

The Female Husband: or, the Surprising History of Mrs. Mary, alias Mr. George Hamilton, who was Convicted of having Married a young Woman of Wells and Lived with her as her Husband (1746)<sup>1</sup>

By Henry Fielding

*Taken from her own Mouth since her Confinement.*

[1] That Propense Inclination which is for very wise purposes implanted in the one Sex for the other, is not only necessary for the continuance of the Human Species; but is, at the same time, when govern'd and directed by Virtue and Religion, productive not only of Corporeal Delight, but of the most Rational Felicity.

[2] But if once our Carnal Appetites are let loose, without those prudent and secure Guides, there is no excess and disorder which they are not liable to commit, even while they pursue their natural satisfaction; and, which may seem still more strange, there is nothing Monstrous and Unnatural, which they are not capable of inventing, nothing so brutal and shocking which they have not actually committed. Of these Unnatural Lusts, all ages and countries have afforded us too many instances; but none I think more surprising than what will be found in the History of Mrs. Mary, otherwise Mr. George Hamilton.

[3] This Heroine in Iniquity was born in the Isle of Man, on the 16th day of August, 1721. Her Father was formerly a Serjeant of Grenadiers in the Foot-Guards, who having the good fortune to marry a Widow of some Estate in that Island, purchased his Discharge from the Army, and retired thither with his wife.

[4] He has not been long arrived there before he died, and left his wife with child of this Mary; but her mother, tho' she had not two months to reckon, could not stay till she was delivered, before she took a third husband.

[5] As her mother, tho' she had three husbands, never had any other child, she always express'd an extraordinary affection for this daughter, to whom she gave as good an Education as the Island afforded; and tho' she used her with much tenderness, yet was the girl brought up in the strictest principles of Virtue and Religion; nor did she in her younger years discover the least proneness to any kind of Vice, much less give cause of suspicion that she would one day disgrace her Sex by the most abominable and unnatural pollutions. And indeed she hath often declared from her conscience, that no irregular passion ever had any place in her mind, till she was first seduced by one Anne Johnson, a neighbour of hers, with whom she had been acquainted from her childhood; but not with such intimacy as afterwards grew between them.

[6] This Anne Johnson going on some business to Bristol, which detained her there near half a year, became acquainted with some of the people called Methodists, and was by them persuaded to embrace their feet.

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[7] At her return to the Isle of Man, she soon made an easy convert of Molly Hamilton, the warmth of whose disposition rendered her susceptible enough of enthusiasm, and ready to receive all those impressions which her friend the Methodist endeavoured to make on her mind.

[8] These two young women became now inseparable companions, and at length bed-fellows: for Molly Hamilton was prevail'd on to leave her mother's house, and to reside entirely with Mrs. Johnson, whose fortune was not thought inconsiderable in that cheap country.

[9] Young Mrs. Hamilton began to conceive a very great affection for her friend, which perhaps was not returned with equal faith by the other. However Mrs. Hamilton declares her love, or rather friendship, was totally innocent, till the temptations of Johnson first led her astray. This latter was, it seems, no novice in impurity, which, as she confess'd, she had learnt and often practiced at Bristol with her Methodistical sisters.

[10] As Molly Hamilton was extremely warm in her inclinations, and as those inclinations were so violently attached to Mrs. Johnson, it would not have been difficult for a less artful woman, in the most private hours, to turn the ardour of enthusiastic devotion into a different kind of flame. Their conversation, therefore, soon became in the highest manner Criminal, and transactions not fit to be mention'd past between them. They had not long carried on this wicked crime before Mrs. Johnson was again called by her affairs to visit Bristol, and her friend was prevail'd on to accompany her thither.

[11] Here when they arrived, they took up their lodgings together, and lived in the same detestable manner as before; till an end was put to their vile amours, by the means of one Rogers, a young fellow, who by his extraordinary devotion (for he was a very zealous Methodist) or by some other charms, (for he was very jolly and handsome) gained the heart of Mrs. Johnson, and married her.

[12] This amour, which was not of any long continuance before it was brought to a conclusion, was kept an entire secret from Mrs. Hamilton; but she was no sooner informed of it, than she became almost frantic, she tore her hair, beat her Breasts, and behaved in as outrageous a manner as the fondest husband could, who had unexpectedly discovered the Infidelity of a Beloved wife.

[13] In the midst of these Agonies she received a letter from Mrs. Johnson, in the following words, or as near them as she can possibly remember:

Dear Molly,

“I know you will Condemn what I have now done; but I condemn myself much more for what I have done formerly: for I take the whole Shame and Guilt of what hath passed between us on myself. I was indeed the first Seducer of your Innocence, for which I ask God's pardon and yours. All the amends I can make you, is earnestly to beseech you, in the name of the Lord, to forsake all such Evil courses, and to follow my Example now, as you before did my temptation, and enter as soon as you can into that Holy state into which I was yesterday called. In which, tho' I am yet but a Novice, believe me, there are delights infinitely surpassing the faint

endearments we have experienc'd together. I shall always pray for you, and continue your friend."

This letter rather increased than abated her rage, and she resolved to go immediately and upbraid her false friend; but while she was taking this resolution, she was informed that Mr. Rogers and his bride were departed from Bristol by a messenger, who brought her a second short Note, and a Bill for some money from Mrs. Rogers.

[14] As soon as the first violence of her Passion subsided, she began to consult what course to take, when the strangest thought imaginable suggested itself to her fancy. This was to dress herself in mens cloaths, to embarque for Ireland, and commence Methodist teacher.

[15] Nothing remarkable happened to her during the rest of her stay at Bristol, which adverse winds occasioned to be a whole week, after she had provided herself with her dress; but at last having procured a passage, and the wind becoming favourable, she set sail for Dublin.

[16] As she was a very pretty woman, she now appeared a most beautiful Youth. A circumstance which had its consequences aboard the ship, and had like to have discovered her, in the very beginning of her Adventures.

[17] There happened to be in the same vessel with this Adventurer, a Methodist, who was bound to the same place, on the same design with herself. These two being alone in the cabin together, and both at their devotions, the man in the Extasy of his enthusiasm, thrust one of his hands into the other's Bosom. Upon which, in her surprize, she gave so effeminate a squawl, that it reached the Captain's ears, as he was smoaking his pipe upon deck. Hey day, says he, what have we a woman in the Ship! and immediately descended into the cabin, where he found the two Methodists on their knees.

[18] Pox on't, says the Captain, I thought you had had a woman with you here; I could have sworn I had heard one cry out as if she had been ravishing, and yet the Devil must have been in you, if you could convey her in here without my knowledge. I defy the Devil and all his works, answered the Methodist. He has no Power but over the Wicked; and if he be in the ship, thy oaths must have brought him hither: for I have heard thee pronounce more than twenty since I came on board; and we should have been at the bottom before this, had not my Prayers prevented it.

[19] Don't abuse my vessel, cried the Captain, she is as safe a vessel, and as good a sailer as every floated, and if you had been afraid of going to the bottom, you might have stay'd on shore and been Damn'd.

[20] The Methodist made no answer, but fell a groaning, and that so loud, that the Captain giving him a hearty curse or two, quitted the cabbin, and resumed his pipe.

[21] He was no sooner gone, than the Methodist gave farther tokens of Brotherly love to his companion, which soon became so importunate and troublesome to her, that after having gently

rejected his hands several times, she at last recollected the Sex she had assumed, and gave him so violent a blow in the nostrils, that the blood issued from them with great impetuosity.

[22] Whether fighting be opposite to the tenets of this Sect (for I have not the honour to be deeply read in their Doctrines) or from what other motive it proceeded, I will not determine; but the Methodist made no other return to this rough treatment, than by many groans, and prayed heartily to be delivered soon from the conversation of the Wicked; which prayers were at length so successful, that, together with a very brisk gale, they brought the vessel into Dublin harbour.

[23] Here our Adventurer took a lodging in a backstreet near St. Stephen's Green, at which place she intended to Preach the next day; but had got a Cold in the voyage, which occasioned such a hoarseness that made it impossible to put that design in practice.

[24] There lodged in the same House with her, a brisk Widow of near 40 years of age, who had buried two husbands, and seemed by her behaviour to be far from having determined against a third expedition to the Land of Matrimony.

[25] To this Widow our Adventurer began presently to make addresses, and as he at present wanted tongue to express the Ardency of his Flame, he was obliged to make use of Actions of Endearment, such as Squeezing, Kissing, Toying, etc.

[26] These were received in such a Manner by the Fair Widow, that her Lover thought he had sufficient encouragement to proceed to a formal Declaration of his Passion. And this she chose to do by letter, as her voice still continued too hoarse for uttering the soft Accents of Love.

[27] A letter therefore was penned accordingly in the usual stile, which, to prevent any Miscarriages, Mrs. Hamilton thought proper to deliver with her own hands; and immediately retired to give the Adored Lady an opportunity of digesting the contents alone, little doubting of an answer agreeable to her wishes, or at least such a one as the Coyness of the Sex generally dictates in the beginning of an Amour, and which Lovers, by long experience, know pretty well how to interpret.

[28] But what was the Gallant's surprize, when in return to an Amorous Epistle, she read the following Sarcasms, which it was impossible for the most sanguine temper to misunderstand, or construe favourably.

“Sir,

I was greatly astonished at what you put into my hands. Indeed I thought, when I took it, it might have been an Opera Song, and which for certain reasons I should think, when your Cold is gone, you might sing as well as Farinelli, from the great resemblance there is between your persons. I know not what you mean by Encouragement to your Hopes; if I could have conceived my innocent freedoms could have been so misrepresented, I should have been more upon my guard: but you have taught me how to watch my Actions for the future, and to preserve myself even from any suspicion of forfeiting the regard I owe to the memory of the best of men, by any future choice. The remembrance of that dear person makes me incapable of proceeding farther.”

and so Firm was this Resolution, that she would never afterwards admit of the least familiarity with the despairing Mrs. Hamilton; but perhaps that destiny which is remarked to interpose in all matrimonial things, had taken the Widow into her protection: for in a few days afterwards, she was married to one Jack Strong, a Cadet in an Irish Regiment.

[29] Our Advertiser being thus disappointed in her love, and what is worse, her money drawing towards an end, began to have some thoughts of returning home, when Fortune seemed inclined to make her amends for the tricks she had hitherto played her, and accordingly now threw another Mistress in her way, whose Fortune was much superior to the former Widow, and who received Mrs. Hamilton's addresses with all the complaisance she could wish.

[30] This Lady, whose Name was Rushford, was the Widow of a rich Cheese-Monger, who left her all he had, and only one great grand-child to take care of, whom, at her Death, he recommended to be her heir; but wholly at her own Power and Discretion.

[31] She was now in the Sixty Eighth year of her age, and had not, it seems, entirely abandoned all thoughts of the Pleasures of this World: for she was no sooner acquainted with Mrs. Hamilton, but, taking her for a Beautiful Lad of about Eighteen, she cast the eyes of affection on her, and having pretty well outlived the bashfulness of her Youth, made little scruple of giving hints of her Passion of her own accord.

[32] It has been observed that Women know more of one another than the Wisest men (if ever such have been employed in the Study) have with all their art been capable of discovering. It is therefore no wonder that these Hints were quickly perceived and understood by the Female Gallant, who animadverting on the conveniency which the old Gentlewoman's fortune would produce in her present situation, very gladly embraced the opportunity, and advancing with great warmth of Love to the attack, in which she was received almost with open arms, by the Tottering Citadel, which presently offered to throw open the Gates, and Surrender at Discretion. In her Amour with the former Widow, Mrs. Hamilton had never any other design than of gaining the Lady's Affection, and then discovering herself to her, hoping to have had the same success which Mrs. Johnson had found with her: but with this old Lady, whose Fortune only she was desirous to possess, such views would have afforded very little gratification. After some reflection, therefore, a device entered into her head, as Strange and Surprising, as it was Wicked and Vile; and this was actually to marry the old Woman, and to deceive her, by means which Decency forbids me even to mention. The Wedding was accordingly Celebrated in the most Public Manner, and with all kind of Gaiety, the old Woman greatly triumphing in her Shame, and instead of hiding her own head for fear of Infamy, was actually proud of the Beauty of her new Husband, for whose sake she intended to disinherit her poor great-grandson, tho' she had derived her Riches from her Husband's family, who had always intended this boy as his heir. Nay, what may seem very Remarkable, she insisted on the Parson's not omitting the Prayer in the Matrimonial Service for Fruitfulness; drest herself as airy as a Girl of Eighteen, concealed twenty years of her Age, and laughed and promoted all the Jokes which are usual at Weddings; but she was not so well pleased with a Repartee of her great-grandson, a pretty and a smart lad, who, when somebody jested on the Bridegroom because he had no Beard, answered smartly:

there should never be a beard on both sides: for indeed the old Lady's chin was pretty well stocked with Bristles.

[33] Nor was this Bride contented with displaying her shame by a Public Wedding Dinner, she would have the whole ceremony compleated, and the Stocking was accordingly thrown with the usual Sport and Merriment.

[34] During the three first days of the Marriage, the Bride expressed herself so well Satisfied with her choice, that being in company with another old Lady, she exulted so much in her Happiness, that her friend began to envy her, and could not forbear inveighing against Effeminacy in men; upon which a discourse arose between the two Ladies, not proper to be repeated, if I knew every particular; but ended at the last, in the unmarried Lady's declaring to the Bride, that she thought her Husband looked more like a woman than a man. To which the other replied in triumph, he was the best man in Ireland. This and the rest which Past, was faithfully recounted to Mrs. Hamilton by her wife, at their next meeting, and occasioned our young Bridegroom to blush, which the old Lady perceiving and regarding as an effect of Youth, fell upon her in a rage of Love like a tygress, and almost murdered her with kisses.

[35] One of our English Poets remarks in the case of a more able Husband than Mrs. Hamilton was, when his Wife grew Amorous in an unseasonable time.

The Doctor understood the Call,  
but had not always Wherewithal.

So it happened to our Poor Bridegroom, who having not at that time the Wherewithal about her, was obliged to remain meerly Passive, under all this torrent of Kindness of his Wife; but this did not discourage her, who was an Experience Woman, and thought she had a Cure for this Coldness in her Husband, the efficacy of which, she might perhaps have essayed formerly. Saying therefore with a tender smile to her Husband, I believe you are a woman, her hands began to move in such direction, that the discovery would absolutely have been made, had not the arrival of Dinner, at that very instant, prevented it.

[36] However, as there is but one way of laying the Spirit of Curiosity, when once raised in a Woman, viz. by satisfying it, so that discovery, though delayed, could not now be long prevented. And accordingly the very next night, the Husband and Wife had not been long in bed together, before a Storm arose, as if drums, guns, wind and thunder were all roaring together. Villain, Rogue, Whore, Beast, Cheat, all resounded at the same instant, and were followed by curses, imprecations and threats, which soon waked the poor great-grandson in the Garret; who immediately ran down stairs into his great-grandmother's room. He found her in the midst of it in her Shift, with a handful of shirt in one hand, and a handful of hair in the other, stamping and crying, I am Undone, Cheated, Abused, Ruined, Robbed by a vile Jade, Impostor, Whore. What is the matter, dear Madam, answered the Youth; O child, replied she, Undone! I am married to one who is no man. My Husband? a Woman, a Woman, a Woman. Ay, said the grandson, where is she? — Run away, gone, said the great-grandmother, and indeed so she was: for no sooner was the Fatal Discovery made, than the poor Female Bridegroom, whipt on her breeches, in the pockets of which, she had stowed all the money she could, and slipping on her shoes, with her

coat, waist-coat and stockings in her hands, had made the best of her way into the street, leaving almost one half of her shirt behind, which the enraged Wife had tore from her back. As Mrs. Hamilton well knew that an Adventure of that kind would soon fill all Dublin, and that it was impossible for her to remain there undiscovered, she hastened away to the Key, where by good fortune, she met with a ship just bound to Dartmouth, on board which she immediately went, and sailed out of the harbour, before her pursuers could find out or overtake her.

[37] She was a full Fortnight in her passage, during which time, no Adventure occurred worthy remembrance. At length she landed at Dartmouth, where she soon provided herself with Linnen, and thence went to Totness, where she assumed the title of a Doctor of Physic, and took lodgings in the house of one Mrs. Baytree.

[38] Here she soon became acquainted with a young girl, the daughter of one Mr. Ivythorn, who had the Green Sickness; a distemper which the Doctor gave out he could cure by an infallible Nostrum. The Doctor had not been long intrusted with the care of this young Patient before he began to make Love to her: for though her complexion was somewhat faded with her Distemper, she was otherwise extremely pretty.

[39] This girl became an easy Conquest to the Doctor, and the day of their Marriage was appointed, without the knowledge, or even suspicion of her Father, or of an old Aunt who was very fond of her, and would neither of them have easily given their Consent to the match, had the Doctor been as good a man as the Niece thought him.

[40] At the day appointed, the Doctor and his Mistress found means to escape very early in the morning from Totness, and went to a town called Ashburton in Devonshire, where they were Married by a regular Licence which the Doctor had previously obtained. Here they staid two days at a Public House, during which time the Doctor so well Acted his part, that his Bride had not the least suspicion of the legality of her Marriage, or that she had not got a Husband for life. The third day they returned to Totness, where they both threw themselves at Mr. Ivythorn's feet, who was highly Rejoic'd at finding his Daughter restor'd to him, and that she was not debauched, as he had suspected of her. And being a very worthy good-natur'd man, and regarding the true interest and happiness of his Daughter more than the satisfying his own Pride, Ambition, or Obstinacy, he was prevailed on to forgive her, and to receive her and her Husband into his house, as his children, notwithstanding the opposition of the old Aunt, who declared she would never forgive the wanton Slut, and immediately quitted the house, as soon as the young couple were admitted into it. The Doctor and his Wife lived together above a fortnight, without the least doubt conceived either by the Wife, or by any other person of the Doctor's being what he appeared; till one evening the Doctor having drank a little too much Punch, slept somewhat longer than usual, and when he waked, he found his Wife in tears, who asked her Husband, amidst many sobs, how he could be so Barbarous to have taken such advantage of her ignorance and innocence, and to ruin her in such a manner? the Doctor being surprized and scarce awake, asked her what he had done. Done, says she, have you not Married me a poor young girl, when you know, you have not — you have not — what you ought to have. I always thought indeed your shape was something odd, and have often wondred that you had not the least bit of Beard; but I thought you had been a man for all that, or I am sure I would not have been so wicked to marry you for the world. The Doctor endeavoured to pacify her, by every kind of Promise, and

telling her she would have all the Pleasures of Marriage without the inconveniences. No, no, said she, you shall not persuade me to that, nor will I be guilty of so much Wickedness on any account. I will tell my Papa of you as soon as I am up; for you are no Husband of mine, nor will I ever have any thing more to say to you. Which resolution the Doctor finding himself unable to alter, she put on her cloaths with all the haste she could, and taking a horse, which she had bought a few days before, hastened instantly out of the town, and made the best of her way, thro' bye-roads and across the Country, into Somersetshire, missing Exeter, and every other great town which lay in the Road.

[41] And well it was for her, that she used both this haste and precaution: for Mr. Ivythorn having heard his daughter's story, immediately obtained a Warrant from a Justice of Peace, with which he presently dispatch'd the Proper Officers; and not only so, but set forward himself to Exeter, in order to try if he could learn any news of his son-in-law, or apprehend her there; till after much search being unable to hear any Tidings of her, he was obliged to set down Contented with his Misfortune, as was his poor Daughter to submit to all the ill-natured sneers of her own Sex, who were often witty at her expence, and at the expence of their own Decency.

[42] The Doctor having escaped, arrive safe at Wells in Somersetshire, where thinking herself at a safe distance from her Pursuers, she again sat herself down in quest of new Adventures. She had not been long in this city, before she became acquainted with one Mary Price, a girl of about Eighteen years of age, and of extraordinary Beauty. With this girl, hath this Wicked Woman since her Confinement declared, she was really as much in Love, as it was possible for a man ever to be with one of her own Sex.

[43] The first opportunity our Doctor obtain'd of conversing closely with this new Mistress, was at a Dancing among the inferior sort of people, in contriving which the Doctor had herself the principal share. At that meeting the two Lovers had an occasion of dancing all night together; and the Doctor lost no opportunity of shewing his Fondness, as well by his tongue as by his hands, whispering many soft things in her ears, and Squeezing as many soft things into her hands, which, together with a good number of Kisses, etc. so pleased and warmed this poor girl, who never before had felt any of those Tender Sensations which we call Love, that she retired from the Dancing in a flutter of spirits, which her youth and ignorance could not well account for; but which did not suffer her to close her eyes, either that morning or the next night. The day after that the Doctor sent her the following letter.

“My Dearest Molly,

Excuse the fondness of that expression; for I assure you, my Angel, all I write to you proceeds only from my Heart, which you have so entirely Conquered, and made your own, that nothing else has any share in it; and, my Angel, could you know what I feel when I am writing to you, Nay even at every thought of my Molly, I know I should gain your Pity if not your Love; if I am so happy to have already succeeded in raising the former, do let me have once more an opportunity of seeing you, and that soon, that I may breathe forth my Soul at those dear feet, where I would willingly die, if I am not suffer'd to lie there and live. My Sweetest Creature, give me leave to subscribe myself

Your fond, doating,  
Undone Slave.”

This letter added much to the disquietude which before began to torment poor Molly's Breast. She read it over twenty times, and, at last, having carefully survey'd every part of the room, that no body was present, she kissed it eagerly. However, as she was perfectly Modest, and afraid of appearing too forward, she resolved not to answer this first letter; and if she met the Doctor, to behave with great coldness towards him.

[44] Her Mother being ill, prevented her going out that day; and the next morning she received a second letter from the Doctor, in terms more warm and endearing than before, and which made so absolute a conquest over the unexperienc'd and tender heart of this poor Girl, that she suffered herself to be prevailed on, by the intreaties of her Lover, to write an Answer, which nevertheless she determin'd should be so distant and cool, that the woman of the strictest Virtue and Modestly in England might have no reason to be asham'd of having writ it; of which letter the reader hath here an Exact Copy:

“sur,

I has recevd boath your too litters, and fur I ham much Surprise hat the Loafe you priten to haf for so pur a Garl as mee. I kan nut beleef you wul desgrace yourself by Marring sutch a yf as mee, and sur I wool nut be thee Hore of the gratest man in the Kuntry. For thof mi Vartu his all I has, yit hit is a Potion I ham rissolv to kare to mi Housband, soe noe moor at presant, from your Umble Savant to Cummand.”

The Doctor received this letter with all the ecstasies any Lover could be inspired with, and, as Mr. Congreve says in his Old Batchelor, thought there was more Eloquence in the False Spellings, with which it abounded, than in all Aristotle. She now resolved to be no longer contented with this distant kind of Conversation, but to meet her Mistress face to face. Accordingly that very afternoon she went to her Mother's house, and enquired for her Poor Molly, who no sooner heard her Lover's voice than she fell a trembling in the most Violent manner. Her sister who opened the door informed the Doctor she was at home, and let the impostor in; but Molly being then in Dishabille, would not see him till she had put on clean linnen, and was arrayed from head to foot in as neat, tho' not in so Fine a manner, as the highest Court Lady in the Kingdom could attire herself in, to receive her Embroider'd Lover. Very tender and delicate was the interview of this pair, and if any corner of Molly's heart remain'd untaken, it was now totally Subdued. She would willingly have Postponed the Match some what longer, from her strict regard to Decency; but the earnestness and Ardour of her Lover would not suffer her, and she was at last obliged to Consent to be Married within two days.

[45] Her sister, who was older than herself, and had over-heard all that had Past, no sooner perceiv'd the Doctor gone, than she came to her, and wishing her Joy with a sneer, said much good may it do her with such a Husband; for that, for her own part, she would almost as willingly be married to one of her own Sex, and made some remarks not so Proper to be here inserted. This was resented by the other with much Warmth. She said she had chosen for herself only, and that if she was pleased, it did not become people to trouble their heads with what was

none of their Business. She was indeed so extremely Enamoured, that I question whether she would have exchanged the Doctor for the greatest and richest match in the World.

[46] And had not her Affections been fixed in this strong Manner, it is possible that an Accident which happened the very next night might have altered her Mind: for being at another Dancing with her Lover, a Quarrel arose between the Doctor and a man there present, upon which the mother seizing the former violently by the Collar, tore open her Wastecoat, and rent her shirt, so that all her Breast was discovered, which, tho' beyond expression Beautiful in a Woman, were of so different a kind from the Bosom of a man, that the married women there set up a great titter; and tho' it did not bring the Doctor's Sex into an absolute Suspicion, yet caused some whispers, which perhaps might have spoiled the Match with a less innocent and less Enamoured Virgin. It had however no such effect on poor Molly. As her fond heart was free from any Deceit, so was it entirely free from Suspicion; and accordingly, at the fixed time she met the Doctor, and their Nuptials were Celebrated in the usual form.

[47] The Mother was extremely pleased at this preferment (as she thought it) of her Daughter. The Joy of it did indeed contribute to restore her perfectly to health, and nothing but Mirth and Happiness appeared in the faces of the whole Family. The new married couple not only continued, but greatly increased the fondness which they had conceived for each other, and poor Molly, from some stories she told among her Acquaintance, the other young married Women of the Town, was received as a great Fibber, and was at least universally laughed at as such among them all.

[48] Three months past in this manner, when the Doctor was sent for to Glastonbury to a Patient (for the Fame of our Adventurer's knowledge in Physic began now to spread) when a Person of Totness being accidentally present, happened to see and know her, and having heard upon enquiry, that the Doctor was married at Wells, as we have above mentioned, related the whole story of Mr. Ivythorn's Daughter, and the whole Adventure at Totnes.

[49] News of this kind seldom wants wings; it reached Wells, and the ears of the Doctor's mother before her return from Glastonbury. Upon this the old Woman immediately sent for her Daughter, and very strictly examined her, telling her the great sin she would be guilty of, if she concealed a fact of this kind, and the great Disgrace she would bring on her own Family, and even on her whole Sex, by living quietly and contentedly with a Husband who was in any degree less a man than the rest of his Neighbours. Molly assured her mother of the Falsehood of this report; and as it is usual for Persons who are too eager in any cause, to prove too much, she asserted some things which staggered her Mother's belief, and made her cry out, O child, there is no such thing in Human Nature.

[50] Such was the progress this story had made in Wells, that before the Doctor arrived there, it was in every body's mouth; and as the Doctor rode through the streets, the Mob, especially the Women, all paid their compliments of congratulation. Some laughed at her, others threw dirt at her, and others made use of terms of reproach not fit to be commemorated. When she came to her own house, she found her wife in tears, and having asked her the cause, was informed of the Dialogue which had past between her and her mother. Upon which the Doctor, tho' he knew not yet by what means the Discovery had been made, yet too well knowing the Truth, began to think

of using the same method, which she had heard before put in Practice, of delivering herself from any impertinence; for as to Danger, she was not sufficiently versed in the Laws to apprehend any.

[51] In the mean time the mother, at the solicitation of some of her relations, who, notwithstanding the stout denial of the wife, had given credit to the story, had applied herself to a Magistrate, before whom the Totness man appeared, and gave evidence as is before mentioned. Upon this a Warrant was granted to apprehend the Doctor, with which the Constable arrive at her house, just as she was meditating her escape.

[52] The Husband was no sooner seized, but the wife threw herself into the greatest agonies of Rage and Grief, vowing that he was injured, and that the information was False and Malicious, and that she was resolved to attend her husband wherever they conveyed him.

[53] And now they all proceeded before the Justice, where a strict examination being made into the Affair, the whole happened to be true, to the great Shock and Astonishment to every body; but more especially to the poor Wife, who fell into Fits, out of which she was with great difficulty recovered. The whole Truth having been disclosed before the Justice, and something of too Vile, Wicked and Scandalous a Nature, which was found in the Doctor's trunk, having been produced in evidence against her, she was Committed to Bridewell, and Mr. Gold, an Eminent and Learned Counsellor at Law, who lives in those parts, was consulted with upon the occasion, who gave his advice that she should be Prosecuted at the next Sessions, on the Clause in the Vagrant act, for having by False and Deceitful practices endeavoured to impose on some of his Majesty's Subjects.

[54] As the Doctor was conveyed to Bridewell, she was attended by many insults from the Mob; but what was more unjustifiable, was the Cruel Treatment which the poor innocent wife received from her own Sex, upon the extraordinary accounts which she had formerly given of her Husband. Accordingly at the ensuing Sessions of the Peace for the County of Somerset, the Doctor was Indicted for the abovementioned Diabolical fact, and after a fair trial convicted, to the entire satisfaction of the whole Court.

[55] At the Trial the said Mary Price the wife, was produced as a Witness, and being asked by the Council, whether she had ever any Suspicion of the Doctor's Sex during the whole time of the Courtship she answered positively in the Negative. She was then asked how long they had been Married, to which she answered three Months; and whether they had Cohabited the whole time together? to which her reply was in the Affirmative. Then the Council asked her, whether during the time of this Cohabitation, she imagined the Doctor had behaved to her as a Husband ought to his Wife? her modesty Confounded her a little at this Question; but she at last answered she did imagine so. Lastly, she was asked when it was that she first harboured any Suspicion of her being imposed upon? to which she answered, she had not the least Suspicion till her Husband was carried before a Magistrate, and there discovered, as hath been said above.

[56] The Prisoner having been Convicted of this Base and Scandalous Crime, was by the Court sentenced to be Publickly and Severely whipt four several times, in four Market Towns within the County of Somerset, to wit, once in each Market Town, and to be Imprisoned, Etc.

[57] These Whippings she has accordingly undergone, and very Severely have they been inflicted, insomuch, that those Persons who have more regard to Beauty than to Justice, could not refrain from exerting some Pity toward her, when they saw so lovely a skin scarified with Rods, in such a manner that her back was almost flead: yet so little effect had the smart or Shame of this Punishment on the Person who underwent it, that the very evening she had suffered the first Whipping, she offered the Goaler money, to Procure her a young Girl to satisfy her most Monstrous and Unnatural Desires.

[58] But it is to be hoped that this example will be Sufficient to deter all others from the Commission of any such Foul and Unnatural Crimes: for which, if they should escape the Shame and Ruin which they so well Deserve in this World, they will be most certain of meeting with their full Punishment in the next: for Unnatural Affections are equally Vicious and equally Detestable in both Sexes, Nay, if Modesty be the Peculiar Characteristick of the Fair Sex, it is in them most Shocking and Odious to prostitute and Debase it.

[59] In order to caution therefore that Lovely Sex, which, while they Preserve their Natural Innocence and Purity, will still look most Lovely in the eyes of men, the above Pages have been written, which, that they might be Worthy of their perusal, such strict regard hath been had to the Utmost Decency, that notwithstanding the Subject of this Narrative be of a Nature so difficult to be handled inoffensively, not a single word occurs through the whole, which might shock the most Delicate ear, or give Offence to the Purest Chastity.

*Finis.*