

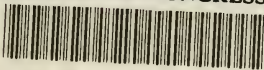
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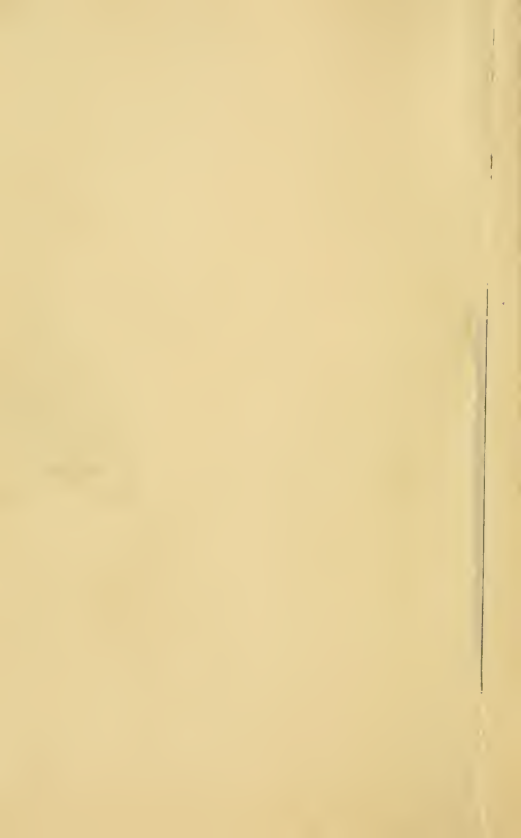
To
W^m K. K. K. K. K. -

your very
sincerely
attached

Wm. K. K.







The
School for Scandal

A Comedy in Five Acts

by

¹⁸¹¹
Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Remodelled and Arranged by

Augustin Daly

First Produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, September 12th, 1874, Reproduced at Daly's Theatre January 20th, 1891, and here Printed from the Prompter's Copy

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A FEW REMARKS ON THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

BY WILLIAM WINTER

ALTHOUGH genius is elemental, and therefore is not created by circumstances, it is certain that circumstances exert an important influence upon its drift, and upon the channels and methods of its expression. Sheridan—whose father was an actor and whose mother was a dramatist, and who was born at Dublin in 1751, and trained at Harrow School from 1762 till 1769, when he went to reside with his father at Bath—came upon the scene at a period when English fine society was in an exceedingly artificial condition ; and this prevalent artificiality of manners, as experience subsequently proved, was destined to increase and to prevail during the whole of his career [he died in 1816], and not to decline until after the death of George the Fourth, in 1830. When Sheridan went to reside at Bath he was in his nineteenth year ; a remarkably handsome youth ; ardent and impressible ; and Bath

was then one of the gayest cities in the British kingdom. In that brilliant city and in that opulent, insincere, tattling, backbiting society—intermittently, but most of the time—he lived during the perilous years of his youth, from 1770 to 1776: there he loved and won for a wife the beautiful Eliza Linley—eloping with her to France, and fighting duels in her defence when he came back; there he wrote “The Rivals” and “The Duenna,” and there he planned and partly executed “The School for Scandal.” Into “The Rivals” he wrought much of his own personal experience, duly and artistically modified and veiled. Into “The School for Scandal” he wrought the results of his observation—working in a manner essentially natural to his order of mind, yet one that was to some extent guided and impelled by the study of Etherege, Wycherley, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, and Congreve, who are his intellectual ancestors. There is more freedom, more freshness of impulse, more kindness, more joy, more nature in “The Rivals” than there is in “The School for Scandal”; but both are artificial; both reflect, in a mirror of artistic exaggeration, the hollow, feverish, ceremonious, bespangled, glittering, heart-breaking fashionable world, in which their author’s mind was developed and in which they were created. The “School for Scandal,” indeed, is completely saturated with artificiality, and the fact that it was intended to satirize and rebuke the faults of an insincere, scandal-mongering society, does not—and was not meant to—modify that pervasive and predominant element of its character.

Satire, in order to be effective, must portray the thing that it excoriates. The "School for Scandal" rebukes a vice by depicting it, and makes the rebuke pungent by depicting it in a brilliant and entertaining way; yet there is no considerable comedy in our language, not even one by Etherege or by Congreve*—authors whose influence was naturally and cogently operative upon the kindred mind of Sheridan—that stands further off from the simplicity of nature, moves in a more garish light,

* The student of the comedies of Sheridan is aided in his appreciation of their quality, their spirit, their peculiar excellence, by a preliminary study of Etherege, Wycherley, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, and Congreve. The intellectual line represented by those writers closed with Sheridan. No successor has arisen, although of imitators there have been scores. Sir George Etherege [1636?-1689] wrote "The Comical Revenge" [1664], "She Would if She Could" [1668], and "The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter" [1676]. William Wycherley [1640-1715] wrote, between 1672 and 1677, "Love in a Wood," "The Gentleman Dancing-Master," "The Country Wife," and "The Plain Dealer." Moore found it difficult to believe that Sheridan was unfamiliar with the last of these pieces; it is extremely probable that he had a cursory knowledge of them all. George Farquhar [1678-1707] wrote "Love and a Bottle" [1699], "The Constant Couple" [1700], "Sir Harry Wildair" [1701], "The Inconstant" [1702], "The Twin Rivals" [1703], "The Stage Coach" [1705], in which he was assisted by Peter A. Motteux [1660-1718], "The Recruiting Officer" [1705], and "The Beaux Stratagem" [1707]. Sheridan had the same Irish grace that is found in Farquhar, but he more closely resembles Congreve in terseness and glitter. Sir John Vanbrugh [1666?-1726] wrote "The Relapse" [1697], "The Provoked Wife" [1697], "Æsop"

or requires for its intelligible and effective interpretation a more studied, manufactured, fantastic manner. It contains no person upon whom the imagination can dwell with delight, or to whom the heart can become devoted; no person who either fires the mind by example, or arouses the imagination by romantic nobility, or especially wins esteem whether for worth of character or excellence of conduct. Once or twice indeed—as in *Charles'* impulsive expression of grateful sentiment toward the boun-

[1697], "The Pilgrim" [1700], "The False Friend" [1702], "The Confederacy" [1705], "The Mistake" [1706], "The Cuckold in Conceit" [1706], "The Country House" [1715], and "A Journey to London" [1728]. "Squire Trelooby" [1734] is also attributed to him. Vanbrugh wrote with more apparent facility than either of the others in this group, and his language is more flexible, more like the language of actual men and women, than that of the rest. William Congreve [1670-1729] wrote "The Old Bachelor" [1693], "The Double-Dealer" [1694], "Love for Love" [1695], "The Mourning Bride" [1697], "The Way of the World" [1700], "The Judgment of Paris," a Masque [1701], and "Semele" [1707]. Moore notes the significant fact that the best comedies have generally been written by young authors. All of Congreve's pieces were written before he was twenty-five. Farquhar died at thirty. Vanbrugh began early. Sheridan at twenty-seven had written "The School for Scandal," and he never surpassed it; indeed, practically, he wrote no more for the stage—for "Pizarro" and "The Stranger" (which substantially are his) are scarcely worth remembrance. But the reason why good comedies may be written by clever young men is not obscure. Comedy must necessarily treat of actual life and manners, and this subject, which ceases to be interesting as men grow old, is for youth a delightful inspiration.

teous uncle whom he supposes to be absent from the scene of the Auction, and in *Sir Peter Teazle's* disclosure to *Joseph* of his considerate intentions toward his volatile wife, in the scene of the Screen—it imparts a transient thrill of feeling. But it never strikes—and, indeed, it never aims to strike—the note of pathos, in its portraiture of human life; so that, in the main, it contains scarcely a single trait of simple humanity. And yet its fascination is universal, indomitable, irresistible, final—the fascination of buoyant, intellectual character, invincible gayety, pungent satire, and a gorgeous affluence of polished wit. It succeeded when it was first produced, and now, after the lapse of a hundred and thirteen years, it still continues to please, equally when it is acted and when it is read. There is a moral in this, which ought to carry comfort to those votaries of art who believe in symbol rather than in fact, the ideal rather than the literal; who know that a dramatic picture of life, in order that it may be made universal in its applicability and incessant in its influence, must be made to present aggregate and comprehensive personifications, and not local and particular portraits, and must be painted in colors that are not simply true but delicately exaggerated. This is the great art—the art which has made Shakspeare to survive when Ben Jonson is dead. The absence of genial emotion—of the glow of expansive humanity and of pathos—in “The School for Scandal” is, perhaps, to be regretted; but in this case a deficiency of the melting heart is counterbalanced by a prodigality of the opulent mind. The piece transcends locality and epoch.

The resident not only of Bath and of London, but of New York and San Francisco, the denizen not only of great capitals, but of provincial villages, the inhabitant of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, can perceive the meaning, feel the power, and rejoice in the sparkling gayety of "The School for Scandal."

This great comedy—produced when its author was in his twenty-seventh year—was written slowly, painfully, and with patient labor. Moore devotes about thirty pages of his "Life of Sheridan," to an exposition of the two distinct sketches that the dramatist first made, when rearing the fabric of the piece, and dilates with particular admiration upon the scrupulous study, the fastidious care, and the anxious severity of revision with which he selected his language, moulded his materials, and blended and fused the many scattered threads of his fancy and inventive thought into one symmetrical fabric of crystal wit. "Nothing great and durable," exclaims the delighted biographer [and Moore was a man of excellent judgment, great reading, and a beautiful faculty in literature], "has ever been produced with ease. . . . Labor is the parent of all the lasting wonders of this world, whether a verse or stone, whether poetry or pyramids." The original manuscripts of the comedy manifested especially to Moore's discerning eye "a certain glare and coarseness," showing the effect of recent study of Wycherley and Vanbrugh; but also they revealed the steady pressure of a delicate taste and the incessant operation of strenuous refinement, alike in the improvement of the characters, the conduct of the plot, the formation and arrangement of the sentences, and

the choice of epithets. One of Sheridan's peculiarities, indeed, was a light, graceful, indolent manner of elegant leisure. He preferred that people should suppose that his work was always done spontaneously and with careless ease. In reality he accomplished nothing without effort. During a considerable part of his life—certainly till he was thirty-six, when he joined Edmund Burke's sentimental crusade against Warren Hastings, and fortified the rancorous rhetoric of that statesman by a refulgent burst of verbal fireworks concerning the Begum Princesses of Oude—his industry was minute, assiduous, and vigilant. No man was ever a more pertinacious worker, and no man ever seemed to have less occupation or less need of endeavor for the accomplishment of splendid things. He did not, as so many fussy people do—who cannot endure to be employed without an everlasting fluster of cackle over the virtue of their toil—intrude his labor upon the attention of his friends. He displayed the finished statue; he did not vaunt the chips and the dust that were made in the cutting of it. He gave results; he did not proclaim the process of their production. "Few persons with so much natural brilliancy of talents," says Moore, "ever employed more art and circumspection in their display." But Sheridan's reticence in this particular was not exclusively of a theatrical kind. He held the most of human achievements to be [what certainly they are] of slight importance; he shrunk with all his soul from the disgrace and humiliation of being a bore; and he possessed in extraordinary fulness, and therefore he abundantly exerted, the rare faculty of taste. There

can be no doubt that as time wore on the character of Sheridan was weakened and degraded by misfortune, embarrassment, profligate associations [with the Prince Regent and his shameless set], and most of all by intemperance ; but at the beginning of his life, and for some years of his splendid productiveness and prosperity, he was a noble gentleman and a most individual mental power ; and there is no reason why a virtue of his character should be set down to its weakness.

“ The School for Scandal ” was produced under auspicious circumstances. Garrick had read it and pronounced it excellent. Garrick, moreover, had assisted at its rehearsals, and had written a prologue to introduce it. Murphy, in his life of that great actor—then retired from the stage—says that Garrick was never known on any former occasion to be more anxious for a favorite piece. On the first night, May 8, 1777, the doors of Drury Lane Theatre, which were opened at half-past five, had not been opened an hour when the house was crowded. The receipts that night were £225. King spoke the prologue, which is in Garrick’s more whimsical and sprightly manner. Colman furnished an epilogue. The rehearsals had been numerous and careful. Sheridan, who was manager as well as author, had taken great pains. Every part was well acted. The incessant play of wit created an effect of sparkling animation. Mrs. Abington, King, and Smith—who played respectively *Lady Teazle*, *Sir Peter Teazle*, and *Charles Surface*—were uncommonly brilliant. Palmer, as *Joseph Surface*, was superb. The only defect noticed was a sluggishness of movement in act second, inci-

dent to some excess of talk by the clique of scandal-mongers. Garrick observed that the characters upon the stage at the falling of the screen waited too long before they spoke. At the close of the screen scene, nevertheless—ending the fourth act,—the applause was tremendous. Frederick Reynolds, the dramatist, happening to pass through the pit passage, “from Vinegar Yard to Brydges Street,” about nine o’clock that night, heard such a noise, all at once, that he thought the theatre was about to fall, and ran for his life. The public enthusiasm, after the final descent of the baize, was prodigious. Sheridan was so delighted that he quaffed unlimited wine, got drunk, made a row in the street, and was knocked down and put into the watch-house. The London newspapers teemed with praises of the comedy, not only on the next day but on many days thereafter. Horace Walpole, who speedily went to see it, wrote thus from his retreat at Strawberry Hill: “To my great surprise there were more parts performed admirably in this comedy than I almost ever saw in any play. Mrs. Abington was equal to the first in her profession. Yates, Parsons, Miss Pope, and Palmer, all shone.” Boaden, the biographer, in allusion to King and Mrs. Abington as *Sir Peter* and *Lady Teazle*, said they were so suited to each other that they lost half their soul in separation. For years afterward the success of “The School for Scandal” was so great in London that it clouded the success of the new pieces that were brought forward in its wake. From the capital it went to Bath, Edinburgh, York, Dublin, and other large towns of the kingdom. Moore records that the scenes of the

Auction and the Screen were presented upon the Paris stage in 1778, in a piece called "Les Deux Neveux," and that the whole story soon found its way to the Théâtre Français, under the name of "Tartuffe de Mœurs." Genest, commenting on the first cast, and speaking from his ample knowledge of the chronicles of the first performance (if not, possibly, from personal recollection), observes that "this comedy was so admirably acted that though it has continued on the acting list at Drury Lane from that time to this [1832], and been several times represented at Covent Garden and The Haymarket, yet no new performer has ever appeared in any one of the principal characters that was not inferior to the person who acted it originally." The statement is made in "The Thespian Dictionary" [1802], that "the copy of this play was lost after the first night's representation, and all the performers in it were summoned together early the next day in order, by the assistance of their parts, to prepare another prompter's book."

The London productions of "The School for Scandal," recorded by Genest, * are as follows :

Drury Lane	May 8, 1777.
Haymarket	September 2, 1785.
Drury Lane	April 8, 1797.
Drury Lane	May 18, 1798.
Covent Garden	March 31, 1798.
Covent Garden	May 30, 1810.
Covent Garden	March 23, 1813.
Covent Garden	September 10, 1818.
Drury Lane	December 1, 1825.

* Some Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830. In Ten Volumes. [By the Rev. John Genest, of Bath.] Bath: Printed by H. E. Carrington. Sold by Thomas Rodd, Great Newport Street, London, 1832.

It is more than half a century since the industrious, loquacious, sensible, matter-of-fact parson of Bath made up his chronicle, and many brilliant representations of "The School for Scandal" have been accomplished within that time on both sides of the Atlantic. The method in which the piece was originally acted, however, has been preserved by tradition, and actors in succeeding generations have seldom widely departed from it—although they may have fallen short of its reputed perfection [a point by no means certain]. That method was the delicate, brilliant exaggeration of the manners of polite society in the days of George the Third. Mrs. Abington [1738-1815], the original representative of *Lady Teazle*, made her, radically and consistently, the affected fine lady, without giving the slightest indication that she had ever been "a girl bred wholly in the country"; and Mrs. Abington's example has usually, and perhaps involuntarily, been followed. Elizabeth Farren [1759-1829,] who succeeded Mrs. Abington at Drury Lane, gave a remarkably elegant performance of the part, harmonious as to artifice with the ideal indicated by her predecessor, but superior to that ideal in natural refinement. It was in this character that Miss Farren took leave of the stage, April 8, 1797, just before her marriage with the Earl of Derby.* The next important embodiment

* "I recollect the circumstance of seeing Lord Derby leaving his private box to creep to her [Miss Farren], behind the screen, and, of course, we all looked with impatience for the discovery, hoping the screen would fall a little too soon and show to the audience Lord Derby as well as *Lady Teazle*."—MISS WYNNE'S "Diary of a Lady of Quality."

characters, possessed exactly the lace-ruffle-and-diamond style essential for the expression of *Sir Peter Teazle's* refinement, high-bred testiness, and amused, satirical cynicism. No English actor since Farren has been esteemed his equal in this character. The most notable performance of *Sir Peter* that the English audience has seen since Farren's day was, apparently, that of Samuel Phelps [1797-1872]. It is thought to have lacked Farren's distinction and his delicacy of mechanism and finish, but it was accounted remarkable for the qualities of force, sincerity, authority, and restraint. William Farren, son of "old Farren," performed *Sir Peter Teazle*, in a revival of "The School for Scandal," which was effected at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, in 1872, and gained public favor and critical admiration.

The character of *Lady Teazle* has had many representatives on the British stage, only a few of whom are now remembered. Louisa Brunton, who became Countess of Craven, and Miss Smithson [1800-1854], who wedded with Berlioz, the composer, were among the earliest followers in the footsteps of Mrs. Abington, Miss Farren, and Mrs. Jordan. Mrs. Warner [1804-1854] acted the part with Phelps, and was esteemed one of its best representatives. Lucy Elizabeth Vestris [1798-1856] gave an impersonation of *Lady Teazle*, which, although superficial and shallow, was exceedingly vivacious and piquant. Louisa Cranstoun Nisbett [1812-1858], who became Lady Boothby—the most radiant and enchanting of the old stage beauties,—made the part bewitching and brilliant, without suggestion of much sincerity or depth. One of the most highly esteemed and

thoughtfully commended portrayals of *Lady Teazle* that have been recorded of late years was that given by Marie Wilton (Mrs. Bancroft) at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, in April, 1874. That intellectual and polished actress, Genevieve Ward, has acted it, with sparkling effect, both in French and English.

The American record of "The School for Scandal" begins with a performance of it given at the John Street Theatre, New York, on December 16, 1785. The famous piece was then acted—according to the excellent authority of Mr. Ireland—"probably for the first time in America." The cast is printed on another page of this book. The first representation that the comedy received at the old Park Theatre occurred on December 3, 1798. Since then it has been performed in every considerable theatre in the United States, and often it has enlisted the talent of remarkably brilliant groups of actors. There is probably no veteran play-goer who could not, with slight effort of the memory, recall a cast of "The School for Scandal" which he would regard as incomparable and memorable. No piece has enjoyed more favor as the signalizing feature of special dramatic occasions.* The chief part—the part that

* Among memorable casts of "The School for Scandal" this one may well be recalled. The performance was given in the afternoon of May 19, 1869, at Niblo's Theatre, for the benefit of John Brougham :

Sir Peter Teazle	John Gilbert. †
Sir Oliver Surface	John Brougham. †
Joseph Surface	Neil Warner.

† Dead.

of the original structure, and the omission of them has been known to prompt a righteous remonstrance against the iniquity of tampering with the author. As a rule they are both spoken and heard under the impression that they belong to the play. The "pickled elephant" that figures in *Valentine's* mad scene, in "Love for Love," might be cited as an example of this sort of embellishment. The passage is not in Congreve's text, but it is generally used. It was introduced by the elder Wallack—then a young man on the London stage—on a night when he was acting *Valentine*, in place of Elliston, who was disabled with gout. That day an elephant had gone mad and been shot by the guards, and this incident had caused much popular excitement. *Valentine*, who is pretending to be deranged, has to talk wildly, and Wallack's sudden ejaculation, "Bring me a pickled elephant," was thought to be excellent lunacy—for it was received with copious applause; and Elliston, seated in his invalid-chair, at the wing, accosted Wallack, as that actor came off, and mournfully exclaimed: "They never shot an elephant for me, young man!" Since then every representative of *Valentine* makes this allusion, although now the reference is pointless and the image stands in the category of *Oriana's* "tall, gigantic sights" and *Tilburina's* "whistling moon." The presence of such points in those old plays may well intimate to the judicious observer that their text has not, from the beginning, been regarded as a sacred thing, and that the prime necessity of the stage—which is Effect—may sometimes be found to warrant both additions and omissions in the presentment of come-

dies that are, in some measure, obsolete. One thing is certain—that the indelicacy of those old pieces is offensive to the taste of the present time, and ought not ever, in these days, to be thrust upon an audience. It is not an answer to talk of “Bowdlerism,” or to sneer at “purists,” or to stigmatize refinement as squeamish pruriency. There is much pure gold in the Old English Comedy; but the dirt that is in it should always be cast aside. Nor is the modern theatre under any sort of obligation to treat that body of stage literature as if it were a celestial revelation. The present book of “The School for Scandal,” prepared by Augustin Daly, has been edited in a spirit harmonious with these views. The coarseness of the scandal-mongering colloquies has been expunged and the story made no less cleanly than it is direct and forcible, as well as pertinent to conventional experience. A few sentences have been dropped, in order to shorten the piece, and a few others have been transposed—the objects sought being incessant movement and the circumscription of each act within a single scenic picture. This comedy is not only the best work of one of the most brilliant writers that ever lived, but it is one of the best dramatic pieces ever written, and the revival of it from time to time will, doubtless, continue to occur upon the stage as long as the stage endures. This certainly should be hoped, for “The School for Scandal” teaches charity and reticence; and these are among the greatest virtues that adorn character and sanctify life.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.	Original Cast, Drury Lane Theatre, London May 8, 1777.	First Cast in New York, John Street Theatre, Dec. 16, 1785. *	Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, September 12, 1874. †
SIR PETER TEAZLE	Mr. King.	Mr. Henry.	Charles Fisher.
SIR OLIVER SURFACE	Mr. Yates.	Mr. Morris.	William Davidge.
JOSEPH SURFACE	Mr. Palmer.	Mr. Wignell.	Louis James.
CHARLES SURFACE	Mr. Smith.	Mr. Harpet.	George Clarke.
CRABTREE	Mr. Parsons.	Mr. Heard.	F. Hardenberg.
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE	Mr. Dodd.	Mr. Biddle.	B. T. Ringgold.
ROWLEY	Mr. Aickin.	Mr. Woolls.	David Whiting.
MOSES	Mr. Baddeley.	Mr. Ryan.	James Lewis.
TRIP	Mr. Lamash.		Sol. Smith Russell.
SNAKE	Mr. Packer.		George Devere.
CARELESS	Mr. Farren.		Hart Conway.
SIR HARRY BUMPER	Mr. Gawdry.		J. G. Peakes.
LADY TEAZLE	Mrs. Abington.	Mrs. Morris.	Miss Fanny Davenport.
LADY SNEERWELL	Miss Sherry.	Mrs. Williamson.	Alice Grey.
MRS. CANDOUR	Miss Pope.	Mrs. Harper.	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert.
MARIA	Miss P. Hopkins.	Miss Tuke.	Sara Jewett.
LADY TEAZLE'S MAID			Miss Griffiths.
SERVANT TO SIR PETER			W. H. Beckman.
SERVANT TO JOSEPH			F. M. Chapman.

* In Sellhamer's "History of the American Stage" (Vol. II.) the first performance of "The School for Scandal" in America is said to have been given by Ryan's Company at Baltimore, Md., on February 3, 1784. Mr. Heard being the Sir Peter, Mrs. Ryan, Lady Teazle; Mr. Courtenay, Charles; Mr. Smith, Joseph; Mrs. Kidd, Mrs. Candour, and Ryan himself, Moses.

† "The School for Scandal" was revived by Mr. Daly at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on Saturday, Dec. 2, 1876, Mr. Charles F. Coghlan appearing as Charles Surface;—the cast upon this occasion was made otherwise interesting by John Brougham appearing as Sir Oliver Surface, Charles Fisher as Sir Peter, James Lewis as Backsite, Hardenberg as Crabtree, William Castle (the popular tenor of English opera) as Sir Harry Bumper; William Davidge as Moses; D. H. Harkins as Joseph Surface; George Parkes as Careless; Miss Fanny Davenport as Lady Teazle, Mrs. Gilbert the Mrs. Candour, Mary Wells the Lady Sneerwell, George Drew the Maria;—and previous to the comedy, the original Prologue written by David Garrick was spoken by Miss Jeffreys Lewis.



THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

ACT I.

SCENE.—LADY SNEERWELL'S *House*.

LADY SNEERWELL *enters with* SNAKE, R.
U. E.

Lady Sneer. The paragraphs, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

Snake. They were, madam; and, as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?
[*Sits on sofa, R.*

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course

of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then the business is as good as done, for you know Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry. [*Sits.*] But then she wants that delicacy of tint and mellowness of sneer which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

[*A servant enters with chocolate, which he serves to both, and stands in the background until they return their cups.*]

Lady Sneer. Ah! You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least—everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the

reducing others to the level of my own reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneer. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of—the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character; the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship's, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expecta-

tions as Mr. Surface ; and more so, why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneer. [*Laying her cup on table.*] Then at once, to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Joseph Surface and me.

Snake. No? [*Handing his cup to SERVANT, who exits.*]

Lady Sneer. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet I am still more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneer. [*Rises and goes c.*] Heavens! how dull you are. Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles, that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I 'm thus

anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice every thing? [*Sits L.*

Snake. [*Rises.*] Now, indeed, your conduct seems consistent; but how came you and Joseph so confidential?

[*Stands by* LADY SNEERWELL.

Lady Sneer. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. [*Sits.*] Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England—and above all he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneer. True—and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy he has brought him entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT, *from L.*

Serv. Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneer. [*Crosses R.*] Show him up [*Exit SERVANT, L.*] He generally call about this time. [*Going R.*] I don't wonder at people giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE, C.

Jos. Surf. [*C.*] My dear Lady Sneerwell how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

Lady Sneer. [*R.*] Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us, and, believe me, the confidence is not ill-placed.

[*Sits R.*

Jos. Surf. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, no compliment now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria, or, what is more material to me, your brother.

Jos. Surf. [*Sits.*] I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneer. Ah! my dear Snake, the merit of this belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Surf. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed every thing I ever heard of.

Lady Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Surf. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one cannot help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I am sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not feel for the distresses of a friend, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves—

Lady Sneer. O Lud! [*Rises and goes c.*] You are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

Jos. Surf. Egad, that 's true! I 'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter.

[*Knock heard outside.*]

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here 's company coming. I 'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. [*Goes up.*] Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

Jos. Surf. [*Turning to SNAKE.*] Sir, your very devoted. [*Exit SNAKE, R. C.*] Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneer. Why so?

Jos. Surf. [*R.*] I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Surf. Nothing more likely. [*LADY SNEERWELL goes R.*] Take my word for it. He has not honesty enough to be faithful even to his own villainy.—Ah! Maria!

[*Crosses L.*]

Enter MARIA, L., preceded by SERVANT.

Lady Sneer. [*R.*] Maria, my dear, how do you do?—What 's the matter?

Mar. [*C.*] Oh! that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Surf. [L.] If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

[MARIA *sits* R.]

Lady Sneer. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is Maria heard *you* were here. [*Sits.*] But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you should avoid him so?

Mar. Oh! he has done nothing—but 't is for what he has said; his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Jos. Surf. Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him—for he 'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend; and his uncle Crabtree 's as bad.

Lady Sneer. Nay, but we should make allowance.—Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Mar. For my part, I own, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice.

Lady Sneer. Pshaw!—there 's no possibility of being witty without a little ill-

nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick.

Enter SERVANT, I.

Serv. Mrs. Candour.

[*Exit* SERVANT, C.

Lady Sneer. Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

Mar. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good-nature and benevolence she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Surf. I' faith that 's true, Lady Sneerwell; whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneer. Hush!—here she is.

[*Goes to meet* MRS. CANDOUR.

SERVANT *shows in* MRS. CANDOUR, I.

Mrs. Can. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century?—Mr. Sur-

face, what news do you hear?—though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Jos. Surf. [L.] Just so, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. [*Crosses to MARIA, and sits on chair R.*] Oh, Maria! child,—what! is the whole affair off between you and Charles?—His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. [R.] I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

Mrs. Can. [R. c.] True, true, child; but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

Mar. 'T is strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Can. Very true, child:—but what's to be done?—People will talk—there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt.—But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

Mar. Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Can. So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious—no character escapes.—Lord, now, who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill-nature of people that they say her uncle stopped her last week just as she was stepping into the York Mail with her dancing-master.

Mar. I 'll answer for it, there are no grounds for that report.

Jos. Surf. The license of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

Mar. 'T is so; [*Rises.*] but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Can. To be sure they are: [*Rises.*] tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'t is an old observation, and a very true one. But what 's to be done? as I said before: how will you prevent people from talking?

Jos. Surf. Ah, Mrs. Candour! [*Rises.*] If everybody had your forbearance and good-nature! [*LADY SNEER. joins MARIA.*]

Mrs. Can. I confess, Mr. Surface, I can-

not bear to hear people attacked behind their backs ; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By the by, I hope 't is not true that your brother is absolutely ruined ?

Jos. Surf. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Ah ! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits ; everybody almost is in the same way ; so if Charles is undone, he 'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

Jos. Surf. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

Enter SERVANT, I.

Serv. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. [*Exit SERVANT.*]

Lady Sneer. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you. [*MARIA makes an attempt to go away.*] Positively you sha'n't escape.

Enter CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, I.

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. [*Crosses to MRS. CANDOUR.*]—Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad! ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too; is n't he, Lady Sneerwell?

Sir Ben. [L.] O fie, uncle!

Crab. [R. c.] Nay, egad, it 's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymer in the kingdom.—Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs Drowzie's conversazione. Come now!

Sir Ben. Uncle, now—prythee——

[*Crosses R. c.*

Crab. I' faith, ma'am, 't would surprise you to hear how ready he is at these things.

[*Sits L. with MRS. CANDOUR.*

Lady Sneer. [*Sits R.*] I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish any thing.

[*Chocolate is here handed round by the SERVANT.*]

Sir Ben. To say truth, ma'am, 't is very vulgar to print, and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. [*Crosses to MARIA.*] However, I have some love elegies which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

Crab. 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they 'll immortalize you!—you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura or Waller's Sacharissa.

Sir Ben. Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall murmur through a meadow of margin.—'Fore Gad, they will be the most elegant things of their kind.

Crab. [*To MRS. CANDOUR.*] But, ladies, that 's true—have you heard the news?

Mrs. Can. What, sir, do you mean the report of—

Crab. No, ma'am, that 's not it—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Can. Impossible !

Crab. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. [*Going c.*] 'T is very true, ma'am ; every thing is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

[*The SERVANT removes cups, and exits.*

Mrs. Can. [*Crosses c.*] It can't be—and I wonder any one should believe such a story, of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Ben. [*R. c.*] O Lud ! ma'am, that 's the very reason 't was believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Can. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crab. That they do, I 'll be sworn, ma'am. [*To SURFACE.*] O Lud ! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home ?

Jos Surf. [*L.*] Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crab. [*R. of JOSEPH.*] He has been in

the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe?—Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

Jos. Surf. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

Sir Ben. To be sure he may: for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

Crab. That's true, egad, nephew. If the old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman:—no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear that whenever he is sick they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

[*Crosses R. C.*

Sir Ben. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me when he entertains his friends, he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities: have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. Surf. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

[*Goes up c.*

Mar. Their malice is intolerable.

[*Goes up.*

Mrs. Can. O dear! she changes color very much. [Whispered.

Lady Sneer. 'T was nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

[*Goes up to meet other guests, who arrive at the back ; others follow at intervals.*]

Sir Ben. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious. [Crosses R. C.

Crab. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that: follow her, and put her in good humor. Aye, 'fore Gad, repeat to her some of your verses;—by the by, your epigram on Lady Betty's ponies.

Mrs. Can. [R.] Yes, do; let us all hear it.

Jos. Surf. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Ben. O plague on 't, uncle! 't is mere nonsense.

Crab. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

Sir Ben. [c.] But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricule was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these maccaronies;
To give them this title I 'm sure is not wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

[*Going L.*

Crab. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback, too.

Joseph Surf. [R.] A very Phœbus, mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. O dear, sir! trifles—trifles.

Mrs. Can. I must have a copy.

SERVANT *enters.*

Serv. [*Announcing*] Lady Teazle!

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady Sneer. Lady Teazle! [*Saluting* LADY TEAZLE *on both cheeks.*] I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

Lady Teaz. I believe he 'll wait on your ladyship presently. [*Goes* L.

Mrs. Can. [*Advancing with* CRABTREE *and* SIR BENJAMIN.] Now, I 'll die, but you are all so scandalous, I 'll forswear your society.

Lady Teaz. What 's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Can. [L. c.] They 'll not allow our friend, Miss Vermilion, to be handsome.

Lady Sneer. [R. c.] Oh, surely, she is a pretty woman.

Crab. [R.] I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. She has a charming fresh color.

Lady Teaz. [*Crosses, c.*] Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Can. Oh, fie! I 'll swear her color is natural: I have seen it come and go.

Lady Teaz. I dare swear you have, ma'am: it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

[*Crosses to c.*

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! How I hate to hear you talk so! But surely now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

Crab. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six and fifty if she's an hour.

[*Crosses L. c.*

Mrs. Can. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost—and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Ben. [R. c.] Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Mrs. Can. [*Crosses c.*] Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does not take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre calks her wrinkles.

Sir Ben. Come, come, 't is not that she paints so ill—but when she has finished her face, she joins it on so badly to her neck that she looks like a mended statue, in which the

connoisseur may see at once that the head is modern, though the trunk is antique.

Crab. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew!

[*Music is heard in the inner room and the guests pass to and fro.*]

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Ben. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady Teaz. Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always ajar, as it were—thus.

[*Shows her teeth.*]

Mrs. Can. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady Teaz. Nay, I allow even that 's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor's box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise, as it were—thus, *How do you do, madam? Yes, madam.*

[*Mimics.*]

Lady Sneer. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Serv. [*Announces*] Sir Peter Teazle.

Lady Teaz. O Lud! here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry. [*Crosses R.*

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Pet. Ladies, your most obedient servant. [*Aside.*] Mercy on me! here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

Mrs. Can. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious—they'll allow good qualities to nobody.

Sir Pet. That must be very distressing to you, indeed, Mrs. Candour.

Mrs. Can. Not even good-nature to our friend, Mrs. Pursy.

Lady Teaz. [*c.*] What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

Mrs. Can. Nay, but her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneer. That's very true, indeed.

Lady Teaz. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by

pulleys ; and often in the hottest noon in summer you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's, and puffing round the Ring on a full trot. [Imitates, going R.

Mrs. Can. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

Sir Pet. Yes, a good defence truly !

Sir Ben. Ah ! you are both of you too good-natured.

Sir Pet. Yes, confoundedly good-natured. [Goes L.

Sir Ben. And Mrs. Candour is of so moral a turn.

Mrs. Can. Well, I will never join ridiculing a friend ; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle ; and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

Crab. Oh, to be sure ! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen ; 't is a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Ben. So she has, indeed—an Irish front——

Crab. Caledonian locks——

Sir Ben. Dutch nose——

Crab. Austrian lips—

Sir Ben. Complexion of a Spaniard—

Crab. And teeth *à la Chinois*—

Sir Ben. In short, her face resembles a *table-d'hôte* at Spa—where no two guests are of a nation—

Crab. Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Mercy on my life!—a person they dine with twice a week. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Can. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for, give me leave to say, that Mrs. Ogle—

Sir Pet. [*Crosses c. to MRS. CANDOUR.*] Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

[*MRS. CANDOUR goes up the stage.*

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, Sir

Peter! but you are a cruel creature—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

Sir Pet. Ah! madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good-nature than your ladyship is aware of.

[*Goes up and joins* MRS. CANDOUR.]

Lady Teaz. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

Sir Ben. Or rather, suppose them man and wife, because one so seldom sees them together.

Lady Teaz. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

[MRS. CANDOUR *and* LADY SNEERWELL
come down each side of SIR PETER.]

Sir Pet. 'Fore heaven, madam, I would, and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputation but [*between* MRS. CANDOUR *and* LADY SNEERWELL] qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

[*Goes L.*

Lady Sneer. Go, you monster.

Mrs. Can. But surely you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Pet. Yes, madam, I would have law for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

SERVANT *enters* L. and *whispers* SIR PETER.

Crab. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

All. Never! Never!

Sir Pet. Nine times out of ten founded on some idle rumor or groundless misrepresentation. [*To the* SERVANT.] I'll be with them directly. [*Exit* SERVANT.] I'll get away unperceived. [*Apart and going* L.

Lady Sneer. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us just as the dance begins.

Sir Pet. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me.

[*Exit* SIR PETER, L.

Sir Ben. Well—certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being; I could tell you some stories of him that would make you laugh heartily, if he were not your husband.

Lady Teaz. Oh, pray don't mind that;—why don't you?—Come, do let 's hear them. [*They all go up c., joining the rest of the company going into the inner room.*]

Jos. Surf. [*Coming down from R. to L. with MARIA.*] Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

Mar. [*L.*] How is it possible I should?—If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness!

Jos. Surf. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone?—Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Mar. Why will you distress me by renewing this subject?

Jos. Surf. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir

Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

Mar. Ungenerously urged! [*Crossing R.*] But whatever my sentiments are for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother. [*Going up.*]

Jos. Surf. [*Following her and getting R.*] Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown: by all that 's honest, I swear— [*Kneels.*] Gad's life, here 's Lady Teazle! —You must not—no, you shall not—for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle——

[*LADY TEAZLE advances L. C.*]

Mar. Lady Teazle!

Jos. Surf. Yet, were Sir Peter to suspect——

Lady Teaz. What is this, pray? [*MARIA goes L.*] Child, you are wanted in the next room. [*Exit MARIA, C.*]—What is all this, pray?

Jos. Surf. Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow sus-

pected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

Lady Teaz. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender method of reasoning—do you usually argue on your knees?

Jos. Surf. Oh, the 's a child, and I thought a little bombast— But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady Teaz. No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and although one must not be out of the fashion, I have so many of my country prejudices left, that, though Sir Peter's ill-humor may vex me ever so much, it never shall provoke me to—

Jos. Surf. The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

Lady Teaz. Go—you are an insinuating wretch. [*Crosses R.*]—But we shall be missed—let us join the company.

Jos. Surf. But we had better not return together.

Lady Teaz. Well—don't stay; for Maria

sha'n't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you.

[LADY TEAZLE goes up c. *Music of Minuet.*]

Jos. Surf. A curious dilemma, truly, my politics have run me into! I wanted at first only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely, I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many confounded rogueries, that I doubt I shall be exposed at last.

[*Exit R. as Minuet begins.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS AT THE END OF THE
DANCE.





ACT II.

SCENE.—SIR PETER'S *House. An elegant Saloon. Entrances R. and L.*

Enter LADY TEAZLE *and* SIR PETER, L.

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, I 'll not bear it.

Lady Teaz. [L.] Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in every thing; and what's more, I will, too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

Sir Pet. [R.] Very well, ma'am, very well—so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Lady Teaz Authority! no, to be sure: if you wanted authority over me, you should

have adopted me, and not married me : I am sure you were old enough.

[*Crosses R. with a sly laugh.*

Sir Pet. Old enough!—ay—there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I 'll not be ruined by your extravagance.

Lady Teaz. [*Arranging her hat at mirror, R.*] My extravagance ! I 'm sure I 'm not more extravagant than a woman ought to be.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife ! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to give a *fête champêtre* at Christmas !

Lady Teaz. Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame, because flowers are dear in cold weather ? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I am sure, I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet ! [*Goes L.*

Sir Pet. Oons ! madam, if you had been born to this, I should n't wonder at your

talking thus ; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady Teaz. No, no, I don't ; 't was a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you. [Sits.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style :—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first, sitting at your tambour, in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side ; your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted of your own working.

Lady Teaz. Oh, yes ! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my Aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, ma'am, 't was so indeed. [Sits R.

Lady Teaz. And then, you know, my evening amusements ! To draw patterns for ruffles which I had not the materials to make up ; to read a novel to my aunt ;

[*Rises.*] or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase. [Goes L.]

Sir Pet. [R.] I am glad you have so good a memory. [*Rises.*] Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—*vis-à-vis*—three powdered footmen before your chair; and in the summer a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler on a dock'd coach-horse.

Lady Teaz. [C.] No—I swear I never did that: I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

[Goes L.]

Sir Pet. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank; in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady Teaz. Well, then—and there is but one thing more you can make me add to the obligation, and that is—

Sir Pet. My widow, I suppose?

Lady Teaz. Hem! hem! [Crosses R.]

Sir Pet. I thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself; for though your ill-conduct may disturb my peace of mind, it shall never break my heart, I promise you: however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady Teaz. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

[*Going c.*]

Sir Pet. [R.] 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady Teaz. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Pet. The fashion, indeed! What had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teaz. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Ay—there again—taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teaz. [*Laughs heartily at him, and he goes round to R.*] That's very true in-

deed, Sir Peter, and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, since we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Pet. Ay, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there.

Lady Teaz. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance: for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation. [Crosses L.

Lady Teaz. What! would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Pet. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady Teaz. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. [At mirror.

Sir Pet. Grace, indeed!

Lady Teaz. [Coming c.] But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse. When I say an ill-natured thing 't is out of pure good-humor; and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me.

Sir Pet. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

Lady Teaz. Then indeed you must make haste after me, or you 'll be too late. So good-by to ye. [Exit LADY TEAZLE, L.]

Sir Pet. [Sits c.] So, I have gained much by my intended expostulation: yet, with what a charming air she contradicts every thing I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing every thing in her power to plague me.

Enter ROWLEY, L. D.

Rowley. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant; how is it with you, sir?

Sir Pet. [Taking snuff.] Very bad, Master

Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Row. [L.] What can have happened since yesterday?

Sir Pet. A good question to a married man!

Row. Nay, I 'm sure, Sir Peter, your lady cannot be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Pet. Why, has anybody told you she was dead? [Rises.

Row. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Pet. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Row. Indeed!

Sir Pet. Ay! and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! Then, to complete my vexations, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the

man whom I have long resolved on for her husband ; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Row. You know, sir, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen.

Sir Pet. [*Sits c.*] You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their uncle Sir Oliver's Eastern liberality gave them an early independence . of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes ; but for the other, take my word for 't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance.

Row. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Sir Pet. What ? let me hear.

Row. Sir Oliver *is* arrived, and at this moment in town. Indeed, he will be shortly with you.

Sir Pet. How?—[*Rises.*] You astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Row. I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick. He will make his first call on you.

Sir Pet. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'T is sixteen years since we met. We have had many a day together. But does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Row. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Sir Pet. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits—however, he shall have his way; but, pray, does he know I am married?

Row. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Pet. [*Crosses L.*] What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption? Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together: but he has been steady

to his text. Well, I 'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Row. By no means.

Sir Pet. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I 'd have him think, Lord forgive me, that we are a very happy couple.

Row. I understand you. But then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

Sir Pet. Egad, and so we must—and that 's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no, the crime carries its punishment along with it. [Crosses R.

Enter SERVANT, L. D.

Serv. Sir Oliver Surface, sir, is below, Sir Peter. [Exit.

Row. Come, let us go to him.

Sir Pet. No, no, Master Rowley, I 'd never dare to face Noll at this moment. [Pushing him L.] Go you and receive him till I can regain my composure. And, Row-

ley, break the news of my marriage infelicity to him gently. Take the edge of his ridicule upon yourself, so that when we meet his jests will be easier to bear. Go to him.

[*Exit* ROWLEY, L.

Sir Pet. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'T is now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tiffed a little going to church, and came to a quarrel before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humors: yet, the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I 'll never be weak enough to own it. [*Exit* SIR PETER, R.

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE *and*
ROWLEY, L.

Sir Oliv. [R.] Ha! ha! ha! So my old

friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country—Ha! ha! ha! That he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last.

Row. [L.] But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver: 't is a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliv. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance! Poor Peter! [*Sits c.*] But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, hey?

Row. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and, I am sure, greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has been industriously led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles' ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

Sir Oliv. [R.] Ay, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, impudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the

value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you. No, no, if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Row. [L.] Then, my life on 't you will reclaim him. Ah, sir! it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him; and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

Sir Oliv. [*Rises.*] What, shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Row. Sir, 't is this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. [*Looking off R.*] But here comes Sir Peter. [*Goes a little up.*]

Sir Oliv. Egad, so he does. Mercy on me!—he 's greatly altered—and seems to have a settled married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance!

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE, R.

Sir Pet. [R.] Ha! Sir Oliver—my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

Sir Oliv. [L.] Thank you—thank you, Sir Peter! and i' faith I 'm glad to find you well, believe me.

Sir Pet. [R.] Oh! 't is a long time since we met—fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliv. Ay, I have had my share.—But what! I find you are married, hey, my old boy? Well, well—it can't be helped—and so—I wish you joy with all my heart.

[SERVANT *serves wine to SIR PETER and SIR OLIVER.*]

Sir Pet. [Sits.] Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. Yes, I have entered into—the happy state; but we 'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliv. [Sits.] True, true, Sir Peter: old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting—no, no, no.

Row. [L.] Take care, pray, sir. [*Apart.*]

Sir Oliv. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild rogue, I find, hey?

Sir Pet. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends. Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be. Everybody in the world speaks well of him.

[SERVANT *takes wine away.*]

Sir Oliv. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him!—Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir Pet. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

Sir Oliv. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles' errors; but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Row. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

Sir Pet. Oh ! my life on Joseph's honor.

Sir Oliv. And my life on the other.

Sir Pet. Well, well, but this plan of yours, Mr. Rowley.

Row. [L.] Why, sir, it is this : There is a certain Mr. Stanley, who is nearly related to them by their mother. He was once a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, since his confinement, both to Mr. Surface and Charles ; from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do ; and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Oliv. [*Rises, going R.*] Ah ! he is my brother's son.

Sir Pet. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to——

Row. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends,

and as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions; and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, "a heart to pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity."

[Goes L.

SERVANT *enters and whispers* ROWLEY.

Sir Pet. [C., rising.] Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well—make the trial if you please.

Sir Oliv. [Crosses L. C.] But where is the fellow whom you brought for me to examine, relative to Charles' affairs?

Row. Below, waiting your commands, and no one can give you better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done every thing in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Pet. Pray, let us have him in.

Row. Desire Mr. Moses to walk up-stairs.

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

Sir Pet. But pray, why should you suppose he will tell the truth?

Row. Oh! [*Crosses c.*] I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests; I have also another evidence in my power: one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce to remove some of your prejudices, Sir Peter, relative to Charles and Lady Teazle.

Sir Pet. I have heard too much on that subject. [*Goes up c.*]

Row. Here comes the honest Israelite.

[*Going l.*]

Enter MOSES, l.

—This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. [*c.*] Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew, Charles.

Mos. [*Crosses to SIR OLIVER.*] Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him ; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliv. That was unlucky, truly ; for you had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Mos. None at all ; I had n't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliv. Unfortunate, indeed ! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses ?

Mos. Yes, he knows that ;—this very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

Sir Pet. [*R.*] What, one Charles never had money from before ?

Mos. Yes—Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Pet. [*Rises.*] Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me !—[*Crosses c.*] Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium ?

Mos. Not at all.

Sir Pet. [c.] Now, then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by any old romancing tale of a poor relation : go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then, I 'll answer for it, you 'll see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliv. [R. c.] Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterward, as old Stanley.

Sir Pet. True, so you may.

Row. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure ; however, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful ?

Mos. You may depend upon me. [*Looks at his watch.*] This is near the time I was to have gone. [*Going up.*]

Sir Oliv. [*Following him.*] I 'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses. But hold ! I have forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew ?

Mos. There 's no need—the principal is Christian.

Sir Oliv. Is he ? I 'm very sorry to hear

it. But then, again, ain't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?

Sir Pet. Not at all; 't would not be out of character, if you went in your own carriage, would it, Moses?

Mos. [*Crosses c.*] Not in the least. I keeps a trim little briskey myself.

Sir Oliv. Well—but how must I talk?—there 's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Pet. Oh, there s not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands—hey, Moses?

Mos. Yes, that 's a very great point.

Sir Oliv. I 'll answer for 't I 'll not be wanting in that. I 'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan at least.

Mos. If you ask him no more than that you 'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliv. Hey!—what the plague!—how much then?

Mos. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him

in great distress, and wants the monies very bad, you may ask double.

Sir Pet. A good honest trade you 're learning, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. Truly, I think so—and not unprofitable.

Mos. Then, you know, you have n't the monies yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him from a friend.

Sir Oliv. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Mos. Yes; and your friend is an unconscionable dog: but you can't help that.

Sir Oliv. My friend an unconscionable dog, is he?

Mos. Yes, and he himself has not the monies by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oliv. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that 's very kind of him.

Sir Pet. I' faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean—you 'll soon be master of the trade.

Sir Oliv. Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Pet. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oliv. Oh, never fear; my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

Mos. It won't be my fault, Sir Oliver, if you 're not a complete rogue before you get down-stairs.

[*Exeunt* SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES.]

Sir Pet. So, now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced: you are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Row. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I 'll hear what he has to say, presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her. [*Exit* ROWLEY, L.] I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph—I am determined I will do it—he will give me his opinion sincerely.

Enter MARIA, L.

—So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Mar. [L.] No, sir; he was engaged.

Sir Pet. [R.] Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Mar. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely—you compel me to declare that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Pet. So—here 's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 't is Charles only whom you would prefer. 'T is evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Mar. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him; I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy of my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Pet. Well, well, pity him as much as

you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthy object.

Mar. Never to his brother. [*Crosses R.*

Sir Pet. Go—perverse and obstinate! but take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is; don't compel me to inform you of it.

Mar. I can only say you shall not have just reason. 'T is true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but I must cease to think you so when you would compel me to be miserable. [*Exit MARIA, R.*

Sir Pet. Was ever man so crossed as I am? Every thing conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. [*LADY TEAZLE sings without.*] [*SONG.*] But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good-humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

Enter LADY TEAZLE, R.

Lady Teaz. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you have n't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humored when I am not by.

Sir Pet. [L.] Ah! Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humored at all times.

Lady Teaz. [R.] I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good-humored now and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Pet. Two hundred pounds! What, a'n't I to be in a good-humor without paying for it? But speak to me thus, and i' faith there 's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it [*Gives her notes*]; but seal me a bond of repayment.

Lady Teaz. Oh, no—there—my note of hand will do as well. [*Offering her hand.*]

Sir Pet. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you; but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady Teaz. If you please. I 'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quar-

relling, provided you 'll own you were tired first.

Sir Pet. Well—then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady Teaz. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you—you look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would ; and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing—did n't you? Did n't you?

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, and you were kind and attentive—

Lady Teaz. Ay, so I was, and would always take your part when my acquaintance used to abuse you and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Pet. Indeed !

Lady Teaz. Ay, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I did n't think you so ugly by any means.

Sir Pet. Thank you.

Lady Teaz. And I dared say you 'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. And you prophesied right : and we shall now be the happiest couple——

Lady Teaz. And never, never differ again ? *[Both sit, c.*

Sir Pet. No, never, never !—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously ; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you will recollect, my love, you always begin first.

Lady Teaz. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter ; indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Pet. Now see, my angel ! take care—contradicting is n't the way to keep friends.

Lady Teaz. Then don't you begin it, my love !

Sir Pet. There, now ! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady Teaz. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear——

Sir Pet. There ! now you want to quarrel again.

Lady Teaz. No, I am sure I don't :—but if you will be so peevish—

Sir Pet. There now ! who begins first ?

Lady Teaz. Why, you, to be sure. [*Both start up.*] I said nothing—but there 's no bearing your temper. [*Crosses, L.*

Sir Pet. No, no, madam ; the fault 's in your own temper. [*Going R.*

Lady Teaz. Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

Lady Teaz. You are a great bear, I am sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more.

Lady Teaz. So much the better.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam : 't is evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest squires in the neighborhood.

Lady Teaz. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never

could meet with any one who would have him. [Crosses, L.]

Sir Pet. Ay, ay, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me; you never had such an offer before.

Lady Teaz. No? Did n't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and—he has broke his neck since we have been married. [Goes, L.]

Sir Pet. [R.] I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there is an end of every thing. I believe you capable of every thing that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, *you* and Charles are—not without grounds—

Lady Teaz. [L.] Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing. I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you. [Goes R.]

Sir Pet. Very well, madam! very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please!

Lady Teaz. Very well! A separate maintenance!

Sir Pet. Yes, madam, or a divorce!

Lady Teaz. As you please! A divorce!

Sir Pet. Very well, madam, a divorce!—
I 'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors.

Lady Teaz. Agreed! agreed!—And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple—and never, never—never differ again, you know—ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Plagues and tortures! Can't I make her angry either? She may break my heart, but she sha'n't keep her temper.

[*Exit, L.*

END OF ACT II.





ACT III.

SCENE.—*The Picture Gallery at CHARLES SURFACE'S. Curtains in Arch at back concealing Dining-room.*

Enter TRIP, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, and MOSES, R.

Trip. Here, Master Moses ! if you 'll stay a moment, I 'll try whether—what 's the gentleman's name ?

Sir Oliv. Mr. Moses, what is my name ?

Mos. Mr. Premium. [*Crosses c.*

Trip. Premium—very well.

[*Exit TRIP, taking snuff, behind curtain, c.*

Sir Oliv. [L.] To judge by the servants, one would n't believe the master was ruined. But what !—sure, this was my brother's house ?

Mos. [R.] Yes, sir ; Mr. Charles bought

it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, etc., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him. [Goes R.

Sir Oliv. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Re-enter TRIP, C.

Trip. My master says you must wait, gentlemen: he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliv. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message.

Trip. Yes, yes, sir: he knows you are here—I did not forget little Premium, no, no, no.

Sir Oliv. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliv. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

Trip. Why, yes—here are three or four of us who pass our time agreeably enough;

but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliv. Bags and bouquets ! halters and bastinadoes ! [*Aside.*

Trip. And, *à propos*, Moses—have you been able to get me that little bill discounted ?

Sir Oliv. Wants to raise money too ! mercy on me ! Has his distresses too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns. [*Sits, and aside.*

Mos. [R.] 'T was not to be done, indeed, Mr. Tripe. [*Gives TRIP the note.*

Trip. [C.] Good lack, you surprise me ! My friend Brush has endorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 't was the same as cash.

Mos. No ! 't would n't do.

Trip. A small sum—but twenty pounds. Hark 'ee, Moses, do you think you could n't get it by way of annuity ?

Sir Oliv. [L.] An annuity ! ha ! ha ! a footman raise money by way of annuity ! Well done, luxury, egad ! [*Aside.*

Mos. Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life too, if you please.

Sir Oliv. It's more than I would your neck. [*Aside.*

Mos. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; [*Bell rings, c.*] but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November—or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit on the blue and silver: [*Bell rings, c.*] these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security—[*Bell rings, c.*] Egad, [*Crosses c.*] I heard the bell, I believe! Gentlemen, I can introduce you presently; step this way for a moment! Don't forget the annuity, little Moses! This way, gentlemen. I'll insure my place, you know. [*Opens door, l.*

Sir Oliv. If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed! [*Exeunt, l.*

[TRIP returns and draws the curtains at back. CHARLES SURFACE, CARELESS, slightly tipsy, SIR HARRY, etc., come forward as if from table, the end of which is seen off R. Servants bring wine and serve it. TRIP exit, L.]

Chas. Surf. 'Fore heaven, 't is true!—there 's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on 't, they won't drink wine.

Care. It is so indeed, Charles! They give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit.

Sir Har. [Seated on lounge, R.] But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

Chas. Surf. For my part, egad! I am never so successful as when I am a little merry: let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose.

All. Hey, what?

Chas. Surf. At least, I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

Care. Ay, that I believe.

Chas. Surf. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love who is an abjurer of wine? 'T is the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at the top is the maid that has bewitched you.

Care. Now, then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favorite.

Chas. Surf. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible—on earth.

Care. Oh! then we 'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant.

Chas. Surf. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria! Maria!

Sir Har. Maria who?

Chas. Surf. Oh, damn the surname—'t is too formal to be registered in love's calendar. Maria!

Care. Down goes Maria!

All. Maria! [*They drink.*

Chas. Surf. But now, Sir Harry, beware, we must have beauty superlative.

Care. Nay, never study, Sir Harry : we 'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

Sir Har. Egad, so I have ! and I 'll give him the song instead of the lady.

SONG.

Here 's to the maiden of bashful fifteen ;
 Here 's to the widow of fifty ;
 Here 's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
 And here 's to the housewife that 's thrifty.

Chorus. Let the toast pass—
 Drink to the lass,
 I 'll warrant she 'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here 's to the charmer whose dimples we prize !
 Now to the maid who has none, sir :
 Here 's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
 And here 's to the nymph with but *one*, sir.
Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
 Young or ancient, I care not a feather ;
 So fill up your glasses, nay, fill to the brim,
 And let us e'en toast them together.
Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

All. Bravo ! bravo !

Enter TRIP, L., and *whispers* CHARLES SURFACE.

Chas. Surf. [*Rises.*] Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little.

Care. Nay, prithee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropt in by chance?

Chas. Surf. No, faith! To tell the truth, 't is a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Care. Oh, hang it! let 's have the Jew in.

Sir Har. Ay, and the broker too, by all means.

Care. Yes, yes, the Brew and the Joker.

Chas. Surf. Egad, with all my heart! Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in—[*Exit* TRIP, R.]—though there 's one of them a stranger, I can assure you.

Care. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they 'll grow conscientious.

Chas. Surf. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter TRIP, MOSES, and SIR OLIVER SURFACE, R. They cross to L.

Chas. Surf. So, honest Moses, walk in ; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that 's the gentleman's name ; is n't it, Moses ?

Mos. Yes, sir.

Chas. Surf. Set chairs, Trip—sit down, Mr. Premium—glasses, Trip—sit down, Moses. [*They sit R. C.*] Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment ; here's *Success to usury!* Fill the gentleman a bumper.

Mos. *Success to usury!*

Care. Right, Moses—usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliv. Then—*here 's all the success it deserves!*

Care. [*Rising and coming forward.*] No, no, that won't do ! Mr. Premium ; you have demurred at the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

Sir Har. [*Rising and advancing.*] A pint bumper, at least.

Mos. Oh, pray, sir—consider—Mr. Premium 's a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine.

Sir Har. Give Moses a quart glass—this is mutiny and a high contempt for the chair.

Chas. Surf. No, hang it, you sha'n't! Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Care. Plague on 'em, then, if they won't drink! Come, Harry, [*Taking his arm and going up c.*] the dice are in the next room. Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen?

Chas. Surf. I will! I will! [*Exeunt all the gentlemen through arch, c., singing.*] Careless!

Care. [*Returning.*] Well!

Chas. Surf. Perhaps I may want you.

Care. Oh, you know I am always ready: word or bond, 't is all the same to me.

[*Exit.*]

Mos. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is——

Chas. Surf. [*Putting MOSES across to L.*] Pshaw! have done.—Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at

expression : he 'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this : I am an extravagant young fellow, who wants money to borrow—you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who has got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it ; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you can see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without further ceremony.

Sir Oliv. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Chas. Surf. Oh, no, sir ; plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I like you the better for it. However, you are mistaken in one thing ; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend ; but then he 's an unconscionable dog ; [*Crosses c.*] is n't he, Moses ? And must sell stock to accommodate you—must n't he, Moses ?

Mos. Yes, indeed ! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie !

Chas. Surf. Right. People that speak truth generally do ; but these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What ! I know money is n't to be bought without paying for 't !

Sir Oliv. Well, but what security could you give ? You have no land, I suppose ?

Chas. Surf. Not a mole-hill, nor a twig, but what's in the bough-pots out of the window !

Sir Oliv. Nor any stock, I presume ?

Chas. Surf. Nothing but live stock—and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted with any of my connections ?

Sir Oliv. Why, to say truth, I am.

Chas. Surf. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oliv. That you have a rich uncle I have heard ; but how your expectations will turn out, is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Chas. Surf. Oh, no, there can be no doubt. They tell me I 'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me every thing.

Sir Oliv. Indeed! This is the first I've heard of it.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, 't is just so—[*Crosses c.*] Moses knows 't is true; don't you, Moses.

Sir Oliv. [R.] Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal. [*Aside.*]

Chas. Surf. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it is agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life: though at the same time, the old fellow has been so liberal to me that I give you my word that I should be sorry to hear any thing had happened to him.

Sir Oliv. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me—for I might live to a hundred and never see the principal.

Chas. Surf. Oh, yes, you would—the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

Sir Oliv. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Chas. Surf. What! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life!

Sir Oliv. No, indeed, I am not ; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Chas Surf. There again, now, you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver! Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told—and is so much altered lately, that his nearest relation would not know him!

Sir Oliv. No! Ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his nearest relations would not know him! Ha! ha! ha! egad—Ha! ha! ha!

Chas. Surf. Ha! ha!—you're glad to hear that, little Premium.

Sir Oliv. No, no, I'm not.

Chas Surf. Yes, yes, you are—ha! ha! ha!—You know that mends your chance.

Sir Oliv. But I am told Sir Oliver is coming over—nay, some say he has actually arrived.

Chas. Surf. Pshaw! Sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no; rely on 't, he's at this moment at Calcutta—is n't he, Moses?

Mos. Oh, yes, certainly. I'll take my oath of it.

Sir Oliv. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority—have n't I, Moses?

Mos. [L.] Yes, most undoubted! I'll take my oath of it.

Sir Oliv. [R.] But, sir, as I understand, you want a few hundreds immediately—is there nothing you could dispose of?

Chas. Surf. [C.] How do you mean?

Sir Oliv. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Chas. Surf. O Lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you better than I can.

Mos. Yes, I popped them in the crucible myself.

Sir Oliv. Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation bowls. [*Aside.*] Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and complete.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliv. Mercy upon me! Learning that

had run in the family like an heir-loom !
[*Aside.*] Pray, what are become of the books?

Chas. Surf. You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

Mos. I know nothing of books, except the books of interest.

Sir Oliv. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not much, indeed ; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors here, and if you have a taste for old paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain.

Sir Oliv. Hey ! what the devil ! Sure, you would n't sell your forefathers, would you?

Chas. Surf. Every man of them, to the best bidder.

Sir Oliv. What ! your great-uncles and aunts ?

Chas. Surf. Ay, and my great-grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oliv. Now I give him up. [*Aside.*] What the plague, have you no bowels for

your own kindred? Odd's life, do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Chas. Surf. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry; what need you care if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliv. Well, I'll be the purchaser: I think I can dispose of the family canvas. Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

[*Crosses L. Aside.*

Enter CARELESS from C.

Care. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

Chas. Surf. I can't come yet: i' faith, we are going to have a sale here:—Little Premium will buy all my ancestors.

Care. Oh, burn your ancestors!

Chas. Surf. No, he may do that afterward, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you: egad, you shall be auctioneer.

Care. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. I can handle a hammer as well as a dice-box. Going! going! [*Going R.*

Sir Oliv. Oh, the profligates!

[*Aside.*

Chas Surf. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business !
[*Crosses L. c.*

Sir Oliv. Oh, yes, I do vastly. Ha ! ha ! ha ! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha ! ha ! Oh, the prodigal !
[*Aside.*

Chas. Surf. To be sure ! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations ?

Sir Oliv. I 'll never forgive him : never ! never !

Chas. Surf. Look around you, gentlemen : look about you—here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliv. Ah ! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Chas. Surf. I hope not.—Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am : here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family.—But, come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer ; here 's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose.

[*Brings chair forward, c.*

Care. Ay, ay, this will do.—But, Charles, I have n't a hammer; and what 's an auctioneer without his hammer?

Chas. Surf. Egad, that 's true. [*Taking pedigree down from back.*] What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. Here, Careless—you shall have no common bit of mahogany; here 's the family-tree for you, you rogue—this shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliv. [L.] What an unnatural rogue! an *ex post facto* parricide! [*Aside.*]

Care. Yes, yes, here 's a list of your generation indeed; faith, Charles, this is the most-convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 't will not only serve as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going!

Chas. Surf. Bravo, Careless! Well, here 's my great-uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet. What say you, Mr. Premium?—look at him—there 's a

hero, not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipt captains are, but enveloped in wigs and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

Sir Oliv. [*Aside to MOSES.*] Bid him speak.

Mos. Mr. Premium would have *you* speak.

Chas. Surf. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I 'm sure that 's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oliv. Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds! [*Aside.*] Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard. Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

Mos. They 're sheep at half the price.

Sir Oliv. Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself! [*Aside.*] Five pounds ten—she 's mine.

Chas. Surf. Knock down my aunt De-

borah, Careless ! This now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit. What do you rate him at, Moses ?

Mos. Four guineas.

Chas. Surf. Four guineas ! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig. Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the wool-sack ; do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliv. By all means.

Care. Gone !

Chas. Surf. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of parliament, and noted speakers ; and what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliv. That is very extraordinary indeed ! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of parliament. [*Crosses.*]

Care. Well said, little Premium ! I'll knock them down at forty.

Chas. Surf. Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Norwich ; take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliv. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

Chas. Surf. Come, make it guineas, and I throw the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliv. They 're mine.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen.

Mos. Six guineas for the mayor and aldermen—what 's to become of the corporation?

Chas. Surf. But, plague on 't, we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale; what say you, little Premium? Give me three hundred pounds, and take all that remains on this side in a lump.

Care. Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down this side of the room!

Care. Going, going, gone!

[*Knocks* MOSES.

Mos. But, Mr. Charles, I ain't this side of the room!

Sir Oliv. Well, well, any thing to accommodate you—they are mine. But there is

one portrait which you have always passed over.

Care. [*Having put the chair away, comes forward, L.*] What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, I mean that, though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow by any means.

Chas. Surf. What, that? Oh! that 's my uncle Oliver; 't was done before he went to India.

Care. Your uncle Oliver? Gad, then you 'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw; an unforgiving eye, and a confounded disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on 't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

[*Crosses R. Slapping him on the shoulder.*]

Sir Oliv. [*Crosses C.*] Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive; but I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

Chas. Surf. No, hang it; I 'll never part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been

very good to me, and, egad, I 'll keep his picture while I 've a room to put it in.

Sir Oliv. [c.] The rogue 's my nephew after all! [*Aside.*] But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Chas. Surf. [L.] I 'm sorry for 't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, have n't you got enough of them?

Sir Oliv. I forgive him every thing! [*Aside.*] But, sir, when I take a whim in my head I don't value money. I 'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Chas. Surf. Don't tease me, Master Broker; I tell you I 'll not part with it, and there 's an end of it. [*Crosses to R.*

Sir Oliv. How like his father the dog is! [*Aside.*] Well, well, I have done. I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a resemblance. [*Aside.*] Here is a draft for your sum. [*Crosses R. c. Taking it out of his pocket-book.*]

Chas. Surf. Why, 't is for eight hundred pounds.

Sir Oliv. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

Chas. Surf. Zounds! no!—I tell you once more.

Sir Oliv. Then never mind the difference, we 'll balance that another time—but give me your hand on the bargain ; you are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg your pardon, sir, for being so free. Come, Moses.

[*Crosses R.*

Chas. Surf. [c.] Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow ! But hark 'ee, Premium, you 'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen ?

Sir Oliv. [L.] Yes, yes, I 'll send for them in a day or two.

Chas. Surf. But hold ; do now send a genteel conveyance for them, for I assure you they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

[*Crosses L.*

Sir Oliv. I will, I will—for all but Oliver.

Chas. Surf. Ay, all but the little nabob.

Sir Oliv. You 're fixed on that ?

Chas. Surf. Peremptorily. [*Crosses L.*

Sir Oliv. A dear, extravagant rogue !
[*Aside.*] Good-day ! Come, Moses. Let me hear now who dares call him profligate !

[*Exeunt SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES, R.*

Care. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever met with.

Chas. Surf. Egad, he 's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how the devil Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow. But, Careless, say I 'll join the company in a few moments.

Care. [R.] I will—don't let any one persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense ; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Chas. Surf. [L.] Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them. Ay, ay, never fear. [*Exit CARELESS, R. U. E.*] Let me see—two thirds of this, five hundred and thirty odd pounds, are mine by right.

Enter ROWLEY.

Ha! Rowley! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintances.

Row. [L.] Yes, I heard the family portraits were a-going. There 's no making you serious a moment.

Chas. Surf. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

Row. A hundred pounds! Consider only—

Chas. Surf. Gad's life, don't talk about it; poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and if you don't make haste we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Row. Ah, there's the point! I will never cease dunning you with the old proverb—

Chas. Surf. "Be just before you are generous." Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity, for the soul of me.

Row. Yet, one hour's reflection—

Chas. Surf. Hark 'ee, Rowley, while I have, by heaven I'll give; so hang your economy, and away to old Stanley with the money. [*Exit ROWLEY.*] 'Fore heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for! Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant.



ACT IV.

SCENE.—JOSEPH SURFACE'S *library*. SER-
VANT *discovered at fire*.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE. *Goes to table ;
looks over some letters.*

Jos. Surf. No letter from Lady Teazle ?

Serv. No, sir.

Jos. Surf. I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming.

[Knocking.

Serv. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Jos. Surf. Hold. See whether 't is or not. I have a particular message for you if 't is my brother. [*Exit* SERVANT.] Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I hope I may not lose the heiress through the scrape I 've drawn myself into with the wife.

However, Charles' imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

Enter SERVANT, L.

Serv. Mr. Stanley, sir.

Jos. Surf. Don't admit him.

Serv. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Jos. Surf. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations! Well, why don't you show the fellow up? [*Exit* SERVANT, L.] Sure Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before. My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria destroyed in a moment! I'm in rare humor to listen to other people's distresses! I sha'n't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on old Stanley. I must try to put a little charity into my face, however.

Enter SIR OLIVER, L.

Sir Oliv. I don't like the complaisance of his features. [*Aside.*

Jos. Surf. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting—Mr. Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliv. [L.] At your service.

Jos. Surf. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down—I entreat you, sir!

Sir Oliv. Dear sir—there 's no occasion.—Too civil by half! [*Aside. Sitting, L.*]

Jos. Surf. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, Mr. Stanley, I think?

Sir Oliv. I was, sir; so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Jos. Surf. Dear sir, there needs no apology; he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was one of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oliv. If your uncle Sir Oliver were here, I should have a friend.

Jos. Surf. My dear sir, Sir Oliver is a

worthy man, a very worthy man ; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for *me* has been a mere nothing, though people, I know, have thought otherwise ; and for my part I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliv. What ! has he never transmitted you bullion—rupees—pagodas ?

Jos. Surf. O dear sir, nothing of the kind. No, no—a few presents now and then—china, shawls, congou tea, avadavats, and Indian crackers—little more, believe me.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Here 's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds ! Avadavats and Indian crackers. [*Aloud.*] Then, sir, you can't assist me ?

[*Rises.*

Jos. Surf. At present it grieves me to say I cannot ; [*Rises.*] but whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

Sir Oliv. I am extremely sorry—

Jos. Surf. Not more than I, believe me ; to pity without the power to relieve is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

Sir Oliv. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Jos. Surf. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley. William, be ready to open the door.

Enter SERVANT, L., standing by door.

Sir Oliv. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

Jos. Surf. Your very obedient.

Sir Oliv. Sir, your most obsequious.

Jos. Surf. You may depend upon hearing from me whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oliv. Sweet sir, you are too good!

Jos. Surf. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliv. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

Jos. Surf. Sir, yours as sincerely.

Sir Oliv. Now I 'm satisfied. [*Aside.*] Charles, you are my heir. [*Exit L.*]

Jos. Surf. This is one bad effect of a good character; it invites application from the unfortunate, [*Knocking.*] and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense.

Enter SERVANT, I.

Serv. 'T is her ladyship, sir ; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

Jos. Surf. Stay, stay ; draw that screen before the window [*SERVANT does so.*]*—*that will do ; my opposite neighbor is a lady of a curious temper. [*SERVANT exit.*] I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria ; but she must by no means be let into the secret—at least, till I have her more in my power.

[*JOSEPH sits at R., near fire.*]

Enter LADY TEAZLE, I.

Lady Teaz. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? [*JOSEPH rises.*] O Lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I could n't come before.

[*Crosses to fire.*]

Jos. Surf. [*c.*] Oh, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy very unfashionable in a lady of quality.

[*Places chairs, and sits after* LADY TEAZLE *is seated.*]

Lady Teaz. [R.] Upon my word you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles, too—that 's the best of the story, is n't it?

Jos. Surf. [*Aside.*] I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up.

Lady Teaz. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. Indeed I do not. [*Aside.*] Oh, certainly, certainly, for then my dear Lady Teazle would be also convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady Teaz. Well, well, I 'm inclined to believe you. But is n't it provoking, to have the most ill-natured things said of one!—And there 's my friend, Lady Sneerwell, has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too—that 's what vexes me.

Jos. Surf. Ay, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation; yes, yes, there 's the mortification,

indeed ; for when a scandalous tale is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady Teaz. No, to be sure, then I 'd forgive their malice ; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend ; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed, 't is monstrous !

Jos. Surf. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 't is your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to endeavor to outwit him.

Lady Teaz. Indeed!—so that if he suspects me without cause, it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for 't.

Jos. Surf. Undoubtedly ; for your husband should never be deceived in you—and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady Teaz. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable; and when the consciousness of my own innocence——

Jos. Surf. Ah! my dear madam, there is the great mistake: 't is this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion?—why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences?—why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions?—why, the consciousness of your innocence.

Lady Teaz. 'T is very true!

Jos. Surf. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

Lady Teaz. Do you think so?

Jos. Surf. Oh! I am sure on 't, and then you would find all scandal would cease at once; for, in short, your character at present

is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

Lady Teaz. Well, certainly, this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

Jos. Surf. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

Lady Teaz. Why, if my understanding were once convinced—

Jos. Surf. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes—heaven forbid I should persuade you to do any thing you *thought* wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

Lady Teaz. Don't you think we may as well leave *honor* out of the argument?

[*Rises, crosses L.*

Jos. Surf. Ah! the ill-effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

[*Rises.*

Lady Teaz. I doubt they do indeed; and I will fairly own to you, that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill-usage, sooner than your *honorable logic*, after all.

Jos. Surf. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of—— [*Taking her hand.*]

Enter SERVANT, L.

—'Sdeath, you blockhead—what do you want?

Serv. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Jos. Surf. Sir Peter! Oons—the devil!

Lady Teaz. Sir Peter! O Lud—I 'm ruined—I 'm ruined!

Serv. Sir, 't was n't I let him in.

Lady Teaz. Oh! I 'm quite undone! What will become of me? Now, Mr. Logic—Oh! mercy, sir, he 's on the stairs—I 'll get behind here—and if ever I 'm so imprudent again—— [*Goes behind screen.*]

Jos. Surf. Give me that book.

[*Sits down near fire. SERVANT pretends to adjust the table, L.*]

Enter SIR PETER, L.

Sir Pet. Ay, ever improving himself. Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface!

[*Taps JOSEPH on the shoulder.*]

Jos. Surf. Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon. [*Gaping—throws away the book.*] I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You have n't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. [*Crosses L.,*] Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Pet. 'T is very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps.

[*Walking up toward screen.*]

Jos. Surf. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

[*Turning SIR PETER from the screen, R.*]

Sir Pet. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find any thing in a hurry.

Jos. Surf. Ay, or to hide any thing in a hurry either. [*Aside.*]

Sir Pet. Well, I have a little private business—

Jos. Surf. You need not stay. [*To the SERVANT, who exits, L.*] Sir Peter—I beg— [*Indicates the divan. They sit.*]

Sir Pet. Well, now we are alone, there is

a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace ; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me very unhappy.

Jos. Surf. [*Seated, L. C.*] Indeed ! I am very sorry to hear it.

Sir Pet. [*R. C.*] Yes, 't is but too plain she has not the least regard for me ; but, what 's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment for another.

Jos. Surf. Indeed ! you astonish me !

Sir Pet. Yes ; and, between ourselves, I think I 've discovered the person.

Jos. Surf. How ! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Pet. Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me !

Jos. Surf. Yes—believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Pet. I am convinced of it. Ah ! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust, even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean ?

Jos. Surf. I have n't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite?

Sir Pet. Oh, no! What say you to Charles?

Jos. Surf. My brother! impossible!

Sir Pet. Oh! my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

Jos. Surf. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Pet. True—but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

Jos. Surf. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

Sir Pet. Ay, but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Jos. Surf. That's very true.

Sir Pet. And then you know the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any very great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why, the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor, who had married a girl.

Jos. Surf. That 's true, to be sure, they would laugh.

Sir Pet. Laugh—ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what, of me.

Jos. Surf. No—you must never make it public.

Sir Pet. But then—that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Jos. Surf. Ay, there 's the point. When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Pet. Ay—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he has been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him—any advice.

Jos. Surf. Oh, 't is not to be credited. There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine—I disclaim kindred with him: for the man who can break through the laws of hospi-

tality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Pet. What a difference there is between you ! what noble sentiments !

Jos. Surf. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

Sir Pet. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her ; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect, for the future : and if I were to die she will find that I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live ; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune after my death.

Jos. Surf. This conduct, Sir Peter, is

indeed truly generous—I wish it may not corrupt my pupil. [Aside.]

Sir Pet. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

Jos. Surf. Nor I, if I could help it.

[Aside.]

Sir Pet. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Jos. Surf. [Softly.]—Oh, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Pet. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Jos. Surf. I beg you will not mention it, sir. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate. [Softly.] 'Sdeath! I shall be ruined every way.

Sir Pet. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion, I 'm sure she 's not your enemy in the affair.

Jos. Surf. Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the

subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never——

Enter SERVANT, L.

Well, sir?

Serv. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

Jos. Surf. [*Rises.*] 'Sdeath, blockhead, I 'm not within—I 'm out for the day.

Sir Pet. [*Rises.*] Stay—hold—a thought has struck me—you shall be at home.

Jos. Surf. [*Crossing to* SERVANT.] Well, well, let him up. [*Exit* SERVANT, L.] He 'll interrupt Sir Peter, however. [*Aside.*]

Sir Pet. [R.] Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere—then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

Jos. Surf. O fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?—To trepan my brother too?

Sir Pet. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me. [*Going up.*] Here, behind this screen will be—Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener here already—I'll swear I saw a petticoat.

Jos. Surf. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark'ee, 't is a little French milliner—a silly rogue that plagues me—and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

Sir Pet. Ah! Joseph! Joseph! Did I ever think that you—but, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Jos. Surf. Oh, 't will never go farther, you may depend upon it. She does n't understand a word of English.

Sir Pet. No! then, faith, let her hear it out. Here's a closet will do as well.

Jos. Surf. Well, go in there.

Sir Pet. Sly rogue! sly rogue!

[*Going into the closet, R.*

Jos. Surf. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady Teaz. [*Peeping.*] Could n't I steal off?

Jos. Surf. Keep close, my angel!

[*She hides.*

Sir Pet. [*Peeping out, R.*] Joseph, tax him home.

Jos. Surf. Back, my dear friend!

Lady Teaz. [*Peeping again.*] Could n't you lock Sir Peter in?

Jos. Surf. Be still, my life! [*She hides.*

Sir Pet. [*Peeping.*] You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Jos. Surf. In, in, my dear Sir Peter—'fore gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

[*In trepidation, fanning himself with his handkerchief.*]

Enter CHARLES SURFACE, L.

Chas. Surf. Holla! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not

let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a girl with you?

Jos. Surf. [R.] Neither, brother, I assure you.

Chas. Surf. [L.] But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Jos. Surf. He *was*, brother; but hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

Chas. Surf. What? was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Jos. Surf. No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, that you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Chas. Surf. Yes, they tell me that I do that to a great many worthy men; but how so, pray?

Jos. Surf. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him!

Chas. Surf. Who, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word. Ha! ha! ha! ha! So the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?

Jos. Surf. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh——

Chas. Surf. True, true, as you were going to say—then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Jos. Surf. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

Chas. Surf. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement—besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Jos. Surf. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you—

Chas. Surf. Why, look 'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father—

Jos. Surf. Well—

Chas. Surf. Why, I believe I should be obliged to—

Jos. Surf. What?

Chas. Surf. To borrow a little of your morality, that 's all. [*Crosses R.*] But,

brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly by naming *me* with Lady Teazle; for, 'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

Jos. Surf. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Chas. Surf. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances——

Jos. Surf. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Chas. Surf. Egad, I'm serious. Don't you remember one day when I called here——

Jos. Surf. Nay, prythee, Charles——

Chas. Surf. And you together——

Jos. Surf. Zounds, sir! I insist——

Chas. Surf. And another time, your servant——

Jos. Surf. Brother, brother, a word with you! Gad, I must stop him. [*Aside.*

Chas. Surf. Informed, I say, that——

Jos. Surf. Hush! [*Putting his handkerchief over CHARLES' mouth.*] I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has heard every word we've been saying. I knew you would clear yourself or I would not have consented.

Chas. Surf. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

Jos. Surf. Softly ; there.

[*Points to the closet, R.*

Chas. Surf. Oh, 'fore heaven, I 'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth !

[*Trying to get to the closet.*

Jos. Surf. No, no—— [*Preventing him.*

Chas. Surf. I say, Sir Peter, come into court. [*Crosses R.; pulls in SIR PETER.*] What ! my old guardian ! What ! turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog. ? Oh, fie ! oh, fie !

Sir Pet. Give me your hand, Charles—I believe I have suspected you wrongfully ; but you must n't be angry with Joseph—'t was my plan !

Chas. Surf. Indeed !

Sir Pet. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did : what I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Chas. Surf. Egad, then 't was lucky you did n't hear any more—was n't it, Joseph ?

[*Apart to JOSEPH.*

Sir Pet. Ah ! you would have retorted on him.

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

Chas. Surf. But you might as well suspect *him* as *me* in this matter, for all that—might n't he, Joseph? [*Apart to* JOSEPH.

Sir Pet. Well, well, I believe you.

Jos. Surf. Would they were both out of the room! [*Aside.*

Sir Pet. And in future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

Enter SERVANT, L.

Serv. Lady Sneerwell is below, and says she will come up.

Jos. Surf. Lady Sneerwell! Gad's life! she must not come here! [*Exit* SERVANT, L.] Gentlemen, I beg pardon—I must wait on you down stairs: here is a person come on particular business.

Chas. Surf. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met for a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Jos. Surf. They must not be left together. [*Aside.*] I 'll send Lady Sneerwell away,

and return directly. [*Suddenly, seeing SIR PETER approach the screen.*] Sir Peter! [*Aside as SIR PETER comes to him.*] Not a word of the French milliner. [*Suddenly, as CHARLES approaches the screen.*] Charles, entertain Sir Peter! [*Exits.*]

Sir Pet. [R. c.] Ah! Charles, if you associated more with your brother one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Chas Surf. [L. c.] Pshaw! he is too moral by half.

Sir Pet. No, no! Come, come—you wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either. I have a great mind to tell him—we should have such a laugh at Joseph. [*Aside.*]

Chas. Surf. Oh, hang him! He's a very anchorite, a young hermit.

Sir Pet. Hark 'ee—you must not abuse him, he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Chas. Surf. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Pet. No!—I won't tell him—but—

this way. Egad, I 'll tell him. [*Aside.*]
Hark 'ee—have you a mind to have a good
laugh at Joseph?

Chas. Surf. I should like it of all things.

Sir Pet. Then, i' faith, we will—I 'll be
quit with him for discovering me. He had a
girl with him when I called. [*Whispers.*

Chas. Surf. What! Joseph?—you jest.

Sir Pet. Hush!—a little French milliner,
who does n't speak a word of English—and
the best of the jest is—she 's in the room
now.

Chas. Surf. The deuce she is!

[*Points at closet.*

Sir Pet. Hush! I tell you!

[*Knocks his hand and points to the screen.*

Chas. Surf. Behind the screen! 'Slife,
let us unveil.

Sir Pet. No, no—he 's coming—you
sha'n't, indeed.

Chas. Surf. Oh, egad, we 'll have a peep
at the little milliner!

[*Endeavoring to get toward screen, SIR
PETER preventing.*]

Sir Pet. Not for the world—Joseph will
never forgive me——

Chas. Surf. I 'll stand by you—

Sir Pet. Odds, here he is!

JOSEPH SURFACE *enters, L., just as CHARLES SURFACE throws down the screen.*

Chas. Surf. [C.] Lady Teazle! by all that 's wonderful!

Jos. Surf. Lady Teazle! by all that 's horrible!

Sir Pet. [R.] Lady Teazle! by all that 's damnable!

Chas. Surf. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide-and-seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? But I forgot, the little French milliner does n't speak a word of English! Not a word! Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too? Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute! Well—though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another—so I 'll leave you to yourselves. [*Going.*] Brother,

I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness. Sir Peter, there 's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment !

[*Exit* CHARLES, I. SIR PETER and JOSEPH stand for some time looking at each other.]

Jos. Surf. [L.] Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Sir Pet. [L.] If you please, sir.

Jos. Surf. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—she, sir, I say—called here—in order that—I might explain these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Pet. A very clear account, upon my

word ; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

Lady Teaz. [*Coming forward, c.*] For not one word of it, Sir Peter !

Sir Pet. How ! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie ?

Lady Teaz. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Pet. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am !

Jos. Surf. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me ?

Lady Teaz. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I 'll speak for myself.

Sir Pet. Ay, let her alone, sir ; you 'll find she 'll make out a better story than you without prompting.

Lady Teaz. Hear me, Sir Peter ! I came hither on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of the gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, tempted by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

Sir Pet. Now I believe the truth is coming indeed !

Jos. Surf. The woman's mad!

Lady Teaz. No, sir—the woman has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means. Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me—but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has so penetrated to my heart that, had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. [*Crosses to L.*] As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have tempted the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward—I behold him now in a light so truly despicable that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him.

[*Exit LADY TEAZLE, L.*]

Jos. Surf. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows——

Sir Pet. [*Crosses, L.*] That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

Jos. Surf. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you

shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to——

Sir Pet. Oh, damn your sentiments!

[*Exeunt* SIR PETER and SURFACE
talking, L.]

END OF ACT IV.





ACT V.

SCENE.—SIR PETER TEAZLE'S *House*. *As
in Act II.*

Enter MAID and MRS. CANDOUR, L.

Maid. [R.] Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

Mrs. Can. [L.] Did you tell her it was her friend, Mrs. Candour?

Maid. Yes, ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

Mrs. Can. Do go again—I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress. [*Exit MAID, R.*] Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, L. D.

Oh, dear Sir Benjamin, you have heard, I suppose——

Sir Ben. [L.] Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface——

Mrs. Can. [L.] And Sir Peter's discovery——

Sir Ben. Oh ! the strangest piece of business, to be sure.

Mrs. Can. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am sorry for all parties, indeed.

Sir Ben. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all ; he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Can. Mr. Surface ! Why, 't was with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

Sir Ben. No such thing, I tell you—Mr. Surface is the gallant.

Mrs. Can. No, no, Charles is the man. 'T was Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

Sir Ben. I tell you I had it from one——

Mrs. Can. And I have it from one——

Sir Ben. Who had it from one, who had it——

Mrs. Can. From one immediately—but here comes Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair. [Crosses, c.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL, L. D.

Lady Sneer. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here 's a sad affair of our friend Teazle.

Mrs. Can. [c.] Ay, my dear friend, who would have thought——

Lady Sneer. [L.] Well, there is no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

Mrs. Can. To be sure, her manners were a little too free; but then she was so young!

Lady Sneer. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

Mrs. Can. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?

Lady Sneer. No; no, but everybody says that Mr. Surface——

Sir Ben [R.] Ay, there; I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

Mrs. Can. No, no—indeed the assignation was with Charles.

Lady Sneer. With Charles! you alarm me, Mrs. Candour.

Mrs. Can. Yes, yes, he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

Sir Ben. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not—

Mrs. Can. Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I did n't hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneer. Nor I, a syllable.

Sir Ben. No! what, no mention of the duel? [Crosses, c.

Mrs. Can. [R.] Not a word. [All sit.

Sir Ben. [C]. Oh, yes; they fought before they left the room.

Lady Sneer. [L.] Pray, let us hear.

Mrs. Can. Ay, do oblige us with the duel.

Sir Ben. "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

Mrs. Can. Ay, to Charles—

Sir Ben. No, no, no—to Mr. Surface—"a most ungrateful fellow; and, old as I

am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

Mrs. Can. Ay, that must have been to Charles; for 't is very unlikely Mr. Surface should fight in his own house.

Sir. Ben. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all—"Giving me immediate satisfaction." On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords——

Enter CRABTREE, L. ; crosses, L. C.

Crab. With pistols, nephew—pistols; I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Can. [*Crosses to CRABTREE.*] Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true?

Crab. [*L. C.*] Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded——

Sir Ben. [*R.*] By a thrust in seagoon quite through his left side——

Crab. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Can. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

Crab. Yes, madam ; though Charles would have avoided the matter if he could.

Mrs. Can. I told you who it was ; I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Ben. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

Crab. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

Sir Ben. That I told you, you know——

Crab. Do, nephew, let me speak !—and insisted on immediate——

Sir Ben. Satisfaction ! Just as I said.

[*Crosses R. C.*

Crab. [R. C.] Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too ! A pair of pistols lay on the bureau. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one ; and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles' shot took effect, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed ; but, what is very extraordinary, the ball struck a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire—but whether the letter was

prepaid or not, I have not been able to ascertain. [Crosses R.]

Sir Ben. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess ; but I believe mine is the only true one, for all that.

Lady Sneer. [Aside.] I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

[Exit LADY SNEERWELL, L. D.]

Sir Ben. Ah ! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crab. Yes, yes, they certainly do say—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Can. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present ?

Crab. Oh ! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

Mrs. Can. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

Crab. Yes, yes ; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

Sir Ben. Hey ! who comes here ?

Crab. Oh, this is he : the physician, depend on 't.

Mrs. Can. Oh, certainly; it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE, L. D.

Crab. [R. c.] Well, doctor, what hopes?

Mrs. Can. Ay, doctor, how 's your patient?

Sir Ben. Now, doctor, is n't it a wound with a small sword?

[*Coming down on SIR OLIVER'S L.*

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred.

Sir Oliv. Doctor! a wound with a small sword! and a bullet in the thorax! Oons! are you mad, good people?

Sir Ben. [L.] Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

Sir Oliv. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree if I am.

Crab. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume.—But, sir, you must have heard of his accident?

Sir Oliv. Not a word!

Crab. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

Sir Oliv. The deuce he is !

Sir Ben. Run through the body——

Crab. Shot in the breast——

Sir Ben. By one Mr. Surface——

Crab. Ay, the younger.

Sir Oliv. Hey ! what the plague ! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts ; however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded ?

Sir Ben. Oh, yes, we agree in that.

[*Crosses behind to R.*

Crab. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

Sir Oliv. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation he is the most imprudent man alive ; for here he comes walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE, R.

Odd's heart, Sir Peter, you are come in good time, I promise you ; for we had just given you over.

Sir Ben. [L.] Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery !

Sir Oliv. Why, man, what do you out

of bed with a small sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

Sir Pet. [R.] A small sword and a bullet?

Sir Oliv. Ay, these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me doctor, to make me an accomplice.

Sir Pet. Why, what is all this?

[Crosses c.

Sir Ben. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

[Goes up a little.

Sir Pet. So, so ; all over the town already.

[Aside.

Crab. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

[Retires a little up.

Sir Pet. [R. c.] Sir, what business is that of yours?

Mrs Can. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he 's very much to be pitied.

Sir Pet. Plague ou your pity, ma'am ! I desire none of it.

[MRS. CANDOUR crosses, L.

Sir Ben. [*Advances on his L.*] However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

Sir Pet. Sir, sir, I desire to be master in my own house.

Crab. [*Advancing to him.*] 'T is no uncommon case, that 's one comfort.

Sir Pet. I insist on being left to myself; without ceremony—I insist on your leaving my house directly.

Mrs. Can. [*Advancing to him.*] Well, well, we are going, and depend on 't we 'll make the best report of it we can.

Sir Pet. Leave my house!

[*The three take arms.*]

Crab. And tell how hardly you 've been treated——

Sir Pet. Leave my house!

Sir Ben. And how patiently you bear it.

[*Exeunt MRS. CANDOUR, SIR BENJAMIN and CRABTREE, L., arm in arm.*]

Sir Pet. Leave my house!—Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

Sir Oliv. They are very provoking, indeed, Sir Peter.

Enter ROWLEY, L.

Row. I heard high words: what has ruffled you, sir?

Sir Pet. [C.] Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without vexations?

Row. Well, I 'm not inquisitive.

Sir Oliv. [R.] Well, I am not inquisitive: I come only to tell you that I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Pet. A precious couple they are!

Row. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliv. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Row. Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliv. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Row. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliv. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age!—But, how's this, Sir Peter? You don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Pet. [c.] Sir Oliver, we live in a very wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Row. [L.] What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Pet. [c.] Pshaw! Plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Row. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's, so humble that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Pet. And does Sir Oliver know all this?

Sir Oliv. Every circumstance.

Sir Pet. What, of the closet and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. 'T was very pleasant.

Sir Oliv. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Oh, vastly diverting! Ha! ha! ha!

Row. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments. Ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, his sentiments! Ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliv. Ay, and that rogue Charles, to pull Sir Peter out of the closet! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Ha! ha! 'T was devilish entertaining, to be sure.

Sir Oliv. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down! Ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

[*Sinks on seat, c.*]

Sir Oliv. But come, come; it is n't fair to laugh at you, neither, my old friend; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Pet. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account: it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself.

Yes, yes, I think being a standing joke for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then, of a morning, to read the paragraph about Mr. S——, Lady T——, and Sir P——, will be so entertaining. I shall certainly leave town to-morrow, and never look mankind in the face again.

[*Rises and crosses, R.*

Row. [c.] Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. But I see Lady Teazle going toward the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

Sir Oliv. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. [*Going.*] Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you. [*Exit, L.*

Sir Pet. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Row. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

Sir Pet. Certainly, a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. [*Comes forward.*] Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Row. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

Sir Pet. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers, evidently intended for Charles?

Row. A mere forgery, Sir Peter, laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

Sir Pet. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I 'll go to her.

Row. Certainly.

Sir Pet. Though, when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

Row. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them that you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Pet. I' faith, so I will! and, if I 'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Row. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion——

Sir Pet. Hold, Master Rowley! If you have any regard for me never let me hear

you utter any thing like a sentiment : I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life. [*Exeunt*, R.]

Enter LADY SNEERWELL, and JOSEPH SURFACE, L.

Lady Sneer. Explain to Sir Peter ! Impossible ! Will he not immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of consequence no longer oppose his union with Maria ? The thought is distraction to me.

Jos. Surf. Can passion furnish a remedy ?

Lady Sneer. No, nor cunning either. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer !

Jos. Surf. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer ; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road to wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

Lady Sneer. No !

Jos. Surf. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us ?

Lady Sneer. I do believe so.

Jos. Surf. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows of honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support.

Lady Sneer. This, indeed, might have assisted.

Jos. Surf. Come, come; it is not too late yet. [*Knocking at the door, L.*] But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver. Retire to that room; we'll consult further when he is gone.

Lady Sneer. Well, but if *he* should find you out too?

Jos. Surf. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake—and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

Lady Sneer. I have no diffidence of your abilities! only be constant to one roguery at a time.

[*Exit LADY SNEERWELL, L.*]

Jos. Surf. I will, I will. So, 't is confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederates in evil. Well,

at all events, my character is so much better than Charles', that I certainly — Hey! what! — this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on 't! that he should return to tease me just now. I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here — and —

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE, L. D.

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliv. [L.] Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

Jos. Surf. [R.] Sir, 't is impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg — Come any other time, and I promise you you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliv. No, Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Jos. Surf. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliv. Nay, sir —

Jos Surf. Sir, I insist on 't! Since you

compel me, sir,—not one moment—this is such insolence !

[*Going to push him out, L.*]

Enter CHARLES SURFACE, L. D.

Chas. Surf. Heyday ! what 's the matter now ! What, the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here ? Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium. [*Crosses, C.*] What 's the matter, my little fellow ?

Jos. Surf. [R.] So ! he has been with you too, has he ?

Chas. Surf. [C.] To be sure he has. Why, he 's as honest a little—But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you ?

Jos. Surf. Borrowing ? No ! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every—

Chas. Surf. O Gad, that 's true ! Noll must n't find the little broker here, to be sure !

Jos. Surf. Yet Mr. Stanley insists—

Chas. Surf. Stanley ! why his name 's Premium.

Jos. Surf. No, sir, Stanley.

Chas. Surf. No, no, Premium.

Jos. Surf. Well, no matter which —
but——

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, Stanley or Premium,
't is the same thing, as you say ; for I sup-
pose he goes by half a hundred names,
besides A. B. at the coffee-house. [*Knock.*

Jos. Surf. 'Sdeath ! here 's Sir Oliver at
the door. Now I beg, Mr. Stanley——

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, and I beg, Mr. Pre-
mium——

Sir Oliv. Gentlemen——

Jos. Surf. Sir, 't is your own fault !

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, out with him, cer-
tainly !

Sir Oliv. This violence——

Jos. Surf. Sir, 't is your own fault.

Chas. Surf. Out with him, to be sure.

[*Both forcing SIR OLIVER out.*

*Enter LADY TEAZLE and SIR PETER,
MARIA, and ROWLEY, R. D.*

Sir Pet. [c.] My old friend, Sir Oliver—
hey ! What in the name of wonder—here
are dutiful nephews—assault their uncle on
a first visit !

Lady Teaz. [R. C.] Indeed, Sir Oliver, 't was well we came to rescue you.

Row. [R.] Truly it was ; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

Sir Oliv. [L. C.] Nor Premium, either ; the necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman ; and with the other, I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

Jos. Surf. [L.] Charles !

Chas. Surf. [L.] Joseph !

Jos. Surf. 'T is now complete.

Chas. Surf. Very.

Sir. Oliv. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, too—look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty ; and you also know how gladly I would have regarded half of my fortune as held in trust for him ; judge, then, of my disappointment on discovering him to be destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude.

Sir. Pel. [L. C.] Sir Oliver, I should be

more surprised at this declaration if I had not myself found him to be selfish, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady Teaz. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call *me* to his character.

Sir. Pet. Then, I believe, we need add no more ; if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment, that he is known to the world.

Chas. Surf. If they talk this way to honesty, what will they say to me by and by?

[*Aside.*

[SIR PETER, LADY TEAZLE, and MARIA retire.]

Sir Oliv. As for that prodigal, his brother there—

Chas. Surf. Ay, now comes my turn ; those confounded family pictures will ruin me.

[*Aside.*

Jos. Surf. Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

Chas. Surf. Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

[*Aside.*

Sir Oliv. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself? [To JOSEPH.]

Jos. Surf. I trust I could.

Sir Oliv. Nay, if you desert your roguery in its distress, and try to be justified, you have even less principle than I thought you had. [To CHARLES] Well, sir, you could justify yourself too, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. What! Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. True, sir; but they were *family* secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Row. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles' follies with anger.

Sir Oliv. Odd's heart, no more I can; nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors? sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Chas. Surf. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas,

that 's the truth on 't. My ancestors may certainly rise up in judgment against me : there 's no denying it ; but believe me sincere when I tell you—that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliv. Charles, I believe you : give me your hand again : the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Chas. Surf. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady Teaz. [*Advancing, c., MARIA on her R.*] Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

Sir Oliv. Oh ! I have heard of his attachment there ; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right that blush——

Sir Pet. Well, child, speak your sentiments !

Maria. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy ; for me, whatever claim I had to his attention, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

Chas. Surf. How, Maria!

Sir Pet. Heyday! what 's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I'll warrant you won't have him.

Maria. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Chas. Surf. Lady Sneerwell!

Joseph. [L.] Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. [Opens the door, L.]

Enter LADY SNEERWELL, R.

Sir Pet. So! another French milliner! Egad, I wonder if he hides them in my house as well as his own.

Lady Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Chas. Surf. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Jos. Surf. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Pet. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake. Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Row. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

Enter MR. SNAKE, R. D.

I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens, unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

Lady Sneer. [L.] A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow: have you, too, conspired against me?

Snake. [R.] I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons; you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I, unfortunately, have been offered double to speak the truth. [Goes up.]

Sir Pet. Plot and counterplot! I wish your ladyship joy of your negotiation.

Lady Sneer. [Crosses, L.] The torments of shame and disappointment on you all!

Lady Teaz. Hold, Lady Sneerwell: before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneer. You, too, madam—[*Crosses L.*], provoking—insolent—May your husband live these fifty years! [Exit L.]

Sir Pet. Oons! what a fury!

Lady Teaz. A malicious creature indeed!

Sir Pet. [On LADY TEAZLE'S right hand.] What! not for her last wish?

Lady Teaz. Oh, no!

Sir Oliv. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Jos. Surf. Sir, I am so confounded to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say: however, lest her revengeful spirit should

prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. For the man who attempts to——

[*Crosses and exit, L.*

Sir Pet. Moral to the last!

Sir Oliv. Ay, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar! Egad! you'll do very well together.

Row. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake, at present.

Snake. [L.] Before I go, I beg pardon, once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Pet. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

Sir Pet. Hey! What the plague!—Are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

Snake. Ah, sir, consider—I live by the badness of my character; and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

[*Exit, L.*

Sir Oliv. Well, well, we'll not traduce you by saying any thing in your praise, never fear.

Lady Teaz. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliv. Ay, ay, that 's as it should be; and, egad, we 'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Chas. Surf. Thank you, dear uncle!

Sir Pet. What, you rogue, don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Chas. Surf. Oh, I have done that a long time—a minute ago—and she has looked yes.

Maria. For shame, Charles!—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word.

Sir Oliv. Well, then, the fewer the better; may your love for each other never know abatement!

Sir Pet. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

Chas. Surf. I 'll make no promises, but here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide. Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, should'st waive thy
beauty's sway,

Thou still must rule, because I will obey :
An humble fugitive from folly view,
No sanctuary near but Love and you ;

[*To the Audience.*

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies, if you approve.

THE END.

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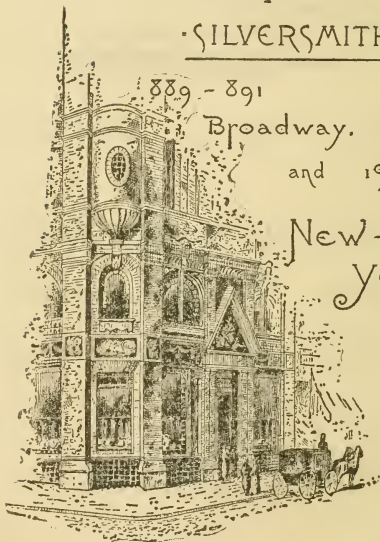
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