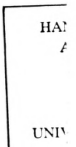
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ENGLISH CLASSICS

EDITED BY W. E. HENLEY

THE COMEDIES OF WILLIAM CONGREVE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY G. S. STREET

II

THE COMEDIES OF WILLIAM CONGREVE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS

LOVE FOR LOVE

A COMEDY

Nudus agris, nudus nummis paternis,
Insanire parat certa ratione modoque.

—Hor.

LOVE FOR LOVE

A COMEDY

Nudus agris, nudus nummis paternis,
Insanire parat certa ratione modoque.

—Hor.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DORSET AND MIDDLESEX,

LORD CHAMBERLAIN OF HIS MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD, AND KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, ETC.

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 t'other, are both of 'em 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.

PROLOGUE.

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 proved,
And hope new fruit from ancient stocks removed.
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 restored,
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 cheerful 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 shows its teeth, as if it smiled.
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 dared 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 designed
Affront to none, but frankly speaks his mind.
And should th' ensuing scenes not chance to hit,
He offers but this one excuse, 'twas writ
Before your late encouragement of wit.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken, at the opening of the new house,
by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

Sure Providence at first designed 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 'em from the weather.
But thinking of this change which last befel us,
It 's 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 called—Py—Pythagories,
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 given,
That after death ne'er went to hell nor heaven,
But lived, 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 stroll.
Thus Aristotle's soul, of old that was,
May now be damned 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 tossed into a tennis-court.
These walls but t'other day were filled with noise
Of roaring gamesters and your dam'me boys;
Then bounding balls and rackets they encompast,
And now they 're filled with jests, and flights, and bombast!
I vow, I don't much like this transmigration,
Strolling from place to place by circulation;
Grant heaven, we don't return to our first station!
I know not what these think, but for my part
I can't reflect without an aching heart,
How we should 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.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir Sampson Legend, father to Valentine and Ben,	*Mr. Underhill.*
Valentine, fallen under his father's displeasure by his expensive 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 valuing 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, palmistry, physiognomy, omens, dreams, etc; uncle to Angelica,	*Mr. Sanford.*
Jeremy, servant to Valentine,	*Mr. Bowen.*
Trapland, a scrivener,	*Mr. Triffusis.*
Buckram, a lawyer,	*Mr. Freeman.*

WOMEN.

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. Foresight, a woman of the town,	*Mrs. Barry.*
Miss Prue, daughter to Foresight 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.

LOVE FOR LOVE

ACT I.—SCENE I.

VALENTINE *in his chamber reading.* JEREMY *waiting.*

Several books upon the table.

VAL. Jeremy.

JERE. Sir?

VAL. Here, take away. I'll walk a turn and digest what I have read.

JERE. 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.

JERE. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write receipts?

VAL. Read, read, sirrah, 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.

JERE. 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.

JERE. Humph, and so he has made a very fine feast, where there is nothing to be eaten?

VAL. Yes.

JERE. 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 lived 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 poverty?

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.

JERE. 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 expenses would bring you to; your coaches and your liveries; your treats 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 cared 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 rivalled 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.

JERE. 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.

JERE. Now heaven of mercy continue the tax upon paper. You don't mean to write?

VAL. Yes, I do. I'll write a play.

JERE. 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.

JERE. Sir, it's impossible. I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works. But to live, even three days, the life of a play, I no more expect it than to be canonised 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 ends 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.

JERE. 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 ruined; you won't have a friend left in the world if you turn poet. Ah, pox confound that Will's coffee-house: 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 decayed porter, worn out with pimping, and carrying *billet doux* and songs: not like other porters, for hire, but for the jests' 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?

JERE. Sometimes like a bilked bookseller, with a meagre terrified countenance, that looks as if he had written for himself, or were resolved 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 preferred 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.

SCENE 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 wherever it is, it's always contriving its own ruin.

JERE. 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?

JERE. Ay, more indeed: for who cares for anybody 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 commissioned by heaven to seize hte 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, anything but poet. A modern poet is worse, more servile, timorous, and fawning, than any I have named: without you could retrieve the ancient honours of the name, recall the stage of Athens, and be allowed the force of open honest satire.

VAL. You are as inveterate against our poets as if your character had been lately exposed 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 do the world say of me, and my forced confinement?

SCAN. The world behaves itself as it uses to do on such 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 expense have been your greatest faults.

VAL. How now?

JERE. Nothing new, sir; I have despatched 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.

JERE. No, faith, sir; I have put 'em off so long with patience and forbearance, and other fair words, that I was forced now to tell 'em in plain downright English——

VAL. What?

JERE. That they should be paid.

VAL. When?

JERE. To-morrow.

VAL. And how the devil do you mean to keep your word?

JERE. Keep it? Not at all; it has been so very much stretched that I reckon it will break of course by to-morrow, and nobody be surprised at the matter. [*Knocking.*] Again! Sir, if you don't like my negotiation, will you be pleased to answer these yourself?

VAL. See who they are.

SCENE 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 an army lead just such a life as I do; have just such crowds of visitants in a morning, all soliciting 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.

SCENE IV.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY.

JERE. 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, could 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?

JERE. 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.

SCENE V.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TRAPLAND, JEREMY.

VAL. Oh, 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 you down, you know his way.

TRAP. [*sits.*] There is a debt, Mr. Valentine, of £1500 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 to our business. My service to you, Mr. Scandal. [*Drinks.*] I have forborne as long——

VAL. T'other glass, and then we 'll talk. Fill, Jeremy.

TRAP. No more, in truth. I have forborne, 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 honester 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. Fie, Mr. Scandal, you never knew——

SCAN. What don't I know? I know the buxom black widow in the Poultry. £800 a year jointure, and £20,000 in money. Aha! 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 anchoret: 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.

SCENE 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. Udso, that 's true: Mr. Valentine, I love mirth, but business must be done. Are you ready to——

JERE. 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.

SCENE 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——

SCENE VIII.

Valentine, Scandal.

SCAN. He begs pardon like a hangman at an execution.

VAL. But I have got a reprieve.

SCAN. I am surprised; 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 pounds to pay my debts and make my fortune. This was once proposed before, and I refused 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.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] JEREMY.

JERE. More misfortunes, sir.

VAL. What, another dun?

JERE. 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.

SCENE X.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

SCAN. Pox on him, I 'll be gone.

VAL. No, prithee stay: Tattle and you should never be asunder; you are light and shadow, and show 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 show 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 public professor of secrecy, and makes proclamation that he holds private intelligence.—He 's here.

SCENE XI.

[*To them*] TATTLE.

TATT. 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 anybody's else, that will never happen.

TATT. How inhuman!

VAL. Why Tattle, you need not be much concerned at anything that he says: for to converse with Scandal, is to play at losing loadum; you must lose a good name to him before you can win it for yourself.

TATT. But how barbarous that is, and how unfortunate for him, that the world shall think the better of any person for his calumniation! I thank heaven, it has always been a part of my character to handle the reputations of others very tenderly indeed.

SCAN. Ay, such rotten reputations as you have to deal with are to be handled tenderly indeed.

TATT. Nay, but why rotten? Why should you say rotten, when you know not the persons of whom you speak? How cruel that is!

SCAN. Not know 'em? Why, thou never had'st to do with anybody that did not stink to all the town.

TATT. Ha, ha, ha; nay, now you make a jest of it indeed. For there is nothing more known than that nobody knows anything of that nature of me. As I hope to be saved, Valentine, I never exposed a woman, since I knew what woman was.

VAL. And yet you have conversed with several.

TATT. 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 anybody else.

SCAN. How?

VAL. Nay faith, I'm apt to believe him. Except her husband, Tattle.

TATT. Oh, that——

SCAN. What think you of that noble commoner, Mrs. Drab?

TATT. 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 bribed 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.

TATT. No matter for that. Yes, yes, everybody knows. No doubt on't, everybody 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 everything in the world; and, says I, if your grace——

SCAN. Grace!

TATT. 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.

TATT. Not a word, as I hope to be saved; an errant *lapsus linguæ*. Come, let's talk of something else.

VAL. Well, but how did you acquit yourself?

TATT. Pooh, pooh, nothing at all; I only rallied 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.

TATT. Valentine, I supped last night with your mistress, and her uncle, old Foresight: I think your father lies at Foresight's.

VAL. Yes.

TATT. 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.

TATT. Oh, that is not fair.

SCAN. What?

TATT. To tell.

SCAN. To tell what? Why, what do you know of Mrs. Frail?

TATT. Who, I? Upon honour I don't know whether she be man or woman, but by the smoothness of her chin and roundness of her hips.

SCAN. No?

TATT. No.

SCAN. She says otherwise.

TATT. Impossible!

SCAN. Yes, faith. Ask Valentine else.

TATT. Why then, as I hope to be saved, 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?

TATT. Though I have more honour than to tell first, I have more manners than to contradict what a lady has declared.

SCAN. Well, you own it?

TATT. I am strangely surprised! 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.

TATT. How?

VAL. She does me the favour, I mean, of a visit sometimes. I did not think she had granted more to anybody.

SCAN. Nor I, faith. But Tattle does not use to bely a lady; it is contrary to his character. How one may be deceived in a woman, Valentine?

TATT. Nay, what do you mean, gentlemen?

SCAN. I'm resolved I'll ask her.

TATT. O barbarous! Why did you not tell me?

SCAN. No; you told us.

TATT. And bid me ask Valentine?

VAL. What did I say? I hope you won't bring me to confess an answer when you never asked me the question?

TATT. 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.

SCENE XII.

[*To them*] JEREMY.

JERE. Sir, Mrs. Frail has sent to know if you are stirring.

VAL. Show her up when she comes.

SCENE XIII.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TATTLE.

TATT. I'll be gone.

VAL. You'll meet her.

TATT. 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.

TATT. Scandal, you will not be so ungenerous. Oh, I shall lose my reputation of secrecy for ever. I shall never be received but upon public days, and my visits will never be admitted beyond a drawing-room. I shall never see a bedchamber again, never be locked in a closet, nor run behind a screen, or under a table: never be distinguished 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.

TATT. 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.

TATT. 'Tis very hard. Won't a baronet's lady pass?

SCAN. No, nothing under a right honourable.

TATT. Oh, inhuman! You don't expect their names?

SCAN. No, their titles shall serve.

TATT. 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 condemned, like other bad painters, to write the name at the bottom.

TATT. Well, first then——

SCENE XIV.

[*To them*] MRS. FRAIL.

TATT. Oh, 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, everything is safe with you, we know.

SCAN. Tattle—

TATT. 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 mistress 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 brother Foresight's daughter is come out of the country: I assure you, there's a match talked 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 their two bodies; 'tis the most superstitious old fool! He would have persuaded me that this was an unlucky day, and would not let me come abroad. But I invented a dream, and sent him to Artimedorus for interpretation, and so stole out to see you. Well, and what will you give me now? Come, I must have something.

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?

TATT. 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.

TATT. 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.

TATT. 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——

TATT. Nor woman, till she consented to have her picture there too—for then she's obliged 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 refused 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, wantonness, inconstancy, covetousness, dissimulation, malice and ignorance, all in one piece. Then I can shew you lying, foppery, vanity, cowardice, bragging, lechery, impotence, and ugliness in another piece; and yet one of these is a celebrated beauty, and t'other a professed 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 should be.

MRS. FRAIL. And no head?

SCAN. No head.

MRS. FRAIL. Pooh, this is all invention. Have you never 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 proportioned critics, with long wigs, laced 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.

SCENE XIV.

[*To them*] JEREMY.

JERE. 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!

TATT. I will: because I have a tendre 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 anybody 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.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A room in FORESIGHT'S *house.*

FORESIGHT *and* SERVANT.

FORE. Hey 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 anything 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.

SCENE II.

[*To them*] NURSE.

FORE. Nurse, where's your young mistress?

NURSE. Wee'st 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, Oh, 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 heaven 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 chequered. Mirth and sorrow, want and plenty, night and day, make up our time. But in troth I am pleased at my stocking; very well pleased 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.

SCENE III.

ANGELICA, FORESIGHT, NURSE.

ANG. Is it not a good hour for pleasure too, uncle? Pray lend me your coach; mine's 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 Messahalah 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 stand 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 retrograde (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 reap 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 spoon-meat together. Indeed, uncle, I'll indite you for a wizard.

FORE. How, hussy! 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, heaven 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 anything 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 shears, 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, hussy; but I'll remember this, I'll be revenged 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 it, 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! Oh, the false, slanderous thing; feel, feel here, if I have anything 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 locked 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, spitfire, but one virgin.

ANG. Nor there had not been that one, if she had had to do with anything 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 hazel 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——

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] SERVANT.

SERV. Sir Sampson is coming down to wait upon you.

ANG. Good-bye, uncle—call me a chair. I'll find out my aunt, and tell her she must not come home.

FORE. I'm so perplexed and vexed, I'm 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.

SCENE 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 Ptolomey, I'll make the ungracious prodigal know who begat him; I will, old Nostrodamus. What, I warrant my son thought nothing belonged 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 danced 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 arrived, he's 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 revenged on this undutiful rogue.

FORE. Odso, 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 signed, what hour? Odso, 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 ordered my lawyer to draw up writings of settlement and jointure—all shall be done to-night. No matter for the time; prithee, brother Foresight, leave superstition. Pox o' the 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 it, and an argument to confound your Ephemeris.—Ignorant! I tell you, I have travelled old Fircu, and know the globe. I have seen the antipodes, where the sun rises at midnight, and sets at noonday.

FORE. But I tell you, I have travelled, and travelled 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 journeys shall be prosperous, undertakings successful, or goods stolen recovered; I know——

SIR SAMP. I know the length of the Emperor of China's foot; have kissed the Great Mogul's slippers, and rid a-hunting upon an elephant with a 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 could not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

FORE. What, does he twit me with my wife too? I must be better informed of this. [*Aside.*] Do you mean my wife, Sir Sampson? Though 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 would say, brother Capricorn.

FORE. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandeville; Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude. Take back your paper of inheritance; send your son to sea again. I 'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, e'er 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; odsbud, 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 purloined from one of the pyramids, powdered 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.

SCENE VI.

[*To them*] JEREMY.

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?

JERE. 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.

SCENE VII.

FORESIGHT, SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, JEREMY.

JERE. He is here, sir.

VAL. Your blessing, sir.

SIR SAMP. You've had it already, sir; I think I sent it 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. Hark ye, 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 signed to.

SIR SAMP. Sir, how, I beseech you, what were you pleased 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 pleased 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 released 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 sirrah, 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 hanged; I shall live to see you go up Holborn Hill. Has 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 damned Tyburn face, without the benefit o' 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.

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, sirrah, 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, ha? Answer me that! Did you come a volunteer into the world? Or did I, with the lawful authority of a parent, press you to the service?

VAL. I know no more why I came than you do why you called 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 manyheaded monster have I propagated!

VAL. I am of myself, a plain, easy, simple creature, and to be kept at small expense; but the retinue that you gave me are craving and invincible; they are so many devils that you have raised, 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, no-

thing 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.

JERE. 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 fellow was not born with you? I did not beget him, did I?

JERE. 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?

JERE. Yes; I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jigs and country dances, and the like; I don't much matter your solos or sonatas, they give me the spleen.

SIR SAMP. The spleen, ha, ha, ha; a pox confound you—solos or sonatas? 'Oons, whose son are you? How were you engendered, muckworm?

JERE. I am by my father, the son of a chair-man; my mother sold oysters in winter, and cucumbers in summer; and I came upstairs into the world; for I was born in a cellar.

FORE. By your looks, you should go upstairs out of the world too, friend.

SIR SAMP. And if this rogue were anatomized now, and dissected, he has his 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 pounds? If I had it again, I would not give thee a groat.—What, would'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.

SCENE VIII.

VALENTINE, JEREMY.

JERE. 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 see Angelica: but since she was gone abroad, it was easily turned another way, and at least looked 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.

SCENE 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 recreation. Lord, where's the comfort of this life if we can't have the happiness of conversing 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 anybody else should have seen you alight, as I did? How can anybody be happy while they're in perpetual fear of being seen and censured? Besides, it would not only reflect upon you, sister, but me.

MRS. FRAIL. Pooh, here's a clutter: why should 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 Knight's Bridge, or to Chelsea, 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 called 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, it's 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? Oh, sister, sister!

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? Oh, sister, sister! Sister every way.

MRS. FORE. Oh, devil on't, that I could not discover her without betraying myself. [*Aside.*]

MRS. FRAIL. I have heard gentlemen say, sister, that one should take great care, when one makes a thrust in fencing, not to lie open oneself.

MRS. FORE. It's very true, sister. 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 sisterly 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 one to another, I'm afraid the world have observed us more than we have observed 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 awkward daughter-in-law, who you know is designed 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.

SCENE X.

[*To them*] TATTLE *and* MISS PRUE.

MISS. Mother, mother, mother, look you here!

MRS. FORE. Fie, fie, Miss, how you bawl! Besides, I have told you, you must not call me mother.

MISS. What must I call you then, are you not 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 overjoyed at?

MISS. Look you here, madam, then, what Mr. Tattle has given 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.

TATT. O fie, 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? It's better than lavender, mun. I'm resolved I won't let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks—ha, cousin?

MRS. FRAIL. Fie, Miss; amongst your linen, you must say. You must never say smock.

MISS. Why, it is not bawdy, is it, cousin?

TATT. 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, demm you toad. I wish you don't persuade her out of her innocency.

TATT. Who, I, madam? O 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 could find out a fresh, harmless creature; and left us, sister, presently.

TATT. 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 anybody else should be beforehand with him.

TATT. O Lord, I swear I would not for the world——

MRS. FRAIL. O hang you; who'll believe you? You'd be hanged 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. Hark'ee, sister, by my soul the girl is spoiled already. D'ee think she'll ever endure a great lubberly tarpaulin? 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 should find us with them, he'd think so, sure enough.

MRS. FORE. So he would—but then leaving them 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 thoroughly innocent.

SCENE XI.

TATTLE, MISS PRUE.

MISS. What makes 'em go away, Mr. Tattle? What do they mean, do you know?

TATT. Yes, my dear; I think I can guess, but hang me if I know the reason of it.

MISS. Come, must not we go too?

TATT. No, no, they don't mean that.

MISS. No! What then? What shall you and I do together?

TATT. I must make love to you, pretty Miss; will you let me make love to you?

MISS. Yes, if you please.

TATT. 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.

TATT. 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.

TATT. D'ye think you can love me?

MISS. Yes.

TATT. 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?

TATT. Why you must say no, or you believe not, or you can't tell——

MISS. Why, must I tell a lie then?

TATT. 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-fashioned country way of speaking one's mind;—and must not you lie too?

TATT. 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.

TATT. 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.*]

TATT. Hold, hold, that's pretty well, but you should not have given it me, but have suffered me to have taken it.

MISS. Well, we'll do it again.

TATT. With all my heart.—Now then, my little angel. [*Kisses her.*]

MISS. Pish.

TATT. That's right,—again, my charmer. [*Kisses again.*]

MISS. O fie, nay, now I can't abide you.

TATT. 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.

TATT. 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.

TATT. No, I'll come in first, and push you down afterwards.

MISS. Will you? Then I'll be more angry, and more complying.

TATT. Then I'll make you cry out.

MISS. Oh, but you shan't, for I'll hold my tongue.

TATT. O my dear apt scholar!

MISS. Well, now I'll run and make more haste than you.

TATT. You shall not fly so fast, as I'll pursue.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

NURSE *alone.*

NURSE. Miss, Miss, Miss Prue! Mercy on me, marry and amen. Why, what's become of the child? Why Miss, Miss Foresight! Sure she has locked herself up in her chamber, 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 husht. 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.

SCENE II.

TATTLE, MISS PRUE.

MISS. O Lord, she's coming, and she'll tell my father; what shall I do now?

TATT. Pox take her; if she had stayed two minutes longer, I should have wished for her coming.

MISS. O dear, what shall I say? Tell me, Mr. Tattle, tell me a lie.

TATT. 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.*]

SCENE III.

TATTLE, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, ANGELICA.

ANG. You can't accuse me of inconstancy; I never told you that I loved 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.

TATT. [*coming up*]. Scandal, are you in private discourse? Anything of secrecy? [*Aside to* SCANDAL.]

SCAN. Yes, but I dare trust you; we were talking of Angelica's love to Valentine. You won't speak of it.

TATT. No, no, not a syllable. I know that's a secret, for it's whispered everywhere.

SCAN. Ha, ha, ha!

ANG. What is, Mr. Tattle? I heard you say something was whispered everywhere.

SCAN. Your love of Valentine.

ANG. How!

TATT. 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?

TATT. Gadso; but I thought she might have been trusted with her own affairs.

SCAN. Is that your discretion? Trust a woman with herself?

TATT. 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 formed the balance of a reciprocal affection.

VAL. O the devil, what damned costive 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 anything in his life.

TATT. O Lord! Yes, indeed, madam, several times.

ANG. I swear I don't think 'tis possible.

TATT. Yes, I vow and swear I have; Lord, madam, I'm the most unfortunate man in the world, and the most cruelly used by the ladies.

ANG. Nay, now you're ungrateful.

TATT. No, I hope not,—'tis as much ingratitude to own some favours as to conceal others.

VAL. There, now it's out.

ANG. I don't understand you now. I thought you had never asked anything 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.

TATT. Brag! O heavens! Why, did I name anybody?

ANG. No; I suppose that is not in your power; but you would if you could, no doubt on't.

TATT. 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.*]

TATT. Faith, madam, you're in the right; no more I have, as

I hope to be saved; I never had it in my power to say anything 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.

TATT. No indeed, madam, you don't know me at all, I find. For sure my intimate friends would have known——

ANG. Then it seems you would have told, if you had been trusted.

TATT. O pox, Scandal, that was too far put. Never have told particulars, madam. Perhaps I might have talked as of a third person; or have introduced an amour of my own, in conversation, by way of novel; but never have explained particulars.

ANG. But whence comes the reputation of Mr. Tattle's secrecy, if he was never trusted?

SCAN. Why, thence it arises—the thing is proverbially spoken; but may be applied 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 asked 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 obliged to you. For you found her virtue upon the backwardness of the men; and his secrecy upon the mistrust of the women.

TATT. Gad, it's very true, madam, I think we are obliged 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.

TATT. And i'Gad, I have given some [illegible]ntation that has not been resisted.

VAL. Good. [illegible]ay son Ben co[illegible] I long to see him. [illegible]

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.

TATT. 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.

TATT. No? I can show 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 Playhouse, the drawers at Locket's, Pontack's, the Rummer, Spring Garden, my own landlady and *valet de chambre*; all who shall make oath that I receive more letters than the Secretary's office, and that I have more vizor-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 answered, I was the famous Tattle, who had ruined so many women.

VAL. It was there, I suppose, you got the nickname of the Great Turk.

TATT. True; I was called 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 would have brought me into the spiritual court, but I was revenged upon him, for he had a handsome daughter whom I initiated into the science. But I repented it afterwards, for it was talked 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 exposed herself upon my account; Gad, I was sorry for it with all my heart. You know whom I mean—you know where we raffled, wom

SCAN. Mum, you won

VAL. Faith, madam, you're ashamed?

ANG. O barbarous! I never heard so insolent a piece of vanity. Fie, Mr. Tattle; I 'll swear I could not have believed it. Is this your secrecy?

TATT. Gadso, the heat of my story carried me beyond my discretion, as the heat of the lady's passion hurried her beyond her reputation. But I hope you don't know whom I mean; for there was a great many ladies raffled. 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.*]

TATT. 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.

SONG.

Set by Mr. John Eccles.

I.

A nymph and a swain to Apollo once prayed,
The swain had been jilted, the nymph been betrayed:
Their intent was to try if his 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 posed,
But sagely at length he this secret disclosed:
He alone won't betray in whom none will confide,
And the nymph may be chaste that has never been tried.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] SIR SAMPSON, MRS. FRAIL, MISS 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 should 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.

SCENE V.

ANGELICA, SIR SAMPSON, TATTLE, MRS. FRAIL, MISS PRUE.

SIR SAMP. What, is my son Valentine gone? What, is he sneaked 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? Could 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 could have liked anything 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. Odsbud, 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, mongrel, cast him off; you shall see the rogue show himself, and make love to some desponding 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.

SCENE 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 body. Body o' me, thou art heartily welcome.

BEN. Thank you, father, and I'm glad to see you.

SIR SAMP. Odsbud, and I'm glad to see thee; kiss me, boy, kiss me again and again, dear Ben. [*Kisses him.*]

BEN. So, so, enough, father. Mess, I'd rather kiss 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*].

TATT. 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. Ay, ay, been! Been far enough, an' that be all. Well, father, and how do all at home? How does brother Dick, and brother Val?

SIR SAMP. Dick—body o' me—Dick has been dead these two years. I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.

BEN. Mess, that's true; marry! I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say. Well, and how? I have a many questions to ask you. Well, you ben't married 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 sit that way. As for my part, mayhap I have no mind to marry.

FRAIL. That would 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 sayn 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 married has, as it were, d'ye see, his feet in the bilboes, and mayhap mayn't get them out again when he would.

SIR SAMP. Ben's a wag.

BEN. A man that is married, d'ye see, is no more like another man than a galley-slave is like one of us free sailors; he is chained 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: it's

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 bed-fellow hugely. How say you, mistress, would you like going to sea? Mess, you're a tight vessel, an well rigged, an you were but as well manned.

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 may'nt carry so much sail o' your head—top and top gallant, by the mess.

MRS. FRAIL. No, why so?

BEN. Why, an you do, you may run the risk to be overset, 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 anything 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.

TATT. 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-faced; 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.

SCENE VII.

BEN, *and* MISS PRUE.

BEN. Come mistress, 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 anything to say, I can hear you farther off, I an't deaf.

BEN. Why that's true, as you say, nor I an't dumb, I can be heard as far as another,—I'll heave off, to please you. [*Sits farther 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, mistress? 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, it's 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 to row another. Now, for my part, d'ye see, I'm for carrying things above board, I'm not for keeping anything under hatches,—so that if you ben't as willing as I, say so a God's name: there's no harm done; mayhap you may be shame-faced; some maidens thof 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 mayhap 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 should 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-beer 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 an he comes near me, mayhap I may 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 chalked face, you cheese-curd you:—marry thee? Oons, I'll marry a Lapland witch as soon, and live upon selling contrary winds and wrecked vessels.

MISS. I won't be called names, nor I won't be abused 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.

SCENE VIII.

[*To them*] MRS. FORESIGHT *and* MRS. FRAIL.

MRS. FORE. They have quarrelled, just as we could wish.

BEN. Tar-barrel? Let your sweetheart 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 fallen out. Come, sir, will you venture yourself with me? [*Looking kindly on him.*]

BEN. Venture, mess, and that I will, though 'twere to sea in a storm.

SCENE 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 set, coming from sea; if he should not stay for saving grace, old Foresight, but fall to without the help of a parson, ha? Odd, if he should I could not be angry with him; 'twould 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 pared 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 a'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.

SCENE 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 anything 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 should be landed in the West, or the French fleet were at 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 appeared 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 wise 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 disturbed 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 divination? 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 blackguard or his shall get the better of the day.

SCENE 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 should not be over-reached, methinks you should not——

FORE. Alas, Mr. Scandal,—*humanum est errare.*

SCAN. You say true, man will err; mere man will err—but you are something more. There have 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 observed 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 inclined——

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 would not have the fate of Cassandra not to be believed. Valentine is disturbed; 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 prospect 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 looked just so.

FORE. How? Am I altered any way? I don't perceive it.

SCAN. That may be, but your beard is longer than it was two hours ago.

FORE. Indeed! Bless me!

SCENE XII.

[*To them*] MRS. FORESIGHT.

MRS FORE. Husband, will you go to bed? It's 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 glass, your little looking-glass.

SCAN. Pray lend it him, madam. I'll tell you the reason. [*She gives him the glass:* 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 morning, 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.* FORESIGHT *looking 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 gathered 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. Oh, 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.

SCENE XIII.

[*To them*] NURSE.

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 cowslip-water, and lie upon your back: maybe you may dream.

FORE. I thank you, Mr. Scandal, I will. Nurse, let me have a watch-light, and lay the Crumbs 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. 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.

SCENE 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? Hark 'ee, 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. Pshaw! 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. Oh, 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 secured, for you have purchased 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 deformed 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 sound.

MRS. FORE. Oh, fie—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 here?

SCENE XV.

[*To them*] MRS. FRAIL *and* BEN.

BEN. Mess, 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 steered by him; 'tis as thof 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: mess, you've nicked 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 *Mary-gold* should 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, thof 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 biscuit.

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 was married she was called buxom Joan of Deptford.

SCAN. I have heard of her.

BEN. [*Sings*]:—

BALLAD.

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 lie o' nights alone.

II

The soldier swore like thunder,
He loved her more than plunder,
And shewed her many a scar, sir,
That he had brought from far, sir,
With fighting for her sake.
The tailor thought to please her
With offering 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 sailor slyly 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 shot '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 biscuit, and drink flip, put on a clean shirt once a quarter; come home and lie 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. Oh, you are the happiest, merriest men alive.

MRS. FORE. We're beholden to Mr. Benjamin for this entertainment. I believe it's late.

BEN. Why, forsooth, an you think so, you had best go to bed. For my part, I mean to toss a can, and remember my sweetheart, afore I turn in; mayhap 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 ripened maid and finished man.

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

Valentine's lodging.

SCANDAL *and* JEREMY.

SCAN. Well, is your master ready? does he look madly and talk madly?

JERE. 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?

JERE. 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 loved him all this while and concealed it.

SCAN. I saw her take coach just now with her maid, and think I heard her bid the coachman drive hither.

JERE. 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.

SCENE 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 ruined lover, and make manifest the cruel triumphs of her beauty, the barbarity of it something surprises me.

ANG. I don't like raillery from a serious face. Pray tell me what is the matter?

JERE. 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?

JERE. Why, faith, madam, he's mad for want of his wits, just as he was poor for want of money; his head is e'en as light as his pockets, and anybody 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 concerned, and loves him. [*Aside.*]

ANG. Mr. Scandal, you can't think me guilty of so much inhumanity as not to be concerned for a man I must own myself obliged to? Pray tell me truth.

SCAN. Faith, madam, I wish 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 should be vexed to have a trick put upon me. May I not see him?

SCAN. I'm afraid the physician is not willing you should see him yet. Jeremy, go in and enquire.

SCENE 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, 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 occasioned his distemper.

ANG. [*Aside.*] Say you so; nay, then, I'm convinced. And if I don't play trick for trick, may I never taste the pleasure of revenge.—Acknowledgment of love! I find you have mistaken my compassion, and think me guilty of a weakness I am 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 concerned for him; but to love is neither in my power nor inclination, and if he can't be cured 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, 'twould 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 surprise is over, methinks I am not half so sorry as I was.

SCAN. So, faith, good nature works apace; you were confessing just now an obligation to his love.

ANG. But I have considered 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.

SCENE IV.

SCANDAL, JEREMY.

SCAN. Humh! An admirable composition, faith, this same womankind.

JERE. What, is she gone, sir?

SCAN. Gone? Why, she was never here, nor anywhere else; nor I don't know her if I see her, nor you neither.

JERE. 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 meantime, 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.

SCENE V.

JEREMY, SIR SAMPSON LEGEND, *with a* LAWYER.

SIR SAMP. D'ye see, Mr. Buckram, here's the paper signed 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. Oh, here's his scoundrel. Sirrah, where's your master?

JERE. Ah, sir, he's quite gone.

SIR SAMP. Gone! What, he is not dead?

JERE. No, sir, not dead.

SIR SAMP. What, is he gone out of town, run away, ha? has he tricked me? Speak, varlet.

JERE. No, no, sir, he's safe enough, sir, an he were but as sound, 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.

JERE. Would you could, sir, for he has lost himself. Indeed, sir, I have a'most 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 pound.

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 skull.

JERE. Ah, you 've hit it, sir; that 's the matter with him, sir: his skull 's cracked, poor gentleman; he 's stark mad, sir.

SIR SAMP. Mad!

BUCK. What, is he *non compos*?

JERE. Quite *non compos*, sir.

BUCK. Why, then, all 's obliterated, Sir Sampson, if he be *non compos mentis*; 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.

JERE. Mr. Scandal is with him, sir; I 'll knock at the door. [*Goes to the scene, which opens.*]

SCENE VI.

SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY, *and* LAWYER. VALENTINE *upon a couch disorderly dressed.*

SIR SAMP. How now, what 's here to do?

VAL. Ha! Who 's that? [*Starting.*]

SCAN. For heav'n's sake softly, sir, and gently; don't provoke him.

VAL. Answer me: who is that, and that?

SIR SAMP. Gads bobs, 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 Buckram, 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 that 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 liest, 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: it's 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?

JERE. 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.

SCENE VII.

SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY.

SIR SAMP. Hold, hold, don't you go yet.

SCAN. You'd better let him go, sir, and send 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—bless 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* JEREMY.]

SCENE VIII.

SIR SAMPSON, VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

SCAN. That ever I should 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 it, sayest thou? Ay, with all my heart. What matter is it who holds it? What need anybody hold it? I'll put it up in my pocket, Val, and then nobody need hold it. [*Puts the paper in his pocket.*] There, Val; it's safe enough, boy. But thou shalt have it as soon as thou hast set thy hand to another paper, little Val.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] JEREMY *with* BUCKRAM.

VAL. What, is my bad genius here again! Oh no, 'tis the lawyer with an itching palm; and he's come to be scratched. 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 begone: I'll not venture myself with a madman.

SCENE 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. Harkee, 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 politics? 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 sauce 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 True-penny, say'st thou so? Thou hast nicked it. But it's wonderful strange, Jeremy.

JERE. What is, sir?

VAL. That gray hairs should cover a green head—and I make a fool of my father. What's here! *Erra Pater*: or a bearded sibyl? If Prophecy comes, Truth must give place.

SCENE 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 could 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 Ptolemy tell you? Your Messahalah 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 sun 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.

SCENE 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 unconvertible ignorance attend him.

SCAN. You must excuse his passion, Mr. Foresight, for he has been heartily vexed. 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. O sister, what will you do with him?

MRS. FRAIL. Do with him? Send him to sea again in the next foul weather. He's used to an inconstant element, and won't be surprised to see the tide turned.

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. Oh 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 that face can you ask the question?

SCAN. This I have heard of before, but never believed. 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 could 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 inspired 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.

SCENE 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 pleased well enough, now I have found you. Mess, 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-faced thing as he would have me marry, so he asked what was the matter. He asked 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 asked in a surly sort of manner, and gad I answered 'n as surlily. What thof he be my father, I an't bound prentice to 'n; 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 ache; and if so be that he could get a woman to his mind, he 'd marry himself. Gad, says I, an you play the fool and marry at these years, there's more danger of your head's aching than my heart. He was woundy angry when I gave 'n that wipe. He hadn't a word to say, and so I left 'n, and the green girl together; mayhap 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? Oh, I am happy to have discovered the shelves and quicksands that lurk beneath that faithless, smiling face.

BEN. Hey toss! What 's the matter now? Why, you ben't angry, be you?

MRS. FRAIL. Oh, 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 turned 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 fobbed indeed, very finely fobbed.

BEN. Harkee, 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 fobbed,—if I have got anger here upon your account, and you are tacked about already. What d'ye mean, after all your fair speeches, and stroking my cheeks, and kissing and hugging, what would you sheer off so? Would 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 changed.

BEN. More shame for you,—the wind 's changed? It 's an ill wind blows nobody good,—mayhap 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 would not be your husband if you would have me, now I know your mind: thof you had your weight in gold and jewels, and thof I loved you never so well.

MRS. FRAIL. Why, can'st thou love, Porpuss?

BEN. No matter what I can do; don't call names. I don't love you so well as to bear that, whatever I did. I 'm glad you show 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-pecked frigate—I believe that, young woman—and mayhap may come to an anchor at Cuckolds-Point; so there 's a dash for

you, take it as you will: mayhap 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.*]

SCENE XIV.

Mrs. Frail, Mrs. Foresight.

MRS. FRAIL. O sister, had you come a minute sooner, you would have seen the resolution of a lover:—honest Tar and I are parted;—and with the same indifference that we met. O' my life I am half vexed at the insensibility of a brute that I despised.

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 anybody 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.

SCENE 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* JEREMY.]

JERE. Yes, sir; he says he'll favour it, and mistake her for Angelica.

SCAN. It may make us sport.

FORE. Mercy on us!

VAL. Husht—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 horned herd buzz in the exchange at two. Wives and husbands will drive distinct trades, and care and pleasure separately occupy the family. Coffee-houses 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 sunk, and his hands shrivelled; his legs dwindled, and his back bowed: pray, pray, for a metamorphosis. Change thy shape and shake off age; get thee Medea's kettle and be boiled 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 should 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 uttered. His sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical.

VAL. Oh, why would Angelica be absent from my eyes so long?

JERE. She's here, sir.

MRS. FORE. Now, sister.

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 abandoned wretch. Oh, welcome, welcome.

MRS. FRAIL. How d'ye, sir? Can I serve you?

VAL. Harkee; 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! Nobody 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 overhear 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 cowl 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.

SCENE XVI.

[*To them*] TATTLE *and* ANGELICA.

JERE. I'll take care, and——

VAL. Whisper.

ANG. Nay, Mr. Tattle, if you make love to me, you spoil my design, for I intend to make you my confidant.

TATT. But, madam, to throw away your person—such a person!—and such a fortune on a madman!

ANG. I never loved him till he was mad; but don't tell anybody so.

SCAN. How's this! Tattle making love to Angelica!

TATT. 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 encouraged by the impossibility of Valentine's making any more addresses to you, I have ventured to declare the very inmost passion of my heart. O madam, look upon us both. There you see the ruins of a poor decayed creature—here, a complete and lively figure, with youth and health, and all his five senses in perfection, madam, and to all this, the most passionate lover——

ANG. O fie, 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?

FRAIL. O Lord, her coming will spoil all. [*To* JEREMY.]

JERE. No, no, madam, he won't know her; if he should, 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 could contrive to couple 'em together.—Hark'ee—— [*Whisper.*]

MRS. FORE. He won't know you, cousin; he knows nobody.

FORE. But he knows more than anybody. O niece, he knows things past and to come, and all the profound secrets of time.

TATT. 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 pounds 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?

TATT. 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* JEREMY.]

TATT. Do you know me, Valentine?

VAL. You? Who are you? No, I hope not.

TATT. I am Jack Tattle, your friend.

VAL. My friend, what to do? I am no married man, and thou canst not lie with my wife. I am very poor, and thou canst

not borrow money of me. Then what employment have I for a friend?

TATT. Ha! 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 all white, a sheet of lovely, spotless paper, when you first are born; but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose's quill. I know you; for I loved a woman, and loved her so long, that I found out a strange thing: I found out what a woman was good for.

TATT. Ay, prithee, what's that?

VAL. Why, to keep a secret.

TATT. O Lord!

VAL. Oh, exceeding good to keep a secret; for though she should tell, yet she is not to be believed.

TATT. Hah! good again, faith.

VAL. I would have music. Sing me the song that I like.

SONG

Set by Mr. Finger.

I.

I 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 vows and oaths 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.*]

JERE. 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.

JERE. [*To* MRS. FRAIL.] You'll meet, madam? I'll take care everything shall be ready.

MRS. FRAIL. Thou shalt do what thou wilt; in short, I will deny thee nothing.

TATT. 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.

TATT. Pox on't, there's no coming off, now she has said that. Madam, will you do me the honour?

MRS. FORE. Mr. Tattle might have used less ceremony.

SCENE XVII.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

SCAN. Jeremy, follow 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 forced you to acknowledge a kindness for Valentine, which you denied 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.

SCENE XVIII.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE.

VAL. Madam, you need not be very much afraid, for I fancy I begin to come to myself.

ANG. Ay, but if I don't fit you, I'll be hanged. [*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 motley 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, hypocrisy apart. The comedy draws toward an end, and let us think of leaving acting and be ourselves; and since you have loved me, you must own I have at length deserved you should confess it.

ANG. [*Sighs.*] I would I had loved you—for heav'n knows I pity you, and could I have foreseen the bad effects, I would have striven; but that's too late. [*Sighs.*]

VAL. What sad effects?—what's too late? My seeming madness has deceived my father, and procured 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 informed you of to-day, but you were gone before I knew you had been here.

ANG. How! I thought your love of me had caused 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.

SCENE XIX.

[*To them*] JEREMY.

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.

JERE. 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.

JERE. O Lord, madam, did you ever know any madman mad enough to own it?

VAL. Sot, can't you apprehend?

ANG. Why, he talked very sensibly just now.

JERE. Yes, madam; he has intervals. But you see he begins to look wild again now.

VAL. Why, you thick-skulled rascal, I tell you the farce is done, and I will be mad no longer. [*Beats him.*]

ANG. Ha, ha, ha! is he mad or no, Jeremy?

JERE. 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. Who's there? [*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 show 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 accidently touched upon your tender part: but now you have restored me to my former opinion and compassion.

JERE. 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 everybody but this lady.

JERE. 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.

SCENE XX.

VALENTINE, ANGELICA, JENNY.

ANG. Well, have you been there?—Come hither.

JENNY. Yes, madam; Sir Sampson will wait upon you presently. [*Aside to* ANGELICA.]

VAL. You are not leaving me in this uncertainty?

ANG. Would anything 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 chase. Never let us know one another better, for the pleasure of a masquerade is done when we come to show 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.

SCENE XXI.

VALENTINE, JEREMY.

VAL. From a riddle you can expect nothing but a riddle. There's my instruction and the moral of my lesson.

JERE. 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.

JERE. I have heard 'em say, sir, they read hard Hebrew books backwards; maybe 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 sleight of hand,
> Which, to admire, we should not understand.

ACT V.—SCENE I.

A room in Foresight's house.

ANGELICA *and* JENNY.

ANG. 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, it's a sign he likes me; and that's more than half my design.

JENNY. I hear him, madam.

ANG. Leave me; and, 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 honoured 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,—odsbud, 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-lived 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 antedeluvian 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, would she would like me, then I should hamper my young rogues. Odd, would she would; faith and troth she's devilish handsome. [*Aside.*] Madam, you deserve a good husband, and 'twere pity you should 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 anything; and if they commit matrimony, 'tis as they commit murder, out of a frolic, and are ready to hang themselves, or to be hanged 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 or 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 would have such an 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 sibyls ever uttered such a truth. Odsbud, you have won my heart; I hate a wit: I had a son that was spoiled among 'em, a good hopeful lad, till he learned 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 abused in that matter: he 's no more mad than you are.

SIR SAMP. How, madam! Would I could prove it.

ANG. I can tell you how that may be done. But it is a thing that would make me appear to be too much concerned 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 offered at the shrine of your beauty.

ANG. Bless me, Sir Sampson, what's the matter?

SIR SAMP. Odd, madam, I love you. And if you would take my advice in a husband——

ANG. Hold, hold, Sir Sampson. I asked 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. Gadzooks, 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. Oh, fie, 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 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 t'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 obligation, 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. Odzooks, I'm a young man—odzooks, 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, hussy, 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, pulled an old house over his head at last.

SIR SAMP. Say you so, hussy? Come, let's go then; odd, I long to be pulling too; come away. Odso, here's somebody coming.

SCENE III.

TATTLE, JEREMY.

TATT. Is not that she gone out just now?

JERE. 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.

TATT. Ay, who's that?

JERE. Even my unworthy self, sir. Sir, I have 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 sigh for.

TATT. I'll make thy fortune; say no more. Thou art a pretty fellow, and canst carry a message to a lady, in a pretty soft kind of phrase, and with a good persuading accent.

JERE. Sir, I have the seeds of rhetoric and oratory in my head: I have been at Cambridge.

TATT. 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?

JERE. Oh, sir, for that, sir, 'tis my chief talent: I'm as secret as the head of Nilus.

TATT. Ay? Who's he, though? A privy counsellor?

JERE. O ignorance! [*Aside.*] A cunning Egyptian, sir, that with his arms would overrun the country, yet nobody could ever find out his head-quarters.

TATT. Close dog! A good whoremaster, I warrant him:—the time draws nigh, Jeremy. Angelica will be veiled like a nun, and I must be hooded like a friar, ha, Jeremy?

JERE. 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 dressed, and she is so in love with him she'll comply with anything 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 accomplished a gentleman.

TATT. 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.

JERE. 'Tis an act of charity, sir, to save a fine woman with thirty thousand pound from throwing herself away.

TATT. So 'tis, faith; I might have saved several others in my time, but, i'gad, I could never find in my heart to marry anybody before.

JERE. 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.

TATT. No, no; let me alone for a counterfeit. I'll be ready for you.

SCENE 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 anything, till I'm as tired as anything in the world.

TATT. Oh, pox, how shall I get rid of this foolish girl? [*Aside.*]

MISS. Oh, 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.

TATT. Oh, fie, miss; who told you so, child?

MISS. Why, my father. I told him that you loved me.

TATT. Oh, fie, miss; why did you do so? And who told you so, child?

MISS. Who? Why, you did; did not you?

TATT. Oh, 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—oh, but I dreamt that it was so, though.

TATT. Ay, but your father will tell you that dreams come by contraries, child. Oh, fie; what, we must not love one another now. Pshaw, that would be a foolish thing indeed. Fie, fie, 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. Oh, fie, marrying is a paw thing.

MISS. Well, but don't you love me as well as you did last night then?

TATT. No, no, child, you would not have me.

MISS. No? Yes, but I would, though.

TATT. 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.

SCENE 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 physiognomy that has a resemblance of her; and the girl is like me.

TATT. And so you would 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?

TATT. 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.

TATT. Sir, I beg your pardon, I'm in haste——

FORE. For what?

TATT. To be married, sir, married.

FORE. Ay, but pray take me along with you, sir——

TATT. 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?

TATT. Who? I, sir? I'm an absolute stranger to you and your daughter, sir.

FORE. Hey day! What time of the moon is this?

TATT. 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.

SCENE 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 would 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. Oh, fearful! I think the girl's influenced too. Hussy, 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.

SCENE VII.

[*To them*] SCANDAL, MRS. FORESIGHT, *and* NURSE.

FORE. Did he so? I'll dispatch him for't presently. Rogue! O 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, Hussy; 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: begone when I bid you.

MRS. FORE. What's 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. Oh, 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?

SCENE 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. Oh, 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 Antegoa—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. Mess, 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 a-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, it's a jest. I can't believe it.

BEN. Look you, friend, it's 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.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, BUCKRAM.

SIR SAMP. Where is this old soothsayer, this uncle of mine elect? Aha, old Foresight, Uncle Foresight, wish 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 enough to put the weekly bills out of countenance.

SCAN. Death and hell! Where's Valentine?

SCENE 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. It's 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. Mess, I fear his fire's little better than tinder; mayhap it will only serve to light up a match for somebody 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. It's just the same thing as if so be you should sail 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 would not so much as have him have the prospect of an estate, though 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 should discover a foul hold. They say a witch will sail in a sieve: but I believe the devil would not venture aboard o' your conscience. And that's for you.

SIR SAMP. Hold your tongue, sirrah. How now, who's here?

SCENE XI.

[*To them*] TATTLE *and* MRS. FRAIL.

MRS. FRAIL. O sister, the most unlucky accident.

MRS. FORE. What's the matter?

TATT. Oh, 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.

TATT. Nor I. But poor Mrs. Frail and I are——

MRS. FRAIL. Married.

MRS. FORE. Married! How?

TATT. Suddenly—before we knew where we were—that villain Jeremy, by the help of disguises, tricked 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.

TATT. I did, as I hope to be saved, 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 concerned at anything in my life.

ANG. 'Tis very unhappy, if you don't care for one another.

TATT. 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 liked anybody 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 damned sort of a life.

MRS. FORE. He's better than no husband at all—though he's a coxcomb. [*To* FRAIL.]

MRS. FRAIL [*to her*]. Ay, ay, it's well it's no 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.

TATT. 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 would speak of it.

MRS. FRAIL. But, my dear, that's impossible: the parson and that rogue Jeremy will publish it.

TATT. Ay, my dear, so they will, as you say.

ANG. Oh, you'll agree very well in a little time; custom will make it easy to you.

TATT. 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 thof 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?

SCENE *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 abused, 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 shown 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 endeavoured 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 answered 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 anything. I never valued 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 obliged to sign this?

BUCK. Sir Sampson, you have it.

ANG. No, I have it, and I'll use it as I would everything that is an enemy to Valentine. [*Tears the paper.*]

SIR SAMP. How now?

VAL. Ha!

ANG. Had I the world to give you, it could 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. Mess, here's the wind changed again. Father, you and I may make a voyage together now.

ANG. Well, Sir Sampson, since I have played 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 loved your son, and hated your unforgiving nature. I was resolved to try him to the utmost; I have tried 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 could receive addition, this kind surprise would make it double.

SIR SAMP. Oons, you're a crocodile.

FORE. Really, Sir Sampson, this is a sudden eclipse.

SIR SAMP. You're an illiterate old fool, and I'm another.

TATT. 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.]

JERE. Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons: 'twas an errant mistake. You see, sir, my master was never mad, nor anything like it. Then how could it be otherwise?

VAL. Tattle, I thank you; you would have interposed between me and heaven, 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 should not be employed when the match is so much mended. Valentine, though it be morning, we may have a dance.

VAL. Anything, my friend, everything that looks like joy and transport.

, say any-
vas telling
SCAN. Call 'em, Jeremy. ul creature
ANG. I have done dissembling now, Valentin ad the good
coldness which I have always worn before yc not once.
an extreme fondness, you must not suspect
VAL. I 'll prevent that suspicion: for I int
immoderate degree that your fondness sha he had, he would
itself enough to be taken notice of. low Mr. Tattle.
love too much, it must be only when I c me at all, I find.
ANG. Have a care of promises; you knoknown——
more in debt than you are able to pay ld, if you had been
VAL. Therefore I yield my body as y
your best on 't. ut. Never have told
SCAN. The music stays for you. [*Dan* have talked as of a
SCAN. Well, madam, you have donemour of my own, in
punishing an inhuman father and rew ever have explained
But there is a third good work whi
thank you for: I was an infidel to f Mr. Tattle's secrecy,
converted me. For now I am convi
not like fortune, blind in bestowin is proverbially spoken;
who do not merit or who do not w e should say in general
ANG. 'Tis an unreasonable accusat was trusted; a satirical
sex: you tax us with injustice, or ther upon yours—as she
of merit. You would all have question. That 's all.
have the constancy to stay till , truly. 'Tis hard to tell
are generally hypocrites and infid the more obliged to you.
but have neither zeal nor faithbackwardness of the men;
would persevere even to mart f the women.
interest to their constancy! In think we are obliged to
the novelty. t—but your ladyship is to

The miracle to-day is, t
A lover true; not that s I have resisted a great

dation that has not

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

A COMEDY

Audire est operæ pretium, procedere recte
Qui mœchis non vultis.—HOR. *Sat.* i. 2, 37.
——Metuat doti deprensa.—Ibid.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

RALPH, EARL OF MOUNTAGUE, ETC.

My Lord,—Whether the world will arraign me of vanity or not, that I have presumed to dedicate this comedy to your lordship, I am yet in doubt; though, it may be, it is some degree of vanity even to doubt of it. One who has at any time had the honour of your lordship's conversation, cannot be supposed to think very meanly of that which he would prefer to your perusal. Yet it were to incur the imputation of too much sufficiency to pretend to such a merit as might abide the test of your lordship's censure.

Whatever value may be wanting to this play while yet it is mine, will be sufficiently made up to it when it is once become your lordship's; and it is my security, that I cannot have overrated it more by my dedication than your lordship will dignify it by your patronage.

That it succeeded on the stage was almost beyond my expectation; for but little of it was prepared for that general taste which seems now to be predominant in the palates of our audience.

Those characters which are meant to be ridiculed in most of our comedies are of fools so gross, that in my humble opinion they should rather disturb than divert the well-natured and reflecting part of an audience; they are rather objects of charity than contempt, and instead of moving our mirth, they ought very often to excite our compassion.

This reflection moved me to design some characters which should appear ridiculous not so much through a natural folly (which is incorrigible, and therefore not proper for the stage) as through an affected wit: a wit which, at the same time that it is affected, is also false. As there is some difficulty in the formation of a character of this nature, so there is some hazard which attends the progress of its success upon the stage: for many

come to a play so overcharged with criticism, that they very often let fly their censure, when through their rashness they have mistaken their aim. This I had occasion lately to observe: for this play had been acted two or three days before some of these hasty judges could find the leisure to distinguish betwixt the character of a Witwoud and a Truewit.

I must beg your lordship's pardon for this digression from the true course of this epistle; but that it may not seem altogether impertinent, I beg that I may plead the occasion of it, in part of that excuse of which I stand in need, for recommending this comedy to your protection. It is only by the countenance of your lordship, and the *few* so qualified, that such who write with care and pains can hope to be distinguished: for the prostituted name of poet promiscuously levels all that bear it.

Terence, the most correct writer in the world, had a Scipio and a Lelius, if not to assist him, at least to support him in his reputation. And notwithstanding his extraordinary merit, it may be their countenance was not more than necessary.

The purity of his style, the delicacy of his turns, and the justness of his characters, were all of them beauties which the greater part of his audience were incapable of tasting. Some of the coarsest strokes of Plautus, so severely censured by Horace, were more likely to affect the multitude; such, who come with expectation to laugh at the last act of a play, and are better entertained with two or three unseasonable jests than with the artful solution of the fable.

As Terence excelled in his performances, so had he great advantages to encourage his undertakings, for he built most on the foundations of Menander: his plots were generally modelled, and his characters ready drawn to his hand. He copied Menander; and Menander had no less light in the formation of his characters from the observations of Theophrastus, of whom he was a disciple; and Theophrastus, it is known, was not only the disciple, but the immediate successor of Aristotle, the first and greatest judge of poetry. These were great models to design by; and the further advantage which Terence possessed towards giving his plays the due ornaments of purity of style, and justness of manners, was not less considerable from the freedom

of conversation which was permitted him with Lelius and Scipio, two of the greatest and most polite men of his age. And, indeed, the privilege of such a conversation is the only certain means of attaining to the perfection of dialogue.

If it has happened in any part of this comedy that I have gained a turn of style or expression more correct, or at least more corrigible, than in those which I have formerly written, I must, with equal pride and gratitude, ascribe it to the honour of your lordship's admitting me into your conversation, and that of a society where everybody else was so well worthy of you, in your retirement last summer from the town: for it was immediately after, that this comedy was written. If I have failed in my performance, it is only to be regretted, where there were so many not inferior either to a Scipio or a Lelius, that there should be one wanting equal in capacity to a Terence.

If I am not mistaken, poetry is almost the only art which has not yet laid claim to your lordship's patronage. Architecture and painting, to the great honour of our country, have flourished under your influence and protection. In the meantime, poetry, the eldest sister of all arts, and parent of most, seems to have resigned her birthright, by having neglected to pay her duty to your lordship, and by permitting others of a later extraction to prepossess that place in your esteem, to which none can pretend a better title. Poetry, in its nature, is sacred to the good and great: the relation between them is reciprocal, and they are ever propitious to it. It is the privilege of poetry to address them, and it is their prerogative alone to give it protection.

This received maxim is a general apology for all writers who consecrate their labours to great men: but I could wish, at this time, that this address were exempted from the common pretence of all dedications; and that as I can distinguish your lordship even among the most deserving, so this offering might become remarkable by some particular instance of respect, which should assure your lordship that I am, with all due sense of your extreme worthiness and humanity, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most obliged humble servant,

WILL. CONGREVE.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. Betterton.

Of those few fools, who with ill stars are curst,
Sure scribbling fools, called poets, fare the worst:
For they 're a sort of fools which fortune makes,
And, after she has made 'em fools, forsakes.
With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent case,
For Fortune favours all her idiot race.
In her own nest the cuckoo eggs we find,
O'er which she broods to hatch the changeling kind:
No portion for her own she has to spare,
So much she dotes on her adopted care.
Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
Suffered at first some trifling stakes to win:
But what unequal hazards do they run!
Each time they write they venture all they 've won:
The Squire that 's buttered still, is sure to be undone.
This author, heretofore, has found your favour,
But pleads no merit from his past behaviour.
To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
Should grants to poets made admit resumption,
And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,
If that be found a forfeited estate.
He owns, with toil he wrought the following scenes,
But if they 're naught ne'er spare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dulness on mature deliberation.
He swears he 'll not resent one hissed-off scene,
Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain,
Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.

Some plot we think he has, and some new thought;
Some humour too, no farce—but that's a fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
For so reformed a town who dares correct?
To please, this time, has been his sole pretence,
He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.
Should he by chance a knave or fool expose,
That hurts none here, sure here are none of those.
In short, our play shall (with your leave to show it)
Give you one instance of a passive poet,
Who to your judgments yields all resignation:
So save or damn, after your own discretion.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Fainall, in love with Mrs. Marwood, . . .	*Mr. Betterton.*
Mirabell, in love with Mrs. Millamant, . .	*Mr. Verbruggen.*
Witwoud, Petulant, } followers of Mrs. Millamant, . .	*Mr. Bowen.* / *Mr. Bowman.*
Sir Wilfull Witwoud, half brother to Witwoud, and nephew to Lady Wishfort, . . .	*Mr. Underhill.*
Waitwell, servant to Mirabell, ...	*Mr. Bright.*

WOMEN.

Lady Wishfort, enemy to Mirabell, for having falsely pretended love to her, ...	*Mrs. Leigh.*
Mrs. Millamant, a fine lady, niece to Lady Wishfort, and loves Mirabell, . . .	*Mrs. Bracegirdle.*
Mrs. Marwood, friend to Mr. Fainall, and likes Mirabell, ...	*Mrs. Barry.*
Mrs. Fainall, daughter to Lady Wishfort, and wife to Fainall, formerly friend to Mirabell, .	*Mrs. Bowman.*
Foible, woman to Lady Wishfort, . . .	*Mrs. Willis.*
Mincing, woman to Mrs. Millamant, . . .	*Mrs. Prince.*

Dancers, Footmen, and Attendants.

Scene: London.

The time equal to that of the presentation.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

pp 211, 214, 176

ACT I.—SCENE I.

A Chocolate-house.

MIRABELL *and* FAINALL *rising from cards,* BETTY *waiting.*

MIRA. You are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall.

FAIN. Have we done?

MIRA. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

FAIN. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently: the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

MIRA. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

FAIN. Prithee, why so reserved? Something has put you out of humour.

MIRA. Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day, and you are gay; that's all.

FAIN. Confess, Millamant and you quarrelled last night, after I left you; my fair cousin has some humours that would tempt the patience of a Stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by?

MIRA. Witwoud and Petulant, and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius—or to sum up all in her own name, my old Lady Wishfort came in.

FAIN. Oh, there it is then: she has a lasting passion for you, and with reason.—What, then my wife was there?

MIRA. Yes, and Mrs. Marwood and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another, then complained aloud of the vapours, and after fell into a profound silence.

FAIN. They had a mind to be rid of you.

MIRA. For which reason I resolved not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose and with a constrained smile told her, I thought nothing was so easy as know when a visit began to be troublesome; she reddened and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

FAIN. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only compliance with her aunt.

MIRA. She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such a resignation.

FAIN. What? though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

MIRA. I was then in such a humour, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

FAIN. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you last night was one of their cabal-nights: they have 'em three times a week and meet by turns at one another's apartments where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. You and I are excluded, and it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved that to avoid scandal there might be one man of the community, upon which motion Witwoud and Petulant were enrolled members.

MIRA. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind, and full of the vigour of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia; and let posterity shift for itself, she 'll breed no more.

FAIN. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to con-

ceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation. Had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

MIRA. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labour. The devil's in't, if an old woman is to be flattered further, unless a man should endeavour downright personally to debauch her: and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

FAIN. What should provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

MIRA. She was always civil to me, till of late. I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice, and think that she who does not refuse 'em everything can refuse 'em nothing.

FAIN. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough not to satisfy a lady's longing, you have too much generosity not to be tender of her honour. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected, and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

MIRA. You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you than is your wife.

FAIN. Fie, fie, friend, if you grow censorious I must leave you:—I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

MIRA. Who are they?

FAIN. Petulant and Witwoud.—Bring me some chocolate.

MIRA. Betty, what says your clock?

BET. Turned of the last canonical hour, sir.

MIRA. How pertinently the jade answers me! Ha! almost one a' clock! [*Looking on his watch.*] Oh, y'are come!

SCENE II.

MIRABELL *and* FOOTMAN.

MIRA. Well, is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

SERV. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country-dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of dispatch, besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's Place, and there they were riveted in a trice.

MIRA. So, so; you are sure they are married?

SERV. Married and bedded, sir; I am witness.

MIRA. Have you the certificate?

SERV. Here it is, sir.

MIRA. Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

SERV. Yes, sir.

MIRA. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation till farther order; bid Waitwell shake his ears, and Dame Partlet rustle up her feathers, and meet me at one a' clock by Rosamond's pond, that I may see her before she returns to her lady. And, as you tender your ears, be secret.

SCENE III.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, BETTY.

FAIN. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleased.

MIRA. Ay; I have been engaged in a matter of some sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is

not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

FAIN. Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engaged are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

MIRA. I am of another opinion: the greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal; for a woman who is not a fool can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one.

FAIN. Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

MIRA. Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

FAIN. You do her wrong; for, to give her her due, she has wit.

MIRA. She has beauty enough to make any man think so, and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

FAIN. For a passionate lover methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

MIRA. And for a discerning man somewhat too passionate a lover, for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her, and those affectations which in another woman would be odious serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence that in revenge I took her to pieces, sifted her, and separated her failings: I studied 'em and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily. To which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance, till in a few days it became habitual to me to remember 'em without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties, and in all probability in a little time longer I shall like 'em as well.

FAIN. Marry her, marry her; be half as well ac[illegible]

her charms as you are with her defects, and, my life on 't, you are your own man again.

MIRA. Say you so?

FAIN. Ay, ay; I have experience: I have a wife, and so forth.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] MESSENGER.

MESS. Is one Squire Witwoud here?

BET. Yes; what 's your business?

MESS. I have a letter for him, from his brother Sir Wilfull, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

BET. He 's in the next room, friend. That way.

SCENE V.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, BETTY.

MIRA. What, is the chief of that noble family in town, Sir Wilfull Witwoud?

FAIN. He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

MIRA. I have seen him; he promises to be an extraordinary person. I think you have the honour to be related to him.

FAIN. Yes; he is half-brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my Lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

MIRA. I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

FAIN. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

MIRA. For travel! Why the man that I mean is above forty.

FAIN. No matter for that; 'tis for the honour of England that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

MIRA. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation and prohibit the exportation of fools.

[illegible] means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better to trade with

a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstocked.

MIRA. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant and those of the squire, his brother, anything related?

FAIN. Not at all: Witwoud grows by the knight like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp and the other all core.

MIRA. So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

FAIN. Sir Wilfull is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy. But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the monster in *The Tempest*, and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good-nature, and does not always want wit.

MIRA. Not always: but as often as his memory fails him and his commonplace of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory and some few scraps of other folks' wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has indeed one good quality: he is not exceptious, for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery that he will construe an affront into a jest, and call downright rudeness and ill language satire and fire.

FAIN. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original.

SCENE VI.

[*To them*] WITWOUD.

WIT. Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity me, Fainall, Mirabell, pity me.

MIRA. I do from my soul.

FAIN. Why, what's the matter?

WIT. No letters for me, Betty?

BET. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, sir?

WIT. Ay; but no other?

BET. No, sir.

WIT. That's hard, that's very hard. A messenger, a mule, a beast of burden, he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author as an epistle dedicatory.

MIRA. A fool, and your brother, Witwoud?

WIT. Ay, ay, my half-brother. My half-brother he is, no nearer, upon honour.

MIRA. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

WIT. Good, good, Mirabell, *le drôle*! Good, good, hang him, don't let's talk of him.—Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say anything in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure and the town a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage, I don't know what I say: but she's the best woman in the world.

FAIN. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

WIT. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell?

MIRA. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

WIT. Mirabell!

MIRA. Ay.

WIT. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons. Gad, I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

MIRA. I thank you heartily, heartily.

WIT. No, but prithee excuse me:—my memory is such a memory.

MIRA. Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud; for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain either of the spleen or his memory.

FAIN. What have you done with Petulant?

WIT. He 's reckoning his money; my money it was: I have no luck to-day.

FAIN. You may allow him to win of you at play, for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee: since you monopolise the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

MIRA. I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

WIT. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates. Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering—faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small wit: nay, I 'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him. And if he had any judgment in the world, he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

FAIN. You don't take your friend to be over-nicely bred?

WIT. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own; no more breeding than a bum-baily, that I grant you:—'tis pity; the fellow has fire and life.

MIRA. What, courage?

WIT. Hum, faith, I don't know as to that, I can't say as to that. Yes, faith, in a controversy he 'll contradict anybody.

MIRA. Though 'twere a man whom he feared or a woman whom he loved.

WIT. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks. We have all our failings; you are too hard upon him, you are, faith. Let me excuse him,—I can defend most of his faults, except one or two; one he has, that 's the truth on 't,—if he were my brother I could not acquit him—that indeed I could wish were otherwise.

MIRA. Ay, marry, what 's that, Witwoud?

WIT. Oh, pardon me. Expose the infirmities of my friend? No, my dear, excuse me there.

FAIN. What, I warrant he 's unsincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

WIT. No, no; what if he be? 'Tis no matter for that, his wit will excuse that. A wit should no more be sincere than a

woman constant: one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

MIRA. Maybe you think him too positive?

WIT. No, no; his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

FAIN. Too illiterate?

WIT. That? That's his happiness. His want of learning gives him the more opportunities to show his natural parts.

MIRA. He wants words?

WIT. Ay; but I like him for that now: for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

FAIN. He's impudent?

WIT. No, that's not it.

MIRA. Vain?

WIT. No.

MIRA. What, he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion?

WIT. Truths? Ha, ha, ha! No, no, since you will have it, I mean he never speaks truth at all, that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

SCENE VII.

[*To them*] COACHMAN.

COACH. Is Master Petulant here, mistress?

BET. Yes.

COACH. Three gentlewomen in a coach would speak with him.

FAIN. O brave Petulant! Three!

BET. I'll tell him.

COACH. You must bring two dishes of chocolate and a glass of cinnamon water.

SCENE VIII.

MIRABELL, FAINALL, WITWOUD.

WIT. That should be for two fasting strumpets, and a bawd troubled with wind. Now you may know what the three are.

MIRA. You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

WIT. Ay, ay; friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment or wine without toasting: but to tell you a secret, these are trulls whom he allows coach-hire, and something more by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

MIRA. How!

WIT. You shall see he won't go to 'em because there's no more company here to take notice of him. Why, this is nothing to what he used to do:—before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself——

FAIN. Call for himself? What dost thou mean?

WIT. Mean? Why he would slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him. As soon as your back was turned—whip he was gone; then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf and a mask, slap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice; where he would send in for himself; that I mean, call for himself, wait for himself, nay, and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

MIRA. I confess this is something extraordinary. I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a coming; oh, I ask his pardon.

SCENE IX.

PETULANT, MIRABELL, FAINALL, WITWOUD, BETTY.

BET. Sir, the coach stays.

PET. Well, well, I come. 'Sbud, a man had as good be a professed midwife as a professed whoremaster, at this rate; to

be knocked up and raised at all hours, and in all places. Pox on 'em, I won't come. D'ye hear, tell 'em I won't come. Let 'em snivel and cry their hearts out.

FAIN. You are very cruel, Petulant.

PET. All's one, let it pass. I have a humour to be cruel.

MIRA. I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

PET. Condition? Condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humour. By this hand, if they were your—a—a—your what-d'ee-call-'ems themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I want appetite.

MIRA. What-d'ee-call-'ems! What are they, Witwoud?

WIT. Empresses, my dear. By your what-d'ee-call-'ems he means Sultana Queens.

PET. Ay, Roxolanas.

MIRA. Cry you mercy.

FAIN. Witwoud says they are——

PET. What does he say th'are?

WIT. I? Fine ladies, I say.

PET. Pass on, Witwoud. Harkee, by this light, his relations—two co-heiresses his cousins, and an old aunt, who loves caterwauling better than a conventicle.

WIT. Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue would come off. Ha, ha, ha! Gad, I can't be angry with him, if he had said they were my mother and my sisters.

MIRA. No?

WIT. No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me, dear Petulant.

BET. They are gone, sir, in great anger.

PET. Enough, let 'em trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint.

FAIN. This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

MIRA. Have you not left off your impudent pretensions there yet? I shall cut your throat, sometime or other, Petulant, about that business.

PET. Ay, ay, let that pass. There are other throats to be cut.

MIRA. Meaning mine, sir?

PET. Not I—I mean nobody—I know nothing. But there are uncles and nephews in the world—and they may be rivals. What then? All 's one for that.

MIRA. How? Harkee, Petulant, come hither. Explain, or I shall call your interpreter.

PET. Explain? I know nothing. Why, you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my Lady Wishfort's?

MIRA. True.

PET. Why, that 's enough. You and he are not friends; and if he should marry and have a child, yon may be disinherited, ha!

MIRA. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth?

PET. All 's one for that; why, then, say I know something.

MIRA. Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and shalt make love to my mistress, thou shalt, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

PET. I? Nothing, I. If throats are to be cut, let swords clash. Snug 's the word; I shrug and am silent.

MIRA. Oh, raillery, raillery! Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets. What, you 're a cabalist; I know you stayed at Millamant's last night after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle or me? Tell me; if thou hadst but good nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwoud, who is now thy competitor in fame, would show as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of orient; he would no more be seen by thee than Mercury is by the sun: come, I 'm sure thou wo 't tell me.

PET. If I do, will you grant me common sense, then, for the future?

MIRA. Faith, I 'll do what I can for thee, and I 'll pray that heav'n may grant it thee in the meantime.

PET. Well, harkee.

FAIN. Petulant and you both will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

WIT. Pshaw, pshaw, that she laughs at Petulant is plain. And

for my part, but that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I should—harkee—to tell you a secret, but let it go no further between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

FAIN. How?

WIT. She 's handsome; but she 's a sort of an uncertain woman.

FAIN. I thought you had died for her.

WIT. Umh—no——

FAIN. She has wit.

WIT. 'Tis what she will hardly allow anybody else. Now, demme, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

FAIN. Why do you think so?

WIT. We stayed pretty late there last night, and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town, and is between him and the best part of his estate. Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my Lady Wishfort has been told; and you know she hates Mirabell worse than a quaker hates a parrot, or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs. Millamant or not, I cannot say; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be in some sort unfortunately fobbed, i'faith.

FAIN. 'Tis impossible Millamant should hearken to it.

WIT. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she 's a woman and a kind of a humorist.

MIRA. And this is the sum of what you could collect last night?

PET. The quintessence. Maybe Witwoud knows more; he stayed longer. Besides, they never mind him; they say anything before him.

MIRA. I thought you had been the greatest favourite.

PET. Ay, *tête-à-tête*; but not in public, because I make remarks.

MIRA. You do?

PET. Ay, ay, pox, I 'm malicious, man. Now he 's soft, you know, they are not in awe of him. The fellow 's well bred, he 's what you call a—what d'ye-call-'em—a fine gentleman, but he 's silly withal.

MIRA. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall?

FAIN. Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

WIT. Ay, we'll all walk in the park; the ladies talked of being there.

MIRA. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother Sir Wilfull's arrival.

WIT. No, no, he comes to his aunt's, my Lady Wishfort; pox on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

PET. Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards, and so have but one trouble with you both.

WIT. O rare Petulant, thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

PET. Enough; I'm in a humour to be severe.

MIRA. Are you? Pray then walk by yourselves. Let not us be accessory to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you, and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

PET. What, what? Then let 'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

MIRA. But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou ought'st to be most ashamed thyself when thou hast put another out of countenance?

PET. Not I, by this hand: I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill-breeding.

MIRA. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

> Where modesty's ill manners, 'tis but fit
> That impudence and malice pass for wit.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

St. James's Park.

MRS. FAINALL *and* MRS. MARWOOD.

MRS. FAIN. Ay, ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doting or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable: and when they cease to love (we ought to think at least) they loathe, they look upon us with horror and distaste, they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as from such, fly from us.

MRS. MAR. True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life that love should ever die before us, and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left than never to have been loved. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

MRS. FAIN. Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind only in compliance to my mother's humour.

MRS. MAR. Certainly. To be free, I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses with which our sex of force must entertain themselves apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to dote like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts, and every heart, or soon or late, receive and readmit him as its lawful tyrant.

MRS. FAIN. Bless me, how have I been deceived! Why, you profess a libertine.

MRS. MAR. You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

MRS. FAIN. Never.

MRS. MAR. You hate mankind?

MRS. FAIN. Heartily, inveterately.

MRS. MAR. Your husband?

MRS. FAIN. Most transcendently; ay, though I say it, meritoriously.

MRS. MAR. Give me your hand upon it.

MRS. FAIN. There.

MRS. MAR. I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

MRS. FAIN. Is it possible? Dost thou hate those vipers, men?

MRS. MAR. I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do is eternally to forget 'em.

MRS. FAIN. There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea.

MRS. MAR. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion further.

MRS. FAIN. How?

MRS. MAR. Faith, by marrying; if I could but find one that loved me very well, and would be throughly sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

MRS. FAIN. You would not make him a cuckold?

MRS. MAR. No; but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

MRS. FAIN. Why had not you as good do it?

MRS. MAR. Oh, if he should ever discover it, he would then know the worst, and be out of his pain; but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

MRS. FAIN. Ingenious mischief! Would thou wert married to Mirabell.

MRS. MAR. Would I were.

MRS. FAIN. You change colour.

MRS. MAR. Because I hate him.

MRS. FAIN. So do I; but I can hear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

MRS. MAR. I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

MRS. FAIN. By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

MRS. MAR. Oh, then it seems you are one of his favourable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

MRS. FAIN. Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

MRS. MAR. What ails you?

MRS. FAIN. My husband. Don't you see him? He turned short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

SCENE II.

[*To them*] FAINALL *and* MIRABELL.

MRS. MAR. Ha, ha, ha! he comes opportunely for you.

MRS. FAIN. For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

FAIN. My dear.

MRS. FAIN. My soul.

FAIN. You don't look well to-day, child.

MRS. FAIN. D'ye think so?

MIRA. He is the only man that does, madam.

MRS. FAIN. The only man that would tell me so at least, and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

FAIN. Oh, my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness; I know you cannot resent anything from me; especially what is an effect of my concern.

MRS. FAIN. Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night: I would fain hear it out.

MIRA. The persons concerned in that affair have yet a tolerable reputation. I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be censorious.

MRS. FAIN. He has a humour more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promise you will oblige us both.

SCENE III.

FAINALL, MRS. MARWOOD.

FAIN. Excellent creature! Well, sure, if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

MRS. MAR. Ay?

FAIN. For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it of consequence must put an end to all my hopes, and what a wretch is he who must survive his hopes! Nothing remains when that day comes but to sit down and weep like Alexander when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

MRS. MAR. Will you not follow 'em?

FAIN. Faith, I think not.

MRS. MAR. Pray let us; I have a reason.

FAIN. You are not jealous?

MRS. MAR. Of whom?

FAIN. Of Mirabell.

MRS. MAR. If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you that I am tender of your honour?

FAIN. You would intimate then, as if there were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him?

MRS. MAR. I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

FAIN. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

MRS. MAR. It may be you are deceived.

FAIN. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

MRS. MAR. What?

FAIN. That I have been deceived, madam, and you are false.

MRS. MAR. That I am false? What mean you?

FAIN. To let you know I see through all your little arts. —Come, you both love him, and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another have made you clash till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession red'ning on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

MRS. MAR. You do me wrong.

FAIN. I do not. 'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife, that by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures, and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

MRS. MAR. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

FAIN. With infidelity, with loving another, with love of Mirabell.

MRS. MAR. 'Tis false. I challenge you to show an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

FAIN. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance? The injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? To undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

MRS. MAR. My obligations to my lady urged me: I had professed a friendship to her, and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

FAIN. What, was it conscience then? Professed a friendship! Oh, the pious friendships of the female sex!

MRS. MAR. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us or mutual faith to one another.

FAIN. Ha, ha, ha! you are my wife's friend too.

MRS. MAR. Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me? Have I been false to her, through strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? And have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit? To you it should be meritorious that I have been vicious. And do you reflect that guilt upon me which should lie buried in your bosom?

FAIN. You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties when set in competition with your love to me.

MRS. MAR. 'Tis false, you urged it with deliberate malice. 'Twas spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

FAIN. Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy: but you are stung to find you are discovered.

MRS. MAR. It shall be all discovered. You too shall be discovered; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed. If I do it myself I shall prevent your baseness.

FAIN. Why, what will you do?

MRS. MAR. Disclose it to your wife; own what has past between us.

FAIN. Frenzy!

MRS. MAR. By all my wrongs I 'll do 't. I 'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune: with both I trusted you, you bankrupt in honour, as indigent of wealth.

FAIN. Your fame I have preserved. Your fortune has been bestowed as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had e'er this repaid it. 'Tis true—had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconcilement: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would have descended to my wife. And wherefore did I marry but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

MRS. MAR. Deceit and frivolous pretence!

FAIN. Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? Have I not a wife? Nay, a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow, and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle through the ways of wedlock and this world. Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?

MRS. MAR. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent.—I hate you, and shall for ever.

FAIN. For loving you?

MRS. MAR. I loathe the name of love after such usage; and next to the guilt with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewell.

FAIN. Nay, we must not part thus.

MRS. MAR. Let me go.

FAIN. Come, I'm sorry.

MRS. MAR. I care not. Let me go. Break my hands, do—I'd leave 'em to get loose.

FAIN. I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

MRS. MAR. Well, I have deserved it all.

FAIN. You know I love you.

MRS. MAR. Poor dissembling! Oh, that——well, it is not yet——

FAIN. What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late——

MRS. MAR. No, it is not yet too late—I have that comfort.

FAIN. It is, to love another.

MRS. MAR. But not to loathe, detest, abhor mankind, myself, and the whole treacherous world.

FAIN. Nay, this is extravagance. Come, I ask your pardon. No tears—I was to blame, I could not love you and be easy in my doubts. Pray forbear—I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends: I'll hate my wife yet more, damn her, I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere, anywhere, to another world; I'll marry thee—be pacified.

—'Sdeath, they come: hide your face, your tears. You have a mask: wear it a moment. This way, this way: be persuaded.

SCENE IV.

MIRABELL *and* MRS. FAINALL.

MRS. FAIN. They are here yet.

MIRA. They are turning into the other walk.

MRS. FAIN. While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he's too offensive.

MIRA. Oh, you should hate with prudence.

MRS. FAIN. Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

MIRA. You should have just so much disgust for your husband as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

MRS. FAIN. You have been the cause that I have loved without bounds, and would you set limits to that aversion of which you have been the occasion? Why did you make me marry this man?

MIRA. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol, reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover, yet one whose wit and outward fair behaviour have gained a reputation with the town, enough to make that woman stand excused who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. When you are weary of him you know your remedy.

MRS. FAIN. I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

MIRA. In justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

MRS. FAIN. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

MIRA. Waitwell, my servant.

MRS. FAIN. He is an humble servant to Foible, my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

MIRA. Care is taken for that. She is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

MRS. FAIN. Who?

MIRA. Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt my servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, should consent to marry my pretended uncle, he might, like Mosca in the *Fox*, stand upon terms; so I made him sure beforehand.

MRS. FAIN. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the imposture betimes, and release her by producing a certificate of her gallant's former marriage.

MIRA. Yes, upon condition that she consent to my marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

MRS. FAIN. She talked last night of endeavouring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

MIRA. That was by Foible's direction and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

MRS. FAIN. Well, I have an opinion of your success, for I believe my lady will do anything to get an husband; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to anything to get rid of him.

MIRA. Yes, I think the good lady would marry anything that resembled a man, though 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

MRS. FAIN. Female frailty! We must all come to it, if we live to be old, and feel the craving of a false appetite when the true is decayed.

MIRA. An old woman's appetite is depraved like that of a girl. 'Tis the green-sickness of a second childhood, and, like the faint offer of a latter spring, serves but to usher in the fall, and withers in an affected bloom.

MRS. FAIN. Here's your mistress.

SCENE V.

[*To them*] MRS. MILLAMANT, WITWOUD, MINCING.

MIRA. Here she comes, i'faith, full sail, with her fan spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders.—Ha, no, I cry her mercy.

MRS. FAIN. I see but one poor empty sculler, and he tows her woman after him.

MIRA. You seem to be unattended, madam. You used to have the *beau monde* throng after you, and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

WIT. Like moths about a candle. I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

MILLA. Oh, I have denied myself airs to-day. I have walked as fast through the crowd——

WIT. As a favourite just disgraced, and with as few followers.

MILLA. Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes, for I am as sick of 'em——

WIT. As a physician of a good air. I cannot help it, madam, though 'tis against myself.

MILLA. Yet again! Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

WIT. Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a screen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day; I am too bright.

MRS. FAIN. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long?

MILLA. Long! Lord, have I not made violent haste? I have asked every living thing I met for you; I have enquired after you, as after a new fashion.

WIT. Madam, truce with your similitudes.—No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

MIRA. By your leave, Witwoud, that were like enquiring after an old fashion to ask a husband for his wife.

WIT. Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit; I confess it.

MRS. FAIN. You were dressed before I came abroad.

MILLA. Ay, that 's true. Oh, but then I had——Mincing, what had I? Why was I so long?

MINC. O mem, your laship stayed to peruse a packet of letters.

MILLA. Oh, ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters. Nobody knows how to write letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why. They serve one to pin up one's hair.

WIT. Is that the way? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

MILLA. Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwoud. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think I tried once, Mincing.

MINC. O mem, I shall never forget it.

MILLA. Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

MINC. Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I 'll vow, mem. And all to no purpose. But when your laship pins it up with poetry, it fits so pleasant the next day as anything, and is so pure and so crips.

WIT. Indeed, so crips?

MINC. You 're such a critic, Mr. Witwoud.

MILLA. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? Oh, ay, and went away. Now I think on 't I 'm angry—no, now I think on 't I 'm pleased:—for I believe I gave you some pain.

MIRA. Does that please you?

MILLA. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

MIRA. You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

MILLA. Oh, I ask your pardon for that. One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty one parts with one's power, and when one has parted with that, I fancy one 's old and ugly.

MIRA. Ay, ay; suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—and then how vain, how lost a thing you 'll be! Nay, 'tis true; you are no longer handsome when you 've lost your lover: your beauty dies upon the instant. For beauty is the lover's gift: 'tis he bestows your charms:—your glass is all a cheat. The ugly

and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it: for that reflects our praises rather than your face.

MILLA. Oh, the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift! Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

WIT. Very pretty. Why, you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

MILLA. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover than one's wit to an echo. They can but reflect what we look and say: vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

MIRA. Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe two the greatest pleasures of your life.

MILLA. How so?

MIRA. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised, and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

WIT. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue that an echo must wait till she dies before it can catch her last words.

MILLA. Oh, fiction; Fainall, let us leave these men.

MIRA. Draw off Witwoud. [*Aside to* MRS. FAINALL.]

MRS. FAIN. Immediately; I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud.

SCENE VI.

MRS. MILLAMANT, MIRABELL, MINCING.

MIRA. I would beg a little private audience too. You had the tyranny to deny me last night, though you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concerned my love.

MILLA. You saw I was engaged.

MIRA. Unkind! You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools: things who visit you from their excessive idleness, bestowing on your easiness that time which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you; they are not capable; or, if they were, it should be to you as a mortification: for, sure, to please a fool is some degree of folly.

MILLA. I please myself.—Besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

MIRA. Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

MILLA. Yes, the vapours; fools are physic for it, next to assafœtida.

MIRA. You are not in a course of fools?

MILLA. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom you 'll displease me. I think I must resolve after all not to have you:—we shan't agree.

MIRA. Not in our physic, it may be.

MILLA. And yet our distemper in all likelihood will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults, I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell—I 'm resolved—I think—you may go—ha, ha, ha! What would you give that you could help loving me?

MIRA. I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

MILLA. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

MIRA. I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and sincerity.

MILLA. Sententious Mirabell! Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging!

MIRA. You are merry, madam, but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

MILLA. What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a lovesick face. Ha, ha, ha! Well I won't laugh; don't be peevish. Heigho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now.—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well: I see they are walking away.

MIRA. Can you not find in the variety of your disposition one moment——

MILLA. To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed? No.

MIRA. But how you came to know it——

MILLA. Without the help of the devil, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

SCENE VII.

MIRABELL *alone.*

MIRA. I have something more.—Gone! Think of you? To think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation, a very tranquillity of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in a windmill has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodged in a woman. There is no point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turned, and by one as well as another; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct.—Oh, here come my pair of turtles. What, billing so sweetly? Is not Valentine's day over with you yet?

SCENE VIII.

[*To him*] WAITWELL, FOIBLE.

MIRA. Sirrah, Waitwell, why, sure, you think you were married for your own recreation and not for my conveniency.

WAIT. Your pardon, sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

MIRA. Give you joy, Mrs. Foible.

FOIB. O—las, sir, I 'm so ashamed.—I 'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, sir, I made as much haste as I could.

WAIT. That she did indeed, sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

MIRA. That I believe.

FOIB. But I told my lady as you instructed me, sir, that I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland, your uncle, and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to show him, which I 'll be sure to say has made him so enamoured of her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet and worship the original.

MIRA. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

WAIT. I think she has profited, sir. I think so.

FOIB. You have seen Madam Millamant, sir?

MIRA. Yes.

FOIB. I told her, sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

MIRA. Your diligence will merit more. In the meantime —[*gives money.*]

FOIB. O dear sir, your humble servant.

WAIT. Spouse——

MIRA. Stand off, sir, not a penny. Go on and prosper, Foible. The lease shall be made good and the farm stocked, if we succeed.

FOIB. I don't question your generosity, sir, and you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands, sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my lady is at her toilet, and can't dress till I come. Oh dear, I'm sure that [*looking out*] was Mrs. Marwood that went by in a mask; if she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, Sir.—B'w'y, Waitwell.

SCENE IX.

MIRABELL, WAITWELL.

WAIT. Sir Rowland, if you please. The jade's so pert upon her preferment she forgets herself.

MIRA. Come, sir, will you endeavour to forget yourself—and transform into Sir Rowland?

WAIT. Why, sir, it will be impossible I should remember myself. Married, knighted, and attended all in one day! 'Tis enough to make any man forget himself. The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self, and fall from my transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither—for now I remember me, I'm married, and can't be my own man again.

> Ay, there's my grief; that's the sad change of life:
> To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

A room in Lady Wishfort's house.

LADY WISHFORT *at her toilet*, PEG *waiting.*

LADY. Merciful! No news of Foible yet?

PEG. No, madam.

LADY. I have no more patience. If I have not fretted myself till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweetheart? An errant ash colour, as I'm a person. Look you how this wench stirs! Why dost thou not fetch me a little red? Didst thou not hear me, Mopus?

PEG. The red ratafia, does your ladyship mean, or the cherry brandy?

LADY. Ratafia, fool? No, fool. Not the ratafia, fool—grant me patience!—I mean the Spanish paper, idiot; complexion, darling. Paint, paint, paint, dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee? Why dost thou not stir, puppet? Thou wooden thing upon wires!

PEG. Lord, madam, your ladyship is so impatient.—I cannot come at the paint, madam: Mrs. Foible has locked it up, and carried the key with her.

LADY. A pox take you both.—Fetch me the cherry brandy then.

SCENE II.

LADY WISHFORT.

I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs. Qualmsick, the curate's wife, that's always breeding. Wench, come, come,

wench, what art thou doing? Sipping? Tasting? Save thee, dost thou not know the bottle?

SCENE III.

LADY WISHFORT, PEG *with a bottle and china cup.*

PEG. Madam, I was looking for a cup.

LADY. A cup, save thee, and what a cup hast thou brought! Dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? Why didst thou not bring thy thimble? Hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill. So, again. See who that is. [*One knocks.*] Set down the bottle first. Here, here, under the table:—what, wouldst thou go with the bottle in thy hand like a tapster? As I'm a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before she came to me, like Maritornes the Asturian in *Don Quixote*. No Foible yet?

PEG. No, madam; Mrs. Marwood.

LADY. Oh, Marwood: let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] MRS MARWOOD.

MRS. MAR. I'm surprised to find your ladyship in *déshabillé* at this time of day.

LADY. Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

MRS. MAR. I saw her but now, as I came masked through the park, in conference with Mirabell.

LADY. With Mirabell? You call my blood into my face with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negotiate an affair, in which if I'm detected

I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruined. O my dear friend, I'm a wretch of wretches if I'm detected.

MRS. MAR. O madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity.

LADY. Oh, he carries poison in his tongue that would corrupt integrity itself. If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood, what's integrity to an opportunity? Hark! I hear her. Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom—you'll pardon me, dear friend, I can make bold with you—there are books over the chimney—Quarles and Pryn, and the *Short View of the Stage*, with Bunyan's works to entertain you.—Go, you thing, and send her in. [*To* PEG.]

SCENE V.

LADY WISHFORT, FOIBLE.

LADY. O Foible, where hast thou been? What hast thou been doing?

FOIB. Madam, I have seen the party.

LADY. But what hast thou done?

FOIB. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamoured—so transported! Well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin—poor Sir Rowland, I say.

LADY. The miniature has been counted like. But hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell? What hast thou to do with him in the park? Answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

FOIB. So, the devil has been beforehand with me; what shall I say?—Alas, madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? Was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I'm sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst I could

have borne: but he had a fling at your ladyship too, and then I could not hold; but, i'faith I gave him his own.

LADY. Me? What did the filthy fellow say?

FOIB. O madam, 'tis a shame to say what he said, with his taunts and his fleers, tossing up his nose. Humh, says he, what, you are a-hatching some plot, says he, you are so early abroad, or catering, says he, ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant. Half pay is but thin subsistence, says he. Well, what pension does your lady propose? Let me see, says he, what, she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated, says he, and——

LADY. Ods my life, I'll have him—I'll have him murdered. I'll have him poisoned. Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer to have him poisoned in his wine. I'll send for Robin from Locket's—immediately.

FOIB. Poison him? Poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, madam, starve him; marry Sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. Oh, you would bless yourself to hear what he said.

LADY. A villain; superannuated?

FOIB. Humh, says he, I hear you are laying designs against me too, says he, and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle (he does not suspect a word of your ladyship); but, says he, I'll fit you for that, I warrant you, says he, I'll hamper you for that, says he, you and your old frippery too, says he, I'll handle you——

LADY. Audacious villain! Handle me? Would he durst? Frippery? Old frippery? Was there ever such a foul-mouthed fellow? I'll be married to-morrow, I'll be contracted to-night.

FOIB. The sooner the better, madam.

LADY. Will Sir Rowland be here, say'st thou? When, Foible?

FOIB. Incontinently, madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood with that impatience in which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

LADY. Frippery? Superannuated frippery? I'll frippery the

villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags, a tatterdemalion!—I hope to see him hung with tatters, like a Long Lane pent-house, or a gibbet thief. A slander-mouthed railer! I warrant the spendthrift prodigal's in debt as much as the million lottery, or the whole court upon a birthday. I'll spoil his credit with his tailor. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

FOIB. He? I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first, and angle into Blackfriars for brass farthings with an old mitten.

LADY. Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features to receive Sir Rowland with any economy of face. This wretch has fretted me that I am absolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

FOIB. Your ladyship has frowned a little too rashly, indeed, madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white vernish.

LADY. Let me see the glass. Cracks, say'st thou? Why, I am arrantly flayed: I look like an old peeled wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before Sir Rowland comes, or I shall never keep up to my picture.

FOIB. I warrant you, madam: a little art once made your picture like you, and now a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, madam.

LADY. But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will a not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate I shall never break decorums. I shall die with confusion if I am forced to advance—oh no, I can never advance; I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy neither—I won't give him despair. But a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

FOIB. A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

LADY. Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—a sort of a dyingness. You see that picture has a sort of a——ha,

Foible? A swimmingness in the eyes. Yes, I'll look so. My niece affects it; but she wants features. Is Sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed—I'll dress above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know; I'll be surprised. I'll be taken by surprise.

FOIB. By storm, madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk man.

LADY. Is he? Oh, then, he'll importune, if he's a brisk man. I shall save decorums if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal terror at the apprehension of offending against decorums. Oh, I'm glad he's a brisk man. Let my things be removed, good Foible.

SCENE VI.

Mrs. Fainall, Foible.

MRS. FAIN. O Foible, I have been in a fright, lest I should come too late. That devil, Marwood, saw you in the park with Mirabell, and I'm afraid will discover it to my lady.

FOIB. Discover what, madam?

MRS. FAIN. Nay, nay, put not on that strange face. I am privy to the whole design, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and, as such winning my lady, to involve her in those difficulties from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin and her fortune left to her own disposal.

FOIB. O dear madam, I beg your pardon. It was not my confidence in your ladyship that was deficient; but I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr. Mirabell might have hindered his communicating this secret.

MRS. FAIN. Dear Foible, forget that.

FOIB. O dear madam, Mr. Mirabell is such a sweet winning gentleman. But your ladyship is the pattern of generosity. Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr. Mirabell cannot choose but

be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success: Mrs. Marwood had told my lady, but I warrant I managed myself. I turned it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr. Mirabell railed at her. I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my lady is so incensed that she'll be contracted to Sir Rowland to-night, she says; I warrant I worked her up that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a Welsh maidenhead.

MRS. FAIN. O rare Foible!

FOIB. Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him—besides, I believe Madam Marwood watches me. She has a month's mind; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her. [*Calls.*] John, remove my lady's toilet. Madam, your servant. My lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

MRS. FAIN. I'll go with you up the back stairs, lest I should meet her.

SCENE VII.

MRS. MARWOOD *alone.*

MRS. MAR. Indeed, Mrs. Engine, is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance? Yes, I shall watch you. Why this wench is the *passe-partout*, a very master-key to everybody's strong box. My friend Fainall, have you carried it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it; but it seems it's over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite then, but from a surfeit. Else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant, to procure for him! A pattern of generosity, that I confess. Well, Mr. Fainall, you have met with your match.—O man, man! Woman, woman! The devil's an ass: if I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveller with a bib and bells. Man should have his

head and horns, and woman the rest of him. Poor, simple fiend! 'Madam Marwood has a month's mind, but he can't abide her.' 'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity; he has not obliged me to that with those excesses of himself, and now I'll have none of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe, with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chymist upon the day of projection.

SCENE VIII.

[*To her*] LADY WISHFORT.

LADY. O dear Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness? But my dear friend is all goodness.

MRS. MAR. No apologies, dear madam. I have been very well entertained.

LADY. As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos to think I should so forget myself. But I have such an olio of affairs, really I know not what to do. [*Calls.*] Foible!—I expect my nephew Sir Wilfull ev'ry moment too.—Why, Foible!—He means to travel for improvement.

MRS. MAR. Methinks Sir Wilfull should rather think of marrying than travelling at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

LADY. Oh, he's in less danger of being spoiled by his travels. I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to choose for himself.

MRS. MAR. Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

LADY. I promise you I have thought on't—and since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my word, I'll propose it.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] FOIBLE.

LADY. Come, come, Foible—I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner—I must make haste.

FOIB. Mr. Witwoud and Mr. Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

LADY. Oh dear, I can't appear till I am dressed. Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em? I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me.

SCENE X.

MRS. MARWOOD, MRS. MILLAMANT, MINCING.

MILLA. Sure, never anything was so unbred as that odious man. Marwood, your servant.

MRS. MAR. You have a colour; what's the matter?

MILLA. That horrid fellow Petulant has provoked me into a flame—I have broke my fan—Mincing, lend me yours. —Is not all the powder out of my hair?

MRS. MAR. No. What has he done?

MILLA. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked. Nay, he has said nothing neither; but he has contradicted everything that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarrelled.

MINC. I vow, mem, I thought once they would have fit.

MILLA. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I swear, that one has not the liberty of choosing one's acquaintance as one does one's clothes.

MRS. MAR. If we had that liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, though never so good, as we are of one suit, though never so fine. A fool and a doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

MILLA. I could consent to wear 'em, if they would wear alike; but fools never wear out. They are such *drap de Berri*

things! Without one could give 'em to one's chambermaid after a day or two.

MRS. MAR. 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think you of the playhouse? A fine gay glossy fool should be given there, like a new masking habit, after the masquerade is over, and we have done with the disguise. For a fool's visit is always a disguise, and never admitted by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover of sense. If you would but appear barefaced now, and own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwoud as your hood and scarf. And indeed 'tis time, for the town has found it, the secret is grown too big for the pretence. 'Tis like Mrs. Primly's great belly: she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it than my Lady Strammel can her face, that goodly face, which in defiance of her Rhenish-wine tea will not be comprehended in a mask.

MILLA. I'll take my death, Marwood, you are more censorious than a decayed beauty, or a discarded toast:—Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is not dressing here; their folly is less provoking than your malice.

SCENE XI.

Mrs. Millamant, Mrs. Marwood.

MILLA. The town has found it? What has it found? That Mirabell loves me is no more a secret than it is a secret that you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

MRS. MAR. You are nettled.

MILLA. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

MRS. MAR. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan, if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

MILLA. O silly! Ha, ha, ha! I could laugh immoderately. Poor Mirabell! His constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear I never enjoined it him to be so coy. If I had the vanity to think

he would obey me, I would command him to show more gallantry: 'tis hardly well-bred to be so particular on one hand and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, and so let him follow his own way. Ha, ha, ha! Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh; ha, ha, ha! Though I grant you 'tis a little barbarous; ha, ha, ha!

MRS. MAR. What pity 'tis so much fine raillery, and delivered with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry.

MILLA. Heh? Dear creature, I ask your pardon. I swear I did not mind you.

MRS. MAR. Mr. Mirabell and you both may think it a thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you——

MILLA. Oh dear, what? For it is the same thing, if I hear it. Ha, ha, ha!

MRS. MAR. That I detest him, hate him, madam.

MILLA. O madam, why, so do I. And yet the creature loves me, ha, ha, ha! How can one forbear laughing to think of it? I am a sibyl if I am not amazed to think what he can see in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handsomer, and within a year or two as young. If you could but stay for me, I should overtake you—but that cannot be. Well, that thought makes me melancholic.—Now I'll be sad.

MRS. MAR. Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

MILLA. D'ye say so? Then I'm resolved I'll have a song to keep up my spirits.

SCENE XII.

[*To them*] MINCING.

MINC. The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam, and will wait on you.

MILLA. Desire Mrs. —— that is in the next room, to sing the song I would have learnt yesterday. You shall hear it,

madam. Not that there's any great matter in it—but 'tis agreeable to my humour.

SONG.

Set by Mr. JOHN ECCLES.

I

Love's but the frailty of the mind
When 'tis not with ambition joined;
A sickly flame, which if not fed expires,
And feeding, wastes in self-consuming fires.

II

'Tis not to wound a wanton boy
Or am'rous youth, that gives the joy;
But 'tis the glory to have pierced a swain
For whom inferior beauties sighed in vain.

III

Then I alone the conquest prize,
When I insult a rival's eyes;
If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me.

SCENE XIII.

[*To them*] PETULANT, WITWOUD.

MILLA. Is your animosity composed, gentlemen?

WIT. Raillery, raillery, madam; we have no animosity. We hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity. The falling out of wits is like the falling out of lovers:—we agree in the main, like treble and bass. Ha, Petulant?

PET. Ay, in the main. But when I have a humour to contradict——

WIT. Ay, when he has a humour to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one

another like two battledores; for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

PET. If he says black's black—if I have a humour to say 'tis blue—let that pass—all's one for that. If I have a humour to prove it, it must be granted.

WIT. Not positively must. But it may; it may.

PET. Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

WIT. Ay, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may. That's a logical distinction now, madam.

MRS. MAR. I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

PET. Importance is one thing and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

WIT. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

PET. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

MRS. MAR. That's a sign, indeed, it's no enemy to you.

PET. No, no, it's no enemy to anybody but them that have it.

MILLA. Well, an illiterate man's my aversion; I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man to offer to make love.

WIT. That I confess I wonder at, too.

MILLA. Ah, to marry an ignorant that can hardly read or write!

PET. Why should a man be any further from being married, though he can't read, than he is from being hanged? The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book. So all's one for that.

MILLA. D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company; I'll begone.

SCENE XIV.

SIR WILFULL WITWOUD *in a riding dress*, MRS. MARWOOD, PETULANT, WITWOUD, FOOTMAN.

WIT. In the name of Bartlemew and his Fair, what have we here?

MRS. MAR. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

WIT. Not I:—yes, I think it is he. I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the revolution.

FOOT. Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company, if you please to walk in, in the meantime.

SIR WIL. Dressing! What, it's but morning here, I warrant, with you in London; we should count it towards afternoon in our parts down in Shropshire:—why, then, belike my aunt han't dined yet. Ha, friend?

FOOT. Your aunt, sir?

SIR WIL. My aunt, sir? Yes my aunt, sir, and your lady, sir; your lady is my aunt, sir. Why, what dost thou not know me, friend? Why, then, send somebody hither that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

FOOT. A week, sir; longer than anybody in the house, except my lady's woman.

SIR WIL. Why, then, belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou seest her. Ha, friend?

FOOT. Why, truly, sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dressed. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

SIR WIL. Well, prithee try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, enquire her out, dost hear, fellow? And tell her her nephew, Sir Wilfull Witwoud, is in the house.

FOOT. I shall, sir.

SIR WIL. Hold ye, hear me, friend, a word with you in your ear: prithee who are these gallants?

FOOT. Really, sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all.

SCENE XV.

SIR WILFULL WITWOUD, PETULANT, WITWOUD, MRS. MARWOOD.

SIR WIL. Oons, this fellow knows less than a starling: I don't think a knows his own name.

MRS. MAR. Mr. Witwoud, your brother is not behindhand in forgetfulness. I fancy he has forgot you too.

WIT. I hope so. The devil take him that remembers first, I say.

SIR WIL. Save you, gentlemen and lady.

MRS. MAR. For shame, Mr. Witwoud; why won't you speak to him?—And you, sir.

WIT. Petulant, speak.

PET. And you, sir.

SIR WIL. No offence, I hope? [*Salutes* MARWOOD.]

MRS. MAR. No, sure, sir.

WIT. This is a vile dog, I see that already. No offence? Ha, ha, ha. To him, to him, Petulant, smoke him.

PET. It seems as if you had come a journey, sir; hem, hem. [*Surveying him round.*]

SIR WIL. Very likely, sir, that it may seem so.

PET. No offence, I hope, sir?

WIT. Smoke the boots, the boots, Petulant, the boots; ha, ha, ha!

SIR WIL. Maybe not, sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, sir.

PET. Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

SIR WIL. Why, 'tis like you may, sir: if you are not satisfied with the information of my boots, sir, if you will step to the stable, you may enquire further of my horse, sir.

PET. Your horse, sir! Your horse is an ass, sir!

SIR WIL. Do you speak by way of offence, sir?

MRS. MAR. The gentleman's merry, that's all, sir. 'Slife, we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and an ass, before they find one another out.—You must not take anything amiss from your friends, sir. You are among your friends

here, though it may be you don't know it. If I am not mistaken, you are Sir Wilfull Witwoud?

SIR WIL. Right, lady; I am Sir Wilfull Witwoud, so I write myself; no offence to anybody, I hope? and nephew to the Lady Wishfort of this mansion.

MRS. MAR. Don't you know this gentleman, sir?

SIR WIL. Hum! What, sure 'tis not—yea, by'r lady, but 'tis—— 'sheart, I know not whether 'tis or no. Yea, but 'tis, by the Wrekin. Brother Antony! What, Tony, i'faith! What, dost thou not know me? By'r lady, nor I thee, thou art so becravated and so beperiwigged. 'Sheart, why dost not speak? Art thou o'erjoyed?

WIT. Odso, brother, is it you? Your servant, brother.

SIR WIL. Your servant? Why, yours, sir. Your servant again —'sheart, and your friend and servant to that—and a—[*puff*] and a flap-dragon for your service, sir, and a hare's foot and a hare's scut for your service, sir, an you be so cold and so courtly!

WIT. No offence, I hope, brother?

SIR WIL. 'Sheart, sir, but there is, and much offence. A pox, is this your inns o' court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

WIT. Why, brother Wilfull of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers slabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a call of serjeants. 'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not, indeed, dear brother.

SIR WIL. The fashion's a fool and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this—by'r lady I conjectured you were a fop, since you began to change the style of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no bigger than a subpœna. I might expect this when you left off 'Honoured brother,' and 'Hoping you are in good health,' and so forth, to begin with a 'Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch.' Ods heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle,

and so conclude. You could write news before you were out of your time, when you lived with honest Pumple-Nose, the attorney of Furnival's Inn. You could intreat to be remembered then to your friends round the Wrekin. We could have Gazettes then, and Dawks's Letter, and the Weekly Bill, till of late days.

PET. 'Slife, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? Of the family of the Furnivals? Ha, ha, ha!

WIT. Ay, ay, but that was but for a while. Not long, not long; pshaw, I was not in my own power then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian; ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that man to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound prentice to a feltmaker in Shrewsbury: this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

SIR WIL. 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops, where, I suppose, you have served your time, and now you may set up for yourself.

MRS. MAR. You intend to travel, sir, as I 'm informed?

SIR WIL. Belike I may, madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

PET. And the wind serve.

SIR WIL. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask license of you, sir, nor the weathercock your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, sir. 'Tis like my aunt may have told you, madam? Yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts. If an how that the peace holds, whereby, that is, taxes abate.

MRS. MAR. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

SIR WIL. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution, because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand shill I, shall I, then; if I say 't, I 'll do 't. But I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the seas. I 'd gladly have a spice of your French as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

MRS. MAR. Here 's an academy in town for that use.
SIR WIL. There is? 'Tis like there may.
MRS. MAR. No doubt you will return very much improved.
WIT. Yes, refined like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

SCENE XVI.

[*To them*] LADY WISHFORT *and* FAINALL.

LADY. Nephew, you are welcome.
SIR WIL. Aunt, your servant.
FAIN. Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.
SIR WIL. Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.
LADY. Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant. Nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink anything after your journey, nephew, before you eat? Dinner 's almost ready.
SIR WIL. I 'm very well, I thank you, aunt. However, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion too, and have remembered to have forgot your relations. Here 's your cousin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offence.
LADY. Oh, he 's a rallier, nephew. My cousin 's a wit: and your great wits always rally their best friends to choose. When you have been abroad, nephew, you 'll understand raillery better. [FAINALL *and* MRS. MARWOOD *talk apart.*]
SIR WIL. Why, then, let him hold his tongue in the meantime, and rail when that day comes.

SCENE XVII.

[*To them*] MINCING.

MINC. Mem, I come to acquaint your laship that dinner is impatient.
SIR WIL. Impatient? Why, then, belike it won't stay till I

pull off my boots. Sweetheart, can you help me to a pair of slippers? My man's with his horses, I warrant.

LADY. Fie, fie, nephew, you would not pull off your boots here? Go down into the hall:—dinner shall stay for you. My nephew's a little unbred: you'll pardon him, madam. Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

MRS. MAR. I'll follow you, madam,—before Sir Wilfull is ready.

SCENE XVIII.

MRS. MARWOOD, FAINALL.

FAIN. Why, then, Foible's a bawd, an errant, rank match-making bawd. And I, it seems, am a husband, a rank husband, and my wife a very errant, rank wife,—all in the way of the world. 'Sdeath, to be a cuckold by anticipation, a cuckold in embryo! Sure I was born with budding antlers like a young satyr, or a citizen's child, 'sdeath, to be out-witted, to be out-jilted, out-matrimonied. If I had kept my speed like a stag, 'twere somewhat, but to crawl after, with my horns like a snail, and be outstripped by my wife—'tis scurvy wedlock.

MRS. MAR. Then shake it off: you have often wished for an opportunity to part, and now you have it. But first prevent their plot:—the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with to a foe, to Mirabell.

FAIN. Damn him, that had been mine—had you not made that fond discovery. That had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added lustre to my horns by that increase of fortune: I could have worn 'em tipt with gold, though my forehead had been furnished like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

MRS. MAR. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife. And she's no worse than when you had her:—I dare swear she had given up her game before she was married.

FAIN. Hum! That may be——

MRS. MAR. You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

FAIN. The means, the means?

MRS. MAR. Discover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her. My lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece, and fortune and all at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm: if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

FAIN. Faith, this has an appearance.

MRS. MAR. I'm sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavour a match between Millamant and Sir Wilfull; that may be an obstacle.

FAIN. Oh, for that matter, leave me to manage him; I'll disable him for that, he will drink like a Dane. After dinner I'll set his hand in.

MRS. MAR. Well, how do you stand affected towards your lady?

FAIN. Why, faith, I'm thinking of it. Let me see. I am married already; so that's over. My wife has played the jade with me; well, that's over too. I never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been over too by this time. Jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy. Weary of her I am and shall be. No, there's no end of that; no, no, that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my repose. Now for my reputation: as to my own, I married not for it; so that's out of the question. And as to my part in my wife's—why, she had parted with hers before; so, bringing none to me, she can take none from me: 'tis against all rule of play that I should lose to one who has not wherewithal to stake.

MRS. MAR. Besides you forget, marriage is honourable.

FAIN. Hum! Faith, and that's well thought on: marriage is

honourable, as you say; and if so, wherefore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived from so honourable a root?

MRS. MAR. Nay, I know not; if the root be honourable, why not the branches?

FAIN. So, so; why this point's clear. Well, how do we proceed?

MRS. MAR. I will contrive a letter which shall be delivered to my lady at the time when that rascal who is to act Sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand—for the less I appear to know of the truth the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked if I could help it, because, you know, she knows some passages. Nay, I expect all will come out. But let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discovered.

FAIN. If the worst come to the worst, I'll turn my wife to grass. I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate, which I wheedled out of her, and that you shall partake at least.

MRS. MAR. I hope you are convinced that I hate Mirabell now? You'll be no more jealous?

FAIN. Jealous? No, by this kiss. Let husbands be jealous, but let the lover still believe: or if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows, when he proves his mistress true. But let husbands' doubts convert to endless jealousy; or if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition and blind credulity. I am single and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And since I take my leave of 'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common motto to their common crest.

All husbands must or pain or shame endure;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

Scene Continues.

LADY WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.

LADY. Is Sir Rowland coming, say'st thou, Foible? And are things in order?

FOIB. Yes, madam. I have put wax-lights in the sconces, and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postillion to fill up the equipage.

LADY. Have you pulvilled the coachman and postillion, that they may not stink of the stable when Sir Rowland comes by?

FOIB. Yes, madam.

LADY. And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertained in all points with correspondence to his passion?

FOIB. All is ready, madam.

LADY. And—well—and how do I look, Foible?

FOIB. Most killing well, madam.

LADY. Well, and how shall I receive him? In what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? There is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit? No, I won't sit, I 'll walk,—ay, I 'll walk from the door upon his entrance, and then turn full upon him. No, that will be too sudden. I 'll lie,—ay, I 'll lie down. I 'll receive him in my little dressing-room; there 's a couch—yes, yes, I 'll give the first impression on a couch. I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow, with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way. Yes; and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder. Yes; oh, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch in some confusion. It shows the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes and re-composing airs beyond comparison. Hark! There 's a coach.

FOIB. 'Tis he, madam.

LADY. Oh dear, has my nephew made his addresses to Millamant? I ordered him.

FOIB. Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, madam, in the parlour.

LADY. Ods my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go. When they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with Sir Rowland.

SCENE II.

MRS. MILLAMANT, MRS. FAINALL, FOIBLE.

FOIB. Madam, I stayed here to tell your ladyship that Mr. Mirabell has waited this half hour for an opportunity to talk with you; though my lady's orders were to leave you and Sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mirabell that you are at leisure?

MILLA. No. What would the dear man have? I am thought ful and would amuse myself; bid him come another time.

> There never yet was woman made,
> Nor shall, but to be cursed.
>
> [*Repeating and walking about.*]

That's hard!

MRS. FAIN. You are very fond of Sir John Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

MILLA. He? Ay, and filthy verses. So I am.

FOIB. Sir Wilfull is coming, madam. Shall I send Mr. Mirabell away?

MILLA. Ay, if you please, Foible, send him away, or send him hither, just as you will, dear Foible. I think I'll see him. Shall I? Ay, let the wretch come.

> Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train. [*Repeating*]

Dear Fainall, entertain Sir Wilfull:—thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool; thou art married and hast patience. I would confer with my own thoughts.

MRS. FAIN. I am obliged to you that you would make me your proxy in this affair, but I have business of my own.

SCENE III.

[*To them*] SIR WILFULL.

MRS. FAIN. O Sir Wilfull, you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point, now or never.

SIR WIL. Yes, my aunt will have it so. I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first, before I am acquainted. [*This while* MILLAMANT *walks about repeating to herself.*] But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is, upon further acquaintance. —So for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave. If so be you'll be so kind to make my excuse, I'll return to my company——

MRS. FAIN. Oh, fie, Sir Wilfull! What, you must not be daunted.

SIR WIL. Daunted? No, that's not it; it is not so much for that —for if so be that I set on't I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient till further acquaintance, that's all—your servant.

MRS. FAIN. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favourable an opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you together and lock the door.

SCENE IV.

SIR WILFULL, MILLAMANT.

SIR WIL. Nay, nay, cousin. I have forgot my gloves. What d'ye do? 'Sheart, a has locked the door indeed, I think. —Nay, cousin Fainall, open the door. Pshaw, what a vixen trick is this? Nay, now a has seen me too.—Cousin, I

made bold to pass through as it were—I think this door's enchanted.

MILLA. [*repeating*]:—

> I prithee spare me, gentle boy,
> Press me no more for that slight toy.

SIR WIL. Anan? Cousin, your servant.

MILLA. That foolish trifle of a heart—

Sir Wilfull!

SIR WIL. Yes—your servant. No offence, I hope, cousin?

MILLA. [*repeating*]:—

> I swear it will not do its part,
> Though thou dost thine, employ'st thy power and art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

SIR WIL. Anan? Suckling? No such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank heaven I'm no minor.

MILLA. Ah, rustic, ruder than Gothic.

SIR WIL. Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the meanwhile I must answer in plain English.

MILLA. Have you any business with me, Sir Wilfull?

SIR WIL. Not at present, cousin. Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening; if so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

MILLA. A walk? What then?

SIR WIL. Nay, nothing. Only for the walk's sake, that's all.

MILLA. I nauseate walking: 'tis a country diversion; I loathe the country and everything that relates to it.

SIR WIL. Indeed! Hah! Look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may. Here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like, that must be confessed indeed——

MILLA. Ah, *l'étourdi!* I hate the town too.

SIR WIL. Dear heart, that's much. Hah! that you should hate 'em both! Hah! 'tis like you may! There are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country, —'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

MILLA. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, 'tis like I may. You have nothing further to say to me?

SIR WIL. Not at present, cousin. 'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private—I may break my mind in some measure—I conjecture you partly guess. However, that's as time shall try. But spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

MILLA. If it is of no great importance, Sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me: I have just now a little business.

SIR WIL. Enough, enough, cousin. Yes, yes, all a case. When you're disposed, when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now. All's one for that. Yes, yes; if your concerns call you, there's no haste: it will keep cold as they say. Cousin, your servant. I think this door's locked.

MILLA. You may go this way, sir.

SIR WIL. Your servant; then with your leave I'll return to my company.

MILLA. Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha!

Like Phœbus sung the no less am'rous boy.

SCENE V.

Mrs. Millamant, Mirabell.

MIRA. Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy.

Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuit be crowned, for you can fly no further?

MILLA. Vanity! No—I'll fly and be followed to the last moment; though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last; nay, and afterwards.

MIRA. What, after the last?

MILLA. Oh, I should think I was poor and had nothing to

bestow if I were reduced to an inglorious ease, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

MIRA. But do not you know that when favours are conferred upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure?

MILLA. It may be in things of common application, but never, sure, in love. Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature as the saucy look of an assured man confident of success: the pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah, I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

MIRA. Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

MILLA. Ah, don't be impertinent. My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h, adieu. My morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs*, ye *sommeils du matin*, adieu. I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible — positively, Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

MIRA. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

MILLA. Ah! Idle creature, get up when you will. And d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

MIRA. Names?

MILLA. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never be seen there together again, as if we were proud of one another the first

week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well-bred. Let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

MIRA. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

MILLA. Trifles; as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please, and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance, or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please, dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

MIRA. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions:—that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

MILLA. You have free leave: propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

MIRA. I thank you. *Imprimis*, then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant or intimate of your own sex; no she friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy-duck to wheedle you a *fop-scrambling* to the play in a mask, then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out, and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my constancy.

MILLA. Detestable *imprimis*! I go to the play in a mask!

MIRA. *Item*, I article, that you continue to like your own face as long as I shall, and while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled skins and I know not what—hog's bones, hare's gall, pig water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewomen in what-d'ye-call-it court. *Item*, I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, china, fans, atlases, etc. *Item*, when you shall be breeding——

MILLA. Ah, name it not!

MIRA. Which may be presumed, with a blessing on our endeavours——

MILLA. Odious endeavours!

MIRA. I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf, and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit; but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province, but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewise to genuine and authorised tea-table talk, such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth. But that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which, I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbadoes waters, together with ratafia and the most noble spirit of clary. But for cowslip-wine, poppy-water, and all dormitives, those I allow. These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

MILLA. Oh, horrid provisos! Filthy strong waters! I toast fellows, odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

MIRA. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

SCENE VI.

[*To them*] MRS. FAINALL.

MILLA. Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

MRS. FAIN. Ay, ay, take him, take him, what should you do?

MILLA. Well then—I 'll take my death I 'm in a horrid fright—Fainall, I shall never say it. Well—I think—I 'll endure you.

MRS. FAIN. Fie, fie, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

MILLA. Are you? I think I have; and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too. Well, you ridiculous thing you, I 'll have you. I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked.—Here, kiss my hand though, so hold your tongue now; don't say a word.

MRS. FAIN. Mirabell, there 's a necessity for your obedience: you have neither time to talk nor stay. My mother is coming; and in my conscience if she should see you, would fall into fits, and maybe not recover time enough to return to Sir Rowland, who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore spare your ecstasies for another occasion, and slip down the back stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

MILLA. Ay, go, go. In the meantime I suppose you have said something to please me.

MIRA. I am all obedience.

SCENE VII.

MRS. MILLAMANT, MRS. FAINALL.

MRS. FAIN. Yonder Sir Wilfull 's drunk, and so noisy that my mother has been forced to leave Sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking. What

they may have done by this time I know not, but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

MILLA. Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing: for I find I love him violently.

MRS. FAIN. So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you. If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.

MILLA. How can you name that superannuated lubber? foh!

SCENE VIII.

[*To them*] WITWOUD *from drinking.*

MRS. FAIN. So, is the fray made up that you have left 'em?

WIT. Left 'em? I could stay no longer. I have laughed like ten Christ'nings. I am tipsy with laughing—if I had stayed any longer I should have burst,—I must have been let out and pieced in the sides like an unsized camlet. Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi,* and stopt the proceedings.

MILLA. What was the dispute?

WIT. That's the jest: there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage; and so fell a sputt'ring at one another like two roasting apples.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] PETULANT *drunk.*

WIT. Now, Petulant? All's over, all's well? Gad, my head begins to whim it about. Why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

PET. Look you, Mrs. Millamant, if you can love me, dear Nymph, say it, and that's the conclusion—pass on, or pass off—that's all.

WIT. Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than decimo

sexto, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomiser of words.

PET. Witwoud,—you are an annihilator of sense.

WIT. Thou art a retailer of phrases, and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions; thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of shorthand.

PET. Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass, and Baldwin yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest. A Gemini of asses split would make just four of you.

WIT. Thou dost bite, my dear mustard-seed; kiss me for that.

PET. Stand off—I'll kiss no more males—I have kissed your Twin yonder in a humour of reconciliation till he [*hiccup*] rises upon my stomach like a radish.

MILLA. Eh! filthy creature; what was the quarrel?

PET. There was no quarrel; there might have been a quarrel.

WIT. If there had been words enow between 'em to have expressed provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of castanets.

PET. You were the quarrel.

MILLA. Me?

PET. If I have a humour to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises. If you are not handsome, what then? If I have a humour to prove it? If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself—I'll go sleep.

WIT. Do, wrap thyself up like a woodlouse, and dream revenge. And, hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge. I'll carry it for thee.

PET. Carry your mistress's monkey a spider; go flea dogs and read romances. I'll go to bed to my maid.

MRS. FAIN. He's horridly drunk—how came you all in this pickle?

WIT. A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight—your husband's advice; but he sneaked off.

SCENE X.

SIR WILFULL *drunk*, LADY WISHFORT, WITWOUD, MRS. MILLAMANT, MRS. FAINALL.

LADY. Out upon 't, out upon 't, at years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate!

SIR WIL. No offence, aunt.

LADY. Offence? As I 'm a person, I 'm ashamed of you. Fogh! How you stink of wine! D'ye think my niece will ever endure such a Borachio? You 're an absolute Borachio.

SIR WIL. Borachio?

LADY. At a time when you should commence an amour, and put your best foot foremost——

SIR WIL. 'Sheart, an you grutch me your liquor, make a bill. —Give me more drink, and take my purse. [*Sings*]:—

Prithee fill me the glass,
Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
He that whines for a lass
Is an ignorant ass,
For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you would have me marry my cousin, say the word, and I 'll do 't. Wilfull will do 't, that 's the word. Wilfull will do 't, that 's my crest,—my motto I have forgot.

LADY. My nephew 's a little overtaken, cousin, but 'tis drinking your health. O' my word, you are obliged to him——

SIR WIL. *In vino veritas*, aunt. If I drunk your health to-day, cousin,—I am a Borachio.—But if you have a mind to be married, say the word and send for the piper; Wilfull will do 't. If not, dust it away, and let 's have t'other round. Tony—ods-heart, where 's Tony?—Tony 's an honest fellow, but he spits after a bumper, and that 's a fault.

We 'll drink and we 'll never ha' done, boys,
Put the glass then around with the sun, boys,

Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he 's drunk every night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he 's able next morning to light us.

The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker, he has a cellar at your antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your antipodes —your antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows. If I had a bumper I 'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em. A match or no match, cousin with the hard name; aunt, Wilfull will do 't. If she has her maidenhead let her look to 't; if she has not, let her keep her own counsel in the meantime, and cry out at the nine months' end.

MILLA. Your pardon, madam, I can stay no longer. Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells! I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, cousin.

SCENE XI.

Lady Wishfort, Sir Wilfull Witwoud, Mr. Witwoud, Foible.

LADY. Smells? He would poison a tallow-chandler and his family. Beastly creature, I know not what to do with him. Travel, quotha; ay, travel, travel, get thee gone, get thee but far enough, to the Saracens, or the Tartars, or the Turks —for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly pagan.

SIR WIL. Turks? No; no Turks, aunt. Your Turks are infidels, and believe not in the grape. Your Mahometan, your Mussulman is a dry stinkard. No offence, aunt. My map says that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian—I cannot find by the map that your Mufti is orthodox, whereby it is a plain case that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and [*hiccup*] Greek for claret. [*Sings*]:—

To drink is a Christian diversion,
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian.

Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,
And be damned over tea-cups and coffee.
But let British lads sing,
Crown a health to the King,
And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

Ah, Tony! [FOIBLE *whispers* LADY W.]

LADY. Sir Rowland impatient? Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbril? Go lie down and sleep, you sot, or as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinadoed with broomsticks. Call up the wenches with broomsticks.

SIR WIL. Ahey! Wenches? Where are the wenches?

LADY. Dear Cousin Witwoud, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation.—You will oblige me to all futurity.

WIT. Come, knight. Pox on him, I don't know what to say to him. Will you go to a cock-match?

SIR WIL. With a wench, Tony? Is she a shake-bag, sirrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

WIT. Horrible! He has a breath like a bagpipe. Ay, ay; come, will you march, my Salopian?

SIR WIL. Lead on, little Tony. I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tantony. Sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantony, and I'll be thy pig.

And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

LADY. This will never do. It will never make a match,—at least before he has been abroad.

SCENE XII.

LADY WISHFORT, WAITWELL *disguised as for* SIR ROWLAND.

LADY. Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness,—I have more pardons

to ask than the pope distributes in the year of jubilee. But I hope where there is likely to be so near an alliance, we may unbend the severity of decorum, and dispense with a little ceremony.

WAIT. My impatience, madam, is the effect of my transport; and till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantalised on the rack, and do but hang, madam, on the tenter of expectation.

LADY. You have excess of gallantry, Sir Rowland, and press things to a conclusion with a most prevailing vehemence. But a day or two for decency of marriage——

WAIT. For decency of funeral, madam! The delay will break my heart—or if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs and poison me—and I would willingly starve him before I die—I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction. That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be revenged on that unnatural viper.

LADY. Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly I would contribute much both to the saving of your life and the accomplishment of your revenge. Not that I respect myself; though he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

WAIT. Perfidious to you?

LADY. O Sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances and the tremblings, the ardours and the ecstasies, the kneelings and the risings, the heart-heavings and the hand-gripings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes!—Oh, no memory can register.

WAIT. What, my rival? Is the rebel my rival? A dies.

LADY. No, don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland: starve him gradually, inch by inch.

WAIT. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms; he shall starve upward and upward, 'till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink like a candle's end upon a save-all.

LADY. Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way,—you are no novice in the labyrinth of love,—you have the clue. But as I am a person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister appetite or indigestion of widowhood; nor impute my complacency to any lethargy of continence. I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials?

WAIT. Far be it from me——

LADY. If you do, I protest I must recede, or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums, but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance——

WAIT. I esteem it so——

LADY. Or else you wrong my condescension——

WAIT. I do not, I do not——

LADY. Indeed you do.

WAIT. I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

LADY. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient——

WAIT. Dear madam, no. You are all camphire and frankincense, all chastity and odour.

LADY. Or that——

SCENE XIII.

[*To them*] FOIBLE.

FOIB. Madam, the dancers are ready, and there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

LADY. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honour's cause, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly.

SCENE XIV.

WAITWELL, FOIBLE.

WAIT. Fie, fie! What a slavery have I undergone; spouse, hast thou any cordial? I want spirits.

FOIB. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady?

WAIT. Oh, she is the antidote to desire. Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't. I shall have no appetite to iteration of nuptials—this eight-and-forty hours. By this hand I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days than act Sir Rowland till this time to-morrow.

SCENE XV.

[*To them*] LADY *with a letter.*

LADY. Call in the dancers; Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment. [*Dance.*] Now, with your permission, Sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter. I would open it in your presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy, I would burn it—speak if it does—but you may see, the superscription is like a woman's hand.

FOIB. By heaven! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it,—my heart aches—get it from her! [*To him.*]

WAIT. A woman's hand? No, madam, that's no woman's hand: I see that already. That's somebody whose throat must be cut.

LADY. Nay, Sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return by a frank communication. You shall see it—we'll open it together. Look you here. [*Reads.*] *Madam, though unknown to you* (look you there, 'tis from nobody that I

know.) *I have that honour for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland is a cheat and a rascal.* O heavens! what's this?

FOIB. Unfortunate; all's ruined.

WAIT. How, how, let me see, let me see. [*Reading.*] *A rascal, and disguised and suborned for that imposture*—O villainy! O villainy!—*by the contrivance of*——

LADY. I shall faint, I shall die. Oh!

FOIB. Say 'tis your nephew's hand. Quickly, his plot, swear, swear it! [*To him.*]

WAIT. Here's a villain! Madam, don't you perceive it? Don't you see it?

LADY. Too well, too well. I have seen too much.

WAIT. I told you at first I knew the hand. A woman's hand? The rascal writes a sort of a large hand: your Roman hand. —I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him.

FOIB. O treachery! But are you sure, Sir Rowland, it is his writing?

WAIT. Sure? Am I here? Do I live? Do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him in the same character.

LADY. How?

FOIB. Oh, what luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture! This was the business that brought Mr. Mirabell disguised to Madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me and would have hid his face.

LADY. How, how? I heard the villain was in the house indeed; and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly when Sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

FOIB. Then, then, madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber; but I would not tell your ladyship to discompose you when you were to receive Sir Rowland.

WAIT. Enough, his date is short.

FOIB. No, good Sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

WAIT. Law? I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis

in a good cause. My lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

LADY. No, dear Sir Rowland, don't fight: if you should be killed I must never show my face; or hanged,—oh, consider my reputation, Sir Rowland. No, you shan't fight: I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, Sir Rowland, by all your love not to fight.

WAIT. I am charmed, madam; I obey. But some proof you must let me give you: I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

LADY. Ay, dear Sir Rowland, that will be some comfort; bring the black box.

WAIT. And may I presume to bring a contract to be signed this night? May I hope so far?

LADY. Bring what you will; but come alive, pray come alive. Oh, this is a happy discovery.

WAIT. Dead or alive I'll come—and married we will be in spite of treachery; ay, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandoned nephew. Come, my buxom widow:

E'er long you shall substantial proof receive
That I'm an arrant knight——

FOIB. Or arrant knave.

ACT V.—SCENE I.

Scene continues.

LADY WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.

LADY. Out of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent that I have fostered, thou bosom traitress that I raised from nothing! Begone, begone, begone, go, go; that I took from washing of old gauze and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose, over a chafing-dish of starved embers, and dining behind a traver's rag, in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage. Go, go, starve again, do, do!

FOIB. Dear madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

LADY. Away, out, out, go set up for yourself again, do; drive a trade, do, with your threepennyworth of small ware, flaunting upon a packthread, under a brandy-seller's bulk, or against a dead wall by a balladmonger. Go, hang out an old frisoneer-gorget, with a yard of yellow colberteen again, do; an old gnawed mask, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace with the beads broken, and a quilted night-cap with one ear. Go, go, drive a trade. These were your commodities, you treacherous trull; this was the merchandise you dealt in, when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you governant of my whole family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?

FOIB. No, no, dear madam. Do but hear me, have but a moment's patience—I'll confess all. Mr. Mirabell seduced me; I am not the first that he has wheedled with his dissembling tongue. Your ladyship's own wisdom has been

deluded by him; then how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O madam, if you knew but what he promised me, and how he assured me your ladyship should come to no damage, or else the wealth of the Indies should not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been to me.

LADY. No damage? What, to betray me, to marry me to a cast serving-man; to make me a receptacle, an hospital for a decayed pimp? No damage? O thou frontless impudence, more than a big-bellied actress!

FOIB. Pray do but hear me, madam; he could not marry your ladyship, madam. No indeed, his marriage was to have been void in law; for he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. He could not have bedded your ladyship, for if he had consummated with your ladyship, he must have run the risk of the law, and been put upon his clergy. Yes indeed, I enquired of the law in that case before I would meddle or make.

LADY. What? Then I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems, while you were catering for Mirabell; I have been broker for you? What, have you made a passive bawd of me? This exceeds all precedent. I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews! I'll couple you. Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's Place you, as I'm a person. Your turtle is in custody already. You shall coo in the same cage, if there be constable or warrant in the parish.

FOIB. Oh, that ever I was born! Oh, that I was ever married! A bride? Ay, I shall be a Bridewell bride. Oh!

SCENE II.

Mrs. Fainall, Foible.

MRS. FAIN. Poor Foible, what's the matter?

FOIB. O madam, my lady's gone for a constable; I shall be

had to a justice, and put to Bridewell to beat hemp. Poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

MRS. FAIN. Have a good heart, Foible: Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

FOIB. Yes, yes; I know it, madam: she was in my lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady, and that missing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and in the meantime Mrs. Marwood declared all to my lady.

MRS. FAIN. Was there no mention made of me in the letter? My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy? I fancy Marwood has not told her, though she has told my husband.

FOIB. Yes, madam; but my lady did not see that part. We stifled the letter before she read so far. Has that mischievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyship then?

MRS. FAIN. Ay, all's out: my affair with Mirabell, everything discovered. This is the last day of our living together; that's my comfort.

FOIB. Indeed, madam, and so 'tis a comfort, if you knew all. He has been even with your ladyship; which I could have told you long enough since, but I love to keep peace and quietness by my good will. I had rather bring friends together than set 'em at distance. But Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

MRS. FAIN. Say'st thou so, Foible? Canst thou prove this?

FOIB. I can take my oath of it, madam; so can Mrs. Mincing. We have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood to conceal something that passed in our chamber one evening when you were at Hyde Park, and we were thought to have gone a-walking. But we went up unawares—though we were sworn to secrecy too: Madam Marwood took a book and swore us upon it: but it was but a book of poems. So long as it was not a bible oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

MRS. FAIN. This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish. Now, Mincing?

SCENE III.

[*To them*] MINCING.

MINC. My lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my lady's closet till my old lady's anger is abated. Oh, my old lady is in a perilous passion at something Mr. Fainall has said; he swears, and my old lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, mem, how that he'll have my lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

MRS. FAIN. Does your lady or Mirabell know that?

MINC. Yes, mem; they have sent me to see if Sir Wilfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My lady is resolved to have him, I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pound. Oh, come, Mrs. Foible, I hear my old lady.

MRS. FAIN. Foible, you must tell Mincing that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

FOIB. Yes, yes, madam.

MINC. Oh, yes mem, I'll vouch anything for your ladyship's service, be what it will.

SCENE IV.

MRS. FAINALL, LADY WISHFORT, MRS. MARWOOD.

LADY. O my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness? To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you I owe the detection of the impostor Sir Rowland. And now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honour of my house and compound for the frailties of

my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses.

MRS. MAR. Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

LADY. O daughter, daughter, is it possible thou shouldst be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the most minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mould of virtue? I have not only been a mould but a pattern for you, and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.

MRS. FAIN. I don't understand your ladyship.

LADY. Not understand? Why, have you not been naught? Have you not been sophisticated? Not understand? Here I am ruined to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldoms. I must pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough——

MRS. FAIN. I am wronged and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation, as false as hell, as false as your friend there; ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband.

MRS. MAR. My friend, Mrs. Fainall? Your husband my friend, what do you mean?

MRS. FAIN. I know what I mean, madam, and so do you; and so shall the world at a time convenient.

MRS. MAR. I am sorry to see you so passionate, madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, madam, if I meddle no more with an affair in which I am not personally concerned.

LADY. O dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns. You ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature; she deserves more from you than all

your life can accomplish. Oh, don't leave me destitute in this perplexity! No, stick to me, my good genius.

MRS. FAIN. I tell you, madam, you're abused. Stick to you? Ay, like a leech, to suck your best blood; she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their aspersions: I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial.

SCENE V.

LADY WISHFORT, MRS. MARWOOD.

LADY. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wronged after all, ha? I don't know what to think, and I promise you, her education has been unexceptionable. I may say it, for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men; ay, friend, she would ha' shrieked if she had but seen a man till she was in her teens. As I'm a person, 'tis true. She was never suffered to play with a male child, though but in coats. Nay, her very babies were of the feminine gender. Oh, she never looked a man in the face but her own father or the chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments, and his sleek face, till she was going in her fifteen.

MRS. MAR. 'Twas much she should be deceived so long.

LADY. I warrant you, or she would never have borne to have been catechised by him, and have heard his long lectures against singing and dancing and such debaucheries, and going to filthy plays, and profane music meetings, where the lewd trebles squeak nothing but bawdy, and the basses roar blasphemy. Oh, she would have swooned at the sight or name of an obscene play-book—and can I think after all this that my daughter can be naught? What, a whore? And thought it excommunication to set her foot within the door

of a playhouse. O dear friend, I can't believe it. No, no; as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

MRS. MAR. Prove it, madam? What, and have your name prostituted in a public court; yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the bar by a pack of bawling lawyers? To be ushered in with an *Oh yes* of scandal, and have your case opened by an old fumbling leacher in a quoif like a man midwife; to bring your daughter's infamy to light; to be a theme for legal punsters and quibblers by the statute; and become a jest, against a rule of court, where there is no precedent for a jest in any record, not even in Doomsday Book. To discompose the gravity of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in more naughty law Latin; while the good judge, tickled with the proceeding, simpers under a grey beard, and fidges off and on his cushion as if he had swallowed cantharides, or sate upon cow-itch.

LADY. Oh, 'tis very hard!

MRS. MAR. And then to have my young revellers of the Temple take notes, like prentices at a conventicle; and after talk it over again in Commons, or before drawers in an eating-house.

LADY. Worse and worse.

MRS. MAR. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here 'twere well. But it must after this be consigned by the shorthand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferred to the hands, nay, into the throats and lungs, of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounder-man's. And this you must hear till you are stunned; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

LADY. Oh, 'tis insupportable. No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all, anything, everything, for composition.

MRS. MAR. Nay, madam, I advise nothing, I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniences which perhaps you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall; if he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

SCENE VI.

FAINALL, LADY WISHFORT, MRS MARWOOD.

LADY. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood. No, no, I do not doubt it.

FAIN. Well, madam, I have suffered myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady, your friend, and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life, on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

LADY. Never to marry?

FAIN. No more Sir Rowlands,—the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

MRS. MAR. That condition, I dare answer, my lady will consent to, without difficulty; she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Besides, madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude, we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

LADY. Ay, that's true; but in case of necessity, as of health, or some such emergency——

FAIN. Oh, if you are prescribed marriage, you shall be considered; I will only reserve to myself the power to choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it matters not who is your apothecary. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already; and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

LADY. This is most inhumanly savage: exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.

FAIN. I learned it from his Czarish Majesty's retinue, in a winter evening's conference over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pound, which is

the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession, and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, Sir Jonathan Wishfort) by her disobedience in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge, and by refusing the offered match with Sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

LADY. My nephew was *non compos,* and could not make his addresses.

FAIN. I come to make demands—I 'll hear no objections.

LADY. You will grant me time to consider?

FAIN. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected: which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the meanwhile I will go for the said instrument, and till my return you may balance this matter in your own discretion.

SCENE VII.

Lady Wishfort, Mrs. Marwood.

LADY. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel. Must I be subject to this merciless villain?

MRS. MAR. 'Tis severe indeed, madam, that you should smart for your daughter's wantonness.

LADY. 'Twas against my consent that she married this barbarian, but she would have him, though her year was not out. Ah! her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is matched now with a witness—I shall be mad, dear friend; is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate? Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

SCENE VIII.

[*To them*] MRS. MILLAMANT, SIR WILFULL.

SIR WIL. Aunt, your servant.

LADY. Out, caterpillar, call not me aunt; I know thee not.

SIR WIL. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say. 'Sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no offence, aunt—and if I did I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke anything I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my cousin. So, pray, let's all be friends, she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

LADY. How's this, dear niece? Have I any comfort? Can this be true?

MILLA. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, madam, and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you were misinformed. I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and for the contract that passed between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your ladyship's presence. He is without and waits your leave for admittance.

LADY. Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor,—I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon: if I see him I swear I shall turn to stone, petrify incessantly.

MILLA. If you disoblige him he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

LADY. Are you sure it will be the last time? If I were sure of that——shall I never see him again?

MILLA. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

SIR WIL. 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman, aunt, let him come in; why, we are sworn brothers and fellow-travellers. We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I. He is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been overseas once already; and with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me company. 'Sheart, I'll call him in,—an I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him. [*Goes to the door and hems.*]

MRS. MAR. This is precious fooling, if it would pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

LADY. O dear Marwood, you are not going?

MRS. MAR. Not far, madam; I'll return immediately.

SCENE IX.

LADY WISHFORT, MRS. MILLAMANT, SIR WILFULL, MIRABELL.

SIR WIL. Look up, man, I'll stand by you; 'sbud, an she do frown, she can't kill you. Besides—harkee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own. 'Sheart, an she should, her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream-cheese; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

MIRA. If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offered to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion. I am too happy. Ah, madam, there was a time——but let it be forgotten. I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place I once held, of sighing at your feet; nay, kill me not by turning from me in disdain, I come not to plead for favour. Nay, not for pardon: I am a suppliant only for pity:—I am going where I never shall behold you more.

SIR WIL. How, fellow-traveller? You shall go by yourself then.

MIRA. Let me be pitied first, and afterwards forgotten. I ask no more.

SIR WIL. By'r lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt. Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt. Why you must an you are a Christian.

MIRA. Consider, madam; in reality you could not receive much prejudice: it was an innocent device, though I confess it had a face of guiltiness—it was at most an artifice which love contrived—and errors which love produces have ever been accounted venial. At least think it is punishment enough that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear, that to your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

SIR WIL. An he does not move me, would I may never be o' the quorum. An it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again, I would I might never take shipping. Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry; one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveller and 'tis dissolved.

LADY. Well, nephew, upon your account. Ah, he has a false insinuating tongue. Well, sir, I will stifle my just resentment at my nephew's request. I will endeavour what I can to forget, but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

MIRA. It is in writing and with papers of concern; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

LADY. Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue; when I did not see him I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but his appearance rakes the embers which have so long lain smothered in my breast. [*Aside.*]

SCENE X.

[*To them*] FAINALL, MRS. MARWOOD.

FAIN. Your date of deliberation, madam, is expired. Here is the instrument; are you prepared to sign?

LADY. If I were prepared, I am not impowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herself by my direction to Sir Wilfull.

FAIN. That sham is too gross to pass on me, though 'tis imposed on you, madam.

MILLA. Sir, I have given my consent.

MIRA. And, sir, I have resigned my pretensions.

SIR WIL. And, sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart, an you talk of an instrument sir, I have an old fox by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir. It shall not be sufficient for a Mittimus or a tailor's measure; therefore withdraw your instrument, sir, or, by'r lady, I shall draw mine.

LADY. Hold, nephew, hold.

MILLA. Good Sir Wilfull, respite your valour.

FAIN. Indeed? Are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there? But I'm prepared for you, and insist upon my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use, as pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant. I suppose, madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr. Mirabell, your resignation; nor, Sir Wilfull, your right. You may draw your fox if you please, sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else; for here it will not avail. This, my Lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turned adrift, like a leaky hulk to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

LADY. Is there no means, no remedy, to stop my ruin?

Ungrateful wretch! Dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistance, to my daughter's fortune?

FAIN. I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

MIRA. But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—I own I have not deserved you should owe any obligation to me; or else, perhaps, I could devise——

LADY. Oh, what? what? To save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to anything to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

MIRA. Ay, madam; but that is too late, my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her who only could have made me a compensation for all my services. But be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you; you shall not be wronged in this savage manner.

LADY. How? Dear Mr. Mirabell, can you be so generous at last? But it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

MIRA. Will you? I take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

LADY. Ay, ay, anybody, anybody.

MIRA. Foible is one, and a penitent.

SCENE XI.

[*To them*] MRS. FAINALL, FOIBLE, MINCING.

MRS. MAR. O my shame! [MIRABELL *and* LADY *go to* MRS. FAINALL *and* FOIBLE.] These currupt things are brought hither to expose me. [*To* FAINALL.]

FAIN. If it must all come out, why let 'em know it, 'tis but the way of the world. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

FOIB. Yes, indeed, madam; I'll take my bible-oath of it.

MINC. And so will I, mem.

LADY. O Marwood, Marwood, art thou false? My friend

deceive me? Hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

MRS. MAR. Have you so much ingratitude and injustice to give credit, against your friend, to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

MINC. Mercenary, mem? I scorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalinas's poems. Mercenary? No, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

FAIN. Go, you are an insignificant thing. Well, what are you the better for this? Is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient? I'll be put off no longer. You, thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this. I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame: your body shall be naked as your reputation.

MRS. FAIN. I despise you and defy your malice. You have aspersed me wrongfully—I have proved your falsehood. Go, you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but starve together. Perish.

FAIN. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear. Madam, I'll be fooled no longer.

LADY. Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

MIRA. Oh, in good time. Your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, madam.

SCENE XII.

[*To them*] WAITWELL *with a box of writings.*

LADY. O Sir Rowland! Well, rascal?

WAIT. What your ladyship pleases. I have brought the black box at last, madam.

MIRA. Give it me. Madam, you remember your promise.

LADY. Ay, dear sir.

MIRA. Where are the gentlemen?

WAIT. At hand, sir, rubbing their eyes,—just risen from sleep.

FAIN. 'Sdeath, what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns.

SCENE XIII.

[*To them*] PETULANT, WITWOUD.

PET. How now? What's the matter? Whose hand's out?

WIT. Hey day! What, are you all got together, like players at the end of the last act?

MIRA. You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

WIT. Ay, I do, my hand I remember—Petulant set his mark.

MIRA. You wrong him; his name is fairly written, as shall appear. You do not remember, gentlemen, anything of what that parchment contained? [*Undoing the box.*]

WIT. No.

PET. Not I. I writ; I read nothing.

MIRA. Very well, now you shall know. Madam, your promise.

LADY. Ay, ay, sir, upon my honour.

MIRA. Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you should know that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had by your insinuations wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune——

FAIN. Sir! Pretended?

MIRA. Yes, sir. I say that this lady, while a widow, having, it seems, received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which from her own partial opinion and fondness of you she could never have suspected—she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same as her act and deed to me in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read if you please [*holding out the parchment*], though perhaps what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

FAIN. Very likely, sir. What's here? Damnation! [*Reads*] *A Deed of Conveyance of the whole estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell.* Confusion!

MIRA. Even so, sir: 'tis the way of the world, sir; of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

FAIN. Perfidious fiend! Then thus I 'll be revenged. [*Offers to run at* MRS. FAINALL.]

SIR WIL. Hold, sir; now you may make your bear-garden flourish somewhere else, sir.

FAIN. Mirabell, you shall hear of this, sir; be sure you shall. Let me pass, oaf.

MRS. FAIN. Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment. You had better give it vent.

MRS. MAR. Yes, it shall have vent, and to your confusion, or I 'll perish in the attempt.

SCENE *the Last.*

LADY WISHFORT, MRS. MILLAMANT, MIRABELL, MRS. FAINALL, SIR WILFULL, PETULANT, WITWOUD, FOIBLE, MINCING, WAITWELL.

LADY. O daughter, daughter, 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

MRS. FAIN. Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

LADY. Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promise, and I must perform mine. First, I pardon for your sake Sir Rowland there and Foible. The next thing is to break the matter to my nephew, and how to do that——

MIRA. For that, madam, give yourself no trouble; let me have your consent. Sir Wilfull is my friend: he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action, for our service, and now designs to prosecute his travels.

SIR WIL. 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts. I have set on 't, and when I 'm set on 't I

must do't. And if these two gentlemen would travel too, I think they may be spared.

PET. For my part, I say little. I think things are best off or on.

WIT. I'gad, I understand nothing of the matter: I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing school.

LADY. Well, sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

MILLA. Why does not the man take me? Would you have me give myself to you over again?

MIRA. Ay, and over and over again. [*Kisses her hand.*] I would have you as often as possibly I can. Well, heav'n grant I love you not too well; that's all my fear.

SIR WIL. 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're married, or, if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the meantime; that we who are not lovers may have some other employment besides looking on.

MIRA. With all my heart, dear Sir Wilfull. What shall we do for music?

FOIB. Oh, sir, some that were provided for Sir Rowland's entertainment are yet within call. [*A dance.*]

LADY. As I am a person, I can hold out no longer: I have wasted my spirits so to-day already that I am ready to sink under the fatigue; and I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

MIRA. Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account: to my knowledge his circumstances are such he must of force comply. For my part I will contribute all that in me lies to a reunion. In the meantime, madam [*to* MRS. FAINALL], let me before these witnesses restore to you this deed of trust: it may be a means, well managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warned, who mean to wed,
Lest mutual falsehood stain the bridal-bed:
For each deceiver to his cost may find
That marriage frauds too oft are paid in kind.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

After our Epilogue this crowd dismisses,
I 'm thinking how this play 'll be pulled to pieces.
But pray consider, e'er you doom its fall,
How hard a thing 'twould be to please you all.
There are some critics so with spleen diseased,
They scarcely come inclining to be pleased:
And sure he must have more than mortal skill
Who pleases anyone against his will.
Then, all bad poets we are sure are foes,
And how their number 's swelled the town well knows
In shoals, I 've marked 'em judging in the pit;
Though they 're on no pretence for judgment fit,
But that they have been damned for want of wit.
Since when, they, by their own offences taught,
Set up for spies on plays, and finding fault.
Others there are whose malice we 'd prevent:
Such, who watch plays, with scurrilous intent
To mark out who by characters are meant:
And though no perfect likeness they can trace,
Yet each pretends to know the copied face.
These, with false glosses, feed their own ill-nature,
And turn to libel what was meant a satire.
May such malicious fops this fortune find,
To think themselves alone the fools designed:
If any are so arrogantly vain,
To think they singly can support a scene,
And furnish fool enough to entertain.
For well the learned and the judicious know,
That satire scorns to stoop so meanly low,
As any one abstracted fop to show.

For, as when painters form a matchless face,
They from each fair one catch some diff'rent grace,
And shining features in one portrait blend,
To which no single beauty must pretend:
So poets oft do in one piece expose
Whole *belles assemblées* of coquettes and beaux.

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