

to be used like an overgrown schoolboy, as I am by you. Do you think no one hath any understanding, unless he hath been about at court? Pox! the world is come to a fine pass indeed, if we are all fools, except a parcel of round-heads and Hanover rats. Pox! I hope the times are a coming when we shall make fools of them, and every man shall enjoy his own. That's all, sister; and every man shall enjoy his own. I hope to zee it, sister, before the Hanover rats have eat up all our corn, and left us nothing but turneps to feed upon."—"I protest, brother," cries she, "you are now got beyond my understanding. Your jargon of turneps and Hanover rats is to me perfectly unintelligible."—"I believe," cries he, "you don't care to hear o'em; but the country interest may succeed one day or other for all that."—"I wish," answered the lady, "you would think a little of your daughter's interest; for, believe me, she is in greater danger than the nation."—"Just now," said he, "you chid me for thinking on her, and would ha' her left to you."—"And if you will promise to interpose no more," answered she, "I will, out of my regard to my niece, undertake the charge."—"Well, do then," said the squire, "for you know I always agreed, that women are the properest to manage women."

Mrs. Western then departed, muttering something with an air of disdain, concerning women and management of the nation. She immediately repaired to Sophia's apartment, who was now, after a day's confinement, released again from her captivity,

## BOOK VII

## CHAPTER I

## A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE WORLD AND THE STAGE

THE world hath been often compared to the theatre; and many grave writers, as well as the poets, have considered human life as a great drama, resembling, in almost every particular, those scenical representations which Thespis is first reported to have invented, and which have been since received with so much approbation and delight in all polite countries.

This thought hath been carried so far, and is become so general, that some words proper to the theatre, and which were at first metaphorically applied to the world, are now indiscriminately and literally spoken of both; thus stage and scene are by common use grown as familiar to us, when we speak of life in general, as when we confine ourselves to dramatic performances: and when transactions behind the curtain are mentioned, St. James's is more likely to occur to our thoughts than Drury-lane.

It may seem easy enough to account for all this, by reflecting that the theatrical stage is nothing more than a representation, or, as Aristotle calls it, an imitation of what really exists; and hence, perhaps, we might fairly pay a very high compliment to those who by their writings or actions have been so capable of imitating life, as to have their pictures in a manner confounded with, or mistaken for, the originals.

But, in reality, we are not so fond of paying compliments to these people, whom we use as children frequently do the instruments of their amusement; and have much more pleasure in hissing and buffeting them, than in admiring their excellence. There are many other reasons which have induced us to see this analogy between the world and the stage.

Some have considered the larger part of mankind in the light of actors, as personating characters no more their own, and to which in fact they have no better title, than the player hath to be in earnest thought the king or emperor whom he represents. Thus the hypocrite may be said to be a player; and indeed the Greeks called them both by one and the same name.

The brevity of life hath likewise given occasion to this comparison. So the immortal Shakspear—

———Life's a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more.

For which hackneyed quotation I will make the reader amends by a very noble one, which few, I believe, have read. It is taken from a poem called the Deity, published about nine years ago, and long since buried in oblivion; a proof that good books, no more than good men, do always survive the bad.

From Thee<sup>1</sup> all human actions take their springs,  
The rise of empires and the fall of kings!  
See the vast Theatre of Time display'd,  
While o'er the scene succeeding heroes tread!  
With pomp the shining images succeed,  
What leaders triumph, and what monarchs bleed!  
Perform the parts thy providence assign'd,  
Their pride, their passions, to thy ends inclin'd:  
Awhile they glitter in the face of day,  
Then at thy nod the phantoms pass away;  
No traces left of all the busy scene,  
But that remembrance says—*The things have been!*

In all these, however, and in every other similitude of life to the theatre, the resemblance hath been always taken from the stage only. None, as I remember, have at all considered the audience at this great drama.

But as Nature often exhibits some of her best performances to a very full house, so will the behaviour of her spectators no less admit the above-mentioned comparison than that of her actors. In this vast theatre of time are seated the friend and the critic; here are claps and shouts, hisses and groans; in short, everything which was ever seen or heard at the Theatre-Royal.

Let us examine this in one example; for instance, in the behaviour of the great audience on that scene which Nature was pleased to exhibit in the twelfth chapter of the preceding book, where she introduced Black George running away with the £500 from his friend and benefactor.

Those who sat in the world's upper gallery treated that incident, I am well convinced, with their usual vociferation; and every term of scurrilous reproach was most probably vented on that occasion.

If we had descended to the next order of spectators, we should

<sup>1</sup> The Deity.

have found an equal degree of abhorrence, though less of noise and scurrility; yet here the good women gave Black George to the devil, and many of them expected every minute that the cloven-footed gentleman would fetch his own.

The pit, as usual, was no doubt divided; those who delight in heroic virtue and perfect character objected to the producing such instances of villany, without punishing them very severely for the sake of example. Some of the author's friends cried, "Look'e, gentlemen, the man is a villain, but it is nature for all that." And all the young critics of the age, the clerks, apprentices, &c., called it low, and fell a groaning.

As for the boxes, they behaved with their accustomed politeness. Most of them were attending to something else. Some of those few who regarded the scene at all, declared he was a bad kind of man; while others refused to give their opinion, till they had heard that of the best judges.

Now we, who are admitted behind the scenes of this great theatre of Nature (and no author ought to write anything besides dictionaries and spelling-books who hath not this privilege), can censure the action, without conceiving any absolute detestation of the person, whom perhaps Nature may not have designed to act an ill part in all her dramas; for in this instance life most exactly resembles the stage, since it is often the same person who represents the villain and the hero; and he who engages your admiration to-day will probably attract your contempt to-morrow. As Garrick, whom I regard in tragedy to be the greatest genius the world hath ever produced, sometimes condescends to play the fool; so did Scipio the Great, and Lælius the Wise, according to Horace, many years ago; nay, Cicero reports them to have been "incredibly childish." These, it is true, played the fool, like my friend Garrick, in jest only; but several eminent characters have, in numberless instances of their lives, played the fool egregiously in earnest; so far as to render it a matter of some doubt whether their wisdom or folly was predominant; or whether they were better intitled to the applause or censure, the admiration or contempt, the love or hatred, of mankind.

Those persons, indeed, who have passed any time behind the scenes of this great theatre, and are thoroughly acquainted not only with the several disguises which are there put on, but also with the fantastic and capricious behaviour of the Passions, who are the managers and directors of this theatre (for as to Reason, the patentee, he is known to be a very idle fellow and seldom to exert himself), may most probably have learned to understand

the famous *nil admirari* of Horace, or in the English phrase, to stare at nothing.

A single bad act no more constitutes a villain in life, than a single bad part on the stage. The passions, like the managers of a playhouse, often force men upon parts without consulting their judgment, and sometimes without any regard to their talents. Thus the man, as well as the player, may condemn what he himself acts; nay, it is common to see vice sit as awkwardly on some men, as the character of Iago would on the honest face of Mr. William Mills.

Upon the whole, then, the man of candour and of true understanding is never hasty to condemn. He can censure an imperfection, or even a vice, without rage against the guilty party. In a word, they are the same folly, the same childishness, the same ill-breeding, and the same ill-nature, which raise all the clamours and uproars both in life and on the stage. The worst of men generally have the words rogue and villain most in their mouths, as the lowest of all wretches are the aptest to cry out low in the pit.

## CHAPTER II

CONTAINING A CONVERSATION WHICH MR. JONES HAD WITH HIMSELF

JONES received his effects from Mr. Allworthy's early in the morning, with the following answer to his letter:—

“SIR,

“I am commanded by my uncle to acquaint you, that as he did not proceed to those measures he had taken with you, without the greatest deliberation, and after the fullest evidence of your unworthiness, so will it be always out of your power to cause the least alteration in his resolution. He expresses great surprize at your presumption in saying you have resigned all pretensions to a young lady, to whom it is impossible you should ever have had any, her birth and fortune having made her so infinitely your superior. Lastly, I am commanded to tell you, that the only instance of your compliance with my uncle's inclinations which he requires, is, your immediately quitting this country. I cannot conclude this without offering you my advice, as a Christian, that you would seriously think of amending your

life. That you may be assisted with grace so to do, will be always the prayer of

“Your humble servant,

“W. BLIFIL.”

Many contending passions were raised in our hero's mind by this letter; but the tender prevailed at last over the indignant and irascible, and a flood of tears came seasonably to his assistance, and possibly prevented his misfortunes from either turning his head, or bursting his heart.

He grew, however, soon ashamed of indulging this remedy; and starting up, he cried, “Well, then, I will give Mr. Allworthy the only instance he requires of my obedience. I will go this moment—but whither?—why, let Fortune direct; since there is no other who thinks it of any consequence what becomes of this wretched person, it shall be a matter of equal indifference to myself. Shall I alone regard what no other—Ha! have I not reason to think there is another?—one whose value is above that of the whole world!—I may, I must imagine my Sophia is not indifferent to what becomes of me. Shall I then leave this only friend—and such a friend? Shall I not stay with her?—Where—how can I stay with her? Have I any hopes of ever seeing her, though she was as desirous as myself, without exposing her to the wrath of her father, and to what purpose? Can I think of soliciting such a creature to consent to her own ruin? Shall I indulge any passion of mine at such a price? Shall I lurk about this country like a thief, with such intentions?—No, I disdain, I detest the thought. Farewel, Sophia; farewel, most lovely, most beloved—” Here passion stopped his mouth, and found a vent at his eyes.

And now having taken a resolution to leave the country, he began to debate with himself whither he should go. The world, as Milton phrases it, lay all before him; and Jones, no more than Adam, had any man to whom he might resort for comfort or assistance. All his acquaintance were the acquaintance of Mr. Allworthy; and he had no reason to expect any countenance from them, as that gentleman had withdrawn his favour from him. Men of great and good characters should indeed be very cautious how they discard their dependents; for the consequence to the unhappy sufferer is being discarded by all others.

What course of life to pursue, or to what business to apply himself, was a second consideration: and here the prospect was all a melancholy void. Every profession, and every trade,

required length of time, and what was worse, money; for matters are so constituted, that "nothing out of nothing" is not a truer maxim in physics than in politics; and every man who is greatly destitute of money, is on that account entirely excluded from all means of acquiring it.

At last the Ocean, that hospitable friend to the wretched, opened her capacious arms to receive him; and he instantly resolved to accept her kind invitation. To express myself less figuratively, he determined to go to sea.

This thought indeed no sooner suggested itself, than he eagerly embraced it; and having presently hired horses, he set out for Bristol to put it in execution.

But before we attend him on this expedition, we shall resort awhile to Mr. Western's, and see what further happened to the charming Sophia.

### CHAPTER III

#### CONTAINING SEVERAL DIALOGUES

THE morning in which Mr. Jones departed, Mrs. Western summoned Sophia into her apartment; and having first acquainted her that she had obtained her liberty of her father, she proceeded to read her a long lecture on the subject of matrimony; which she treated not as a romantic scheme of happiness arising from love, as it hath been described by the poets; nor did she mention any of those purposes for which we are taught by divines to regard it as instituted by sacred authority; she considered it rather as a fund in which prudent women deposit their fortunes to the best advantage, in order to receive a larger interest for them than they could have elsewhere.

When Mrs. Western had finished, Sophia answered, "That she was very incapable of arguing with a lady of her aunt's superior knowledge and experience, especially on a subject which she had so very little considered, as this of matrimony."

"Argue with me, child!" replied the other; "I do not indeed expect it. I should have seen the world to very little purpose truly, if I am to argue with one of your years. I have taken this trouble, in order to instruct you. The antient philosophers, such as Socrates, Alcibiades, and others, did not use to argue with their scholars. You are to consider me, child, as Socrates, not asking your opinion, but only informing you of mine." From

which last words the reader may possibly imagine, that this lady had read no more of the philosophy of Socrates, than she had of that of Alcibiades; and indeed we cannot resolve his curiosity as to this point.

"Madam," cries Sophia, "I have never presumed to controvert any opinion of yours; and this subject, as I said, I have never yet thought of, and perhaps never may."

"Indeed, Sophy," replied the aunt, "this dissimulation with me is very foolish. The French shall as soon persuade me that they take foreign towns in defence only of their own country, as you can impose on me to believe you have never yet thought seriously of matrimony. How can you, child, affect to deny that you have considered of contracting an alliance, when you so well know I am acquainted with the party with whom you desire to contract it?—an alliance as unnatural, and contrary to your interest, as a separate league with the French would be to the interest of the Dutch! But however, if you have not hitherto considered of this matter, I promise you it is now high time, for my brother is resolved immediately to conclude the treaty with Mr. Blifil; and indeed I am a sort of guarantee in the affair, and have promised your concurrence."

"Indeed, madam," cries Sophia, "this is the only instance in which I must disobey both yourself and my father. For this is a match which requires very little consideration in me to refuse."

"If I was not as great a philosopher as Socrates himself," returned Mrs. Western, "you would overcome my patience. What objection can you have to the young gentleman?"

"A very solid objection, in my opinion," says Sophia—"I hate him."

"Will you never learn a proper use of words?" answered the aunt. "Indeed, child, you should consult Bailey's Dictionary. It is impossible you should hate a man from whom you have received no injury. By hatred, therefore, you mean no more than dislike, which is no sufficient objection against your marrying of him. I have known many couples, who have entirely disliked each other, lead very comfortable genteel lives. Believe me, child, I know these things better than you. You will allow me, I think, to have seen the world, in which I have not an acquaintance who would not rather be thought to dislike her husband than to like him. The contrary is such out-of-fashion romantic nonsense, that the very imagination of it is shocking."

"Indeed, madam," replied Sophia, "I shall never marry a man I dislike. If I promise my father never to consent to any

marriage contrary to his inclinations, I think I may hope he will never force me into that state contrary to my own."

"Inclinations!" cries the aunt, with some warmth. "Inclinations! I am astonished at your assurance: A young woman of your age, and unmarried, to talk of inclinations! But whatever your inclinations may be, my brother is resolved; nay, since you talk of inclinations, I shall advise him to hasten the treaty. Inclinations!"

Sophia then flung herself upon her knees, and tears began to trickle from her shining eyes. She entreated her aunt, "to have mercy upon her, and not to resent so cruelly her unwillingness to make herself miserable;" often urging, "that she alone was concerned, and that her happiness only was at stake."

As a bailiff, when well authorized by his writ, having possessed himself of the person of some unhappy debtor, views all his tears without concern; in vain the wretched captive attempts to raise compassion; in vain the tender wife bereft of her companion, the little prattling boy, or frightened girl, are mentioned as inducements to reluctance. The noble bumtrap, blind and deaf to every circumstance of distress, greatly rises above all the motives to humanity, and into the hands of the gaoler resolves to deliver his miserable prey.

Not less blind to the tears, or less deaf to every entreaty of Sophia was the politic aunt, nor less determined was she to deliver over the trembling maid into the arms of the gaoler Blifil. She answered with great impetuosity, "So far, madam, from your being concerned alone, your concern is the least, or surely the least important. It is the honour of your family which is concerned in this alliance; you are only the instrument. Do you conceive, mistress, that in an intermarriage between kingdoms, as when a daughter of France is married into Spain, the princess herself is alone considered in the match? No! it is a match between two kingdoms, rather than between two persons. The same happens in great families such as ours. The alliance between the families is the principal matter. You ought to have a greater regard for the honour of your family than for your own person; and if the example of a princess cannot inspire you with these noble thoughts, you cannot surely complain at being used no worse than all princesses are used."

"I hope, madam," cries Sophia, with a little elevation of voice, "I shall never do anything to dishonour my family; but as for Mr. Blifil, whatever may be the consequence, I am resolved against him, and no force shall prevail in his favour."

Western, who had been within hearing during the greater part of the preceding dialogue, had now exhausted all his patience; he therefore entered the room in a violent passion, crying, "D—n me then if shatunt ha'un, d—n me if shatunt, that's all—that's all; d—n me if shatunt."

Mrs. Western had collected a sufficient quantity of wrath for the use of Sophia; but she now transferred it all to the squire. "Brother," said she, "it is astonishing that you will interfere in a matter which you had totally left to my negotiation. Regard to my family hath made me take upon myself to be the mediating power, in order to rectify those mistakes in policy which you have committed in your daughter's education. For, brother, it is you—it is your preposterous conduct which hath eradicated all the seeds that I had formerly sown in her tender mind. It is you yourself who have taught her disobedience."—"Blood!" cries the squire, foaming at the mouth, "you are enough to conquer the patience of the devil! Have I ever taught my daughter disobedience?—Here she stands; speak honestly, girl, did ever I bid you be disobedient to me? Have not I done everything to humour and to gratify you, and to make you obedient to me? And very obedient to me she was when a little child, before you took her in hand and spoiled her, by filling her head with a pack of court notions. Why—why—why—did I not overhear you telling her she must behave like a princess? You have made a Whig of the girl; and how should her father, or anybody else, expect any obedience from her?"—"Brother," answered Mrs. Western, with an air of great disdain, "I cannot express the contempt I have for your politics of all kinds; but I will appeal likewise to the young lady herself, whether I have ever taught her any principles of disobedience. On the contrary, niece, have I not endeavoured to inspire you with a true idea of the several relations in which a human creature stands in society? Have I not taken infinite pains to show you, that the law of nature hath enjoined a duty on children to their parents? Have I not told you what Plato says on that subject?—a subject on which you was so notoriously ignorant when you came first under my care, that I verily believe you did not know the relation between a daughter and a father."—"Tis a lie," answered Western. "The girl is no such fool, as to live to eleven years old without knowing that she was her father's relation."—"O! more than Gothic ignorance," answered the lady. "And as for your manners, brother, I must tell you, they deserve a cane."—"Why then you may gi' it me, if you think you are able," cries the squire; "nay, I

suppose your niece there will be ready enough to help you."—"Brother," said Mrs. Western, "though I despise you beyond expression, yet I shall endure your insolence no longer; so I desire my coach may be got ready immediately, for I am resolved to leave your house this very morning."—"And a good riddance too," answered he; "I can bear your insolence no longer, and you come to that. Blood! it is almost enough of itself to make my daughter undervalue my sense, when she hears you telling me every minute you despise me."—"It is impossible, it is impossible," cries the aunt; "no one can undervalue such a boor."—"Boar," answered the squire, "I am no boar; no, nor ass; no, nor rat neither, madam. Remember that—I am no rat. I am a true Englishman, and not of your Hanover breed, that have eat up the nation."—"Thou art one of those wise men," cries she, "whose nonsensical principles have undone the nation; by weakening the hands of our government at home, and by discouraging our friends and encouraging our enemies abroad."—"Ho! are you come back to your politics?" cries the squire: "as for those I despise them as much as I do a f—t." Which last words he accompanied and graced with the very action, which, of all others, was the most proper to it. And whether it was this word or the contempt exprest for her politics, which most affected Mrs. Western, I will not determine; but she flew into the most violent rage, uttered phrases improper to be here related, and instantly burst out of the house. Nor did her brother or her niece think proper either to stop or to follow her; for the one was so much possessed by concern, and the other by anger, that they were rendered almost motionless.

The squire, however, sent after his sister the same holla which attends the departure of a hare, when she is first started before the hounds. He was indeed a great master of this kind of vociferation, and had a holla proper for most occasions in life.

Women who, like Mrs. Western, know the world, and have applied themselves to philosophy and politics, would have immediately availed themselves of the present disposition of Mr. Western's mind, by throwing in a few artful compliments to his understanding at the expense of his absent adversary; but poor Sophia was all simplicity. By which word we do not intend to insinuate to the reader, that she was silly, which is generally understood as a synonymous term with simple; for she was indeed a most sensible girl, and her understanding was of the first rate; but she wanted all that useful art which females

convert to so many good purposes in life, and which, as it rather arises from the heart than from the head, is often the property of the silliest of women.

## CHAPTER IV

## A PICTURE OF A COUNTRY GENTLEWOMAN TAKEN FROM THE LIFE

MR. WESTERN having finished his holla, and taken a little breath, began to lament, in very pathetic terms, the unfortunate condition of men, who are, says he, "always whipt in by the humours of some d—n'd b— or other. I think I was hard run enough by your mother for one man; but after giving her a dodge, here's another b— follows me upon the foil; but curse my jacket if I will be run down in this manner by any o'um."

Sophia never had a single dispute with her father, till this unlucky affair of Blifil, on any account, except in defence of her mother, whom she had loved most tenderly, though she lost her in the eleventh year of her age. The squire, to whom that poor woman had been a faithful upper-servant all the time of their marriage, had returned that behaviour by making what the world calls a good husband. He very seldom swore at her (perhaps not above once a week) and never beat her: she had not the least occasion for jealousy, and was perfect mistress of her time; for she was never interrupted by her husband, who was engaged all the morning in his field exercises, and all the evening with bottle companions. She scarce indeed ever saw him but at meals; where she had the pleasure of carving those dishes which she had before attended at the dressing. From these meals she retired about five minutes after the other servants, having only stayed to drink "the king over the water." Such were, it seems, Mr. Western's orders; for it was a maxim with him, that women should come in with the first dish, and go out after the first glass. Obedience to these orders was perhaps no difficult task; for the conversation (if it may be called so) was seldom such as could entertain a lady. It consisted chiefly of hallowing, singing, relations of sporting adventures, b—d—y, and abuse of women, and of the government.

These, however, were the only seasons when Mr. Western saw his wife; for when he repaired to her bed, he was generally so drunk that he could not see; and in the sporting season he always rose from her before it was light. Thus was she perfect mistress

of her time, and had besides a coach and four usually at her command; though unhappily, indeed, the badness of the neighbourhood, and of the roads, made this of little use; for none who had set much value on their necks would have passed through the one, or who had set any value on their hours, would have visited the other. Now to deal honestly with the reader, she did not make all the return expected to so much indulgence; for she had been married against her will by a fond father, the match having been rather advantageous on her side; for the squire's estate was upward of £3000 a year, and her fortune no more than a bare £8000. Hence perhaps she had contracted a little gloominess of temper, for she was rather a good servant than a good wife; nor had she always the gratitude to return the extraordinary degree of roaring mirth, with which the squire received her, even with a good-humoured smile. She would, moreover, sometimes interfere with matters which did not concern her, as the violent drinking of her husband, which in the gentlest terms she would take some of the few opportunities he gave her of remonstrating against. And once in her life she very earnestly entreated him to carry her for two months to London, which he peremptorily denied; nay, was angry with his wife for the request ever after, being well assured that all the husbands in London are cuckolds.

For this last, and many other good reasons, Western at length heartily hated his wife; and as he never concealed this hatred before her death, so he never forgot it afterwards; but when anything in the least soured him, as a bad scenting day, or a distemper among his hounds, or any other such misfortune, he constantly vented his spleen by invectives against the deceased, saying, "If my wife was alive now, she would be glad of this."

These invectives he was especially desirous of throwing forth before Sophia; for as he loved her more than he did any other, so he was really jealous that she had loved her mother better than him. And this jealousy Sophia seldom failed of heightening on these occasions; for he was not contented with violating her ears with the abuse of her mother, but endeavoured to force an explicit approbation of all this abuse; with which desire he never could prevail upon her by any promise or threats to comply.

Hence some of my readers will, perhaps, wonder that the squire had not hated Sophia as much as he had hated her mother; but I must inform them, that hatred is not the effect of love, even through the medium of jealousy. It is, indeed, very possible for jealous persons to kill the objects of their jealousy, but not to

hate them. Which sentiment being a pretty hard morsel, and bearing something of the air of a paradox, we shall leave the reader to chew the cud upon it to the end of the chapter.

## CHAPTER V

## THE GENEROUS BEHAVIOUR OF SOPHIA TOWARDS HER AUNT

SOPHIA kept silence during the foregoing speech of her father, nor did she once answer otherwise than with a sigh; but as he understood none of the language, or, as he called it, lingo of the eyes, so he was not satisfied without some further approbation of his sentiments, which he now demanded of his daughter; telling her, in the usual way, "he expected she was ready to take the part of everybody against him, as she had always done that of the b— her mother." Sophia remaining still silent, he cried out, "What, art dumb? why dost unt speak? Was not thy mother a d—d b—to me? answer me that. What, I suppose you despise your father too, and don't think him good enough to speak to?"

"For Heaven's sake, sir," answered Sophia, "do not give so cruel a turn to my silence. I am sure I would sooner die than be guilty of any disrespect towards you; but how can I venture to speak, when every word must either offend my dear papa, or convict me of the blackest ingratitude as well as impiety to the memory of the best of mothers; for such, I am certain, my mamma was always to me?"

"And your aunt, I suppose, is the best of sisters too!" replied the squire. "Will you be so kind as to allow that she is a b—? I may fairly insist upon that, I think?"

"Indeed, sir," says Sophia, "I have great obligations to my aunt. She hath been a second mother to me."

"And a second wife to me too," returned Western; "so you will take her part too! You won't confess that she hath acted the part of the vilest sister in the world?"

"Upon my word, sir," cries Sophia, "I must belie my heart wickedly if I did. I know my aunt and you differ very much in your ways of thinking; but I have heard her a thousand times express the greatest affection for you; and I am convinced, so far from her being the worst sister in the world, there are very few who love a brother better."

"The English of all which is," answered the squire, "that I

am in the wrong. Ay, certainly. Ay, to be sure the woman is in the right, and the man in the wrong always."

"Pardon me, sir," cries Sophia. "I do not say so."

"What don't you say?" answered the father: "you have the impudence to say she's in the right: doth it not follow then of course that I am in the wrong? And perhaps I am in the wrong to suffer such a Presbyterian Hanoverian b— to come into my house. She may 'dite me of a plot for anything I know, and give my estate to the government."

"So far, sir, from injuring you or your estate," says Sophia, "if my aunt had died yesterday, I am convinced she would have left you her whole fortune."

Whether Sophia intended it or not, I shall not presume to assert; but certain it is, these last words penetrated very deep into the ears of her father, and produced a much more sensible effect than all she had said before. He received the sound with much the same action as a man receives a bullet in his head. He started, staggered, and turned pale. After which he remained silent above a minute, and then began in the following hesitating manner: "Yesterday! she would have left me her estate yesterday! would she? Why yesterday, of all the days in the year? I suppose if she dies to-morrow, she will leave it to somebody else, and perhaps out of the family."—"My aunt, sir," cries Sophia, "hath very violent passions, and I can't answer what she may do under their influence."

"You can't!" returned the father: "and pray who hath been the occasion of putting her into those violent passions? Nay, who hath actually put her into them? Was not you and she hard at it before I came into the room? Besides, was not all our quarrel about you? I have not quarrelled with sister this many years but upon your account; and now you would throw the whole blame upon me, as thof I should be the occasion of her leaving the estate out o' the family. I could have expected no better indeed; this is like the return you make to all the rest of my fondness."

"I beseech you then," cries Sophia, "upon my knees I beseech you, if I have been the unhappy occasion of this difference, that you will endeavour to make it up with my aunt, and not suffer her to leave your house in this violent rage of anger: she is a very good-natured woman, and a few civil words will satisfy her. Let me entreat you, sir."

"So I must go and ask pardon for your fault, must I?" answered Western. "You have lost the hare, and I must draw

every way to find her again? Indeed, if I was certain"—Here he stopt, and Sophia throwing in more entreaties, at length prevailed upon him; so that after venting two or three bitter sarcastical expressions against his daughter, he departed as fast as he could to recover his sister, before her equipage could be gotten ready.

Sophia then returned to her chamber of mourning, where she indulged herself (if the phrase may be allowed me) in all the luxury of tender grief. She read over more than once the letter which she had received from Jones; her muff too was used on this occasion; and she bathed both these, as well as herself, with her tears. In this situation the friendly Mrs. Honour exerted her utmost abilities to comfort her afflicted mistress. She ran over the names of many young gentlemen: and having greatly commended their parts and persons, assured Sophia that she might take her choice of any. These methods must have certainly been used with some success in disorders of the like kind, or so skilful a practitioner as Mrs. Honour would never have ventured to apply them; nay, I have heard that the college of chambermaids hold them to be as sovereign remedies as any in the female dispensary; but whether it was that Sophia's disease differed inwardly from those cases with which it agreed in external symptoms, I will not assert; but, in fact, the good waiting-woman did more harm than good, and at last so incensed her mistress (which was no easy matter) that with an angry voice she dismissed her from her presence.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONTAINING GREAT VARIETY OF MATTER

THE squire overtook his sister just as she was stepping into the coach, and partly by force, and partly by solicitations, prevailed upon her to order her horses back into their quarters. He succeeded in this attempt without much difficulty; for the lady was, as we have already hinted, of a most placable disposition, and greatly loved her brother, though she despised his parts, or rather his little knowledge of the world.

Poor Sophia, who had first set on foot this reconciliation, was now made the sacrifice to it. They both concurred in their censures on her conduct; jointly declared war against her, and directly proceeded to counsel, how to carry it on in the most

vigorous manner. For this purpose, Mrs. Western proposed not only an immediate conclusion of the treaty with Allworthy, but as immediately to carry it into execution; saying, "That there was no other way to succeed with her niece, but by violent methods, which she was convinced Sophia had not sufficient resolution to resist. By violent," says she, "I mean rather, hasty measures; for as to confinement or absolute force, no such things must or can be attempted. Our plan must be concerted for a surprize, and not for a storm."

These matters were resolved on, when Mr. Blifil came to pay a visit to his mistress. The squire no sooner heard of his arrival, than he stept aside, by his sister's advice, to give his daughter orders for the proper reception of her lover: which he did with the most bitter execrations and denunciations of judgment on her refusal.

The impetuosity of the squire bore down all before him; and Sophia, as her aunt very wisely foresaw, was not able to resist him. She agreed, therefore, to see Blifil, though she had scarce spirits or strength sufficient to utter her assent. Indeed, to give a peremptory denial to a father whom she so tenderly loved, was no easy task. Had this circumstance been out of the case, much less resolution than what she was really mistress of, would, perhaps, have served her; but it is no unusual thing to ascribe those actions entirely to fear, which are in a great measure produced by love.

In pursuance, therefore, of her father's peremptory command, Sophia now admitted Mr. Blifil's visit. Scenes like this, when painted at large, afford, as we have observed, very little entertainment to the reader. Here, therefore, we shall strictly adhere to a rule of Horace; by which writers are directed to pass over all those matters which they despair of placing in a shining light;—a rule, we conceive, of excellent use as well to the historian as to the poet; and which, if followed, must at least have this good effect, that many a great evil (for so all great books are called) would thus be reduced to a small one.

It is possible the great art used by Blifil at this interview would have prevailed on Sophia to have made another man in his circumstances her confidant, and to have revealed the whole secret of her heart to him; but she had contracted so ill an opinion of this young gentleman, that she was resolved to place no confidence in him; for simplicity, when set on its guard, is often a match for cunning. Her behaviour to him, therefore, was entirely forced, and indeed such as is generally prescribed

to virgins upon the second formal visit from one who is appointed for their husband.

But though Blifil declared himself to the squire perfectly satisfied with his reception; yet that gentleman, who, in company with his sister, had overheard all, was not so well pleased. He resolved, in pursuance of the advice of the sage lady, to push matters as forward as possible; and addressing himself to his intended son-in-law in the hunting phrase, he cried, after a loud holla, "Follow her, boy, follow her; run in, run in; that's it, honeys. Dead, dead, dead. Never be bashful, nor stand shall I, shall I? Allworthy and I can finish all matters between us this afternoon, and let us ha' the wedding to-morrow."

Blifil having conveyed the utmost satisfaction into his countenance, answered, "As there is nothing, sir, in this world which I so eagerly desire as an alliance with your family, except my union with the most amiable and deserving Sophia, you may easily imagine how impatient I must be to see myself in possession of my two highest wishes. If I have not therefore importuned you on this head, you will impute it only to my fear of offending the lady, by endeavouring to hurry on so blessed an event faster than a strict compliance with all the rules of decency and decorum will permit. But if, by your interest, sir, she might be induced to dispense with any formalities—"

"Formalities! with a pox!" answered the squire. "Pooh, all stuff and nonsense! I tell thee, she shall ha' thee to-morrow: you will know the world better hereafter, when you come to my age. Women never gi' their consent, man, if they can help it, 'tis not the fashion. If I had stayed for her mother's consent, I might have been a batchelor to this day.—To her, to her, co to her, that's it, you jolly dog. I tell thee shat ha' her to-morrow morning."

Blifil suffered himself to be overpowered by the forcible rhetoric of the squire; and it being agreed that Western should close with Allworthy that very afternoon, the lover departed home, having first earnestly begged that no violence might be offered to the lady by this haste, in the same manner as a popish inquisitor begs the lay power to do no violence to the heretic delivered over to it, and against whom the church hath passed sentence.

And, to say the truth, Blifil had passed sentence against Sophia; for, however pleased he had declared himself to Western with his reception, he was by no means satisfied, unless

it was that he was convinced of the hatred and scorn of his mistress: and this had produced no less reciprocal hatred and scorn in him. It may, perhaps, be asked, Why then did he not put an immediate end to all further courtship? I answer, for that very reason, as well as for several others equally good, which we shall now proceed to open to the reader.

Though Mr. Blifil was not of the complexion of Jones, nor ready to eat every woman he saw; yet he was far from being destitute of that appetite which is said to be the common property of all animals. With this, he had likewise that distinguishing taste, which serves to direct men in their choice of the object or food of their several appetites; and this taught him to consider Sophia as a most delicious morsel, indeed to regard her with the same desires which an ortolan inspires into the soul of an epicure. Now the agonies which affected the mind of Sophia, rather augmented than impaired her beauty; for her tears added brightness to her eyes, and her breasts rose higher with her sighs. Indeed, no one hath seen beauty in its highest lustre who hath never seen it in distress. Blifil therefore looked on this human ortolan with greater desire than when he viewed her last; nor was his desire at all lessened by the aversion which he discovered in her to himself. On the contrary, this served rather to heighten the pleasure he proposed in rifling her charms, as it added triumph to lust; nay, he had some further views, from obtaining the absolute possession of her person, which we detest too much even to mention; and revenge itself was not without its share in the gratifications which he promised himself. The rivalling poor Jones, and supplanting him in her affections, added another spur to his pursuit, and promised another additional rapture to his enjoyment.

Besides all these views, which to some scrupulous persons may seem to savour too much of malevolence, he had one prospect, which few readers will regard with any great abhorrence. And this was the estate of Mr. Western; which was all to be settled on his daughter and her issue; for so extravagant was the affection of that fond parent, that, provided his child would but consent to be miserable with the husband he chose, he cared not at what price he purchased him.

For these reasons Mr. Blifil was so desirous of the match that he intended to deceive Sophia, by pretending love to her; and to deceive her father and his own uncle, by pretending he was beloved by her. In doing this he availed himself of the piety of Thwackum, who held, that if the end proposed was religious (as

surely matrimony is), it mattered not how wicked were the means. As to other occasions, he used to apply the philosophy of Square, which taught, that the end was immaterial, so that the means were fair and consistent with moral rectitude. To say truth, there were few occurrences in life on which he could not draw advantage from the precepts of one or other of those great masters.

Little deceit was indeed necessary to be practised on Mr. Western; who thought the inclinations of his daughter of as little consequence as Blifil himself conceived them to be; but as the sentiments of Mr. Allworthy were of a very different kind, so it was absolutely necessary to impose on him. In this, however, Blifil was so well assisted by Western, that he succeeded without difficulty; for as Mr. Allworthy had been assured by her father that Sophia had a proper affection for Blifil, and that all which he had suspected concerning Jones was entirely false, Blifil had nothing more to do than to confirm these assertions; which he did with such equivocations, that he preserved a salvo for his conscience; and had the satisfaction of conveying a lie to his uncle, without the guilt of telling one. When he was examined touching the inclinations of Sophia by Allworthy, who said, "He would on no account be accessory to forcing a young lady into a marriage contrary to her own will;" he answered, "That the real sentiments of young ladies were very difficult to be understood; that her behaviour to him was full as forward as he wished it, and that if he could believe her father, she had all the affection for him which any lover could desire. As for Jones," said he, "whom I am loth to call villain, though his behaviour to you, sir, sufficiently justifies the appellation, his own vanity, or perhaps some wicked views, might make him boast of a falsehood; for if there had been any reality in Miss Western's love to him, the greatness of her fortune would never have suffered him to desert her, as you are well informed he hath. Lastly, sir, I promise you I would not myself, for any consideration, no, not for the whole world, consent to marry this young lady, if I was not persuaded she had all the passion for me which I desire she should have."

This excellent method of conveying a falsehood with the heart only, without making the tongue guilty of an untruth, by the means of equivocation and imposture, hath quieted the conscience of many a notable deceiver; and yet, when we consider that it is Omniscience on which these endeavour to

impose, it may possibly seem capable of affording only a very superficial comfort; and that this artful and refined distinction between communicating a lie, and telling one, is hardly worth the pains it costs them.

Allworthy was pretty well satisfied with what Mr. Western and Mr. Blifil told him: and the treaty was now, at the end of two days, concluded. Nothing then remained previous to the office of the priest, but the office of the lawyers, which threatened to take up so much time, that Western offered to bind himself by all manner of covenants, rather than defer the happiness of the young couple. Indeed, he was so very earnest and pressing, that an indifferent person might have concluded he was more a principal in this match than he really was; but this eagerness was natural to him on all occasions: and he conducted every scheme he undertook in such a manner, as if the success of that alone was sufficient to constitute the whole happiness of his life.

The joint importunities of both father and son-in-law would probably have prevailed on Mr. Allworthy, who brooked but ill any delay of giving happiness to others, had not Sophia herself prevented it, and taken measures to put a final end to the whole treaty, and to rob both church and law of those taxes which these wise bodies have thought proper to receive from the propagation of the human species in a lawful manner. Of which in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### A STRANGE RESOLUTION OF SOPHIA, AND A MORE STRANGE STRATAGEM OF MRS. HONOUR

THOUGH Mrs. Honour was principally attached to her own interest, she was not without some little attachment to Sophia. To say truth, it was very difficult for any one to know that young lady without loving her. She no sooner therefore heard a piece of news, which she imagined to be of great importance to her mistress, than, quite forgetting the anger which she had conceived two days before, at her unpleasant dismissal from Sophia's presence, she ran hastily to inform her of the news.

The beginning of her discourse was as abrupt as her entrance into the room. "O dear ma'am!" says she, "what doth your la'ship think? To be sure I am frightened out of my wits; and yet I thought it my duty to tell your la'ship, though perhaps it may make you angry, for we servants don't always know what

will make our ladies angry; for, to be sure, everything is always laid to the charge of a servant. When our ladies are out of humour, to be sure we must be scolded; and to be sure I should not wonder if your la'ship should be out of humour; nay, it must surprize you certainly, ay, and shock you too."—"Good Honour, let me know it without any longer preface," says Sophia; "there are few things, I promise you, which will surprize, and fewer which will shock me."—"Dear ma'am," answered Honour, "to be sure, I overheard my master talking to parson Supple about getting a licence this very afternoon; and to be sure I heard him say, your la'ship should be married to-morrow morning." Sophia turned pale at these words, and repeated eagerly, "To-morrow morning!"—"Yes, ma'am," replied the trusty waiting-woman, "I will take my oath I heard my master say so."—"Honour," says Sophia, "you have both surprized and shocked me to such a degree that I have scarce any breath or spirits left. What is to be done in my dreadful situation?"—"I wish I was able to advise your la'ship," says she. "Do advise me," cries Sophia; "pray, dear Honour, advise me. Think what you would attempt if it was your own case."—"Indeed, ma'am," cries Honour, "I wish your la'ship and I could change situations; that is, I mean without hurting your la'ship; for to be sure I don't wish you so bad as to be a servant; but because that if so be it was my case, I should find no manner of difficulty in it; for, in my poor opinion, young Squire Blifil is a charming, sweet, handsome man."—"Don't mention such stuff," cries Sophia. "Such stuff!" repeated Honour; "why, there. Well, to be sure, what's one man's meat is another man's poison, and the same is altogether as true of women."—"Honour," says Sophia, "rather than submit to be the wife of that contemptible wretch, I would plunge a dagger into my heart."—"O lud! ma'am!" answered the other, "I am sure you frighten me out of my wits now. Let me beseech your la'ship not to suffer such wicked thoughts to come into your head. O lud! to be sure I tremble every inch of me. Dear ma'am, consider, that to be denied Christian burial, and to have your corpse buried in the highway, and a stake drove through you, as farmer Halfpenny was served at Ox Cross; and, to be sure, his ghost hath walked there ever since, for several people have seen him. To be sure it can be nothing but the devil which can put such wicked thoughts into the head of anybody; for certainly it is less wicked to hurt all the world than one's own dear self; and so I have heard said by

more parsons than one. If your la'ship hath such a violent aversion, and hates the young gentleman so very bad, that you can't bear to think of going into bed to him; for to be sure there may be such antipathies in nature, and one had lieverer touch a toad than the flesh of some people."—

Sophia had been too much wrapt in contemplation to pay any great attention to the foregoing excellent discourse of her maid; interrupting her therefore, without making any answer to it, she said, "Honour, I am come to a resolution. I am determined to leave my father's house this very night; and if you have the friendship for me which you have often professed, you will keep me company."—"That I will, ma'am, to the world's end," answered Honour; "but I beg your la'ship to consider the consequence before you undertake any rash action. Where can your la'ship possibly go?"—"There is," replied Sophia, "a lady of quality in London, a relation of mine, who spent several months with my aunt in the country; during all which time she treated me with great kindness, and expressed so much pleasure in my company, that she earnestly desired my aunt to suffer me to go with her to London. As she is a woman of very great note, I shall easily find her out, and I make no doubt of being very well and kindly received by her."—"I would not have your la'ship too confident of that," cries Honour; "for the first lady I lived with used to invite people very earnestly to her house; but if she heard afterwards they were coming, she used to get out of the way. Besides, though this lady would be very glad to see your la'ship, as to be sure anybody would be glad to see your la'ship, yet when she hears your la'ship is run away from my master—" "You are mistaken, Honour," says Sophia: "she looks upon the authority of a father in a much lower light than I do; for she pressed me violently to go to London with her, and when I refused to go without my father's consent, she laughed me to scorn, called me silly country girl, and said, I should make a pure loving wife, since I could be so dutiful a daughter. So I have no doubt but she will both receive me and protect me too, till my father, finding me out of his power, can be brought to some reason."

"Well, but, ma'am," answered Honour, "how doth your la'ship think of making your escape? Where will you get any horses or conveyance? For as for your own horse, as all the servants know a little how matters stand between my master and your la'ship, Robin will be hanged before he will suffer it to go out of the stable without my master's express orders." "I

intend to escape," said Sophia, "by walking out of the doors when they are open. I thank Heaven my legs are very able to carry me. They have supported me many a long evening after a fiddle, with no very agreeable partner; and surely they will assist me in running from so detestable a partner for life."—"Oh Heaven, ma'am! doth your la'ship know what you are saying?" cries Honour; "would you think of walking about the country by night and alone?"—"Not alone," answered the lady; "you have promised to bear me company."—"Yes, to be sure," cries Honour, "I will follow your la'ship through the world; but your la'ship had almost as good be alone: for I should not be able to defend you, if any robbers, or other villains, should meet with you. Nay, I should be in as horrible a fright as your la'ship; for to be certain, they would ravish us both. Besides, ma'am, consider how cold the nights are now; we shall be frozen to death."—"A good brisk pace," answered Sophia, "will preserve us from the cold; and if you cannot defend me from a villain, Honour, I will defend you; for I will take a pistol with me. There are two always charged in the hall."—"Dear ma'am, you frighten me more and more," cries Honour: "sure your la'ship would not venture to fire it off! I had rather run any chance than your la'ship should do that."—"Why so?" says Sophia, smiling; "would not you, Honour, fire a pistol at any one who should attack your virtue?"—"To be sure, ma'am," cries Honour, "one's virtue is a dear thing, especially to us poor servants; for it is our livelihood, as a body may say: yet I mortally hate fire-arms; for so many accidents happen by them."—"Well, well," says Sophia, "I believe I may ensure your virtue at a very cheap rate, without carrying any arms with us; for I intend to take horses at the very first town we come to, and we shall hardly be attacked in our way thither. Look'ee, Honour, I am resolved to go; and if you will attend me, I promise you I will reward you to the very utmost of my power."

This last argument had a stronger effect on Honour than all the preceding. And since she saw her mistress so determined, she desisted from any further dissuasions. They then entered into a debate on ways and means of executing their project. Here a very stubborn difficulty occurred, and this was the removal of their effects, which was much more easily got over by the mistress than by the maid; for when a lady hath once taken a resolution to run to a lover, or to run from him, all obstacles are considered as trifles. But Honour was inspired by

no such motive; she had no raptures to expect, nor any terrors to shun; and besides the real value of her clothes, in which consisted a great part of her fortune, she had a capricious fondness for several gowns, and other things; either because they became her, or because they were given her by such a particular person; because she had bought them lately, or because she had had them long; or for some other reasons equally good; so that she could not endure the thoughts of leaving the poor things behind her exposed to the mercy of Western, who, she doubted not, would in his rage make them suffer martyrdom.

The ingenious Mrs. Honour having applied all her oratory to dissuade her mistress from her purpose, when she found her positively determined, at last started the following expedient to remove her clothes, viz., to get herself turned out of doors that very evening. Sophia highly approved this method, but doubted how it might be brought about. "O, ma'am," cries Honour, "your la'ship may trust that to me; we servants very well know how to obtain this favour of our masters and mistresses; though sometimes, indeed, where they owe us more wages than they can readily pay, they will put up with all our affronts, and will hardly take any warning we can give them; but the squire is none of those; and since your la'ship is resolved upon setting out to-night, I warrant I get discharged this afternoon." It was then resolved that she should pack up some linen and a night-gown for Sophia, with her own things; and as for all her other clothes, the young lady abandoned them with no more remorse than the sailor feels when he throws over the goods of others, in order to save his own life.

### CHAPTER VIII

CONTAINING SCENES OF ALTERCATION, OF NO VERY UNCOMMON KIND

Mrs. Honour had scarce sooner parted from her young lady, than something (for I would not, like the old woman in Quevedo, injure the devil by any false accusation, and possibly he might have no hand in it)—but something, I say, suggested itself to her, that by sacrificing Sophia and all her secrets to Mr. Western, she might probably make her fortune. Many considerations urged this discovery. The fair prospect of a handsome reward for so great and acceptable a service to the squire, tempted her avarice; and again, the danger of the enterprize she had under-

taken; the uncertainty of its success; night, cold, robbers, ravishers, all alarmed her fears. So forcibly did all these operate upon her, that she was almost determined to go directly to the squire, and to lay open the whole affair. She was, however, too upright a judge to decree on one side, before she had heard the other. And here, first, a journey to London appeared very strongly in support of Sophia. She eagerly longed to see a place in which she fancied charms short only of those which a raptured saint imagines in heaven. In the next place, as she knew Sophia to have much more generosity than her master, so her fidelity promised her a greater reward than she could gain by treachery. She then cross-examined all the articles which had raised her fears on the other side, and found, on fairly sifting the matter, that there was very little in them. And now both scales being reduced to a pretty even balance, her love to her mistress being thrown into the scale of her integrity, made that rather preponderate, when a circumstance struck upon her imagination which might have had a dangerous effect, had its whole weight been fairly put into the other scale. This was the length of time which must intervene before Sophia would be able to fulfil her promises; for though she was intitled to her mother's fortune at the death of her father, and to the sum of £3000 left her by an uncle when she came of age; yet these were distant days, and many accidents might prevent the intended generosity of the young lady; whereas the rewards she might expect from Mr. Western were immediate. But while she was pursuing this thought the good genius of Sophia, or that which presided over the integrity of Mrs. Honour, or perhaps mere chance, sent an accident in her way, which at once preserved her fidelity, and even facilitated the intended business.

Mrs. Western's maid claimed great superiority over Mrs. Honour on several accounts. First, her birth was higher; for her great-grandmother by the mother's side was a cousin, not far removed, to an Irish peer. Secondly, her wages were greater. And lastly, she had been at London, and had of consequence seen more of the world. She had always behaved, therefore, to Mrs. Honour with that reserve, and had always exacted of her those marks of distinction, which every order of females preserves and requires in conversation with those of an inferior order. Now as Honour did not at all times agree with this doctrine, but would frequently break in upon the respect which the other demanded, Mrs. Western's maid was not at all pleased with her company; indeed, she earnestly longed to return home to the house of her

mistress, where she domineered at will over all the other servants. She had been greatly, therefore, disappointed in the morning, when Mrs. Western had changed her mind on the very point of departure; and had been in what is vulgarly called a glouting humour ever since.

In this humour, which was none of the sweetest, she came into the room where Honour was debating with herself in the manner we have above related. Honour no sooner saw her, than she addressed her in the following obliging phrase: "Soh, madam, I find we are to have the pleasure of your company longer, which I was afraid the quarrel between my master and your lady would have robbed us of."—"I don't know, madam," answered the other, "what you mean by we and us. I assure you I do not look on any of the servants in this house to be proper company for me. I am company, I hope, for their betters every day in the week. I do not speak on your account, Mrs. Honour; for you are a civilized young woman; and when you have seen a little more of the world, I should not be ashamed to walk with you in St. James's Park."—"Hoity toity!" cries Honour, "madam is in her airs, I protest. Mrs. Honour, forsooth! sure, madam, you might call me by my sir-name; for though my lady calls me Honour, I have a sir-name as well as other folks. Ashamed to walk with me, quotha! marry, as good as yourself, I hope."—"Since you make such a return to my civility," said the other, "I must acquaint you, Mrs. Honour, that you are not so good as me. In the country, indeed, one is obliged to take up with all kind of trumpery; but in town I visit none but the women of quality. Indeed, Mrs. Honour, there is some difference, I hope, between you and me."—"I hope so too," answered Honour: "there is some difference in our ages, and—I think in our persons." Upon speaking which last words, she strutted by Mrs. Western's maid with the most provoking air of contempt; turning up her nose, tossing her head, and violently brushing the hoop of her competitor with her own. The other lady put on one of her most malicious sneers, and said, "Creature! you are below my anger; and it is beneath me to give ill words to such an audacious saucy trollop; but, hussy, I must tell you, your breeding shows the meanness of your birth as well as of your education; and both very properly qualify you to be the mean serving-woman of a country-girl."—"Don't abuse my lady," cries Honour: "I won't take that of you; she's as much better than yours as she is younger, and ten thousand times more handsomer."

Here ill luck, or rather good luck, sent Mrs. Western to see her maid in tears, which began to flow plentifully at her approach; and of which being asked the reason by her mistress, she presently acquainted her that her tears were occasioned by the rude treatment of that creature there—meaning Honour. "And, madam," continued she, "I could have despised all she said to me; but she hath had the audacity to affront your ladyship, and to call you ugly—Yes, madam, she called you ugly old cat to my face. I could not bear to hear your ladyship called ugly."—"Why do you repeat her impudence so often?" said Mrs. Western. And then turning to Mrs. Honour, she asked her "How she had the assurance to mention her name with disrespect?"—"Disrespect, madam!" answered Honour; "I never mentioned your name at all: I said somebody was not as handsome as my mistress, and to be sure you know that as well as I."—"Hussy," replied the lady, "I will make such a saucy trollop as yourself know that I am not a proper subject of your discourse. And if my brother doth not discharge you this moment, I will never sleep in his house again. I will find him out, and have you discharged this moment."—"Discharged!" cries Honour; "and suppose I am: there are more places in the world than one. Thank Heaven, good servants need not want places; and if you turn away all who do not think you handsome, you will want servants very soon; let me tell you that."

Mrs. Western spoke, or rather thundered, in answer; but as she was hardly articulate, we cannot be very certain of the identical words; we shall therefore omit inserting a speech which at best would not greatly redound to her honour. She then departed in search of her brother, with a countenance so full of rage, that she resembled one of the furies rather than a human creature.

The two chambermaids being again left alone, began a second bout at altercation, which soon produced a combat of a more active kind. In this the victory belonged to the lady of inferior rank, but not without some loss of blood, of hair, and of lawn and muslin.