A Wife To be Lett: A Comedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, By his Majesty's Servants. Written by Mrs. Eliza Haywood   
London   
Printed for Dan. Browne junr. ... and Sam. Chapman [etc.]

A WIFE To be LETT:   
A COMEDY.   
As it is Acted at the THEATRE-ROYAL in Drury-Lane , By his MAJESTY's Servants.

*PROLOGUE, Spoken by Mr. Theophilus Cibber .*

*The Tragick Muse, to merit wish'd Applause,   
From fancy'd Misery, real Caution draws;   
Her flaming Strokes display some purple Crime,   
The Passions feel, and the Soul swells Sublime.   
The Comick, all this Pomp of Woe declines,   
Softens her Light, and rather smiles, than shines;   
She but your known familiar Follies shews,   
Prudes, Misers, Cullies, Fops, Coquets, and Beaus:   
With her, as at some poor Man's Feast, you meet,   
Where, what the Guests contribute, makes the Treat.   
  
  
Criticks! be dumb to-night---no Skill display;   
A dangerous Woman-Poet wrote the Play:   
One, who not fears your Fury, tho prevailing,   
More than your Match, in every thing, but Railing.   
Give her fair Quarter, and whene'er she tries ye,   
Safe in superior Spirit , she defies ye:   
Measure her Force, by her known Novels , writ   
With manly Vigour, and with Woman's Wit.   
Then tremble, and depend, if ye beset her,   
She, who can talk so well, may act yet better.   
  
Learn, from the opening Scene, ye blooming Fair,   
Rightly to know your Worth, and match with Care;   
When a Fool tempts ye, arm your Hearts with Pride,   
And think th' Ungenerous born to be deny'd:   
But, to the Worthy, and the Wise, be kind,   
Their Cupid is not, like the Vulgar's, blind:   
Justly they weigh your Charms, and sweetly pay   
Your soft Submission, with permitted Sway.*

EPILOGUE, Spoken by the Author .

*We* Women, who by Nature love to teaze ye,   
Will have it, that the newest things best please ye;   
Sure then, to-night, our Graspall claims Compassion ,   
For ne'er, since Bridal Antlers were in fashion,   
Heard ye of one, who to a Beauty married,   
Wou'd fain have been a Cuckold, and miscarry'd.   
This Man's of Novelty , a Proof most ample !   
Had ye but Grace to copy out th' Example;   
Each well comply'd with by his kinder Fair-One ,   
Wou'd own that Graspall 's Fate's a new and rare one .   
  
Well, we have shown ye Av'rice to the Life,   
A rich old Miser, melting down his Wife ,   
Not into soft Desires , and amorous Puling ,   
He, sober Thinker ! was for no such Fooling .   
Tho many a sparkling Jewel grac'd his Honey ,   
He thought no Gem, about her, worth that Money:   
Two Thousand Pounds, he judg'd, would soften Satyr,   
And weigh against the heavy'st Horns in Nature.   
Strange Bargain! but since Husband wish'd to strike it,   
What Whim could work with Madam ---not to like it!   
'Twas this ---she shun'd, when 'twas her Husband 's Tasking,   
What her own Bounty would have given for asking .   
Women , however stirring in their Way,   
Are ne'er too active, when they move t'obey ;   
They rather would (if I can understand 'em)   
Not do at all---than do as Spouse commands 'em.   
  
But to be grave---the Heroine of our Play   
Gains Glory by a hard, and dangerous Way:   
Belov'd , her Lover pleads---she fears no Spy,   
Her Husband favours ---and her Pulse beats high.   
Warm glows his Hope---her Wishes catch the Fire,   
Mutual their Flame , yet Virtue quells Desire.   
  
Safe th' Untempted may defy Love's Call,   
Why should the Unencounter'd fear to fall ?   
Virtue must pass thro Fire to prove its Weight,   
And equal Danger make the Triumph great.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

WOMEN.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fairman. | Mr. *Boman* . |
|  | *Mr. Graspall .* | Mr. *Evans* . |
|  | *Sir Harry Beaumont .* | Mr. *Wilks* . |
|  | *Captain Gaylove .* | Mr. *Bridgewater* . |
|  | Courtly. | Mr. *Oates* . |
|  | Toywell. | Mr. *Cibber* . |
|  | Sneaksby. | Mr. *Parler* . |
|  | Shamble. | Mr. *Harper* . |
|  | Tim. | Mr. *Peplow* . |
|  | *Widow Stately .* | Mrs. *Willis* . |
|  | *Mrs. Graspall .* | Mrs. *Haywood* , the Author. |
|  | Celemena. | Mrs. *Tenoe* . |
|  | Marilla. | Mrs. *Lindar* . |
|  | Amadea. | Mrs. *Brett* . |
|  | Dogood. | Mrs. *Davison* . |

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*Enter Captain Gaylove, Courtly , and Shamble .*

*Courtly.*

I little thought when I went out to take the Air this Morning, to be so agreeably surpriz'd with the sight of my old Companion, and Friend---but I hope no Misfortune of yours has occasion'd me this Happiness, which I confess would be much more compleat, but for that Doubt.

*Gaylove.*

While Fortune has a Being, we must all expect to find Vicissitudes---but nothing of my own Affairs can take me up so much as to make me forgetful of my Friends.---May I yet wish you Joy? Art marry'd? Or do you still set *Hymen* at defiance?

*Court.*

No, *Charles* , I am not yet so happy.

*Gay.*

Happy! Is it possible you can term the Loss of Liberty a Happiness? you, who of all Mankind seem'd most averse to it.

*Court.*

My Eyes, at last, are open'd, *Charles* , and I now court those Bonds as a Blessing, which I once look'd upon as galling Fetters.

*Gay.*

Poor *Ned* ---I pity thy Change---But pray who is the Lady whose Charms have wrought []  so wonderful a Transformation?

*Court.*

I will not go about to describe her, because I am certain you'll look on her real Character as an extravagant Encomium;---but she is the Niece of Mr. *Fairman* , whom you have often seen with me in *London* .

*Gay.*

If I remember the Man, he's of a downright sincere Temper, affable and obliging; but I believe loves Money.

*Court.*

You read his Character:---His Brother was a positive, hasty, old Gentleman, and consider'd Money as the Source of all Happiness--- left an only Daughter, whom, on his Death-bed, he oblig'd to swear she should marry the Man he propos'd to her, (one who is, without exception, the greatest Fop in nature, but has *l.* a Year, which was an irresistible Motive to him:) You cannot but have seen him either at *London* or *Bath* ; his Name is *Toywell* .

*Gay.*

O! I know him perfectly.

*Court.*

This Wretch, who has no Sense of what is truly valuable, and esteems *Marilla* only for her Fortune, makes me despair of Happiness: for she seems so religiously bent to keep her Vow, that all my Applications hitherto have been ineffectual []  to obtain any thing more from her than a bare Complaisance.---But prithee, dear *Charles* , give me leave to be impertinent, and enquire what drove you to *Salisbury* ?

*Gay.*

Why faith, *Ned* , you know in what manner I us'd to live;---the Consequence of which was a certain Equipage of People call'd Duns, whose daily Attendance was no way pleasing to me.---In short, my Creditors having no Patience, my Father no Compassion, and I no Money, I was oblig'd to leave *London* in complaisance to my Tradesmen---fearing I should put them to the expence of providing a Lodging for one, who thought himself too far engag'd to 'em already---therefore selling my Company in the Guards, I bought in one of these Regiments.---But prithee, *Ned* , give me some little Idea how you spend your time here.

*Court.*

As they do in most Country Towns--- the Men in Hunting, Hawking, and Drinking--- the Women in Cookery, Pickling, and Preserving ---not but there are some more elegant among us, to whom I shall make it my business to introduce you.

*Gay.*

I shall think myself infinitely oblig'd to you.

*Court.*

[]  Of the Number of those I last mention'd, is Sir *Harry Beaumont* ; who, tho' he chuses to live retir'd in this Country at present, where he has a vast Estate, has been a very great Traveller, and from all the different Courts where he has been, brought with him every thing worth the wearing of a fine Gentleman.---In short, I know nothing of his Character that a Man of the strictest Honour wou'd not be proud of---then for his Wit and Conversation, 'tis such as I'm sure you'll be infinitely charm'd with.

*Gay.*

The Description you give of him is no more than what he merits---I knew him about a Year ago, he then made his Addresses to a Relation of mine---I never heard what occasion'd their breaking off---I thought him a most accomplish'd   
  
  
Gentleman, and I am glad to hear his late Accession to his Uncle's Title and Estate has not taken from him that easy Gayety and Freedom of Behaviour, which is one of the greatest Charms of Conversation, and without which the brightest Wit wants relish.

*Court.*

You shall anon renew your Acquaintance with him---he has engag'd me to dine with him to-day, your Company will add to the Pleasure of []  the Entertainment, and in the Afternoon I will carry you to visit some Ladies.

*Gay.*

May I ask you who they are?

*Court.*

I believe you never saw either of 'em--- one is my Mistress, the other is Daughter to Mr. *Fairman* , whose Name is *Celemena* :---She is speedily to be marry'd to a very Blockhead, one *Sneaksby* .---She is a Woman of a world of Life and Spirit in her Conversation, and has as much Wit as her intended Husband wants it; I am certain you will be pleas'd with her Acquaintance.

*Gay.*

I were stupid else, if she be what you represent. ---But, *Ned* , I have heard of a mighty fine Woman you have here, since my coming into these Parts, one who bears the Bell from all the rest---I think they call her Mrs. *Graspall* .

*Court.*

She is extreamly handsome indeed, and virtuous they say;---but I never visit there:--- She is marry'd to the most covetous miserable Wretch that ever was; he denies her the Privilege of any Company, not out of Jealousy, but for fear she shou'd be at any Expence in entertaining 'em.

*Gay.*

And how does she endure a Restraint so disagreeable to her Youth and Beauty?

*Court.*

With a Resignation, which is surprizing []  to all who know her:---But come, we'll take a little Walk, and then to dinner.

*Gay.*

With all my heart.

                                         *[Exeunt.*

*Enter Dogood , and pulls Shamble back.*

*Dogood.*

'Tis he for certain! Harkye! harkye! 'Squire *Sancho* , you have follow'd your Don *Quixote* long enough---to take upon you the Protection of a distressed Damsel--- without any Infringement, I hope, on the hardy Knight---your Master.

*Shamble.*

Faith, Lady, I know you not;---and if you have any Commands for me, I shall be more at leisure, and in better humour after Dinner.

*Do.*

Well, I find the Proverb's false, which says, Custom is a second Nature---or the want of a Dinner would not put the accustom'd Mr. *Shamble* out of humour.

*Sham.*

Ha! by my Veracity, *Jenny* !

*Do.*

Ay, by my Maidenhead (as terrible an Oath) the very same; but I wonder thou could'st forget me in so short a time.

*Sham.*

Why how was it possible to know thee thus metamorphos'd, fine Lace Pinners transmogrify'd into a round-ear'd Coif and a high-crown'd Hat---a Gold Watch into a Pincushion, and a Tweezer into a Scissar-Case---Prithee on what []  Design art thou thus equipt?

*Do.*

Why, faith, *Shamble* ---I found Trading in publick grew somewhat slippery, and now deal all in private.

*Sham.*

What, kept?

*Do.*

Not for the purpose you mean---In short, being weary of the Life I led in *London* , I resolv'd to take up, and live retir'd---I found means to be recommended to the Service of one of the richest Widows in this Country, with whom I now live as a Housekeeper---not but I have a great deal of spare Time for the service of my Friends.

*Sham.*

Ha! say'st thou so? Why then methinks 'tis greatly in thy power to oblige my Master--- thy Assistance may be needful in a Place where he has so little Acquaintance. The Company of a kind She would not be unwelcome to a Man of his Constitution---and as his Affairs stand at present, a rich Widow or Heiress would be an excellent Cordial to his sinking Fortune.

*Do.*

O! I thought you would be glad to own me---Why my Mistress is a Widow, and exceeding rich; but, duce on't, her Age and Affectation will never down with thy queasy stomach'd Master.

*Sham.*

[]  Prithee what, who is she?

*Do.*

The Relict of a Country Mercer, who, dying, left her an immense Sum of Money, besides a good Estate he had purchas'd in Land--- She has no Child, but a foolish Nephew is look'd upon as Heir---he is speedily to be marry'd to a young Lady of a great Fortune, and a celebrated Beauty---I could wish thy Master were in his place, but that's impossible to be effected.

*Sham.*

But has this old Lady of yours no Suitors?

*Do.*

Yes, enow---but she is all for a Title; a Man of her own Station she looks upon as unworthy of her. As soon as this Marriage is over, she designs to go to *London* , and lay out her whole Estate, rather than want a Bargain of Knight's Flesh.

*Sham.*

I have a Thought come into my Head, which may prove a lucky one---Dost thou not think if I were equipt accordingly, I might pass for a Knight?

*Do.*

A Knight, ha! ha! ha!

*Sham.*

Why, I have seen as bad a Face in a gilded Chariot.

*Do.*

That's true; and now I think on't, 'tis not the Man, but the Title that must charm   
  
  
  
[]  her---I don't know, but with my Management, such a thing might be possible.

*Sham.*

If it cou'd, *l.* are thine out of her Money---besides a Premium better than any Jointure I can make her.

*Do.*

O Goodman Promiser! as if I were not acquainted with your Abilities---make but the Money secure to me, and I'll give you a Discharge from all other Demands.

*Sham.*

Well, but harkye, I suppose with your Change of Habit, you have also shifted your Name---by what must I call you now?

*Do.*

*Dogood* , at your Service.

*Sham.*

A very good Name, and I hope prophetick to us both---but come, shall we step into some House, and consult about this Affair.

*Do.*

Ay, I have an Acquaintance just by.

                                         *Ex.*

*Enter Mrs. Graspall , and Amadea in Boys Cloaths.*

*Wife.*

Very unaccountable---that neither at Home or Abroad, I can one Moment get rid of this little troublesome Impertinent.---Have you any Business this way, Sir.

*Amad.*

No other, Madam, than to wait on you; now the Camp's so near, 'tis unsafe for Ladies to walk alone.

*Wife.*

I am much obliged to you---but I apprehend []  no Danger. I cannot harbour so ill an Opinion of the Gentlemen of the Army, as to imagine any of them wou'd offer an Affront to a Woman, who, I hope, looks not to deserve it--- and as for the Meaner Sort (Thanks to the good Discipline they are under) they they are oblig'd to follow the Example of their Leaders.

*Amad.*

Were it so, which yet I can't allow--- there is another Danger not less imminent, tho' perhaps more pleasing than what I have mentioned---   
  
  
  
A certain Gentleman who lives not far off, and very much frequents this Walk, carries a kind of Spell in his Eyes and Tongue, which has been fatal to many of your Sex.

*Wife.*

Ay; pray who is that?

*Amad.*

I fancy, Madam, after what I've said, 'tis needless to repeat his Name---however, for your Satisfaction---

*Wife.*

My Satisfaction! what means he?

*Amad.*

Ha! she blushes---then my Suspicions are too just.---Yes, Madam, since you take pleasure in the Sound, Sir *Harry Beaumont* .

*Wife.*

Was ever such an Insolence---I take pleasure in the Sound! What is Sir *Harry Beaumont* to me, or I to him?

*Amad.*

[]  Nay, if you are angry, Madam---

*Wife.*

Have I not Reason? What Act of mine has ever justify'd this Rudeness---but I guess by whom you are set on; and if it were not more Love of myself, than my Husband, I wou'd be reveng'd even in the way he fears.

*Amad.*

Nay, now I understand you not---but if you think your Husband---

*Wife.*

Yes, I know you wou'd not dare, unless authoriz'd by him, to treat me in this manner--- Ungrateful Man! have I submitted to the hard uncovered Condition of his Wife, to be at last suspected of Dishonour---O! to what Fate are wretched Women born! Condemn'd to Slavery, tho' conscious of superior Merit, and bound to obey the severe Dictates of a very Fool, when e'er the Name of Husband gives 'em Force.

*Amad.*

Transport not thus your self with causeless Rage, but listen patiently, while I confess I am alone the Offender---your Virtue appears fair, your Conduct blameless, to the fond Eyes of your admiring Husband---but the judging World,   
  
  
  
which takes delight in finding something to condemn, watch all your Actions; and as I so freely have begun, I will take the liberty still to remind []  you, that the frequent Visits of Sir *Harry Beaumont* are most pernicious to your Character.---

*Wife.*

'Tis well---then this is your Surmise.

*Amad.*

If mine, why not others?

*Wife.*

No, bold Adviser---my Reputation is too well establish'd---no Malice ever attempted to sully my unblemish'd Fame, till thou, for what base End I know not, hast presum'd to tax me---but I despise whatever thou can'st say, and secure in my own Innocence, defy thy Malice.

*Amad.*

But one word more---if to receive the Addresses of a Man, whose utmost Wit can find no Form to make 'em look like honourable---and varnish o'er the vile Design they are made for; if this, I say, be not a fault to Vertue, I have done.

*Wife.*

Oh Heav'ns!

*Amad.*

If you are free from this, then I confess my Accusation false---but if charm'd with Flattery, your Sexes bait to ruin, you still encourage the Deceiver's Hopes, you wrong yourself, not I. I leave you to reflect on what I've said; and, as you want not Sense, entreat you to exert it on an Occasion which requires it all---think, 'tis your good Genius warns thro' my Lips, immortal Honour, Fame, and Peace, attend to crown the []  glorious Conquest---Eternal Infamy, Disgrace, and those worse Racks the Stings of Conscience, watch to seize your Soul, if you persist to listen to the undoing Vows of faithless *Beaumont* .---Madam, farewel, and rest assur'd, whatever my Thoughts are, my Tongue, but to yourself, shall on this Theme be dumb for ever.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Wife.*

His Words, methinks, have open'd all my Heart, and fill'd it with a Horror, till now a   
  
  
  
Stranger to me---O Vertue! if I in aught had swerv'd from thy strict Precepts, I shou'd not wonder at these Starts, and Tremblings---but as I have held, and still will hold my Honour dearer than my Life, why am I thus alarm'd? Why, arm'd with Innocence, did I not hear, unmov'd, the audacious Monitor? O 'tis too true, I've been to blame: tho' resolute never to yield to what the Tempter sues for, I have, perhaps, with too attentive Ears, listned to his Persuasions--- and 'tis a Crime to Vertue, ev'n but to hear what loose Desires suggest---were I unmarried---cou'd I with Honour receive Sir *Harry's* Love, how happy were my Lot?---For sure, of all Mankind, he is most form'd to charm, and bless a Woman's fondest, softest Wishes---but as I am, tho' hard my Fate, I []  must be blind and deaf to all his Worth, and place my sole Felicity in Duty.---That Creature here!

*Enter Toywell .*

*Toy.*

She's here, and alone---now will I accost her with such Phrases, as she shall not be able to withstand.---Stay, Madam, fly not your adoring Slave---who long has languish'd for this Opportunity, to tell you that he dies for you.

*Wife.*

What means the Wretch? are you mad, Sir?

*Toy.*

If Love be Madness, I have wondrous Cause---for from the first Moment I beheld that Field of Beauty, I have done nothing, but wish and languish, burn and bleed, with Passion and Desire.

*Wife.*

Hold, Sir; if you really are in your Senses, let me tell you, you are guilty of an Assurance, which you will not find me easy to forgive.

*Toy.*

No matter for that, I know she's pleas'd with it---Ah, Madam! as the inimitable *Otway* says, Who can behold such Beauty, and be silent?

*Wife.*

Wretched Animal---If I did not think that all Advice was lost upon you, I wou'd give you this friendly Caution---to know to whom you speak.

*Toy.*

Ha! Perhaps I've been too grave---Gad, I'll try another way.   
*[aside.]*   
---Why, Faith, Madam, I []  believe I know you, and I am sure I know myself--- there stand you, Mrs. *Susanna Graspall* ---without Exception, the most agreeable Woman breathing--- married to an old decrepid, miserly Curmudgeon ---who debars you from all the Pleasures of Life; and here am I, *Jack Toywell* , in free Possession of full three thousand Pounds a Year---with Youth, Vigour, and some other tolerable Qualifications, ready with my Person and Fortune to make you happy in all those Enjoyments your Husband's Age and Avarice denies.---Gad, I am mighty florid to-day.

*Wife.*

Since you oblige me to be more serious than I thought at first your ridiculous Addresses merited, I must tell you, that you are an impudent pretending Fop---that I despise and loath you; and if you dare to trouble me again with such impertinent Discourses, my Husband shall be acquainted with the Character you give of him.

*Toy.*

Come, Madam, egad I like you ne'er the worse for this dissembled Coldness---it whets the Edge of Appetite, and gives a double Relish to those Raptures you yielding will bestow.

*Wife.*

Nay, if you grow rude---

*Toy.*

No Rudeness, Madam, but what you will []  one day pardon:---A Lover must begin with humble distant Sighs, but when the Ice is broke, and he has once ventur'd to say he loves, then he proceeds by swift Degrees to greater Freedoms--- your Hand, your Lips.---

                                         *[Offers to kiss her.*   
  
  
  
  
  
  
*Wife.*

Impudent Villain.   
*[boxes his Ears.]*   
But here's Company---if ever thou dar'st affront me thus again.

*Enter Beaumont .*

*Beau.*

Ha! so free!

*Toy.*

Sir *Harry Beaumont* ---dear Sir *Harry* , I am your most obsequious humble Servant.

*Beau.*

Yours, yours, Mr. *Toywell* ---a good day to you, Madam, I see you are taking the Benefit of the fresh Air this Morning---I doubt not but you have been agreeably entertain'd in the Conversation of so polite a Gentleman as Mr. *Toywell* .

*Wife.*

I shall not envy you that Happiness, Sir *Harry* , therefore leave you to enjoy it---your Servant! Oh the Difference of Men!

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Beau.*

Madam, your most humble---methinks, Mr. *Toywell* , the Lady seems displeas'd---what have you done to her?

*Toy.*

O Sir *Harry* , you and I know the World too well, to think a Woman's Anger, in some Cases, worth regarding; I dare swear it has escaped []  the Observation of neither of us, that they are frequently most pleas'd, when least they seem to be so.---

*Beau.*

What! then you have been making Love.

*Toy.*

Why, Faith, she is look'd upon as one of the finest Women in the County---and having had of late a pretty deal of idle time on my hands, I took it into my head to make her some Offers, which, I believe, when she has consider'd on, she'll scarce refuse.

*Beau.*

Conceited Coxcomb! but she has the Reputation of a vertuous Woman.---

*Toy.*

Vertuous! so they are all till they are try'd---and I don't remember to have heard that before me, any Man of Figure has attack'd her---

*Beau.*

Intolerable Fop!---A Man truly deserving of a Lady's Favour, Mr. *Toywell* , seldom discloses his Design on the Woman he admires, but to herself---for any thing you know, Mrs. *Graspall* may have been Proof against the most elegant Addresses.

*Toy.*

'Twas then for want of a right Method in applying them---for my part, I never yet had the Mortification to engage with any Woman, silly enough to hold out above three Summons.---

*Beau.*

[]  You are a happy Man indeed---but methinks 'tis a little odd you dare venture to make an Attempt of this nature so near your Marriage--- for I hear your Wedding with the fair *Marilla* is to be accomplished in a day or two---Suppose she shou'd hear of it.

*Toy.*

Psha! 'tis so long ago since we were contracted, that for a great while we have regarded each other with an absolute Indifference.--- I lik'd her well enough indeed at first, but the Certainty that she must one day be my Wife, has set her in the self-same View as she wou'd have appear'd after seven Years Possession. But now I think on't, I promis'd her Uncle to dine with 'em to-day---prithee, Sir *Harry* , go along with me, I shall be so dull else.

*Beau.*

I wou'd willingly accompany you, Mr. *Toywell* , to such agreeable Conversation, if I were not engag'd at home with some Friends, who I believe by this time expect me.

*Toy.*

Phoo, Pox---well then I must take my leave; 'tis pretty near One, and they dine consumed early.---Sir *Harry* , your Servant.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Beau.*

Your Servant, Sir.---Fool! Heavens, how strange a Creature is a Lover!---I am []  asham'd to think the Rivalship of such a Wretch can give me Pain, and yet it does---which proves   
  
  
  
more strongly than I e'er knew before, the Violence of my Passion---Yes, I find I love to such a height, that if unlicens'd Enjoyment be a Crime, 'tis here excus'd by the Necessity---but be it as it will, wou'd I promise it myself at any rate---but Hope is not so vain; yet she has heard my Suit, and still continues to admit my Visits--- confesses an Esteem, and if so, 'tis the first Step to Love---A constant Assiduity, in time, perhaps may loosen the strict Bonds of galling Duty, and make the Charmer mine.

*Ne'er let the Lover of his Wish despair,*   
*Whose Vows of Passion reach th'attentive Fair:*   
*Tho' bent to follow Vertue, 'tis her Fate*   
*At last to yield, if once capitulate.*

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*Enter Celemena and Marilla .*

*Cel.*

Prithee , good Cousin, take a Friend's Advice, and cast off this obstinate Humour of marrying the Man who slights you, and slighting the Man who loves you. *Toywell* has indeed a great Estate, but *Courtly* knows how to use what he has handsomely, and is withall very easy in his Circumstances.---Can any thing, that has not taken   
  
  
  
an entire leave of her Understanding, persist in a Resolution of throwing herself away in this manner?

*Mar.*

Allowing all that you have said---the religious Observance I owe to the Vow I made my dying Father, leaves me no choice.

*Cel.*

If the Dead cou'd tell what we Living are doing, I am apt to believe the old Gentleman wou'd quit his Grave a while, to forbid the Banes, and save his Daughter from so visible a Ruin.---Besides, the Vow you made was forc'd, and consequently not binding.---Heavens! it provokes me to see you act so contrary to Reason, nay, to your own Inclination too; for I am sure you love *Courtly* .

*Mar.*

How came you so well acquainted with my Thoughts, good Cousin?

*Cel.*

[]  Prithee, none of your Airs! I know you have sense enough to distinguish a Man of Parts from a Fool.

*Enter Servant.*

*Serv.*

Ladies, Mr. *Courtly* and a strange Gentleman desire to know if you are at leisure.

*Cel.*

Show 'em up.   
*[Exit Servant.]*   
Now let me see you use him as you us'd to do, and I protest I'll disclaim Kindred with you.

*Mar.*

You will---but I fancy I shall put it to the venture.

*Cel.*

I wonder who he has brought with him.

*Enter Courtly and Gaylove .*

*Court.*

Ladies, I hope you will pardon my introducing a Gentleman whose Conversation will hereafter make his own Apology.---This, Captain, is Mr. *Fairman* 's Daughter; this, his Niece.

*Cel.*

We are too well acquainted with Mr. *Courtly* 's Delicacy, not to afford a ready Welcome to any whom he calls Friend. Such Entertainment, Sir, as furnishes a homely Country Cottage, you may expect.

*Gay.*

He must be covetous indeed, could form a Wish beyond what here is to be found.

*Cel.*

This Fellow has something in him prodigiously agreeable, I can't help liking him.---   
*[Aside.]*   
Well, Mr. *Courtly* , I have been labouring for you, []  you must now e'en speak for yourself.

*Court.*

If all that can betoken a sincere and ardent Passion, cou'd influence the fair *Marilla* to pity what I feel, she would not thus cruelly resolve to make my Rival happy.

*Mar.*

If you have any value for my Quiet, you will forbear to urge a Suit, which, were my Inclination otherwise, is not in my power to grant; and consider me not as Mistress of myself.

*Court.*

Shou'd the Man you purpose to bless, not know the Value of the Treasure you bestow, I do assure you, Madam, 'twou'd give me an Uneasiness almost equal to the Loss of you.

*Mar.*

That's generous indeed, but---

*Court.*

Yet give me leave---Your pardon, Madam!   
[to *Cel.* ] [ *They walk apart* .]

*Cel.*

O Sir, you will have it, if your Friend will as willingly forgive your leaving him to the Conversation of a raw Country Girl.

*Gay.*

Now have I a great mind to tell you the pleasure he does me, but fear of disobliging, stops my Mouth:

*But Eccho shall so oft repeat your Name,*   
*You'll learn my Sufferings, and reward my Flame.*

As my Passion is more than common, my Style, []  Madam, ought to be no less than Heroick.

*Cel.*

But had I an inclination to give ear to it, you have more Modesty, I hope, than to make love at first sight---But now I think on't, perhaps you may imagine, that the Apprehension of the fine things may be saying yonder, makes me wish I were capable of inspiring the same; however, to shew you I have vanity enough to believe I've made a Conquest, when I have found the Bark of every Tree carv'd with the cruel *Celemena* 's Name, and you have sigh'd away some seven Years---

*Gay.*

I find, Madam, you're like to be pretty reasonable.

*Cel.   
When Cooing Doves the shady Cypress shun,   
And hide their Heads, to find their Plaints outdone;   
When sympathizing Grief o'erspreads the Plains,   
And Shepherds mourn your Fate in rural Strains;   
When my Disdain's the Theme of every Song,   
And Celemena hangs on every Tongue---*   
  
*Gay.*

For Heaven's sake Madam! have you no Compassion?

*Cel.   
When cruel Nymph thro' Hills and Valleys flies,   
And distant Eccho cruel Nymph replies---*   
  
*Gay.*   
Dear Madam, come to a Conclusion.   
  
*Cel.*

[]  I have done---and here give you permission to spend the following seven Years in the same manner; then come to me again, and I perhaps may allow you my Hand to---Kiss.

*Gay.*

Truly, Madam, I can't but say your Demands are extremely moderate---But can't you as well suppose all this past?---I have lov'd you very passionately these seven Minutes, and, according to Modern Calculation, they appear so many Ages.

*Cel.*

No, I can't suppose one word on't---nor can I admit of your Modern Calculations--- 'tis impossible the Man can love me, who would hesitate on starving, hanging or drowning, on my   
  
  
  
account---much less in passing a few Years in so sublime a Despair, as I have enjoin'd you---

*Gay.*

But, Madam---

*Cel.*

A word more---and I'll not allow of you as a Servant, till you have kill'd Lions, and made Monsters tame.

*Gay.*

There's no talking to her---she will be too hard for me. O! here comes a Relief.

*Enter Fairman and Toywell .*

*Toy.*

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, Wit and Beauty are inseparable here, and, let me Blood, I am so pleasant myself, I am like a Fish out of Water, []  in dull Company.

*Fair.*

O' my Conscience, this Nephew of mine that is to be, grows every day a greater Fop than ever. Your Servant, Gentlemen. Daughter, pray invite this good Company to your Wedding. ---I expect 'Squire *Sneaksby* to-night, and to-morrow shall make you one.

*Cel.*

Heaven forbid---'Tis very sudden, Sir.

*Fair.*

His Aunt, Child, the Widow *Stately* , is a fickle Woman; if she happen to marry again, or should change her mind, there is not such another Match in the County---You don't consider, she is to settle best part of her Estate on him: and the Fortune I'll give you, will set you on a foot with the Nobility---

*Mar.*

Now, *Celemena* , 'twill be my turn to wonder how you can submit to be the Wife of a Fool. ---But, Uncle, this *Sneaksby* is accounted exceeding silly.

*Fair.*

He is good-natur'd, Niece, and rich; two things a young Woman ought to prefer to a full Head and light Purse.

*Toy.*

Nay, Sir, you would not marry my Cuz to a Fool---Why, Sir, she'll never enjoy a happy Minute with a Fool---

*Fair.*

[]  Hum! then you think a Fool can never make a good Husband.

*Toy.*

Certainly.

*Fair.*

Ha! then if you have any value for the Fair Sex, shew it, by laying aside all Thoughts of marrying.

*Toy.*

The old Gentleman is mighty testy, methinks.

*Fair.*

Well, *Celemena* , I expect your Compliance.

*Cel.*

Sir, my Duty obliges me not to dispute with your Commands---But I may find some way to evade 'em.

                                         *[Aside.*   
  
  
*Fair.*

That's my good Girl, and to-morrow thou shalt have my Blessing in a Bag of ten thousand Pounds---But come, I have some Business with you; your Servant all.

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Toy.*

*Marilla.*

*Mar.*

Sir!

*Toy.*

Prithee, my Dear, e'en let our Wedding be to-morrow.

*Mar.*

Sir, you know my Obedience to my Father submits my Will to yours.

*Toy.*

To-morrow then, if you please; 'twill save Expences.

*Court.*

Heaven! that she can bear this Usage--- Dear Madam, have some compassion for yourself, []  if you have none for me.

*Gay.*

Pardon a Stranger's Freedom, Madam, if I say, not only my Concern for my Friend, but also the sincere Esteem your Character has fill'd me with, makes me wish you could avoid this Marriage.

*Mar.*

I thank you, Sir---but alas! you speak the Charms of Liberty to a Galley-Slave.

*Gay.*

But suppose some lucky Means should offer, would you then bless my Friend?

*Mar.*

There is not a Possibility, unless the Dead could be restor'd to Life, and give me back   
  
  
  
my Vow---but if there were, I'd promise nothing.

*Court.*

I do not ask it---May your Fate be happy ---my own I leave to your Dispose.

*Mar.*

'Tis kindly said---and I, perhaps, should not be found ungrateful---But I'll order Tea, you'll follow.

*Court.*

Immediately, Madam. I fancy, *Charles* , this is a good time for our Design.

*Gay.*

Ay, ay, let me alone---Poor Lady, I pity her.

*Court.*

So do I, for he had all her Fortune in his hands---But I am strangely surpriz'd; he was reckon'd one of the most substantial Men in *London* : []  I fear his breaking will involve more than *Marilla* in his Ruin.

*Toy.*

Ha! what's that? Pray, Sir, who is the Gentleman you speak of?

*Gay.*

Mr. *Trusty* , Sir, a Banker in *Lombard-street* .

*Toy.*

Ha! Mr. *Trusty* !

*Gay.*

Yes, Sir; a Statute was taken out against him two days before I left *London* ---But you seem concern'd, Sir; I hope it will prove of no Prejudice to you.

*Toy.*

Me! hum! no, Sir---I had no Dealings with him, but I know the best part, if not all of *Marilla* 's Fortune was lodg'd in his hands---I must find some way to break with her---This was lucky News, a Day more, and it had been as unfortunate. Gentlemen, your Servant.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Gay.*

Come, chear up, *Ned* , who knows how this may work.

*Court.*

His mercenary base Nature gives me some hopes.

*Gay.*

If we could as easily contrive some Stratagem to defer *Celemena* 's Wedding; for I confess I feel something here that will give me Disquiet to see her marry'd to another.

*Court.*

How! *Charles* , I thought you were proof []  against Love and Matrimony.

*Gay.*

Why, will you allow nobody to repent of their Mistakes but yourself?--- *Celemena* has Wit, Beauty, and Good-nature---and I heard her Father express himself very prettily to her--- *l.* would make a Convert of one more Reprobate than your humble Servant.

*Court.*

'Tis a receiv'd Article indeed---but let's in, the Ladies wait.

*Gay.*

Allons.

                                         *[Ex.*

*Mrs. Graspall discover'd reading at a Toylet.*

*Wife.*

How small a Relief can Books afford us when the Mind's perplex'd?---The Subject that our Thoughts are bent upon, forms Characters more capital and swelling, than any these useless Pages can produce---and 'tis no matter on what Theme the Author treats; we read it our own way, and see but with our Passions Eyes--- *Beaumont* is here in ev'ry Line--- *Beaumont* in all the Volume---I'll look no more on't---These Opticks too are Traytors, and conspire with Fancy to undo me---To what shall I have recourse?

*Enter Beaumont .*

*Beau.*

The Door happening to be open, and nobody in the way, I presum'd to enter without Ceremony.

*Wife.*

Ha! catch'd in this Confusion of my []  Soul! when all my Thoughts were unprepar'd and hurry'd! Unlucky Accident!

*Beau.*

You are disorder'd, Madam---I hope my Presence has not offended.---

*Wife.*

Sir *Harry* , you can be guilty of but one Offence---forbear to talk of Love, and you shall ever be most welcome here.

*Beau.*

O too severe Injunction! you know this is the only Command I could refuse to obey you   
  
  
  
in---and yet, unkind and cruel, you rate the Price of my Admittance at an Impossibility. The Language of my Eyes you have long since understood and pardon'd, why then is it greater Guilt when told you by my Tongue?

*Wife.*

The Crime in both is equal---and since with Innocence I can admit of neither, have resolv'd---

*Beau.*

On what?

*Wife.*

Never to look on you, or hear you more.

*Beau.*

What have I done to merit such a Sentence?

*Wife.*

How shall I answer him, or how disguise the real Reason of my Change of Temper, for much I fear he will not think it Hate?---That I no sooner did forbid your Visits, was because I hoped you would endeavour to overcome a Passion which, I think, I never err'd so far by any []  Words or Actions to encourage---and wish'd I might with Honour have preserv'd your Friendship.

*Beau.*

Are Love and Friendship then at such a distance they ne'er can meet? O! wou'd you but rightly weigh their Likeness, you'd find the Scale so even, you'd think them Twins---Friendship is Love refin'd, and Love is Friendship of a warmer Soil---There's such a Sympathy between 'em, the Breast that harbours one, can never be a Stranger to the other.---

*Wife.*

I must not harken to such Sophistry--- Hark! I think I hear somebody coming, and have reason to believe that of late I have had Spies upon my Actions---Step into the Closet while I see who 'tis.---

                                         *[Ex. Beaum.*

*Enter Toywell .*

*Toywell* ! what means this Intrusion? Did I not bid you trouble me no more? Or if I had not, were there no Servants in the way to keep down such Impertinents?

*Toy.*

No, faith, Madam, all your People are in the middle of the Street yonder, crowding about a Pedlar's Pack---and chusing Nick-nacks; and so, Madam, Passage being free, I took an opportunity to, to, to---come in, Madam.---

*Wife.*

Very well---but I shall call 'em to guard []  it better, and show you down a nearer way than you came up, unless you leave me immediately.

*Toy.*

I don't think you have so litte Understanding ---Besides, I am come to make a new Proposal ---I have heard some News, which will certainly disappoint *Marilla* in her hopes of marrying me---I can now settle a whole Heart upon you.

*Wife.*

Peace, thou despicable Fop---if you fancy this Gallantry, as 'tis possible you may be weak enough---I pity your Simplicity---But if your Designs are as base as your impudent persisting in this Behaviour intimates, once more I tell you, I have Virtue to arm me against the Assaults of your whole Sex, and Value enough for my Husband, to let him know the Favour you would do him---Who's there?

*Toy.*

Nay, Madam, if I part with you so, you may justly suspect my want of Parts---Women often pardon Actions when they will not Words: a little Compulsion gives 'em an Excuse.---Come, come, you will not be always cruel.

*Wife.*

Unhand me, Villain---help---

*Toy.*

Nay, nay, I can stop your Mouth---   
*[As they struggle, she falls against the Closet Door, which opens, and discovers Beaumont .]*   
'Sdeath, Sir *Harry* []  *Beaumont* ! why who the devil thought to find you here? I beg ten thousand Pardons, if I have been the Cause of your Imprisonment---Let me blood, I must banter him a little---he dares not resent it, for fear I should tell.

*Wife.*

O! I'm undone---my Reputation's ruin'd! For Heaven's sake, Sir *Harry* , how came you there?

*Toy.*

I suppose, Madam, Sir *Harry* offer'd this as a Piece of Gallantry; but I hope your Goodness will pardon him, for all the vain Attempts he may make on a Virtue so impregnable as yours--- ha! ha! ha!

*Beau.*

Give over your ridiculous Mirth, or---

*Toy.*

Fye, fye, Sir *Harry* , that's no proper Weapon to be us'd in a Lady's Chamber---But, Sir *Harry* , you forget the Lady desir'd you to tell her how you came hither.

*Beau.*

Madam, I heartily beg pardon for the Surprize I have occasion'd you---but having some Business with Mr. *Graspall* , and finding nobody at home, I took the freedom to step into the Closet, which I knew to be well furnish'd with Books--- designing no more than to amuse myself till he came home---I happen'd to meet with one which so agreeably entertain'd me, that till the opening []  of the Door, I had forgot where I was.

*Toy.*

Hum! Mr. *Graspall* has indeed an admirable Collection---but Age has somewhat impair'd his Eye-sight, poor Man! I believe he seldom reads---And I must own 'tis a great Conveniency for a Gentleman, who has not Books of his own, to have the liberty of so fine a Library.

*Beau.*

Sir, I wish you either cou'd, or wou'd explain yourself---But if you harbour a Thought to the Prejudice of this Lady's Character, cou'd I discover it, I'd make such an Example of you, as should be a Terror to all talkative Coxcombs.

*Toy.*

Who I, Sir *Harry* ?

*Wife.*

The Aspersions of this Fool are intolerable ---tho my Innocence should make me despise his Malice, and my Character not fear it, yet those of his own Stamp may believe the mean Reflections he may cast on me.

*Toy.*

You see, Madam, what Inconveniencies attend-Ill-nature; when you are kind, I'll---

*Wife.*

Peace, Screech-Owl---

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Beau.*

Come, Sir, the Lady is now gone; and since I am the unhappy Cause of her Uneasiness, it lies upon me to vindicate her Reputation---A Fool's most dangerous Weapon is his Tongue, and []  I find there is no way to stop yours, but by cutting it out---Draw, Sir.

*Toy.*

I don't like his Looks---Gad, I wish I had not been so witty---Draw, Sir *Harry* ! why I hope you are not in earnest---What draw on your Friend for a little harmless Rallery?---if you have no more value for me, I'll shew you I love you better.---

*Beau.*

That shan't do, Sir.

*Toy.*

Why, Sir *Harry* , I was but in jest as I hope to live---I vow to Gad I believe the Lady as chaste as the Moon, and her Virtue as conspicuous as the Stars in the Firmament---Draw quoth'a! What draw upon my Friend---Sir *Harry* *Beaumont* !---All the World shan't make me draw upon my Friend.

*Beau.*

Harkye, Sir, your Cowardice shan't skreen you another time---if ever I hear a word injurious of this Lady, assure yourself I shall justify her Honour with my Life.

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Toy.*

Pox! who would have thought he had lov'd fighting so well?---I'm glad I'm well off tho'---I'll trouble myself no more about her--- there are as fine Women to be had without venturing one's Life for 'em. Now if I could but find some plausible Pretence to break with *Marilla* , []  I should be the most easy Man in the World; for

*When her Fortune's gone, the loveliest Woman*   
*In this wise Age is a fit Wife for no Man.*

The End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*Enter Captain Gaylove, Courtly laughing, and Shamble very fine.*

*Gay.*

Ha ! ha! ha! how sawcy the Rogue looks?

*Court.*

Why he tells you his Grandeur must charm the Widow.

*Sham.*

Ha! ha! I have quite forgot my Dancing for want of Practice---but Business, State-Affairs, Intrigues, and one Hurry or another takes up all my time---Ha! ha! Pray Gentlemen stand by---Do you know who I am? Won't this do, Sir?

                                         *[In an affected Tone.*   
  
  
*Court.*

Rarely!

                                         *[Dancing in an aukward manner.*   
  
  
*Gay.*

Excellent! if he can but keep up to his Character.

*Sham.*

O! Sir, there is no one thing in the World so soon learnt as the forgetting what one really is, in the Appearance of another---Humility is a Lesson few study with much Pleasure, and all, at some times, are truant from. Then why may not I, Sir *Tristram Shamtown* , forget I have been your Honour's Pimp and Serving Man.

*Court.*

Sir *Tristram* .

*Gay.*

Aye, that Name was of my inventing. But pray, good Sir *Tristram* , don't so far forget your self, as to neglect the main Chance---take care []  to put the Widow off settling any Part of her Estate on her Nephew.

*Sham.*

No, no, Sir, never doubt it, I shall retain that Principle of Honour, to serve my Friends,   
  
  
  
when in so doing I doubly serve myself---If I marry the Widow, depend upon it not a foot of the Estate shall be parted with.---In that I go a great way in breaking off the designed Match between her Nephew and *Celemena* .

*Court.*

A great way---all in all! for I am satisfy'd Mr. *Fairman* will never sacrifice his Daughter to such a Fool as *Sneaksby* , without a Certainty of the Widow's Land for her Jointure.

*Gay.*

Well, faith, I have a strong Opinion we shall succeed---prithee *Shamble* tell honest *Jenny* , Mrs. *Dogood* I think you call her now, that if she has not quite forgot past Kindnesses, she must lend her Assistance in this Affair; and to refresh her Memory, let her know Pieces more are at her Service, the Moment *Sneaksby* quits his Pretensions to *Celemena* .

*Sham.*

I'll warrant you, Sir---but 'tis about the time she order'd me to come.

*Gay.*

Come, shall we walk? Mr. *Fairman* , you know, was so obliging to desire we'd pass the []  Evening there.

*Court.*

With all my heart---tho' it is feeding me with the Fare of *Tantalus* ---I ought to shun the Sight of what I must desire, and yet am hopeless of enjoying.

*Gay.*

Never despair, our Design on *Toywell* may have more effect than you imagine.---Farewell *Shamble* , good Luck attend thee---if any thing happens, I shall be here, or at Mr. *Fairman* 's.

                                         *Ex.*   
  
  
*Sham.*

I have a good Stock of Impudence, and that often carries the day.

*And they went to a Widow's House,*   
    *And she was dancing naked,*   
*And all the Tunes the Piper play'd,*   
    *Was take it, Widow, take it.*   
                                         [Exit.

*Enter Sneaksby and Tim .*

*Sneak.*

Come, *Tim* , let's go close together---I can't abide to be out when it grows towards dark, now here be all these Soldiers come down---they are plaguy mischievous, they say---

*Tim.*

Ay, Sir, my Mother us'd to tell me terrible Stories of 'em.

*Sneak.*

'Twan't well done of Aunt, so 'twan't, to turn one out as soon as ever one come---She might have made one eat a bit of somewhat first, methinks---what did I care if I did not see my []  Mistress till to-morrow, we an't to be marry'd to-night.

*Tim.*

Mayhap, Sir, she thought 'twou'd not look respectful enough.---

*Sneak.*

What did I care, I have paid respect to her long enough, I think---besides, is not she a going to be my Wife, and as long as we know one another's Mind, what signifies making such a to do about it?

*Tim.*

Why, Sir, you told me you had never ask'd her the Question yet.

*Sneak.*

What then? Aunt has, and Father-in-law that must be, and that's as well---Oh here he comes.---

*Enter Fairman .*

*Fair.*

Your Servant, Father-in-law---Mr. *Sneaksby* your Servant---how happens it your Aunt is not with you---I expected her.---

*Sneak.*

Why, Aunt gives her Service---but she has some great Visiter to come to-night belike, for all the House is stuck with Candles, and she is woundy fine.

*Fair.*

An humble Servant, it may be.

*Sneak.*

Mayhap so, I never ask Questions.

*Fair.*

I wish I had the Writings seal'd tho'.

                                         *[Aside.*   
  
  
*Sneak.*

'Tis nothing to me, you know she has []  promis'd me the Estate.

*Fair.*

If she should marry, I much question whether she'll keep her word---I must be satisfy'd.   
*[Aside]*   
But come, Sir, let's go in, my Daughter expects you.

*Sneak.*

Ay, Father-in-law---but I wish you'd let me have a bit of somewhat first, for *Tim* and I are plaguy hungry, and Aunt wou'd not let us stay to eat a bit.

*Fair.*

You shall command any thing my House affords.

                                         *[Exit.*

*Enter Dogood and Shamble .*

*Do.*

Well, now I think 'tis almost impossible our Plot shou'd fail---the Widow is half distracted in Love with you, before she sees you.

*Sham.*

My Person cannot but secure the Conquest.

*Do.*

You wou'd have laugh'd if you had seen how greedily she swallow'd the Bait---but you must be sure to strut and look big, and not lose an Inch of your Grandeur.---

*Sham.*

O, you need not fear---none look so proud and scornful as your new made Gentry.

*Do.*

I have told her, I waited on a Sister of yours in *London* ; that you have a good Estate in Possession, and another in Reversion; that you are of a most ancient Family.---

*Sham.*

[]  And my Name is---

*Do.*

Sir *Tristram Shamtown* ---of *Shamtown-Hall* --- but I hear her coming, step into the next Room, and you shall hear a little of her Humour.

                                         *[Exit. Sham.*

*Enter Widow .*

*Wid.*

And did Sir *Tristram* tell you he'd be sure to come?

*Do.*

I warrant you, Madam, he'll not fail; for tho' I say it, he had always a great Respect for me.

*Wid.*

I long to see him---how do I look, *Dogood* ?

*Do.*

Perfectly amiable, Madam.

*Wid.*

I think I am bloated to-day---   
*[Pulls out a Pocket-Glass.]*   
Here, pull this Ribband a little more to my Face---so, there, 'tis well enough now--- well, I don't like myself, 'tis impossible a Man of his Quality shou'd take a fancy to me.

*Do.*

'Tis rather impossible he shou'd not, Madam. But hark, somebody knocks---'tis he for certain.

*Wid.*

Well, I vow, I believe something will come of this, for I never had such a Palpitation since the Day I first saw Mr. *Stately* .

*Enter Servant.*

*Serv.*

A Gentleman enquires for Mrs. *Dogood* ; he told me his Name, but 'tis so hard a one, I have forgot it.

*Wid.*

[]  It must be he---this Blockhead is us'd to nothing but the Vulgar---but if he continues with me, he must improve his Understanding.

*Do.*

Desire the Gentleman to walk up.

*Wid.*

And do you hear, Loggerhead, be sure you pay him a great deal of Respect.   
                                         *[Ex. Servant.*   
I leave thee to receive him---I'll step into the next Room, and settle myself a little, and then return as if I did not know any body was here.---

*Do.*

Very well, Madam---and in the mean time, I'll be giving him a Character.

*Wid.*

That's my good Wench---and I'll reward thee.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Do.*

They say good Actions reward themselves--- but if my Project goes on as luckily as it begins, I am like to have Rewards from all Sides.

*Enter Shamble .*

So, you have nothing to do, you see, but to summon the Governour, the Fort's ready to surrender.

*Sham.*

Egad, and I like the Situation of it extremely, it seems to want no Fortification.

*Do.*

You see but the Outworks, there's a Magazine within, of Plate, and Jewels, and old Broad-pieces, that have not seen the Sun these forty Years, enough to set the whole Country in a Blaze---But I hear her coming---now to your []  part.

*Sham.*

Ay, ay,---And your Lady is so fine a Woman you say, Mrs. *Dogood* ?

*Enter Widow .*

*Do.*

She's here, Sir *Tristram* .

*Wid.*

*Dogood* ! bless me! I did not know you had any body with you---

*Do.*

A Gentleman you have often heard me talk of, Sir *Tristram Shamtown* , Madam.

*Wid.*

Oh Heav'ns! Sir *Tristram Shamtown* ! I am asham'd to be caught thus in my Dishabille--- and the House, O gad, the House is not fit for any body to come into, much more a Gentleman of Sir *Tristram Shamtown* 's Quality.

*Sham.*

Madam, 'tis impossible that any thing can be more elegant than the Oeconomy of ev'ry thing about you---I was perfectly charm'd with your House, till the Appearance of your Ladyship made me forget all but you.

*Wid.*

O Sir *Tristram* !

*Sham.*

O Madam!

*Wid.*

You are such a Courtier---

*Sham.*

You are such a Beauty---

*Wid.*

So full of Gallantry.---

*Sham.*

So full of Charms---

*Wid.*

Nay, Sir *Tristram* ---

*Sham.*

[]  So all over engaging, that it wou'd puzzle a Logician to define your Brightness.

*Wid.*

This is too much, Sir *Tristram* .

*Sham.*

Madam, every body that has Eyes must admire you---what a Shape---pray, Mrs. *Dogood* , did you ever see so exact a Symmetry of Body?

*Wid.*

O fye, Sir *Tristram* ! you make me blush to death---

*Sham.*

What a Foot! Mrs. *Dogood* , pray look at your Lady's Foot---there's a Foot proportion'd to the Body; the Body suited to the Grandeur of the Face; and the Air of the Face bespeaks the Grandeur of the Soul---

*Wid.*

I vow, Sir *Tristram* , you quite confound me---but you Men of Quality are so used to Rallery---

*Sham.*

How, Madam! another such a word wou'd make me curse my Stars, grow mad, and die---Is there any need to say I adore you, after having seen you?---

*Wid.*

Alas, Sir *Tristram* , I have nothing in me worth the regard of a Man of your Quality---

*Sham.*

Ah, Madam, you cannot be ignorant of the Pow'r of your Charms, and but say this because you think me undeserving of your Favour---

*Wid.*

[]  I protest you wrong me, Sir. Sir *Tristram* *Shamtown* cannot but know any Woman wou'd be proud of his Addresses.

*Sham.*

If you receive 'em, Madam, let all your Sex besides think as they please---Mrs. *Dogood* , you know I cannot flatter; help me to convince your   
  
  
  
Lady of the Sincerity of my Passion---for my Stock of Speeches are almost exhausted.

*Do.*

What do you think of him, Madam?

*Wid.*

O charming! but dost thou think he really admires me so much as he says?---

*Do.*

I never saw a Man so much transported.

*Wid.*

What a difference between a Man of Quality, and the Vulgar!---Mr. *Stately* never courted me in this Manner.

*Sham.*

Speak, Madam, what must I do to prove myself your Beauty's Slave---Will nothing but my Death suffice?

*Wid.*

O Heaven forbid, Sir *Tristram* ! I wou'd not do so much Injustice to the World, whose chief Ornament you are.

*Sham.*

Your Goodness is equal to your Beauty.

*Wid.*

Will you favour me so far, Sir *Tristram* , as to take part of a Collation, just what the House affords.

*Sham.*

[]  A Sallad, with your Ladyship, is preferable to Ortelans in any other Company.

*Wid.*

*Dogood* , lead the way, and see if ev'ry thing is ready.

*Do.*

Yes, Madam---

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Wid.*

Sir *Tristram* !

*Sham.*

Exquisite Hand!

*Wid.*

Nay, Sir *Tristram* .

*Sham.*

Madam, I obey.

                                         *[Ex.*

*Enter Celemena, Marilla .*

*Mar.*

Sure never any two were so nearly ally'd in their Misfortunes as ourselves---Was there ever such a Wretch in Human Kind, as *Sneaksby* ?

*Cel.*

Never, unless it be Mr. *Toywell* ; but if I had no more to fear from the Resentment of a living Father, than you have from a dead one, I shou'd not think my Condition very deplorable.

*Mar.*

You talk strangely; were mine alive, I might hope by Prayers and Tears to move him, or that the Sight of *Toywell* 's Indifference might change his Mind: but as he's past the Knowledge of all this, and has my Vow, nothing remains for me, but Patience in my Sufferings.

*Cel.*

Well, I find there's no persuading you--- but for my part, I'm resolv'd---

*Mar.*

On what?

*Cel.*

[]  Never to be Wife to *Sneaksby* .

*Mar.*

But how will you avoid it?

*Cel.*

Nay, that I can't tell.

                                         *[Sighs.*   
  
  
*Mar.*

Here comes one may inform you, for if I know any thing of the Language of the Eyes, you understand one another's already.

*Cel.*

Psha!

*Mar.*

Farewell, I'll be no Interruption.

*Enter Gaylove .*

*Cel.*

Why, *Marilla, Marilla* .

*Gay.*

Whither in such haste, Madam?

*Mar.*

Your Pardon, Captain; I have Business.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Gay.*

Have you told her our Design on *Toywell* ?

*Cel.*

No, nor I would not have you---I know not but she may be whimsically nice enough to disapprove the Means, tho' she would bless the Effect.

*Gay.*

'Tis not impossible---but methinks, Madam, you stand here prodigiously indolent and degagée ---I fancy you forget to-morrow is your Wedding-day---What, no Preparations? Spouse that must be, is arriv'd, I see---but I think, at present, he seems more inclinable to pay his Addresses to a good Supper, than a Mistress---As I came thro the Hall just now, I saw him lay about him, like a Man of Mettle, at a piece of cold roast []  Beef, and a Tankard of Ale.

*Cel.*

'Tis ungenerous in you, Captain, to insult.

*Gay.*

Who I, Madam? I protest the farthest from it in the World---Why I thought you had been infinitely pleas'd with the Match---and that no Discourse could have been so agreeable as that which mention'd Mr. *Sneaksby* ---And without doubt the Squire will make you prodigiously happy in a Husband---

*Cel.*

Well, Captain, well.

*Gay.*

If your ready Compliance with your Father's Commands, had not assur'd me 'twas your own Desire, I had a Project in my Head, which would certainly have left you at your liberty.

*Cel.*

For Heaven's sake, what?

*Gay.*

No, Madam, no; far be it from me to separate Hearts so strictly join'd---Marry, Madam, the lovely beloved Youth;

*Enjoy th' unenvy'd Title of his Wife,*   
*While I at distance languish out my Life.*   
  
*Cel.*

I hate your Rallery---when one has a mind to be serious---But tell me what you mean, and I'll forgive it.

*Gay.*

That won't do, Madam; I have you in my power now, and you can't blame me if I follow []  your own Example in making use of it.

*Cel.*

Duce take you---Well, but what must I do to bribe you then?

*Gay.*

Why faith, Madam, no less than cancelling all the Injunctions you laid me under this Morning; that you will immediately, on the breaking off of this Match, put me in possession of the same Title your Father designs to give *Sneaksby* .

*Cel.*

O the impudent Demand! So to escape one Slavery, I must throw myself into another, which, for ought I know, may be as bad.

*Gay.*

Nay, if you think so---

*Cel.*

Stay, have you no Conscience?

*Gay.*

You hear the Price, Madam.

*Cel.*

I thought a Lock of my Hair, or my Picture, had been a Reward, the greatest your Ambition could have ask'd for the highest Obligation.

*Gay.*

No, no, Madam---Knight-Errantry has been a long time out of fashion; I shan't bate an Ace of what I told you---but see, here comes your Doom, if you persist in Obstinacy.

*Cel.*

Cursed, teazing, charming Devil.

*Enter Fairman and Sneaksby .*

*Sneak.*

I hope, Father-in-law that must be, you have told her every thing, for I hate a great many Words. An' she were a Man now, I should know []  what to say to her; but mayhap she mayn't like my way.

*Fair.*

Well, well; she knows your Mind.

*Sneak.*

Why that's well enough---Your Servant, Mistress.

*Cel.*

Your Servant, Sir.

*Fair.*

Captain, if you please, we'll walk into the next Room.

*Gay.*

I wait upon you, Sir. You'll remember the Conditions, Madam.

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Cel.*

Hang you---Won't you please to sit, Sir?

*Sneak.*

No, I thank you, I'd as lief stand--- What must I say new? I wonder what made 'em go away?

*Cel.*

I hope he has not Courage enough to be impertinent.

*Sneak.*

I suppose, Mrs. *Celemena* , you know that Aunt and your Father think it convenient our Wedding should be to-morrow.

*Cel.*

'Tis so design'd, Sir, I hear.

*Sneak.*

Nay, as the Saying is, as long as 'tis to be, the sooner 'tis over the better---for my part, I have nothing to say against it; have you?---

*Cel.*

Not that I know of, Sir.

*Sneak.*

Why then, I may go to the Company []  again, mayn't I?

*Cel.*

With all my heart, Sir---

*Sneak.*

Nay, do you go first; I an't so unmannerly neither.

*Cel.*

O intolerable! Heaven grant the Captain be in earnest---or I shall lose my Senses.

                                         *[Ex.*

*Enter Graspall and Wife .*

*Grasp.*

You know, Spouse, the Duty of a Husband is to love and provide for his Wife; and, in return, the Wife is oblig'd to obey the Commands, and study the Interest of her Husband.

*Wife.*

I don't know that I have given any occasion for this Recital of a Wife's Duty.

*Grasp.*

Far be it from me to accuse thee---I mention Obedience to a Husband, not that I believe thee to have err'd in it, but that it being fresh in thy Memory, thou might'st not boggle at any thing which tends to the enriching thy Husband.

*Wife.*

To what purpose can this Harangue be made? Sir, let me know what you expect from me, and I shall answer with a ready Compliance.

*Grasp.*

Indeed thou'rt very good, and thou would'st not scruple any thing for thy old Lovy, ha! *Pudsy* ?

*Wife.*

I hope you can command me nothing I can make a Scruple of obeying you in---But why []  all these Precautions?

*Grasp.*

Well, well, I ha' done---I ha' done--- But remember that Obedience to a Husband ought to be the *Primum Mobile* in a Woman---Here, *Pudsy* , read this.

*Wife.*

Heavens! a Letter from Sir *Harry* .

*Grasp.*

Read, *Pudsy* , it's prettily turn'd---Come, I'll read it for thee.

Madam,

*What I feel in the Contemplation of your Cruelty this Morning, is not to be express'd: I beg you will be, at least, so just, as to let me know to what I owe so great a Misfortune.*

*Your Everlasting Admirer, Beaumont .*

Now, *Pudsy* , you shall see if I had not a tender Regard for your Youth, and a just Consideration of my own Age. I fitted him with a Letter in your Name.

*Wife.*

I am undone---O! Sir, I beg you on my Knees, whatever Appearances may be against me, you will not think me guilty of Dishonour; for on my Soul---

*Grasp.*

Rise prithee, I am not jealous---Hear what I writ to him---I have the Copy---O here 'tis.

*Wife.*

What will this come to?

*Grasp.*

[]  Now, *Pudsy* , you shall hear.

Sir,

*The Satisfaction you require of me shall be made you, if you will give yourself the trouble to meet me in the little Field behind our Garden, at four a-clock this Afternoon---*

*Your Humble Servant, Susanna Graspall .*

*Wife.*

And did you send him this impudent Letter in my Name?

*Grasp.*

Have patience---Condemn me when you have reason, *Pudsy* .

*Wife.*

I know not what to think.

*Grasp.*

The appointed Hour, and the Lover, came together; whom I accosted with, *Sir* Harry, *your humble Servant* , and so forth.

*Wife.*

Heavens! how I tremble?

*Grasp.*

And then it seems, said I, by this Letter, which accidentally fell into my hands, that   
  
  
  
you have some Affairs to negotiate with my Wife. Now she being under Covert-Baron, can transact nothing without my leave; for which reason, and believing my Age and Experience might enable me to treat more effectually with you, I answer'd your Letter---Nay, Sir *Harry* , said I, don't blush (for he did look cursedly confus'd, that he did) []  a Sword and a Wife, said I, are both useless to me; and as I wear one for the Ornament of my Dress, so I marry'd the other as a Grace to my House---

*Wife.*

Where will this end?

*Grasp.*

Now, Sir *Harry* , says I, whoever has the use of my Sword, it's but reasonable he pay for the furbishing---and if you really have so violent a Passion for my Wife, as your Letter intimates, pay the Money down she has expended me in Clothes, and allow me some Consideration for the Pity I have of your Sufferings, and I here give you free Ingress, Egress and Regress---I was some time before I could persuade him that I was in earnest.

*Wife.*

In earnest, Sir!---

*Grasp.*

Ay, *Pudsy* ; for a good while I could not make him believe I really design'd him the Favour of paying me *l.* the Price I set for giving him the liberty to---visit thee now and then, that's all---But I convinc'd him at last, and he immediately sent the Sum propos'd to my House, in a strong Box, with Condition only of keeping the Key, till you set your Hand to the Covenant. Now, *Pudsy* , if thou hast any Love for thy old []  Hubby, never let such a Sum depart the House, by a foolish Denial---if thou dost, it is as bad as robbing me, for whatever I have in my Custody, I always look upon as my own.

*Wife.*

Is it possible you can have so mean a Spirit?---Or do you believe, if you have so sordid   
  
  
  
and groveling a Soul, that I can, regardless of my Fame, and lost to Vertue, yield to such a detested Bargain.

*Grasp.*

Dear, dear Pudsy---don't be too hasty in resolving---consider, will Fame ever get thee *l* ? Remember, Pudsy! two thousand Pounds! when I think what a Sum it is, I sweat at the Apprehension of Virtue.

*Wife.*

And would you be a Cuckold?

*Grasp.*

Two thousand Pounds, *Pudsy* ---

*Wife.*

Despis'd and pointed at.

*Grasp.*

Two thousand Pounds.---

*Wife.*

Become the publick Scorn, and all for Gain, a little trifling Trash.

*Grasp.*

A little, dost thou call it? I wish thy Virtue has not flown into thy Head, and turn'd thy Brain---Why what dost thou value thy Virtue at?

*Wife.*

The World cannot repair the loss of it.

*Grasp.*

[]  Ah! to be sure thou art a little touch'd, but don't think that I'll be fool'd out of the strong Box---if you are mad, I am not; and you had best consent quietly to what I desire, or I shall make you---'Sbud I've been too humble---

*Wife.*

No Husband's Power extends to force the Execution of unlawful Commands---But sure you cannot be so dead to Shame, to wish it seriously.

*Grasp.*

Seriously! why there 'tis now---Don't I tell you that *l.* are in a strong Box, and that I have that Box in keeping---and that there is nothing hinders me from being Master of it, but your refusing to perform Articles.

*Wife.*

Monstrous Stupidity! not to be believ'd!

*Grasp.*

But you'll believe it, I hope, when you find Sir *Harry* tells you the same thing---I have appointed him to come this Night---I'll give you half an Hour to consider on't---but would   
  
  
  
advise you not to be a Fool, nor think to make me so---

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Wife.*

Thou mak'st thyself a wretched, wicked Fool: Was ever any thing like this?

*Enter Amadea .*

*Amad.*

Start not, Madam, I have overheard all, and know not whether my Admiration of your Virtue, or Amazement at your Husband's base []  Intention, most takes up my Thoughts.

*Wife.*

Expos'd to him---Heav'ns! this Story will be the Jest of the whole Country---Whatever are my Husband's Faults, is not your business to examine---and 'twas unmannerly to listen to our private Conference.

*Amad.*

I doubt not of your Pardon for this and many other Actions, which have seem'd impertinent, when you shall know my Reasons for Curiosity; which now, fully convinc'd of your Virtue, and confident of your Good-nature, and Compassion, I shall make no scruple of revealing--- I am a Woman, Madam.

*Wife.*

A Woman!

*Amad.*

My Name *Amadea* ---descended from a Family I need not blush to own---blest with a Fortune equal to my Birth, and bred in expectation of the fairest Hopes---Sir *Harry Beaumont* once was not asham'd to own to all who knew him, he thought me worthy of the tenderest Passion.---

*Wife.*

A Woman! and Sir *Harry Beaumont* 's Mistress---

*Amad.*

His Wife, if Vows can make me so--- therefore in such a Circumstance, you cannot wonder I took all Opportunities to dive into the []  Secret of his coming hither---You shall hereafter be inform'd of all the Particulars of my Story---but   
  
  
  
the time allow'd you for Consideration is so short, I must defer it, and only beg you (for in your power alone it is) to help a wretched Woman, and save me from eternal Ruin and Despair.

*Wife.*

Alas! what can I do?

*Amad.*

Seem to consent to what your Husband asks, and leave the rest to me.

*Wife.*

How will that serve you?

*Amad.*

You shall know anon---In the mean time, I conjure you to dissemble a Compliance---your Virtue shall not suffer by your Charity to me.

*Wife.*   
Well, you shall persuade me.   
  
*Amad.   
---Heav'n will reward the generous Aid you lend,   
And the soft Wishes of my Soul befriend:   
Since, true to Virtue, my Endeavours aim   
Only the dear false Rover to reclaim.*

The End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*Enter Dogood, Shamble , and Widow .*

*Wid.*

Indeed , Sir *Tristram* , this Offer of your Sister for my Nephew convinces me the most of any thing of your Affection--- I wish there were a way for me to get off with Mr. *Fairman* .

*Sham.*

Madam, the Passion I have for you makes me study your Interest, which I think you ought to prefer to Ceremony---My Sister's Fortune, which is *l.* more than Mr. *Fairman* proffers   
  
  
  
with his Daughter, is in her own hands, and I'll undertake she shall be content with only her own Money settled on her.

*Wid.*

That is obliging indeed---I was certainly bewitch'd when I agreed to Mr. *Fairman* 's Proposal ---But alas! I did not think of marrying then, nor am I sure I shall yet.

*Sham.*

How, Madam! not sure of marrying? You have undone my Quiet---drove me to Despair, and without you retract those cruel Words, you shall very soon see the fatal Consequence.

*Wid.*

Nay, Sir *Tristram* , I only said---

*Sham.*

O you have ruin'd me! Farewel Board-Wages and Lace'd Liveries! Farewell all Joy, all []  Peace of Mind, all Happiness---Welcome ye solitary Groves and baleful Yew, ye purling Streams and cooing Doves; behold the unhappy *Shamtown* oppress'd with Grief, and sunk with sad Despair, joins in your Moan! the cruel Stately scorns my Passion.

*Wid.*

Sir *Tristram* , won't you hear me?

*Sham.*

Oh! can I bear a Doubt of that Happiness I so ardently desire, and yet live? No, no, Death will soon ease me of these Pains---I will rip up this faithful Breast, and shew my panting Heart.

*Wid.*

Sir *Tristram* , I did not say that---

*Sham.*

Was it for this you gave me hopes? Did you raise me up but to make my Fall the greater?

*Wid.*

Why, Sir *Tristram* ! Lard, I think he's run mad indeed---What shall I say to him, *Dogood* ?

*Do.*

Tell him you'll marry him this minute--- Say any thing.

*Wid.*

Then, Sir *Tristram* , to show you---

*Sham.*

What unhappy Destiny drove me here, or first fix'd my Eyes on that lovely cruel Woman ---Oh that I could forget I ever saw you!

*Wid.*

Why, Sir *Tristram* , to convince you that []  I am not cruel, send for a Parson, and make me my Lady *Shamtown* .

*Sham.*

Ha! do you mock my Grief? Nay, then Death must be my Portion.

                                         *[Offers to fall on his Sword.*   
  
  
*Do.*

Ah!

*Wid.*

Ah! for Goodness sake, Sir *Tristram* , I am in earnest, I vow and swear---I will marry you this minute, if you please.

*Sham.*

Can it be possible---But I'll not believe I am so happy.

*Wid.*

Then follow me, and put it to the proof.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Do.*

You'd make a rare Actor.

*Sham.*

Send for a Parson, lest some unlucky Accident should prevent us---I'm quite out of breath.

                                         *[Ex.*

*Enter Celemena and Gaylove .*

*Gay.*

Well, Madam, what think you of my Plots? You see, as near as your Cousin *Marilla* thought herself to *Hymen* , my Contrivance is in a fair way to make her lose sight of him.

*Cel.*

I can't but say you are like to be successful enough, and I should be very apt to employ you in the same Business, if you were not so exorbitant in your Demands.

*Gay.*

Good Workmen, Madam, will have good Prices---I would fain do your Business once for []  all---If I should be compassionate enough to hew off this Rub in your way for little or nothing, who knows but another may start up---No, no, let me see you at your Journey's end---Lodge you safe in Matrimony, and I'll trust to your Management afterwards.

*Cel.*

You are very confident of your own Abilities, I find---But suppose you should be mistaken---   
  
  
  
Many a Woman has been glad of a Fool after Matrimony, that she would have despis'd before.

*Gay.*

That's because then she has a Husband too wise.

*Enter Courtly .*

*Court.*

Dear *Gaylove* , I am infinitely oblig'd to thee--- *Toywell* is grown so insolent to *Marilla* , that if she should still persist in her Resolution of marrying him, I think 'twould cure my Passion.

*Cel.*

'Twas almost come to a downright Quarrel, when we left 'em.

*Court.*

Nothing to what is now---Here they come, pray observe 'em.

*Enter Marilla and Toywell .*

*Mar.*

I wish, Mr. *Toywell* , you'd forbear your Visits, unless you could behave youself with more good Manners---You play the Husband too soon.

*Toy.*

And to deal plainly with you, Madam, I []  think you play the Wife too soon.

*Mar.*

If I never give you leave to call me by that Title, your Usage would almost excuse my Breach of Vow.

*Toy.*

Why really, Madam, I believe, of all Womankind, your Charms have the least effect on me---and I don't think 'twould be the death of me, if you should refuse me that Blessing of calling you my Wife---If that's your Desire, pray let me know it, probably I may have Tenderness enough for you, to give up my Pretensions on very easy Terms.

*Mar.*

Say on what? say on any---Leave me but a Competency for Bread, and take the rest of my Fortune.

*Toy.*

Which is little enough, if she knew all--- Look ye, Madam, tho you are so cruel as to tax   
  
  
  
me with Indifference, to shew you how vast a Regard I have for your Ease, I will forego all the Happiness I propos'd in the Possession of so much Beauty, and now swear from my Soul, in the Presence of these Witnesses, that upon no account will I, *John Toywell* , ever be the Husband of you, *Marilla Fairman* .

*Mar.*

I thank you, and with Joy receive my []  Liberty.

*Court.*

Now, Madam, may I not hope?---

*Mar.*

The Usage I have receiv'd from him, is sufficient to make me hate all Men.

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Court.*

Yes, Madam.

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Gay.*

Why, are you in earnest, Mr. *Toywell* ? really quitted your Pretensions?

*Toy.*

Really! Ay, Captain---'twou'd have been carrying the Jest too far, to have marry'd her without a Portion.---There stands one, and a good agreeable Woman---Egad, I think I'll make Love to her.

*Gay.*

But you know she's to be marry'd to *Sneaksby* .

*Toy.*

It's no matter for that---do you think she'd be such a Fool to refuse me for him?

*Gay.*

But you have affronted her Cousin, don't you believe she'll resent it?

*Toy.*

Psha! I'll tell her 'twas for her Sake.

*Gay.*

Nay, you may try: Madam, here's a Gentleman is fallen desperately in Love with you on the sudden---

*Cel.*

Who? What do you mean?

*Gay.*

That he must explain.

*Toy.*

Madam, I long have ador'd you; 'tis impossible []  to tell you with how much Ardor; that, your Glass must inform you, because nothing else can give you any just Idea of your Perfections.

*Cel.*

The Fool's distracted sure; or is it your Contrivance too?

*Gay.*

No, faith, Madam, 'tis all his own---

*Toy.*

Till this happy Moment, Madam, I was not at my own Disposal---but was oblig'd to smother all the Transports of my Soul, when I beheld you---

*Gay.*

Hold, Mr. *Toywell* ---take care---here's a Rival approaching, trebly arm'd with Mead, Syder, and Metheglin.

*Toy.*

What, *Sneaksby* drunk! O the Putt!

*Enter Sneaksby drunk.*

*Sneak.*

Adod! Father-in-law keeps good Liquor; but 'tis plaguy heady---who's here? O Mistress! Wife that must be, here, tie my Neckcloth---

*Cel.*

Oh hideous! really Sir, I don't know how.

*Sneak.*

Not know how! you are very fit for a Wife indeed! mayhap you'll never learn.

*Cel.*

'Tis possible.

*Toy.*

O the Brute, how he smells! sure, Madam, you cannot consent to bury your Youth and Beauty in the Arms of that Wretch---

*Cel.*

Whatever he is, I prefer him to a Fop--- []  Mr. *Sneaksby* , you are not apt to be jealous, I hope---Mr. *Toywell* is making Love to me--- How do you approve of it?

*Sneak.*

Making Love to you---ugh!

*Toy.*

Well, Sir; and what then, Sir? what if I do, Sir---Egad I may bully him.

*Gay.*

I don't know but these two Coxcombs might afford some Diversion---if we had time to work 'em to any Pitch.

*Sneak.*

Ugh---why then, mayhap, you may make me a Cuckold---

*Toy.*

And what then, Sir?

*Sneak.*

Ha! ugh! what then, Sir---why then? mayhap I may break your Sconce, I'll tell you but that.

*Toy.*

How, Sir! gad I'll charm her with my Courage. Do you see this, Sir?

                                         *[Draws.*   
  
  
*Sneak.*

Why Mistress, do you stand there and see your Husband that is to be---murder'd--- but he shall kill you first, I'll tell you but that.

*Gay.*

O Sir! he'll do you no hurt---Come, put up, Mr. *Toywell* , put up.

*Sneak.*

Nay, you shan't stir.

*Cel.*

Out, filthy Creature!

*Sneak.*

What's the Matter---ugh---

*Cel.*

[]  Oh insufferable! Captain, help me.

*Gay.*

Ha, ha, ha---come Mr. *Toywell* , you see your Antagonist is not *se defendendo* ---'twill be generous to lend your Arm to help him in.

*Cel.*

Oh, I am poison'd!

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Toy.*

In Complaisance to you, Capt.---faugh! how he stinks.

*Sneak.*

Ugh! What are you doing---Murder, Murder!---where are you carrying me? Murder!

*Enter Servants.*

*Serv.*

Murder! What's the Matter?

*Gay.*

Why, your young Master that is to be, as he says, is a little overtaken, that's all.

*Serv.*

O, the Squire's drunk.

*Sneak.*

Murder, Murder!

*Gay.*

There; there lug him in---

                                         *[Ex.*

*Enter Beaumont and Graspall .*

*Beau.*

Well, my kind Sollicitor, what Hopes? shall we enjoy our Mistress, or not? Here's the Key, old *Mammon* , gives you Admittance to your Yellow Beauties---methinks thy Looks foretel Success, and say, your Wife gives ear to Reason---

*Grasp.*

Ah, Sir *Harry* , what Pains have I taken?

*Beau.*

But to what purpose, my old *Plutus* ? What's the Success; is she still cruel? and must I send for the Box?

*Grasp.*

When the Box goes, your Suit ends, []  good Sir *Harry* ---Ev'n *Jove* had been repuls'd, if a Show'r of Gold had not introduc'd him---my Reasons had, I hope, some effect, and I left her---

*Beau.*

How, my dear *Graspall* ?

*Grasp.*

Like the Sea after a Storm, tho' the Winds are laid, there yet remains some Swell--- which must have time to settle---But the Key, Sir *Harry* .

*Beau.*

Nay, I must have some Assurance that I don't part with such a Sum for nothing, the Minute your Wife consents---

*Grasp.*

Consents! 'sbud she had as good meet a hungry Lion, as pronounce the first Letter of a Denial---I'll have the Letters *N. O.* struck out of the Alphabet, except to poor Rogues that come for Money, and there, Self-preservation makes it lawful.

*Beau.*

Farewel.

                                         *[Ex.*   
  
  
*Grasp.*

I'm in the House, if you want Help--- Since I can't persuade him out of the Key, I'll force the Box; let him take the same Method if he pleases, with his Mistress.---Bless me! that Sir *Harry* , esteem'd a Man of Wit, can part with such a Sum, for such a Bauble as a Woman!

                                         *[Ex.*

*Enter Mrs. Graspall, Beaumont .*

*Wife.*

And is it possible then, Sir *Harry* , that you can have join'd with my Husband in an Attempt []  at once so ridiculous and base---but tho' your Gold has had this Influence on his sordid Nature, know, I despise the Man who dares believe 'twill bribe me out of my Honour.

*Beau.*

Far be it from me, Madam, ever to have harbour'd such a Thought; and as the Proposal was made by your Husband, 'tis he alone you shou'd condemn.

*Wife.*

But you agreed to't.

*Beau.*

If I had not, you might have believ'd I had thought so small a Sum more valuable than your Favour.

*Wife.*

You have taken a very wrong Method to obtain it: But as for him, base, mean-spirited, and sordid as he is, he is my Husband still---nor will I wrong him, tho' by his own Consent.

*Beau.*

Can you have so much value for a Man, who, tastless of your Charms, and ignorant of the Treasure he is master of, wou'd barter it for Trash---if no Compassion for my Sufferings wou'd move you, methinks the Injury he does you, shou'd prompt you to revenge.

*Wife.*

What you call revenging Injuries, is being accessary to 'em.

*Beau.*

Your Husband has transfer'd his Right to []  me; and if deaf to Arguments, has giv'n me Pow'r to seize---

*Wife.*

Which if you dare attempt---

*Beau.*

Be not frighted, Madam; I never gave you cause to think I'd be a Villain---Honour has always been the Guide of my Actions---and 'tis that now whispers me, No Epithets so vile, as that of Ravisher.

*Wife.*

And does it not inform you too, you ought not to ask of me what Honour forbids me to grant---you look confounded---Oh, Sir *Harry* ! how forcible is Truth, tho' ne'er so plainly utter'd?---Not all your Learning, Wit, or Artifice, can form an Answer in Contradiction to this short Demand.

*Beau.*

Madam, I will not answer on this Theme---because I know that all the Arguments I cou'd bring, wou'd, to a Woman of your Temper, appear too weak to convince you that all those Conversations, which the World calls criminal, are not also really dishonourable in themselves ---nay, I will own to you, that I cou'd   
  
  
  
wish there were a Possibility for me to love you less, unless my Passion cou'd appear in a more noble Light.

*Wife.*

[]  'Tis generously confess'd---but why will you then persist to urge a Suit your Reason does condemn?

*Beau.*

Ah, lovely Creature---you may as well ask Madmen why they rave---but do not mistake me; when I say I wish I lov'd you less, 'tis not because my Reason tells me 'tis a Fault, but because it is not in my pow'r to give you so convincing a Proof as I wou'd do, of my sincere Affection: the Flame I feel for you, is in it self so pure, I grieve it shou'd appear in any Likeness with those unconstant Fires which base Desires create; I tremble when I approach you; and tho' I'd forfeit Life to touch that Hand, so fearful am I to offend, I dare not ask it---Consider, Madam, and justly weigh the difference between us.---Did *Toywell* treat you thus?

*Wife.*

That Wretch's Impudence was owing to his Folly---if I look into your Designs, they are the same; and you, but with more Art, wou'd ruin me.

*Beau.*

By Heav'n I wou'd not---your Reputation shou'd be sacred and unblasted---the dear, the happy Secret safe lodg'd within my Soul, shou'd take no Air, nor let in the least room for a Conjecture []  ---then for your Fears, those little Fears, which all your Sex are prone to, and which the Inconstancy of ours too frequently gives Cause for, I'd follow you, as now, with Sighs and Pray'rs, and ardent Vows of everlasting Passion.

*Wife.*

Then you'll allow that Constancy's the only Test of true Affection.

*Beau.*

Most sure it is, the only certain one.

*Wife.*

How am I then secure of yours, till I have purchas'd the Experiment at a Rate too   
  
  
  
dear---I must resign my Honour, my Vertue, and my Peace of Mind, before I can promise myself the least Assurance I have not done all this for an ungrateful Man---

*Beau.*

There are a thousand Marks by which you may distinguish which Passions will be lasting, and which not---and if repeated Vows and Imprecations can have Force---

*Wife.*

No, Sir *Harry* ; I know with how much ease you Men absolve yourselves the Breach of Vows in an Affair of this nature---but since you have confest that Constancy's the only Proof of true Affection, answer me, did you ne'er love before?

*Beau.*

Suppose I did; if I hereafter shall love []  none but you, the former Errors of my Fancy may be forgiv'n.

*Wife.*

But tell me if you did; and I conjure you, speak with the same Sincerity as you wou'd answer Heav'n---

*Beau.*

What can she mean? few Men, Madam, I believe, who have travell'd so far as I have done, had such Variety of Conversations, (some of which perhaps have not been over-nice) and seen such Numbers of fine Women, can boast an entire Continency. I do not deny but I have met Temptations in my way, which Youth and Inadvertency, at some unguarded Hours, have yielded to.

*Wife.*

I speak not of those slight and transient Passions, but of a Flame which bore the show of Honourable---did you not---answer without Equivocation, did you not, (neglecting all the rest) never address one Favourite Fair?

*Beau.*

Ha! But whate'er she aims at, I scorn the Baseness of a Lye---Yes, Madam---I confess, I once before, and ne'er but once, knew what it was to love---But why this Question, and with such Earnestness?

*Wife.*

You shall be told---Pray who was she?

*Beau.*

She was a Woman, Madam, whose Deserts []  might well excuse my Passion---But why this Enquiry?

*Wife.*

But one thing more, and you shall know. Since so belov'd, and so deserving, why are you disunited? Grew she unkind?

*Beau.*

I am so confounded, I know not what to say. O *Amadea* ! now thy Image rises to my View, and brings my broken Vows to my Remembrance.

*Wife.*

What say you, Sir? Did she prove false? or is she dead?

*Beau.*

Neither, Madam---but, pray no more--- This Talk is foreign to the kind End your Husband brought me for.

*Wife.*

Stand off, perfidious Man! by your own Mouth you are condemn'd---since, as yourself confess, Constancy's the only Proof of Love and Honour, how can you be justify'd by either?--- You own you lov'd, where both Desert and Kindness join'd to engage---yet, full of your Sex's Falshood and Ingratitude, that Conquest gain'd, you offer to another your prostituted Heart, and think a little idle Flattery can win me to accept your violated Faith.

*Beau.*

I have lost her by my Plainness---What you speak of, Madam, happen'd a long time ago, []  we now are separated---Forgive what is past--- your Beauty, as it justifies my Change, will also be your own Security for my future Constancy.

*Wife.*

I'll hear no more---nor is it my Business to judge either your past or present Actions--- Come forth, *Amadea* ---

*Beau.*

*Amadea!*

*Enter Amadea in her own Clothes.*

*Wife.*

If you can obtain a Pardon here, mine will not be long with-held.

*Beau.*

'Tis she indeed!

*Ama.*

Turn not away confus'd; I shall believe you never knew the Force of Love, if you can doubt my Readiness to pardon---You wrong me more by this unkind Delay to meet my stretch'd-out Arms, than e'er you did in your Addresses there.

*Beau.*

Can there be so much Generosity in Nature!

*Ama.*

Come, Sir *Harry* , look on me, and as you just now said, forget what's past: By Heaven! your future Kindness will more than expiate all you have done, or would have done to wrong me.

*Beau.*

Excellent Woman! may I then believe thee---Can it be possible that thou (who, I perceive, art well acquainted with my Crime) can'st wish to pardon it, and again receive me to that []  soft Breast, that lovely Mansion of eternal Truth?

*Ama.*

I now am fully recompens'd.

*Beau.*

Thou Prodigy of Goodness---to find thou hast left *London* , thy Father, Friends, Relations and Acquaintance---to meet thee here---here in this Scene of guilty Wishes, so strangely, so unexpected, fills me at once with Shame, with Joy, and Wonder.

*Ama.*

Could *London* , my Father's House, or the Society of any Friends, bring Comfort to me, when I saw not you? 'Twas enough to know that *Beaumont* was in *Salisbury* , to wing the Feet of *Amadea* hither---Besides, you may remember the News of your Uncle's Death took you away so suddenly, I scarce had time for one short Adieu--- You writ to me indeed, and made me hope a quick Return; but in a little time (tho I'm unwilling to mention past Unkindness) you left off even that distant Conversation---I writ, and writ again, but had no Answer---at first I thought my Letters had miscarry'd---but long Expectance   
  
  
  
it last grew weary, and I resolv'd to know the Truth of what I then began to fear; and to that end left *London* in Disguise.

*Beau.*

In Disguise!

*Ama.*

[]  I dress'd me in a Suit of my Brother's Clothes, which happening to be out of Town, he had left behind him, and came down here in the Stage-Coach---At the Inn where I alighted, I met Mr. *Graspall* , who hearing me enquire for Lodgings, made me an Offer of a Chamber in his House, where I have been ever since; and by that means had an Opportunity of finding out that Secret, which now you are so good to acknowledge as a Fault.

*Beau.*

And ever shall---Nor will this Lady think me unmannerly, when I declare, I ought to have been blind to every Charm but yours.

*Wife.*

Sir *Harry* , I rejoice in your Conversion, and I hope you are too sincerely touch'd with a Sense of your late Errors to repeat 'em.

*Beau.*

O never! This unexampled Tenderness and Generosity has charm'd my very Soul---nor will we ever be divided more; but as by solemn Vows we have long since been one, my Chaplain to-morrow shall ratify the Contract.

*Wife.*

I heartily congratulate the Happiness of you both; but notwithstanding the real Pleasure it gives me to see every thing so well answer the End I propos'd by this Meeting, I cannot find in []  my heart to forgive my Husband's base Design upon me, and have thought of a way to be reveng'd, if you'll vouchsafe me your Assistance.

*Beau.*

I dare answer you may command us both.

*Wife.*

This Lady must put on her Men's Clothes once more.

*Ama.*

Most willingly, they have been fortunate to me.

*Wife.*

Within I'll tell you my Design---please to walk---

*Beau.*

We'll follow, Madam.

*Ye false-name'd Pleasures of my Youth farewel,*   
*They charm'd my Sense, but you subdue my Soul.*   
*Tho fix'd to you alone, I've pow'r to change,*   
*While o'er each Beauty of your Form I range.*   
*Nor to those only need I be confin'd,*   
*But changing still, enjoy thy beauteous Mind.*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*Enter Graspall and Wife.*

*Wife.*

Nay , you won't be so ungrateful to deny me so small a Request, when I have broke thro all Objections to oblige you.

*Grasp.*

I would deny thee nothing, *Pudsy* ; but thou dost not consider what an Inconvenience, as well as an Expence, this will be.

*Wife.*

Inconvenience! where can be the Inconvenience of having a few Friends to be merry with you?

*Grasp.*

A few! why thou hast nam'd half the County, I think---but prithee, let me hear them over again.

*Wife.*

Why in the first place, Sir *Harry Beaumont* ; you won't grudge him a Dinner out of his *l.* sure?

*Grasp.*

If he is not satisfy'd with the Meal you have given him, he should e'en fast till Doomsday for me---But go on---

*Wife.*

Mr. *Courtly* ; he is Sir *Harry* 's Intimate, and 'twill be rude to leave him out.

*Grasp.*

Well! who else?

*Wife.*

The Widow *Stately* ---She is our next Neighbour, you know, and must be invited.

*Grasp.*

[]  So---to the rest.

*Wife.*

Mr. *Fairman* , his Niece, and Daughter, and their two Lovers, Squire *Sneaksby* and Mr. *Toywell* ; and if you find any Company at their House, as they seldom are without, they must be ask'd.

*Grasp.*

Very well---and these you call a few--- besides a Retinue of Servants at the heels of 'em, of more than twice double the Number---A Pack of romping, tearing, hungry Hounds, that will eat me out of house and home, tho I had laid in for a Siege. 'Sdeath, how can you be so inconsiderate?

*Wife.*

Well, I'll never ask you any thing again ---but remember, that if ever you make any more Bargains for me, your Unkindness has given me a very good Pretence to refuse making 'em good.

*Grasp.*

Ha! let me consider---she'll be spiteful enough, that's certain, and who knows, but among these Blades I may find a Fool as willing to part with his Money as Sir *Harry* ?---I have a good mind to let her have her Will for once. Well, *Pudsy* ---suppose I should oblige thee in this, thou wilt never be refractory hereafter, wilt thou?

*Wife.*

Not when 'tis for your Interest, *Tony* .

*Grasp.*

I shall never ask any thing of thee, *Pudsy* , []  that is not for the Interest of us both.

*Wife.*

But since you have consented to have this Company here to-day, 'tis time they were invited.

*Grasp.*

Well, I'll go---but, *Pudsy* , dear *Pudsy* , prithee bate me the Severity of one Article.

*Wife.*

What's that?

*Grasp.*

Give me leave to desire they would not bring their Footmen with 'em.

*Wife.*

Fye! you would not make yourself so ridiculous.

*Grasp.*

Well, for once---

                                         *[Going.*   
  
  
*Wife.*

Stay, *Tony* ---I protest I had like to have been guilty of a piece of Ill Manners I should never have forgiven myself---

*Grasp.*

What now?

*Wife.*

I am told there's a Baronet lately come down, I can't think of his Name, but he's at the Widow *Stately* 's---you must be sure to entreat the Favour of his good Company.

*Grasp.*

The Devil!

*Wife.*

You must not omit him by any means.

*Grasp.*

No, no---Was ever Man thus plague'd?

*Wife.*

Well, go about it then, while I prepare for their Reception. Be sure not to forget.

*Grasp.*

No, no, no---if I stay much longer, she'll []  remember as many more.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Wife.*

I'll fit you for your Bargain, Sir.

                                         *[Exit.*

*Enter Gaylove and Celemena .*

*Cel.*

'Tis now no time for Dissimulation, Captain; I freely own nothing is so terrible to me as the Thoughts of being *Sneaksby* 's Wife---therefore, if in earnest you can find any way to disappoint my Father in his design of marrying me to that Idiot, I give you leave to hope, I may one day have the Opinion of you, you wish.

*Gay.*

That is not sufficient, Madam; I must have an immediate Security for your Performance of Articles, before I undertake any thing.

*Cel.*

Why, I hope you have not seriously the Confidence to think of gaining me so soon---Do you think it reasonable, that a Woman, who believes herself in some measure agreeable, should lose the pleasure of seeing her Lover tremble at   
  
  
  
her Approach, and by his Sighs and Melancholy betray the Passion he has for her to all who know him, admire all she says, and cry up all she does, and threaten to poison, stab, or drown himself to pacify her, whenever she happens to be in the humour of giving Pain.

*Gay.*

But, Madam, I believe 'Squire *Sneaksby* never read Romances, and will perhaps think it []  an unreasonable Request, should you desire him either to poison, stab, or drown himself---Therefore, Madam, since all these Preludiums, one way or other, must be cut off; you had e'en as good venture on me, and imagine that if there was time for it, I would willingly come into all these Methods to obtain you.

*Cel.*

But do you consider what you ask? Tho my Father proffers *Sneaksby* *l.* to take his Daughter off his hands, I question whether he may be in the same Humour when *Gaylove* has me.

*Gay.*

It is you, not your Fortune, that I am ambitious of. My Commission will keep us from want, if your Father gives you nothing; and when mine dies, his Estate, for the greater Part, is intail'd on me: and without being romantick, I shall think it but a poor Purchase for my *Celemena* .

*Cel.*

Well, let me consider---Here's a Coach and Six with my Father's Commands, and *l.* to back it---On the other hand, *s.* a Day, and the Title of a Captain's Lady, with a reasonable Suspicion of being turn'd out of doors with never a Groat---But then, on this side, I've a Fool--- on that, a Man not disagreeable, and of allow'd Sense---One marries me upon Compact, the other []  generously runs the risque of a Fortune---Well, *Gaylove* , I think you carry the day---I'll lay aside the Woman for once---Here's my Hand.

*Gay.*

My future Carriage shall show my Gratitude for the Blessing, and---

*Cel.*

Come, no Raptures---you are a Man of Honour, and I expect you'll keep your Promise--- I can't bear this Coxcomb's Impertinence---Prithee banter him a little, while I retire to think on what I've done.

                                         *[Ex.*

*Enter Toywell .*

*Toy.*

O Captain *Gaylove* ! are you here? You have serv'd me finely!

*Gay.*

As how, good Sir?

*Toy.*

Why did not you tell me that Mr. *Trusty* the Banker was broke? and I saw a Letter from him just now, which says, he's in as good a Condition as ever.

*Gay.*

Is he so? Faith I'm glad on't.

*Toy.*

O! but you have ruin'd me, I have lost *Marilla* by it.

*Gay.*

Why what's *Marilla* to *Trusty* ?

*Toy.*

Why he has her Fortune in his hands--- and if he had fail'd, she had been no Wife for me---So, upon what you have told me, I broke off, and releas'd her from all Ties.

*Gay.*

[]  Why 'tis none of my Fault---Did I advise you to't?

*Toy.*

No; for that matter, 'twas all my own doing---But I'll go and throw myself at her feet, and if she has any Compassion---

*Gay.*

You may spare yourself the pains, for to my certain Knowledge, there's a terrible ill-natur'd Fellow, with a Sword like a Scythe, pretends a Right to her---

                                         *[Sings.*   
  
  
 *With whom you cannot grapple,   
   For at one Sup,   
   He'd eat you up,   
As Boys do eat an Apple.*   
  
*Toy.*

Gad's Curse! So I am to lose my Mistress for an old Song?

*Gay.*

His Name is *Courtly* , do you know such a Man?

*Toy.*

*Courtly* ! Pho, I've a better Estate than he has.

*Gay.*

But he understands a Sword better than you do---Come, take my Advice, and be merry--- and when you see *Courtly* , wish him Joy, with an Air of Indifference---for they are, by this time, marry'd; seem pleas'd with what you can't help, for to my knowledge you'll get little by Resentment.

*Toy.*

[]  Psha! I don't care this Pinch of Snuff, and since she's gone---let her go.

*Gay.*

Ay, this becomes you---it shows you are a Man above Disappointment---But here they come---now let me see you bear your Misfortunes like a Man untouch'd by 'em.

*Toy.*

You shall see me accost her with the Unconcern of a tir'd Keeper.

*Enter Courtly, Celemena , and Marilla .*

*Mar.*

Your Importunity, Mr. *Courtly* , incenses me as much as Mr. *Toywell* 's Indifference; and if you think to teaze me into a Compliance, you shall find yourself deceiv'd.

*Gay.*

How's this?

*Toy.*

Ha! I find things are not so bad as I thought.

*Court.*

Heav'n is not displeas'd with Prayers and Adorations---'Tis with the most awful distance I pursue you, the tenderest Passion, and sincerest Vows.

*Mar.*

Perhaps I'm fix'd never to marry---and if so, shall no more endeavour to force my Inclinations, than you to govern yours.

*Toy.*

O! Madam, can you forgive my Rashness, occasion'd by the Violence of my Passion, for a belief I was not so well in your Esteem as I desir'd []  to be?

*Gay.*

What a devil! have you a mind to have your Throat cut?

*Mar.*

O! Mr. *Toywell* , do you repent? Then I'll soon put an end to Mr. *Courtly* 's Importunities.

*Toy.*

Ah Madam! how shall I requite your Goodness?

*Mar.*

Hold Sir! thank me when I deserve it--- Mr. *Courtly* , you have given me daily Uneasiness, haunting me from place to place, scarce leaving me a moment, and endeavouring by your Constancy to merit me; answer me, Guilty, or not?

*Court.*

Guilty, Madam.

*Mar.*

You, Mr. *Toywell* , on the contrary---

*Toy.*

Ay, Madam.

*Mar.*

Always shunn'd the Places I frequented, never discover'd your Passion by either Words or Actions, or hoped by Assiduity to gain me.

*Toy.*

Not I, Madam, upon my Soul---I carry'd myself so, that no Man on Earth would ever have thought I had valu'd you in the least, not I--- I had more Sense---Poor *Courtly* , how he looks! he's finely fobb'd.

*Gay.*

What will this come to?

*Mar.*

Know then, that I resolve to give myself []  to him who most deserves me.

*Gay.*

That's easily distinguish'd, Madam---

*Toy.*

Ay, Captain, so 'tis---faith I pity *Courtly* ---But the Lady must follow her Inclinations, ha! ha! ha!

*Gay.*

'Sdeath, leave your Impertinence---Prithee how came you and I so familiar?

*Toy.*

Lord, you are as crusty as a sickly Miser to a Depending Heir. Come, Madam, I want that poor Gentleman should be put out of suspence.

*Court.*

Sir!

*Mar.*

Nay, no quarrelling---Mr. *Courtly* , from this time forwards, I desire you will lay aside all Hopes, and Fears, for I now discharge you as my Servant.

*Gay.*

'Sdeath!

*Cel.*

Why, Cousin, are you mad?

*Mar.*

Have Patience---I give you now my Hand, with it my Heart, and make you now my Master.

*Court.*

Health to the Sick is not more welcome, I receive you as the greatest Blessing Heav'n had in store.

*Toy.*

Fire and Brimstone!

*Gay.*

You are out of Suspence now, Sir.

*Cel.*

Joy to you, *Marilla* , I'll be bound you've made a worthy Choice, and done Justice.

*Gay.*

[]  I wanted but this to make me compleatly happy.

*Toy.*

Sure, Madam, you are not in earnest.

*Gay.*

You are only fobb'd, Sir.

*Enter Fairman , dragging in Sneaksby .*

*Fair.*

An impudent Villain! to make a Brothel of my House!

*Sneak.*

How did I know 'twas your House, when I was so drunk, I did not know myself---beside, you need not make such a to do about it; I did no harm as I know of---

*Gay.*

What's the matter, Sir, that your intended Son-in-law is in this Condition?

*Fair.*

No, no, Captain, I'll have no such drunken lewd Wretches in my Family---Sending just now to look for him, to know what was the reason his Aunt did not come to seal the Writings, where do you think he was found? but in the Cockloft, where it seems he had lain all Night with the Wench that feeds the Poultry.

*Cel.*

A blessed Husband you had chose for me truly, Sir!

*Fair.*

I was wrong indeed, in believing thou could'st be happy with such an Idiot---and rejoice I have made this Discovery before it was too late.

*Sneak.*

Marry what care I---I can have a Wife I []  warrant you; but Aunt shall know how you have us'd me---mayhap she may tell you your own.

*Gay.*

Here's another fobb'd too---Come, cheer up Man, you see you have a Companion in Tribulation.

*Fair.*

Pray leave my House, and tell your Aunt there's no occasion for the Writings now.

*Gay.*

I believe you may spare yourself that Trouble, Sir, for I expect her here every moment, with her new Husband.

*Fair.*

Husband! why, is she marry'd?

*Gay.*

Yes, faith, and to one, who, I'll engage, will take care not a Foot of her Estate shall descend to this Gentleman.

*Fair.*

I'm glad on't---tho' this News yesterday wou'd have been a very great Disappointment to me.

*Enter Graspall .*

Ha! who have we here? a Stranger indeed! Mr. *Graspall* !

*Grasp.*

Ay, truly, Mr. *Fairman* , I don't often visit---but my Pudsy has taken a Fancy to be mighty merry to-day, and I love to humour her--- so if you, your Niece, and Daughter, and all this good Company, will take a Dinner with her, ye shall have a hearty Welcome.---As for the rest of her Entertainment, let her answer, I never []  trouble myself with those things.

*Fair.*

Miracles are not ceas'd, I find!

*Grasp.*

What say you, Sir, will you do us the Favour? I hope he is engag'd.

                                         *[Aside.*   
  
  
*Fair.*

Sir, 'tis a Favour you so seldom ask, that I believe nobody will refuse it you---Gentlemen--- Captain, you hear the Invitation---can you go?

*Court.*

O! by all means, Sir.

*Gay.*

I'll wait upon you, Sir.

*Toy.*

Am I in the Number of your Guests, Sir.

*Grasp.*

Ay, ay, all of you, if there were a hundred---I shall expect you soon---your Servant, and I wish the first Dish may choak you.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
  
  
  
  
*Fair.*

There must be something extraordinary has happen'd to occasion this Fit of Generosity--- let us go.

*If that which is most rare is counted best,*   
*We cannot want it in a Miser's Feast.*   
                                         *[Ex.*

*Enter Beaumont , and Graspall .*

*Beau.*

Ay, now I like you Mr. *Graspall* ---this is done like a Man who knows how to use his Fortune ---I look on Hospitality to be the most pleasurable of any Vertue, and when you have once try'd it, I don't doubt but the whole Country will very often find the Effects of it.

*Grasp.*

You'll find yourself exceedingly out in []  your Politics, if you do think so, that I can tell you.

*Beau.*

Once or twice a Week at least, I suppose, one may expect to find good Company here.

*Grasp.*

'Sdeath! he wants to take out his *l.* in Board, I believe.   
*[Aside.]*   
As often as I can, Sir *Harry* ---but, alas! I am infirm and crazy---very crazy---and sometimes can't bear the Sight of a Fire, or the Smell of dressing Meat for a Quarter of a Year together.

*Beau.*

Poor Man! but you need not incommode yourself with that---a cold Collation, with three or four Dozen of *Champagne* and *Burgundy* will serve well enough---Your Friends will excuse the rest on account of your Indisposition,

*Grasp.*

They shall when I give it 'em.   
                                         *[Aside.*   
But, Sir *Harry* , I can't endure a Noise.

*Beau.*

As for that, you have a large House here, and may easily retire into some remote Part of it, where you won't be disturb'd---Your Guests will be contented to spare you, provided you leave your Wife, and the Fiddles to entertain 'em.

*Grasp.*

That wou'd be fine indeed---'Sbud! I'll sell my House, and live in *Wales* among the   
  
  
  
Mountains, where nobody will attempt to come []  near me for fear of breaking their Necks.

*Beau.*

I think you look ill now---I am afraid you won't be able to let us have your Company to-day---if you find yourself out of Order, pray don't hazard growing worse by an Over-Complaisance ---I'll answer for it, nobody will take it ill if you shut up yourself all day.

*Grasp.*

The Devil I will---no, no, Sir *Harry* , I am mighty well---mighty well as can be, and so all my good Friends shall find---Here they come.

*Enter Gaylove, Courtly, Toywell, Fairman, Marilla , and Celemena .*

You are welcome, Sirs, heartily welcome all---

*Fair.*

Sir, we thank you.

*Court.*

We are all oblig'd to you---Sir *Harry* , your most humble Servant---

*Beau.*

Yours, Sir---Ladies, yours---but where's your Wife, Mr. *Graspall* ? your fair Visitors will think themselves unwelcome while she is absent---

*Grasp.*

I'll go and see for her.

*Beau.*

I'll save you the Trouble, if you please, Sir---you know I am free here.

                                         *[Exit.*   
  
  
*Grasp.*

Ay, and so shou'd they all be on the same Conditions. Come, Gentlemen---Mrs. *Celemena* , Mrs. *Marilla* , pray sit down---you'll excuse me, I don't love much Ceremony---but pray be []  merry.

*Fair.*

Wine, Sir, gives a Life to Conversation--- after Dinner, when the chearful Glass goes round, you may expect we shall be heartily merry.

*Wife within.]*

Murder! Murder!

*Fair.*

Ha! what's this?

*Court.*

Murder cry'd

*Fair.*

Your Wife's Voice.

*Enter Beaumont and Amadea fighting, Mrs. Graspall following.*

*Beau.*

Villain! to abuse so worthy a Man! but from my Arm thou shalt receive the just Reward of thy Treachery.

*Amad.*

I fear you not.

*Wife.*

Part 'em, part 'em.

*Court.*

What's the Matter, Sir *Harry* ?

*Beau.*

Base Villain! and thou, ungrateful Woman!

*Wife.*

Oh! Sir *Harry* , you will not be so barbarous to expose me?

*Grasp.*

Why? what's the Meaning of all this?

*Beau.*

Not expose you, Madam! yes, to the whole World---you that cou'd wrong so kind, so tender a Husband.

*Grasp.*

Ha! how's this?

*Beau.*

So good, so true a Friend, so worthy a Man, and one so infinitely fond of you, shall receive no Pity, no Regard from me---You must []  know, Gentlemen, that going to seek this Lady, for whom till now I had the greatest Respect, I found her in the Embraces of that young Gallant ---They started when they saw me, and tho' my Sword was in a moment ready to revenge my injur'd Friend, his was not tardy in Defence--- but tho' you have prevented me at present, I shall find a time to make the Villain smart.

*Court.*

I'm amaz'd.

*Fair.*

She that was esteem'd so vertuous!

*Toy.*

They are all so till caught.

*Grasp.*

And hast thou done this? Hast thou made a Cuckold of thy old Hubby---Ah Cockatrice!

*Wife.*

I see Surprize in every Face, and know my Reputation has been hitherto so fair, that I believe some here scarce credit what they hear; but I disdain to be a Hypocrite, nor will deny   
  
  
  
the Truth---This lovely Youth, this Darling of my Soul, has indeed receiv'd whatever Favours he cou'd intreat, or Love prompt me to grant.

*Cel.*

Monstrous Impudence!

*Mar.*

I never heard the like.

*Grasp.*

And do you own it then? have you no Shame?

*Wife.*

You taught me to despise all Sense of []  Shame, when laughing at that Notion which the World calls Virtue, you forc'd me, contrary to my Nature, to my Inclinations, to the Principles my Youth was bred to observe, it yield myself a Prey to your insatiate Avarice, and his base Desires.

*Fair.*

How!

*Wife.*

Did you not sell me? let me out to Hire, and forc'd my trembling Vertue to obey--- Did I not kneel, and weep, and beg---but you had receiv'd the Price you set me at, and I must yield, or be turn'd out a Beggar.

*Fair.*

What! let his Wife for Hire.

*Court.*

Agree for Mony to his own Dishonour!

*Toy.*

Egad, if I had known that, I'd have been a Customer---prithee what dost thou demand, old Lucre? ha!

*Grasp.*

Fop! Fool! Oh that I were dead!

*Wife.*

Since you have taught me, I'll now experience that Charm Mankind's so fond of, Variety ---I'll give a Loose to each unbounded Appetite, range thro' all Degrees of Men, nor shall you dare to contradict my Pleasures.

*Grasp.*

Pray kill me---will nobody kill me?

*Gay.*

Why truly, Sir, as the Case stands, I []  think 'tis the greatest Kindness can be done you.

*Wife.*

But do not imagine you shall ever reap any Advantage from my Crimes---I have broke open your Closet, and the *l.* Sir *Harry* paid you for seducing me, I have bestow'd on this dear Man.

*Grasp.*

Oh! Oh! the Money gone too!

*Wife.*

You shall find what 'tis to have a vicious Wife---Do you not now repent what you have done, and wish I cou'd resume my Vertue--- tho' it shou'd cost you twice as much as you receiv'd for my renouncing it?

*Grasp.*

I do indeed, I see my Error now 'tis too late---Oh damn'd, damn'd Avarice!

*Wife.*

You wou'd not tempt me then, were it again to do.

*Grasp.*

No.

*Wife.*

Not for the greatest Consideration.

*Grasp.*

Not for the Universe---but do not plague me, I shall not live to endure it long.

*Wife.*

Stay, Sir, your Sorrow moves me; if I may believe your Penitence sincere, I can return to your Embraces a true, a faithful, and a vertuous Wife.

*Grasp.*

What new Invention to distract me []  more?

*Beau.*

She tells you Truth by Heav'n---that seeming Gentleman with whom I fought, and who you think has injur'd you, has not the Pow'r ---Appear, my Love, without Disguise---See, Sir, a Woman and my Wife.

*Omn.*

How!

*Gay.*

*Amadea!*

*Amad.*

The same, dear Cousin---much happier than when you saw me last, by the addition of Sir *Harry* 's Love confirm'd.

*Gay.*

I wish you Joy.

*Grasp.*

May I believe my Eyes?

*Beau.*

They do not deceive you, Sir---this Plot was laid on purpose to cure you, if 'twas possible, of that covetous, sordid Disposition, which has ever been the Blot of your Character---and a little also to revenge the Contempt you seem'd to have of so good a Wife---when you were willing to chaffer her for Gold---

*Court.*

'Twas handsomely contriv'd---

*Cel.*

I am glad to find she has brought herself off; for I protest I trembled for her two Minutes ago.

*Beau.*

Come, Sir, if you have any Consideration []  of Honour, and the eternal Infamy and Disgrace she has preserv'd you from, you will admire her Vertues, and entreat her Pardon---

*Grasp.*

*Pudsy* , dear *Pudsy* , can'st thou forgive me.

*Wife.*

Rise, Sir, this is not a Posture for a Husband ---I form'd this Design only to make you worthy of that Name, and shall ever make it my Study to prove myself a most obedient Wife.

*Fair.*

This is a happy Conclusion, indeed; but here's more Company, Mr. *Graspall* ---

*Enter Widow, Dogood, Shamble .*

*Wid.*

Your Servant, Gentlemen, your Servant, Ladies; I beg pardon for my long Absence--- but, but---a---I cou'd not rise to-day, I think.

*Gay.*

Sir *Tristram* play'd his part then pretty well, last Night, I find.

*Fair.*

Joy, Madam---you have stole a Wedding, I hear.

*Wid.*

People of Quality never talk of these Affairs till they are accomplish'd, Mr. *Fairman* --- Sir *Tristram* here was so pressing.

*Court.*

And your Ladyship so easy---

*Grasp.*

Sir *Tristram* ! why are you all mad? why, this is *Jonathan Shamble* ---sure I know *Jonathan* *Shamble* ; he was Footman to a Nephew of mine about four or five Years ago, when I was []  last in *London* .

*All.*

Ha, ha, ha! a Footman!

*Gay.*

Well, well, Mr. *Graspall* , he's a Man of an Estate now, and 'twill be unmannerly to rip up Pedigrees.

*Wid.*

I am not cheated, sure---what's the Meaning of all this?

*Sham.*

Why, faith, my dear Wife, since the Truth must out, I only borrow'd my Quality to make myself agreeable to you---

*Wid.*

Villain! Rogue! I'll tear you to pieces.

*Sham.*

Hold, hold, good Lady, Passion---have mercy on my Cloaths, for they are none of my own.

*Gay.*

Patience, Madam, Patience! Boxing does not become a Woman of Quality.

*Wid.*

A Footman! a Footman! but I'll have him hang'd, he's a Cheat, he has marry'd me in a false Name; but you shan't think to carry it so--- I was not born Yesterday: I'll go to a Lawyer immediately.

*Gay.*

Hark ye, hark ye, Madam---your Anger will do you but little Service---he has wedded you, bedded you, and got your Writings, and if you consider calmly on the Matter, you'll find nothing []  can be done in this Affair for your Satisfaction--- you had better therefore quietly forgive the Imposition; and as you have a good Estate, turn part of it into ready Money, and e'en buy him a Title--- such Things are done every day in *London* ---and when once you have made a Gentleman of him, ev'ry body won't know by what means he came to be one.

*Wid.*

Why that's true, indeed.

*Gay.*

You'll find it your best way.

*Wid.*

Well, since there's no Help, I'll sell all I have, and away to *London* .

*Gay.*

You may be happy enough---I dare swear he'll make you a good Husband.

*Wid.*

That's all I have to hope.

*Gay.*

Well, I think I have been very busy in endeavouring to settle the Happiness of others---   
  
  
  
'tis high time now to consider my own, which lies only in your pow'r, Sir, to bestow.

*Fair.*

Sir, Mr. *Courtly* has just now acquainted me with the Kindness you have for my Daughter--- I know your Father, and I approve of your Character ---therefore if she is of the same Opinion (for I will never go about to force her Inclinations more) she is yours, with the same Fortune I design'd []  to give the Squire---what say you, *Celemena* ?

*Cel.*

I shou'd have endeavour'd to obey you, Sir, ev'n where my Nature was most reluctant---but in this, I confess, you've chosen with my Eyes.

*Fair.*

Why, then bless you both---I think poor Mr. *Toywell* is the only unhappy Man among us.

*Toy.*

Faith, Sir, I am positively easy: I'll e'en trip to *Bath* this Season, and I don't doubt but I shall there find an Opportunity with some kind Damsel to repay my Loss in *Marilla* .

*Beau.   
How simply Politic is foolish Man!   
How poor, how vain, our deepest laid Designs,   
To the all-seeing Eye of Providence!   
Like those weak Webbs by Æsop 's Spider wrought,   
To stop the swift-wing'd Swallow in her Flight:   
Who, with Contempt surveys her fruitless Pains,   
Her Folly pities, and her Rage disdains;   
Baffles her Wiles, breaks thro' the tender Snare,   
And, uncontroul'd divides the yielding Air.*

FINIS.