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THE LADIES' CLUB,

A Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

MARK LEMON,

*Author of Domestic Economy, Jack in the Green, Self Accusation,
Love and Charity, My Man Tom, M. P., Gwynneth Vaughan,
Grey Doublet, The Ancestress, Hearts are Trumps,
Grandfather Whitehead, Mind your own
Business, &c., &c., &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

909470

First Performed at the Royal Olympic Theatre.

CHARACTERS.

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| <i>Major Mortar</i> (of the U.S., &c.) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. BROOKS. |
| <i>Hon. Mr. Derby</i> (of Boodle's, &c.) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. C. BAKER. |
| <i>Mr. Twankay</i> (of the Oriental) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. TURNOUR. |
| <i>Mr. Bookly</i> (of the Athenæum) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | { MR. PITT. " HOLL. |
| <i>Captain Fitzsmyth</i> (of the Guards) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. ROSS. |
| <i>Sir Charles Lavender</i> (of Crockford's) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. HALFORD. |
| <i>Flammer</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. G. WILD. |
| <i>Fricandeau</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. M. BARNETT. |
| <i>Gentlemen at Club House</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | { MESSRS. BECKET, " YOUNGE AND " SPENCER. |
| <i>Servants at ditto</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MESSRS. HARRY and FLEMING. |
| <i>Mrs. Fitzsmyth</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | { MRS. GLOVER. " STIRLING. |
| <i>Mrs. Major Mortar</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MISS ATKINSON. |
| <i>Hon. Mrs. Derby</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MISS FITZWALTER. |
| <i>Mrs. Twankay</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MR. GARRICK. |
| <i>Mrs. Bookly</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MISS TREBLE. |
| <i>Susan</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MISS BARTLETT. |
| <i>Ladies at the Club House</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MISSES CONNELL, DAVIS, &c. |
| <i>Servants at ditto</i> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | MES. ALCROFT and MISS SMITH. |

COSTUMES.

Major Mortar.—1st dress: Morning gown, cord breeches, gaiters, and white wig. 2nd dress: Blue dress coat, hat, and stick.

Derby.—Green Newmarket coat, buckskin breeches, whip, hat, red wig and whiskers.

Bookly.—Suit of black and whiskers.

Fitzsmyth.—Dress of the Guards.

Twankay.—Brown dress coat, vest, speckled trowsers, brown spencer, hat, and grey wig.

Flammer.—Grey livery coat buttoned close to the throat, epaulette and tassel, buff breeches, silk stockings, and shoes.

Fricandeau.—Modern suit, and white wig. A la Morbleu.

Gentlemen at Club.—Modern dresses.

Servants.—White liveries, and white wigs.

Mrs. Fitzsimmyth.—1st dress: Black velvet satin mantilla, bonnet, &c. 2nd: Full dress.

Mrs. Mortar.—1st dress: Morning dress cap, &c. 2nd: Gentlemen's. 3rd: Full dress.

Mrs. Derby.—1st dress: Morning dress, bonnet. 2nd: Gentlemen's. 3rd: Full dress.

Mrs. Bookly.—1st dress: Morning dress, bonnet, white muslin mantilla.
2nd: Full dress.

Mrs. Twankay.—1st dress: Morning dress, bonnet, à la Queen of Scots, bird of Paradise. 2nd: Full dress.

Susan.—Servant's modern dress.

Ladies.—Full dresses.

THE LADIES' CLUB.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—*Breakfast Parlour in Major Mortar's house—the table laid out in the first style of elegance—a piano on one side.*

SUSAN, arranging the room.

SUSAN. There! every thing's ready at last! and a very good morning's work I've had of it. (*sits*) This is a world of woe, as the song says—work, work, nothing but work. I'd give 'em up, place and life together, if I hadn't the invigorating hope of some day being a lady's maid. Oh, here's Mr. Flammer, master's own man, a very nice fellow, if he wouldn't tell so many fibs.

Enter FLAMMER, R.

FLAM. Every thing in order, Susan?

SUS. Yes, Mr. Flammer! master dressed?

FLAM. All but his wig; he's what he calls cooling his upper works out of the window.

SUS. Master has some odd tastes, surely. Don't you think he's a little queer here, Mr. Flammer?

FLAM. Yes, Susan, he is, poor old soul! not to be wondered at—had the top of his skull blown off by a cannon ball—carried away part of the brain, and the deficiency was supplied by a bread poultice. (*aside*). Buzz.

SUS. Gracious me! I thought he was a little soft to

marry a young wife like missus—a poor country curate's daughter, that's always a squalling and thumping that grand piano.

FLAM. Master likes it; puts him in mind of a grand invention of his.

SUS. What was that, Mr. Flammer?

FLAM. He was once Governor of the Foundling, and rendered a whole ward of squalling babbies musical, by inserting harmonised whistles into their dear little throats.

SUS. La! I never heard of that.

FLAM. No; it's abandoned now; one little boy swallowed a G-sharp, and whistled himself into a consumption. (*aside*) Buzz.

SUS. La, how horrible! to take a poor little innocent off in that way; I wonder it don't prey upon his mind!

FLAM. It did, so he resolved to do penance; marry, and supply the deficiency. (*Mrs. MAJOR MORTAR sings without*) Here's missus descending the chromatic scale and the stairs at the same time. Fly, Susan! (*kisses her*) I shall take tea at six, Susan.

SUS. Very well, Mr. Flammer, I'll be punctual.

Exit, L.

Enter MRS. MAJOR MORTAR, R.

MRS. M. Ta, ra, la, la! Ah, Flammer! is the Major up?

FLAM. Yes, Madam, up stairs.

MRS. M. At what hour did your master return, Flammer?

FLAM. Return, Madam? seven minutes and a half past one (*aside*) or four.

MRS. M. Impossible! I did not retire to my chamber till after that hour.

FLAM. True, Madam; but the Major pulled off his boots at the bottom of the stairs, because he would not disturb you. (*aside*) Buzz.

MRS. M. I wish he would not be quite so considerate. Thanks to the club, I've so little of his company that I could willingly pardon an occasional interruption. Any letters?

FLAM. (*goes to side-table*) Yes, Madam (*hands them*), three triangles, two squares, and one oblong, Madam.

MRS. M. (*sits, and opens letters and notes*) A learned description, Flammer. By the bye, I think you are musical?

FLAM. A pardonable fault, I hope, Madam. My father was a carpenter, who taught me his trade and the fiddle; but preferring music to mahogany, I cut the bench and took to the stage, which in turn cut me. True!

MRS. M. The stage? what situation did you occupy?

FLAM. I was principal accountant to the theatre. (*aside*) I delivered the bills.

MRS. M. (*opens letters*) Oh, Welter, the shoemaker, has sent for his account. Tell him to be here on Thursday, to receive his money.

FLAM. Receive his money, Madam? Why, he has not called here above six times, and I've not arrived at lie inconvenient.

MRS. M. Inconvenient?

FLAM. If I shall not be impertinent, I'll explain. In great families, where bills are more plentiful than means to discharge them, it is the duty of a good servant to supply prompt lies instead of prompt payment!

MRS. M. Well?

FLAM. They are divided into "not at homes," "much engaged's," "call in a week," "inconvenient," "out of town," "gone to the continent," "shan't pay till next year," and "not likely!"

MRS. M. I'm sorry that a good servant should be called upon to exercise such a bad habit; but your ingenuity will not be taxed with us. Flammer, you can leave the room.

FLAM. Yes, Madam! (*aside*) This comes of being brought up in the country. She'd ruin a servant of any pretensions.

Exit L.

MRS. M. (*opens notes*) An invitation to a *soiree musicale*, from Mrs. Derby!—delightful! What with the gout and those odious clubs, the Major would leave me to die with *ennui*, which I certainly should do, were it not for music—dear enchanting music! [SONG INTRODUCED.]

Enter MAJOR MORTAR, R.

MAJOR. At it again! If any man deserved the halbert, it was the inventor of pianofortes. (*takes up newspaper*)

MRS. M. Good morning, Major.

MAJ. Good morning, my dear, good morning.

MRS. M. (*pours out coffee*) I hope you spent a pleasant day yesterday?

MAJ. Yes, my dear—very—very—

MRS. M. I concluded so, from the late hour at which you returned.

MAJ. Late! was I late? really, we had such an agreeable discussion at the club—

MRS. M. The club! there it is—

MAJ. (*peeping round the paper*) Hallo! that random shot has hit a mark I never intended.

MRS. M. What can you find there to occupy your time so entirely? There must be some secret charm of which the world in general is in ignorance.

MAJ. My dear, I notice that the moment I take up the paper and get into an interesting paragraph, you invariably begin to talk to me. I am quiet at the club.

MRS. M. Major Mortar, I never have an opportunity of selecting the time for my remarks, and I am obliged to speak to you when and how I can.

MAJ. (*reading aloud*) "The honourable member concluded amidst great uproar."

MRS. M. Major! Major! you are most provoking!

MAJ. My dear madam, what have I done now? I was but reading the end of Mr. Brotherton's speech.

MRS. M. When you should have been listening to the conclusion of mine.

MAJ. Franklin was perfectly right when he said "that matrimony was like a bagful of snakes, with only one eel in it." I was a fool to dip twice.

MRS. M. (*a knock*) Come in.

Enter FRICANDEAU, L. with bill of fare—he bows.

MRS. M. Well, Fricandeau, (*takes bill*) this is almost an useless document in our family.

FRICANDEAU. Oui, Madam, I almost forget how to make ze dish.

MRS. M. Poor fellow, I pity you. Do you dine at home to-day, Major?

MAJ. Dine? my dear, I am compelled to deny myself that pleasure; I've promised to dine out.

MRS. M. Indeed! I know of no invitation.

MAJ. Why, no; but I'm engaged to meet two or three members of the club.

MRS. M. The club again !

FRICAN. Like Hercules, he nevare wisout his club—curse de club !

MRS. M. Oh, Major, Major, that club will break my heart !

MAJ. Nay, my dear, I promise you that to-morrow I'll not leave the house ; but to-day I am positively obliged to go—I—I am really.

MRS. M. Heigho ! a roast chicken at seven, Fricandeau.

FRICAN. Nozing else, Madam—no sauce piquant ?

MAJ. Yes, sauce piquant.

MRS. M. No, I hate it !

FRICAN. Eels, à la tartare ?

MRS. M. I detest anything à la tartare.

FRICAN. Veale a la daube and fricasees ?

MRS. M. I abhor veal, and can't endure fricasees.

MAJ. D—n fricasees !

FRICAN. (*recoils in alarm*) Monsieur !

MRS. M. Leave the room, Fricandeau.

MAJ. Leave the room, Sir.

FRICAN. Oui, Monsieur. (*aside*) O, dese barbarians !

Exit, L.

MAJ. As Madam seems in the sulks, I think I'd better do the same. (*going*) Adieu, my dear.

MRS. M. Do you take coffee at home ?

MAJ. I'm afraid I must stop at the club. (*aside*) Now for it. *Exit, R.*

MRS. M. This is most provoking ! I thought by marrying an old no, an *elderly* man, I should escape the proverbial neglect of a fashionable husband. (*a knock*) Ah, a visitor ! never was one more welcome.

* *Enter FLAMMER, L.*

FLAM. The Hon. Mrs. Derby, Madam.

MRS. M. Has she come in her carriage ?

FLAM. No, Madam, she has come in tears and a hackney coach.

MRS. M. In tears ! Ask her up.

FLAM. Yes, Madam. (*aside*) I should say the Major won't get a bad character between them.

Exit L.

Enter the Hon. MRS. DERBY, L.

MRS. D. (*falls into chair*) Ho, ho, ho!

MRS. M. My dear Mrs. Derby, what is the matter?

MRS. D. Oh, I am a miserable woman!

MRS. M. What has happened?

MRS. D. Would you believe it? My brute of a husband—but you can't believe it—you can't.

MRS. M. Pray compose yourself, and let me know what distresses you so?

MRS. D. Am I ugly?

MRS. M. Ugly!

MRS. D. Am I old—am I disagreeable?

MRS. M. Why ask me such questions?

MRS. D. Because—because I know I am not; but Mr. Derby, for the last two months, has—(*a violent knock*) Oh, dear! I'm quite nervous.

Enter FLAMMER, L.

FLAM. Mrs. Twankay, in—

MRS. M. Tears, too?

FLAM. No, Madam, in a rage, and—such a bonnet!

MRS. M. Ask Mrs. Twankay up.

Exit FLAMMER, L.

Enter MRS. TWANKAY, L.

MRS. T. My dear Mrs. Mortar, how d'ye do? Ah, Mrs. Derby, how are you? I'm glad to see you here, to sympathise with me.

MRS. D. I don't think I shall ever sympathise again!

MRS. T. If I was not the mildest woman—the least passionate—I should have—destroyed Mr. Twankay, or myself. As it is, I've only destroyed the looking glasses!

MRS. D. *and* { What has occurred?

MRS. M. }

MRS. T. I'll tell you, as soon as I have breath. That quiet, sneaking, yellow old man, that I *must* call husband, has become a—(*a violent knock*)

OMNES. Ah, who's that?

Enter FLAMMER, L.

[MRS. TWANKAY and MRS. DERBY converse.

FLAM. Mrs. Bookly, Madam, with a printer's devil and a black footman.

MRS. M. I'm completely puzzled ! Ask Mrs. Bookly up.

FLAM. And the two devils, Madam ?

MRS. M. No ; you are impertinent.

FLAM. I ask pardon, Madam. Oh, here is Mrs. Bookly.

Exit L.

Enter MRS. BOOKLY, L.

MRS. B. Oh, Mrs. Mortar ! Oh, Mrs. Derby ! Oh, Mrs. Twankay ! Behold in me—a wretched woman—a widow.

OMNES. A widow !

MRS. B.—Tho' a wife ! This world that once appeared a thing of golden promises, is now to me a desert. My husband ! my husband !

MRS. D. And *my* husband !

MRS. T. And *my* husband !

MRS. M. And *my* husband !

MRS. B. What all ! There is, then, a comfort left : I'll tell you my story—For one month my wretch has never dined at home.

MRS. T.

MRS. M. } Nor mine !

MRS. D.

MRS. M. Mortar has dined at the United Service.

MRS. D. Derby, at the Conservative.

MRS. T. And Twankay, at the Oriental.

OMNES. Wretches !

MRS. B. There must be something awfully attractive in those Clubs ; something that, if discovered, would startle—*(a double knock)*

OMNES. Ah, another wretched wife !

Enter FLAMMER, L.

FLAM. Mrs. Fitzsmyth and the Captain, Madam.

OMNES. And the Captain !

FLAM. I believe so, ladies, either he or his uniform ; but *(points to the door)* Venus and Mars !

Exit L.

Enter MRS. FITZSMYTH, and the CAPTAIN, in the dress of the Guards, with a preposterously large cap and sword.

MRS. F. Well, dears, how do ? Fitz, hold my parasol.

Couldn't pass without calling, Mrs. Mortar. How are all the *hubbies*?

OMNES. Brutes!

MRS. F. What's the matter?

CAPT. Bless me, is—

MRS. F. Silence, Fitz! Hold yourself up, Sir.

MRS. M. Mrs. Derby, pray inform Mrs. Fitzsmyth of our unhappy situation.

MRS. D. I can't, love! Mrs. Bookly—

MRS. B. I cannot, the words parch my tongue!

CAPT. Really, I'm alarmed!

MRS. F. (*slaps his back*) Fitz! leave the room—leave the room, Sir, and don't return till nine; I may then want you for the Opera.

CAPT. (*turns up his eyes*) Oh!

MRS. F. Fitz, is that the way you leave a room, Sir? Where's your bow? That will do, now go.

Exit CAPTAIN, L.

Now that we are rid of my lord and master, tell me what is the matter?

MRS. M. The truth is, Mrs. Fitzsmyth, that Major Mortar—

MRS. D. Mr. Derby—

MRS. B. And Mr. Bookly—

MRS. M. Are never at home!

MRS. F. Never at home! ha, ha! and you are all miserable on that account?

MRS. M. The neglect!

MRS. D. The appearance!

MRS. B. The solitude!

MRS. F. The fiddle-de-de! ha, ha! Now look at my dear Fitz, ha, ha! he's my husband; but I never allow him to be at home, but when I want him. He goes to his club every morning as regularly as a child to a day-school.

OMNES. His club!

MRS. M. Surely, you do not *compel* him to go to a club?

MRS. F. I do! Of course you know who Fitz was—the son of a highly respectable haberdasher, who died and left his son something very near a plum; I wanted money—Fitz wanted an introduction into high life; we married, purchased a commission for him, tacked a Fitz to his name, and I find he does as well for a husband as a better; being

very docile, obedient, and wealthy. I send him to the club when I don't want him in the day, and to bed when I don't want him at night.

MRS. M. But Mr. Fitzsmyth is not Major Mortar !

MRS. D. Nor Mr. Derby !

MRS. T. Nor Mr. Twankay !

MRS. B. Nor Mr. Bookly !

MRS. F. I am not angry at your comparisons ; for, to tell you the truth, I should be very sorry if he were like either of them. I want a slave, and not a master. But seriously, you find yourselves neglected ?

OMNES. We do.

MRS. M. And all for those odious clubs.

MRS. F. Are you sure that the clubs do occupy all their time ?

OMNES. Eh ? you alarm us !

MRS. F. I'm sorry for it ; but such things as faithless husbands *have* been known to exist.

MRS. M. Oh, if the Major—

MRS. D. Or my Derby—

MRS. T. Or my Tiffin—

MRS. B. Or Bookly, should be faithless—

MRS. F. Why, none of you could help it. Should my suspicions be correct, something must be done to punish them. Let me see—if we could only ascertain their movements for one day—

MRS. M. Or know what they do at the club.

OMNES. (*except* MRS. M. and MRS. F.) That's what I want to learn !

MRS. F. That might be known.

OMNES. How ? how ?

MRS. F. Ladies are not admitted ?

OMNES. No !

MRS. F. Not even a Ladies' gallery ?

OMNES. No !

MRS. F. Then I shall require two volunteers.

MRS. M. I'm one !

MRS. D. And I another !

MRS. F. I expect Sir Charles Lavender to call for me presently, and—(*a knock*) Oh, here he is ! yes, how d'ye do ? (*waves her hand*) Perhaps you will allow me to see him alone ?

MRS. M. Certainly ! Somewhat suspicious !

MRS. D. Very !

MRS. T.

and } Poor Fitzsmyth !

MRS. B.

Exeunt R. all except MRS. FITZSMYTH.

Enter FLAMMER, L.

FLAM. Sir Charles Lavender ! (*aside*) Musk and bear's grease !

Exit L.

Enter SIR CHARLES LAVENDER, L.

SIR CHARLES. Mrs. Fitzsmyth !

MRS. F. My dear Sir Charles !

SIR CHAS. I did not anticipate this solitary pleasure.

MRS. F. Now, no compliments—I am a woman of the world, and understand their value—as nothing.

SIR CHAS. You are too severe. To us men of fashion compliment is as necessary as credit.

MRS. F. Then as I wish to pay you in the ready money of truth, perhaps you will dispense with it upon this present occasion. You know my unfortunate situation ?

SIR CHAS. Unfortunate !

MRS. F. I mean—you know I'm married for the third time ?

SIR CHAS. I do ; and can but sympathise—

MRS. F. Not now ! You also know that Fitz is neither useful nor ornamental ?

SIR CHAS. Oh, really Mrs. Fitz—

MRS. F. Don't deny it, he won't call you out ! You know the man—simple as coltsfoot, and courageous as a butterfly !

SIR CHAS. My dear Madam, I cannot hear an officer and a gentleman thus maligned, without speaking a word in his behalf, though his traducer is the most charming libeller in the universe ! (*kisses her hand—she coughs significantly*) Captain Fitzsmyth is certainly not the beau ideal of Mars, tho' you are of Venus !

MRS. F. I'm glad to find Fitz has a friend.

SIR CHAS. Devoted ! (*kisses her hand*) as this billet will assure you, tho' I can but feel his unworthiness to command the admiration of such a divinity as Mrs. Fitzsmyth !

MRS. F. (*looks at note*) A love letter! Oh, Sir Charles! In the absence of my natural friend and protector—

SIR CHAS. Accept of my humble service and devotion.

MRS. F. But dare I trust you?

SIR CHAS. Stultz does.

MRS. F. What was I about to do? To commit myself to one who might perhaps deny me—

SIR CHAS. Nothing—nothing, from my heart to my tiger!

MRS. F. For this I have the assurance of your honour?

SIR CHAS. (*kneels*) You have—you have.

MRS. F. (*in an easy tone*) Don't derange your toilet by exertion. Ladies, a word with you!

SIR CHAS. What does this mean?

Enter MRS. DERBY, MRS. TWANKAY, MRS. MORTAR, and MRS. BOOKLY, R.

MRS. FITZSMYTH. Ladies, Sir Charles Lavender has pledged his honour to serve us in our present dilemma—

SIR CHAS. Outwitted, I fear!

MRS. F. My dear fellow, don't look alarmed; ha, ha! you'll positively spoil your dimples! You are a member of the Carlton, and, if I am rightly informed, possess the *entrée* and privilege of introduction to the other clubs in London.

SIR CHAS. Exactly.

MRS. F. You must oblige me by introducing my friends Mrs. Mortar and Mrs. Derby.

SIR CHAS. Oh! my dear madam, ladies, I regret to say, are excluded.

MRS. F. There is an old adage, though a vulgar one—that "the tailor makes the man;" you understand me?

SIR CHAS. My dear Mrs. Fitzsmyth—

MRS. F. Oh, your honour—your honour, and this *billet doux*!

SIR CHAS. Does she mean to expose me?

MRS. F. Ladies, are you content to accept of Sir Charles's protection and introduction?

OMNES. Certainly.

MRS. M. Anything to know the secret of those odious clubs.

MRS. D. Death, rather than unsatisfied curiosity!

SIR CHAS. But—

MRS. F. Sir Charles—Sir Charles! My dear, pray summon your servant.

MRS. M. (*ringing*) Instantly!

Enter FLAMMER, L.

MRS. FITZSMYTH. Do you think you could keep a secret?

FLAM. A secret, ma'am? I've kept one ever since 1830 for five guineas—not a shilling a month! (*aside*) I wonder if she understands me?

MRS. F. We want you to tell a fib for an hour or so.

FLAM. I'll try, madam, though I've been so much out of practice in this family, that it will be very difficult.

MRS. F. (*giving money*) Perhaps this will assist you. Your mistress is going out, and *must* be at home.

FLAM. Certainly.

MRS. F. Come, ladies,

I'll be your leader—tho' to arms unknown,
Women can conquer by their wits alone!

[*Exeunt L. except FLAMMER.*]

FLAM. Mystery and mischief, or my name's not Flammer!

[*Exit L.*]

SCENE II.—*Hall in MAJOR MORTAR's house.*

Enter FRICANDEAU, L.

FRICAN. Der nevare be so miserable cuisnier, as pauvre Fricandeau! Ma foi—why did I leave la belle France for dis dam pays of Ros Bif and Barglay Portare? I shall go melancholic, and knock out my brain wid my own rollin-pin! Ah, moi!

Enter FLAMMER, L.

FLAM. What's the matter, monsieur? You look as happy as eels in a stew-pan!

FRICAN. Ah, monsieur Flam! you no know the misere that I have under my waistcoat!

FLAM. Under your waistcoat—perhaps a new flannel jacket, or a new cotton shirt?

FRICAN. No, stupig!

FLAM. Stewed pig! that's the oddest thing I ever heard of for a comforter!

FRICAN. Sall you understand me?

FLAM. Yes, monsieur! (*aside*) By to-morrow morning!

FRICAN. I am come here, some tree months ago, as *chef de cuisine*—

FLAM. Well?

FRICAN. I bring wis me a character as good—as good—

FLAM. As a baked shoulder of mutton and potatoes!

FRICAN. Sare, you make de game of me!

FLAM. Game of you? (*aside*) An old goose!

FRICAN. Monsieur Flammer, if you had the cœur of a fellow-servant Français, you would feel for my distress.

FLAM. What, the stewed pig? Monsieur, I don't want to interfere with your private enjoyments.

FRICAN. Sare, you are de villain!

FLAM. No; I'm a valet!

FRICAN. Bah! I sall not talk to you no more—I sall go and give my warning!

FLAM. What, like the hall-clock—tick before you strike?

FRICAN. Yes, sare, I sall strike my stick—I sall what you call carve my timber—I sall not live in a family where dey eat nozing but boiled chicken, and have de horrid taste to dam fricasees!

FLAM. O ho! that's your trouble, is it, monsieur? I pity you; I can imagine the misery of receiving £300 a year, and doing nothing for it; but you should have fortitude, and bear with your annoyances as I do!

FRICAN. Annoyances! you have nozing—you have de close to brush! your wig to dress—

FLAM. But no lies to tell!

FRICAN. What?

FLAM. Monsieur Fricandeau, I have lived in the first families—lying became habit—and you know how difficult it is to get rid of an old habit.

FRICAN. Oui, monsieur; I find my new ones go too fast.

FLAM. Very good, for—a cook! But here I'm obliged to sacrifice all my old prejudices, and in spite of myself am compelled to tell the truth.

FRICAN. Ver bad, ver bad!

FLAM. It is, monsieur; it's as bad as an apple-pudding without spice! Were it not for my private practice, I should be compelled to resign, from the fear of losing my character; but I think better days are in store for us.

FRICAN. Oh! sall I ever see *un diner* of three removes?

FLAM. You have reason to hope so; and I trust the time

is not far distant when my own peculiar talent will be called into requisition. Truth, they say, lives in a well, and I never could stand cold water !

Exit L.

SONG.

Either by FRICANDEAU or FLAMMER, for the LADIES to dress.

SCENE III.—*Interior of one of the London Club Houses.*

Characters grouped about the Stage. MAJOR MORTAR, MR. TWANKAY, on one side, MR. BOOKLY in centre, MR. DERBY and CAPTAIN FITZSMYTH, seen through in centre, as if in Card-room.

MAJ. Any news from China, Mr. Twankay ?

TWANKAY. Nothing—nothing in the public papers, I mean ; but I have received some private letters, containing matters of the greatest importance.

MAJ. Indeed !

TWANK. Yes ; the fact is, a friend of mine, Chin-Long, is in secret correspondence with the Government (*to the waiter*) Charles, another quarter of a pint of Madeira !—and he has ascertained that, by the first of next month, or the second, at latest—(*CHARLES brings the wine*) Bless me, Charles ! the steward must have made a deduction from the required quantity !

CHARLES. I think not, Sir.

TWANK. I hope not ; for one might as well live at an hotel, if such practices are to be permitted, Major.

MAJ. Certainly—(*aside*) a miserly old hunk ; he once had the yellow fever, and, egad, it has never left him.

TWANK. When I was in Calcutta in the year nine, I remember a black whitewasher—

MAJ. You've forgot your friend, Chin-Long !

TWANK. True ! the fact I was about to communicate is this. The China men have projected a scheme to bring us to our senses !

MAJ. They ! I should like to see them. Only think of such a thing ! Bring us to our senses, indeed ! If such an idea were promulgated, we should have a popular commotion !

TWANK. Mind you, Major, I don't think it possible ; it's only an Utopian idea of the Celestials.

MAJ. How do they mean to do it, by sea or land ?

TWANK. Not exactly ! they intend to put a strong infusion of opium into the tea chests; open the trade, and when the nation is in an universal state of somnolency, cut our throats !

MAJ. What, destroy us by our own teapots ? barbarians !

BOOKLY. Great powers ! that would be a twagedy—nay, I might say, a Fwench melo-dwama !

TWANK. Ah, Mr. Narcissus, you have a fine sensibility !

MAJ. Humbug !

TWANK. What might you be reading ?

BOOK. *Weading* ! I was studying a chawacter from that touching womance of weal life—the Newgate Calendar !

TWANK. For a moral, or an essay ?

BOOK. I'm not quite sure.

CAPTAIN FITZSMYTH and the HON. MR. DERBY come down.

CAPTAIN FITZSMYTH. Well, I never did see such an extraordinary run of luck as you have, Derby !

DERBY. I am in luck to-night !

CAPT. We have played fifteen games !

DERBY. So many ?

CAPT. And I've only won—

DERBY. One—singular !

CAPT. Not that I mind about it particularly, for Mrs. S.—F., I mean, allows me £2,000 a year for play-money, provided I wear my uniform. I dare say you have thought me imposed upon in the way of duty by our mess.

DERBY. Had I not known my man, I should have thought so. Do you do anything with the Leger ?

CAPT. Not now—when I was fourteen, and lived in Milk—

DERBY. You had better forget the locality of Temple Bar—I can't afford to lose his £2,000 a year—I find it useful.

Enter SIR CHARLES LAVENDER and LADIES, L.

OMNES. Ah, Lavender !

SIR CHAS. Allow me to introduce two friends of mine, Lord Tattle and the Hon. Mr. Dasher. (*All bow.* LAVENDER and the LADIES sit at table, L.)

MRS. M. How my heart palpitates ! I'm afraid they will discover us !

MRS. D. Courage ! Lavender, you seem a little forgetful to-day—no wine ! I prefer claret.

SIR CHAS. I ask pardon ! Charles ! Chateau Margeau.

MAJOR. (*who has been talking to TWANKAY*) 'Pon my life that's strange !

TWANK. No less strange than true—and I expect the two little cherubs over by the next ship. Of course, as a father, I shall provide for them.

MRS. D. (*aside*) News for Mrs. Twankay !

MAJ. Ah, our age has often to pay for the imprudences of our youth—at least mine has.

MRS. M. (*aside*) Indeed !

MAJ. When I was in the Fourteenth, I ran away with the wife of a tailor, and repented at the first stage ! Not so the lady. I took to horse-racing, and she took to dram-drinking, till, tired of both, I gave up my stud, and settled an annuity upon her.

TWANK. The best way to get rid of her.

MAJ. Stop ! the work of error that I began, time has completed, and now she pays me periodical visits, in the shape of a washerwoman, for the purpose of extortion and annoyance.

MRS. D. (*aside*) Do you know any washerwoman, dear ?

MRS. M. (*aside*) I shall cry in a minute.

SIR CHAS. (*aside*) I shall be called out by every married man in the club.

CAPT. I under domestic control ! I ? Mr. Derby ! if Mrs. F. was but to look at me in a way that I considered unpleasant, I should—I should pulverize her, I do believe.

MRS. D. (*aside*) I must make a note of this, eh, dear ?

CAPT. By the bye, Derby, what were you after on Thursday, at Brompton, eh, you sly dog ?

MRS. D. (*aside*) Brompton !—he told me had been to Epsom !

DERBY. The truth is, Fitz, that my wife has got a slight cross of the Tartar in her disposition, so when she won't go in a snaffle, I'm obliged to try her with the curb.

CAPT. But do you really manage her ?

DERBY. Ah, as well as I do my old hack !

MRS. D. (*aside*) Indeed !

MRS. M. What a life you must lead, my dear.

MAJ. Well, Lavender, when are we to be introduced to Mademoiselle Entrechat ?

MRS. M. }
and } Sir Charles !
MRS. D. }

SIR CHAS. I—I—not to-day—I—

TWANK. Oh, yes, Sir Charles; I want to kill an hour.

DERBY. My opinion is indispensable,

CAPT. And mine.

MAJ. What say you, gentlemen? will you join us to a rehearsal of the new ballet?

LADIES. Oh, with pleasure. (*aside*) Wretches!

DERBY. Does anyone dine at home, to-day?

OMNES. No, no, no! Ha, ha, ha!

MRS. M. But how do you manage to pacify your wives upon these occasions?

OMNES. Ho, ho, ho!

MAJ. Tell them we are going to the club! Don't we, Derby?

DERBY. To be sure we do! Don't we Fitz?

CAPT. To be sure we do! Don't we, Twankay?

TWANK. To be sure we do! Don't we Bookly?

BOOKLY. Invariably!

OMNES. Capital things those clubs! Ha, ha, ha! (*during this laughing* MRS. MORTAR goes to the MAJOR, and speaks through the noise, "Major," and MRS. DERBY, "Mr. Derby.")

CHORUS.

Now, false Sir, your spell is broken!

For I've heard each word you've spoken!

Oh, you wretch, you're false to me!

Oh, Sir! Oh, Sir! he, he, he!

Wretch!—you wretch!—you—he, he, he!

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Same as 1st Scene in 1st Act.*

FLAMMER, L. SUSAN, C. FRICANDEAU, R. *discovered.*

OMNES. Ha, ha, ha!

FLAM. Capital, isn't it? Capital! Ha, ha, ha!

SUSAN. Oh, excellent! Enough to burst all one's hooks and eyes, I declare.

FRICAN. Parbleu! but I have laugh till de tears run down my sheeks like de steam down von dish cover.

SUSAN. Oh ! I'd have given the world to have seen master's face when he found missus was there ! What could it have been like ?

FLAM. Like ? Why, a calf's head surprised, as Fricandeau would say.

FRICAN. Ha, ha ! Monsieur Flamare, do not say you such funny things ! I shall laugh myself to dead ! There will be dinners now—there will be dinners now ! Ha, ha !

SUSAN. Yes ; and one shall have a little more peace in the kitchen.

FRICAN. Oh, *oui* ! and I hope we shall have a little more peas in de pot.

SUSAN. Missus does nothing now but hunt for the dust in the china, and the cobwebs in the corners.

MAJOR calls "FLAMMER."

FLAM. Coming, Sir ! Egad, here he is ! run, Susan !

Exit SUSAN, L.

Enter MAJOR MORTAR, R. in a dressing gown, and notes in his hand.

MORTAR. Flammer, send Thomas and John with these notes directly.

FLAM. Yes, Sir.

Exit, L.

MAJ. A pretty kettle of fish we've made of it !

FRICAN. What he say ? kettle of fish ? Aha ! he think of his dinner at last !

MAJ. Lavender ought to be expelled ; but my wife has bound me down to secrecy, and I don't think any one is aware of the *exposé* but Derby and myself. What shall I do to make my peace ? Mrs. Mortar has been bouncing about like a bombshell in agony, and I expect every moment there'll be an explosion !

Enter FLAMMER, L.

FLAM. I have despatched the notes, Sir.

MAJ. That's right, Flammer. I shall dine at home to-day.

FLAM. What, Sir ? I was not aware that you were indisposed !

MAJ. Indisposed !

FLAM. Yes, Sir ; you have not dined at home since you had the gout.

MAJ. Very true. (*aside*) Mrs. Mortar has some cause for her ill humour.

FLAM. Shall I order you some broth, Sir? (*aside*) Con-nubial comfort—slop and parsley.

MAJ. Broth? No; order me Fricandeau!

FRICAN. Oui, sare—I am here.

MAJ. Fricandeau, I want dinner for twenty.

FRICAN. Twenty! Oh, Monsieur Flammer, catch me, I shall faint with delight!

MAJ. What the devil ails the fellow?

FRICAN. Pardonnez moi, monsieur; but I thought our chimney nevare smoke again!

MAJ. Well, well; let every thing be in the first style, for I want, if possible, to please the ladies.

FRICAN. Sare, it shall be superbe—in grandeur it shall rival de antique—in flavour it shall excel it in grandeur—and in expense it shall excel its flavour, its grandeur, and de ancients, all put on top of one another altogeder!

MAJ. Well, well, that will do.

FRICAN. De banquet shall commence wid soup, and dere shall be dinner for all de vorld, and for de next day shall be enough for dree more.

MAJ. Flammer, remove him, or I shall lay him as dead as Captain Cook, at my feet.

FLAM. You see, Sir, he's a devotée to his art, and the prospect of roasting, boiling, and frying, has put him in a stew.

FRICAN. Oh, Flammer, a dinner for twenty! By Gare, Sir, your stomach nevare shall be empty! *Exit, L.*

MAJOR. Yes, I could not have hit upon a better plan; for if any thing makes a woman forgiving, it is champagne and flattery. *Exit, R.*

Enter all the LADIES, L. 2 E. MRS. F. L., MRS. D. L. C., MRS. T. C., MRS. M. R.C., MRS. B. R.

OMNES. Now, dears, tell us all about it.

MRS. M. Well, then, my dear Mrs. Twankay, your horrid Mr. T—

MRS. T. Well, love? (*aside*) Like her impertinence!

MRS. M. Spoke in the most affectionate terms of two little ebony cherubs!

MRS. T. Cherubs! the black monster!

MRS. D. The creature!

MRS. F. For my part, I always suspected Twankay; for he creeps about the house like a cat stealing cream, and I never knew a sneak that was not the greater knave of his acquaintance.

MRS. T. Mr. Twankay, ladies, may have his failings, but he is still a gentleman.

MRS. F. My dear, I hope I've said nothing to annoy you; but I always find it extremely agreeable to abuse my husband when I am out of temper. Well, my dear Mortar?

MRS. M. As for Mrs. Derby—but I won't wound the feelings of Mrs. D. by a repetition of her husband's failings.

MRS. F. Oh, my dear, don't deny us our only consolation.

MRS. D. (*aside*) Savages! I shall go into hysterics!

MRS. M. Well then, Mr. Derby is very partial to Brompton.

MRS. F. Horrid locality!

MRS. M. There can be but one opinion as to its attraction.

OMNES. Oh, dear, no!

MRS. F. Had you any idea of this partiality before you went to the club?

MRS. D. None—nor do I believe now that there is anything wrong—it's too ambiguous.

MRS. F. Well, ladies, as Mrs. Derby *does not* believe it, it would be cruel to try and persuade her, though I *do* think, if it was Fitz, I should draw a very different conclusion.

MRS. M. And so should I.

MRS. D. Mrs. Mortar, ladies, has forgotten to inform you that the Major once had the honour of being beloved by a washerwoman.

MRS. M. No, Mrs. Derby, the person was not a washerwoman.

MRS. B. And what did Mr. Bookly confess?

MRS. M. }
and } Nothing!
MRS. D. }

MRS. F. Delightful automaton! Really, ladies, you seem to have made some very fortunate selections.

MRS. D. Fortunate selections! We have not married men whom we are ashamed to own.

MRS. F. Oh, bless you, I'm not ashamed of Fitz!—not I; a dear little goose!

MRS. M. The butt of the clubs!

MRS. F. Is he? Well, I'm delighted to hear he is so useful.

MRS. D. A braggart—that trembles when at home, and threatens to pulverize his wife when he's away from her.

MRS. F. Well, I never gave him credit for so much

courage as that even. It's of no use, my dears, you can't make me angry, and I forgive you for your desire to do so, knowing the cause you have to be vexed yourselves.

MAJOR MORTAR, *outside R.*

MAJ. No; I shall not want the horses to-day.

MRS. M. Oh, here comes my husband. Now, then, for the revolt!

Enter MAJOR MORTAR, R.

MAJ. Ah, ladies! your most obedient! Well, this is pleasant! I'm glad to find you all here, as I have a little surprise in store for you.

OMNES. Indeed!

MRS. F. (*aside*) I think we shall return the compliment.

A double knock.

MRS. M. Whom have we here?

MAJ. Some friends that I have been expecting, and who I've no doubt will be welcome visitors.

Enter all the GENTLEMEN, L. 1 E., they each bow to the LADIES and take their situation on the right of their wives. The LADIES express surprise as they appear, and MRS. F. exclaims when she sees the CAPTAIN, with a burst of laughter—
Ha, ha, ha, here's Fitz! To what do we owe this unexpected gratification?

CAPT. Why, my life, you see that—

MRS. F. Hush, my dear!

MAJ. Why, ladies, the fact of this matter is this, we feel that we have all been a little remiss in our attentions of late, and so have determined to have a quiet family party to-day.

TWANK. And I beg to suggest, that is, with Mrs. Twankay's permission, that once a month we have a similar meeting.

LADIES. Once a month!

TWANK. Or once a week.

GENTS. Certainly, certainly!

Enter FLAMMER, L.

FLAM. The carriages are at the door, ladies.

GENTS. (*to their wives*) Carriages?

LADIES. (*to their husbands*) Yes, my dear.

MAJ. Well, ladies, a pleasant ride to you! We will, if it so please you, order dinner at seven.

MRS. M. Oh, please yourself, my dear, as to the hour.

MAJ. Nay, suit your own convenience.

LADIES. (*surprised*) Our convenience!

MAJ. Why that surprise?

MRS. F. It is really so unusual for us to hear the expression *our convenience*, that the feeling is not to be wondered at; besides, we are engaged to-day.

GENTS. Engaged! what, all?

LADIES. Yes.

MRS. F. Yes, for myself, I dine at my club.

GENTS. Club!

MRS. M. And I, Major.

MRS. D. And I Derby.

MRS. T. And I Twankay!

CAPT. And you, my life?

MRS. F. Yes, my soul!

GENTS. Their club! Ha, ha! Capital joke!

MAJ. Well, ladies, you'll return to tea?

LADIES. No; we shall tea at our club!

BOOKLY. Tea at their club? Quite satirical!

MRS. F. Well, *au revoir*, gentlemen! Come, ladies, we can't leave them more comfortable.

LADIES. (*moving to L.*) Good bye, &c.

Exit LADIES, L. 1 E.

The GENTLEMEN stand amazed, then catch one another's eyes, and endeavour to laugh it off; and then exit in a passion after the LADIES, DERBY and TWANKAY—MORTAR, CAPTAIN, and BOOKLY last.

SCENE II.—*Hall in MAJOR MORTAR'S house.*

Enter MRS. FITZSMYTH and FLAMMER, R. 1 E.

MRS. F. Now, Flammer, you understand your cue, these gentlemen must be paid in their own coin!

FLAM. Trust to me, Madam.

MRS. F. That is more than I shall ask of you, for there are five sovereigns; manage this to our satisfaction, and I will make it ten.

FLAM. Thank you, Madam! you have adopted the right means to ensure my co-operation. Truth grows on every hedge; but lies, like hot-house plants, require forcing.

MRS. F. I shall not forget that sentiment! Be sure to make them as miserable as you can, while I and the other ladies prepare for their reception.

Exit, L. 1 E.

FLAM. Five pounds to begin with, hem ! Five more in perspective, besides the probable gratuities from the gentlemen, for being made miserable. Oh, here comes the governor.

Enter MAJOR MORTAR, R.

MAJ. Flammer !

FLAM. (*quickly*) Yes, Sir !

MAJ. Why do you speak in that way ? as sharp as the crack of a rifle !

FLAM. I beg pardon, Sir.

MAJ. Flammer !

FLAM. Y-e-s, Sir.

MAJ. What do you mean by dragging out your words like volunteers firing in platoon, fiz-fiz-fiz ? Where's your mistress ?

FLAM. Gone out, Sir.

MAJ. I know that ! Where to ?

FLAM. Her club, Sir.

MAJ. I know that too ! But where is it ? (*FLAMMER shakes his head*) Don't stand there wabbling your head about, like a mandarin in a china shop. What do you mean ?

FLAM. Can't say, Sir ! Missus, Sir, has put a seal upon my lips ; can't break it, Sir, without I have another impression.

MAJ. Zounds, Sir, don't I pay you for your services ?

FLAM. Yes, Sir ; but this is secret service, and ought to be paid for out of the privy purse.

MAJ. Well, I suppose I must. But where did you learn this sophistical cant ?

FLAM. I once lived with a minister, Sir, and took to his old sayings and old clothes together ; and though second hand, they have both answered my purpose very well, Sir.

MAJ. (*gives money*) I suppose so. Now, where is the club ?

FLAM. At No. 4, in the next street. Oh, lord !

MAJ. What do you mean ?

FLAM. Well, it's no business of mine ; but I don't think I should like an officer in moustachios—but it's no business of mine.

MAJ. Moustachios ! Where's my coat ? Why the devil don't you answer me ?

FLAM. In the dressing room, Sir. Shall I attend you ?

MAJ. No! Let me catch any moustachios on my wife's lip, and I'll challenge every officer in the service. *Exit, R.*

FLAM. There goes one pound of misery! Ha! here's another customer, Mr. Tiffin Twankay—he shall have good weight.

Enter TWANKAY, R. I. E.

TWANK. Ah, Flammer! the very person I wanted to see! I believe you are acquainted with the locality of this Ladies' Club?

FLAM. I am, Sir.

TWANK. Then there's a crown for you. Now tell me where it is!

FLAM. For a *crown*, Sir? Not for a sovereign! It's a secret, Mr. Twankay, and miserable enough it makes me!

TWANK. How so? Nothing dreadful going on, I hope?

FLAM. Mr. Tiffin Twankay, when I see hundreds staked upon the odd trick—

TWANK. That's my wife! she's a devil for odd tricks!

FLAM. See housekeeping books with false entries—

TWANK. That's Mrs. T.! moist sugar can't be tenpence per pound.

FLAM. Hear husbands called yellow and foolish.

TWANK. That's me! that's me! I know that's her impression.

FLAM. Hear *black* ladies made an excuse for *white* men.

TWANK. White men! black ladies! she has heard of my two ebony cherubs, takes my pledges for two black pawns, and means to check-mate me.

FLAM. I say, Sir, when I have told you all this—I suppose you will give me a sovereign?

TWANK. Certainly! I never was so miserable! (*crossing to L.*) I'm very much obliged—

MAJ. (*without, R.*) Flammer! who the devil has been opening oysters with my razors?

TWANK. Razors! The Major knows nothing of this, does he?

FLAM. (*shews a sovereign*) Sir, that was his!

TWANK. Bless me! he may be induced to do something desperate. Mortar—Mortar! (*a crash heard*) He has jumped out of the window! *Exit, R. I. E.*

FLAM. No, he's holding a private auction of the furniture, and knocking down his own lots!

Enter DERBY, CAPTAIN, and BOOKLY, R., calling FLAMMER.

DERBY. Oh, here the fellow is ! Where's this Ladies' Club ?

FLAM. Mum, Sir !

DERBY. Mum ! Do you understand this attitude ? In one minute I'll make you indistinguishable, if you don't answer me. Where's the club ?

BOOKLY. Excuse him, Derby !

FLAM. Mr. Derby, as a gentleman, I beg you won't press the subject. I can't compromise my honor.

DERBY. Rat the fellow ! he's a curious compound ! (crossing to L.)

FLAM. Yes, Sir, I'm fond of curiosities. I've the picture of a king with his arms at the back of his head.

DERBY. What ?

BOOK. *Widiculous !*

FLAM. (*shews a sovereign*) There, gentlemen ! here's the head, and there are his arms. I'm a collector of these.

DERBY. Well, your ingenuity deserves a recompense. (*the GENTLEMEN give money, BOOKLY last*)

BOOK. A vewy pretty incident ! I want one joke for my new work, "The Attenuated Antiquary," and that will do !

FLAM. Gentlemen, your liberality does you honor.

MAJ. (*without*) Come along, Twankay ! let's carry the war into their very camp !

Enter MAJOR MORTAR, followed by TWANKAY, R. l. E.

MAJ. (*walking about*) We'll see, Tiffin, who are to be the victors !

TWANK. Compose yourself, my dear Mortar ! it's the duty of a leader to be cool and temperate.

DERBY, L., MORTAR, L. C., TWANKAY, C., CAPTAIN, R. C., BOOKLY and FLAMMER, R.

MAJ. So I am ! Gentlemen. The hour has arrived, when hearts must prove the stuff they're made of ! Gentlemen, the arms of England, which—

DERBY. Why, Major ! one would think that every man was about to face an enemy, and not merely to look after his baggage ! Do you know where these conspirators are ?

MAJ. I do.

DERBY. Then lead on, Major, and—

FLAM. I beg pardon for spoiling a good speech, but are you aware that no gentlemen are admitted ?

GENTS. What ! none ?

FLAM. Hem ! not husbands ! but in gratitude for the many handsome compliments that you have paid me (*rattles money*), wait but a quarter of an hour, and I will obtain admission, even for you.

GENTS. My dear Flammer, thank you.

MAJ. Flammer, you may take the blue coat, with metal buttons, and the pepper and salts, that you were admiring yesterday ; but if you deceive us, I'll have you kicked like a dog ! Gentlemen, come on.

GENTS. We follow, Major. *Exit all the GENTS, l. c.*

FLAM. Kicked like a dog ! It's always the case, if any thing goes wrong in a family, the two most likely to suffer, either in body or reputation, are the dog or the cat. *Exit, l.*

SCENE III.—*An extensive Room, elegantly furnished, two Windows, with drapery in front. All the Ladies discovered.*

MRS. F. Well, ladies, I think we have succeeded in astonishing our lords, and if Flammer can but contrive to bring them here, I think we may promise ourselves the victory.

MRS. D. I almost despair, I confess : that odious Boodle's !

LADIES. And I those abominable clubs.

Enter FLAMMER hastily, l. c.

FLAM. Ladies ! Ladies !

LADIES. Well, Flammer ?

FLAM. The gentlemen are below, and for certain golden considerations, I have promised to introduce them.

MRS. F. Exactly what we wanted. (*Exit FLAMMER, l. c.*) Now, Ladies, take your places, so that these wise men of the west may not suspect our intention. Mrs. Mortar—Ladies, pray oblige us with a song. (*The Ladies sing ad libitum, and are variously employed, while FLAMMER introduces the gentlemen, who conceal themselves behind the curtains at back*)

MRS. F. (*taps on the table*) Ladies, the hour has arrived for the commencement of business ; but, before we proceed farther, it is requisite I believe to elect a chairwoman.

LADIES. Certainly.

MRS. D. Ladies ! I beg to propose that Mrs. Fitzsmyth do take the chair.

MRS. M. I beg to second that proposition.

LADIES. Bravo ! (*applauding*)

MRS. D. Carried, *nem. con.* (MRS. F. rising and approaching table c.—all the LADIES rise, and applaud at the same time)

MRS. F. (*taking the chair*) Ladies, as your kindness has placed me in the enviable position of your chairwoman, I will at once draw your attention to the objects of this meeting, and then proceed to put those resolutions which will hereafter constitute its laws. (*the LADIES tap with their thimbles*)

MRS. F. Ladies ! It is a fact well known to you all, that there are numerous clubs—

LADIES. Shame ! shame !

MRS. F. Order ! That there are numerous clubs in this metropolis, whose attractions are calculated to produce the estrangement of husbands—the keeping up of servants—and to supply excuses for every delinquency.

LADIES. They are ! they are !

MRS. F. When we think how many *separations* have occurred through the “*Union*,”—how many fits of the *blues* have been occasioned by the “*Guards*,”—how many happy couples have been made *wranglers* by the “*University*,”—and the difference of interest that the “*United Service*” has produced—I say that the time has arrived when we should bestir ourselves, and endeavour by every means in our power to put an end to these inroads upon our domestic comforts.

LADIES. Bravo ! Quite time, &c.

MRS. F. Ladies ! I will now proceed to the first resolution. It is resolved, that a Club be formed to be called “The Ladies Club,” for the promotion of the rights of women; the furtherance of the fashions; and by its attractions completing the domestic estrangements already so happily begun. (*the LADIES applaud*)

MAJOR. (*at the back*) Egad, they are serious !

BOOKLY. Vewy !

MRS. F. Resolved, that no single lady be eligible, as the knowledge she would acquire as a clubbist, might be detrimental to the interests of society.

MRS. D. I shall move an amendment to the last resolution—

LADIES. What for ? what for ?

MRS. F. Order, ladies ! pray let us be impartial !

MRS. D. I propose that after “Single Lady,” the words “under thirty-six” be added, as I do feel that those whom the world has neglected should have the means of retaliation.

LADIES. Yes ! yes ! No ! no !

TWANK. (*at the back*) I thought they couldn't agree long.

MAJOR. They never do at home.

MRS. F. As there is a difference of opinion, we will proceed to the ballot. Where is the balloting reticule and the colored cotton balls ?

MRS. D. Rather than delay the business of the evening, I withdraw my motion.

MRS. F. Resolved, that any single gentleman, (*the Gentlemen pop their heads out and listen*) not a member of any club, may be introduced as a visitor, provided his name be entered on the books at the preceding quarterly meeting.

MRS. D. Excellent ! I name Cornet Cattermole—a duck !

DERBY. A devil !

MRS. M. I. M. Pimminy !—such a guitar player !

MAJOR. D—n his guitar !

MRS. T. I shall name Lord Mothly—he's not a boy !

TWANK. No ! he's seventy-five !

MRS. T. But then he's so polished.

CAPT. I'd polish him, if I were you, Twankay.

MRS. B. The being that I would select is the denizen of another land.

LADIES. Name ! name !

MRS. B. Herr Von Joel !

BOOKLY. Herr Von Joel ! Excruciating weflection ! I could have forgiven her, if he could have played the twumpet or the twombone, but a—support me, somebody !

Enter FLAMMER, R. C.

FLAM. Sir Charles Lavender, ladies.

MRS. F. The very name I was about to mention. Shall he come up ?

LADIES. By all means ! Certainly !

FLAM. (*aside*) Aromatic as a nutmeg !

Exit R. C.

CAPT. Lavender ! Assafœtida !

Enter FLAMMER and SIR CHARLES, R. C.

FLAM. Sir Charles ! (*The Ladies all crowd round Sir Charles*)

SIR CHAS. Really, ladies, you overpower me. (*The Gentlemen all come down from their hiding places*)

MRS. F. My dear Sir Charles, you are so welcome a visitor that you must excuse us.

SIR CHAS. Excuse you for admitting me into Paradise !

I received your note this morning and instantly availed myself of your condescending politeness.

LADIES. Charming fellow !

MAJOR. D—d puppy !

TWANK. Perfumed poodle !

DERBY. Cocktail !

BOOKLY. Wretched imitator !

CAPT. I—I don't know what !

SIR CHAS. I should have been here before, but I promised a contribution to the Bouquet of Bon Ton, and I have but just now completed it.

LADIES. Oh, my dear Sir Charles, let us see it, &c.

MAJOR. (*advancing, r. c.*) Mrs. Major Mortar ! *

BOOKLY. (R.) Mrs. Narcissus Bookly !

TWANK. (L. c.) Mrs. Tiffin Twankay !

CAPT. (R. c.) Oh, Mrs. Fitz !

DERBY. Mrs. Derby !

LADIES. Gentlemen, this intrusion is unpardonable !

GENTS. Unpardonable ?

MAJOR. Well, that's cool ! hugging a man before our faces, and then calling the intrusion unpardonable ! As for you, Sir Charles, there's my card !

GENTS. And mine !

SIR CHAS. Gentlemen, I thank you, a complete pack, I declare ! (*retires up*)

MAJOR. And now, Mrs. Mortar, I presume you will allow me to order your carriage ?

MRS. M. Certainly not !

GENTS. And yours, madam. (*to their wives*)

LADIES. Certainly not ! (*to their husbands*)

MRS. F. You, gentlemen, have intruded where you were not wanted ; this is *our* club-room, and we shall appeal to a court of honor, to justify our proceedings, and to judge of yours.

GENTS. To judge of ours !

TWANK. Ladies, you have sworn to obey !

MRS. T. And you have sworn to cherish ! We have the same right to exclusive meetings as yourselves ; and unless you promise to resist the attractions of your club, we shall persist in the continuance our own.

MAJOR. Gentlemen, my experience tells me that a treaty

* These exclamations are said at one time as the gentlemen advance to their respective wives.

is better than a war—for one, I accept the conditions.
More home, and less club.

GENTS. And I.

SIR CHAS. (*advancing*) Pray, gentlemen, at what hour shall I be wanted? (*showing cards*)

MAJOR. At seven, to-morrow evening! to meet these ladies and gentlemen—

If those who have our various failings seen,
Pass not too rude a censure on our scene:
For from this night I promise to amend,
And seek at home for comfort and a friend.

DERBY. And I at once will wager ten to one
I'm found no more at the Conservative—

MRS. D. Derby, done!

TWANK. The Oriental has no charms for me,
I'll pass my hours alone with Mrs. T.

MRS. T. Delightful vision!

CAPT. Tho' my voice is weak,
I'd vain implore—

MRS. F. Fitz! my love, don't speak!

BOOKLY. And I alone will wite and wead to thee,
My gentle Sappho, tomes of poetry.

MRS. B. My life! my love!

Enter FLAMMER, L. 1 E.

FLAM. I hope I've come in time,
With your permission, just to tag a rhyme;
I trust my slight digressions have but shown
I lived for other's pleasure, not my own.

MRS. F. You've heard them all, permit me now to ask
Your kind indulgence for our mimic task.

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|----------|---------|--------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| R. | Bookly. | Mrs. B. | Mortar. | Mrs. M. | Lavender. | Captain. | Mrs. F. | Derby. | Mrs. D. | Twankay. | Mrs. T. | Flammer. |
|----|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|----------|---------|--------|---------|----------|---------|----------|