

PLAYS
WRITTEN IN
COLLABORATION
A CURE FOR A CUCKOLD
APPIUS AND VIRGINIA

A CURE FOR A CUCKOLD

DATE

THE play can be dated fairly closely by internal evidence. Rupert Brooke assigned it to 1624-30, on the ground that the episode of the sea-fight with Spanish ships (III. 3) is rather more likely to have been written (and, we may add, allowed on the stage) during the war with Spain. Hostilities began in the summer of 1624, though the formal rupture was delayed till September 1625: thus we find Chamberlain writing to Carleton on Aug. 7th 1624: "The Dunkirkers rifle our ships at sea as familiarly as if open war were proclaimed, whilst we protect theirs in the Downs".

If, however, this topical evidence is valid at all, it can, I think, be made more precise. The English ship is described (II. 4. 150) as having letters of marque. Now these seem to have been first issued in February 1625 (*Cal. State Papers (Venet.)* 1623-5, pp. 591, 595, 606; see too J. Howell's Letter to Lord Colchester, Feb. 5th 1624-5).

Again, if the view is right which regards *A Cure for a Cuckold* as based on Massinger's *Parliament of Love* (licensed Nov. 1624), we have further reason for dating our play after 1624—though it always remains just possible, of course, that Webster saw Massinger's work in manuscript, especially as the two dramatists were about this time collaborating in *The Fair Maid of the Inn*.

In any case *A Cure for a Cuckold* was probably written after the middle of 1624, if not after the beginning of 1625. But not very long after. The war with Spain, indeed, went on till 1630. But in IV. 1. 118-9 there is an allusion (see Commentary) to Flood the informer's execution¹, which took place in Newgate on January 18th 1624 (or, rather less probably, 1623).

¹ This is settled by a pamphlet on that otherwise unknown rogue which the present writer was so lucky as to light on in the British Museum. See on IV. 1. 118-9. The pamphlet is indeed dated 1623, and merely refers to Flood's execution as having occurred on Jan. 18th "last past". But it is likely to have appeared within two months at most of the event it deals with: and since the year then ran from March to March, "March, 1623" probably = our "March, 1624".

Similarly in v. 1. 208-9 there is a hitherto unnoticed reference to the fine of twelvecence for swearing introduced by 21 Jac. I, c. 20 (1623-4)¹, which is also alluded to in Jonson's *Masque of Owls* (Aug. 19th 1624—wrongly dated 1626 in the Folio of Jonson; see Herford and Simpson's edition, II. 330).

Both these allusions forbid a date very long after the events they refer to. For though a play may have been written twenty years *before* some event to which it contains an allusion (the allusion being interpolated subsequently, as in *The Duchess of Malfi*, I. 1) it cannot have been written very long *after*, otherwise the allusion will become stale or even unintelligible. The value of such evidence thus differs a great deal accordingly as it is used: and in the present case it points clearly to the neighbourhood of 1625. Metrical evidence indeed, which however I should be loth to press, would seem to indicate that *A Cure for a Cuckold* was later than *The Fair Maid of the Inn* (written, probably, in 1625: licensed Jan. 1626: see Metrical Appendix). Only one feels that by that time the memory of Mr Flood might have been getting rather threadbare. At all events the year 1625 is for both plays, I think, as near as we are likely to get.

¹ The Parliament which passed it sat from Feb 19th to May 29th 1624.

SOURCES

This point has been very fully argued by Stoll and Rupert Brooke. Both agree that the main-plot of *A Cure for a Cuckold* was probably suggested by Massinger's *Parliament of Love*, which treats a theme handled in *The Dutch Courtezan* of Marston, who used in his turn Bandello's story of the Countess of Cellant (*Novelle*, I. 4: whence Painter took the tale for his *Palace of Pleasure*, II. 24).

Bianca Maria Scappardona was the daughter of a rich old usurer in Casal di Monferrato, and his young Greek wife. After burying her first husband, and leaving her second, the Count of Cellant, Bianca removed to Padua and began to live with lovers. For a year she was devoted to Ardizzino Valperga, conte di Masino; then she began to cast eyes on his friend Roberto Sanseverino, conte di Gaiazzo. Ardizzino left her in anger and cried her ill-fame on the housetops wherever he went; the Countess in revenge urged Sanseverino to kill him. Sanseverino, however, hesitated; for Ardizzino was his friend and, after all, more sinned against than sinning. Seeing this, Bianca Maria broke off relations with Sanseverino and reconciled herself once more with Ardizzino; and, to round matters off, urged him in his turn to kill Sanseverino, who meant, she said, to murder him. Instead, the two friends met, compared notes, and combined in spreading the shameful story broadcast. Bianca's next move was to fascinate a third lover in Milan, Don Pietro di Cardona, and bid him kill both the others. He obeyed and actually murdered Ardizzino, but was arrested by the Constable of Bourbon, and confessed the whole truth: he then escaped, but the Countess of Cellant was beheaded before the citadel of Milan. I have told this story at perhaps needless length; but it is too interesting to spoil, and throws yet another ray of light on the ways of Webster's Italy.

On this theme Marston wrote his *Dutch Courtezan* (acted 1603: printed 1605); and was followed by Massinger and Webster twenty years later. In comparing the plots of their plays I have adopted Rupert Brooke's useful plan of symbols for the three essential characters common to all of them, although

not his exact notation. Let *W* be the woman, *L* her lover, *F* his friend.

In *Bandello*, then, *W* deserts *L* for *F*. She bids *F* kill *L*; he disobeys; she returns to *L* and bids him kill *F*. Instead he tells *F*. In revenge *W* has *L* killed by a third lover; but is herself convicted and put to death. In the three plays, on the other hand, the story develops as shown on p. 7.

When the plays are thus compared, the resemblance between *The Parliament of Love* and *A Cure for a Cuckold* is seen to be extraordinarily close—too close to be explained except by direct imitation. Further, both of them seem to be developments, directly or indirectly, of the simpler story found in *The Dutch Courtezan*; though of course, as Rupert Brooke points out, we cannot absolutely assume that Marston's play was the immediate source of either. Anyway, it matters little; more interesting is the question—did Webster copy Massinger or Massinger Webster?

Stoll and Brooke take the first view. Their arguments are very numerous but, in Stoll's case, though admirably ingenious, often of that mustard-seed variety which tries to make up for lack of weight by force of numbers.

The first evidence that naturally suggests itself is that of date. *The Parliament of Love* was licensed for performance on Nov. 3rd 1624; if we are right in putting *A Cure for a Cuckold* after the beginning of collisions with Spain in the summer of 1624, the four to five months intervening would hardly suffice both for Webster, who in earlier days, at all events, was such a slow worker, to write a play and for Massinger to write another copying it. While if 1625 is the right date for *A Cure for a Cuckold*, the whole question is settled.

But we cannot rely simply on the supposed date. The strongest internal evidence lies, I think, not in Stoll's argument that Webster was incapable of inventing such a plot by himself and so must have copied *The Parliament of Love* (how can one make such assertions?), but in his other point, that Webster's version elaborates on Massinger's. It is natural that the later-comer should find the easiest scope for his originality in working up his predecessor's details: in the same way Massinger had elaborated the still simpler version of Marston. Thus when Massinger's Leonora bids her lover kill his dearest friend, her

MARSTON

Dutch Courtesan

W is jilted by F; and, in revenge, when L woos her, promises herself to him only on condition that he kills F.

L agrees, then repents and reveals all to F. They pretend to fight a duel. L returns to W and says he has killed F. Her reply is to have L brought to trial as a murderer

To punish L, F hides.

L is condemned for murder. At the last moment F reveals himself; W is sent to prison; and L is cured of his passion.

MASSINGER

Parliament of Love

W conceives a hatred for L because, when they were betrothed, he tried to ravish her; and, when L begs to be forgiven, promises herself to him only on condition that he finds out and kills his best friend.

L reflects on the faithlessness of friends in general; then F appears, rejoicing over an assignation he has just received with his own mistress. He notices L's sadness and cross-questions him, L says he has to fight a duel and needs a second. F insists on being his second, even though it means missing his assignation

At the duelling-ground L reveals that he is himself F's opponent, fights, and is worsted

L returns to W; but as he is reported to have killed F, she has him brought to trial as a murderer.

L is condemned for murder, W herself for cruelty. F, however, having feigned death for L's sake, comes to life; and W and L are happily married.

WEBSTER

Cure for a Cuckold

W is hopelessly in love with F who is just being married; and, when L woos her, promises herself to him only on condition that he finds out and kills his best friend.

L reflects on the faithlessness of friends in general; and puts several of his acquaintances to the test, saying that he has to fight a duel and needs a second, who must also fight. They excuse themselves; then F appears and cross-questions L on his sadness. L repeats his story. F insists on being his second, even though it means missing his marriage-night

At the duelling-ground L reveals that he is himself F's opponent, and tries to insist on fighting; but F replies that he can already say he has killed his friend, for he is dead to L henceforth.

L returns to W and says he has killed F. Her reply is that F was the one man she loved; "however", she adds, with a sudden revulsion, "I am glad he is dead, since he could not be mine. And now I will be yours". L, filled with repulsion and jealousy, leaves her¹, and tries to poison F's relations with his bride. His plot fails, however; and W and L are happily married.

¹ There are further complications at this point: for which see p. 21.

words are perfectly straightforward; but Webster's Clare, by a far-fetched equivocation, really means that her lover is to kill *herself*. Again Massinger's lover merely reflects generally on the faithlessness of friends: in Webster the incident is expanded and the lover puts his friends actually to the test. In Webster the issue of the duel is complicated by a second quibble—the friend's declaration that Lessingham's killing of their friendship is tantamount to killing him. And it is, in general, hard not to feel that the slighter treatment of the subject in *The Parliament of Love*, where it provides only one intrigue among several, would be an anticlimax *after A Cure for a Cuckold*. And just as Webster's version seems a stage further removed in development from Marston than Massinger's, there are also points in which Massinger's seems a stage *nearer* to Marston—such as the indictment of the lover by the mistress for murder, his trial and condemnation, and the resurrection of the friend in the nick of time.

Further, if we find Massinger handling similar incidents elsewhere at an earlier date, it becomes rather more likely that he should have been repeating himself, and not imitating Webster, when he handles them again in *The Parliament of Love*. Now Stoll points out that in *The Little French Lawyer* (assigned to the years 1619–20 and to the hand of Massinger and Fletcher), which has four names of characters in common with *The Parliament of Love*, a lover is going to a duel, with his friend as his second, when an order comes from his mistress which entails missing his appointment on the duelling-ground. And here the lover sacrifices friendship to the call of love and obeys her. This, Stoll urges, may be regarded as a variation of the episode in our two plays; it is very possible, though certainly not an argument that can be heavily stressed.

Considering the probable date, however, and the trend of the internal evidence we may say that the main-plot of *A Cure for a Cuckold* is very probably based on Massinger's *Parliament of Love*. I have so far discussed the question on the supposition that Massinger wrote the Leonora-Clairemond part of *The Parliament of Love*; if, however, it were Rowley's¹, the matter would be further simplified; and we should simply have to sup-

¹ Cf. C. W. Stork, *All's Lost by Lust and A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, Introd. p. 50. *The Parliament of Love* is assigned to Rowley in the *Stationers' Register* for June 29th 1660, and in Warburton's list.

pose Rowley handing over for fresh treatment by Webster his own former theme. But I do not myself see any grounds for doubting Massinger's authorship of the whole play.

The source of Rowley's sub-plot of Compass and his cuckoldry has never been suggested. A sentence in *Anything for a Quiet Life* (II. 1. 120-2)—“when 'tis done (*i.e.* my cuckoldry), we will be married again wife, which some say is the onely *Supersedeas* about *Limehouse*, to remove Cuckoldry”—sounds like a reference to some actual local incident, or even custom. The date of that play (1621), which seems to me unusually certain, forbids the idea, once entertained, that the phrase was simply an allusion to the present comedy. It is worth noting, too, that Kirkman in his preface (24 ff.) remarks: “*The Expedient of Curing a Cuckold (after the maner set down in this Play) hath bin tried to my knowledge, and therefore I may say Probatum est*”. But without more knowledge of the manners of Elizabethan Limehouse, this is as much as we can say.

AUTHORSHIP

The play was attributed by its first publisher Kirkman in 1661 to Webster and Rowley. But a good deal of doubt was long felt on this point; for Kirkman was a liar and the play did not seem much like Webster's earlier work¹. Gosse indeed, on general grounds of style, accepted Kirkman's statement, and in 1885 at his suggestion S. Spring-Rice printed the main plot, as Webster's, by itself under the title *Love's Graduate* (cf. *C.C.* I. I. 20-2). But even critics like Arthur Symonds and Rupert Brooke continued to find in the play only the faintest signs of Webster's work. Their scepticism does indeed seem not unreasonable the first time one reads the play; but by the sixth reading or so, when parallels with Webster's other work have gradually revealed themselves by dozens, it becomes astonishing that anyone should ever have doubted his share in *A Cure for a Cuckold*. The credit of clearly proving in this way that Kirkman was not merely drawing on his imagination, belongs to Stoll and, still more, to Sykes. The evidence of parallel passages is of course easy to abuse (its dangers are pointed out in an able review in *Englische Studien*, 1925, p. 436); but, handled with common-sense, it remains usually the best available, especially with an author who repeats himself as much as Webster. The signs of his authorship collected by Stoll and Sykes, with some additions I have been able to make, will be found tabulated below. For Rowley, on the other hand, there are, it will be seen, few verbal parallels in the list. But apart from the general likelihood that if Kirkman was right about one partner, he was right also about the other, the whole treatment of the domestic troubles of *Compass*, with his robust, good-natured whimsicality, is so like the author of *A Woman Never Vext* that far less doubt has been felt from the beginning about Rowley's authorship.

It was however at first assumed, given this collaboration of Webster and Rowley, that Rowley simply wrote the sub-plot of *Compass* (II. 3, III. 2, IV. 1 and 3), and Webster all the rest. It was left to Sykes to show reason for seeing Webster's hand

¹ Fleay is at his best on a point like this. "Rowley's coadjutor was most likely Middleton, certainly not Webster *They never worked together.*" Was ever question better begged? "*Ces érudits, à force d'étudier, ne doutent de rien*"

also present in iv. 1; while C. W. Stork in the introduction to his edition of *All's Lost by Lust* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, suggested that the character of Rochfield was, on the other hand, more like Rowley than Webster (cf. young Foster in Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune by Land and Sea*). After all, there was nothing improbable in this. The far too common assumption that the joint plays of the Elizabethans can necessarily be divided up as neatly as an orange into quarters, with this scene wholly by A and that one entirely B's, has often no basis whatever beyond the convenience of critics who like compact results. Even where the style is clearly one partner's, a number of the ideas may be the other's: there are signs of that, for instance, in *F.M.I.* v. 3.

Here however a further complication has since been introduced by Professor H. D. Gray in a paper which he has very generously allowed me to see before its publication in the *Modern Language Review*. He brings evidence for a third partner—Heywood. In both *A Cure for a Cuckold* and *Appius and Virginia* there occur a number of words and some phrases which are undoubtedly characteristic of Heywood. These had been noticed in *Appius* by Rupert Brooke, who accordingly suggested that Heywood was the true author of that play; then, in his reply defending Webster's authorship, Sykes pointed out that similar signs of Heywood occurred also, though less obviously, in *A Cure for a Cuckold*, and explained them in both cases as borrowings from Heywood by Webster. Last of all Gray, while admitting that Webster's share of *Appius* was larger than Brooke had allowed, suggested that Heywood was the part-author not only of that play but of *A Cure for a Cuckold* as well. Accordingly he divides the play as follows:

- I. 1-2. Heywood.
- II 1-4. Rowley.
- III. 1. Webster.
- III. 2. Rowley.
- III. 3. Heywood (with some revision by Webster in III. 3. 1-40).
- IV. 1. Rowley.
- IV. 2. Webster.
- IV. 3. Rowley.
- V. 1 a (1-131). Heywood.
- V. 1 b (132-352). Rowley, revised by Webster.
- V. 1 c (353-end = Dyce's v. 2). Rowley.

The question thus raised is, I think, the most difficult to settle of all the problems of the Webster canon. Here are both of Webster's latest plays showing strong marks of Heywood's style. Is the answer that Webster was here imitating Heywood or that he was collaborating with him? Or was one of them revising the other's work? Clearly it is likely on the whole that the same answer is right for both plays, so similar is the problem they present, so close, as far as I can judge, their connection in time¹.

Gray's arguments for Heywood's share in *A Cure for a Cuckold* are based on general tone and atmosphere, on metre, and on diction. Towards evidence of the first kind I feel an extreme distrust. It may be, for instance, that "This is a place of feasting and of joy" is typical of Heywood; but if Webster was imitating Heywood in other ways, he could certainly imitate him in this sort of thing². After reading Webster's share in *Anything for a Quiet Life* and *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, one feels indeed that there was hardly any metamorphosis of which he was incapable, so different are those scenes from the Webster of our imagination. And we may be sure that had not Webster written a prose preface to *The Devil's Law-Case* marking it as clearly his, that play too would long ago have been parcelled out, in part at least, among other Elizabethans.

The argument from metre (see Metrical Appendix) is more important. Unfortunately here my figures do not square very well with Gray's. To be more precise, the percentage of resolved feet (which I agree to be the best means of distinguishing between the two writers) is indeed markedly higher in the undoubted Webster scenes of *A Cure for a Cuckold*, like III. 2 and IV. 1, than in scenes which Gray attributes to Heywood, such as I. 1 and 2. But what would by itself be a strong argument is rather weakened when we find in the trial-scene in *Appius* (IV. 1), which is clearly Webster's, very much the same percentage of resolved feet as, at all events, in two of the four scenes here attributed to Heywood³. If Webster was imitating Heywood's diction, he might imitate his metre; and, apart from that, the

¹ Gray, indeed, pushes *Appius* right back to 1603-4: but this seems to me less likely.

² Cf too *F.M.I.* v. 3. 1. "This well may be a day of joy long wish'd for".

³ I. 1, v. 1a: the explanation may be I think that these scenes are partly Webster's, even if predominantly Heywood's.

number of resolved feet per hundred lines in his verse falls markedly and progressively after reaching its height in *The Devil's Law-Case*. The metrical evidence, in short, I regard as supporting Heywood's part-authorship to some extent, but not conclusively.

The really important evidence is, however, that of word and phrase. Gray has not only added to the already collected parallels with Heywood's known work, he has also shown what were supposed to be typical pieces of Webster's phraseology, to be in some cases equally typical of Heywood—words, for instance, like “noble” and “strange”, the rhyme “sin—bin”, phrases like “above merit”, “you speak nobly”, “breed a strange distraction”. He falls himself, however, into exactly the same pitfall in bringing forward as evidence for Heywood such other phrases as “I'm full of thoughts” (1. 2. 25: to which a far closer parallel than any he brings from Heywood, is provided by *D. L.* II. 3. 188: “I am ful of thoughts, strange ones, but they'r no good ones”); or “a thousand oathes”, as if Webster had not written “*ten thousand curses on't*” (*W. D.* IV. 2. 88: cf. v. 6. 67—“*millions are now in graves*”); or “'Tis confessed” (1. 1. 4, v. 1. 123), which he denies to occur in Webster at all, whereas it is to be found in *A. Q. L.* v. 1. 468 and *F. M. I.* v. 2. 3. As these are probably the two plays of Webster that immediately preceded *A Cure for a Cuckold*, the phrase is, if anything, an argument for Webster. The real point, however, is the danger of such evidence in general: I have no doubt that I have myself been guilty of similar oversights, which are indeed hardly to be avoided unless one knows all the Elizabethans equally by heart. All that one can do is to seek safety in the number of parallels used and to avoid basing conclusions on phrases as slight and as likely to be common property as “'Tis confessed”. More weight, I think, attaches to Gray's argument that the contractions “o'th”, “i'th” are typical of Webster as against Heywood.

It remains, then, to consider in detail the evidence of diction.

It has not been noticed that three of the names occur elsewhere in Heywood—Franckford in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*; Lessingham in *The Four Prentices* (Guy of Lessingham = Guy de Lusignan; cf. however Webster's Cressingham in *A. Q. L.*); and Bonvile in *The Royal King and Loyal Subject*.

I. 1.

Evidence for Webster.

22. "To become graduate." The metaphor is an obvious one; but cf. *F.M.I.* iv. 2. 61: I would be a Graduate sir, no freshman. Cf. also *D.L.* i. 2. 171-6, II. 3. 29.

125-6. 'Tis a strange difficulty,
And it will ask much counsel.

Cf. *F.M.I.* iv. 2. 101-2: This is somewhat difficult, and will aske some conference with the divell.

212. The phrase "breed teeth" of course recalls *D.M.* iv. 2. 137, etc.; but it clearly cannot be stressed.

It may be noted that the "Labyrinth" (68), though also a Heywoodian metaphor, recurs in an undoubted piece of Webster's work later in the play—v. 1. 349.

For Heywood.

84, 98. "choice Beauties", "a choice Beauty": cf. *Eng. Trav.* 1. (*Wks.* iv. 11), *Maidenhead Well Lost* (*Wks.* iv. 102)¹.

105, 186. "You are pleasant." (Common in Heywood.)

I. 2.

Evidence for Webster.

25. "I'm full of thoughts": see p. 13 above.

139-41. But pardon me, that being now a-dying
Which is so near to man, if part we cannot
With pleasant looks.

Cf. *W.D.* i. 1. 52 ff. I am patient,
I have seene some ready to be executed
Give pleasant lookes, and money, and growne familiar
With the knave hangman.

186-8. — Will you go then?
— I am resolved I will.
— And instantly?
— With all the speed celerity can make.

Cf. *D.L.* II. 1. 292-4. — You must fight with me.
— I will sir. — And instantly.
— I will haste before you.

Note also 47 (Crotchet), cf. v. 1. 263 below, *A.Q.L.* II. 1. 68, v. 1. 248; 50, 143 ("I protest"—a favourite tag of Webster's).

For Heywood.

21 (opinion'd); 37 (sads); 81 (Monomachy—the word, however, occurs also in the *Arcadia*).

¹ References are to Pearson's *Heywood*. For further details see Commentary in each case.

II. 1-2.

Both Stork and Gray have suggested that the episode of Rochfield is Rowley's. There is certainly little sign of Webster's work or of Heywood's. Note that the metaphor of I. I. 19-22 recurs in II. I. 30, II. 2. 42. The metre seems more regular than Rowley's usually is, but his partner or partners may have revised it.

II. 3.

Rowley.

II. 4.

Assigned by Gray to Rowley, but metrically it is much more anapaestic than II. 1-2. Part of it may be Rowley's, but hardly all.

Evidence for Webster.

50. There's some good luck yet.

Cf. *W.D.* v. 3. 79. There's some good lucke in that yet.

68. I have question'd with my meditations.

Cf. *D.L.* II. 3. 111, etc.

Cf. also 74-6 (goodness...ill cannot betide him), *D.M.* III. 2. 312-4; 176 (I am a little travell'd), *D.L.* I. 2. 210.

Note too that 146 ('Tis meant for Physick) is closely echoed in IV. 2. 142-3, which is admittedly Webster's.

For Rowley. "Gratulate" (54) is found both in Heywood and in Rowley and Gray points out that "though I say't" is typical of Rowley (*A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, II. 1, etc.).

III. 1.

The scene is too clearly Webster's to need detailed treatment.

Apart from the characteristic "equivocations" and the resemblance to the duel in *D.L.*, cf. 7-8, *A. Q. L.* IV. 1. 96-7; 12-4, *D.L.* v. 4. 78-9; 26, *W.D.* IV. 2. 173; 81-2, *D.L.* I. 2. 145-6; 101, *D.L.* II. 1. 331; 116, *D.M.* III. 2. 234, v. 3. 41-4 (also IV. 2. 102 below); 119, *D.L.* I. 2. 238-9; 140-1, *W.D.* II. 1. 201; 170, *W.D.* I. 2. 4.

III. 2.

Rowley.

III. 3.

The first part is clearly Webster's; the second may be Heywood's. The metre supports this.

Evidence for Webster.

Cf. 12, *W.D.* v. 3. 35, *D.L.* II. 3. 102; 29-32, *A.Q.L.* III. I. 43-4; 44, *D.L.* I. I. 116.

For Heywood.

109-10: never was, Gentlemen,
 A Sea-fight better mannged.

Cf. (Gray) *Fortune by Land and Sea* IV. (*Wks.* IV. 411):
 a sea-fight

Was never better managed.

Note also 87 (mediate), 95 (unite consent—also in *Silver Age*, III).

IV. 1.

Rowley, with traces of Webster (not unnaturally in this legal connection).

Evidence for Rowley.

See Commentary on 123 (*Tweak* or *Bronstrops*) and 153 ff.

For Webster.

79 (cf. II. 4. 50 above).

Cf. also 95-6, *Char.* "Canting Rogue", 10-1; 108-9, *D.L.* IV. I. 108-9; 206-7, *D.L.* I. 2. 300-1.

IV. 2.

Here Webster's hand remains undisputed.

Cf. 36, III. 3. 12 above; 57, *D.M.* III. 2. 131-3; 119, *D.M.* IV. 2. 402; 131-2, *D.M.* III. 2. 288-9; 177, *W.D.* II. I. 202-3; 200-1, *Mon. Hon.* 298-9.

IV. 3.

Rowley.

V. 12 (1-131).

Gray assigns this to Heywood, while admitting that traces of Webster appear after 98; they do in fact, I think, appear rather earlier.

Evidence for Heywood.

49-50. — Sir, may I beg your name?
 — 'Tis that I never yet denied to any.

Cf. *Challenge for Beauty*, II. (*Wks.* v. 24):

— Your name Ferrers?

— Rather than *deny*

My name and country....

Cf. also: 17 ("Apology" as a verb), *Eng. Trav.* III. 1 (a scene which contains also "asperse", as in 16 here, though that word is not confined to Heywood); 33 (unite consent), III. 3. 95 above.

For Webster.

73-4. Sir, you have cause to bless the lucky Planet
Beneath which you were born.

Cf. *W.D.* I. 2. 70-2: your *Ephemerides*
Which shewes you under what a smiling planet
You were first swaddled.

(In both cases it is a question of cuckoldry.) Similarly, *D.M.* III. 2. 274.

Cf. also 100 (give him line), *D.L.* II. 1. 16; 129, *A.V.* III. 3. 32.

There are several other expressions very characteristic of Heywood and Webster in the scene; unfortunately they seem to be equally characteristic of both.

v. 1 b (132-352).

Gray regards this as Rowley's work, heavily revised by Webster; but it seems to me essentially Webster's throughout.

Cf 132, *D.M.* v. 4. 92-3, etc; 133 (my Master-piece; Foxes); 159-61 (a typical equivocation), *A.V.* I. 1. 100-15; 168, *W.D.* v. 6. 18; 182-4, *A.V.* III. 2. 265-6; 228, *W.D.* IV. 2. 108; 259, *W.D.* II. 1. 163-4; 263, I. 2. 47 above; 295, *D.M.* III. 2. 77; 300-1, *D.M.* II. 4. 26-7; 319, *D.M.* I. 1. 267; 328-30, *D.L.* II. 1. 324-6; 347-8, *D.L.* v. 5. 62-4.

It is worth noting, as H.D.S. has privately pointed out to me, that 351-2, like the closing couplet of IV. 2, are based on Daniel, *The Queen's Arcadia*, of 1605 (see Commentary).

v. 1 c (353-end; Dyce's v. 2).

Gray assigns to Rowley, with traces of Webster: this seems probable, though it is hard to be more definite. Lessingham's apology for his conduct (441-3) perhaps slightly resembles Bosola's (*D.M.* v. 5. 107). (Cf. too 480 ff., *A.Q.L.* v. 1. 485.)

Thus the general conclusion from the evidence of style seems to be that Heywood must be given a share in the play; but that Gray has tended to underestimate the traces of Webster's hand outside the three scenes essentially his—III. 1, IV. 2 and v. 1 b. Accordingly I should divide the play as follows:

- I. 1-2. Webster and Heywood.
- II. 1-2. ? Rowley.

- *II. 3. Rowley.
- II. 4. Rowley and Webster.
- *III. 1. Webster.
- *III. 2. Rowley.
- III. 3. Webster, then Heywood.
- *IV. 1. Rowley and Webster.
- *IV. 2. Webster.
- *IV. 3. Rowley.
- v. I a. Heywood, then Webster.
- v. I b. Webster.
- v. I c. Rowley and Webster.

* These scenes are fairly certain.

The sum of the whole matter is, then, that Kirkman's attribution to Webster and Rowley has proved to be true, though not, probably, the whole truth; for a good case has also been made for Heywood's collaboration, especially if we believe that he had a hand in *Appius and Virginia* likewise. Further, considering that the names of three of the characters are typical of Heywood, it seems difficult to regard him as the reviser of a play originally written by Webster and Rowley alone; on the other hand, I find it hard to believe that Webster was, as Gray suggests, the reviser of Heywood and Rowley's work. For, as we have seen, the whole main plot of *A Cure for a Cuckold* strikingly resembles part of Massinger's *Parliament of Love*. And it seems so plausible to connect this resemblance with the fact that Webster was at this very time collaborating with Massinger in *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, that I should be slow to give Webster only a reviser's part in the play before us. Besides, his scenes are the real heart of the plot. The evidence points rather, I think, to an intimate collaboration between all three dramatists. In any case, Webster's share does of course dwindle from what it once seemed to be, when he and Rowley were thought of as the sole authors. Yet after all those who are jealous for Webster need not much regret this: for his reputation gains rather than loses, when it appears that his share, though thus diminished, still includes the two finest scenes in the whole play, the duel of the friends and their meeting with the heroine after it.

THE PLAY

Between *The Devil's Law-Case* and the present comedy Webster had probably written, in collaboration with Middleton, *Anything for a Quiet Life*, the lowest point reached by his dramatic work. With the Webster of the great plays it was impossible not to feel that here was a man whose love of the beautiful was indeed embittered by his hatred of the hideous, his love of the true half-poisoned by his loathing of the false; yet in him there breathed a quivering energy that made his work impressive even when imperfect. But as he comes to sink beneath the influence of Fletcher, what strikes us is the disappearance, after *The Devil's Law-Case*, of the energy, the love, and the hatred alike. He seems to cease to care. *Anything for a Quiet Life* is frivolous without light-heartedness and vulgar without vitality; and of its characters it is doubtful whether the virtuous or the wicked are the more repellent or the more unreal, as they drift like bubbles hither and thither upon a shallow stream of intrigue, that froths and dimples on its tortuous way. The brief age of Elizabethan tragedy was over: and in its twilight of romantic comedy such works were produced in hundreds. The same decline has happened in other times and lands.

There tiny pleasures occupy the place
Of glories and of duties; as the feet
Of fabled fairies, when the sun goes down,
Trip o'er the grass where wrestlers strove by day.

To the same class belongs *A Cure for a Cuckold*; but it is at least a far better specimen. Its gentlemen occasionally behave as such, notably in that fine duel-scene on Calais sands which takes us back to its companion-piece in *The Devil's Law-Case*; and its comic figure, the good Compass, is so alive and genuine that we feel Dickens himself might have enjoyed him, in an expurgated form. As in *The Devil's Law-Case*, however, the motivation of the play is sometimes so obscure that a summary of the plot may save the reader a good deal of trouble.

It is the wedding day of Annabel Woodroff and her lover Bonvile. But the piece begins by showing us first two less fortunate lovers, Bonvile's friend Lessingham and his mistress

Clare, who has long kept him in an unkind suspense with which he reproaches her in one of the best speeches of the play.

I have loved you
 Beyond my self, mis-spended for your sake
 Many a fair hour, which might have been employed
 To pleasure, or to profit, have neglected
 Duty to them from whom my being came,
 My parents; but my hopeful studies most.
 I have stol'n time from all my choice delights,
 And robb'd my self, thinking to enrich you.
 Matches I have had offered, some have told me,
 As fair, as rich—I never thought 'em so,
 And lost all these in hope to finde out you,
 Resolve me then for Christian charity.

Answering that she will send him in a moment a message that will end his suspense for ever, she withdraws; and her maid brings Lessingham these written words—

Prove all thy friends, finde out the best and nearest,
 Kill for my sake that Friend that loves thee dearest.

Lessingham, much taken aback, is nevertheless prepared to pay any price for his mistress. But who is his best friend? There follows a scene of naïve but not ineffective irony in which, like the soul in *Everyman*, Lessingham puts his "friends" to the test. He needs, he says, a second in a duel—a duel where not only the principals but the seconds too must fight; and his opponents are dangerous men. At this, one after the other, his acquaintances invent hasty excuses and vanish; and the lonely Lessingham is soliloquizing on the hollowness of all friendship when Bonvile appears, learns how the case stands, and at once offers to leave his bride and come. So the newly-wedded Annabel is abandoned, without a word of explanation; and the two friends arrive at the rendezvous on Calais sands. There the astonished Bonvile discovers that he is himself the destined victim. This scene at least, whatever weakness besets the play, is moving both as drama and as poetry: though even here there is something slightly childish in the equivocation that ends this situation which an equivocation had begun. For now Bonvile, deeply and naturally resentful, refuses to fight and bids Lessingham go back and say he has duly killed his friend. He well may: for their friendship is dead indeed. The two men return separately; and Lessingham comes to Clare to claim his reward for killing

his dearest friend—Bonvile. In a strange hysteria she first curses him for misunderstanding her, then with a sudden change of mood accepts him. She will rejoice after all: for she had loved Bonvile passionately and now she has at least the satisfaction of knowing that no other woman shall enjoy him. But Lessingham in his turn is maddened with jealousy at this confession, and casts her off for ever. He goes away; and now Bonvile appears, as though risen from the dead; he explains his escape to Clare, and she owns her passion for him. She had really meant, she says, by her ambiguous message to Lessingham that he was to poison her with a drug she had procured in the despair of her love for Bonvile: only he had misunderstood. Bonvile, seeing how the situation stands, in order to estrange Clare's passion from himself, insults her as a "whore". But meanwhile Lessingham in his jealous rage against Bonvile tries to ruin his marriage by accusing Annabel to her husband of misconduct with a certain Rochfield, whom she had befriended, and Bonvile to his bride of similar misconduct with Clare. He succeeds in causing a violent quarrel; but Clare and Rochfield satisfactorily explain all and the play ends with the union of the unamiable Clare to the still less amiable Lessingham in a felicity as improbable as undeserved.

The sub-plot is at least simpler. The mariner Compass finds on his return from a four years' absence that his wife has just had a child: and the comedy consists in the whimsical behaviour of Compass, who insists on gaining possession of a child which is not his; and restores his own respectability by divorcing his wife and remarrying her an hour later.

The main-plot of the play is, as we have seen, both involved and far-fetched. But complications are not yet over: for in the text as it stands Clare's final explanation of her motives is not only improbable, but impossible. And to make it coherent it is necessary to accept Rupert Brooke's emendation of one passage (iv. 2. 165). But though I have printed his conjecture in order to make sense of the play, I cannot really accept his view that the text has simply been corrupted at that one point; and I am unwillingly driven, much as I dislike the "revisions" with which many Elizabethan critics so freely cut all their knots, to suggest that Webster first wrote a version in which Clare, like her prototypes in Webster's sources, the Countess of Cellant, Marston's

Courtezan, and Massinger's Leonora, actually meant her lover to murder his friend¹; then however decided that this made Clare too odious, or that there was room for yet more equivocations (Webster's fondness for these is as bad and persistent as Shakespeare's for puns); and so changed Clare's intentions from murder to suicide, forgetting however to make all the necessary re-adjustments. Or we may explain it simply by bad collaboration, if we believe in Heywood's part-authorship. At all events, as the play stands, even with Rupert Brooke's emendation, it is absurd that Clare in her riddling message should describe herself as the person who loves Lessingham best, when it is clear she cares little for him and more in any case for Bonville. For a fuller discussion on this point, however, I must refer the reader to the Textual Note on iv. 2. 165.

Thus the motivation is far from clear. But there is more amiss than that. The main weaknesses of the play may be said to be three—that several of its chief characters are obscure; that two in particular, Clare and Lessingham, are improbable; and that Lessingham, above all, is utterly ignoble. Of the first enough has been said, and of the second little needs saying; but the third requires explanation. There is no intrinsic reason why the characters of a play should not be mean; nor is there any need for the author to express moral disapproval of their meanness. But it is fatal if once the reader begins to suspect that the author is less aware of this meanness than he himself is. In a book like Maupassant's *Bel Ami* the dispassionate detachment of the artist is complete, and completely effective; but no one doubts that Maupassant realized absolutely what his hero was like. So with Tchekov. But here, when after so much prate of friendship the almost incredible and repeated perfidy of Lessingham seems hardly to ruffle, at the end, even those whose lives he has tried by the lowest treachery to ruin—when this creature is dismissed to a happy marriage, as quite a good fellow after all, it is as monstrous as the end of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* or *Measure for Measure*. There is no need to labour the point: with the customary adulations of Elizabethan criticism laid aside, let us

¹ We may be reminded how in one of the greatest and most tragic stories in the world, the *Volsunga Saga* (the older form of the legend of the *Nibelungen Lied*), Brynhild, seeing Sigurd married to another, can find no escape for her misery except by making her husband plan Sigurd's murder and then joining her lover in death. See W. Morris, *Sigurd the Volsung*.

admit that there are moments when these writers, even Shakespeare himself, strike us as insensitive and morally obtuse. For them marriage suffices to cover any multitude of sins—even such a marriage as seems to us itself the most flagrant sin of all. It is no use making mere gods of these men and adoring them with fast-shut eyes: at times their attitude is odious. If they are great, it is despite faults which would have killed the work of less vital poets once for all. And if *A Cure for a Cuckold* is less read than many other Elizabethan plays, it is not because it is baser in its ending than *The Two Gentlemen* or *Measure for Measure*; but because it has not enough of their redeeming poetry. Annabel indeed has charm, and Compass can face comparison with all but the best figures of Elizabethan low life. Indeed I feel I have perhaps said too little of his merits, which are doubtless to Rowley's credit: but then this honest creature, who has so shocked some critics, needs no interpreter to the ordinary reader. As for the serious scenes, those between Lessingham and Clare in Acts I and IV, as well as the duel in III, have the power to hold the reader again and again. But I cannot find much beyond this to praise: and "where we cannot love, we should pass by".

A CURE FOR A CUCKOLD

A
C U R E
FOR A
C U C K O L D.
A PLEASANT
C O M E D Y,

As it hath been several times Acted
with great Applause.

Written by JOHN VVEBSTER *and*
VVILLIAM ROWLEY.

Placere Cupio.

*London, Printed by Tho. Johnson, and are to be sold by Francis
Kirkman, at his Shop at the Sign of John Fletchers Head,
over against the Angel-Inne, on the Back-side of
St Clements, without Temple-Bar, 1661.*

The Stationer, to the Judicious Reader.

Gentlemen,

IT was not long since I was onely a Book-Reader, and not a Book-seller, which Quality (my former Employment somewhat failing, and I being unwilling to be idle) I have now lately taken on me. It hath been my fancy and delight (e'er) since I knew any thing) to converse with Books; and the pleasure I have taken in those of this nature, (viz. Plays) hath bin so extraordinary, that it hath bin much to my cost; for I have been (as we term it) a Gatherer of Plays for some years, and I am confident I have more of several sorts than any man in England, Book-seller, or other: I can at any time shew 700 in number, which is within a small matter all that 10 were ever printed. Many of these I have several times over, and intend as I sell, to purchase more; All, or any of which, I shall be ready either to sell or lend to you upon reasonable Considerations.

In order to the increasing of my Store, I have now this Tearn printed and published three, viz. This called A Cure for a Cuckold, and another called, The Thracian Wonder; and the third called, Gammer Gurtons Needle. Two of these three were never printed, the third, viz. Gammer Gurtons Needle, hath bin formerly printed, but it is almost an hundred years since. As for this Play, I need not speak any thing in its Commendation, the Authors names, Webster and Rowley, are (to knowing men) sufficient to declare its worth: several persons remember the Acting of it, and say that it then pleased generally well; and let me tell you, in my judgement it is an excellent old Play. The Expedient of Curing a Cuckold (after the maner set down in this Play) hath bin tried to my knowledge, and therefore I may say Probatum est. I should, I doubt, be too tedious, or else I would say somewhat in defence of this, and in Commendation of Plays in general, but I question not but you have read what abler Pens than mine have writ in their Vindication. Gentlemen, I hope you will so incourage me in my beginnings, that I may be induced to proceed to 30 do you service, and that I may frequently have occasion in this nature, to subscribe my self

Your Servant,
Francis Kirkman.

Dramatis Personæ.

WOODROFF, a Justice of the Peace, Father to *Annabel*.

FRANCKFORD, a Merchant, Brother in Law to *Woodroff*.

LESSINGHAM, a Gentleman, in love with *Clare*.

BONVILLE, a Gentleman, the Bridegroom and Husband to *Annabel*.

RAYMOND,

EUSTACE,

LYONEL, and

GROVER,

} Gallants invited to the Wedding.

ROCHFELD, a young Gentleman, and a Thief.

COMPASS, a Sea-man.

PETTIFOG, and

DODGE,

} two Attorneys.

A Councillor.

Two Clients.

Two Boys.

A Saylor.

LUCE, Wife to *Franckford*, and Sister to *Woodroff*.

ANNABEL, the Bride, and Wife to *Bonville*.

CLARE, *Lessingham's* Mistriss.

URSE, Wife to *Compass*.

Nurse.

A Waiting-woman.

A CURE FOR A CUCKOLD.

ACT I. SCENE I.

[*Woodroff's House.*]

Enter Lessingham and Clare.

LESSINGHAM.

THIS is a place of feasting and of joy,
And as in Triumphs and Ovations, here
Nothing save state and pleasure.

CLARE. 'Tis confest.

LESS. A day of Mirth and solemn Jubile.

CLARE. For such as can be merry.

LESS. A happy Nuptial,

Since a like pair of Fortunes suitable,

Equality in Birth, parity in years,

And in affection no way different,

Are this day sweetly coupled.

CLARE. 'Tis a Marriage.

LESS. True, Lady, and a noble precedent

Me thinks for us to follow: why should these

Out-strip us in our loves, that have not yet

Out-gone us in our time? If we thus loose

Our best, and not to be recovered hours

Unprofitably spent, we shall be held

Meer Trewants in Loves school.

CLARE. That's a study

In which I never shall ambition have

To become graduate.

LESS. Lady, you are sad:

This Jovial Meeting puts me in a spirit

To be made such. We two are Guests invited,

And meet by purpose, not by accident;

Where's then a place more opportunely fit,

In which we may sollicite our own Loves,

Than before this example?

10

20

30 CLARE. In a word,
I purpose not to marry.

LESS. By your favor;
For as I ever to this present hour
Have studied your observance, so from henceforth
I now will study plainness—I have loved you
Beyond my self, mis-spended for your sake
Many a fair hour, which might have been employed
To pleasure, or to profit, have neglected
Duty to them from whom my being came,
40 My parents; but my hopeful studies most.
I have stol'n time from all my choice delights,
And robb'd my self, thinking to enrich you.
Matches I have had offered, some have told me,
As fair, as rich—I never thought 'em so,
And lost all these in hope to finde out you,
Resolve me then for Christian charity.
Think you an Answer of that frozen nature
Is a sufficient satisfaction for
So many more then needful services?

50 CLARE. I have said, Sir.

LESS. Whence might this distaste arise?
Be at least so kinde to perfect me in that:
Is it of some dislike lately conceived
Of this my person, which perhaps may grow
From calumny and scandal? if not that,
Some late received Melancholy in you?
If neither, your perverse and peevish will—
To which I most imply it?

CLARE. Be it what it can, or may be, thus it is,
60 And with this Answer pray rest satisfied.
In all these travels, windings, and indents,
Paths, and by-paths which many have sought out,
There's but one onely road, and that alone
To my fruition; which who so findes out,
'Tis like he may enjoy me: but that failing,
I ever am mine own.

LESS. Oh name it, Sweet.
I am already in a Labyrinth
Until you guide me out.

CLARE. Ile to my Chamber—
 May you be pleased, unto your mis-spent time
 To adde but some few minutes. By my Maid
 You shall hear further from me. 70
Exit.

LESS. Ile attend you.
 What more can I desire, than be resolv'd
 Of such a long suspence? Here's now the period
 Of much expectation.

Enter Raymond, Eustace, Lyonel, and Grover, Gallants.

RAYM. What? you alone retired to privacy,
 Of such a goodly confluence, all prepared
 To grace the present Nuptials? 80

LESS. I have heard some say,
 Men are ne're less alone, then when alone,
 Such power hath meditation.

EUST. Oh these choice Beauties
 That are this day assembled! But of all,
 Fair Mistriss *Clare*, the Bride excepted still,
 She bears away the prize.

LYON. And worthily;
 For, setting off her present melancholly,
 She is without taxation. 90

GROV. I conceive
 The cause of her so sudden discontent.

RAYM. 'Tis far out of my way.

GROV. Ile speak it then:
 In all estates, professions, or degrees
 In Arts or Sciences, there is a kinde
 Of Emulation; likewise so in this:
 There's a Maid this day married, a choice Beauty.
 Now [*Mistriss Clare*], a Virgin of like Age,
 And Fortunes correspondent, apprehending 100
 Time lost in her that's in another gained,
 May upon this—for who knows womens thoughts?—
 Grow into this deep sadness.

RAYM. Like enough.

LESS. You are pleasant, Gentlemen, or else perhaps,
 Though I know many have pursued her Love—

GROV. (And you amongst the rest) with pardon Sir!—
 Yet she might cast some more peculiar eye

On some that not respects her—

*Enter Wayting-
woman.*

110 LESS. That's my fear

Which you now make your sport.

WOM. A Letter, Sir.

LESS. From whom?

WOM. My Mistriss.

LESS. She has kept her promise,
And I will read it, though I in the same
Know my own death included.

WOM. Fare you well, Sir. *Exit.*

LESS. *Prove all thy friends, finde out the best and nearest,
Kill for my sake that Friend that loves thee dearest.*

120 Her servant, nay her hand and character,

All meeting in my ruine! Read agen—

*Prove all thy Friends, finde out the best and nearest,
Kill for my sake that Friend that loves the[e] dearest.*

And what might that one be? 'Tis a strange difficulty,
And it will ask much counsel. *Exit Less.*

RAYM. *Lessingham*

Hath left us on the sudden.

EUST. Sure the occasion

130 Was of that Letter sent him.

LYON. It may be
It was some Challenge.

GROV. Challenge—never dream it:
Are such things sent by women?

RAYM. 'Twere an Heresie
To conceive but such a thought.

LYON. Tush, all the difference
Begot this day, must be at night decided
Betwixt the Bride and Bridegroom. Here both come.

Enter Woodroff, Annabel, Bonvile, Franckford, Luce, and Nurse.

140 WOOD. What did you call the Gentleman we met
But now in some distraction?

BON. *Lessingham:*
A most approv'd and noble friend of mine,
And one of our prime Guests.

WOOD. He seemed to me
Somewhat in minde distemper'd. What concern
Those private humors [our] so publick Mirth

In such a time of Revels? Mistriss *Clare*,
I miss her too. Why Gallants, have you suffered her
Thus to be lost amongst you? 150

ANNA. Dinner done,
Unknown to any, she retir'd her self.

WOOD. Sick of the *Maid* perhaps, because she sees
You Mistriss Bride, her School- and Play-fellow
So suddenly turned Wife.

FRANCK. 'Twas shrewdly guest.

WOOD. Go finde her out: Fie Gentlemen, within
The Musick playes unto the silent walls,
And no man there to grace it: when I was young,
At such a Meeting I have so bestir'd me, 160
Till I have made the pale Green-sickness Girls
Blush like the Rubie, and drop pearls apace
Down from their Ivory fore-heads: In those days
I have cut Capers thus high. Nay, in, Gentlemen,
And single out the Ladies.

RAYM. Well advised!
Nay [Mistriss] Bride, you shall along with us;
For without you all's nothing.

ANNA. Willingly,
With [Master] Bridegrooms leave. 170

BON. Oh my best Joy,
This day I am your servant.

WOOD. True, this day;
She his, her whole life after—so it should be:
Onely this day a Groom to do her service,
For which the full remainder of his age
He may write Master. I have done it yet,
And so I hope still shall do. Sister *Luce*,
May I presume my brother *Franckford* can
Say as much, and truly? 180

LUCE. Sir, he may,
I freely give him leave.

WOOD. Observe that, brother—
She freely gives you leave; But who gives leave,
The Master or the servant?

FRANCK. You [are] pleasant,
And it becomes you well, but this day most;

That having but one Daughter, have bestowed her
To your great hope and comfort.

190 WOOD. I have one:

Would you could say so, Sister; but your barrenness
Hath given your husband freedom, if he please,
To seek his pastime elsewhere.

LUCE. Well, well brother,
Though you may taunt me that have never yet
Been blest with issue, spare my husband pray,
For he may have a By-blow, or an Heir
That you never heard of.

FRANCK. [*aside*] Oh fie wife, make not
200 My fault too publick.

LUCE. Yet himself keep within compass.

FRANCK. [*aside*] If you love me, Sweet!

LUCE. Nay I have done.

WOOD. But if

He have not, Wench, I would he had; the hurt
I wish you both. [*to Luce*] Prithee, thine ear a little.

NURSE. [*to Franckford*] Your boy grows up, and 'tis a chop-
ping Lad,

A man even in the Cradle.

FRAN. Softly Nurse:

210 NURSE. One of the forwardst infants—how it will crow
And chirrup like a Sparrow! I fear shortly
It will breed teeth, you must provide him therefore
A Corral, with a Whistle and a Chain.

FRAN. He shall have any thing.

NURSE. He's now quite out of Blankets.

FRAN. There's a Piece,

Provide him what he wants, onely good Nurse
Prithee at this time be silent.

NURSE. A Charm to binde
220 Any Nurses tongue that's living.

WOOD. Come, we are mist
Among the younger Frye—Gravity oft-times
Becomes the sports of youth, especially
At such Solemnities, and it were sin
Not in our Age to show what we have bin.

Exeunt

[SCENE 2.]

*The same.**Enter Lessingham sad, with a Letter in his hand.*

LESS. *Amicitia nihil dedit natura majus nec rarius,*
 So saith my Author. If then powerful Nature
 In all her bounties showred upon mankinde,
 Found none more rare and precious than this one
 We call Friendship, oh to what a Monster
 Would this trans-shape me, to be made that he
 To violate such goodness! To kill any
 Had been a sad Injunction, but a Friend!
 Nay, of all Friends the most approved! A Task,
 Hell till this day could never parallel: 10
 And yet this woman has a power of me
 Beyond all vertue—vertue! almost grace.
 What might her hidden purpose be in this?
 Unless she apprehend some fantasie
 That no such thing has being:—and as kinred
 And claims to Crowns are worn out of the world,
 So the name Friend? 'T may be 'twas her conceit.
 I have tryed those that have professed much,
 For coin . . . nay sometimes slighter courtesies,
 Yet found 'em cold enough,—so perhaps she, 20
 Which makes her thus opinion'd.—If in the former,
 And therefore better days, 'twas held so rare,
 Who knows but in these last and worser times,
 It may be now with Justice banisht th'earth?
 I 'm full of thoughts, and this my troubled brest
 Distemper'd with a thousand fantasies—
 Something I must resolve. I'le first make proof
 If such a thing there be; which having found,
 'Twixt Love and Friendship 'twill be a brave Fight,
 To prove in man which claims the greatest right. 30

Enter Raymond, Eustace, Lyonel, and Grover.

RAYM. What, Master *Lessingham!*
 You that were wont to be compos'd of mirth,
 All spirit and fire—Alacrity it self,

Like the lustre of a late bright-shining Sun,
Now wrapt in clouds and darkness!

LYON. Prithee be merry,
Thy dulness sads the half part of the house,
And deads that spirit which thou wast wont to quicken,
And, half spent, to give Life [to].

40 LESS. Gentlemen,
Such as have cause for sport, I shall wish ever
To make of it the present benefit
While it exists.—Content is still short-breathed,
When it was mine I did so. If now yours,
I pray make your best use on't.

LYON. Riddles and Paradoxes:
Come, come, some Crotchet's come into thy pate,
And I will know the cause on't.

GROV. So will I,
50 Or I protest ne're leave thee.

[LESS.] 'Tis a business
Proper to my self,—one that concerns
No second person.

GROV. How's that? not a friend?

LESS. Why, is there any such?

GROV. Do you question that? what do you take me for?

EUST. I Sir, or me? 'Tis many moneths ago
Since we betwixt us interchang'd that name,
And of my part ne're broken.

60 LYON. Troth, nor mine.

RAYM. If you make question of a Friend, I pray
Number not me the last in your accompt,
That would be crown'd in your opinion first.

LESS. You all speak nobly. But amongst you all
Can such a one be found?

RAYM. Not one amongst us,
But would be proud to wear the character
Of noble Friendship. In the name of which,
And of all us here present, I intreat,
70 Expose to us the grief that troubles you.

LESS. I shall, and briefly: If ever Gentleman
Sunk beneath scandal, or his reputation,
Never to be recovered, suffered, and

For want of one whom I may call a Friend,
Then mine is now in danger.

RAYM. I'll redeem't,
Though with my lifes dear hazard.

EUST. I pray Sir,
Be to us open-breasted.

LESS. Then 'tis thus: 80
There is to be performed a Monto)machy,
Combat, or Duel—Time, Place, and Weapon
Agreed betwixt us. Had it toucht my self,
And my self onely, I had then been happy;
But I by composition am engag'd
To bring with me my Second, and he too,
Not as the Law of Combat is, to stand
Aloof and see fair play, bring off his friend,
But to engage his person; both must fight,
And either of them dangerous. 90

EUST. Of all things,
I do not like this fighting.

LESS. Now Gentlemen,
Of this so great a courtesie I am
At this instant meerly destitute.

RAYM. The time?

LESS. By eight a clock to-morrow.

RAYM. How unhappily
Things may fall out!—I am just at that hour
Upon some late conceived Discontents, 100
To atone me to my father, otherwise
Of all the rest you had commanded me
Your Second, and your Servant.

LYON. Pray the Place?

LESS. Callis-Sands.

LYON. It once was fatal to a friend of mine,
And a near kinsman, for which I vowed then,
And deeply too, never to see that ground:
But if it had been elsewhere, one of them
Had before [n]ine been worms-meat. 110

GROV. What's the weapon?

LESS. Single-sword.

GROV. Of all that you could name,

A thing I never practis'd,——Had it been
 Rapier——or that, and Ponyard, where men use
 Rather sleight than force, I had been then your Man;
 Being young, I strained the sinews of my arm,
 Since then to me 'twas never serviceable.

EUST. In troth Sir, had it been a money-matter,
 120 I could have stood your friend, but as for fighting
 I was ever out at that. *Exeunt Gallants.*

LESS. Well, farewell Gentlemen,
 But where's the Friend in all this? tush, she's wise, *Enter*
 And knows there's no such thing beneath the moon: *Bonville.*
 I now applaud her judgement.

BON. Why how now friend!—this Discontent which now
 Is so unseason'd, makes me question what
 I ne're durst doubt before, your Love to me—
 Doth it proceed from Envy of my Bliss
 130 Which this day crowns me with? Or have you been
 A secret Rival in my happiness?
 And grieve to see me owner of those Joys,
 Which you could wish your own?

LESS. Banish such thoughts,
 Or you shall wrong the truest faithful Friendship
 Man e're could boast of—oh mine honor, Sir,
 'Tis that which makes me wear this brow of sorrow:
 Were that free from the power of Calumny. . .
 But pardon me, that being now a-dying
 140 Which is so near to man, if part we cannot
 With pleasant looks.

BON. Do but speak the burthen,
 And I protest to take it off from you,
 And lay it on my self.

LESS. 'Twere a request,
 Impudence without blushing could not ask,
 It bears with it such injury.

BON. Yet must I know't.

LESS. Receive it then.——But I intreat you sir,
 150 Not to imagine that I apprehend
 A thought to further my intent by you,
 From you 'tis least suspected——'Twas my fortune
 To entertain a Quarrel with a Gentleman,

The Field betwixt us challeng'd,——place and time,
 And these to be performed not without Seconds.
 I have rely'd on many seeming friends,
 But cannot bless my memory with one
 Dares venter in my Quarrel.

BON. Is this all?

LESS. It is enough to make all temperature 160
 Convert to fury.——Sir, my Reputation
 (The life and soul of Honor) is at stake,
 In danger to be lost——the word of *Coward*
 Still printed in the name of *Lessingham*.

BON. Not while there is a *Bonvile*.——May I live poor,
 And die despised, not having one sad friend
 To wait upon my Hearse, if I survive
 The ruine of that Honor!——Sir, the time?

LESS. Above all spare me (that)——for that once known,
 You'l cancel this your promise, and unsay 170
 Your friendly proffer.——Neither can I blame you—
 Had you confirmed it with a thousand Oathes,
 The Heavens would look with mercy, not with justice
 On your offence, should you enfringe 'em all.
 Soon after Sun-rise upon *Callis-sands*,
 To-morrow we should meet——now to deferre
 Time one half hour, I should but forfeit all.
 But Sir, of all men living, this alas
 Concerns you least;——For shall I be the man
 To rob you of this nights felicity, 180
 And make your Bride a Widow,——her soft bed
 No witness of those joys this night expects?

BON. I still preferre my friend before my pleasure,
 Which is not lost for ever——but adjourned
 For more mature employment.

LESS. Will you go then?

BON. I am resolved I will.

LESS. And instantly?

BON. With all the speed celerity can make.

LESS. You do not weigh those inconveniences 190
 This Action meets with.——Your departure hence
 Will breed a strange distraction in your friends,
 Distrust of Love in your fair vertuous Bride,

Whose eyes perhaps may never more be blest
 With your dear sight: since you may meet a grave,
 And that not amongst your noble Ancestors,
 But amongst strangers, almost enemies.

BON. This were enough to shake a weak resolve,
 It moves not me. Take horse as secretly
 200 As you well may: my Groom shall make mine ready
 With all speed possible, unknown to any. *Enter Annabel.*

LESS. But Sir, the Bride.

AN. Did you not see the Key that's to unlock
 My Carckanet and Bracelets? Now in troth
 I am afraid 'tis lost.

BON. No Sweet, I ha't:
 I found it lye at random in your Chamber,
 And knowing you would miss it, laid it by
 'Tis safe I warrant you.

210 AN. Then my fear's past:
 But till you give it back, my Neck and Arms
 Are still your Prisoners.

BON. But you shall finde
 They have a gentle Jaylor.

AN. So I hope.
 Within y'are much enquired of.

BON. Sweet, I follow. *[Exit Annabel.]*

Dover?

LESS. Yes, that's the place.

220 BON. If you be there before me, hire a Barque,
 I shall not fail to meet you. *Exeunt.*

LESS. Was ever known
 A man so miserably blest as I?
 I have [^] no sooner found the greatest good,
 Man in this pilgrimage of Life can meet,
 But I must make the womb where 'twas conceived
 The Tomb to bury it, and the first hour it lives,
 The last it must breath? Yet there's a Fate
 That sways and governs above womans hate. *Exit.*

Explicit. Act. 1.

ACTUS SECUNDUS. SCENA PRIMA.

[*A highway close by.*]*Enter Rochfield a young Gentleman.*

ROCH. A Younger Brother! 'tis a poor Calling
 (Though not unlawful) very hard to live on;
 The elder fool inherits all the Lands,
 And we that follow, Legacies of Wit,
 And get 'em when we can too. Why should Law
 (If we be lawful and legitimate)
 Leave us without an equal dividant?
 Or why compels it not our Fathers else
 To cease from getting, when they want to give?
 No sure, our Mothers will ne're agree to that,
 They love to groan, although the Gallows eccho
 And groan together for us. From the first
 We travel forth, t'other's our journeys end.
 I must forward, to beg is out of my way,
 And borrowing is out of date: The old road,
 The old high-way 't must be, and I am in't,
 The place will serve for a yong beginner, for
 This is the first day I set open shop;
 Success then, sweet *Laverna*, I have heard
 That Thieves adore thee for a Deity.
 I would not purchase by thee, but to eat,
 And 'tis too churlish to deny me meat.
 Soft, here may be a booty.

10

*Enter Annabel 20
and a servant.*

AN. Hors'd, sayest thou?

SER. Yes Mistriss, with *Lessingham*.

AN. Alack, I know not what to doubt or fear,
 I know not well whether't be well or ill:
 But sure it is no custom for the Groom
 To leave his Bride upon the Nuptial day.
 I am so yong and ignorant a Scholar—
 Yes, and it proves so: I talk away perhaps
 That might be yet recovered. Prithee run,
 The fore-path may advantage thee to meet 'em,
 Or the Ferry which is not two miles before,
 May trouble 'em until thou comest in ken,

30

And if thou dost, prithee enforce thy voice
 To overtake thine eyes, cry out, and crave
 For me but one word 'fore his departure.
 I will not stay him, say, beyond his pleasure;
 40 Nor rudely ask the cause, if he be willing
 To keep it from me. Charge him by all the love . . .
 But I stay thee too long. Run, run.

SER. If I had wings I would spread 'em now, Mistriss. *Exit.*

AN. Ile make the best speed after that I can,
 Yet I am not well acquainted with the path:
 My fears I fear me will misguide me too. *Exit.*

ROCH. There's good movcables I perceive, what ere
 The ready Coin be—
 Who ever owns her, she's mine now: the next ground
 50 Has a most pregnant hollow for the purpose. *Exit.*

[ACTUS SECUNDUS. SCENA SECUNDA.]

[*The same road, a little further on.*]

*Enter servant running over, [and exit.] Enter Annabel,
 after her Rochfield.*

AN. I'm at a doubt already where I am.

ROCH. Ile help you, Mistriss, well overtaken.

AN. Defend me goodness! What are you?

ROCH. A man.

AN. An honest man, I hope.

ROCH. In some degrees hot, not altogether cold
 So far as rank poison, yet dangerous

As I may be drest: I am an honest thief.

AN. Honest and Thief hold small affinity,

10 I never heard they were akin before,

Pray Heaven I finde it now!

ROCH. I tell you my name.

AN. Then honest thief, since you have taught me so,
 For Ile enquire no other, use me honestly.

ROCH. Thus then Ile use you: First Δ to prove me honest,
 I will not violate your Chastity,
 (That's no part yet of my profession)
 Be you Wife or Virgin.

AN. I am both, Sir.

ROCH. This then it seems should be your Wedding-day, 20
 And these the hours of interim to keep you
 In that double state. Come then, Ile be brief,
 For Ile not hinder your desired *Hymen*:
 You have about you some superfluous Toys,
 Which my lanck hungry pockets would [containe]
 With much more profit, and more privacy;
 You have an idle Chain which keeps your Neck
 A Prisoner—a Mannacle, I take it,
 About your wrist too. If these prove Emblems
 Of the combined Hemp to halter mine, 30
 The Fates take their pleasure!—these are set down
 To be your Ransom, and there the Thief is proved.

AN. I will confess both, and the last forget;
 You shall be onely honest in this deed.
 Pray you take it, I intreat you to it,
 And then you steal 'em not.

ROCH. You may deliver 'em.

AN. Indeed I cannot:
 If you observe, Sir, they are both lock'd about me,
 And the Key I have not; happily you are furnisht 40
 With some instrument, that may unloose 'em.

ROCH. No in troth, Lady, I am but a Fresh-man,
 I never read further than this Book you see,
 And thus very day is my beginning too:
 These picking Laws I am to study yet. [*He draws his sword.*]

AN. Oh, do not show me that, Sir, 'tis too frightful:
 Good, hurt me not, for I do yield 'em freely:
 Use but your hands, perhaps their strength will serve
 To tear 'em from me without much detriment,
 Somewhat I will endure. [*He sheathes it again.*] 50

ROCH. Well, sweet Lady,
 Y' are the best Patient for a young Physician,
 That I think e're was practis'd on. Ile use you
 As gently as I can, as I'm an honest Thief. [*He tries to force*
 No? [wil't] not do? do I hurt you, Lady? *off the bracelet.*]

AN. Not much, Sir.

ROCH. I'd be loath at all, I cannot do't. [*She draws his sword.*]

AN. Nay then you shall not, Sir. You a Thief,

And guard your self no better! No further read?
60 Yet out in your own book? A bad Clerk, are you not?

ROCH. I by Saint *Nicholas*, Lady, sweet Lady.

AN. Sir, I have now a Masculine vigor,
And will redeem my self with purchase too.
What money have you?

ROCH. Not a cross, by this foolish hand of mine.

AN. No money! 'Twere pity then to take this from thee:

I know thou'lt use me ne're the worse for this,

Take it agen, I know not how to use it:

A frown had taken't from me, which thou hadst not.

70 And now hear and believe me, on my knees

I make the Protestation—Forbear

To take what violence and danger must

Dissolve, if I forgo 'em now—I do assure

You would not strike my head off for my Chain,

Nor my hand for this—how to deliver 'em

Otherwise I know not; Accompany

Me back unto my house, 'tis not far off,

By all the Vows which this day I have tyed

Unto my wedded husband, the honor

80 Yet equal with my Cradle-puritie

(If you will tax me), to the hoped joys,

The blessings of the bed, posterity,

Or what ought else by woman may be pledg'd,

I will deliver you in ready Coin,

The full and dearest esteem of what you crave.

ROCH. Ha, ready money is the prize I look for,

It walks without suspition any where,

When Chains and Jewels may be stayed and call'd

Before the Constable: But—

90 AN. But? Can you doubt?

You saw I gave you my advantage up:

Did you e're think a woman to be true?

ROCH. Thought 's free. I have heard of some few, Lady,
Very few indeed.

AN. Will you adde one more to your belief?

ROCH. They were fewer than the Articles of my Belief;

Therefore I have room for you, and will believe you.

Stay: you'l ransom your Jewels with ready Coin—

So may you do, and then discover me.

AN. Shall I reiterate the Vows I made
To this injunction, or new ones coyn? 100

ROCH. Neither, Ile trust you: if you do destroy
A Thief that never yet did Robbery,
Then farewel I, and mercy fall upon me!

I knew one once fifteen years Courtier—owld,

And he was buried ere he took a Bribe:

It may be my case in the worser way.

Come, you know your path back?

AN. Yes, I shall guide you.

ROCH. Your arm, Ile lead with greater dread than will, 110
Nor do you fear, tho in thieves handling still. *Exeunt.*

[ACTUS SECUNDUS. SCENA TERTIA.]

[*Blackwall*]

Enter two Boys, one with a childe in his arms.

1 BOY. I say 'twas fair play.

2 BOY. To snatch up stakes! I say you should not say so,
if the childe were out of mine arms.

1 BOY. I then thou'dst lay about like a man, but the childe
will not be out of thine arms this five years, and then thou hast
a prentiship to serve to a boy afterwards. *Enter Compass.*

2 BOY. So Sir!—you know you have the advantage of me.

1 BOY. I'm sure you have the odds of me, you are two to one.
But soft, *Jack*, who comes here? if a Point will make us friends,
we'l not fall out. 10

2 BOY. Oh the pity, 'tis *Gaffer Compass*! They said he was
dead three years ago.

1 BOY. Did not he dance the *Hobby-horse* in *Hackney-Morrice*
once?

2 BOY. Yes, yes, at *Green-goose Fayr*—as honest and as poor
a man.

COMP. *Black-wall*, sweet *Black-wall*, do I see thy white
cheeks again? I have brought some Brine from sea for thee:
tears that might be tyed in a True-love Knot, for they'r fresh
salt indeed. Oh beautiful *Black-wall*! if *Urse* my wife be living 20
to this day, though she die to-morrow, sweet Fates!

2 BOY. Alas, let's put him out of his dumps for pity sake: welcome home, Gaffer *Compass*, welcome home, Gaffer.

COMPASS. My pretty youths, I thank you. Honest *Jack*! what a little man art thou grown since I saw thee! Thou hast got a child since, methinks.

2 BOY. I am fain to keep it, you see, whosoever got it, Gaffer: it may be another mans case as well as mine.

COMP. Say'st true, *Jack*: and whose pretty knave is it?

30 2 BOY. One that I mean to make a younger brother if he live to't, Gaffer. But I can tell you news: You have a brave Boy of your own wives: oh tis a shot to this pig.

COMP. Have I *Jack*? Ile ow thee a dozen of Points for this news.

2 BOY. Oh 'tis a chopping Boy! it cannot chuse you know, Gaffer, it was so long a-breeding.

COMP. How long, *Jack*?

2 BOY. You know 'tis four year ago since you went to sea, and your childe is but a Quarter old yet.

40 COMP. What plaguy boys are bred now a days!

1 BOY. Pray Gaffer, how long may a childe be breeding before 'tis born?

COMP. That is as things are and prove, childe; the soyl has a great hand in't too, the Horizon, and the Climate; these things you'l understand when you go to sea. In some parts of *London* hard by, you shall have a Bride married to-day, and brought to Bed within a moneth after, sometimes within three weeks, a fortnight. 1 BOY. Oh horrible!

COMP. True as I tell you Lads: in another place you shall
50 have a couple of Drones, do what they can, shift Lodgings, Beds, Bed-fellows, yet not a childe in ten years. 2 BOY. Oh pitiful!

COMP. Now it varies agen by that time you come at *Wapping*, *Radcliff*, *Lymehouse*, and here with us at *Black-wall*, our childrjen come uncertainly, as the winde serves: sometimes here we are supposed to be away three or four year together, 'tis nothing so; we are at home and gone agen, when no body knows on't: if you'l believe me, I have been at *Surrat* as thus day, I have taken the Long-boat (a fair Gale with me) been here a-bed with my
60 wife by twelve a Clock at night, up and gone agen i'th morning and no man the wiser, if you'l believe me.

2 BOY. Yes, yes Gaffer, I have thought so many times—that you or somebody else have been at home—I lye at next wall, and I have heard a noise in your chamber all night long.

COMP. Right, why that was I, yet thou never sawst me.

2 BOY. No indeed, Gaffer.

COMP. No, I warrant thee, I was a thousand leagues off e're thou wert up. But *Jack*, I have been loath to ask all this while for discomforting my self, how does my wife? is she living?

2 BOY. Oh never better, Gaffer, never so lusty, and truly she 70 wears better clothes than she was wont in your days, especially on Holidays—fair Gowns, brave Petticoats, and fine Smocks, they say that have seen 'em; and some of the neighbors reports that they were taken up at *London*.

COMP. Like enough they must be paid for, *Jack*:

2 BOY. And good reason, Gaffer.

COMP. Well *Jack*, thou shalt have the honor on't, go tell my wife the joyful tidings of my return.

2 BOY. That I will, for she heard you were dead long ago. *Exit.*

1 BOY. Nay sir, Ile be as forward as you, by your leave. *Exit.* 80

COMP. Well wife, if I be one of the Livery, I thank thee, the Horners are a great Company, there may be an Alderman amongst us one day—'tis but changing our Copy, and then we are no more to be called by our old Brother-hood.

Enter Compass his wife.

WIFE. Oh my sweet *Compass*, art thou come agen?

COMP. Oh *Urse*, give me leave to shed—the fountains of Love will have their course; though I cannot sing at first sight, yet I can cry before I see. I am new come into the world, and children cry before they laugh, a fair while.

WIFE. And so thou art, sweet *Compass*, new born indeed; 90
For Rumor laid thee out for dead long since,
I never thought to see this face agen.
I heard thou wert div'd to th' bottom of the sea,
And taken up a Lodging in the Sands,
Never to come to *Black-wall* agen.

COMP. I was going indeed wife, but I turn'd back: I heard an ill report of my neighbors, Sharks and Sword-fishes, and the like, whose companies I did not like: come kiss my tears now sweet *Urse*, sorrow begins to ebb.

WIFE. A thousand times welcome home, sweet *Compass.* 100

COMP. An Ocean of thanks—and that will hold 'em: and *Urse*, how goes all at home? or cannot all go yet? Lanck still? will 't never be full Sea at our Wharf?

WIFE. Alas, husband.

COMP. A lass or a lad, wench—I should be glad of both: I did look for a pair of Compasses before this day.

WIFE. And you from home?

COMP. I from home? why though I be from home, and other of our neighbors from home, it is not fit all should be
110 from home, so the town might be left desolate, and our neighbors of *Bowe* might come further from the [*Lea Cut*], and inhabit here.

WIFE. I'm glad y'are merry, sweet husband.

COMP. Merry? nay, Ile be merrier yet, why should I be sorry? I hope my boy's well, is he not? I lookt for another by this time. WIFE. What boy, husband?

COMP. What boy? why the boy I got when I came home in the Cock-boat one night, about a year ago? you have not forgotten't, I hope? I think I left behinde for a boy, and a boy I must be answer'd: I'm sure I was not drunk, it could be no girl.

120 WIFE. Nay then I do perceive my fault is known.
Dear man, your pardon.

COMP. Pardon! Why thou hast not made away my boy, hast thou? Ile hang thee if there were ne're a whore in *London* more, if thou hast hurt but his little toe.

WIFE. Your long absence, with rumor of your death—
After long battery I was surprized.

COMP. Surprized? I cannot blame thee: *Black-wall*, if it were double black-walled, can't hold out always, no more than *Lymehouse*, or *Shadwell*, or the strongest Suburbs about *London*,
130 and when it comes to that, woe be to the City too!

WIFE. Pursued by gifts and promises I yielded:
Consider husband, I am a woman,
Neither the first nor last of such Offenders—
'Tis true, I have a childe.

COMP. [Ha'] you? and what shall I have then I pray? will not you labor for me as I shall do for you? Because I was out o'th way when 'twas gotten, shall I loose my share? There's better Law amongst the Players yet; for a fellow shall have his share though he do not play that day: if you look for any part of my
140 [foure] Years wages, I will have half the boy.

WIFE. If you can forgive me, I shall be joyed at it.

COMP. Forgive thee, for what? for doing me a pleasure? and what is he that would seem to father my childe?

WIFE. A man sir, whom in better courtesies We have been beholding [to]:

The Merchant, [Master] *Franckford*.

COMP. Ile acknowledge no other courtesies: for this I am beholding to him, and I would requite it if his wife were young enough. Though he be one of our Merchants at Sea, he shall give me leave to be Owner at home. And where's my boy? shall I see him? 150

WIFE. He's nurst at *Bednal-green*: 'tis now too late, To-morrow Ile bring you to it, if you please.

COMP. I would thou couldst bring me another by to-morrow. Come, we'l eat and to bed, and if a fair Gale come, We'l hoist sheets, and set forwards.

Let fainting fools lie sick upon their scorns,
Ile teach a Cuckold how to hide his horns.

Exeunt.

[ACTUS SECUNDUS. SCENA QUARTA.]

[*Woodroff's House.*]

Enter Woodroff, Franckford, Raymond, Eustace, Grover, Lyonel, Clare, Luce.

WOOD. This wants a pre[ce]dent, that a Bridegroom Should so discreet and decently observe His Forms, Postures, all customary Rites Belonging to the Table, and then hide himself From his expected wages in the bed.

FRANCK. Let this be forgotten too, that it [remain] not A first example.

RAYM. [*aside*] Keep it amongst us,
Lest it beget too much unfruitful sorrow:
Most likely 'tis that love to *Lessingham*
Hath fastened [that] on him, we all denied. 10

EUST. [*aside*] 'Tis more certain than likely. I know 'tis so

GROV. [*aside*] Conceal [it] then: the event may be well enough.

WOOD. The Bride my daughter, she's hidden too:
This last hour she hath not been seen with us.

RAYM. Perhaps they are together.

EUST. And then we make too strict an inquisition—
Under correction of fair modesty,
Should they be stoln away to bed together,
20 What would you say to that?

WOOD. I would say, Speed 'em well,
And if no worse news comes, Ile never weep for't.
How now, hast thou any tidings?

*Enter
Nurse.*

NURSE. Yes forsooth, I have tidings.

WOOD. Of any one that's lost?

NURSE. Of one that's found agen, forsooth.

WOOD. Oh, he was lost, it seems then?

FRANCK. This tidings comes to me, I guess Sir.

NURSE. Yes truly does it, sir. *[They whisper together.]*

30 RAYM. I, has old Lads work for young Nurses?

EUST. Yes, when they groan towards their second infancy.

CLARE. *[aside]* I fear my self most guilty for the absence
Of the Bridegroom: what our wills will do
With over-rash and headlong peevishness,
To bring our calm discretions to repentance!
Lessingham's mistaken, quite out o'th way
Of my purpose too.

FRANCK. Return'd? NURSE. And all discover'd.

FRANCK. A fool!—rid him further off. Let him not
40 Come near the child.

NURSE. Nor see't, if it be your charge.

FRANCK. It is, and strictly.

NURSE. To-morrow morning, as I hear, he purposeth
To come to *Bednal-green*, his wife with him.

FRANCK. He shall be met there; yet if he fore-stall
My coming, keep the childe safe.

NURSE. If he be

The earlier up, he shall arive at the proverb. *Exit Nurse.*

Enter Rochfield and Annabel.

WOOD. So, so,
50 There's some good luck yet, the Bride's in sight agen.

ANNA. Father, and Gentlemen all, beseech you
Entreat this Gentleman with all courtesie,
He is a loving kinsman of my *Bonviles*,

That kindly came to gratulate our Wedding;
 But as the day falls out, you see alone
 I personate both Groom and Bride;
 Onely your help to make this welcome better.

WOOD. Most dearly. RAYM. To all, assure you sir.

WOOD. But where's the Bridegroom, Girl?
 We are all at a *non-plus* here, at a stand, quite out, 60
 The Musick ceas'd, and dancing surbated,
 Not a light heel amongst us; my Cousin *Clare* too
 As cloudy here as on a washing-day.

CLARE. It is because you will not dance with me,
 I should then shake it off.

ANNA. 'Tis I have cause
 To be the sad one now, if any be:
 But I have question'd with my meditations,
 And they have rend'red well and comfortably
 To the worst fear I found: Suppose this day 70
 He had long since appointed to his foe
 To meet, and fetch a Reputation from him
 (Which is the dearest Jewel unto man.)
 Say he do fight, I know his goodness such,
 That all those Powers that love it are his guard,
 And ill cannot betide him.

WOOD. Prithee peace,
 Thou'lt make us all Cowards to hear a woman
 Instruct so valiantly. Come, the Musick,
 Ile dance my self rather than thus put down— 80
 What, I am rife a little yet.

ANNA. Onely this Gentleman
 Pray you be free in welcome [to]—I tell you
 I was in fear when first I saw him.

ROCH. *(aside)* Ha? she'l tell.

ANNA. I had quite lost my way
 In my first amazement, but he so fairly came
 To my recovery, in his kinde conduct,
 Gave me such loving comforts to my fears. . .
 ('Twas he instructed me in what I spake) 90
 And many better than I have told you yet,
 You shall hear more anon.

ROCH. *(aside)* So, she will out with 't.

ANNA. I must, I see, supply both places still:
Come, when I have seen you back to your pleasure,
I will return to you, Sir: we must discourse
More of my *Bonvile* yet.

OMNES. A noble Bride, 'faith.

CLARE. *(aside)* You have your wishes, and you may be merry,
100 Mine have over-gone me. *Exeunt.*

[Manet] Rochfield solus.

ROCH. It is the tremblingst trade to be a Thief,
H'ad need have all the world bound to the peace;
Besides the bushes, and the phanes of houses,
Every thing that moves he goes in fear of 's life on.
A furr-gown'd Cat, and meet her in the night,
She stares with a Constables eye upon him;
And every Dog, a Watch-man; a black Cowe
And a Calf with a white face after her
Shows like a surly Justice and his Clerk;
110 And if the Baby go but to the bag,
'Tis ink and paper for a *Mittimus*:
Sure I shall never thrive on't, and it may be
I shall need take no care, I may be now
At my journeys end, or but the Goals distance,
And so to'th t'other place: I trust a woman
With a secret worth a hanging—is that well?
I could finde in my heart to run away yet.
And that were base too, to run from a woman;
I can lay claim to nothing but her Vows,
120 And they shall strengthen me. *Enter Annabel.*

ANNA. See sir, my promise,
There's twenty Pieces, the full value I vow,
Of what they cost.

ROCH. Lady, do not trap me
Like a Sumpter-horse, and then spur-gall me till
I break my winde: if the Constable be at the door,
Let his fair staff appear, perhaps I may
Corrupt him with this Gold.

ANNA. Nay then if you mistrust me: Father, Gentlemen,
130 *[Master] Raymond, Eustace!* *Enter all as before,*
WOOD. How now, what's the matter, Girl? *and a Saylor.*

ANNA. For shame!—will you bid your Kinsman welcome?
 No one but I will lay a hand on him—
 Leave him alone, and all a-revelling!

WOOD. Oh, is that it? Welcome, welcome heartily,
 I thought the Bridegroom had been return'd.
 But I have news, *Annabel*: this fellow brought it.
 Welcome Sir, why you tremble methinks, Sir.

ANNA. Some agony of anger 'tis, believe it,
 His entertainment is so cold and feeble.

140

RAYM. Pray be cheer'd, Sir.

ROCH. I'm wondrous well, sir, 'twas the Gentlemans mistake.

WOOD. 'Twas my hand shook belike, then—you must pardon
 Age, I was stiffer once. But as I was saying,
 I should by promise see the Sea to-morrow,
 ('Tis meant for Physick) as low as *Lee* or *Margets*:
 I have a Vessel riding forth, Gentlemen,
 'Tis called the *God-speed* too—though I say't, a brave one,
 Well and richly fraughted; and I can tell you
 She carries a *Letter of Mart* in her mouth too,
 And twenty roaring Boys on both sides on her,
 Star-board and Lar-board.

150

What say you now, to make you all Adventurers?
 You shall have fair dealing, that Ile promise you.

RAYM. A very good motion, sir, I begin,
 There's my ten pieces.

EUST. I second 'em with these.

GROV. My ten in the third place.

ROCH. And Sir, if you refuse not a proffer'd love,
 Take my ten pieces with you too.

160

WOOD. Yours, above all the rest, Sir.

ANNA. Then make 'em above, venter ten more.

ROCH. Alas Lady, 'tis a younger brothers portion,
 And all in one Bottom.

ANNA. At my encouragement, Sir,
 Your credit (if you want Sir) shall not sit down
 Under that sum return'd.

(R)OCH. With all my heart, Lady. There Sir:
(aside) So, she has fisht for her Gold back, and caught it;
 I am no thief now.

170

WOOD. I shall make here a pretty Assurance.

ROCH. Sir,

I shall have a suit to you.

WOOD. You are likely to obtain it then, Sir.

ROCH. That I may keep you company to Sea,
And attend you back; I am a little travell'd.

WOOD. And heartily thank you too, sir.

ANNA. Why, that's well said:

Pray you be merry—though your Kinsman be absent,
180 I am here, the worst part of him, yet that shall serve
To give you welcome: to-morrow may show you
What this night will not—and be full assured,
Unless your twenty Pieces be ill lent,
Nothing shall give you cause of Discontent.
There's ten more, Sir.

ROCH. Why should I fear? Fouter on't,
He be merry now spite of the Hang-man.

Exeunt.

Finis Actus secund[us].

ACT 3. SCENE I.

[Calais-sands.]

Enter Lessingham and Bonville.

BON. We are first i'th field: I think your Enemy
Is staid at *Dover*, or some other Port,
We hear not of his landing.

LESS. I am confident
He is come over.

BON. You look methinks fresh-coloured.

LESS. Like a red Morning, friend, that still foretels
A stormy day to follow: But methinks
Now I observe your face, that you look pale,
10 There's death in't already.

BON. I could chide your error,
Do you take me for a Coward? A Coward
Is not his own friend, much less can he be
Another mans. Know, Sir, I am come hither
To instruct you by my generous example,
To kill your enemy, whose name as yet

I never question'd.

LESS. Nor dare I name him yet,
For dis-heartning you.

BON. I do begin to doubt
The goodness of your Quarrel.

LESS. Now you hav't;
For I protest that I must fight with one
From whom in the whole course of our acquaintance,
I never did receive the least injury.

BON. It may be the forgetful Wine begot
Some sudden blow, and thereupon [this] Challenge—
Howe'rc you are engaged; and for my part
I will not take your course, my unlucky friend,
To say your Conscience grows pale and heartless,
Maintaining a bad Cause: fight as Lawyers plead,
Who gain the best of reputation
When they can fetch a bad Cause smoothly off:
You are in, and must through.

LESS. Oh my friend,
The noblest ever man had: when my fate
Threw me upon this business, I made trial
Of divers had profest to me much love,
And found their friendship like the effects that kept
Our company together, Wine and Riot—
Giddy and sinking; I had found 'em oft
Brave Seconds at pluralities of Healths,
But when it came to'th proof, my Gentlemen
Appeared to me as promising and failing
As cozening Lotteries; but then I found
This Jewel worth a thousand Counterfeits:
I did but name my Engagement, and you flew
Unto my succor with that chearfulness,
As a great General hastes to a Battel,
When that the chief of the adverse part
Is a man glorious, [and] of ample fame:
You left your Bridal-bed to finde your Death-bed,
And herein you most nobly exprest,
That the affection 'tween two loyal friends
Is far beyond the love of man to woman,
And is more near allied to eternity.

20

30

40

50

What better friends part could be showed i'th world?
 It transcends all! My father gave me life,
 But you stand by my honor when 'tis falling,
 60 And nobly [under-prop] it with your sword.
 But now you have done me all this service,
 How, how shall I requite this? how return
 My grateful recompence for all this love?
 For it am I come hither with full purpose
 To kill you.

BON. Ha?

LESS. Yes: I have no opposite i'th wo[r]ld
 But your self: There, read the Warrant for your death. [*Gives*

BON. 'Tis a womans hand. *him Clare's letter.*

70 LESS. And 'tis a bad hand too:

The most of 'em speak fair, write foul, mean worse.

BON. Kill me! away, you jest.

LESS. Such jest as your sharp-witted Gallants use
 To utter, and loose their friends; Read there how I
 Am fettered in a womans proud Command:
 I do Love madly, and must do madly:
 Deadliest Hellebore or vomit of a Toad
 Is qualified poyson to the malice of a woman.

BON. "And kill that friend"? Strange!

80 LESS. You may see, Sir,

Although the Tenure by which Land was held
 In Villenage be quite extinct in *England*,
 Yet you have women there at this day living,
 Make a number of slaves.

BON. "And kill that friend"? She mocks you
 Upon my life, she does Equivocate:
 Her meaning is, you cherish in your breast
 Either self-love, or pride, as your best friend,
 And she wishes you'd kill that.

90 LESS. Sure her Command

Is more bloody; for she loathes me, and has put,
 As she imagines, this impossible task,
 For ever to be quit and free from me;
 But such is the violence of my affection,
 That I must undergo it. Draw your sword,
 And guard your self—though I fight in fury,

I shall kill you in cold blood, for I protest
'Tis done in heart-sorrow.

BON. Ile not fight with you,
For I have much advantage; the truth is, 100
I wear a privy Coat.

LESS. Prithee put it off then,
If th[ou] bee'st manly.

BON. The defence I mean, is the justice of my Cause
That would guard me, and fly to thy destruction:
What confidence thou wearest in a bad cause!—
I am likely to kill thee if I fight,
And then you fail to effect your [Mistriss'] bidding,
Or to enjoy the fruit of 't;
I have ever wisht thy happiness, and vow 110
I now so much affect it in compassion
Of my friends sorrow—make thy way to it. *(He offers his*

LESS. That were a cruel Murder. *sword to Lessingham.)*

BON. Believ't 'tis ne're intended otherwise,
When 'tis a womans bidding.

LESS. Oh the necessity of my fate!

BON. You shed tears.

LESS. And yet must on in my cruel purpose:
A Judge methinks looks lovelyest when he weeps,
Pronouncing of deaths Sentence: how I stagger 120
In my resolve! guard thee, for I came hither
To do, and not to suffer; wilt not yet
Be perswaded to defend thee? turn the point,
Advance it from the ground above thy head,
And let it underprop thee otherwise,
In a bold resistance.

BON. Stay. Thy injunction was,
Thou shouldst kill thy friend.

LESS. It was.

BON. Observe me— 130
He wrongs me most, ought to offend me least,
And they that study man, say of a friend.
There's nothing in the world that's harder found,
Nor sooner lost: thou camest to kill thy friend,
And thou mayest brag thou hast don't; for here for ever
All friendship dyes between us, and my heart

For bringing forth any effects of love,
 Shall be as barren to thee as this sand
 We tread on; cruel, and inconstant as
 140 The Sea that beats upon this Beach. We now
 Are severed: thus hast thou slain thy friend,
 And satisfied what the Witch thy [Mistriss] bad thee.
 Go and report that thou hast slain thy friend.

LESS. I am served right.

BON. And now that I do cease to be thy friend,
 I will fight with thee as thine enemy,
 I came not over idly to do nothing.

LESS. Oh friend!

BON. Friend?

150 The naming of that word shall be the quarrel.
 What do I know but that thou lovest my wife,
 And faind'st this plot to divide me from her bed,
 And that this Letter here is counterfeit?
 Will you advance Sir?

LESS. Not a blow;

'Twould appear ill in either of us to fight:

In you unmanly; for believe it Sir,

You have disarmed me already, done away

All power of resistance in me—it would show

160 Beastly to do wrong to the dead: to me you say,

You are dead for ever, lost on *Callis-sands*,

By the cruelty of a woman; yet remember

You had a noble friend, whose love to you

Shall continue after death: shall I go over

In the same Barque with you?

BON. Not for yon town

Of *Callis*—you know 'tis dangerous living

At Sea, with a dead body.

LESS. Oh you mock me,

170 May you enjoy all your noble wishes.

BON. And may you finde a better friend then I,

And better keep him.

Exeunt.

[SCENE 2.]

[*Bethnal-Green. The Nurse's House.*]*Enter Nurse, Compass, and his Wife.*

NURSE. Indeed you must pardon me, Goodman *Compass*, I have no authority to deliver, no not to let you see the Childe: to tell you true, I have command unto the contrary.

COMP. Command! From whom?

NURSE. By the father of it.

COMP. The father! Who am I?

NURSE. Not the father, sure.

The Civil Law has found it otherwise.

COMP. The Civil Law! why then the Uncivil Law shall make it mine agen; Ile be as dreadful as a *Shrove-tuesday* to thee, I will tear thy Cottage but I will see my Childe.

NURSE. Speak but half so much agen, Ile call the Constable, and lay Burglary to thy charge.

WIFE. My good husband, be patient. And prithee Nurse let him see the Childe.

NURSE. Indeed I dare not:

The father first delivered me the Childe,
He pays me well, and weekly for my pains,
And to his use I keep it.

COMP. Why thou white Bastard-breeder, is not this the 20
mother?

NURSE. Yes, I grant you that.

COMP. Dost thou? and I grant it too: And is not the Childe
mine own then by the wifes Cobby-hold?

NURSE. The Law must try that.

COMP. Law? Dost think Ile be but a Father in Law? all
the Law betwixt *Black-wall* and *Tuttle-street*, and there's a
pretty deal, shall not keep it from me—mine own flesh and
blood! who does use to get my children but my self?

NURSE. Nay, you must look to that, I ne're knew you get any. 30

COMP. Never? put on a clean Smock and try me, if thou
darest—three to one I get a Bastard on thee to-morrow morning
between one and three.

NURSE. Ile see thee hangd first.

*Enter Franckford
and Luce.*

COMP. So thou shalt too.

NURSE. Oh here's the father, now pray talk with him.

FRANCK. Good morrow Neighbor: morrow to you both.

COMP. Both? Morrow to you and your wife too.

FRANCK. I would speak calmly with you.

40 COMP. I know what belongs to a Calm and a Storm too.
A cold word with you: You have tyed your Mare in my ground.

FRANCK. No, 'twas my Nag.

COMP. I will cut off your Nags tayl, and make his rump
make Hair-buttons, if e're I take him there agen.

FRANCK. Well sir, but to the Main.

COMP. Main! Yes, and Ile clip his Main too, and crop his
ears too, do you mark? and back-gaul him, and spur-gaul him,
do you note? And slit his Nose, do you smell me now, Sir?
Unbritch his Barrel, and discharge his Bullets: Ile gird him till
50 he stinks—you smell me now I'm sure.

FRANCK. You are too rough neighbor, to maintain. . .

COMP. Maintain? you shall not maintain no childe of mine,
my wife does not bestow her labor to that purpose.

FRANCK. You are too speedy: I will not maintain—

COMP. No marry shall you not.

FRANCK. The deed to be lawful:

I have repented it, and to the Law

Given satisfaction, my purse has paid for't.

60 [C]OMP. Your purse! 'twas my wifes purse. You brought in
the Coin indeed, but it was found base and counterfeit.

FRANCK. I would treat colder with you, if you be pleased.

COMP. Pleased? yes I am pleased well enough, serve me so
still: I am going agen to sea one of these days, you know where I
dwell, yet you'l but loose your labor, get as many children as
you can, you shall keep none of them—

FRANCK. You are mad.

COMP. If I be horn-mad, what's that to you?

FRANCK. I leave off milder phrase, and then tell you plain
you are a—

70 COMP. A what? what am I? FR. A Coxcomb.

COMP. A Coxcomb? I knew 'twould begin with a C.

FRANCK. The childe is mine, I am the father of it;

As it is past the deed, 'tis past the shame,

I do acknowledge, and will enjoy it.

COMP. Yes, when you can get it agen—is it not my wifes

labor? I'm sure she's the mother, you may be as far off the father as I am; for my wife's acquainted with more Whore-masters besides your self, and crafty Merchants too.

WIFE. No indeed husband, to make my offence
Both least and most, I knew no other man, 80
He's the begetter, but the childe is mine,
I bred and bore it, and I will not loose it.

LUCE. The childe's my husbands, Dame, and he must have it:
I do allow my sufferance to the deed,
In lieu I never yet was fruitful to him,
And in my barrenness excuse my wrong.

COMP. Let him dung his own ground better at home, then—
if he plant his Reddish roots in my garden, Ile eat 'em with
bread and Salt, though I get no Mutton to 'em; what tho your
husband lent my wife your distaff, shall not the yarn be mine? 90
Ile have the head, let him carry the spindle home agen.

FR. Forebear more words—then let the Law try it:
Meantime Nurse keep the childe, and to keep it better
Here take more pay beforehand. There's money for thee.

COMP. There's money for me too, keep it for me, Nurse:
give him both thy dugs at once: I pay for thy right dug.

NURS. I have two hands you see—Gentlemen this does but
show how the law will hamper you: even thus you must be used.

FR. The law shall show which is the worthier Gender:
A School-boy can do't. 100

COMP. Ile whip that School-boy that declines the childe
from my wife and her heirs: do not I know my wifes case the
Genetive Case, and that's *Hujus*, as great a case as can be?

FR. Well, fare you well, we shall meet in another place.
Come *Luce*. *Exit, [with Luce].*

COMP. Meet her in the same place agen if you dare, and do
your worst: must we go to law for our Children now a days?
No marvel if the Lawyers grow rich; but e're the Law shall
have a Lymb, a Leg, a Joynt, a Nayl,
I will spend more then a whole childe in getting, 110
Some win by play, and others by—by-betting. *Exeunt.*

[SCENE 3.]

[*Woodroff's House.*]*Enter Raymond, Eustace, Lyonel, Grover, Annabel, Clare.*

LYON. Whence was that Letter sent?

ANN. From *Dover*, Sir.LYON. And does that satisfie you what was the cause
Of his going over?ANN. It does: yet had he onely
Sent this it had bin sufficient.

RAY. Why, what's that?

ANN. His Will wherein
He has estated me in all his land.10 EUST. [*aside*] He's gone to fight.LYON. [*aside*] *Lessinghams* second, certain.

ANN. And I am lost, lost in't for ever.

CLARE. [*aside*] Oh fool *Lessingham*,
Thou hast mistook my injunction utterly,
Utterly mistook it, and I am mad, stark mad
With my own thoughts, not knowing what event
Their going o're will come [to]; 'tis too late
Now for my tongue to cry my heart mercy,
Would I could be senceless till I hear

20 Of their return: I fear me both are lost.

RAY. [*aside*] Who should it be *Lessinghams* gone to fight with?EUST. [*aside*] Faith I cannot possibly conjecture.ANN. Miserable creature! a Maid, a Wife,
And Widow in the compass of two days.

RAY. Are you sad too?

CLARE. I am not very well, Sir.

RAY. I must put life in you.

CLARE. Let me go, Sir.

RAY. I do love you in spight of your heart.

30 CLARE. Believe it

There was never a fitter time to express it;

For my heart has a great deal of spight in't.

RAY. I will discourse to you fine fancies.

CLARE. Fine fooleries, will you not?

RAY. By this hand I love you, and will court you.

CLARE. Fie,
You can command your tongue, and I my ears
To hear you no further.

RAY. *(aside)* On my reputation, *Ent. Woodroff, Roch-*
She's off o'th hindges strangely. *feild, and a saylor. 40*

WOOD. Daughter, good news.

AN. What, is my husband heard of?

WOOD. That's not the business; but you have here a Cousin
You may be mainly proud of, and I am sorry
'Tis by your husbands kindred, not your own,
That we might boast to have so brave a man
In our Allyance.

ANN. What, so soon return'd?
You have made but a short voyage; howsoever
You are to me most welcome. 50

ROCH. Lady thanks,
'Tis you have made me your own creature,
Of all my being, fortunes, and poor fame—
If I have purchas'd any, and of which
I no way boast—next the high providence,
You have bin the sole creatress.

ANN. Oh deer Cousin,
You are grateful above merit—what occasion
Drew you so soon from Sea?

WOOD. Such an occasion, 60
As I may bless Heaven for, you thank their bounty,
And all of us be joyful.

ANN. Tell us how.

WOOD. Nay daughter, the discourse will best appear
In his relation—where he fails, Ile help.

ROCH. Not to molest your patience with recital
Of every vain, and needless Circumstance,
'Twas briefly thus: Scarce having reacht to *Margets*,
Bound on our voyage, suddenly in view 70
Appeared to us three Spanish men of War—
These having spied the English Cross advance,
Salute us with a piece to have us strike,
Ours better spirited and no way daunted,
At their unequal oddes, though but one bottom,
Returned 'em fire for fire: the fight begins,

And dreadful on the sudden—still they proffered
To board us, still we bravely beat 'em off.

WOOD. But daughter, mark the Event.

ROCH. Sea-room we got—our ship being swift of sayl,
80 It helpt us much, yet two unfortunate shot,
One struck the Captains head off, and the other
With an unlucky splinter laid the Master
Dead on the hatches; all our spirits then failed us.

WOOD. Not all, you shall hear further, daughter.

ROCH. For none was left to manage, nothing now
Was talkt of but to yeild up Ship and goods,
And mediate for our peace.

WOOD. Nay Cous, proceed.

ROCH. Excuse me, I intreat you, for what's more,
90 Hath already past my memory.

WOOD. But mine it never can: Then he stood up,
And with his oratory made us agen
To recollect our spirits so late dejected.

ROCH. Pray Sir!

WOOD. Ile speak't out; by unite consent
Then the command was his, and 'twas his place
Now to bestir him, down he went below,
And put the Lin-stocks in the Gunners hands—
They ply their ordinance bravely—then agen
100 Up to the decks; courage is there renewed,
Fear now not found amongst us: within less
Then four hours fight two of their ships were sunk,
Both foundered, and soon swallowed: not long after
The [third] begins to wallow, lyes on the Lee
To stop her leakes, then boldly we come on,
Boarded and took her, and she's now our prize.

SAYL. Of this we were eye-witness.

WOOD. And many more brave boys of us besides,
My self for one; never was, Gentlemen,
110 A Sea-fight better mannaged.

ROCH. Thanks to Heaven
We have saved our own, dammaged the enemy,
And to our Nations glory, we bring home
Honor and profit.

WOOD. In which Cousin *Rochfeild*,

You as a venturer have a double share,
 Besides the name of Captain, and in that
 A second benefit, but most of all,
 Way to more great employment.

ROCH. [to *Annabel*] Thus your bounty
 Hath been to me a blessing.

120

RAY. Sir, we are all
 Indebted to your valor—this beginning
 May make us of small venturers, to become
 Hereafter wealthy Merchants.

WOOD. Daughter and Gentlemen,
 This is the man was born to [^] make us all,
 Come enter, enter; we will in and feast,
 He's in the Bridegrooms absence my chief guest.

*Exeunt.**Finis Actus Tertii.*

ACT 4. SCENE I.

[The Three Tuns, Blackwall.]

*Enter Compass, Wife, Lyonel, and Pettifog the Attorney,
 and one Boy.*

COMP. Three Tuns do you call this Tavern? it has a good
 neighbor of *Guld-hall*, Mr. *Pettifog*. Show a room, boy.

BOY. Welcome Gentlemen.

COMP. What? art thou here *Hodge*!

BOY. I am glad you are in health, sir

COMP. This was the honest *Crack-roap* first gave me tidings
 of my wifes fruitfulness. Art bound Prentice? BOY. Yes, Sir.

COMP. Mayest thou long jumble Bastard most artificially,
 to the profit of thy Master, and pleasure of thy Mistriss.

BOY. What Wine drink ye, Gentlemen?

10

LYON. What Wine rellishes your pallate, good Mr. *Pettifog*?

PET. Nay, ask the woman.

COMP. Ellegant for her, I know her Diet.

PET. Believe me, I con her thank for't, I am of her side.

COMP. Marry, and reason, sir, we have entertain'd you for
 our Attorney. BOY. A Cup of neat Allegant?

COMP. Yes, but do not make it speak Welch, boy.

BOY. How mean you? *They sit down, Pettifog*

COMP. Put no Metheglin in't, ye rogue. *pulls out papers.*

20 BOY. Not a drop, as I am true Britain. *[Exit.]*

*Enter Franckford, Eustace, [Raymond], Luce, and Mr. Dodge
a Lawyer to another Table, and a Drawer.*

FR. Show a private room, Drawer.

DR. Welcome Gentlemen.

EUST. As far as you can from noise, boy.

DR. Further this way then, sir; for in the next room there
are three or four Fish-wives taking up a brabbling business.

FR. Let's not sit near them by any means.

DODGE. Fill Canary, sirrah. *[Drawer fills glasses and exit.]*

FR. And what do you think of my Cause, Mr. Dodge?

DODGE. Oh we shall carry it most indubitably: you have
30 money to go through with the business, and ne're fear it but we'l
trownce 'em—you are the true Father.

LUCE. The mother will confess as much.

DODGE. Yes Mistriss, we have taken her Affidavit. Look
you sir, here's the Answer to his Declaration.

FR. You may think strange, sir, that I am at charge
To call a Charge upon me: but 'tis truth,
I made a Purchase lately, and in that
I did estate the Childe, 'bout which I'm sued,
Joynt-purchaser in all the Land I bought:
40 Now that's one reason that I should have care,
Besides the tye of blood, to keep the Childe
Under my wing, and see it carefully
Instructed in those fair Abilities
May make it worthy hereafter to be mine,
And enjoy the Land I have provided for't.

LUCE. Right, and I counsel'd you to make that Purchase;
And therefore Ile not have the Childe brought up
By such a Coxcomb as now sues for him,
He'd bring him up onely to be a Swabber:
50 He was born a Merchant and a Gentleman,
And he shall live and die so.

DODGE. Worthy Mistriss, I drink to you: you are a good
woman, and but few of so noble a patience. *Enter [I] Boy.*

[I BOY.] Score a quart of Allegant to'th' *Woodcock.*

Enter [2] Boy like a Musician.

[2] BOY. Will you have any musick, Gentlemen?

COMP. Musick amongst Lawyers! here's nothing but discord. What, *Rafe*! here's another of my young Cuckoes I heard last *April*, before I heard the Nightingale: no musick, good *Rafe*: here boy, your father was a Taylor, and methinks by your leering eye you should take after him. A good boy, ⁶⁰ make a leg handsomly, scrape your self out of our company. [*Exit 2 Boy.*] And what do you think of my Suit, sir?

PET. Why, look you, sir: The Defendant was arrested first by [*Latitat*] in an Action of Trespass.

COMP. And a Lawyer told me it should have been an Action of the Case, should it not, wife?

WIFE. I have no skill in Law, sir: but you heard a Lawyer say so.

PET. I, but your Action of the Case is in that point too ticklish.

COMP. But what do you think—shall I overthrow my adversary? ⁷⁰

PET. Sans question: The childe is none of yours: what of that? I marry a widow is possest of a Ward, shall not I have the tuition of that Ward? Now sir, you lye at a stronger Ward; for *partus sequitur ventrem*, says the Civil Law: and if you were within compass of the four Seas, as the common Law goes, the childe shall be yours certain.

COMP. There's some comfort in that yet. Oh your Attorneys in *Guild-hall* have a fine time on't. ⁸⁰

LYON. You are in effect both Judge and Jury your selves.

COMP. And how you will laugh at your Clients when you sit in a Tavern, and call them Coxcombs, and whip up a Cause, as a Barber trims his Customers on a Christmass Eve, a snip, a wipe, and away!

PET. That's ordinary, sir: you shall have the like at a *Nisi Prius*. Oh you are welcome, Sir. *Enter 1 Client.*

1 CLIENT. Sir, you'l be mindful of my Suit?

PET. As I am religious, Ile drink to you.

1 CLIENT. I thank you. By your favor, Mistriss. I have ⁹⁰ much business and cannot stay; but there's money for a quart of Wine.

COMP. By no means.

I CLIENT. I have said, Sir. *Exit. Enter 2 Client.*

PET. He's my Client sir, and he must pay; this is my tribute. Custom is not more truly paid in the *Sound of Denmark*.

2 CLIENT. Good sir, be careful of my business.

PET. Your Declaration's drawn, sir: Ile drink to you.

2 CLIENT. I cannot drink this morning; but there's money
100 for a pottle of Wine. PET. Oh good sir!

2 CLIENT. I have done, sir. Morrow, Gentlemen. *Exit.*

COMP. We shall drink good cheap, [Master] *Pettifog*.

PET. And we sate here long, you'd say so. I have sate here in this Tavern but one half hour, drunk but three pints of wine, and what with the offering of my Clients in that short time, I have got nine shillings clear, and paid all the Reckoning.

LYON. Almost a Councillors Fee.

PET. And a great one, as the world goes in *Guild-hall*, for now our young Clerks share with 'em, to help 'em to Clients.

110 COMP. I don't think but that the Cucking-stool is an enemy to a number of brables, that would else be determined by Law.

PET. 'Tis so indeed, sir: My Client that came in now, sues his neighbor for kicking his Dog, and using the defamatory speeches, *Come out Cuckolds curr!*

LYON. And [what?—shall] you recover upon this speech?

PET. In *Guild-hall* I assure you—the other that came in was an Informer, a precious knave.

COMP. Will not the Ballad of *Flood* that was prest, make them leave their knavery?

120 PET. Ile tell you how he was served: This Informer comes into *Turnball-street* to a Victualling-house, and there falls in league with a Wench. . .

COMP. A *Tweak*, or *Bronstrops*—I learnt that name in a Play.

PET. Had belike some private dealings with her, and there got a Goose.

COMP. I would he had got two, I cannot away with an Informer.

130 PET. Now sir, this fellow in revenge of this, informs against the Bawd that kept the house, that she used Cannes in her house; but the cunning Jade comes me into'th Court, and there deposes that she gave him true *Winchester* measure.

COMP. Marry, I thank her with all my heart for't.

Ent. Drawer.

DRAW. Here's a Gentleman, one Justice *Woodroff*, enquires for [Master] *Franckford*. [Exit.]

FR. Oh, my brother and the other Compr[t]o[m]iser come to take up the business.

Enter Councillor and Woodroff.

WOOD. We have conferred and labored for your peace,
Unless your stubbornness prohibit it;
And be assured, as we can determine it, 140
The Law will end, for we have sought the Cases.

COMP. If the Childe fall to my share, I am content to end upon any conditions, the Law shall run on head-long else.

FR. Your purse must run by like a Foot-man then

COMP. My purse shall run open-mouth'd at thee.

COUN. My friend, be calm, you shall hear the reasons:
I have stood up for you, pleaded your Cause,
But am overthrown, yet no further yielded
Than your own pleasure; you may go on in Law
If you refuse our Censure. 150

COMP. I will yield to nothing but my Childe.

COUN. 'Tis then as vain in us to seek your peace,
Yet take the reasons with you: This Gentleman
First speaks, a Justice, to me—and observe it,
A childe that's base and illegitimate born,
The father found, who (if the need require it)
Secures the charge and dammage of the Parish
But the father? who charged with education
But the father? then by clear consequence
He ought for what he pays for, to enjoy. 160
Come to the strength of reason, upon which
The Law is grounded: the earth brings forth,
This ground or that, her Crop of Wheat or Rye—
Whether shall the Seeds-man enjoy the sheaf,
Or leave it to the earth that brought it forth?
The summer tree brings forth her natural fruit,
Spreads her large arms—who but the lord of it
Shall pluck Apples, or command the lops?
Or shall they sink into the root agen?
'Tis still most cleer upon the Fathers part 170

COMP. All this Law I deny, and will be mine own Lawyer. Is not the earth our Mother? And shall not the earth have all her children agen? I would see that Law durst keep any of us back, she'l have Lawyers and all first, tho they be none of her best children. My wife is the mother, and so much for the Civil-law. Now I come agen, and y'are gone at the Common-law: suppose this is my ground, I keep a Sow upon it, as it might be my wife, you keep a Boar, as it might be my adversary here; your Boar comes foaming into my ground, jumbles with my Sow, and wal-
180 lowes in her mire, my Sow cryes *week*, as if she had Pigs in her belly—who shall keep these Pigs? he the Boar, or she the Sow?

WOOD. Past other alteration, I am changed,
The Law is on the Mothers part.

COUN. For me, I am strong in your opinion,
I never knew my judgement erre so far,
I was confirmed upon the other part,
And now am flat against it.

WOOD. Sir you must yeild,
Believe it there's no Law can relieve you.

190 FR. I found it in my self: well sir,
The childe's your wifes, Ile strive no further in it,
And being so neer unto agreement, let us go
Quite through to't; forgive my fault, and I
Forgive my charges, nor will I take back
The inheritance I made unto it.

COMP. Nay, there you shall finde me kinde too, I have a pottle of Claret, and a Capon to supper for you; but no more Mutton for you, not a bit.

200 RAY. Yes a shoulder, and we'l be there too, or a leg opened with Venison sawce.

COMP. No legs opened by your leave; nor no such sawce.

WOOD. Well brother, and neighbor, I am glad you are friends.

OMNES. All, all joy at it.

Exeunt Wood. Fr. [Luce] and Lawyers.

COMP. Urse, come kiss, Urse, all friends.

RAY. Stay sir, one thing I would advise you, 'tis Councel worth a Fee, tho I be no Lawyer, 'tis Physick indeed, & cures Cuckoldry, to keep that spiteful brand out of your forehead, that it shall not dare to meet or look out at any window to you,

'tis better then an Onion to a green wound i'th left hand made 210
by fire, it takes out scar and all.

COMP. This were a rare receipt, Ile content you for your skill.

RAY. Make here a flat divorce between your selves,
Be you no husband, nor let her be no wife,
Within two hours you may salute agen,
Wooe, and wed afresh, and then the Cuckold's blotted.
This medicine is approved.

COMP. Excellent, and I thank you: *Urse*, I renounce thee,
and I renounce my self from thee; thou art a *Widow*, *Urse*, 220
I will go hang my self two hours, and so long thou shalt drown
thy self, then will we meet agen in the Pease-field by *Bishops-*
Hall, and as the Swads and the Cods shall instruct us, we'l talk
of a new matter.

WIFE. I will be ruled, fare you well, sir.

COMP. Farewel widdow, remember time and place, change
your Clothes too, do ye hear, widow? Sir, I am beholding to
your good Councel. *Exit wife.*

RAY. But you'l not follow your own so far I hope? you said 230
you'd hang your self.

COMP. No I have devised a better way, I will go drink my
self dead for an hour, then when I awake agen, I am a fresh
new man, and so I go a-wooing.

RAY. That's handsome, and Ile lend thee a dagger.

COMP. For the long Weapon let me alone then. *Exeunt.*

[SCENE 2.]

[*Woodroff's House.*]

Enter Lessingham and Clare.

CLARE. Oh sir, are you return'd? I do expect
To hear strange news now.

LESS. I have none to tell you,
I am onely to relate I have done ill
At a womans bidding—that's I hope no news:
Yet wherefore do I call that ill, begets
My absolute happiness? you now are mine,
I must enjoy you solely.

CLARE. By what warrant?

10 LESS. By your own condition—I have been at *Callis*,
Performed your will, drawn my revengful sword,
And slain my neerest and best friend i'th world
I had, for your sake.

CLARE. Slain your friend for my sake?

LESS. A most sad truth.

CLARE. And your best friend?

LESS. My chiefest.

CLARE. Then of all men you are most miserable,
Nor have you ought further'd your suit in this,
20 Though I enjoyn'd you to't—for I had thought
That I had been the best esteemed friend
You had i'th world

LESS. Ye did not wish I hope,
That I should have murder'd you?

CLARE. You shall perceive

More of that hereafter: But I pray sir tell me,
For I do freeze with expectation of it,
It chills my heart with horror till I know
What friends blood you have sacrificed to your fury
30 And to my fatal sport, this bloody Riddle?
Who is it you have slain?

LESS. *Bonvile* the Bridegroom.

CLARE. Say?

Oh you have struck him dead thorough my heart,
In being true to me, you have proved in this
The falsest Traitor: oh I am lost for ever:
Yet wherefore am I lost? rather recovered
From a deadly witchcraft, and upon his grave
I will not gather Rue, but Violets
40 To bless my wedding strewings; good sir tell me,
Are you certain he is dead?

LESS. Never, never
To be recovered.

CLARE. Why now sir, I do love you,
With an entire heart, I could dance methinks,
Never did wine or musick stir in woman
A sweeter touch of Mirth, I will marry you,
Instantly marry you.

LESS. [*aside*] This woman has strange changes—you are ta'ne
Strangely with his death. 50

CLARE. Ile give the reason
I have to be thus extasied with joy:
Know sir, that you have slain my deerest friend,
And fatalest enemy.

LESS. Most strange!

CLARE. 'Tis true,
You have ta'ne a mass of Lead from off my heart,
For ever would have sunk it in despair;
When you beheld me yesterday, I stood
As if a Merchant walking on the *Downs*, 60
Should see some goodly Vessel of his own
Sunk 'fore his face i'th Harbor, and my heart
Retained no more heat then a man that toyles,
And vainly labors to put out the flames
That burns his house to'th bottom. I will tell you
A strange concealement, sir, and till this minute
Never revealed, and I will tell it now,
Smiling and not blushing; I did love that *Bonville*,
(Not as I ought, but as a woman might
'That's beyond reason,) I did doat upon him, 70
Tho he net[er] knew of't, and beholding him
Before my face wedded unto anther,
And all my interest in him forfeited,
I fell into despair, and at that instant
You urging your Suit to me, and I thinking
That I had been your onely friend i'th world,
I heartily did wish you would have kill'd
That friend your self, to have ended all my sorrow,
And had prepared it, that unwittingly
You should have don't by poison. 80

LESS. Strange amazement!

CLARE. The effects of a strange Love.

LESS. 'Tis a dream sure.

CLARE. No 'tis real sir, believe it.

LESS. Would it were not!

CLARE. What sir!—you have done bravely, 'tis your Mistriss
That tells you, you have done so.

LESS. But my Conscience

Is of Council 'gainst you, and pleads otherwise:
 90 Vertue in her past actions glories still,
 But vice throwes loathed looks on former ill.
 But did you love this *Bonvile*?

CLARE. Strangely sir,
 Almost to a degree of madness.

LESS. [*aside*] Trust a woman!
 Never henceforward, I will rather trust
 The winds which *Lapland* Witches sell to men—
 All that they have is feign'd, their teeth, their hair,
 Their blushes, nay their conscience too is feigned,
 100 Let 'em paint, load themselves with Cloth of Tissue,
 They cannot yet hide woman—that will appear
 And disgrace all. The necessity of my fate!
 Certain this woman has bewitched me here,
 For I cannot chuse but love her. Oh how fatal
 This might have proved!—I would it had for me—
 It would not grieve me, tho my sword had split
 His heart in sunder, I had then destroyed
 One that may prove my Rival, oh but then
 What had my horror bin, my guilt of conscience!
 110 I know some do ill at womens bidding
 I'th Dog-days, and repent all the Winter after:
 No, I account it treble happiness
 That *Bonvile* lives, but 'tis my chiefest glory
 That our friendship is divided.

CLARE. Noble friend,
 Why do you talk to your self?

LESS. Should you do so,
 You'd talk to an ill woman—fare you well,
 For ever fare you well; [*aside*] I will do somewhat
 120 To make as fatal breach and difference
 In *Bonvile's* love as mine—I am fixt in't,
 My melancholly and the devil shall fashion't.

CLARE. You will not leave me thus?

LESS. Leave you for ever—
 And may my friends blood whom you loved so dearly,
 For ever lye impostumed in your breast,
 And i'th end choak you. Womans cruelty
 This black and fatal thread hath ever spun—

It must undo, or else it is undone.

Exit.

CLARE. I am every way lost, and no meanes to raise me, 130
But blest repentance: what two unvalued Jewels
Am I at once deprived of! now I suffer
Deservedly, there's no prosperity settled,
Fortune plays ever with our good or ill,
Like Cross and Pile, and turns up which she will.

Enter BONVILLE. Friend!

CLARE. Oh you are the welcomest under heaven:
Lessingham did but fright me, yet I fear
That you are hurt to danger.

BON. Not a scratch. 140

CLARE. Indeed you look exceeding well, methinks.

BON. I have bin Sea-sick lately, and we count
That excellent Physick. How does my *Annabel*?

CLARE. As well sir, as the fear of such a loss
As your esteemed self, will suffer her.

BON. Have you seen *Lessingham* since he returned?

CLARE. He departed hence but now, and left with me
A report had almost kill'd me.

BON. What was that?

CLARE. That he had kill'd you. 150

BON. So he has.

CLARE. You mock me.

BON. He has kill'd me for a friend, for ever silenc't
All amity between us; you may now
Go and embrace him, for he has fulfilled
The purpose of that Letter.

Gives her a Letter.

She gives him another.

CLARE. Oh I know't.
And had you known this which I meant to have sent you
An hour 'fore you were married to your wife,
The Riddle had been construed. 160

BON. Strange! this expresses
That you did love me.

CLARE. With a violent affection.

BON. Violent indeed; for it seems it was your purpose
To have ended it in violence: [and] your friend,
The unfortunate *Lessingham* unwittingly
Should have been the Executioner.

CLARE. 'Tis true.

BON. And do you love me still?

170 CLARE. I may easily
Confess it, since my extremity is such
That I must needs speak or die.

BON. And you would enjoy me
Though I am married?

CLARE. No indeed not I sir:
You are to sleep with a sweet Bed-fellow
Would knit the brow at that.

BON. Come, come, a woman's telling truth
Makes amends for her playing false. You would enjoy me?

180 CLARE. If you were a Batchelor or Widower,
Afore all the great Ones living.

BON. But 'tis impossible
To give you present satisfaction,
For my Wife is young and healthful; and I like
The summer and the harvest of our Love,
Which yet I have not tasted of, so well,
That and you'll credit me, for me her days
Shall ne're be shortned: let your reason therefore
Turn you another way, and call to minde
190 With best observance, the accomplisht graces
Of that brave Gentleman whom late you sent
To his destruction: A man so every way
Deserving, no one action of his
In all his lifetime e're degraded him
From the honor he was born to; think how observant
He'll prove to you in nobler request, that so
Obeyed you in a bad one: and remember
That afore you engaged him to an act
Of horror, to the killing of his friend,
200 He bore his steerage true in every part,
Led by the Compass of a noble heart.

CLARE. Why do you praise him thus? You said but now
He was utterly lost to you: now 't appears
You are friends, else you'd not deliver of him
Such a worthy commendation.

BON. You mistake,
Utterly mistake that I am friends with him,
In speaking this good of him: To what purpose

Do I praise him? onely to this fatal end,
 That you might fall in love and league with him. 210
 And what worse office can I do i'th world
 Unto my enemy, than to endeavor
 By all means possible to marry him
 Unto a Whore? and there I think she stands.

CLARE. Is Whore a name to be beloved? if not,
 What reason have I ever to love that man
 Puts it upon me falsely? You have wrought
 A strange alteration in me: were I a man,
 I would drive you with my sword into the field,
 And there put my wrong to silence. Go, y'are not worthy 220
 To be a womans friend in the least part
 That concerns honorable reputation;
 For you are a Liar.

BON. I will love you now
 With a noble observance, if you will continue
 This hate unto me: gather all those graces
 From whence you have faln, yonder, where you have left 'em
 In *Lessingham*, he that must be your husband;
 And though henceforth I cease to be his friend,
 I will appear his noblest enemy, 230
 And work reconcilment 'tween you.

CLARE. No, you shall not,
 You shall not marry him to a Strumpet; for that word
 I shall ever hate you.

[BON.] And for that one deed,
 I shall ever love you. Come, convert your thoughts
 To him that best deserves 'em, *Lessingham*.
 It's most certain you have done him wrong,
 But your repentance and compassion now
 May make amends: disperse this melancholly, 240
 And on that turn of Fortunes Wheel depend,
 When all Calamities will mend, or end.

Exeunt.

[SCENE 3.]

[Near Bishop's Hall.]

Enter Compass, Raymond, Eustace, Lyonel, Grover.

COMP. Gentlemen, as you have been witness to our Divorce, you shall now be evidence to our next meeting, which I look for every minute, if you please Gentlemen.

RAY. We came for the same purpose, man.

COMP. I do think you'll see me come off with as smooth a forehead, make my Wife as honest a woman once more, as a man sometimes would desire—I mean of her rank, and a teeming woman as she has been. Nay surely I do think to make the Childe as lawful a childe too, as a couple of unmarried people
10 can beget, and let it be begotten when the father is beyond Sea, as this was: do but note. *Enter Wife.*

EUST. 'Tis that we wait for.

COMP. You have waited the good hour—see, she comes, a little room I beseech you, silence and observation.

RAY. All your own, sir. *[They withdraw a little.]*

COMP. Good morrow fair Maid.

WIFE. Mistaken in both sir—neither fair, nor Maid.

COMP. No? a married woman?

WIFE. That's it I was sir—a poor widdow now.

20 COMP. A widdow? Nay then I must make a little bold with you, 'tis akin to mine own case, I am a wiveless husband too—how long have you been a widow pray? nay, do not weep.

WIFE. I cannot chuse, to think the loss I had. *[Weeps.]*

COMP. He was an honest man to thee it seems.

WIFE. Honest quoth'a—oh!

COMP. By my feck, and those are great losses, an honest man is not to be found in every hole, nor every street—if I took

A whole parish in sometimes I might say true,
30 For stincking Mackarel may be cried for new.

RAY. Somewhat sententious.

EUST. Oh, silence was an Article enjoyed.

COMP. And how long is it since you lost your honest husband?

WIFE. Oh the memory is too fresh, and your sight makes My sorrow double.

COMP. My sight? why, was he like me?

WIFE. Your left hand to your right, is not more like.

COMP. Nay then I cannot blame thee to weep, an honest man I warrant him, and thou hadst a great loss of him; such a proportion, so limb'd, so coloured, so fed? 40

RAY. Yes faith, and so taught too.

EUST. Nay, will you break the Law?

WIFE. Twins were never liker.

COMP. Well, I love him the better, whatsoever is become of him—and how many children did he leave thee at his departure?

WIFE. Onely one sir.

COMP. A Boy, or a Girl?

WIFE. A Boy, Sir.

COMP. Just mine o[w]ne case still: my wife, rest her soul, left me a Boy too, a chopping Boy I warrant. 50

WIFE. Yes if you call 'em so.

COMP. I, mine is a chopping Boy, I mean to make either a Cook or a Butcher of him, for those are your chopping Boys. And what profession was your husband of?

WIFE. He went to Sea, sir, and there got his living.

COMP. Mine own faculty too—and you can like a man of that profession well?

WIFE. For his sweet sake whom I so dearly loved, More dearly lost, I must think well of it.

COMP. Must you? I do think then thou must venter to Sea 60 once agen, if thou'lt be rul'd by me.

WIFE. Oh Sir, but there's one thing more burdensome

To us, then most of others wives, which moves me

A little to distaste it—long time we endure

The absence of our husbands, sometimes many years,

And then if any slip in woman be,

As long vacations may make Lawyers hungry,

And Tradesmen cheaper pennyworths afford,

(Then otherwise they would for ready coin)

Scandals fly out, and we poor souls branded 70

With wanton living, and incontinency,

When alas (consider) can we do withal?

COMP. They are fools, and not saylors that do not consider that, I'm sure your husband was not of that minde, if he were like me.

WIFE. No indeed, he would bear kinde and honestly.

COMP. He was the wiser, alack your land and fresh-water men never understand what wonders are done at Sea; yet they may observe ashore, that a Hen having tasted the Cock, kill him, 80 and she shall lay Eggs afterwards.

WIFE. That's very true indeed.

COMP. And so may women, why not? may not a man get two or three children at once? One must be born before another, you know.

WIFE. Even this discretion my sweet husband had: You more and more resemble him.

COMP. Then if they knew what things are done at sea, where the Winds themselves do copulate, and bring forth issue, as thus: In the old world there were but four in all, as Nor, East, Sou, 90 and West: these dwelt far from one another, yet by meeting they have ingendred Nor-East, Sou-East, Sou-West, Nor-West, then they were eight; Of them were begotten Nor-Nor-East, Nor-Nor-West, Sou-Sou-East, Sou-Sou-West, and those two Sows were Sou-East and Sou-West[s] daughters, and indeed there is a family now of 32 of 'em, that they have fill'd every corner of the world, and yet for all this, you see these baudy Bellows-menders when they come ashore, will be offering to take up Womens coats in the street.

WIFE. Still my husbands discretion!

100 COMP. So I say, if your Land-men did understand that we send Windes from Sea, to do our commendations to our wives, they would not blame you as they do.

WIFE. We cannot help it.

COMP. But you shall help it. Can you love me, widow?

WIFE. If I durst confess what I do think, sir, I know what I would say.

COMP. Durst confess! Why whom do you fear? here's none but honest Gentlemen my friends; let them hear, and never blush for't.

110 WIFE. I shall be thought too weak, to yeild at first.

RAY. Tush, that's niceness; come, we heard all the rest, The first true stroke of love sinks thee deepest, If you love him, say so.

COMP. I have a Boy of mine own, I tell you that afore-hand, you shall not need to fear me that way.

WIFE. Then I do love him.

COMP. So here will be man and wife to-morrow then, what though we meet strangers, we may love one another ne'r the worse for that. Gentlemen, I invite you all to my Wedding.

OMNES. We'l all attend it.

120

COMP. Did not I tell you, I would fetch it off fair?—let any man lay a Cuckold to my charge, if he dares now.

RAY. 'Tis slander who ever does it.

COMP. Nay, it will come to *Petty Lassery* at least, and without compass of the general pardon too, or I'll bring him to a foul sheet, if he has ne're a clean one—or let me hear him that will say I am not father to the childe I begot!

EUST. None will adventure any of those.

COMP. Or that my wife that shall be, is not as honest a woman, as some other mens wives are?

130

RAY. No question of that.

COMP. How fine and sleek my brows are now!

EUST. I, when you are married, they'l come to themselves agen.

COMP. You may call me Bridegroom if you please now, for the Guests are bidden.

OMNES. Good Master Bridegroom!

COMP. Come Widow then, ere the next Ebb and Tide,
If I be Bridegroom, thou shalt be the Bride. *Exeunt.*

Finis Actus quarti.

ACT 5. SCENE I.

[*Woodroff's House.*]

Enter Rochfield and Annabel.

ROCH. Believe me, I was never more ambitious,
Or covetous, if I may call it so,
Of any fortune greater than this one,
But to behold his face.

ANN. And now's the time;
For from a much feared danger as I heard,
He's late come over.

ROCH. And not seen you yet?

'Tis some unkindness.

10 ANN. You may think it so;
But for my part, sir, I account it none:
What know I but some business of import
And weighty consequence, more near to him
Than any formal Complement to me,
May for a time detain him? I presume
No jealousy can be asperst on him,
For which he cannot well Apology.

ROCH. You are a Creature every way compleat,
As good a Wife, as Woman; for whose sake
20 As I in duty am endeer'd to you,
So shall I owe him service.

Enter Lessingham.

LESS. [*aside*] The ways to Love, and Crowns, lye both
through blood,
For in 'em both all Lets must be removed,
It could be stiled no true ambition else.
I am grown big with project: Project, said I?
Rather with sudden mischief; which without
A speedy birth fills me with painful throwes,
And I am now in labor. Thanks, occasion,
That givest me a fit ground to work upon!—
30 It should be *Rochfield*, one since our departure,
It seems, ingrafted in this Family:
Indeed the Houses Minion, since from the Lord
To the lowest Groom, all with unite consent
Speak him so largely. Nor as it appears
By this their private Conference, is he grown
Least in the Brides opinion. A foundation
On which I will erect a brave Revenge.

ANN. Sir, What kinde Offices lyes in your way
To do for him, I shall be thankful for,
40 And reckon them mine own.

ROCH. In acknowledgement
I kiss your hand, so with a gratitude
Never to be forgot, I take my leave.

ANN. I mine of you, with hourly expectation
Of a long-lookt-for husband.

ROCH. May it thrive
According to your wishes.

Exit [Annabel].

LESS. [*aside*] Now's my turn.
Without offence, Sir, may I beg your name?

ROCH. 'Tis that I never yet denied to any,
Nor will to you that seem a Gentleman:
'Tis *Rochfield*.

50

LESS. *Rochfield*? You are then the man
Whose nobleness, vertue, valor, and good parts,
Have voiced you loud. *Dover* and *Sandwich*, *Marget*,
And all the Coast is full of you:
But more, as an Eye-witness of all these,
And with most truth, the Master of this house
Hath given them large expressions.

ROCH. Therein his love
Exceeded much my merit.

60

LESS. That's your modesty:
Now I as one that goodness love in all men,
And honoring that which is but found in few,
Desire to know you better.

ROCH. Pray your name?

LESS. *Lessingham*.

ROCH. A friend to [Master] *Bonville*?

LESS. In the number
Of those which he esteems most dear to him,
He reckons me not last.

70

ROCH. So I have heard.

LESS. Sir, you have cause to bless the lucky Planet
Beneath which you were born, 'twas a bright star
And then shined cleer upon you, for as you
Are every way well parted, so I hold you
In all designs mark't to be fortunate.

ROCH. Pray do not stretch your love to flattery,
'T may call it then in question; grow I pray you
To some particulars.

80

LESS. I have observed
But late your parting with the Virgin Bride,
And therein some affection.

ROCH. How?

LESS. With pardon,
In this I still applaud your happiness,
And praise the blessed influence of your stars:

For how can it be possible that she,
 Unkindly left upon the Bridal-day,
 90 And disappointed of those Nuptial sweets
 That night expected, but should take the occasion
 So fairly offered? Nay, and stand excused
 As well in detestation of a scorn,
 Scarce in a husband heard of, as selecting
 A Gentleman in all things so compleat,
 To do her those neglected offices,
 Her youth and beauty justly challengeth?

ROCH. *[aside]* Some plot to wrong the Bride—and I now
 Will marry Craft with Cunning: if he'l bite,
 100 He give him linc to play on: wer't your case,
 You being young as I am, would you intermit
 So fair and sweet occasion?

^ Yet mis-conceive me not, I do intreat you,
 To think I can be of that easie wit,
 Or of that malice to defame a Lady,
 Were she so kinde so to expose her self—
 Nor is she such a creature.

LESS. *[aside]* On this foundation
 I can build higher still—(sir I beleiv't)
 110 I hear you two call Cousins; comes your kindred
 By the *Woodroffs*, or the *Bonviles*?

ROCH. From neither, 'tis a word of courtesie
 Late interchanged betwixt us, otherwise
 We are forreign as two strangers.

LESS. *[aside]* Better still.

ROCH. I would not have you grow too inward with me
 Upon so small a knowledge; yet to satisfie you,
 And in some kinde too to delight my self—
 Those Bracelets and the Carckanet she wears,
 120 She gave me once.

LESS. They were the first, and special Tokens past
 Betwixt her and her husband.

ROCH. 'Tis confest:
 What I have said, I have said: Sir, you have power
 Perhaps to wrong me, or to injure her;
 This you may do, but as you are a Gentleman
 I hope you will do neither.

LESS. Trust upon't.

Exit Rochfield.

If I drown Ile sink some along with me;
 For of all miseries I hold that chief, 130
 Wretched to be, when none co-parts our grief.
 Here's another Anvile to work on: I must now
 Make this my Master-piece; for your old Foxes
 Are seldom ta'ne in Springes. *Enter Woodroff.*

WOOD. What, my Friend!

You are happily returned; and yet I want
 Somewhat to make it perfect. Where's your Friend,
 My Son in Law?

LESS. Oh sir!

WOOD. I pray sir resolve me; 140
 For I do suffer strangely till I know
 If he be in safety.

LESS. Fare you well: 'Tis not fit
 I should relate his danger.

WOOD. I must know't.

I have a Quarrel to you already, for enticing
 My Son in Law to go over: Tell me quickly,
 Or I shall make it greater.

LESS. Then truth is, 150
 He's dangerously wounded.

WOOD. But he's not dead I hope?

LESS. No sir, not dead,
 Yet sure your daughter may take liberty
 To chuse another.

WOOD. Why that gives him dead.

LESS. Upon my life Sir, no; your son's in health
 As well as I am.

WOOD. Strange! you deliver Riddles.

LESS. I told you he was wounded, and 'tis true, 160
 He is wounded in his Reputation.
 I told you likewise, which I am loth to repeat,
 That your fair Daughter might take liberty
 To embrace another. That's the consequence
 That makes my best Friend wounded in his Fame.
 This is all I can deliver.

WOOD. I must have more of't;
 For I do sweat already, and Ile sweat more;

'Tis good they say to cure Aches, and o'th sudden
I am sore from head to foot—let me taste the worst.

170 LESS. Know Sir, if ever there were truth in falshood,
Then 'tis most true, your Daughter plays most false
With *Bonville*, and hath chose for her Favorite
The man that now past by me, *Rochfield*.

WOOD. Say?

I would thou hadst spoke this on *Callis-sands*,
And I within my Sword and Ponyards length
Of that false throat of thine. I pray sir, tell me
Of what Kin or Alliance do you take me
To the Gentlewoman you late mentioned?

180 LESS. You are her Father.

WOOD. Why then of all men living, do you address
This Report to me, that ought of all men breathing
To have been the last o'th Rowl, except the husband,
That should have heard of't?

LESS. For her honor Sir, and yours;
That your good Council may reclaim her.

WOOD. I thank you.

LESS. She has departed sir, upon my knowledge,
With Jewels, and with Bracelets, the first Pledges,
190 And confirmation of th'unhappy Contract
Between her self and husband.

WOOD. To whom?

LESS. To *Rochfield*.

WOOD. Be not abused: but now,
Even now I saw her wear 'em.

LESS. Very likely;
'Tis fit, hearing her husband is returned,
That [he] should re-deliver 'em.

WOOD. But pray sir tell me,
200 How is it likely she could part with 'em,
When they are lockt about her Neck and Wrists,
And the Key with her husband?

LESS. Oh sir, that's but practise;
She has got a trick to use another Key
Besides her husbands.

WOOD. Sirrah, you do lie;
And were I to pay down a hundred pounds

For every Lie given, as men pay Twelve pence,
 And worthily, for Swearing, I would give thee
 The Lie, nay though it were in the Court of Honor, 210
 So oft, till of the Thousands I am worth,
 I had not left a hundred. For is't likely
 So brave a Gentleman as *Rochfield* is,
 That did so much at Sea to save my life,
 Should now on Land shorten my wretched days,
 In ruining my Daughter? A rank Lie!
 Have you spread this to any but my self?

LESS. I am no Intelligencer.

WOOD. Why then 'tis yet a secret?
 And that it may rest so, Draw; Ile take order (Draws.) 220
 You shall prate of it no further.

LESS. Oh, my Sword
 Is enchanted, Sir, and will not out o'th Scabbard:
 I will leave you, sir, yet say not I give ground,
 For 'tis your own you stand on. *Enter Bonvile & Clare.*
(aside) *Clare* here with *Bonvile*? excellent! on this
 I have more to work. This goes to *Annabel*,
 And it may increase the Whirlwinde. *Exit.*

BON. How now, Sir?
 Come, I know this choler bred in you 230
 For the Voyage which I took at his entreaty;
 But I must reconcile you.

WOOD. On my credit
 There's no such matter. I will tell you Sir,
 And I will tell it in laughter. The Cause of it
 Is so poor, so ridiculous, so impossible
 To be believed! Ha, ha, he came even now
 And told me that one *Rochfield*, now a Guest
 (And most worthy, Sir, to be so) in my House,
 Is grown exceedingly familiar with 240
 My Daughter.

BON. Ha?

WOOD. Your wife, and that he has had favors from her.

BON. Favors?

(WOOD) Love-tokens I did call 'em in my youth;
 Lures to which Gallants spread their wings, and stoop
 In Ladies bosoms. Nay, he was so false

To Truth and all good Manners, that those Jewels
 You lockt about her Neck, he did protest
 250 She had given to *Rochfield*! Ha! methinks o'th sudden
 You do change colour. Sir, I would not have you
 Believe this in least part: My Daughter's honest,
 And my Guess is a noble Fellow: And for this
 Slander deliver'd me by *Lessingham*,
 I would have cut his throat.

BON. As I your Daughters,
 If I finde not the Jewels 'bout her.

CLARE. Are you returned
 With the Italian Plague upon you, Jealousie?

260 WOOD. Suppose that *Lessingham* should love my Daughter,
 And thereupon fashion your going over,
 As now your Jealousie, the stronger way
 So to divide you, there were a fine Crotchet!
 Do you stagger still? If you continue thus,
 I vow you are not worth a welcome home
 Neither from her, nor me. See, here she comes.

*Enter Rochfield
 and Annabel.*

CLARE. I have brought you home a Jewel.

ANN. Wear it your self;

For these I wear are Fetters, not Favors.

270 CLARE. I lookt for better welcome.

ROCH. Noble sir,

I must wooe your better knowledge.

BON. Oh dear sir,

My Wife will bespeak it for you.

ROCH. Ha? your Wife!

WOOD. Bear with him, sir, he's strangely off o'th hinges.

BON. *(aside)* The Jewels are i'th right place; but the Jewel
 Of her heart sticks yonder. You are angry with me
 For my going over.

280 ANN. Happily more angry

For your coming over.

BON. I sent you my Will from *Dover*?

ANN. Yes Sir.

BON. Fetch it.

ANN. I shall Sir, but leave your Self-will with you. *Exit.*

WOOD. This is fine, the woman will be mad too.

BON. Sir, I would speak with you.

ROCH. And I with you
Of all men living.

BON. I must have satisfaction from you. 290

ROCH. Sir, it growes upon the time of payment.

WOOD. What's that? what's that? Ile have no whispering.

Enter Annabel with a Will.

AN. Look you, there's the Pattent
Of your deadly affection to me.

BON. 'Tis wellcome,
When I gave my self for dead, I then made over
My Land unto you—now I finde your love
Dead to me, I will alter't.

AN. Use your pleasure,
A man may make a garment for the Moon, 300
Rather then fit your Constancy.

WOOD. How's this?
Alter your Will!

BON. 'Tis in mine own disposing,
Certainly I will alter't.

WOOD. Will you so my friend?
Why then I will alter mine too.
I had estated thee, thou peevish fellow,
In forty thousand pounds after my death,
I can finde another Executor. 310

BON. Pray sir, do,
Mine Ile alter without question.

WOOD. Doest hear me?
And if I change not mine within this two hours,
May my Executors cozen all my kindred
To whom I bequeath Legacies!

BON. I am for a Lawyer, sir.

WOOD. And I will be with one as soon as thy self,
Though thou ridest poste to'th devil. *(Exit Bonville)*

ROCH. Stay let me follow, 320
And cool him.

WOOD. Oh by no means,
You'll put a quarrel upon him for the wrong,
H'as done my Daughter.

ROCH. No believe it sir,

He's my wisht friend.

WOOD. Oh come, I know the way of't;
 Carry it like a French quarrel, privately whisper,
 Appoint to meet, and cut each others throats
 330 With Cringes and Embraces—I protest
 I will not suffer you exchange a word
 Without I overhear't.

ROCH. Use your pleasure. *Exit Woodroff, Rochfield.*

CLARE. You are like to make fine work now.

AN. Nay, you are like
 To make a finer buissness of't.

CLARE. Come, come,
 I must sowder you together.

AN. You? why I heard
 340 A bird sing lately, you are the onely cause
 Works the division.

CLARE. Who? As thou ever lovedst me—
 For I long, though I am a Maid, for't.

AN. *Lessingham.*

CLARE. Why then I do protest my self first cause
 Of the wrong, which he has put upon you both,
 Which please you to walk in, I shall make good
 In a short relation; come Ile be the clew
 To lead you forth this Labyrinth, this toyl
 350 Of a supposed and causeless Jealousie.
 Cankers touch choicest fruit with their infection,
 And Fevers seize those of the best complexion.

Exeunt.

Enter Woodroff and Rochfield.

WOOD. Sir, have I not said I love you? if I have,
 You may believ't before an Oracle,
 For there's no trick in't, but the honest sence.

ROCH. Believe it, that I do, sir.

WOOD. Your love must then
 Be as plain with mine, that they may suit together:
 I say you must not fight with my son *Bonville.*

360 ROCH. Not fight with him, sir?

WOOD. No, Not fight with him, sir.
 I grant you may be wronged, and I dare swear
 So is my childe, but he is the husband, you know,

The womans lord, and must not always be told
Of his faults neither—I say you must not fight.

ROCH. Ile swear it, if you please sir.

WOOD. And forswear, I know't,
E're you lay ope the secrets of your valour—
'Tis enough for me I saw you whisper,
And I know what belongs to't.

370

ROCH. To no such end, assure you. *Enter Lessingham.*

WOOD. I say you cannot fight with him,
If you be my friend, for I must use you,
Yonder's my foe, and you must be my Second—
Prepare thet; Slanderer, and get another
Better then thy self too; for here's my Second,
One that will fetch him up, and fierk him too.
Get your tools, I know the way to *Callis-sands*—
If that be your Fence-school, hee'l show you tricks 'faith,
Hee'l let blood your Calumny, your best guard
Will come to a *Peccavi* I believe.

380

LESS. Sir, if that be your quarrel,
He's a party in it, and must maintain
'The side with me, from him I collected
All those Circumstances concern your Daughter—
His own tongue's confession.

WOOD. Who?—from him?
He will belie to do thee a pleasure then,
If he speak any ill upon himself—
I know he ne're could do an injury.

390

ROCH. So please you, Ile relate it, sir.

Enter Bonvile, Annabel, Clare.

WOOD. Before her husband then—and here he is
In friendly posture with my Daughter too;
I like that well. Son Bridegroom, and Lady Bride,
If you will hear a man defame himself,
(For so he must if he say any ill,)
'Then listen.

BON. Sir, I have heard this story,
And meet with your opinion in his goodness,
The repitition will be needless.

400

ROCH. Your father has not, Sir. Ile be brief

In the delivery.

WOOD. Do, do then, I long to hear it.

ROCH. The first acquaintance I had with your Daughter,
Was on the Wedding-Eve.

WOOD. So!—'tis not ended yet, methinks.

ROCH. I would have robb'd her.

WOOD. Ah, thief!

ROCH. That Chain and Bracelet which she wears upon her,
410 She ransom'd with the full esteem in Gold,
Which was with you my Venture.

WOOD. Ah, thief agen!

ROCH. For any attempt against her honor, I vow
I had no thought on't.

WOOD. An honest thief 'faith yet.

ROCH. Which she as nobly recompenc'd, brought me home,
And in her own discretion thought it meet,
For cover of my shame, to call me Cousin.

WOOD. Call a thief Cousin? Why, and so she might,
420 For the Gold she gave thee, she stole from her husband,
'Twas all his now—yet 'twas a good Girl too.

ROCH. The rest you know, sir.

WOOD. Which was worth all the rest—
Thy valor Lad; but Ile have that in Print,
Because I can no better utter it.

ROCH. Thus (Jade unto my Wants,
And spurred by my Necessities) I was going,
But by that Ladies counsel I was staid;
(For that Discourse was our familiarity.)
430 And this you may take for my Recantation,
I am no more a thief.

WOOD. A blessing on thy heart,
And this was the first time I warrant thee too.

ROCH. Your charitable Censure is not wrong'd in that.

WOOD. No, I knew 't could be but the first time at most;
But for thee (brave Valor) I have in store,
That thou shalt need to be a thief no more. *Soft Musick.*
Ha? What's this Musick?

BON. It chimes a[n] *Io paeant* to your Wedding, sir,
440 If this be your Bride.

LESS. Can you forgive me? some wilde distractions

Had overturned my own condition,
 And spilt the goodness you once knew in me,
 But I have carefully recovered it,
 And overthrown the fury on't.

CLARE. It was my cause
 That you were so possest, and all these troubles
 Have from my peevish will original:
 I do repent, though you forgive me not.

LESS. You have no need for your repentance then, 450
 Which is due to it: all's now as at first
 It was wisht to be.

WOOD. Why, that's well said of all sides.
 But soft, this Musick has some other meaning:
 Another Wedding towards!—Good speed, good speed.

*Enter Compass and the four Gallants, Bride between Franckford
 and another, Luce, Nurse, and Childe.*

COMP. We thank you, sir.

WOOD. Stay, stay, our neighbor *Compass*, is't not?

COMP. That was, and may be agen to-morrow, this day
 Master Bridegroom.

WOOD. Oh! give you joy. But sir, if I be not mistaken, you 460
 were married before now; how long is't since your wife died?

COMP. Ever since yesterday, sir.

WOOD. Why, she's scarce buried yet then.

COMP. No indeed, I mean to dig her grave soon, I had no
 leisure yet.

WOOD. And was not your fair Bride married before?

WIFE. Yes indeed, sir.

WOOD. And how long since your husband departed?

WIFE. Just when my husbands wife died.

WOOD. Bless us *Hymen*, are not these both the same parties? 470

BON. Most certain, sir.

WOOD. What Marriage call you this?

COMP. This is called *Shedding of Horns*, sir.

WOOD. How?

LESS. Like enough, but they may grow agen next year.

WOOD. This is a new trick.

COMP. Yes sir, because we did not like the old trick.

WOOD. Brother, you are a helper in this design too?

FR. The Father to give the Bride, sir.

480 COMP. And I am his son, sir, and all the sons he has; and this is his Grand-childe, and my elder brother—you'll think this strange now.

WOOD. Then it seems he begat this before you?

COMP. Before me? not so sir, I was far enough off when 'twas done; yet let me see him dares say, this is not my Childe, and this my father.

BON. You cannot see him here, I think sir.

WOOD. Twice married! Can it hold?

COMP. Hold? It should hold the better, a wise man would
490 think, when 'tis ty'd of two knots.

WOOD. Methinks it should rather unloose the first,
And between 'em both make up one *Negative*.

EUST. No sir, for though it hold on the contrary,
Yet two *Affirmatives* make no *Negative*.

WOOD. Cry you mercy, sir.

COMP. Make what you will, this little *Negative* was my wifes laying, and I *Affirm* it to be mine own.

WOOD. This proves the marriage before substantial,
Having this issue.

500 COMP. 'Tis mended now sir; for being double-married, I may now have two children at a birth, if I can get 'em. D'ye think Ile be five years about one, as I was before?

EUST. The like has bin done for the loss of the Wedding-ring,
And to settle a new peace before disjoynted.

LYON. But this indeed sir, was especially done,
To avoid the word of Scandal, that foul word
Which the fatal Monologist cannot alter.

WOOD. *Cuckow!*

COMP. What's that, the Nightingale?

510 WOOD. A Night-bird—much good may do you, sir!

COMP. Ile thank you when I'm at Supper. Come Father,
Childe, and Bride; and for your part Father,
Whatsoever he, or he, or t'other says,
You shall be as welcome as in my t'other wifes days.

FR. I thank you, sir.

WOOD. Nay, take us with you, Gentlemen:
One Wedding we have yet to solemnize,
The first is still imperfect. Such troubles

Have drown'd our Musick: but now I hope all's friends.
 Get you to Bed, and there the Wedding ends.

520

COMP. And so good night, my Bride and Ile to bed:

He that has Horns, thus let him learn to shed.

Exeunt.

FINIS

If any Gentlemen please to repair to my House aforesaid, they may be furnished with all manner of English, or French Histories, Romances, or Poetry; which are to be sold, or read for reasonable Considerations.

COMMENTARY

A CURE FOR A CUCKOLD

TITLE-PAGE.

Tho. Johnson: printer (1642-77).

Francis Kirkman: bookseller (1656-78). The eldest son of a blacksmith and apprenticed to a scrivener, he became a bookseller in 1656 and combined his trade with a sort of circulating library. In the dedicatory epistle to *Lust's Dominion*, which he published in 1657, he says that he had collected plays from boyhood; and he now began printing them. He actually printed indeed, by his own account, only three, which all belonged to himself (*A Cure for a Cuckold*; *The Thracian Wonder*; *Gammer Gurton's Needle*); but his partners, Johnson, Brooke, and Henry Marsh (bookseller 1635-65), issued the best plays they could find, from other men's copies. In consequence Kirkman got into trouble in this year, 1661; had 1400 play books seized in his shop, and gave up business till 1666. We owe him two useful lists of extant plays (690 in the first, 1661; 806 in the second, 1671). Contemporaries accused him of corrupting texts and charging exorbitant prices: but Greg finds no confirmation of this.

THE STATIONER, TO THE JUDICIOUS READER

19 *almost an hundred years since Gammer Gurton's Needle* was first printed in 1575. This second edition is dated 1661.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Lessingham: the name occurs in Heywood's *Prentices*, where "Guy of Lusignan" becomes "Guy of Lessingham". Similarly *Bonville* occurs in Heywood's *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, *Franckford* in his *Woman Killed with Kindness*.

I. 1.

Whole stage?

28. *solicite*: "conduct", "carry on". This sense of the verb is obsolete; but cf. "solicitor"—one who "conducts" a law-suit.

46. *Resolve me*: clear up my doubts.

52. *perfect me*: inform me.

58. *imply*: attribute. The only example in *N.E.D.* of this sense.

81-3. *some say*. . . *meditation*: an allusion to the epigram of the elder Scipio (Cic. *De Rep.* i. 17. 27: *De Off.* iii. 1. 1)—"Nunquam se

plus agere quam nihil cum ageret, nunquam minus solum esse, quam cum solus esset" (he was never busier than when idle, never less alone than when alone).

90. *taxation*: blame.

153. *Sick of the Maid*: i.e. of green sickness, supposed to be partly due to the need for marriage. See on *A.V.* III. 2. 221-2.

205-6. See Text. Note.

207. *chopping*: bouncing. Cf. Heywood, *Silver Age*, III. 1: "A fine chopping boy".

212. *breed teeth* Cf. *D.M.* IV. 2. 137.

222. *Gravity*: the presence of grave old men.

I. 2.

The same? Indeed there is hardly need to mark a new scene.

1. "Nature has given nothing greater or rarer than friendship"; the nearest classical passage approaching this that I can find is Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 47: "Qua (amicitia) nihil a diis immortalibus melius habemus, nihil iucundius".

24. *Justice banisht th'earth*: an idea derived ultimately from Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 197 ff.):

καὶ τότε δὴ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης
λευκοῖσιν φάρεσσι καλυψαμένω χροῖα καλὸν
ἀθανάτων μετὰ φύλον ἴτην προλιποντ' ἀνθρώπους
Αἰδῶς καὶ Νέμεσις.

Then to Olympus from the wide-wayed earth,
Their fair forms clad in robes of shining white,
Forsaking men to rejoin the Host of Heaven
Conscience and Righteous Anger fled away.

86-9. The custom of making seconds also fight seems to have been French. Cf. Rev. T. Lorkin writing to Sir T. Puckering (Jan. 5th 1618-9; in Birch) of an attempted duel between Sir Edward Villiers and Sir Henry Rich: "a new difference arose between the seconds for Mr Rich (Sir Henry's brother) was fresh come out of France, and would needs observe the French custom of fighting with the other second". From a note by H.D.S. in *N.Q.* II. IX. 418 it appears that the fashion was introduced in France in the time of Montaigne, who strongly disapproves of it (II. 28).

90. *them*: the opponent and his second.

95. *meerly*: utterly.

101. *atone*: (at + one) reconcile.

105. *Callis-Sands*: the regular place for duels, as the nearest ground beyond the jurisdiction of English law. (A Star Chamber decree was made against duelling in 1614.) Cf. *D.L.* IV. 2. 646. The custom long continued. Thus Bliss in his edition of Earle's *Microcosmography* (1811), on a similar reference in the character of "A Surgeon", quotes *The Beau's Duel*, by Mrs Centlivre (1707): "Your only

way is to send him word you'll meet him on Calais sands; duelling is unsafe in England for men of estates".

- 150-1. *Not to imagine . . . by you*: not to suppose that I have any idea of using you to help me.
 152. *suspected*: expected. Cf. Fuller, *Pisgah*, III. 6. 330: "When the siege of Jerusalem was suspected".
 160-1. *enough to make all temperature Convert to fury: i.e.* to make the most temperate man furious.
 173. *not with justice: i.e.* not with rigid justice.
 176-7. *now to deferre . . . forfeit all*: if I postponed my arrival at Calais one half-hour, my honour would be lost.
 204. *Carckanet*: necklace.

II. 1.

Outer stage.

- 1 ff. For this "Character of a Younger Brother" cf. Earle, *Micro-cosmography*, "A Younger Brother": "Others take a more crooked path yet, the king's high-way; where at length their vizard is plucked off, and they strike fair for Tyburn".
 9. *want to give*: lack means to give.
 19. *Laverna*: a Roman goddess of thieves and pagan counterpart of St Nicholas. She was perhaps originally connected with the nether-world, thence with darkness, and so with thieves. Cf. Horace, *Epistles*, I. 16. 60, doubtless the source of this allusion.

Pulchra Laverna,
 Da mihi fallere, da iusto sanctoque videri,
 Noctem peccatis et fraudibus obice nubem.

21. *purchase*: acquire, gain (*pour-chasser*) See on *D.M.* II. 5. 50.
 33. *fore-path*: short cut (not in *N.E.D.*)
 36-7. *voice . . . eyes: i.e.* having once got sight of them, try to make yourself heard by them too.

II. 2.

Outer stage.

6. *In some degrees hot*: with allusion to the classification of things in medieval science as hot, cold, wet, dry in various degrees: e.g. "Rue," says Gerard in his *Herbal*, "is hot and dry in the later end of the third degree". See Text. Note on 7.
 8. *drest*: "addressed", with a play on "dressed" = "cooked", continuing the metaphor of a poisonous herb.
 30. *combined*: bound, tied Cf. *As You Like It*, v. 4. 157: "Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine".
 33. *I will confess both, and the last forget: i.e.* I will admit having both an idle chain and a bracelet: but I will forget that you are proving yourself a thief.

61. *Saint Nicholas*: patron of thieves—either by confusion with Old Nick, though it remains unknown why the Devil was so called; or because the saint was patron of wandering scholars, who were not always very distinct from thieves; or on account of the legend which tells how the saint compelled certain robbers to restore a treasure which had been placed under his protection. This last is not very plausible; at all events the thieves were either very Christian or very cunning, if they made that a reason for adopting St Nicholas as their patron.
63. *with purchase*: with a profit into the bargain.
65. *cross*: coin. See on iv. 2. 135.
- 71-3. *Forbear . . . forgo 'em now*: do not take from me these ornaments, which, if I have to surrender them now, can only be violently and dangerously broken to pieces in being forced off my neck and wrists.
73. *assure*: feel assured, feel sure. I can find no exact parallel. The sense "to state with assurance", however, is found in Heywood, *Wise Woman*, iv. 1 (*Wks.* v. 329): "If he assure to know me, I'll outface him".
81. *tax me*: call me to account.
85. *esteem*: estimated value.
105. *Courtier—owld*: the point of the joke, such as it is, lies in the sudden change from a Courtier who never took a bribe *in a career of fifteen years* (a perfect portent of incorruptibility) to a Courtier *aged fifteen years*, who had never taken one—with the implication that even at so innocent an age such integrity was rare at Court.

II. 3.

Outer stage.

9. *Point*: tagged lace, for fastening hose to doublet and other parts of the dress, where buttons would now be used. Hence also, like "button", a symbol of worthlessness. Cf. Sir E. Hoby, *Currycombe*, vi. 265: "He hath hardly earned a blew point for his daies worke".
13. *Hobby-horse*: once a regular feature of morris-dance and May-game—being originally a survival of the ritual disguise of the worshipper in a beast-skin in order to attain communion with the sacrificed god. (Cf. the surviving custom of decking horses on May-day: and see Chambers, *Med. Stage*, i. 130, 142.) In the morris the hobby-horse was represented by a performer encased in a paste-board horse with housings falling so low as to graze the ground and hide his human legs, while false legs hung down outside, from the saddle: in this guise he danced and did juggling tricks. (See the illustration of the stained-glass window representing a morris, in the old hall at Betley, Staffs, given at the end of vol. viii. of Johnson and Steevens's *Shakespeare*; and cf. Scott, *The Abbot*, i. ch. 14.) The hobby-horse excited the particular hatred of the Puritans (cf. Fletcher,

Women Pleased, IV. 1; Jonson, *Barth. Fair*, III. 1); and in the later Elizabethan period it was falling, for a time at least, into disuse; whence there seems to have been a ballad "For O! for O! the hobby-horse is forgot". (Cf. *Love's Lab. Lost*, III. 1. 31; *Hamlet*, III. 2. 145; and indeed so many other passages that the hobby-horse might well have been a little more forgotten than it was.)

13. *Hackney*: then a village, two miles N. of St Paul's. The name was probably suggested here by "hackney" = "hobby-horse" (esp. as a term of abuse). Cf. *Love's Lab. Lost*, III. 1. 34: "the hobby-horse is but a colt, and your love perhaps, a hackney".
15. *Green-goose*: a young goose (opposed to "stubble-goose"). Probably at Hackney, as at Bow, the fair was just after Whitsuntide. Cf. Taylor, *Wks.* (Spenser Society, 1870-7), p. 110:

At Bow the Thursday after Pentecost
There is a fair of green geese, ready roast.

Elsewhere it was on Whit Monday.

- 15-6. *as honest and as poor a man*: as honest as can be. Cf. the now obsolete "asoon", "asfast" = "as soon, as fast, as possible", and Lat. phrases like "*quam maxime*".
17. *Black-wall*: in Poplar, on the N. bank of the Thames, four miles E. of St Paul's.
19. *tears . . . tyed*: a quibble on tears wept and *tears* = "torn pieces".
19. *True-love Knot*: a double bow, like a four-leaved clover.

The point seems to be that his tears might be tied in a true-love knot because, though salt, they are the expression of a constant and ever-fresh affection.

- 19-20 *fresh salt*: *fresh* = (1) unstaled, (2) unsalted.
32. *shot*. a "shote" or "shoot" is a pig of a year old or less (Flemish *schote*)
32. *to this pig*: in comparison with it.
- 33 *Points*: see on 9 above.
35. *chopping*: bouncing.
- 53-4. *Wapping, Radcliff, Lymehouse*: suburbs of ill repute N. of the Thames; in the order, going eastwards, Wapping, Shadwell, Radcliff, Lymehouse.
58. *Surrat*: Surat, on the W. coast of India, N. of Bombay. The Portuguese held it from 1573 to 1612, when it passed to the English East India Company and became extremely prosperous till superseded, after 1668, by Bombay.
- 74 *taken up*: "borrowed", with of course a *double entendre*.
82. *Horners*: (1) the City Company of horn-makers, (2) cuckolds.
83. *changing our Copy*: "to change one's copy" is a regular phrase = "to assume another character", "to change one's designation". So in a letter to Rev. Joseph Mead, April 27th 1627, there is described a raid of Captain Pennington on La Rochelle, "which he entered with the French colours, but presently changed his copy and

let fly amongst them". It appears to be derived from the sense of "copy" = "copyhold"; cf. Fuller, *Church Hist.* pt. 1. 6: "Waltham Abbey had its copie altered by King Henry the Second, and bestowed on Augustinians".

87-8. *sing at first sight*: i.e. at sight, from the music.

89. *children cry before they laugh, a fair while*: according to Pliny the infant does not laugh before the fortieth day (except Zoroaster, who laughed the day he was born).

102. *go*: with a play on *go* = "be pregnant". Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.* 1. 2. 68 "let him marry a woman that cannot go". (H.D.S.)

105. *A lass*: a pun, of course, on his wife's *Alas*.

137. *share*: a London company of players seems usually to have contained from ten to twelve "sharers" (shares might however be subdivided) who divided profits and expenses between them, and were distinguished from the "hired men" or "journeymen". It was an obvious and well-tried device for keeping together a company of actors who otherwise would be perpetually scattering and changing. See Chambers, *Eliz. Stage*, 1. 352-8.

II. 4

Whole stage.

3. *Postures*: carriage, bearing.

48. *the proverb*: "Early up and never the nearer". Cf. Field's *Amends for Ladies* (1639), sig. F. 3: "I have beene early up, but, as God help me, I was never the neere". (Dyce.)

It is the counterpart, in the way proverbs have of flatly contradicting one another, of the more popular adage about early birds and worms.

61. *surbated*: (Fr. *sur, battre*) foot-sore, wearied out.

69. *rend'red*: answered. No parallel in *N.E.D.*; though "render answer" is common.

81. *rife*: disposed, inclined, keen (to go on dancing). There is again no parallel in *N.E.D.* to this absolute use; but in Bunyan's *Holy War* we find "very rife and hot for religion". See Text. Note.

88. *my recovery*: my rescue.

90. *what I spake*: i.e. in 70 ff. above.

91. *better*: better comforts.

101 ff. The passage that follows is an expansion of a popular adage, found, for instance, in Nash's *Unfortunate Traveller* and in *3 Hen. VI*, v. 6. 12: "The thief doth fear each bush an officer".

103. *phanes* = fanes, an old form of "vanes".

105. *and meet her*: if you meet her.

110. *to the bag*: to the udder; i.e. if the calf goes up to suck the cow, it seems as if the clerk were going up to the justice and holding a paper (the calf's white face) under him for signature.

111. *Mittimus*: warrant for arrest.

114. *Goals*: with a play on "gaol", sometimes so spelt.
115. *th' other place*: the next world. "The tother" is still used in Scotch and N. Eng. dialects.
124. *trap*: (Fr. *drap*) caparison, adorn with trappings.
146. *'Tis meant for Physick*: i.e. by being sea-sick. Cf. iv. 2. 142-3.
146. *as low*: "as far south" is Sugden's explanation (s.v. "Lee"): but there is little evidence for such a use. It seems to mean rather "as far down the river", if Margate be thought of as on an extension of the Thames estuary.
146. *Lee*: probably Leigh in Essex, on the N. of the Thames estuary.
146. *Margets*: Margate, then an obscure fishing-village.
150. *Letter of Mart*: a variant of the commoner form "Letter of Marque" (med. Lat. *marcare*, seize as a pledge), perhaps due to confusion with "mart" = "market". This was originally a license granted to a subject to make reprisals on enemy subjects for injuries done him: thence, a general commission to privateer. For this evidence of the date of the play see Introd. p. 3.
151. *roaring Boys*: "bullies", here of the ship's guns. See on *D.M.* II. I. 16.
171. *Assurance*: insurance.
186. *Fouter*: (Lat. *futuere*).

III. 1.

Outer stage.

26. *forgetful*: causing forgetfulness.
- 35 ff. The rest of this scene, like the very similar duel between Ercole and Contarino in *D.L.*, is one of those bursts of eloquence that often unexpectedly light up the long flats of the lesser Elizabethan drama.
41. *sinking*: flagging.
78. *qualified*: weakened, diluted.
101. *privy Coat*: i.e. of mail; see on *D.L.* II. I. 331.
131. *most, ought*: i.e. *who* ought.
- 167-8. For this superstition cf. the legend that the body of Henry IV was jettisoned by the terrified sailors in a storm, as it was being conveyed from Westminster to Gravesend to be buried at Canterbury.

III. 2.

Whole stage?

- 10-1. *as dreadful as a Shrove-tuesday to thee*: a roundabout way of calling the nurse a bawd. For the London Prentices used to serve both morality and their own need of diversion by wrecking houses of ill-fame on this day, to encourage the chaster keeping of Lent. Cf. "Overbury", *Characters*, "A Bawd": "Nothing daunts her so much as the approach of Shrove Tuesday"; *N.Ho!* iv. 4 (p. 241); Middleton, *Inner Temple*, 170 ff.: "Stand forth, Shrove-Tuesday! . . . 'Tis in your charge to pull down bawdy houses . . . cause spoil in Shoreditch . . . deface Turnbull, And tickle Codpiece Row".

24. *by the wifes Cobby-hold*: i.e. his wife is as it were his tenant and the child her holding, of which Compass, as lord of the manor, can claim possession. Copyhold means "tenure by copy of court-roll at the will of the lord of a manor according to the custom thereof" (Mozley and Whiteley, *Concise Law Dictionary*).
27. *Tuttle-street*: Tothill St in Westminster, at the opposite end of London to Blackwall.
44. *make Hair-buttons*: hair-buttons were made of horse-hair. Dr Johnson wore them on his tour to the Hebrides: see G. B. Hill's ed. of Boswell's *Life*, v. 18 and note. There is, of course, a play on "make buttons" = *cacare* (from fright).
45. *Main*: main point.
85. *In lieu*: in consideration that (not in *N.E.D.*).
89. *Mutton*: with the usual *double entendre* (= "prostitute").
97. *I have two hands*: (she is taking money from Franckford with one, from Compass with the other).
99. *Gender*: (1) gender in our sense, (2) genderer, begetter, parent.
103. *Hujus*: with a pun, of course, on "hugeous" and a *double entendre* in "case".
111. *by-betting*: *N.E.D.* only gives "by-bet" (noun) from Middleton and Rowley, *Changeling*, iv. 1. 88: "the gold Is but a by-bet to wedge in the honour"; and even this passage it fails to explain. Can it mean "betting on another's performance"? There Beatrice is staking her honour on her woman's passing, in her place, the test of chastity; so here Compass wants to win the child another has begotten.

Outer stage.

III. 3.

54. *purchas'd*: gained.
70. *three Spanish men of War*: see Introd. p. 3.
87. *mediate for*: beg for. See on *A.V.* II. 1. 41.
95. *unite consent*: a Heywoodian phrase found in *The Silver Age*, III. (1613). Cf. v. 1. 33.
98. *Lin-stocks*: staves, with a point at one end to stick in the deck, and a match for firing the cannon at the other (*Dutch lont*, match).

IV. 1.

Whole stage: perhaps changing to outer stage towards the close of the scene.

2. *neighbor of Guild-hall*: there was a famous "Three Tuns" in Guildhall Yard; cf. Herrick:

Ah Ben!
 Say how or when
 Shall we thy guests
 Meet at those lyric feasts,
 Made at the Sun,
 The Dog, the Triple Tun.

6. *Crack-roap*: gallows-bird.
 8. *jumble*: stir up.
 8. *Bastard*: sweet wine, esp. Spanish; perhaps so called because often adulterated with honey. Presumably there is here a double sense.
 13. *Ellegant*: Alligant, wine of Alicante, near Valencia. The converse pun is found in *Merry Wives*, II. 2. 71, where Mrs Quickly talks of "alligant terms".
 14. *con her thank*: thank her, acknowledge my indebtedness (O.Eng. *thanc cunnan*, cf. Fr. *savoir gré*).
 19. *Metheglin*: a Welsh form of mead (cf. *Britain* in 20).
 49. *Swabber*: sailor.
 57-8. *Cuckoes...before...the Nightingale*: Dyce quotes Milton's "Sonnet to the Nightingale":

Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
 First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
 Portend success in love

Conversely it was an ill-omen to hear the cuckoo first.

- 59-60. *Taylor...leering eye*. Cf. Dante, *Inferno*, xv:

E sì ver noi aguzzavan le ciglia,
 Come vecchio sartor fa nella cruna.

64. [*Latitat*]: the Court of King's Bench had originally jurisdiction, not between subject and subject, but only between king and subject. The court could however deal with trespasses within the county where it sat (Middlesex), as breaches of the peace; so the custom grew up in the King's Bench of issuing a writ to the Sheriff of Middlesex ordering the defendant's arrest for an imaginary trespass there committed, *ac etiam* to answer the real action. If the defendant were not in Middlesex, another writ was issued to the Sheriff of the defendant's own county to the effect that the defendant "lies hid and runs about" (*latitat et discurrit*) in that county and must be arrested. This legal rigmarole continued till 1854. (See *Sh.'s Eng.* I. 391.)
 65-6. *Action of the Case*: the jurisdiction of the Court of Common Pleas was originally limited to certain definite causes of action, with a particular writ for each. A case covered by none of these writs could not, accordingly, be dealt with, till under Edward I it was ordered that, in such circumstances, a new writ should be issued. Actions commenced by such new writs were known as "actions of trespass on the case" or "actions on the case", because these new writs were framed on the analogy of the old writ of trespass. (See *Sh.'s Eng.* I. 390.) The whole point of this legal jargon here lies, of course, in the *double-entendres* to which it lends itself.
 75. *lye at a stronger Ward*: "are in a stronger position". "Ward" is a "guard", "defensive position" in fencing. Cf. I *Henry IV*, II. 4. 219: "Thou knowest my old ward: here I lay, and thus I bore my point". So Fairfax, *Jerusalem Delivered*, VI. 42: "Close at his surest ward each warrior lies".

76. *partus sequitur ventrem*: "that which is born goes with the womb" (i.e. the child goes with the mother).

86-7. *at a Nisi Prius*: i.e. a trial, before judge and jury at the assizes, of a civil action brought in one of the superior courts.

Originally causes commenced at Westminster Hall had to be tried there before a jury from the county in which the cause arose, "*nisi prius* justitiarii ad assisas capiendas venerint" in the county in question. Hence the name.

96. *Sound of Denmark*: the strait between Zealand and Sweden, in which passing vessels had to pay toll at Elsinore.

108-9. Cf. *D.L.* IV. I. 108-9.

110. *Cucking-stool*: stool on a pole for ducking scolds. See on *D.L.* V. 4. 43.

115. *recover*: recover damages.

118. *the Ballad of Flood*: this does not seem to be extant. Dyce searched in vain for it or for any reference to Flood. I have found however in the British Museum a pamphlet on the subject—"The Life and Death of Griffin Flood, Informer, whose cunning courses, churlish manners, and troublesome Informations molested a number of plaine-dealing people in this City of London. Wherein is also declared the murder of John Chipperford Vintner, for which fact the said Griffin Flood was pressed to death the 18. day of January last past". Below the title on the title-page is a picture of Mr Flood being pressed, still decorously wearing a hat as he lies on his back with a large box full of weights covering his body. Then follows—"Printed for I.T. and are to be sold at the signe of the Bible without New-gate, 1623" (i.e. probably Jan.-March 1623-4).

Flood certainly appears to have been an unpleasant person. After beginning as a currier's prentice, he found the trade of informer and blackmailer more congenial. His victims were prentices found by him in taverns or not at church in service-time; or tapsters, ostlers, and tradesmen who tried to make a living without having acquired the freedom of the city by seven years' apprenticeship or by purchase. Naturally he was no popular hero; but how little that troubled him he showed by declaiming in mid-Guildhall one day an epitaph of his own composition:

*Here lyeth Griffin Flood full low in his grave
Which lived a Rascall and died a Knave.*

This obituary he came however to need sooner than he had expected. For he ended by stabbing a Constable and a Vintner at the same time; the Vintner died of his wound; and Flood found himself in Newgate, whither ironic Tapsters congregated to drink his health and pass him the empty cans. He refused to plead "guilty" or "not guilty"; and was accordingly, like certain other tough spirits who chose this painful death (it saved forfeiture of their goods) rather than a comparatively painless hanging, pressed to death in the pressing-yard at Newgate.

Hazlitt's note here is characteristic: "Doubtless some ballad-history of the removal of an informer called Flood from the scene of his operations, by a Press Gang".

The anecdote that follows is clearly based on an incident rather differently related in the pamphlet on Flood. There it is said that he had successfully blackmailed an ale-wife for employing a tailor not free of the city; encouraged by this he visited her ale-house with a view to further triumphs and there "espied the good wife run down into the Cellar with a blacke Pot or two, measures contrary to the Cities custome". So he pursued her and demanded hush-money; but the ale-wife caught up a quart-pot of pewter and broke his head, crying "Oh help, murther, murther". To her neighbours rushing in she explained that Flood had tried to ravish her; the denials of such a man were unconvincing; and Flood had to sit in prison till he had paid her damages.

121. *Turnball-street*: Turnbull St, between Clerkenwell Green and Cowcross St, once called Turnmill St from the Fleet River or Turnmill Brook. It was notorious for its brothels, cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, III. 2. 333.

123. *Tweak or Bronstrops*: whore or bawd. Cf. Middleton and Rowley, *A Fair Quarrel* (1617), IV. 4. 196: "Mayst thou first serve out thy time as a tweak and then become a bronstrops, as she is!" This is doubtless the "play" referred to in I. 124.

126. *Goose*: swelling due to venereal disease. Winchester House, the London palace of the Bishop of Winchester, was in Southwark; and in the Bishop's liberties stood the notorious stews of the Bankside. Hence "Winchester goose" is a regular phrase in Elizabethan drama for "venereal disease".

132. *Winchester measure*: see on 126 above.

136. *Comptromiser*: arbitrator.

140-1. "The law will come to the decision which we are able to predict from our study of the precedents".

150. *Censure*: opinion.

153 ff. This debate on the rights of parenthood might almost be a parody of the famous contest on the subject between Apollo and the Furies before the Areopagus in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus.

We may also, as Tischner points out, cf. Rowley's *A Search for Money*, 1609 (Percy Soc. reprint, 1840, p. 28), where the law-suits in Westminster Hall are described: "Here two neighbours together by the purses; the good man Nabuloes (Lat. *nebulo*, a rogue) goose had laid an eg in good man Corridons barne, and he pleaded possession and the trespasse of the goose, that had committed burglary to come in the wrong way".

168. *lops*: loppings, faggot-wood.

173. *I would see that Law durst*: i.e. I should like to see that Law which durst.

- 175-6. *Civil-law . . . Common-law*: "common law", as opposed to "civil", means the traditional law of England embodied in judicial precedents, as against Roman law.
- 206-7. Cf. *W.D.* 1. 2. 87, etc.
- 222-3. *Bishops-Hall*: probably Bishop Bonner's House, just E. of Bethnal Green (Sugden).
223. *Swads*: pods (of peas, beans, etc.).

IV. 2.

Whole stage.

40. *wedding strewings*: flowers strewn before a bride.
97. *Lapland Witches*: for their notorious sorcery, especially with winds, cf. *Com. of Errors*, IV. 3. 11; Milton, *Par. Lost*, II. 665; Burton, *Anat. of Mel.* 1. 2. 1. 2; Elizabethan dramatists *passim*; the narratives of Regnard and Leems in Pinkerton's *Voyages* (1808), vol. 1; and Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 1. 326, whence it appears that the Lap idea of tying the wind up in knots (three was their usual number; the untying of each increased the fury of the gale) has been world-wide from the days of Aeolus and Odysseus down to the old wind-selling witch whom Sir Walter Scott visited in the Orkneys.
135. *Cross and Pile*: "heads and tails". Coins had a cross on the obverse, and the reverse was called the "pile" after the under-iron (Fr. *pile*, Lat. *pila*) on which the coin was struck. Cf. "Overbury", *Characters*, "Countrey Newes": "good and ill is the crosse and pile in the aime of life". (Should we not read "game of life"?)
165. [*and*] *your friend*: see Text. Note.
- 241-2. From Daniel, *Queen's Arcadia*, IV. 4 (1605):

And on that turne of Fortune's Scene depend
When all extremities must mend or end. (H D.S.)

Cf. on v. 1. 351-2.

IV. 3.

Outer stage.

7. *sometimes*: the joke consists in the unexpected insertion of this word.
10. *and let it be*: *i.e.* even though it is.
26. *feck*: faith. Probably from a diminutive "fay + kin" (Fr. *foi*.)
- 28-9. Honest men are not found in every street, nor indeed (one may sometimes truly say) in every parish even.
41. *taught*: probably "roughly treated", "taught an unpleasant lesson" (not in *N.E.D.*), as when Gideon "taught the men of Succoth" with briars (*Judges* viii. 16: it is immaterial that the Hebrew really means "threshed"). Cf. the use of "school" in Ford, *Lover's Melancholy*, v. 1: "Take hence the wag and school him for't".
42. *the Law*: of keeping silence.
50. *chopping*: bouncing.
124. *Petty Lassery*: petty larceny.

V. 1.

Whole stage.

26-7. *without A speedy birth: i.e.* unless it finds speedy deliverance and execution.

76. *well parted*: endowed with good parts.

106. *kinde*: Baron Bourgeois explains "foolish" (cf. *fond*): but the ordinary sense fits perfectly well.

188-9. *departed... With*: parted with.

204-5. *Double entendre*.

208-9. *Twelve pence... for Swearing*: an allusion to 21 Jac. I, c. 20 (1623-4), where this penalty is enacted. There is a similar reference in Jonson's *Masque of Owls* (Aug. 19th 1624):

Who since the act against swearing...
Hath at twelve pence an oath...
Sworn himself out of his estate.

246. *Lures*: for the hawking metaphor see on *W.D.* iv. 1. 139.

253. *Guess*: guest.

259. *Italian Plague... Jealousie*. Cf. *W.D.* II. 1. 163-4.

267. *a Jewel: i.e.* the lost Bonvile

280. Annabel answers angrily because Lessingham has already made her jealous of her husband with Clare. Hence the quarrel that now follows.

281. *coming over*: just possibly with a double meaning. Cf. *A.V.* III. 1. 5-7.

351-2. From Daniel, *Queen's Arcadia*, II. 4:

And note but how these cankers always seaze
The choycest fruits with their infections;
How they are still ordainéd to disease
The natures of the best complexions. (H.D.S)

Cf. on iv. 241-2.

377. *firk*: firck, trounce.

388. *belie*: simply = "lie", if the text is right. No example in *N.E.D.* See Text. Note.

426. *Jade unto my Wants: "i.e.* jaded" (Dyce). But surely it means that his Wants rode him and spurred him on like an overridden horse (cf. next line).

429. *For that Discourse was our familiarity*: all our supposed intimacy was based on that conversation we had.

439. *Io paeon*: ancient cry of rejoicing ("Paeon" was a name of Apollo as "Healer"). Perhaps the dramatist is remembering here the triumphant cry of the lover-poet at the beginning of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, II:

Dicite "io Paeon" et "io" bis dicite "Paeon",
Decidit in casses praeda petita meas.

450-1. The sense seems to be: "The very fact of your repenting makes repentance needless" ("Which" = "a fact which"). Cf. *D.M.I.* I. 10.

493. *though it hold on the contrary*: i.e. though two negatives make an Affirmative, two Affirmatives do *not* make a Negative.

507. *Monologist*: should mean "one who *speaks alone*, in monologue, or soliloquizes"; sometimes, "one who monopolizes the conversation". Here, however, as applied to the cuckoo, I suspect that it means "One who *utters one word alone*"—i.e. "Cuckoo!" H.D.S. compares Chapman, *Byron's Conspiracy*, III. 2. 60:

Which the Welsh herald of their praise, the cuckoo,
Would scarce have put in his monology.

There *monology* certainly means "monologue": but the phrase may be adapted here in a slightly altered sense.

This term may serve as another example of the danger of relying too much on the *N.E.D.* as evidence of the date of the first appearance of words or usages in English; for the earliest instance there quoted of *monologist* is nearly a century later—1711.

510. *may do you*: for *may it do you*. See Text. Note.

516. *take us with you*: "understand us" (Dyce). But surely it means "let us accompany you to church".

TEXTUAL NOTES

A CURE FOR A CUCKOLD

For details of editions, see Bibliography. In the notes that follow

Q = the Quarto of 1661. (Brit. Mus. 82. c. 26. (6).)

D = Dyce.

H = Hazlitt.

THE STATIONER, TO THE JUDICIOUS READER

26. The curious change to smaller type is reproduced from Q.

I. I.

The great mass of the verse in the play is printed as prose, except for short and haphazard passages (and the rhyming couplets), until we come to Act v, where most of the verse is treated as such. I can see no underlying principle in this chaos; and I have not thought it worth while to fill pages cataloguing in detail the excursions of Kirkman's printer from verse to prose and prose to verse. Those whom they interest will do better to refer direct to Q. On the other hand, where Q arranges its verse as verse, but with different line divisions, these are recorded.

72 *minutes* By Q: *minutes*, by D (thus making *May you = If you will*).

95 D inserts a comma after *degrees*, with some change of the sense.

99. [*Mistriss*] *Mrs.* Q (which misleads the modern reader to think of the repellent *Missus*) I have made this change throughout the play: and similarly [*Master*] represents the *Mr.* of Q.

102-3 *upon this—for... thoughts?—sadness.* D: *upon this. For... sadness?* Q (with no stop after *thoughts*)

123. *Friends*] The capital is wanting in the corresponding 119 above; it *might* serve to mark the stress Lessingham lays on this word at the second reading; but it is probably carelessness. Cf. the different spellings of *thee*, *the* in corresponding places.

124. *the[e]* *the* Q.

139-40 *Enter Woodroff, etc.*] opposite 133 in Q.

147 [*our*] D. *ours* Q.

186 [*are*] D: *r* Q (doubtless for *your = you're*).

*205. *I would he had; the hurt...*] Q has a comma after *had*: D and H no stop; but what sense does this make? I take the passage to mean. "If he has not such a natural child, I can only say I wish he had. It might be rather discreditable still that 'hurt' would be worth while putting up with for the sake of having an heir". D's reading *might* be rendered "I wish him—the hurt I wish you both—that is, no ill at all"—*i.e.* a sort of *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*. But this is hardly satisfactory.

I. 2.

There is no apparent change of place; but the rhyming couplet and the *Exeunt* which leaves the stage empty are perhaps enough to justify D in marking a new scene.

- 18-9. *much, For con. . . nay, etc.*] *much For coin; nay* Q.
 24. *Justice*] *justice* Q.
 51. [*Less.*] *Eust.* Q.
 81. *Mon[o]machy*] *Monamachy* Q.
 110. [*n*] *ine*] *mine* Q.
 120. [*f*] *ighting*] *sighting* Q.
 169 [*that*] inserted by D. Cf. *W.D.* II. 1. 28.
 218. *Dover?*] ends 217 in D (the whole passage is prose in Q).
 224. *have* ^] *have have* Q.

II. 1.

18. *ope*[*n*] *ope* QD. Considering the far greater metrical smoothness of this play, so easy a correction (the MS. may have had *opē*) seems worth making.
 41. *love. . .*] *love.* Q.
 43. D queries *I now would spread 'em*—(needlessly).
 47. Ends at *moveables* in D (prose in Q).

II. 2.

- *7. *So far as rank poison*] ? *Not so far*. If all poisons were "cold", we could dispense with the *not*: but Winter Wolf's-bane, for instance, is classified by Gerard as "dry and hot". See Commentary. However the author may have forgotten this. (Q has a comma after *cold*)
 15. *First* ^] *First then* Q: probably, as D suggests, through a mistaken repetition of the first *then* in the line.
 *25 [*containe*] D: *contrive* Q; *n* and *v* are easily confused; thus we have *grieved* (Q) for *grained* (F) in *Ham.* III. 4. 90; and *conserve* for *containe* in Spenser (Kellner, p. 116).
Contrive might be right, in the sense "spend" (Lat. *conterere*). All the sixteenth-century instances in *N.E.D.*, however, up to the latest there given (*Tam. Shrew*, I. 2. 279—"contrive this afternoon") are of spending *time*. Still it is impossible to say that *contrive* is definitely wrong. *Lanck*, however, supports *containe*.
 38-9. End with *Sir* | *Key* in D.
 55. [*wil'f*] D: *wilt* Q.
 *105. *Courtier—owld*] *Courtier, owl'd* Q: *Courtier old* D. D by abolishing any stop between the words destroys the joke, which apparently consists in the unexpected addition, after a pause, of *old*. See Commentary. A more drastic remedy would be to change the order—I *knew one Courtier once, fifteen years old*. But this too destroys the joke.
 108. *back?*] QDH omit question-mark (Q, of course, omits them *passim*).

II. 3.

6. *Enter Compass.*] D (needlessly) moves to 16.
 62. *times—that*] no stop in Q.
 86. *fountain[s]* D: *fountain* Q.
 105. *wench—*] Q has a comma, D a question-mark.

*111. [*Lea Cut*] the only conjecture I can make for Q's *Itacus*, which previous editors have left in despair. *Cut* is the regular word for artificial channels: see 13 Eliz. c. 18 *passim*, which authorizes a "cut" to bring the waters of the Lea to London. The present passage, however, requires a *Lea Cut* further south so as to form a frontier somewhere by Bow: and it is worth noting that 7 Jac. I, c. 9 (1609-10), does authorize such a cut from the Lea at Bow Bridge to Lock Bridge in Hackney. I do not for a moment claim the emendation to be certain: but it at least makes sense. And there are not many suitable landmarks in the district, though I have searched old maps.

In Elizabethan handwriting, *I* for *L*, *t* for *r*, *s* for *t* are all easy mistakes.

135. [*Ha'*] D: *Ha*, Q.

140. [*foure*] *fours* Q: *four* D.

154-8. D prints as prose: Q as here.

II. 4

6. [*remain*] D. *remains* Q.

*11. [*that*] the addition of this seems to me necessary. It probably dropped out through confusion with the *that* immediately above it in the previous line. See Text. Note on *W.D.* II. 1. 28.

13. [*it*] QD omit. *Conceal't* would be even easier.

22. *Enter Nurse*] One line higher in Q.

*39. *A fool!—rid him*] *A fool rid him* QD. But this is nonsense. Why should a fool be invoked to remove Compass? *Rid him further off* is an order to the nurse Cf next sentence.

57. *Onely*] ends 56 in D.

60. *quite out*] begins 61 in D.

*81. *am rife*] ? *can rise* (cut a caper). Cf Steele, *Spectat* 376. "She has seen him rise six or seven Capers together". This goes rather well with *put down* just before (cf. I. 1. 164): but it cannot, of course, claim any high degree of probability.

87 *In*] ends 86 in D

100-1. [*Manet*] *Manent* Q.

102-3 *peace, ... houses,*] *peace, . . houses,* Q. *peace, ... houses:* D. But 103 certainly belongs rather to 104 than to 102

125-7. In D end—*me* | *Constable* | *appear*.

129. *Nay*] *Nay?* Q.

137. *But*] ends 136 in D.

143. *then—you*] *then you* Q: *then; you* D.

147-50. In D lines end—*too* | *fraughted* | *Mart* | *boys*. The metre is unsatisfactory either way.

172. *Sir*] begins 173 in D.

187. *Ile*] *I will* D.

secund[us]] *secundus* Q.

III. 1.

27. [*this*] D: 'tis Q.

*40-2. *Wine and Riot—giddy and sinking; I had found 'em oft Brave Seconds. . .*] this stopping agrees in the main with H. QD, missing the point, place a colon after *Riot*, no stop after *sinking*, and a comma after *oft*.

51. [*and*] D: *but* Q.

60. [*under-prop*] D: *under-prop't* Q (doubtless for *underprop't* with ditto-graphy of *it*).

67. wo[r]ld D: would Q.

68. But] ends 67 in D.

79, 85. I have added the inverted commas. Bonville is pondering on Clare's phrase.

85. She mocks you] begins 86 in D.

103. th[ou] D: then Q.

109-10. In D lines end—ever | now.

112. make thy way to it] D thinks something must have dropped out here. But with the stage-direction I have added there seems no difficulty.

III. 2.

92. words—then let] words, then let Q words, then; let D.

111. by—by-betting] D: by, by betting Q: H silently alters to by bye-getting.

III. 3.

5. onely] begins 6 in D.

104. [third] D: three Q. Probably the ms. had 3rd which was misread as 3.

108. us besides,] us, besides Q.

127. to ^] to Q.

IV. 1.

s.D. one Boy] probably a corruption of 1 Boy (i.e. 1st Boy). Cf. III. 3 104 above. D has First Boy.

53, 54-5. [1] Boy, [2] Boy] 2 Boy, 1 Boy Q. But, as Dyce points out, Compass has already called the Boy who appears at the beginning of this scene "Hodge"; so that if Hodge is First Boy, Rafe the musician must be Second Boy.

54. [1 Boy] D: Enter Boy Q.

64. [Latitat] Latitate Q.

*89. religious, Q: D has a full stop. But I think Pettfog is being intentionally ambiguous: seeming to say "As sure as I'm religious, I'll mind your suit"; but meaning only "As sure as I'm religious—I'll drink to you!"

94. Enter 2 Client] D moves to 96-7

*115. [what?—shall] you recover] QDH read simply what shall you recover?—to which the reply In Guild-hall is no answer at all. So that D has to suppose that something has dropped out; which, with this reading, is unnecessary. The point is the absurdity of getting any damages whatever for such a trifle. This absolute use of recover (= "recover damages") is quite common down to modern times.

136. Compr[omiser] Comprémiser Q.

168. Apples Q: the Apples D (metri gratia; but needlessly).

192-4. In D lines end agreement | fault | will I.

205. kiss, Urse] kiss Urse Q; but there can be no real question about the sense.

*218. approved Q: approved? D. It makes quite good sense thus to turn the sentence into a question: but the real point is, I think, that the remedy is a tried one—as Kirkman says in his preface (24-6)—"The Expedient . . . hath bin tried to my knowledge, and therefore I may say Probatum est".

The reference is probably to some local tradition of Limehouse.

228. Exit wife.] opposite 225 in Q.

IV. 2.

26. *More*] ends 25 in D.

34-5. One line in D.

71. *ne[']e[r]*] near Q (old variant-form).

*165. *violence*: [and] *your friend Brooke*: *violence on your friend* QDH. The right reading here is extremely important, for it affects the whole question of Clare's motives. And either this emendation of Rupert Brooke's, or his less probable alternative, *violence on your [self]*, seems necessary to make the plot coherent.

Clare tells Lessingham in I. 1—

Prove all thy Friends, find out the best and nearest,
Kill for my sake that Friend that loves thee dearest.

Now the answer to this riddle is not "Bonvile". For in II. 4, when Clare suspects that Lessingham has actually gone to fight Bonvile, she says to herself that he is "quite out o' the way Of my purpose"; and in III. 3:

O fool Lessingham,
Thou hast mistook my injunction utterly,
Utterly mistook it!

Once more in IV. 2 she says to Lessingham himself: "Surely I was your dearest friend?" And a little later, she explains her real meaning. She was in love with Bonvile and desperate at his marriage; and so she had prepared poison for herself and plotted that Lessingham should "unwittingly" have administered it to her. The equivocation about the "dearest friend" is a childish piece of staginess on the part of an intending suicide; but Webster loved such Delphic riddles; and we cannot say that the psychology is quite impossible. In any case here Clare has just stated quite clearly that the intended victim was not Bonvile, but *herself*.

And yet, as the text of the Quarto stands, she is here made, in explaining herself to Bonvile, to contradict this statement of a moment before and imply that she *did* mean Lessingham to kill Bonvile after all. For that is the only natural meaning of the rather obscure phrasing; and yet it makes the plot a complete chaos.

One other possibility occurs to me. Could "violence on your friend" mean "making your friend Lessingham, against his will and without his knowledge, become the agent of your death"? In this way the text might be saved but it seems to me a quite desperate remedy.

I must add that in neither case, whether with Rupert Brooke's alteration of the text or with this interpretation of it, does the motivation of the play as a whole become satisfactory. Brooke failed to note, when he tried to make suicide Clare's *one* idea, that she could not possibly describe *herself* as the friend that loved Lessingham dearest. for it was very far from being the case. Besides, how was he to "prove" her? And it would be hard even for her preevish logic to call Lessingham a fool for not giving her words a sense they could not possibly bear.

We must conclude, I think, either that Clare is meant to be utterly hysterical, not knowing her own mind from one moment to the next; or that the plot was muddled by the author or authors. It seems strange that such carelessness should be possible: and yet we must remember that of all the critics who have read and sometimes praised the play, no one before Stoll seems to have perceived that any difficulty existed.

184. *For*] ends 183 in D.

235. [*Bon*] *Less*. Q.

IV. 3.

10. *beget, and] beget; and* Q.
 11. *Enter Wife]* D moves to 15-6.
 23. No comma in Q.
 28-30. H's arrangement. Prose in Q; D makes the verse begin only at *I might* and puts a comma (wanting in QH) after *sometimes*.
 34-5. Prose in QDH; but the wife seems to speak in verse.
 70. *branded] are branded* D (which may well be right).
 94. *Sou-west [s] Sou-west* Q; *Sou-west'* D.
 110. *too weak, to yeild]* Q, ambiguously, omits comma.

V. 1.

26. From here onwards, except for a number of short passages, the verse is properly printed as verse in Q.
 47. *Exit.]* opposite 45 in Q.
 89. *Brid[al]-day] Bride-day* Q.
 103-7. Q gives to *Less*, inserting his name as speaker again, however, at 108.
 108-9. One line in Q.
 129. *Ile] I will* D.
 134. *Enter Woodroff]* Q places at 129.
 146-7. In D lines end—*already | over*.
 174-5, 196-7. One line in Q.
 198. [*he]* *she* Q.
 229-30, 240-1. One line in Q.
 245. [*Wood.]* Q omits.
 271-2. One line in Q.
 280-1, 288-9. One line in QD.
 302-3. One line in Q.
 320-1. One line in QD.
 325-6, 335-6, 337-8. One line in Q.
 352. D marks new scene. This rather breaks into the middle of a rapid piece of action.
 372-3. *him, ...you,] him. ...you*, Q: *him, . you*: D.
 375. *the[e]] the* Q.
 378-9. *Callis-sands—... Fence-school,] -sands, ...-school*, Q. *-sands, ...-school*; D. It is clear, I think, that *hee'l show you tricks* is closely connected with *Fence-school*.
 *388. *belue* QDH: ? *belue himself* (cf. 395). Scan:
 He'll belue | himself | to do thee | a plea|sure then.
 An alternative is—*he will be lying*.
 396-7. One line in Q.
 401. *Ile* Q: *I will* D (perhaps rightly).
 414. *on['t]] on* QD.
 470. *Bless us Hymen]* separate line in D.
 510. *A night-bird]* separate line in D.
 510. *may do you] may it do you* D in 1st ed.: in his 2nd ed. he restored the Q reading, on the ground that in such expressions *it* is frequently omitted in English of the time.