

276 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Let me not do what honour must condemn,
And friendship blush to hear.

FRANKLIN.

That Arden never will.

MARIA.

Did you but know her grief—

ARDEN.

Am I the cause?

Have I, just heaven, have I e'er injur'd her!

Yet I'm the coward—O prepos't'rous fear!

See where she comes—Arm'd with my num'rous
wrongs,

I'll meet with honourable confidence

Th' offending wife, and look the honest husband.

FRANKLIN.

Maria, we'll withdraw—even friendship here

Wou'd seem impertinence.—

[*Exeunt* FRANKLIN and MARIA.]

ARDEN.

Be still my heart.

ALICIA enters, not seeing ARDEN.

ALICIA.

How shall I bear my Arden's just reproaches!

Or can a reconciliation long continue,

That's founded on deceit! can I avow

My secret guilt!—No—at so mean a thought

Abandon'd infamy herself wou'd blush.

Nay, cou'd I live with public loss of honour,

Arden wou'd die to see Alicia scorn'd.

He's here, earth open—hide me from his sight.

ARDEN.

Guilt chains her tongue. Lo silent, self-condemn'd,
With tearful eyes and trembling limbs she stands.

ALICIA.