

The Modern Husband

Henry Fielding

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Henry Fielding

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*Hæc ego non credam Venusinâ digna Lucernâ?
Hæc ego non agitem?
Cùm Leno accipiat Moechi bona, si capiendi
Jus nullum Uxori, doctus spectare Lacunar,
Doctus & ad Calicem vigilantî stertere Naso.*

Juv. Sat. 1.

To the Right Honourable *Sir Robert Walpole, Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter.*

SIR,

The Modern Husband

While the Peace of *Europe*, and the Lives and Fortunes of so great a Part of Mankind, depend on Your Counsels, it may be thought an Offence against the publick Good to divert, by Trifles of this Nature, any of those Moments, which are so sacred to the Welfare of our Country.

But however ridicul'd or exploded the Muses may be, in an Age when their greatest Favourites are liable to the Censure and Correction of every Boy or Idiot, who shall have it in his power to satisfy the Wantonness of an evil Heart, at the Expence of the Reputation and Interest of the best Poet, yet has this Science been esteemed, honoured, protected, and often professed by the greatest Persons of Antiquity. Nations and the Muses have generally enjoyed the same Protectors.

The Reason of this is obvious: As the best Poets have owed their Reward to the greatest Heroes and Statesmen of their Times, so those Heroes have owed to the Poet that Posthumous Reputation, which is generally the only Reward that attends the greatest Actions. By them the Great and Good blaze out to Posterity, and triumph over the little Malice and Envy which once pursued them.

Protect therefore, Sir, an Art from which You may promise Your self such notable Advantages; when the little Artifices of Your Enemies, which You have surmounted, shall be forgotten, when Envy shall cease to misrepresent Your Actions, and Ignorance to misapprehend them. The Muses shall remember their Protector, and the wise Statesman the generous Patron, the stedfast Friend, and the true Patriot; but above all that Humanity and Sweetness of Temper, which shine thro' all your Actions, shall render the Name of Sir Robert Walpole dear to his no longer ungrateful Country.

That Success may attend all Your Counsels; that You may continue to preserve us from our Enemies Abroad, and to triumph over Your Enemies at Home, is the sincere Wish of,

SIR, Your most obliged, Most obedient humble Servant, Henry Fielding.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. WILKS.

*In early Youth, our Author first begun,
To Combat with the Follies of the Town;
Her want of Art, his unskill'd Muse bewail'd,
And where his Fancy pleas'd, his Judgment fail'd.
Hence, your nice Tastes he strove to entertain,
With unshap'd Monsters of a wanton Brain!
He taught Tom Thumb strange Victories to boast,
Slew Heaps of Giants, and then kill'd a Ghost!
To Rules, or Reason, scorn'd the dull Pretence,
And fought your Champion, 'gainst the Cause of Sense!
At length, repenting Frolick Flights of Youth,
Once more he flies to Nature, and to Truth:
In Virtue's just Defence, aspires to Fame,
And courts Applause without the Applauder's Shame!
Impartial let your Praise, or Censure flow,
For, as he brings no Friend, he hopes to find no Foe.
His Muse in Schools too unpolite was bred,*

The Modern Husband

*To apprehend each Critick that can Read:
For, sure, no Man's Capacity's loss ample
Because he's been at Oxford or the Temple!
He shews but little Judgment, or discerning,
Who thinks Taste banish'd from the Seats of Learning.
Nor is less false, or scandalous th' Aspersion,
That such will ever damn their own Diversion.
But, Poets damn'd, like Thieves convicted, act,
Rail at their Jury, and deny the Fact!
To Night (yet Strangers to the Scene) you'll view,
A Pair of Monsters most entirely new!
Two Characters scarce ever found in Life.
A willing Cuckold sells his willing Wife!
But, from whatever Clime the Creatures come,
Condemn 'em not because not found at home:
If then, true Nature in his Scenes you trace,
Not Scenes, that Comedy to Farce debase;
If Modern Vice detestable be shewn,
And vicious, as it is, he draws the Town;
Tho' no loud Laugh applaud the serious Page,
Restore the sinking Honour of the Stage!
The Stage which was not for low Farce design'd,
But to divert, instruct, and mend Mankind.*

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. HERON.

*As Malefactors, on their dying Day,
Have always something, at the Tree, to say;
So I, before to Exile I go down,
With my hard hapless Fate would warn the Town.
Fatal Quadrille! Fly! Fly the tempting Evil!
For when our last Stake's lost, 'tis sure the Devil!
With curst Quadrille avoid my fatal Shame,
Or if you can't at least play all the Game
Of spotless Fame, be chary as your Lives!
Keep wide of Proof, and you're the best of Wives!
Husbands most Faults, not publick made, connive at;
The Trip's a Trifle when the Frailty's private.
What can a Poet hope, then, that reveals 'em?
The Fair might like the Play, whose Plot conceals 'em;
For who would favour Plays to be thus us'd,
None ever were by Operas abus'd!
Or could they warble Scandal out at random,
Where were the Harm, while none could understand 'em?
But I no more must hear those melting Strains
Condemn'd, alas! to Woods and lonely Plains!
Gay Masquerades, now, turn'd to Country-Fairs,*

The Modern Husband

*And croaking Rooks supply soft Eunuch Airs.
No Ring, no Mall no Rat, tat, tat, at Doors;
And, O hard Fate! for dear Quadrille All-Fours.
No more new Plays! but that's a small Offence,
Your Taste will shortly banish them from hence.
Yet ere I part, methinks, it were to wrong you,
Not to bequeath some Legacies among you.
My Reputation, I for Prudes intend,
In hopes their Strictness what's amiss will mend.
My young Gallants, let ancient Maidens kill,
And take my Husband any Soul that will!
Our Author to the spotless Fair I give,
For his chaste Wife to grant him a Reprieve:
Whatever Faults to me may be imputed,
In her you view your Virtues unpolluted.
In her sweet Mind, even Age and wandring Youth
Must own the Transports of Connubial Truth:
Thus each Extreme is for Instruction meant,
And ever was the Stage's true Intent,
To give Reward to Virtue, Vice its Punishment.*

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

*Lord Richly. Mr. Cibber. Mr. Bellamant. Mr. Wilks. Cap. Bellamant. Mr. Cibber, Jun. Mr. Gaywit. Mr. Mills, Jun.
Mr. Modern. Mr. Bridgewater. Lord Lazy. Person who attends L. Richly's Levee. Mr. Boman. Col. Courtly. Person
who attends L. Richly's Levee. Mr. Hallam, Jun. Mr. Woodall, Person who attends L. Richly's Levee. Mr.
Harper. Cap. Merit. Person who attends L. Richly's Levee. Mr. Paget. Cap. Bravemore. Person who attends L.
Richly's Levee. Mr. Watson. John, Servant to Modern. Mr. Berry. Porter to Lord Richly. Mr. Mullart.*

WOMEN.

*Lady Charlotte Gaywit. Mrs. Cibber. Mrs. Bellamant. Mrs. Horton. Mrs. Modern. Mrs. Heron. Emilia. Mrs.
Butler. Lately. Mrs. Charke.*

SCENE LONDON.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE, *Mrs. Modern's House.*

Mrs. Modern at her Toilet: Lately attending.

Mrs. Modern.

Lud! this Creature is longer in sticking a Pin, than some People are in dressing a Head. Will you never have done fumbling?

ACT I.

The Modern Husband

Lately.

There, Maam, your Ladyship is drest.

Mrs. Modern.

Drest! ay, most frightfully drest, I am sure If it were not too late, I wou'd begin it all again. This Gown is wretchedly made, and does not become me when was *Tricksy* here?

Lately.

Yesterday, Maam, with her Bill.

Mrs. Modern.

How! her Bill already?

Lately.

She says, Maam, your Ladyship bid her bring it.

Mrs. Modern.

Ay, to be sure, she'll not fail to remember that.

Lately.

She says too, Maam, that she's in great Distress for her Money.

Mrs. Modern.

Oh, no doubt of that, I do not know any one who is not.

Lately.

What shall I do, Maam, when she comes again?

Mrs. Modern.

You must you must send her away again, I think.

Lately.

Yes, Maam, but

Mrs. Modern.

But but what? don't trouble me with your Impertinence, I have other things to think on Bills! Bills! Bills! I wonder, in a civiliz'd Nation, there are no Laws against Duns. [*Knocking at the Door.*] Come in.

SCENE II.

To them Footman.

Foot.

My Lady *Ever-play*, Madam, gives her humble Service to you, and desires your Ladyship's Company To-morrow Se'nnight to make a Party at *Quadrille* with my Lady *Lose-all*, and Mrs. *Banespouse*.

Mrs. Modern.

Lately, bring the *Quadrille* Book hither, see whether I am engag'd.

The Modern Husband

Lately.

Here it is, Maam.

Mrs. Modern.

Run over the Engagements.

Lately.

Monday, February 5. at Mrs. Squabble's; Tuesday, at Mrs. Witless's; Wednesday, at Lady Matadore's; Thursday, at Mrs. Fiddle-Faddle's; Friday, at Mrs. Ruin's; Saturday, at Lady Trifle's; Sunday, at Lady Barbara Pawnjewels.

Mrs. Modern.

What is the Wench doing? see for how long I am engag'd at this rate you will not have done this Hour.

Lately.

Maam, your Ladyship is engag'd ev'ry Night till *Thursday* three Weeks.

Mrs. Modern.

My Service to Lady *Ever-play*, I have Parties ev'ry Night till *Thursday* three Weeks, and then I shall be very glad if she will get two more at my House and *Tom* take the Roll of Visits, and go with my Chair to pay them, but remember not to call at Mrs. *Worthy's*.

SCENE III.

Mrs. Modern, Lately.

I intend to leave off her Acquaintance, for I never see any People of Fashion at her House; which, indeed, I do not wonder at, for the Wretch is hardly ever to be found without her Husband. And truly, I think, she is not fit Company for any other. Did you ever see any one dress like her, *Lately*?

Lately.

Oh, frightful! I have wonder'd how your Laship cou'd endure her so long.

Mrs. Modern.

Why, she plays at *Quadrille* worse than she dresses, and one wou'd endure a great deal in a Person who loses her Money.

Lately.

Nay, now I wonder that your Laship has left her off at all.

Mrs. Modern.

Truly, because she has left off Play; and now she rails at Cards for the same Reason, as some Women do at Gallantry from ill Success. Poor Creatures! how ignorant they are, that all their railing is only a loud Proclamation, that they have lost their Money, or a Lover!

Lately.

They may rail as long as they please, Maam, they will never be able to expel those two Pleasures out of the World.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Modern.

Ah, *Lately!* I hope, I shall be expell'd out of the World first. Those *Quadrille* Rings of mine are worth more Money, than four of the best *Brilliants* There is more *Conjuration* in these dear *Circles*; [*Shews a Ring.*] These *Spades*, *Hearts*, *Clubs* and *Diamonds*. Hark, I hear my Husband coming, go you down *Stairs*. [*Exit Lately.*] Husband, did I say? Sure, the *Wretch*, who sells his *Wife*, deserves another *Name*; but I must be civil to him while I despise him.

SCENE IV.

Mr. Modern, Mrs. Modern.

Mrs. Modern.

My Dear, Good-morrow.

Mr. Modern.

I hope, you slept well last Night, Madam; that is, I hope, you had good Success at Cards.

Mrs. Modern.

Very indifferent. I had won a considerable Sum if it had not been for a cursed *Sans-prendre-vole*, that swept the whole Table. That Lady *Weldon* has such Luck, if I were superstitious, I shou'd forswear playing with her for I never play'd with her, but I cheated, nor ever play'd with her, but I lost.

Mr. Modern.

Then without being very superstitious, I think, you may suspect that she cheats too.

Mrs. Modern.

Did I not know the other Company; for the very worst of *Quadrille* is, one cannot cheat without a Partner. The Division of a Booty gives one more Pain, than the winning it can Pleasure I am to make up Accounts to-morrow with Mrs. *Sharpring* but where to get the Money, I know not, unless you have it, Child.

Mr. Modern.

I have it! I wanted to borrow some of you; unless you can raise me 500 Pounds by tomorrow Night, I shall be in a fair way to go to Jail the next Morning.

Mrs. Modern.

If the whole Happiness of my Life depended on it, I cou'd not get the tenth part.

Mr. Modern.

You do not manage Lord *Richly* right: Men will give any thing to a Woman they are fond of.

Mrs. Modern.

But not to a Woman whom they were fond of The Decay of Lord *Richly's* Passion is too apparent for you not to have observ'd it. He visits me seldom, and I am afraid, shou'd I ask a Favour of him, it might break off our Acquaintance.

Mr. Modern.

Then, I see no reason for your Acquaintance; he dances no longer at my House, if he will not pay the Musick But hold, I have a Thought

The Modern Husband

come into my Head, may oblige him to it, and make better Musick for us than you imagine.

Mrs. Modern.

What is it?

Mr. Modern.

Suppose, I procur'd Witnesses of his Familiarity with you I shou'd recover swinging Damages.

Mrs. Modern.

But then my Reputation

Mr. Modern.

Pooh, you will have enough to gild it; never fear your Reputation, while you are rich for Gold in this World covers as many Sins, as Charity in the next. So that get a great deal, and give away a little, and you secure your Happiness in both. Besides, in this Case, all the Scandal falls on the Husband.

Mrs. Modern.

Oh no! I shall be no more visited Farewel, dear *Quadrille* ; dear, dear, *Sans-prendre-vole*, and *Matadores*.

Mr. Modern.

You will be forc'd to quit these Pleasures otherwise, for your Companions in 'em will quit you the very Moment they apprehend our sinking Fortune. You will find that Wealth has a surer Interest to introduce Roguery into Company, than Vertue to introduce Poverty.

Mrs. Modern.

You will never persuade me: my Reputation is dearer to me than my Life.

Mr. Modern.

Very strange, that a Woman who made so little Scruple of sacrificing the Substance of her Vertue, shou'd make so much of parting with the Shadow of it.

Mrs. Modern.

'Tis the Shadow only that is valuable Reputation is the Soul of Vertue.

Mr. Modern.

So far indeed, that it survives long after the Body is dead. Tho' to me, Vertue has appeared nothing more than a Sound, and Reputation is its Echo. Is there not more Charm in the Chink of a thousand Guineas, than in ten thousand Praises? But what need more Arguments, as I have been contented to wear Horns for your Pleasure, it is but reasonable, you shou'd let me show 'em for my Profit.

Mrs. Modern.

If my Pleasures, *Mr. Modern*, had been your only Inducement, you wou'd have acted another Part. How have you maintain'd your Figure in the World since your Losses in the *South-Sea*, and others? and do you upbraid me with the Crimes which you your self have licens'd have liv'd by?

Mr. Modern.

Had I follow'd my own Inclinations, I had retir'd; and instead of supporting these Extravagances by such Methods, had reduc'd my Pleasures to my Fortune. 'Twas you, Madam, who by your unbridl'd Pride, and Vanity run me into Debt, and then I gave up your Person to secure my own.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Modern.

Ha! have I secur'd thy worthless Person at the Expence of mine? no, Wretch, 'tis at the Price of thy Shame, I have purchas'd Pleasures. Why, why do I say thy Shame? the mean, the groveling Animal, whom any fear cou'd force to render up the Honour of his Wife, must be above the fear of Shame. Did I not come unblemisht to thee? Was not my Life unspotted as my Fame, 'till at thy base Intreaties I gave up my Innocence? Oh! that I had sooner seen thee starve in Prison, which yet I will, ere thou shalt reap the Fruits of my Misfortunes. No, I will publish thy Dishonour to the World.

Mr. Modern.

Nay, but, my Dear.

Mrs. Modern.

Despicable Monster!

Mr. Modern.

But, Child, hearken to Reason.

Mrs. Modern.

Never, never.

Mr. Modern.

I own my self in the wrong. I ask ten thousand Pardons. I will submit to any Punishment.

Mrs. Modern.

To upbraid me with

Mr. Modern.

My Dear, I am in the wrong, I say: I never will be guilty of the like again.

Mrs. Modern.

Leave me a while, perhaps, I may come to my self.

Mr. Modern.

My Dear, I am obedient. Sure, the Grand Seignior has no Slave equal to a contented Cuckold.

[Exit.

SCENE V.

Mrs. Modern alone.

Mrs. Modern.

What shall I do? Money must be rais'd but how? Is there on Earth a Person that wou'd lend me twenty Guineas! I have lost *Gaywit's* Heart too long to expect any thing there, nor wou'd my Love ever suffer me to ask him. Ha! *Bellamant*, perhaps may do it: he is generous, and I believe, he loves me. I will try him, however What wretched Shifts are they oblig'd to make use of, who wou'd support the Appearance of a Fortune which they have not!

The Modern Husband

[Exit.]

SCENE VI.

The Street before Lord Richly's Door.

Cap. Merit.

Cap. Merit.

That is the Door I must attack, and I have attackt a City with less Reluctance. There is more Hardship in one Hour's base Solicitation at a Levée, than in a whole Campaign.

SCENE VII.

Cap. Merit, Porter.

Cap. Merit.

Does my Lord *Richly* see Company this Morning?

Porter.

Sir, I cannot tell yet, whether he does or no.

Cap. Merit.

Nay, I have seen several Gentlemen go in.

Porter.

I know not whom you may see go in. I suppose, they have Business with his Lordship. I hope, you will give my Lord leave to be at home to whom he pleases.

Cap. Merit.

If Business be a Passport to his Lordship, I have Business with him of Consequence.

Porter.

Sir, I shall tell him of it.

Cap. Merit.

Sir, I shall be oblig'd to you, to tell him now.

Porter.

I cannot carry any Message now, unless I knew you.

Cap. Merit.

Why, don't you know me? that my Name is *Merit*.

Porter.

Sir, here are so many Gentlemen come ev'ry Day, that unless I have often new Tokens to remember 'em by, it is impossible Stand by there, room for my Lord *Lazy*.

[Lord Lazy crosses in a Chair.]

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SCENE VIII.

Cap. Merit, Cap. Bravemore, from the House.

Cap. Brave.

Merit, Good—morrow; what important Affair can have sent you hither, whom I know to shun the Houses of the Great, as much as Vertue does?

Cap. Merit.

Or as much as they do Poverty, for I have not been able to advance farther than you see me. 'Sdeath, I have mounted a Breach against an armed File of the Enemy, and yet a single Porter has deny'd me Entrance at that Door. You, I see, have speeded better.

Cap. Brave.

Ha! ha! ha! thou errant Man of War hark'ye, Friend, there is but one Key to all the great Mens Houses in Town.

Cap. Merit.

Is it not enough to cringe to Pow'r, but we must do the same to the Servants of Pow'r?

Cap. Brave.

Sir, the Servants of a great Man are all great Men. Wou'd you get within their Doors, you must bow to the Porter, and Fee him too. Then to go farther, you must pay your Devoirs to his Gentleman; and after you have bowed for about half an Hour to his whole Family, at last you may get a Bow from himself.

Cap. Merit.

Damnation! I'd sooner be a Galley—Slave; shall I, who have spent my Youth and Health in my Country's Service, be forc'd by such mean Vassalage to defend my old Age from Cold and Hunger, while ev'ry painted Butterfly wantons in the Sunshine? [*Col. Courtly crosses.*] 'Sdeath, there's a Fellow now that Fellow's Father was a Pimp; his Mother, she turn'd Bawd; and his Sister, turn'd Whore; you see the Consequence: How happy is that Country, where pimping and whoring are esteemed publick Services, and where Grandeur, and the Gallows lie on the same Road!

Cap. Brave.

But leaving off railing, what is your Business with his Lordship?

Cap. Merit.

There is a Company vacant in Colonel *Favourite's* Regiment, which by his Lordship's Interest I hope to gain.

Cap. Brave.

But pray, by what do you hope to gain his Lordship's Interest?

Cap. Merit.

You know, *Bravemore*, I am little inclin'd to boasting; but I think, my Services may speak something for me.

Cap. Brave.

Faith, I'm afraid you will find 'em dumb; or if they do speak, it will be a Language understood by the Great. Suppose you apply to his Nephew, Mr. *Gaywit*; His Interest with my Lord, may be of service to you.

Cap. Merit.

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I have often seen him at Mr. *Bellamont's*, and believe he wou'd do any thing to serve me.

Cap. Brave.

But the Levee is begun by this: if you please, I'll introduce you to't.

Cap. Merit.

What an abundance of poor Wretches go to the feeding the Vanity of that Leviathan one great Rogue.

SCENE IX.

Lord Richly at his House.

L. Richly.

Ha! ha! ha agreeable! *Courtly*, thou art the greatest Droll upon Earth you'll dine with me Lord *Lazy*, will you make me happy too?

L. Lazy.

I'll make my self so, my Lord.

L. Richly.

Mr. *Woodall*, your Servant, how long have you been in Town?

Woodall.

I cannot be particular, I carry no Almanack about me, my Lord, a Week or a Fortnight perhaps, too much time to lose at this Season, when a Man shou'd be driving the Foxes out of his Country.

Col. Courtly.

I hope, you have brought your Family to Town; a Parliament—man shou'd always bring his Wife with him, that if he does not serve the Publick, she may.

L. Richly.

Now I think Familiarity with the Wife of a Senator shou'd be made a Breach of Privilege.

Col. Courtly.

Your Lordship is in the right the Person of his Wife shou'd be made as sacred as his own.

Woodall.

Ay, the Women wou'd thank us damnably for such a Vote and the Colonel here is a very likely Man to move it.

Col. Courtly.

Not I, for the Women then wou'd be as backward to be our Wives, as the Tradesmen are now to be our Creditors.

Woodall.

To the fine Gentlemen of us, who lay out their small Fortunes in Extravagance, and their slender Stock of Love on their Wenches. I remember the time, when I was a young Fellow, that Men us'd to dress like Men: But now I meet with nothing but a Parcel of Toupet Coxcombs, who plaister up their Brains upon their Periwigs.

L. Richly.

I protest thou art an errant Wit, *Woodall*.

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Col. Courtly.

Oh, he's one of the greatest Wits of his County.

Woodall.

I have one of the greatest Estates of my County, and by what I can see, that entitles a Man to Wit here, as well as there.

Cap. Merit.

Methinks, this rough Spark is very free with his Lordship.

[To Bravemore.]

Cap. Brave.

You must know, this is a sort of polite Bear-baiting. There is hardly a great Man in Town but what is fond of these sort of Fellows; whom they take a delight in baiting with one or more Buffoons. But now for your Business.

L. Richly.

I shall see him this Morning; you may depend on my speaking about it. Captain *Bravemore*, I am glad to see you.

[To a Gentleman.]

Cap. Brave.

My Lord, here is a Gentleman of distinguish'd Services. If your Lordship wou'd recommend him to Colonel *Favourite*.

L. Richly.

Sir, I shall certainly do it.

Cap. Merit.

There being a Company vacant, my Lord my Name is *Merit*.

L. Richly.

Mr. *Merit*, I shall be extremely glad to serve you. Sir *John*, your most obedient humble Servant *Lazy*, what were you saying about Mr. *Bellamant*?

L. Lazy.

We were talking, my Lord, of his Affair, which was heard in our House yesterday.

L. Richly.

I am sorry I was not there. It went against him, I think.

L. Lazy.

Yes, my Lord, and I am afraid it affects him deeply.

Col. Courtly.

Undone, Sir, quite undone.

L. Richly.

Upon my Soul, Mrs. *Bellamant's* a fine Woman.

The Modern Husband

Woodall.

Then I suppose, if her Husband's undone, you'll have her among you.

L. Richly.

Woodall, thour't a Liquorish Dog. Thou woud'st have the first Snap.

Woodall.

Not I, none of your Town Ladies for me; I always take leave of Women from the time I come out of the Country till I go back agen.

L. Lazy.

Women! Pox on him! he means Foxes agen.

Col. Courtly.

He knows no difference.

Woodall.

Nor you either; but, hark'e, I fancy it is safer riding after the one, than the other.

Col. Courtly.

Thy Ideas are as gross as thy Person.

L. Richly.

Hang him, sly Rogue you never knew a Fox-hunter, that did not love a Wench.

Woodall.

No, nor a Wench of any Sense that did not love a Fox-hunter.

L. Richly.

Modern, your Servant.

Mr. Modern.

I would presume only to remind your Lordship

L. Richly.

Depend upon it, I will remember you I hope, your Lady is well.

Mr. Modern.

Entirely at your Service, my Lord.

L. Richly.

I have a particular Affair to communicate to her, a Secret that I cannot send by you; you know, all Secrets are not proper to trust a Husband with.

Mr. Modern.

You do her too much Honour, my Lord; I believe you will find her at Home any time to-day.

L. Richly.

Faith, *Modern*, I know not whether thou art happier in thy Temper, or in thy Wife.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Modern.

Um my Lord, as for my Wife, I believe, she is as good as most Wives, I believe she is a vertuous Woman; that I think I may affirm of her.

L. Richly.

That thou may'st, I dare swear; and that I as firmly believe as thou dost thy self; and let me tell you, a vertuous Woman is no common Jewel in this Age but prithee, hast thou heard any thing of Mr. *Bellamant's* Affairs?

Mr. Modern.

No more, than that he has lost his Cause, which he seem'd to expect the other Night, when he was at my House.

L. Richly.

Then you are intimate.

Mr. Modern.

He visits my Wife pretty often, my Lord.

L. Richly.

Modern, you know I am your Friend and now we are alone let me advise you. Take care of *Bellamant*, take a particular care of *Bellamant* he is prudent enough in his Amours to pass upon the World for a Constant Husband; but I know him I know him he is a dangerous Man.

M. Modern.

My Lord, you surprize me so that

L. Richly.

I know you will excuse this Freedom my Friendship takes; but beware of *Bellamant* as you love your Honour.

Serv.

My Lord, the Coach is at the Door.

L. Richly.

My dear *Modern*, I see the great Surprize you are in: but you'll excuse my Freedom.

Mr. Modern.

I am eternally oblig'd to your Lordship

L. Richly.

Your humble Servant.

Mr. Modern.

I hope your Lordship will pardon my Freedom, if after all these Obligations I beg leave once more to remind you.

L. Richly.

Depend upon it, I'll take care of you. What a World of poor chimerical Devils does a Levee draw together? all gaping for Favours, without the least Capacity of making a Return for them.

But great Men justly act, by wiser Rules;

A Levee is the Paradise of Fools.

The End of the first Act.

SCENE IX.

The Modern Husband

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SCENE Mrs. Bellamant's House.

Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia.

Mrs. Bella.

Bid *John* put up the Coach. [*To a Servant.*] What think you now, *Emilia*? has not this Morning's Ramble giv'n you a Surfeit of the Town? After all the Nonsense and Ill-nature we have heard to-day, wou'd it grieve one to part with the Place one is sure to hear 'em over again in?

Emilia.

I am far from thinking any of its Pleasures worth too eager a Wish and the Woman who has with her, in the Country, the Man she loves, must be a very ridiculous Creature to pine after the Town.

Mrs. Bella.

And yet, my Dear, I believe you know there are such ridiculous Creatures.

Emilia.

I rather imagine, they retire with the Man they shou'd love, than him they do: For a Heart that is passionately fond of the Pleasures here, has rarely room for any other Fondness. The Town it self is the Passion of the greater Part of our Sex; But such I can never allow a just Notion of Love to A Woman, that sincerely loves, can know no Happiness without, nor Misery with her beloved Object.

Mrs. Bella.

You talk feelingly, I protest, I wish you don't leave your Heart behind you Come, confess; I hope, I have deserv'd rather to be esteem'd your Confident than your Mother-in-Law.

Emilia.

Wou'd it be a Crime, if it were so? But if Love be a Crime, I am sure you cannot upbraid me with it.

Mrs. Bella.

Tho' if it be a Crime, I am sure you are guilty Well, I approve your Choice, Child.

Emilia.

My Choice! Excellent! I carry his Picture in my Eyes, I suppose.

Mrs. Bella.

As sure as in your Heart, my Dear.

Emilia.

Nay, but dear Madam, tell me whom you guess.

Mrs. Bella.

Hush, here's Mr. *Bellamant*.

Enter Bellamant.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

So soon return'd, my Dear? Sure, you found no Body at Home.

Mrs. Bella.

Oh, my Dear! I have been in such an Assembly of Company, and so pulled to pieces with Impertinence and Ill-nature Welcome, Welcome! the Country! for sure the World is so very bad, those Places are best, where one has the least of it.

Mr. Bella.

What's the Matter?

Mrs. Bella.

In short, I have been downright affronted.

Mr. Bella.

Who durst affront you?

Mrs. Bella.

A Set of Women that dare do ev'ry thing, but what they shou'd do In the first Place, I was complimented with Prude, for not being at the last Masquerade with Dulness, for not entring into the Taste of the Town in some of its Diversions Then had my whole Dress run over, and dislik'd; and to finish all, Mrs. *Termagant* told me I lookt frightful.

Mr. Bella.

Not all the Paint in *Italy* can give her half your Beauty.

Mrs. Bella.

You are certainly the most complaisant Man in the World, and I the only Wife who can retire Home, to be put in a good Humour. Most Husbands are like a plain-dealing Looking-glass, which sullies all the Compliments we have receiv'd abroad, by assuring us we do not deserve 'em.

[During this Speech a Servant delivers a Letter to Bellamant, which he reads.]

Emilia.

I believe tho', Madam, that generally happens when they are not deserv'd: for a Woman of true Beauty can never feel any Dissatisfaction from the Justice of her Glass; nor she, who has your Worth, from the Sincerity of Her Husband.

Mrs. Bella.

Your Father seems discompos'd I wish there be no ill News in his Letter.

Mr. Bella.

My Dear, I have a Favour to ask of you.

Mrs. Bella.

Say to command me.

Mr. Bella.

I gave you a Bank Note of a Hundred Yesterday, you must let me have it agen.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Bella.

I am the luckiest Creature in the World, that I did not pay away some of it this Morning. *Emilia*, Child, come with me.

[Exit with Emilia.]

Mr. Bella.

Excellent! Unhappy Woman! How little doth she guess, she fetches this Money for a Rival? That is all the little Merit I can boast towards her. To have contended by the utmost Civility and Compliance, with all her Desires, and the utmost Caution in the Management of my Amour, to disguise from her a Secret, that must have made her miserable. Let me read once more.

SIR,

If you have, or ever had any Value for me, send me a Hundred Pounds this Morning, or to make 'em more welcome than the last of Necessities can, bring them your self to Yours more than her own,

Hillaria Modern.

Why, what a Farce is human Life? How ridiculous is the Pursuit of our Desires, when the Enjoyment of 'em is sure to beget new ones?

SCENE IV.

Mr. Bellamant, Cap. Bellamant.

Cap. Bella.

Good-morrow, Sir.

Mr. Bella.

I suppose, Sir, by the Gaiety of your Dress, and your Countenance, I may wish you Joy of something besides your Father's Misfortunes.

Cap. Bella.

Wou'd you have me go into Mourning for your Losses, Sir?

Mr. Bella.

You may mourn, Sir I am now unable to support your Extravagance any longer. My Advice, nay, my Commands have had no Effect upon you, but Necessity must; and your Extravagance must fall of Course, when it has nothing to support it.

Cap. Bella.

I am surpriz'd you shou'd call the Expences of a Gentleman, Extravagance.

Mr. Bella.

I am sorry you think the Expences of a Fool, or Fop, the Expences of a Gentleman: and that Race-Horses, Cards, Dice, Whores, and Embroidery are necessary Ingredients in that amiable Composition.

Cap. Bella.

The Modern Husband

Faith, and they are so with most Gentlemen of my Acquaintance; and give me leave to tell you, Sir, these are the Qualifications which recommend a Man to the best Sort of People. Suppose, I had staid at the University, and follow'd *Greek* and *Latin*, as you advis'd me; What Acquaintance had I found at Court? What Bows had I receiv'd at an Assembly, or the Opera?

Mr. Bella.

And will you please to tell me, Sir, what Advantage you have receiv'd from these? Are you the wiser, or the richer? What are you? Why, in your Opinion, better drest Where else had been that smart Toupet, that elegant Sword-knot, that Coat cover'd with Lace, and then with Powder? That ever Heav'n shou'd make me Father to such a drest up Daw! A Creature, who draws all his Vanity from the Gifts of Tailors, and Periwig-Makers!

Cap. Bell.

Wou'd you not have your Son drest, Sir?

Mr. Bella.

Yes, and, if he can afford it, let him be sometimes fine; but let him dress like a Man, not affect the Woman, in his Habit, or his Gesture.

Cap. Bella.

If a Man will keep good Company, he must comply with the Fashion.

Mr. Bella.

I would no more comply with a ridiculous Fashion, than with a vicious one; nor with that which makes a Man look like a Monkey, than that which makes him act like any other Beast.

Cap. Bella.

Lord, Sir! you are grown strangely unpolite.

Mr. Bella.

I shall not give my self any farther Trouble with you: But since all my Endeavours have prov'd ineffectual leave you to the Bent of your own Inclinations. But I must desire you to send me no more Bills; I assure you, I shall not answer them you must live on your Commission this last Misfortune has made it impossible that I shou'd add one Farthing to your Income.

Cap. Bella.

I have an Affair in my View, which may add to it Sir, I wish you Good-morrow when a Father and Son must not talk of Money-Matters, I cannot see what they have to do together.

SCENE V.

Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia.

Mrs. Bella.

Here is the Bill, my Dear.

Mr. Bella.

You shall be repaid in a Day or two.

Mrs. Bella.

The Modern Husband

I saw your Son part hastily from you, as I came in; I hope, you have not been angry with him.

Mr. Bella.

Why will you ever intermeddle between us?

Mrs. Bella.

I hope you will pardon an Intercession, my Dear, for a Son-in-Law; which I shou'd not be guilty of for a Son of my own.

SCENE VI.

Mr. Gaywit, Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia.

Mr. Gaywit.

Bellamant, Good-morrow Ladies, your humble Servant.

Mr. Bella.

Servant, *Mr. Gaywit*. I thought your time had been so employ'd, that you had forgot your Friends.

Mr. Gaywit.

I ought to excuse so long an Absence, but as *Bellamant* knows that it must give my self the greatest Pain, he will impute it to Business.

Mr. Bella.

Did I not also know, that two Days of thy Life were never giv'n to Business yet?

Mr. Gaywit.

Not what the grave World call so, I confess; but of what the gay World allow that Name to, no Hands were ever fuller.

Mr. Bella.

You have been making Love to some new Mistress, I suppose.

Mr. Gaywit.

Fy, it is only Husbands make a Business of Love, to us 'tis but an Amusement.

Mrs. Bella.

Very fine! and to my Face too!

Mr. Gaywit.

Mr. Bellamant, Madam, is so known an Exception to the general Mode of Husbands, that what is thrown on them, cannot effect one of so celebrated a Constancy.

Mrs. Bella.

That's a Virtue he may be celebrated for, without much Envy.

Mr. Gaywit.

He will be envy'd by all Men, for the Cause of that Constancy. Were such Wives as *Mrs. Bellamant* less scarce, such Husbands as my Friend wou'd be more common.

The Modern Husband

Emilia.

You are always throwing the Fault on us.

Mrs. Bella.

It is commonly in us, either in our Choice of our Husband, or our Behaviour to them. No Woman, who married a Man of perfect Sense, was ever unhappy, but from her own Folly. [*Knock here.*]

Mr. Gaywit. [*Looking out of the Window.*]

Ha! a very worthy Uncle of mine, my Lord *Richly*.

Mr. Bella.

You'll excuse me, if I am not at Home.

Mr. Gaywit.

Fy! to deny your self to him, wou'd be unprecedented.

Mr. Bella.

I assure you, no for I have often done it.

Mr. Gaywit.

Then, I believe, you are the only Man in Town that has. But it is too late, I hear him on the Stairs.

Mrs. Bella.

Come, *Emilia*, we'll leave the Gentlemen to their Entertainment; I have been surfeited with it already.

SCENE VII.

L. Richly, Mr. Gaywit, Mr. Bellamant.

L. Richly.

Dear *Bellamant*, I am your most obedient Servant. I am come to ask you ten thousand Pardons, that my Affairs prevented my Attendance the Day your Cause came on. It might have been in my Power to have serv'd you beyond my single Vote.

Mr. Bella.

I am oblig'd to your Lordship, but as I have great Reason to be satisfied with the Justice of your honourable House I am contented.

L. Richly.

I hope, the Loss was not considerable.

Mr. Bella.

I thought your Lordship had heard.

L. Richly.

I think, I was told twenty thousand Pound but that's a Trifle, a small Retrenchment in one's Expences two or three dozen Suits the less, and two or three dozen fewer Women in a Year, will soon reimburse you.

Mr. Bella.

My Loss is not equal to what your Lordship intimates; nor can I complain of a Fortune, still large enough to retire

The Modern Husband

into the Country with.

L. Richly.

Nay, dear *Bellamant*, we must not lose you so. Have you no Friend that cou'd favour you with some comfortable snug Employment, of a thousand or fifteen Hundred *per Annum*?

Mr. Gaywit.

Your Lordship is the properest Person in the World.

L. Richly.

Who I? I am sure, no Mortal wou'd do half so much to serve dear *Jack Bellamant* as my self but I have no Interest in the least.

Mr. Bella.

I am oblig'd to the good Offices of my Friend, but I assure your Lordship I have no Intention that way. Besides, I have liv'd long enough in the World, to see that Necessity is a bad a Recommendation to Favours of that kind, which as seldom fall to those who really want them, as to those who really deserve them.

L. Richly.

I can't help saying, those things are not easily obtained. I heartily wish I could serve you in any thing It gives me a great deal of Uneasiness that my Power is not equal to my Desire. Damn it, I must turn this Discourse, or he'll never have done with it. Oh, *Bellamant*! have you heard of the new Opera of Mr. *Crambo*?

Mr. Gaywit.

What's the Name of it?

L. Richly.

It will be call'd the Humours of *Bedlam*. I have read it, and it is a most surprizing fine Performance. It has not one Syllable of Sense in it from the first Page to the last.

Mr. Gaywit.

It must certainly take.

L. Richly.

Sir, it shall take, if I have Interest enough to support it. I hate your dull Writers of the late Reigns. The Design of a Play is to make you laugh; and who can laugh at Sense?

Mr. Gaywit.

I think, my Lord, we have improv'd on the *Italians*. They wanted only Sense We have neither Sense, nor Musick.

L. Richly.

I hate all Musick but a Jig.

Mr. Gaywit.

I don't think it wou'd be an ill Project, my Lord, to turn the best of our Tragedies and Comedies into Operas.

L. Richly.

And, instead of a Company of Players, I wou'd have a Company of Tumblers and Ballad-Singers.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

Why, Faith, I believe it will come to that soon, unless some sturdy Critick should oppose it.

L. Richly.

No Critick shall oppose it. It wou'd be very fine, truly, if Men of Quality were confin'd in their Taste; we should be rarely diverted, if a Set of Pedants were to licence all our Diversions; the Stage then wou'd be as dull as a Country Pulpit.

Mr. Gaywit.

And the Boxes in *Drury-Lane*, as empty as the Galleries in *St. James's*.

Mr. Bella.

Like enough: for Religion and common Sense are in a fair way to be banish'd out of the World together.

L. Richly.

Let 'em go, egad.

Mr. Bella.

This is, I believe, the only Age that has scorn'd a Pretence to Religion.

L. Richly.

Then it is the only Age that hath scorn'd Hypocrisy.

Mr. Bella.

Rather, that Hypocrisy is the only Hypocrisy it wants. You shall have a known Rascal set up for Honour a Fool for Wit and your professed dear bosom fawning Friend, who, tho' he wallow in Wealth, wou'd refuse you ten Guineas to preserve you from Ruin, shall lose a hundred times that Sum at Cards, to ruin your Wife.

L. Richly.

There dear *Jack Bellamant* is the happiest Man in the World, by possessing a Wife whom a thousand times that Sum wou'd have no effect on.

Mr. Bella.

I look upon my self equally happy, my Lord, in having no such Friend as wou'd tempt her.

L. Richly.

That thou hast not, I dare swear. But I thank you for putting me in mind of it. I must engage her in my Author's Cause, for I know her Judgment has a great Sway.

Mr. Bella.

As our Stay will be so short in Town, she can do you no Service; besides, I have heard her detest Partiality in those Affairs; you wou'd never persuade her to give a Vote contrary to her Opinion.

L. Richly.

Detest Partiality! ha, ha, ha I have heard a Lady declare for doing Justice to a Play, and condemn it the very next Minute Tho' I knew she had neither seen, nor read it. Those things are entirely guided by Favour.

Mr. Gaywit.

Nay, I see no reason to fix the Scandal on the Ladies; Party and Prejudice have the same Dominion over us. Ask a Man's Character of one of his Party, and you shall hear he is one of the worthiest, honestest Fellows in

The Modern Husband

Christendom; ask it of one of the opposite Party, and you shall find him as worthless, good-for-nothing a Dog as ever was hang'd.

Mr. Bella.

So that a Man must labour very hard to get a general good Reputation, or a general bad one.

L. Richly.

Well, since you allow so much, you will give me leave to tempt Mrs. *Bellamant*.

Mr. Bella.

With all my Heart, my Lord.

Mr. Gaywit.

Thou art a well-bred Husband, indeed, to give another leave to tempt your Wife.

Mr. Bella.

I shou'd have been a very ill-bred one to have deny'd it. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

L. Richly.

If I had said more, he had granted it, rather than have lost my Favour. Poverty makes as many Cuckolds as it does Thieves.

[Aside.

Mr. Bella.

Wait on my Lord *Richly* to your Mistress's Apartment I am your most obedient Servant.

SCENE VIII.

Mr. Gaywit, Mr. Bellamant.

Mr. Gaywit.

I find, you are resolv'd to make your Wife share your Misfortunes. It wou'd have been civil to have giv'n her the Choice of not being at Home.

Mr. Bella.

I wanted to be alone with you besides, Women have a Liberty of sending away an impertinent Visitant which we have not.

Mr. Gaywit,

Ay, and a Way of entertaining Visitants too which we have not; and he is a Visitant not easily sent away, I assure you. I have known him receive very vigorous Rebuffs without retreating.

Mr. Bella.

You talk as if you suspected his making Love to my Wife.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

He does so to every Woman he sees; neither the strictest Friendship profess'd to her Husband, nor the best Reputation on her own side, can preserve any Woman he likes from his Attacks: for he is arriv'd at a happy way of regarding all the rest of Mankind as his Tenants, and thinks because he possesses more than they, he is entitled to whatever they possess.

Mr. Bella.

Insolent Vanity! I wonder the Spirit of Mankind has not long since crush'd the Tyranny of such Lordly Wolves; yet believe me, *Gaywit*, there generally goes a great deal of Affectation to compose this voluptuous Man. He oftner injures Women in their Fame, than in their Persons. This Affectation of Variety discovers a sickly Appetite; and many Mistresses, like many Dishes, are often sent away untasted.

Mr. Gaywit.

A very innocent Affectation truly, to destroy a Lady's Fame.

Mr. Bella.

Why ay, for we are come to an Age, wherein a Woman may live very comfortably without it: as long as the Husband is content with his Infamy, the Wife escapes hers.

Mr. Gaywit.

And I am mistaken, if many Husbands in this Town do not live very comfortably by being content with their Infamy, nay, by being Promoters of it. It is a modern Trade, unknown to our Ancestors, a modern Bubble, which seems to be in a rising Condition at present.

Mr. Bella.

It is a Stock-jobbing Age, ev'ry thing has its Price; Marriage is Traffick throughout; as most of us bargain to be Husbands, so some of us bargain to be Cuckolds; and he wou'd be as much laught at, who preferr'd his Love to his Interest, at this End of the Town, as he who preferr'd his Honesty to his Interest at the other.

Mr. Gaywit.

You, *Bellamant*, have had Boldness enough, in Contradiction to this general Opinion, to choose a Woman from her Sense and Virtues. I wish it were in my Power to follow your Example but

Mr. Bella.

But the Opinion of the World, dear Boy

Mr. Gaywit.

No, my good Forefathers have chosen a Wife for me. I am oblig'd by the Settlement of Lord *Richly's* Estate to marry Lady *Charlotte*.

Mr. Bella.

How!

Mr. Gaywit.

The Estate will descend to me so encumber'd, I assure you.

Mr. Bella.

I thought it had not been in Lord *Richly's* Power, to have cut off the Entail.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

Not if I marry Lady *Charlotte*.

Mr. Bella.

I think you are happy in being engag'd to no more disagreeable Woman.

Mr. Gaywit.

Lady *Charlotte*, is indeed pretty; but were she ev'ry thing a Lover cou'd wish, or ev'n imagine there is a Woman, my Friend

Mr. Bella.

Nay, if you are in Love with another, I pity you.

Mr. Gaywit.

Did'st thou know how I love, you wou'd pity me: but didst thou know whom, cou'd'st thou look upon her with Eyes like mine, cou'dst thou behold Beauty, Wit, Sense, Good-nature, contending which shou'd adorn her most?

Mr. Bella.

Poor *Gaywit*! thou art gone indeed.

Mr. Gaywit.

But I suppose, the Ladies have by this discharg'd their Visitant. Now if you please, we will attend them.

Mr. Bella.

You will excuse me, if I leave you with 'em; which I will not do, unless you promise I shall find you at my return.

Mr. Gaywit.

I intend to dedicate the Day to your Family; so dispose of me as you please.

SCENE IX.

Mrs. Modern's House.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Modern.

Mrs. Modern.

I think, I ought to blame your Unkindness I have not seen you so long.

L. Richly.

Do you think a Week so long?

Mrs. Modern.

Once you wou'd have thought so.

L. Richly.

Why, truly, Hours in the Spring of Love are something shorter than they are in the Winter.

Mrs. Modern.

Barbarous Man! do you insult me, after what I have done for you?

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

I fancy, those Favours have been reciprocal.

Mrs. Modern.

Have I not giv'n you up my Virtue?

L. Richly.

And have I not paid for your Virtue, Madam? I am sure, I am 1500 Pounds out of Pocket, which in my Way of counting, is fourteen more than any Woman's Virtue is worth; in short, our Amour is at an end, for I am in pursuit of another Mistress.

Mrs. Modern.

Why do you come to torment me with her?

L. Richly.

Why, I wou'd have you act like other prudent Women in a lower Station; when you can please no longer with your own Person, e'en do it with other People's.

Mrs. Modern.

Monster! insupportable!

L. Richly.

You may rave, Madam, but if you will not do me a Favour, there are wiser People enow who will I fix'd on you out of a particular Regard to you; for I think, when a Man is to lay out his Money, he is always to do it with his Friends.

Mrs. Modern.

I'll bear it no longer.

[Going.

L. Richly.

Nor I.

[Going.

Mrs. Modern.

Stay, my Lord, can you be so cruel?

L. Richly.

Pshaw!

[Going.

Mrs. Modern.

Oh! stay! stay! you know my Necessities.

L. Richly.

And, I think, I propose a very good Cure for 'em.

Mrs. Modern.

Lend me a hundred Guineas.

SCENE IX.

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

I will do more.

Mrs. Modern.

Generous Creature!

L. Richly.

I'll give you Twenty.

Mrs. Modern.

Do you jest with my Necessity?

L. Richly.

Looke, Madam, if you will do a good–natur'd Thing for me, I will oblige you in return as I promis'd you before, and I think that very good Payment.

Mrs. Modern.

Pray, my Lord, use me with Decency at least.

L. Richly.

Why should we use more Decency to an old Acquaintance, than you Ladies do to a new Lover, and have more Reason for so doing? You often belye your Hearts, when you use us ill In using you so, we follow the Dictates of our Natures.

Enter a Servant, who delivers a Letter to Mrs. Modern.

Mrs. Modern.

Ha! it is *Bellamant's* Hand and the Note that I desir'd This is lucky, indeed.

SCENE X.

Lord Richly, Mr. Gaywit, Emilia, Lady Charlotte, Captain Bellamant, Mrs. Modern.

L. Richly.

So! here's an end of my Business for the present, I find.

La. Charl.

Oh, dear *Modern*! I am heartily glad to see you are alive; for you must know, I thought it impossible for any one to be alive, and not be at the Rehearsal of the new Opera.

Cap. Bella.

How can you be surpriz'd at one of no Taste, Lady *Charlotte* ?

Mrs. Modern.

I suppose, it was very full.

La. Charl.

Oh! ev'ry Body was there; all the World.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

How can that be, Lady *Charlotte*, when so considerable a Part, as Mrs. *Modern*, was wanting?

Mrs. Modern.

Civil Creature! when will you say such a thing?

Cap. Bella.

When I am as dull, Madam.

L. Richly.

Very true! no one makes a Compliment, but those that want Wit for Satyr.

Mr. Gaywit.

Right, my Lord. It is as great a Sign of want of Wit to say a good–natur'd thing, as want of Sense to do one.

La. Charl.

Oh! I wou'd not say a good–natur'd thing for the World. Captain *Bellamant*, did you ever hear me say a good–natur'd thing in your Life?

Mr. Gaywit.

But I am afraid, Lady *Charlotte*, tho' Wit be a Sign of Ill–nature, Ill–nature is not always a Sign of Wit.

La. Charl.

I'll give you leave to say any thing, after what I have said this Morning Oh! dear *Modern*, I wish, you had seen *Emilia's* Dressing–box! such Japoning he! he! he! she hath varnished over a Windmil ten several times, before she discover'd, she had placed the wrong Side upwards.

Mrs. Modern.

I have had just such another Misfortune. I have laid out thirty Pounds on a Chest, and now I dislike it of all things.

La. Charl.

Oh! my Dear, I do not like one thing in twenty that I do my self.

Emilia.

You are the only Person that dislikes, I dare say, *Lady Charlotte*.

La Charl.

Oh, you flatt'ring Creature! I wish, you cou'd bring my Papa to your Opinion. He says, I throw away more Money in Work than in Play.

Mrs. Modern.

But you have not heard half my Misfortune; for when I sent my Chest to be sold, what do you think I was offer'd for my thirty Pounds worth of Work?

La. Charl.

I don't know, fifty Guineas perhaps.

Mrs. Modern.

Twenty Shillings, as I live.

The Modern Husband

La. Charl.

Oh! intolerable! Oh! insufferable!

Cap. Bella.

But are we to have no *Hazard* this Morning?

Mrs. Modern.

With all my Heart Lord *Richly*, what say you?

L. Richly.

My Vote always goes with the Majority, Madam.

Mrs. Modern.

Come then, the Shrine is within, and you that will offer at it, follow me.

SCENE XI.

Mr. Gaywit, Emilia.

Emilia.

Mr. *Gaywit*, are you no Gamester?

Mr. Gaywit.

No, Madam, when I play, 'tis the utmost Stretch of my Complaisance.

Emilia.

I am glad, I can find one who is as great an Enemy to play as my self; for I assure you, we are both of the same Opinion.

Mr. Gaywit.

I wish we were so in ev'ry thing.

Emilia.

Sir!

Mr. Gaywit.

I say, Madam, I wish all of my Opinions were as well seconded; and yet, methinks, I wou'd not have your Thoughts the same with mine.

Emilia.

Why so, pray?

Mr. Gaywit.

Because you must have then many an unhappy Hour, which that you may ever avoid, will be still my heartiest Pray'r.

Emilia.

I am oblig'd to you, Sir.

Mr. Gaywit.

The Modern Husband

Indeed, you are not. It is a self-interested Wish: for believe me, to see the least Affliction attend you, wou'd give this Breast the greatest Agony it is capable of feeling.

Emilia.

Nay, this is so extravagant a Flight, I know not what to call it.

Mr. Gaywit.

Nor I call it a just Admiration of the highest Worth, call it the tenderest Friendship if you please; tho' much I fear it merits the sweetest, softest Name that can be giv'n to any of our Passions. If there be a Passion pure without Allay, as tender and soft, as violent and strong, you cannot sure miscall it by that Name.

Emilia.

You grow now too philosophical for me to understand you: besides, you wou'd, I am sure, be best understood ironically; for who can believe any thing of Mr. *Gaywit*, when he hath asserted that he is unhappy?

Mr. Gaywit.

Nay, I will leave my Case to your own Determination when you know it. Suppose me oblig'd to marry the Woman I don't like, debarr'd for ever from her I love, I dote on, the Delight of my Eyes, the Joy of my Heart. Suppose me oblig'd to forsake her, and marry another.

Emilia.

But I cannot suppose you oblig'd to that.

Mr. Gaywit.

Were it not an impertinent Trouble, I cou'd convince you.

Emilia.

I know not why I may not be excus'd a little Concern for one who hath expressed so much for me.

Mr. Gaywit.

Then, Madam, the Settlement of my whole Fortune obliges me to marry Lady *Charlotte Gaywit*.

Emilia.

How! but suppose the Refusal were on Lady *Charlotte's* Side.

Mr. Gaywit.

That is my only Hope.

Emilia.

And I can assure you, your Hope is not ill-grounded.

Mr. Gaywit.

I know, she hath express'd some dislike to me; but she is a Woman of that sort, that it is as difficult to be certain of her Dislike, as her Affection; and whom the Prospect of Grandeur wou'd easily make obedient to her Father's Commands.

Emilia.

Well! if you are sincere, I pity you heartily.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

And if you are sincere, I never knew Happiness till this dear Moment.

SCENE XII.

Mr. Gaywit, Emilia, Lord Richly, Mrs. Modern, Lady Charlotte, Captain Bellamant.

Mrs. Modern.

Victoria, Victoria!

Cap. Bella.

Stript, by *Jupiter!*

La. Charl.

Eleven Mains together, *Modern*; you are a Devil.

Emilia.

What's the matter, Lady *Charlotte*?

La. Charl.

Oh, my Dear, you never saw the like *Modern* has held in nine thousand Mains in one Hand, and won all the World.

Mr. Gaywit.

She has always great Luck at *Hazard*.

L. Richly.

Surprizing to-day, upon my Word.

Mrs. Modern.

Surprizing to me; for it is the first Success I have had this Month; and I am sure, my *Quadrille* makes ev'ry one a sufficient Amends for my *Hazard*.

L. Richly.

You are one of those, whose winning no body ever heard of, or whose losing no one ever saw.

C. Bella.

But you forget the Auction, Lady *Charlotte*.

La. Charl.

What have I to do at an Auction, that am ruin'd and undone?

Mr. Gaywit.

As much as many that are undone; bid out of whim, in order to raise the Price, and ruin others. Or if the Hammer shou'd fall upon you, before you expect it, take a sudden dislike to the Goods, or dispute your own Words, and leave them upon the Hands of the Seller.

Mrs. Modern.

How polite is that now? *Gaywit* will grow shortly as well-bred, as Madcap.

The Modern Husband

Cap. Bella.

We shall have him there too, and he is the life of an Auction.

La. Charl.

Oh! the most agreeable Creature in the World he has more Wit than any Body, he has made me laugh five hundred Hours together. *Emilia*, we will just call there, and then I'll set you down at Home.

Emilia.

Let us but just call then.

La. Charl.

That Caution is admirable from you, when you know I never stay above six Minutes any where. Well, you never will reform.

L. Richly.

I desire, *Charlotte*, you wou'd be at Home by Four.

La. Charl.

I shall very easily, my Lord, for I have not above fourteen or fifteen Places to call at Come, dear Creature, let us go, for I have more Business than half the World upon my Hands, and I must positively call at the Auction.

Mr. Gaywit.

Where you have no Business, it seems.

La. Charl.

Impertinent! *Modern*, your Servant.

SCENE XIII.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Modern.

L. Richly.

I only waited till you were alone, Madam to renew my Business.

Mrs. Modern.

If you intend to renew your Impertinence, I wish you wou'd omit both.

L. Richly.

So, I find I have my Work to do over again.

Mrs. Modern.

But if you please, my Lord, to truce with your Proposals, and let *Piquet* be the Word.

L. Richly.

So, you have taken Money out of my Daughters Hands, to put it into mine.

Mrs. Modern.

Be not confident I have been too hard for you before now.

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

Well, and without a Compliment, I know none whom I wou'd sooner lose to than your self; for to any one who loves Play as well as you, and plays as ill, the Money we lose, by a surprizing ill Fortune, is only lent.

Mrs. Modern.

Methinks, my Lord, you shou'd be fearful of deterring me by this plain-dealing.

L. Richly.

I am better acquainted with your Sex. It is as impossible to persuade a Woman that she plays ill, as that she looks ill. The one may make her tear her Cards, and the other break her Looking-glass.

Her want of Skill, for want of Luck must pass;
As want of Beauty's owing to her Glass.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SCENE continues.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Modern.

Mrs. Modern.

Can you be so cruel?

L. Richly.

Ridiculous! you might as well ask me for my whole Estate; I am sure, I wou'd as soon give it you.

Mrs. Modern.

An everlasting Curse attend the Cards! to be repiqu'd from forty, when I play'd but for five! my Lord, I believe you a Cheat.

L. Richly.

At your Service, Madam when you have more Money, if you will honour me with Notice, I will be ready to receive it.

Mrs. Modern.

Stay, my Lord give me the twenty Guineas.

L. Richly.

On my Conditions.

Mrs. Modern.

Any Conditions.

L. Richly.

Then you must contrive some way or other, a Meeting between me and Mrs. *Bellamant*, at your House.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Modern.
Mrs. Bellamant!

L. Richly.
Why do you start at that Name?

Mrs. Modern.
She has the Reputation of the strictest Vertue of any Woman in Town.

L. Richly.
Vertue! ha, ha, ha! so have you, and so have several of my Acquaintance; there are as few Women who have not the Reputation of Vertue, as that have the thing it self.

Mrs. Modern.
And what do you propose by meeting her here?

L. Richly.
I am too civil to tell you plainly what I propose; tho' by your Question one wou'd imagine you expected it.

Mrs. Modern.
I expect any thing from you, rather than Civility, my Lord.

L. Richly.
Madam, it will be your own Fault, if I am not civil to you. Do this for me, and I'll deny you nothing.

Mrs. Modern.
There is one thing, which tempts me more than your Gold, which is the Expectation of seeing you desert her, as you have done me.

L. Richly.
Which is a Pleasure you'll certainly have; and the sooner you compass my Wishes, the sooner you may triumph in your own: Nay, there is a third Motive will charm thee, my dear *Hillaria*, more than the other two. When I have laid this Passion, which hath abated that for you, I may return to your Arms with all my former Fondness.

Mrs. Modern.
Excuse my Incredulity, my Lord; for tho' Love can change its Object, it can never return to the same again.

L. Richly.
I may convince you of the contrary but to our Business; Fortune has declar'd on our Side already, by sending *Bellamant* hither: cultivate an Acquaintance with him, and you cannot avoid being acquainted with his Wife. She is the perfect Shadow of her Husband; they are as inseparable, as Lady *Coquette* and her Lapdog.

Mrs. Modern.
Yes, or as her Ladyship and her Impertinence; or her Lapdog and his Smell. Well, it is to me surprizing, how Women of Fashion can carry Husbands, Children, and Lapdogs about with 'em; three Things I never cou'd be fond of.

L. Richly.
If the Ladies were not fonder of their Lapdogs than of their Husbands, we shou'd have no more Dogs in *St.*

The Modern Husband

James's Parish, than there are Lions at the Tower.

Mrs. Modern.

It is an uncommon Bravery in you, to single out the Woman who is reputed to be the fondest of her Husband.

L. Richly.

She that is fond of one Man, may be fond of another. Fondness, in a Woman's Temper, like the Love of Play, may prefer one Man, and one Game; but will incline her to try more, especially, when she expects greater Profit, and there I am sure, I am superior to my Rival: If Flattery will allure her, or Riches tempt her, she shall be mine; and those are the two great Gates by which the Devil enters the Heart of Womankind Pshaw! He here!

SCENE II.

Lord Richly, Mr. Modern, Mrs. Modern.

Mr. Modern.

I am your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant.

L. Richly.

Have you seen this new Opera, Madam?

Mrs. Modern.

I have heard vast Commendations of it; but I cannot bear an Opera, now poor *La Dovi's* gone.

L. Richly.

Nor I, after poor *A la Fama*.

Mrs. Modern.

Oh! *Cara la Dovi!* I protest, I have often resolv'd to follow her into *Italy*.

L. Richly.

You will allow *A la Fama's* Voice, I hope.

Mrs. Modern.

But the Mien of *La Dovi*, then her Judgment in Singing; the Moment she enter'd the Stage, I have wish'd my self all Eyes.

L. Richly.

And the Moment *A la Fama* sung, I have wish'd my self all Ears.

Mr. Modern.

I find, I am no desir'd part of this Company. I hope, your Lordship will pardon me; Business of the greatest Consequence requiring my Attendance, prevents my waiting on your Lordship according to my Desires.

SCENE III.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Modern.

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

This unseasonable Interruption has quite cut the Thread of my Design. Pox on him, a Husband, like the Fool in a Play, is of no Use but to cause Confusion.

Mrs. Modern.

You wou'd have an Opportunity at my House, and to procure it, I must be acquainted with Mrs. *Bellamant*; now, there is a lucky Accident which you are not appriz'd of Mr. *Bellamant* is an humble Servant of mine.

L. Richly.

That is lucky indeed; cou'd we give her a Cause of Suspicion that way, it were a lively Prospect of my Success; as persuading a Thief that his Companion is false, is the surest way to make him so.

Mrs. Modern.

A very pretty Comparison of your Lordship's between the two States.

Enter Servant.

Serv.

Madam, Mr. *Bellamant* desires to know, if your Ladyship is at home.

Mrs. Modern.

I am. Bring him into the Dining-Room.

L. Richly.

Thou dear Creature, let me but succeed in this Affair, I'll give thee Millions.

Mrs. Modern.

More Gold, and fewer Promises, my Lord.

L. Richly.

An hundred Guineas shall be the Price of our first Interview.

Mrs. Modern.

Be punctual, and be confident. Go out the back Way, that he may not see you

L. Richly.

Adieu, my *Machiavil*.

SCENE IV.

Mrs. Bellamant's House.

Mrs. Bellamant, Mr. Gaywit, Emilia.

Mrs. Bella.

And so, Lady *Willitt*, after all her Protestations against Matrimony, has at last generously bestowed her self on a young Fellow with no Fortune, the famous Beau *Smirk*.

Emilia.

The Modern Husband

She was proof against ev'ry thing but Charity.

Mr. Gaywit.

To which all other Virtues shou'd be sacrific'd, as it is the greatest; the Ladies are apt to value themselves on their Virtue, as a rich Citizen does on his Purse; and I do not know which is of the greatest Use to the Publick.

Mrs. Bella.

Nor I, which are the oftneft Bankrupts.

Mr. Gaywit.

And as, in the City, they suspect a Man who is oftentatious of his Riches; so shou'd I the Woman, who makes the most Noise of her Virtue.

Mrs. Bella.

We are all the least solicitous about Perfections, which we are well assur'd of our possessing. Flattery is never so agreeable as to our blind Side. Commend a Fool for his Wit, or a Knave for his Honesty, and they will receive you into their Bosoms.

Emilia.

Nay, I have known a pretty Lady who was vain of nothing but her false Locks; and have seen a Pair of squinting Eyes, that never smil'd at a Compliment made to any other Feature.

Mr. Gaywit.

Yes, Madam, and I know a pretty Gentleman, who obliges me very often with his illspelt Songs; and a very ugly Poet, who hath made me a Present of his Picture.

Emilia.

Well, since you see it is so agreeable to flatter one's blind Side, I think you have no Excuse to compliment on the other.

Mr. Gaywit.

Then I shall have a very good Excuse to make you no Compliment at all. But this I assure you, *Emilia*, the first Imperfection I discover, I will tell you of it with the utmost Sincerity.

Emilia.

And I assure you with the utmost Sincerity, I shall not thank you for it.

Mrs. Bella.

Then without any Flattery, you are two of the most open Plain-dealers I have met with.

SCENE V.

Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia, Lady Charotte, Mr. Gaywit.

La. Charl.

Dear Mrs. *Bellamant*, make some Excuse for me; I see, *Emilia* is going to chide me for staying so long. When, did she know the Fatigue I had this Afternoon, I was just going into my Coach, when Lady *Twitter* came in, and forc'd me away to a Fan-shop. Well, I have seen a Set of the prettiest Fans to-day. My dear Creature, where did

The Modern Husband

you get that Lace? I never saw any thing so ravishing.

Emilia.

I cannot see any thing so extraordinary in it.

La. Charl.

It cou'd not cost less than ten Pound a Yard Oh! Mr. *Gaywit* , are you here?

Emilia.

He goes with us to the Play.

La. Charl.

Oh hateful! how can you bear him? I wou'd as soon to the Chappel with Lady *Prude*: I saw the ridiculous Creature cry at a Tragedy.

Mrs. Bella.

Do you think he need be asham'd of that, Lady *Charlotte*?

La. Charl.

I wou'd as soon laugh at a Comedy, or fall asleep at an Opera.

Mrs. Bella.

What is the Play to-night?

La. Charl.

I never know that. Miss *Rattle* and I saw four Acts the other Night, and came away without knowing the Name. I think, one only goes to see the Company, and there will be a great deal to-night; for the Dutchess of *Simpleton* sent to me this Morning. *Emilia* , you must go with me after the Play: I must make just fourteen Visits between Nine and Ten: Yesterday, was the first Payment I have made since I came to Town, and I was able to compass no more than three and forty; tho' I only found my Lady *Sober* at Home, and she was at *Quadrille* Lud, Mrs. *Bellamant*, I think you have left off play, which is to me surprizing, when you play'd so very well.

Mrs. Bella.

And yet I believe, you hardly ever saw me win.

La. Charl.

I never mind whether I win or no, if I make no Mistakes.

Mr. Gaywit.

Which you never fail of doing as often as you play.

La. Charl.

Do you hear him?

Emilia.

Oh! he sets up for a Plain-dealer, that is, one who shews his Wit at the Expencc of his Breeding.

La. Charl.

Yes, and at the Expencc of his Truth.

The Modern Husband

Emilia.

Never mind him, Lady *Charlotte*, you will have the Town on your Side.

Mr. Gaywit.

Yes, they will all speak for you that play against you.

La. Charl.

This is downright insupportable.

SCENE VI.

Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia, Mr. Gaywit, Lady Charlotte, Captain Bellamant.

La. Charl.

Oh! here's Captain *Bellamant* shall be my Voucher.

Cap. Bella.

That you may be assur'd of, Lady *Charlotte*, for I have so implicit a Faith in your Ladyship, that I know you are in the right before you speak.

La. Charl.

Mr. *Gaywit* does not allow me to play at *Quadrille*.

Cap. Bella.

He may as well deny that your Ladyship sees; besides, I do not lay a great deal of Weight on his Judgment, whom I never saw play at all.

La. Charl.

Oh, abominable! then he does not live at all. I wish my whole Life was one Party at *Quadrille*.

Cap. Bella.

As a *Spaniard's* is a Game at *Chess*, egad.

Mrs. Bella.

I never intend to sacrifice my Time entirely to play, till I can get no one to keep me Company for nothing.

Mr. Gaywit.

Right, Madam, I think the Votaries to Gaming, shou'd be such as want Helps for Conversation: And none shou'd have always Cards in their Hands, but those who have nothing but the Weather in their Mouths.

Mrs. Bella.

Thus gaming wou'd be of Service to the Publick of Wit, by taking away the Encouragers of Nonsense, as a War is of Service to a Nation, by taking the idle People out of it.

La. Charl.

Intolerable! Mrs. *Bellamant* an Advocate against Play?

The Modern Husband

SCENE VII.

Lord Richly, Mr. Gaywit, Captain Bellamant, Lady Charlotte, Emilia, Mrs. Bellamant.

L. Richly.

Who is an Advocate against Play?

La. Charl.

Mrs. *Bellamant*, my Lord.

L. Richly.

She is grown a perfect Deserter from the *Beau Monde*: She has declar'd her self against Mr. *Crambo* too.

La. Charl.

Against dear Mr. *Crambo*?

Mrs. Bella.

I am only for indulging Reason in our Entertainments, my Lord. I must own, when I see a polite Audience pleas'd at seeing *Bedlam* on the Stage, I cannot forbear thinking them fit for no other Place.

L. Richly.

Now, I am never entertain'd better.

La. Charl.

Nor I. Oh dear *Bedlam*! I have gone there once a Week for a long time. I am charm'd with those delightful Creatures, the Kings, and the Queens.

Cap. Bella.

And your Ladyship has contributed abundance of Lovers, all Kings, no doubt: for he that cou'd have the Boldness to attempt you, might with much less Madness dream of a Throne.

La. Charl.

Well, I shou'd like to be a Queen. I fancy, 'tis very pretty to be a Queen.

Cap. Bella.

Were I a King, Lady *Charlotte*, you shou'd have your Wish.

La. Charl.

Ay, but then, I must have you too I wou'd not have an odious filthy He-Creature for the World.

Mr. Gaywit.

Faith, you cannot easily find any, who is less of the He-Creature.

[Aside.

Emilia.

But, Lady *Charlotte*, we shall be too late for the Play.

La. Charl.

I believe the first Act is over, so we'll go. I don't believe, I ever saw the first Act of a Play in my Life but do you think, I'll suffer you in my Coach?

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

At least, you'll suffer me to put this Lady into it.

Cap. Bella.

And me to put your Ladyship in.

La. Charl.

Dear Mrs. *Bellamant*, your most obedient Servant.

L. Richly.

Shall I have the Honour, in the mean time, of entertaining you at *Piquet*?

Mrs. Bella.

Your Lordship has such a vast Advantage over me

L. Richly.

None in the least: but if you think so, Madam, I'll give you what Points you please.

Mrs. Bella.

For one Party then, my Lord Get Cards there Your Lordship will excuse me a Moment.

L. Richly.

Charming Woman! and thou art mine, as surely as I wish thee Let me see she goes into the Country in a Fortnight Now, if I compass my Affair in a Day or two, I shall be weary of her by that time, and her Journey will be the most agreeable thing that can happen.

SCENE VII.

Mr. Modern's House.

Mrs. Modern, Mr. Bellamant.

Mrs. Modern.

Is it not barbarous, nay, mean, to upbraid me with what nothing but the last Necessity could have made me ask of you?

Mr. Bella.

You wrong me; I lament my own Necessities, not upbraid yours. My Misfortune is too publick for you not to be acquainted with it; and what restrains me from supporting the Pleasures of the best Wife in the World, may, I think, justly excuse me from supporting those of a Mistress.

Mrs. Modern.

Do you insult me with your Wife's Virtue? You! who have robb'd me of mine? yet Heaven will, I hope, forgive me this first Slip; and if henceforth I ever listen to the Siren Perswasions of your false ungrateful Sex, may I

Mr. Bella.

But hear me, Madam.

Mrs. Modern.

The Modern Husband

Would I had never heard, nor seen, nor known you.

Mr. Bella.

If I alone have robb'd you of your Honour, it is you alone have robb'd me of mine.

Mrs. Modern.

Your Honour! ridiculous! the Virtue of a Man!

Mr. Bella.

Madam, I say, my Honour; if to rob a Woman who brought me Beauty, Fortune, Love and Virtue; if to hazard the making her miserable be no Breach of Honour, Robbers and Murderers may be honourable Men: Yet, this I have done, and this I do still for you.

Mrs. Modern.

We will not enter into a Detail, Mr. *Bellamant*, of what we have done for one another; perhaps, the Balance may be on your Side: If so, it must be still greater; for I have one Request which I must not be denied.

Mr. Bella.

You know, if it be in my Power to grant, it is not in my Power to deny you.

Mrs. Modern.

Then for the sake of my Reputation, and to prevent any Jealousy in my Husband, bring me acquainted with Mrs. *Bellamant*.

Mr. Bella.

Ha!

Mrs. Modern.

By which means we shall have more frequent Opportunities together.

Mr. Bella.

Of what use your Acquaintance can be, I know not.

Mrs. Modern.

Do you scruple it? This is too plain an Evidence of your Contempt of me; you will not introduce a Woman of stain'd Virtue to your Wife: Can you, who caused my Crime, be the first to condemn me for it?

Mr. Bella.

Since you impute my Caution to so wrong a Cause, I am willing to prove your Error.

Mrs. Modern.

Let our Acquaintance begin this Night then, try if you cannot bring her hither now.

Mr. Bella.

I will try, nay, and I will succeed: for Oh! I have sacrificed the best of Wives to your Love.

Mrs. Modern.

I envy, not admire her for an Affection which any Woman might preserve to you.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

I fly to execute your Commands.

Mrs. Modern.

Stay I

Mr. Bella.

Speak.

Mrs. Modern.

I must ask one last Favour of you and yet I know not how tho' it be a Trifle, and I will repay it only to lend me another Hundred Guineas.

Mr. Bella.

Your Request, Madam, is always a Command. I shall think Time flies with Wings of Lead till I return.

SCENE VIII.

Mrs. Modern sola.

Mrs. Modern.

And I shall think you fly on golden Wings, my dear Gallant. Thou Ass, to think that the Heart of a Woman is to be won by Gold, as well as her Person; but thou wilt find, though a Woman often sells her Person she always gives her Heart.

SCENE IX.

Mrs. Bellamant's House.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Bellamant, at Piquet.

L. Richly.

Six Parties successively! sure, Fortune will change soon, or I shall believe she is not blind.

Mrs. Bella.

No, my Lord, you either play with too great Negligence, or with such Ill-luck that I shall press my Victory no farther at present. Besides I can't help thinking five Points place the Odds on my Side.

L. Richly.

Can you change this Note, Madam?

Mrs. Bella.

Let it alone, my Lord.

L. Richly.

Excuse me, Madam, if I am superstitiously observant to pay my Losings, before I rise from the Table Besides, Madam, it will give me an infinite Pleasure to have the finest Woman in the World in my Debt. Do but keep it till I have the Honour of seeing you again. Nay, Madam, I must insist on it, tho' I am forced to leave it in your Hands thus

The Modern Husband

SCENE X.

Mrs. Bellamant sola.

Mrs. Bella.

What can this mean! I am confident too that he lost the last Party designedly. I observed him fix his Eyes stedfastly on mine, and sigh, and seem careless of his Game It must be so he certainly hath a Design on me. I will return him this Note immediately, and am resolved never to see him more.

SCENE XI.

Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant.

Mrs. Bella.

My Dear! where have you been all Day? I have not had one Moment of your Company since Dinner.

Mr. Bella.

I have been upon Business of very great Consequence, my Dear.

Mrs. Bella.

Is it fit for me to hear?

Mr. Bella.

No, my Dear, it would only make you uneasy.

Mrs. Bella.

Nay, then I must hear it, that I may share your Concern.

Mr. Bella.

Indeed, it would rather aggravate it: It is not in your Power to assist me; for since you will know it, an Affair hath happen'd, which makes it necessary for me to pay an Hundred Guineas this very Evening.

Mrs. Bella.

Is that all?

Mr. Bella.

That indeed was once a Trifle but now it makes me uneasy.

Mrs. Bella.

So it doth not me, because it is in my Power to supply you Here is a Note for that Sum; but I must be positively repaid within a Day or two: It is only a Friend's Money trusted in my Hands.

Mr. Bella.

My Dear, sure when Heaven gave me thee, it gave me a Cure for every Malady of the Mind, and it hath made thee still the Instrument of all its Good to me.

Mrs. Bella.

Be assured, I desire no greater Blessing than the continual Reflection of having pleased you.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

Are you engaged, my Love, this Evening?

Mrs. Bella.

Whatever Engagement I have, it is in your Power to break.

Mr. Bella.

If you have none, I will introduce you to a new Acquaintance: One whom I believe you never visited, but must know by Sight *Mrs. Modern*.

Mrs. Bella.

It is equal to me in what Company I am, when with you. My Eyes are so delighted with that principal Figure, that I have no Leisure to contemplate the rest of the Piece. I'll wait on you immediately.

SCENE XII.

Mr. Bellamant solus.

Mr. Bella.

What a Wretch am I! Have I either Honour or Gratitude, and can I injure such a Woman? How do I injure her! While she perceives no Abatement in my Passion, she is not injured by its inward Decay: Nor can I give her a secret Pain, while she hath no Suspicion of my secret Pleasures. Have I not found too an equal Return of Passion in my Mistress? Does she not sacrifice more for me than a Wife can? The Gallant is, indeed, indebted for the Favours he receives: But the Husband pays dearly for what he enjoys. I hope, however, this will be the last hundred Pounds I shall be asked to lend. My Wife's having this dear Note was as lucky as it was unexpected Ha! the same I gave this Morning to *Mrs. Modern*; Amazement, what can this mean?

SCENE XIII.

Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant.

Mr. Bella.

My Dear, be not angry at my Curiosity, but pray tell me how came you by this?

Mrs. Bella.

Pardon me, my Dear, I have a particular Reason for not telling you.

Mr. Bella.

And I have as particular a Reason for asking it.

Mrs. Bella.

I beg you not to press me: perhaps you will oblige me to sacrifice a Friend's Reputation.

Mr. Bella.

The Secret shall rest in my Bosom, I assure you.

Mrs. Bella.

But suppose, I should have promised not to suffer it from my own.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

A Husband's Command breaks any Promise.

Mrs. Bella.

I am surprized to see you so solicitous about a Trifle.

Mr. Bella.

I am rather surprized to find you so tenacious of one; besides be assured, you cannot have half the Reason to suppress the Discovery, as I to insist upon it.

Mrs. Bella.

What is your Reason?

Mr. Bella.

The very Difficulty you make in telling it.

Mrs. Bella.

Your Curiosity shall be satisfied then; but I beg you would defer it now. I may get absolved from my Promise of Secrecy. I beg you would not urge me to break my Trust.

Mr. Bella. [Aside.]

She certainly hath not discovered my Falshood, that were impossible: besides I may satisfy my self immediately by *Mrs. Modern* .

Mrs. Bella.

What makes you uneasy? I assure you, there is nothing in this worth your knowing.

Mr. Bella.

I believe it, at least I shall give up my Curiosity to your Desire.

Mrs. Bella.

I am ready to wait on you.

Mr. Bella.

I must make a short Visit first on what I told you, and will call on you immediately.

SCENE XIV.

Mrs. Bellamant sola.

Mrs. Bella.

What can have given him this Curiosity I know not, but should I have discovered the Truth, who can tell into what Suspicions it might have betrayed him? His jealous Honour might have resolved on some fatal Return to Lord *Richly*, had he taken it in the same way as I do; whereas by keeping the Secret, I preserve him every way from Danger; for I my self will secure his Honour without exposing his Person. I will my self give Lord *Richly* his Discharge. How nearly have I been unawares to the Brink of Ruin! for, surely, the lightest Suspicion of a Husband is Ruin, indeed!

When Innocence can scarce our Lives defend;

The Modern Husband

What Dangers must the guilty Wife attend?

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

SCENE, Mrs. Modern's House.

Mr. Modern, Mrs. Modern.

Mr. Modern.

In short, Madam, you shall not drive a separate Trade at my Expence. Your Person is mine, I bought it lawfully in the Church, and unless I am to profit by the Disposal, I shall keep it all for my own Use.

Mrs. Modern.

This Insolence is not to be borne.

Mr. Modern.

Have I not winked at all your Intrigues? Have I not pretended Business, to leave you and your Gallants together? Have I not been the most obsequious, observant

Mrs. Modern.

Out with it, you know what you are.

Mr. Modern.

Do you upbraid me with your Vices, Madam?

Mrs. Modern.

My Vices call it Obedience to a Husband's Will. Can you deny that you have your self persuaded me to the Undertaking? Can you forget the Arguments you used to convince me that Virtue was the lightest of Bubbles?

Mr. Modern.

I own it all; and had I felt the Sweets of your Pleasures, as at first, I had never once upbraided you with them; but as I must more than share the Dishonour, it is surely reasonable I should share the Profit.

Mrs. Modern.

And have you not?

Mr. Modern.

What if I have

Mrs. Modern.

Why do you complain then?

Mr. Modern.

Because I find those Effects no more. Your Cards run away with the Lucre of your other Pleasures and you lose to the Knaves of your own Sex, what you get from the Fools of ours.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Modern.

'Tis false, you know I seldom lose Nor indeed can I considerably; for I have not lately had it in my Power to stake high: Lord *Richly*, who was the Fountain of our Wealth, hath long been dry to me.

Mr. Modern.

I hope, Madam, this new Gallant will turn to a better Account.

Mrs. Modern.

Our Amour is yet too young to expect any Fruit from thence.

Mr. Modern.

As young as it is, I have Reason to believe it is grown to Perfection. Whatever Fruits I may expect from him, it is not impossible, from what hath already happened, but I may expect some from you, and that is not golden Fruit. I am sure if Women sprung from the Earth, as some Philosophers think, it was from the Clay of *Egypt*, not the Sands of *Peru*. Serpents and Crocodiles are the only Fruit they produce.

Mrs. Modern.

Very true, and a Wife contains the whole ten Plagues of her Country.

[*Laughing.*]

Mr. Modern.

Why had I not been born a *Turk*, that I might have enslaved my Wife, or a *Chinese*, that I might have sold her!

Mrs. Modern.

That would have been only the Custom of the Country: You have done more, you have sold her in *England*; in a Country, where Women are as backward to be sold to a Lover, as to refuse him; and where Cuckold is almost the only Title of Honour that can't be bought.

Mr. Modern.

This ludicrous Behaviour, Madam, as ill becomes the present Subject, as the entertaining new Gallants doth the Tenderness you this Morning expressed for your Reputation. In short, it is impossible that your Amours should be secret long; and however careless you have been of me whilst I have had my Horns in my Pocket, I hope you'll take care to gild them when I am to wear them in Publick.

Mrs. Modern.

What would you have me do?

Mr. Modern.

Suffer me to discover you together; by which means we may make our Fortunes easy all at once. One good Discovery in *Westminster-Hall* will be of greater Service than his utmost Generosity The Law will give you more in one Moment, than his Love for many Years.

Mrs. Modern.

Don't think of it.

Mr. Modern.

Yes, and resolve it; unless you agree to this, Madam, you must agree immediately to break up our House, and retire into the Country.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Modern.

Racks and Tortures are in that Name.

Mr. Modern.

But many more are in that of a Prison; so you must resolve either to quit the Town, or submit to my Reasons.

Mrs. Modern.

When Reputation is gone, all Places are alike: when I am despised in it, I shall hate the Town as much as now I like it.

Mr. Modern.

There are other Places and other Towns; the whole World is the House of the Rich, and they may live in what Apartment of it they please.

Mrs. Modern.

I cannot resolve.

Mr. Modern.

But I can: if you will keep your Reputation, you shall carry it into the Country, where it will be of Service In Town it is of none or if it be, 'tis, like Clogs, only to those that walk on Foot; and the one will no more recommend you in an Assembly, than the other.

Mrs. Modern.

You never had any Love for me.

Mr. Modern.

Do you tax me with Want of Love for you? Have I not for your sake stood the publick Mark of Infamy? Would you have had me poorly kept you, and starv'd you? No I could not bear to see you want, therefore have acted the Part I've done: And yet while I have wink'd at the giving up your Virtue, have I not been the most industrious to extol it every where?

Mrs. Modern.

So has Lord *Richly*, and so have all his Creatures, a common Trick among you: to blazon out the Reputation of Women, whose Virtue you have destroyed; and as industriously blacken them who have withstood you. A Deceit so stale, that your Commendation wou'd fully a Woman of Honour.

Mr. Modern.

I have no longer Time to reason with you; so I shall leave you to consider on what I have said.

[Exit.]

Mrs. Modern.

What shall I do! Can I bear to be the publick Scorn of all the Malicious and Ugly of my own Sex, or to retire with a Man whom I hate and despise. Hold! there is a small Glimpse of Hope that I may avoid them both. I have reason to think *Bellamant's* Love as violent as he avers it. Now could I persuade him to fly away with me Impossible! he hath still too much Tenderness for his Wife.

The Modern Husband

SCENE II.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Modern.

L. Richly.

What Success, my Angel.

Mrs. Modern.

Hope all, my Lord, that Lovers wish or Husbands fear; she will be here.

L. Richly.

When?

Mrs. Modern.

Now, to-night, instantly.

L. Richly.

Thou Glory of Intrigue, what Words shall thank thee?

Mrs. Modern.

No Words at all, my Lord, a Hundred Pounds must witness the first Interview.

L. Richly.

They shall; and if she yields a Thousand.

Mrs. Modern.

That you must not expect yet.

L. Richly.

By Heaven I do, I have more Reason to expect it than you imagine; I have not been wanting to my Desires, since I left you. Fortune too seems to have watched for me. I got her to *Piquet*, threw away six Parties, and left her a Bank-Note of a Hundred for the Payment of Six Pound.

Mrs. Modern.

And did she receive it?

L. Richly.

With the same Reluctancy that a Lawyer or Physician would a double Fee, or a Court-Priest a Plurality.

Mrs. Modern.

Then there is Hope of Success, indeed.

L. Richly.

Hope, there is Certainty, the next Attack must carry her.

Mrs. Modern.

You have a hundred Friends in the Garrison, my Lord.

L. Richly.

The Modern Husband

And if some of them do not open the Gates for me, the Devil's in it: I have succeeded often by leaving Money in a Lady's Hands; she spends it, is unable to pay, and then I, by Virtue of my Mortgage, immediately enter upon the Premises.

Mrs. Modern.

You are very generous, my Lord.

L. Richly.

My Money shall always be the humble Servant of my Pleasures; and it is the Interest of Men of Fortune to keep up the Price of Beauty, that they may have it more among themselves.

Mrs. Modern.

I am as much pleased, as surprized, at this your Prospect of Success; and from this Day forward I will think with you, all Vertue to be only Pride, Caprice, and the Fear of Shame.

L. Richly.

Vertue, like the Ghost in *Hamlet*, is here, there, every where, and no where at all; its Appearance is as imaginary as that of a Ghost; and they are much the same sort of People, who are in Love with one, and afraid of the other. It is a Ghost which hath seldom haunted me, but I have had the Power of laying it.

Mrs. Modern.

Yes, my Lord, I am a fatal Instance of that Power.

L. Richly.

And the dearest, I assure you, which is some Sacrifice to your Vanity; and shortly I will make an Offering to your Revenge, the two darling Passions of your Sex.

Mrs. Modern.

But how is it possible for me to leave you together, without the most abrupt Rudeness?

L. Richly.

Never regard that; as my Success is sure, she will hereafter thank you for a Rudeness so seasonable.

Mrs. Modern.

Mr. *Bellamant* too will be with her.

L. Richly.

He will be as agreeably entertained with you in the next Room, and as he does not suspect the least Design in me, he will be satisfied with my being in her Company.

Mrs. Modern.

Sure, you will not attempt his Wife while he is in the House.

L. Richly.

Pish! He is in that Dependence on my Interest, that, rather than forfeit my Favour, he would be himself her Pander. I have made twenty such Men subscribe themselves Cuckolds by the Prospect of one Place, which not one of them ever had.

Mrs. Modern.

So that your Fools are not caught like the Fish in the Water by a Bait, but like the Dog in the Water by a Shadow.

SCENE II.

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

Besides I may possibly find a Pretence of sending him away.

Mrs. Modern.

Go then to the Chocolate-House, and leave a Servant to bring you word of their Arrival. It will be better you should come in to them than they find you here.

L. Richly.

I will be guided by you in all things, and be assured the Consummation of my Wishes shall be the Success of your own.

[Exit Lord Richly.]

Mrs. Modern.

That they shall, indeed, tho' in a way you little imagine: This Forwardness of Mrs. *Bellamant's* meets my swiftest Wishes: Could I once give *Bellamant* Reason to suspect his Wife, I despair not of the happiest Effect of his Passion for me Ha! he's here and alone.

SCENE III.

Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Modern.

Mrs. Modern.

Where's Mrs. *Bellamant*?

Mr. Bella.

She will be here immediately: But I chose a few Moments Privacy with you, first to deliver you this, and next to ask you one Question, which do not be startled at. Pray, how did you employ that Note you received this Morning?

Mrs. Modern.

Nay, if you expect an Account of me, perhaps you will still do so; so let me return you this.

Mr. Bella.

Do not so injuriously mistake me. Nothing but the most extraordinary Reason could force me to ask you; know then that the very Note you had of me this Morning, I received within this Hour from my Wife.

Mrs. Modern.

Ha! ha! ha!

Mr. Bella.

Why do you laugh, Madam?

Mrs. Modern.

Out of Triumph, to see what empty Politicians Men are found, when they oppose their weak Heads to ours! On my Conscience, a Parliament of Women would be of very great Service to the Nation.

Mr. Bella.

Were all Ladies capable as Mrs. *Modern*, I should be very ready to vote on their Side.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Modern.

Nay, nay, Sir, you must not leave out your Wife, especially you that have the best Wife in the World, ha, ha, ha.

Mr. Bella.

Forgive me, Madam, if I have been too partial to a Woman, whose whole Business hath been to please me.

Mrs. Modern.

Oh! You have no Reason to be ashamed of your good Opinion; you are not singular in it, I assure you; Mrs. *Bellamant* will have more Votes than one.

Mr. Bella.

I am indifferent how many she has, since I am sure she will make Interest but for one.

Mrs. Modern.

"*It is the Curse of Fools to be secure, And that be thine and Altamont's*, ha, ha, ha.

Mr. Bella.

I cannot guess your Meaning.

Mrs. Modern.

Then to introduce my Explanation, the Note you lent me, I lost at *Piquet* to Lord *Richly*.

Mr. Bella.

To Lord *Richly*!

Mrs. Modern.

Who perhaps might dispose of it to some who might lend it to others, who might give it to those who might lose it to your Wife.

Mr. Bella.

I know not what to suppose.

Mrs. Modern.

Nor I; for sure one cannot suppose, especially since you have the best Wife in the World; one cannot suppose, that it could be a Present from Lord *Richly* to her self, that she received it, that in Return she hath sent him an Assignation to meet her here.

Mr. Bella.

Suppose! Hell and Damnation, No.

Mrs. Modern.

But certainly, one could not affirm that this is Truth.

Mr. Bella.

Affirm!

Mrs. Modern.

And yet all this is true, as true as she is false. Nay, you shall have an Instance! an immediate undeniable Instance. You shall see it with your own Eyes, and hear it with your own Ears.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

Am I alive?

Mrs. Modern.

If all the Husbands of these best Wives in the World are dead, we are a strange Nation of Ghosts. If you will be prudent, and be like the rest of your Brethren, keep the Affair secret, I assure you I'll never discover it.

Mr. Bella.

Secret! Yes, as inward Fire, till sure Destruction shall attend its Blaze. But why do I rage? it is impossible; she must be innocent.

Mrs. Modern.

Then Lord *Richly* is still a greater Villain to belye that Innocence to me: But give your self no Pain of Anxiety since you are so shortly to be certain. Go fetch her hither, Lord *Richly* will be here almost as soon as you; then feign some Excuse to leave the Room, I will soon follow you, and convey you where you shall have an Opportunity of being a Witness either to her Innocence or her Guilt.

Mr. Bella.

This Goodness, my sweetest Creature, shall bind me yours for ever.

Mrs. Modern.

To convince you That is all I desire, I am willing to leave the Town and Reputation at once, and retire with you wherever you please.

Mr. Bella.

That must be the Subject of our future Thoughts. I can think of nothing now but Satisfaction in this Affair.

[Exit.

Mrs. Modern.

Do you demur to my Offer, Sir! Oh, the Villain! I find, I am to be only a momentary Object of his looser Pleasures, and his Wife yet sits nearest his Heart. But I shall change the Angel Form she wears into a Devil's Nor shall my Revenge stop there But at present I must resolve my Temper into a Calm *Lately*.

SCENE IV.

Mrs. Modern, Lately.

Mrs. Modern.

Come hither, *Lately*, get me some Citron–Water. I am horribly out of Order.

Lately.

Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Modern.

To be slighted in this manner: Insupportable! What is the Fool doing.

Lately.

There is no Citron–Water left. Your Ladyship drank the last half Pint this Morning.

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Modern.

Then bring the Cinnamon–Water, or the Surfeit–Water, or the Aniseed–Water, or the Plague–Water, or any Water.

Lately.

Here, Madam.

[Brings the Bottle and Glass, and fills.]

Mrs. Modern. [Drinks. Looks in the Glass.]

Lord, how I look Oh! frightful I am quite shocking.

Lately.

In my Opinion your Ladyship never looked better.

Mrs. Modern.

Go, you Flatterer; I look like my Lady *Grim*.

Lately.

Where are your Ladyship's little Eyes, your short Nose, your wan Complexion, and your low Forehead?

Mrs. Modern.

Which Nature, in order to hide, hath carefully placed between her Shoulders; so that if you view her behind, she seems to walk without her Head, and lessen the Miracle of St. *Dennis*.

Lately.

Then her left Hip is tucked up under her Arm, like the Hilt of a Beau's Sword; and her disdainful Right is never seen, like its Blade.

Mrs. Modern.

Then she has two Legs, one of which seems to be the Dwarf of the other, and are alike in nothing but their Crookedness.

Lately.

And yet she thinks herself a Beauty.

Mrs. Modern.

She is, indeed, the Perfection of Ugliness.

Lately.

And a Wit I warrant you.

Mrs. Modern.

No doubt she must be very quick–sighted, for her Eyes are almost crept into her Brain.

Lately., Mrs. Modern.

He, he, he.

Mrs. Modern.

And yet the detestable Creature hath not had Sense enough, with all her Deformity to preserve her Reputation.

SCENE IV.

The Modern Husband

Lately.

I never heard, I own, any thing against that.

Mrs. Modern.

You hear, you Fool, you Dunce, what should you hear? Have not all the Town heard of a certain Colonel?

Lately.

Oh! Lud! What a Memory I have! Oh! yes, Madam, she has been quite notorious. It is surprizing, a little Discretion should not preserve her from such publick

Mrs. Modern.

If she had my Discretion, or yours, *Lately.*

Lately.

Your Ladyship will make me proud, indeed, Madam.

Mrs. Modern.

I never could see any want of Sense in you, *Lately.* I could not bear to have an insensible Creature about me. I know several Women of Fashion I could not support for a tiring Woman. What think you of Mrs. *Charmer?*

Lately.

Think of her! that were I a Man, she shou'd be the last Woman I attacked. I think her an ugly, ungenteel, squinting, flirting, impudent, odious, dirty Puss.

Mrs. Modern.

Upon my Word, *Lately,* you have a vast deal of Wit too.

Lately.

I am beholden for all my Wit, as well as my Clothes, to your Ladyship. I wish, your Ladyship wore out as much Clothes as you do Wit; I should soon grow rich.

Mrs. Modern.

You shall not complain of either. Oh! [*Knocking.*] They are come, and I will receive them in another Room.

[*Exit.*

Lately.

I know not whether my Talent of Praise, or of Slander, is of more Service to me; whether I get more by flattering my Lady, or abusing all her Acquaintance.

SCENE V.

John, Lately.

John.

So, Mrs. *Lately,* you forget your old Acquaintance; but Times are coming when I may be as good as another, and you may repent your Inconstancy.

Lately.

Odious Fellow!

The Modern Husband

John.

I would have you to know, I look on my self to be as good as your new Sweetheart, tho' he has more Lace on his Livery, and may be a Year or two younger, and as good a Man I am too; and so you may tell him. Why does not he stay at Home? What does he come into our Family for?

Lately.

Who gave you Authority to enquire, Sirrah?

John.

Marry, that did you, when you gave me a Promise to marry me; well, I shall say no more; but Times are a coming, when you may wish you had not forsaken me. I have a Secret.

Lately.

A Secret! Oh, let me hear it.

John.

No, no, Mistress, I shall keep my Secrets as well as you can yours.

Lately.

Nay, now you are unkind; you know, tho' I suffer *Tom Brisk* to visit me, you have my Heart still.

John.

Ah! you do but say so! you know too well how much I love you. Then I'll tell you, my Dear, I am going to the Devil for you.

Lately.

The Devil, you are. Going to the Devil for me! what does the Fool mean?

John.

Ay, I am to get a hundred Pounds that you may marry me.

Lately.

A hundred Pounds! and how are you to get a hundred Pounds, my dear *John*?

John.

Only by a little Swearing.

Lately.

What are you to swear?

John.

Nay, if I tell you, it would be double Perjury; for I have sworn already, I would not trust it with any Body.

Lately.

Oh! but you may trust me.

John.

And if you should trust some Body else.

The Modern Husband

Lately.

The Devil fetch me, if I do.

John.

Then my Master is to give me an hundred Pound to swear that he is a Cuckold.

Lately.

What's this?

John.

Why, my Master has offered me an hundred Pound, if I discover my Lady and Mr. *Bellamant* in a proper Manner; and let me but see them together, I'll swear to the Manner, I warrant you.

Lately.

But can you do this with a safe Conscience?

John.

Conscience, pshaw; which would you choose, a Husband with a hundred Pound, or a safe Conscience? Come give me a Dram out of your Mistress's Closet; and there I'll tell you more.

Lately.

Come along with me.

SCENE VI.

SCENE changes to another Apartment.

Lord Richly, Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant, Mrs. Modern.

L. Richly.

Well, Madam, you have drawn a most delightful Sketch of Life.

Mrs. Modern.

Then it is *still Life*; for I dare swear there never were such People breathing.

Mrs. Bella.

Don't you believe then, Madam, it is possible for a married Couple to be happy in one another, without desiring any other Company?

Mrs. Modern.

Indeed, I do not know what it may have been in the Plains of *Arcadia*; but truly, in those of *Great Britain*, I believe not.

L. Richly.

I must subscribe to that too.

Mrs. Bella.

Mr. *Bellamant*, what say you?

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

Oh! my Dear, I am entirely of your Mind.

L. Richly.

This is a Miracle almost equal to the other, to see a Husband and Wife of the same Opinion. I must be a Convert too; for it would be the greatest Miracle of all to find Mrs. *Bellamant* in the wrong.

Mrs. Bella.

It would be a much greater to find want of Complaisance in Lord *Richly*.

Mr. Bella. [Aside.]

Confusion!

Mrs. Modern.

Nay, Madam, this is hardly so; for I have heard his Lordship say the same in your Absence.

L. Richly.

Dear *Bellamant*, I believe, I have had an Opportunity to serve you this Afternoon. I have spoke to Lord *Powerful*, he says, he is very willing to do for you. Sir *Peter*, they tell me, is given over, and I fancy, you may find my Lord at Home now.

Mr. Bella.

I shall take another Opportunity, my Lord, a particular Affair now preventing me.

L. Richly.

The Loss of an Hour hath been often the Loss of a Place; and unless you have something of greater Consequence, I must advise you as a Friend.

Mr. Bella.

I shall find a Method of thanking you.

[Aside.]

Mrs. Modern.

Make this a Handle to slip out, I'll come into the next Room to you.

[Aside to Mr. Bellamant.]

Mr. Bella.

My Lord, I am very much obliged to your Friendship. My Dear, I'll call on you in my Return: Mrs. *Modern*, I am your humble Servant.

SCENE VII.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Bellamant, Mrs. Modern.

L. Richly.

I wish you Success, you may command any thing in my Power to forward it.

Mrs. Bella.

Mr. *Bellamant* is more indebted to your Lordship, than he will be ever able to pay.

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

Mr. *Bellamant*, Madam, has a Friend, who is able to pay more Obligations than I can lay on him.

Mrs. Modern.

I am forc'd to be guilty of a great piece of Rudeness, by leaving you one Moment.

L. Richly.

And I shall not be guilty of losing it.

[Aside.

Mrs. Bella.

What can this mean?

[Aside.

SCENE VIII.

Lord Richly, Mrs. Bellamant.

L. Richly.

And can you, Madam, think of retiring from the general Admiration of Mankind?

Mrs. Bella.

With Pleasure, my Lord, to the particular Admiration of him who is to me all Mankind.

L. Richly.

Is it possible any Man can be so happy?

Mrs. Bella.

I hope, my Lord, you think Mr. *Bellamant* so.

L. Richly.

If he be, I pity him much less for his Losses, than I envy him the Love of her in whose Power it may be to redress them.

Mrs. Bella.

You surprize me, my Lord: In my Power!

L. Richly.

Yes, Madam; for whatever is in the Power of Man, is in yours: I am sure, what little Assistance mine can give, is readily at your Devotion. My Interest and Fortune are all in these dear Hands; in short, Madam, I have languish'd a long Time for an Opportunity to tell you, that I have the most violent Passion for you.

Mrs. Bella.

My Lord, I have been unwilling to understand you; but now your Expression leaves me no other Doubt, but whether I hate or despise you most.

L. Richly.

Are these the ungrateful Returns you give my Love?

The Modern Husband

Mrs. Bella.

Is this the Friendship you have profess'd to Mr. *Bellamant* ?

L. Richly.

I'll make his Fortune. Let this be an Instance of my future Favours.

[Puts a Bank-Note in her Hand; she throws it away.]

Mrs. Bella.

And this of my Reception of them. Be assur'd, my Lord, if you ever renew this unmannerly Attack on my Honour, I will be reveng'd; my Husband shall know his Obligations to you.

L. Richly.

I have gone too far to retreat, Madam; if I cannot be the Object of your Love, let me be oblig'd to your Prudence. How many Families are supported by this Method which you start at? Does not many a Woman in this Town drive her Husband's Coach?

Mrs. Bella.

My Lord, this Insolence is intolerable, and from this Hour I never will see your Face again.

[A Noise without.]

L. Richly.

Hey! what is the meaning of this?

SCENE IX.

Mr. Modern with Servants, Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Modern, Lord Richly, Mrs. Bellamant.

Mr. Modern.

Come out, Strumpet, show thy Face and thy Adulterer's before the World; thou shalt be a severe Example of the Vengeance of an injur'd Husband.

L. Richly.

I have no farther Business here at present; for I fear, more Husbands have discover'd Injuries, than one.

[Exit.]

Mrs. Bella.

Protect me, Heavens! what do I see!

Mr. Bella.

This was a Master-piece of my evil Genius.

Mrs. Modern.

Sir, this Insult upon my Reputation shall not go unreveng'd; I have Relations, Brothers, who will defend their Sister's Fame from the base Attacks of a perfidious Husband, from any Shame he would bring on her Innocence.

Mr. Modern.

The Modern Husband

Thou hast a Forehead that would defend it self from any Shame whatsoever; that you have grafted on my Forehead, I thank you, and this worthy Gentleman.

Mrs. Modern.

Sir, you shall smart for the Falsehood of this Accusation.

[Exit.

Mr. Modern.

Madam, you shall smart for the Truth of it; this honest Man, *[Pointing to the Servant.]* is Evidence of the Fact, of your Dishonour and mine. And for you, Sir, *[To Bellamant.]* you may depend upon it, I shall take the strictest Satisfaction which the Law will give me: so I shall leave you at present, to give Satisfaction to your Wife.

[Exeunt.

SCENE X.

Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant.

Mr. Bella. [After some Pause.]

When the Criminal turns his own Accuser, the merciful Judge becomes his Advocate: Guilt is too plainly written in my Face to admit of a Denial, and I stand prepar'd to receive what Sentence you please.

Mrs. Bella.

As you are your own Accuser, be your own Judge; you can inflict no Punishment on your self equal to what I feel.

Mr. Bella.

Death has no Terrors equal to that Thought. Ha! I have involv'd thee too in my Ruin, and thou must be the wretched Partaker of my Misfortunes.

Mrs. Bella.

While I was assur'd of your Truth, I could have thought that Happiness enough: yet, I have still this to comfort me, the same Moment that has betray'd your Guilt, has discover'd my Innocence.

Mr. Bella.

Oh! thou ungrateful Fool, what Stores of Bliss hast thou in one vicious Moment destroy'd! *[To himself.]* Oh! my Angel, how have I requited all your Love and Goodness? For what have I forsaken thy tender virtuous Passion?

Mrs. Bella.

For a new one. How could I be so easily deceiv'd? How could I imagine there was such Truth in Man, in that inconstant fickle Sex, who are so prone to Change; that to indulge their Fondness for Variety, they would grow weary of a Paradise to wander in a Desert?

Mr. Bella.

How weak is that Comparison to shew the Difference between thee, and every other Woman!

Mrs. Bella.

I once had that Esteem of you; but hereafter, I shall think all Men the same; and when I have wean'd my self of my Love for you, will hate them all alike.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

Thy Sentence is too just. I own, I have deserv'd it, I never merited so good a Wife. Heaven saw it had given too much, and thus has taken the Blessing from me.

Mrs. Bella.

You will soon think otherwise. If Absence from me can bring you to those Thoughts, I am resolv'd to favour them.

Mr. Bella.

Thou shalt enjoy thy Wish, we will part, part this Night, this Hour. Yet, let me ask one Favour, the Ring which was a Witness of our Meeting, let it be so of our Separation. Let me bear this as a Memorial of our Love. This shall remind me of all the tender Moments we have had together, and serve to aggravate my Sorrows: Henceforth, I'll study only to be miserable; let Heaven make you happy, and curse me as it pleases.

Mrs. Bella.

It cannot make me more wretched than you have made me.

Mr. Bella.

Yet, do believe me when I swear, I never injur'd you with any other Woman. Nay, believe me when I swear how much soever I may have deserv'd the Shame I suffer, I did not now deserve it.

Mrs. Bella.

And, must we part?

Mr. Bella.

Since it obliges you.

Mrs. Bella.

That I may have nothing to remember you by, take back this, and this, and this, and all the thousand Embraces thou hast given me till I die in thy loved Arms and thus we part for ever.

Mr. Bella.

Ha!

Mrs. Bella.

Oh! I forgive thee all: forget it as a frightful Dream it was no more, and I awake to real Joy.

Mr. Bella.

Oh! let me press thee to my Heart; for every Moment that I hold thee thus, gives Bliss beyond Expression, a Bliss no Vice can give. Now Life appears desirable again. Yet shall I not see thee miserable? Shall I not see my Children suffer for their Father's Crime?

Mrs. Bella.

Indulge no more uneasy Thoughts; Fortune may have Blessings yet in store for us and them.

Mr. Bella.

Excellent Goodness! my future Days shall have no Wish, no Labour, but for thy Happiness; and from this Hour, I'll never give thee Cause of a Complaint.

The Modern Husband

And whatsoever Rocks our Fates may lay
In Life's hard Passage to obstruct our way;
Patient, the toilsome Journey I'll abide;
And bless my Fortune with so dear a Guide.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

SCENE Mr. Bellamant's House

Emilia speaking to a Servant, afterwards Lady Charlotte.

Emilia.

It is very strange you will not give me the Liberty of denying myself; that you will force me to be at Home, whether I will or no.

Serv.

I had no such Order from your Ladyship.

Emilia.

Well, well, go wait upon her up. I am but in an ill Humour to receive such a Visit; I must try to make it as short as I can.

La. Charl.

Emilia, Good-morrow: Am not I an early Creature? I have been so frightned with some News I have heard I am heartily concern'd for you, my Dear, I hope the Fright has not done you any Mischief.

Emilia.

I am infinitely oblig'd to you, *Lady Charlotte*.

La. Charl.

Oh! I could not stay one Moment; you see, I hurried into my Chair to you half undrest; never was Creature in such a Pickle, so frightful; Lud! I was oblig'd to draw all the Curtains round me.

Emilia.

I don't perceive you had any Reason for that, *Lady Charlotte*.

La. Charl.

Why, did you ever see any thing so hideous, so odious as this Gown? Well, *Emilia*, you certainly have the prettiest Fancy in the World. I like what you have on now, better than *Lady Pinup's*, tho' hers cost so much more. Some People have the strangest way of laying out their Money. You remember our Engagement to-night.

Emilia.

You must excuse me; it will look very odd to see me abroad on this Occasion.

La. Charl.

Not odd in the least. No Body minds these Things. There's no Rule upon such Occasions. Sure, you don't intend to

The Modern Husband

stay at Home, and receive formal Visits.

Emilia.

No; but I intend to stay at Home, and receive no Visits.

La. Charl.

Why, Child, you will be laugh'd at by all the Town. There never was such a Thing done in the World; staying at Home is quite left off upon all Occasions; a Woman scarce stays at Home a Week for the Death of a Husband. Dear *Emilia*, don't be so awkward: I can make no Excuse for you; Lady *Polite* will never forgive you.

Emilia.

That I shall be sorry for: but I had rather not be forgiven by her, than by my self.

SCENE II.

Captain Bellamant, Lady Charlotte, Emilia.

Cap. Bella.

Sister, Good-morrow; Lady *Charlotte* abroad so early!

La. Charl.

You may well be surpriz'd; I have not been out at this Hour, these fifty Years.

Cap. Bella.

You will never be able to hold it out till Night.

Emilia. [Aside.]

I am sure if she should take it in her Head to stay with me, I shall not: And unless some dear Creature, like her self, should come and take her away, I seem to be in Danger.

La. Charl. [To Bellamant after a Whisper.]

Don't tell me of what I said last Night. Last Night was last Year; an Age ago: and I have the worst Memory in the World.

Cap. Bella.

You seem to want one, egad!

La. Charl.

Indeed, I do not. A Memory would be of no Use to me; for I was never of the same Mind twice in my Life: and tho' I should remember what I said at one Time, I should as certainly remember not to do it at another.

Cap. Bella.

You dear agreeable Creature! Sure, never two People were so like one another as you and I are. We think alike, we act alike, and some People think, we are very much alike in the Face.

La. Charl.

Do you hear him, *Emilia*? He has made one of the most shocking Compliments to me; I believe, I shall never be able to bear a Looking-glass again.

The Modern Husband

Cap. Bella.

Faith, and if it was not for the Help of a Looking-glass, you would be the most unhappy Creature in the World.

La. Charl.

Impertinent!

Cap. Bella.

For then you would be the only Person debarr'd from seeing the finest Face in the World.

Emilia.

Very fine, indeed.

La. Charl.

Civil enough. I think, I begin to endure the Wretch again now.

Cap. Bella.

Keep but in that Mind half an Hour

La. Charl.

Emilia, Good-morrow, you will excuse the Shortness of my Visit.

Emilia.

No Apologies on that Account, Lady *Charlotte*.

La. Charl.

You are a good Creature, and know the continual Hurry of Business I am in Don't you follow me, you Thing, you!

[To Cap. Bellamant.

Cap. Bella.

Indeed, Lady *Charlotte*, but I shall, and I hope to some Purpose.

[Aside.

SCENE III.

Emilia alone.

Emilia.

So, I am once more left to my own Thoughts. Heaven knows, they are like to afford me little Entertainment. Oh! *Gaywit!* too much I sympathize with thy Uneasiness. Didst thou know the Pangs I feel on thy Account, thy generous Heart would suffer more on mine. Ha! my Words have rais'd a Spirit.

SCENE IV.

Emilia, Mr. Gaywit.

Mr. Gaywit.

I hope, Madam, you will excuse a Visit at so unseasonable an Hour.

The Modern Husband

Emilia.

Had you come a little earlier, you had met a Mistress here.

Mr. Gaywit.

I met the Lady you mean, Madam, at the Door, and Captain *Bellamant* with her.

Emilia.

You are the most Cavalier Lover I know, you are no more jealous of a Rival with your Mistress, than the most polite Husband is of one with his Wife.

Mr. Gaywit.

A Man should not be jealous of his Friend, Madam, and I believe, Captain *Bellamant* will be such to me in the highest Manner. I wish, I were so blest in another Heart, as he appears to be in Lady *Charlotte's*. I wish, I were as certain of gaining the Woman I do love, as of losing her I do not.

Emilia.

I suppose, if your Amour be of any Date, you can easily guess at the Impressions you have made.

Mr. Gaywit.

No, nor can she guess at the Impression she has made on me; for unless my Eyes have done it, I never acquainted her with my Passion.

Emilia.

And that your Eyes have done it, you may be assur'd, if you have seen her often. The Love that can be conceal'd, must be very cold indeed; but, methinks, it is something particular in you to desire to conceal it.

Mr. Gaywit.

I have been always fearful to disclose a Passion, which I know not whether it be in my Power to pursue. I would not even have given her the Uneasiness to pity me, much less have tried to raise her Love.

Emilia.

If you are so tender of her, take care you never let her suspect so much Generosity. That may give her a secret Pang.

Mr. Gaywit.

Heaven forbid it should, one equal to those I feel; lest, while I am endeavouring to make my Addresses practicable, she should unadvisedly receive those of another.

Emilia.

If she can discover your Love as plain as I can, I think you may be easy on that Account.

Mr. Gaywit.

He must dote like me who can conceive the Ecstasy these Words have given.

Emilia. [Knocking.]

Come in.

Serv.

Your Honour's Servant, Sir, is below.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

I come to him Madam, your most obedient Servant; I go on Business which will by Noon give me the Satisfaction of thinking I have preserv'd the best of Fathers to the best of Women.

Emilia.

I know, he means mine; but why do I mention that, when every Action of his Life leaves me no other Doubt than whether it convinces me more of his Love, or of his deserving mine.

SCENE V.

Lord Richly's House.

Lord Richly, Servant.

L. Richly.

Desire Mr. *Bellamant* to walk in. What can the Meaning of this Visit be? Perhaps, he comes to make me Proposals concerning his Wife; but my Love shall not get so far the better of my Reason, as to lead me to an extravagant Price; I'll not go above two Thousand, that's positive.

SCENE VI.

Lord Richly, Mr. Bellamant.

L. Richly.

My dear *Bellamant*.

Mr. Bella.

My Lord, I have receiv'd an Obligation from you, which I thus return.

[Gives him a Bank-Bill.]

L. Richly.

Pshaw! Trifles of this Nature can hardly be call'd Obligations; I would do twenty times as much for dear *Jack Bellamant*.

Mr. Bella.

The Obligation indeed was to my Wife, nor hath she made you a small Return; since it is to her Intreaty you owe your present Safety, your Life.

L. Richly.

I am not appriz'd of the Danger; but would owe my Safety to no one, sooner than to Mrs. *Bellamant*.

Mr. Bella.

Come, come, my Lord; this Prevarication is low and mean: You know, you have us'd me basely, villanously; and under the Cover of Acquaintance and Friendship have attempted to corrupt my Wife; for which, but that I would not suffer the least Breath of Scandal to sully her Reputation, I would exact such Vengeance on thee

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

Sir, I must acquaint you, that this is a Language I have not been us'd to.

Mr. Bella.

No, the Language of Flatterers and hireling Sycophants has been what you have dealt in Wretches, whose Honour and Love are as venal as their Praise. Such your Title might awe, or your Fortune bribe to Silence; such you should have dealt with, and not have dared to injure a Man of Honour.

L. Richly.

This is such Presumption

Mr. Bella.

No, my Lord, yours was the Presumption, mine is only Justice, nay, and mild too; unequal to your Crime which requires a Punishment from my Hand, not from my Tongue.

L. Richly.

Do you consider who I am?

Mr. Bella.

Were you as high as Heraldry could lift you, you should not injure me unpunish'd. Where Grandeur can give Licence to Oppression, the People must be Slaves, let them boast what Liberty they please.

L. Richly.

Sir, you shall hear of this.

Mr. Bella.

I shall be ready to justify my Words by any Action you dare provoke me to: And be assur'd of this, if ever I discover any future Attempts of yours to my Dishonour, your Life shall be its Sacrifice. Hence forward, my Lord, let us behave, as if we had never known one another.

[Exit.

L. Richly.

Here's your Man of Sense now, He was half ruin'd in the House of Lords a few Days ago, and is in a fair Way of going the other Step in *Westminster-Hall* in a few Days more; yet, has the Impudence to threaten a Man of my Fortune and Quality, for attempting to debauch his Wife; which many a Fool, who rides in his Coach and Six, would have had Sense enough to have wink'd at.

SCENE VII.

Lord Richly, Mr. Gaywit.

Mr. Gaywit.

Your Lordship is contemplative.

L. Richly.

So, Nephew, by this early Visit, I suppose you had ill Luck last Night; for where Fortune frowns on you, she always smiles on me, by blessing me with your Company.

Mr. Gaywit.

The Modern Husband

I have long since put it out of the Power of Fortune to do me either Favour or Injury. My Happiness is now in the Power of another Mistress.

L. Richly.

And thou art too pretty a Fellow not to have that Mistress in your Power.

Mr. Gaywit.

The Possession of her, and in her of all my Desires, depends on your Consent.

L. Richly.

You know, *Harry*, you have my Consent to possess all the Women in Town, except those few that I am particular with: Provided you fall not foul on mine, you may board and plunder what Vessels you please.

Mr. Gaywit.

This is a Vessel, my Lord, neither to be taken by force, nor hired by Gold. I must buy her for Life, or not board at all.

L. Richly.

Then the principal thing to be consider'd, is her Cargo. To marry a Woman meerly for her Person, is buying an empty Vessel: And a Woman is a Vessel, which a Man will grow cursed weary of in a long Voyage.

Mr. Gaywit.

My Lord, I have had some Experience in Women, and I believe, that I never could be weary of the Woman I now love.

L. Richly.

Let me tell you, I have had some Experience too, and I have been weary of forty Women that I have lov'd.

Mr. Gaywit.

And, perhaps, in all that Variety, you may not have found one of equal Excellence with her I mean.

L. Richly.

And pray, who is this Paragon you mean?

Mr. Gaywit.

Must I, my Lord, when I have painted the finest Woman in the World, be oblig'd to write Miss *Bellamant's* Name to the Picture?

L. Richly.

Miss *Bellamant!*

Mr. Gaywit.

Yes, Miss *Bellamant.*

L. Richly.

You know Mr. *Bellamant's* Losses; you know what happen'd Yesterday, which may entirely finish his Ruin; and the Consequence of his Ruin must be the Ruin of his Daughter; Which will certainly throw her Vertue into your Power; for Poverty as surely brings a Woman to Capitulation, as Scarcity of Provisions does a Garrison.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

I cannot take this Advice, my Lord: I would not take Advantage from the Misfortunes of any; but surely, not of the Woman I love.

L. Richly.

Well, Sir, you shall ask me no more; for if my Consent to your Ruin will oblige you, you have it.

Mr. Gaywit.

My Lord, I shall ever remember this Goodness, and will be ready to sign any Instrument to secure a very large Fortune to Lady *Charlotte* when you please.

SCENE VIII.

Lord Richly solus.

L. Richly.

Now if he takes my Consent from my own Word, I may deny it afterwards, so I gain the whole Estate for my Daughter, and bring an entire Destruction upon *Bellamant* and his whole Family: Charming Thought! that would be a Revenge, indeed; nay, it may accomplish all my Wishes too; Mrs. *Bellamant* may be mine at last.

SCENE IX.

Lord Richly, Mr. Modern.

Mr. Modern.

My Lord, I was honour'd with your Commands.

L. Richly.

I believe, I shall procure the Place for you, Sir.

Mr. Modern.

My Obligations to your Lordship are so infinite, that I must always be your Slave.

L. Richly.

I am concern'd for your Misfortune, Mr. *Modern*.

Mr. Modern.

It is a common Misfortune, my Lord, to have a bad Wife. I am something happier than my Brethren in the Discovery.

L. Richly.

That, indeed, may make you amends more ways than one. I cannot dissuade you from the most rigorous Prosecution; for, tho' dear *Jack Bellamant* be my particular Friend, yet in Cases of this nature, even Friendship it self must be thrown up. Injuries of this kind are not to be forgiven.

Mr. Modern.

Very true, my Lord; he has robb'd me of the Affections of a Wife, whom I have lov'd as tenderly as my self: Forgive my Tears, my Lord I have lost all I held dear in this World.

The Modern Husband

L. Richly.

I pity you, indeed; but comfort your self with the Hopes of Revenge.

Mr. Modern.

Alas! my Lord, what Revenge can equal the Dishonour he has brought upon my Family? Think on that, my Lord; on the Dishonour I must endure. I cannot name the Title they will give me.

L. Richly.

It is shocking, indeed!

Mr. Modern.

My Ease for ever lost, my Quiet gone, my Honour stain'd, my Honour, my Lord. Oh! 'tis a tender Wound.

L. Richly.

Laws cannot be too rigorous against Offences of this Nature: Juries cannot give too great Damages. To attempt the Wife of a Friend To what Wickedness will Men arrive? *Mr. Modern*, I own, I cannot blame you in pushing your Revenge to the utmost Extremity.

Mr. Modern.

That I am resolv'd on. I have just receiv'd an Appointment from your Lordship's Nephew, *Mr. Gaywit*; I suppose to give me some Advice in the Affair.

L. Richly. [Aside.]

Ha! that must be to dissuade him from the Prosecution *Mr. Modern*, if you please, I'll set you down, I have some particular Business with him: besides, if he knows any thing that can be of Service to you, my Commands shall enforce the Discovery. Bid the Coachman pull up.

Mr. Modern.

I am the most oblig'd of all your Lordship's Slaves.

SCENE X.

Another Apartment.

Lady Charlotte, Captain Bellamant and Servant.

La. Charl.

My Lord gone out! then d'ye hear! I am at home to no Body.

Cap. Bella.

That's kind, indeed, *Lady Charlotte*, to let me have you all to my self.

La. Charl.

You! you confident thing! how came you here? don't you remember, I bad you not to follow me?

Cap. Bella.

Yes, but it's so long ago, that I'm surpriz'd you should remember it.

La. Charl.

The Modern Husband

Indeed, Sir, I always remember to avoid what I don't like. I suppose you don't know that I hate you of all things.

Cap. Bella.

Not I, upon my Soul! the Duce take me, if I did not think, you had lik'd me, as well as I lik'd you, ha, ha.

La. Charl.

I like you, impossible! why don't you know, that you are very ugly?

Cap. Bella.

Pshaw! that's nothing; that will all go off; a Month's Marriage takes off the Homeliness of a Husband's Face, as much as it does the Beauty of a Wife's.

La. Charl.

And so you would insinuate that I might be your Wife? O horrible! shocking Thought!

Cap. Bella.

Nay, Madam, I am as much frighten'd at the Thoughts of Marriage, as you can be.

La. Charl.

Indeed, Sir, you need not be under any Apprehensions of that kind, upon my Account.

Cap. Bella.

Indeed, but I am, Madam; for what an unconsolable Creature wou'd you be, if I shou'd take it in my Head to marry any other Woman.

La. Charl.

Well, he has such an excessive Assurance that I am not really sure, whether he is not agreeable. Let me die, if I am not under some sort of Suspense about it and yet I am n't neither for to be sure I don't like the thing and yet methinks, I do too and yet I do not know what I should do with him neither Hi! hi! hi! this is the foolishhest Circumstance that ever I knew in my Life.

Cap. Bella.

Very well! sure, Marriage begins to run in your Head at last; Madam.

La. Charl.

A propos! do you know that t'other Day, Lady *Betty Shuttlecock* and I laid down the prettiest Scheme of Matrimony, that ever enter'd into the Taste of People of Condition.

Cap. Bella.

O! pray let's hear it.

La. Charl.

In the first place then, when ever she or I marry, I am resolv'd positively to be Mistress of my self; I must have my House to my self, my Coach to my self, my Servants to my self, my Table, Time, and Company to my self; Nay, and sometimes when I have a mind to be out of Humour, my Bed to my self.

Cap. Bella.

Right, Madam, for a Wife and a Husband always together, are, to be sure, the flattest Company in the World.

The Modern Husband

La. Charl.

O detestable! then I will be sure to have my own Humour in ev'ry thing; to go, come, dine, dance, play, sup, at all Hours, and in whatever Company I have a mind to; and if ever he pretends to put on a grave Face, upon my enjoying any one of those Articles, I am to burst out in his Face a laughing. Won't that be prodigious pleasant? ha! ha! ha!

Cap. Bella.

O charmingly charming! ha, ha, what a contemptible Creature is a Woman, that never does any thing, without consulting her Husband?

La. Charl.

Nay, there you're mistaken again, Sir: For I would never do any thing without consulting my Husband.

Cap. Bella.

How so, dear Madam?

La. Charl.

Because sometimes one may happen to be so low in Spirits, as not to know one's own Mind; and then, you know, if a foolish Husband should happen to say a Word on either Side, why one determines on the contrary without any farther Trouble.

Cap. Bella.

Right, Madam, and a thousand to one, but the happy Rogue, your Husband, might warm his indolent Inclinations too from the same Spirit of Contradiction, ha, ha.

La. Charl.

Well, I am so passionately fond of my own Humour, That let me die, if a Husband were to insist upon my never missing any one Diversion this Town affords, I believe in my Conscience, I should go twice a Day to Church, to avoid 'em.

Cap. Bella.

O fy! you could not be so unfashionable a Creature!

La. Charl.

Ay, but I would tho'. I do not care what I do, when I'm vext.

Cap. Bella.

Well! let me perish, this is a most delectable Scheme. Don't you think, Madam, we shall be vastly happy?

La. Charl.

We, what we? pray, who do you mean, Sir?

Cap. Bella.

Why, Lady *Betty Shuttlecock* and I: Why you must know this is the very Scheme she laid down to me last Night; which so vastly charm'd me, that we resolv'd to be married upon it to-morrow Morning.

La. Charl.

What do you mean?

The Modern Husband

Cap. Bella.

Only to take your Advice, Madam, by allowing my Wife all the modish Privileges, that you seem so passionately fond of.

La. Charl.

Your Wife? why, who's to be your Wife, pray? you don't think of me, I hope.

Cap. Bella.

One wou'd think, you thought I did: for you refuse me as odly, as if I had ask'd you the Question: Not, but I suppose, you would have me think now, you have refus'd me in earnest.

La. Charl.

Ha! ha! ha! that's well enough; why, sweet Sir, do you really think I am not in Earnest?

Cap. Bella.

No faith, I can't think you're so silly, as to refuse me in Earnest, when I only ask'd you in Jest. *[Both.]* Ha! ha! ha!

La. Charl.

Ridiculous!

Cap. Bella.

Delightful! well, after all, I am a strange Creature to be so merry, when I am just going to be married.

La. Charl.

And had you ever the Assurance to think I would have you?

Cap. Bella.

Why, faith! I don't know, but I might, if I had ever made love to you Well, Lady *Charlotte*, your Servant. I suppose you'll come and visit my Wife, as soon as ever she sees Company.

La. Charl.

What do you mean?

Cap. Bella.

Seriously what I say, Madam; I am just now going to my Lawyer to sign my Marriage Articles with Lady *Betty Shuttlecock*.

La. Charl.

And are you going in Earnest?

Cap. Bella.

Positively. Seriously.

La. Charl.

Then I must take the Liberty to tell you, Sir, you are the greatest Villain, that ever liv'd upon the Face of the Earth.

Cap. Bella.

Ha! what do I see? *[She burst into Tears.]* Is it possible! O my dear! dear Lady *Charlotte*, can I believe my self the Cause of these transporting Tears! O! till this Instant never did I taste of Happiness.

The Modern Husband

La. Charl.

Ha! ha! nor I upon my Faith, Sir! Ha! ha!

Cap. Bella.

Hey day! what do you mean?

La. Charl.

That you are one of the silliest Animals, that ever open'd his Lips to a Woman Ha! ha! O I shall die! ha! ha!

Enter a Servant.

Serv.

Sir, here's a Letter for you.

Cap. Bella.

So, it's come in good time. If this does not give her a turn, Egad, I shall have all my Plague to go over again Lady *Charlotte*, you'll give me leave.

La. Charl.

O Sir! *Billet doux* are exempt from Ceremony. Ha! ha!

Cap. Bella. [After reading to himself.]

Ha! ha! Well, my dear Lady *Charlotte*, I am vastly glad to see you are so easy; upon my Soul, I was afraid you was really in love with me; But since I need have no farther Apprehensions of it, I know you won't take it ill, if I obey the Summons of my Wife, that is to be Lady *Betty* has sent for me You'll excuse me if I am confin'd a Week or two, with my Wife for the present; When that's over, you and I will laugh and sing, and coquette as much as ever we did, and so dear Lady *Charlotte*, your humble Servant.

[Exit.

La. Charl.

What can the Creature mean? I know not what to think of him! sure it can't be true! but if it should be true I can't believe it true and yet it may be true too I am resolv'd to be satisfied Here, who's there! will no Body hear? Who's there, I say.

Enter Servant.

Desire Captain *Bellamant* to step back again.

Serv.

He's just gone out, Madam.

La. Charl.

Then it's certainly true get me a Chair this Moment this Instant go, run, fly! I am in such a Hurry, I don't know what I do. O hideous! I look horridly frightful but I'll follow him just as I am I'll go to Lady *Betty's* If I find him there, I shall certainly faint. I must take a little Hartshorn with me.

[Exit.

SCENE X.

Mr. Gaywit, Mrs. Modern, meeting in his Lodgings. Mr. Gaywit.

This is exactly the Time I appointed her to meet me here. Ha! she comes, you are punctual as a young Lover to his first Appointment.

Mrs. Modern.

Women commonly begin to be most punctual, when Men leave it off; our Passions seldom reach their Meridian, before yours set.

Mr. Gaywit.

We can no more help the Decrease of our Passions, than you the Increase of yours; and tho' like the Sun I was obliged to quit your Hemisphere, I have left you a Moon to shine in it.

Mrs. Modern.

What do you mean?

Mr. Gaywit.

I suppose you are by this no Stranger to the Fondness of the Gentleman I introduced to you; nor will you shortly be to his Generosity. He is one who has more Money than Brains, and more Generosity than Money.

Mrs. Modern.

Oh! *Gaywit!* I am undone: you will too soon know how; will hear it perhaps with Pleasure, since it is too plain by betraying me to your Friend; I have no longer any Share in your Love.

Mr. Gaywit.

Blame not my Inconstancy, but your own.

Mrs. Modern.

By all our Joys I never loved another.

Mr. Gaywit.

Nay, will you deny what Conviction has long since constrained you to own? Will you deny your Favours to Lord *Richly?*

Mrs. Modern.

He had indeed my Person, but you alone my Heart.

Mr. Gaywit.

I always take a Woman's Person to be the strongest Assurance of her Heart. I think, the Love of a Mistress who gives up her Person, is no more to be doubted than the Love of a Friend who gives you his Purse.

Mrs. Modern.

By Heavens, I hate and despise him equal with my Husband. And as I was forced to marry the latter by the Commands of my Parents, so I was given up to the former by the Intreaties of my Husband.

Mr. Gaywit.

The Modern Husband

By the Intreaties of your Husband!

Mrs. Modern.

Hell and his blacker Soul both know the Truth of what I say That he betrayed me first, and has ever since been the Pander of our Amour; to you my own Inclinations led me. Lord *Richly* has paid for his Pleasures, to you they have still been free: He was my Husband's Choice, but you alone were mine.

Mr. Gaywit.

And have you not complied with *Bellamant* too?

Mrs. Modern.

Oh! blame not my Necessities. He is indeed that generous Creature you have spoke him.

Mr. Gaywit.

And have you not betrayed this generous Creature to a Wretch?

Mrs. Modern.

I see you know it all By Heavens I have not: It was his own Jealousy, not my Design; nay, he importuned me to have discovered Lord *Richly* in the same manner; Oh, think not any Hopes could have prevailed on me to blast my Fame. No Reward could make me amends for that Loss. Thou shalt see by my Retirement I have a Soul too great to encounter Shame.

Mr. Gaywit.

I will try to make that Retirement easy to you; and call me not ungrateful for attempting to discomfit your Husband's Purpose, and preserve my Friend.

Mrs. Modern.

I my self will preserve him; if my Husband pursues his Intentions, my Woman will swear that the Servant own'd he was hired to be a false Evidence against us.

Mr. Gaywit.

Then since the Story is already publick, forgive this last Blush I am obliged to put you to.

Mrs. Modern.

What do you mean?

Mr. Gaywit.

These Witnesses must inform you.

SCENE XI.

Mr. Gaywit, Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant, Mrs. Modern, Emilia, Capt. Merit.

Mrs. Modern.

Distraction! Tortures!

Mr. Gaywit.

I have with Difficulty brought myself to give you this Shock; which nothing but the Preservation of the best of Friends could have extorted; and which you shall be made amends for.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Bella.

Be not shocked, Madam; it shall be your Husband's Fault, if you are farther uneasy on this Account.

Mr. Gaywit.

Come, Madam, you may your self reap a Benefit from what I have done, since it may prevent your being exposed in another Place.

Mrs. Modern.

All Places to me are equal, except this.

[Exit.

Mrs. Bella.

Her Misfortunes move my Compassion.

Mr. Gaywit.

It is generous in you, Madam, to pity the Misfortunes of a Woman, whose Faults are more her Husband's than her own.

SCENE XII.

Lord Richly, Mr. Modern, Mr. Gaywit, Mr. Bellamant, Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia.

L. Richly.

Mr. *Gaywit*, upon my Word, you have the most splendid Levée I have seen.

Mr. Gaywit.

I am sorry, my Lord, you have increased it by one who should only grace the Keeper of *Newgate's* Levée; a Fellow whose Company is scandalous to your Lordship, as it is odious to us all.

Mr. Bella.

His Lordship is not the only Man who goes abroad with his Cuckold.

L. Richly.

Methinks you have invited a Gentleman to a very scurvy Entertainment.

Mr. Gaywit.

You'll know, my Lord very shortly, wherefore he was invited, and how much you your self are obliged to his kind Endeavours; for would his Wife have consented to his Intreaties, this pretended Discovery had fallen on you, and you had supplied that Gentleman's Place.

L. Richly.

A Discovery fallen on me!

Cap. Merit.

Yes, my Lord, the whole Company are Witnesses to Mrs. *Modern's* Confession of it; that he betrayed her to your Embraces with a Design to discover you in them.

Mr. Modern.

My Lord, this is a base Design to ruin

The Modern Husband

the humblest of your Creatures in your Lordship's Favour.

L. Richly.

How it should have that Effect I know not; for I do not understand a Word of what these Gentlemen mean.

Mr. Gaywit.

We shall convince your Lordship; in the mean time I must beg you to leave this Apartment; you may prosecute what Revenge you please, but at Law we shall dare to defy you. The Damages will not be very great, which are given to a voluntary Cuckold.

Emilia.

Tho' I see not why; for it is surely as much a Robbery to take away a Picture unpaid for, from the Painter who would sell it, as from the Gentleman who would keep it.

Mr. Modern.

You may have your Jest, Madam, but I will be paid severely for it; I shall have a Time of laughing in my Turn. My Lord, your most obedient Servant.

SCENE XIII.

Lord Richly, Mr. Gaywit, Mr. Bellamant, Captain Bellamant, Lady Charlotte, Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia.

Mr. Gaywit.

He will find his Mistake, and our Conquest soon enough; and now, my Lord, I hope you will ratify that Consent you gave me this Morning, and compleat my Happiness with this Lady.

L. Richly.

Truly, Nephew, you misunderstood me, if you imagined I promised any such thing: However, tho' you know I might insist on my Brother's Will; yet let Mr. *Bellamant* give his Daughter a Fortune equal to yours, and I shall not oppose it; and till then I shall not consent.

Mr. Gaywit.

Hah!

Cap. Bella.

I hope your Lordship has not determin'd to deny every Request; and therefore I may hope your Blessing.

[Kneels.]

L. Richly.

What does this mean?

Cap. Bella.

Lady *Charlotte*, my Lord, has given me this Right. Your Daughter

L. Richly.

What of her?

Cap. Bella.

The Modern Husband

Is my Wife.

L. Richly.

Your Wife!

Cap. Bella.

Nay, if you will not give me your Blessing, you may let it alone: I would not kneel any longer to you, tho' you were the great Mogul.

L. Richly.

Very well! this is your doing, Mr. *Bellamant*, or rather my own. Confusion! my Estate, my Title, and my Daughter, all contribute to aggrandize the Man I must hate, because he knows I would have wronged him! Well, Sirs! whatever Pleasures you may seem to take at my several Disappointments, I shall take very little Trouble to be revenged on any of you; being heartily convinced, that in a few Months you will be so many mutual Plagues to one another.

SCENE the last.

Mr. Gaywit, Mr. Bellamant, Captain Bellamant, Lady Charlotte, Mrs. Bellamant, Emilia.

Mr. Bella.

Methinks, I might have been consulted on this Affair.

La. Charl.

We had no time for Consultation; our Amour has been of a very short Date.

Capt. Bella.

All our Love is to come, Lady *Charlotte*.

La. Charl.

I expect a deal of Love after Marriage, for what I have bated you before it.

Capt. Bella.

I never asked you the Question till I was sure of you.

La. Charl.

Then you knew my Mind better than myself; for I never resolved to have you, till I had you.

Mr. Gaywit.

Now, my dear *Emilia*, there is no Bar in our way to Happiness. Lady *Charlotte* has made my Lord's Consent unnecessary too: Your Father has already blessed me with his, and it is now in your Power to make me the happiest of Mankind.

Emilia.

I suppose, you follow my Brother's Method, and never ask till you are sure of obtaining.

Mr. Bella.

Gaywit, my Obligations to you are beyond my Power of repaying; and while I give you what you ask, I am still heaping greater Favours on my self.

The Modern Husband

Mr. Gaywit.

Think not so, when you bestow on me more than any Man can merit.

Mr. Bella.

Then take the little all I have, and may you be as happy with her, as I am in these Arms; [*Embracing Mrs. Bellamant.*] whence the whole World should never estrange me more.

Mrs. Bella.

I am too happy in that Resolution.

Mr. Gaywit.

Lady *Charlotte!* I made a Promise this Day to your Father in your Favour; which I am resolved to keep, tho' he hath broken his. I know, your good Nature and good Sense will forgive a Fault which Love has made me commit Love, which directs our Inclinations in spite of equal and superior Charms.

La. Charl.

No Excuses, dear Sir, my Inclinations were as whimsical as yours.

Capt. Bella.

You have fairly got the Start, Lady *Charlotte.*

Mr. Gaywit.

My *Bellamant!* my Friend! my Father! What a Transport do I feel from the Prospect of adding to your future Happiness! Let us henceforth be one Family, and have no other Contest but to outvy in Love.

Mr. Bella.

My Son! Oh! What Happiness do I owe to thy Friendship, and may the Example of my late Misfortune warn thee to fly all such Encounters; and since we are setting out together in the Road to Happiness, take this Truth from an experienced Traveller.

However slight the Consequence may prove,
Which waits unmarried Libertines in Love,
Be from all Vice divorc'd before you wed,
And bury Falshood in the bridal Bed.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. *HERON.*

In dull Retirement e're I go to Grieve,
Ladies, I am return'd, to take my Leave:
Prudes, I suppose, will, with their old good Nature,
Shew their great Vertue, and condemn the Creature:
They fail not at th' Unfortunate to Flout,
Not because Naughty but because found out.
Why, faith if these Discoveries succeed,
Marriage will soon become a Trade, indeed!
This Trade, I'm sure, will flourish in the Nation,
'Twill be esteem'd below no Man of Fashion,
To be a Member of the Cuckold's Corporation!

SCENE the last.

The Modern Husband

What Int'rest will be made! what mighty doing!
To be Directors for the Year ensuing!
And 'tis exceeding difficult to say,
Which end of this chaste Town wou'd win the Day:
Oh! shou'd no Chance this Corporation stop,
Where shou'd we find one House, without a Shop?
How wou'd a Wife hung out, draw Beaux in Throngs!
To hire your Dears, like Domino's, at Long's!
There wou'd be dainty Days! when every Ninny,
Might put them on and off for half a Guinea!
Oh! to behold th' embroider'd Trader grin,
My Wife's at Home Pray, Gentlemen, walk in!
Money alone Men will no more importune,
When ev'ry Beauty makes her Husband's Fortune!
While Juries value Vertue at this Rate,
Each Wife is (when discover'd) an Estate!

A Wife with Gold, is mixing Gall with Honey,
But here you lose your Wife by what you get your Money.
And now, t'obey a dull Poetic Sentence,
In lonely Woods, I must pursue Repentance!
Ye Virgins pure, ye modest Matrons, lend
Attentive Ears to your departing Friend;
If Fame, unspotted, be the Thing you drive at,
Be Vertuous, if you can, if not, be Private
But hold! Why shou'd I leave my Sister-Sinners,
To dwell 'mongst Innocents, or young Beginners?
Frailty will better with the Frail go down;
So hang the Stupid Bard! I'll stay in Town.

FINIS.