

The Country Wife (1675)¹
By William Wycherley

*Indignor quicquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum illepidéve putetur, sed quia nuper:
Nec veniam Antiquis, sed honorem & præmia posci.
Horat.²*

THE PERSONS

Mr. Horner
Mr. Harcourt
Mr. Dorilant
Mr. Pinchwife
Mr. Sparkish
Sir Jaspar Fidget
Mrs. Margery Pinchwife
Mrs. Alithea
My Lady Fidget
Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Mrs. Squeamish
Old Lady Squeamish
Waiters, Servants, and Attendants
A Boy
A Quack
Lucy, Alithea's Maid

PROLOGUE, spoken by Mr. Horner

Poets like Cudgel'd Bullys, never do
At first, or second blow, submit to you;
But will provoke you still, and ne're have done,
Till you are weary first, with laying on:
The late so baffled Scribler of this day,
Though he stands trembling, bids me boldly say,
What we, before most Playes are us'd to do,
For Poets out of fear, first draw on you;
In a fierce Prologue, the still Pit defie,
And e're you speak, like Castril, give the lye;
But though our Bayses Batles oft I've fought,
And with bruis'd knuckles, their dear Conquests bought;
Nay, never yet fear'd Odds upon the Stage,
In Prologue dare not Hector with the Age,
But wou'd take Quarter from your saving hands,
Though Bayse within all yielding Countermands,
Says you Confed'rate Wits no Quarter give,
Ther'fore his Play shan't ask your leave to live:
Well, let the vain rash Fop, by huffing so,
Think to obtain the better terms of you;
But we the Actors humbly will submit,
Now, and at any time, to a full Pit;
Nay, often we anticipate your rage,
And murder Poets for you, on our Stage:
We set no Guards upon our Tying-Room,

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² [I hate to see something criticized not on the grounds that it is clumsy and inelegant, but simply because it is modern. I hate to see people demand not merely indulgence for the older writers, but the actual prerogative of idolatry. —Horace, Epistles, 1,1, 76-78]

But when with flying Colours, there you come,
We patiently you see, give up to you,
Our Poets, Virgins, nay our Matrons too.

The SCENE London.
ACT 1.

SCENE 1.

Enter Horner, and Quack following him at a distance.

Horner

A quack is as fit for a Pimp, as a Midwife for a Bawd; they are still but in their way, both helpers of Nature.---[aside.]---Well, my dear Doctor, hast thou done what I desired.

Quack

I have undone you for ever with the Women, and reported you throughout the whole Town as bad as an Eunuch, with as much trouble as if I had made you one in earnest.

Horner

But have you told all the Midwives you know, the Orange Wenches at the Playhouses, the City Husbands, and old Fumbling Keepers of this end of the Town, for they'l be the readiest to report it.

Quack

I have told all the Chamber-maids, Waiting women, Tyre women, and Old women of my acquaintance; nay, and whisper'd it as a secret to'em, and to the Whisperers of Whitehal; so that you need not doubt 'twill spread, and you will be as odious to the handsome young Women, as---

Horner

As the small Pox.---Well---

Quack

And to the married Women of this end of the Town, as---

Horner

As the great ones; nay, as their own Husbands.

Quack

And to the City Dames as Annis-seed Robin of filthy and contemptible memory; and they will frighten their Children with your name, especially their Females.

Horner

And cry Horner's coming to carry you away: I am only afraid 'twill not be believ'd; you told'em 'twas by an English-French disaster, and an English-French Chirurgeon, who has given me

at once, not only a Cure, but an Antidote for the future, against that damn'd malady, and that worse distemper, love, and all other Womens evils.

Quack

Your late journey into France has made it the more credible, and your being here a fortnight before you appear'd in publick, looks as if you apprehended the shame, which I wonder you do not: Well I have been hired by young Gallants to bely'em t'other way; but you are the first wou'd be thought a Man unfit for Women.

Horner

Dear Mr. Doctor, let vain Rogues be contented only to be thought abler Men than they are, generally 'tis all the pleasure they have, but mine lyes another way.

Quack

You take, methinks, a very preposterous way to it, and as ridiculous as if we Operators in Physick, shou'd put forth Bills to disparage our Medicaments, with hopes to gain Customers.

Horner

Doctor, there are Quacks in love, as well as Physick, who get but the fewer and worse Patients, for their boasting; a good name is seldom got by giving it ones self, and Women no more than honour are compass'd by bragging: Come, come Doctor,

the wisest Lawyer never discovers the merits of his [50] cause till the tryal; the wealthiest Man conceals his riches, and the cunning Gamster his play; Shy Husbands and Keepers like old Rooks are not to be cheated, but by a new unpractis'd trick; false friendship will pass now no more than false dice upon'em, no, not in the City.

Enter Boy.

Boy.

There are two Ladies and a Gentleman coming up.

Horner

A Pox, some unbelieving Sisters of my former acquaintance, who I am afraid, expect their sense shou'd be satisfy'd of the falsity of the report.

Enter Sir Jasp. Fidget, Lady Fidget, and Mrs. Dainty Fidget.
No---this formal Fool and Women!

Quack

His Wife and Sister.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

My Coach breaking just now before your door Sir, I look upon as an occasional repremand to me Sir, for not kissing your hands Sir, since your coming out of France Sir; and so my disaster Sir, has been my good fortune Sir; and this is my Wife, and Sister Sir.

Horner
What then, Sir?

Sir Jaspar Fidget
My Lady, and Sister, Sir.---Wife, this is Master Horner.

Lady Fidget
Master Horner, Husband!

Sir Jaspar Fidget
My Lady, my Lady Fidget, Sir.

Horner
So, Sir.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Won't you be acquainted with her Sir? [So the report is true, I find by his coldness or aversion to the Sex; but I'll play the wag with him.]
[Aside.]
[75] Pray salute my Wife, my Lady, Sir.

Horner

I will kiss no Mans Wife, Sir, for him, Sir; I have taken my eternal leave, Sir, of the Sex already, Sir.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Hah, hah, hah; I'll plague him yet.
[aside.]
Not know my Wife, Sir?

Horner
I do know your Wife, Sir, she's a Woman, Sir, and consequently a Monster, Sir, a greater Monster than a Husband, Sir.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
A Husband; how, Sir?

Horner
So, Sir; but I make no more Cuckholds, Sir.

[makes horns.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Hah, hah, hah, Mercury, Mercury.

Lady Fidget

Pray, Sir Jaspar, let us be gone from this rude fellow.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

Who, by his breeding, wou'd think, he had ever been in France?

Lady Fidget

Foh, he's but too much a French fellow, such as hate Women of quality and virtue, for their love to their Husband, Sr. Jaspar; a Woman is hated by'em as much for loving her Husband, as for loving their Money: But pray, let's be gone.

Horner

You do well, Madam, for I have nothing that you came for: I have brought over not so much as a Bawdy Picture, new Postures, nor the second Part of the Escole de Fides; Nor---

Quack

Hold for shame, Sir; what d'y mean? you'l ruine your [100] self for ever with the Sex---.

[apart to Horner.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Hah, hah, hah, he hates Women perfectly I find.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

What pitty 'tis he shou'd.

Lady Fidget

Ay, he's a base rude Fellow for't; but affectation makes not a Woman more odious to them, than Virtue.

Horner

Because your Virtue is your greatest affectation, Madam.

Lady Fidget

How, you sawcy Fellow, wou'd you wrong my honour?

Horner

If I cou'd.

Lady Fidget

How d'y mean, Sir?

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Hah, hah, hah, no he can't wrong your Ladyships honour, upon my honour; he poor Man---hark you in your ear---a meer Eunuch.

Lady Fidget

O filthy French Beast, foh, foh; why do we stay? let's be gone;
I can't endure the sight of him.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Stay, but till the Chairs come, they'l be here presently.

Lady Fidget

No, no.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Nor can I stay longer; 'tis---let me see, a quarter and a half
quarter of a minute past eleven; the Council will be sate, I must
away: business must be preferr'd always before Love and
Ceremony with the wise Mr. Horner.

Horner

And the Impotent Sir JaSparkish

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Ay, ay, the impotent Master Horner, hah, ha, ha.

Lady Fidget

What leave us with a filthy Man alone in his lodgings?

Sir Jaspar Fidget

[125] He's an innocent Man now, you know; pray stay, I'll
hasten the Chaires to you.---Mr. Horner your Servant, I shou'd
be glad to see you at my house; pray, come and dine with me,
and play at Cards with my Wife after dinner, you are fit for
Women at that game; yet hah, ha---['Tis as much a Husbands
prudence to provide innocent diversion for a Wife, as to hinder
her unlawful pleasures; and he had better employ her, than let
her employ her self.

[Aside.

Farewell.

[Exit Sir JaSparkish

Horner

Your Servant Sr. JaSparkish

Lady Fidget

I will not stay with him, foh---

Horner

Nay, Madam, I beseech you stay, if it be but to see, I can be as
civil to Ladies yet, as they wou'd desire.

Lady Fidget

No, no, foh, you cannot be civil to Ladies.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

You as civil as Ladies wou'd desire.

Lady Fidget

No, no, no, foh, foh, foh.

[Exeunt Ladie Fid. and Dainty.

Quack

Now I think, I, or you your self rather, have done your business with the Women.

Horner

Thou art an Ass; don't you see already upon the report and my carriage, this grave Man of business leaves his Wife in my lodgings, invites me to his house and wife, who before wou'd not be acquainted with me out of jealousy.

Quack

Nay; by this means you may be the more acquainted with the Husbands, but the less with the Wives.

Horner

Let me alone, if I can but abuse the Husbands, I'll [150] soon disabuse the Wives: Stay---I'll reckon you up the advantages, I am like to have by my Stratagem: First, I shall be rid of all my old Acquaintances, the most insatiable sorts of Duns, that invade our Lodgings in a morning: And next, to the pleasure of making a New Mistriss, is that of being rid of an old One, and of all old Debts; Love when it comes to be so, is paid the most unwillingly.

Quack

Well, you may be so rid of your old Acquaintances; but how will you get any new Ones?

Horner

Doctor, thou wilt never make a good Chymist, thou art so incredulous and impatient; ask but all the young Fellows of the Town, if they do not loose more time like Huntsmen, in starting the game, than in running it down; one knows not where to find'em. who will, or will not; Women of Quality are so civil, you can hardly distinguish love from good breeding, and a Man is often mistaken; but now I can be sure, she that shews an aversion to me loves the sport, as those Women that are gone, whom I warrant to be right: And then the next thing, is your Women of Honour, as you call'em, are only chary of their reputations, not their Persons, and 'tis scandal they wou'd avoid, not Men: Now may I have, by the reputation of an Eunuch, the Priviledges of One; and be seen in a Ladies Chamber, in a morning as early as her Husband; kiss Virgins

before their Parents, or Lovers; and may be in short the Pas par tout of the Town. [175] Now Doctor.

Quack

Nay, now you shall be the Doctor; and your Process is so new, that we do not know but it may succeed.

Horner

Not so new neither, Probatum est Doctor.

Quack

Well, I wish you luck and many Patients whil'st I go to mine.

[Exit. Quack.

Enter Harcourt, and Dorilant to Horner.

Harcourt

Come, your appearance at the Play yesterday, has I hope hardned you for the future against the Womens contempt, and the Mens raillery; and now you'l abroad as you were wont.

Horner

Did I not bear it bravely?

Dorilant

With a most Theatrical impudence; nay more than the Orange-wenches shew there, or a drunken vizard Mask, or a great belly'd Actress; nay, or the most impudent of Creatures, an ill Poet; or what is yet more impudent, a second-hand Critick.

Horner

But what say the Ladies, have they no pitty?

Harcourt

What Ladies? the vizard Masques you know never pitty a Man when all's gone, though in their Service.

Dorilant

And for the Women in the boxes, you'd never pitty them, when 'twas in your power.

Harcourt

They say 'tis pitty, but all that deal with common Women shou'd be serv'd so.

Dorilant

Nay, I dare swear, they won't admit you to play at Cards with them, go to Plays with'em, or do the little duties [200] which other Shadows of men, are wont to do for'em.

Horner
Who do you call Shadows of Men?

They disturb one another.

Dorilant
Half Men.

Harcourt
No, Mistresses are like Books; if you pore upon them too much, they doze you, and make you unfit for Company; but if us'd discreetly, you are the fitter for conversation by'em.

Horner
What Boyes?

Dorilant
A Mistress shou'd be like a little Country retreat near the Town, not to dwell in constantly, but only for a night and away; to tast the Town the better when a Man returns.

Dorilant
Ay your old Boyes, old beaux Garcons, who like super-annuated Stallions are suffer'd to run, feed, and whinney with the Mares as long as they live, though they can do nothing else.

Horner
I tell you, 'tis as hard to be a good Fellow, a good Friend, and a Lover of Women, as 'tis to be a good Fellow, a good Friend, and a Lover of Money: You cannot follow both, then choose your side; Wine gives you liberty, Love [225] takes it away.

Horner
Well a Pox on love and wenching, Women serve but to keep a Man from better Company; though I can't enjoy them, I shall you the more: good fellowship and friendship, are lasting, rational and manly pleasures.

Dorilant
Gad, he's in the right on't.

Harcourt
For all that give me some of those pleasures, you call effeminate too, they help to relish one another.

Horner
Wine gives you joy, Love grief and tortures; besides the Chirurgeon's Wine makes us witty, Love only Sots: Wine makes us sleep, Love breaks it.

Horner

Dorilant

By the World he has reason, Harcourt.

Horner

Wine makes---

Dorilant

Ay, Wine makes us---makes us Princes, Love makes us
Beggars, poor Rogues, y gad---and Wine---

Horner

So, there's one converted.---No, no, Love and Wine, Oil and
Vinegar.

Harcourt

I grant it; Love will still be uppermost.

Horner

Come, for my part I will have only those glorious, manly
pleasures of being very drunk, and very slovenly.
Enter Boy.

Boy.

Mr. Sparkish is below, Sir.

Harcourt

What, my dear Friend! a Rogue that is fond of me, only I think
for abusing him.

Dorilant

No, he can no more think the Men laugh at him, than that
Women jilt him, his opinion of himself is so good.

Horner

Well, there's another pleasure by drinking, I thought not of; I
shall loose his acquaintance, because he cannot drink; and you
know 'tis a very hard thing to be rid of him, for he's one of
those nauseous offerers at wit, who like the worst Fidlers run
themselves into all Companies.

Harcourt

One, that by being in the Company of Men of sense [250]
wou'd pass for one.

Horner

And may so to the short-sighed World, as a false Jewel
amongst true ones, is not discern'd at a distance; his Company
is as troublesome to us, as a Cuckolds, when you have a mind
to his Wife's.

Harcourt

No, the Rogue will not let us enjoy one another, but ravishes our conversation, though he signifies no more to't, than Sir Martin Mar-all's gaping, and auker'd thrumming upon the Lute, does to his Man's Voice, and Musick.

Dorilant

And to pass for a wit in Town, shewes himself a fool every night to us, that are guilty of the plot.

Horner

Such wits as he, are, to a Company of reasonable Men, like Rooks to the Gamesters, who only fill a room at the Table, but are so far from contributing to the play, that they only serve to spoil the fancy of those that do.

Dorilant

Nay, they are us'd like Rooks too, snub'd, check'd, and abus'd; yet the Rogues will hang on.

Horner

A Pox on'em, and all that force Nature, and wou'd be still what she forbids'em; Affectation is her greatest Monster.

Harcourt

Most Men are the contraries to that they wou'd seem; your bully you see, is a Coward with a long Sword; the little humbly fawning Physician with his Ebony cane, is he that destroys Men.

Dorilant

The Usurer, a poor Rogue, possess'd of moldy Bonds, and Mortgages; and we they call Spend-thrifts, are only [275] wealthy, who lay out his money upon daily new purchases of pleasure.

Horner

Ay, your errantest cheat, is your Trustee, or Executor; your jealous Man, the greatest Cuckhold; your Church-man, the greatest Atheist; and your noisy pert Rogue of a wit, the greatest Fop, dullest Ass, and worst Company as you shall see: For here he comes.

Enter Sparkish to them.

Sparkish

How is't, Sparks, how is't? Well Faith, Harry, I must railly thee a little, ha, ha, ha, upon the report in Town of thee, ha, ha, ha, I can't hold y Faith; shall I speak?

Horner

Yes, but you'l be so bitter then.

Sparkish

Honest Dick and Franck here shall answer for me, I will not be
extream bitter by the Univers.

Harcourt

We will be bound in ten thousand pound Bond, he shall not be
bitter at all.

Dorilant

Nor sharp, nor sweet.

Horner

What, not down right insipid?

Sparkish

Nay then, since you are so brisk, and provoke me, take what
follows; you must know, I was discoursing and raillying with
some Ladies yesterday, and they hapned to talk of the fine new
signes in Town.

Horner

Very fine Ladies I believe.

Sparkish

Said I, I know where the best new sign is. Where, says one of
the Ladies? In Covent-Garden, I reply'd. Said another, In what
street? In Russel-street, answer'd I. Lord says [300] another,
I'm sure there was ne're a fine new sign there yesterday. Yes,
but there was, said I again, and it came out of France, and has
been there a fortnight.

Dorilant

A Pox I can hear no more, prethee.

Horner

No hear him out; let him tune his crowd a while.

Harcourt

The worst Musick the greatest preparation.

Sparkish

Nay faith, I'll make you laugh. It cannot be, says a third Lady.
Yes, yes, quoth I again. Says a fourth Lady,

Horner

Look to't, we'l have no more Ladies.

Sparkish

No.---then mark, mark, now, said I to the fourth, did you never see Mr. Horner; he lodges in Russel-street, and he's a sign of a Man, you know, since he came out of France, heh, hah, he.

Horner
But the Divel take me, is thine be the sign of a jest.

Sparkish
With that they all fell a laughing, till they bepiss'd themselves; what, but it do's not move you, methinks? well see one had as good go to Law without a witness, as break a jest without a laugher on ones side.---Come, come Sparks, but where do we dine, I have left at Whitehal an Earl to dine with you.

Dorilant
Why, I thought thou hadst lov'd a Man with a title better, than a Suit with a French trimming to't.

Harcourt
Go, to him again.

Sparkish
No, Sir, a wit to me is the greatest title in the World.

Horner

But go dine with your Earl, Sir, he may be exceptionous; [325]
we are your Friends, and will not take it ill to be left, I do assure you.

Harcourt
Nay, faith he shall go to him.

Sparkish
Nay, pray Gentlemen.

Dorilant
We'l thrust you out, if you wo'not, what disappoint any Body for us.

Sparkish
Nay, dear Gentlemen hear me.

Horner
No, no, Sir, by no means; pray go Sir.

Sparkish
Why, dear Rogues.

[They all thrust him out of the room.

Dorilant
No, no.

All.
Ha, ha, ha.

[Sparkish returns.

Sparkish
But, Sparks, pray hear me; what d'ye think I'll eat then with gay shallow Fops, and silent Coxcombs? I think wit as necessary at dinner as a glass of good wine, and that's the reason I never have any stomach when I eat alone.---Come, but where do we dine?

Horner
Ev'n where you will.

Sparkish
At Chateline's.

Dorilant
Yes, if you will.

Sparkish
Or at the Cock.

Dorilant
Yes, if you please.

Sparkish
Or at the Dog and Partridg.

Horner
Ay, if you have mind to't, for we shall dine at neither.

Sparkish
Pshaw, with your fooling we shall loose the new Play; and I wou'd no more miss seing a new Play the first [350] day, than I wou'd miss setting in the wits Row; therefore I'll go fetch my Mistriss and away.

[Exit Sparkish.
Manent Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant; Enter to them Mr. Pinchwife.

Horner
Who have we here, Pinchwife?

Mr. Pinchwife
Gentlemen, your humble Servant.

Horner
Well, Jack, by thy long absence from the Town, the grumness
of thy countenance, and the slovenlyness of thy habit; I shou'd
give thee joy, shoud' I not, of Marriage?

Mr. Pinchwife
[Death does he know I'm married too? I thought to have
conceal'd it from him at least.]
[Aside.
My long stay in the Country will excuse my dress, and I have a
suit of Law, that brings me up to Town, that puts me out of
humour; besides I must give Sparkish to morrow five thousand
pound to lye with my Sister.

Horner
Nay, you Country Gentlemen rather than not purchase, will
buy any thing, and he is a crackt title, if we may quibble: Well,
but am I to give thee joy, I heard thou wert marry'd.

Mr. Pinchwife
What then?

Horner

Why, the next thing that is to be heard, is thou'rt a Cuckold.

Mr. Pinchwife
Insupportable name.

[Aside.

Horner
But I did not expect Marriage from such a Whoremaster as
you, one that knew the Town so much, and Women so well.

Mr. Pinchwife
Why, I have marry'd no London Wife.

Horner
Pshaw, that's all one, that grave circumspection in marrying
[375] a Country Wife, is like refusing a deceitful pamper'd
Smithfield Jade, to go and be cheated by a Friend in the
Country.

Mr. Pinchwife [Aside.
A Pox on him and his Simile. At least we are a little surer of
the breed there, know what her keeping has been, whether
foyl'd or unsound.

Horner

Come, come, I have known a clap gotten in Wales, and there are Cozens, Justices, Clarks, and Chaplains in the Country, I won't say Coach-men, but she's handsome and young.

Mr. Pinchwife

I'll answer as I shou'd do.

[Aside.

No, no, she has no beauty, but her youth; no attraction, but here modesty, wholesome, homely, and huswifely, that's all.

Dorilant

He talks as like a Grasier as he looks.

Mr. Pinchwife

She's too auker'd, ill favour'd, and silly to bring to Town.

Harcourt

Then methinks you shou'd bring her, to be taught breeding.

Mr. Pinchwife

To be taught; no, Sir, I thank you, good Wives, and private Souldiers shou'd be ignorant.---[I'll keep her from your instructions, I warrant you.

Harcourt

The Rogue is as jealous, as if his wife were not ignorant.

[Aside.

Horner

Why, if she be ill favour'd, there will be less danger here for you, than by leaving her in the Country; we have such variety of dainties, that we are seldom hungry.

Dorilant

But they have alwayes coarse, constant, swinging stomachs [400] in the Country.

Harcourt

Foul Feeders indeed.

Dorilant

And your Hospitality is great there.

Harcourt

Open house, every Man's welcome.

Mr. Pinchwife

So, so, Gentlemen.

Horner

But prethee, why woud'st thou marry her? if she be ugly, ill bred, and silly, she must be rich then.

Mr. Pinchwife

As rich as if she brought me twenty thousand pound out of this Town; for she'l be as sure not to spend her moderate portion, as a London Baggage wou'd be to spend hers, let it be what it wou'd; so 'tis all one: then because shes ugly, she's the likelier to be my own; and being ill bred, she'l hate conversation; and since silly and innocent, will not know the difference betwixt a Man of one and twenty, and one of forty

Horner

Nine---to my knowledge; but if she be silly, she'l expect as much from a Man of forty nine, as from him of one and twenty: But methinks wit is more necessary than beauty, and I think no young Woman ugly that has it, and no handsome Woman agreeable without it.

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis my maxime, he's a Fool that marrys, but he's a greater that does not marry a Fool; what is wit in a Wife good for, but to make a Man a Cuckold?

Horner

Yes, to keep it from his knowledge.

Mr. Pinchwife

A Fool cannot contrive to make her husband a Cuckold.

Horner

[425] No, but she'l club with a Man that can; and what is worse, if she cannot make her Husband a Cuckold, she'l make him jealous, and pass for one, and then 'tis all one.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, well, I'll take care for one, my Wife shall make me no Cuckold, though she had your help Mr. Horner; I understand the Town, Sir.

Dorilant

His help!

[Aside.

Harcourt

He's come newly to Town it seems, and has not heard how things are with him.

[Aside.

Horner

But tell me, has Marriage cured thee of whoring, which it seldom does.

Harcourt

'Tis more than age can do.

Horner

No, the word is, I'll marry and live honest; but a Marriage vow is like a penitent Gamesters Oath, and entring into Bonds, and penalties to stint himself to such a particular small sum at play for the future, which makes him but the more eager, and not being able to hold out, looses his Money again, and his forfeit to boot.

Dorilant

Ay, ay, a Gamester will be a Gamester, whilst his Money lasts; and a Whoremaster, whilst his vigour.

Harcourt

Nay, I have known'em, when they are broke and can loose no more, keep a fumbling with the Box in their hands to fool with only, and hinder other Gamesters.

Dorilant

That had wherewithal to make lusty stakes.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, Gentlemen, you may laugh at me, but you shall [450] never lye with my Wife, I know the Town.

Horner

But prethee, was not the way you were in better, is not keeping better than Marriage?

Mr. Pinchwife

A Pox on't, the Jades wou'd jilt me, I cou'd never keep a Whore to my self.

Horner

So then you only marry'd to keep a Whore to your self; well, but let me tell you, Women, as you say, are like Souldiers made constant and loyal by good pay, rather than by Oaths and Covenants, therefore I'd advise my Friends to keep rather than marry; since too I find by your example, it does not serve ones turn, for I saw you yesterday in the eighteen penny place with a pretty Country-wench.

Mr. Pinchwife

How the Divil, did he see my Wife then? I sate there that she might not be seen; but she shall never go to a play again.

[Aside.

Horner

What dost thou blush at nine and forty, for having been seen with a Wench?

Dorilant

No Faith, I warrant 'twas his Wife, which he seated there out of sight, for he's a cunning Rogue, and understands the Town.

Harcourt

He blushes, then 'twas his Wife; for Men are now more ashamed to be seen with them in publick, than with a Wench.

Mr. Pinchwife

Hell and damnation, I'm undone, since Horner has seen her, and they know 'twas she.

[Aside.

Horner

[475] But prethee, was it thy Wife? she was exceedingly pretty; I was in love with her at that distance.

Mr. Pinchwife

You are like never to be nearer to her. Your Servant Gentlemen.

[Offers to go.

Hor,

Nay, prethee stay.

Mr. Pinchwife

I cannot, I will not.

Horner

Come you shall dine with us.

Mr. Pinchwife

I have din'd already.

Horner

Come, I know thou hast not; I'll treat thee dear Rogue, thou sha't spend none of thy Hampshire Money to day.

Mr. Pinchwife

Treat me; so he uses me already like his Cuckold.

[Aside.

Horner
Nay, you shall not go.

Mr. Pinchwife
I must, I have business at home.

[Exit Pinchwife.

Harcourt
To beat his Wife, he's as jealous of her, as a Cheapside
Husband of a Covent-garden Wife.

Horner
Why, 'tis as hard to find an old Whoremaster without jealousy
and the gout, as a young one without fear or the Pox.

As Gout in Age, from Pox in Youth proceeds;
So Wenching past, then jealousy succeeds:
The worst disease that Love and Wenching breeds.

ACT 2.

SCENE 1.

Mrs. Margery Pinchwife, and Alithea: Mr. Pinchwife peeping
behind at the door.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Pray, Sister, where are the best Fields and Woods, to walk in in
London?

Alithea
A pretty Question; why, Sister! Mulberry Garden, and St.
James's Park; and for close walks the New Exchange.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Pray, Sister, tell me why my Husband looks so grum here in
Town? and keeps me up so close, and will not let me go a
walking, nor let me wear my best Gown yesterday?

Alithea
O he's jealous, Sister.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Jealous, what's that?

Alithea
He's afraid you shou'd love another Man.

Mrs. Pinchwife

How shou'd he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself.

Alithea

Did he not carry you yesterday to a Play?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay, but we sate amongst ugly People, he wou'd not let me come near the Gentry, who sate under us, so that I cou'd not see'em: He told me, none but naughty Women sate there, whom they tous'd and mous'd; but I wou'd have ventur'd for all that.

Alithea

But how did you like the Play?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Indeed I was aweary of the Play, but I lik'd hugely the Actors; they are the goodlyest proper'st Men, Sister.

Alithea

O but you must not like the Actors, Sister.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay, how shou'd I help it, Sister? Pray, Sister, [25] when my Husband comes in, will you ask leave for me to go a walking?

Alithea

A walking, hah, ha; Lord, a Country Gentlewomans leasure is the drudgery of a foot-post; and she requires as much airing as her Husbands Horses.

[Aside.

Enter Mr. Pinchwife to them.

But here comes your Husband; I'll ask, though I'm sure he'l not grant it.

Mrs. Pinchwife

He says he won't let me go abroad, for fear of catching the Pox.

Alithea

Fye, the small Pox you shou'd say.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Oh my dear, dear Bud, welcome home; why dost thou look so fropish, who has nanger'd thee?

Mr. Pinchwife

Your a Fool.

[Mrs. Pinch. goes aside, & cryes.

Alithea

Faith so she is, for crying for no fault, poor tender Creature!

Mr. Pinchwife

What you wou'd have her as impudent as your self, as errant a Jilflirt, a gadder, a Magpy, and to say all a meer notorious Town-Woman?

Alithea

Brother, you are my only Censurer; and the honour of your Family shall sooner suffer in your Wife there, than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the Town.

Mr. Pinchwife

Hark you Mistriss, do not talk so before my Wife, the innocent liberty of the Town!

Alithea

Why, pray, who boasts of any intrigue with me? what Lampoon has made my name notorious? what ill Women [50] frequent my Lodgings? I keep no Company with any Women of scandalous reputations.

Mr. Pinchwife

No, you keep the Men of scandalous reputations Company.

Alithea

Where? wou'd you not have me civil? answer'em in a Box at the Plays? in the drawing room at Whitehal? in St. James's Park? Mulberry-garden? or---

Mr. Pinchwife

Hold, hold, do not teach my Wife, where the Men are to be found; I believe she's the worse for your Town documents already; I bid you keep her in ignorance as I do.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Indeed be not angry with her Bud, she will tell me nothing of the Town, though I ask her a thousand times a day.

Mr. Pinchwife

Then you are very inquisitive to know, I find?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Not I indeed, Dear, I hate London; our Place-house in the Country is worth a thousand of't, wou'd I were there again.

Mr. Pinchwife

So you shall I warrant; but were you not talking of Plays, and Players, when I came in? you are her encourager in such discourses.

Mrs. Pinchwife

No indeed, Dear, she chid me just now for liking the Player Men.

Mr. Pinchwife

Nay, if she be so innocent as to own to me her liking them, there is no hurt in't---

[Aside.

Come my poor Rogue, but thou lik'st none better then me?

Mrs. Pinchwife

[75] Yes indeed, but I do, the Player Men are finer Folks.

Mr. Pinchwife

But you love none better then me?

Mrs. Pinchwife

You are mine own Dear Bud, and I know you, I hate a Stranger.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ay, my Dear, you must love me only, and not be like the naughty Town Women, who only hate their Husbands, and love every Man else, love Plays, Visits, fine Coaches, fine Cloaths, Fiddles, Balls, Treats, and so lead a wicked Town-life.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Nay, if to enjoy all these things be a Town-life, London is not so bad a place, Dear.

Mr. Pinchwife

How! if you love me, you must hate London.

Ali.

The Fool has forbid me discovering to her the pleasures of the Town, and he is now setting her a gog upon them himself.

Mrs. Pinchwife

But, Husband, do the Town-women love the Player Men too?

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, I warrant you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay, I warrant you.

Mr. Pinchwife
Why, you do not, I hope?

Mrs. Pinchwife
Why, Love?

Mrs. Pinchwife
No, no Bud; but why have we no Player-men in the Country?

Mr. Pinchwife
Why, I'll tell you.

Mr. Pinchwife
Ha---Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a Play.

Alithea
Nay, if he tell her, she'l give him more cause to forbid her that place.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Nay, why, Love? I did not care for going; but [100] when you forbid me, you make me as't were desire it.

[Aside.

Alithea
So 'twill be in other things, I warrant.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Pray, why, Dear?

[Aside.

Mr. Pinchwife
First, you like the Actors, and the Gallants may like you.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Pray, let me go to a Play, Dear.

Mrs. Pinchwife
What, a homely Country Girl? no Bud, no body will like me.

Mr. Pinchwife
Hold your Peace, I wo'not.

Mr. Pinchwife
I tell you, yes, they may.

Mrs. Pinchwife

No, no, you jest---I won't believe you, I will go.

Mr. Pinchwife

I tell you then, that one of the lewdest Fellows in Town, who saw you there, told me he was in love with you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Indeed! who, who, pray who wast?

Mr. Pinchwife

I've gone too far, and slipt before I was aware; how overjoy'd she is!

[Aside.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Was it any Hampshire Gallant, any of our Neighbours? I promise you, I am beholding to him.

Mr. Pinchwife

I promise you, you lye; for he wou'd but ruin you, as he has done hundreds: he has no other love for Women, but that, such

as he, look upon Women like Basilicks, but [125] to destroy'em.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay, but if he loves me, why shou'd he ruin me? answer me to that: methinks he shou'd not, I wou'd do him no harm.

Alithea

Hah, ha, ha.

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis very well; but I'll keep him from doing you any harm, or me either.

[Enter Sparkish and Harcourt.

But here comes Company, get you in, get you in.

Mrs. Pinchwife

But pray, Husband, is he a pretty Gentleman, that loves me?

Mr. Pinchwife

In baggage, in.

[Thrusts her in: shuts the door.

What all the lewd Libertines of the Town brought to my Lodging, by this easie Coxcomb! S'death I'll not suffer it.

Sparkish

Here Harcourt, do you approve my choice? Dear, little Rogue,
I told you, I'd bring you acquainted with all my Friends, the
wits, and---

[Harcourt salutes her.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ay, they shall know her, as well as you your self will, I warrant
you.

Sparkish

This is one of those, my pretty Rogue, that are to dance at your
Wedding to morrow; and him you must bid welcom ever, to
what you and I have.

Mr. Pinchwife

Monstrous!---

[Aside.

Sparkish

Harcourt how dost thou like her, Faith? Nay, Dear, do not look
down; I should hate to have a Wife of mine out of countenance
at any thing.

Mr. Pinchwife

[150] Wonderful!

Sparkish

Tell me, I say, Harcourt, how dost thou like her? thou hast
star'd upon her enough, to resolve me.

Harcourt

So infinitely well, that I cou'd wish I had a Mistriss too, that
might differ from her in nothing, but her love and engagement
to you.

Alithea

Sir, Master Sparkish has often told me, that his Acquaintance
were all Wits and Raillieurs, and now I find it.

Sparkish

No, by the Universe, Madam, he does not railly now; you may
believe him: I do assure you, he is the honestest, worthyest,
true hearted Gentleman---A man of such perfect honour, he
wou'd say nothing to a Lady, he does not mean.

Mr. Pinchwife

Praising another Man to his Mistriss!

Harcourt

Sir, you are so beyond expectation obliging, that---

Sparkish

Nay, I gad, I am sure you do admire her extreamly, I see't in your eyes.---He does admire you Madam.---By the World, don't you?

Harcourt

Yes, above the World, or, the most glorious part of it, her whole Sex; and till now I never thought I shou'd have envy'd you, or any Man about to marry, but you have the best excuse for Marriage I ever knew.

Alithea

Nay, now, Sir, I'm satisfied you are of the Society of the Wits, and Raillieurs, since you cannot spare your Friend, even when he is but too civil to you; but the surest sign is, [175] since you are an Enemy to Marriage, for that I hear you hate as much as business or bad Wine.

Harcourt

Truly, Madam, I never was an Enemy to Marriage, till now, because Marriage was never an Enemy to me before.

Alithea

But why, Sir, is Marriage an Enemy to you now? Because it robs you of your Friend here; for you look upon a Friend married, as one gone into a Monastery, that is dead to the World.

Harcourt

'Tis indeed, because you marry him; I see Madam, you can guess my meaning: I do confess heartily and openly, I wish it were in my power to break the Match, by Heavens I wou'd.

Sparkish

Poor Franck!

Alithea

Wou'd you be so unkind to me?

Harcourt

No, no, 'tis not because I wou'd be unkind to you.

Sparkish

Poor Franck, no gad, 'tis only his kindness to me.

Mr. Pinchwife

Great kindness to you indeed; insensible Fop, let a Man make love to his Wife to his face.

[Aside.

Sparkish

Come dear Franck, for all my Wife there that shall be, thou shalt enjoy me sometimes dear Rogue; by my honour, we Men of wit condole for our deceased Brother in Marriage, as much as for one dead in earnest: I think that was prettily said of me, ha Harcourt?---But come Franck, he not not melancholy for me.

Harcourt

No, I assure you I am not melancholy for you.

Sparkish

[200] Prethee, Frank, dost think my Wife that shall be there a fine Person?

Harcourt

I cou'd gaze upon her, till I became as blind as you are.

Sparkish

How, as I am! how!

Harcourt

Because you are a Lover, and true Lovers are blind, stockblind.

Sparkish

True, true; but by the World, she has wit too, as well as beauty: go, go with her into a corner, and trye if she has wit, talk to her any thing, she's bashful before me.

Harcourt

Indeed if a Woman wants wit in a corner, she has it no where.

Alithea

Sir, you dispose of me a little before your time.---

[Aside to Sparkish.

Sparkish

Nay, nay, Madam let me have an earnest of your obedience, or---go, go, Madam---

[Harcourt courts Alithea aside.

Mr. Pinchwife

How, Sir, if you are not concern'd for the honour of a VVife, I am for that of a Sister; he shall not debauch her: be a Pander to your own VVife, bring Men to her, let'em make love before

your face, thrust'em into a corner together, then leav'em in private! is this your Town wit and conduct?

Sparkish

Hah, ha, ha, a silly wise Rogue, wou'd make one laugh more then a stark Fool, hah, ha: I shall burst. Nay, you shall not disturb'em; I'll vex thee, by the World.

Struggles with Pinch. to keep, him from Harc. and Alithea

Alithea

The writings are drawn, Sir, settlements made; 'tis too [225] late, Sir, and past all revocation.

Harcourt

Then so is my death.

Alithea

I wou'd not be unjust to him.

Harcourt

Then why to me so?

Alithea

I have no obligation to you.

Harcourt

My love.

Alithea

I had his before.

Harcourt

You never had it; he wants you see jealousy, the only infallible sign of it.

Alithea

Love proceeds from esteem; he cannot distrust my virtue, besides he loves me, or he wou'd not marry me.

Harcourt

Marrying you, is no more sign of his love, then bribing your Woman, that he may marry you, is a sign of his generosity: Marriage is rather a sign of interest, then love; and he that marries a fortune, covets a Mistress, not loves her: But if you take Marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.

Alithea

No, now you have put a scruple in my head; but in short, Sir, to end our dispute, I must marry him, my reputation wou'd suffer in the World else.

Harcourt

No, if you do marry him, with your pardon, Madam, your reputation suffers in the World, and you wou'd be thought in necessity for a cloak.

Alithea

Nay, now you are rude, Sir.---Mr. Sparkish, pray come hither, your Friend here is very troublesom, and very [250] loving.

Harcourt

Hold, hold---

[Aside to Alithea.

Mr. Pinchwife

D'ye hear that?

Sparkish

Why, d'ye think I'll seem to be jealous, like a Country Bumpkin?

Mr. Pinchwife

No, rather be a Cuckold, like a credulous Cit.

Harcourt

Madam, you wou'd not have been so little generous as to have told him.

Alithea

Yes, since you cou'd be so little generous, as to wrong him.

Harcourt

Wrong him, no Man can do't, he's beneath an injury; a Bubble, a Coward, a senseless Idiot, a Wretch so contemptible to all the World but you, that---

Alithea

Hold, do not rail at him, for since he is like to be my Husband, I am resolv'd to like him: Nay, I think I am oblig'd to tell him, you are not his Friend.---Master Sparkish, Master Sparkish.

Sparkish

What, what; now dear Rogue, has not she wit?

Harcourt

Not so much as I thought, and hoped she had.

[Speaks surlily.

Pshaw, to shew his parts---we wits rail and make love often,
but to shew our parts; as we have no affections, so we have no
malice, we---

Alithea

Mr. Sparkish, do you bring People to rail at you?

Alithea

He said, you were a Wretch, below an injury.

Harcourt

Madam---

Sparkish

Pshaw.

Spar,

How! no, but if he does rail at me, 'tis but in jest I warrant;
what we wits do for one another, and never take any notice of
it.

Harcourt

Damn'd, senseless, impudent, virtuous Jade; well since she won't
let me have her, she'l do as good, she'l make me hate her.

Alithea

He spoke so scurrilously of you, I had no patience [275] to hear
him; besides he has been making love to me.

Alithea

A Common Bubble.

Harcourt

True damn'd tell-tale-Woman.

Sparkish

Pshaw.

[Aside.

Alithea

A Coward.

Sparkish

Sparkish

Pshaw, pshaw.

Alithea
A sensless driveling Idiot.

Sparkish
How, did he disparage my parts? Nay, then my honour's
concern'd, I can't put up that, Sir; by the World, Brother help
me to kill him; [Aside. [I may draw now, since we have the
odds of him:---'tis a good occasion too before my Mistriss]---

[Offers to draw.

Alithea
Hold, hold.

Sparkish
What, what.

Alithea
I must not let'em kill the Gentleman neither, for his kindness to
me; I am so far from hating him, that I wish my Gallant had his
person and understanding:--- [300] [Aside. [Nay if my honour-
--

Sparkish
I'll be thy death.

Alithea
Hold, hold, indeed to tell the truth, the Gentleman said after all,
that what he spoke, was but out of friendship to you.

Sparkish
How! say, I am, I am a Fool, that is no wit, out of friendship to
me.

Alithea
Yes, to try whether I was concern'd enough for you, and made
love to me only to be satisfy'd of my virtue, for your sake.

Harcourt
Kind however---

[Aside.

Sparkish
Nay, if it were so, my dear Rogue, I ask thee pardon; but why
wou'd not you tell me so, faith.

Harcourt

Because I did not think on't, faith.

Sparkish

Come, Horner does not come, Harcourt, let's be gone to the new Play.---Come Madam.

Alithea

I will not go, if you intend to leave me alone in the Box, and run into the pit, as you use to do.

Sparkish

Pshaw, I'll leave Harcourt with you in the Box, to entertain you, and that's as good; if I sate in the Box, I shou'd be thought no Judge, but of trimmings.---Come away Harcourt, lead her down.

[Exeunt Sparkish, Harcourt, and Alithea.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, go thy wayes, for the flower of the true Town Fops, such as spend their Estates, before they come to'em, and are Cuckolds before they'r married. But let me go look [325] to my own Free-hold---How---
Enter my Lady Fidget, Mistriss Dainty Fidget, and Mistriss Squeamish.

Lady Fidget

Your Servant, Sir, where is your Lady? we are come to wait upon her to the new Play.

Mr. Pinchwife

New Play!

Lady Fidget

And my Husband will wait upon you presently.

Mr. Pinchwife

Damn your civility---

[Aside.

Madam, by no means, I will not see Sir Jaspar here, till I have waited upon him at home; nor shall my Wife see you, till she has waited upon your Ladyship at your lodgings.

Lady Fidget

Now we are here, Sir---

Mr. Pinchwife

No, Madam.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

Pray, let us see her.

Squeam.

We will not stir, till we see her.

Mr. Pinchwife

A Pox on you all---

[Aside.

Goes to the door, and returns.

she has lock'd the door, and is gone abroad.

Lady Fidget

No, you have lock'd the door, and she's within.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

They told us below, she was here.

Mr. Pinchwife

[Will nothing do?]-Well it must out then, to tell you the truth, Ladies, which I was afraid to let you know before, least it might endanger your lives, my Wife has just now the Small Pox come out upon her, do not be frighten'd; but pray, be gone Ladies, you shall not stay here in danger of your lives; pray get you gone Ladies.

Lady Fidget

No, no, we have all had'em.

Squeam.

Alack, alack.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

[350] Come, come, we must see how it goes with her, I understand the disease.

Lady Fidget

Come.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, there is no being too hard for Women at their own weapon, lying, therefore I'll quit the Field.

[Aside.

[Exit Pinchwife.

Squeam.

Here's an example of jealousy.

Lady Fidget

Indeed as the World goes, I wonder there are no more jealous,
since Wives are so neglected.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Pshaw, as the World goes, to what end shou'd they be jealous.

Lady Fidget
Foh, 'tis a nasty World.

Squeam.
That Men of parts, great acquaintance, and quality shou'd take
up with, and spend themselves and fortunes, in keeping little
Play-house Creatures, foh.

Lady Fidget
Nay, that Women of understanding, great acquaintance, and
good quality, shou'd fall a keeping too of little Creatures, foh.

Squeam.
Why, 'tis the Men of qualities fault, they never visit Women of
honour, and reputation, as they us'd to do; and have not so
much as common civility, for Ladies of our rank, but use us
with the same indifferency, and ill breeding, as if we were all
marry'd to'em.

Lady Fidget
She says true, 'tis an errant shame Women of quality shou'd be
so slighted; methinks, birth, birth, shou'd go for something; I
have known Men admired, courted, and followed [375] for
their titles only.

Squeam.
Ay, one wou'd think Men of honour shou'd not love no more,
than marry out of their own rank.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Fye, fye upon'em, they are come to think cross breeding for
themselves best, as well as for their Dogs, and Horses.

Lady Fidget
They are Dogs, and Horses for't.

Squeam.
One wou'd think if not for love, for vanity a little.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Nay, they do satisfy their vanity upon us sometimes; and are
kind to us in their report, tell all the World they lye with us.

Lady Fidget

Damn'd Rascals, that we shou'd be only wrong'd by'em; to report a Man has had a Person, when he has not had a Person, is the greatest wrong in the whole World, that can be done to a person.

Squeam.
Well, 'tis an errant shame, Noble Persons shou'd be so wrong'd, and neglected.

Lady Fidget
But still 'tis an erranter shame for a Noble Person, to neglect her own honour, and defame her own Noble Person, with little inconsiderable Fellows, foh!--

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
I suppose the crime against our honour, is the same with a Man of quality as with another.

Lady Fidget
How! no sure the Man of quality is likest one's Husband, and therefore the fault shou'd be the less.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
But then the pleasure shou'd be the less.

Lady Fidget
[400] Fye, fye, fye, for shame Sister, whither shall we ramble? be continent in your discourse, or I shall hate you.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Besides an intrigue is so much the more notorious for the man's quality.

Squeam.
'Tis true, no body takes notice of a private Man, and therefore with him, 'tis more secret, and the crime's the less, when 'tis not known.

Lady Fidget
You say true; y faith I think you are in the right on't: 'tis not an injury to a Husband, till it be an injury to our honours; so that a Woman of honour looses no honour with a private Person; and to say truth---

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
So the little Fellow is grown a private Person--- with her---

[Apart to Squeamish.

Lady Fidget
But still my dear, dear Honour.

Enter Sir Jaspar, Horner, Dorilant.

Stay, stay, faith to tell you the naked truth.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Ay, my dear, dear of honour, thou hast still so much honour in thy mouth---

Lady Fidget

Fye, Sir Jaspar, do not use that word naked.

Horner

That she has none elsewhere---

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Well, well, in short I have business at Whitehal, and cannot go to the play with you, therefore wou'd have [425] you go---

[Aside.

Lady Fidget

With those two to a Play?

Lady Fidget

Oh, what d'ye mean to bring in these upon us?

Sir Jaspar Fidget

No, not with t'other, but with Mr. Horner, there can be no more scandal to go with him, than with Mr. Tatle, or Master Limberham.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

Foh, these are as bad as Wits.

Lady Fidget

With that nasty Fellow! no---no.

Squeam.

Foh!

Lady Fidget

Let us leave the Room.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Nay, prethee Dear, hear me.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

[Whispers to Lady Fid. Horner, Dorilant drawing near Squeamish, and Daint.

Horner
Ladies.

affected, dull, Tea-drinking, Arithmetical Fop sets up for a wit,
by railing at men of sence, so these for honour, by railing at the
Court, and Ladies of as great honour, as quality.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Stand off.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Come, Mr. Horner, I must desire you to go with these Ladies to
the Play, Sir.

Squeam.
Do not approach us.

Horner
I! Sir.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
You heard with the wits, you are obscenity all over.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Ay, ay, come, Sir.

Squeam.
And I wou'd as soon look upon a Picture of Adam and Eve,
without fig leaves, as any of you, if I cou'd help it, therefore
keep off, and do not make us sick.

Horner
[450] I must-beg your pardon, Sir, and theirs, I will not be seen
in Womens Company in publick again for the World.

Dorilant
What a Divel are these?

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Ha, ha, strange Aversion!

Horner
Why, these are pretenders to honour, as criticks to wit, only by
censuring others; and as every raw peevish, out-of-humour'd,

Squeam.
No, he's for Womens company in private.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
He---poor Man---he! hah, ha, ha.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
'Tis a greater shame amongst lew'd fellows to be seen in
virtuous Womens company, than for the Women to be seen
with them.

Horner
Indeed, Madam, the time was I only hated virtuous Women,
but now I hate the other too; I beg your pardon Ladies.

Lady Fidget
You are very obliging, Sir, because we wou'd not be troubled
with you.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
In sober sadness he shall go.

Dorilant
Nay, if he wo'not, I am ready to wait upon the Ladies; and I
think I am the fitter Man.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

You, Sir, no I thank you for that---Master Horner is a privileg'd
Man amongst the virtuous Ladies, 'twill be a great while before
you are so; heh, he, he, he's my Wive's Gallant, heh, he, he; no
pray withdraw, Sir, for as I take it, the virtuous Ladies have no
business with you.

Dorilant
And I am sure, he can have none with them: 'tis strange a Man
can't come amongst virtuous Women now, but upon the same
terms, as Men are admitted into the great Turks Seraglio; but
Heavens keep me, from being an hombre [475] Player with'em:
but where is Pinchwife---

[Exit Dorilant.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Come, come, Man; what avoid the sweet society of Woman-
kind? that sweet, soft, gentle, tame, noble Creature Woman,
made for Man's Companion---

Horner
So is that soft, gentle, tame, and more noble Creature a Spaniel,
and has all their tricks, can fawn, lye down, suffer beating, and
fawn the more; barks at your Friends, when they come to see
you; makes your bed hard, gives you Fleas, and the mange
sometimes: and all the difference is, the Spaniel's the more
faithful Animal, and fawns but upon one Master.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Heh, he, he.

Squeam.
O the rude Beast.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Insolent brute.

Lady Fidget
Brute! stinking mortify'd rotten French Weather, to dare---

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Hold, an't please your Ladyship; for shame Master, Horner
your Mother was a Woman---[Aside. [Now shall I never
reconcile'em] Hark you, Madam, take my advice in your anger;
you know you often want one to make up your droling pack of
hombre Players; and you may cheat him easily, for he's an ill
Gamester, and consequently loves play: Besides you know, you
have but two old civil Gentlemen (with stinking breaths too) to
wait upon you abroad, take in the third, into your [500] service;
the other are but crazy: and a Lady shou'd have a
supernumerary Gentleman-Usher, as a supernumerary Coach-
horse, least sometimes you shou'd be forc'd to stay at home.

Lady Fidget
But are you sure he loves play, and has money?

Sir Jaspar Fidget
He loves play as much as you, and has money as much as I.

Lady Fidget
Then I am contented to make him pay for his scurrillity; money
makes up in a measure all other wants in Men.--- Those whom
we cannot make hold for Gallants, we make fine.

[Aside.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
So, so; now to mollify, to wheedle him,---
[Aside.
Master Horner will you never keep civil Company, methinks
'tis time now, since you are only fit for them: Come, come,
Man you must e'en fall to visiting our Wives, eating at our
Tables, drinking Tea with our virtuous Relations after dinner,
dealing Cards to'em, reading Plays, and Gazets to'em, picking
Fleas out of their shocks for'em, collecting Receipts, New
Songs, Women, Pages, and Footmen for'em.

Horner
I hope they'l afford me better employment, Sir.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Heh, he, he, 'tis fit you know your work before you come into your place; and since you are unprovided of a Lady to flatter, and a good house to eat at, pray frequent mine, and call my Wife Mistriss, and she shall call you Gallant, according to the custom.

Horner

Who I?---

Sir Jaspar Fidget

[525] Faith, thou sha't for my sake, come for my sake only.

Horner

For your sake---

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Come, come, here's a Gamester for you, let him be a little familiar sometimes; nay, what if a little rude; Gamesters may be rude with Ladies, you know.

Lady Fidget

Yes, losing Gamesters have a privilege with Women.

Horner

I alwayes thought the contrary, that the winning Gamester had most privilege with Women, for when you have lost your money to a Man, you'l loose any thing you have, all you have, they say, and he may use you as he pleases.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Heh, he, he, well, win or loose you shall have your liberty with her.

Lady Fidget

As he behaves himself; and for your sake I'll give him admittance and freedom.

Horner

All sorts of freedom, Madam?

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Ay, ay, ay, all forts of freedom thou can'st take, and so go to her, begin thy new employment; wheedle her, jest with her, and be better acquainted one with another.

Horner

I think I know her already, therefore may venter with her, my secret for hers---

[Aside.

Horner, and Lady Fidget whisper.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Sister Cuz, I have provided an innocent Play-fellow for you there.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
Who he!

Squeam.
[550] There's a Play-fellow indeed.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Yes sure, what he is good enough to play at Cards, Blind-mans buff, or the fool with sometimes.

Squeam.
Foh, we'l have no such Play-fellows.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget
No, Sir, you shan't choose Play-fellows for us, we thank you.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
Nay, pray hear me.

[Whispering to them.

Lady Fidget
But, poor Gentleman, cou'd you be so generous? so truly a Man of honour, as for the sakes of us Women of honour, to cause your self to be reported no Man? No Man! and to suffer your self the greatest shame that cou'd fall upon a Man, that none might fall upon us Women by your conversation; but indeed, Sir, as perfectly, perfectly, the same Man as before your going into France, Sir; as perfectly, perfectly, Sir.

Horner
As perfectly, perfectly, Madam; nay, I scorn you shou'd take my word; I desire to be try'd only, Madam.

Lady Fidget
Well, that's spoken again like a Man of honour, all Men of honour desire to come to the test: But indeed, generally you Men report such things of your selves, one does not know how, or whom to believe; and it is come to that pass, we dare not take your words, no more than your Taylors, without some staid Servant of yours be bound with you; but I have so strong a faith in your honour, dear, dear, noble Sir, that I'd forfeit mine for yours at any time, dear Sir.

Horner

[575] No, Madam, you shou'd not need to forfeit it for me, I have given you security already to save you harmless my late reputation being so well known in the World, Madam.

Lady.

But if upon any future falling out, or upon a suspition of my taking the trust out of your hands, to employ some other, you your self shou'd betray your trust, dear Sir; I mean, if you'l give me leave to speak obscenely, you might tell, dear Sir.

Horner

If I did, no body wou'd believe me; the reputation of impotency is as hardly recover'd again in the World, as that of cowardise, dear Madam.

Lady Fidget

Nay then, as one may say, you may do your worst, dear, dear, Sir.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Come, is your Ladyship reconciled to him yet? have you agreed on matters? for I must be gone to Whitehal.

Lady Fidget

Why, indeed, Sir Jaspar, Master Horner is a thousand, thousand times a better Man, than I thought him: Cosen Squeamish, Sister Dainty, I can name him now, truly not long ago you know, I thought his very name obscenity, and I wou'd as soon have lain with him, as have nam'd him.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Very likely, poor Madam.

Mrs. Dainty Fidget

I believe it.

Squeam.

No doubt on't.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Well, well---that your Ladyship is as virtuous as any she,---I know, and him all the Town knows---heh, he, [600] he; therefore now you like him, get you gone to your business together; go, go, to your business, I say, pleasure, whilst I go to my pleasure, business.

Lady Fidget

Come than dear Gallant.

Horner

Come away, my dearest Mistriss.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
So, so, why 'tis as I'd have it.
[Exit Sr. JaSparkish

Horner
And as I'd have it.

Lady Fidget
Who for his business, from his Wife will run;
Takes the best care, to have her bus'ness done.
[Exeunt omnes.

ACT 3.

SCENE 1.
Alithea, and Mrs. Pinchwife.

Alithea
Sister, what ailes you, you are grown melancholy?

Mrs. Pinchwife
Wou'd it not make any one melancholy, to see you go every
day fluttering about abroad, whil'st I must stay at home like a
poor lonely, sullen Bird in a cage?

Alithea
Ay, Sister, but you came young, and just from the nest to your
cage, so that I thought you lik'd it; and cou'd be as chearful in't,
as others that took their flight themselves early, and are
hopping abroad in the open Air.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Nay, I confess I was quiet enough, till my Husband told me,
what pure lives, the London Ladies live abroad, with their
dancing, meetings, and junketings, and drest every day in their
best gowns; and I warrant you, play at nine Pins every day of
the week, so they do.
Enter Mr. Pinchwife.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come, what's here to do? you are putting the Town pleasures in
her head, and setting her a longing.

Alithea
Yes, after Nine-pins; you suffer none to give her those
longings, you mean, but your self.

Mr. Pinchwife
I tell her of the vanities of the Town like a Confessor.

Alithea

A Confessor! just such a Confessor, as he that by forbidding a silly Oastler to grease the Horses teeth, taught him to do't.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come Mistriss Flippant, good Precepts are lost, when bad Examples are still before us; the liberty you take abroad makes her hanker after it; and out of humour at [25] home, poor Wretch! she desired not to come to London, I wou'd bring her.

Alithea

Very well.

Mr. Pinchwife

She has been this week in Town, and never desired, till this afternoon, to go abroad.

Alithea

Was she not at a Play yesterday?

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, but she ne'er ask'd me; I was my self the cause of her going.

Alithea

Then if she ask you again, you are the cause of her asking, and not my example.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, to morrow night I shall be rid of you; and the next day before 'tis light, she and I'll be rid of the Town, and my dreadful apprehensions: Come, be not melancholly, for thou sha't go into the Country after to morrow, Dearest.

Alithea

Great comfort.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Pish, what d'ye tell me of the Country for?

Mr. Pinchwife

How's this! what, pish at the Country?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Let me alone, I am not well.

Mr. Pinchwife

O, if that be all---what ailes my dearest?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Truly I don't know; but I have not been well, since you told me there was a Gallant at the Play in love with me.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ha---

Alithea

That's by my example too.

Mr. Pinchwife

Nay, if you are not well, but are so concern'd, [50] because a lew'd Fellow chanc'd to lye, and say he lik'd you, you'l make me sick too.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Of what sickness?

Mr. Pinchwife

O, of that which is worse than the Plague, Jealousy.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Pish, you jear, I'm sure there's no such disease in our Receipt-book at home.

Mr. Pinchwife

No, thou never met'st with it, poor Innocent--- well, if thou Cuckold me, 'twill be my own fault--- for Cuckolds and Bastards, are generally makers of their own fortune.

[Aside.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Well, but pray Bud, let's go to a Play to night.

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis just done, she comes from it; but why are you so eager to see a Play?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Faith Dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the Player-men, and wou'd see, if I cou'd, the Gallant you say loves me; that's all dear Bud.

Mr. Pinchwife

Is that all dear Bud?

Alithea

This proceeds from my example.

Mrs. Pinchwife

But if the Play be done, let's go abroad however, dear Bud.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come have a little patience, and thou shalt go into the Country on Friday.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Therefore I wou'd see first some sights, to tell my Neighbours of. Nay, I will go abroad, that's once.

Alithea

I'm the cause of this desire too.

Mr. Pinchwife

[75] But now I think on't, who was the cause of Horners coming to my Lodging to day? that was you.

Alithea

No, you, because you wou'd not let him see your handsome Wife out of your Lodging.

Mrs, Mr. Pinchwife

Why, O Lord! did the Gentleman come hither to see me indeed?

Mr. Pinchwife

No, no;---You are not cause of that damn'd question too, Mistriss Alithea?---[Aside. [Well she's in the right of it; he is in love with my Wife---and comes after her--- 'tis so---but I'll nip his love in the bud; least he should follow us into the Country, and break his Chariot-wheel near our house, on purpose for an excuse to come to't; but I think I know the Town.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Come, pray Bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain.

Mr. Pinchwife

So! the obstinacy already of a Town-wife, and I must, whilst she's here, humour her like one.

[Aside.

Sister, how shall we do, that she may not be seen, or known?

Alithea

Let her put on her Mask.

Mr. Pinchwife

Pshaw, a Mask makes People but the more inquisitive, and is as ridiculous a disguise, as a stage-beard; her shape, stature, habit will be known: and if we shou'd meet with Horner, he wou'd be sure to take acquaintance with us, must wish her joy, kiss her, talk to her, leer upon her, and the Devil and all; no I'll not use her to a Mask, 'tis dangerous; [100] for Masks have made more Cuckolds, than the best faces that ever were known.

Alithea
How will you do then?

Mrs. Pinchwife
Nay, shall we go? the Exchange will be shut, and I have a mind to see that.

Mr. Pinchwife
So---I have it---I'll dress her up in the Suit, we are to carry down to her Brother, little Sir James; nay, I understand the Town tricks: Come let's go dress her; a Mask! no---a Woman mask'd, like a cover'd Dish, gives a Man curiosity, and appetite, when, it may be, uncover'd, 'twou'd turn his stomach; no, no.

Alithea
Indeed your comparison is something a greasie one: but I had a gentle Gallant, us'd to say, a Beauty mask'd, lik'd the Sun in Eclipse, gathers together more gazers, than if it shin'd out.

[Exeunt.

The Scene changes to the new Exchange: Enter Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant.

Dorilant
Engag'd to Women, and not Sup with us?

Horner
Ay, a Pox on'em all.

Harcourt
You were much a more reasonable Man in the morning, and had as noble resolutions against'em, as a Widdower of a weeks liberty.

Dorilant
Did I ever think, to see you keep company with Women in vain.

Horner
In vain! no---'tis, since I can't love'em, to be reveng'd on'em.

Harcourt

Now your Sting is gone, you look'd in the Box amongst [125]
all those Women, like a drone in the hive, all upon you; shov'd
and ill-us'd by'em all, and thrust from one side to t'other.

Dar.

Yet he must be buzzing amongst'em still, like other old beetle-
headed, lycorish drones; avoid'em, and hate'm as they hate you.

Hor,

Because I do hate'em, and wou'd hate'em yet more, I'll
frequent'em; you may see by Marriage, nothing makes a Man
hate a Woman more, than her constant conversation: In short, I
converse with'em, as you do with rich Fools; to laugh at'em,
and use'em ill.

Dorilant

But I wou'd no more Sup with Women, unless I cou'd lye
with'em, than Sup with a rich Coxcomb, unless I cou'd cheat
him.

Horner

Yes, I have known thee Sup with a Fool, for his drinking, if he
cou'd set out your hand that way only, you were satisfy'd; and
if he were a Wine-swallowing mouth 'twas enough.

Harcourt

Yes, a Man drink's often with a Fool, as he tosses with a
Marker, only to keep his hand in Ure; but do the Ladies drink?

Horner

Yes, Sir, and I shall have the pleasure at least of laying'em flat
with a Bottle; and bring as much scandal that way upon'em, as
formerly t'other.

Harcourt

Perhaps you may prove as weak a Brother amongst'em that
way, as t'other.

Dorilant

[150] Foh, drinking with Women, is as unnatural, as scolding
with'em; but 'tis a pleasure of decay'd Fornicators, and the
basest way of quenching Love.

Harcourt

Nay, 'tis drowning Love, instead of quenching it; but leave us
for civil Women too!

Dorilant

Ay, when he can't be the better for'em; we hardly pardon a
Man, that leaves his Friend for a Wench, and that's a pretty
lawful call.

Horner

Faith, I wou'd not leave you for'em, if they wou'd not drink.

Dorilant

Who wou'd disappoint his Company at Lewis's, for a Gossiping?

Harcourt

Foh, Wine and Women good apart, together as nauseous as Sack and Sugar: But hark you, Sir, before you go, a little of your advice, an old maim'd General, when unfit for action is fittest for Counsel; I have other designs upon Women, than eating and drinking with them: I am in love with Sparkish's Mistriss, whom he is to marry to morrow, now how shall I get her?

Enter Sparkish, looking about.

Horner

Why, here comes one will help you to her.

Harcourt

He! he, I tell you, is my Rival, and will hinder my love.

Horner

No, a foolish Rival, and a jealous Husband assist their Rivals designs; for they are sure to make their Women hate them, which is the first step to their love, for another Man.

Harcourt

[175] But I cannot come near his Mistriss, but in his company.

Horner

Still the better for you, for Fools are most easily cheated, when they themselves are accessaries; and he is to be bubled of his Mistriss, as of his Money, the common Mistriss, by keeping him company.

Sparkish

Who is that, that is to be bubled? Faith let me snack, I han't met with a bubble since Christmas: gad; I think bubbles are like their Brother Woodcocks, go out with the cold weather.

Harcourt

A Pox, he did not hear all I hope.

[Apart to Horner.

Sparkish

Come, you bubling Rogues you, where do we sup---Oh,
Harcourt, my Mistriss tells me, you have been making fierce
love to her all the Play long, hah, ha--- but I---

Harcourt
I make love to her?

Sparkish
Nay, I forgive thee; for I think I know thee, and I know her, but
I am sure I know my self.

Harcourt
Did she tell you so? I see all Women are like these of the
Fexchange, who to enhance the price of their commodities,
report to their fond Customers offers which were never
made'em.

Horner
Ay, Women are as apt to tell before the intrigue, as Men after
it, and so shew themselves the vainer Sex; but hast thou a
Mistriss, Sparkish? 'tis as hard for me to believe it, as that thou
ever hadst a bubble, as you brag'd just now.

Sparkish
[200] O your Servant, Sir; are you at your raillery, Sir? but we
were some of us beforehand with you to day at the Play: the

Wits were something bold with you, Sir; did you not hear us
laugh?

Harcourt
Yes, But I thought you had gone to Plays, to laugh at the Poets
wit, not at your own.

Sparkish
Your Servant, Sir, no I thank you; gad I go to a Play as to a
Country-treat, I carry my own wine to one, and my own wit to
t'other, or else I'm sure I shou'd not be merry at either; and the
reason why we are so often lowder, than the Players, is,
because we think we speak more wit, and so become the Poets
Rivals in his audience: for to tell you the truth, we hate the silly
Rogues; nay, so much that we find fault even with their Bawdy
upon the Stage, whilst we talk nothing else in the Pit as lowd.

Horner
But, why should'st thou hate the silly Poets, thou hast too much
wit to be one, and they like Whores are only hated by each
other; and thou dost scorn writing, I'am sure.

Sparkish
Yes, I'd have you to know, I scorn writing; but Women,
Women, that make Men do all foolish things, make'em write
Songs too; every body does it: 'tis ev'n as common with

Lovers, as playing with fans; and you can no more help
Rhyming to your Phyllis, than drinking to your Phyllis.

Harcourt

Nay, Poetry in love is no more to be avoided, than jealousy.

Dorilant

[225] But the Poets damn'd your Songs, did they?

Sparkish

Damn the Poets, they turn'd'em into Burlesque, as they call it; that Burlesque is a Hocus-Pocus-trick, they have got, which by the virtue of Hictius doctius, topsey turvey, they make a wise and witty Man in the World, a Fool upon the Stage you know not how; and 'tis therefore I hate'em too, for I know not but it may be my own case; for they'l put a Man into a Play for looking a Squint: Their Predecessors were contented to make Serving-men only their Stage-Fools, but these Rogues must have Gentlemen, with a Pox to'em, nay Knights: and indeed you shall hardly see a Fool upon the Stage, but he's a Knight; and to tell you the truth, they have kept me these six years from being a Knight in earnest, for fear of being knighted in a Play, and dubb'd a Fool.

Dorilant

Blame'em not, they must follow their Copy, the Age.

Harcourt

But why should'st thou be afraid of being in a Play, who expose your self every day in the Play-houses, and as publick Places.

Horner

'Tis but being on the Stage, instead of standing on a Bench in the Pit.

Dorilant

Don't you give money to Painters to draw you like? and are you afraid of your Pictures, at length in a Play-house, where all your Mistresses may see you.

Sparkish

A Pox, Painters don't draw the Small Pox, or Pimples in ones face; come damn all your silly Authors whatever, [250] all Books and Booksellers, by the World, and all Readers, courteous or uncourteous.

Harcourt

But, who comes here, Sparkish?

Enter Mr. Pinchwife, and his Wife in Mans Cloaths, Alithea, Lucy her Maid.

Sparkish
Oh hide me, there's my Mistriss too.

Sparkish hides himself behind Harcourt.

Harcourt
She sees you.

Sparkish
But I will not see her, 'tis time to go to Whitehal, and I must not fail the drawing Room.

Harcourt
Pray, first carry me, and reconcile me to her.

Sparkish
Another time, faith the King will have sup't.

Harcourt
Not with the worse stomach for thy absence; thou art one of those Fools, that think their attendance at the King's Meals, as necessary as his Physicians, when you are more troublesom to him, than his Doctors, or his Dogs.

Sparkish

Pshaw, I know my interest, Sir, prethee hide me.

Horner
Your Servant, Pinchwife,---what he knows us not---

Mr. Pinchwife
Come along.

[To his Wife aside.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Pray, have you any Ballads, give me six-penny worth?

Clasp.
We have no Ballads.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Then give me Covent-garden-Drollery, and a Play or two---Oh here's Tarugos Wiles, and the Slighted Maiden, I'll have them.

Mr. Pinchwife
No, Playes are not for your reading; come along, [275] will you discover your self?

[Apart to her.

Horner

Who is that pretty Youth with him, Sparkish?

Sparkish

I believe his Wife's Brother, because he's something like her,
but I never saw her but once.

Horner

Extreamly handsom, I have seen a face like it too; let us
follow'em.

Exeunt Pinchwife, Mistriss Pinchwife. Alithea, Lucy, Horner,
Dorilant following them.

Harcourt

Come, Sparkish, your Mistriss saw you, and will be angry you
go not to her; besides I wou'd fain be reconcil'd to her, which
none but you can do, dear Friend.

Sparkish

Well that's a better reason, dear Friend; I wou'd not go near her
now, for her's, or my own sake, but I can deny you nothing; for
though I have known thee a great while, never go, if I do not
love thee, as well as a new Acquaintance.

Harcourt

I am oblig'd to you indeed, dear Friend, I wou'd be well with
her only, to be well with thee still; for these tyes to Wives
usually dissolve all tyes to Friends: I wou'd be contented, she
shou'd enjoy you a nights, but I wou'd have you to my self a
dayes, as I have had, dear Friend.

Sparkish

And thou shalt enjoy me a dayes, dear, dear Friend, never stir;
and I'll be divorced from her, sooner than from thee; come
along---

Harcourt

So we are hard put to't, when we make our Rival our Procurer;
but neither she, nor her Brother, wou'd let me come near her
now: when all's done, a Rival is the best cloak to steal to a
Mistress under, without suspicion; [300] and when we have
once got to her as we desire, we throw him off like other
Cloaks.

[Aside.

[Exit Sparkish, and Harcourt following him.

Re-enter Mr. Pinchwife, Mistress Pinchwife in Man's Cloaths.

Mr. Pinchwife

Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you---

[To Alithea.

The Fool her Gallant, and she, will muster up all the young
santerers of this place, and they will leave their dear
Seamstresses to follow us; what a swarm of Cuckolds, and
Cuckold-makers are here?

[Aside.

Come let's be gone Mistriss Margery.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Don't you believe that, I han't half my belly full of sights yet.

Mr. Pinchwife

Then walk this way.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Lord, what a power of brave signs are here! stay---the Bull's-
head, the Rams-head, and the Stags-head, Dear---

Mr. Pinchwife

Nay, if every Husbands proper sign here were visible, they
wou'd be all alike.

Mrs. Pinchwife

What d'ye mean by that, Bud?

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis no matter---no matter, Bud.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Pray tell me; nay, I will know.

Mr. Pinchwife

They wou'd be all Bulls, Stags, and Rams heads.

[Exeunt Mr. Pinchwife, Mrs. Pinchwife.

Re-enter Sparkish, Harcourt, Alithea, Lucy, at t'other door.

Sparkish

Come, dear Madam, for my sake you shall be reconciled to
him.

Alithea

For your sake I hate him.

Harcourt

That's something too cruel, Madam, to hate me for his sake.

Sparkish

[325] Ay indeed, Madam, too, too cruel to me, to hate my
Friend for my sake.

Alithea

I hate him because he is your Enemy; and you ought to hate him too, for making love to me, if you love me.

Sparkish

That's a good one, I hate a Man for loving you; if he did love you, 'tis but what he can't help, and 'tis your fault not his, if he admires you: I hate a Man for being of my opinion, I'll ne'er do't, by the World.

Alithea

Is it for your honour or mine, to suffer a Man to make love to me, who am to marry you to morrow?

Sparkish

Is it for your honour or mine, to have me jealous? That he makes love to you, is a sign you are handsome; and that I am not jealous, is a sign you are virtuous, that I think is for your honour.

Alithea

But 'tis your honour too, I am concerned for.

Harcourt

But why, dearest Madam, will you be more concern'd for his honour, than he is himself; let his honour alone for my sake, and his, he, he, has no honour---

Sparkish

How's that?

Harcourt

But what, my dear Friend can guard himself.

Sparkish

O ho---that's right again.

Harcourt

Your care of his honour argues his neglect of it, which is no honour to my dear Friend here; therefore once more, let his honour go which way it will, dear Madam.

Sparkish

Ay, ay, were it for my honour to marry a Woman, [350] whose virtue I suspected, and cou'd not trust her in a Friends hands?

Alithea

Are you not afraid to loose me?

Harcourt

He afraid to loose you, Madam! No, no---you may see how the most estimable, and most glorious Creature in the World, is valued by him; will you not see it?

Sparkish

Right, honest Franck, I have that noble value for her, that I cannot be jealous of her.

Alithea

You mistake him, he means you care not for me, nor who has me.

Sparkish

Lord, Madam, I see you are jealous; will you wrest a poor Mans meaning from his words?

Alithea

You astonish me, Sir, with your want of jealousy.

Sparkish

And you make me guiddy, Madam, with your jealousy, and fears, and virtue, and honour; gad, I see virtue makes a Woman as troublesome, as a little reading, or learning.

Alithea

Monstrous!

Lucy.

[Well to see what easie Husbands these Women of quality can meet with, a poor Chamber-maid can never have such Lady-like luck; besides he's thrown away upon her, she'l make no use of her fortune, her blessing, none to a Gentleman, for a pure Cuckold, for it requires good breeding to be a Cuckold.

[Behind.

Alithea

I tell you then plainly, he pursues me to marry me.

Sparkish

[375] Pshaw---

Harcourt

Come, Madam, you see you strive in vain to make him jealous of me; my dear Friend is the kindest Creature in the World to me.

Sparkish

Poor fellow.

Harcourt

But his kindness only is not enough for me, without your favour; your good opinion, dear Madam, 'tis that must perfect my happiness: good Gentleman he believes all I say, wou'd you wou'd do so, jealous of me! I wou'd not wrong him nor you for the World.

Sparkish

Look you there; hear him, hear him, and do not walk away so.

Alithea walks carelessly, to and fro.

Harcourt

I love you, Madam, so---

Sparkish

How's that! Nay---now you begin to go too far indeed.

Harcourt

So much I confess, I say I love you, that I wou'd not have you miserable, and cast your self away upon so unworthy, and inconsiderable a thing, as what you see here,

Clapping his hand on his breast, points at Sparkish.

Sparkish

No faith, I believe thou woud'st not, now his meaning is plain: but I knew before thou woud'st not wrong me nor her.

Harcourt

No, no, Heavens forbid, the glory of her Sex shou'd fall so, low as into the embraces of such a contemptible Wretch, the last of Mankind---my dear Friend here--- [400] I injure him.

[Embracing Sparkish.

Alithea

Very well.

Sparkish

No, no, dear Friend, I knew it Madam, you see he will rather wrong himself than me, in giving himself such names.

Alithea

Do not you understand him yet?

Sparkish

Yes, how modestly he speaks of himself, poor Fellow.

Alithea

Methinks he speaks impudently of your self, since--- before
your self too, insomuch that I can no longer suffer his
scurrilous abusiveness to you, no more than his love to me.

[Offers to go.

Sparkish

Nay, nay, Madam, pray stay, his love to you: Lord, Madam,
has he not spoke yet plain enough?

Alithea

Yes indeed, I shou'd think so.

Sparkish

Well then, by the World, a Man can't speak civilly to a Woman
now, but presently she says, he makes love to her: Nay,
Madam, you shall stay, with your pardon, since you have not
yet understood him, till he has made an eclaircissement of his
love to you, that is what kind of love it is; answer to thy
Catechisme: Friend, do you love my Mistriss here?

Harcourt

Yes, I wish she wou'd not doubt it.

Sparkish

But how do you love her?

Harcourt

With all my Soul.

Alithea

I thank him, methinks he speaks plain enough now.

Sparkish

[425] You are out still.

[to Alithea.

But with what kind of love, Harcourt?

Harcourt

With the best, and truest love in the World.

Sparkish

Look you there then, that is with no matrimonial love, I'm sure.

Alithea

How's that, do you say matrimonial love is not best?

Sparkish

Gad, I went too far e're I was aware: But speak for thy self
Harcourt, you said you wou'd not wrong me, nor her.

Sparkish
Look you there, he means me stil, for he points at me.

Harcourt
No, no, Madam, e'n take him for Heaven's sake.

Alithea
Ridiculous!

Sparkish
Look you there, Madam.

Harcourt
Who can only match your Faith, and constancy in love.

Harcourt
Who shou'd in all justice be yours, he that loves you most.

Sparkish
Ay.

Claps his hand on his breast.

Alithea
Look you there, Mr. Sparkish, who's that?

Harcourt
Who knows, if it be possible, how to value so much beauty and
virtue.

Sparkish
Who shou'd it be? go on Harcourt.

Sparkish
[450] Ay.

Harcourt
Who loves you more than Women, Titles, or fortune Fools.

Harcourt
Whose love can no more be equall'd in the world, than that
Heavenly form of yours.

[Points at Sparkish.

Sparkish
No---

Harcourt
Who cou'd no more suffer a Rival, than your absence, and yet
cou'd no more suspect your virtue, than his own constancy in
his love to you.

Sparkish
No---

Harcourt
Who in fine loves you better than his eyes, that first made him
love you.

Sparkish
Ay---nay, Madam, faith you shan't go, till---

Alithea
Have a care, lest you make me stay too long---

Sparkish
But till he has saluted you; that I may be assur'd you are
friends, after his honest advice and declaration: Come pray,
Madam, be friends with him.

Enter Master Pinchwife, Mistriss Pinchwife.

Alithea
You must pardon me, Sir, that I am not yet so obedient to you.

Mr. Pinchwife
What, invite your Wife to kiss Men? Monstrous, are you not
asham'd? I will never forgive you.

Sparkish
Are you not asham'd, that I shou'd have more confidence in the
chastity of your Family, than you have; you must not teach me,
I am a man of honour, Sir, though I am frank and free; I am
frank, Sir---

Mr. Pinchwife
Very frank, Sir, to share your Wife with your friends.

Sparkish
[475] He is an humble, menial Friend, such as reconciles the
differences of the Marriage-bed; you know Man and Wife do
not alwayes agree, I design him for that use, therefore wou'd
have him well with my Wife.

Mr. Pinchwife

A menial Friend---you will get a great many menial Friends, by shewing your Wife as you do.

Sparkish

What then, it may be I have a pleasure in't, as I have to shew fine Clothes, at a Play-house the first day, and count money before poor Rogues.

Mr. Pinchwife

He that shews his wife, or money will be in danger of having them borrowed sometimes.

Sparkish

I love to be envy'd, and wou'd not marry a Wife, that I alone cou'd love; loving alone is as dull, as eating alone; is it not a frank age, and I am a frank Person? and to tell you the truth, it may be I love to have Rivals in a Wife, they make her seem to a Man still, but as a kept Mistriss; and so good night, for I must to Whitehal. Madam, I hope you are now reconcil'd to my Friend; and so I wish you a good night, Madam, and sleep if you can, for to morrow you know I must visit you early with a Canonical Gentleman. Good night dear Harcourt.

[Exit Sparkish.

Harcourt

Madam, I hope you will not refuse my visit to morrow, if it shou'd be earlyer, with a Canonical Gentleman, than Mr. Sparkish's.

Mr. Pinchwife

This Gentle-woman is yet under my care, therefore [500] you must yet forbear your freedom with her, Sir.

Coming between Alithea and Harcourt.

Harcourt

Must, Sir---

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, Sir, she is my Sister.

Harcourt

'Tis well she is, Sir---for I must be her Servant, Sir. Madam---

Mr. Pinchwife

Come away Sister, we had been gone, if it had not been for you, and so avoided these lewd Rakehells, who seem to haunt us.

Enter Horner, Dorilant to them.

Horner
How now Pinchwife?

Mr. Pinchwife
Your Servant.

Horner
What, I see a little time in the Country makes a Man turn wild
and unsociable, and only fit to converse with his Horses, Dogs,
and his Herds.

Mr. Pinchwife
I have business, Sir, and must mind it; your business is
pleasure, therefore you and I must go different wayes.

Horner
Well, you may go on, but this pretty young Gentleman---

[Takes hold of Mrs. Pinchwife.

Harcourt
The Lady---

Dorilant
And the Maid---

Horner
Shall stay with us, for I suppose their business is the same with
ours, pleasure.

Mr. Pinchwife
'Sdeath he knows her, she carries it so sillily, yet if he does not,
I shou'd be more silly to discover it first.

[Aside.

Alithea
Pray, let us go, Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come, come---

Horner
[525] Had you not rather stay with us?
[to Mrs. Pinchwife.
Prethee Pinchwife, who is this pretty young Gentleman?

Mr. Pinchwife
One to whom I'm a guardian. [Aside. [I wish I cou'd keep her
out of your hands---

Horner

Who is he? I never saw any thing so pretty in all my life.

Mr. Pinchwife

Pshaw, do not look upon him so much, he's a poor bashful youth, you'l put him out of countenance. Come away Brother.

[Offers to take her away.

Hor,

O your Brother!

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, my Wifes Brother; come, come, she'l stay supper for us.

Horner

I thought so, for he is very like her I saw you at the Play with, whom I told you, I was in love with.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O Jeminy! is this he that was in love with me, I am glad on't I vow, for he's a curious fine Gentleman, and I love him already too.

[Aside.

Is this he Bud?

[to Mr. Pinchwife.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come away, come away.

[To his Wife.

Horner

Why, what hast are you in? why wont you let me talk with him?

Mr. Pinchwife

Because you'l debauch him, he's yet young and innocent, and I wou'd not have him debauch'd for any thing in the World.

[Aside. How she gazes on him! the Divil---

Horner

[550] Harcourt, Dorilant, look you here, this is the likeness of that Dowdey he told us of, his Wife, did you ever see a lovelyer Creature? the Rogue has reason to be jealous of his Wife, since she is like him, for she wou'd make all that see her, in love with her.

Harcourt

And as I remember now, she is as like him here as can be.

Dorilant

She is indeed very pretty, if she be like him.

Horner

Very pretty, a very pretty commendation---she is a glorious Creature, beautiful beyond all things I ever beheld.

Mr. Pinchwife

So, so.

Harcourt

More beautiful than a Poets first Mistriss of Imagination.

Horner

Or another Mans last Mistriss of flesh and blood.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Nay, now you jeer, Sir; pray don't jeer me---

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, come. [Aside. [By Heavens she'l discover her self.

Horner

I speak of your Sister, Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ay, but saying she was handsom, if like him, made him blush.

[Aside. [I am upon a wrack---

Horner

Methinks he is so handsom, he shou'd not be a Man.

Mr. Pinchwife

O there 'tis out, he has discovered her, I am not able to suffer any longer. [To his Wife. [Come, come away, I say---

Horner

Nay, by your leave, Sir, he shall not go yet--- Harcourt, Dorilant, let us torment this jealous Rogue a little.

[To them.

Harcourt, Dorilant

[575] How?

Horner

I'll shew you.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, pray let him go, I cannot stay fooling any longer; I tell you his Sister stays supper for us.

Horner

Do's she, come then we'll all go sup with her and thee.

Mr. Pinchwife

No, now I think on't, having staid so long for us, I warrant she's gone to bed---[Aside. [I wish she and I were well out of their hands--- Come, I must rise early to morrow, come.

Horner

Well then, if she be gone to bed, I wish her and you a good night. But pray, young Gentleman, present my humble service to her.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Thank you heartily, Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife

S'death, she will discover her self yet in spite of me.
[Aside.

He is something more civil to you, for your kindness to his Sister, than I am, it seems.

Horner

Tell her, dear sweet little Gentleman, for all your Brother there, that you have reviv'd the love, I had for her at first sight in the Play-house.

Mrs. Pinchwife

But did you love her indeed, and indeed?

Mr. Pinchwife

So, so.

[Aside.

Away, I say.

Horner

Nay stay; yes indeed, and indeed, pray do you tell her so, and give her this kiss from me.

[Kisses her.

Mr. Pinchwife

[600] O Heavens! what do I suffer; now 'tis too plain he knows her, and yet---

[Aside.

Horner
And this, and this---

[Kisses her again.

Mrs. Pinchwife
What do you kiss me for, I am no Woman.

Mr. Pinchwife
So---there 'tis out.

[Aside.
Come, I cannot, nor will stay any longer.

Horner
Nay, they shall send your Lady a kiss too; here Harcourt,
Dorilant, will you not?

[They kiss her.

Mr. Pinchwife
How, do I suffer this? was I not accusing another just now, for
this rascally, patience, in permitting his Wife to be kiss'd
before his face? ten thousand ulcers gnaw away their lips.
[Aside.

Come, come.

Horner
Good night dear little Gentleman; Madam goodnight; farewell
Pinchwife. [Apart to Harcourt and Dorilant.] [Did not I tell
you, I would raise his jealous gall.

[Exeunt Horner, Harcourt, and Dorilant.

Mr. Pinchwife
So they are gone at last; stay, let me see first if the Coach be at
this door.

[Exit.

Horner
What not gone yet? will you be sure to do as I desired you,
sweet Sir?

Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant return.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Sweet Sir, but what will you give me then?

Horner
Any thing, come away into the next walk.

Exit Horner, haling away Mrs. Pinchwife.

Alithea
Hold, hold,---what d'ye do?

Lucy.
Stay, stay, hold---

Harcourt
[625] Hold Madam, hold, let him present him, he'l come presently; nay, I will never let you go, till you answer my question.

Alithea, Lucy struggling with Harcourt, and Dorilant.

Lucy.
For God's sake, Sir, I must follow'em.

Dorilant
No, I have something to present you with too, you shan't follow them.
Pinchwife returns.

Mr. Pinchwife

Where?---how?---what's become of? gone--- whither?

Lucy.
He's only gone with the Gentleman, who will give him something, an't please your Worship.

Mr. Pinchwife
Something---give him something, with a Pox--- where are they?

Alithea
In the next walk only, Brother.

Mr. Pinchwife
Only, only; where, where?

Exit Pinchwife, and returns presently, then goes out again.

Harcourt
What's the matter with him? why so much concern'd? but dearest Madam---

Alithea
Pray, let me go, Sir, I have said, and suffer'd enough already.

Harcourt

Then you will not look upon, nor pity my sufferings?

Alithea

To look upon'em, when I cannot help'em, were cruelty, not pity, therefore I will never see you more.

Harcourt

Let me then, Madam, have my privilege of a banished Lover, complaining or railing, and giving you but a farewell reason; why, if you cannot condescend to marry me, you shou'd not take that wretch my Rival.

Alithea

[650] He only, not you, since my honour is engag'd so far to him, can give me a reason, why I shou'd not marry him; but if he be true, and what I think him to me, I must be so to him; your Servant, Sir.

Harcourt

Have Women only constancy when 'tis a vice, and like fortune only true to fools?

Dorilant

Thou sha't not stir thou robust Creature, you see I can deal with you, therefore you shou'd stay the rather, and be kind.

[To Lucy, who struggles to get from him.
Enter Pinchwife.

Mr. Pinchwife

Gone, gone, not to be found; quite gone, ten thousand plagues go with'em; which way went they?

Alithea

But into t'other walk, Brother.

Lucy.

Their business will be done presently sure, an't please your Worship, it can't be long in doing I'm sure on't.

Alithea

Are they not there?

Mr. Pinchwife

No, you know where they are, you infamous Wretch, Eternal shame of your Family, which you do not dishonour enough your self, you think, but you must help her to do it too, thou legion of Bawds.

Alithea
Good Brother.

Mr. Pinchwife
Damn'd, damn'd Sister.

Alithea
Look you here, she's coming.
Enter Mistriss Pinchwife in Mans cloaths, running with her hat
under her arm, full of Oranges and dried fruit, Horner
following.

Mrs. Pinchwife
O dear Bud, look you here what I have got, see.

Mr. Pinchwife
And what I have got here too, which you can't see.

[Aside rubbing his forehead.

Mrs. Pinchwife
[675] The fine Gentleman has given me better things yet.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ha's he so? [Aside. [Out of breath and colour'd--- I must hold
yet.

Horner
I have only given your little Brother an Orange, Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife
Thank you, Sir.
[To Horner.
You have only squeez'd my Orange, I suppose, and given it me
again; yet I must have a City-patience.
[Aside.
Come, come away---

[To his Wife.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Stay, till I have put up my fine things, Bud.
Enter Sir Jaspar Fidget.

Sir Jaspar Fidget
O Master Horner, come, come, the Ladies stay for you; your
Mistriss, my Wife, wonders you make not more hast to her.

Horner

I have staid this halfhour for you here, and 'tis your fault I am not now with your Wife.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

But pray, don't let her know so much, the truth on't is, I was advancing a certain Project to his Majesty, about---I'll tell you.

Horner

No, let's go, and hear it at your house: Good night sweet little Gentleman; one kiss more, you'll remember me now I hope.

[Kisses her.

Dorilant

What, Sir Jaspar, will you separate Friends? he promis'd to sup with us; and if you take him to your house, you'll be in danger of our company too.

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Alas Gentlemen my house is not fit for you, there [700] are none but civil Women there, which are not for your turn; he you know can bear with the society of civil Women, now, ha, ha, ha; besides he's one of my Family;---he's--- heh, heh, heh.

Dorilant

What is he?

Sir Jaspar Fidget

Faith my Eunuch, since you'll have it, heh, he, he.

[Exit Sir Jaspar Fidget, and Horner.

Dorilant

I rather wish thou wert his, or my Cuckold: Harcourt, what a good Cuckold is lost there, for want of a Man to make him one; thee and I cannot have Horners privilege, who can make use of it.

Harcourt

Ay, to poor Horner 'tis like coming to an estate at threescore, when a Man can't be the better for't.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Presently Bud.

Dorilant

Come let us go too: Madam, your Servant.

[To Alithea

Good night Strapper.---

[To Lucy.

Harcourt

Madam, though you will not let me have a good day, or night, I wish you one; but dare not name the other half of my wish.

Alithea

Good night, Sir, for ever.

Mrs. Pinchwife

I don't know where to put this here, dear Bud, you shall eat it; nay, you shall have part of the fine Gentlemans good things, or treat as you call it, when we come home.

Mr. Pinchwife

Indeed I deserve it, since I furnish'd the best part [725] of it.

[Strikes away the Orange.

The Gallant treats, presents, and gives the Ball;
But 'tis the absent Cuckold, pays for all.