

No. CLIII.

THE MINOR DRAMA.

THE

MUSARD BALL;

OR,

LOVE AT THE ACADEMY.

A Contemporaneous Extrabaganza, in One Act.

BY JOHN BROUGHAM, COMEDIAN.

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, STAGE BUSINESS, COSTUMES,
RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c., &c.

AS PERFORMED AT BURTON'S THEATRE.

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TO WHICH ARE ADDED

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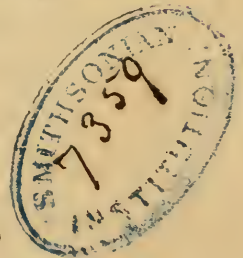
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CAST OF THE CHARACTERS.—[THE MUSARD BALL.]

THE HON. HIRAM DOOLITTLE DUGGINS, Ambassador, Mr. Burton.
ORLANDO FURIOSO BROWN, of the Staff, Mr. Brougham.
CAPTAIN POLAR, his Friend and Adviser, Mr. Barrett.
TOM JONES, Brother to Fanny Mr. McRae.
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MRS. H. D. DUGGINS Mrs. Hudson Kirby.
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THE MUSARD BALL.

SCENE I.—*Retiring Room of the Opera—a string of people seen passing through the back ground to cloak room.*

MRS. DUGGINS enters with POLAR.

Mrs. D. Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you, indeed. I don't believe I have lost much—a diamond brooch and my lace mantilla, nothing more.

Polar. Nothing more! She talks Arabian Nights! Can I do anything? go any where? would there be any chance of my finding the lost valuables?

Mrs. D. It doesn't matter. I have lost something yet more precious.

Polar. Indeed! and what may that be?

Mrs. D. A husband, sir!

Polar. Oh, lord! hem! I mean happy man!

Mrs. D. What, sir, to have lost me!

Polar. No, madam, if I may so express myself, to have ever found so—pardon me if I may so express myself—as it were so angelic a creature.

Mrs. D. You flatter, sir, but perhaps you will oblige me still more by looking for——

Polar. Your—if I may so express myself—most fortunate husband, madame.

Mrs. D. No, the diamonds; him I shall be sure to find; his jealous regard for me won't keep him long away.

Polar. May I make so bold as to ask where he is gone to?

Mrs. D. Only to the cloak room.

Polar. Ah! then if he should happen to be at the tail of that long single file, you may probably meet at breakfast, not before.

Mrs. D. Dear me, dear me; what shall I do? pray, sir, do try to find him for me.

Polar. Certainly, madame, on the instant.

Mrs. D. Stay, sir, there is one important matter which you seem to have forgotten, you probably don't know his name.

Polar. Madame, I should only have to inquire for the liege lord of— if I might take the liberty to say so—the most lovely lady at the ball.

Mrs. D. It might facilitate your progress better, sir, to ask for his Excellency, Mr. Hiram Doolittle Duggins.

Polar. His Excellency! proud of the commission, madame; on the wings, if I may so express myself, of respectful admiration—would I might say love but I won't—I fly. [Goes off at back.]

Mrs. D. Singularly excitable, but very obliging indeed; what a bore this is, if my husband has to wait his turn amongst all these people, moving as they are, about an inch an hour; there's no knowing when I shall see him. Ha! there's a private room, it will be more agreeable to wait there. There's no pleasure without its cost, and this is a somewhat expensive one, indeed. [Exit.]

Enter HIRAM.

Hiram. Not here! I knew it, I felt it! I saw that impudent military fellow's outrageous eye upon her, and she returned his glances. I didn't look, but I felt it burning here; I told her to wait in this apartment, no, no, it was more agreeable to flirt with some mustachioed coxcomb, and now I've lost my place in that confounded Indiau file, and must tail on again at the interminable end. She would come to this infernal ball of course, for the opportunity to enjoy her coquettishly torturing disposition. I know I look ridiculous. I'm sure I feel ridiculous in this mountebank attire. I wish to heaven there was a corner I could hide myself in until all those grinning monkeys were gone, but its no use, I must go through with it. Oh, Anna Matilda, what a fool you've made of me.

[Goes off running against BROWN.]

Enter BROWN and POLAR.

Brown. Ten thousand pardons, Mr. — You didn't happen to see a blue domino and pink hat.

Hiram. The very individual habiliments I am looking for myself. Of what possible interest can they be to you.

Brown. Interest to me, stranger, with the incomprehensible rig, don't be impertinent; what is it to you, if it comes to that?

Hiram. Simply, my military friend, because they appertain to me.

Brown. Insatiable monopolizer, do you own all the blue dominoes and pink hats in the place?

Hiram. No, sir, but I've watched you all the night, and all I have to say to you is beware! lest you rouse the anger of an injured husband.

Brown. Depart, amorphous institution! make yourself scarce, organic compound of forgotten ages! My blue domino is young and fresh, and plump as Hebe; no desperate fate could link her with a mate like thee.

Hiram. You're complimentary, my military friend, but it's late, and I suppose you've been in the Committee room; but have a care, the vengeful eye of a husband and father is upon you. Confound it, I've lost my place.

Man at top. Here you are, sir, I've kept it for you.

Hiram. I'm very much obliged to you, indeed, sir. [*Goes up.*]

Polar. What the deuce is the meaning of all this ecstasy.

Brown. I'm in the seventh heaven of delight; don't you remember that photograph I fell in love with at Brady's? The bright and beautiful original was here to-night—smiled on me immensely—looked graciousness and almost love out of her most lustrous eyes! Bathed me in an atmosphere of joy with one delicious glance.

Polar. What a susceptible brute you are, Brown. You seem to forget there's such a being in existence as Fanny Jones.

Hiram. [*At top.*] Beware!

Brown. What a cruelly unsentimental savage you are, Polar; can not a comprehensively ardent, and illimitable lover of the whole elysian sex, enjoy a temporary aberration of meteoric felicity without calling his attention to the one fixed star of his affection. I know that every eye full of admiration diverted from my heart's allegiance is high treason against King Cupid; but the provocation, my friend—the provocation.

Hiram. [*Getting towards wing.*] Be warned, military individual.

Brown. Pshaw! I heed you not, travel! highly decorated turtle! I wish you a pleasant march to the cloak room.

Hiram. You, sir, confound it all, you're walking on my corns!

Brown. My heart's on fire, my throat is parched; a little brandy and water would be a reviver. Why, what an insensible piece of half-animated Russ pavement you are. Did you see her look at me with that bewildering glance, the slightest draught of which plunges a fellow's very soul into a fever of intoxication?

Polar. I'm no believer in ecstasies—in fact, I don't think, if I may be allowed the expression, that she looked at you at all. But you are one of those self-stultified Broadway loungers, who imagine that every good-looking woman that they meet is captivated by their passing glance. There are whole squads of you to be met there any day.

Brown. You fish-blooded Zoophite? you big black negative cloud upon life's beautiful horizon! What do you know about the responsive interchange of emotional electricity—the fiery ray of lightning-like intelligence, that in a thought, conveys to each the consciousness of an awakened interest?

Polar. Nothing. I should simply call your absurd rhapsody—if I may so express it—a transcendental description of the common impertinence of staring impudently at respectable ladies.

Brown. You're a stock, a stone, a clothes-block, a mere mechanical absorber of regular meals, a poor, miserable, no-hearted combination of head and stomach! By all my hopes and joys, she's here! Away, away! leave me a few blessed moments with her alone!

Polar. Remember Fanny.

Brown. Her star's eclipsed, for Diana has arisen; the night huntress comes to her Endymion. Disperse, dark cloud, disperse!

[*Exit POLAR.*]

Enter Mrs. DUGGINS.

Beautiful Luna! do we meet at last?

Mrs. D. What do you mean, sir? Are you mad?

Brown. Mad, yes; mad with delight and boundless admiration; a lunatic, sweet Luna, moon-stricken to the very heart.

Mrs. D. This is simply insolent, sir. I do not know you.

Brown. Oh, say not that; let me not feel that my impassioned glance was hurled against a rock of granite! Times without number have we passed each other; and at each succeeding turn, I drank more deeply at those fountains of delight, your eyes.

Mrs. D. Pardon me, sir, if I say that the extremity of your boldness is but partially excused, by the knowledge that you must have been indulging at a more potent fountain.

Brown. Slightly, only—just to give me the necessary courage to make this respectful avowal: I'm in love, delectable Luna. Permit me but to touch that beauteous hand. [Takes her hand.]

Enter DUGGINS—he starts.

Dug. Ha! what do I see? I knew it. Unhappy woman! could you not refrain from bringing disgrace upon my head, even in this public place?

Mrs. D. You are in error, my husband, indeed you are.

Brown. I should like to know, irate individual in the wonderful garments, what your head has got to do with it?

Dug. Everything, impertinent jackanapes; this lady is my wife.

Brown. No, no, no; that cannot, shall not be. Magnificent Luna! orbicular excellence! deny the terrible words of this disagreeable intruder.

Mrs. D. This gentleman is my husband, sir, and I am pleased that he has so opportunely relieved me from your incoherent and abusive protestations.

Dug. Is this a blind to deceive me?—she's laughing, and so is he—it is. I'll be calm, but resolute. Revenge is left me, and I will have it. Anna Matilda, you will do me the favor to wait for me in yonder room.

Mrs. D. No violence, no scenes, Hiram; it is only worthy of your laughter.

Dug. I'm well aware of it. I do laugh at it—will laugh at it—ha, ha! You see how execratiugly funny I think it. [Hands her to room.]

Brown. Well, after all, it is rather a laughable affair. Married, and to this apochryphal concern! Dreadful fate! melancholy termination of my meteoric flame!

Dug. Sir, I believe I told you to beware how you provoked an injured husband's wrath.

Brown. Yes, I believe you did.

Dug. It would have been better for you had you heeded my words.

Brown. A mere difference of opinion between us. I don't see that exactly.

Dug. It will be my pleasant duty to open your eyes. You are aware, I presume, sir, of the alternative your conduct has entailed upon you.

Brown. Haven't the slightest idea.

Dug. We must meet, sir.

Brown. As often as you please, hospitable creature.

Dug. Pshaw, sir! I'm in no humor for such untimely jesting, One of us must die.

Brown. Both, my good friend, according to the immutable laws of nature.

Dug. In this case, sir, the equally immutable laws of honor may precipitate the crisis.

Brown. Don't be abstruse, incomprehensible institution, elucidate.

Dug. In one desperate word, sir—your card!

Brown. Oh, I see. But don't you think this is carrying the joke a trifle too far? I don't mind taking a drink with you, but fighting is not at all in my line.

Dug. Am I to infer that you are a coward, sir?

Brown. I can't help what absurd inference you may arrive at.

Dug. Then, sir, you are a——

Brown. Stop. Hang it, I can't stand that. If you're in earnest, I'll accommodate you at twelve paces, to-morrow morning, although I would much rather anticipate my usual egg at breakfast. Here's my card, sir—it's the only one I have—very lucky I had any.

Dug. It may be, sir, that neither of us will ever breakfast again. I shoot well.

Brown. [*Gives card.*] I don't. You take this matter too seriously—upon my life you do.

Dug. The honor of an outraged husband is not to be trifled with. I shall expect to see you, with a friend, to-morrow morning. [*Exit.*]

Brown. You're very obliging. I'll try and be punctual. What a very particular sort of old chap he is, to be sure. Who the devil is he? "The Honorable Hiram Doolittle Duggins, Ambassador to ——." Phew! here's a pretty kettle of fish. Have I had the daring presumption to cast my iniquitous glance at an ambassador's lady? It's a national affair—a star and stripe business, or my name's not Brown. Shall I rush in and apologize? No, he'll think me afraid. Egad, I must curb these predatory looks, or there's no knowing what mischief they may lead me into. Bnt she is such a glorious creature. He called her Anna Matilda. Oh, Anna Matilda! for the transitory delirium of one unsatisfactory interview, I have to go to bed with the pleasing anticipation of being shot in the morning. Bed! I can't go to bed. I'll hunt up Polar, and drown all unpleasant thoughts in bumpers of "Green Seal." [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*Handsome Apartment in Fifth Avenue.*

Enter Mr. and Mrs. DUGGINS.

Dug. You can't deceive me, madame. I tell you I saw the encouragement you gave to that impudent rascal.

Mrs. D. All I will say then, is, that you have a singular facility for seeing what doesn't occur.

Dug. Don't be so aggravatingly impertinent, Anna Matilda. You know mine is not the most placid disposition.

Mrs. D. I'm fully aware of that comfortable fact.

Dug. Oh! why was I not satisfied to remain a widower all my life?

Mrs. D. Ah, why indeed? I might have been spared the annoyance of having to watch the fluctuations of an elderly man's temper.

Dug. An elderly man! Anna Matilda, don't beat about the bush; annihilate me with your sarcasm; say old at once.

Mrs. D. Well then, *old*, if you like it better. There, I know what you're going to say—your first wife wouldn't have treated you so badly. They all say that.

Dug. You're an ungrateful woman. What have I not done for you? Think of the elevated position in which I have placed you. Look at the bills I have paid without a murmur.

Mrs. D. Extraordinary sacrifice! Oh, you're a perfect model of a husband, in your own estimation.

Dug. Perhaps your next one will be more considerate.

Mrs. D. Very likely. I shall be a rich widow, I suppose, and can afford to pay for my preference, as you did.

Dug. Pay for it, Anna Matilda. Do you mean to insinuate that there was no affection in your marriage with me?

Mrs. D. Not a bit. A judicious bargain on both sides—that's all.

Dug. This is intolerable! This is unworthy! To irritate my temper is bad enough, but thus to assault my heart!

Mrs. D. Your what? I didn't know, really, that you possessed that anatomical peculiarity.

Dug. I see, Madame, that you do not.

Mrs. D. How can *you* possibly tell?

Dug. It serves me right. It serves me right. What business had I to dip again in the lottery of plagues.

Mrs. D. Lotteries *are* rather hazardous now-a-day.

Dug. Mrs. Duggins, this cool, worrying indifference of yours is worse to endure than the fiercest vituperation.

Mrs. D. I'm sorry I can't accommodate you with an oath or two.

Dug. Confound it all, I won't endure it. If you knew the position I am in, you might perhaps show more consideration.

Mrs. D. I see the position you are in, and must confess that it is rather a ridiculous one.

Dug. Anna Matilda, let common humanity force you to evince some show of feeling, as I whisper in your ear—I may be brought home to you a dead man to-morrow.

Mrs. D. The dispensations of Providence are beyond human control.

Dug. Heartless woman, listen! Ere many hours elapse my life will be in peril for your sake.

Mrs. D. How so, pray?

Dug. You shall know in time. Farewell! cruel, unfeeling Anna Matilda; farewell, perhaps for ever. [Exit.

Mrs. D. Not the remotest fear of such a catastrophe. William!

Enter WILLIAM.

Tell James to go instantly to the head police station, and inform the proper authorities, that two gentlemen may probably attempt to fight a duel to-morrow morning. Then you follow Mr. Duggins to the club. He's sure to go there when he's in these tempers. Take care

that he gets into no mischief, and see him safely home. [*Exit WILLIAM.*] He deserves this lesson, for his absurd and groundless jealousy. I know him well, An hour or two will change the entire current of his mind, and he'll come back again, all love and repentance. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*Exterior of Lafarge House ; BROWN discovered in a dilapidated condition, hanging on to a lamp-post.*

Brown. [*Sings.*] Don't go away old fel—, let's have another song. I'm devilish glad to see you looking so well. Now don't go ; I havn't met you before for an age. Thank you ! I'll take just one more glass. Here, waiter ! another bottle of green seal, and plenty of ice. Sit down ; what are you waltzing round the room for, eh ? Hollo ! what did you hit me for ? I didn't insult you. Oh ! if you want a fight, here goes. There's nothing like winding up with a shindy. Pitch in. I wish I could get my coat off. [*Falls.*] Hollo ! I'm knocked down, and hang me if somebody hasn't tacked my coat tail to the floor. Now that's a practical joke, and I don't like practical jokes. Oh, Anna Fanny Matilda ! sweet, moon-faced creature ! I can't get up. I wonder if I've been out, and got shot ?

Enter POLICEMAN.

Police. Hallo ! here's a case—pretty far gone too, I'm thinking. Capital chance for the garroters. I say, my friend, you seem to be a trifle overcome.

Brown. One, two, three—fire ! I'm hit ; I know I am, in a vital part. Polar, where are you ? Take me home, Polar, and send for Fanny. I leave her all I'm worth in the world. I deserved it all. Ambassador, I forgive you. I die magnanimous.

Police. I never saw a man so heavy in liquor ; I must pass him on. [*Beats for assistance.*] Come, sir, try and stand up. Do you know where you are ?

Brown. Why of course I do, old boy. I'm at Delmonico's, having a jolly good time.

Police. I wouldn't have the jolly good headache you've been manufacturing, my friend, for a trifle. Lord, how weighty he is. Do you know where you live ?

Brown. Live ! I don't live at all ; I'm dead and buried. My heart's broken, and my prospects blighted. I'm a ruin, a wreck, a disgrace to humanity. Tuck me up, and let me sleep for ever.

Enter POLICEMAN.

2d Police. What's the muss ?

1st Police. Intoxicated party ; don't know where he lives. Let's see if he has anything valuable about him ? Didn't like to search him before you came. People like to lie about policemen. If they but knew the hardships as well as the temptations of our life, they wouldn't be so apt to libel us. I can find nothing but a card ; that will tell us where he lives, anyhow. Ho, ho ! an honorable, eh ! has been lobbying somewhere. Fifth Avenue, No. — ; all right.

Just pass him along 'till you find a hack. Come along, old boy—you'll pay for this to-morrow.

Brown. Who says it's to-morrow? I was shot, if it's to-morrow. Let's go somewhere where there's an oyster. Hurrah! I'm all right now,
[Sings, and exits. Slight rain.]

Enter TOM JONES and FANNY, as from Evening Party.

Tom. How provoking this rain is, Fan; and, of course, no carriage in the way.

Fan. I don't mind it a bit, Tom. I've got my rubbers on, and my handkerchief will save my new bonnet.

Tom. Here's a shelter; let us stand here until the shower passes.
[Stands up under portico.]

Jones. Many a laugh we've had, inside these doors, Fanny.

Fanny. And now they enable us to laugh at the storm outside.

Jones. We must come to-morrow night out of gratitude. What are they playing? The Musard Ball; that's the contemporaneous drama.

Fan. Ha! ha! cute fellow, that Burton; never lets a chance pass by. Hallo! why that's strange, Fanny, look there, the name of that scamp, whoever he is, whose letter I found addressed to you, Mr. Orlando Furioso Brown.

Fanny. Its only a coincidence, Jones. Why! there's your name and mine; they haven't dared to put us in a play?

Jones. It would serve you right if they did; however, this Mr. Brown had better not let me get hold of him, that's all.

Fanny. See, Tom; look at those ill-looking fellows, evidently following that old gentleman in the cloak.

Jones. The ruffians are attacking him. Stay a minute; they are garroters. I'll soon settle their business.
[Rushes off.]

Fanny. Brother, be careful. Ha! there's a policeman just round the corner; I'll go and bring him.
[Exit.]

Re-enter JONES and DUGGINS.

Dug. Thank you, sir, most gratefully for this timely assistance. I do believe you have saved my life. You look astonished at finding me in this unseemly garb. But the fact is, I have been at Musard's, and thought I would just put my cloak and boots on and meet a few friends at the club.

Jones. Don't apologize, sir. This is a kind of carnival night in New York. I have, myself, just come from a party, with my sister here. Why! where's Fanny? Ah! bless her, she went for a policeman; fortunately we don't require his services.

Dug. Your prompt assistance, sir, demands of me a more extended acknowledgment. Pray do me the favor to call at my house to-morrow, and let me date a friendship from this evening.
[Gives BROWN'S card.]

Jones. What do I see? Oh! its you is it?

Dug. I am under the impression that it is.

Jones. Well, then, sir, though I don't regret having thus assisted you, I can't say that I particularly wish to prolong the acquaintance.

Dug. Dear me, why not?

Jones. Your own conscience and the name of Fanny Jones, may enlighten you.

Dug. On the contrary, sir, they sink me into deeper obscurity.

Jones. Isn't your name, Orlando Furioso Brown?

Dug. Bless me, have I given you that rascal's card; its a mistake, sir. I exchanged cards with that impertinent individual this very night; hence this confusion.

Enter FANNY.

Jones. Fanny, come here. Look at that gentleman; is he your clandestine lover, Brown.

Fanny. What, this Spanish gentleman? Dear me, not a bit like him.

Dug. I thought not; but to dispel any thoughts you may harbor, and as it seems to be about to storm again, here is a carriage coming up, pray ride with me to my house, and by presenting you to my dear wife, I trust all doubt will vanish.

Jones. What say you, Fanny; it's rather an unusual hour to make a call, but—

Dug. Come, I insist upon it. This is carnival time, you know, and, indeed, my blood's up for an adventure. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Drawing-Room in DUGGINS' house. Dark.*

Enter POLICEMAN and WILLIAM, carrying BROWN on a chair.

Will. You found him in the street, you say?

Police. Yes, he was passed on from beat to beat. We saw by the card in his pocket where he lived, and so, thanks to us, here he is, safe and sound.

Will. Dear me, I never saw His Excellency in such a state before. You had better leave him here. I'll tell Misses, I'm sure she'll be very much obliged to you.

Police. Not at all, my man, its our duty only; we do it sometimes, though they do blow out about us. Good morning. [*Exeunt.*

Brown. Pass the bottle; I'm dryer than a cart-load of dried cod-fish. I think I'll take plain soda now, with a little drop of brandy in the bottom; all right. Hello! where the deuce am I? In the street I believe; the night's uncommonly dark, not a star visible, but that's not uncommon. Let me collect my scattered senses, what little of them are left. There's a terrible uncertain something weighing on my heart; what can it be. Oh! I was at Musard's last night; met a lovely, bewitching moon, I mean creature; made myself supremely ridiculous; got challenged, and will have to fight to-morrow; no, to-day; now, perhaps. What o'clock is it; early I think. Where the deuce am I, at home no doubt. Yes, I know the feel of the carpet; if I could only find my carpet-bag, I'd try and get a sleep.

Enter MRS. D. with Light.

Mrs. D. I certainly did not expect you'd come home in such a disgraceful plight; never mind, you'd better retire to bed.

Brown. Angels and ministers of Grace church! Brown and all. What do I see? a lovely vision. What an ecstatic dream. Oh!

bewildering apparition; it's no harm to worship you while I'm asleep; although I'm aware you're nothing but a cloud, yet I must embrace you.

[Embraces her.]

Enter DUGGINS and FANNY.

Fanny, my Fanny. Oh! this is too much for one dream; its a bouquet of intangible delight. I wish I had the arms of Briairius, that I might embrace you all.

Dug. There's a limit to human endurance, sir; you have reached it. You recollect our appointment, sir; it is almost time now to prepare for it.

Brown. I am prepared, impatient and belligerent institution. I'll fight you now, with any thing in the world. You, anybody, everybody in the dream; damme, I feel that I'm invulnerable. There's no back out about Orlando Furioso Brown.

Jones. You are that impudent varlot, are you? Then it strikes me you'll have to begin with me.

Fanny. Oh! no! no! brother, for my sake, don't hurt him.

Brown. Brother, I didn't know I had such a prospective relative in existence. Bless her. I'm not worthy of her; but she does love me, and her noble conduct sobers me on the spot.

Jones. Have you, then, really an affection for the scamp, Fanny?

Fanny. Unworthy and dreadful as he is, I'm afraid I have.

Jones. Oh! just like your incomprehensible sex.

Brown. I'm a repentant wretch. I wish I knew how to make reparation. Madame, can you forgive the folly that urged me to address you at the ball, and for which presumption I freely confess you did not give me the remotest pretext.

Dug. How, sir; is this so? Great, then, though your impudent interference was, I forgive you, for the relief the knowledge has given me. Dare I hope that my darling Anna Matilda will be equally merciful.

Mrs. D. You hardly deserve it; but, in the hope that the lesson you've been taught will banish for ever the groundless jealousy which has caused us both so much annoyance, I consent. There's my hand.

Dug. Never, never more shall I insult you with a suspicion. Oh, Anna Matilda.

[Embrace.]

Brown. Fanny, my darling Fanny, although I acknowledge that my fancy has hitherto been occasionally dazzled by meteoric lights, you have ever been the fixed star of my affection. Bless me, by accepting the love and constancy of my future life; and as I have now no fear of being prematurely disposed of, the slight annoyance this contretemps may have caused you will be the only regret I shall entertain from having figured at

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THE END.

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