

MY SON'S A DAUGHTER.

A Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

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The Changed Heart, The Orphan of Glencoe, The Kettledrum of the Surrey, &c.

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MY SON'S A DAUGHTER.

*First Performed at the Royal Strand Theatre,
Under the Management of Mr. Swanborough, Sen.,
On Monday, the 15th of September, 1862.*

Characters.

HECTOR BLOWHARD (<i>Trumpeter in a Regiment of Dragoons</i>)	Mr. PARSELLE.
SERGEANT O'BLARNEY (<i>of the Carbineers</i>) ...	Mr. POYNTER.
MR. MOULDYWORT (<i>a Village Fiddler</i>).....	Mr. TURNER.
TIMMINS	Mr. EDGE.
MRS. BRIDGET GOOSEQUILL (<i>a Widow</i>).....	Mrs. POYNTER.
FAN (<i>an Orphan</i>).....	Miss JOSEPHS.
POLLY SWEETBREAD (<i>a Bride</i>)	Miss TURTLE.

Soldiers, Male and Female Peasants.

Time—During the Reign of Queen Anne.

Costumes.

SERJEANT O'BLARNEY.—Scarlet square-cut coat; white pantaloons; jack boots; three-cornered hat.

HECTOR.—Ditto.

MR. MOULDYWORT.—A grey square-cut coat; waistcoat; and breeches.

TIMMINS.—A brown ditto.

SOLDIERS.—Same as O'Blarney.

VILLAGERS.—Same cut as Timmins.

MRS. GOOSEQUILL.—A village tuck-up, and quilted petticoat.

FAN.—Merino ditto; cap; and handkerchief. 2nd Act: scarlet cloak.

POLLY.—White silk tuck up; pink petticoats.

VILLAGERS.—Chintz tuck-ups.

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MY SON'S A DAUGHTER.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Extremity of a Village—Mouldywort's house, L. A cage hanging on wall, with starling—Mrs. Goosequill's house, R.—tree, R. C.*

Enter BRIDGET and O'BLARNEY from house, R.

BRIDGET. No, no; I tell you it's too bad, after all you have said.

O'BLARN. Now, now, calm yourself, my too susceptible friend.

BRIDGET. That's very easy for you to say, you monster of a man, at the end of three months' ardent and secret courtship! Ah, Sergeant O'Blarney, you are unworthy of my tenderness!

O'BLARN. (*soothingly*) I own my unworthiness, most beautiful of Bridgets.

BRIDGET. (*fiercely*) Call me Mrs. Goosequill, sir, the name of my first, whom I should have lamented longer. Poor Goosequill! he was a man of the pen—Registrar of the village—what has made me unfaithful to his memory is a weakness I have for the gentlemen of the sword.

O'BLARN. (*caressing his moustache*) Venus had always a mighty hankering for Captain Mars.

BRIDGET. And now, after stealing a heart long coveted by all the bachelors of the village—

O'BLARN. And don't I offer to restore the stolen property as sound as ever?

BRIDGET. And for what reason, you military savage?

O'BLARN. (*aside*) I can't tell her I'm going to marry another to-morrow; it would be unbefitting an Irishman and a soldier. (*aloud*) I'll explain to you, my angelic widow. The adventurous life of us children of Bellona is subject to so many dangers, and as our General Marlborough is about to make another campaign, I cannot frustrate his chances of victory, by depriving him of my small amount of valour, nor expose you to a second widowhood, for such a small amount of the blessings of matrimony.

BRIDGET. That is no reason.

O'BLARN. Pardon me, I have too much delicacy and sentiment; however, we shall talk of this matter by-and-bye; my time's up—my men await me at the foot of the hill, for the evening's round. (*going*)

BRIDGET. (*stopping him*) But cruel sergeant, you'll come and sup with me this evening, as you promised.

O'BLARN. (*hesitating*) Hum! why, I'm on duty to-morrow.

BRIDGET. I won't let you go, till you say yes.

O'BLARN. (*pretending to yield*) Superb despot, let it be so.

BRIDGET. (*aside*) I shall succeed, perhaps, in making him change his mind.

O'BLARN. Well, expect me under the elm, (*aside*) I'm an honest man, and will not be there.

BRIDGET. Don't let any of the neighbours see you.

O'BLARN. You may depend upon that—not a soul, shall set eye upon me—adieu!

Exit, L. U. E.

BRIDGET. I'm very unlucky in my attachments; what consoles me, in this, is, that the sergeant quits me only for glory.—Well, if he won't marry me, I must look out for another. (*looking at MOULDYWORT's house*) I don't think I did quite right, in turning up my nose at Mr. Mouldywort, when he used to make love to me—he's not a bad match, with his well lined purse. I must change my treatment of him. I must endeavour to light up the old flame again. Why, I declare, here he comes.

Enter MOULDYWORT from house, L.

MOULDY. (*speaking as he enters*) Come Fan, look sharp, take my donkey round to the garden gate, my violin, my cloak, and the bag of oats.

BRIDGET. Is that you, neighbour Mouldywort?

MOULD. Good evening, neighbour Goosequill.

BRIDGET. (*sighs*) Dear me, what a time it is since I saw you, you quite neglect your friends, now.

MOULD. (*aside*) What's she up to now? that woman's a regular man trap! (*aloud*) Why you see, neighbour, my time's my money, and can't be spent foolishly—matrimony is quite an epidemic this year, and as the best and only fiddler within twenty miles, my violin, my donkey, and myself, are kept in a perpetual motion. I'm off to a wedding party this evening, at Greenhill.

BRIDGET. What an active man! Do you know I was just thinking of you.

MOULDY. I hope your thoughts will always be as agreeably employed.

BRIDGET. I was saying to myself, what a pity that Mr.

Mouldywort, so amiable, so respected, so comely—especially on shaving days—

MOULDY. (*feeling his chin*) And this is one; I've just been giving myself a scrape.

BRIDGET. (*simpering*) Should be such a general lover.

MOULDY. Because I like to laugh; as a fiddler, it is not forbidden. I like to spy into all the tricks of women, and the accidents that happen to their nannies of husbands. Oh, I make my profit of them. (*rubs his hands*) Besides, it is such fun.

BRIDGET. (*looking slyly at him*) Oh, you wicked man! That was what frightened me when you offered me your hand; for in truth, I was very much inclined to accept it.

MOULDY. Ah!

BRIDGET. (*coaxingly*) That distinguished air.

MOULDY. Ah!

BRIDGET. That intelligent eye.

MOULDY. Ah!

BRIDGET. And your talent; I have a weakness for music.

MOULDY. (*aside*) She's strong in weaknesses.

BRIDGET. (*languishingly*) Our two houses, looking on each other so tenderly. Why not follow their example, and by a good marriage—

MOULDY. (*quickly*) Ah, neighbour, why didn't you say that sooner.

BRIDGET. (*joyfully*) You accept?

MOULDY. (*derisively*) On the contrary, deeply afflicted; I am going to be married the day after tomorrow.

BRIDGET. (*surprised*) You going to be married! And pray, who would have you?

MOULDY. You, if you could get me. But I'm going to marry little Fan.

BRIDGET. (*contemptuously*) Your servant!

MOULDY. My servant; not at all. She cleans my house, brushes my coats, grooms my donkey—but she's not a servant; and the proof is, I give her no wages. I thought it would humiliate her, poor girl; she was confided to me by an old cousin of mine, who brought her up, and recommended me to find her a good husband. The first time I shaved afterwards I had one in my intelligent eye, as you call it. I popped the question, and the pledge was accepted.

BRIDGET. (*piqued*) Marry a simpleton like that, without dignity, without experience!

MOULDY. (*ironically*) That's what pleases me. I don't like your too experienced women—I know how their husbands suffer, and I am not envious—I have laughed too much at them to give them a chance of returning the compliment; with Fan I've nothing to fear—she never goes out—sees nobody—

hasn't one idea to put on the top of another—she's a little treasure, who scarcely knows her right hand from her left.

BRIDGET. But she will perhaps know a smart, handsome young fellow from an old and ugly one. (*coaxingly*) Now, I shouldn't like to see you make such a noodle of yourself, so come and breakfast with me to-morrow, and I'll prove to you—

MOULDY. (*in a tone of raillery*) Breakfast with you, neighbour—the devil no, no, it's too dangerous! what would my future wife say?

Enter FAN from house, L.

FAN. Mr. Mouldywort, everything's ready, the portmanteau is bridled, the donkey is tied on its back.

BRIDGET. Ha, ha, ha!

FAN. (*laughing foolishly*) Hi, hi, hi!

MOULDY. (*laughing*) Ho, ho, ho! (*to BRIDGET*) Do you hear her? Well, Fan, what makes you laugh?

FAN. I don't know, I always laugh when I see—

BRIDGET. (*maliciously*) Perhaps when she sees you depart.

MOULDY. Oh, you're jealous! She is only happy when I am near her—eh, Fan?

FAN. Yes, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. She's over head and ears in love with me—eh, Fan?

FAN. Yes, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. Isn't that beautiful simplicity? (*to BRIDGET*) Do you think she could prefer another?

FAN. Yes, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. What? (*stage gradually darkens*)

BRIDGET. Do you hear that?

MOULDY. (*annoyed*) What a devil of a habit you have of saying yes to everything.

FAN. I don't know what to say—I always answer yes, because I wish to be obliging to everybody.

BRIDGET. (*to MOULDYWORT*) That's a promising disposition—but the girl's a fool.

MOULDY. I like her the better for it; one Solomon in a family's enough.

BRIDGET. And you will marry her?

MOULDY. I swear it by my Cremona!

BRIDGET. Then, neighbour, I wish you, what you deserve so well—all sorts of good luck; and it can't fail with a wife, the most amiable, the most obliging, and (*half aside*) the greatest fool in the country!

FAN. (*curtseying as if to thank her*) After you, Mrs. Goosequill.

BRIDGET. What!

MOULDY. (*laughing*) Do you hear that?

BRIDGET. (*angrily, aside*) Ah! I must make O'Blarney marry me within twenty-four hours.

Exit into house, R., slamming door,

MOULDY. (*looking after her*) What a sweet temper! I her husband! not if I know it. I see his fate distinctly, whoever he is; no, there's my wife (*points to FAN, who is catching flies*), who thinks of nothing but catching flies. Here, Fan! my little wife—for I look on you as my wife, already; in two days all will be concluded.

FAN. Heigho!

MOULDY. Ha! Are you impatient, you little rogue, so am I—so am I, but now I must away to the wedding party. I shall not be back till to-morrow. (*going*)

FAN. Yes, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. You will be careful. You'll shut up the house.

FAN. Yes, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. And if any one should come—

FAN. Yes, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. (*impatient*) Still that infernal yes—it's sauce for every dish with you. (*to himself*) It's an infirmity by no means tranquillizing to a frequently absent husband, this facility of being of everybody's mind. Hark ye, Fan, to vary the charms of your conversation a little, henceforth be kind enough to answer no, to what is said to you.

FAN. (*astonished*) No!

MOULDY. To all comers, to all questions—no, no, and stick to it.

FAN. Yes, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. (*shouting*) Not at all—no—

FAN. (*shouting*) I say yes, I will say no, Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. Take care then, for if you don't, you know my little finger tells me all that passes, when I am not here,

FAN. (*aside*) Oh, the horrid wizard!

MOULDY. (*threateningly*) And if you disobey me, as soon as we're married, I'll—no, I won't—but mind what you are about, it will soon be dark, and I'll make myself scarce, so bolt the door, see no one—think of nothing, and amuse yourself—go in, and perhaps I'll bring you home something nice from the party. Where's my donkey, damme, if he isn't nibbling the fiddle case!

FAN *exit into house, L.*, MOULDYWORT, L. U. E.

Re-enter FAN from house; looks after him.

FAN. There's a suspicious old wretch for you! although I respect him like a father and mother, when he comes to talk of being a husband, I hate the very sight of him! I suppose his little finger will tell him that too. Here am I always shut up by myself, it's very tiresome! If I had a dog or a cat, the

one would bark, and the other would mew, that would be some company at least. I declare I don't know what I should do, if it were not for my bird here. Dicky! Dickey! I am teaching him the song of the King's Officer and the Milkmaid. How much do you know, Dickey? Let us hear.

(HECTOR *is heard without*, R.)

HECT. (*without*) Hallo, friend! can you oblige me, by telling me where I am?

FAN. I hear somebody's voice, perhaps Mr. Mouldywort come back to spy me; if he finds me outside there would be a pretty tune! Come along, Dickey, we must lock ourselves in.

(*takes bird, and exit into house, L.—stage quite dark*)

HECT. (*without*) Which is the shortest way to—

VOICE. (*without*) Go to the devil!

Enter HECTOR, half-t tipsy, R. U. E.

HECT. This is a most inhospitable village, whose name I never heard, and can't, for the life of me remember. In consequence of asking my way at every public-house; I've lost my way, completely. I have a strong suspicion it's either getting dark, or I'm getting blind drunk; objects are so indistinct. (*stumbles against tree, R. C.*) Come, friend, none of your tricks, or I'll—(*draws sword*) perforate you! (*feeling tree*) Why, damme, it's a vegetable! I beg your pardon. (*sheaths sword*) Here's a pilgrimage, for a trumpeter of dragoons—to say that I, Hector Blowhard, in the flower of my youth, have already a son eighteen years old—whom I have never seen, and whom I seek like a needle in a bottle of hay—but, understand me, a son by adoption, whom I have sworn to love and protect as my own; (*increasing in loudness every phrase*) and I will keep my oath—I'll give him the education of a duke—I'll teach him to smoke—to swear—to run after the girls! (*softening*) Yes, my brave Ironfist, it's the least you can expect that I should do for your son, what you did for me. Poor Ironfist! there was a soldier for you! at the battle of Blenheim, poor fellow, he received more sugarplums than a man can well digest. (*softening more and more*) "Hector my lad," says he, "that last shot has doubled me up." Well," says I, "you don't fear to die?" "Fear, be damned," says he, "that would be something new for a British soldier! but there's a little brat I left in England, and when I think I shall die without embracing the poor little thing, it weighs me down like a forty-eight-pounder!" "Well, well, don't cry like that—a dragoon! am I not here?—haven't you been like a father to me? I swear to adopt your child—never to marry, that the orphan may have all my fortune—if

ever I make one—so be tranquil, my old cock!" He pressed my hand, scrawled on a scrap of paper the name and whereabouts of the child, and then he—he— (*sobs*) What the devil do I blubber now for? I believe it is the fog, or something; I am soaked like a sponge; I can't bivouac here under the stars—catch the rheumatism, and ruin my constitution—besides, I am starving of hunger and thirst. (*comes against door of house, L.*) Oh! here's another house, an inn, perhaps—I'll see if I can't billet myself here. (*knocks*) House! girl! Susan! where are you all?

FAN. (*opens window above*) Who can be calling like that?

HECT. (*to himself*) Somebody has opened a window! (*aloud*) Invisible and benevolent being!

FAN. (*aside*) A stranger! I mustn't forget Mr. Mouldywort's instructions.

HECT. May I politely ask if this is an inn?

FAN. No.

HECT. Can I speak to the master of the house?

FAN. No. (*closes window loudly*)

HECT. A woman's voice; its all right. Amiable and handsome unknown! your sweet accents betoken a generous heart. (*FAN opens window again*) I am a poor blind soldier; I've lost both my eyes, and can't see my way—open your door. What will become of me if it should snow?—it freezes like the devil already.

FAN. (*aside*) A soldier, and blind; what a pity!

HECT. Charming creature, such as you see me—or rather such as you don't see me—I am looking for a young man, but that's not the question at present; will you accord me hospitality?

FAN. No.

HECT. No! I'm dying of sheer emptiness—I expect to collapse every minute! You will at least give me a crust of bread and a mouthful of beer?

FAN. No.

HECT. The inhabitants here are well supplied with noes—it's a strong feature in their character. Not even a crust of bread!—that's very hard. Well, I must continue my journey at the risk of falling into a quagmire, and breaking my neck; my death then will lie at your door.

FAN. Poor man! It breaks my heart to turn him away; but the little finger!

HECT. Beautiful specimen of inhumanity, must I then depart?

FAN. No.

HECT. (*surprised*) Eh! you don't wish that I should go?

FAN. No.

HECT. (*aside*) What do I hear? here's a change in the

weather! (*aloud*) I thought so soft a voice couldn't be joined to a marble heart.

FAN. Oh no!

HECT. (*aside, imitating*) Oh no! Is your husband in?

FAN. Oh no!

HECT. (*aside imitating*) Oh no! And if I entreated you to open this cruel door, would you refuse?

FAN. No. (*aside*) It's a kind action, besides, he is blind and won't steal anything. (*closes window*)

HECT. She comes! may the devil fly away with me but she comes! she isn't much of a babbler—she doesn't resemble the sex in general—her conversation's not remarkable for variety.

Enter FAN, from house, L.

Oh, here she is—oh, you angel! (*takes her hand*) You are not afraid of me then?

FAN. (*trembling*) No; but in spite of your blindness, you found my hand very soon.

HECT. Charitable soul, it was by instinct! (*aside*) What a plump little hand! (*aloud*), but, if in my gratitude, I dared to press these pretty little fingers, you would be angry, perhaps?

FAN. No.

HECT. No! (*presses her hand against his heart*) If I had the audacity to kiss them, you would drive me away.

FAN. Oh, no.

HECT. No! (*kisses her hand*)

FAN. (*aside*) It's droll! if he could see, I don't believe he could do it any better.

HECT. (*aside*) Now, that I have the key to her vocabulary I think we'll get on. (*aloud*) I think it begins to rain; hadn't you better go in doors? You won't prevent my following you?

FAN. No.

HECT. What a windfall!

FAN. If the little finger denounces me, Mr. Mouldywort will see that I have only followed his directions.

HECT. Then, darling, take my hand; I can't see. (*aside*) If I drop into a trap here, I can flatter myself I didn't do it with my eyes open.

Exeunt into house, L.

Enter MOULDYWORT, L. U. E.; he wears a cloak.

MOULDY. May the devil exterminate all marriages, dances, and all that concerns them! That brute of a Sergeant O'Blarney, why couldn't he tell me sooner that the party was not to take place till to-morrow. I met him when I got half way; it put me in such a rage. I began to wallop my donkey homewards, but the confounded beast threw me into a ditch, and has gone

I don't know where. Let him find his way home, that's his business. I hurried back. Fan can't be in bed yet, and—

(he is going towards his house, when BRIDGET opens window above in her house)

BRIDGET. (aside, at window) There's some one below—O'Blarney, I dare say. (aloud) Ahem! ahem! are you there?

MOULDY. Eh? (aside) Mrs. Goosequill at her window!

BRIDGET. (in a low tone) Is that you, dear?

MOULDY. (aside) Dear—an intrigue—a nocturnal assignation! oh! here's a discovery!

BRIDGET. (low) Why don't you reply?

MOULDY. (in a loud whisper) Yes—yes—it's I.

BRIDGET. Nobody has seen you?

MOULDY. No.

BRIDGET. Supper is ready. I didn't wish to light the lamp, because if anyone saw the light at this hour, he might suspect.

MOULDY. (aside) And that would be very unjust.

BRIDGET. Above all, it might be seen by that prying, ugly old baboon, Mouldywort.

MOULDY. (aside) The prying, ugly old baboon is very much obliged to you.

BRIDGET. Wait a moment—I must see if the neighbours on the other side of the garden are asleep; (tenderly) don't be impatient, my dear, and take care you don't catch cold. (closes window)

MOULDY. My dear, take care you don't catch cold! And she wanted to marry me—marry the prying, ugly old baboon! now I'll show her in her true colours, since she has put my monkey up; but let me enter—I can watch from my window the arrival of this expected gallant, and to-morrow I will regale the whole village with the adventure. What a horror! see a man at this time of night! Well, things are coming to a pretty crisis! Fan wouldn't permit herself such—(knocks at door, L., gently) Can she be asleep? (knocks louder)

FAN and HECTOR appear at window above.

Open—It's I!

FAN. (aside to HECTOR) Oh, my gracious, it's himself

HECT. (to FAN) Don't say a word.

MOULDY. (to himself) It's very odd; she must sleep furiously sound. (FAN coughs) Hallo! are you there? you didn't hear me, then?

FAN. (confused) No.

MOULDY. I've knocked the skin off my knuckles, thumping here. Come down, quick, and open.

FAN. No.

MOULDY. How—no!

HECT. (*aside*) Here's the old tune again.

MOULDY. Don't you know me?

FAN. No.

MOULDY. It's me, myself—your beloved husband; come and embrace me!

FAN. (*forcibly*) No.

MOULDY. (*angry*) Oh, you unhappy infant! I'll break open the door and astonish her; let me get this cloak off. (*takes cloak off and drops it in centre of stage*)

HECT. (*to FAN*) Don't be alarmed, I'm here to protect you.

FAN. Oh, I entreat you, whoever you are, get out by the window, for if he finds you here, he will kill me.

MOULDY. (*at door*) Yes, I'll astonish her! (*aside*) It's as well to begin early, to teach her what she has to expect. (*with his back to door*) Once—twice—will you open?

FAN. No, no, no! and I'll stick to it.

MOULDY. Oh, oh! now I remember.

FAN. I answer as you told me.

MOULDY. Oh, you little dolt! I meant to others, not to me. (*aside*) Now, there's true innocence! Come down, then, and open the door.

FAN. (*aside*) And my blind soldier, if he should break his neck. You must go, sir, the window's not high.

HECT. Adieu, then, my charmer! (*FAN disappears*)

MOULDY. Now, then, I shall watch from my window the arrival of the gentleman my loving widow expects— (*door opens, L., and he enters—HECTOR descends from window, as MOULDYWORT goes in*)

HECT. Obliged to beat a retreat without blast of trumpet. These confounded husbands always drop in like a bombshell in a country dance! What a delicious little wife he has! as well as one can judge in the dark, when one hasn't the eyes of a cat. It's very odd!—her candour—her simple answers—had such an effect on me, that I only dared to risk the smallest kiss by way of a skirmish, when the enemy forced me to decamp. I had just time to slip my silver ring on her finger, that I may know her, if we should ever chance to meet again, for may I never blow trumpet more, if her soft voice hasn't scratched my heart, for I feel—(*feeling*) No, that's my stomach. I've had no supper. I'm as hollow as my own bugle! where the devil am I to go? I can't pass the whole night playing blindman's buff; besides it freezes enough to—(*stumbles over MOULDYWORT's cloak*) What's this? Somebody asleep—hollo! here let me help you up. (*lays hold of cloak*) Why, it's a cloak! Welcome my friend! (*puts it on*) When things are at the worst they generally mend. Who knows but some kind soul will send me a supper too.

Enter BRIDGET, cautiously, from house, R.

BRIDGET. 'St! 'st! 'st!

HECT. Who's that chirping there?

BRIDGET. Here I am, my dear.

HECT. (*aside*) Another woman! it rains women here.

BRIDGET. (*low*) Everybody's asleep, no one will see you, and supper is ready.

HECT. (*aside*) Supper! I said so. (*strikes his stomach*) Do you hear that, you famishing gulf?

BRIDGET. But where are you? (*puts out her hand*)

HECT. (*in a whisper*) Here. (*gives hand*)

BRIDGET. Poor fellow, how cold your hand is!

HECT. (*aside*) And this warm and soft.

BRIDGET. Follow me.

HECT. Follow you?

BRIDGET. Yes.

HECT. We shall sup together?

BRIDGET. Yes.

HECT. I mean, alone together?

BRIDGET. Yes?

HECT. (*kisses her hand*) And you'll permit me to tell you that I love you.

BRIDGET. Oh yes.

MOULDY. (*appears at his window*) I hear voices.

HECT. (*aside*) Oh yes—this is the drollest village—some always say, "No," and some always say, "Yes;" but it appears that it all comes to the same thing. *Exeunt into house, R.*

MOULDY. (*at window*) Yes, I can see their shadows—there they go—there they go. (*sings*) "Will you walk into my parlour said the spider to the fly—" (*drop descends quickly*)

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—*Village Green—Inn, R.—Table and forms, C—chairs, drinking materials on table, a large cask, L., with a board across for Mouldywort, the bunghole towards the R. of stage—two carbines standing against tree, R. C.*

As the curtain rises, a country dance; MOULDYWORT standing on the cask playing the violin; HECTOR and O'BLARNEY discovered seated at table drinking, and two CARBINEERS, VILLAGE LADS and LASSES, at end of dance, exit into house, R.

O'BLARN. (*after dance, laughing*) And do you think I'm going to swallow all you have been saying, now?

HECT. You may, on the faith of a trumpeter.

O'BLARN. And this was last night?

HECT. In a village whose name I don't know any more than the damsel's. The fact is, I was a little how-come-you-so; but when the princess opened her window—

MOULDY. (*aside*) Eh! what's that? Why this is Mrs. Goosequill's gallant.

O'BLARN. And she always answered—no?

HECT. And stuck to it, till—

MOULDY. (*aside*) No—did he say no? (*struck with a sudden recollection*) Oh! lord.

O'BLARN. Oh, you deluding devil! And the disturber—

HECT. (*laughing*) Entered by the door, whilst I retreated by the window.

MOULDY. (*involuntarily*) Oh, murder! (*falls against cask*)

Enter VILLAGERS from inn, R., followed by POLLY SWEETBREAD.

ALL. What's the matter?

MOULDY. Nothing! nothing! A sudden giddiness in the head.

POLLY. Take a drop of something, Mrs. Mouldywort.

O'BLARN. Now then, Polly, we must be off to church. Hector, allow me to present to you my bride, and in a few minutes my spouse in perpetuity.

HECT. (*to POLLY gallantly*) If you had a sister as beautiful as yourself, I should be inclined to follow my friend O'Blarney's example.

POLLY. Oh! sir.

O'BLARN. (*to HECTOR*) A pastrycook's daughter—a desirable match—made me break off with a fine woman who was dying for me. I'll tell you by-and-bye. (*aloud*) But give Polly your arm, and let us march—left foot first.

HECT. (*stops him*) It's impossible, my old friend—duty before pleasure. I have a sacred mission, I am in search of my son, who is now eighteen years of age.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

MOULDY. (*aside*) A son eighteen years old—what perverse precocity, he can't be thirty yet.

O'BLARN. Search for him to-morrow—I can't part with an old comrade met so unexpectedly, and on my wedding-day too; remain and—

POLLY. You will remain when a lady asks you?

MOULDY. You'll remain when a brother musician asks you? (*aside*) I want to know all about the— (*aloud*) Do you know I begin to like you very much, Trumpeter.

HECT. You are very good, Fiddler—how's your head?

O'BLARN. We are going to dine here. Then for fun and frolic—hunt the slipper—we shall dance—we shall get drunk.

HECT. Get drunk! (*takes his hand*) You know the way to my heart. I remain. (*gives POLLY his arm*)

O'BLARN. Bravo!

POLLY. (*to MOULDYWORT*) Mr. Mouldywort, why didn't you bring Fan with you, she would have made a dancer the more, and—

MOULDY. (*angrily*) Oh, she's such a goose—can't put one foot before the other. I can't take her anywhere.

HECT. (*to POLLY*) Who is Fan?

POLLY. We don't know much about her. He's as jealous of her as a Turk; but he little knows the trick I've played him. (*laughs*) I've sent for her as if from him, and she is going to come.

HECT. Oh, you wicked little devil! (*aside*) My friend, the sergeant, must mind his eye with you.

O'BLARN. Now then, fall in—left foot first!

Music. VILLAGERS form two and two, headed by HECTOR and POLLY, and O'BLARNEY, and exeunt L. 2 E.

MOULDY. This must be cleared up. Now I recollect, that cursed bird, who never spoke a traitorous word in his life, never ceased the whole night screaming something about (*imitating*) "An officer of the king's;" and now this trumpeter; but I'm an idiot—it's not possible! At first she wouldn't open to me—a plain proof she wouldn't open to anyone—and when I entered she was calm, that is to say, she had that natural fluttering caused by the joy of my return. (*loudly*) It's stupid! absurd! she has replied "No!" to him, and banged the door in his face, and he in return is bragging—doing a little trumpeting on his own private account; but here is Mrs. Goosequill—what brings her here? (*hides behind eask, L.*)

Enter BRIDGET, R. U. E.

BRIDGET. Mr. O'Blarney is at Greenhill, they say; I must have an explanation with him. (*fans herself with pocket handkerchief*)

MOULDY. (*aside*) What's the matter now?

BRIDGET. (*to herself*) It's horrible to think of. I'm morally sure it wasn't he—he wouldn't answer my questions, and when at last he did speak out his voice betrayed him. I screamed, and he darted out of the window.

MOULDY. (*aside and approaching*) What the deuce is she muttering about? Some inward difficulty that she can't arrange to her own satisfaction.

BRIDGET. (*aside*) If he should have been seen I am compromised; but I have a proof, (*louder*) and if I discover the audacious fellow he shall marry me.

MOULDY. (*hearing the last words*) That's a fixed idea of hers.

BRIDGET. (*perceiving him*) Eh! Ah, that dear Mr. Mouldywort.

MOULDY. (*aside*) The old baboon! (*aloud*) What has brought you here? Oh, the wedding of your cousin, Polly Sweetbread!

BRIDGET. (*astonished*) Polly! Is she married?

MOULDY. Married to-day. You didn't know, then?

BRIDGET. She never invited me.

MOULDY. That was too bad! Perhaps there was some motive.

BRIDGET. Oh, no! we were always on good terms—loved each other dearly—never saw one another.

MOULDY. Oh, then it's an oversight! They are at church. I'll go and tell them. (*aside*) We shall have discord here, O'Blarney's been seen hanging about her house.

BRIDGET. I can't understand it.

MOULDY. Nor I neither! (*aside*) There will be a row here! —there'll be a row!—what a jubilee! I'll be back in a moment.

Exit, L. 2 E.

BRIDGET. What does the old scraper mean? (*a sigh*) When one has a gnawing worm one thinks all the world guesses it.

Enter FAN, R. U. E.

FAN. It is odd that Mr. Mouldywort should send for me—can it be anything about the blind soldier? (*sees BRIDGET*) Ah, Mrs. Goosequill, hope you're well!

BRIDGET. (*aside*) Even to that little wretch—it appears the whole country is invited but me. (*aloud*) Good-day, my dear.

FAN. Have you come to the marriage too?

BRIDGET. I don't think I shall stay, all the riff-raff of the country is here, and a woman who has any respect for herself— (*crosses, R.*)

FAN. (*aside*) Riff-raff! that's me she means—she must have perceived the soldier last night from her window. (*aloud, sighing*) Yes, there are persons who would have done better to stay at home.

BRIDGET. (*aside, looking at FAN*) What does she mean by that? she must have seen my unknown escape by the window. If she were to disclose—

FAN. (*as if trying to excuse herself*) But one cannot always prevent—

BRIDGET. (*the same*) Men are so bold.

FAN. (*aside*) She has seen him. (*aloud*) Who follow you in spite of yourself.

BRIDGET. (*aside*) She has seen him. (*aloud*) Yes, and at night, when one is alone—

FAN. And afraid. (*approaching*)

BRIDGET. (*approaching*) It is so easy to be deceived.

FAN. It is better not to mention it.

BRIDGET. Much better. (*aside*) She's not such a fool as I thought. (*aloud*) So, my dear Fan, you will be dumb.

FAN. Perfectly.

BRIDGET. She won't mention it. (*aside*)

FAN. (*aside*) She'll say nothing.

BRIDGET. (*aside*) After all, Fan improves every day.

FAN. (*aside*) Mrs. Goosequill isn't a bad woman at bottom! (*aloud*) Let us shake hands on it.

BRIDGET. There!

Re-enter HECTOR, POLLY, SOLDIERS, PEASANTS, L. U. E.

HECT. Now, Mrs. O'Blarney, for ever and ever!

POLLY. (*sees FAN*) What do I see, Fan? Welcome Fan! welcome!

FAN. Wish you joy! wish you joy!

HECT. Is this Fan? (*FAN retires up*)

POLLY. (*crossing to BRIDGET*) And cousin Bridget, too!

BRIDGET. (*dignified*) Wish you joy!

POLLY. You are angry, cousin. It's not my fault, it was done so quick—my husband only wanted a few—

BRIDGET. Yes, yes, I understand—this is he, I suppose. (*points to HECTOR*) Wish you joy, cousin!

HECT. Excuse me, cousin, but this is not he. (*goes up*)

POLLY. (*looking about*) Where is my husband? have I lost him already?

Enter O'BLARNEY, L. 2 E.

O'BLARN. Now then, dinner, boys, dinner!

POLLY. Come here, my love, and receive the congratulations of—

O'BLARN. You are all— (*comes face to face with BRIDGET*) Oh!

BRIDGET. (*thunderstruck—aside*) My sergeant!

O'BLARN. (*aside*) My victim!

BRIDGET. (*aside*) I'm going to faint!

O'BLARN. (*aside*) I feel my legs going away!

POLLY. You know each other?

O'BLARN. No—that is to say— (*confused*)

BRIDGET. (*in a softer tone*) I see the gentleman for the first time. (*crosses to him and shakes hands*) Oh, you monster!

O'BLARN. My susceptible friend, I'll explain to you.

BRIDGET. And when I expected you last night.

POLLY. (*to BRIDGET*) How do you like him?

BRIDGET. Oh, he is charming! (*aside—looking severely at O'BLARNEY*) Don Juan in jack boots! (*stamps on his toes, crossing, L.*)

O'BLARN. Oh!

HECT. (*coming forward*) Hollo! what's the matter?

O'BLARN. The woman I told you of, who was dying for me.

HECT. (*looks at her*) She doesn't much look like as if she were dying. Upon my life she's a very fine woman!

O'BLARN. Make love to her then.

HECT. Well, I may amuse myself as long as I'm here. Majestic cousin, (*crosses to BRIDGET*) perhaps there may be a little incoherence here, at which you must be shocked, on the part of my friend, the sergeant; but permit me to say, the Duke of Marlborough had set his heart on this marriage—a political arrangement with France. It was I who brought the order. There was no slight intended towards you—banish then the clouds which obscure the brilliancy of those eyes, and take your place at the banquet of the Graces, of whom you are the lieutenant-colonel.

BRIDGET. (*flattered—aside*) He's a very fine man!

O'BLARN. (*aside to HECTOR*) Thanks! thanks!

HECT. (*aloud, as if to himself*) A magnificent woman, upon my honor!

BRIDGET. (*to herself*) He expresses himself with a delicacy.

FAN. (*coming down to HECTOR*) What does the Duke of Marlborough concern himself with the marriages of us poor peasants?

HECT. When they are pretty, like you.

POLLY. (*comes down to BRIDGET*) So, cousin, you are no longer angry?

BRIDGET. (*embracing her*) No; when people love each other as we do! (*aside*) I detest her!

Enter MOULDYWORT, L. 1 E.

MOULDY. Now, I suppose, they are tearing each other's eyes out. (*seeing them embrace*) Eh! why they embrace! (*turns and sees FAN, R.*) What do I see?—Fan! (*going to her*) I should like to know—

HECT. (*pushing him off*) Pardon me, fragment of Orpheus—she is engaged to me for the first dance.

MOULDY. (*enraged*) Dance! I'll dance her!

FAN. Oh, oh, oh!

ALL. Oh, Mr. Mouldywort!

HECT. Mr. Uglywort, respect the sex, or I'll break you and your fiddle into small pieces!

MOULDY. Mind your own business, Mr. Trumpeter! (*to FAN*) Who told you to come here?

POLLY. Well, Mr. Mouldywort, it was I.

MOULDY. You!

POLLY. Yes, I wanted her to dance at my wedding.

HECT. Come! (*strikes MOULDYWORT on the stomach*) You old miserly fiddler—be content!

MOULDY. (*aside*) There's some frightful business going on here. (*aloud*) Well, she may remain, since it is agreeable to the company. (*aside*) I'll make her pay for this! (*crosses to L.*)

O'BLARN. Dinner will be ready directly! In the meantime, Hector, suppose you tell us the history of your son of eighteen years.

MOULDY. Do, Mr. Trumpeter, and I have one of an inconsolable widow, that'll keep for the dessert; but wouldn't you rather give us the other?

HECT. What other?

MOULDY. The one you were telling O'Blarney, and of which I heard a few words.

O'BLARN. Yes, famous, it will amuse the ladies.

LADIES. Yes, yes!

HECT. I am at the orders of Beauty.

ALL. We listen.

MOULDY. Yes, we listen—Beauty listens.

HECT. Hem! it's no older than last night, in a village, a few miles from here—

ALL. Which? Which?

HECT. I'll mention no names, because I'm discreet, (*aside*) and because I don't know it.

MOULDY. Go on!

HECT. I was wandering in the dark, seeking some shelter. I caught a glimpse of a woman taking the air at her window—

MOULDY. A woman!

POLLY. At her window!

O'BLARN. At night! She was expecting somebody.

HECT. Possibly!

BRIDGET. (*aside*) Good heavens!

FAN. (*aside*) What did he say?

HECT. She descended, and we entered into conversation.

BRIDGET. (*aside*) My unknown!

FAN. (*aside*) My blind soldier!

MOULDY. (*looking at FAN*) She seems troubled. (*aside*) This becomes very interesting.

HECT. You will laugh when I tell you that to every question I asked, this female phantom answered, "No!"

ALL. No!

HECT. Always no.

FAN. (*aside*) What will become of me?

BRIDGET. (*aside*) He mistakes, I always said yes to everything.

HECT. I soon understood the allegory, and I arranged all my demands, so that all her "Noes" meant yes.

FAN. (How my heart beats ; It was he !) (*aside*)

BRIDGET. (*aside*) I'm afraid I shall be ill ; it was he !

O'BLARN. (*laughing*) You are the devil's own boy, Hector.

POLLY. He tells a story like an angel.

MOULDY. Oh, he is a devil of a story-teller !

POLLY. And so amusing.

MOULDY. (*writhing*) Very ! very !

HECT. In a word we entered the house, it was darker than the outside ; I pressed her hand—now seeing that I am a trumpeter, and as timid as a cannon ball, I—

BRIDGET. (*aside*) He won't look this way.

FAN. (*aside*) How can I stop him ? Ah ! (*struck with an idea—goes to table—returns with a drinking horn, and puts silver ring into it*)

OMNES. Well ! well you !

HECT. Well I—

FAN. (*to HECTOR*) You must be thirsty, sir, you had better take a mouthful of beer.

HECT. I never refuse a woman anything. (*drinks*)

MOULDY. How dare you interrupt ?

HECT. (*coughs*) Ugh ! ugh ! I've nearly choked myself.

OMNES. What's the matter ?

HECT. (*aside*) What do I see ? (*takes out ring unperceived, aloud*) Nothing, the beer went the wrong way ! (*aside*) My silver ring ? (*meets FAN'S eye*) It was she—Oh !

OMNES. Well ! The end, the end.

MOULDY. You are not going to leave off at the best of it ?

HECT. (*with a forced laugh*) Yes, yes ; the end ! (*aside, striking his forehead*) Oh, you thick headed trumpeter, you will always be getting yourself or somebody else into a scrape. (*aloud*) Where, where was I ?

MOULDY. You were squeezing her hand !

POLLY. In her chamber ?

O'BLARN. Without a candle ?

OMNES. Yes, yes.

HECTOR. (*confused, laughing*) Exactly, in her chamber ; without a candle ; since I didn't see, for if I had seen, I wouldn't have permitted myself—

OMNES. At last ?

HECT. At last—she repulsed me.

O'BLARN. Hector, that won't do, you told me she didn't repulse you.

HECT. (*stammering*) At first, but afterwards—it's always

like that, the first moment modesty—or some—*(aside)* My tongue twists like an eel in my mouth !

MOULDY. How long will it be, before we hear the end ?

HECT. Emboldened by her silence, I gently pressed her lips, put my hands round her waist—I resolved to be more bold, when all at once, I—

OMNES. Oh !

HECT. I awoke.

OMNES. How ?

MOULDY. *(disappointed)* You awoke ?

HECT. *(laughs)* Yes, it was only a dream—ha ! ha !

OMNES. A dream ! *(murmuring)* Oh !

POLLY. What a pity.

FAN. *(aside)* I breathe !

BRIDGET. *(aside)* Such presence of mind.

MOULDY. *(aside)* He lies like a travelling pedlar.

Enter TIMMINS, from house, R.

TIM. Dinner's ready.

O'BLARN. That's right, now for dinner—hands to the ladies.

HECT. *(to FAN aside)* I must speak with you here in two minutes.

Exeunt all but MOULDYWORT into house, R.

MOULDY. *(watching)* An assignation—I'll be there ! I have a scheme in my head, to ensnare the enemy—they understand each other. He mustn't think I'm the dupe of his dreams, the scarlet-coated libertine ! No, you were awake, wide awake, and so am I. *(with sudden passion)* Oh, women are—women ; but I won't swallow this pill without avenging myself, and before all the village. Here she comes already—what impatience ; the other won't be long ! Where can I hide myself ? Ah, in this cask—a musician has a right to go into his own orchestra ! *(conceals himself in cask)*

Enter FAN, from house, R.

FAN. No one here ; he told me to wait—how frightened I am ! Oh, here he comes !

Enter HECTOR from house, R.

HECT. Ah, you're come, then.

MOULDY. *(pops up his head)* I was sure of it, there they are.

HECT. Fan—

FAN. Beware, Mr. Mouldywort—

HECT. Fear nothing, he is not here.

MOULDY. Don't you be too sure.

HECT. It was you, then !

FAN. (*timidly*) And you are not blind ? How wrong it is to deceive.

HECT. Speak not of it ; I am a scoundrel ! To think I was on the point of compromising you, innocence itself; but self-esteem—the desire of raising a laugh, when in truth, I would give my life—when I think of it, I could tear off my moustache, and blow my brains out !

FAN. Oh, no, no, I should be so sorry.

MOULDY. You're not of my opinion !

HECT. You are not angry with me, then ?

FAN. No.

HECT. You don't bear any malice ?

FAN. No.

MOULDY. Still thrusting her "Noes" upon everybody.

FAN. I've always been so unhappy—nobody has never addressed a word of real kindness to me, and when I heard your voice, it appeared from the first the voice of a friend, and I came to you without fear.

MOULDY. I never heard her say as much before—a regular sermon.

HECT. Yes, Fan, I will be your friend, and will never quit you more.

MOULDY. You don't say so !

HECT. But what the devil am I saying ? I must be off this very night.

FAN. Ah, you depart—then perhaps you will leave with me, the silver ring you put on my finger last night, and which I returned to you.

HECT. There it is. (*gives it*) But if your tyrant sees it ?

MOULDY. And he will see it.

HECT. But no ! I will kill him before I go.

MOULDY. (*aloud*) Oh ! (*sinks into cask*)

FAN. Kill him !

HECT. (*having heard MOULDYWORT*) Where is he ? I'll send a bullet through his head, just as I'm going to send this through the bunghole of that cask ! (*seizing one of the carbines, against tree*).

MOULDY. (*umps up his head*) Stop ! Stop ! Don't be a fool ; no folly !

HECT. Hallo ! Here's Diogenes, in his tub ! (*pops down*).

MOULDY. (*not showing himself ; but thrusts his hand thro' bunghole*) No, no ; it's not Diogenes—it's I, Mouldywort ; I have heard all ! (*his hand through bunghole*) Put down that carbine !

HECT. (*near the cask levelling carbine*) I am prepared to give you satisfaction.

MOULDY. (*pops up ; finds the muzzle of carbine close to his*

mouth—pops down) I am satisfied! (*thrusts hand through bung-hole*) Put down that carbine!

HECT. (*putting down carbine*) There, the carbine's down—excuse me; but I thought that a husband—

MOULDY. (*getting out of cask*) Her husband? Not such a fool!

HECT. You are not her husband?

MOULDY. I was to be; but after what I've just heard, I've no wish to profane the name of Mouldywort.

HECT. (*taking fiddle from table*) I'll break your fiddle over your occiput, if you—

MOULDY. Don't put yourself in a passion, Mr. Trumpeter! Don't give yourself the trouble! You love Fan, Fan loves you—marry her; I wash my hands of her!

HECT. Certainly, I shall marry her.

FAN. Is it possible?

HECT. (*recollecting*) But wooden-headed idiot, that I am—I can't.

MOULDY. He can't—he's married already! (*joyously*)

HECT. If it was only that; but it's worse—an oath I swore to a dying friend, I would never enlist in the corps of Hymen, in order to consecrate myself to his son whom I adopted.

FAN. Ah!

MOULDY. (*derisively*) Humbug! Humbug! 'More trumpeting!

HECT. (*seizing him*) You dog of a catgut scraper; I'll tear your viperous tongue out!

MOULDY. Murder! Murder! Help!

Enter O'BLARNEY, POLLY, TIMMINS, VILLAGERS, and SOLDIERS, from house, R.—O'BLARNEY and POLLY get between HECTOR and MOULDYWORT.

Hold him fast, O'Blarney! Hold him fast! I've interpreted the trumpeter's dream—Miss Fan is the heroine! I give her up to him, and he refuses to marry her!

HECT. You infernal box of resin! (*threatening*)

MOULDY. Hold him fast, O'Blarney! Hold him fast!

POLLY. (*to HECTOR*) You refuse to marry her?

MOULDY. Serve her right! Serve her right!

HECT. (*restrained by O'BLARNEY*) Just let me strangle him; the smallest bit!

MOULDY. O'Blarney, don't let him strangle me the smallest bit! She must go to the workhouse—nobody will have anything to do with her; I was only going to marry her out of charity—a little wretch, with neither a father nor a mother—who has not even a name; for who would own such a name as Ironfist?

HECT. What? What's that? Guns and mortars; who dares speak ill of my poor friend Ironfist? I'll cut him in two.

MOULDY. A friend of yours? I thought so—I wish you joy of him! a finished brigand! (HECTOR *threatens him*) Hold him fast, Mr. O'Blarney! Who deserted his infant child?

HECT. Yes, yes, his son, who—

MOULDY. No, no, his daughter.

HECT. Daughter, no, son! Look here (*pulls paper from his pocket*) It's a boy, Francis Ironfist.

MOULDY. Exactly! Frances Ironfist—I called her Fan, for shortness.

HECT. (*spelling*) F-r-a-n-c-i-s.

POLLY. (*looking at it*) That is'n't an *i*, it's an *e*, only not looped, there's no dot.

HECT. Drums and trumpets! You are right. I took it for granted the child was a boy, and thought that it was an *i*!

MOULDY. Well, what with your *i's*, and her "Noes," you've made a good thing of it!

HECT. It is she! (*rapturously*)

OMNES. She!

FAN. What's the matter with him?

MOULDY. He is going mad! He'll bite somebody.

HECT. I believe I shall go mad—this boy, whom I've been seeking everywhere, is a girl! I'm not sorry for the transformation—embrace me, Fan—and so my son's a daughter.

FAN. But tell me—

HECT. I havn't time now—embrace me, everybody! (VILLAGE GIRLS *rush round and embrace him*—MOULDYWORT *advances*) Not you Mr. Mouldywort! Oh, my brave old Ironfist. I promised him to love you, to be your father; I'll be more—I'll be your husband, and love you enough for both.

OMNES. Her husband?

FAN. Oh, dear Hector! (*to MOULDYWORT, retorting*) Serve her right, serve her right! he does'n't marry me for charity—I will not be your wife, and he will be my husband.

Enter BRIDGET, from house, R.

BRIDGET. After me, if he lives long enough!

FAN. Eh!

HECT. Hallo!

BRIDGET. (*to HECTOR*) Don't be alarmed—thanks to your recital, all is known, sir. An individual had the boldness to penetrate into my house, last night.

O'BLAR. (*aside*) In my place, I'll swear!

MOULDY. (*aside*) He's Mrs. Goosequill's gallant, too; this is beautiful!

BRIDGET. Although my honour is unsullied by that nocturnal invasion, my reputation is not the less compromised, for the invader escaped by the window.

FAN. (*aside*) Just as he did with me.

HECT. I'm in for it this time—an inevitable bigamist.

BRIDGET. You owe me reparation, and must marry me at once.

FAN. No, no; he is to marry me.

O'BLARN. The man can't have two wives.

POLLY. Such a thing has never been seen, or heard of.

MOULDY. Sometimes, sometimes!

HECT. Permit me to say, majestic widow, you must be mistaken.

BRIDGET. No, trumpeter; I have a proof. (*whispers one of the SOLDIERS who exits into house, R., and returns with Mouldywort's cloak*)

MOULDY. I raise my hand!

HECT. And I my foot! (*kicks MOULDY behind FAN*)

MOULDY. Oh, confound him! What hard boots the fellow wears!

HECT. What proof?

BRIDGET. You shall know presently! (*takes cloak, and holds it open*) Behold, it's your cloak!

HECT. (*aside*) The one I found! (*aloud*) What does that prove? It is not mine.

OMNES. Not yours!

MOULDY. (*astonished*) Not yours! Oh, it's not yours. Ha! ha!

FAN. (*looking*) Eh! Yes! Why, it's Mr. Mouldywort's!

OMNES. Ha! Ha! Ha!

MOULDY. (*astonished*) What, my cloak! HECTOR *thrusts it to his face*)

BRIDGET. It must have been he, then. (*with a grimace of disgust*) Ugh!

POLLY. (*crossing to MOULDY*) Oh, you old poacher.

O'BLARN. (*crossing to MOULDY*) You wicked old fiddler!

BRIDGET. After such an exposure, I must have a husband.

MOULDY. It won't be me.

TIM. (*aside to him*) Don't be a fool—marry her, man. (*whispers*)

MOULDY. (*low*) Her uncle, the grocer—

TIM. (*low*) Died yesterday. (*they whisper to each other*)

MOULDY. (*low*) £700, and she doesn't know it. (*aloud to BRIDGET*) Too cruel Bridget; I struggle in vain—repentance overwhelms me—pardon an unhappy fiddler, whose rage blinded his judgment.

BRIDGET. It was you then, decidedly. (*disconcerted*)

MOULDY. Since they all say so.

OMNES. He confesses.

HECT. I'm astounded!

BRIDGET. I would rather have had the other; but he is a husband—Mr. Mouldywort, take my hand!

MOULDY. My dear Bridget. (*embrace, then aside over her shoulder*) How the devil did my cloak get there?

FAN. Well, but I—

HECT. You are Mrs. Blowhard-in-chief, and without a partner; and I hope our friends are no less happy than I, in being witnesses to the circumstances that have led me to discover that—**MY SON'S A DAUGHTER.**

VILLAGERS.

TIMMINS.

FANNY.

HECTOR.

R.

SOLDIERS.

BRIDGET.

POLLY.

L.

VILLAGERS.

MOULDYWORT.

O'BLARNEY.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R.

R. C.

C.

L. C.

L.

Right.

Right Centre.

Centre.

Left Centre.

Left.

Curtain.