

AN
ATROCIOUS CRIMINAL. 

A Farce.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

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" Poor Cousin Walter," " The World and the Stage," " Sybilla; or, Step by Step,"
" Second Love," " A Fair Pretender," " Very Suspicious," " Appearances,"
" That Odious Captain Cutter," " Court Cards," " A Scrap of Paper," " A
School for Coquettes," " Heads or Tails ?" " Daddy Hardacre," " Dreams
of Delusion," " Prison and Palace," " Family Pride," " Marco Spada,"
" Ranelagh," " Only a Clod," " Matrimonial Prospectuses," " Without
Incumbrances," " Deadly Reports," " A Smack for a Smack," " First
Affections," " King of the Merrows," " The Watch-Cry," " The Master of
Ravenswood," " Broken Ties," " Jack in a Box," &c.

And " Bianca, the Bravo's Bride," " Romance," " Caught and Caged,"
" Ida; or the Guardian Storks," &c. &c.. (*Operas*).

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

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AN ATROCIOUS CRIMINAL.

*First performed at the Royal Olympic Theatre (Sole Lessee,
Mr. Benjamin Webster; Manager, Mr. Horace Wigan),
on Monday, 18th February, 1867.*

Characters.

HANS FLICKER VON FLICKERDORF	Mr. JOHN CLAYTON.
FLORIAN HAHNENKAMM	Mr. H. COOPER.
BOCK	Mr. JERROLD REEVES.
CUNIGUNDA LIPPMAN	Mrs. STEPHENS.
MINNA VON ROSEN	Miss AMY SHERIDAN.
LISA	Miss E. FARREN.

Scene.—**COBLENTZ ON THE RHINE.**

Costumes.

HANS FLICKER VON FLICKERDORF.—Black coat, white waistcoat, tight black trousers, German student's cap, riband of the same colours crossing the chest, railway shawl on shoulders, long hair, double eye-glass on nose.

FLORIAN HAHNENKAMM.—Black official suit, white cravat, frill.

BOCK.—Military long coat with plain brass buttons, white trousers, belt round waist, Prussian cap.

CUNIGUNDA LIPPMAN.—Extravagantly fashionable morning attire.

MINNA VON ROSEN.—Elegant travelling dress.

LISA.—German peasant's dress and cap.

AN ATROCIOUS CRIMINAL!



SCENE.—*A Plain Drawing Room Interior.—Entrance door, C; in the angle, L. a door opening in a passage, R.; an ottoman, C.; a standing desk, practicable, to lock, R.; books on the desk; chairs about the stage.*

Enter LISA, R.

LISA. (*speaking off*) All right, ma'amselle ; I'll take care and let master know at once, (*crosses to L., and endeavours to enter—she is stopped by BOCK, who stands on threshold, with an official staff, which he carries as a gun*)

BOCK. Can't pass !

LISA. Nonsense, Bock! Can't pass, indeed! I want to see Mr. Lippman our chief magistrate.

BOCK. No go!

LISA. Very well! I'm nobody: and I will go. (*tries to force her way*)

BOCK. Won't do!

LISA. You tiresome man; I tell you, I've an urgent message to master.

BOCK. Don't care! Got my orders to let no one pass—neither man nor woman, whatever their sex, unless a criminal. Now, are *you* a criminal ? If you are a criminal tell me so.

LISA. I can tell you what you are—an arrant fool!

BOCK. (*pathetically*) Oh, Lisa!

LISA. Of course you are ! I want to fetch Mr. Lippman to take his sister, Ma'amselle Cunigunda, to a morning concert at the Casino—at the Casino—don't you hear ?

BOCK. I hear.

LISA. Well!

BOCK. Well!

LISA. Oh, you dullard! Then, when the house is clear, you might—(*affecting modesty*)

BOCK. What!

LISA. Make love to me—dolt!

BOCK. (*with a big sigh*) Oh !
 LISA. So let me go in, and fetch master. (*tries to pass*)
 BOCK. No!
 LISA. But don't I tell you-----
 BOCK. Duty!
 LISA. Oh, very well! (*leaving him*) You're a rude, ill-tempered fellow!
 BOCK. (*plaintively*) Lisa !
 LISA. And I've done with you, for ever!
 BOCK. (*half crying*) Lisa!
 LISA. I never mean to look at you again!
 BOCK. (*sobbing*) Lisa!
 LISA. Very well, then ! Let me go in to master—Come, my sweet, good-looking dear little Bock ? Do now—do !
 BOCK. (*recovering himself*) Can't I
 LISA. Bock!
 BOCK. Duty ! (*shoulders his staff like a gun, and exit, L.*)
 LISA. Brute! There's no getting him out of his (*mimicking*)
 " Can't! Duty ! " The creature isn't a man—he's a stone wall!

Enter MINNA VON ROSEN, C.

MINNA. Ah ! there you are, Lisa!
 LISA. Why, if it isn't Madame von Resen !

Enter CUNIGUNDA LIPPMAN, R.

CUNI. Well, is my brother ready to go with me?
 MINNA. (*advancing*) Aunt Cunigunda !
 CUNI. My dear Minna! This is an unexpected pleasure. (*they embrace*)
 MINNA. Delighted to see you after so long an absence ! But where is my father ?
 LISA. In his office.
 MINNA. Then I'll go to him.
 LISA. (*mimicking* BOCK) Can't!
 MINNA. Why not ?
 LISA. (*as before*) Duty !
 MINNA. What does all this mean ?
 LISA. Ask that fool Bock, the doorkeeper, ma'am. That's all I could get out of *him*.
 MINNA. Oh, nonsense! Of course my father will see *me*. (*goes to door, L.*)
 BOCK. (*appearing at door L., and presenting staff*) Can't pass!
 MINNA. But, to speak to my own father, surely.
 BOCK. Won't do!
 MINNA. But why? Why?
 BOCK. Orders!

LISA, (*laughing*) What did I tell you, madam ? Bock's ablock!

BOCK. (*pathetically*) Oh, Lisa !

FLORIAN HAHNENKAMM. (*without, L.*) Bock ! Bock ! Where are you ?

CUNI. Ah ! Here comes Florian Hahnenkamm, the head clerk. He is always polite with the fair sex. (*simpers*)

LISA, (*aside*) She calls herself " the fair sex," does she?

MINNA. He will give the necessary orders, doubtless.

Enter FLORIAN HAHNENKAMM, from passage, L.

FLOR. (*calling*) Bock!

BOCK. (*shouldering staff*) Here !

FLOR. Ah, ladies ! I have the honour to present you my most respectful (*pause for a word*) respects. Allow me one moment. Bock, you were placed in the passage. Why have you left the passage ?

BOCK. I-----

FLOR. Silence! Not a soul is to pass. You know your orders!

BOCK. I know.

FLOR. Then march off to your post!

BOCK. I march !

Exit into passage, L.

FLOR. Now, ladies, I await your fair commands.

MINNA. I want to see my father !

FLOR. You overwhelm me with despair, madam. Impossible!

MINNA. But after more than three months' separation, when I have come all the way from Berlin here to Coblenz, to fly to his arms-----

FLOR. I am infinitely grieved to check your flight, madam. And his arms will doubtless regret the delay. But it can't be helped.

CUNI. But I must have my brother to chaperon me to the concert. It would be too compromising, for a young woman, like me, to go alone. The male sex is so enterprising now o'days.

LISA. (*aside*) Not enough to *her* liking, I fancy.

FLOR. Ladies, I can only express my most regretful— (*seeks for a word*) regrets! Mr. Lippman, at this hour, has no daughter—no sister—

MINNA AND CUNI. (*together*) What!

FLOR. I mean, he is no longer a father—no longer a brother. He is just now the incarnated—(*seeks for a word*) incarnation of justice—as chief magistrate.

MINNA. But how is this?

CUNI. Good heavens ! What has happened?

FLOR. Happened ! Why, a burglary—a beautiful burglary ! One of the most magnificent and palpitating cases imaginable.

CUNI. It makes me palpitate to think of it.

MINNA. And have you caught the midnight aggressor ?

FLOR. Well, not yet! not yet! But, thanks to my perspicuity, we are on his track already.

CUNI. Poor fellow! These malefactors are always so engaging.

FLOR. The chief magistrate is receiving depositions, reading, examining, protocoling, et cetera. An earthquake would not move him, even though his magisterial chair broke down beneath him.

MINNA. But, my dear sir-----

CUNI. My good Mr. Florian Hahnenkamm-----

FLOR. Ladies, you cause my heart to bleed—you do, indeed! But here, I am no longer the gallant and amiable Florian Hahnenkamm—I am only head clerk ; and as such I am inflexible in my—*(pauses for a word)* inflexibility, *(looking at his watch)* Bless my soul! Ten o'clock ! I must be off to the house where the offence was committed ; and I have no doubt all will be clear as soon as I put my nose into it. For I *liave* a nose!

LISA. You have, indeed ! *(aside)* A precious ugly one!

FLOR. *(going to door, L.)* Bock! Not a soul is to enter, unless it be a criminal, brought before the magistrate—you hear ? a criminal! Ladies, sorry—not to oblige you! I leave you, a man agonized with—*(seeks word)* agony. *Bows, exit door, c.*

CUNI. Now, isn't it aggravating ? To have arrayed myself in my most becoming and captivating attire—and all for nothing, *(with a sudden thought)* Oh, Minna, you might chaperon me to the concert !

MINNA. My dear aunt, you forget I have passed the night on the railway. Just now, the best music would have but little charms for me.

CUNI. As if I cared for the music!

MINNA. *(laughing)* And yet you are so eager for its strains.

CUNI. It's all very well for you to laugh; you are a married woman.

MINNA. A widow ! you mean.

CUNI. *(sighing)* At all events, you *have* had the happiness of being married ; whilst I am yet to be wooed and won. And at a concert, you know, one has the chance of meeting some engaging young fellow, who is looking out for a solid settlement in life.

LISA. *(aside)* Solid enough, if he takes her !

CUNI. And when a young woman is still on the sunny side of existence-----

LISA. *(aside)* Like an over ripe plum on a wall!

CUNI. She is loath to miss any propitious chance.

MINNA. Run and see after my luggage, Lisa.

LISA. I fly ! (*runs up door, c, and is nearly knocked over by*
HANS FLICKER VON FLICKERDORF, *who enters hurriedly*)

HANS. All right! Never mind me ! How are you, my pretty one ? (*chucks her under the chin*)

LISA. Well, I'm sure!

HANS. All right! Never mind me! Mr. Lippman, the Chief Magistrate, if you please. Announce me immediately! I must see him directly. I'm in a deuce of a hurry !

LISA. (*laughing*) Come, that's a good'un ! *Exit, C. door.*

HANS. What's a (*mimicking*) "good'un?" Who's a "good'un ?" Where's a "good'un?" (*seeing CUNIGUNDA*) A female of the archeological order! Is she the "good'un?" (*bowing*) Mr. Lippman, the Chief Magistrate, if you please.

CUNI. (*angrily*) I am not Mr. Lippman, sir!

HANS. Upon my honour, I never took you for that respectable individual of the male sex.

CUNI. Speak to Bock, sir, (*aside, going*) Impertinent fellow!

Exit, R. door

HANS. All right! I'll speak to Bock, (*looking round*) Hollo, Bock! Where's Bock ? (*seeing MINNA*) Ah! Have I the honour of addressing Mademoiselle Bock? Mr. Lippman, the Chief Magistrate, if you please.

MINNA. (*smiling*) Bock is the doorkeeper of Mr. Lippmann's office.

HANS. Is he ? All right! But if you are not Bock, perhaps you won't mind being Bock, "for this occasion only." Mr. Lippman, the Chief Magistrate, if you please.

MINNA. Really, sir-----

HANS. (*bowing*) I am convinced, that you won't refuse to be Bock—you, the most amiable, as you are the most charming of your sex.

MINNA. (*smiling*) You have a strange way of jumping at conclusions, sir.

HANS. Not at all! You are charming—you know you are ! And I can see at once you are amiable, by that air of—of pleasant (*gesticulating*) alloverishness, so unlike the other specimens of the feminine gender, which have just given me such curt answers.

MINNA. Mr. Lippman is my father, sir.

HANS. You don't say so! Is it possible? (*with rapture*) Happy father ! (*seeing MINNA looking at him with surprise*) Oh, all right ! Never mind me !

MINNA. Just now, he is inaccessible. Even I, his daughter, am refused his presence.

HANS. Is it possible that a father can be so devoid of all the bowels of paternity (*bowing*) and gallantry ? To be sure, I

always heard justice was blind ! But she mustn't be deaf—hang it! she mustn't be deaf! And so (*loudly*) Mr. Lippman, the Chief Magistrate, if you please.

MINNA. (*playfully stopping her ears*) She must be deaf indeed to resist such an appeal.

HANS. Pardon the vociferation in favour of the urgency of the case. You shall judge its urgency, I, Hans Flicker von Flickerdorf, as you have the honour of seeing me here before you—no, I mean, as *I* have the honour of seeing myself here before you, madam, (*suddenly checking himself, and changing tone*) By the bye, ought I to say " madam," or " made-moiselle ?"

MINNA. (*smiling*) Say, " madam," by all means.

HANS. All right! Well, madam, I, Hans Flicker von Flickerdorf, as I have the honour of seeing myself—(*checking himself again*) A wife, or a widow!

MINNA. (*as before*) A widow, sir!

HANS. Bravo ! an advancement in rank. Shall we say " advancement?" Well, never mind ! All right! As I said before, I, Hans Flicker von Flickerdorf— (*checking himself as before*) Any children ?

MINNA. Really, sir, this is a regular inquisition.

HANS. Oh, you're not bound to answer, you know.

MINNA. I have no reason to be silent—one little boy, three years of age---- (*aside*) What an original!

HANS. One little boy ! Happy offspring of such a mother ! (*catching her look as before*) Oh, all right! Never mind me! To resume. I, Hans Flicker von Flickerdorf, as I have the honour—and all the rest—I am, at this very moment, one of a wedding party. The wedding is my own.

MINNA. (*laughing*) Indeed!

HANS. And what's more—as the wedding is my own, I am waited for to play a very considerable part in the ceremony—My intended bride is----

MINNA. (*as before*) Fair or dark ?

HANS. Neither ! If I were not the politest of men, I fancy I might say " carrotty."

MINNA. You don't appear very sure.

HANS. I have a very strong notion on the subject. But, my courtship having been very brief, I have not exactly had time to study the particular shades of----

MINNA. Of the lady's character ?

HANS. Of her hair. It was doubtful. I mean the hair again—not the character.

MINNA. But I don't see----

HANS. You don't! And with such lovely eyes too. (*catching a look and gesture of MINNA*) Oh, all right! Never mind me !

Well, the facts are these. I met the young lady in question, one warm evening. Mark that fact! Mark it well! A *warm* evening. I was warm, and an animated conversation ensued. The young lady warmed up, and responded with fervour. After about three quarters of an hour, the father stepped in between us and with very considerable warmth asked what were my intentions. I had not any—so we *all* got warm—uncommonly warm.

MINNA. Your story grows exciting, sir.

HANS. Exciting! I should think so ! Well, this warm old gentleman was a savage Captain of Dragoons. To get out of the range of the fire of this human breech-loader who threatened to pop me off, I decided on popping the question; and the question was popped.

MINNA. (*gaily*) It was rather sudden.

HANS. You have said it! It was! But I had another reason for this unusual precipitancy. A rich old uncle, endowed with a considerable fortune, and the gout, desires to see his race perpetuated before he dies. At present, I am the only race to inherit his endowments—I mean the fortune not the gout. If I don't marry at once he disinherits me : and to achieve his desire, he has liberally given me—one month. So, you see, the lady of the doubtful hair came at the very nick of time.

MINNA. Shall I offer you my congratulations ? (HANS *shrugs his shoulders*) or my condolences, sir ?

HANS. (*politely*) Whichever you please, madam.

MINNA. My condolences let it be !

HANS. Thanks for that tear of sympathy! I don't see it. But I am sure you have dropped a tear of sympathy—some-where ! And in return allow me to offer you a little piece of practical advice. Never engage in warm conversations on warm evenings.

MINNA. Sir!

HANS. Oh, all right! Never mind me !

MINNA. But I don't see what all this has to do with my father, the Chief Magistrate.

HANS. Permit me the full development of my tale. The wedding day was fixed—this very day. Early this morning I arrive from Bonn. I find the nuptial habitation surrounded by armed police. I seek to enter—I am told, in rough tones, to " Move on !" Move on! that's the very thing I wanted to do, but they wouldn't let me ! I explain the urgent necessity of a bridegroom's presence to make a marriage ceremony in Borne degree valid. I am only told, in still rougher tones, to move still onner.

MINNA. But what did this mean ?

HANS. I have still more to develope. A burglary, it would

seem, had been committed in the very habitation of my intended father-in-law. The culprit had not been arrested; and, meanwhile, father-in-law, guests, wedding breakfast, favours, fiddles, blushing bride, orange flowers, and all, had been put under lock and key. Not a soul was allowed to leave the house or enter it. The law was inexorable!

MINNA. Well then! The wedding is simply deferred until to-morrow.

HANS. But didn't I tell you, madame, that my intended father-in-law was a Captain of Dragoons?

MINNA. I have not forgotten it.

HANS. His leave of absence ends to-morrow. He is obliged to take the train for Berlin this very evening. And if you had only seen him at his window, in full uniform, with his sabre in his hand—a sabre as long as that, madame—fully as long as that! "Son-in-law!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder, "You are free! You are able to relieve the blockade. Fly to the Chief Magistrate! He alone can give the necessary order for our release! I give you half an hour. If all is not done by that time, you know what to expect." What to expect—*(shudders)* Burr!

MINNA. And what were you to "expect?"

HANS. Well, I have no strictly definite idea; but I have a pretty strong notion.

MINNA. Poor fellow!

HANS. You have dropped another tear of sympathy. I am sure you have, though, as before, I don't exactly see it. Complete this invisible trait of feeling by procuring an interview, with your equally invisible father! *(pulling out his watch)* The half hour will soon expire, *(aside)* and I have no mind to do like the half hour.

MINNA. I can but be grieved at your deplorable position, my dear sir!

HANS. That's it! Drop more tears of sympathy! But consent!

MINNA. I consent to show you how utterly fruitless is your persistence.

Goes to door, L., and opens it—BOCK appears.

BOCK. *(presenting staff)* Can't pass!

MINNA. It is not I who want to pass, Bock—but this gentleman, who has urgent business with my father.

BOCK. A criminal?

HANS. A criminal! I! Good heavens, no!

BOCK. Then can't pass.

HANS. But I----

BOCK. Won't do. *(shuts door)*

MINNA. You see, sir! I told you the strict truth. Now permit me to retire. I have been here only too long.

Curtseys and exit, door, R.

HANS. (*bowing to MINNA as she goes*) Don't think of apologizing! All right! (*walking about and pulling out his watch*) Five minutes gone! five minutes! and before my eyes I still see the horrible vision of my ferocious father-in-law telegraphing with his sabre—aa long as that.— I *must* see this wretched chief magistrate—I must! Were I to scratch down the wall, brick by brick, with my own nails—only that process would probably last a little longer than half-an-hour—and when I say half-an-hour, (*pulling out his watch*) I mean five-and-twenty minutes.

Enter FLORIAN HAHNENKAMM, door C, with a pair of long pistols.

FLOR. Bravo, bravissimo! If I haven't been able to put my clutches on the burglar, I have on these pistols suspiciously hidden in a carriage, under the seat. This is evidence, overwhelming evidence!

HANS. Hollo! the dragoon's cavalry pistols, (*tries to take them*)

FLOR. (*drawing them back*) Hey! You know these pistols?

HANS. I should think so! I have often looked at them (*aside*) with a prophetic shudder.

FLOR. You know them. Then you are a witness in this case of important—(*seeking the word*) importance. Witness—name unknown—I summon you to appear before the chief magistrate.

HANS. Bravo! All right! The very thing I came for. (*to himself*) I have done it at last! (*exclaiming*) March on! I'll follow thee—Mr.----- similarly, name unknown—even to death I'll follow thee. (*marches to door, L.*)

FLOR. Stop, stop! You must take your turn, (*pulling a card out of his pocket*) There's your number! (*gives it*)

HANS. All right! (*reading*) One hundred and thirty-seven. The devil! And when may your wonderful "One hundred and thirty-seven" turn up?

FLOR. Well, late this evening—about midnight I should say—or to-morrow morning at the latest.

HANS. Infinitely obliged to you! I should be sorry to put you or your chief magistrate to any such inconvenience. (*gives back the number*)

FLOR. What does this mean, witness—name unknown?

HANS. It means that I don't mean to be a witness! I retire from the service, ticket distributor—name equally unknown.

FLOR. What!

HANS. It means that the pistols belong to my father-in-law, a captain of dragoons, who put them in his carriage.

FLOR. Then what do you want—you----- ?

HANS. I want to see the chief magistrate.

FLOR. What for?

HANS. I am one of his most dearly cherished bosom friends ; and I want—I want—to ask him to dinner.

FLOR. (*pompously*) Learn then, Mr.-----

HANS. "Name unknown!" All right ! Bowl on!

FLOR. Learn then that a magistrate, in the exercise of his functions, never dines.

HANS. Doesn't he? I am devilish sorry for him ! But—confound it! This is enough to make one blow one's brains out. Give those pistols to me ! and you shall see what you shall see!

FLOR. (*majestically*) They shall only be rendered up to the individual who can prove his claim, in all its legal—(*seeking the word*) legality ! (*puts the pistols into the standing desk, which he closes*)

HANS. But, my good friend-----

FLOR. I am not your good friend, Mr.----- (*occupied in locking the desk*)

HANS. " Name unknown." All right! (*bell rings violently outside, L.*)

FLOR. There! you have been keeping me here with your confounded nonsense !

HANS. Manners, ticket distributor ! Manners !

FLOR. And the chief magistrate is getting impatient, (*goes L., leaving the key in standing desk*)

HANS. (*seizing hold of the skirts of FLORIAN'S coat*) Ticket distributor, I summon you, by the majesty of the functions with which you are invested to take me with you—in your pocket!

FLOR. Let me be, sir! Don't you see, that I am already aggravated, with all this—(*seeking a word*) aggravation ? You can't appear before the bench. You are neither a witness, nor a criminal. If you had only been the criminal of whom we are in search—or any other criminal, why—(*bell rings again violently, L.*) I come ! I come ! *Exit hastily, door, L.*

HANS. (*walking up and down impatiently*) A criminal! a criminal! If I were but a criminal! Why, have I not committed some horrid crime ? It would be all right then ! But unfortunately I haven't; and that confounded half hour is slipping by ! What's to be done ? (*sits down by desk*) A brilliant idea! Why the deuce shouldn't I *become* a criminal—an atrocious criminal ? It is the only means left in my power, (*reflects—his hand falls on a book*) What's this ? The Code--the Prussian Code. I might find in it some charming little crime of the due atrocity, which would drag me before the august tribunal of this

august, but invisible magistrate. Let's see! let's see ! (*turns over the pages at random*) " Forging false coin of the realm." That won't do! I haven't the time, and the instruments are multifarioug. " Conspiring to defraud." No ! I haven't got any fellow conspirators. " Abduction of a married woman." Hm ! hm ! That's by no means so unpleasant a notion. And, if the fates would but be propitious.—(*reflects*)

Enter CUNIGUNDA LIPPMAN, door R.

CUNI. Upon my word, it is too bad ! To keep me waiting—me—Cunigunda Lippman!

HANS. (*starting*) What do I hear ? Lippman ! The wife of the very magistrate himself! The fates are uncommonly propitious ! (*rises*)

CUNI. Who's there ? (*aside*) The young gentleman, who was here just now. He really is by no means so bad-looking. I didn't sufficiently investigate his personality before.

HANS. (*who has been giving a last look at the Code, aside, throwing down the book*) All right! Now for it! (*starting forward explosively*) Madame!

CUNI. Sir ! (*aside*) He made me jump !

HANS. Moments are precious! I have only half an hour. (*pulling out his watch*) I mean only twenty minutes—to tell you that I love you!

CUNI. You love me? You!

HANS. I don't wonder at your astonishment. It is the most improbable thing in nature, I admit—but never mind that! It's all right! I love you! I adore you!

CUNI. Lower, my dear sir, lower!

HANS. Lower ! Ah, I see ! You wish to have me at your feet. All right! You *shall* have me at your feet! (*kneels*) There! What do you say to that ? I repeat—I love you—I adore you!

CUNI. Lower ! Lower still!

HANS. Lower still ? Well, I don't see how I can conveniently go much lower, unless, like a puppy dog, I were to—

CUNI. Not so loud! For heaven's sake not so loud!

HANS. Oh, I understand ! I am to *speak* lower, (*rising—aside*) That wouldn't suit my book, though, (*aloud*) No, madam, no! I am proud of my feelings. I would proclaim them aloud—on the house-tops—like the torn and tabby cats ! Why should they alone have the privilege of amatory vociferation ?

CUNI. Oh, sir! These words-----

HANS. Don't suit you—I am very sorry—but I have no time to pick and choose, (*pulling out his watch*) Only a quarter!

CUNI. But, sir, I don't know you—I never saw you before!

HANS. Nor I you. (*correcting himself*) Yes! of course I did—of course! Seven years ago when you may have been young.

CUNI. (*indignant*) Sir!

HANS. Younger! I mean younger—seven years younger—All right!

CUNI. But why wait thus long, unhappy youth ?

HANS. Well, you see, I—I— never found an opportunity.

CUNI. During seven whole years ?

HANS. (*with pathos*) During seven whole years! But I have found one now! (*gesticulating violently*) I seize it by the scruff of the neck!

CUNI. (*drawing back, alarmed*) Sir!

HANS. Oh, all right! Never mind me.

CUNI. But, just now, you asked for the chief magistrate.

HANS. Only to make sure he wasn't here. His presence you will admit, might have been inconvenient, during a declaration of love to *you*.

CUNI. I have no need to ask if your intentions are strictly honorable ?

HANS. Of course, you haven't—because they can't be!

CUNI. Oh, sir, would you abuse your position?

HANS. Of course I would ! All right! (*takes her round the waist*)

CUNI. Leave off! Or I shall have to scream.

HANS. (*aside*) The very thing, (*aloud*) Scream away.

CUNI. I will!

HANS. Scream away ! (*aside*) Now it's coming !

CUNI. Well, no, I won't scream! Are you satisfied, you naughty man ?

HANS. (*aside*) Satisfied! Quite the reverse, (*aloud*) But were I to press your lovely hand, as I now press your beautiful waist—what would you say?

CUNI. (*coquettishly*) Press!

HANS. (*aside*) Hollo! hollo! (*aloud*) But were I to snatch a kiss—what would you say ?

CUNI. Snatch!

HANS. (*aside*) The devil you would!

CUNI. (*looking at him archly*) Snatch !

HANS. (*kissing her with reluctance—then with a wry face*) Pah !

CUNI. (*leaning on the shoulder of HANS*) I feel I am very weak. But it's your fault, wicked one !

HANS. (*aside*) Weak! weak ! She's as heavy as lead, (*aloud—letting her go*) But what is a kiss to a man, who loves like me? A drop of water to the wretch who dies of thirst! No ! no! You must be mine—mine! I mean to carry you off—carry you to the ends of the earth—carry you much further still!

Cum. But think, wretched youth ! What you propose is a crime.

HANS. All right! the very thing ! (*opening his arms*) Come! jump up, and let me carry you off!

CUNI. (*flying from him*) Oh ! whither would you lead me ?

HANS. All right! To my great grandmother's ! We'll seek that sheltering asylum of love and innocence.

Cum. Never!

HANS. (*seizing her*) Tis in vain you would resist.

CUNI. Is it? Then bear me away, (*falls into his arms*)

HANS. (*aside*) I hear some one coming. I may win the trick yet. (*hoisting up CUNIGUNDA in his arms, with the cry of seafaring men, heaving weights*) Hee houp! he houp !

Enter LISA, R door.

LISA. (*seeing them, screams*) Ah! (*she continues to scream*)

HANS. (*carrying CUNIGUNDA in his arms round the stage*) Lost! discovered! Whither shall we fly ? Where conceal ourselves ?

Enter MINNA VON ROSA, hastily R. door.

MINNA. Good heavens! What does all this mean ?

HANS. (*putting down CUNIGUNDA in a chair, and wiping his forehead—aside*) Pof! I couldn't have stood it half a minute longer, (*aloud*) It means, madam, that I ought to carry off this lovely female in distress—it means, that I am a criminal—an atrocious criminal!

LISA. Come! That's a good 'un !

HANS. She says again, it's a "good 'un."

LISA. Pretty strong, I must say.

HANS. Pretty strong! I should say so! I must have been pretty strong to have—(*rubs his arms*)

CUNI. (to MINNA) Oh! do not believe me guilty!

HANS. Guilty! No! She was virtuous, and I, alone, was criminal! Go ! Summon your myrmidons of the law!

CUNI. No—no! Summon no one ! He loves me—he adores me!

MINNA. You, sir—you! On the point of marriage, too !

HANS. Yes, I! I am an atrocious criminal! (to MINNA) You consider me sufficiently atrocious in my criminality—don't you ? All right ! I thought you would ! So, as I said before, summon your myrmidons of the law ! Let them load me with chains, and drag me before the tribunal of my judge!

MINNA. But there is no reason for any such extremities.

HANS. No reason ! No reason! Why, you have never read your Code, madam—article—never mind what— it's all right—about the abduction of a married woman.

MINNA. But my aunt is not married, sir!

CUNI. (*Looking down with modesty*) No! I am still to be wooed and won!

HANS. (*to MINNA*) Your aunt! I'll take my oath, I thought she was your mother! (*CUNIGUNDA screams violently—aside*) An old maid! (*shudders*) Burr! A pretty business I have made of my criminality!

MINNA. You hear, sir. My aunt is still to be wooed and won.

HANS. Is she ? All right! Then let some one else woo and win her. I am not going in for the stakes. I'm scratched!

LISA. (*aside*) Scratched! Then the old lady used her nails.

CUNI. But you said you loved me—you adored me!

HANS. All right! Of course I did ! I thought you were a married woman !

CCNI. Horror ! Support me, niece! I faint! I die! Bear me to my room, that I may hide my shame! (*falls into the arms of MINNA*)

MINNA. (*leading out CUNIGUNDA—gaily*) Wicked Don Juan! Atrocious criminal! *Exit, door, R., with CUNIGUNDA.*

HANS. Atrocious criminal! All right—No, it's all wrong! That crime was a mere flash in the pan. I must find something more explosive now. Let me see! Where is my Code ?

LISA. (*laughing violently*) Make love to Ma'mselle Cunigunda! Well, I must say, that is a good 'un !

HANS. The absurd female is at her "good 'uns," again! (*walking up to LISA*) What is a " good 'un," absurd female? (*LISA laughs heartily*) And what do you mean by laughing in that absurd way?—You grinning young hyena, you ! (*mimics her angrily*) Ha, ha, ha! (*goes to table and takes up Code, again*)

LISA. (*laughing*) I can't help it! It's so droll! Make love to old Ma'mselle Cunigunda ! Ha, ha, ha!

HANS. Oh, droll, is it? We'll just see if it's droll! (*pulls out his watch*) Just five minutes left! They shall be employed as agreeably as profitably! (*goes to the standing desk*)

LISA. (*laughing*) Been reading in the book, how to make love to old women, sir?

HANS. Yes. Laugh—laugh away ! I'm going to make you laugh with a vengeance, (*opens the desk, and takes out the pistols, which he presents at LISA*)

LISA. Hollo, sir! Take care what you are about!

HANS. I thought I should stop your laughing, absurd female!

LISA. Good gracious ! They may be loaded!

HANS. They are—up to the muzzle! Sit down.

LISA. Sit down?

HANS. Sit down ! (*threatening with the pistols*) At once ! Sit down !

LISA. (*falling into a chair*) Preserve us ! He must be a lunatic maniac, out of his senses !

HANS. Unhappy specimen of the feeble female sex! Do you scream when you are hurt ?

LISA. Don't I, just!

HANS. Loud?

LISA. I bellow like a bull!

HANS. All right! The very thing! The old one wouldn't. (*presenting a pistol*) Now, look out! I'm going to shoot off your left ear!

LISA. Come, no nonsense!

HANS. All right! I am a crack shot!

LISA. But it is a crime to shoot a poor body like me !

HANS. Of course it is! The absurd female is replete with intelligence! It is a crime ! See the Code—article—never mind what! It's all right! So now lookout! (*presents his pistol*)

LISA. Help! murder! Help ! mur—der! (*HANS fires off pistol in the air—LISA falls back in her chair*)

Enter BOCK from passage, L., and MINNA and CUNIGUNDA, R door.

BOCK. A shot!

MINNA and CUNI, (*together*) Lisa! Lisa!

LISA. I'm a dead woman ! Dead as a door nail! That man has murdered me !

MINNA. He ! (*smiling with incredulity*) He, a murderer !

CUNI. (*screaming*) A murderer!

Enter FLORIAN HUHNEKAMM, L. door, hastily.

FLOR. A murderer ! Let him be arrested on the spot! (*BOCK and FLORIAN seize HANS, and take the pistols from him*)

HANS. (*delighted*) All right! I've done it at last! I am an atrocious criminal! I've had devilish hard work, though ! (*BOCK and FLORIAN proceed to tie his hands with a handkerchief*)

LISA. (*looking up*) I don't think I am quite dead. But I feel such a sinking.

CUNI. Come, poor innocent! A drop of sal volatile will do you good.

LISA. Don't you think a drop of brandy would do me better ?

Exit R., led by CUNIGUNDA.

MINNA. (*looking back at HANS*) Our atrocious criminal is an original, certainly. But there is a charm about his very eccentricities. Come, come, Minna! No nonsense about the man; or I shall have to read you a pretty sharp lesson! *Exit, R. door.*

HANS. (*who has been bound, to FLORIAN and BOCK*) Now then, myrmidons of the law, drag me before the tribuna of your chief magistrate!

FLOR. Silence! Time enough for that! Another criminal has been arrested, and has the right of prior—(*seeking the word*) priority!

HANS. Before me?

FLOR. Before you!

HANS. Come, none of your nonsense! Who is this vile intruder? He has no right to go first! Is his atrocity so atrocious as mine? No! it can't be!

FLOR. The offender is the burglar we have sought all the morning.

HANS. So you have pinned him at last, ticket distributor—name unknown?

FLOR. Concealed in a clothes press in the young lady's room.

HANS. In my intended's room! Hollo! "hollo! hollo!

FLOR. Behind a quantity of-----

HANS. Decency, ticket distributor—decency! But, then the house is no longer in a state of siege?

FLOR. The armed police has been withdrawn.

HANS. And the dragon—I mean the dragoon—is as liberty?

FLOR. Certainly!

HANS. And the guests, and the fiddles, and the orange flowers, and the bride?

FLOR. Certainly!

HANS. All right! Then I have nothing more to do here. (*runs up*)

FLOR. The prisoner is attempting to escape! Seize him, Bock—seize him! Let him be immediately put under lock and key, in solitary (*seeking the word*) solitude! (HANS is seized by BOCK and FLORIAN) until he can appear before the chief magistrate!

HANS. (*struggling*) But I don't want your chief magistrate now! Confound your chief magistrate!

FLOR. He confounds the chief magistrate! He blasphemers, the atrocious criminal!

HANS. But I am not an atrocious criminal any longer! I don't want to be an atrocious criminal! I won't be an atrocious criminal!

FLOR. Forwards! March! The dark room in the passage, Bock, without any window! Come!

HANS. (*pulled along by BOCK, and pushed by FLORIAN*) A dark room without a window? How am I ever to see clearly-----?

FLOR. The atrocity of your offence?

HANS. No, the enormity of your stupidity—ticket distributor—name unknown.

Exit, L. door, dragged out by FLORIAN and BOCK.

CUNIGUNDA LIPPMAN *looks in R. door, watching the men as they exeunt.*

CUNI. Unhappy victim of a too ardent temperament! (*calling, R.*) Lisa ! Lisa!

Enter LISA, R. door.

LISA. (*looking in cautiously*) Yes, ma'amselle ! Is the maniac gone?

CUNI. The too fascinating youth. He is ! Come near, Lisa, but don't look at me—I cannot bear your scrutinising gaze ! This young man is an assassin—a bravo—a bandit—which you will. But—but—don't look at me, Lisa! I love him still!

LISA. Well, ma'amselle! I never could take up with a fellow, who, when I said " take me," only answered " pooh."

CUNI. Lisa, he said nothing about " pooh!"

LISA. But something very like it.

CUNI. If he did, the expression came not from his heart. And all is forgotten now—now that he pines within a dungeon's wall—and all owing to you, Lisa !

LISA. To me, ma'amselle ?

CUNI. Yes—to you ! Why did you scream ?

LISA. That's all very well to say. *You*, have never been assassinated!

CUNI. I have been carried off, Lisa—carried off by force ! Was not that enough? and you did not hear *me* scream. But on one thing I am resolved. He must be saved—saved at any price ! *You* shall aid me in his escape.

LISA. I ? (*aside*) She's a more *lunatticker* maniac, than he is!

CUNI. Listen to my plan. You know that I possess a pass-key to every room in the house and office. So, there is nothing to be done but to lure away Bock from his post. This shall be your task. He loves you, Lisa—the obtuse Bock loves you! Encourage that love, Lisa—only for a few minutes, and he will bow before your will.

LISA. (*aside*) The old girl is sharp enough in such matters.

CUNI. Lisa, I burn with impatience—burn like Etna and Vesuvius, both in one.

LISA. Well, ma'amselle, I'll do what I can.

CUNI. And then I will break the chains of the too interesting criminal ! (*retires*)

LISA. (*calling, L. door*) Hist—hist—Bock !

Enter BOCK, L. door.

BOCK. Lisa!

LISA. (*cajoling*) Listen, my dear, good, little Bock.

BOCK. (*simpering*) He—he—he!

LISA. The prisoner is safely locked up—not a soul is by—and no one will want to pass contrary to orders. So now is our time. Come with me into the kitchen—you shall have some beautiful sour kroust.

BOCK. Sour kroust! (*on reflection*) Can't!

LISA. And a glass of schnaps, Bock.

BOCK. (*delighted*) Schnaps! (*as before*) Can't!

LISA. And a kiss from me, Bock—Think of that—A kiss from me.

BOCK. (*hesitating*) A kiss?

LISA. A kiss, (*aside*) And if that isn't sacrificing oneself for missus, (*aside*) Come.

BOCK. I come. (*LISA leads BOCK out stealthily, door, c, CUNIGUNDA advances*)

CUNI. The little breechless god has triumphed. Oh, force of love! Now, to release the prisoner—The propitious moment has arrived, (*she enters the passage, L., and returns immediately*) Follow me!

Enter HANS FLICKER VON FLICKERDORF, door, L.

HANS. Thanks, moustachioed gaoler! Thanks!

CUNI. Moustachioed gaoler?

HANS. Good gracious! It is you! I retract the moustaches!

CUNI. Interesting criminal, you are free!

HANS. Free—free to bolt!

CUNI. (*casting down her eyes, with pathos*) To bolt?

HANS. Well, you are a jolly old girl after all!

CUNI. Sir!

HANS. No. I mean you are *not* a jolly old girl.

CUNI. Sir!

HANS. No, I mean—All right—Never mind what I mean. My brain is turned with joy: and if I didn't restrain myself, I should embrace you on the spot.

CUNI. But, why restrain yourself—interesting criminal?

HANS. Well—I don't exactly know why—but I do.

CUNI. Foolish youth! Do you not read—there in my eyes—that if you are free, it is my heart, that has guided my hand?

HANS. (*retreating, alarmed*) It couldn't be done! It's out of nature—and anatomy.

CUNI. (*advancing on him*) Do you not feel that I love you—interesting criminal?

HANS. (*as before*) No, no—On my honour—I don't feel anything at all.

CUNI. (*as before*) That, if I have set you at liberty, it is that you may partake that liberty with me.

HANS. (*as before*) I shouldn't think of taking such a liberty!

CUNI. Would you force me, in my turn, to carry *you* off?

HANS. Carry me off?

CUNI. (*clinging to him*) Carry you off?

HANS. Hollo! Here's another atrocious criminal. Murder! Abduction!

CUNI. (*letting him go*) Oh, he terrifies me !

HANS. (*raving*) I am to be carried off, am I ? Help, help !

CUNI. (*screaming with, terror*) Help, help !

Enter LISA, C. door, with a letter.

LISA. Are they both *lunatic* maniacs ?

CUNI. Lisa—She will protect me. (*clings to LISA*)

HANS. Heavens be praised! Succour has arrived—I am saved! (*embraces LISA*)

LISA. Go along with you!

HANS. (*very quietly putting his hands in his pockets*) That is just what I an doing—I *am* going along. (*going, c. door*)

LISA. But I have a letter for you, sir.

HANS. (*returning*) Give here, (*looking at it*) It's from the dragon—I mean the dragoon—No doubt, my death warrant.

CUNI. Take me away, Lisa—take me away ! Men are ungrateful wretches!

LISA. That's as you may happen to pick them, ma'amselle. It isn't all the apples as are sour. You had better look out for a riper one. *Exit with CUNIGUNDA, R. door.*

HANS. (*who has opened the letter after some hesitation—reading*) " Son-in-law." Now it's coming. " I am obliged to renounce the honour of your alliance." Can I believe my eyes? " A young man has been found concealed in the chamber of your intended." By Jove! it's the supposed burglar. " He had long loved her, and resolved on this scheme to prevent her marrying another. The young villain must espouse her at once, or he knows what to expect." Well if *he* doesn't, I do. May they be happy, the amateur burglar and his lady-love of the doubtful hair ! Bless you, my children !

Enter MINNA VON ROSEN, R. door.

MINNA. What does this mean ?

HANS. It means, that I am the happiest man alive ! Such a lucky chance! I have lost my wife—that was to be—you know—her of the doubtful hair! I'm the luckiest dog—hollo ! No ! If I don't marry, my uncle will disinherit me. I'm the unluckiest poor devil! I want a wife—bring me a wife.

MINNA. My aunt Cunigunda.

HANS. Horror! Rather renounce my fortune— (*with a sudden resolution*) Stop a bit! stop a bit! an idea ! You are a widow I am an unmarried bachelor—totally unmarried.

MINNA. (*aside*) What is he driving at?

HANS. (*with great formality*) Madame Von Rosen, I have the honor of demanding your hand in marriage.

MINNA. (*laughing, with agitation*) Mine? you are mad!

HANS. Not at all, I'm all right!

MINNA. How can you think of such a thing ?

HANS. I haven't the slightest idea how I can, but I do. It's all settled ! eh ? The settlement is written—in your eyes.

MINNA. Eyes may be deceptive.

HANS. I will never believe yours could be so treacherous.

Enter BOCK, C. door.

BOCK. The prisoner! Escaped ! Help, help !

Enter CUNIGUNDA LIPPMAN, R. door, followed by LISA.

CUNI. Merciful powers ! Has he murdered anyone else ?

LISA. Help, help!

Enter FLORIAN HAHNENKAMM, L. door.

FLOR. What do I see? the incriminated— (*seeking the word*) —criminal out of his cell!

HANS. All right, never mind me! I am not going to run away! very much the contrary; I am very comfortable here. I politely request the intelligent Bock to lay hold on me, on one side, and you, amiable ticket distributor—name unknown, on the other, (*they seize him*) All right! that's it. (*bell rings without, L.*) And take me now, at last, before the illustrious Chief Magistrate, to whom I shall develop my tale—no I mean my name, Christian name, position, and advantages, and formally demand of him the hand of his-----

CUNI. Of his sister! oh, happiness !

HANS. No, of his daughter. (*CUNIGUNDA collapses*) Come, drag me before my judge ! Stop! I have first to appear, a trembling culprit, before other judges. They alone can give that real verdict which is to acquit, or to condemn, " An Atrocious Criminal."

Curtain.