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William Wycherley

Complete Plays

Series Eleven

The Complete Plays of

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY

(1641-1716)

Contents

Version 1

The Complete Plays of

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY

By Delphi Classics, 2020

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Complete Plays of William Wycherley

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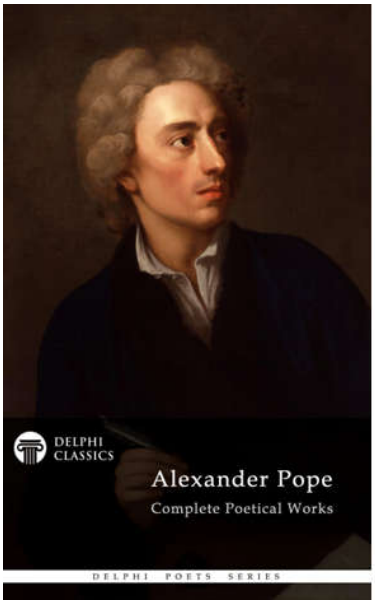

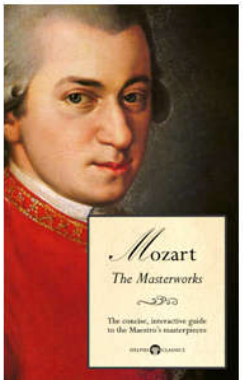

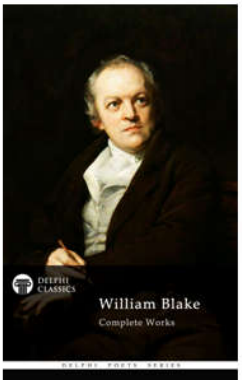

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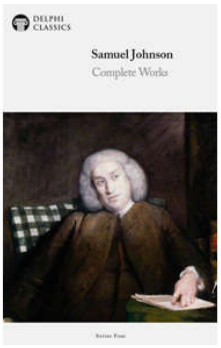

The Plays

Clive, a village in Shropshire — Wycherley's birthplace

Love in a Wood (1671)

EDITED BY W. C. WARD, 1893

UNEXPURGATED EDITION

A prominent dramatist of the Restoration period, William Wycherley was born at Clive near Shrewsbury, Shropshire and baptised on 8 April 1641 at Whitchurch, Hampshire. He was the son of Daniel Wycherley and Bethia, daughter of William Shrimpton. The Wycherley family was settled on a moderate estate of about £600 a year and Daniel Wycherley was employed in the service of the Marquess of Winchester. Wycherley spent three years of his adolescence in France, where he was sent at the age of fifteen to be educated on the banks of the Charente. While in France, he converted to Roman Catholicism. He returned to England shortly before the restoration of King Charles II, studying at Queen's College, Oxford, where Thomas Barlow was provost. Under Barlow's influence, Wycherley returned to the Church of England.

Enjoying the life of a fine gentleman, at a time of general loose living and low morality, Wycherley appears to have had a straightforward attitude to life, earning him the sobriquet of "Manly Wycherley". In time, he left Oxford and took up residence at the Inner Temple, which he had initially entered in October 1659, but he gave little attention to studying law and had left the chambers by 1670. He served in Ireland in 1662 as a soldier with the Earl of Ancram's Regiment of Guards and in 1664 he was attached to a diplomatic mission with Sir Richard Fanshawe in Madrid, where he claimed to have fought in the Second Anglo-Dutch War in 1665.

For a man that had lived a chequered life of experiences, it would appear that only pleasure and the stage were his enduring interests. In 1671 he produced his first play, *Love in a Wood*, which was performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. It was published the following year. Though Wycherley boasted of having written the play at the age of nineteen, before going to Oxford, it is likely untrue. The critic Thomas Babington Macaulay identifies several problematic allusions in the play — namely, references to gentlemen's periwigs, to guineas, to the vests which Charles ordered to be worn at court and to the Great Fire of London — all revealing that the comedy could not have been written prior to Wycherley's time at Oxford.

Nonetheless, *Love in a Wood; or, St. James's Park* won instant acclaim for Wycherley, as he was taken up by Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, whose favours he shared with Charles II, and he was admitted to the circle of wits at court. The main plot concerns the adventures and trials of Valentine and Christina, a pair of idealised lovers. Valentine, who had fled England for France after wounding a man in a duel, has furtively returned and is staying with his friend, Vincent. Ranger, another friend, has met Christina by chance while investigating the activities of his own mistress, Lydia. Though innocent, Christina has now become the object of Ranger's desire, which he has hastened to tell Vincent. Valentine concludes that Christina has been untrue and five acts of the expected misunderstandings and confusions are needed to convince him that his jealousy is unfounded…

William Wycherley by Sir Peter Lely, c. 1668

Portrait of Barbara Villiers by Sir Peter Lely, c. 1666. Barbara Palmer, 1st Duchess of Cleveland (1640-1709) was perhaps the most notorious of the many mistresses of King Charles II of England, by whom she had five children, all of them acknowledged and subsequently ennobled.

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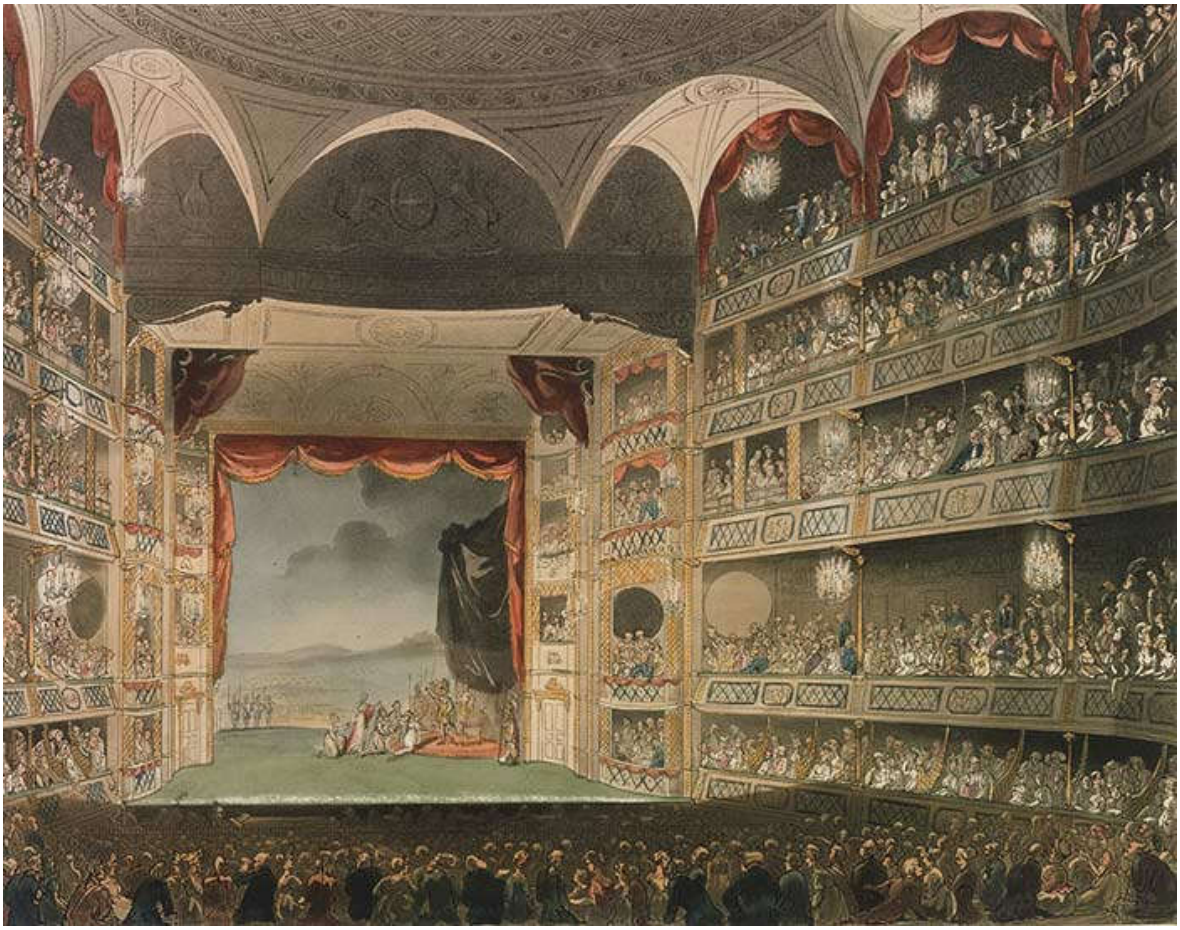
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in 1809 — this play was first performed here in 1671.



The interior of the theatre, c. 1808

The theatre in more recent times

LOVE IN A WOOD; OR ST. JAMES'S PARK.

—— Excludit sanos Helicone poetas
Democritus.[1] — Horat.

WYCHERLEY INFORMED POPE that he wrote his first comedy. *Love in a Wood*, at the age of nineteen — *i.e.* in the year 1659-60. If this statement be accurate, the play must have undergone very considerable alterations previous to its production on the stage; for not only do we discover in it occasional allusions to events of later years, but the whole piece displays an intimate acquaintance with life in the metropolis scarcely commensurate with the opportunities of a youth who, from the age of fifteen, when he was sent into France, to that of twenty, when he became a student at Oxford, can have passed but a few weeks, at the most, in London. From the *Biographia Britannica* we learn that Wycherley returned from France shortly before the Restoration; from Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses* that he became a fellow commoner of Queen's College, Oxford, also "a little before the Restoration of Charles II., but wore not a gown, only lived in the provost's lodgings," and "was entered in the public library (the Bodleian) under the title of philosophiæ studiosus in July, 1660." In the *Fasti Oxonienses*, however, the following entry occurs under the year 1660: "In the month of July this year Will. Wicherley became sojourner in Oxon for the sake of the public library." We are at liberty, therefore, to conclude that between the date of his return to England and the following July, part, at least, of our author's time may have been spent in London, where he may possibly have composed the first draught of his comedy, and where, at all events, his quick observation would furnish him with material sufficient for a first draught.

The year 1672 has been universally determined as that of the first performance of *Love in a Wood*; I believe, nevertheless, incorrectly. We are as certain as we can be, in the absence of direct evidence, that Wycherley's second play, *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*, was first brought upon the stage in 1671.[2] Now there is little doubt that *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* had been preceded by *Love in a Wood*, for not only do the authorities generally concur in assigning an earlier date to the production of the latter play, but Wycherley, in dedicating it to the Duchess of Cleveland, refers pointedly to himself as a "new author." Further in the dedication we find that her Grace had honoured the poet by going to see his comedy twice together, *during Lent*, and had been pleased, thereupon, to command from him a copy of the play, with which he takes occasion to offer the dedicatory epistle. These were not the days of long runs, even for the most successful dramas, nor are we likely to err in assuming that the Duchess was present at an early performance of the piece which she distinguished with her favour; or that Wycherley prefixed her title to a comedy newly brought upon the stage, rather than to one which had already been for some time the property of the public, and which had been revived, as must then have been the case, before the Duchess had seen it. Note, also, that the dedication is addressed to the Duchess of Cleveland by that title. In Lent, 1670, Barbara Palmer was Countess of Castlemaine: she was created Duchess of Cleveland on the 3rd of August in the same year. Considering then that the piece was certainly performed during Lent, that it cannot have been produced later than 1671, and that the Duchess to whom it was

inscribed enjoyed not that title until the autumn of 1670, we may conclude, with tolerable security, that the first performance of *Love in a Wood* took place some time during the spring of 1671.

Genest indeed, supposes it to have been brought out by the King's Company after their removal to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields.[3] Their own house in Drury Lane having been destroyed by fire in January, 1672, they opened, on the 26th of February following, the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, which had been untenanted since the migration of the Duke's Company to Dorset Gardens in the preceding November, with a representation of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wit without Money*. This was succeeded, in order, by *Arviragus and Philicia* and Dryden's *Marriage à la Mode*, after which, Genest thinks, *Love in a Wood* was produced. But, on this supposition, the first performance of *Love in a Wood* must have taken place later than that of *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*, and in that case it seems hardly probable that Wycherley should describe himself as a *new* author in the dedication to the former play. Moreover, the prologue to Wycherley's third comedy, *The Country Wife*, contains a distinct allusion to the recent ill-fortune of *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*, which we can scarcely suppose the author would have thus referred to, had a successful play of his been produced in the interval, and that by the same company which brought forward *The Country Wife*. In fact, the only argument which I can conceive it possible to adduce in support of Genest must be based upon a conjecture that not only *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*, but *Love in a Wood* also, had failed to win the favour of the public, and that it is the latter play to which allusion is intended in the prologue to *The Country Wife*. That *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* proved a failure is certain; that *Love in a Wood* succeeded, we have no direct evidence, but of circumstantial sufficient, I think, to prove the point. The general assumption in its favour we may pass; but the whole tone of the dedication, though it afford us no information, in so many words, as to the fate of the piece, forbids us to believe that it can have been indited by the "baffled scribbler" of a condemned comedy. Indeed, had the piece thus failed, it is quite inconceivable that Wycherley would have had the temerity to offer it to the Duchess; he would rather have sent it into the world silently, and without the flourish of a dedication, as was actually the case with *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*. Dennis, moreover, declares expressly that *Love in a Wood* brought its author acquainted with the wits of the Court, and we may question whether the reputation of an unprosperous playwright would have proved the surest passport to their intimacy.

The reasons for rejecting the date of 1672 thus recounted, there remains but to notice one inconsiderable particular, which, could we allow it consequence, would tend to determine the production of *Love in a Wood* at a yet earlier date than that to which I have assigned it. In a conversation with the Duchess, immediately after her visit to his play, Wycherley, as reported by Dennis, continually addresses her Grace by the title of "your Ladyship." I doubt not, however, that this is a mere slip on the part of Dennis, nor can we easily imagine that Wycherley deferred, until the autumn, the presentation of his play to a lady who had "commanded" it of him, with such distinguishing marks of favour, in the preceding spring.

Love in a Wood, then, was produced by the King's company, during the spring of 1671, at the Theatre Royal, in Drury Lane. Some of the first actors of the day took part in the performances. Hart, who in tragedy yielded the palm to Betterton alone, appeared as Ranger, Mohun as Dapperwit; Lacy the comedian, soon afterwards "creator" of Bayes, as Alderman Gripe; and Kinaston, who in his youth, before women trod the boards, had been famous in female parts, now, changing sides, enacted the jealous lover, Valentine. The rôle of Lady Flippant was taken by an

actress well known to us from the pages of Pepys — his favourite Mrs. Knipp, “a merry jade!”

Upon the whole this play must be owned inferior to Wycherley’s other dramas. It is excelled in unity of action by *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*, in richness of humour by *The Country Wife*, in strength of satire by *The Plain Dealer*. Nevertheless, it is a highly diverting, witty comedy, and strikingly superior to most of the new plays which, since the Restoration, had preceded it upon the stage. Some critics would have us believe that Wycherley derived the suggestion of this play from Sir Charles Sedley’s comedy of *The Mulberry Garden*. It is difficult to understand upon what grounds this assertion is based. In the first place, although *The Mulberry Garden* was produced on the stage in 1668, nearly three years earlier than *Love in a Wood*, it is exceedingly doubtful if it were earlier written. Indeed, if Wycherley may be credited as to the year in which his own play was composed, the question of priority is easily settled, for *The Mulberry Garden* cannot have been written until after the Restoration, as its dénouement turns upon the proclamation of the King by General Monk. Moreover, it is hardly possible that Wycherley should have known anything of Sedley’s play before its public representation, as he seems not to have been acquainted with Sedley himself until after the production of his own drama, so that our acceptance of the theory that he borrowed from Sedley the hint of *Love in a Wood* would involve the unwarrantable conclusion that he also, in conversation with Pope, antedated its composition by at least eight years. But further, the only considerable point of resemblance between the two plays appears to be that while in Wycherley’s part of the action takes place in St. James’s Park, in Sedley’s one of the scenes is laid in the Mulberry Garden, which was certainly very near to St. James’s Park, being, in fact, situated at its western extremity. If the reader choose to consider this remarkable coincidence sufficient to justify a charge of plagiarism against Wycherley, I have nothing more to urge in his defence.

Love in a Wood was registered at Stationers’ Hall on the 6th of October, 1671, and was published in the following year.

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND.

MADAM,

All authors whatever in their dedication are poets; but I am now to write to a lady who stands as little in need of flattery, as her beauty of art; otherwise I should prove as ill a poet to her in my dedication, as to my reader in my play. I can do your Grace no honour, nor make you more admirers than you have already; yet I can do myself the honour to let the world know I am the greatest you have. You will pardon me, Madam, for you know it is very hard for a new author, and poet too, to govern his ambition: for poets, let them pass in the world ever so much for modest, honest men, but begin praise to others which concludes in themselves; and are like rooks, who lend people money but to win it back again, and so leave them in debt to 'em for nothing; they offer laurel and incense to their heroes, but wear it themselves, and perfume themselves. This is true, Madam, upon the honest word of an author who never yet writ dedication. Yet though I cannot lie like them, I am as vain as they; and cannot but publicly give your Grace my humble acknowledgments for the favours I have received from you: — this, I say, is the poet's gratitude, which, in plain English, is only pride and ambition; and that the world might know your Grace did me the honour to see my play twice together. Yet, perhaps, my enviers of your favour will suggest 'twas in Lent, and therefore for your mortification. Then, as a jealous author, I am concerned not to have your Grace's favours lessened, or rather my reputation; and to let them know, you were pleased, after that, to command a copy from me of this play; — the only way, without beauty and wit, to win a poor poet's heart.

'Tis a sign your Grace understands nothing better than obliging all the world after the best and most proper manner. But, Madam, to be obliging to that excess as you are (pardon me, if I tell you, out of my extreme concern and service for your Grace) is a dangerous quality, and may be very incommode to you; for civility makes poets as troublesome, as charity makes beggars; and your Grace will be hereafter as much pestered with such scurvy offerings as this, poems, panegyrics, and the like, as you are now with petitions: and, Madam, take it from me, no man with papers in 's hand is more dreadful than a poet; no, not a lawyer with his declarations. Your Grace sure did not well consider what ye did, in sending for my play: you little thought I would have had the confidence to send you a dedication too. But, Madam, you find I am as unreasonable, and have as little conscience, as if I had driven the poetic trade longer than I have, and ne'er consider you had enough of the play. But (having suffered now so severely) I beseech your Grace, have a care for the future; take my counsel, and be (if you can possible) as proud and ill-natured as other people of quality, since your quiet is so much concerned, and since you have more reason than any to value yourself: — for you have that perfection of beauty (without thinking it so) which others of your sex but think they have; that generosity in your actions which others of your quality have only in their promises; that spirit, wit and judgment, and all other qualifications which fit heroes to command, and would make any but your Grace proud. I begin now, elevated by my subject, to write with the emotion and fury of a poet, yet the integrity of an historian; and I could never be weary — nay, sure this were my only way to make my readers never weary too, though they were a more

impatient generation of people than they are. In fine, speaking thus of your Grace, I should please all the world but you; therefore I must once observe and obey you against my will, and say no more, than that I am,

Madam,

Your Grace's most obliged, and most humble servant,

William Wycherley.

PROLOGUE.

Custom, which bids the thief from cart harangue
All those that come to make and see him hang,
Wills the damned poet (though he knows he's gone)
To greet you ere his execution.
Not having fear of critic 'fore his eyes,
But still rejecting wholesome, good advice,
He e'en is come to suffer here to-day
For counterfeiting (as you judge) a play,
Which is against dread Phœbus highest treason;
Damn, damning judges, therefore, you have reason: —
You he does mean who, for the selfsame fault,
That damning privilege of yours have bought.
So the huge bankers, when they needs must fail,
Send the small brothers of their trade to jail;
Whilst they, by breaking, gentlemen are made,
Then, more than any, scorn poor men o' the trade.
You hardened renegado poets, who
Treat rhyming poets worse than Turk would do,
But vent your heathenish rage, hang, draw, and quarter;
His Muse will die to-day a fleering martyr;
Since for bald jest, dull libel, or lampoon,
There are who suffer persecution
With the undaunted briskness of buffoon,
And strict professors live of raillery,
Defying porter's-lodge, or pillory.
For those who yet write on our poet's fate,
Should as co-sufferers commiserate:
But he in vain their pity now would crave,
Who for themselves, alas! no pity have,
And their own gasping credit will not save;
And those, much less, our criminal would spare,
Who ne'er in rhyme transgress; — if such there are.
Well then, who nothing hopes, need nothing fear:
And he, before your cruel votes shall do it,
By his despair declares himself no poet.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Ranger,
Mr. Vincent,
Mr. Valentine,
Young Gentlemen of the town.

Alderman Gripe, seemingly precise, but a covetous, lecherous, old Usurer of the city.

Sir Simon Addleplot, a Coxcomb, always in pursuit of women of great fortunes.

Mr. Dapperwit, a brisk, conceited, half-witted fellow of the town.

Mrs. Crossbite's Landlord, and his Prentices, Servants, Waiters, and other Attendants.

Christina, Valentine's Mistress.

Lydia, Ranger's Mistress.

Lady Flippant, Gripe's Sister, an affected Widow in distress for a husband, though still declaiming against marriage.

Mrs. Martha, Gripe's Daughter.

Mrs. Joyner, a Match-maker, or precise city bawd.

Mrs. Crossbite, an old cheating jill, and bawd to her Daughter.

Miss Lucy, Mrs. Crossbite's Daughter.

Isabel, Christina's Woman.

Leonore, Servant to Lydia.

SCENE — London.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I. Gripe's House, in the evening.

Enter Lady Flippant *and* Mrs. Joyner.

Lady Flip. Not a husband to be had for money! — Come, come, I might have been a better housewife for myself, as the world goes now, if I had dealt for an heir with his guardian, uncle, or mother-in-law; and you are no better than a chouse, a cheat.

Mrs. Joyn. I a cheat, madam!

L. Flip. I am out of my money, and patience too.

Mrs. Joyn. Do not run out of your patience, whatever you do:— 'tis a necessary virtue for a widow without a jointure, in truly.

L. Flip. Vile woman! though my fortune be something wasted, my person's in good repair. If I had not depended on you, I had had a husband before this time. When I gave you the last five pounds, did you not promise I should be married by Christmas?

Mrs. Joyn. And I had kept my promise if you had co-operated.

L. Flip. Co-operated! what should I have done? 'Tis well known no woman breathing could use more industry to get her a husband than I have. Has not my husband's 'scutcheon walked as much ground as the citizens' signs since the Fire? — that no quarter of the town might be ignorant of the widow Flippant.

Mrs. Joyn. 'Tis well known, madam, indeed.

L. Flip. Have I not owned myself (against my stomach) the relict of a citizen, to credit my fortune?

Mrs. Joyn. 'Tis confessed, madam.

L. Flip. Have I not constantly kept Covent-Garden church, St. Martin's, the playhouses, Hyde Park, Mulberry garden,[4] and all the other public marts where widows and maids are exposed?

Mrs. Joyn. Far be it from me to think you have an aversion to a husband. But why, madam, have you refused so many good offers?

L. Flip. Good offers, Mrs. Joyner! I'll be sworn I never had an offer since my late husband's. — If I had an offer, Mrs. Joyner! — there's the thing, Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. Then your frequent and public detestation of marriage is thought real; and if you have had no offer, there's the thing, madam.

L. Flip. I cannot deny but I always rail against marriage; — which is the widow's way to it certainly.

Mrs. Joyn. 'Tis the desperate way of the desperate widows, in truly.

L. Flip. Would you have us as tractable as the wenches that eat oatmeal, and fooled like them too?

Mrs Joyn. If nobody were wiser than I, I should think, since the widow wants the natural allurement which the virgin has, you ought to give men all other encouragements, in truly.

L. Flip. Therefore, on the contrary, because the widow's fortune (whether supposed or real) is her chiefest bait, the more chary she seems of it, and the more she withdraws it, the more eagerly the busy gaping fry will bite. With us widows, husbands are got like bishoprics, by saying "No:" and I tell you, a young heir is as shy of a widow as of a rook, to my knowledge.

Mrs. Joyn. I can allege nothing against your practice — but your ill success; and indeed you must use another method with Sir Simon Addleplot.

L. Flip. Will he be at your house at the hour?

Mrs. Joyn. He'll be there by ten:— 'tis now nine. I'll warrant you he will not fail.

L. Flip. I'll warrant you then I will not fail: — for 'tis more than time I were sped.

Mrs. Joyn. Mr. Dapperwit has not been too busy with you, I hope? — Your experience has taught you to prevent a mischance.

L. Flip. No, no, my mischance (as you call it) is greater than that. I have but three months to reckon, ere I lie down with my port and equipage, and must be delivered of a woman, a footman, and a coachman: — for my coach must down, unless I can get Sir Simon to draw with me.

Mrs. Joyn. He will pair with you exactly if you knew all. [*Aside.*

L. Flip. Ah, Mrs. Joyner, nothing grieves me like the putting down my coach! For the fine clothes, the fine lodgings, — let 'em go; for a lodging is as unnecessary a thing to a widow that has a coach, as a hat to a man that has a good peruke. For, as you see about town, she is most properly at home in her coach: — she eats, and drinks, and sleeps in her coach; and for her visits, she receives them in the playhouse.

Mrs. Joyn. Ay, ay, let the men keep lodgings, as you say, madam, if they will.

Enter behind, at one door, Gripe *and* Sir Simon Addleplot, *the latter in the dress of a* Clerk; *at the other,* Mrs. Martha.

L. Flip. Do you think if things had been with me as they have been, I would ever have housed with this counter-fashion brother of mine, (who hates a vest as much as a surplice,) to have my patches assaulted every day at dinner, my freedom censured, and my visitants shut out of doors? — Poor Mr. Dapperwit cannot be admitted.

Mrs. Joyn. He knows him too well to keep his acquaintance.

L. Flip. He is a censorious rigid fop, and knows nothing.

Gripe. So, so! [*Behind.*

Mrs. Joyn. [*Aside.*] Is he here? — [*To* Lady Flippant.] Nay, with your pardon, madam, I must contradict you there. He is a prying commonwealth's-man, an implacable magistrate, a sturdy pillar of his cause, and — [*To* Gripe] But, oh me, is your worship so near then? if I had thought you heard me —

Gripe. Why, why, Mrs. Joyner, I have said as much of myself ere now; and without vanity, I profess.

Mrs. Joyn. I know your virtue is proof against vainglory; but the truth to your face looks like flattery in your worship's servant.

Gripe. No, no; say what you will of me in that kind, far be it from me to suspect you of flattery.

Mrs. Joyn. In truly, your worship knows yourself, and knows me, for I am none of those —

L. Flip. [*Aside.*] Now they are in — Mrs. Joyner, I'll go before to your house, you'll be sure to come after me.

Mrs. Joyn. Immediately. — [*Exit* Lady Flippant.] But as I was saying, I am none of those —

Gripe. No, Mrs. Joyner, you cannot sew pillows under folks' elbows; you cannot hold a candle to the devil; you cannot tickle a trout to take him; you —

Mrs. Joyn. Lord, how well you do know me indeed! — and you shall see I know your worship as well. You cannot backslide from your principles; you cannot be terrified by the laws; nor bribed to allegiance by office or preferment; you —

Gripe. Hold, hold, my praise must not interrupt yours.

Mrs. Joyn. With your worship's pardon, in truly, I must on.

Gripe. I am full of your praise, and it will run over.

Mrs. Joyn. Nay, sweet sir, you are —

Gripe. Nay, sweet Mrs. Joyner, you are —

Mrs. Joyn. Nay, good your worship, you are — [*Stops her mouth with his handkerchief.*

Gripe. I say you are —

Mrs. Joyn. I must not be rude with your worship.

Gripe. You are a nursing mother to the saints; through you they gather together; through you they fructify and increase; and through you the child cries from out of the hand-basket.

Mrs. Joyn. Through you virgins are married, or provided for as well; through you the reprobate's wife is made a saint; and through you the widow is not disconsolate, nor misses her husband.

Gripe. Through you —

Mrs. Joyn. Indeed you will put me to the blush.

Gripe. Blushes are badges of imperfection: — saints have no shame. You are — are the flower of matrons, Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. You are the pink of courteous aldermen.

Gripe. You are the muffler of secrecy.

Mrs. Joyn. You are the head-band of justice.

Gripe. Thank you, sweet Mrs. Joyner: do you think so indeed? You are — you are the bonfire of devotion.

Mrs. Joyn. You are the bellows of zeal.

Gripe. You are the cupboard of charity.

Mrs. Joyn. You are the fob of liberality.

Gripe. You are the rivet of sanctified love or wedlock.

Mrs. Joyn. You are the picklock and dark-lantern of policy; and, in a word, a conventicle of virtues.

Gripe. Your servant, your servant, sweet Mrs. Joyner! you have stopped my mouth.

Mrs. Joyn. Your servant, your servant, sweet alderman! I have nothing to say.

Sir Sim. The half pullet will be cold, sir.

Gripe. Mrs. Joyner, you shall sup with me.

Mrs. Joyn. Indeed I am engaged to supper with some of your man's friends; and I came on purpose to get leave for him too.

Gripe. I cannot deny you anything. But I have forgot to tell you what a kind of fellow my sister's Dapperwit is: before a full table of the coffee-house sages, he had the impudence to hold an argument against me in the defence of vests and protections; and therefore I forbid him my house; besides, when he came I was forced to lock up my daughter for fear of him, nay, I think the poor child herself was afraid of him. — Come hither, child, were you not afraid of Dapperwit?

Mrs. Mar. Yes indeed, sir, he is a terrible man. — Yet I durst meet with him in a piazza at midnight. [*Aside.*

Gripe. He shall never come into my doors again.

Mrs. Mar. Shall Mr. Dapperwit never come hither again then?

Gripe. No, child.

Mrs. Mar. I am afraid he will.

Gripe. I warrant thee.

Mrs. Mar. [*Aside.*] I warrant you then I'll go to him. — I am glad of that, for I hate him as much as a bishop.

Gripe. Thou art no child of mine, if thou dost not hate bishops and wits. — Well, Mrs. Joyner, I'll keep you no longer. [*To* Addleplot.] Jonas, wait on Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. Good night to your worship.

Gripe. But stay, stay, Mrs. Joyner: have you spoken with the widow Crossbite about her little daughter, as I desired?

Mrs. Joyn. I will to-morrow early; it shall be the first thing I'll do after my prayers.

Gripe. If Dapperwit should contaminate her! — I cannot rest till I have redeemed her from the jaws of that lion. — Good night.

Mrs. Joyn. Good gentleman. [*Exeunt* Gripe *and* Mrs. Martha.

Sir Sim. Ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. What's the matter, Sir Simon?

Sir Sim. Ha! ha! ha! — let us make haste to your house, or I shall burst, faith and troth, to see what fools you and I make of these people.

Mrs. Joyn. I will not rob you of any of the credit; I am but a feeble instrument, you are an engineer.

Sir Sim. Remember what you say now when things succeed, and do not tell me then, — I must thank your wit for all.

Mrs. Joyn. No, in truly, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. Nay, I am sure Dapperwit and I have been partners in many an intrigue, and he uses to serve me so.

Mrs. Joyn. He is an ill man to intrigue with, as you call it.

Sir Sim. Ay, so are all your wits; a pox! if a man's understanding be not so public as theirs, he cannot do a wise action but they go away with the honour of it, if he be of their acquaintance.

Mrs. Joyn. Why do you keep such acquaintance then?

Sir Sim. There is a proverb, Mrs. Joyner, "You may know him by his company."

Mrs. Joyn. No, no, to be thought a man of parts, you must always keep company with a man of less wit than yourself.

Sir Sim. That's the hardest thing in the world for me to do, faith and troth.

Mrs. Joyn. What, to find a man of less wit than yourself? Pardon my raillery, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. No, no, I cannot keep company with a fool: — I wonder how men of parts can do't, there's something in't.

Mrs. Joyn. If you could, all your wise actions would be your own, and your money would be your own too.

Sir Sim. Nay, faith and troth, that's true; for your wits are plaguily given to borrow. They'll borrow of their wench, coachman, or linkboy, their hire, Mrs. Joyner; Dapperwit has that trick with a vengeance.

Mrs. Joyn. Why will you keep company with him then, I say? for, to be plain with you, you have followed him so long, that you are thought but his cully;[5] for every wit has his cully, as every squire his led captain.

Sir Sim. I his cully, I his cully, Mrs. Joyner! Lord, that I should be thought a cully to any wit breathing!

Mrs. Joyn. Nay, do not take it so to heart, for the best wits of the town are but cullies themselves.

Sir Sim. To whom, to whom, to whom, Mrs. Joyner?

Mrs. Joyn. To sempstresses and bawds.

Sir Sim. To your knowledge, Mrs. Joyner. — [*Aside.*] There I was with her.

Mrs. Joyn. To tailors and vintners, but especially to the French houses.

Sir Sim. But Dapperwit is a cully to none of them; for he ticks.

Mrs. Joyn. I care not, but I wish you were a cully to none but me; that's all the hurt I wish you.

Sir Sim. Thank you, Mrs. Joyner. Well, I will throw off Dapperwit's acquaintance when I am married, and will only be a cully to my wife; and that's no more than the wisest husband of 'em all is.

Mrs. Joyn. Then you think you shall carry Mrs. Martha?

Sir Sim. Your hundred guineas are as good as in your lap.

Mrs. Joyn. But I am afraid this double plot of yours should fail: you would sooner succeed if you only designed upon Mrs. Martha, or only upon my Lady Flippant.

Sir Sim. Nay, then, you are no woman of intrigue, faith and troth: 'tis good to have two strings to one's bow. If Mrs. Martha be coy, I tell the widow I put on my disguise for her; but if Mrs. Martha be kind to Jonas, Sir Simon Addleplot will be false to the widow: which is no more than widows are used to; for a promise to a widow is as seldom kept as a vow made at sea, as Dapperwit says.

Mrs. Joyn. I am afraid they should discover you.

Sir Sim. You have nothing to fear; you have your twenty guineas in your pocket for helping me into my service, and if I get into Mrs. Martha's quarters, you have a hundred more; if into the widow's, fifty: — happy go lucky! Will her ladyship be at your house at the hour?

Mrs. Joyn. Yes.

Sir Sim. Then you shall see when I am Sir Simon Addleplot and myself I'll look like myself; now I am Jonas, I look like an ass. You never thought Sir Simon Addleplot could have looked so like an ass by his ingenuity.

Mrs. Joyn. Pardon me, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. Nay, do not flatter, faith and troth.

Mrs. Joyn. Come let us go, 'tis time.

Sir Sim. I will carry the widow to the French house.

Mrs. Joyn. If she will go.

Sir Sim. If she will go! why, did you ever know a widow refuse a treat? no more than a lawyer a fee, faith and troth: yet I know too —

No treat, sweet words, good mien, but sly intrigue
That must at length the jilting widow fegue.[6] [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. The French House. A table, wine and candles.

Enter Vincent, Ranger, *and* Dapperwit.

Dap. Pray, Mr. Ranger, let's have no drinking to-night.

Vin. Pray, Mr. Ranger, let's have no Dapperwit to-night.

Ran. Nay, nay, Vincent.

Vin. A pox! I hate his impertinent chat more than he does the honest Burgundy.

Dap. But why should you force wine upon us? we are not all of your gusto.

Vin. But why should you force your chawed jests, your damned ends of your mouldy lampoons, and last year's sonnets, upon us? we are not all of your gusto.

Dap. The wine makes me sick, let me perish!

Vin. Thy rhymes make me spew.

Ran. At repartee already! Come, Vincent. I know you would rather have him pledge you: here, Dapperwit — [*Gives him the glass.*] — But why are you so eager to have him drink always?

Vin. Because he is so eager to talk always, and there is no other way to silence him.

Enter Waiter.

Wait. Here is a gentleman desires to speak with Mr. Vincent.

Vin. I come. [*Exit* Vincent *with* Waiter.

Dap. He may drink, because he is obliged to the bottle for all the wit and courage he has; 'tis not free and natural like yours.

Ran. He has more courage than wit, but wants neither.

Dap. As a pump gone dry, if you pour no water down you will get none out, so —

Ran. Nay, I bar similes too, to-night.

Dap. Why, is not the thought new? don't you apprehend it?

Ran. Yes, yes, but —

Dap. Well, well, will you comply with his sottishness too, and hate brisk things in complaisance to the ignorant dull age? I believe shortly 'twill be as hard to find a

patient friend to communicate one's wit to, as a faithful friend to communicate one's secret to. Wit has as few true judges as painting, I see.

Ran. All people pretend to be judges of both.

Dap. Ay, they pretend; but set you aside, and one or two more —

Ran. But why, has Vincent neither courage nor wit?

Dap. He has no courage, because he beat his wench for giving me *les doux yeux* once; and no wit, because he does not comprehend my thoughts; and he is a son of a whore for his ignorance. I take ignorance worse from any man than the lie, because 'tis as much as to say I am no wit.

Re-enter Vincent.

You need not take any notice, though, to him what I say.

Vin. Ranger, there is a woman below in a coach would speak with you.

Ran. With me? [*Exit* Ranger.

Dap. This Ranger, Mr. Vincent, is as false to his friend as his wench.

Vin. You have no reason to say so, but because he is absent.

Dap. 'Tis disobliging to tell a man of his faults to his face. If he had but your grave parts and manly wit, I should adore him; but, a pox! he is a mere buffoon, a jack-pudding, let me perish!

Vin. You are an ungrateful fellow. I have heard him maintain you had wit, which was more than e'er you could do for yourself. — I thought you had owned him your Mæcenas.

Dap. A pox! he cannot but esteem me, 'tis for his honour; but I cannot but be just for all that — without favour or affection. Yet I confess I love him so well, that I wish he had but the hundredth part of your courage.

Vin. He has had courage to save you from many a beating, to my knowledge.

Dap. Come, come, I wish the man well, and, next to you, better than any man! and, I am sorry to say it, he has not courage to snuff a candle with his fingers. When he is drunk, indeed, he dares get a clap, or so — and swear at a constable.

Vin. Detracting fop! when did you see him desert his friend?

Dap. You have a rough kind of a raillery, Mr. Vincent; but since you will have it, (though I love the man heartily, I say,) he deserted me once in breaking of windows, for fear of the constables —

Re-enter Ranger.

But you need not take notice to him of what I tell you; I hate to put a man to the blush.

Ran. I have had just now a visit from my mistress, who is as jealous of me as a wife of her husband when she lies in: — my cousin Lydia, — you have heard me speak of her.

Vin. But she is more troublesome than a wife that lies in, because she follows you to your haunts. Why do you allow her that privilege before her time?

Ran. Faith, I may allow her any privilege, and be too hard for her yet. How do you think I have cheated her to-night? — Women are poor credulous creatures, easily deceived.

Vin. We are poor credulous creatures, when we think 'em so.

Ran. Intending a ramble to St. James's Park to-night, upon some probable hopes of some fresh game I have in chase, I appointed her to stay at home; with a promise to come to her within this hour, that she might not spoil the scent and prevent my sport.

Vin. She'll be even with you when you are married, I warrant you. In the meantime here's her health, Dapperwit.

Ran. Now had he rather be at the window, writing her anagram in the glass with his diamond, or biting his nails in the corner for a fine thought to come and divert us with at the table.

Dap. No, a pox! I have no wit to-night. I am as barren and hide-bound as one of your damned scribbling poets, who are sots in company for all their wit; as a miser is poor for all his money. How do you like the thought?

Vin. Drink, drink!

Dap. Well, I can drink this, because I shall be reprieved presently.

Vin. Who will be so civil to us?

Dap. Sir Simon Addleplot: — I have bespoke him a supper here, for he treats to-night a new rich mistress.

Ran. That spark, who has his fruitless designs upon the bed-ridden rich widow, down to the suckling heiress in her pissing-clout. He was once the sport, but now the public grievance, of all the fortunes in town; for he watches them like a younger brother that is afraid to be mumped of his snip,[7] and they cannot steal a marriage, nor stay their stomachs, but he must know it.

Dap. He has now pitched his nets for Gripe's daughter, the rich scrivener, and serves him as a clerk to get admission to her; which the watchful fop her father denies to all others.

Ran. I thought you had been nibbling at her once, under pretence of love to her aunt.

Dap. I confess I have the same design yet, and Addleplot is but my agent, whilst he thinks me his. He brings me letters constantly from her, and carries mine back.

Vin. Still betraying your best friends!

Dap. I cannot in honour but betray him. Let me perish! the poor young wench is taken with my person, and would scratch through four walls to come to me.

Vin. 'Tis a sign she is kept up close indeed.

Dap. Betray him! I'll not be traitor to love for any man.

Enter Sir Simon Addleplot *with the* Waiter.

Sir Sim. Know 'em! you are a saucy Jack-straw to question me, faith and troth; I know everybody, and everybody knows me.

All. Sir Simon! Sir Simon! Sir Simon!

Ran. And you are a welcome man to everybody.

Sir Sim. Now, son of a whore, do I know the gentlemen? — A dog! would have had a shilling of me before he would let me come to you!

Ran. The rogue has been bred at Court, sure. — Get you out, sirrah. [*Exit* Waiter.

Sir Sim. He has been bred at a French-house, where they are more unreasonable.

Vin. Here's to you, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. I cannot drink, for I have a mistress within; though I would not have the people of the house to know it.

Ran. You need not be ashamed of your mistresses, for they are commonly rich.

Sir Sim. And because she is rich, I would conceal her; for I never had a rich mistress yet, but one or other got her from me presently, faith and troth.

Ran. But this is an ill place to conceal a mistress in; every waiter is an intelligencer to your rivals.

Sir Sim. I have a trick for that: — I'll let no waiters come into the room; I'll lay the cloth myself rather.

Ran. But who is your mistress?

Sir Sim. Your servant, — your servant, Mr. Ranger.

Vin. Come, will you pledge me?

Sir Sim. No, I'll spare your wine, if you will spare me Dapperwit's company; I came for that.

Vin. You do us a double favour, to take him and leave the wine.

Sir Sim. Come, come, Dapperwit.

Ran. Do not go, unless he will suffer us to see his mistress too. [*Aside to* Dapperwit.

Sir Sim. Come, come, man.

Dap. Would you have me so uncivil as to leave my company? — they'll take it ill.

Sir Sim. I cannot find her talk without thee. — Pray, gentlemen, persuade Mr. Dapperwit to go with me.

Ran. We will not hinder him of better company.

Dap. Yours is too good to be left rudely.

Sir Sim. Nay, gentlemen, I would desire your company too, if you knew the lady.

Dap. They know her as well as I; you say I know her not.

Sir Sim. You are not everybody.

Ran. Perhaps we do know the lady, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. You do not, you do not: none of you ever saw her in your lives; — but if you could be secret, and civil —

Ran. We have drunk yet but our bottle a-piece.

Sir Sim. But will you be civil, Mr. Vincent?

Ran. He dares not look a woman in the face under three bottles.

Sir Sim. Come along then. But can you be civil, gentlemen? will you be civil, gentlemen? pray be civil if you can, and you shall see her.

[*Exit, and returns with* Lady Flippant *and* Mrs. Joyner.

Dap. How, has he got his jilt here! [*Aside.*

Ran. The widow Flippant! [*Aside.*

Vin. Is this the woman that we never saw! [*Aside.*

L. Flip. Does he bring us into company! — and Dapperwit one! Though I had married the fool, I thought to have reserved the wit as well as other ladies. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Nay, look as long as you will, madam, you will find them civil gentlemen, and good company.

L. Flip. I am not in doubt of their civility, but yours.

Mrs. Joyn. You'll never leave snubbing your servants! Did you not promise to use him kindly? [*Aside to* Lady Flippant.

L. Flip. [*Aside to* Mrs. Joyner.] 'Tis true. — [*Aloud.*] We wanted no good company, Sir Simon, as long as we had yours.

Sir Sim. But they wanted good company, therefore I forced 'em to accept of yours.

L. Flip. They will not think the company good they were forced into, certainly.

Sir Sim. A pox! I must be using the words in fashion, though I never have any luck with 'em. Mrs. Joyner, help me off.

Mrs. Joyn. I suppose, madam, he means the gentlemen wanted not inclination to your company, but confidence to desire so great an honour; therefore he forced 'em.

Dap. What makes this bawd here? Sure, mistress, you bawds should be like the small cards, though at first you make up a pack, yet, when the play begins, you should be put out as useless.

Mrs. Joyn. Well, well, gibing companion: you would have the pimps kept in only? you would so?

Vin. What, they are quarrelling!

Ran. Pimp and bawd agree now-a-days like doctor and apothecary.

Sir Sim. Try, madam, if they are not civil gentlemen; talk with 'em, while I go lay the cloth — no waiter comes here. — [*Aside.*] My mother used to tell me, I should avoid all occasions of talking before my mistress, because silence is a sign of love as well as prudence. [*Lays the cloth.*

L. Flip. Methinks you look a little yellow on't, Mr. Dapperwit. I hope you do not censure me because you find me passing away a night with this fool: — he is not a man to be jealous of, sure.

Dap. You are not a lady to be jealous of, sure.

L. Flip. No, certainly. — But why do you look as if you were jealous then?

Dap. If I had met you in Whetstone's park,[8] with a drunken foot-soldier, I should not have been jealous of you.

L. Flip. Fy, fy! now you are jealous, certainly; for people always, when they grow jealous, grow rude: — but I can pardon it since it proceeds from love certainly.

Dap. I am out of all hopes to be rid of this eternal old acquaintance: when I jeer her, she thinks herself praised; now I call her whore in plain English she thinks I am jealous. [*Aside.*

L. Flip. Sweet Mr. Dapperwit, be not so censorious, (I speak for your sake, not my own,) for jealousy is a great torment, but my honour cannot suffer certainly.

Dap. No, certainly; but the greatest torment I have is — your love.

L. Flip. Alas! sweet Mr. Dapperwit, indeed love is a torment: but 'tis a sweet torment; but jealousy is a bitter torment. — I do not go about to cure you of the torment of my love.

Dap. 'Tis a sign so.

L. Flip. Come, come, look up, man; is that a rival to contest with you?

Dap. I will contest with no rival, not with my old rival your coachman; but they have heartily my resignation; and, to do you a favour, but myself a greater, I will help to tie the knot you are fumbling for now, betwixt your cully here and you.

L. Flip. Go, go, I take that kind of jealousy worst of all, to suspect I would be debauched to beastly matrimony. — But who are those gentlemen, pray? are they men of fortunes, Mrs. Joyner?

Mrs. Joyn. I believe so.

L. Flip. Do you believe so, indeed? — Gentlemen — [*Advancing towards* Ranger *and* Vincent.

Ran. If the civility we owe to ladies had not controlled our envy to Mr. Dapperwit, we had interrupted ere this your private conversation.

L. Flip. Your interruption, sir, had been most civil and obliging; — for our discourse was of marriage.

Ran. That is a subject, madam, as grateful as common.

L. Flip. O fy, fy! are you of that opinion too? I cannot suffer any to talk of it in my company.

Ran. Are you married then, madam?

L. Flip. No, certainly.

Ran. I am sure so much beauty cannot despair of it.

L. Flip. Despair of it! —

Ran. Only those that are married, or cannot be married, hate to hear of marriage.

L. Flip. Yet you must know, sir, my aversion to marriage is such, that you, nor no man breathing, shall ever persuade me to it.

Ran. Cursed be the man should do so rude a thing as to persuade you to anything against your inclination! I would not do it for the world, madam.

L. Flip. Come, come, though you seem to be a civil gentleman, I think you no better than your neighbours. I do not know a man of you all that will not thrust a woman up into a corner, and then talk an hour to her impertinently of marriage.

Ran. You would find me another man in a corner, I assure you, madam; for you should not have a word of marriage from me, whatsoever you might find in my actions of it; I hate talking as much as you.

L. Flip. I hate it extremely.

Ran. I am your man then, madam; for I find just the same fault with your sex as you do with ours: — I ne'er could have to do with woman in my life, but still she would be impertinently talking of marriage to me.

L. Flip. Observe that, Mrs. Joyner.

Dap. Pray, Mr. Ranger, let's go; I had rather drink with Mr. Vincent, than stay here with you; besides 'tis Park-time.

Ran. [*To* Dapperwit.] I come. — [*To* Lady Flippant.] Since you are a lady that hate marriage, I'll do you the service to withdraw the company; for those that hate marriage hate loss of time.

L. Flip. Will you go then, sir? but before you go, sir, pray tell me is your aversion to marriage real?

Ran. As real as yours.

L. Flip. If it were no more real than mine — [*Aside.*

Ran. Your servant, madam. [*Turns to go.*

L. Flip. But do you hate marriage certainly? [*Plucks him back.*

Ran. Certainly.

L. Flip. Come, I cannot believe it: you dissemble it only because I pretend it.

Ran. Do you but pretend it then, madam?

L. Flip. [*Aside*] I shall discover myself — [*Aloud*] I mean, because I hold against it, you do the same in complaisance: — for I have heard say, cunning men think to bring the coy and untractable women to tameness as they do some mad people — by humouring their frenzies.

Ran. I am none of those cunning men, yet have too much wit to entertain the presumption of designing upon you.

L. Flip. 'Twere no such presumption neither.

Dap. Come away; 'sdeath! don't you see your danger?

Ran. Those aims are for Sir Simon. — Good night, madam.

L. Flip. Will you needs go, then? — [*To* Sir Simon] The gentlemen are a-going, Sir Simon; will you let 'em?

Sir Sim. Nay, madam, if you cannot keep 'em, how should I?

L. Flip. Stay, sir; because you hate marriage, I'll sing you a new song against it. [*Sings.*

A spouse I do hate,
For either she's false or she's jealous;
But give us a mate
Who nothing will ask us or tell us.

She stands on no terms,
Nor chaffers, by way of indenture,
Her love for your farms;
But takes her kind man at a venture.

If all prove not right,
Without an act, process, or warning,
From wife for a night
You may be divorced in the morning.

When parents are slaves,
Their brats cannot be any other;
Great wits and great braves
Have always a punk[9] to their mother.

Though it be the fashion for women of quality to sing any song whatever, because the words are not distinguished, yet I should have blushed to have done it now, but for you, sir.

Ran. The song is edifying, the voice admirable — and, once more, I am your servant, madam.

L. Flip. What, will you go too, Mr Dapperwit?

Sir Sim. Pray, Mr. Dapperwit, do not you go too.

Dap. I am engaged.

Sir Sim. Well, if we cannot have their company, we will not have their room: ours is a private backroom; they have paid their reckoning, let's go thither again.

L. Flip. But pray, sweet Mr. Dapperwit, do not go. Keep him, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. I cannot keep him. [*Exeunt* Vincent, Ranger, *and* Dapperwit.

It is impossible; (the world is so;)
One cannot keep one's friend, and mistress too. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I. St. James's Park at night.

ENTER RANGER, VINCENT, *and* Dapperwit.

Ran. Hang me, if I am not pleased extremely with this new-fashioned caterwauling, this mid-night coursing in the park.

Vin. A man may come after supper with his three bottles in his head, reel himself sober, without reproof from his mother, aunt, or grave relation.

Ran. May bring his bashful wench, and not have her put out of countenance by the impudent honest women of the town.

Dap. And a man of wit may have the better of the dumb show of well-trimmed vest or fair peruke: — no man's now is whitest.

Ran. And now no woman's modest or proud; for her blushes are hid, and the rubies on her lips are dyed, and all sleepy and glimmering eyes have lost their attraction.

Vin. And now a man may carry a bottle under his arm instead of his hat; — and no observing spruce fop will miss the cravat that lies on one's shoulder, or count the pimples on one's face.

Dap. And now the brisk repartee ruins the complaisant cringe, or wise grimace. — Something 'twas, we men of virtue always loved the night.

Ran. O blessed season!

Vin. For good-fellows.

Ran. For lovers.

Dap. And for the Muses.

Ran. When I was a boy I loved the night so well, I had a strong vocation to be a bellman's apprentice.

Vin. I, a drawer.

Dap. And I, to attend the waits of Westminster, let me perish!

Ran. But why do we not do the duty of this and such other places; — walk, censure, and speak ill of all we meet?

Dap. 'Tis no fault of mine, let me perish!

Vin. Fy, fy! satirical gentlemen, this is not your time; you cannot distinguish a friend from a fop.

Dap. No matter, no matter; they will deserve amongst ’em the worst we can say.

Ran. Who comes here, Dapperwit? [*People walk slowly over the stage.*

Dap. By the toss of his head, training of his feet, and his elbows playing at bo-peep behind his back, it should be my Lord Easy.

Ran. And who the woman?

Dap. My Lord what-d’ye-call’s daughter, that had a child by —

Vin. Dapperwit, hold your tongue.

Ran. How! are you concerned?

Vin. Her brother’s an honest fellow, and will drink his glass.

Ran. Prithee, Vincent, Dapperwit did not hinder drinking to-night, though he spake against it; why, then, should you interrupt his sport? — Now, let him talk of anybody.

Vin. So he will, — till you cut his throat.

Ran. Why should you on all occasions thwart him, contemn him, and maliciously look grave at his jests only?

Vin. Why does he always rail against my friends, then, and my best friend — a beer-glass?

Ran. Dapperwit, be your own advocate: my game, I think, is before me there. [*Exit.*

Dap. This Ranger, I think, has all the ill qualities of all your town fops; — leaving his company for a spruce lord or a wench.

Vin. Nay, if you must rail at your own best friends, I may forgive you railing at mine.

Enter Lydia *and* Lady Flippant. — *They walk over the stage.*

Lyd. False Ranger, shall I find thee here? [*Aside.*

Vin. Those are women, are they not? [*To* Dapper.

Dap. The least seems to be my Lucy, sure. [*Aside.*

Vin. Faith, I think I dare speak to a woman in the dark! — let’s try.

Dap. They are persons of quality of my acquaintance; — hold!

Vin. Nay, if they are persons of quality of your acquaintance, I may be the bolder with ’em. [*The* Ladies *go off, they follow them.*

Re-enter Lydia *and* Lady Flippant.

Lyd. I come hither to make a discovery to-night.

L. Flip. Of my love to you, certainly; for nobody but you could have debauched me to the Park, certainly. I would not return another night, if it were to redeem my dear husband from his grave.

Lyd. I believe you: — but to get another, widow.

L. Flip. Another husband, another husband, foh!

Lyd. There does not pass a night here but many a match is made.

L. Flip. That a woman of honour should have the word match in her mouth! — but I hope, madam, the fellows do not make honourable love here, do they? I abominate honourable love, upon my honour.

Lyd. If they should make honourable love here, I know you would prevent 'em.

Re-enter Vincent *and* Dapperwit. — *They walk slowly towards the* Ladies.

But here come two men will inform you what to do.

L. Flip. Do they come? — are they men certainly?

Lyd. Prepare for an assault, they'll put you to't.

L. Flip. Will they put us to't certainly? I was never put to't yet. If they should put us to't, I should drop down, down, certainly.

Lyd. I believe, truly, you would not have power to run away.

L. Flip. Therefore I will not stay the push. — They come! they come! oh, the fellows come! [Lady Flippant *runs away,* Lydia *follows, and* Vincent *and* Dapperwit *after them.*

Re-enter Lady Flippant *at the other side, alone.*

L. Flip. So! I am got off clear! I did not run from the men, but my companion. For all their brags, men have hardly courage to set upon us when our number is equal; now they shall see I defy 'em: — for we women have always most courage when we are alone. But, a pox! the lazy rogues come not! or they are drunk and cannot run. Oh drink! abominable drink! instead of inflaming love, it quenches it; and for one lover it encourages, it makes a thousand impotent. Curse on all wine! even Rhenish wine and sugar —

Enter Sir Simon Addleplot, *muffled in a cloak.*

But fortune will not see me want; here comes a single bully, — I wish he may stand; —

For now a-nights the jostling nymph is bolder
Than modern satyr with his cloak o'er shoulder.

Well met, sir. [*She puts on her mask.*

Sir Sim. How shall I know that, forsooth? Who are you? do you know me?

L. Flip. Who are you? don't you know me?

Sir Sim. Not I, faith and troth!

L. Flip. I am glad on't; for no man e'er liked a woman the better for having known her before.

Sir Sim. Ay, but then one can't be so free with a new acquaintance as with an old one; she may deny one the civility.

L. Flip. Not till you ask her.

Sir Sim. But I am afraid to be denied.

L. Flip. Let me tell you, sir, you cannot disoblige us women more than in distrusting us.

Sir Sim. Pish! what should one ask for, when you know one's meaning? — but shall I deal freely with you?

L. Flip. I love, of my life, men should deal freely with me; there are so few men will deal freely with one —

Sir Sim. Are you not a fireship,[10] a punk, madam?

L. Flip. Well, sir, I love raillery.

Sir Sim. Faith and troth, I do not rally, I deal freely.

L. Flip. This is the time and place for freedom, sir.

Sir Sim. Are you handsome?

L. Flip. Joan's as good as my lady in the dark, certainly: but men that deal freely never ask questions, certainly.

Sir Sim. How then! I thought to deal freely, and put a woman to the question, had been all one.

L. Flip. But, let me tell you, those that deal freely indeed, take a woman by —

Sir Sim. What, what, what, what?

L. Flip. By the hand — and lead her aside.

Sir Sim. Now I understand you; come along then.

Enter behind Musicians *with torches.*

L. Flip. What unmannerly rascals are those that bring light into the Park? 'twill not be taken well from 'em by the women, certainly. — [*Aside.*] Still disappointed!

Sir Sim. Oh, the fiddles, the fiddles! I sent for them hither to oblige the women, not to offend 'em; for I intend to serenade the whole Park to-night. But my frolic is not without an intrigue, faith and troth: for I know the fiddles will call the whole herd of vizard masks together; and then shall I discover if a strayed mistress of mine be not amongst 'em, whom I treated to-night at the French-house; but as soon as the jilt had eat up my meat and drunk her two bottles, she ran away from me, and left me alone.

L. Flip. How! is it he? Addleplot! — that I could not know him by his faith and troth! [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Now I would understand her tricks; because I intend to marry her, and should be glad to know what I must trust to.

L. Flip. So thou shalt; — but not yet. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Though I can give a great guess already; for if I have any intrigue or sense in me, she is as arrant a jilt as ever pulled pillow from under husband's head, faith and troth. Moreover she is bow-legged, hopper-hipped, and, betwixt pomatum and Spanish red, has a complexion like a Holland cheese, and no more teeth left than such as give a *haut goût* to her breath; but she is rich, faith and troth.

L. Flip. [*Aside.*] Oh rascal! he has heard somebody else say all this of me. But I must not discover myself, lest I should be disappointed of my revenge; for I will marry him. [*The* Musicians *approaching, exit* Flippant.

Sir Sim. What, gone! — come then, strike up, my lads.

Enter Men *and* Women *in vizards — a Dance, during which* Sir Simon Addleplot, *for the most part, stands still in a cloak and vizard; but sometimes goes about peeping, and examining the* Women's *clothes — the Dance ended, all exeunt.*

Re-enter Lady Flippant *and* Lydia, *after them* Vincent *and* Dapperwit.

L. Flip. [*To* Lydia.] Nay, if you stay any longer, I must leave you again. [*Going off.*

Vin. We have overtaken them at last again. These are they: they separate too; and that's but a challenge to us.

Dap. Let me perish! ladies —

Lyd. Nay, good madam, let's unite, now here's the common enemy upon us.

Vin. Damn me! ladies —

Dap. Hold, a pox! you are too rough. — Let me perish! ladies —

Lyd. Not for want of breath, gentlemen: — we'll stay rather.

Dap. For want of your favour rather, sweet ladies.

L. Flip. [*Aside.*] That's Dapperwit, false villain! but he must not know I am here. If he should, I should lose his thrice agreeable company, and he would run from me as fast as from the bailiffs. [*To* Lydia.] What! you will not talk with 'em, I hope?

Lyd. Yes, but I will.

L. Flip. Then you are a Park-woman certainly, and you will take it kindly if I leave you.

Lyd. No, you must not leave me.

L. Flip. Then you must leave them.

Lyd. I'll see if they are worse company than you, first.

L. Flip. Monstrous impudence! — will you not come? [*Pulls* Lydia.

Vin. Nay, madam, I never suffer any violence to be used to a woman but what I do myself: she must stay, and you must not go.

L. Flip. Unhand me, you rude fellow!

Vin. Nay, now I am sure you will stay and be kind; for coyness in a woman is as little sign of true modesty, as huffing in a man is of true courage.

Dap. Use her gently, and speak soft things to her.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Now do I guess I know my coxcomb. — [*To* Dapperwit.] Sir, I am extremely glad I am fallen into the hands of a gentleman that can speak soft things; and this is so fine a night to hear soft things in; — morning, I should have said.

Dap. It will not be morning, dear madam, till you pull off your mask. — [*Aside.*] That I think was brisk.

Lyd. Indeed, dear sir, my face would frighten back the sun.

Dap. With glories more radiant than his own. — [*Aside.*] I keep up with her, I think.

Lyd. But why would you put me to the trouble of lighting the world, when I thought to have gone to sleep?

Dap. You only can do it, dear madam, let me perish!

Lyd. But why would you (of all men) practise treason against your friend Phœbus, and depose him for a mere stranger?

Dap. I think she knows me. [*Aside.*

Lyd. But he does not do you justice, I believe; and you are so positively cock-sure of your wit, you would refer to a mere stranger your plea to the bay-tree.

Dap. She jeers me, let me perish! [*Aside.*

Vin. Dapperwit, a little of your aid; for my lady's invincibly dumb.

Dap. Would mine had been so too! [*Aside.*

Vin. I have used as many arguments to make her speak, as are requisite to make other women hold their tongues.

Dap. Well, I am ready to change sides. — Yet before I go, madam, since the moon consents now I should see your face, let me desire you to pull off your mask; which to a handsome lady is a favour, I'm sure.

Lyd. Truly, sir, I must not be long in debt to you for the obligation; pray let me hear you recite some of your verses; which to a wit is a favour, I'm sure.

Dap. Madam, it belongs to your sex to be obliged first; pull off your mask, and I'll pull out my paper. — [*Aside.*] Brisk again, of my side.

Lyd. 'Twould be in vain, for you would want a candle now.

Dap. [*Aside.*] I dare not make use again of the lustre of her face. — [*To* Lydia.] I'll wait upon you home then, madam.

Lyd. Faith, no; I believe it will not be much to our advantages to bring my face or your poetry to light: for I hope you have yet a pretty good opinion of my face, and so have I of your wit. But if you are for proving your wit, why do not you write a play?

Dap. Because 'tis now no more reputation to write a play, than it is honour to be a knight. Your true wit despises the title of poet, as much as your true gentleman the title of knight; for as a man may be a knight and no gentleman, so a man may be a poet and no wit, let me perish!

Lyd. Pray, sir, how are you dignified or distinguished amongst the rates of wits? and how many rates are there?

Dap. There are as many degrees of wits as of lawyers: as there is first your solicitor, then your attorney, then your pleading-counsel, then your chamber-counsel, and then your judge; so there is first your court-wit, your coffee-wit, your poll-wit, or politic-wit, your chamber-wit, or scribble-wit, and last of all, your judge-wit, or critic.

Lyd. But are there as many wits as lawyers? Lord, what will become of us! — What employment can they have? how are they known?

Dap. First, your court-wit is a fashionable, insinuating, flattering, cringing, grimacing fellow — and has wit enough to solicit a suit of love; and if he fail, he has malice enough to ruin the woman with a dull lampoon: — but he rails still at the man that is absent, for you must know all wits rail; and his wit properly lies in combing perukes, matching ribbons, and being severe, as they call it, upon other people's clothes.

Lyd. Now, what is the coffee-wit?

Dap. He is a lying, censorious, gossiping, quibbling wretch, and sets people together by the ears over that sober drink, coffee: he is a wit, as he is a commentator, upon the

Gazette; and he rails at the pirates of Algier, the Grand Signior of Constantinople, and the Christian Grand Signior.

Lyd. What kind of man is your poll-wit?

Dap. He is a fidgetting, busy, dogmatical, hot-headed fop, that speaks always in sentences and proverbs, (as other in similitudes,) and he rails perpetually against the present government. His wit lies in projects and monopolies, and penning speeches for young parliament men.

Lyd. But what is your chamber-wit, or scribble-wit?

Dap. He is a poring, melancholy, modest sot, ashamed of the world: he searches all the records of wit, to compile a breviate of them for the use of players, printers, booksellers, and sometimes cooks, tobacco-men; he employs his railing against the ignorance of the age, and all that have more money than he.

Lyd. Now your last.

Dap. Your judge-wit, or critic, is all these together, and yet has the wit to be none of them: he can think, speak, write, as well as the rest, but scorns (himself a judge) to be judged by posterity: he rails at all the other classes of wits, and his wit lies in damning all but himself: — he is your true wit.

Lyd. Then, I suspect you are of his form.

Dap. I cannot deny it, madam.

Vin. Dapperwit, you have been all this time on the wrong side; for you love to talk all, and here's a lady would not have hindered you.

Dap. A pox! I have been talking too long indeed here; for wit is lost upon a silly weak woman, as well as courage. [*Aside.*

Vin. I have used all common means to move a woman's tongue and mask; I called her ugly, old, and old acquaintance, and yet she would not disprove me: — but here comes Ranger, let him try what he can do; for, since my mistress is dogged, I'll go sleep alone. [*Exit.*

Re-enter Ranger.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Ranger! 'tis he indeed: I am sorry he is here, but glad I discovered him before I went. Yet he must not discover me, lest I should be prevented hereafter in finding him out. False Ranger! — [*To* Lady Flippant.] Nay, if they bring fresh force upon us, madam, 'tis time to quit the field. [*Exeunt* Lydia *and* Lady Flippant.

Ran. What, play with your quarry till it fly from you!

Dap. You frighten it away.

Ran. Ha! is not one of those ladies in mourning?

Dap. All women are so by this light.

Ran. But you might easily discern. Don't you know her?

Dap. No.

Ran. Did you talk with her?

Dap. Yes, she is one of your brisk silly baggages.

Ran. 'Tis she, 'tis she! — I was afraid I saw her before; let us follow 'em: prithee make haste. — [*Aside.*] 'Tis Lydia. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter, on the other side, Lydia *and* Lady Flippant — Dapperwit *and* Ranger *following them at a distance.*

Lyd. They follow us yet, I fear.

L. Flip. You do not fear it certainly; otherwise you would not have encouraged them.

Lyd. For Heaven's sake, madam, waive your quarrel a little, and let us pass by your coach, and so on foot to your acquaintance in the old Pall-mall[11]: for I would not be discovered by the man that came up last to us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Christina's Lodging.

Enter Christina *and* Isabel.

Isa. For Heaven's sake, undress yourself, madam! They'll not return to-night: all people have left the Park an hour ago.

Chris. What is't o'clock?

Isa. 'Tis past one.

Chris. It cannot be!

Isa. I thought that time had only stolen from happy lovers: — the disconsolate have nothing to do but to tell the clock.

Chris. I can only keep account with my misfortunes.

Isa. I am glad they are not innumerable.

Chris. And, truly, my undergoing so often your impertinency is not the least of them.

Isa. I am then more glad, madam, for then they cannot be great; and it is in my power, it seems, to make you in part happy, if I could but hold this villainous tongue of mine: but then let the people of the town hold their tongues if they will, for I cannot but tell you what they say.

Chris. What do they say?

Isa. Faith, madam, I am afraid to tell you, now I think on't.

Chris. Is it so ill?

Isa. O, such base, unworthy things!

Chris. Do they say I was really Clerimont's wench, as he boasted; and that the ground of the quarrel betwixt Valentine and him was not Valentine's vindication of my honour, but Clerimont's jealousy of him?

Isa. Worse, worse a thousand times! such villainous things to the utter ruin of your reputation!

Chris. What are they?

Isa. Faith, madam, you'll be angry: 'tis the old trick of lovers to hate their informers, after they have made 'em such.

Chris. I will not be angry.

Isa. They say then, since Mr. Valentine's flying into France you are grown mad, have put yourself into mourning, live in a dark room, where you'll see nobody, nor take any rest day or night, but rave and talk to yourself perpetually.

Chris. Now, what else?

Isa. But the surest sign of your madness is, they say, because you are desperately resolved (in case my Lord Clerimont should die of his wounds) to transport yourself and fortune into France to Mr. Valentine, a man that has not a groat to return you in exchange.

Chris. All this, hitherto, is true; now to the rest.

Isa. Indeed, madam, I have no more to tell you. I was sorry, I'm sure, to hear so much of any lady of mine.

Chris. Insupportable insolence!

Isa. [*Aside.*] This is some revenge for my want of sleep to-night. — [*Knocking at the door.*] So, I hope my old second is come; 'tis seasonable relief. [*Exit.*

Chris. Unhappy Valentine! couldst thou but see how soon thy absence and misfortunes have disbanded all thy friends, and turned thy slaves all renegadoes, thou sure wouldst prize my only faithful heart!

Enter Lady Flippant, Lydia, *and* Isabel.

L. Flip. Hail, faithful shepherdess! but, truly, I had not kept my word with you, in coming back to-night, if it had not been for this lady, who has her intrigues too with the fellows as well as you.

Lyd. Madam, under my Lady Flippant's protection, I am confident to beg yours; being just now pursued out of the Park by a relation of mine, by whom it imports me extremely not to be discovered: — [*Knocking at the door.*] but I fear he is now at the door. — [*To* Isabel, *who goes out.*] Let me desire you to deny me to him courageously; — for he will hardly believe he can be mistaken in me.

Chris. In such an occasion, where impudence is requisite, she will serve you as faithfully as you can wish, madam.

L. Flip. Come, come, madam, do not upbraid her with her assurance, a qualification that only fits her for a lady's service. A fine woman of the town can be no more without a woman that can make an excuse with assurance, than she can be without a glass, certainly.

Chris. She needs no advocate.

L. Flip. How can any one alone manage an amorous intrigue? though the birds are tame, somebody must help draw the net. If 'twere not for a woman that could make an excuse with assurance, how should we wheedle, jilt, trace, discover, countermine, undermine, and blow up the stinking fellows? which is all the pleasure I receive, or

design by them; for I never admitted a man to my conversation, but for his punishment, certainly.

Chris. Nobody will doubt that, certainly.

Re-enter Isabel.

Isa. Madam, the gentleman will not be mistaken: he says you are here, he saw you come in; he is your relation, his name's Ranger, and is come to wait upon you home. I had much ado to keep him from coming up.

Lyd. [*To* Christina.] Madam, for Heaven's sake, help me! 'tis yet in your power; if but, while I retire into your dining-room, you will please to personate me, and own yourself for her he pursued out of the Park: you are in mourning too, and your stature so much mine it will not contradict you.

Chris. I am sorry, madam, I must dispute any command of yours. I have made a resolution to see the face of no man, till an unfortunate friend of mine, now out of the kingdom, return.

Lyd. By that friend, and by the hopes you have to see him, let me conjure you to keep me from the sight of mine now. Dear madam, let your charity prevail over you superstition.

Isa. He comes, he comes, madam! [Lydia *withdraws, and stands unseen at the door.*

Enter Ranger.

Ran. Ha! this is no Lydia. [*Aside.*

Chris. What, unworthy defamer, has encouraged you to offer this insolence?

Ran. She is liker Lydia in her style than her face. I see I am mistaken; but to tell her I followed her for another, were an affront rather than an excuse. She's a glorious creature! [*Aside.*

Chris. Tell me, sir, whence had you reason for this your rude pursuit of me, into my lodgings, my chamber? why should you follow me?

Ran. Faith, madam, because you ran away from me.

Chris. That was no sign of an acquaintance.

Ran. You'll pardon me, madam.

Chris. Then, it seems, you mistook me for another, and the night is your excuse, which blots out all distinctions. But now you are satisfied in your mistake, I hope you will seek out your woman in another place.

Ran. Madam, I allow not the excuse you make for me. If I have offended, I will rather be condemned for my love, than pardoned for my insensibility.

Lyd. How's that? [*Aside.*

Chris. What do you say?

Ran. Though the night had been darker, my heart would not have suffered me to follow any one but you: — he has been too long acquainted with you to mistake you.

Lyd. What means this tenderness? he mistook me for her sure. [*Aside.*

Chris. What says the gentleman? did you know me then, sir?

Ran. [*Aside.*] Not I, the devil take me! but I must on now. — [*Aloud.*] Could you imagine, madam, by the innumerable crowd of your admirers, you had left any man free in the town, or ignorant of the power of your beauty?

Chris. I never saw your face before, that I remember.

Ran. Ah, madam! you would never regard your humblest slave; I was till now a modest lover.

Lyd. Falsest of men! [*Aside.*

Chris. My woman said, you came to seek a relation here, not a mistress.

Ran. I must confess, madam, I thought you would sooner disprove my dissembled error, than admit my visit, and was resolved to see you.

Lyd. 'Tis clear! [*Aside.*

Ran. Indeed, when I followed you first out of the Park, I was afraid you might have been a certain relation of mine, for your statures and habits are the same; but when you entered here, I was with joy convinced. Besides, I would not for the world have given her troublesome love so much encouragement, to have disturbed my future addresses to you; for the foolish woman does perpetually torment me to make our relation nearer; but never more in vain than since I have seen you, madam.

Lyd. How! shall I suffer this? 'tis clear he disappointed me to-night for her, and made me stay at home that I might not disappoint him of her company in the Park. [*Aside.*

Chris. I am amazed! but let me tell you, sir, if the lady were here, I would satisfy her the sight of me should never frustrate her ambitious designs upon her cruel kinsman.

Lyd. I wish you could satisfy me. [*Aside.*

Ran. If she were here, she would satisfy you she were not capable of the honour to be taken for you: — though in the dark. Faith, my cousin is but a tolerable woman to a man that had not seen you.

Chris. Sure, to my plague, this is the first time you ever saw me!

Ran. Sure, to the plague of my poor heart, 'tis not the hundredth time I have seen you! For, since the time I saw you first, you have not been at the Park, playhouse,

Exchange,[12] or other public place, but I saw you; for it was my business to watch and follow.

Chris. Pray, when did you see me last at the Park, playhouse, or Exchange?

Ran. Some two, three days, or a week ago.

Chris. I have not been this month out of this chamber.

Lyd. That is to delude me. [*Aside.*

Chris. I knew you were mistaken.

Ran. You'll pardon a lover's memory, madam. — [*Aside.*] A pox! I have hanged myself in my own line. One would think my perpetual ill-luck in lying should break me of the quality; but, like a losing gamester, I am still for pushing on, till none will trust me.

Chris. Come, sir, you run out of one error into a greater: you would excuse the rudeness of your mistake, and intrusion at this hour into my lodgings, with your gallantry to me, — more unseasonable and offensive.

Ran. Nay, I am in love I see, for I blush and have not a word to say for myself.

Chris. But, sir, if you will needs play the gallant, pray leave my house before morning, lest you should be seen go hence, to the scandal of my honour. Rather than that should be, I'll call up the house and neighbours to bear witness I bid you begone.

Ran. Since you take a night visit so ill, madam, I will never wait upon you again but by day. I go, that I may hope to return; and, for once, I wish you a good night without me.

Chris. Good night, for as long as I live. [*Exit* Ranger.

Lyd. And good night to my love, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

Chris. Though I have done you an inconsiderable service, I assure you, madam, you are not a little obliged to me. — [*Aside.*] Pardon me, dear Valentine!

Lyd. I know not yet whether I am more obliged than injured: when I do, I assure you, madam, I shall not be insensible of either.

Chris. I fear, madam, you are as liable to mistakes as your kinsman.

Lyd. I fear I am more subject to 'em: it may be for want of sleep, therefore I'll go home.

Chris. My Lady Flippant, good night.

L. Flip. Good night, or rather good morrow, faithful shepherdess.

Chris. I'll wait on you down.

Lyd. Your coach stays yet, I hope.

L. Flip. Certainly. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. The Street before Christina's Lodging.

Enter Ranger *and* Dapperwit.

Dap. I was a faithful sentinel: nobody came out, let me perish!

Ran. No, no, I hunted upon a wrong scent; I thought I had followed a woman, but found her an angel.

Dap. What is her name?

Ran. That you must tell me. What very fine woman is there lives hereabouts?

Dap. Faith, I know not any. She is, I warrant you, some fine woman of a term's standing or so in the town; such as seldom appear in public, but in their balconies, where they stand so constantly, one would think they had hired no other part of the house.

Ran. And look like the pictures which painters expose to draw in customers; — but I must know who she is. Vincent's lodging is hard by, I'll go and inquire of him, and lie with him to-night: but if he will not let me, I'll lie with you, for my lodging is too far off.

Dap. Then I will go before, and expect you at mine. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. Vincent's Lodging.

Enter Vincent *and* Valentine *in a riding habit, as newly from a journey.*

Vin. Your mistress, dear Valentine, will not be more glad to see you! but my wonder is no less than my joy, that you would return ere you were informed Clerimont were out of danger. His surgeons themselves have not been assured of his recovery till within these two days.

Val. I feared my mistress, not my life. My life I could trust again with my old enemy Fortune; but no longer my mistress in the hands of my greater enemies, her relations.

Vin. Your fear was in the wrong place, then: for though my Lord Clerimont live, he and his relations may put you in more danger of your life than your mistress's relations can of losing her.

Val. Would any could secure me her! I would myself secure my life, for I should value it then.

Vin. Come, come; her relations can do you no hurt. I dare swear, if her mother should but say, "Your hat did not cock handsomely," she would never ask her blessing again.

Val. Prithee leave thy fooling, and tell me if, since my departure, she has given evidences of her love, to clear those doubts I went away with: — for as absence is the bane of common and bastard love, 'tis the vindication of that which is true and generous.

Vin. Nay, if you could ever doubt her love, you deserve to doubt on; for there is no punishment great enough for jealousy — but jealousy.

Val. You may remember, I told you before my flight I had quarrelled with the defamer of my mistress, but I thought I had killed my rival.

Vin. But pray give me now the answer which the suddenness of your flight denied me; — how could Clerimont hope to subdue her heart by the assault of her honour?

Val. Pish! it might be the stratagem of a rival to make me desist.

Vin. For shame! if 'twere not rather to vindicate her, than satisfy you, I would not tell you how like a Penelope she has behaved herself in your absence.

Val. Let me know.

Vin. Then know, the next day you went she put herself in mourning, and —

Val. That might be for Clerimont, thinking him dead, as all the world besides thought.

Vin. Still turning the dagger's point on yourself! hear me out. I say she put herself into mourning for you — locked herself in her chamber this month for you — shut out her barking relations for you — has not seen the sun or the face of man since she saw you — thinks and talks of nothing but you — sends to me daily to hear of you — and, and, in short, (I think,) is mad for you. All this I can swear; for I am to her so near a neighbour, and so inquisitive a friend for you —

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Ranger, sir, is coming up.

Vin. What brings him now? he comes to lie with me.

Val. Who, Ranger?

Vin. Yes. Pray retire a little, till I send him off: — unless you have a mind to have your arrival published to-morrow in the coffee houses. [Valentine *retires to the door behind.*

Enter Ranger.

Ran. What! not yet a-bed? your man is laying you to sleep with usquebaugh or brandy; is he not so?

Vin. What punk[13] will not be troubled with you to-night, therefore I am? — is it not so?

Ran. I have been turned out of doors, indeed, just now, by a woman, — but such a woman, Vincent!

Vin. Yes, yes, your women are always such women!

Ran. A neighbour of yours, and I'm sure the finest you have.

Vin. Prithee do not asperse my neighbourhood with your acquaintance; 'twould bring a scandal upon an alley.

Ran. Nay, I do not know her; therefore I come to you.

Vin. 'Twas no wonder she turned you out of doors, then; and if she had known you, 'twould have been a wonder she had let you stay. But where does she live?

Ran. Five doors off, on the right hand.

Vin. Pish! pish! —

Ran. What's the matter?

Vin. Does she live there, do you say?

Ran. Yes; I observed them exactly, that my account from you might be exact. Do you know who lives there?

Vin. Yes, so well, that I know you are mistaken.

Ran. Is she not a young lady scarce eighteen, of extraordinary beauty, her stature next to low, and in mourning?

Val. What is this? [*Aside.*

Vin. She is; but if you saw her, you broke in at window.

Ran. I chased her home from the Park, indeed, taking her for another lady who had some claim to my heart, till she showed a better title to't.

Vin. Hah! hah! hah!

Val. Was she at the Park, then? and have I a new rival? [*Aside.*

Vin. From the Park did you follow her, do you say? — I knew you were mistaken.

Ran. I tell you I am not.

Vin. If you are sure it was that house, it might be perhaps her woman stolen to the Park, unknown to her lady.

Ran. My acquaintance does usually begin with the maid first, but now 'twas with the mistress, I assure you.

Vin. The mistress! — I tell you she has not been out of her doors since Valentine's flight. She is his mistress, — the great heiress, Christina.

Ran. I tell you then again, I followed that Christina from the Park home, where I talked with her half an hour, and intend to see her to morrow again.

Val. Would she talk with him too! [*Aside.*

Vin. It cannot be.

Ran. Christina do you call her? Faith I am sorry she is an heiress, lest it should bring the scandal of interest, and the design of lucre, upon my love.

Vin. No, no, her face and virtues will free you from that censure. But, however, 'tis not fairly done to rival your friend Valentine in his absence; and when he is present you know 'twill be dangerous, by my Lord Clerimont's example. Faith, if you have seen her, I would not advise you to attempt it again.

Ran. You may be merry, sir, you are not in love; your advice I come not for, nor will I for your assistance; — Good night. [*Exit.*

Val. Here's your Penelope! the woman that had not seen the sun, nor face of man, since my departure! for it seems she goes out in the night, when the sun is absent, and faces are not distinguished.

Vin. Why! do you believe him?

Val. Should I believe you?

Vin. ‘Twere more for your interest, and you would be less deceived. If you believe him, you must doubt the chastity of all the fine women in town, and five miles about.

Val. His reports of them will little invalidate his testimony with me.

Vin. He spares not the innocents in bibs and aprons. I’ll secure you, he has made (at best) some gross mistake concerning Christina, which to-morrow will discover; in the meantime let us go to sleep.

Val. I will not hinder you, because I cannot enjoy it myself: —

Hunger, Revenge, to sleep are petty foes,
But only Death the jealous eyes can close.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I. A Room in Mrs. Crossbite's House.

Enter Mrs. Joyner *and* Mrs. Crossbite.

Mrs. Joyn. Good morrow, gossip.

Mrs. Cros. Good morrow; — but why up so early, good gossip?

Mrs. Joyn. My care and passionate concern for you and yours would not let me rest, in truly.

Mrs. Cros. For me and mine?

Mrs. Joyn. You know we have known one another long; I think it be some nine-and-thirty years since you were married.

Mrs. Cros. Nine-and thirty years old, mistress! I'd have you to know, I am no far-born child; and if the register had not been burned in the last great fire, alas! — but my face needs no register sure; nine-and-thirty years old, said you?

Mrs. Joyn. I said you had been so long married; but, indeed, you bear your years as well as any she in Pepper-alley.

Mrs. Cros. Nine-and-thirty, mistress!

Mrs. Joyn. This it is; a woman, now-a-days, had rather you should find her faulty with a man, I warrant you, than discover her age, I warrant you.

Mrs. Cros. Marry, and 'tis the greatest secret far. Tell a miser he is rich, and a woman she is old, — you will get no money of him, not kindness of her. To tell me I was nine-and-thirty — (I say no more) 'twas un-neighbourly done of you, mistress.

Mrs. Joyn. My memory confesses my age, it seems, as much as my face; for I thought —

Mrs. Cros. Pray talk nor think no more of any one's age; but say what brought you hither so early.

Mrs. Joyn. How does my sweet god-daughter, poor wretch?

Mrs. Cros. Well, very well.

Mrs. Joyn. Ah, sweet creature! Alas! alas! — I am sorry for her.

Mrs. Cros. Why, what has she done to deserve your sorrow, or my reprehension?

Enter Lucy, *and stands unseen at the door.*

Lucy. What, are they talking of me? [*Aside.*

Mrs. Joyn. In short, she was seen going into the meeting-house of the wicked, otherwise called the playhouse, hand in hand with that vile fellow Dapperwit.

Mrs. Cros. Mr. Dapperwit! let me tell you, if ‘twere not for Master Dapperwit, we might have lived all this vacation upon green cheese, tripe, and ox cheek. If he had it, we should not want it; but, poor gentleman! it often goes hard with him, — for he’s a wit.

Mrs. Joyn. So, then, you are the dog to be fed, while the house is broken up! I say, beware! The sweet bits you swallow will make your daughter’s belly swell, mistress; and, after all your junkets, there will be a bone for you to pick, mistress.

Mrs. Cros. Sure, Master Dapperwit is no such manner of man!

Mrs. Joyn. He is a wit, you say; and what are wits, but contemners of matrons, seducers, or defamers of married women, and deflowerers of helpless virgins, even in the streets, upon the very bulks[14]; affronters of midnight magistracy, and breakers of windows? in a word —

Mrs. Cros. But he is a little wit, a modest wit, and they do no such outrageous things as your great wits do.

Mrs. Joyn. Nay, I dare say, he will not say himself he is a little wit if you ask him.

Lucy. Nay, I cannot hear this with patience. — [*Comes forward.*] With your pardon, mother, you are as much mistaken as my godmother in Mr. Dapperwit; for he is as great a wit as any, and in what he speaks or writes as happy as any. I can assure you, he contemns all your tearing wits, in comparison of himself.

Mrs. Joyn. Alas, poor young wretch! I cannot blame thee so much as thy mother, for thou art not thyself. His bewitching madrigals have charmed thee into some heathenish imp with a hard name.

Lucy. Nymph, you mean, godmother.

Mrs. Joyn. But you, gossip, know what’s what. Yesterday, as I told you, a fine old alderman of the city, seeing your daughter in so ill hands as Dapperwit’s, was zealously, and in pure charity, bent upon her redemption; and has sent me to tell you, he will take her into his care and relieve your necessities, if you think good.

Mrs. Cros. Will he relieve all our necessities?

Mrs. Joyn. All.

Mrs. Cros. Mine, as well as my daughter’s?

Mrs. Joyn. Yes.

Mrs. Cros. Well fare his heart! — D'ye hear, daughter, Mrs. Joyner has satisfied me clearly; Dapperwit is a vile fellow, and, in short, you must put an end to that scandalous familiarity between you.

Lucy. Leave sweet Mr. Dapperwit! — oh furious ingratitude! Was he not the man that gave me my first Farrendon[15] gown, put me out of worsted stockings and handkerchiefs, taught me to dress, talk, and move well?

Mrs. Cros. He has taught you to talk indeed; but, huswife, I will not have my pleasure disputed.

Mrs. Joyn. Nay, indeed, you are too tart with her, poor sweet soul.

Lucy. He taught me to rehearse, too, — would have brought me into the playhouse, where I might have had as good luck as others: I might have had good clothes, plate, jewels, and things so well about me, that my neighbours, the little gentlemen's wives of fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds a year, should have retired into the country, sick with envy of my prosperity and greatness.

Mrs. Joyn. If you follow your mother's counsel, you are like to enjoy all you talk of sooner than by Dapperwit's assistance: — a poor wretch that goes on tick for the paper he writes his lampoons on, and the very ale and coffee that inspire him, as they say.

Mrs. Cros. I am credibly informed so, indeed, Madam Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. Well, I have discharged my conscience; good morrow to you both. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II. Mrs. Crossbite's Dining-room.

Enter Dapperwit *and* Ranger.

Dap. This is the cabinet in which I hide my jewel; a small house, in an obscure, little, retired street, too.

Ran. Vulgarly, an alley.

Dap. Nay, I hide my mistress with as much care as a spark of the town does his money from his dun after a good hand at play; and nothing but you could have wrought upon me for a sight of her, let me perish.

Ran. My obligation to you is great; do not lessen it by delays of the favour you promised.

Dap. But do not censure my honour; for if you had not been in a desperate condition, — for as one nail must beat out another, one poison expel another, one fire draw out another, one fit of drinking cure the sickness of another, — so, the surfeit you took last night of Christina's eyes shall be cured by Lucy's this morning; or as —

Ran. Nay, I bar more similitudes.

Dap. What, in my mistress's lodging? that were as hard as to bar a young parson in the pulpit, the fifth of November, railing at the Church of Rome; or as hard as to put you to bed to Lucy and defend you from touching her; or as —

Ran. Or as hard as to make you hold your tongue. — I shall not see your mistress, I see.

Dap. Miss Lucy! Miss Lucy! — [*Knocks at the door and returns.*] — The devil take me, if good men (I say no more) have not been upon their knees to me, to see her, and you at last must obtain it.

Ran. I do not believe you.

Dap. 'Tis such as she; she is beautiful without affectation; amorous without impertinency; airy and brisk without impudence; frolic without rudeness; and, in a word, the justest creature breathing to her assignation.

Ran. You praise her as if you had a mind to part with her; and yet you resolve, I see, to keep her to yourself.

Dap. Keep her! poor creature, she cannot leave me; and rather than leave her, I would leave writing lampoons or sonnets almost.

Ran. Well, I'll leave you with her then.

Dap. What, will you go without seeing her?

Ran. Rather than stay without seeing her.

Dap. Yes, yes, you shall see her; but let me perish if I have not been offered a hundred guineas for a sight of her; by — I say no more.

Ran. [*Aside.*] I understand you now. — [*Aloud.*] If the favour be to be purchased, then I'll bid all I have about me for't.

Dap. Fy, fy, Mr. Ranger! you are pleasant, i'faith. Do you think I would sell the sight of my rarity? — like those gentlemen who hang out flags at Charing Cross, or like —

Ran. Nay, then I'm gone again.

Dap. What, you take it ill I refuse your money? rather than that should be, give us it; but take notice I will borrow it. Now I think on't, Lucy wants a gown and some knacks.

Ran. Here.

Dap. But I must pay it you again: I will not take it unless you engage your honour I shall pay it you again.

Ran. You must pardon me; I will not engage my honour for such a trifle. Go, fetch her out.

Dap. Well, she's a ravishing creature: such eyes and lips, Mr. Ranger!

Ran. Prithee go.

Dap. Such neck and breasts, Mr. Ranger!

Ran. Again, prithee go.

Dap. Such feet, legs, and thighs, Mr. Ranger!

Ran. Prithee let me see 'em.

Dap. And a mouth no bigger than your ring! — I need say no more.

Ran. Would thou wert never to speak again!

Dap. And then so neat, so sweet a creature in bed, that, to my knowledge, she does not change her sheets in half a year.

Ran. I thank you for that allay to my impatience.

Dap. Miss Lucy! Miss Lucy! Miss! — [*Knocking at the door.*

Ran. Will she not open? I am afraid my pretty miss is not stirring, and therefore will not admit us. Is she not gone her walk to Lamb's Conduit?[16]

Dap. Fy, fy, a quibble next your stomach in a morning! What if she should hear us? would you lose a mistress for a quibble? that's more than I could do, let me perish! — She's within, I hear her.

Ran. But she will not hear you; she's as deaf as if you were a dun or a constable.

Dap. Pish! give her but leave to gape, rub her eyes, and put on her day pinner; the long patch under the left eye; awaken the roses on her cheeks with some Spanish wool, and warrant her breath with some lemon-peel; the doors fly off the hinges, and she into my arms. She knows there is as much artifice to keep a victory as to gain it; and 'tis a sign she values the conquest of my heart.

Ran. I thought her beauty had not stood in need of art.

Dap. Beauty's a coward still without the help of art, and may have the fortune of a conquest but cannot keep it. Beauty and art can no more be asunder than love and honour.

Ran. Or, to speak more like yourself, wit and judgment.

Dap. Don't you hear the door wag yet?

Ran. Not a whit.

Dap. Miss! miss! 'tis your slave that calls. Come, all this tricking for him! — Lend me your comb, Mr. Ranger.

Ran. No, I am to be preferred to-day, you are to set me off. You are in possession, I will not lend you arms to keep me out.

Dap. A pox! don't let me be ungrateful; if she has smugged herself up for me, let me prune and flounce my peruke a little for her. There's ne'er a young fellow in the town but will do as much for a mere stranger in the playhouse.

Ran. A wit's wig has the privilege of being uncombed in the very playhouse, or in the presence.

Dap. But not in the presence of his mistress; 'tis a greater neglect of her than himself. Pray lend me your comb.

Ran. I would not have men of wit and courage make use of every fop's mean arts to keep or gain a mistress.

Dap. But don't you see every day, though a man have never so much wit and courage, his mistress will revolt to those fops that wear and comb perukes well. I'll break off the bargain, and will not receive you my partner.

Ran. Therefore you see I am setting up for myself. [*Combs his peruke.*

Dap. She comes, she comes! — pray, your comb. [*Snatches* Ranger's *comb.*

Enter Mrs. Crossbite.

Mrs. Cros. Bargain! — what, are you offering us to sale?

Dap. A pox! is't she? — Here take your comb again, then. [*Returns the comb.*

Mrs. Cros. Would you sell us? 'tis like you, y'fads.

Dap. Sell thee! — where should we find a chapman? Go, prithee, mother, call out my dear Miss Lucy.

Mrs. Cros. Your Miss Lucy! I do not wonder you have the conscience to bargain for us behind our backs, since you have the impudence to claim a propriety in us to my face.

Ran. How's this, Dapperwit?

Dap. Come, come, this gentleman will not think the worse of a woman for my acquaintance with her. He has seen me bring your daughter to the lure with a chiney-orange, from one side of the playhouse to the other.

Mrs. Cros. I would have the gentleman and you to know my daughter is a girl of reputation, though she has been seen in your company; but is now so sensible of her past danger, that she is resolved never more to venture her pitcher to the well, as they say.

Dap. How's that, widow? I wonder at your confidence.

Mrs. Cros. I wonder at your old impudence, that where you have had so frequent repulses you should provoke another, and bring your friend here to witness your disgrace.

Dap. Hark you, widow, a little.

Mrs. Cros. What, have you mortgaged my daughter to that gentleman; and now would offer me a snip to join in the security!

Dap. [*Aside.*] She overhead me talk of a bargain;— 'twas unlucky. — [*Aloud.*] Your wrath is grounded upon a mistake; Miss Lucy herself shall be judge; call her out, pray.

Mrs. Cros. She shall not; she will not come to you.

Dap. Till I hear it from her own mouth, I cannot believe it.

Mrs. Cros. You shall hear her say't through the door.

Dap. I shall doubt it unless she say it to my face.

Mrs. Cros. Shall we be troubled with you no more then?

Dap. If she command my death, I cannot disobey her.

Mrs. Cros. Come out, child.

Enter Lucy, *holding down her head.*

Dap. Your servant, dearest miss: can you have —

Mrs. Cros. Let me ask her.

Dap. No, I'll ask her.

Ran. I'll throw up cross or pile[17] who shall ask her.

Dap. Can you have the heart to say you will never more break a cheese-cake with me at New Spring Garden,[18] the Neat-house, or Chelsea? never more sit in my lap at a new play? never more wear a suit of knots of my choice? and, last of all, never more pass away an afternoon with me again in the Green Garret? — do not forget the Green Garret.

Lucy. I wish I had never seen the Green Garret. — Damn the Green Garret!

Dap. Damn the Green Garret! — You are strangely altered!

Lucy. 'Tis you are altered.

Dap. You have refused Colby's Mulberry-garden, and the French houses, for the Green Garret; and a little something in the Green Garret pleased you more than the best treat the other places could yield; and can you of a sudden quit the Green Garret?

Lucy. Since you have a design to pawn me for the rent, 'tis time to remove my goods.

Dap. Thou art extremely mistaken.

Lucy. Besides, I have heard such strange things of you this morning.

Dap. What things?

Lucy. I blush to speak 'em.

Dap. I know my innocence, therefore take my charge as a favour. What have I done?

Lucy. Then know, vile wit, my mother has confessed just now thou wert false to me, to her too certain knowledge; and hast forced even her to be false to me too.

Dap. Faults in drink, Lucy, when we are not ourselves, should not condemn us.

Lucy. And now to let me out to hire like a hackney! — I tell you my own dear mother shall bargain for me no more; there are as little as I can bargain for themselves now-a-days, as well as properer women.

Mrs. Cros. Whispering all this while! — Beware of his snares again: come away, child.

Dap. Sweet, dear miss —

Lucy. Bargain for me! — you have reckoned without your hostess, as they say. Bargain for me! bargain for me! [*Exit.*

Dap. I must return, then, to treat with you.

Mrs. Cros. Treat me no treatings, but take a word for all. You shall no more dishonour my daughter, nor molest my lodgings, as you have done at all hours.

Dap. Do you intend to change 'em, then, to Bridewell, or Long's powdering-tub?[19]

Mrs. Cros. No, to a bailiff's house, and then you'll be so civil, I presume, as not to trouble us.

Ran. Here, will you have my comb again, Dapperwit?

Dap. A pox! I think women take inconstancy from me worse than from any man breathing.

Mrs. Cros. Pray, sir, forget me before you write your next lampoon. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir Simon Addleplot *in the dress of a* Clerk. — Ranger *retires to the background.*

Sir Sim. Have I found you? have I found you in your by-walks, faith and troth? I am almost out of breath in following you. Gentlemen when they get into an alley walk so fast, as if they had more earnest business there than in the broad streets.

Dap. [*Aside.*] — How came this sot hither? Fortune has sent him to ease my choler. — You impudent rascal, who are you, that dare intrude thus on us? [*Strikes him.*

Sir Sim. Don't you know me, Dapperwit? sure you know me. [*Softly.*

Dap. Will thou dishonour me with thy acquaintance too? thou rascally, insolent, pen-and-ink man. [*Strikes him again.*

Sir Sim. Oh! oh! sure you know me! pray know me. [*Softly.*

Dap. By thy saucy familiarity, thou shouldst be a marker at a tennis-court, a barber, or a slave that fills coffee.

Sir Sim. Oh! oh!

Dap. What art thou? [*Kicks him.*

Sir Sim. Nay, I must not discover myself to Ranger for a kick or two. Oh, pray hold, sir: by that you will know me. [*Delivers him a letter.*

Dap. How, Sir Simon!

Sir Sim. Mum, mum, make no excuses, man; I would not Ranger should have known me for five hundred — kicks.

Dap. Your disguise is so natural, I protest, it will excuse me.

Sir Sim. I know that, prithee make no excuses, I say. No ceremony between thee and I, man: — read the letter.

Dap. What, you have not opened it!

Sir Sim. Prithee, don't be angry, the seal is a little cracked: for I could not help kissing Mrs. Martha's letter. The word is, now or never. Her father she finds will be abroad all this day, and she longs to see your friend Sir Simon Addleplot: — faith 'tis a pretty jest; while I am with her, and praising myself to her at no ordinary rate. Let thee and I alone at an intrigue.

Dap. Tell her I will not fail to meet her at the place and time. Have a care of your charge; and manage your business like yourself, for yourself.

Sir Sim. I warrant you.

Dap. The gaining Gripe's daughter will make me support the loss of this young jilt here. [*Aside.*

Ran. [*Coming forward.*] What fellow's that?

Dap. A servant to a friend of mine.

Ran. Methinks he something resembles our acquaintance Sir Simon; but it is no compliment to tell him so: for that knight is the most egregious coxcomb that ever played with lady's fan.

Sir Sim. So! thanks to my disguise, I know my enemies! [*Aside.*

Ran. The most incorrigible ass, beyond the reproof of a kicking rival or a frowning mistress. But, if it be possible, thou dost use him worse than his mistress or rival can; thou dost make such a cully of him.

Sir Sim. Does he think so too? [*Aside.*

Dap. Go, friend, go about your business. — [*Exit* Sir Simon.] A pox! you would spoil all, just in the critical time of projection. He brings me here a summons from his mistress, to meet her in the evening; will you come to my wedding?

Ran. Don't speak so loud, you'll break poor Lucy's heart. Poor creature, she cannot leave you; and, rather than leave her, you would leave writing of lampoons or sonnets — almost.

Dap. Come, let her go, ungrateful baggage! — But now you talk of sonnets, I am no living wit if her love has not cost me two thousand couplets at least.

Ran. But what would you give, now, for a new satire against women, ready made?— 'Twould be as convenient to buy satires against women ready made, as it is to buy cravats ready tied.

Dap. Or as —

Ran. Hey, come away, come away, Mr., or as — [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. A Room in Mrs. Crossbite's House.

Enter Mrs. Joyner *and* Gripe.

Gripe. Peace, plenty, and pastime be within these walls!

Mrs. Joyn. 'Tis a small house, you see, and mean furniture; for no gallants are suffered to come hither. She might have had ere now as good lodgings as any in town; her Mortlake[20] hangings, great glasses, cabinets, china, embroidered beds, Persia carpets, gold-plate, and the like, if she would have put herself forward. But your worship may please to make 'em remove to a place fit to receive one of your worship's quality; for this is a little scandalous, in truly.

Gripe. No, no; I like it well enough: — I am not dainty. Besides, privacy, privacy, Mrs. Joyner! I love privacy in opposition to the wicked, who hate it. [*Looks about.*

Mrs. Joyn. What do you look for, sir?

Gripe. Walls have ears; but, besides, I look for a private place to retire to, in time of need. Oh! here's one convenient. [*Turns up a hanging, and discovers the slender provisions of the family.*]

Mrs. Joyn. But you see, poor innocent souls, to what use they put it; — not to hide gallants.

Gripe. Temperance is the nurse of chastity.

Mrs. Joyn. But your worship may please to mend their fare; and, when you come, may make them entertain you better than, you see, they do themselves.

Gripe. No, I am not dainty, as I told you. I abominate entertainments; — no entertainments, pray, Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. No! [*Aside.*

Gripe. There can be no entertainment to me more luscious and savoury than communion with that little gentlewoman. — Will you call her out? I fast till I see her.

Mrs. Joyn. But, in truly, your worship, we should have brought a bottle or two of Rhenish and some Naples biscuit, to have entertained the young gentlewoman. 'Tis the mode for lovers to treat their mistresses.

Gripe. Modes! I tell you, Mrs. Joyner, I hate modes and forms.

Mrs. Joyn. You must send for something to entertain her with.

Gripe. Again entertaining! — we will be to each other a feast.

Mrs. Joyn. I shall be ashamed, in truly, your worship. — Besides, the young gentlewoman will despise you.

Gripe. I shall content her, I warrant you; leave it to me.

Mrs. Joyn. [*Aside.*] I am sure you will not content me, if you will not content her; 'tis as impossible for a man to love and be a miser, as to love and be wise, as they say.

Gripe. While you talk of treats, you starve my eyes; I long to see the fair one; fetch her hither.

Mrs. Joyn. I am ashamed she should find me so abominable a liar; I have so praised you to her, and, above all your virtues, your liberality; which is so great a virtue, that it often excuses youth, beauty, courage, wit, or anything.

Gripe. Pish, pish! 'tis the virtue of fools; every fool can have it.

Mrs. Joyn. And will your worship want it, then? I told her —

Gripe. Why would you tell her anything of me? you know I am a modest man. But come, if you will have me as extravagant as the wicked, take that and fetch us a treat, as you call it.

Mrs. Joyn. Upon my life a groat! what will this purchase?

Gripe. Two black pots of ale and a cake, at the cellar. — Come, the wine has arsenic in't.

Mrs. Joyn. [*Aside.*] Well, I am mistaken, and my hopes are abused: I never knew any man so mortified a miser, that he would deny his lechery anything; I must be even with thee then another way. [*Exit.*

Gripe. These useful old women are more exorbitant and craving in their desires than the young ones in theirs. These prodigals in white perukes spoil 'em both; and that's the reason, when the squires come under my clutches, I make 'em pay for their folly and mine, and 'tis but conscience: — oh, here comes the fair one at last!

Re-enter Mrs. Joyner *leading in* Lucy, *who hangs backwards as she enters.*

Lucy. Oh Lord, there's a man, godmother!

Mrs. Joyn. Come in, child, thou art so bashful —

Lucy. My mother is from home too, I dare not.

Mrs. Joyn. If she were here, she'd teach you better manners.

Lucy. I'm afraid she'd be angry.

Mrs. Joyn. To see you so much an ass. — Come along, I say.

Gripe. Nay, speak to her gently; if you won't, I will.

Lucy. Thank you, sir.

Gripe. Pretty innocent! there is, I see, one left of her age; what hap have I! Sweet little gentlewoman, come sit down by me.

Lucy. I am better bred, I hope, sir.

Gripe. You must sit down by me.

Lucy. I'd rather stand, if you please.

Gripe. To please me, you must sit, sweetest.

Lucy. Not before my godmother, sure.

Gripe. Wonderment of innocence!

Mrs. Joyn. A poor bashful girl, sir: I'm sorry she is not better taught.

Gripe. I am glad she is not taught; I'll teach her myself.

Lucy. Are you a dancing-master then, sir? But if I should be dull, and not move as you would have me, you would not beat me, sir, I hope?

Gripe. Beat thee, honeysuckle! I'll use thee thus, and thus, and thus. [*Kisses her.*] Ah, Mrs. Joyner, prithee go fetch our treat now.

Mrs. Joyn. A treat of a groat! I will not wag.

Gripe. Why don't you go? Here, take more money, and fetch what you will; take here, half-a-crown.

Mrs. Joyn. What will half-a-crown do?

Gripe. Take a crown then, an angel, a piece;[21] — begone!

Mrs. Joyn. A treat only will not serve my turn; I must buy the poor wretch there some toys.

Gripe. What toys? what? speak quickly.

Mrs. Joyn. Pendants, necklaces, fans, ribbons, points, laces, stockings, gloves —

Gripe. Hold, hold! before it comes to a gown.

Mrs. Joyn. Well remembered, sir; indeed she wants a gown, for she has but that one to her back. For your own sake you should give her a new gown, for variety of dresses rouses desire, and makes an old mistress seem every day a new one.

Gripe. For that reason she shall have no new gown; for I am naturally constant, and as I am still the same, I love she should be still the same. But here, take half a piece for the other things.

Mrs. Joyn. Half a piece! —

Gripe. Prithee, begone! — take t'other piece then — two pieces — three pieces — five! here, 'tis all I have.

Mrs. Joyn. I must have the broad-seal ring too, or I stir not.

Gripe. Insatiable woman! will you have that too! Prithee spare me that, 'twas my grandfather's.

Mrs. Joyn. That's false, he had ne'er a coat. — So! now I go; this is but a violent fit, and will not hold. [*Aside.*

Lucy. Oh! whither do you go, godmother? will you leave me alone?

Mrs. Joyn. The gentleman will not hurt you; you may venture yourself with him alone.

Lucy. I think I may, godmother. — [*Exit* Mrs. Joyner.] What! will you lock me in, sir? don't lock me in, sir. [Gripe, *fumbling at the door, locks it.*

Gripe. 'Tis a private lesson, I must teach you, fair.

Lucy. I don't see your fiddle, sir; where is your little kit?

Gripe. I'll show it thee presently, sweetest. — [*Sets a chair against the door.*] — Necessity, mother of invention! — Come, my dearest. [*Takes her in his arms.*

Lucy. What do you mean, sir? don't hurt me, sir, will you — Oh! oh! you will kill me! Murder! murder! — Oh! oh! — help! help! oh!

The door is broken open; enter Mrs. Crossbite, *and her* Landlord, *and his* 'Prentice, *in aprons.*

Mrs. Cros. What, murder my daughter, villain!

Lucy. I wish he had murdered me. — Oh! oh!

Mrs. Cros. What has he done?

Lucy. Why would you go out, and leave me alone? unfortunate woman that I am!

Gripe. How now, what will this end in? [*Aside.*

Mrs. Cros. Who brought him in?

Lucy. That witch, that treacherous false woman, my godmother, who has betrayed me, sold me to his lust. — Oh! oh! —

Mrs. Cros. Have you ravished my daughter, then, you old goat? ravished my daughter! — ravished my daughter! speak, villain.

Gripe. By yea and by nay, no such matter.

Mrs. Cros. A canting rogue, too! Take notice, landlord, he has ravished my daughter, you see her all in tears and distraction; and see there the wicked engine of the filthy execution. — [*Pointing to the chair.*] — Jeremy, call up the neighbours, and the constable, — False villain! thou shalt die for it.

Gripe. Hold! hold! — [*Aside.*] — Nay, I am caught.

Mrs. Cros. Go, go, make haste —

Lucy. Oh! oh! —

Mrs. Cros. Poor wretch! — Go quickly.

Gripe. Hold! hold! — Thou young spawn of the old serpent! wicked, as I thought thee innocent! wilt thou say I would have ravished thee?

Lucy. I will swear you did ravish me.

Gripe. I thought so, treacherous Eve! — then I am gone, I must shift as well as I can.

Lucy. Oh! oh! —

Mrs. Cros. Will none of you call up the neighbours, and the authority of the alley?

Gripe. Hold, I'll give you twenty mark[22] among you to let me go.

Mrs. Cros. Villain! nothing shall buy thy life.

Land. But stay, Mrs. Crossbite, let me talk with you.

Lucy. Oh! oh! —

Land. Come, sir, I am your friend: — in a word, I have appeased her, and she shall be contented with a little sum.

Gripe. What is it? what is it?

Land. But five hundred pounds.

Gripe. But five hundred pounds! — hang me then, hang me rather.

Land. You will say I have been your friend.

Pren. The constable and neighbours are a-coming.

Gripe. How, how; will you not take a hundred? pray use conscience in your ways. [*Kneels to* Mrs. Crossbite.

Mrs. Cros. I scorn your money! I will not take a thousand.

Gripe. [*Aside.*] My enemies are many, and I shall be a scandal to the faithful, as a laughing-stock to the wicked. — [*Aloud.*] Go, prepare your engines for my persecution; I'll give you the best security I can.

Land. The instruments are drawing in the other room, if you please to go thither.

Mrs. Cros. Indeed, now I consider, a portion will do my daughter more good than his death. That would but publish her shame; money will cover it — *probatum est*, as they say. Let me tell you, sir, 'tis a charitable thing to give a young maid a portion. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. Lydia's Lodging.

Enter Lydia *and* Lady Flippant, *attended by* Leonore.

Lyd. 'Tis as hard for a woman to conceal her indignation from her apostate lover, as to conceal her love from her faithful servant.

L. Flip. Or almost as hard as it is for the prating fellows now-a-days to conceal the favours of obliging ladies.

Lyd. If Ranger should come up, (I saw him just now in the street,) the discovery of my anger to him now would be as mean as the discovery of my love to him before.

L. Flip. Though I did so mean a thing as to love a fellow, I would not do so mean a thing as to confess it, certainly, by my trouble to part with him. If I confessed love, it should be before they left me.

Lyd. So you would deserve to be left, before you were. But could you ever do so mean a thing as to confess love to any?

L. Flip. Yes; but I never did so mean a thing as really to love any.

Lyd. You had once a husband.

L. Flip. Fy! madam, do you think me so ill bred as to love a husband?

Lyd. You had a widow's heart, before you were a widow, I see.

L. Flip. I should rather make an adventure of my honour with a gallant for a gown, a new coach, a necklace, than clap my husband's cheeks for them, or sit in his lap. I should be as ashamed to be caught in such a posture with a husband, as a brisk well-bred spark of the town would be to be caught on his knees at prayers — unless to his mistress.

Enter Ranger *and* Dapperwit.

Lyd. Mr. Ranger, 'twas obligingly done of you.

Ran. Indeed, cousin, I had kept my promise with you last night, but this gentleman knows —

Lyd. You mistake me; but you shall not lessen any favour you do to me. You are going to excuse your not coming to me last night, when I take it as a particular obligation, that though you threatened me with a visit, upon consideration you were so civil as not to trouble me.

Dap. This is an unlucky morning with me! here's my eternal persecution, the widow Flippant. [*Aside.*

L. Flip. What, Mr. Dapperwit! [Dapperwit *retires to the back of the stage, followed by* Lady Flippant.

Ran. Indeed, cousin, besides my business, another cause I did not wait on you was, my apprehension you were gone to the Park, notwithstanding your promise to the contrary.

Lyd. Therefore, you went to the Park to visit me there, notwithstanding your promise to the contrary?

Ran. Who, I at the Park! when I had promised to wait upon you at your lodging! But were you at the Park, madam?

Lyd. Who, I at the Park! when I had promised to wait for you at home! I was no more at the Park than you were. Were you at the Park?

Ran. The Park had been a dismal desert to me, notwithstanding all the good company in it, if I had wanted yours.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Because it has been the constant endeavour of men to keep women ignorant, they think us so; but 'tis that increases our inquisitiveness, and makes us know them ignorant as false. He is as impudent a dissembler as the widow Flippant, who is making her importunate addresses in vain, for aught I see.

[Lady Flippant *comes forward, driving* Dapperwit *from one side of the stage to the other.*

L. Flip. Dear Mr. Dapperwit! merciful Mr. Dapperwit!

Dap. Unmerciful Lady Flippant!

L. Flip. Will you be satisfied?

Dap. Won't you be satisfied?

L. Flip. That a wit should be jealous; that a wit should be jealous! there's never a brisk young fellow in the town, though no wit, Heaven knows, but thinks too well of himself, to think ill of his wife or mistress. Now, that a wit should lessen his opinion of himself; — for shame!

Dap. I promised to bring you off, but I find it enough to shift for myself — [*Softly, apart to* Ranger.

Lyd. What! out of breath, madam!

L. Flip. I have been defending our cause, madam; I have beat him out of the pit. I do so mumble these prating, censorious fellows they call wits, when I meet with them.

Dap. Her ladyship, indeed, is the only thing in petticoats I dread. 'Twas well for me there was company in the room; for I dare no more venture myself with her alone, than a cully that has been bit dares venture himself in a tavern with an old rook.

L. Flip. I am the revenger of our sex, certainly.

Dap. And the most insatiable one I ever knew, madam; I dare not stand your fury longer. — Mr. Ranger, I will go before and make a new appointment with your friends that expect you at dinner at the French-house; 'tis fit business still wait on love.

Ran. Do so — but now I think on't, Sir Thomas goes out of town this afternoon, and I shall not see him here again these three months.

Lyd. Nay, pray take him with you, sir.

L. Flip. No, sir, you shall not take the gentleman from his mistress. — [*Aside to* Dapperwit.] Do not go yet, sweet Mr. Dapperwit.

Lyd. Take him with you, sir; I suppose his business may be there to borrow or win money, and I ought not to be his hindrance: for when he has none, he has his desperate designs upon that little I have; — for want of money makes as devout lovers as Christians.

Dap. I hope, madam, he offers you no less security than his liberty.

Lyd. His liberty is as poor a pawn to take up money on as honour. He is like the desperate bankrupts of this age, who, if they can get people's fortunes into their hands, care not though they spend them in jail all their lives.

L. Flip. And the poor crediting ladies, when they have parted with their money, must be contented with a pitiful composition, or starve, for all them.

Ran. But widows are commonly so wise as to be sure their men are solvable before they trust 'em.

L. Flip. Can you blame 'em! I declare I will trust no man. Pray, do not take it ill, gentlemen: quacks in their bills, and poets in the titles of their plays, do not more disappoint us, than gallants with their promises; but I trust none.

Dap. Nay, she's a very Jew in that particular. To my knowledge, she'll know her man, over and over again, before she trust him.

Ran. Well, my dearest cousin, good-morrow. When I stay from you so long again, blame me to purpose, and be extremely angry; for nothing can make me amends for the loss of your company, but your reprehension of my absence. I'll take such a chiding as kindly as Russian wives do beating.

Lyd. If you were my husband, I could not take your absence more kindly than I do.

Ran. And if you were my wife, I would trust you as much out of my sight as I could, to show my opinion of your virtue.

L. Flip. A well-bred gentleman, I warrant. — Will you go then, cruel Mr. Dapperwit? [*Exeunt* Ranger *and* Dapperwit, *followed by* Lady Flippant.

Lyd. Have I not dissembled well, Leonore?

Leo. But, madam, to what purpose? why do you not put him to his trial, and see what he can say for himself?

Lyd. I am afraid lest my proofs, and his guilt, should make him desperate, and so contemn that pardon which he could not hope for.

Leo. 'Tis unjust to condemn him before you hear him.

Lyd. I will reprieve him till I have more evidence.

Leo. How will you get it?

Lyd. I will write him a letter in Christina's name, desiring to meet him; when I shall soon discover if his love to her be of a longer standing than since last night; and if it be not, I will not longer trust him with the vanity to think she gave him the occasion to follow her home from the Park; so will at once disabuse him and myself.

Leo. What care the jealous take in making sure of ills which they, but in imagination, cannot undergo!

Lyd.

Misfortunes are least dreadful when most near:
'Tis less to undergo the ill, than fear. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I. A Room in Gripe's House.

Enter Mrs. Joyner *and* Gripe, *the latter in a blue gown and nightcap.*

Mrs. Joyn. What, not well, your worship! This it is, you will be laying out yourself beyond your strength. You have taken a surfeit of the little gentlewoman, I find. Indeed you should not have been so immoderate in your embraces; your worship is something in years, in truly.

Gripe. Graceless, perfidious woman! what makest thou here? art thou not afraid to be used like an informer, since thou hast made me pay thee for betraying me?

Mrs. Joyn. Betray your worship! what do you mean? I an informer! I scorn your words!

Gripe. Woman, I say again, thou art as treacherous as an informer, and more unreasonable; for he lets us have something for our money before he disturb us.

Mrs. Joyn. Your money, I'm sure, was laid out faithfully; and I went away because I would not disturb you.

Gripe. I had not grudged you the money I gave you: — but the five hundred pounds! the five hundred pounds! Inconscionable, false woman, the five hundred pounds! — You cheated, trepanned, robbed me, of the five hundred pounds!

Mrs. Joyn. I cheat you! I rob you! — well, remember what you say, you shall answer it before Mr. Doublecap and the best of —

Gripe. Oh, impudent woman, speak softly!

Mrs. Joyn. I will not speak softly; for innocence is loud as well as barefaced. Is this your return, after you have made me a mere drudge to your filthy lusts?

Gripe. Speak softly; my sister, daughter, and servants, will hear.

Mrs. Joyn. I would have witnesses, to take notice that you blast my good name, which was as white as a tulip, and as sweet as the head of your cane, before you wrought me to the carrying on the work of your fleshly carnal seekings.

Gripe. Softly! softly! they are coming in.

Enter Lady Flippant *and* Mrs. Martha.

L. Flip. What's the matter, brother?

Gripe. Nothing, nothing, sister, only the godly woman is fallen into a fit of zeal against the enormous transgressions of the age. Go! go! you do not love to hear vanity reproved; pray begone!

Mrs. Joyn. Pray stay, madam, that you may know —

Gripe. [*Aside to* Mrs. Joyner.] Hold! hold! here are five guineas for thee, — pray say nothing. — [*Aloud.*] Sister, pray begone, I say. — [*Exeunt* Lady Flippant *and* Mrs. Martha.] Would you prejudice your own reputation to injure mine?

Mrs. Joyn. Would you prejudice your own soul to wrong my repute, in truly? [*Pretends to weep.*

Gripe. Pray have me in excuse. Indeed, I thought you had a share of the five hundred pounds, because you took away my seal-ring; which they made me send, together with a note to my cash-keeper for five hundred pounds. Besides, I thought none but you knew it was my wonted token to send for money by.

Mrs. Joyn. 'Tis unlucky I should forget it, and leave it on the table! — But oh the harlotry! did she make that use of it then? 'twas no wonder you did not stay till I came back.

Gripe. I stayed till the money released me.

Mrs. Joyn. Have they the money, then? five hundred pounds!

Gripe. Too certain.

Mrs. Joyn. They told me not a word of it; and have you no way to retrieve it?

Gripe. Not any.

Mrs. Joyn. [*Aside.*] I am glad of it. — [*Aloud.*] Is there no law but against saints?

Gripe. I will not for five hundred pounds publish my transgression myself, lest I should be thought to glory in't: though, I must confess, 'twould tempt a man to conform to public praying and sinning, since 'tis so chargeable to pray and sin in private.

Mrs. Joyn. But are you resolved to give off a loser?

Gripe. How shall I help it?

Mrs. Joyn. Nay, I'll see you shall have what the young jade has, for your money; I'll make 'em use some conscience, however. — Take a man's money for nothing!

Gripe. Thou sayest honestly, indeed. And shall I have my pennyworths out of the little gentlewoman for all this?

Mrs. Joyn. I'll be engaged body for body for her, and you shall take the forfeiture on me else.

Gripe. No, no, I'll rather take your word, Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. Go in and dress yourself smug, and leave the rest to me.

Gripe. No man breathing would give-off a loser, as she says. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Another Room in the same.

SIR SIMON ADDLEPLOT *discovered sitting at a desk writing as a* Clerk, Lady Flippant *jogging him.*

Sir Sim. 'Tis a lord's mortgage, and therefore requires the more haste: — pray do not jog me, madam.

L. Flip. Dull rascal! [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. They cannot stay for money as other folks. If you will not let me make an end on't, I shall lose my expedition-fee.

L. Flip. There are some clerks would have understood me before this. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. Nay, pray be quiet, madam; if you squeeze me so to the wall, I cannot write.

L. Flip. [*Aside.*] 'Tis much for the honour of the gentlemen of this age, that we persons of quality are forced to descend to the importuning of a clerk, a butler, coachman, or footman; while the rogues are as dull of apprehension, too, as an unfledged country squire amongst his mother's maids! [*Jogs him again.*

Sir Sim. Again! Let me tell you, madam, familiarity breeds contempt: you'll never leave till you have made me saucy.

L. Flip. I would I could see that.

Sir Sim. I vow and swear then, get you gone! or I'll add a black patch or two to those on your face. — [*Aside.*] I shall have no time to get Mrs. Martha out, for her.

L. Flip. Will you, sir, will you! [*Jogs him again.*

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] I must have a plot for her, she is a coy woman. — [*Aloud.*] I vow and swear if you pass this crevice,[23] I'll kiss you in plain English.

L. Flip. I would I could see that! — do you defy me! [*Steps to him — he kisses her.*

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] How's this! I vow and swear, she kisses as tamely as Mrs. Ticklish, and with her mouth open too.

L. Flip. I thought you would have been ashamed to have done so to your master's own sister!

Sir Sim. I hope you'll be quiet now, madam?

L. Flip. Nay, I'll be revenged of you sure.

Sir Sim. If you come again, I shall do more to you than that. — [*Aside.*] I'll pursue my plot and try if she be honest.

L. Flip. You do more to me than that! nay, if you'll do more to me than that — [*She throws down his ink and runs out, he following her.*

Enter Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. I must visit my young clients in the meantime.

Re-enter Sir Simon, *holding up his hands.*

What's the matter, Sir Simon?

Sir Sim. Lord! who would have thought it?

Mrs. Joyn. What ails you, Sir Simon?

Sir Sim. I have made such a discovery, Mrs. Joyner!

Mrs. Joyn. What is't?

Sir Sim. Such a one that makes me at once glad and sorry; I am sorry my Lady Flippant is naught, but I'm glad I know it: — thanks still to my disguise.

Mrs. Joyn. Fy! fy!

Sir Sim. Nay, this hand can tell —

Mrs. Joyn. But how?

Sir Sim. She threw down my ink-glass, and ran away into the next room; I followed her, and, in revenge, threw her down upon the bed: — but, in short, all that I could do to her would not make her squeak.

Mrs. Joyn. She was out of breath, man, she was out of breath.

Sir Sim. Ah, Mrs. Joyner, say no more, say no more of that!

Re-enter Lady Flippant.

L. Flip. You rude, unmannerly rascal!

Mrs. Joyn. You see she complains now.

Sir Sim. I know why, Mrs. Joyner, I know why. [*Aside to* Mrs. Joyner.

L. Flip. I'll have you turned out of the house; you are not fit for my brother's service.

Sir Sim. Not for yours, you mean, madam. [*Aside.*

L. Flip. I'll go and acquaint my brother —

Mrs. Joyn. [*Aside to* Lady Flippant.] Hold, hold, madam, speak not so loud:— 'tis Sir Simon Addleplot, your lover, who has taken this disguise on purpose to be near you, and to watch and supplant his rival.

L. Flip. What a beast was I, I could not discover it! you have undone me! why would you not tell me sooner of it? [*Aside to* Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. I thought he had been discernible enough.

L. Flip. I protest, I knew him not; for I must confess to you, my eyes are none of the best since I have used the last new wash of mercury-water. — What will he think of me!

Mrs. Joyn. Let me alone with him. — [*To* Sir Simon.] Come, come, did you think you could disguise yourself from my lady's knowledge? she knew you, man, or else you had ne'er had those liberties. Alas, poor lady, she cannot resist you!

L. Flip. 'Tis my weakness.

Sir Sim. How's this! — but here comes my master.

Enter Gripe *and* Mrs. Martha.

Gripe. Come, Mrs. Joyner, are you ready to go?

Mrs. Joyn. I am ever ready when your worship commands.

L. Flip. Brother, if you go to t'other end of the town, you'll set me down near the playhouse?

Gripe. The playhouse! do you think I will be seen near the playhouse?

L. Flip. You shall set me down in Lincoln's-inn-fields, then? for I have earnest business there. — [*Apart to* Sir Simon.] When I come home again, I'll laugh at you soundly, Sir Simon.

Sir Sim. Has Joyner betrayed me then! 'tis time to look to my hits. [*Aside.*

Gripe. Martha, be sure you stay within now. If you go out, you shall never come into my doors again.

Mrs. Mar. No, I will not, sir; I'll ne'er come into your doors again, if once I should go out.

Gripe. 'Tis well said, girl. [*Exeunt* Gripe, Mrs. Joyner, *and* Lady Flippant.

Sir Sim. 'Twas prettily said: I understand you, they are dull, and have no intrigue in 'em. But dear sweet Mrs. Martha, 'tis time we were gone; you have stole away your scarfs and hood from your maid, I hope?

Mrs. Mar. Nay, I am ready, but —

Sir Sim. Come, come, Sir Simon Addleplot, poor gentleman, is an impatient man, to my knowledge.

Mrs. Mar. Well, my venture is great, I'm sure, for a man I know not. But pray, Jonas, do not deceive me; is he so fine a gentleman, as you say he is?

Sir Sim. Pish! pish! he is the — gentleman of the town, faith and troth.

Mrs. Mar. But may I take your word, Jonas?

Sir Sim. 'Tis not my word, 'tis the word of all the town.

Mrs. Mar. Excuse me, Jonas, for that: — I never heard any speak well of him but Mr. Dapperwit and you.

Sir Sim. That's because he has been a rival to all men, and a gallant to all ladies. Rivals and deserted mistresses never speak well of a man.

Mrs. Mar. Has he been so general in his amours? his kindness is not to be valued then.

Sir Sim. The more by you; because 'tis for you he deserts all the rest, faith and troth.

Mrs. Mar. You plead better for him than he could for himself, I believe; for, indeed, they say he is no better than an idiot.

Sir Sim. Then, believe me, madam — for nobody knows him better than I — he has as much wit, courage, and as good a mien to the full, as I have. — He an idiot!

Mrs. Mar. The common gull; so perspicuous a fop, the women find him out: — for none of 'em will marry him.

Sir Sim. You may see, now, how he and you are abused. For that he is not married, is a sign of his wit; and for being perspicuous, 'tis false; he is as mysterious as a new parliament-man, or a young statesman newly taken from a coffee-house or tennis-court.

Mrs. Mar. But is it a sign of his wit because he is not married?

Sir Sim. Yes, yes; your women of the town ravish your fops: there's not one about the town unmarried that has anything.

Mrs. Mar. It may be then he has spent his estate.

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] How unluckily guessed! — [*Aloud.*] If he had, he has a head can retrieve it again.

Mrs. Mar. Besides, they say he has the modish distemper.

Sir Sim. He can cure it with the best French chirurgeon in town.

Mrs. Mar. Has his practice on himself been so much?

Sir Sim. Come, come. —

Fame, like deserted jilt, does still belie men;
Who doubts her man, must be advised by Hymen;
For he knows best of any how to try men. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. The old Pall Mall.

Enter Ranger *and* Dapperwit.

Ran. Now the Lucys have renounced us, hey for the Christinas! She cannot use me worse than your honourable mistress did you.

Dap. A pox! some young heir or another has promised her marriage. There are so many fools in the world, 'tis impossible for a man of wit to keep his wench from being a lady, let me perish!

Ran. But have you no other acquaintance that sticks to her vocation, in spite of temptations of honour or filthy lucre? I declare, I make honourable love merely out of necessity, as your rooks play on the square rather than not play at all.

Enter Leonore *masked, with a letter in her hand.*

Dap. Come, the devil will not lose a gamester: here's ready money for you, push freely.

Ran. Thou art as well met as if by assignation. [*To* Leonore.

Leo. And you are as well met as if you were the man I looked for.

Ran. Kind rogue!

Leo. Sweet sir!

Ran. Come, I am thy prisoner, (without more words,) show but thy warrant. [*Goes to pull off her mask.*

Leo. You mistake, sir; here is my pass. [*Gives him the letter.*

Ran. A letter! and directed to me!

[*Reads.*] "I cannot put up the injuries and affronts you did me last night;" — a challenge, upon my life! and by such a messenger!— "therefore conjure you by your honour, at eight o'clock precisely, this evening, to send your man to St. James's gate, to wait for me with a chair, to conduct me to what place you shall think most fit, for the giving of satisfaction to the injured — Christina."

Christina! I am amazed! What is it o'clock, Dapperwit?

Dap. It wants not half an hour of eight.

Ran. [*To* Leonore.] Go then back, my pretty herald, and tell my fair enemy the service she designs my man is only fit for my friend here; whose faith and honour she may be secure of. He shall immediately go wait for her at St James's gate, whilst I go to

prepare a place for our rencounter, and myself to die at her feet. [*Exit* Leonore.] Dapperwit, dear Dapperwit.

Dap. What lucky surprisal's this?

Ran. Prithee ask no questions, till I have more leisure and less astonishment. I know you will not deny to be an instrument in my happiness.

Dap. No, let me perish! I take as much pleasure to bring lovers together as an old woman; or as a bankrupt gamester loves to look on, though he has no advantage by the play; or as a bully that fights not himself, yet takes pleasure to set people together by the ears, or as —

Ran. 'Sdeath! is this a time for similitudes?

Dap. You have made me miscarry of a good thought now, let me perish!

Ran. Go presently to St. James's gate, where you are to expect the coming of a lady ('tis Christina), accompanied by that woman you saw e'en now. She will permit you to put her into a chair, and then conduct her to my lodging; while I go before to remove some spies, and prepare it for her reception.

Dap. Your lodging? had you not better carry her to Vincent's? 'tis hard by; and there a vizard mask has as free egress and regress as at the playhouse.

Ran. Faith, though it be not very prudent, yet she shall come thither in my vindication; for he would not believe I had seen her last night.

Dap. To have a fine woman, and not tell on't as you say, Mr. Ranger —

Ran. Go, and bring her to Vincent's lodging; there I'll expect you. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV. The Street before Vincent's Lodging.

Enter Christina *and* Isabel.

Isa. This is the door, madam; here Mr. Vincent lodges.

Chris. 'Tis no matter, we will pass it by; lest the people of our lodgings should watch us. But if he should not be here now!

Isa. Who, Mr. Valentine, madam? I warrant you my intelligencer dares not fail me.

Chris. Did he come last night, said he?

Isa. Last night late.

Chris. And not see me yet! nay, not send to me!— 'tis false, he is not come, — I wish he were not. I know not which I should take more unkindly from him, exposing his life to his revengeful enemies, or being almost four-and-twenty hours so near me, and not let me know't.

Isa. A lover's dangers are the only secrets kept from his mistress; he came not to you because he would not purchase his happiness with your fear and apprehensions.

Chris. Nay, he is come, I see, since you are come about again of his side.

Isa. Will you go in, madam, and disprove me, if you can? 'tis better than standing in the street.

Chris. We'll go a little further first, and return. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. Vincent's Lodging.

Enter Vincent *and* Valentine.

Vin. I told you I had sent my man to Christina's this morning, to inquire of her maid, (who seldom denies him a secret,) if her lady had been at the Park last night; which she peremptorily answered to the contrary, and assured him she had not stirred out since your departure.

Val. Will not chambermaids lie, Vincent?

Vin. Will not Ranger lie, Valentine?

Val. The circumstances of his story proved it true.

Vin. Do you think so old a master in the faculty as he will want the varnish of probability for his lies?

Val. Do you think a woman, having the advantage of her sex, and education under such a mistress, will want impudence to disavow a truth that might be prejudicial to that mistress?

Vin. But if both testimonies are fallible, why will you needs believe his? we are apter to believe the things we would have, than those we would not.

Val. My ill luck has taught me to credit my misfortunes and doubt my happiness.

Vin. But fortune we know is inconstant.

Val. And all of her sex.

Vin. Will you judge of fortune by your experience, and not do your mistress the same justice? Go see her, and satisfy yourself and her; for if she be innocent, consider how culpable you are, not only in your censures of her, but in not seeing her since your coming.

Val. If she be innocent, I should be afraid to surprise her, for her sake; if false, I should be afraid to surprise her for my own.

Vin. To be jealous and not inquisitive is as hard as to love extremely and not to be something jealous.

Val. Inquisitiveness as seldom cures jealousy, as drinking in a fever quenches the thirst.

Vin. If she were at the Park last night, 'tis probable she'll not miss this. Go watch her house, see who goes out, who in; while I, in the meantime, search out Ranger: who,

I'll pawn my life, upon more discourse shall avow his mistake. — Here he is; go in: — how luckily is he come! [Valentine *retires to the door behind.*

Enter Ranger.

Ranger, you have prevented me: I was going to look you out, between the scenes at the playhouse, the coffee-house, tennis-court, or Gifford's.[24]

Ran. Do you want a pretence to go to a bawdy-house? — but I have other visits to make.

Vin. I forget. I should rather have sought you in Christina's lodgings, ha! ha! ha!

Ran. Well, well, I'm just come to tell you that Christina —

Vin. Proves not, by daylight, the kind lady you followed last night out of the Park.

Ran. I have better news for you, to my thinking.

Vin. What is't?

Ran. Not that I have been in Christina's lodging this morning; but that she'll be presently here in your lodging with me.

Val. How! [*Aside.*

Vin. [Retiring, and speaking softly to Valentine.] You see now, his report was a jest, a mere jest. — [*To* Ranger.] Well, must my lodging be your vaulting-school[25] still? thou hast appointed a wench to come hither, I find.

Ran. A wench! you seemed to have more reverence for Christina last night.

Vin. Now you talk of Christina, prithee tell me what was the meaning of thy last night's romance of Christina?

Ran. You shall know the meaning of all when Christina comes: she'll be here presently.

Vin. Who will? Christina?

Ran. Yes, Christina.

Vin. Ha! ha! ha!

Ran. Incredulous envy! thou art as envious as an impotent lecher at a wedding.

Vin. Thou art either mad, or as vain as a Frenchman newly returned home from a campaign, or obliging England.

Ran. Thou art as envious as a rival; but if thou art mine, there's that will make you desist; [*gives him a letter*] and if you are not my rival, entrusting you with such a secret will, I know, oblige you to keep it, and assist me against all other interests.

Vin. Do you think I take your secret as an obligation? don't I know, lovers, travellers, and poets, will give money to be heard? But what's the paper? a lampoon upon Christina, hatched last night betwixt squire Dapperwit and you, because her maid used you scurvily?

Ran. No, 'tis only a letter from her, to show my company was not so disgustful to her last night, but that she desires it again to-day.

Val. A letter from her! [*Aside.*

Vin. A letter from Christina! [*Reads.*] — Ha! ha! ha!

Ran. Nay, 'tis pleasant.

Vin. You mistake, I laugh at you, not the letter.

Ran. I am like the winning gamester, so pleased with my luck, I will not quarrel with any who calls me a fool for't.

Vin. Is this the style of a woman of honour?

Ran. It may be, for ought you know; I'm sure 'tis well if your female correspondents can read.

Vin. I must confess I have none of the little letters, half name or title, like your Spanish Epistles Dedicatory; but that a man so frequent in honourable intrigues as you are, should not know the summons of an impudent common woman, from that of a person of honour!

Ran. Christina is so much a person of honour she'll own what she has writ when she comes.

Vin. But will she come hither indeed?

Ran. Immediately. You'll excuse my liberty with you; I could not conceal such a happiness from such a friend as you, lest you should have taken it unkindly.

Vin. Faith, you have obliged me indeed; for you and others would often have made me believe your honourable intrigues, but never did me the honour to convince me of 'em before.

Ran. You are merry, I find, yet.

Vin. When you are happy I cannot be otherwise.

Ran. [*Aside.*] But I lose time; I should lay a little parson in ambush, that lives hard by, in case Christina should be impatient to be revenged of her friends, as it often happens with a discontented heiress. Women, like old soldiers, more nimbly execute than they resolve. [*Going out.*

Vin. What now! you will not disappoint a woman of Christina's quality?

Ran. I'll be here before she comes, I warrant you. [*Exit.*

Vin. I do believe you truly! — What think you, Valentine?

Val. [*Coming forward.*] I think, since she has the courage to challenge him, she'll have the honour of being first in the field.

Vin. Fy, your opinion of her must be as bad, as Ranger's of himself is good, to think she would write to him. I long till his bona-roba[26] comes, that you may be both disabused.

Val. And I have not patience to stay her coming, lest you should be disabused.

Enter Christina *and* Isabel.

Vin. Here she is, i'faith; I'm glad she's come.

Val. And I'm sorry. But I will to my post again, lest she should say she came to me. [*Retires as before.*

Vin. [*Aside.*] By heavens, Christina herself! 'tis she! [Christina *pulls off her mask.*

Val. 'Tis she: — cursed be these eyes! more cursed than when they first betrayed me to that false bewitching face. [*Aside.*

Chris. You may wonder, sir, to see me here —

Vin. I must confess I do.

Chris. But the confidence your friend has in you is the cause of mine; and yet some blushes it does cost me to come to seek a man.

Val. Modest creature! [*Aside.*

Vin. How am I deceived! [*Aside.*

Chris. Where is he, sir? why does he not appear, to keep me in countenance? pray call him, sir; 'tis something hard if he should know I'm here.

Vin. I hardly can myself believe you are here, madam.

Chris. If my visit be troublesome or unseasonable, 'tis your friend's fault; I designed it not to you, sir. Pray call him out, that he may excuse it, and take it on himself, together with my shame.

Vin. How impatient she is! [*Aside.*

Chris. Or do you delay the happiness I ask, to make it more welcome? I have stayed too long for it already, and cannot more desire it. Dear sir, call him out. Where is he? above, or here within? I'll snatch the favour which you will not give. — [*Goes to the door and discovers* Valentine.] What! Do you hide yourself for shame?

Val. [*Coming forward.*] I must confess I do.

Chris. To see me come hither —

Val. I acknowledge it. [Valentine *offers to go out.*

Chris. Before you came to me? But whither do you go? come, I can forgive you.

Val. But I cannot forgive you.

Chris. Whither do you go? you need not forge a quarrel to prevent mine to you: nor need you try if I would follow you, you know I will; — I have, you see.

Val. That impudence should look so like innocence! [*Aside.*

Chris. Whither would you go? why would you go?

Val. To call your servant to you.

Chris. She is here; what would you have with her?

Val. I mean your lover, — the man you came to meet.

Chris. Oh heavens! what lover? what man? I came to see no man but you, whom I had too long lost.

Val. You could not know that I was here.

Chris. Ask her; 'twas she that told me. [*Points to* Isabel.

Val. How could she know?

Chris. That you shall know hereafter.

Val. No, you thought me too far out of the way to disturb your assignation; and I assure you, madam, 'twas my ill-fortune, not my design: and that it may appear so, I do withdraw, as in all good breeding and civility I am obliged; for sure your wished-for lover's coming.

Chris. What do you mean? are you a-weary of that title?

Val. I am ashamed of it, since it grows common. [*Going out.*

Chris. Nay, you will not, shall not go.

Val. My stay might give him jealousy, and so do you injury, and him the greatest in the world: heavens forbid! I would not make a man jealous; for though you call a thousand vows, and oaths, and tears to witness (as you safely may), that you have not the least of love for me, yet if he ever knew how I have loved you, sure he would not, could not believe you.

Chris. I do confess, your riddle is too hard for me to solve; therefore you are obliged to do't yourself.

Val. I wish it were capable of any other interpretation than what you know already.

Chris. Is this that generous good Valentine? who has disguised him so? [*Weeps.*

Vin. Nay, I must withhold you then. [*Stops* Valentine *going out.*] Methinks she should be innocent; her tongue, and eyes, together with that flood that swells 'em, do vindicate her heart.

Val. They show but their long practice of dissimulation. [*Going out.*

Vin. Come back: I hear Ranger coming up: stay but till he comes.

Val. Do you think I have the patience of an alderman?

Vin. You may go out this way, when you will, by the back-stairs; but stay a little, till — Oh, here he comes.

Re-enter Ranger. *Upon his entrance* Christina *puts on her mask.*

Val. My revenge will now detain me. [Valentine *retires again.*

Ran. [*Aside.*] — What, come already! where is Dapperwit? — [*Aloud.*] The blessing's double that comes quickly; I did not yet expect you here, otherwise I had not done myself the injury to be absent. But I hope, madam, I have not made you stay long for me.

Chris. I have not staid at all for you.

Ran. I am glad of it, madam.

Chris. [*To* Isabel.] Is not this that troublesome stranger who last night followed the lady into my lodgings? — [*Aside.*] 'Tis he. [*Removing from him to the other side.*

Ran. [*Aside.*] Why does she remove so disdainfully from me? — [*Aloud.*] I find you take it ill I was not at your coming here, madam.

Chris. Indeed I do not; you are mistaken, sir.

Ran. Confirm me by a smile then, madam; remove that cloud, which makes me apprehend foul weather. [*Goes to take off her mask.*] — Mr. Vincent, pray retire; 'tis you keep on the lady's mask, and no displeasure which she has for me. — Yet, madam, you need not distrust his honour or his faith. — But do not keep the lady under constraint; pray leave us a little, Master Vincent.

Chris. You must not leave us, sir; would you leave me with a stranger?

Val. How's that! [*Aside.*

Ran. [*Aside.*] I've done amiss, I find, to bring her hither. — Madam, I understand you — [*Apart to* Christina.

Chris. Sir, I do not understand you.

Ran. You would not be known to Mr. Vincent.

Chris. 'Tis your acquaintance I would avoid.

Ran. [*Aside.*] Dull brute that I was, to bring her hither! — I have found my error, madam; give me but a new appointment, where I may meet you by and by, and straight I will withdraw as if I knew you not. [*Softly to her.*

Chris. Why, do you know me?

Ran. [*Aside.*] I must not own it. — No, madam, but — [*Offers to whisper.*

Chris. Whispering, sir, argues an old acquaintance; but I have not the vanity to be thought of yours, and resolve you shall never have the disparagement of mine. — Mr. Vincent, pray let us go in here.

Ran. How's this! I am undone, I see; but if I let her go thus, I shall be an eternal laughing-stock to Vincent. [*Aside.*

Vin. Do you not know him, madam? I thought you had come hither on purpose to meet him.

Chris. To meet him!

Vin. By your own appointment.

Chris. What strange infatuation does delude you all? you know, he said he did not know me.

Vin. You writ to him; he has your letter.

Chris. Then, you know my name sure? yet you confessed but now you knew me not.

Ran. I must confess your anger has disguised you more than your mask: for I thought to have met a kinder Christina here.

Chris. [*Aside.*] Heavens! how could he know me in this place? he watched me hither sure; or is there any other of my name. — [*Aloud.*] That you may no longer mistake me for your Christina, I'll pull off that which soothes your error. [*Pulls off her mask.*

Ran. Take but t'other vizard off too, (I mean your anger,) and I'll swear you are the same, and only Christina which I wished, and thought, to meet here.

Chris. How could you think to meet me here?

Ran. [*Gives her the letter.*] By virtue of this your commission; which now, I see, was meant a real challenge: for you look as if you would fight with me.

Chris. The paper is a stranger to me; I never writ it. You are abused.

Vin. Christina is a person of honour, and will own what she has written, Ranger.

Ran. [*Aside.*] So! the comedy begins; I shall be laughed at sufficiently if I do not justify myself; I must set my impudence to hers. She is resolved to deny all, I see, and I have lost all hope of her.

Vin. Come, faith, Ranger —

Ran. You will deny too, madam, that I followed you last night from the Park to your lodging, where I staid with you till morning? you never saw me before, I warrant.

Chris. That you rudely intruded last night into my lodging, I cannot deny; but I wonder you have the confidence to brag of it: sure you will not of your reception?

Ran. I never was so ill-bred as to brag of my reception in a lady's chamber; not a word of that, madam.

Val. [*Aside.*] How! If he lies, I revenge her; if it I be true, I revenge myself. [Valentine *draws his sword, which* Vincent, *seeing, thrusts him back, and shuts the door upon him before he is discovered by* Ranger.

Enter Lydia *and* Leonore, *stopping at the door.*

Lyd. What do I see! Christina with him! a counterplot to mine, to make me and it ridiculous. 'Tis true, I find, they have been long acquainted, and I long abused; but since she intends a triumph, in spite, as well as shame, (not emulation,) I retire. She deserves no envy, who will be shortly in my condition; his natural inconstancy will prove my best revenge on her — on both. [*Exeunt* Lydia *and* Leonore.

Enter Dapperwit.

Dap. Christina's going away again; — what's the matter?

Ran. What do you mean?

Dap. I scarce had paid the chairmen, and was coming up after her, but I met her on the stairs, in as much haste as if she had been frightened.

Ran. Who do you talk of?

Dap. Christina, whom I took up in a chair just now at St. James's gate.

Ran. Thou art mad! here she is, this is Christina.

Dap. I must confess I did not see her face; but I am sure the lady is gone that I brought just now.

Ran. I tell you again this is she: did you bring two?

Chris. I came in no chair, had no guide but my woman there.

Vin. When did you bring your lady, Dapperwit?

Dap. Even now, just now.

Vin. This lady has been here half-an-hour.

Ran. He knows not what he says, he is mad: you are all so; I am so too.

Vin. 'Tis the best excuse you can make for yourself, and by owning your mistake you'll show you are come to yourself. I myself saw your woman at the door, who but looked in, and then immediately went down again; — as your friend Dapperwit too affirms.

Chris. You had best follow her that looked for you; and I'll go seek out him I came to see. — Mr. Vincent, pray let me in here.

Ran. 'Tis very fine! wondrous fine! [Christina *goes out a little, and returns.*

Chris. Oh! he is gone! Mr. Vincent, follow him; he were yet more severe to me in endangering his life, than in his censures against me. You know the power of his enemies is great as their malice; — just Heaven preserve him from them, and me from this ill or unlucky man! [*Exeunt* Christina, Isabel, *and* Vincent.

Ran. 'Tis well — nay, certainly, I shall never be master of my senses more: but why dost thou help to distract me too?

Dap. My astonishment was as great as yours to see her go away again; I would have stayed her if I could.

Ran. Yet again talking of a woman you met going out, when I talk of Christina!

Dap. I talk of Christina too.

Ran. She went out just now; the woman you found me with was she.

Dap. That was not the Christina I brought just now.

Ran. You brought her almost half an hour ago;— 'sdeath, will you give me the lie?

Dap. A lady disappointed by her gallant, the night before her journey, could not be more touchy with her maid or husband, than you are with me now after your disappointment; but if you thank me so, I'll go serve myself hereafter. For aught I know, I have disappointed Mrs. Martha for you, and may lose thirty thousand pounds by the bargain. Farewell! a raving lover is fit for solitude. [*Exit.*

Ran. Lydia, triumph! I now am thine again. Of intrigues, honourable or dishonourable, and all sorts of rambling, I take my leave; when we are giddy, 'tis time to stand still. Why should we be so fond of the by-paths of love, where we are still waylaid with surprises, trepans, dangers, and murdering disappointments? —

Just as at blindman's buff we run at all,
Whilst those that lead us laugh to see us fall;
And when we think we hold the lady fast,
We find it but her scarf, or veil, at last. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I. St. James's Park.

Enter Dapperwit *and* Sir Simon Addleplot, *the latter leading* Mrs. Martha.

Sir Sim. At length you see I have freed the captive lady for her longing knight, Mr. Dapperwit: — who brings off a plot cleverly now?

Dap. I wish our poets were half so good at it. — Mrs. Martha, a thousand welcomes! [Dapperwit *kisses and embraces* Mrs. Martha.

Sir Sim. Hold, hold, sir: your joy is a little too familiar, faith and troth!

Dap. Will you not let me salute Mrs. Martha?

Mrs. Mar. What, Jonas, do you think I do not know good breeding? must I be taught by you?

Sir Sim. I would have kept the maidenhead of your lips for your sweet knight, Mrs. Martha, that's all; I dare swear you never kissed any man before but your father.

Mrs. Mar. My sweet knight, if he will be knight of mine, must be contented with what he finds, as well as other knights.

Sir Sim. So smart already, faith and troth!

Mrs. Mar. Dear Mr. Dapperwit I am overjoyed to see you; but I thank honest Jonas for't. [*She hugs* Dapperwit.

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] How she hugs him!

Mrs. Mar. Poor Mr. Dapperwit, I thought I should never have seen you again; but I thank honest Jonas there —

Sir Sim. Do not thank me, Mrs. Martha, any more than I thank you.

Mrs. Mar. I would not be ungrateful, Jonas.

Sir Sim. Then reserve your kindness only for your worthy, noble, brave, heroic knight, who loves you only, and only deserves your kindness.

Mrs. Mar. I will show my kindness to my worthy, brave, heroic knight, in being kind to his friend, his dear friend, who helped him to me. [*Hugs* Dapperwit *again.*

Sir Sim. But, Mistress Martha, he is not to help him always; though he helps him to be married, he is not to help him when he is married.

Mrs. Mar. What, Mr. Dapperwit, will you love my worthy knight less after marriage than before? that were against the custom; for marriage gets a man friends, instead of losing those he has.

Dap. I will ever be his servant and yours, dear madam; do not doubt me.

Mrs. Mar. I do not, sweet dear Mr. Dapperwit; but I should not have seen you these two days if it had not been for honest Jonas there — [*She kisses* Dapperwit.

Sir Sim. [*Apart to* Dapperwit.] For shame! though she be young and foolish, do not you wrong me to my face.

Dap. Would you have me so ill bred as to repulse her innocent kindness? — what a thing it is to want wit!

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] A pox! I must make haste to discover myself, or I shall discover what I would not discover; but if I should discover myself in this habit, 'twould not be to my advantage. But I'll go, put on my own clothes, and look like a knight. — [*Aloud.*] Well, Mrs. Martha, I'll go seek out your knight: are you not impatient to see him?

Mrs. Mar. Wives must be obedient; let him take his own time.

Sir Sim. Can you trust yourself a turn or two with Master Dapperwit?

Mrs. Mar. Yes, yes, Jonas — as long as you will.

Sir Sim. [*Aside.*] But I would not trust you with him, if I could help it. —

So married wight sees what he dares not blame;
And cannot budge for fear, nor stay for shame. [*Exit.*

Dap. I am glad he is gone, that I may laugh. 'Tis such a miracle of fops, that his conversation should be pleasant to me, even when it hindered me of yours.

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, I'm glad he is gone too, as pleasant as he is.

Dap. I know why, I know why, sweet Mrs. Martha. I warrant you, you had rather have the parson's company than his? — now you are out of your father's house, 'tis time to leave being a hypocrite.

Mrs. Mar. Well, for the jest's sake, to disappoint my knight, I would not care if I disappointed myself of a ladyship.

Dap. Come, I will not keep you on the tenters; I know you have a mind to make sure of me: I have a little chaplain (I wish he were a bishop or one of the friars) to perfect our revenge upon that zealous Jew, your father.

Mrs. Mar. Do not speak ill of my father; he has been your friend, I'm sure.

Dap. My friend!

Mrs. Mar. His hard usage of me conspired with your good mien and wit, and to avoid slavery unto him, I stoop to your yoke.

Dap. I will be obliged to your father for nothing but a portion; nor to you for your love; 'twas due to my merit.

Mrs. Mar. You show yourself Sir Simon's original; if 'twere not for that vanity —

Dap. I should be no wit— 'tis the badge of my calling; for you can no more find a man of wit without vanity than a fine woman without affectation: but let us go before the knight comes again.

Mrs. Mar. Let us go before my father comes; he soon will have the intelligence.

Dap. Stay, let me think a little. [*Pauses.*

Mrs. Mar. What are you thinking of? you should have thought before this time, or I should have thought rather.

Dap. Peace! peace!

Mrs. Mar. What are you thinking of?

Dap. I am thinking what a wit without vanity is like. He is like —

Mrs. Mar. You do not think we are in a public place, and may be surprised and prevented by my father's scouts!

Dap. What! would you have me lose my thought?

Mrs. Mar. You would rather lose your mistress, it seems.

Dap. He is like — I think I am a sot to-night, let me perish.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, if you are so in love with your thought — [*Offers to go.*

Dap. Are you so impatient to be my wife? — He is like — he is like — a picture without shadows, or — or — a face without patches — or a diamond without a foil. These are new thoughts now, these are new!

Mrs. Mar. You are wedded already to your thoughts, I see; — good night.

Dap. Madam, do not take it ill: —

For loss of happy thought there's no amends;
For his new jest true wit will lose old friends.

That's new again, — the thought's new. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Another part of the same.

Enter Gripe, *leading* Lucy; Mrs. Joyner *and* Mrs. Crossbite *following.*

Gripe. Mrs. Joyner, I can conform to this mode of public walking by moonlight, because one is not known.

Lucy. Why, are you ashamed of your company?

Gripe. No, pretty one; because in the dark, or as it were in the dark, there is no envy nor scandal. I would neither lose you nor my reputation.

Mrs. Joyn. Your reputation! indeed, your worship, 'tis well known there are as grave men as your worship; nay, men in office too, that adjourn their cares and businesses, to come and unbend themselves at night here, with a little vizard-mask.

Gripe. I do believe it, Mrs. Joyner.

Lucy. Ay, godmother, and carries and treats her at Mulberry-garden.

Mrs. Cros. Nay, does not only treat her, but gives her his whole gleaning of that day.

Gripe. They may, they may, Mrs. Crossbite; they take above six in the hundred.

Mrs. Cros. Nay, there are those of so much worth and honour and love, that they'll take it from their wives and children to give it to their misses; now your worship has no wife, and but one child.

Gripe. Still for my edification! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Joyn. That's true, indeed; for I know a great lady that cannot follow her husband abroad to his haunts, because her Ferrandine is so ragged and greasy, whilst his mistress is as fine as fi'pence, in embroidered satins.

Gripe. Politicly done of him indeed! If the truth were known, he is a statesman by that, umph —

Mrs. Cros. Truly, your women of quality are very troublesome to their husbands: I have heard 'em complain, they will allow them no separate maintenance, though the honourable jilts themselves will not marry without it.

Mrs. Joyn. Come, come, mistress; sometimes 'tis the craft of those gentlemen to complain of their wives' expenses to excuse their own narrowness to their misses; but your daughter has a gallant that can make no excuse.

Gripe. So, Mrs. Joyner! — my friend, Mrs. Joyner —

Mrs. Cros. I hope, indeed, he'll give my daughter no cause to dun him; for, poor wretch! she is as modest as her mother.

Gripe. I profess, I believe it.

Lucy. But I have the boldness to ask him for a treat. — Come, gallant, we must walk towards the Mulberry-garden.

Gripe. So! — I am afraid, little mistress, the rooms are all taken up by this time.

Mrs. Joyn. Will you shame yourself again? [*Aside to* Gripe.

Lucy. If the rooms be full we'll have an arbour.

Gripe. At this time of night! — besides, the waiters will ne'er come near you.

Lucy. They will be observant of good customers, as we shall be. Come along.

Gripe. Indeed, and verily, little mistress, I would go, but that I should be forsworn if I did.

Mrs. Joyn. That's so pitiful an excuse! —

Gripe. In truth, I have forsworn the place ever since I was pawned there for a reckoning.

Lucy. You have broken many an oath for the good old cause, and will you boggle at one for your poor little miss? Come along.

Enter Lady Flippant *behind.*

L. Flip. Unfortunate lady that I am! I have left the herd on purpose to be chased, and have wandered this hour here; but the Park affords not so much as a satyr for me, and (that's strange!) no Burgundy man or drunken scourer will reel my way. The rag-women, and cinder-women, have better luck than I. — But who are these? if this mongrel light does not deceive me, 'tis my brother,— 'tis he: — there's Joyner, too, and two other women. I'll follow 'em. It must be he, for this world hath nothing like him; — I know not what the devil may be in the other. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. Another part of the same.

Enter Sir Simon Addleplot, *in fine clothes*, Dapperwit *and* Mrs. Martha, *unseen by him at the door.*

Sir Sim. Well, after all my seeking, I can find those I would not find; I'm sure 'twas old Gripe, and Joyner with him, and the widow followed. He would not have been here, but to have sought his daughter, sure; but vigilant Dapperwit has spied them too, and has, no doubt, secured her from him.

Dap. And you. [*Aside.*

Sir Sim. The rogue is as good at hiding, as I am at stealing, a mistress. 'Tis a vain, conceited fellow, yet I think 'tis an honest fellow: — but, again, he is a damnable whoring fellow; and what opportunity this air and darkness may incline 'em to, Heaven knows; for I have heard the rogue say himself, a lady will no more show her modesty in the dark than a Spaniard his courage.

Dap. Ha! ha! ha! —

Sir Sim. Nay, if you are there, my true friend, I'll forgive your hearkening, if you'll forgive my censures. — I speak to you, dear Madam Martha; dear, dear — behold your worthy knight —

Mrs. Mar. That's far from neighbours.

Sir Sim. Is come to reap the fruit of his labours.

Mrs. Mar. I cannot see the knight; well, but I'm sure I hear Jonas.

Sir Sim. I am no Jonas, Mrs. Martha.

Mrs. Mar. The night is not so dark, nor the peruke so big, but I can discern Jonas.

Sir Sim. Faith and troth, I am the very Sir Simon Addleplot that is to marry you; the same Dapperwit solicited you for; ask him else, my name is not Jonas.

Mrs. Mar. You think my youth and simplicity capable of this cheat; but let me tell you, Jonas, 'tis not your borrowed clothes and titles shall make me marry my father's man.

Sir Sim. Borrowed title! I'll be sworn I bought it of my laundress, who was a court-laundress; but, indeed, my clothes I have not paid for; therefore, in that sense, they are borrowed.

Mrs. Mar. Prithee, Jonas, let the jest end, or I shall be presently in earnest.

Sir Sim. Pray, be in earnest, and let us go; the parson and supper stay for us, and I am a knight in earnest.

Mrs. Mar. You a knight! insolent, saucy fool.

Sir Sim. The devil take me, Mrs. Martha, if I am not a knight now! a knight-baronet too! A man ought, I see, to carry his patent in his pocket when he goes to be married; 'tis more necessary than a licence. I am a knight indeed and indeed now, Mrs. Martha.

Mrs. Mar. Indeed and indeed, the trick will not pass, Jonas.

Sir Sim. Poor wretch! she's afraid she shall not be a lady. — Come, come, discover the intrigue, Dapperwit.

Mrs. Mar. You need not discover the intrigue, 'tis apparent already. Unworthy Mr. Dapperwit, after my confidence reposed in you, could you be so little generous as to betray me to my father's man? but I'll be even with you.

Sir Sim. Do not accuse him, poor man! before you hear him. — Tell her the intrigue, man.

Dap. A pox! she will not believe us.

Sir Sim. Will you not excuse yourself? but I must not let it rest so. — Know, then, Mrs. Martha —

Mrs. Mar. Come, I forgive thee before thy confession, Jonas; you never had had the confidence to have designed this cheat upon me but from Mr. Dapperwit's encouragement— 'twas his plot.

Sir Sim. Nay, do not do me that wrong, madam.

Mrs. Mar. But since he has trepanned me out of my father's house, he is like to keep me as long as I live; and so good night, Jonas.

Sir Sim. Hold, hold, what d'ye mean both? prithee tell her I am Sir Simon, and no Jonas.

Dap. A pox! she will not believe us, I tell you.

Sir Sim. I have provided a supper and parson at Mulberry-garden, and invited all my friends I could meet in the Park.

Dap. Nay, rather than they shall be disappointed, there shall be a bride and bridegroom to entertain 'em; Mrs. Martha and I will go thither presently.

Sir Sim. Why, shall she be your bride?

Dap. You see she will have it so.

Sir Sim. Will you make Dapperwit your husband?

Mrs. Mar. Rather than my father's man.

Sir Sim. Oh, the devil!

Mrs. Mar. Nay, come along, Jonas, you shall make one at the wedding, since you helped to contrive it.

Sir Sim. Will you cheat yourself, for fear of being cheated?

Mrs. Mar. I am desperate now.

Sir Sim. Wilt thou let her do so ill a thing, Dapperwit, as to marry thee? open her eyes, prithee, and tell her I am a true knight.

Dap. 'Twould be in vain, by my life! you have carried yourself so like a natural clerk — and so adieu, good Jonas. [*Exeunt* Mrs. Martha *and* Dapperwit.

Sir Sim. What! ruined by my own plot, like an old cavalier! yet like him, too, I will plot on still, a plot of prevention. So! I have it — her father was here even now, I'm sure; well — I'll go tell her father of her, that I will!

And punish so her folly and his treachery:
Revenge is sweet, and makes amends for lechery.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV. Another part of the same.

Enter Lydia *and* Leonore.

Lyd. I wish I had not come hither to-night, Leonore.

Leo. Why did you, madam, if the place be so disagreeable to you?

Lyd. We cannot help visiting the place often where we have lost anything we value: I lost Ranger here last night.

Leo. You thought you had lost him before, a great while ago; and therefore you ought to be the less troubled.

Lyd. But 'twas here I missed him first, I'm sure.

Leo. Come, madam, let not the loss vex you; he is not worth the looking after.

Lyd. It cannot but vex me yet, if I lost him by my own fault.

Leo. You had but too much care to keep him.

Lyd. It often happens, indeed, that too much care is as bad as negligence; but I had rather be robbed than lose what I have carelessly.

Leo. But, I believe you would hang the thief if you could.

Lyd. Not if I could have my own again.

Leo. I see you would be too merciful.

Lyd. I wish I were tried.

Leo. But, madam, if you please, we will waive the discourse; for people seldom (I suppose) talk with pleasure of their real losses.

Lyd. 'Tis better than to ruminate on them; mine, I'm sure, will not out of head nor heart.

Leo. Grief is so far from retrieving a loss, that it makes it greater; but the way to lessen it is by a comparison with others' losses. Here are ladies in the Park of your acquaintance, I doubt not, can compare with you; pray, madam, let us walk and find 'em out.

Lyd. 'Tis the resentment, you say, makes the loss great or little; and then, I'm sure, there is none like mine: however, go on. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. Another part of the same.

Enter Vincent *and* Valentine.

Vin. I am glad I have found you, for now I am prepared to lead you out of the dark and all your trouble: I have good news.

Val. You are as unmerciful as the physician who with new arts keeps his miserable patient alive and in hopes, when he knows the disease is incurable.

Vin. And you, like the melancholy patient, mistrust and hate your physician, because he will not comply with your despair: but I'll cure your jealousy now.

Val. You know, all diseases grow worse by relapses.

Vin. Trust me once more.

Val. Well, you may try your experiments upon me.

Vin. Just as I shut the door upon you, the woman Ranger expected came up stairs; but finding another woman in discourse with him, went down again; I suppose, as jealous of him, as you of Christina.

Val. How does it appear she came to Ranger?

Vin. Thus: Dapperwit came up after he had brought her, just then, in a chair from St. James's by Ranger's appointment; and it is certain your Christina came to you.

Val. How can that be? for she knew not I was in the kingdom.

Vin. My man confesses, when I sent him to inquire of her woman about her lady's being here in the Park last night, he told her you were come; and she, it seems, told her mistress.

Val. [*Aside.*] That might be. — [*Aloud.*] But did not Christina confess, Ranger was in her lodging last night?

Vin. By intrusion, which she had more particularly informed me of, if her apprehensions of your danger had not posted me after you; she not having yet (as I suppose) heard of Clerimont's recovery. I left her, poor creature! at home, distracted with a thousand fears for your life and love.

Val. Her love, I'm sure, has cost me more fears than my life; yet that little danger is not past (as you think) till the great one be over.

Vin. Open but your eyes, and the fantastic goblin's vanished, and all your idle fears will turn to shame; for jealousy is the basest cowardice.

Val. I had rather, indeed, blush for myself than her.

Vin. I'm sure you will have more reason. But is not that Ranger there?

Enter Ranger, *followed by* Christina *and* Isabel; *after them* Lydia *and* Leonore.

Val. I think it is.

Vin. I suppose his friend Dapperwit is not far off; I will examine them both before you, and not leave you so much as the shadow of doubt: Ranger's astonishment at my lodging confessed his mistake.

Val. His astonishment might proceed from Christina's unexpected strangeness to him.

Vin. He shall satisfy you now himself to the contrary, I warrant you; have but patience.

Val. I had rather, indeed, he should satisfy my doubts than my revenge; therefore I can have patience.

Vin. But what women are those that follow him?

Val. Stay a little —

Ran. Lydia, Lydia — poor Lydia!

Lyd. If she be my rival, 'tis some comfort yet to see her follow him, rather than he her. [*To* Leonore.

Leo. But if you follow them a little longer, for your comfort you shall see them go hand in hand.

Chris. Sir! sir! — [*To* Ranger.

Leo. She calls to him already.

Lyd. But he does not hear, you see; let us go a little nearer.

Vin. Sure it is Ranger!

Val. As sure as the woman that follows him closest is Christina.

Vin. For shame! talk not of Christina; I left her just now at home, surrounded with so many fears and griefs she could not stir.

Val. She is come, it may be, to divert them here in the Park; I'm sure 'tis she.

Vin. When the moon, at this instant, scarce affords light enough to distinguish a man from a tree, how can you know her?

Val. How can you know Ranger, then?

Vin. I heard him speak.

Val. So you may her too, I'll secure you, if you will draw but a little nearer; she came, doubtless, to no other end but to speak with him: observe —

Chris. [*To* Ranger.] Sir, I have followed you hitherto; but now, I must desire you to follow me out of the company; for I would not be overheard nor disturbed.

Ran. Ha! is not this Christina's voice? it is, I am sure; I cannot be deceived now. — Dear madam —

Vin. It is she indeed. [*Apart to* Valentine.

Val. Is it so?

Chris. Come, sir — [*To* Ranger.

Val. Nay, I'll follow you too, though not invited. [*Aside.*

Lyd. I must not, cannot stay behind. [*Aside.* [*They all go off together hastily.*

Re-enter Christina, Isabel, *and* Valentine *on the other side.*

Chris. Come along, sir.

Val. So! I must stick to her when all is done; her new servant has lost her in the crowd, she has gone too fast for him; so much my revenge is swifter than his love. Now shall I not only have the deserted lover's revenge, of disappointing her of her new man, but an opportunity infallibly at once to discover her falseness, and confront her impudence. [*Aside.*

Chris. Pray come along, sir, I am in haste.

Val. So eager, indeed! — I wish that cloud may yet withhold the moon, that this false woman may not discover me before I do her. [*Aside.*

Chris. Here no one can hear us, and I'm sure we cannot see one another.

Val. 'Sdeath! what have I giddily run myself upon? 'Tis rather a trial of myself than her; — I cannot undergo it. [*Aside.*

Chris. Come nearer, sir.

Val. Hell and vengeance! I cannot suffer it — I cannot. [*Aside.*

Chris. Come, come; yet nearer, — pray come nearer.

Val. It is impossible! I cannot hold! I must discover myself, rather than her infamy. [*Aside.*

Chris. You are conscious, it seems, of the wrong you have done me, and are ashamed, though in the dark. [*Speaks, walking slowly.*

Val. How's this! [*Aside.*

Chris. I'm glad to find it so; for all my business with you is, to show you your late mistakes, and force a confession from you of those unmannerly injuries you have done me.

Val. What! I think she's honest; or does she know me? — sure she cannot. [*Aside.*

Chris. First, your intrusion, last night, into my lodging; which, I suppose, has begot your other gross mistakes.

Val. No, she takes me for Ranger, I see again. [*Aside.*

Chris. You are to know, then, (since needs you must,) it was not me you followed last night to my lodging from the Park, but some kinswoman of yours, it seems, whose fear of being discovered by you prevailed with me to personate her, while she withdrew, our habits and our statures being much alike; which I did with as much difficulty, as she used importunity to make me; and all this my Lady Flippant can witness, who was then with your cousin.

Val. I am glad to hear this. [*Aside.*

Chris. Now, what your claim to me, at Mr. Vincent's lodging, meant; the letter and promises you unworthily, or erroneously, laid to my charge, you must explain to me and others, or —

Val. How's this! I hope I shall discover no guilt but my own: — she would not speak in threats to a lover. [*Aside.*

Chris. Was it because you found me in Mr. Vincent's lodgings you took a liberty to use me like one of your common visitants? but know, I came no more to Mr. Vincent than you. Yet, I confess, my visit was intended to a man — a brave man, till you made him use a woman ill; worthy the love of a princess, till you made him censure mine; good as angels, till you made him unjust: — why, in the name of honour, would you do't?

Val. How happily am I disappointed! — poor injured Christina! [*Aside.*

Chris. He would have sought me out first, if you had not made him fly from me. Our mutual love, confirmed by a contract, made our hearts inseparable, till you rudely, if not maliciously, thrust in upon us, and broke the close and happy knot: I had lost him before for a month, now for ever. [*Weeps.*

Val. My joy and pity makes me as mute as my shame; yet I must discover myself. [*Aside.*

Chris. Your silence is a confession of your guilt.

Val. I own it. [*Aside.*

Chris. But that will not serve my turn; for straight you must go clear yourself and me to him you have injured in me! if he has not made too much haste from me to be found again. You must, I say; for he is a man that will have satisfaction; and in satisfying him, you do me.

Val. Then he is satisfied.

Chris. How! is it you? then I am not satisfied.

Val. Will you be worse than your word?

Chris. I gave it not to you.

Val. Come, dear Christina, the jealous, like the drunkard, has his punishment with his offence.

Re-enter Vincent.

Vin. Valentine! Mr. Valentine!

Val. Vincent! —

Vin. Where have you been all this while? [Valentine *holds* Christina *by the hand; who seems to struggle to get from him.*

Val. Here with my injured Christina.

Vin. She's behind with Ranger, who is forced to speak all the tender things himself; for she affords him not a word.

Val. Pish! pish! Vincent; who is blind now? who deceived now?

Vin. You are; for I'm sure Christina is with him. Come back and see. [*They go out on one side, and return on the other.*

Re-enter Lydia *and* Leonore, *followed by* Ranger.

Ran. [*To* Lydia.] Still mocked! still abused! did you not bid me follow you where we might not be disturbed or overheard? — and now not allow me a word!

Vin. Did you hear him? [*Apart to* Valentine.

Val. Yes, yes, peace. [*Apart to* Vincent.

Ran. Disowning your letter and me at Mr. Vincent's lodging, declaring you came to meet another there, and not me, with a great deal of such affronting unkindness, might be reasonable enough, because you would not entrust Vincent with our love; but now, when nobody sees us nor hears us, why this unseasonable shyness?

Lyd. It seems she did not expect him there, but had appointed to meet another: — I wish it were so. [*Aside.*

Ran. I have not patience! — do you design thus to revenge my intrusion into your lodging last night? sure if you had then been displeased with my company, you would not have invited yourself to't again by a letter? or is this a punishment for bringing you to a house so near your own, where, it seems, you were known too? I do confess it was a fault; but make me suffer any penance but your silence, because it is the certain mark of a mistress's lasting displeasure.

Lyd. My — is not yet come. [*Aside.*

Ran. Not yet a word! you did not use me so unkindly last night, when you chid me out of your house, and with indignation bid me begone. Now, you bid me follow you, and yet will have nothing to say to me; and I am more deceived this day and night than I was last night; — when, I must confess, I followed you for another —

Lyd. I'm glad to hear that. [*Aside.*

Ran. One that would have used me better; whose love I have ungratefully abused for yours; yet from no other reason but my natural inconstancy. — [*Aside.*] Poor Lydia! Lydia!

Lyd. He muttered my name sure; and with a sigh. [*Aside.*

Ran. But as last night by following (as I thought) her, I found you, so this night, by following you in vain, I do resolve, if I can find her again, to keep her for ever.

Lyd. Now I am obliged, and brought into debt, by his inconstancy: — faith, now cannot I hold out any longer; I must discover myself. [*Aside.*

Ran. But, madam, because I intend to see you no more, I'll take my leave of you for good and all; since you will not speak, I'll try if you will squeak. [*Goes to throw her down, she squeaks.*

Lyd. Mr. Ranger! Mr. Ranger!

Vin. Fy! Fy! you need not ravish Christina sure, that loves you so.

Ran. Is it she! Lydia all this while! — how am I gulled! and Vincent in the plot too! [*Aside.*

Lyd. Now, false Ranger!

Ran. Now, false Christina too! — you thought I did not know you now, because I offered you such an unusual civility.

Lyd. You knew me! — I warrant you knew, too, that I was the Christina you followed out of the Park last night! that I was the Christina that writ the letter too!

Ran. Certainly, therefore I would have taken my revenge, you see, for your tricks.

Val. Is not this the same woman that took refuge in your house last night, madam? [*To* Christina.

Chris. The very same.

Val. What, Mr. Ranger, we have chopped, and changed, and hid our Christinas so long and often, that at last we have drawn each of us our own?

Ran. Mr. Valentine in England! — the truth on't is, you have juggled together, and drawn without my knowledge; but since she will have it so, she shall wear me for good and all now. [*Goes to take her by the hand.*

Lyd. Come not near me.

Ran. Nay, you need not be afraid I would ravish you, now I know you.

Lyd. And yet, Leonore, I think 'tis but justice to pardon the fault I made him commit? [*Apart to* Leonore, Ranger *listens.*

Ran. You consider it right, cousin; for indeed you are but merciful to yourself in it.

Lyd. Yet, if I would be rigorous, though I made a blot, your oversight has lost the game.

Ran. But 'twas rash woman's play, cousin, and ought not to be played again, let me tell you.

Enter Dapperwit.

Dap. Who's there? who's there?

Ran. Dapperwit.

Dap. Mr. Ranger, I am glad I have met with you, for I have left my bride just now in the house at Mulberry-garden, to come and pick up some of my friends in the Park here to sup with us.

Ran. Your bride! are you married then? where is your bride?

Dap. Here at Mulberry-garden, I say, where you, these ladies and gentlemen, shall all be welcome, if you will afford me the honour of your company.

Ran. With all our hearts: — but who have you married? Lucy?

Dap. What! do you think I would marry a wench? I have married an heiress worth thirty thousand pounds, let me perish!

Vin. An heiress worth thirty thousand pounds!

Dap. Mr. Vincent, your servant; you here too?

Ran. Nay, we are more of your acquaintance here, I think. — Go, we'll follow you, for if you have not dismissed your parson, perhaps we may make him more work. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. The Dining-room in Mulberry-garden House.

Enter Sir Simon Addleplot, Gripe, Lady Flippant, Mrs. Martha, Mrs. Joyner, Mrs. Crossbite, *and* Lucy.

Sir Sim. 'Tis as I told you, sir, you see.

Gripe. Oh, graceless babe! married to a wit! an idle, loitering, slandering, foul-mouthed, beggarly wit! Oh that my child should ever live to marry a wit!

Mrs. Joyn. Indeed, your worship had better seen her fairly buried, as they say.

Mrs. Cros. If my daughter there should have done so, I would not have given her a groat.

Gripe. Marry a wit!

Sir Sim. Mrs. Joyner, do not let me lose the widow too: — for if you do, (betwixt friends,) I and my small annuity are both blown up: it will follow my estate. [*Aside to* Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. I warrant you. [*Aside.*

L. Flip. Let us make sure of Sir Simon to-night, or — [*Aside to* Mrs. Joyner.

Mrs. Joyn. You need not fear it. — [*Aside.*] Like the lawyers, while my clients endeavour to cheat one another, I in justice cheat 'em both.

Gripe. Marry a wit!

Enter Dapperwit, Ranger, Lydia, Valentine, Christina, *and* Vincent. Dapperwit *stops them, and they stand all behind.*

Dap. What, is he here! Lucy and her mother! [*Aside.*

Gripe. Tell me how thou camest to marry a wit.

Mrs. Mar. Pray be not angry, sir, and I'll give you a good reason.

Gripe. Reason for marrying a wit!

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, I found myself six months gone with child, and saw no hopes of your getting me a husband, or else I had not married a wit, sir.

Mrs. Joyn. Then you were the wit.

Gripe. Had you that reason? nay, then —— [*Holding up his hands.*

Dap. How's that! [*Aside.*

Ran. Who would have thought, Dapperwit, you would have married a wench?

Dap. [*To* Ranger.] — Well, thirty thousand pounds will make me amends; I have known my betters wink, and fall on for five or six. — [*To* Gripe *and the rest.*] What! you are come, sir, to give me joy? you Mrs. Lucy, you and you? well, unbid guests are doubly welcome. — Sir Simon, I made bold to invite these ladies and gentlemen. — For you must know, Mr. Ranger, this worthy Sir Simon does not only give me my wedding supper, but my mistress too; and is, as it were, my father.

Sir Sim. Then I am, as it were, a grandfather to your new wife's *Hans en kelder*;[27] to which you are but, as it were, a father! there's for you again, sir — ha, ha! —

Ran. Ha! ha! ha! — [*To* Vincent.

Dap. Fools sometimes say unhappy things, if we would mind 'em; but — what! melancholy at your daughter's wedding, sir?

Gripe. How deplorable is my condition!

Dap. Nay, if you will rob me of my wench, sir, can you blame me for robbing you of your daughter? I cannot be without a woman.

Gripe. My daughter, my reputation, and my money gone! — but the last is dearest to me. Yet at once I may retrieve that, and be revenged for the loss of the other: and all this by marrying Lucy here: I shall get my five hundred pounds again, and get heirs to exclude my daughter and frustrate Dapperwit; besides, 'tis agreed on all hands, 'tis cheaper keeping a wife than a wench. [*Aside.*

Dap. If you are so melancholy, sir, we will have the fiddles and a dance to divert you; come!

A Dance.

Gripe. Indeed, you have put me so upon a merry pin, that I resolve to marry too.

L. Flip. Nay, if my brother come to marrying once, I may too; I swore I would, when he did, little thinking —

Sir Sim. I take you at your word, madam.

L. Flip. Well, but if I had thought you would have been so quick with me —

Gripe. Where is your parson?

Dap. What! you would not revenge yourself upon the parson?

Gripe. No, I would have the parson revenge me upon you; he should marry me.

Dap. I am glad you are so frolic, sir; but who would you marry?

Gripe. That innocent lady. [*Pointing to* Lucy.

Dap. That innocent lady!

Gripe. Nay, I am impatient, Mrs. Joyner; pray fetch him up if he be yet in the house.

Dap. We were not married here: — but you cannot be in earnest.

Gripe. You'll find it so; since you have robbed me of my housekeeper, I must get another.

Dap. Why, she was my wench!

Gripe. I'll make her honest then.

Mrs. Cros. Upon my repute he never saw her before: — but will your worship marry my daughter then?

Gripe. I promise her and you, before all this good company, to-morrow I will make her my wife.

Dap. How!

Ran. Our ladies, sir, I suppose, expect the same promise from us. [*To* Valentine.

Val. They may be sure of us without a promise; but let us (if we can) obtain theirs, to be sure of them.

Dap. But will you marry her to-morrow? — [*To* Gripe.

Gripe. I will, verily.

Dap. I am undone then! ruined, let me perish!

Sir Sim. No, you may hire a little room in Covent Garden, and set up a coffee-house: — you and your wife will be sure of the wits' custom.

Dap.

Abused by him I have abused! —
Fortune our foe we cannot overwit;
By none but thee our projects are cross-bit.

Val. Come, dear madam, what, yet angry? — jealousy sure is much more pardonable before marriage than after it; but to-morrow, by the help of the parson, you'll put me out of all my fears.

Chris. I am afraid then you would give me my revenge, and make me jealous of you; and I had rather suspect your faith than you should mine.

Ran. Cousin Lydia, I had rather suspect your faith too, than you should mine; therefore let us e'en marry to-morrow, that I may have my turn of watching, dogging, standing under the window, at the door, behind the hanging, or —

Lyd. But if I could be desperate now and give you up my liberty, could you find in your heart to quit all other engagements, and voluntarily turn yourself over to one

woman, and she a wife too? could you away with the insupportable bondage of matrimony?

Ran. You talk of matrimony as irreverently as my Lady Flippant: the bondage of matrimony! no —

The end of marriage now is liberty.
And two are bound — to set each other free.

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY DAPPERWIT.[28]

Now my brisk brothers of the pit, you'll say
I'm come to speak a good word for the play;
But gallants, let me perish! if I do,
For I have wit and judgment, just like you;
Wit never partial, judgment free and bold,
For fear or friendship never bought or sold,
Nor by good-nature e'er to be cajoled.
Good-nature in a critic were a crime,
Like mercy in a judge, and renders him
Guilty of all those faults he does forgive,
Besides, if thief from gallows you reprieve,
He'll cut your throat; so poet saved from shame,
In damned lampoon will murder your good name.
Yet in true spite to him and to his play,
Good faith, you should not rail at them to-day
But to be more his foe, seem most his friend,
And so maliciously the play commend;
That he may be betrayed to writing on,
And poet let him be, — to be undone.

ENDNOTES.

[1] Democritus excludes sane poets from Helicon. — *De Art Poet.* 296-7.

[2] See the Introduction to *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*.

[3] *Some Account of the English Stage*, vol i. p. 135.

[4] The Mulberry Garden was situated at the further extremity of the Mall in St. James's Park, upon the site now occupied by Buckingham Palace and its grounds. Its name was derived from a plantation of mulberry trees which James I. caused to be made there. Later, the spot was converted into a public garden, with shrubberies, walks, arbours, and a house of refreshment, and was much frequented by persons of fashion as well as citizens. Pepys found it "a very silly place, worse than Spring-garden," but "a wilderness here that is somewhat pretty." The following extract from Sedley's *Mulberry Garden* gives an idea of the doings at this place. The scene is laid in the Garden: —

"*Wildish.* What, is there store of game here, gentlemen?

Modish. Troth, little or none; a few citizens that have brought their children out to air 'em, and eat cheesecakes.

Wildish. I thought this place had been so full of beauties, that like a pack of hounds in a hare warren, you could hunt one for another: what think you of an arbor and a bottle of Rhenish?"

[5] A gull; a courtesan's dupe; "one who may be easily led by the nose or put upon." — *Bailey's Dict.*

[6] Fegue or feague. "To beat, to whip, to drive." — *Wright Dict. of obsolete and provincial English.* Hence our word *fag.*

[7] Cheated of his portion.

[8] Whetstone's Park was the name of the district lying between Lincoln's Inn Fields and Holborn. The character of its inhabitants had given it at this time an ill reputation. In Crowne's comedy of the *Country Wit* (1675) occurs the following allusion to Whetstone's Park: "After I had gone a little way in a great broad street, I turned into a Tavern hard by a place they call a Park; and just as our Park is all Trees, that Park is all Houses. I asked if they had any Deer in it, and they told me, not half so many as they used to have; but that if I had a mind to a Doe, they would put a Doe to me."

[9] Strumpet.

[10] A prostitute.

[11] The present Pall Mall, so called from the game of Pall Mall formerly played there with ball and mallet. In Wycherley's time Pall Mall was already a street of houses, and the game was then played at the Mall in St. James's Park, also called Pall Mall.

[12] *i.e.* The New Exchange, a long building, erected upon the site of the stables of Durham House, on the south side of the Strand, and nearly opposite Bedford Street. Opened in 1609, it became a fashionable lounge after the Restoration, and was pulled down in 1737. "It was erected partly on the plan of the Royal Exchange, with vaults beneath, over which was an open paved arcade; and above were walks of shops, occupied by perfumers and publishers, milliners and sempstresses." — *Timbs' Curiosities of London.*

[13] Strumpet.

[14] Bulk. “A stall before a shop.” — *Bailey.*

[15] Or Ferrandine: a stuff made of silk and wool.

[16] In 1577, William Lamb (formerly a gentleman of the chapel to Henry VIII.) caused to be constructed, in the fields where now stands Lamb’s Conduit Street, a reservoir and a conduit by which the water was conveyed to Snow Hill. These fields formed a place of resort for the inhabitants of the adjoining districts. The conduit was restored, from a design by Sir Christopher Wren, in 1667.

[17] “Cross or pile”: equivalent to our “heads or tails.” A cross was usually on the reverse of old English coins; the obverse was called the “pile,” from the pile or punch with which the impression was struck.

[18] The New Spring Garden, at Vauxhall; afterwards under the name of Vauxhall, the most famous place of resort of that kind in the metropolis. It was first opened about 1661, when Evelyn describes it as “a pretty-contriv’d plantation,” and was closed in 1859. Pepys has an interesting entry concerning it, under date of May 28, 1667; “I by water to Fox-hall, and there walked in Spring-garden. A great deal of company, and the weather and garden pleasant: and it is very pleasant and cheap going thither, for a man may go to spend what he will, or nothing, all as one. But to hear the nightingale and other birds, and here fiddles and there a harp, and here a Jew’s trump, and here laughing, and there fine people walking, is mighty divertising.” — The Neat-house was a place of entertainment at Pimlico.

[19] A powdering-tub means properly a tub in which meat is salted, to sprinkle with salt being an occasional sense of the verb “to powder.” Hence the name of powdering-tub was applied to places where persons afflicted with a certain disease were cured. Compare Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, iii. 2; “Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.” Also *King Henry V.*, ii. 1.

[20] The Mortlake tapestry was of some note at this time. The works had been founded under the patronage of James I., and Rubens and Vandyck subsequently lent their services to the undertaking.

[21] The angel was worth 10*s.*, and the piece 22*s.*

[22] The mark was worth 13*s.* 4*d.*

[23] This incident is evidently borrowed from the story of “La procureuse passe la raie,” in *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, or from the more recent version in Bandello’s *Novelle*.

[24] Mother Clifford was a noted procuress, who is mentioned in several comedies of the time.

[25] Brothel.

[26] Prostitute.

[27] Dutch, literally “Jack in the Cellar;” a jocular term for an unborn infant. — *Wright.*

[28] The part of Dapperwit was originally acted by Mohun.

End of Sample