Hardcastle and servants

HARDCASTLE. Well, I hope you are perfect in the table exercise I have
been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your
places, and can show that you have been used to good company, without
ever stirring from home.

OMNES. Ay, ay.

HARDCASTLE. When company comes you are not to pop out and stare, and
then run in again, like frightened rabbits in a warren.

OMNES. No, no.

HARDCASTLE. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make
a show at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the
plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand
so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your
pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead you. See how Diggory
carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no
great matter.

DIGGORY. Ay, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this
way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill----

HARDCASTLE. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all
attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of
talking; you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see
us eat, and not think of eating.

DIGGORY. By the laws, your worship, that's parfectly unpossible.
Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing
for a mouthful himself.

HARDCASTLE. Blockhead! Is not a belly-full in the kitchen as good as
a belly-full in the parlour? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

DIGGORY. Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my
stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

HARDCASTLE. Diggory, you are too talkative.--Then, if I happen to say
a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out
a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

DIGGORY. Then ecod your worship must not tell the story of Ould
Grouse in the gun-room: I can't help laughing at that--he! he!
he!--for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty
years--ha! ha! ha!

HARDCASTLE. Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest
Diggory, you may laugh at that--but still remember to be attentive.
Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will
you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please (to DIGGORY).--Eh, why
don't you move?

DIGGORY. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the
eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld
as a lion.

HARDCASTLE. What, will nobody move?

FIRST SERVANT. I'm not to leave this pleace.

SECOND SERVANT. I'm sure it's no pleace of mine.

THIRD SERVANT. Nor mine, for sartain.

DIGGORY. Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

HARDCASTLE. You numskulls! and so while, like your betters, you are
quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved. O you dunces! I
find I must begin all over again----But don't I hear a coach drive into
the yard? To your posts, you blockheads. I'll go in the mean time and
give my old friend's son a hearty reception at the gate. [Exit
HARDCASTLE.]

DIGGORY. By the elevens, my pleace is gone quite out of my head.

ROGER. I know that my pleace is to be everywhere.

FIRST SERVANT. Where the devil is mine?

SECOND SERVANT. My pleace is to be nowhere at all; and so I'ze go
about my business. [Exeunt Servants, running about as if frightened,
different ways.]