

THE
POETICAL, DRAMATIC,
AND
MISCELLANEOUS WORKS
OF
JOHN GAY.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

DR. JOHNSON'S

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL PREFACE.

VOLUME THE FIFTH,
CONTAINING
PLAYS AND ESSAYS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for EDWARD JEFFERY, opposite Carlton House,
Pall-Mall.

M.DCC.XCV.

[Price in Boards One Pound Four Shillings.]

T H E
WIFE of BATH;
A
C O M E D Y,
As IT WAS ACTED AT THE
T H E A T R E - R O Y A L
I N
L I N C O L N S - I N - F I E L D S .

Revised and altered by the AUTHOR.

———*Magis sanos avertere sacris
Experiar sensus.*

V I R G .

R z

Dra-

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

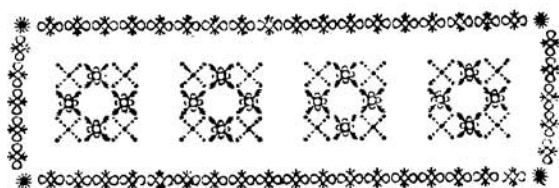
Plowdon,	Mr. BOHEME.
Sir Harry Gauntlet,	Mr. RYAN.
Doggrell,	Mr. CHAPMAN.
Merit,	Mr. MILWARD.
Hubert,	Mr. HALL.
Astrolabe,	Mr. OGDEN.
Grift,	Mr. HIPPESELEY.
Spigot,	Mr. HULETT.
Shipman,	Mr. RAY.

W O M E N.

Myrtilla,	Mrs. YOUNGER.
Florinda,	Mrs. TEMPLER.
Alifon,	Mrs. EGLETON.
Busy,	Mrs. CANTRELL.

S C E N E.

An Inn on the Road between *London* and *Canterbury*.




T H E
W I F E of B A T H.



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

A R O O M.

PLOWDON, DOGGRELL.

 BUD! what matter is it though you have never seen her? Were you not left wholly to my care? Am I not your guardian? 'Tis a match that I think proper for you. Is it not sufficient that she is my daughter?

Dogg. But confider, Sir; I am but juſt come from the Univerſity, where I have only converſed with the Muſes, and I would willingly ſtudy mankind a little before I ſettle.

Plowd. Have you ſtole a marriage in the college with your landreſs, puppy? For there can be no other objection.

Dogg. But how can I know whether I shall like her or how can you know whether she will like me?

Plowd. I like it; and that is sufficient. I speak with the authority of a father to both of you. Since thou hast been dabbling in poetry, to be sure, nothing less than a goddess will serve thy turn. Let me tell you, *Frank*, a rich Yeoman of *Kent*'s daughter will make a much better wife than *Venus*.

Dogg. But had my father been alive, he would have insisted upon blood, Sir; upon a family.

Plowd. Is that the point then. In troth, a staunch country Yeoman, and an honest healthy country Lads, may raise as good a breed as a Lady and a Valet de Chambre, though her Lord have faith and fondness enough to own himself the father.

Dogg. But I would fain have time to consider of this matter; for the *D'Ogrelles*——

Plowd. Pr'ythee, *Frank*, don't talk to me of the *D'Ogrelles*. Thy grandfather's name was *Doggrell*, and thy father's name was *Doggrell*; and when my daughter loses the name of *Plowdon*, she will be Mrs. *Doggrell*. Indeed she will, *Frank*.

Dogg. Pardon me, Sir; the name is originally *French*, and it is written with an apostrophe; as much as to say, *De Ogrelle*, which was the ancient mansion of the family.

Plowd. Have done, Boy. I'll hear no more of these fooleries. We are now about the mid-way to *Canterbury*, and within a dozen miles of my house; to-morrow we shall leave the pilgrims, and strike off to the left hand-road. Such a merry company sure never met together! And if it were not upon your account, Boy, I should turn Pilgrim too, and they would draw me on with them to *Canterbury*. But we should go to them;——they will expect us.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

PLOWDON, HUBERT.

Plowd. **W**HERE in all this hurry, Father? A word with you. By his haste one would think supper were upon the table. But, in troth, Father, you shall stay with me one minute. What hath put you in all this bustle?

Hub. A marriage, my good Mr. *Plowdon*; and I am afraid, should I stay a minute, the parties may not continue of the same mind; or they may agree between them to dispense with the ceremonies of the church, and I would not be the occasion of sin. They are both in so much haste, that I am sure neither of them were ever married before. Poor things, they don't know what they are about to undertake!

Plowd. Is there a match then struck up among the Pilgrims?

Hub. No, no! They are all so merry within, that one may swear not one of them is thinking of matrimony. There is a lady going to profess herself a nun, who hath just now joined them; and the Wife of Bath is so talkative, and so carnal, that unless I return to the Lady with Ecclesiastical persuasives immediately, I am afraid she will joke her out of her resolution. She is rich, it seems, and hath much to bestow on the Convent. You see I must go——But hold——Mr. *Plowdon*, if you are going to join the Pilgrims, this room would be convenient for the ceremony.

Enter

Enter a Footman.

Footman. Sir, my master hath sent me all over the house to look for you; he grows wondrous impatient; and if you were not to be found, he hath ordered me to call the curate; and so you will lose a good perquisite.

Hub. You will oblige us then, Mr. *Plowdon*, with your absence. You may tell your master, I am here alone, and ready to obey his commands. Sir, your servant. [*Exit.* Footman.]

Plowdon. Curiosity will persuade me to stay to have a peep at this ceremony; so I will only step out of the way that I may not be observed. [*Exit* Plowdon.]

Hub. This seems to be an uncanonical kind of a business, and, to be sure, requires the most canonical kind of a reward. But I will ask no questions, and suppose it just and regular, that I may not give offence to my own scrupulous conscience. If we did not now and then connive at an affair of this kind, matrimony would be nothing but a bargain and sale between parents: And, for the propagation of mankind, we should allow the world once a year, or so, to see a happy marriage to induce others to the hazardous undertaking.

Merit. Well then, to the ceremony.

SCENE III.

Merit, Florinda, mask'd. Hubert, Footman.

Merit. NOW, Father, to your office.

Hub. Does the Lady assent?

Flor. With all my heart.

Hub. But let us first secure the door, that we be not interrupted. And now, Madam, I must beg you to take off that mask, that I may be able to attend what I am going about. You will pardon me, Sir, for it may be

be necessary. By my fay, she hath a face worthy a Nun-
nery: it might afford a pleasant and delightful prospect
for Ecclesiastical contemplation. But, alack-a-day! The
good things of this world are not for us! Well; now I
am ready for you.

Plowd. Open the door; open the door! I forbid
the marriage, I forbid the marriage.

[*Knocking without.*

Merit. Never heed it, Father; begin; dispatch.

Plowd. Break open the door. Break it open, I say.

[*Knocking and hammering:—the doors forced open.*

S C E N E IV.

*Merit, Florinda, Hubert, Plowdon, Footman, Spigot,
Drawers.*

Flor. **H**A! my father!

Plowd. Thank my stars I came just in the
nick! There is as yet no harm done, unless they have
begun at the sag-end of the ceremony. How, gipsy!
what, without your father's consent! And let me tell
you, Father, such as you disgrace the Church when
you connive at, nay, promote the disobedience of chil-
dren to their parents—And as for you, Sir, though I
have got my daughter again, I will have you secured
till I know who you are.

Merit. Indeed, Sir, you came very opportunely, for
now, I hope to have the sanction of your consent. I
expected you, Sir, at this Inn, or I had not brought her
hither,

Plowd. And bolted the door upon me, as the most
ready way to get the sanction of my consent! Into what
impudent hands is she fallen! You are a rascal, Sirrah.

Merit. By the ill language you give me, one would
think

think you really were, or intended to be my father; with this lady's consent I shall allow you that privilege.

Plowd. Keep upon your knees, huffy, for I have not done with you yet. Are your silver tankard and spoons safe? Secure him, Landlord; for by his assurance he is a highwayman to be sure!

Spigot. No such matter, indeed, Mr. *Plowdon*. He's my customer, and I know him to be a worthy, honest, sensible Gentleman, for he pays the handsomest reckonings without any deductions. He hath the air of a man of quality, you may impose upon him as you think fit; he is above finding you out. No doubt, he must have had a very genteel education.

[To *Plowdon aside*.

Plowd. Why, wench, you look as easy as if you had no concern in this affair.

Flor. How can I look otherwise, when I am under my father's protection?

Plowd. What a profligate age are we arrived at! when daughters think they have a right to dispose of themselves in marriage! Here's a wench now, who can scarce cast up an account of pounds, shillings, and pence, takes upon her to drive a bargain for ten thousand pounds! Why, huffy, in disposing of yourself, I warrant you have never considered that you were putting out ten thousand pounds of your father's money.

Flor. I know my duty, Sir; but how could I help myself? He stole me as I was walking in the meadow near our house, and by violence brought me hither: he threatened me, and would have forced me to his arms; and what, alas can weak woman do when men are so resolute?

Hubert. Not an equivocation! nay, by the utmost extent that I allow myself, I cannot trace her mental reservation!

[*Aside*.

Mer. So then I find I am given up on all sides! What can she drive at! The step she took with me was beyond

beyond the practice of a Coquet, and yet the most consummate one of them all could not sacrifice a lover with more ease. Sure, there is not so much difference in women as I imagined!

[*Aside.*]

Plowd. This may be all false, hussy, and I shall not trust to those smooth looks; but get you up, for you shall tell no more lies upon your knees. I have taken my resolutions. Since this kidnapper, girl, hath set your inclinations agog, I have a husband of my own providing ready to lay them. You may remember child, I have talked to you of Mr. *Doggrell*:—Let us have no fiddle faddle; what you call, consideration now. I shall forgive you too, father *Hubert*, when you have done this job for me.

Hubert. Bless me, Sir,—If I had known she had been your daughter.——But I never saw her, you know, till now; for since I have been acquainted in your family you have kept her all along at the Boarding-School, and I have been absent from this country ever since you took her home.

Plowd. Mr. *Doggrell*, girl, is a very pretty fellow.

Flor. He's at *Oxford*, Sir,—and I am not in such haste: I would not interrupt his studies.

Plowd. But I would interrupt your projects, hussy. I have brought him down with me, wench, and I will have no demurs. The jealousy of a father for a marriageable daughter is insupportable: I shall never be easy till I have shifted it off upon a husband. Where is *Frank* now? Why is he out of the way? I would get rid of my daughter, I would get rid of my care this instant. I'll cross-examine them, to be sure that I am not imposed upon. Get you into that closet, gipsy, and stay there till I call you.

Hubert. Really, if it were consistent with our duty, one would forswear the function of the matrimonial office; we so very seldom perform it to the satisfaction of all parties.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

*Plowdon, Hubert, Merit, Footmen, Spigot, Drawers,
Myrtilla, Alifon. { Myrtilla veiled.*

Alifon. **H** EYDAY! what is the meaning of ~~an~~ this uproar?

Plowd. The company are breaking in upon us. Conduct him into the other room. I'll be with you immediately, and examine this affair thoroughly. The Wife of *Bath* will talk, and I hate to be interrupted. Take notice Landlord, I leave this impudent fellow in your custody. Then *Frank* too, Father, must have some preparatory discourse before he sees my daughter, or I shall have demurs and objections from that quarter too. I will talk to you, Father *Hubert*, upon that head by and by.

S C E N E VI.

Plowdon, Alifon Myrtilla.

Alifon. **W** H A T hath discomposed you my good Master *Plowdon*? Hath the Wench of the Inn sworn a rape against you? Believe me, old gray beard, it cannot turn out to your disparagement. It will do you credit, if you have views of a second wife.

Plowd. I know dame *Alifon*, it will be in vain to make my complaints to you upon this article; for the Wife of *Bath* was always a zealous advocate for the liberties of women.

Alif. And with very good reason, in troth; when every man alive is invading them! Every husband would

would be a *Cæsar*, if they did not now and then meet with a stubborn *Cato*, of a wife. But pr'ythee, *Plowden*, let me know after all, what is the matter?

Plowd. I have a daughter, dame.

Alif. One would have thought by the hurly-burly we over-heard, it could have been with no body but your wife. But what hath your daughter done? Where is she?

Plowd. Pouting, and plotting against her father in yonder closet.

Alif. How came she hither?

Plowd. That fellow, that rascal I sent out as you came in, (if you will take her word) stole her from my house, and brought her hither; and if I had not come upon her just in the nick, Father *Hubert* would have given the thief a right and title to her.

Alif. And so you would hang him! Let him upon all accounts marry her. How long hath he had her in possession? Perhaps you have only prevented the ceremony. You had better huddle up the marriage, indeed you had; it may prove more for her's and your own credit; for, adad! he is a sightly young fellow.

Plowd. I have a husband ready for her, Dame. Mr. *Doggrell*, the young Gentleman you saw with me is the man I have pitched upon; so that, as to a man, you see the girl hath met with no disappointment.

Alif. There you are out, Mr. *Plowden*. Let men say what they will, women do like one man better than another; look round among the husbands of your acquaintance, and you will find I tell you truth. Why, marriage would be a contented state, and cuckoldom out of fashion, if all the men were alike to us.

Plowd. But, my dear Dame, (ever set a woman to watch a woman) shall I leave her under your care, till I have dispatched this affair? You can never think the girl hardly used, for I have provided her a young husband; and that he hath an estate can be no objection;

your prudent women, who think before they marry, marry for nothing else. Talk over the affair with her, my good Dame, in your own way, and as soon as I have let *Frank* into the matter, I shall desire your company at the wedding. I must now go to the examination of the prisoner.——But I don't see why I should trust any woman; so, for security, I'll lock the door.

S C E N E VII.

Myrilla, Alison.

Alison. YOU see, Madam, here is a woman acting like a woman; with the spirit of intrigue, and at the same time with the spirit of disobedience. Why, in the name of *Cupid*, a Nunnery, Madam? 'Tis hard, I grant you, in marriage, to swear that you will like only one man; but sure it is harder to swear you will never like any man at all. Now, I fairly confess, as to man, I cannot answer for my own thoughts four-and-twenty hours together.

Myrt. As I am convinced Madam, marriage is not to be my destiny, I had better seclude myself from the solicitation.

Alif. Why is it not your destiny? Do you never think of a man? Do you never talk of a man? Do you never dream of a man? Sure, girl, you would not be an imperfect creature all your life! Gracious! A Nunnery! It makes one's blood run cold: But your blood must run cold, or you never could take such an un-woman-like resolution.

Myrt. Some are allotted to one state, others to another; and there is no opposing fatality.

Alif. I dare say, *Plowdon's* daughter within is of another mind: let us hear her story and her opinion upon this subject.

[*Ex. Alison.*

Myrt.

Myrt. While we are in the world, 'tis hard to disengage ourselves from the thoughts of it. Every woman is another's tempter; by their conversation they warm one another into wishes, and encourage and assist one another in the risques of intrigue. At my return from my pilgrimage to *Canterbury*, I am determined, the walls of a Nunnery (whatever be my thoughts) shall be a guard upon my actions; since I am convinced that the stars have decreed me to a single life.

S C E N E VIII.

Alison, Florinda, Myrtilla.

Alison. WELL, girl, since your father hath carried off your man, for your comfort and revenge, here is a sister ready to introduce you to a Nunnery. To be sure you are ready for the most desperate undertaking, to cross the old peevish put, your father!

Myrt. *Florinda!* My dear child, I have not seen you these three years, never since we lay in the same bed-chamber at the Boarding-school.

Flor. *Myrtilla!* Are you in masquerade? I hope my dear, this habit does not really belong to you.

Myrt. At my return from *Canterbury* you may see me professed. The world is not for me, so I have chosen the prudent part, to retire from it.

Alif. 'Tis her destiny, forsooth, that hath thrown this lot for her.

Flor. She was always a superstitious girl, but I never thought she would have run this length. Here my father now is contradicting my stars, and disappointing me of a husband; but for all that I am still determined,

that my destiny shall be my own choice. Now I love contradiction so heartily, that I should even have a pleasure in contradicting the stars.

Alif. But let me into your affair, child; for, in your circumstance, you may want a friend; and I ever chuse to take the part of love.

Flor. I rely upon your honour, Ladies. You must know then, my father hath chosen a husband for me, and I have chosen one for myself: Now the dispute between us is, whether I shall take the man that he likes, or the man that I like: a common case between fathers and daughters.

Alif. And so, child, you were stolen with your own consent.

Flor. Very true. I took the opportunity of my father's absence, to escape from home with the man I am determined to marry; and when I was just upon the point of it, unluckily fell into my father's hands. That I might be less suspected, and have the more liberty, I have denied all this, and accused my lover of having stolen me.

Alif. Here is one man, 'tis plain, must be disappointed, unless you or I take compassion on him. Really, Madam, I should think you ought to do a less rash thing, to prevent your doing a greater. [*To Myrtilla.*] But all this affair, girl, must soon be unravelled, for your father, with the husband of his providing, will be here immediately; and then nothing but obstinacy and disobedience can save you. [*To Flor.*]

Flor. I have that ready at work. 'Tis now, *Myrtilla*, in your power to give me proof of your friendship. You see my stars decline me to marriage; if you will lend me your habit to escape to my lover, and remain in my place, I shall owe my future happiness to you. I hope you will not deny me.

Alif. As you can have no design upon her man, 'tis a very reasonable request; her thought is so right that you

you cannot refuse her. If women scruple to help one another, how can love go on?—Step into the closet, chickens, and prepare matters, lest *Plowdon* return before she is ready.

Myrt. My friendship can deny you nothing; yet I wish this request had never been made to me. But I will undergo the anger and reproaches of your father to procure the happiness of a friend.

[*Exeunt Florinda and Myrtilla.*]

Alif. Ah! *Cupid*, were I rewarded for all my services, thou owest me many a good turn. I have had some love, 'tis true; but then I have run the risque of a few husbands for it; they indeed had their crosses, for I was always a woman of spirit. I shall be abused; I shall be called bawd for this affair, to be sure; and what then? If a woman is a bawd for friendly connivance, where shall we find a woman of unspotted reputation? If you invite a Lady to supper, would you be so ill bred not to invite her friend? At a party of cards, would you not make it agreeable by engaging her friend? At a ball, you would not sure let a Lady want her friend for a partner? and at a play, you would squeeze close to make room for a friend between you? Well; if friendship and good offices be sins, my acquaintance know I have many to answer for! So, here come my girls. This is well done, child; now you have got rid of the habit, I hope you have thrown aside the resolution, and that you will never take it up again; break it girl, for, on my word, 'tis not worth the keeping.

Flor. For this favour, *Myrtilla*, I shall be ever indebted to you, and I hope my happiness in marriage will persuade you to follow my example.

Alif. Here's a girl now of a true female spirit, one half love and t'other half contradiction. Which is the greatest pleasure? By my fay, I would not be without either of them; but when they are together, without doubt, it gives love the more agreeable relish.

Flor. My whole scheme is disappointed at once. What shall I do? The door is locked, [*Peeping*] and my father coming with the young fellow with him! Run into the closet this instant, *Myrtilla*, I beg it of you.

S C E N E IX.

Florinda, Alifon, Plowdon, Doggrell.

Plowd. **S**INCE I have got my daughter again, I was determined to get that affair first off my hands; so I have deferred the examination of the rascal, and left him without in the custody of my Landlord; for perhaps it will not be prudent to make too strict a scrutiny into this matter till the marriage is over.

Alif. Poh, poh! let him go! The man hath his mare again, and what would you have more?

Plowd. But in what disposition, Dame, did you find *Florinda*?

Alif. Sullen, Sir; very sullen.

Plowd. Ay, ay; there must be more in this matter than appears at present. But, a-lack-a-day, did not I leave Father *Hubert* with you? What is become of him?

Alif. He went out with you; we have not seen him since you left us.

Plowd. In troth, this is very unlucky; for I shall be confoundedly uneasy till this business is over.——
Pr'ythee, Frank, will you try what you can do with her? The Dame here shall introduce you, and speak a good word for you. In the mean time I will look out for father *Hubert*.

Flor. My presence shall be no restraint upon their courtship. You will find me, Madam, among the Pilgrims.

SCENE

S C E N E X.

Alison, Doggrell.

Doggrell. **W**HAT can Mr. *Plowdon* mean by all this haste? I have never seen his daughter, and I am not fond of the alliance.

Alif. Then she will be quite new to you; and, without doubt, you have good taste enough to like a new face. But I suppose you intend to know the life of a fine Gentleman, and run helter-skelter among the sex before you settle. There is courage in that way of life, I grant you; but, adad! it may spoil the breed of your family.

Dogg. This too would at once cut short all the gallantries of my poetry; I designed, like other poets, to have had a hundred imaginary mistresses before I had one real one.

Alif. The girl shall not ravish you. Curiosity should persuade you to see her. Why, sure, stripling, you are not afraid of a woman! She is no old maid, I can assure you, and is not at that desperate time of life to take the first man that falls in her way.—*Florinda!*

S C E N E XI.

Alison, Doggrell, Myrtilla.

Alison. **G**IVE me leave, Madam, to introduce Mr. *Doggrell* to you; the Gentleman your father designs for your husband.

Myrt.

Myrt. As a stranger he claims my civility : But sure no well-bred man would be guilty of the rudeness to marry a Lady against her inclination ; besides, should the wife resent, you know, Madam, it in time may make the match very disagreeable to him.

Dogg. 'Tis, I confess, a kind of rape for life.

Alif. And, 'ifackins, 'tis in a wife's power to prove it a most conspicuous capital offence.

Dogg. Who could have imagined that old *Put's* daughter could be half so agreeable ! so well-bred ! so like a Gentlewoman ! I hope, Madam, 'twas with your consent your father hath given me his ; or at least that you will have no objections to his choice.

Myrt. Though I had none, undoubtedly you must have many. Would you marry the woman who would be married to any man at first sight ? You are a stranger, Sir. Is it possible I can have thought of you in the view of a husband ?——I am certain, every man of sense must be disgusted with a woman that could be so forward to seem to listen to a proposal of this kind.

Dogg. Why, really, Madam, since I have seen you, all my objections are answered ; and I must acquaint you, your father grows outrageous upon the least hint of delay. He hath consented, and I consent.

Myrt. Disobedience then defend me ! I shall give you leave to visit me.

Dogg. Your father may dispose of me ! I shall implicitly obey his commands.

Myrt. What ! Take the advantage of an arbitrary father ! No civility before Marriage ! I see what I am to expect. If you will allow me consideration. I do not give you an absolute refusal ; and I think this is too much encouragement for a first visit. Now you know my mind.

Alif. You should always let a woman comply with you in her own way. This hurry and haste might do with a widow who knows what she is about ; but your maiden is a timorous kind of creature ; let her have
her

her humour for a day or two, she will grow more familiar and tame to you by degrees.

Dogg. I cannot, Madam, for my heart, refuse Mr. *Plowdon's* offer.

Myrt. But I can.

Dogg. I must be content then, Madam, to take you in his way.

Myrt. And I must be content to refuse you in my own. The fellow grows impudent. I shall hate you,

Dogg. I know myself, Madam, and I shall venture that.

Myrt. Most audacious! You have already the insolence of an ill-bred husband; I'll hear no more; I'll make no reply; I have an answer ready for my father that shall serve for both of you.

[*Myrtilla sits, and leans in a melancholy posture.*]

Alif. Ay, the spleen! over-run with the spleen! Woman is so weak that she must have her own way.

S C E N E XII.

Myrtilla, Alifon, Doggrell, Plowdon, Hubert.

Plowdon. **W**ELL, *Frank*, what think you of the girl now you have seen her? Whether you like her or no, you shall have her; so you may speak your mind.

Dogg. Why, really, Sir, the objections now are all on her side, mine were all removed at sight.

Plowd. Hold up your head, huffey, and look chearful. Take her by the hand, *Frank*.—How, huffey! won't you give the Gentleman your hand when I bid you?

Myrt. No.

Hub.

Hub. Will you consent, fair Lady, that I join your hands?

Myrt. No.

Plew. Is this language to a father? Comply this instant, gipfy, or you will provoke me.

Myrt. I won't.

Plew. You won't!—Down upon your knees, you positive slut; down, I say!—Furies! Who have we here? What have you done with my daughter?

Alif. Ha, ha, ha! only a little innocent mummery! You will persuade us then you did not know her in the Nun's habit when she went out of the room with you: The Lady, and she, and I had a mind to divert you. Don't be concerned, your daughter will not turn Nun in earnest.—'Twas only a frolic, indeed 'twas only a frolic.

Plew. Let me go.—Let me go.—You are her accomplices, all of you.

Alif. Hold him, Father *Hubert*. Talk to him, Father, of the sin of anger; 'tis your duty to prevent transgression.

Myrt. My friendship hath engaged me too far in this worldly affair; I grow scandalous to myself. I cannot bear to expose myself any longer out of my character.

[*Aside.*

Dogg. I knew by her behaviour she must be a woman of fashion. I have now the strongest reason in the world to have nothing to do with that old fellow's daughter. [*Aside.*] I hope, Madam, my love will have interest enough to prevail with you never to put on that habit again.—There is nothing like perseverance; so, I'll follow her.

[*Exeunt.* Myrtila and Doggrell.

SCENE

S C E N E XIII.

*Plowdon, Alison, Hubert.**Hub.* I Dare not trust a madman.*Plowd.* Pimp, Pandar!*Hub.* Indeed, Mr. *Plowdon*, I dare not.*Plowd.* Bawd. You are a bawd.*Hub.* Anger, Mr. *Plowdon*, hath been looked upon, in all times, as a short madness.*Plowd.* Furies! Father, my daughter, I tell you, is run away.——And you, you bawd, would give her time for escape. Could I but get at my sword! I should have the murder of one or both of you to answer for.*Alif.* Tie him, Father *Hubert*. Lend him your girdle a while: That rope may save him from a more fatal one.*Hub.* He raves, indeed, of murder.*Alif.* Cool him with some lenitive admonitions.——

More lenitives against the fatal consequences of anger.

Plowd. Thank my stars; here comes my Landlord, with some of the Pilgrims, to my relief.

S C E N E XIV.

*Plowdon, Alison, Hubert, Spigot, Shipman.**Shipman.* WHERE's my master *Plowdon*? Adad! we have had a rare uproar upon your account yonder.——Your daughter was sheering off under false colours, had not *Grist* the Miller laid an
em-

embargo upon her. What! I warrant, it was against your consent, and she had stole duty!

Plowd. My daughter! Where is the jade? Help, release me, unhand me! But pray, Landlord, what have you done with the fellow I left in your custody too?

Spig. Since you had no more to say to him, all the business I had with him, was to receive his reckoning, and to wish him a good journey.

Plowd. That was not well done, Landlord. Are you sure, honest sailer, that my daughter is safe?

Shipm. *Grift*, you see yonder, is towing her hither. Adad! I believe the little runner would fain be adrift again.

S C E N E XV.

Plowden, Hubert, Alison, Spigot, Shipman, Grift, Florinda, &c.

Plowden. **B**Y my troth, that *Grift* is a very honest fellow; I would trust him with any thing—but my corn.—Neighbour *Grift*, this was kindly done of you. But how could you find her out through this disguise?

Grift. A man who hath kept a mill is frequented by so many women, that he must know something of their ways. The most mealy-mouthed of them all can never impose upon me; for you must know, I always suspect a woman. She offered money to the sailer there, to give a letter to the young fellow that you left with my Landlord. But, 'ifackins, the young woman begged so pitifully, that if your honour had not been my good customer, I should not have balked her fancy.

Alif. Without doubt these young slippery flirts have a pleasure in imposing upon us old folks.

Plowd.

Plowd. I shall forgive you every thing, girl, provided you will now chearfully finish this affair. Come, I know you will be good. Comply with your father for this once; after you are married, you may divert yourself with disobedience: I have had my share of your perverseness already. 'His good company, Father *Hubert*, shall be witnesses of the marriage; and then we'll send and invite the rest of the pilgrims, and make a merry night of it. Every thing, you find, Mr. *Doggrell*, is at last agreed upon: give my daughter your hand. What a-vengeance, gone! Now 'tis his turn to run away. If they had been married these ten years, they could not keep more opportunely out of one another's way. Furies this is not to be borne!

Alij. Another fit! Good-lack-a-day! If his fits come so quick upon him, this must end in bleeding and confinement.

Shipm. Now, to my thinking, you are all very hard upon the Gentleman, that you won't let him ease his mind by a few oaths or so. If our boatswain did not every now and then give his passion vent that way, o' my conscience, he would burst.

Griff. Why should we hinder my master *Plowdon*? Let him have the full scope of his passion; it may do him good: We none of us need mind it.

Plowd. Since things will not go as I would have them, I'll have all the security I can. I'll lock you, wench, into your room for this night. You shall fast, huffy; for these gadding tricks of yours require mortification.

Alij. The old fellow had as good give up this affair; the girl hath a spirit, and will bring her matters to bear at last: Indeed she will, father. You have heard confessions, and I know you must be of my opinion. Troth, I think women are in the right of it, not to be over-ready in taking advice. Every fool can give advice, every quack can give physic; but who will take

it? Good counsel now and then works upon us; and what can men boast of more? We are not so unreasonable.

The best advice comes sometimes out of season;
When reason's on our side, we side with reason.

END of the FIRST ACT.



A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Myrtille, Alison, Busy.

Alison. GRACIOUS! A Nun at these years! And with so much beauty! What a degenerate age are we arrived at! Fie Madam! Fie!——'Tis for such 'as you to be useful in your generation. All your five senses about you, and not one spark of love! Alack-and-well-a day, the true breed of woman-kind is no more! Let me die, if I do not think it unnatural! There cannot be such difference in constitutions; by my fay, girl, 'tis impossible. Lookye, my dear, if you are set upon confinement and discipline, I would infallibly advise you to a husband. Give any husband but his head, and I'll promise you enough of both of them to exercise any reasonable woman's patience.

Myrt.

Myrt. When it is allotted by the stars that a person shall always remain in the single state, 'tis but common prudence to retire from the world.

Alif. The stars! A pretty impediment, truly! Why, they are *Cupid's* lamps, girl, and have served to light many a lover to his mistress. Believe me child, star-light hath been reckoned the best love-light in all ages, and all countries; to my knowledge, they have been aiding, abetting, and assisting to many an intrigue. Besides, let your star-gazers say what they will, I do not think it in the power of all the stars in the firmament to influence so ticklish a thing as a woman's inclination.

Myrt. Sure, Madam, experience must have taught you to the contrary, and you cannot be such an infidel to call in question the truth of judicial Astrology! My case too is very particular; for all the Astrologers that I was ever so unhappy as to consult, hint at the same thing.

Alif. The only Planet that should influence and govern me is the moon, ever changing, and by that trick new every month.

Myrt. Besides, Madam, every other thing, concurs. I have tried three *Midsummer-Eves*, and there hath not appeared so much as the shadow of a man.

Alif. What signifies the *shadow*, when your Ladyship hath youth and beauty enough at any time to command the *substance*?

Myrt. But it is my resolution to retire.

Alif. Consider, friend, that resolution must be very rash and desperate, where even repentance can nothing avail. Let me look on your hand, honey. Bow your hand a little more. There, there, enough. As promising a hand as ever returned a squeeze! Ay, look upon it yourself, my dear. Ods-my-life! There it is. 'That little forked line there! A manifest husband. Let me see. Now, for children!—Children! Gracious!

as I live, three fine bouncing boys, and four girls! A woman that must have seven children, if she would preserve her character, must either turn prude, or get her a husband.

Bus. My Lady hath had many a good offer to be sure, and she need not drive matters to extremities.

Alif. And that mole there beneath the tip of your right ear is a shrewd sign.—I could tell you where you have another; but so much for that.

Bus. Nay, Madam, now you must be convinced she does know something of the matter.

Alif. Lookye, my dear, thanks to my lucky planets, I have made a shift to dispatch five good men already, and welcome the sixth, say I! I fear him not. One, two, three, four, five? and here is another little tiny thing; if it will not reach to a husband, my life for it, my good management shall make it stretch to a fine hopeful gallant.

Bus. Methinks one's natural inclination would induce one to try matrimony once purely for the sake of novelty. Now I own I have curiosity.

Myrt. 'Tis not, Dame, that I have the dread of matrimony before my eyes: As to the love of power, I feel I have the spirit of a woman; but really, Dame, I question your skill; you only amuse and flatter me. Are you sure this mark signifies a husband?

Alif. Am I sure that I ever knew the comforts of one?

Bus. Nay, Madam, the mark is as plain in your hand as in mine; and I have no doubts about the matter.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

Myrtilla, Alifon, Busy, Hubert.

Hub. NEVER mind that carnal woman, Madam; her conversation is enough to stagger the most determined resolution. She blows the coals of inclination. She is *Cupid's* incendiary, and will talk up the coldest heart into a flame. Let chastity, Madam, be your guard against this advocate for incontinence.

Alif. I am persuading her to her duty, father. Was she not born to multiply? Answer me that.

Hub. But if her virtue is strong enough to renounce the pleasures of the world——Marriage is only a kind of necessary indulgence for the weak and frail.

Alif. Heretical doctrine! What, speak against the holy institution of marriage, father?

Hub. You mistake me, dame: To some women, (to such constitutions as yours, I mean) I would inculcate matrimony; but at the same time, in others I would encourage devotion. You, such as you, can have no notions of the contentment and sweet serenity of a Nunnery.

Alif. You plead for a Nunnery; I, for a husband. Let her hear the arguments on both sides, and then chuse. Sure a woman may lose her liberty in the way that is the most agreeable to her.

Myrt. I can safely hear what she hath to say, for my lot is already cast.

Hub. Marriage, you know, dame, is for life——

Alif. Hold, father!——So is a convent.

Hub. With a man——

Alif. Without a man——

Hub. But you won't let me speak.—With a man, whose temper may vary.

Alif. With a number of women, only women ; whose tempers are all variable.

Hub. You are too quick upon me, Dame.—The husband may be morose, may be jealous——

Alif. But then she may have had the pleasure of giving him occasion.

Hub. The care of children——

Alif. The envying of those that have them.

Hub. The anxiety of domestic affairs——

Alif. The being always confined within the same walls——

Hub. Curtain-lectures——

Alif. No man to preach them to her——

Hub. The contradiction of a husband——

Alif. The contradiction of her own inclinations——

Hub. Secluded from all the cares of life——

Alif. And from all the pleasures too——

Hub. No temptation——

Alif. To become at——

Hub. The solitude——the enjoying her own thoughts——

Alif. The nothing else to enjoy.—The very worst husband promises better than all this. Why must you have a woman shut up with you ? Have you not opportunities enough ? Are you not frequently shut up with those that are abroad ?

Hub. You grow scandalous, woman. There is no bearing your discourse.

Alif. But we have said nothing of the comforts of matrimony all this while. The harmony, the friendship——

Hub. Of perpetually telling one another their faults, either imaginary or real ones.

Alif. A man always in your power.

Hub. You always in his.

Alif. You never were married, Father ; and most married men know to the contrary. If she were alone I could say more to her ; but I leave the rest to her imagination——

Hub.

Hub. Go, go, naughty woman! There is no talking with you upon this subject. I shall take another opportunity. By perverting my meaning, she weakens all my arguments. Continue your resolution, and think of a Nunnery.

Alif. And there have the perpetual torment of thinking and wishing for a husband. For the benefit of mankind, so fine a woman should not be lost.

Hub. You flatter her, you only flatter her, Dame *Alison*.

Alif. You inveigle her, you only inveigle her, Father *Hubert*.

Hub. What! arraign the admonitions of the church! You are carnal minded, Dame; very carnal-minded.

Alif. One would think you were particularly so by your solicitations.

Hub. You are now too scurrilous. I shall excommunicate you, Dame *Alison*!

Alif. That you may do, but you shall never put me in a Convent; that I can tell you, Father *Hubert*!

Hub. In my next visit, I hope I shall speak my mind without all this impertinence, Dame *Alison*!

Alif. Impertinence! Give better language, or your cloth shall not protect you. Were you a woman, you durst not have said that to me. Father *Hubert*!

Myrt. Have done; I beg it of you; the dispute is become too noisy, and it grows late.

Hub. Scurrility! downright scurrility!—— I'll disappoint her, and put an end to her talk by removing the subject. [Exit.]

Alif. For want of a reply, at last you were driven down to foul language!—— Was not I all along, Madam, in the right of it? I will not intrude upon your patience. Consider what I have said. 'Tis, I vow, a strange thing our *English* Ladies should be so backward in coming to knowledge. Why, an *Italian* girl thinks at eleven, meditates at twelve, and ripens into perfection at thirteen; and here we shall have an awkward

awkward *English* Bride want advice on her wedding-day, though she be not married till five and twenty. Go, make haste to bed, child; think of the fortune I have told you, and dream of a husband.

S C E N E III.

Myrtille, Busy.

Myrt. IF it were not quite opposite to my stars, I should just now be inclined to think the wife of *Bath* not so much in the wrong. Nay, now I recollect myself, every thing hath not concurred against her? for you may remember, *Busy*, I flung two husbands at the fortune-book about a year ago.

Busy. Perfectly well, Madam.

Myrt. The last astrologer too I unluckily consulted upon *Childermas-Day*, so that I could not possibly have any good fortune happen to me then.—Ah! there is a pin with the point towards me! Take it out of my sight this instant.

Busy. I wish your ladyship would not discompose your self for such trifles.

Myrt. But such trifles as these have warned me out of many inconveniences. If you had minded them too, it might have been much better for you.

Busy. Bless me! I have pricked my finger.

Myrt. Thank my stars, the pin hath done its mischief. I was indeed afraid it pointed at me. Confess fairly, *Busy*; didst thou ever in thy life spill salt without anger?

Busy. I was always angry with myself for spilling the salt.

Myrt. Thou wilt always, wench, be an unbeliever. But now I recollect too another favourable circumstance: About a week ago, when I laid the bride-cake under my pillow I dreamed of Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Busy.

Bufy. Poor Sir Harry Gauntlet! 'Twas your cruel usage sent him a travelling.

Myrt. If any man could have prevailed, I own it would have been him: But he hath had his absolute refusal.

Bufy. And so have many lovers who have succeeded.

Myrt. By this day's fasting I have prepared myself for one experiment more. What o'clock is it?

Bufy. Almost ten, Madam.

Myrt. This, I am resolved, shall be the last trial: I go to make ready the Dumb-cake; 'tis St. Agnes's night, and the hour approaches. Now don't you be out of the way, *Bufy*. [Exit *Myrtilla*.]

Bufy. How strong must be her superstition, when it can prevail against her inclination! It hath forced this Nunnery upon her. Why is she so set upon a Nunnery? It cannot be the discontent of poverty, for she is rich. It cannot be disappointed love, for she may have her choice. She is not made a sacrifice to the avarice of a Parent, for she is an orphan. Superstition, in short, hath got the better of the woman, and she implicitly gives up the pleasures of her youth to her credulity. Bless me! it is impossible, it cannot be he!—Sir Harry Gauntlet!

S C E N E IV.

Bufy, Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Sir Harry. **W**Hat! turned pilgrim, my girl! I was very luckily a day or two ago informed of *Myrtilla's* resolution.

Bufy. But, dear *Sir Harry*, how long have you been returned from your travels?

Sir Harry. But a very few days; and as much in love as ever. My passion was beyond the cure of absence, and I could like no woman, but as she more or less put me in mind of *Myrtilla*.

Bufy.

Bufy. Her heart is fortified by superstition; the stars oppose you, and the planets fight against you: In short, she hath nothing weak about her but her inclination.

Sir Harry. Am I quite forgotten, Mrs. *Bufy*?

Bufy. You have said so many fine things to her, that she must have a very bad memory, or very little vanity, if she does not remember some of them.

Sir Harry. Do you think no man whatever could divert her from this rash, extravagant project?

Bufy. There are questions not proper to be answered. Confidantes, Sir, must not divulge secrets.

Sir Harry. Am I come so opportunely to thy relief, when thou hast so uneasy a thing as a secret within thee?

Bufy. We are not so communicative as you imagine. A woman, Sir, always sets the true value upon a secret; for she never tells it but to her best Friends.

Sir Harry. But a secret of this consequence! You see, I dare trust you with one first. [*Gives her money.*]

Bufy. When a gentleman is so open, he always draws one in to talk freely, in return.—You know, Sir, my lady is as superstitious as an ignorant, doating abbess: Her humour by day depends upon her dreams by night; spilling salt throws her into the vapours; she loses half the week upon the score of unlucky days, and from her cradle she hath had an implicit confidence in all astrologers. And those illiterate fellows have put this thing in her head.

Sir Harry. And so your lady, to prove those fools in the right, hath resolved to prove herself all her life in the wrong! If superstition did not give up common sense, astrology would soon lose all its credit.

Bufy. She just now indeed was a little wavering. The wife of *Bath* is but this moment gone from her; with her merry tattling way, she almost laughed her out of her project, and my lady, to my thinking, seemed to feel her conversation. My good dame, I should have told you, consulted her hand, and (in all appearance, much

much to her satisfaction) contradicted all her former fortune by a promise of a husband.

Sir Harry. There lies the judgment of an astrologer. His predictions always prove true, when he foretels that a woman will do what she likes.

Buffy. The thing at present is so far undetermined, that this being *St. Agnes's* night, she hath, in all the forms, prepared the Dumb-Cake; and 'tis my opinion, her imagination is so warm that it will deceive her into an agreeable vision of the man she hath in her head, and then, Nunnery, adieu!

Sir Harry. The most lucky incident in the world! Approaches, by the way of her superstition, cannot fail of success. With your assistance, *Mrs. Buffy*, to-night I'll play the apparition.

Buffy. Just my thought, I vow. I always had a very good opinion of you, *Sir Harry*. Exactly at twelve! Remember the hour. The key of my room, through the closet, will let you into hers. You see I would go great lengths to contribute to my Lady's happiness. I know she is now expecting me, and company I see is coming in upon us. Go with me, and see me go in, that you may know where to find my room again. I shall expect you before twelve.

S C E N E V.

Merit, Spigot.

Spigot. **I**N troth, *Mr. Merit*, you are so very much disguised, that I can scarcely believe my own eyes. You could not be known by your most intimate acquaintance. Believe me, *Sir*, you may safely go among any company in the house without the least suspicion.

Merit. You delivered my letter, you say?

Spigot. Do you doubt me, *Sir*? As to such kind of affairs, leave me alone to serve a good customer. Why,
Sir,

Sir, I was bred up a drawer in *London*, and if I had not turned my hand to this sort of business, how think you I got wherewithal to set up an inn? When he called for a fresh bottle, I took the opportunity, and while I gave him the glass with one hand, I gave her the letter with t'other. Master *Plowdon* makes but sparing reckonings, and it would be no great loss, if he should ever find me out, and take to the *Red-Lion* over the way.

Merit. If I mistake not, you were saying that you overheard some of the discourse.—I think, Mr. *Spigot*, you have never a handsome silver tankard in the house.

Spigot. I make it my request that it may have your honour's arms upon it, to put me in mind of drinking your health: But, alack-a-day, I had almost forgot it, we must drink the Lady's. Here, Drawer, a bottle of wine! Sit you down, Sir,—I can't help saying that your honour hath made a very handsome choice, and she will be a rare fortune. Set down the bottle and glasses, and about your business, Sirrah.

Merit. She does not then shew the least symptoms of compliance.

Spigot. A rare obstinate Girl, i'faith! If she prove always in the right, she will make a most excellent wife. But, a plague on it, my wife is always obstinate, and always in the wrong, and that, you will say, is a little provoking: But we must all take our chance. Yonder comes *Grist*, you can never be known, and from him we may learn more of the matter.

Merit. I never saw him,——By all means ask him to sit down.

Spigot. The young fellow, your rival, is with him.
[To *Merit* apart.] Master *Grist*, if you and your friend have no particular affairs, this honest gentleman and I shall all be obliged to you for your company.

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

Spigot, Merit, Grist, Doggrell.

Dog. **I** Marry that old put's daughter, Master *Grist* !
 I know my duty to my family better. Besides,
 I am actually in love too with a woman of condition.
 Tho' he hath my fortune in his hands, neither that,
 nor my person are at his disposal.

Grist. Mr. *Plowdon* is my very good friend ; and as
 my mill hath his constant custom, I may, in a manner,
 say that I owe my bread to him ; so that I ought to be
 so neighbourly to him as to wish him a good harvest,
 or so ; but farther than that, d'ye see, I have nothing
 to say to him nor his daughter neither.

Spigot. If you are not upon private affairs, Gentle-
 men, we beg you to join conversation. You see, Sir,
 I make use of a landlord's privilege. 'Tis the whole
 amusement of my life to divide myself among my
 guests, for I love to entertain them all as well as I can.
 Now this is the way I live every day of my life.

Grist. The affair we were talking of is no secret. It
 hath set the whole Inn in an uproar. This is the young
 gentleman Mr. *Plowdon* intended for his daughter ;
 but it seems the gentleman hath other intentions of his
 own.

Spigot. You are his neighbour and friend, Mr. *Grist* ;
 I left you just now together. You should persuade him
 to temper.

Grist. Why, as a neighbour and friend, Mr. *Spigot*,
 he claims the privilege of being more unreasonable
 with me than with any body else. His daughter, I
 must own, is a fine, obstinate girl, and seems resolved
 never to repent of her over-hasty obedience. I mistake
 her shrewdly or she hath other grist to grind ; and if

Vol. III.

U

she

she hath, Mr. *Doggrell*, adad, is even with her, for her mill he owns is not for his Turn.

Merit. Does she give him no answer at all?

Griff. Not a word; she is as still and silent as a mill-pool, and just like that, only because she cannot have her own way; but, in troth, she will have it at last, or break bounds. So I told him, which put him in a plaguy passion. He then grew so obstreperous, that (though I am a Miller) he was too noisy for me; and so I left him determined to lock up his daughter to-night in the next room to his own.

Dog. Let us have done with that old fool and his daughter. What think you, Landlord, of the lady in the Nun's habit? Is not she a most delicious piece?

Spigot. Hah! Mr. *Doggrell*, are you thereabouts?

Dog. Her manner, her behaviour, her conversation, bespeak her a woman of condition. A fine gentleman would not be thrown away upon her. I hate any thing that is vulgar.

Merit. Then to rescue a young Lady from being immured in a convent, is an amour of spirit. Hath she beauty, Sir, equal to her birth?

Dog. You must know, Sir, till I saw her, my Muse was my only mistress; but she hath given me an idea of beauty beyond all poetical description. The Sun, Moon and Stars, and such kind of things, are not sublime enough for her, I feel she hath inspired me; my imagination is on the wing; 'tis impossible not to write. And I know by her eye she hath a soul susceptible of verse.

Merit. 'Tis the resolution, Sir, of a man of sense. Would you allow another to chuse you a companion or a friend? Without doubt, no. Much less surely would I allow another to chuse me a wife. 'Tis an imposition for life; and a man of spirit hates all imposition.

Griff. Now, to my thinking, there is very little choice in the matter, for women are no sooner made wives than

than they become all alike. Why there's Mr. *Spigot's* wife now hath my wife's ways to a hair. Their clacks are eternally going. They will take a world' of care off our hands too, and you may hear them governing the family all the house over, and all the day long.

Merit. Love-verses, Sir, are very insinuating, and those, with perseverance, must undermine the strongest resolution. You will excuse me, Gentlemen, it grows late.—This Fool's Conversation hath given me Hope.

[*To Spigot.*] Gentlemen, your Servant.

[*As the Company are breaking up, Enter Alison.*]

S C E N E VII.

Spigot, Grist, Doggrell, Alison.

Alif. **B**Y my fay, Lads, I shall not part with you yet. This going to bed every night, unless upon a good occasion, is the bane of all good society. I ever thought sleep so much time lost; but I never could persuade any one of my five husbands to be of this opinion. Come sit you down, Master *Grist*. For shame, Younker! Going to bed! If a woman is in the case, you have indeed the only gentleman-like excuse for leaving your bottle. Fill about, Landlord, 'tis your interest to encourage mirth. In troth, Mr. *Doggrell*, I have many precepts, and much matter of advice to give you, but if company stays for you, and you have any thing to do besides sleep, get you to bed, and leave us to our wine; for I would, upon no account, be any gentlewoman's hindrance. Come, Boy on t'other hand of me then. Here's to your inclinations. Poh! Fill a bumper, Goodman *Grist*, and then you drink your own inclinations too. You see my bonny host there sets you a good example.—By my troth, a handsome young fellow!—And I am far enough advanced in years to have a taste for these sort of striplings.

U 2.

Dog.

Dog. Myrtilla! divine Myrtilla! [*Drinking.*

Alif. And why not *Florinda*? Ever lay hold of the woman you can come at. Now to my thinking, *Floridon*'s daughter is a good sightly wench. Were I a young fellow, in troth I could not baulk her.

Grift. Nor I neither.

Dog. Were I a Miller, I should say so too. Why thou canst not look upon a woman with the eye of a gentleman.

Grift. But I can look upon a woman with the eye of a man; that is to say, consider a woman as a woman. Now I'll be judged by my Dame here, if that is not looking upon a woman as she would be looked upon.

Alif. These nice distinctions, my Boy, are not becoming your youth. But pray, Younker, let me know in what light a gentleman considers a woman?

Dog. As a woman fit for a gentleman. There's a taste in the choice of a woman.

Grift. Miss *Florinda*, for aught I know, may not be for your tooth: She will not break her heart, that I can tell you; the young woman is as unwilling as yourself, and in refusing her, you only disappoint her of the pleasure of disobedience. Yet for all that, Master *Floridon* swears he will bring matters about at last: For why, quoth he, should I be more scrupulous than other parents? And indeed what is it to him whether, forsooth, you love one another or no?

Dog. How love works in the imagination! Myrtilla! divine Myrtilla!

Alif. Why divine Myrtilla? What signifies thinking of a woman as an angel? You would have a much better chance by considering her, and talking to her as a woman.

Dog. Had I such an advocate as you, Madam——

Alif. You would do just as you do now, sit still and think of her, and so discredit my recommendation. Believe me, Lad, a woman is often won by speaking without thinking, but never by thinking without speaking.

Dog.

Dog. Could I be so happy as to have you, Dame, for my introducer!

Alif. But why will you have any introducer at all? Love is always the better heard, when he is his own advocate, and without witnesses. And so, stripling, you look upon me of an age fit only to set young folks together, and think of times past.

Dog. I beg your pardon, Madam.—Could I have seen *Myrtilla's* maid, I should not have presumed to have talked to you upon this subject:

Alif. Upon what subject? You may speak freely, Younker.

Spigot. The gentleman, perhaps may be upon the reserve before company.

Grist. And so may my good Dame too.

Dog. For that matter, Sir, I am not ashamed of shewing my verses, I own I have writ upon her. All I ask, Madam, is, that you would do me the office of a *Zephyr*, and bear my sighs to the lady.

[Takes a paper out of his pocket.]

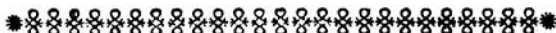
Alif. We have no private affairs at present. We'll all break up together.—You shall show the verses by and by in my own room; and there we'll consider how I may be of use to you.

Dog. Upon my word, I have no scruples, nor ever had, of communicating my poetry,—Nay, pray, Gentlemen, I should be glad of your opinion. *[Exeunt Spigot and Grist. Doggrell walking and reading to himself.]*

Alif. Let us into my room then stripling; there we can talk easier and freer. I hate to be overheard by tapsters and servant-maids. Put up your verses, Sir. *Spigot and Grist* are gone, and I am sure you have read them before.—He is conceited; he is a fool; but he is young and handsome, and an opportunity at my time of life is not to be lost. My mind gives me that I shall make something of this young fellow. Those conceited conceits, who impose upon themselves, tempt their

honest neighbours to impose upon them too. Now, because he hath had one woman offered him, his vanity thinks no woman can deny him.

In love, he's like the dog, (that foolish glutton)
Who for a shadow lost substantial mutton.



A C T III.

S C E N E I.

MYRTILLA'S Apartment.

Alison, Busy.

Busy. **T**HIS late, Dame, and my Lady requires my attendance; so I must beg to be excused 'till to-morrow.

Alif. Nay, Mrs *Busy*, I will not be denied. I must, and will speak with you. Your Lady, I know, hath a kindness for Miss *Plowden*; besides, by what you have said of her, I am sure you too wish her well; and I must acquaint you, your love can never be more seasonably shewn than just now; for the girl is in imminent danger of marriage.

Busy. To-morrow, my good Dame: Let us talk over this affair to-morrow. But what, after all, in the name of love, would you have my Lady do?

Alif. Have her do? Have her take the natural diversion of woman, and play the coquet. *Mr. Doggrell*,
you

you know, is smitten with her; and the least encouragement from her, would take him quite off from *Florinda*. By flattering and deceiving him, I would have her divert herself, and save her friend.

Bufy. To be sure, Dame, I must know her way of thinking; and I know she hates herself for so far meddling in the affair already. She loves *Florinda*, I grant you, and would do much for her: But to expose her character again, as she calls it!—pshaw! pshaw! I know she never will consent to it.

Alif. I would not have you be too positive, girl. A lady may be cool and phlegmatic enough to refuse a man; but to deny herself the satisfaction of deceiving a man! I must beg your pardon for that!—I know somewhat of women too, Mrs. *Bufy*, and I will not believe any thing so very improbable.—For my part, I don't know whether that is not the greater pleasure of the two.

Bufy. To convince you, Dame, that I myself would do any thing, in my power, to serve Miss *Plowdon*.—But after all, what can I do? For I know my Lady will upon no account consent to see the young fellow again.

Alif. But you may flatter him with the hopes of it.

Bufy. Upon my word, Dame, at this time 'tis impossible. My Lady wants me this moment.—If you could contrive to play off the young fellow, you may say for me what you please.

Alif. But methinks, if possible, I would fain have your Lady see him.—Yet, hold.—If you could procure me *Myrilla*'s dress and veil—I would undertake it myself.

Bufy. We have settled it then—so, now leave me; as soon as I have put my Lady to bed you shall have it. I'll vouch for any thing you say or do, and you shall impose upon him in your own way. But, hark! Who's at the door?

Alif. 'Tis Mr. *Doggrell*. May he come in?

Bufy.

Bufy. By no means.—I can't, Sir, talk to you now. My Dame here, will inform you of my readiness to do you good offices. Let him know, Madam, that I cannot be seen to night.—In about an hour I shall have the dress ready for you. Go to him then, Dame, and fix your assignation. Away, I beg you, for I hear my Lady coming. [*Exit Alison.*] How can any mortal refuse to assist a fellow-creature in such a dreadful circumstance! There is no barbarity like a forced marriage. Such a wife is a perfect galley-slave; always in disagreeable, shocking company, and chained for life, to row one way and look another.

S C E N E H.

Myrilla, Bufy.

Myrilla. **T**O what purpose have I given myself all this trouble? I am convinced I shall see nothing but my winding-sheeb; and that must be a most horrid, shocking sight! Hark! Is not that a death-watch?

Bufy. 'Tis only the watch your Ladyship lent me to put you in mind of the hour.

Myrt. I vow, *Bufy*, the hour is so near, I tremble every joint of me. Well, what o'clock is it?

Bufy. It wants two or three minutes of twelve.

Myrt. The cake here is ready, prepared too by the infallible receipt. Every thing upon this table I hope remains untouched, and in the very place I left it. Take off the cover. So. Now every thing is in order.

Bufy. The ceremony is so near at hand, that it is now high time for me to leave you.

Myrt. Hold! Stay! I shall die if I am left alone. You shall not stir! I cannot support it.—Place yourself in the corner of the room. In that chair, yonder.

Bufy.

Bufy. But if, after the clock strikes twelve, one word should escape us, the whole charm is broken; and when we have any body to speak to, you know, Madam, words often slip from us without thinking. I'll be within call, Madam.

Myrt. I will have you stay. Sit you down in the place I bid you. Whatever you see or hear, say nothing.

Bufy. I know my duty, Madam; for to be sure, that woman does not deserve to serve a Lady, who cannot be deaf, dumb, and blind whenever it is convenient. Now I will say that for myself—*[The clock strikes twelve.*

[As the clock is striking, Myrtilla, by signs, stops the discourse. She retires step by step, and seats herself at the table in a melancholy posture. Bufy, in like manner, takes her post. Sir Harry Gauntlet enters, places himself in the chair over against Myrtilla; eats, and drinks; he then addresses her in dumb-show; she continues in the same posture; he now rises, approaches, and kneels.

S C E N E III.

Myrtilla, Bufy, Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Sir Harry. **I**N short, Madam, you see destiny will have it so. Love pleads for me, and the aspect of the Planets favour me. What must be, must be. If the Incantation restrain your tongue, consent with your eyes; I don't insist upon a verbal declaration. What! both your tongue and eyes under command! Are you a woman? This is supernatural! Is this delicate hand real? *[He offers to take her hand, she shrieks, and runs out of the room.*

SCENE

S C E N E. IV.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Busy.

Busy. **G**O, you unthinking creature; you have spoiled all. You had forgot you were a spirit.

Sir Harry. I'll follow her.

Busy. You will but make the matter worse. You will ruin the whole affair. What business had you to be talking?

Sir Harry. Why had you not told me so? One can never expect to gain upon a woman by silence, unless 'tis to let her talk without interruption; for women love to have talk always a going; when they are tired of talking themselves, they like to be talked to.

Busy. Hark! What noise was that?—As I live, the whole house is in an uproar. You will lose your mistress, your mistress her reputation, and I the reward you promised me. What shall we do?

Sir Harry. A good steady assurance may still impose upon her credulity. We may have another opportunity. Affirm, persist, that you neither saw or heard any thing. Superstition is inclined to believe what is improbable. In the mean time, I'll play the apparition and vanish.

Busy. Away! for company are coming in upon us.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

Myrtilla, Alison.

Myrtilla. **H**OW happy was it that you fell in my way! I was frightened to that degree—

Alif. Gracious! Madam, and what was the matter? Hath love committed burglary, and broken into your Bed-chamber? Sleeping or waking, to my thinking, a man is a good, convenient companion; believe me, precious, a husband will save you from all these frights.

Myrt. Bless me! Hold!—ah!—there he is again.

Alif. What? Where? Where is he? Gracious! Madam, you made me start.

Myrt. My dear Dame, I beg your pardon. It made so deep an impression upon me, that Fancy recalls my fears.

Alif. Do you see now, my dear Lady, these are some of the scare-crows that attend virginity. Whims, visions and vapours; just my case when I was a maid, as I hope for a help-mate!

Myrt. Busy. Where is the wench gone? *Busy! Busy!* where are you?

S S E N E VI.

Myrtilla, Alison, Busy

Busy. **M**ADAM.

Myrt. Where do you run? Why do you leave me? There is more vexation with these creatures! —I vow 'tis intolerable.

Exit.

Nay, friend, you may very decently pledge me, for by your own rule it must be a match.

Myrt. I tell you, I hate the fellow mortally.

Alif. So much the better for him, say I. He had better have your hate before marriage, than after; for the man, some time or other, must know a woman in all her humours.

Myrt. I had got the better of every passion but curiosity. Why did I revive this abominable creature in my imagination? There is a ring too in yonder snuff of the candle! How shall I get off from this affair?

Alif. A wedding one, by my troth! By that light, child, you must wear one!

Myrt. Do you believe then, Dame, that I must inevitably submit to this fortune?

Alif. Never take an aversion to the man before you are married to him. There is a time, Madam, for all things.

Myrt. But, perhaps, this may be all delusion, and my fancy may have imposed upon me.

Alif. By every thing you say or do, I see plainly you have man at heart; shew yourself a woman then, and follow your inclinations. But if you are still undetermined, here is now in the inn one of the most cunning men that ever drew circle; hear what he says. 'To be sure Madam, he foretold me two or three of my husbands, and described them to me to a hair. Lookye, bird, if you find him of a contrary opinion, you must do what none of us care to do, give up your own, and be married as soon as you can. Sure, Madam, you must have heard of Doctor *Astrolabe*!

Myrt. Many of my acquaintance have told me the strangest things of him! I own it would stagger me prodigiously, if his predictions to-morrow morning should tally with what I saw to-night. I really then don't know what I should do. Are all my things in order for going to bed? You will follow me, *Buffy*. Good night to you, Dame.

Alif. Sweet dreams, lucky omens, and happy predictions attend you honey! [Exit Myrtilia.

Buffy. As soon as I have put my Lady to bed, and can get away from her, under covert of her dress, you shall answer for her; and so Dame, I put Miss *Plowdon's* affair entirely under your management.

S C E N E VII.

Alifon, Doggrell.

Alifon. **L**ET me die if I don't like this young fool; and ten to one but in this adventure, I shall gain a double end, save *Florinda*, and serve myself.

Dog. You must pardon my impatience, Madam; for I cannot go to bed 'till I know the success of my poetry. Have you given her the verses?

Alif. She's won, she's charmed, she's thy own, my lad. As I hope for indulgence, she read them; like a lover. She languished; she sighed; she praised them; she repeated them; and she felt them to such a degree, that if I had not known they had been yours, I should have thought she had written them herself.

Dog. So then I may presume upon hope.

Alif. Upon certainty, my boy, if you pursue her in the way you ought. Poetical feet alone will never do. Why *Apollo* himself was forced to run Miss *Daphne* out of breath.—All women love a chase, and will twist and turn like a hare, though they resolve to be caught at last. By those little freaks and gambols they try whether their lovers be staunch, or not.

Dog. Every little circumstance touches the heart of a lover. Was she very inquisitive? Were you very particular and partial in your answers? I long to know the whole conversation.

Alif.

Alif. She asked at least above a hundred questions about you, before she had patience to stay for an answer; and I told her—Ah, *benedicite!* What did I not tell her! Gracious! Sure, Mr. *Doggrell*, I was almost in love with my own description. Now, as to men, you must know, there is no woman that knows me, but will take my recommendation. But, harkye, young man, let me know how you intend to answer your character? I have promised much for you, and if you do as you should, I know your youth with my experience must carry her. Tell me now how you mean to attack her?

Dog. In form, Madam. All great Ladies, I know, love form.

Alif. In public, I grant you, you can never treat her with too much of it; but in private, they will take it mortally ill of you, if you forgot they are women. *A tête à tête* puts us all upon the level, and love then is the only civility.

Dog. I doubt myself; for as yet I am but a novice in courtship.

Alif. Now, to my thinking, you seem so justly sensible of your own merits, that you can hardly want assurance.

Dog. But assurance may be interpreted as folly and insolence, and treated accordingly.

Alif. Never, stripling, when applied in proper season. With a competent stock of that, you can never be at a loss. Why, you would not, sure, put the woman to difficulties, and require it of her! Unless one of the parties have it, I pray you, which way can love go on?

Dog. May I hope then, Madam, for an interview?

Alif. Think of what she hopes from it.

Dog. But I fear my natural bashfulness.

Alif. Why then will you see her at all, and discredit yourself, and my recommendation! Raise your courage with a glass of wine, my lad, and don't be awkward.

ward. Go, do as I bid you; for I would fain have you make something of this affair. Does not an assignation at this secret hour of the night, give you a hint not to be too much upon the reserve? This at once puts you upon an easy footing:—if you distrust your own behaviour, drink yourself up to presence of mind, and, I'll answer for it, you win her.

S C E N E VHI.

Deggrell, Alifon, Busy.

Busy. MY Lady has a word or two to say to me in private, before she admits you, Sir.—So that I hope, Dame, you too will excuse me.—You'll find every thing ready for you in the next room.

[*Aside to Alifon.*

Alif. I cannot leave Mr. Deggrell in better hands; remember my advice, and don't be bashful. So, now I have delivered him over to your friendship, and good offices, I have, alack-a-day, nothing more to do but to go to bed and sleep.

[*Exit Alifon.*

Busy. As soon as my Lady is ready to receive you, I'll bring you word, Sir, and have the honour of introducing you.

Deg. Your civilities. Madam, are beyond recompence. I shall impatiently, Madam, attend your summons. In the mean time a bumper or two shall raise my courage, and inspirit my conversation. [*Aside.*

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

Busy, Alison.

Alison. **H**AVE you secured the door? I long to play off this fool, and save Miss *Plowdon*.

Busy. I always loved the girl, that's certain; but 'tis as much as my place is worth if my Lady should come to know of this frolic; so, my dear Dame, if ever any thing comes to light, you must take care to keep me out of the scrape.

Alif. Never doubt my discretion, Mrs. *Busy*.

Busy. So then—now, Dame, I'll prepare you for the part. Let me die, if I should care to put on the dress; I should be afraid it might prove ominous.

[*Dresses Alison in the veil.*]

Alif. There is nothing in-outward appearance, girl. A cloak and band do not make a man religious; nor a prudish look, nor a Nun's habit, make a woman chaste. Till now I was ever a plain-dealer. Every woman hath her frailties, and the sin of hypocrisy was very seldom mine; but a diligent woman, and a good housewife, must turn her hand to every thing.

Busy. You will be sure to bring me the dress to-morrow before my Lady rises.

Alif. Depend upon it Mrs. *Busy*, I shall be punctual in every thing.

Busy. Now then, Dame, if you are ready, I'll go and introduce your lover, and then to bed. I shall be impatient to laugh over this adventure with you to-morrow.

[*Exit Busy.*]

Alif. Those have a rare, easy, indolent time of it, to be sure, whose inclinations grow old with their constitutions; but that is not my case. I should have a

fine time of it, i'fackins, to let custum and the world be judges of my constitution, which, in troth, hath worn out two brace and a half of brave jolly husbands already, and is yet never the worse for it. Alack-and-well-a-day, that ever love was sin, say I! But hold; I must now suit my talk to the formality of my habit.

S C E N E X.

Alison, Busy, Doggrell.

Busy. YOU were in the right indeed, Sir, to finish your bottle. That last bumper will help to keep up the discourse, and give a spur to your gallantry. *Mr. Doggrell, Madam.*

Alif. Don't leave the candles flaring in my eyes—Set them upon yonder table.—When I want you, *Busy*, I shall call. But now I think on't you may go to bed. I shall want you no more to-night. [*Exit Busy.*] *Mr. Doggrell*, your servant.

Dog. The joy, the transport, the hurry of spirits, the wishes, the fears, that perplex a passionate lover, have quite disconcerted me. What shall I say? How shall I address you? *Madam—Madam—*I hope you will pardon my confusion, and—and——

Alif. I am sure I can hardly pardon myself. Don't you think me very odd, *Mr. D'Ogrelle* in trusting myself and you with such an uncommon visit? But I beg you, Sir, don't talk to me of wishes, fears, and hurry of spirits. Now you may think it all affectation; but I really can't abide all such sort of immodest expressions. I vow, *Mr. D'Ogrelle*, I think your verses charming; I wish you had chosen a more agreeable subject.

Dog. The verses, *Madam*, were none of mine. Love dictated them, I only transcribed them: In the attempt

attempt I may be censured as a poet, but ought to be excused as a lover.

Alif. But, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, how shall I excuse myself for this indiscretion? All you fine men are apt to put strange interpretations upon the little innocent liberties of women. I mortally hate myself now for what I have done. I know you must think me most monstrously ridiculous. But if you give it the most malicious turn, (as a woman would give it,) I blush to guess what you must think of me.

Dog. I'll tell you, Madam, sincerely what I do think of you. I see you as a lover, I think of you as a lover.

Alif. Oh! Dear Sir, don't think of me in that way, I beg it of you: And now we are alone, to talk to me of love too! I knew you were thinking of what you should not think of.

Dog. Since then you know my thoughts——

Alif. Why, sure you won't have the assurance to confess them! By your thinking this way of me, I know you must have a prodigious stock of vanity; for those men that have too good an opinion of themselves, have always too bad a one of women.

Dog. Nay, Madam; now you oblige me to explain myself.——If honourable love——

Alif. But, dear Sir,——consider we are alone. Consider too, that it is not proper and decent for a woman of my cloth to hear every thing. But when one hath done an indiscreet thing, one never knows where it will end. I vow, I wish I had never seen you.

Dog. What are you afraid of, dear Madam? What have you done?

Alif. Nay, I tremble only to think what you may do.

Dog. But sure, Madam, there are some little innocent liberties that are allowed in the most discreet addresses. For example, Madam, the liberty of glances was never denied a lover. Let this malicious cloud then no longer eclipse the sunshine of your beauty.

Alif.

Alif. Desist, I beg you. These liberties do not become you, Sir.

Dog. Why not become me, Madam? I shall behave myself like a Gentleman.

Alif. To tell one so too is very impudent. You know, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, that is a very impudent expression. I might, indeed, have expected all this.—But it is too late now.

Dog. My addressee, Madam, are honourable. My family, my estate, are by no means contemptible. I propose myself as a husband.

Alif. As a husband! That, indeed, is a very different behaviour. I vow I was horribly frightened, when you talk'd of behaving yourself like a Gentleman.

Dog. Consider the proposal, Madam. I hope, Madam, you are convinced that I love you.

Alif. Convinced! I don't know what you mean. Convinced! I am, sure Sir, I have allowed you no liberties.

Dog. By this hand, I swear I love you. [*Kisses it.*]

Alif. Really, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, you are monstrous rude. Let my hand go; do, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, now do.—I dare not make a noise at this time of night, and that, to be sure, you know by your behaviour.

Dog. You mistake me, Madam; my address is honourable.

Alif. You may be sure, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, whatever I think, I never shall tell you that I like you, therefore, pray, ask no more questions. Though, indeed, if I were inclined to marriage—But have done, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*; for I will not be asked any more questions about any such kind of thing.

Dog. In this room, Madam, our conversation may, perhaps, be overheard.

Alif. By no means, Sir—I vow I won't trust you in my bedchamber. Yet after all, 'tis disagreeable too to have all the world overhear our discourse. I take it for granted, Sir, you won't be rude.—But from a Nunnery

Nunnery to a husband, methinks, is too desperate a transition. If it were not so late—To-morrow—Well then—To-morrow I will allow you to talk to me—and so, Sir, good night to you.—What do you mean? I beg you, Sir, don't be impertinent.—I hate myself now for having so much curiosity—For once then I will trust myself to your civility;—For I must hear what you can say for yourself. Yet, I own, 'tis not very discreet of me.

There's double danger in an assignation;
Though we resist the man's sollicitation,
We're often lost by woman's inclination.

}



A C T IV.

S C E N E I.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, *Busy*.

Busy. DOCTOR *Astrolabe* will be here this minute; for my Lady appointed him in this room at this hour. I'll keep her from breaking in upon you till you have brib'd him to your interest. If this affair be rightly carried on (though she hath refused you so often) you have her; I know she will consent the first time you see her. I have expected you here with the utmost impatience. Your stay might have spoiled our whole scheme.

Sir Harry.

Sir Harry. I have been unluckily fastened upon by an impertinent University acquaintance, and it was with the utmost difficulty (he was so full of his amours and his poetry) that I got rid of him. And, at last, I was obliged to promise him a hearing, or he would have followed me.

Buſy. D'Ogrelle. Is not that his name?

Sir Harry. Ay, Doggrell.

Buſy. A most ridiculous conceited creature! I have not time now to tell you his story; for Doctor *Astrolabe*, I see, is coming. I'll keep my Lady off, to give you what time I can to prepare the scheme. Success attend you.

S C E N E II.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, *Astrolabe*.

Astrolabe. I Profess, I expected to have found a Lady. In order to wait upon you, Sir, I was forced to interrupt my studies. I do, indeed, sometimes wait upon Ladies in their own apartments; but the Gentlemen always come to mine. You took me off from calculating a great Lady's nativity; and the life of most Ladies is extremely perplexed and intricate. 'Tis a hard thing to trace them through all their unaccountable ways of life! And really, Sir, to tell what any woman will do, is a study exceedingly difficult, because even but an hour beforehand, 'tis what they themselves cannot tell you. Indeed, Sir, I was very sorry to be interrupted.

Sir Harry. But an interruption in a regular way, Doctor. Why the greatest lawyers and physicians are always ready to excuse this sort of interruptions.

[*Exes him.*]

Astro.

Astro. O dear, Sir!—This is what I never can take all from any gentleman. I am willing to oblige as far as lies within the circumference of my art, and especially a person who hath applied to me in so handsome a manner. Let me know how I can serve you. Propose your business.

Sir Harry. I know, Doctor, that you are provided with general answers for the common questions of your customers, and I grant you it should be so; 'tis in the way of business. But that is not my affair; I want your assistance as a friend.

Astro. You have the appearance of so much honour, Sir, that you cannot mean to draw me in to expose and betray myself. If you have any commands, let me know in what manner I can be useful to you.

Sir Harry. I must acquaint you then, Doctor; that I am in love with a lady who is entirely governed by superstition. 'Twas she that sent for you, to consult you about her marriage. What I want, Doctor, is to personate you, and to answer all her questions. I know the foretelling this match will make your fortune as well as mine, for you shall have all the credit of it.

Astro. I trust myself and my profession in your hands.

Sir Harry. As for the science, Doctor, I shall not disparage it. I have the twelve signs by heart, my memory is pretty well stocked with the cant phrases of Astrology, and I shall take care to be most learnedly unintelligible.

Astro. You know the science so thoroughly, Sir, that one would think you had made it your profession. This, Sir, in our way, I call my hieroglyphical Cap.

[Puts it on Sir Harry's head.]

This, Sir, is the wand of incantation.

[Gives him the Wand.]

It gives a charming, diabolical air to all the gibberish we utter; and when you have put on my gown, I have at once invested you with all my learning.

Sir Harry.

Sir Harry. But I should have a face too, proper to the habit. A beard and a pair of whiskers would give a magical turn to my countenance, and make my figure altogether more awful and solemn. Have you not a spare beard for a friend?

Astro. I have laid myself open to you, Sir, and shall confide in you in every thing. Rather than you shall be at a loss for so necessary a dignity, I will divest my own chin of its science. You now see a man reduced by extravagance, and skulking from his creditors. Other people have lived upon my follies, and now I am living upon the follies of others. To your post, Sir! the ladies are coming. If I am seen in this condition, I may be discovered; and, in this business, our reputation is as tender as a lady's; 'tis never to be regained, if ever we are found out.

S C E N E III.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtille, Busy, Alison.

Alis. WHY how now, Doctor! Don't you remember your old acquaintance? Good lack, good lack! you are most strangely altered.

Sir Harry. Watching and reading the stars, Madam, are studies that wear a man's constitution most consumedly. 'Tis not only women, you see, that are given to change, every thing is variable; kingdoms, friends, and fashions; all change.

Myr. Is your name *Astrolabe*, Sir?

Sir Harry. Yes, Madam, I am known and fought after by the name of Doctor *Astrolabe*. Germany had the honour of my birth, and *Scorpio* was ascendant at my nativity. I studied the occult sciences under an Egyptian necromancer. I was born an adept, and have done wonders from my cradle, for I am not only the seventh

seventh son, but the son of the seventh son. To give a sketch of my proficiency, your ladyship must observe—

Bufy. There was a stroke of art! your ladyship! How could he know she had a title? He must be a most prodigious great man to be sure.

Myrt. I won't have you talk, *Bufy*. Have done with your impertinent remarks, and be silent.

Sir Harry. My head, Madam, is a perfect celestial microcosm, like the concave and the convex of the heavens, lined with planets, and powdered with constellations. Let your question be within my cyclopede. But I love not to puzzle ladies with terms of art. Your business, Madam, is inscribed in your forehead, and the fates decree your happiness. Why will you oppose and struggle against your stars? For, do what you will, you must be happy at last.

Myrt. Since you pretend, Doctor, to be acquainted with my affairs, I suppose you are not a stranger to my name.

Sir Harry. Your ladyship's name (but questions of this kind are mere trifles;) let me see, it begins, ay, the first letter of it is an M. It will take up time; but if you will have me proceed, I could go through all the three syllables.

Myrt. You need not.—This is most prodigiously astonishing!—But, Doctor, my business, I pray?

Sir Harry. Your business, Madam, is now upon the crisis. Every thing that was retrograde, now tends to a happy conjunction. Your business, let me see, lies in *Aries*, *Taurus*, and *Capricorn*, that is to say, the signs of marriage.

Myrt. Then I am married, I presume, Doctor?

Sir Harry. I presume, Lady, you mean to mislead me. The matrimonial hour is nearer than you imagine. You are just now entering the house of marriage. Don't be concerned, Madam, there is nothing shocking in the appearance, for you are not married to him

VOL. III.

Y

yet.

yet. The man, Madam, who seems the most unlikely person in the world at present, will have you. But most marriages, indeed, at first have that appearance.

Myrt. Hath this unlikely gentleman, I pray, Doctor, ever made his applications?

Sir Harry. Last night, Madam——by the hour of his visit, it might be a dream, (but of this I will not be positive) yet last night, Madam, I affirm you saw him; and it will not be long, Madam, before you will see him again;—sooner than you imagine. Your house of marriage, indeed, is very uncommon, and almost incredible, for it begins in aversion, and ends in love. 'Tis to no purpose to hold out! for that very man must be your husband.

Myrt. Must be! I hate that *must be*. Sure, Doctor, you must think me of an unaccountable complying temper, and a very particular sort of woman, to do any thing because I must!

Sir Harry. Believe me, Madam, so many hours as you defend yourself from marriage, so many happy ones you strike out of the register of your nativity. As I told you before, Madam, your love is very particular, for it will strengthen by marriage.

Myrt. Why really, Doctor, as for the gentleman there are very few women but what would like him: But—nay—since you say I must—if ever he falls in my way—I shall not endeavour to set myself against him.

Sir Harry. Indeed, Madam, you had better be easy with the man you are to live with. I have performed my part. You know your fortune. So I say no more.

Myrt. If I must then give up all thoughts of a nunnery, 'tis a disappointment; but I'll try to bear it, and resign myself to matrimony. You must shew me to my company, Doctor; but, first, give me leave to return you thanks. [Fees him.]

[Exit Myrtilla. Sir Harry returns.]

Sir Harry. So: The ladies, at last, are all fairly disposed. Enter

Enter Astrolabe.

Astro. You have played the part, Sir, with so much judgement, that it must turn out to my reputation; and I think it cannot fail of answering all your wishes.

Sir Harry. For this fee, Sir, you are obliged to the lady. I hope my success will soon lay an obligation on me to reward you in a more particular manner.

Astro. We must remove from this room; you may more conveniently adjust yourself in mine. The landlord, I see, is coming this way, and company with him.

S C E N E V.

Spigot, Merit, Doggrell.

Spigot. **H**AVE but patience, dear Mr. Merit; the thing, I tell you, will do at last.

Merit. But which way, my good landlord, (granting she had inclination,) can she escape, or can I relieve her? *Plowdon* never leaves her alone a moment.

Enter Doggrell.

Dog. Sir, I beg your pardon. I have a little business with my landlord; I shall not detain him. May one talk before him? You know one would not truit every body. [To Spigot.]

Spig. You saw him with me last night. I'll be answerable for him. You are safe, Sir.

Dog. Nay, for that matter, the affair cannot be long a secret.

Merit. I hate to interrupt conversation.

Dog. And so do I. I vow you shall not stir. Excuse me, Sir; I have no scruple of speaking before you.

Merit. Or before any body.

[Aside.]

Y z

Dog.

Dog. The Lady, Mr. *Spigot*, hath consented.

Merit. Consented! 'tis impossible.

Spig. Consented, say you?

Dog. Fond of me to distraction, that's all!

Spig. But are you, Sir, as fond of her?

Dog. 'This very morning you will have good reason to think so. You seem to wonder at her, landlord.

Spig. No, Sir. I wonder at you.

Dog. You thought then I would not have pushed the affair so far as marriage.

Spig. Wonder at you! Why, all the world, Sir, will wonder at you. What! give up such an agreeable, such an honourable pursuit! and for *Plowdon's* daughter! Why, really, considering the fair way you were in last night, 'tis very astonishing.

Dog. You are out, landlord. What do you mean? Give up the pursuit, man! Why, I have caught her.

Spig. Is *Myrtilla*, then the lady you have been talking of?

Dog. 'The very same.

Merit. Sir, I wish you joy with all my heart.

Dog. Old *Plowdon* is but just gone from me. I talked to him in my rattling way, of my being to be married. The Put bit just like my landlord here, and is gone off very well satisfied that it can be with nobody but his daughter.

Spig. I shall have the honour, I hope, of providing your wedding dinner.

Dog. To be sure, my good landlord; and let it be a very handsome one. The old fellow's surprise and choler will be very entertaining; so that till then I beg you, gentlemen, to keep the secret. You will do me the honour I hope, Sir, to dine with me. [*To Merit.*] I have still time enough upon my hands before the happy hour. Would Sir *Harry Gauntlet* were in the way! For I must see him. You saw me, landlord, with a gentleman just now, who was called away upon business. Can you tell me where I may find him?

Spig.

Spig. I have not seen him since.

Dog. I must seek him out. You'll excuse me, Sir,
that I leave you so abruptly. (*Exit Doggrell.*)

Spig. You are perfectly easy now upon his account: your rival, you see, is disposed of. I'll make it my business, from time to time, to inform you how matters go, that the lady (when she takes her flight) may find her mate. Yonder is Mr. *Doggrell's* lady walking this way, in earnest conversation with her maid; as he hath no business with your mistress, I suppose you have none with his. Come with me, then, Sir: that you may be in the way: I'll shew you a convenient post, and then seek out for intelligence.

S C E N E VI.

Myrtilla, Busy.

Busy. **N**AY, dear Madam, excuse me! I persuade you to nothing. A match-maker is a very unthankful office. Serve your friend that way, and you always lose her; so I wash my hands of the whole affair. But so much I will say, that, to my thinking, any husband is better than a nunnery; for, be it as it will, you will then have frequent opportunities of pleasing yourself.

Myrt. As incredulous a thing as thou art, *Busy*, I am positive the Doctor must have convinced thee; and were I to see him, really I don't know—Yes I *do know* what would become of me. The creature is grown intolerably agreeable to me. Since I must live in the world, what have I to do with this dress? I hate hypocrisy. Have I no other cloaths with me? Don't be so prodigiously surprized, *Busy*; for I own I have changed my resolution.

Busy. Where, dear Madam, can be the surprize? for I have long known that no woman is tied down to a resolution. And, indeed, why should she? for as fast as she breaks one, she has the pleasure of making another. Then there's a sort of contradiction in it too, and self-contradiction is amusing enough—when a woman can get no better.

Myrt. But you don't answer me, *Busy*. Have I any thing with me besides these hideous dismal things to put on?

Busy. Yes, Madam, your ladyship's last new gown and petticoat. But I thought you so near a nunnery, that I looked upon them as my own. How uncertain are human expectations!

Myrt. I feel so forward and so impudent, that I vow I hate myself. Don't I blush, *Busy*? The fellow runs in my head strangely. I always thought that suit as becoming as any thing I have.

Busy. Your ladyship knows I always thought so.

Myrt. Really, after all, a nunnery is ridiculous. I know you think so. A woman only exposes herself by it; for 'tis telling the world her inclinations are so strong that she dares not trust them. 'Tis to no purpose to ask me his name; for I never will own it till I see him again. But I think 'tis impossible the thing can happen.

Busy. If 'tis the man you like best, I have a shrewd guess.

Myrt. Now without a joke, *Busy*, the whole thing is most prodigiouſly surprizing. Doctor *Astrolabe* promised he would renew his addresses in person, and very suddenly too. Now if this circumstance should agree with last night's experiment, what can a woman do? To be sure I must have him. The first time he proposes himself, I know I shall be horribly impudent, and consent. Hah!

S C E N E VII.

Myrtilla, Busy, Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Busy. **T**O be sure, Madam, I never saw an apparition before in all my life! Don't think it fancy, for I vow I see him as plain as if he were really alive. Heaven, blefs me, Madam, don't you see him? He's coming towards us. But now I see him nearer; don't be frighten'd, for 'tis only a man. 'Tis he himself.

Sir Harry. Do I dream still? Or hath fortune guided me to my wishes? May I presume, Madam, to give credit to my eyes, and call you *Myrtilla*?

Myrt. Who, after this, will ever call in question the truth of art-magic? Never was any thing so surprizing. You are not deceiv'd *Sir Harry*; my name is *Myrtilla*.

Sir Harry. Every thing concurs; every thing is prodigious. In the habit of a Nun too! From this hour I shall look upon dreams as sacred. Last night, Madam, after the fatigue of a stormy passage, I landed at *Dover*, and there in my sleep I saw you, I made love to you, I offered to kiss your hand; you snatch'd it from me, and flew out of the room; in struggling, and not being able to stir to pursue you, I wak'd; but after that Madam, in my morning-dream, I saw you kind and consenting; and your ladyship hath often told me, that morning dreams were always true.

Myrt. I hope you have breakfasted, *Sir Harry*; for I can't endure that any body should tell their dreams when they are fasting. Considering what hath happened to me, you must allow, *Busy*, this is wonderful. Destiny, indeed, seems to throw you in my way in spite of my resolution. You know, *Sir Harry*, it will be to no purpose to persist. As often as you have asked, you know you have had a refusal.

Sir Harry.

Sir Harry. I know, Madam, 'tis what you have very often offered me; and though you offer it again, I find in my heart I shall never take it.

Myrt. How can you, *Sir Harry*, be so provoking? Suppose I were weak enough to listen to you, could you be so barbarous as to hinder my vow? Would you seduce me from being a Saint?

Sir Harry. Why in so much haste, Madam? Be a Woman first, and think of that afterwards.

Myrt. And have you really, *Sir Harry*, thought of me while you were abroad? Now that is what I can have no notion of. You must imagine me very credulous, indeed, if you think to persuade me you have been constant in this long absence. I believe, in dreams, in fairies, in visions, in apparitions, and those things; but I am not such a fool to believe in Man, who I know is deceiving.

Sir Harry. All women are certainly in the right to insist upon constancy in a husband, for one of the two ought to have it; and why do we marry, but to supply each other's wants?

Myrt. You have surprised me in a mighty odd humour, and I fear I shall be very indiscreet. But I must and will tell it you. You must know then, the whim led me this morning to consult a fortune-teller, who appeared very zealous in your interest. He promised me happiness, and a world of fine things.

Sir Harry. He promised then as if he had known my inclinations. You know, Madam, 'tis what I have promised you a thousand times—Indeed, Madam, you'll find me responsible.

Myrt. Don't grow impertinent.

Sir Harry. How can you be so very cruel?

Myrt. Nay, dear *Sir Harry*, you see I am not so positive and so peremptory as I used to be; and is not that enough for you? But fortune will have it so, and it must come out at last; and so, *Sir Harry*,—you know what I mean.

Sir Harry.

Sir Harry. You will defer my happiness no longer.

Myrt. I won't say so; but I won't contradict you. Now you know my mind. If I had not given my word so hastily, to be sure I should never have done it. I hope, *Sir Harry*, I shall find you here. I cannot bear to be seen in this dismal, fusty way. You must excuse me for a minute or two; for I want to be dressed again like a christian. *Bufy*, follow me. You will be sure, *Sir Harry*, to be constant till I come back.

SCENE VIII.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Bufy, Doggrell.

Bufy. **T**HE affair is done. You have her. Clinch it while you may. Never take a woman's word when you may take the woman. [*Exit Bufy.*]

Sir Harry. She will have at least nine or ten minutes to change her mind, and that's a long while. I shall have good luck if she hold out. If I depended upon her temper alone, it would be impossible. All my hope and hold are in her superstition.—Was ever any thing so unlucky? Here's that pestering, teasing young fellow again. I shall be forced to affront him, to get rid of him.

Dog. Dear *Sir Harry*, your servant. I have been enquiring for you; I have been looking for you; and to find you quite disengaged from all business, is just now very lucky; for I hate to interrupt any body. *Sir Harry*, I must beg a favour of you.

Sir Harry. Upon my word, Sir, I have business.

Dog. But it is impossible it can be so pressing as mine. I want a friend, *Sir Harry*; but how can I say I want a friend, when I have found you?

Sir Harry. Nay pr'ythee, *Doggrell*—It can never be so pressing, but in the afternoon—in the evening it will be time enough.

Dog.

Dog. Do but hear me, Sir, and you will be convinced. Nay, you must hear me.

Sir Harry. Well, Sir——since I must.

Dog. I know you are secret. I must acquaint you then, Sir, that last night I fell in love, I address'd, and I vanquish'd.

Sir Harry. And what is all this to me, I pray you?—So you are married, and I am to wish you joy. Is not that the thing?

Dog. Promis'd, betroth'd, and all that; but I say no more. I am immediately going to give her personal security. The honour of having you, *Sir Harry*, a witness to the contract——

Sir Harry. At any other time I should not have refused you, but just now it is impossible; and you must excuse me.

Dog. That then I give up. But you must not deny me a minute or two, while I read a couple of stanza's that I wrote this morning. Metre subdued her, and metre shall maintain the conquest. Do, dear *Sir Harry*, comply with me; for I long to have your opinion before she sees them.

Sir Harry. At any other time you may command me.

Dog. Now, *Sir Harry*; dear *Sir Harry* now. 'Tis impossible a minute or two can be of that consequence. 'Tis a sort of an Ode of triumph: Your reading will do it justice. [Gives a paper.

Sir Harry. Ye Gods! Did *Jove* e'er taste such charms,
When prest in fair *Alcmena's* arms?
I'm sure it could not be!
A triple night would not have done:
He would have blotted out the Sun
Had he been pleas'd like me.

[Reads carelessly.

Dog.

Dog. Not so fast, I beseech you, Sir *Harry*. Mark the harmony and the easy cadence that warbles through the whole stanza.—

Ye Gods! did *Jove*, &c. [*Repeats affectedly, and follows Sir Harry, who appears very uneasy.*]

Soft as the *Italian*!—Then it starts into the Heavens. *Ye Gods!* perfectly *Pindaric*!

A triple night would not have done.

That *triple* is one of the most happy epithets: 'tis worth a whole poem of most of the modern Authors.

Sir Harry. You might spare your comment, Sir: for the beauties lie so superficially apparent, that there is no room for criticism.—So now, Sir, I hope you have done with me.

Dog. Nay 'tis but one stanza more. I am amazed you can have so little curiosity.

Sir Harry. In my own defence then! [*Aside.*]

Beneath the fable veil's disguise,
Had you not hid your killing eyes,
It had been worse for me.
My *Nun* had then appear'd like *Jove*,
I had been light'ning-struck for love,
And dy'd like *Semele*.

A *Nun*, Sir?

Dog. 'Tis always unsafe to trust any body with half a secret; for they then generally tell more than the whole. I wonder how I could be so unguarded. Since we are to be married, you know 'tis exposing nobody more than myself. You must have heard of a lady whose name is *Myrtilla*.—But don't you think the last stanza very prettily turned.

Sir Harry. No wonder she was in such haste to consent. [*Aside.*]

Dog. Is not the allusion to *Semele* elegant and genteel?
Sir Harry

Sir Harry. After what has passed, she is afraid the fool might fly off when he comes to the brink of marriage, and so the jilt would make sure of me. [*Afide.*]

Dog. How good poetry can strike a man of taste! quite rapt and lost in the sublime!

Sir Harry. This coxcomb has saved me from having every coxcomb in town for my friend; for they all like to put themselves upon an easy footing with the husband. [*Afide.*]

Dog. Nay, 'tis a pity to interrupt his admiration. Though I cannot have your company now, I hope, *Sir Harry*, you are not engaged to-day at dinner. You know 'tis upon a particular occasion, and you must not deny me. I take it for granted you will come——
Pardon me, Sir, for this intrusion. Your Servant.

S C E N E IX.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtille, Bussy.

Myrtille. **T**HAT is a hideous conceited fellow; I wonder how you could be entertained with him. I was too well-bred, you see, to break in upon the conversation.

Sir Harry. What an unaccountable mysterious creature is woman? [*Afide.*] Pray, Madam, how long has your ladyship been acquainted with that Gentleman?

Myrt. Last night was the first time I ever saw him.

Sir Harry. He told me indeed it was a very sudden acquaintance.

Myrt. How can you, *Sir Harry*, be so ridiculous to talk gravely about him? You know the fellow is a fool.

Sir

Sir Harry. You talk of fools, and with fools every day, Madam, without this violent flutter. What has discomposed you thus?

Myrt. You grow intolerable. I am glad you have shewn me such early proof of your temper and manners. What means the creature, *Bufy*? I am obliged to you, *Sir Harry*, for this ill-bred capricious behaviour; it hath saved me from having any more of it for the future.

S C E N E X.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Bufy.

Bufy. **I**Ndeed, I winked, I made signs; and all to no purpose. Seriously I believe you have ruined the whole affair. I never was more vexed in all my life. What could you mean by that provoking behaviour?

Sir Harry. Such an uncommon unaccountable jilt! For ought I know, you too may be an accomplice. After what passed last night, I would by no means prevent *Doggrell's* taking upon him the title of husband.

Bufy. You may remember, *Sir Harry*, that I hinted to you that I had something to tell you about that fool. All I have time to say now, is, that Dame *Alison* last night borrowed my Lady's habit of me out of a frolick, to impose upon him; and his folly and vanity hath now imposed upon himself and you too. O' my conscience she was in such a pettish way, that I fear she won't easily be reconciled.

Sir Harry. Though the fellow is a fool, she is a woman——And how could I know? What we fear, we are very apt to believe.

VOL. III.

Z

Bufy.

Bufy. How jealousy misleads, all young men! Beware of this same passion, I 'beg you, Sir, after matrimony. 'Tis a perfect ghost in a house that can never be laid.

Sir Harry. The thing will be only made worse by endeavouring to explain it: so, dear Mrs. *Bufy*, you must help me out.

Bufy. Upon my word, *Sir Harry*, it was too much. If you had been her husband and been used to her talk for twenty years together, you could not have seen and heard her with more indifference. But, be assured, *Sir Harry*, you shall always find a real friend in me.

Sir Harry. If a good convenient husband fell in your way, (I mean a rich one,) I think, my dear, you are not absolutely determined against matrimony.

Bufy. Why should I be more scrupulous than the rest of my sex? I have not vanity enough to risque myself and my lovers like a coquette. Should I neglect a good offer, the fate of an old maid might too late convince me of my folly.

Sir Harry. Mr. *Doggrell*, girl, is a man of an estate. The Nun he had an assignation with last night he is to marry this morning.

Bufy. Is it so then, Dame?—I was forced indeed to fetch the dress from her; and she would not part with it till I promised to dress her out again to-day to carry on the joke. No wonder the old lady was so zealous about it.

Sir Harry. Now if you will secure the habit, and give him a meeting, the habit will secure the man. I am sure the scheme is practicable, and I really think you should undertake it.

Bufy. And I really think so too. My good Dame, I find, has been a little too free in this affair; and for not trusting me, she deserves to be outwitted. While I have the habit in my possession, she cannot interfere with me. So I'll about it this moment. But here comes my Lady, and I dare not be seen with you. Curiosity

rusty will not let me go yet. I must listen ; for I long to hear how you will get over this affair.

S C E N E XI.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtille.

Myrt. IF I had thought you were here still, I assure you, Sir, I should not have returned this way so soon. Nay, never endeavour to excuse yourself, 'twill be to no purpose.

Sir Harry. I am unhappy, Madam, to be in disgrace with you ; but I can never think of excusing myself when I am not conscious that I ever offended.

Myrt. Which way then can you account for your behaviour ?

Sir Harry. That I had been conversing with a fool, and by remembering the conversation, had brought away some of his folly with me. His vanity talked in so familiar a way of you, that I wanted to give you a caution, and you thought I had ill opinion enough of you to believe him, and ill manners enough at the same time to reproach you.

Myrt. But don't you yourself think that your careless indifferent way must have surprized me most prodigiously ?

Sir Harry. When I knew my own thoughts and heart, I was surprized you could take any thing ill of me.

Myrt. I was determined never to forgive you—— But I am grown a changeling, I can determine upon nothing.

Sir Harry. Consider, Madam, destiny hath confirmed our marriage.——All you can do, is but to delay it.

Myrt. It would be more handsome and obliging, I confess, to make my love a present; yours may wear out too perhaps by tedious expectation. But, upon my word, Sir *Harry*, I can never say directly what you would have me.

Sir *Harry*. Let your heart then accompany your hand, and double the value of the gift by putting me in present possession.

Myrt. Nay, there's no pleasure in being obstinate, when one knows one shall bring nothing about by it.

Sir *Harry*. Let us readily and cheerfully then accept the fortune the stars have allotted for us.

Myrt. You find, Sir *Harry*, that I am not at my own disposal. *Bufy*! Where is the girl?

Enter Bufy.

Bufy. Madam!

Myrt. How can I be so ridiculous? I really begin to believe I am in earnest. Sir *Harry* is most abominably teasing; say what I will, I find he will persist—and since it is decreed——

Sir *Harry*. There is a Clergyman of my acquaintance in t'other room.

Myrt. Where is the creature going?

Sir *Harry*. You'll shew him to your Lady's apartment.

Myrt. Have I given you any orders?

Sir *Harry*. Give me leave, Madam, to attend you.

Myrt. Stay. [To *Bufy*.]

Sir *Harry*. From this hour I date my happiness.

Myrt. Well then——You may—— [To *Bufy*.]

Sir *Harry*. I shall be very impatient, Mrs. *Bufy*.

Myrt. Do what Sir *Harry* bids you. [To *Bufy*.]

[Exit Sir *Harry*, leading *Myrtilla*.]

Bufy. When one is resolved to do a rash thing, one would chuse to do it suddenly and inconsiderately, for
fear

fear of prevention ; one has always time enough to think of it afterwards. Money influences and governs us all. What is there but men and women will venture for it ? Ignominy, hanging, marriage. Well, till now I never thought I had so much courage. Which of us two now shall be first served, my lady or myself ? Servants have seldom any doubt upon this point. But since it is the last duty I shall do in place, (first of all, begging pardon of all servants whatsoever, from the highest to the lowest,) I will break through the rules of practice ; and for once

I'll act with zeal that never yet was shewn ;
First do my Lady's job, and next my own.



A C T V.

S C E N E I.

FLOWDON'S ROOM.

Flowdon, Hubert.

Flowdon. FATHER *Hubert*, this is very unkind of you——Nay pr'ythee, Father!——you must and shall hear me.

Hub. I am not asleep, master *Flowdon*. That wicked Chamberlain without doubt is an enemy to the Church, and it was in contempt of the function that he lodged me over the stables. What with the horses, the carriers, and the hostler, I had not a wink of sleep ; and I

was so angry, that for swearing and calling names I could not (as indeed I ought) spend the night in devotion.

Plowd. Believe me, Father, a cup of wine will refresh you——That was well done——Now I can talk to you. You must know then, *Frank* has complied, but my wench hath her mother's spirit, and is as obstinate as ever. You must bring her to reason. Talk to her; preach to her; frighten her. Of all men alive 'tis not for me to talk to her; why, a wench who will contradict no body else, will contradict her father. They are upon the same easy foot with a father, as a wife is with her husband——Do you mind me?

Hub. Dear Sir, I beg your pardon. [*Drinks.*]

Plowd. Hear me but a moment, father. Mark me: This then is the case; I have considered that while the ceremony of matrimony is administering, 'tis necessary the man and wife should appear to agree.—Nodding again, Father!

Hub. I hear you, Sir. Indeed, Mr. *Plowdon* it was only a nod of assent to what you were saying.

Plowd. Now, while you preach my daughter into obedience, I'll go and bring *Frank* hither; and the instant she consents, you shall nick them, slap-dash with the ceremony.

Hub. Slap-dash with the ceremony——I heard you, master *Plowdon*; and I shall exhort her to take a husband slap-dash with the ceremony.

Plowd. This key, Father, is the only security I have of her duty; and this, putting confidence in the strength of your virtue, I deliver into your possession.

Hub. Really, I never was more sleepy; but the fit is now over, and you may rely on my pious endeavours.

Plowd. As soon as I am gone, you will take the opportunity of talking with her; and, at my return with *Frank*, I hope to find her in a good disposition. Be watchful, be vigilant, Father; for I trust you with a woman.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

Hubert, Florinda.

Hubert. **T**O persuade a woman against her inclination! My negotiation will, I am afraid, be attended with some difficulties. Inclination is impregnable; it will hold out against the strongest attacks of eloquence and reason. Then, to persuade a young girl that her father knows what is most convenient for her; that it is undutiful to chuse a husband for herself; that she must love with discretion; that she must trust her father; that she must have no little private schemes of her own! Impossibilities, all impossibilities! I know the young hussy will in her heart only laugh at me. Yet, though the undertaking be desperate, we must discharge our duty. [Unlocks the door.]

Enter Florinda.

Hub. I hope, young Lady, you have no other objection to Mr. *Doggrell* but that he is of your father's proposing.

Flor. The fellow is a fool, I tell you, and I hate him.

Hub. Why you would not surely, child, chuse a husband for his wisdom! Consult the married women of your acquaintance, and they will tell you 'tis sometimes very inconvenient; you will be more liable to be found out. Obey your father's commands, young Lady, and you will have a better chance to command your husband——And so, Madam, you will consent that Mr. *Doggrell*——I beg your pardon, Madam——I was somewhat overtaken with sleep——I had not one wink
all

all night long——Drowsiness had almost broken the thread of my argument——As I was saying, Madam——

Flor. Sit you down, Father *Hubert*. Cheer up your spirits with a glass of wine. Your judgement, Sir, must tell you that love is an appetite that will not be governed by another's palate : and one so conversant in female confessions as you, must know that the combats of love and filial duty are very frequent. [*He nods.*

[*Fills to him again.*

You forgot your liquor, Sir.

[*He drinks.*

Hub. You talk very well, child, in the woman's way.——But I wish you would talk a little reasonably. [*Nods.*

Flor. What, refuse to pledge a woman !

[*She fills again.*

Hub. Bless me ! I had almost forgot myself again. [*Drinks.*] I am unmannerly I must confess. You may think what you please, but I affirm that disobedience is not only unbefitting, but sinful. [*Nods.*] Now a daughter not being a free agent——[*Nods.*]

[*She fills again.*

Flor. How, Father *Hubert*, is that your doctrine ? Are we born slaves, Father ? [*Very loud.*

Hub. I profess, Madam, you made me start.

Flor. You see the liquor stands before you still, Father. You always forget yourself.

Hub. If I were not very thirsty, I could have sworn I drank before [*Drinks.*] You say right, Madam. No, Madam, I beg pardon, you say wrong. [*Nods.*] But what was it you said ?——Obedience, or disobedience, or some such thing——I have drank already——don't awaken me.

Flor. He's fast. He snores delightfully. Father !——Father *Hubert*——all's safe——nobody at his own sermons could sleep more heartily——just out of one cage into another——So, now for my charming fellow ! The landlord is my friend, and shall direct

rest me to him. So.———Very sound! Sleep on
in peace. Adieu! [Exit.]

S C E N E III.

Hubert asleep, Plowdon, Grift.

Plowdon. **I**S not this vexatious, neighbour *Grift*? Is it not reasonable for a man to be in a passion with this provoking puppy? To be out of the way just at this instant! My cane trembles in my hand to be at him.———What a woundy deal of trouble do we fathers take to marry our daughters. And yet the hussies have not one bit of gratitude.

Grift. You should consider, master *Plowdon*, for all the trouble you take before marriage, they have all the trouble after.

Plowd. 'Tis not to be borne, neighbour *Grift*———And I take it unfriendly of you to persuade me to keep my temper.———But Father *Hubert* by this time may have brought my daughter to a better disposition.———What a dickins!———asleep! And the girl still confined to her closet!

Grift. Nay, Sir, I don't think Father *Hubert* so much in the wrong. He hath given her good advice, but would not trust her with it, without locking her up, that it might not be thrown away upon her.

Plowd. Furies! What is the meaning of this? Father *Hubert*,——Father *Hubert*,——Father *Hubert*.——

[Stamps.]

Hub. I beg your pardon, Madam, your reproof is just. I should indeed have forgotten to take my glass had not you put me in mind of it. [Tearns, and drinks.]

Plowd. What have you done with my daughter?

Hub. I, I, I.———

Plowd.

Plowd. What have you done with yourself?

Hub. I, I can't——

Plowd. Give me the key. Give it me.

Hub. Good-lack-a-day, and is it you, Sir?

[*Plowdon snatches the key, runs into the closet, and returns.*]

Plowd. Gone! Escaped! Plague! thunder and combustion! This is all roguery and contrivance. Answer me! What have you done with my daughter?

Hub. Nothing, master *Plowdon*, upon my word, nothing.

Plowd. Come, come, Father, I will have satisfaction in this affair. What have you done with my daughter, I say?

Hub. If there is any thing done, 'twas all her own doing; I know nothing of it; and indeed how could I, when I was asleep?

Plowd. Answer me you, you, you——Your function keeps me from using you as I ought, so I shall say nothing shocking or indecent.——You have, I fear, Father, been a rogue in this affair.——You know, I know you to be a rascal.——Were you bribed by her or her fellow,——or both? You treacherous, pimping——But I say no more.——Now is it not a hard case, neighbour *Grist*, that a man can't talk to these fellows in the style they deserve?——What is become of her? For I will know.

Hub. Is she gone then?

Plowd. Let me have no lying excuses. If you won't tell me when I speak to you civilly, you must take what follows; for I won't make myself sick, and smother my passion any longer for you nor any man alive. You hypocritical, pimping——but I forbear,——and you are witness, neighbour *Grist*, that I give no foul language. Are you dumb? Have you slept away invention? Have you never a lye awake? You must then still be asleep for certain.

Hub.

Hub. So you say she is gone. 'Tis somewhat unlucky, I grant you. Keep your temper. But who, I pray, is she gone with?

Plowd. Ay, who is she gone with? Who have you sold her to? Into what bawd's hands have you put her?

Hub. For shame, master *Plowdon*, talk more decently, I beg you.

Plowd. Answer me.—I will have an answer. Take notice, neighbour *Griff*, that I give him not one indecent expression, though the rascal deserves every thing one could say to him.

Hub. Pray, Sir, don't be scurrilous. 'Tis your and my misfortune, and we must make the best of it. I own I was asleep.

Griff. Nay, so far indeed, Father *Hubert* says true.—He really was asleep.

Plowd. Neighbour *Griff*, you lye, (excuse the expression.) 'Twas all dog's sleep. I am not to be bantered, Father. [*Walking about in a passion.*] I am not to be abused and imposed upon—Pimp! [*Walking.*] It would make a man mad to be tricked, bubbled, and laughed at by such an—impudent rascal.

Griff. You forgot yourself: only think, dear Sir, that I am to be witness for you; an impudent rascal is an indecent expression.

Plowd. Mind your own affairs, neighbour *Griff*. What is it to you what I call him? I am in a passion: I own it. And when a man is in a passion, expressions go for nothing, that you know; and you know too that he deserves much worse usage from my hands. You know it, I say, neighbour *Griff*.

S C E N E IV.

Plowdon, Grist, Hubert, Spigot, Alifon, Shipman.

Alifon. BLESS us all! what's the matter?
Spig. Mischief to be sure.

Shipm. They have fallen foul on one another, that's for certain.

Spig. Keep your temper. What has provoked you, dear Sir? Keep your temper.

Plowd. I'll keep it or not keep it, as I think fit. So, now you are answered, Landlord. [*Walks about muttering.*] An undermining deceitful dog!

Alif. But, master *Plowdon*, to my thinking, surely 'tis not worth while to be in a passion, if you keep it all to yourself. Now when we women fall out, we generally let our neighbours be the better for it.

Plowd. A son of a whore! [*Walks about muttering.*]

Alif. Gracious! What is the matter with the old Gentleman, goodman *Grist*?

Shipm. Mayhap the Gentleman may be like our captain, who swears and swaggers every now and then, with he does not know who, and he does not know why; only to show his authority.

Grist. To be sure he puts me in mind of my wife. Speaking to him does but make him worse. She would never cool if I did not leave her to herself.

Alif. Why really, goodman *Grist*, I must confess that was always my way too. And, say what you will, what men call good advice is very provoking.

Plowd. My daughter, Dame——

Alif. Ay, to be sure: I knew by the violence of your passion it could only be with a wife or a daughter, or some special good friend.

Plowd.

Plowd. I am cool, Dame, and you may talk to me now——My daughter, as I was saying, hath been seduced by that son of a——I was almost provoked to let slip a hasty expression, or so.——My daughter, Dame, is inveigled, and run away.

Alif. If that is the case, you had better reserve your passion for some more convenient opportunity, and look for your daughter.

Plowd. Let it be your care neighbour *Griff*, to find me out *Doggrell*; myself, with my Landlord and his friend, will pursue the wench. And my good Dame in the mean time shall pump intelligence out of that prevaricating——out of Friar *Hubert*. As a woman, Dame, you must understand somewhat of prevarication, and you can deal with him in his own way. At him, Madam! Do what you can for me. We'll soon be with you again.

S C E N E V.

Alison, Hubert.

Alison. IF he finds his daughter, 'tis my opinion, he will find one with her who had found her before. But what's all this to me? I have affairs of my own upon my hands. That Mrs. *Buffy* could not be found is very provoking. This is the first time I ever bilked an assignation. If I could have got the habit, by this time I had secured my man; inclination was ready; nothing but that was wanting. Gracious! Father *Hubert*, I never once thought of you.

Hub. Ah! Dame, if ever a man deserved excommunication——

Alif. Nay, for that matter, Father, if you have let the young wench escape, I should not have the worse
VOL. III. A opinion

opinion of you. Why, sure, you should succour the distressed. Gracious! now, only think of the good you may have done. By saving the girl from being married against her consent, you may have saved her from giving her husband daily provocations, and her husband from thousands of daily oaths: You may have kept him and his estate from being eaten out by harlots, and her from variety of adulteries——You may, sure, have done much good by it.

Hub. But I have not done it, I tell you, Dame. I know nothing of her escape. And so I leave you all in your errors.

S C E N E VI.

Alison, Doggrell, Busy.

Doggrell. **S**O, the ceremony is over, and I am happy.
Busy. It will be the pleasure of my life to make you so.

Dog. Upon the first discovery of my marriage the old fellow may be brutal; and an unmannerly word to your Ladyship may provoke me. So, dear Madam, for a minute or two keep out of sight, and let me stand the brunt of his anger alone. [*Busy in the Nun's dress retires.*] I thought to have found the old Put my guardian here. My good Dame, I am infinitely obliged to you.

Alis. Nay, don't be out of hope. She was disappointed to the last degree, that she could not keep her assignation. Gracious, Sir! I was as much vexed, sure, as you could be for your life. And she bade me tell you——

Dog. But hold, Dame! Here comes *Plowden*.

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

Alison, Doggrell, Busy, Plowdon, Spigot, Grist, Shipman.

Plowdon. SO, neighbour *Grist*, you could, it seems, learn no tale or tidings of him. But he's here, I see. Now, are not you a puppy, *Frank*? Had you been in the way, all my care by this time had been over. Did not you promise me that you would make an end of this affair, and marry?

Dog. I won't suffer these liberties, Sir; and so, Sir, I venture to tell you boldly that I am married.

Plowd. 'Tis all over then. I forgive thee, boy, and am heartily glad 'tis no worse. Had you invited me to the wedding, you might have saved me from an ocean of passion. But where, *Frank*, is my wench? My anger is blown over; 'twas an innocent whim, and I forgive you both.

Alif. Gracious! And what is become of my affair all this while? This young fellow's proceeding (to my thinking) is somewhat unaccountable. [*Aside.*]

Dog. Now, Sir, as a proof that I am married, this is my Lady, I know nothing of your daughter, and I don't value your anger a rush. The law shall give me my own; and so, Sir, your servant.

Plowd. Where will this end? Mankind is in a combination against me.——I'm dumb. I shall burst.

Alif. And are you married then, Lady? Gracious! Madam, to be sure I never was so surprized at any thing in all my life!

Busy. 'Tis to no purpose now to conceal myself. The thing must come out. Don't you know me then, Dame?

Alif. 'Slidikins! Mrs. *Buffy*! I am finely jilted, I find! to take the advantage of an old woman too! Was this well done, Mrs. *Buffy*?

Dog. What do you mean, Madam? Who are you talking to?

Alif. To your wife, you say.

Dog. To a woman of rank and distinction.

Alif. To the woman of a woman of rank and distinction. Why, you are bit, fool. Look upon her, and be convinced. Since the thing is done, shew thyself, girl, and put it out of dispute. 'Tis good to have witnesses in these matters. When a man is in the case, the women, sure, stick at nothing; and I can't blame the girl. Mrs. *Deggrell*, I wish you joy with all my heart.

Dog. A chambermaid!

Buffy. Till you did me the honour to take me out of that condition. I shall always, Sir, with gratitude remember the obligation.

Dog. And is it to you, my good Dame, that I am obliged for this eternal disgrace?

Alif. After what you have done by me, Madam, I am sure I of all womankind ought not to give you a recommendation; but when a thing is over — I always love to take the good-natured side. Let me tell you, Mr. *Deggrell*, though by her circumstances she was reduced to service, she is very well born, and never the less a gentlewoman.

Phred. Now that this puppy is made a fool of, is some sort of satisfaction. — My daughter was not well enough born for you, coxcomb?

Alif. Things have taken their turn, you see, in spite of us. This young fellow hath play'd the fool without your approbation. Your daughter too, take my word for it, wherever she is, hath done something or other without your approbation too. So, by the way of a frolic or so, why should we not divert ourselves? What think you, my heart of oak, have not I a bonny complexion?

plexion? Nay, look upon me, I have a face like an ancient medal, antiquity does but add to its value. Revenge yourself by your own marriage, and baulk all their contrivances.

Plowd. And so have the revenge light upon my own head too.—I wish women would be less impertinent.

S C E N E VIII.

Alison, Deggrell, Bussy, Plowdon, Spigot, Grist, Shipman, Merit, Florinda.

Plowdon. **A**Y, yonder the jade comes, and the fellow with her! She thinks now 'tis nothing but to ask blessing and have it. I can't bear the sight of the hussy.

Flor. Your pardon, Sir.

Plowd. You shall starve—you jade.

Merit. Your forgiveness and blessing, Sir.

Plowd. You shall be hanged—you dog—A blessing! a halter!

Alif. Nay, but master *Plowdon*—

Plowd. Furies! I'll hear none of you—I hate you all.

Alif. Be calm; dear, good Sir, have patience.

Plowd. Was there ever such an unreasonable request! A woman now with half the provocation would be ten times as angry as I am.—My blessing! A halter, a halter, a halter! [Exit *Plowdon*.]

S C E N E IX.

Alison, Doggrell, Bussy, Spigot, Grift, Shipman, Merit, Florinda, Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtila.

Alison. **S**IR Harry Gauntlet and Myrtila! Gracious! who would have thought it? Every body provided for but me! This is very hard now. But I have had my husbands, and buried my husbands; and what can any woman wish more? So I must even be content.

Myrt. My dear *Florinda*, I wish you joy. I was impatient, child, to see you so happy as I know you must be at this instant; and I know it will add to your pleasure to see me happy. There is no opposing fatality. Sir *Harry* has succeeded at last, and I am married, child. Now are not you mightily surprized?

Sir Harry. Seriously, Mr. *Doggrell*, I know her to be a Gentlewoman. She hath a taste too of poetry, and she herself writes very prettily. Believe me, she will prove a very agreeable companion. I know my wife will think herself happy in the continuance of Mrs. *Doggrell's* friendship, as I shall in my improving my acquaintance with you.

Flor. Never think of it, Madam—'tis not to be done—my father was so outrageous, and is so positive, a reconciliation is impossible.

Sir Harry. I have some interest with him. Upon the first occasion it shall all be employed in your service.

Enter a Drawer.

Draw. The Pilgrims, Ladies in the next room are preparing for a dance. If you like it, with your leave, they will come among you, and will be glad that you would join in the entertainment.

Grift. By all means, by all means.

Myrt. It will be very agreeable and obliging.

A DANCE.

A D A N C E.

Alif. Now, Madam, is not this better than being a Nun? To be caged in a convent for life, and made a Priest's singing-bird! But women have a tendency to what is good—I always thought so.

Sir Harry. Or a tendency to superstition.

When superstition hath the mind engross'd,
Judgment is laid asleep, and reason lost;
By fancy'd omens we have joy and sorrow,
Sit moaped at home, or gad abroad to-morrow;
By that we sink our joys, our fears enhance,
And all we do, is right or wrong by chance.
But shall I censure visionary schemes?
Myrilla, no.—I thank your stars and dreams.

Alif. And with good reason, in troth! Besides, let me tell you *Sir Harry*, you may call it superstition, or what you will—I do insist upon it, as I said before, that we women, sure, have a tendency to what is good.

For through the sex this pious humour runs;
Were there no men, all women would be Nuns.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

Buffy. By your Ladyship's looks, I thought you just falling into a fit, so I ran out to fetch cold water, strong water, your smelling-bottle or any thing.

Myrt. You saw him, I suppose, *Buffy*?

Buffy. What, Madam?

Myrt. The apparition.

Buffy. The apparition! Dear Madam, it must be all fancy, for I neither saw nor heard any thing.

Myrt. 'Tis wonderful! 'Tis prodigious strange!

Alif. Bless us all! An apparition, said you?

Buffy. I did indeed observe the candle of a blueish colour; and the room still smells a little of brimstone.

Alif. For certain, there is a kind of a sulphureous smell. Strong! very strong! gracious! don't you smell it, Madam?

Myrt. You seem frightened, Dame.

Alif. To be sure, Madam, I never saw any thing worse than myself in all my life. Frightened, said you? Alack-a-day! all my skittish days are over. When I was young, indeed, like other young girls, I thought fear very becoming; and I had then, Madam, though I say it, a very genteel scream.

Myrt. But, dear Dame, how can you talk so? Only think of an apparition, Madam! A manifest, plain apparition!

Alif. All this, believe me, comes of lying alone; and to be sure, 'tis a most fearful thing to lie alone! If you can get over the dread of marriage, take my word, the best cure for fear, is a husband.—What have we here! A cake, a bottle of wine, and St. *Agnes's* night too! Are these your pranks, Madam? 'Twas a ghost, my dear, I perceive of your own raising.

Myrt. Your contradicting my former fortune, Dame, drew me in to make this experiment.

Alif. And how do you like him? By your scream, one would have thought it had not been only the shadow of a man. Come, honey, here's to his health.

Nay!