

THE
LOAN OF A LOVER.

A Vaudeville.

BY

J. R. PLANCHE.

AUTHOR OF

"Reputation," "Follies of a Night," "Grist to the Mill," "Captain of the Watch," "Somebody Else," "A Cabinet Question,"
"The Irish Post," "Spring Gardens," "The Jacobite,"
"The Pride of the Market," "The Jenkinses,"
"Mysterious Lady," &c., &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET NORTH, STRAND
LONDON.

909404

*First performed at the Royal Olympic Theatre,
on Monday, September 29th, 1834.*

Characters.

CAPTAIN AMERSFORT	MR. J. Vining.
PETER SPYK	MR. KEELEY.
SWYZEL	MR. WILLIAM Vining.
DELVE	MR. WYMAN.
GERTRUDE	MADAME VESTRIS.
ERNESTINE ROENDAAL ...	MISS FITZWALTER.

Costumes.

Amersfort.—A military undress.

Peter.—Plain square-cut coat, large buttons, trunk breeches, striped stockings, shoes and buckles, and broad-brimmed hat.

Swyzel.—*Delve*. *Ibid.*

Ernestine.—Modern walking dress.

Gertrude.—Plain but neat peasant's dress. *2nd Dress*: White satin and veil.

Time in Representation—1 hour and 20 minutes.

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The passages between *inverted commas* are sometimes omitted.

THE LOAN OF A LOVER.

*SCENE.—Gardens of a Villa on the Canal, near Utrecht.
The tower of the Cathedral is seen in the distance. In
r. corner of the Garden, overlooking the Canal, is a
Summer House, in the Dutch taste.*

Enter SWYZEL and DELVE, l. 2 e.

Swy. Do as you're bid, and no reflections. Don't you know the mistress is the master?

DEL. Well, but now really, Mynheer Swyzel—to put out the orange-trees before the white frosts are over—is that common sense?

Swy. What have you to do with common sense? Nothing at all, or you would not pretend to have more than your mistress. It is Mamzelle Ernestine's pleasure to turn the orangery into a ball-room, and turned it must be.

DEL. But the trees will die.

Swy. Let 'em die, then—that's their business; yours is to clear the place out, according to order. About it without more words! If she told me to fling all the Schiedam in the cellar into the canal, I should do so, without hesitation.

DEL. You'd fling yourself after it, I'm sure.

Swy. Not when it was mixed with water, you rogue ! or while the baron has money enough to buy more. Come —to work ! to work ! or you'll not get the room ready by midnight.

DEL. O, my poor orange trees—they'll die, every one
of them! Exit DELVE, L.

Swy. Silly fellow, to trouble his head about what does not concern him. If his employers take no care for their own interests, why should he fidget about them? He hasn't the slightest notion of service! Ah! here's Peter Spyk.

Enter PETER, R.

Well, Peter.

PET. Good morning, Master Steward.

SWY. So, you've been to Amsterdam, to buy cattle, I hear?

PET. Ay, and fine beasts they are too, Master Steward: but, talking of beasts, how do you find yourself to-day? You were rather poorly when I left.

SWY. Oh, I'm better, thank you; but I'm not so young as I was thirty years ago—I find that, Peter. Ah! I envy you, you rogue! Three-and-twenty—stout-timbered—light-hearted—and rich, I may say; for old Jan Spyk, your father, left you a pretty round sum, I take it?

PET. Why, it might have been less, and yet worth having, Master Steward.

SWY. Well, and why don't you get a wife now? All the girls in the neighbourhood are pulling caps for you!

PET. Why, I don't know; they do look at me, somehow, but I'm not smitten with anybody in particular. However, I don't wish to prevent them—they may fall in love with me, then I can choose, you know.

SWY. Well, perhaps that's the best way.

PET. Yes, I think so; as Gertrude said to me, the other day, you don't love anybody in particular, Peter, so you can look about you.

SWY. Gertrude—what, our Gertrude? The simpleton that has the run of the house and gardens, by permission of the baron, because she is the orphan daughter of his old bailiff, and who is always so mighty busy, doing nothing at all, by way of earning the living allowed her! Is she your counsellor?

PET. Oh, she and I gossip now and then, when we meet. She's a sort of relation of mine—my brother-in-law's aunt stood godmother to her.

SWY. Well, that is a sort of relation, certainly.

PET. And then, you see, simpleton as she is, she has now and then an idea, and that's the only thing I want—I never have an idea. It's very odd, but I never have what you can really call an idea—of my own, that is—for I'm quick enough if a person only just—and yesterday, now, I saw her but for two or three minutes, and I'll be hanged

if she didn't give me a capital idea! and that's what has brought me here this morning. You've a captain Amersfort staying here, haven't you?

SWY. Oh, yes; one of our young lady's score of lovers—and the best of 'em, too, to my mind; but she's too capricious to make up hers. He's a fine fellow—handsome, clever, gallant—

PET. And landlord of the fine farm of Appledoorn—so Gertrude says.

SWY. Ah! and you want to be his tenant, no doubt?

PET. Why Gertrude thinks—

SWY. Well, she's right there—it's a pretty property; but there are several farmers offering.

PET. So she tells me; but she says that if you were to speak to the captain in my favour—

SWY. Well, she's right there, too. If I were to speak—

PET. And will you?—will you, Master Steward? I've a keg at home of the finest flavour, which I should be too happy—

SWY. Pshaw! pshaw! you know if I do anything it's never with a view to benefit myself, Peter; so send me the keg, if it will serve you, and we'll see what can be done about it.

GERTRUDE. (*without*) Mynheer Swyzel! Mynheer Swyzel!

SWY. Here comes Gertrude.

Enter GERTRUDE, running, R.

GER. Mynheer Swyzel! Mynheer Swyzel!

SWY. Well, don't bawl so—you young baggage! What do you want!

GER. (*out of breath*) You're to go directly—I've been looking for you everywhere, to tell you—there's Peter Spyk!

SWY. To tell me that?—why I know that?

GER. No; to tell you—to tell you—how d'ye do, Peter? Are you very well?

PET. Ay, ay!

SWY. Will you tell me what you mean to tell me?

GER. Law! I'd almost forgotten—I'd run so fast. How well Peter looks this morning, don't he?

SWY. Do let Peter alone ! and tell me who wants me—and what for. Is it the wine for breakfast ?

GER. Yes, that's it ; you've got the keys of the cellar, and the baron wants some of the best Moselle, to give to Captain Amersfort.

" French Air.

GER. Well, but make more haste about it,
Master wants to treat his guest.

SWY. Oh, I'll please him ! never doubt it ;
Of his wine you know the best,
He shall own that down his throttle,
Such has seldom found its way.

GER. (*aside*) Then you'll get him up a bottle
Of what you drink every day. "

Exit SWYZEL, R.

GER. (*aside*) An old rogue, I'm sure he is ; and he always snubs me and scolds me. So does everybody, indeed, except Peter. Peter never snubs me, at any rate ; but that's because he hardly ever speaks to me. Now only look at him at this moment ! there he stands, puffing away with his pipe, and turning up the whites of his eyes. Now, what can he be thinking about ?—that is if he is thinking. Suppose it's about—(*aloud, and taking hold of his arm*)—Peter !

PET. Eh !—Oh ! you're here still, are you ?

GER. (*aside*) How civil ! (*aloud*) Yes, I am here still ; and, if I had kept still, you'd never have known it seemingly. What are you thinking about so deeply ?

PET. Thinking about ? Why, I was thinking about Mother Wynk's tavern, where I breakfasted this morning.

GER. What an interesting subject !

PET. Rather. The old vrow worried my life out with "Why don't you get married, farmer Spyk?"—"Why do you live alone in that old house, like an owl in an ivy-bush ?"—"Why don't you take a wife ? You've got money enough to keep one, and you are your own master : you've only to please yourself."

GER. Well, and haven't I told you so over and over again ?

PET. Well, so you have ; and I do think if I should get the Appeldoorn Farm, I'll sign a lease and a contract the same day.

GER. But, if you don't get the farm, what does it signify?—you might marry all the same for that. You've enough without. You needn't wait—that is, if you like anybody well enough to marry them.

PET. Ah, but then I don't know that I do. Now, who is there, in your opinion, that would suit me.

GER. Oh, I don't know. I dare say, if I were to choose, I could name somebody.

PET. Well, but let's see now. To begin with the neighbourhood:—I know all the girls here, and I am sure I can't say—(*suddenly*)—What d'ye think of Mary Moerdyke, to begin with?

GER. Very bad, to begin with, and much better to have done with as soon as possible. She is the worst tempered girl in all Utrecht, and as tall as the tower yonder—a great, gawky, sulky thing, just like it.

PET. Ah, well, I don't think she would suit me.—But there's her cousin, Judith—she's very good-natured!

GER. Ah, Judith's a pretty girl, if you please, and very good-natured, as you say,—perhaps a little too good-natured.

PET. No, really—humph!—I shouldn't like that. What d'ye say to Anne Stein?

GER. Everybody says she's a great coquette. See her on a Sunday, that's all! or at a dance at the fair! She's always changing her partner.

PET. Oh, if she's always changing her partner—well, they can't say that of little Barbara?

GER. No, because she is lame, and can't dance at all.

PET. That's very true; poor thing, she's lame, so she is. Well, I declare, then, Vrow Wynk herself?

GER. Old enough to be your grandmother.

PET. And Rachel, her daughter?

GER. She's engaged to young Maurice.

PET. The devil! Then I must go farther a field, for there's nobody else that I know of in this place.

GER. Oh dear! oh dear! how blind he is, to be sure.

PET. Ah!—stop! What a fool I am never to have remembered—

GER. Well, who?—what?

PET. Why, that to-morrow will be market-day here,

and that there'll be plenty of pretty girls, from all the villages round about—so I can choose, without the trouble of a journey.

Dutch Air.

PET. To-morrow will be market-day,
The streets all thronged with lasses gay,
And from a crowd so great, no doubt,
Sweethearts enough I may pick out.
In verity, verity, &c.

GER. Be not too bold, for hearts fresh caught
Are ne'er, I'm told to market brought;
The best, they say, are given away,
Nor left to sell on market-day.
In verity, verity, &c.

PET. Well, at any rate, I'll take my chance of to-morrow. But yonder's mamzelle and some of the gentlefolks, so I'll go and hear what the steward has done for me. Good-bye, Gertrude. I say, mind, if you can find me a nice little good-tempered wife, I'll make you a present the day I'm married, and you shall dance at the wedding.

Exit PETER, R, singing "In verity, verity," &c.

GER. Now isn't it provoking? He can think of everybody but me; and unless I were to say to him, plump, "Peter, will you marry me?"—and then, if he should say, "No!" oh, I should die with shame and disappointment. O dear! O dear! how vexatious it is! And it's not only Peter, but nobody seems to think me worth marrying at all—nobody ever says a civil thing to me of any sort! I never had a sweetheart in my life, and I do believe that's the reason. If I only had one to begin with, I shouldn't wonder if they swarmed afterwards.

"A Temple to Friendship."

I don't think I'm ugly!—I'm only just twenty—
I know I should make a most excellent wife;
The girls all around me have lovers in plenty,
But I not a sweetheart can get for my life!
It isn't because I'm not worth a penny,
For lasses as poor I've known dozens to win;
That I should have none and the others so many,
I vow and declare it's a shame and a sin!

Retires up the stage sobbing

Enter ERNESTINE and CAPTAIN AMERSFORT, R. I. E.

AMER. Why, you proposed the ride yourself, Ernestine.

ERN. Perhaps I did ; but I've changed my mind.

AMER. Will you walk, then ?

ERN. It's too hot.

AMER. By the side of the canal—under the trees ?

ERN. By the side of the canal ? I wonder you don't propose that I should tow the passage-boat.

AMER. I shouldn't wonder if *you* proposed something equally extravagant. For myself, I have done—I shall suggest nothing else. Please yourself, if possible, and you will please me.

ERN. Now he's out of humour.

AMER. No, not out of humour—but you are the most capricious creature !

ERN. Well, well, sir, if you are tired of your allegianee, renounce it at once. I have plenty of slaves at my footstool who will serve me with oriental obedience !

AMER. If they really loved you, they would not encourage you in your follies.

ERN. My follies ! How dare you talk to me of my follies, sir ? Hold your tongue ! Hold your tongue, directly ! There's Gertrude, and I want to speak to her. Gertrude ! (*calling.*)

GER. Yes, mamzelle. (*drying her eyes, and advancing.*)

ERN. What's the matter, Gertrude ? you've been crying.

GER. Yes, mamzelle.

ERN. And what for ? Has any one vexed you ?—some faithless swain, perhaps ?

GER. Oh dear no, mamzelle ! I wish it was—but that's not possible ! (*bursts out afresh.*)

ERN. How d'ye mean—not possible, child ?

GER. Because I haven't got a swain of any sort.

ERN. Bless the girl ! What ! no sweetheart, at your age ?

GER. No, mamzelle.

ERN. Then, perhaps that's what you are crying about ?

GER. Yes, mamzelle.

ERN. Silly wench ! you ought to rejoice at it rather ; the men are nothing but plagues, Gertrude. Lovers, indeed ! there's not one worth having !

GER. I—I wish I had one though, just to try. I was just saying to myself it was a shame that some young women should have a score, and others none at all !

AMER. (r.) The girl is right enough there. It is a shame that some young women should have a score, and hold out equal hopes to all.

ERN. The sooner you lessen the number of mine the better, then. I could manage to spare even the gallant Captain Amersfort—and—a capital thought! as you seem so concerned at the unequal division, I'll transfer you to Gertrude.

GER. Law, mamzelle, you don't say so? Will you, really?

AMER. Ernestine!—what folly!

ERN. I'm quite serious. As you have no admirer, Gertrude, and I have so many, I'll give you one of mine.

GER. Oh, but I don't want you to give me one, mamzelle! If you'll only lend me a beau—just to encourage the others.

ERN. Ha! ha! ha! delightful! That's better still!—you hear, sir, I am not to give you up altogether, though you deserve it; I shall only try your obedience! We command you, therefore, on pain of our sovereign displeasure, to pay all proper attentions to our handmaid, Gertrude; you are her beau till further notice.

AMER. Ernestine, are you mad?

ERN. Mad or not, you will obey me, or take the consequences! I won't be charged with folly and extravagance for nothing! (*aside*) Remember, I have promised my father to decide this day in favour of somebody; if you hesitate only, you are excluded from all chance! (*crosses*, r.) Gertrude, I lend you a beau—on your personal security, mind!

GER. Oh, you needn't be afraid, mamzelle—I'll take the greatest care of him—"and, besides—

Dutch Air.

GER. Think not I the heart would keep
I'm content to borrow!
See, if I don't have a heap,
To pay it from to-morrow.
Money, money makes they say—
The job is to get any!
And lovers grow like money may.

ERN. Oh, yes! one fool makes many!"

ERN. (*to AMERSFORT*) One step, and you lose me for ever !

Exit ERNESTINE, R. 1 E.

AMER. (*to himself*) This passes everything ! I am a fool indeed, and love her like a fool, or I would never bear—

GER. Only think ! I've got a beau at last—and such a beau—an officer !—a fine, young, handsome officer !—What'll Peter say to that ?

AMER. And while I thus humour her caprices, she returns to the house to flirt with that puppy, Amstell, or that booby, Blankenberg !

GER. But he takes no more notice of me than Peter himself !

AMER. I will not endure it ! I will follow her, and—

GER. Stop ! stop ! you mustn't run away—you're only lent to me, you know—and if I should lose you, there'll be a pretty business ! (*taking his arm.*)

AMER. (*laughing in despite of himself*) Upon my word, this is too ridiculous ; So, you really look upon me as a oan, do you ?

GER. Yes ; and I don't choose to be left alone. My stars ! Peter could do that.

AMER. Peter !—who's Peter ? I thought you said you hadn't a sweetheart in the world ?

GER. Nor have I.

AMER. Come, come, no fibs ! You've betrayed yourself. This said Peter, isn't he a sweetheart.

GER. No, I don't think he is—at least, I don't know. What do you call a sweetheart—one whom you love, or one who loves you ?

AMER. One who loves you, of course.

GER. Well, then, I'm right—he is not my sweetheart ; but I am his, for I love him dearly !

AMER. What a candid little soul ! And so you really love Peter dearly, though Peter doesn't love you ? But are you sure he doesn't love you ?

GER. I don't believe he ever thought about it.

AMER. Is it possible ! Why you are very pretty !—(*aside*) Upon my soul, she is uncommonly pretty—I wonder I never noticed her before !—(*aloud*) And so Peter has never thought about you ?

GER. No——

"Faut l'oublier." (Music published.)
 I've no money; so, you see,
 Peter never thinks of me—
 I own it to my sorrow;
 Oh, could I grow rich, and he
 Be reduced to poverty,
 What sweet revenge 'twould be for me
 To marry him to-morrow!
 Peter's thought almost a fool—
 You have profited by school—
 Wit from you folks borrow!
 Peter's plain—you handsome, gay;
 But, if you were both to say—
 "Will you have me, Gertrude, pray?"
 I'd marry him to-morrow!

AMER. There's love!—there's devotion! What charming frankness!—what innocent enthusiasm! By Jove, if she wasn't so fond of another, I should be almost tempted—if it were only to punish Ernestine! I—I—(aloud) Confound that Peter!—almost a fool—he must be a downright idiot not to fall head over ears in love with such a sweet, dear, bewitching—(catches her round the waist; and is about to kiss her)

PETER SPYK enters with SWYZEL, R. 2 E.

SWY. I beg your pardon, captain. (both stop short—
 PETER staring at GERTRUDE)

GER. (aside) Oh, lud, there is Peter!

AMER. What the devil do you want?

SWY. Only to introduce Peter Spyk—an honest young farmer—who desires to be your honour's tenant.

AMER. Peter Spyk! What is this *the* Peter?

GER. Yes, that's Peter Spyk; and he wants to rent your farm of Appeldoorn; and I am sure you can't do better than let him have it, for he's as good a farmer, and as honest a young man—

AMER. If you interest yourself for him, my dear Gertrude, that is sufficient. Swyzel, come here. (aside to him) I am much interested about this girl!—I've taken a great fancy to her!

SWY. What, to our Gertrude?—to that poor simple thing? Well, I thought just now you seemed rather—eh? You're a terrible man, captain! What wilt mamzelle say?

AMER. Oh, it's all in pure friendship, I assure you; but come this way, and tell me all you know about her. (*aloud to PETER*) I'll speak to you presently, young man.

AMERSFORT and SWYZEL enter the summerhouse, R. U. E.

GER. Peter, you'll have the farm!

PET. No, shall I, though? Well I thought he said something like it; and because you asked him, too! I say, you and he seem great friends—he'd got his arm round your waist!

GER. Had he? oh, yes, I believe he had.

PET. Well, now I've known you ever since you were that high, and I'm sure I never put my arm round your waist.

GER. No, that you never did! But, then, he's my sweetheart!

PET. Your sweetheart?—yours? What, the captain? Pshaw! you're joking!

GER. Joking!—indeed I'm not joking! What is there so strange in it, pray?

PET. Why, in the first place, he's mamzelle's sweetheart!

GER. Not now.

PET. What, has he left her for you? Why, what can a rich officer like that see in a poor servant girl?

GER. Don't be a brute, Peter! If you can't see anything to like in me, it's no reason that others should not.

PET. Me!—oh, that's a different affair; because you and I, you know, there's not so much difference between us, and—oh, by-the-bye, talking of that—I've been thinking of what you said to me, and I won't wait any longer—not even till to-morrow—I've fixed upon Ann Stein. Her mother was here just now, on some business with old Swyzel, and something was dropped about my having the Appeldoorn farm; and Swyzel says, she gave him a hint that her daughter, Anne, was very fond of me, and that decided me at once.

GER. It did?

PET. Oh, yes; because, where a woman is really fond of one, you know—So directly I've settled with the captain about the farm, I'll post off to widow Stein's, and—

well, what's the matter with you, Gertrude? Why, you are crying!

GER. Nothing—nothing! I wish you may be happy—that's all, Peter.

PET. Thank ye—thank ye! It's very kind of you to cry for joy about me, I'm sure—and I won't forget my promise.

Enter AMERSFORT and SWYZEL, from the summerhouse.

SWY. You can't be in earnest, captain?

AMER. I tell you there it is, in black and white! Put a wafer in that (*giving a note*) and send it immediately to my lawyer's, as directed.

SWY. (*aside*) Two thousand crowns to portion off a wench like that. 'Gad! she won't want a husband long.

Exit SWYZEL, l.

AMER. (*to PETER*) Now for you, farmer. I find there are writing materials in the summerhouse, so we can—

GER. Stop! stop!—one word.

AMER. What is it?

GER. (*leading him apart from PETER*) You are my beau, you know, and you're to do everything I bid you!

AMER. Of course.

GER. Well, then, I bid you refuse the farm to Peter Spyk!

AMER. Refuse!—why I thought you said—

GER. It doesn't signify what I said!—I've changed my mind! I suppose I may do that as well as your fine ladies! You're to obey me!—Mamzelle Ernestine said so; and I don't choose you should let Peter have the farm! (*speaking the last five words loud enough for PETER to hear*)

PET. (*aside*) "Let Peter have the farm!" 'Gad! she's giving me a famous lift with the captain!

AMER. Well, if you don't choose, he shan't have it, certainly; and I'm not sorry, for I don't think he deserves it. And now, listen to me. I mean to help you to a good husband, and, in return, you must assist me in a little plot. I can't stay to tell you now; but meet me in half an hour's time at the sun-dial yonder. May I depend upon you?

GER. That you may.

AMER. Enough! Now, master Peter Spyk, follow me. There's no occasion for writing: we can settle this business in two words.

PET. (*aside*) The farm's mine! (*to GERTRUDE*) I owe you a good turn for this! *Exit, with AMERSFORT, R. U. E.*

GER. Indeed you do. If Anne Stein marries him now, I'm mistaken in the family altogether.

Enter SWYZEL, L.

SWY. I've sent Delve with the note; but I've made up my mind. I'm not a young man, certainly; and I had no idea of changing my situation; but two thousand crowns will suit me as well as anybody in the world, and so here goes—there's nothing like being first in the field. (*aloud*) Gertrude! Gertrude!—come hither, Gertrude; I want to say a word to you in private!

GER. To me, master steward? (*aside*) O dear, now he's going to scold me for something, I'm sure. A cross old patch!

SWY. Come here, I tell you! Nearer—don't be afraid—I'm going to propose something for your good, my dear!

GER. (*aside*) "My dear!" Bless me, how kind he's grown all of a sudden.

SWY. I've known you a long while, Gertrude—from your cradle in fact. I knew your poor dear father and mother, and I always had a great affection for you!

GER. You, Mynheer Swyzel?—I'm sure you nevr showed it, then.

SWY. May be not—may be not! I was afraid of spoiling you, as a child; but now, you know, you are grown up, and very nicely you have grown up—I see it more and more every day—and in short, Gertrude, I've been thinking that, as I am a bachelor, I couldn't do better than marry a good pretty girl like you, whose character and temper I have watched the growth of from an infant.

GER. You—you, Mynheer Swyzel, marry me?

SWY. Why not—why not?—if you have no objection, I'm only fifty-five, and a hale, hearty man for that age. I have saved some money in service, and—

GER. But I haven't a doit in the world!

SWY. Nay ; nay ! you are richer than you think for !

GER. Eh ?

SWY. In charms—in youth and beauty !—

GER. (*aside*) So—so ! here's a real, downright sweet-heart at last !—and old Swyzel, too, of all men in the world ! I shall die of laughing !

SWY. (*aside*) She's silent !—she hesitates ! The two thousand crowns are mine !

"Dutch Air."

SWY. My ears with sweet consentment bless !

GER. (*aside*) The moon must, surely, be about full !

(*aloud*) I don't say no—I don't say yes.

SWY. Alack ! that's rather doubtful !

GER. What proof have I you mean me fair ?

Your sex is of deceit, throughout, full.

SWY. Upon my honour, I declare !

GER. Alack ! that's rather doubtful ! "

GER. (*aside*) Here's Peter a coming back. If I could manage—(*aloud*) Besides, that isn't the way to swear you love a body—you should go down on your knees !

SWY. There !—there, then ! Charming Gertrude, on my knees, I swear eternal love and constancy !

Enter PETER, R. U. E.

PET. Halloo !—why, Mynheer Swyzel, what are you doing there ?

SWY. (*scrambling up*) Confusion ! (*aloud*) I—nothing—only kneeling to—(*aside to GERTRUDE.*) Don't say anything to that fool. Come to my room as soon as you've got rid of him. *Exit SWYZEL, L.*

GER. You here again, Peter ?

PET. Here again !—I believe I am, too ; and just as I went away. Would you believe it ?—Captain Amersfort won't let me the farm, after all !

GER. Dear me !—you don't say so ?

PET. He wouldn't hear a word ; and, to make matters worse, old widow Stein, who saw me talking to him, waited to hear the upshot ; and, when I told her, she as good as gave me to understand that I wasn't match enough for her daughter, and that Anne herself liked Groot, the miller, much better than she did me ! A coquette !—you said

she was a coquette!—and you were quite right. I don't know how it is, but you're always right!—you've got more sense than all of 'em put together; and, for the matter of looks, why there's the captain vows—and, talking of voweding, what was old Swyzel about on his knees? I do believe he was voweding, too!

GER. Between you and me, he was voweding all sorts of love to me!—and he wants me to marry him!

PET. Marry him!—marry old Swyzel!—and will you?

GER. I don't know!—what do you think? Would you like me to marry him, Peter?

PET. Not at all! I don't know how it is, but I can't fancy your marrying anybody—that is, I never thought of *your* marrying anybody; and, now I do think of it, I think—

GER. Well—what?

Enter DELVE, with a note, L.

DEL. Oh, Gertrude, here you are; here's a note for you. It's very particular—they gave me a florin to run all the way!

GER. A note for me?—who is it from?

DEL. The clerk at Van Nickem's, the lawyer. I took a letter there for the captain, and, as his master wasn't at home, the clerk opened it, and wrote this answer to the captain, and then scribbled that for you, and begged me to give you yours first—and so I have; and now I must find the captain.

Exit DELVE, R.

GER. A note for me? Nobody ever wrote to me before; and if they had, it would have been no use, for I can't read written hand. You can, Peter; so pray open it, and let's hear what it's all about.

PET. (*opening and reading*) "Mamzelle." Mamzelle, to you!

GER. Go on—go on.

PET. "I have loved you above all earthly beings!"

GER. Bless us, and save us!

PET. "I dared not disclose my passion; but, believe me, my affection was equal to my silence."

GER. Then it was great indeed!

PET. "I have at length summoned courage to address you, and if the offer of my hand and fortune"—another proposal!—who is the fellow that writes this?

GER. Van Nickem's clerk, Delve told you.

PET. Yes; here's his ugly name, sure enough, at the bottom of it—Simon Snek!

GER. Ah! if I recollect, he's rather a good-looking young man!

PET. Why, you don't mean to—

GER. Surely he's better than old Swyzel!

PET. Well! but what does it all mean? Everybody wants to marry you.

GER. I can't help that—can I? But I shan't be in a hurry; I shall do as you do—look about me; perhaps somebody may offer that I should like better. (*clock strikes*) Hark! that's two o'clock!—and I promised to meet the captain at the sun-dial yonder. Good bye, Peter; and mind, if you can find me a husband that I should like better than any of these, I'll make you a present the day I'm married, and you shall dance at the wedding!

(*goes out singing "In verity," &c., in imitation of PETER'S manner at his exit, R. 1 E.*)

PET. (*stands staring after her, with the note open in his hand*) Well, when she talks of Anne Stein always changing her partner—she's off to meet the captain now; and yet she says to me, "if you can find me a husband I should like better!"—the idea of Gertrude having a husband!—a little girl, that was only a baby the other day, as it seems to me. I wonder if she'd like me better; because if she would—I want a wife myself—and I don't know why I didn't at first. But there goes that cursed captain, running like mad to meet her!—Gad! I begin to feel that I don't like it all! Why can't he keep to his fine ladies, and let the others alone? I don't go and make love to Mamzelle Ernestine, do I? What business has he to talk a pack of stuff to Gertrude, and turn the poor girl's head? He'd better mind what he's about, though—I can tell him that! If he makes her unhappy, I wouldn't be in his shoes for something, for I should break every bone in my own skin!

Enter DELVE, R.

DEL. What's the matter, Master Peter?—you don't look best pleased.

PET. Well, I have been pleased better.

DEL. Anything in that note?

PET. This note!—no. This is the note you brought from Van Nickem's. There's that young rogue, Sneek, wants to marry Gertrude.

DEL. To marry Gertrude! Well, now, do you know, I think he might do worse.

PET. Might do worse?—I believe he might, too!

DEL. Gertrude's by no means ill-looking.

PET. Ill-looking?—she's very pretty.

DEL. Well—yes—I think she is,—and very good tempered.

PET. The best humoured soul in the world!

DEL. Do you know, Master Peter, if I thought there was any chance of our living comfortably together, I shouldn't mind making up to Gertrude myself.

PET. You!—you be hanged!

DEL. Hanged!—what for, I should like to know? I question now if I couldn't afford to marry as well as young Sneek—he doesn't get much out of Nickem's pocket, I'll swear!

PET. Well, you needn't trouble your head about it, because you shan't have her!

DEL. Why, farmer Spyk, what have you to do with it?—suppose I choose, and she chooses, you're neither her father nor her mother. If you put my blood up, I'll go and ask her at once!

PET. And if you do, you'll put my blood up—and then I shall knock you down!

DEL. Knock me down! Donner and blitzen!

PET. Don't provoke me!—I'm getting desperate!—I mean to marry Gertrude myself, if she'll have me; and I'll fight anybody for her, with fists, knives, pistols—anything!

Enter ERNESTINE, R.

ERN. Heyday! heyday! what is all this noise about—and threat of fighting?

DEL. It's farmer Spyk, here, and please you, mamzelle; he threatens to knock me down if I go a-courtin' to Gertrude—and all in an honest way, too.

ERN. To Gertrude! Why how long have you taken this fancy into your head?

PET. Why, not five minutes, mamzelle; and he has the impudence to set himself up against me, who have been in love with her—more than half an hour!

ERN. And where is the fair object of your contention? —what does she say to these sudden passions?

PET. I'm waiting to know what she'll say to mine—but she's a plaguy long time with the captain. He's the only rival I'm afraid of; she seems deuced fond of him—and he raves about her!

ERN. (*alarmed*) He does!—(*recovering herself*) But, of course—I desired him.

PET. You desired him, mamzelle?

ERN. Yes; I commanded him to make love to her!

PET. Well, he wont be broke for disobedience, then—that's all I can say—for he does make love to her most furiously! I caught him myself with his arm round her waist, this morning, and I dare say its round it now, if the truth was known; but I can't see for that beastly holly-bush.

DELVE steals out behind, R.

ERN. Why, where are they, then?

PET. She was to meet him at the sun-dial, and I saw him slinking through the trees yonder; and just now I'm almost certain I caught a glimpse of them at the end of that walk.

ERN. (*aside*) I don't like this account; I'm afraid I've acted very sillily. I repented of the freak almost as soon as I left them; but my pride would not suffer me to return. The girl's pretty—very pretty—and if Amersfort, enraged at my indifference, should, out of mere spite—such things have happened—Oh, dear! I do not like it at all!

PET. There she goes!—there she goes!

ERN. With the captain?

PET. No, by herself—and there's Delve after her as hard as he can scamper! I'll follow—I'll—no, I can't—I can't move—I—I feel very ill—my head spins round like a top! Here comes the captain.

ERN. Amersfort! I am ready to sink—

PET. Don't—don't, mamzelle—for I've no strength to catch you!

Enter AMERSFORT, R. U. E.

AMER. (*aside*) She is here—now for the trial!—(*aloud*) Mademoiselle Ernestine, I came to seek you.

ERN. Indeed, sir; and for what purpose? I thought I had desired you to pay your attentions in another quarter for the present.

AMER. It is in perfect accordance with that desire that I have sought this interview. I am anxious to express my gratitude for the blessing which you have so unexpectedly bestowed upon me.

ERN. What do you mean, sir?

AMER. I mean, Mamzelle Rosendaal, that the heart you treated with so much indifference has been accepted by one of the most lovely and amiable of your sex; and that, in the affection of Gertrude, it has found a balm for all the wounds you had so wantonly inflicted on it!

PET. There!—there! I told you so!

ERN. Upon my word, sir!—and you have the assurance to make this confession to me?

AMER. Why not, Mademoiselle? We are not masters of our affections, and, therefore, I will not reproach you. But can you be surprised that I should be weary of loving one who did not love me? or that, stung to the quick by your contempt, I should be more sensible to the kindness and sympathy of another? Gertrude is lovely!

PET. (L.) She is!—she is!

AMER. The sweetest tempered—the most frank and affectionate of beings!

PET. Too true!—too true!

AMER. The possession of her heart is a blessing monarchs might envy me!

PET. I shall go mad!

AMER. And monarchs have matched with maidens as lowly born, and far less deserving!

ERN. (C.) Enough!—enough, sir!

PET. No, it's not enough! He can't say too much about her!—she hasn't her equal upon earth!

AMER. You are right, farmer; and I thank you for the honest warmth with which you justify my choice.

(crosses and offers his hand)

PET. Your choice! Don't touch me!

AMER. My sweet bride—my affianced wife—Madame Amersfort shall thank you in person!

PET. His wife! Madame Amersfort! Cruel, faithless Gertrude!

AMER. Faithless!—why, did you ever propose to her?

PET. No; but I meant to do so! Oh, dear!

ERN. Your wife?—your wife?—and you really intend to marry this orphan girl?

AMER. I have desired my lawyer to prepare her marriage contract, which shall be signed this evening!

PET. Oh!

ERN. Not in this house, sir! I will not be insulted to that extent! I go this moment to inform my father.

AMER. The Baron Van Rosendaal is already informed, and approves of my intentions!

ERN. Approves!—we shall see, sir!—we shall see!

"Air—" *The Challenge.*"

ERN. Such perfidy was never known—
I joy in its unmasking.

PET. O Gertrude! you've a heart of stone,
To break a heart so true!

AMER. Why, had she promised you?

PET. No, there her falsehood's shown!
So bent was she on jilting me,
She could not wait for asking.

AMER. Well, there with you I must agree.
Such falsehood ne'er was known.

ERN. 'Tis well—'tis well, sir, we shall see,
Such falsehood ne'er was known."

Exit ERNESTINE, R.

AMER. (*aside*) Yes, yes, my fair tyrant, your father is in the plot! I think we have you now! (*aloud*) Well, my good friend, I must say I pity you extremely—you have lost a model of a wife!

PET. Don't—don't!

AMER. But where is she?—where is my adored Gertrude?

Enter GERTRUDE, R., 3 E., dressed as a bride.

AMER. (*makes signs to her not to speak, and points at PETER, who stands in an attitude of comic despair, with his back towards them*) I must hasten to find her—I cannot bear to be an instant from her sight ! Oh, Peter !—Peter ! what a treasure has escaped you !

Exit AMERSFORT, R. 1 E., exchanging signs with GERTRUDE.

PET. (*soliloquising*) Escaped me, as if I was a mad dog !—and it was an escape for Gertrude ! An escape !—and I have let her escape ! Well, well, she won't be Madame Swyzel, nor Madame Sneek ; and that rascal Delve hasn't got her—that's one comfort ! Comfort !—I talk of comfort !—I shall never know comfort again ! Oh, Gertrude !—Gertrude !

GER. (*advancing*) Did you call me, Peter ?

PET. Hah ! what do I see ? There's a dress—a wedding dress ! It is !—it is !

GER. It is—it is a very beautiful dress, as you say, and I don't wonder you start to see me in such a dress ; but, as the bride of a captain, you know——

PET. It is true, then, you are going—going to marry Captain Amersfort ?

GER. Ah ! he has told you, then ? Well, I was in hopes of giving you an agreeable surprise !

PET. An agreeable surprise !

GER. Why, are you not delighted, Peter, at my good fortune ?

PET. Delighted !

GER. Only think—a poor orphan girl like me, whom nobody loved, and nobody cared about——

PET. It isn't true ! I cared about you—I loved you—doated on you !

GER. You, Peter !—you ! Mercy on me ! And why didn't you tell me so then ?

PET. Because I didn't know it myself then ; but I do now, Gertrude—I do now !

GER. Now !—now that it is too late !

PET. But is it—is it too late ? You are not married yet ?

GER. No ; but I have promised ! The contract is or-

dered, and this beautiful dress was bought by the captain on purpose. You would not have me behave so shamefully to one who loves me so dearly ?

PET. But I—I love you dearly !

GER. Ah ! if you had but said so an hour ago ! But you thought of everybody but me !

PET. I know it—I know it ! But then nobody thought of you, and now everybody does ; and it proves to me that you—you are the only girl in the world that I ought to marry ; and if you wont have me, I—I know what I'll do.

GER. Dear me, Peter, what ?

PET. I'll fling myself into the canal !

GER. Nonsense !

PET. You see if I don't, then. I'm not desperate till I take anything in my head ; but then nothing can turn me !

" Air—" *Take care of the corner.*"

PET. I rush to my fate,
And my funeral straight-
Way shall follow my latest transgression !
And in the church-yard
It shall go very hard,
But it meets with your bridal procession !
When my coffin appears,
You will melt into tears,
And your friends in your grief will be sharers.

GER. O yes, not only I,
But my husband will cry—
" Stand out of the way," to the bearers !

PET. Laughed at !" I'll jump over the wall, here, into the canal, before your face !

GER. Indeed you shan't ! Peter, don't be a fool !
(trying to hold him) Oh dear, he will ! Murder !—help !

Enter ERNESTINE, R.

ERN. What's the matter now ?

GER. O, mamzelle, help me to hold Peter—he wants to drown himself !

ERN. He is sillier than ever I supposed him, if he would drown himself for so worthless a person ! I wonder you are not ashamed to look me in the face !

GER. I'm very sorry, mamzelle. I know you only

lent me a lover ; but how can I give him you back if he wont go ?

ERN. Cease your impertinence ! Your simplicity is all affected !

GER. I'm sure mamzelle, if the captain will only consent, I'll give him up with pleasure !

PET. You will ?

ERN. You will ? Hark ye, Gertrude ! Don't think that I care the least about Captain Amersfort—his behaviour has entirely destroyed any little affection I might have had for him ; but, only to vex him in my turn, if you will promise not to marry him——

PET. Do, do !

ERN. I will settle a handsome income on you !

PET. There, there !

ERN. Tell him you do not love him ?

PET. Yes, yes !

ERN. That you love another—anybody !

PET. Yes, me !—I'm ready to be loved !

GER. (*aside*) I see him !—now's the time—(*aloud*) Well, mamzelle, I believe it would be only the truth—I have a great respect for Captain Amersfort, but I certainly do not love him—and perhaps I do love somebody else ! (*looking at PETER.*)

PET. Oh, Gertrude !

Enter AMERSFORT, unseen by them, R. U. E.

GER. But how can I consent to make him wretched ? If there was any chance of your making it up—if I thought you still loved the captain, and would make him happy in the avowal !

ERN. Would that decide you ?

PET. Oh, do, then !—do. (*to ERNESTINE*)

ERN. What would you have me say ?

GER. That you forgive him, and are willing to marry him, if I give him up !

ERN. Well, then, I am willing !

AMER. (*advances, R., and takes her hand*) And so am I !

GER. (L. c.) And so am I .

PET. (L.) Hurrah !

ERN. (r. c.) Captain Amersfort here! This was a plot, then!

AMER. Own that it was to secure your happiness, Ernestine, and you make mine for ever!

ERN. Well, I believe I deserved this lesson,

PET. And I'm sure I did!

GER. You've made your mind up, then, that I shall marry you now?

PET. To be sure I have!

GER. Well, as you say, when you once do take a thing in your head, nothing can turn you, I suppose it's useless to say "No." There is my hand, dear Peter!

AMER. And I suppose I may let him the farm now?

GER. If you please, captain.

AMER. And give him the two thousand crowns that I desired Van Nickem to settle on you as a wedding portion?

PET. Ah! then that's why young Sneek—but no matter!

Finale. (Trio from "The Challenge.")

'She } is mine! She } is mine! Let the stars work their will;
He } He } If our patrons approve, nothing now can go ill;
If the lover we lend must with them make his way,
Or our dealings will end with the devil to pay.

ERN. Should they not befriend us?

GER. I will hope for the best,
If one kind friend will lend us
His hands to move the rest.

Will you as ?

PET. No, do you.

GER., (to audience.) Do you like it?

PET. Say you do.

ALL. Oh happy hour! O joyous night!
Our patrons share in our delight."

She } is mine! She } is mine! Let the stars work their will;
He } He } Since our friends have approved, nothing now can go ill;
The lover we lent has with them made his way,
And their smiles of content all our toils overpay.

Curtain.

AMERSFORT.

R.

ERNESTINE.

GERTRUDE.

PETER.

L.