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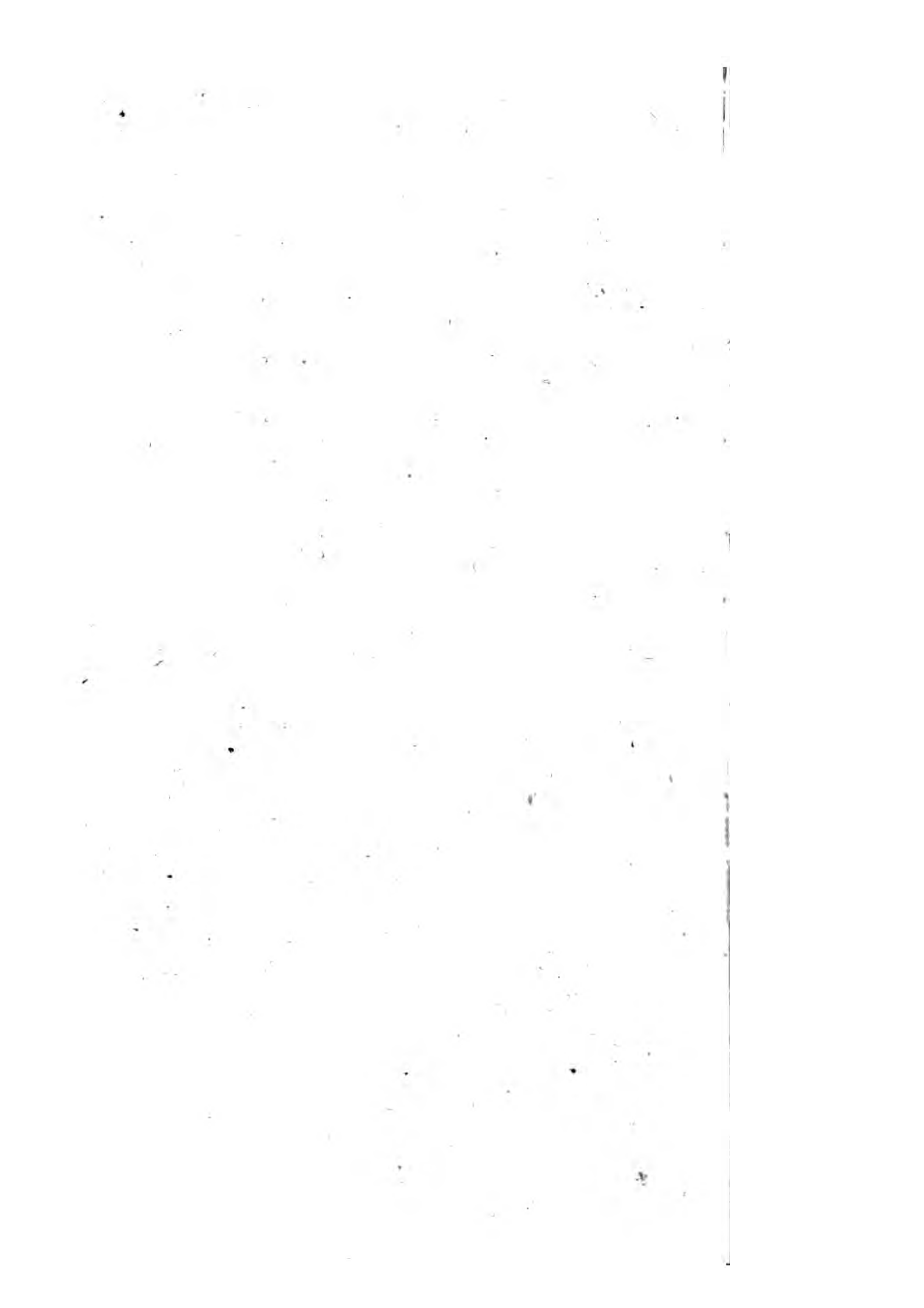
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Congreve : Works, 1773 :

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THE
DRAMATIC WORKS

Catherine Maria Dawson
O B 1782

WILLIAM CONGREVE, Esq;

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME FIRST.

L O N D O N :

Printed for S. CROWDER, C WARE, and T. PAYNE.
M D C C . L X X I I I .

T H E
O L D B A C H E L O R .

A
C O M E D Y .

“ 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. 2.

To the Right Honourable

C H A R L E S,

Lord C L I F F O R D.

MY LORD,

IT 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 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 distinguished 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 acknowledgment (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. It is 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, it is 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, though not the first made public; and therefore, I hope, will the more easily be pardoned: 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 covered by the care of the players; for I think, scarce a character but received 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 Epictetus 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 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, though I am ever

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

T O

Mr C O N G R E V E.

WHEN 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 chace;
 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 eldest Wycherly, 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:

To Mr CONG R E V E.

11

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, but 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.

THOMAS SOUTHERNE.

To Mr CONG R E V E.

THE 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 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 herself's beholden to your dress,
Which though 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;

To Mr CONGREGVE.

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, though 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 though my offering may unworthy prove,
 Take, as a friend, the wishes of my love.

J. MARSH.

To Mr CONGREGVE.

WIT, like true gold, refin'd from all allay,
 Immortal is, and never can decay ;
 'Tis in all times and languages the same ;
 Nor can an ill translation quench the flame :
 For though 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 surpriz'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 comic age.

BEVIL HIGGONS.

P R O L O G U E,

Intended for the

O L D B A C H E L O R.

Written by the Lord F A L K L A N D.

MOST 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 bachelor be worn and cold,
He thinks the young may club to help the old ;
And what alone can be achiev'd by neither,
Is often brought about by both together.
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 wesy 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 holds out to please you the third night.

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.

HOW 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 suplicants 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, would 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 prays—O bless me ! what shall I do now !
Hang me if I know what he prays, or how !
And 'twas the prettiest prologue as he wrote it !
Well, the duce take me, if I han't forgot it.
O Lord, for heaven's sake excuse the play, }
Because, you know, if it be damn'd to day,
I shall be hang'd for wanting what to say.
For my sake then—but I'm in such confusion,
I cannot stay to hear your resolution.

[Runs off.]

E P I L O G U E.

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 'tis our way (you know) for fear o' th' worst,
To be beforehand still, and cry fool first.
How say you, sparks ? how do you stand affected ?
I swear, young Bays within is so dejected,
'Twou'd 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 end, and damn 'em when you've done.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

HEARTWELL, a surly old bachelor, pretending to slight women, secretly in love with Silvia,	} Mr BETTERTON.
BELLMOUR, in love with Belinda,	Mr POWEL.
VAINLOVE, capricious in his love; in love with Araminta,	} Mr WILLIAMS.
SHARPER,	Mr VERBRUGGEN.
Sir JOSEPH WITTOL,	Mr BOWEN.
Captain BLUFF,	Mr HAINES.
FONDLEWIFE, a banker,	Mr DOGGET.
SETTER, a pimp,	Mr UNDERHILL.
Servant to Fondlewife.	

W O M E N.

ARAMINTA, in love with Vainlove,	} Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.
BELINDA, her cousin, an affected lady, in love with Bellmour,	} Mrs MOUNTFORT.
LÆTITIA, wife to Fondlewife,	Mrs BARRY.
SILVIA, Vainlove's forsaken mistress,	} Mrs BOWMAN.
LUCY, her maid,	Mrs LEIGH.
Boy and Footmen.	

SCENE, LONDON.

T H E
O L D B A C H E L O R.

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

S C E N E, *the Street.*

BELLMOUR and VAINLOVE meeting.

BELLMOUR.

VAINLOVE, and abroad so early! good morrow;
I thought a contemplative lover could no more have
parted with his bed in a morning, than he could
have slept in't.

Vain. Bellmour, good morrow——Why, truth on't is,
these early fallies are not usual to me; but business, as you
see, Sir—[*Shewing letters.*] And business must be followed,
or be lost.

Bell. Business!——And so must time, my friend,
be close pursued, or lost. Business is the rub of life, per-
verts our aim, casts off the bias, and leaves us wide and
short of the intended mark.

Vain. Pleasure, I guess, you mean.

Bell. Ay, what else has meaning?

Vain. Oh, the wife will tell you——

Bell. More than they believe——or understand.

Vain. How, how, Ned, a wife man say more than he un-
derstands?

Bell. Ay, ay, wisdom's nothing but a pretending to
know and believe more than we really do. You read

but of one wise man, and all that he knew was, that he knew nothing. Come, come, leave business to idlers, and wisdom to fools: they have need of 'em: wit, be my faculty, and pleasure my occupation; and let father Time shake his glass. Let low and early 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——

Vain. 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.]

Bell. I marry, Sir, I have a hawk's eye at a woman's hand——There's more elegance in the false spelling of this superscription [Takes up the letter.] than in all Cicero——Let me see—How now! *Dear perfidious Vainlove.* [Reads.]

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

Bell. Nay, let's see the name (Sylvia!) how canst thou be ungrateful to that creature? She's extremely pretty, and loves thee entirely——I have heard her breathe such raptures about thee——

Vain. Ay, or any body that she's about——

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

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

Bell. Never—her affections: 'tis true, by Heav'n, she own'd it to my face; and blushing like the virgin morn when it disclosed the cheat, which that trusty bawd of Nature, Night, had hid, confess'd her soul was true to you; though I by treachery had stoln the bliss——

Vain. So was true as turtle—in imagination, Ned, ha? Preach this doctrine to husbands, and the married women will adore thee.

Bell. 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.

Vain. But is it not an abuse to the lover to be made a blind of?

Bell. 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.

Vain. 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.

Bell. What, the old banker with the handsome wife?

Vain. Ay.

Bell. Let me see, Lætitia! Oh 'tis a delicious morsel. Dear Frank, thou art the truest friend in the world.

Vain. 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.

Bell. [*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. Ay.

Bell. [*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——

Vain. 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 happened to be once or twice, where Lætitia was the handsomest woman in company, so consequently applied myself to her———And it seems she has

taken me at my word——Had you been there, or any body, 'thad been the same.

Bell. I wish I may succeed as the same.

Vain. 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.

Bell. Pr'ythee, what sort of a fellow is Fondlewife?

Vain. 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's often jealous without a cause, he's as often satisfied without reason.

Bell. A very even temper, and fit for my purpose. I must get your man Setter to provide my disguise.

Vain. Ay, you may take him for good and all if you will, for you have made him fit for no body else——
Well——

Bell. You're going to visit in return of Silvia's letter——Poor rogue. Any hour of the day or night will serve her——But do you know nothing of a new rival there?

Vain. 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.

Bell. Yet rails on still, and thinks his love unknown to us; a little time will swell him so, he must be forc'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 delivered of a secret when he has miscarried of it already.

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

Bell. With all my heart; it lyes convenient for us to pay our afternoon services to our mistresses. I find I am damnable in love, I'm so uneasy for not having seen Belinda yesterday.

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

S C E N E II.

BELLMOUR *alone.*

Bell. Why 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 Vainlove'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*] SHARPER.

Sharp. I'm sorry to see this, Ned; once a man comes to his soliloquies I give him for gone.

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

Sharp. What, is Belinda cruel, that you are so thoughtful?

Bell. No, faith, not for that——— But there's a business of consequence fall'n out to-day, that requires some consideration.

Sharp. Prithee what mighty business of consequence canst thou have?

Bell. Why, you must know 'tis a piece of work toward the finishing 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.

Sharp. 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 handsome for a wife.

Bell. 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 am sure I shall like her, for the devil take me if I don't love all the sex.

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

S C E N E IV.

[*To them*] HEARTWELL.

Bell. 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.

Heart. I confess I have not been sneering fulsome lies 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.

Bell. Wou'd thou hadst come a little sooner: Vainlove would have wrought thy conversion, and been a champion for the cause.

Heart. 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.

Sharp. That's because he always sets out in foul weather, loves to buffet with the winds, meet the tide, and sail in the teeth of opposition.

Heart. What, has he not dropt anchor at Araminta?

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

Sharp. She had need have a good share of sense to manage so capricious a lover.

Bell. 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 or unpleasant.

Sharp. An argument of very little passion, very good understanding, and very ill-nature.

Heart. And proves that Vainlove plays the fool with discretion.

Sharp. You, Bellmour, are bound in gratitude to stickle for him; you with pleasure reap the fruit, which he takes pains to sow; he does the drudgery in the mine, and you stamp your image on the gold.

Bell. 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.

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

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

Heart. Good Mr Young-fellow, you're mistaken; as able as yourself, and as nimble too, tho' I mayn't 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 temptation.

Bell. Time enough? ay too soon, I should rather have expected, from a person of your gravity.

Heart. 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.

Bell. 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.

Heart. I am for having every body be what they pretend to be; a whoremaster be a whoremaster, and not like Vainlove, kifs a lapdog with passion, when it would disgust him from the lady's own lips.

Bell. That only happens sometimes, where the dog has the sweeter breath, for the more cleanly conveyance. But, George, you must not quarrel with little gallantries 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?

Sharp. 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?

Bell. 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.

Heart. I confess, you that are womens asses bear greater burdens; are forced to undergo dressing, dancing, sing-

ing, fishing, whining, rhyming, flattering, lying, grinning, cringing, and the drudgery of loving to boot.

Bell. O brute, the drudgery of loving!

Heart. Ay, why to come to love through all these incumbrances, is like coming to an estate overcharged with debts; which, by the time you have paid, yields no further profit than what the bare tillage and manuring of the land will produce at the expence of your own sweat.

Bell. Pr'ythee, how dost thou love?

Sharp. He! he hates the sex.

Heart. So I hate phyfic too——yet I may love to take it for my health.

Bell. Well come off, George, if at any time you should be taken straying.

Sharp. He has need of such an excuse, considering the present state of his body.

Heart. How d'ye mean?

Sharp. Why, if whoring be purging (as you call it), then, I may say, marriage is entering into a course of phyfic.

Bell. How, George, does the wind blow there?

Heart. It will as soon blow north and be-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.

Bell. Who the devil would have thee? unless 'twere an oyster-woman, to propagate young fry for Billingsgate——thy talent will never recommend thee to any thing of better quality.

Heart. My talent is chiefly that of speaking truth, which I don't expect shall ever recommend me to people of quality——I thank Heav'n, I have very honestly purchased the hatred of all the great families in town.

Sharp. And you in return of spleen hate them: But could you hope to be receiv'd into the alliance of a noble family——

Heart. No, I hope I shall never merit that affliction——to be punished with a wife of birth——be a stag of the first head, and bear my horns aloft, like one of the sup-

porters of my wife's coat. S'death, I would not be a cuckold to e'er an illustrious whore in England.

Bell. What, not to make your family, man! and provide for your children?

Sharp. For her children, you mean.

Heart. Ay, there you've nick'd it—there's the devil upon devil—O the pride and joy of heart 'twould be to me, to have my son and heir resemble such a duke—to have a fleering 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; tho' he has my Lord What-d'ye-eall's 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.

Bell. }
Sharp. } Ha, ha, ha.

Bell. Well, but George, I have one question to ask you—

Heart. Pshaw, I have prattled away my time—I hope you are in no haste for an answer—for I shan't stay now. [Looking on his watch.

Bell. Nay, pray thee, George—

Heart. No: besides my business, I see a fool coming this way. Adieu.

S C E N E V.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR.

Bell. What does he mean? Oh, 'tis Sir Joseph Wittol with his friend; but I see he has turn'd the corner, and goes another way.

Sharp. What in the name of wonder is it?

Bell. Why, a fool.

Sharp. 'Tis a tawdry outside.

Bell. And a very beggarly lining——yet he may be worth your acquaintance——a little of thy chymistry, Tom, may extract gold from that dirt.

Sharp. Say you so? 'faith I am as poor as a chymist, and would be as industrious. But what was he that followed him? Is not he a dragon that watches those golden pippins?

Bell. Hang him, no, he a dragon! if he be, 'tis a very peaceful one; I can insure his anger dormant; or should he seem to rouse, 'tis but well lashing him, and he will sleep like a top.

Sharp. Ay, is he of that kidney?

Bell. Yet is ador'd by that bigot Sir Joseph Wittol, 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 frightened, for as soon as ever he was loose, he ran away, without staying to see who had help'd him.

Sharp. Is that bully of his in the army?

Bell. No, but is a pretender, and wears the habit of a soldier; which now-a-days as often clokes cowardice, 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 slighting men of merit, and preferring only those of interest, has made him quit the service.

Sharp. Wherein, no doubt, he magnifies his own performance.

Bell. 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.

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

Bell. Right; but then the comparison breaks, for

he will take a drubbing with as little noise as a pulpit-cushion.

Sharp. His name, and I have done?

Bell. Why that, to pass it current too, he has gilded with a title: he is called Captain Bluff.

Sharp. Well, I'll endeavour his acquaintance—you steer another course, are bound

For love's island; I for the golden coast:

May each succeed in what he wishes most.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOL, SHARPER *following.*

SHARPER.

SURE that's he, and alone.

Sir Jo. Um—Ay this, this is the very damn'd place; the inhuman cannibals, 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.

Sharp. How's this?

Sir Jo. An it hadn't been for a civil gentleman as came by and frighted 'em away—but agad I durst not stay to give him thanks.

Sharp. This must be Bellmour he means—ha! I have a thought—

Sir Jo. Zooks, would the Captain were come; the very remembrance makes me quake; agad I shall never be reconciled to this place heartily.

Sharp. '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 Jo. Agad and so it is—why here has been more mischief done I perceive.

Sharp. 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 despair of what I've lost. [*Looking about as in search.*]

Sir Jo. Poor gentleman—by the Lord Harry I'll stay no longer, for I have found too—

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

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

Sharp. O your servant, Sir, you are safe then it seems; 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good: well, you may rejoice over my ill fortune, since it paid the price of your ransom.

Sir Jo. 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.

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

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

Sharp. How!

[*Angrily.*]

Sir Jo. 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' sight, out o' mind, agad. [*Aside.*]

Sharp. 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 Jo. Gads-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 entire dependance, 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.

Sharp. So-h, O Sir, I'm easily pacify'd, the acknowledgement of a gentleman——

Sir Jo. Acknowledgement! Sir, I'm all over acknowledgement, and will not stick to shew it in the greatest extremity, by night or by day, in sickness or in health, winter or summer; all seasons and occasions shall testify the reality and gratitude of your super-abundant humble servant, Sir Joseph Wittol knight. Hem, hem.

Sharp. Sir Joseph Wittol!

Sir Jo. The same, Sir, of Wittol Hall, in Comitatu Bucks.

Sharp. Is it possible! then I am happy, to have obliged the mirror of knighthood, and pink of courtesy in the age. Let me embrace you.

Sir Jo. O Lord, Sir!

Sharp. My loss, I esteem as a trifle repaid with interest, since it has purchased me the friendship and acquaintance of the person in the world, whose character I admire.

Sir Jo. You are only pleas'd to say so——but pray, if I may be so bold, what is that loss you mention?

Sharp. O term it no longer so, Sir. In the scuffle, last night, I only dropt a bill of an hundred pound, which I confess, I came half-despairing to recover, but thanks to my better fortune——

Sir Jo. You have found it, Sir, then it seems; I profess I'm heartily glad.

Sharp. 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 Jo. What a dickens does he mean by a trivial sum?
 [*Aside.*] But han't you found it, Sir?

Sharp. No otherwise I vow to gad, but in my hopes in you, Sir.

Sir Jo. Humph.

Sharp. But that's sufficient——'twere injustice to doubt the honour of Sir Joseph Wittol.

Sir Jo. O Lord, Sir!

Sharp. 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; it was so much lent you——and you scorn, I'll say that for you——

Sir Jo. 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.

Sharp. 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—mere dirt.

Sir Jo. But I profess 'tis a dirt I have washed my hands of at present; I have laid it all out upon my back.

Sharp. Are you so extravagant in clothes, Sir Joseph?

Sir Jo. 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 ha'n'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-piece as it were to me——agad he's a brave fellow—pauh, I'm 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——

Sharp. If he had, Sir, what then? he could have done no more, nor perhaps have suffer'd so much——had he a hundred pound to lose?
 [*Angrily.*]

Sir Jo. O Lord, Sir, by no means (but I might have sav'd a hundred pound) : I meant innocently, as I hope to be saved, 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——

Sharp. That you are, I'll be sworn [*Aside.*] Why that's great, and like yourself.

S C E N E II.

[*To them*] Captain B L U F F.

Sir Jo. O, here a' comes—Ay, my Hector of Troy, welcome my bully, my back; agad my heart has gone a pit-a-pat for thee.

Bluff. How now, my young knight! not for fear I hope, he that knows me must be a stranger to fear.

Sir Jo. Nay, agad I hate fear ever since I had like to have died of a fright—but—

Bluff. 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 on his sword.*]

Sir Jo. Ay, bully, a devilish smart fellow; a' will fight like a cock.

Bluff. Say you so ? then I honour him——But has he been abroad ? for every cock will fight upon his own dung-hill.

Sir Jo. I don't know, but I'll present you——

Bluff. 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.

Sharp. 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.

Bluff. 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's sake is sufficient cause; fighting, to me's religion and the laws.

Sir Jo. 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.

Bluff. Ay, then I honour him again.—Sir, may I crave your name?

Sharp. Ay, Sir, my name's Sharper.

Sir Jo. 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?

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

Bluff. 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.

Sharp. How, Sir! I make a doubt if there be at this day a greater general breathing.

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

Sharp. Not I really, Sir.

Bluff. 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.

Sharp. Not I, Sir, no more than public letters or gazettes tell us.

Bluff. 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—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, were an eye-witness of——I won't say had the greatest share in't; though 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 mentioned me——not once, by the wars——took no more notice, than as if Nol. Bluff had not been in the land of the living.

Sharp. Strange!

Sir Jo. Yet by the Lord Harry, 'tis true, Mr Sharper, for I went every day to coffeehouses to read the gazette myself.

Bluff. 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.

Sharp. Impudent rogue!

[*Aside.*

Sir Jo. Ay, this damn'd modesty of yours——Agad, if he would put in for't he might be made general himself yet.

Bluff. O fy, no, Sir Joseph—you know I hate this.

Sir Jo. Let me but tell Mr Sharper a little, how you ate fire once out of the mouth of a cannon——agad he did; those impenetrable whiskers of his have confronted flames——

Bluff. Death, what do you mean, Sir Joseph?

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

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

[*Angrily.*

Sir Jo. I am dumb.

Bluff. 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 Jo. Nay, now I must speak; it will split a hair, by the Lord Harry, I have seen it.

Bluff. Zounds, Sir, it's a lie, 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 Jo. I am blind.

Bluff. Death, had any other man interrupted me——

Sir Jo. Good Mr Sharper, speak to him, I dare not look that way.

Sharp. Captain, Sir Joseph's penitent.

Bluff. 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.

Sir Jo. Well, I am a fool sometimes—but I'm sorry.

Bluff. Enough.

Sir Jo. Come, we'll go take a glass to drown animosities. Mr Sharper, will you partake?

Sharp. 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.*

Belin. Ah, nay, dear—pr'ythee good, dear sweet cousin, no more; Oh gad, I swear you'd make one sick to hear you.

Aram. Bless me, what have I said to move you thus?

Belin. Oh, you have raved, talked idly, and all in commendation of that filthy, awkward, two-leg'd creature man—you don't know what you've said, your fever has transported you.

Aram. 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.

Belin. There was a whine!———O gad, I hate your horrid 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.

Aram. Fy, this is gross affectation———A little of Bellmour's company would change the scene.

Belin. Filthy fellow! I wonder, cousin———

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

Belin. Oh I love your hideous fancy! Ha, ha, ha, love a man!

Aram. Love a man! yes, you would not love a beast.

Belin. Of all beasts not an afs———which is so like your Vainlove!—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 buffoonry 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.

Aram. Yes, yes, I can see something near it, when you and Bellmour meet. You don't know that you dream'd of Bellmour last night, and call'd him aloud in your sleep.

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

Aram. 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 awak'd, you had stifled me with kisses.

Belin. O barbarous asperision!

Aram. No asperision, cousin, we are alone———Nay, I can tell you more.

Belin. I deny it all.

Aram. What, before you hear it?

Belin. My denial is premeditated like your malice——
Lard, cousin, you talk oddly —— What ever the matter is,
O my sol, I'm afraid you'll follow evil courses.

Aram. Ha, ha, ha, this is pleasant.

Belin. You may laugh, but ——

Aram. Ha, ha, ha!

Belin. You may think the malicious grin becomes you——
The devil take Bellmour——Why do you tell me of him?

Aram. Oh it comes out——now you are angry, I am sure
you love him. I tell no-body else, cousin——I have
not betray'd you yet.

Belin. Pr'ythee tell it all the world; it's false.

Aram. Come then, kifs and friends.

Belin. Pish.

Aram. Pr'ythee don't be so peevish.

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

Aram. Ha, ha, ha.

Betty. Did your Ladyship call, Madam?

Belin. Get my hoods and tippet, and bid the footman
call a chair.

Aram. I hope you are not going out in dudgeon, cousin?

S C E N E IV.

[To them] FOOTMAN.

Foot. Madam, there are——

Belin. Is there a chair?

Foot. No, Madam, there are Mr Bellmour and Mr Vain-
love to wait upon your Ladyship.

Aram. Are they below?

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

Belin. The visit's to you, cousin, I suppose I am at my
liberty.

Aram. Be ready to shew 'em up.

S C E N E V.

[To them]. BETTY with hoods and looking-glasses.

I can't tell, cousin, I believe we are 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.

Belin. I shall oblige you, in leaving you to the full and free enjoyment of that conversation you admire——Let me see; hold the glass——Lard, I look wretchedly to-day!

Aram. Betty, why don't you help my cousin?

[Putting on her hoods.

Belin. Hold off your fists, and see that he gets a chair with a high roof, or a very low seat——Stay, come back, hear you, Mrs Fidget—you are so ready to go the footman——Here, take 'em all again, my mind's chang'd, I won't go.

S C E N E VI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA.

Aram. So, this I expected——You won't oblige me then, cousin, and let me have all the company to myself.

Belin. 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, Heaven knows how far you may be tempted: I am tender of your reputation.

Aram. I am oblig'd to you——But who's malicious now, Belinda?

Belin. Not I; witness my heart, I stay out of pure affection.

Aram. In my conscience I believe you.

S C E N E VII.

[To them] VAINLOVE, BELLMOUR, FOOTMAN.

Bell. So, fortune be prais'd! to find you both within, Ladies, is——

Aram. No miracle, I hope.

Bell. Not o'your side, Madam, I confess——But my tyrant there and I, are two buckets that can never come together.

Belin. Nor are ever like——Yet we often meet and clash.

Bell. 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 be a dun.

Belin. Ay, on my conscience, and the most impertinent and troublesome of duns.—A dun for money will be quiet, when he sees his debtor has not wherewithal——But a dun for love is an eternal torment that never rests——

Bell. '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.

Aram. 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.

Vain. 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.

Belin. O gad, would you wou'd all pray to Love then, and let us alone.

Vain. You are the temples of love, and 'tis through your devotion must be conveyed.

40 THE OLD BACHELOR.

Aram. Rather poor filly 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. O Madam——

Aram. 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.

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

S C E N E VIII.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE and BELLE-MOUR.

Bell. Why, you won't hear me with patience.

Aram. What's the matter, cousin?

Bell. Nothing, Madam, only——

Belin. Pr'ythee hold thy tongue——Lard, he has so pester'd me with flames and stuff——I think I shan't endure the sight of a fire this twelvemonth.

Bell. Yet all can't melt that cruel frozen heart.

Belin. 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.

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

Belin. Then know, I would be ador'd in silence.

Bell. Humph, I thought so, that you might have all the talk yourself——you had better let me speak; for if my thoughts fly to any pitch, I shall make villainous signs.

Belin. What will you get by that? to make such signs as I don't understand.

Bell. Ay, but if I am 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 IX.

[*To them*] MUSIC-MASTER.

Aram. 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 their golden dream;
Nothing's new besides our faces,
Every woman is the same.*

Aram. So, how d'ye like the song, gentlemen?

Bell. O very well perform'd——but I don't much admire the words.

Aram. I expected it——there's too much truth in 'em: if Mr Gavot will walk with us in the garden, we'll have

it once again —— you may like it better at the second hearing. You'll bring my cousin.

Bell. Faith, Madam, I dare not speak to her, but I'll make signs. [Addresses Belinda in dumb shew.]

Belin. O foh, your dumb rhetoric is more ridiculous than your talking impertinence; as an ape is a much more troublesome animal than a parrot.

Aram. Ay, cousin, and 'tis a sign the creatures mimic nature well; for there are few men, but do more silly things than they say.

Bell. 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,
Ev'n silence may be eloquent in love. }

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

S C E N E, *The Street.*

SILVIA and LUCY.

SILVIA.

WILL he not come then!

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

Silv. Why did you not tell me?——whom mean you?

Lucy. Whom you should mean, Heartwell.

Silv. Senseless creature, I meant my Vainlove.

Lucy. 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.

Silv. Well, since there's no remedy—Yet tell me—for I would know, though to the anguish of my soul; how 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.

Silv. 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.

Silv. Respects, and peruse it! He's gone, and Araminta has bewitch'd him from me—Oh 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.

Silv. How, dear Lucy?

Lucy. You know Araminta's dissembled coyness has won, and keeps him hers—

Silv. 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, 'twould disgust his nicety, and take away his stomach.

Silv. Impossible, 'twill never take.

Lucy. Trouble not your head. Let me alone—I will inform myself of what pass'd between 'em to-day, and about

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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 dissimulation—You know what will take him.

Silv. '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 BELL-
MOUR *following.*

Bell. Hift, hift, is not that Heartwell going to Silvia?

Vain. He's talking to himself, I think: prithee let's try if we can hear him.

Heart. Why, whither in the devil's name am I a-going now? Hum——let me think——Is not this Silvia'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 envenom'd shirt, to run into the embraces of a fever, and in some raving fit, be led to plunge myself into that consuming fire, a woman's arms. Ha! well recollected, I will recover my reason, and be gone.

Bell. Now, Venus forbid!

Vain. Huh——

Heart. 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! S'death how the young fellows will hoot me! I shall be the jest of the town. Nay in two days, I expect to be chronicled in dit-

ty, and sung in woeful ballad, to the tune of the superannuated maiden's comfort, or the bachelor'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 III.

B E L L M O U R, V A I N L O V E.

Bell. A very certain remedy, *probatum est.*—Ha, ha, ha, poor George. thou art i' th' right, thou hast sold thyself 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.

Vain. Or a young wench, between pleasure and reputation.

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

Vain. She has made a quarrel on't.

Bell. Paugh, women are only angry at such offences, to have the pleasure of forgiving 'em.

Vain. And I love to have the pleasure of making my peace—I should not esteem a pardon if too easily won.

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

Vain. Could you be content to go to heaven?

Bell. Hum, not immediately, in my conscience not heartily. I'd do a little more good in my generation first, in order to deserve it.

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

Bell. But how the devil dost thou expect to get her if she never yield?

Vain. That's true; but I would——

Bell. 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 all lewd projects do, Sir, where the devil prevents our endeavours with success.

Bell. A good hearing, Setter.

Vain. Well, I'll leave you with your engineer.

Bell. And hast thou provided necessaries?

Setter. All, all, Sir; the large sanctified hat, and the little precise band, with a swinging long spiritual cloak, to cover carnal knavery—not forgetting the black patch, which Tribulation Spintext wears, as I'm inform'd, upon 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.

Bell. Well, in this fanatic father's habit, will I confess Lætitia.

Setter. Rather prepare her for confession, Sir, by helping her to sin.

Bell. Be at your master's lodging in the evening, I shall use the robes.

S C E N E V.

SETTER *alone.*

Setter. 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.

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S C E N E VI.

[To him] LUCY.

Lucy. There's the hang-dog his man——I had a power over him in the reign of my mistrets; but he is too true a valet de chambre not to affect his master's faults; and consequently is revolted from his allegiance.

Setter. Undoubtedly 'tis impossible to be a pimp and not a man of parts. That is, without being polite, 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 villainy a-foot, he's so thoughtful; may be I may discover something in my mask——Worthy Sir, a word with you. [Puts on her mask.

Setter. Why, if I were known, I might come to be a great man——

Lucy. Not to interrupt your meditation——

Setter. And I should not be the first that has procured his greatness by pimping.

Lucy. Now poverty and the pox light upon thee, for a contemplative pimp.

Setter. Ha! what art, who thus maliciously hast awaken'd me from my dream of glory? Speak, thou vile disturber——

Lucy. 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.

Setter. Good words, damsel, or I shall——But how dost thou know my master or me?

Lucy. Yes, I know both master and man to be——

Setter. 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.

Lucy. Ay, the breach of faith, which he has begun: thou traitor to thy lawful princess.

Setter. Why, how now! pry'thee, who art? Lay by that worldly face, and produce your natural vizard.

Lucy. No, firrah, I'll keep it on to abuse thee, and leave thee without hopes of revenge.

Setter. 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.

Lucy. No, thou pitiful flatterer of thy master's imperfection; thou maukin made up of the shreds and pairings of his superfluous fopperies.

Setter. Thou art thy mistress's foul self, composed of her sullied iniquities and clothing.

Lucy. Hang thee——Beggar's cur——Thy master is but mumper in love; lyes canting at the gate, but never dares presume to enter the house.

Setter. 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.

Lucy. Beast, filthy toad, I can hold no longer: look and tremble. [Unmasks.

Setter. How, Mrs Lucy!

Lucy. I wonder thou hast the impudence to look me in the face.

Setter. 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?

Lucy. 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.

Setter. Nay, faith, Lucy, I'm sorry, I'll own myself to blame, though we are both in fault as to our offices——Come, I'll make you any reparation.

Lucy. Swear.'

Setter. I do swear, to the utmost of my power.

Lucy. To be brief then; what is the reason your master did not appear to-day according to the summons I brought him?

Setter. To answer you as briefly—He has a cause to be tried in another court.

Lucy. Come, tell me in plain terms, how forward is he with Aramiuta.

Setter. 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.

Lucy. Stand off—He's a precious jewel.

Setter. And therefore you'd have him to fet in your lady's locket.

Lucy. Where is he now?

Setter. He'll be in the piazza presently.

Lucy. Remember to-day's behaviour—let me see you with a penitent face.

Setter. What, no token of amity, Lucy? you and I don't use to part with dry lips.

Lucy. No, no, avaunt—I'll not be slabber'd and kifs'd now—I'm not i'th' humour.

Setter. I'll not quit you so—I'll follow and put you into the humour.

S C E N E VII.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOL, BLUFF.

Bluff. And so out of your unwonted generosity—

Sir Jo. And good-nature, back; I am good-natur'd, and I can't help it.

Bluff. You have given him a note upon Fondlewife for a hundred pound.

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, poor fellow, he ventur'd fair for't.

Bluff. You have difobliged 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 Jo. You may stay 'till the day of judgment then : by the Lord Harry, I know better things than to be run thro' 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 ?

Bluff. Well, go to him for 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 Jo. 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.

Bluff. By these hilts I believe he frighted you into this composition : I believe you gave it him out of fear, pure paltry fear——confess.

Sir Jo. 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 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.

Bell. Thou'rt a lucky rogue ; there's your benefactor ; you ought to return him thanks now you have receiv'd the favour.

Sharp. Sir Joseph—your note was accepted, and the money paid at sight: I'm come to return my thanks—

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

Bell. I doubt the knight repents, Tom——He looks like the knight of the sorrowful face.

Sharp. 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 Jo. 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.

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

Bluff. 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.

Sharp. Trick, Sir?

Sir Jo. Ay, trick, Sir, and won't be put upon, Sir, being a man of honour, Sir, and so, Sir——

Sharp. 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 charg'd with wind.

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

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

Sir Jo. Captain, will you see this? won't you pink his soul?

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

Sharp. 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.

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

Sharp. I gad and so I will : there's again for you.

[Kicks him.

B'uff. 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.

Sharp. Ay, thou inimitable coward, and to be felt——
as for example.

[Kicks him.

Bell. Ha, ha, prithee 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 WITTOL, BLUFF.

Bluff. Very well——very fine——but 'tis no matter——
Is not this fine, Sir Joseph ?

Sir Jo. Indifferent, agad in my opinion very indifferent——I'd rather go plain all my life, than wear such finery.

Bluff. Death and hell ! to be affronted thus ! I'll die before
I'll suffer it.

[Draws.

Sir Jo. O Lord, his anger was not raised before——
nay, dear Captain, don't be in a passion now he's gone——
Put up, put up, dear back, 'tis your Sir Joseph begs, come,
come, let me kiss thee ; so, so, put up, put up.

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

Sir Jo. What, Bully ?

Bluff. The affront.

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

Bluff. Well, Sir Joseph, at your intreaty——But were not
you, my friend, abus'd and cuff'd and kick'd ?

[Putting up his sword.

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

Bluff. By the immortal thunder of great guns, 'tis false
——he sucks not vital air who dares affirm it to this face.

[Locks his big.

Sir Jo. 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 kiss'd you, as kick'd 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.

Bluff. I'll call a council of war within to consider of my revenge to come.

S C E N E X.

HEARTWELL, SILVIA. *Silvia's Apartment.*

S O N G.

*As Amoret and Thyr sis 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 antics.*]

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

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

Silv. If you could sing and dance so, I should love to look upon you too.

Heart. Why 'twas I sung and danc'd; I gave music to the voice, and life to their measures—Look you here, Silvia, [*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, faint, witch; do not rack me with suspense.

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

Heart. 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 mere infant and would suck. Can you love me, Silvia? speak.

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

Heart. 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 mystery———Now by my soul I cannot lie, though it were to serve a friend or gain a mistress.

Silv. Must you lie then, if you say you love me?

Heart. No, no, dear ignorance, thou beauteous changeling——I tell thee I do love thee, and tell it for a truth, a naked truth, which I'm ashamed to discover.

Silv. 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.

Heart. '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.

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

Heart. Take the symptoms—and ask all the tyrants

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of thy sex, if their foals are not known by this party-coloured livery—I am melancholic when thou art absent, look like an afs 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 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 money.

Silv. Ay, but that is no sign; for they say gentlemen will give money 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.

Heart. The more is the pity. [*Aside.*]

Silv. 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?

Heart. 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.

Silv. 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?

Heart. Ay, ay, in old days people married where they lov'd; but that fashion is chang'd, child.

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

Heart. I'll have my beard shav'd, it shan't hurt thee, and we'll go to bed——

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

Heart. Damn her, let her go, and a good riddance—yet so much tenderness and beauty—and honesty together is a

jewel—stay, Silvia—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.

Silv. What did you call me for?

Heart. 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.

Silv. I'll die before I'll be your whore—as well as I love you.

Heart. aside.] A woman, and ignorant, may be honest, when 'tis out of obstinacy and contradiction—but s'death! 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.

Silv. Well—good by.

[Turns and weeps.]

Heart. Hay! nay come, we'll kifs at parting, *[Kisses her.]* By Heaven her kifs is sweeter than liberty—I will marry thee—there thou hast done't. All my resolves melted in that kifs—once more.

Silv. But when?

Heart. I'm impatient till it be done; I will not give myself 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,

Silv. Ha, ha, ha, an old fox trap'd—

S C E N E XI.

[To her] LUCY.

Bless me! you frightened me, I thought he had been come again, and had heard me.

Lucy. Lord, Madam, I met your lover in as much haste, as if he had been going for a midwife.

Silv. He's going for a parson, girl, the forerunner of a midwife, some nine months hence—Well, I find dissembling 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 made the experiment—but how hast thou succeeded?

Lucy. 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 reconciliation first. I know that will do—walk in and I'll shew it you. Come, Madam, you're like to have a happy time on't, both your love and anger satisfied! all that can charm our sex conspires to please you.

That woman sure enjoys a blessed night,
Whom love and vengeance both at once delight.

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

S C E N E, *the Street.*

B E L L M O U R *in fanatic habit,* S E T T E R.

B E L L M O U R.

'T IS pretty near the hour, [*Looking on his watch.*] Well and how, Setter, ha? does my hypocrisy fit me, ha? does it fit easy on me?

Set. O most religiously well, Sir.

Bell. 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.

Set. S'bud, Sir, away quickly; there's Fondlewife just turn'd the corner, and's coming this way.

Bell. Gads so, there he is, he must not see me.

S C E N E II.

F O N D L E W I F E, B A R N A B Y.

Fond. I say I will tarry at home.

Bar. But, Sir.

Fond. Good lack! I profess the spirit of contradiction hath possess'd the lad—I say I will tarry at home, varlet.

Bar. I have done, Sir; then farewell five hundred pound.

Fond. Ha, how's that! Stay, stay, did you leave word, say you, with his wife? with Comfort herself?

Bar. 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——

Fond. 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.

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

Fond. And nothing can be done here till I go—so that I'll tarry, d'ye see.

Bar. And run the hazard to lose your affair, Sir?

Fond. Good lack, good lack—I profess 'tis a very sufficient vexation, for a man to have a handsome wife.

Bar. 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 to pay the rent.

Fond. I profess a very apt comparison, varlet; go and bid my Cockey come out to me. I will give her some instructions, I will reason with her before I go.

S C E N E III.

FONDLEWIFE *alone.*

And in the mean time, I will reason with myself——Tell

me, Isaac, why art thou 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 doating; 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, doat 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, LAETITIA.

Lat. I hope my dearest jewel is not going to leave me, are you, Nykin?

Fond. Wife, have you thoroughly considered how detestable, how heinous, and how crying a sin, the sin of adultery is? have you weigh'd it, I say? for it is a very weighty sin; and although it may ly heavy upon thee, yet thy husband must also bear his part; for thy iniquity will fall upon his head.

Lat. Bless me, what means my dear!

Fond. aside.] I profess she has an alluring eye; I am doubtful whether I shall trust her, even with Tribulation himself—Speak, I say, have you considered what it is to cuckold your husband?

Lat. aside.] I'm amaz'd; sure he has discovered 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.

Fond. No, no, I tell you I shall have it in my head—

Lat. aside.] I know not what to think; but I'm re-

folv'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.*]

Fond. 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 i'feck.

Let. aside.] O then all's safe. I was terribly frightened—My affliction is always your jest, barbarous man! Oh that I should love to this degree! yet——

Fond. Nay, Cocky.

Let. 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 one that will love you as well as I have done: I shall be contented to ly at peace in my cold grave——since it will please you. [*Sighs.*]

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

Let. aside.] How! Heaven forbid! that will be carrying the jest too far indeed.

Fond. Won't you kifs Nykin?

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

Fond. Kifs, kifs, i'feck I do.

Let. No, you don't.

Fond. What, not love Cocky!

[*She kisses him.*]

THE OLD BACHELOR. 65

Lat. No—h. [Sighs.]

Fond. I profess, I do love thee better than five hundred pound—and so thou shalt say, for I'll leave it to stay with thee.

Lat. 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.

Fond. He, he, he, wilt thou, poor fool? Then I will go, I won't be dealous—Poor Cocky, kifs Nykin kifs Nykin, ee, ee, ee—Here will be the good man anon, to talk to Cocky, and teach her how a wife ought to behave herself.

Lat. aside.] 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. [Kifs.]

Fond. That's my good dear,—Come, kifs Nykin once more, and then get you in—So—Get you in, get you in. By, by.

Lat. By Nykin.

Fond. By Cocky.

Lat. By Nykin.

Fond. By Cocky, by, by.

S C E N E V.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER. 66

Sharp. How! Araminta lost!

Vain. To confirm what I have said, read this—

[Gives a letter.]

Sharp. Reads.] Hum, hum,—“ And what then appeared
“ 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 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.”

Sharp. Lost! Pray Heaven 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.

Vain. 'Tis an untimely fruit, and she has miscarried of her love.

Sharp. Never leave this damn'd, ill-natur'd whimfy, Frank? Thou hast a sickly peevish appetite; only chew love, and cannot digest it.

Vain. 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 chace: my sport is always balk'd, 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.

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

Vain. No, she will be there this evening—Yes, I will go too—and she shall see her error in—

Sharp. In her choice, I'gad—But thou canst not be so great a brute as to slight her?

Vain. 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 woo.

S C E N E VI.

A Room in Fondlewife's House.

A SERVANT introducing *BELLMOUR* in a fanatic habit, with a patch upon one eye, and a book in his hand.

Serv. Here's a chair, Sir, if you please to repose yourself. My mistress is coming, Sir.

Bell. Secure in my disguise, I have outfac'd suspicion,

and even dar'd discovery—This cloak my sanctity, and trusty Scarron's novels my prayer-book—Methinks I am the very picture of Montufar in the Hypocrites—Oh she comes.

S C E N E VII.

BELLMOUR, LAETITIA.

“ So breaks Aurora through the veil of night,
 “ Thus fly the clouds, divided by her light,
 “ And ev'ry eye receives a new-born light.”

[Throwing off his cloak, patch, &c.

Let. “ Thus strew'd with blushes, 'like'—Ah' Heaven defend me! Who's this? [Discovering him, starts.

Bell. Your lover.

Let. Vainlove's friend! I know his face, and he has betray'd me to him. [Aside.

Bell. You are surpris'd. Did you not expect a lover, Madam? Those eyes shone kindly on my first appearance, though now they are o'er-cast.

Let. 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.

Bell. Rather the hypocrisy was welcome, but not the hypocrite.

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

Bell. I have directions in my pocket, which agree with every thing but your unkindness. [Pulls out the letter.

Let. My letter! Base Vainlove! Then 'tis too late to dissemble. [Aside.] 'Tis plain then you have mistaken the person. [Going.

Bell. 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 block-head am I! Can you forgive me the disorder I have put

you into——But it is a mistake which any body might have made.

Let. What can this mean! 'Tis impossible he should be mistaken after all this——A handsome fellow if he had not surpris'd me : methinks, now I look on him again, I would not have mistaken. [*Aside.*] We are all liable to mistakes, Sir; if you own it to be so, there needs no further apology.

Bell. 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 delivered 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 superscription,) 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.

Let. I am discover'd—And either Vainlove is not guilty, or he has handsomely excus'd him. [*Aside.*]

Bell. You appear concern'd, Madam.

Let. 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——

Bell. And more love; or my face is a false witness, and deserves to be pillory'd—No, by Heav'n, I swear——

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

Bell. 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 them up for ever.

Let. Upon that condition. [*He kisses her.*]

Bell. Eternity was in that moment—One more, upon any condition.

Let. 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!

Bell. Doing! no tongue can express it—not thy own! nor any thing but thy lips. I am faint with the excess of bliss: Oh, for love-sake, lead me any whither where I may lie down;—quickly, for I'm afraid I shall have a fit.

Let. Bless me! what fit?

Bell. Oh, a convulsion——I feel the symptoms.

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

Bell. Oh, no: let me lie down upon the bed;—the fit will be soon over.

S C E N E VIII.

S C E N E, *St James's Park.*

ARAMINTA and BELINDA meeting.

Belin. Lard, my dear, I am glad to have met you——I have been at the Exchange since, and am so tir'd——

Aram. Why, what's the matter?

Belin. Oh, the most inhuman barbarous hackney-coach! I am jolted to a jelly—Am not I horribly tous'd?

[*Pulls out a pocket-glass.*]

Aram. Your head's a little out of order.

Belin. A little! O frightful! what a furious phyz I have? O most rueful! ha, ha, ha: O gad, I hope no body will come this way, 'till I have put myself a little in repair—Ah! my dear—I have seen such unbewn 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'st

lock——So, as I was telling you——How d'ye like me now? Hideous, ha? Frightful still? Or how?

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

Belin. And so——But where did I leave off, my dear? I was telling you——

Aram. You were about to tell me something, child——but you left off before you began.

Belin. 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, oh gad! two such unlick'd cubs!

Aram. I warrant, plump, cherry-cheek'd country girls.

Belin. Ay, on 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 Tramontanes, and foreigners to the fashion, or any thing in practice! I had not patience to behold—I undertook the modelling of one of their fronts, the more modern structure——

Aram. Bless me, cousin, why would you affront any body so? They might be gentlewomen of a very good family——

Belin. 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 curtsies, 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 sensible of it; for she thank'd me, and gave me two apples, piping hot, out of her 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 travelling flies.

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

Belin. Why, the father bought a powder-horn, and an almanac, 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 BLUFF.

Aram. May be he may not know us again.

Belin. We'll put on our masks to secure his ignorance.

[They put on their masks.]

Sir Jo. 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 fifty pieces more from him. Adsidikins, 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 glass of Madera, and I durst have attack'd 'em in my own proper person, without your help.

Bluff. Come on then, knight——But d'ye know what to say to 'em?

Sir Jo. Say: pooh, 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.

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

Aram. 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 those coxcombs, when I seem oppress'd with 'em, will be a fair one.

Bluff. Ladies, by these hilts you are well met.

Aram. We are afraid not.

Bluff. What says my pretty little knapsack carrier?

[To Belinda,

Belin. O monstrous filthy fellow! Good slovenly captain Huff, Bluff, (what is your hideous name?) be gone: you stink of brandy and tobacco, most soldier-like. *Poh.*

[*Spits.*

Bluff. Now am I slap dash down in the mouth, and have not one word to say! [*Aside.*

Aram. I hope my fool has not confidence enough to be troublesome. [*Aside.*

Sir Jo. Hem! Pray, Madam, which way's the wind?

Aram. A pithy question—Have you sent your wits for a venture, Sir, that you enquire?

Sir Jo. Nay, now I'm in—I can prattle like a magpye.

[*Aside.*

S C E N E X.

[*To them*] SHARPER and VAINLOVE at some distance.

Belin. Dear Araminta, I'm tir'd.

Aram. '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.*

Sir Jo. The great fortune, that dined at my Lady Free-love's! Sir Joseph, thou art a made man. Agad, I'm in love up to the ears. But I'll be discreet and hush'd. [*Aside.*

Bluff. Nay, by the world, I'll see your face.

Belin. You shall.

[*Unmasks.*

Sharp. Ladies, your humble servant——We were afraid you would not have given us leave to know you.

Aram. 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.

Bluff. 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 Jo. I wish I durst stay to let her know my lodging—

S C E N E XI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, SHARPER.

Sharp. There is in true beauty, as in courage, somewhat, which narrow souls cannot dare to admire—And see, the owls are fled, as at break of day.

Belin. Very courtly—I believe, Mr Vainlove has not rubb'd his eyes since break of day neither, he looks as if he 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?

Vain. 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.

Aram. So cold! [*Aside.*

Belin. 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—Oh gad! I have a great passion for Cowley—Don't you admire him?

Sharp. Oh Madam! he was our English Horace.

Belin. Ah so fine! So extremely fine! So every thing in the world that I like—Oh Lord, walk this way—I see a couple, I'll give you their history.

S C E N E XII.

ARAMINTA, VAINLOVE.

Vain. 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.

Aram. I'm amaz'd! This impudence 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.

Vain. Hey-day! Which way now? Here's fine doubling.
[*Aside.*]

Aram. Base man! was it not enough to affront me with your saucy passion!

Vain. You have given that passion a much kinder epithet than saucy, in another place.

Aram. Another place! some villainous 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. 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.*]

Aram. There's poison in every thing you touch—blisters will follow——

Vain. That tongue, which denies what the hands have done.

Aram. Still mystically senseless and impudent—I find I must leave the place.

Vain. 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.

Aram. 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.

BELINDA, SHARPER.

Belin. Nay, we have spared no-body, I swear. Mr Sharper, you're a pure man; where did you get this excellent talent of railing?

Sharp. 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.

Belin. Nay, sure railing is the best qualification in a woman's man.

S C E N E XIV.

[To them] FOOTMAN.

Sharp. The second best—indeed, I think.

Belin. How now, Pace? Where's my cousin?

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

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

S C E N E XV.

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

LAETITIA, and BELLMOUR, *his cloke, hat, etc. lying loose about the chamber.*

Bell. Here's no-body, nor no noise—'twas nothing but your fears.

Laet. I durst have sworn I had heard my monster's voice—I swear I was heartily frightened—Feel how my heart beats.

THE OLD BACHELOR.

Bell. 'Tis an alarm to love—Come in again, and let us——

Fond. without.] Cocky, Cocky, where are you Cocky? I'm come home.

Laet. Ah! there he is. Make haste, gather up your things.

Fond. Cocky, Cocky, open the door.

Bell. Pox choke him, would his horns were in his throat. My patch, my patch.

[Looking about, and gathering up his things.]

Laet. 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.

Fond. Nay, prithee, dear, i'feck I'm in haste.

Laet. Then i'll let you in. *[Opens the door.]*

S C E N E XVI.

LAETITIA, FONDLEWIFE, Sir JOSEPH.

Fond. Kifs, dear—I met the master of the ship by the way—And I must have my papers of accounts out of your cabinet.

Laet. Oh, I'm undone! *[Aside.]*

Sir Jo. Pray, first let me have fifty pound, good alderman, for I'm in haste.

Fond. 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.

LAETITIA, Sir JOSEPH.

Sir Jo. Agad, 'tis a curious, fine, pretty rogue; I'll speak to her—Pray, Madam, what news d'ye hear?

Laet. Sir, I seldom stir abroad. *[Walks about in disorder.]*

Sir Jo. I wonder at that, Madam, for 'tis most curious fine weather.

Lat. Methinks 'thas been very ill weather.

Sir Jo. As you say, madam, 'tis pretty bad weather, and has been so a great while.

S C E N E XVIII.

[*To them*] FONDLEWIFE.

Fond. 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.

Lat. Ruin'd, past redemption! What shall I do?—Ha! this fool may be of use. [*Aside*] [*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 blefs me! why will you leave me alone with such a fatyr?

Fond. Blefs us! what's the matter? what's the matter?

Lat. Your back was no sooner turn'd, but like a lion, he came open-mouth'd upon me, and would have ravished a kifs from me by main force.

Sir Jo. O Lord! Oh terrible! Ha, ha, ha, is your wife mad, alderman?

Lat. Oh! I'm sick with the fright; won't you take him out of my sight?

Fond. Oh traitor! I'm astonish'd, Oh bloody-minded traitor!

Sir Jo. Hey-day! Traitor yourself—by the Lord Harry I was in most danger of being ravish'd, if you go to that.

Fond. Oh how the blasphemous wretch swears! out of my house, thou son of the whore of Babylon; offspring of Bell and the Dragon—Blefs us! ravish my wife! my Dinah! Oh Shechemite! be gone I say.

Sir Jo. Why, the devil is in the people, I think.

S C E N E XIX.

LAETITIA, FONDLEWIFE.

Lat. Oh! won't you follow, and see him out of doors, my dear?

Fond. I'll shut the door, to secure him from coming back——Give me the key of your cabinet, cocky, —Ravish my wife before my face! I warrant he's a papist in his heart, at least, if not a Frenchman.

Let. 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 colic, and is forced to ly down upon our bed——You'll disturb him; I can tread softlier.

Fond. 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.*]

Let. 'Tis no-body but Mr Fondlewife; Mr Spintext, ly still on your stomach; lying on your stomach will ease you of the colic.

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

S C E N E XX.

LAETITIA *alone.*

Let. Sure, 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 XXI.

FONDLEWIFE *returns with papers.*

Fond. Good lack! good lack!——I profess, the poor man is in great torment, he lyes as flat——Dear, you should heat a trencher, or a napkin——Where's Deborah! let her clap some warm thing to his stomach, or chase it with a warm hand, rather than fail. What book's this?

[*Sees the book that Bellmour forgot.*]

Let. Mr Spintext's prayer-book, Dear——Pray Heaven it be a prayer book!

[*Aside.*]

Fond. Good man! I warrant he dropped it on purpose, that you might take it up and read some of the pious ejaculations, [*Taking up the book.*] O blifs me! O monstrous! A prayer-book! Ay this is the devil's Pater-Noster: hold, let me see, *The innocent adultery.*

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

Bell. [*peeping.*] Damn'd chance! if I had gone a whoring with the *Practice of Piety* in my pocket, I had never been discovered.

Fond. Adultery and innocent! O Lord! Here's doctrine! Ay here's discipline!

Lat. Dear husband, I'm amaz'd:—Sure it is a good book, and only tends to the speculation of sin.

Fond. 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.

Lat. I'm so distracted, I can't think of a lie. [*Aside.*

S C E N E XXII.

LAETITIA, and FONDLEWIFE, haling out
BELLMOUR.

Fond. Come out here, thou Ananias incarnate---Who, how now! Who have we here?

Lat. Ha! [*Shrieks, as surpris'd.*

Fond. Oh, thou salacious 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---

Lat. Oh, goodness keep us! who's this? Who are you? what are you?

Bell. Soh.

Lat. 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.

Fond. Indeed, and I have horns, dear. The devil, no, I am afraid, 'tis the flesh, thou harlot. Dear, with the

pox. Come, siren, speak, confess, who is this reverend, brawny pastor?

Lat. Indeed, and indeed, now my dear Nykin——I never saw this wicked man before.

Fond. Oh, it is a man then, it seems.

Lat. Rather, sure it is a wolf in the clothing of a sheep.

Fond. 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.

Bell. Well, now I know my cue——That is, very honourably to excuse her, and very impudently accuse myself.

[*Aside.*

Lat. Why then, I wish I may never enter into the heaven of your embraces again, my dear, if ever I saw his face before.

Fond. 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.

Bell. Since all artifice is vain ——and I think myself obliged to speak the truth in justice to your wife——No.

Fond. Humph.

Lat. No indeed, dear.

Fond. Nay, I find you are both in a story; that I must confess. But, what——not to be cured of the colic? Don't you know your patient, Mrs Quack? Oh, ly upon your stomach; lying upon your stomach will cure you of the colic. Ah! Answer me, Jezebel!

Lat. 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.

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

Fond. Come, Sir, who are you, in the first place? And what are you?

Bell. A whore-master.

Fond. Very concise.

Lat. O beastly, impudent creature!

Fond. Well, Sir, what came you hither for?

Bell. To ly with your wife.

Fond. Good again——A very civil person this is, and I believe speaks truth.

Lat. Oh, insupportable impudence!

Fond. Well, Sir,——Pray be cover'd——and you have ——Heh! you have finish'd the matter, heh? 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

Bell. Why, faith, I must confess, so I design'd you——But you were a little unlucky in coming so soon, and hindered the making of your own fortune

Fond. 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 employment of a cuckold, and have been three years apprentice to matrimony? come, come, plain-dealing is a jewel.

Bell. Well, since I see thou art a good honest fellow, I'll confess the whole matter to thee.

Fond. Oh, I am a very honest fellow ———you never lay with an honest man's wife in your life.

Lat. How my heart akes! All my comfort lyes in his impudence, and heaven be prais'd, he has a considerable portion. [*Aside.*

Bell. 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 know Spintext was to come by your direction. ———But I laid a trap for him, and procured his habit; in which I pass'd upon your servants, and was conducted hither. I pretended a fit of the colic, to excuse my lying down upon your

ned; hoping that when she heard of it, her good nature would bring her to administer remedies for my distemper.—You know what might have followed.—But like an uncivil person, you knock'd at the door, before your wife was come to me.

Fond. Ha! this is apocryphal; I may choose whether I will believe it or no.

Bell. 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.

Fond. How! wou'd not you have me believe you, say you?

Bell. 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 maintainance—

Fond. No, no, for that matter,—when she and I part, she'll carry her separate maintainance about her.

Lat. Ah, cruel dear, how can you be so barbarous? You'll break my heart, if you talk of parting. [*Cries.*

Fond. Ah, dissembling vermin!

Bell. How can'st 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; bathe 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.

Lat. 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 colic, upon our bed. And won't you speak to me, cruel Nykin? indeed, I'll die, if you don't.

Fond. 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

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the Philistines—Heh! art thou not vile and unclean?

Heh! speak: [Weeping.

Lat. No—h [Sighing.

Fond. Oh, that I could believe thee!

Lat. Oh, my heart will break. [Seeming to faint.

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

Lat. Oh' Oh! where is my dear!

Fond. Here, here, I do believe thee.—I won't believe my own eyes.

Bell. For my part, I am so charm'd with the love of your turtle to you, that I'll go and solicit matrimony with all my might and main.

Fond. Well, well, Sir; as long as I believe it, 'tis well enough. No thanks to you, Sir, for her virtue.-----But I'll shew you the way out of my house, if you please. Come, my dear. Nay, I will believe thee, I do, i'feck.

Bell. See the great blessing of an easy faith; opinion cannot err.

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

ACT V. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Street.*

BELLMOUR *in a 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?

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Bell. 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 surpriz'd us—I would unrig.

Setter. I attend you, Sir.

Bell. Ha! is not that Heartwell at Silvia'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 N E II.

BELLMOUR, HEARTWELL, LUCY.

Heart. 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?

Heart. O ay, he's a fanatic.

Lucy. An executioner qualified to do your business: he has been lawfully ordain'd.

Heart. 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.

Bell. Humph, fits the wind there?——What a lucky rogue am I! Oh, what sport will be here, if I can persuade this wench to secrecy?

Lucy. Sir; reverend Sir.

Bell. Madam.

[Discovers himself.]

Lucy. Now, goodness have mercy upon me! Mr Bellmour? is it you?

Bell. Even I: What dost think?

Lucy. Think! that I shou'd not believe my eyes, and that you are not what you seem to be.

Bell. 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.

Bell. Well, your business with me, Lucy?

Lucy. I had none, but through mistake.

Bell. Which mistake you must go through 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?

Bell. Well, is it as I say?

Lucy. Well, it is then; but you'll be secret?

Bell. Phuh, secret, ay:—And to be out of thy debt, I'll trust thee with another secret. Your mistress must not marry Heartwell, Lucy.

Lucy. How! O Lord!—

Bell. Nay, don't be in a 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 wittingly marry a whore.

Lucy. Whore! I'd have you to know my mistress scorns—

Bell. 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 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.]

Lucy. Ah, the devil is not so cunning—You know my easy nature—Well, for once I'll venture to serve you; but if you deceive me, the curse of all kind, tender-hearted women light upon you.

Bell. That's as much as to say, "The pox take me."—Well, lead on.

S C E N E IV.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER, and SETTER.

Sharp. Just now, say you, gone in with Lucy?

Setter. I saw him, Sir, and stood at the corner where you found me, and overheard all they said : Mr Bellmour is to marry 'em.

Sharp. Ha, ha; 'twill be a pleasant cheat—I'll plague Heartwell when I see him. Pr'ythee, Frank, let's teaze him; make him fret 'till he foam at the mouth, and disgorge his matrimonial oath with interest—Come, thou'rt musty—

Setter. to *Sharper.*] Sir, a word with you. [Whispers him.]

Vain. *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 surprize :—And so I remember in the park—She had reason, if I wrong her—I begin to doubt.

Sharp. Say'st thou so?

Setter. This afternoon, Sir, about an hour before my master receiv'd the letter.

Sharp. In my conscience, like enough.

Setter. Ay, I know her, Sir; at least, I'm sure I can fish it out of her : she's the very sluice to her lady's secrets : 'tis but setting her mill a-going, and I can drain her of 'em all.

Sharp. Here, Frank, your blood-hound has made out the fault : this letter, that so sticks in thy maw, is coun-

terfeit; only a trick of Silvia in revenge, contriv'd by Lucy.

Vain. Ha! it has a colour—But how do you know it, firrah?

Setter. 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 her last? when you were to see her next? and where you were to be found at that time? and such like.

Vain. And where did you tell her?

Setter. In the Piazza.

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

Setter. Sir, I was pimping for Mr Bellmour.

Sharp. You were well employ'd :—I think there is no objection to the excuse.

Vain. Pox o' my faucy 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.

Sharp. Methinks I long to see Bellmour come forth.

S C E N E V.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR, SETTER.

Setter. Talk of the devil—See where he comes.

Sharp. Hugging himself on his prosperous mischief—No real fanatic can look better pleas'd after a successful sermon of sedition.

Bell. Sharper! Fortify thy spleen: such a jest! Speak when thou art ready.

Sharp. Now, were I ill-natur'd, I would 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.

Bell. Pshaw, no; I have a better opinion of thy wit—Gad, I defy thee—

Sharp. Were it not loss of time, you should make the

experiment. But honest Setter, here, overheard you with Lucy, and has told me all.

Bell. 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 married 'em) of discovering the cheat to Silvia. 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.

Sharp. But how the devil do you think to acquit yourself of your promise? Will you marry her yourself?

Bell. 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.

Setter O Lord, Sir.

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

S C E N E VI.

SHARPER, SETTER, Sir JOSEPH, and BLUFF.

Sharp. Heh! Sure, fortune has sent this fool hither on purpose. Setter, stand close; seem not to observe 'em, and hark ye—— *[Whispers.*

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

Sir Jo. Hush, hush: don't you see him?

Bluff. Shew him to me——Where is he?

Sir Jo. Nay, don't speak so loud——I don't jest, as I did a little while ago——Look yonder——Agad, 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? A gad, there are good morals to be pick'd out of Æsop's fables, let me tell you that; and Renard the fox too.

Bluff. Damn your morals.

Sir Jo. Pr'ythee, don't speak so loud.

Bluff. Damn your morals; I must revenge th' affront done to mine honour. *[In a low voice.*

Sir Jo. 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.

Bluff. 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 Jo. 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.

Sharp. Impossible! Araminta take a liking to a fool!

[Aloud.

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

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

Sir Jo. How's this? Good Bully, hold your breath, and
let's hearken. A gad, this must be I.——

Sharp. Death, it can't be—An oaf, an idiot, a wittal.

Sir Jo. Ay, now it's out; 'tis I, my own individual
person.

Sharp. A wretch, that has flown for shelter to the lowest
shrub of mankind, and seeks protection from a blasted
coward.

Sir Jo. That's you, Bully back.

[Bluff frowns upon Sir Joseph.

Sharp. She has given Vainlove her promise to marry him
before to-morrow morning—Has she not? [To Setter.

Setter. She has, Sir;—And I have it in charge to attend
her all this evening, in order to conduct her to the place
appointed.

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

S C E N E VII.

SETTER, Sir JOSEPH, BLUFF.

Setter. Were I a rogue now, what a noble prize could I dispose of! A goodly pinnace, richly laden, and to launch forth under my auspicious convoy. Twelve thousand pounds, and all her rigging; besides what lyes concealed under hatches.—Ha! all this committed to my care!—Avaunt 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 Jo. Heh, heh, heh: here 'tis for you, i'faith, Mr Setter. Nay, I'll take you at your word. [*Chinking a purse.*]

Setter. 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 Jo. No, no, never fear, man, the lady's business shall be done. What—Come, Mr Setter, I have overheard all, and to speak is but loss of time; but if there be occasion, let these worthy gentlemen intercede for me.

[*Gives him gold.*]

Setter. O Lord, Sir, what d'ye mean? Corrupt my honesty——They have indeed very persuading faces. But——

Sir Jo. 'Tis too little, there's more, man. There take all——Now——

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

Sir Jo. 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 am so overjoy'd—And

stroke down her belly? and then step aside to tie her garter, when she was thinking of her love? Heh, Setter?

Setter. Oh, yes, Sir.

Sir Jo. 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.

Bluff. Pshaw, I have petitions to shew from other-guests toys than she. Look here; these were sent me this morning. There, read. [*Shews letters.*] That—That's a scrawl of quality. Here, here's from a Countess too. Hum—No, hold—that's from a knight's wife, she sent it me by her husband—But here, both these are from persons of great quality.

Sir Jo. They are either from persons of great quality, or no quality at all, 'tis such a damn'd ugly hand.

[*While Sir Joseph reads, Bluff whispers Setter.*]

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

Bluff. Not at all. Don't I know him?

Setter. You'll remember the conditions?——

Bluff. I'll give it 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 Jo. Ah, honest Setter; Sirrah, I'll give thee any thing but a night's lodging.

S C E N E VIII.

S H A R P E R *tugging in* H E A R T W E L L.

Sharp. Nay, pr'ythee leave railing, and come along with me: may be she mayn't be within. 'Tis but to yond' corner-house.

Heart. Whither? Whither? Which corner-house?

Sharp. Why, there: the two white posts.

Heart. And who would you visit there, say you? (Oons, how my heart akes!)

Sharp. Pshaw, 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 Silvia?

Heart. Death, and hell, and marriage! My wife! [*Aside.*

Sharp. Why thou art as musty as a new marry'd man, that had found his wife knowing the first night.

Heart. 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?

Sharp. 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.*

Heart. 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, Sharper!

Sharp. How now?

Heart. Oh, I am—marry'd.

Sharp. (Now hold spleen.) Marry'd!

Heart. Certainly, irrecoverably marry'd.

Sharp. Heav'n forbid, man! how long?

Heart. Oh, an age, an age! I have been married these two hours.

Sharp. My old bachelor marry'd! That were a jest. Ha, ha, ha.

Heart. Death! d'ye mock me! Hark ye, if you either esteem my friendship, or your own safety—Come not near that house—that corner-house—that hot brothel: ask no questions.

Sharp. 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.

SHARPER, SETTER.

Setter. Some by experience find those words misplac'd:
At leisure marry'd, they repent in haste.

As I suppose may master Heartwell.

Sharp. Here again, my Mercury?

Setter. Sublimate, if you please, Sir: I think my achievements 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 employ'd in the promotion of vulgar matrimony.

Sharp. As how, dear dexterous pimp?

Setter. Why, to be brief, for I have weighty affairs depending—Our stratagem succeeded as you intended—Bluff turns arrant traitor; bribes me to make a private conveyance of the lady to him, and put a sham settlement upon Sir Joseph.

Sharp. O rogue! well, but I hope—

Setter. 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.

Sharp. Where's the bride?

Setter. 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 X.

BELLMOUR, BELINDA, ARAMINTA and
VAIN LOVE.

Vain. Oh, 'twas frenzy all! cannot you forgive it?—
men in madness have a title to your pity. [*To Araminta.*

Aram. —Which they forfeit, when they are restor'd
to their senses.

Vain. I am not presuming beyond a pardon.

Aram. You who cou'd reproach me with one counter-

feit, how insolent would a real pardon make you! but there's no need to forgive what is not worth my anger.

Belin 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.

Bell. Say you so? Is that a maxim among you.

Belin. Yes; you fluttering men of the mode have made marriage a mere dish.

Bell. I hope there's no French fauce. [Aside.

Belin. 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 warmed for other company, and at last serv'd up cold to the wife.

Bell. 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 chimera of a husband, as of a creature contrary to that soft, humble, pliant, easy thing, a lover; so guesfs 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.

Belin. 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.

Sharp. Hift, Bellmour; if you'll bring the ladies, make haste to Silvia's lodgings, before Heartwell has fretted himself out of breath—

Bell. You have an opportunity now, Madam, to revenge yourself upon Heartwell, for affronting your squirrel.

[To Belinda.

Belin. O the filthy rude beast.

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Aram. 'Tis a lasting quarrel; I think he has never been at our house since.

Bell. 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.

S C E N E XII.

SCENE, *Silvia's Lodgings.*

HEARTWELL and BOY.

Heart. 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.

Heart. 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 curfed state! How wide we err, when apprehensive of the load of life!

——— We hope to find
 That help which Nature meant in womankind,
 To man that supplemental self design'd;
 But proves a burning caustic when apply'd;
 And Adam sure, could 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.

Bell. Now George, what rhyming! I thought the chimes of verse were past, when once the doleful marriage-knell was rung.

Heart. Shame and confusion, I am exposed!

[*Vainlove and Araminta talk apart.*]

Belin. Joy, joy, Mr Bridegroom; I give you joy, Sir.

Heart. 'Tis not in thy nature to give me joy—a woman can as soon give immortality.

Belin. Ha, ha, ha, O gad, men grow such clowns when they are married.

Bell. That they are fit for no company but their wives.

Belin. Nor for them neither, in a little time—I swear, at the month's end, you shall hardly find a married 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. Ha, ha, ha.

Heart. 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 boisterous, I have a fly-flap.

Belin. You have occasion for't, your wife has been blown upon.

Bell. That's home.

Heart. Not fiends or furies could have added to my vexation, or any thing but another woman——you've rack'd my patience; be gone, or by——

Bell. Hold, hold; what the devil, thou wilt not draw upon a woman!

Vain. What's the matter?

Aram. Bless me! what have you done to him?

Belin. Only touch'd a gall'd beast till he winch'd.

Vain. Bellmour, give it over; you vex him too much; 'tis all serious to him.

Belin. Nay, I swear, I begin to pity him myself.

Heart. 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 expiring, and endeavour to prolong his life, and you one and twenty? Madam, have I had an opportunity with you and baulk'd it? Did you ever offer me the favour that I refus'd it? Or——

Belin. Oh, foh, what does the filthy fellow mean? lard, let me be gone.

Aram. Hang me, if I pity you; you are right enough serv'd.

Bell. This is a little scurrilous though.

Vain. Nay, 'tis a fore of your own scratching—Well, George—

Heart. You are the principal cause of all my present ills. If Silvia had not been your mistress, my wife might have been honest.

Vain. And if Silvia 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.

Heart. When execution's over, you offer a reprieve.

Vain. What would you give?

Heart. Oh! any thing, every thing, a leg or two, or an arm; nay, I would be divorced from my virility, to be divorced from my wife.

S C E N E XIV.

[To them] SHARPER.

Vain. Faith, that's a sure way—but here's one can sell your freedom better cheap.

Sharp. Vainlove, I have been a kind of a god-father to you, yonder; I have promised and vow'd some things in your name, which I think you are bound to perform.

Vain. No signing to a blank, friend.

Sharp. No, I'll deal fairly with you—'tis a full and free discharge to Sir Joseph Wittol and Captain Bluff, for all injuries whatsoever, done unto you by them, until the present date hereof—how say you?

Vain. Agreed.

Sharp. Then let me beg these ladies to wear their masks a moment. Come in, gentlemen and ladies.

Heart. What the devil's all this to me?

Vain. Patience.

S C E N E, *the Last.*

[To them] Sir JOSEPH, BLUFF, SILVIA, LUCY SETTER.

Bluff. All injuries whatsoever, Mr Sharper.

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, whatsoever, Captain, stick to that; whatsoever.

Sharp. 'Tis done, these gentlemen are witnesses to the general release.

Vain. Ay, ay, to this instant moment—I have pass'd an act of oblivion.

Bluff. 'Tis very generous, Sir, I needs must own—

Sir Jo. No, no, Captain, you need not own, heh, heh, heh; 'tis I must own—

Bluff. — That you are over-reached 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 unmask.

Sir Jo. Only a little art-military trick, Captain, only countermined, or so—Mr Vainlove, I suppose you know whom I have got now—but all's forgiven.

Vain. I know whom you have not got; pray ladies convince him. [Aram. and Belin. unmask.

Sir Jo. Ah! O Lord, my heart akes—Ah! Setter, a rogue of all sides.

Sharp. 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. [Silvia unmask.

Heart. My wife! by this light 'tis she, the very cockatrice—Oh Sharper, let me embrace thee—but art thou sure she is really married to him?

Setter. Really and lawfully married, I am witness.

Sharp. Bellmour will unriddle to you.

[Heartwell goes to Bellmour.

Sir Jo. Pray, Madam, who are you? for I find you and I are like to be better acquainted.

Silv. The worst of me is, that I am your wife—

Sharp. Come, Sir Joseph, your fortune is not so bad as you fear—A fine lady, and a lady of very good quality.

Sir Jo. Thanks to my knighthood, she's a lady—

Vain. — That deserves a fool with a better title— Pray use her as my relation, or you shall hear on't.

Bluff. 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.

B'uff. No more wars, spouse, no more wars—while I plant laurels for my head abroad, I may find the branches sprout at home.

Heart. 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 deliver'd me.

Bell. I thank thee, George, for thy good intention—but there is a fatality in marriage—for I find I'm resolute.

Heart. 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 bawd.

Vain. Ill-natur'd as an old maid—

Bell. Wanton as a young widow—

Sharp. And jealous as a barren wife.

Heart. Agreed.

Bell. Well, 'midst of these dreadful denunciations, and notwithstanding the warning and example before me, I commit myself to lasting durance.

Belin. Prisoner, make much of your fetters.

[Giving her hand.]

Bell. Frank, will you keep us in countenance?

Vain. May I presume to hope so great a blessing?

Aram. We had better take the advantage of a little of our friend's experience first.

Bell. O' my conscience she dares not consent, for fear he should recant. [*Aside.*] Well, we shall have your company to church in the morning—may be it may get you an ap-

petite to see us 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.

Bell. Now set me forward on a journey for life——
Come take your fellow-travellers. Old George, I'm sorry to see thee still plod on alone.

Heart. 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-sward 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 courfers the first heat with vigour run ;

But 'tis with whip and spur the race is won.

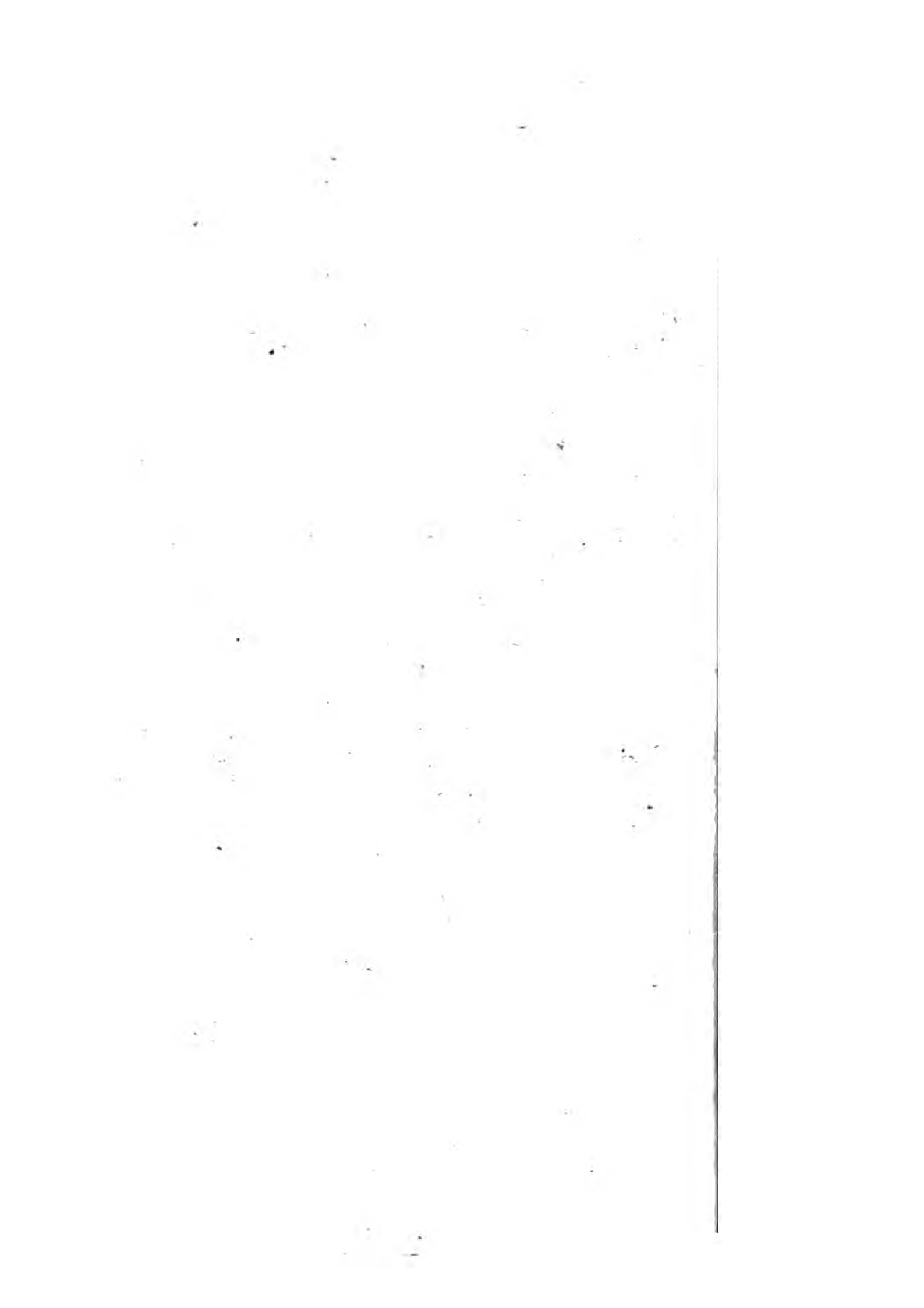
[*Exeunt omnes.*

T H E
D O U B L E - D E A L E R .

A
C O M M E D Y .

VOL. I.

I



To the Right HONOURABLE

CHARLES MONTAGUE,

ONE OF THE

LORDS of the TREASURY.

S I R,

I HEARTILY wish that 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 when yet unknown; and now it is made public, it 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 designed (whatever vanity or ambition occasioned 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 miscarried 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 fet his flowers in a knot of such or such a figure. I designed the moral first, and to that moral I invented the fable, and do not know that I have borrowed one hint of it any where. I made the plot as strong as I could, because it was single; and I made it single, because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved 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 be any such) which it would 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 denied 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, hearkened 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 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 confessed them. 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 confidant. Such, for certain, is all villainy; and other less mischievous intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a second person. In such a case therefore the audience 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 concealed 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 the person's thoughts; and to that

end is forced 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 to distinguish the characters. The hero of the play, as they are pleased to call him, (meaning *Mellefont*) is a gull, and made a fool, and cheated. Is every man a gull and a fool that is deceived? At that rate I am afraid the two classes of men will be reduced 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 obliged 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 deceived by the treachery of the other; must he of necessity commence fool immediately, only because the other has proved a villain? Ay, but there was caution given to *Mellefont* in the first act by his friend *Careless*. Of what nature was the 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 of any villainy; he was only a sort of man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his familiarity with my Lady *Touchwood*; let them examine the answer that *Mellefont* makes him, and compare it with the conduct of *Maskwell's* character through the play.

I would beg them again to look into the character

of *Maskwell*, before they accuse *Mellefont* of weakness for being deceived 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 affected: how can I help it? It is the business of a comic poet to paint the 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 is letting them blood. They who are virtuous or discreet, should not be offended; for such characters as these distinguish *them*, and make their beauties more shining and observed: and they who are of the other kind, may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displeased, or touched with the satire of this comedy. Thus have they also wrongfully accused 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 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 excused what was ill performed. 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 shewed, in protecting an infant, but by enrolling it in your service, now that it is of age and come into the world. Therefore be pleased 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,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

To my dear Friend

Mr C O N G R E V E,

On his COMEDY called

THE DOUBLE-DEALER.

WELL 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,
 Conqu'ring 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 foil manur'd,
 With rules of husbandry, the rankness cur'd:
 Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude;
 And boist'rous English wit with art endu'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 you, the best Vitruvius, come at length,
 Our beauties equal; but excel our strength.
 Firm Doric pillars found your solid base;
 The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space;
 Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
 In easy dialogues is Fletcher's praise;
 He mov'd the mind, but had no power 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,
 Etherege his courtship, Southern's purity;
 The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherly.
 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 Romanø 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 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 I this 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 cou'd 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 Heaven'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 !
 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 cou'd my love do less.

JOHN DRYDEN.

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.

MOORS 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 of wit.

Critics avaunt ; 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 must 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 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.
I' th' 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.

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by Mrs MOUNTFORD.

COU'D poets but foresee how plays would 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 stol'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 jury :
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 choos'ing 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 rally.
The lady critics, who are better read,
Inquire 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 assignation learning.
Beaux judge of dress ; the wittlings 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.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

MASKWELL, a villain; pretended friend to Mellefont, gallant to Lady Touchwood, and in love with Cynthia,	Mr BETTERTON.
Lord TOUCHWOOD, uncle to Mellefont,	Mr KYNASTON.
MELLEFONT, promised to, and in love with Cynthia,	Mr WILLIAMS.
CARELESS, his friend,	Mr VERBRUGGEN.
Lord FROTH, a solemn coxcomb,	Mr BOWMAN.
BRISK, a pert coxcomb,	Mr POWELL.
Sir PAUL PLYANT, an uxorious, foolish, old knight; brother to Lady Touchwood, and father to Cynthia,	Mr DOGGET.

W O M E N.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, in love with Mellefont,	Mrs BARRY.
CYNTHIA, daughter to Sir Paul by a former wife, promised to Mellefont,	Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.
Lady FROTH, a great coquet; pretender to poetry, wit and learning,	Mrs MOUNTFORT.
Lady PLYANT, insolent to her husband, and easy to any pretender,	Mrs LEIGH.

Chaplain, Boy, Footmen and Attendants.

The SCENE, a gallery in the Lord Touchwood's house, with chambers adjoining.

T H E

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.

NED, Ned, whither so fast? what, turn'd flincher? why, you won't leave us?

Care. Where are the women? I'm weary of guzling, and begin to think them the better company.

Mel. Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost drunk.

Care. 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.

Mel. 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.

Care. 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.

Care. 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 Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery 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.

Mel. 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 duce 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?

Care. Hum, ay, what is't?

Brisk. O, *mon cœur!* What is't? Nay gad I'll punish you for want of apprehension: the duce take me if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, hang him, he has no taste.——But, dear Brisk, excuse me, I have a little business.

Care. Pr'ythee get thee gone; thou see'st we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately, if you'll 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 duce take me if I say a good thing 'till you come,——

But pr'ythee, dear rogue, make haste, pr'ythee make haste, I shall burst else.—And yonder's your uncle, my Lord Touchwood, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir Paul Plyant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my Lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-morrow; nor the duce take me, I won't write your epithalamium—and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

Mel. 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.

Care. Pert coxcomb!

Mel. 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; though patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise; there are times when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth. Pr'ythee do thou wear none to day; but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou may'st seem a fool.

Care. Why, how now; why this extravagant proposition?

Mel. 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 her imagination.

Care. 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?

Mel. 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 manag'd '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 the 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 surpriz'd me in my bed. —

Care. 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 followed?

Mel. 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.

Care. 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.

Mel. 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 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.

Care. I confess, a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

Mel. 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's 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.

Care. So, you have mann'd your works: but I wish you may not have the weakest guard, where the enemy is strongest.

Mel. Maskwell, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

Care. Faith, I cannot help it, you know I never lik'd him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

Mel. He has obligations of gratitude, to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means.

Care. Upon your aunt, you mean.

Mel. My aunt?

Care. I'm mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them, you do not suspect, notwithstanding her passion for you.

Mel. 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.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but, your aunt's aversion in her revenge, cannot be any way so effectually shewn, as in bringing forth a child to disinherit you; She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton: Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities be-

tween 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.

Mel. 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 Touch. Out upon't, nephew——Leave your father-in-law, and me, to maintain our ground against young people.

Mel. I beg your Lordship's pardon——we are just returning.

Sir Paul. 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 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. 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 nobody'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 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 inferiour 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 jests, I'gad, ha ha, ha.

Lord Froth. He, he, I swear, tho', your raillery provokes me to a smile.

Brisk. Ay, my Lord, 'tis a sign I hit you in the teeth if you shew 'em.

Lord Froth. He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

Care. I find a quibble bears more sway in your Lordship's face, than a jest.

Lord Touch. Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a dish of tea, to settle our heads.

Sir Paul. 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.

Mel. But does your Lordship never see comedies?

Lord Froth. O yes, sometimes——But I never laugh.

Mel. No?

Lord Froth. Oh no--Never laugh indeed, Sir.

Care. No! why what do you go there for?

Lord Froth. To distinguish myself from the commonality, 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.

Mel. 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, duce 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.

Care. 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 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.---

Care. Smile, no, what the devil should you smile at, when 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.

Care. 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?

Care. 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 Briik so have wit, my wife says he has a great deal. I hope you will 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?

Care. Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, Briik, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

Brisk. I'm sorry for him, the deuce take me.

Mel. Shall we go to the ladies, my Lord?

Lord Froth. With all my heart, methinks we are a solitude without 'em.

Mel. Or, what say you to another bottle of champagne?

Lord Froth. O, for the universe, not a drop more I beseech you. O 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.

S C E N E VI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.

Lady Touch. I'll hear no more — Y'are false and ungrateful; come, I know you false.

Mask. I have been frail, I confess, Madam, for your ladyship's service.

Lady Touch. That I should trust a man, whom I had known betray his friend.

Mask. What friend have I betray'd? or to whom?

Lady Touch. Your fond friend Mellefont, and to me; can you deny it?

Mask. I do not.

Lady Touch. 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?

Mask. 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 Touch. More! Audacious villain. O, what's more, is most my shame.—Have you not dishonour'd me?

Mask. No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life: so that accusation's answer'd; on to the next.

Lady Touch. 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; oppress'd at once with love, and with despair. But a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

Mask. Will you be in temper, Madam! I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about d'foraered.*] 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 Touch. 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, that languishing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engag'd?

Mask. Fix'd, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove 'em, yet you——

Lady Touch. Yet, what yet?

Mask. Nay, misconceive me not, Madam, when I say I have had a generous and a faithful passion, which you had never favour'd, but through revenge and policy.

Lady Touch. Ha!

Mask. Look you, Madam, we are alone——Pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you lov'd your nephew, 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 repulsed by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplish'd my design; I press'd the yielding minute, and was blest'd. How I have lov'd you since, words have not shewn, then how should words express?

Lady Touch. Well, mollifying devil!——And have I not met your love with forward fire?

Mask. 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-worship.——A son and heir would have edg'd young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.

Lady Touch. Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my own still'd soul for your diversion? Confusion!

Mask. 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? 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 Touch. How, what said you, Maskwell?—Another caprice to unwind my temper?

Mask. 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 Touch. O, Maskwell, in vain do I disguise me from thee, thou know'st me, know'st the very inmost windings and recesses 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 moment immediate ruin seize him.

Mask. Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too.—Will that please you?

Lady Touch. How, how? thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my Lady Plyant?

Lady Touch. I have: she is ready for any impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded, that Mellefont loves her.

Lady Touch. 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.

Mask. 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.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Lady FROTH and CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.

INDEED, Madam! Is it possible your Ladyship could have been so much in love?

Lord *Froth*. I could not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

Cyn. 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 whimsies and vapours, but I gave them vent.

Cyn. How pray, Madam?

Lady *Froth*. O I writ, writ abundantly,——do you never write?

Cyn. Write, what?

Lady *Froth*. Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

Cyn. 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 bless me! what a sad thing would that have been, if my Lord and I should never have met!

Cyn. 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.

Cyn. 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! bless me! how can Mellefont believe you love him?

Cyn. Why faith, Madam, he that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

Lady Froth. I vow Mellefont's a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

Cyn. A manner! what's that, Madam?

Lady Froth. Some distinguishing quality, as for example, the bellair or brillant of Mr Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own that should look a little *je ne scay quoy*; he is too much a mediocrity, in my mind.

Cyn. 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.

Cyn. 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 Froth. Pleasant creature! perfectly well, ah! that look, ay, there it is; who could resist! 'twas so my heart was made a captive, 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 mein 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 than'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?

Mel. O yes, Madam.

Brisk. O dear Madam——

Lady Froth. An infinite deal.

Brisk. O Heavens, Madam——

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?

Cyn. 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.

Cyn. '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.

Cyn. I believe he'll love me better.

Lord Froth. Heavens! that can never be; but why do you think so?

Cyn. 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.

Mel. 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.

Brisk. To Lady Froth.] Your Ladyship's 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 essay toward 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 *a propos* and surprising, ha, ha, ha.

Lady Froth. He, ay, is it not?—and then I call myself?

Brisk. Laçtilla, may be—'gad I cannot tell.

Lady Froth. Bidy, that's all; just my own name.

Brisk. Bidy! 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 will 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 *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..

Mel. You're thoughtful, Cynthia ?

Cyn. I'm thinking, though marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two fools ; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are oppos'd

Cyn. 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 ?

Mel. 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.

Cyn. Then I find it's like cards, if either of us have a good hand it is an accident of Fortune.

Mel. 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 entirely upon judgment.

Cyn. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mel. 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

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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.

*Cynthia frowns whene'er I woo her,
Yet she's vext 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, O think, o' the sad condition,
To be past, yet wish fruition.*

Mel. 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. Gadsbud! 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. Pray your Ladyship give me leave to be angry — I'll rattle him up I warrant you, I'll firke him with a Certiorari.

Lady Plyant. You firke him! I'll firke him myself; pray, Sir Paul, hold you contented.

Cyn. Bless me, what makes my father in such a passion! I never saw him thus before.

Sir Paul. 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. No, marry, will I not be pleased; I am pleased
to be angry, that's my pleasure at this time.

Mel. What can this mean?

Lady Plyant. Gad's 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 spi-
rit and conduct, should be contradicted in a matter of this
concern?

Sir Paul. It concerns me, and only me;—Besides,
I'm not to be govern'd at all times. When I am in tran-
quillity, my Lady Plyant shall command Sir Paul; but
when I'm provok'd to fury, I cannot incorporate with pa-
tience 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. 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 violator 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 is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I
please——Therefore don't provoke me.

Sir Paul. Hum, Gadsbud, she says true——Well, my
Lady, march on, I will fight under you then: I am con-
vinced, as far as passion will permit.

[*Lady Plyant and Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*

Lady Plyant. Inhuman and treacherous——

Sir Paul. Thou serpent and first tempter of woman-
kind——

Cyn. Bless me! Sir; Madam; what mean you?

Sir Paul. 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!

Mel. 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 unsully'd even by Sir Paul himself?

Sir Paul. 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?—

Sir Paul. And she shall make a simile with any woman in England.

Mel. I am so amaz'd, I know not what to say.

Sir Paul. Do you think my daughter, this pretty creature; Gadsbud, 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; Gadsbud, I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be pleas'd again.

Mel. Hell and damnation! this is my aunt; such malice can be engendered 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.

Cyn. Pray, Sir, stay, hear him; I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir Paul. Innocent! Why hark'ye, come hither Thy, hark'ye, I had it from his aunt, my sister Touchwood—Gadsbud, 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 should 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.

Cyn. I must obey.

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——

Mel. But the greatest villain imagination can form. I grant it; and next to the villainy of such a fact, is the villainy of aspersing me with the guilt. How? which way was I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

Lady Plyant. Why, Gad's 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 nobus*.

Mel. By Heav'n, I love her more than life, or——

Lady Plyant. Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and ev'ry thing in the world, but give me mathemacular demonstration, answer me directly——But I have not patience——O! 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?

Mel. 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.

Mel. Incest! O my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction! [*Aside.*

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.

Mel. Where am I! Is it day? and am I awake? Madam——

Lady Plyant. And nobody 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.

Mel. 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 all the blood into my face; I warrant I am as red as a Turkey-cock; O fy, cousin Mellefont.

Mel. 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 one's 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 uncomatable.

Mel. For Heaven'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.

Mel. 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 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.*

Mel. [*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 machiavilian 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 VII.

[*To him*] MASKWELL.

Mel. Maskwell, 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.

Mask. I know it; I met Sir Paul taking away Cynthia: come, trouble not your head, I'll join you together ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

Mel. There's comfort in a hand stretch'd out, to one that's sinking, tho' ne'er so far off.

Mask. 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.

Mel. Ha! How's this?

Mask. 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 disinheret you, to get you turn'd out of doors; and to——Ha, ha, ha, I can't 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.

Mel. 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 outwitted woman.—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.

Mask. 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.

Mel. 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.

Mask. 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 convinced 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.

Mel. She is most gracious in her favour—Well, and dear Jack, how hast thou contrived?

Mask. 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.

Mel. I will; 'till then success attend thee.

S C E N E VIII.

M A S K W E L L *alone.*

'Till 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 their 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 nobody but himself; such

another coxcomb, as your wife man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody, 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 dissimulation 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.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Lord TOUCHWOOD and Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

MY Lord, can you blame my brother Plyant, if he refuses his daughter upon this provocation? the contract's void by this unheard of impiety.

Lord *Touch.* 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 wou'd center 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 *Touch.* You censure hardly, my Lord; my sister's honour is very well known.

Lord *Touch.* 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 *Touch.* 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 Touch. There should have been demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believ'd——

Lady Touch. So I suppose there was.

Lord Touch. How? where? when?

Lady Touch. 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 Touch. I don't know that. [Half aside.

Lady Touch. How? don't you believe that, say you, my Lord?

Lord Touch. No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

Lady Touch. His defence! bless me, wou'd you have me defend an ill thing?

Lord Touch. You believe it then?

Lady Touch. 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 my reasons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Lord Touch. 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 Touch. But those which cause my disquiet, I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good, my Lord, don't press me.

Lord Touch. Don't oblige me to press you.

Lady Touch. Whatever it was, 'tis past; and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore let me beg you to rest satisfied——

Lord Touch. When you have told me, I will——

Lady Touch. You won't.

Lord Touch. By my life, my dear, I will.

Lady Touch. What if you can't?

Lord Touch. 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 Touch. 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 had not told you any thing.——Indeed, my Lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleas'd, I'll tell you.

Lord Touch. Well, well.

Lady Touch. Nay, but will you be calm?——indeed 'tis nothing but——

Lord Touch. But what?

Lady Touch. 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 Touch. Sorry, for what? death, you rack me with delay.

Lady Touch. 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 gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it look'd oddly.

Lord Touch. Confusion and hell, what do I hear!

Lady Touch. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough a-kin to me, upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on 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 Touch. No, no, no—Damnation!

Lady Touch. Nay, I swear you must not—A little harmless mirth—Only misplac'd, that's all—But if it were more,

THE DOUBLE-DEALER. '139

'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 Touch. These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! Death, I'll have him stripp'd and turn'd naked out of my doors, this moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous brute!

Lady Touch. 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 Touch. Before I've done I will be satisfied. Ungrateful monster, how long?—

Lady Touch. 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 surpriz'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 Touch. I will—I am mute with wonder.

Lady Touch. Well, but go now, here's somebody coming.

Lord Touch. Well, I go—You won't stay, for I would hear more of this.

Lady Touch. I follow instantly—So.

S C E N E II.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

Mask. This 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 Touch. Have you seen Mellefont?

Mask. I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

Lady Touch. How does he bear his disappointment?

Mask. 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 Touch. Expedition indeed; for all we do, must be perform'd in the remaining part of this evening, and before the company break up; lest my Lord should cool, and he have an opportunity to talk with him privately—My Lord must not see him again.

Mask. 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 Touch. How?

Mask. 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 next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my Lord.

Lady Touch. To what end is this!

Mask. 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 cheat you as well as the rest. [*Aside.*

Lady Touch. I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindred him once from forcing me.

Mask. 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 engag-

ed in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

Lady Touch. When shall we meet?—At eight this evening in my chamber; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth.

Mask. I will not fail.

S C E N E III.

MASKWELL *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 IV.

[*To him*] MELLEFONT *mus'ing.*

Mask. Mercy on us, what will the wickedness of this world come to?

Mel. How now, Jack? What, so full of contemplation that you run over!

Mask. 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.—You're aunt's just gone from hence.

Mel. And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villainously bent to discover 'em all to me, ha!

Mask. I'm afraid my frailty leans that way—But I don't know whether I can in honour discover 'em all.

Mel. All, all, man; what! you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope.

Mask. No, but it is a comical design upon mine.

Mel. What dost thou mean?

Mask. Listen and be dumb, we have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin—

Mel. Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress—Well.

Mask. And, whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I do is to be paid with pleasure.

Mel. So when you've swallow'd the potion you sweeten your mouth with a plumb.

Mask. 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—

Mel. Of Cynthia, and her fortune—Why, you forget you told me this before.

Mask. No, no—So far you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of your—aunt.

Mel. Ha!—Pho, you trifle.

Mask. 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.

Mel. Hell and the devil! is she abandon'd of all grace?—Why the woman is possess'd—

Mask. Well, will you go in my stead?

Mel. By Heav'n into a hot furnace sooner.

Mask. No, you would not——It would not be so convenient, as I can order matters.

Mel. What d'ye mean?

Mask. 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 contrived to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

Mel. How, how, for Heav'n's sake, dear Maskwell?

Mask. Why thus——I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice at the critical minute to come and surprize 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 discoverey will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mel. 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!

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here, within a quarter of eight, and give you notice.

Mel. Good fortune ever go alone with thee.

S C E N E V.

MELEFONT, CARELESS.

Care. Mellefont, get out o'th' way, my lady Plyant'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.

Mel. Why, what's the matter? She's convince'd that I don't care for her.

Care. 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.

Mel. That I have seen, with the ceremony there unto 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 she not tell you at what a distance she 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 lyes 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.

Care. Excessively foolish!---But that which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

Mel. 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 irresistably. 'Tis only an enhancing the price of the commodity by telling you how many customers have underbid her.

Care. 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 fatisfy'd she knew me, and I had no reason to complain of my reception; but I find

women are not the same bare-fac'd and in masks,—and a vizor disguiseth their inclinations as much as their faces.

Mel. 'Tis a mistake, for women may most properly be said to be unmask'd when they 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 and Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul. Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr Careless? you wou'd be private?

Care. You bring that along with you, Sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

Sir Paul. 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 ly 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. I acquiesce, my Lady; but don't snub so loud.

[*Aside to her.*]

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 should rather attempt it than any thing in the world, [*Careless's.*]

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—

Care. O heav'ns! Madam! you confound me.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, 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.—

Care. O your Ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

Lady Plyant. You are so obliging, Sir.

Care. Your Ladyship is so charming.

Sir Paul. So, now, now; now, my Lady.

Lady Plyant. So well bred.

Care. So surprizing.

Lady Plyant. So well dress'd, so *bonne mien*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable—

Sir Paul. Ay, so, so, there.

Care. 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.

Care. For Heav'n's sake, Madam—I'm quite out of countenance.

Sir Paul. And my Lady's quite out of breath; or else you should hear—Gadsbud, you may talk of my Lady Froth!

Care. 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. Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

Care. O Sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive. Such a lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours.

Sir Paul. 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 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 hasty 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, Lady PLYANT, BOY *with a letter.*

Lady Plyant. How often have you been told of that, you jackanapes!

Sir Paul. 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. 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, Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul. 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.

Care. What can that be, Sir Paul?

Sir Paul. Why, I have, I thank Heav'n, a pretty plenti-

ful 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, 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.

Care. Why, methinks that might be easily remedied——my Lady is a fine likely woman——

Sir Paul. Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day——Indeed she is, Mr Careless, in all respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old——

Sir Paul. 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.

Care. No! what can be the matter then?

Sir Paul. You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you——my Lady is so nice——'Tis very strange, but 'tis 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've found it so; and alas, what's once a-year to an old man, who would do good in his generation? Indeed 'tis 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.

Care. 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. Ay! would to Heaven you would, Mr Careless: you are mightily in her favour.

Care. I warrant you: what, we must have a son some way or other.

Sir Paul. Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr Careless.

Lady Plyant. Here, Sir Paul, 'tis from your steward, here's a return of six hundred 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. How does my girl? come hither to thy father, poor lamb, thou'rt melancholic.

Lord Froth. Heav'ns, 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 Sncer, and Sir Laurence Loud, and that gang.

Sir Paul. 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. Yes, my Lord—I must humour this fool. [Aside.]

Lord Froth. Well, and how? hee! What is your sense of the conversation?

Cyn. 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 Whifler 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—

Cyn. As dancing without a fiddle.

Lord Froth. Just, i'faith; that was at my tongue's end.

Cyn. 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 jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

Lord *Froth*. True, as I'm a person of honour——For Heaven's sake let us sacrifice 'em to mirth a little.

[*Enter Boy, and whispers Sir Paul.*]

Sir *Paul*. Gads so——Wife, wife, my Lady Plyant, I have a word.

Lady *Plyant*. I'm busy, Sir Paul, I wonder at your impertinence——

Care. 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*. 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*. Then 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 Heaven's charioteer.

Lady *Froth*. Oh, infinitely better; I am 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. I'm afraid that simile won't do in wet weather
—Because you say the sun shines ev'ry day.

Lord Froth. 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

Brisk. Right, right, that saves all.

Lord Froth. 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.

Brisk. Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

Lord Froth. 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.*

Brisk. That's right, all's well, all's well. *More or less.*

Lord Froth. [Reads] *And when at night his labour's done,
Then too, like heaven'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——

Brisk. Incomparably well and proper, I'gad—But I have one exception to make—Don't you think *bilk* (I know 'tis good rhyme) but don't you think *bilk* and *fare* too like a hackney-coachman ?

Lord Froth. I swear and vow I'm afraid so——And yet our Jehu was a hackney-coachman, when my Lord took him.

Brisk. Was he ? I'm answer'd, if Jehu was a hackney-coachman——You may put that in the marginal notes tho', to prevent criticism——Only mark it with a small asterisk, and say,——Jehu 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 Whifler, 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.

Cyn. Fy, Mr Brisk! Eringos for her cough.

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.

Cyn. aside.] Well, I find there are no fools so inconsiderable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible 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 exorbitantly.

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 thro' 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.

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Cyn. O good my Lord let's hear it.

Brisk. 'Tis not a song neither——'Tis a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but 'tis satire—Sing it, my 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?*

Brisk. Short, but there's salt in't; my way of writing, I'gad.

S C E N E XI.

[To them.] FOOTMAN.

Lady Froth. How now?

Foot. Your Ladyship's chair is come.

Lady Froth. Is nurse and the child in it?

Foot. 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 'tis 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 Cynthia, Mr Brisk, we'll go see Sapho, tho' my Lord won't.

Cyn. 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.*

Cyn. 'Tis not so hard to counterfeit joy in the depth of affliction, as to dissemble mirth in the company of fools— Why should I call them 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 are only blest'd.

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

MELLEFONT *and* CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.

I HEARD him loud as I came by the closet-door, and my Lady with him, but she seem'd to moderate his passion.

Mel. Ay, hell thank her, as gentle breezes moderate a fire: but I shall counterwork her spells, and ride the witch in her own bridle.

Cyn. 'Tis impossible; she'll cast beyond you still—
I'll lay my life it will never come to be a match.

Mel. What?

Cyn. Between you and me.

Mel. Why so?

Cyn. 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 same game; but forget one another; and 'tis because we are so near that we don't think of coming together.

Mel. 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.

Cyn. 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.

Mel. 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.

Cyn. Ay, ay, what have we to do with 'em? you know we marry for love.

Mel. Love, love, downright very villainous love.

Cyn. 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 —

Mel. To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me this moment, and be married.

Cyn. Hold — never to marry any body else.

Mel. That's but a kind of negative consent — Why, you won't baulk the frolic?

Cyn. If you had not been so assured of your own conduct I would not — But 'tis but reasonable that once 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 —

Mel. I'll do't.

Cyn. And I'll do't.

Mel. The very next ensuing hour of eight o'clock, is the

last minute of her reign, unless the devil assist her in *propria persona*.

Cyn. Well, if the devil should assist her, and your plot miscarry.

Mel. Ay, what am I to trust to then?

Cyn. 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.

Mel. And you won't die one for your own; so still there's hope.

Cyn. Here's my mother-in-law, and your friend Careless, I would not have them see us together yet.

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.

Care. And despise me.

[*Sighing.*]

Lady Plyant. The last of any 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 entire resignation of all my best wishes, for the person and parts of so accomplished a person, whose merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my illiterate praises can description—

Care. *In a whining tone.*] Ah, Heavens, 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. *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.

Care. 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 palpitation of the heart.

Care. 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.

Care. O Heav'n! I can't outlive this night without your favour—I feel my spirits faint, a general dampness overspreads 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 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.*]

Care. I thank Heaven 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 embraces—Say, thou near-dying man, when, where, and how—Ah, there's Sir Paul.

Care. '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, CYNTHIA.

Sir Paul. Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt—But endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

Cyn. I would obey you to my power, Sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir Paul. Never to marry! Heavens forbid; must I neither have sons nor grandsons? must the family of the Plyants be utterly extinct for want of issue male? Oh, impiety! But did you swear, did that sweet creature swear? ha! how durst you swear without my consent; ah, gadsbud, who am I?

Cyn. Pray, don't be angry, Sir: when I swore I had your consent; and therefore I swore.

Sir Paul. Why then, the revoking my consent does annul, or make of non effect your oath; so you may unswear it again—the law will allow it.

Cyn. Ay, but my conscience never will.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, 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. Does your Ladyship conceive so?—Why, I was of that opinion once too—Nay, if your Ladyship conceive 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 satisfied that my cousin Mellefont has been much wrong'd.

Cyn. 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 informed by Mr Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a profound respect—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. Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your mother says, child——

Lady Plyant. Plain! I was informed 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.

Cyn. 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. I am much obliged 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 law, no indeed, Sir Paul; 'tis upon your account.

Sir Paul. 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. 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.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, I'm transported! Give me leave to kiss your Ladyship's hand.

Cyn. That my poor father should be so very silly!

[Aside.

Lady Plyant. My lip, indeed, Sir Paul, I swear you shall.

[He kisses her, and bows very low.

Sir Paul. I humbly thank your Ladyship—I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air—Gadsbud, 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 satisfied me of the matter.

Sir Paul. 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'm in such a twitter to read Mr Careless's 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. 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; I would look upon the account again, and may be increase your allowance.

Sir Paul. 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. 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, gadsbud. 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, hey, Thy? Can't you contrive that affair, girl? Do, Gadsbud, think on thy old father, heh; make the young rogue as like as you can.

Cynt. I'm glad to see you so merry, Sir.

Sir Paul. Merry, gads-bud I'm serious, I'll give thee five hundred pound 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, huffy, 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, huffy, I would have held fifty to one, I could have drawn my own picture — Gads-bud I could have done — not so much as you neither, — but — nay, don't blush —

Cynt. I don't blush, Sir, for I vow I don't understand —

Sir Paul. 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 vagarie 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.

Cynt. 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 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. 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. 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. Go, 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. 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 Froth! 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 VI.

[*To him*] Lady FROTH.

[*Brisk sings, walking about*] *I'm sick with love, ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come cure me.*

I'm sick with, etc.

O ye pow'rs! O my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth! My Lady Froth! Heigho! Break heart; Gods I thank you.

[*Stands musing with his arms across.*]

Lady Froth. O heav'ns, Mr Brisk! What's the matter?

Brisk. My Lady Froth! Your Ladyship's most humble servant;—The matter, Madam? Nothing, Madam, nothing at all I'gad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement 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?

Brisk. 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?

Brisk. Not I, let me perish——But did I! Strange! I confess 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 in-

deed——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 cou'd 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 Volscius 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 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. Oh 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 shew Mr Brisk?

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 hold 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.

Care. What's the matter, Madam?

Lady Plyant. O the most unlucky accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

Care. Heav'n forbid! What is it?

Lady Plyant. I'm in such a fright; the strangest quandary and premunire! 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.

Care. 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. —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 surprize 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 position of taking up arms by my authority, against my person. Well let me see——“ ’Till then I languish in expectation “ 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 Iscariot both. O friendship! what art thou but a name! Henceforward let no man make a friend that would not be a cuckold: 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 ev'n 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 licence to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the letter as in anger*] Look, read it? Gads 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 divorc'd this instant.

Sir *Paul*. Gadsbud 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 disssembled 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 divorc'd presently.

Sir *Paul*. O strange, what will become of me!—I'm so amaz'd, and so overjoyed, 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*. 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*. 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 com-

mission—If I desir'd him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me; gadsbud only for poor Sir Paul, I'm an anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

Lady Plyant. Why, is not here a matter of fact?

Sir Paul. 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 ly 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.

Care. Sir 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 carry'd me a little farther in this matter.—

Sir Paul. Indeed—Well, Sir—I'll dissemble with him a little. [*Aside.*

Care. 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 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. O Providence! Providence! what discoveries are here made? Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

Care. What do you mean?

Sir Paul. I can't tell you, I'm so overjoy'd; come along with me to my Lady, I can't contain myself; come, my dear friend.

Care. So, so, so, this difficulty's over.

[*Aside.*

S C E N E XII.

MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, *from different doors.*

Mel. Maskwell! I have been looking for you—'tis within a quarter of eight.

Mask. My Lady is just gone into my Lord's closet, you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and ly concealed there, otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprize us.

Mel. He! you say true.

Mask. 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.

Mel. I go this moment : now fortune, I defy thee.

S C E N E XIII.

MASKWELL *alone.*

I confess you may be allowed 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 Touch. Maskwell, you are the man I wish to meet.

Mask. I am happy to be in the way of your Lordship's commands.

Lord Touch. I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concern'd me or my family.

Mask. I were a villain else——I am bound by duty and gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your Lordship's servant.

Lord Touch. 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.

Mask. My Lord!

Lord Touch. 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 villainy, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, though you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

Mask. I am sorry, my Lord, I can't make you an answer; this is an occasion in which I would not willingly be silent.

Lord Touch. I know you would excuse him——And I know as well that you can't.

Mask. Indeed I was in hopes 'thad been a youthful heat that might have soon boil'd over; but——

Lord Touch. Say on.

Mask. I have nothing more to say, my Lord——but to express my concern; for I think his frenzy increases daily.

Lord Touch. How! Give me but proof of it, ocular proof, that I may justify my dealing with him to the world, and share my fortunes.

Mask. 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 Touch. He is your friend, and what am I?

Mask. I am answered.

Lord Touch. 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.

Mask. I wish I could not——To be plain, my Lord, I intended this ev'ning 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 Touch. I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

Mask. He 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 by my Lady's bed-chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

Lord Touch. I will.

Mask. My duty to your Lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice——

Lord Touch. I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes.

S C E N E XV.

S C E N E opening, shews Lady Touchwood's chamber.

MELLEFONT *solus.*

Pray Heav'n my aunt keep touch with her assignation——Oh that her Lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see——Hist, she comes——Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But to my post.

[Goes behind the hangings.]

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 XVII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

Mellefont absconding.

Mask. I confess you do reproach me when I see you

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here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodnefs.

Lady Touch. You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been to blame—A ready answer ftews you were prepar'd.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a lofs, and confufion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expreffion——

Lady Touch. Not in love; words are the weak fupport of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

Mask. Excefs of joy has made me ftupid!. Thus may my lips be ever clos'd. [*Kiffes her.*] And thus——Oh who would not lofe his fpeech, upon condition to have joys above it!

Lady Touch. Hold, let me lock the door firft.

[*Goes to the door.*]

Mask. afide.] That I believ'd; 'twas well I left the private paffage open.

Lady Touch. So, that's fafe.

Mask. And fo may all your pleasures be, and fecret as this kifs——

Mel. And may all treachery be thus discover'd.

[*Leaps out.*]

Lady Touch. Ah!

[*Shrieks.*]

Mel. Villain!

[*Offers to draw.*]

Mask. Nay, then, there's but one way. [*Runs out.*]

S C E N E XVIII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MELLEFONT.

Mel. Say you fo, were you provided for an efcape? Hold, Madam, you have no more holes to your burrow, I ftand between you and this fally-port.

Lady Touch. Thunder ftrike thee dead for this deceit, immediate lightning blaft thee, me, and the whole world—Oh! I could rack myfelf, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it piece-meal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

Mel. Be patient——

Lady Touch. Be damn'd.

Mel. Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself a-weary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

Lady Touch. I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

Mel. 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 Touch. O what shall I do? say? whither shall I turn? Has hell no remedy?

Mel. None; hell has serv'd you ev'n as heaven 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 Touch. aside.] Hold in, my passion, and fall, fall a little, thou swelling heart; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble.

[She weeps.]

Mel. You have been to blame——I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind—penitential tears.

Lady Touch. 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 imagined, 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 betrayed into unthought of ways of ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

Lady Touch. 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.

Mel. Upon such terms, I will be be ever yours in ev'ry honest way.

S C E N E XIX.

MASKWELL softly introduces Lord TOUCHWOOD, and retires.

Mask. I have kept my word, he's here, but I must not be seen.

S C E N E XX.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, Lord TOUCHWOOD,
MELLEFONT.

Lord Touch. Hell and amazement! she's in téars.

Lady Touch. kneeling.] Eternal blessings thank you—

Ha! my Lord listening! O fortune has o'erpaid me all,
all! all's my own! [*Aside.*]

Mel. Nay, I beseech you rise.

Lady Touch. 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!

Mel. Ha!

Lady Touch. O cruel man, will you not let me go?—I'll forgive all that's past—O Heav'n, you will not ravish me!

Mel. Damnation!

Lord Touch. Monster, dog! your life shall answer this—

[*Draws, and runs at Mel is held by Lady Touchwood.*]

Lady Touch. O Heav'ns, my Lord! Hold, hold, for Heaven's sake.

Mel. Confusion, my uncle! O the damn'd forcerefs!

Lady Touch. 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.

Mel. By Heav'n 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such witchcraft.

Lady Touch. My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Lord Touch. Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to

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my name; when next I see that face, I'll write villain in't with my sword's point.

Mel. 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 Touch. Alas he raves! talks very poetry. For Heaven's sake, away, my Lord, he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

Mel. 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 Touch. I fear he's mad indeed—Let's send Maskwell to him.

Mel. Send him to her.

Lady Touch. 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, 'death 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.

[*Scene shuts.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lady TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

WAS'T not lucky?

Mask. Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her interest so to be: by Heav'n, I believe you can controul her power, and she fears it; though chance brought my Lord, 'twas your own art turn'd it to advantage.

Lady Touch. '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—

SCENE III.

[*To him*] Lord TOUCHWOOD.*Mask.* What have I done?*Lord Touch.* 'Palking to himself!

Mask. '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 Touch. Unequal'd virtue! [*Aside.*]

Mask. 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 served myself, and what is yet better, I have served a worthy Lord, to whom I owe myself.

Lord Touch. Excellent man! [*Aside.*]

Mask. 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 Touch. Ha!

Mask. Why do I love! Yet Heaven and my waking conscience are my witnesses, 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 Touch. Start not—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fix'd, as is thy virtue.

Mask. I am confounded, and beg your Lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with myself.

Lord Touch. 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—

Mask. Now, Heaven forbid—

Lord Touch. No more—I have resolv'd—The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be sign'd, and have his name inserted—Yours will fill the blank as well—I will have no reply—Let me command this time; for 'tis the last in which I will assume authority—hereafter you shall rule where I have power.

Mask. I humbly would petition—

Lord Touch. Is't for yourself?—*[Mask. pauses.]* I'll hear of nought for any body else.

Mask. Then witness Heaven 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 Touch. 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 what way that is going.

Mask. 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 Touch. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

S C E N E IV.

M A S K W E L L *alone.*

This is so 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 to delay——Let me think——shou'd my Lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all must be discovered, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded.——It must not be; nay, shou'd 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*] M E L L E F O N T.

Mel. O Maskwell, what hopes? 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.

Mask. No matter, Sir, don't trouble your head, all's in my power.

Mel. How? for Heaven's sake?

Mask. Little do you think that your aunt has kept her word—How the devil she wrought my Lord into this dotage, I know not; but he's gone to Sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

Mel. The devil he has! What's to be done?

Mask. I have it, it must be by stratagem; for 'tis in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head that cannot fail: where's Cynthia?

Mel. In the garden.

Mask. 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 Touch. Maskwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

Lord Touch. I cannot do too much for so much merit.

Lady Touch. But this is a thing of too great moment to be so soon resolv'd. Why Cynthia? Why must he be married? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you my brother will consent, or she? Nay, he himself perhaps may have affections elsewhere.

Lord Touch. No, I am convinc'd he loves her.

Lady Touch. Maskwell love Cynthia, impossible!

Lord Touch. I tell you, he confess'd it to me.

Lady Touch. Confusion! How's this! [*Aside.*

Lord Touch. 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 considered it; but remember how we are both indebted to him.

S C E N E VII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD *alone.*

Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all. Villain! Oh, I am wild with this surprize 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 distraction! 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 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 VIII.

[*To her*] Sir PAUL.

Sir *Paul.* Madam, sister, my Lady sister, did you see my Lady, my wife?

Lady *Touch.* Oh! torture!

Sir *Paul.* Gadsbud, I can't find her high nor low; where can she be, think you?

Lady *Touch.* 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.* A fool; he, he, he, you're merry—No, no, not I, I know no such matter.

Lady *Touch.* Why then, you don't know half your happiness.

Sir *Paul.* 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, — Gadsbud, 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 Touch. 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 forever,-----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. 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 Touch. With Careless, in the close arbour; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

Sir Paul. O, if she be with Mr Careless, 'tis well enough.

Lady Touch. 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. 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.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has propos'd; if you have love enough to run the venture.

Cynt. 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.

Mask. That's right,----Well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

Cynt. But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

Mask. 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.

Mel. How?

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Mask. Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

Mel. I don't understand you.

Mask. 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 finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.----

Mel. So-----

Mask. 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. O I conceive you, you'll tell him so?

Mask. Tell him so! ay, why you don't think I mean to do so?

Mel. No, no; ha, ha, I do swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore, for our farther security, I would have you disguis'd like a parson, that if my Lord should have the curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

Mel. 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.

Mask. 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.

Mel. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have.

S C E N E X.

CYNTHIA, MASKWELL.

Mask. Madam, you will be ready?

Cynt. I will be punctual to the minute. [Going.]

Mask. 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.

Cyat. I am guided by you, but Mellefont will mistake.

Mask. No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

Cyat. I will not fail.

S C E N E XI.

M A S K W E L L *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 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.

M A S K W E L L, S A Y G R A C E.

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-----

Mask. 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.

Sayg. [*Enters,*] You shall prevail, I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater,-----except-----the business in hand-----Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

Sayg. I have, they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starch'd band and cuffs.

Mask. 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?

Sayg. I have; the gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. 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.

Sayg. You have no more commands?

Mask. None, your text is short.

Sayg. But pithy, and I will handle it with discretion.

Mask. It will be the first you have so serv'd.

S C E N E XIII.

Lord TOUCH-WOOD, MASKWELL.

Lord Touch. Sure I was born to be controlled by those I should command: my very slaves will shortly give me rules how I shall govern them.

Mask. I am concern'd to see your Lordship discompos'd——

Lord Touch. Have you seen my wife lately, or disoblig'd her?

Mask. No, my Lord. What can this mean! [*Aside.*]

Lord Touch. Then Mellefont has urg'd somebody to incense her—Something she has heard of you which carries her beyond the bounds of patience.

Mask. This I fear'd, [*Aside.*] Did not your Lordship tell her of the honours you design'd me?

Lord Touch. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that; you know my Lady has a high spirit, she thinks I am unworthy.

Lord Touch. 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-ridden; were it possible, it should be done this night.

Mask. By Heav'n he meets my wishes. [*Aside.*] Few things are impossible to willing minds.

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Lord Touch. Instruct me how this shall be done, you shall see I want no inclination.

Mask. 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 Touch. Here's company—Come this way, and tell me.

S C E N E XIV.

CARELESS, and CYNTHIA.

Care. Is not that he, now gone out with my Lord?

Cyn. Yes.

Care. By Heav'n there's treachery—The confusion that I saw your father in, my Lady Touchwood's passion, with what imperfectly I over-heard between my Lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's Mellefont?

Cyn. Here he comes.

S C E N E XV.

[To them] MELLEFONT.

Cyn. Did Maskwell tell you any thing of the chaplain's chamber?

Mel. No; my dear, will you get ready—the things are all in my chamber; I want nothing but the habit.

Care. You are betray'd, and Maskwell is the villain I always thought him.

Cyn. 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.

Care. 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.

Mel. 'Tis loss of time—I cannot think him false.

S C E N E XVI.

CYNTHIA, Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Cyn. My Lord musing!

Lord *Touch.* He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly design'd—Yet he says he had prepar'd my chaplain already.

Cyn. How's this! now I fear indeed.

Lord *Touch.* Cynthia here! Alone, fair cousin, and melancholy?

Cyn. Your Lordship was thoughtful.

Lord *Touch.* My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

Cyn. Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Lord *Touch.* Treachery concerning me! pray be plain—Hark! What noise!

Mask. Within.] Will you not hear me?

Lady *Touch. Within.]* No, monster! traitor! No.

Cyn. My Lady and Maskwell! this may be lucky—My Lord, let me intreat you to stand behind this screen, 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. MASKWELL:
CYNTHIA and Lord TOUCHWOOD absent, listening.

Lady *Touch.* You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, 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.

Mask. Strike then—since you will have it so.

Lady *Touch.* Ha! A steady villain to the last!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

Lady *Touch.* 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.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady *Touch.* 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.

O! that they were written in thy heart,

That I, with this, might lay thee open to my fight!

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 I want strength to hold it; thou hast disarm'd my soul. [*Gives the dagger.*]

Lord Touch. Amazement shakes me—Where will this end?

Mask. So, 'tis well—let your wild fury have a vent; and when you have temper, tell me.

Lady Touch. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. 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 Touch. My Lord himself surpriz'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.

Cyn. How, my Lord!

Lord Touch. Pray forbear all resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

Mask. 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, could e'er be fond of an inferior slavery?

Lord Touch. Ha! O poison to my ears! What do I hear!

Cyn. Nay, good my Lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

Lord Touch. Yes, I will contain, tho' I cou'd burst.

Mask. I that had wanton'd in the rich circle of your

world of love, cou'd I be confin'd within the puny province of a girl! No—yet tho' I doat on each last favour more than all the rest; though 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 Touch. If this were true—But how can this be?

Mask. 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 elsewhere 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 Touch. Thou can't deceive every body,——Nay, thou hast deceiv'd me; but 'tis as I would wish——Trusty villain! I could worship thee——

Mask. No more.—It wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

Lady Touch. I go, I fly, incomparable Maskwell!

S C E N E XVIII.

MASKWELL, CYNTHIA, Lord TOUCHWOOD

Mask. 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.

Cyn. Now, my Lord.

Lord Touch. Astonishment binds up my rage! Villainy upon villainy! 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!

Cyn. My Lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

Lord Touch. 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?—

Cyn. I dare answer for him.

Lord Touch. 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 and 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 XX.

Lord FROTH and Sir PAUL.

Lord Froth. By Heav'ns I have slept an age——Sir Paul, what a clock is't? Past eight, o' 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. The company, Gadsbud, 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. All turned topsy-turvy, as sure as a gun.

Lord Froth. How do you mean? my wife!

Sir Paul. The strangest posture of affairs!

Lord Froth. What, my wife?

Sir Paul. 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. I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

Lord Froth. How?

Sir Paul. Nay, only about poetry, I suppose, my Lord; making couplets.

Lord Froth. Couplets!

Sir Paul. O, here they come.

S C E N E XXII.

[To them] Lady FROTH, BRISK.

Brisk. My Lord, your humble servant: Sir Paul, yours,—the finest night!

Lady Froth. My dear, Mr Brisk and I have been stargazing, I don't know how long.

Sir Paul. Does it not tire your Ladyship; are you not 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 Froth. Well, I swear, Mr Brisk, you understood astronomy like an old Egyptian.

Brisk. Not comparably to your Ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the skies, and queen of stars.

Lady Froth. That's because I have no light, but what's by reflection from you, who are sun.

Brisk. Madam, you have eclips'd me quite, let me perish—I can't answer that.

Lady Froth. No matter—Harkye, shall you and I make an almanac together?

Brisk. 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 Froth. O finely taken! I swear now you are even with me. O Parnassus! you have an infinite deal of wit.

Sir Paul. So he has, Gadsbud, and so has your Ladyship.

S C E N E XXII.

[*To them*] Lady PLYANT, CARELESS, CYNTHIA.

Lady Plyant. You tell me most surprizing things; bless me, who would ever trust a man! O my heart akes for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

Care. 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 my Lady?

Cyn. They'll wait upon your Lordship presently.

Lady Froth. Mr Brisk, my coach shall set you down.

All. 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 Touch. O I'm betray'd—Save me, help me.

Lord Touch. Now, what evasion, strumpet?

Lady Touch. Stand off, let me go.

Lord Touch. 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, *the Last.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lord FROTH, Lady FROTH, Lady PLYANT, Sir PAUL, CYNTHIA, MELLEFONT, MASKWELL; Mellefont disguised in a parson's habit, and pulling in Maskwell.

Mel. Nay, by Heav'n, you shall be seen.—Careless,

192 THE DOUBLE-DEALER.

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 falsehood.

Lord Touch. Are you silent, monster?

Mel. Good Heav'ns! How I believ'd and lov'd this man!—Take him hence, for he's a disease to my sight.

Lord Touch. Secure that manifold villain.

[*Servants seize him.*]

Care. 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 Touch. 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.

Mel. We are your Lordship's creatures.

Lord Touch. And each others 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 villainy from hence be warn'd;
How'er in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,
Torture and shame attend their open birth;
Like vipers in the womb, base treachery lyes,
Still gnawing that, whence first it did arise;
No sooner born, but the vile parent dies.

[*Excunt omnes.*]

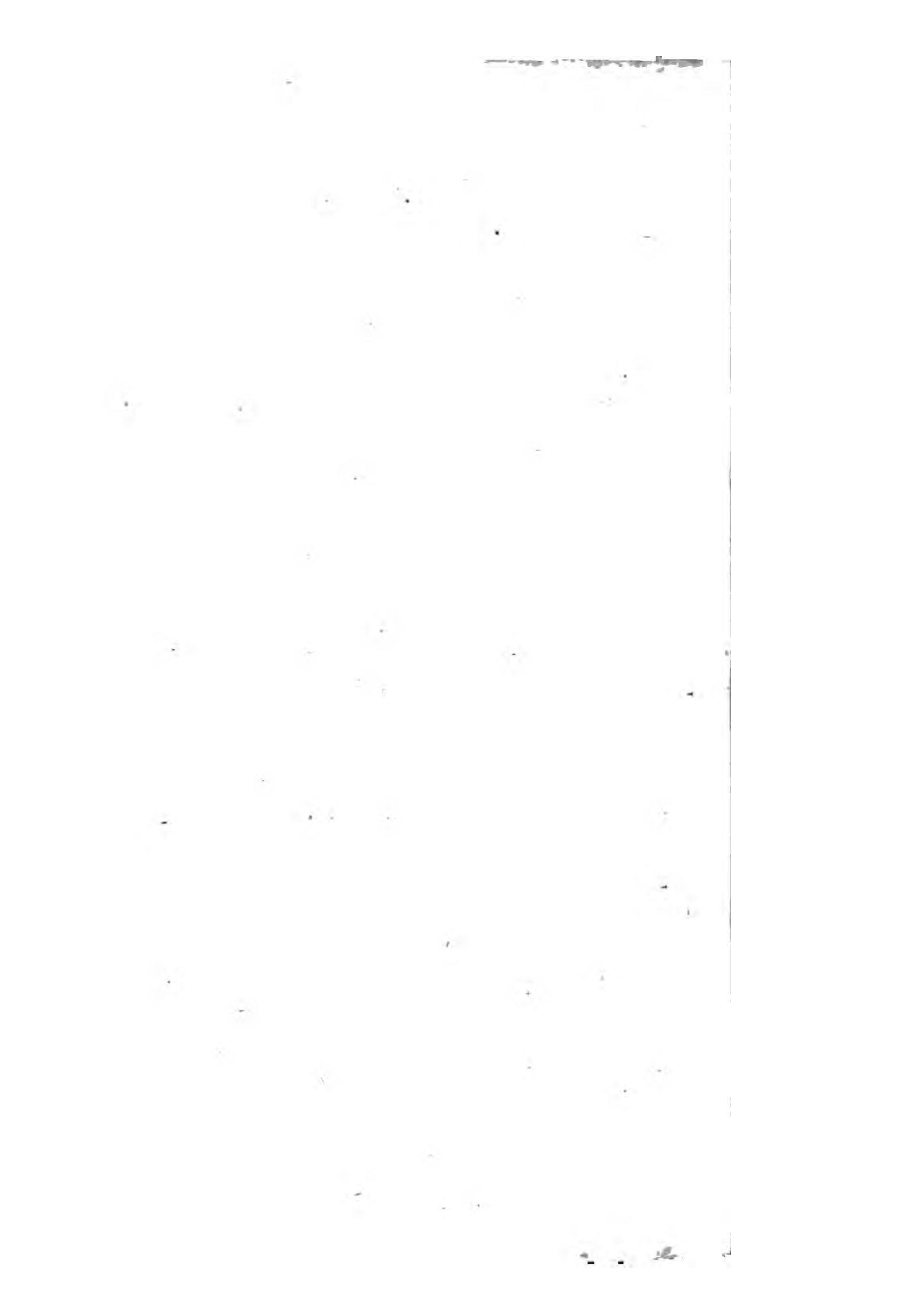
L O V E for L O V E.

C O M E D Y.

“ Nudus agris, nudus nummis paternis,
“ Insanire parat certa ratione modoque.” H O R .

VOL. I.

R



To the Right Honourable

C H A R L E S,

Earl of DORSET and MIDDLESEX,

Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's Household,
and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the
Garter, &c.

MY LORD,

A YOUNG poet is liable to the same vanity and indiscretion with a young lover; and the great man who smiles upon one, and the fine woman who looks kindly upon the other, are both of them in danger of having the favour published with the first opportunity.

But there may be a different motive, which will a little distinguish the offenders. For though one should have a vanity in ruining another's reputation, yet the other may only have an ambition to advance his own. And I beg leave, my Lord, that I may plead the latter, both as the cause and excuse of this dedication.

Whoever is king, is also the father of his country; and as nobody can dispute your Lordship's monarchy in poetry; so all that are concerned, ought to acknowledge your universal patronage; and it is only presuming on the privilege of a loyal

subject, that I have ventured to make this my address of thanks to your Lordship; which, at the same time, includes a prayer for your protection.

I am not ignorant of the common form of poetical dedications, which are generally made up of panegyrics, where the authors endeavour to distinguish their patrons, by the shining characters they give them above other men. But that, my Lord, is not my business at this time, nor is your Lordship now to be distinguished. I am contented with the honour I do myself in this epistle, without the vanity of attempting to add to, or explain your Lordship's character.

I confess it is not without some struggling, that I behave myself in this case as I ought; for it is very hard to be pleased with a subject, and yet forbear it. But I choose rather to follow Pliny's precept, than his example, when in his panegyric to the Emperor Trajan, he says,

“Nec minus considerabo quid aures ejus pati possint,
“Quam quid virtutibus debeatur.”

I hope I may be excused the pedantry of a quotation, when it is so justly applied. Here are some lines in the print, (and which your Lordship read before this play was acted) that were omitted on the stage, and particularly one whole scene in the third act, which not only helps the design forward with less precipitation, but also heightens the ridiculous character of Foresight, which indeed seems to be maimed without it. But I found myself in great danger of a long play, and was glad to help

it where I could. Though notwithstanding my care, and the kind reception it had from the town, I could heartily wish it yet shorter; but the number of different characters represented in it, would have been too much crowded in less room.

This reflection on prolixity, (a fault, for which scarce any one beauty will atone) warns me not to be tedious now, and detain your Lordship any longer with the trifles of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken at the opening of the New House.

By Mr BETTERTON.

THE husbandman in vain renews his toil,
To cultivate each year a hungry soil ;
And fondly hopes for rich and generous fruit,
When what should feed the tree, devours the root :
Th' unladen boughs, he sees, bode certain dearth,
Unless transplanted to more kindly earth.
So, the poor husbands of the stage, who found
Their labours lost upon ungrateful ground,
This last and only remedy have prov'd ;
And hope new fruit from ancient stocks remov'd.
Well may they hope, when you so kindly aid,
Well plant a soil which you so rich have made.
As Nature gave the world to man's first age,
So from your bounty we receive this stage ;
The freedom man was born to, you've restor'd,
And to our world such plenty you afford,
It seems like Eden, fruitful of its own accord.
But since in paradise frail flesh gave way,
And when but two were made, both went astray ;
Forbear your wonder and the fault forgive,
If in our larger family we grieve
One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.
We who remain, would gratefully repay
What our endeavours can, and bring, this day,
The first-fruit offering of a virgin play.
We hope there's something that may please each taste,
And though of homely fare we make the feast,
Yet you will find variety at least.
There's humour, which for chearful friends we got,
And for the thinking party there's a plot.

We've something too, to gratify ill nature,
(If there be any here) and that is satire.
Though satire scarce dares grin, 'tis grown so mild,
Or only shews its teeth as if it smil'd.
As asses thistles, poets mumble wit,
And dare not bite, for fear of being bit.
They hold their pens, as swords are held by fools,
And are afraid to use their own edge-tools.
Since the Plain-Dealer's scenes of manly rage,
Not one has dar'd to lash this crying age.
This time, the poet owns the bold essay,
Yet hopes there's no ill-manners in his play :
And he declares by me, he has design'd
Affront to none, but frankly speaks his mind.
And shou'd th' ensuing scenes not chance to hit,
He offers but this one excuse, 'twas writ
Before your late encouragement of wit.

}

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Sir SAMPSON LEGEND , father to Valentine and Ben,	}	Mr UNDERHILL .
VALENTINE , fallen under his father's displeasure by his ex- pensive way of living, in love with Angelica,	}	Mr BETTERTON .
SCANDAL , his friend, a free speaker,	}	Mr SMITH .
TATTLE , a half-witted beau, vain of his amours, yet va- luing himself for secrecy,	}	Mr BOWMAN .
BEN , Sir Sampson's younger son, half home-bred, and half sea- bred, designed to marry Miss Prue,	}	Mr DOGGET .
FORESIGHT , an illiterate old fellow, peevish and positive, superstitious, and pretending to understand astrology, pal- mistry, physiognomy, omens, dreams, &c. uncle to Ange- lica,	}	Mr SANDFORD .
JEREMY , servant to Valentine,	}	Mr BOWEN .
TRAPIAND , a scrivener,	}	Mr TRIFFUSIS .
BUCKRAM , a lawyer,	}	Mr FREEMAN .

W O M E N.

ANGELICA , niece to Foresight, of a considerable fortune in her own hands,	}	Mrs BRACEGIRDLE .
Mrs FORESIGHT , second wife to Foresight,	}	Mrs BOWMAN .
Mrs FRAIL , sister to Mrs Fore- sight, a woman of the town,	}	Mrs BARRY .
Miss PRUE , daughter to Fore- sight by a former wife, a silly awkward country girl,	}	Mrs AYLIFF .
Nurse to Miss,	}	Mrs LEIGH .
JENNY ,	}	Mrs LAWSON .

A Steward, Officers, Sailors and several Servants.

The SCENE in LONDON.

L O V E for L O V E.

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

VALENTINE in his Chamber reading, JEREMY waiting.

Several Books upon the Table.

VALENTINE.

JEREMY!

Jer. Sir.

Val. Here, take away; I'll walk a turn, and digest what I have read.

Jer. You'll grow devilish fat upon this paper diet.

[Aside, and taking away the books.]

Val. And d'ye hear, go you to breakfast—There's a page doubled down in Epictetus, that is a feast for an Emperor.

Jer. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write receipts?

Val. Read, read, firrah, and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind, and mortify your flesh; read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes; shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding; so Epictetus advises.

Jer. O Lord! I have heard much of him, when I waited upon a gentleman at Cambridge; pray, what was that Epictetus?

Val. A very rich man—not worth a groat.

Jer. Humph, and so he has made a very fine feast where there is nothing to be eaten ?

Val. Yes.

Jer. Sir, you're a gentleman, and probably understand this fine feeding; but if you please, I had rather be at board-wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? or Diogenes, because he understands confinement, and liv'd in a tub, go to prison for you? 'Slife, Sir, what do you mean? to mew yourself up here with three or four musty books, in commendation of starving and poetry.

Val. Why, Sirrah, I have no money, you know it; and therefore resolve to rail at all that have; and in that I but follow the examples of the wisest and wittiest men in all ages; these poets and philosophers whom you naturally hate, for just such another reason, because they abound in sense, and you are a fool.

Jer. Ay, Sir, I am a fool, I know it; and yet, Heaven help me, I'm poor enough to be a wit---but I was always a fool, when I told you what your expences would bring you to; your coaches and your liveries, your tréats and your balls; your being in love with a lady, that did not care a farthing for you in your prosperity; and keeping company with wits, that car'd for nothing but your prosperity, and now when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another.

Val. Well, and now I am poor, I have an opportunity to be revenged on them all; I'll pursue Angelica with more love than ever, and appear more notoriously her admirer in this restraint, than when I openly rival'd the rich fops that made court to her; so shall my poverty be a mortification to her pride, and perhaps make her compassionate the love, which has principally reduced me to this lowness of fortune. And for the wits, I'm sure I am in a condition to be even with them——

Jer. Nay, your condition is pretty even with theirs, that's the truth on't.

Val. I'll take some of their trade out of their hands.

Jer. Now heaven of mercy continue the tax upon paper! you don't mean to write!

Val. Yes, I do; I'll write a play.

Jer. Hem!—Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines—only to certify those whom it may concern, that the bearer hereof, Jeremy Fetch by name, has for the space of seven years, truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend, Esq; and that he is not now turned away for any misdemeanour, but does voluntarily dismiss his master from any future authority over him——

Val. No, sirrah, you shall live with me still.

Jer. Sir, 'tis impossible—I may die with you, starve with you, or be damn'd with your works; but to live, even three days, the life of a play, I no more expect it, than to be canonized for a muse after my decease.

Val. You are witty, you rogue, I shall want your help; I'll have you learn to make couplets, to tag the end of acts, d'ye hear; get the maids to crambo in an evening, and learn the knack of rhyming, you may arrive at the height of a song sent by an unknown hand, or a chocolate-house lampoon.

Jer. But, Sir, is this the way to recover your father's favour? Why, Sir Sampson will be irreconcilable. If your younger brother should come from sea, he'd never look upon you again. You're undone, Sir, you're ruin'd, you won't have a friend left in the world if you turn poet—— Ah, confound that Will's coffeehouse, it has ruined more young men than the Royal Oak lottery—nothing thrives that belongs to't. The man of the house would have been an alderman by this time with half the trade, if he had set up in the city. For my part, I never sit at the door, that I don't get double the stomach that I do at a horse-race. The air upon Banstead downs is nothing to it for a whetter; yet I never see it, but the spirit of famine appears to me, sometimes like a decay'd porter, worn out

with pimping, and carrying billets-doux and songs; not like other porters for hire, but for the jest's sake. Now like a thin chairman, melted down to half his proportion, with carrying a poet upon tick, to visit some great fortune, and his fare to be paid him like the wages of sin, either at the day of marriage, or the day of death.

Val. Very well, Sir; can you proceed?

Jer. Sometimes like a bilk'd bookseller, with a meagre terrified countenance, that looks as if he had written for himself, or were resolv'd to turn author, and bring the rest of his brethren into the same condition. And lastly, in the form of a worn-out punk, with verses in her hand, which her vanity had preferr'd to settlements, without a whole tatter to her tail, but as ragged as one of the muses; or as if she were carrying her linen to the paper-mill, to be converted into folio books, of warning to all young maids, not to prefer poetry to good sense, or lying in the arms of a needy wit, before the embraces of a wealthy fool.

S C E N E II.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY.

Scan. What, Jeremy holding forth?

Val. The rogue has (with all the wit he could muster up) been declaiming against wit.

Scan. Ay? why then I'm afraid Jeremy has wit: for where-ever it is, 'tis always contriving its own ruin.

Jer. Why, so I have been telling my master, Sir; Mr Scandal, for Heaven's sake, Sir, try if you can dissuade him from turning poet.

Scan. Poet! he shall turn soldier first, and rather depend upon the outside of his head, than the lining. Why, what the devil! has not your poverty made you enemies enough? must you needs shew your wit to get more?

Jer. Ay, more indeed; for who cares for any body that has more wit than himself?

Scan. Jeremy speaks like an oracle. Don't you see how worthless great men, and dull rich rogues, avoid a witty man of small fortune? Why, he looks like a writ of enquiry into their titles and estates; and seems commission'd by Heav'n to seize the better half.

Val. Therefore I would rail in my writings, and be revenged.

Scan. Rail? at whom? the whole world? Impotent and vain! who would die a martyr to sense in a country where the religion is folly? you may stand at bay for a while; but when the full cry is against you, you shan't have fair play for your life. If you can't be fairly run down by the hounds, you will be treacherously shot by the huntsmen. No, turn pimp, flatterer, quack, lawyer, parson, be chaplain to an atheist, or stallion to an old woman, any thing but poet; a modern poet is worse, more servile, timorous, and fawning, than any I have nam'd: without you could retrieve the ancient honours of the name, recall the stage of Athens, and be allow'd the force of open honest satire.

Val. You are as inveterate against our poets, as if your character had been lately expos'd upon the stage——Nay, I am not violently bent upon the trade.—[*One knocks.*] Jeremy, see who's there. [*Jer. goes to the door.*] But tell me what you would have me do? What does the world say of me, and my forc'd confinement?

Scan. The world behaves itself, as it uses to do on some occasions; some pity you, and condemn your father; others excuse him and blame you; only the ladies are merciful, and wish you well; since love and pleasurable expence have been your greatest faults.

[*Jeremy returns.*]

Val. How now?

Jer. Nothing new, Sir; I have dispatched some half a dozen duns with as much dexterity as a hungry judge does causes at dinner-time.

Val. What answer have you given 'em?

Scan. Patience, I suppose, the old receipt.

Jer. No faith, Sir; I have put 'em off so long with patience and forbearance, and other fair words, that I was forc'd now to tell 'em in plain downright English —

Val. What?

Jer. That they should be paid —

Val. When?

Jer. To-morrow.

Val. And how the devil do you mean to keep your word?

Jer. Keep it? not at all; it has been so very much stretch'd, that I reckon it will break of course by to-morrow, and no body be surpris'd at the matter— [*Knocking.*] Again! Sir, if you don't like my negociation, will you be pleas'd to answer these yourself?

Val. See who they are.

S C E N E III.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

Val. By this, Scandal, you may see what it is to be great; secretaries of state, presidents of the council, and generals of the army lead just such a life as I do; have just such crouds of visitants in a morning, all solliciting of past promises; which are but a civiller sort of duns, that lay claim to voluntary debts.

Scan. And you, like a true great man, having engaged their attendance, and promised more than ever you intended to perform, are more perplexed to find evasions than you would be to invent the honest means of keeping your word, and gratifying your creditors.

Val. Scandal, learn to spare your friends, and do not provoke your enemies: this liberty of your tongue will one day bring a confinement on your body, my friend.

S C E N E IV.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY.

Jer. O Sir, there's Trapland the scrivener, with two

suspicious fellows like lawful pads, that would knock a man down with pocket tipstaves—and there's your father's steward, and the nurse with one of your children from Twitnam.

Val. Pox on her, cou'd she find no other time to fling my sins in my face? here, give her this, [*Gives money.*] and bid her trouble me no more; a thoughtless, two-handed whore, she knows my condition well enough, and might have overlaid the child a fortnight ago, if she had had any forecast in her.

Scan. What, is it bouncing Margery with my godson?

Jer. Yes, Sir.

Scan. My blessing to the boy, with this token [*Gives money.*] of my love. And d'ye hear, bid Margery put more flocks in her bed, shift twice a week, and not work so hard that she may not smell so vigorously. I shall take the air shortly.

Val. Scandal, don't spoil my boy's milk: bid Trapland come in. If I can give that Cerberus a sop, I shall be at rest for one day.

S C E N E V.

V A L E N T I N E , S C A N D A L , T R A P L A N D , J E R E M Y .

Val. O Mr Trapland! my old friend! welcome; Jeremy, a chair quickly; a bottle of sack and a toast—fly—a chair first.

Trap. A good morning to you, Mr Valentine, and to you Mr Scandal

Scan. The morning's a very good morning, if you don't spoil it.

Val. Come sit down, you know his way.

Trap. [*sits.*] There is a debt, Mr Valentine, of fifteen hundred pounds of pretty long standing—

Val. I cannot talk about business with a thirsty palate. Sirrah, the sack.

Trap. And I desire to know what course you have taken for the payment?

Val. Faith and troth, I am heartily glad to see you—my service to you——fill, fill, to honest Mr Trapland, fuller.

Trap. Hold, sweetheart——this is not our business——my service to you, Mr Scandal—[*Drinks.*]—I have forborn as long——

Val. T'other glafs, and then we'll talk—fill, Jeremy.

Trap. No more, in truth——I have forborn, I say—

Val. Sirrah, fill when I bid you——and how does your handsome daughter? Come, a good husband to her.

[*Drinks.*

Trap. Thank you—I have been out of this money——

Val. Drink first. Scandal, why do you not drink?

[*They drink.*

Trap. And in short, I can be put off no longer.

Val. I was much obliged to you for your supply: it did me signal service in my necessity. But you delight in doing good—Scandal, drink to me, my friend Trapland's health. An honest man lives not, nor one more ready to serve his friend in distress; though I say it to his face. Come, fill each man his glass.

Scan. What, I know Trapland has been a whoremaster, and loves a wench still. You never knew a whoremaster, that was not an honest fellow.

Trap. Fy, Mr Scandal, you never knew——

Scan. What, don't I know?——I know the buxom black widow in the Poultry—eight hundred pound a-year, jointure, and two thousand pound in money. Ahah! old Trap.

Val. Say you so, i'faith? come, we'll remember the widow: I know whereabouts you are; come, to the widow——

Trap. No more, indeed.

Val. What, the widow's health; give it him——off with it; [*They drink.*] A lovely girl, i'faith, black sparkling eyes, soft pouting ruby lips; better sealing there, than a bond for a million, ha!

Trap. No, no, there's no such thing, we'd better mind our business——you're a wag.

Val. No faith, we'll mind the widow's business, fill again—pretty round heaving breasts, a Barbary shape, and a jut with her bum, would stir an anchorite; and the prettiest foot! Oh, if a man could but fasten his eyes to her feet, as they steal in and out, and play at bo-peep under her petticoats; ah, Mr Trapland?

Trap. Verily, give me a glass—you're a wag—and here's to the widow. [Drinks.]

Scan. He begins to chuckle;—ply him close, or he'll relapse into a dun.

S C E N E VI.

[To them] OFFICER.

Off. By your leave, gentlemen,—Mr Trapland, if we must do our office, tell us—we have half a dozen gentlemen to arrest in Pall-mall and Covent-garden; and if we don't make haste, the chairmen will be abroad, and block up the chocolate-houses, and then our labour's lost.

Trap. Udsó, that's true. Mr Valentine, I love mirth, but business must be done; are you ready to——

Jer. Sir, your father's steward says he comes to make proposals concerning your debts.

Val. Bid him come in; Mr Trapland, send away your officer, you shall have an answer presently.

Trap. Mr Snap, stay within call.

S C E N E VII.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TRAPLAND, JEREMY, STEWARD, *who whispers Valentine.*

Scan. Here's a dog now, a traitor in his wine;—sirrah, refund the sack; Jeremy, fetch him some warm water, or I'll rip up his stomach, and go the shortest way to his conscience.

Trap. Mr Scandal, you are uncivil; I did not value

your sack; but you cannot expect it again, when I have drunk it.

Scan. And how do you expect to have your money again, when a gentleman has spent it?

Val. You need say no more, I understand the conditions, they are very hard, but my necessity is very pressing; I agree to 'em. Take Mr Trapland with you, and let him draw the writing—Mr Trapland, you know this man, he shall satisfy you.

Trap. Sincerely, I am loth to be thus pressing, but my necessity——

Val. No apology, good Mr Scrivener, you shall be paid.

Trap. I hope you forgive me, my business requires——

S C E N E VIII.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

Scan. He begs pardon like a hangman at an execution.

Val. But I have got a reprieve.

Scan. I am surpriz'd; what, does your father relent?

Val. No; he has sent me the hardest conditions in the world; you have heard of a booby brother of mine, that was sent to sea three years ago? This brother, my father hears is landed; whereupon he very affectionately sends me word, if I will make a deed of conveyance of my right to his estate after his death, to my younger brother, he will immediately furnish me with four thousand pound to pay my debts, and make my fortune. This was once propos'd before, and I refus'd it; but the present impatience of my creditors for their money, and my own impatience of confinement, and absence from Angelica, force me to consent.

Scan. A very desperate demonstration of your love to Angelica; and I think she has never given you any assurance of hers.

Val. You know her temper, she never gave me any great reason either for hope or despair.

Scan. Women of her airy temper, as they seldom think before they act, so they rarely give us any light to guess at what they mean: but you have little reason to believe that a woman of this age, who has had an indifference for you in your prosperity, will fall in love with your ill-fortune; besides, Angelica has a great fortune of her own; and great fortunes either expect another great fortune, or a fool.

S C E N E IX.

[*To them*] JEREMY.

Jer. More misfortune, Sir.

Val. What, another dun?

Jer. No, Sir, but Mr Tattle is come to wait upon you.

Val. Well, I can't help it,——you must bring him up; he knows I don't go abroad.

S C E N E X.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

Scan. Pox on him, I'll be gone.

Val. No, pr'ythee stay: Tattle and you should never be asunder: you are light and shadow, and shew one another; he is perfectly thy reverse both in humour and understanding; and, as you set up for defamation, he is a mender of reputations.

Scan. A mender of reputations! ay, just as he is a keeper of secrets, another virtue that he sets up for in the same manner. For the rogue will speak aloud in the posture of a whisper; and deny a woman's name, while he gives you the marks of her person: he will forswear receiving a letter from her, and at the same time shew you her hand in the superscription; and yet perhaps he has counterfeited the hand too, and sworn to a truth; but he hopes not to be believed; and refuses the reputation of a

lady's favour, as a Doctor says, No, to a bishopric, only that it may be granted him — In short, he is a public professor of secrecy, and makes proclamation that he holds private intelligence.—He's here.

S C E N E XI.

[To them] TATTLE.

Tat. Valentine, good morrow; Scandal, I am yours, — That is, when you speak well of me.

Scan. That is, when I am yours; for while I am my own, or any body's else, that will never happen.

Tat. How inhuman!

Val. Why, Tattle, you need not be much concerned at any thing that he says: for to converse with Scandal, is to play Losing Loadum; you must lose a good name to him, before you can win it for yourself.

Tat. But how barbarous that is, and how unfortunate for him, that the world shall think the better of any person for his calumination! — I thank Heav'n, it has always been a part of my character, to handle the reputation of others very tenderly indeed.

Scan. Ay, such rotten reputations as you have to deal with, are to be handled tenderly indeed.

Tat. Nay, but why rotten? Why should you say, rotten, when you know not the persons of whom you speak? How cruel that is!

Val. Not know 'em? Why, thou never hadst to do with any body that did not stink to all the town.

Tat. Ha, ha, ha; nay, now you make a jest of it indeed. For there is nothing more known, than that nobody knows any thing of the nature of me. As I hope to be sav'd, Valentine, I never expos'd a woman, since I knew what woman was.

Val. And yet you have convers'd with several.

Tat. To be free with you, I have — — — I don't care if I own that — — — Nay more (I'm going to say a bold word

now) I never could meddle with a woman that had to do with any body else.

Scan. How!

Val. Nay, faith, I'm apt to believe him—Except her husband, Tattle.

Tat. Oh, that——

Scan. What think you of that noble commoner Mrs Drab?

Tat. Pooh, I know Madam Drab has made her brags in three or four places, that I said this and that, and writ to her, and did I know not what——But upon my reputation, she did me wrong——Well, well, that was malice——But I know the bottom of it. She was brib'd to that by one we all know——A man too. Only to bring me into disgrace with a certain woman of quality.

Scan. Whom we all know.

Tat. No matter for that——Yes, yes, every body knows——No doubt on't, every body knows my secrets——But I soon satisfied the Lady of my innocence; for I told her——Madam, says I, there are some persons who make it their business to tell stories, and say this and that of one and t'other, and every thing in the world; and, says I, if your Grace——

Scan. Grace!

Tat. O Lord, what have I said? My unlucky tongue!

Val. Ha, ha, ha.

Scan. Why, Tattle, thou hast more impudence than one can in reason expect: I shall have an esteem for thee, well, and ha, ha, ha, well, go on, and what did you say to her Grace?

Val. I confess this is something extraordinary.

Tat. Not a word, as I hope to be fav'd; an arant *lappus linguae*——Come, let's talk of something else.

Val. Well, how did you acquit yourself?

Tat. Pooh, pooh, nothing at all, I only rally'd with you——a woman of ordinary rank was a little jealous of me, and I told her something or other, faith—I know not what——Come, let's talk of something else. [*Hums a song.*]

Scan. Hang him, let him alone, he has a mind we should enquire.

Tat. Valentine, I suppd last night with your mistress, and her uncle old Foresight : I think your father lyes at Foresight's.

Val. Yes.

Tat. Upon my soul; Angelica's a fine woman—And so is Mrs Foresight, and her sister Mrs Frail.

Scan. Yes, Mrs Frail is a very fine woman, we all know her.

Tat. Oh, that is not fair.

Scan. What?

Tat. To tell.

Scan. To tell what? Why, what do you know of Mrs Frail?

Tat. Who; I? Upon my honour I don't know whether she be a man or woman; but by the smoothness of her chin, and roundness of her hips.

Scan. No!

Tat. No.

Scan. She says otherwise.

Tat. Impossible!

Scan. Yes faith. Ask Valentine else.

Tat. Why then, as I hope to be sav'd, I believe a woman only obliges a man to secrecy, that she may have the pleasure of telling herself.

Scan. No doubt on't. Well, but has she done you wrong, or no? You have had her? Ha?

Tat. Tho' I have more honour than to tell first, I have more manners than to contradict what a lady has declar'd.

Scan. Well, you own it?

Tat. I am strangely surpris'd? Yes, yes, I can't deny't, if she taxes me with it.

Scan. She'll be here by and by, she sees Valentine every morning

Tat. How?

Val. She does me the favour—I mean of a visit sometimes. I did not think she had granted more to any-body.

Scan. Nor I, faith—But Tattle does not use to belie a lady; it is contrary to his character—How one may be deceiv'd in a woman, Valentine!

Tat. Nay, what do you mean, gentlemen?

Scan. I'm resolv'd I'll ask her.

Tat. O barbarous! Why, did you not tell me?—

Scan. No, you told us.

Tat. And bid me ask Valentine?

Val. What did I say? I hope you won't bring me to confess an answer, when you never ask'd me the question?

Tat. But, gentlemen, this is the most inhuman proceeding—

Val. Nay, if you have known Scandal thus long, and cannot avoid such a palpable decoy as this was; the ladies have a fine time, whose reputations are in your keeping.

S C E N E XII.

[To them] J E R E M Y..

Jer. Sir, Mrs Frail has sent to know if you are stirring.

Val. Shew her up when she comes.

S C E N E XIII.

V A L E N T I N E, S C A N D A L, T A T T L E.

Tat. I'll be gone.

Val. You'll meet her.

Tat. Is there not a back way?

Val. If there were, you have more discretion than to give Scandal such an advantage; why, your running away will prove all that he can tell her.

Tat. Scandal, you will not be so ungenerous.—O, I shall lose my reputation of secrecy for ever— I shall never be receiv'd but upon public days; and my visits will

never be admitted beyond a drawing-room: I shall never see a bed-chamber again, never be lock'd in a closet, nor run behind a skreen, or under a table; never be distinguish'd among the waiting-women by the name of trusty Mr Tattle more—You will not be so cruel.

Val. Scandal, have pity on him; he'll yield to any conditions.

Tat. Any, any terms.

Scan. Come then, sacrifice half a dozen women of good reputation to me presently——Come, where are you familiar?——And see that they are women of quality too, the first quality——

Tat. 'Tis very hard—Won't a baronet's lady pass?

Scan. No, nothing under a right honourable.

Tat. O inhuman! you don't expect their names?

Scan. No, their titles shall serve.

Tat. Alas, that's the same thing: pray spare me their titles; I'll describe their persons.

Scan. Well, begin then: but take notice, if you are so ill a painter, that I cannot know the person by your picture of her, you must be condemn'd, like other bad painters, to write the name at the bottom.

Tat. Well, first then——

S C E N E XIV.

[*To them*] Mrs FRAIL.

Tat. O unfortunate! she's come already; will you have patience 'till another time—I'll double the number.

Scan. Well, on that condition—Take heed you don't fail me.

Mrs Frail. I shall get a fine reputation, by coming to see fellows in a morning. Scandal, you devil, are you here too? Oh Mr Tattle, every thing is safe with you we know.

Scan. Tattle.

Tat. Mum—O Madam, you do me too much honour.

Val. Well, Lady galloper, how does Angelica?

Mrs Frail. Angelica? manners!

Val. What, you will allow an absent lover——

Mrs Frail. No, I'll allow a lover present with his mis-
dresses to be particular——But otherwise I think his passion
ought to give place to his manners.

Val. But what if he has more passion than manners?

Mrs Frail. Then let him marry and reform.

Val. Marriage indeed may qualify the fury of his passion,
but it very rarely mends a man's manners.

Mrs Frail. You are the most mistaken in the world;
there is no creature perfectly civil, but a husband. For
in a little time he grows only rude to his wife, and that
is the highest good breeding, for it begets his civility to
other people. Well, I'll tell you news; but I suppose
you hear your brother Benjamin is landed. And my bro-
ther Foresight's daughter is come out of the country——
I assure you there's a match talk'd of by the old people——
Well, if he be but as great a sea-beast, as she is a land-
monster, we shall have a most amphibious breed——The
progeny will be all otters; he has been bred at sea, and
she has never been out of the country.

Val. Pox take 'em, their conjunction bodes me no good,
I'm sure.

Mrs Frail. Now you talk of conjunction, my brother
Foresight has cast both their nativities, and prognosticates
an admiral and an eminent justice of the peace to be the
issue male of the two bodies; 'tis the most superstitious
old fool! he would have persuaded me, that this was an
unlucky day, and wou'd not let me come abroad; but I
invented a dream, and sent him to Artemidorus for in-
terpretation, and so stole out to see you. Well, and
what will you give me now? come, I must have some-
thing.

Val. Step into the next room——and I'll give you
something.

Scan. Ay, we'll all give you something.

Mrs Frail. Well, what will you all give me?

Val. Mine's a secret.

Mrs Frail. I thought you would give me something that would be a trouble to you to keep.

Val. And Scandal shall give you a good name.

Mrs Frail. That's more than he has for himself. And what will you give me, Mr Tattle?

Tat. I? my soul, Madam.

Mrs Frail. Pooh, no, I thank you, I have enough to do to take care of my own. Well; but I'll come and see you one of these mornings: I hear you have a great many pictures.

Tat. I have a pretty good collection at your service, some originals.

Scan. Hang him, he has nothing but the Seasons and the Twelve Cæsars, paltry copies; and the Five Senses, as ill represented as they are in himself; and he himself is the only original you will see there.

Mrs Frail. Ay, but I hear he has a closet of beauties.

Scan. Yes, all that have done him favours, if you will believe him.

Mrs Frail. Ay, let me see those, Mr Tattle.

Tat. Oh, Madam, those are sacred to love and contemplation. No man but the painter and myself was ever blest with the sight.

Mrs Frail. Well, but a woman——

Tat. Nor woman, 'till she consented to have her picture there too—for then she's oblig'd to keep the secret.

Scan. No, no; come to me if you'd see pictures.

Mrs Frail. You?

Scan. Yes, faith, I can shew you your own picture, and most of your acquaintance to the life, and as like as at Kneller's.

Mrs Frail. O lying creature——Valentine, does not he lie?——I can't believe a word he says.

Val. No, indeed, he speaks truth now: for as Tattle has pictures of all that have granted him favours, he has the pictures of all that have refus'd him: if satires, descriptions, characters, and lampoons are pictures.

Scan. Yes, mine are most in black and white.—And yet there are some set out in their true colours, both men and women. I can shew you pride, folly, affectation, wantonne's, inconstancy, covetousness, dissimulation, malice and ignorance, all in one piece. Then I can shew you lying, foppery, vanity, cowardise, bragging, lechery, impotence and ugliness in another piece; and yet one of these is a celebrated beauty, and t'other a profest beau. I have paintings too, some pleasant enough.

Mrs Frail. Come, let's hear 'em.

Scan. Why, I have a beau in a bagnio, cupping for a complexion, and sweating for a shape.

Mrs Frail. So.

Scan. Then I have a lady burning brandy in a cellar with a hackney-coachman.

Mrs Frail. O devil! Well, but that story is not true.

Scan. I have some hieroglyphics too: I have a lawyer with a hundred hands, two heads, and but one face; a divine with two faces, and one head; and I have a soldier with his brains in his belly, and his heart where his head shou'd be.

Mrs Frail. And no head?

Scan. No head.

Mrs Frail. Pooh, this is all invention. Have you ne'er a poet?

Scan. Yes, I have a poet weighing words, and selling praise for praise, and a critic picking his pocket. I have another large piece too, representing a school; where there are huge proportion'd critics, with long wigs, lac'd coats, Steinkirk cravats, and terrible faces; with cat-calls in their hands, and horn-books about their necks. I have many more of this kind, very well painted, as you shall see.

Mrs Frail. Well, I'll come, if it be but to disprove you.

S C E N E XA.

[To them] JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, here's the steward again from your father.

Val. I'll come to him——will you give me leave? I'll wait on you again presently.

Mrs Frail. No, I'll be gone. Come, who squires me to the Exchange? I must call my sister Foresight there.

Scan. I will: I have a mind to your sister.

Mrs Frail. Civil!

Tat. I will, because I have a tender for your Ladyship.

Mrs Frail. That's somewhat the better reason, to my opinion.

Scan. Well, if Tattle entertains you, I have the better opportunity to engage your sister.

Val. Tell Angelica, I am about making hard conditions to come abroad, and be at liberty to see her.

Scan. I'll give an account of you, and your proceedings. If indiscretion be a sign of love, you are the most a lover of any body that I know: you fancy that parting with your estate will help you to your mistress——In my mind he is a thoughtless adventurer,

Who hopes to purchase wealth by selling land,
Or win a mistress with a losing hand.

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

A Room in Foresight's House.

FORESIGHT and SERVANT.

FORESIGHT.

H EY-DAY! what, are all the women of my family abroad? Is not my wife come home? nor my sister, nor my daughter?

Serv. No, Sir.

Fore. Mercy on us, what can be the meaning of it? Sure the moon is in all her fortitudes; is my niece Angelica at home?

Serv. Yes, Sir.

Fore. I believe you lie, Sir.

Serv. Sir?

Fore. I say you lie, Sir. It is impossible that any thing should be as I would have it; for I was born, Sir, when the crab was ascending, and all my affairs go backward.

Serv. I can't tell indeed, Sir.

Fore. No, I know you can't, Sir; but I can tell, and foretell, Sir.

S C E N E II.

[*To them*] NURSE.

Fore. Nurse, where's your young mistress?

Nurse. Wee'ft heart, I know not, they're none of 'em come home yet. Poor child! I warrant she's fond o' seeing the town—Marry, pray Heaven, they ha' given her any dinner—Good lack-a-day, ha, ha, ha, O strange! I'll vow and swear now, ha, ha, ha, marry, and did you ever see the like!

Fore. Why, how now, what's the matter?

Nurse. Pray Heav'n, send your worship good luck, marry and amen with all my heart, for you have put on one stocking with the wrong side outward.

Fore. Ha, how? Faith and troth I'm glad of it, and so I have, that may be good luck in troth, in troth it may, very good luck: nay, I have had some omens: I got out of bed backwards too this morning, without premeditation; pretty good that too; but then I stumbled coming down stairs, and met a weasel; bad omens those: some bad, some good, our lives are chequer'd: mirth and sorrow, want and plenty, night and day, make up our time—But in troth I am pleas'd at my stocking; very well

pleas'd at my stocking—Oh, here's my niece!—Sirrah, go tell Sir Sampson Legend I'll wait on him if he's at leisure,—'tis now three o'clock, a very good hour for business. Mercury governs this hour.

S C E N E III.

ANGELICA, FORESIGHT, NURSE.

Ang. Is it not a good hour for pleasure too, uncle? pray lend me your coach, mine is out of order.

Fore. What, would you be gadding too? Sure all females are mad to-day—It is of evil portent, and bodes mischief to the master of a family—I remember an old prophecy written by Messalah the Arabian, and thus translated by a reverend Buckinghamshire bard.

“ When housewives all the house forsake,
 “ And leave goodman to brew and bake,
 “ Withouten guile, then be it said,
 “ That house doth stond upon its head;
 “ And when the head is set in grond,
 “ Ne marl, if it be fruitful fond.”

Fruitful, the head-fruitful, that bodes horns; the fruit of the head is horns—Dear niece, stay at home—For by the head of the house is meant the husband; the prophecy needs no explanation.

Ang. Well, but I can neither make you a cuckold, uncle, by going abroad; nor secure you from being one, by staying at home.

Fore. Yes, yes; while there's one woman left, the prophecy is not in full force.

Ang. But my inclinations are in force; I have a mind to go abroad; and if you won't lend me your coach, I'll take a hackney, or a chair, and leave you to erect a scheme, and find who's in conjunction with your wife. Why don't you keep her at home, if you're jealous of her when she's abroad? You know my aunt is a little re-

trograde (as you call it) in her nature. Uncle, I'm afraid you are not lord of the ascendant, ha, ha, ha!

Fore. Well, jill-flirt, you are very pert—and always ridiculing that celestial science.

Ang. Nay, uncle, don't be angry—If you are, I'll rip up all your false prophecies, ridiculous dreams, and idle divinations. I'll swear you are a nuisance to the neighbourhood——What a bustle did you keep against the last invisible eclipse, laying in provision, as 'twere for a siege! What a world of fire and candle, matches and tinder-boxes did you purchase! One would have thought we were ever after to live under ground, or at least making a voyage to Greenland, to inhabit there all the dark season.

Fore. Why, you malapert slut——

Ang. Will you lend me your coach, or I'll go on——
Nay, I'll declare how you prophesied popery was coming, only because the butler had mislaid some of the apostle spoons, and thought they were lost. Away went religion and spoonmeat together—Indeed, uncle, I'll indite you for a wizard.

Fore. How, huffy! was there ever such a provoking minx!

Nurse. O merciful father, how she talks!

Ang. Yes, I can make oath of your unlawful midnight practices; you and the old nurse there——

Nurse. Marry, Heav'n defend—I at midnight practices!——O Lord, what's here to do!——I in unlawful doings with my master's worship!——Why, did you ever hear the like now?—Sir, did ever I do any thing of your midnight concerns—but warm your bed, and tuck you up, and set the candle and your tobacco-box, and your urinal by you, and now and then rub the soles of your feet?—O Lord, I?——

Ang. Yes, I saw you together, through the key-hole of the closet, one night, like Saul and the witch of Endor, turning the sieve and sheers, and pricking your thumbs, to write poor innocent servants names in blood,

about a little nutmeg-grater, which she had forgot in the caudle-cup—Nay, I know something worse, if I would speak of it—

Fore. I defy you, huffy; but I'll remember this, I'll be reveng'd on you, cockatrice; I'll hamper you—You have your fortune in your own hands—but I'll find a way to make your lover, your prodigal spendthrift gallant, Valentine, pay for all, I will.

Ang. Will you? I care not, but all shall out then—look to't, nurse; I can bring witness that you have a great unnatural teat under your left arm, and he another; and that you suckle a young devil in the shape of a tabby-cat, by turns, I can.

Nurse. A teat, a teat, I an unnatural teat! O the false slanderous thing; feel, feel here, if I have any thing but like another Christian. [Crying.]

Fore. I will have patience, since it is the will of the stars I should be thus tormented—This is the effect of the malicious conjunctions and oppositions in the third house of my nativity; there the curse of kindred was foretold—But I will have my doors lock'd up—I'll punish you, not a man shall enter my house.

Ang. Do, uncle, lock 'em up quickly before my aunt come home—You'll have a letter for alimony to-morrow morning—But let me be gone first, and then let no mankind come near the house, but converse with spirits and the celestial signs, the bull, and the ram, and the goat. Bless me! there are a great many horned beasts among the twelve signs, uncle. But cuckolds go to Heaven.

Fore. But there's but one virgin among the twelve signs, spit-fire, but one virgin.

Ang. Nor there had not been that one, if she had had to do with any thing but astrologers, uncle. That makes my aunt go abroad.

Fore. How? how? is that the reason? Come, you know something; tell me, and I'll forgive you; do, good-niece—Come, you shall have my coach and horses—Faith and troth, you shall—Does my wife complain?

Come, I know women tell one another——She is young and sanguine, has a wanton hazle eye, and was born under Gemini, which may incline her to society; she has a mole upon her lip, with a moist palm, and an open liberality on the mount of Venus.

Ang. Ha, ha, ha.

Fore. Do you laugh?——Well, gentlewoman, I'll——But come, be a good girl, don't perplex your poor uncle, tell me——won't you speak? Odd, I'll——

S C E N E IV.

[*To them*] SERVANT.

Ser. Sir Sampson is coming down to wait upon you—

Ang. Good b'w'ye, uncle—Call me a chair,——I'll find out my aunt, and tell her, she must not come home.

Fore. I'm so perplex'd and vex'd, I am not fit to receive him; I shall scarce recover myself before the hour be past: go, nurse, tell Sir Sampson I'm ready to wait on him.

Nurse. Yes, Sir.

Fore. Well——Why, if I was born to be a cuckold, there's no more to be said—he's here already.

S C E N E V.

FORESIGHT and Sir SAMPSON LEGEND with a paper.

Sir Samp. Nor no more to be done, old boy; that's plain——here 'tis, I have it in my hand, old Ptolomee; I'll make the ungracious prodigal know who begat him; I will, old Nostrodamus. What, I warrant my son thought nothing belong'd to a father, but forgiveness and affection; no authority, no correction, no arbitrary power; nothing to be done, but for him to offend, and me to pardon. I warrant you, if he danc'd till doomsday, he thought I was to pay the piper. Well, but here it is under black and white, Signatum, Sigillatum, and

Deliberatum; that as soon as my son Benjamin is arriv'd, he is to make over to him his right of inheritance. Where's my daughter that is to be——hah! old Merlin! body o'me, I'm so glad I'm reveng'd on this undutiful rogue.

Fore. Odsso, let me see; let me see the paper——Ay, faith and troth, here 'tis, if it will but hold——I wish things were done, and the conveyance made——When was this sign'd, what hour? Odsso, you should have consulted me for the time. Well, but we'll make haste—

Sir Samp. Haste, ay, ay; haste enough, my son Ben will be in town to-night——I have order'd my lawyer to draw up writings of settlement and jointure——All shall be done to-night——No matter for the time; prythee, brother Foresight, leave superstition——Pox o'th' time; there's no time but the time present, there's no more to be said of what's past, and all that is to come will happen. If the sun shine by day, and the stars by night, why, we shall know one another's faces without the help of a candle, and that's all the stars are good for.

Fore. How, how? Sir Sampson, that all? Give me leave to contradict you, and tell you, you are ignorant.

Sir Samp. I tell you I am wise; and *sapiens dominabitur astris*; there's Latin for you to prove, and an argument to confound your Ephemeris——Ignorant!—I tell you, I have travel'd, old Fircu, and know the globe. I have seen the Antipodes, where the sun rises at midnight, and sets at noon-day.

Fore. But I tell you, I have travell'd, and travell'd in the celestial spheres, know the signs and the planets, and their houses. Can judge of motions direct and retrograde, of Sextiles, Quadrates, Trines and Oppositions, fiery Trigons and aquatical Trigons. Know whether life shall be long or short, happy or unhappy, whether diseases are curable or incurable. If journêys shall be prosperous, undertakings successful; or goods stol'n recover'd, I know——

Sir Samp. I know the length of the emperor of China's foot; have kiss'd the Great Mogul's slipper, and rid a hunting upon an elephant with the Cham of Tartary.— Body o'me, I have made a cuckold of a king, and the present majesty of Bantam is the issue of these loins.

Fore. I know when travellers lie or speak truth, when they don't know it themselves.

Sir Samp. I have known an astrologer made a cuckold in the twinkling of a star; and seen a conjurer, that cou'd not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

Fore. What, does he twit me with my wife too? I must be better inform'd of this,——[*Aside.*]——Do you mean my wife, Sir Sampson? Tho' you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet by the body of the sun——

Sir Samp. By the horns of the moon, you wou'd say, Brother Capricorn.

Fore. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandevil; Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude. Take back your paper of inheritance; fend your son to sea again. I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, ere she shall incorporate with a contemner of sciences, and a defamer of virtue.

Sir Samp. Body o'me, I have gone too far;——I must not provoke honest Albumazar,——an Egyptian mummy is an illustrious creature, my trusty hieroglyphic; and may have significations of futurity about him; ods bud, I would my son were an Egyptian mummy for thy sake. What, thou art not angry for a jest, my good Haly?——I reverence the sun, moon and stars with all my heart.——What, I'll make thee a present of a mummy: now I think on't, body o'me, I have a shoulder of an Egyptian king, that I purloin'd from one of the pyramids, powder'd with hieroglyphics; thou shalt have it brought home to thy house, and make an entertainment for all the Philomaths, and students in physic and astrology in and about London.

Fore. But what do you know of my wife, Sir Sampson?

Sir Samp. Thy wife is a constellation of virtues; she's the moon, and thou art the man in the moon: nay, she is more illustrious than the moon; for she has her chastity without her inconstancy; 'sbud, I was but in jest.

S C E N E VI.

[*To them*] J E R E M Y.

Sir Samp. How now, who sent for you? Ha! what would you have?

Fore. Nay, if you were but in jest———Who's that fellow? I don't like his physiognomy.

Sir Samp. My son, Sir; what son, Sir? My son Benjamin, hoh?

Jer. No, Sir, Mr Valentine, my master——'tis the first time he has been abroad since his confinement, and he comes to pay his duty to you.

Sir Samp. Well, Sir.

S C E N E VII.

FORESIGHT, Sir SAMPSON, VALENTINE,
J E R E M Y.

Jer. He is here, Sir.

Val. Your blessing, Sir.

Sir Samp. You've had it already, Sir. I think I sent it to you to-day in a bill of four thousand pound: a great deal of money, Brother Foresight.

Fore. Ay, indeed, Sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man; I wonder what he can do with it.

Sir Samp. Body o'me, so do I.——Harkye, Valentine, if there be too much, refund the superfluity; dost hear, boy?

Val. Superfluity, Sir, it will scarce pay my debts.——I hope you will have more indulgence, than to oblige me to those hard conditions which my necessity sign'd to.

Sir Samp. Sir, how, I beseech you, what were you pleas'd to intimate concerning indulgence?

Val. Why, Sir, that you would not go to the extremity of the conditions, but release me at least from some part——

Sir Samp. Oh, Sir, I understand you——that's all, ha?

Val. Yes, Sir, all that I presume to ask——But what you, out of fatherly fondness, will be pleas'd to add, shall be doubly welcome.

Sir Samp. No doubt of it, sweet Sir: but your filial piety, and my fatherly fondness would fit like two tallies——Here's a rogue, Brother Foresight, makes a bargain under hand and seal in the morning, and would be releas'd from it in the afternoon; here's a rogue, dog, here's conscience and honesty; this is your wit now, this is the morality of your wits! You are a wit, and have been a beau, and may be a——Why, firrah, is it not here under hand and seal——Can you deny it?

Val. Sir, I don't deny it.——

Sir Samp. Sirrah, you'll be hang'd; I shall live to see you go up Holborn-hill——Was he not a rogue's face?——Speak, Brother, you understand physiognomy, a hanging look to me——of all my boys the most unlike me; he has a damn'd Tyburn-face, without the benefit of the clergy.

Fore. Hum——truly I don't care to discourage a young man.——He has a violent death in his face; but I hope no danger of hanging.

Val. Sir, is this usage for your son?——for that old weather-headed fool, I know how to laugh at him; but you, Sir——

Sir Samp. You, Sir; and you, Sir;——Why, who are you, Sir?

Val. Your son, Sir.

Samp. That's more than I know, Sir, and I believe not.

Val. Faith, I hope not.

Sir Samp. What, would you have your mother a whore! Did you ever hear the like! Did you ever hear the like! Body o'me——

Val. I would have an excuse for your barbarity and unnatural usage.

Sir Samp. Excuse! impudence! Why, firrah, mayn't I do what I please? Are not you my slave? Did not I beget you? And might not I have chosen whether I would have begot you or no? 'Oons! who are you! Whence came you? What brought you into the world? How came you here, Sir? Here, to stand here, upon those two legs, and look erect with that audacious face, hah? Answer me that? Did you come a volunteer into the world? Or did I, with the lawful authority of a parent, prefs you to the service?

Val. I know no more why I came, than you do why you call'd me. But here I am, and if you don't mean to provide for me, I desire you would leave me as you found me.

Sir Samp. With all my heart: come, uncase, strip, and go naked out of the world as you came into't.

Val. My clothes are soon put off;—but you must also divest me of reason, thought, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of attendants that you begot along with me.

Sir Samp. Body o'me, what a many-headed monster have I propagated!

Val. I am of myself a plain easy simple creature, and to be kept at small expence; but the retinue that you gave me are craving and invincible; they are so many devils that you have rais'd, and will have employment.—

Sir Samp. 'Oons, what had I to do to get children!—can't a private man be born without all these followers?—Why, nothing under an emperor should be born with appetites.—Why, at this rate, a fellow that has but a groat in his pocket, may have a stomach capable of a ten shilling ordinary.

Jer. Nay, that's as clear as the sun; I'll make oath of it before any justice in Middlesex.

Sir Samp. Here's a cormorant too—S'heart, this fel-

How was not born with you?——I did not beget him, did I?——

Jer. By the provision that's made for me, you might have begot me too:——nay, and to tell your Worship another truth, I believe you did, for I find I was born with those same whoreson appetites too, that my master speaks of.

Sir Samp. Why, look you there now——I'll maintain it, that by the rule of right reason, this fellow ought to have been born without a palate.——'s'heart, what should he do with a distinguishing taste?——I warrant now he'd rather eat a pheasant than a piece of poor John: and smell now; why, I warrant he can smell, and loves perfumes above a stink——Why, there's it; and music, don't you love music, scoundrel?

Jer. Yes, I have a reasonable good ear, Sir, as to jiggs and country dances, and the like; I don't much matter your solo's or sonato's; they give me the spleen.

Sir Samp. The spleen, ha, ha, ha, a pox confound you——solo's or sonato's? 'Qons, whose son are you? How were you engender'd, muckworm?

Jer. I am by father the son of a chairman; my mother sold oysters in winter, and cucumbers in summer; and I came up stairs into the world; for I was born in a cellar.

Fore. By your looks, you should go up stairs out of the world too, friend.

Sir Samp. And if this rogue were anatomized now, and dissected, he has vessels of digestion and concoction, and so forth, large enough for the inside of a cardinal, this son of a cucumber.——These things are unaccountable and unreasonable——Body o'me, why was not I a bear? that my cubs might have lived upon sucking their paws. Nature has been provident only to bears and spiders; the one has its nutriment in his own hands; and t'other spins his habitation out of his own entrails.

Val. Fortune was provident enough to supply all the

necessities of my nature, if I had my right of inheritance.

Sir Samp. Again! 'Oons, han't you four thousand pound——if I had it again, I wou'd not give thee a groat,——What, wou'd'st thou have me turn Pelican, and feed thee out of my own vitals!——'S'heart, live by your wits,——You were always fond of the wits.——Now let's see if you have wit enough to keep yourself——Your brother will be in town to-night, or to-morrow morning, and then look you perform covenants, and so your friend and servant——Come, brother Foresight.

S C E N E VIII.

VALENTINE, JEREMY.

Jer. I told you what your visit would come to.

Val. 'Tis as much as I expected——I did not come to see him: I came to Angelica; but since she was gone abroad, it was easily turned another way; and at least look'd well on my side. What's here? Mrs Foresight and Mrs Frail; they are earnest.——I'll avoid 'em.——Come this way, and go and enquire when Angelica will return.

S C E N E IX.

Mrs FORESIGHT, and Mrs FRAIL.

Mrs Frail. What have you to do to watch me! 'S'life, I'll do what I please.

Mrs Fore. You will?

Mrs Frail. Yes marry will I——A great piece of business to go to Covent-Garden Square in a hackney-coach, and take a turn with one's friend.

Mrs Fore. Nay, two or three turns, I'll take my oath.

Mrs Frail. Well, what if I took twenty——I warrant if you had been there, it had been only innocent recrea-

tion,——Lord, where's the comfort of this life, if we can't have the happiness to converse where we like?

Mrs *Fore*. But can't you converse at home?——I own it, I think there's no happiness like conversing with an agreeable man; I don't quarrel at that, nor I don't think but your conversation was very innocent; but the place is public, and to be seen with a man in a hackney-coach is scandalous: what if any body else shou'd have seen you alight, as I did?——How can any-body be happy, while they're in perpetual fear of being seen and censur'd?——Besides, it wou'd not only reflect upon you, sister, but me.

Mrs *Frail*. Pooh, here's a clutter——Why shou'd it reflect upon you?——I don't doubt but you have thought yourself happy in a hackney-coach before now——If I had gone to Knightsbridge, or to Chelsey, or to Spring-Garden, or Barn Elms with a man alone——something might have been said.

Mrs *Fore*. Why, was I ever in any of those places? What do you mean, sister?

Mrs *Frail*. Was I? What do you mean?

Mrs *Fore*. You have been at a worse place.

Mrs *Frail*. I at a worse place, and with a man!

Mrs *Fore*. I suppose you would not go alone to the world's-end.

Mrs *Frail*. The world's end! What, do you mean to banter me?

Mrs *Fore*. Poor innocent! you don't know that there's a place call'd the world's-end? I'll swear you can keep your countenance purely, you'd make an admirable player.

Mrs *Frail*. I'll swear you have a great deal of confidence, and in my mind too much for the stage.

Mrs *Fore*. Very well, that will appear who has most: you never were at the world's-end?

Mrs *Frail*. No.

Mrs *Fore*. You deny it positively to my face?

Mrs *Frail*. Your face, what's your face?

Mrs *Fore*. No matter for that, 'tis as good a face as yours

Mrs *Frail*. Not by a dozen years wearing——But I do deny it positively to your face then.

Mrs *Fore*. I'll allow you now to find fault with my face;——for I'll swear your impudence has put me out of countenance:——but look you here now,——where did you lose this gold bodkin?——O sifter, sifter!

Mrs *Frail*. My bodkin!

Mrs *Fore*. Nay 'tis yours, look at it.

Mrs *Frail*. Well, if you go to that, where did you find this bodkin?——Ah sifter, sifter!——sifter every way.

Mrs *Fore*. O devil on't, that I cou'd not discover her, without betraying myself! [*Aside*.

Mrs *Frail*. I have heard gentlemen say, sifter, that one shou'd take great care, when one makes a thrust in fencing, not to ly open one's self.

Mrs *Fore*. 'Tis very true, sifter: well, since all's out, and as you say, since we are both wounded, let us do what is often done in duels; take care of one another, and grow better friends than before.

Mrs *Frail*. With all my heart: ours are but slight flesh wounds, and if we keep 'em from air, not at all dangerous: well, give me your hand in token of sifterly secrecy and affection.

Mrs *Fore*. Here 'tis with all my heart.

Mrs *Frail*. Well, as an earnest of friendship and confidence, I'll acquaint you with a design that I have. To tell truth, and speak openly to one another, I'm afraid the world have observ'd us more than we have observ'd one another. You have a rich husband, and are provided for; I am at a loss, and have no great stock either of fortune or reputation; and therefore must look sharply about me. Sir Sampson has a son that is expected to-night; and by the account I have heard of his education, can be no conjurer: the estate you know is to be made

over to him :——Now if I could wheedle him, sister, ha? you understand me?

Mrs Fore. I do; and will help you to the utmost of my power——And I can tell you one thing that falls out luckily enough; my aukward daughter-in-law, who you know is design'd to be his wife, is grown fond of Mr Tattle; now if we can improve that, and make her have an aversion for the booby, it may go a great way towards his liking you. Here they come together; and let us contrive some way or other to leave 'em together.

S C E N E X.

[To them] T A T T L E and Miss P R U E.

Miss. Mother, Mother, Mother, look you here.

Mrs Fore. Fy, fy, Miss, how you bawl——Besides, I have told you, you must not call me Mother.

Miss. What must I call you then? are not you my father's wife?

Mrs Fore. Madam; you must say madam——By my soul, I shall fancy myself old indeed, to have this great girl call me Mother——Well, but Miss, what are you so overjoy'd at?

Miss. Look you here, Madam then, what Mr Tattle has giv'n me——Look you here, cousin, here's a snuff-box; nay, there's snuff in't;——here, will you have any?——Oh good! how sweet it is——Mr Tattle is all over sweet, his peruke is sweet, and his gloves are sweet——and his handkerchief is sweet, pure sweet, sweeter than roses——Smell him, Mother, Madam, I mean——He gave me this ring for a kiss.

Tat. O fy, Miss, you must not kiss and tell.

Miss. Yes; I may tell my Mother——And he says he'll give me something to make me smell so——Oh pray lend me your handkerchief——Smell, cousin; he says, he'll give me something that will make my smocks smell this way——Is not it pure?——'Tis better than laven-

der, nun—I'm resolv'd I won't let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks—ha, cousin?

Mrs Frail. Fy, Miss; amongst your linen, you must say—You must never say smock

Miss. Why, it is not bawdy, is it, cousin?

Tat. Oh, Madam; you are too severe upon miss; you must not find fault with her pretty simplicity, it becomes her strangely——Pretty Miss, don't let 'em persuade you out of your innocency.

Mrs Fore. Oh, demn you, toad—I wish you don't persuade her out of her innocency.

Tat. Who I, Madam?——Oh Lord, how can your Ladyship have such a thought——sure you don't know me?

Mrs Frail. Ah devil, sly devil——He's as close, sister, as a confessor——He thinks we don't observe him.

Mrs Fore. A cunning cur, how soon he cou'd find out a fresh harmless creature; and left us, sister, presently.

Tat. Upon reputation——

Mrs Fore. They're all so, sister, these men——they love to have the spoiling of a young thing, they are as fond of it, as of being first in the fashion, or of seeing a new play the first day,——I warrant it would break Mr Tattle's heart, to think that any-body else shou'd be before hand with him.

Tat. Oh Lord, I swear I would not for the world——

Mrs Frail. O hang you; who'll believe you?—You'd be hang'd before you'd confess—we know you—she's very pretty!——Lord, what pure red and white!—she looks so wholesome;——ne'er stir, I don't know, but I fancy, if I were a man——

Miss. How you love to jeer one, cousin!

Mrs Fore. Harkye, sister,——by my soul the girl is spoil'd already——d'ye think she'll ever endure a great lubberly tarpawlin—Gad, I warrant you, she won't let him come near her, after Mr Tattle.

Mrs Frail. O' my soul, I'm afraid not—eh!—filthy

creature, that smells all of pitch and tar—devil take you, you confounded toad——why did you see her before she was married?

Mrs Fore. Nay, why did we let him?—my husband will hang us—He'll think we brought 'em acquainted.

Mrs Frail. Come, faith let us be gone—If my brother Foresight shou'd find us with them;——he'd think so, sure enough.

Mrs Fore. So he wou'd—but then leaving 'em together is as bad——And he's such a sly devil, he'll never miss an opportunity.

Mrs Frail. I don't care; I won't be seen in't.

Mrs Fore. Well, if you should, Mr Tattle, you'll have a world to answer for, remember I wash my hands of it, I'm throughly innocent.

S C E N E XI.

TATTLE, Miss PRUE.

Miss. What makes 'em go away, Mr Tattle? What do they mean, do you know?

Tat. Yes, my dear——I think I can guess—But hang me if I know the reason of it.

Miss. Come, must we not go too?

Tat. No, no, they don't mean that.

Miss. No! What then? What shall you and I do together?

Tat. I must make love to you, pretty Miss; will you let me make love to you?

Miss. Yes, if you please.

Tat. Frank, I'gad, at least. What a pox does Mrs Foresight mean by this civility? Is it to make a fool of me? or does she leave us together out of good morality, and do as she would be done by?——Gad I'll understand it so

[*Aside.*

Miss. Well; and how will you make love to me?——

Come, I long to have you begin—must I make love too? You must tell me how.

Tat. You must let me speak, Miss, you must not speak first; I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

Miss. What, is it like the Catechism?—come then ask me.

Tat. D'ye think you can love me?

Miss. Yes.

Tat. Pooh, pox; you must not say yes already; I shan't care a farthing for you then in a twinkling.

Miss. What must I say then?

Tat. Why, you must say no, or you believe not, or you can't tell——

Miss. Why, must I tell a lie then?

Tat. Yes, if you'd be well-bred. All well-bred persons lie——Besides, you are a woman, you must never speak what you think: your words must contradict your thoughts; but your actions may contradict your words. So, when I ask you, if you can love me, you must say no, but you must love me too.——If I tell you you are handsome, you must deny it, and say I flatter you——But you must think yourself more charming than I speak you:——And like me, for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself——If I ask you to kiss me, you must be angry, but you must not refuse me. If I ask you for more, you must be more angry, ——but more complying; and as soon as ever I make you say you'll cry out, you must be sure to hold your tongue.

Miss. O Lord, I swear this is pure,——I like it better than our old-fashion'd country way of speaking one's mind; ——and must not you lie too?

Tat. Hum!——Yes——But you must believe I speak truth.

Miss. O Gemini! Well, I always had a great mind to tell lies—but they frighted me, and said it was a sin.

Tat. Well, my pretty creature; will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

Miss. No, indeed; I'm angry at you.

[*Runs and kisses him.*]

Tat. Hold, hold, that's pretty well—but you should not have given it me, but have suffer'd me to have taken it.

Miss. Well, we'll do't again.

Tat. With all my heart——Now then my little angel.

[*Kisses her.*]

Miss. Pish!

Tat. That's right—again, my charmer. [Kisses again.]

Miss. O fy, nay, now I can't abide you.

Tat. Admirable! that was as well as if you had been born and bred in Covent-garden. And won't you shew me, pretty *Miss*, where your bed-chamber is?

Miss. No, indeed won't I; but I'll run there and hide myself from you behind the curtains.

Tat. I'll follow you.

Miss. Ah, but I'll hold the door with both hands, and be angry——and you shall push me down before you come in.

Tat. No, I'll come in first, and push you down afterwards.

Miss. Will you? then I'll be more angry, and more complying.

Tat. Then I'll make you cry out.

Miss. Oh, but you shan't, for I'll hold my tongue.

Tat. Oh my dear apt scholar.

Miss. Well, now I'll run and make more haste than you.

Tat. You shall not fly so fast as I'll pursue.

ACT III. SCENE I.

NURSE alone.

MISS! *Miss Prue!*——mercy on me, marry and amen. Why, what's become of the child? why *Miss!* *Miss Foresight!*——Sure, she has lock'd herself up in her cham-

ber, and gone to sleep, or to prayers—Miss! Miss! I hear her—come to your father, child; open the door—open the door, Miss—I hear you cry hush—O Lord, who's there? [*peeps.*] What's here to do?—O the father! a man with her?—Why, Miss, I say! God's my life, here's fine doings towards—O Lord, we're all undone—O you young harlotry! [*knocks.*] Od's my life, won't you open the door? I'll come in the back way.

S C E N E II.

TATTLE, Miss PRUE.

Miss. O Lord, she's coming—and she'll tell my father; what shall I do now!

Tat. Pox take her; if she had staid two minutes longer, I shou'd have with'd for her coming.

Miss. O dear, what shall I say! Tell me, Mr Tattle, tell me a lie.

Tat. There's no occasion for a lie; I could never tell a lie to no purpose—but since we have done nothing, we must say nothing, I think. I hear her; I'll leave you together, and come off as you can.

[*Thrusts her in, and shuts the door.*]

S C E N E III.

TATTLE, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, ANGELICA.

Ang. You can't accuse me of inconstancy; I never told you that I lov'd you.

Val. But I can accuse you of uncertainty, for not telling me whether you did or not.

Ang. You mistake indifference for uncertainty; I never had concern enough to ask myself the question.

Scan. Nor good-nature enough to answer him that did ask you; I'll say that for you, Madam.

Ang. What, are you setting up for good nature?

Scan. Only for the affectation of it, as the women do for ill-nature.

Ang. Persuade your friend that it is all affectation.

Scan. I shall receive no benefit from the opinion; for I know no effectual difference between continued affectation and reality.

Tat. *coming up.*] Scandal; are you in private discourse, any thing of secrecy? *[Aside to Scan.*

Scan. Yes, but I dare trust you; we were talking of Angelica's love to Valentine; you won't speak of it?

Tat. No, no, not a syllable—I know that's a secret, for 'tis whisper'd every where.

Scan. Ha, ha, ha.

Ang. What is, Mr Tattle? I heard you say something was whisper'd every where.

Tat. Your love of Valentine.

Ang. How!

Tat. No, Madam, his love for your Ladyship—Gad take me, I beg your pardon—for I never heard a word of your Ladyship's passion till this instant.

Ang. My passion! and who told you of my passion, pray, Sir?

Scan. Why, is the devil in you? Did not I tell it you for a secret?

Tat. Gad so, but I thought she might have been trusted with her own affairs.

Scan. Is that your discretion? Trust a woman with herself?

Tat. You say true, I beg your pardon—I'll bring all off—it was impossible, Madam, for me to imagine, that a person of your Ladyship's wit and gallantry could have so long received the passionate addresses of the accomplished Valentine, and yet remain insensible; therefore you will pardon me, if from a just weight of his merit, with your Ladyship's good judgment, I form'd the balance of a reciprocal affection.

Val. O the devil, what damn'd coſtly poet has given thee this leſſon of fuſtian to get by rote?

Ang. I dare ſwear you wrong him, it is his own——and Mr Tattle only judges of the ſucceſs of others, from the effects of his own merit. For certainly Mr Tattle was never denied any thing in his life.

Tat. O Lord! yes, indeed, Madam, ſeveral times.

Ang. I ſwear I don't think it poſſible.

Tat. Yes, I vow and ſwear I have: Lord, Madam, I'm the moſt unfortunate man in the world, and the moſt cruelly us'd by the ladies.

Ang. Nay, now you're ungrateful.

Tat. No, I hope not—'tis as much ingratitude to own ſome favours, as to conceal others.

Val. There, now 'tis out.

Ang. I don't underſtand you now: I thought you had never aſk'd any thing, but what a lady might modeſtly grant, and you confeſs.

Scan. So faith, your buſineſs is done here; now you may go brag ſomewhere elſe.

Tat. Brag! O heavens! why, did I name any body?

Ang. No, I ſuppoſe that is not in your power; but you wou'd if you cou'd, no doubt on't.

Tat. Not in my power, Madam! What, does your Ladyſhip mean that I have no woman's reputation in my power?

Scan. 'Oons, why, you won't own it, will you? [*Aſide.*

Tat. Faith, Madam, you're in the right: no more I have, as I hope to be fav'd; I never had it in my power to ſay any thing to a lady's prejudice in my life——for as I was telling you, Madam, I have been the moſt unſucceſſful creature living, in things of that nature; and never had the good fortune to be truſted once with a lady's ſecret, not once.

Ang. No!

Val. Not once, I dare anſwer for him.

Scan. And I'll anſwer for him; for I'm ſure if he had,

he would have told me; I find, Madam, you don't know Mr Tattle.

Tat. No indeed, Madam, you don't know me at all, I find. For sure my intimate friends wou'd have known—

Ang. Then it seems you would have told, if you had been trusted.

Tat. O pox, Scandal, that was too far put—Never have told particulars, Madam. Perhaps I might have talk'd as of a third person—or have introduc'd an amour of my own, in conversation, by way of novel: but never have explain'd particulars.

Ang. But whence comes the reputation of Mr Tattle's secrecy, if he was never trusted?

Stan. Why thence it arises—The thing is proverbially spoken; but may be apply'd to him—As if we should say in general terms, he only is secret who never was trusted; a satirical proverb upon our sex—There's another upon yours—As, she is chaste who was never ask'd the question. That's all.

Val. A couple of very civil proverbs, truly: 'tis hard to tell whether the Lady or Mr Tattle be the more oblig'd to you. For you found her virtue upon the backwardness of the men, and his secrecy upon the mistrust of the women.

Tat. Gad, 'tis very true, Madam, I think we are oblig'd to acquit ourselves—And for my part—But your Ladyship is to speak first.——

Ang. Am I? Well, I freely confess I have resisted a great deal of temptation.

Tat. And 'Gad, I have given some temptation that has not been resisted.

Val. Good.

Ang. I cite Valentine here, to declare to the court how fruitless he has found his endeavours, and to confess all his solicitations and my denials.

Val. I am ready to plead, not guilty for you; and guilty, for myself.

Scan. So, why this is fair, here's demonstration with a witness.

Tat. Well, my witnesses are not present——But I confess I have had favours from persons——But as the favours are numberless, so the persons are nameless.

Scan. Pooh, this proves nothing.

Tat. No? I can shew letters, lockets, pictures, and rings; and if there be occasion for witnesses, I can summon the maids at the chocolate-houses, all the porters at Pall-Mall and Covent-Garden, the door keepers at the play-house, the drawers at Locket's, Pontack's, the Rummer, Spring-Garden; my own landlady, and valet de chambre; who all shall make oath, that I receive more letters than the secretary's office; and that I have more vizzor-masks to enquire for me, than ever went to see the hermaphrodite, or the naked prince. And it is notorious, that in a country church, once, an enquiry being made, who I was; it was answer'd, I was the famous Tattle, who had ruin'd so many women.

Val. It was there, I suppose, you got the nick-name of the Great Turk.

Tat. True, I was call'd Turk-Tattle all over the parish——The next Sunday all the old women kept their daughters at home, and the parson had not half his congregation. He wou'd have brought me into the spiritual court, but I was reveng'd upon him, for he had a handsome daughter whom I initiated into the science. But I repented it afterwards, for it was talk'd of in town——And a lady of quality that shall be nameless, in a raging fit of jealousy, came down in her coach and six horses, and expos'd herself upon my account; gad I was very sorry for it with all my heart——You know whom I mean——You know where we raffled——

Scan. Mum, Tattle.

Val. 'sdeath, are you not ashamed?

Ang. O barbarous! I never heard so insolent a piece of vanity——Fy, Mr Tattle——I'll swear I could not have believ'd it——Is this your secrecy?

Tat. Gad so, the heat of my story carried me beyond my discretion, as the heat of the lady's passion hurry'd her beyond her reputation——But I hope you don't know whom I mean; for there were a great many ladies ruffled——Pox on't, now could I bite off my tongue.

Scan. No, don't; for then you'll tell us no more——Come, I'll recommend a song to you upon the hint of my two proverbs, and I see one in the next room that will sing it. [Goes to the door.]

Tat. For Heaven's sake if you do guess, say nothing; gad, I'm very unfortunate.

Scan. Pray sing the first song in the last new play.

S O N G.

Set by Mr John Eccles.

I.

*A nymph and a swain to Apollo once pray'd,
The swain had been jilted, the nymph been betray'd:
Their intent was to try if the oracle knew
E'er a nymph that was chaste, or a swain that was true.*

II.

*Apollo was mute, and had like t'have been pos'd,
But sagely at length by this secret disclos'd:
"He alone won't betray in whom none will confide:
"And the nymph may be chaste that has never been try'd."*

S C E N E IV.

[To them] Sir SAMPSON, Mrs FRAIL, MRS PRUE,
and SERVANT.

Sir Samp. Is Ben come? Odso, my son Ben come? Odd I'm glad on't: where is he? I long to see him. Now, Mrs Frail, you shall see my son Ben——Body o'me, he's

the hopes of my family—I han't seen him these three years—I warrant he's grown—Call him in, bid him make haste—I'm ready to cry for joy.

Mrs Frail. Now, Miss, you shall see your husband.

Miss. Pish, he shall be none of my husband.

[*Aside to Frail.*

Mrs Frail. Hush: well he shan't, leave that to me—I'll beckon Mr Tattle to us.

Ang. Won't you stay and see your brother?

Val. We are the twin-stars, and cannot shine in one sphere; when he rises I must set.—Besides, if I shou'd stay, I don't know but my father in good-nature may press me to the immediate signing the deed of conveyance of my estate; and I'll defer it as long as I can——Well, you'll come to a resolution?

Ang. I can't. Resolution must come to me, or I shall never have one.

Scan. Come, Valentine, I'll go with you; I've something in my head to communicate to you.

S C E N E V.

ANGELICA, Sir SAMPSON, TATTLE, Mrs
FRAIL, Miss PRUE.

Sir Samp. What, is my son Valentine gone? What, is he sneak'd off, and would not see his brother? There's an unnatural whelp! there's an ill-natured dog! What, were you here too, Madam, and could not keep him? cou'd neither love, nor duty, nor natural affection oblige him? Odsbud, Madam, have no more to say to him; he is not worth your consideration. The rogue has not a drachm of generous love about him: all interest, all interest; he's an undone scoundrel, and courts your estate: body o'me, he does not care a doit for your person.

Ang. I'm pretty even with him, Sir Sampson; for if ever I cou'd have lik'd any thing in him, it should have

been his estate too: but since that's gone, the bait's off, and the naked hook appears.

Sir Samp. Ods-bud, well spoken; and you are a wiser woman than I thought you were: for most young women now-a-days are to be tempted with a naked hook.

Ang. If I marry, Sir Sampson, I'm for a good estate with any man, and for any man with a good estate: therefore if I were obliged to make a choice, I declare I'd rather have you than your son.

Sir Samp. Faith and troth you're a wise woman, and I'm glad to hear you say so; I was afraid you were in love with the reprobate; odd, I was sorry for you with all my heart: hang him, mungrel; cast him off; you shall see the rogue shew himself, and make $1\ \pounds$ to some depending Cadua of fourscore for sustenance. Odd, I love to see a young spendthrift forced to cling to an old woman for support, like ivy round a dead oak: faith I do; I love to see 'em hug and cotton together, like down upon a thistle.

S C E N E VI.

[To them] BEN LEGEND and SERVANT.

Ben. Where's father?

Serv. There, Sir, his back's toward you.

Sir Samp. My son Ben! Bless thee, my dear boy; body o'me, thou art heartily welcome.

Ben. Thank you, father, and I'm glad to see you.

Sir Samp. Ods-bud, and I am glad to see thee; kifs me, boy, kifs me again and again, dear Ben. [Kisses him.]

Ben. So, so, enough, father——Mefs, I'd rather kifs these gentlewomen.

Sir Samp. And so thou shalt——Mrs Angelica, my son Ben.

Ben. Forsooth, if you please——[Salutes her.] Nay, Mistress, I'm not for dropping anchor here; about ship

i'faith—[*Kisses Frail.*] Nay, and you too, my little cock-boat—so ——— [*Kisses Miss;*

Tat. Sir, you're welcome ashore.

Ben. Thank you, thank you, friend.

Sir Samp. Thou hast been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw thee.

Ben. Ey, ey, been ! been far enough, and that be all—Well, father, and how do all at home ? How does brother Dick, and brother Vall ?

Sir Samp. Dick, body o'me, Dick has been dead these two years ; I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.

Ben. Mefs, that's true ; marry, I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say—Well, and how ? I have many questions to ask you : ^{all} All, you ben't marry'd again, father, be you ?

Sir Samp. No, I intend you shall marry, Ben ; I would not marry for thy sake.

Ben. Nay, what does that signify ?——An you marry again——why then, I'll go to sea again, so there's one for t'other, an that be all——Pray don't let me be your hindrance ; e'en marry a God's name, an the wind fit that way. As for my part, mayhap I have no mind to marry.

Mrs Frail. That wou'd be pity, such a handsome young gentleman.

Ben. Handsome ! he, he, he, nay, forsooth, an you be for joking, I'll joke with you ; for I love my jest, an the ship were sinking, as we say'n at sea. But I'll tell you why I don't much stand towards matrimony. I love to roam about from port to port, and from land to land : I could never abide to be port-bound, as we call it ; now, a man that is marry'd, has, as it were, d'ye see, his feet in the bilboes, and mayhap mayn't get 'em out again when he wou'd.

Sir Samp. Ben's a wag.

Ben. A man that is marry'd, d'ye see, is no more like another man, than a galley-slave is like one of us free

failors; he is chain'd to an oar all his life; and mayhap forced to tug a leaky vessel into the bargain.

Sir Samp. A very wag, Ben's a very wag; only a little rough, he wants a little polishing

Mrs Frail. Not at all; I like his humour mightily, 'tis plain and honest; I should like such a humour in a husband extremely.

Ben. Say'n you so, forsooth? Marry, and I should like such a handsome gentlewoman for a bedfellow hugely; how say you, Mistress, would you like going to sea? Mefs, you're a tight vessel, and well rigg'd, an you were but as well mann'd.

Mrs Frail. I should not doubt that, if you were master of me.

Ben. But I'll tell you one thing, an you come to sea in a high wind, or that lady—you mayn't carry so much sail o' your head—Top and top-gallant, by the Mefs.

Mrs Frail. No, why so?

Ben. Why, an you do, you may run the risk to be overfet, and then you'll carry your keels above water, he, he, he.

Ang. I swear, Mr Benjamin is the veriest wag in nature; an absolute sea-wit.

Sir Samp. Nay, Ben has parts, but as I told you before, they want a little polishing: you must not take any thing ill, Madam.

Ben. No, I hope the gentlewoman is not angry; I mean all in good part; for if I give a jest, I'll take a jest: and so, forsooth, you may be as free with me.

Ang. I thank you, Sir, I am not at all offended;— But methinks, Sir Sampson, you should leave him alone with his mistress. Mr Tattle, we must not hinder lovers.

Tat. Well, Miss, I have your promise. [*Aside to Miss.*

Sir Samp. Body o'me, Madam, you say true:— Look you, Ben, this is your mistress—Come, Miss, you must not be shame-fac'd; we'll leave you together.

Miss. I can't abide to be left alone, mayn't my cousin stay with me?

Sir Samp. No, no. Come, let's away.

Ben. Look you, father, mayhap the young woman mayn't take a liking to me.—

Sir Samp. I warrant thee, boy; come, come, we'll be gone; I'll venture that.

S C E N E VII.

BEN and Miss PRUE.

Ben. Come, Mistrefs, will you please to sit down? for an you stand a-stern a that'n, we shall never grapple together—Come, I'll haul a chair; there, an you please to sit, I'll sit by you.

Miss. You need not sit so near one; if you have any thing to say, I can hear you further off, I an't deaf.

Ben. Why, that's true, as you say; nor an't I dumb; I can be heard as far as another——I'll have off to please you. [*Sits further off.*] An we were a league asunder, I'd undertake to hold discourse with you, an 'twere not a main high wind indeed, and full in my teeth. Look you, forsooth, I am, as it were, bound for the land of matrimony; 'tis a voyage, d'ye see, that was none of my seeking, I was commanded by father, and if you like of it, mayhap I may steer into your harbour. How say you, Mistrefs? The short of the thing is, that if you like me, and I like you, we may chance to swing in a hammock together.

Miss. I don't know what to say to you, nor I don't care to speak with you at all.

Ben. No, I'm sorry for that.——But pray, why are you so scornful?

Miss. As long as one must not speak one's mind, one had better not speak at all; I think, and truly I won't tell a lie for the matter.

Ben. Nay, you say true in that, 'tis but a folly to lie :

for to speak one thing, and to think just the contrary way, is as it were, to look one way and row another. Now, for my part, d'ye see, I'm for carrying things above board, I'm not for keeping any thing under hatches,—— so that if you ben't as willing as I, say so a God's name, there's no harm done; may-hap you may be shame-fac'd, some maidens tho'f they love a man well enough, yet they don't care to tell'n so to's face: if that's the case, why silence gives consent.

Miss. But I'm sure it is not so, for I'll speak sooner than you should believe that; and I'll speak truth, though one should always tell a lie to a man; and I don't care, let my father do what he will; I'm too big to be whipt, so I'll tell you plainly, I don't like you, nor love you at all, nor never will, that's more: so, there's your answer for you; and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing.

Ben. Look you, young woman, you may learn to give good words however. I spoke you fair, d'ye see, and civil.——As for your love or your liking, I don't value it of a rope's end;——and may-hap I like you as little as you do me.——What I said was in obedience to father; gad I fear a whipping no more than you do. But I tell you one thing, if you shou'd give such language at sea, you'd have a cat o' nine-tails laid cross your shoulders. Flesh! who are you? You heard t'other handsome young woman speak civilly to me, of her own accord: whatever you think of yourself, gad I don't think you are any more to compare to her, than a can of small bear to a bowl of punch.

Miss. Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here, that loves me, and I love him; and if he sees you speak to me any more, he'll thrash your jacket for you, he will, you great sea-calf.

Ben. What, do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? Will he thrash my jacket?—Let'n—let'n—But and he comes near me, may-hap I may have giv'n a salt eel for's supper, for all that. What does father

mean to leave me alone as soon as I come home, with such a dirty dowdy?—Sea-calf! I an't calf enough to lick your chalk'd face, you cheefe-curd you.—Marry thee! Oons, I'll marry a Lapland witch as soon, and live upon felling contrary winds, and wreck'd vessels.

Miss. I won't be call'd names, nor I won't be abus'd thus, so I won't.—If I were a man—[cries.]—you durst not talk at this rate—No, you durst not, you stinking tar-barrel.

S C E N E VIII.

[To them] Mrs FORESIGHT and Mrs FRAIL.

Mrs Fore. They have quarrel'd just as we cou'd wish.

Ben. Tar-barrel? Let your sweet-heart there call me so, if he'll take your part, your Tom Essence, and I'll say something to him; gad I'll lace his musk doublet for him, I'll make him stink; he shall smell more like a weasel than a civet cat, afore I ha' done with 'en.

Mrs Fore. Bless me, what's the matter? Miss? What does she cry?—Mr Benjamin, what have you done to her?

Ben. Let her cry: the more she cries, the less she'll—she has been gathering foul weather in her mouth, and now it rains out at her eyes.

Mrs Fore. Come, Miss, come along with me, and tell me, poor child.

Mrs Frail. Lord, what shall we do? there's my brother Foresight, and Sir Sampson coming. Sister, do you take Miss down into the parlour, and I'll carry Mr Benjamin into my chamber, for they must not know that they are fall'n out.—Come, Sir, will you venture yourself with me?

[Looking kindly on him.]

Ben. Venture, Miss, and that I will, tho' 'twere to sea in a storm.

S C E N E IX.

Sir SAMPSON and FORESIGHT.

Sir Samp. I left 'em together here; what, are they gone? Ben's a brisk boy; he has got her into a corner, father's own son, faith, he'll touzle her, and mouzle her; the rogue's sharp fet, coming from sea; if he should not stay for saying grace, old Foresight, but fall to without the help of a parson, ha? Odd, if he shou'd, I cou'd not be angry with him; 'twou'd be but like me, *A chip of the old block*. Ha! thou'rt melancholic, old prognostication; as melancholic as if thou hadst spilt the salt, or par'd thy nails on a Sunday.—Come, cheer up, look about thee: look up, old star-gazer. Now is he poring upon the ground for a crooked pin, or an old horse-nail, with the head towards him.

Fore. Sir Sampson, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Sir Samp. With all my heart.

Fore. At ten o'clock, punctually at ten.

Sir Samp. To a minute, to a second; thou shalt set thy watch, and the bridegroom shall observe its motions; they shall be married to a minute; go to bed to a minute; and when the alarm strikes, they shall keep time like the figures of St Dunstan's clock, and *consummatum est* shall ring all over the parish.—

S C E N E X.

[*To them*] SCANDAL.

Scan. Sir Sampson, sad news.

Fore. Bless us!

Sir Samp. Why, what's the matter?

Scan. Can't you guess at what ought to afflict you and him, and all of us, more than any thing else?

Sir Samp. Body o'me, I don't know any universal grievance, but a new tax, or the loss of the Canary fleet. Unless popery shou'd be landed in the West, or the French fleet were at an anchor at Blackwall.

Scan. No. Undoubtedly Mr Foresight knew all this, and might have prevented it.

Fore. 'Tis no earthquake!

Scan. No, not yet; nor whirlwind. But we don't know what it may come to.—But it has had a consequence already that touches us all.

Sir Samp. Why, body o'me, out with't.

Scan. Something has appear'd to your son Valentine—He's gone to bed upon't, and very ill—He speaks little, yet he says he has a world to say. Asks for his father and the wife Foresight; talks of Raymond Lully, and the ghost of Lilly. He has secrets to impart I suppose to you two. I can get nothing out of him but sighs. He desires he may see you in the morning, but would not be disturb'd to-night, because he has some business to do in a dream.

Sir Samp. Hoity toity, what have I to do with his dreams or his divinations—Body o'me, this is a trick to defer signing the conveyance. I warrant, the devil will tell him in a dream, that he must not part with his estate: but I'll bring him a parson, to tell him that the devil's a liar—Or, if that won't do, I'll bring a lawyer that shall out-lie the devil. And so I'll try whether my black-guard or his shall get the better of the day.

S C E N E XI.

SCANDAL, FORESIGHT.

Scan. Alas, Mr Foresight, I'm afraid all is not right—You are a wise man, and a conscientious man; a searcher into obscurity and futurity; and if you commit an error, it is with a great deal of consideration and discretion, and caution.—

Fore. Ah, good Mr Scandal——

Scan. Nay, nay, 'tis manifest; I do not flatter you——
But Sir Sampson is hasty, very hasty;—I'm afraid he is not scrupulous enough, Mr Foresight—He has been wicked, and Heav'n grant he may mean well in his affair with you—But my mind gives me, these things cannot be wholly insignificant. You are wise, and shou'd not be over-reach'd, methinks you shou'd not——

Fore. Alas, Mr Scandal.—*Humaxum est errare.*

Scan. You say true, man will err; mere man will err—but you are something more—There has been wise men; but they were such as you—men who consulted the stars, and were observers of omens—Solomon was wise, but how?—by his judgment in astrology—So says Pineda in his third book and eighth chapter——

Fore. You are learned, Mr Scandal——

Scan. A trifler——but a lover of art——And the wise men of the East owed their instruction to a star, which is rightly observ'd by Gregory the Great in favour of astrology! And Albertus Magnus makes it the most valuable science. Because, (says he) it teaches us to consider the causation of causes, in the causes of things.

Fore. I protest I honour you, Mr Scandal——I did not think you had been read in these matters——Few young men are inclin'd——

Scan. I thank my stars that have inclined me——But I fear this marriage, and making over this estate, this transferring of a rightful inheritance, will bring judgments upon us. I prophesy it, and I wou'd not have the fate of Cassandra, not to be believ'd. Valentine is disturb'd, what can be the cause of that? and Sir Sampson is hurried on by an unusual violence——I fear he does not act wholly from himself; methinks he does not look as he used to do.

Fore. He was always of an impetuous nature——But as to this marriage, I have consulted the stars, and all appearances are prosperous——

Scan. Come, come, Mr Foresight, let not the pro-

spect of worldly lucre carry you beyond your judgment, nor against your conscience—You are not satisfied that you act justly.

Fore. How?

Scan. You are not satisfied, I say.—I am loth to discourage you—But it is palpable that you are not satisfied.

Fore. How does it appear, Mr Scandal? I think I am very well satisfied.

Scan. Either you suffer yourself to deceive yourself; or you do not know yourself.

Fore. Pray explain yourself.

Scan. Do you sleep well o' nights?

Fore. Very well.

Scan. Are you certain? You do not look so.

Fore. I am in health, I think.

Scan. So was Valentine this morning; and look'd just so.

Fore. How! am I alter'd any way? I don't perceive it.

Scan. That may be, but your beard is longer than it was two hours ago.

Fore. Indeed! blefs me!

S C E N E XII.

[*To them*] Mrs FORESIGHT.

Mrs Fore. Husband, will you go to bed? 'Tis ten a clock. Mr Scandal, your servant.

Scan. Pox on her, she has interrupted my design—but I must work her into the project. You keep early hours, Madam.

Mrs Fore. Mr Foresight is punctual, we sit up after him.

Fore. My dear, pray lend me your glafs, your little looking-glafs.

Scan. Pray, lend it him, Madam—I'll tell you the reason. [*She gives him the glafs: Scandal and she whisper.*] My passion for you is grown so violent—that I am no longer master of myself—I was interrupted in the morn-

ing, when you had charity enough to give me your attention, and I had hopes of finding another opportunity of explaining myself to you—but was disappointed all this day; and the uneasiness that has attended me ever since, brings me now hither at this unseasonable hour.—

Mrs Fore. Was there ever such impudence, to make love to me before my husband's face! I'll swear I'll tell him.

Scan. Do, I'll die a martyr, rather than disclaim my passion. But come a little farther this way, and I'll tell you what project I had to get him out of the way, that I might have an opportunity of waiting upon you. [*Whisper.*
[*Fore* looks in the glass.]

Fore. I do not see any revolution here;—methinks I look with a serene and benign aspect—pale, a little pale—but the roses of these cheeks have been gather'd many years;—ha! I do not like that sudden flushing—Gone already!—hem, hem, hem! faintish. My heart is pretty good; yet it beats; and my pulses, ha!—I have none—Mercy on me---hum---Yes, here they are---Gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, hey! whither will they hurry me?---Now they're gone again---And now I'm faint again; and pale again, and hem! and my, hem!---breath, hem!---grows short; hem! hem! he, he, hem!

Scan. It takes, pursue it in the name of love and pleasure.

Mrs Fore. How do you do, Mr Foresight?

Fore. Hum, not so well as I thought I was. Lend me your hand.

Scan. Look you there now---Your Lady says, your sleep has been unquiet of late.

Fore. Very likely.

Mrs Fore. O mighty restless, but I was afraid to tell him so,—He has been subject to talking and starting.

Scan. And did not use to be so?

Mrs Fore. Never, never; 'till within these three nights; I cannot say that he has once broken my rest since we have been married.

Fore. I will go to bed.

Scan. Do so, Mr Foresight, and say your prayers---He looks better than he did.

Mrs Fore. Nurse, nurse!

Fore. Do you think so, Mr Scandal?

Scan. Yes, yes, I hope this will be gone by morning, taking it in time.——

Fore. I hope so.

S C E N E XIII.

[*To them*] N U R S E.

Mrs Fore. Nurse, your master is not well; put him to bed.

Scan. I hope you will be able to see Valentine in the morning,---you had best take a little diacodion and cow-slip-water, and ly upon your back, may be you may dream.

Fore. I thank you, Mr Scandal, I will——Nurse, let me have a watch-light, and lay *the crums of comfort* by me——

Nurse. Yes, Sir.

Fore. And——hem, hem! I am very faint.

Scan. No, no, you look much better.

Fore. Do I? And, d'ye hear---bring me, let me see——within a quarter of twelve—hem—he, hem!——just upon the turning of the tide, bring me the urinal:—And I hope, neither the lord of my ascendant, nor the moon will be combust; and then I may do well.

Scan. I hope so——I leave that to me; I will erect a scheme; and I hope I shall find both Sol and Venus in the sixth house.

Fore. I thank you, Mr Scandal; indeed that would be a great comfort to me. Hem, hem! good night.

S C E N E XIV.

SCANDAL, Mrs FORESIGHT.

Scan. Good night, good Mr Foresight;—and I hope Mars and Venus will be in conjunction,—while your wife and I are together.

Mrs Fore. Well, and what use do you hope to make of this project? You don't think that you are ever like to succeed in your design upon me?

Scan. Yes, faith, I do; I have a better opinion both of you and myself, than to despair.

Mrs Fore. Did you ever hear such a toad?—harkye, devil; do you think any woman honest?

Scan. Yes, several very honest;—they'll cheat a little at cards, sometimes, but that's nothing.

Mrs Fore. P'fhaw! but virtuous I mean.

Scan. Yes, faith, I believe some women are virtuous too; but 'tis as I believe some men are valiant, through fear—For why should a man court danger, or a woman shun pleasure?

Mrs Fore. O monstrous! what are conscience and honour?

Scan. Why, honour is a public enemy; and conscience a domestic thief; and he that would secure his pleasure, must pay a tribute to one, and go halves with t'other. As for honour, that you have secur'd; for you have purchas'd a perpetual opportunity for pleasure.

Mrs Fore. An opportunity for pleasure!

Scan. Ay, your husband; a husband is an opportunity for pleasure; so you have taken care of honour, and 'tis the least I can do to take care of conscience.

Mrs Fore. And so you think we are free for one another?

Scan. Yes, faith, I think so; I love to speak my mind.

Mrs Fore. Why, then I'll speak my mind. Now, as to this affair between you and me. Here you make

love to me; why, I'll confess it does not displease me. Your person is well enough, and your understanding is not amiss.

Scan. I have no great opinion of myself; but I think I'm neither deform'd nor a fool.

Mrs Fore. But you have a villainous character; you are a libertine in speech as well as practice.

Scan. Come, I know what you would say,—you think it more dangerous to be seen in conversation with me, than to allow some other men the last favour; you mistake, the liberty I take in talking is purely affected, for the service of your sex. He that first cries out, Stop thief, is often he that has stol'n the treasure. I am a juggler, that act by confederacy; and if you please, we'll put a trick upon the world.

Mrs Fore. Ay; but you are such an universal juggler, —that I'm afraid you have a great many confederates.

Scan. Faith, I'm found.

Mrs Fore. O, fy—I'll swear you're impudent.

Scan. I'll swear you're handsome.

Mrs Fore. Pish, you'd tell me so, though you did not think so.

Scan. And you'd think so, though I should not tell you so.—And now I think we know one another pretty well.

Mrs Fore. O Lord, who's there?

S C E N E XV.

[To them] Mrs FRAIL and BEN.

Ben. Mefs, I love to speak my mind——Father has nothing to do with me.—Nay, I can't say that neither; he has something to do with me. But what does that signify? if so be, that I ben't minded to be steer'd by him; 'tis as tho'f he should strive against wind and tide.

Mrs Frail. Ay, but, my dear, we must keep it secret, 'till the estate be settled; for you know marrying without an estate, is like sailing in a ship without ballast.

Ben. He, he, he; why, that's true; just so for all the world it is indeed, as like as two cable-ropes.

Mrs Frail. And though I have a good portion, you know one would not venture all in one bottom.

Ben. Why, that's true again; for mayhap one bottom may spring a leak. You have hit it indeed, Mefs, you've nick'd the channel.

Mrs Frail. Well, but if you should forsake me after all, you'd break my heart.

Ben. Break your heart! I'd rather the Marygold shou'd break her cable in a storm, as well as I love her. Flesh, you don't think I'm false-hearted like a landman. A sailor will be honest, tho'f mayhap he has never a penny of money in his pocket——Mayhap I may not have so fair a face as a citizen or a courtier; but for all that, I've as good blood in my veins, and a heart as sound as a bisket.

Mrs Frail. And will you love me always?

Ben. Nay, an I love once, I'll stick like pitch; I'll tell you that. Come, I'll sing you a song of a sailor.

Mrs Frail. Hold, there's my sister; I'll call her to hear it.

Mrs Fore. Well, I won't go to bed to my husband to-night; because I'll retire to my own chamber, and think of what you have said.

Scan. Well; you'll give me leave to wait upon you to your chamber-door, and leave you my last instructions?

Mrs Fore. Hold, here's my sister coming towards us.

Mrs Frail. If it won't interrupt you, I'll entertain you with a song.

Ben. The song was made upon one of our ship's-crew's wife; our boatswain made the song; mayhap you may know her, Sir. Before she marry'd, she was call'd buxom Joan of Deptford.

Scan. I have heard of her.

[*Ben sings.*

B A L L A D.

Set by Mr John Eccles.

I.

*A soldier and a sailor,
 A tinker and a tailor,
 Had once a doubtful strife, Sir,
 To make a maid a wife, Sir,
 Whose name was buxom Joan.
 For now the time was ended,
 When she no more intended,
 To lick her lips at men, Sir,
 And gnaw the sheets in vain, Sir,
 And ly o' nights alone.*

II.

*The soldier swore like thunder,
 He lov'd her more than plunder ;
 And shew'd her many a scar, Sir,
 That he had brought from far, Sir,
 With fighting for her sake.
 The tailor thought to please her,
 With off'ring her his measure.
 The tinker too with mettle,
 Said he could mend her kettle,
 And stop up ev'ry leak.*

III.

*But while these three were prating,
 The sailors sily waiting,
 Thought if it came about, Sir,
 That they should all fall out, Sir,
 He then might play his part.*

*And just e'en as he meant, Sir,
To loggerheads they went, Sir,
And then he let fly at her
A spot 'twixt wind and water,
That won this fair maid's heart.*

Ben. If some of our crew that came to see me, are not gone, you shall see that we sailors can dance sometimes, as well as other folks. [*Whistles.*] I warrant that brings 'em, an they be within hearing.

Enter SEAMEN.

Oh here they be—and fiddles along with 'em; come, my lads, let's have a round, and I'll make one. [*Dance.*]

Ben. We're merry folks, we sailors, we han't much to care for. Thus we live at sea; eat bisket, and drink flip; put on a clean shirt once a quarter——come home and ly with our landladies once a year, get rid of a little money; and then put off with the next fair wind. How d'ye like us?

Mrs Frail. O you are the happiest, merriest men alive.

Mrs Fore. We're beholden to Mr Benjamin for this entertainment. I believe 'tis late.

Ben. Why, forsooth, an you think so, you had best go to bed. For my part, I mean to tofs a can, and remember my sweet-heart, afore I turn in; may-hap I may dream of her.

Mrs Fore. Mr Scandal, you had best go to bed and dream too.

Scan. Why faith, I have a good lively imagination; and can dream as much to the purpose as another, if I set about it; but dreaming is the poor retreat of a lazy, hopeless, and imperfect lover; 'tis the last glimpse of love to worn-out sinners, and the faint dawning of a bliss to wishing girls, and growing boys.

There's nought but willing, waking love, that can
Make blest the ripen'd maid and finish'd man.

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

Valentine's Lodging.

SCANDAL, and JEREMY.

SCANDAL.

WELL, is your master ready? does he look madly,
and talk madly?

Jer. Yes, Sir; you need make no great doubt of that; he that was so near turning poet yesterday morning, can't be much to seek in playing the madman to-day.

Scan. Would he have Angelica acquainted with the reason of his design!

Jer. No, Sir, not yet;—he has a mind to try, whether his playing the madman won't make her play the fool, and fall in love with him; or at least own, that she has lov'd him all this while and conceal'd it.

Scan. I saw her take coach just now with her maid; and think I heard her bid the coachman drive hither.

Jer. Like enough, Sir, for I told her maid this morning my master was run stark mad only for love of her mistress. I hear a coach stop; if it should be she, Sir, I believe he would not see her, 'till he hears how she takes it.

Scan. Well, I'll try her——'tis she, here she comes.

S C E N E II.

[*To them*] ANGELICA, with JENNY.

Ang. Mr. Scandal, I suppose you don't think it a novelty, to see a woman visit a man at his own lodgings in a morning?

Scan. Not upon a kind occasion, Madam. But when

A lady comes tyrannically to insult a ruin'd lover, and make manifest the cruel triumphs of her beauty; the barbarity of it something surpris'es me.

Ang. I don't like raillery from a serious face——Pray tell me what's the matter?

Jer. No strange matter, Madam, my master's mad, that's all: I suppose your Ladyship has thought him so a great while.

Ang. How d'ye mean, mad?

Jer. Why, faith, Madam, he's mad for want of his wits, just as he was poor for want of money; his head is even as light as his pocket; and any body that has a mind to a bad bargain, can't do better than to beg him for his estate.

Ang. If you speak truth, your endeavouring at wit is very unseasonable.

Scan. She's concern'd, and loves him. [*Aside.*

Ang. Mr Scandal, you can't think me guilty of so much inhumanity, as not to be concern'd for a man I must own myself oblig'd to——pray tell me truth.

Scan. Faith, Madam, I with telling a lie would mend the matter. But this is no new effect of an unsuccessful passion.

Ang. *aside.*] I know not what to think——Yet I shou'd be vex'd to have a trick put upon me——May I not see him?

Scan. I'm afraid the physician is not willing you shou'd see him yet——Jeremy, go in and enquire.

S C E N E III.

SCANDAL, ANGELICA, JENNY.

Ang. Ha! I saw him wink and smile——I fancy 'tis a trick——I'll try——I would disguise to all the world a failing, which I must own to you——I fear my happiness depends upon the recovery of Valentine. Therefore I conjure you, as you are his friend, and as you have compassion

upon one fearful of affliction, to tell me what I am to hope for——I cannot speak——But you may tell me, for you know what I would ask.

Scan. So, this is pretty plain——Be not too much concerned, Madam, I hope his condition is not desperate: an acknowledgment of love from you, perhaps, may work a cure; as the fear of your aversion occasion'd his distemper.

Ang. aside] Say you so? nay, then I'm convinc'd: and if I don't play trick for trick, may I never taste the pleasure of revenge——Acknowledgement of love! I find you have mistaken my compassion, and think me guilty of a weakness I'm a stranger to. But I have too much sincerity to deceive you, and too much charity to suffer him to be deluded with vain hopes. Good nature and humanity oblige me to be concern'd for him; but to love is neither in my power nor inclination; and if he can't be cur'd without I suck the poison from his wounds, I'm afraid he won't recover his senses 'till I lose mine.

Scan. Hey, brave woman, i'faith——Won't you see him then, if he desire it?

Ang. What signify a madman's desires! Besides, 'twou'd make me uneasy——If I don't see him, perhaps my concern for him may lessen——If I forget him, 'tis no more than he has done by himself; and now the surprize is over, methinks I am not half so sorry as I was.——

Scan. So, faith, good-nature works apace; you were confessing an obligation to his love.

Ang. But I have consider'd that passions are unreasonable and involuntary; if he loves, he can't help it; and if I don't love, I can't help it; no more than he can help his being a man, or I my being a woman; or no more than I can help my want of inclination to stay longer here——
Come, Jenny.

S C E N E IV.

SCANDAL, JEREMY.

Scan. Humph!—An admirable composition, faith, this same womankind!

Jer. What, is she gone, Sir?

Scan. Gone? why she was never here; nor any where else; nor I don't know her if I see her; nor you neither.

Jer. Good lack! what's the matter now? Are any more of us to be mad? why, Sir, my master longs to see her; and is almost mad in good earnest, with the joyful news of her being here.

Scan. We are all under a mistake—Ask no questions, for I can't resolve you; but I'll inform your master. In the mean time, if our project succeed no better with his father, than it does with his mistress, he may descend from his exaltation of madness into the road of common sense, and be content only to be made a fool with other reasonable people. I hear Sir Sampson. You know your cue; I'll to your master.

S C E N E V.

JEREMY, Sir SAMPSON LEGEND, with a
LAWYER.

Sir Samp. D'ye see, Mr Buckarm, here's the paper sign'd with his own hand.

Buck. Good, Sir. And the conveyance is ready drawn in this box, if he be ready to sign and seal.

Sir Samp. Ready, body o'me, he must be ready: his sham-sickness shan't excuse him—O, here's his scoundrel: Sirrah, where's your master?

Jer. Ah, Sir, he's quite gone.

Sir Samp. Gone! What, he is not dead?

Jer. No, Sir, not dead.

Sir Samp. What, is he gone out of town, run away, ha! has he trick'd me? speak, varlet.

Jer. No, no, Sir, he's safe enough, Sir, an he were but as found, poor gentleman. He is indeed here, Sir, and not here, Sir.

Sir Samp. Hey-day, rascal, do you banter me? Sirrah, d'ye banter me?—Speak, Sirrah, where is he, for I will find him.

Jer. Would you could, Sir; for he has lost himself. Indeed, Sir, I have almost broke my heart about him—— I can't refrain tears when I think of him, Sir: I'm as melancholy for him as a passing-bell; Sir; or a horse in a pond.

Sir Samp. A pox confound your similitudes, Sir.—— Speak to be understood, and tell me in plain terms what the matter is with him, or I'll crack your fool's scull.

Jer. Ah, you've hit it, Sir, that's the matter with him, Sir; his skull's crack'd, poor gentleman; he's stark mad, Sir.

Sir Samp. Mad!

Buck. What, is he *non compos*?

Jer. Quite *non compos*, Sir.

Buck. Why, then all's obliterated, Sir Sampson, if he be *non compos menti*, his act and deed will be of no effect, it is not good in law.

Sir Samp. Oons, I won't believe it; let me see him, Sir——Mad, I'll make him find his senses.

Jer. Mr Scandal is with him, Sir; I'll knock at the door.

[Goes to the Scene, which opens.]

S C E N E VI.

Sir SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY and LAWYER, Valentine upon a couch disorderly dress'd.

Sir Samp. How now, what's here to do?

Val. Ha! who's that?

Scan. For Heaven's sake softly, Sir, and gently; don't provoke him.

Val. Answer me, who is that, and that?

Sir Samp. Gadfbobs, does he not know me? Is he mischievous? I'll speak gently—Val, Val, dost thou not know me, boy? not know thy own father, Val! I am thy own father, and this is honest Brief Bucksram the lawyer.

Val. It may be so—I did not know you—the world is full—There are people that we do know, and people that we do not know; and yet the sun shines upon all alike—There are fathers that have many children; and there are children that have many fathers—'Tis strange! but I am Truth, and come to give the world the lie.

Sir Samp. Body o' me, I know not what to say to him.

Val. Why does the lawyer wear black?—Does he carry his conscience withoutside?—Lawyer, what art thou? dost thou know me?

Buck. O Lord, what must I say?—yes, Sir.

Val. Thou lyest, for I am Truth. 'Tis hard I cannot get a livelihood amongst you. I have been sworn out of Westminster-Hall the first day of every term—let me see—no matter how long—but I'll tell you one thing; 'tis a question that would puzzle an arithmetician, if you should ask him, whether the bible saves more souls in Westminster-Abbey, or damns more in Westminster-Hall; for my part, I am Truth, and can't tell; I have very few acquaintance.

Sir Samp. Body o' me, he talks sensibly in his madness—has he no intervals?

Jer. Very short, Sir.

Buck. Sir, I can do you no service while he's in this condition; here's your paper, Sir—he may do me a mischief if I stay—the conveyance is ready, Sir, if he recover his senses.

S C E N E VII.

SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY.

Sir Samp. Hold; hold, hold, don't you go yet.

Scan. You'd better let him go, Sir; and fend for him if there be occasion; for I fancy his presence provokes him more.

Val. Is the lawyer gone? 'Tis well, then we may drink about without going together by the ears—heigh-ho! what a clock is't? my father here! your blessing, Sir.

Sir Samp. He recovers—blefs thee, Val,—how dost thou do, boy?

Val. Thank you, Sir, pretty well—I have been a little out of order—won't you please to sit, Sir?

Sir Samp. Ay, boy,——Come, thou shalt sit down by me.

Val. Sir, 'tis my duty to wait.

Sir Samp. No, no, come, come, sit thee down, honest Val; how dost thou do? let me feel thy pulse—Oh, pretty well now, Val; body o' me, I was sorry to see thee indisposed; but I'm glad thou art better, honest Val.

Val. I thank you, Sir.

Scan. Miracle! the monster grows loving. [*Aside.*]

Sir Samp. Let me feel thy hand again, Val; it does not shake——I believe thou canst write, Val; ha, boy, thou canst write thy name, Val?——Jeremy, step and overtake Mr Buckram, bid him make haste back with the conveyance; quick, quick. [*In whisper to Jer.*]

S C E N E VIII.

SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

Scan. That ever I shou'd suspect such a heathen of any remorse! [*Aside.*]

Sir Samp. Dost thou know this paper, Val? I know thou'rt honest, and wilt perform articles.

[Shows him the paper; but holds it out of his reach.]

Val. Pray, let me see it, Sir. You hold it so far off, that I can't tell whether I know it or no.

Sir Samp. See it, boy? Ay, ay, why thou dost see it—'tis thy own hand, Vally. Why, let me see, I can read it as plain as can be; look you here, *[Reads.]* "The condition of this obligation"—look you, as plain as can be, so it begins—and then at the bottom—"As witness my hand, VALENTINE LEGEND," in great letters; why, 'tis as plain as the nose in one's face; what, are my eyes better than thine? I believe I can read it farther off yet—let me see. *[Stretches his arm as far as he can.]*

Val. Will you please to let me hold it, Sir?

Sir Samp. Let thee hold, say'st thou?—Ay, with all my heart—What matter is it who holds it? What need any body hold it?—I'll put it up in my pocket, Val, and then no-body need hold it. *[Puts the paper in his pocket.]* There, Val, 'tis safe enough, boy—but thou shalt have it as soon as thou hast set thy hand to another paper, little Val.

S C E N E IX.

[To them.] JEREMY, with BUCKRAM.

Val. What, is my bad genius here again! Oh no, it is the lawyer with an itching palm; and he's come to be scratch'd—my nails are not long enough—let me have a pair of red hot tongs quickly, quickly, and you shall see me act St. Dunstan, and lead the devil by the nose.

Buck. O Lord; let me be gone; I'll not venture myself with a madman.

S C E N E X.

Sir SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY.

Val. Ha, ha, ha, you need not run so fast, honesty will not overtake you—ha, ha, ha, the rogue found me out to be in *forma pauperis* presently.

Sir Samp. Oons! what a vexation is here! I know not what to do, or say, nor which way to go.

Val. Who's that, that's out of his way! I am Truth, and can set him right—Harkye, friend, the straight road is the worst way you can go—he that follows his nose always, will very often be led into a stink. *Probatum est.* But what are you for, religion or politicks? There's a couple of topics for you, no more like one another than oil and vinegar; and yet those two beaten together by a state-cook, make fauce for the whole nation.

Sir Samp. What the devil had I to do, ever to beget sons? Why did I ever marry?

Val. Because thou wert a monster, old boy; the two greatest monsters in the world, are a man and a woman; What's thy opinion?

Sir Samp. Why, my opinion is, that those two monsters joined together, make yet a greater, that's a man and his wife.

Val. Aha, old truepenny! say'st thou so: thou hast nick'd it. But 'tis wonderful strange, Jeremy.

Jer. What is, Sir?

Val. That gray hairs thou'd cover a green head, and I make a fool of my father. What's here! *erra pater*, or a bearded Sybil? If Prophecy comes, Truth must give place.

S C E N E XI.

Sir SAMPSON, SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, Mrs FORESIGHT, Mrs FRAIL.

Fore. What says he? What, did he prophesy? Ha, Sir Sampson, bless us! how are we?

Sir Samp. Are we? A pox o' your prognostication—
Why, we are fools as we use to be——Oons, that you
cou'd not foresee, that the moon would predominate, and
my son be mad——Where's your oppositions, your trines,
and your quadrates——What did your Cardan and your
Ptolomy tell you? your Meilahalah and your Longomontanus,
your harmony of chiromancy with astrology? Ah! pox on't,
that I that know the world, and men and manners, that don't
believe a syllable in the sky and stars, and fun and almanacs,
and trash, should be directed by a dreamer, an omen-hunter,
and defer business in expectation of a lucky hour; when,
body o'me, there never was a lucky hour after the first opportunity.

S C E N E XII.

SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, Mrs FORESIGHT,
Mrs FRAIL.

Fore. Ah, Sir Sampson, Heav'n help your head—This
is none of your lucky hour; *Nemo omnibus horis sapit*. What,
is he gone, and in contempt of science? Ill stars, and un-
convertible ignorance attend him.

Scan. You must excuse his passion, Mr Foresight; for he
has been heartily vex'd——His son is *non compos mentis*,
and thereby incapable of making any conveyance in law;
so that all his measures are disappointed.

Fore. Ha! say you so?

Mrs Frail. What, has my sea lover lost his anchor of
hope then? [Aside to Mrs Foresight.

Mrs Fore. Oh sister, what will you do with him?

Mrs Frail. Do with him, send him to sea again in the
next foul weather——He's us'd to an unconstant element,
and won't be surpris'd to see the tide turn'd.

Fore. Wherein was I mistaken, not to foresee this?

[Considers.

Scan. Madam, you and I can tell him something else,

that he did not foresee, and more particularly relating to his own fortune.

[*Aside to Mrs Foresight.*

Mrs Fore. What do you mean? I don't understand you.

Scan. Hush, softly—the pleasures of last night, my dear, too considerable to be forgot so soon.

Mrs Fore. Last night! and what would your impudence infer from last night! last night was like the night before, I think.

Scan. 'Sdeath, do you make no difference between me and your husband?

Mrs Fore. Not much,——he's superstitious, and you are mad in my opinion.

Scan. You make me mad——You are not serious——Pray, recollect yourself.

Mrs Fore. O yes, now I remember, you were very impertinent and impudent,——and would have come to bed to me.

Scan. And did not?

Mrs Fore. Did not! with what face can you ask the question?

Scan. This I have heard of before, but never believ'd. I have been told, she had that admirable quality of forgetting to a man's face in the morning, that she had lain with him all night, and denying that she had done favours with more impudence, than she cou'd grant 'em——Madam, I'm your humble servant, and honour you.——You look pretty well, Mr Foresight.——How did you rest last night?

Fore. Truly, Mr Scandal, I was so taken up with broken dreams and distracted visions, that I remember little.

Scan. 'Twas a very forgetting night——But would you not talk with Valentine, perhaps you may understand him; I'm apt to believe, there is something mysterious in his discourses, and sometimes rather think him inspir'd than mad.

Fore. You speak with singular good judgment, Mr

scandal, truly—I am inclining to your Turkish opinion in this matter, and do reverence a man whom the vulgar think mad. Let us go to him.

Mrs Frail. Sister, do you stay with them; I'll find out my lover, and give him his discharge, and come to you. O' my conscience here he comes.

S C E N E XIII.

Mrs FRAIL, BEN.

Ben. All mad, I think—Flesh, I believe all the Calentures of the sea are come ashore, for my part.

Mrs Frail. Mr Benjamin in choler!

Ben. No, I'm pleas'd well enough, now I have found you——Mefs, I have had such a hurricane upon your account yonder.——

Mrs Frail. My account, pray what's the matter?

Ben. Why, father came and found me squabbling with yon chitty fac'd thing, as he would have me marry,——so he ask'd what was the matter.——He ask'd in a surly sort of a way—(It seems brother Val. is gone mad, and so that put'n into a passion;) but what did I know that, what's that to me?——So he ask'd in a surly sort of manner,——and gad I answer'd 'em as furlily; what tho'f he be my father? I an't bound prentice to 'em:——so faith I told'n in plain terms, if I were minded to marry, I'd marry to please myself, not him: and for the young woman that he provided for me, I thought it more fitting for her to learn her sampler, and make dirt-pies, than to look after a husband; for my part I was none of her man——I had another voyage to make, let him take it as he will.

Mrs Frail. So then, you intend to go to sea again?

Ben. Nay, nay, my mind run upon you,—but I would not tell him so much—So he said he'd make my heart ake; and if so be that he cou'd get a woman to his mind, he'd marry himself. Gad, says I, and you play the fool

and marry at these years, there's more danger of your head's aking than my heart.—He was woundy angry when I gav'n that wipe.—He had'nt a word to say, and so I left'n, and the green girl together; may-hap the bee may bite, and he'll marry her himself, with all my heart.

Mrs Frail. And were you this undutiful and graceless wretch to your father?

Ben. Then why was he graceless first?—If I am undutiful and graceless, why did he beget me so? I did not get myself?

Mrs Frail. O impiety! How have I been mistaken! What an inhuman merciless creature have I set my heart upon? O I am happy to have discover'd the shelves and quicksands that lurk beneath that faithless smiling face!

Ben. Hey tofs! what's the matter now? Why, you ben't angry, be you?

Mrs Frail. O see me no more,——for thou wert born amongst rocks, suckled by whales, cradled in a tempest, and whistled to by winds; and thou art come forth with fins and scales, and three rows of teeth, a most outrageous fish of prey.

Ben. O Lord, O Lord, she's mad, poor young woman, love has turn'd her senses, her brain is quite overset. Well-a-day, how shall I do to set her to rights?

Mrs Frail. No, no, I am not mad, monster, I am wise enough to find you out.—Hadst thou the impudence to aspire at being a husband with that stubborn and disobedient temper?—You that know not how to submit to a father, presume to have a sufficient stock of duty to undergo a wife? I should have been finely fobb'd indeed, very finely fobb'd.

Ben. Hark'ye forsooth; if so be that you are in your right senses, d'ye see; for ought as I perceive I'm like to be finely fobb'd,—if I have got anger here upon your account, and you are tack'd about already.—What d'ye mean, after all your fair speeches, and stroaking my cheeks,

and kissing and hugging, what wou'd you sheer off so?
Wou'd you, and leave me aground?

Mrs Frail. No, I'll leave you adrift, and go which way you will.

Ben. What, are you false-hearted then?

Mrs Frail. Only the wind's chang'd.

Ben. More shame for you,—the wind's chang'd?—
'Tis an ill wind blows no-body good,—may-hap I have a good riddance on you, if these be your tricks—what did you mean all this while, to make a fool of me?

Mrs Frail. Any fool but a husband.

Ben. Husband! Gad I wou'd not be your husband, if you wou'd have me; now I know your mind, tho'f you had your weight in gold and jewels, and tho'f I lov'd you never so well.

Mrs Frail. Why, can't thou love, Porpuffe?

Ben. No matter what I can do; don't call me names,—I don't love you so well as to bear that, whatever I did—I'm glad you shew yourself, mistress:—Let them marry you, as don't know you:—Gad I know you too well, by sad experience; I believe he that marries you will go to sea in a hen-peck'd frigate—I believe that, young woman—and may-hap may come to an anchor at Cuckold's-Point; so there's a dash for you, take it as you will, may-hap you may holla after me when I won't come to.

Mrs Frail. Ha, ha, ha, no doubt on't,—

My true love is gone to sea,— [Sings.

S C E N E XIV.

Mrs FRAIL, Mrs FORESIGHT.

Mrs Frail. O sifter, had you come a minute sooner, you would have seen the resolution of a lover.—Honest Tarr and I are parted—and with the same indifference that we met;—O my life I am half vex'd at the insensibility of a brute that I despis'd.

Mrs Fore. What, then, he bore it most heroically?

Mrs Frail. Most tyrannically——for you see he has got the start of me; and I the poor forsaken maid am left complaining on the shore. But I'll tell you a hint that he has given me; Sir Sampson is enraged, and talks desperately of committing matrimony himself——if he has a mind to throw himself away, he can't do it more effectually than upon me, if we could bring it about.

Mrs Fore. Oh, hang him old fox, he's too cunning; besides, he hates both you and me. But I have a project in my head for you, and I have gone a good way towards it. I have almost made a bargain with Jeremy, Valentine's man, to sell his master to us.

Mrs Frail. Sell him, how?

Mrs Fore. Valentine raves upon Angelica, and took me for her, and Jeremy says will take any body for her that he imposes on him. Now I have promised him mountains, if in one of his mad fits he will bring you to him in her stead, and get you married together, and put to bed together; and after consummation, girl, there's no revoking. And if he should recover his senses, he'll be glad at least to make you a good settlement. Here they come: stand aside a little, and tell me how you like the design.

S C E N E XV.

Mrs FORESIGHT, Mrs FRAIL, VALENTINE,
SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, and JEREMY.

Scan. And have you given your master a hint of their plot upon him? [To Jer.]

Jer. Yes, Sir; he says he'll favour it, and mistake her for Angelica.

Scan. It may make us sport.

Fore. Mercy on us!

Val. Hush!——interrupt me not——I'll whisper prediction to thee, and thou shalt prophesy——I am Truth, and can

teach thy tongue a new trick——I have told thee what's past—now I'll tell what's to come—dost thou know what will happen to-morrow?—Answer me not—for I will tell thee. To-morrow, knaves will thrive through craft, and fools through fortune, and honesty will go as it did, frost-nipt in a summer-suit. Ask me questions concerning to-morrow?

Scan. Ask him, Mr Foresight.

Fore. Pray, what will be done at court?

Val. Scandal will tell you——I am Truth, I never come there.

Fore. In the city?

Val. Oh, prayers will be said in empty churches, at the usual hours. Yet you will see such zealous faces behind counters, as if religion were to be sold in every shop. Oh things will go methodically in the city; the clocks will strike twelve at noon, and the horn'd herd buz in the Exchange at two. Wives and husbands will drive distinct trades, and care and pleasure separately occupy the family. Coffeehouses will be full of smoke and stratagem. And the cropt prentice, that sweeps his master's shop in the morning, may ten to one dirty his sheets before night. But there are two things that you will see very strange; which are wanton wives with their legs at liberty, and tame cuckolds with chains about their necks. But hold, I must examine you before I go further; you look suspiciously. Are you a husband?

Fore. I am married.

Val. Poor creature! is your wife of Covent-garden parish?

Fore. No; St Martin's in the fields.

Val. Alas, poor man; his eyes are funk, and his hands shrivell'd; his legs dwindled, and his back bow'd, pray, pray, for a metamorphosis——change thy shape, and shake off age; get the Medea's kettle, and be boil'd anew; come forth with lab'ring callous hands, a chine of steel, and Atlas' shoulders. Let Taliacotius trim the calves of twenty chairmen, and make thee pedestals to stand erect upon, and look matrimony in the face. Ha, ha, ha!

that a man shou'd have a stomach to a wedding supper, when the pigeons ought rather to be laid to his feet, ha, ha, ha.

Fore. His frenzy is very high now, Mr Scandal.

Scan. I believe it is a spring tide.

Fore. Very likely, truly; you understand these matters; —Mr Scandal, I shall be very glad to confer with you about these things which he has utter'd—his sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical.

Val. Oh, why would Angelica be absent from my eyes so long?

Jer. She's here, Sir.

Mrs Fore. Now, Sir.

Mrs Frail. O Lord, what must I say?

Scan. Humour him, Madam, by all means.

Val. Where is she? Oh, I see her;—she comes like riches, health, and liberty at once, to a despairing, starving, and abandon'd wretch. Oh welcome, welcome.

Mrs Frail. How d'ye, Sir? Can I serve you?

Val. Harkye,—I have a secret to tell you—Endymion and the moon shall meet us upon mount Latmos, and we'll be married in the dead of night—but say not a word. Hymen shall put his torch into a dark lanthorn, that it may be secret; and Juno shall give her peacock poppy-water, that he may fold his ogling tail, and Argus's hundred eyes be shut, ha! No body shall know but Jeremy.

Mrs Frail. No, no, we'll keep it secret, it shall be done presently.

Val. The sooner the better—Jeremy, come hither—closer—that none may over-hear us——Jeremy, I can tell you news; Angelica is turned nun, and I am turning friar, and yet we'll marry one another in spite of the Pope. Get me a coul and beads, that I may play my part; for she'll meet me two hours hence in black and white, and a long veil to cover the project, and we won't see one another's faces, till we have done something to be ashamed of, and then we'll blush once for all.

S C E N E XVI.

[To them] TATTLE, ANGELICA.

Jer. Ill take care, an——

Val. Whisper.

Ang. Nay, Mr Tattle, if you make love to me, you spoil my design, for I intend to make you my confident.

Tat. But, Madam, to throw away your person, such a person, and such a fortune, on a madman?

Ang. I never lov'd him till he was mad; but don't tell any body so.

Scan. How's this! Tattle making love to Angelica?

Tat. Tell, Madam! alas, you don't know me——I have much ado to tell your Ladyship how long I have been in love with you——but encourag'd by the impossibility of Valentine's making any more addressees to you, I have ventured to declare the very inmost passion of my heart Oh, Madam, look upon us both; there you see the ruins of a poor decayed creature——here a compleat lively figure, with youth and health, and all his five senses in perfection, Madam; and to all this, the most passionate lover——

Ang. O fy, for shame, hold your tongue; a passionate lover, and five senses in perfection! when you are as mad as Valentine, I'll believe you love me, and the maddest shall take me.

Val. It is enough——Ha, who's here?

Mrs Frail. O Lord, her coming will spoil all. [To *Jer.*

Jer. No, no, Madam, he won't know her; if he shou'd, I can persuade him.

Val. Scandal, who are these? Foreigners? If they are, I'll tell you what I think——get away all the company but Angelica, that I may discover my design to her. [Whisper.

Scan. I will; I have discovered something of Tattle, that is of a piece with Mrs Frail. He courts Angelica; if we cou'd contrive to couple 'em together; harkye——[Whisper.

Mrs Fore. He won't know you, Cousin, he knows nobody.

Fore. But he knows more than any body—Oh, niece, he knows things past and to come, and all the profound secrets of time.

Tat. Look you, Mr Foresight, it is not my way to make many words of matters, and so I shan't say much—but in short, d'ye see, I will hold you a hundred pound now, that I know more secrets than he.

Fore. How! I cannot read that knowledge in your face, Mr Tattle——Pray, what do you know?

Tat. Why, d'ye think I'll tell you, Sir? Read it in my face! No, Sir, 'tis written in my heart; and safer there, Sir, than letters writ in juice of lemon; for no fire can fetch it out. I am no blab, Sir.

Val. Acquaint Jeremy with it, he may easily bring it about.—They are welcome, and I'll tell 'em so myself. [*To Scandal.*] What, do you look strange upon me? Then I must be plain. [*Coming up to them.*] I am Truth, and hate an old acquaintance with a new face.

[*Scandal goes aside with Jer.*]

Tat. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. You? who are you? No, I hope not.

Tat. I am Jack Tattle, your friend.

Val. My friend? what to do? I am no married man, and thou canst not ly with my wife; I am very poor, and thou canst not borrow money of me; then what employment have I for a friend?

Tat. Hah, a good open speaker, and not to be trusted with a secret.

Ang. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. Oh very well.

Ang. Who am I?

Val. You're a woman—one to whom Heav'n gave beauty, when it grafted roses on a briar. You are the reflection of Heav'n in a pond, and he that leaps at you is sunk. You are white, a sheet of lovely spotless paper, when you first are born; but you are to be scrawl'd and blotted by every goose's quill. I know you; for I lov'd

a woman, and lov'd her so long, that I found out a strange thing; I found out what a woman was good for.

Tat. Ay, pr'ythee, what's that?

Val. Why, to keep a secret.

Tat. O Lord!

Val. O exceeding good to keep a secret: for though she should tell, yet she is not to be believed.

Tat. Hah! good again, faith.

Val. I would have music——Sing me the song that I like——

S O N G.

Set by Mr Finger.

I.

*It tell thee, Charmion, could I time retrieve,
And could again begin to love and live,
To you I should my earliest off'ring give;
I know, my eyes would lead my heart to you,
And I should all my oaths and vows renew.
But to be plain, I never would be true.*

II.

*For by our weak and weary truth, I find,
Love hates to centre in a point assign'd;
But runs with joy the circle of the mind:
Then never let us chain what should be free,
But for relief of either sex agree:
Since women love to change, and so do we.*

No more, for I am melancholy.

[*Walks musing.*

Fer. I'll do't, Sir.

[*To Scandal.*

Scan. Mr Foresight, we had best leave him. He may grow outrageous, and do mischief.

Fore. I will be directed by you.

Fer. to Mrs Frail.] You'll meet, Madam;——I'll take care every thing shall be ready.

Mrs Frail. Thou shalt do what thou wilt; in short, I will deny thee nothing.

Tat. Madam, shall I wait upon you? [*To Angelica.*

Ang. No, I'll stay with him—Mr Scandal will protect me. Aunt, Mr Tattle desires you would give him leave to wait on you.

Tat. Pox on't, there's no coming off, now she has said that—Madam, will you do me the honour?

Mrs Frail. Mr Tattle might have us'd less ceremony.

S C E N E XVII.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

Scan. Jeremy, follow Mr Tattle.

Ang. Mr Scandal, I only stay till my maid comes, and because I had a mind to be rid of Mr Tattle.

Scan. Madam, I am very glad that I overheard a better reason, which you gave to Mr Tattle; for his impertinence forc'd you to acknowledge a kindness for Valentine, which you deny'd to all his sufferings and my solicitations. So I'll leave him to make use of the discovery, and your Ladyship to the free confession of your inclinations.

Ang. O heav'ns! you won't leave me alone with a madman?

Scan. No, Madam, I only leave a madman to his remedy.

S C E N E XVIII.

VALENTINE, ANGELICA.

Val. Madam, you need not be much afraid, for I fancy I begin to come to myself.

Ang. Ay, but if I don't fit you, I'll be hang'd. [*Aside.*

Val. You see what disguises love makes us put on: Gods have been in counterfeited shapes for the same reason; and the divine part of me, my mind, has worn this mask of

madness, and this motly livery, only as the slave of love, and menial creature of your beauty.

Ang. Mercy on me, how he talks! poor Valentine!

Val. Nay, faith, now let us understand one another, hypocritise apart——The comedy draws towards an end, and let us think of leaving acting, and be ourselves; and since you have lov'd me, you must own, I have at length deserv'd you should confess it.

Ang. *sighs.*] I would I had lov'd you——for Heaven knows I pity you; and could I have foreseen the sad effects, I would have striven; but that's too late. [*Sighs.*

Val. What sad effects?——What's too late? my seeming madness has deceiv'd my father, and procur'd me time to think of means to reconcile me to him, and preserve the right of my inheritance to his estate; which otherwise by articles I must this morning have resigned: and this I had inform'd you of to-day, but you were gone, before I knew you had been here.

Ang. How! I thought your love of me had caus'd this transport in your soul; which, it seems, you only counterfeited for mercenary ends, and sordid interest——

Val. Nay, now you do me wrong: for if any interest was considered it was yours; since I thought I wanted more than love to make me worthy of you.

Ang. Then you thought me mercenary——But how am I deluded by this interval of sense, to reason with a madman!

Val. Oh, 'tis barbarous to misunderstand me longer.

S C E N E XIX.

[*To them*] J E R E M Y.

Ang. Oh, here's a reasonable creature——sure he will not have the impudence to persevere——Come, Jeremy, acknowledge your trick, and confess your master's madness counterfeit.

Jer. Counterfeit, Madam! I'll maintain him to be as

absolutely and substantially mad, as any freeholder in Bethlehem; nay, he's as mad as any projector, fanatic, chymist, lover, or poet in Europe.

Val. Sirrah, you lie; I am not mad.

Ang. Ha, ha, ha, you see he denies it.

Jer. O Lord, Madam, did you ever know any madman mad enough to own it?

Val. Sot, can't you apprehend?

Ang. Why, he talk'd very sensibly just now.

Jer. Yes, Madam, he has intervals; but you see he begins to look wild again now.

Val. Why, you thick-skull'd rascal, I tell you the farce is done, and I'll be mad no longer. [Beats him.]

Ang. Ha, ha, ha, is he mad or no, Jeremy?

Jer. Partly, I think—for he does not know his own mind two hours—I'm sure I left him just now in the humour to be mad; and I think I have not found him very quiet at this present. [One knocks.]

Val. Go see, you sot. I'm very glad that I can move your mirth, though not your compassion.

Ang. I did not think you had apprehension enough to be exceptious: but madmen shew themselves most, by over-pretending to a sound understanding; as drunken men do by over-acting sobriety. I was half-inclining to believe you, 'till I accidentally touch'd upon your tender part: but now you have restor'd me to my former opinion and compassion.

Jer. Sir, your father has sent to know if you are any better yet—Will you please to be mad, Sir, or how?

Val. Stupidity! you know the penalty of all I'm worth must pay for the confession of my senses; I'm mad, and will be mad to every body but this lady.

Jer. So—Just the very backside of truth—But lying is a figure in speech, that interlards the greatest part of my conversation—Madam, your Ladyship's woman.

S C E N E XX.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE, JENNY.

Ang. Well, have you been there?—Come hither.

Jenny. Yes, Madam, Sir Sampson will wait upon you presently. [*Afide to Angelica.*]

Val. You are not leaving me in this uncertainty?

Ang. Would any thing but a madman complain of uncertainty? Uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life. Security is an insipid thing, and the overtaking and possessing of a wish, discovers the folly of the chace. Never let us know one another better: for the pleasure of a masquerade is done, when we come to shew our faces; but I'll tell you two things before I leave you; I am not the fool you take me for; and you are mad, and don't know it.

S C E N E XXI.

VALENTINE, JEREMY.

Val. From a riddle you can expect nothing but a riddle. There's my instruction, and the moral of my lesson.

Jer. What, is the lady gone again, Sir? I hope you understood one another before she went?

Val. Understood! She is harder to be understood than a piece of Egyptian antiquity, or an Irish manuscript; you may pore 'till you spoil your eyes, and not improve your knowledge.

Jer. I have heard 'em say, Sir, they read hard Hebrew books backwards; may be you begin to read at the wrong end.

Val. They say so of a witch's prayer: and dreams

and Dutch almanacs are to be understood by contraries. But there's regularity and method in that; she is a medal without a reverse or inscription, for indifference has both sides alike. Yet while she does not seem to hate me, I will pursue her, and know her if it be possible, in spite of the opinion of my satirical friend, Scandal, who says,

That women are like tricks by slight of hand,
Which, to admire, we should not understand.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Room in Foresight's House.

ANGELICA and JENNY.

ANGELICA.

WHERE is Sir Sampson? Did you not tell me he would be here before me?

Jenny. He's at the great glass in the dining-room, Madam, setting his cravat and wig.

Ang. How! I'm glad on't—If he has a mind I should like him, 'tis a sign he likes me; and that's more than half my design.

Jenny. I hear him, Madam.

Ang. Leave me: d'ye hear, if Valentine should come, or send, I am not to be spoken with.

SCENE II.

ANGELICA, Sir SAMPSON.

Sir Samp. I have not been honour'd with the commands of a fair lady, a great while—Odd, Madam, you have revived me—not since I was five and thirty.

Ang. Why, you have no great reason to complain, Sir Sampson, that is not long ago.

Sir Samp. Zooks, but it is, Madam, a very great while, to a man that admires a fine woman as much as I do.

Ang. You're an absolute courtier, Sir Sampson.

Sir Samp. Not at all, Madam; ods-bud you wrong me; I am not so old neither, to be a bare courtier, only a man of words: odd, I have warm blood about me yet, and

can serve a lady any way——Come, come, let me tell you, you women think a man old too soon, faith and troth you do——Come, don't despise fifty; odd, fifty, in a hale constitution, is no such contemptible age.

Ang. Fifty a contemptible age! Not at all, a very fashionable age, I think——I assure you, I know very considerable beaus, that set a good face upon fifty: fifty! I have seen fifty in a side-box, by candle-light, out-blossom five-and-twenty.

Sir Samp. Outsides, outsides; a pize take 'em, mere outsides; hang your side-box beaus; no, I'm none of those, none of your forced trees, that pretend to blossom in the fall, and bud when they should bring forth fruit; I am of a long-liv'd race, and inherit vigour: none of my ancestors married till fifty; yet they begot sons and daughters 'till fourscore; I am of your patriarchs, I, a branch of one of your antediluvian families, fellows that the flood could not wash away. Well, Madam, what are your commands? has any young rogue affronted you, and shall I cut his throat? or——

Ang. No, Sir Sampson, I have no quarrel upon my hands——I have more occasion for your conduct than your courage at this time. To tell you the truth, I'm weary of living single, and want a husband.

Sir Samp. Odsbud, and 'tis pity you should——Odd, wou'd she wou'd like me, then I shou'd hamper my young rogues: odd, wou'd she wou'd; faith and troth she's devilish handsome [*Aside.*] Madam, you deserve a good husband, and 'twere pity you shou'd be thrown away upon any of these young idle rogues about the town. Odd, there's ne'er a young fellow worth hanging,——that is a very young fellow——Pize on 'em, they never think beforehand of any thing;——and if they commit matrimony, 'tis as they commit murder; out of a frolic, and are ready to hang themselves, or to be hang'd by the law, the next morning:—odso, have a care, Madam.

Ang. Therefore I ask your advice, Sir Sampson: I have

fortune enough to make any man easy that I can like; if there were such a thing as a young agreeable man with a reasonable stock of good-nature and sense——For I would neither have an absolute wit nor a fool.

Sir Samp. Odd, you are hard to please, Madam; to find a young fellow that is neither a wit in his own eye, nor a fool in the eye of the world, is a very hard task. But, faith and troth you speak very discreetly; for I hate both a wit and a fool.

Ang. She that marries a fool, Sir Sampson, forfeits the reputation of her honesty and understanding: and she that marries a very witty man is a slave to the severity and insolent conduct of her husband. I should like a man of wit for a lover, because I wou'd have such a one in my power; but I would no more be his wife, than his enemy. For his malice is not a more terrible consequence of his aversion, than his jealousy is of his love.

Sir Samp. None of old Foresight's Sybils ever utter'd such a truth. Odsbud, you have won my heart: I hate a wit; I had a son that was spoil'd among 'em; a good hopeful lad, 'till he learn'd to be a wit—and might have risen in the state——But, a pox on't, his wit run him out of his money, and now his poverty has run him out of his wits.

Ang. Sir Sampson, as your friend, I must tell you, you are very much abus'd in that matter: he's no more mad than you are.

Sir Samp. How, Madam! Wou'd I cou'd prove it.

Ang. I can tell you how that may be done——But it is a thing that wou'd make me appear to be too much concern'd in your affairs.

Sir Samp. Odsbud, I believe she likes me——[*Aside.*]——Ah, Madam, all my affairs are scarce worthy to be laid at your feet; and I wish, Madam, they were in a better posture, that I might make a more becoming offer to a lady of your incomparable beauty and merit——If I had Peru in one hand, and Mexico in t'other, and the eastern

empire under my feet; it would make me only a more glorious victim to be offer'd at the shrine of your beauty.

Ang. Bleis me, Sir Sampson, what's the matter?

Sir Samp. Odd, madam, I love—And if you would take my advice in a husband—

Ang. Hold, hold, Sir Sampson. I ask'd your advice for a husband, and you are giving me your consent—I was indeed thinking to propose something like it in jest, to satisfy you about Valentine: for if a match were seemingly carried on between you and me, it would oblige him to throw off his disguise of madness, in apprehension of losing me: for you know he has long pretended a passion for me.

Sir Samp. Gad-zooks, a most ingenious contrivance— if we were to go through with it. But why must the match only be seemingly carried on?—Odd, let it be a real contract.

Ang. O fy, Sir Sampson, what would the world say?

Sir Samp. Say, they would say, you were a wise woman, and I a happy man. Odd, Madam, I'll love you as long as I live, and leave you a good jointure when I die.

Ang. Ay; but that is not in your power, Sir Sampson; for when Valentine confesses himself in his senses, he must make over his inheritance to his younger brother.

Sir Samp. Odd, you're a cunning, a wary baggage! faith and troth I like you the better—But, I warrant you, I have a proviso in the obligation in favour of myself—Body o'me, I have a trick to turn the settlement upon the issue male of our two bodies begotten. Odsbud let us find children, and I'll find an estate.

Ang. Will you? well do you find the estate, and leave the other to me—

Sir Samp. O rogue! But I'll trust you. And will you consent! Is it a match then?

Ang. Let me consult my lawyer concerning this obliga-

tion; and if I find what you propose practicable, I'll give you my answer.

Sir Samp. With all my heart;—Come in with me, and I'll lend you the bond—You shall consult your lawyer, and I'll consult a parson? Od-zooks I'm a young man: od-zooks, I'm a young man, and I'll make it appear—Odd, you're devilish handsome: faith and troth, you're very handsome; and I'm very young, and very lusty—Odsbud, huffy, you know how to choose, and so do I;—Odd, I think, we are very well met.—Give me your hand, odd, let me kiss it; 'tis as warm and as soft—as what?—Odd, as t'other hand—give me t'other hand, and I'll mumble 'em and kiss 'em till they melt in my mouth.

Ang. Hold, Sir Sampson—You're profuse of your vigour before your time: you'll spend your estate before you come to it.

Sir Samp. No, no, only give you a rent-roll of my possessions—Ah! Baggage—I warrant you for little Sampson: odd, Sampson's a very good name for an able fellow: Your Sampsons were strong dogs from the beginning.

Ang. Have a care, and don't over-act your part—If you remember, Sampson, the strongest of the name, pull'd an old house over his head at last.

Sir Samp. Say you so, huffy?—Come, let's go then; odd, I long to be pulling too, come away—Odsb, here's somebody coming.

S C E N E III.

TATTLE, JEREMY.

Tat. Is not that she, gone out just now?

Jer. Ay, Sir, she's just going to the place of appointment. Ah, Sir, if you are not very faithful and close in this business, you'll certainly be the death of a person that

has a most extraordinary passion for your honour's service.

Tat. Ay, who's that?

Jer. Even my unworthy self, Sir——Sir, I had an appetite to be fed with your commands a great while;——And now, Sir, my former master having much troubled the fountain of his understanding, it is a very plausible occasion for me to quench my thirst at the spring of your bounty——I thought I could not recommend myself better to you, Sir, than by the delivery of a great beauty and fortune into your arms, whom I have heard you fight for.

Tat. I'll make thy fortune; say no more——Thou art a pretty fellow, and can'st carry a message to a lady, in a pretty soft kind of phrase, and with a good persuading accent.

Jer. Sir, I have the seeds of rhetoric and oratory in my head——I have been at Cambridge.

Tat. Ay; 'tis well enough for a servant to be bred at an university: but the education is a little too pedantic for a gentleman. I hope you are secret in your nature, private, close, ha?

Jer. O Sir, for that, 'tis my chief talent; I'm as secret as the head of Nilus.

Tat. Ay? who is he, tho'? A privy counsellor?

Jer. O ignorance! [*Aside.*] A cunning Egyptian, Sir, that with his arms would over-run the country; yet nobody could ever find out his head-quarters.

Tat. Close dog! A good whoremaster, I warrant him——the time draws nigh, Jeremy. Angelica will be veil'd like a nun; and I must be hooded like a friar; ha, Jeremy?

Jer. Ay, Sir, hooded like a hawk, to seize at first sight upon the quarry. It is the whim of my master's madness to be so dress'd; and she is so in love with him, she'll comply with any thing to please him. Poor Lady, I'm sure she'll have reason to pray for me, when she finds what

a happy exchange she has made, between a madman and so accomplish'd a gentleman.

Tat. Ay, faith, so she will, Jeremy; you're a good friend to her, poor creature—I swear I do it hardly so much in consideration of myself as compassion to her.

Jer. 'Tis an act of charity, Sir, to save a fine woman with thirty thousand pound; from throwing herself away.

Tat. So 'tis, faith—I might have fav'd several others in my time; but i'gad I could never find in my heart to marry any body before.

Jer. Well, Sir, I'll go and tell her my master's coming; and meet you in half a quarter of an hour, with your disguise, at your own lodgings. You must talk a little madly, she won't distinguish the tone of your voice.

Tat. No, no, let me alone for a counterfeit;—I'll be ready for you.

S C E N E IV.

TATTLE, Miss PRUE.

Miss. O Mr Tattle, are you here! I'm glad I have found you; I have been looking up and down for you like any thing, 'till I'm as tired as any thing in the world.

Tat. O pox, how shall I get rid of this foolish girl!

[*Aside.*

Miss. O I have pure news, I can tell you pure news—I must not marry the seaman now—my father says so. Why won't you be my husband? You say you love me, and you won't be my husband. And I know you may be my husband now if you please.

Tat. O fy, Miss: who told you so, child?

Miss. Why, my father—I told him that you lov'd me.

Tat. O fy, Miss, why did you do so? And who told you so, child?

Miss. Who? why you did; did not you?

Tat. O-pox, that was yesterday, Miss, that was a great while ago, child. I have been asleep since; slept a whole night, and did not so much as dream of the matter.

Miss. 'Pshaw, O but I dreamt that it was so tho'.

Tat. Ay, but your father will tell you that dreams come by contraries, child—O fy; what, we must not love one another now—'Pshaw, that would be a foolish thing indeed———Fy, fy, you're a woman now, and must think of a new man every morning, and forget him every night———No, no, to marry is to be a child again, and play with the same rattle always; O fy, marrying is a paw thing.

Miss. Well, but don't you love me as well as you did last night then?

Tat. No, no, child, you would not have me.

Miss. No? Yes, but I would tho'.

Tat. 'Pshaw, but I tell you, you would not———You forget you're a woman, and don't know your own mind.

Miss. But here's my father, and he knows my mind.

S C E N E V.

[*To them*] FORESIGHT.

Fore. O, Mr Tattle, your servant, you are a close man; but methinks your love to my daughter was a secret I might have been trusted with,———Or had you a mind to try if I could discover it by my art———hum, ha! I think there is something in your phyfiognomy, that has a resemblance of her; and the girl is like me.

Tat. And so you wou'd infer, that you and I are alike——what does the old prig mean? I'll banter him, and laugh at him, and leave him. [*Aside.*] I fancy you have a wrong notion of faces.

Fore. How? what? a wrong notion! How so?

Tat. In the way of art: I have some taking features,

not obvious to vulgar eyes; that are indications of a sudden turn of good fortune, in the lottery of wives; and promise a great beauty and great fortune reserved alone for me, by a private intrigue of destiny, kept secret from the piercing eye of perspicuity; from all astrologers, and the stars themselves.

Fore. How? I will make it appear, that what you say is impossible.

Tat. Sir, I beg your pardon, I'm in haste——

Fore. For what?

Tat. To be married, Sir, married.

Fore. Ay, but pray take me along with you, Sir——

Tat. No, Sir; 'tis to be done privately——I never make confidants.

Fore. Well; but my consent I mean——You won't marry my daughter without my consent?

Tat. Who I, Sir? I'm an absolute stranger to you and your daughter, Sir.

Fore. Hey-day! what time of the moon is this?

Tat. Very true, Sir, and desire to continue so. I have no more love for your daughter, than I have likeness of you; and I have a secret in my heart, which you would be glad to know, and shan't know; and yet you shall know it too, and be sorry for't afterwards. I'd have you to know, Sir, that I am as knowing as the stars, and as secret as the night. And I'm going to be married just now, yet did not know of it half an hour ago; and the Lady stays for me, and does not know of it yet——There's a mystery for you,——I know you love to untie difficulties——Or if you can't solve this, stay here a quarter of an hour, and I'll come and explain it to you.

S C E N E VI.

FORESIGHT, Miss PRUE.

Miss. O father, why will you let him go? Won't you make him to be my husband?

Fore. Mercy on us, what do these lunacies portend? Alas? he's mad, child, stark wild.

Miss. What, and must not I have e'er a husband then? What, must I go to bed to nurse again, and be a child as long as she's an old woman? Indeed but I won't. For now my mind is set upon a man, I will have a man some way or other. Oh! methinks I'm sick when I think of a man; and if I can't have one, I wou'd go to sleep all my life: for when I'm awake it makes me wish and long, and I don't know for what——And I'd rather be always asleep, than sick with thinking.

Fore. O fearful! I think the girl's influenc'd too,——Huffy, you shall have a rod.

Miss. A fiddle of a rod, I'll have a husband: and if you won't get me one, I'll get one for myself: I'll marry our Robin the butler, he says he loves me, and he's a handsome man, and shall be my husband; I warrant he'll be my husband, and thank me too, for he told me so.

S C E N E VII.

[*To them*] SCANDAL, Mrs FORESIGHT and NURSE.

Fore. Did he so?——I'll dispatch him for't presently; rogue! Oh, nurse, come hither.

Nurse. What is your worship's pleasure?

Fore. Here take your young mistress, and lock her up presently, 'till farther orders from me—not a word, huffy.

—Do what I bid you, no reply, away. And bid Robin make ready to give an account of his plate and linen, d'ye hear : be gone when I bid you.

Mrs Fore. What is the matter, husband ?

Fore. 'Tis not convenient to tell you now—Mr Scandal, Heav'n keep us all in our senses——I fear there is a contagious frenzy abroad. How does Valentine ?

Scan. O, I hope he will do well again——I have a message from him to your niece Angelica.

Fore. I think she has not returned since she went abroad with Sir Sampson. Nurse, why are you not gone ?

S C E N E VIII.

FORESIGHT, SCANDAL, Mrs FORESIGHT, BEN.

Mrs Fore. Here's Mr Benjamin, he can tell us if his father be come home.

Ben. Who, father ? Ay, he's come home with a vengeance.

Mrs Fore. Why, what's the matter !

Ben. Matter ! Why he's mad.

Fore. Mercy on us ! I was afraid of this.

Ben. And there's the handsome young woman, she, as they say, brother Val. went mad for, she's mad too, I think.

Fore. O my poor niece, my poor niece, is she gone too ? Well, I shall run mad next.

Mrs Fore. Well, but how mad ? how d'ye mean ?

Ben. Nay, I'll give you leave to guess——I'll undertake to make a voyage to Antego——No, hold, I mayn't say so neither——But I'll sail as far as Leghorn, and back again, before you shall guess at the matter, and do nothing else ; Mef, you may take in all the points of the compass, and not hit right.

Mrs Fore. Your experiment will take up a little too much time.

Ben. Why then I'll tell you; there's, a new wedding upon the stocks, and they two are going to be married to rights.

Scan. Who?

Ben. Why, father, and—the young woman. I can't hit of her name.

Scan. Angelica?

Ben. Ay, the same.

Mrs Fore. Sir Sampson and Angelica, impossible!

Ben. That may be—but I'm sure it is—as I tell you.

Scan. 'Sdeath, 'tis a jest. I can't believe it.

Ben. Look you, friend. 'Tis nothing to me whether you believe it or no. What I say is true d'ye see; they are married, or just going to be married, I know not which.

Fore. Well, but they are not mad, that is, not lunatic.

Ben. I don't know what you may call madness—But she's mad for a husband, and he's horn mad, I think, or they'd ne'er make a match together—Here they come.

S C E N E IX.

[*To them*] SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, BUCKRAM.

Sir Samp. Where is this old soothsayer? this uncle of mine elect? A ha, old Foresight, uncle Foresight, with me joy, uncle Foresight, double joy, both as uncle and astrologer; here's a conjunction that was not foretold in all your Ephemeris—The brightest star in the blue firmament—is *shot from above in a jelly of love*, and so forth; and I'm lord of the ascendant. Odd, you're an old fellow, Foresight; uncle I mean, a very old fellow, uncle foresight; and yet you shall live to dance at my wedding: faith and troth you shall. Odd, we'll have the music of the spheres

for thee, old Lilly, that we will, and thou shalt lead up a dance *in via lactea*.

Fore. I'm thunderstruck! You are not married to my niece?

Sir Samp. Not absolutely married, uncle; but very near it, within a kiss of the matter, as you see. [*Kisses Angelica.*]

Ang. 'Tis very true indeed, uncle; I hope you'll be my father, and give me.

Sir Samp. That he shall, or I'll burn his globes——
Body o'me, he shall be thy father, I'll make him thy father, and thou shalt make me a father, and I'll make thee a mother, and we'll beget sons and daughters enow to put the weekly bills out of countenance.

Scan. Death and hell! Where's Valentine?

S C E N E X.

Sir SAMPSON, ANGELICA, FORESIGHT,
Mrs FORESIGHT, BEN, BUCKRAM.

Mrs Fore. This is so surprising——

Sir Samp. How! what does my aunt say? Surprising, Aunt! Not at all, for a young couple to make a match in winter? Not at all——'Tis a plot to undermine cold weather, and destroy that usurper of a bed called a warming-pan.

Mrs Fore. I'm glad to hear you have so much fire in you, Sir Sampson.

Ben. Mas, I fear his fire's little better than tinder: mayhap it will only serve to light up a match for some body else. The young woman's a handsome young woman, I can't deny it; but father, if I might be your pilot in this case, you should not marry her. 'Tis just the same thing, as if so be you should fail so far as the Straits without provision.

Sir Samp. Who gave you authority to speak, Sirrah? to your element, fish, be mute, fish and to sea, rule your helm, Sirrah, don't direct me.

Ben. Well, well, take you care of your own helm, or you mayn't keep your new vessel steady.

Sir Samp. Why, you impudent tarpaulin! Sirrah, do you bring your forecastle jests upon your father? but I shall be even with you, I won't give you a groat. Mr Buckram, is the conveyance so worded that nothing can possibly descend to this scoundrel? I wou'd not so much as have him have the prospect of an estate; tho' there were no way to come to it, but by the North-East passage.

Buck. Sir, it is drawn according to your directions, there is not the least cranny of the law unstopt.

Ben. Lawyer, I believe there's many a cranny and leak unstopt in your conscience—If so be that one had a pump to your bosom, I believe we shou'd discover a foul hold. They say a witch will sail in a sieve—But I believe the devil wou'd not venture aboard o'your conscience. And that's for you.

Sir Samp. Hold your tongue, Sirrah. How now? who's here?

S C E N E XI.

[To them] TATTLE and Mrs FRAIL.

Mrs Frail. O, sister, the most unlucky accident.

Mrs Fore. What's the matter?

Tat. O, the two most unfortunate poor creatures in the world we are.

Fore. Bless us! how so?

Mrs Frail. Ah, Mr Tattle and I, poor Mr Tattle and I are—I can't speak it out.

Tat. Nor I——But poor Mrs Frail and I are——

Mrs Frail. Married.

Mrs Fore. Married! How?

Tat. Suddenly—before we knew where we were—that villain Jeremy, by the help of disguises, trick'd us into one another.

Fore. Why, you told me just now, you went hence in haste to be married.

Ang. But I believe Mr Tattle meant the favour to me, I thank him.

Tat. I did, as I hope to be sav'd, Madam, my intentions were good—But this is the most cruel thing, to marry one does not know how, nor why, nor wherefore——The devil take me if ever I was so much concern'd at any thing in my life.

Ang. 'Tis very unhappy, if you don't care for one another.

Tat. The least in the world——That is, for my part; I speak for myself. Gad, I never had the least thought of serious kindness——I never lik'd any body less in my life. Poor woman! Gad, I'm sorry for her too; for I have no reason to hate her neither; but I believe I shall lead her a damn'd sort of a life.

Mrs Fore. He's better than no husband at all—tho' he's a coxcomb. [To Frail.

Mrs Frail. [To her.] Ay, ay, 'tis well 'tis not worse.—Nay, for my part I always despised Mr Tattle of all things: nothing but his being my husband could have made me like him less.

Tat. Look you there, I thought as much——Pox on't, I wish we could keep it secret: why, I don't believe any of this company wou'd speak of it.

Mrs Frail. But, my dear, that's impossible; the parson and that rogue Jeremy will publish it.

Tat. Ay, my dear, so they will, as you say.

Ang. O you'll agree very well in a little time; custom will make it easy to you.

Tat. Easy! Pox on't, I don't believe I shall sleep to-night.

Sir Samp. Sleep, quotha! No, why you would not sleep

o' your wedding night? I'm an older fellow than you, and don't mean to sleep.

Ben. Why, there's another match now, as tho'f a couple of privateers were looking for a prize, and should fall foul of one another. I'm sorry for the young man with all my heart. Look you, friend, if I may advise you, when she's going, for that you must expect, I have experience of her, when she's going, let her go. For no matrimony is tough enough to hold her, and if she can't drag her anchor along with her, she'll break her cable, I can tell you that. Who's here? the madman?

S C E N E, *The Last.*

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, Sir SAMPSON, ANGELICA, FORESIGHT, Mrs FORESIGHT, TATTLE, Mrs FRAIL, BEN, JEREMY, BUCKRAM.

Val. No; here's the fool; and if occasion be, I'll give it under my hand.

Sir Samp. How now!

Val. Sir, I'm come to acknowledge my errors, and ask your pardon.

Sir Samp. What, have you found your senses at last then? In good time, Sir.

Val. You were abus'd, Sir, I never was distracted.

Fore. How, not mad! Mr Scandal.

Scan. No, really, Sir; I'm his witness, it was all counterfeit.

Val. I thought I had reasons.-----But it was a poor contrivance, the effect has shewn it such.

Sir Samp. Contrivance, what, to cheat me? to cheat your father? Sirrah, could you hope to prosper?

Val. Indeed, I thought, Sir, when the father endeavour'd to undo the son, it was a reasonable return of nature.

Sir Samp. Very good, Sir-----Mr Buckram, are you ready!-----Come, Sir, will you sign and seal?

Val. If you please, Sir; but first I would ask this lady one question.

Sir Samp. Sir, you must ask me leave first; that Lady? No, Sir; you shall ask that Lady no questions, 'till you have asked her blessing, Sir; that Lady is to be my wife.

Val. I have heard as much, Sir; but I would have it from her own mouth.

Sir Samp. That's as much as to say, I lie, Sir, and you don't believe what I say.

Val. Pardon me, Sir. But I reflect that I very lately counterfeited madness; I don't know but the frolic may go round.

Sir Samp. Come, chuck, satisfy him, answer him;—
Come, come, Mr Buckram, the pen and ink.

Buck. Here it is, Sir, with the deed; all is ready.

[Valentine goes to Angelica.]

Ang. 'Tis true, you have a great while pretended love to me; nay, what if you were sincere; still you must pardon me, if I think my own inclinations have a better right to dispose of my person, than yours.

Sir Samp. Are you answer'd now, Sir?

Val. Yes, Sir.

Sir Samp. Where's your plot, Sir? and your contrivance now, Sir? Will you sign, Sir? Come, will you sign and seal?

Val. With all my heart, Sir.

Scan. 'Sdeath, you are not mad indeed, to ruin yourself?

Val. I have been disappointed of my only hope; and he that loses hope may part with any thing. I never valu'd fortune, but as it was subservient to my pleasure; and my only pleasure was to please this Lady; I have made many vain attempts, and find at last that nothing but my ruin can effect it; which, for that reason, I will sign to—
Give me the paper.

Ang. Generous Valentine!

[Aside.]

Buck. Here is the deed, Sir.

Val. But where is the bond, by which I am oblig'd to sign this!

Buck. Sir Sampson, you have it.

Ang. No, I have it; and I'll use it, as I wou'd every thing that is an enemy to Valentine. [Tears the paper.

Sir Samp. How now!

Val. Ha!

Ang. Had I the world to give you, it cou'd not make me worthy of so generous and faithful a passion; here's my hand, my heart was always yours, and struggled very hard to make this utmost trial of your virtue. [To Valentine.

Val. Between pleasure and amazement, I am lost——
But on my knees I take the blessing.

Sir Samp. Oons, what is the meaning of this?

Ben. Mefs, here's the wind chang'd again. Father, you and I may make a voyage together now.

Ang. Well, Sir Sampson, since I have play'd you a trick, I'll advise you how you may avoid such another. Learn to be a good father, or you'll never get a second wife. I always lov'd your son, and hated your unforgiving nature. I was resolv'd to try him to the utmost; I have try'd you too, and know you both. You have not more faults than he has virtues; and 'tis hardly more pleasure to me, that I can make him and myself happy, than that I can punish you.

Val. If my happiness cou'd receive addition, this kind surprize wou'd make it double.

Sir Samp. Oons, your're a crocodile.

Fore. Really, Sir Sampson, this is a sudden eclipse.

Sir Samp. You're an illiterate old fool, and I'm another.

Tat. If the gentleman is in disorder for want of a wife, I can spare him mine. Oh, are you there, Sir? I'm indebted to you for my happiness. [To Jeremy.

Jer. Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons; 'twas an arrant mistake—You see, Sir, my master was never mad or any thing like it——Then how cou'd it be otherwise?

Val. Tattle, I thank you, you would have interposed between me and heav'n; but providence laid purgatory in your way——You have but justice.

Scan. I hear the fiddles that Sir Sampson provided for his own wedding; methinks 'tis pity they shou'd not be employ'd when the match is so much mended. Valentine, tho' it be morning, we may have a dance.

Val. Any thing, my friend, every thing that looks like joy and transport.

Scan. Call 'em, Jeremy.

Ang. I have done dissembling now, Valentine; and if th'at coldness which I have always worn before you, should turn to an extreme fondness, you must not suspect it.

Val. I'll prevent that suspicion—For I intend to doat to that immoderate degree, that your fondness shall never distinguish itself enough to be taken notice of. If ever you seem to love too much, it must be only when I can't love enough.

Ang. Have a care of promises; you know you are apt to run more in debt than you are able to pay.

Val. Therefore I yield my body as your prisoner, and make your best on't.

Jer. The music stays for you.

[*Dance.*

Scan. Well, Madam, you have done exemplary justice, in punishing an inhuman father, and rewarding a faithful lover: but there is a third good work, which I, in particular, must thank you for; I was an infidel to your sex, and you have converted me—For now I am convinc'd that all women are not like fortune, blind in bestowing favours, either on those who do not merit, or who do not want 'em.

Ang. 'Tis an unreasonable accusation, that you lay upon our sex: you tax us with injustice, only to cover your own want of merit. You would all have the reward of love; but few have the constancy to stay till it becomes your due. Men are generally hypocrites and infidels, they pretend to worship, but have neither zeal nor faith: how few, like Valentine, would persevere even to martyrdom, and sacrifice their interest to their constancy! In admiring me you misplace the novelty.

The miracle to-day is, that we find
A lover true: not that a woman's kind.

E P I L O G U E,

Spoken at the opening of the New House,

By Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.

SURE providence at first design'd this place
To be the player's refuge in distress;
For still in every storm, they all run hither,
As to a shed, that shields them from the weather.
But thinking of this change which last befel us,
'Tis like what I have heard our poets tell us:
For when behind our scenes, their suits are pleading,
To help their love, sometimes they show their reading;
And wanting ready cash to pay for hearts,
They top their learning on us, and their parts.
Once of philosophers they told us stories,
Whom, as I think, they call'd—Py——Pythagorics,
I'm sure 'tis some such Latin name they give 'em,
And we, who know no better, must believe 'em.
Now to these men (say they) such souls were giv'n,
That after death ne'er went to hell, nor heav'n,
But liv'd, I know not how, in beasts; and then
When many years were past, in men again.
Methinks, we players resemble such a soul,
That, does from bodies, we from houses stole.
Thus Aristotle's soul, of old that was,
May now be damn'd to animate an ass;
Or in this very house, for ought we know,
Is doing painful penance in some Beau:
And thus, our audience, which did once resort
To shining theatres to see our sport,
Now find us toss'd into a tennis-court.
These walls but t'other day were fill'd with noise
Of roaring gamesters, and your dammee boys;

Then bounding balls and rackets they encompass,
 And now they're fill'd with jests, and flights, and bombast!
 I vow, I don't much like this transmigration,
 Stroling from place to place, by circulation;
 Grant, Heav'n, we don't return to our first station.
 I know not what these think; but for my part,
 I can't reflect without an aking heart,
 How we shou'd end in our original, a cart.
 But we can't fear, since you're so good to save us,
 That you have only set us up, to leave us.
 Thus from the past, we hope for future grace,
 I beg it———
 And some here know I have a begging face.
 Then pray continue this your kind behaviour,
 For a clear stage won't do, without your favour.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

