

NELL GWYNNE

OR

THE PROLOGUE

A COMEDY

IN

T W O A C T S

BY

DOUGLAS JERROLD

AUTHOR OF

*Black Eyed Susan—Rent Day—Gipsey of Derncleugh—Tower of
Lochlian—Statue Lover—Bampfylde Moore Carew—Wives by
Advertisement—Paul Pry—Vidocq—Law and Lions—
Prisoner of War—Beau Nash—Martha Willis—Two
Eyes between Two—Descart—White Milliner—
Hazard of the Die—Perils of Pippins—Bride
of Ludgate—Housekeeper—Wedding
Gown—Doves in a Cage—Painter
of Ghent, &c. &c. &c.*

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LONDON.

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NELL GWYNNE.

Whilst we may safely reject as unfounded gossip many of the stories associated with the name of Nell Gwynne, we cannot refuse belief to the various proofs of kind-heartedness, liberality and—taking into consideration her subsequent power to do harm—absolute goodness of a woman mingling—(if we may believe a passage in Pepys,)—from her earliest years in the most depraved scenes of a most dissolute age. The life of Nell Gwynne, from the time of her connexion with Charles the Second, to that of her death, proved that error had been forced upon her by circumstances, rather than indulged from choice. It was under this impression that the present little comedy was undertaken : under this conviction an attempt has been made to shew some glimpses of the “silver lining” of a character, to whose influence over an unprincipled voluptuary, we owe a national asylum for veteran soldiers, and whose brightness shines with the most amiable lustre in many actions of her life, and in the last disposal of her worldly effects.

Nell Gwynne first attended the theatre as an orange girl. Whether she assumed the calling, in order to attract the notice of Betterton,—who, it is said, on having heard her recite and sing, discouraged her hopes of theatrical eminence ;—or whether her love of the stage grew from her original trade of play-house fruit-girl, has not yet been clearly shewn. Indeed, nothing certain can be gathered of her parentage or place of birth ; even her name has lately been disputed. That, from “the pit she mounted to the stage,” is, however, on the poetic testimony of Rochester, indisputable :—

“ The orange-basket her fair arm did suit,
Laden with pippins and Hesperian fruit ;
This first step raised, to the wond'ring pit she sold
The lovely fruit, smiling with streaks of gold.
Fate now for her did its whole force engage,
And from the pit she mounted to the stage ;
There in full lustre did her glories shine,
And, long eclips'd, spread forth their light divine :
There Hart and Rowley's soul she did ensnare,
And made a king a rival to a player.”

She spoke a new prologue to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* : she afterwards played *Queen Almahide*, in Dryden's *Conquest of Grenada*, besides speaking the prologue

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"in a broad-brimmed hat and waste belt." The history of this hat and belt is given by old Downes, the prompter, in his valuable *Roscus Anglicanus*, a chance perusal of which, first suggested the idea of this drama.

On the death of Charles our heroine lived a secluded life. She inhabited a house in Pall-Mall, built for her on her retirement from the stage, by the king. According to Pennant (in his *Account of London*,) the walls of the back room on the ground floor were entirely covered with looking-glass, as it was said the ceiling had been. Over the chimney was her picture. At this house, she died, in November, 1687; the day of the month is unknown. Her mother was drowned near the Neat-houses, Chelsea, in July, 1679. Any further account of her kindred has escaped research. She was interred on the 17th of November in the old church of St. Martin's-in-the-fields: her funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Tenison, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The Queen, in allusion to the circumstance said she was convinced the deceased had merited the praises of the worthy Doctor, or he had never bestowed them.

Among the correspondence of Sir George Etherge with the Scotch College at Ratisbon, is a letter to him, from his under secretary, Mr. Wigmore, written on the 18th of November, in which he acquaints him—

"Last night was buried Mad. Ellen Gwyn, the D. of St. Alban's mother. She has made a very formal will, and died richer than she seemed to be whilst she lived. She is said to have died piously and penitently; and as she dispensed several charities in her life time, so she left several such legacies at her death; but what is much admired is, she died worth, and left to D. St. Alban's *vivis et modis*, about 1,000,000*l.* sterling, a great many say more, few less."

"The assertion of her dying worth a million of money (says a writer in *The Athenaeum*) is hardly worth attention; the extract from the original letter, by Seward, must have contained a 0 too much. What the Duke of Buckingham told Bishop Burnet, that Nell's first demand on the King was five hundred a-year, which he rejected; but that in about four years afterwards, she had managed to obtain more than sixty thousand pounds, goes far to make up the one hundred thousand, which it is more generally allowed she died possessed of.

"The will and codicil, now first published, will set at rest many vague stories relative to the disposal of her property, which was bequeathed in the bulk to her only surviving son, Charles Beauclerc, Duke of St. Alban's. The will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, December, 7, 1687, and the original given up to Sir Robert Sawyer, on the 18th of

February following. The documents in the archives of the Court are official copies, with an autograph receipt for the original by Sir Robert Sawyer, attached. Any reference to the depository of the original, has eluded my particular inquiries.

The Will of Mrs. Ellen Gwynne.

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Ellen Gwynne, of the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-fields, and county of Middlesex, spinster, this 9th day of July, Anno Domini 1687, do make this my last will and testament, and do revoke all former wills. First, in hopes of a joyful resurrection, I do recommend myself whence I came, my soul into the hands of Almighty God, and my body unto the earth, to be decently buried, at the discretion of my executors, hereinafter named, and as for all such houses, lands, tenements, offices, places, pensions, annuities, and hereditaments whatsoever, in England, Ireland, or elsewhere, wherein I, or my heirs, or any to the use of, or in the trust for me or my heirs, hath, have, or may or ought to have, any estate, right, claim or demand whatsoever, of fee-simple or freehold, I give and devise the same all and wholly to my dear natural son, his Grace the Duke of St. Albans, and to the heirs of his body; and as for all and all manner of my jewels, plate, and household stuff, goods, chattels, credits, and other estate whatsoever, I give and bequeath the same, and every part and parcel thereof, to my executors hereafter named, in, upon, and by way of trust for, my said dear son, his executors, administrators, and assigns, and to and for his and their own sole use and peculiar benefit and advantage, as in such manner as is hereafter expressed; and I do hereby constitute the Right Hon. Lawrence Earl of Rochester, the Right Hon. Thomas Earl of Pembroke, the Hon. Sir Thomas Sawyer, Knight, his Majesty's Attorney General, and the Hon. Henry Sidney, Esq. to be my executors of this my last will and testament, desiring them to please to accept and undertake the execution hereof, in trust, as afore-mentioned; and I do give and bequeath to the several persons in the schedule hereunto annexed, the several legacies and sums of money therein expressed and mentioned; and, my further will and mind, and anything above notwithstanding, is, that if my said dear son happen to depart this natural life without issue then living, or such issue die without issue, then and in such case, all and all manner of my estate devised to him, and in case my said natural son die before the age of one-and-

twenty years, then also all my personal estate devised to my said executors, not before then by my said dear son and his issue, and my said executors, and the executors or administrators of the survivor of them, or by some of them otherwise lawfully and firmly devised or disposed of, shall remain, go, or be to my said executors, their heirs, executors, and administrators respectively, in trust of and for answering, paying and satisfying all and every and all manners of my gifts, legacies and directions that at any time hereafter, during my life, shall be by me anywise mentioned or given or by any codicils or schedule to be hereto annexed. And lastly, that my executors shall have, all and every of them, 100*l.* a-piece, of lawful money, in consideration of their care and trouble herein, and furthermore, all their several and respective expenses and charges in and about the execution of this my will. In witness of all which, I hereunto set my hand and seal, the day and years first above written.

“E. G.”

“Signed, sealed, published and declared, in the presence of us, who, at the same time subscribe our names, also in her presence.

“Lucy Hamilton Sandys, Edward Wyborne, John Warner, William Scarborough, James Booth.”

On a separate sheet, as a codicil, is—

“The last request of Mrs. Ellen Gwynn to his Grace the Duke of St. Albans, made October the 18th, 1687.

“1. I desire I may be buried in the church of St. Martin’s-in-the-fields.

“2. That Dr. Tenison may preach my funeral sermon.

“3. That there may be a decent pulpit-cloth and cushion given to St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields.

“4. That he would give one hundred pounds for the use of the poor of the said St. Martin’s and St. James’s, Westminster, to be given into the hands of the said Dr. Tenison, to be disposed of at his discretion, for taking any poor debtors of the said parish out of prison, and for cloaths this winter, and other necessaries, as he shall find most fit.

“5. That for showing my charity to those who differ from me in religion, I desire that fifty pounds may be put into the hands of Dr. Tenison and Mr. Warner, who, taking to them any two persons of the Roman religion, may dispose of it for the use of the poor of that religion inhabiting in the parish of St. James’s aforesaid.

“6. That Mrs. Rose Forster, may have two hundred pounds given to her, any time within a year after my decease.

“7. That Jo., my porter, may have ten pounds given him.

" My request to his Grace is, further—

" 8. That my present nurses may have ten pounds each, and mourning, besides their wages due to them.

" 9. That my present servants may have mourning each, and a year's wages, besides their wages due.

" 10. That the Lady Fairborne, may have five pounds given her to buy a ring.

" 11. That my kinsman, Mr. Cholmley, have one hundred pounds given to him, within a year after this date.

" 12. That his Grace would please to lay out twenty pounds yearly, for the releasing of poor debtors, out of prison, every Christmas-day.

" 13. That Mr. John Warner may have fifty pounds given him to buy a ring.

" 14. That the Lady Hollyman may have the pension of ten shillings per week continued to her during the said lady's life."

" Oct. 18, 1687.—This request was attested and acknowledged, in the presence of us—John Hetherington, Hannah Grace, Daniel Dyer."

" Dec. 5, 1687.—I doe consent that this paper of request may be made a codicil to Mrs. Gwynne's will.

" St. ALBAN'S."

" A writer in *The Champion*, June 3rd, 1742, No. 398, on 'the Fraudulent Practices of Parish Vestries, and in particular that of St. Martin's-in-the-fields,' observes, ' I cannot forbear mentioning one action more laid to the charge to these honest men, viz.—Nell Gwyn, player, left a handsome income yearly to St. Martin's, on condition that on every Thursday evening in the year, there should be six men employed for the space of one hour in ringing, for which they were to have a roasted shoulder of mutton and ten shillings for beer ; but this legacy is of late diverted some other way, and no such allowance is now given.'

" No authority, beyond report, appears for this assertion.

" Persons incarcerated for debt in Whitecross-street prison, that being the county gaol for Middlesex, have some allowance, on a particular day in the year, which is denominated Nell Gwynne's Bounty, but whence this arises, or how paid, I have yet to learn."

All the characters in the comedy, with but two exceptions, and allowing the story that the first lover of Nell was really an old lawyer, figured in the time of Charles the Second. For the introduction of *Orange Moll* (so inimitably acted by Mr. KEELEY,) the author pleads the authority of Pepys, who in the following passage, proves the then existence and notoriety of

some such personage :—“It was observable how a gentleman of good habit sitting just before us, eating of some fruit in the midst of the play, did drop down as dead, being choked ; but with much art Orange Mal did thrust her finger down his throat, and brought him to life again.” In another place Pepys speaks of Sir W. Penn and himself having a long talk with “Orange Mal.” A dramatic liberty has been taken with the lady’s name, Moll being thought more euphonic than “Mal” or “Matilda.” The incident of the king supping at a tavern with Nell, and finding himself without money to defray the bill, is variously related in the *Chroniques Scandaleuses* of his “merry” and selfish days.

In conclusion, the author has to return his thanks to all who aided the representation of his drama, and to the management for every wish and care to perfect the illusion of the scene.

D. J.

Little Chelsea, July 17, 1833.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,
January 9th, 1833.*

CHARACTERS.

KING CHARLES THE SECOND	Mr. JONES.
SIR CHARLES BERKELEY	Mr. FORESTER.
CHARLES HART { Managers of the King's Theatre, Drury Lane, 1667. }	Mr. DURUSET.
MAJOR MOHUN { Lincoln's Inn. }	Mr. PERKINS
BETTERTON { Manager of the Duke's Theatre, Lincoln's Inn. }	Mr. DIDDEAR.
JOE HAYNES—late of Drury Lane	Mr. MEADOWS.
COUNSELLER CROWSFOOT	Mr. BLANCHARD.
STOCKFISH, puritanical drawer at the Mitre Tavern	Mr. F. MATTHEWS.
BOY	Master MACDONALD.
MRS. SNOWDROP	Mrs. DALY.
NELL GWYNNE	Miss TAYLOR.
ORANGE MOLL	Mr. KEELEY.

Length
in
Lines.

CHARACTERS ENTER

500 CHARLES, at	page 12—17—23—27—34—40—change.
180 BERKELRY	„ 12—18—23—27—34—40—change.
80 HART	„ 21—change 41—42.
60 MOHUN	„ 21—change 41—42.
80 BETTERTON	„ 11—22.
420 HAYNES	„ 9—18—26—34—39—41.
560 CROWSFOOT	„ 13—19—25—32—37.
73 STOCKFISH	„ 30—33—38.
0 GENTLEMEN	„ 21.
2 BOY	„ 26.
0 YEOMEN	„ 42.
0 TWO MEN	„ 39.
0 LORDS	„ 42.
80 Mrs. SNOWDROP	9.
580 NELL	„ 11—14—change 23—27—36—change 42.
220 ORANGE MOLL	„ 21—36.
0 ORANGE GIRLS	„ 21.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION.—1 hour 55 minutes.

1st ACT.—50 minutes. 2nd ACT.—45 minutes.

COSTUMES.—Period, 166—

CHARLES.—Plain but handsome cloth doublet, trunk breeches, cloak, boots, dark peruke, slouch hat and feather, broad shoulder sword belt and sword. 2nd dress.—Rich velvet suit, &c.

BERKELEY.—Plain suit, similar to the above, light peruke. 2nd dress.—Rich riding suit, moustache.

HART and MOHUN.—Handsome plain suits of the period, doublets, cloaks, breeches, perukes, high heeled shoes, swords, hats, and feathers. 2nd dress.—Laced suits of the time.

BETTERTON.—Dark cloth suit, walking cane, shoes, and dark full peruke, no moustache.

HAYNES.—Plain suit, rather the worse for wear, slouch hat with no feather, dark hose, and black shoes with high heels. 2nd—Smock frock.

CROWSFOOT.—Black velvet suit, doublet, trunk breeches, cloak, high hat without feathers, black stockings, high heeled shoes, full black peruke.

STOCKFISH.—Plain grey tight suit—long black hair, buff shoes.

BOY.—Red doublet and trunks, stockings and shoes.

GENTLEMEN.—Handsome suits of the time, of different colours.

YEOMEN.—Beefeaters' dresses.

Mrs. SNOWDROP.—Red tunic body, grey petticoat, caul cap, apron, high heeled shoes, large plain white collar.

NELL.—Neat yellow bodice and skirt, white apron, large white collar, black mittens, light brown hair in full curls. 2nd dress.—A straw flat hat, mask. 3rd dress.—Black cloak, broad brown waist belt, and very large brimmed hat.

MOLL.—Yellow body and skirt, apron and small flat cap, over a red ringlet wig.

QUEEN.—Small circular curls round the forehead, full ringlets, diamond circlet, satin dress, purple robe.

LADIES.—Handsome dresses of the time.

ORANGE GIRLS.—Similar to Orange Moll, of different colours.

NELL GWYNNE.



A C T I.

SCENE I.—*Nell Gwynne's Lodgings. (1st Grooves.)*

Enter MRS. SNOWDROP, followed by JOE HAYNES, L.

MRS. S. Mr. Haynes, do you know what character is?

HAYNES. I do, Mrs. Snowdrop, in all its varieties; 'tis at the best, an ostentatious superfluity. Character! That may be called our first year of discretion, in which we learn to live without it.

MRS. S. 'Tis just like you of the King's Play-house.

HAYNES. Nay, I'm no longer of the King's Play-house—they've cast me out of the community.

MRS. S. Cast out! For what?

HAYNES. My religion. T'other day, I sent a ship-parson with a bell to call Manager Hart and his actors to prayers—the manager swore at my piety, and straight discharged me. I'm a martyr of the last new make: if one day Joe Haynes be not in the calendar, then do they manufacture saints as we make knights; not from desert, but court favour. My sanctity brings me to my errand. This girl—Mistress Ellen Gwynne—

MRS. S. Poor thing! I do believe she has hardly a friend in the world.

HAYNES. I'm a benefactor on a grand scale—I mean my lord Buckhurst—

MRS. S. But then she has a heart for a queen.

HAYNES. And an ankle for Venus, no doubt. When shall we see her?

MRS. S. Pretty Nelly, she's quite a lamb. Could I but see her well married; could I but discover an honest man—

HAYNES. Ay, but only think of the uncertainty.

MRS. S. A plain-going citizen—

HAYNES. Plain-going ! Where will you find one—unless, indeed, you count among the livery, the wooden men of Saint Dunstan's ? Since Charles hath come back, the city hath grown ashamed of its plainness, and stands begging at Whitehall for cast-off ruffs and feathers. Now, my Lord Buckhurst—

MRS. S. You see, Mr. Haynes, I'm a lone widow, with nothing left but my reputation.

HAYNES. Poor destitute thing !

MRS. S. And though I do let lodgings, my husband, Balaam Snowdrop, was once very high as a Roundhead.

HAYNES. (*aside.*) Thrice very high—and each time in the pillory.

MRS. S. Nay, would you believe it, closely concerned with Barebones ?

HAYNES. I can easily believe it—(*aside.*) since he married you. But for Mistress Gwynne, something must be done to fix her fortunes ?

MRS. S. So she said last night. You see, she has run away from a lady whose companion she was, because she wouldn't listen to some lawyer man, old and ugly, no doubt—dear Nelly—she is such a kind hearted thing !

HAYNES. But last night ?

MRS. S. Well, last night, as I was saying, she made me—the lord knows against my will—but then she smiled so, and bade me take a mouthful of strong waters, for I had been thinking of my dear Balaam, and—

HAYNES. D——n Balaam !

MRS. S. Mr. Haynes !

HAYNES. No, I abhor unnecessary swearing ; pass Balaam, and come to Nelly. What was't she made you do ?

MRS. S. Carry a letter to the Duke's Playhouse, to Mr. Manager Betterton.

HAYNES. To what end ?

MRS. S. To ask him to come and hear her read play-books. You may well look ; nothing now will serve her but to go upon the stage. 'Tisn't my fault ; I'm sure I put the pious Mr. Muggleton under her pillow every night.

HAYNES. And Betterton ?

MRS. S. He's with her now ; they have been doing what they call a scene ; but you may be sure I was present—and there Nelly played the queen of—of—I forget what,—but she talked of racks, and daggers, and poisons, and cutting off people's heads,—oh, if she'd been born a queen, it couldn't have come more natural to her !

HAYNES. A heroine ready made for Dryden !

MRS. S. And then to see how beautifully she faints—and

how in a minute she'll drown her face with tears! I've known hundreds of women try as much, but none like Nelly. And then she sings—sings as if nightingales—

NELL GWYNNE is heard to sing without, R.

“ My lodging it is on the cold ground,
 And very hard is my fare,
 But that which troubles me most, is
 The unkindness of my dear.
 Yet still I cry, Oh, turn, love,
 And I prythee, love, turn to me ;
 For thou art the man that I long for,
 And alack! what remedy ! ”

HAYNES. Sings! if that voice do not fill a pit, do not lead the gallants by the ears—we must see her. Eh? here's Betterton; stand aside. *Puts her off, R.*
 Now, for the humility of a cast-off actor to a manager in full play.

Enter BETTERTON, R.

Mr. Betterton, your most humble servant.

BETTER. What Joe! again on the world? Why, man, how dost live?

HAYNES. Live, sir? by hand and knife—one night I pick a pocket, the next I cut a throat. I have a consuming desire to end my life at the gallows.

BETTER. May your desires be gratified! But why, Joe, at the gallows?

HAYNES. I'd fain cast discredit on the rest of the players. My dying speech shall be a second Cromwell to you, and turn your theatres to conventicles; and (*mock heroically.*) as the stage first saw the light in the wagon of Thespis, so shall it close its eyes in the Tyburn cart of Joseph Haynes.

BETTER. Nay, cheat the hangman, and spare us. (*looking at his watch.*) But I shall be late at rehearsal. (*crosses L.*)

HAYNES. Mr. Betterton. So you are going to fire the town with another Helen?

BETTER. On my life, no.

HAYNES. Come, you managers are so close. Have you no wonder?—No speaking doll from France?—No new treble from Italy?—Have you shipped no unicorn—set no bird-trap for the phoenix?

BETTER. Twixt ourselves, Davenant is about to cut down, and put music to Othello, to make it pass for a night or two.

HAYNES. Music to Othello cut down! I see; he takes away the golden wires of Apollo, and put in their place his own cat-gut.

BETTER. Nay, Davenant has improved Shakspeare ; in fact made some of the bard's plays his own.

HAYNES. Yes ; as the Grand Turk makes prisoners his own —by mutilation. But have you no new actress ? Come there's the syren in this house ?

BETTER. She ! phoo—raw, quite raw !

HAYNES. Hang it ! 'tis said she's very beautiful.

BETTER. Humph.

HAYNES. And sings like—

BETTER. All women sing,—good morning.

HAYNES. You'll repent your judgment.

BETTER. 'Tis the cry of every one I refuse ; repentance with me, as with yourself, Joe, is late coming ; for I have had no qualms as yet. Farewell, Joe ; and, hark ye, have pity on the poor actors, and eschew hanging.

HAYNES. But if I persist, I shall at least have at my execution what hath long been a rarity in your play-house.

BETTER. What's that ?

HAYNES. A full audience.

BETTER. A merry one, I warrant.

HAYNES. Not so ; my death, like your new comedies, will raise the price of pocket-handkerchiefs.

BETTER. Farewell, mad Joe.

HAYNES. Farewell, reasonable Tom. (*Exit BETTERTON, l.*) And now, if it be possible, to get an interview with Mistress Nelly. (*Exit R.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Show-room in the house of Madame Charrett, Milliner, Covent-garden; gowns, boddices, and various articles of female dress displayed on stands R. Two high backed chairs.*

KING CHARLES discovered sitting, looking off into another room, l. 2 E., he is plainly habited. SIR CHARLES BERKELEY seated on his R.

CHARLES. (l.) Well done, Madame Charrett !—That's the tenth letter exchanged within half the number of minutes. Why, Berkeley, this is no milliner's, but the post-office.

BERK. Madame's establishment combines the two. I told your Majesty, that—

CHARLES. Softly, Berkeley, milliners have ears. (*looking out.*) Look there ! another ! Didst ever see so insidious a bit of paper ? Sealed with a stag I warrant me. Bravo ! another ! That's from a courtier ; long, narrow, and scented ; a very

musk-rat of epistles. That's from an alderman's wife, with wax enough on't for the privy seal. If the Stationers' Company do not give Madame Charrett their freedom commerce is dead to gratitude.

BERK. Your majesty, as I live there's Ned Kynaston, the actor!

CHARLES. And there! yes—he—the rope-dancer! od's fish! his name? Jacob Hall! Ha! ha!

BERK. And letters for each!

CHARLES. A golden Jacob, now, to know the writers!

BERK. Some dry-salter's wife.

CHARLES. Tut, man! I'll be sworn maids of honour at the least. (*they rise.*) 'Twas but last week I met a certain young countess in the Mall; she had in her coach, as she said, a country maiden, a poor curate's daughter, all bashfulness and blushes. As we talked, up come my lady's short-sighted lord: to him she told the same story; when his lordship said he had ever loved the clergy—chucked the fluttering damsel under the chin, and went his way to play a match at bowls. Now, who dost think the maiden really was?

BERK. A curate's daughter.

CHARLES. Ned Kynaston, the actor, fresh from the play-house, drest in woman's clothes! Ha! ha! Why, who comes here?

BERK. 'Tis the old counsellor.

CHARLES. Old, indeed; where has he left his scythe and hour-glass.

BERK. Madame's house, as I told your majesty, is an office for stray doves. The counsellor comes, as I hear, to learn about a runaway, a pretty wench.

CHARLES. A pretty wench!

BERK. Yes; one Nell Gwynne.

CHARLES. Nell Gwynne! and who is she?

BERK. A girl, 'tis said, of wit and spirit, who took fright at the counsellor's wrinkles; ran from the man of law as from a Russian frost. Your majesty may see some sport.

CHARLES. If the knave do not know me?

BERK. But condescend to remain my cousin, new from the country—for the tale has served with Madame Charrett—and we may outface his knowledge, even if he have any.

Enter COUNSELLOR CROWSFOOT from back, l. 2 E.

Good morning, counsellor.

CROWS. (*aside.*) Sparks here!

CHARLES. Is't not a shame?

CROWS. Shame! What's a shame?

CHARLES. That Nestor should have a tooth for sugar-plums? Have you found her, sir; or has poor Madame Charrett been led astray by a false description? Were her eyes meltingly blue?—

BERK. (r. turning him round.) Or piercingly black?

CHARLES. Or had she one or two?

BERK. Did her locks shame the raven's wing?

CHARLES. Or the robin's throat?

BERK. Did she swim like Venus?—

CHARLES. Or limp like her spouse? Or, after all, art certain 'tis really a woman whom you seek?

CROWS. Humph! a grave man cannot enter a house for business—

BERK. Business! Oh, a suit at law for Madam Charrett!

CHARLES. Some one hath libelled the milliner's last new skirt, or pirated the architecture of the pocket-holes!—Business with the milliner! Come, Rhadamanthus, what business?

CROWS. Cannot give an order for a few ruffles and neck-bands—(crosses L.)

BERK. Certainly, ruffles and neck-bands!

CHARLES. Yes, the counsellor looks as though his errand was for muslin. (*aside to BERKELEY.*) I hear the rustling of a petticoat. Can it be old Bracton here? let's watch.

BERK. Counsellor, may you one day be lord chancellor!

CHARLES. And so, exercise a care for widows and orphans! that is—for ruffles and neck-bands.

(CHARLES and BERKELEY *hide at back, L.*

CROWS. Coxcombs! Sugar-sops! They're gone, though. The milliner takes my money, and gives me nought but promises. Hang the girl! To slip through my fingers, when I thought she would relent—to be gulled at my age! Madame Charrett promised to come—said she had—

NELL GWYNNE. (*without, L. 2 E.*) Very well, madam—I'll just take one peep at the silks!

CROWS. Why, it is Nelly! As I am a lawyer, her very voice takes forty years from my back! Stay—she shan't see me at first, lest she fly off again. This gown may serve me. Oh, Nelly, Nelly! (CROWSFOOT *hides himself behind one of the gowns spread out on a stand, r. 2 E., which he wraps about him.*)

Enter NELL GWYNNE from L. 2 E.

NELL. Dear heart! why, what a world of silk and lace! How beautiful! If it isn't enough to turn one's head to look at it. But I mustn't stop—no, Mr. Betterton gave me no hopes; and now, nothing is left me but the play and the orange basket. Well, that with honesty and my good spirits may serve me yet

—for I have a thought that I shall yet surprise 'em—that I shall yet shine upon the stage—that I shall—*(turning to gown which hides CROWSFOOT, R.)* Why, bless me—what a pretty gown! Now if I had money, this gown above all other gowns, I'd buy. What a damask—what a flow of skirt! How I should love this gown!

CROWS. *(discovering himself.)* You shall have the gown!

NELL. Ha! *(screaming and running away.)*

CROWS. Don't I tell you, you shall have the gown?

NELL. Yes, sir, but then it must be without the lining.

CROWS. Now, Nelly, let me plead—

NELL. Nay, if you're for pleading, put the gown on again. I'm sure 'tis fitter for you than your own.

CROWS. Nelly, Nelly, art not shocked to look at me?

(they advance.)

NELL. *(L.)* Oh, sir, I always was.

CROWS. *(R.)* Why didst run away from the lady?

NELL. Because I could not honestly listen to the gentleman.

CROWS. Come, thou hast known me long, and must love me.

NELL. La, sir—I've known the giants at Guildhall still longer, yet care not a pin about 'em.

CROWS. Giants, my dear, I am no giant.

NELL. No, sir.

CROWS. I—I confess—I'm not in the veriest flower of my days! What then? Still I am gay and flourishing—green and cheerful like the holly at Christmas.

NELL. To be sure, sir, and the holly is very well—but—I prefer the mistletoe.

CROWS. A challenge to battle!

NELL. Not to you. Your age exempts you from service.

CROWS. Now, Nelly, thou wouldst not throw my years in my face?

NELL. Why should I—are they not there already?

CROWS. Hast thou no gratitude?—and is not love the same?

NELL. Oh, dear no! Gratitude's a snow-ball—love's a fire—make 'em meet and they kill one another.

CROWS. Now, Nelly! *(taking her hand.)* Dear Nelly—od's life! I do doat to look in your eyes.

NELL. It says much for your courage.

CROWS. How, love—how?

NELL. Because you must see yourself there.

CROWS. Come, where hast been, Nelly, unprotected in this wicked town? Thou shouldst not be alone.

NELL. I've thought so some time, sir.

CROWS. Thou'rt a lily that needs support. What think you of a husband? (*he is seized with a cough.*)

NELL. Think, sir? (*aside.*) Now I'll tease him! Why, a good husband above all things—

CROWS. Yes, yes!

NELL. But good husbands are so scarce.

CROWS. You may light on a husband—kind—good—

NELL. I am sure of that.

CROWS. What then? After all, 'tis a match—you have found the man?

NELL. Yes, sir—and married him last week.

CROWS. Married! (*retreating, R.*)

NELL. 'Twas such a thing to be unprotected in this wicked town.

CROWS. Last week!

NELL. And being a lily, needing support, I took for a prop—

CROWS. The furies!

NELL. A handsome young mercer of Bishopsgate.

CROWS. Come, you jest, Nelly! Let me beg—see me on my knees, asking for—

(CHARLES and BERKELEY, who have been listening, come down.)

CHARLES. (c.) Ruffles and neck-bands! Thou piece of jaundiced parchment! thou antique edition of the criminal laws!

CROWS. (r. c.) Sirrah! this abuse—the law!

CHARLES. You say well—the law! Doctors' Commons, sir!

BERK. (r.) A man of your cloth and years!

CHARLES. With my own wife too!

NELL & } Wife!

CROWS. } Wife!

CHARLES. I am her injured husband. Can you deny it?

CROWS. I know not as for husband—certainly, you look the mercer.

CHARLES. See I do not furnish you with a neck-band. And you, Nelly! Oh, Nelly! Nelly!

NELL. (*aside.*) Hang the fellow! his impudence is charming!

CHARLES. After one week! What will they say of us in Bishopsgate Without—with such a leaf of black letter too—old, torn, and dog's-eared?

BERK. A title page of the statutes with nothing left but the date?

CHARLES. A collection of flaws, and each one fatal to a suit in love! But come, Nelly, let's kiss and be friends—we'll go home. (*crosses R. with NELL on his arm.*)

NELL. Home! (*aside.*) Well, let me get from my old persecutor, I warrant me I'll trick my new gallant. As you will, love; I came to Madame Charrett's about the—the—rose-coloured satin. What is to be the price, dear?

CHARLES. Why, when madame deals, cost price. (*crossing to CROWSFOOT, who approaches.*) Old gentleman, freeze in one spot—or by the honour of the Mercers' Company, I'll send you to practise in the courts below!

CROWS. But Nelly! can it be?

CHARLES. Doubt, and thou diest. Nelly! (*introducing her.*) Mistress Ellen Tissue, of the—the—

NELL. Golden Lamb!

CHARLES. Bishopsgate Without—velvets, new from Genoa, lace from France, and—

NELL. Ruffles and neck-bands at the lowest charge.

CHARLES. (*to CROWSFOOT, who follows.*) Back, old Parr! “Gregory (*to BERKELY, who comes down, L.*) out with thy blade!” If that Icelander—

CROWS. Icelander!

CHARLES. Move a foot—like a good citizen, cry *Domine, dirige nos!* and make thy sword hilts knock against his short ribs!

Exit with NELL, R.—BERKELEY turns CROWSFOOT, who is about to follow, over to L.

CROWS. But it's a lie—I know it's a lie!

BERK. What, a lie to a liveryman! (*drawing.*) 'Twould make the dagger leap from the City Arms!

CROWS. I am a lawyer—and—a—counsellor!

BERK. Be moderate—seek not to add to their great profits—the trade of sheep stealer.

CROWS. Sheep stealer!

BERK. Touch not our golden lamb! As a counsellor, thou mayest in time hope to carry off the wool-sack—but lay no finger on the fleecy hosiery of Bishopsgate Without. Back, back, I say!

Exit, R.

CROWS. I'll follow—I'll follow the girl for all that! *Exit, L.*

SCENE 3.—*Exterior of Drury Lane Theatre, in 1667.*
(1st Grooves.)

Enter CHARLES, R.

CHARLES. Od's fish! she didn't sink through the earth, or take flight over the house tops; yet, as I'm a Christian king, know I not how or where the baggage went. What an eye

she has ! the pair worth the crown jewels. I must put Berkeley on the scent.

Enter BERKELEY, R.

That girl—did she pass you ?

BERK. What ! escaped, your majesty ?

CHARLES. No hawk could be more certain of its swoop than I, when she glided through my hands like quicksilver, and left me to look at where she stood. Berkeley, you must find her.

BERK. A few golden words, your majesty, to Madame Charrett, and the game is ours. I left the old counsellor swearing most devoutly for revenge. It seems he would fain marry Nelly in earnest.

CHARLES. That would be revenge, indeed. Be it our paternal care to stay such vengeance. To the milliner's, Berkeley—you will find me in the play-house. Is not this one of the rogues ?

BERK. One of your majesty's most impudent servants, Joseph Haynes.

Enter HAYNES, L.

CHARLES. What, Joe ! hast a holiday to-day ?

HAYNES. Your majesty—

CHARLES. Hush, man ! Let my majesty rest with your modesty. Why art not playing the fool inside ?

HAYNES. Sir, I have become serious, and been turned from the troop.

CHARLES. Serious, varlet ! what, your tailor cries out for payment, and the mistress of the Roebuck points to the score ?

HAYNES. For the tailor, sir, he is nought—morality forbids me to pay him.

CHARLES. Ay, how so ?

HAYNES. Tailors were brought into the world by sin ; *ergo*, to pay a tailor, is to respect the origin of tailors. A tailor I never pay.

CHARLES. A sound, doctrinal reason. What is acted here to-day ?

HAYNES. Something of Dryden's, your majesty ; as full of heroics as its dedication is full of—

CHARLES. Lies. (*to BERKELEY.*) Poor John ! he soars and flatters with equal genius. Such poets are like the snake in the Indian mythology ; they not only fly, but creep. Learn directly why this fellow has been discharged, and let me know. (*crosses L.*) Berkeley, be vigilant ; I shall wait for you.

Exit CHARLES, L.

BERK. Call on me to-morrow, and I will hear your story.

HAYNES. If it shall please your lordship, now. 'Tis easily told.

BERK. But not heard. To-morrow, or—next day—or—next week.

HAYNES. His majesty said directly.

BERK. Which, translated from the vulgar, means one's easiest leisure.

Crosses and exit, R.

HAYNES. Even so. Yet 'twill be a rare triumph over manager Hart, to go back under the royal seal—ticketed from Whitehall. Now to Lord Buckhurst—yet with poor hopes. Nelly was not to be seen; had left the house, followed, it may be, turnspit Betterton. (*retires.*)

Enter CROWSFOOT, R.

CROWS. A great thought! ha, ha!

HAYNES. (*aside.*) Here's a lawyer merry—alack! for his clients.

CROWS. Let me see; four or five sturdy fellows, with a cool head to direct 'em—a trustworthy—(*HAYNES comes down.*) What! Joe Haynes of the King's?

HAYNES. Late of that establishment, Counsellor Crowsfoot.

CROWS. Late!

HAYNES. Late, sir. I am destitute. If necessity, and not Joe Haynes, pick a pocket, I hope I may find a friend at the sessions?

CROWS. (*aside.*) He's the very man. Joe, in all thy pranks, didst ever commit a robbery?

HAYNES. Never. Yet I have quick natural parts, and (*bowing.*) with an example before me, I might flourish.

CROWS. I mean, didst thou ever steal a woman?

HAYNES. Steal! bless you, the dear creatures never reduced me to that extremity. Yet if a valued friend—

CROWS. Listen. A mad wench, whom I want to send back to her relations—friends of mine, in the country—is at the playhouse here, as a fruit girl.

HAYNES. It isn't Orange Moll?

CROWS. Orange Moll! pshaw!

HAYNES. To carry her off would take a troop of horse, with extra trumpets to drown her screams.

CROWS. That virago! Will you undertake the job?

HAYNES. Alone?

CROWS. No, with four or five stout hands, if you know such?

HAYNES. I do.

CROWS. And trusty?

HAYNES. They bear certificates.

CROWS. Certificates!

HAYNES. Wounds go in the service. They've tasted steel of every kind, from a duke's rapier to a 'prentice's cheese-knife.

CROWS. Secure the girl—I promise twenty pounds.

HAYNES. 'Tis scarce enough. I've known a beating with a poor cudgel fetch five. Indeed, five is the standard price. Sir Charles Sedley gave it to the gentleman who licked Ned Kynaston for wearing clothes of the baronet's cut. Five's the market terms.

CROWS. And how, as in some cases, if the party's ears are cropped and his nose slit?

HAYNES. Nay, when gentlemen come to extras, 'tis left to their own delicate sense of honour. Well, I'll take your twenty pounds. Now, counsellor, you must confide. What's the girl's name?

CROWS. Curse the fellow! yet I must tell him. Ellen—Ellen Gwynne!

HAYNES. (*aside.*) So, so! this is Mrs. Snowdrop's lawyer-man! And you'd send her to her relations? Where may they live?

CROWS. Oh, (*hesitating.*) oh, Shropshire!

HAYNES. And the town? Nay, mutual confidence. Shropshire; but the town?

CROWS. Shrewsbury. I'll be at hand to point her out.

HAYNES. Are you sure she goes there as a fruit-girl?

CROWS. Certain. I've just had the news from the milliner who finds the dress. When you have secured the wench—

HAYNES. We'll bring her to the Temple—to your chambers.

CROWS. Not for the world! I've a consultation there about a case in the Ecclesiastical Court. Take her to—to the Mitre Tavern—my clerk shall be there with the money.

HAYNES. The Mitre Tavern?

CROWS. Yes! the landlord's my client. Besides, the Shropshire wagon passes the house, and can take the girl up. (*going.*

HAYNES. But you'll come to the theatre?

CROWS. I'll be there straight.—The Mitre Tavern—I shall expect you. *Exit, R.*

HAYNES. You shall expect me. Now, to earn twenty pounds, cheat a counsellor, and serve my Lord Buckhurst. *Exit, L.*

SCENE 4.—*Interior of Drury Lane Theatre. The stage forms a space at the back of the pit. A MAN discovered lighting the candle by a light attached to a wand—having finished, goes off R. 1 E.*

Enter MAJOR MOHUN and HART, L.

MOHUN. Upon my life, Hart, something must be done.

HART. Well, Mohun, isn't there our new play to-morrow, "The Conquest of Grenada?" That must take town—and, major, we have hit upon a thought for the prologue, enough of itself to fill a pit.

MOHUN. I had a thought too. What say you if we could get back Goodman?

HART. What! after he has turned highwayman?

MOHUN. That's it—he's quite the fashion. Get him to give the prologue, and advertise that he will appear with the identical pistols with which he robbed the money-broker at Finchley. Depend on't, the pistols would do more than the heroic verse.

HART. My plan is to have a fling at the other house. Nokes has lately drawn the town—and with what? Forsooth, a huge broad-brimmed hat! Now, we'll have a hat as big as a coach wheel; and in that hat the prologue shall be spoken. Here it is.

MOHUN. Why not get Joe Haynes to speak it?

HART. Haynes! That rogue is the disgrace of our calling.

Enter first PARTY OF VISITORS to the theatre, L.—a LADY AND GENTLEMEN—Two LADIES, and ONE GENTLEMAN.

MOHUN. Well, Charles, take your own way. So! the folks are dropping in.

HART. As neither you nor I act to-day, suppose we stop here, and, like thrifty managers, puff our new play among the audience for to-morrow?

ORANGE MOLL. (*without, L.*) Oranges, sweet ladies! oranges, dear gentlemen!

MOHUN. There's Orange Molly's gentle voice. How they swarm about the beldam's basket!

Enter ORANGE MOLL, L., with orange basket, Two GENTLEMEN, ONE ORANGE GIRL, ONE GENTLEMAN, and THREE LADIES, L.

MOLL. Oranges! The true Seville, by my virtue! Buy, buy my golden Spaniards! Never look, but taste, sweet gentlemen! Fair maidens, buy, and many husbands to you! Come, cavaliers, have none of you a Carolus? Major Mohun,

a good house to you! Lovely virgins, make your sweethearts buy, or never say yes for a twelvemonth! Charles Hart, your servant. Will nobody buy my Don Spaniards?

ONE GENTLEMAN and a LADY, and ONE ORANGE GIRL
enters, R.

Never look as though they were crabs! All sweet! sweet! sweet! Balls of honey! balls of honey, as I'm an honest woman! Will nobody buy of Orange Mary?

(the VISITORS cross and take their seats for the play—some pick and pay for fruit.

HART. Mary—ha, ha!

MOHUN. (to HART.) I've known her plain Moll these five-and-twenty years.

MOLL. If you have, Major Mohun, keep it to yourself—don't disgrace me with the acquaintance before company. Buy my oranges!

HART. Why here comes Betterton.

Enter BETTERTON, R.

MOLL. (L.) Yes; Manager Betterton, of the Duke's—of the Duke's! He is a gentleman.

HART. What Betterton! come to spy or to steal?

MOLL. Steal! there's little good he could steal here! No, not even if he was to run off with the managers.

HART. (to MOLL.) The foul fiend's in your tongue. Will you be still?

MOLL. As still as Charles Hart's conscience when he has done cruel murder.

BETTER. Why, when does he murder, Moll?

MOLL. Whenever he goes upon the stage—when does he not? And doesn't Charles Hart crow about his family? A descent from Shakspeare!—He may say descent; from everything to nothing, and a little lower!

MOHUN. Molly, be silent.

MOLL. As silent as little Major Mohun when the Roundheads broke into the playhouse, and Molly smuggled him out in her basket, under the oranges. To be sure that was no great matter, for who could tell his lily face from one of these? (holding up an orange.) See, between my finger and thumb, here's the little major! Foul fiend! Whoop! I'll have revenge!

HART. Why, what wilt do, Molly?

MOLL. Do! do! I'll (curtseying to BETTERTON.) go to the other house.

BETTER. Out, you slut!

Enter CHARLES and BERKELEY, L.—they mix with the VISITORS.

MOLL. Slut! I was never slut, nor spit at Whitehall. No, nor ever basted from the kitchen for embezzling sops in the pan.

Fourth PARTY enter R.—FRUIT GIRL, THREE GENTLEMEN, and TWO LADIES—TWO GENTLEMEN.

Slut! Rogues! I'll write your lives and give them to the pamphlet-sellers! Buy my oranges! buy my little yellow majors! Slut?

CHARLES. (*aside to BERKELEY.*) The wench is not here. Art sure the milliner is true?

BERK. My life on't. The girl was to be here with an orange basket.

MOLL. (*coming down to CHARLES, c.*) Buy my oranges—buy. (*aside.*) His Christian majesty, for all his plain clothes! Buy my Spaniards! Near neighbours of our blessed queen: buy, or you do not love her majesty.

CHARLES. (*L. c.*) A plague on this sybil! (*to BERKELEY, L.*) Charles, get her off. (*BERKELEY engages MOLL. HART and MOHUN come down.*)

HART. (*R. c.*) His majesty! (*bowing.*)

CHARLES. Not a word. It is my pleasure to remain unknown; see I am not intruded on. (*to MAJOR.*) So, my little Mohun, you have something new to-morrow—is it not so?

MOHUN. (*R.*) "The Conquest of Grenada," so please your—

CHARLES. We shall attend; ay, and in state. Her majesty may, perhaps, accompany us.

MOLL. (*coming down with BERKELEY to CHARLES.*) I'll be judged, if you're no Cavalier, but a Roundhead. I'll take this sweet gentleman for my witness! What! grudge sixpence a-piece for my Spaniards? Sixpence for the neighbours of her blessed majesty.

NELL GWYNNE. (*sings without, R.*) "Buy oranges."

BERK. (*to CHARLES.*) Madame Charrett is true—'tis she.

Enter NELL GWYNNE, R., as orange girl, with orange basket—she carries a mask; and FIFTH PARTY a LADY and GENTLEMEN, FOUR GENTLEMEN two and two, one FRUIT GIRL, and TWO LADIES.

NELL. (*sings.*) "Buy oranges!" Ladies and cavaliers, vouchsafe to look at my basket! Maidens, ripen my fruit

with your glances ; buy my oranges, as bright as hope, and as sweet as courtship. Though they look as hard as gold, they'll melt in the mouth like a lover's promise. Their juice is syrup, and their coats as thin as a poet's. Buy, gentlemen ; or I'll vow that, being jealous, you hate yellow even in an orange. (*goes up.*)

MOLL. What pert minnikin's this, with its lavender slip-slop?

BETTER. (*aside, r.*) It is—I'd swear to her face—the very girl !

CHARLES. (*coming down with NELLY.*) And have your oranges really all these virtues ?

NELL. (*on KING's L., aside.*) So, my gallant mercer. All, and a thousand more ; there's nothing good that may not be said of the orange. It sets special examples to elder brothers, misers, and young travellers.

CHARLES. Ay ? What example to elder brothers ?

NELL. This ; though of full age, it dwells quietly on the same branch with bud and blossom.

CHARLES. What doth it teach misers ?

NELL. That golden coats should cover melting hearts.

CHARLES. And, lastly, what may the young traveller learn of your orange ?

NELL. This much ; that he is shipped when green, that he may ripen on the voyage.

CHARLES. Prettily lectured, indeed.

(KING, BERKELEY, and NELL go up c.

MOLL. Prettily ! well, before I'd talk such snip-snip, as though my mouth was a button-hole cut in French muslin, I'd go in mourning for my tongue, and sew up my lips with black worsted ?

HART. (*to MOLL.*) Silence, Sycorax ! (ORANGE MOLL and GIRLS go up, L.—*to MOHUN.*) This is the girl for our prologue.

BETTER. (*aside.*) The king seems dazzled with the girl. I must secure her for the Duke's.

NELL. But, gentlemen ; fair gentlemen ; will no one lighten my basket ? Buy my oranges !

SONG.—NELL GWYNNE.

(*The company gather round and listen. ORANGE MOLL and the other GIRLS also come down, watching her with contempt.*)

Buy oranges !—No better sold,—

New brought in Spanish ships ;

As yellow bright as minted gold,

As sweet as ladies' lips.

Come, maidens, buy ; nor judge my fruit
 From beauty's bait—the skin ;
 Nor think like fops, with gaudy suit,
 They're dull and crude within.
 Buy oranges !

* "Buy oranges ! Buy courtiers, pray,
 " And as ye drain their juice,
 " Then, cast the poor outside away,
 " A thing that's serv'd its use ;
 " Why, courtier, pause ; this truth translate,
 " Imprinted in the rind ;
 " However gay the courtier's state,
 " 'Tis yet of orange kind.
 " Buy oranges !"

Buy oranges ! Coquetting fair,
 A sweet reproach come buy ;
 And, as the fruit ye slice and share,
 Remember with a sigh—
 A heart divided needs must cast
 The faith which is its soul ;
 If, maidens ye would have it last,
 Give none—if not the whole.

Buy oranges !

(*The bystanders applaud and go up.*)

MOLL. Well, ladies—(*to ORANGE GIRLS*)—if we are to be squealed out of our calling by an interloper ! (*imitating NELL.*)
 "Buy oranges ! Buy oranges !" (*all go up.*)

Enter CROWSFOOT, R.

NELL. (*going towards R.*) Buy my—(*hiding her face with mask.*) The counsellor ! (*retreats, L.*)

CROWS. Stay, my pretty dear ; I want to deal with you. I want to buy—

NELL. Ruffles, or—

CHARLES. (*coming down, R.*) Neckbands ?

CROWS. What, these jackanapes again ? (*aside.*) Where's Haynes ? (*KING and NELLY go up.*)

BERK. (*urging him away.*) Counsellor—counsellor—I've a suit for you, counsellor.

CROWS. I want no suit—at my chambers, I—

BERK. Nay, sir, life and death are on't.

CROWS. If 'twere your hanging, I wouldn't budge. If you were the king himself I wouldn't move.

* The second verse omitted in representation.

BERK. And if you were the lord chief justice, you shouldn't stay.

CROWS. An assault—I'll indict!

BERK. Indict—but come. (*forces him off, R.*)

NELL. (*aside.*) Now, to make my escape. (*comes down, R.C.*)

HART. (*these lines are spoken as quickly as possible, following NELL.*) If you would but step this way—

BETTER. (*to NELL.*) Permit me again to wait upon you.

MOHUN. Mr. Hart and myself are desirous—

BETTER. Nay, sirs, but I have the first claim.

HART } (*keeping BETTERTON from NELL.*) Betterton!

MOHUN. } Mr. Betterton!

NELL. Lud, gentlemen! have you found such a jewel, that you must quarrel about it?

MOLL. A jewel! A thing for candle-light; else 'twou'dn't have a shade like this! (*snatching mask from NELL's hand—to ORANGE GIRL, L.*) Here, ladies; here's a toy for an orange girl! Minx! (*imitates NELL.*) "Buy oranges!"

NELL. (*to CHARLES.*) Oh, save me from her tongue!

CHARLES. (*crosses to R. of NELL.*) Trust yourself, my little Pomona, to me: this will take us behind the scenes. Mohun, lead the way—nay, come! or that she-devil will raise the house. (*MOHUN crosses L.*)

NELL. Any where, for in truth I fear her nails.

Exit with CHARLES and MOHUN, R.

HART. (*to MOLL.*) Art not ashamed to rate the young woman?

MOLL. Woman! A chit! a baby face! If she's a woman, what am I?

Enter CALL BOY, R.

BOY. (*to HART.*) Sir, it's the time—shall the music begin?

HART. I am coming. This girl must be ours. Come Betterton.

BETTER. (*aside.*) What a fool was I to miss her! (*bell rings and music tunes behind the scenes.*) *Exit with HART, R.*

MOLL. A woman, forsooth! Why, look ye, ladies; if a mask's to make the difference, let us all be as black as Sandford's perriwig. (*puts mask to her face and walks about imitating NELL.*)

Enter HAYNES. R.

HAYNES. The counsellor says, she wears a mask—eh? (*sees MOLL.*) Here she is. (*advancing and making signs to her.*) My love! I bear a message from a lord—a nobleman—who—

MOLL. (*aside.*) He takes me for that doll! A lord! no wonder they call her Pomona. I'll trick her now.

HAYNES. (*advancing to her.*) Put your arm through mine—don't tremble, you are with an honourable gentleman.

(*Prompter's bell—music heard behind the scenes.*)

MOLL. I—I—

HAYNES. Not a word. They're going to begin the play. Hark! the music. Let us steal away quietly. Don't flutter—softly—softly—(*aside.*) and now for the Mitre and the twenty pounds. (HAYNES leads MOLL off, masked, R., as VISITORS take their seats in the pit, and the music is heard in orchestra. *The drop falls quickly.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

A C T I I.

SCENE 1.—*An Apartment in the Mitre Tavern.* Nell's basket on the floor, R.

NELL GWYNNE, CHARLES, and BERKELEY discovered at table, L.C.

NELL. (*rising.*) No, not a minute longer.

CHARLES. Why wilt not take my word?

NELL. I have taken it, and found it counterfeit. The cracked coin doesn't pass a second time.

CHARLES. But—I promise thou *shalt* go home.

NELL. So you promised when I left the theatre; how is it that you brought me here?

CHARLES. By accident.

NELL. Accident!

CHARLES. Yes; through gazing on your eyes, I somehow lost my way. I was blinded by light. Is not the excuse a fair one?

NELL. No; an owl would have made as good. Farewell.

(*going.*)

CHARLES. (*still detaining her.*) Stay! we must not part so. Come, Nelly; thou dost not know me. Now what dost think I am?

NELL. By my troth you are hardly worth a guess.

CHARLES. Try. What dost take me for?

NELL. An apothecary's 'prentice with just label Latin

enough to tell camphor from cinnamon? No; your features are not learned enough for that. A money-lender's clerk? Oh, no—that face would never get you such a place of trust. A ballad-writer? No—for though your cheek is blank enough for paper, you haven't quite a goose-quill look.

CHARLES. Come—will my face fit no honest calling? Say something.

NELL. Well, then, in despair I decide. There is a shallow neatness, a sort of brassy glitter in your air, that—I know not what you are, if not a pin-maker.

CHARLES. A pin-maker! but why a pin-maker?

NELL. Nay, I've known some pin-makers who'd see no compliment in the comparison. But if none of these, what are you?

CHARLES. A gentleman—upon my word—a gentleman.

NELL. Is that all? Farewell.

CHARLES. What would you have?—a gentleman and a soldier.

NELL. A soldier!

CHARLES. Even so. Now will you leave me?

NELL. A soldier! Well, I declare, this quite makes out a dream I had two mornings ago. You shall hear it.

CHARLES. No dreams now—another time.

NELL. Now or never. Listen; I dreamt that I was riding in a fine golden coach with the king.

CHARLES. With the king!

BERK. With the king!

NELL. You know, we do dream such strange things—with the king! Well, the coach stopped; when there came up a poor old soldier without any legs or arms; and of a sudden, he held out his hand—

CHARLES. What, without any arms?

NELL. You know it was only in a dream.

CHARLES. Yes, Nelly; but you ought to dream according to anatomy.

NELL. I say, he held out his hand—and telling us that he had no place to lay his old grey head upon, not a morsel of bread to put into his mouth—he begged for charity, while the tears came peeping into the corners of his eyes.

CHARLES. Well?

NELL. I turned round to the king—for, bless you, I was altogether at my ease, no more afraid of him than I am of you—and I said, "Charles—"

CHARLES. Charles!

BERK. (*sitting at table.*) Charles!

NELL. "Is it not a shame to let your old soldiers carry about

their scars as witnesses of their king's forgetfulness? Is it not cruel that those who for your sake—" (*unconsciously laying her hand upon the arm of CHARLES.*)

CHARLES. For my sake?

NELL. You know I'm supposing you the king.

CHARLES. Oh, ay, ay!

NELL. "Who for your sake have left some of their limbs in a strange country, should have no resting place for the limbs they have in their own?"

CHARLES. I see the end; the king relieved the soldier, and then you awoke?

NELL. No, I didn't—for I thought the coach went on towards Chelsea, and there—

CHARLES. Well, what happened at Chelsea?

NELL. There, I thought I saw a beautiful building suddenly grow up from the earth; and going in and coming out of it, just like so many bees, heaps of old soldiers, with their long red coats, and three-corner hats, and some with their dear wooden legs, and all with their rough faces looking so happy and contented—that when I looked and thought it was all my work, I felt as if I could have kissed every one of 'em round!

CHARLES. When it came to that, of course you awoke?

NELL. No, I didn't—not until I saw a place, with my picture hanging out for a sign. My head for a sign! what do you think of that?

CHARLES. Think? I can't think of the sign with the living lips before me. (*she avoids him.*) Nay, thou'rt a wild and beautiful bird!

NELL. Ay, he must be a cunning fowler who cages me.

CHARLES. I can make the bars of gold.

NELL. If you'd hold the surer, better bend one of the gold bars into a ring. No other cage, no other net; a little fable hath taught me wisdom—you shall hear it.

(BERKELEY comes down, R., to hear her sing.

SONG.—NELL GWYNNE.

"Little bird, little bird, have a care;"

Thus whisper'd a lark to her child;

"See the fowler is spreading his snare,"

What makes ye thus noisy and wild?"

"Good mother," the silly one cried,

Conceitedly trimming its wing—

"I've beauty and youth on my side—

Hang fowlers! I'll gambol and sing,

Good mother,

Hang fowlers! I'll gambol and sing."

"Little bird, little bird, not so near ;"
 In vain ! "Now too late you'll regret."
 For the poor little bird, dead with fear,
 A captive is ta'en in the net.
 The mother then sigh'd forth this truth,
 Her little one fast in the string—
 "In prisons, what's beauty and youth ?
 Fear fowlers, nor gambol nor sing."
 "Oh, mother!"
 "Fear fowlers, nor gambol nor sing!"

CHARLES. I tell thee, Nelly, I am rich, abundantly rich—what dost think now ?

NELL. Think!—that faces do not go with fortunes.

CHARLES. Thou shalt be a queen—almost !

NELL. Almost ! Saving the coronation and a few such ceremonies.

CHARLES. I'll pour heaps of wealth into your lap ; thou shalt be studded with diamonds ; thou shalt tread on nothing baser than the richest damasks ; music shall float about you ; servants shall bow before you ; all things shall come with your wish !

NELL. Let me have one now in earnest of the future.

CHARLES. Name it.

NELL. Home ! Home now, and the damask and music afterwards. I will not be delayed, I insist—

Enter STOCKFISH, R. D. 1 E.

STOCK. What cry is this in the Mitre ? Did ye call for the bill ? (NELL retires up.)

CHARLES. Bill !

STOCK. Ye have feasted right lusciously, and here is the account thereof. (gives bill to CHARLES.)

CHARLES. (*aside to BERKELEY, giving the bill.*) Pay this puritanical bagpipe.

BERK. (*aside to CHARLES, on his L.*) Your majesty—I—

CHARLES. Pay. Why dost not pay the knave ?

BERK. (*aside to CHARLES.*) Has your majesty no money ? I have none.

CHARLES. 'Oddfish ! Not my own likeness, even in copper. (takes bill.) Four pounds three and two-pence.

STOCK. Pullets are dear, and ye did command the choicest claret.

CHARLES. (*aside.*) How perplexing ! (to STOCKFISH.) You see, my friend—

STOCK. I do see, that thy belly hath not taken counsel of thy pocket.

NELL. (*coming down R., of CHARLES.*) What is all this? Oh, the bill! Well, pay the good man. (*taking bill from CHARLES.*) Four pounds three and two-pence. Why, 'tisn't a grain from one of the heaps of gold to be poured into my lap.

CHARLES. No money to pay my score! A pretty incident i'faith? Now if Nelly's life be ever writ, be assured this story therein will have a place. (*to STOCKFISH.*) You see, both myself and friend have forgotten our purses.

NELL.. If you have no money, leave as a surety one of the diamonds with which I am to be studded; a very little one will serve the reckoning.

CHARLES. (*aside.*) I'd almost give one from my crown to be well out of this scrape!

NELL. I'm sure the charges are most reasonable. (*reading bill.*) "Three pullets, five and fourpence." You never bought them cheaper at market. A vension pasty, three and two-pence.' How deer's flesh can be sold for the money, I know not; unless indeed, 'tis stolen from one of the royal parks.

CHARLES. (*aside.*) In which case, certainly, the pasty should come to me for nothing.

NELL. "Sugar-sops and fish, two and sixpence;" which with claret, sauce, tarts, ale, bread, and wax candles, amount exactly to four pounds three and two-pence of his majesty's current money.

CHARLES. Certainly, of his majesty's money. (*aside.*) If his majesty had it.

NELL. As they say in the play book, "pay the Jew his principal and let him go."

STOCK. I am no Jew, but a plain going, simple spoken, guileless Christian! nevertheless, I will go, on the receipt of my principal.

NELL. (*to CHARLES.*) Now, my good diamond merchant!

CHARLES. (*to STOCKFISH.*) The fact is, I must make a friend of you.

STOCK. Not on credit. If ye do not pay, ye shall be locked up in the roundhouse forthwith.

NELL. (*to CHARLES.*) Give the man your place of residence, and let him call for the money.

STOCK. (*crosses to CHARLES.*) Have you a reputable place of dwelling?

CHARLES. I—I—(*aside to BERKELEY.*) Answer for me. (*goes up stage laughing.*)

BERK. (*crosses R. C.*) My good fellow, never mind the dwelling. Suffer my friend to depart; I will remain in your custody until the money arrives.

STOCK. May I be sure?

CHARLES. (*coming down.*) Religiously sure ; besides, I'll reward you with—

NELL. Diamonds—richest damask—and music floating about him.

STOCK. (*opening door, l. 2 E.*) If ye open yonder door, a passage will lead ye to my master's private room ; he will doubtless agree.

CHARLES. Dull blockhead, (*takes up his hat.*) why didst not say so before ? (*pointing to an inner room, l. 2. E.*) That door ?

STOCK. That door !

CHARLES and BERKELEY enter the room, L. 2. E., when STOCKFISH immediately closes and locks the door upon them.)

NELL. You never mean to make prisoners ?—

CHARLES. (*knocking at door.*) Why, drawer, that door is locked !

STOCK. Barred and bolted—and so is this. (*bolting the door.*)

CHARLES. Varlet ! what is't ye mean—to cheat us ?

STOCK. No ; I mean that ye should not cheat me. (*going.*)

NELL. You will never be so barbarous—you cannot !

STOCK. I can—I will ! Exit door, r. 1 E.

NELL. (*CHARLES knocks.*) Patience, prisoners, your keeper is gone.

CHARLES. The rascal ! I'll tear the house about his ears.

NELL. Don't begin these two minutes, for then I shall be out of it.

CHARLES. Nelly, thou wouldest not leave me ?

NELL Leave you ! (*CROWSFOOT heard without, r. 1 E.*) The counsellor again ! Oh, my fate ! (*to CHARLES.*) I have it—remain quiet but for a while, and I'll release you.

Enter CROWSFOOT, door, r. 1 E.

CROWS. She's there ! she's safe !—she's—(*seeing her.*) Nelly !

NELL. Sir !

CROWS. (*aside.*) She doesn't look angry—she doesn't storm at being carried off ! I own I have been violent.

NELL. Have you, sir ?

CROWS. I was afraid I might have a little agitated you.

NELL. Oh dear, no, sir. You judge yourself too rashly. (*aside.*) What can he mean ?

CROWS. But now, now we're alone, with not a soul to—

CHARLES. (*knocking at door.*) Nelly, Nelly !

CROWS. Your name—who's that ?

BERK. (*knocking within.*) Nelly !

CROWS. Another ! why, they know you ! Who are they ? How came they here ? Speak !

NELL They—they came with me.

CROWS. With you?

NELL. That is, they brought me here; certainly, against my will.

CROWS. (*aside.*) Oh, I see; they're Joe Haynes's journey-men. No more of that, sweet Nelly; no reproaches.

BERK. (*knocking.*) Nelly, have you got the money?

CROWS. Money, what money?

NELL. If you must know, money I was going to borrow to pay the gentlemen's score; for which they are now locked up.

CROWS. Score! What's the amount?

NELL. Four pounds three shillings and two-pence. Here's the bill. (*giving it.*)

CROWS. (*reading bill.*) "Pullets, tongue, claret!" (*aside.*) Well, for ruffians who live by their cudgels, they've palates for lords! And you'd pay for the feast?

NELL. I would.

CROWS. What, then, you bear no malice towards the rogues?

NELL. They deceived me, certainly; but what's the use of malice?

CROWS. That's well: go to your room; and, for fear you should be seen, don't budge without your mask. You shall pay the bill—here, here's my purse. (*she refuses.*) What! wilt not borrow of me? Why wilt not take my purse, and with it my hand and heart?

NELL. Because the money I might repay, but for the hand and heart, they must fain die creditors.

CROWS. Not so—not so! Take the purse.

BERK. (*within.*) Nelly!

NELL. (*aside.*) Yet there is no other way.

CROWS. Take it.

BERK. (*within.*) Hast got the money?

NELL. (*taking the purse.*) Yes, I've got it.

CROWS. And now to seal the loan—one kiss—one.

Approaches NELLY, who runs under his arms to R., and meets STOCKFISH, who enters, R. 1 E.

STOCK. Did you call?

NELL. The gentleman's bill is—

STOCK. Four pounds three shillings and twopence.

NELL. (*imitating STOCKFISH.*) Have you written in a fair, round, publican hand, the receipt thereto?

STOCK. Ay!

NELL. (*counting money into his hand.*) One—two—three—four. There then, is your money—there, counsellor, is your purse—what I have taken I will return.

STOCK. And here is the receipt—here the key.

CROWS. Which I will hold. Come here!

(*takes STOCKFISH aside.*)

NELL. (*going to door, L 2 E.*) The bill paid! Now, will I turn the key upon myself, watch my opportunity, and then, good bye, counsellor. *Enters a room in flat*

CROWS. (*to STOCKFISH.*) Fail not, but hasten the coach.

Exit STOCKFISH, R. 1 E.

Well, the feast's paid for—the gluttonous varlets! and here's the key to let the gaol-birds fly. Nelly! (*looking about.*) Oh, gone to her room! All the better, I'll—

Enter JOE HAYNES, R. 1 E.

HAYNES. So, counsellor, I've found you! I've been running all over the town after you; here is the wench! Where's the twenty pounds? Not a word—come!

CROWS. There, (*giving it.*) you have the money.

HAYNES. And in that room (*pointing to door, R. 2 E.*) you have the stolen goods. (*listening at door.*) Why, bless me, she's surely asleep. Hark! you may hear her snore.

CROWS. Snore! you profane villain! Begone—stop! The money has been easily earned? You haven't had much trouble?

HAYNES. No. The business was managed very quietly and soberly.

CROWS. Quietly and soberly! What, after so much tongue and claret?

HAYNES. Claret! tongue! What romantic things are these?

CROWS. Such things your assistants have consumed; such things I have paid for! Here's the bill—here's the receipt; (*giving them.* CHARLES and BERKELEY knock violently at door.) and there's your companions knocking to get out of limbo.

HAYNES. I forswear all companions. "I am myself alone."

CROWS. If there be a blush in you, I'll bring it to your face. (CHARLES knocks.) Coming, gentlemen, coming! Now, knave, own thyself exposed, for I will confront you with—

(*opens door, L. 2 E.*)

CHARLES and BERKELEY run out,

the devils that haunt me!

CHARLES. (*aside to HAYNES.*) Hush! What, counsellor! become gaoler at the Mitre!

CROWS. (L.) Mercers, forsooth! I thought they were fellows who lived by cudgels and cold steel. (*to HAYNES.*) Above all else, what fiend made you employ these?

HAYNES. Employ! Let the gentlemen speak for themselves; did I?

CHARLES. Of course, you employed us.

(*next to him on his L.*

CROWS. (*to HAYNES.*) Can you deny it now?

HAYNES. (*bowing to CHARLES,*) Now, certainly not.

CROWS. A supper for *these*! But I won't pay.

HAYNES. You have paid. Gentlemen, acknowledge the counsellor's liberality. Here (*gives them to CHARLES.*) is the bill—and here the receipt.

CHARLES. Many thanks, most liberal sir!

(CHARLES and BERKELEY *bow ceremoniously.*

CROWS. Begone, fellows, begone; you have your hire! Share the twenty pounds and vanish! (*aside.*) If they stop I shall go mad. She shan't stir while they are here.

(*watches room door, R.*

CHARLES. (*to HAYNES.*) Hire! twenty pounds! what does old frailty mean!

HAYNES. Your majesty, a simple love bargain, for carrying off a damsel—one Mistress Ellen Gwynne. I brought her from the theatre, and placed her in that room. (*points to door, R. 2 E.*

CHARLES. Tut, man! you dream. I myself escorted pretty Ellen to this house.

HAYNES. Then, your majesty, I have blundered rarely, for I vow I brought somebody.

CHARLES. Ha, ha, ha! No matter; 'twill be all the same to the counsellor. But stay—the real Nelly is somewhere here—he may trick us, after all.

HAYNES. Never fear, your majesty; you shall yet see some sport—a scene from a Shropshire comedy.

CHARLES. A Shropshire comedy!

HAYNES. A brief time will prepare the actors, and then—

CROWS. (*comes down, L.*) Will you never go?

CHARLES. We are gone, most liberal sir! If, at a future time, there should be another lady to carry off—

HAYNES. (*shaking the bag of money.*) Our terms are very moderate.

BERK. And secrecy inviolable.

HAYNES. Cudgelling performed in every variety, and ears cropped—

CHARLES. With perfect satisfaction to the employer, and according to the last new fashion.

Exeunt all but CROWSFOOT, R. D. 1 E.

CROWS. They're gone—yes, there's their last step upon the staircase—I'll make sure of the door. (*bolts it.*) Now for my little prisoner. (*goes to R. D. 2 E.*) Od's, she has locked herself

in—the dear flutterer! frightened, I dare say. My dear—my dear, you may come out now. (*listening.*) Why, as that rascal said, there is a sound like snoring, to be sure; but no, it can't be. Nelly—Nelly! (*NELLY opens L. D. and is coming out, but retreats on seeing CROWSFOOT—she watches him from door.*) She comes! I hear her timid partridge foot run along the boards.

Enter ORANGE MOLL, masked, from room R. 2 E.

Come along, my love! sit down—sit down.

MOLL. (*aside.*) The old villain! and is this the lord?

CROWS. Masked! never mind before me—put it away—let me look on the light. (*MOLL refuses.*) Well, if you won't. Why don't you speak to me? Come, sit—sit. (*places two old-fashioned high-backed chairs—they sit.*) Speak, love! (*MOLL coughs violently.*) Dear heart! what a cold. Ha! those nasty thin shoes. But I have such presents for you, Nelly. (*MOLL coughs.*) A glass of wine, Nelly! here's a glass of claret—and it is paid for.

(*gives MOLL wine—she drinks—NELLY creeps round to MOLL's chair, whilst CROWSFOOT is engaged at table—MOLL seeing her is about to exclaim.*)

NELL. (*aside to MOLL.*) Hush! You shall have all the presents. (*stands behind MOLL's chair, unseen by CROWSFOOT.*)

CROWS. (*taking glass from MOLL.*) How do you feel now?

NELL (*from behind chair.*) Another glass!

CROWS. To be sure. (*fills and gives to MOLL, she drinks.*) There—it revives you?

NELL. I think it does—I'll take another. (*MOLL affects repugnance to NELL.*)

CROWS. Well said; I like this; it shows no silly squeamishness. You won't take another glass?

NELL. Yes I will; nay, you may bring the bottle.

CROWS. No, Nelly; I can only spare another half glass? There, (*sits.*) and now, Nelly, (*draws his chair closer to MOLL's.*) What would you ask of me, what can I do for you? Ask and have! I'm so delighted! Is there anything in the world you want? Speak! speak! speak! (*taking out his watch.*) 'Tis growing late.

NELL. That's a very pretty watch of yours counsellor; a lady's watch, is it not?

CROWS. My dear first wife's—rest her soul! But 'tis yours, Nelly. (*gives watch to MOLL.*)

NELL. What a beautiful ring on your finger!

CROWS. A mere nothing—a mere nothing. Now Nelly!

NELL. I never did see so pretty a ring.

CROWS. Hang it! Say no more about it! (*gives MOLL the ring.*) Now, Nelly; now dove, let us talk about—

NELL. The presents—the presents you spoke of.

CROWS. Trifles; a gown and—let us talk.

NELL. The gown now, and then talk.

CROWS. I obey—I'll fetch them myself. (*rises, and as CROWSFOOT gets up and is crossing towards door, MOLL moves the chair round so as to keep her face to him the better to hide NELL behind—aside.*) At the same time I can hurry the coach and bear her like a conqueror off. (*aloud.*) I'll fetch them—I'll fetch them! I shan't be long, my soul.

(CROWSFOOT goes off—they come forward, laughing heartily.

MOLL. (*embracing NELL.*) Kiss me, child! Pretty darling! what wit she has! Oh, Nelly, how may one woman be deceived in another! Now, the stars pardon me my bad words to you!

NELL. I forgive them; only tell me how you came here?

MOLL. I suffered myself to be led away in your name. Oh, my dear baby! you don't know the wickedness of this town—I do. I was shown into that room, where I must have fallen asleep. But how, my innocent, did you come here?

NELL. I thought I was going home, when I was cheated to this place.

MOLL. Cheated! Well, let's be friends; though you take half my orange custom at the theatre.

NELL. Never fear; I am no longer your rival. I have obtained all I ventured for; for to-day I speak a prologue at the theatre!

MOLL. A prologue! why—hush!—

NELL. The counsellor! Hide, and this time leave him to me.

MOLL. But, my dear angel, the gown—

NELL. Gown and all shall be yours. Quick! (*MOLL retires into room, R. 2 E.*)

Enter CROWSFOOT with a square deal box—he fastens door, R. 1 E.

CROWS. Here it is, Nelly! What, (*puts box down.*) taken off thy mask? that's well.

NELL. What gown can it be?

CROWS. What gown? the gown you admired at Madame Charrett's!

NELL. Why, you have never bought it?

CROWS. Bought it to surprise you; and head-gear to suit. Thou shalt dress like an empress, Nelly. See, (*taking gown from box.*) here's the gown! (*MOLL comes down between NELL and CROWSFOOT.*) Here it is, be happy and take it.

MOLL. (*twitching it away.*) I will!

CROWS. In the devil's name, what witch is this? *Witch!*
 MOLL. (*taking off her mask.*) Witch! no more a witch than thou'rt a conjuror.

CROWS. (*R.*) That hag of the pit, Orange Moll!

MOLL. Hag! why, thou superannuated pounce box! thou piece of faded red tape! thou nothing made! something by a wig! Hag! pah!

CROWS. I shall go off in a spasm! how got she here?

MOLL. How? and don't the blushes burn your wrinkles to ask? Wasn't I carried off?

CROWS. I—I— Come, Nelly, 'tis nearly the time that—the time—what's o'clock? (*looking doubtfully at NELL and MOLLY.*)

MOLL. (*taking out watch.*) Seven minutes to two, by the watch of your dear first wife. (*putting it back carefully.*)

CROWS. Watch! ring! robbery! Jade, I'll hang you—I'll—
 (*violent knocking at door, R. 1 E.*)

STOCKFISH. (*without.*) Counsellor—counsellor! There'll be murder.

CROWS. Is Beelzebub making holiday? what next?

(NELL opens door—knocking without.)

Enter STOCKFISH, R. 1 E.

STOCK. Flee! flee, or ye are a dead mad! The Shropshire wagon is come in!

CROWS. D—n the Shropshire wagon! what of that?

STOCK. And in it seven stout young men, who clamour and cry for you.

NELL. For the counsellor—for what?

STOCK. For their sister, whom, as they complain, he hath conveyed away.

CROWS. (*aside.*) Shropshire! can I by accident have stumbled on the truth? Why, Nelly, where are you from?

NELL. (*R.*) Shropshire, sir!

MOLL. (*L.*) I'm Shropshire too!

CROWS. (*to NELL.*) And have you any brothers?

NELL. Seven.

MOLL. Just my number.

STOCK. Savage and cruel do they look—and they vow wrathfully against thy bones.

NELL. Just like 'em—my brothers are dragoons.

MOLL. So are mine! Brother Tom once killed a butcher!

STOCK. Some of them do carry cudgels as thick as my arm, and some—

CROWS. Well?

STOCK. A little thicker! If they do find ye with their sister, they will slaughter ye.

NELL. (*clinging to CROWSFOOT.*) But I'll never leave you.

MOLL. (*clinging to him*) No—nor I—never.
 CROWS. (*trying to shake them off*) You shall leave me! I
 don't want you! I don't know! (*knocking without, R.*)

HAYNES. (*without, R.*) We will go up—we'll ha' his life!

STOCK. What a shocking thing 'twill be—

CROWS. What?

STOCK. To have a crowner's inquest at the Mitre!
 (*knocking continued—voices without, R.*)

VOICES. We won't be stopped—we'll ha' his life!

CROWS. Put me anywhere! do anything with me! My
 character! my bones!

NELL. The only chance, counsellor—get into the gown!
 (*taking gown from box*)

CROWS. What! turn woman!

NELL. Or be cudgelled for a man.

CROWS. Give it to me! oh, that I were in the Temple!

(*NELL and MOLL hastily dress CROWSFOOT in gown and
 head-dress—knocking continued.*)

NELL. There—pull this well over your head.

MOLL. And be sure to walk pretty and tripping like one
 of us.

NELL. Here they come. (*STOCKFISH whispers NELL*) A
 trick, indeed!

*Enter JOE HAYNES, and two others disguised in smock frocks,
 as PEASANTS, at door, R. 1 E.*

HAYNES. (*speaking as he enters*) Giles, Dick, and John—
 stay there and watch below.

ALL. Where be he—where be he?

HAYNES. We'll beat 'un like a sheaf o' corn.

STOCK. As I'm a man of truth, he whom you seek is not
 here.

ALL. Where be sister? where be sister, then!

HAYNES. (*to NELL and MOLL*) You bean't she—nor—why,
 no! (*seizing CROWSFOOT*) Yes, spite of all her Lunnun rags,
 I do know her! here she be! here, brothers, be poor lost
 Susan!

CROWS. (*aside*) Susan!

HAYNES, &c. (*shaking cudgels at CROWSFOOT*) Oh, Susey,
 Susey!

NELL. My good people, this lady is a friend of mine—she's
 not your sister.

MOLL. My own cousin!

HAYNES. (*to CROWSFOOT*) Deny thine own flesh and
 blood! (*they all seize CROWSFOOT*)

CROWS. Murder!

NELL. Mercy! you'll kill the young woman.

Enter CHARLES and BERKELEY, R. 1 E.

CHARLES. Shame, friends ! What was ~~her~~ ^{HAYNES} a woman? (HAYNES takes off CROWSFoot's head-dress.) The counsellor let me congratulate you, learned sir.

CROWS. Congratulate! (all laugh) By ~~her~~ ^{HAYNES} lovey mandate, to ~~you~~ ^{NELL} promotion sit so gracefully.

CROWS. (tearing off gown.) To be gulled—robbed! To pay for suppers—

CHARLES. Four pounds and odd—Gregory, return the amount. (BERKELEY puts purse into CROWSFoot's hand.)

CROWS. If I could persuade her to—Nelly—Nelly. (NELL turns away.) Tricked—exposed! (all laugh.) I'll wage war with all womankind—I'll confine my practice to strolls against 'em, and spend the rest of my days in persecuting the frailties of the whole sex. Oh, woman! woman!

Runs off. ¹ ~~they~~ ^{the} PARTY retire up—MOLL sits at table drinking.

NELL. Ha, ha! Poor counsellor. Now to make my escape.

CHARLES. What, Nelly, art running after the lawyer?

NELL. Indeed, you must not detain me.

CHARLES. Why, then, I see it; thou'rt an antiquarian in love, and fairly taken with the last century. In truth, now, where wouldst go?

NELL. In truth, to the theatre. You'll never guess for what? I am to speak the prologue. Let me go, I pray!

CHARLES. You shall go, and I will be at the theatre too.

NELL. (R.) Yet I'm so frightened!

CHARLES. Never fear; you may see a friend there, be certain, you may; and, with such assurance, kind-hearted, good-natured, sprightly Nelly, fare ye well. Fortune plays a blind game, or she had taken better care of you. But courage! I tell you I and some friends will be at the house.

NELL. Why, is't a holiday with the Mercer's company?

CHARLES. Nelly, if thou shouldst see me, yet seeing, miss the mercer, then—

NELL. Must I die for the loss? What then?

CHARLES. Then, own with mighty John, that

"Princes may retire whene'er they please,

"And breathe free air from out their palaces;

"They go sometimes unknown to shun their state;

"And then 'tis manners not to know or wait."

NELL. What is all this?

CHARLES. Four lines from the new play to-night; mark them, and learn the wisdom they advise. And so, again, courage, Nelly, courage and success!

(*Exeunt CHARLES and BERKELEY, R. 1 E.*)

Next scene. We meet again, we meet never more;

Enter CHARLES and BERKELEY, R. 1 E.

CHARLES. Shame, friends ! What, cudgel a woman ?
(HAYNES takes off Crowsfoot's head-dress.) The counsellor ! let me congratulate you, learned sir.

CROWS. Congratulate !

CHARLES. On your new silk gown. Never did promotion sit so gracefully.

CROWS. (tearing off gown.) To be gulled—robbed ! To pay for suppers—

CHARLES. Four pounds and odd—Gregory, return the amount. (BERKELEY puts purse into Crowsfoot's hand.)

CROWS. If I could persuade her to—Nelly—Nelly. (NELL turns away.) Tricked—exposed ! (all laugh.) I'll wage war with all womankind—I'll confine my practice to snits against 'em, and spend the rest of my days in persecuting the frailties of the whole sex. Oh, woman ! woman !

Runs off R. 1 E.—the PARTY retire up—MOLL sits at table, drinking.

NELL. Ha, ha ! Poor counsellor. Now to make my escape.

CHARLES. What, Nelly, art running after the lawyer ?

NELL. Indeed, you must not detain me.

CHARLES. Why, then, I see it ; thou'rt an antiquarian in love, and fairly taken with the last century. In truth, now, where wouldst go ?

NELL. In truth, to the theatre. You'll never guess for what ? I am to speak the prologue. Let me go, I pray !

CHARLES. You shall go, and I will be at the theatre too.

NELL. (R.) Yet I'm so frightened !

CHARLES. Never fear ; you may see a friend there ; be certain, you may ; and, with such assurance, kind-hearted, good-natured, sprightly Nelly, fare ye well. Fortune plays a blind game, or she had taken better care of you. But, courage ! I tell you I and some friends will be at the house.

NELL. Why, is't a holiday with the Mercer's company ?

CHARLES. Nelly, if thou shouldst see me, yet seeing, miss the mercer, then—

NELL. Must I die for the loss ? What then ?

CHARLES. Then, own with mighty John, that

" Princes may retire whene'er they please,
" And breathe free air from out their palaces,
" They go sometimes unknown to shun their state,
" And then 'tis manners not to know or wait."

NELL. What is all this ?

CHARLES. Four lines from the new play to night ; mark them, and learn the wisdom they advise. And so, again, courage, Nelly, courage and success !

(Exeunt CHARLES and BERKELEY, R. 1 E.)

HAYNES. And now to return our dresses here to the wardrobe, for again I am one of the theatre.

NELL. What! you?

HAYNES. By royal mandate from the king. Let's haste; for to day their majesties in full state do honour to Mr Dryden's new play.

NELL. Lud a mercy! "The Conquest of Grenada?"

HAYNES. The same.

MOLL. (*staggering forward, L.*) Why, bless me, child! Thou'rt white as chalk!

NELL. Well I may be—I have to speak the prologue; and before the King and Queen! My gracious!

HAYNES. (c.) What are you the new comer the managers are mad about? You the heroine of the great hat?

NELL. I! Manager Hart would make me promise. But I have been so teased! I have hardly looked at the words. What shall I do?

HAYNES. Hope, and all will be well.

NELL. Say you so? Why, then, good friends come to the theatre, and hear me, if there yet be time, rehearse the prologue.

Exit R. 1 E.

MOLL. Joseph—Mr. Haynes—you brought me here—pray take me back again.

(HAYNES leads MOLL off—all *Exeunt, R. 1 E.*)

SCENE 2.—*A lobby of the King's Theatre. (1st grooves.)*

Enter HART in full dress, L.

HART. (*looking at watch.*) If the girl, this Nell Gwynne should disappoint us after all!

Enter MAJOR MOHUN, L.

MOHUN. My dear Hart, the girl is come! Though, indeed, half dead with fear for the event.

HART. We'll have her run through the verse at once. Where's Dryden?

MOHUN. He's behind, admiring the big hat; and, with the prophetic fury of a poet, vows it will extinguish Nokes for ever. In sober truth, 'tis a beaver for Atlas.

Enter JOE HAYNES, L.

HART. Mr. Haynes, you are welcome once again; yet mind, no more bells, Joe. But time hastens; let us go and encourage the new comer. (*flourish of trumpets without.*)

MOHUN. Their majesties!

HART. Nay, then, we must even trust to fortune; for there

is no time for rehearsal. Away, gentlemen ; away, all to your places! Come, Mohun to light the king to his box.

(*Flourish of trumpets. Exeunt MOHUN with HART and HAYNES, L. Trumpets and music continued, when*)—

Re-enter HART and MOHUN lighting CHARLES and the QUEEN, with GUARDS, LORDS, and LADIES in waiting. ATTENDANTS, &c. &c.; they cross the stage. L. Procession—FOUR YEOMEN of GUARD with halberds. HART and MOHUN with lighted candles bowing on KING CHARLES, leading the QUEEN. —BERKELEY—FOUR LADIES—FOUR LORDS—FOUR YEOMEN of GUARDS two and two—they go off, R.

SCENE 3.—Interior of King's Theatre. *The royal box, in which are their MAJESTIES, &c. Music, "Britons Strike Home."*

The bell is rung, the curtains open in the middle, and enter NELL, "in a broad-brimmed hat and waist belt."

NELL. “This jest was first of the other house’s making ;
 “And, five times tried, has never failed of taking :
 “For, ’twere a shame a poet should be killed
 “Under the shelter of so broad a shield—
 “This is that hat whose very sight did win ye
 “To laugh and clap as though the devil were in ye ;
 “As then for Nokes, so now I hope you’ll be
 “So dull to laugh once more for love of me.
 “I’ll write—”

(recognizing CHARLES.)

What ! he—the King ! the words are flown.
 For Dryden’s syllables, pray take my own. (*let’s hat fall.*)

First let me ask that niceness may not halt
 With eager eyes, to scan out every fault ;
 And miss, with venal look, those streaks of light,
 Which fortune only would not have more bright.
 Of good and ill all character is made ;
 The good accept—the rest cast into shade.
 Of some we’d shew (if so our hopes might draw,)
 The moral amber, with nor grub nor straw ;
 Would take away th’ unseemly gnats and flies,
 And keep the prettiness that glads all eyes :
 This our design ; if granted, may I ask
 Your hands and wishes for th’ attempted task ?

Band plays "Britons Strike Home,"

CURTAIN.



Nell Gwynne.

CROWSFOOT. Spend the rest of my Days in persecuting
the frailties of the whole sex! oh, woman!
woman! (runs off.)

Act 2. Scene 1.