

MISS IN HER TEENS.

A F A R C E,

IN TWO ACTS.

WRITTEN BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES ROYAL DRURY LANE AND
COVENT GARDEN.

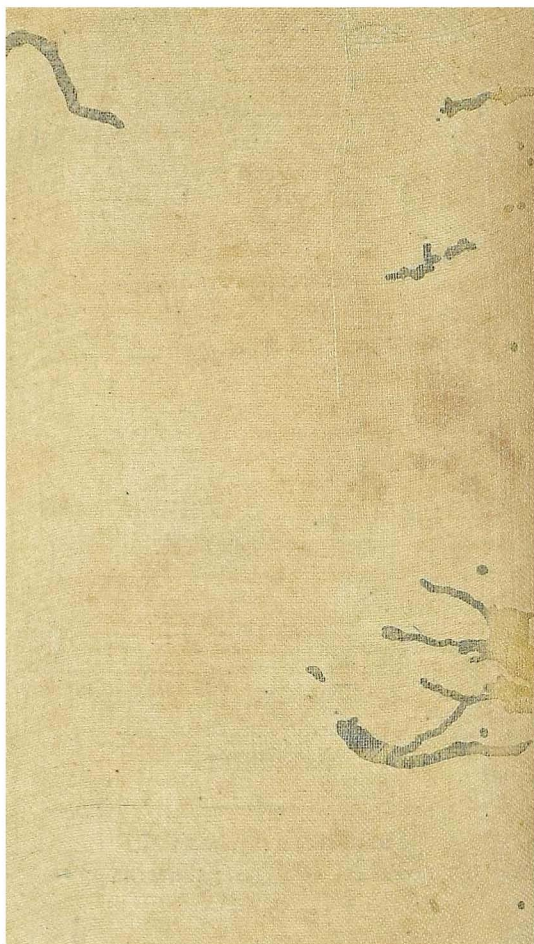
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52



MISS IN HER TEENS

Time has silvered over the heads of the few, who can remember GARRICK and WOODWARD in the characters of Fribble and Flash in this excellent farce, which came from the pen of our English Roscius, and was first performed at Covent Garden Theatre; a year or two before the present century, now hastening towards its close, had attained its fifth stage.

This very laughable production will ever retain its place among the list of acting pieces; as its satire is levelled against objects which have disgraced the circles of society in every age.

Lily's Male still remain to flatter around a lady's toilet, and descant on the properties of its various articles; Braggadocio, huffers still infest our public places, to the annoyance of assemblies they have no pretensions to mix with, and from which they would be driven with contempt and punishment, were their real characters fairly developed.

To expose the worthless and assuming, and to caution the credulous and unsuspecting, is an employment honourable to genius; and the trade which favour an end so salutary to the welfare and safety of society, cannot be too often brought forward on the stage of Fancy, where, as in a glass, the world may view that of Life, if conducted upon those principles, which ought to be the study of every Manager, whether presiding over a Theatre Royal, or conducting the wooden train of a Puppet-show.

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

Captain Loveit,	-	MR. WHITFIELD
Fribble,	-	MR. R. PALMER
Flash,	-	MR. BARRYMORE
Puff,	-	MR. SUETT
Jasper,	-	MR. PHILLIMORE.

Women.

Miss Biddy,	-	MISS DE CAMP
Tag,	-	MRS. EDWARDS.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Captain Loveit,	-	MR. MACREARY
Fribble,	-	MR. BERNERD
Flash,	-	MR. DAVIES
Puff,	-	MR. POWELL
Jasper,	-	MR. THOMSON.

Women.

Miss Biddy,	-	MISS GRISIT
Tag,	-	MISS STUART.

P R O L O G U E.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

TOO long has Farce, neglecting Nature's laws,
 Debas'd the stage, and wrong'd the comic cause;
 To raise a laugh has been her sole pretence,
 Tho' dearly purchas'd at the price of sense.
 This child of Folly gain'd increase with time;
 Fit for the place, succeeded Pantomime;
 Reviv'd her honours, join'd her motley band,
 And Song and low Conceit o'er-ran the land.

More gen'rous views inform our author's breast;
 From real life his characters are drest.

He seeks to trace the passions of mankind;
 And while he spares the person, paints the mind.

In pleasing contrast he attempts to show
 The vap'ring bully, and the fribbling beau:
 Cowards alike: that, full of martial airs,
 And ~~as~~ tender as the silks he wears.

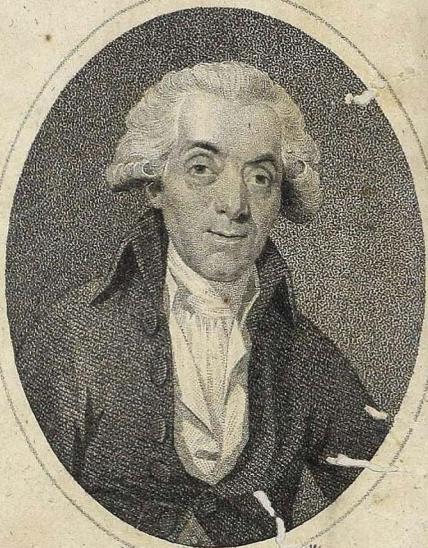
Proud to dissent, not anxious for renown,
 Oft has the hard essay'd to please the Town.

Your full applause out-paid his little art:
 He boasts no merit, but a grateful heart.
 Pronounce your doom, he'll patiently submit,
 Ye sovereign judges of all works of wit!

To you the ore is brought, a lifeless mass ;
You give the stamp, and then the coin may pass.
Now whether judgment prompt you to forgive,
Whether you bid this trifling offspring live,
Or with a frown should send the sickly thing
To sleep whole ages under Dulness' wing ;
To your known candour we will always trust,
You never were, nor can you be, unjust.



PARSONS'S MINOR THEATRE.



Engraved by R. Ridley from a Picture by J. N. de.

MR PARSONS.

PARSONS'S MINOR THEATRE.



M^{RS}. WELLS.



MISS IN HER TEENS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Street.

Enter Captain LOVEIT and PUFF.

Captain.

THIS is the place we were directed to; and now, Puff, if I can get no intelligence of her, what will become of me?

Puff. And me too, Sir—You must consider I am a marry'd man, and can't bear fatigue as I have done.—But pray, Sir, why did you leave the army so suddenly, and not give me time to fill my knapsack with common necessaries? Half a dozen shirts, and your regimentals, are my whole cargo.

Capt. I was wild to get away; and as soon as I obtained my leave of absence, I thought every moment an age till I return'd to the place where I first saw this young, charming, innocent, bewitching creature.

Puff. With fifteen thousand pounds for her fortune—strong motives, I must confess.——
now, Sir, as you are pleased to say you must depend upon my care and abilities in this affair, I think I have a just right to be acquainted with the particulars of your passion, that I may be the better enabled to serve you.

Capt. You shall have 'em.——' *Wh.* I left the university, which is now seven months since, my father, who loves his money better than his son, and would not settle a farthing upon me—

Puff. Mine did so by me, Sir.——

Capt. Purchas'd me a pair of colours at my own request; but before I join'd the regiment, which was going abroad, I took a ramble into the country with a fellow collegian, to see a relation of his who lived in Berkshire.——

Puff. ——A party of pleasure, I suppose.

Capt. During a short stay there, I came acquainted with this young creature: she was just come from the boarding-school; and tho' she had all the simplicity of her age, and the country, yet it was mix'd with such sensible vivacity, that I took fire at once.——

Puff. I was tinder myself at your age. But pray, Sir, did you take fire before you knew of her fortune?

Capt. Before, upon my honour.

Puff. Folly and constitution—But on, Sir.

Capt. I was introduced to the family by the name of *Rhodophil* (for so my companion and I had settled

it) : at the end of three weeks I was obliged to attend the call of honour in Flanders ; but——

Puff. Your parting, to be sure, was heart-breaking.

Capt. I feel it at this instant. We vow'd eternal constancy, and I promis'd to take the first opportunity of returning to her. I did so : but we found the house was shut up ; and all the information, you know, that we could get from the neighbouring cottage was, that Miss and her aunt were remov'd to town, and liv'd somewhere near this part of it.

Puff. And now we are got to the place of action, propose your plan of operation.'

Capt. My father lives in the next street, so I must decamp immediately for fear of discoveries : you are not known to be my servant ; go make what inquiries you can in the neighbourhood, and I shall wait at the inn for your intelligence.

Puff. I'll patrol hereabouts, and examine all that pass ; but I've forgot the word, Sir—Miss Biddy—

Capt. Bellair——

Puff. A young lady of wit, beauty, and fifteen thousand pounds fortune—But Sir—

Capt. What do you say, Puff ?

Puff. If your honour pleases to consider that I had a wife in town whom I left somewhat abruptly half a-year ago, you'll think it, I believe, but decent to make some inquiry after her first ; to be sure, it would be some small consolation to me to know whether the poor woman is living, or has made away with herself,

or——

Capt. Prithce don't distract me ; a moment's delay is of the utmost consequence ; I must insist upon an immediate compliance with my commands.

[*Exit Captain.*]

Puff. The devil's in these fiery young fellows, they think of nobody's wants but their own. He does not consider that I am flesh and blood as well as himself. However, I may kill two birds at once ; for I shan't be surprized if I meet my lady walking the streets—But, who have we here ? Sure I should know that face.

Enter JASPER from a house.

Who's that ? my old acquaintance Jasper !

Jas. What, Puff ! are you here ?

Puff. My dear friend ! [*kisses him.*] Well, and now Jasper, still easy and happy ! *Toujours le meme !* What intrigues now ? What girls have you ruin'd, and what cuckolds made, since you and I used to beat up together, eh ?

Jas. Faith, business has been very brisk during the war ; men are scarce, you know : not that I can say I ever wanted amusement in the worst of times—But hark ye, Puff——

Puff. Not a word aloud, I am incognito.

Jas. Why, faith, I should not have known you, if you had not spoke first ; you seem to be a little dishabille too, as well as incognito. Whom do you honour with your service now ? Are you from the wars ?

Puff. Piping hot, I assure you ; fire and smoke

will tarnish: a man that will go into such service as I have been in, will find his cloaths the worse for the wear, take my word for it. But how is it with you, friend Jasper? What, you still serve, I see? you live at that house, I suppose?

Jas. I don't absolutely live, but I am most of my time here; I have, within these two month, entered into the service of an old gentleman, who hired a reputable servant, and dressed him as you see, because he has taken it into his head to fall in love.

Puff. False appetite, and second childhood! But, prithee, what's the object of his passion?

Jas. No less than a virgin of sixteen, I assure you.

Puff. Oh the toothless old dotard!

Jas. And he mumbles and plays with her till his mouth waters; then he chuckles till he cries, and calls her his Bid and his Bidsy; and is so foolishly fond——

Puff. Bidsy! what's that?—

Jas. —— Her name is Biddy.

Puff. Biddy! What, Miss Biddy Bellair?

Jas. —— The same——

Puff. I have no luck, to be sure. (*Aside.*)—Oh, I have heard of her; she's of a pretty good family, and has some fortune, I know. But are things settled? is the marriage fix'd?

Jas. Not absolutely; the girl, I believe, detests him; but her aunt, a very good prudent old lady, has given her consent, if he can gain her niece's:—how it will end, I can't tell—but I'm hot upon't myself.

Puff.—The devil! not marriage, I hope?

Jas. That is not yet determined.

Puff. Who is the lady, pray?

Jas. A maid in the same family, a woman of honour, I assure you. She has one husband already, a scoundrel sort of a fellow, that has run away from her, and listed for a soldier; so, towards the end of the campaign, she hopes to have a certificate—he's knock'd o' th' head: if not, I suppose, we shall settle matters another way.

Puff. Well, speed the plough—But hark ye, consummate without the certificate if you can—keep your neck out of the collar—do—I have wore it these two years, and damnably gall'd I am—

Jas. I'll take your advice; but I must run away to my master, who will be impatient for an answer to his message, which I have just deliver'd to the young lady: so, dear Mr. Puff, I am your most obedient humble servant.

Puff. And I must to our agent's for my arrears: if you have an hour to spare, you'll hear of me at George's, or the Tilt-yard—in *revoir*, as we say abroad. (*Exit Jasper.*) Thus we are as civil and as false as our betters: Jasper and I were always the beau monde exactly; we ever hated one another heartily, yet always kiss and shake hands—But now to my master with a headful of news, and a heartful of joy.

[*Going, starts.*]

Angels and ministers of grate defend me!
It can't be! By heav'n's, it is, that freerful porcupine, my wife! I can't stand it; what shall I do?—
I'll try to avoid her.

Enter TAG.

Tag. It must be he! I'll swear to the rogue at a mile's distance:—he either has not seen me, or won't know me. If I can keep my temper, I'll try him farther.

Puff. I sweat—I tremble—She comes upon me!

Tag. Pray, good Sir, if I may be so bold—

Puff. I have nothing for you, good woman; don't trouble me.

Tag. If your honour pleases to look this way—

Puff. The kingdom is over-run with beggars. I suppose the last I gave to has sent this: but I have no more loose silver about me; so, prithee, woman, don't disturb me.

Tag. I can hold no longer. Oh you villain, you! where have you been, scoundrel? Do you know me now, varlet?

[Seizes him.]

Puff. Here, watch, watch! Zounds, I shall have my pockets pick'd.

Tag. Own me this minute, hang-dog, and confess every thing; or, by the rage of an injured woman, I'll raise the neighbourhood, throttle you, and send you to Newgate.

Puff. Amazement! what, my own dear Tag!—Come to my arms, and let me press you to my heart, that pants for thee, and only thee, my true and lawful wife.—Now my stars have overpaid me for the fatigue and dangers of the field. I have wander'd about like Achilles in search of faithful Penelope; and the gods have brought me to this happy spot.

[Embraces her.]

Tag. The fellow's crackt for certain! Leave your bombastic stuff, and tell me, rascal, why you left me, and where you have been these six months, heh!

Puff. We'll reserve my adventures for our happy winter evenings—I shall only tell you now, that my heart beat so strong in my country's cause, and being instigated either by honour or the devil, (I can't tell which), I set out for Flanders to gather laurels, and lay 'em at thy feet.

Tag. You left me to starve, villain, and beg my bread, you did so.

Puff. I left you too hastily, I must confess; and often has my conscience stung me for it.—I am got into an officer's service; have been in several actions, gained some credit by my behaviour, and am now returned with my master to indulge the gentler passions.

Tag. Don't think to fob me off with this nonsensical talk. What have you brought me home besides?

Puff. Honour, and immoderate love.

Tag. I could tear your eyes out.

Puff. Temperance, or I walk off.

Tag. Temperance, traitor; temperance! What can you say for yourself: Leave me to the wide world.

Puff. Well, I have been in the world too, han't I? What would the woman have?

Tag. Reduce me to the necessity of going to service. [Cries.

Puff. Why, I'm in service too, your lord and master, an't I, you saucy jade you?—Come, where

dost live, hereabout? Hast got good vails? Dost go to market? Come, give me a kiss, darling, and tell me where I shall pay my duty to thee.

Tag. Why, there I live; at that house.

[Pointing to the house Jasper came out of.]

Puff. What! there! that house?

Tag. Yes, there; that house.

Puff. Huzza! We're made for ever, you slut you; huzza! Every thing conspires this day to make me happy.—Prepare for an inundation of joy! My master is in love with your Miss Biddy over head and ears, and she with him. I know she is courted by some old fumbler, and her aunt is not against the match; but now we are come, the town will be reliev'd, and the governor brought over: in plain English, our fortune is made; my master must marry the lady, and the old gentleman may go to the devil.

Tag. Heyday! what's all this?

Puff. Say no more; the dice are thrown doublets for us: away to your young mistress, while I run to my master. Tell her Rhodophil, Rhodophil will be with her immediately; then if her blood does not mount to her face like quicksilver in a weather-glass, and point to extreme hot, believe the whole a lie, and your husband no politician.

Tag. This is news indeed! I have had the place but a little while, and have not quite got into the secrets of the family: but part of your story is true; and if you bring your master, and Miss is willing, I warrant we'll be too hard for the old folks.

Puff. I'll about it straight.——But hold, Tag, I had forgot——Pray, how does Mr. Jasper do?

Tag. Mr. Jasper!——What do you mean? I—I—I—

Puff. What! out of countenance, child? O fie! speak plain my dear——And the certificate; when comes that, heh, love?

Tag. He has sold himself and turn'd conjuror, or he could never have known it. *Aside.*

Puff. Are not you a jade?—are not you a Jezebel!—arn't you a——

Tag. O ho, temperance, or I walk off.—

Puff. I know I am not finish'd yet, and so I am easy! but more thanks to my fortune than your virtue, madam.

Bid. (within.) Tag, Tag! where are you, Tag?

Tag. Coming, Madam——My lady calls—away to your master, and I'll prepare his reception within.

Puff. Shall I bring the certificate with me? [*Exit.*

Tag. Go you graceless rogue, you richly deserve it. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *changes to a chamber.*

Enter AUNT and TAG.

Aunt. Who was that man you were talking^a to, Tag?

Tag. A cousin of mine, Madam, that brought me some news from my aunt in the country.

Aunt. Where's my niece? Why are you not with her?

Tag. She bid me leave her alone.—She's so ma-

‘ lanchely, Madam, I don’t know what’s come to her
‘ of late——

‘ *Aunt.* The thoughtfulness that is natural upon
‘ the approach of matrimony, generally occasions a
‘ decent concern.

‘ *Tag.* And do you think, Madam, a husband of
‘ three-score and five——

‘ *Aunt.* Hold, Tag, he protests to me he is but
‘ five and fifty.

‘ *Tag.* He is a rogue, Madam; and an old rogue,
‘ which is the worst of rogues.—

‘ *Aunt.* Alas, youth, or age, ’tis all one to her:
‘ she is all simplicity, without experience. I would
‘ not force her inclinations; but she’s so innocent
‘ she won’t know the difference——

‘ *Tag.* Innocent! ne’er trust to that, Madam. I
‘ was innocent myself once; but *live* and *learn* is an
‘ old saying, and a true one.—I believe, Madam,
‘ nobody is more innocent than yourself, and a good
‘ maid you are to be sure; but though you *really*
‘ don’t know the difference, yet you can *fancy* it, I
‘ warrant you.

‘ *Aunt.* I should prefer a large jointure to a small
‘ one, and that’s all; but ’tis impossible that Biddy
‘ should have desires; she’s but newly come out of
‘ the country, and just turn’d of sixteen.

‘ *Tag.* That’s a ticklish age, Madam. I have
‘ observ’d she does not eat, nor she does not sleep;
‘ she sighs and she cries, and she loves moonlight:
‘ these, I take it, are very strong symptoms.

‘ *Aunt.* They are very unaccountable, I must con-

‘fess; but you talk from a depraved mind, Tag;
‘hers is simple and untainted.

‘*Tag.* She’ll make him a cuckold though, for all
‘that, if you force her to marry him.

‘*Aunt.* You shock me, Tag, with your coarse ex-
‘pressions. I tell you, her chastity will be her
‘guard, let her husband be what he will.

‘*Tag.* Chastity! never trust to that, *Madam*:
‘get her a husband that’s fit for her, and I’ll be
‘bound for her virtue; but with such a one as Sir
‘Simon, I’m a rogue if I’d answer for my own.

‘*Aunt.* Well, Tag, the child shall never have
‘reason to repent of my severity. I was going be-
‘fore to my lawyer’s to speak about the articles of
‘marriage; I will now put a stop to ‘em for some
‘time, till we can make farther discoveries.

‘*Tag.* Heav’n will bless you for your goodness.—
‘Look where the poor bird comes, quite mop’d and
‘melancholy. I’ll set my pump to work, and draw
‘something from her before your return, I warrant
‘you. (*Exit Aunt.*) There goes a miracle: she has
‘neither pride, envy, or ill-nature; and yet is near
‘sixty, and a virgin.’

Enter BIDDY.

Bid. How unfortunate a poor girl am I! dare not
tell my secret to any body; and if I don’t, I’m un-
done—Heigh ho! (*Sighs.*) ‘Pray, Tag, is my aunt
‘gone to her lawyer about me?—Heigh ho!’

Tag. What’s that sigh for, my dear young mis-
tress?

Bid. I did not sigh, not I—— [Sighs.

Tag. Nay, never gulp 'em down; they are the worst things you can swallow. There's something in that little heart of yours, that swells it, and puffs it, and will burst it at last, if you don't give it vent.

Bid. What would you have me tell you? [Sighs.

Tag. Come, come, you are afraid I'll betray you: but you had as good speak; I may do you some service you little think of.

Bid. It is not in your power, Tag, to give me what I want. [Sighs.

Tag. Not directly perhaps; but I may be the means of helping you to it. As, for example—if you should not like to marry the old man your aunt designs for you, one may find a way to break——

Bid. His neck, Tag?

Tag. Or the match; either will do, child.

Bid. I don't care which indeed, so I was clear of him——I don't think I'm fit to be marry'd.

Tag. To him you mean—You have no objection to marriage, but the man; and I applaud you for it. But come, courage, Miss; never keep it in; out with it all.

Bid. If you'll ask me any questions, I'll answer 'em; but I can't tell you any thing of myself; I shall blush if I do.

Tag. Well, then—in the first place, pray tell me, Miss Biddy Bellair, if you don't like somebody better than old Sir Simon Loveit?

Bid. Heigh ho!

Tag. What's heigh ho, Miss?

Bid. When I say heigh ho, it means yes.

Tag. Very well: and this somebody is a young handsome fellow?

Bid. Heigh ho!

Tag. And if you were once his, you'd be as merry as the best of us?

Bid. Heigh ho!

Tag. So far so good! and since I have got you to wet your feet, souse over head at once, and the pain will be over.

Bid. There—then (*A long sigh.*) Now help me out, *Tag*, as fast as you can.

Tag. When did you hear from your gallant?

Bid. Never since he went to the army.

Tag. How so?

Bid. I was afraid the letters would fall into my aunt's hands, so I would not let him write to me: but I had a better reason then.

Tag. Pray let's hear that too.

Bid. Why, I thought if I should write to him, and promise him to love nobody else, and should afterwards change my mind, he might think I was inconstant, and call me a coquette.

Tag. What a simple innocent it is! (*Aside.*) And have you chang'd your mind, Miss?

Bid. No indeed, *Tag*; I love him the best of any of 'em.

Tag. Of any of 'em? Why, have you any more?

Bid. Pray, don't ask me.

Tag. Nay, Miss, if you only trust me by halves, you can't expect——

Bid. I will trust you with every thing.—When I parted with him, I grew melancholy; so, in order to divert me, I have let two others court me till he return again.

Tag. Is that all, my dear? Mighty simple, indeed!

[*Aside.*

Bid. One of 'em is a fine blust'ring man, and so call'd Captain *Flash*; he's always talking of fighting and wars: he thinks he's sure of me; but I shall baulk him: we shall see him this afternoon, for he press'd strongly to come; and I have given him leave, while my aunt's taking her afternoon's nap.

Tag. And who is the other, pray?

Bid. Quite another sort of a man. He speaks like a lady for all the world, and never swears as Mr. *Flash* does, but wears nice white gloves, and tells me what ribbons become my complexion, where to stick my patches, who is the best milliner, where they sell the best tea, and which is the best wash for the face, and the best paste for the hands; he is always playing with my fan, and showing his teeth; and whenever I speak, he pats me—so—and cries, The devil take me, Miss Biddy, but you'll be my perdition, ha, ha, ha!

Tag. Oh the pretty creature! And what do you call him, pray?

Bid. His name's *Fribble*: you shall see him too; for by mistake I appointed 'em at the same time: but you must help me out with 'em.

Tag. And suppose your favourite should come too—

Bid. I should not care what become of the others.

Tag. What's his name?

Bid. It begins with an R—h—o—

Tag. I'll be hang'd if it is not Rhodophil.

Bid. I am frighten'd at you! You're a witch, Tag.

Tag. I am so; and I can tell your fortune too. Look me in the face. The gentleman you love most in the world, will be at our house this afternoon:—he arrived from the army this morning, and dies till he sees you.

Bid. Is he come Tag? Don't joke with me.

Tag. Not to keep you longer in suspense, you must know, the servant of your Strephon, by some unaccountable fate or other, is my lord and master: he has just been with me, told me of his master's arrival and impatience——

Bid. Oh, my dear, dear Tag, you have put me out of my wits—I am all over in a flutter.—I shall leap out of my skin—I don't know what to do with myself.—Is he come, Tag?—I am ready to faint—I'd give the world I had put on my pink and silver robings to-day.

Tag. I assure you, Miss, you look charmingly.

Bid. Do I indeed though? I'll put a little patch under my left eye, and powder my hair immediately.

Tag. We'll go to-dinner first, and then I'll assist you.

Bid. Dinner! I can't eat a morsel—I don't know what's the matter with me—my ears tingle, my heart beats, my face flushes, and I tremble every

joint of me.——I must run in and look at myself in the glass this moment.

Tag: Yes she has it, and deeply too: ‘This is no
“ ‘hypocrisy——

‘Not art, but Nature, now, performs her part,

“ ‘And ev’ry word’s the language of the heart.”

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Scene continues.

Enter Captain LOVEIT, BIDDY, TAG, and PUFF.

Captain Loveit.

TO find you still constant, and to arrive at such a critical juncture, is the height of fortune and happiness.

Bid. Nothing shall force me from you ;—and if I am secure of your affections——

Puff. I'll be bound for him, Madam, and give you any security you can ask.

Tag. Every thing goes on to our wish, Sir.—I just now had a second conference with my old lady ; and she was so convinc'd by my arguments, that she return'd instantly to the lawyer to forbid the drawing out of any writings at all ; and she is determin'd never to thwart Miss's inclinations, and left it to us to give the old gentleman his discharge at the next visit.

Capt. Shall I undertake the old dragon ?

Tag. If we have occasion for help, we shall call for you.

Bid. I expect him every moment ;—therefore I'll tell you what, Rodophil, you and your man shall be lock'd up in my bed-chamber till we have settled matters with the old gentleman.

Capt. Do what you please with me.

Bid. You must not be impatient though.

Capt. I can undergo any thing with such a reward in view. One kiss, and I'll be quite resign'd—And now show me the way. [*Exeunt.*

Tag. Come, sirrah, when I have got you under lock and key, I shall bring you to reason.

Puff. Are your wedding-cloaths ready, my dove?—The certificate's come.

Tag. Go follow your captain, sirrah—march—You may thank Heav'n I had patience to stay so long. [*Exeunt Tag and Puff.*

Re-enter BIDDY.

Bid. I was very much alarm'd for fear my two gallants should come in upon us unawares; we should have had sad work if they had.—I find I love Rhodophil vastly; for though my other sparks flatter me more, I can't abide the thoughts of 'em now—I have business upon my hands enough to turn my little head—but, egad, my heart's good, and a fig for dangers.—Let me see—what shall I do with my two gallants? I must at least part with 'em decently. Suppose I set 'em together by the ears?—The luckiest thought in the world:—For if they won't quarrel (as I believe they won't), I can break with them for cowards, and very justly dismiss 'em my service: and if they will fight, and one of 'em should be killed, the other will certainly be hang'd or run away;—and so I shall very hand-

somely get rid of both.—I am glad I have settled it so purely.

Enter TAG.

Well, Tag, are they safe?

Tag. I think so—the door's double lock'd, and I have the key in my pocket.

Bid. That's pure; but have you given them any thing to divert 'em?

Tag. I have given the Captain one of your old gloves to mumble; but my Strephon is diverting himself with the more substantial comforts of a cold venison pasty.

Bid. What shall we do with the next that comes?

Tag. If Mr. Fribble comes first, I'll clap him up into my lady's store-room. I suppose he is a great maker of marmalade himself, and will have an opportunity of making some critical remarks upon our pastry and sweetmeats.

Bid. When one of 'em comes, do you go and watch for the other; and as soon as you see him run in to us, and pretend it is my aunt, and so we shall have an excuse to lock him up till we want him.

Tag. You may depend upon me—Here is one of 'em.

Enter FRIBBLE.

Bid. Mr. Fribble, your servant—

Frib. Miss Biddy, your slave—I hope I have not come upon you abruptly.—I should have

waited upon you sooner; but an accident happen'd that discomposed me so, that I was oblig'd to go home again to take drops.

Bid. Indeed you don't look well, Sir—Go, Tag, and do as I bid you.

Tag. I will, Madam. [Exit.

Bid. I have set my maid to watch my aunt, that we mayn't be surprised by her.

Frib. Your prudence is equal to your beauty, Miss; and I hope your permitting me to kiss your hands, will be no impeachment to your understanding.

Bid. I hate the sight of him. (*Aside.*) I was afraid I should not have had the pleasure of seeing you. Pray, let me know what accident you met with, and what's the matter with your hand:—I shan't be easy till I know.

Frib. Well, I vow, Miss Biddy, you're a good creeter—I'll endeavour to muster up what little spirits I have, and tell you the whole affair.—Hem! —But first, you must give me leave to make you a present of a small pot of my lip-salve. My servant made it this morning: the ingredients are innocent, I assure you; nothing but the best virgin wax, conserve of roses, and lily-of-the-valley water.

Bid. I thank you, Sir, but my lips are generally red; and when they an't, I bite 'em.

Frib. I bite my own sometimes, to pout 'em a little; but this will give them a softness, colour, and

an agreeable *moister*.—Thus let me make an humble offering at that shrine, where I have already sacrificed my heart. [Kneels, and gives the pot.

Bid. Upon my word, that's very prettily express'd; you are positively the best company in the world—I wish he was out of the house. [Aside.

Frib. But to return to my accident, and the reason why my hand is in this condition—I beg you'll excuse the appearance of it, and be satisfy'd, that nothing but mere necessity could have forc'd me to appear thus muffled before you.

Bid. I am very willing to excuse any misfortune that happens to you, Sir. [Curtains.

Frib. You are vastly good, indeed—Thus it was—Hem!—You must know, Miss, there is not an animal in the creation I have so great an aversion to, as those hackney-coach fellows—As I was coming out of my lodgings,—says one of 'em to me, Would your honour have a coach?—No, man, said I, not now, (with all the civility imaginable.)—I'll carry you and your Doll too, said he, Miss Margery, for the same price—Upon which the masculine beasts about us fell a-laughing. Then I turn'd round in a great passion—Curse me, says I, fellow, but I'll trounce thee.—And as I was holding out my hand in a threatening *poster*—thus—he makes a cut at me with his whip, and striking me over the nail of my little finger, it gave me such exquisite *torter*, that I fainted away—and while I was in this condition, the mob pick'd my pocket

of my purse, my scissars, my Mocco smelling bottle, and my husswife.

Bid. I shall laugh in his face. (*Aside.*) I am afraid you are in great pain. Pray sit down, Mr. Fribble: but I hope your hand is in no danger?

[*They sit.*]

Frib. Not in the least, Ma'am; pray, don't be apprehensive.—A milk-poultice, and a gentle sweat to-night, with a little manna in the morning, I am confident will relieve me entirely.

Bid. But, pray, Mr. Fribble, do you make use of a husswife.

Frib. I can't do without it, Ma'am: there is a club of us, all young bachelors, the sweetest society in the world; and we meet three times a week at each other's lodgings, where we drink tea, hear the chat of the day, invent fashions for the ladies, make models of 'em, and cut out patterns in paper. We were the first inventors of knotting; and this fringe is the original produce and joint labour of our little community.

Bid. And who are your pretty set, pray?

Frib. There's Phil. Whiffle, Jacky Wagtail, my lord Trip, Billy Dimple, Sir Dilberry Diddle, and your humble—

Bid. What a sweet collection of happy creatures!

Frib. Indeed and so we are, Miss—But a prodigious fracas disconcerted us some time ago at Billy Dimple's—three drunken naughty women of the town burst into our club-room, curs'd us all, threw down the china, broke six looking-glasses,

scalded us with the slop-bason, and scratch'd poor Phil. Whiffle's cheek in such a manner, that he has kept his bed these three weeks.

Bid. Indeed, Mr. Fribble, I think all our sex have great reason to be angry; for if you are so happy now you are batchelors, the ladies may wish and sigh to very little purpose.

Frib. You are mistaken, I assure you; I am prodigiously rallied about my passion for you, I can tell you that, and am looked upon as lost to our society already. He, he, he!

Bid. Pray, Mr. Fribble, now you have gone so far, don't think me impudent if I long to know how you intend to use the lady who has been honour'd with your affections?

Frib. Not as most other wives are used, I assure you: all the domestic business will be taken off her hands; I shall make the tea, comb the dogs, and dress the children myself; so that, tho' I'm a commoner, Mrs. Fribble will lead the life of a woman of quality; for she will have nothing to do but lie in bed, play at cards, and scold the servants.

Bid. What a happy creature she must be!

Frib. Do you really think so? Then, pray, let me have a little *serous* talk with you—Tho' my passion is not of long standing, I hope the sincerity of intentions—

Bid. Ha, ha, ha!

Frib. Go you wild thing. (*Pats her.*) The devil take me but there is no talking to you—How can you use me in this barbarous manner! if I had the con-

stitution of an alderman, it would sink under my sufferings——*hoomam nater* can't support it.

Bid. Why, what would you do with me, Mr. Fribble?

Frib. Well, I vow I'll beat you if you talk so—— Don't look at me in that manner—Flesh and blood can't bear it—I could—but I won't grow indecent—

Bid. But pray Sir, where are the verses you were to write upon me? I find, if a young lady depends too much upon such fine gentlemen as you, she'll certainly be disappointed.

Frib. I vow, the flutter I was put into this afternoon has quite turn'd my senses——here they are, tho'——and I believe you'll like 'em.

Bid. There can be no doubt of it. [Curtseys.

Frib. I protest, Miss, I don't like that curtsy—Look at me, and always rise in this manner. (*Shows her.*) But, my dear *creeter*, who put on your cap to-day? They have made a fright of you, and it is as yellow as old lady *Crowfoot's* neck.—When we are settled, I'll dress your head myself.

Bid. Pray read the verses to me Mr. Fribble,

Frib. I obey——Hem!——William Fribble, Esq. to Miss Biddy Bellair——greeting.

No ice so hard, so cold as I,
Till warm'd and soften'd by your eye;
And now my heart dissolves away
In dreams by night, in sighs by day.
No brutal passion fires my breast,
Which loaths the object when possess'd;
But one of harmless, gentle kind,
Whose joys are center'd—in the mind : 69

Then take with me love's better part,
His downy wing, but not his dart.
How do you like 'em?

Bid. Ha, ha, ha! I swear they are very pretty—but I don't quite understand 'em.

Frib. These light pieces are never so well understood in reading as singing; I have set 'em myself and will endeavour to give 'em you: *La—la—I* have an abominable cold, and can't sing a note; however, the tune's nothing, the manner's all.

No ice so hard, &c. (*Sings.*)

Enter TAG, running.

Tag. Oh, Madam, Madam!

Frib. What's the matter?

Tag. Your aunt, your aunt, your aunt, Madam!

Bid. Oh! for heav'n's sake hide Mr. Fribble, or we are ruin'd. Put him into the store-room this moment.

Frib. Is it a damp place, Mrs. Tag? The floor is boarded, I hope?

Tag. Indeed it is not, Sir.

Frib. What shall I do? I shall certainly catch my death! Where's my cambric handkerchief, and my salts? I shall certainly have my hystericks!

[*Runs in with Tag.*]

Bid. In, in, in———So now let the other come as soon as he will; I did not care if I had twenty of 'em, so they would but come one after another.

Re-enter TAG.

Was my aunt coming?

' *Tag.* No, 'twas Mr. Flash, I suppose by the length of his stride, and the cock of his hat. He'll be here this minute——What shall we do with him?

' *Bid.* I'll manage him, I warrant you, and try his courage; be sure you are ready to second me—we shall have pure sport.

' *Tag.* Hush! here he comes.'

Enter FLASH singing.

' *Flash.* Well, my blossom, here am I! What hopes for a poor dog, ch?—How! the maid here? then I've lost the town, demmee! Not a shilling to bribe the governor; she'll spring a mine, and I shall be blown to the devil.

Bid. Don't be asham'd, Mr. Flash: I have told Tag the whole affair; and she's my friend, I can assure you.

Flash. Is she? then she won't be mine I am certain. (*Aside.*) Well, Mrs. Tag, you know, I suppose, what is to be done. This young lady and I have contracted ourselves; and so, if you please to stand bride-maid, why we'll fix the wedding-day directly.

Tag. The wedding-day, Sir?

Flash. The wedding-day, Sir! Ay, Sir! the wedding day, Sir! What have you to say to that, Sir?

Bid. My dear Captain Flash, don't make such a noise, you'll wake my aunt.

Flash. And suppose I did, child, what then?

Bid. She'd be frighten'd out of her wits.

Flash. At me, Miss? frighten'd at me? *Tout au contraire*, I assure you: you mistake the thing,

child : I have some reason to believe I am not quite so shocking. [*Affectedly.*]

Tag. Indeed, Sir, you flatter yourself—But pray, Sir, what are your pretensions?

Flash. The lady's promises, my own passion, and the best-mounted blade in the three kingdoms. If any man can produce a better title, let him take her, if not, the devil mince me if I give up an atom of her.

Bid. He's in a fine passion if he would but hold it.

Tag. Pray, Sir, hear reason a little.

Flash. I never do, Madam; it is not my method of proceeding? here is my logic! (*Draws his sword.*) Sa, sa—my best argument is cart-over-arm, Madam, ha, ha, (*lounches*); and if he answers that, Madam, through my small guts, my breath, blood, and mistress, are all at his service—nothing more, Madam.

Bid. This'll do, this'll do.

Tag. But, Sir, Sir, Sir!

Flash. But, Madam, Madam, Madam! I profess blood, Madam, I was bred up to it from a child; I study the book of fate, and the camp is my university; I have attended the lectures of Prince Charles upon the Rhine, and Bathiani upon the Po, and have extracted knowledge from the mouth of a cannon. I'm not to be frighten'd with squibs, Madam; no, no.

Bid. Pray, dear Sir, don't mind her, but let me prevail with you to go away this time.—Your passion is very fine, to be sure; and when my aunt and Tag are gone out of the way, I'll let you know when I'd have you come again.

Flash. When you'd have me come again, child! And suppose I never would come again, what do you think of that now, ha? You pretend to be afraid of your aunt; your aunt knows what's what too well to refuse a good match when 'tis offer'd—Lookee, Miss, I'm a man of honour; glory is my aim; I have told you the road I am in; and do you see here, child, (*showing his sword,*) no tricks upon travellers.

Bid. But pray, Sir, hear me.

Flash. No, no, no; I know the world, Madam: I am as well known at Covent-garden as the Dial, Madam: I'll break a lamp, bully a constable, bam a justice, or bilk a box-keeper, with any man in the liberties of Westminster: What do you think of me now, Madam?

Bid. Pray don't be so furious, Sir.

Flash. Come, come, come, few words are best; somebody's happier than somebody, and I am a poor silly fellow, ha, ha—that's all—Look you, child, to be short, (for I'm a man of reflection), I have but a bagatelle to say to you. I am in love with you up to hell and desperation, may the sky crush me if I am not!—But since there is another more fortunate than I, adieu, Biddy! Prosperity to the happy rival, patience to poor Flash; but the first time we meet—gunpowder be my perdition, but I'll have the honour to cut a throat with him. [Going.]

Bid. (*stopping him.*) You may meet with him now, if you please.

Flash. Now! may I?—Where is he? I'll sacrifice the villain. [Aloud.]

71

Tag. Hush! he's but in the next room.

Flash. Is he? Ram me (*low*) into a mortar-piece but I'll have vengeance; my blood boils to be at him.—Don't be frighten'd, Miss!

Bid. No, Sir; I never was better pleas'd, I assure you.

Flash. I shall soon do his business.

Bid. As soon as you please; take your own time.

Tag. I'll fetch the gentleman to you immediately.

[*Going.*

Flash. (*stopping her.*) Stay, stay a little; what a passion I am in!—Are you sure he is in the next room?—I shall certainly tear him to pieces—I would fain murder him like a gentleman too—Besides, this family shan't be brought into trouble upon my account—I have it—I'll watch for him in the street, and mix his blood with the puddle of the next kennel.

[*Going.*

Bid. (*stopping him.*) No, pray, Mr. Flash, let me see the battle; I shall be glad to see you fight for me; you shan't go, indeed.

[*Holding him.*

Tag. (*holding him.*) Oh, pray, let me see you fight: there were two gentlemen *fit* yesterday, and my mistress was never so diverted in her life.—I'll fetch him out.

[*Exit.*

Bid. Do, stick him, stick him, Captain Flash, I shall love the better for it.

Flash. Damn your love; I wish I was out of the house.

[*Aside.*

Bid. Here he is—Now, speak some of your hard words, and run him through—

Flash. Don't be in fits now—— [*Aside to Biddy.*

Bid. Never fear me.

Enter TAG and FRIBBLE.

Tag. (*to Fribble.*) Take it on my word, Sir, he is a bully, and nothing else.

Frib. (*frighten'd.*) I know you are my good friend; but perhaps you don't know his disposition.

Tag. I am confident he is a coward.

Frib. D'ye think so, Mrs. Tag?

Tag. Oh, I am sure of it.

Frib. Is he? Nay, then I'm his man.

Flash. I like his looks, but I'll not venture too far at first.

Tag. Speak to him, Sir.

Frib. I will—I understand, Sir—hem—that you—by Mrs. Tag here—Sir—who has inform'd me—hem—that you would be glad to speak with me—damme—

[*Turns off.*

Flash. I can speak to you, Sir—or to any body, Sir—or I can let it alone and hold my tongue—if I see occasion, Sir, damme—

[*Turns off.*

Bid. Well said, Mr. Flash; be in a passion.

Tag. (*to Fribble.*) Don't mind his looks, he changes colour already; to him, to him. [*Pushes him.*

Frib. Don't hurry me, Mrs. Tag, for heaven's sake: I shall be out of breath before I begin, if you do—Sir—(*to Flash.*) If you can't speak to a gentleman in another manner, Sir—why then I'll venture to say, you had better hold your tongue—oons.

Flash. Sir, you and I are of different opinions.

Frib. You and your opinions may go to the devil—take that.

[Turns off to Tag.]

Tag. Well said, Sir, the day's your own.

Bid. What's the matter, Mr. Flash? Is all your fury gone? Do you give me up?

Frib. I have done his business.

[Struts about.]

Flash. Give you up, Madam! No, Madam, when I am determin'd in my resolutions, I am always calm; 'tis our way, Madam: and now I shall proceed to business—Sir, I beg to say a word to you in private.

Frib. Keep your distance, fellow, and I'll answer you.—That lady has confess'd a passion for me, and as she has deliver'd up her heart into my keeping, nothing but my 'art's blood shall purchase the Damnation!

Tag. Bravo! bravo!

Flash. If those are the conditions, I'll give you earnest for it directly. (Draws.) Now, villain, renounce all right and title this minute, or the torrent of my rage will overflow my reason, and I shall annihilate the nothingness of your soul and body in an instant.

Frib. I wish there was a constable at hand to take us both up; we shall certainly do one another a prejudice.

Tag. No, you won't indeed, Sir; pray, bear to him; if you would but draw your sword, and be in a passion, he would run away directly.

Frib. Will he? (Draws his sword.) Then I can ne

longer contain myself—Hell and the furies! Come on, thou savage brute!

Tag. Go on, Sir.

[Here they stand in fighting postures, while Biddy and Tag push them forward.]

Flash. Come on, Sir.

Bid. Go on.

Frib. Come on, rascal.

Tag. Go on, Sir.

Enter Captain LOVEIT and PUFF.

Capt. What's the matter, my dear?

Bid. If you won't fight, here's one that will.

Oh Rhodophil, these two sparks are your rivals, and have pester'd me these two months with their addresses; they forced themselves into the house, and have been quarrelling about me, and disturbing the family; if they won't fight, pray kick 'em out of the house.'

Capt. What's the matter, gentlemen?

[They both keep their fencing posture.]

Flash. Don't part us, Sir.

Frib. No, pray Sir, don't part us; we shall do you a mischief.

Capt. Puff, look to the other gentleman, and call a surgeon.

Bid. and Tag. Ha, ha, ha!

Puff. Bless me! how can you stand under your wounds, Sir?

Frib. Am I hurt, Sir?

Puff. Hurt, Sir! why, you have—let me see—pray stand in the light—one, two, three, thro' the heart? and, let me see—hum—eight thro' the small guts! Come, Sir, make it up the round dozen, and then we'll part you.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Capt. Come here, *Puff.*

[*Whispers, and looks at Flash.*]

Puff. 'Tis the very same, Sir.

Capt. (*to Flash.*) Pray, Sir, have I not had the pleasure of seeing you abroad?

Flash. I have serv'd abroad.

Capt. Had not you the misfortune, Sir, to be missing at the last engagement in Flanders?

Flash. I was found amongst the dead in the field of battle.

Puff. He was the first that fell, Sir;—the wind of a cannon-ball struck him flat upon his face: he had just strength enough to creep into a ditch, and there he was found after the battle in a most deplorable condition.

Capt. Pray, Sir, what advancement did you get by the service of that day?

Flash. My wounds rendered me unfit for service and I sold out.

Puff. Stole out, you mean—We hunted him by scent to the water-side;—thence he took shipping for England; and taking the advantage of my master's absence, has attacked the citadel; which we are luckily come to relieve—and drive his honour in to the ditch again.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Frib. He, he, he!

Capt. And now, Sir, how have you dar'd to show your face in open day, or wear even the outside of a profession you have so much scandalized by your behaviour?—I honour the name of soldier; and, as a party concerned, am bound not to see it disgrac'd. As you have forfeited your title to honour, deliver up your sword this instant.

Flash. Nay, good Captain—

Capt. No words, Sir. *[Takes his sword.]*

Frib. He's a bad scoundrel;—I wish I had kick'd him.

Capt. The next thing I command—Leave this house, change the colour of your cloaths and fierceness of your looks;—appear from top to toe the wretch, the very wretch thou art:—If e'er I meet thee in the military dress again, or if you put on looks that belie the native baseness of thy heart, be it where it will, this shall be the reward of thy impudence and disobedience. *[Kicks him; he runs off.]*

Bid. Oh, my dear Rodophil!

Frib. What an infamous rascal it is!—I thank you, Sir, for this favour; but I must after and cane him.

[Going, is stop'd by the Captain.]

Capt. One word with you too, Sir.

Frib. With me, Sir!

Capt. You need not tremble;—I shan't use you roughly.

Frib. I am certain of that, Sir;—but I am sadly troubled with weak nerves.

Capt. Thou art of a species too despicable for correction; therefore be gone; and if I see you here again, your insignificancy shan't protect you.

Frib. I am obliged to you for your kindness.— Well, if ever I have any thing to do with intrigues again—Miss Biddy, your servant—Captain, your servant—Mrs. Tag, yours—Old soldier, yours.

Puff. Boh!—(in *Fribble's* face as he is going out.)

Frib. O Lard!

[*Exit.*]

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Puff. Shall I ease you of your trophy, Sir?

Capt. Take it, Puff, as a small recompence for thy fidelity; thou can'st better use it than its owner.

Puff. I wish your Honour had a patent to take such trifles from every pretty gentleman that could spare 'em. I would set up the largest cutler's shop in the kingdom.

Capt. Well said, Puff.

Bid. But pray, Mr. Fox, how did you get out of your hole? I thought you was lock'd in.

Capt. I shot the bolt back when I heard a noise—and thinking you was in danger, I broke my confinement without any other consideration than your safety.

[*Kisses her hand.*]

Sir Sim. (without.) Biddy, Biddy!—Why, Tag, Tag!

Bid. There's the old gentleman; run in, run in.

[*Exeunt Capt. and Puff.* *Tag* opens the door.]

Enter Sir SIMON and JASPER.

Sir Sim. Where have you been, Biddy?—Jas-

' per and I have knock'd and call'd as loud and as
' long as we were able. What were you doing,
' child?

' *Bid.* I was reading part of a play to Tag, and
' we came as soon as we heard you.

' *Sir Sim.* What play, Moppet?

' *Tag.* The old Bachelor; and we were just got
' to old Nykyn as you knock'd at the door.

' *Sir Sim.* I must have you burn your plays and
' romances, now you are mine—they corrupt your
' innocence; and what can you learn from 'em?

' *Bid.* What you can't teach me, I am sure.

' *Sir Sim.* Fy, fy, child, I never heard you talk at
' this rate before. I'm afraid, Tag, you put these
' things into her head.

' *Tag.* I, Sir!—I vow, Sir Simon, she knows
' more than you can conceive. She surprises me,
' I assure you, though I have been married these
' two years, and liv'd with batchelors most part of
' my life.

' *Sir Sim.* Do you hear, Jasper?—I'm all over in
' a sweat.—Pray, Miss, have you not had com-
' pany this afternoon? I saw a young fop go out of
' the house as I was coming hither.

' *Bid.* You might have seen two, Sir Simon, if
' your eyes had been good.

' *Sir Sim.* Do you hear, Jasper?—Sure the
' child is possess'd—Pray, Miss, what do they want
' here?

' *Bid.* Me, Sir; they wanted me.

' *Sir Sim.* What did they want with you, I say?

‘ *Bid.* Why, what do you want with me?

‘ *Sir Sim.* Do you hear, Jasper?—I am thunder-struck!—I can’t believe my own ears——Tell me the reason, I say, why——

‘ *Tag.* I’ll tell you the reason why, if you please, Sir Simon. Miss, you know, is a very silly young girl; and having found out (Heaven knows how!) that there is some little difference between sixty-five and twenty-five, she’s ridiculous enough to choose the latter; when, if she’d take my advice——

‘ *Sir Sim.* You are right, Tag, she would take me—eh!——

‘ *Tag.* Yes, Sir, as the only way to have both; for if she marries you, the other will follow of course.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Do you hear, Jasper?

‘ *Bid.* ’Tis very true, Sir Simon: from knowing no better, I have set my heart upon a young man; and a young one I’ll have. There has been three here this afternoon.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Three, Jasper!

‘ *Bid.* And they have been quarrelling about me, and one has beat the other two. Now, Sir Simon, if you’ll take up the conqueror, and kick him, as he has kick’d the others, you shall have me for your reward, and my fifteen thousand pounds into the bargain. What says my hero, eh?

[Slaps him on the back.

‘ *Sir Sim.* The world’s at an end——What’s to be done, Jasper?

‘ *Jas.* Pack up and be gone. Don’t fight the match, Sir.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Flesh and blood can’t bear it—I’m all over agitation—Hugh, hugh!—Am I cheated by a baby, a doll? Where’s your aunt, you young blackatrice?—I’ll let her know—she’s a base woman, and you are—

‘ *Bid.* You are in a fine humour to show your valour. Tag, fetch the Captain this minute, while Sir Simon is warm, and let him know he is waiting here to cut his throat. [*Exit Tag.*] I lock’d him up in my bed-chamber till you came.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Here’s an imp of darkness!—What would I give that my son Bob were here to thrash her spark, while I—ravish’d the rest of the family.

‘ *Jas.* I believe we had best retire, Sir.

‘ *Sir Sim.* No, no, I must see her bully first: and, do you hear, Jasper, if I put him in a passion, do you knock him down.

‘ *Jas.* Pray, keep your temper, Sir.

• Enter CAPTAIN TAG and PUFF.

‘ *Capt.* (*approaching angrily.*) What is the meaning, Sir—’Ounds! it is my father, Puff; what shall I do? [*Aside.*]

‘ *Puff.* (*drawing him by the coat.*) Kneel again, Sir.

‘ *Sir Sim.* I am enchanted! [*Starting.*]

‘ *Capt.* There is no retreat; I must stand it!

‘ *Bid.* What’s all this?

Sir Sim. Your humble servant, Captain Fireball.

‘ You are welcome from the wars, noble Captain.—

‘ I did not think of being knock’d o’ th’ head, or

‘ cut up alive, by so fine a gentleman.

‘ *Capt.* I am under such confusion, Sir, that I

‘ have not power to convince you of my innocence.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Innocence ! pretty lamb ! And so, Sir,

‘ you have left the regiment, and the honourable

‘ employment of fighting for your country, to come

‘ home and cut your father’s throat. Why, you’ll

‘ be a great man in time, Bob !

‘ *Bid.* His father, Tag !

‘ *Sir Sim.* Come, come, ’tis soon done—one stroke

‘ does it—or if you have any qualms, let your squire

‘ there perform the operation.

‘ *Puff.* Pray, Sir, don’t throw such temptations

‘ in my way.

Capt. Hold your impudent tongue.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Why don’t you speak, Mr. Modesty ?

‘ what excuse have you for leaving the army, I say ?

‘ *Capt.* My affection to this lady.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Your affection, puppy !

‘ *Capt.* Our love, Sir, has been long and mutual.

‘ What accidents have happened since my going

‘ abroad, and her leaving the country, and how I

‘ have most unaccountably met you here, I am a

‘ stranger to ; but whatever appearances may be, I

‘ still am, and ever was, your dutiful son.

‘ *Bid.* He talks like an angel, Tag !

‘ *Sir Sim.* Dutiful, sirrah !—have not you rival’d

‘ your father ?

‘ *Capt.* No, Sir, you have rivall’d me. My claim
‘ must be prior to yours.

‘ *Bid.* Indeed, Sir Simon, he can show the best
‘ title to me.

‘ *Jas.* Sir, Sir, the young gentleman speaks well ;
‘ and as the fortune will not go out of the family, I
‘ should advise you to drop your resentment, be re-
‘ concil’d to your son, and relinquish the lady.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Ay, ay, with all my heart—Look ye,
‘ son, I give you the girl; she’s too much for me, I
‘ confess ;—and, take my word, you’ll catch a tar-
‘ tar.

‘ *Bid.* I assure you, Sir Simon, I’m not the person
‘ you take me for. If I have us’d you any ways ill,
‘ ’twas for your son’s sake, who had my promise and
‘ inclinations before you : and though I believe I
‘ should have made you a most uncomfortable wife,
‘ I’ll be the best daughter to you in the world ; and
‘ if you stand in need of a lady, my aunt is disen-
‘ gag’d, and is the best nurse—

‘ *Sir Sim.* No, no, I thank you, child ; you have
‘ so turn’d my stomach to marriage, I have no ap-
‘ petite left.—But where is this aunt? Won’t she
‘ stop your proceedings, think you?

‘ *Tag.* She’s now at her lawyer’s, Sir ; and if you
‘ please to go with the young couple, and give your
‘ approbation, I’ll answer for my old lady’s consent.

‘ *Bid.* The Captain and I, Sir—

‘ *Sir Sim.* Come, come, Bob, you are but an en-
‘ sign, don’t impose on the girl neither.

‘ *Capt.* I had the good fortune, Sir, to please my

‘ royal general by my behaviour in a small action with the enemy, and he gave me a company.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Bob, I wish you joy! This is news indeed! And when we celebrate your wedding, son, I’ll drink a half-pint bumper myself to your benefactor.

‘ *Capt.* And he deserves it, Sir, Such a general, by his example and justice, animates us to deeds of glory, and insures us conquest.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Right, my boy——Come along then.

[*Going.*

‘ *Puff.* Halt a little, gentlemen and ladies, if you please. Every body here seems well satisfied but myself.

‘ *Capt.* What’s the matter, Puff?

‘ *Puff.* Sir, as I would make myself worthy of such a master, and the name of a soldier, I cannot put up with the least injury to my honour.

‘ *Sir Sim.* Heyday! what flourishes are these?

‘ *Puff.* Here is the man; come forth, caitiff.—
‘ (*To Jasper.*)—He hath confess’d this day, that in my absence he hath taken freedoms with my lawful wife, and had dishonourable intentions against my bed; for which I demand satisfaction.—

‘ *Sir Sim.* (*striking him.*) What stuff is here? The fellow’s brain’s turn’d.

‘ *Puff.* And crack’d too, Sir; but you are my master’s father, and I submit.

‘ *Capt.* Come, come, I’ll settle your punctilios, and will take care of you and Tag hereafter, provided you drop all animosities, and shake hands this moment.

‘ *Puff*. My revenge gives way to my interest; and
‘ I once again, Jasper, take thee to my bosom.

‘ *Jas*. I’m your friend again, *Puff*—But, hark ye
‘ —I fear you not; and if you’ll lay aside your steel
‘ there, as far as a broken head or a black eye, I’m
‘ at your service upon demand.

‘ *Tag*. You are very good at crowing, indeed, Mr.
‘ Jasper; but let me tell you, the fool that is rogue
‘ enough to brag of a woman’s favours, must be a
‘ dunghill every way.—As for you, my dear hus-
‘ band, show your manhood in a proper place, and
‘ you need not fear these sheep-biters.

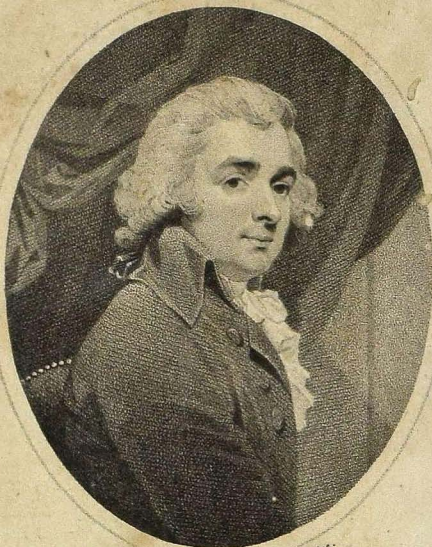
‘ *Sir Sim*. The abigail is pleasant, I confess—he,
‘ he!—’

Bid. I’m afraid the town will be ill-natur’d enough
to think I have been a little coquettish in my beha-
viour; but I hope, as I have been constant to the
Captain, I shall be excus’d diverting myself with
pretenders.

Ladies to fops and braggarts ne’er be kind;
No charms can warm ’em, and no virtues bind:
Each lover’s merit by his conduct prove;
Who fails in honour, will be false in love.

[*Exeunt*.]

PARSONS'S MINOR THEATRE.



Engraved by Ridley from a Miniature by Edridge.

MR BANNISTER, Junr.

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