

P. P.;

OR,

THE MAN AND THE TIGER.

A Farce.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

TOM PARRY, COMEDIAN,

Author of "Damp Beds."

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

1094A

*First performed at the Royal Adelphi Theatre,
on Monday, October 21st, 1833.*

Characters.

MR. SPLASHER	MR. YATES.
MR. STARTLE	MR. W. BENNETT.
MR. SOMERHILL.....	MR. HEMMING.
LIEUT. FUSILE.....	MR. BRAYNE.
BOB BUCKSKIN	MR. JOHN REEVE.

SUSAN STARTLE	MISS ALLEYNE.
CRAPE	MISS DALY.
DUSTER	MISS GRIFFITHS.

Mr., Mrs., and the two Misses Jenkins, }
Mr., Master, and Miss Jones, }
Mr. and Mrs. Tomkins, } *Visitors.*

Servants, Keeper, &c., &c., &c.

COSTUMES OF THE DAY.

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OR,

THE MAN AND THE TIGER.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the House of Mr. Startle.*

Enter CRAPE, R.

CRAPE. How am I to discover this mystery? A chambermaid's curiosity is on the full stretch—something extraordinary is certainly contemplated—an express sent off to Gunter's, the cook—a quadrille band engaged—and the whole house in an uproar. My young lady knows not the cause. "We shall learn soon," says she, with the most provoking calmness. Dear me! what little curiosity some people have: nothing interests them—nothing excites them. I hate such wishy-washy beings. I've been in a twitter ever since seven o'clock this morning—there's not a particle of me that's not in suspense. My little toes have even got the fidgets! If I'm not relieved shortly I shall be in a high fever.

Enter BOB BUCKSKIN, L.

BOB. Fever! Who's got a fever? Have you sent for the 'pothecary?

CRAPE. Where did you spring from? You ought to have tapped at the door before you entered a lady's apartment.

BOB. The door was open, Miss Crape, and there wasn't no 'casion for a *spring*, seeing as how it's no five-barred gate; so I trotted in as you see.

CRAPE. Your language always savours of the stable, Mr. Buckskin,—you don't polish much.

BOB. Don't I though?—look at master's boots.

CRAPE. And now, may I ask—what brought you here this morning, Buckskin? (*aside*) Perhaps he knows what's going on—I'll sift him.

BOB. The old story—"Master's compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is." I have carried the same message so frequently, that it's always running in my head. Yesterday I went to our saddler's to order a new set of harness—my brain was certainly wool gathering—for, when asked by the man what I wanted, I began as usual—"Master's compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is."

CRAPE. Well, we are going to have a great to-do here to-day.

BOB. On what account?

CRAPE. Well asked, Mr. Dissembler! You and your master are both in the secret.

BOB. Are we?

CRAPE. Now, my dear Buckskin, don't tantalize me. There is a secret—an immense secret—and you know it.

BOB. I'm whipped if I do.

CRAPE. Sir, will you look me in the face, and say you don't know what is to take place in this house to-day?

BOB. Do you take me for a conjuror or a fortune-teller? How should I know what's a going to happen?

CRAPE. Come now, be a good fellow, and tell me the truth, and I give you—

BOB. What?

CRAPE. No!—I'll not give—but you may take—

BOB. A kiss?

CRAPE. Oh, fie! I didn't say so.

BOB. It was pretty near it. (*aside*) I don't know no secret—I must invent one. I never boggled long at a lie—here goes a plumper. The old gentleman, Mr. Startle, is going to be married to-day.

CRAPE. What?

BOB. What a long *what*. Ah! it makes you open your eyes a bit.

CRAPE. Oh! this is beautiful news!—I'm so delighted! But are you sure it's true?

BOB. I had it from the parson's own man. It's a real fact.

CRAPE. So, Mr. Startle intended to astonish us. He spends half his time in plotting how he shall surprise people—his greatest delight is to take one unawares; but I'll spoil his sport—everybody shall know it! I'll go first to Mr. Somerhill—no, I'll tell the servants first—no, I'll run to my mistress—no!—

BOB. (*wiping his mouth*) Miss Sally Crape, before you run away, recollect—

CRAPE. Another time, Mr. Bob, I am in a hurry. (*advancing towards him*) I can't stop any longer now.

BOB. No—no more can I. (*catches her in his arms, and kisses her*) Oh! barley-sugar's nothing to it. Sally, excuse my familiarity; but after a kiss, one knows one another so much better. Sally, do you think my master, Mr. Splasher, will ever marry Miss Susan?

CRAPE. It is impossible to say; Mr. Startle rules their destiny—it will be as he pleases—he is imperative, and Miss is obedient.

BOB. And do you think *we* ever shall—Oh! I've a very decent place—good pickings, and pretty prospects. Shall I ever reach the winning post of your affections?

CRAPE. Why, Mr. Bob, you never said so much to me before.

BOB. And I don't know how I came to bring it out now; but I'm rather up in the stirrups to-day. Talking of marriage, you see,—the complaint's infectious.

CRAPE. How long have you been with Mr. Splasher?

BOB. Rising eight years. I was quite a colt then—Mr. Splasher broke me in;—and a very experienced hand he is at the whip. I gave him plenty of practice.

CRAPE. Poor fellow! such harsh usage upon your first entrance into life—

BOB. No! That wasn't the first go off. I had a false start. Mother 'prenticed me to a tailor; but, when they told me I should never be no more than the ninth part of a man, I declared off—no go!

CRAPE. The ninth part of a man! That's a very small proportion!—Then you went to Mr. Splasher?

BOB. Yes; but I found there that I had jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.

CRAPE. How?

BOB. Why, I ain't no man at all now.

CRAPE. What are you then?

BOB. I'm a *Tiger!* Mr. Splasher's tiger! Whenever I misbehave myself, he threatens to send me to the Zoological Society; and, when I says they won't admit me, I'm no tiger,—he gives me the whip that they may know, as he says, my *genus* by the stripes upon my back.

CRAPE. I could not have supposed Mr. Splasher was such a dreadful man! The next time I see him, I shall be ready to scratch his eyes out.

BOB. How that would make him stare! I don't mind a cut or two—I'm game! I never calls out. Well, good bye!—Master's ordered the cab at once! Sally, you've forgotten what you promised me!

CRAPE. You've had it.

BOB. Being the first time, I did it very badly—let me try again.

CRAPE. I won't hear of such a thing.

BOB. Then I'll say no more about it. (*snatches her in his arms, and kisses her*)

Enter STARTLE, R.

START. I've caught you!—So, so! (*crosses to C.*)

CRAPE. Undone, undone! I shall never be able to lecture the servants for their flirtations!

BOB. Hang him!—how he crept upon us! He must go with muffled hoofs!

START. Ha, ha, ha! What! I've surprised you!—how I enjoy this! Ha, ha! This is a lucky omen of success for the intended manœuvres of the day.

BOB. Master's compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is?

START. Who the deuce are you, sir?

BOB. 'Squire Splasher's tiger.

START. 'Squire Splasher's puppy!—there's a crown for your tigership. Deliver my compliments to your master—inform him the lady is in excellent health, and request him not to leave home till I have seen him.

BOB. (*taking the money*) You may consider the thing done and done on both sides.

START. Now, then, vanish. Stop—one word more. If your *tigership* thinks to make prey of all the petticoats in my family, I shall unleash the dogs, and give signal for a Royal Hunt.

BOB. I shall go with a double curb for the future. My bit of horseflesh is at the door, therefore my master will receive your message in about three minutes and thirteen seconds. As to the petticoats, sir, I acknowledge I loves the dear little fillies—bless them! I'm no hypocrite there;—and now I'm off with a canter.

Exit, l.

START. I'll give that jackanapes a surprise before many hours are over. Crape, I'm shocked at your conduct—I thought you a pattern for the whole house;—but I'll look over everything to-day—this indeed shall be a day of joy!

CRAPE. I declare he is quite in raptures!—and the man's been married before! (*aside*) If you would be kind enough, sir, not to mention the little circumstance!—

START. Not a word. Upon consideration you will never do so again, I'll not breathe a syllable of the matter, (*getting close to her*) and thus I seal my promise. (*attempts to kiss her*)

CRAPE. No, sir. Should such a thing become known, it might give offence to one who has an exclusive right to all your salutes.

START. Now, what the devil does she mean by that? If anything should happen to baulk the surprises I mean to give, it will be the death of me. Run, girl, and tell my daughter Susan I must speak with her instantly.

CRAPE. Yes, sir, I'll go. (*looks at him significantly—aside*) Silly old man! what does he want with a second wife?

Exit, r.

START. I don't half like the mysterious manner of that wench! Can she know anything? Impossible! I have been so close in the arrangement of my plans—so sudden in their execution, that I might have defied an Argus. All's right, I am confident, and this day will witness my triumph! A special license is procured—the wedding dinner ordered—friends invited—and this night my daughter will be Mrs. Splasher, without a soul interested knowing one word of the matter. What a surprise for all parties—splendid effect of my unrivalled tactics!—Let me revel in the fond anticipation of my glory!—The delight of Splasher, when he finds that, in a few minutes, he will possess the object he has been sighing months for;—the surprise of my daughter, when she learns she is so soon to become a bride!—the astonishment of the servants;—the wonder—the admiration of all! I am the happiest fellow in the universe!

Enter SOMERHILL, SUSAN, and CRAPE, r.

SUSAN. I can scarcely credit what you have heard, Crape.

CRAPE. Depend upon it, it is true, Miss—you are to have a mamma-in-law.

SOMER. This is most strange! Yet the extraordinary preparations you tell me of, certainly give a face to it.

START. (*down l.*) Susan, I wish'd to—Ha! Mr. Somerhill here!

I am glad to see you; you could not have arrived at a more opportune moment. I expect a few friends to dinner; say, shall I have the additional pleasure of your company?

SOMER. (r.) Sir, you could not have proposed anything more agreeable to me. I shall do myself the honour. Perhaps this little festival is in commemoration of some important event in your life?

START. Sly dog! A very important event is about to take place, sir. I see by your anxious looks, that you are all dying to know what it is—I shall surprise you.

SOMER. Forgive a friend's inquisitiveness; I am certainly—

START. On tenter-hooks, I know. Now, then, prepare for wonder.

CRAPE. (l., aside to SUSAN, l. c.) It's coming, miss; mortify him by not seeming in the least surprised.

START. (c.) Crape, leave off playing with that locket, and pay more attention. Now for it! Susan, my dear, why the devil do you whisper when I'm talking? I thought that female curiosity—

CRAPE. Is oftener prated about than felt.

START. Don't interrupt me when I'm speaking; it would serve you right if I were to keep you longer in suspense; but I'll be merciful! What I have to tell you is—

CRAPE. (carelessly) In confirmation, I suppose, of the rumour of an intended marriage?

START. Rumour of a marriage!

SUSAN. (l. c.) Yes, papa; we know all about it! And I think it very naughty of you to endeavour to keep it a secret so long.

START. Everything known! (drops into a chair) O! I'm a wretched old man!

CRAPE. Did you, sir, for a moment imagine that you could deceive us women? Female curiosity, you know, is—

START. The devil! Oh, for a dose of prussic acid!

SUSAN. I hope my new mamma will be kind to me.

CRAPE. And not snub the servants.

START. (aside) New mamma! What jest are they upon?

SOMER. I hope, sir, that every happiness will attend you in the married state.

START. A hope crosses my brain! (aside) Perhaps they're on a wrong tack. I will know the worst. You think, then, I am about to take a second wife?

SOMER. So report gives it out, sir.

START. Report's an unblushing liar then. Marriage, a second time! No! I've tried it once! Thirty years of it is quite enough in a man's life. It is not my marriage that will take place to-day—but Susan Startle's.

SUSAN. Mine! Oh dear!

SOMER. Miss Susan's! Good heavens!

CRAPE. Young Miss's! Oh, Gemini!

START. There's astonishment! beautiful! I'm a happy old dog again! Oh! delicious!

SUSAN. This is so unexpected, papa!

START. Unexpected happiness is always the most welcome. I've ordered a casket of splendid jewels as a wedding present, baggage!

What a foolish, fond father I am! Somerhill, I shall expect to see you at dinner—(*crosses to R.*) They are absolutely confounded with astonishment—this is delightful! I haven't been so happy since the death of poor dear Mrs. Startle.

Exit, R.

SOMER. (R.) This is surely some horrid dream!

SUSAN. (C.) Alas, Somerhill! there is too sufficient evidence of its reality. You know not my father's eccentricity of disposition. But who is he to whom I am so unceremoniously allotted?

CRAPE. (L.) Oh, miss! It can be no other than Mr. Splasher! And that little rascal, Bob Buckskin, to misinform me!

SOMER. One short month has not yet expired, my dear Susan, since first I had the happiness of being introduced to you. In compliance with your wish, I delayed declaring myself to your father; but I think I should have dared to disobey you, had I known that Mr. Splasher was received in the character of a professed admirer.

SUSAN. Somerhill, he was not so received by me. He has occasionally visited us when he could tear himself from his more interesting companions—his dogs and horses—and that but seldom. My heart is yours, Charles.

SOMER. What, then, have I to fear? In the possession of your love, and backed by a handsome fortune—

CRAPE. My dear sir, you mustn't stop talking here all day. Something must be done.

SOMER. Right, my girl; deeds, and not words, must be our motto. Adieu, dear Susan! (*crosses to L.*) I've no settled plan, but go forth resolutely bent on doing something. I'll call in at St. James's-street, for my friend, Fusile, of the Guards, in case I should be under the necessity of cutting Splasher's throat.

SUSAN. Pray be careful, Charles.

SOMER. Oh, doubt me not! Violence shall be my last resort. Adieu, dearest! Soon will I be with thee again.

Exit, L.

CRAPE. Come, ma'am; we are all in a pretty predicament.

Exeunt, R.

SCENE II.—*Splasher's Lodgings.*

SPLASHER discovered at table, in his dressing gown and slippers; breakfast, &c.

SPLASH. More than half the beef-steak unfinished! the ale untouched; and but one roll consumed! I'm assuredly going into a decline! This infernal London takes away the appetite; and when a man can't make a breakfast, he must be bad indeed! Chained to town in October!—melancholy idea. And for what? To dangle at the elbow of a wench who can't make up her mind to accept the common title of wife, till she has been courted a certain number of weeks—so the old blinker, her father, says. She is certainly rich; and, therefore, carries great weight! But what sacrifices have I not made! Cut Doncaster! Given up three weeks' popping at partridges; and paid forfeit to Tom Bolter, because I couldn't ride

my match ! I must tell the old one it must be P.P.—play or pay ; for next week I have to attend Lord Leatherleg's shooting party, and I wouldn't miss it for a bevy of wives.

Enter Bob, L.

You rascal, where the devil have you been all the morning ?

Bob. To old Startle's, sir.

SPLASH. For what, sirrah ?

Bob. Your compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is.

SPLASH. And who sent you ?

Bob. Oh, I went quite of my own accord ! I carried that message from you about a month back, when Miss Susan hurt her little finger in playing the piano. They were so polite and respectful, that I thought it was but handsome to go as often as I could. It was as good as ten shillings a-week to me.

SPLASH. Now mind, scoundrel, if ever you dare go again, without my orders, it shall be as good as a broken neck to you.

Bob. Beg pardon, sir ! Queer news from the country, sir : Johnson, the trainer, is just come up.

SPLASH. Well, how's the stable ?

Bob. That's very well, sir ; the horses are but middling. (*pulls out a book*) Here's the list. (*reads*) Republican—out of order; Young Master—dead amiss ; the General—has been on his knees ; and Sobriety—has got the staggers.

SPLASH. Awkward that—a prospect of loss. No matter—can't have it every way. My book for the next Newmarket looks well—must win. However, I must make short work with old Startle, for the sake of the three thousand a-year.

Bob. (*still looking over book*) The filly's your only chance now, sir.

SPLASH. (*not heeding him*) She's certainly a fine creature.

Bob. Uncommon clean about the pastern.

SPLASH. There is but one fault—she has hardly spirit enough for me.

Bob. Lord, sir, now I think she's over vicious. Why she kicked our Dick in the throat t'other morning.

SPLASH. The devil she did !

Bob. She's a good-looking animal, for certain ; but she has got some tricks : a nasty way of throwing out her legs ; but once fairly started, she's a prime 'un.

SPLASH. Of whom are you speaking, whelp ?

Bob. Why, here she is, sir—(*pointing to the book*)—Miss Kitty, your three-year old filly, what's a going to run to-day at Newmarket. It's getting on for one, sir ; shall I bring up the cab ?

SPLASH. No ; tell them to saddle Rattler. I didn't ride above thirty miles yesterday—I want a little exercise. When will Johnson call ?

Bob. I told him you would be at Tattersall's, and he'll see you there, sir.

SPLASH. Discharge the tea equipage, and bring my boots.

(*taking off his dressing gown*)

Bob. Oats, the livery-stable keeper, has sent in his bill for the week.

SPLASH. How much?

BOB. Ten pound ten.

SPLASH. Pay him. Ten guineas! These horses draw the purse-strings, and run away with the shiners.

Exit into dressing room, c.

BOB. Any pickings left? (*going to table*) What a voracious appetite the governor has! the best part of two pounds of rump-steak, and a couple of Yarmouth bloaters gone! He beats me hollow—I didn't eat half so much at my breakfast. I'll take a feed while I can get it. (*begins eating*) The steak's tough—the tea's too sweet—and the ale is sour. (*continues eating and drinking while SPLASHER comes from dressing room, unperceived by him*) Master was determined not to waste much. What a twist he has got.

SPLASH. I'll try. (*takes him by the ear*)

BOB. Murder! mercy!

SPLASH. What's your opinion of my twist now?

BOB. It an't altered a bit!—I never felt such a twist! You are tidy strong in the wrist, or you couldn't pull up them four bays as you do.

SPLASH. Well, bear it in mind; and let it act as a caution for the future.

BOB. I'm not likely to forget it for some time to come—my memory won't want the spur.

SPLASH. Once more, get this room cleared; and should any one call, I'm not at home.

BOB. Beg pardon, sir!—I quite forgot,—Mr. Startle requests you'll not go out till he has seen you.

SPLASH. I'm to be seen by no one else then. Hang the old twaddler, what does he want? I must endure the infliction. But, if he comes with any more of his infernal surprises, I shall be tempted to tell him, in the bitterness of chagrin, that I won't marry his daughter, and that would surprise him.

Exit into dressing room.

BOB. I'll order the *slavey* to take these things away. (*pulls the bell*) What a flighty chap my master is—he goes it above a bit—stretches out—he must clap on a martingale, or I'll be hanged if he wont be down some of these odd days—

Enter DUSTER, l.

Clear the course, Duster!—Bring up Mr. Splasher's boots;—and tell Joe, the knife boy, to run down to the stables, and order them to saddle Rattler for the governor, and Virginia for me.

DUST. Virginia for you?

BOB. Yes; she's a quiet thing. I'm vexed to day; and must ride easy.

DUST. You are very particular, Mr. Buckskin.

BOB. I always was—and that makes me admire you so.

DUST. Oh, Mr. Buckskin ! (*as she is looking at him, and simpering, she lets one of the plates fall*)

BOB. There !—I knew if you looked at me, you'd make a slip.—There's eighteen-pence out of your four pounds a-year. (*assists in picking up the pieces*) Never mind! put it down to Mr. Splasher's account—

Exit DUSTER, with tray, &c., L.

(*calling after her*) If that Joe don't go directly, I'll wring his ears for him !—What a pain I've got in the side of my head !—Master's rather too free with his fingers.—If I were lost or stolen, he could recover me by describing my marks.

Re-enter DUSTER, with boots, L.

DUST. Joe's off; and here's the boots.

BOB. There's the real japan ! When Joe looks at them boots, doesn't he envy me, and think of his own insignificance ?

DUST. Joe has a great respect for you, Mr. Robert.

BOB. So has everybody what knows me.

SPLASHER. (*calls from within, c.*) Where's that whelp ?

BOB. He wants Joe !

SPLASHER. (*within*) Buckskin ! bring my boots, you lazy scoundrel !

DUST. It's you he wants.

BOB. I wish I was Rattler this morning—I'm bless'd if I wouldn't fling him ! Duster don't go; I'll be back in an instant !

Exit into dressing room, c.

DUST. That fellow's a genus—he has such a way of doing things.

SPLASHER. (*within*) Clumsy blockhead !—Get out of the room !

Re-enter Bob precipitately from dressing room.

BOB. There !—I told you I should be back in an instant—I trod upon his corn while I was reaching the boot hooks ; and then—

DUST. (L.) And what then ?

BOB. (R.) As quick as lightning I found myself outside the door—Miss Kitty's a fool to him. (*rubbing his back*)

DUST. Missus is in the kitchen.—If I stay any longer, she'll blow me up.

BOB. Then don't go down to be blown up. Duster, if it's your turn out next Sunday, will you take a walk with me in the evening ?—Somebody's coming up stairs !—It must be old Startle ! If he sees me with a petticoat again, he'll be giving the signal for a royal hunt ! Duster, can't you bolt ?

DUST. There an't a bolt in the room.

BOB. Here's a mess !—Get into that arm chair ; and don't stir, for your life, till I tell you ! (*DUSTER sits in the arm chair ; while BOB covers her with his master's dressing gown*)

Enter SOMERHILL and FUSILE, L.

SOMER. (C.) You belong to Mr. Splasher ?

BOB. Yes, sir, but he's out of town—gone down into Oxfordshire ;

and rides a steeple chase, at three o'clock this afternoon, with the Honourable Mr. Riskneck.

FUS. (L., aside to SOMERHILL) He can't be the intended bridegroom then.—You are on a wrong scent.

SOMER. It may be a throw off. When do you expect his return?

BOB. He has ordered his dinner to be ready on Thursday evening, precisely at seven.

FUS. (to SOMERHILL) You are evidently wrong—leave your card, and—

SPLASHER. (within) Where's that scoundrel Buckskin?

SOMER. Who is that calling?

BOB. Some blackguard in the street, sir.

SPLASHER. (within) Brush my coat, sirrah!

SOMER. Is that in the street, also?

BOB. No; that's in the next room. (aside) I shall nab it nicely for letting these chaps up.—Lie snug, Duster! (R.)

SPLASHER. (within) Buckskin!—Buckskin!—I'll certainly break every bone in that rascal's body!—

Enter SPLASHER, from dressing room, in his shirt sleeves—one boot on.

You vagabond!—I'll— Ha!—Mr. Somerhill, where have you been this age?—Very happy to see you. (aside) What the deuce brings him here?

SOMER. I am much indebted to you!—Allow me the honour to introduce to you my friend Lieutenant Fusile, of the Guards.

SPLASH. Glad to see him.—You must excuse this dishabille; but really that fellow of mine is so indolent that—Get me a coat, sir.

Exit BOB, c.

SOMER. Presuming on a very short acquaintance, I have called to ask the assistance of your opinion in the purchase of some horses. Your vast experience and excellent judgment are proverbial; you will therefore favour me with your company at dinner to-day, to talk over the matter, prior to—

SPLASH. Command me at any hour to-morrow, or the next day, or when you please; but to-day I am sorry I cannot accept your invitation.

SOM. (to FUSILE) By all my fears, he refuses me!—it's plain.

FUS. (L., aside to SOMERHILL) You must endeavour to keep him at home.—He's a sporting man.—Think of something.

BOB. (coming forward from c. d.) Here's a coat, sir!

SPLASH. Did not I tell you I would never wear that heavy ill-built coat again?—Bring me another.—Never mind, my dressing gown will do for the present.

BOB. Your dressing gown!—Hadn't you better put on a coat?—You'll catch cold, sir.

SPLASH. Am I to be obeyed?—Fetch the dressing gown—it's close at your hand.

BOB. Your brown frock sits easy, sir.

SPLASH. The dressing gown!

BOB. Or your favourite pea green, sir.

SPLASH. Then I must wait upon myself.—You impudent puppy—I discharge you!—(*snatches at the dressing gown, and discovers Duster*)

DUST. What will my missus say!

She runs off, L.

SOMER. Ha! ha! ha!—You must pardon my laughing, Mr. Splasher; but your servant's denying you is now accounted for—this is far less dangerous amusement than riding a steeple chase with Mr. Riskneck in Oxfordshire.

SPLASH. Laugh away, gentlemen!—But it is not my bird. Do you think I should let her fly?—No, no—I'd have brought her down.—This is some of your work, Mr. Buckskin!

BOB. (*r. aside*) I can guess the consequences.

FUS. You are certainly detected, Mr. Splasher, in a little bit of smuggling.

BOB. (*sheepishly*) Will you put on the dressing gown now, sir?

SPLASH. No; rascal! As you took it to cover your misdoings, continue it for the same purpose;—the housemaid can make a counterpane of it.

SOMER. An excellent present! She'll need additional covering as the cold weather advances.

SPLASH. Cold! Quite a West Indian atmosphere! Cold! I never feel cold. Custom requires that I should wear a coat; but, for comfort and convenience, I'd much rather be without one.

SOMER. (*aside to Fusile*) A scheme has just entered my head, by which I think I can confine him to the house.

SPLASH. (*aside to Bob*) Have the horses at the door in five minutes. I shall find a time to settle accounts with you for this morning's work.

BOB. I expect the balance will be against me.

Crosses behind, and exit, L.

SOMER. I can't help smiling at your pretended indifference to our easterly winds.

SPLASH. East or west, sunshine or snow, it's all the same to me. I'm out all hours and all seasons; tough and weather-beaten—(*stretching out his arm*)—As Shakespeare somewhere says, "Hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve."

FUS. I perceive you have a scratch at the back of your hand; was it done with the foils?

SPLASH. No; that's a bite. My terrier Scamp caught at Rattler's heels; he flung out and broke the dog's leg; and while I was strapping on the splints, the poor fellow mistook my hand for a paunch, that's all.

SOMER. Well, Fusile, I must take a gallop to circulate my blood. I'm below freezing point.

SPLASH. Ha! ha! ha! Shall I lend you a blanket?

SOMER. I should like to put your boasted hardihood to the test.

SPLASH. Make it worth my while.

FUS. I must confess I do not think that Mr. Splasher could go without coat, cloak, or jacket, for an entire day.

SPLASH. Will you back your opinion?

SOMER. I agree with you, Fusile; before nightfall he would be glad to cry, "enough."

SPLASH. What will you lay of that?

SOMER. Five hundred pounds.

SPLASH. Done!

SOMER. Done!

FUS. A fair wager; I'm witness.

SPLASH. When is it to take place?

SOMER. There's no time like the present. You are not to wear any more clothing than you have now on, and all the fires are to be put out. I will not be too hard upon you. An hour or two will be sufficient—say till six o'clock. Fusile shall have the liberty of looking in when he thinks proper; and should you go out, you must leave word whither you have bent your steps.

SPLASH. Then I'm not compelled to leave the house?

SOMER. That's at your own discretion. I suppose you have no particular wish to lounge up Regent Street?

SPLASH. And the bet five hundred pounds?

SOMER. Exactly so.

SPLASH. (*shaking hands with him*) All right. (*aside*) What a flat!

SOMER. I have but one condition more—that you will pledge me your word of honour, not to mention this wager till it be decided.

SPLASH. Oh, with all my heart. You had better give me the money at once, Somerhill.

SOMER. Depend upon it, you're done! I shall have a nurse and a doctor in readiness in case of any serious result.

SPLASH. Pooh! have a hogshead of punch ready. Make it a thousand, and I won't wear a coat for a week.

SOMER. Ha, ha, ha! Well, we'll leave you to your meditations. The wind is getting up, Splasher. We will look in again presently, though we are sure of a cold welcome. (*aside to FUSILE*) Bravo, Fusile; our lucky star prevails—he is too much of a sportsman to give in. We've put a stop to the wedding! Good morning, Splasher! Shall we send you a fan? Good bye. Ha, ha, ha!

Exeunt SOMERHILL and FUSILE, L.

SPLASH. I did not think Somerhill had been such a young one. That five hundred is bagged. To-day my match comes off with Leatherleg at Newmarket—Miss Kitty against Bandit—two miles—a thousand guineas; and, as old Startle won't let me leave town, I'll e'en make myself comfortable at home, and earn the five hundred.

Enter BOB, L.

BOB. The horses are ready, sir.

SPLASH. Send them back, and order dinner at five—I shall keep house to-day.

BOB. That's a queer start. Why, he's got the uneasiness.

SPLASH. Do this, and return in an instant.

BOB. What a precious hard place mine is. I wish he was my tiger just for one day—how I would work him.

Exit BOB, L.

SPLASH. No more clothing than I've on now;—I'm not to wear my other boot then! Well, the odds are in favour of my right leg. Time will hang heavy—I never stayed at home a whole day but once in my life, and that was when I dislocated my shoulder while hunting in Leicestershire.

BOB re-enters, L.

BOB. Dinner will be on the table at five, sir.

SPLASH. Come here; I wish to speak to you, sirrah!

BOB. (*aside*) Now I'm a going to catch it!

SPLASH. As Somerhill says, it is rather cold to-day. Come here, sir. How sleek and warm the rascal looks! I don't see any reason why he should be more comfortable than his master. Take off your coat, sir.

BOB. Lord, sir! I feels the whip quite sufficient without that.

SPLASH. You know what you deserve; but this time you shall escape my anger. Off with your coat!

BOB. I've got the *rheumatiz* so cruel bad in this left wing, sir.

SPLASH. Am I to be obeyed?

BOB. Well! (*aside*) I don't see no whip in the room. (*takes off his coat*) It's uncommon chilly to-day.

SPLASH. Is it? Then I must find a little exercise to warm you. Ha! I have it. (*pulls forward a chair*) Now, sir, leap over this chair.

BOB. It's quite unpossible, sir: I'm too stiff in the legs. I can run a bit on a fair course, but I never was a good hunter.

SPLASH. Then I must teach you. (*goes into dressing room, and brings out a carriage whip*) Now, sir—over!

BOB. I'm booked to break my knees.

SPLASH. Over! (*he flogs BOB, who jumps and nearly knocks down MR. STARTLE, who enters, L.*)

START. Over? What's over? I hope I'm in time.

SPLASH. Glad to see you, old boy.

START. Thankee, thankee—Haven't a moment to spare—been detained longer than I expected at—(*aside*)—No; I won't tell him I've been at the lawyer's—he may suspect. I wish to see you at my house in two hours from this time. You must dine with me to-day.

SPLASH. Can't!

START. You must; or you shall never dine with me again.

SPLASH. Excuse me to-day, and I'll dine with you to-morrow, and every day this week.

START. Now or never.

SPLASH. You have got some cursed surprise or other in the back ground.

START. Do you wish to marry my daughter?

SPLASH. As soon as possible.

START. If I don't see you to-day, you haven't the slightest chance. Will you dine with me.

SPLASH. Well, then—if I must, damme if I don't—I know you will be annoyed when I do come.

START. It will be the most pleasurable moment of my life.—You're late this morning—I see you're not dressed.

SPLASH. (*aside*) As much as I shall be to-day. I suppose it's only a family dinner?

START. A quiet, snug thing. (*aside*) I'll not tell him there's company; his astonishment will be the greater. I expect you; be punctual.

SPLASH. Suppose the rascally tailor had disappointed me, and I haven't a coat.

START. That's a capital joke!—but you must come, if you hadn't a shirt! Splasher, give me your hand;—you are an honest fellow, and I like you. You are a five bottle man, and fit to be the son-in-law of a duke. Susy shall be yours some day. (*aside*) How astonished he'll be by-and-bye. The champagne shall flow to-night, my boy—be punctual! Oh! I'm a happy fellow! Fol de rol, lol, lol.

Exit, singing, l.

SPLASH. The champagne, I think, has been flowing already—the old boy's forgot he hasn't dined. What are you about, huddled up in that corner.

BOB. (L. U. E.) I was only a thinking.

SPLASH. Thinking of what?

BOB. How precious cold it is to be sure.

SPLASH. It's likely to be colder. Now, listen to my orders:—the cab to be ready in two hours—and you to remain as you are. And if you put on a coat or a jacket till the clock has struck six, you must consider yourself no longer in my service.

BOB. Oh! (*groans*)

SPLASH. You've both your boots on! Take one off, sir.

BOB. It will give me the gout, sir.

SPLASH. No hesitation—off with the left boot!

BOB. Then the boot on the *near* side is to go *off*, sir—Oh! (Bob reluctantly takes off his boot)

SPLASH. I can't afford to lose my five hundred for a whim of old Startle's. But go I must—and yet to go without a coat! Give in then! No!—rather than that, I would present myself before the astonished family *in cuerpo*.

Exit, c.

BOB. I'm hanged if I don't think the governor's losing the little sense he has!—First he will go out—then he wont—then he will,—then I'm to remain all day in this airy situation! I'm all of a cold shiver! I've got a cigar in my pocket—there's a bottle of brandy on the sideboard, and I'm blessed if I don't stick to the kitchen fire. (*gets the brandy and drinks*) What a miserable life I do lead!—But it won't do to kick over the traces till I'm independent. Who would be a Tiger?

Exit BOB, l.

SCENE III.—*Startle's Drawing Room—folding doors.*

Enter SUSAN and CRAPE, R.

SUSAN. Somerhill not yet returned—the lawyers in the house—visitors arriving—my father declaring I am to be a bride—and I am yet ignorant of the name of the man to whom I am assigned.

CRAPE. Remain no longer in doubt, miss;—take my word for it, Mr. Splasher is to be the happy man.

SUSAN. Never, Crape; my father knows me not. My obedience has been mistaken for a want of proper spirit; but he shall find, where my happiness is at stake, I am not the passive creature he takes me for.

CRAPE. Do let me kiss you, miss;—it does me good to hear a woman stick up for her rights!

SUSAN. You are a good girl, Crape.

CRAPE. It breaks my heart to think how ill we poor women are used.

Enter STARTLE, L.

STAR. Well, my darling, your poor fond parent is filled with joy at the thoughts of your approaching happiness.

CRAPE. Wretchedness, you ought to have said, sir.

START. How dare you speak, Mrs. Pert? She will be the happiest woman in England! Have I not done everything to make her comfortable?—provided a proper husband for her? Not one of your white-faced, taper-waisted dissipated London dandies, but a noble country gentleman, and as hale and jolly a fellow as any in the three kingdoms.

SUSAN. (c.) In the absence of Somerhill, I know not how to act.

CRAPE. (*aside to Susan*) Why don't you speak, miss?—Where's your spirit now? I wish we could change places for five minutes, I'd pay him off in his own coin, and astonish him a little.

START. I knew I was right—she is quite overcome with the prospect of her good fortune. (*a loud knock heard at the door, L.*) Oh! that's the happy dog!—that's the jovial bridegroom! I know his knock. Now then girl, prepare for a surprise!—prepare to receive your husband,—Mr. Splasher.

Enter SOMERHILL, L.

Mr. Somerhill!—(*sulkily*) I'm disappointed! I scarcely thought to have had the pleasure of seeing you till dinner time.

SOMER. Ever anxious in all that concerns the welfare of Miss Susan, I wished to be an early witness of her happiness. (*crosses to c.*)

START. I hate intrusion. (*aside*) If anything else crosses me before dinner-time, I shall be upset for the day.

SUSAN. (*aside, and eagerly*) What's to be done, Somerhill?

SOMER. (*aside to her*) Fear not, dearest! Splasher will not be here—he knows not of the marriage. (*a loud knock*)

START. Here's Splasher at last!

Enter SERVANT, L.

SER. Mr., Mrs., and the Miss Jenkinses.

START. The whole tribe!—Shew them up.

Exit SERVANT, L.

Dear me; Splasher's more than half an hour behind his time. I'm getting uncommonly uncomfortable!

Enter MR., MRS., and the two MISSES JENKINS, L.

(introducing them) Mr., Mrs., and the Misses Jenkins,—my daughter. Mr., Mrs., and the Misses Jenkins,—Mr. Somerhill.

MR. AND MRS. JENKINS. Delighted to see you. Every happiness attend you!

MISS JENKINS. How handsome you look, dear! What sweet jewels! (another knock, L.)

START. Better late than never! I was becoming very uneasy; but now all doubts are at an end.

Enter SERVANT, L.

SER. Mr., Master, and Miss Jones.

START. Damn the Joneses! Send them up! *Exit SERVANT, L.* If Splasher disappoint me, all my well-contrived schemes will be blown into air, and I shall be covered with shame.

Enter MR., MASTER, and MISS JONES, L.

Ha! Jones, glad to see you! You know the Jenkins—make yourselves at home.

JONES. How charming the bride looks! (to SOMERHILL) You are about to take possession of an inestimable jewel.

START. You mistake, friend Jones; that is not the bridegroom. Mr. Splasher will be here in a minute—(aside) at least I hope so. (another knock, L.) This is he, and all will yet go smoothly.

Enter SERVANT, L.

SER. Mr. and Mrs. Tomkins.

Exit SERVANT, L.

START. My brain begins to turn!—some dreadful disappointment awaits me. I ought to have dropped a hint to him that it was his wedding day. Jones, be the master of the ceremonies, and introduce these people to one another.

Enter MR. and MRS. TOMKINS, L.

As they come to feast, they may as well set to at once;—while they are filling their mouths, they'll not have time to ask questions. Jones, there's a cold collation in the next room—bring it forward. Now, Jones, see that my friends want nothing. (*The SERVANTS open the folding doors. c., and bring forward a table ready set; the VISITORS retire up*) My pulse is at 120! (takes out his watch) Five-and-forty minutes after the time appointed. I'm an unlucky fellow!—a victim to my own contrivances. I shall be laughed at—(*an outcry*)

and loud laughter heard in the street, L.) What noise is that ! I'm in such a trepidation, that I shake like an aspen leaf ! Some calamity is certainly hanging over me ! (*a tremendous knock is heard, followed by a loud cheer, L.*) What suspense ?—Is it good or bad news ?

Enter SERVANT, L., laughing, half-aside.

SER. Mr. Splasher, sir.

START. I am saved !

SUSAN. I'm lost !

SOMER. Confusion ! this is indeed unexpected.

START. (*to SERVANT*) How dare you giggle here, sir ? What was the meaning of that outcry below ?

SER. Why, sir, Mr. Splasher drove up with a mob at his heels ;—they all laughed ;—then he gave them money ;—then they cheered !

START. Generous fellow !—Shew him up.

Exit SERVANT, L.

Now, my friends, you shall see my son-in-law ! You may judge what a father I am in providing Susan with such a husband. (*aside*) How astonished he'll be when I present him with a wife !—What a surprise !

Enter SPLASHER, L., in his shirt sleeves; a boot on his right foot, and a red slipper on his left; several large spots of mud upon his shirt and waistcoat.

SPLASH. Well, how are you ?

START. I'm petrified ! (*the rest laugh loudly*)

SPLASH. I'm rather out of condition.—Ha ! Somerhill ! didn't expect to meet you here. You see it's all right.

START. Will somebody have the kindness to wake me out of this disagreeable dream ?

SPLASH. I will ! (*cuts at him with his handkerchief*) I told you you would be annoyed if I came.

SOMER. But, Mr. Splasher, how was it you robbed the street of so large a portion of its mud ?

SPLASH. Upon starting, a wide-mouthed griffin set up a horse laugh ! I twisted the whip-cord round him in an instant—he replied with a well-directed charge of mud—a mob collected—I cut right and left—cracked the whip—st—st—st—old Prancer understood it, and spanked through them amidst a volley of mud as thick as a hailstorm.

START. But old Prancer ought to have understood better than to stop at this house. Mr. Anti-Mania, the mad doctor, lives at the other end of the street.

SPLASH. Come, no sulks, old one ! You've often surprised *me* ; and now I astonish *you*. Give and take is fair play all the world over.

START. All my pleasant prospects are at an end. (*aside*) I am a broken-hearted old gentleman—(*an uproar is again heard in the street, L.*) What disturbance is that ? Not another surprise, I hope.

JONES (*looking through the window, L.*) Why, I declare there are two men a fighting—a little one and a big one.

SPLASH. (*going up*) An even fifty upon the little one.

JONES. They press upon him—now he fights through them—now he runs over here!

SPLASH. Runs, does he? Then it's Rockingham to a donkey against him. (*voices heard disputing without, L.*)

SERVANTS. (*without*) You can't come in here.

BOB. (*without*) Can't I though? I'll make my way anywhere.

Enter BOB, L., in his shirt sleeves, and an old shawl thrown over his shoulders—his nose bleeding.

SPLASH. What the devil do you want?

BOB. Glorious news, sir! Miss Kitty's whopp'd the Bandit!

SPLASH. Bravo!

START. What an Amazon!

BOB. The carrier pigeon, as you ordered, is just arrived at Fantail's with the news.

SPLASH. Twenty guineas for the intelligence, Buckskin! We'll drink Miss Kitty's health in pint bumpers! (*fills out wine for himself and BUCKSKIN*) Now, Bob!—three cheers—huzza!

BOB. Huzza! huzza! huzza!

SPLASH. I make free you see, Startle! Can't stop to talk to you now—company must excuse me—I've another match in view. Pen, ink, and paper there! Two thousand guineas to-day!—Miss Kitty for ever!

Exit, R.

START. Another match in view! Miss Kitty for ever! Then he means to decline my daughter. I'll be revenged for this public insult. How dare you, sirrah, come into my house without a coat?

BOB. (*L.*) You must put that question to master—it was his orders. I saddled on this shawl just for decency's sake; but when I got out, how I was chevied! The boys cried out "mad dog!" and when I tripped up one of them, I caught such a rum one over the nose.

SOMER. (*R.*) Mr. Splasher's conduct looks more like insanity than anything else.

BOB. Wind me, if I don't think he's cracked in the cocoa-nut. (*points to his head*)

START. You are right, Mr. Somerhill! such atrocious behaviour must be the effect of delirium.

BOB. It were only this morning I said the same thing; he's been coming such queer pranks lately: he wanted me to jump over the chairs to-day.

SOMER. Did he not receive a bite from a dog?

BOB. Yes, from Scamp, our terrier. I see it as plain as the distance post—he's got the *Phoby*!

SOMER. It's a clear case of Hydrophobia! (*Mrs. JENKINS shrieks, and faints*)

START. He must be secured at once! I'll send to the doctor's at the end of the street.

BOB. You had better; for when he once breaks out, he lays it in—above a bit.

SOMER. Ladies, pray retire to the dining room—the gentlemen will attend you.

START. Take care of Susan, Mr. Somerhill. (*aside*) What a disagreeable thing it is to be surprised!

SPLASHER. (*without*) Buckskin! order post horses—I'm off to-night for Barkshire. *Startle and Visitors run off in alarm, c.*

SOMER. You stay, Buckskin, and watch him. Should he become outrageous, we will be near to assist you. Susan, depend on't, before supper time, I shall have your father's consent to wed you.

Exeunt SOMERHILL and SUSAN, c.

BOB. A pretty set of cowards they are to run away, and leave me to manage him. That's capital wine! I'll drink Miss Kitty's health again. Here he comes—I feel a little nervous.

Enter SPLASHER—a letter in his hand, r.

SPLASH. See this letter is in time for the post—Whiffler will have it on Thursday, and the thing will be concluded. This is an elegant dinner dress! What must old Startle and his friends take me for?

BOB. (*at the back*) An unhappy lunatic.

SPLASH. It's very ridiculous! But when they know all—

BOB. They do!

SPLASH. They'll laugh and enjoy the joke. Ha! ha! ha!

BOB. A pretty joke! There's a set of grinders. How horribly he squints too!

SPLASH. I'm as thirsty as if I had been at a fox-hunt. Bob, give me a tumbler of wine. Let me see—Whiffler is to carry fourteen pounds extra—

BOB. He seems pretty quiet now—I'll try him. If it's the *phoby*, he'll kick at the sight of water. (*SPLASHER walks about in meditation, while BOB fills a glass with water*)

SPLASH. Where's the wine?

BOB. Here it is. (*BOB advances with the glass cautiously, and in great fear*) He foams at the mouth already.

SPLASH. What's this? Water! Ugh! You know I detest water, you puppy. (*he throws the water in Bob's face*)

BOB. Help! murder!

Enter two SERVANTS, with a KEEPER and ASSISTANTS, L.

SER. There he is; secure him.

SPLASH. That's easier said than done.

SPLASHER trips up the heels of one, and knocks another down.

What, four to one? Then I must try my speed. Forward! Yoicks—Soho!

Exit SPLASHER, followed by SERVANTS, L.

BOB. Secure him, and send for his mother. How very thirsty I am. (*drinks wine*) Shall I get my twenty guineas? Is a man's promise, when he's got the *phoby*, worth anything? Now I'll think of that over a glass of wine. (*sits at the table, and drinks*)

Who is to pay me for a broken nose? How foolish of the governor to run mad! At this particular moment too, when Kitty's done the trick. (*drinks*) What a shocking disorder! I wonder whether they'll smother him between two feather beds? (*drinks*) It's lucky he didn't bite me, for he was always very snappish. (*drinks*) Well, a man can't die but once; then I won't whine any longer—but I'll attack the brandy. (*he drinks from the bottle*) How very weak I get in the legs; and I can't look straight forward for the life of me. Everything doubles in the room; the table turns, and doubles. What paper is that? (*takes the letter from the table*) Yes, it's a double letter. I'm tired of this: I shall go out, and take a turn. (*he reels*) How uneven the floors are in these old houses. My throat's parched; so is the bottle—quite dry. Where's my head gone to? What a dreadful noise there is—Who calls Bob Buckskin? I'm a-coming. (*he reels, and falls upon the ground*)

SPLASH. (*without*) Bob Buckskin!

BOB. Coming!

SPLASH. (*without*) Make haste, and assist the poor devil, your master, Bob.

BOB. Coming!

Enter SPLASHER, l., with his hands tied behind him, and a white nightcap on his head.

SPLASH. So I'm seized with hydrophobia! They have left me for a few minutes to compose myself.

BOB. (*asleep*) Beware of mad dogs.

SPLASH. That's an unnecessary caution to me. This is some scheme of old Startle's, and be cursed to him. Bob, I say—(*stumbles over him*) Upon the floor, drunk and asleep! (*he kicks him*) Rise, rascal!

BOB. Who calls me? (*seeing SPLASHER*) What a frightful spectacle!

SPLASH. What brought you upon the ground, sir?

BOB. A swimming in the head. I've been subject to fits from the cradle.

SPLASH. Get up, you drunken dog, and slacken these curbs.

BOB. Give me your hand, and help me up. (*laughter and noise of merriment*)

SPLASH. They're enjoying themselves below—making merry at my expense; but I'll be even with them. (*a clock strikes six*) Six o'clock—Huzza! Somerhill's five hundred pounds are gone! Huzza! Shout, you scoundrel!

BOB. I shan't shout! When you was in your senses you'd never let me rest. Now you're mad, you ought to be quiet.

SPLASH. Mad!—If my arms were free—Remember, sir, I owe you something.

BOB. You do—twenty guineas, and half-a-year's wages; and as I don't choose to serve a man with the *phoby*, you'll please to stick three months' notice in the bill. (*the band below strikes up a quadrille*)

SPLASH. Oh! if dancing is the order of the day, here goes—

(SPLASHER starts off to music—BOB endeavours to follow him; while they are dancing—)

Enter SOMERHILL, STARTLE, FUSILE, SUSAN, VISITORS, and SERVANTS with candles, c.

SPLASH. Somerhill, I've won your five hundred.

SOMER. Dearly won it, and you shall have it.

SPLASH. Thankee—thankee. You're a man of honour—give me your hand—I can't take it just yet!

SOMER. Give Mr. Splasher his liberty. (to the KEEPER, who releases SPLASHER)

SPLASH. Now I'll be even with old Startle. (starts) Ha! who is that little wretched old man, with an elephant on his head? Remove the mountain. (he knocks off STARTLE's wig)

START. Pinion his arms again.

SPLASH. Look at the moon;—what does she say? Listen! All the world's insane; and each man thinks his neighbour madder than himself. Why not trip up old Atlas by the heels, and send the globe spinning? (he trips up STARTLE) How are you? My name is Whirlgig. Give me a bowl of lighted sulphur.

BOB. (upon the floor) Give me a glass of soda water.

START. What an escape you've had, Susan. By this time, you would have been his wife! Mr. Somerhill, she shall be yours to-morrow morning; and I'll never attempt to surprise any one again.

SOMER. I know not how to thank you! Mr. Splasher's case, I fear, is hopeless. The money I have lost to him I'll pay over to a trustee.

SPLASH. No you wont, while I'm alive to receive it. I am as sane, though not quite so deep as you. (SOMERHILL gives him notes) I see through it. I've been cleverly had—a sprat to catch a whale. I ought to call you out, Mr. Somerhill.

FUS. Shall I make arrangements?

SPLASH. I'll not trouble you, Captain. A letter's off to Dick Whiffler, accepting his challenge to ride a match for a thousand. Now, as it is P. P., I should not like to run the risk of paying forfeit. You've all done the knowing one. (they laugh) Well, forget and forgive—that's the best way. But I have certainly been very ill used. I appeal to you—(to the audience)—May I not hope for better treatment here?—Your hands decide it—I ask a laugh for the Man—

BOB. And a roar for the Tiger.

Curtain.