

THE MOUSTACHE MOVEMENT.

An Original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"Lord Bateman's Overland Journey to Constantinople," "Kensington Gardens," "Twelve Labours of Hercules," and (jointly) "The Enchanted Isle," "The Sphinx," "Ivanhoe," "Princess Radiant," "Mephistopheles," &c.

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DEDICATION.

TO MRS. KEELEY.

DEAR MRS. KEELEY,

The existence of a woman in any way comparable with yourself may well be disputed, still, for the sake of illustration, I may be allowed to compare you to one—like yourself, a great artist and public benefactress. I allude to the philanthropic lady who is constantly asking us—through the medium of *The Times*, if we “want luxuriant hair, whiskers, moustaches, &c.” and urging us, in case of our being so necessitated, to “use Criniline.”

For the beauty you have imparted to my unobtrusive and originally “scrubby” *Moustache*—by a secret charm which is entirely your own, and which (to the regret of—let us hope, at the earliest—our great grandchildren) will die with you—I cannot sufficiently express my delighted gratitude.

To drop metaphor—which is troublesome—and joking—which smacks too much of “the shop,” let me beg of you to accept the dedication of what was originally the merest trifle—but which you have elevated to something more than a trifle—as a slight acknowledgement of the pleasure and profit I have derived from your valuable and zealous co-operation, on this, and various former occasions, in the course of a (to me at least) truly delightful professional acquaintance—now of some years’ standing.

The sincerity of people, following our artificial callings, has been frequently questioned. We undoubtedly say many things to each other that we do not mean. When, however, I say that, with such little successes as I have had the good fortune to obtain—no name is more intimately or gratefully associated in my recollection than your own—and that the possibility of my having been occasionally the means of bringing that name—not unfavourably before the public, is not the least among the consolations that have occurred to reconcile me to an arduous and harrassing career; I trust I may be believed—as I *do* mean it—in the same sincerity with which I subscribe myself

Your friend and admirer,

ROBERT B. BROUGH.

N.B.—At the risk of incurring a charge of eccentricity, ignorance of the French language, or inability to purchase a *Spier's Dictionary*—the author begs to state, that this piece (such as it is) is purely original, and translated or “adapted” from no foreign source whatever.

*First Performed at the Royal Adelphi Theatre,
on Thursday, March 30th, 1854.*

Characters.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| MR. SIMON SWOSSER (<i>in the Law</i>) | MR. O. SMITH. |
| CAPTAIN ALTAMONT KIDD (<i>in the Army</i>) | MR. PARSELLE. |
| LIEUTENANT CORNELIUS O'PAKE (<i>formerly in the same—Swosser's Nephew</i>) .. | MR. GARDEN. |
| ANTHONY SOSKINS (<i>a Lawyer's Clerk</i>) ... | MR. KEELEY. |
| JOHN (<i>a Waiter, as may be anticipated</i>)..... | MR. LE BARR. |
| BUTCHER (<i>with a Moustache</i>) | MR. SANDERS. |
| BAKER (<i>with ditto</i>) | MR. BRAITHWAITE. |
| TWO INDIVIDUALS (<i>in the Police</i>) | { MR. THOMAS. MR. KELLY. |
| LOUISA FITZ-JOHNSON (<i>a Milliner</i>) | MRS. KEELEY. |
| ELIZA SWOSSER (<i>Swosser's Daughter</i>) | MISS MARY KEELEY. |
| SALLY (<i>a Housemaid, as will be naturally expected</i>) | MISS LAIDLAW. |

Costumes

MODERN AND DESCRIBED IN THE PIECE.

** * This piece as regards the right of performing it, in and within ten miles of London, belongs to MR. BENJAMIN WEBSTER. The provincial right (beyond the circle alluded to) remains with the author, who may be applied to through the agency of the London Dramatic Authors' Society.*

THE MOUSTACHE MOVEMENT.



SCENE.—*Exterior of a Country Inn near a Railway Station. The house R. with portico, door, and lawn windows on each side. Garden wall enclosing the stage, L. Railing right across back, with gate in C.; arbours, R. and L. with table and seats; garden table and chairs L. towards the front with writing materials. Signpost, R. back inscribed, "Railway Hotel and Refreshment Rooms."*

As the curtain rises the BUTCHER, in a conspicuous moustache, which he caresses, using the suet on his tray as cosmetique, is discovered ringing the gate bell, C.

BUTCHER. Butcher!

Enter SALLY from house; she takes meat from him.

SALLY. *(looking admiringly at his moustache)* Lor, butcher, how beautifully they are coming on.

BUTCHER. Yes'm, civilians has a chance with the military now. Don't know as I shall be able to keep 'em though.

SALLY. Lor, butcher, surely your master can't be such a brute as to—

BUTCHER. Like to catch him at it; 'taint that, mem, but they're a getting low—the tripe-shops wearing of 'em already, let 'em come down to the cat's-meat and I shave.

Exit, L. crying "Butcher" and ringing bell of next house; when off the BAKER has entered, R. and handed loaves, &c. across the gate to SALLY. He also wears a moustache and beard.

SALLY. Why I declare if you aint a wearing 'em, too, Baker.

BAKER. Only as nateral respirator on account o' my health, mem. The milkman's started a tip, and that's too revolting. *(railway whistle and bell heard R. at back)*

SALLY. *(laden with the provisions, calling)* John! John! here's the express in.

JOHN. *(from the house)* Coming.

Exit, BAKER, L., calling "Baker," and ringing next door bell; when off, SALLY exits, R., behind the house staggering under the bread, meat, &c. Noise of steam heard R. at back.

Enter JOHN the Waiter from house, in a hurry and wiping his mouth with a napkin (he wears a moustache). He runs towards gate, when he is met by LIEUTENANT O'PAKE, who rushes in from R. with a case of duelling pistols under his arm. He knocks against, looks at, and collars JOHN, dragging him forward angrily (the LIEUTENANT is dressed in a half-military costume and wears a moustache).

O'PAKE. (*shaking JOHN fiercely*) So ye'd escape me, would ye! But ye don't. Where's the lady, ye pace-of-families-desthroyin-spalpeen? Restore the orphan that you've inveigled away from her home—to her broken-hearted father and mother. (*shaking him incessantly*).

JOHN. If you please I'm the—

O'PAKE. I know ye are—you're the man with the moustache, between twenty and thirty—of gentlemanly appearance. Do ye think I didn't take care to get your description?

JOHN. (*gasping with an effort*) If you please sir, I'm the waiter.

O'PAKE. (*still holding*) The what!

JOHN. The waiter.

O'PAKE. Eh!

JOHN. And if you'd please to give your orders—

O'PAKE. (*releasing him*) Sure and why didn't ye say so? (*sits down coolly at table, L.*) Whisky!

JOHN. Hot or cold, sir?

O'PAKE. Hot.

JOHN. Yes, sir.

Exit into house, R.

O'PAKE. (*seated solus*) Faith now and a man less cool than myself would have made a blunder. I'm before 'um. Its the quick train I came by, and I've passed 'um. (*takes out a letter and reads*) "Cornelius—Your cousin Eliza has eloped with a man of the highest respectability, but without a shilling. Punish the scoundrel—they have taken first-class tickets to Mudford. I have no time to add more, but that the honour of the family is in your hands, and that if he escape you it will be impossible for me to negotiate that little matter for you in the present depressed state of the money market. Your affectionate uncle, Simon Swosser."

Enter CAPTAIN KIDD at back from L., (he wears a moustache).

KIDD. Those confounded postboys are so seldom wanted now that there is no finding them when— (*railway bell and whistle*)

O'PAKE. (*starting up*) There's the other train in and the black-guard of a waiter—(*turning round fiercely and seeing KIDD*) you thundering thief of the world, where's the whisky?

KIDD. (*down R. indignantly*) What the devil do you mean, sir?

Enter JOHN briskly from house with grog on tray.

JOHN. (*crossing to table, L.*) Whisky, sir, hot. (*puts it on table*).

O'PAKE. Eh! (*bowing to KIDD*) Sir, I humbly ask your pardon for mistaking a gentleman for a waiter.

KIDD. (*turns away, R. impatiently*) Pray don't mention it.

O'PAKE. But as I had just mistaken the waiter for a gentleman—
KIDD. (*impatiently*) Indeed, sir.

O'PAKE. A gentleman I am in active pursuit of—

KIDD. Ha! (*turns his back and pulls hat over his eyes*)

O'PAKE. And do you hear, waiter? if a gentleman comes here and a lady with a moustache, you'll let me know.

JOHN. Yes, sir.

O'PAKE. It's likely her trunks will be marked Swosser. (KIDD *slips money into JOHN's hand*)

JOHN. The lady with the moustache, sir.

O'PAKE. No, the gentleman, you boghthrotter! I'm afther him, and he mustn't escape me. (*drinks grog hastily and rushes out at back through gate and r.*)

JOHN. (*running after him*) One whisky, please sir, hot.

Exit in pursuit.

KIDD. So! commend me to an Irish bailiff; I should never have suspected him, but now all classes have left off shaving there's no telling a duke from a dustman. I was warned that they were on my track. However, I mustn't risk a second meeting with the blundering blockhead. How to warn Eliza? I mustn't disturb the poor girl's nap after the fatigues of the journey—a few hours' hiding somewhere or other—(*seeing writing materials on table L.*) Ha, pen, ink, and paper. (*sits down to write*)

Enter SOSKINS and LOUISA FITZJOHNSON at back from L. and through gate. SOSKINS wears a preposterously large moustache, but his appearance is otherwise of a vulgar holiday shopboy description. LOUISA sits down in arbour at back and begins unpacking provisions from her basket. SOSKINS comes forward to C. whistling.

KIDD. (*writes* "My own Eliza. The officers are in pursuit of me." (*looking up impatiently at SOSKINS whom he mistakes for the waiter and whose whistling annoys him*) Don't whistle, sir.

SOSKINS. (R.) (*indignant and astonished—aside*) He be blowed. I will if I like. (*whistles*)

KIDD. (L.) Don't you see I'm writing.

SOSKINS. (*defiantly*) What do I care? (*aside*) Who's he I should like to know.

KIDD. (*writing*) "Are in pursuit." Don't be impertinent, sir.

SOSKINS. (*aside*) Well I like that?

KIDD. (*not looking up*) Go about your business—or, stay I shall want you to take a note.

SOSKINS. I'll see you blowed first.

KIDD. (*intent upon his writing*) "The officers are in pursuit of me. The repulsive looking ruffian in the moustache who at the first glance might be mistaken for a gentleman—is one"—(*SOSKINS is whistling very loudly*) Will you be quiet, waiter?

SOSKINS. Who do you call waiter?

LOUISA. (*coming forward and indignant*) Waiter, sir,—have the kindness to look at his mustarchurs.

KIDD. Eh,—I beg ten thousand pardons, but as I myself, an officer in the army, as you probably are, (*aside*) that will appease

him, he looks a snob—have just been subjected to a similar misapprehension. (*during the above he has scarcely looked up from his letter*)

SOSKINS. You mistake, sir,—I am not precisely in the army.

KIDD. (*intent on writing*) You surprise me! (*writing*) "If you can get him off the scent—do!" (*looking round at back*) Where the deuce is that waiter?

LOUISA. And if he's not in the army, what then, sir?—I suppose he isn't obliged to shave. I'd have you to know that the time is past for the privileged classes to brand the people by the degrading imposition of presumptuary laws.

KIDD *without attending to her has folded his letter and gone out at back, R., with it in his hand, as if in search of the Waiter.*

LOUISA. (*aside to SOSKINS*) Isn't that what the lecturer said at the Institution?

Re-enter JOHN with KIDD's note in his hand: he has come down and stands R. of SOSKINS.

SOSKINS. (*aside, in reply to LOUISA*) Yes—but I don't want to get into a row with a soldier. (*crosses to R., seeing JOHN*) You will excuse her enthusiasm, Captain—

JOHN. I aint a captain, sir.

SOSKINS. General, then—

JOHN. Waiter, if you please, sir. (*bowing*)

SOSKINS. (*staggering back in astonishment*) Oh! (*bell rings in house*)

JOHN. And if there's anything you'd like to take— (*bell rings more violently*) Coming—coming!

Exit, running into house, R.

LOUISA. (*looking after JOHN indignantly*) Well! I'm sure!—a waiter with moustache—of all things in the world!

SOSKINS. Well, and why not a waiter, Louisa?—Don't be illiberal. I ask you, as a milliner and with your knowledge of public life, are the perquisites of a man in his humble sphere sufficient to purchase for him exemption from those little weaknesses to which we are all more or less liable?—I except you, for you are a pattern of your sex, and the thing is out of the question—but myself for instance?

LOUISA. (*dignified*) Anthony, don't forget yourself!—You are a lawyer's clerk, and your rank in life entitles you to wear them.

SOSKINS. Ahem—ahem—true—true! (*uneasily*)

LOUISA. (*looking at his moustache rapturously*) And yours are such loves! (*caressing them*)

SOSKINS. (*putting his hand up nervously*) D—don't pull 'em about.

LOUISA. (*passionately*) I wouldn't injure a hair of them for worlds!—For they are the load-star of my existence!

SOSKINS. (*aside*) Ahem! (*seriously, taking her hand, walking her up and down*) Louisa, I fear it is the moustache and not the man you love.

LOUISA. Oh! don't say that, Anthony—though I own it was they first won me, two months ago, when we met at the Eagle, and perhaps if you hadn't had 'em—

SOSKINS. (*agonized sides*) Oh! heavens! Louisa! ask your heart, if supposing circumstances over which we have no control—(*tragically*) for we have no control over circumstances, Louisa—

LOUISA. No, Anthony, but go on.

SOSKINS. If circumstances, I say, were some day to place me before your eyes, shorn of those manly attributes—do you think—(*in a broken voice*) you could—still love me?

LOUISA. (*overcome*) Oh, Anthony, don't ask me.

SOSKINS. (*aside*) She couldn't—I daren't break it to her.

LOUISA. But why need you think of such a thing—your master allows you to wear 'em, doesn't he?

SOSKINS. (*aside*) Old Swosser! Yes—oh yes—he wishes it rather than otherwise.

LOUISA. You've often told me that all the clerks in the office wear 'em.

SOSKINS. (*aside*) Fancy old Jenkins the conveyancer, under his blue specs and red nose.

LOUISA. And don't they?

SOSKINS. Oh yes—all, and the errand boy a tip.

LOUISA. And there's no fear of your losing such a comfortable situation, is there?

SOSKINS. No, Louisa, I think not—I hope not. (*aside*) And yet if old Swosser was to get to know—

SWOSSER. (*voice heard outside, R.*) Secure them, I say!—secure them!

SOSKINS. (*struck with abject terror*) Oh, lord!

LOUISA. Anthony, what ails you?

SOSKINS. That voice!

LOUISA. Whose?

SOSKINS. Old Swosser's.

LOUISA. Your master's?

SOSKINS. Yes—what the devil shall I do? Louisa—I— (*as if about to confess*)

SWOSSER. (*outside*) I say, secure every man with a moustache, and a young woman!—bind 'em hand and foot!

LOUISA. (*wildly*) Anthony, speak—have you robbed the office?

SOSKINS. No—yes—that is, Louisa, this is no time for explanation—but I mustn't let him see me—I have deceived you—wronged you grossly—but give us a leg over this wall and all may yet be well, and years of penitence shall atone for months of falsehood and villainy.

LOUISA. Quick—he's here! (*bundles him over the wall, L.—he disappears*) And I am calm under it—but I was meant for a heroine. If despair can save him—it shall.

Enter SWOSSER at back, R.

SWOSSER. Waiter—here—landlord—boots—somebody! (*seeing LOUISA*) Young woman, have you seen anything of a—

LOUISA. No—nothing of the kind—I'll swear it!

Enter ELIZA from house, unseen, R.

ELIZA. (*aside*) Good heavens! my father! (*listens in arbour at back, R.*)

SWOSSER. A gentleman with a moustache, who came here with a young lady by the last train but one?

LOUISA. Went away last night—saw 'em go myself.

ELIZA. (*aside*) We are lost!

SWOSSER. (R.) Don't trifle with me, young woman—it's a question of breaking the laws of the country—a question of crime.

LOUISA. (L., *aside*) I thought so.

SWOSSER. A question perhaps of life and death—and certainly of what's of much more importance—of money—money, young woman. (*aside*) The captain's come into ten thousand a year since this morning, and that blood-thirsty scoundrel, Cornelius—

LOUISA. (*aside*) It's embezzlement—but they can't hang him.

SWOSSER. I must find out where the nearest magistrate lives. (*going, R.*)

LOUISA. Hold, sir! (*he stops*) What is the amount?

SWOSSER. The amount?

LOUISA. Yes—you said the money was of the most importance—name the figure.

ELIZA. (*aside*) What are they talking about?

SWOSSER. Pray, young woman, what the devil is it to you?

LOUISA. Everything, sir—life and death—I'm Louisa Fitzjohnson—you don't know me—but I know you—you are Mr. Swosser—I know all—I know the person you are looking after—it's very kind of you to call him a gentleman, and I used to think him one myself. He's a wretch and a villain, he has deceived me, he confessed as much—but I love him.

ELIZA. (*aside*) What do I hear?

SWOSSER. (*aside*) Whew! this is a pleasant discovery.

LOUISA. And you won't tear him from me, for the sake of a little money—for it can't be much?

SWOSSER. (*aside*) She's heard of the captain's fortune, but doesn't know the extent of it.

LOUISA. (*passionately*) It isn't much, is it, sir? but whatever it is I'll make it up to you—I'm only a milliner, but I've put by a little money, and I'll work the skin off my bones. Consider, sir, we were to have been married, and you wouldn't break a poor girl's heart when a word from you can prevent it.

ELIZA. (*aside*) My head swims.

SWOSSER. What you tell me is really very extraordinary! Your's, I presume, is an old attachment?

LOUISA. Not so very—two months.

ELIZA. (*aside*) And he's been engaged to me for six! (*falls into a seat overcome*)

LOUISA. But if you knew the amount of love that has been made in the time!

SWOSSER. (*aside*) The captain's evidently a Lothario, but I can't afford to lose a rich son-in-law!

LOUISA. But do tell me the amount, sir! I'll pay you at so much a week!

SWOSSER. (*aside*) The girl's crazed! (*aloud*) My poor girl, I am deeply sorry for you; you have been the victim of a heartless

deceiver! (*aside*) Hope he doesn't hear me? (*aloud*) As to any compensation you could make my family out of your little earnings, the idea is simply ridiculous!

LOUISA. (*aside*) It was for a heavy amount then! What can the villain have done with it? I never had a penny of it!

SWOSSER. And as a rightly disposed young person, after what has occurred, you ought to see the propriety of allowing things to take their course, and give up all thoughts of the—(*looking about cautiously aside*) He isn't within hearing—the scoundrel! (*ELIZA recovers a little and listens again*)

LOUISA. I know I ought, but I can't when I think of his youth and beauty!

ELIZA. (*aside*) True, true!

LOUISA. Of his talents!

ELIZA. (*aside*) Yes.

LOUISA. Of his gentlemanly tastes, though they have been the ruin of him!

ELIZA. (*aside*) Alas!

LOUISA. And above all, when I think of his heavenly moustache!

ELIZA. (*aside*) I can hear no more. (*falls again overcome*)

LOUISA. And besides, when I reflect, that he is in danger!

SWOSSER. (*recollecting with alarm*) Ah, true! You are aware of his danger?

LOUISA. Oh, yes!

SWOSSER. But he still lives?

LOUISA. (*horror struck*) Lives! Are his days then threatened?

SWOSSER. Why, there is reason to fear that the effects—(*aside*) that murderous scoundrel, Cornelius!

LOUISA. I see it all—they have hunted him to death! his noble spirit won't survive it! (*looking at wall, L.*) And to think that I have perhaps given him a leg into his grave. Anthony! I will save you yet or perish in the attempt! *Rushes out wildly at back, L.*

SWOSSER. (*looking after her*) I thought the captain's name was Altamont: but I dare say he has a name for every lady love. But while I am standing here, the duel may take place! If that fire-brand, Cornelius, has done him any injury, I'll never discount another bill for the villain as long as I live! *Exit, excited, at back, L.*

ELIZA. (*comes forward, staggering*) They are gone—it must have been a terrible dream!—but no, my father stood here, and I remember too well that horrid creature with her tears and passionate entreaties that he might not be torn from her—Ugh! (*shuddering*) It was too real! The abandoned hussey to follow him here, when in an hour I should have married him, and had him all to myself! And to allude to his moustache: the moustache that I have loved so, and little thought to live to see twiddled by other fingers, and fingers that I am sure must be coarser than mine! Oh, it's too dreadful! And that note he sent me, saying that the officers were in pursuit of him—the wretch, he meant the milliners. But I hope I shall live to see him shaved! But she shall have him!—oh, yes; I won't dispute the precious prize. (*proudly*) No! Eliza

Swosser, you were born for something higher than to be the rival of milliners! (*bursting into tears*) though I'm sure if he'd said he liked milliners, I'd have put myself to the business with pleasure, if papa would have allowed me. (*sobs*)

Enter LOUISA, at back, L.

LOUISA. He isn't in sight, and I haven't the heart to tell him to drag the river! (*sits at table, L., exhausted*)

ELIZA. She is there again—(*looking at her*) and he could desert me for such a creature—in eighteen-penny gloves that have been cleaned! but she shall not triumph in my weakness. Eliza! Be firm, you have a duty to perform!

LOUISA. Oh, lord! What will become of me!

ELIZA. (*aside*) I will make the effort. (*approaching LOUISA*) madame, you are unhappy?

LOUISA. (*groaning*) Oh, I should just think I was—oh, rather!

ELIZA. What expressions! (*aloud*) But believe me, you have no longer cause to be so!

LOUISA. Much you know about it.

ELIZA. You will not say so when you know who I am! I am Eliza Swosser!

LOUISA. Oh! Old Swosser's daughter?

ELIZA. The same.

LOUISA. What is the whole biling of you here after him?

ELIZA. (*aside*) Vulgar wretch! What does she mean?

LOUISA. It don't matter, you'll be clever if you can catch him now! (*groans*)

ELIZA. (*aside*) The creature dares to exult! (*with dignity*) Believe me, if he is never caught till I wish to catch him, as you call it, he need never fear of his liberty.

LOUISA. Well, that's very kind of you though it wasn't said in the kindest way. But it won't do me no good—it won't give him back to me as I once knew him—oh dear, oh dear!

ELIZA. (*aside*) She seems to take the discovery of his perfidy very much to heart! I could almost forget my own sufferings in hers! (*with feeling*) And did you love him very much!

LOUISA. Who could see him and not?

ELIZA. True, true!

LOUISA. Who could listen to his downright gentlemanly conversation—

ELIZA. It was.

LOUISA. Who could feel the soft pressure of his hand, that wasn't much too red for a nobleman.

ELIZA. It was perfectly white.

LOUISA. (*astonished*) You've noticed it then?

ELIZA. Pressed it often.

LOUISA. Well, that's odd; but, above all, who could gaze on the glossy twist of his heavenly moustaches?

ELIZA. (*casting down her eyes*) It was that first won me.

LOUISA. (*starting up aghast*) What! Say that again, or— No don't, not yet.

ELIZA. Is it possible that you do not know? (*rises*)

LOUISA. What? Speak! But I am prepared for anything.

ELIZA. That we were to have been married?

LOUISA. (*falls into a chair overcome*) I didn't know he was so much the gentleman as that. I thought I was dead—but it's over now. (*starting up*) I'll tear him from my heart like a bit of old lining; and to think of his having borrowed of me.

ELIZA. Is it possible? when he has lavished the most costly presents upon me.

LOUISA. That accounts for the largeness of the amount; then I wouldn't be you for something.

ELIZA. What do you mean?

LOUISA. I shall think of him till my dying day; but it won't be with his head shaved, a log of wood chained to one of his legs, and his dear moustachers cut off. But, I'll beg that least—

ELIZA. Woman, explain yourself.

LOUISA. And when he does get his ticket of leave for good behaviour, and begins murdering and robbing the gold diggers in the bush, as is usual in such cases, he won't have me to thank for bringing him to it.

ELIZA. Would you drive me mad?

LOUISA. I shan't hear myself cried about in the streets as the young woman, to satisfy whose frivolous vanity, the young man was induced to commit the robbery.

ELIZA. (*agonized*) The what? Oh no, it cannot be, unsay that horrible word. I knew he had been extravagant, reckless, but not criminal—not criminal.

LOUISA. My dear, the extent of his crimes I fear we shall never know.

ELIZA. Then the officers that are in pursuit of him—

LOUISA. Who told you that the officers were in pursuit of him?

ELIZA. Himself?

LOUISA. Where?

ELIZA. Here—this morning.

LOUISA. What, you have seen him?

ELIZA. We were to have left in a postchaise together in half an hour. (*LOUISA faints*) She has fainted. Look up—let us save him—he may not yet be wholly lost. Think that he is perhaps by this time out of their reach. (*CAPTAIN KIDD runs precipitately across the back from R. to L., ELIZA sees him and screams*) A—a—a—ah! (*falls into chair R. of LOUISA*)

LOUISA. (*starting up*) What is it?

ELIZA. I saw him.

LOUISA. Where?

ELIZA. There! (*points without looking round to L. where KIDD has disappeared—LOUISA looks round frightened, and sees SOSKINS run across from L. to R.*)

LOUISA. A—a—ah! (*falls into chair*)

ELIZA. (*hiding her eyes*) Did you see him?

LOUISA. Yes.

ELIZA. Is he pursued? (*LOUISA looks timidly round, and sees KIDD run from L. to R., she screams*)

LOUISA. Yes.

ELIZA. (*still hiding her face*) By a repulsive-looking ruffian?

LOUISA. Very.

ELIZA. In a moustache?

LOUISA. Yes.

ELIZA. It is the officer, as you described him to me.

LOUISA. (*hiding her face*) See if he's after him still.

ELIZA. I scarcely dare. (*looks round—SOSKINS runs from R. to L., she screams*) Repulsive indeed! (*both sit down groaning*) Dare we look again?

LOUISA. To see him taken before our eyes?

ELIZA. And yet there is a terrible fascination that I cannot resist.

LOUISA. Nor I—and he may escape. Shall we venture. (*they turn round as if afraid to look—KIDD runs from R. and SOSKINS from L., they rush into each other's arms, nearly upsetting one another at gate; the two WOMEN scream*)

ELIZA. Captured!

LOUISA. Took! (*they both faint*)

KIDD.

SOSKINS. } (*bowing*) I beg your pardon, sir.

KIDD. } I have not the pleasure of knowing you, sir.

SOSKINS. } You are a total stranger to me, sir.

KIDD. } But as there is an individual I am anxious to avoid.

SOSKINS. } But as there is a party I can't meet without getting into a precious mess. (*they come down hastily*)

KIDD. (R.) Good heavens—Eliza insensible!

SOSKINS. (L.) Merciful powers—Louisa inanimate!

KIDD. (*looking out at back, R., uneasily*) This is most unfortunate.

SOSKINS. (*looking L.*) This is d——d annoying!

KIDD. I was about to ask you if you would oblige me by taking charge of this young lady who has fainted, for a few minutes.

SOSKINS. I was about to trespass on your good nature to lend a hand for a minute or two to this utterly senseless young person.

O'PAKE. (*outside, R.*) I say the gentleman has arrived, sir, he has been seen.

KIDD. (*throwing ELIZA into SOSKINS's arms*) I must really trouble you. (*runs to door of hotel, which he tries to open*)

SOSKINS. (*shaking LOUISA*) Then I say, Loo, don't be a d——d fool!

LOUISA. (*rousing and seeing him—with rapture*) They have not torn him from me—he still lives for his Louisa alone, and with all his falsehood. (*seeing that ELIZA is also in his arms—screams*) Ah, villain, take her away in your postchaise. (*faints*)

SOSKINS. I say, Loo—if you took anything at the station that's got into your head you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

KIDD. (*coming down furiously*) The idiots have fastened the glass door. For heaven's sake, Eliza—

SWOSSER. (*outside, L.*) All I have to say is scour the country.

SOSKINS. (*throwing LOUISA into KIDD's arms*) I must really avail myself of your kind offer. (*runs towards wall, L., where he had previously climbed over, and tries to do so again*)

KIDD. Inhuman wretch—Eliza look up!

ELIZA. (*looking up*) In the hour of danger, he thinks of me, me only! (*seeing that he also is embracing LOUISA*) Monster, go to your milliner! (*faints again*)

KIDD. Eliza, if your breakfast has disagreed with you to such an extent as to make you talk nonsense, you ought to have gone to bed.

SOSKINS. (*dropping from wall and staggering back towards, c.*) There's old Swosser on the other side.

KIDD. (*resigning the ladies*) Thank you, sir! (*runs into house by lawn window which he forces open*)

SOSKINS. (*calling after him*) Pitiful dastard!

Enter O'PAKE at back, R., he unlocks his pistol case at table, R.

O'PAKE. (*aside*) I have 'em.

SOSKINS. (*bawling, and shaking the girls*) Here, I say, you couple of fools, come to your senses do. (*the girls start up—ELIZA, seeing SOSKINS, recoils with horror*)

ELIZA. Ah!

O'PAKE. (*down R., aside*) They've had a row—fear nothing, Eliza—I am here to protect you.

LOUISA. (*aside*) Who's this I wonder?

ELIZA. Cornelius!

O'PAKE. Yes, your cousin Cornelius, come to restore you to the arms of your aged parent, that you'd send to an early grave in the prime of his life, and to punish the perfidious partner of your flight. (*to SOSKINS*) You and I sir will arrange our business privately.

LOUISA. They're going to shoot him now—what next I wonder.

SOSKINS. And may I ask what is your business?

ELIZA. (*aside*) He mistakes the horrid constable for Altamont—if I could keep up the deception.

O'PAKE. I am this lady's nearest living relative, and the intimate friend of her father.

SOSKINS. And what the devil do I care if you are.

LOUISA. (*aside*) He'll fight, he's capable of it—but he shan't have blood on his head, if I can prevent it.

O'PAKE. Faith, I can't have made a mistake. (*to ELIZA*) Sure he's the perfidious partner of your flight.

SOSKINS. I!

LOUISA. (*aside to him*) It's no use brazening it out, Anthony, I know all.

SOSKINS. (*aside to her*) Louisa, I'm willing to hope it's only the weather has affected you.

ELIZA. (*aside*) Every moment is of importance. Yes, Cornelius, that is the gentleman.

SOSKINS. I—why I never saw her before in my life.

ELIZA. Oh! Altamont, can you be so heartless.

LOUISA. (*aside to him*) So you can be Altamont to her, and plain Anthony was good enough for me.

SOSKINS. (*aside*) As soon as I get Louisa back to town, I shall

take her to an eminent practitioner to consult him about the state of her brains. Here, what stuff, my name isn't Altamont.

LOUISA. There's no knowing what his name is, he's one entire alias.

ELIZA. This cruelty is more than I can bear. (*clings to him*)

KIDD. (*has partially come out*) What do I see—good heavens! (*seeing O'PAKE*) the Irish bailiff! (*runs back*)

SOSKINS. Now, have you done?

ELIZA. You shall not leave me; no, false—cruel as he has been, they shall not injure him while I am near. (*clings to him*)

LOUISA. (*pulling her away*) You'll excuse me, miss—but this is a little too strong in my presence.

ELIZA. (*aside to her*) Excellent, keep it up.

LOUISA. (*aside*) Keep it up, what does she mean?

O'PAKE. (*to SOSKINS*) Enough, sir. I parsave that to the moral terptitude of the dhirty blackguard, ye add the pusillanimity of the cowardly spalpeen.

SOSKINS. You're driving me mad amongst you. I'm not going to stand any bullying.

O'PAKE. Then, you will understand, there is but one way in which our difference can be arranged. I have weapons here.

LOUISA. Anthony, you shan't do it.

SOSKINS. Shan't do what? Louisa, your eccentricities are becoming unbearable.

LOUISA. You shan't add manslaughter to your numerous crimes. Police!

SOSKINS. Will you be quiet, Louisa?

LOUISA. No—police! murder! duels! thieves! (*runs out at back*)

SOSKINS. Stop that madwoman, or she'll do mischief.

ELIZA. (*aside*) I begin to think there's some mistake.

O'PAKE. You parsave, sir, that we are liable to interruption at any moment—so, (*presenting pistols*) here, on this very spot, behind the wall outside—

Re-enter LOUISA, followed by two POLICEMEN.

LOUISA. There they are—there's one, and there's the other—bind 'em hand and foot.

Enter SWOSSER.

SWOSSER. Cornelius, if you hurt a hair of his head, it will be impossible for me to arrange that little money affair for you.

SOSKINS. (*aside*) Old Swosser! (*turns back*)

LOUISA. And now I've saved his life, you may transport him for it as soon as you like.

SWOSSER. Transport—who?

LOUISA. Who? why—(*SOSKINS stops her mouth*)

SWOSSER. This is Captain Kidd, isn't it? the young man whose acquaintance I've so long wished to make—whom I've burned to call my son-in-law (*aside*) ever since he came into the fortune.

ELIZA. (*aside*) What can this change mean? Papa, that is not Captain Kidd.

SWOSSER. No; then where is the dear Captain? Let me press him to my heart.

O'PAKE. Faith, there's no Captain in the case—that's the man she was running away with.

ELIZA. No, it isn't.

LOUISA. Well, of all the young brazen-faced—— (SOSKINS stops her)

ELIZA. There is some mistake, papa, I never saw that person before in the whole course of my life.

O'PAKE. Then, bedad, ye'd got mighty intimate on a short acquaintance.

SWOSSER. What do I hear?

O'PAKE. Sure, I saw her kiss him.

SWOSSER. What?

O'PAKE. And fall on his bosom, and spake of the sacrifices she'd made for 'un.

LOUISA. She did; and it's all true.

SWOSSER. The abandoned hussey, to run away with another man, and Captain Kidd's uncle just dead, and left him ten thousand a year. Who are you, sir? (SOSKINS silent) Why don't you speak?

SOSKINS. (aside) If I do it's all up.

SWOSSER. Why don't you show your face? (turning him round—SOSKINS shows his face very much distorted) And she could throw herself away on such an object?

LOUISA. What, don't you know him?

SWOSSER. Well, the face seems familiar; but I can't positively say I ever saw him before.

KIDD. (coming forward) Excuse the interruption of a stranger, sir, but was the uncle of the Captain Kidd you alluded to named Higgins?

SWOSSER. It was—he was my client.

KIDD. And there was no will?

SWOSSER. There was one executed an hour before his death in the Captain's favour.

KIDD. (to O'PAKE) Then, sir, do your worst—I am Captain Kidd.

O'PAKE. What the devil is that to me?

KIDD. Why, sir, as by your own stupidity, you let out this morning that you were a bailiff in pursuit of me.

O'PAKE. (breaking from POLICEMAN, and seizing pistol from SOSKINS) Stupidity—bailiff, choose your weapon!

SWOSSER. (stopping him) Cornelius, if ever you expect me to help you through the Insolvent Court—— (O'PAKE stops) My dear Captain I'm delighted to see you, my daughter is yours.

KIDD. Pardon me, after the discovery that has just been made.

ELIZA. (aside) And pardon me, as I happened to have heard something this morning of the Captain's moral character.

KIDD. Madam.

ELIZA. I resign the Captain to one who has superior claims upon him, and who has expressed her willingness to beg for his moustache even in the hour of trial. (drawing LOUISA very much astonished towards him)

SOSKINS. (*wildly—losing all self-possession—following her*) It can't be! No, Louisa, your passion for moustachers cannot have led you to such an excess!—say that it is false! (*all look astonished*)

LOUISA. Anthony—can you believe it? As if I would beg for anybody's moustache but yours!

SOSKINS. Then fate, and old Swosser! I defy you both! (*to KIDD*) Sir, I shall be able to give you legal and satisfactory proofs that I never saw Miss Swosser in my life till to-day!

SWOSSER. Where have I heard that voice?

SOSKINS. Louisa, my love, come here! (*LOUISA approaches*) I am about to make a clean bosom.

LOUISA. (*tenderly*) Don't criminate yourself in the eyes of the law, Anthony!

SOSKINS. In the eyes of the law (*looking at SWOSSER*) I am all right—but I wish to be equally so in yours, which are much nicer eyes. Louisa, you love me?

LOUISA. Oh, Anthony, can you doubt it!

SOSKINS. No—no, you have stood by me through danger and suspicion, you have said you would beg for my moustache in the hour of trial.

LOUISA. Yes, Anthony, if you were in trouble and obliged to part with it!

SOSKINS. Such devotion should not go unrewarded! I am not in any serious trouble, Louisa, but if you would like it—(*takes it off and gives it*) there it is, (*to SWOSSER*) and if you have any commands for the office, sir—

SWOSSER. My clerk, Soskins, in moustache!

LOUISA. And was this the extent of your falsehood, Anthony?

SOSKINS. All that was false about me!

LOUISA. I will never part with it.

KIDD. Eliza!

ELIZA. Altamont!

SOSKINS. Louisa!

LOUISA. Anthony! (*comes forward*) If it be true, that a good face needs no whiskers, 'tis true that a good farce needs no tag—yet to good faces they do use good bushes, and good farces prove the better by the help of good tags. What a fix am I in then—that cannot offer you a good tag, which is the very tip and imperial of a piece; to insinuate with you in behalf of a bare-faced farce. My way is to conjure you, and I'll begin with the women—I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to moustaches, to like this play as an advocate for their growing—and I charge you, O men, for the anxiety you have to grow moustaches, and I perceive by your simpering none of you have any objection, that on the hundredth night I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, moustaches that liked me, and whiskers that were dyed not; and I am sure as many as can grow beards, or good whiskers, or sweet moustache, will, for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell!

Curtain.