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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THREE HOURS AFTER MARRIAGE ***

THE AUGUSTAN REPRINT SOCIETY

JOHN GAY, ALEXANDER POPE
JOHN ARBUTHNOT
THREE HOURS AFTER MARRIAGE

**Edited, with an
Introduction, by
John Harrington Smith**

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Los Angeles
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INTRODUCTION

It is a privilege to have a part in this reprint of what is certainly one of the wittiest plays in the language, and one of the most neglected.^[A] Its tripartite authorship and raffish character have encouraged editors to bypass it. The 1717 London edition and Dublin reprint the same year bore no author's name on the title-page, but as Gay signed the Advertisement one would think his editors would have felt it somewhat incumbent on them to keep the play alive. However, so far as I have been able to discover, only the 1795 collected edition of Gay does its duty in this respect, and the editor of Gay's plays in the *Abbey Classics* (2 vols., 1923) refused to admit it there, claiming that though "this justly abused piece" had been ascribed to Gay, "the authors of the greater part were Pope and Arbuthnot." *Three Hours* has fared somewhat better as a work of Pope, but interest in reprinting it under his aegis seems to have died out early in the nineteenth century, where the Twickenham Edition (VI, 180) locates two collections of writings attached to Pope that include it—very far to the back of the volume in each case. Since then, nothing, except for a few scraps in G. C. Faber's *Poetical Works of Gay*, 1926.

[A] Since this introduction was written the *Johnsonian News Letter* for June 1961 has announced that an edition of *Three Hours* is being prepared and may be expected to appear at an early date. It is gratifying to learn that the play is receiving this attention and I hope that this reprint may be of use to the editors in their task.

Not much can be done with the play in the space here available, but neither is a complete treatment attempted. Our purpose is to dispel the impression that *Three Hours* is "dull"^[1] (or so risqué that in the public interest it should be kept from general circulation) and to bring it to the attention of more scholars. Certainly the present discussion does not aim to pre-empt the possibilities for study; much will remain to conquer still—for example, the knotty problem of which author wrote precisely which parts of the play, if anyone wants to try an untangling here—I prefer to think it a collaboration through and through, though some tracks of individuals may be made out.

In the selection of the text to be reproduced for this series the first edition (somewhat unexpectedly) had competition, not from the London 1757 *Supplement* to Pope's works, but from the version of the play given in the three Dublin printings of the collection of this title: 1757, 1758, 1761. The Dublin play is not merely a debased version of 1717: it is in five acts, 1717 in three, and it contains a sentence of dialogue that 1717 does not: these differences, when taken in conjunction with the prefatory remarks that Gay wrote for the 1717 printing, made it possible to determine (readers will find the argument set forth further on, in a note to the Advertisement) that Dublin, though printed so long after the event (and somewhat butchered by the type-setter, we admit, but corrections of his worst misreadings and typos will be found in the notes) dates from the year 1717 just as the other does, was the script used in the production of the play, and actually was the one that Gay thought Lintot would use in the edition he published. The other consideration inclining us toward the Dublin version of the play was that only in its printings can one get the Key and Letter which, a number of years ago, George Sherburn had in a copy of 1761 and used with such striking effect in his article on the "Fortunes and Misfortunes" of the play;^[2] he quoted liberally from both documents but they seemed to us so interesting as to be worth putting into the reader's hands entire.

Thus it boiled down to a choice between the two earlier Dublin printings; 1761, it seemed, would not need to be checked. The kindness of the Harvard College Library made it possible to compare its copy of 1757 with the Clark Library's copy of 1758, and in the light of the data furnished by the Clark's Supervising Bibliographer, Mr. William E. Conway, the Clark copy could be settled upon; the differences, though slight—there was little resetting from 1757 to 1758, and none in the play proper—were in its favor.

Any study of the play must begin with Professor Sherburn's article—it is still indispensable, factually—but in its findings scholars have perhaps let it influence them more than they should have. John Wilson Bowyer was exceptional in challenging one of its identifications^[3] (successfully, I thought); perhaps the time has now come for re-examining some of its other theses—for example, the doctrine (which has become so firmly embedded in the scholarship on the play) that the authors intended the role of Plotwell as a satire on Cibber. This was suggested at the time in the *Key* to the play by E. Parker, but any charge brought by this person might well have been looked at askance; for, whoever he was, he was avowedly a champion of "that elaborate Gentleman," "the learned Dr. W—d—d" (Woodward, one of the real people attacked in the play) and might be suspected of hoping to cause an embroilment. It seems clear that prior to the play's première there was no rift between the management at Drury Lane and the authors. Parker says that they were constantly in attendance at rehearsals, and our Letter (p. 216) avers that they were more than satisfied with what Cibber was doing with their work. It rings true; the line attributed to Gay, "We dug the ore, but he [Cibber] refined the gold" exaggerates greatly no

doubt, but seems beyond the powers of our female informant to have contrived in support of a thesis. An atmosphere of happy optimism prevailed; Lintot (Parker says) predicted that the play "would surprize the whole Town," and it was reported that he had given 50 guineas for the publishing rights (this item from John Durant Breval—signing himself "Joseph Gay"—p. 30 of *The Confederates*, 1717).^[4]

That in all this sweetness and light there should have been a plan to make Cibber ridiculous, and he too stupid to realize this until he had trod the stage as Plotwell and felt the impact of the lines directed at him personally, is unbelievable on the face of it. How could the alleged plotters have been sure that when Colley came to cast the play he would not frustrate their deep-laid plan by assigning Plotwell to some other actor, if only by mere chance?

The theory has fed on some misreadings of the play that must have an end put to them if this ghost is to be laid. If the reader, then, will pardon the obviousness of the following, it is true that Cibber wrote plays, but the name Plotwell should not be taken in this sense, but merely as suggesting the gallant skilled in the stratagems which, in the older comedies, males of this class had been accustomed to use in their cuckolding operations. Plotwell in the play has never set pen to paper except for notes sent to wives, and he is not an "actor-manager" or the like. He and Underplot are simply gentlemen who spend so much of their time in intrigues in real life that they would have no time for play-writing.^[5] In the part of *Three Hours* that has led scholars down this false path—the scene in which the manuscript is judged by Sir Tremendous and the players—it must be kept in mind that the actual author of the work being dismembered is Phoebe Clinket, not Plotwell, who, since he is merely fronting for her, is enabled to meet such strictures as "Between you and I, this gentleman knows nothing of poetry" with perfect sang-froid; it is Phoebe whose withers are comically wrung. Thus there was nothing in the part to offend Cibber, much less can resentment on his part be deduced from the intermission of the play after the seventh night.^[6]

The squabble involving Pope, Gay, and Cibber must have begun with the latter's allusion to our play in the revival of *The Rehearsal* on February 7, a couple of weeks after *Three Hours* had closed. Cibber's version of how it happened may be read in the Letter (pp. 217-218 below); our female correspondent sympathized with him and deleted a few expressions indicative of animus on his part, but on the whole the quote as she gives it is a reasonable facsimile of what he had said in the *Letter to Pope* (1742). His disclaimer of an intent to offend is believable in the light of what we have just seen as to how Plotwell should be read in the play; on the other side, Pope's anger at the gag—though not any visit by him to Cibber, that is true—is attested both by Breval and by "Timothy Drub" (*A Letter to Mr. John Gay*, 1717) who agree that Pope was the one principally offended and that it was he who sent Gay with instructions to trounce "that impudent Dog C—r" (this line from Drub's pamphlet). Why may not Pope have been angry enough to seek out Cibber himself on the impulse of the moment? It seems feeble to doubt Cibber's testimony on the grounds that he had not told the story prior to 1742; he had not previously told the tale of the youthful Pope in a bagnio, either, yet the authorities think there might be something to this—if to the one tale, why not to the other? As to the account the lady gives of the scuffle between Gay and Cibber, it was widely known at the time that there had been some sort of angry meeting between them; her story is highly colored but nonetheless may be substantially true.^[7]

This quarrel, whether with both poets involved with Cibber or only one, doubtless cost the play a revival or two that it would otherwise have had; with such evidence of anger in the authors Cibber could well have wished to have done with them and their work. The use of the crocodile costume on April 2 in a dance at Drury Lane entitled *The Shipwreck* suggests that so far as the management was concerned the play for which it had been devised would not be acted again. Thereafter, *Three Hours* had only two revivals (Handlist of Plays in Nicoll, *Early Eighteenth-Century Drama*)—one in 1737 (two performances) the other in 1746 (three).

A pity! But in any case the play could not have had much of a life on the stage, considering the climate into which the authors chose to introduce it. The type of wit that had flourished in the former age did still hold a place in the theatre in 1717, but only in such comedies as had already won a place in the repertory.^[8] The older plays could be "corrected" (that is, the racier lines could be taken out) or the tender-minded could tolerate them as classics or in a pinch stay at home when a play known to be of this sort had been announced. A new play was in a more vulnerable position; it had to conform to what the reformers had for a couple of decades been telling audiences a play should be, or squalls could be expected. Sir Richard Blackmore was continuing the crusade against scapegrace wit—in the Preface to his *Essays*, 1717, he is explicitly severe upon *Three Hours* and its authors—and the battle was going his way. Jeremy Collier had published nothing on the theatre for nearly a decade but it is interesting to see his methods applied to the play by Timothy Drub in his *Letter to Gay* and Drub then clinching his remarks with a quote of two pages from "a very elegant author" whom he does not name but who—not too surprisingly—can be recognized as Collier himself.^[9] (Could "Drub" have been, in fact, Collier, thus tempted by *Three Hours* to return to the fray under this alias?)

In any event the authors must have known that they were offering to swim against the tide but counted on their combined brilliance to win anyway. What they wrote happens to conform to the current rules in one respect—to paraphrase the epilogue to *Love's Last Shift*, no cuckold is made within the limits of its three hours' time span—but this compliance must have been accidental, for in every other respect the play deliberately flouts the regulations as established by Collier and his school. Obviously the authors were out to create a sensation: shock the stodgy and

respectable element, jam the play down the throats of the audience, and win the admiration of the minority with whom libertine wit was still in favor.

These aims, which even a friend and well-wisher has to view as a bit on the juvenile side, were far from fully achieved. The description that Breval gives of the behavior of the crowd on the first night (Sherburn quotes it, if the reader can not readily get hold of *The Confederates*) is suggestive, not of a house packed with enemies of the authors, friends of Dr. Woodward and John Dennis out to damn the play, but of a crowd that had come predisposed to approve—"Silent a while th'attentive Many sate"—but found themselves simply unable to endure the dramatic fare set before them. The murmur that began and then grew to a hiss must have surprised and alarmed the authors: Breval's version of how they reacted must have a grain or two of truth in it. In the account of the second and third nights furnished by our Key one can see matters improving, but it is clear that to quiet the audience took heroic efforts by the cast and there was probably some deletion of offending lines,^[10] perhaps some resort to "packing" the house.^[11] This last was a measure not infrequently taken in those days—Dr. Johnson's story of Steele's efforts in behalf of *Cato* will be recalled—but this was not what the authors had anticipated. In the upshot they had dared the unpastured dragon of reform in his den and had got away with it—but barely. They were all right financially—the run should have brought them two "benefits"—and there was the fee from Lintot and an added present of guineas from those three court ladies who wanted the world to know that they were sophisticated enough to take the play in stride. (Pope paid them with "A Court Ballad.") Still, the pride of the authors must have received some damage; perhaps some sensitiveness on Pope's part is understandable.

But what the collaboration produced is truly remarkable; if there is something of a show-off air about it the authors can be forgiven, in view of what they had to exhibit. Though its fast pace (which flags only toward the last) and its emphasis on intrigue may slant it toward farce, *Three Hours* has the vitality and verve that one finds only in the very best English comic writing. Phoebe Clinket and Sir Tremendous are, to me, endlessly enjoyable, and Dr. Fossile more than merely a caricature of a now forgotten virtuoso or a lifeless counter in an intrigue plot (though in both these respects he meets the requirements of the part beautifully); even he has moments when the humanity shows through—as in his plaintive line to his friends when the mummy and the crocodile spring into movement and speech, "Gentlemen, wonder at nothing within these walls; for ever since I was married, nothing has happened to me in the common course of human life." Of the trio composed of Mrs. Townley and her followers I like them all, for various reasons, but the lady best. Once she shrieks (p. 186) but considering the circumstances anyone would consider this justifiable; otherwise she moves through the incredible crises of her role with a self-possession and an easy charm and good humor that one can only admire: as if she knew it was all nonsense but condescended to cooperate for the sake of the joke.

Among the minor characters one deserves especial mention. It was probably heartless of the authors to make fun of an aging and unfortunate (if rather eccentric) lady in "poor Lady Hyppoekoana" (as her compassionate, but, perforce, ever neglectful physician calls her) but at least the result was esthetically satisfactory, and I beg leave to nominate her for listing with that class of comic characters who, though kept behind the scenes throughout, still come through unforgettably in the reports we have of them: Mrs. Grundy in *Speed the Plough*; Mrs. Harris in *Martin Chuzzlewit*; Dashenka in *The Cherry Orchard*.

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[1] Thus the editor of the Cambridge *Pope* in his headnote to the prologue; one wonders whether he had read the play or was merely going on hearsay.

[2] *MP*, XXIV (1926), 91-109.

[3] In *The Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre* (1952). Sherburn had contended that Phoebe Clinket in the play was aimed at Mrs. Centlivre rather than at Lady Winchilsea as the tradition had it. Bowyer pins the satire to Lady Winchilsea once more and it seems this must be generally correct; the reference in the epilogue to "our well-bred poetess" seems intended for Lady Winchilsea rather than for Mrs. Centlivre.

[4] The report was not far wrong—the amount that Lintot paid Gay, on January 8, was £43, 2s, 6d (Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, VIII (1814), 296).

[5] See the excellent comment on the pair in our Key, p. 212.

[6] To charge him, as one authority has done, with "an arbitrary withdrawal of *Three Hours* after a far from unsuccessful week ... an invidious, if not unwarrantable, decision on his part" betrays an imperfect understanding of how a theater had to be managed in the early 18th century when the number of patrons upon which it could rely was limited. A play would run as long as it continued to draw; when the house began to fall off a new bill would have to be announced. The intermitting of *Three Hours* should be most naturally read as suggesting that at least in the judgment of the managers its initial vogue had passed. It would have been brought back when they thought patrons were ready to see it again—say, in a couple of months.

[7] She says that the fracas occurred on the fourth evening of *The Rehearsal*, and at least this revival did have a fourth performance, five in fact: Emmett L. Avery in *The London Stage* (1960) gives the dates as February 7, 8, 20, March 21, 28. There is a slight difficulty in assigning Gay's visit to the fourth of these, i.e., March 21: this is that the dates on which the two pamphlets that refer to it were advertised ("just before March 1" for Drub's, and March 30 for Breval's—Sherburn, p. 91) seem to rule out a March 21 fracas in the one case and to fall uncomfortably close in the other. But publication (of course) though announced, may have been delayed, and it is perhaps worth noticing that in each pamphlet Gay's visit is mentioned in an inorganic part of the work that could have been added late: the Dedication in Drub's, and, in Breval's, an ironical "congratulatory poem" printed after the epilogue, on the last two pages of the book.

[8] During the year prior to the première of *Three Hours* the following had been seen on the London stage twice each or more (selection only: based on Avery, op. cit.): *The Comical Revenge*, *Man of Mode*, *Country Wife*, *Plain-Dealer*, *London Cuckolds*, *Old Bachelor*, *Relapse*. *City Politicks*, a play from which our authors took some hints, was revived in the July after the closure of *Three Hours*; it ran three performances (i.e., successfully). But it should be recalled that the most recent of the eight plays here mentioned—Vanbrugh's—had been in the repertory twenty years.

[9] The quote is from the *Short View*, pp. 7-8 in the 1698 edition, from "Obscenity in any Company is a rustick and incredible Talent" to "But here a Man can't be a Sinner without being a Clown."

[10] Drub says that the actors left out "a considerable load of Obscenity and Prophaness." Presumably the authors would have to acquiesce in such bowdlerizing.

[11] Breval, p. 11, and his note.

NOTES

Advertisement, printed exactly as it is acted. In 1717 Gay continued, "for, tho' the Players in Compliance with the Taste of the Town, broke it into five Parts in the Representation; yet, as the Action pauses, and the Stage is left vacant but three times, so it properly consists but of three Acts, like the *Spanish Comedies*." There are several puzzles here. In the first place for a three-act play the stage should be left vacant twice rather than three times. But setting this aside there is a contradiction which must have puzzled any reader who has used the 1717 edition, namely that if the players broke it into five parts and the play is printed exactly as it is acted, the play that follows should be in five acts but actually is in three. The London 1757 *Supplement to Pope* merely reprints Advertisement and play as they are in 1717 and it is not until the Dublin printings that the play appears in the five acts in which Gay says it was acted.

I suggest that Lintot in 1717 had two scripts of the play, one in three acts, one in five, and that Gay wrote the Advertisement under the impression that Lintot would discard the former.

I judge that when W. Whitestone undertook his Dublin Supplement of 1757 he took the Advertisement from the London book that had just been published (see the title-page of the volume) but that when he re-issued his book in 1758 he deleted the lines quoted above, perceiving that they were not to the point so far as his text of the play was concerned.

Unless we imagine Whitestone revising the play into five acts himself we must suppose that he had got his hands on an authentic acting MS of the play, and it seems not one from a late revival. I suspect that Whitestone in fact had got the very MS of the play that Gay thought Lintot was going to print; one cannot guess from where, but presumably from the same source that supplied the Key and Letter. Besides the act divisions the most interesting variant is a speech of a dozen words added to Dublin; see the note to p. 183. Cibber may have put this in, or Gay, at Cibber's request. But in either case it seems that the text that has it is the one that Gay authorized for printing.

[128]

By the same token, the cast as given in the present reprint (no actors' names are given in Dublin 1757 but they must have been in the script and in the reprint of 1758 Whitestone decided to put them in) is more probably correct than that printed in 1717. The only differences between the two are in five very minor roles, where, as rehearsals went on, substitutions would be easy. All the principals are the same.

Prologue. Nothing to add to the Twickenham *Pope*, VI, 179-180.

Dramatis Personae. Five minor roles differ from 1717, as stated above. *Mrs. Bicknet*. A misreading by the typesetter—he had never heard of Mrs. Bicknell.

Play.

- [140](#) *Almost three and twenty*. Mrs. Oldfield was only 34 in 1717 but no doubt popular enough to draw a laugh by simpering at this line.
The office of the church ... brute beasts. The *Book of Common Prayer* (1709) says of matrimony that it is not to be taken in hand "wantonly ... like brute beasts." The fashion of alluding to the Prayer Book in a jocose context, if it did not begin in the reign of Charles II, was at least in vogue then; a couple of instances in Dryden's *Wild Gallant* will be pointed out in the Clark *Dryden*, VIII (scheduled to appear in 1962). Another touch of "profaneness" that Collieresque critics objected to in *Three Hours* was the paraphrase of Holy Writ in Sir Tremendous's line about "ten righteous criticks," p. 153; cf. Key, p. 215.
- [141](#) *pistachoe-porridge*. An aphrodisiac concoction? (I apologize for my neglect of the pharmaceutical, medical, and alchemical jargon—J.H.S.)
- [144](#) *spoils of quarries*. Cf. the anecdote of Dr. Woodward in the Key, p. 211; Parker's Key has it also, but in a less complete form.
- [145](#) *Shock*. Mrs. Townley's lapdog—perhaps named after Belinda's in *Rape of the Lock*. Of course it may have been a common name for such dogs before Pope wrote the poem; see Twickenham *Pope*, II, 153.
- [147](#) *my pace and my honour*. 1717, "Peace."
- [148](#) *forgive thee, if thou hadst ... kill'd my lapdog*. Parker, with a citation to *Rape of the Lock*, assigned this speech to Pope, and indeed it smacks of several places in the poem, e.g., III, 157-8, IV, 119-120.
- [150](#) *some ... that nauseate the smell of a rose*. Cf. *Essay on Man*, I, 200.
- [152](#) *That injudicious Canaille*. In view of her bias Phoebe's strictures on the players are of course to be taken in the directly opposite sense.
- [155](#) Parker finds some double-entendres in the dialogue in which Phoebe and Sir Tremendous compliment each other; if such there be, the speakers are unaware of them.
- [156](#) *if stones were dissolved, as a late philosopher hath proved*. In summarizing his thesis in the preface to his *Essay Toward a Natural History of the Earth* (1695) Dr. Woodward does say that "the whole Terrestrial Globe was taken all to pieces and dissolved at the Deluge, the particles of Stone ..." According to the DNB, Arbuthnot published a criticism of this book in 1697.
- [163](#) The "old woman" who brings the letter from Madam Wyburn (a name beyond all praise!); Drub, p. 18, calls her "an Old Woman without a Nose," and objects strenuously. One dislikes siding with Drub on anything, but this was indeed an unsavory touch, perhaps one of the embellishments suggested by Cibber while refining the ore of the play into gold during the rehearsal period. Our authors should have ruled against it but they were in no mood to pull punches at this time, though, as stated above, they had to consent to some bowdlerizing after the first night of the play.
- [168](#) *a rouge in disguise*. 1717, "Rogue."
- [171](#) *my Mercury*. 1717, "by Mercury."
- [173](#) *s.d. in a chair like a sick man*. Idea from Crowne, *City Politicks*, first acted 1682.
- [178](#) *fitigue*. 1717, "Fatigue."
s.d. powers some drops in. 1717, "pours."
- [180](#) *have the any power*. 1717, "they."
- [182](#) Townley's concealing Plotwell under the petticoat owes to Mrs. Behn's *The Younger Brother* (acted 1696, not revived), Mirtilla's hiding "Endimion" under the train of her gown in IV.ii.
invisible i th is very. Typo for "in this very"; 1717 has "on this very." Gay (or Cibber) might have changed "on" to "in" when adding the sentence at the end of Act IV; see next note.
- [183](#) *But pritheee ... rarities*. This sentence is not in 1717, but seems an improvement, as it hints at developments to come and raises the expectations of the audience.
- [186](#) *desarts*. 1717, "Disserts."
Macedonian queen. Olympias: Underplot in his verses alludes, mock-heroically, to the fabled begetting of Alexander the Great.
mantygers. This spelling may have come from the London 1757 *Supplement*. 1717, "Mantegers" (OED, mantegar, a kind of baboon).
- [191](#) *s.d. leap from their places*. Idea from Ravenscroft's *The Anatomist*: cf. n. to 215.
- [199](#) *Come we may* (5th line on page). 1717, "Come we now"—perhaps "may" is a misreading.

Epilogue.

sound in living. Perhaps another misreading: 1717, "and" for "in."

Key.

- [212](#) *knights of the shires, who represent them all.* Paraphrase of a line in Dryden's epilogue to *The Man of Mode*: a mark of literacy in the anonymous writer of our Key. *Heautontimerumenos.* Self-tormentor—title of a play by Terence.
- [213](#) *another eminent physician's wife ... shall be nameless.* Contemporary gossip said that the wife of Dr. Richard Mead was meant: Parker, less considerate than the gentlemanly author of our Key, uses her name, and in Breval (p. 15) Mrs. Oldfield is made to wish that she had not "mimick'd Mrs. M—d" in her role as Mrs. Townley. But it seems likely that any mimicry would be in the mind of the audience rather than in Mrs. Oldfield's performance, or for that matter, the intention of the authors.
- [214](#) *Marriage not to be undertaken wantonly.* The Key is incorrect in citing the Jonson play; see note to p. 140, above.
- [215](#) *letters ... Cocu imaginaire.* None of our Key-writer's adducings of Molière is really in point. The hint for the letters came from Act V of anon., *The Apparition*, acted twice in 1713. The same play has an intriguing valet named Plotwell; here our authors found the name for one of their gallants—Underplot was a happy invention of their own. *Lubomirski ... in Lopez de Vega.* Parker (p. 9) is correct in tracing this impersonation of Plotwell's to Ravenscroft's *The Anatomist, or the Sham Doctor*; the same farce suggested the anxiety of the disguised gallants at the proposals to dissect them in Act V. Ravenscroft's play, first acted in 1696, was popular well into the 18th century and would be well known to the audience. No doubt our authors expected their play to be found infinitely funnier than Ravenscroft's in the comparable parts. It is. *Theatre Italien.* Parker (p. 14) says more explicitly that the mummy-crocodile scene is "all stole from a farce" in this collection. Gherardi, vol. VI, does have a farce of the title cited but the only trace of it in *Three Hours* occurs in the brief joke on Antony and Cleopatra that Townley and Plotwell share on p. 185.

A
SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
WORKS
OF
ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;
CONTAINING,
Such POEMS, LETTERS, &c.

As are omitted in the Edition published
by the Reverend Doctor *Warburton*:

With the COMEDY of the
THREE HOURS after MARRIAGE;
And a KEY to the LETTERS:
To which is added, (not in the *London* Edition)
A KEY to the THREE HOURS after
MARRIAGE,

And a LETTER giving an Account of the
Origin of the Quarrel between CIBBER,
POPE, and GAY.

DUBLIN:
Printed for W. WHITESTONE, opposite *Dick's*
Coffee-House, in Skinner-Row.
M.DCC.LVIII.

Three Hours after

MARRIAGE:

A

COMEDY.

Rumpatur, quisquis rumpitur invidia.
MART.

[135]

ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be necessary to acquaint the reader, that this play is printed exactly as it is acted.

I must farther own the assistance I have receiv'd in this piece from two of my friends; who, tho' they will not allow me the honour of having their names join'd with mine, cannot deprive me of the pleasure of making this acknowledgment.

JOHN GAY.

[136]



PROLOGUE

Spoke by Mr. WILKS.

*Authors are judg'd by strange capricious rules,
The great ones are thought mad, the small ones fools.
Yet sure the best are most severely fated,
For fools are only laugh'd at, wits are hated,
Blockheads with reason, men of sense abhor;
But fool 'gainst fool is barb'rous civil war.
Why on all authors then should critics fall?
Since some have writ, and shewn no wit at all.
Condemn a play of theirs, and they evade it,
Cry, damn not us, but damn the French that made it;
By running goods, these graceless owlers gain,
Theirs are the rules of France, the plots of Spain:
But wit, like wine, from happier climates brought,
Dash'd by these rogues, turns English common draught:
They pall Moliere's and Lopez sprightly strain,
And teach dull Harlequins to grin in vain.
How shall our author hope a gentle fate,
Who dares most impudently—not translate.*

*It had been civil in these ticklish times,
To fetch his fools and knaves from foreign climes;
Spaniards and French abuse to the worlds' end
But spare old England, lest you hurt a friend.
If any fool is by your satire bit,
Let him hiss loud, to show you all—he's hit.
Poets make characters as salesmen cloaths,
We take no measure of your fops and beaus.
But here all sizes and all shapes ye meet,
And fit yourselves—like chaps in Monmouth-street.*

*Gallants look here, this^[B] fool's cap has an air—
Goodly and smart,—with ears of Issachar.
Let no one fool engross it, or confine:
A common blessing! now 'tis your's, now mine.
But poets in all ages, had the Care
To keep this cap, for such as will, to wear;
Our author has it now, for ev'ry wit
Of course resign'd it to the next that writ:
And thus upon the stage 'tis fairly^[C] thrown,
Let him that takes it, wear it for his own.*

[B] Shews a cap with ears.

[C] Flings down the cap and

Exit.



Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

FOSSILE,	}	Doctors.	Mr. Johnson.
POSSUM,			Mr. Corey.
NAUTILUS,			Mr. Cross.
PTISAN,		Apothecary.	Mr. Wright.
PLOTWELL,			Mr. Cibber.
UNDERPLOT,			Mr. Penkethman.
SIR TREMENDOUS,			Mr. Bowman.
FIRST PLAYER,			Mr. Diggs.
SECOND PLAYER,			Mr. Watson.
SAILOR.			Mr. Bickerstaff.
			Footmen, Servants, &c.

WOMEN.

Mrs. TOWNLEY,	Mrs. Oldfield.
Mrs. PHOEBE CLINKET,	Mrs. Bicknet.
SARSNET,	Mrs. Garnet.
PRUE.	Miss Willis.



Three Hours after

MARRIAGE:

A

COMEDY.

ACT I.

Enter FOSSILE, leading TOWNLEY.

Fos. Welcome, my bride, into the habitation of thy husband. The scruples of the parson—

Town. And the fatigue of the ceremony—

Foss. Are at last well over.

Town. These blank licences are wonderful commodious.—The clergy have a noble command, in being rangers of the park of matrimony; produce but a warrant, and they deliver a lady into your possession: but I have no quarrel with them, since they have put me into so good hands.

Foss. I now proclaim a solemn suspension of arms between medicine and diseases. Let distempers suspend their malignant influence, and powders, pills, and potions their operations. Be this day sacred to my love. I had rather hold this hand of thine, than a dutchess by the pulse. [140]

Town. And I this, than a hand of matadores.

Foss. Who knows but your relations may dispute my title to your person? come, my dear, the seal of the matrimonial bond is consummation.

Town. Alas! what will become of me!

Foss. Why are thy eyes fix'd on the ground? why so slow? and why this trembling?

Town. Ah! heedless creature that I was, to quit all my relations, and trust myself alone in the hands of a strange man.

Foss. Courage, thou best of my curiosities. Know that in husband, is comprehended all relations; in me thou seest a fond father.

Town. Old enough o' my conscience.

[*Aside.*

Foss. You may, you must trust yourself with me.

Town. Do with me as you please: Yet sure you cannot so soon forget [the office of the church. Marriage is not to be undertaken wantonly, like brute beasts](#). If you will transgress, the sin be upon your own head.

Foss. Great indeed is thy virtue, and laudable is thy modesty. Thou art a virgin, and I a philosopher; but learn, that no animal action, *quatenus animal*, is unbecoming of either of us. But hold! where am I going? Prithee, my dear, of what age art thou?

Town. [Almost three and twenty.](#)

Foss. And I almost at my grand climacterick. What occasion have I for a double-night at these years? She may be an Alcmena, but alas! I am no thunderer.

[*Aside*

Town. You seem somewhat disturb'd; I hope you are well, Mr. Fossile.

Foss. What business have I in the bed-chamber, when the symptoms of age are upon me? Yet

hold, this is the famous corroborative of Crollius; in this vial are included sons and daughters. Oh, for a draught of the *aqua magnanimitatis* for a vehicle! fifty drops of *liquid laudanum* for her dose would but just put us upon a *par*. *Laudanum* would settle the present ataxy of her animal spirits, and prevent her being too watchful.

[141]

[*aside*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, your [pistachoe-porridge](#) is ready.

[*Exit.*]

Foss. Now I think of it, my dear; Venus, which is in the first degree of Capricorn, does not culminate till ten; an hour if astrology is not fallible, successful in generation.

Town. I am all obedience, Sir.

Foss. How shall I reward thee for so much Goodness? let our wedding as yet be a secret in the family. In the mean time I'll introduce my niece Phœbe Clinket to your acquaintance: but alas, the poor girl has a providence of the pineal gland, which has occasioned a rupture in her understanding. I took her into my house to regulate my oeconomy; but instead of puddings, she makes pastorals; or when she should be raising paste, is raising some ghost in a new tragedy. In short, my house is haunted by all the underling players, broken booksellers, half-voic'd singing-masters, and disabled dancing-masters in town. In a former will I had left her my estate; but I now resolve that heirs of my own begetting shall inherit. Yonder she comes in her usual occupation. Let us mark her a while.

Enter Clinket and her maid bearing a writing-desk on her back. Clinket writing, her head dress stain'd with ink, and pens stuck in her hair.

Maid. I had as good carry a raree-show about the streets. Oh! how my back akes!

Clink. What are the labours of the back to those of the brain? thou scandal to the muses. I have now lost a thought worth a folio, by thy impertinence.

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Maid. Have not I got a crick in my back already, that will make me good for nothing, with lifting your great books?

Clink. Folio's, call them, and not great books, thou monster of impropriety: But have patience, and I will remember the three gallery-tickets I promis'd thee at my new tragedy.

Maid. I shall never get my head-cloaths clear-starch'd at this rate.

Clink. Thou destroyer of learning, thou worse than a book-worm; thou hast put me beyond all patience. Remember how my lyrick ode bound about a tallow-candle; thy wrapping up snuff in an epigram; nay, the unworthy usage of my hymn to Apollo, filthy creature! read me the last lines I writ upon the deluge, and take care to pronounce them as I taught you.

Maid. Swell'd with a dropsy, sickly nature lies,
And melting in a diabetes, dies.

[*Reads with an affected tone.*]

Clink. Still without cadence!

Maid. Swell'd with a dropsy—

Clink. Hold. I conceive—

The roaring seas o'er the tall woods have broke,
And whales now perch upon the sturdy oak.
Roaring? stay. Rumbling, roaring, rustling, no; raging seas.
The raging seas o'er the tall woods have broke,
Now perch, thou whale, upon the sturdy oak.
Sturdy oak? no; steady, strong, strapping, stiff. Stiff? no, stiff is too short.

[*Writing.*]

FOSSILE and TOWNLEY come forward.

What feast for fish! Oh too luxurious treat!
When hungry dolphins feed on butchers meat.

Foss. Niece, why niece, niece? oh, Melpomene, thou goddess of tragedy, suspend thy influence for a moment, and suffer my niece to give me a rational answer. This lady is a friend of mine; her present circumstances oblige her to take sanctuary in my house; treat her with the utmost civility. Let the tea-table be made ready.

[143]

Clink. Madam, excuse this absence of mind; my animal spirits had deserted the avenues of my senses, and retired to the recesses of the brain, to contemplate a beautiful idea. I could not force the vagrant creatures back again into their posts, to move those parts of the body that

express civility.

Town. A rare affected creature this! if I mistake not, flattery will make her an useful tool for my purpose.

[*Aside.*
[*Exeunt* Townley, Clinket, and Maid.

Foss. Her jewels, her strong box, and all her things left behind! if her uncle should discover her marriage, he may lay an embargo upon her goods.—I'll send for them.

Enter a boy with a letter.

Boy. This is the ho-ho-house.

Foss. Child, whom dost thou want?

Boy. Mistress Townley's ma-ma-maid.

Foss. What is your business?

Boy. A l-l-letter.

Foss. Who sent this letter?

Boy. O-o-one.

Foss. Give it me, child. An honest boy. Give it me, and I'll deliver it myself. A very honest boy.

Boy. So.

[*Exit boy.*

Foss. There are now no more secrets between us. Man and wife are one.

'Madam, either I mistake the encouragement I have had, or I am to be happy to-night. I hope the same person will compleat her good offices: I stand to articles. The ring is a fine one; and I shall have the pleasure of putting it on the first time.'

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This from your impatient, R. P.

In the name of Beelzebub, what is this? encouragement! happy to-night! same person! good offices! whom hast thou married, poor Fossile? couldst thou not still divert thyself with the [spoils of quarries](#) and coal-pits, thy serpents and thy salamanders, but thou must have a living monster too! 'sdeath! what a jest shall I be to our club! is there no rope among my curiosities? shall I turn her out of doors, and proclaim my infamy; or lock her up and bear my misfortunes? lock her up! impossible. One may shut up volatile spirits, pen up the air, confine bears, lyons and tygers, nay, keep even your gold: but a wanton wife, who can keep?

Enter TOWNLEY.

Town. Mrs. Clinket's play is to be read this morning at the tea-table: will you come and divert yourself, Sir?

Foss. No: I want to be alone.

Town. I hope my company is not troublesome already. I am as yet a bride; not a wife. [*sighs.*] What means this sudden change? [*Aside.*] Consider, Mr. Fossile, you want your natural rest: the bed would refresh you. Let me sit by you.

Foss. My head akes, and the bed always makes it worse.

Town. Is it hereabouts?

[*rubbing his temples.*

Foss. Too sure.

[*Turns from her.*

Town. Why so fretful, Mr. Fossile?

[145]

Foss. No, I'll dissemble my passion, and pump her. [*Aside.*] Excess of joy, my dear, for my good fortune overcomes me. I am somewhat vertiginous, I can hardly stand.

Town. I hope I was ordain'd for thy support.

Foss. My disorder now begins to dissipate: it was only a little flatulency, occasion'd by something hard of digestion. But pray, my dear, did your uncle shut you up so close from the conversation of mankind?

Town. Sarsnet and [Shock](#) were my only company.

Foss. A very prudent young woman this Sarsnet; she was undoubtedly a good and faithful friend in your solitude.

Town. When it was her interest; but I made no intimacies with my chamber-maid.

Foss. But was there no lover offer'd his service to a lady in distress.

Town. Tongue, be upon thy guard: these questions must be design'd to trap me. [*Aside.*] A woman of my condition can't well escape importunity.

Foss. What was the name of that disagreeable fellow, who, you told me, teaz'd you so?

Town. His name? I think he had a thousand names. In one letter he was Myrtillo, in another Corydon, Alexis, and I don't know what.

Enter SARSNET in haste to her mistress: He runs and embraces her with great earnestness.

Foss. Dear Mrs. Sarsnet, how am I oblig'd to thee for thy services: thou hast made me happy beyond expression.—I shall find another letter upon her.

[*Aside.*

[*He gets his hand into Sarsnet's pocket, as searching for a letter.*

[*Whenever Sarsnet goes to whisper her mistress, he gets between them.*

[146]

Enter PTISAN.

Ptis. Mrs. Colloquintida complains still of a dejection of appetite; she says that the genevre is too cold for her stomach.

Foss. Give her a quieting draught; but let us not interrupt one another. Good Mr. Ptisan, we are upon business.

[*Fossile gets between Sarsnet and Townley.*

Ptis. The colonel's spitting is quite suppress'd.

Foss. Give him a quieting draught. Come to morrow, Mr. Ptisan; I can see no body till then.

Ptis. Lady Varnish finds no benefit of the waters; for the pimple on the tip of her nose still continues.

Foss. Give her a quieting draught.

Ptis. Mrs. Prudentia's tympany grows bigger and bigger. What, no pearl cordial! must I quiet them all?

Foss. Give them all quieting draughts, I say, or blister them all, as you please. Your servant Mr. Ptisan.

Ptis. But then lady Giddy's vapours. She calls her chamber-maids nymphs; for she fancies herself Diana, and her husband Acteon.

Foss. I can attend no patient till to morrow. Give her a quieting draught, I say.

[*Whenever Fossile goes to conduct Ptisan to the door, Sarsnet and Townley attempt to whisper; Fossile gets between them, and Ptisan takes that opportunity of coming back.*

Ptis. Then, sir, there is miss Chitty of the boarding-school has taken in no natural sustenance for this week, but a halfpeny worth of charcoal, and one of her mittens.

Foss. Sarsnet, do you wait on Mr Ptisan to the door. To morrow let my patients know I'll visit round.

[*A knocking at the door.*

Ptis. Oh, Sir; here is a servant of the countess of Hippokekoana. The emetick has overwrought and she is in convulsions.

[147]

Foss. This is unfortunate. Then I must go. Mr. Ptisan, my dear, has some business with me in private. Retire into my closet a moment, and divert yourself with the pictures. There lies your way, madam.

[*To Sarsnet.*

[*Exit Townley at one door and Sarsnet at the other.*

Mr. Ptisan, pray, do you run before, and tell them I am just coming.

[Exit Ptisan.]

All my distresses come on the neck of one another. Should this fellow get to my bride before I have bedded her, in a collection of cuckolds, what a rarity should I make! what shall I do? I'll lock her up. Lock up my bride? [my pace and my honour](#) demand it, and it shall be so. [Locks the door.] Thomas, Thomas!

Enter footman.

I dream't last night I was robb'd. The town is over-run with rogues. Who knows but the rascal that sent the letter may be now in the house? [Aside.] Look up the chimney, search all the dark closets, the coal hole, the flower-pots, and forget not the empty butt in the cellar. Keep a strict watch at the door, and let no body in till my return.

[Exit footman. A noise at the closet-door.]

(within.) Who's there?—I'm lock'd in. Murder! fire!

Foss. Dear madam, I beg your pardon.

[Unlocks the door. Enter TOWNLEY.]

'Tis well you call'd. I am so apt to lock this door; an action meerly mechanical, not spontaneous. [148]

Town. Your conduct, Mr. Fossile, for this quarter of an hour has been somewhat mysterious. It has suggested to me what I almost blush to name; your locking me up, confirms this suspicion. Pray speak plainly, what has caused this alteration?

[Fossile shews her the letter.]

Is this all?

[Gives him the letter back.]

Foss. (reads) Either I mistake the encouragement I have had. What encouragement?

Town. From my uncle,—if I must be your interpreter.

Foss. Or I am to be happy to night.

Town. To be married.—If there can be happiness in that state.

Foss. I hope the same person.

Town. Parson. Only a word mis-pell'd.—Here's jealousy for you!

Foss. Will compleat her good offices. A she-parson, I find!

Town. He is a Welshman. And the Welsh always say her instead of his.

Foss. I stand to articles.

Town. Of jointure.

Foss. The ring is a fine one, and I shall have the pleasure of putting it on my self.

Town. Who should put on the wedding-ring but the bridegroom.

Foss. I beseech thee, pardon thy dear husband. Love and jealousy are often companions, and excess of both had quite obnubilated the eyes of my understanding.

Town. Barbarous man! I could [forgive thee, if thou hadst poison'd my father, debauch'd my sister, kill'd my lapdog](#); but to murder my reputation!

[Weeps]

Foss. Nay, I beseech thee, forgive me.

[Kneels.]

Town. I do: but upon condition your jealous fit never returns. To a jealous man a whisper is evidence, and a dream demonstration. A civil letter makes him thoughtful, an innocent visit mad. I shall try you, Mr. Fossile; for don't think I'll be deny'd company. [149]

Foss. Nay, prithee, my dear; I own I have abused thee. But lest my marriage, and this simple story should take air in the neighbourhood, to morrow we will retire into the country together, till the secret is blown over. I am call'd to a patient. In less than half an hour I'll be with you again, my dear.

[Exit Fossile.]

Town. Plotwell's letter had like to have ruin'd me. 'Twas a neglect in me, not to intrust him with the secret of my marriage. A jealous bridegroom! every poison has its antidote; as credulity is the cause, so it shall be the cure of his jealousy. To morrow I must be spirited away into the country; I'll immediately let Plotwell know of my distress: and this little time with opportunity,

even on his wedding-day, shall finish him a compleat husband. Intrigue assist me! and I'll act a revenge that might have been worthy the most celebrated wife in Boccace.

Enter PLOTWELL and CLINKET.

Hah! Plotwell! which way got he hither? I must caution him to be upon his guard.

Plot. Madam, I am agreeably surpriz'd to find you here.

Town. Me, Sir? you are certainly mistaken, for I don't remember I ever saw you before.

Plot. Madam, I beg your pardon. How like a truth sounds a lye from the tongue of a fine woman.

[*Aside.*

Clink. This, Madam, is Mr. Plotwell; a Gentleman who is so infinitely obliging, as to introduce my play on the theatre, by fathering the unworthy issue of my muse, at the reading it this morning.

Plot. I should be proud, madam, to be a real father to any of your productions.

[150]

Clink. Mighty just. Ha, ha, ha. You know, Mr. Plotwell, that both a parrot and a player can utter human sounds, but we allow neither of them to be a judge of wit. Yet some of those people have had the assurance to deny almost all my performances the privilege of being acted. Ah! what a *Goût de travers* rules the understanding of the illiterate!

Plot. There are [some, madam, that nauseate the smell of a rose.](#)

[*Whenever Plotwell and Townley endeavour to talk, she interrupts them.*

Clink. If this piece be not rais'd to the sublime, let me henceforth be stigmatiz'd as a reptile in the dust of mediocrity. I am persuaded, Sir, your adopted child will do you no dishonour.

Town. Pray, madam, what is the subject?

Clink. Oh! beyond every thing. So adapted for tragical machines! so proper to excite the passions! not in the least encumber'd with episodes! the vraysemblance and the miraculous are linkt together with such propriety.

Town. But the subject, madam?

Clink. The universal Deluge, I chose that of Deucalion and Pyrrha, because neither our stage nor actors are hallow'd enough for sacred story.

Plot. But, madam—

[*To Townley.*

Clink. What just occasion for noble description! these players are exceeding dilatory.

—In the mean time, Sir, shall I be oblig'd to you and this lady for the rehearsal of a scene that I have been just touching up with some lively strokes.

Town. I dare assure you, madam, it will be a pleasure to us both. I'll take this occasion to inform you of my present circumstances.

[*To Plotwell.*

Clink. Imagine Deucalion and Pyrrha in their boat. They pass by a promontory, where stands prince Hæmon a former lover of Pyrrha's, ready to be swallowed up by the devouring flood. She presses her husband to take him into the boat. Your part, Sir, is Hæmon; the lady personates Pyrrha; and I represent Deucalion. To you, Sir.

[151]

[*Gives Plotwell the manuscript.*

Plot. What ho, there sculler!

[*reads.*

Town. ——Hæmon!

Plot. ———Yes, 'tis Hæmon!

Town. Thou seest me now sail'd from my former lodgings,
Beneath a husband's ark; yet fain I would reward
Thy proffer'd love. But Hæmon, ah, I fear
Tomorrow's eve will hide me in the country.

Clink. Not a syllable in the part! wrong, all wrong!

Plot. Through all the town, with diligent enquiries,
I sought my Pyrrha—

Clink. Beyond all patience! the part, Sir, lies before you; you are never to perplex the drama

with speeches extempore.

Plot. Madam, 'tis what the top players often do.

Town. Though love denies, companion bids me save thee.

[*Plotwell kisses her.*

Clink. Fye, Mr. Plotwell; this is against all the decorum of the stage; I will no more allow the libertinism of lip-embraces than the barbarity of killing on the stage; your best tragedians, like the ladies of quality in a visit, never turn beyond the back-part of the cheek to a salute, as thus Mr. Plotwell.

[*Kisses Plotwell.*

Plot. I don't find in Aristotle any precept against killing.

Clink. Yet I would not stand upon the brink of an indecorum.

Plot. True, madam, the finishing stroke of love and revenge should never shock the eyes of an audience. But I look upon a kiss in a comedy to be upon a par with a box on the ear in a tragedy, which is frequently given and taken by your best authors.

[152]

Clink. Mighty just! for a lady can no more put up a kiss than a gentleman a box on the ear. Take my muse, Sir, into your protection [*Gives him her play*] the players I see are here. Your personating the author will infallibly introduce my play on the stage, and spite of their prejudice, make the theatre ring with applause, and teach even [that injudicious Canaille](#) to know their own interest.

Exit.



[153]



ACT II.

PLOTWELL, TOWNLEY, CLINKET, with Sir TREMENDOUS and two Players, discovered seated round a Table.

Plot. Gentlemen, this lady who smiles on my performances, has permitted me to introduce you and my tragedy to her tea-table.

Clink. Gentlemen, you do me honour.

1st *Play.* Suffer us, Sir, to recommend to your acquaintance, the famous Sir Tremendous, the greatest critick of our age.

Plot. Sir Tremendous, I rejoice at your presence; though no lady that has an antipathy, so sweats at a cat as some authors at a critick. Sir Tremendous, madam, is a Gentleman who can instruct the town to dislike what has pleased them, and to be pleased with what they disliked.

Sir *Trem.* Alas! what signifies one good palate when the taste of the whole town is viciated. There is not in all this Sodom of ignorance ten righteous criticks, who do not judge things backward,

Clink. I perfectly agree with Sir Tremendous: your modern tragedies are such egregious stuff, they neither move terror nor pity.

Plot. Yes, madam, the pity of the audience on the first night, and the terror of the author for the third. Sir Tremendous's plays indeed have rais'd a sublimer passion, astonishment.

[154]

Clink. I perceive here will be a wit-combat between these beaux-esprits. Prue, be sure you set down all the similes.

Prue retires to the back part of the stage with pen and ink.

Sir *Trem.* The subjects of most modern plays are as ill chosen as—

Plotw. The patrons of their dedications.

[*Clink. makes signs to Prue.*

Sir *Trem.* Their plots as shallow—

Plotw. As those of bad poets against new plays

Sir *Trem.* Their episodes as little of a piece to the main action, as—

Clink. A black gown with a pink-colour'd petticoat. Mark that, Prue.

[*Aside.*

Sir *Trem.* Their sentiments are so very delicate—

Plotw. That like whipt syllabub they are lost before they are tasted.

Sir *Trem.* Their diction so low, that—that—

Plotw. Why, that their friends are forced to call it simplicity.

1st *Play.* Sir to the play if you please.

2d *Play.* We have a rehearsal this morning.

Sir *Trem.* And then their thefts are so open—

Plotw. that the very French taylors can discover them.

Sir *Trem.* O what felony from the ancients! what petty larceny from the moderns! there is the famous Ephigenia of Racine, he stole his Agamemnon from Seneca, who stole it from Euripides, who stole it from Homer, who stole it from all the ancients before him. In short there is nothing so execrable as our most taking tragedies.

1st *Play.* O! but the immortal Shakespeare, Sir.

Sir *Trem.* He had no judgment.

2d *Play.* The famous ben Johmson!

Clink. Dry.

1st *Play.* The tender Otway!

[155]

Sir *Trem.* Incorrect.

2d *Play.* Etheridge!

Clink. Mere chit-chat.

1st *Play.* Dryden!

Sir *Trem.* Nothing but a knack of versifying.

Clink. Ah! dear Sir Tremendous, there is that delicatesse in your sentiments!

Sir *Trem.* Ah madam! there is that justness in your notions!

Clink. I am so much charm'd with your manly penetration!

Sir *Trem.* I with your profound capacity!

Clink. That I am not able—

Sir *Trem.* That it is impossible—

Clink. To conceive—

Sir *Trem.* To express—

Clink. With what delight I embrace—

Sir *Trem.* With what pleasure I enter into—

Clink. Your ideas, most learned Sir Tremendous!

Sir *Trem.* Your sentiments, most divine Mrs. Clinket.

2d *Play.* The play, for heaven's sake, the play.

[*A tea-table brought in.*]

Clink. This finish'd drama is too good for an age like this.

Plotw. The Universal Deluge, or the tragedy of Deucalion and Pyrrha.

[*Reads*

Clink. Mr. Plotwell, I will not be deny'd the pleasure of reading it, you will pardon me.

1st *Play.* The deluge! the subject seems to be too recherche.

Clink. A subject untouch'd either by ancients or moderns, in which are terror and pity in perfection.

1st *Play.* The stage will never bear it. Can you suppose, Sir, that a box of ladies will sit three hours to see a rainy day, and a feather in a storm; make your best of it, I know it can be nothing else.

[156]

2d *Play.* If you please, madam, let us hear how it opens.

Clink. [*reads.*] The scene opens and discovers the heavens cloudy. A prodigious shower of rain. At a distance appears the top of the mountain Parnassus; all the fields beneath are overflowed; there are seen cattle and men swimming. The tops of steeples rise above the flood, with men and women perching on their weathercocks—

Sir *Trem.* Begging your pardon, Sir, I believe it can be proved, that weather-cocks are of a modern invention. Besides, [if stones were dissolved, as a late philosopher hath proved](#), how could steeples stand?

Plot. I don't insist upon trifles. Strike it out.

Clink. Strike it out! consider what you do. In this they strike at the very foundation of the drama. Don't almost all the persons of your second act start out of stones that Deucalion and Pyrrha threw behind them? This cavil is levell'd at the whole system of the reparation of human race.

1st *Play.* Then the shower is absurd.

Clink. Why should not this gentleman rain, as well as other authors snow and thunder?—
— [*reads.*] Enter Deucalion in a sort of waterman's habit, leading his wife Pyrrha to a boat—Her first distress is about her going back to fetch a casket of jewels. Mind, how he imitates your great authors. The first speech has all the fire of Lee.

Tho' heav'n wrings all the sponges of the sky,
And pours down clouds, at once each cloud a sea.
Not the spring tides—

Sir *Trem.* There were no spring tides in the Mediteranean, and consequently Deucalion could not make that simile.

Clink. A man of Deucalion's quality might have travelled beyond the Mediteranean, and so your objection is answered. Observe, Sir Tremendous, the tenderness of Otway, in this answer of Pyrrha.

[157]

————— Why do the stays
Taper my waist, but for thy circling arms?

Sir *Trem.* Ah! Anachronisms! Stays are a modern habit, and the whole scene is monstrous, and against the rules of tragedy.

Plot. I submit Sir,—out with it.

Clink. Were the play mine, you should gash my flesh, mangle my face, any thing sooner than scratch my play.

Plot. Blot and insert wherever you please—I submit myself to your judgment.

Plotwell rises and discourses apart with Townley.

Sir *Trem.* Madam, nonsense and I have been at variance from my cradle, it sets my understanding on edge.

2d *Play.* Indeed, madam, with submission, and I think I have some experience of the stage, this play will hardly take.

Clink. The worst lines of it would be sufficiently clapt, if it had been writ by a known author, or recommended by one.

Sir *Trem.* Between you and I, madam, who understand better things, this gentleman knows nothing of poetry.

1st *Play.* The gentleman may be an honest man, but he is a damn'd writer, and it neither can take, nor ought to take.

Sir *Trem.* If you are the gentleman's friend, and value his reputation, advise him to burn it.

Clink. What struggles has an unknown author to vanquish prejudice! Suppose this play acts but six nights, his next may play twenty. Encourage a young author, I know it will be your interest.

2d *Play.* I would sooner give five hundred pounds than bring some plays on the stage; an audience little considers whether 'tis the author or the actor that is hiss'd, our character suffers. [158]

1st *Play.* Damn our character—We shall lose money by it.

Clink. I'll deposit a sum myself upon the success of it. Well, since it is to be play'd—I will prevail upon him to strike out some few things.—Take the play, Sir Tremendous.

Sir Tremendous reads in a muttering tone.

Sir *Trem.* Absurd to the last degree [*strikes out.*] palpable nonsense! [*strikes out.*]

Clink. What all those lines! spare those for a lady's sake, for those indeed, I gave him.

Sir *Trem.* Such stuff! [*strikes out.*] abominable! [*strikes out.*] most execrable!

1st *Play.* This thought must out.

2d *Play.* Madam, with submission, this metaphor.

1st *Play.* This whole speech.

Sir *Trem.* The Fable!

Clink. To you I answer,—

1st *Play.* The characters!

Clink. To you I answer—

Sir *Trem.* The diction!

Clink. And to you—Ah, hold, hold,—I'm butcher'd, I'm massacred. For mercy's sake! murder, murder! ah!

[*faints.*]

Enter Fossile peeping at the door.

Foss. My house turn'd to a stage! and my bride playing her part too! What will become of me? but I'll know the bottom of all this. [*aside.*] I am surprized to see so many patients here so early. What is your distemper, Sir?

1st *Play.* The cholic, Sir, by a surfeit of green tea and damn'd verses.

Foss. Your pulse is very high, madam. [*To Townley.*] You sympathize, I perceive, for yours is somewhat feverish. [*To Plotwell.*] But I believe I shall be able to put off the fit for this time. And as for you, niece, you have got the poetical itch, and are possess'd with nine devils, your nine muses; and thus I commit them and their works to the flames. [*Takes up a heap of papers and flings them into the fire.*] [159]

Clink. Ah! I am an undone woman.

Plot. Has he burnt any bank-bills, or a new Mechlin head-dress?

Clink. My works! my works!

1st *Play.* Has he destroyed the writings of an estate, or your billet doux?

Clink. A Pindarick ode! five similes! and half an epilogue!

2d *Play.* Has he thrown a new fan or your pearl necklace into the flames?

Clink. Worse, worse! The tag of the acts of a new comedy! a prologue sent by a person of quality three copies of recommendatory verses! and two Greek mottos!

Foss. Gentlemen, if you please to walk out.

2d *Play.* You shall have our positive answer concerning your tragedy, madam, in an hour or two.

[*Exit Sir Tremendous, Plotwell and Players.*]

Foss. Though this affair looks but ill; yet I will not be over-rash: What says Lybanus? 'A false accusation often recoils upon the accuser;' and I have suffered already by too great precipitation.

[*Exit Fossile.*]

Town. A narrow escape, Sarsnet! Plotwells letter was intercepted and read by my husband.

Sars. I tremble every joint of me. How came you off?

Town. Invention flow'd, I ly'd, he believ'd. True wife, true husband!

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Sars. I have often warned you, madam, against this superfluity of gallants; you ought at least to have clear'd all mortgages upon your person before you leas'd it out for life. Then, besides Plotwell, you are every moment in danger of Underplot, who attends on Plotwell like his shadow; he is unlucky enough to stumble upon your husband, and then I'm sure his shatterbrains would undo us at once.

Town. Thy wit and industry, Sarsnet, must help me out. To day is mine, to morrow is my husband's.

Sars. But some speedy method must be thought of, to prevent your letters from falling into his hands.

Town. I can put no confidence in my landlady Mrs. Chambers, since our quarrel at parting. So I have given orders to her maid to direct all letters and messages hither, and I have plac'd my own trusty servant Hugh at the door to receive them—but see, yonder comes my husband, I'll retire to my closet.

[*Exit Townley and Sarsnet.*]

Enter FOSSILE.

Foss. O marriage, thou bitterest of potions, and thou strongest of astringents. This Plotwell that I found talking with her must certainly be the person that sent the letter. But if I have a Bristol stone put upon me instead of a diamond, why should I by experiments spoil its lustre? She is handsome, that is certain. Could I but keep her to myself for the future! Cuckoldom is an accute case, it is quickly over; when it takes place, it admits of no remedy but palliatives.—Be it how it will, while my marriage is a secret—

Within. Bless the noble doctor Fossile and his honourable lady. The city musick are come to wish him much joy of his marriage.

[*A flourish of fiddles.*]

Foss. Joy and marriage; never were two words so coupled.

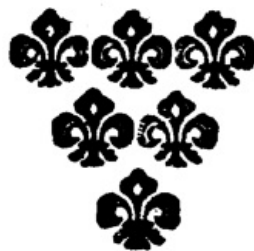
[161]

Within. Much happiness attend the learned doctor Fossile and his worthy and virtuous lady. The drums and trumpets of his majesty's guards are come to salute him—

[*A flourish of Drums and Trumpets.*]

Foss. Ah, Fossile! wretched Fossile! into what state hast thou brought thy self! thy disgrace proclaim'd by beat of drum! New married men are treated like those bit by a Tarantula, both must have musick: But where are the notes that can expell a wife!

Exit.



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ACT III.

Enter FOSSILE in a footman's cloaths,

Foss. A Special dog; this footman of my wife's! as mercenary as the porter of a first minister! Why should she place him as a centinal at my door? unquestionably, to carry on her intrigues.

Why did I bribe him to lend me his livery? to discover those intrigues. And now, O wretched Fossile, thou hast debas'd thyself into the low character of a footman. What then? gods and demi gods have assum'd viler shapes: they, to make a cuckold; I, to prove myself one. Why then should my metamorphosis be more shameful, when my purpose is more honest?

[*Knocking at the door, enter footman.*]

Foot. Ay, this is her livery. Friend, give this to your mistress.

[*Gives a letter to Fossile and exit.*]

Fossile. [*reads*] 'Madam, you have jilted me. What I gave you cost me dear; what you might have given me, would have cost you nothing. You shall use my next present with more respect. I presented you a fine snuff-box; you gave it to that coxcomb Underplot, and Underplot gave it to my wife. Judge of my surprise.

'Freeman.'

A fine circulation of a snuff-box! in time I shall have the rarest of my shells set off with gold hinges, to make presents to all the fops about town. My *Conchæ Veneris*; and perhaps, even my *Nautilus*.

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A knocking at the door. Enter an old woman.

Old Wom. Can I speak with your good mistress, honest friend?

Fos. No, she's busy.

Old Wom. Madam Wyburn presents her service and has sent this letter.

[*Exit.*]

Fossile. [*reads*] 'Being taken up with waiting upon merchants ladies this morning, I have sent to acquaint you, my dear sweet Mrs. Townley, that the alderman agrees to every thing but putting away his wife, which he says is not decent at that end of the town. He desires a meeting this evening.'

Postscript.

'He does not like the grocer's wife at all.'

Bless me! what a libidinous age we live in! neither his own wife! nor the grocer's wife! Will people like nobody's wife but mine!

[*Knocking at the door. Enter footman, gives a letter, and exit.*]

Enter another footman gives a letter, and exit.

Foss. [*reads*] 'Sincerely, madam, I cannot spare that sum; especially in monthly payments. My good friend and neighbour Pinch, a quiet sober man, is content to go a third part, only for leave to visit upon sabbath days.

'Habakkuk Plumb.'

,

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Well, frugallity is laudable even in iniquity! Now for this other.

Opens the second letter.

Foss. [*reads*] 'Madam, I can't make you rich, but I can make you immortal.

Verses on Mrs. Susanna Townley, in the front box dress'd in green.

In you the beauties of the spring are seen,
Your cheeks are roses, and your dress is green.

A poor dog of a poet! I fear him not.

Enter a ragged fellow with a letter.

Foot. My master is at present under a cloud—He begs you will deliver this letter to your lady.

[Exit.]

Foss. [reads] 'I am reduced by your favours to ask the thing I formerly deny'd; that you would entertain me as a husband, who can no longer keep you as a mistress.

'Charles Bat.'

Why did I part with this fellow? This was a proposal indeed, to make both me and himself happy at once! He shall have her, and a twelve-month's fees into the bargain. Where shall I find him?—Why was the mistress of all mankind unknown to thee alone? Why is nature so dark in our greatest concerns? Why are there no external symptoms of defloration, nor any pathognomick of the loss of virginity but a big belly? Why has not lewdness its tokens like the plague? Why must a man know rain by the aking of his corns, and have no prognostick of what is of infinitely greater moment, cuckoldom? Or if there are any marks of chastity, why is the enquiry allowed only to Turks and Jews, and denyed to Christians? O Townley, Townley! once to me the fragrant rose; now aloes, wormwood and snake-root! but I must not be seen.

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As Townley and Sarsnet enter, Fossile sneaks off.

Town. Sarsnet, we are betray'd. I have discovered my husband posted at the door in Hugh's livery, he has intercepted all my letters. I immediately writ this, which is the only thing that can bring us off. Run this moment to Plotwell, get him to copy it, and send it directed to me by his own servant with the utmost expedition. He is now at the chocolate-house in the next street.

Sars. I fly, madam; but how will you disengage yourself from the affair with Underplot?

Town. Leave it to me. Though he wants sense, he's handsome, and I like the fellow; and if he is lucky enough to come in my husband's absence.—But prithee Sarsenet make haste.

[Exit Townley and Sarsenet, upon which Fossile re-enters, to him Underplot.]

Underp. Harke'e, friend. I never talk with one of your coat, but I first tip him.

Foss. Behold the lucre of a pimp! Between the pox abroad, and my plague at home, I find a man may never want fees. [*aside.*] Your honour's commands, I pray. I long to serve you.

Underp. Ah, boy! thou hast a rare mistress for vails. Come I know thou art a sly dog; can'st thou introduce me to her for a moment's conversation?

Foss. Impossible.

Underp. What, still impossible?

[Gives more money.]

Foss. Still impossible.

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Underp. Poh, pox. But prithee, friend, by the by, is there any thing in this report that she is marry'd to the doctor here?

Foss. I am afraid there is something in it.

Underp. What a spirit does a jealous husband give to an intrigue! Pray, is he not a most egregious silly animal?

Foss. Not exceeding wise indeed,

Underp. Rich?

Foss. He has money.

Underp. That will save the expence of her gallants. Old?

Foss. Ay, too old, heaven knows.

Underp. How came it into the puppy's head to marry?

Foss. By the instigation of Satan.

Underp. I'll help the old fool to an heir.

Foss. No doubt on't. If the whole town can do it, he will not want one.

[Aside.]

Underp. Come, prithee deal freely with me, Has Plotwell been here since the wedding?

Foss. He has! too sure: [*aside.*] He's a dangerous rival to you; if you have a mind to succeed, keep a strict watch upon him, that he may not get admittance before you.

Underp. Well since thou hast shown thyself so much my friend, I'll let thee into a secret. Plotwell and I no sooner heard of the wedding, but we made a bett of a hundred guineas, who should dub the doctor first. Remember you go twenty pieces with me.

Foss. But here is some body coming. Away you are sure of my interest.

[*Exit Underplot.*]

Foss. This was well judg'd. I have a small territory coveted by two rival potentates. It is profound policy to make them watch one the other, and so keep the ballance of power in my own hands. Certainly nothing so improves one's politicks, as to have a coquet to on'es wife,

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Enter a footman with a letter,

Foot. This is for your lady, Deliver it safe into her own hands.

[*Exit Footman.*]

Fos. [*reads.*] 'Know, cruel woman, I have discovered the secret of your marriage; you shall have all the plague of a jealous husband, without the pleasure of giving him cause. I have this morning counterfeited billetdoux and letters from bawds; nay, I have sent pimps; some of which, I hope, are fallen into your old coxcomb's hands. If you deny me the pleasure of tipping him a real cuckold, at least, I'll have the resentment to make him an imaginary one. Know that this is not the hundredth part of the revenge that shall be executed upon thee, by

R. P.'

Town. [*peeping.*] So. The letter works as I would have it.

[*Aside.*]

Foss. How true is that saying of the philosopher! 'We only know, that we know nothing.' The eruption of those horns which seem'd to make so strong a push is now suppress'd. Is the mystery of all these letters nothing but the revenge of a disappointed lover? The hand and seal are just the same with the Welchman's that I intercepted a while ago. Truly, these Welch are a hot revengeful people. My wife may be virtuous; she may not. Prevention is the safest method with diseases and intrigues. Women are wanton, husbands weak, bawds busy, opportunities dangerous, gallants eager; therefore it behoves honest men to be watchful. But here comes my Wife, I must hide myself; for should I be detected, she might have a just cause of complaint for my impertinent curiosity.

Exit Fossi.

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Enter TOWNLEY; and to her SARNET at the other door.

Sars. Your orders, madam, have been executed to a tittle, and I hope with success.

Town. Extremely well. Just as we could have wish'd. But I can't forgive that rascal Hugh. To turn him away would be dangerous. We will rather take the advantage of the confidence my husband has in him. Leave the husband to me, and do you discipline the footman. Such early curiosity must be crush'd in the bud. Hugh, Hugh, Hugh. [*calls aloud, and rings.*] What is become of the rogue?

[*Townley runs in, and drags out Fossile changing his cloaths with Hugh.*]
Why sirrah! must one call all day for you?

[*cuffs him.*]

Sars. This is not Hugh, madam; [a rouge in disguise](#), got in to rob the house! thieves, thieves!

Enter CLINKET, PRUE with the writing-desk, and servants

Foss. St. St—no noise. Prithee, deeree, look upon me. See, see, thy own dear husband. It is I.

Town. What an unfortunate woman am I! Could not you pass one day without an intrigue? and with a cookwench too! for you could put on a livery for no other end. You wicked man.

Sars. His coldness, madam, is now no longer a mystery. Filthy monster! wer't not thou provided with my mistress as a remedy for thy rampant unchastity?

Town. Was all your indifferance to me for this! you brute you.

[*weeps.*]

Foss. Nay, prithee, deeree, judge not rashly. My character is establish'd in the world. There lives not a more sober, chaste, and virtuous person than doctor Fossile.

Town. Then why this disguise?

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Foss. Since it must come out; ha, ha, ha, only a frolick on my wedding day between Hugh and I. We had a mind to exhibit a little mummery.

Clink. What joy arises in my soul to see my uncle in a dramattick character! Since your humour lead you to the drama, uncle, why would you not consult a relative muse in your own family? I have always used you as my physician; and why should not you use me as your poet?

Foss. Prithee, dear, leave me a moment. This is a scandal to my gravity. I'll be with you, as my self, immediately.

[*Exeunt omnes, except Fossile and Hugh. As they are changing habits, Fossile says,*

As a mark of my confidence in thee, I leave thee guardian of my house while I go my rounds. Let none in but patients; wan sickly fellows, no person in the least degree of bodily strength.

Hugh. Worthy doctor, you may rely upon my honour.

Exit Fos.

I have betray'd my mistress. My conscience flies in my face, and I can ease it noway but by betraying my master.

Knocking at the door.

This is not the doctor; but he is dress'd like him, and that shall be my excuse.

[*He lets Plotwell in, Townley meets him, they embrace.*

Town. Hugh, go, wait at the door.

[*Exit Hugh.*

Plotw. This disguise gives spirit to my intrigue. Certainly I am the first person that ever enjoy'd a bride without the scandal of matrimony.

Town. I have a different relish, Mr. Plotwell, for now I can't abide you, you are so like my husband.

Plotw. Underplot, I defy thee. I have laid the wager, and now I hold the stakes.

Town. Opportunity Mr. Potwell, has been the downfall of much virtue.

[*As he is leading her off, enter Hugh.*

Hugh. Ah, madam! the doctor! the doctor!

Exit Hugh.

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Plot. Fear nothing. I'll stand it. I have my part ready.

[*Exit Townley.*

Enter FOSSILE.

Foss. I promised lady *Langfort* my eagle-stone. The poor lady is like to miscarry, and 'tis well I thought on't. Ha! who is here! I do not like the aspect of the fellow. But I will not be over censorious.

[*They make many bows and cringes in advancing to each other.*

Plot. *Illustrissime domine, huc adveni—*

Foss. *Illustrissime domine—non usus, sum loquere Latinum—*If you cannot speak English, we can have no lingual conversation.

Plot. I can speak but a little Englishe. Me ave great deal heard of de fame of de great luminary of all arts and sciences, de illustrious doctor Fossile. I would make commutation (what do you call it) I would exchange some of my tings for some of his tings.

Foss. Pray, Sir, what university are you of?

Plot. De famous university of Cracow in Polonia minor. I have cured de king of Sweden of de wound. My name be doctor Cornelius Lubomirski.

Foss. Your Lubomirskis are a great family. But what Arcana are you master of, Sir?

Plot. [*Shows a large snuff-box.*] See dere, Sir, dat box de snuff.

Foss. Snuff-box.

Plot. Right. Snuff-box. Dat be de very true gold.

Foss. What of that?

Plot. Vat of dat? me make dat gold my own self, of de lead of de great church of Crawcow.

Foss. By what operations?

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Plot. By calcination; reverberation; purification; sublimation; amalgamation; precipitation; volutilization.

Foss. Have a care what you assert. The volutilization of gold is not an obvious process. It is by great elegance of speech called, *fortitudo fortitudinis fortissima.*

Plot. I need not acquaint de illustrious doctor Fossile, dat all de metals be but unripe gold.

Foss. Spoken like a philosopher, And therefore there should be an act of parliament against digging of lead mines, as against felling young timber. But inform me, Sir, what might be your

menstruum, snow-water, or May-dew?

Plot. Snow-vater.

Foss. Right. Snow is the universal pickle of nature for the preservation of her productions in the hyemal season.

Plot. If you will go your self, and not trust de servant, to fetch some of de right Thames sand dat be below de bridge, I will show you de naked Diana in your study before I go hence.

Foss. Perhaps you might. I am not at present dispos'd for experiments.

Plot. This bite wont take to send him out of the way, I'll change my subject. [*Aside.*] Do you deal in longitudes, Sir?

Foss. I deal not in impossibilities. I search only for the grand elixir.

Plot. Vat do you tink of de new metode of fluxion?

Foss. I know no other but [my mercury](#).

Plot. Ha, ha. Me mean de fluxion of de quantity.

Foss. The greatest quantity I ever knew, was three quarts a day.

Plot. Be dere any secret in the hydrology, zoology, minerology, hydraulicks, acausticks, pneumaticks, logarithmatechny, dat you do want de explanation of? [172]

Foss. This is all out of my way. Do you know of any hermaphrodites, monstrous twins, antediluvian shells, bones, and vegetables?

Plot. Vat tink you of an antediluvian knife, spoon, and fork, with the mark of Tubal Cain in Hebrew, dug out of the mine of Babylon?

Foss. Of what dimensions, I pray, Sir?

Plot. De spoon be bigger dan de modern ladle; de fork, like de great fire-fork; and de knife, like de cleaver.

Foss. Bless me! this shows the stature and magnitude of those antediluvians!

Plot. To make you convinced that I tell not de lie, dey are in de Turkey ship at Vapping, just going to be disposed of. Me would go there vid you, but de businss vil not let me.

Foss. An extraordinary man this! I'll examine him further. [*Aside.*] How could your country lose so great a man as you?

Plot. Dat be de secret. But because me vil have de fair correspondence with de illustrious doctor Fossile, me vil not deny dat Orpheus and me had near run de same fate for different reason. I was hunted out of my country by de general insurrection of de women.

Foss. How so pray?

Plot. Because me have prepare a certain liquor which discover whether a woman be a virgin or no.

Foss. A curious discovery! have you any of it still?

Plot. Dere it is, Sir. It be commonly called de *Lapis Lydius Virginitatis*, or touch-stone of virginity.

[*gives him a vial.*]

Foss. It has the smell of your common hart's-horn. But all your volatile spirits have a near resemblance.

Plot. Right, Sir. De distillation be made from the *Hippomanes* of a young mare. When a deflower'd virgin take ten drops, she will faint and sneeze, and de large red spot appear on the cheek; which we call de spot of infamy. All de young bridegroom make de experiment. De archbishop did make obligation to de nun to take it every ninth month. And I fly for the hurlyburly it make. [173]

Enter HUGH.

Hugh. Sir here is a patient in a chair.

Foss. Doctor Lubomirski, let me conduct you into my study, where we will farther discuss the wonderful virtues of this liquor. Tell the patient I will attend him this instant.

[*Exeunt Plotwell and Fossile.*]

Enter UNDERPLOT [in a chair like a sick man](#).

Hugh. The doctor will wait upon you immediately.

[*Exit Hugh.*]

Underp. I dogg'd Plotwell to this door in a doctor's habit. If he has admittance as a doctor, why not I as a patient? Now for a lucky decision of our wager! If I can't succeed myself, I will at least spoil his intrigue.

Enter FOSSILE.

Underp. Ah! ah! have you no place? Ah! where can I repose a little? I was taken suddenly. Ah! ah! 'tis happy I was so near the house of an eminent physician.

Foss. Rest yourself upon that couch.

Underp. If I lay a few minutes cover'd up warm in a bed, I believe I might recover.

[*Fossile feels his pulse. Plotwell peeps.*]

Plot. Underplot in disguise! I'll be his doctor, and cure him of these frolicks.

[*aside.*]

Foss. What are your symptoms, Sir? a very tempestuous pulse, I profess!

Underp. Violent head-ach, ah! ah!

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Foss. All this proceeds from the fumes of the kitchen, the stomachic digester wants reparation for the better concoction of your aliment: But, Sir, is your pain pungitive, tensive, gravitive, or pulsatory?

Plot. All together, ah!

Foss. Impossible Sir; but I have an eminent physician now in the house, he shall consult. Doctor Lubomirski, here is a person in a most violent cephalalgy, a terrible case!

Enter PLOTWELL.

Foss. Feel his pulse. [*Plotwell feels it.*] You feel it, Sir, strong, hard and labouring.

Plot. Great plenitude, Sir.

Foss. Feel his belly, Sir; a great tension and heat of the abdomen—A hearty man, his muscles are torose; how soon are the strongest humbled by diseases! let us retire, and consult.

Enter SARNET in haste.

Sars. My mistress approves your design, bear it out bravely, perhaps I shall have a sudden opportunity of conveying you into her bed-chamber, counterfeit a fainting fit and rely upon me.

[*Exit.*]

Underp. As yet I find I am undiscover'd by Plotwell; neither is his intrigue in such forwardness as mine, though he made a fair push for it before me.

[*aside.*]

[*Fossile and Plotwell come forward.*]

Foss. I am entirely for a glister.

Plot. My opinion is for de strong vomit.

Foss. Bleed him.

Plot. Make de searrification, give me de lancet, me will do it myself, and after dat will put de blister to de sole of de feet,

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Foss. Your dolor proceeds from a frigid *intemperies* of the brain, a strong disease! the enemy has invaded the very citadel of your microcosm, the magazine of your vital functions; he has set down before it; yet there seems to be a good garrison of vital spirits, and we don't question to be able to defend it.

Plot. Ve will cannonade de enemy with pills, bombard him wid de bolus, blow him up with volatiles, fill up the trenches wid de large inundation of apozems, and dislodge him wid de stink pot; let de apotecary bring up de artillery of medicine immediately.

Foss. True, we might unload the stomach by gentle emeticks, and the intestines by clysters stimulative, carminative, and emollient, with strong hydroticks, quiet the spasms of the viscera by paregoricks, draw off the stagnant blood by deep scarrifications, and depurate its fæculencies by volatiles; after this, let there be numerous blisters and potential cauteries—I consult my patient's ease; I am against much physick—He faints, he is apoplectic, bleed him this moment.

Plot. Hoy de servant dere, make hast, bring de pan of hot coals; or de red hot iron to make

application to de temples.

Enter HUGH.

Hugh. Here's the poker red hot from the fire.

Plot. Very well make de burn dere, exactly dere.

[*putting the poker near his head.*]

Underp. Hold, hold, am I to be murder'd? [*starts up.*] I know you, Plotwell, and was I not oblig'd by honour and friendship, I'd expose you to the doctor.

[*aside to Plotwell.*]

Plot. Very lunatick, mad, fetch me de cord to make de tie upon de leg and de arm, take off thirty ounces of blood, and den plunge him into de cold bath. [176]

Foss. Your judgment, doctor Lubomirski, is excellent, I will call my servants to assist us.

Underp. Hearke'e, old put; I came to take your advice, and not that French son of a whore's scarrifications; and so plague take you both.

[*Exit Underplot and Hugh.*]



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ACT IV.

Enter Dr. FOSSILE, and PLOTWELL.

Foss. Doctor Lubomirski, this vial that you have intrusted into my custody, shall be with acknowledgment return'd after a few experiments; I must crave your indulgence; diseases, you know, Sir, are impertinent, and will tie themselves to no hours, poor lady Hyppokekoana!

Plot. Ah Sir! I beg your pardon, if you make visit to de patient, me will divert myself in your study till you make return.

Foss. That cannot be, I have a lady just coming to consult me in a case of secrecy.

Plot. Have you not de wife? me will make conversation wid de ladies till you come.

Foss. They see no company in the morning, they are all in *deshabilleé*; most learned doctor Lubomirski, your humble servant.

Plot. Most illustrious doctor Fossile, me be, with de profoundest adoration

Foss. With the greatest admiration

Plot. Your most humble

Foss. Most obedient servant.

Plot. Ah, Monsieur, point de ceremonie.

[*Exit Plotwell.*]

Enter HUGH.

Foss. Hugh, bring me a pint of sack; let your mistress know I want to see her. Take care that her orders be obey'd, and that her trunks and boxes be immediately brought hither. Sarset will give you directions. [178]

[Exit Hugh. Fossile sits down on a couch.]

Ah Fossile! if the cares of two hours of a married life have so reduc'd thee, how long can'st thou hold out! to watch a wife all day, and have her wake thee all night! 'twill never do. The [fitigue](#) of three fevers, six small poxes, and five great ones, is nothing to that of one wife. Now for my touch-stone; I will try it upon her presently. If she bear it to day—I am afraid she will bear it to morrow too.

Enter Hugh with a bottle of sack, and after him Townley. Hugh gives the bottle and glass to Fossile and exit.

Sit down by me, my dear, I was going to refresh myself with a glass of canary. You look pale. It will do you good.

Town. Faugh. Wine in the morning!

[Fossile drinks and fills again, and drops some of the liquor into the glass.]

What is the meaning of this? am I to be poison'd.

[aside.]

Foss. You must drink it. Sack is sacred to Hymen; of it is made the nuptial posset.

Town. Don't press me, Mr. Fossile, I nauseate it. It smells strangely. There is something in it.

Foss. An ill symptom! she can't bear the smell. [aside.] Pray, my dear, oblige me.

Town. I'm for none of your flops. I'll fill myself.

Foss. I must own, I have put some restorative drops in it, which are excellent. I may drink it safely. [aside.] [drinks.] The next glass I prepare for you.

[Fills, and [powers some drops in.](#)

[Townley drinks. Fossile runs behind to support her; then pores upon her cheek, and touches it with his finger.]

[179]

Town. Your insolence is insupportable. 'Twas but this moment you suspected my virtue; and now my complexion. Put on your spectacles. No red was ever laid upon these cheeks. I'll fly thee, and die a maid, rather than live under the same roof with jealousy and caprice.

Foss. O thou spotless innocence! I cannot refrain tears of joy. Forgive me, and I'll tell thee all. These drops have been a secret in our family for many years. They are call'd the touch-stone of virginity. The males administer it to the brides on their wedding-day; and by its virtue have ascertain'd the honour of the Fossiles from generation to generation. There are family customs, which it is almost impious to neglect.

Town. Had you married a person of doubtful reputation—But me, Mr. Fossile!

Foss. I did not indeed suspect thee. But my mother obliged me to this experiment with her dying words—My wife is chaste: And to preserve her so, 'tis necessary that I have none but chaste servants about her. I'll make the experiment on all my female domesticks. [aside.] I will now, my dear, in thy presence, put all my family to the trial. Here! bid my niece, and all the maid-servants come before me.

[Calling out.]

Enter Clinket, Prue, and Servants.

Give ear, all ye virgins: We make proclamation in the name of the chaste Diana, being resolv'd to make a solemn essay of the virtue, virginity, and chastity of all within our walls. We therefore advise, warn and precaution all spinsters, who know themselves blemish'd, not on any pretence whatsoever to taste these our drops, which will manifest their shame to the world by visible tokens.

[180]

Clink. I abominate all kind of drops. They interrupt the series of ideas. But [have the any power](#) over the virgin's dreams, thoughts, and private meditations?

Foss. No. They do not affect the *motus Primo-primi*, or intentions; only actualities, niece.

Clink. Then give it me. I can drink as freely of it as of the waters of Helicon. My love was always Platonick.

[drinks.]

Foss. Yet I have known a Platonick lady lodge at a mid wife's.

[*Fossile offers it round.*]

1st *Wom.* I never take physick.

Foss. That's one. Stand there. My niece professes herself a Platonick. You are rather a Cartesian.

Clink. Ah dear uncle! how do the Platonicks and Cartesians differ.

Foss. The Platonicks are for idea's, the Cartesians for matter and motion.

Town. Mr. Fossile, you are too severe.

2d *Wom.* I am not a-dry. [*curtsies.*]

Foss. There's two. Stand there.

Prue. My mistress can answer for me. She has taken it.

Foss. She has. But however stand there, among the Cartesians.

3d *Wom.* My innocence would protect me, though I trod over red-hot iron. Give me a brimmer.

[*She takes a mouthful and spits it out again.*]

Foss. 'Twas a presumptuous thing to gargle with it: but however, madam, if you please—
walk among the Cartesians.

[*Two young wenches run away.*]

Clink. Prue, follow me. I have just found a rhyme for my Pindarick.

[*They all sneak off.*]

[181]

Fos. All gone! what no more ladies here? no more ladies! [*looking to the audience,*] O that I had but a boarding-school, or a middle gallery!

[*Enter Sarsnet, follow'd by two porters bearing a chest.*]

Set down the things here: there is no occasion for carrying them up stairs, since they are to be sent into the country to morrow.

[*Exit porters.*]

What have I done? My marriage, these confounded whimsies, and doctor Lubomirski, have made me quite forget poor lady Hippokekoana. She was in convulsions, and I am afraid dead by this time.

[*Exit Fossile.*]

Sars. I have brought you a present, madam, make good use of it. So I leave you together.

[*Exit Sarsnet.*]

[*Townley opens the chest: Plotwell, who was cover'd with a gown and petticoat, gets out.*]

Town. Never was any thing so lucky. The doctor is just this minute gone to a patient.

Plot. I tempt dangers enough in your service. I am almost crippled in this chest-adventure. Oh my knees! Prithee, my dear, lead me to a bed where I may stretch myself out.

[*Leading her off.*]

Enter SARSNET.

Sars. Oh madam! yonder is the doctor in deep discourse with Underplot: I fear he has dogg'd me, and betray'd us. The are both coming back together.

[*Exit Sarsnet.*]

Plot. I'll shrink snug into my shell again.

[182]

Town. That he may directly pop upon you. The trunk will be the first place he will examine, have you no presence of mind? You sit for an intrigue!

Plot. What shall I do?

Town. Fear not, you shall be [invisible i th is very](#) spot.

Plot. What do you mean? he's just at the door. You intend to discover me.

Town. Mistrust me not: You shall walk out before his face at that very door, though he bring in a hundred spies, and not one of them shall perceive you.

Plot. Don't trifle. Are you mad? [*knocking at the door.*] Nay, now 'tis too late.

Town. Arm thyself with flounces, and fortify thyself with whalebone; [enter beneath the cupulo of this petticoat.](#)

Plot. The best security in the world! an old fellow has seldom any thing to do beneath that circumference.

Town. No more but under it immediately.

[*Plotwell goes under it.*]

Thus Venus, when approaching foes assail,
Shields her Æneas with a silken veil.

Enter FOSSILE.

Town. O my dear you come opportunely. How do you like my fancy in this new petticoat? there is something in it so odd!

Fos. You have another in your chest much odder. I want to see that.

Town. How jaunty the flounces!

Fos. Ay, 'tis plain she would lure me from the chest; there I shall find him.

[*aside.*]

Town. The lace! the fringe!

Fos. All this is nothing to the embroider'd sattin. Prithee, my dear, give me the key.

[183]

Town. Sure never was any thing so prettily disposed. Observe but the air of it: So *degagee!* But the lining is so charming.

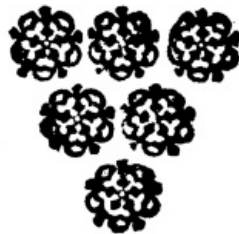
[*She walks to the door, and Fossile to the trunk. Plotwell kisses her out of the top of the petticoat, and then goes off.*]

[*As Fossile is cautiously opening the trunk with his sword drawn, Townley comes to him.*]

What, more of your frolicks, Mr. Fossile. What time of the moon is this?

Fos. This Underplot is a confounded villain, he would make me jealous of an honest civil gentleman, only for an opportunity to cuckold me himself. [*aside.*] Come, my dear, forget all that is past. I know—I have proved thee virtuous. [But prithee, love, leave me a moment; I expect some Egyptian rarities.](#)

[*Exeunt severally.*]



[184]



ACT V.

Enter FOSSILE with a vial in his hand.

Fos. This is all we have for the flying dragon so celebrated by antiquity. A cheap purchase! It cost me but fifteen guineas. But the Jew made it up in the butterfly and the spider.

Enter two porters bearing a Mummy.

Oh! here's my mummy. Set him down. I am in haste. Tell captain Bantam, I'll talk with him at the coffee-house.

[*Exit porters.*]

Enter two porters bearing an Alligator.

A most stupendous animal! set him down.

[*Exit porters.*]

Poor lady Hippokekoana's convulsions! I believe there is fatality in it, that I can never get to her. Who can I trust my house to in my absence? Were my wife as chaste as Lucretia, who knows what an unlucky minute may bring forth! In cuckoldom, the art of attack is prodigiously improved beyond the art of defence. So far it is manifest, Underplot has a design upon my honour. For the ease of my mind, I will lock up my wife in this my musæum, 'till my return.

[185]

Enter TOWNLEY, and SARNET.

You will find something here, my dear, to divert yourself.

Town. I hate the sight of these strange creatures; but since I am Mr. Fossiles wife, I shall endeavour to conquer my aversion.

Foss. Thou may'st safely be here to day, my dear; to-morrow thou shouldst no more enter this room than a pest-house. 'Tis dangerous for women that are impregnated. But poor lady Hippokekoana suffers all this while.

[*Exit Fossile with a key in his hand.*]

Town. Since he has lock'd me in, to be even with him, I'll bolt him out.

[*Plotwell dress'd like a Mummy, comes forward.*]

Plot. Thus trav'ling far from his Egyptian tomb,
Thy Anthony salutes his Cleopatra.

Town. Thus Cleopatra, in desiring arms,
Receives her Anthony—But prithee dear pickled Hieroglyphic, who so suddenly could assist thee with this shape.

Plot. The play-house can dress mummies, bears, lions, crocodiles, and all the monsters of Lybia. My arms madam are ready to break their past-board prison to embrace you.

Town. Not so hasty. Stay till the jealous fool is out of sight.

Plot. Our ill stars, and the devil, have brought him back so often

Town. He can never parry this blow, nor grow jealous of his mummy. A mummy is his intimate friend.

Plot. And a man cannot easily be cuckolded by any body else.

Town. Here may'st thou remain the ornament of his study, and the support of his old age. Thou shalt divert his company and be a father to his children. I will bring thee legs of pullets, remnants of tarts, and fragments of [desarts](#). Thou shalt be fed like Bell and the Dragon.

[186]

Plot. But madam; before you entertain me as your mummy in ordinary, you ought to be acquainted with my abilities to discharge that office. Let me slip off this habit of death, you shall find I have some symptoms of life.—Thus Jove within the milk-white swan compress'd his Leda.

[*Underplot in the Alligator crawls forward, then rises up and embraces her.*]

Underp. Thus Jove within the serpents scaly folds,
Twin'd round the [Macedonian queen](#),

Town. Ah!

[*shrieks.*]

Plot. Fear not, madam. This is my evil genius Underplot that still haunts me. How the devil got you here?

Underp. Why should not the play-house lend me a crocodile as well as you a mummy?

Town. How unlucky is this! [*Aside.*] Nay, I don't know but I may have twenty lovers in this

collection. You snakes, sharks, monkeys, and [mantygers](#), speak, and put in your claim before it is too late.

Underp. Mr. Mummy, your humble servant; the lady is pre-engag'd.

Plot. Pray, Mr. Crocodile, let the lady make her own choice.

Underp. Crocodile as I am, I must be treated with common humanity. You can't, madam, disown the message you sent me.

Town. Well! ye pair of Egyptian lovers, agree this matter between you, and I will acquit myself like a person of honour to you both. [187]

Plot. Madam! If I don't love you above all your sex, may I be banish'd the studies of virtuoso's; and smook'd like dutch beef in a chimney—

Underp. If I don't love you more than that stale mummy, may I never more be proclaim'd at a show of monsters, by the sound of a glass-trumpet.

Plot. May I be sent to 'Pothecary's-hall, and beat up into venice treacle for the fleet and the army, if this heart—

Underp. May I be stuff'd with straw, and given to a mountebank, if this soul—

Plot. Madam I am a human creature. Taste my balsamick kiss.

Underp. A lover in swadling-clouts! What is his kiss, to my embrace?

Plot. Look upon me, madam. See how I am embroider'd with hieroglyphicks.

Underp. Consider my beautiful row of teeth.

Plot. My balmy breath.

Underp. The strong joints of my back.

Plot. My erect stature.

Underp. My long tail.

Town. Such a contest of beauty! How shall I decide it?

Plot. Take me out of my shell, madam, and I'll make you a present of the kernel.

Underp. Then I must be upon a level with him, and be uncrocodil'd.

Town. Keep both of you your shapes, and we are in no fear of a surprize from the doctor: If you uncase, his presence would undo us. Sure never was any thing so unlucky—I hear his foot-steps; quick to your posts.

[*Mummy and Crocodile run to their places.*]

[188]

Enter FOSSILE, Dr. NAUTILUS, and Dr. POSSUM.

Naut. Much joy to the learned Dr. Fossile. To have a mummy, an alligator, and a wife, all in one day, is too great happiness for mortal man!

Poss. This an alligator! Alack a day, brother Nautilus, this is a mere lizard, an eft, a shrimp to mine.

Naut. How improving would it be to the female understanding, if the closets of the ladies were furnish'd, or, as I may say, ornamented and embellish'd with preserv'd butterflies, and beautiful shells, instead of China jars, and absurd Indian pictures.

Town. Now for a stratagem to bring off my unsuccessful pair of gallants.

[*Aside.*
[*Exit Townley.*]

Foss. Ah, Dr. Nautilus, how have I languish'd for your feather of the bird Porphyryon!

Naut. But your dart of the Mantichora!

Foss. Your haft of the antediluvian trowel, unquestionably the tool of one of the Babel masons!

Naut. What's that to your fragment of Seth's pillar?

Poss. Gentlemen, I affirm I have a greater curiosity than all of them. I have an entire leaf of Noah's journal aboard the ark, that was hewen out of a porphyry pillar in Palmyra.

[*Fossile opens the case of the mummy.*]

Naut. By the formation of the muscular parts of the visage, I conjecture that this mummy is male.

Pos. Male, brother! I am sorry to observe your ignorance of the symetry of a human body. Do

but observe the projection of the hip; besides, the bloom upon the face; 'tis a female beyond all contradiction.

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Fos. Let us have no rash dispute, brothers; but proceed methodically—Behold the vanity of mankind! [*pointing to the mummy.*] Some Ptolemy perhaps!—

Naut. Who by his pyramid and pickle thought to secure to himself death immortal.

Fos. His pyramid, alas! is now but a wainscot case.

Pos. And his pickle can scarce raise him to the dignity of a collar of brawn.

Fos. Pardon me, Dr. Possum: The musæum of the curious is a lasting monument. And I think it no degradation to a dead person of quality, to bear the rank of an anatomy in the learned world.

Naut. By your favour, Dr. Possum, a collar of brawn! I affirm, he is better to be taken inwardly than a collar of brawn.

Fos. An excellent medicine! he is hot in the first-degree, and exceeding powerful in some diseases of women.

Naut. Right, Dr. Fossile; for your Asphaltion.

Pos. Pice-Asphaltus, by your leave.

Naut. By your leave, doctor Possum, I say, Asphaltion.

Pos. And I positively say, Pice-Asphaltus.

Naut. If you had read Dioscorides or Pliny—

Poss. I have read Dioscorides. And I do affirm Pice-Asphaltus.

Foss. Be calm, Gentlemen. Both of you handle this argument with great learning, judgment, and perspicuity. For the present, I beseech you to concord, and turn your speculations on my alligator.

Poss. The skin is impenetrable even to a sword.

Naut. Dr. Possum I will show you the contrary.

[*Draws his sword.*]

Poss. In the mean time I will try the mummy with this knife, on the point of which you shall smell the pitch, and be convinc'd that it is the Pice-Asphaltus.

[*Takes up a rusty knife.*]

Foss. Hold, Sir: You will not only deface my mummy, but spoil my Roman sacrificing-knife.

[190]

Enter TOWNLEY.

Town. I must lure them from this experiment, or we are discover'd.

[*Aside.*]

[*She looks through a telescope.*]

What do I see! most prodigious! a star as broad as the moon in the day-time!

[*The doctors go to her.*]

Poss. Only a halo about the sun, I suppose.

Naut. Your suppositions, doctor, seem to be groundless. Let me make my observation.

[*Nautilus and Possum struggle to look first.*]

Town. Now for your escape:

[*To Plotwell and Underplot.*]

[*They run to the door, but find it lock'd.*]

Underp. What an unlucky dog I am!

Town. Quick. Back to your posts. Don't move, and rely upon me. I have still another artifice.

[*They run back to their places.*]

Naut. I can espy no celestial body but the sun.

[*Exit Townley.*]

Poss. Brother Nautilus, your eyes are somewhat dim; your sight is not fit for astronomical observations.

Foss. Is the focus of the glass right? hold gentlemen, I see it; about the bigness of Jupiter.

Naut. No phenomenon offers itself to my speculation.

Poss. Point over yonder chimney. Directly south.

Naut. Thitherward, begging your pardon, Dr. Possum, I affirm to be the north.

Foss. East.

Poss. South.

Naut. North. Alas! what an ignorant thing is vanity! I was just making a reflection on the ignorance of my brother Possum, in the nature of the crocodile.

[191]

Poss. First, brother Nautilus, convince yourself of the composition of the mummy.

Naut. I will insure your alligator from any damage. His skin I affirm once more to be impenetrable.

[*draws his sword.*

Poss. I will not deface any hieroglyphick.

[*Goes to the mummy with the knife.*

Foss. I never oppose a luciferous experiment. It is the beaten highway to truth.

[*Plotwell and Underplot leap from their places; the doctors are frighted.*]

Foss. Speak, I conjure thee. Art thou the ghost of some murder'd Egyptian monarch?

Naut. A rational question to a mummy! But this monster can be no less than the devil himself, for crocodiles don't walk.

Enter TOWNLEY and CLINKET.

[*Townley whispers Clinket.*

Foss. Gentlemen, wonder at nothing within these walls; for ever since I was married, nothing has happen'd to me in the common course of human life.

Clink. Madam, without a compliment, you have a fine imagination. The masquerade of the mummy and crocodile is extremely just; I would not rob you of the merit of the invention, yet since you make me the compliment, I shall be proud to take the whole contrivance of this masquerade upon myself. [*To Townley.*] Sir, be acquainted with my masqueraders.

[*To Fossile.*

Foss. Thou female imp of Appollo, more mischievous than Circe, who fed gentlemen of the army in a hog's-stye! What mean you by these gambols? this mummy, this crocodile?

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Clink. Only a little mummery, uncle?

Fos. What an outrageous conceit is this! had you contented yourself with the metamorphosis of Jupiter, our skill in the classicks might have prevented our terror.

Clink. I glory in the fertility of my invention the more, that it is beyond the imagination of a pagan deity. Besides, it is form'd upon the vraysemblance; for I know you had a mummy and a crocodile to be brought home.

Fos. Dr. Nautilus is an infirm tender gentleman; I wish the sudden concussion of his animal spirits may not kindle him into a fever. I myself, I must confess, have an extreme palpitation.

Clink. Dear uncle, be pacified. We are both of us the votaries of our great master Appollo. To you he has assign'd the art of healing: Me he has taught to sing; why then should we jangle in our kindred faculties?

Fos. Appollo, for ought I know, may be a very fine person; but this I am very sure of, that the skill he has given all his physicians is not sufficient to cure the madness of his poets.

Pos. Hark ye, brother Fossile? Your Crocodile has proved a human creature, I wish your wife may not prove a crocodile.

Naut. Hark ye, brother Fossile! Your mummy, as you were saying, seemeth to be hot in the first degree, and is powerful in some diseases of women.

[*Exit Nautilus and Possum.*

Fos. You diabolical performers of my niece's masquerade, will it please you to follow those gentlemen?

Clink. Nay, Sir, you shall see them dance first.

Fos. Dance! the devil! bring me hither a spit, a fire-fork, I'll try whether the monsters are impenetrable or no.

Plotw. I hope, Sir, you will not expose us to the fury of the mob, since we came here upon so courteous a design.

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Foss. Good courteous Mr. Mummy, without more ceremony, will it please you to retire to your subterraneous habitation. And you Mr. Crocodile, about your business this moment, or you shall change your Nile for the next horse-pond.

Clink. Spare my masqueraders.

Underp. Let it never be said that the famous Dr. Fossile, so renowned for his charity to monsters, should violate the laws of hospitality, and turn a poor alligator naked into the street.

Foss. Deposit your *exuviæ* then, and assume your human shape.

Underp. For that I must beg your excuse. A gentleman would not chuse to be known in these frolicks.

Foss. Then out of my doors, here footman, out with him; out, thou hypocrite, of an alligator.

[*Underplot is turn'd out.*]

Sir, the respect I have for catacombs and pyramids, will not protect you.

[*A noise of mob within.*]

Enter PRUE.

Prue. Sir, Sir, lock your doors, or else all your monsters will run home again to the Indies. Your crocodile yonder has made his escape; if he get but to Somerset water-gate, he is gone for ever.

[*Exit Prue.*]

Enter a Footman.

Foot. The herbwoman swore she knew him to be the devil, for she had met him one dark night in St. Pulchre's church-yard; then the monster call'd a coach, methought with the voice of a christian; but a sailor that came by said he might be a crocodile for all that, for crocodiles could cry like children, and was for killing him outright, for they were good to eat in Egypt, but the constable cry'd take him alive, for what if he be an Egyptian, he is still the king's subject.

[194]

Ex. footman.

[*A noise of mob within.*]

Enter PRUE

Prue. Then he was hurry'd a way by the mob. A bull-dog ran away with fix joints of his tail, and the claw of his near foot before: At last by good fortune, to save his life, he fell in with the Hockley in the Hole bull and bear; the master claim'd him for his monster, and so he is now attended by a vast mob, very solemnly marching to Hockley in the Hole, with the bear in his front, the bull in his rear, and a monkey upon each shoulder.

Town. Mr. Mummy, you had best draw the curtains of your chair, or the mob's respect for the dead will scarce protect you.

[*Exit Plotwell in a chair.*]

Clink. My concern for him obliges me to go see that he gets off safe, lest any further mischief befalls the persons of our masque.

[*Exit Clinket.*]

Fos. Sweetly, Horace. *Nunquam satis*, and so forth. A man can never be too cautious. Madam, sit down by me. Pray how long is it since you and I have been married?

Town. Near three hours, Sir.

Fos. And what anxieties has this time produc'd? the dangers of divorce! calumniatory letters! lewd fellows introduc'd by my niece! groundless jealousies on both sides! even thy virginity put to the touch-stone! but this last danger I plung'd thee in myself; to leave thee in the room with two such robust young fellows.

Town. Ay, with two young fellows! but my dear, I know you did it ignorantly.

Fos. This is the first blest minute of repose that I have enjoy'd in matrimony. Dost thou know the reason, my dear, why I have chosen thee of all womankind?

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Town. My face, perhaps.

Fos. No.

Town. My wit?

Fos. No.

Town. My virtue and good humour.

Fos. No. But for the natural conformity of our constitutions. Because thou art hot and moist in the third degree, and I myself cold and dry in the first.

Town. And so nature has coupled us like the elements.

Fos. Thou hast nothing to do but to submit thy constitution to my regimen.

Town. You shall find me obedient in all things.

Foss. It is strange, yet certain, that the intellects of the infant depend upon the suppers of the parents. Diet must be prescrib'd.

Town. So the wit of one's posterity is determin'd by the choice of one's cook.

Foss. Right. You may observe how French cooks, with their high ragousts, have contaminated our plain English understandings. Our supper to night is extracted from the best authors. How delightful is this minute of tranquility! my soul is at ease. How happy shalt thou make me! thou shalt bring me the finest boy!

[A knocking at the door,

No mortal shall enter these doors this day. [*knocking again.*] Oh, it must be the news of poor lady Hippokekoana's death. Poor woman! such is the condition of life, some die, and some are born, and I shall now make some reparation for the mortality of my patients by the fecundity of my wife. My dear thou shalt bring me the finest boy!

Enter footman.

Foot. Sir, here's a seaman from Deptford must needs speak with you.

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Foss. Let him come in. One of my retale Indian merchants, I suppose, that always brings me some odd thing.

Enter sailor with a child.

What hast thou brought me, friend, a young drill?

Sail. Look ye d'ye see, master, you know best whether a monkey begot him.

Foss. A meer human child.

Town. Thy carelessness, Sarsnet, has exposed me, I am lost and ruin'd. O heav'n! heav'n! No, impudence assist me.

[*Aside.*

Foss. Is the child monstrous? or dost thou bring him here to take physick?

Sail. I care not what he takes so you take him.

Foss. What does the fellow mean?

Sail. Fellow me no fellows. My name is Jack Capstone of Deptford, and are not you the man that has the raree-show of oyster-shells and pebble-stones?

Fos. What if I am?

Sail. Why, then my invoice is right, I must leave my cargo here.

Town. Miserable woman that I am! how shall I support this fight! thy bastard brought into thy family as soon as thy bride!

Fos. Patience, patience, I beseech you. Indeed I have no posterity.

Town. You lascivious brute you.

Fos. Passion is but the tempestuous cloud that obscures reason; be calm and I'll convince you. Friend, how come you to bring the infant hither?

Sail. My wife, poor woman, could give him suck no longer, for she died yesterday morning. There's a long account, master. It was hard to trace him to the fountain-head. I steer'd my course from lane to lane, I spoke to twenty old women, and at last was directed to a ribbon-shop in Covent-Garden, and they sent me hither, and so take the bantling and pay me his clearings.

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[*Offers him the child.*

Fos. I shall find law for you, sirrah. Call my neighbour Possum, he is a justice of peace, as well as a physician.

Town. Call the man back. If you have committed one folly, don't expose yourself by a second.

Sail. The gentlewoman says well. Come, master, we all know that there is no boarding a pretty wench, without charges one way or other; you are a doctor, master, and have no surgeons bills to pay; and so can the better afford it.

Town. Rather than you should bring a scandal on your character, I will submit to be a kind mother-in-law.

Fos. Mr. justice Possum, for now I must so call you, not brother Possum; here is a troublesome fellow with a child, which he would leave in my house.

Pos. Another man's child? he cannot in law.

Fos. It seemeth to me to be a child unlawfully begotten.

Pos. A bastard! who does he lay it to?

Fos. To our family.

Pos. Your family, *quatenus* a family, being a body collective, cannot get a bastard. Is this child a bastard, honest friend?

Sail. I was neither by when his mother was show'd, nor when she was unladen; whether he belong to a fair trader, or be run goods, I cannot tell: In short here I was sent, and here I will leave him.

Pos. Dost then know his mother, friend?

Sail. I am no midwife, master; I did not see him born.

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Pos. You had best put up this matter, doctor. A man of your years, when he has been wanton, cannot be too cautious.

Fos. This is all from the purpose. I was married this morning at seven; let any man in the least acquainted with the powers of nature, judge whether that human creature could be conceiv'd and brought to maturity in one forenoon.

Pos. This is but talk, doctor Fossile. It is well for you, though I say it, that you have fallen into the hands of a person, who has study'd the civil and canon law in the point of bastardy. The child is either yours or not yours.

Foss. My child, Mr. Justice!

Pos. Look ye, doctor Fossile, you confound filiation with legitimation. Lawyers are of opinion, that filiation is necessary to legitimation, but not *è contra*.

[*The child cries*

Foss. I would not starve any of my own species, get the infant some water-pap. But Mr. Justice—

Pos. The proofs, I say, doctor, of filiation are five. Nomination enunciatively pronounc'd, strong presumptions, and circumstantial proofs—

Foss. What is all this to me? I tell you I know nothing of the child.

Pos. Signs of paternal piety, similitude of features, and commerce with the mother. And first of the first, nomination. Has the doctor ever been heard to call the infant, son?

Town. He has call'd him child, since he came into this room. You have indeed, Mr. Fossile.

Pos. Bring hither the doctor's great bible.—Let us examine in the blank leaf whether he be enroll'd among the rest of his children.

Foss. I tell you, I never had any children. I shall grow distracted, I shall—

Pos. But did you give any orders against registering the child by the name of Fossile?

Foss. How was it possible?

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Pos. Set down that, clerk. He did not prohibit the registering the child in his own name. We our selves have observed one sign of fatherly tenderness; clerk, set down the water-pap he order'd just now. [Come we may](#)—

Foss. What a jargon is this!

Pos. Come we now, I say, to that which the lawyers call *magnum naturæ argumentum*, similitude of features. Bring hither the child, friend; Dr. Fossile, look upon me. The unequal circle of the infant's face, somewhat resembles the inequality of the circumference of your countenance; he has also the vituline or calf-like concavity of the profile of your visage.

Foss. Pish.

Pos. And he is somewhat beetle-brow'd, and his nose will rise with time to an equal prominence with the doctor's.

Town. Indeed he has somewhat of your nose Mr. Fossile.

Foss. Ridiculous!

Town. The child is comely.

Pos. Consider the large aperture of his mouth.

Sail. Nay, the tokens are plain enough. I have the fellow of him at home; but my wife told me two days ago, that this with the wall-eye and splay-foot belong'd to you, Sir.

[*Prue runs a-cross the stage with a letter, which Fossile snatches from her.*

Fos. Whither are you going so fast, hussy? I will examine every thing within these walls. [*Exit Prue.*]

[*reads.*] 'For Richard Plotwell, esq;'
This letter unravels the whole affair: As she is an unfortunate relation of mine, I must beg you would act with discretion.

[*Gives Possum the letter.*

Pos. [*reads*] 'Sir, the child which you father'd is return'd back upon my hands. Your Drury-lane friends have treated me with such rudeness, that they told me in plain terms I should be damn'd. How unfortunate soever my offspring is, I hope you at least will defend the reputation of the unhappy

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'Phœbe Clinket.'

—As you say, doctor, the case is too plain; every circumstance hits.

Enter CLINKET.

Clink. 'Tis very uncivil, Sir, to break open one's letters.

Foss. Would I had not; and that the contents of it had been a secret to me and all mankind for ever. Wretched creature, to what a miserable condition has thy poetry reduc'd thee!

Clink. I am not in the least mortified with the accident. I know it has happen'd to many of the most famous daughters of Apollo; and to myself several times.

Foss. I am thunderstruck at her impudence! several times!

Clink. I have had one returned upon my hands every winter for these five years past. I may perhaps be excell'd by others in judgment and correctness of manners, but for fertility and readiness of conception, I will yield to nobody.

Foss. Bless me, whence had she this luxuriant constitution!

Pos. Patience, Sir. Perhaps the lady may be married.

Town. 'Tis infamous, Mr. Fossile, to keep her in your house; yet though you turn her out of doors, use her with some humanity; I will take care of the child.

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Clink. I can find no *Denoûement* of all this conversation. Where is the crime, I pray, of writing a tragedy? I sent it to Drury-Lane house to be acted; and here it is return'd by the wrong goût of the actors.

Pos. This incident has somewhat embarrassed us. But what mean you here, madam, by this expression? Your offspring.

Clink. My tragedy, the offspring of my brain. One of his majesty's justices of the peace, and not understand the use of the metaphor!

Pos. Doctor, you have used much artifice, and many demurrers; but the child must lie at your door at last. Friend, speak plain what thou knowest of this matter.

Foss. Let me relate my story. This morning, I married this lady, and brought her from her lodgings, at Mrs. Chambers's, in King-street, Covent-Garden.

Sail. Mrs. Chambers! To that place I was directed, where liv'd the maid that put the bantling out to be nurs'd by my wife for her lady; and who she was, 'tis none of our business to enquire.

Pos. Dost thou know the name of this maid?

Sail. Let me consider—Lutestring.

Foss. Sarsnet, thou mean'st.

Sail. Sarsnet, that's right.

Town. I'll turn her out of my house this moment, Filthy creature!

Pos. The evidence is plain. You have cohabitation with the mother, doctor, *currat lex*. And you must keep the child.

Foss. Your decree is unjust, Sir, and I'll seek my remedy at law. As I never was espoused, I never had carnal knowledge of any woman; and my wife, Mrs. Susanna Townley, is a pure virgin at this hour for me.

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Pos. Susanna Townley! Susannah Townley! Look how runs the warrant you drew up this morning.

[Clerk gives him a paper.]

Madam, a word in private with you. [*whispers her*] Doctor, my Lord Chief Justice has some business with this lady.

Foss. My Lord Chief Justice business with my wife!

Pos. To be plain with you, doctor Fossile, you have for these three hours entertain'd another man's wife. Her husband, lieutenant Bengal, is just returned from the Indies, and this morning took out a warrant from me for an elopement; it will be more for your credit to part with her privately, than to suffer her publickly to be carried off by a tipstaff.

Foss. Surprizing have been the events of this day; but this, the strangest of all, settles my future repose. Let her go—I have not dishonoured the bed of lieutenant Bengal—Hark ye friend! Do you follow her with that badge of her infamy.

Pos. By your favour, doctor, I never reverse my judgment. The child is yours: for it cannot belong to a man who has been three years absent in the East-Indies. Leave the child.

Sail. I find you are out of humour, master. So I'll call to-morrow for his clearings.

[*Sailor lays down the child, and exit with Possum, Clerk, and Townley.*]

Clink. Uncle, by this day's adventure, every one has got something. Lieutenant Bengal has got his wife again; you a fine child; and I a plot for a comedy; and I'll this moment set about it.

[*Exit Clinket.*]

Foss. What must be, must be. [*takes up the child.*] Fossile, thou didst want posterity: Here behold thou hast it. A wife thou didst not want; thou hast none. But thou art caressing a child that is not thy own. What then? a thousand, and a thousand husbands are doing the same thing this very instant; and the knowledge of truth is desirable, and makes thy case the better, What signifies whether a man beget his child or not? How ridiculous is the act itself, said the great emperor Antoninus! I now look upon myself as a Roman citizen; it is better that the father should adopt the child, than that the wife should adopt the father.

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[*Exit Fossile.*]



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EPILOGUE.

Spoke by Mrs. OLDFIELD.

*The ancient Epilogue, as criticks write,
Was, Clap your hands, excuse us, and good-night.
The modern always was a kind essay
To reconcile the audience to the play:
More polish'd, we of late have learn'd to fly
At parties, treaties, nations, ministry.
Our author more genteelly leaves these brawls
To coffee-houses, and to coblers stalls.
His very monsters are of sweet condition,*

*None but the Crocodile's a politician;
He reaps the blessings of his double nature,
And, Trimmer like, can live on land or water:
Yet this same monster should be kindly treated,
He lik'd a lady's flesh—but not to eat it.*

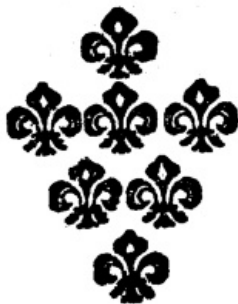
*As for my other spark, my favourite Mummy,
His feats were such, smart youths! as might become ye;
Dead as he seem'd, he had sure signs of life;
His hieroglyphicks pleas'd the doctor's wife.*

*Whom can our well-bred poetess displease?
She writ like quality—with wond'rous ease:
All her offence was harmless want of wit;
Is that a crime?—ye powers, preserve the pit.*

*My doctor too, to give the devil his due,
When every creature did his spouse pursue,
(Men [sound in living](#), bury'd flesh, dry'd fish,) [205]
Was e'en as civil as a wife could wish.
Yet he was somewhat saucy with his [viol](#);
What! put young maids to that unnat'ral trial!
So hard a test! why, if you needs will make it,
Faith, let us marry first,—and then we'll take it.*

*Who could be angry, though like Fossile teas'd?
Consider, in three hours, the man was eas'd.
How many of you are for life beguil'd,
And keep as well the mother, as the child!
None but a Tar could be so tender-hearted,
To claim a wife that had been three years parted;
Would you do this, my friends?—believe me, never!
When modishly you part—you part for ever.*

*Join then your voices, be the play excus'd
For once, though no one living is abus'd;
To that bright circle that commands our duties,
To you superior eighteen-penny beauties,
To the lac'd hat and cockard of the pit,
To all, in one word, we our cause submit, }
Who think good breeding is a-kin to wit.*



The *Publisher's*

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***Advertisement to this
Edition.***

The following Key with the Letter annexed, was sent me from my Correspondent in *London*; which came too late to the English Editor, to be printed with that Edition. As the Squabble between *Cibber* and *Gay* behind the Scenes of the Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane*, at that Time, was very well known; we imagine the reader will

not be displeas'd to have a particular Account of
it, now, first added to this *Dublin* Edition.

A
K E Y
TO THE
NEW COMEDY;
CALL'D,
THREE HOURS AFTER
MARRIAGE.

Written by a Person of Distinction in
L O N D O N,

To his Friend in the County of *Cornwal*.

With a Letter, giving an Account of the
Origin of the Quarrel between CIBBER,
POPE, and GAY.



A
K E Y
TO THE
NEW COMEDY, &c.

To Sir H. M.

My Friend,

You have sent me a long letter to persuade me to an undertaking I cannot think myself capable of executing; therefore, I must call it worse to me than an Egyptian bondage! My frequenting the Theatre (you say) I make my favourite amusement—I confess it—I think it a rational, instructive, and most pleasurable one, of all those this great city affords: Where can a man pass three hours of his idle time better? however, I never enter the house as a critick, and therefore find myself unequal to the task you have imposed upon me; yet notwithstanding, I will venture. But as you make use of this old sentence in your letter,

Ut clavis partam, sic pandit Epistolæ pectum.

I shall divide (as parsons do their pulpit orations) my matter into three parts. First then I shall give you my own thoughts, which I believe concur with at least three parts of the audience. So I shall unlock (according to your motto) my breast, and tell you all I know or think concerning this affair.

2dly. I intend to let you know as much as I do; at least, all the persons that are satiriz'd in this merry drama.

3dly. And lastly, without the least favour, I shall discover according to my judgment, from whence they have borrowed, or bordered upon any likeness from any other dramattick piece within my knowledge.

Now as to the FIRST article. The expectation of all lovers of the drama, were rais'd to the highest pitch, from the great reputation of the authors, (the Triumvir, as they were call'd) Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot. I went to the Theatre the first night, but could not find the least room; every door that was opened to me, diffus'd more heat than a baker's oven, or the mouth of a glass-house. The next morning, I stroll'd to several coffee-houses, where I knew the wits and criticks met like surgeons, to dissect the body of any new piece; but I found more opinions among them, than there are sectaries in the world: So I resolv'd to venture a sweating the next evening, and be

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my own judge. When I came to the Theatre, I found it crowded as the night before, but fortunately got a seat in the boxes among some of my acquaintance.

Wilk's spoke the prologue with his usual vivacity and applause! but he had no sooner ended, and thrown the fool's cap on the stage, [D] but the storm began, and the criticks musick of cat-calls join'd in the chorus.—The play was acted like a ship tost in a tempest; yet notwithstanding, through those clouds of confusion and uproar, I, as one of the neutral powers, could discover a great many passages that gave me much satisfaction; and while the inimitable Oldfield was speaking the epilogue, (who performed the character of Mrs. Townley, the doctor's wife) the storm subsided—And to speak poetically, my friend—

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The billows seem'd to slumber on the shore.

[D] See the two last lines of the prologue.

But when the play was given out for the third night, (tho' the benefit of the author was not mention'd) the roar burst out again, like sudden thunder from two meeting clouds; but I with pleasure observ'd, the roar of applause overcame and triumph'd.

I went the third night to the pit, where I saw the comedy perform'd to a numerous and polite audience with general applause! as for my own particular part, I was extremely delighted. Thus have I unlock'd my own sentiments concerning this three hours after marriage, and expos'd them naked before you. And so ends the first promised article of my Key—Now I shall proceed to the

SECOND, *viz.* The persons that are struck at in this drama (which has opened so many mouths against it) and the cause which drew the satirical lash upon them.

Poets, that are inspir'd by Apollo are so quickly fir'd, that the least touch sets them in a blaze. The Triumvir had been inform'd, that Dr. Fossile, or Dr. Woodward, which you please; (for Dr. Woodward they mean by Dr. Fossile) had very concisely affronted them all three in one speech, *viz.* Pope's essay on criticism, was plundered from Vida—Gays pastoral lucubrations, were built upon Spencer, and Brown's Britania's-pastorals, published in the year 1613—and Arbuthnot could never be eminent in surgery, since he never study'd at Paris or Leyden; for in Scotland, he could learn nothing, but to cure the itch. So Fossile appears as the principal character in this ludicrous drama: He gain'd that title tis said, by asking a man digging in a gravel-pit—if he ever met with any Fossils? the man mistaking the Word, reply'd—no, nor Spiggot's master; for I believe this gravel-pit was never an ale-cellar yet. Thus have I given you all the intelligence I can, why Dr Woodward is Dr. Fossile in this comedy.

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The other two physicians next in the dramatis personæ, do not, I believe, mean any particular persons, only to satirize pretenders, and you know we have too many that kill without license.

Sir Tremendous is meant for that snarling, ill-natur'd critick, Dennis, who fell so critically upon Addison, with his billingsgate remarks on Cato! a growler, who never yet lik'd any child of fancy but his own! and I must declare, all of his offspring that I have seen, are as ill-shap'd, and as hard-favour'd as the parent that begot 'em: He swells like an invenom'd reptile, at any thing that gives pleasure to the rest of the world, while he only torments himself; therefore he has truly gain'd the true name of [Heautontimerumenos](#).

The two extraordinary lovers, Plotwell, and Underplot; there are so many of their resemblance in this great town, that we may call them [knights of the shires, who represent them all](#).

The two players by their different manner of speaking, by those whoever convers'd with them, might be easily found to mean Wilk's and Booth.

Now we have open'd our lock, and set to view all our men display'd in our three hours after marriage, I shall proceed to the women, which are but two pointed at in the drama, whatever may occur in the body of the play, which I shall refer to the last article of my discourse. (*do not I my friend talk like your chaplain in the country! on the day between saturday and monday?*)

Mrs. Townley, the heroine of our play, I am inform'd, does not suit the character of Fossile's real wife in the least; for tis said they cannot slander that poor woman with any other failing, than that thing so much out of fashion call'd virtue; which seems as ridiculous as if a woman of quality should come to court to a ball on a birth day, with a black-bever high-crown-hat on: But they say [another eminent physician's wife sat for that picture; and the painters have done her justice in all but the catastrophe; for the poor man has her still, nor feels he yet any pain in the forehead; therefore shall be nameless](#), for I think it hard, a man's head should be laden, for the lightness of his wife's heels.

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Phœbe Clinket; I am a little griev'd to say, reflects a little on a lady of your acquaintance, the Countess of W—sea, who is so much affected with that itch of versifying, that she has implements for writing, in every room in her house that she frequents. You and I know, Gay has many obligations to that lady, therefore, out of justice and good manners ought to have spar'd her. But poets provok'd, are as bad as hornets; they care not who they sting! and I think the motto to the thistle, (the arms of North-Britain) *Nemo me impune lacessit*, given by James V. of Scotland, is not an improper one for a poet—That unlucky lady was heard to say,—*Gays trivia show'd he was more proper to walk before a chair, than to ride in one*. This sarcasm was the cause, why the poor Countess is thrust among such a pack of motley figures on the stage. As Hamlet says by the players; "You had better have a poets good word, than a bad epitaph after

your death." I must confess a poor revenge upon a woman; and a revenge of this kind on any of the soft sex, is below the dignity of man. I am of the poets opinion, who says—

"Too noble for revenge! which still we find
"The weakest frailty of a feeble mind;
"Ungenerous passion! and for man too base—

Thus my friend have I finish'd my 2d article, and proceed to the THIRD and last, which shall be to consider the play, and remark every passage that borders on any other in the dramatic way, but not with the ill-natur'd design of a critick.

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The very first scene of the play, puts me in mind of the first entrance of Morose, with his epicæne in Ben Johnson's silent woman; and several other scenes in this *Three Hours after Marriage*, convinces me the authors had that celebrated comedy often in view. But Fossile in his first speech where he says—

"I now proclaim a solemn suspension of arms between medicine and diseases; Be this day sacred to my love." Puts me strongly in mind of Jupiter's ending the first act of Dryden's amphytrion: and I doubt not, but the author had the same thought with me.

"Let human kind their sovereign's leisure wait,
"Love is this night my great affair of state:
"Let this one night on providence be void:
"All Jove for once, is on himself employ'd.

In the next page Mrs. Townley says—

Marriage, is not to be undertaken wantonly like brute beasts. Do you not think this following speech of Truwits to Morose upon his sudden marriage, was not the father of Mrs. Townley's speech.

"Wou'd you go to bed so soon? a man of your head and hair should owe more to the reverend ceremony, and not mount the marriage-bed like a town-bull, &c.

The messages from his patients, I like the least of any thing in the whole play, tho' it is a just satire on those people of rank, that dare not be well without the advice of their physician: Yet I am angry at the countess of Hippokekoana, who is no other than the good dutchess of M—n—th, who generally took an emetick once a week. This lady had the misfortune to break her thigh-bone by a fall, but her modesty was so great, she would not allow the surgeons to apply any remedy; but by their advice, women took their office upon them, but performed it so ill, that the poor lady must go lame to her tomb. The annual day, on which her illustrious husband lost his head, she fasts the four and twenty hours: a rare example of conjugal-love! But indeed something of this whole scene may be picked out of *Moliere*.

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In the scene between Tremendous, Clinket and the Players; that critick talks in the usual stile of *Dennis*—But in this speech of—

There is not in all this sodom of ignorance, ten righteous criticks—The triumvir makes a little too free with the old testament.

Those letters that are given to the doctor in disguise of his footman, are something like several passages in Moliere's *Cecu imaginaire*. That sign'd *Wyburn*, I believe I need not inform you, is the most noted bawd in London. The character of Lubomirski, may be found (at least something like it) in *Lopez de Vega*; but his water of virginity, you may find something very like that in a play call'd the *Changeling*, written by Middleton and Rowley in conjunction, printed 1653.

Their Mummy may be found in a little piece in the *Theatre Italien*, call'd the mummies of Egypt; and I believe the Nile furnish'd the Crocodile.

I begin to be tir'd my friend, and, therefore let me tell you, Mrs. Townley proving no wife to Fossile, may put you in mind of *Ben Johnson's* silent woman, and *Congreve's* old batchelor.

But what of all this! who would search for what I have done, but such a compliant puppy as myself, to please one who does not care what trouble I take; but for taking hints from the French, Spanish, or any of our own celebrated authors, especially if they are improved upon, as in justice these are. I will not esteem a crime—How many whole plays have we translated from the celebrated *Moliere*, that every winter gives pleasure to a British audience? I shall never ask my cook of what ingredients my dishes are compos'd, so my viands are wholesome and well relish'd: And this *Three Hours after Marriage*, in my opinion, had not the satire been pointed at particular people, might have furnis'd out a repast for many winters Theatric nights.

A LETTER, &c.

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To the Publisher.

SIR,

I Desire you will publish this short account I send you, if you think fit, since it cannot more properly be tacked to any other work—It is wrote by a person who is still alive, and tho' a woman,

intimate with the poets of this century, and consequently with most of the theatrical persons worthy notice; therefore I have sent you a careful copy from the original, by the gentleman's consent it was wrote to.

A LETTER, giving an Account of the Origin of the Quarrel between *Cibber, Pope, and Gay.*

SIR,

You tell me, it is matter of great surprize to you, that Pope like a vicious horse, has so often flung out at the Laureat, whose apology for his life and comedies you so much admire. Women, depend on it, Sir Thomas, keep up a little vanity, even in the decline of life, as well as you men; and you will certainly think so, when I tell you I can unravel all the true reasons, and sources of that affair.—I have often informed you, my intimacy with Mrs. Oldfield brought me the freedom of the theatre, as well at rehearsals in the morning, as the use of her box at night. I accomany'd her almost every morning to the *Three Hours after Marriage*. This comedy was the source of that bitterness, and keen-cutting satire that Pope expresses against Cibber in all his writings. At the rehearsal of this piece, no two could express more amity; and the former was often heard to say, with his other two associates, Arbuthnot and Gay: "Cibber, in teaching the comedians their parts, had struck out infinitely more humour than they themselves conceiv'd, or even meant; and I heard Gay say"—

"We dug the oar, but he refin'd the gold."

Which was plainly owning, they all three had a hand in mixing the ingredients for this theatric pudding.

We shall give the first appearance of Pope's resentment, in Mr. Cibber's own words, in his letter to Pope; and then relate another passage the laureat has omitted.

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"The play of the Rehearsal, which had lain some few years dormant, being by his present majesty (then Prince of Wales) commanded to be reviv'd, the part of Bayes fell to my share. To this character, there always had been allow'd such ludicrous liberties of observation, upon any thing new or remarkable in the state of the stage, as Mr. Bayes should think proper to take. Much about this time the *Three Hours after Marriage* had been acted, which Mr. Baye's as usual had a fling at, which in itself as no jest, unless the audience would please to make it one. In this play, two coxcombs being in love with a virtuoso's wife; to get unsuspected access to her, ingenuously sent themselves as two presented rarities to the husband, the one swath'd up like an Egyptian Mummy, and the other slyly cover'd in the paste board skin of a Crocodile: Upon which poetical expedient, Mr. Bayes, when the two kings of Brentford came down from the clouds into the throne again; instead of what my part directed me to say, I made use of these words, *viz.* Now Sir, this revolution, I had some thoughts of introducing by a quite different contrivance; but my design taking air, some of your sharp wits I found, had made use of it before me; otherwise, I intended to have stolen one of them in, in the shape of a mummy, and the other, in that of a crocodile. The audience by their roar of applause, show'd their approbation: But why am I answerable for that? I did not lead them by any reflection of my own. But this it seems was so heinously taken by Mr. Pope, that in the swellings of his heart after the play was over, he came behind the scenes with his lips pale, and voice trembling, to call me to account for the insult, and, accordingly fell upon me with all the foul language, that a wit out of his senses, could be capable of—*How durst I have the impudence to treat any gentlemen in that manner?* &c., &c., &c. Now let the reader judge by this concern, who was the true mother of the child—When he was almost choak'd with the foam of his passion, I was enough recovered to make him (as near as I can remember) this reply—*viz.* Mr. Pope, you are so particular a man, that I must be asham'd to return your language as I ought to do; but since you have attacked me in so monstrous a manner, this you may depend upon, that as long as the play continues to be acted, I will never fail to repeat the same words over and over again. Now, as he accordingly found I kept my word for several nights following, I am afraid he has since thought, that his pen was a sharper weapon than his tongue, to trust his revenge with; and, however just cause this may be for his doing so; it is, at least, the only cause my conscience can charge me with.

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So far has Mr. Cibber thought fit to relate of this affair, and no farther, which is strictly true: But the laureat in this account of the first failing of Mr. Popes friendship, makes no mention of what pass'd between him and Mr. Gay, the fourth evening, after his sparring with Mr. Pope: Perhaps, the death of Gay prevail'd on him to be silent, or perhaps, that author, never having publicly attack'd him, might be his motive for not mentioning the affair.

Thus it was, Mr Pope's frail form not being cut out for a hero, spirited up Mr. Gay, as a party concerned in the suppos'd affront; and accordingly, the fourth night, after Pope's ill success, Gay, like a valiant champion, came behind the scenes to attack Bayes at the head of his new rais'd forces: A dangerous undertaking, since, he might have seen, if rage had not blinded him, several horse, rang'd on each side the field of battle, ready for the riders to mount, at the first call of the trumpet—most of the forces were in their tents, waiting the word of command. But *Bayes*, the general, already prepar'd, was gone from his pavilion, and reconnoitring the numerous spectators—that is without a metaphor: Cibber with his glove rais'd up to his eyes, (his usual custom) was observing the audience about half an hour after five o'clock (the play beginning in drury-lane axactly at six) when Gay accosted him. We shall wave the short dialogue; but only observe that great poets are as well vers'd in the vulgar language, as well as the sublime, and perhaps, in their anger show as little politeness, as those educated in the boarding school of billing's-gate. But at

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last Gays passion grew ungovernable; he with his arm rais'd high, was going to discharge a ponderous blow upon Baye's, but a stander by disarmed him, and prevented the ignominious blow. They then seiz'd each other, grappled hard, and a cuff or two were exchang'd on both sides—Gay having the advantage of youth, and strength, threw Bayes down, yet he bravely drag'd his foe down with him in his fall: But the affair growing a little too serious, the combatants were parted, without bloodshed, save that Bayes got a small scratch upon the nose, which the piece of wet brown paper, (a property of his part) decently conceal'd from the spectators. It is certain, one of those that endeavoured to part them, got a most severe broken shin from one of them; so that we may be assur'd they *kick'd* as well as *cuff'd*. However this combat did not last so long as it takes up in the relation. Bayes's wig went once more under the correction of the barber, and the play began at the stated time. We cannot call this by the pompous name of Battle, but simply skirmishing; but as Gay was obliged to quit the field, *Bayes* may in some sort be termed victor; however, he triumph'd with his mummy and crocodile that night, but dropt it afterwards, the jest growing stale. Mr. Pope's apparition to Mr. Cibber on this occasion was known to very few, but this of Mr. Gay was the common town and table-talk for some time, kept up by the grub-street wits that made many a hearty meal upon it, ('till something more in season threw it out of the bill of fare.) It is manifest, this truffling beginning put an end to Pope's friendship for Cibber if he really had any; and the continuance of his enmity, for near thirty years, is no mark of humanity. It is accounted unmanly and mean, to give a person repeated strokes, when he has not spirit enough to resent the first; and yet that excellent poet, had so much bitterness in his sweet wit, (if we may be allowed to say so,) that to many it palls the taste. The reader in this supplement, will not find Cibber's name once mentioned: The reason is apparent; he had not done any thing to provoke; but since the year of the three Hours after Marriage, (1717) he has a dart at him in almost every thing he publishes—In his epistle to doctor Arbuthnot he plainly says—(mentioning a play he was desired to recommend to the stage)

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There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,
Cibber and I, are luckily no friends.

And yet it is well known, Mr. Cibber never made the least return, till his letter to Pope 1742, and then, he declar'd to many of his friends, he did it, because he had no other business on his hands, and that he might not be forgot before he was dead. Of all the foibles Mr. Cibber might be guilty of, those that are conversant with him, know malice, envy or slander, are not in the composition.

When a person informed him, Pope was no more; he seem'd much concern'd, and reply'd, I am griev'd for the loss of so great a man; I was never his enemy, and for those spots he seem'd to dash on me, his admirable wit made me overlook them all—and I am convinced, he sometimes wrote against the sentiments of his heart. Nay we are informed, Pope was heard to say in his last sickness—

"My satires against Cibber, are not my last repented faults."

But we are not willing to part with this Three Hours after Marriage, without relating an odd accident, that happened the 4th night of that play; it may be called a scene of distress, in a pantomime that befell an unlucky lover; for it was all in dumb show: We are sure, it created more vociferous mirth in the spectators, than any other passage of wit or satire; and the enemies to the Triumvir, declared it was the best thing in the whole piece. Had Hogarth been present (as he might have been) his inimitable pencil would, have stronger ideas, of the comic distress, than any description can do: But, perhaps, contemplating the scene may strengthen the readers imagination.

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Cibber, was the mummy, curiously wrapt and folded with proper bandages, painted with false Egyptian Hieroglyphics, but however false the heraldry, his arms were at liberty. The droll facetious Penkethman, was that amphibious devourer, the crocodile, where the painter, the tailor, with other artificers had us'd their utmost skill: The monster's two foremost legs, were fitted to his arms, and Penky's legs, serv'd for those of the monster. He made a formidable figure as he crawl'd in, with his great head, and long tail; for, tho' he was ordered to be carry'd as a stuff'd monster, he would creep, as crocodiles should do on dry land: When he stood upright, his face peep'd from the belly of the monster; form'd monstrously to charm indeed! The case that brought in the mummy-lover, was plac'd in the center of the stage behind, and the door, or, open part, stood facing the audience upright—While they were employ'd in their courtship, displaying their charms as lovers; Penkethman, the crocodile, boasting much in the beauty of his long tail, and, traversing the stage, unfortunately made such a parade with it, that he threw down Sarsnet (the attendant and confidant of Mrs. Townley) flat upon her back, where she discovered more linnen than other habitments, and, more skin and flesh than linnen, this began the first uproar in the audience. The persons of the drama upon the stage, strove to screen the accident as much as they could, and the crocodile, Penkethman, (whose face was a farce) rising from giving his assistance *to the fallen maid*; unluckily, his back encountered the case for the mummy, which stood upright, openmouth'd, to receive him, that case and crocodile fell backward with such violent noise, that the body of the crocodile lay intirely inhum'd in the case of the mummy, all absorb'd but the head and tail of the monster; and the rapidity of the fall, had so forcibly jamm'd all that appertain'd to Pinky's fair form, that all the strength and skill of twenty people running to the assistance of the monster, could not disengage him, till Pallas in the likeness of hammers, saws, chissels, and other implements in the hands of those that knew their use, releas'd him. This scene took more than half an hour in the action; with what roar of applause the reader must form in his own Imagination. Many of the audience the next night, made an interruption of some minutes, to have the scene repeated, which so much allarm'd poor Sarsnet, that she run off the

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stage extremely frightened, which provok'd a peal of laughter from the spectators.

You see sir, it is some danger, to give a woman room to talk; but I'll make an end with Bromias's last speech in the second act of *Amphytrion*, viz.

"The tongue is the last moving thing about a woman.



PUBLICATIONS OF THE AUGUSTAN REPRINT SOCIETY

First Year (1946-47)

Numbers 1-6 out of print.

Second Year (1947-1948)

7. John Gay's *The Present State of Wit* (1711); and a section on Wit from *The English Theophrastus* (1702).

8. Rapin's *De Carmine Pastoralis*, translated by Creech (1684).

9. T. Hanmer's (?) *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* (1736).

10. Corbyn Morris' *Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, etc.* (1744).

11. Thomas Purney's *Discourse on the Pastoral* (1717).

12. *Essays on the Stage*, selected, with an Introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch.

Third Year (1948-1949)

13. Sir John Falstaff (pseud.), *The Theatre* (1720).

14. Edward Moore's *The Gamester* (1753).

15. John Oldmixon's *Reflections on Dr. Swift's Letter to Harley* (1712); and Arthur Mainwaring's *The British Academy* (1712).

16. Nevil Payne's *Fatal Jealousy* (1673).

17. Nicholas Rowe's *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare* (1709).

18. "Of Genius," in *The Occasional Paper*, Vol. III, No. 10 (1719); and Aaron Hill's Preface to *The Creation* (1720).

Fourth Year (1949-1950)

19. Susanna Centlivre's *The Busie Body* (1709).

20. Lewis Theobald's *Preface to The Works of Shakespeare* (1734).

21. Out of print.

22. Samuel Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749) and Two *Rambler* papers (1750).

23. John Dryden's *His Majesties Declaration Defended* (1681).

24. Out of print.

Fifth Year (1950-1951)

25. Thomas Baker's *The Fine Lady's Airs* (1709).
26. Charles Macklin's *The Man of the World* (1792).
27. Out of print.
28. John Evelyn's *An Apologie for the Royal Party* (1659); and *A Panegyric to Charles the Second* (1661).
29. Daniel Defoe's *A Vindication of the Press* (1718).
30. Essays on Taste from John Gilbert Cooper's *Letters Concerning Taste*, 3rd edition (1757), & John Armstrong's *Miscellanies* (1770).

Sixth Year (1951-1952)

31. Thomas Gray's *An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard* (1751); and *The Eton College Manuscript*.
32. Prefaces to Fiction; Georges de Scudéry's Preface to *Ibrahim* (1674), etc.
33. Henry Gally's *A Critical Essay on Characteristic-Writings* (1725).
34. Thomas Tyers' *A Biographical Sketch of Dr. Samuel Johnson* (1785).
35. James Boswell, Andrew Erskine, and George Dempster. *Critical Strictures on the New Tragedy of Elvira, Written by Mr. David Mallock* (1763).
36. Joseph Harris's *The City Bride* (1696).

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Seventh Year (1952-1953)

37. Thomas Morrison's *A Pindarick Ode on Painting* (1767).
38. John Phillips' *A Satyr Against Hypocrites* (1655).
39. Thomas Warton's *A History of English Poetry*.
40. Edward Bysshe's *The Art of English Poetry* (1708).
41. Bernard Mandeville's *A Letter to Dion* (1732).
42. Prefaces to Four Seventeenth-Century Romances.

Eighth Year (1953-1954)

43. John Baillie's *An Essay on the Sublime* (1747).
44. Mathias Casimire Sarbiewski's *The Odes of Casimire*, Translated by G. Hils (1646).
45. John Robert Scott's *Dissertation on the Progress of the Fine Arts*.
46. Selections from Seventeenth Century Songbooks.
47. Contemporaries of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*.
48. Samuel Richardson's Introduction to *Pamela*.

Ninth Year (1954-1955)

49. Two St. Cecilia's Day Sermons (1696-1697).
50. Hervey Aston's *A Sermon Before the Sons of the Clergy*, (1745).
51. Lewis Maidwell's *An Essay upon the Necessity and Excellency of Education* (1705).
52. Pappity Stampoy's *A Collection of Scotch Proverbs* (1663).
53. Urian Oakes' *The Sovereign Efficacy of Divine Providence* (1682).
54. Mary Davys' *Familiar Letters Betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady* (1725).

Tenth Year (1955-1956)

55. Samuel Say's *An Essay on the Harmony, Variety, and Power of Numbers* (1745).
56. *Theologia Ruris, sive Schola & Scala Naturae* (1686).
57. Out of print.
58. Eighteenth-Century Book Illustrations.

59. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. I, Comedies, Part I.
60. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. I, Comedies, Part II.

Eleventh Year (1956-1957)

61. Elizabeth Elstob's *An Apology for the Study of Northern Antiquities* (1715).
62. *Two Funeral Sermons* (1635).
63. *Parodies of Ballad Criticism* (1711-1787).
64. *Prefaces to Three Eighteenth-Century Novels* (1708, 1751, 1797).
65. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. II, Histories, Part I.
66. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. II, Histories, Part II.

Twelfth Year (1957-1958)

67. Henry Fielding's *The Voyages of Mr. Job Vinegar* (1740).
68. Elkanah Settle's *The Notorious Impostor* (1692) and *Diego Redivivus* (1692).
69. *An Historical View of the ... Political Writers in Great Britain* (1740).
70. G.W., *Magazine, or Animadversions on the English Spelling* (1703).
71. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. III, Tragedies, Part I.
72. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. III, Tragedies, Part II.

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Thirteenth Year (1958-1959)

73. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. III, Tragedies, Part III.
74. *Seventeenth-Century Tales of the Supernatural*.
75. John Joyne, *A Journal* (1679).
76. André Dacier. *Preface to Aristotle's Art of Poetry* (1705).
77-78. David Hartley, *Various Conjectures on the Perception, Motion, and Generation of Ideas* (1746).

Fourteenth Year (1959-1960)

79. William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke's *Poems* (1660).
80. [P. Whalley's] *An Essay on the Manner of Writing History* (1746).
81. Two Burlesques of Lord Chesterfield's Letters *The Graces* (1774) *The Fine Gentleman's Etiquette* (1776).
82. Henry Fuseli's *Remarks on the Writings and Conduct of J. J. Rousseau* (1767).
83. *Sawney and Colley* (1742) and other Pope Pamphlets.
84. Richard Savage's *An Author To Be Lett* (1729).

Fifteenth Year (1960-1961)

- 85-86. *Essays on the Theatre from Eighteenth-Century Periodicals*. Selected, with an introduction, by John Loftis. [double issue]
87. Daniel Defoe, *Of Captain Misson and his Crew* (1728). Introduction by Maximillian E. Novak.
88. Samuel Butler, *Poems*. Selected, with an introduction, by Alexander C. Spence.
89. Henry Fielding, *Ovid's Art of Love* (1760). Introduction by Claude E. Jones.
90. Henry Needler, *Works* (1728). Selected, with an introduction, by Marcia Allentuck.

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Publications for 1961-1962

John Gay, Alexander Pope, and John Arbuthnot, *Three Hours After Marriage* (1717). Introduction by John Harrington Smith. [double issue]

John Norris, *Cursory Reflections Upon a Book Call'd, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). Introduction by Gilbert D. McEwen.

An. Collins, *Divine Songs and Meditations* (1653). Introduction by Stanley Stewart.

An Essay on the *New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding* (1751). Introduction by Alan D. McKillop.

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