

The Family of Love

Thomas Middleton

Table of Contents

<u>The Family of Love</u>	1
<u>Thomas Middleton</u>	1
<u>PREFACE</u>	1
<u>[I.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]</u>	2
<u>[II.i. A room in Purge's house.]</u>	14
<u>[III.i. Maria's room.]</u>	27
<u>[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]</u>	42
<u>[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]</u>	59

The Family of Love

Thomas Middleton

Actorum Nomina

GLISTER, a doctor of physic
[Peter] PURGE, a jealous pothecary
DRYFAT, a merchant, a Brother of the Family
GERARDINE, a lover
[Laurence] LIPSALVE }
[Gregory] GUDGEON } two gallants that only pursue city lechery
CLUB, a prentice
VIAL, a servant to Glister
[SHRIMP] }
PERIWINKLE } pages to the gallants
MISTRESS GLISTER
MISTRESS [Rebecca] PURGE, an Elder in the Family
MARIA, niece to Glister
[SERVANTS]

PREFACE

Too soon and too late is this work is published: too soon, in that it was in the press before I had notice of it, by which means some faults may escape in the printing; too late, for that it was not published when the general voice of the people had sealed it for good, and the newness of it made it much more desired than at this time. For plays in this city are like wenches new-fallen to the trade: only desired of your neatest gallants whiles they're fresh; when they grow stale they must be rented by termers and country chapmen. I know not how this labour will please: sure I am it passed the censure of the stage with a general applause; now whether vox populi be vox Dei or no, that I leave to be tried by the acute judgment of the famous six wits of the city. Farewell.

PROLOGUE

If, for opinion hath not blaz'd his fame
Nor expectation filled the general round,
You deem his labours slight, you both confound
Your graver judgment and his merits:
Impartial hearing fits judicious spirits.
Nor let the fruit of many an hour fall
By envy's tooth or base detraction's gall,
Both which are tokens of such abject spirits,
Which wanting worth themselves hate other merits;
Or else of such which, once made great by fame,
Repine at those which seek t'attain the same.
From both we know all truer judgments free;
To them our muse with blushing modesty
Patiently to her entreats their favour;
Which done, with judgment praise, or else dislike the labour.

[I.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

Enter Glister, his wife, and Maria.

GLISTER

Tricks and shows: protestations with men are like tears with women, forgot ere the cheek be dry. Gerardine is a gentleman; his lands be in statutes: 'a is not for thee, nor thou for him; 'a is a gallant, and young thoughts be most unconstant.

MARIA

Yet young vines yield most wine.

MISTRESS GLISTER

But old vines the best. Believe not these great-breeched gallants; they love for profit, not for affection; if 'a brings thee to a fool's paradise, 'a will forsake thee.

GLISTER

Which fortune God send my enemy. Love is a cold heat, a bitter sweet, a pleasure full of pain, a huge loss, and no gain. Why shouldst thou love him only ?

MARIA

Words cannot force what destiny hath seal'd.
Who can resist the influence of his stars,
Or give a reason why 'a loves or hates,
Since our affections are not rul'd by will,
But will by our affections? 'Tis blasphemy
'Gainst love's most sacred deity, to axe
Why we do love, since 'tis his only power
That sways all our affections; all things which be,
Beasts, birds, men, gods, pay him their fealty.

GLISTER

Tut, love is an idle fantasy, bred by desire, nursed by delight, an humour that begins his dominion in Leo the Lion, the sign of the heart, and ends in Aries the Ram, the sign of the head; his power is to stir the blood, pricks up the flesh, fills all the body with a libidinous humour, and is indeed the overture of all ladies. Which to prevent, I have banished Gerardine, your dearly beloved, my house; and as for you, since I am your guardian by my brother's last will, I will sequester you from all other rooms in my house, save this gallery and your upper chamber, till in discretion I shall find it convenient to enlarge you.

MARIA

My body you may circumscribe, confine
And keep in bounds; but my unlimited love
Extends itself beyond all circumscription.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Believe me, Maria, I have known the natures of divers of these gallants: if they possess the unlimited love of us women in never so ample manner, without the society of the body, I know how soon their love vadeth. Young

The Family of Love

men's love is like ivy: it must have somewhat to cleave to, or it never prospers. Love is like fasting—days, but the body is like flesh—days; and 'tis our English gallants' fashion to prefer a morsel of flesh before all the fasting—days in the whole year.

Enter Vial.

GLISTER

The news with you, Vial?

VIAL

And it like your worship, here's Club, Master Purge the pothecary's prentice, come to invite you, my mistress and Mistress Maria to supper, and to see Master Gerardine's will sealed.

GLISTER

Tell Club my wife and myself will be there, but Maria shall not come.

Exit Vial.

There must be your sweetheart's parting feast: now 'a perceives no access to my house, 'a will to sea. A good riddance: if 'a returns not, you forsooth are his heir, that's not much amiss. Yet there may be tricks; I will not be overreached. Come to your chamber, where till my return you shall be in safe custody.

[Exit with Mistress Glister.]

MARIA

O silly men, which seek to keep in awe
Women's affections, which can know no law!

Maria ascends [to the upper stage].

[I.ii. A street before Glister's house.]

Enter Gerardine, Lipsalve and Gudgeon.

LIPSALVE

Now, by the horns of Cupid's bow, which hath been the bane to many a tall citizen, I think there be no finer fools under heaven than we men when we are lovers. How thou goest crying up and down with thy arms across for a wife; which hadst thou, she'd cross both arms, head and heart. Dost not yet know the old saying, a wife brings but two good days, that is her wedding—day, and death—day?

GUDGEON

Believe him, Gerardine, 'a speaks now gospel; a man may take more wife with one hand than he's able to put away with ten, G[erardine]. A wife is such a cross, that all married men would most gladly be rid of.

GERARDINE

And yet such [a] cross that all bachelors would gladly be creeping to.
Profane not thus the sacred name of love,

[I.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

You libertines, who never knew the joys
Nor precious thoughts of two consenting hearts.

LIPSALVE

Didst ever see the true picture of a lover? I can give thee the hieroglyphic; and this it is: a man standing naked, a wench tickling him on the left side with a feather and pricking him under the right side with a needle. The allegory, as I take, is this: that at the first we are so overjoyed with obtaining a wife, that we conceit no heaven like to the first night's lodging; and that's the signification of the left side, for wives always in the night take the left-side place. But sir, now come to the needle on the right side: that's the day-time, wherein she commands; then, sir, she has a certain thing called tongue, ten times more sharp than a needle, and that at the least displeasure a man must have shot quite through him.

GUDGEON

Gramercies, Lipsalve, my neat courtier! But sirrah Gerardine, be thyself sociable and free, leave not thy native soil for a giglot, a wench who in her wit is proud—

LIPSALVE

In her smile deceitful—

GUDGEON

In her hate revengeable—

LIPSALVE

And in nothing but her death acceptable. I'll tell thee, there's no creature more desirous of an honest name and worse keeps it, than a woman. Dost hear? Follow this song, and if ever thou forsake thy country for a wagtail, let me be whipped to death with ladies' hair-laces.

GERARDINE

Let's hear that worthy song, gentle Master Lipsalve.

LIPSALVE

Observe:

[Singing] Now if I list, will I love no more,
Nor longer wait upon a gill;
Since every place now yields a wench,
If one will not, another will;
And if what I have heard be true,
Then young and old and all will do.

How dost thou like this, man?

GERARDINE

No more, no more.
This is the chamber which confines my love,
This is the abstract of the spacious world.
Within it holds a gem so rich, so rare,
That art or nature never yet could set
A valued price to her invaluable worth.

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

LIPSALVE

Unvalued worth? ha, ha, ha! Why, she's but
A woman, and they are windy turning vanes:
Love light as chaff, which when our nourishing grains
Are winnow'd from them, unconstantly they fly
At the least wind of passion. A woman's eye
Can turn itself with quick dexterity
And in each wanton glass can comprehend
Their sundry fancy suited to each [friend].
Tut, their loves are all compact of levity
Even like themselves: nil muliere levius.

GUDGEON

Tut, man, everyone knows their worth when they are at a rack-rent. In the term-time they bear as great a price as wheat when transportations are—

Enter Maria at the window.

GERARDINE

Peace; let's draw near the window and listen if we may hear her.

MARIA

Debar'd of liberty! O, that this flesh
Could like swift-moving thoughts transfer itself
From place to place, unseen and undissolv'd:
Then should no iron ribs or churlish flint
Divide my love and me. Dear Gerardine,
Despite of chance or guardian's tyranny,
I'd move within thy orb and thou in mine.

LIPSALVE

She'd move within thy orb, and thou in hers?
Blood, she talk[s] bawdy to herself. Gudgeon, stand close.

MARIA

But in vain do I proclaim my grief,
When air and walls can yield me no relief.

GUDGEON

[Aside to Lipsalve] The walls are the more stony-hearted then.

LIPSALVE

[Aside to Gudgeon] Peace, good Gudgeon, gape not so loud.

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

MARIA

Come thou my best companion, thou art sensible
And canst my wrongs reiterate; thou and I
Will make some mirth in spite of tyranny.
The black-brow'd night, drawn in her [pitchy] wain,
In starry-spangled pride rides now o'er heaven;
Now is the time when stealing minutes tell
The stole delight joy'd by all faithful lovers;
Now loving souls contrive both place and means
For wished pastimes; only I am pent
Within the closure of this fatal wall,
Depriv'd of all my joys.

GERARDINE

My dear Maria, be comforted in this:
The frame of heaven shall sooner cease to move,
Bright Phoebus' steeds leave their diurnal race
And all that is forsake their natural being,
Ere I forget thy love.

MARIA

Who's that protests so fast?

GERARDINE

Thy ever-vowed servant, Gerardine.

MARIA

O, by your vows it seems you'd fain get up.

LIPSALVE

[Aside to Gudgeon] Ay, and ride too.

GERARDINE

I would, most lov'd Maria.

[GUDGEON]

[Aside to Lipsalve] I knew it: he that to get up to a fair woman will stick to vow and swear, may be accounted no man.

MARIA

But tell me
Why hast thou chose this hour to visit me,

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

Which nor the day nor night can claim, but both
Or neither? Why in this twilight cam'st thou?

GERARDINE

T' avoid suspicious eyes; I come, dear love,
To take my last farewell: fitting this hour,
Which nor bright day will claim nor pitchy night,
An hour fit to part conjoined souls.
Since that my native soil will not afford
My wish'd and best content, I will forsake it
And prove more strange to it than it to me.
In time's swift course all things shall find event
Be it good or ill; and destinies do grant
That most preposterous courses often gain
What labour and direct proceedings miss.

MARIA

Wo't thou forsake me then?

GERARDINE

Let first blest life forsake me! Be constant;
My absence may procure thy more enlarge
And then—

MARIA

Desire's conceit is quick, I apprehend thee.
Be thou as loyal as I constant prove,
And time shall knit our mutual knot of love:
Wear this, my love's true pledge. I need not wish,
I know thou wo't return, [n]or will I say
Thou may'st conceal thyself, being return'd,
Till I may make escape, and visit thee.
I prithee, love, attempt not to ascend
My chamber-window by a [ladder'd] rope.
Th' entrance is too narrow, except this post
Which may with ease, yet that is dangerous:
I prithee do it not. I hear some call. Farewell:
My constant love let after-actions tell.

Exit.

GERARDINE

O perfection of women!

[LIPSALVE]

A plague of such perfection!

GERARDINE

How she woos!
By negatives shows—

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

GUDGEON

Thee what to do, under colour of dissuasion.

GERARDINE

She's truly virtuous!

LIPSALVE

Tut, man, outward apparence is no authentic instance of the inward desires. Women have sharp falcon's eyes, and can soar aloft; but keep them like falcons from flesh, and they soon stoop to a gaudy lure.

GERARDINE

Why, then Huguenot women are admirable angels.

GUDGEON

But angels make them admirable devils.

GERARDINE

My love's chaste smile to all the world doth speak
Her spotless innocence.

LIPSALVE

Women's smiles are more of custom than of courtesy. Women are creatures: their hearts and they are full of holes, apt to receive, but not retain affection. Thou wilt tomorrow thou sayest be gone: if thou wilt know the worst of a country's, marry before thou goest; for if thou canst endure a curst wife, never care what company thou comest in.

GERARDINE

Come, merry gallants, will you associate me to my cousin Purge's the pothecary's and take part of my parting feasts tonight?

GUDGEON

O, his wife is of the Family of Love, I'll thither: perhaps I may prove of the fraternity in time; we'll thither, that's flat.

Exeunt.

[I.iii. A room in Purge's house.]

Enter Mistress Purge.

MISTRESS PURGE

What, Club, Club! Is Club within there?

Enter Club.

CLUB

Mistress?

[I.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

MISTRESS PURGE

I pray, what said Master Doctor Glister, will 'a come?

CLUB

'A sent word 'a would, for 'a was but to carry a diet to one of his patients: what call you her? She that paints a day–times, and looks fair and fresh on the outside, but in the night–time is filthier than the inside of Bocardo, and is indeed far more unsavoury [to those] that know her, forsooth.

MISTRESS PURGE

Went 'a to her?

CLUB

'A had a receipt for the grincomes in his hand, and 'a said 'a would take that in his way.

MISTRESS PURGE

'Tis well; and what guest besides him and his wife will be here at supper?

CLUB

The first in my account is Master Gerardine your cousin, Master Doctor Glister and his wife, Master Dryfat the merchant, Master Lipsalve the courtier, Master Gudgeon the gallant, and their pages. These I take will be your full number.

MISTRESS PURGE

Then belike my room shall be stuffed with courtiers and gallants tonight. Of all men I love not these gallants: they'll prate much but do little; they are people most uncertain: they use great words, but little sense; great beards, but little wit; great breeches, but no money.

CLUB

That was the last thing they swore away.

MISTRESS PURGE

Belike they cannot fetch it again with swearing, for if they could, there's not a page of theirs but would be as rich as a monarch.

CLUB

There's nothing, mistress, that is sworn out of date that returns. Their first oath in times past was "by the mass", and that they have sworn quite away; then came they to their faith, "as by my faith, 'tis so": that in a short time was sworn away too, for no man believes now more than 'a sees; then they swore "by their honesties", and that, mistress, you know is sworn quite away; after their honesties was gone, then came they to their gentility, and swore "as they were gentlemen": and their gentility they swore away so fast, that they had almost sworn away all the ancient gentry out of the land, which indeed are scarce missed, for that yeomen and farmers' sons, with the help of a few Welshmen, have undertook to supply their places; that at the last they came to silver, and their oath

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

was "by the cross of this silver": and swore so fast upon that, that now they have scarce left them a cross for to swear by.

MISTRESS PURGE

And what do they swear by now their money is gone?

CLUB

Why, by [] and "God refuse them."

MISTRESS PURGE

And can they not as well say men refuse them, as God refuse them?

CLUB

No, mistress, for men, especially citizens and rich men, have refused them their bonds and protestations already.

Enter Purge.

MISTRESS PURGE

'Tis well; see how supper goes forward, and that my shoes be very well blacked against I go to the Family.

Exit Club.

Now, sweet chick, where hast thou been? In troth, la, I am not well; I had thought to have spent the morning at the Family, but now I am resolved to take pills, and therefore I pray thee desire Doctor Glister that 'a would minister to me in the morning.

PURGE

Thy will is known; and this for answer say,

'Tis fit that wise men should their wives obey.

And now, sweet duck, know I have been for my cousin Gerardine's will and have it: 'a has given thee a legacy, but the total is Maria's.

Enter Glister, Dryfat and Mistress Glister.

Master Doctor, your wife and Master Dryfat are most welcome; now were my cousin Gerardine and Master Lipsalve here, our number were complete.

GLISTER

Is this frantic will done? will Master Gerardine to sea? Let me tell you I am no whit sorry; let such as will be headstrong bite on the bridle.

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

PURGE

'Tis here, Master Doctor; all his worth is Maria's and locked in a trunk, which by tomorrow sun shall be delivered to your custody.

DRYFAT

Methinks 'twere a reasonable match to bestow your niece on Master Gerardine: 'a is a most hopeful gentleman, and his revenue such, that having your niece's portion to clear it of all incumbrances, 'twill maintain them both in a very worthy degree.

GLISTER

Tut, you are Master Dryfat the merchant; your skill is greater in cony–skins and woolpacks than in gentlemen. His lands be in statutes; you merchants were wont to be merchant staplers, but now gentlemen have gotten up the trade, for there is not one gentleman amongst twenty but his land be engaged in twenty statutes staple.

Enter Lipsalve, Gerardine and Gudgeon.

LIPSALVE

[Singing] Let every man his humour have,
I do at none repine;
I never regard whose wench I kiss,
Nor who doth the like by mine:
Th' indifferent mind's I hold still best,
Whatever does befall;
For she that will do with me and thee
Will be a wench for all.

And how goes the squares?

PURGE

Your stay, gentlemen, does wrong to a great many of good stomachs; your suppers expect you.

GUDGEON

And we our suppers.

GLISTER

And from what good exercise come you three?

GERARDINE

From a play, where we saw most excellent Sampson excel the whole world in gate–carrying.

DRYFAT

Was it performed by the youths?

LIPSALVE:

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

By youths? Why, I tell thee we saw Sampson, and I hope 'tis not for youths to play Sampson. Believe it, we saw Sampson bear the town-gates on his neck from the lower to the upper stage, with that life and admirable accord that it shall never be equalled, unless the whole new livery of porters set their shoulders.

MISTRESS PURGE

Fie, fie, 'tis pity young gentlemen can bestow their time no better; this playing is not lawful, for I cannot find that either plays or players were allowed in the prime church of Ephesus by the elders.

DRYFAT

Aha, I think she tickled you there.

PURGE

Cousin Gerardine, shall the will be read before supper?

GERARDINE

Before supper, I beseech you.

LIPSALVE

Ay, ay, before supper, for when these women's bellies be full, their bones will be soon at rest.

DRYFAT

Well, Master Doctor, pity the state of a poor gentleman: it is in you to stay his journey, and make him and yourself happy in his choice.

GLISTER

Hold you content. Shall this will be read?

PURGE

It shall. Read you, good Master Lipsalve.

LIPSALVE

Command silence then.

GUDGEON

Silence.

LIPSALVE

[Reading the will] "In the name of God, amen. Know all men by these presents that I Gerardine, being strong of body and perfect in sense—"

DRYFAT

That's false, there's no lover in his perfect sense.

GUDGEON

Peace, Dryfat.

LIPSALVE

"Do give and grant to Maria Glister, daughter of John Glister, and niece to Doctor Glister, physician, all my leases, lands, chattels, goods and moveables whatsoever." This is stark naught: you cannot give away your moveables, for Mistress Doctor and Mistress Purge claim both shares in your moveables by reason of their legacies.

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

DRYFAT

That's true, for their legacies must go out of your moveables.

LIPSALVE

Ay, put it in: "all my moveables, these following legacies being paid."

GERARDINE:

Do so, good Master Lipsalve.

LIPSALVE

[Writes.] 'Tis done.

MISTRESS PURGE

I pray read only the legacies, for supper stays.

LIPSALVE

Well, the legacies: "First, I give to my cousin, Mistress Purge, a fair large standing—" What's this? O, cup: "a fair large standing cup, with a closestool."

DRYFAT

'Tis not so, 'tis not so.

LIPSALVE

I cry you mercy: "a close cover" 'tis. "To Mistress Doctor I give a fair bodkin of gold, with two orient pearls attending the same: all which are in my trunk to be delivered to the keeping of Maria. In witness, Is this your will?"

GERARDINE

'Tis.

LIPSALVE

To it with your hand and seal.

[Gerardine signs and seals the will.]

MISTRESS PURGE

[Aside to Purge] How is it, chick, I must have the standing cup, and Mistress Glister the bodkin?

PURGE

[Aside to Mistress Purge] Right, sweet duck.

GERARDINE

I pray, gentlemen, put to your hands.

DRYFAT

Come, your fists, gentlemen, your fists.

GERARDINE

[l.i. A gallery in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

[Aside, while the witnesses sign the will] Mistress Glister, I have found you always more flexible to understand the estate of a poor gentleman than your husband was willing; therefore I have thought it a point of charity to reveal the wrongs you [sustain] by your husband's looseness. Let me tell you in private that the doctor cuckolds Purge oftener than he visits one of his patients; what 'a spares from you 'a spends lavishly on her. These pothecaries are a kind of panders; look to it: if 'a keep Maria long close, it is for some lascivious end of his own.

MISTRESS GLISTER

She is his niece.

GERARDINE

Tut, these doctors have tricks. Your niceness is such that you can endure no polluted [shoes] in your house; take heed lest 'a make you a bawd before your time, look to it.

LIPSALVE

Come, our hands are testimonies to thy follies. Shall's now to supper? We'll have a health go round to thy voyage.

GUDGEON

Ay, and to all that forswear marriage, and can be content with other men's wives.

GERARDINE

Of which consort you two are grounds: one touches the bass, and the other tickles the minikin.
But to our cheer; come, gentles, let's away,
The roast meat's in consumption by our stay.
Exeunt.

[II.i. A room in Purge's house.]

Enter Purge.

PURGE

The grey-eyed morning braves me to my face, and calls me sluggard; 'tis time for tradesmen to be in their shops, for he that tends well his shop, and hath an alluring wife with a graceful "what d'ye lack" shall be sure to have good doings, and good doings is that that crowns so many citizens with the horns of abundance. My wife, by ordinary course, should this morning have been at the Family, but now her soft pillow hath given her counsel to keep her bed. Master Doctor should indeed minister to her: to whose pills she is so much accustomed, that now her body looks for them as duly as the moon shakes off the old and borrows new horns. I smile to myself to hear our knights and gallants say how they gull us citizens, when indeed we gull them, or rather they gull themselves. Here they come in term-time, hire chambers, and perhaps kiss our wives: well, what lose I by that? God's blessing on's heart, I say still, that makes much of my wife; for they were very hard-favoured that none could find in's heart to love but ourselves. Drugs would be dog-cheap, but for my private well-practised doctor and such customers. Tut, jealousy is a hell, and they that will thrive must utter their wares as they can, and wink at small faults.

Exit.

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

[II.ii. A street.]

Enter Glister.

GLISTER

The tedious night is past, and the jocund morn looks more lively and fresh than an old gentlewoman's glazed face in a new periwig. By this time my humorous lover is at Gravesend, and I go with more joy to fetch his trunk than ever the valiant Trojans did to draw in the Grecian jade; his gods shall into the walls of my Troy, and be offered to a face more [lovely] than ever was that thrice-ravished Helen: yet with such caution that no danger shall happen to me.

Exit.

[II.iii. Another street.]

Enter Lipsalve and Gudgeon at several doors with their pages, Shrimp and Periwinkle.

GUDGEON

Master Lipsalve, welcome within ken; we two are so nearly linked, that if thou beest absent but one two hours, thy acquaintance grows almost mouldy in my memory.

LIPSALVE

And [thine] fly-blown in mine; how dost thou do?

SHRIMP

Fellow page, I think our acquaintance runs low too; but if it run not o' the lees, let's set it a-tilt, and give 'em some dregs to their mouldy, fly-blown compliments.

PERIWINKLE

No, rather let's pierce the rundlets of our running heads, and give 'em a neat cup of wagship to put down their courtship.

SHRIMP

Courtship? cartship: for the tongues of complimenters run on wheels. But mark 'em, they ha' not done yet.

GUDGEON

And i'faith how is't? Methinks thou hast been a long vagrant.

LIPSALVE

The rogation hath been long indeed: therefore we may salute as ceremoniously as lawyers when they meet after a long vacation, who, to renew the discontinued state tale, they stretch it out with such length, that whilst they greet before, their clients kiss them behind.

SHRIMP

If his nose were put i' the remainder of that state tale, he would say 'twere an unsavoury one.

PERIWINKLE

I wonder why many men gird so at the law.

SHRIMP

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

I'll tell thee, because they themselves have neither law nor conscience.

GUDGEON

But what news now? How stands the state of things at Brussels?

LIPSALVE

Faith, weak and limber, weak and limber; nothing but pride and double-dealing. Virtue is vice's lackey; beggars suck like horse-leeches at the heart of bounty, and [leaves him] so tired and spur-galled that he can be no longer ridden with honesty.

GUDGEON

Well fare the city yet. There virtue rides a cock-horse, cherished and kept warm in good sables and fox-fur, and with the breath of his nostrils drives pride and covetousness before him, like's own shadow. Beggars have whipping cheer: bounty obliges men to't, [and liberality gives money for scrips and scrolls, sealed] with strong arms and heraldry to outlive mortality. Love there will see the last man born, never give over while there's an arrow i' th' quiver.

LIPSALVE

Now we talk of love, I do know not far hence so good a subject for that humour, that if she would wear but the standing collar and her things in fashion, our ladies in the court were but brown sugar-candy, as gross as grocery to her.

GUDGEON

She is not so sweet as a pothecary's shop, is she?

LIPSALVE

A plague on you, ha' you so good a scent? [Aside] For my life, he's my rival.

GUDGEON

Her name begins with Mistress Purge, does it not?

LIPSALVE

True, the only comet of the city.

GUDGEON

Ay, if she would let her ruffs stream out a little wider; but I am sure she is ominous to me: she makes civil wars and insurrections in the state of my stomach. I had thought to have bound myself from love, but her purging comfits makes me loose-bodied still.

LIPSALVE

What, has she ministered to thee then?

GUDGEON

Faith, some lectuary or so.

LIPSALVE

Ay, I fear she takes too much of that lectuary to stoop to love; it keeps her body soluble from sin: she is not troubled with carnal crudities nor the binding of the flesh.

The Family of Love

GUDGEON

Thou hast sounded her then, belike.

LIPSALVE

Not I, I am too shallow to sound her, she's out of my element. If I show passion and discourse of love to her, she tells me I am wide from the right scope; she says she has another object, and aims at a better love than mine.

GUDGEON

O, that's her husband.

LIPSALVE

No, no, she speaks pure devotion; she's impenetrable: no gold or oratory, no virtue in herbs nor no physic will make her love.

GUDGEON

More is the pity, I say, that fair women should prove saints before age had made them crooked. [Aside] 'Tis my luck to be crossed still, but I must not give over the chase.

LIPSALVE

Come hither, boy, while I think on't

Lipsalve and Shrimp confer.

GUDGEON

[Aside] Faith, friend Lipsalve, I perceive you would fain play with my love. A pure creature 'tis, for whom I have sought every angle of my brain; but either she scorns courtiers as most of them do, because they are given to boast of their doings, or else she's exceeding strait-laced. Therefore to prevent this smell-smock, I'll to my friend Doctor Glister, a man exquisite in th' art magic, who hath told me of many rare experiments available in this case.—Farewell, friend Lipsalve.

LIPSALVE

Adieu, honest Gregory; frequent my lodging, I have a viol de gambo and good tobacco.

Exeunt Gudgeon and Periwinkle.

Thou wilt do this feat, boy?

SHRIMP

Else knock my head and my pate together.

LIPSALVE

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

Away then; bid him bring his measure with him.

Exit Shrimp.

Gerardine is travelled, and I must needs be cast into his mould. My flesh grows proud, and Maria's a sweet wench, But yet I must not let fall my suit with Mistress Purge, lest, sede vacante, my friend Gudgeon join issue: I'll rather to my learned doctor for a spell, For I have a fire in my liver burns like hell.

Exit.

[II.iv. A room in Glister's house.]

Enter Mistress Glister and Maria.

MISTRESS GLISTER

[To a servant offstage] I pray let's have no polluted feet nor rheumatic chaps enter the house; I shall have my floor look more greasy shortly than one of your inn-of-court dining-tables. [To Maria] And now to you, good niece, I bend my speech: let me tell you plainly, you are a fool to be love-sick for any man longer than he is in your company; are you so ignorant in the rules of courtship, to think any one man to bear all the prick and praise? I tell thee, be he never so proper, there is another to second him.

MARIA

Let rules of courtship be authentic still
To such as do pursue variety;
But unto those whose modest thoughts do tend
To honour'd nuptials and a regular life,
As far from show of niceness as from that
Of impure thoughts, all other objects seem
Respectless, of no proportion, balanc'd with esteem
Of what their souls affect.

MISTRESS GLISTER

No marvel sure you should regard these men with such reverend opinion: there's few good faces and fewer graces in any of them; if one among a multitude have a good pair of legs, he never leaves riding the ring till he has quite marred the proportion. Nay, some, as I have heard, wanting lineaments to their liking and calf to support themselves, are fain to use art, and supply themselves with quilted calves, which oftentimes in revelling fall about their ankles; and for their behaviour, wit and discourse (except some few that are travelled) it is as imperfectious and silly as your scholars new come from the university. By this light, I think we lose part of our happiness when we make these weathercocks our equals.

MARIA

Disgrace not that for which our sect was made,
Society in nuptial beds; above these joys
Which lovers taste when their conjoined lips
Suck forth each other's souls, the earth, the air,
Yea gods themselves, know none. Elysiums sweet,
Ay, all that bliss which poets' pens describe,

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

Are only known when soft and amorous folds
Entwine the corps of two united lovers,
Where what they wish they have, yet still desire,
And sweets are known without [satiety].

Enter [Vial].

[VIAL]

Here's Club, forsooth, and his fellow prentice have brought Master Gerardine's trunk.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Let them come in if their feet be clean.

Exit Vial.

So then, your best-beloved is gone: fair weather after him! All thy passions go with him. Recomfort thyself, wench, in a better choice: his love to thee would have been of no longer continuance than the untrussing of his hose; then why shouldst thou pine for such a one?

MARIA

[Aside] She's foolish sure; with what imperfect phrase
And shallow wit she answers me.

Enter Club and another, with the trunk.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Honest Club, welcome; is this Master Gerardine's trunk? He is gone then?

CLUB

Ay, indeed, Mistress Glister, he is departed this transitory city, but his whole substance is here enclosed; which, by command, we here deliver to your custody, to the use of Mistress Maria, according to the tenor of the premises.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Place it here, my honest Club, well done. And how does thy mistress? Was she at the Family today?

[Club spits.]

Spit not, good Club, I cannot abide it.

CLUB

Not today, forsooth: she hath over-charged herself and her memory; she means to use a moderation, and take no more than she can make use of.

MISTRESS GLISTER

And I prithee, Club, what kind of creatures are these Familists? Thou art conversant with them.

[ll.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

CLUB

What are they? With reverence be it spoken, they are the most accomplished creatures under heaven; in them is all perfection.

MISTRESS GLISTER

As how, good Club?

CLUB

Omitting their outward graces, I'll show you only one instance, which includes all other: they love their neighbours better than themselves.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Not than themselves, Club.

CLUB

Yes, better than themselves, for they love them better than their husbands, and husband and wife are all one; therefore better than themselves.

MISTRESS GLISTER

This is logic. But tell me, doth she not endeavour to bring my doctor of her side and fraternity?

CLUB

Let him resolve that himself, for here he comes.

Enter Glister.

GLISTER

O, hast thou brought the trunk, honest Club? I commend thy honest care; here's for thy pains.

CLUB

I thank you, Master Doctor, you are free and liberal still; you'll command me nothing back?

GLISTER

Nothing but commendations; farewell.

Exit Club.

Your sweetheart Gerardine is by this time cold of his hope to enjoy thee: he's gone, and a more equal and able husband shall my care ere long provide thee. What clients have been here in my absence, wife?

The Family of Love

MISTRESS GLISTER

Faith, mouse, none that I know more than an old woman that had lost her cat, and came to you for a spell in the recovery.

GLISTER

I think egregious ignorance will go near to save this age; their blindness takes me for a conjuror. Yesterday a justice of peace salutes me with proffer of a brace of angels to help him to his footcloth, some three days before stolen, and was fain to use his man's cloak instead on't.

Enter Vial.

[VIAL]

Here's a gentleman craves speech with you, sir.

GLISTER

Go in, sweet wife, and give my niece good counsel.

Exeunt Mistress Glister and Maria.

His name?

[VIAL]

He will not tell it me.

GLISTER

His countenance?

[VIAL]

I can see nothing but his eyes; the rest of him is so wrapped in cloak that it suffers no view.

GLISTER

Admit him.

Exit Vial.

What should he be for a man?

Enter Lipsalve.

What, Master Lipsalve, is't you? Why thus obscured? What discontent overshadows you?

LIPSALVE

A discontent indeed, Master Doctor, which to shake off I must have you extend your art to the utmost bounds. You physicians are as good as false doors behind hangings to ladies' necessary uses: you know the very hour in which they have neither will to deny nor wit to mistrust; faith now, by the way, when are women most apt?

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

GLISTER

Shall I unbutton myself unto you? After the receipt of a purgation, for then are their pores most open. But what creature of a courtier is it hath drawn your head into the woodcock's noose?

LIPSALVE

A courtier? Nay, by this flesh, I am clean fallen out with them; they have nothing proportionable.

GLISTER

O, I perceive, then 'tis some city star that attracts your aspect.

LIPSALVE

[Aside] He knows by his art.—In plain terms, a certain pothecary's wife.

GLISTER

Upon my life, Master Purge; I smell you, sir.

LIPSALVE

You may smell a man after a purgation indeed; sir, 'tis she. Now, for that fame hath bruted you to be a man expert in necromancy, I would [endear] myself to you for ever, would you vouchsafe to let one of your spirits bring Mistress Purge into some convenient place, where I might enjoy her. I have heard of the like; can you perform this?

GLISTER

With much facility, I assure you; but you must understand that the apparition of a spirit is dreadful, and withal covetous, and with no small sum of gold hired to such feats.

[Enter Vial.]

[VIAL]

Sir, here's another gentleman, muffled too, that desires present conference with you.

GLISTER

Walk you into that room; I will bethink myself for your good, and instantly resolve you.

Exit Lipsalve.

Let the gentleman come in.

Exit Vial.

Lipsalve in love with my vessel of ease? Come to me to help him to a morsel most affected by mine own palate? No more but so. I have shaped it; the conceit tickles me.

[ll.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

Enter Gudgeon.

Sir, as a stranger I welcome you—what, Master Gudgeon, have I caught you? I thought it was a gallant that walked muffled. Come, let me behold you at full; here are no sergeants, man.

GUDGEON

Master Doctor, this my obscure coming requires an action more obscure; and, in brief, this 'tis. Sir, you are held a man far seen in nature's secrets; I know you can effect many things almost impossible: know then, I love Mistress Purge, and opportunity favours me not, nor indeed is she so tractable as I expected, if either by medicine or your art magical you can work her to my will, I have a poor gallant's reward, sir.

GLISTER

[Aside] That's just nothing.—But how, sir, would you have me to procure you access to Mistress Purge? You never knew a physician a bawd.

GUDGEON

Why, by conjuration, I tell you, wherein you are said to be as well practised as in physic; here's the best part of my present store to effect it.

GLISTER

Not a penny for myself; but my spirits, indeed they must be fed. Walk you by here, while I think upon a spell.

[Aside] What mystery should this be? Lipsalve and Gudgeon both in love with Mistress Purge, and come to me to help 'em by art magic? 'Tis some gullery sure; yet if my invention hold, I'll fit them.—Who's within there?

Enter [Servant].

Fetch me in all haste two good whips; I think you may have them not far hence.

[Exit Servant.]

[Aside] It shall be so.—Now tell me, Master Gudgeon, does no man know of your love to Mistress Purge?

GUDGEON

Not a man, by my gentry.

GLISTER

Then, sir, know I'll effect it; but understand withal the apparition will be most horrid if it appear in his proper form, and will so amaze and dull your senses, that your appetite will be lost and weak, though Mistress Purge should attend it naked. Now, sir, could you name a friend with whom you are most conversant, in his likeness should the spirit appear.

GUDGEON

Of all men living my conversation is most frequent with Lipsalve the courtier.

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

GLISTER

'Tis enough. I'll to my spirit.

Enter [Servant] with whips.

Are these whips come there?

[SERVANT]

Ready here, sir.

GLISTER

[Taking the whips and setting one aside] So, lie thou there. [Aside] My noble gallants, I'll so firk you.—Sir, my spirit agrees in Lipsalves shape. Tomorrow, 'twixt the hours of four and five, shall Mistress Purge be rapt with a whirlwind into Lipsalve's chamber: that's the fittest place, for by the break of day Lipsalve shall be mounted and forsake the city for three days; so my spirit resolves me. Now, sir, by my art, at that very hour shall his chamber-door fly open; into which boldly enter in this sort accoutred: put me on a pure clean shirt, leave off your doublet (for spirits endure nothing polluted), take me this whip in your hand, [giving him a whip] and being entered you shall see the spirit in Lipsalve's shape, in the self-same form that you appear; speak these words here ready written, [giving him a paper] take three bold steps forward, then whip him soundly, who straight vanisheth and leaves Mistress Purge to your will.

GUDGEON

Ay, but shall your spirit come armed with a whip too?

GLISTER

He shall, but have no power to strike.

GUDGEON

Is this infallible? Have you seen the proof?

GLISTER

Probatum, upon my word, I have seen the experience; if it fail, say I am a fool, and no magician.

GUDGEON

Master Doctor, I would you had some suit at court; by the faith of a courtier, I would beg it for you. Fare you well, sir; I shall report of you as I find your charm.

GLISTER

And no otherwise, sir; let me understand how you thrive.

Exit Gudgeon.

Ha, ha, ha! Now to my friend Lipsalve; I must possess him with the same circumstance, wherein I am assured to

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

get perpetual laughter in their follies and my revenge.

Exit. Enter Maria over the trunk.

MARIA

O, which way shall I turn, or shift, or go,
To lose one thought of care? No soothing hope
Gives intermission, or beguiles one hour
Of tedious time, which never will have end,
Whilst love pursues in vain my absent friend.
Thou continent of wealth, whose want of store,
For that it could not peize th' unequal scale
Of avarice, giv'st matter to my moan.
O dross, the level of insatiate eyes,
The devil's engine and the soul's corrupter,
Thou play'st th' attorney 'gainst the lawful force
Of true affection, dost interpose a bar
'Twixt hearts conjoin'd: curs'd be thy seed of strife,
Whose progress chokes the natural course of life!

Gerardine rising out of the trunk, she seems fearful and flies.

MARIA

O, help, help, help!

GERARDINE

Stay, sweet Maria, I bring thee ample joy
To check that sudden fear; let thy sweet heart,
That constant seat of thy affection,
Repay that blood exhausted from thy veins.
Fear not, sweet wench; I am no apparition,
But the firm substance of thy truest friend:
Know'st thou me now?

MARIA

Gerardine my love?
What unheard-of accident presents
Thy unexpected self, and gives my heart
Matter of joy, mix'd with astonishment?
I thought thou hadst been cabin'd in thy ship,
Not trunk'd within my cruel guardian's house.

GERARDINE

That cruelty gives fuel to desire,
For love suppress'd fares like a raging fire

[III.i. A room in Purge's house.]

The Family of Love

Which burns all obstacles that stop his course,
And mounts aloft. The ocean in his source
May easier hide himself and be confin'd
Than love can be obscur'd; for in the mind
She holds her seat, and through that heavenly essence
Is near when far remote; her virtual presence
Fills, like the air, all places, gives delight,
Hope in despair, and heart 'gainst fell despite.
That worst of men, thy cruel guardian, may
Keep down awhile, but cannot dissipate
What heaven hath join'd: for fate and providence
Gave me this stratagem, to let him know
That love will creep where 'tis restrain'd to go.

MARIA

I apprehend the rest. O rare conceit!
I see thy travel happily was feign'd
To win access, which with small ease thou hast gain'd.
This trunk, which he so greedily supposes
Contains thy substance (as it doth indeed),
Upon thy fair pretence in lieu of love
Bequeath'd to me if death should stop the course,
This trunk, I say, he hugs; sink thou or swim,
So he may feed his wolf, that root of sin,
His avarice; but heaven, that mocks man's might,
Gives this close means t' insist upon our right.

GERARDINE

Ingenious spirit, true oracle of love,
Thou hast prevented me. This was my plot,
Whose end and scope I long to imitate
With accents free, and uncontroll'd with fear.
Does opportunity stand fair?

MARIA

Not now,
Danger stands sentinel.

GERARDINE

Then I'll retire;
We must be cautelous.

MARIA

So, so; and time
Shall not oft turn his hour-glass ere I'll find
Peace and occasion fitting to thy mind.

Exeunt.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

Enter Gerardine and Maria.

GERARDINE

The coast is clear, and Argus' wakeful eyes
Securely sleep: time turns to us his front.
Come sweet Maria, of th' auspicious hours
Let's take advantage.

MARIA

With all my heart;
I do embrace the motion with thyself.
Welcome sweet friend to liberty of air,
Which now, methinks, doth promp[t] our breaths to move
Sweet accents of delight, the joys of love.
How dost thou brook thy little-ease, thy trunk?

GERARDINE

That trunk confines this chest; this chest contains
Th' unbounded speculation of our love
Incomprehensible: grief, joy, hope and fears,
Th' affections of my mind, are like the spheres,
Which in their jarring motions do agree,
Through th' influence of love's sweet harmony.

MARIA

Are not inferior bodies here on earth
Produc'd and govern'd by those heavenly ones?

GERARDINE

They are.

MARIA

They jar, you say, yet in that strife maintain
Perpetual league: why should their influence
In rational souls be check'd by erring sense?
Or why should mutual love, confirm'd by heaven,
B' infrig'd by men? Methinks 'tis most uneven.

GERARDINE

Thou argu'st well, Maria; and this withal,
That brutes nor animals do prove a thrall
To such servility: souls that are wards
To gold, opinion, or th' undue regards

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

Of broking men, wolves that in sheepskin bands
Prey on the hearts to join th' unwilling hands,
Ruin fair stocks, when generous houses die,
Or propagate their name with bastardy.

MARIA

Sterility and barrenness ensue
Such forced love; nor shall erroneous men
Pervert my settled thoughts, or turn mine eye
From thy fair object, which I will pursue,
Rich in thy love, proud of this interview.

GERARDINE

I'll suck these accents; let our breaths engender
A generation of such pleasing sounds,
To interchange delights. O, my blood's on fire!
Sweet, let me give more scope to true desire.

MARIA

What wouldst thou more than our minds' firm contract?

GERARDINE

Tut, words are wind; thought unreduced to [act]
Is but an embryo in the truest sense.

MARIA

I am [beleaguer'd], I had need of sense;
You make me blush: play fair, yet above board.

GERARDINE

Hear me exemplify love's Latin word
Together with thyself,
As thus: hearts join'd, Amore; take A from thence,
Then more is the perfect moral sense:
Plural in manners, which in thee do shine
Saint-like, immortal, spotless and divine.
Take M away, ore in beauty's name
Craves an eternal trophy to thy fame.
Lastly, take O, in re stands all my rest,
Which I in Chaucer-style do term a jest.

MARIA

You break all modest bounds; away, away!

GERARDINE

So when men come behind do women say.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

MARIA

Come, come, I say--

GERARDINE

Ay, that's the word indeed;
Men that come bold before are like to speed.

Enter Lipsalve [disguised as Gerardine,] with Shrimp, his page.

But who comes here? Monstrum horrendum! My nostrils have the rank scent of knavery. Maria, let's remove ourselves to the window, and observe this piece of man's flesh.

Exit with Maria.

LIPSALVE

Now Mistress Maria, ward yourself; if my strong hope fail not, I shall be with you to bring--

SHRIMP

To bring what, sir? Some more o' your kind?

LIPSALVE

Faith, boy, that's mine aim.

SHRIMP

I'll be sworn, sir, you have a good loose; you let fly at 'em apace.

LIPSALVE

I have shot fair and far off; but now I hope to hit the mark indeed.

SHRIMP

God save it.

LIPSALVE

But where's the sign?

SHRIMP

Why, there.

LIPSALVE

That's a special thing to be observed.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

SHRIMP

I have heard talk of the Gemini; methinks that should be a star favourable to your proceeding.

LIPSALVE

The Gemini? O, I apprehend thee: that's because I am so like Gerardine; ha, is't not so, boy?

SHRIMP

As if you were spit out on's mouth, sir; you must needs be like him, for you are both cut out of a piece. But lord, sir, how you hunt this chase of love; are you not weary?

LIPSALVE

Indefatigable, boy, indefatigable.

SHRIMP

Fatigable, quoth you? You may call it leanable well enough, for I am sure it is able to make a man lean.

LIPSALVE

'Tis my vocation, boy; we must never be weary of well-doing: love's as proper to a courtier as preciseness to a puritan.

Enter Gerardine and Maria above.

SHRIMP

[Aside] Love, subaudi lust; a punk in this place subintelligitur.

LIPSALVE

Boy, I have spied my saint.

SHRIMP

Then down on your knees.

LIPSALVE

Fly off, lest she take thee for my familiar.

[Shrimp hides himself.]

Save thee, sweet Maria!

Nay wonder not (for thou thyself art wonder)

To see this unexpected gratulation.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

MARIA

Whom do I see? O, how my senses wander!
Am not I Hero? Art not thou Leander?

GERARDINE

[Aside] Th' art in the right, sweet wench; more of that vein.

LIPSALVE

[Aside to Shrimp] Her passion overcomes her; 'tis the kindest soul! O excellent device; it works, it works, boy.

SHRIMP

It does indeed, sir, like the suds of an ale—fat or a washing—bowl.

LIPSALVE

Joy not too much; extremes are perilous.

MARIA

O weather—beaten love! Cisley, go make a fire;
Go fetch my ladder of ropes, Leander's come.

LIPSALVE

[Aside] Mark, how prettily in her rapture she harps upon Gerardine's travel.—Let th' ecstasy have end, for I am Gerardine.

GERARDINE

[Aside] The devil you are.

MARIA

Ha? let me see; my love so soon return'd?

LIPSALVE

I never travell'd farther than thine eyes;
My bruted journey was a happy project
To cast a mist before thy jealous guardian,
Who now suspectless gives some hope t' attain
My wish'd delight, before pursu'd in vain.

GERARDINE

[Aside to Maria] Ask if he strain'd not hard for that same project.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

MARIA

Has not that project overrack'd thy brain,
And spent more wit than thou hast left behind?

SHRIMP

[Aside] By this light, she flouts him.

LIPSALVE

No, wit is infinite: I spent some brain;
Thy love did stretch my wit upon the tenters.

GERARDINE

[Aside to Maria] Then is't like to shrink in the wetting.

MARIA

It cottons well; it cannot choose but bear
A pretty nap. I tender thy capacity;
A comfortable caudle cherish it.
But where's my favour that I bid thee wear
As pledge of love?

GERARDINE

[Aside] Now dost thou put him to't;
More tenters for his wit; he's non plus quite.

LIPSALVE

I wear it, sweet Maria, but on high days,
Preserve it from the tainting of the air—
[Aside] What should I say?—'Tis in my t'other hose.

MARIA

How? In your t'other hose? He that I love
Shall wear my favour in those hose he has on.

LIPSALVE

[Aside] Fiends and furies! Block that I am!

SHRIMP

[Aside to Lipsalve] In your t'other hose? [Aside] She talked of a ladder of ropes; if she would let it down, for my life he would hang himself in't.—In your t'other hose? Why, those hose are in lavender; besides, they have never a codpiece: but indeed there needs no ivy where the wine is good. In your t'other hose?

MARIA

I said you were too prodigal of wit.

The Family of Love

LIPSALVE

Expostulate no more; grant me access,
Or else I'll travel to the wilderness.

MARIA

Your only way. Go, travel till you tire;
Be rid, and let a gull discharge the hire.

SHRIMP

Master, the doctor, the doctor!

LIPSALVE

Where? Which way?

SHRIMP

This way, that way, some way I heard him coming.

LIPSALVE

O boy, I am abused, gulled, disgraced; my credit's cracked.

SHRIMP

You know that's nothing for a new courtier.

LIPSALVE

O, I shall run beside myself.

SHRIMP

No sir, that's my office; I'll run by your side.

LIPSALVE

My brain is out of temper; what shall I do?

SHRIMP

Take her counsel, sir; get a cullis to your capacity, a restorative to your reason, and a warming-pan to your wit.
He comes, he comes!

LIPSALVE

Follow close, boy; let him not see us.

Exeunt Lipsalve and Shrimp. Enter Glister.

GLISTER

What, more flatterers about my carrion? More battery to my walls? Shall I never be rid of these Petronel Flashes? As for my friend Gerardine, the wind of my rage has blown him to discover countries; and let the sea purge his love away and him together, I care not. Young wenches now are all o' the hoigh. We that are guardians must respect more besides titles, gold lace, person, or parts; we must have lordships and manors elsewhere as well as in the man. Wealth commands all; and wealth I'll have, or else my minion shall lead apes in hell. I must after this gallant too; I'll know his rendezvous, and what company he keeps.

Exit.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

MARIA

Now must we be abrupt; retire, sweet friend,
To thy small-ease. What more remains to do
We'll consummate at our next interview.

GERARDINE

So shall I bear my prisonment with pleasure;
Look thou but big, [our] cruel foe will yield,
And give to Hymen th' honour of the field.

Exeunt.

[III.ii. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]
Enter Mistress Purge and Club before her with a link.

MISTRESS PURGE

Fie, fie, Club, go a' t'other side the way, thou collost me and my ruff; thou wilt make me an unclean member i' the congregation.

CLUB

If you be unclean, mistress, you may pure yourself; you have my master's ware at your commandment; but what am I then, that does all the drudgery in your house?

MISTRESS PURGE

Th' art born to't; why, boy, I can show thy indentures; thou givest no other milk. We know how to use all i' their kind.

CLUB

You're my better in bark and rine, but in pith and substance I may compare with you. You're above me in flesh, mistress, and there's your boast; but in my t'other part we are all one before God.

Enter Dryfat.

MISTRESS PURGE

All one with me? Dost thou swear too? Why then, up and ride!

DRYFAT

Whither away, Mistress Purge?

MISTRESS PURGE

To the Family, Master Dryfat, to our exercise.

DRYFAT

What, by night?

MISTRESS PURGE

O Lord, ay, sir, with the candles out too; we fructify best i' th' dark. The glance of the eye is a great matter; it leads us to other objects besides the right.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

DRYFAT

Indeed, I think we perform those functions best when we are not thrall to the fetters of the body.

MISTRESS PURGE

The fetters of the body? What call you them?

DRYFAT

The organs of the body, as some term them.

MISTRESS PURGE

Organs? Fie, fie, they have a most abominable squeaking sound in mine ears; they edify not a whit, I detest 'em. I hope my body has no organs.

DRYFAT

To speak more familiarly, Mistress Purge, they are the senses: the sight, hearing, smelling, taste and feeling.

MISTRESS PURGE

Ay, marry. Marry, said I? Lord, what a word's that in my mouth. You speak now, Master Dryfat, but yet let me tell you where you err too: this feeling I will prove to be neither organ nor fetter; it is a thing—a sense did you call it?

DRYFAT

Ay, a sense.

MISTRESS PURGE

Why then, a sense let it be. I say it is that we cannot be without: for, as I take it, it is a part belonging to understanding; understanding, you know, lifteth up the mind from earth; if the mind be lift up, you know the body goes with it. Also it descends into the conscience, and there tickles us with our works and doings, so that we make singular use of feeling.

DRYFAT

And not of the rest?

MISTRESS PURGE

Not at that time; therefore we hold it not amiss to put out the candles, for the soul sees best i' th' dark.

DRYFAT

You come to me now, Mistress Purge.

The Family of Love

[Enter Purge, who overhears them.]

MISTRESS PURGE

Nay, I will come to you else, Master Dryfat. These senses, as you term them, are of much efficacy in carnal mixtures; that is, when we crowd and thrust a man and a woman together.

PURGE

[Aside] What, so close at it? I thought this was one end of your exercise. Byrlady, I think there is small profit in this. I'll wink no more, for I am now tickled with a conceit that it is a scurvy thing to be a cuckold .

DRYFAT

I commend this zeal in you, Mistress Purge; I desire much to be of your society.

MISTRESS PURGE

Do you indeed? Blessing on your heart. Are you upright in your dealings?

DRYFAT

Yes, I do love to stand to any thing I do, though I lose by it; in truth, I deal but too truly for this world. You shall hear how far I am entered in the right way already. First, I live in charity and give small alms to such as be not of the right sect; I take under twenty i' th' hundred, nor no forfeiture of bonds unless the law tell my conscience I may do't; I set no pot on a' Sundays, but feed on cold meat dressed a' Saturdays; I keep no holydays nor fasts, but eat most flesh o' Fridays of all days i' the week; I do use to say inspired graces able to starve a wicked man with length; I have Aminadabs and Abrahams to my godsons, and I chide them when they ask me blessing; and I do hate the red letter more than I follow the written verity.

PURGE

[Aside] Here's clergy.

MISTRESS PURGE

These are the rudiments indeed, Master Dryfat.

DRYFAT

Nay, I can tell you I am, or will be, of the right stamp.

PURGE

[Aside] A pox o' your stamp.

MISTRESS PURGE

Then learn the word for your admittance, and you will be much made on by the congregation.

DRYFAT

Ay, the word, good Mistress Purge.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

MISTRESS PURGE

A Brother in the Family.

DRYFAT

Enough, I have my lesson.

PURGE

[Aside] So have I mine: a Brother in the Family; I must be a Familist today. I'll follow this gear while 'tis on foot, i'faith.

MISTRESS PURGE

Then shore up your eyes, and lead the way to the goodliest people that ever turned up the white o' th' eye. Give me my book, Club, put out thy link, and come behind us.

They knock.

ANSWER WITHIN

Who's there?

DRYFAT

Two Brothers and a Sister in the Family.

They are let in. Purge knocks.

WITHIN

Who's there?

PURGE

A Familiar Brother.

[WITHIN]

Here's no room for you nor your familiarity.

PURGE

How? No room for me nor my familiarity? Why, what's the difference between a Familiar Brother and a Brother in the Family? O, I know: I made ellipsis of "in" in this place where it should have been expressed, so that the want of "in" put me clean out; or, let me see: may it not be some mystery drawn from arithmetic? For my life, these Familists love no subtraction, take nothing away, but put in and add as much as you will; and after addition follows multiplication of a most Pharasithypocritical crew. Well, for my part I like not this Family, nor indeed some kind of private lecturing that women use. Look to't, you that have such gadders to your wives: self-willed they are as children, and, i'faith, capable of not much more than they, peevish by custom, naturally fools. I

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

remember a pretty wooden sentence in a preamble to an exercise, where the reader prayed that men of his coat might grow up like cedars to make good wainscot in the House of Sincerity; would not this wainscot phrase be writ in brass, to publish him that spake it for an animal? Why, such wooden pellets out of earthen trunks do strike these females into admiration, hits 'em home; sometimes, perhaps, in at one ear and out at t'other; and then they depart, in opinion wiser than their neighbours, fraught with matter able to take down and mortify their husbands. Well, I'll home now, and bring the true word next time. I shall expect my wife anon, red-hot with zeal and big with melting tears; and this night do I expect, as her manner is, she will weep me a whole chamber-pot full. Loquor lapides? Do I cast pills abroad? 'Tis no matter what I say; I talk like a pothecary, as I am; I have only purged myself of a little choler and passion, and am now armed with a patient resolution. But how? To put my horns in my pocket? No:

What wise men bear is not for me to scorn;
'Tis a[n] honourable thing to wear the horn.

Exit.

[III.iii. Lipsalve's chamber, and outside.]
Enter Lipsalve[, undoubletted,] with his whip.

LIPSALVE

Fortune, devil's turd i' thy teeth! I'll turn no more o' thy wheel; art is above thy might. What though my project with Mistress Maria failed? More ways to the wood than one: there's variety in love. It is believed I am out of town; my door is open, the hour is at hand; all things squared by the doctor's rule; and now I look for the spirit to bring me warm comfort to clothe my nakedness, and that is Mistress Purge, the cordial of a Familist; and come quickly, good spirit, or else my teeth will chatter for thee.

Enter Gudgeon[,undoubletted,] with his [whip, outside the chamber].

GUDGEON

O the naked pastimes of love, the scourge of dullness, the purifier of uncleanness, and the hot-house of humanity! I have taken physic of Master Purge any time this twelve months to purge my humour upon's wife, and I have ever found her so fugitive, from exercise to exercise, and from Family to Family, that I could never yet open the closestool of my mind to her; so that I may well say with Ovid, "Hei mihi, quod nullis amor est medicabilis herbis." Now am I driven to prove the violent virtue of conjuration; if it hit, and that I yerke my Familist out of the spirit, I'll hang up my scourge-stick for a trophy, and emparadize my thoughts; though the doctor go to the devil, 'tis no matter. Ha, let me see: Lipsalve's door open, and himself out of town? Excellent doctor, soothsaying doctor, oraculous doctor!

Enter Glister above.

GLISTER

[Aside] I have taken up this standing to see my gallants play at barriers with scourge-sticks, for the honour of my punk. And in good time I see my brave spirits shining in bright armour, nakedly burning in the hell-fire of lechery, and ready for the hot encounter. Sound trumpets, the combatants are mounted.

Enter Gudgeon [into the chamber].

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

GUDGEON

The apparition! Mistress Purge peers through him; I see her.

LIPSALVE

The spirit appears! But he might have come sooner: I am numbed with cold, a shivering ague hath taken away my courage.

GLISTER

[Aside] They are afraid one of another; look how they tremble; the flesh and the devil strengthen 'em! Ha, ha, ha!

GUDGEON

Has 'a no cloven feet? What a laxative fever shakes me.

LIPSALVE

Will 'a not carry me with him to hell? Well, I must venture: Clogmathos.

GUDGEON

My cue: Clogmathathos.

LIPSALVE

My cue: Garrazin.

GUDGEON

Garragas.

LIPSALVE

Garrazinos.

GUDGEON

Ton tetuphon.

LIPSALVE

Tes tetuphes.

BOTH

With a whirly twinos.

They lash one another.

Hold, hold, hold!

Gogs nowns, gogs blood!

A pox, a plague, the devil take you!

Truce, truce, I smart, I smart.

GLISTER

[Aside] Ha, ha, ha! O, for one of the hoops of my Cornelius' tub!

I must needs be gone, I shall burst myself with laughing else.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

Magic hath no such rule; men cannot find
Lust ever better handled in his kind.

Exit.

GUDGEON

What art thou? With the name of Jove I conjure thee!

LIPSALVE

With any name, saving the whip; I'll no more of that conjuration, a plague on't!

GUDGEON

Speak, art not a spirit in the likeness of my friend Lipsalve, that should transform thyself to Mistress Purge?

LIPSALVE

How, a spirit? I hope spirits have no flesh and blood; and I am sure thou hast drawn blood out of my flesh with the spirit of thy whip.

GUDGEON

Then shall we prove to be honest gulls, and the doctor an errant knave.

LIPSALVE

A plague upon him for a Glister! He has given our loves a suppositor with a recumbentibus. I'll tell thee, sirrah—

GUDGEON

Tell not me, let me prevent thee; the wind shall not take the breath of our gross abuse; we feel the gullery. Therefore let us swear by our naked truths, and by the hilts of these our blades, our flesh-tamers, to be revenged upon that paraperopandential doctor, that pocky doctor.

LIPSALVE

Agreed; we'll cuckold him, that he shall not be able to put his head in at's doors; and make his precise, puritanical and peculiar punk, his pothecary's drug there, a known cockatrice to the world.

GUDGEON

If report catch this knavery, we have lost our reputations for ever; wherefore let's be secret.
Ill tax we women of credulity,
When men are gull'd with such gross foppery.

LIPSALVE

Come, let us in and cover both our shames.
This conjuration to the world's a novelty;
Gallants turn'd spirits and whipped for lechery.

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

Exeunt.

[III.iv. Maria's room.]

Enter Maria.

MARIA

Gerardine, come forth, Maria calls!

Enter Gerardine out of the trunk.

Those ribs shall not enfold thy buxom limbs
One minute longer: the cincture of mine arms
Shall more securely keep thy soul from harms.

GERARDINE

What heavenly breath of Phitonessa's power,
That raised the dead corpse of her friend to life,
Prevails no less on me; for even this urn,
The figure of my sadder requiem,
Gives up my bones, my love, my life, and all,
To her that gives me freedom in my thrall.

MARIA

Be brief, sweet friend, salute and part in one;
For niggard time now threatens with imminent danger
Our late joy'd scope. Thy earnest, then, of love,
Ere Sol have compass'd half the signs, I fear
Will show a blushing fault; but 'twas thine aim,
T' enforce consent in him that bars thy claim.

GERARDINE

Love salves that fault; let time our guilt reveal,
I'll ne'er deny my deed, my hand and seal.
The elements shall lose their ancient force,
Water and earth suppress the fire and air,
Nature in all use a preposterous course,
Each kind forget his likeness to repair,
Before I'll falsify my faith to thee.

MARIA

The humorous body's elemental kind
Shall sooner lose th' innated heat of love,
The soul in nature's bounds shall be confin'd,
Heaven's course shall retrograde and leave to move,
Ere I surcease to cherish mutual fire,
With thoughts refin'd in flames of true desire.

GERARDINE

These words are odours in the sacred shrine

[III.i. Maria's room.]

The Family of Love

Of love's best deity. The marriage-god
Longs to perform these ceremonious rites
Which terminate our hopes; till mine grow full,
I'll use that intercourse amongst my friends
That erst I did. Then in the height of joy,
I'll come to challenge interest in my boy.
Till then, farewell.

MARIA

You'll come upon your cue?

GERARDINE

Doubt not of that.

MARIA

Then twenty times adieu.

Exeunt.

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

Enter Lipsalve and Gudgeon, Shrimp and Periwinkle.

GUDGEON

Come boys, our clothes, boys; and what is the most current news, Periwinkle?

PERIWINKLE

Faith, sir, fortune hath favoured us with no news but what the pedlar brought from Norfolk.

LIPSALVE

Is there nothing stirring at court, Shrimp?

SHRIMP

Faith, there is, sir, but nothing new.

LIPSALVE

[To Gudgeon] Good wag, faith, thou smellest somewhat of a courtier, though thy mother was a citizen's wife. Off with that filthy great band, nay, quick; on with your robe of sanctity, nay, suddenly, man.

[Lipsalve and Gudgeon don Puritanical robes.]

GUDGEON

And why must we shift ourselves into this demure habit, if impossible to be of the Family and keep our own fashion?

The Family of Love

LIPSALVE

Tut, man, the name of a gallant is more hateful to them than the sight of a corner–cap. Hadst thou heard the protestations the wife of a bellows–mender made but yesternight against gallants, thou hadst for ever abjured crimson breeches. She swore that all gallants were persons inferior to bellows–menders, for the trade of bellows–making was very aerial and high; and what were men and women but bellows, for they take wind in at one place and do evaporate at another; evaporate was her very phrase.

GUDGEON

Methinks, her phrase flew with somewhat too strong a vapour.

LIPSALVE

Nay, she proves farther, that all men receive their being chiefly from bellows, without which the fire burns not; without fire the pot seethes not; the pot not seething, powdered beef is not to be eaten; of which she then averred our nation was a great devourer, and without which they could neither fight for their country abroad, nor get children at home; for, said she, powdered beef is a great joiner of nerves together.

GUDGEON

What answer madest thou?

LIPSALVE

Marry, that I thought a bawd was a greater joiner of nerves together than powdered beef; with that she protested that a bawd was an instrument of the devil, and as she had proved that bellows–makers were of God's trade, so bawds were of the devil's trade: for (and thereupon she blew her nose) the devil and bawds did both live by the sins of the people.

Enter Club and Mistress Purge.

GUDGEON

No more; Mistress Purge is at hand.

LIPSALVE

Vanish boys, away. Make haste; before Jove, she'll be with us ere we can be provided for her.

[Exeunt Shrimp and Periwinkle.] Lipsalve and Gudgeon retire.

MISTRESS PURGE

Advance your link, Club. At what time wert thou bound, Club? At Guttide, Hollantide or Candletide?

CLUB

I was bound indeed about midsummer.

MISTRESS PURGE

And when hath thy prenticeship end? At Michaeltide next?

CLUB

So I take it.

The Family of Love

MISTRESS PURGE

They say, Club, you fall very heavy on such you love not; you never learnt that of me.

CLUB

Indeed, mistress, I must confess my falling is rustic, gross and butcher-like; marry, yours is a pretty, foolish, light, [courtlike] falling. Yet believe me, my master smells somewhat too gross of the purgation; he wants tutoring.

MISTRESS PURGE

And why, I pray?

CLUB

My master being set last night in his shop, comes Master Doctor Glisten, as his manner is, squirting in suddenly; and after some conference, tells my master that by his own knowledge you were young with child; to which my master replied: "Why, Master Doctor, will you put me to more charges yet?"

MISTRESS PURGE

Thou art a fool, in that my husband spake as wisely as if the master of his company had spoke. He knows doctors have receipts for women, which makes them most apt to conceive; and he promising a' had ministered the same lately to me, thereupon spake it. Lead on with your link.

LIPSALVE

[To Gudgeon] Art ready ?

GUDGEON

[To Lipsalve] Ready.

LIPSALVE

[To Gudgeon] Then speak pitifully, look scurvily, and dissemble cunningly, and we shall quickly prove two of the Fraternity.—Benediction and sanctity, love and charity fall on Mistress Purge, Sister of the Family.

MISTRESS PURGE

And what, I pray, be you two?

LIPSALVE

Two newly converted from the rags of Christianity to become good members in the house of the Family.

MISTRESS PURGE

Who, I pray, converted you?

The Family of Love

[GUDGEON]

Master Dryfat the merchant.

MISTRESS PURGE

And from what sins hath he converted you?

LIPSALVE

From two very notorious crimes; the first was from eating fish on Fridays, and the second from speaking reverently of the clergy. But a' resolved us your talent in edifying young men went far beyond his.

Enter Purge[, hiding himself].

MISTRESS PURGE

A talent I have therein, I must confess, nor am I very nice at fit times to show it; for your better instructions, therefore, you must never hereafter frequent taverns nor tap-houses, no masques nor mummeries, no pastimes nor playhouses.

GUDGEON

Must we have no recreation?

MISTRESS PURGE

Yes, on the days which profane lips call holydays, you may take your spaniel and spend some hours at the ducking-pond.

LIPSALVE

What are we bound unto during the time we remain in the Family?

MISTRESS PURGE

During the light of the candle you are to be very attentive; which being extinguished, how to behave yourselves I will deliver in private whisper.

PURGE

[Aside] 'Tis now come to a whisper. What young Familists be these? I'faith, I'll make one; I'll trip you, wife; I scent your footing, wife.

For [Galen] writes, Paracelsus can tell,
Pothecaries have brains and noses eke to smell.

LIPSALVE

We shall with much diligence observe it.

PURGE

[Aside] I fear I shall have small cause to thank that diligence; but do your worst:
He that hath read [five] herbals in one year

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

Can find a trick which shall prevent this gear.

They are going; follow, Purge, close, close and softly, like a horsekeeper in a lady's matted chamber at midnight.

Mistress Purge knocks.

WITHIN

Who knocks?

MISTRESS PURGE

Brethren and a Sister in the Family.

WITHIN

Enter in peace.

Exeunt Gudgeon, Lipsalve and Mistress Purge [and Club].

PURGE

Brethren and a Sister; that's the word. How beastly was I mistaken last day: I should have said "A Brother in the Family" and I said "A Familiar Brother"; for which I and my family were thrust out of doors. But as Titus Silus of Holborn Bridge most learnedly was wont to say, "Q.d."

He knocks.

WITHIN

Who's there?

PURGE

A Brother in the Family.

WITHIN

Enter, and welcome.

Exit Purge.

[IV.ii. A street.]

Enter Gerardine disguised [as a porter].

GERARDINE

Thou sacred deity, Love!

Thou power predominate, more to be admir'd

Than able to be express'd, whose orb includes

All terrene joys which are, all states which be,

Pay to thy sacred throne, as tribute-fee,

Their thoughts and lives. Like Jove's, so must thy acts

Endure no question; why, thy hidden facts

The gods themselves obey; heaven-synod holds

No gods but what thy awful power controls.

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

The Delphian archer proud with Python's spoil,
At Cupid's hand was forc'd to take the foil;
Nor Mars his warlike adamantine targe
Could free his warlike breast at Cupid's charge;
And Jove, whose frown all mortal lives bereaves,
[His] marble throne and ivory sceptre leaves,
And in the likeness of a bull was seen,
As forc'd by him to bear the Tyrian queen
Through Neptune's watery kingdom. If these submit,
My metamorphose is not held unfit.
And see, in most wished occasion, Dryfat the merchant presents himself. Sir, in the best of hours met; my thoughts had marked you out for a man most apt to do them the fairest of offices.

DRYFAT

What! Art thou a Welsh carrier or a northern landlord, th' art so saucy?

GERARDINE

Is't possible, sir, my disguise should so much fool your knowledge? How? A northern landlord? Can you think I get my living by a bell and a clack-dish?

DRYFAT

By a bell and a clack-dish? How's that?

GERARDINE

Why, by begging, sir. Know you me now?

DRYFAT

Master Gerardine, disguised and ashore! Nay, then I smell a rat.

GERARDINE

Master Dryfat, shall I repose some trust in you? Will you lay by awhile your city's precise humour? Will you not deceive me?

DRYFAT

If I deceive your trust, the general plague seize me; that is, may I die a cuckold.

GERARDINE

And I say thou shall die a true citizen, if thou conceal it. And thus in brief: it stands with thy knowledge how seriously I have and do still affect Maria. Now, sir, I have so wrought it, that if thou couldst procure me a fellow that could serve instead of a crier, I myself would play Placket the paritor, and summon Doctor Glister and Maria to appear at thy house; and as [I play] the paritor, so wouldst thou but assume the shape of a proctor, I should have the wench, thou the credit, and the whole city occasion of discourse this nine days.

DRYFAT

How's this, how's this? I should procure a fellow to play the [crier] and I myself should play the proctor? But upon what occasion should they be summoned?

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

GERARDINE

Upon an accusation that Doctor Glister should get Maria his niece with child, and have bastards in the country, which I have a trick to make probable.

DRYFAT

And now I recall it to memory, I heard somewhat to that effect last night in Master Beardbush the barber's shop; but how will this sort? Who shall accuse him?

GERARDINE

Refer that to me, I say, be that my care; all shall end in merriment, and no disgrace touch either of their reputations.

DRYFAT

Then take both word and hand, 'tis done; Club, Mistress Purge's prentice, shall be the [crier].

GERARDINE

O my most precious Dryfat, may none of thy daughters prove vessels with foul bungholes, or none of thy sons hogsheads, but all true and honourable Dryfats like thyself.

DRYFAT

Well, Master Gerardine, I hope to see you a Familist before I die.

GERARDINE

That's most likely, for I hold most of their principles already. I never rail nor calumniate any man but in love and charity; I never cozen any man for any ill will I bear him, but in love and charity to myself; I never make my neighbour a cuckold for any hate or malice I bear him, but in love and charity to his wife.

DRYFAT

And may those principles fructify in your weak members. I'll be gone, and with most quick dexterity provide you a crier. Tomorrow at my house, said you, they should appear?

GERARDINE

Be that the time, most honoured Dryfat; but be this known to none, most loved sir, save Club, or to some other whom your judgment shall select as a fit person for our project.

DRYFAT

Thus enough; time out of sight.

Exit.

GERARDINE

Maria, thou art mine.

Earth's [perfection] and nature's glory:

Woman; of what an excellency, if

Her thoughts and acts were squared and levelled

With the first celsitude of her creation!

T' enjoy a creature, whose dishevell'd locks,

Like gems against the repercussive sun,

Gives light and splendour; whose star-like eyes

Attract more [gazers'] loves to see there a move

The Family of Love

Then the Tartarians' god, when Egeon's hill
'A mounts in triumph; a skin more pure and soft
Than is the silk-worm[s] bed; tooth more white
Than new-fall'n snow or shining ivory,
Is happiness sought by the gods themselves.
Celestial Venus, born without a mother,
Be thou propitious; thee [do] I implore,
Not vulgar Venus, heaven's scorn and Mars his whore.

Exit.

[IV.iii. A room in Glister's house.]
Enter Mistress Glister and Maria.

MARIA

Good aunt, quiet yourself; ground not upon dreams, you know they are ever contrary.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Minion, minion, coin no excuses; I grant dreams are deceitful, but a true judgment grounded upon knowledge never fails. What? Have not I observed the rising and falling of the blood, the coming and going of the countenance, your qualms, your unlacings, your longings? Most evident tokens. Besides, a more certain sign than all these, too; you know't, I need not speak it; nay, I am as skilful in that point as my husband. I can tell you, Aristotle speaks English enough to tell me these secrets. Body of me, so narrowly looked to, and yet fly out! Well, I see maids will ha't in spite of laws or locks that restrain 'em; they will open, do men what they can.

MARIA

I see my fault appears; simplicity
Hath no evasion. 'Tis bootless to deny
Where guilty blood, cited by touch of shame,
Runs through my veins, and leaves my conscience' stain
Even in my face. Forbear, I do beseech you,
To publish my defame; what I have done
You shall not answer; I must bear mine own.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Bear your own? Ay, marry, there it goes;
What must you bear?

MARIA

My sins, forsooth.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Your sins, forsooth? Confess to me, and go not about the bush; you have been doing, that's flat; you have caught a clap, that's round; and answer me roundly to the point, or else I'll square. Come, whose act is't? I cannot devise unless it be my husband's, for none else had access to thee; I am sure time has turned his bald side to thee, and I do but wonder how thou tookest opportunity. Speak, tell me.

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

MARIA

Now, good aunt, press me not; let time reveal
What you suspect; for never shall my tongue
Confess an act that tends unto my wrong.

Enter Gerardine like a porter.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Will you not bolt? I must ha't out on you, and will.

GERARDINE

By your leave, mistress—

MISTRESS GLISTER

Passion of my heart, what art thou?

GERARDINE

No ghost forsooth, though I appear in white.

MISTRESS GLISTER

No, but a saucy knave I perceive by your manners.

GERARDINE

None of that livery neither. I am of the bearing trade forsooth; you may see by my smock-frock, I would say. I am, if it please you, of the spick and span new-set-up company of porters. Here's my breastplate; and besides our own arms we have the arms of the city to help us in our burdens; ecce signum: here's the cross and the sword of justice in good pewter, I can tell you, which goes as current with us as better metal.

MISTRESS GLISTER

What's your name, sir?

GERARDINE

Nicholas Nebulo. There's but a straw's-breadth between that and the arms; 'tis in the backside of the cross here, and well known in the city for an ancient name and an honest, an't like your worship.

MARIA

You are none of the twelve, are you?

GERARDINE

No forsooth, but one of the twenty-four—

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

MISTRESS GLISTER

Orders of knaves; I thought so. Sirrah, you're a rascal, to come thus bluntly into my house with your dirty startups; get you without doors, like a filthy fellow as you are; a place more fit for you.

GERARDINE

O, good words, mistress. I may be warden of my company for aught you know, and for my bluntness we have a clause in our charter to warrant that; for as we bear, so likewise we may be borne with, and have free egress and regress where our business lies.

MISTRESS GLISTER

And what's your business here?

GERARDINE

I have a letter, an't please you, to Master Doctor.

MISTRESS GLISTER

From whence?

GERARDINE

That I cannot show your worship; but I had it of Curtal the carrier, whose lawful deputy I am.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Leave your scraping, sirrah. Fie, how rank the knave smells of grease and taps-droppings.

Gerardine coughs and spits.

What, are you rheumatic too, with a vengeance!

GERARDINE

Yes indeed, mistress; though I be but a poor man, I have a spice of the gentleman in me; Master Doctor could smell it quickly, because he's a gentleman himself. I must to the diet, and that is tobacco at the ale-house; I use n'other physic for it.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Did ever such a peasant defile my floor, or breathe so near me? I'faith, sirrah, you would be bummed for your roguery, if you were well served.

GERARDINE

I am bummed well enough already, mistress; look here else. Sir-reverence in your worship, Master Doctor's lips are not made of better stuff.

The Family of Love

MISTRESS GLISTER

What an impudent rogue is this. Sirrah, be gone I say; I would be rid o' you.

GERARDINE

Be rid o' me? I shall gallop then. You mistake me, forsooth; I am a foot post, I do not use to ride.

MISTRESS GLISTER

I think the rascal be humorous or drunk. Well, I will read the letter and send him packing, or else he will spew or do worse before me. Fie on him, I think he will infect me with some filthy disease.

GERARDINE

[Aside] Or else I lose mine aim.

MISTRESS GLISTER

[Takes the letter and reads it] What's here? "Your poor nurse, Thomasine [Tweedles]?" For my life, now shall I find out my husband's knavery I have so long suspected.

GERARDINE

[Aside] She begins to nibble; 'twill take, i'faith.--Mistress,
I see some discontentment in your looks;
Care ill befits so delicate a spirit.
Be frolic, wench, for he that is so near thee
Has been much nearer.

MARIA

That accent sounds sweet music; 'tis my love.
That tongue breathes life into my lifeless spirits:

[Aside to Gerardine] Gerardine? O rapture! Why thus disguis'd?

GERARDINE

[Aside to Maria] No more, be mute. Thus must I vary forms
To bring our cares to end; her jealousy
Ensues this drift, which, if it take true scope,
Love's joy comes next; be fearless in that hope.

MISTRESS GLISTER

'Tis so. Rats-bane! I ha't; it racks on, it torments me! Here 'tis: "Woe worth the time that ever I gave suck to a child that came in at the window, God knows how." Villainous lecher! "Yet if you did but see how like the little red-headed knave is to his father." Damnable doctor! A bastard in the country, and another towards here. I am out of doubt this is his work. [To Maria] You are an arrant strumpet! Incest, fornication, abomination in my own house! Intolerable! O, for long nails to scratch out his eyes!

The Family of Love

GERARDINE

Or the breeches, to fight with him.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Out of my sight, quean; thou shalt to Bridewell! O, I shall be mad with rage!

GERARDINE

Then you shall go to Bedlam.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Hence, you slave.

GERARDINE

I must have a penny; you must pay me for my pains.

MISTRESS GLISTER

The devil pay thee.

GERARDINE

O, that's the doctor; but he wants his horns.

MISTRESS GLISTER

But I'll furnish him ere long, if I live.

GERARDINE

[Aside to Maria] It works as I would wish. Farewell Maria;
This storm once past, fair weather ever after.

Exit.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Was ever woman so moved? But you shall be talked withal; and for mine old fornicator, he shall ha't as hot as coals, i'faith. Here's stuff indeed! Come, minx, come; there's law for you both. Have I found your knavery? If I wink at this, let me be stone blind, or stoned to death; bear this, and bear all!

Exit with Maria.

[IV.iv. A street.]

Enter Lipsalve and Gudgeon, [Shrimp and Periwinkle].

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

LIPSALVE

Our hopes are cross'd; sure there's some providence
Which countermands libidinous appetites,
For what we most intend is counter-check'd
By strange and unexpected accidents.
For by disguise procuring full access,
Nay, ready to have [seiz'd] th' expected prize,
The candle out, steps 'twix my hopes and me
Some pleasant groin, possess'd and full enjoy'd
That sweet for which our vigilant eyes have watch'd,
And in one moment frustrates all our hopes.

GUDGEON

Upon my life, we are bewitched: the greasy rascal that first seized Mistress Purge, by the last reflection of the light, appeared to my sight not much unlike her husband.

LIPSALVE

The court's gall, the city's plague, and Europa's sea-form be his perpetual crest, whate'er 'a was. To lose Mistress Purge for lack of dexterity, is a disgrace insalveable. The like opportunity will never present itself.

GUDGEON

'Twas an egregious grief, I must confess, to see a knave slip betwixt us both and take occasion by the foretop; but since these projects have had so star-cross events, let's lay some plot how to revenge our late disgrace on the doctor by making him cuckold.

LIPSALVE

Agreed; but what melancholy sir with acrostic arms now comes from the Family?

Enter Purge.

GUDGEON

Purge the pothecary; I prithee, let's step aside and hear the issue of this discontent.

[They retire with the two pages.]

PURGE

O, the misery of married men's estate!

LIPSALVE

[Aside] 'A begins very pitifully.

PURGE

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

O women, what are many of you?

LIPSALVE

[Aside] Why, disease to bachelors, and plagues to married men.

PURGE

O marriage, the rage of all our miseries! My wife is a dissembling strumpet.

GUDGEON

[Aside] So is many a man's besides yours; and what of that?

PURGE

I would have a law that all such which pray little should instantly be married; for then would they pray continually, if it were but to be rid of their wives.

LIPSALVE

[Aside] This is a charitable request and surely would pass the Lower House.

PURGE

Surely if affliction can bring a man to heaven, I cannot see how any married man can be damned; I have made myself a plain cuckold.

[GUDGEON]

[Aside] A pile on ye, want you? Had you not been so manable, here are some would have saved you that labour.

PURGE

What shall I do in this extremity? Had I but witness of the fact, I would make her answer it before authority. This is my wedding ring; 'tis it, I know it by the posy. This I took from her finger in the dark, and she was therewith very well pleased; were not this, trow, a sufficient testimony? She knows not that it was myself got so near her; I will take counsel. Well, little know bachelors the miseries they undergo when they prostrate themselves to women.

LIPSALVE

[Coming forward with Gudgeon] O most true, Master Purge: little knows a man what elements 'a is to pass, when 'a puts his head under a woman's girdle. Your passion, Master Purge, is overheard, and, plain tale to tell, we were eye-witnesses of your wife's treachery, and if need be will be ready to depose as much.

PURGE

What, Master Lipsalve and Master Gudgeon, are you disguised testimonies?

Nay then, revenge look big! Elf and fairy

Help to revenge the wronged pothecary!

GUDGEON

Why, now 'a speaks like himself; get me a paritor for her straight.

LIPSALVE

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

Conceal the ring, my little Purge; let not thy wife know thou hast it, until she comes to her trial.

Enter Dryfat, and Gerardine [disguised as an apparitor].

PURGE

Your advices are very pithy; therefore in private let me disclose my intent.

GUDGEON

Off, boys.

[Purge, Lipsalve and Gudgeon retire.]

SHRIMP

What dost thou think of thy master? Is 'a not a rare gull?

PERIWINKLE

I think 'a will swallow and pocket more disgraces than large-conscienced lawyer fees in a Michaelmas term. Thy master, my honest [Shrimp], comes not much short of a fool too, but that 'a is a courtier.

SHRIMP

Draw somewhat near, and overhear their conference.

[Shrimp and Periwinkle retire.]

GERARDINE

This shape of the crier must Club tomorrow assume. Are you fitted for Poppin the proctor?

DRYFAT

Excellent, and have spent some study in the mystical cases of venery. I can describe how often a man may lie with another man's wife before 'a come to the white sheet--

GERARDINE

How long is that?

DRYFAT

Why, till 'a be taken tardy;--how long all women-kind may by the statute profess and swear they are maids.

GERARDINE

And how long is that?

DRYFAT

Why, till their bellies be so big, that it cannot be no longer concealed; but come forward towards Glister's.

LIPSALVE

It must be so. Let the summer tickle her; you shall bring in these allegations and let us alone to swear them. Who's this? Master Dryfat? Opportunely met, sir; and whether so fast? The news, the news?

DRYFAT

Faith, gentlemen, I think to relate for news what I hear of Doctor Glister would come stale to your hearings.

LIPSALVE

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

O, the getting of his niece with child; tut, that's apparently known to all the company. But, in the name of Jupiter, what art thou? Or from whence camest thou?

GERARDINE

Why, sir, I come from compassing the corners of the land.

GUDGEON

Of what trade, in the name of Pluto?

GERARDINE

Of the devil's trade; for I live as he does, by the sins of the people. In brief, sir, I am Placket the paritor.

LIPSALVE

As the devil would! We have, my noble paritor, instant employment for thee; a grey groat is to be purchased without sneaking, my little sumner; where's thy quorum nomina, my honest Placket?

GERARDINE

Sir, according to the old ballad,

"My quorum nomina ready, have I,

With my pen and inkhorn hanging by."

Her name, sir, her name?

GUDGEON

Is't no more but so?

PURGE

I have most right to her name. Her name, Master Placket, is my wife, Mistress Purge, sir. To what place dost thou belong?

GERARDINE

To the commissioners which sit tomorrow at Master Dryfat's upon the crimes of Doctor Glister and others.

LIPSALVE

Sits there a commission, Dryfat? Now for the love of lechery, let's have Mistress Purge summoned thither.

GERARDINE

She makes my quorum nomina reasonable full. My grant, sir, and she shall appear there upon a crime of concupiscence: is not that your meaning?

PURGE

[IV.i. A street before the meeting-house of the Family of Love.]

The Family of Love

Yes, my honest paritor; here's thy fee. [Gives him money.]

Enter Club and Mistress Purge.

GUDGEON

And see how happily it succeeds: Mistress Purge is new come from the Family. Let us step aside whilst Placket the paritor gives her a summons.

LIPSALVE

Content. To her, Placket, but see for the bribery of twelvecence you strike her not out of your quorum nomina.

GERARDINE

Fear not, sir.

MISTRESS PURGE

Forward apace, Club.

GERARDINE

Your name I take to be Mistress Purge, fair gentlewoman?

MISTRESS PURGE

I am Mistress Purge, Purge's wife the pothecary; what of that?

DRYFAT

[Aside] Now you shall see him tickle her with a quorum nomina.

GERARDINE

I cite you by virtue of my quorum nomina to make your personal appearance by eight of the clock in the morrow morning, before certain commissioners at Master Dryfat's house, to answer to an accusation of a crime of concupiscence.

MISTRESS PURGE

To answer a crime of concupiscence? What's that, I pray?

GERARDINE

Why, 'tis to answer a venereal crime, for having carnal copulation with other besides your husband.

MISTRESS PURGE

What are you, I pray?

The Family of Love

GERARDINE

By name Placket, by trade a paritor.

MISTRESS PURGE

And must I answer, say you, to a venereal crime? I tell thee, Placket the paritor, I am able to answer thee or any man else in any venereal crime they'll put me to; and so tell your commissioners.

GERARDINE

If you fail your appearance, the penalty must fall heavy.

MISTRESS PURGE

If it fall never so heavy, I am able to bear it; and so set forward, Club.

Exeunt Club and Mistress Purge.

LIPSALVE

Excellent, i'faith. After your wife, Purge. Read, Placket, thy quorum nomina, my noble goat-monger.

Exit Purge.

GERARDINE

Silence. The first that marcheth in this fair rank is Th[r]um the feltmaker, for getting his maid with child and sending his prentice to Bridewell for the fact; Whip the beadle, for letting a punk escape for a night's lodging and bribe of ten groats; Bat the bellman, for lying with a wench in a tailor's stall at midnight, when 'a should be performing his office.

GUDGEON

And Tipple the tapster, for deflowering a virgin in his cellar; Doctor Glister, his wife, Maria, Mistress Purge. These be the complete number.

LIPSALVE

Now dissolve, and each to his occasion till tomorrow morning.

Exeunt.

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

Enter Doctor Glister and Mistress Glister.

MISTRESS GLISTER

This was your colour to keep her close, but what cloak ha' you for her's and your own shame? What, your own niece, your brother's daughter, besides your bastard in the country!

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

GLISTER

Wife, range not too far, I would advise you! Come home in time; vex me not beyond sufferance. The two-edged sword of thy tongue hath drawn blood o' me. Patience, I say; thou art all this while in an error.

MISTRESS GLISTER

No, thou hast been all this while in an urinal; thou hast gone out of thy compass in women's waters; you're a conjuror, forsooth, and can rouse your spirits into circles. Ah, you old fornicator, that ever I saw that red beard of thine! Now could I rail against thy complexion. I think, in my conscience, the traces and caparison of Venus' coach are made o' red hairs, which may be a true emblem that no flaxen stuff or tanned white leather draws love like 'em; I think thou manuredst thy chin with the droppings of eggs and muskadine before it bristled. A shame take thee and thy loadstone. But 'tis no matter; Master Placket the paritor has cited you, and you shall answer it.

GLISTER

O, the raging jealousy of a woman! Do you hear, wife? I will show myself a man of sense, and answer you with silence; or like a man of wisdom, speak in brief. I say you are a scold, and beware the cucking-stool.

[Retires.]

MISTRESS GLISTER

I say you are a ninnihammer, and beware the cuckoo: for as sure as I have ware, I'll traffic with the next merchant venturer; and in good time here comes gallants of the right trade.

Enter Lipsalve and Gudgeon.

LIPSALVE

All alone, Mistress Glister? Meditating who shall be your next child's father?

GUDGEON

Indeed, methinks that should be one end of her thought, an't be but to cry quittance with her husband, of whose abuse the town rings.

GLISTER

[Aside] Flax and fire, flax and fire; here are fellows come in the nick, to light their matches at my tinder.

LIPSALVE

He tells you true, Mistress Glister; the doctor hath made you ordinary in our ordinaries; satires whet their teeth, and steep rods in piss; epigrams lie in poetry's pickle, and we shall have rhyme out of all reason against you.

GUDGEON

Ere long he will take up his station at a stationer's, where we shall see him do penance in a sheet at least.

MISTRESS GLISTER

O, I am nettled! My patience is so provoked that I must doff my modesty. What shall I do? If ye be honest gentlemen, counsel me in my revenge, teach me what to do, make my case your own.

LIPSALVE

Why, you are in the common road of revenge, take which hand you will, you cannot go out o' your way; 'tis as

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

soon taken as time by his forepart.

GUDGEON

Faith, since he has strook with the sword, strike you with the scabbard; in plain terms, cuckold him. You may as easily do't as lie down o' your bed.

GLISTER

[Aside] This gear cottons, i'faith.

MISTRESS GLISTER

I apprehend you, gentlemen. Lord, how much better are two heads than one to make one large head!

LIPSALVE

You say true, Mistress Glister: there's help required in grafting; and how happily we come to tender our service. Let our pretence be to take physic of the doctor; and that he may with as much ease minister to us as we to you, we'll take a lodging in his house.

GUDGEON

How say you to this? Is the colour good? Does't like you?

MISTRESS GLISTER

Passing well; the colour is so good, that you shall wear my favour out o' the same piece.

LIPSALVE

Excellent, excellent; now shall we be revenged for the whipping. Mistress Glister, let me be your first man.

GUDGEON

Nay, soft, sir, I plied her as soon as you.

GLISTER

[Aside] I should have an oar in her boat too by right.

LIPSALVE

How ill-advised were you to marry one with a red beard!

MISTRESS GLISTER

O Master Lipsalve, I am not the first that has fallen under that ensign. There's no complexion more attractive in this time for women than gold and red beards: such men are all liver.

GUDGEON

Ay, but small heart, and less honesty.

LIPSALVE

Yes, they are honest too in some kind, for they'll beg before they'll steal.

GUDGEON

That's true; for, for one that holds up his hand at the sessions, you shall have ten come into the bawdy court.

GLISTER

[Aside] Was ever beard so back-bitten? This were enough to make red beards turn medley, and dash 'em clean out of countenance; but I hope, like mine, they fear no colours. And you were ten courtiers, I'll front you; I must

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

give you physic, with a pox. Well, if I pepper ye not, call me Doctor Doddipoll.—[Comes forward] Master Lipsalve and Master Gudgeon, you are heartily welcome; I am very glad to see you well.

LIPSALVE

O Master Doctor, your salutation is very suspicious!

GLISTER

Why, Master Lipsalve?

LIPSALVE

It can scarce be hearty, for physicians are rather glad to see men ill than well.

GLISTER

Not so, sir; you must distinguish of men; though this I know, virtue is not the end of all science, which commonly keeps the professor poor; some study questuary and gainful arts, and every one would thrive in's calling. But, i'faith, gentlemen, what wind drives you hither?

GUDGEON

The wind—colic, Master Doctor, or some such disease.

GLISTER

But not the stone—colic?

LIPSALVE

O no, sir, we have no obstructions in those parts; we are loose enough there.

GLISTER

If you were troubled with that, my wife can tell you of an excellent remedy.

GUDGEON

We need it not, we need it not. But indeed, Master Doctor, for some private infirmities, which our waters shall make known to you, we desire to take some physic of you for a few days; and to that end we would take a lodging in your house during the time.

LIPSALVE

Shall we entreat your favour?

GLISTER

No entreaty, gentlemen; you shall command me to search the very profundity of my skill for you. Have them in, wife, and show them their lodging. I will think upon another receipt, and follow you immediately.

The Family of Love

GUDGEON

And i'faith we shall requite your pains to the full.

Exeunt Lipsalve, Gudgeon, Mistress Glister.

GLISTER

To the fool, you mean. I know you ha' the horn of plenty for me, which you would derive unto me from the liberality of your bawdies, not your minds. Here are lords that, having learned the O P Q of courtship, travel up and down among citizens' wives to show their learning and bringing up; as if the city were not already a good proficient in the court horn-book. Yes, I warrant they have heads as capable as other men; ay, and some of them can wisely say with the philosopher, that in knowing all they know nothing. Well, because I am of the livery, and pay scot and lot amongst you, do but observe how I'll fetch over my gallants for your sakes. They say I am of the right hair; and indeed they may stand to't, and hold the position good, saving with my wife. Soft; are they not at pro and contra already? I know they are hot-spurs, and I must have an eye to the main. They have been whipped already for lechery and yet the pride of the flesh pricks 'em.

Well, I must in; I have given them such a pill
Shall take 'em down, for lust must have his fill.

Exit.

[V.ii. A street before Glister's house.]

Enter Maria above.

MARIA

Now nature's pencil and the hand of time
Gives life and limb to generation's act,
My shame and guilt in wordless notes appear,
The argument of scorn. O now I stand
The theme and comment to each liberal tongue,
Whilst hope breeds comfort, and fear threatens my wrong.
O Gerardine, how oft thy lively figure,
[Deeply] impressed in my yielding temper,
Assures me thou art mine! How fancy paints
Thy true proportion in my troubled sleep,
Because sole subject of my daily thoughts.
O, if thy vows prove feign'd and thou unjust,
I say and swear in men there is no trust.

Enter Gerardine.

GERARDINE

Thus have I passed the round and court of guard,
Without the word: either conceit is strong,
Or else the body where true love's confin'd
Walks as a spirit and doth force his way
Through greatest dangers, frightful to those eyes
That wait to intercept him. Maria!

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

How like to Cynthia in her silver orb
She seems to me, attended by love's lamp,
Whose mutual influence and soul's sympathy
Doth show heaven's model in mortality.

MARIA

Gerardine!
Aurora [nor] the blushing sun's approach
Dart not more comfort to this universe
Than thou to me. Most acceptably come;
The art of number cannot count the hours
Thou hast been absent.

GERARDINE

Infinity of love
Holds no proportion with arithmetic.
Think not, Maria, but my heart retains
A deep impression of such thoughts as these.
I have been forging of a mirthful plot
To celebrate our wish'd conjunction;
Which now digested, come to summon thee
To be an actress in the comedy.

MARIA

How, where, when? Speak, mine ears are quick to hear;
I stand on thorns already to be there.

GERARDINE

At Dryfat's house, the merchant, there's our scene,
Whose sequel, if I fail not in intent,
Shall answer our desires and each content.
But when sawest thou Lipsalve and Gudgeon, our two gallants?

MARIA

They are here in the house, so handled by mine uncle that they are the pitifullest patients that ever you beheld.

GERARDINE

No matter, he serves them in their kind; they were infamous in the court and now are grown as notorious in the city. They may happily prove particles in our sport, and fit subjects for laughter.
Time calls me hence: adieu; prepare to meet.

MARIA

I shall outstrip the nimblest in my feet.

Exeunt.

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

[V.iii. A room in Dryfat's house.]

Enter Dryfat and Club disguised [as a proctor and a crier, respectively].

DRYFAT

Come Club, come, there's a merry fray towards; we shall see the death of melancholy; wherein thou and I must call a grand jury of jests together, and pass upon them with the club law.

CLUB

Now as I am 0 the crier, and yet but a young club, I have not yet practised that law; you have a whole dryfat on't; I pray you instruct me.

DRYFAT

Why, 'tis a law enacted, by the common council of statute-caps, to qualify the rage of the time, to follow, to call back, and sometimes to encounter gentlemen when they run in arrearages; I tell thee there's no averment against our book-cases. 'Tis the law called make-peace; it makes them even when they are at odds; it shows 'em a flat case as plain as a pack-staff, that is, knocks 'em down without circumstance.

CLUB

Ay, marry, I like that law well; 'tis studied with the turning of a hand. There's no quiddits nor pedlar's French in't; there needs no book for th' exposition o' th' terms; 'tis as easily learned as the felling of wood and getting of children; all is but laying on load the downright blow.

DRYFAT

Ay, and by the way of exhortation it prints this moral sentence on their costards, in capital letters, "Agree, for the law is costly".

CLUB

Good, good. But all this while there's no doctor thought on; we must have one to arbitrate.

DRYFAT

Why, Master Gerardine, man, has his name for the purpose; he shall be called Doctor Stickler; lupus est in fabula, here he comes.

Enter Gerardine.

GERARDINE

How now, lads, does our conceit cotton? Ha' you summoned your wits from wool-gathering? Are you fraught with matter for this merriment?

DRYFAT

Full, full; we are in labour, man, and we shall die without midwifery.

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

CLUB

We are ravished with delight, like the wench that was got with child against her stomach. O, but if we could wrest this smock law now in hand to our club law, it were excellent.

DRYFAT

Easily, easily; all shall be called the club law.

GERARDINE

As how?

DRYFAT

Why, thus. Club is the crier, I am [Poppin] the proctor and you Stickler the doctor; he calls them to appear, I must be of their counsel and you must atone them, put 'em together. We may know their cases and be in their elements, mark you me, but they cannot be in ours. Tut, none knows our secrets; we can speak fustian above their understanding, and make asses' ears attentive. I'll play Ambodexter, tell 'em 'tis a plain case and put 'em down with the club law; so that, as Club said well e'en now, our knavery is as near allied as felling of wood and getting of children.

GERARDINE

Excellent, excellent. By this they are at hand: let's bear these things like ourselves; I'll withdraw and put on my habiliments, and then enter for the doctor.

DRYFAT

Do so; they come, they come!

Exit Gerardine. Enter Glister and Purge.

Welcome, Master Doctor Glister and Master Purge; there's a commission to be sat upon this day, to open a passage for imprisoned truth, concerning acts yet in tenebris.

GLISTER

True; I am brought hither by the malice of my wife.

PURGE

And I have a just appeal against my wife.

GLISTER

Master [Poppin], so I think you are called, I understand you have the law at your fingers' ends.

DRYFAT

I can box cases, and scold and scratch it out amongst them.

The Family of Love

GLISTER

Indeed, fame reports you to be a good trumpeter of causes; I must retain you, sir, to sound mine.

DRYFAT

My sackbut shall do it most pathetically; tell me, in brief, the nature of your case.

GLISTER

Faith, sir, a scandalous letter devised to wrong my reputation, about a bastard in the country which should be mine.

DRYFAT

About a bastard in the country which should be yours? Hum; 'tis very like you then, it should seem.

GLISTER

O no, sir, understand me, only fathered upon me.

DRYFAT

Only fathered upon you cum nemini obtrudi potest. I understand you, and like you well too, you do not flatter yourself in your own case, no, 'tis not good; well, what more?

GLISTER

And about my niece, got with child in my own house.

DRYFAT

Byrlady, burdens of some weight, which you make light of! You deny?

GLISTER

What else, sir? I have reason.

DRYFAT

I know it well, I take you for no beast. Believe me, Master Doctor, denial and reason are two main grounds; stand upon them, and you cannot err. Your case, Master Purge?

PURGE

First take your fee, Master [Poppin], that you may have the more feeling, and urge it home when you come to't. Mine is a discovery of my wife's iniquity at the Family of Love.

DRYFAT

Otherwise called the House of Venerly, where they hunger and thirst for't.

PURGE

True, sir; you have heard of the Hole in the Wall, where they assemble together in the day-time, like so many

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

bees under a hive?

DRYFAT

Come home crura thymo plena, and lodge among hornets, is't not so?

PURGE

I cannot tell, sir; but for my part, I am much noted as I go.

DRYFAT

No doubt of that, sir; your wife can furnish you with notes out of her cotations.

CLUB

Ay, and give him a two-tagged point to tie 'em together.

DRYFAT

But how came you to detect her?

PURGE

Why, thus, sir: getting the word, I dogged her to the Family where, closing with her, I whispered so pleasing a tale in her ear that I got from her her wedding ring; and here 'tis.

DRYFAT

Well, out of that ring we will wring matter that shall carry meat i' th' mouth. But what witness or proof can you produce to make good your wife's iniquity and your own cuckoldry?

PURGE

Master Lipsalve and Master Gudgeon, who were her companions at that same time.

DRYFAT

Very good; are they cited in the quorum nomina?

CLUB

They will be here, sir.

GLISTER

If they be, they will bewray all.

DRYFAT

So much the better; 'twill savour well for Master Purge.

PURGE

You understand my case now?

GLISTER

And mine too, sir?

DRYFAT

I do, I do; they are as different as a doctor and a dunce, a man and a beast. Here's the compendium; yours, Master Doctor, stands upon the negative; and yours, Master Purge, upon the affirmative; pauca sapienti, I ha't, I ha't.

PURGE

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

Mine is very current, sir; I can show you good guilt.

DRYFAT

Ay, marry, there spoke an angel; gilt's current indeed; let me feel't, let me feel't.

PURGE

I mean, my wife's guilt.

GLISTER

Master Poppin, you shall have innocence to speak for me.

DRYFAT

Tut, innocence is a fool, I care not for's company; I can speak enough without him.

GLISTER

Then, I hope, you will be as good to us as the five-finger at maw.

DRYFAT

No, rather as Hercules, to lip-labour 'em with the club law; tut, let me alone.

Enter Mistress Glister, Mistress Purge and Maria.

MISTRESS GLISTER

O, you are here, sir? I have brought you a full barn to glut your greedy appetite; if you have any maw, feed here till you choke again. Now shall I see the whole carcass of your knavery ripped up; if thou hast any grace, now will thy red beard turn white upon't.

MISTRESS PURGE

O, how have I been toss'd from post to pillar
In this libidinous world. The yoke I bear
Is so uneven, as if an innocent lamb
And a mad hare-brain'd ox should draw together.
But I must have patience, there's no remedy.

DRYFAT

There's some difference between these two tempers.

GLISTER

I would give a hundred pounds my wife had so gentle a spirit.

PURGE

My wife must needs be gentle, for she can bear double.

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

Enter Gerardine [disguised as a doctor of law].

DRYFAT

Here comes Master Doctor; now rig up your vessels, every one to his tackling.

GERARDINE

Good day to all at once, and peace amongst you. Fie, how I sweat; I think Vulcan ne'er toiled so at his anvil as I have done, and all to make maid's water to slake Cupid's fire, and to turn his shafts from the feather-bed to the bed-post, from the heart to the heel. Come, Master Poppin, shall we to this gear?

DRYFAT

Reverend doctor, we have stayed your coming. Crier, cry silence! Master Doctor, I have heard in general terms the tales of Master Doctor Glister and Master Purge, which have in mutual manner jumped into the quagmire of my mind; out of which quagmire, by your enforcement and mine own duty, I pluck them up by the ears, and thus, in naked apparence, I present them.

GERARDINE

Ad rem, ad rem, Master Poppin. Leave your allegories, your metaphors and circumlocutions, and to the point.

DRYFAT

Then briefly thus: I have compared their tales, how short they will come of their wives' I know not; and first for Mistress Purge. Crier, call Mistress Purge.

CLUB

Rebecca Purge, wife to Peter Purge, pothecary, appear upon thy purgation, upon pain of excommunication.

MISTRESS PURGE

Here I am. O time's impiety!
Hither I come from out the harmless fold
To have my good name eaten up by wolves.
See how they grin! Well, the weak must to the wall;
I must bear wrong, but shame shall them befall.

GERARDINE

Who is her accuser?

DRYFAT

Her own husband, upon the late discovery of a crew of narrow-[ruffed], strait-laced, yet loose-bodied dames, with a rout of omnium-gatherums, assembled by the title of the Family of Love; which, Master Doctor, if they be not punished and suppressed by our club law, each man's copyhold will become freehold, specialities will turn to generalities, and so from unity to parity, from parity to plurality, and from plurality to universality; their wives, the only ornaments of their houses, and of all their wares, goods, and chattel[s], the chief moveables, will be made common.

The Family of Love

PURGE

Most voluble and eloquent proctor!

GERARDINE

Byrlady, these enormities must and shall be redressed, otherwise I see their charter will be infringed, and their ancient staff of government the club (from whence we derive our law of castigation), this club, I say, they seeming nothing less than men by their fore-part, will be turned upon their own heads. Speak, Rebecca Purge: art thou one of this Family? Hast thou ever known the body of any man there or elsewhere concupiscentically?

MISTRESS PURGE

No, M[aster] Doctor, those are but devices of the wicked to trap the innocent; but I thank my spirit I have fear before my eyes, which my husband sees not, because something hangs in's light.

PURGE

[Aside] That's my horns. She flouts me to my face, and I will not endure it. I shall carry her mark to my grave.—Master Doctor, she has given me that, that Aesculapius, were he now extant, could not heal, nor edax rerum take away.

GERARDINE

Produce your witness, [Master] Purge, and blow not your own horn.

PURGE

Master Lipsalve and Master Gudgeon, let them be called.

CLUB

Laurence Lipsalve and Gregory Gudgeon, late of hic et ubique, in the county of nusquam, gentlemen, come into the court and give your evidence, upon pain of that which shall ensue.

Enter Lipsalve and Gudgeon.

GLISTER

Here they come, in pain I warrant them. How works your physic, gallants? Do you go well to the ground? Now cuckold the doctor! Wife, who's your first man now? Now strike with the scabbard! Ha, ha, ha!

GUDGEON

A villainous doctor.

LIPSALVE

Mountebank, you're a rascal, and we will cast about to be revenged.

DRYFAT

Cast about this way and bewray what you can concerning Mistress Purge, who stands here upon her purgation, either to prove mundified or contaminated, according to the tenor-piece of your principal evidence. First give 'em the book.

CLUB

Come, lay your hands upon the book. You shall speak and aver no more, nor wade no farther into the cream-pots of this woman's crime, than the naked truth and the cart-rope of your conscience shall conduct you, so help you

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

the contents. Kiss the book.

LIPSALVE

Alas, we are not in case to answer largely; but if you will have our evidence in brief, I think I kissed her at the Family some three times, once at coming, once at going, and once in the midst; otherwise never knew her dishonestly.

PURGE

Ay, mark that middle kiss, Master Doctor.

GUDGEON

And for my part, I have been more mortified by her than ever I was provoked.

GERARDINE

How say you to this, Master Purge? Your witness is weak, and, sir—reverence on [it], without sounder proof, they may depart to the close—stool whence they came, and you to your pothecary's shop.

PURGE

No, Master Doctor, I have another bolt to shoot that shall strike her dead; she shall not have a word to say.

DRYFAT

Answer me to this, Mistress Purge; where's your wedding ring?

MISTRESS PURGE

My wedding ring? Why, what should I do with unnecessary things about me, when the poor begs at my gate ready to starve? Is it not better, as I learned last lecture, to send my substance before me, where I may find it, than to leave it behind me, where I must forego it? Yes, verily; wherefore, to put you out of doubt, I have given that ring to charitable uses.

DRYFAT

Nay, now she falters. My client can shew that ring, got from her at the Family, when these two courtling[s] had at the same time beleaguered her fort.

GERARDINE

This alters the case clean. What starting—hole ha' you now, Mistress Purge?

MISTRESS PURGE

E'en the sanctuary of a safe conscience. Now truly, truly, however he came by that ring, by my Sisterhood, I gave it to the relief of the distressed Geneva.

PURGE

How! To the relief of the distressed Geneva? Justice, Master Doctor! I may now decline victus, victa, victum; one word more shall overthrow her. I myself was a Familist that day, who, more jealous than zealous in devotion, thrust in amongst the rest (as I had most right) on purpose to sound her, to find out the knavery. Short tale to make, I got her ring, and here it is: let her deny it if she can; and what more I discovered non est nunc narrandi locus.

MISTRESS PURGE

Husband, I see you are hoodwinked in the right use of feeling and knowledge, as if I knew you not then as well as the child knows his own father! Look in the posy of my ring: does it not tell you that we two are one flesh? And hath not fellow—feeling taught us to know one another as well by night as by day? Husband, husband, will you do

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

as the blind jade, break your neck down a hill because you see it not? Ha' you no light of nature in that flesh of yours? Now, as true as I live, Master Doctor, I had a secret operation, and I knew him then to be my husband e'en by very instinct.

PURGE

Impudence, dost not blush? Art not ashamed to lie so abominable?

MISTRESS PURGE

No, husband, rather be you ashamed of your own weakness; for, for my part, I neither fear nor shame what man can do unto me.

GERARDINE

Master Purge, I see you have spent your pith; therefore best make a full point at the ring, and attend our pleasure. Master [Poppin], proceed to the rest.

DRYFAT

Crier, call Doctor Glister.

CLUB

Doctor Glister, alias suppositor doctor of phisic, appear upon thy purgation, upon the belly-pain that may ensue therein.

GLISTER

Here, Master Doctor.

GERARDINE

Who is his accuser?

DRYFAT

His clamorous wife, who seems to enforce a separation about a bastard in the country, which should be his, only fathered upon him.

GERARDINE

What proof of that?

MISTRESS GLISTER

Proof unanswerable, Master Doctor, the nurse's letter: let it be read; but first observe his countenance: it may be his blushing will bewray his guilt.

GERARDINE

Now by this light, I thought it had indeed, but I see 'tis but the reflection of his beard. Read the letter, Master [Poppin].

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

[DRYFAT]

[Reads] "After my hearty commendations remembered unto your worshipful doctorship, trusting in God that you are as well as I was at the making hereof, thanks be to him therefor. The cause of my writing unto you at this time is to let you understand that your little son is turned a ragged colt, a very stripling; for, being now stripped of all his clothing, his backside wants a tail-piece, commends itself to your fatherly consideration. Woe worth the time that ever I gave suck to a child that came in at the window, God knows how. Yet if you did but see how like the pert, little, red-headed knave is to his father, and how like a cock-sparrow he mouses and touses my little Bess already, you would take him for your own, and pay me my hire. I write not of the want of one thing, for I want all things; wherefore take some speedy order, or else as naked as he came from the mother will I send him to the father. From Pis. the xxii of —

Your poor nurse, Thomasine Tweedles."

GLISTER

Master Doctor, truth needs not the foil of rhetoric; I will only in monosyllaba answer for myself, as sometimes a wise man did: such and such things are laid to my charge, which I deny; you may think of me what you please, but I am as innocent in this as the child new-born.

GERARDINE

Why, there's partly a confession. The child we know is innocent, and not new-born neither, for it should seem by the letter he is able to call his dad knave.

GLISTER

You take me wrong, Master [Doctor].

DRYFAT

Under correction, thus much can I say for my client's justification: indeed he hath travelled well in the beating of pulses, and hath been much conversant in women's jordans; but he had ever a care to raise his patient being before cast down. His charitable disposition hath been such to poor folk, that he never took above fourpence for the casting of a water, which good custom was so well known among all his patients, that if sixpence were at any time offered him, they might be bold to ask and have twopence again. He hath been so skilful and painful withal in the cure of the green sickness, that, of my knowledge, he hath risen at all hours in the night to pleasure maids that have had it. And for that foul-mouthed disease, termed by a fine phrase—a pox on't, what d'ye call't? O, the grincomes—at that he hath played his doctor's prize, and writes nil ultra to all [mountebanks]; so that the wise woman in Pissing Alley, nor she in Do-little Lane, are more famous for good deeds than he. Then, Master Doctor, out of these presumptions, besides his flat denial (a more infallible ground), you may gather his innocence, and let him have his purgation.

GERARDINE

No, Master [Poppin], it is not so to be foisted off.

MISTRESS GLISTER

Nay, Master Doctor, what say you to his own niece, that looks big upon him? An arrow that sticks for the upshot against all comers; which by his restraint of her from Master Gerardine, an honest gentleman that loved her, and upon that colour from the sight and intercourse of other men, must by all presumptions be his own act.

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

GERARDINE

O monstrous! This [is] a foul blot in your tables indeed.

GLISTER

Wife, thou hast no shame nor womanhood in thee; thy conscience knows me.

MISTRESS GLISTER

True of thy flesh, who knows not that? Thy beard speaks for thee. Ay, ay, thou liest by me like a stone, but abroad th'art like a stone-horse, you old [limb]-lifter!

DRYFAT

Cease your clamour, and attend my speech. Most worshipful, reverend and judicial doctor, for the quickening of your memory I will give you a breviat of all that hath been spoken. Master Doctor Glister hath a cradleful and a bellyful, you see, thrust upon him; and Master Purge a headful. Your wife is an angry honeyless wasp, whose sting I hope you need not fear, and yours carries honey in her mouth, but her sting makes your forehead swell. Your wife makes you deaf with the shrill treble of her tongue; and yours makes you horn-mad with the tenor of her tale. In fine, Master Doctor's refuge is his conscience, and Master Purge runs at his wife's ring.

GERARDINE

Summa totalis, a good audit ha' you made, Master [Poppin]. Now attend my arbitrement. For you gallants, though you have incurred the danger of the law by using counterfeit keys, and putting your hands into the wrong pocket, yet because I see you punished and purged already, my advice is, that you learn the A B C of better manners. Go back and tell how you have been used in the city; and being thus scoured, keep yourselves clean and the bed undefiled. For you, Master Purge, because I see your evidence insufficient, and indeed too weak, to foil your wife's uprightness, and seeing jealousy and unkindness hath only made her a stranger in your land of Ham, my counsel is that you readvance your standard, give her new press-money.

PURGE

You may enjoin me, sir, but—

GERARDINE

But not at me, man; I will enjoin you, and conjoin you, and briefly thus: you have your ring that has made this combustion and uproar; that keep still: wear it; and here, by my edict, be it proclaimed to all that are jealous, to wear their wives' ring still on their fingers, as best for their security, and the only charm against cuckoldry.

PURGE

Then, wife, at Master Doctor's enjoinder, so thou wilt promise me to come no more at the Family, I receive thee into the lists of my favour.

MISTRESS PURGE

Truly husband, my love must be free still to God's creatures; yea, nevertheless preserving you still as the head of

The Family of Love

my body, I will do as the spirit shall enable me.

GERARDINE

Go to; thou hast a good wife, and there an end. Upon you, Master Doctor, being solicited by so apparent proof, I can do no less than pronounce a severe sentence. And yet, i'faith, the reverence of your calling and profession doth somewhat check my austerity; what if Master Gerardine, by my persuasion, would yet be induced to take your niece, and father the child? Would you launch with a thousand pound, besides her father's portion?

GLISTER

Master Doctor, I would, were it but to redeem her lost good name.

GERARDINE

Then, foreknowing what would happen, I thought good, in Master Gerardine's name, to have this bond ready, which if you seal to, he shall take her with all faults.

GLISTER

That will I instantly. [Seals the bond] So, this is done; which together with my niece do I deliver by these presents to the use of Master Gerardine.

GERARDINE

He thanks you heartily, and lets you know,

Gerardine, Dryfat and Club discover themselves.

That Indian mines and Tagus' glistening ore
To this bequest were unto me but poor.

GLISTER

What? Gerardine, Dryfat and Club!

DRYFAT AND CLUB

The very same. You are welcome to our club law!

GERARDINE

Cease admiration here. What doubt remains
I'll satisfy at full. Now join with me
For approbation of our Family.

EPILOGUE

Gentles, whose favour have o'erspread this place,
And shed the real influence of grace

[V.i. A room in Glister's house.]

The Family of Love

On harmless mirth, we thank you; for our hope
Attracts such vigour and unmeasur'd scope
From the reflecting splendour of your eyes,
That, grace presum'd, fear in oblivion dies.
Your judgment, as it is the touch and trier
Of good from bad, so from your hearts comes fire,
That gives both ardour to the wit refin'd,
And [sweetens] th' incense of each willing mind.
O may that fire ne'er die; nor let your favours
Depart from us: give countenance to their labours
Propos'd a sacrifice, which may no less
Their strong desires than our true zeals express.
Exeunt.

