

—(To her.) It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight, and nothing can restore me to myself, but this painful effort of resolution.

*Miss Hard.* Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit ; and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages, without equal affluence ? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit ; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

*Enter HARDCASTLE and SIR CHARLES from behind.*

*Sir Charles.* Here, behind this screen.

*Hard.* Ay, ay, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

*Marl.* By heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye ; for who could see that without emotion ? But every moment that I converse with you, steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue.

*Sir Charles.* What can it mean ? He amazes me !

*Hard.* I told you how it would be. Hush !

*Marl.* I am now determined to stay, madam ; and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

*Miss Hard.* No, Mr Marlow, I will not, cannot detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connexion in which there is the smallest room for repentance ? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion, to load you