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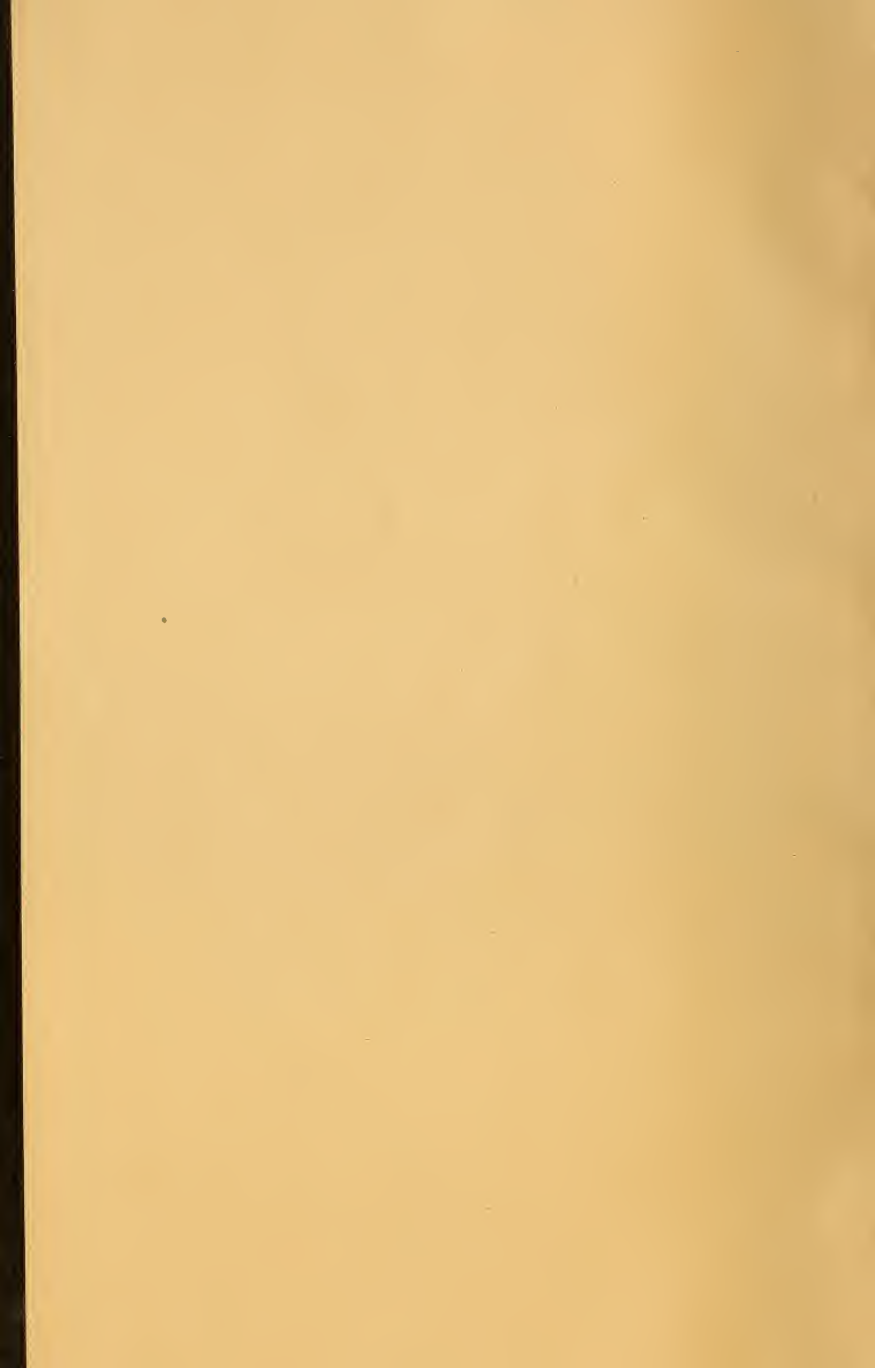
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Book 117113







WANTED A WIFE;

OR,

A Checque on my Banker,

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS:

AS PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,

WITH UNIVERSAL APPROBATION.

William Somers
BY W. T. MONCRIEFF, Esq.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN LOWNDES,
25, BOW STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1819.

[Price Three Shillings.]

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W. Shackell, Printer,
Johnson's-court, Fleet-street.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Comedy, produced at a period when a continued display of Tragic excellence had untuned the public mind for

“ Nods and cranks, and wreathed smiles,”

though it has been favoured with a greater share of the applause of those who have witnessed its representation, than the Author's most sanguine expectations could have hoped for, has not, perhaps, been so productive of profit as it has of praise. Some of our critics have been kind enough to assign as a reason for this want of attraction, the illiberal prejudice that at present, it is feared, exists against the Establishment at

which it was brought forward : the Author would willingly assign it to his own demerits; but he cannot conceal from himself, that on the first night of his Comedy's production, notwithstanding the brilliant display of names included in its Dramatis Personæ, the House was only a third part filled. Therefore, with every feeling of gratitude for the great kindness and toleration afforded to his very feeble attempts by those who have witnessed them, he must regret that number has not hitherto been greater : he owns this with a pecuniary sensitiveness, perhaps more peculiar to Poets than any other persons, between the ebb and flow of whose spirits and pockets, a greater sympathy exists than is generally imagined. But notwithstanding this drawback, and it is by no means a small one, he most sincerely returns his thanks for the encouragement he *has* received. If his Comedy has been productive of nothing else, it has procured him the attention, and he hopes the esteem of a great body of talent, which though he came among them unknown and unpatronized, received him with a friendly interest and kind warmth that can never be effaced

from his memory ; the almost brotherly interest taken in the success of this Comedy, trifling and faulty as it is, would more than have insured the success of a much worse piece. The utmost stretch of his ambition was to raise a laugh, and in this he has certainly succeeded, whether at his own expence or not, it is not for him to decide. But the Author will turn from the ungracious contemplation of his own failings, to the pleasing reflection of the excellencies of those by whom he has been supported. To Mr. Munden, Mr. Johnstone, Mr. Harley, Mr. Oxberry, Mr. Knight, Mrs. W. West, Mrs. Sparks, and indeed the *whole* of the Ladies and Gentlemen concerned in the representation of this Piece, his gratitude is due much beyond the gratitude of a Preface. Trusting they are fully convinced of the sincerity of his private feelings, he hopes this slight public acknowledgment of them will be thought sufficient. Deep grief, has been pronounced by the Poet to be dumb: and the Author hopes that deep gratitude, may in this instance be deemed the same. Hereafter it is trusted a mutual meeting will take place in a more productive season,

and on a worthier occasion with regard to himself than the present. To Mr. S. Kemble and Mr. Carr, for a world of kindness in forwarding the production of this Comedy, a world of thanks are due—are sincerely offered, and the Author trusts will be kindly accepted.

*Worcester Coffee House, Holborn,
May 10th, 1819.*

PROLOGUE.

By the Author of the Comedy.

'Tis sweet, though sad, when day its course has run,
To mark the radiance of the setting sun,
Delightful promise, to the wanderer's eyes,
That it but sets, more bright again to rise ;
All love the ray—though brief and faint its glow,
As young Hope's sparkle on the tear of woe,
And deem it like th' adieu by Lovers spoken,
Of Constancy, and glad return, the token.
It has been said, we own it with regret,
Thalia's cheering Sun has long been set.
Yet, should some rays flash on your view to-night,
Awakening memories of past delight,
Do not condemn, though they but feebly gleam
With the warm splendour of its mid-day beam.
But, as you'd hail your favorite's sway again,
Spare the attempt, e'en though it's made in vain!
The Bard, whose frolic pen to-night would cheer
Your hearts with Comedy's gay fancies here,
Has been of old—(They were his proudest gains)
Blest by your fostering smiles at humbler Fanes ;
And urg'd by Gratitude to venture more,
Asks here, that kindness, he's received before.
Child of your Bounty! Creature of your will!
The hopes you first gave birth to, can you kill?
Young, humble, ardent, should you doom to-night,
Hereafter he with worthier pen may write.
In his light sketches should there nought offend,
Say will you be your lowly votary's friend?
Owning himself Thalia's humblest son
If what he has attempted—he has won.
Though no high effort in his Play appear,
Oh pardon the fond pride that led him here.
Pilgrims who rove to seek some mighty Fane,
Kneel at humbler shrines new strength to gain :
Thus he who long has play'd a Trifler's part,
Comes to this crowning shrine to yield his heart.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR WILFUL WILDFIRE,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Watkinson.</i>
SIR GABRIEL PEEPER,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Munden.</i>
GENERAL MALABAR,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Gattie.</i>
ARTHUR WILDFIRE,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Russell.</i>
FRANK CLEVERLY,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Harley.</i>
JONATHAN CURRY,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Oxberry.</i>
BARNEY M'SHIFT,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Johnstone.</i>
JOLT,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Knight.</i>
PIKESTAFF,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Carr.</i>
BOOZLE,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Coveney.</i>
SERVANT,	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Ebsworth.</i>

WOMEN.

MISS CATHERINE ARRAGON,	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. W. West.</i>
MISS ARRAGON,	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Sparks.</i>
LILLIAN EDEN,	-	-	-	<i>Miss Smithson.</i>

SCENE—*Barney M'Shift's Echo Office, Castleton Hall,
and Inn in a Country Village.*

TIME—*One Day.*

WANTED A WIFE,

&c.

ACT I.

SCENE—M'SHIFT's *Echo and Address Office, Advertising Lists, and Statute Rooms.*

Enter M'SHIFT.

M'Shift. BY the powers now but my setting up this Address Office, show'd no small address in me. I hadn't a place in all the world, when I undertook to supply all the world with places; but it was high time to begin advertising when I'd lost every thing. Oh, fait, not a word should I have had to say for myself, if it hadn't been for my Echo Office here. But where the divil is Jolt, that he doesn't bring the papers this morning?—Does'nt he know I want to compose my lists? Och, I'm a great author; I write all my books with a pair of scissars. (*JOLT sings without*) Eh, here he comes: well, Jolt!

Enter JOLT.

Jolt. Here bees I, Measter Makeshift.

M'Shift. Makeshift! M'Shift, bad manners to you: you little Yorkshire gossoon; e'nt I descended from the O' Mac's of Trotterbogslough? Would you go then to insinuate any thing about making shift to a person of my havings?

Jolt. Your havings ! why what have you ?

M'Shift. What have I, dolt ? Hav'nt I my own beautiful brains ; and hav'nt I this elegant Address Office here ; and then haven't I you ? e'nt you my amanuensis ?

Jolt. Why yes ; I am your man of senses, certainly.

M'Shift. But where are the papers that I may go to work ?

Jolt. Here they be.

M'Shift. Let me see them : what have we here ? the Herald, Chronicle, Traveller, and British Press ! Why here are not half of them : where's the Statesman ?

Jolt. Oh, newsman do say, the Statesmen be all sold.

M'Shift. Och, murder ! but where's the Post ? I don't see the Post.

Jolt. Na, nor I did'nt see the post, or else I'd never ha' gotten this big thump of the head that I have.

M'Shift. Och, you bog-trotter—but come, give me the Day.

Jolt. You'll have the Day to-morrow.

M'Shift. And are these all you've brought ?

Jolt. Yes. I should ha' brought some more ; but the Barber had the Whig ; and they told I at the office Pilot had'nt arrived, Star were not out, and that there were no News.

M'Shift. Well, let me give a small ogle at the contents of these tell-tales. Wheugh ! here's five hundred " wanted to borrow," to one " money to lend." " Matrimony !" why, that's the young jontleman's advertisement that was here yesterday, and is to be here again this morning : he wants a young wife—has any one applied ?

Jolt. Yeas,ould Lady Totterdown. (*Wild. seen without*)

M'Shift. Och ! here he is : upon my word he seems to have been a mighty high fellow in his time, though he looks a little low in the world at present.—The top of the morning to your honor.

Enter WILDFIRE.

Wild. Good morning to you, my honest fellow. Has there been any one enquiring after me yet?

M^cShift, Not a soul, man or beast.

Wild. Then Frank has'nt arrived. Well, my game's up. I've gone through every act of a first-rate fashionable but the last—

M^cShift. And what's that, if I may be so bold?

Wild. The Insolvent Act. I've only to take the benefit of that to be completely cursed. Yes, it's all over now. They no sooner found I run short at Long's, than the Greeks used me like a Trojan.

Jolt. What be your name, sir?

Wild. Arthur Wildfire.

Jolt. Because, you see, master wishes me to put your name in our books.

Wild. Yes, yes; I know, it's customary—all my tradesmen have my name down in their books, and egad, are likely to have (*aside*); but where the deuce can Frank be? That fellow is the only one of my fashionable incumbrances, except my tradesmen's bills, that I haven't long since got rid of: I must discharge him: that's easily done—but how to discharge his wages! there is but one way—I must give him a cheque on my banker; that I can do with perfect safety; for I'm very certain, let me draw for what I will “no effects” will follow.

M^cShift. How melancholy he looks! Och, what a pity it is, he has'nt a little whiskey to cheer him. Fait, but I'll go and take a drop in private. Jolt, jump about, you divil, and get every thing ready, before you see the turn of my back again. *[Exit.*

Wild. Let me consider for a moment, the situation in which I am placed: my father, Sir Wilful Wildfire, considering matrimony literally a matter of money, coolly commands me to marry a certain Miss Arragon, a lady I have never seen, though half my ancestors have. I in-

dignantly refuse ; he obstinately insists : and we part mutually enraged—I am cut off with a shilling, and find too late that the very course I took to avoid matrimony brings me to it. I have stuck up an invitation in the shape of an advertisement here, which I think will prove effective—but egad, I'll take this fellow's opinion on it.—What's your name, friend ?

Jolt. John Jolter, sir.

Wild. Read that advertisement, and tell me candidly what you think of it.

Jolt. I wool, Sir. “ Matrimony.—To the fair Sex.—“ A young gentleman of prepossessing person—”

Wild. Yes, that's me.

Jolt. You, sir ; dang it, if I didn't think it were I.

Wild. No, it's I.

Jolt. Be it though ?—“ and dress—”

Wild. Dress ! no, that's not very prepossessing—“ address.”

Jolt. “ Address, good education, and superior connections, would be happy to form an union with any lady “ similarly circumstanced, whose fortune may be found “ adequate to his expectations.”

Wild. Yes, yes ; that's coming to the point.

Jolt. It be indeed ; but you don't say any thing about fulfilling *her* expectations, eh ! But I'll finish—“ the strictest “ honor may be relied upon. Apply at M'Shift's Address “ Office any morning before one, where the gentleman “ will attend.”

Wild. There, what do you think of it ?

Jolt. Why, it will do ; but you ought to ha' put in some signal for them to ha' known you by ; such as pulling out your handkerchief now, twiddling your thumbs, tying your shoe-string, or any little thing of that kind ; but it will do.

Wild. Yes, I think it will ; but where the devil is Frank ? that fellow is always sure to be out of the way

when he's wanted—I must step out and look for him, for the sooner I get rid of such an idle varlet the better: were there no other reasons, he has the impudence to run into every folly under the sun, and then shelters himself by remarking he is only following my example. [*Exit.*]

Jolt. Gad, if he should happen to get a wife with a tightish bit of money by this: dang me, if I doan't advertise myself: I doan't see why I han't as good a chance as he: I'm every bit as sightly; and then as for parts—but comparisons sow no parsnips, as the man said: so let the girls be judge o' that. Who be this?

Enter FRANK.

Frank. Yes, I'm right: this is the place, M'Shift's Address Office, sure enough; but where's my master? not come yet, I suppose; he's past his time; sometimes he can be before it; witness my last quadrille party, which he interrupted so completely in the middle. [*Jolt. advancing and hitting Frank on the shoulder.*] Zounds, what a dislocater! Who are you, my fine fellow?

Jolt. John Jolt, sir, at your service. Be you come after a servant, sir?

Frank. Come after a servant? No, friend: I'm come after a master.

Jolt. Dickens! what a fine gentleman to have a master! I suppose his pleace be one of those grand pleaces we do read of in papers.

Frank. Who in heaven's name do you belong to, friend?

Jolt. To Measter Makeshift, sir, at your sarvice. I be his man of senses—be you come to be hired, sir?

Frank. No, faith, I come here to be discharged.

Jolt. Discharged! Why these be the statute rooms, and you ha' nothing to do but to write down what you want for half a crown, in master's advertising lists, and you'll be hired directly.

Frank. Write down what I want for half a crown!—Oh, I see: what I want is a good place; that is, large wages, and little work. Yes, I'll take this bumpkin's ad-

vice and advertise here ; but no more waiting on gentlemen : no, no, I'll become a lady's man now.—Here, clod, give me the pen and ink.

Jolt. Here it be, sir.

Frank. Now then let mesee. (*writes*)—" To the Ladies :
" Wanted a situation—wait on a lady—young man—gen-
" teel address—prepossessing person—good education—
" moved in the first circles—liberal remuneration. Apply,
" M'Shift's Statute Rooms every morning till two."—
There, I think that's the thing ; brief and expressive, short
and sweet. Jolt, go and stick that on your show-board
at the door, d'ye mark, and get a copy of it made for
your lists. (*giving him money.*)

Jolt. I wool.

[*Exit.*

Frank. Sob, that's accomplished : but where's my
master ? Talk of the devil, they say, and—he's here.

Enter WILDFIRE.

Wild. So, sir, you've arrived at last.

Frank. Yes, sir, at your service.

Wild. Not at my service long, I hope. I must pick a
quarrel with him, to prevent his guessing the reason of
my parting with him. (*aside.*) I presume, sir, you know
why I sent for you ?

Frank. Why yes, sir ; I believe I can give a pretty
good guess : I suppose I'm come for to go, as the saying
is.

Wild. Right sir, and the sooner the better : I cannot
too speedily be rid of such an idle, graceless, extrava-
gant rascal ; a fellow with a thousand bad habits.

Frank. Bad habits, sir. Excuse me there, I flatter
myself you always allowed I dressed well.

Wild. Dressed well, sir : you dressed too well : how dare
a menial, like you, aspire to the notoriety of ruining four
tailors, as I am credibly informed you have done ?

Frank. Pardon me, sir : I always gave your tradesmen
the preference ; and no one could dare flatter himself with

the exclusive ruin of a man, when he recollects you too were a customer.

Wild. What do you mean by that, sir? Zounds! if there isn't my last new coat on his back! it didn't fit me, but it seems quite at home with him: this is quite of a piece with your quadrille parties, and your converzationes; but, thank heaven, I am rid of such a reprobate—henceforth, I'll have some one I can rely on, some one a little more attentive to my interests: I'll wait on myself (*aside*) not such an extravagant spendthrift as you, sir; but I discharge you; yes, sir, discharge you—well, why don't you go?

Frank. Go, sir?

Wild. Yes, go, sir—haven't I discharged you?

Frank. Yes, sir; you have discharged *me*, but you haven't discharged my little account here. I have him there (*aside*.)

Wild. Oh, curse the fellow's memory! I must give him a cheque on my banker, after all I see (*aside*.) Your account? Oh, sir, you shall have your account; any thing to get rid of such an idle, worthless—what is the amount of it, sir?

Frank. There's the bill; it's not very long—merely fifteen pounds wages, and five pounds for silk stockings and walking sticks; in all twenty pounds.

Wild. Very well, sir; you shall be paid certainly—I'll give you a cheque on my banker directly.

Frank. A cheque, sir?

Wild. Yes, in payment of your account. Did you never receive a cheque from me before?

Frank. Oh, yes, sir, very often when I've asked you for money.

Wild. (*writing*) "Messrs. Aldgate, Handle, and Co. pay Frank Cleverly or bearer twenty pounds—Arthur Wildfire."—There, sir, now be off: and never let me see your impudent face, again—he seems very loath to depart; I hope he

don't suspect any thing (*aside.*) Well, sir, why e'nt you off? you appear strangely reluctant, methinks—but no wonder you should linger with regret; when you reflect what a good master your imprudence has lost you—you'll never get such another.

Frank. Very true, sir: I wish he'd go: I may expect a pretty character, if any one comes to hire me while he's here! (*aside*)

Wild. Should any rich heiress apply, and find this blockhead here, what an exposure! I must get him off—(*aside*) the London coaches set off at eleven: if you do not return to the inn, you'll be too late.

Frank. I an't going by the coach, thankye, sir: he's immoveable! I must get him off—(*aside*) looks like rain, sir—we shall have a shower—you'll get wet, sir, if you don't make haste.

Wild. I'm not going to leave this place for some time: but you, Frank, you'll be sure to get wet; therefore you'd better set off directly—bless me! how dark it's getting—don't lose a moment—I know you are loath to part with me: but my resolution is fixed: you must go: therefore repress your feelings, and go, my good fellow, at once.—Good day! good day!

Frank. Curse him, he won't budge; so I must: (*aside*) good bye, sir—I'll be back soon though, or good bye to my poor advertisement—good day, sir—wish you at the devil!

[*aside.*]

Wild. Thank ye, Frank; thank ye: glad you're off (*aside*) [*forces Frank out.*] Soh! I've got rid of him at last—think he suspected something, but thank Heaven, before he can come back again, I hope either to be the husband of a rich wife, or far enough out of his reach. Now I've got rid of him, I'll step into the next room, and watch the effect of my advertisement.

[*Exit.*]

Enter M^cSHIFT.

M^cShift. By the hookey now, business tumbles in apace! another advertisement: and paid for too. Who's this? another customer?

Enter JONATHAN CURRY.

Jon. Good morning, sir: how do you do, sir?

M^cShift. Och, beautiful, sir; I hope you're the same.

Jon. Charming: I'm much obliged to you, sir—though I believe, I don't exactly look so.

M^cShift. Why, not exactly! he'd frighten a milestone!
[*aside.*]

Jon. I hope your wife and family are well, sir?

M^cShift. Fait, sir, I can't say: for I don't happen to have any.

Jon. I beg your pardon, sir: very fine morning this—charming weather for the corn—mayhap you don't know who I am?

M^cShift. No sir, divil burn me if I do.—I hope a customer.

Jon. I'm Jonathan Curry; butler at Castleton Hall here: shall be very glad to see you in my pantry, any time, to drink a horn of ale.

M^cShift. Upon my conscience, sir, but you're mighty civil!

Jon. Why yes, sir, I love to be civil: civility costs one nothing. You've a very snug place, here: how do you find business?

M^cShift. Oh, mighty brisk.

Jon. I'm very happy to hear it, sir: I just stepp'd in to let you know, that my young lady, the heiress of Castleton, and Sir Gabriel, her guardian, with old Miss Arragon, my young lady's aunt, are coming to look at your lists this morning.

M^cShift. They'll be in high luck; for I've just made them up.

Jon. My young lady, you see, is a little high flighty, and prides herself a great deal about her descent : she is always talking of supporting the house, and raising her establishment.

M^rShift. Supporting the house, and raising her establishment! by Saint Patrick, but that's strange employment for a young lady.

Jon. She passes her time in reading about knights and heroines ; and talks of reviving the *few-dull* days, and keeping alive the spirits of her ancestors : she calls me the Seneschal ; and is going to have a squire for a footman : he's to be a sort of gentleman at arms like ; and as I'm not young enough, I've recommended her to come here to get one.

M^rShift. And she could'nt come to a better place ! for sooner than she shall be disappointed, I'll be her gentleman at arms, and groom of the chamber myself. Och ! but she's a girl of spirit !

Jon. But that's no reason she should be fond of fighting ; I'm sure, I'm not.

M^rShift. You've not the Irish *fancy* then : we're never at peace, but when we're at war : a few blows always settles all our words. Och ! I should be a rare squire for her : I can fight like a game cock at all times : but when a lady's in the case, fait myself is a whole army.

Jon. Well then, there's old Miss : she be looking out for a husband : she has been cross'd in love as it were, by a Mr. Wildfire ; perhaps, sir, you can help her to what she wants.

M^rShift. That can I : I help gentlemen to grooms, and ladies to bridegrooms : and she shall have an unmarried husband, as soon as she likes ;—there's a young gentleman in waiting, at this present writing, to take any lady to church that's in want of the parson.

Jon. I thought so, that was the reason I recommended her to come.

M'Shift. On my conscience now, but you're a mighty good sort of person; and I'm greatly obliged to you—won't you take a needleful of whisky?

Jon. Why, you're very good, sir: if it isn't giving you too much trouble to get it.

M'Shift. Och! not at all, my darling: the trouble would be, if I could not get it;—but it's snug enough; and I'll whisky it here, in a jiffey. [*Exit.*

Jon. This makes good what I say; one never loses any thing by being civil. Eh! who is—

Enter JOLT.

Jon. How do you do, sir? I hope you're very well?

Jolt. Why, pretty well, I thankye, sir: same to you; keep on your hat, sur; I'm not measter.

Jon. No!—then who are you?

Jolt. John Jolt, sir—oh, here master comes.

Enter M'SHIFT.

M'Shift. Now then: och, Jolt, are you there, darling? Here'll be a lady here, after a husband presently; you may be wanted—be sure now, you're in the way, and shew her the young gentleman's advertisement.

Jolt. Never fear, sur: I always ha' an eye to business. You've got the bottle there, I see: I doan't mind if I take a drop with you.

M'Shift. Come on then [*filling a glass.*] My service to you! [*drinks.*] Now, sir, [*filling a glass, and giving it to Jon. Curry.*]

Jon. Your very good health, sir: I hope my recommendation may put a guinea or two in your pocket. I shan't look for the least reward, I assure you. [*drinks.*

M'Shift. Upon my soul now, but you're better than good, sir: but what do I see.

Sir Gab. [*without*] This way, this way: here is the Echo-Office.

M'Shift. Hey! here come the quality. Jolt, you divil, take the bottle behind the door.

Jolt. I wool: and I'll take a glass behind the door, too. (*aside*)

M^cShift. Put the liquor out of the way, whatever you do.

Jolt. Aye, aye: it will be out of the way enough, where I'll put it.

[*Jolt retires with the bottle and glasses.*]

Enter SIR GABRIEL, MISS ARRAGON, and MISS CATHERINE ARRAGON.

Sir G. I tell you, Miss Catherine Arragon, you're a perfect female Quixote; a very Black Prince in petticoats; a second Madam D'Eon; what the deuce do you want with a gentleman at arms, or squire? E'nt there Jonathan to attend on you? honest Jonathan: the most obliging, civil, quiet creature in the world.

Cath. Those negative virtues of quietness and civility, Sir Gabriel, are what I object to. I want some one to protect me from insult, lead my vassals to the field; one that will uphold the ancient customs of my house, and prevent the illustrious name of Castleton from coming to dishonour and decay. I am the last of the house of Castleton, and must keep alive its memory.

Sir G. Marry, marry, what must the world think? A young maiden lady coming to an advertizing-office, to procure a gentleman at arms' as she calls it?

Cath. It is perfectly consonant with the laws of chivalry, Sir Gabriel, for a young maiden to procure a knight from the lists: I could produce many precedents of such occurrences.

Sir G. Ah! always thinking of those cursed days of chivalry: I hate such follies: you'd better mount a rosinante, and turn knight errant at once: don't you, every day as it is, dine in state, as you call it, in your great hall? Keeping open castle, and feeding all the vagabonds for twenty miles round? then instead of your own proper name,

Catherine Arragon, don't you call yourself, and make every body else call you, the heiress of Castleton—the lady of Castleton, and fifty other titles, as high sounding and nonsensical? but I've done with you: I have written to your other guardians, General Malabar, and Sir Wilful Wildfire, and—

Miss A. Wildfire! oh! cruel, insensible youth!

Sir G. Curse it! I've touch'd upon the tender string as she calls it—no matter: having seen you safely here, I shall leave you to yourselves; or egad, I shall be too late for the grand review of our volunteers to day. Colonel Waddle is to be on the ground precisely at twelve: I wouldn't miss the sight for a thousand; then Ballast goes up in his balloon, at two: have you secured me a place in the steeple, Jonathan?

Jon. Yes, Sir Gabriel: right under the weathercock.

Sir G. Right under the weathercock? Charming! a man might be truly vain in such a situation. I shall be back to dinner, for I believe there is nothing more to be seen to-day. Next week I start for town; there I've got to walk over the Southwark bridge, visit the wonderful Salamander, have my fortune told by Toby the pig, and practice the rule of three, with the learned dog in Pall Mall: but, I must be off: it wants but ten minutes to twelve: the review will begin directly. I hear the rolling of the drums, the clangor of the trumpets; I pant to be there; my soul's in arms. "The soldier tired of war's alarms," &c. [*Exit.*]

Enter JOLT.

Cath. Eccentric, happy creature! always something in expectation—some pleasure to come! But I must hasten to settle the business of the morning. Give me one of your lists, friend: it may, perhaps, help to accomplish my wishes.

Jolt. I wool, Miss: never fear, there be what you wish for there. (*giving her 1st book.*)

Cath. Where? why, what is this? "Matrimony!" Psha! that's not what I wish for, friend!

Jolt. Bean't it? well, that be odd; I thought all young ladies wish'd for Matrimony.

Miss A. Matrimony, did she say? Bless me, how my poor little heart does flutter! Lie still, thou foolish trembler! Oh, Wildfire! cruel Wildfire!

Cath. I do not see any thing here to suit me: take this list away, friend; and bring me another: I wish to engage a young man, somewhat superior to the general, to head my household.

Jolt. Why then, flashy chap will just suit her: he be superior, sure enough—here, Miss; here be what you want,—[giving second book and going to put the other away.]

Miss A. Do not put that book away, young man; but bring it to me: there is something there, I believe, will suit me, though it does not *that* young lady.

Jolt. What, the Matrimony, old one? He! he! he!

Miss A. What is the fellow laughing at? Give me the book, blockhead; and none of your impertinent observations, if you please. (*Exit JOLT.*) Let me retire, and contemplate the treasure in secret: my agitation may betray me here. [Exit.]

Cath. What is this? 'To attend on a Lady! young man, genteel address! liberal education! been used to high life!' This is indeed beyond my hopes. It is doubtless, some poor youth, reduced to dependence by misfortune; and my servitude will sit lightly on him—"May be seen at M'Shift's Statute Rooms"—He then is here.

Enter WILDFIRE.

Wild. Now, what luck with my advertisement? Ha! a lady! and reading the lists: perhaps my notice! how fortunate!

Cath. That superior air! This must be the object of my search. (*aside*) I believe, sir, I am not mistaken:

you attend here, in consequence of an advertisement addressed to a lady?

Wild. Yes, Ma'am.

Cath. I was wishing to meet a person circumstanced as you here describe yourself! You have, doubtless, family reasons for wishing to enter this situation?

Wild. Family reasons! Zounds, she suspects something I fear; it will be best for me to be explicit. (*aside.*) I cannot deny it!

Cath. Embarrassments, I presume? Nay, believe me, I wish not to wound your feelings. I can sympathize with the unfortunate; and as far as my fortune will permit me, will assist them.

Wild. Generous creature!

Cath. I have long wish'd to meet some one, who would attach himself particularly to my person.

Wild. In this early period of our acquaintance, prudence forbids me, Madam, to disclose the patronymic of my family; but my christian name is Arthur.

Cath. Arthur! It is chivalric, and noble! Just the name I wished—you can, of course, be well recommended?

Wild. Well recommended, Madam?

Cath. Yes; will any of the ladies you have formerly lived with, speak as to your capabilities for entering into my service?

Wild. (*aside.*) That's an amazingly strange question, methinks.

Cath. But I mistake: this is your first situation of the kind, I believe?

Wild. The very first, upon my honour:—why, zounds! She did not think I had been married before; did she? (*aside.*)

Cath. You allude to a liberal settlement. Make yourself easy, I am rich. There is one thing I must mention

—my guardian, perhaps, may start objections to the arrangement I have made.

Wild. I should wonder if he didn't. (*aside*)

Cath. But I am determined to be absolute in my own territory ; it would be very hard if I couldn't have my way in an affair like this : therefore, follow me to Castleton, and every thing shall be settled. [*Exit.*]

Wild. Oh, Fortune! Fortune! I forgive you all, you jade, for this.—Young, handsome and wealthy! And to throw herself into my arms at the first glance! Oh! it's too much! What an irresistible, lucky, impudent scoundrel I must be!—Faith, I don't know whether I'm standing on my head or my heels! [*Exit.*]

Enter FRANK CLEVERLY.

Frank. Soh! he's gone off at last; and with a very smart girl too.—Oh, the devil's in him for getting hold of the girls ;—but, let me see if there's any luck for me. I wonder whether any body has seen my advertisement yet?—Hey! who's this? a lady by all my hopes! perhaps come after me? rather of the ancient order. No matter, the service of these old dowagers often turns out very profitable to a young fellow.

Enter MISS ARRAGON.

Miss A. Thank Heaven, my niece has departed, at last; and I can peruse this dear morceau quite undisturbedly. “ Matrimony—young—prepossessing—happy to form an union—any lady—” Why, who is this regarding me so stedfastly? (*aside.*)

Frank. She's certainly reading my advertisement!

Miss A. That earnest gaze! It must be the interesting youth himself! How my heart beats! Be hush'd, thou little flutterer. (*aside.*)

Frank. Yes, I am right: I beg pardon, madam; but you were looking at an advertisement?

Miss A. Addressed to the fair sex, sir.

Frank. Yes, ma'am.

Miss A. Oh, my heart! Are you the gentleman, then, sir, that would be happy to engage with a lady?

Frank. Yes, madam: very much at your service—it's a done thing: I'm hired! I'll have fifty guineas wages—an allowance for vails and canes, and all my clothes found me, lucky dog! (*aside.*)

Miss A. What an embarrassing situation! he seems as confused as myself: I must relieve the dear youth!—Hem! hem! did you speak, sir?

Frank. Oh! Oh—invises me to break the ice: rather rustic it appears—Yes, ma'am.

Miss A. You were remarking, I believe—

Frank. Very true, ma'am, I was remarking that, that—oh, I have it: I was remarking, madam, I should be extremely happy to be your humble servant.

Miss A. Oh, sir!

Frank. I shall be ready, at a moment's notice.

Miss A. Ardent youth! yet, I cannot be angry at a warmth so flattering. (*aside*) A business like this, sir, requires consideration.

Frank. Ah, madam: should you give me the preference, I trust my endeavours, my assiduity, attention to your interests, and all that—

Miss A. I have no doubt of it, sir: and will go so far as to say, I should be glad to see you at the Hall, as soon as you can make it convenient: in the mean time, I will speak to Sir Gabriel and the heiress on the subject: and if they approve, I can then be ready to listen to your proposals.

Frank. See me in the Hall! Sir Gabriel and the heiress! why what a Gabriel must I be! This must be the house-keeper—the hall she speaks of, the servants' hall; and Sir Gabriel, and the heiress, the master and mistress—

sne's sent here to hire me : yes, now I look again, she has all the venerable graces of a dame of the keys—how could I be so mistaken? (*aside*)

Miss A. He pauses: he is certainly going to put the question to me! what shall I answer? (*aside*)

Frank. I'll ask her to engage me at once (*aside.*) Dearest lady, why keep me in suspense? why not fix a day? I burn to become one of the family.

Miss A. Impetuous youth! But I must take pity on him (*aside*)—well then, this day week.

Frank. A week! Zounds, I shall die with hunger before then (*aside.*) Why not to-day! you had better settle it at once.

Miss A. But the family.

Frank. Psha! the family need'nt know any thing about it, till we chuse to tell them.

Miss A. A clandestine marriage! Oh! the dear deluder (*aside.*) Since you are so urgent, we will proceed together to the Hall: where you will see Sir Gabriel: the old gentleman will perhaps object to my compliance on so short an acquaintance: but he knows I will have my own way.

Frank. The old gentleman, who the deuce is he? some fellow servant perhaps: the butler, I dare say. I'll kick him, if he's troublesome: that's soon settled. Allow me, madam, the extremity of your little finger.

Miss A. Oh, sir! you're so gallant: you've such a way with you, I protest there's no refusing you.

Frank. The place is mine! I'm in service again! lucky dog! Here Barney M'Shift, Jolt, shew us out, you dogs!

Enter JOLT and BARNEY.

M'Shift. And is it me you want, your honour?

Jolt Here bees I: ecod he's hooked the old one.

M'Shift. Och, you devil, but you've bamboozled her nicely!

Frank. Hush, you dog; I shall come down handsomely. This way, madam, this way. Hurrah! Jolt, M'Shift, allons, rascals, allons.

Jolt and Barney. This way, this way, your honour: he's got her! he's got her!

[*Exeunt* FRANK and MISS ARRAGON, *shewn out by*
JOLT and BARNEY.]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Gothic Style at Castleton-Hall.

Enter WILDFIRE and CATHERINE.

Cath. Well, Arthur ; what think you of Castleton ? is it not a fit residence for the heiress of a family like mine ?

Wild. It is indeed a magnificent pile ; it throws one's imagination back to the romantic inspiring days of chivalry, when every maiden was chaste and lovely ; and every youth was constant and brave : these towers seem the very temple of high soul'd sentiment, and in you, must we worship its presiding deity (*kneels.*)

Cath. Romantic, interesting creature (*aside.*) You think then, that in this castle, you can pass your time with pleasure ?

Wild. With rapture ! it will be elysium !

Cath. Your duties will be few : you will merely have to attend me on all state occasions.

Wild. That you may rely on it, I shall not fail to do.
(*aside.*)

Cath. You will be my squire ; my gentleman at arms : my purse-bearer.

Wild. Your purse-bearer ! that is exactly what I wish to be (*aside.*)

Cath. I am now going to my boudoir : the person who is coming this way, will answer you any questions you may wish to ask. Farewell ! I shall take speedy steps to

have you permanently fixed at the head of my establishment.

Wild. Farewell! sweet excellence!

Cath. Poor young man! he is carried beyond himself, by his good fortune in obtaining this place (*aside.*)

[*Exit Catherine.*]

Wild. She must be devilish fond of me, to wish to settle every thing so quickly; but so much the better. A noble castle this, upon my soul! I'm a lucky dog! but who the deuce can this person be, that she wishes me to make enquiries of? he's a very respectable looking gentleman: I dare say some uncle? or perhaps the guardian she mentioned; but mum! here he is.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. So the new servant's come: here's the man of arms that is to be, (*aside.*) Good morning, sir: I hope you're very well: will you take any thing after your walk?

Wild. Sir, you're very good: I don't care if I do, a glass of wine and a biscuit will be very acceptable.

Jon. Should'nt you like a glass of ale, and a little bit of hock of bacon, better?

Wild. Hock of bacon, and ale in a morning!—a vulgar rascal. (*aside.*)

Jon. He's quite one of your gentlemen footmen, I see: well, sir, as it's the beginning of our acquaintance, I'll give you a glass of fine old Madeira that I got upon the sly.

Wild. Got upon the sly! Oh, smuggled!

Jon. Yes, sir, smuggled: we'll go, by and bye, sir, and take a glass together.

Wild. Sir, you're vastly civil.

Jon. Why, yes, sir, I like to be civil: civility costs one nothing you know.

Wild. I presume, sir, you know why I am here? you

know my views, that is, the situation in which I am placed ?

Jon. Yes, sir, perfectly well : I was the very person that help'd to put you in it.

Wild. Oh ! I suppose you saw the advertisement first, and pointed it out to the lady ?

Jon. I did, Sir : and told her she could'nt do better than make you her gentleman : not one in a hundred would have done it in my place—for you must know, sir, you have, what they call, put my nose out of joint.

Wild. Oh, oh ! a rival ! but I'll not seem to notice it : pray, sir, what fortune is the lady possessed of ?

Jon. Afraid of his wages (*aside.*) There's no want of money, here.

Wild. Bravo !

Jon. You might have gone further, and far'd worse.

Wild. If, sir, the lady has the fortune, you say, I don't care how soon I take her to church.

Jon. To church !

Wild. Yes, to church !

Jon. Oh, ah ! true : you'll have to go with her to church.

Wild. But when ? that's the question !

Jon. Why next Sunday, to be sure.

Wild. Soh ! they've already settled it ! then it's all right : Sunday—well, I can't modestly desire it to be sooner—But, come sir, suppose we drink the lady's health in the Madeira you were speaking of ? and then we can talk over matters more at large.

Jon. With all my heart, sir ! we'll step into the pantry, and have it directly.

Wild. Into the pantry ! what a low brute it is (*aside.*) had'nt we better step into the drawing-room, sir ?

Jon. The drawing room ? Oh, Lord bless your life ! no ; master's there.

Wild. Master !

Jon. Ah: Sir Gabriel.

Wild. Why then, who the devil are you?

Jon. Me? oh! I'm Jonathan Curry, the butler.

Wild. Then, Mr. Jonathan Curry, the butler, I must tell you, sir, I think you take great liberties.

Jon. Sir, I beg pardon, if I've offended: but it's in my power, sir, to do a great many good offices for you.

Wild. He wants a fee: and I hav'nt a sixpence. Shall I give him a cheque on my banker? No; curse it that won't do. (*aside.*)

Jon. And besides, sir, there's many little perquisites, it is proper should be talked about.

Wild. What do you mean, sir?

Jon. Why, in respect to sharing in some of the things you'll have.

Wild. What, some of the young lady's money?

Jon. Yes, sir.

Wild. Here's a precious scoundrel! pretends first to his lady, and when he finds I am going to have her, lays claim to his share of her property—Why, you impudent villain! get out of my sight, rascal.

Jon. Be civil; civility costs nothing. Here's a man at arms with a witness! [*Exit forced out by Wildfire.*]

SCENE II.

Another Apartment in Castleton-Hall.

Enter Sir GABRIEL.

Sir G. Charming! charming! never was present at a more imposing review in my life! every thing went off well but the guns:—very stupid of Scribble the Poet, to be there.—No wonder he was run down by the light-horse in their heavy charge; he ought to have known an author seldom 'scapes safe from a review—ah, Jonathan!

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Ah! Sir Gabriel: did you get a good sight in the steeple?

Sir G. Excellent, Jonathan; if there had been any thing to see; to be sure, the balloon did go off: but not as we wish'd, for it turned out a bubble; it burst: so, as it didn't go up, I came down; for I had got quite grave, looking in the church-yard so long—ah! Jonathan, I'm a remarkable man.

Jon. Yes, Sir Gabriel; so you've often remarked.

Sir G. I can safely say I have seen every thing worth seeing, for the last forty years; I have been at the laying of more first stones than would have built the Tower of Babel: I have seen more ships launch'd, than ever we had in the navy; and can boldly assert there never was a public dinner, let it have been ever so private, but I had a knife and fork there.

Jon. What a deal you must have on your brain.

Sir G. I have; I'm a living chronicle! would'nt miss any sight for the world. How many times have I been squeezed black and blue at the presentation of colours? What martyrdoms have I suffered at the theatres? See all the new pieces! Support all the new actors! I love the actors! know them all; they know me—a harmless, merry set—thoughtless sometimes: but we've all faults; so I always give them my support; and I will venture to say, my individual exertions have sav'd as many pieces as any man's—but you are going to say something, Jonathan; what is it?

Jon. Why, Sir Gabriel, I've made—a discovery; old Miss has got a lover.

Sir G. The devil she has! some vagabond, I'll be bound. Where the deuce did she pick him up?

Jon. She pick'd him up, in a newspaper, Sir Gabriel.

Sir G. Ah! some very light character.

Jon. He was advertized—

Sir G. Yes, I've no doubt, he's been advertized often enough: have you seen him, Jonathan?

Jon. No, Sir Gabriel; I'm going to see him now: it will be but civil, you know, to enquire if he wants any thing.

Sir G. Well, collect all you can from him; though I dare say that won't be much—however, let me know what kind of a fellow he is, who he is, where he comes from, and whether he's ever seen any thing remarkable.

Jon. Yes, Sir Gabriel; I'll take care: good morning, Sir Gabriel. [*Exit.*

Sir G. Ha! ha! ha! So the old fool has got a sweet-heart at last! well, we shall hear no more of Mr. Wild-fire now; it will have that good effect—it's an ill wind—but let me be off, or I shall be too late for the Jingling match: then I've got to ride one of the Dandy Chargers round the village, and wait for the coming in of the newly invented patent safety coach. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Another Apartment in Castleton Hall.

Enter FRANK.

Frank. Soh! here I am in possession, and settled once more in a comfortable service, thanks to a little flattery; and what's better than all, I've got a place without a character; no unusual thing now-a-days. I shouldn't wonder if the old lady isn't warm in the pocket: if she is, I must be warm in the person, and pay my best addresses to her *Bank notes*. Eh! who is this? a gentleman! Oh, Sir Gabriel, I dare say?

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Here he is: quite a smart gentleman, I declare!

I don't wonder at old miss's picking him up! How do you do, sir? I hope you're very well?

Frank. Very well I thank you, sir; I hope you're the same.

Jon. Why, nothing extraordinary, sir; I just look'd in Mr. — I forget your name sir.

Frank. Frank, sir, Frank!

Jon. I just look'd in Mr. Franks; to see if there was any thing you wanted: as you're but a stranger here, it's nothing but what's proper you know, Mr. Franks.

Frank. You're very kind, sir; you'll allow me to get you a chair, sir.

Jon. Oh, Mr. Franks, I could'nt think of such a thing; allow me to get you one.

Frank. Oh, really, this is too much, sir; your politeness is too much—pray be seated, sir.

Jon. After you, Mr. Franks, if you please.

Frank. Impossible! Monstrous civil to be sure! poor fellow! he thinks all this mighty well bred: wishes to encourage me: supposes I'm bashful, I dare say: cursedly mistaken though.

Jon. Quite a real gentleman: no fear of speaking to him. You come from London, I believe, Mr. Franks?

Frank. Yes, sir, from London.

Jon. Did you know any of the great people, there?

Frank. Oh, yes: I spent some months with Mr. O'Brien, and my Lord Spindle: and was quite the confidant of Sir Bilberry Fudge.

Jon. Bless me, he's quite one of your tip-tops: I'm afraid I've been making too free with him: excuse my manner, Mr. Franks: one should'nt perhaps make so free with persons in such a different situation to ourselves; but where one finds a person that knows themselves, it encourages one like. And a person as knows themselves, won't take no improper liberties on it you know; Mr. Franks.

Frank. A hint for me—certainly not, sir: for my part, I don't see why a servant isn't as good as another man, providing he behaves himself.

Jon. Just my sentiment, Mr. Franks: I hate your proud upstarts; servants are flesh and blood, as well as their masters; I never domineers over those that are under me; and after all, what's in a title? No, no; free and easy is my motto: not but what I likes civility.

Frank. Freedom and ease, sir, all the world over! we exactly agree there.

Jon. As you're old miss's favourite, you may command me, Mr. Franks, in any thing.

Frank. You're extremely civil, sir.

Jon. Why yes, I like to be civil: civility costs one nothing.

Frank. Or else perhaps, he would'nt bestow it on me.

Jon. As old Miss has pretty well fixed on you, I dare say you'll stay some time here.

Frank. I hope so, I don't care how long. (*aside*)

Jon. You'll not be badly off, I can assure you: you'll find old Miss a very pleasant sort of body.

Frank. So I think; she's certainly a very good taste, or else she'd never have engaged me.

Jon. Yes, she's an engaging woman, but I see her coming; so I'll leave you together: I wish you a very good day, Mr. Franks.

Frank. Good day, sir; pray mind how you go.

Jon. Don't trouble yourself, Mr. Franks, I beg.

Frank. No trouble, sir; let me see you to the door; good day, sir.

Jon. Good day, sir. Rare tidings for sir Gabriel!

[*Exit Jonathan.*]

Frank. So much for Sir Gabriel. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter MISS ARRAGON.

Miss A. I beg your pardon, sir, for leaving you alone; but I was obliged to make a little alteration in my dress

before dinner ; the heiress likes every one on her establishment to do it : she is a great observer of etiquette, and it's as well to humour her ; but now, sir, you shall be introduced.

Frank. I have already seen Sir Gabriel, my dear madam, and he is perfectly agreeable to our arrangements.

Miss A. Indeed ! I am very glad to hear that : the heiress will not then object, I am sure.

Frank. I have found him an extremely worthy and civil gentleman ; but, come, my dear madam, allow me the honor.

Miss A. Oh, sir, my poor heart ! Heigho ! You are so polite, really there's no resisting you. Heigho ! heigho !
[*Exeunt Frank and Miss Arragon.*]

SCENE IV.

Another Apartment in the Hall.

Enter WILDFIRE.

Wild. By heavens, this girl has surely bewitched me ! She fascinates me more and more, at every fresh interview. Never did I behold such winning familiarity joined to such graceful dignity : she's here.

Enter CATHERINE.

Cath. Arthur, I've been searching for you : and yet I scarcely know why (*aside.*) Have you seen my guardian ?

Wild. I have not, my lovely mistress : I met one, I mistook for him, an impudent rogue of a butler ; who under a shew of civility, was the most uncivil varlet I ever encounter'd. I made bold to bestow on him a little gentle correction, to teach him better manners, both to yourself and me.

Cath. It must have been Jonathan ; but, Arthur, I men-

tioned to you my wish that you would wear the surcoat of my family.

Wild. Oh curse the surcoat! (*aside.*) Will you not excuse me?

Cath. Excuse you, when the object is to oblige me? Surely, Arthur, you are too gallant to refuse to wear the colours of your lady?

Wild. Very whimsical this, but I must comply: I cannot refuse you any thing.

Cath. This is indeed kind. [Rings a bell.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. My lady! Oh Lord! here's the man at arms (*aside*)

Cath. What is your fear? Be composed, I will procure a pardon from this justly offended defender of my rights—you must forgive him, Arthur—be assured, friend, you are safe; but use less freedom for the future.

Jon. I will, my lady; thank'ye, my lady!

Cath. Bring in the family surcoat.

Jon. I've got it here, my lady: if the gentleman at arms will step this way I'll help him with it on.

[*Exeunt Jonathan and Wildfire.*

Cath. I thought he would not deny me this proof of his homage.

Re-enter WILDFIRE in Surcoat.

Wild. They may call it what they like: but to me it appears cursedly like a livery.

Cath. Ah this indeed looks noble! Now you truly look as if you were a member of our family: I shall expect you to attend me at dinner in it.

Wild. Most certainly: musn't be away at dinner-time on any account. (*aside*)

Cath. In conformity with the ancient customs of our house, you will wait on me in the great hall.

Wild. Any thing you can request.

Cath. When I am ready for you I will ring a bell.
[*Exit.*

Wild. And when I am ready for you I will ring a belle.
Behold me here like another Hercules—Oh Omnia vincit
Amor! Curse the surcoat though, with another Omphale
subdued to a petitcoat (*bell rings*) Hark, the bell invites
me! I come, my charmer.
[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

The Great Hall, Tables laid out for Dinner.

Enter CATHERINE and WILDFIRE.

Cath. My aunt and Sir Gabriel have not yet arrived,
I see; they will not be long: (*noise without*) Hey! what
is that?

Frank. (*without.*) Which way did you say, madam?

Mis A. (*without.*) This way to the left, Sir: you
will find them here.

Wild. Why, zounds; that's Frank's voice: surely he
has presented the checque on my banker? has discovered
the trick, and come here burning with rage to expose
me! What the devil shall I do? (*aside.*)

Enter MISS ARRAGON and FRANK.

Miss A. This way, sir.

Frank. Bless me, what a grand hall! why, I declare it
looks just like a drawing room: the servants must have
rare good places here! Eh! who is that fine tit, there?
Oh, I suppose the lady's maid.

Wild. Yes, 'tis he; sure enough, how can I get off? (*aside*)

Miss A. Niece, allow me to introduce this gentleman.

Frank. Why, who the deuce is that? Can I believe
my eyes! My master, by all that's good and gracious!
and in a livery too! what mystery is this? He is on his
tricks here—oh, I see it all—he has heard at the office
of my getting this place; and is waiting here to have
me kicked out—Oh, Lord! what the devil shall I do?

(*aside.*)

Wild. (*aside.*) He has spied me out! I shall be exposed.

Miss A. (*to Frank.*) Come, sir, will you not be seated?

Frank. I must get off somehow or other—Ha! I have it—Eh? did any body call? coming!

Miss A. Why nobody call'd.

Frank. Yes, I thought somebody call'd—I'm coming! I'm coming!

Wild. He's going for a bailiff, or a constable, perhaps—what shall I do?—I must be seized with a violent pain somewhere; or else I shall be seized by an officer. Pardon me—a sudden indisposition. [*Exit hastily.*]

Frank. I'm coming, I tell you. [*Exit hastily.*]

Cath. What does all this mean, Arthur? Arthur!

[*Follows Arthur.*]

Miss A. Coming? Bless me, I think he's going; it's very strange—here! Mr.—what's your name!

[*Follows Frank.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Outside of M'SHIFT'S Echo Office, and Part of the Village.

Enter M'SHIFT and JOLT from the Office.

M'Shift. Jolt, darling, take this paper; it's the Press, and put it in the post for my friend Scribble, the Poet: he often goes to the press; so it is but fair, you know, that the Press should sometimes go to him.

Jolt. Be I to pay the postage of un? for if he be a poet, you see, it's like enough he can't.

M'Shift. Pay the postage, you blockhead! Sure now, and don't you know that the British Press goes free? Oh it would be a mighty bad thing for us all if it didn't—there, there, skip along. [*Exit Jolt.*

Fait but business thrives apace—Eh! what's this I see? A wanderer! no doubt in want of a place; perhaps coming into my office.

Enter LILLIAN EDEN.

Lillian. Whither have I strayed to? my form has caught the infection of my mind, and becomes as wandering as lost.

M'Shift. Och, the little darling! she's lost her way: well, I can set her all right there.

Lillian. Wretched Lillian! deprived by death of the tender solace of a mother, and by chance of the knowledge of a father: I have no resource, no hope.

M'Shift. Poor lambkin! but I'm mighty sorry for that now.

Lillian. Yes; I am indeed an orphan, without a home, a hope, a friend.

M'Shift. Oh fait, then it's very clear she knows nothing of Mr. Barney M'Shift: no female's in want of a friend that he's acquainted with—and so, my darling, you want to find a father, do you? I've known many young ladies in your situation: excuse my freedom: but it's my business, you see. I keep a bit of an office here, to find out what they want for every body.

Lillian. Your sincerity is evident from your manner: I would willingly confide in you: but alas! I fear it is not in your power to serve me.

M'Shift. 'Not in my power!' by the powers now, but I'm mighty sorry for that.

Lillian. From my earliest infancy, I have resided with my mother, in this village: my father, I was taught to believe, had died abroad. We lived humbly and happily together, till death deprived me of her care. In her last moments, she called me to her side, and revealed with tears, her melancholy history. She had married early in life, a young man superior in rank to herself, who, dreading his father's anger, made her swear never to reveal the secret of their nuptials. He deserted her for a foreign country. She withdrew from her native place, to hide her misery, assumed a fictitious name, and on the pittance he had left her, lived in hopes of his return. In vain—she died, left me to know I had a father, but without a clue to avail myself of my knowledge. His name she did not dare reveal, and even of her name I'm ignorant. My cousin Frank, who only could inform me, left us when a boy, and has not since been heard of.

M'Shift. Fait then, it's a nameless piece of business altogether, a mighty blind bargain indeed, something like looking for pearls in the bog of Ballynahack—What's to be done? I have it—since we don't know what name to inquire for, nor what name to direct to, we'll do it by initials—direct to A. B. to enquire for X. Y. Z.—that

will do beautifully.—Och! never say Barney M'Shift isn't a man of letters in a difficult piece of business.

Lillian. Warm hearted creature! your intentions are well meant, but the execution of them, is, I fear, impossible.

M'Shift. And what a pity that is; but it's an Irishman's greatest misfortune, to let his heart run away with his head, and suffer his benevolence to bother his brains; however if we can't do any thing to find your father, sure we can do something to assist his daughter. Is'nt there plenty of nice snug situations and livings in my gift? Didn't I this very morning suit one gentleman with a wife, and another with a service, and I don't know which of the two will have the best place of it.

Lillian. A situation!—that indeed promises something.

M'Shift. Say no more—You want to be housekeeper and companion to some rich old body; I see what will suit you at a glance. It shall be done in a twinkling—call on me to-morrow morning at this time, and I warrant I'll have news for you—Nay! Devil a bit will I take any deposit; but when I've got you the situation, and you're once comfortably settled in it, I'll make myself rich with the recompence of having done an acceptable piece of service to a pretty friendless young creature, who was in want of my assistance.

Lillian. Thank you, thank you. May the reward of Heaven increase in tenfold proportion as want of means may cripple that of Lillian Eden.

[*Exit Lillian.*]

M'Shift. Lilly of Eden, sweet creature! so pretty spoken, and so pretty looking too. Oh! I'm in ecstasies. Though I've had seven wives already, if I was a trifle younger, devil burn me if I would'nt make her the eighth Mrs. M'Shift!—Jolt, you devil!

Enter JOLT.

Jolt. I've been to the post.

M'Shift. And now come to me, and then I'll go to the young woman, and then I'll have a drop of the cratur, and then—

Jolt. Ecod! I think you've been having a drop of the cratur already.

M'Shift. Not yet, but I will—We'll go off to the Cock and Bottle together. Sure now, business thrives apace, and it would be a burning shame if we was'nt both in good spirits. So come along; Jolt, come along.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Castleton Hall.

Enter SIR GABRIEL.

Sir G. Very strange behaviour of these new inmates of ours: their running away so oddly, seems as if they were runaways by profession.—Eh! here comes one of them, my ward's gentleman at arms: I'll speak to him;—but I must go cautiously to work, and sound the rogue.

Enter WILDFIRE.

Wildfire. Cursed unlucky Frank should have traced me here! Eh! who's this? Oh, the guardian in reality! I must accost him to do away suspicion—your most obedient, Sir Gabriel!

Sir G. How d'ye do, Arthur?

Wildfire. Arthur! he's as familiar as his ward.

Sir G. What do you think of Castleton Hall? there's a great many curiosities in it very well worth seeing, I can assure you, King William the Conqueror's porridge pot, and the jaw-bone of the dragon that was kill'd by Saint George. Do you find yourself comfortable?

Wildfire. Exceedingly: it is impossible I can do otherwise here.

Sir G. What think you of your lady?

Wildfire. She is an angel.

Sir G. You imagine you shall be able to agree with her?

Wildfire. We cannot disagree.

Sir G. It is time then we should think of a settlement.

Wildfire. Most certainly: he doesn't seem to object, as she thought he would. [*aside.*]

Sir G. What terms did you think of proposing?

Wildfire. Why, I shall expect all the lady's ready money to be at my disposal.

Sir G. The devil you will.

Wildfire. I touch'd him there!—As for the estates: they will, of course, be settled on our eldest son.

Sir G. Their eldest son! Am I standing on my head or my heels; Why, you haven't the consummate impudence to think of marrying my ward, have you?

Wildfire. To be sure I have; or what the deuce did I come here, for?

Sir G. What a brazen dog it is; but you must be joking sure; you can't think of such a thing.

Wildfire. Think, my old buck; there's no thinking in the case; it's all settled.

Sir G. Why you impudent, audacious varlet: here's confusion of ranks! Do you know who you are talking to? Have I been at every remarkable sight for the last forty years, coronations, illuminations, installations, proclamations, and celebrations to be treated in this manner. Do you know who I am you jacobinical, democratical puppy?

Wildfire. Aye, Aye: I know you better than you think I do, old Gaby. [*aside.*]

Sir G. Old Gaby indeed! Get out of my sight! get out of the house!

Wildfire. You may fume, and fret, and storm, and rave, as much as you like, old Gaby, but it's no use: I shall

have her in spite of you.—What, you wanted to smuggle her all to yourself, did you? why you old fox.

Sir G. I want to smuggle her! I shall go mad! why you villain; you rascal, you—

Wildfire. Ha! ha! ha! that's right: go it, old Gaby! storm away, old boy: you'll leave off when you're tired: good bye, Gaby!—I shall have her—you take it warmly, I take it coolly—good bye! ha! ha! ha! [*Exit Wildfire.*]

Sir G. Old Gaby! have I liv'd all these years, and seen all the sights I have seen, to be call'd a Gaby at last; I shall expire! Where is my ward? that I may get an explanation of these doings. Dear me, he's put every thing out of my head, and I've so many sights to look after. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Another Apartment.

Enter MISS ARRAGON.

Miss A. Yes, I must attribute it to the sweet delirium of love—these little flights must be expected from a passion so ardent as his; I must take pity on him, lest he should become desperate.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jonathan. Eh! here's Miss, I must be civil to her, or I shan't get any bride cake. [*aside.*] How do you do, Miss? I hope you're very well?

Miss A. Jonathan! what can he want? [*aside*] Very well, Jonathan, I thank you.

Jonathan. Very happy to hear it, Miss: is there any thing I can get you to-day? [*aside.*] Lord bless me! who'd think any body would take a fancy to her old physiognomy?

Miss A. How he looks at me! what can the fellow be so extraordinarily civil for—dear me! I begin to feel quite alarmed; he certainly has designs.

Jonathan. I beg your pardon, Miss: I hope you won't

think me too bold; but if a certain circumstance should take place, may I ask the favor, to have a favor—I should certainly like to drink your health, and kiss hands on the occasion.

Miss A. Kiss hands, oh Lord! don't come near—

Jonathan. Why, what a frustration old Miss is in! [*aside*] Good bye, Miss! hope I hav'nt offended, good bye!

Exit Jonathan.

Miss A. The wicked man! Oh dear! I wish Mr. — Bless me, he is here! how my heart throbs!

Enter FRANK.

Frank. I don't hear any thing of my master, and must have been mistaken. Eh! here's the old housekeeper: what will she think of my running away? I must cajole her.—My dear Madam.

Miss A. Your most obedient, Sir.

Frank. Receives me as usual: its all right! [*aside*]

Miss A. I have discovered, since we parted—

Frank. What! I hope she has'nt discover'd me, [*aside*]

Miss A. Excuse my blushes; I have long suspected he had an attachment: I wished, therefore, to put you on your guard; for you may depend upon it, he will do all he can to thwart your wishes, and blight our happiness.

Frank. Let him do it if he dares: here he comes, pray retire: Mr. Jonathan is, I see, coming this way; therefore, it's very probable we shall have a few words together.

Miss A. Dearest Sir, do not be too rash: be careful of yourself for my sake—Heigho!

[*Exit Miss Arragon.*]

Frank. Soh! I've got rid of the old woman: now for Mr. Jonathan.

Enter SIR GABRIEL.

Sir G. Why, where can my ward be?

Frank. Hark ye, Mr. What's your name; a word with you.

Sir G. Eh! the old woman's *cher ami*; this is a-propos enough: Jonathan says, he's a quiet, civil, obliging, sort of a person; so I can open my mind to him without reserve. [*aside*] Your most obedient, Sir.

Frank. Devilish civil; but I'll soon spoil his civility for him.

Sir G. I was wishing to meet with you, Sir: I have a few questions I must take the liberty of asking.

Frank. With all my heart, Sir.

Sir G. I hope you will not be offended, but considering the nature of your engagement with the old lady, I think it is but proper that some enquiry should be made into your character and views; and as a person interested in her welfare, I feel myself bound to make that enquiry.

Frank. [*aside.*] An impertinent scoundrel! he's letting it all out.

Sir G. I have no reason to doubt your respectability: but there are a sad set of fellows about, now o'days: I don't mean to say, Sir, you are such a person; but there's no knowing, you know, Sir.

Frank. Very pretty, friend Pantry. [*aside.*] Well, Sir!

Sir G. Your intentions, Sir, may be all very correct: but it's proper one should be on one's guard.

Frank. Go on, Mr. Drawcork: you do it nicely, upon my word. [*aside.*] Yes, Sir.

Sir G. You may only be bamboozling the old lady, you know, Sir, to get her money: I've known many such instances, for I attend all the remarkable trials; therefore, I'm sure you'll not be offended, if I object to your remaining here, till you can give a good account of yourself?

Frank. [*aside.*] If I can't, I'll give a good account of you, friend Pantry. (*aside*)—Certainly, Sir. Have you quite finished, Sir?

Sir G. Oh yes, Sir, quite.

Frank. Then I'll begin: Do you see that door?

Sir G. To be sure I do—What the deuce does he mean by that? [*aside.*]

Frank. Instantly walk your old body through it; before I take you by the nose, and force you.

Sir G. Take me by the nose! What do you mean?

Frank. You're known, old boy: you want to be fingering the old lady's cash, and to turn me out, eh! Do you, but you're known, I'm up to all your manœuvres—So, walk off! Come, Sir, tramp!

Sir G. 'Finger the old lady's cash!' why this is as bad a fellow as the other!

Frank. Will you retire to the kitchen, friend Pantry, or I will give you such a tweak, you shall feel it for a month! Come Sir, march!

Sir G. They're accomplices! we shall all be murdered! that rascal Jonathan, too, to say he was quiet and civil; but I'll not go, Sir! I won't be bullied in this way!

Frank. You won't?—we'll see: come (*forcing him out*) move your old bones, you designing dog, or I'll shake them out of your skin! and never dare interfere with me or the old lady again, as you value your carcass—d'ye hear?

Sir G. Why, what a set of ruffians have I got into company with! Bullied by one, blustered at by another: abused, maltreated! was ever knight used thus? but I won't put up with it! Here John! Thomas! help! help! I say—help! Jonathan!

Frank. Help Jonathan? My foot shall help Jonathan, if you don't move a little faster.—You must be casting your sheep's eyes at the old house-keeper, must you? why you most ancient goat! but come: hop! skip! jump! abscond!

Sir G. Help! murder! Jonathan! Help.

[*Exit Sir Gabriel, being forced off by Frank.*]

SCENE IV.

*Gardens of Castleton Hall.**Enter CATHERINE.*

Catherine. This interesting youth, this Arthur, has wound himself so into my esteem, that I cannot, for the life of me, bring myself to treat him as a domestic. Could I be assured his birth was not disgraceful! Heigho! some strange mystery hangs o'er his fate.

Enter FRANK.

Frank. So much for old Jonathan. By all my hopes, here's my old housekeeper's niece, Miss Tit! she's a fine creature, upon my life. I must have a little small talk with her.—How do you do, my dear?

Catherine. What saucy companion is this? as I live, my aunt's lover! *Dear !!* that term from you, would, I should imagine, Sir, be better applied to my aunt than to me.

Enter MISS ARRAGON from behind.

Miss A. [aside] My lover and my niece together! what can this mean? she is not endeavouring to rob me of his affections?

Frank. Oh, oh! a little jealous at my attention to the housekeeper! Why, my dear girl, surely you cannot suppose I meant any thing serious towards the old woman?

Miss A. [aside] That's me: oh, the base perjurd man!

Catherine. If you do not, I must tell you, Sir, your conduct is neither that of a gentleman nor a man; possesses neither honor nor honesty.

Miss A. [aside] I shall die with vexation!

Frank. Why, my love—

Catherine. I must again request you, Sir, to keep those terms of endearment for some one weak enough to listen to them.

Frank. Oh, the little scornful devil! (*aside*) Jonathan,

the butler, has a sneaking kindness for the old lady; and I think it will be a devilish good match.

Miss A. The butler a match for me! horrible! (*aside*)

Catherine. I shall think it my duty to let Sir Gabriel and my aunt be acquainted with your sentiments immediately.

Frank. Tell Sir Gabriel and the old lady! Zounds, that will spoil all! I shall be blown!—psha! nonsense, my dear; I was only joking—there, there—go along, and wait on your mistress.

Catherine. Mistress! I will degrade myself no longer by holding converse with you—yet, ere I depart, let me remind you, Sir, that no one with the feelings of a gentleman, would thus have insulted the heiress of Castleton, in the halls of her ancestors. [*Exit Catherine.*]

Frank. Wheugh! here's a go! Kitty, the heiress of Castleton! then who the devil is her aunt?

Miss A. [*advancing.*] Oh, you base, perjur'd man!

Frank. [*aside.*] The old woman! and overheard all! zounds! I am completely in for it now—I must brazen it out—what the plague shall I say? My dear madam!

Miss A. But my niece is right: you are some unprincipled fortune hunter—was it not enough to be false to your vows; but you must ridicule the hapless victim of your treachery? after winning my affections, to declare it all a hum! after even fixing the day, to consign me to the butler!

Frank. 'Winning your affections!'—'fixing the day!' Why, what can this mean?

Miss A. Yes: when covered with blushes, I attended your advertisement, inviting one of the fair sex to enter into a disinterested union with you—didn't you in the most passionate terms force me to name to-morrow as the happy day? But it is my fortune, Sir, you love; not me.

Frank. Her fortune! zounds, I may get into a good

thing here. [*aside.*] My dear madam, by all that's lovely; by your bright self, I was joking; merely joking—to prove it, I am ready to accompany you to the parson this instant! Ah! Madam, sacrifice on the propitious altar of matrimony your anger, your resentment!

Miss A. How irresistibly he pleads: [*aside.*] If you are sincere, and, indeed, a gentleman, you will instantly disclose your name and family: I may, then, perhaps, veil my just frowns, and smile once more upon your suit.

Frank. What name can I give that will pass off? my master's: he's safe enough in London: so there will be no danger. [*aside.*] Wildfire, Madam, at your service.

Miss A. Can it be; Arthur Wildfire, Sir?

Frank. Arthur Wildfire, Madam.

Miss A. Son of Sir Wilful Wildfire?

Frank. The same, Madam—what's in the wind now? [*aside.*]

Miss A. Oh, my heart! it is the dear insensible himself!—Support me—Arthur! [*Sinks in Frank's arms.*]

Frank. Curse it, what mystery is this? My dear Madam, let me conjure you to explain.

Miss A. Is it possible, then, you do not recognize your betrothed bride?

Frank. My betrothed bride?

Miss A. There wanted but this to complete my happiness—poor Sir Wilful, how great will be his joy! This union was always the darling wish of his heart—the union of our estates, he said, prov'd that nature intended us for each other.

Frank. Why, zounds! Madam, you are not the rich Miss Arragon, of Gloucestershire? the lady Sir Wilful intended to be my master's—psha! I shall expose all [*aside.*—My mistress?

Miss A. Well may you be confused, my dear Arthur!

I am indeed that neglected fair one; but this meeting repays all.

Frank. Come to my arms! come to your Wildfire! As I've taken my master's place, I've a right to his name.*[aside.]*—Come, my dear Miss Arragon, let us into the house.

Miss A. With all my heart: I must not lose an instant in acquainting Sir Gabriel with this happy discovery: he will be transported—come, my betrothed Arthur!

Frank. I must get married directly, or there may be a discovery by which *I* may be transported:—Impudence assist me! I attend you, my lovely bride!

[Exeunt Miss Arragon and Frank.]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Common Room of a Country Inn.

Enter General MALABAR and PIKESTAFF, ushered in by BOOZLE.

Gen. M. What the devil does Sir Gabriel mean sending off an express in this manner, and dragging a poor invalid like me a forced march of sixty miles, and all to look after a young baggage of whom I thought he had become commanding officer for life. It's monstrously perplexing. I'm sure the female sex have caus'd me trouble enough in my time without another of them adding to my miseries.

Pikest. Why you've caus'd them trouble enough. Poor Miss Millflower—to marry her clandestinely; then to desert her and your own precious baby; and never even to write or send to her, and all because she didn't happen to be as high born as yourself; but what good have you done by it? Though you went to India, and married a rich wife, with all your endeavours you've no one to leave your money to. Fie! fie on you! I don't wonder at those twinges: if they were twice as bad, they'd serve you right. I'm glad, however, to see you've a little remorse.

Gen. M. A little remorse, sir! what dy'e mean by that? It's not remorse, sir, it's the rheumatism—havn't I done every thing in my power to make reparation; didn't I hasten the first moment I reach'd England to discover, acknowledge, and make them happy? and finding they had left their native village, didn't I advertize for them, offering immense rewards, in every newspaper in London, but without effect? could a man do more?

Pikest. Yes, what was the use of your advertizing, when you made poor Miss Millflower swear, before you

married her, to conceal her name, and never to reveal your's but by your desire, putting it for ever out of her power to expose your treachery.

Gen. M. Why, you most impudent subaltern, here's in-subordination ; 'tis true I have kept you in my service because you always say what you think, and speak plain ; but——

Pikest. Yes, but now I speak too plain, you want to get rid of me ; it makes good what I always said, there's none of us like to hear the truth at all times. Well, I've done.

Gen. M. That's lucky, for here's company coming, and——

Pikest. It might'n't be very politic to let them overhear what we're talking about.

Gen. M. What do you mean by that, sir ? I don't care who overhears.

M'Shift. (*without*) This way, Jolt, darling : we'll get a nice drop here at the King of Prussia.

Enter M'SHIFT and JOLT, ushered in by BOOZLE.

M'Shift. By my soul now, but you're a mighty funny fellow, master Boozle.

Boozle. Yes, your honour, I like to make my customers in good humour with themselves, and then they're in good humour with me. If I'm dry I generally find they become so too, and drink like fishes, which is all right for the King of Prussia, you know : for it empties my butts and fills my pockets at the same time.

M'Shift. That is to say, master Boozle, you give them a sweet word to blarney down your sour beer, and tell 'em a story to stomach your spirits. In short, Mr. Bampfyld Boozle, you've a mighty pleasant way of bamboozling your customers. Be off wid you.

[*Exit* BOOZLE.]

Gen. M. That I'll be sworn he has. Now that man speaks his mind, and I like him for it. How are you, friend ?

M'Shift. Beautiful, sir! I hope you be so too, though I scarcely need ask, for upon my soul you're mighty ill-looking.

Gen. M. I am not very well, sure enough: old age and hard service are not remarkable for benefiting the constitution of the warrior, however they may have served that of his country. Oh that I had some one to sooth the anguish of old age, and cheer those pangs, a life of cares has brought upon my soul.

M'Shift. Is it a companion he's looking for? Sure then, the little Lilly of Eden won't do delightfully for him. Och! I'll speak to him directly. Faith, sir! for if it's a companion you're looking for, sure now I can't help you to one in no time. You must know, sir, I keep a small bit of an office for supplying every body with what they want; and if your honour will let me, I'll bring you one that will make you ten years younger by the time you're an hour older.

Gen. M. Be it so: I'll see this companion of yours.

M'Shift. I'faith, sir, and you shall not wait long. I'll skip like a grasshopper, and never turn my back till I make you both mighty well acquainted with each other.

[*Exeunt Jolt and M'Shift.*]

Gen. M. I intended to make these head-quarters till the afternoon, that I might refit before I visited the castle; therefore encamping for these honest fellows, will not disarrange my operations. I will lie down awhile—a nap will do me good. [Exeunt General and Pikestaff.]

SCENE II.

An Apartment.

Entr SIR GABRIEL and MISS ARRAGON.

Sir Gab. Ha! ha! ha! Well this is droll enough that

he should turn out to be my old friend's son after all, the very man that was originally to have married you, very droll upon my life, and very apropos too ; but are you sure he's not imposing upon us ? Are you sure that he really is young Wildfire ?

Miss A. Oh my life upon the dear youth's honor.

Sir Gab. Ah, that of course : you're a woman, and easily imposed upon ; but I'm an old bird, and not caught so quickly. I shall try him before I trust him : he's coming this way, so do you step out, I'll ask him to lend me twenty pounds ; that's sure to try a man.

Miss A. I consent with all my heart, convinced he'll come from the trial as pure as gold from the furnace.

Sir Gab. If the trial should produce some gold I shall be satisfied :—away, he's here. [Exit MISS ARRAGON.

Enter FRANK.

Frank. (*aside.*) Oh the devil ! Sir Gabriel ! my dear sir Gabriel, I hope you'll excuse the little mistake that—

Sir Gab. Don't mention it, Mr. Wildfire, I beg. I am rejoiced to shake by the hand a son of my old friend Sir Wilful. Your father and I, young gentleman, have been to many a grand sight together : we were the first persons in the village that looked through the kaleidoscope.

Frank. It's all right. (*aside*) I'faith, it was very droll my turning you out.

Sir Gab. Very droll indeed (but not very agreeable) (*aside.*) But egad, I beg your pardon, I'm going to take a great liberty with you. I'm disappointed in some remittances I expected : you could'nt lend me twenty pounds for a short time, could you ?

Frank. No, nor twenty pence. (*aside.*) Twenty pounds, my dear Sir Gabriel ; really I should be very happy, but upon my honor I left town in such a devil of a hurry that I quite forgot to put my pocket book in the chaise.

Sir Gab. Well, ten will do ; can you lend me ten ?

Frank. Curse it, he'll find me out. My dear sir, I'm extremely sorry, but I really have no notes about me, or I would with the greatest pleasure!

Sir Gab. Well then five pounds will serve for the present, or a little loose silver.

Frank. Oh, certainly sir, here's—curse it, they are half-pence. (*aside.*) Bless me, where's my purse? my loose silver will be hard to find I believe. (*aside.*) Dear me, I'm afraid I've lost my purse! Oh, now I recollect I left it at the inn! I was changing a guinea, and put it in my portmanteau, for one's loose cash does run away so. Ha! ha! ha! excuse the joke. I shall get off (*aside.*) Very sorry.

Sir Gab. No money, that looks suspicious: the son of a baronet, and not able to give change for a sixpence, or pay turnpike for a walking stick. But I'll try him further. (*aside.*) Never mind, I've thought of a plan that will settle all: give me a checque on your banker.

Frank. A checque on my banker! What the devil shall I do now? If I write him one, I shall be hang'd for forgery: if I don't, I shall be found out, and kicked out; what is to be done: ah, the checque in my pocket of my master, it's for £20; it will do; it will do! (*aside.*) A checque on my banker, my dear Sir Gabriel, I'll give it you directly—for twenty pounds, you say? I've luckily one in my pocket for exactly that sum, which I wrote this morning, to give to a devilish clever fellow of a servant of mine, Frank Cleverly; he left me to be married, and that twenty pounds was his marriage portion: however, on second thoughts, I gave it him in notes, and so, sir, there is the checque, very much at your service.

(*gives checque.*)

Sir Gab. I'm extremely obliged to you, sir: let me see, "Aldgate, Handle and Co. Frank Cleverly, or bearer, twenty pounds.—Arthur Wildfire." Very good: I'll return it to you to-morrow, Mr. Wildfire.

Frank. Any time, my dear Sir Gabriel: have another for a hundred if you like; I can give it you in a moment.

Sir Gab. Sir, you're very obliging; but this will do for my *purpose*, as well as a thousand.

Frank. Thank Heaven for that: but now let me be off, 'ere he asks me for any thing else. I may'nt answer his next demand so satisfactorily. (*aside.*) My dear Sir Gabriel, *excusez moi pour un moment.*

Sir Gab. Oh certainly, sir.

Frank. Good bye then, for the present, my dear Sir Gabriel. I shall see you again by and by. *Au revoir!*

[*Exit.*

Sir Gab. It's all right; but i'faith I began to be afraid. Sir Wilful will be rarely rejoiced to find his runaway son on the eve of accomplishing his dearest wish. Jonathan!

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Oh, Sir Gabriel!

Sir Gab. Hey day! what now?

Jon. He's come, Sir Gabriel; Sir Wilful is come.

Sir Gab. What, my old friend: well, that is lucky. Why i'faith, every thing is turning out just as one could wish it; where is he?

Jon. In the hall, Sir Gabriel, come post, and has brought all the London papers. We shall now know all that's doing there, all the new sights.

Sir Gab. But, Jonathan, what is it I hear of you? Why they tell you've broken out—have become rumbustious, obstreperous. The old lady is going to have you bound over to keep the peace: she swears you've designs upon her.

Jon. What! Sir Gabriel, I break out—I obstropolos, that never offends nobody. I that's always so civil?

Sir Gab. There it is: It's that very civility that does all the mischief with the women: but come along, Jonathan: I must go and make interest with my friend the

nabob, that as the Persian Ambassador has arrived, I may get the first peep at his beautiful Circassian; for I am dying to see her.

Jon. Oh, Sir Gabriel; why old miss could'nt say so, surely. Heaven forgive us our sins; what a world this is we live in, when a man can't say any thing civil to a lady, but she thinks he's going to be uncivil. Oh, I'll never be civil to nobody, never no more. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The Hall as before.

Enter SIR WILFUL.

Sir Wil. Hav'nt I had enough plague with my own son; but Sir Gabriel must want to trouble me with another person's daughter.

Enter SIR GABRIEL.

Sir Gab. Ah, my dear friend, ten thousand welcomes; you have arrived opportunely indeed. I sent to you about our late friend's daughter; but must introduce you to your own son.

Sir Wil. My son! how's this? I won't see him, Sir Gabriel. I won't see him; you know it.

Sir Gab. But you must, you shall. I was just going to send an express off for you.

Sir Wil. I tell you, Sir Gabriel, I won't see him; and you know I am positive. I have sworn never to see him till he marries Miss Arragon.

Sir Gab. Then you'll see him this afternoon.

Sir Wil. Impossible! it can't be: Arthur is as obstinate as myself: and having once refused to marry Miss Arragon, the devil himself won't make him alter his resolution.

Sir Gab. The devil might'nt, but the angel has: for

such he considers the old lady ; he was enamoured of her before he knew who she was ; and it was not until the last half hour we discovered he was the son of my old companion Sir Wilful.

Sir Wil. It must be an impostor ; it cannot be my son ; you may as well attempt to bend a crocodile's back as Arthur, when he's once resolved.

Sir Gab. A crocodile's back!—if that can't be bent, it may be brought about ; and so may he : and let me tell you stranger things have been brought about than this. But how the plague shall I convince you ? Gad, I know how ! Do you know your son's handwriting ?

Sir Wil. Aye, as well as I do my own : our writing is like ourselves, a firm downright text.

Sir Gab. Should you know one of his checques on his banker, if you were to see it ?

Sir Wil. To be sure I should, for he always begins them in the imperative mood ! ' Pay so and so ? ' or ' bearer ! ' and leaves ' please ' out, making them pay whether they please or not.

Sir Gab. Very well, then read that ; that, sir, is a checque, he gave me scarcely ten minutes ago.

Sir Wil. It is his hand sure enough : and he is really going to marry Miss Arragon ? Then I have conquer'd the rascal at last.

Sir Gab. Follow me into the next room, and I'll bring you together. I'll just step and prepare him, for he knows nothing of your being here. This way : having once got him happily married, we'll then talk about our ward.

Sir Wil. This news of my son's submission has given me more joy than any thing since the rascal's birth. This marriage will bring about all my favourite wishes ; it will enlarge my estate, our lands joining together, and command the boy a seat in the House, having the gift of a borough attached to it. So come along, I pant to forgive

the villain, and knock him down for standing up against me. [*Exeunt ambo.*

SCENE V.

An Apartment in the King of Prussia Inn.

Enter BARNEY, M'SHIFT, JOLT, *and* LILLIAN.

M'Shift. This way, darling, this way. Fait, but we've taken a mighty great short cut across the fields, Jolt; but good luck lightens a man's heels wonderfully; and sure we're not in wonderful good luck to get little Lilly here settled so soon. It shews the Echo Office answers rarely.

Lil. It is indeed fortunate—it is more than I almost scarcely dar'd to hope for.

M'Shift. Och, I'll be bound you'll have a rare comfortable place of it—there'll be no quarrelling about victuals, rails, or wages; you'll do just what you like, and after you've kept open house for two or three years, the old gentleman will close all accounts, by popping off, and leaving you a fat thumping legacy to console you for his loss—and 'ent these beautiful prospects?

Lil. The prospect which presents itself in the death of a benefactor, will always be a sad one to Lillian Eden.

M'Shift. Blessings on your little grateful heart for that—but here the old gentleman comes—stand aside, my darling, and I'll introduce you to him before he sees you, in a little bit of an epilogue of my own.

Enter GENERAL MALABAR *and* PIKESTAFF.

Gen. M. Not so fast, Pikestaff; not so fast—why zounds, you are marching in double quick time. You have dislocated every joint in my body. Hey, who is this—a woman!

M'Shift. This is the little Lilly of Eden, your honour,

that I spoke to you about. She'll keep your house for you rarely, never fear.

Gen. M. Death and the devil! I expected one to drive away every disquiet from me, and you bring me a woman:—this is an Irish remedy with a witness to it. She's very pretty faith, and young too. (*aside*)

M^cShift. Oh, murder! what have we done now?

Jolt. We be all in the wrong box here, sure eno'.

Lillian. What can all this mean? (*aside*) I perceive, sir, there is some strange mistake here; (*to Gen. Malabar*) but I am born to be the victim of circumstance. Allow me to explain: I am a friendless orphan, without a resource; without a hope. This honest creature, whose good wishes may have outstripped his prudence, becoming by chance acquainted with my situation, kindly offered his endeavours to assist me. I understood from him you wished for one whose assiduities and attention might alleviate your cares, and soothe your pangs. Under this impression it was I accompanied him hither.

Gen. M. There's no deceit in this. Stop, young woman; I feel a strange interest in your history; and though it will not be exactly the thing for an old fellow like me to tempt scandal by hiring such a young and pretty housekeeper as you would make, my ward, Miss Arragon, may act as proxy for me. I'll hasten to Castle-ton-Hall directly; meet me there within an hour, and you shall have no cause to complain of being destitute or friendless. Ecod I feel so light and brisk. Come, Pike-staff—quick march, my boy.

Pikest. Quick march? why you seem to have taken a new lease. [*Exeunt.*]

M^cShift. It's all right—If I had'nt made a mistake, we'd never have understood one another. We'll be with you, your honour, never fear—come, Lillian, darling—
● come Jolt, honey—

Lil. My heart's too full for words—it expands with gratitude, and dances with joy.

M'Shift. Does it—then fait our legs shall accompany it—Jolt, you bog-trotter, can you dance a minuet?

Jolt. Dance a minute—Ecod, when I were in Yorkshire, I used to dance a hundred minutes, and never were tired.

M'Shift. Oh fie! fie! You've been brought up at a Yorkshire boarding-school, and taught nothing. Ireland is the place for education;—but come, we'll have a small bit of a reel, and then we'll take a bottle together—you'll understand that.

Jolt. He! he! But I always thought the bottle came first and the reel afterwards; but come.

M'Shift. With all my heart—Saint Patrick's Day in the Morning! Fal de ral, lal de ral, &c.

[*Exeunt omnes dancing.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Another Apartment.

Enter FRANK.

Frank. All goes on swimmingly: the parson will be ready in an hour; the old woman has promised to be ready when he is; I'm ready directly; the ready itself is all ready, and so every thing's ready. Eh, sir Gabriel; what can he want? [*Enter SIR GABRIEL.*

Sir Gab. Rare news, my dear young friend! rare news! I've such a surprise for you.

Frank. The devil you have, what now? (*aside*)

Sir Gab. I've let your father know that you are here.

Frank. Upon my soul I'm extremely obliged to you.

Sir Gab. But that's not all; I'm come now to let you know your father's here.

Frank. Confusion! Sir Wilful here. Nothing can save me; I feel the tossing of the blanket now—my head begins to swim—I'm going up. (*aside*)

Sir Gab. I've told him every thing about you and the old lady!

Frank. You're excessively good; I wish you were choaked. (*aside*)

Sir Gab. And so he's coming here to give you his blessing.

Frank. It will be a blessing when he does come. Curse it, what's to be done? (*aside*)

Sir Gab. What's more, he's at the door!

Frank. I wish he was at Nova Scotia: it's all over

with me, I may bid good bye to the old lady. (*aside*)

Sir Gab. He would'nt believe you were his son.

Frank. I don't know how he should. (*aside*)

Sir Gab. And so he's come here to be convinced!

Frank. He will be convinced with a witness to it, and so shall I; only my conviction will not be exactly like his. (*aside*)-

Sir Gab. I thought it would be an agreeable surprise to you; but I'll go and send him in, and leave you closeted for half an hour, he's not at all angry.

Frank. No, that's all to come! (*aside*)

Sir Gab. He means to replace you in his will, he says; but I'll go and send him here. [*Exit.*]

Frank. His will, he'll let me know more of his power than his will, I believe. What in the name of brass am I to do? Oh, that there were any chimney I could climb up, or any cellar I could crawl down. Impudence! Impudence! dear goddess, Impudence! befriend thy son. I can only avoid meeting him by running away; so here goes. Hey, by all that's provoking, this way comes my master; 'tis he after all, and this way my master's father! I'm between two fires, and must be blown to the devil! Dear me, what a perspiration I'm in already. Ha! this cupboard—Sir Gabriel said I was to be closeted, and closeted I will be, if this cupboard will hold me.

[*Frank gets into the cupboard at the back of the stage. Sir Wilful and Wildfire enter at opposite sides, and meet in the middle.*]

Wild. My father, astonishment! (*aside*)

Sir Wil. Yes, 'tis my son sure enough; I thought I could not be mistaken in his writing. (*aside.*)

Wild. What can have brought him here! (*aside.*)

Sir Wil. So, sir, 'ent you a pretty fellow?

Wild. So they tell me, sir.

Sir Wil. 'Ent you ashamed to see my face?

Wild. No, sir: however we may disagree on some points, I trust I shall never be ashamed of my father.

Sir Wil. The stubborn young dog, he won't own himself in fault. Well I like him for that, because it's like myself. (*aside.*) It seems though, sir, that if you are not ashamed of me, you're ashamed of yourself, and have endeavoured, by a late compliance with my wishes, to express your repentance for having so precipitately disobeyed them.

Wild. Compliance with your wishes! I do not understand you, sir.

Sir Wil. I allude to Miss Arragon: it seems you understand *her*, sir; nay, that you understand one another.

Wild. Miss Arragon, sir!

Sir Wil. Yes, sir, Miss Arragon! the lady you formerly refused at my request to marry, but whom you are now dying to carry to church, who is now in the house nothing loath; and only waiting for Sir Gabriel's consent.

Wild. It is true, sir, I am enamoured of a lady in this house, who is under the care of Sir Gabriel.

Sir Wil. It is the same lady, sir.

Wild. Impossible, my dear father! the Miss Arragon you mentioned to me, was old and ugly: this is an angel of eighteen; fresh as the morning, and fairer than un-fallen snow.

Sir Wil. Lord bless me, how love does blind a young fellow to be sure. I tell you, Arthur, it is the same lady: she's not very old, I'll grant, but still she's no chicken; she's on the shady side of forty if she's a day; as for her being as fresh as the morning, it must be one of the foggy mornings in November; and with respect to comparisons between her and the snow you talk'd about, the less we say on that subject, the better, as the snow is by no means flattered.

Wild. I tell you, my dear father, you must be mistaken; the

lady I speak of, is youth and beauty personified, one would imagine that like the Eastern Houri, she lived upon essences, and with the fragrance of every flower imbibed its beauty.

Sir Wil. Psha, nonsense! what an obstinate young dog it is: to come to the point at once, did you not through some whim of your own advertise for a wife?

Wild. I did, sir.

Sir Wil. Did not your advertisement produce an interview with a lady who brought you here?

Wild. Most certainly.

Sir Wil. Have you not fallen desperately in love with that lady?

Wild. I cannot deny it.

Sir Wil. Is she not under Sir Gabriel's care, and have you not spoken to him about marrying her?

Wild. I confess it.

Sir Wil. Well then how can there be any mistake? But let me question you further: did you not give a cheque on your Banker for twenty pounds?

Wild. Oh that cursed cheque. I did, is it in your possession?

Sir Wil. Yes, yes; here it is safe enough!

Wild. Thank Heaven! he has paid it, and I've got rid of Frank at last.

Sir Wil. Why, if it had'nt been for this cheque, I should'nt have believed you could have been here.

Wild. There is some mystery I can't account for; (*aside.*) and you are certain, sir, the lady in question is Miss Arragon whom you wished me to marry?

Sir Wil. As certain as I am you're my son, though your lovesick eyes mistake wrinkles for dimples, and fancy a Hebe where there's only a Hecate.

Wild. And you consent to my marrying her?

Sir Wil. It is the darling wish of my heart; and I'll

give you twenty thousand pounds to pay for a wedding dinner.

Wild. A bargain, sir ; but will you stand to it ?

Sir Wil. Stand to it ; we'll have it down in black and white directly.

Wild. Aye black and white, where is the pen and ink ?

Sir Wil. Here it is : now then for it : “ I promise to pay my son Arthur Wildfire on his marriage with Miss” —what's her christian name ?

Wild. Catherine.

Sir Wil. “ With Miss Catherine Arragon the sum of twenty thousand pounds, in token of my consent to the said marriage, Wilful Wildfire.” Dated this day ; there it is allsigned and ready, and now go and marry the old girl as soon as you like.

Wild. In less than an hour, sir, the lady and myself will be at your feet, asking your blessing.

Sir Wil. And you shall have it,—ten thousand blessings. Odds heart, I'm so happy. Huzza, huzza, let me go in search of John Groom—happy event—stick to her Arthur—carry the old girl off—tol lol de rol lol.

[*Exit.*

Wild. If I don't carry the old girl off I've sent the old boy off, at all events, so I'll go and marry Catherine directly.

[*Exit WILDFIRE.*

FRANK *advancing from the cupboard.*

Frank. They're both clear off : here's an escape, egad. I'll go and marry my old Venus directly ; but how the devil to pay the parson ? I've no silver, nor any gold ; but I've brass enough, so I must pay him in brass, 'tis a rare joke 'ifaith ; I shall get my master's sweetheart, he'll get his own, and we shall both get a fortune into the bargain. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Enter SIR GABRIEL.

Sir Gab. Well, my young friend, why you seem merry : have you settled every thing to your satisfaction ?

Frank. Most completely so.

Sir Gab. You've come over the old man, eh?

Frank. Yes, yes; I've got on his blind side.

Sir Gab. And you're to marry the girl, eh.

Frank. Directly.

Sir Gab. I'll give you away. We'll have it done at once; but odso, let me give you the twenty pounds for your cheque. You'll want some loose money, you know, for the parson, the bell-ringers, and the marrow-bones, and so on; and as you've left your purse at the inn, it may be acceptable.

Frank. Uncommonly so. (*aside.*)

Sir Gab. I've nothing less than £50.; but never mind the difference, you can give it me, when you come to rummage over some of the old lady's hoards.

Frank. So I can; yes, yes, I'll rummage them over.

Sir Gab. By the bye, my asking you for that cheque, was all a trap to catch you in. Ha! ha! ha! very droll.

Frank. In which you were caught yourself. (*aside.*) Very droll indeed, ha! ha! ha!

Sir Gab. But come, we'll set off to the parson, and then I'll shew you the lions about here: there are some sights very well worth seeing; there's the Devil's Kettle, and Mouse Hall—and Cat's Castle, and—but I can't tell you half of them, though I've seen them all.

Frank. Indeed, sir: you have had some enviable opportunities, upon my word.

Sir Gab. I have, I have, sir: why do you know, at our great naval hero's funeral, I sat immediately next to the gentleman who travelled post from the highlands of Scotland to witness the spectacle. Noble ardour! I saw him fall asleep, just before it began, and when it had passed, I, sir, was the identical person that woke him, to tell him it was all over. I was, indeed; but come along. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

MISS CATHERINE ARRAGON'S *Boudoir*.*Enter* CATHERINE.

Cath. Yes, marriage is what we must all come to ; and to whom can I better entrust the hopes and honours of my house, than to him whom I am convinced will support and uphold them.

Enter WILDFIRE.

Wild. Pardon me, charming Catherine. Excuse this abrupt intrusion of one to whom your word is law. The cloud that hung over my fate has vanished, and equal in birth and fortune to yourself, I no longer hesitate to claim your promise, and ask the consummation of my hopes.

Cath. My promise! What can this mean? But no matter.*(aside.)* The favourable sentiments I entertained for you, when my servant, Arthur, I shall not now retract in your prosperity : my hand is your's on two conditions:—the first, that you obtain the sanction of my guardians ; the other that you disclose implicitly, your name and rank.

Wild. Confusion! Old Gaby won't give his consent, I'm certain. I'm check'd there—what does she mean too, by my being her servant.

Cath. You hesitate, and Catherine Arragon of Castleton—

Wild. Catherine Arragon: then you are really the woman I was to marry ; and my obstinate old father was right ; but where could his eyes be, when he swore you were old and ugly.

Cath. The woman you were to marry? “ My promise?”

Wild. Yes, my lovely mistress! Did you not expressly bring me here to marry me, and depute me to speak about the settlement to Sir Gabriel?

Cath. Never. I brought you here as a servant—the settlement I alluded to, was the amount of your wages.

Wild. Wages; ha! ha! ha! Arthur Wildfire, a footman—was ever any thing so ridiculous—that cursed Irishman has made a bull, and I've made a blunder. This then accounts for Sir Gabriel's conduct, and all the mysteries I've observ'd here.

Cath. Arthur Wildfire! Is it possible? Why, Sir Wilful intends you to marry my aunt: he is another of my guardians, and without his consent, I never can marry you, unless I give up all my fortune.

Wild. Make yourself perfectly easy about that, my love. Here is Sir Wilfull's consent in black and white. I have pledged myself to him to marry you in the next half-hour.

Cath. Impossible!

Wild. Not at all. The parson is all ready.

Cath. Nay, but Arthur, I shall lose——

Wild. No, no, my love, it's I shall lose——twenty thousand pounds, if we lose many more minutes in debate: so not a word 'till the parson says, 'will you take him?'

Cath. Well, on this condition, I'll consent: but positively I would'nt have yielded so soon on any other; but sooner than you should lose twenty thousand pounds——

Wild. You'll consent to find a husband in Arthur Wildfire. It's very plain here's some mistake in this business; but it's a very lucky mistake for us: so come along, my charming Kate, and let us settle every thing directly.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE THE LAST.

The great Hall as before.

Enter GENERAL MALABAR, LILLIAN, PIKESTAFF, and SERVANT.

Servant. Who do you say, sir?

Gen. M. General Malabar, blockhead. I wish to see either Sir Gabriel, or Miss Arragon, directly. Go and let them know I'm here.

Servant. Very well, sir! *[Exit.*

Gen. M. Gad I'm so happy. To think now that warm-hearted Irishman should have blundered on a discovery, the wisest of us might have searched ages for in vain, and that in my little companion, Lillian, I should find my long lost daughter. Could we but find this Frank Cleverly—this run-away cousin to confirm it, (not that I have any doubt) my felicity would be complete. Ah, my old friend, Sir Gabriel.

Enter SIR GABRIEL.

Sir Gab. They are married—the old woman has got a husband at last. Ah, General Malabar. I rejoice to see you: I haven't time at present to tell you why I desired your presence here. I'm over my ears in marriages, surprises, and good fortune. Where is Sir Wilful?

Enter SIR WILFUL.

Sir Wil. Here I am now, my dear friend—Ah, General Malabar, your most obedient.

Gen. M. I am happy to see you, Sir Wilful.

Sir G. My dear friends, we have no time for salutation now; I've completed the business, Sir Wilful; the nuptial knot is tied; Parson Drawltext has gone through the ceremony, and I left the old lady twittering away like a young canary.

Sir Wil. My dear friend, how shall I ever repay you?

Sir Gab. Don't mention that, the happy couple are at the door, I'll bring them in. Stand aside, my dear

General, for a few moments, and then we shall be your very humble servants. [Exit.]

Sir Wil. A father's feelings, General, will take precedence of those of friendship—You must excuse me.

Gen. M. What the devil does all this mean?

Re-enter SIR GABRIEL, leading in MISS ARRAGON.

Sir Gab. Sir Wilful, allow me to introduce to you a daughter, and now— [Exit.]

Miss A. (To Sir Wilful.) Your blessing, sir. *(kneels.)*

Sir Wil. Rise, madam, I request.

Re-enter SIR GABRIEL, with FRANK.

Sir Gab. And now, Sir Wilful, allow me to introduce to you your son.

Sir Wil. My son! Why, zounds, who is this? No son of mine, Sir Gabriel.

Enter WILDFIRE, and MISS CATHERINE ARRAGON.

Wild. No, sir—your son is here.

Sir Wil. Here, sir, why 'ent you with your wife?

Wild. I am with my wife: allow me to present her to you, and request your blessing.

[Kneels with MISS CATHERINE ARRAGON.]

Frank. And I, sir—kneel, my love. *(kneels with Miss Ar.)*

Sir Wil. How is this, sir? Why have you not married as I ordered you?

Wild. I have done so, sir. You desired me to marry Miss Catherine Arragon: behold her; and now, sir, I'll thank you for twenty thousand pounds.

Sir Wil. Twenty thousand devils—but you, Miss *(to Catherine)* you have not married with my consent, and are a beggar.

Wild. Not so, sir; I have here your consent in writing.

Sir Wil. I am over-reached, duped, tricked; I shall not have the grounds, nor he the seat: but I'm glad he didn't submit.

Wild. You shall have both, sir: the acres can be bought, and so too can the seat by that surest currency, merit and independence.

Sir Gab. What the deuce have I been doing? Another mistake. Pray, sir, who the devil are you? *(To Frank.)*

Frank. I was that gentleman's obedient servant, sir ; but now I'm this lady's husband, and your most obedient servant. Allow me to introduce her—Mrs. Cleverly.

Sir Gab. You shall be taken up as an impostor, rascal.

Miss A. No, sir, he shall not—he cannot, for before our marriage he disclosed himself to me.

Frank. Yes, through a mistake, I entered her service ; and that I might not be deceived, she determined to keep me in it for life.

Wild. The same with me : you were my servant, 'tis true ; but I, it appears, have been a servant since then ; so now we are equals, and though we are masters, will still prove men to our mistresses.

Sir Wil. I am not to be foiled in this way ; you have not yet gained the consent of all your guardians, Miss Arragon. There is General Malabar : he is luckily present : stand forward, General.

Cath. My other guardian here ? this is indeed perplexing.

Sir Wil. Now, General, what do you say ?

Gen M. Why, zounds, I hardly know what to say ; I must ask this rogue a question before I say any thing. Your name's Frank Cleverly, you say : do you know this lady ?

Frank. Eh, can it be ! it must ! My cousin Lillian, the daughter of my aunt poor Mary Millflower.

Gen. M. I am satisfied : having discovered my long lost daughter, this must be a day of general jubilee ; I give my consent to your marriage, ward. It must be so, Sir Wilful ; no one must be dissatisfied to-day.

Sir Gab. Aye ! aye ! Let it be so. Sir Wilful, you and I have been two old fools, and the less we say the more it will be to our credit. We must forgive them—May all advertising prove as propitious as ours ; may a wife never be wanted by the brave and deserving ; and may we receive no other check to our mirth than the cheering one of a cheque on our bankers !

(*Exeunt Omnes.*)

EPILOGUE.

By the Author of the Comedy.

Enter JONATHAN CURRY.

OH, who would have too much civility?
All who want any thing are wanting me!
And all the world's in want, egad I think,
Young maids want husbands, and young men the chink:
Wives children want, husbands abroad to fly—
And how should Jonathan their wants supply?
Sir Gabriel, with the world of rank and fashion,
All want to see the beautiful Circassian.
E'en our mad poet talks at such a rate!
He call'd me just now—Oh, his advocate!
Pale as a sprite he look'd—all hurry scurry,
Crying you are so civil, Master Curry;
You can't refuse a civil word to say,
And beg they'll civilly accept my play;
What do I know of speaking, moods and tenses!
Stop—here comes Mr. M'Shift's man of senses;
He'll help me out (*JOLT enters.*) I hope, sir, you are well?

Jolt. Why middling, sir,—I hope you're so yoursel.

Jonathan. I'm glad you happened to be passing by,
Our poet here wants me to speechify.

Jolt. Yes, I know what he wants, and took for granted,
That you would soon cry out—here, York, you're wanted!
I wonder he should ever fix on you,
I told him that a cockney would'nt do;
And promis'd him I'd speak—we Yorkshire lads,
Are now o' days more knowing than our dads;
We be so up, you see, to all that passes,
And then we are sic favourites wi' the lasses:

We have sic coaxing ways—

Jonathan. Stop, Mr. Jolt!

At coaxing ladies I am no such dolt;
Though no great beauty, as my mother says,
I've a great many little winning ways.

Jolt. Ees, but for speaking—we York lads are famous,
Our English is so good—you Ignoramus!
Now you, you know, have got the cockney brogue,
And that will never do.—

Jonathan. Well, well—you rogue—
But I speak best.

Jolt. Then why did you call me ?

Jonathan. Why that's a poser—Stop, sir, now I see—
It was to help me, should I prove at fault,
For when I speechify I'm apt to halt.

Jolt. Well, well, I'll help you—Now then for the poet
We hav'nt said one word for him.

Jonathan. I know it :
But we soon will—now for it—I'll begin,
And should I want a word, you'll pop it in.
Ladies and gentlemen, I come, you see,
Because our poet wants—wants—wants—

Jolt. (prompting.) Wants me.

Jonathan. Wants me to speak—that's it, you're right, you
rogue,
Because he wants—wants—wants—

Jolt. (prompting.) An Epilogue.

Jonathan. An Epilogue—that's it—you've found the cause,
To ask for what we all want, your—

Jolt. (prompting.) Applause.

Jonathan. Applause—you've hit it, Jolt—upon my life,
The ladies smile when wanted is—

Jolt. (prompting.) A wife !

Jonathan. Support us then, you young men, who want—

Jolt. (prompting.) Spouses !

Jonathan. Because Old Drury here wants—

Jolt. (prompting.) Crowded houses !

Jonathan. Should you allow our bark in peace to anchor,
May you ne'er want—

Jolt. (prompting.) A cheque upon your banker !

Jonathan. A cheque ! the bankers I should like to know.

Jolt. You shall—The Public, Drury Lane and Co. !

Jonathan. Well said, John Jolt, you are a friend in need,
But these are what I call our friends indeed ;
Our hands we'll join in this the poet's cause,

Jolt. Join yours, kind Sirs, and greet him with applause !

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