

The City-Heiress: or, Sir Timothy Treat-all. A Comedy. By Mrs A. Behn. London, 1682. Adapted for The Canterbury Commemoration Society by Elaine Hobby and Stewart Ross, from Rachel Adcock's edition for Cambridge University Press.

This modernised text was produced by Elaine Hobby from the edition by Rachel Adcock for Volume III of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Aphra Behn*, and used by the Canterbury Commemoration Society as the basis for a script Stewart Ross made for a public reading in St Peter's Anglican Church, Canterbury in 2024. In modernising it, Elaine largely updated spelling and punctuation, but also occasionally substituted modern words for 1682 ones. As long as this origin is acknowledged, anyone is welcome to use this script for any purpose, but a 1681 copy must be checked if accuracy is essential.

Behn dedicated the published version of this play to Henry Howard (1655-1701), later Duke of Norfolk, saying that she had, since childhood, admired this noble family. This dedication was probably occasioned by the fact that he was steward of the Honourable Artillery Company, and so in charge of organising a feast for James, Duke of York (the later James II). She says that the play 'has the luck to be well receiv'd in the Town; which (not from my vanity) pleases me'. The play's prologue, attributed to Behn's fellow-playwright, Thomas Otway, which laments 'How vain have proved the labours of the stage', is here omitted.

CHARACTERS

Sir Timothy Treat-all	An old, seditious knight that keeps open house for Whigs.
Tom Wilding	A Tory. His discarded nephew.
Sir Anthony Merriwill	An old Tory knight of Devonshire.
Sir Charles Merriwill	Sir Anthony's nephew, a Tory also. In love with Lady Galliard, and Wilding's friend.
Dresswell	A young gentleman, Wilding's friend.
Fopington	A hanger-on on Wilding.
Jervice	Man to Sir Timothy.
Footmen, musicians, etc.	
Lady Galliard	A rich City widow, in love with Wilding.
Charlot	The City heiress, in love with Wilding.
Diana	Mistress to Wilding, and kept by him.
Mrs Clacket	A City bawd and Puritan.
Mrs Closet	Woman to Lady Galliard.
Mrs Sensure	servant in Sir Timothy's house

SETTING: within the walls of the City of London.

The City Heiress; or, Sir Timothy Treat-all.

Act I, scene 1. *The Street.*

Enter Sir Timothy Treat-all, followed by Tom Wilding, bare-headed, Sir Charles Merriwill, Fopington, and footman with a cloak.

SIR TIMOTHY Trouble me no more. For I am resolved, deaf and obdurate, d'ye see, and so forth.
WILDING I beseech ye, uncle, hear me.
SIR TIMOTHY No.
WILDING Dear uncle ...
SIR TIMOTHY No.
WILDING You will be mortified ...
SIR TIMOTHY No.
WILDING At least, hear me out, sir.
SIR TIMOTHY No, I have heard you out too often, sir, till you have talked me out of many a fair thousand.
Have had ye out of all the bailiffs', serjeants', and constables' clutches about Town, sir. Have brought ye

out of all the surgeons', apothecaries', and pocky-doctors' hands that ever pretended to cure incurable diseases. And have crossed ye out of the credit-books of all the mercers, silk-men, exchange-men, tailors, shoemakers, and seamstresses, with all the rest of the unconscionable City tribe that allow large credit, that had but faith enough to trust, and thought me fool enough to pay.

SIR CHARLES But, sir, consider. He's your own flesh and blood.

SIR TIMOTHY That's more than I'll swear.

SIR CHARLES Your only heir.

SIR TIMOTHY That's more than you or any of his wise associates can tell, sir.

SIR CHARLES Why his wise associates? Have you any exception to the company he keeps? This reflects on me and young Dresswell, sir, men both of birth and fortune.

SIR TIMOTHY Why, good Sir Charles Merriwill, let me tell you, since you'll have it out, that you and young Dresswell are able to debauch, destroy, and confound all the young imitating fops in Town.

SIR CHARLES What, sir!

SIR TIMOTHY Nay, never huff, sir. For I have six thousand pound a year, and look up to no man. Neither do I speak so much for your particular, as for the company you keep, such tarmagant Tories as these (*indicates Fopington*), who are the very vermin of a young heir, and, for one tickling, give him a thousand bites.

FOPINGTON Death! Meaning me, sir?

SIR TIMOTHY Yes, you, sir. Nay, never stare, sir. I fear you not. No man's hectoring signifies this (*snaps his fingers*) in the City, except the constable's. Nobody dares be saucy here, except it be in the king's name.

SIR CHARLES Sir, I confess he was to blame.

SIR TIMOTHY Sir Charles, thanks to heaven, you may be lewd. You have a plentiful estate, may whore, drink, gamble, and play the devil,. Your uncle, Sir Anthony Merriwill, intends to give you all his estate, too. But for such sparks as this (*indicates Dresswell and Wilding*) and my fop in fashion here, why, with what face, conscience, or religion can they be lewd and vicious, keep their wenches, coaches, rich liveries, and so forth, who live upon charity, and the sins of the nation?

SIR CHARLES If he have youthful vices, he has virtues, too.

SIR TIMOTHY Yes, he had. But I know not you have bewitched him amongst ye (*weeping*). Before he fell to Toryism, he was a sober, civil youth, and had some religion in him. Would read ye prayers, night and morning, with a laudable voice, and cry 'Amen' to 'em. 'Twould have done one's heart good to have heard him. ... Wore decent clothes. Was drunk only on fasting-nights, and swore only on Sundays and holidays. And then I had hopes of him. (*Still weeping.*)

WILDING Aye, heaven forgive me.

SIR CHARLES But, sir, he's now become a new man, is casting off all his women, is drunk not above five or six times a week, swears not above once in a quarter of an hour, nor has not gambled this two days. ...

SIR TIMOTHY 'Twas because the devil was in his pocket, then.

SIR CHARLES ... Begins to take up at coffee-houses, talks gravely in the City, speaks scandalously of the government, and rails most abominably against the Pope and the French king.

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, aye, this shall not wheedle out of me one English guinea. And so I told him yesterday.

WILDING You did so, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY Yes. By a good token, you were witty upon me, and swore I loved and honoured the king nowhere but on his coin.

SIR CHARLES Is it possible, sir?

WILDING God forgive me, sir. I confess I was a little overwhelmed.

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, so it should seem. For he mistook his own chamber, and went to bed to my maid's.

SIR CHARLES What! To bed to your maid's! Sure, sir, 'tis scandal on him.

SIR TIMOTHY No, no, he makes his brags on it, sir. Oh, that crying sin of boasting! Well fare, I say, the days of old Oliver Cromwell. He, by a wholesome Act, made it death to boast. So that then, a man might whore his heart out, and nobody the wiser.

SIR CHARLES Right, sir, and then the men passed for sober, religious persons, and the women for as demure saints ...

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, then there was no scandal, but now they do not only boast what they do, but what they do not.

WILDING I'll take care that fault shall be amended, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, so will I, if poverty have any feats of mortification. And so, farewell to you, sir. *(going.*

WILDING Stay, sir. Are you resolved to be so cruel then, and ruin all my fortunes now depending?

SIR TIMOTHY Most religiously ...

WILDING You are?

SIR TIMOTHY I am.

WILDING Death, I'll rob.

SIR TIMOTHY Do, and be hanged.

WILDING Nay, I'll turn Papist.

SIR TIMOTHY Do, and be damned.

SIR CHARLES Bless me, sir, what a scandal would that be to the family of the Treat-alls!

SIR TIMOTHY Hm! I had rather indeed he turned Turk or Jew, for his own sake. But as for scandalizing me, I defy it. My integrity has been known ever since 1641. I bought three thousand a year in bishop's lands, as 'tis well known, and lost it at the king's return. For which I'm honoured by the City. But for his farther satisfaction, consolation, and destruction, know, that I, Sir Timothy Treat-all, knight and alderman, do think myself young enough to marry, d'ye see, and will wipe your nose with a son and heir of my own begetting, and so forth. *(going away.*

WILDING Death! Marry!

SIR CHARLES *(To Wilding)* Patience, dear Tom, or thou'lt spoil all.

WILDING *(Aside to Sir Charles)* Damn him, I've lost all patience, and can dissemble no longer, though I lose all. ... *(Aloud)* Very good, sir. Hark ye, I hope she's young and handsome. Or if she be not, amongst the numerous, lusty-stomached Whigs that daily smell out your public dinners, some may be found, that either for money, charity, or gratitude, may requite your treats. You keep open house to all the Whig party, not for mirth, generosity, or good nature, but for roguery. You cram the brethren, the pious City gluttons, with good cheer, good wine, and rebellion in abundance, gormandizing all-comers and -goers, of all sexes, sorts, opinions, and religions. Young, half-witted fops, hot-headed fools, and malcontents. You guttle and fawn on all, and all in hopes of debauching the king's liege-people into Whigs. And rather than lose a convert, you'll pimp for him. These are your nightly debauches. ... Nay, rather than you shall fail to do it, I'll cuckold you myself in pure revenge.

SIR TIMOTHY What! Cuckold his own natural uncle!

SIR CHARLES Oh, he cannot be so profane.

WILDING Profane! Why, he denied just now the having any share in me. And therefore, 'tis lawful. I am to live by my wits, you say, and your old, rich, good-natured cuckold is as sure a revenue to a handsome younger son, as a thousand pound a year. Your tolerable face and shape is an estate in the City, and a better bank than your six per cent interest-rate at any time.

SIR TIMOTHY Well, sir, since Nature has furnished you so well, you need but up and ride, show and be rich. And so, your servant, witty Mr Wilding. *(Goes out. Wilding looks after him.*

SIR CHARLES *(Aside)* Whilst I am labouring another's good, I quite neglect my own. This cursed, proud, disdainful Lady Galliard is ever in my head. She's now at church, I'm sure, not for devotion, but to show her charms, and throw her darts amongst the gazing crowd, and grows more vain by conquest. I'm near the church, and must step in, though it cost me a new wound. *(Stands, pausing.*

WILDING I am resolved ... Well, dear Charles, let's sup together tonight, and contrive some way to be revenged of this wicked uncle of mine. I must leave thee now, for I have an assignation here at church.

SIR CHARLES Hah! At church!

WILDING Aye, Charles, with the dearest she-saint and, I hope, sinner.

SIR CHARLES What, at church? *(Aside)* Pox, I shall be discovered now in my amours. *(Aloud)* That's an odd place for love-intrigues.

WILDING Oh, I am to pass for a sober, discreet person to the relations. But for my mistress, she's made of no such sanctified materials. She is a widow, Charles, young, rich, and beautiful.

SIR CHARLES *(Aside)* Hah! If this should prove my widow, now!

WILDING And, though at her own dispose, yet is much governed by honour, and a rigid mother, who is ever preaching to her against the vices of youth, and t'other-end-of-the-Town sparks. Dreads nothing so

much as her daughter's marrying a villainous Tory. So, the young one is forced to dissemble religion, the best mask to hide a kind mistress in.

SIR CHARLES *(Aside)* This must be my Lady Galliard.

WILDING There is, at present, some ill-understanding between us. Some damned, honourable fop lays siege to her, which has made me ill-received. And I, having a new intrigue elsewhere, return her cold disdain. But now and then, she crosses my heart too violently to resist her. In one of these hot fits I now am, and must find some occasion to speak to her.

SIR CHARLES *(Aside)* By heaven, it must be she! ... *(Aloud)* I am studying, now, amongst all our she-acquaintance, who this should be.

WILDING Oh, this is of quality to be concealed. But the dearest, loveliest hypocrite, white as lilies, smooth as rushes, and plump as grapes after showers. Haughty her bearing, her eyes full of disdain, and yet bewitching sweet. But when she loves, soft, witty, wanton, all that charms a soul, and but for now and then a fit of honour (oh, damn the nonsense!) would be all my own.

SIR CHARLES *(Aside)* 'Tis she, by heaven! *(Aloud)* Methinks this widow should prove a good fortune to you, as things now stand between you and your uncle.

WILDING Ah, Charles, but I am otherwise disposed of. There is the most charming young thing in nature fallen in love with this person of mine, a rich City heiress, Charles. I have her in possession.

SIR CHARLES How can you love two at once? I've been as wild, and as extravagant, as youth and wealth could render me, but ne'er arrived to that degree of lewdness to deal my heart about. My hours, I might, but love should be entire.

WILDING Ah, Charles, two such bewitching faces would give thy heart the lie. ... But love divides us, and I must into church. Adieu till night. *(Exit Wilding.)*

SIR CHARLES And I must follow, to resolve my heart in what it dreads to learn. Here, my cloak. *(Takes his cloak from his man, and puts it on)* Hah, church is done! See, they are coming forth!

Enter people across the stage, as from church. Amongst them Sir Anthony Merriwill, followed by Sir Timothy Treat-all.

Hah, my uncle! He must not see me here. *(Throws his cloak over his face.)*

SIR TIMOTHY What? My old friend and acquaintance, Sir Anthony Merriwill!

SIR ANTHONY Sir Timothy Treat-all!

SIR TIMOTHY Whe! How long have you been in Town, sir?

SIR ANTHONY About three days, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY Three days, and never came to dine with me! 'Tis unpardonable! What, you keep close to the church, I see. You are for the surplice, still, old orthodox you. The times cannot amend you, I see.

SIR ANTHONY No, nor shall they mar me, sir.

SIR CHARLES *(Aside)* They are discoursing. I'll pass by. *(Exit Sir Charles.)*

SIR ANTHONY As I take it, you came from church, too.

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, needs must, when the devil drives. I go to save my bacon, as they say, once a month. And that, too, after the porridge is served up.¹

SIR ANTHONY Those that made it, sir, are wiser than we. For my part, I love good, wholesome doctrine that teaches obedience to my king and superiors, without railing at the government, and quoting scripture for sedition, mutiny, and rebellion. Why, here was a jolly fellow this morning made a notable sermon. By George, our country vicars are mere scholars to your gentlemen town-parsons! Hah, how he handled the text, and analysed it! 'Twould make a man sin with moderation, to hear how he clawed away the vices of the Town, whoring, drinking, and conventicling, with the rest of the deadly number.

SIR TIMOTHY Good lack! If he were so good at whoring and drinking, you'd best carry your nephew, Sir Charles Merriwill, to church. He needs a little documentising that way.

SIR ANTHONY Hm! You keep your old wont still. A man can begin no discourse to you, even of Prester John,² but you still conclude with my nephew.

¹ **after ... served up:** arriving in time to miss hearing the Book of Common Prayer, sometimes called pottage, or porridge by Puritans, because it resembled something dull and turgid.

² **Prester John:** a derogatory name for Whig nonconformists derived from that of the Christian king of Ethiopia.

SIR TIMOTHY Good Lord! Sir Anthony, you need not be so purty. What I say, is the discourse of the whole City – How lavishly you let him live, and give ill examples to all young heirs.

SIR ANTHONY The City! The City's a grumbling, lying, dissatisfied City, and no wise or honest man regards what it says. Do you, or any of the City, stand bound to his scrivener or tailor? He spends what I allow him, sir. His own. And you're a fool, or knave, choose ye which, to concern yourself.

SIR TIMOTHY Good lack! I speak but what wiser men discourse.

SIR ANTHONY Wiser men! Wiser coxcombs. What, they would have me train my nephew up, a hopeful youth, to keep a merchant's book. Or send him to chop logic in a university, and have him return an arrant, learned ass, to simper, and look demure, and baulk at oaths and wenches, whilst I fell his woods, and grant leases. And lastly, to make good what I have cozened him of, force him to marry Miss Crump, the ill-favoured daughter of some right worshipful. ... A pox of all such guardians.

SIR TIMOTHY Do, countenance sin and expences, do.

SIR ANTHONY What sin? What expences? He wears good clothes. Why, tradesmen get the more by him. He keeps his coach. 'Tis for his ease. A mistress, 'tis for his pleasure. He gambles, 'tis for his diversion. And where's the harm of this? Is there aught else you can accuse him with?

SIR TIMOTHY Yes. ... *(Aside)* A pox upon him, he's my rival, too. *(Aloud)* Why then, I'll tell you, sir. He loves a lady.

SIR ANTHONY If that be a sin, heaven help the wicked!

SIR TIMOTHY But I mean, honourably. ...

SIR ANTHONY *(Angrily)* Honourably! Why, do you know any infirmity in him, why he should not marry?

SIR TIMOTHY Not I, sir.

SIR ANTHONY Not you, sir? Why then, you're an ass, sir. ... But is the lady young and handsome?

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, and rich, too, sir.

SIR ANTHONY No matter for money, so she love the boy.

SIR TIMOTHY Love him! No, sir, she neither does, nor shall love him.

SIR ANTHONY What, sir, nor shall love him? By George, but she shall, and lie with him too, if I please, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY What, sir! Lie with a rich City widow, and a lady, and to be married to a fine reverend old gentleman within a day or two?

SIR ANTHONY His name, sir, his name. I'll dispatch him presently. *(Offers to draw.)*

SIR TIMOTHY What, sir, dispatch him! ... Your servant, sir. *(Offers to go.)*

SIR ANTHONY Hold, sir! By this abrupt departure, I fancy you the boy's rival. Come, draw. *(Draws.)*

SIR TIMOTHY What, draw, sir!

SIR ANTHONY Aye, draw, sir. Not my nephew have the widow!

SIR TIMOTHY With all my soul, sir, I love and honour your nephew. I, his rival? Alas, sir, I'm not so fond of cuckoldom. Pray, sir, let me see you and Sir Charles at my house. I may serve him in this business. And so I take my leave, sir. ... *(Aside)* Draw, quotha! A pox upon him for an old Tory-rory. *(Exit.)*

Enter as from church, Lady Galliard, Closet, and footman. Wilding passes carelessly by her, Sir Charles Merriwill following, wrapped in his cloak.

SIR ANTHONY Who's here? Charles muffled in a cloak, peering after a woman? ... My own boy, to a hair. She's handsome, too. I'll step aside. For I must see the meaning of it. *(Goes aside.)*

LADY GALLIARD Bless me! How unconcerned he passed!

CLOSET He bowed low, madam.

LADY GALLIARD But 'twas in such a fashion as expressed indifference, much worse than hate from Wilding.

CLOSET Your ladyship has used him ill of late. Yet if your ladyship please, I'll call him back.

LADY GALLIARD I'll die, first. ... Hah, he's going! ... Yet now I think of it, I have a toy of his, which, to express my scorn, I'll give him back now: ... this ring.

CLOSET Shall I carry it, madam?

LADY GALLIARD You'll not express disdain enough in the delivery. And you may call him back. *(Closet goes to Wilding.)*

SIR CHARLES *(Aside)* By heaven, she's fond of him.

WILDING Oh, mistress Closet! Is it you? ... Madam, your servant. By this disdain, I fear your woman, madam, has mistaken her man. Would your ladyship speak with me?

LADY GALLIARD Yes. ... *(Aside)* But what? The god of love instruct me.

WILDING Command me quickly, madam, for I have business.

LADY GALLIARD (*Aside*) Nay, then I cannot be discreet in love.

... (*Aloud*) Your business once was love, nor had no idle hours
To throw away on any other thought.
You loved as if you'd had no other faculties,
As if you'd meant to gain eternal bliss
By that devotion only. And see how now you're changed.

WILDING Not I, by heaven. 'Tis you are only changed.

I thought you'd love me too, curse on the dull mistake.
But when I begged to reap the mighty joy
That mutual love affords,
You turned me off for honour,³
That nothing, framed by some old sullen maid
That wanted charms to kindle flames when young.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) By George, he's right.

SIR CHARLES (*Aside*) Death! Can she hear this language?

LADY GALLIARD How dare you name this to me any more?

Have you forgot my fortune, and my youth?
My quality, and fame?⁴

WILDING No, by heaven. All these increase my flame.

LADY GALLIARD Perhaps they might, but yet I wonder where
You got the boldness to approach me with it.

WILDING Faith, madam, from your own encouragement.

LADY GALLIARD From mine! Heavens, what contempt is this!

WILDING When first I paid my vows (good heaven forgive me)

They were honourable all;
But wiser you, thanks to your mother's care, too,
Knowing my fortune an uncertain hope,
My life of scandal, and my bad reputation,
Forbade my wish that way. 'Twas kindly urged.
You could not, then, forbid my passion, too,
Nor did I ever, from your lips or eyes,
Receive the cruel sentence of my death.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Gad, a fine fellow this!

LADY GALLIARD To save my life, I would not marry thee.

WILDING That's kindly said.

But to save mine, thou't do a kinder thing.
... I know thou wouldst.

LADY GALLIARD What, yield my honour up!

And after, find it sacrificed anew,
And made the scorn of a triumphing wife!

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Gad, she's i'th' right too. A noble girl, I'll warrant her.

LADY GALLIARD But you disdain to satisfy those fears.

And, like a proud and haughty conqueror,
Demand the town without the least conditions.

SIR CHARLES (*Aside*) By heaven, she yields apace.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Pox on't, I wish I'd ne'er seen her. Now have I a legion of small Cupids at hot-cockles in
my heart.

WILDING Now am I pausing on that word 'conditions'.

Thou sayst thou wouldst not have me marry thee.

³ **turned me off for honour:** dismissed me to preserve your reputation.

⁴ **quality, and fame:** high social position and reputation.

That is, as if I loved thee for thy eyes,
And put 'em out to hate thee.

Or, like our stage-smitten youth, who fall in love with a woman for acting finely, and by taking her off the stage, deprive her of the only charm she had, then leave her to ill-luck.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Gad, he's right again, too! A rare fellow!

WILDING For, widow, know, hadst thou more beauty, yet not all of 'em were half so great a charm as thy not being mine.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Hm! How will he make that out, now?

WILDING The stealths of love, the midnight, kind admittance,
The gloomy bed, the soft-breathed, murmuring passion.
Ah, who can guess at joys thus snatched by parcels!
The difficulty makes us always wishing,
Whilst on thy part, fear still makes some resistance;
And every blessing seems a kind of rape.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) He's done it! ... A divine fellow this. Just of my religion. I am studying, now, whether I was never acquainted with his mother. (*Lady Galliard walks away. Wilding follows.*)

LADY GALLIARD Tempt me no more! What dull, unwary flame
Possessed me all this while! (*In rage*) Confusion on thee,
And all the charms that dwell upon thy tongue.
Diseases ruin that bewitching form,
That with thy soft, feigned vows debauched my heart.

SIR CHARLES (*Aside*) Heavens! Can I yet endure?

LADY GALLIARD By all that's good, I'll marry instantly.
Marry, and save my last stake, honour, yet,
Or thou wilt cheat me out of all at last.

WILDING Marry! thou canst not do a better thing.

There are a thousand matrimonial fops,
Fine fools of fortune,
Good-natured blockheads, too, and that's a wonder.

LADY GALLIARD That will be manipulated by a man of wit.

WILDING Right.

LADY GALLIARD I have an eye upon a friend of yours.

WILDING A friend of mine! Then he must be my cuckold.

SIR CHARLES (*Aside*) Very fine! Can I endure yet more?

LADY GALLIARD Perhaps it is your uncle.

WILDING Hah, my uncle! (*Sir Charles comes up to them.*)

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Hah, my Charles! Why, well said Charles! He bore up briskly to her.

SIR CHARLES Ah, madam, may I presume to tell you ...

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Ah, pox, that was stark naught! He begins like a foreman of the shop to his master's daughter.

WILDING (*Aside*) What? Charles Merriwill acquainted with my widow!

SIR CHARLES Why do you wear that scorn upon your face?

I've nought but honest meaning in my passion.
Whilst him you favour so profanes your beauties,
In scorn of marriage and religious rites,
Attempts the ruin of your sacred honour.

LADY GALLIARD (*Aside*) Hah! Wilding boast my love!

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) The devil take him, my nephew's quite spoiled!
Why, what a pox has he to do with honour now?

LADY GALLIARD (*To Wilding*) Pray leave me, sir.

WILDING (*Aside*) Damn it, since he knows all, I'll boldly admit my flame ...
(*Aloud to Sir Charles*) You take a liberty I never gave you, sir.

SIR CHARLES What! This from thee! Nay, then I must take more,
 And ask you where you borrowed that brutality
 To approach that lady with your saucy passion.

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* Gad, well done, Charles! Here must be sport anon.

WILDING I will not answer every idle question.

SIR CHARLES Death, you dare not.

WILDING What, dare not!

SIR CHARLES No, dare not. For if you did ...

WILDING What durst you, if I did?

SIR CHARLES Death, cut your throat, sir. *(Taking hold of him roughly.*

SIR ANTHONY Hold, hold, let him have fair play, and then curse him that parts ye.
(Taking 'em asunder. They draw.

LADY GALLIARD Hold, I command ye, hold!

SIR CHARLES There rest my sword to all eternity. *(Lays his sword at her feet.*

LADY GALLIARD Now I conjure ye both, by all your honour,
 If you were e'er acquainted with that virtue,
 To see my face no more,
 Who durst dispute your interest in me thus,
 As for a common mistress in your drink.
(She goes out, as do all but Wilding, Sir Anthony and Sir Charles, who stand sadly looking after her.

SIR ANTHONY A heavenly girl! ... Well, now she's gone, by George, I am for disputing your title to her by dint
 of sword.

SIR CHARLES I won't fight.

WILDING Another time we will decide it, sir. *(Wilding goes out.*

SIR ANTHONY After your whining prologue, sir, who the devil would have expected such a farce? ... Come,
 Charles, take up thy sword, Charles. ... And, d'ye hear, forget this woman. ...

SIR CHARLES Forget her, sir! There never was a thing so excellent!

SIR ANTHONY You lie, sirrah, you lie. There are a thousand
 As fair, as young, and kinder, by this day.
 We'll into the country, Charles, where every grove
 Affords us rustic beauties,
 That know no pride, nor make-up,
 And that will take it and be thankful, Charles.
 Fine, wholesome girls that fall like ruddy fruit,
 Fit for the gathering, Charles.

SIR CHARLES Oh, sir, I cannot relish the coarse fare.
 But what's all this, sir, to my present passion?

SIR ANTHONY Passion, sir! You shall have no passion, sir.

SIR CHARLES No passion, sir! Shall I have life and breath?

SIR ANTHONY It may be not, sirrah, if it be my will and pleasure.
 ... Why, how now! Saucy boys be their own carvers? * * i.e. choose their own wives (proverb)

SIR CHARLES Sir, I am all obedience. *(Bowing and sighing.*

SIR ANTHONY Obedience! Was ever such a blockhead! Why then, if I command it, you will not love this
 woman?

SIR CHARLES No, sir.

SIR ANTHONY No, sir! But I say, 'Yes, sir'. Love her. And love her like a man, too, or I'll renounce ye, sir.

SIR CHARLES I've tried all ways to win upon her heart,
 Sent gifts, writ, watched, fought, prayed, kneeled, and wept.

SIR ANTHONY Why there's it, now. I thought so: kneeled and wept! A pox upon thee ... I took thee for a better
 fellow. ...
 You should've huffed and blustered at her door.
 Been very impudent and saucy, sir.
 Lewd, ruffling, mad. Courted at all hours and seasons.

Let her not rest, nor eat, nor sleep, nor see friends.
Believe me, Charles, women love importunity.
Watch her close, watch her like a witch, boy,
Till she confess the devil in her ... Love.

SIR CHARLES I cannot, sir.

Her eyes strike such an awe into my soul ...

SIR ANTHONY Strike such a fiddlestick. ... Sirrah, I say, do it. What, you can touse a wench as handsomely ...
You can be lewd enough upon occasion. I know not the lady, nor her fortune; but I am resolved thou
shalt have her with practising a little courtship of my mode. ... Come ...
Come, my boy Charles, since you must needs be doing,
I'll show thee how to go a widow-wooing.

Act II, scene 1. A Room. *Enter Charlot, Fopington, and Mrs Clacket.*

CHARLOT Enough! I've heard enough of Wilding's vices to know I am undone. *(weeps)* ... Galliard his
mistress, too? I never saw her, but I have heard her famed for beauty, wit, and fortune. That rival may
be dangerous.

FOPINGTON Yes, madam, the fair, the young, the witty Lady Galliard, even in the height of all his love to
you. Nay, even whilst his uncle courts her for a wife, he designs himself for a gallant.

CHARLOT Wondrous inconstancy and impudence!

MRS CLACKET Nay, madam, you may rely upon Mr Fopington's information. Therefore, if you respect your
reputation, retreat in time.

CHARLOT Reputation! That I forfeited when I ran away with your friend Mr Wilding.

MRS CLACKET Ah, that ever I should live to see *(weeps)* the sole daughter and heir of Sir Nicholas Gettall run
away with one of the lewdest heathens about town!

CHARLOT What! Your friend, Mr Wilding, a heathen? and from you, too, Mistress Clacket! That friend, Mr
Wilding, who thought none so worthy as Mistress Clacket to trust with so great a secret as his flight
with me. He, a heathen!

MRS CLACKET Aye, and a poor heathen, too, madam. 'Slife, if you must marry a man to buy him breeches,
marry an honest man, a religious man, a man that bears a conscience, and will do a woman some
reason. ... Why, here's Mr Fopington, madam. Here's a shape, here's a face, a back as straight as an
arrow, I'll warrant.

CHARLOT What! Buy him breeches! Has Wilding, then, no fortune?

FOPINGTON Yes, faith, madam, pretty well. So, so, as the dice run. And now and then he lights upon a
squire, or so, and, between fair and foul play, he makes a shift to pick a pretty livelihood up.

CHARLOT What! does his uncle allow him no current maintenance?

FOPINGTON No, nor future hopes, neither. Therefore, madam, I hope you will see the difference between
him, and a man of parts that adores you. *(Smiling and bowing.)*

CHARLOT If I find all this true you tell me, I shall know how to value myself and those that love me. ... *(Aside)*
This may be yet a rascal.

Enter a maid.

MAID Mistress, Mr Wilding's below. *(Exit.)*

FOPINGTON *(In great disorder)* Below! Oh, heavens, madam, do not expose me to his lewd fury for being too
zealous in your service.

CHARLOT I will not let him know you told anything, sir.

FOPINGTON *(To Clacket)* Death! To be seen here would expose my life.

MRS CLACKET Here, here, step out upon the staircase, and slip into my chamber.

(Fopington is going out, but returns in fright.)

FOPINGTON Zounds, he's here! Lock the door fast. Let him not enter.

MRS CLACKET Oh, heavens, I have not the key! Hold it, hold it fast, sweet, sweet Mr Fopington. Oh, should
there be murder done, what a scandal would that be to the house of a true Protestant! *(Knocking.)*

CHARLOT Heavens! What will he say and think, to see me shut in with a man?

MRS CLACKET Oh, I'll say you're sick, asleep, or out of humour.

CHARLOT I'd give the world to see him. *(Knocking.)*

WILDING (*From offstage*) Charlot, Charlot! Am I denied an entrance? By heaven, I'll break the door.

(*Knocks again. Fopington still holding it closed.*)

FOPINGTON Oh, I'm a dead man, dear Clacket! (*Knocking still.*)

MRS CLACKET Oh, hold, sir. Mistress Charlot is very sick.

WILDING What, sick, and I kept from her!

MRS CLACKET She begs you'll come again an hour hence.

WILDING Delayed! By heaven, I will have entrance.

FOPINGTON Ruined! Undone! For if he do not kill me, he may starve me.

MRS CLACKET Oh, he will break in upon us! Hold, sir, hold a little. Mistress Charlot is just ... just ... changing, sir. You will not be so uncivil as to press in, I hope, at such a time.

CHARLOT I have a fine time on it between ye, to have him think I am stripping myself before Mr Fopington. ... (*To Fopington*) Let go, or I'll call out and tell him all.

Wilding breaks open the door and rushes in. Fopington stands close up at the entrance till he is past him, then, venturing to slip out, finds Wilding has made fast the door. So he is forced to return again and stand close up behind Wilding, with signs of fear.

WILDING How now, Charlot, what means this new unkindness? What, not a word?

CHARLOT There is so little music in my voice, you do not care to hear it. You have been better entertained, I find. Mightily employed, no doubt.

WILDING Yes, faith, and so I have, Charlot. Damned business, that enemy to love, has made me rude.

CHARLOT Or that other enemy to love, damned wenching.

WILDING Wenching! How ill hast thou timed thy jealousy! What banker, that tomorrow is to pay a mighty sum, would venture out his stock today in little parcels, and lose his credit by it?

CHARLOT (*Angry*) You would, perfidious as you are, though all your fortune, all your future health, depended on that credit.

WILDING (*Aside to Clacket*) So. Hark ye, Mistress Clacket, you have been prating, I find, in my absence, giving me a handsome character to Charlot. ... (*Aloud*) You hate any good thing should go by your own nose.⁵

MRS CLACKET By my nose, Mr Wilding! I defy you. I'd have you to know, I scorn any good thing should go by my nose in an uncivil way.

WILDING I believe so.

MRS CLACKET (*Aside to Wilding*) Have I been the confidante to all your secrets this three years, in sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer? Concealed the nature of your wicked diseases under the honest name of 'surfeits'? Called your filthy surgeons 'Doctor' to keep up your reputation? Civilly received your t'other-end-of-the-Town young 'relations' at all hours ...

WILDING (*Aside to Clacket*) Hah!

MRS CLACKET (*Aside to Wilding*) Been up with you and down with you, early and late, by night and by day. Let you in at all hours, drunk and sober, single and accompanied, and civilly withdrawn, and modestly shut the door after me?

WILDING (*Aside*) Whirr! The storm's up, and the devil cannot calm it.

MRS CLACKET (*Aside to Wilding*) And am I thus rewarded for my pain! (*Weeps.*)

WILDING (*Aside*) So tempests are allayed by showers of rain.

MRS CLACKET That I should be charged with speaking ill of you, so honest, so civil a gentleman ...

CHARLOT No, I have better witness of your falsehood.

FOPINGTON (*Aside*) Hah, 'sdeath, she'll name me!

WILDING What mean you, my Charlot?

Do you not think I love you?

CHARLOT Go ask my Lady Galliard. She keeps the best account of all your sighs and vows (*Kindly to him*) And robs me of my dearest softer hours.

MRS CLACKET (*Aside*) You cannot hold off being kind to him.

WILDING (*aside*) Galliard! How came she by that secret of my life? (*Aloud*) Why, aye, 'tis true, I am there sometimes about an arbitration, about a suit in law, about my uncle.

⁵ go by ...nose: pass right in front of you.

CHARLOT Aye, that uncle too ...

You swore to me you were your uncle's heir.
But you perhaps may chance to get him one,
If the lady prove not cruel.

WILDING (*Aside*) Death and the devil, what rascal has been prating to her!

CHARLOT Whilst I am reserved for a last hope, if fortune prove unkind, or wicked uncles refractory,
(*In a soft tone to him*) Yet I could love you, though you were a slave,
And I were queen of all the universe.

MRS CLACKET (*Aside to Charlot*) Aye, there you spoiled all again ... You forget yourself.

CHARLOT (*Aside*) And all the world, when he looks kindly on me.

But I'll take courage, and be very angry.

(*Angry*) Nor does your perjuries rest here. You're equally as false to Galliard, as to me. False, for a little mistress of the Town, whom you've set up in spite to quality.

MRS CLACKET (*Aside to Charlot*) So, that was home and handsome.

WILDING (*Aside*) What damned informer does she keep on salary?

CHARLOT (*Angry*) And can you think my fortune and my youth
Merits no better treatment?

(*Soft to him*) How could you have the heart to use me so?

(*Aside*) I fall insensibly to love and fondness.

WILDING Ah, my dear Charlot! You, who know my heart, can you believe me false?

CHARLOT In every syllable, in every look.

Your vows, your sighs, and eyes, all counterfeit.

You said you loved me. Where was then your truth?

You swore you were to be your uncle's heir.

Where was your confidence in me, the while,

To think my generosity so scanted,

To love you for your fortune?

... (*Aside*) How every look betrays my yielding heart!

No, since men are grown so cunning in their

Trade of love, the necessary vice I'll practise too,

And barter with love-merchants for my heart.

Make it appear you are your uncle's heir,

I'll marry ye tomorrow.

Of all thy cheats, that was the most unkind,

Because you thought to conquer by that lie.

... (*Aloud*) Tonight I'll be resolved.

WILDING Hm! Tonight!

CHARLOT Tonight, or I will think you love me for my fortune; which, if you find elsewhere to more advantage,

I may unpitied die ... (*Tenderly to him*) And I should die,

If you should prove untrue.

MRS CLACKET (*Aside to Charlot*) There, you've dashed all again.

WILDING (*Aside*) I am resolved to keep my credit with her. ... [*Aloud*] Here's my hand.

This night, Charlot, I'll let you see his Will.

--- (*Aside*) But how, a pox of him that knows, for Thomas.

CHARLOT Hah, that hand without the ring!

Nay, never study for a handsome lie.

WILDING Ring! Oh, aye, I left it in my dressing-room this morning.

CHARLOT See how thou hast inured thy tongue to falsehood!

Did you not send it to a certain creature

They call Diana,

From off that hand that plighted faith to me?

WILDING (*Aside*) By heaven, 'tis witchcraft all,
 Unless this villain Fopington betrayed me.
 Those sort of rascals will do anything
 For ready meat and wine. ... I'll kill the fool ... Hah, here! (*Turns quick and sees him behind him.*)

FOPINGTON Here, lord! Lord!
 Where were thy eyes, dear Wilding?

WILDING Where they have spied a rascal.
 Where was this property concealed?

FOPINGTON Concealed! What dost thou mean, dear Tom? Why, I stood as plain as the nose on thy face, man.

WILDING But 'tis the ungrateful quality of all your sort, to make such base returns.
 How got this rogue admittance, and, when in,
 The impudence to tell his treacherous lies?

FOPINGTON Admittance! Why thou'rt stark mad: Did not I come in with you, that is, followed you?

WILDING Whither?

FOPINGTON Why into the house, upstairs, stood behind you when you swore you would come in, and followed you in.

WILDING All this, and I not see!

FOPINGTON Oh, love's blind. But this lady saw me, Mistress Clacket saw me. ... Admittance, quotha!

WILDING Why did you not speak?

FOPINGTON Speak! I was so amazed at what I heard, the villainous scandals laid on you by some pick-thank rogue or other, I had no power.

WILDING Aye, thou knowst how I am wronged.

FOPINGTON Oh, most damnably, sir!

WILDING Abuse me to my mistress, too!

FOPINGTON Oh, villains! Dogs!

CHARLOT Do you think they've wronged him, sir? For I'll believe you.

FOPINGTON Do I think, madam? Aye, I think him a son of a whore that said it. And I'll cut's throat.

MRS CLACKET (*Aside*) Well, this impudence is a heavenly virtue!

WILDING You see now, madam, how innocence may suffer.

CHARLOT In spite of all thy villainous dissembling,
 I must believe and love thee, for my quiet.

WILDING That's kind. And if, before tomorrow, I do not show you I deserve your heart, kill me at once by quitting me. ... Farewell. ... (*Going out with Fopington*) I know both where my uncle's Will and other writings lie, by which he made me heir to his whole estate.
 (*Aside*) My craft will be in catching. Which, if passed,
 Her love secures me the kind wench at last.

MRS CLACKET What if he should not chance to keep his word, now?

CHARLOT What if he should not? By all that's good, if he should not, I am resolved to marry him, however.
 We two may make a pretty shift with three thousand pound a year. Yet I would gladly be resolved how affairs stand between the old gentleman and him. I would give the world to see that widow, too, that Lady Galliard.

MRS CLACKET If you're bent upon it, I'll tell you what we'll do, madam. There's every day mighty feasting here at his uncle's, hard by, and you shall disguise yourself as well as you can, and go for a niece of mine I have coming out of Scotland. There you will not fail of seeing my Lady Galliard, though I suspect, not Mr Wilding, who is of late discarded.

CHARLOT Enough. I am resolved upon this design. Let's in, and practise the Northern dialect. (*Exit both.*)

Act II, scene 2. The Street. *Enter Wilding and Fopington.*

WILDING But then Diana took the ring at last?
 FOPINGTON Greedily; but railed, and swore, and ranted at your late unkindness, and would not be appeased.

Enter Dresswell.

WILDING Dresswell, I was just going to search for thee.

DRESSWELL I'm glad, dear Tom. I'm here to serve thee.

WILDING And now I've found thee, thou must along with me.

DRESSWELL Whither? But I'll not ask, but obey.

WILDING To a kind sinner, Frank.

DRESSWELL Pox on 'em all. Prithee, turn out those petty tyrants of thy heart, and fit it for a monarch, love, dear Wilding, of which thou never knewst the pleasure yet, or not above a day.

WILDING Not knew the pleasure! Death, the very essence, the first draughts of love. Ah, how pleasant 'tis to drink when a man's a-dry!

The rest is all but dully sipping on.

DRESSWELL And yet this Diana ... for thither thou art going ... thou hast been constant to this three or four years.

WILDING A constant keeper of her, thou meanst. Which is, indeed, enough to get the scandal of a coxcomb. But I know not, those sort of baggages have a kind of fascination so enticing ... And, faith, after the fatigues of formal visits to a man's dull relations, or what's as bad, to women of quality; after the busy afflictions of the day, and the debauches of the tedious night, I tell thee, Frank, a man's best retirement is with a soft, kind wench. But to say truth, I have a farther design in my visit now. Thou knowst how I stand past hope of grace, excommunicated the kindness of my uncle.

DRESSWELL True.

WILDING My lewd debauches, and being of the wrong Party, as he calls it, is now become an irreconcilable quarrel. So that I, having many and hopeful intrigues now pending, especially these of my charming widow, and my City heiress, which can by no means be carried on without that damned necessary, called ready money, I have stretched my credit, as all young heirs do, till 'tis quite broke. Now, liveries, coaches, and clothes must be had, they must, my friend.

DRESSWELL Why dost thou not, in this extremity, clap up a match with my Lady Galliard? Or this young heiress you speak of?

WILDING But marriage, Frank, is such a bugbear! And this old uncle of mine may one day be gathered together, and sleep with his fathers, and then I shall have six thousand pound a year, and the wide world before me. And who the devil could relish these blessings with the clog of a wife behind him? ... But till then, money must be had, I say.

FOPINGTON Aye, but how, sir?

WILDING Why, from the old fountain, Jack, my uncle. He has himself decreed it. He tells me I must live upon my wits, and will, Frank.

FOPINGTON Gad, I'm impatient to know how.

WILDING I believe thee, for thou art out at elbows. And when I thrive, you show off in the theatre pit, behind the scenery, and in coffee-houses. Thy breeches give a better account of my fortune, than Lilly the astrologer, with all his schemes and stars.

FOPINGTON I admit I thrive by your influence, sir.

DRESSWELL Well. But, to your project, friend. To which I'll set a helping hand, a heart, a sword, and fortune.

WILDING You make good what my soul conceives of you. Let's to Diana, then, and there I'll tell thee all.

As they are going out, they meet Diana, who enters with her maid Betty, and boy. She looks angry.

... Diana, I was just going to thy lodgings!

DIANA Oh, alas, you are too much taken up with your rich City heiress.

WILDING That's no cause of quarrel between you and I, Diana. You were wont to be as impatient for my marrying, as I for the death of my uncle. For your rich wife ever obliges her husband's mistress. And women of your sort, Diana, ever thrive better by committing adultery than fornication.

DIANA Do, try to appease the easy fool with these fine expectations. ... No, I have been too often flattered with the hopes of your marrying a rich wife, and then I was to have a settlement. But instead of that, things go backward with me. My coach is vanished, my servants dwindled into one necessary woman and a boy, which, to cut costs, is too small for any service. My twenty guineas a week, turned into two pounds. A hopeful reformation!

WILDING Patience, Diana. Things will amend in time.

DIANA When, I wonder? Summer's come, yet I am still in my embroidered manteau, when I'm dressed up, lined with velvet. 'Twould give one a fever but to look at me. Yet still I am flammed off with hopes of a

rich wife, whose fortune I am to lavish. ... But I see you have neither conscience nor religion in you. I wonder what a devil will become of your soul for thus deluding me! *(Weeps.*

WILDING By heaven, I love thee!

DIANA Love me! What if you do? How far will that go at the exchange for lace? Will the mercer take it for currency? ... But, 'tis no matter, I must love a wit, with a pox, when I might have had so many fools of fortune. But the devil take me, if you deceive me any longer. *(Weeping.*

WILDING You'll keep your word, no doubt, now you have sworn.

DIANA So I will. I never go out, but I gain new conquest. Happy's the man that can approach nearest the side-box where I sit at a play, to look at me. But if I deign to smile on him, lord, how the o'er-joyed creature returns it with a bow low as the very benches! Then, rising, shakes his ears, looks round, with pride, to see who took notice how much he was in favour with charming mistress Di.

WILDING No more. Come, let's be friends, Diana. For you and I must manage an uncle of mine.

DIANA Damn your projects. I'll have none of 'em.

WILDING Here, here's the best softener of a woman's heart. 'Tis gold, two hundred pieces. Go, pay it out, till you shame quality into plain silk and fringe.

DIANA Lord, you have the strangest power of persuasion! ... Nay, if you buy my peace, I can afford a pennyworth.

WILDING So thou canst of anything about thee.

DIANA Well, your project, my dear Tommy?

WILDING Thus, then ... Thou, dear Frank, shalt to my uncle, tell him that Sir Nicholas Gettall, as he knows, being dead, and having left, as he knows. too, one only daughter his whole heir, Mistress Charlot, I have, by my civil and modest behaviour, so won upon her heart, that two nights since she left her father's country house at Lewisham, in Kent, in spite of all her strict guards, and run away with me.

DRESSWELL What, wilt thou tell him of it, then?

WILDING Hear me ... That I have hitherto secured her at a friend's house here in the City. But, diligent search being now made, dare trust her there no longer. And make it my humble request, by you, my friend, (who are only privy to this secret) that he would give me leave to bring her home to his house, whose very authority will defend her from being sought for there.

DRESSWELL Aye, sir. But what will come of this, I say?

WILDING Why, a settlement. You know he has already made me heir to all he has, after his decease. But, for being a wicked Tory, as he calls me, he has, after the writings were made, signed, and sealed, refused to give 'em to a trustee. Now, when he sees I have made myself master of so vast a fortune, he will immediately surrender. That reconciles all again.

DRESSWELL Very likely; but wouldst thou trust him with the woman, Thomas?

WILDING No. Here's Diana, who, as I shall bedizen her, shall pass for as substantial an alderman's heiress, as ever fell into wicked hands. He never knew the right Charlot. Nor, indeed, has anybody ever seen her but an old aunt and nurse, she was so confined. ... And there, Diana, thou shalt have a good opportunity to lie, dissemble, and jilt in abundance, to keep thy hand in. Prithee, dear Dresswell, haste with the news to him.

DRESSWELL Faith, I like this well enough., This project may take, and I'll about it. *(Goes out.*

WILDING Go, get ye home, and trick and betawder yourself up like a right City lady, rich, but ill-fashioned. On with all your jewels, but no patch, ye gypsy, nor no Spanish cosmetics, d'ye hear.

DIANA I'll warrant you for my part.

WILDING Then, before the old gentleman, you must behave yourself very soberly, simple, and demure, and look as haughty as at a conventicle. And take heed you drink not off your glass at table, nor rant, nor swear. One oath confounds our plot, and betrays thee to be an arrant drab.

DIANA Doubt not my art of dissimulation.

WILDING Go, haste and dress --- *(Exit Diana, Betty and boy.*

Enter Lady Galliard and Closet above in the balcony. Wilding, going out, sees them, stops, and reads a paper.

WILDING Hah, who's yonder? The widow! A pox upon't, now have not I power to stir. She has a damned hold upon my heart, and nothing but right-down lying with her will dissolve the charm. She has forbid me seeing her, and therefore, I am sure, will the sooner take notice of me. *(Reads.*

CLOSET What will you put on tonight, madam? You know you are to sup at Sir Timothy Treat-all's.

LADY GALLIARD Time enough for that. Prithee, let's take a turn in this balcony, this City-garden where we walk to take the fresh air of the sea-coal-smoke. Did the footman go back, as I ordered him, to see how Wilding and Sir Charles parted?

CLOSET He did, madam. And nothing could provoke Sir Charles to fight after your ladyship's strict commands. Well, I'll swear he's the sweetest-natured gentleman ... has all the advantages of nature and fortune. I wonder what exception your ladyship has to him!

LADY GALLIARD Some small exception to his whining humour. But I think my chiefest dislike is, because my relations wish it a match between us. It is not hate to him, but natural contradiction. Hah, is not that Wilding yonder? He's reading of a letter, sure.

WILDING *(Aside)* So, she sees me. Now for an art to make her lure me up. For, though I have a greater inclination than she, it shall be all her own. The match she told me of this morning with my uncle sticks plaguily upon my stomach. I must break the neck of it, or break the widow's heart, that's certain. If I advance towards the door now, she frowningly retires. If I pass on, 'tis likely she may call me.

(Advances.)

LADY GALLIARD I think he's passing on,
Without so much as looking towards the window.

CLOSET He's glad of the excuse of being forbidden.

LADY GALLIARD But, Closet, knowest thou not he has abused my fame,

And does he think to pass thus unupbraided?

Is there no art to make him look this way?

No trick? ... Prithee, feign to laugh. *(Closet laughs.)*

WILDING *(Aside)* So, I shall not answer to that call.

LADY GALLIARD He's going! Ah, Closet, my fan! ... *(Lets fall her fan just as he passes by. He takes it up, and looks up.)* Cry mercy, sir. I'm sorry, I must trouble you to bring it.

WILDING Faith, so am I. And you may spare my pains, and send your woman for it. I am in haste.

LADY GALLIARD Then the quickest way will be to bring it. *(She goes out of the balcony with Closet.)*

WILDING I knew I should be drawn in one way or other.

Act II, scene 3. A Chamber. *Enter Lady Galliard, Closet. To them, Wilding delivers the fan, and is retiring.*

LADY GALLIARD Stay. I hear you're wondrous free of your tongue when 'tis let loose on me.

WILDING Who I, widow? I think of no such trifles.

LADY GALLIARD Such railers never think when they're abusive. But something you have said, a lie so infamous!

WILDING A lie, and infamous of you! Impossible!

What was it that I called you, wise, or honest?

LADY GALLIARD What, can you accuse me for the want of either?

WILDING Yes, of both. Had you a grain of honesty, or intended ever to be thought so, would you have the impudence to marry an old coxcomb, a fellow that will not so much as serve you for a cloak, he is so visibly and undeniably impotent?

LADY GALLIARD Your uncle, you mean.

WILDING I do. Who has not known the joy of fornication this thirty year, and now the devil and you have put it into his head to marry, forsooth. Oh, the felicity of the wedding-night!

LADY GALLIARD Which you, with all your railing rhetoric, shall not have power to hinder.

WILDING Not if you can help it. For I perceive you are resolved to be a lewd, incorrigible sinner, and marryest this seditious, dotting fool, my uncle, only to hang him out for the sign of the cuckold, to give notice where beauty is to be purchased. For fear otherwise we should mistake, and think thee honest.

LADY GALLIARD So much for my want of honest. My wit is the part of the text you are to handle next.

WILDING Let the world judge of that, by this one action: this marriage undisputably robs you both of your reputation and pleasure. Marry an old fool, because he's rich! When so many handsome, proper, younger brothers would be glad of you!

LADY GALLIARD Of which hopeful number, yourself are one.

WILDING Who, I? Bear witness, Closet. Take notice I'm upon my marriage, widow, and such a scandal on my reputation might ruin me. Therefore, have a care what you say.

LADY GALLIARD Ha, ha, ha, marriage! Yes, I hear you give it out you are to be married to me. For which defamation, if I be not revenged, hang me.

WILDING Yes, you are revenged. I had the fame of vanquishing where-e'er I laid my siege, till I knew thee, hard-hearted thee. Had the honest reputation of lying with the magistrates' wives, when their reverend husbands were employed in the necessary affairs of the nation, seditiously petitioning. And then I was esteemed. But now they look on me as a monstrous thing, that makes honourable love to you. Oh, hideous, a husband-lover! So that now I may protest, and swear, and lie my heart out, I find neither credit nor kindness. But when I beg for either, my Lady Galliard's thrown in my dish. Then they laugh aloud, and cry, 'Who would think it of gay, of fine Mr Wilding?' Thus the City she-wits are let loose upon me, and all for you, sweet widow. But I am resolved I will redeem my reputation again, if never seeing you nor writing to you more, will do it. And so, farewell, faithless and scandalous, honest woman.

LADY GALLIARD Stay, tyrant.

WILDING I am engaged.

LADY GALLIARD You are not.

WILDING I am, and am resolved to lose no more time on a peevish woman who values her honour above her lover. *(He goes out.)*

LADY GALLIARD Go; this is the noblest way of losing thee.

CLOSET Must not I call him back?

LADY GALLIARD No. If any honest lover come, admit him. I will forget this devil. Fetch me some jewels. The company tonight at Sir Timothy's may divert me. *(She sits down before her mirror.)*

Enter a boy.

BOY Madam, one Sir Anthony Merriwill would speak with your ladyship.

LADY GALLIARD Admit him. Sure, 'tis Sir Charles's uncle. If he come to negotiate a match with me for his nephew, he takes me in the critical minute. I wish he but leave his whining. I might love him, if 'twere but in revenge.

Enter Sir Anthony Merriwill and Sir Charles.

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* So, I have tutored the young rogue. I hope he'll learn in time. *(To Lady Galliard)* Good day to your ladyship. Charles *(putting him forward)*, my nephew, here, madam ... *(To Sir Charles)* Sirrah! ... *(To Lady Galliard)* Notwithstanding your ladyship's commands ... Look how he stands now, being a mad, young rascal! ... Gad, he would wait on your ladyship ... *(Aside)* A devil on him, see if he'll budge now ... *(To Lady Galliard)* For he's a brisk lover, madam, when he once begins. *(Aside)* A pox on him, he'll spoil all, yet.

LADY GALLIARD Please you sit, sir.

SIR CHARLES Madam, I beg your pardon for my rudeness.

LADY GALLIARD Still whining? ... *(Dressing herself carelessly.)*

SIR ANTHONY *(To Sir Charles)* D'ye hear that, sirrah? Oh, damn it, beg pardon! *(Aside)* The rogue's quite out of his part.

SIR CHARLES Madam, I fear my visit is unseasonable.

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* Unseasonable! Damned rogue! Unseasonable, to a widow! ... Quite out.

LADY GALLIARD There are, indeed, some ladies that would be angry at an untimely visit, before they've put on their best faces. But I am none of those that would be fair in spite of nature, sir. ... *(To Closet)* Put on this jewel, here.

SIR CHARLES That beauty needs no ornament. Heaven has been too bountiful.

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside, vexed)* Heaven! Oh lord, heaven! A Puritanical rogue, he courts her like her chaplain.

LADY GALLIARD You are still so full of university-compliments ...

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside to Sir Charles)* D'ye hear that, sirrah? ... *(Aloud)* Aye, so he is, so he is indeed, madam. ... *(Aside to him.)* To her like a man, ye knave.

SIR CHARLES Ah, madam, I am come!

SIR ANTHONY To show yourself a coxcomb.

LADY GALLIARD To tire me with discourses of your passion. ... Fie, how this curl sits! *(Looking in the mirror.)*

SIR CHARLES No, you shall hear no more of that unwelcome subject.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside to Sir Charles*) Son of a whore, hear no more of love, damned rogue! (*Aloud*) Madam, by George, he lies. He does come to speak of love, and make love, and to do love, and all for love. ... (*Aside to him. He ignores him*) Not come to speak of love, with a pox! Zounds, sir, behave yourself like a man. Be impudent, be saucy, forward, bold, tousing, and lewd, d'ye hear, or I'll beat thee before her. Why, what a pox!

SIR CHARLES Finding my hopes quite lost in your unequal favours to young Wilding, I'm quitting of the Town.

LADY GALLIARD You will do well to do so. ... (*To Closet*) Lay by that necklace. I'll wear pearl today.

SIR ANTHONY (*aside*) Confounded blockhead! ... (*Aloud*) By George, he lies again, madam. (*Aside*) A dog, I'll disinherit him. (*Aloud*) He, quit the Town, madam? No, not whilst your ladyship is in it, to my knowledge. He'll live in the Town, nay, in the street where you live. Nay, in the house. Nay, in the very bed, by George. I've heard him a thousand times swear it. Swear it now, sirrah! Look, look, how he stands now! (*aside to Charles*) Why, dear Charles, good boy, swear a little, ruffle her, and swear, damn it, she shall have none but thee. (*Aloud*) Why, you little think, madam, that this nephew of mine is one of the maddest fellows in all Devonshire.

LADY GALLIARD I wish I could see it, sir.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside to Sir Charles*) See it! Look ye there, ye rogue. ... (*Aloud*) Why. 'tis all his fault, madam. He's seldom sober. Then he has a dozen wenches in pay, that he may, with the more authority, break their windows. There's never a virgin within forty miles of Merriwill Hall to work a miracle on, but all are mothers. He's a hopeful youth, I'll say that for him.

SIR CHARLES How I have loved you, my despairs shall witness. For I will die to purchase your content.

(She rises.)

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Die, a damned rogue! Aye, aye, I'll disinherit him. A dog, die, with a pox! No, he'll be hanged first, madam.

SIR CHARLES And sure you'll pity me when I am dead.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) A curse on him! Pity, with a pox! I'll give him ne'er a shilling.

LADY GALLIARD (*To Closet*) Give me that perfume-bottle.

SIR CHARLES But, for a recompence of all my sufferings ...

LADY GALLIARD (*To Closet*) Sprinkle my handkerchief with tuberoses.

SIR CHARLES I beg a favour you'd afford a stranger.

LADY GALLIARD Sooner, perhaps. (*To Closet*) What jewel's that?

CLOSET One Sir Charles Merriwill ...

LADY GALLIARD Sent, and you received without my order!

No wonder that he looks so scurvily.

Give him the trifle back, to mend his humour.

SIR ANTHONY I thank you, madam, for that reprimand. Look in that glass, sir, and admire that sneaking coxcomb's countenance of yours. (*Aside*) A pox on him, he's past grace. Lost, gone. Not a shilling, not a groat. Goodbye to you, sir. (*Aloud*) Madam, I beg your pardon. The next time I come a-wooing, it shall be for myself, madam, and I have something that will justify it, too. But as for this fellow, if your ladyship have e'er a small page at leisure, I desire he may have order to kick him downstairs. A damned rogue, to be civil, now, when he should have behaved himself handsomely! Not an acre, not a shilling, ... Bye, Sir Softhead. (*Going out, he meets Wilding, and returns*) Hah, who have we here? Hm, the fine mad fellow? So, so, he'll thrash him, I hope. I'll stay to have the pleasure of seeing it done.

Enter Wilding, brushes by Sir Charles.

WILDING (*Aside*) I was sure 'twas Merriwill's coach at door.

SIR CHARLES Hah, Wilding!

SIR ANTHONY (*To Sir Charles*) Aye. Now, sir, here's one will waken ye, sir.

WILDING How now, widow. You are always giving audience to lovers, I see.

SIR CHARLES You're very free, sir.

WILDING I'm always so in the widow's lodgings, sir.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) A rare fellow!

SIR CHARLES You will not do it elsewhere?

WILDING Not with so much authority.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) An admirable fellow! I must be acquainted with him.

SIR CHARLES Is this the respect you pay women of her quality?

WILDING The widow knows I stand not much on ceremonies.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside still*) Gad, he shall be my heir.

LADY GALLIARD Pardon him, sir. This is his Cambridge breeding.

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Aye so 'tis, so 'tis. That two years there quite spoiled him.

LADY GALLIARD Sir, if you've any farther business with me, speak it. If not, I'm going forth.

SIR CHARLES Madam, in short ...

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) In short to a widow! In short! Quite lost.

SIR CHARLES I find you treat me ill for my respect.

And when I court you next,

I will forget how very much I love you.

SIR ANTHONY (*To Wilding*) Sir, I shall be proud of your farther acquaintance. For I like, love, and honour you.

WILDING I'll study to deserve it, sir.

SIR ANTHONY Madam, your servant. A damned, sneaking dog to be civil and modest, with a pox!

(Exit Sir Charles and Sir Anthony.)

LADY GALLIARD See if my coach be ready.

(Exit Closet.)

WILDING Whither are you jaunting now?

LADY GALLIARD Where you dare not wait on me. To your uncle's, to supper.

WILDING That uncle of mine pimps for all the sparks of his Party.

There they all meet and bargain without scandal.

Fops of all sorts and sizes you may choose.

Whig-land affords not such another market.

Enter Closet.

CLOSET Madam, here's Sir Timothy Treat-all come to wait on your ladyship to supper.

WILDING (*Aside*) My uncle! Oh, damn him, he was born to be my plague. Not disinheriting me had been so great a disappointment. And if he sees me here, I ruin all the plots I've laid for him. Ha, he's here!

Enter Sir Timothy.

SIR TIMOTHY What, my nephew, Thomas, here!

WILDING Madam, I find you can be cruel too,

Knowing my uncle has abandoned me.

SIR TIMOTHY How now, sir, what's your business here?

WILDING I came to beg a favour of my Lady Galliard, sir, knowing her power and quality here in the City.

SIR TIMOTHY (*aside*) What, a favour of my Lady Galliard! The rogue said, indeed, he would cuckold me.

(Aloud) Why, sir, I thought you had been taken up with your rich heiress?

WILDING That was my business now, sir. Having in my possession the daughter and heir of Sir Nicholas

Gettall, I would have made use of the authority of my Lady Galliard's house to have secured her, till I got things in order for our marriage. But my lady, to put me off, cries, I have an uncle.

LADY GALLIARD (*Aside*) A well-contrived lie.

SIR TIMOTHY Well, I have heard of your good fortune. And however a reprobate thou hast been, I'll not show myself so undutiful an uncle, as not to give the gentlewoman a little house-room. I heard, indeed, she was gone a week ago. And, sir, my house is at your service.

WILDING I humbly thank you, sir. Madam, your servant. (*Aside*) A pox upon him, and all his associates. (*Exit.*

SIR TIMOTHY Come, madam, my coach waits below.

(Exit.)

Act III, scene 1. A Room.

Enter Sir Timothy Treat-all and Jervice.

SIR TIMOTHY Here, take my sword, Jervice. What have you inquired, as I directed you, concerning the rich heiress, Sir Nicholas Gettall's daughter?

JERVICE Alas, sir, enquired! Why, 'tis all the City news, that she's run away with one of the maddest Tories about Town.

SIR TIMOTHY Good Lord! Aye, aye, 'tis so. The plaguy rogue my nephew has got her. That heaven should drop such blessings in the mouths of the wicked! Well, Jervice, what company have we in the house, Jervice?

JERVICE Why, truly, sir, a fine deal, considering there's no Parliament.

SIR TIMOTHY What Lords have we, Jervice?

JERVICE Lords, sir! Truly, none.

SIR TIMOTHY None! What, ne'er a Lord! Some mishap will befall me, some dire mischance. Ne'er a Lord! Ominous, ominous! Our Party dwindles daily. What, nor Earl, nor Marquess, nor Duke, nor ne'er a Lord? Hm, my wine will lie most villainously upon my hands tonight, Jervice. What, have we store of knights and gentlemen?

JERVICE I know not what gentlemen there be, sir. But there are knights, citizens, their wives and daughters.

SIR TIMOTHY Make us thankful for that. Our meat will not lie upon our hands, then, Jervice. I'll say that for our little Londoners: they are as tall fellows at a well-charged table as any in Christendom.

JERVICE Then, sir, there's nonconformist parsons.

SIR TIMOTHY Nay, then we shall have a clear table. For your true Protestant appetite in a lay-elder does a man's table credit.

JERVICE Then, sir, there's country justices and grand-jury-men.

SIR TIMOTHY Well enough, well enough, Jervice.

Enter Mrs Sensure.

SENSURE If it like your worship, Mr Wilding is come in with a lady richly dressed in jewels, masked, in his possession, and will not be denied speaking with your worship.

SIR TIMOTHY Hah, rich in jewels! This must be she. My sword again, Jervice. ... Bring 'em up, Sensure. --- Prithee, how do I look tonight, Jervice? *(Setting himself.*

JERVICE Oh, most methodically, sir.

Enter Wilding and Diana and Betty.

WILDING Sir, I have brought into your kind protection the richest jewel all London can afford, fair Mistress Charlot Gettall.

SIR TIMOTHY Bless us, she's ravishing fair! Lady, I had the honour of being intimate with your worthy father. I think he has been dead ...

DIANA *(Aside)* If he catechize me much on that point, I shall spoil all. *(Aloud)* Alas, sir, name him not. For if you do *(weeping)* I'm sure I cannot answer you one question.

WILDING *(Aside to him)* For heaven's sake, sir, name not her father to her. The bare remembrance of him kills her.

SIR TIMOTHY Alas, poor soul! Lady, I beg your pardon. *(Aside)* How soft-hearted she is! I am in love. I find already a tickling kind of, I know not what, run frisking through my veins.

BETTY Aye, sir. The good alderman has been dead this twelvemonth just, and has left his daughter, here, my mistress, three thousand pound a year. *(Weeping.*

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* Three thousand pound a year! Yes, yes, I am in love.

BETTY Besides money, gold and silver, and jewels.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* I'll marry her out of hand. *(Aloud)* Alas, I could even weep too. But 'tis in vain. Well, nephew, you may be gone now, for 'tis not necessary you should be seen here, d'ye see.

(Pushing him out.

WILDING You see, sir, now, what heaven has done for me. And you have often told me, sir, when that was kind, you would be so. Those writings, sir, by which you were so good to make me heir to all your estate, you said you would put into my possession, whene'er I made it appear to you I could live without 'em, or bring you a wife of fortune home.

SIR TIMOTHY And I will keep my word. There's time enough. *(Putting him out.*

WILDING I have, 'tis true, been wicked. But I shall now turn from my evil ways, establish myself in the religious City, and enter into the Association. There wants but these same writings, sir, and your good character of me.

SIR TIMOTHY Thou shalt have both. All in good time, man. Go, go thy ways, and I'll warrant thee for a good character. Go.

WILDING Aye, sir. But the writings, because I told her, sir, I was your heir. Nay, forced to swear it, too, before she would believe me.

SIR TIMOTHY Alas, alas, how shrewdly thou wert put to it!

WILDING I told her, too, you'd buy a title for me. For nothing woos a City fortune like the hopes of a ladyship.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* I'm glad of that. That I can settle on her presently.

WILDING You may please to hint something to her of my godly life and conversation. That I frequent conventicles, and am drunk nowhere but at your true Protestant consults and clubs, and the like.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* Nay, if these will please her, I have her for certain. *(Aloud)* Go, go. Fear not my good word.

WILDING But the writings, sir. ...

SIR TIMOTHY Am I a Jew, a Turk? *(Aside)* Thou shalt have anything, now I find thee a lad of parts, and one that can provide so well for thy uncle. *(Pushes him out, and addresses himself to the lady.)*

WILDING *(Aside)* I wish they were hanged that trust you, that have but the art of legerdemain, and can open the Japan-cabinet in your bed-chamber, where I know those writings are kept. Death, what a disappointment's here! I would've sworn this sham had passed upon him. ... *(To Sir Timothy)* But, sir, shall I not have the writings now?

SIR TIMOTHY What, not gone yet! For shame, away: Canst thou distrust thy own natural uncle? Fie, away, Tom, away.

WILDING *(Aside)* A plague upon your damned dissimulation, that never-failing badge of all your Party. There's always mischief at the bottom of it. I know ye all, and fortune be the word. When next I see you, uncle, it shall cost you dearer. *(Exit.)*

Enter Jervice.

JERVICE If it please your worship, supper's almost over, and you are asked for.

SIR TIMOTHY They know I never sup. I shall come, time enough, to bid 'em welcome. *(Exit Jervice.)*

DIANA I keep you, sir, from supper and better company.

SIR TIMOTHY Lady, were I a glutton, I could be satisfied
With feeding on those two bright, starry eyes.

DIANA You are a courtier, sir. We City maids do seldom hear such language, in which you show your kindness to your nephew, more than your thoughts of what my beauty merits.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* Lord, Lord, how innocent she is! *(Aloud)* My nephew, madam? Yes, yes, I cannot choose but be wondrous kind upon his score.

DIANA Nay, he has often told me you were the best of uncles. And he deserves your goodness. So hopeful a young gentleman.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* I wish I could see it.

DIANA So modest.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* Yes, ask my maids.

DIANA So civil.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* Yes, to my neighbours' wives. *(Aloud)* But so, madam, I find by this high commendations of my nephew, your ladyship has a very slender opinion of your devoted servant the while. Or else, madam, with this not disagreeable face and shape of mine, six thousand pound a year, and other virtues and commodities that shall be nameless, I see no reason why I should not beget an heir of my own body, had I the helping hand of a certain victorious person in the world, that shall be nameless. *(Bowing and smirking.)*

DIANA *(Aside)* Meaning me, I am sure. If I should marry him now, and disappoint my dear inconstant with an heir of his own begetting, 'twould be a most wicked revenge for past kindnesses.

SIR TIMOTHY I know your ladyship is studying now who this victorious person should be, whom I dare not name. But let it suffice, she is, madam, within a mile of an oak.

DIANA No, sir, I was considering, if what you say be true,
How unadvisedly I have loved your nephew,
Who swore to me he was to be your heir.

SIR TIMOTHY My heir, madam! Am I so visibly old to be so desperate?
No, I'm in my years of desires and discretion,

And I have thoughts, durst I but utter 'em.

But modestly say 'mum' ...

DIANA I took him for the hopefulest gentleman ...

SIR TIMOTHY Let him hope on, so will I. And yet, madam, in consideration of your love to him, and because he is my nephew, young, handsome, witty, and so forth, I am content to be so much a parent to him, as, if heaven please ... to see him fairly hanged.

DIANA (*In astonishment*) What, sir!

SIR TIMOTHY He has deserved it, madam. First, for lampooning the reverend City, with its noble government, with the right honourable gownmen. Libelling some for feasting, and some for fasting, some for cuckolds, and some for cuckold-makers. Charging us with all the seven deadly sins, the sins of our forefathers, adding seven score more to the number. The sins of 1641 revived again in eighty-one, with additions and amendments. For which, though the writings were drawn by which I made him my only heir, I will disinherit him. Secondly, madam, he deserves hanging for seducing and most feloniously bearing away a young City heiress.

DIANA Undone, undone! Oh with what face can I return again!

What man of wealth or reputation, now

Will think me worth the owning?

(*Feigns to weep.*)

SIR TIMOTHY Yes, yes, madam. There are honest, discreet, religious and true Protestant knights in the City that would be proud to dignify and distinguish so worthy a gentlewoman. (*Bowing and smiling.*)

BETTY (*Aside*) Look to your luck, and take fortune by the forelock, madam.

... (*Aloud*) Alas, madam, no knight, and poor, too!

SIR TIMOTHY As a Tory poet.

BETTY Well, madam, take comfort. If the worst come to the worst, you have estate enough for both.

DIANA Aye, Betty, were he but honest, Betty.

(*Weeping.*)

SIR TIMOTHY Honest! I think he will not steal. But for his body, the Lord have mercy upon it, for he has none.

DIANA 'Tis evident I am betrayed, abused.

He's looked, and sighed, and talked away my heart.

He's sworn and vowed, and flattered me to ruin.

(*Weeping.*)

SIR TIMOTHY A small fault with him. He has flattered and sworn me out of many a fair thousand. Why, he has no more conscience than a politician, nor no more truth than a narrative 'in strict confidence'.

DIANA Is there no truth nor honesty in the world?

SIR TIMOTHY Troth, very little, and that lies all in the City, amongst us sober magistrates.

DIANA Were I a man, how would I be revenged!

SIR TIMOTHY Your ladyship might do it better as you are, were I worthy to advise you.

DIANA Name it.

SIR TIMOTHY Why, by marrying your ladyship's most assured friend, and most humble servant, Timothy

Treat-all of London, alderman.

(*Bowing.*)

BETTY Aye, this is something, mistress. Here's reason!

DIANA But I have given my faith and troth to Wilding, Betty.

SIR TIMOTHY Faith and troth! We stand upon neither faith nor troth in the City, lady. I have known an heiress married and bedded, and yet with the advice of the wiser magistrates, has been unmarried and consummated anew with another, if it stands with our interest. 'Tis law, by Magna Carta. Nay, had you married my ungracious nephew, we might, by this our Magna Carta, have hanged him for a rape.

DIANA What, though he had my consent?

SIR TIMOTHY That's nothing. He had not ours.

DIANA Then, should I marry you by stealth, the danger would be the same.

SIR TIMOTHY No, no, madam. We never accuse one another. 'Tis the poor rogues, the Tory rascals, we always hang. Let 'em accuse me if they please, alas. I come off completely with *ignoramus*.

Enter Jervice.

JERVICE Sir, there's such calling for your worship! They are all very merry. The glasses go briskly about.

SIR TIMOTHY Go, go. I'll come when all the healths are drunk. I love no drinking of healths.

JERVICE They are all over, sir, and the ladies are for dancing. So they are all adjourning from the dining-room hither, as more commodious for that exercise. I think they're coming, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY Hah, coming! Call Sensure to wait on the lady to her rooms. ... And, madam, I do most heartily recommend my most humble appeal to your most judicious consideration, hoping you will most vigorously, and with all your might, maintain the rights and privileges of the honourable City, and not suffer the force or persuasion of any arbitrary lover whatsoever to subvert their ancient and fundamental laws, by seducing and forcibly bearing away so rich and so illustrious a lady. And, madam, we will unanimously stand by you with our lives and fortunes. ... *(Aside)* This I learned from a speech at the election of an MP. *(Leads her to the door. She goes out with Betty and Sensure.*

*Enter musicians playing, Sir Anthony Merriwill dancing with a lady in his hand,
Sir Charles with Lady Galliard, several other women and men.*

SIR ANTHONY (singing) Philander was a jolly swain,
And loved by every lass;
Whom when he met upon the plain,
He laid upon the grass.

And here he kissed, and there he played
With this, and then with t'other,
Till every wanton, smiling maid
At last became a mother.

And to her swain, and to her swain,
The nymph begins to yield.
Ruffle, and breathe, then to it again,
Thou art master of the field. *(Clapping Sir Charles on the back.*

SIR CHARLES And if I keep it not, say I'm a coward, uncle.

SIR ANTHONY More wine there, boys. I'll keep the humour up.

Enter bottles and glasses.

SIR TIMOTHY What! young Merriwill so close to the widow! ...

Madam ... *(Addressing himself to her. Sir Charles puts him by.*

SIR CHARLES Sir Timothy. Why, what a pox dost thou bring that damned Puritanical, schismatical, fanatical, small-beer-face of thine into good company? Give him a full glass to the widow's health.

SIR TIMOTHY O lack, Sir Charles, no health-drinking for me, I pray.

SIR CHARLES Hark ye, leave that cozening, canting, sanctified sneer of yours, and drink ye, like a sober, loyal magistrate, all those healths you are behind, from his sacred majesty, whom God long preserve, with the rest of the royal family, even down to this wicked widow, whom heaven soon convert from her lewd designs upon my body. *(Pulling Sir Timothy to kneel.*

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* A rare boy! He shall have all my estate.

SIR TIMOTHY *(Aside)* What? The widow a lewd design upon his body! Nay, then I am jealous.

LADY GALLIARD I, a lewd design upon your body! For what, I wonder?

SIR CHARLES Why, for villainous matrimony.

LADY GALLIARD Who, I!

SIR CHARLES Who, you? Yes, you.

Why are those eyes dressed in inviting love?

Those soft, bewitching smiles, those rising breasts,

And all those charms that make you so adorable?

Is it not to draw fools into matrimony?

SIR ANTHONY How's that, how's that! Charles at his adorables and charms! He must have t'other health. He'll fall to his old dog-trot again, else. Come, come, every man his glass. Sir Timothy, you are six behind.

Come, Charles, name 'em all. *(Each takes a glass, and force Sir Timothy on to his knees.*

SIR CHARLES ... Don't hold back, sir. Come, His Majesty's health, and confusion to his enemies.

(They go to force his mouth open to drink.

SIR TIMOTHY Hold, sir, hold. If I must drink, I must. But this is very arbitrary, methinks. *(Drinks.*

SIR ANTHONY And now, sir, to the royal Duke of York. Musicians, play a Scotch jig. *(Music plays, they drink.*

SIR TIMOTHY This is mere tyranny.

Enter Jervice.

JERVICE Sir, there is just alighted at the gate a person of quality, as appears by his followers, who give him the title of a lord.

SIR TIMOTHY What, a strange lord! Conduct him up with ceremony, Jervice. --- 'Ods so, he's here!

Enter Wilding in disguise, Dresswell, and footmen and pages.

WILDING Sir, by your reverend aspect, you should be the renowned *maître d'hotel*?

SIR TIMOTHY *Meter de Otel!* I have not the honour to know any of that name. I am called Sir Timothy Treat-all. *(Bowling.)*

WILDING The same, sir. I have been bred abroad, and thought all persons of quality had spoke French.

SIR TIMOTHY Not City persons of quality, my lord.

WILDING I'm glad of it, sir. For 'tis a nation I hate, as indeed I do all monarchies.

SIR TIMOTHY Hm! Hate monarchy! Your lordship is most welcome. *(Bows.)*

WILDING Unless elective monarchies, which so resemble a democracy.

SIR TIMOTHY Right, my lord. Where every man may hope to take his turn. ... Your lordship is most singularly welcome. *(Bows low.)*

WILDING And though I am a stranger to your person, I am not to your fame amongst the sober Party of the Amsterdamians, all the French Huguenots throughout Geneva, even to Hungary and Poland. Fame's trumpet sounds your praise, making the Pope to fear, the rest admire you.

SIR TIMOTHY I'm much obliged to the renowned mob.

WILDING So you will say, when you shall hear my ambassadorial message. The Polanders by me salute you, sir, and have in this next new election, pricked ye down for their succeeding king.

SIR TIMOTHY What, my Lord? Pricked me down for a king! Why, this is wonderful! Pricked me, unworthy me, down for a king! How could I merit this amazing glory!

WILDING They know, he that can be so great a patriot to his native country, where but a private person, what must he be when power is on his side?

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, my lord, my country, my bleeding country! There's the stop to all my rising greatness. Shall I be so ungrateful to disappoint this big, expectant nation? Defeat the sober Party, and my neighbours, for any Polish crown? But yet, my lord, I will consider on it: Meantime, my house is yours.

WILDING I've brought you, sir, the measurement of the crown: Hah, it fits you to a hair. *(Pulls out a tape and measures his head)* You were by heaven and nature framed that monarch.

SIR ANTHONY Hah, at it again! *(Sir Charles courting politely)* Come, we grow dull, Charles. Where stands the glass? What, refuse to drink my Lady Galliard's health! *(They go to drink.)*

WILDING *(Aside)* Hah, Galliard ... And so sweet on Merriwill!

LADY GALLIARD If it be your business, sir, to drink, I'll withdraw.

SIR CHARLES Gad, and I'll withdraw with you, widow. Hark ye, Lady Galliard, I am damnably afraid you cannot bear your liquor well, you are so forward to leave good company and a bottle.

SIR TIMOTHY Well, gentlemen, since I have done what I never do, to oblige you, I hope you'll not refuse a health of my denomination.

SIR ANTHONY We scorn to be so uncivil. *(All take glasses.)*

SIR TIMOTHY Why, then here's a concealed health, that shall be nameless, to His Grace the King of Poland.

SIR CHARLES King of Poland! Lord, lord, how your thoughts ramble!

SIR TIMOTHY Not so far as you imagine. I know what I say, sir.

SIR CHARLES Away with it. *(Drink all.)*

WILDING I see, sir, you still keep up that English hospitality that so renowned our ancestors in history. *(Looking at Lady Galliard.)*

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, my lord, my noble guests are my wife and children.

WILDING Are you not married, then? *(Aside)* Death, she smiles on him!

SIR TIMOTHY I had a wife, but, rest her soul, she's dead. And I have no plague left now, but an ungracious nephew, perverted with ill customs, tantivy-opinions, and Court notions.

WILDING Cannot your pious examples convert him? *(Aside)* By heaven, she's fond of him!

SIR TIMOTHY Alas, I have tried all ways, fair and foul. Nay, had settled t'other day my whole estate upon him. And just as I had signed the writings, out comes a damned libel called *A Warning to All Good Christians against the City Magistrates*. And I suspect he had a hand in *Absolom and Achitophel*. A rogue. But some of our sober Party have clawed him home, i'faith, and given him rhyme for his reason.

WILDING *(Aside)* Most visibly in love! ... *(Aloud)* Oh, sir, nature, laws, and religion, plead for so near a kinsman.

SIR TIMOTHY Laws and religion! Alas, my lord, he deserves not the name of a patriot who does not for the public good defy all laws and religion.

WILDING *(Aside)* Death, I must interrupt 'em! ... *(Aloud)* Sir, pray, what lady's that? *(Wilding nods to her.)*

SIR TIMOTHY I beseech your lordship, know her. 'Tis my Lady Galliard. The rest are all my friends and neighbours, true Protestants all ... Well, my lord, how do you like my method of doing the business of the nation, and carrying on the cause with wine, women, and so forth?

WILDING High feeding and smart drinking gains more to the Party than your smart preaching.

SIR TIMOTHY Your lordship has hit it right. A rare man, this!

WILDING But come, sir, leave we serious affairs, and oblige these fair ones.

(Addresses himself to Galliard. Sir Charles puts him by.)

Enter Charlot disguised, Clacket, and Fopington.

CHARLOT Heavens, Clacket, yonder's my false one, and that my lovely rival.

(Pointing to Wilding and Lady Galliard.)

Enter Diana and Sensure masked, and Betty.

DIANA Dear Mistress Sensure, this favour has obliged me.

SENSURE I hope you'll not reveal it to his worship, madam.

WILDING *(Aside)* By her bearing, this should be handsome. ... *(Goes to Diana)* Madam, I hope you have not made a resolution to deny me the honour of your hand.

DIANA Hah, Wilding! Love can discover thee through all disguise.

WILDING *(Aside)* Hah, Diana! I wish 'twere felony to wear a mask. Gad, I'd rather meet it on the King's Highway with 'stand and deliver', than thus encounter it on the face of an old mistress. And the cheat were more excusable. ... But how --- *(Talks aside with her.)*

SIR CHARLES *(To Lady Galliard)* Nay, never frown nor chide. For thus do I intend to show my authority, till I have made thee only fit for me.

WILDING *(Aside)* Is it so, my precious uncle! Are you so great a devil in hypocrisy! Thus had I been served had I brought him the right woman.

DIANA But do not think, dear Tommy, I would have served thee so. Married thy uncle, and have cozened thee of thy birthright. ... But see, we're observed! *(Charlot listening behind him all this while.)*

CHARLOT *(Aside)* By all that's good, 'tis he! That voice is his!

(He, going from Diana, turns upon Charlot and looks.)

WILDING Hah, what pretty creature's this, that has so much of Charlot in her face? But sure, she durst not venture out. 'Tis not her dress nor bearing. Dear pretty stranger, I must dance with you.

CHARLOT Gued deed, and see ye shall, sir, gen you please. Tho I's not dance, sir, I's tell ya that noo.

WILDING Nor I, so we're well matched. *(Aside)* By heaven, she's wondrous like her.

CHARLOT By the Mass, not so kind, sir. 'Twere gued that ene of us should dance to guid the other weel.

WILDING *(Aside)* How young, how innocent, and free she is! *(Aloud)* And would you, fair one, be guided by me?

CHARLOT In anything that gued is.

WILDING I love you extremely, and would teach you to love.

CHARLOT Ah, wele aday!

(Sighs and smiles.)

WILDING A thing I know you do not understand.

CHARLOT Gued faith, and ya're i'th' right, sir. Yet 'tis a thing I's often hear ya gay men talk of.

WILDING Yes, and no doubt have been told those pretty eyes inspired it.

CHARLOT Gued deed, and so I have: Ya men make sa mickle ado aboot ens eyes, ways me, I's ene tired with sick-like compliments.

WILDING Ah, if you give us wounds, we must complain.

CHARLOT Ya may ene keep out a harm's way then.
WILDING Oh, we cannot. Or, if we could, we would not.
CHARLOT Well, and I's have ene a song tol that tune, sir.
WILDING Dear creature, let me beg it.
CHARLOT Gued faith, ya shall not, sir. I's sing without entreaty.

SONG.

Ah, Jenny, gen your eyes do kill,
You'll let me tell my pain.
Gued faith, I loved against my will,
But wad not break my chain.
I ence was called a bonny lad,
Till that fair face've yours
Betrayed the freedom ence I had,
And ad my bleether howers.

But noo, wey's me, like winter looks,
My gloomy showering eyne,
And on the banks of shaded brooks,
I pass my wearied time.
I call the stream that gleeedeth on
To witness if it see,
On all the flowry brink along,
A swain so true as I-ee.

WILDING This very swain am I, so true and so forlorn, unless you pity me. *(Aside)* This is an excellency Charlot lacks. At least, I never heard her sing.

SIR ANTHONY Why, Charles. Where stands the woman, Charles? *(Fopington comes up to Charlot.)*

WILDING *(Aside)* I must speak to Galliard, though all my fortunes depend on the concealment of myself.

SIR ANTHONY Come, come, a cooling glass about.

WILDING Dear Dresswell, entertain Charles Merriwill a little, whilst I speak to Galliard.

(The men go all to the drinking-table.)

(Aside) By heaven, I die, I languish for a word!
... *(Aloud)* Madam, I hope you have not made a vow
To speak with none but that young cavalier?
They say, the freedom English ladies use
Is, as their beauty, great.

LADY GALLIARD Sir, we are none of those of so delicate a virtue as conversation can corrupt. We live in a cold climate.

WILDING And think you're not so apt to be in love,
As where the sun shines oftener.
(Maliciously to her) But you too much partake of the inconstancy of this your fickle climate.
One day, all sunshine, and the encouraged lover
Decks himself up in glittering robes of hope.
And in the midst of all their boasted finery
Comes a dark cloud across his mistress' brow,
Dashes the fool, and spoils the gaudy show. *(Lady Galliard observing him attentively.)*

LADY GALLIARD Hah, do not I know that railing tongue of yours?

WILDING 'Tis from your guilt, not judgment, then.
I was resolved to be tonight a witness
Of that sworn love you flattered me so often with.
By heaven, I saw you playing with my rival,
Sighed, and looked babies in his gloating eyes.
When is the assignation? When the hours?
For he's impatient as the raging sea,

Loose as the winds, and amorous as the sun
That kisses all the beauties of the spring.

LADY GALLIARD I take him for a soberer person, sir.

WILDING Have I been the companion of his riots
In all the lewd course of our early youth,
Where, like unwearied bees, we gathered flowers?
But no kind blossom could oblige our stay.
We rifled, and were gone.

LADY GALLIARD Your virtues, I perceive, are pretty equal.
Only his love's the honester of the two.

WILDING Honester! That is, he would owe his good fortune to the parson of the parish,
And I would be obliged to you alone.
He would have a licence to boast he lies with you,
And I would do it with modesty and silence
For virtue's but a name kept free from scandal,
Which the most base of women best preserve,
Since jilting and hypocrisy cheat the world best.
... *(In a soft tone)* But we both love, and who shall blab the secret?

LADY GALLIARD Oh, why were all the charms of speaking given to that false tongue that makes no better use
of 'em?

--- I'll hear no more of your enchanting reasons.

WILDING You must.

LADY GALLIARD I will not.

WILDING Indeed, you must.

LADY GALLIARD By all the powers above ...

WILDING By all the powers of love, you'll break your oath, unless you swear this night to let me see you.

LADY GALLIARD This night?

WILDING This very night.

LADY GALLIARD I'd die first ... At what hour? *(First turns away, then sighs and looks on him.)*

WILDING *(With joy)* Oh, name it; and if I fail ...

LADY GALLIARD I would not for the world ...

WILDING That I should fail!

LADY GALLIARD Not name the guilty hour.

WILDING Then I, through eager haste, shall come too soon,
And do your honour wrong.

LADY GALLIARD My honour! Oh that word!

WILDING *(Aside)* Which the devil was in me for naming. ... *(Aloud)* At twelve!

LADY GALLIARD My women and my servants then are up.

WILDING At one, or two.

LADY GALLIARD So late! 'Twill be so quickly day!

WILDING Aye, so it will,

That half our business will be left unfinished.

LADY GALLIARD Hah, what do you mean? What business?

WILDING A thousand tender things I have to say,
A thousand vows of my eternal love.

And now and then we'll kiss and ...

LADY GALLIARD Be extremely honest.

WILDING As you can wish.

LADY GALLIARD Rather, as I command: *(Aside)* For should he know my wish, I were undone.

WILDING The sign. ...

LADY GALLIARD Oh, press me not. ... Yet you may come at midnight under my chamber window.

(Sir Charles, seeing them so close together, comes to them.)

SIR CHARLES (*To Dresswell*) Hold, sir, hold! Whilst I am listening to the relation of your French fortifications, outworks, and counterscarps, I perceive the enemy in my quarters. ... My lord, by your leave.
(*Puts him by, growing drunk.*)

CHARLOT Persuade me not. I burst with jealousy. (*Wilding turns, sees Clacket.*)

WILDING (*Aside*) Death and the devil, Clacket! Then 'tis Charlot, and I'm discovered to her.

CHARLOT (*To Wilding in anger*) Say, are not you a false dissembling thing?

WILDING What, my little Northern lass translated into English!

This 'tis to practise art in spite of Nature.

Alas, thy virtue, youth, and innocence

Were never made for cunning.

I found ye out through all your forced disguise.

CHARLOT Hah, did you know me, then?

WILDING At the first glance, and found you knew me too,

And talked to yonder lady in revenge, whom my uncle would have me marry. But to avoid all discourses of that nature, I came tonight in this disguise you see, to be concealed from her; that's all.

CHARLOT And is that all, on honour? Is it, dear?

WILDING What, no belief, no faith, in villainous women?

CHARLOT Yes, when I see the writings.

WILDING Go home. I die if you should be discovered.

And credit me. I'll bring you all you ask.

(*Aside to Clacket*) Clacket, you and I must have an odd reckoning about this night's jaunt of yours.

SIR TIMOTHY Well, my lord, how do you like our English beauties?

WILDING Extremely, sir; and was pressing this young lady to give us a song.

(*Here is sung is an Italian sing in two parts.*)

SIR TIMOTHY (*To Clacket*) I never saw this lady before. Pray, who may she be, neighbour?

MRS CLACKET A niece of mine, newly come out of Scotland, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY Nay, then she dances by nature. Gentlemen and ladies, please you to sit. Here's a young neighbour of mine will honour us with a dance. (*They all sit. Charlot and Fopington dance.*)

So, so. Very well, very well. Gentlemen and ladies, I am for liberty of conscience, and moderation.

There's a banquet waits the ladies, and my cellars are open to the men. But for myself, I must retire.

First, waiting on your lordship to show you your rooms, then leave you to cheer entire. And tomorrow,

my lord, you and I will settle the nation, and resolve on what return we will make to the noble

Polanders. (*Exeunt all but Wilding, Dresswell and Fopington. Sir Charles leading out Lady Galliard.*)

SIR ANTHONY Well said, Charles. Thou leavest her not till she's thy own, boy. --- And

Philander was a jolly swain, etc.

(*Exit singing.*)

WILDING All things succeed above my wish, dear Frank.

Fortune is kind; and more, Galliard is so.

This night crowns all my wishes.

(*To his footman*) Laboir, are all things ready for our purpose?

LABOIR Lanterns, pistols, costumes and masks, sir.

FOPINGTON I have provided portmanteaus to carry off the treasure.

DRESSWELL I perceive you are resolved to make a through-stitched robbery of it.

FOPINGTON Faith, if it go our way, sir. We had as good venture a caper under the gallows for one as well as t'other.

WILDING We will consider on't. 'Tis now just struck eleven. Within this hour is the dear assignation with Galliard.

DRESSWELL What, whether our affairs be finished or not?

WILDING 'Tis but at next door, I shall return time enough for that trivial business.

DRESSWELL A trivial business of some six thousand pound a year?

WILDING Trivial compared to a woman, Frank! No more. Make as if you went to bed. ... Laboir, feign to be drunk, and lie on the hall table. And when I give the sign, let me softly in.

DRESSWELL Death, sir, will you venture at such a time!

WILDING My life and future hope ... I am resolved,

Let politicians plot, let rogues go on
In the old beaten path of 1641.
Let City-knaves delight in mutiny,
The rabble bow to old Presbytery.
Let petty states be to confusion hurled,
Give me but woman, I'll despise the world.

Act IV, scene 1. A dressing-room. *Lady Galliard is revealed informally dressed at her dressing-table, mirror and make-up, Closet attending. As soon as the scene starts, she rises from the dressing-table as if disturbed and out of humour.*

LADY GALLIARD Come, leave your everlasting chamber-maid's chat, your dull road of slandering by rote, and lay that paint aside. Thou art fuller of false news, than an unlicensed news-sheet.

CLOSET I have good proof, madam, of what I say.

LADY GALLIARD Proof of a thing impossible! ... Away.

CLOSET Is it a thing so impossible, madam, that a man of Mr Wilding's parts and person should get a City heiress? Such a *bonne miene*, and such a pleasant wit!

LADY GALLIARD Hold thy fluent tattle. Thou hast tongue enough to talk an oyster-woman deaf. I say it cannot be. ...
(Aside) What means the panting of my troubled heart!
Oh, my presaging fears! should what she says prove true,
How wretched and how lost a thing am I!

CLOSET Your honour may say your pleasure. But I hope I have not lived to these years to be impertinent. ...
No, madam, I am none of those that run up and down the Town a story-hunting, and a lie-catching, and ...

LADY GALLIARD Eternal rattle, peace! ... Mistress Charlot Gettall go away with Wilding! A man of Wilding's extravagant life get a fortune in the City! Thou mightst as well have told me a nonconformist preacher were married to a nun. There are not two such contraries in nature. 'Tis flam, 'tis foolery, 'tis most impossible.

CLOSET I beg your ladyship's pardon, if my discourse offend you. But all the world knows Mistress Clacket to be a person ...

LADY GALLIARD Who is a most devout bawd, a precise procurer. Saint in the spirit, and whore in the flesh. A doer of the devil's work in God's name. Is she your informer? Nay, then the lie's undoubted. ... I say once more, I've done with your idle tittle-tattle. ... And to divert me, bid Betty sing the song which Wilding made to his last mistress. We may judge by that what little haunts and what low game he follows. This is not like the description of a rich citizen's daughter and heir, but some common hackney of the suburbs.

CLOSET I have heard him often swear she was a gentlewoman, and lived with her friends.

LADY GALLIARD Like enough. There are many of these gentlewomen who live with their friends, as rank prostitutes, as errant jilts, as those who make open profession of the trade ... Almost as mercenary ...
But come, the song.

Enter Betty.

SONG.

In Phillis all vile jilts are met,
Foolish, uncertain, false, coquette.
Love is her constant welcome guest,
And still the newest pleases best.
Quickly she likes, then leaves as soon;
Her life on woman's a lampoon.

Yet, for the plague of human race,
This devil has an angel's face.
Such youth, such sweetness in her look,

Who can be man, and not be took?
What former love, what wit, what art,
Can save a poor inclining heart?

In vain, a thousand times an hour,
Reason rebels against her power.
In vain I rail, I curse her charms;
One look my feeble rage disarms.
There is enchantment in her eyes.
Who sees 'em, can no more be wise.

Enter Wilding, who runs to embrace Lady Galliard.

WILDING 'Twelve was the lucky minute when we met.'* * quoting a poem about a night of passion.

Most charming of your sex, and wisest of all widows,
My life, my soul, my heaven to come, and here!
Now I have lived to purpose, since at last ... Oh, killing joy! ...
Come, let me fold you, press you in my arms,
And kiss you thanks for this dear, happy night.

LADY GALLIARD You may spare your thanks, sir, for those that will deserve 'em. I shall give ye no occasion for 'em.

WILDING Nay, no scruples now, dearest of dears, no more;
'Tis most unseasonable ...
I bring a heart full freight with eager hopes,
Oppressed with a vast load of longing love.
Let me unlade me in that soft, white bosom,
That store-house of rich joys and lasting pleasures,
And lay me down as on a bed of lilies. *(She breaks from him.)*

LADY GALLIARD You're wondrous full of love and rapture, sir. But certainly you mistake the person you address 'em to.

WILDING Why, are you not my Lady Galliard, that very Lady Galliard, who, if one may take her word for it, loves Wilding? Am I not come hither by your own appointment? And can I have any other business here at this time of night, but love, and rapture, and ...

LADY GALLIARD Scandalous and vain! By my appointment, and for so lewd a purpose! Guard me, ye good angels.
If, after an affront so gross as this,
I ever suffer you to see me more,
Then think me what your conduct calls me,
An impudent, an open prostitute,
Lost to all sense of virtue, or of honour.

WILDING *(Aside)* What can this mean?
(Looking at Closet) Oh, now I understand the mystery. Her woman's here, that troublesome attendant.
... I must remove her. *(Aloud)* Hark ye, Mistress Closet, I had forgot to tell you. As I came up, I heard a kinsman of yours, very earnest with the servants below, and in great haste to speak with you.

CLOSET A kinsman! That's very likely indeed, and at this time of night.

WILDING Yes, a very near kinsman he said he was, your father's own mother's uncle's sister's son. What d'ye call him?

CLOSET Aye, what d'ye call him indeed? I should be glad to hear his name. Alas, sir, I have no near relation living that I know of, the more's my misfortune, poor helpless orphan that I am. *(Weeps.)*

WILDING Nay, but Mistress Closet, pray take me right. This countryman of yours, as I was saying ...

LADY GALLIARD Changed already from a kinsman to a countryman! A plain contrivance to get my woman out of the room. Closet, as you value my service, stir not from hence.

WILDING This countryman of yours, I say, being left executor by your father's last will and testament, is come ... *(Aside to Closet)* Dull waiting-woman, I would be alone with your lady. Know your cue, and retire.

CLOSET What, sir!

WILDING (*Aside to Closet*) Learn, I say, to understand reason when you hear it. Leave us a while. Love is not a game for three to play at. *(Gives her money.*

CLOSET (*Aside to Wilding*) I must own to all the world, you have convinced me. I ask a thousand pardons for my dullness. Well, I'll be gone. I'll run. You're a most powerful person, the very spirit of persuasion. ... I'll steal out. ... You have such a taking way with you ... But I forget myself. Well, your most obedient servant. Whenever you've occasion, sir, be pleased to use me freely.

WILDING (*Aside to Closet*) Nay, dear impertinent, no more compliments. You see I'm busy now. Prithee, be gone. You see I'm busy.

CLOSET (*Aside to Wilding*) I'm all obedience to you, sir ... Your most obedient ...

LADY GALLIARD Whither are you fiscing and gigiting now?

CLOSET Madam, I am going down, and will return immediately, immediately. *(Exit Closet.*

WILDING So, she's gone. Heaven and broad gold be praised for the deliverance. And now, dear widow, let's lose no more precious time. We've fooled away too much already.

LADY GALLIARD This, to me?

WILDING To you, yes. To whom else should it be? Unless, being aware you have not discretion enough to manage your own affairs yourself, you resolve, like other widows, with all you're worth, to buy a governor, commonly called a husband. I took ye to be wiser. But, if that be your design, I shall do my best to serve you. ... Though, to deal freely with you ...

LADY GALLIARD Trouble not yourself, sir, to make excuses. I'm not so fond of the offer to take you at your word. Marry you! A rakeshame, who have not esteem enough for the sex to believe your own mother honest ... Without money or credit, without land either in present or prospect. And half-a-dozen hungry vices, like so many bawling brats at your back, perpetually craving, and more chargeable to keep than twice the number of children. Besides, I think you are provided for. Are you not married to Mistress Charlot Gettall?

WILDING Married to her? Do I know her, you should rather ask. What fool has forged this unlikely lie? But suppose 'twere true, could you be jealous of a woman I marry? Do you take me for such an ass, to suspect I shall love my own wife? On the other side, I have a great charge of vices, as you well observe, and I must not be so barbarous to let them starve. Everybody in this age takes care to provide for their vices, though they send their children a-begging. I should be worse than an infidel to neglect them. No, I must marry some stiff, awkward thing or other, with an ugly face and a handsome estate, that's certain. But whoever is ordained to make my fortune, 'tis you, only, that can make me happy. ... Come, do it then.

LADY GALLIARD I never will.

WILDING Unkindly said. You must.

LADY GALLIARD Unreasonable man! Because you see
I have unusual regards for you,
Pleasure to hear, and trouble to deny you.
A fatal yielding in my nature toward you.
Love bends my soul that way. ...
A weakness I ne'er felt for any other.
And would you be so base? And could you have the heart
To take the advantage of it to ruin me,
To make me infamous, despised, loathed, pointed at?

WILDING You reason false. ...

According to the strictest rules of honour,
Beauty should still be the reward of love,
Not the vile merchandise of fortune,
Or the cheap drug of a church ceremony.
She's only infamous, who, to her bed,
For advantage, takes some nauseous clown she hates.
And though a jointure* or a vow in public * prospect of a widow's income
Be her price, that makes her but the dearer whore.

LADY GALLIARD I understand not these new morals.

WILDING Have patience. I say 'tis clear.

All the desires of mutual love are virtuous.
Can heaven or man be angry that you please
Yourself and me, when it does wrong to none?
Why rave you, then, on things that ne'er can be?
Besides, are we not alone, and private? Who can know it?

LADY GALLIARD Heaven will know it. And I ... That, that's enough.

But when you're weary of me, first your friend, then his, then all the world.

WILDING Think not that time will ever come.

LADY GALLIARD Oh, it must, it will!

WILDING Or if it should, could I be such a villain? ...

Ah, cruel! If you loved me as you say,
You would not thus distrust me.

LADY GALLIARD You do me wrong. I love you more than e'er my tongue,

Or all the actions of my life, can tell you ... So well ...
Your very faults, how gross so e'er, to me
Have something pleasing in 'em. To me, you're all
That man can praise, or woman can desire.
All charm without, and all merit within.
But yet, my virtue is more lovely still.
That is a price too high to pay for you.
The love of angels may be bought too dear,
If we bestow on them what's kept for heaven.

WILDING Hell and the devil! I'll hear no more

Of this religious stuff, this godly nonsense.

Death, madam, do you bring me into your chamber to preach virtue to me?

LADY GALLIARD I, bring you hither! How can you say it?

I suffered you, indeed, to come, but not
For the base end you fancied, but to take
A last leave of you. Let my heart break with love,
I cannot be that wretched thing you'd have me.
Believe I still shall have a kindness for you,
Always your friend, your beloved now no more.

WILDING *(Aside)* Cozened, abused! She loves some other man!

Dull blockhead not to find it out before!

(Aloud) ... Well, madam, may I at last believe

This is your fixed and final resolution?

And does your tongue now truly speak your heart,

That has so long belied it?

LADY GALLIARD It does.

WILDING I'm glad of it. Good night. And when I visit you again,

May you again thus fool me. *(Offers to go.)*

LADY GALLIARD Stay, but a moment.

WILDING For what? To praise your night-dress, or make court to your little dog? No, no, madam, send for Mr Flamfull and Mr Flutterbuz, Mr Lap-fool and Mr Love-all. They'll do it better, and are more at leisure.

LADY GALLIARD *(In a soft tone)* Hear me a little. You know I both despise and hate those civil coxcombs, as much as I esteem and love you. But why will you be gone so soon? And why are you so cruel to urge me thus to part either with your good opinion or your kindness? I would, dearly, keep 'em both.

WILDING Then keep your word, madam.

LADY GALLIARD My word! And have I promised, then, to be

A whore? A whore! Oh let me think of that!

A man's convenience, his leisure hours, his bed of ease,
To loll and tumble on at idle times.

The slave, the hackney of his lawless lust!
A loathed extinguisher of filthy flames,
Made use of, and thrown by. ... Oh, infamous!

WILDING Come, come, you love me not. I see it plain.

That makes your scruples. That, that's the reason
You flinch at words, and run away from shadows.
Already some pert fop, some ribbon-fool,
Some dancing coxcomb, has supplanted me
In that unsteady, treacherous woman's heart of yours.

LADY GALLIARD Believe it if you will. Yes, let me be false, unjust, ungrateful, anything but a ... whore ...

WILDING Oh, sex on purpose formed to plague mankind!

All that you are, and that you do, is a lie.
False are your faces, false your floating hearts.
False are your quarrels, false your reconcilements.
Enemies without reason, and dear without kindness.
Your friendship's false, but much more false your love.
Your damned, deceitful love is all o'er false.

LADY GALLIARD False, rather, are the joys you are so fond of.

Be wise, and cease, sir, to pursue 'em farther.

WILDING No, them I can never quit. But you, most easily.

A woman changeable, and false as you.

LADY GALLIARD Said you most easily? Oh, inhuman!

Your cruel words have waked a dismal thought.

I feel 'em cold and heavy at my heart,
And weakness steals upon my soul apace.

I find I must be miserable. ...

(In a soft tone, coming near him) I would not be thought false.

WILDING Nor would I think you so. Give me not cause.

LADY GALLIARD *(Aside)* What heart can bear distrust from what it loves?

Or who can always her own wish deny?

My reason's weary of the unequal strife,
And love and nature will at last o'ercome.

--- *(To him in a soft tone)* Do you not then believe I love you?

WILDING How can I, while you still remain unkind?

LADY GALLIARD *(Aside)* How shall I speak my guilty thoughts? ...

(Aloud) I have not power to part with you. Conceal my shame I fear I cannot. I fear I would not any more deny you.

WILDING Oh, heavenly sound! Oh, charming creature! Speak that word again. Again, again! For ever let me hear it.

LADY GALLIARD But did you not, indeed? And will you never, never love Mistress Charlot, never?

WILDING Never, never.

LADY GALLIARD Turn your face away, and give me leave

To hide my rising blushes. I cannot look on you,

But you must undo me if you will. ... *(As this last speech is speaking, she sinks into his arms by degrees.*

Since I no other way my truth can prove,

... You shall see I love.

Pity my weakness, and admire my love.

WILDING All heaven is mine. I have it in my arms.

Nor can ill fortune reach me any more.

Fate, I defy thee, and dull world, adieu.

In love's kind fever let me ever lie,

Drunk with desire, and raving mad with joy.

(Exeunt into the bed-chamber, Wilding leading her with his arms about her.)

Act IV, scene 2 Enter Sir Charles Merriwill, drunk, and Sir Anthony.

SIR ANTHONY A dog, a rogue, to leave her!

SIR CHARLES Why, look ye, uncle, what would you have a man do? I brought her to her coach. ...

SIR ANTHONY To her coach! To her coach! Did not I put her into your hand, followed you out, winked, smiled, and nodded? Cried, "bye Charles, 'bye rogue'? Which was as much as to say, 'Go home with her, Charles, home to her chamber, Charles'. Nay, as much as to say, 'Home to her bed, Charles'. Nay, as much as to say ... Hm, hm, a rogue, a dog, and yet to be modest too! That I should bring thee up with no more fear of God before my eyes!

SIR CHARLES Nay, dear uncle, don't break my heart now. Why, I did proffer, and press, and swear, and lied, and ... But a pox on her, she has the damnedest, wheedling way with her, as, 'Dear Charles. Nay prithee, fie, 'tis late, tomorrow. My honour, which if you loved, you would preserve'. And such obliging reasons.

SIR ANTHONY Reasons! Reason! A lover, and talk of reason! You lie, sirrah, you lie. Leave a woman for reason, when you were so finely drunk, too? A rascal!

SIR CHARLES Why, look ye, d'ye see, uncle, I durst not trust myself alone with her in this pickle, lest I should've fallen foul on her.

SIR ANTHONY Why, there's it. 'Tis that you should've done. I am mistaken if she be not one of those ladies that love to be ravished of a kindness. Why, your willing rape is all the fashion, Charles.

SIR CHARLES But, hark ye, uncle.

SIR ANTHONY Why, how now, Jack-sauce. What, capitulate?

SIR CHARLES Why, do but hear me, uncle. Lord, you're so hasty! Why, look ye, I am as ready, d'ye see, as any man on these occasions.

SIR ANTHONY Are you so, sir? And I'll make you willing, or try a toledo sword with you, sir. ... Whe, what, I shall have ye whining when you are sober again, traversing your chamber, with arms across, railing on love and women, and at last defeated, turn Whipping Tom,⁶ to revenge yourself on the whole sex.

SIR CHARLES My dear uncle, come kiss me and be friends. I will be ruled. *(Kisses him.)*

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* A most admirable, good-natured boy, this! *(Aloud)* Well then, dear Charles, know, I have brought thee now hither to the widow's house with a resolution to have thee order matters so, as before thou quits her, she shall be thy own, boy.

SIR CHARLES Gad, uncle, thou'rt a cherubin! Introduce me, d'ye see, and if I do not so woo the widow, and so do the widow, that before morning she shall be content to take me for better for worse. ... Renounce me! Egad, I'll make her know the Lord God from Tom Bell,⁷ before I have done with her. Nay, backed by my noble uncle, I'll venture on her, had she all Cupid's arrows, Venus's Beauty, and Messalina's fire, d'ye see.

SIR ANTHONY A sweet boy, a very sweet boy! Hm, thou art damnably handsome tonight, Charles. ... Aye, thou wilt do it. I see a kind of a resistless lewdness about thee, a most triumphant impudence, loose and wanton. *(Stands looking at him.)*

Enter Closet.

CLOSET Heavens, gentlemen, what makes you here at this time of night?

SIR CHARLES Where's your lady?

CLOSET Softly, dear sir.

SIR CHARLES Why, is she asleep? Come, come, I'll wake her. *(Offers to force in as to the bed-chamber.)*

CLOSET Hold, hold, sir. No, no, she's a little busy, sir.

SIR CHARLES I'll have no business done tonight, sweetheart.

CLOSET Hold, hold, I beseech you, sir. Her mother's with her. For heaven's sake, sir, be gone.

SIR CHARLES I'll not budge.

SIR ANTHONY No, not a foot.

CLOSET The City you know, sir, is so censorious ...

⁶ **Whipping Tom:** he assaulted women in the Fleet Street area by spanking them.

⁷ **Lord God ... Tom Bell:** distinguish her rightful lord from ordinary men.

SIR CHARLES Damn the City.

SIR ANTHONY All the Whigs, Charles, all the Whigs.

SIR CHARLES In short, I am resolved, d'ye see, to go to the widow's chamber.

SIR ANTHONY Hark ye, Mistress Closet, I thought I had entirely hired you this evening.

CLOSET I am perfectly yours, sir; but now it happens so, her mother being there ... Yet if you would withdraw for half an hour, into my chamber, till she were gone ...

SIR ANTHONY This is reason, Charles. Here, here's two pieces to buy thee a gorget. *(Gives her money.*

SIR CHARLES And here's my two, because thou art industrious. *(Gives her money, and goes out with her.*

Enter Lady Galliard in rage, held by Wilding.

LADY GALLIARD What have I done? Ah, whither shall I fly? *(Weeps.*

WILDING Why all these tears? Ah, why this cruel passion?

LADY GALLIARD Undone, undone! Unhand me, false, forsworn.

Be gone, and let me rage till I am dead.

What should I do with guilty life about me?

WILDING Why, where's the harm of what we two have done?

LADY GALLIARD Ah, leave me ...

Leave me alone to sigh to flying winds,

That the infection may be borne aloft,

And reach no human ear.

WILDING Cease, lovely charmer. Cease to wound me more.

LADY GALLIARD Shall I survive this shame? No, if I do,

Eternal blushes dwell upon my cheeks,

To tell the world my crime.

... Mischief and hell, what devil did possess me?

WILDING It was no devil, but a deity.

A little, gay-winged god, harmless and innocent,

Young as desire, wanton as summer-breezes,

Soft as thy smiles, resistless as thy eyes.

LADY GALLIARD Ah, what malicious god,

Sworn enemy to feeble womankind,

Taught thee the art of conquest with thy tongue?

Thy false, deluding eyes were surely made

Of stars that rule our sex's destiny.

And all thy charms were by enchantment wrought,

That first undo the heedless gazers-on,

Then show their natural deformity.

WILDING *(In a soft tone)* Ah, my Galliard, am I grown ugly then?

Has my increase of passion lessened yours?

LADY GALLIARD Peace tempter. Peace, who artfully betrayest me,

And then upbraidst the wretchedness thou'st made.

--- Ah, fool, eternal fool! To know my danger,

Yet venture on so evident a ruin.

WILDING Say ... What one grace is faded?

Is not thy face as fair, thy eyes as killing?

By heaven, much more. This charming change of looks

Raises my flame, and makes me wish to invoke

The harmless god again. *(Embraces her.*

LADY GALLIARD By heaven, not all thy art

Shall draw me to the tempting sin again.

WILDING Oh, I must, or die.

LADY GALLIARD By all the powers, by ...

WILDING Oh, do not swear, lest love should take it ill

That honour should presume to give him laws,

And make an oath more powerful than his godhead.

... Say that you will, half a long hour hence ...

LADY GALLIARD Hah?

WILDING Or say a tedious hour.

LADY GALLIARD Death, never ...

WILDING Or, if you must ... Promise me, then, tomorrow.

LADY GALLIARD No. Hear my vows.

WILDING Hold, see me die. If you resolve 'em fatal to my love, by heaven I'll do it. *(Lays his hand on his sword.*

LADY GALLIARD Ah, what ...

WILDING Revoke that fatal 'Never', then.

LADY GALLIARD I dare not.

WILDING Oh, say you will.

LADY GALLIARD Alas, I dare not utter it.

WILDING Let's in, and thou shalt whisper it into my bosom.

Or, sighing, look it to me with thy eyes.

LADY GALLIARD Ah, Wilding ... *(Sighs.*

WILDING It touched my soul! Repeat that sigh again.

LADY GALLIARD Ah, I confess I am but feeble woman. *(Leans on him.*

SIR CHARLES *(from offstage)* Good mistress keep-door, stand by. For I must enter.

LADY GALLIARD Hah, young Merriwill's voice!

CLOSET *(from offstage)* Pray, Sir Charles, let me go and give my lady notice.

She enters, and goes to Wilding.

--- For heaven's sake, sir, withdraw, or my lady's honour's lost.

WILDING *(To Galliard)* What will you have me do?

LADY GALLIARD Be gone, or you will ruin me for ever. *(In disorder.*

WILDING Nay, then I will obey.

LADY GALLIARD Here, down the back stairs. ...

As you have honour, go and cherish mine. *(Pulling him.*

--- He's gone. And now, methinks, the shivering fit of honour is returned.

Enter Sir Charles, rudely pushing Closet aside, with Sir Anthony.

SIR CHARLES Denied an entrance! Nay, then there is a rival in the case, or so. And I'm resolved to discover the hellish plot, d'ye see.

Just as he enters, drunk, at one door, Wilding returns at the other.

LADY GALLIARD Ha, Wilding returned! Shield me, ye shades of night.

(Puts out the candles, and goes to Wilding.

WILDING The back-stairs door is locked.

LADY GALLIARD Oh, I am lost! Curse on this fatal night!

Art thou resolved on my undoing every way?

CLOSET *(To Wilding)* Nay, now we're by dark, let me alone to guide you, sir.

SIR CHARLES What, what, all in darkness? Do you make love like cats, by star-light? *(Reeling about.*

LADY GALLIARD *(Aside)* Ah, he knows. He's here! ... Oh, what a pain is guilt!

WILDING I would not be surprised.

(As Closet takes him to lead him out, he takes out his sword, and, by dark, pushes by Sir Charles, and almost knocks down Sir Anthony. At which, they both draw, whilst he goes out with Closet.

SIR CHARLES Hah, Gad, 'twas a man! ... What, vanished! Hah ...

SIR ANTHONY Nay, nay, sir, I am prepared for ye.

SIR CHARLES Are you so, sir? And I am for the widow, sir, and ...

Just as they are passing at each other, Closet enters with a candle.

--- Hah, why, what have we here? ... Mine own flesh and blood? *(Embracing his uncle.*

SIR ANTHONY Cry mercy, sir! Pray, how fell we out?

SIR CHARLES Out, sir! Prithee where's my rival? Where's the man, the ... Gad, I took thee for an arrant rival.
Where, where is he? *(Searching about.)*

LADY GALLIARD *(Angrily)* Whom seek ye, sir? A man, and in my lodgings?

CLOSET A man! Merciful, what will this scandalous, lying world come to? Here's no man.

SIR CHARLES Away, I say, thou damned domestic intelligence, that comest out every half hour with some fresh sham. ... No man! ... What, 'twas an appointment only, hm ... which I shall now make bold to unappoint, render null, void, and of none effect. And if I find him here *(searches about)* I shall very civilly and accidentally, as it were, being in perfect friendship with him ... pray mark that ... run him through the lungs.

LADY GALLIARD *(Aside)* Oh, what a coward is guilt! *(Aloud)* What mean you, sir?

SIR CHARLES Mean! Why, I am obstinately bent to ravish thee, thou hypocritical widow, make thee mine by force, that so I may have no obligation to thee, and consequently use thee scurvily with a good conscience.

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* A most delicate boy! I'll warrant him as lewd as the best of 'em, God grant him life and health.

LADY GALLIARD 'Tis late, and I entreat your absence, sir. These are my hours of prayer, which this unseasonable visit has disturbed.

SIR CHARLES Prayer! No more of that, sweetheart. For let me tell you, your prayers are heard. A widow of your youth and complexion can be praying for nothing so late, but a good husband. And see, heaven has sent him, just in the crit ... critical minute, to supply your occasions.

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* A wag, an arch wag. He'll learn to make lampoons, presently. I'll not give sixpence away from him, though to the poor of the parish.

SIR CHARLES Come, widow, let's to bed. *(Pulls her. She is angry.)*

LADY GALLIARD Hold, sir. You drive the jest too far.
And I am in no humour, now, for mirth.

SIR CHARLES Jest! Gad, ye lie. I was never in more earnest in all my life.

SIR ANTHONY *(Aside)* He's in a heavenly humour, thanks to good wine, good counsel, and good company.
(Getting nearer the door still.)

LADY GALLIARD What mean you, sir? What can my woman think, to see me treated thus?

SIR CHARLES Well thought on! Nay, we'll do things decently, d'ye see ... *(To Closet)* Therefore, thou sometimes necessary utensil, withdraw. *(Gives her to Sir Anthony.)*

SIR ANTHONY Aye, aye, leave it to me to teach her her duty. *(Pushes her out, and goes out.)*

LADY GALLIARD Stay, Closet, I command ye. ... *(To Sir Charles)* What have you seen in me should move you to this rudeness?

SIR CHARLES No frowning. For by this dear night, 'tis charity, care of your reputation, widow. And therefore, I am resolved, nobody shall lie with you but myself. You have dangerous wasps buzzing about your hive, widow ... Mark that ... *(She flings from him)* Nay, no parting but upon terms, which in short, d'ye see, are these: down on your knees, and swear me heartily, as Gad shall judge your soul, d'ye see, to marry me tomorrow.

LADY GALLIARD Tomorrow! Oh, I have urgent business then.

SIR CHARLES So have I. Nay, Gad, if you be for the nearest way to wood, the sober discreet way of loving, I am for you, look ye. *(He begins to undress.)*

LADY GALLIARD Hold, sir, what mean you?

SIR CHARLES Only to go to bed, that's all. *(Still undressing.)*

LADY GALLIARD Hold, hold, or I'll call out.

SIR CHARLES Aye, do. Call up a Jury of your female neighbours. They'll be for me, d'ye see, bring in the bill *ignoramus*, though I am no very true blue Protestant neither. Therefore, be quick, or ...

LADY GALLIARD Hold, are you mad? I cannot promise you to night.

SIR CHARLES Well, well, I'll be content with performance, then, tonight, and trust you for your promise till tomorrow.

SIR ANTHONY *(peeping)* Ah, rogue! By George, he outdoes my expectations of him.

LADY GALLIARD What imposition's this! I'll call for help.

SIR CHARLES You need not. You'll do my business better alone. *(Pulls her.)*

LADY GALLIARD (*Aside*) What shall I do! How shall I send him hence?

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside. Peeping out, unseen*) He shall ne'er drink small-beer more, that's positive. I'll burn all his books, too. They have helped to spoil him. And, sick or well, sound or unsound, drinking shall be his diet, and whoring his study.

SIR CHARLES Come, come, no pausing. Your promise, or I'll to bed.

(Offers to pull off his breeches, having pulled off almost all the rest of his clothes.)

LADY GALLIARD (*Aside*) What shall I do? Here is no witness near! And to be rid of him, I'll promise him. He'll have forgot it in his sober passion. *(He fumbling to undo his breeches)* Hold, I do swear I will ...

SIR CHARLES What?

LADY GALLIARD Marry you.

SIR CHARLES When?

LADY GALLIARD Nay, that's too much. ... Hold, hold. I will tomorrow. ... Now you are satisfied, you will withdraw?

Enter Sir Anthony and Closet.

SIR ANTHONY Charles! Joy, Charles, give ye joy. Here's two substantial witnesses.⁸

CLOSET I deny it, sir. I heard no such thing.

SIR ANTHONY What, what, Mistress Closet? A waiting-woman of honour, and flinch from her evidence! Gad, I'll damn thy soul, if thou darest swear what thou sayest.

LADY GALLIARD What, upon the catch, sir! Am I betrayed?

Base and unkind, is this your humble love!

Is all your whining come to this, false man! By heaven, I'll be revenged.

(She goes out in rage, with Closet.)

SIR CHARLES Nay, Gad, you're caught. Struggle and flounder as you please, sweetheart, you'll but entangle more. Leave it to me to tickle your gills, i'faith. *(Looking after her)* ... Uncle, get ye home about your business. I hope you'll give me the 'good-morrow', as becomes me. ... I say no more ... A word to the wise ...

SIR ANTHONY By George, thou'rt a brave fellow. Why I did not think it had been in thee, man? Well, adieu. I'll give thee such a good-morrow, Charles ... The devil's in him! ... 'Bye, Charles ... A plaguy rogue! ... 'Night, boy ... A divine youth! *(Going and returning, as not able to leave him. Exit.)*

SIR CHARLES Gad, I'll not leave her now, till she is mine.

Then keep her so, by constant consummation.

Let man of God do his, I'll do my part,

In spite of all her fickleness and art.

There's one sure way to fix a widow's heart.

Act V, scene 1. Sir Timothy's House.

Enter Dresswell, Fopington, and five or six more disguised with masks, carrying lanterns.

FOPINGTON Not here yet! A plague of this damned widow. The devil owed him an unlucky throw of the dice, and has thrown it him tonight.

Enter Wilding in rapture and joy.

... Hah, dear Tom, art thou come?

WILDING I saw how at her length she lay!

I saw her rising bosom bare!⁹

FOPINGTON A pox of her rising bosom. My dear, let's dress, and about our business.

WILDING Her loose thin robes, through which appear

A shape designed for love and play!

⁸ **witnesses:** Though the church disapproved, a legal marriage came into existence at the exchange of vows. Having witnesses helped, because they would attest to the marriage if either party later disputed it..

⁹ **I saw ... bosom bare:** here and in his next speech, Wilding quotes Behn's poem 'The Disappointment', where the male lover similarly disregards his lover's conflict between her desire and outward virtue.

DRESSWELL 'Sheart, sir, is this a time for rapture? 'Tis almost day.

WILDING Ah, Frank, such a dear night!

DRESSWELL A pox of nights, sir. Think of this, and the day to come. Which I perceive you were too well employed to remember.

WILDING The day to come!

Death, who could be so dull in such dear joys,

To think of time to come, or aught beyond 'em!

And had I not been interrupted by Charles Merriwill, who, getting drunk, had courage enough to venture on an untimely visit, I'd had no more power of returning, than committing treason. But that conjugal lover, who will needs be my cuckold, made me then give way to him, that he might give it me another time. And so, unseen, I got off. But come ... My disguise. *(Dresses.*

DRESSWELL All's still and hush, as if nature meant to favour our design.

WILDING 'Tis well. And hark ye, my friends, I'll proscribe you no bounds, or moderation. For I have considered: if we modestly take nothing but the writings, 'twill be easy to suspect the thief.

FOPINGTON Right. And since 'tis for the securing our necks, 'tis lawful prize. ... Sirrah, leave the portmanteau here. *(Exeunt as into the house.*

After a small time, enter Jervice in night-clothes, crying out, pursued by some of the thieves.

JERVICE Murder, murder! Thieves, murder!

Enter Wilding with his sword drawn.

WILDING A plague upon his throat. Set a gag in his mouth and bind him, though he be my uncle's chief pimp. ... So ... *(They bind and gag him.*

Enter Dresswell.

DRESSWELL Well, we have bound all within hearing in their beds, before they could alarm their fellows by crying out.

WILDING 'Tis well. Come, follow me. Like a kind midnight-ghost I will conduct ye to the rich buried heaps ... This door leads to my uncle's rooms. I know each secret nook conscious of treasure.

(All go in, leaving Jervice bound on the stage.

Enter Sensure, running half undressed as from Sir Timothy's chamber, with his velvet coat on her shoulders.

SENSURE Help, help! Murder! Murder! *(Dresswell, Laboir, and others pursue her.*

DRESSWELL What have we here? A female bolted from the alderman's bed? *(Holding his lantern to her face.*

SENSURE Ah, mercy, sir, Alas, I am a virgin.

DRESSWELL A virgin! Gad, and that may be, for any great miracles the old gentleman can do.

SENSURE Do! Alas, sir, I am none of the wicked.

DRESSWELL That's well. ... The sanctified jilt professes innocence, yet has the badge of her occupation about her neck. *(Pulls off the coat.*

SENSURE Ah, misfortune, I have mistook his worship's coat for my gown.

(A little book drops out of her bosom.

DRESSWELL What have we here? *A Sermon Preacht by Richard Baxter, divine.* Gad-a-mercy, sweetheart, thou art a hopeful member of the true Protestant cause.

SENSURE Alack, how the saints may be scandalised! I went but to tuck his worship in.

DRESSWELL And comment upon the text a little, which I suppose may be, 'increase and multiply'. ... Here, gag and bind her. *(Exit Dresswell.*

SENSURE Hold, hold! I am with child!

LABOIR Then you'll go near to miscarry of a babe of grace.

Enter Wilding, Fopington and others, leading in Sir Timothy in his dressing-gown and night-cap.

SIR TIMOTHY Gentlemen! Why, gentlemen, I beseech you use a conscience in what you do, and have a feeling of what you go about. ... Pity my age.

WILDING Damned beggarly conscience, and needless pity ...

SIR TIMOTHY Oh, fearful! ... But, gentlemen, what is it you design? Is it a general massacre, pray, or am I the only person aimed at as a sacrifice for the nation? I know, and all the world knows, how many plots have been laid against myself, both by men, women, and children, the diabolical emissaries of the Pope.

WILDING (*Fiercely, he starts*) What, sirrah!

SIR TIMOTHY Nay, gentlemen. Not but I love and honour his holiness with all my soul. And if his Grace did but know what I have done for him, d'ye see ...

FOPINGTON You, done for the Pope, sirrah! Why, what have you done for the Pope?

SIR TIMOTHY Why, sir, if you like, I have done you great service, very great service. For I have been, d'ye see, in a small trial I had the cause and occasion of invalidating the evidence to that degree, that I suppose no jury in Christendom will ever have the impudence to believe 'em hereafter, should they swear against his Holiness himself, and all the conclave of cardinals.

WILDING And yet you plot on still, cabal, treat, and keep open debauch for all the renegade Tories and old Commonwealths-men to carry on the good cause.

SIR TIMOTHY Alas, what signifies that? You know, gentlemen, that I have such a strange and natural agility in changing position, ... I shall whip about yet, and leave 'em all in the lurch.

WILDING 'Tis very likely. But at this time we shall not take your word for that.

SIR TIMOTHY Bloody-minded men, are you resolved to assassinate me, then?

WILDING You trifle, sir, and know our business better than to think we come to take your life, which would not advantage a dog, much less any party or person. ... Come, come, your keys, your keys.

FOPINGTON Aye, aye, reveal, reveal your money, sir, your ready ...

SIR TIMOTHY Money, sir! Good lack, is that all? (*Smiling at 'em*) Why what a beast was I, not knowing of your coming, to put out all my money last week, to alderman Draw-tooth! Alack, alack, what shift shall I make now to accommodate you? ... But if you please to come again tomorrow ...

FOPINGTON (*Aside*) A shamming rogue. The right sneer and grin of a dissembling Whig. (*Aloud, and threatening.*) Come, come. Deliver, sir. We are for no rhetoric, but ready money.

SIR TIMOTHY Hold, I beseech you, gentlemen. Not so loud. For there is a lord, a most considerable person and a stranger, honours my house tonight. I would not, for the world, his lordship should be disturbed.

WILDING Take no care for him, he's fast bound, and all his retinue.

SIR TIMOTHY What, bound! My Lord bound, and all his people! Undone, undone, disgraced! What will the Polanders say, that I should expose their ambassador to this disrespect and affront?

WILDING Bind him, and take away his keys. (*They bind him hand and foot, and take his keys out of his bosom. Exeunt all.*)

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, aye, what you please, gentlemen, since my lord's bound. ... Oh, what recompense can I make for so inhospitable usage? I am a most unfortunate magistrate! ... Hah, who's there? Jervice? Alas, art thou here too? What, canst not speak? But 'tis no matter if I were dumb, too. For what speech or harangue will serve to beg my pardon of my lord? ... And then my heiress, Jervice, aye, my rich heiress. Why, she'll be ravished. Oh heavens, ravished! The young rogues will have no mercy, Jervice. Nay, perhaps, as thou sayst, they'll carry her away. ... Oh, that thought! Gad, I'd rather the City charter were lost.

Enter some with bags of money.

--- Why, gentlemen, rob like Christians, gentlemen.

FOPINGTON What, do you mutter, dog?

SIR TIMOTHY Not in the least, sir, not in the least. Only a conscience, sir, in all things, does well. ... Barbarous rogues! (*They go out all again*) Here's your arbitrary power, Jervice. Here's the rule of the sword now for you. These are your Tory rogues, your tantivy roisters. But we shall cry quits with you, rascals, before long. And if we do come to our old trade of plunder and sequestration, we will so handle ye ... We'll spare neither prince, peer, nor prelate. Oh, I long to have a slice at your fat churchmen, your crepe-gown-orums.

Enter Wilding and the rest, with more bags.

WILDING A prize, a prize, my lads, in ready guineas! Contribution, my beloved.

DRESSWELL Nay then, 'tis lawful prize, in spite of *ignoramus* and all his tribe. ... *(To Fopington, who enters with a bag full of papers)* What hast thou there?

FOPINGTON A whole bag of knavery: damned sedition, libels, treason, successions, rights and privileges, with a new-fashioned oath of abjuration, called the Association.¹⁰ ... Ah, rogue, what will you say when these shall be made public?

SIR TIMOTHY Say, sir? Why, I'll deny it, sir. For what jury will believe so wise a magistrate as I could communicate such secrets to such as you? I'll say you forged 'em, and put 'em in ... Or print every one of 'em, and own 'em, as long as they were writ and published in London, sir. Come, come. The world is not so bad yet, but a man may speak treason within the walls of London, thanks be to God, and honest conscientious jury-men. And as for the money, gentlemen, take notice you rob the party.

WILDING Come, come. carry off the booty, and, prithee, remove that rubbish of the nation out of the way. ... Your servant, sir. ... So, away with it to Dresswell's lodging. His coach is at the door ready to receive it.
(They carry off Sir Timothy, and others take up the bags and go out with 'em.)

DRESSWELL Well, you are sure you have all you came for?

WILDING All's safe, my lads. The writings, all ...

FOPINGTON Come, let's away, then.

WILDING Away? What meanst thou? Is there not a lord to be found bound in his bed, and all his people? Come, come, dispatch, and each man bind his fellow.

FOPINGTON We had better follow the baggage-train of an army, captain.

WILDING No. We have not done so ill, but we dare show our faces. Come, come, to binding.

FOPINGTON And who shall bind the last man?

WILDING Honest Laboir. D'ye hear, sirrah? You got drunk and lay in your clothes under the hall-table. D'ye understand me? Look to it, ye rascal, and manage things discreetly, or you'll all be hanged, that's certain.
(Exit Wilding and Dresswell.)

FOPINGTON So. Now will I in the morning to Charlot, and give her such a character of her lover as, if she have resentment, makes her mine.
(Exit Fopington.)

SIR TIMOTHY *(calls within)* Ho, Jenkin, Roger, Simon! Where are these rogues? None left alive to come to my assistance? So ho, ho, ho! Rascals, sluggards, drones! So ho, ho, ho!

LABOIR *(Aside)* So, now's my cue ... And stay, I am not yet sober. *(Puts himself into a drunken posture.)*

SIR TIMOTHY Dogs, rogues, none hear me? Fire, fire, fire!

LABOIR Water, water, I say. For I am damnably dry.

SIR TIMOTHY Ha, who's there?

LABOIR What doleful voice is that?

SIR TIMOTHY *(In a doleful tone)* What art thou? Friend or foe?

LABOIR Very direful --- Why, what the devil art thou?

SIR TIMOTHY If thou'rt a friend, approach. Approach the wretched.

LABOIR Wretched! What art thou, ghost, hobgoblin, or walking spirit? *(Reeling in with a lantern in's hand.)*

SIR TIMOTHY Oh, neither, neither, but mere mortal Sir Timothy Treat-all, robbed and bound.
(Coming out led by Laboir.)

LABOIR What, our generous host?

SIR TIMOTHY What, one of my lord's servants! Alas, alas, how camest thou to escape?

LABOIR Just by miracle, sir, by being drunk and falling asleep under the hall-table with your worship's dog Tory, till just now a dream of small-beer waked me. And crawling, from my kennel to secure the black jug, I stumbled upon this lantern, which I took for one, till I found a candle in it, which helps me to serve your worship.
(Goes to unbind his hands.)

SIR TIMOTHY Hold, hold, I say. For I scorn to be so uncivil to be unbound before his lordship. Therefore, run, friend, to his honour's chamber, for he, alas, is confined too.

LABOIR What, and leave his worthy friend in distress? By no means, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY Well then, come, let's to my lord, whom if I be not ashamed to look in the face, I am an arrant Saracen. *(Exit Sir Timothy and Laboir)*

¹⁰ **Oath ... Association:** legally binding vow to reject allegiance to James if he should succeed to the throne, a draft of which was supposedly found in Shaftesbury's closet.

Act V, scene 2. Wilding's Chamber. *He is sitting in a chair, bound, his valet bound next to him.
To them, Sir Timothy and Laibir.*

WILDING *(To the Valet)* Peace, sirrah, for sure I hear someone coming. ... *(Aloud)* Villains, rogues! I care not for myself, but the good pious alderman. *(Sir Timothy as listening.)*

SIR TIMOTHY Wonderful goodness, for me! Alas, my lord, this sight will break my heart. *(Weeps.)*

WILDING Sir Timothy safe! Nay then, I do forgive 'em.

SIR TIMOTHY Alas, my lord, I've heard of your harsh fate.

WILDING It is my custom, sir, to pray an hour or two in my chamber before I go to bed. And, having prayed that drowsy slave asleep, the thieves broke in upon us unawares, I having laid my sword aside.

SIR TIMOTHY Oh, heavens, at his prayers! Damned ruffians. And would they not stay till you had said your prayers?

WILDING By no persuasion. ... Can you not guess who they should be, sir?

SIR TIMOTHY Oh, some damned Tory-rory rogues, you may be sure, to rob a man at his prayers! Why, what will this world come to?

WILDING Let us not talk, sir, but pursue 'em. *(Offering to go.)*

SIR TIMOTHY Pursue 'em? Alas, they're past our reach by this time.

WILDING Oh, sir, they are nearer than you imagine. Some that know each corner of your house, I'll warrant.

SIR TIMOTHY Think ye so, my lord? Aye, this comes of keeping open house. Which makes so many shut up their doors at dinner-time.

Enter Dresswell.

DRESSWELL Good morrow, gentlemen! What, was the devil broke loose tonight?

SIR TIMOTHY Only some of his imps, sir, saucy varlets, insupportable rascals. ... But well, my lord, now I have seen your lordship at liberty, I'll leave you to your rest, and go see what harm this night's work has done.

WILDING I have a little business, sir, and will take this time to dispatch it in. My servants shall to bed, though 'tis already day. ... I'll wait on you at dinner.

SIR TIMOTHY Your time. My house and all I have is yours. And so I take my leave of your lordship. *(Exit.)*

WILDING Now for my angry maid, the young Charlot.

'Twill be a task to soften her to peace.

She is all new and gay, young as the morn,

Blushing as tender rose-buds on their stalks,

Pregnant with sweets for the next sun to ravish.

... *(To the valet)* Come, thou shalt along with me. I'll trust thy friendship. *(Exeunt.)*

Act V, scene 3. Diana's Chamber. *She is revealed dressing, with Betty.*

DIANA Methinks I'm up as early as if I intended what I'm going to do, marry this old rich coxcomb.

BETTY And you do well to lose no time.

DIANA Ah, Betty. And could thy prudence prefer an old husband, because rich, before so young, so handsome, and so soft a lover as Wilding?

BETTY I know not that, madam. But I verily believe, the way to keep your young lover is to marry this old one. For what youth and beauty cannot purchase, money and quality may.

DIANA Aye. But to be obliged to lie with such a beast! Aye, there's the devil, Betty.

Ah, when I find the difference of their embraces,

The soft, dear arms of Wilding round my neck,

From those cold feeble ones of this old dotard.

When I shall meet, instead of Tom's warm kisses,

A hollow pair of thin, blue, withered lips,

Trembling with palsy, stinking with disease,

By age and nature baracadoed up

With a long nose and chin.

What fancy or what thought can make my hours supportable?

BETTY What? Why, six thousand pound a year, mistress.

He'll quickly die and leave you rich. And then do what you please.

DIANA Die! No, he's too healthy. --- Sure, these Whigs, Betty, believe there's no heaven, they take such care to live so long in this world. ... No, he'll out-live me. *(Sighs.*

BETTY In grace of God, he may be hanged, first, mistress. ... Ha, someone knocks, and I believe 'tis he. *(She goes to open the door.*

DIANA I cannot bring my heart to like this business.

One sight of my dear Tom would turn the scale.

BETTY Who's there?

Enter Sir Timothy joyful. Diana walks away.

SIR TIMOTHY 'Tis I, impatient I, who, with the sun, have welcomed in the day.

This happy day, to be enrolled

In rubric-letters, and in gold.

--- *(Aside)* Hm, I am profoundly eloquent this morning. ... *(Aloud)* Fair excellence, I approach ... *(Going towards her.*

DIANA *(Aside)* Like medicine in a morning next one's heart. Which, though 'tis necessary, is most filthy loathsome. *(Going from him.*

SIR TIMOTHY What, do you turn away, bright sun of beauty?

... *(Aside)* Hm, I'm much upon the suns and days this morning.

DIANA I cannot swallow it. *(Turning to him, looks on him, and turns away.*

SIR TIMOTHY *(Heroically)* Alas, ye gods, am I despised and scorned?

Did I, for this, ponder upon the question

Whether I should be king or alderman?

DIANA *(Aside)* If I must marry him, give him patience to endure the cuckolding, good heaven.

SIR TIMOTHY Heaven! Did she name heaven, Betty?

BETTY I think she did, sir.

SIR TIMOTHY I do not like that. What need has she to think of heaven upon her wedding-day?

DIANA Marriage is a sort of hanging, sir. And I was only making a short prayer before execution.

SIR TIMOTHY Oh, is that all? Come, come, we'll leave that till we are abed, that we have nothing else to do. *(Takes her hand.*

DIANA Not much, I dare swear.

SIR TIMOTHY And let us, fair one, haste. The parson awaits. Besides, that heap of scandal may prevent us ... I mean my nephew.

DIANA A pox upon him now for naming Wilding. *(Weeps.*

SIR TIMOTHY What, weep at naming my ungracious nephew? Nay, then I am provoked ... Look on this head, this wise and reverend head. I'd have ye know it has been taken measure on to fit it to a crown, d'ye see.

DIANA *(Aside)* A noose, rather.

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, and it fits it, too. And am I slighted, I that shall receive *billets doux* from *infantas*? 'Tis most uncivil and impolitic.

DIANA *(Aside)* I hope he's mad, and then I reign alone. *(Aloud)* Pardon me, sir, that parting tear I shed indeed at naming Wilding,

Of whom my foolish heart has now taken leave,

And, from this moment, is entirely yours. *Gives him her hand. They go out.*

Act V, scene 5. A Street.

Enter Charlot, led by Fopington, followed by Mrs Clacket.

CHARLOT Stay. My heart fills me with foreboding that I shall be undone. ... Ah, whither was I going?
(Pulls her hand from Fopington.)

FOPINGTON Do, stay till the news arrives that he is married to her that had his company tonight, my Lady Galliard.

CHARLOT Oh take heed, lest you sin doubly, sir.

FOPINGTON By heaven, 'tis true. He passed the night with her.

CHARLOT All night? What could they find to do?

MRS CLACKET A very proper question. I'll warrant you, they were not idle, madam.

CHARLOT Oh, no. They looked and loved, and vowed and loved, and swore eternal friendship. ... Haste, haste, and lead me to the church, the altar. I'll put it past my power to love him more.

FOPINGTON Oh, how you charm me! *(Takes her by the hand.)*

CHARLOT Yet what art thou? A stranger to my heart.

Wherefore, ah why, on what occasion, should I?

MRS CLACKET Acquaintance. 'Tis enough I know him, madam, and I hope my word will be taken for a greater matter in the City. In troth, you're beholden to the gentleman for marrying you. Your reputation's gone.

CHARLOT What, am I not honest, then?

MRS CLACKET Marry, heaven forbid! But who that knows you have been a single hour in Wilding's hands, that would not swear you'd lost your maidenhead? And, back again I'm sure you dare not go unmarried. That would be a fine ishtory to be sung to your eternal fame in a ballad.

FOPINGTON Right. And you see, Wilding has left you for the widow. To whom, perhaps, you'll shortly hear he's married.

CHARLOT Oh, you trifle, sir. Lead on.

They, going out, meet Sir Anthony with musicians. They return.

SIR ANTHONY Come, come, gentlemen, this is the house, and this the window belonging to my lady's bedchamber. Come, come. Let's have some elegant, soft, brisk, languishing, sprightly air, now.

FOPINGTON *(Aside)* Old Merriwill ... How shall I pass by him? *(Stand by.)*

SIR ANTHONY So, here's company, too. 'Tis very well ... *(To the musicians)* Don't you have a soprano boy? I'll warrant this violin does the business. ... Come, come, screw up your strings. *(They play)* ... Hold, hold a little. ... *(To the balcony)* Good morrow, my Lady Galliard. ... Give your ladyship joy.

CHARLOT What do I hear? My Lady Galliard joyed?

FOPINGTON What, married her already?

CHARLOT Oh, yes he has. Lovely and false, hast thou deceived my faith?

MRS CLACKET *(To Fopington)* Oh heavens, Mr Fopington. She faints ... Ah me! *(They hold her. Music plays.)*

Enter Wilding and Dresswell, disguised as before.

WILDING Ah, musicians at Galliard's door!

SIR ANTHONY *(To the balcony)* Good morrow, Sir Charles Merriwill. Give your worship and your fair lady joy.

WILDING Hah, Merriwill married the widow?

DRESSWELL No matter. Prithee advance, and mind thy own affairs.

WILDING Advance, and not enquire the meaning of it!

Bid me not eat when appetite invites me.

Not draw, when branded with the name of coward.

Nor love, when youth and beauty meets my eyes. ... Hah! ...

Sees Sir Charles come into the balcony in his night-clothes.

SIR CHARLES Good morrow, uncle. Gentlemen I thank ye. Here, drink the king's health, with my royal master's, the duke. *(Gives 'em money.)*

FIDLER Heaven bless your honour, and your virtuous bride.

FOPINGTON *(Aside)* Wilding! Undone. *(Shelters Charlot so that she may not see Wilding.)*

WILDING Death and the devil, Merriwill above?

SIR ANTHONY (*Aside*) Hah, the boy's rival here! By George, here may be exertion this morning. ... No matter, here's two against two. Come, gentlemen, you must in. (*Thrusts the musicians in, and goes in.*)

DRESSWELL Is it not what you expected? Nay, what you wished?

WILDING What then? It comes too suddenly upon me ...

Before my last kiss was cold upon her lips,
Before the pantings of her breast were laid,
Raised by her joys with me. Oh, damned, deluding woman!

DRESSWELL Be wise, and do not ruin where you love.

WILDING Nay, if thou comest to reasoning, thou hast lost me. (*Breaks from him, and runs in.*)

CHARLOT I say 'twas Wilding's voice, and I will follow it.

FOPINGTON What, madam? Would you after him?

CHARLOT Nay, force me not. By heaven, I'll cry a rape

Unless you let me go. ... Not after him!

Yes, to the infernal shades. ... Unhand me, sir.

FOPINGTON What, madam? Have you, then, designed my ruin?

CHARLOT Oh, trust me, sir. I am a maid of honour. (*Runs in after Wilding.*)

MRS CLACKET So. Damn your projects, we're all undone now. For my part I'll go directly after her, and deny to have any hand in the business. (*Goes in.*)

FOPINGTON Damn all ill-luck. Was ever man thus fortune-bit, that he should cross my hopes just in the nick? ... But shall I lose her thus? No, Gad, I'll after her. And come the worst, I have an Impudence shall out-face a Middlesex-jury, and out-swear a discoverer. (*Goes in*)

Act V, scene 5. A Chamber. Enter Lady Galliard, pursued by Sir Charles, and a footman.

LADY GALLIARD (*To the footman, who is going*) Sirrah, run to my Lord Mayor's and require some of his officers to assist me instantly. And, d'ye hear, rascal, bar up my doors, and let none of his mad crew enter.

SIR CHARLES (*To the footman*) William, you may stay, William.

LADY GALLIARD (*To the footman*) I say, obey me, sirrah.

SIR CHARLES (*To the footman*) Sirrah, I say ... Know your lord and master.

WILLIAM (*To Sir Charles*) I shall, sir. (*Goes out.*)

LADY GALLIARD Was ever woman vexed thus? Pursue me not.

SIR CHARLES You are mistaken. I'm disobedient grown since we became one family. And when I've used you thus, a week or two, you will grow weary of this peevish fooling.

LADY GALLIARD Malicious thing, I will not. I am resolved I'll tire thee out merely in spite to have the better of thee.

SIR CHARLES Gad, I'm as resolved as you. And do your worst.

For I'm resolved never to quit thy house.

LADY GALLIARD But, malice, there are officers, magistrates in the City, that will not see me used thus, and will be here anon.

SIR CHARLES Magistrates! Why, they shall be welcome, if they be honest and loyal. If not, they may be hanged in heaven's good time.

LADY GALLIARD Are you resolved to be thus obstinate?

Fully resolved to make this way your conquest?

SIR CHARLES Most certainly. I'll keep you honest to your word, my dear. I've witness ...

LADY GALLIARD You will?

SIR CHARLES You'll find it so.

LADY GALLIARD Then know, if thou darest marry me, I will so plague thee, be so revenged for all those tricks thou'st played me ... --- Dost thou not dread the vengeance wives can take?

SIR CHARLES Not at all. I'll trust thy stock of beauty with thy wit.

LADY GALLIARD Death, I will cuckold thee.

SIR CHARLES Why then I shall take freely of the reverend City.

LADY GALLIARD Then I will gamble without cessation, till I've undone thee.

SIR CHARLES Do, so that all the fops of empty heads and pockets may know where to be sure of a fool. And may they cheat ye till ye lose, and fret, and chafe, and rail those youthful eyes to sinking Watch your fair face to pale and withered leanness.

LADY GALLIARD Then, I will never let thee bed with me, but when I please.

SIR CHARLES For that, see who'll petition first, and then I'll change for new ones every night.

Enter William.

WILLIAM Madam, here's Mr Wilding at the door, and will not be denied seeing you.

LADY GALLIARD Hah, Wilding! Oh, my eternal shame! Now thou hast done thy worst.

SIR CHARLES Now for a struggle 'twixt your love and honour.

... Yes, here's the bar to all my happiness.

You would be left to the wide world and love,

To infamy, to scandal, and to Wilding.

But I have too much honour in my passion,

To let you loose to ruin. Consider, and be wise.

LADY GALLIARD *(Aside)* Oh, he has touched my heart too acutely.

SIR ANTHONY *(from offstage)* As far as good manners goes, I'm yours. But when you press indecently to ladies' chambers, civil questions ought to be asked, I take it, sir.

LADY GALLIARD *(Aside)* To find him here will make him mad with jealousy, and in the fit, he'll utter all he knows. Oh, guilt, what art thou?

Enter Sir Anthony, Wilding and Dresswell.

DRESSWELL Prithee, dear Wilding. Moderate thy passion.

WILDING *(To Dresswell)* By heaven, I will. She shall not have the pleasure to see I am concerned. ... *(Aloud)* Morrow, widow. You are early up. You mean to thrive, I see. You're like a mill that grinds with every wind.

SIR CHARLES Hah, Wilding this, that passed, last night at Sir Timothy's for a man of quality? Oh, give way to him, Wilding's my friend, my dear, and now I'm sure I have the advantage of him in thy love, I can forgive a hasty word or two.

WILDING I thank thee, Charles --- What, you are married, then?

LADY GALLIARD *(Scornfully)* I hope you've no exception to my choice.

WILDING *(To her aside, angrily)* False woman. Dost thou glory in thy perfidy?

... *(Aloud)* Yes, faith, I've many exceptions to him ...

Had you loved me, you'd pitched upon a blockhead,

Some spruce, gay fool of fortune, and no more,

Who would have taken so much care of his own ill-favoured person, he should have had no time to have minded yours, but left it to the care of some fond, longing lover.

LADY GALLIARD *(Aside)* Death, he will tell him all! *(Aloud)* Oh, you are merry, sir.

WILDING *(In a soft tone aside to her)* No, but thou art wondrous false,

False as the love and joys you feigned last night.

LADY GALLIARD *(Softly to him)* Oh, sir, be tender of those treacherous minutes.

--- *(Walking away, and speaking loud)* If this be all you have to say to me ...

WILDING *(Aloud)* Faith, madam, you have used me scurvily,

To marry, and not give me notice.

--- *(To her softly, aside)* Curse on thee. Did I only blow the fire

To warm another lover?

LADY GALLIARD Perjured ... Was it not by your advice I married?

... *(Softly to him, aside)* Oh, where was then your love?

WILDING Just when I did advise,

Didst thou invite me to the feast of love,

To snatch away my joys as soon as tasted.

(Aside to her, in a low tone) Ah, where was then your modesty and sense of honour?

LADY GALLIARD *(Soft)* Aye, where indeed, when you so quickly vanquished?

... *(Aloud)* But you I find are come prepared to rail.

WILDING (*Aloud*) No, 'twas with thee to make my last effort against your scorn. (*Shows her Sir Timothy's Will.*

And this, I hoped, when all my vows and love,
When all my languishments could not prevail,
Had made ye mine forever.

Enter Sir Anthony pulling in Sir Timothy and Diana.

SIR ANTHONY 'Morrow, Charles. 'Morrow to your ladyship. Charles, bid Sir Timothy welcome. I met him luckily at the door, and am resolved none of my friends shall pass this joyful day without wishing thee joy, Charles, and drinking my lady's health.

WILDING (*Aside*) Hah, my uncle here so early?

SIR TIMOTHY What, has your ladyship served me so? How finely I had been cheated now, if I had not took heart, and showed your ladyship trick for trick. For I have been this morning about some such business of life, too, gentlemen. I am married to this fair lady, the daughter and heiress of Sir Nicholas Gettall, knight and alderman.

WILDING (*Aside*) Hah, married to Diana!

How fickle is the faith of common women?

SIR TIMOTHY Hm. Who's here, my lord? What, I see you lordship has found the way already to the fair ladies. But I hope your lordship will do my wedding-dinner the honour to grace it with your presence.

WILDING I shall not fail, sir.

(*Aside*) A pox upon him, he'll discover all.

LADY GALLIARD I must own, Sir Timothy, you have made the better choice.

SIR TIMOTHY I could not help my destiny. Marriages are made in heaven, you know.

Enter Charlot, weeping, and Clacket.

CHARLOT Stand off, and let me loose as are my griefs, which can no more be bounde. Oh, let me face the perjured, false, forsworn!

LADY GALLIARD Fair creature, who is it that you seek with so much sorrow?

CHARLOT Thou, thou fatally fair enchantress. (*Weeps.*)

WILDING (*Aside*) Charlot! Nay then, I am discovered.

LADY GALLIARD Alas, what dost thou want?

CHARLOT That which I cannot have: thy faithless husband.

Be judge, ye everlasting powers of love,
Whether he more belongs to her or me.

SIR ANTHONY What, my nephew claimed? Why, how now, sirrah, have you been dabbling here?

SIR CHARLES By heaven, I know her not. ... (*To Lady Galliard*) Hark ye, widow, this is some trick of yours, and 'twas well laid. And, Gad, she's so pretty, I could find in my heart to take her at her word.

LADY GALLIARD (*To Sir Charles*) Vile man, this will not pass your falsehood off. (*Aside*) Sure, 'tis some art to make me jealous of him, to find how much I value him.

SIR CHARLES Death, I'll have the forgery out. ... Tell me, thou pretty weeping hypocrite, who was it set thee on to lay a claim to me?

CHARLOT To you! Alas, who are you? For till this moment I never saw your face.

LADY GALLIARD Mad as the seas when all the winds are raging.

SIR TIMOTHY Aye, aye, madam, stark mad! Poor soul --- Neighbour, pray let her lie in the dark, d'ye hear.

SIR CHARLES How came you, pretty one, to lose your wits, thus?

CHARLOT With loving, sir, strongly. With too much loving.

--- (*To Lady Galliard*) Will you not let me see the lovely false one?

For I am told you have his heart in keeping.

LADY GALLIARD Who is he? Pray describe him.

CHARLOT A thing just like a man, or rather, angel!

He speaks, and looks, and loves, like any god!

All fine and gay, all manly, and all sweet.

And when he swears he loves, you would swear too

That all his oaths were true.

SIR ANTHONY Who is she? Someone who knows her and is wiser, speak ... *(To Clacket)* You, mistress.

MRS CLACKET Since I must speak, there comes the man of mischief.

--- *(To Wilding)* 'Tis you I mean, for all your learing, sir.

WILDING So.

SIR TIMOTHY What, my lord!

MRS CLACKET I never knew your nephew was a lord. Has his honour made him forget his honesty?

(Charlot runs and catches Wilding in her arms.)

CHARLOT I have thee, and I'll die thus grasping thee.

Thou art my own. No power shall take thee from me.

WILDING Never, thou truest of thy sex, and dearest,

Thou soft, thou kind, thou constant sufferer.

This moment end thy fears, for I am thine.

CHARLOT May I believe thou art not married, then?

WILDING How can I, when I'm yours?

How could I, when I love thee more than life?

... *(To Lady Galliard)* Now, madam, I'm revenged on all your scorn.

... *(To Sir Timothy)* And, uncle, all your cruelty.

SIR TIMOTHY Why, what, are you indeed my nephew, Thomas?

WILDING I am Tom Wilding, sir, that once bore some such title, till you discarded me, and left me to live upon my wits.

SIR TIMOTHY What, and are you no Polish ambassador, then, incognito?

WILDING No, sir. Nor you no king elect, but must just remain as you were ever, sir, a most seditious, pestilent old knave. One that deludes the rabble with your politics, then leave 'em to be hanged, as they deserve, as silly, mutinous rebels.

SIR TIMOTHY I'll charge the rogue, and then he'll be hanged in course, because he's a Tory. One comfort is, I have cozened him of his rich heiress. For I am married, sir, to mistress Charlot.

WILDING Rather, Diana, sir. I wish you joy: See, here's Charlot! I was not such a fool to trust such blessings with the wicked.

SIR CHARLES What, Mistress Di ladyfied! This is an excellent way of disposing an old, cast-off mistress.

SIR TIMOTHY What, have I married a strumpet, then?

DIANA You give your nephew's mistress, sir, too coarse a name. 'Tis true, I loved him, only him, and was true to him.

SIR TIMOTHY Undone, undone! I shall ne'er make an alderman's speech more, but he shall hang for it, if there be e'er a witness to be had between this and Titus Oates for money.

WILDING Do your worst, sir. Witnesses are out of fashion now, sir, thanks to your Whig juries.

SIR TIMOTHY Then, I'm resolved to disinherit him.

WILDING See, sir, that's past your skill, too, thanks to my last night's ingenuity. *(Shows him the writings)*

They're signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of, and so on.

SIR TIMOTHY Bear witness, 'twas he that robbed me last night.

SIR ANTHONY We bear witness, sir, we know of no such matter, we. I thank you for that, sir. Would you make witnesses of gentlemen?

SIR TIMOTHY No matter for that, I'll have him hanged. Nay, drawn and quartered.

WILDING What, for obeying your commands, and living on my wits?

SIR ANTHONY Nay, then 'tis a clear case: you can neither hang him, nor blame him.

WILDING I'll propose fairly now, if you'll be generous and pardon all. I'll render your estate back during life, and put the writings in Sir Anthony Merriwill's and Sir Charles's hands. ...

I have a fortune here *(Gestures to Charlot)* that will maintain me,

Without so much as wishing for your death.

ALL This is but reason.

SIR CHARLES With this proviso: that he makes not use of it to promote any mischief to the king and government.

ALL Good and just. *(Sir Timothy pauses.)*

SIR TIMOTHY (*Aside*) Hm, I'd as good quietly agree to it, as lose my credit by making a noise. ... (*Aloud*) Well, Tom, I pardon all, and will be friends. (*Gives him his hand.*)

SIR CHARLES (*To Lady Galliard*) See, my dear creature, even this hard old man is mollified, at last, into good nature. Yet you'll still be cruel.

LADY GALLIARD No, your unwearied love at last has vanquished me. Here, be as happy as a wife can make ye ... One last look more, and then ... be gone fond Love.

(*Sighing and looking at Wilding, giving Sir Charles her hand.*)

SIR CHARLES (*To Sir Timothy*) Come, sir, you must receive Diana too. She is a cheerful, witty girl, and handsome. One that will be a comfort to your age, and bring no scandal home. Live peaceably, and do not trouble your decrepit age with business of state.

Let all things in their own due order move,

Let Caesar* be the kingdom's care and love.

* i.e. King Charles

Let the hot-headed mutineers petition,

And meddle in the rights of just succession.

But may all honest hearts as one agree

To bless the king, and toyal Albany.¹

The epilogue is anonymous, and not by Behn. Spoken by Charlotte Butler, who played Charlot, it asserts that 'marrying's the mask, which modesty assures, | Helps to get new, and covers old amours' and calls on the audience to be faithful.

¹ **royal Albany**: James, Duke of York and Albany, the Catholic heir to the throne, whom the Whigs opposed.
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