

Man *Superior to Woman*;
OR, A
VINDICATION
OF
MAN's Natural Right
OF
Sovereign AUTHORITY
OVER THE
W O M A N

Containing a plain Confutation of the fallacious Arguments of SOPHIA, in her late Treatise entitled, *Woman not inferior to Man*. Interspersed with a Variety of Characters, of different Kinds of *Women*, drawn from Life.

To which is prefix'd, a Dedication to the *Ladies*.

By a GENTLEMAN.

*You here in Miniature you Pictures see,
Nor hope from Zincks more Justice than from me.
My portraits grace your Mind, as his your Side;
His Portraits will inflame, mine quench your Pride.
He's dear, you frugal: choose my cheaper Lay,
And be your Reformation all my Pay. Young.*

L O N D O N:

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DEDICATION *to the* LADIES.

LOVELY CREATURES,

If openly to attack so fair and favourite a part of human society, as you are, will seem a confident attempt; it will appear a much bolder one, to lay at your feet, for approbation, the very instrument of your pain, still warm and reeking from the wound it has given you. Methinks, I see some pretty Lady pouting with an indignation so amiable that a man would almost, for the sake of beholding, purposely study to pique her. What! says the charming, peevish thing, is not striking at our honour in every tender part, an injury great enough, unless the aggressor insult us with the very weapon which has just executed his cruel purpose? Must we not only feel the barbarous edge of his ungenerous satire but be taunted with a dedication of it?

And truly, I must own, if we are to judge of things by their first appearances, the angry fair-one's transport is not quite unreasonable. But still, Ladies, if you allow yourselves leisure to reflect, you will not only be far from considering me, with like passion, as an insolent enemy, but will look upon it as your common Interest to acknowledge me a generous friend. Examine but the nature of the operation I have performed and the disease which made it necessary, and you will consider me in the true character I act in, which is not that of a merciless assassin whose end is destruction; but that of an honourable surgeon, who makes no incision, but to let in a cure where it is wanting; as I have already hinted elsewhere.

As I have employed a good deal of time in the study of your fair beings, I could not help discovering, in several of you, many visible tumours, in mind and heart, which, like pimples on your faces, were injurious to your real charms, and obstructive of the rational delight you were born to receive and bestow. Nevertheless the same tender respect, which made me anxious in wishing you an effectual riddance of them, restrained me from attempting to remove them myself; I saw no probable means of succeeding to my wish but by such an operation as must give exquisite smart to some, however beneficial it was likely to prove to all. But when I saw a rash hand from among your fair selves, indiscreetly busied in clogging your evils, already too dangerous, with the more dangerous poultice of pride and ambition, I thought it high time to spare you the threatening gangrene, at the expense of some anguish, by applying where necessary the lancet of satire to let out those imposthumes, which the pretty, undefigning traitress was labouring to render incurable.

I would beg fair Sophia's pardon for giving her the title of traitress, if I did not think the epithet, undefining, sufficient to dispense me from Apologies. I am far from imagining, she had the least sinister view in the work she has published: On the contrary, I am inwardly convinced, her intentions were excellent. For though I have not the honour of happiness to know the charming creature, however I wish for both; the noble sentiments and virtuous dispositions, she discovers in that ingenious essay, oblige me to consider her as another *Angelica*, at once her sex's noblest ornament, and liveliest reproach, as well as the most illustrious example their virtuous ambition can aspire to copy after. If all women were like her, we should have little danger to apprehend from coming into her Ladyship's notions; and I might have spared the pains of a desperate remedy to try to make them such. But as the case is quite otherwise, and their dangerous evils call for a dangerous cure; I flatter myself, lovely creatures, that she, and all such of you as are like her, will approve me for attempting one. How much more concerned I am for your happiness than my own safety must appear from my entering the lists against a Lady so formidable as *Sophia* must be, if the charms of her person are equal to those of her soul.

If my zeal for your felicity and safety has rendered me eager to rescue you from imminent misery; it has equally tempered that eagerness with a regard for your natural delicacy in the manner of doing it. So that wherever I found amputation necessary, without sparing proud flesh, I have been sparing of the quick. But if nevertheless I have not been able to pursue the honest end of my wishes, without giving pain to some of you, let your resentment be levelled, not at the instrument of your cure, but at the evils which called for it; not at the hand which directed it, but at that which provoked it. Instead then of frowning on me as an enemy who has a design on your honour and happiness; if you have either at heart, you will exert all your industry to show, how far you are from being incurable in your evils, by reaping the benefits of a cure offered you; and how little you are aversed to that cure, by receiving into your graces the person who has generously endeavoured to perform it at the risk of displeasing you.

Or otherwise, lovely creatures, if you are insensible of being, or unwilling to own yourselves, in need of a cure; let that natural love of change which is so bewitching in you justify my presenting to you this little lovegift in a different shape, by changing the allegory. The transition, however unconnected, is no impropriety in an address to such pretty variable things as you. Fancy then that it is a useful pocket-mirror I present you with. It is at least capable of answering the best ends of one, if consulted with the same attention as the glasses on your toilets. Indeed you will find it less flattering than most of those are; but perhaps it may prove the more useful for being so; and therefore ought to be, at least, equally agreeable to you. By showing you to yourselves in a true light, it will, I hope, enable you to improve the real excellencies, and to remove out of sight all the blemishes you may discover in yourselves. And as patches and paint will be useless to hide the defects which this will point you out, it may possibly set you on finding out better expedients to prevent the ill effects of

them than the daubing disguise of affectation.

Accept then this little token of my regard for you, in the light I propose it in, and I am confident you cannot be out of temper with the donor. For should any of you chance to see yourselves in a *Salacia*, an *Uberia*, a *Pavonia*, or some other as little pleasing figure, 'tis not the truth of the representation, but yourselves you must fall out with for being so like what you are so unwilling to be thought like. And such of you, as may applaud yourselves in the merit of an *Angelica*, can have no reason to be angry with me for placing you in company, which can only serve to see your charms in a more conspicuous light.

If I have not represented all women in that amiable character, it is not my fault, but theirs, who refute or neglect to assume it, that I have not placed you all in as lovely light as some of you deserve to be, and all are capable of being. For if you are not all *Angelicas*, you all have the power to be such. And therefore, if, notwithstanding all I have said, you are still resolved to consider me as an enemy, for exposing the deformity of some of you, you have a fair opportunity of glutting an honourable revenge by unanimously assuming *Angelica's* character.

By this means you will condemn me to the infamy of a scandalous libeller, and make all I have advanced, to the disgrace of your sex in general, be branded by future ages with the ignominious title of impudent falshood. And should this undertaking be happy enough to provoke you to such a noble resentment, I shall think my labour amply rewarded by the fruit it produces. For such is the ardent zeal I have for your real felicity, that I would gladly fall a sacrifice to the worst effects of your indignation, to have the merit of contributing towards the making you the perfect beings, in your kind, I wish to see you, as
Lovely
Creatures Your disinterested Votary

MAN Superior to WOMAN

INTRODUCTION

The very great tenderness, I have always expressed and really felt for the fair-sex, would by no means suffer me now to exert my pen against that delicate part of the creation which has hitherto engrossed my best wishes; if justice to my own sex, a disinterested zeal for the prosperity of the other, and an invincible love of truth, did not oblige me to render them service by opposing them.

Nature, ever reminding me that I was born of a woman, bids me respect that endearing name: yet honour, not allowing me to forget by whom I was begotten, forbids me to derogate from the dignity of man. However generosity then may incline me to favour the women, by overlooking their real imperfections, and putting an advantageous gloss on their little merits; it is an act of justice I owe to my own sex to defend its prerogatives, when openly attacked by the too daring ambition of the other.

From the beginning of the world till now, *our sex* has enjoyed an undisputed sovereignty over the other, and their joint consent in all ages sufficiently proves our possession not usurped. Hitherto, the women, conscious of their own inabilities, have cheerfully acknowledged the authority which wisdom gives to men over them, content with the soft dominion which love secures to them over the men. In a word the little glimmering of reason, which Heaven bestowed on them out of compassion to us, that they might be in some degree a sort of rational amusement to us, was sufficient to convince them of the justness of their subjection. And so far from accusing Nature of partiality in making them vassals to us, they were sensible that she had been but too bountiful in bestowing on them the privilege of reigning in the hearts of their lords: a privilege which we have hitherto been too generous to grudge them; having no danger to apprehend from leaving our hearts in the keeping of women, while the heads of the fair-keepers themselves were in due subjection to our own.

But the case must necessarily alter from the minute that sex forgets its allegiance to us. Once the women presume to call in question the great duty of vassalage to us, it must be time to withdraw our hearts from their power. They can no longer be safe in the custody of such women as refuse to submit their heads to our authority.

The joint industry of the *fair* of all times, in labouring to make themselves agreeable to us, is a standing proof that that is the great business they were created for, and that the acquiring our love and esteem is the highest end their ambition ought to soar to; as the possession of *both* is the great and sole happiness they are capable of enjoying in this life. But how can they hope ever to reach *either*, without persevering in the use of those methods which alone can render them worthy to obtain what they aim at. How shall they appear any longer agreeable in our eyes, once they throw off that modesty and subjection which alone can give even their native charms the force to please us? What title will they have left to our favour and indulgence, from the moment they begin to dispute our power and prerogative over them? In a word, if, instead of making use of the little complaisances we have for their weakness to redouble their obedience and fidelity to us, they aspire to become our equals; ought we not, in justice to ourselves and for instruction to them, to show them that it has been owing to our own generosity more than to any right they claim, that we have not hitherto treated them only as our less useful slaves?

However one should be apt to imagine that women had their own interest more at heart than to reduce us to this extremity. Who could conceive that any one of that sex should be so much an enemy to herself and the rest, as to risk the forfeiture of that liberty which the *men* have so graciously raised them to, merely for the sake of grasping at a libertinism which they are sure of never attaining to? And yet, inconceivable as it is, our own times can show a very recent instance of it in a Lady, who, perhaps, for the sake of becoming an author, has taken abundance of pains to convince us that there is no excess of extravagance which that sex cannot attempt; and no presumption in them which merits our surprise.

Every one will be able to guess that I am speaking of *SOPHIA*, that enlightened Lady, who, after a prescription which scarce any duration but that of eternity can out-date, has surprisingly found out that *man* is not superior to *woman* in any thing but what she pleases to call *brutal strength*. So extravagant an assertion cannot but be attended with very fatal consequences to both sexes, if listened to by the women: and what will not woman listen to which flatters her vanity, ambition, curiosity or love of change?

For women have fantastic constitutions,
Inconstant as their wishes, ever wavering
And never fixed. *Ven. Pres.*

. . . To show them how much I am their friend, and how sincerely I wish to preserve them in that degree which the generosity of the men has lifted them to, I shall here render them all the service their tender capacities will permit me to do, by endeavouring to open their eyes to the discovery of the gay illusions of this aspiring Lady; that they may not become the dupes of her friendly but mistaken zeal for them, which might otherwise do them more mischief than

their greatest enemies could wish done, or than their native charms could possibly repair.

This dexterous female, to give us a sample of the expertness of her sex at invention, has artfully enough thrown in a *caveat* against any *man's* being judge of the equality or inferiority of merit in women, as compared with men: because truly the men are to be considered as parties concerned, and therefore must all be partial in their judgment. However, I must beg leave to observe, that though it be true that the generality of both sexes are weak enough to give prejudice and interest the preference to truth and justice, yet even *Sophia* herself cannot be so rashly censorious as to imagine that all are unjust alike. And therefore she must own that some few men may be found among us, who, supposing their interest to be ever so nearly concerned, would nevertheless be honest enough to acknowledge the women for their equals, if there was the least appearance of reason in their favour; and to make them every concession they had a right to demand.

For my own part at least I have so indefeasible a right to be ranked in the number of those few, that the most jealous of their sex cannot dispute my title. For on one side, I can have no interest to bias me, having nothing to hope or fear from my own sex, and expecting as little from the opposite. And on the other, if I have received any partiality or inclination, it is all for the women. I do not say this out of any ambition of being judge in so unthankful an affair, in which it will be impossible to do justice to one party without giving the other offence. And I of all men have the least reason to court the occasion of displeasing those amiable creatures; who cannot myself give them the slightest pain without sharing with them in it.

Instead therefore of taking upon me the office of deciding the merit of the fair-sex, and the degree they ought to stand in comparatively with the men, I shall leave it to themselves to be the judges in their own cause, after I have fairly stated what is worthy observation on both sides of the debate. For I can by no means apprehend anything from their partiality, or prejudice, when I consider how much it is to their own advantage to be just to the men, and how seldom they are guilty of disregarding their own private interests.

The more suspicious part of our sex may perhaps think it dangerous to trust the woman to judge of anything where reason is concerned, on account of the weakness of their intellects, which seldom can reach higher than a head-dress. But to remove all objections of this kind, I shall endeavour to make the matter plain to them, by treating it in the most familiar manner. And as well to prevent their weakening the little understanding they have by keeping it too much upon the stretch, as to save them from exposing their slight-pinioned fancy to the resistless beams of scrutiny by soaring above their capacity, I shall do my utmost to make reason stoop to their comprehension, by confining myself entirely to their sphere. In doing this I know it will be expected that I take

notice of whatever may seem worthy of any in the pretty whimsical treatise with which *Sophia* has thought fit to divert the public: and therefore I shall follow the method she has pointed out to me. However I must beg to be excused from being accessory to her losing herself and her partisans in the maze of *theory*, a ground too holy for female feet to tread with impunity. No; practice is the boundary of their province; and therefore I shall wholly confine myself, in this little treatise, to practical reasoning, except where I am obliged to step aside to recover my bewildered fair antagonist from the danger of straying out of her latitude.

It will be a needless repetition, to say that my only motive in opposing this Lady is the desire of seconding her good intention, by doing effectual service to her sex; as my only view in laying open their foibles is the hope I conceive of rendering them less pernicious to themselves. However, tender as I design to be in handling the faults of these delicate creatures, I am sensible that an operation of this kind cannot but give them some smart. Nevertheless resolved, like an honest surgeon, to conquer the little reluctances of a heart disposed to compassion, I shall rather choose to give them a little momentary pain, than suffer them out of false tendencies to risk a more fatal mortification. The little uneasiness, which the probing of their blemishes may occasion, will be amply atoned for by the gangrene it will prevent; especially since natural propensity towards them will incline me to use them as gently as possible. Not that I can think of seeing a delirious man fond of the man which trepans him. I only flatter myself that once they have received benefit enough from it to be sensible of the necessity of it, they will thank me for my labour: a labour in which neither passion nor prejudice, and much less interest, could have any share, with one whose age and state of life raise him above being biased by the smiles of their sex, or the frowns of his own. So that even those pretty incurables, whom nothing will be sufficient to prevail with to consider me in any other light than that of an enemy, cannot without injustice deny me to be a generous one: though how far I am from being one at all will best appear in the conclusion of this little piece. And therefore relying on the uprightness of my own intentions, and the manner of executing them. I shall confidently proceed to the subject in question. But before we descend to particulars, it will not be improper to examine in general,

CHAPTER I.

Whether the Superiority of the Men over the Women be not founded on something more solid than Custom and Prejudice.

It cannot be denied that the ingenious Lady, whom I have to contend with, is, for a woman, no despicable adversary. The cause indeed she has undertaken to defend is none of the best. But bad as it is, she has been cautious enough to make use of all the means practicable to render her arguments, in the support of it, unanswerable. She could not, without a degree in blindness, possibly overlook the irrefragable authority of a practice founded upon a prescription as ancient as human nature. She knew that the superiority of man over woman was no novelty to either sex ever since Adam's time; and therefore imagined, as well she might, that it could be no easy matter to invert this disposition of things, so venerable from the single consideration of its antiquity, without removing the obstacle which custom put in her way, by lessening the regard which the most considerate are inclined to pay to it. This she has endeavoured to do, but how? Why truly by enumerating some few instances, in which mankind of both sexes have been led into error by a blind prejudice in favour of habitual ignorance, and not of practical positive custom: and those too instances of a particular nature, and in which all men were not concerned, as the disbelief of the *Antipodes*, the supposed *spirits of machinery*, and the fancied *machinery of cartesian animals*. Whereas to convince us that *custom* is never to be regarded, she should have instanced some one custom as universal with relation to place and time, as that of woman's subjection to man, in which mankind had confessedly found themselves in error.

As this is past her skill to do, it is plain she has run beyond her mark, and contrary to her design established an argument in favour of man's authority over woman on the very principle of custom, which she with so much industry and artifice laboured to undermine. For it cannot without rashness be doubted but that mankind being rational creatures and therefore not only directed, but even of themselves inclined, to do nothing without reason, they must have consulted reason for the introduction of such practices as have been universally received by both sexes in all places, and at all times. Insomuch that it is impossible for any in their senses to conceive that right reason and prudence had no hand in establishing the customs, which both oblige us to conform to, and which we cannot deviate from without breaking in upon order and decency.

Of this nature is the custom, if *Sophia* chooses to call it so, which directs the women to be subject and submissive to the heaven-derived authority of their

natural sovereign *man*: a custom, which, whether right or wrong, must so nearly concern every individual of human nature, that neither sex could be supposed so indifferent to their happiness, as not to consult reason before they established or rejected it. And therefore, since both sexes from the creation unanimously established this practice and handed it down, through all ages to our own, it is the height of temerity to impute the power of men over women to inconsiderate custom, or to any cause inferior to reason and prudence.

. . . No, let any one affirm, if truth will permit, that the women were ever treated in any one nation made up of both sexes, upon a better footing than inferior subjects; fit at best only to be the upper servants in their families.

This is the light in which they have always been viewed here in England; the place in the world where the fair sex is the most regarded, and perhaps deserves most to be so. And every one knows how much worse they are looked upon in some countries where they are esteemed absolute slaves. In China they are confined to see no one but their husbands and children; and have their feet kept small on purpose to prevent their gadding. In Turkey they are pampered prisoners at best. Almost throughout Asia, Africa and America wives are but housemaids for life. In most parts of Europe indeed they are treated a little more gently; though the difference is but little in Italy, and scarce discernible in Spain. In a word they are every where employed in nothing but what is low and servile. Their highest dignities are limited to housewifery, and their common use is to be kept for breeders. In England alone it is that they are raised to the office of dissipators of our more intense thoughts, amusing lullers of our care and application, and a kind of under-companions to us, when reason is disposed to relax. Nor is it easy to comprehend how it is possible to raise them higher, with any show of reason, considering their natural incapacity for every thing above the sphere they actually move in. So that however the men might be disposed, and whatever endeavour they might make use of, to alter the present disposition of matters with regard to the fair-sex, it is absolutely impossible to succeed in it.

It is doubtless for this reason that the wisest of law-givers, in founding their common-wealths, have never once established any thing in favour of an equality between both sexes. Their laws, on the contrary, have tended only to confirm the women in an entire subjection to the men. The generality of the learned of all ages have advanced many things to the disadvantage of woman: but not one has ever thought of adding the least privilege to those we have in general agreed to allow them. Nay the wise of all times and places are so unanimous in the establishment of the men's sovereignty over women, that one should be apt to imagine they had conspired together; but for the evident impossibility, that so many persons of different ages, distant climes, and opposite interests, unknown to each other, should be able to combine with one another. Whence it is plain to a demonstration, that the state of subordination, which woman is in to man, must have been dictated at least by reason and

prudence.

This alone might suffice to show how greatly the Lady my antagonist is overseen in imputing the power of our sex over her own to blind custom and inconsiderate prejudice. But what will confirm it still more, is the universal ease with which the women of all ages have supported this their condition. The general content with which they submit is a plain proof, that they look upon submission as a natural duty they owe to us; and that, conscious of the legalness of our authority, they pass the same judgment on their dependency as every man does. Insomuch that both sexes appear convinced that their souls are as different as their bodies, and that there ought to be as great distinction between the two sexes in all the functions of life as there is in that of instrumentally producing it. All which considered, no woman in her senses can doubt of the subjection of that sex to ours being dictated at least by the Laws of Nature and Reason. . . .

Her All is but a Show,
Rather than solid Virtue; all but a Rib,
Crooked by Nature.
Oh! why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
With Spirits masculine, create at last
This Novelty on Earth! this fair Defect
Of Nature! and not fill the World at once
With Men, as Angels, without Feminine,
Or find some other Way to generate Mankind.
- Milton

Heaven took him sleeping when he Woman made,
Had Man been waking he had ne'er consented.
- Dryden

. . . Let it suffice that I have shown how much inferior to us they are, from their Creation, if considered in themselves, and now I shall proceed to examine a little farther with *Sophia*.

CHAPTER II

In what esteem the Women are held by the Men, and how justly.

My fair adversary is undoubtedly right in saying that "the men are unanimous in thinking women made only for their use, fit only to breed and nurse children in their tender years, to mind household affairs, and to obey, serve and please the masters" appointed them by Heaven. And would not all women be as right in thinking the same with men? Can it be doubted by the Christian *Sophia* that her sex was made for our use, after St. Paul has told her in his Epistle to the Corinthians that the man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man?

. . . Though the consideration of man's not being created till all creatures were in readiness for him be no contemptible argument of their being created for his use; yet it is far from being the only one on which he builds his authority. It is the only one indeed which *Sophia* thought to her purpose to alledge; though had she allowed herself time to reflect, woman as she is, she might have been able to see how little it suits the purpose she has applied it to. For she is certainly mistaken in saying, that, "if this argument has any weight at all, it must equally prove that the men were made for the woman's use rather than she for theirs." And her mistake, it is plain, arises from the vulgar error of imagining that woman was created at all. Whereas any understanding inferior to that of woman, if such a being could exist, would be capable of discerning that the production of that weak sex was no distinct creation from that of man. . . Let not *Sophia* then nor any of her sex glory any more in their disgrace. Let them not be vain of the title of creatures which our sex is so generous to compliment them with; rather ought they to reject it as flattery, since they cannot themselves but be convinced that we can look upon the most perfect of their sex in no better a light than a kind of amphibious thing between a creature and no creature; and therefore man, who calls them creatures, must mean very *poor* creatures indeed.

After what I have just now said, good breeding obliges me to add, that, whenever I let the word drop in the course of this little treatise, it neither is nor will be my meaning to offend, or call them names; but a desire of complying with *fashion*, a goddess ever sacred in their tender eyes. However, to show more fully my aversion to abusing them, whenever I may chance to give them the title of creatures, I shall take the precaution of adding the softening epithets, *pretty, charming, beautiful, etc*, which, unless I am more unfortunate than others before me, would, I know, be looked upon by the generality of them as a sufficient atonement for the grossest invectives.

Though I will allow the women to deserve that some care should be taken of them, in consideration of the part they have in the propagation of human nature, as a field does on account of the vegetables it produces; yet I cannot see the reason why they are to be considered on a level with the men they bring forth, any more than that the mould in a garden is to be equally valued with the fruits it produces; unless the Ladies place a merit in the superior propensity they have above men to this office of life. But how ever they may value themselves upon this score, I am apt to believe that they, who have the most of this sort of merit, are not such as have the least of our disesteem.

To name but one instance of the many which this one town affords, *Salacia* is undeniably rich in this kind of worth, and too much so to obtain the esteem of the more moderate even of her own sex. It is true she is fair, most exquisitely fair; but not more fair than wanton. The charms of her person can be excelled by nothing, but the brightness of her wit; which bears so near a resemblance to sense that any man would be liable to mistake it for such, who should lay down reflection but for a minute. Her good nature is boundless, and her evenness of temper not to be ruffled. In short, all the blemishes which compose the perfections of her sex, she possesses in so high a degree, that we could not but acknowledge her worthy of something very like our esteem, if all these feminine accomplishments were not eclipsed by one more, which absorbs all the rest. She is sensible that the chief end she was made for is to breed; and therefore is unweariedly solicitous to answer that end. The good man she pitched upon for a husband, as the most likely to second her procreative zeal, is indeed every way qualified to answer the expectations of any woman less public-spirited than herself; and is rather industrious than indolent in the duty of propagation. But the misfortune is, that his industry to forward the Lady's good intentions serves only to point out his inability, and to convince her, that all mankind are scarce a sufficient match for one woman, whose zeal nothing less could gratify than being the immediate mother of all men. If she herself is not so, it is more to be ascribed to the obstinacy of fate than any slackness in her capricious disposition which takes in the whole creation of men. Had she her will she would breed in every pore. And if she is not incessantly employed in this important office, it is for want of a perpetual succession of help-mates. Though to give her her due Nature itself is not more active in multiplying, than she in procuring them. As she is never tired with labouring towards the preservation of the species, no assistant comes amiss to her. Her taste is as little nice as her appetite is never sated nor satiable. In the act of gratifying it, like a true woman,

*No hungry Churl feeds coarser at a feast;
Every rank Fool goes down: Otway*

And in the few short intervals of bodily inactivity, her mind is ever busied in preparing for action. Awake she is ever conceiving in body or soul; and her

very slumbers are so many rough draughts of future embryos. If nevertheless none of them are brought to maturity, it is not for want of manuring the soil which should produce them: In this so far from being sparing she is profuse; for, as the polite Lord Lansdown says of another heroine of the same class, I may say,

*She's mine, or thine, and strolling up and down
Sucks in more Filth than and Sink in Town.*

It is true, indeed, that all this extravagant merit in *Salacia*, entitles her to no degree of esteem from our sex or her own. Her too eager desire of being serviceable to the human species renders her useless, nay destructive to it. What colonies might not the motley nation of foetuses within her have peopled, if properly dispersed? . . . which are now too busy in struggling for room to aim at maturity; and too much taken up, in their intestine war, with destroying each other, to add one perfect individual to the decaying numbers of mankind. In a word, what esteem can we have for a woman made barren by excess of fertility, and lavish of the choicest fruits of the creation by an insatiable lust of monopolizing them?

Clavia, it must be owned has been more cautious, though not less criminal. Disposed from her cradle to become a common *recevoir* of human nature, she took care not to launch out into wholesale lechery, till she furnished the world with a breeder in her stead. Indeed she makes ample amends in her old age for the little time she lost in her prime, by converting her house into a public stew, and making herself the sewer of it. All men are welcome there, if provided with brawn, though unprovided with breeches, from the tall apothecary to the lufty-limbed porter. Though neither the purchased roses on her cheeks, nor the borrowed ivory in her gums would have any power over the most rampant, even of her powdered, pampered, parti-coloured stallions-in-keeping, if the yellow charms of all enchanting gold, which the God of waste has lavished upon her, did not fill up the deep-indented furrows of seventy. 'Tis by this she is empowered, in the last stage of life, to vie with her sex in the favourite commerce of their youth, and to convince the world, that though there are some women, whom the whole collection of mankind would be an equal match for, there are others again of more extensive inclinations, who, but for the short date of their existence, could unweariedly weary a new creation of men in the business of enjoyment. Not that she herself is capable of reaping any thing from fruition but the guilt of it - too old and battered to produce even a monster, and too inanimate for any sensation, she has nothing to enjoy but sin. And this her eager soul has such a talent for, that, like the demon who inspires her, she can take in an eternity of lust into one single minute. And multiply one libidinous act into an infinity. Such are the pretty creatures we are to esteem for the talent of breeding.

The general rule however will admit of some exceptions: and *Sprucilla* is one.

Formed by Heaven a perfect vehicle of human nature, she has every qualification requisite to reap the fruits of fruition, and no dislike to the pleasure of it. The graces have combined to enrich her with every endearment capable of charming the man she is married to, and making him forget himself, to stoop to the low but necessary office of rendering her really useful. But pride, predominant pride, is so prevalent in her, as to make her prefer the empty praise of a fine shape to that of being a mother of children. And if, in complying with her husband's wantonness to gratify her own, she is at any time made a mother before she is aware, so careless is she of the only good she is fit for, as rather to risk the loss of an heir to his estate, than to miss an opportunity of gaining new admirers at a ball or a play.

Among the unmarried women, what numberless tribes of useless things are there not, whose pride, avarice, fickleness or icy constitutions, rob human nature of the individuals they were intended to bear; and by not answering the use they were given to him for, become a dead weight upon man? Indeed, if there are some among them less squeamish than the rest, who atone out of wedlock for their slowness to engage in it; how few of them is human nature the better for? How many of them stifle the fruit of their pleasure before it is ripe? Not to speak of those disgraces to the soft shape they wear, who only delay destruction to make it more cruel.

Nor can it be deemed a sufficient amends to the creation for the many particles of human nature wafted and destroyed in their passage through these quick-sanded, baneful channels, that there are a few married women, fertile enough to forward the propagation of man, and modest enough to moderate their pregnant zeal. Especially if we consider, how dearly their whims, their vanity, their extravagance, and fantastical humours make us purchase the service they do us. *Uberia* has blessed her husband with a numerous offspring, all his own. But she would scarce be a woman, if she did not take pains to make him sensible how expensive and troublesome a thing is a fruitful, faithful wife. Every lying-in costs him more than would make a handsome provision for the infant; besides an estate spent in the time of her breeding. Indeed she has economy enough to lose him no time between her bringing forth one child and preparing him another. The reason is, that there are two conditions in which her Ladyship can bear no contradiction, that is before delivery and after. And therefore she is in the perpetual possession of her own will, because ever with child or in the straw. However the happy father might be very well content to sell her a wood for every longing, to mortgage a manor for every lying-in, and to fell another for every Christening; nay to make her over, by deed of gift, the everlasting property of her own will, upon the bare condition of her leaving him the undisturbed possession of his. But nothing less can reward the prolific merit of this Lady than her husband's peace. He must not so much as look civilly on any other female. And such a miser is she of his manhood, that while she takes care to hoard up the principal to herself, she is as solicitous to secure even the interest. He must not have even the use of a single smile at his own

disposal. His company must be such only as her Ladyship approves of; and them he must converse with no longer than his pretty fond thing of a wife can spare him from her embraces. At home, it is true, he never wants amusement, being sure in the daytime to be entertained with seeing his children either humoured into impertinencies, or chastised into faults; and rendered incorrigible by the folly, passion, and caprice of their fond, fickle, foolish mother; to contradict whom would cost nothing less than the price of another child. Then that he may not grow tired with such entertainments by daily repetition, they are ever succeeded by an evening interlude of vapours, ratasee, and tears, till bed invites him to repose; where, after he has glutted the kind creature's fonder fits, he is generally lulled to sleep, and awakened from it, by the melody of a curtain-serenade. Now can it be denied after all that *Uberia's* husband is a happy man; and that all men have reason to esteem the women for their prolific merit?

But that they should be entitled to any part of our esteem for nursing the children they bring forth for their pleasure, I see nothing in it. What is it they do for infants which would not be much better done by the men, if they were not called away from that meaner task to provide for the safety and sustenance of them and their mothers? Indeed they may save the expense of milk, which we cannot: but how much more cheaply might this defect be supplied from a cow, a goat, or an ass than from them? And how few women of any condition in life have economy enough to save us this superfluous expense! Too delicate themselves, to bestow on the fruits of their own bowels the nutriment which heaven and nature design them, don't they force us to hire a mercenary wretch, to starve her own babe to give suck to ours? Pretty nurses indeed! Happy for man that the life of an infant does not entirely depend on the liberality of woman in this particular! And how much happier would it not be for all infants, were they snatched from the arms of the women, in the instant they are born! How much more healthy, wise, and comely would they grow! For 'tis notorious that the longer a child sucks the more weakly and stupid it turns out; and that those which suck at all are never so wise, so strong or well-formed as those which are brought up by hand. The reason is plain: with the milk they suck in, they generally imbibe a tincture of the follies, passions, and imbecillities of that sex, besides having their various distempers entailed upon them.

However, as this is a means of humiliation pointed out to us by Nature, we are not to condemn it, but to apply to it, when not to be avoided without danger to the infant. The greater mischief is that which comes from the weakness of woman in their manner of educating it. With what innumerable follies, vices, and impertinencies do they not fill children's heads, by their example and precepts, during the time of their nursing them! To what secret crimes do they often make them privy; and to what fanciful inconsistencies do they not publicly expose and encourage them!

I can forgive a mother for putting a doll into the hands of her daughters as soon

as they are able to hold it. As the great end of their semi-creation is the getting of children, it may not be absolutely improper to forward their natural propensity to that duty, while they are but children themselves. But for this diligence in an industrious parent, here and there one of them might be so awkwardly innocent as not to know the essential difference of her own sex from the opposite, till the period of her passing from a maid to a mother. Whereas, by this and other helps they are generally supplied with, they are often as well versed as the most skilful matron, in the theory, if not in the practical knowledge of propagation, long before they are ripe for the fruits of it. A very useful science to some young Ladies, who have been able to instruct an ignorant booby of a husband in the sacred and secret rites of wedlock, in a much more familiar manner than the modest *Albertus* could pretend to.

But I can by no means be reconciled to their training up our boys, as they do, from their earliest infancy, to folly, foppery, effeminacy, and vice. If little master must be humoured into pride, idleness, or mischief; why should he be taught to lie, cajole, dissemble to all above him, and domineer over all beneath him? If it is thought so necessary to acquaint him with the greatness of his birth and fortune, with the handsomness of his person, or the acuteness of his understanding, or any advantages he possesses above others designed by Nature for his equals; why must he be taught to make no better use of them than to disregard the authority of those above him, to envy his equals, to despise his inferiors, and render himself the contempt of all who know him, by an unlimited gratification of his lawless passions? Let his fond, foolish mother think it wonderfully pretty to initiate the little urchin in the mystery of intriguing with the little miffes of his companions: but let her not expose him to the danger of practising those intrigues in her absence, by abandoning him to the corrupt company of the wanton wench, her servants. And yet how many of our youth, by such shocking education, have been utterly debauched at an age when we could scarce think it possible for them to have parted with innocence! Have we not then the greatest reason to esteem and revere that sex on account of the obligations we have to them for our early advances in the knowledge of good and evil? Must not we be lost to all reason, if we are not pleased with these eminent services which the pretty creatures are so industrious to do us? Or if not; must not *Sophia* be lost to all shame, should she again repeat without a blush that what she has so inconsiderately advanced "that their office of nursing our children entitles them to the *first place in civil society*?" If I had a mind to be severe, I could tell them, that it is owing to our own generosity that we give them any place at all; and that nothing, but the want of power to annihilate them, or to create a lower degree for them, can excuse our leaving them in possession even of the lowest place in society. But I choose to drop a subject so much the more disagreeable as we are daily made sensible of the truth of it. I shall therefore immediately pass to another consideration.

CHAPTER III

Whether Women are equal to Men in their intellectual Capacity, or not.

If the business of the mind were nothing more than to contrive a dress; to invent a new fashion; to set off a bad face; to heighten the charms of a good one; to understand the economy of a tea-table; to manage an intrigue; to conduct a game at quadrille, and to lay out new plans of pleasure, pride and luxury; then women must be owned to have a capacity not only equal but even superior to us. But as the understanding of man has infinitely higher objects to employ its speculations on, objects beyond the very aim of the ablest women; their intellectual faculties are so evidently inferior to his, that I should think it an impertinence in me to take up any time to prove it. Need we look any farther than their soft, simpering, silly faces to fathom the perceptible depth of their understandings? View the whole sex round:

Eternal Smiles their Emptiness betray
As shallow Streams run dimpling all the way.
Pope.

A thoughtless stare, a wild vivacity, a sleepy pertness, giddy gravity, or some such other sense-defying look betrays, in all, the narrow space between the surface and centre of their mimic wit. How well the masterly Limner knew them, who snatched from them the graces he so skilfully bestowed on *Sporus*, that copy of themselves, inspired too by them as they by Satan! As nothing can show the finished mastery of that excellent piece in the fairer light than giving back to its pretty originals whatever is borrowed from them, it cannot be amiss to do it, considering it requires but little alteration: a presumption, I dare say, that ingenious author will excuse.

Whether in florid impotence they speak,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppets squeak,
Or, Eves true spawn, and tools of the ancient toad,
Half froth, half venom, spit themselves abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
Their wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now forward, now remiss,
And each herself one dull antithesis.
Amphibious things! That acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,

Bullies at cards, and flirts when at the board,
Now jilt like Dames, now swear like any Lord.
Their tempter thus the Rabbins have expressed,
A cherubs face, a reptile all the rest.
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that must creep, and pride that licks the dust.

In Fact, what is all their discourse but *froth*? What inspires it but *venom*? And in what does their Sprightliness appear, but in empty puns, conundrums, rebukes, trifling politics or mischievous lies? They who shine most among them, are such as have nothing to entertain you with but scandal, indecency, hypocrisy, or impiety. What is their wit but a mere see-saw from one inconsistency to another? Their conversation is ever screwed up to bombast, when it should be familiar; or sunk into meanness, when the subject they presume to meddle with is sublime. Where they should be silent, they are as forward to prate, as they are remiss in speaking on proper occasions. In short their talk, like their persons, is one continued, insipid antithesis. Amphibious things indeed! Whose impotent eagerness to be like man serves only to show that they are but mere mechanic rote-repeaters of his words, and unsuccessful mimics of his sense. How unlike are they at their tea-tables to the sensible things they would be thought; and at the card-table how short of the spirit of the noble creatures they would be! There is nothing of a piece in them but the corruption of their hearts and the low cunning of their heads. If ever they succeed in aping us, it is in what is a disgrace to understanding. Whenever they attempt it, they can swear as well as the greatest libertine among us, though still without excelling the parrot in anything but the guilt. Thus ever actuated by perversity, they are never truly like us; and are never themselves, but when they jilt us: though in that, thanks to their native talents, they seldom fail to be true women. How ill-bestowed then on these fantastic things is the beauty we admire in them! And if it was bestowed on them by nature to decoy us into a commerce with them, for the benefit of propagation; must it not still shock our reason when we consider it accompanied only with parts which we can reap no benefit from, nor place any confidence in? And what assistance can we hope from their false wit, as groveling as the pride it inspires them with?

But *Sophia* it seems would fain make a handle of the beauty of her sex to impose upon us an opinion of their sense; and because "the organs of the body are more delicate in them, therefore they must be fitter to answer the ends they were made for." True in one sense, the organs of women were designed for finical amusements, and therefore were made more delicate than ours, in that sense of the word. But if by delicate she means more perfectly or exactly formed; I must insist that experience in the use proves ours to be more solidly and exactly formed than those of the women. And fit they should be so, considering the more noble uses they were designed for, and are employed in. But granting for a minute that the organs of sense are as perfect in women as in men, and yet more delicate; what can *Sophia* infer but that they are more liable

to be thrown into disorder, and therefore the less to be depended upon? As the mechanism of a watch, the more minute, gim, and delicate it is, the more is it subject to inconstancy. A consideration which I willingly mention to apologize, as much as the nature of the thing will bear, for that otherwise unaccountable inconstancy in which alone the fair sex are ever constant.

Not that I entirely come into my soft antagonist's opinion, that the organs in women are any more adapted to the natural functions of the mind than in men: perhaps they are less so. For the external sleekness of their pretty forms is no proof of the internal perfection of their organization. And to imagine a woman must have sense because she is handsome, would be as absurd as to think that a house must needs be finely furnished within, because the outside is beautiful: an error to be excused in none but a woman.

What angel can imagination paint more beautiful than *Pavonia*! What reptile more insensate! To reason by *Sophia's* rule, our eyes would cheat us into the belief that she surpasses all the sages time has yet produced. And yet hear her but speak, you'll almost doubt if Heaven had any hand making a thing at once so fair and foolish, though so like a man. Never guilty of design, she never looks it. Her smiles and frowns, alike effects of accident, want power to please or displease. Her words mere liquid sounds of half-articulated nonsense, gush from her pretty coral-spouted mouth with such unmeaning energy, or drip with such deliberate drawl that even ridicule is robbed of all its zest. Frequent in blunders, she excites no laugh in others; but often laughs herself, when she should be most serious. Her misbehaviour moves no anger, and her favours lay no obligations but upon such as are little wiser than herself. Every motion, every air betrays the fool, whom they who have sense can scarce stoop to pity, and they who have none scarce condescend to envy. In a word, gazed at by all, she is admired and conversed with by none but idiots and women. Amidst whom while she alternately reigns the idol of flattery, and slavishly sinks the dupe of deceit, she is still looked down upon by all men of sense, with the same contempt as the comely peacock: though she be worthy of greater scorn in this, that the more beauteous bird bears all his blemish in his feet, while her disgrace is feated in her head; his deformity abates his pride, while hers but serves to make her more incorrigibly vain. Must it not be owned then, that beauty is a convincing proof of sense in its fair possessors? But *Sophia* perhaps will answer that one black feather makes no crow. Let us then see, how much wiser the rest of her sex are than pretty, simple *Pavonia*?

It is a common rule, and liable to very few mistakes, to guess at people's Genius by their company. To know then the capacity of the fair sex, let us but survey their favourite companions. Eye them, and you will find them the very dregs of our sex; fops whose whole merit is made up of dress and drivel, show and emptiness; mere Jack-daws and parrots; nay, rather gawdy, screech-owls made fine with plundered plumes. Laced-waistcoats, smart toupees, light heels, and lighter heads, are all they have to recommend them to the Ladies. Yet they are

sure to please, because eminently qualified to discuss the weightiest arguments on country-dances, to decide the fate of fashions, square the round of a woman's petticoat, and take the latitude of a nightcap from the equinox of her noddle, or the longitude of two lappets by the meridian of her whims. Not that I the least blame the lovely female triflers who are pleased with them. 'Tis but natural for birds of a feather to associate; and since likeness ever begets liking, why should they not be fondest of those men whose follies are nearest their own? But then I would not have them boast of an equality of sense with those men, whose superior understanding is all they have to find fault with.

It will be to little purpose for *Sophia* to quote me the illustrious names of many of the greatest wits of all ages who have admired, and been admired by, the women. Has not the success they have met with been more owing to their being men, than to their having sense? *Anacreon*, the polite, the witty *Anacreon*, with all his fine parts reaped nothing from his pursuit of those unsettled things but the contempt of his agedness. And *Theocritus* himself makes no secret of the little encouragement he met with. The lesser poets indeed, as well as *Ovid* and *Horace*, received some marks of their favour; but what were these mighty favours if you will believe their own boasts, but the sharing the lewdness of their mistresses with half the town. If I leave the classics it will be an endless toil to enumerate the many instances that that thought-abhorning sex have, at all times and on all occasions, furnished, of the preference they give to fools before men of parts. But where is the necessity of recurring to other times and countries for what our own can produce? Of all our fine Ladies industrious in adorning the brows of their husbands, where is there one who does it with a man of true wit? Of all our pretty widows ruined by second adventures, where is there one who does it with a *man* of any merit? Search but the registers of the fleet, and you shall find numbers of our fairest, brightest heiresses charmed away from their guardians by lacqueys, valet-de-chambres, and powdered, empty coxcombs; but scarce one single match with a really rational creature. In short, who are the persons who can boast of the favours of all our finest women, but wretches too low for the jest of our sex, and too much like theirs to differ from them in any thing but one single circumstance. Let the amorous billets they scribble be produced; and for every one that is directed to a man of sense, I'll allow them a grain of understanding more than they are entitled to.

But surely they are not all void of understanding. No; but to fathom the depth of their understandings, remark only the objects which employ them. Frequent their drawing-rooms, and listen to their conversation: what is it filled up with but annoying repetitions of stale impertinencies to every new visitor? One part of the week, the day is wasted in visiting and contriving visits to persons they hope not to find at home, and the night in receiving visits from persons they would rather be almost blind than have the sight of: The other part, their mornings, are laid out in interrupting some tradesmen whom they know to be busy, and lulling their own time as well as murdering his in rummaging his shop for goods they neither want nor purpose to buy; and their evenings are

eked out with tea, slander, operas, and quadrille, when the intrigues on their hands are not interfered with. In a word upon examining them thoroughly, it must be owned that not all the bloom on their cheeks, nor the washes they owe it to, can make any tolerable amends, in the esteem of a wise man, for the folly, vanity, affectation, malice, deceit and impertinence which appear in all they say, and inspire all they do.

And yet it must be granted, there are women, who employ their understandings on higher objects; who can try to reason; and almost succeed in it. Nay there are some can write, can even spell; and, what is more, can turn a sophistry to look not altogether unlike an argument. And therefore it would be quite ungenerous not to allow a brilliancy of wit (however false) in some of them. Especially since my pretty smooth antagonist has given so late proof of it in herself. And yet even she

Had she been blessed with only half her sense,
None could admire too much her excellence.
But since she can make error shine so bright,
She thinks it vulgar to defend the right.
With understanding she is quite o'er-run;
And by too great accomplishments undone.
With skill she vibrates her unwearied tongue,
For ever most divinely in the Wrong

Young.

So dangerous is a little understanding to that tender sex! How happy is it for them, that learning but seldom molests them! What strange distraction would it not create in their poor tender heads! Is not *Sophia's* self a living demonstration that to them

A little learning is a dangerous thing?

And they, alas, poor pretty creatures, have neither breath nor brains to *drink* of knowledge *deeply*. Good sense and tea they are forced to sip alike; their heads and stomachs of equal delicacy can best digest the shallowest draughts of all but mum and mischief. Let thus much then suffice to show *Sophia* how little room she has to complain of want of learning in her sex; and how much less, for any parallel between her sex and ours in point of understanding; when her own essay plainly proves how short the brightest of them fall of man's superior wisdom. Is there nothing less will serve the women's turn than having an equal share with us in Government and public offices? Let us then weigh their best pretensions to so extraordinary a privilege.

CHAPTER IV

Whether the Women are equally qualified with Men for Government and Public Offices.

Our female champion is in a very great passion with *Cato* for excluding her sex from all Government; and, I must own not without some appearance of reason. For it is certainly true that *Cato* was not the most well-bred man who ever spoke of them. He had too little of the courtier in him to flatter; and spoke too plain truth not to fet a pretty Lady, who wants to wear the breeches, on pouting. But *Sophia* would have much more reason to be angry with him, if he had been the only one of opinion that women are to be ever kept in subjection. Whereas unluckily for them, all the greatest sages of antiquity, as well as the wisest legislators of all ages, have been of the same mind. The greatest poets, the most eminent divines, the brightest orators, the ablest historians, the most skilful physicians, and the profoundest philosophers, in a word, all who have been famous for excelling in learning, wisdom, and parts, have condemned the women to perpetual subjection, and less noble, less perfect, and consequently inferior to men. The laws of all common-wealths are so many confirmations of the subjection they have ever been in. Neither can the men free them from this subjection, without revolting against the decree of Heaven, which appointed them masters, as I have already shown, and therefore need not repeat. There are not wanting other texts of scripture to confirm this matter. *Ecclesiasticus*, ch.vii. absolutely forbids the men to give woman any power over their minds; and the prophet *Micab* positively says to them, *Keep the doors of thy mouth from her who lyeth in thy bosom.*

. . . How exactly of a mind are the divines and the poets! *Euripedes* tells us, that of all animals, especially the intellectual ones, woman is the poorest thing. Therefore, says *Pittacus*, "keep womankind in subject." *Tibullus* says, "they are a cruel generation void of all Faith." *Menander* says almost the same, and adds that "when a woman speaks with most affability, it is then she is most to be dreaded." And if we believe *Plautus* "Once a woman has any mischief in her head, sickness, nay what is worse old age, is less insupportable to her, than being thwarted in the pursuit of it. Either let her complete it, or you make her completely miserable. But if by chance or whim she attempts anything that is good, how soon is she sick and tired of it! Whatever you do, if she begins anything tolerable, never be afraid of her hurting herself; she'll be sure to do little enough. For women have a natural Genius for exceeding in mischief, but are never guilty of excess in what is right."

The greatest of orators are not the most favourable to them, and the best the character *Cicero*, one of the ablest, had to give them, was that they are a covetous race, sovereignly ruled by the inordinate love of lucre. Nor are the physicians a jot more in their interest. We are assured by *Philo* that the women, according to the common received opinion of the faculty "are but a kind of imperfect men, that their understandings are naturally weaker than ours, and that they are incapable of comprehending anything but what immediately falls under the jurisdiction of their sensation."

If we credit historians, whose opinions are less to be suspected as being founded on the irrefragable evidence of experience, we shall find women everywhere a weak, inconsistent generation, ever irresistibly led away by some predominant passion, which enslaves and engrosses them. "The fair sex (says *Tacitus*) is not only weak and unequal to toil, but, if truth may be spoken, cruel, ambitious, and greedy after power." *Valerius Maximus* goes yet further and assures us, that the practice of poison had still been unknown, if the cruel artifice of that sex had not made it necessary to enact laws against it.

Cato then was not the only wise man who thought the women unfit to govern. The sacred writers tell us they are not to be trusted; divines, poets, orators, physicians, and historians agree that they are weak, silly, poor, fickle, cruel, ambitious things, ever forward in mischief, ever sluggards in good. Pretty qualifications truly to entitle them to Government and public offices!

But let us suspend our judgment till we hear what the philosophers think. Those oracles of wisdom may perhaps be more their friends, and then it will ill become us to be their adversaries. Not at all; *Aristotle* tells us that "a city must needs be wretchedly governed which is governed by women," and well may he think so who tells us that "the judgment of boys is only imperfect, but that of women is absolutely impotent." Therefore, says an anonymous author, "when things are come to so bad a pass as to suffer an old woman to reign, or interfere in state affairs, nothing better is to be expected than to see her rend the state and involve it in calamities and confusion." Among men the oldest are generally the fittest to govern, because the most confirmed in wisdom and experience, but in women, according to this author, age is incapable of any wisdom: and no wonder at it, when their judgment is all impotence.

To which if we add their natural itch of tattling, their invincible curiosity, and their innate aversion to secrecy, it can no longer be doubted that they are absolutely unfit for public Government, and every office connected with it. Nothing more requisite in one who is to be entrusted with Government, than a steadiness which no curiosity can make giddy, and nothing more powerful to make a woman give up the most important interests of her own or others than curiosity. Secrecy is the very soul of public administration, which to require from that tongue-punished race would be downright barbarity. The wise Romans were thoroughly convinced of the natural incapacity of women for

keeping a secret, and therefore were kind enough to them never to entrust any of them with one. Every one knows the stratagem young *Papirius* was forced to make use of to satisfy his mother's curiosity, without betraying the secrets of the Senate. Being one day extremely solicited by her to reveal the subject of that morning's debate, to rid himself of her importunities, he was reduced to the necessity of feigning, that a law was proposed to allow the men a plurality of wives. There needed no more to alarm the whole sex. *Papirius*'s mother, spite of her solemn engagements, divulges it to all the women she knew, and they to as many more, till the whole tribe of wives, acquainted with it, formed themselves into a league, and began to make open opposition to a law so odious to them. How safe would the young Senator have been, had he been indiscreet enough to trust his tattling mother with a real secret as he did with a fiction!

Plutarch tells us of another Senator, who, teased by his wife, on the like score, beyond all power of toleration, and unwilling to mortify her, told her, that a lark being seen to fly over the Senate house with a golden helmet on his head and a spear on his claws, the augurs had been consulted, to know what it could portend. To make it appear the more like a real secret, he had had the precaution to exact from her the most solemn vows of privacy, assuring her that nothing less than his life could atone for his divulging it to her, should it be known he had done so. But what force could the fear of a husband's death have to make a woman keep a secret, who must herself burst or vent it? No sooner had her husband taken leave of her, to return again to the Senate, than she eased herself of the intolerable burden, and the tale flew so swiftly about the city, that, before he got to his journey's end, he had it whispered in his ear as a profound secret, by one who supposed him to have been absent from the Senate. At his return home he charges his wife with having undone him. But she, with a confidence peculiar to that sex, flatly denies her having divulged what he entrusted her with; and to silence him at once, of three hundred Senators in the house, why should the secret be supposed to come from you alone, says she? She had carried her boldness yet farther, but for his stopping her mouth by telling her, that it was a fiction of his own making.

Fulvius was far from coming off so well, but he must blame himself for knowing womankind no better. We are obliged to *Plutarch* for the account. *Augustus* displeased with *Fulvius* for disinheriting his own nephews in favour of *Livia*'s children, blamed him for it; and he like a silly oaf was weak enough to tell it his wife. She immediately tells the Empress of it; and the Empress upbraided the Emperor with it. So that the next time *Fulvius* went to court was to receive a severe reprimand from *Augustus*, and the pleasure of finding himself undone. And what did he get by returning home to tell his wife what she had done, and that he was resolved to stab himself? Why, no other satisfaction than to be answered that he was a fool and deserved no better fate, for living with her for so long without finding out that she was a true woman, and could not keep a secret.

What shall we say after this? Shall we agree with *Sophia*, that the women are fit for Government and public offices? Or shall we not rather conclude them absolutely unqualified for them; and that the ancients were undoubtedly right in saying that *woman are no more to be trusted than their wombs* - these not being more liable to miscarry of their fruits than they of the trusts we deposit in them?

If England has been so wise to admit these evils to reign over us when necessary to avoid greater evils, is that any proof that they are qualified for it? No 'twas not their capacity, but our prudence placed them on the throne, to remove occasions of bloodshed and other ill effects of civil dissension. And though it must be confessed that during the reign of some of our women, this nation has been in its most flourishing condition; yet whether ought it to be attributed to, the capacity of the soft cyphers placed over us, or the wisdom of the ministry which made them of some account. Mere adjectives of Nature, what use could they have been of but for the substantial support of their counsel and parliament? Into which none, not even themselves ever thought it worth while to introduce a woman.

However, I am apt to think that the pretty fawning faces of these fair creatures would go a great way towards wheedling us into the folly of admitting them to a share in public offices, if we could discern in them the least talent for governing their own families. Whereas without much study we need but step into the next house we can think of, where the gray mare is the better horse, to find a Babylon of anarchy and confusion.

Belluina's is the first in my mind, let us pay her a visit then. To do her justice, nothing can be more decent than her apartments, her whole house from the cellars to the stairs, from the kitchen to the closet are so many varied scenes of finished neatness; not the meanest piece of furniture owes its situation to the hand of chance; every table has its proper post; every picture its fellow; there's not a chair a hair's breadth from its place; not a carpet but what is mathematically spread; nay, woe to Mrs. Betty if the very china is not as regularly disposed as the features in her Ladyship's face. From such an orderly economy in trifles who would not expect to find a little Commonwealth, where peace and decorum have taken up their residence? But a moment's patience, and the all-divulging tea-table will set you right. An insufferable troop of ill-trained brats are called in to expose their want of manners, and put yours on the trial. Pretty Miss must throw your hat about, Master Jacky must put his fingers in your eyes, Charlie in your dish; and Tommy, her favorite for never doing what his father bids him, should offer to wipe his greasy fingers on your coat, you must suffer him to do so, or be as much in her disgrace as John, who had his head broke but an hour ago, just where you see the plaster, for hastily setting Veny upon the bare ground to save my Lord from falling downstairs. Happily for John he is in her Ladyship's good graces, or he had fared no better than Fanny the housemaid, who had warning given her, for letting a tea-cup fall to hinder the house from taking fire. But this lucky fellow, who is too much used

to his Lady to be often guilty of such mistakes, has absolutely rooted himself into his post by once leaving a butt of wine to run about the cellar rather than let the parrot call him twice. So despotic is *Belluina* in her family! Her children, sure never to be corrected but when they behave well, are incessantly rude and unruly; and her servants, never sure that her Ladyship will think what they do right, are always doing wrong, with as sedate a confusion as the workmen of Babel. If you call for a teaspoon a saucer is brought you; and if you have a mind for sugar you must call for the milk-pot. But it's time to leave this orderly Lady, Miss's cap you see is the tenth part of an inch awry; the lightning in her mother's looks are portentous of a storm, and once it breaks out the house will be too hot for every one in it. Her Ladyship can bear anything but disorder in trifles; but that like a true woman she is so averse to, that she'll rather throw herself, her family and even her country into confusion, than suffer the symmetry of a curl or a cap to be broken with impunity. Whence it appears that all this excellent Lady's qualifications for Government are owing to her happy want of sense to set others right, and temper to curb herself when wrong.

Muccabella has a great deal more temper but much less sense than *Belluina*. She can with incredible calmness see her house a perpetual dung-hill, for want of brains to reflect how ill it becomes the fortune she has, and the figure she affects. She has a number of servants, every one of which is too busy, in helping their mistress to litter the rooms, ever to be clean themselves. Neither is it fit they should disgrace their superiors by being less dirty than they are. About seven months ago, before she was a widow, I went for the first and last time to breakfast with her and her gouty husband and family. The dirty disorder of the room I was introduced to offended me less than the rankness of my company poisoned me. It is true I was forced to stand for some time, every chair in the place being taken up with some greasy heap; one with foul plates, another with the Lady's stays, and the rest with miscellaneous muck. At length however I was helped to a chair and dish of excellent coffee from a silver tea-board, placed on a large table near my old gouty friend, and jumbled together with a mangled piece of beef, a woman's dirty night-cap, a comb-brush, an old stocking, and a urinal. The conversation I was entertained with was a piece with the persons who held it: 'twas an argument between the Lady and her husband, who would fain have persuaded her that one clean shift a week could not prejudice her health. But with all her meekness she had been put out of temper, if Mamma's own daughter had not taken up the argument, and insisted that the trouble was needless when a pair of sleeves would do as well. It must be thought I could not be fond of staying in such a disorderly Jakes: accordingly I took leave never to return thither again. My old friend followed my example not long after: he died in about two months, and was sent to rot in a decent tomb after having lived many years buried in a disorderly sink of sluttery. However I have been lately informed that this Lady has put her children in a terrible fright, by turning cleanly at last. They are under dreadful apprehensions of her marrying again; and not without some reason. For she has washed her hands and face twice since my friend's death, has the dining room swept once a week,

and has shifted her no less than three times in one fortnight. Whatever might be said of *Muccabella* the wife, it cannot be disowned that the widow discovers a tolerable disposition for Government, and public offices. For if outward cleanliness is any proof of inward neatness, and if an orderly outside is an indication of no confusion within, why may not she be at least advanced to the dignity of Mistress of Ceremonies to the Court?

Priscilla is akin to neither of the former: not finically nice nor carelessly sluttish. She loves neatness and knows when she sees it, but has been too genteely bred to be able to give any directions towards it. For the very economy of her table she is forced to depend upon the discretion of her servants: and if her housekeeper should desert her, she would be as much puzzled to order a dinner, as a blind man could be to find out his way without a guide. This was a secret to her husband, till an unlucky accident brought him acquainted with it. One day when he was without a housekeeper he came home and desired his wife to add another dish to the table, because he should bring an acquaintance or two home with him. She did as he ordered her; and the gentlemen when they sat down had the solid satisfaction of two legs of mutton and turnips to feed on at the first course. A Lady so versed in domestic economy must needs be wondrous fit for public Government: must she not?

In justice to that sex I must not put an end to this subject without taking notice of *Prudentia*. She is one of your notable women, a tip-top housewife I assure you. There's not a secret in domestic management unknown to her. She can metamorphose a leg of mutton to a haunch of venison, make the Lark transmigrate to an Ortolan, and transform English hog's flesh into good Westphalia ham as ever was imported into Great Britain. She is perfectly acquainted with the mystery of making butter and cheese, jellies, conserves, sweet meats, cordials, and what not. Gardening she is quite learned in, and at the needle she is perfect mistress. Nay she is a good accomptant too. In short, nothing which relates to economy comes amiss to her. And yet she is not vain of all these accomplishments. For though she does often plague us with her dissertations upon these subjects, 'tis ever the commendable view of learning what she knows not, or showing us how much she does know. So far is she from being proud that she has stooped to the humble office of boiling an egg; and, to show how fit she was to govern, she submitted once, in her husband's life time, to boil him a pig pursuant to his own request. But, such is the fatality of that poor sex, she has forfeited, since a widow, all her reputation of wisdom, in the management of her children; though she has but two to manage. Possessed of a thousand pounds a year at her own disposal, she has withstood the temptation of a second match to lay up all for them; and has made no better use of it than to ruin one by excess of extravagance, and the other by extreme niggardliness. By giving her daughter a profusion of money and liberty, she has afforded her the means to gain the title of Mother independent of Wedlock. And to make amends for that error in the care of her son, has kept him so short of money, that to get rid of twelve penny dun he has married a fritter- woman.

Strange as this circumstance is, 'tis no less strange than true. Nevertheless *Prudentia* cannot be charged with want of love. All the defect lies in that want of talent for Government, which is so evident in that tender sex. It can no longer then be doubted that those poor pretty creatures must make a very sorry figure in Government and public offices, who appear so universally unqualified for the administration of private economy. But I fear I have proved this matter too plainly to them, and therefore not to give them the pain of more ungrateful truths on this head, I shall follow whither *Sophia* leads me, that is to consider.

CHAPTER V

What Capacity the Women have for Sciences.

I cannot help being of the same mind with the Duke of Britany quoted by Montagne in his essays, and every one in their right senses must think with us, that a woman is learned enough in conscience if she can distinguish between her husband's shirt and his breeches. A severer imprecation could scarce be uttered against the lovely sex than to wish them science-mad. 'Tis their pretty fluency in nonsense, and their bewitching confidence in ignorance, which give their charms the power of pleasing us in the soft moments, when unbending the mind from study we seek in their native folly a respite from sense and speculation. But why should we put them to the pains of learning to entertain us with that nonsense and ignorance in several languages? Why should they be suffered to distract their poor tender brains with hard words and technical terms: is it not enough that they can clip and carve their own mother tongue into a variety of dialects, without obliging them to confound others into a kind of mixed jargon, as unintelligible as the conversation of negroes?

I don't however pretend to dispute their natural Genius for words. It is undoubtedly to them we owe the preservation of that ancient and venerable language, called *gibberish*, which had long since been utterly lost but for their care and assiduity in cultivating it. It would therefore be highly ungrateful not to give them the praise due to their excellent talents in this branch of learning, especially since we reap such important advantages from their excellence in it. Without the instructions of those pretty jabbering creatures, we should be at a loss to converse with our own infants. Our ignorance would run us into the dilemma of either frightening them with plain English, or reducing them to the necessity of learning it much sooner than the usual time, and even before they had gone through the politer language of the nursery. How vulgar would it be to hear an infant say, "Pray mother give your little boy a plum!" Is it not infinitely more elegant to say, *Pay Mamma div eeky boy a pum.*" And how should a child ever be able to learn the latter preferably to the former, if the women were not more industrious in teaching them than we are? Besides, we are such natural dunces when put out of the road of sense, that we should never succeed in making children reach the eloquent unintelligible so soon as they do under their present teachers. For my own part I have been often in a nursery of young children, and, though ever so attentive to their conversation with one another, could understand no more of their meaning than if they had been so many Hottentots. Though every woman who came in, I found, was perfectly versed in their language. Well for me and them they were so, or I am afraid I

should often have done mischief, but particularly once. Being where two or three children were at play, on a sudden I heard one of them cry, and more good natured than wise was offering to pacify it with these barbarous words, *Pretty thing, what do you cry for?* But the children were terribly frightened, and for aught I know had all fallen into fits at the cannibal sound, if a learned woman in the room had not interpreted my meaning in familiar gibberish, which it seems runs thus: *Peety sing! did um ky, did um vets it, sall um beat paw paw man, div me a bow den, dare, doe paw man doe.* These mellifluous sounds quite tranquillized the little peevish gentry, and finished to convince me of how great importance it is to mankind that this feminine science should be kept up.

So far then from thinking the Ladies incapable of teaching at least this branch of knowledge, I am for moving the legislature for the establishment of a female university for that purpose. And if I were not afraid of offending my fair antagonist's great modesty, I would, with all due submission to higher powers, propose her for Chancellor. One of the professors I have already in my eye; 'tis a Lady who keeps a female academy in Blackfriars. I was agreeably surprized, some time ago, to find her excellent talents, for such a purpose, displayed on the very board over her door. Where was written in golden capitals these elegant words, *Yong Laydis taut to spill and imbrawther.* Which by the nicest of critics is translated thus, "Young Ladies taught to spell and embroider." But I have since had the satisfaction to hear that this piece of antique learning has brought her such a number of scholars, that she thinks it now beneath her to keep out a board, convinced of the old proverb, that *Good wine needs no bush.*

Nevertheless I would not have *gibberish* the sole affair of this university. No, I would have some taught to lisp a little *English*, and write it, however askew and unintelligibly. If I am not misinformed there is a Lady now at work upon a new English grammar for the use of the fair sex; which in all probability will take very much, as her chief view has been to save unnecessary trouble, by reducing the work to a very concise compass. Still she has spared no pains to make it of universal use to the women, and by the strength of her Genius, and continued application, she has abridged the whole art of grammar to four parts of speech, *lispings, misspelling, noise, and nonsense.* If my scheme should take effect, what a considerable figure would not this Lady make in an university chair?

I can by no means however consent to the women's losing any time in the study of the law. To complete a man a knave, it is absolutely necessary to make a lawyer of him. But every woman from her cradle is by nature a lawyer in this sense. They have all such finished talents for lying, dissembling, cajoling, undermining, equivocating and barefacedly cheating, that there is no law profane or sacred which they cannot argue away or brazen out. 'Tis rather than a woeful shame their knowledge of this kind has no bridle put to it, than any ways likely they should improve us or themselves by any farther advances.

What a disgrace to her sex, and what a bane to ours, is *Lolia*, with all her

jurisprudence. There is no tricking attorney she has not out-tricked, no sharpening counsellor she has not bit, and no both-sided sergeant she has not outwitted. There's not a court in England but she is versed in the practice of, and not a quirk in it but she has made use of. She has cozened a bribe-worthy Judge into open perversion of the law, and bilked him after all of the premium of his iniquity. She has forged away an eminent knave's ears without risking her own, and married away the estate of an honest dupe of rank from his lawful issue, to squander it away upon her own lawless mongrel. Her greatest praise is the having utterly ruined many, and greatly injured all she ever had to do with. The never having built upon one honest plea the numberless suits she has had upon her hands; and the having gained many causes without using any honest means; though she never lost a single one for want of any knavish artifice in her power. To sum up the litigious merit of this Machiavelian Lady in few words; without ever poring over Littleton or Coke, there is no law so plain which could any ways concern her, but what she has baffled by the sanction of the laws themselves. So idle and needless is it for that sex to study the chicaneries of the law; so easy is it for them without study to be perfect in the practice, and so pernicious is this perfection in them to all who have any concerns with them? I would therefore, for *Lolia's* sake, have all matters of law banished the female province under pain of death.

Indeed they may, if they think proper, erect a faculty of their own to give a grace to the mischief they do with their nostrums. To qualify them for physicians there is nothing wanting but a little solemnity of phiz, the use of spectacles, and a profuseness of unintelligible jargon; though the latter, thanks to their propitious stars, their natural glibness of tongue, and fondness for hard words, gives them an admirable disposition for.

For history I think they have an uncommon capacity: at least one of the most noted productions in that kind is thought to be the work of a female Genius. For though a Reverend Bishop, in compliance with the modesty of its real author, was so kind to lend his name to the celebrated history of his own times, it is believed by many that this Chaplains old grandmother had the chief hand in it. In politics and novels too they are remarkable for excelling: their propensity to intriguing qualifies them for the latter, and the former they are assisted in by curiosity and the gift of tattle.

Novilia is an excellent newspaper, which neither tires your eyes, nor sounds your purse: your ears are at all the expense of your information. There is not a thing happens or can happen but she knows or invents, unless there be too much probability in it. She can fettle the affairs of all Europe with as great facility as the grounds in her coffee-pot; can carry on war with equal resolution; and has actually taken more ships from Spain since the rupture, than Admiral Haddock had time to take; nay than that nation has to lose. I was informed of the convention by her two hours before I read it in a *Hague* letter; and had from her some months ago the joyful news of Cuba being taken by Admiral *Vernon*;

which if it was not true, was very near being so; but luckily for the Spaniards the Admiral had not yet quitted the Downs. She has often communicated to me the important conferences a certain great monarch had in bed with his wife. And if she is not always right in her accounts it is owing to the impolitic proceedings of the ministers of state. For to give her her due, in telling you what is done, she only means to acquaint you with what she thinks ought to be done. I would by all means therefore have a chair erected in the female university, for the instruction of such women as discover a Genius for politics: but that they may be of some use to the public, I would humbly propose to the Government to take off the duty from all other newspapers, and lay it upon these living *Gazettes*.

In the Chair, for the Education of such as have a peculiar talent for novels, I would have the works of the learned authors Mrs. *Behn* and Mrs. *Manly* read as the standard of that Science; and as impiety and smut are considerable branches of it, I would have those passages, which are the most remarkable for either, particularly enforced to the fair students. I know no one more happy for a communicative faculty, in that part of literature, and therefore none likely to make a more able Professor of it, than the witty *Saphira*, that surprising Genius the first essay of whose incomparable pen was closed in the sprightly parentheses of bawdy and blasphemy. The Lady, you must know, is a freethinker by profession; but most firmly believes there is a God, because folks will have it there is none: though she can with a becoming ease talk of him in as careless a manner as she does of the Devil, whom she looks upon as a mere fiction, and wishes she had nothing to trouble her more than the Fears of Hell. For she is very sure God is too good to make such a troublesome being, or such a dismal place. As she has, besides these accomplishments, a tolerable taste for poetry she may give her pretty scholars a little tincture of it by reading to them Mrs. *Barber's* "Family Poems", unless she should think it more instructive to paraphrase Mrs. *Behn's* piece upon *Enjoyment*.

If I mistake not, *Sophia* disclaims, in the name of her whole sex, the privilege of interfering in matters of Divinity: though she still contends hard for their natural aptness for it. What commission she may have from her pretty clients to give up so considerable a claim I know not. However, I am absolutely of opinion, that it becomes them full as well to hold forth on the subject of religion in a Church as in their drawing-rooms; in a pulpit as at a tea-board; and both are as graceful in them as riding astride would be. What schism ever rended the Church, which they have not had a principal hand in? What error ever crept in among Christians which they have not been industrious to forward? What point too abstruse in religion which they are not for deciding? If they must be Chamber-Divines, why do they not even go farther and seize the Church and pulpit too? Why do they not copy after that female pattern of consistency, *Dromonia*? This fleshly Tabernacle of Spirit hath wisely thrown off all idle forms, to preach the outward man into the arms of the inward one. Convinced of the Light within her, she hath not buried it under a bushel; at her levee, but

has placed it on a candlestick in the House of the Lord, that it may give Light unto all that are in it. And the Lord in return hath so replenished her with the Light of his Knowledge, that she expoundeth the Scriptures without ceasing, and bursteth not, albeit she knoweth not how to read them. He hath made her a picklock of Wisdom, and given unto her a key to open the greatest mysteries of the revelations, and show that there is no mystery in them; to unfold the prophets as she unfoldeth her apron; and to expose the evangelists as she exposeth herself. Nay he hath given her a two-edged tongue for a snare, two rolling eyes for a bait; he hath added claws unto her fingers, and behold she goeth forth like unto a fisher of men, and spreadeth her snowy arms like unto a net. But the Spirit bloweth where it listeth; and the Sons of Flesh will not bite at the bait, nor be caught in the net.

However unsuccessful the industry of this female Divine is, I think she is a living proof of the ability of that sex for the study of Theology. And therefore I am not against their erecting a Chair to teach, and appointing her the Professor.

But I can by no means give into their puzzling their little delicate heads with the more intricate study of philosophy of any sort. Every branch of that is built upon reason, and reason they have nothing to do with. However as they have some faint glimmerings of it, I don't pretend to say there will be any harm in their gaining a little superficial smatch of some trifles dependent on philosophy: such as a few mysterious terms, a small number of detached sentences, and here and there a trite experiment. These will suffice to make any woman as learned as she need be, and these any woman may pick up without much cost.

I was lately, entertained by one of your very learned Ladies in her study, where I had the opportunity, during a short space she left me alone there, to take a survey of her library, and the choice collection which had contributed to make her such a scholar. As I found it very curious I was at the pains of writing a catalogue, which I shall here transcribe for the benefit of all the fair lovers of polite learning. So far am I from envying them any opportunity of improving their talents:

Her books then stood in the following order.

"The Atalantis", "A Common-prayer-book", "Rochester's Poems", "Preparation for Communion", "Love's Last Shift", "Meditations of Death", "A Patch Box", "Paradise Lost", "The Art of being Easy at all Times", "Behn's Novels", "Whitefield's Sermons", "Ovid's Art of Love", "Advice of a Mother to her Son and Daughter", "Petronius in English", A Bible, "A Paper of Pins", "A Thee-and-Thou Almanack", "The Moral Philosopher", "The Pilgrim's Progress", "Geography of Children", "The Tatlers", "A Pocket Looking Glass", "Dacier's Homer", "Persian Tales", "The Merry Jester", "Essay on Midwifery" . . . in a vacancy lay Swift's "Dressing-Room", with a housewife upon it stuffed with silks, and a paper of Spanish wool, "The Plain-Dealer", "Law's Serious Call to a

devout Life", "Tale of a Tub", "Dyche's Spelling-Book", "The Whole Duty of Man", "The Art of getting Beautiful Children" . . .

After having given an account of her library, it is fit I should give some idea of its fair owner. She has read a great deal, and has a very good memory; can talk incoherently in five several languages; has translated and even composed; is a critic in prose and an author in verse. But with all this deal of learning and memory, she neither knows how to set her cap straight, nor can remember to buckle her shoes. . . . It must be owned, that if this Lady is a scholar she is a very sluttish one; and the much she reads is to little purpose, since it can make nothing better than a bookish slattern. . . . For my part, after seeing such an instance of the ill consequence of literature in women, I cannot but be of *Juvenel's* mind, as Mr. Dryden translates him,

*That of all plagues, the greatest is untold;
The book-learned wife in Greek and Latin bold.
The Critic-Dame, who at her table sits;
Homer and Virgil quotes, and weighs their wits;
And pities Dido's agonizing fits.
She has so far the ascendant of the board,
The prating pedant puts not in one word:
The man of law is nonplussed, in his suit;
Nay every other female tongue is mute.
Hammers and beating anvils, you would swear,
And vulcan with his whole militia there.
Tabors and trumpets cease;
for she alone Is able to redeem the labouring moon.
Even wit's a burden, where it talks too long:
But she, who has no continence of tongue,
Should walk in breeches, and should wear a beard;
And mix among the philosophic herd.
O what midnight curse has he,
whose side Is pestered with a mood and figure bride?
Let mine, ye gods! (if such must be my fate)
No logic learn, nor history translate;
But rather be a quiet, humble fool:
I hate a wife to whom I go to school,
Who climbs the grammar tree, distinctly knows
Where noun, and verb, and participle grows;
Corrects her country neighbour; and a-bed
For breaking priscian's breaks her husband's head.*

Neither Juvenal nor I deny that women may acquire some superficial learning: all we contend for is that it is ever ill bestowed upon them, inasmuch as it renders them useless to their own sex, and a nuisance to ours. Of which the Lady whose portraiture I have just given is a signal proof. If *Sophia* should

bring me a few instances out of the common rule, what will she get by it? I grant that Greece has shown its *Sappho*; Rome her *Cornelia*; France has produced *Dacier*; Holland has brought forth a *Schurman*; Italy a Doctress; and, more blessed than all, England now boasts an *Eliza* and a *Sophia*: what then? Are seventy instances, though seventy times seven times doubled, in upwards of five thousand seven years, sufficient to prove a general capacity in women for knowledge and learning? Would my fair antagonist think horses a fit party for her at quadrille, if I should instance some of that species which have been dabs at *put*? Or would she like to be confined to the conversation of parrots because many of them can talk a great deal? No: neither can we deem the women fit associates for us in the study of sciences, because a few have had a tolerable smattering of them. But let us proceed to view them in another light in the following question.

CHAPTER VI

Whether Women are naturally qualified for Military Offices, or not?

Idle as I think this question, it is necessary to take it into a minute's consideration, in complaisance to my fair adversary, who is disposed to think it of some importance. Indeed, in one sense I am of her mind: for I cannot help wishing, for the good of my own sex, that the women, however unqualified for military exploits, were obliged to engage in all the wars, civil dissensions, family feuds, and bloody broils they are the original authors of; since, in all probability, their natural aversion to danger would have made them less forward to expose us to it. I would have every jilting coquet, who prides herself in measuring the love of her dupes by the length of their swords, be compelled to act the part of a second in the fray. And as for those Ladies who have pride and prettiness enough to set their families on cutting one another's throats, to involve their country in civil discord, or to let nations at a bloody strife, I would have them singled out, like so many *Curatia* and *Horatia*, to decide the dispute with their own blood, and spare unnecessary slaughter. Thus, knowing themselves doomed to heal at their own cost the mischiefs of their own making, they would be less fond of discord, or we should be less the victims of it. But to expect them to expose their pretty carcasses to perils or hardships for the safety of their country, the good of the public, or the defense of virtue, would be requiring impossibles from them. Magnanimity, as an illustrious author observes, was never expected from that pusillanimous sex. Each sex, indeed, has its perfections, but greatness of soul was never numbered among feminine accomplishments. Nature from the beginning fixed an essential difference between man and woman, not more in strength of body than of mind; and, though she gave them both some virtues not unlike in appearance, yet she distributed those virtues between them in very unequal shares. What is the utmost strength of woman but the struggle of imbecility? What her greatest bravery, but cowardice made desperate?

And yet I will not pretend to say that every woman is a coward, or that any of them are always such: No, women can be sometimes fearless, but that is only when vice inspires their valour. And then what is it they cannot do or dare? For, as Mr. *Dryden* says after *Juvenal*,

*Each inconvenience makes their virtue cold;
But womankind in ills is ever bold.*

Tremula is as tender a Lady, and as easily feared as any I know of her whole

sex. Too pretty to tread the ground in a vulgar manner, she cannot stand, though it should be to save her husband from ruin, much less can she walk the enormous length of a room, unless she has a man to lean upon, or the happiness to forget herself. Music, indeed, has a miraculous effect on the harmonious creature, it can solidate her too supple sinews, and give her force to foot it, without fainting, for four and twenty hours together; though her joints are naturally so very weak, that she can seldom succeed to take two steps and a half without tripping. I myself have known her laid up with a cold for the whole winter, by rashly venturing across a boarded entry to her coach before the maid could spread the carpet, for all her husband had warmed her clogs very carefully: and at this very time is dangerously ill of a toothache, which she got by inconsiderately going one night to the play without earrings. What makes the danger greater is that she cannot be bled. The sight of a lancet would throw her into a swoon; and her fits are frequent enough, without seeking occasions to make them more so. She is always in a panic at best. For conscious to herself of being something very precious, she never thinks herself thoroughly safe. The buzz of a gnat will awake her from the profoundest dream of tranquillity; the rustling of her own silks has often set her on trembling; and in another person's house, she has fainted away at the sight of her own sweet self in a glass, before she had time to recollect the dear idol's features. All edge tools she has an utter dread of; two cross knives are sufficient matter at any time to metamorphose the fearful thing into an aspin leaf; her husband's sword, though as harmless as Harlequin's sabre, she can tolerate nowhere but at his side; and one day finding him, as she came into his closet, with a razor in his hand, she fairly fell back into the arms of the footman; and what would have been the consequence I cannot say, if Richard had not unlaced her, while his master went after the housekeeper for her Lady's drops. So delicate and fearful is pretty *Tremula*. And yet, averse as I am to hazards, I would venture an even wager of a small matter, that if Richard had the sense to feel her pulse, and guess at her constitution, he might enable her to walk three or four miles to an assignation of mischief, in the darkest night, without fear of meeting in the way of a bear, or a bug-a-boe: if I may be allowed this female elegance.

And why not; *Viragina* is as slender and delicate to appearance as herself; and yet she can do that and more. Strong and stout as the tallest officers in our standing army, horse or foot, she can leap a five-barred gate, keep at the heels of a fox, and set a buck at bay, with the best of them. She can turn her horse adrift, take her dog and her gun on a winter's day, and without fear of colds or catarrhs ramble miles in the dirt, to a solitary coppice, in pursuit of her game. No weather can keep her at home, and no dangers can fright her from venturing abroad. In the country she can stroll a whole day, from cover to cover, after a brace of woodcocks; and, moon or no moon, can traipse all night through thick and thin from village to village, after a single fidler. In town she is as undaunted; can swagger at a card table, riot at a tavern, and ramble through the streets from bagnio to bagnio, with as much security in a hack as in her own coach; and that at hours when the honestest part of the watchmen are scarce safe.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that this Lady is vigorous and undaunted alike in everything. No; in every thing that is good and commendable, she is all impotence and panic; and would be full as feeble and fearful as *Tremula* herself, even in these her favourite amusements, if the toil and danger of them should once assume the face of virtue. 'Tis mischief then, dear, dear mischief, which spirits *Viragina* to be so vigorous, and act so valiantly. Vice and mischief alone are capable of making that sex summon all its latent strength, and forget all its fears. Inspired by evil, what will they not hazard? Vice shall make a *Thalestris* equal to the labour of rambling after an *Alexander*; make *Sheba's* Queen overlook the dangers of a long and unknown road; and humble an Empress, *Messalina*, a Roman Empress, to walk the streets. Every woman is a *Hippia*, pressed in the lists of virtue; slow, impotent and heartless, scared by an atom, fainting at a rose. But place the goal of vice, or standard of iniquity within their reach, all volunteers of sin and lust, they'll hurry to it with the utmost eagerness; forsake their husbands, the tenderest of husbands, forget their children, parents, blood and friends, dare foaming seas, snuff pitch and tar, feed on carrion with a gusto, lie hard, work harder, and go through all sufferable woes to gain the point in view.

Can it then be denied, that some women have strength and courage enough to qualify them for military offices? And yet what *Pascal* says, in his political maxims, is still true:

"Nothing is more certain, than that the fair sex is not only weak and unequal to toil; but even, if truth is no treason, as impotent as they are cruel-minded, ambitious, and greedy of power; which they are to such an excess, that they know no moderation in their disorders, when, shameless enough to herd with warriors, they expose themselves to public view at the head of armies, range troops, march with a regiment at their tail, and value themselves upon their own dexterity in all military exercises. Though when I see any such forward woman, I cannot help thinking I see a monkey aping the actions of a man."

And in reality, what can be more ridiculous or indecent? Is it not full as unseemly a sight to behold a woman giving the word of command to her troops, leading them up to combat in battle array, and giving them the signal of onset, as to see a man knotting, knitting, handling a distaff, or embroidering his wife's petticoat? The reason is plainly that which *Buchanan* gives us from *Rennodius*, that everything unnatural and out of character is offensive, and therefore wrong. And therefore what appears and is, in a valiant man, gallantry, bravery and sturdiness, is, in a forward woman, madness, arrogance and cruelty; as on the contrary, what makes a woman elegant, makes a man deformed; as the dress and ornaments which add grace and dignity to her beauty, but serve to make him a finical, pragmatic, enervate coxcomb. It is no praise then, but rather a disgrace, to any of that soft sex to be qualified for military offices. For, as the same learned writer observes, the more their natural weakness is a curb to their violent sallies of imagination and whim, so when they give a loose to

libertinism, the greater lengths are they sure to run, and with the more difficulty are they brought back to their former modesty, if ever they are. And such of them as are something more robust and dauntless than the generality are but the more dangerous evils for being so; inasmuch as their impetuosity of temper is ever more furious. So that when once a woman, impatient of her sex, throws off the soft character which is properly hers, she will never fail to carry her insolence beyond the bounds which even men of any sense fix to their boldness.

And yet I don't believe it absolutely impossible for a woman to have a true courage, animated by real virtue, but I look upon such a woman as a miracle, out of the common course of Nature. As such I consider the immortal *Boadicea*, and as such I profoundly revere the more immortal *Sophia*, when she tells us, that she *could, with more ease and less repugnance, dare the frowns and fury of an already victorious army, which she had forces to resist, than she could stoop to court the smiles of a corrupt minister whom she had reason to despise*. Sentiments so like my own compel me to believe her, though a woman; and I admire (I had almost said adore) her for them. Words are but words at best, and hers are no more. But the spirit they are uttered with is a proof to me of their being the overflowings of a heart capable of the execution. But will *Sophia* pretend to say there are many women like her in this particular; or that the bulk of womankind are not pusillanimous things? If the sun halted once at the valiant Joshua's word of command, must its course be interrupted for every impertinent bully? And if virtuous courage has taken a seat in one woman's breast, shall all the heartless generation lay a claim to that extra-privilege? No; miracles allowed for, timidity, like all other defects of men, is an ornamental perfection in women, and inseparable, in some degree or other, even from those virago dames who launch out of nature into affectation.

I will agree with my fair antagonist so far, that *the virtuous are always timid*; but can draw no conclusion thence in favour of her sex, till she makes it appear that *the timid are always virtuous*. The contrary to which I have already so plainly instanced in those little heartless pretty mischiefs, that I need add nothing more to convince a rational creature, that the women are as little qualified for military employments as honour, truth, or importance, as they are for every other office in life, except that for which they were given us, that is, the propagation of human nature.

CONCLUSION

From what I have hitherto said it must appear, to all who have the least degree of understanding, that if the merit of women be weighed by the end of their production, and the circumstances attending it, by their natural capacity, and the practice they have applied it to in all ages; by the living variety of instances of their folly, inconsistency, impotence in good, and propensity to evil, they are not only wide of the perfection of man, but even almost infinitely beneath him. So that far from having any just title, or even plausible pretence, to claim an equality of power, dignity and esteem with him; the very privileges they enjoy can only be looked upon as so many instances of his generosity to them.

If we trace their conduct through every age, and consider it in all lights, we shall find them everywhere, even in their seeming differences, the same; emptily vain, foolishly conceited, and ambitiously groveling; at once covetous and extravagant to extremes; restless even in indolence, and false in their very fits of fondness; in their hatred cruel, in their love lascivious, and then most treacherous, when most industrious to show sincerity. What else do we find in women but the bane of friendship, an inevitable pain, a native temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic snare, a flattering mischief, the very essence of evil, under the semblance of good? If then there is a heinous crime in dismissing them when ours, it must surely be owned as heavy grievance to be forced to retain them, though uncertain of their being only ours. And yet such the hapless dilemma man is reduced to, when tied to that frail toy of woman; in danger of becoming an adulterer if he dismisses her, or of harbouring an adultress if he keeps her.

Nevertheless it must be owned, that woman, though essentially an evil, is a necessary one: but then so much the more burdensome is she for being so; since what is most endearing in her makes our danger the more imminent, and our only security is in what must render her intolerable. The man, who weds a beautiful woman, measures a mark for every libertine's lechery. But he who marries a plain one, marries lechery itself. The former will find it an arduous task to preserve inviolated his private property in the object of public lust. And how wretched must be the fate of the latter, to be confined to the society of one, whom none else would condescend to couple with! However upon the whole there may be, perhaps, much less misery annexed to the possession of a homely wife, than to the difficulty of keeping a handsome one chaste. But still it is plain there is misery in both.

Well then might *Cato* say, that "but for woman the world would be without woe, and the celestial beings would delight to mingle their conversation with

ours." It is well remarked by a learned author that *Cato* spoke not by guess but from his own fatal experience. And who better qualified to give a proper idea of the artifices of those common mischiefs, than one who was himself the dupe of them? Their vices and follies alike are carried to such an excess, that nothing could make them credible but conviction; and nothing but experience could justify the belief of it in one who were almost conscious of the reality. But *Cato* had the trial, and to his sorrow found the fair, delusive flower of venus like the soft, silky, touch-ensnaring rose, beneath whose beauteous baneful blossom lies many a pointed thorn.

But I forget, *Cato* is no oracle with *Sophia*. Nor would he be such with me, was he particular in his opinion of the fair-sex. But surely all can never be mistaken. And do not all, who bear the character of wise, agree, that women are the shuttle-cocks of vice and folly, impotence and eagerness; the dupes of others passions, and jilted by their own. Do not all writers, sacred and profane, without comparing notes, combine in painting them false as they are fair, and silly as they are sweet; artful in modest guise, and impudent when lewd; treacherous, ambitious, slaves of avarice, the foes of reason, and never friends to thought, but when they think on mischief. If *Seneca* may be believed, "a woman never muses by herself, but she is musing on some wickedness." And if we discredit him, we must discredit all who have ever stooped to write about them. For all are of his mind, and all consider them at best as flattering, pleasing, desirable evils. *Democritus* was so convinced of this, that, being questioned, *why he who was himself so big had married a wife so little*, he answered, *Methinks*, says he, *as it is, I have chosen too big a one, when all I had to choose was evil*. But *Protagoras* went farther still, no evil according to him exceeds that Evil, *Woman*. What made him give his daughter in marriage to his mortal enemy? Ask him, and take his reason from himself, *I gave her to him*, says he, *because I could give him nothing worse*.

I should never have done were I to give a list of all the sages in every age who have thought like them. But what occasion have we for the authority of others to confirm a truth our own eyes are daily witnesses to? Let us look round the female world; what shall we find but weakness of head and corruption of heart, intolerable trifling, or destructive industry? A giddy tribe of useless things, made up of noise and nonsense, envy, malice, impertinence, and show? Mere murderers of time, averse to all that's good, and prone to all that's naught; proud only of what serves to humble them, and never humble but when 'tis base to be so; and but a fairer kind of fiends disguised in angels dresses, whose actions are the best antidote to the poison of their charms? Here their insatiable incontinence renders their beauty shocking; there their modesty is meant a cover to their own lust and an incentive to yours. In one house, you see a pretty, foolish, lifeless, moving statue; in another, a homely, bookish, pert prating Doctress, a retailer of cross-cross sentences, whose brain is a mere lottery-wheel of sense and nonsense drawn alike by chance, five hundred blanks to one prize, of no worth when examined. In a third you meet with a

housewifely shrew, a sober slut, an ignorant cypher, a gossiping politician, or a learned slattern. In a fourth a litigious cheat, a virago, bully, or phantom frightened at the crow of a cock. And everywhere you are sure to find an inconsistent set of fickle creatures, never for a minute themselves, but when most unlike us and nearest being unlike themselves; and never steady in anything but folly, vice and fickleness.

How unlike are these pretty, little-more-than-nothings, to that lordly creature, whose superiority of merit, as well as power and prerogative, their impotent ambition to be like him might alone suffice to convince them of, had they but one degree of understanding more than they have! *Man*, created by Nature to rule, was endowed with a soul equal to the task. His body is strong, his mind vigorous, and his heart resolute; his understanding is fitted for the most sublime speculations, and his person for the most hardy and important exercises. He can dive into the inmost secrets of Nature without losing himself; and has art enough to copy her noblest works, and almost to excel the great Original. He wants neither fancy to invent, nor Genius to contrive. With quickness to apprehend and memory to retain, he has judgment to discern, and can by distinguishing and comparing different ideas form the greatest of designs. Happy in a Genius for the most glorious enterprises he has both courage and conduct sufficient to execute them. For he is not only qualified by his intellectual capacity to be greatly wise, but naturally prompted to be truly good. In short, virtue and wisdom are the epitome of his character, where woman interferes not to corrupt it. If there are a few degenerate creatures, who answer not this character, they are such only as by conversing with womankind, putting on their foibles, and affecting to be like them, degrade themselves of manhood, commence intellectual eunuchs, and, though they are, deserve no more to be reputed of the same sex with us. But still the bulk of men were designed by Nature to be both greatly wise and eminently good. And there are as many instances to prove these characteristics in the men, as there are in women to prove their want of them, and natural incapacity for them.

How many men might we not point out, whom but to name would force that daring sex to own the little claim they have to equal merit with that noble creature, though all the female train should club their several worths to match it. To know what *man* is capable of being, examine what he really is when perfect. And to gain a true idea of all *men's* real merit, view any man in whom all manly virtues are blended.

Philanthropus is such, admired, esteemed, beloved by all who know him, and loving all mankind. Majestic in his person, of a lively understanding, and of manners gracious, affable and sincere; he is ever cheerful, never light; ever present to his company, never absent to himself. His voice is all harmony, his words all sense, his actions answer to his mien, and what he looks he is; discreetly daring, modest with becoming boldness, sprightly sedate, easy without levity, solid without solemnity, good by approved principle, and wise

by parts anticipating experience. His virtue not stiffened by austerity, nor his wisdom foiled by any fondness of showing it. Never elated by prosperity, adversity cannot depress him; always serene in every vicissitude of life, not from insensibility, but from thought, resolution, and conscious worth. Grateful to his maker he has nothing so much at heart as the true interests of religion, which he is incessantly studious to cultivate in himself, and frequently happy enough to promote in others. His unblemished conduct proves him the Christian he professes to be; In him faith free from bigotry and superstition, zeal according to knowledge, Godliness without ostentation or severity, and devotion without enthusiasm, give piety such an amiable aspect, as makes the practice of it inviting. Thus blessed, thus happy, thus worthy to be so, so far is he from taking pride in any advantages he possesses above others, that he looks on them as the common property of all. Nor is he more anxious to communicate those advantages to others, than sure to share in their miseries by a generous fellow-feeling of their misfortunes. The widow has a protector in him, the orphan a father; the wretched find him their relief, and all who are in distress or under oppression, their advocate, support, and defence. He never thinks himself so rich as when a poor man shares with him his fortune. His endeavours to surpass others in goodness, never hinder him from labouring to make them even better than himself. And he never approves his own wisdom but when it helps him to make others wise, or to discover some excellence in them. The good are ever sure of his esteem, the sage of his admiration, and both of his love and praise. For no merit escapes his acknowledgment which reaches his knowledge, as no demerit incurs his scorn or hatred, though it cannot elude his penetration. To the gift of knowing how to applaud the deserving, without putting them out of countenance, he joins the talent of reasoning or laughing others out of their follies and foibles, without exposing or offending them; ever sure to gain a friend by the worth he rewards, never in danger of making an enemy by the vice he discountenances. The foolish he is industrious to direct, and is indefatigable as well as informing the ignorant as in reforming the wicked. Those, whom he can better, he always encourages; and those whom he cannot, he pities, but never condemns; not more liberal of just commendation than sparing of deserved censure. He is just to the nicest point of honour, and sets no other bounds to benevolence than prudence prefixes. Glad of advice, he is not forward to give it, not conceited enough to offer it unasked but where 'tis a charity to do so. And when he does give it, his counsels are honest, open, and persuasive, the torch of reason and the flame of friendship; his encomiums are pathetic, emulative and insinuating, the spur of virtue, though the curb of pride; and his reproofs, gentle yet piercing; calm but not resolute; serious though soothing; candid and yet so piquing, that every haughtiness must stoop, and obstinacy itself submit to rule. Skilled in every science, versed in many languages, and master of every elegance, his learning serves not to make him arrogant, nor his eloquence to make him talkative. In a word, such judgment, propriety, energy, dignity and grace combine to dictate all he says, and inspire all he does, that envy itself considers him as a finished pattern of manly perfection; a nice Christian, a complete gentleman, a useful

friend, a prudent parent, and an indulgent husband; Good even where goodness seems fruitless; and wise even in a choice where wisdom has but the left hand of chance, the election of a wife.

Angelica, the fair the exquisitely fair *Angelica*, is the blessed object of this happy choice. In her person, oh! She is all beauty, softness, ease, and delicacy. Nature, in a strife of grandeur, fashioned her to show how far the charms of ocular perfection could be carried. And then she is good beyond what fancy can conceit of woman, and wise enough to copy from her husband such accomplishments as may be molded into female virtues. Yet her virtue neither renders her formal nor censorious; and her sense but serves to make her easily reserved and modestly free. Her only pride is to enrich her mind with such useful knowledge as may complete her a perfect mother, wise and friend. Without the ambition to appear learned, she has gained a sufficient tincture of the sciences to make herself an agreeable companion to her husband and all who converse with her. Though whenever she treats of learning, 'tis in a manner which shows rather a desire of receiving information than a consciousness of being able to afford it. The books she reads are such only as can assist her judgment and refine her morals, the choice of which she ever depends upon her husband for: and them she never suffers to break in upon the essential duties of her station; for study is only the occupation of her leisure hours, not the business of life. Her chief care is to please and be useful to her Lord; to nurse her children, to educate them in virtue, and to instill into them by her precepts and example an early aversion to vice, folly, idleness and trifling. And the next to this is the economy and government of her family; in which, with sensible subordination to her husband, she is absolute mistress, without being imperious; frugal without meanness, hospitable without prodigality, and neat without affectation. She can manage her domestic affairs without neglecting the service of her friends. Ever assiduous to oblige, she has the art of doing it without making an obligation a burden. The poor, the sick, the imprisoned, and distressed, all look upon her as a common mother; and that truly Christian piety, which gives life to all she does or thinks, inspires her with means to assist them all, which she does without the least exterior ostentation or inward vanity. Thus free from every vice she is deficient in no one commendable quality her sex can be capable of, but that of forgiving enemies; which she cannot practise for want of foes to forgive. For, respectful to those above her, courteous to her equals, affable to her dependents, and beneficent to all, she reigns the object of just admiration, respect, and esteem in every heart, and forces envy itself to wish for her friendship.

Such is *Angelica*, and such the height of womanish perfection, as near to that of man, as women's lovely faces in a glass appear to them. All that is wanting is the life, the truth, the reality. Still lifeless and feeble as their merit is, compared with manly worth, how happy might not man esteem himself, if each *Philanthropus* among mankind had an *Angelica* to match with. But such a one is too delicate a work for Nature to produce in every century. 'Tis like a

phoenix, the prodigy of an age; and such a miracle of completeness but serves to make the rest of the sex more contemptible by comparison, as *Michael* painted with the rebel Angels shows the fiends more frightful.

Let women then give up their claim to an equality with the men, and be content with the humble station which Nature has allotted them. If their souls are great enough to aspire to our esteem, let them learn from *Angelica* to be more deserving and less assuming. And since neither their capacity for head nor their dispositions of heart can lift them to emulate, let them apply their little talents at least to imitate us: That pleased with the pretty mimics of ourselves, we may venture to place them in our bosoms without fear of cherishing a viper there. Let them remember that man holds his superiority over them by a charter from Nature in his very production. And nothing can justify their calling that charter into question till they are able to prove their worth. But as we may venture to bid them a bold defiance to this, we may safely conclude that the utmost liberty they have a tolerable colour to contend for is that we admit children too; which would be a barbarous condescension to some, considering the ill use they are able to make of it, and is but a good-natured weakness to the best of them, considering the little good use any of them are capable of applying it to.

F I N I S

