wilful, a.¹ (adv., n.)

(‘wɪfʊl) Compared wilfuller, wilfullest (both rare). Also 3-4 wil(le)uol, wyl(le)fol, 3-7 wilfull, 3-5, 7-8 (9 U.S.) willful, 4 wyluolle, (weleful), 4-5 willef(öl), 4-6 Sc. vilful(ı), also various forms with y, ll, ff, with or without final e. [f. WILL n.¹+ -FUL: not recorded in OE. (but see WILFULLY): cf. WILLESFUL.]

A. adj.

1. a. Asserting or disposed to assert one's own will against persuasion, instruction, or command; governed by will without regard to reason; determined to take one's own way; obstinately self-willed or perverse. (Of persons or personal attributes, or transf. of actions: see also 5.)

   c1200 Trin. Coll. Hom. 75 Pertinaces in malo eliminat ecclesia holie chirche deleð fro cristendom, þo þe wilfulle ben here sinnes to luuen. c1250 in O.E. Misc. 184 Hwan þu sixst on leode King þat is wilful. c1374 CHAUCER Troylus III. 935 For verray slowe þe and oþere wilful tachses. c1400 Rule St. Benet (verse) 280 Men or wemen of wilful mode, þat order of religion takes. 1529 in Leadam Sel. Cases Star Chamber (Selden Soc.) II. 34 The seid Henry is sklanderus and a wylfull person and wyll not be ordered but after his owne wyll. 1570-6 LAMBARDE Peramb. Kent 256 Some blinde and wilfull worshipper. 1579 LYLY Euphues 43 He that to day is not willyng, will to morrow bee more wilful. 1605 SHAKES. Lear II. iv. 305 To wilfull men, The injuries that they themselves procure, Must be their Schoole-Masters. 1773 MRS. CHAPONE Improv. Mind (1774) II. vi. 24 The smallest disappointment..will put wilful young people out of temper. 1821 SHELLEY Adonais xi, One..in her wilful grief would break Her bow and winged reeds. 1867 SWINBURNE Blake (1868) 190 These opinions, and stranger than these, he put forth in the cloudiest style, the wilfullest humour, and the stormiest excitement.

Comb. 1632 LITHGOW Trav. I. 34 What wilfull-hearted man can be so apt to believe, that our blessed Lady had such estimation of morter and stones?

†b. In good sense: Strong-willed, strongly persistent. Obs. rare.

   c1330 R. BRUNNE Chron. Wace (Rolls) 5663 A myghtful [v.r. wilfull] man was Maryus, Of fair speche merueillous. 1633 T. JAMES Voy. 92 Being now become wilfull in our indeauours.

   e. In nonce Comb. with wavy.

   1877 [see meal-drift s.v. MEAL n.¹ 3a].

†2. Having the will to do something; purposing, intending; wishful, desirous. Also said of the purpose or desire: Eager, earnest. Obs.

   1340 Ayenb. 162 Nou yziʒ ane yongne boryeis and ane newene kniʒt. Mochel habbeʃ þos of uele þoʒtes newe diuerses and wyluolle. þe borgyes wylneʃ to chapfari. þe knyʒt..wilneʃ corteyyses to
done an largeliche yeue. 1375 BARBOUR Bruce ii. 345 Arayt rycht awisely, Willful to do chewalry. 1390 GOWER Conf. I. 361 Whan that he..hadde his wilful pourpos wonne Of al this Erthe under the Sonne. c1400 Destr. Troy 725 [She] Wan þe worship & wilfull desire. a1500 Ratís Raving 2910 Wysmen ar wyffull to do grace, & mercyable in petwous cas. 1513 DOUGLAS Æneis xii. Prol. 270 On fut I sprent into my bayr sark, Wilfull for till compleyt my langsum wark. 1573-80 TUSSER Husb. (1878) 77 Be wilfull to kill and vnskilfull to store, And looke for no foison.

1.3. Willing; consenting; ready to comply with a request, desire, or requirement. Obs.

1375 BARBOUR Bruce xi. 266 The worthy kyng, quhen he has seyn His host..wilfull to fulfill His liking, with gud hert and will. 1456 SIR G. HAYE Law Arms (S.T.S.) 207 Gif thi lordis..defendis maliciously the ref, and is nocht wilfull to mak reformacioun and redress. c1460 Oseney Reg. 39 With þe wilfull consent of þe Kyng and of the Advocates of the same church. c1475 Partenay 1641 With A wilfull hert full gentilly rescueuyng..thys souerayn. 1590 SHAKES. Mids. N. v. i. 211 When Wals are so wilfull, to heare without warning. 1598 —— Merry W. iii. ii. 44, I will..divulge Page..for a secure and wilfull Acteon.

1.4. a. Proceeding from the will; done, undertaken, assumed, or undergone of one's own free will or choice; not compulsory or enforced: = VOLUNTARY A. 1b, 3. Obs.

c1374 CHAUCER Boeth. iii. pr. xi. (1868) 98, I ne trete nat heere now of weleful moeuynge of the sowle. c1380 Wyclif Wks. (1880) 14 Men þat haue..taken cristiis mekenesse and gret pouert bi wilful profession. c1400 Rule St. Benet (prose) 142 The secunde is, þat þe behous liue in wilfull powerte. c1470 HENRY Wallace x. 218 The gret debait in Wallace wit can waid, Betwix kyndnes and wyffull wow he maid. c1480 HENRYSON Fox & Wolf xxvi. (Bann.), Do wil–full pennisance here, and þe sall wend..to ioy withouttin end. 1531 TINDALE Expos. 1 John (1538) 37b, By wyffull keypnyng of the commandemt we be sure that we loue God. 1613 PURCHAS Pilgrimage II. ix. 131 He there died..through his wilfull want of bread and water. 1667 MILTON P.L. x. 1042 No more be mention’d then of violence Against our selves, and wilful barrenness, That cuts us off from hope. 1687 DRYDEN Hind & P. ii. 715 The silent stranger stood amazed to see Contempt of wealth, and wilful poverty.

b. Involving unfettered exercise of will; arbitrary; wilful empire, absolute sovereignty, autocracy. Obs.

1533 BELLENDEN Livy iii. xviii. (S.T.S.) II. 24 Thus sall It be clerely schewin..quhidder wilfull empire or public liberte be erast establisit be þir lawis.

5. Done on purpose or wittingly; purposed, deliberate, intentional; not accidental or casual. Chiefly, now always, in bad sense, of an action either evil in itself or blameworthy in the particular case; often (with colour of sense 1) implying 'perverse, obstinate'. Also transf. of the agent, as wilful murderer, one who commits wilful murder.

a1300 Cursor M. 9633 It was his aun..wilful sin þat did vs all fra him to tuin. 1526 Pilgr. Perf. (W. de W. 1531), Mortall synnes, & carnall consentes to the same, and wyffull delectacyons in synne. a1548 HALL Chron., Edu. V 9b, Wyffull murtherers, whom God commandeth to be taken from the aulter. 1583 STUBBES Anat. Abus. ii. (1882) 13 Although it be wilfull and purposed murther. 1591 SHAKES. i Hen. VI, iv. i. 142 How will their grudging stomackes be prouok'd To wilfull Disobedience, and Rebell? a1625 FLETCHER Nice Valour v. ii, Can there be wilfuller destruction? 1736 BAILEY (fol.) s.v. Waste, Wilfful Waste makes woful Want. 1781 COWPER Truth 20 Charge not..Your wilfful suicide on God's decree. 1844 THIRLWALL Greece lxvi. VIII. 387 Though his character has..been misrepresented through hostile prejudices and wilful calumny.
1883 D. C. MURRAY Hearts xxviii, On a charge of wilful and corrupt perjury.

B. as adv.

†1. = WILFULLY 4, 5. Obs.

a1300 Cursor M. 16429 To þaa wilful wod he taght þe lauerd es al-weldand. c1381 CHAUCER Parl. Foules 429 Dishobeyaunt or wilful negligent. ?1541 COVERDALE Confut. Standish (1547) dvij, Forgetfull what ye sayd afore, or els wilfull blind. 1592 KYD Sp. Trag. 1. iii, Could she [Fortune] heare, yet is she wilfull mad. 1595 SHAKES. John v. ii. 124 The Dolphin is too wilfull opposite And will not temporize with my intreaties. 1596 [see BLAME v. 6]. c1600 SHAKES. Sonn. li. 13 Since from thee going, he went wilfull slow. 1611 —— Wint. T. 1. ii. 255 If euer I was wilfull-negligent.

†2. Voluntarily, of free will: = WILFULLY 2.

c1380 WYCLIF Wks. (1880) 87 So þat whanne þei schulden ben most wilful pore & preche þe gospel of cristis pouert & his apostlis. 1450-1530 Myrr. our Ladye II. 161 The sete of dome where the wylfull powre shall sytte and deme wyth cryste.

C. as n. A wilful person; rarely, a wilful act.

1819 SCOTT Ivanhoe xxxi, Nay, then, if wilful will to water, wilful must drench. 1829 —— Anne of G. xvi, That is as much as to say, wilful will to it. 1875 TENNYSON Q. Mary III. v, One of those wicked wilfuls that men make, Nor shame to call it nature. 1885 Academy 14 Nov. 322/1 The unfortunates or the wilfuls who are under restraint.

Hence ✪wilfulhead (whence irreg. ✪wilfulheadness in same sense), ✪wilfulship, wilfulness; ✪wilfulling nonce-wd. [irreg. f. wilful + -ING2], a wilful act.

c1385 CHAUCER L.G.W. Prol. 355 Lyk tyrantauntis of lumbardyte That vsyn *wilfulhed & tyrannye. c1400 Pilgr. Sowle (Caxton 1483) iv. xii. 63 Only that thyng euer wyght may which he may by ryght and nought of wilful-hede.

1485 Coventry Leet Bk. 523 Yf any personne of obstinacie or *wilful-hednesse will withstand..the said..Rules.

1605 SYLVESTER Du Bartas II. iii. III. Law 610 No more bay with thy *wilfullings His wrath’s dread Torrent.

c1200 Trin. Coll. Hom. 205 þat oþer is *wilfulshipe and lichamliche lustes. c1280 MS. Douce 139 lf. 157 þe idel mon..þat þurstes of wilfulscipe and drinket sorwenesse.
wilfully, *adv.*

(‘wɪlflɪlɪ) Forms: see WILFUL a.¹ [Late OE. wilfullíce, f. *wilfull WILFUL a.¹ (cf. OE. carfull careful, carfullíce carefully): see -LY².]

†1. Willingly, readily, without reluctance; patiently, submissively (with suffer, etc.); gladly, ‘fain’ (with will vb. expressing desire: cf. 3). Obs.

a1100 Gloss. Ælfric's Colloq. 146 (Napier 225/1) Wolenter, wilful[lice]. a1240 Wohunge in O.E. Hom. I. 279 Alle þat cœl þor þei lue mesaise and pouere wilfulliche þolien. 1357 Lay Folks’ Catech. (L.) 1100 Men schuld wilfully fede pore hungry men and þrusty. 1375 Barbour Bruce II. 172 He serwyt ay lelely; And the tothir full wilfully...Rewardyt him weile his seruice. 1382 Wyclif Acts xxi. 17 Whanne we camen to Jerusalem, bretheren rescuyedens vs wilfully. c1460 Godstow Reg. 132 Mansel..willid & acceptid wilfulli þe gifte þat Raph bloet made to þe church. 1493 Festival (W. de W. 1515) 9 He must..suffre trybulacyon mekely, and do almes dedes wyfully. 1513 Douglas Æneis VIII. iii. 89 Wilfully I obey their command.

†b. With good will, heartily; ‘with a will’.

1375 Barbour Bruce II. 386 And with that word sa wilfully He dang on. Ibid. VIII. 462 Thai..prikit furth sa wilfull To vyn the ladis at thai saw pass. c1430 Lydg. Min. Poems (Percy Soc.) 7 First understand, and wilfully procede.

†2. Of one's own free will, of one's own accord, voluntarily. Rarely in reference to an inanimate thing: Spontaneously, 'of itself'. Obs.

c1000 in Haupt's Zeitschr. f. deutschen Alt. IX. 435/2 Sponte, wilful[lice]. 1357 Lay Folks' Catech. (L.) 1163 How moche more be þei cursyd of god; þat bynde hem-self wil-fully. 1377 Langl. P. Pl. B. xx. 48 Syth he þat wrouȝte al þe worlde was wilfulicly ned. c1400 Mandeville xvi. (1839) 176 Hem that sleen hem self wilfully, for love of here Ydole. a1425 tr. Arderne's Treal Fistula etc. 87 If þe puluis putte in go willfully out with þe dede fleisch þi nedez is wede sped. c1440 Gesta Rom. lxiv. 277 (Add. MS.) Do of thi clothes wilfully, or thou shalt agayn thi will. a1536 Tindale Exam. W. Thorpe in Foxe A. & M. (1563) 155/1 The night before y Chryst Jesu wold suffer wilfullye passion for mankinde. 1590 Spenser F.Q. ii. i. 15 She wilfully her sorrow did augment. 1642 Fuller Holy & Prof. St. v. xi. 403 Martyrs are to die willingly but not wilfully. 1705 Clarke Disc. Nat. Relig. (1706) 103 A Man is obliged not to depart willfully out of this Life, which is the general Station that God has appointed him.

†b. According to one's own will; at will, freely. Obs.

1340-70 Alex. & Dind. 604 But þe, folliche folk þour fals godus alle Wil-fully worshipen wiþ wordliche godus. c1350 Wil. Palerne 1782 To me tended þei nouȝt bot tok forþ here wey wilfullye to sum wildernesse. c1475 Partenay 327 Ouer all thys hors so went wyfullye here and there ouer all where at hys lust wold. c1600 Shakes. Sonn. lxxx. 8 But since your worth (wide as the Ocean is) The humble as the proudest saile doth beare, My sawsie barke (inferior farre to his) On your broad
maine doth wilfully appeare.

3. With desire, longingly. Obs. rare.

\[\text{c}1350\] Will. Palerne 3300 \text{pat quen & hire dou\text{\`e}ter & meliers pe schene wayteden out at a windowe wilfulli in-fere.}\ \text{c}1611\ \text{CHAPMAN Iliad VIII. 497 And all did wilfully expect, the silver-throned morne.}

4. Purposely, on purpose, by design, intentionally, deliberately. Chiefly, now always, in bad sense (cf. \textsc{wilful} a.\(^1\) 5); often with admixture of, or passing into, sense 5; occas. implying ‘maliciously’.

\[\text{c}1374\] Chaucer Troylus ii. 284 Yf \text{pat he wole take of it no cure, Whan \text{\`e}an it cometh, but wylfully it weyuen.}\ \text{c}350\ \text{LANGL. P. Pl. B. xvii. 285 How my\text{\`e}te he axe mercy, or any mercy hym helpe, \text{\`e}at wykkelich \& willefullich wolde mercy anynte?}\ \text{c}1400\ \text{Pilgr. Soule (Caxton) ii. li.}\ \(1859\) 54 He that wylfully deceyued hym self, who may hym releue of myschyef? \text{c}1477\ \text{Rolls of Parlt. vi. 184/2 Money so molten, beten or wilfully broken.}\ \text{c}1526\ \text{R. Whitford Martiloge 67b,}

The feest also of saynt Dace bysshop of mylen, y\(^i\) in his journey toward constantynople was wylfully lodged in a hous y\(^i\) was occupuyd w\(^i\) wycked spirytes. \text{c}1617\ \text{J. Taylor (Water P.) Three Weekes Observ. C3,}\ For those that set houses on fire wilfully, they are smoked to death. \text{c}1726\ \text{G. SHELVOCKE Voy. round World (1757) 242 Deaf to all I could say, and so wilfully insensible of the impendant destruction.}\ \text{c}1819\ \text{M. Scott Ivanhoe xliiv, His administration was wilfully careless, now too indulgent, and now allied to despotism.}\ \text{c}1849\ \text{Macaulay Hist. Eng. v. i. 545 Instead of the money came excuses..which ought to have opened the eyes of all who were not wilfully blind.}\ \text{c}1879\ \text{Cassell's Techn. Educ. VIII. 107 A mill containing 500 of his looms was wilfully burnt down.}\ \text{c}1911\ \text{Ac. 1 & 2 Geo. V c. 6 §1 If any person lawfully sworn as a witness..wilfully makes a statement..which he knows to be false.}

5. In a self-willed manner, perversely, obstinately, stubbornly.

\[\text{a}1586\ \text{Sidney Arcadia i. v. (1912) 33 The mother..beyng determinately (least I shoulde say of a great Lady, wilfully) bent to marrie her to Demagogras.}\ \text{Ibid. ii. xiii. 232 Now so evill could she conceale her fire, and so wilfully perseverance she in it, that [etc.].}\ \text{c}1595\ \text{Shakes, John III. i. 142, I..demand Why thou against the Church, our holy Mother, So wilfully dost spurne.}\ \text{c}1596\ \text{Spenser State Irel. Wks. (Globe) 654/1 Surely of such desperat persons as will wilfully followe the course of theyr owne follye, there is noe compassion to be had.}\ \text{a}1694\ \text{Tillotson Serm., Luke xii. 47, 48 Wks. 1717 I. 425 He that first acknowledgeth him for his Prince, and then affronts him, deserves to be prosecuted with the utmost severity, because he did it wilfully, and in meer contempt.}\ \text{c}1726$\text{-\[see 4\].}