

# The Country Wife, Act II

## ACT 2, Scene I

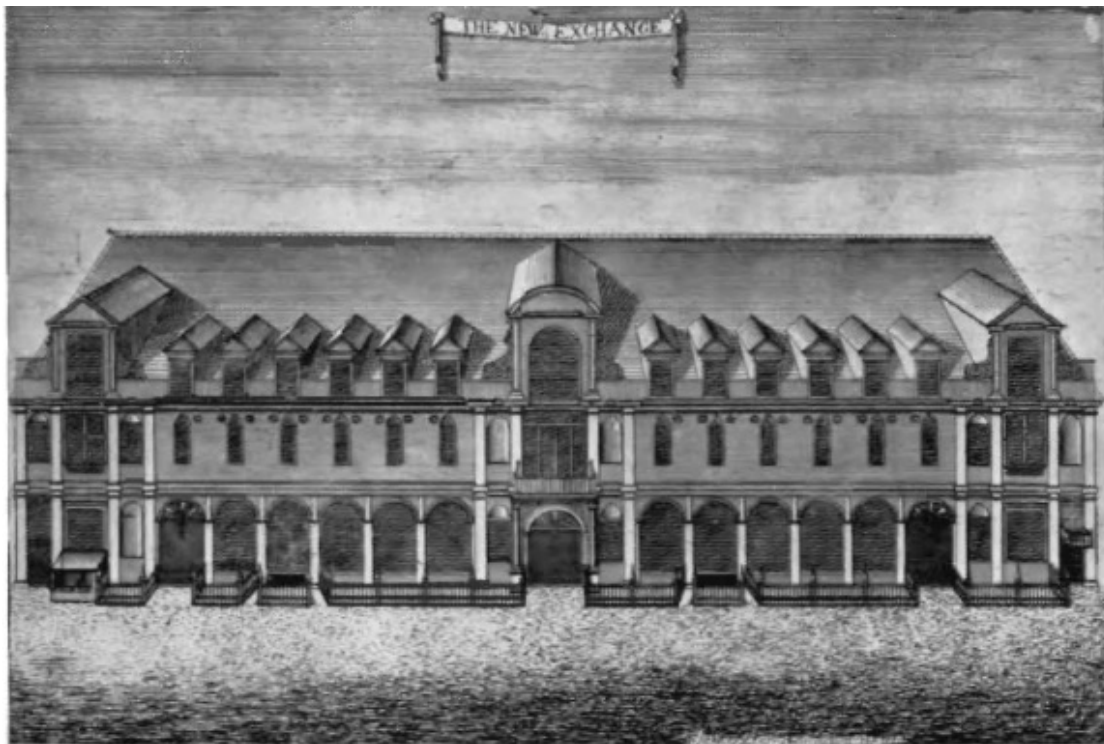
*Mrs. Margery Pinchwife, and Alithea: Mr. Pinchwife peeping behind at the door.*

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

A pretty Question; why, Sister! [Mulberry Garden](#), and [St. James's Park](#); and for close walks the [New Exchange](#).



The New Exchange, on the Strand in London, was a covered shopping arcade, with stores selling fashionable clothing.

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

O he's jealous, Sister.

*Mrs Pinchwife*

Jealous, what's that?

*Alithea*

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

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

Did he not carry you yesterday to a Play?

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

But how did you like the Play?

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

O but you must not like the Actors, Sister.

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

A walking, hah, ha; Lord, a Country Gentlewomans leisure is the drudgery of a foot-post; and she requires as much airing

as her Husbands Horses. [*Aside.*]

Enter Mr. *Pinchwife* to them.

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

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

Fye, the small Pox you shou'd say.

*Mrs Pinchwife*

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

*Mr Pinchwife*

Your a Fool.

*Alithea*

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

*Mr Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Mr Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Mr Pinchwife*

No, you keep the Men of scandalous reputations Company.

*Alithea*

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

*Mr Pinchwife*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Then you are very inquisitive to know, I find?

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Nay, if she be so innocent as to own to me her lieking them,

there is no hurt in't— [*Aside.*] Come my poor Rogue, but thou lik'st none better then me?

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

But you love none better then me?

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Yes, I warrant you.

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

Ay, I warrant you.

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Why, you do not, I hope?

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Ha—Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a Play.

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

So 'twill be in other things, I warrant. [*Aside.*

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

Pray, let me go to a Play, Dear.

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Hold your Peace, I wo'not.

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

Why, Love?

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Why, I'll tell you.

*Alithea*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

Pray, why, Dear?

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

I tell you, yes, they may.

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

Indeed! who, who, pray who wast?

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

I promise you, you lye; for he wou'd but ruin you, as he has done hundreds: he has no other love for Women, but that, such as he, look upon Women like Basilicks, but to destroy 'em.

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Alithea*

Hah, ha, ha.

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Enter Sparkish and Harcourt.*

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

*Mrs. Pinchwife*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

In baggage, in.

*Thrusts her in: shuts the door.* [What all the lewd Libertines of the Town brought to my Lodging, by this easie Coxcomb! S'death I'll not suffer it.

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt* salutes her.

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Sparkish*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Monstrous!— [*Aside.*

*Sparkish*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Wonderful!

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt*



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

*Alithea*

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

*Sparkish*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

Praising another Man to his Mistriss!

*Harcourt*

Sir, you are so beyond expectation obliging, that—

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

Truly, Madam, I never was an Enemy to Marriage, till now,

because Marriage was never an Enemy to me before.

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

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

*Sparkish*

Poor Franck!

*Alithea*

Wou'd you be so unkind to me?

*Harcourt*

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

*Sparkish*

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

*Pinchwife*

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



“Fop” meant a man who dressed extravagantly, taking fashion to an excess. Here is Colley Cibber in his signature role of Lord Foppington, around 1697.

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt*

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

*Sparkish*

Prethee, *Frank*, dost think my Wife that shall be there a fine Person?

*Harcourt*

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

*Sparkish*

How, as I am! how!

*Harcourt*

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

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt*

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

*Alithea*

Sir, you dispose of me a little before your time.— [*Aside to Sparkish.*]

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt courts Alithea aside.*

*Pinchwife*

How, Sir, if you are not concern'd for the honour of a Wife, I am for that of a Sister; he shall not debauch her: be a Pander to your own Wife, bring Men to her, let 'em make love before your face, thrust 'em into a corner together, then leav 'em in private! is this your Town wit and conduct?

*Sparkish*

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

Struggles with *Pinchwife* to keep him from *Harcourt* and *Alithea*.

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

Then so is my death.

*Alithea*

I wou'd not be unjust to him.

*Harcourt*

Then why to me so?

*Alithea*

I have no obligation to you.

*Harcourt*

My love.

*Alithea*

I had his before.

*Harcourt*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

Marrying you, is no more sign of his love, than bribing your Woman, that he may marry you, is a sign of his generosity:

Marriage is rather a sign of interest, then love; and he that marries a fortune, covets a Mistress, not loves her: But if you take Marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

Hold, hold— [*Aside to Alithea.*]

*Mr. Pinchwife*

D'ye hear that?

*Sparkish*

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

*Mr. Pinchwife*

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

*Harcourt*

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

*Alithea.*

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

*Harcourt*

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

*Alithea.*

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

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt*

Not so much as I thought, and hoped she had. [*Speaks surlily*

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

Madam—

*Sparkish*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

True damn'd tell-tale-Woman. [*Aside.*

*Sparkish*

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

*Alithea.*

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

*Sparkish*

Pshaw.

*Harcourt*

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

*Alithea*

A Common Bubble.

*Sparkish*

Pshaw.

*Alithea*

A Coward.

*Sparkish*

Pshaw, pshaw.

*Alithea*

A senseless driveling Idiot.

*Sparkish*

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

*Alithea*

Hold, hold.

*Sparkish*

What, what.

*Alithea*

I must not let 'em kill the Gentleman neither, for his



kindness to me; I am so far from hating him, that I wish my Gallant had his person and understanding:— [*Aside.*] Nay if my honour—

*Sparkish*

I'll be thy death.

*Alithea*

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

*Sparkish*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Harcourt*

Kind however— [*Aside.*]

*Sparkish*

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

*Harcourt*

Because I did not think on't, faith.

*Sparkish*

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

*Alithea*

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

*Sparkish*

Pshaw, I'll leave *Harcourt* with you in the Box, to entertain you, and that's as good; if I sate in the Box, I shou'd be

thought no Judge, but of trimmings.—Come away *Harcourt*, lead her down.

Exeunt *Sparkish*, *Harcourt*, and *Alitheia*.

*Pinchwife*

Well, go thy wayes, for the flower of the true Town Fops, such as spend their Estates, before they come to 'em, and are Cuckolds before they'r married. But let me go look to my own Free-hold—How—

Enter my *Lady Fidget*, *Mistriss Dainty Fidget*, and *Mistriss Squeamish*.

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Pinchwife*

New Play!

*Lady Fidget*

And my Husband will wait upon you presently.

*Pinchwife*

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

*Lady*

Now we are here, Sir—

*Pinchwife*

No, Madam.

*Dainty*

Pray, let us see her.

*Squeamish*

We will not stir, till we see her.

*Pinchwife*

A Pox on you all— [Aside.] Goes to the door, and returns.  
She has lock'd the door, and is gone abroad.

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Dainty*

They told us below, she was here.

*Pinchwife*

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

*Lady Fidget*

No, no, we have all had 'em.

*Squeamish*

Alack, alack.

*Dainty*

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

*Lady Fidget*

Come.

*Pinchwife*

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

Exit *Pinchwife*.

*Squeamish*

Here's an example of jealousy.

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Dainty*

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

*Lady Fidget*

Foh, 'tis a nasty World.

*Squeamish*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Squeamish*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Squeamish*

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

*Dainty*

Fye, fye upon 'em, they are come to think cross breeding for

themselves best, as well as for their Dogs, and Horses.

*Lady Fidget*

They are Dogs, and Horses for 't.

*Squeamish*

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

*Dainty*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Squeamish*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Dainty*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Dainty*

But then the pleasure shou'd be the less.

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Dainty*

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

*Squeamish*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Dainty*

So the little Fellow is grown a private Person— with her—  
[*Apart to Squeamish.*]

*Lady Fidget*

But still my dear, dear Honour.

*Enter Sir Jaspar, Horner, Dorilant*

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Horner*

That she has none elsewhere— [Aside.]

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Dainty*

Foh, these are as bad as Wits.

*Squeamish*

Foh!

*Lady Fidget*

Let us leave the Room.

*Sir Jasper*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Sir Jasper*

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

*Lady Fidget*

With those two to a Play?

*Sir Jasper*

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

*Lady Fidget*

With that nasty Fellow! no—no

*Sir Jasper*

Nay, prethee Dear, hear me. [*Whispers to Lady Fid. Horner, Dorilant drawing near Squeamish, and Dainty*

*Horner*

Ladies.

*Dainty*

Stand off.

*Squeamish*

Do not approach us.

*Dainty*

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

*Squeamish*

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

*Dorilant*

What a Divel are these?

*Horner*

Why, these are pretenders to honour, as criticks to wit, only by censuring others; and as every raw peevish, out-of-humour'd, affected, dull, Tea-drinking, Arithmetical Fop sets up for a wit, by railing at men of sence, so these for honour, by railing at the Court, and Ladies of as great honour, as quality.

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Horner*

I! Sir.

*Sir Jaspar*

Ay, ay, come, Sir.

*Horner*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

Ha, ha, strange Aversion!

*Squeamish*

No, he's for Womens company in private.

*Sir Jaspar*

He-poor Man-he! hah, ha, ha.

*Dainty*

'Tis a greater shame amongst lew'd fellows to be seen in



virtuous Womens company, than for the Women to be seen with them.

*Horner*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

In sober sadness he shall go.

*Dorilant*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Dorilant*

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

*Exit Dorilant*

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Horner*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

Heh, he, he.

*Squeamish*

O the rude Beast.

*Dainty*

Insolent brute.

*Lady Fidget*

Brute! stinking mortify'd rotten *French* Weather, to dare—

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Horner*

I hope they'll afford me better employment, Sir.

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Horner*

Who I?—

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Horner*

For your sake—

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Lady Fidget*

Yes, losing Gamesters have a privilege with Women.

*Horner*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Horner*

All sorts of freedom, Madam?

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Horner*

I think I know her already, therefore may venter with her, my secret for hers— [*Aside.*

*Horner, and Lady Fidget whisper.*

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Dainty*

Who he!

*Squeamish*

There's a Play-fellow indeed.

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Squeamish*

Foh, we'll have no such Play-fellows.

*Dainty*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

Nay, pray hear me. [*Whispering to them.*]

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Horner*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Horner*

No, Madam, you shou'd not need to forfeit it for me, I have given you security already to save you harmless my late

reputation being so well known in the World, Madam.

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Horner*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

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

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Sir Jaspar*

Very likely, poor Madam.

*Dainty*

I believe it.

*Squeamish*

No doubt on 't.

*Sir Jaspar*

Well, well—that your Ladyship is as virtuous as any she,—I know, and him all the Town knows—heh, he, he; therefore now

you like him, get you gone to your business together; go, go,  
to your business, I say, pleasure, whilst I go to my pleasure,  
business.

*Lady Fidget*

Come than dear Gallant.

*Horner*

Come away, my dearest Mistriss.

*Sir Jaspar*

So, so, why 'tis as I'd have it.

*Exit Sir Jaspar*

*Horner*

And as I'd have it.

*Lady Fidget*

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

*Exeunt omnes.*