

A Modest Defence of Public Stews

Or

An Essay upon Whoring as it is now Practiced in this Kingdom

By

Bernard Mandeville

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Bernard Mandeville

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Bibliographic and Editorial Note.

A Modest Defence of Public Stews or An Essay upon Whoring was published in 1724 and in a second edition the following year. The author was given as "A Layman" but it is generally regarded as the work of Bernard Mandeville, a Dutch doctor resident in England who wrote extensively on social and political questions. The book was republished several times in the next twenty years, under various pseudonyms. This version has been taken from a facsimile of an edition published in 1740 and ascribed to "The late Colonel Harry Mordaunt" ([see title page](#)). Spelling and capitalisation have been standardised and a few misprints silently corrected. The notes are the work of the Ex-Classics Project.

Bernard Mandeville

Title Page

A
Modest DEFENCE
OF
Publick STEWS:

OR, AN

ESSAY
UPON
WHORING.

As it is now practis'd in these Kingdoms.

*Certainly some Kind of Incontinency may be necessary to preserve Chastity,
as one Fire is extinguished by another. Seneca. <1>*

Not only Man's Imperial Race, but they
That wing the liquid Air, or swim the Sea,
Or haunt the Desert, rush into the Flame,
For Love is Lord of All, and is in All the same.
Dryden's Virg.

By the late Colonel HARRY MORDAUNT.

LONDON:

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Fryars, Fleet-street.* MDCCXL.

(Price 1s.)

To the Most Valuable Good-for-nothing FEMALE Living

MUST Interest to Honour be preferred?
To save my Credit, shall I break my Word?
I know not how to steer in such a Storm:
Rashly I spoke, more rashly still perform.
My Zeal to Truth, at least, you will approve,
Though Truth weighs little in the Scales of Love.
Still upon that alone 'tis I depend
So bold a Gamester rarely gains his End:
I stake the Lover down to win the Friend.

Dedication

TO THE GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETIES FOR REFORMATION OF
MANNERS.

Gentlemen,

THE great pains and diligence you have employed, in the defence of modesty and virtue, give you an undisputed title to the address of this treatise; though it is with the utmost concern that I find myself under a necessity of writing it, and that after so much reforming, there should be anything left to say upon the subject, besides congratulating you upon happy success. It is no small addition to my grief to observe, that your endeavours to suppress lewdness, have only served to promote it; and that this *branch* of immorality has grown under your hands, as if it was *pruned* instead of being *lopped*. But however your ill success may grieve, it cannot astonish me: what else could we hope for, from your persecuting of poor strolling damsels? From your stopping up those *drains* and *sluices* we had to let out lewdness? From your demolishing those *horn-works* and *breast-works* of modesty? Those *ramparts* and *ditches* within which the virtue of our wives and daughters lay so conveniently *entrenched*? An entrenchment so much the safer, by how much the ditches were harder to be filled up. Or what better could we expel, from your carting of bawds, than that the great leviathan of lechery, for want of these tubs to play with, should with one whisk of his tail, overset the *vessel* of modesty? Which, in her best trim, we know to be somewhat *leaky*, and to have a very unsteady *helm*.

An ancient philosopher compares lewdness to a wild, fiery, and head-strong young colt, which can never be broke till he is rid into a bog: and Plato, on the same subject, has these words: *The Gods*, says he, *have given us one disobedient and unruly member, which, like a greedy and ravenous animal that wants food, grows wild and furious till having imbibed the fruit of the common thirst he has plentifully besprinkled and bedewed the bottom of the womb.*

And now I have mentioned the philosophers, I must beg your patience for a moment, to hear a short account of their amours: for nothing will convince us of the irresistible force of love, and the folly of hoping to suppress it, sooner than reflecting, that those venerable *sages*, those standards of morality, those great *reformers* of the world, were so sensibly touched with this tender passion.

Socrates confessed, that, in his old age, he felt a strange tickling all over him for five days, only by a girl's touching his shoulder.

Xenophon made open profession of his passionate love to *Clineas*.

Aristippus, of *Cyrene*, writ a lewd book of ancient delights; he compared a woman to a house or a ship, that was the better for being used: he asserted, that there was no crime in pleasure, but only in being a slave to it: and often used to say, *I enjoy Lais, but Lais does not enjoy me.*

Theodorus openly maintained, that a wise man might, without shame or scandal, keep company with common harlots.

Plato, our great pattern for chaste love, proposes, as the greatest reward for public service, that he who has performed a signal exploit, should not be denied any amorous favour. He writ a description of the loves of his time, and several amorous

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sonnets upon his own minions: his chief favourites were *Asterus*, *Dio*, *Phaedrus*, and *Agatho*; but he had, for variety, his female darling *Archeanassa*; and was so noted for wantonness, that *Antisthenes* gave him the nickname of *Satho*, i.e. *well furnished*.

Polemo was prosecuted by his wife for male venery.

Crantor made no secret of his love to his pupil *Arcesilaus*.

Arcesilaus made love to *Demetrius* and *Leocharus*; the last, he said, he would fain have opened: besides, he openly frequented the two *Elean* courtesans, *Theodota* and *Philaeta*, and was himself enjoyed by *Demochares* and *Pythocles*: he suffered the last, he said, for patience' sake.

Bion was noted for debauching his own scholars.

Aristotle, the first *Peripatetic*, had a son called *Nicomachus*, by his concubine *Herpilis*: he loved her so well, that he left her in his will a talent of silver, and the choice of his country houses, that, as he says, the damsel might have no reason to complain: he enjoyed, besides the eunuch *Hermias*, others say, only his concubine *Pythais*, upon whom he writ a hymn, called, *The Infide*.

Demetrius Phalereus, who had 360 statues in *Athens*, kept *Lamia* for his concubine, and at the same time was himself enjoyed by *Cleo*: he writ a treatise, called, *The Lover*, and was nicknamed by the courtesans, *Charito Blespharus*, i.e. *A Charmer of Ladies*; and *Lampetes*, i.e. *A Great Boaster of his Abilities*.

Diogenes, the *Cynic*, used to say, that women ought to be in common, and that marriage was nothing but a man's getting a woman in the mind to be lain with: he often used manual venery in the public market-place, with this saying, *Oh! I that I [could] assuage my hunger thus with rubbing of my stomach!*

But what wonder if the old *Academics*, the *Cyrenaics* and *Peripatetics*, were so lewdly wanton, when the very *Stoics*, who prided themselves in the conquest of all their other passions, were forced to submit to this?

Zeno, indeed, the founder of that sect, was remarkable for his modesty, because he rarely made use of boys, and took but once an ordinary maid servant to bed, that he might not be thought to hate the sex; yet, in his commonwealth, he was for a community of women; and writ a treatise, wherein he regulated the motions in getting a maidenhead, and philosophically proved action and reaction to be equal.

Chrysippus and *Appollodorus* agree with *Zeno* in a community of women, and say, that a wise man may be in love with handsome boys.

Erillus, a scholar of *Zeno's*, was notorious debauchee.

I need not mention the *Epicureans* that were remarkable for their obscenity.

Epicurus used to make a pander of his own brother; and his scholar, the great *Metrodorus*, visited all the noted courtesans in *Athens*, and publicly kept the famous *Leontium*, his matter's quondam mistress. Yet, if you will believe *Laertius*, he was every way a good man.

But what shall we say of our favourite *Seneca*, who, with all his morals, could never acquire the reputation of chastity? He was indeed somewhat nice in his amours, like the famous *Flora*, who was never enjoyed by anything less than a dictator or a consul; for he scorned to intrigue with anything less than the Empress.

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Now, if those reverend schoolmasters, of antiquity, were so loose in their seminaries, shall we, of this age, set up for chastity? Have our *Oxford students* more command of their passions than the *Stoics*? Are our young *Templars* less amorous than *Plato*? Or, is an officer of the army less ticklish in the shoulder than *Socrates*?

But I need not waste any rhetoric upon so evident a truth; for plain and clear propositions, like windows painted, are only the more obscure the more they are adorned.

I will now suppose, that you have given up the men as incorrigible; since you are convinced, by experience, that even matrimony is not able to reclaim them. Marriage, indeed, is just such a cure for lewdness, as a surfeit is for gluttony; it gives a man's fancy a distaste to the particular dish, but leaves his palate as luxurious as ever; for this reason we find so many married men that, like Sampson's foxes, only do more mischief for having their tails tied. But the women, you say, are weaker vessels, and you are resolved to make them submit; rightly judging, if you could make all the females modest, it would put a considerable stop to fornication. It is great pity, no doubt, so fine a project should miscarry: and I would willingly entertain hopes of seeing one of these Bridewell converts. In the meantime it would not be amiss, if you changed somewhat your present method of conversion, especially in the article of whipping. It is very possible, indeed, that leaving a poor girl penniless, may put her in a way of living honestly, though the want of money was the only reason of her living otherwise; and the stripping of her naked, may, for ought I know, contribute to her modesty, and put her in a state of innocence; but surely, gentlemen you must all know, that flogging has a quite contrary effect. This project of pulling down bawdy-houses to prevent uncleanness, puts me in mind of a certain over-nice gentleman, who could never fancy his garden looked sweet, till he had demolished a bog-house that offended his eye, in one corner of it; but it was not long before every nose in the family was convinced of his mistake. If reason fails to convince, let us profit by example: observe the policy of a modern butcher, persecuted with a swarm of carnivorous flies; when all his engines and fly-traps have proved ineffectual to defend his stall against the greedy assiduity of those carnal insects, he very judiciously cuts off a fragment already blown, which serves to hang up for a cure; and thus, by sacrificing a small part, already tainted, and not worth keeping, he wisely secures the safety of the rest. Or, let us go higher for instruction, and take example by the grazier, who far from denying his herd the accustomed privilege of rubbing, when their sides are stimulated with sharp humours, very industriously fixes a stake in the centre of the field; not so much, you may imagine, to regale the salacious hides of his cattle, as to preserve his young trees from suffering by the violence of their friction.

I could give you more examples of this kind, equally full of instruction, but that I'm loth to detain you from the perusal of the following treatise; and at the same time impatient to have the honour of subscribing myself

*Your fellow-reformer,
and devoted servant*

* * * *

The Preface.

Lest any inquisitive reader should puzzle his brains to find out why, this foundling is thus clandestinely dropped at his door, let it suffice him, that the midwife of a printer was unwilling to help bring it into the world, but upon that condition, or a much harder, That of I my openly fathering it. I could make many other reasonable apologies if requisite: For, besides my having followed the modest example of several other pious authors, such as that of Εικόν Βασιλική [Eikon Basilike]<2>, of the Whole Duty of Man<3>, &c., who have studied rather their country's public good, than their own private fame. I think, I have also played the politic part; for should my offspring be defective, why, let it fall upon the parish: on the other hand, if accidentally it prove hopeful, 'tis certain I need be at no farther trouble: there will then be parents enough ready to own the babe, and take it upon themselves. Adoption amongst the Machiavellian laws of the Muses, is strictly kept up, and every day put in practice: how few of our now bright noblemen would otherwise have wit? How many of our present thriving poets would else want a dinner? 'Tis a vulgar error to imagine men live upon their own wits, when generally it is upon others' follies; a fund that carries by much the best interest, and is by far upon the most certain security of any: the Exchequer has been shut up, the Bank has stopped payment, South-Sea has been demolished, but White's was never known to fail; and indeed how should it, when almost every wind blows to Dover or Holyhead, some fresh proprietor amply qualified with sufficient stock.

I am in some pain for the event of this scheme, hoping the wicked will find it too grave, and fearing the godly will scarce venture beyond the title-page: and should they even, I know they'll object, 'tis here and there interwoven with too ludicrous expressions, not considering that a dry argument has occasion for the larding of gaiety to make it the better relish and go down. Besides, finding by the exact account tacked to that most edifying Anti-Heidegger<4> discourse, that eighty-six thousand offenders have been lately punished, and that four hundred thousand religious books have been distributed about gratis (not to mention the numberless three-penny jobs daily published to no ends, or purpose, but the author's); I say, finding all these measures have been taken, and that lewdness still so much prevails, thought it highly proper to try this experiment, being fully convinced that opposite methods often take place. Own, preferment-hunter! When sailing on with the wind avails nothing, does not tacking about steer you sometimes into that snug harbour, an employment? Speak, Hibernian stallion! When a meek fawning adoration turns to no account, does not a pert assuming arrogance frequently forward, nay, gain the critical minute? And say, learned Ward!<5> where a purge fails, is not a vomit an infallible recipe for a looseness?

To conclude, when my arguments are impartially examined, I doubt not but my readers will join with me, that as long as it is the nature of man (and *naturam expellas furca licet usque recurret*<6>) to have a salt itch in the breeches, the brimstone under the petticoat will be a necessary remedy to lay it; and let him be ever so sly in the application, it will still be found out: what avails it then to affect to conceal that which cannot be concealed, and that which if carried on openly and above board, would become only less detrimental and of consequence more justifiable.

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Be the success of this treatise as it happens, the good of mankind is my only aim; nor am I less hearty or zealous in the public welfare of my country, than that noble<7> pattern of sincerity, who finishes his preface with the following paragraph:

and now, O my G-d, the G-d of my life, and of all my mercies, I offer this work to thee, to whole honour it is chiefly intended; that thereby I may awaken the world to just reflections on their own errors and follies, and call on them to acknowledge thy providence, to adore it, and ever to depend on it.

A Modest Defence, &c.

There is nothing more idle, or shows a greater affectation of wit, than the modern custom of treating the most grave subjects with burlesque and ridicule. The present subject of whoring, was I disposed, would furnish me sufficiently in this kind, and might possibly, if so handled, excite mirth in those who are only capable of such low impressions. But, as the chief design of this treatise is to promote the general welfare and happiness of mankind, I hope to be excused, if I make no farther attempts to please, than are consistent with that design. The practice of whoring has, of late years, become so universal, and its effects so prejudicial to mankind, that several attempts have been made to put a stop to it; and a certain society of worthy gentlemen have undertaken that affair with a zeal truly commendable, though the success does but too plainly make it appear, that they were mistaken in their measures, and had not rightly considered the nature of this evil, which we are all equally solicitous to prevent, however we may differ in our opinions as to the manner. And though the method I intend to propose, of erecting public stews for that purpose, may seem at first sight somewhat ludicrous, I shall, nevertheless, make it appear to be the only means we have now left for redressing this grievance. As this redress is the whole scope and design of this treatise, I hope to be acquitted of my design, when I have proved the following proposition; that public whoring is neither so criminal in itself, nor so detrimental to the society, as private whoring; and that the encouraging of public whoring, by erecting stews, will not only prevent most of the ill consequences of this vice, but even lessen the quantity of whoring in general, and reduce it to the narrowest bounds which it can possibly be contained in. But before we proceed, it is requisite that we examine what those mischievous effects are which whoring naturally produces, that we may the better judge whether or no they will be prevented by this scheme.

The greatest evil that attends this vice, or could well befall mankind, is the propagation of that infectious disease, called the French pox^{<8>}, which, in two centuries, has made such incredible havoc all over Europe. In these kingdoms it so seldom fails to attend whoring, nowadays mistaken for gallantry and politeness, that a hale, robust constitution is esteemed a mark of ungentility; and a healthy young fellow is looked upon with the same view, as if he had spent his life in a cottage. Our gentlemen of the army, whose unsettled way of life makes it inconvenient for them to marry, are hereby very much weakened and enervated, and rendered unfit to undergo such hardships as are necessary for defending and supporting the honour of their country: and our gentry in general seem to distinguish themselves by an ill state of health, in all probability the effect of this pernicious distemper: for the secrecy which most people are obliged to in this disease, makes the cure of it often ineffectual; and though the infection itself may possibly be removed, yet for want of taking proper methods, it generally leaves such an ill habit of body as is not easily recovered. 'Tis to this we seem to owe the rise of that distemper, the King's-evil^{<9>}, never known till the French disease began to prevail here. But what makes this mischief the more intolerable, is that the innocent must suffer by it as well as the guilty: men give it to their wives, women to their husbands, or perhaps their children; they to their nurses, and the nurses again to other children; so that no age, sex, or condition can be entirely safe from the infection.

Another ill effect of this vice, is, its making people profuse, and tempting them to live beyond what their circumstances will admit of; for if once men suffer their minds to be led astray by this unruly passion, no worldly consideration whatever will

be able to stop it; and wenching as it is very expensive in itself, without the ordinary charges of physic or children, often leads men into a thousand other vices to support its extravagance: besides, after the mind has once got this extravagant turn, there naturally follows a neglect and contempt of business; and whoring of itself disposes the mind to such a sort of indolence, as is quite inconsistent with industry, the main support of any, especially a trading, nation.

The murdering of bastard infants is another consequence of this vice, by much worse than the vice itself: and though the law is justly severe in this particular, as rightly judging that a mind capable of divesting itself so entirely of humanity, is not fit to live in a civilized nation; yet there are so many ways of evading it, either by destroying the infants before their birth, or suffering them afterwards to die by wilful neglect, that there appears but little hope of putting any stop to this practice, which, besides the barbarity of it, tends very much to dispeople the country. And since the prosperity of any country is allowed to depend, in a great measure, on the number of its inhabitants, the government ought, if it were possible, to prevent any whoring at all, as it evidently hinders the propagation of the species: how many thousand young men in this nation would turn their thoughts towards matrimony, if they were not constantly destroying that passion, which is the only foundation of it? And though most of them, sooner or later, find the inconvenience of this irregular life, and think fit to confine themselves to one, yet their bodies are so much enervated, by the untimely or immoderate increase of this passion, together with the relics of venereal cures, that they beget a most wretched, feeble, and sickly offspring: we can attribute it to nothing else but this, that so many of our ancient families of nobles are of late extinct.

There is one thing more we ought to consider in this vice, and that is the injury it does to particular persons and families either by alienating the affections of wives from their husbands, which often proves prejudicial to both, and sometimes fatal to whole families; or else by debauching the minds of young women, to their utter ruin and destruction: for the reproach they must undergo, when a slip of this nature is discovered, prevents their marrying in any degree suitable to their fortune, and by degrees hardens them to all sense of shame; and when they have once overcome that, the present view of interest as well as pleasure, sways them to continue in the same course, till at length they become common prostitutes.

These are the several bad effects of whoring; and it is an unhappy thing, that a practice so universal as this is, and always will be, should be attended with such mischievous consequences: but since few or none of them are the necessary effects of whoring, considered in itself, but only proceed from the abuse and ill management of it; our business is certainly to regulate this affair in such sort as may best prevent these mischiefs. And I must here beg pardon of those worthy gentlemen of the society, if I can't conceive how the discouragement they have given, or rather attempted to give, to public whoring, could possibly have the desired effect. If this was a vice acquired by habit or custom, or depended upon education, as most other vices, there might be some hopes of suppressing it; and then it would, no doubt, be commendable to attack it, without distinction, in whatever form or disguise it should appear: but alas! This violent love for women is born and bred with us; nay, it is absolutely necessary to our being born at all: and however some people may pretend, that unlawful enjoyment is contrary to the law of nature; this is certain, that nature never fails to furnish us largely with this passion, though she is often sparing to bestow upon us such a portion of reason and reflection as is necessary to curb it.

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That long course of experience which most of these gentlemen have had in the world, and which is of so great use in other cases, may probably occasion their mistake in this; for age is very liable to forget the violence of youthful passions, and, consequently, apt to think them easier curbed: whereas if we consider the true source of whoring, and the strong impulse of nature that way, we shall find, it is a thing not to be too violently restrained; lest, like a stream diverted out of its proper channel, it should break in and overflow the neighbouring enclosures.

History affords us several instances of this truth; I shall mention but one, and that is of Pope Sixtus the 5th, who was so strictly severe in the execution of justice, if such severity may be called justice, and particularly, against offenders of this kind, that he condemned a young man to the galleys, only for snatching a kiss of a damsel in the street: yet notwithstanding this his holiness's zeal, he never attempted once to extirpate whoring entirely: but like a true pastor separated the clean sheep from the unclean, and confined all the courtesans to one quarter of the city. It is true, he did attempt to moderate this vice, and banished as many courtesans as he thought exceeded the necessary number; but he was soon convinced of the error of his computation, for sodomy and a thousand other unnatural vices sprung up, which forced him soon to recall them, and has left us a remarkable instance of the vanity of such attempts.

Let us now proceed to the proof of our proposition, in the first part of which, it was asserted, that public whoring is neither so criminal in itself, nor so detrimental to the society, as private whoring.

Public whoring consists in lying with a certain set of women, who have shook off all pretence to modesty; and for such a sum of money, more or less, profess themselves always in a readiness to be enjoyed. The mischief a man does in this case is entirely to himself, for with respect to the woman, he does a laudable action, in furnishing her with the means of subsistence, in the only, or at least most innocent way that she is capable of procuring of it. The damage he does to himself, is either with regard to his health, or the expense of money, and may be considered under the same view as drinking, with this considerable advantage, that it restores us to that cool exercise of our reason, which drinking tends to deprive us of. Indeed was there a probability of a woman's amendment, and of her gaining a livelihood by some honester method, there might be some crime in encouraging her to follow such a profession: but the minds of women are observed to be so much corrupted by the loss of chastity, or rather by the reproach they suffer upon that loss, that they seldom or never change that course of life for the better; and if they should, they can never recover that good name, which is so absolutely necessary to their getting a maintenance in any honest way whatever; and that nothing but mere necessity obliges them to continue in that course, is plain from this, that they themselves in reality utterly abhor it: and indeed there appears nothing in it so very alluring and bewitching, especially to people who have that inclination to lewdness entirely extinguished, which is the only thing could possibly make it supportable.

The other branch of whoring, viz. *Private*, is of much worse consequence; and a man's crime in this case, increases in proportion to the different degree of mischief done, if you consider his crime with regard to the society; for as to personal guilt, allowance ought to be made for the increase of temptation, which is very considerable in the case of debauching married women; upon account of the safety to the aggressor, either with respect to his health, or the charge, and, if that affects him, the scandal of having a bastard. On the other hand, the injury done, is very considerable, as such an

action tends to corrupt a woman's mind, and destroys that mutual love and affection between man and wife, which is so necessary to both their happiness. Besides, the risk run of a discovery, which at least ruins a woman's reputation, and destroys the husband's quiet; nay, where virtue does not entirely give way, if it warps but ever so little, the consequence is shockingly fatal: for though the good man, suspicious of the wife's chastity, the wife of the gallant's constancy, and the gallant of the husband's watchfulness, by being a check upon each other, may keep the gate of virtue shut; yet then even all parties must be attended with a never-ceasing misery, not to be imagined, but by those who too fatally feel it.

The crime of debauching young virgins will appear much greater, if we consider that there is much more mischief done, and the temptation to do it much lessened by the fear of getting children; which, in most circumstances of life, does a man a deal of prejudice, and keeps at least three parts in four of our sober youth from gratifying this violent passion. Besides, the methods that are necessary to be taken, before a man can have such an action in his power, are in themselves criminal; and it shows a certain baseness of mind to persuade a woman, by a thousand solemn vows and protestations, into such a good opinion of you, and assurance of your love to her, that she trusts you with all that is dear and near to her; and this with no other view but the gratification of a present passion, which might be otherwise vented, than at the certain expense of her ruin, and putting her under the necessity of leading the life of a public courtesan.

From this general consideration of whoring, it is evident, that though all the several species of it proceed from the same cause, our natural love and passion for women, yet they are very different in their natures, and fully as distinct crimes as those which proceed from our love to money, such as murder, shoplifting, &c. And I hope I have said enough to prove, that the public part of it is by far the least criminal, and least detrimental to the society; which of itself is a sufficient motive for the legislature to confine it to that channel. I shall now proceed farther, and show, as I before proposed, that the encouraging of public whoring, will not only prevent most of the mischievous effects of this vice, but even lessen the quantity of whoring in general, and reduce it to the narrowest bounds which it can possibly be contained in.

When I talked of encouraging public whoring, I would be understood to mean, not only the erecting public stews, as I at first hinted, but also the endowing them with such privileges and immunities, and at the same time giving such discouragement to private whoring, as may be most effectual to turn the general stream of lewdness into this common channel.

I shall here lay down a plan for this purpose, which, though it may well serve to illustrate this point, and make good the proof of my present argument, would doubtless receive infinite improvement by coming through the hands of a national senate, whose august body, being composed of spirituals as well as temporals, will, I hope, take into consideration this important affair, which so nearly concerns both.

The plan I would propose, is this: let a hundred or more houses be provided in some convenient quarter of the city, and proportionably in every country town, sufficient to contain two thousand women: if a hundred are thought sufficient, let a hundred matrons be appointed, one to each house, of abilities and experience enough to take upon them the management of twenty courtesans each, to see that they keep themselves neat and decent, and entertain gentlemen after a civil and obliging manner.

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For the encouragement of such matrons, each house must be allowed a certain quantity of all sorts of liquor, custom and excise free; by which means they will be enabled to accommodate gentlemen handsomely, without that imposition so frequently met with in such houses. Besides the hundred abovementioned, there must be a very large house set apart for an infirmary, and provision made for two able physicians, and four surgeons at least. Lastly, there must be three commissioners appointed to superintend the whole, to hear and redress complaints, and to see that each house punctually observes such rules and orders as shall be thought necessary for the good government of this community. For the better entertainment of all ranks and degrees of gentlemen, we shall divide the twenty women of each house into four classes, who for their beauty, or other qualifications may justly charge different prices.

The first class is to consist of eight, who may legally demand from each visitant half a crown. The second class to consist of six, whose fixed price may be a crown. The third class of four, at half a guinea each. The remaining two make up the fourth class, and are designed for persons of the first rank, who can afford to pay a guinea for the elegance of their taste. To defray the charges of this establishment, will require but a very moderate tax: for if the first class pays but forty shillings yearly, and the rest in proportion, it will amount to above ten thousand pounds a year, which will not only pay the commissioners' salaries, surgeons' chests, and other contingencies, but likewise establish a good fund for the maintenance of bastard-orphans and superannuated courtesans.

For the better government of this society, it will be necessary that the mistress have an absolute command in her own house, and that no woman be suffered to go abroad without her leave. No woman must be suffered to lie in within the house, nor any young children admitted under any pretence. No music or revelling to be allowed in any room, to the disturbance of the rest. No gentlemen disorderly or drunk, to be admitted at an unseasonable hour, without the consent of the mistress: and, in case of violence, she must be empowered to call the civil aid.

For the society's security in point of health, it must be ordered, that if any gentleman complains of receiving an injury, and the woman, upon search, be found tainted, without having discovered it to the mistress, she shall be stripped and cashiered. But if a woman discovers her misfortune before any complaint is made against her, she shall be sent to the infirmary, and cured at the public charge. No woman that has been twice poxed shall ever be re-admitted. Note, that three claps shall be reckoned equivalent to one pox.

But as no society ever framed a complete body of laws at once, till unforeseen accidents had taught them foresight, we shall refer the farther regulation of these laws, with whatever new ones shall be thought necessary, to the wisdom of the legislature.

The public stews being thus erected and governed by good and wholesome laws, there remains nothing to complete this project, but that proper measures be taken effectually to discourage all other kinds of whoring whatsoever. And here it is to be hoped, that those worthy gentlemen of the society who have hitherto distinguished their zeal to so little purpose, will now exert themselves where they have so good a prospect of success; for although a poor itinerant courtesan could not by any means be persuaded to starve at the instigation of a reforming constable, yet a little Bridewell rhetoric, or the terrors of a transportation, will soon convince her that she may live more comfortably and honestly in a public stew. If there are any so foolish as to love

rambling better, or who are not qualified to please gentlemen according to law, they ought to be transported; for Bridewell, as it is now managed, only makes them poorer, and consequently lays them under a greater necessity than ever of continuing whores.

Let us now suppose, for brevity's sake, that the public stews are as much as possible favoured and encouraged, and that all the other branches of this vice have the utmost rigour of the laws exerted against them.

It now remains for me to show what benefit the nation would receive thereby, and how this project would prevent or in any degree alleviate those mischiefs which I have mentioned to be the necessary consequences of this vice. As for any objections that may be raised against me, either Christian or moral, I shall refer them to the close of this discourse.

First, then, I say, the nation would receive a general benefit by having such a considerable number of its most disorderly inhabitants brought to live after a regular civilized manner. There is, one year with another, a certain number of young women who arrive gradually, step by step, at the highest degree of impudence and lewdness. These women, besides their incontinence, are commonly guilty of almost the whole catalogue of immoral actions: the reason is evident: they are utterly abandoned by their parents, and thereby reduced to the last degree of shifting poverty; if their lewdness cannot supply their wants, they must have recourse to methods more criminal, such as lying, cheating, open theft, &c. Not that these are the necessary concomitants of lewdness, or have the least relation to it, as all lewd men of honour can testify; but the treatment such women meet with in the world, is the occasion of it.

Those females, who either by the frigidity of their constitutions, a lucky want of temptation, or any other cause, have preserved their chastity; and the men, in general, chaste or unchaste, are so outrageous against these delinquents, that they make no distinction: all of them are branded with the same opprobrious title, they are all treated with the same contempt, all equally despised; so that let them be guilty of what other crimes they please, they cannot add one jot to the shame they already undergo. Having thus removed the fear of worldly reproach, which is justly esteemed the greatest bulwark of morality, it is no wonder if these women, insensible of shame, and pricked on by want, commit any crimes, where they are not deterred by the fear of corporal punishments. But the case now will be quite altered; these women, as soon as they have attained a competent share of assurance, and before they are pinched with the extreme of poverty, will enter themselves in some of the above-mentioned classes of professed courtesans; where, instead of being necessarily dishonest, they will have more inducements to honesty than any other profession whatsoever. The same money defends, as well as it corrupts a prime minister: a churchman takes sanctuary in a gown, and who dare accuse a mitre of simony? Accuse a colonel of injustice, he is tried by his board of peers, and your information is false, scandalous, and malicious. A lawyer cheats you according to law; and you may thank the physician, if you live to complain of him. Overreaching in trade, is prudent dealing; and mechanic cunning, is styled handicraft. Not so fares the poor courtesan; if she commits but one ill action, if for instance, she should circumvent a gentleman in a snuff-box, she can hardly escape detection; and the first discovery ruins her; she is banished the public stews, marked out for infamy; and can have no better prospect than a transportation. On the other hand, the motives to honesty will be as great here as anywhere: it is natural for mankind to regard chiefly the good opinion of those with whom they converse, and to neglect that of strangers; now in this community, lewdness not being esteemed a reproach, but

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rather a commendation, they will set a value on their good name, and stand as much upon the puncto of honour, as the rest of mankind; being moved by the same commendable emulation, and deterred by greater, or at least more certain punishments. Besides this reformation in point of honesty, the public will receive another benefit in being freed from those nocturnal disorders, quarrels, and brawlings, which are occasioned by vagrant punks, and the number of private brothels dispersed throughout the city, to the great disturbance of its sober inhabitants.

We have already mentioned the French disease as one of the worst attendants upon lewdness, and with good reason; for in the enjoyment of this life, health is the sine qua non: and this distemper has one thing in it peculiarly inveterate, as if it came out of Pandora's worst box: there is no other disorder, but what at some age, or in some particular constitution, will abate of itself without the application of medicines; but this is such a busy restless enemy, that unless resisted, he is never at a stand, but gathers strength every day, to the utter disquiet of the patient. Now it is so evident that the public stews, when well regulated, will prevent the spreading of this plague, that a prolix and tedious proof of it would look like declaiming. As this disease has its spring and source entirely from public whoring, and from thence creeps into private families; so it likewise receives continual supplies and recruits through the same channel: when this source is once dried up, the nation will naturally recover its pristine health and vigour: and this cannot fail to happen, if due care be taken to keep the stews free from infection; for what young fellow will be so industriously mad, as to take pains to run his head into an apothecary's shop, when he may with so much ease and convenience, and without the fear of a reforming officer, both secure his health, and gratify his fancy with such a variety of mistresses.

'Tis true, the keeping of the public stews so very safe will appear a difficult task, at first sight, but not so if we consider the case a little nearer. This disease is propagated reciprocally from the woman to the man, and from the man to the woman; but the first is the most common for several reasons: we are not like cocks or town-bulls; who have a whole seraglio of females entirely and solely at their devotion; on the contrary, one industrious painstaking woman, that lays herself out that way, is capable of satisfying several rampant males; insomuch, that a select number of women get a handsome livelihood by being able to oblige such a number of customers. Now, if but a few of these women are unsound, they can infect a great many men; whereas these men have neither power nor inclination to infect the like number of women. I say, inclination; for a woman, to raise money for the surgeon's fee, may counterfeit pleasure when she really receives pain; nay, she may even venture to complain of being hurt: for the man will attribute the pain he gives her, either to her chastity, or his own vigour; not dreaming, perhaps, that he has molested a chancre^{<10>}. This a female may do, as being only passive in the affair, but a man must have real fancy and inclination before he is qualified to enter upon action: and how far this fancy to woman may be cooled by a stinging gonorrhæa, I leave the experienced reader to judge; and whether a man won't rather employ his thoughts upon his round diet^{<11>}, how to digest two at night, and three in the morning; what conveyance to find out, when poached eggs grow nauseous, and how to preserve his linen from being speckled; with a thousand other particulars that occur to a man in this distress: but these are sufficient, with the assistance of a *chordee*^{<12>}, to bridle any moderate passion. So that from the whole we may safely draw this conclusion; that since the men are so seldom guilty of transgressing in this kind, the spreading of this distemper must be owing to the neglect of cure in the women. Now the public stews will be so regulated, that a woman cannot

possibly conceal her misfortune long; nay, it will be highly her interest to make the first discovery: so that whatever damage the society may sustain at first, when claps are most current, it will be soon repaired, and this distemper, in time, entirely rooted out. But of this enough.

The next thing that comes to be considered in this vice, is the expense it occasions, and the neglect of worldly business, by employing so much of our time and thoughts; for let a man have ever so much business, it can't stop the circulation of his blood, or prevent the seminal secretion: for sleeping or waking, the spermatics will do their office, though a man's thoughts may be so much employed about other affairs, that he cannot attend to every minute titillation. A man of pleasure, indeed, may make this copulative science his whole study; and, by idleness and luxury, may prompt nature that way, and spur up the spirits to wantonness: but then his constitution will be the sooner tired; for the animal spirits being exhausted by this anticipation, his body must be weakened, and his nerves relaxed; neither will his irregular effeminate life assist them in recovering their former force. Besides, those parts which more particularly suffer the violence of this exercise, are liable to many accidents; and men of pleasure, though otherwise pretty healthy, are often troubled with gleans^{<13>} and weaknesses, either by a former ulceration of the prostates, or else some violent overstraining, which occasions this relaxation. These men, 'tis true, will talk very lusciously of women, but, pretend what they please, they can never have that burning desire which they had formerly, when their vessels were in full vigour. The truth is, their lust lies chiefly in their brain, kept alive by the impression of former ideas, which are not so easily rubbed out as the titillation which created them; and this passion comes to be so diminished, that, in time, it changes its residence from the glans penis to the *glandula penealis*.^{<14>} A man of business, on the contrary, or one who leads a sober regular life, will seldomer be attacked by these wanton fits, but then they will come with double the violence; for though it is a common received opinion, that the longer a man refrains, the better he is able to refrain, yet it is only true in one sense, and amounts to no more than this: that if a man has been able, for such and such reasons, to curb this passion, for instance, a month, he will, if the same reasons hold, and without an additional temptation, be able to curb it a month longer; but, nevertheless, he may have desires much stronger than a man who, for want of these motives to abstinence, gratifies them every day. If there are some men of a particular constitution, whose puny desires may be easily blocked up with the assistance of three small buttons; or else endowed with such an extraordinary strength of reason, that they can master the most rampant sallies of this raging passion; I heartily congratulate their happy conquest, but have nothing more to do with them at present, the public stews not being designed for such: I am here speaking of those men of business, who, notwithstanding their abstinence or the regularity of their lives, are sometimes prevailed upon to quench these amorous heats; and, I say, in such men the passion is much stronger than in men of pleasure, and that their abstinence contributes to heighten the violence of the desire, and make it the more irresistible: for the fancy not being cloyed with too frequent enjoyment, presently takes fire; and the spermatics, not being weakened with forced evacuations, are in their full vigour, and give the nerves a most exquisite sensation: so that upon the least toying with an alluring wench, the blood vessels are ready to start; and to use Othello's words, *The very sense aches at her*.^{<15>}

Now what shall this man do, when he has once taken the resolution to make himself easy? He must either venture upon the public, where, it is odds, he may meet with a mischance that will either drain his pocket, and make him unfit for any business,

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at least without doors; or else he must employ both his time and rhetoric, and perhaps too his purse, in deluding some modest girl; which, besides the loss of time in carrying on such an intrigue, is apt to give the head such an amorous turn as is quite inconsistent with business, and may probably lead a man into after-expenses, which at first he never dreamed of.

Now, to remedy all these inconveniencies, the public stews will be always ready and open, where a man may regulate his expenses according to his ability, from half a crown to a guinea; and that too without endangering his health: and besides, which is chiefly to be considered, if a man should be overtaken with a sudden gust of lechery, it will be no hindrance to him even in the greatest hurry of business, for a ready and willing mistress will ease him in the twinkling of an eye, and he may prosecute his affairs with more attention than ever, by having his mind entirely freed and disengaged from those troublesome ideas which always accompany a wanton disposition of the body. But to proceed:

Another ill consequence of whoring, is the tendency it has to dispeople a nation; and that both by the destruction of bastard infants, and by ruining young men's constitutions so much, that, when they marry, they either beget no children, or such as are sickly and short-lived. The first of these, indeed, is almost unavoidable, especially in modest women, who will be guilty of this cruelty as long as female chastity carries that high reputation along with it, which it really deserves: however, in common women, it may and will be, in a great measure, prevented by this scheme; for every professed courtesan, that is legally licensed, will have an apartment allotted her in the infirmary when she is ready to lie in, and will be obliged to take care of her child; by which means a considerable number of infants will be reared up, that otherwise might probably have perished. Besides, there are a great many ordinary girls, such as servant-maids, who are chiefly moved to this action, by the fear of losing their services, and wanting bread. Now this handsome provision that is made for them, will be a great inducement for such to enter themselves in the stews, rather than commit such an unnatural action, especially when the discovery is death.

Let us now consider the affair of matrimony. Since the world is now no longer in a state of nature, but formed into several societies independent of one another, and these societies again divided into several ranks and degrees of men, distinguished by their titles and possessions, which descend from father to son; it is very certain that marriage is absolutely necessary, not only for the regular propagation of the species, and their careful education, but likewise for preserving that distinction of rank among mankind, which otherwise would be utterly lost and confounded by doubtful successions. And it is no less certain and indisputable, that all sorts and kinds of debauchery whatever are enemies to this state, in so far as they impair the natural vigour of the constitution, and weaken the very springs of love.

This necessary passion is, indeed, of such a ticklish nature, that either too much or too little of it is equally prejudicial, and the medium is so hard to hit, that we are apt to fall into one of the extremes. We are naturally furnished with an extraordinary stock of love; and, by the largeness of the provision, it looks as if nature had made some allowance for wear and tear. If young men were to live entirely chaste and sober, without blunting the edge of their passions, the first fit of love would turn their brains topsy-turvy, and we should have the nation pestered with love adventures and feats of chivalry: by the time a peer's son came to be sixteen, he would be in danger of turning knight-errant, and might possibly take a cobbler's daughter for his

Dulcinea^{<16>}; and who knows but a sprightly young tailor might turn an Orlando Furioso^{<17>}, and venture his neck to carry off a lady of birth and fortune. In short, there are so many instances every day of these ruinous disproportioned matches, notwithstanding our present intemperance, that we may justly conclude, if the nation was in a state of perfect sobriety, no man could answer for the conduct of his children.

It must, indeed, be confessed, as matters now stand, the excess of chastity is not so much to be feared as the other extreme of lewdness, though there are instances of both; and many fathers, now living, would gladly have seen their sons fifty times in a stew, rather than see them so unfortunately married. The other extreme is equally, or rather more dangerous, as it is more common; for most young men give too great a loose to their passions, and either quite destroy their inclination to matrimony, or make their constitutions incapable of answering the ends of that state.

To avoid therefore these two dangerous extremes, we have erected the public stews, which every considerate man must allow to be that golden mean so much desired: for, in the first place, we avoid the inconvenience of too strict a chastity. When a man has gained some experience by his commerce in the stews, he is able to form a pretty good comparative judgment of what he may expect from the highest gratifications of love; he finds his ideas of beauty strangely altered after enjoyment, and will not be hurried into an unsuitable match by those romantic chimerical notions of love, which possess the minds of unexperienced youth, and make them fancy that love alone can complete the happiness of a married state. But this will be so readily granted, that I shan't insist upon it farther.

In the next place, the public stews will prevent the ill effects of excessive lewdness, by preserving men's constitutions so well, that though they may defer matrimony some time for special advantage, yet they will have a sufficient stock of desire left to persuade them, one time or other, to quit the gaiety of a single life: and when they do marry, they will be able to answer all the ends and purposes of that state as well, and rather better, than if they had lived perfectly chaste.

This may seem a bold proposition, but the proof of it is nevertheless obvious. However, to proceed methodically, there are three ways by which lewd young men destroy their natural vigour, and render themselves impotent: first, by manufriction, alias masturbation. Secondly, by too frequent and immoderate enjoyment. And, lastly, by contracting venereal disorders, as claps or poxes.

The first lewd trick that boys learn, is this manual diversion; and when they have once got the knack of it, they seldom quit it till they come to have actual commerce with women: the safety, privacy, convenience, and cheapness of this gratification are very strong motives, and chiefly persuade young men to continue the practice of it.

If these Onanites were so abstemious as to wait the ordinary calls of nature, this action, however unnatural, would be no more prejudicial, when prudently managed, than common copulation; but, instead of this, they are every day committing rapes upon their own bodies; and though they have neither real inclination nor ability to attack a woman, yet they can attack themselves, and supply all these defects by the agility of their wrists; by which means they so weaken their genitals, and accustom them to this violent friction, that, though they have frequently evacuations without an erection, yet the common and ordinary sensation which females afford to those parts,

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is not able of itself to promote this evacuation: so that they are impotent to all intents and purposes of generation.

To put a stop therefore to these clandestine practices, and prevent young men from laying violent hands upon themselves, we must have recourse to the public stews, which cannot fail to have the desired effect: for which of these private practitioners can be so brutish, as to prefer this boyish, solitary amusement before the actual embraces of a fine woman, when they can proceed with the same convenience, safety, and privacy in the one, as well as the other.

In the next place, men are often weakened, and sometimes contract almost incurable gleets^{<13>} by too frequent and immoderate enjoyment. This seldom or never happens but in private whoring, when some particular mistress has made such a strong impression upon a man's fancy, that he exerts himself in an extraordinary manner beyond his natural ability, and thereby contracts a seminal weakness, which is generally more difficult to cure than a virulent running. Now this danger will be pretty well removed by the encouragement given to public whoring, which, as I shall show more particularly hereafter, will divert men's minds, and turn their thoughts very much from private intrigues: and it will be readily granted me, that no such excess is to be feared in public stews; where a man only acting out of a general principle of love to the whole sex, will be in no danger of proceeding any farther than he is prompted by nature, and the particular disposition of his body at that time.

As for the third cause of impotency, the venereal disease, we have already proved that this institution of the stews is the best and surest remedy against it; and shall only observe here how happily this project provides against the various ill effects of lewdness, in whatever light we consider them.

Thus, I think, the first part of my proposition pretty well cleared, viz. That the public stews will preserve men's constitutions so well, that they will have a sufficient stock of corporal ability, and consequently inclination left to persuade them, sooner or later, to enter into the marriage-state.

I say farther, that these men, having thus preserved their constitution, will answer all the intents and purposes of that state, rather better than if they had lived perfectly chaste.

When a man and a woman select one another out of the whole species, it is not merely for propagation; nay, that is generally the least in their thoughts: what they chiefly have in view, is to pass the remainder of their lives happily together, to enjoy the soft embraces and mutual endearments of love; to divide their joys and griefs; to share their pleasures and afflictions; and, in short, to make one another as happy as possible. As for children, they come of course, and of course are educated according to their parents' abilities.

Now all these enjoyments depending upon the mutual affection of these two, man and wife; whenever this affection fails, either in the woman or the man, that marriage is unhappy, and all the good ends and designs of this state entirely frustrated. To give the women their due, they must have the preference in point of constancy; their passions are not so easily raised, nor so suddenly fixed upon any particular object: but when this passion is once rooted in women, it is much stronger and more durable than in men, and rather increases than diminishes, by enjoying the person beloved. Whether it is that women receive as much love as they part with, and that the love they receive is not entirely lost, but takes root again by conception; whereas what a man

parts with never affects him farther, than just the pleasure he receives at the time of parting with it; or whether this difference is owing to the different turn of men's fancies, which are more susceptible of fresh impressions from every handsome face they meet, or perhaps that their heads are so much employed in worldly affairs, that they only take love *en passant* to get rid of a present uneasiness, whereas women make it the whole business of their lives: whatever the reason is, I say, it is experimentally true, that a woman has but a very slippery hold of a man's affections after enjoyment. Let us see therefore which of these two, the chaste or the experienced man, will be least liable to this failure of affection, and consequently which of the two will make the best married man.

The first great cooler of a man's affections after marriage, is the disparity of the match. When a man has married entirely for love, and to the apparent detriment of his worldly affairs, as soon as the first flush of it is over, he can't help reflecting upon the woman as the cause, and, in some sense, the author of his misfortunes: this naturally begets a coldness and indifference, which, by degrees, turns to an open dislike. Now it is these sort of marriages that chaste men are always in danger of falling into, as I have already proved; neither is there any effectual way to convince a man of this folly, and secure him against it, but by giving him some experience in love-affairs. Again, as chaste men seldom marry for anything but sheer love, so they have framed to themselves such high extravagant notions of the raptures they expect to possess in the marriage-bed, that they are mightily shocked at the disappointment. A chaste unexperienced man is strangely surprised, that those bewitching charms should make such a faint impression upon him after a thorough perusal; he can scarce believe that the woman is still possessed of the same charms which transported him formerly; he fancies he has discovered abundance of little faults and imperfections, and attributes his growing dislike to this discovery, not dreaming that this alteration is entirely in himself, and not in the object of desire, which remains still the same. The truth is, when a man is full fraught with love, and that his pulse beats high for enjoyment, this peccant love-humour falls down upon the eye, which may be observed at such a time to be full brisk and sparkling: 'tis then the beauty of every feature is magnified by coming through this false perspective. And Parthenope^{<18>} is no less than a goddess. But when this dazzling humour is drawn downwards by a revulsion, as in the case of marriage, a man's eyes are perfectly opened; and though they may look languid, sunk, and environed with blueish circles, yet he actually sees much better than before; for Parthenope will now appear to him a mortal, such as she really is, divested of all those false glosses and appearances.

The chaste man is surprised at this change; he is apt to lay the fault upon the woman, and generally fixes his affections on some other female, who, he imagines, is free from those faults: then farewell happy wedlock. The experienced man, on the contrary, has tried several women; he finds they all agree in one particular, and that after a storm of love there always succeeds a calm: when he enters into matrimony, he is prepared against any disappointments of that nature, and is ready to make allowance for those faults and imperfections which are inseparable from human kind.

This is so true, that women have established a maxim, that rakes make the best husbands; for they are very sensible how difficult it is to monopolize a man's affections; that he will have his curiosity about those affairs satisfied one time or other: and though this experience is useful before marriage, it is very dangerous afterwards.

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Besides, to complete the happiness of the marriage state, or indeed to make it tolerably easy, there must be some agreement in the temper, humour, and disposition of the two parties concerned. If, for instance, the man can't endure the sight of a metropolis, and the woman can't enjoy herself out of it; if the man is grave, serious, and an enemy to all jocular merriment, when his wife is a professed lover of mirth and gaiety, these two can never agree; differences will arise every day, and differences in wedlock are as hard to reconcile as those in religion: we may guess at the reason from a parallel instance.

After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes^{<19>}, several Protestant gentlemen were shut up in the Bastille at Paris, where they lived constantly together for a considerable time: they made an observation, during their stay there, that whenever the least difference or dispute happened amongst them, it was never reconciled till some time after their enlargement; because, said they, although we were yoke-fellows in affliction, yet never being out of one another's company, our animosities were always kept up warm, for want of a little absence to cool them. It is the same case with matrimony; and people ought to be particularly careful to choose a wife as nearly of their own temper as possible.

Now this consideration never enters into the head of a chaste unexperienced man; he is so infatuated with personal love, that he imagines his whole future happiness depends upon the possession of such a shape, or such a composition of features; when he is disappointed in this, how much will it add to his chagrin, to find himself yoked for life to a woman whose temper is quite opposite to his own, and consequently whose satisfaction is quite inconsistent with his? We may guess the sequel; separate beds, separate maintenance, and all the whole train of conjugal misfortunes. In short, let us consider matrimony under what view we please, we shall still find that the experienced man will make the best husband, and answer all the ends of marriage much better than a man who lives perfectly chaste to his wedding-day.

Thus, we see, by this happy regulation of the public stews, that whoring, instead of being an enemy to matrimony, will advance and promote the interest of it as much as possible.

We come now to the last great point proposed, viz. That this project of the public stews will prevent, as much as possible, the debauching of modest women, and thereby reduce whoring to the narrowest bounds in which it can possibly be contained.

To illustrate this matter, we must step a little back to consider the constitution of females, while they are in a state of innocence; and when we have taken a view of the fortifications which nature has made to preserve their chastity, we shall find out the reason why it is so often surrendered, and be the better able to provide for its defence.

Every woman, who is capable of conception, must have those parts which officiate so framed, that they may be able to perform whatever is necessary at that juncture. Now, to have those parts so rightly adapted for the use which nature designed them, it is requisite that they should have a very quick sensation, and, upon the application of the male organ, afford the woman an exquisite pleasure; for without this extravagant pleasure in fruition, the recipient organs could never exert themselves to promote conception as they now do, in such an extraordinary manner: the whole vagina, as one continued sphincter, contracting and embracing the penis, while the nymphæ^{<20>} and adjacent islands have their particular emissions at that critical

minute, either as a vehicle to lubricate the passage, or else to incorporate with the masculine injection: add to this, that the fallopian tubes put themselves in a proper posture to receive the impregnating fluid, and convey it, as is supposed, to the ovaria. Now it is hard to imagine, that so many alert members, which can exert themselves in such a lively manner on this occasion, should be at all other times in a state of perfect tranquillity; for, besides that experience teaches us the contrary, this handsome disposition would be entirely useless, if nature had not provided a prior titillation, to provoke women at first to enter upon action; and all our late discoveries, in anatomy, can find out no other use for the clitoris, but to whet the female desire by its frequent erections; which are, doubtless, as provoking as those of the penis, of which it is a perfect copy, though in miniature.

In short, there requires no more to convince us of the violence of female desire, when raised to a proper height, but only to consider, what a terrible risk a woman runs to gratify it. Shame and poverty are looked upon as trifles, when they come in competition with this predominating passion. But although it must be allowed, that all women are liable to these amorous desires, yet, the variety of constitutions will make a considerable difference; for as in some men the olfactory, auditory, or optic nerves, are not so brisk and lively as in others, so there are some women who have the nerves of their pudenda more lively, and endowed with a much quicker sensation than others. Now, whether this difference is owing to the formation of the nerves, or to the different velocity of the blood circulating through those parts, or whether it is owing to the different quantity, or perhaps acrimony, of that fluid which is separated from the blood by the nymphæ, and other titillating glands: I say, from whencesoever this difference proceeds, according to the degree of this sensation, we may venture to pronounce a woman more or less in their own nature chaste.

To counterbalance this violent natural desire, all young women have strong notions of honour carefully inculcated into them from their infancy. Young girls are taught to hate a whore, before they know what the word means; and when they grow up, they find their worldly interest entirely depending upon the reputation of their chastity. This sense of honour and interest, is what we may call artificial chastity; and it is upon this compound of natural and artificial chastity, that every woman's real actual chastity depends.

As for instance, some women are naturally more chaste, or rather, to speak properly, less amorous than others, and at the same time have strict notions of honour. Such women are almost impregnable, and may be compared to towns strongly fortified both by art and nature, which, without treachery, are safe from any sudden attacks, and must be reduced by long and regular sieges, such as few men have the patience or resolution to go through with.

Other women, again, have the same value for their reputation, and stand as much upon the point of honour; but then they are naturally of a very sanguine amorous disposition. A woman of this class may not unjustly be compared to a town well garrisoned, but whose mutinous unruly inhabitants are strongly inclined to revolt and let in the enemy. Such women, it's true, by extraordinary care and vigilance may suppress these mutinies; and honour may for a long while keep inclination under, but yet they are never perfectly safe; there are certain times and seasons, certain unguarded hours, when honour and interest are lulled asleep, and love has got the entire ascendant. Besides, although we allow love and honour to be pretty equal combatants, nay even granting, that in a pitched battle, when they have mustered up all their forces, honour

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will have the advantage, and quell inclination; yet, in the course of a long civil war, it is odds but love one time or other obtains a victory, which is sure to be decisive: for inclination has this unlucky advantage over honour, that, instead of being weakened, it grows stronger by subjection; and, like camomile, the more it is pressed down and kept under, the sturdier it grows; or, like Antæus^{<21>}, it receives fresh vigour from every defeat, and rises the brisker the oftener it is thrown. Whereas honour once routed never rallies; nay, the least breach in female reputation is irreparable; and a gap in chastity, like a chasm in a young tree, is every day a widening. Besides, honour and interest require a long chain of solid reasoning before they can be set in battle-array; whereas inclination is presently under arms, the moment love has pitched his standard: for, as we find that the least wanton glance of a lady's eye quickly alarms a man's animal spirits, and puts the whole body corporate into an unruly ferment; so, doubtless, the female imagination is at least equally alert: and in such a sudden scuffle betwixt love and honour, it is ten to one but the enemy enters; for the gate of chastity, like the temple of Janus^{<22>}, always stands open during these conflicts. It must indeed be granted, that if the loss of honour was immediately to succeed the loss of chastity, the virtue of these women would be much stronger than it is; but they flatter themselves with the hopes of secrecy, and fancy that they have found out an expedient to purchase pleasure without the expense of reputation; by this means honour is reconciled to inclination, or at best made to stand neuter; and then the consequence is very obvious. In short, a wanton woman of honour may withstand a great many attacks, and possibly defend her chastity to the very last; but yet she is every day in danger of being surprised, and at best will make but a very precarious defence.

A third sort of women, the very reverse of the preceding, have neither honour nor inclination; that is to say, they have neither the one nor the other to an equal degree with the rest of the sex. These kind of women who put a slighter value than ordinary upon their characters, are generally, in their circumstances, either above the world or below it; for when a woman has her interest and fortune depending upon her reputation, as all the middle rank of womankind have, she is a woman of honour of course. Interest, indeed is inseparable from female honour, nay, it is the very foundation of it; and honour and interest, when they are considered as guardians to chastity, are synonymous terms. The bare point of honour, when abstracted from interest, would prove but a small rub to women in their eager pursuit of pleasure: thus we see the conduct of a maiden lady, how much more circumspect it is whilst her fortune in marriage is depending, than afterwards, when that point of interest is secured by a husband; for all married women are above the world, in so far as they are out of the reach of any suspicions or surmises, or even a probability of incontinence; and since they are not liable to be detected by pregnancy, there's no other sort of conviction able to prejudice them, but downright ocular demonstration: which seems to be the reason why so many of them take such liberties, as if they were of Falstaff's opinion, when he said, nothing but eyes confutes me. Female honour, therefore, being so nearly allied and closely annexed to worldly interest, we must confine this class of women to two sorts: first, those whose fortunes are independent, and above being influenced by the censure of the world; and, secondly, those who are so far below the world, that they either escape its censure, or else are incapable of being hurt by it. The first sort lie under this disadvantage, that let their natural chastity be ever so great, the smallest spark of desire is capable of being blown up and raised to a considerable pitch; whereas, when a woman is once arrived to maturity, that portion of honour which she has acquired, is with difficulty preserved, and at best is incapable of any improvement.

The second sort are equally liable to have their passions raised, however low they may be naturally, and besides lie under this farther disadvantage, that though they can't promote their interest by preserving their chastity, yet, if they have the least spark of beauty, they will find their account sufficiently in parting with it. The virtue, indeed, of this class of women, seems chiefly to depend upon the degree of beauty which they stand possessed of; for if they have charms sufficient to provoke young men to be at any tolerable pains and cost, their chastity can never hold out long, but must infallibly surrender.

The fourth and last kind of women we shall mention, are those who have a very moderate share of honour, joined to a very amorous constitution.

The virtue of these women is entirely defenceless; and, as soon as a man has removed that little timorous coyness, which is natural to young women in their first attempts, he may proceed with confidence, and conclude the breach to be practicable; for whatever resistance he meets with afterwards, will only enhance the pleasure of conquest. Most women, indeed, let them be ever so fully resolved to comply, make as great a show of resistance as they can conveniently counterfeit; and this the sex would pass upon the world for a kind of innate modesty: but it is very easily accounted for.

As soon as women have entertained any degree of love, they make it their whole study to raise and maintain an equal degree of passion in the men; and they are very sensible how far the bare appearance of modesty will prevail to render them amiable. The pain they suffer in smothering their desires, is fully recompensed by that secret pleasure which a lover's eagerness gives them, because they esteem it a proof both of the sincerity and violence of his passion. A woman is not, without some reason, afraid, lest a man's love should diminish after enjoyment, and would gladly bribe his after-love, by the great value she seems to put upon her chastity before she makes him a present of it.

Besides, not to mention the actual pleasure a woman receives in struggling, it is a justification of her in the eye of the man, and a kind of salvo to her honour and conscience, that she never did fully comply, but was in a manner forced into it. This is the plain natural reason why most women refuse to surrender upon treaty, and why they delight so much in being stormed.

Having thus taken a cursory view of the sex, in their several classes, and according to their several circumstances, we may conclude, preferring truth to complaisance, that by far the greater part of womenkind hold their virtue very precariously; and that female chastity is, in its own nature, built upon a very ticklish foundation.

Hudibras has ludicrously placed the seat of male honour in the posteriors, whereby it is secured from any attack in front; but female honour, notwithstanding the apparent safety of the situation, like a debtor's house upon the verge of two counties, is liable to be attacked both ways; à parte ante, & à parte post.

That the seat of honour in females has this double aspect, like Janus Bifrons^{<22>}, and consequently that it is two ways accessible, has already been taken notice of by almost all the writers upon this subject; but it is worth remarking here, that Lycurgus^{<23>} had an eye to it when he modelled the Spartan petticoat; for though the warmth of the climate obliged the women to be very open in that part of their dress, insomuch that, if we believe Plutarch in his comparison of Numa^{<24>} and Lycurgus, the habit which the maidens of Laconia^{<25>} wore came but to their knees, and was

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open on both sides, so that as they walked their thighs appeared bare; yet this wise lawgiver would not permit them to make the least aperture, either in the fore or hind part of that garment; rightly judging, that those two sacred avenues to a maid's honour ought to be guarded with the utmost caution.

For this same reason the upright posture of the body has always been esteemed the most decent; and it has ever been the mode, in all countries, for ladies to curtsy instead of bowing: for though a female bow might seem a modest and coy reclension of the body, with regard to the person saluted, yet it would occasion a very indecent projection to those who should happen to be behind; especially since that dangerous fashion of postern plackets has crept into the European petticoat.

But to return to our present argument, the design of which was to prove the following syllogism.

The only way to preserve female chastity, is to prevent the men from laying siege to it: but this project of the public stews is the only way to prevent men's laying siege to it: therefore this project is the only way to preserve female chastity.

The former part of the proposition is, I hope, sufficiently proved. It is, indeed, evident, from the bare consideration of the nature of females, that if the men are suffered to go on, as they now do, in the pursuit of pleasure, there is no possible way can be found out, effectually, to secure the virtue of any one woman of any rank, or in any station of life. If a woman is handsome, she has the more trials to undergo, if homely, and for that reason seldom attacked, the novelty of the address makes the greater impression: if she is married, it is odds but there's a failure at home, and habitual pleasures are not easily foregone, especially when they may be enjoyed with safety: if a maid, her unexperienced virgin heart is capable of any impression: if she is rich, ease and luxury make the blood run mad; and love, if high-dieted, is ungovernable: if poor, she will be the easier bribed, when love and avarice jointly must be gratified.

In short, to sum up all, there is in the passion of love a certain fatal crisis, to which all womenkind are capable of being wrought up: the difference of virtue consisting only in this, that it is very hard to work a virtuous woman up to this crisis, and requires a very unlucky concurrence of circumstances: whereas a woman without a good stock of virtue, must have an unaccountable series of good fortune if she escapes. But, virtuous or not virtuous, when this passion is once raised to the critical height, it is absolutely irresistible.

Since therefore female virtue cannot effectually be secured, but by preventing the men from laying siege to it, it remains for us to examine, if this prevention can be effected by any other method than that of erecting the public stews; and whether or no the public stews, when erected, will have the desired effect.

That young men, in a good state of health, have their desires towards women much stronger, and more violent, than for the enjoyment of anything else in this life, is a truth not to be contested. And it is likewise as certain, that young men will gratify these desires, unless the legislature can affix such a penalty to the commission of the fact, that the apprehension of the penalty may give their minds more uneasiness, than refraining from the gratification.

Now there are but three things which men fear in this life, viz. shame, poverty, and bodily pain, and consequently but three sorts of punishments which the legislature

can inflict. The first of these, indeed, might be omitted; for shame is so very little in the power of the laws, that it hardly deserves the name of a penalty. If the pillory, and such like infamous punishments, are more terrible for the shame that attends them, than for the bodily pain, it is not because such a posture of a man's body, with his neck through a hole, is in itself ignominious, or that any law can make it so; but because it publishes to the world, that a man has been proved to commit such a certain action, in its own nature scandalous, which he is ashamed to have thus publicly made known. The truth is, honour and dishonour being only the different opinions of mankind, as to the good or evil of any action; and these opinions in the mind arising, as Dr. Clarke²⁸ well observes, from the natural fitness or unfitness of the actions themselves, cannot be altered or determined by any secular force. And that they are entirely out of the power of the legislature, is evident in the instance of duelling; where a man often receives honour for a breach of the law, nay is forced to break it in defence of his honour.

The utmost scandal, therefore, which the laws can affix to any action, is to make a full and open publication of the fact: now it is evident that this publication cannot have a sufficient influence over men's minds to deter them from wenching, a crime which meets with so favourable a reception in the eye of the world, that young men are not ashamed to boast of it.

We must have recourse then to a fine, or corporal punishment, or perhaps both. If it is a fine, it must be one of these three sorts; either a certain determinate sum for every offence, or, to make it fall more equally, such a certain portion of a man's whole substance, or else it must be such a sum as the jury shall think sufficient to repair the woman's damages. The first is impracticable because of its inequality, with regard to men's different fortunes. The second would punish none but men of fortune. And the third, in many cases, would be impossible; for women are often ruined by such as have it not in their power to make them amends. But granting that a fine could be so happily contrived as to affect all men equally in their several stations of life; and let us suppose this fine considerable enough, for so it must be, to deter any moderate-spirited man: yet still we lie under a manifest dilemma as to the point of proof; for if the proof is to depend upon the evidence of eye-witnesses, none but fools will be convicted; and let a man be ever so indiscreet, he that swears to *rem in re*²⁹ must have good eyes, and be a good swearer withal. If, on the other hand, a man is to be convicted upon the sole evidence of the woman, we run into greater inconveniencies: for either a woman is to be recompensed for the injury she has received, or not; if not, there is no modest woman of common sense, but will choose much rather to conceal her weakness, than expose it in public court so much to her own prejudice; and this too upon the sole motive of doing prejudice to a man, for whom, in all probability, she still retains an affection: so that no man would be accused but by such sort of women as the law can never intend to favour or countenance.

And if the woman is to receive this fine, either in part or the whole, by way of reparation, not to mention its being an actual encouragement to transgress, this recompense would only be a means to promote a multitude of false accusations; for what man could live with so much circumspection, that a woman might not often have an opportunity to accuse him of such a fact, with very probable circumstances, when there is no opportunity of detecting the fallacy. This difficulty, indeed, is not to be got over; and the objection lies equally strong against all sorts of corporal punishment, death itself not excepted. For if there are so many false indictments for rapes, where a

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woman receives no benefit by the prosecution, where she is liable to such cross examinations, and where the possibility of the fact is so much doubted, that a woman is generally discountenanced, and must bring a number of probable concurrent circumstances before she can gain credit: I say, if notwithstanding these discouragements, there are so many malicious prosecutions for rapes, that the benefit of the law in general is much disputed, what may we expect in the present case, where a woman has nothing to do but acknowledge that she was over-persuaded, and then all difficulties vanish? Besides, if such a law was made, setting aside that the remedy would be worse than the disease, it is much to be questioned if it proved any remedy at all: for what fine can we propose as sufficient to deter men, when there are so many that squander away their whole fortunes upon this sole gratification? And what corporal punishment, on this side death, can we find out equivalent to a pox, which they every day run the risk of?

But no such law, as yet, has been so much as proposed, although whoring has been a very obvious mischief ever since laws were in being; therefore, without farther argument, considering the wisdom of our legislature, that such a law never has been made, ought to be sufficient reason for us to judge it impracticable.

Since the torrent of lewdness, then, is too strong to be opposed by open force, let us see if we can find out an expedient to divert it by policy, and prevent the mischief though we can't prevent the crime.

Most authors, who have writ of government, have chosen to express their sentiments by comparing the public body with the body natural; and Mr. Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, has carried the allegory as far as it will go. To make use of it in the present instance, we may look upon whoring as a kind of peccant humour in the body politic, which, in order to its discharge, naturally seizes upon such external members as are most liable to infection, and at the same time most proper to carry off the malignity. If this discharge is promoted by a licence for public stews, which is a kind of legal evacuative, the constitution will certainly be preserved: whereas, if we apply penal laws, like violent astringents, they will only drive the disease back into the blood; where, gathering strength, and at last assimilating the whole mass, it will break out with the utmost virulence, to the apparent hazard of those sound members, which otherwise might have escaped the contagion. As we may observe in a clap, where nature of her own accord expels the noxious humour through the same passages by which it was at first received; but if we resist nature in this discharge, and repel the venom by too hasty an application of styptics, the disease then turns to a pox, seizes the vitals, and, to use Solomon's words like a dart, strikes through the liver^{<30>}. But, leaving allegory as more proper for rhetoric or poetry, than such serious debates, since this project of the public stews is the only expedient now left for the preservation of female chastity, the question is, whether or no this expedient will really answer the end proposed?

To prove the affirmative, requires no more but that we look into ourselves, and examine our own passions; for love ever was and will be the same in all men, and in all ages. The first amorous emotions that young men feel, are violent; they are plagued with a stimulation, which raises a vehement desire: the passion is strong, but then it is general; it is lust, not love: and therefore the natural impatience of lust will prompt them to take the speediest way for present gratification, and make them prefer the ready and willing embraces of a courtesan, before the doubtful and distant prospect of enjoying a modest damsel, whose coyness will cost so much pains, as well as time, to

overcome; and, when overcome, may probably occasion a future uneasiness, and give them more trouble after enjoyment than they had before.

Besides this, if their first affections should happen to be engaged to a particular object, which is very rare; and that this particular object was in their power to compass, which is still rarer; yet there is naturally in young men a certain secret shame, which attends their first sallies, and prevents their declaring a private passion, 'till it grows so violent, that they are forced to give it vent upon the public; and by that means, get into a regular method of making themselves easy, without doing their modesty any violence.

But though the natural bent of men's minds inclines them to an easy purchase of pleasure in their first amours, yet public whoring lies at present under so many disadvantages; the public women, for want of good regulation, are so infamous in the principles and practice; the places of resort so vile, and so scandalously imposing in the common expense, and lying under the lash of the civil power, so pestered with the mercenary officiousness of reforming constables; and which is worst of all, the plague of claps and poxes is so inevitable, that men contrary to their inclinations are often forced to enter upon private intrigues, either without trying the public, or after meeting with some misfortunes in the trial.

Now if we see daily so many young men who prefer the public commerce under all these disadvantages, what success may we not expect from this happy establishment of the stews, when the young women's behaviour will be regulated after a civil decent manner; when the houses of entertainment will be so commodious, and the expense of accommodation so reasonable; when the horrid dread of claps is entirely removed; and when the laws, instead of disturbing such assemblies, will be employed in their protection, to give them the greater countenance and encouragement; surely we may hope for a thorough reformation.

But if these considerations should not prove fully effectual, and some men should be so obstinate as to persist in private whoring, notwithstanding these inducements to the contrary; we must then have recourse to legal force, and drive those who are too restive to be led: for though the laws can't prevent whoring, they may yet regulate it; the *quid* is not in their power, but the *quomodo* is^{<31>}. A man must eat, but he may be directed how to eat. The strongest curb can't stop an unruly horse, but the weakest will serve to turn him: and the smallest stream is not to be obstructed, though we can change the course of the greatest river. So love, though ever so unruly and headstrong in the general, changes the particular object of its passion with the smallest circumstance; and legal penalties are no trifling dissuasives, when the laws don't command impossibilities.

This argument indeed, of compulsion, is in a manner supernumerary, and thrown in, as it were, *ex abundantia*^{<32>}: for the public stews under this regular economy, will have so much the advantage of private whoring, whether we regard the ease and convenience of enjoyment, or the beauty and variety of mistresses, that men's natural inclinations will sway them sufficiently without this superfluous constraint. If there is any fear of success, the danger lies on the other side; and indeed we have some colour of reason to apprehend, lest the whole body of lewdness being turned upon the public, there should want a sufficient supply of young women to recruit the stews; which, by that means may run into a sudden disrepute, and lose a character that will be difficult to retrieve. But however plausible this objection may seem at first sight,

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we shall find, upon a nearer view, that it only serves to make the excellence of this scheme the more manifest.

As there is constantly in the nation, a certain number of young men, whose passions are too strong to brook any opposition: our business is to contrive a method how they may be gratified, with as little expense of female virtue as possible. But the difficulty lies in adjusting this matter, and gauging our young men's affections so exactly, that the modesty of one woman may not be sacrificed, more than is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the rest.

The gallants of this age, indeed, are not quite so sturdy as that rampant Roman emperor who deflowered ten Sarmatian virgins in one night^{<33>}; but what we want in constitution, we make up in the nicety of our palates; as a squeamish stomach requires the greatest variety of dishes: and some of our youth are grown such perfect epicures in venery, that they can relish nothing but virgins: they destroy, it is true, a great deal of beauty, by browsing only upon the buds.

But we ought not to judge of these men's abilities by the number of women they debauch, no more than we should measure the goodness of a certain curious gentleman's appetite by his bespeaking several dozen of young pigeons, when he only regaled upon the rumps: neither is it entirely from a wantonness of fancy, or a luxurious taste of pleasure, that men indulge themselves in making this havoc, but chiefly for their own personal safety. Young girls are so giddy, thoughtless, and unexperienced, and withal so fond of the sport, at their first setting out, that they seldom escape a taint; and a man is not safe in being constant: nay, some men are afraid of venturing even after themselves. By this means several likely women, that might do the public signal service, are in a short time rendered useless: and, by a modest computation, we are put to the expense of as many virtuous women in one year, as might reasonably serve the nation six.

Now, the public stews will regulate this affair so precisely, and with such critical exactness, that one year with another, we shall not have one woman employed in the public service more than is absolutely necessary, nor one less than is fully sufficient.

When this project is first set on foot, the vast choice and variety there is at present of these women, will give us an opportunity of making a very beautiful collection; and will, doubtless, for some time, occasion a considerable run upon the public; so that private whoring, the only nursery of our courtesans, may probably remain too long neglected: for the whole body of our incontinent youth, like a standing army, being employed in constant action, there cannot well be spared a sufficient detachment to raise the necessary recruits.

But however true this may be, we shall thereby suffer no inconvenience; for if the supplies of young women, which we may reasonably expect from the northern and western parts of these kingdoms, or from such places as are remote and out of the influence of this scheme: I say, if these supplies should not prove sufficient to answer the greatness of the demand, and that the reputation of the stews upon this account, should begin to flag, why then the worst accident that can befall, is a gradual relapse into our former state of private whoring; and this no farther than is just necessary to recruit the stews, and thereby make them retrieve their former character: for every woman that is debauched more than is barely necessary, only brings so much additional credit and reputation to the stews, and in some measure atones for the loss

of her own chastity, by being a means to preserve that of others; so that whenever the tide of private lewdness runs too high, and exceeds the just and ordinary bounds, it must of course, by encouraging the public stews, immediately suffer a proportionable ebb: that is to say, it must be reduced again so low, that there will remain but just a sufficient quantity to supply the stews: which is as low, as in the nature of the thing is possible.

I might here lavish out encomiums, and take occasion to dwell upon those many advantages that will accrue to the nation by this admirable scheme; but shall only take notice of this peculiar excellence, which it has above all other schemes, that it necessarily executes itself.

But since the necessity of debauching a certain number of young women, is entirely owing to the necessity of supplying the public stews; a question may very reasonably arise, whether this project might not be vastly improved, even to the total extirpation of private whoring, by an act for encouraging the importation of foreign women. This, I must confess, deserves a serious debate: for, besides the honour of our females, which would be preserved by such an act, it might bring this farther advantage; that whereas most of our estated youth spend a great part of their time and fortunes in travelling abroad, for no other end, as it seems by most of them, but to be informed in the French and Italian gallantry; they would then have an opportunity of satisfying their curiosity in foreign amours, without stirring out of London. But I shall leave the decision of this matter to abler pens, well knowing, that a truth of this nature, which carries so much the air of novelty, will require much better authority than mine to warrant it.

Let it suffice for the present, that I have fully proved what I at first proposed in this treatise: that public whoring is neither so criminal in itself, nor so detrimental to the society, as private whoring; and that the encouraging of public whoring, by erecting stews for that purpose, will not only prevent most of the mischievous consequences of this vice, but even lessen the quantity of whoring in general, and reduce it to the narrowest bounds which it can possibly be contained in.

After what has been said, it may, perhaps, appear somewhat odd to talk of religious objections, as if either Christianity or morality could possibly object against a scheme, which is entirely calculated for the welfare and happiness of mankind. But since a great many men amongst us have entertained such whimsical notions of religion, as to imagine, that in some cases, a law may be unjust and wicked, though it evidently promotes the public good; as if the right enjoyment of this life was inconsistent with our happiness in the next: I say, since many men of understanding have suffered themselves to be possessed with this mistaken principle, I shall, as briefly as may be, answer such objections as can, with any colour of reason, be offered.

First then, I expect to be attacked with that old moral precept, of not doing evil that good may come of it. This may be answered with another old saying, equally authentic, and more applicable to the present purpose, that of two evils we ought to choose the least. The case is this: a private member of a society, may, doubtless, commit a crime with a design to promote the good of that society, which was partly the case of Felton against the Duke of Buckingham^{<34>}; and this evil action may possibly answer the goodness of the intention, but is universally condemned as an unwarrantable presumption; and falls justly under the censure of doing a certain evil, for the prospect of an uncertain good. But as to the legislature, there is a wide

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difference; for they, and they only, are entrusted with the welfare of the society: this public welfare is, or ought to be, the whole end and scope of their actions; and they are fully empowered to do whatever they judge conducive to that end. If their intentions come up to this, they are certainly in their consciences acquitted: but as to the world, their actions, that is, their laws, are judged good or bad, just or unjust, according as they actually prove beneficial or detrimental to the society in general: and therefore it is the grossest absurdity, and a perfect contradiction in terms, to assert, that a government may not commit evil that good may come of it; for, if a public act, taking in all its consequences, really produces a greater quantity of good, it must, and ought to be termed a good act; although the bare act, considered in itself, without the consequent good, should be in the highest degree wicked and unjust.

As for instance: a ship performing quarantine, and known to be infected, is sunk by a storm; some of the crew, half drowned, recover the shore; but the moment they land, the government orders them to be shot to death; this action, in itself, is no less than a downright unchristian and inhuman murder: but since the health and safety of the nation is secured by this severe precaution, it is no wonder, if we allow the action to be not only justifiable, but in the strictest sense of morality, just.

Another objection, or rather the same set in a stronger light, is, that although the welfare and happiness of the community is, or ought to be, the only end of all law and government, yet since our spiritual welfare is the *summum bonum*<35> which all Christians should aim at, no Christian government ought to authorize the commission of the least known sin, though for the greatest temporal advantage.

To this objection, I answer, that it is universally allowed as one of the greatest perfections of the Christian religion, that its precepts are calculated to promote the happiness of mankind in this world as well as the next; if so, then it is a direct arraignment of the Lawgiver's infinite wisdom, i.e. a contradiction, to assert that in matters of law and government, the public breach of any gospel precept can possibly be for the temporal good of any society whatever: and therefore we may with confidence affirm, that no sinful laws can be beneficial, and vice versa, that no beneficial laws can be sinful. Now we have already given sufficient proof of the benefit the public would receive by licensing the stews, and therefore ought to conclude such licence lawful; but lest the apparent wickedness of the stews, should be objected against this general reasoning, it is fit that we examine this matter a little nearer.

Fornication is, no doubt, a direct breach of a gospel precept, and is therefore a sin; but this sin, barely as such, concerns the government no more than the eating of black-puddings, equally prohibited in the same text.<36> The reason is this: the sin consists in a full intention to gratify a lustful desire; which intention the legislature cannot possibly prevent: penalties indeed may deter men from gratifying their desires, at the expense of the public, but will rather increase than lessen the desires themselves. If it is argued, that the sin of the intention is aggravated by being put in execution, so much the better for our purpose; for then the argument stands thus.

Since the sin of the intention is entirely out of the legislature's power, the utmost they can do, with regard to this sin, is, to prevent its being aggravated by actual commission.

But the public stews, as we have already proved, will prevent as much as possible this actual commission.

Therefore the public stews will prevent as much as possible this sin.

Bernard Mandeville

Another branch of this objection, without which the objection itself would be of no force, is, that the authorizing of public stews is a public encouragement for people to whore.

If by people are meant those in the stews, I hope it will be thought no crime to encourage such people, rather to confine themselves to the practice of one vice, than live by committing a thousand; especially when that one vice is what they would really practice, whether they were encouraged or not.

But if any imagine that this particular licence would be a general encouragement to the whole nation, they are certainly mistaken. For, as to the men, they are already as bad as they can be; if anything cures them, it must be satiety; let them have full and free leave to take a surfeit of unlawful love, and they will soon learn to prefer the chaste embraces of innocence before the bought smile of harlots loveless, joyless, unendeared, casual fruition.

It is a right observation, that restraint does but whet a man's passions instead of curing them.—*exuperat magis, ægrescitque medendo.* Æn.12.<37> And a late ingenious author, who studied mankind, speaking on the subject, has these words: "To put down public stews, is not only to disperse fornication into all parts, but, by the difficulty, to excite wild and wanton people to this vice."<38>

It was observed at Rome, that in the full liberty of divorces, there was not a single instance of one in fifty years: and that Cato longed for his wife again as soon as she was in another's possession.

The master of love says positively, *Quod licet ingratum est, quod non licet acrius urit.*<39> And Martial speaking to a married rake, B.3. Ep.68. says,

*Cur aliena placet tibi, quæ tua non placet uxor?
Nunquid securus non potes arrigere?*

I prithee tell me why a wife
Thy am'rous fancy never warms?
What! Without danger o'thy life,
Cannot thy cod-piece stand to arms?

And again, B.1 . Ep. 74.

*Nullus in urbe fuit tota, qui tangere vellet
Uxorem gratis, Caeciliane tuam
Dum licuit: sed nunc, positis custodibus, ingens
Turba futurorum est. Ingeniosus homo es.*

There's no man, Cecil, in the town,
Would, gratis, have enjoyed thy spouse;
But now thou are so jealous grown,
Lord! What a crowd about the house!
You've locked her up, t'increase her value:
In short, you are a cunning fellow.

The public stews will not encourage men to be lewd, but they will encourage them to exercise their lewdness in a proper place, without disturbing the peace of the society, and with as little detriment to themselves as possible. And, as to the women, there's not the least shadow of encouragement: for no modest woman ever lost her maiden-head with the dismal prospect of becoming a public courtesan: and if a woman is not modest, the licensing of the public stews is no more an encouragement for her

A Modest Defence of Public Stews

to practise, than the allowing a certain number of hackney-coaches every Sunday is an encouragement for the rest to ply; when the very licence, to some, expressly implies a prohibition of the rest.

Having now sufficiently proved the institution of the public stews to be a political good, and answered all the religious objections against it; I shall conclude with observing, that I have the authority of Italy, the most politic nation in the world, to back me in the first part of my argument; and the opinion of Holland, one of the strictest reformed churches, to vindicate me in the second; and that we ourselves enjoyed the benefit of this institution till we were deprived of it by the over-hasty zeal of our first reformers in the sixteenth century.

The public stews were anciently kept in Southwark, if not by an express licence from the government, at least by an open permission; though we have most reason to believe the first, since they paid regular taxes both to the lord-mayor of the city, and to the bishop of the see.

We do not find that they were ever molested till the 25th of Edward the Third[1352], when, in the parliament at Westminster, at the request of the Londoners, says Daniel^{<40>}, an act passed, obliging all common whores to distinguish themselves, by wearing hoods striped with divers colours, or furs, and their gowns turned inside out.

This, indeed, was but a trifle to what they suffered thirty years after by Wat Tyler's rebellion.

In the fifth of Richard the Second[1381], Wat marched up from Dartmouth, with a true spirit of reformation, fully resolved to burn and destroy everything that opposed him: if the archbishop's palace at Lambeth could not escape, there was little mercy to be expected for the stews; besides, whoring was not the least of Wat's grievances: he began his rebellion by killing a collector of the poll-tax for being a little too brisk upon his daughter; and his antipathy to the stews was still increased, by the Lord Mayor's shutting the city-gates, and denying him entrance; for he could not revenge the affront more effectually, than by cutting off so large a branch of his lordship's revenue.

In short, everything concurred to the destruction of the stews, and demolished they were.

This action, however, lost Tyler his life; for William Walworth, the then Lord Mayor, was the very man that struck him first off his horse in Smithfield: for which the king knighted him, gave him a hundred pounds pension, and added the dagger to the city arms.

Whilst whoring was in this unsettled condition, the bishop thought it a good opportunity to engross the whole profit of licensing courtesans, which occasioned them fresh trouble; for John Northampton, who succeeded Walworth, either piqued at the bishop's invading his right, or out of a real reforming principle, for he was a follower of Wycliffe, commenced a severe persecution. He had his spies and constables in every street, to apprehend strollers; and such women as were neither handsome nor rich enough to bribe his officers, were carried through the streets in great pomp, with their hair shorn, and trumpets and pipes playing before them. All this he did contrary to the express commands of the bishop, who had several bickerings with him upon that head.

Bernard Mandeville

This great reformer John Northampton was, from his troublesome temper, nick-named Cumber-Town; and as he succeeded Tyler in the work of reformation, so he had like to have met with as bad a fate: for two years after he was found guilty of high-treason, without making the least defence; had his goods confiscated, and was condemned to perpetual imprisonment a hundred miles from London: accordingly he was sent to Tintagel Castle in Cornwall.

This dreadful Cumber-Town being removed, the stews had leisure to re-settle themselves under the protection of the church; and enjoyed an almost uninterrupted tranquillity for an hundred and fifty years.

We find, indeed, an act passed at Westminster, in the 11th of Henry the Sixth, that no keepers of stews, or whore-houses, in Southwark should be empanelled upon any jury, or keep a tavern in any other place.

But the most sensible blow they ever felt, was the invasion of the French-pox. The Spaniards had brought it from the islands of Florida to Naples, and the army of Charles the Eighth, when he conquered that Kingdom in the year 1495, transmitted it into France, from whence it had a very quick passage into England; for there was an act passed in the latter end of Henry the Seventh's reign, for expelling out of the stews all such women as had the faculty of burning men. However, we find they still continued in good repute in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and yielded a considerable revenue to the Bishop of London; for Bucer, in one of his books against Gardiner, taxes him with it as an heinous crime, that he should receive most of his rents out of the public stews.

After this terrible accusation, we may easily guess what quarter our stews met with at the reformation. But now Bucer has got his ends; the stews are destroyed; those public nuisances are demolished; whoring is attacked on all hands without mercy; and what then? Why, truly, by mere dint of reforming, we have reduced lewdness to that pass, that hardly one bachelor in the kingdom will lie with a woman, if he is sure that she's not sound; and very few modest women will suffer a man to get them with child, unless he makes a promise to marry. In short, the truth is, we are at this present writing as bad as we can be; and I hope I have fairly shown how we may be better.

FINIS.

Notes

1. *Seneca*: The quotation is actually from Tertullian, *De Pudicitia*, I. 16.
2. Εικών Βασιλική [Eikon Basilike]: "The Portrait of the King," an anonymous royalist pamphlet published in 1649 at the time of the execution of King Charles I. Purporting to be his own work, (though this is very doubtful) it is written the form of a diary, and combines prayers urging the forgiveness of Charles's executioners with a justification of royalism and the King's political and military programme that led to the Civil War.
3. *The Whole Duty of Man*: An Anglican devotional work issued anonymously in 1658. It remained popular for many years.
4. *Anti-Heidegger*: footnote in the original reads "A sermon lately preached against masquerades." This sermon was delivered to the members of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners on January 6, 1724, by Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London.
5. *Learned Ward*: Joshua "Spot" Ward (1685–1761), a famous and very successful quack.
6. *Naturam expellas furca licet usque recurret*: A Latin proverb: "Though you drive out Nature with a pitchfork, she will always return."
7. *That noble pattern of sincerity*: Footnote in the original reads B——p B——t i.e. Bishop (Gilbert) Burnet. The work referred to is *The History of His Own Time*.
8. *The French pox*: Syphilis.
9. *The King's-evil*: Scrofula, an infection of the lymph nodes in the neck by the tuberculosis bacterium. It was so called because it was believed that being touched by a King would cure it. (Mandeville was mistaken in his belief that syphilis was the cause.)
10. *Chancre*: A venereal sore.
11. *Round diet*: i.e. pills.
12. *Chordee*: An inflamed and distorted penis.
13. *Gleet*: A discharge of pus from the penis, usually caused by gonorrhoea.
14. *Glandula pinealis*: The pineal gland, a part of the brain.
15. *The very sense aches at her*: See *Othello*, Act IV, Sc. II.
16. *Dulcinea*: Don Quixote's beloved
17. *Orlando Furioso*: The eponymous hero of a chivalric romance by Lodovico Ariosto, 1532. He is driven mad by his unrequited love for a princess.
18. *Parthenope*: One of the Sirens, monsters in the form of beautiful women, who lured men to them by singing, and then devoured them.
19. *Edict of Nantes*: issued in 1598 by King Henry IV of France, it allowed French Protestants the free practice of their faith. Louis XIV revoked it in 1685, leading to renewed persecution of Protestants, many of whom fled France.
20. *Nymphae*: The labia minora of the vulva.
21. *Antaeus*: A mythical giant who challenged all comers to wrestling. He was the son of the earth goddess Gaia, and could not be defeated while he remained in contact with the earth, his mother; pinning him to the ground only increased his strength. He was

eventually defeated by Hercules, who held him clear of the ground and crushed him in a bear hug.

22. *Janus*: The Roman god of beginnings, endings, and transitions. He was depicted with two faces, one in front and one in the back of his head. His temple was locked in times of peace, but in wartime it was open, and prayers and sacrifices for victory were held there

23. *Lycurgus*: A semi-legendary king of Sparta, credited with reorganizing Spartan society to its famously totalitarian and militaristic form.

26. *Numa*: Legendary second king of Rome.

27. *Laconia*: Another name for Sparta.

28. *Dr Cl—ke*: Dr. Samuel Clarke, D.D. (1675–1729), chaplain to Queen Anne, and rector of St James's, Westminster, who was particularly concerned with "the fitness of things", as set out in his *Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation* (1706)

29. *Rem in re*: "The thing in the thing" i.e. sexual penetration.

30. *Solomon's words*: From Proverbs 7:21-23, warning of the consequences of immorality—"With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver".

31. *The quid is not in their power, but the quomodo is: quid*: "what" *quomodo*: "how"; i.e. they cannot prevent it, but they can change how it is done.

32. *Ex abundantia*: "More than is necessary."

33. *That rampant Roman emperor*: Proculus, a pretender to the Imperial throne in 280 AD.

34. *The case of Felton against the Duke of Buckingham*: The Duke of Buckingham, a favourite of King Charles I, was assassinated by John Felton in 1628. Buckingham was very unpopular. He was regarded as popish, cowardly, effeminate and corrupt, and had been responsible for a disastrous military expedition against France. Many people thought Felton a hero who had done a noble deed; but he was hanged nonetheless.

35. *Summum bonum*: "The greatest good."

36. *The same text*: (Footnote in original) Acts 15:29 "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

37. *Exuperat magis, ægrescitque medendo*: "[The disease] grows all the stronger, and he sickens from the cure." Aeneid, Bk XII, l.46.

38. *A late ingenious author*: Michel de Montaigne, in his *Apology for Raimond Sebond*.

39. *Quod licet ingratum est, quod non licet acrius urit*: What we can have for the asking we never want; to forbid a thing adds ardour to our longing. Ovid, *Amores*, Bk II, El. xix, l. 3.

40. *Daniel*: Samuel Daniel in *The Collection of the Historie of England*. (First published 1612, several subsequent editions, the last in 1685).