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BY J. M. MORTON.


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AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

A FARCE.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

John M. Morton
J. M. MORTON, Esq.



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AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

CHARACTERS.

	<i>London, Adelphi Theatre, 1858.</i>	<i>Boston Museum, 1865.</i>
HORATIO THOMAS SPARKINS . .	Mr. B. Webster.	Mr. F. Hardenburg.
MAJOR VOLLEY	Mr. Selby.	Mr. R. F. McClamin.
PIVOT (<i>A Lawyer</i>)	Mr. C. J. Smith.	Mr. Woolf.
MRS. PUDDIFOOT	Mrs. Chatterley.	Miss M. Parker.
FANNY VOLLEY	Miss Hayman.	Mrs. T. M. Hunter.
MATILDA JONES (<i>Aunt Charlotte's Maid</i>)	Mrs. F. Williams.
	Guests, &c., &c.	

SCENE — LONDON.

— : —

MODERN COSTUMES.

AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

SCENE. — *An Apartment. Large door in flat, R., with a double curtain hanging on each side of it — at L. in flat, a door leading into a conservatory, which is seen beyond — at L. U. E., the general door of entrance — between this door and L. 1 E. a fireplace — doors, R. U. E. and R. 2 E. — a piano, sofa, easy chair, table, &c. &c.*

MATILDA JONES discovered dusting the furniture. Enter MRS. PUDDI-FOOT, door, L. U. E.

Mrs. P. (*as she enters.*) Tilda! Tilda, I say.

Matil. Matilda, if you please, ma'am! I'm rather particular about my Mat. You were going to say summut, ma'am?

Mrs. P. Summut! it's really high time you left off murdering the Queen's English in that way, Tilda.

Matil. Mat, please ma'am!

Mrs. P. You have now been three months in my service, where the very best English is always spoken — the pure unadulterated mother tongue.

Matil. Well, mum, in three months more I shall speak your mother's tongue, like one o'clock, as your nephew, Mr. Horatio Thomas, calls it.

Mrs. P. "Like one o'clock!" My nephew may use words which you may not. I engaged you from a serious family in the country, where, I am sure, you could not have picked up any such expressions!

Matil. No, ma'am, I never picked up nothing there, 'cause they never kept no company.

Mrs. P. Now listen to me, Tilda — I mean Mat-ilda!

Matil. Yes, ma'am!

Mrs. P. I'm going out — how do I look?

Matil. Jolly!

Mrs. P. "Jolly!" Well, there's no harm in *that* expression. Now listen — I shall not be back till late.

Matil. Eight, ma'am?

Mrs. P. Late! but I can trust you, for you never talk to the policeman as the generality of London servants do!

Matil. Not I, ma'am. (*aside.*) I prefers the butcher.

Mrs. P. In short, you've too much respect for yourself!

Matil. I believe you, my boy.

Mrs. P. Another of Horatio Thomas's favorite expressions; besides, you tell me you come of a respectable but unfortunate family.

Matil. Very *unfortunate*, indeed, ma'am! My father kept a public house till he got into trouble for sheep stealing; and then Uncle Jack took care of me till he got transported to Botany Bay, where my other three uncles had been sent afore him; so you see, we *are* a *very* unfortunate family, ma'am!

Mrs. P. Tilda, if you're a good girl, you shall never want a good home; and who knows but I may find a husband for you?

Matil. I have no wish to leave you, ma'am, (*aside*) nor young master neither — he is the husband I've got in *my* eye.

Mrs. P. By-the-by, Matilda, who was that Life Guardsman I saw coming up the area steps yesterday evening?

Matil. (*confused.*) I think I heard the cook say he was her cousin, ma'am.

Mrs. P. Indeed! the number of cousins that woman has in the Life Guards is perfectly extraordinary.

Matil. What shawl will you put on, ma'am? this here! (*taking shawl off back of chair.*)

Mrs. P. Yes, that will do very well. (*MATILDA puts on shawl.*) How do I look?

Matil. Quite the cheese, ma'am, I assure you.

Mrs. P. "Quite the cheese!" Another of Horatio Thomas's favorite expressions. Well, now I'm off. By-the-by, don't forget that I want those red curtains taken down, and the white ones put up. (*pointing to curtains over C. D.*)

Matil. Very well, ma'am; when you come back you'll find it as right as ninepence.

Mrs. P. "Right as ninepence!" another of Horatio Thomas's favorite expressions. Now go and see if he's ready!

Matil. (*modestly.*) Ma'am!

Mrs. P. I say, go to my nephew's room, and see if he's dressed.

Matil. Lawks, ma'am; suppose I go to his room, and find he *ain't* dressed? I should faint away as dead as mutton.

Mrs. P. "As dead as mutton!" another of Horatio Thomas's favorite expressions! True! (*aside.*) She's very ignorant; but then she's brimful of virtue and innocence, and all that sort of thing! (*aloud.*) I'll call Horatio Thomas — don't be afraid — if he's undressed, he won't come. (*goes to R. side.*) Horatio Thomas, are you ready?

Spark. (*without.*) Almost. I've put my right boot on my left leg — I mean my left leg into my right boot, and I can't get it out again. I've done it — it's all right.

Enters from R. door, in fashionable suit — white kid gloves, smart blue and white spotted satin tie — he carries his coat over his arm.

Here I am.

Matil. (*turning away.*) Oh, lawks!

Mrs. P. My dear Horatio, why didn't you put on your coat before you came in?

Spark. Because I couldn't! Either I'm too big for the coat — or the coat's too small for me — I don't know which!

Mrs. P. Matilda, help Mr. Horatio Thomas on with his coat.

Matil. Yes, ma'am! (*assists him on with it.*)

Spark. (*coldly.*) I thank you, Matilda.

Matil. (*tenderly, and unperceived by Mrs. PUDDIFOOT.*) Oh, Horatio Thomas!

Spark. (*aside to her.*) Hush! not so loud! I feel Matilda Jones's eyes going through me like a pair of gimlets!

Mrs. P. Mercy on me! Horatio!

Spark. What's the matter now?

Mrs. P. What's this thing you've got round your neck? (*laying hold of neckcloth.*) A blue and white neckcloth on such a day as this?

Spark. (*interrupting and coughing.*) Ahem! The fact is, my complexion being naturally blue and white, I thought—

Mrs. P. Matilda, go into my nephew's room, and fetch a white cravat.

Matil. Yes, ma'am! (*as she passes HORATIO, she stops and says in his ear,*) A white cravat? what's up?

Spark. (*alarmed, aside to her.*) Nothing! merely to put on, that's all!

Matil. Horatio Thomas, take care—I smell a rat! [*Exit, R. D.*]

Spark. (*aside.*) She says she smells a rat! I'm horribly afraid she does! (*to Mrs. P.*) Aunt Charlotte, may I venture respectfully to inquire why it has lately seemed necessary to your earthly felicity that I should wear nothing but white chokers—I mean neckcloths? If you intend me for the haberdashery line, or the undertaking business—say so at once.

Mrs. P. Surely, Horatio, you wouldn't present yourself before your bride elect in a colored cravat?

Spark. Hush! (*looking anxiously towards R. D.*)

Mrs. P. On the very day, too, when the preliminaries of your marriage with Miss Fanny Volley—

Spark. (*anxiously.*) Hush!

Mrs. P. Are going to be arranged.

Spark. (*in an agony.*) Hush! there's no necessity for shouting out at the top of your voice in that way.

Mrs. P. Shouting out! why, what's the matter?

Spark. Nothing! Only you needn't make it the talk of the servants! I know I'm going to be married, but that's no reason the people in the next county should know!

Re-enter MATILDA, R. D., with white cravat.

Matil. (*handing the cravat.*) Here you are, sir, white as snow, and lots of starch.

Spark. I thank you, Matilda. (*taking off necktie, and putting on white one.*) Tra, la, la, la! (*trying to sing.*)

Mrs. P. Tie it for him, Matilda!

Spark. Pooh, pooh! I suppose I shan't be allowed to brush my own hair, or clean my own teeth next!

Mrs. P. I insist upon it!

Matil. Very well, ma'am. (*begins tying cravat.*) Now, sir, look in my face, or I can't tie it! (*fixing her eyes upon HORATIO, who tries to whistle.*)

Mrs. P. A blue and white cravat would have been such a bad compliment to dear Fanny.

Spark. Ahem! (*trying to get up a whistle.*)

Matil. (*in a low, angry tone to HORATIO.*) "Dear Fanny," eh? I heard it! I'm almost choking! (*tying the neckcloth very tight.*)

Spark. (*almost throttled.*) If you come to that, so am I!

Mrs. P. By-the-by, Matilda, has Mr. Smith the silversmith sent home the pair of bracelets —

Spark. (*singing, and interrupting her.*) "I'd be a butterfly — born in a bower" —

Matil. The bracelets, ma'am?

Mrs. P. Yes, which my nephew ordered yesterday as a present for Miss —

Spark. (*singing again, and very loud.*)

Hokee pokee, wankce fum,
How do you like your tatoes done?

(*aside.*) I have the highest possible regard for Aunt Charlotte; but, if she was under the centre arch of Blackfriars Bridge at this moment, with a paving stone round her neck, I should feel gratified beyond measure.

Mrs. P. Never mind! it's of no consequence; we'll call for them on our way; for, of course, on such an occasion some present or other is always expected from the happy —

Spark. (*singing.*) "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves," &c. (*aside.*) There'll be murder presently, I'm sure there will.

Mrs. P. So come along, Horatio. Dear me, I've forgotten my parasol — I left it on my dressing-table — I'll soon be back — in the mean time, Matilda, brush Horatio Thomas's new beaver hat. (*pointing to hat box on table.*) Hitherto he has always worn silk ones, but on such an interesting occasion as this —

Spark. (*suddenly.*) "Wait for the wagon — wait for the wagon."

Mrs. P. As I said before, I'll soon be back. [*Exit, L. 1 B.*]

Matil. (*watches Mrs. P., and advances and grasps HORATIO by the arm.*) Horatio Thomas!

Spark. (*indifferently.*) Eh? well?

Matil. Who is this Miss Fanny? (*violently.*)

Spark. Humph!

Matil. Who is this Miss Fanny?

Spark. Fanny — Fanny! Oh! perhaps you mean — no! her name's Sarah! I don't know any Fanny.

Matil. Indeed! You do not know any Fanny, eh? and yet (*fiercely*) you give her a pair of bracelets! Pshaw! tell that to the marines, the tailors won't believe you.

Spark. (*aside.*) Tailors! she means sailors. I must humbug her. (*aloud.*) Ha, ha, ha! you're surprised at my making a present to a lady I don't know? It's a custom we have in London! When a young man enters fashionable society, he invariably makes a present of a pair of bracelets to every woman he knows — I mean every woman he *doesn't* know — consequently, it is not to be wondered at — in fact it's only natural that I — now you know all about it.

Matil. (who has taken the hat out of box, and is brushing it the wrong way.) I know this about it, Horatio Thomas, that you don't budge out of the house!

Spark. But Aunt Charlotte insists upon my budging!

Matil. (snapping fingers.) That for Aunt Charlotte! Here you are, and here you stops!

Enter MRS. PUDDIFOOT, L. 1 E.

Mrs. P. Now, Horatio, I'm ready.

Matil. Here is your hat, sir. (presenting hat to him.)

Spark. I thank you, Matilda. (puts it on.)

Mrs. P. Come along!

Spark. Yes, but — (throwing a look at MATILDA, who is dusting chair — aside.) If I could only manage to sneak out. (turns his aunt round, and finds MATILDA'S eye fixed upon him, and pointing with dusting brush to the floor, signifying that he must stop — aside.) It's more than my life's worth to go, so I must endeavor to humbug Aunt Charlotte. (putting his hand up to his cheek suddenly.) Oh! oh!

Mrs. P. What's the matter?

Spark. My tooth! Oh, oh!

Matil. Oh, poor young master! There — sit down. (making him sit down.)

Mrs. P. Dear, dear, how very unfortunate! Which is the bad tooth? Let me see it.

Spark. (aside.) You'd be very clever if you could see it. (aloud.) Oh! oh!

Mrs. P. I don't recommend young people to have their teeth drawn, still on such an interesting occasion as this —

Spark. (very loud, and stamping his feet on the floor.) Oh, oh, oh! (aside.) This is precious hot work — I can't keep it up much longer.

Mrs. P. Matilda, run for the dentist.

Matil. Yes, ma'am.

Spark. No, no! I'm a little easier just now — perhaps the tooth will come out of itself — and, perhaps, if I were to go out into the fresh air for an hour or so — (getting up — MATILDA pinches his arm.) Oh, it's come on again! (falling into chair again, and stamping his feet.)

Mrs. P. It's a very odd thing! but I've observed lately that you invariably have an attack of toothache —

Spark. Whenever you want me to go out with you. Yes, it is odd — in my opinion it's all stomach.

Mrs. P. Goodness gracious, Horatio! what's the matter with your hat — (taking it off) — the nap's all the wrong way.

Spark. Yes — stomach again.

Mrs. P. Well, it can't be helped. So you must stop at home, and muffle your head up well in flannel.

Matil. A capital thing, ma'am! (taking a small white shawl from off her shoulders, and tying it round his head.) There!

Spark. (aside.) A pretty guy I must look.

Mrs. P. As soon as I'm gone, Matilda will make you a camomile poultice, which you must keep constantly applied.

Matil. Yes, ma'am, but I think mustard would be better !

Spark. Thank you ! (*aside.*) She's a fiend !

Mrs. P. And when the paroxysm has passed, you can join me at the Major's, and in the mean time I'll explain your absence to your dear Fanny.

Spark. (*violently.*) Oh ! Oh ! Oh !

Mrs. P. Come along, Matilda, and call a cab for me.

Matil. Yes, ma'am.

(*Mrs. P. goes out, L. U. E. — MATILDA about to follow — stops — turns — and makes a sign to HORATIO to remain where he is, then follows Mrs. P. out.*)

Spark. (*watching them out — then snatching shawl off his head, and advancing.*) This is a pleasant state of affairs, to be obliged to stop at home with an imaginary toothache. Here am I — Horatio Thomas Sparkins, twenty-five years of age, five hundred pounds a year, with considerable personal attractions, and no profession — consequently people imagine I can do what I like, think what I like, say what I like, eat what I like, drink what I like — deuce a bit ! I'm a *slave*, a *menial*, a *serf*, a *nigger* — and why ? I'll tell you why — and let the junior members of the masculine sex present listen to my story, and profit by it. Three months ago, Aunt Charlotte (you've seen her), a tall elderly female, took it into her venerable head to engage a lady's maid. There are plenty of London ones ; but she would have one from the rural districts, all rustic innocence, freckles, and red elbows — and the result was Matilda Jones ! — you've seen her, too. Well, the very first morning she entered upon her duties, my tailor happened to send me home a waistcoat, a nice quiet pattern — a mixture of yellow and sky blue — well, in trying the waistcoat on, one of the buttons came off. At the time of the accident, Matilda Jones was present, and, in the most interesting manner possible, asked permission to sew the button on again. In doing so she ran the needle into her finger — fainted, and fell into my arms — and when she came to, she found me kissing the place to make it well. Now, I ask you, is it to be wondered at that I, whose experience of female society had hitherto been bounded by Aunt Charlotte on one side, and fat Sarah the cook on the other — I repeat, is it to be wondered at that I should have become fascinated with Matilda Jones, from Bury St. Edmund's ? Of course not — so I at once set her down as essential to my earthly happiness, and proved it by giving her my portrait — a shilling photograph — and a lock of my hair — in short, I was actually seriously thinking of proposing an elopement, when I suddenly discovered I didn't care a button about her — or, rather, that I cared a great many more buttons about somebody else — Miss Fanny Volley — sweet blooming eighteen, with five thousand pounds in her pocket at her father's death — think of that — and he sixty-three next birthday, with a tendency to gout in the stomach — think of that. I've managed, hitherto, to keep the affair a profound secret from Matilda Jones. I've made love to Fanny on the sly — proposed to Fanny on the sly, and I'd get married to Fanny on the sly, if I could. Oh, if I could only get my portrait and the lock of my hair out of Matilda's clutches, I'd snap my fingers in her face. I've rummaged all her boxes, fumbled all her pockets, but deuce a bi:

can I find them. There's only one thing to be done; I'll show a proper spirit, and throw off this nightmare, this incubus at once. Here she comes — Horatio Thomas, be firm!

Enter MATILDA, L. U. E.

Matilda! I want you — nay, more, I require you!

Matil. (arranging table, and taking no notice.)

Froggy would a wooing go,

If ho says Roley.

Spark. Matilda, I say.

Matil. Froggy would a wooing go,

Whether his mammy would let him or no,

With his Roley, poley, &c.

Spark. She seems in a capital humor — I've half a mind to acquaint her with my approaching nuptials. We're alone on the premises — so that if she manifests an intention of scratching my eyes out, we shall have all the fun to ourselves. (aloud, and in a coaxing tone.) Matilda — Tilda — Tilly — I want to say something to you. Come here!

Matil. Here I am — well!

Spark. Ahem! has it ever occurred to you that one of these days I may — I say I may get married.

Matil. Married? you? Oh, crimini! what a lark! Marry? a hobbledehoy like you? Oh, fiddle-de-dee!

Spark. (aside.) No symptoms of scratching eyes out yet. (aloud.) A desirable match might — I say might — offer itself.

Matil. Like "dear Fanny," eh? (grasping his arm, and looking daggers at him.) Now, Horatio Thomas, let's square accounts, and come to the sum tottle, and that's this here — I go to your "dear Fanny" with your portrait in one hand, and the lock of your hair in the other.

Spark. (aside.) The devil! (aloud.) But, as I said before, I don't know any young lady — except Aunt Charlotte.

Matil. That won't do, Horatio Thomas; you talked of marriage — you can't marry your aunt — it isn't allowed.

Spark. (aside.) What the deuce shall I say? (aloud.) I merely said so to — to — to —

Matil. Ah, I see!

Spark. (aside.) Do you? that's lucky!

Matil. (tenderly.) You only invented this to see if Matilda Jones loved her Horatio Thomas as much as ever. (he turns away, and makes a wry face.) Fie! fie! for shame, you naughty, jealous boy. (playfully, and patting his cheek, much to his disgust.)

Spark. (aside, and suddenly.) Jealous! by Jove, that's not a bad idea! (aloud and suddenly.) Yes, Miss Jones, I am jealous! frightfully jealous! horribly jealous!

Matil. Jealous? who of?

Spark. Who of? who of? (aside.) Who of? I never thought of that!

Matil. (aside.) Can he suspect? (aloud.) Oh, yes, yes, I see! — you mean that soldier?

Spark. (aside.) Oh, there's a soldier, is there? (aloud.) Yes, Miss Jones, I do mean that soldier. Instantly explain that soldier — where did you pick up that heavy dragoon?

Matil. He's not a dragoon.

Spark. I didn't say he was a dragoon! I repeat, where did you pick up that Sapper and Miner?

Matil. He's a Life Guardsman.

Spark. I said a Life Guardsman.

Matil. He don't come here for me — he is fat Sarah's cousin. Cruel Horatio Thomas, to suspect your poor Matilda! (*taking out handkerchief, and sobbing.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Now she's going to blubber. (*taking handkerchief from her, and wiping his eyes.*) But I don't suspect you. (*aside.*) One of Aunt Charlotte's best cambrie handkerchiefs. (*seeing MATILDA, who has seated herself in the arm-chair before the fire.*) Now she's making herself comfortable in Aunt Charlotte's arm-chair. (*looks at watch.*) Seven o'clock, and I promised to be with Fanny at a quarter past seven — if I could only manage to slip out. (*putting on his hat, and making for door, L.*)

Matil. Horatio Thomas!

Spark. Eh? (*stopping, and taking off his hat, which he holds behind him.*)

Matil. Put some coals on the fire, there's a dear — you'll find the scuttle outside the door. (*falling back in the arm-chair, and turning over the leaves of a book.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Was it to hand about coal-scuttles that I put on straw-colored kids and a white choker — this is the result of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. Oh, if I could only get back my portrait and that lock of my hair — wouldn't I — (*makes a face at her, goes out at C. D., then returns with large coal-scuttle full of coals, which he dashes down near the fireplace, then takes a shovel, and puts some on.*)

Matil. Another shovelful, dear!

Spark. Oh, bother! (*takes up scuttle, and empties it on fire, then dashes it down again — aside.*) Nice sort of work this for a gentleman in straw-colored kids and a white choker. (*looking at watch.*) Quarter past seven — I must be off. (*puts on his hat, and is making for the door.*)

Matil. Where are you going?

Spark. Why, I just remember, I've important business at the Mansion House with the First Lord of the Admiralty — I mean the Turkish Ambassador.

Matil. Nonsense — he can wait — give me that footstool, there's a dear.

Spark. (*dignified.*) Really, Miss Jones —

Matil. Now look sharp — you're so precious slow.

Spark. (*taking up footstool — aside.*) As I said before, this comes of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. (*aloud, and putting footstool down before her.*) There's your stool!

Matil. Thank'ee, dear. (*extending herself in the arm-chair.*) This is what I call comfortable. Horatio Thomas, come and sit by me, there's a dear — you shall have the footstool — there!

Spark. I thank you, but having, as I said before, important business at the West India Docks with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. (*putting on his hat, and going.*)

Matil. (*impatiently.*) Do as I tell you, and come and sit by me.

Spark. (*banging hat down on table.*) I'm coming! (*aside.*) A pretty tempting figure I must cut with my straw-colored kids and white cravat; but, as I said before, this comes of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. (*sits on footstool, and looking at his watch.*) Half past seven. Oh, if I only knew where she keeps that portrait, and that infernal lock of hair.

Matil. Horatio Thomas, dear.

Spark. Well! (*sulkily.*)

Matil. Ain't it prime to sit together, and warm our toes by the fire, eh?

Spark. Yes, remarkably prime. (*aside.*) I don't know that I ever endured greater muscular agony in all my life. (*sitting on footstool, with his knees up to his chin.*)

Matil. Now I tell you what, you shall sing me a song — something tender and sentimental.

Spark. (*getting up.*) You really must excuse me; but having, as I said before, important business at the National Gallery with the Archbishop of Canterbury —

Matil. Do you hear what I say? Sing me a song, directly.

Spark. (*going towards piano — aside.*) As I've observed once or twice already, this comes of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. Where the devil she can have put that portrait and that lock of hair, I can't imagine. (*sitting down — aloud.*) I'll give you the last new ballad. (*striking up, ad libitum.*) "We won't go home till morning," &c. —

Matil. (*starting, and stopping her ears.*) That will do — I have had enough of that.

Spark. Oh, you've had enough, have you? but I haven't, so here goes again. "For she's a very good fellow," &c. (*banging on the piano, and singing at the top of his voice.*)

Matil. Come away, do! (*pulling him away from piano.*) Horatio Thomas, dear, I want you to teach me the last new dance — what do you call it? "Pop goes the Measles"?

Spark. The measles! the weasel! (*aside.*) People would hardly credit the humiliating results of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. Here am I — Horatio Thomas Sparkins — five hundred pounds a year — no profession — turning dancing master, and teaching a servant "Pop goes the Weasel." (*aloud.*) Come along! (*Dance.*) (*after dance.*) Wheugh! I haven't a bit of breath left in my body — this is another of the agreeable results of familiarizing oneself with one's servant.

Matil. By-the-by, where was you got to last night?

Spark. Where I was got to! — I was at the opera.

Matil. The Hopora! And what did you see?

Spark. Oh — I saw Sardanapalus — no — I saw the Dona del Lago.

Matil. Did you! Sit down, and tell me all about it.

Spark. All about it — it'd puzzle me to tell her *anything* about it. (*looking at watch.*) I really can't keep the Chairman of the Middlesex Sessions waiting any longer.

Matil. Nonsense! Now begin!

Spark. Well, then, after the overture, the curtain rises, and discovers a mountainous country in the — Bay of Biscay, with Mount Vesuvius in the distance. Well, a flourish of trumpets is heard, and

the King of Prussia, attended by his faithful mandarins, comes in, and in a very spirited duetto, which he sings with three of his principal Janissaries — you're told that his nephew, the youthful Mazzeppa —

Matil. Mazzeppa? law — I saw him last week at Astley's.

Spark. He may have been at Astley's when you saw him, but he was at the opera last night. Never mind — as I was saying, we're told that the youthful Mazzeppa is in love with the daughter of the Chinese Ambassador, Prince Poniatowski, and that his presumptuous passion being discovered, he is condemned either to be drowned in a butt of malmsey, or to shoot an apple from the head of his only daughter, the youthful Dona del Lago, so christened after her uncle, a Portuguese nobleman — but at that interesting moment, on rush the Dutch troops, with Columbus at their head — Tableau — the lovers are united — the curtain descends — and — (*dragging out his watch again.*) 'Pon my life, I shall be too late for the commander-in-chief! (*putting on his hat, and going.*)

Matil. Stop — Missus told me to change them there curtains — so, before you go, bring us in the steps, will you, dear?

Spark. (*dignified.*) Miss Jones!

Matil. (*impatiently.*) Bring me the steps, I say! Come, look alive!

Spark. (*with a wry face — aside.*) Considering all things, I have reason to congratulate myself on having put on straw-colored kids and a white choker!

[*Exit, L. D., and returns with pair of double steps, which he places near curtains, R. C.*]

Matil. Thankee! And now, while I go for the other curtains, you'll take down those, won't you, dear?

Spark. Miss Jones! (*dignified.*)

Matil. You will take down those, I say! Now jump up! [*Exit, R.*]

Spark. Jump up! This comes, as I've observed before, of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. (*by this time he has climbed to the top of the steps.*) A pretty state my straw-colored kids will be in.

Major. (*without, L.*) All right — I'll find him. Horatio Thomas, where are you?

Spark. Zounds! the Major, my father-in-law! (*HORATIO takes out pocket handkerchief, and ties up his face.*)

Enter MAJOR, door, L. U. E.

Major. Where the deuce is he? (*seeing him.*) Halloo! what are you doing up there?

Spark. Eh! (*bothered, and not knowing what to say.*) Up here! so I am, I declare! If you'd got such a toothache as I have, you'd be glad to get up anywhere — Oh!

Major. Poor fellow! (*gets up one side of the steps as HORATIO gets down the other — looking down from top of steps, and seeing HORATIO.*) Halloo! (*coming down as HORATIO goes up — looking up from bottom of steps, and seeing HORATIO at the top again.*) Halloo! now let's perfectly understand one another: will you stop where you are till I get up, or shall I stop where I am till you get down?

Spark. It's just the same to me.

Major. Very well, then I'll get up. (*ascending.*)

Spark. And I'll get down. (*descending.*)

Major. No, no; stop where you are. (*mounts to top.*) How deuced unlucky that toothache of yours! Such a disappointment to poor Fanny!

Spark. Hush! lower! lower!

Major. You wish me to get lower? Oh! very well! (*getting down a few steps.*)

Spark. No! (*pulling him up.*) I mean, *speak lower.*

Major. Now take my advice — get mesmerized, and you'll get rid of your toothache.

Spark. Mesmerized! I forgot, you believe in animal magnetism.

Major. I rather believe I *do* believe in it. You've heard of the table-turning, I suppose — a wonderful phenomenon, sir — I'll tell you how it's done. Suppose this is a table — it's a pair of steps, but we'll suppose it's a table — I put my hands so — (*extending his hands.*) you do the same — I repeat, you — halloa! (*during the above SPARKINS has quietly got down, unseen by MAJOR.*)

Spark. (*looking off.*) She'll be here with those infernal curtains directly. What the devil's to be done?

Major. (*who has got down.*) As I was saying, I place my hand on this hat, so! (*laying his hand on SPARKINS's hat on table.*)

Spark. Suppose we say *this* hat! (*taking away his hat, and substituting MAJOR's.*)

Major. Well, you do the same. (*SPARKINS places his hands.*) By joining the extremities of our thumbs and little fingers, the magnetic chain is completed, and the hat, which is now perfectly flat on the table, will first assume an oscillating movement from side to side, after which it will become perfectly flat again.

Matil. (*without.*) I've found them at last.

Spark. Oh lud! (*falling forward on MAJOR's hat, and crushing it.*)

Major. Halloa! zounds!

Spark. Wonderful! the hat is flat — perfectly flat; so come along! (*seizing hold of his arm.*)

Major. Come along! where?

Spark. To join Fanny, of course.

Major. She's coming here!

Spark. (*starting.*) Here!

Major. Yes, and all our friends, too! As your tooth wouldn't let you come to us, I proposed we should come to you; and what's more, I told Pivot the lawyer to come too, so that we might talk over the marriage settlements. A good idea of mine, wasn't it, eh? (*slapping him on the back.*)

Spark. A delicious idea. (*aside.*) Stupid old ass.

Major. Ah! here they come! (*looking off.*)

Spark. Zounds! here, help to take those infernal steps away. (*putting steps into MAJOR's arms.*) There, make haste! run along! (*pushing him out, c. to R.*) Here they come!

Enter FANNY and several LADIES and GENTLEMEN — Mrs. PUDDIFOOT following, door L.

Mrs. P. Now, Horatio, say how much you feel obliged to the Major's kind friends for taking the trouble to come here.

Spark. Quite delighted — flattered, I'm sure. (*looking anxiously towards L. c.*) Suppose we adjourn to the drawing-room!

Re-enter MAJOR, c. from R.

Major. With all my heart; and we'll get up a dance, and a chorus, till Pivot the lawyer comes, with the marriage settlements in his pocket — eh, you young rogue? (*poking HORATIO.*) Come along.

[*Exit with FANNY — Mrs. PUDDIFOOT and guests, c. to R.*]

Spark. Pivot with the marriage settlements — Matilda with the curtains — and Fanny here. I've half a mind to rush to the nearest railway station, jump into the first train that starts, and go straight ahead somewhere or other. Here she comes.

Enter MATILDA, with white curtains, R.

Matil. Hollo! you've not taken down the red 'uns. (*pointing.*)

Spark. No! (*aside.*) I must get her out of the way somehow or other. (*suddenly.*) Matilda, listen — Aunt Charlotte is out of the way — we've got the evening before us, so let's go out and enjoy ourselves. How do you like the idea, eh?

Matil. Oh, first-rate — where shall we go?

Spark. Cremorne or Exeter Hall!

Matil. I vote for Cremorne. You're a dear, good, kind duck of a dear! so come along. (*taking his arm.*)

Spark. What, together? no, no, consider your reputation. No, no, we'll meet somewhere or other in half an hour! let's see — suppose we say Temple Bar or Battersea Bridge!

Matil. I will be at Temple Bar!

Spark. And if by chance you should get there before me, (*aside.*) which you probably will —

Matil. I'll wait till you come.

Spark. Do, there's a dear! (*aside.*) She'll wait till I come! that's satisfactory!

Matil. Good by! I'll run and put on my bonnet, and slip out up the area steps. Recollect Temple Bar, and I will wait for you —

Spark. Till I come. Be sure you wait till I come.

Matil. Of course; and then for Cremorne. [*Exit, L. U. E.*]

Spark. Tol de rol — tol de rol! Ha, ha, ha! I've managed that little affair to my entire satisfaction, and now for my darling Fanny; but let me see that I'm all correct first. (*arranging his cravat before glass, and standing on arm-chair, dancing all the time.*) La, la, la, la!

Enter MAJOR VOLLEY, c. from R.

Major. Halloa! what the deuce is he at now? he's dancing the polka on an arm-chair. (*aloud.*) Zounds! what are you doing up there?

Spark. Up here! so I am, I declare. If you were as happy as I am, you'd be glad to get up anywhere. (*jumps.*) Toothache all gone!

Major. Well, I congratulate you on having got rid of a nuisance.

Spark. Yes, my nuisance left me about two minutes and a half ago (*aside.*) for Temple Bar. (*aloud.*) So now for my adorable Fanny.

Major. By-the-by, Horatio, Fanny thinks you rather a lukewarm sort of a lover.

Spark. Oh, does she?

Major. Yes, here she is!

Spark. Is she? (*aside.*) Then I'll astonish her!

Enter FANNY, C. from R.

Fanny. Papa, you're wanted to make up a rubber.

Major. Very well! (*aside to SPARKINS.*) Now here's a chance for you — d—n it, Horatio, go it a bit.

Spark. (*aside.*) She thinks me lukewarm, does she? then I will go it a bit — several bits. (*advancing behind FANNY, and kissing her.*)

Fanny. (*screaming.*) Ah! oh, Mr. Sparkins.

Spark. I'm afraid you find me timid — shy; but I can't help it — extreme diffidence is my failing! (*kisses her again.*)

Enter MATILDA, L. U. E., in bonnet and shawl — seeing him kiss FANNY, throws off her shawl, and sits near table.

Fanny. (*trying to get away.*) Really, Mr. Sparkins!

Spark. Call me not Sparkins — call me your Horatio Thomas, for I am your Horatio Thomas, and you will be your Horatio Thomas's Fanny! (*falling on his knees, and kissing her hands — aside.*) And to think of that unhappy Matilda Jones cooling her heels under Temple Bar all this while.

Fanny. Hark! papa is calling me.

[*Runs out C. to R.*

Spark. (*who has not seen FANNY's exit — seizing MATILDA, who has come down and taken FANNY's place.*) Never mind your papa, my adorable Fanny, but say, say when you will be — (*looking up and seeing her.*) the devil!

Matil. (*with assumed quietness.*) So, sir, you send me to cool my heels under Temple Bar, do you? Very well, then look out for squalls, that's all. (*going after FANNY.*)

Spark. (*stopping her.*) Where are you going?

Matil. To revenge myself by showing your portrait to your adorable Fanny.

Spark. (*throwing himself before her.*) Matilda Jones, beware! if you cross the threshold of that door, it shall be over your own body — I'm desperate — mad — frantic — whoorah! (*advancing towards her, and flourishing his arms.*)

Matil. (*screaming.*) Ah! help! murder! police! (*falls into his arms.*)

Spark. Zounds! she's fainted! 'Tilda — 'Tilda! don't be a fool! I'd slap her hands, only I can't. Will any one come and slap this woman's hands?

Mrs. P. (*without, R.*) Horatio Thomas, where are you?

Spark. Zounds! Aunt Charlotte's voice. (*seizing up MATILDA, and running about with her.*) Where shall I take her to? what shall I do with her? (*shouting.*) Will any one tell me what to do with her? I'd put her in the cistern, only we haven't got one.

Mrs. P. Horatio Thomas, I say.

Spark. Oh, lud! (*rushing off with MATILDA, and runs up against PIVOT, who enters, c. from R.*)

Pivot. Halloa! what do I see?

Spark. (*to PIVOT.*) Silence! not a word, or I'll strangle you. (*rushing off into his room, R., with MATILDA.*)

Pivot. (*astonished.*) "Strangle!" he distinctly said "strangle."

Enter MRS. PUDDIFOOT, c. from R.

Mrs. P. Matilda! Matilda, I say — (*seeing PIVOT.*) Ah! Mr. Pivot.

Pivot. (*suddenly.*) No, ma'am, I haven't seen anything — I haven't seen anything — I haven't heard anything — I don't know anything — 'pon my honor, ma'am. Good evening, ma'am! (*aside.*) "Strangle!" he distinctly said "strangle!" (*makes his escape at door, c. to R.*)

Mrs. P. Why, what's the matter with the man?

Enter MAJOR VOLLEY, c. from R.

Major. Where the deuce is he? Do you know your nephew is a very extraordinary young man? There's no keeping him in one place for two minutes together.

Mrs. P. I thought he was in the drawing-room.

Major. Deuce a bit! we shall find him perched up on some article of furniture or other, I'll be bound.

Re-enter SPARKINS, from R. D.

Spark. (*very pale, and carrying a large brown pitcher.*) Such a terrific scene! She no sooner came to herself than she threatened to drown herself in the wash-hand basin, upon which I laid violent hands on the piteher of water, and here it is! (*seeing MAJOR.*) Zounds! the Major. (*hiding the pitcher behind him.*)

Major. So I've found you at last, eh?

Mrs. P. Yes, and you must come to the drawing-room, and sing your favorite song, the "Ship on Fire."

Spark. (*aside.*) Sing the "Ship on Fire" with a piteher of water in my hand?

Mrs. P. By-the-by, we can't make up a game of speculation for the want of counters. I think they must be in your room. (*going towards door, R.*)

Spark. (*rushing and placing himself before door.*) No, no, no! you'll find them in that table drawer — there! (*Mrs. P. goes to table.*)

Enter FANNY, c. from R.

Fanny. Now, Mr. Sparkins, are you going to sing, or not?

Spark. Yes — certainly — most happy — but — (*aside to MAJOR VOLLEY, in a mysterious whisper.*) There! (*putting the pitcher in his hand.*) Hush! not a word! You understand! (*runs out with FANNY, c. to R.*)

Major. Halloa! a piteher! (*upsetting water over his legs.*) Zounds! here, stop! (*shouting after him.*)

Mrs. P. Heyday! what's the matter? why, Major, what have you got there?

Major. Here! who, I — that is — (*bewildered.*)

Mrs. P. The man's had too much negus, and yet I'm sure it was weak enough! (*aloud.*) You may well have recourse to a pitcher of water, sir — drink it, sir — every drop, sir — it will do you good, sir. Ugh!

[*Exit, c. to R.*]

Major. The woman's mad! but why the deuce did my son-in-law deposit this ponderous pitcher in my hands?

Enter PIVOT, c. from R.

Pivot. Major, you'll make one at a rubber at sixpenny shorts.

Major. Certainly, but — (*aside to him, and in a mysterious whisper.*) There! (*putting the pitcher into his hands.*) Hush! not a word — you understand!

Pivot. What's this? a pitcher! Major! Major! what the deuce shall I do with it. (*looking about at back for a place to deposit the pitcher.*)

Re-enter SPARKINS, c. from R.

Spark. (*speaking off as he enters.*) There are thirteen more verses, but I can't remember them. (*to AUDIENCE.*) No wonder — I can think of nothing but that unhappy creature I left stretched in a state of insensibility on the hearth-rug.

Pivot. (*at R. D.*) Suppose I put the pitcher in here! what do I see? a woman!

Spark. (*running to him, and swinging him round, upsetting the contents of the pitcher over him.*) Hush! not a word, or I'll strangle you! (*runs into room, R., slamming door after him.*)

Pivot. (*after a short pause.*) Well, during the thirty years I've practised as an attorney, I'll venture to assert, affirm, and declare that — Zounds! here he is again! (*seeing SPARKINS at R., runs off with pitcher, c. to R.*)

Enter SPARKINS, R.

Spark. It's all right. I've not only persuaded Matilda that my marriage with Fanny is broken off, but I've actually prevailed on her to retire to her attic for the night — but she insists on having her bed warmed first — and no wonder, for I threw such a quantity of water on her face to bring her to, that I've given her a dreadful cold in the head. Let me see, where the deuce is the warming-pan? I think it's in Aunt Charlotte's room. (*goes into room, L. 1 R., and brings in warming-pan — goes to fireplace, and scrapes some coals into the warming-pan.*) That'll do!

Fanny. (*without.*) Mr. Sparkins!

Spark. Zounds! here's Fanny. (*hiding the warming-pan behind him, the handle thrust up his coat, and the pan hanging down between his coat tails —*

Enter FANNY, c. from R.

Fanny. Well, Mr. Sparkins, you seem to forget that you invited me for the first polka. (*music of polka heard.*)

Spark. The first? no, the second! (*suddenly.*) Ah!

Fanny. What's the matter?

Spark. Nothing! (*aside.*) The warming-pan's red hot, I'm sure it is.

Enter MAJOR, C. from R.

Major. Well, Fanny, so you've found your partner, I see!

Spark. (*running to her, still concealing the warming-pan behind him.*) Yes, here we are, (*putting his arms round her waist.*) practising the polka. (*dancing with her, the pan dangling behind him — in passing the MAJOR, he stops, grasps his arm.*) There! (*giving him the warming-pan.*) Hush! not a word — you understand! (*takes FANNY's waist, and exit dancing, C. to R.*)

Major. A warming-pan! damn it! that's worse than the pitcher; what does it all mean? will anybody tell me what it all means? (*runs off after SPARKINS, calling after him — runs up against*

MRS. PUDDIFOOT, enters C. from R.

Mrs. P. Ah! (*screaming.*)

Major. A thousand pardons — but hush! not a word! you understand! there! (*puts the pan in her hands, and rushes off C. to R.*)

Mrs. P. (*shouting.*) Major — Major! (*running about.*)

Enter PIVOT, C. from R.

Pivot. What's the matter, my dear madam?

Mrs. P. Matter! run after the major! no! hush! not a word — you understand! there! (*puts the pan into his hands, and runs after MAJOR, C. to R.*)

Pivot. No, d—n it! I can't stand this! first a pitcher, then a warming-pan. (*runs about.*)

Enter MATILDA, R. D.

Matil. What can keep Horatio Thomas so long? why does he not come with the warming-pan? (*seeing PIVOT.*) Oh, thank'ee, my good man — I will give you sixpence next time. (*about to take the warming-pan.*)

Pivot. (*indignant.*) Good man! do you know who I am, young woman? I'm Jeremiah John Pivot, attorney-at-law, come to draw up the marriage settlements.

Matil. Marriage settlements!

Pivot. Yes, between Horatio Thomas Sparkins, bachelor, and Fanny Volley, spinster.

Matil. Ah! (*faints 'on his shoulder — then suddenly starts upright again, grasps him by the arm, and drags him forward.*) Listen to me, old 'un — I don't wish to hurt you, but if you don't prevent this marriage, I'll kill you.

Pivot. Help! murder! (*rushes out, C. to R., dragging the warming-pan after him.*)

Matil. So, then, the marriage is not broken off! Oh, Horatio Thomas, haven't I just got a rod in pickle for you?

Enter Mrs. PUDDIFOOT, C. from R.

Mrs. P. Oh, here you are, Matilda — come here! here are the bracelets. (*giving case.*) When I ring the bell, you'll bring them in, and present them to Miss Fanny Volley with Horatio Thomas's compliments! It'll be an agreeable surprise for her!

Matil. Yes, ma'am!

Mrs. P. Remember, you are not to come in till I ring the bell.

[*Exit, C. to R.*

Matil. Very well, ma'am. (*aside.*) Now to fetch the good-for-nothing wretch's portrait and the lock of his odious hair — perhaps when I present them to the dear creature, her surprise will not be so very agreeable.

[*Exit, L.*

Enter SPARKINS, C. from R.

Spark. Fanny dances like an angel! I could have kept it up for an hour, only I suddenly recollected that that poor creature with a cold in her head was waiting all this time for the warming-pan. (*looking about stage.*) Where the deuce can the old Major have put it?

MAJOR appears at door, R. C., with the warming-pan in his hand.

Major. Can what Pivot tells me be true? "Major Volley," said he, putting the warming-pan into my hands — I don't see why he should, but he did. "Major Volley," said he, "it's my painful duty to inform you that I saw a youthful female come out of your intended son-in-law's room."

Spark. Ah! (*seeing MAJOR, goes to him, and lays hold of the end of warming-pan.*) Thank ye, Major — sorry you should have had it in your hands so long, but —

Major. (*gravely.*) Stand aside, sir. (*turning towards R. D.*)

Spark. (*suddenly.*) Where are you going?

Major. (*significantly.*) To your room, sir.

Spark. Pooh! no, you can't — you shan't.

Major. Shan't! (*they struggle — the handle comes out, and the MAJOR rushes into rooms, R. 3 E.*)

Spark. It's all over! he'll find Matilda. I shall lose Fanny — zounds! (*tossing the hot warming-pan from hand to hand, and at last throws it into fireplace.*)

Enter MATILDA, L.

Matilda! then you're *not there!* of course not — as you're *here*, you can't be *there.* (*anxiously looking towards R. D.*) Why didn't you retire to your attic? Let me entreat my poor suffering Matilda instantly to retire to her attic.

Matil. (*in a freezing tone.*) Not till the suffering Matilda has obeyed her missuses' orders, and presented something she's got in her pocket to Miss Fanny Volley with Mr. Horatio Thomas's compliments.

Spark. (*aside.*) She means the bracelets.

Matil. (*taking out a miniature from her right hand pocket, and holding it up to HORATIO.*) Here it is!

Spark. (*aside.*) My portrait! my lock of hair? (*suddenly.*) Matilda, give me that portrait — that lock of hair — and I'll return you your letters. (*producing letters — MATILDA shakes her head.*) I'll buy you ever so many shawls, and no end of bonnets — not one of which shall go on your head! There!

Matil. Catch a weasel — (*shaking her head.*)

Spark. Lots of dresses, loads of stockings, bushels of boots and shoes!

Matil. No, I want nothing but revenge! — that I'll have. I'll wait till I hear the drawing-room bell, and then I'll rather astonish your weak mind.

[*Exit, L., closing door.*]

Spark. But Matilda! Matilda, I say!

Enter MAJOR, from door R., with MATILDA'S bonnet, which he holds behind his back — sees HORATIO — crosses to him, and leads him to c. of stage.

Major. Horatio Thomas Sparkins! as Fanny's only father — I mean — only parent, I desire that you will at once, and without prevarication, explain, solve, clear up, and elucidate this article of female attire which I've just discovered in your room. (*holding up bonnet.*)

Spark. Well, I confess — I confess I am rather inclined to come to the conclusion that — it's a bonnet.

Major. It is a bonnet, sir — but whose bonnet, sir?

Spark. (*quietly.*) Aunt Charlotte's.

Major. No such thing! I saw it on the head of her lady's maid the day before yesterday.

Spark. Very likely — the fact is that — I think somebody called me. (*going up.*)

Major. (*pulling him back.*) No, no, I insist on your explaining this bonnet, sir — this bonnet, sir, sticks in my throat!

Spark. (*aside.*) I wish it did, with all my heart! (*aloud.*) You must know that the owner of that bonnet has got an unfortunate habit of — of walking in her sleep.

Major. A somnambulist! (*suddenly.*) By Jove! here's a splendid opportunity of convincing them of the truth of the sublime science of mesmerism. (*running to bell rope.*)

Spark. What are you going to do?

Major. Ring for her of course — I suppose she'd come.

Spark. (*pulling him away.*) I'm horribly afraid she *would* — with my portrait in one hand and my lock of hair in another! What's to be done? I have it. (*aloud to MAJOR.*) She's there — in that room — put her to sleep through the keyhole, (*imitating mesmeric passes.*) and then tell her to bring you some article or other — no matter what?

Major. I write! what article?

Spark. For instance, my portrait, and lock of my hair which I intended for Fanny! they're locked up in Aunt Charlotte's work-box, and the key's in the china teacup on the mantelpiece! now begin. (*MAJOR turns up his cuffs, and begins making violent passes from himself towards the door, increasing in energy.*) Go it — keep it up!

Major. Wheugh! it's very easy to say "go it" — "keep it up" — she must be in the mesmeric sleep by this time — so now to draw her into the room! (*begins again making violent passes.*)

Spark. Capital — I think she's coming. (*lays hold of bell-rope, and pulls the bell.*)

Major. Halloa! somebody rang.

Spark. The people next door! go it!

Enter MRS. PUDDIFOOT, FANNY, PIVOT, ladies and gentlemen, &c., C. from R.

Spark. (*seeing them.*) Confound it, and I've just rung the bell.

Mrs. P. (*observing MAJOR's actions.*) Mercy on me! what's the matter with the Major.

Spark. (*aside to them.*) Hush! slightly deranged. (*touching his forehead.*)

Mrs. P. (*aside.*) He's been at the negus again! — now then to ring for Matilda. (*rings bell, and MATILDA enters slowly, L., and looks steadfast at HORATIO. MAJOR turns to company, and seems to explain to them his mesmeric experiment.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Matilda! (*in an imploring tone.*) 'Tilda!

Matil. Silence! I come here for revenge.

Spark. (*aside.*) She's got that infernal portrait, and that damned lock of hair in her pocket — it's all over with me. (*sinking into a chair.*)

Major. (*to the company.*) Now you shall see! ahem! — (*turning to MATILDA, and making mesmeric motions.*) Now, young woman, I charge you answer me! (*turning to company.*) Of course you are aware that she's in a deep mesmeric trance all this while. (*to MATILDA.*) What have you come here for?

Matil. (*emphatically.*) To expose a faithless monster in all his naked deformity! (*the company express astonishment.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) That's me! I wish I was fifteen thousand miles off!

Matil. I've got him in my pocket — I mean his portrait! (*looking fiercely at him, and at FANNY.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Oh, for a trap-door! I wouldn't even mind an earthquake — anything to swallow me up!

Major. Halloa! halloa! what's that about a portrait? (*to HORATIO — suddenly and furiously.*) So, sir! I see it all — you are the faithless monster! (*to MATILDA.*) The portrait, quick! where is it?

Matil. There! (*hands miniature to MAJOR.*)

Spark. It's all over! (*falls back.*)

Major. Now then! (*all surround him.*) Now, then, to know who this faithless monster is. Heyday! what's this — who's this? A Lifeguardsman!

All. A Lifeguardsman! Tol de rol! tol de rol! (*dancing.*)

Matil. Oh, gemini! I've gone and put my hand into the wrong pocket!

Spark. (*to company.*) And shall we allow — I repeat, shall we permit an innocent, a confiding female from the rural districts to be trifled with by a heartless, an inhuman Lifeguardsman? Never! (*to company.*) Oblige me by saying — "Never!"

All. Never!

Spark. (*to MATILDA.*) Your wedding portion shall be our care! (*aside to her.*) Here's my share — *your letters* — (*taking a bundle of*

papers out of his pocket.) which I should only have to show to your Lifeguardsman — but which I will generously exchange for my portrait and the lock of my hair.

Matil. There! (*giving them to him.*)

Spark. There! (*giving papers to her.*)

Matil. What do I see? A bundle of five pound notes! Then you're a trump, after all!

Spark. The devil! I've put my hand in the wrong pocket! Never mind — I've learnt a lesson that's well worth the money, and that is, not to familiarize oneself with one's servants! And now *polka generale!* Gentlemen, take your partners. Fanny — your hand. (*all take partners, except MAJOR.*)

Major. Halloo! halloo! what shall I do for a partner?

Spark. I'll find you one. (*taking MATILDA's hand, and addressing audience as he leads her to front.*) Ladies and Gentlemen, I am going to introduce Matilda Jones to my worthy father-in-law; but, as he's rather particular who he dances with, may I refer her to *you*, in the hope that you will overlook her faults —

Matil. And speak a kind word in favor of AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

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