

"SPECIAL"  
PERFORMANCES.

*A Farce,*

*IN ONE ACT.*

BY

WILMOT HARRISON.

(MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHORS' SOCIETY),

AUTHOR OF

JOHN SMITH, MARGATE SANDS, STOLEN! £20 REWARD,  
MR. SCROGGINS, &c, &c, &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
89. STRAND, LONDON'

" SPECIAL " PERFORMANCES.

*First Performed at the New Holborn Theatre Royal, (under the management of Miss Fanny Josephs), on Easter Monday, April 12th., 1868.*

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CHARACTERS.

FERRET } GRIPP } BARNWELL BROWN	(Shopkeepers and Special Constables)	{ Mr. Moreland { Mr. Harry Cox { Mr. Westland
MOWBRAY MOBBS } NEWINGTON BUTTS } GREGORY GRIPP } TOM TUCKER } HARRY HAYBRAND }	(of the Theatre Royal Pentonville) (United Thespians)	{ Mr. McIntyre { Mr. Arthur { Miss A. Melville { Mr. Harrison { Mr. Bernascoin
FANNY FERRET.....	.....	Miss Cholmondely
SALLY .....	.....	Miss Weathersbv
MRS MOBBS .....	.....	Miss Sophia Larkin

SCENE—An Apartment in Ferret's House.

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Time: Present.

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COSTUMES.

FERRET.—Blue coat with brass buttons, light trousers, iron grey hair 2nd dress: Long overcoat, policeman's badge.

GRIPP.—Grey or brown suit, short red or brown hair. 2nd dress: Same as Ferret

MOWBRAY MOBBS.—Tightly fitting dark suit, cloak or cape, long black hair.

The other Costumes at the discretion of the Performers.

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Time occupied in representation, Forty Minutes.

## SPECIAL PERFORMANCES.



SCENE.—*A Chamber. Door R. 2 E.—practicable window, C. in flat, showing parapet to one-third the height of the window, and houses beyond. Large closet, R. in flat—couch, L. c, chairs, table, R. C.—two candles and matches. Small table, L.—in the closet, a countryman's dress and light wig.*

FANNY and SALLY discovered. FANNY leaning on a chair,  
R. c. SALLY sitting, L. C.

SALLY. (*eating*) O do go on, miss ! you does it beautiful.  
Do some rummy O, and what's her name? I like that best.

FANNY. You mean Romeo and Juliet, Sally. Then you must be Romeo. Now mind you look very serious, or you'll put me out.

SALLY. (*picking nuts which she holds in her lap*) Oh, I'll be as grave as a judge, miss, (*looks very grave.*)

FANNY. That is what you are—of my acting, you know.  
Now then, (*leans over chair—acting*)

Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou, Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name!

Or if thou wilt not-----

(SALLY cracks a nut very loudly.)

FANNY. Now, Sally, how can I go on if you crack those horrible nuts. Besides, you are Romeo, remember. Do you suppose Romeo would crack nuts while Juliet is talking to him ?

SALLY. He would if he liked 'em as much, as I do. There ain't nothing in the world I like so well as nuts—'cept s'rimps.

FANNY. Well, don't interrupt me again.

(*acting*) Or if thou will not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Cap-----

(SALLY cracks another nut)

Oh, this is too bad.

SALLY. I can't help it, miss. I tries, but I can't—I always takes a pocketful of 'em when I goes to the theytre, and I can't enjoy the hactin' without 'em. But go on, miss, do go on. I won't do it again.

FANNY. Mind you don't.

(*acting*) What's in a name ? that which we call a rose,  
By any other name would smell as sweet:  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called.  
Betain that dear perfection which he owes,  
Without that title Romeo, doff thy name;  
And for that name, which is no part of thee  
Take all myself-----

(SALLY, who has been cautiously preparing to crack a nut by placing it under the leg of her chair, cracks it as FANNY concludes, appears startled, and then assumes an unconscious attitude.)

FANNY. There, what do you think of it, Sally ?

SALLY. (*examining nut*) Bad !

FANNY. Bad! what, my acting ?

SALLY. No, miss, the nut. That's the fifth bad 'un I've had out of my last ha'p'orth.

FANNY. Bother your nuts. I shall not act for you any more, Sally. You have got no soul, (*comes to front.*)

SALLY. (*rising*) Don't suppose I have much, miss. Don't think souls is much use to maids o' all work. But tell me, miss; are you going to hact at a real theytre ?

FANNY. Yes, Sally, at the Theatre Royal, Pentonville. There are to be two special amateur performances, and I am to play in one of them. But it's a great secret, Sally. I don't want papa to know anything about it, till it is all over, and then when he hears what a success I made, perhaps he'll let me go on the stage, and then when I have saved a little money Barnwell and I can get married. He is only a lawyer's clerk you see, Sally, and ——

SALLY. (*aside*) Thirty bob a week and find hisself!

FANNY. But then he is so clever. Why he wrote the play I am going to act in. What do you think of that ?

SALLY. And what is it called, miss ?

FANNY. Oh, such a beautiful title—The Fugitive Felon of Fingal; or the Faithful Foster-brother and the Fatal Firebrand!

SALLY. Lor, miss, what a lot of F.'s!

FANNY. To be sure, that is what makes it so elective. It is full of exciting situations.

SALLY. I wish you would recommend me for one of 'em, miss. I like exciting situations.

FANNY. Pooh ! I mean exciting scenes, incidents. There are two murders, a suicide, a bigamy and a robbery.

SALLY. Lor, how jolly! and what are you going to hact, miss?

FANNY. I'm the heroine, Sally. Mr. Brown is in love with me.

SALLY. I knows he is, miss—over 'ed and *hears*.

FANNY. But I mean in the play, Sally; and so is Mr. Mobbs. He is our stage manager. He's a real actor, you know, and gets—oh, I don't know how many pounds a week at the Pentonville Theatre. He's a villain!

SALLY. Oh, how shocking ! I hope he won't have nothing to say to me if he comes here.

FANNY. Psha! I mean he is the heavy man of the company.

SALLY. (*stares at FANNY—aside*) Well, I never heard as weight and willainy always went together afore.

FANNY. He is the Fugitive Felon, young Mr. Gripp, he is the Foster-brother and a sailor. Oh, doesn't he act the sailor nicely, (*hitches up imaginary trousers*) and then there are—but they are all coming here to-night for the first rehearsal.

SALLY. It was a capital idea of yours to get Mr. Brown to come and take these rooms when the last lodger left, miss, (*lights a little down.*)

FANNY. Yes, for as papa wouldn't let me go out in the evenings, I couldn't have attended rehearsals else, you know.

SALLY. I don't think master takes very kindly to Mr. Brown, miss.

FANNY. I am afraid not, Sally. Papa let some of his visitors in when you were out the other evening, and said they were suspicious-looking characters. The United Thespians suspicious-looking characters, indeed, (*lights lower.*)

SALLY. Yes, and he asked me when Mr. Brown went out and when he came home and—but law ! since master's been

and got hisself made a special, I don't know what's come over him. He is always a pryin' and pokin' about like a detector perliceman.

FANNY. Yes, and Mr. Gripp, who lives next door is just as bad. However, thank goodness they have both gone out this evening, so we shall have the house to ourselves. (FERRET *appears from L. outside window with a bull's-eye lantern from which he throws a light rapidly across the stage*) Oh, Sally, there's a storm coming on. Did you see the lightning? (FERRET *again throws light on stage*) There again! how vivid! (*hides face—crossing L.*) I can't stop here. (FERRET *again throws light on stage—she screams and runs off, L.*)

SALLY. (R.) Lightning ! not a bit of it. I knows what it is. I haven't lived for five years down a hairy not to know the light of a bull's-eye lantern. It can't be the perlice now though—oh, dear! perhaps it's thieves !

FERRET. (*beckons off, L., then opens window*) Come on, it's all right.

SALLY. Oh, dear, there's two on 'em! thieves sure enough! and master's out. What's to be done ? I can't get to the door or they'll see me, and if I call out they'll murder me—I'll get into the closet, (*she creeps up stage, R., and goes into closet.*)

FERRET. (*comes on stage*) No one here. Come, look alive, Gripp.

GRIPP. (*outside window, holding nervously on to parapet—he also carries a lantern*) It's all very well to say "look alive." If I go over this parapet I shan't look alive when I reach the pavement, (*makes a false step*) Oh !

FERRET. Here, take my hand.

GRIPP. (*looking cautiously around*) You, you are quite certain there is nobody here.

FERRET. Quite, I tell you, come along.

GRIPP. (*comes on stage*) I don't see why you couldn't have come up the stairs of your own house, Ferret, as well as through mine, and along that confounded gutter.

FERRET. (R. C.) Because we might meet him as we went down stairs again, (*turns lantern suddenly on GRIPP'S face*) Don't you see ?

GRIPP. (C.) See ! you take care I shan't. Don't do that! it's enough to blind a man !

FERRET. I beg pardon, I----- (*turns light upon window.*)

GRIPP. Here, I say! what are you about ?

FERRET. What do you mean ?

GRIPP. Why, you are sending the light slap into Jones's workshop over the way, and they'll think the place is on fire.

FERRET. Bless me! I didn't mean to do that, (*turns light a little, R., but still on window.*)

GRIPP. Now you are casting reflections on the milliner's girls in the next house. Shut it up, can't you?

FERRET. Casting reflections—ha, ha, very good, I say, Gripp, it is a powerful reflector, isn't it? (*turns light on GRIPP'S face.*)

GRIPP. Don't! Shut it up, I say.

FERRET. Shut up yours, then, (*closes lantern.*)

GRIPP. But we shall be in the dark.

FERRET. No! there are candles on the table, and see here are matches.

GRIPP. (*closes lantern—stage dark*) Make haste, Ferret. Oh, do make haste, (*aside*) I have a great mind to bolt.

(*SALLY opens door of closet slightly.*)

FERRET. (*taking hold of GRIPP*) Hush! what's that?

GRIPP. (*frightened*) Don't do that. What's what?

FERRET. I heard a noise.

GRIPP. Did you—(*aside*) I'm off. (*going.*)

FERRET. (*Holding him*) It's all right, (*lights candles*) You see, if any one *should* come, we are safe. There's the window. We are off like a shot.

GRIPP. (*aside*) Yes, if we are not shot before we are off.

FERRET. Unless we decided to remain and encounter the rascals ----

GRIPP. (*nervously*) Eh?

FERRET. Ha, you would like that best, eh? you are a brave fellow and I honour your courage. Give me your hand, (*talces his hand*) Why, how it shakes. You are in a perfect fever of excitement, quite-----

GRIPP. Ye-yes, it's—it's very exciting, (*aside*) I'd give half-a-crown for a glass of pale brandy.

FERRET. Hot with-----

GRIPP. No—cold without.

FERRET. Eh!

GRIPP. Nothing, that is, I don't know exactly what-----

FERRET. I was going to say you are hot with eagerness and anxiety to capture the scoundrels.

GRIPP. (*still nervous*) When did you say they are to meet here?

FERRET. At half-past seven. I heard them arrange it a week ago as they left the house. There is to be a full

muster to-night. There's mischief-brewing depend upon it, and our man is at the head of it.

SALLY. (*peeping*) What desperate-looking characters! Oh, if Miss Fanny only knew what was going on up here. (FANNY *calls at a distance*, "Sally, Sally!") Bless me, she's calling—I can't go. (*shuts door.*)

GRIPP. I say, what's that ?

FERRET. Only my daughter calling the servant. Let us make haste, (*he opens a drawer in table*) Here ! you look over these papers while I examine that closet, (*goes to closet*) It's locked, (*pulls door*) No. (*the door yields, SALLY holding on to it*) Hullo ! what docs this mean ? (*drags SALLY down to front—GRIPP goes up alarmed.*)

SALLY. (*on her knees*) Oh, let me go, please let me go. (*about to scream.*)

FERRET. (*placing his hand on her mouth—mysteriously*) Be quiet!

SALLY. That voice, (*looks up*) Why, if it ain't master. Lor sir, what did you go and frighten a body like that for? (*GRIPP comes down.*)

FERRET. No matter, girl. I have my reasons; eh, Gripp ?

SALLY. Oh, very well, sir. (*aside*) Being specials has turned the heads of both on 'em. (FANNY *is heard calling* "Sally ! Sally! ") Comin', miss, comin'. (*going L.*)

FERRET. Stop, girl, (*holding her—SALLY alarmed*) What were you doing up here ?

SALLY. T-t-turning down Mr. Brown's bed, sir.

FERRET. Very well, now t-turn yourself down stairs, but mind, not a word of what you have seen.

GRIPP. (*coming down R.*) No; not a word of what you have seen.

FERRET. }  
and } Or heard!

GRIPP. }

SALLY. Oh, no, I won't say nothin' .

FERRET. (*turning lantern on her face*) Swear! (*she turns to GRIPP.*)

GRIPP. (*doing the same*) Swear ! (FERRET and GRIPP *turn their lanterns on each other's faces as FANNY stoops forward.*)

GRIPP. }  
and } The devil!

FERRET. }

SALLY. Lor! swear like that ?

FERRET. No, no, swear you'll tell no one.

SALLY. Oh, I know, (*aside*) Like Rummy O. (*aloud*) By yonder blessed moon, I swear !



FERRET. Now go. Gripp, you are sure there is no one else in that closet, (*goes to table and takes paper from drawers*)

GRIPP. Eh ? I'll g-g-go and see. (*goes up.*)

SALLY. (*aside*) Well, if Mr. Brown comes home and catches them in his room, won't there be a jolly row—that's all! (*exit L.*)

GRIPP. (*opens closet door, goes behind it, and turns lantern upon the inside, of closet—aside*) Nobody there! or the bull's-eye would have brought them out. (*opens door wide, a countryman's dress and wig are seen so arranged as to look like a human figure—he sees it*) Ugh ! oh, oh ! (*goes in great alarm to FERRET, pointing to closet.*)

FERRET. What's the matter ?

GRIPP. There's a ma-ma-man in the closet!

FERRET. A man ? (*goes to closet—GRIPP following—both turn lanterns on the dress*) Nonsense ! Don't you see what it is ?

GRIPP. Why it's a wig and-----

FERRET. A disguise—that's what it is, sir. (*comes down R. c.*) This Brown is a desperate fellow depend upon it—a lawyer's clerk, indeed—no more than I am. Or if he is, it's all a blind—but he don't blind us, eh Gripp ? (*turns lantern on GRIPP's face.*)

GRIPP. (L. C.) You'll blind me—you're at it again ! Shut it up !

FERRET. Now for the rest of these papers, (*sits L. of table—turns over papers*) If we don't find something to criminate—ha ! what's this ! See, here, I told you so. (*reads*) " Details of Plot----- "

GRIPP. (*sitting R. of table*) And here is a list of names. (*reads*) " Black Brandon, Downey Jim, Ben Binnacle, Mark Tapscott----- . "

FERRET. And look here—look here! (*reads*) "Ben to shoot the sentinel, run to the room where Mark is confined and release-----." Gripp, we must have these papers. (*about to take them.*)

GRIPP. No, no ; I wouldn't take them away. You see we have no proofs.

FERRET. No proofs—nonsense! Here *are* the proofs.

GRIPP. Yea, but he may miss them, and suspect and-----

FERRET. Hush! hark! (*listens R.*) There's a step on the stairs.

GRIPP. There—I knew we should be caught, (*jumps up hastily*)

FERRET. (*listening*) Two steps—several steps !

GRIPP. A whole flight of steps. (*inside*) Oh, dear ! here's the entire gang of them—I shall take steps for flight. (*going door, R.*)

FERRET. Don't go that way—that is his bed-room—the window!

GRIPP. (*aside*) I wish I was safe in my bed-room, (*gets on chair at window and falls.*)

FERRET. Here, the closet, quick ! (*goes to closet.*)

GRIPP. (*following*) You have left the candles alight.

FERRET. Blow them out. then.

GRIPP. I'm blowed if I do. Do it yourself, (*both blow at the candles unsuccessfully, and retire to closet.*)

*Enter BROWN and NEWINGTON BUTTS, L. 1 E.*

BUTTS. (*as he enters*) I say it's not fair. I'm not treated well. You are always taking the leading part in everything.

FERRET. (*aside to GRIPP*) I told you he was the head.

BROWN. (*x's R.*) Now look here, Butts. Hullo, my candles alight, that's a rum go !

GRIPP. (*aside*) I wish I had a go of rum.

BROWN. Oh, I suppose Fanny did it. Considerate, but extravagant! And the window open—that's that stupid girl Sally's doing, (*shuts window*) Now look here, Butts, haven't I arranged the whole thing?

FERRET. (*aside to GRIPP*) Do you hear that ?

GRIPP. Yes. (*aside*) We've arranged the whole thing—and a pretty mess we have made of it.

BROWN. Haven't I provided this room for our meetings ? Haven't I got the best men I could to act with us ?

FERRET. (*aside to GRIPP*) There—didn't I tell you. (*rubbing his hands*) We have got 'em safe enough.

BUTTS. (*L. C.*) I don't deny all that; but I want to know when I am to have a chance. I don't like the part I'm to play in the affair, and that's all about it.

FERRET. (*aside to GRIPP*) Discontented ! The very man to turn Queen's evidence. Oh, they are a pretty pair o' pets.

GRIPP. (*aside*) The very men to pitch us over that pretty parapet if they catch us here. (*pointing to window*)

BUTTS. I have a great mind to cut the whole concern.

BROWN. No, no. Hang it, Butts, don't do that. We can't do without you—we can't indeed, (*sits R. c.*) Now look here, I'll make it worth your while to stick to us.

BUTTS. How ! (*sits L. C.*)

BROWN. You shall make your own arrangements for the second affair that is to come off. Will that suit you ?

BUTTS. Oh, if you have a mind to do the liberal thing —

FERRET. (*aside to GRIPP*) They have made it up.

GRIPP. (*aside*) Worse luck! If they would only fall a fighting we might get clear off.

BROWN. Very well, that's agreed, (*rises*) What do you mean to do ? (*going behind table R.—FERRET closes door*)

BUTTS. Really, I don't know. It is not easy to decide. I wish you would help me to some farces. Have you got Lacy's List?

BROWN. (*gives paper*) Yes, here it is. (*FERRET opens door —HE and GRIPP listen*)

BUTTS. (*reading, as if struck by a good idea*) " Your life's in danger," do you know it ?

BROWN. Perfectly.

FERRET. (*aside to GRIPP*) He takes it coolly, eh, Gripp ?

GRIPP. (*aside*) That's more than I do. (*wiping his forehead*) I'm in a fever.

BROWN. I have made *my* arrangements.

BUTTS. Yes. What are you going to do ?

BROWN. I shall take " A Hundred Pound Note " and "A Trip to Scarboro'!"

FERRET. (*aside*) Will you ? Not if we know it.

GRIPP. (*aside*) I'd give a hundred pounds if you were there now.

BUTTS. I really don't know what to do for the best. What do you suggest ? I have made up my mind to a *tragedy*.

GRIPP. (*aside*) The sanguinary ruffian!

BROWN. (*takes list*) I'll show you. (*marks list and returns it*) There! now I'll let you see that dress I am going to wear. It is in that closet.

FERRET. Good gracious! We shall be discovered. Take the key inside and lock the door.

GRIPP. If I do we shall be suffocated, (*takes key inside*)

FERRET. If you don't we shall be murdered.

GRIPP. There ain't much to choose, but I think, on the whole, I prefer suffocation, (*closes door*)

BROWN. (*tries door*) The door's locked, and where's the key ? I could swear I left it in the door this morning. No matter, I'll get it open presently, (*comes down*) It is almost time the others were here. Did I tell you old Ferret's daughter is going to rehearse with us to-night.

BUTTS. If that's the case I should like a brush up, old fellow. She is an awfully nice girl. I have had some thoughts of making up to her—I have upon my word. (*conceitedly*)

BROWN. And while you have been thinking of it I have done it, so no poaching on my preserves. Come to my room, (*going R.*)

BUTTS. (*following, aside*) I shall cut that fellow, he is such a snob.

BROWN. How do you like the pieces I marked ? (FERRET *opens door and advances a step*)

BUTTS. They will do famously.

BROWN. Don't forget " The Rendezvous " and " Two in the Morning ! " (*exeunt door, R.*)

FERRET. (*bringing GRIPP down c, leaving dress and wig on floor of closet—GRIPP is ghastly pale*) Did you hear that? He is going to leave this to-night. That's his disguise—off to Scarboro'. You heard the appointment for the next meeting. The rendezvous—two in the morning. We'll spoil their little game—we'll come back presently and — Why, Gripp, what's the matter ? (GRIPP *gasps for breath*) Good gracious ! he's choking! This is awful! How am I to get him out of window ? Those ruffians will be coming back directly and-----(*drags GRIPP to window, lifts sash, gets out himself and pulls GRIPP after him with difficulty—GRIPP falls across parapet, FERRET drags him off L, leaving window open*)

*Re-enter BROWN and BUTTS, D. L.*

BUTTS. (*adjusting his dress*) I'm all right now, Brown. Why, the window's open again!

BROWN. It's very odd—nobody will open that window. (*closes window*) Sally must have been up here again. She is afflicted with a species of sanitary insanity, and vents her eccentricity on the ventilation of my apartments.

BUTTS. (R. C.) The closet door is open too.

BROWN. (*goes to closet*) And my dress and wig upon the floor. I'll ring the bell and—(*going L. carrying dress and wig*)

*Enter FANNY, L.*

Ha, Fanny ! (*kisses her*)

FANNY. Oh, Barnwell, for shame!

BROWN. Oh, it's only Butts. You don't mind Butts. Nobody minds him, do they Butts ? (*throws dress off door R.*)

FANNY. Good evening, Mr. Butts, (x's R c.—*a knock is heard within*)

BROWN. (C.) There's an arrival. Mobbs, I dare say.

FANNY. Oh, I hope it is, then we can begin.

*Enter SALLY, L.*

SALLY. (*eating*) If you please sir it's Mr. Mow—Mow—Mow—Mow-----

BROWN. (*imitating*) Mow—Mow— Mr. Mowbray Mobbs I suppose you mean, Sally ?

*Enter MR. and MRS. MOWBRAY MOBBS. MOBBS is of a thin figure, MRS. MOBBS is elderly, with an assumption of juvenility, and an inveterate tendency to sleepiness*

MOBBS. (*as he enters*) The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever. (*gives his hand*)

BUTTS. (R. C.) Ha, how d'ye do, Mobbs. (BROWN and MRS. MOBBS *at table, L.*)

MOBBS. (*Xing*) Sir, I am glad to see you well. Horatio—ahem ! that is, Mr. Butts—or I do forget myself.

BUTTS. Yes. (*aside*) That's the worst of Mobbs, he is always on his professional stilts, (*goes up, takes paper from table, R.*)

MOBBS. (*to FANNY*) Miss Ferret, your most obedient. (*talks to her*)

SALLY. (*aside*) Well, if that is Miss Fanny's hidea of 'eavy man—I never! (*exit, L.*)

FANNY. (C.) Oh, Mr. Mobbs, I am so glad you are come. This lady is Mrs. Mobbs, I suppose ?

MOBBS. (R. C.) This is Mrs. Mowbray Mobbs. Look, where my love appears, darting pale lustre like the silver moon ! (X's c.) Miranda, my dear, Miss Ferret! (*introducing them—BUTTS joins BROWN*)

FANNY. Miranda! What a pretty name.

MOBBS. After Prospero's Miranda, my dear Miss Ferret. Mrs. Mobbs's father was great in Prospero—I may say immense in Prospero—though an unappreciative public, and the managers, could not be induced to believe so. It was almost as great a performance, Miss Ferrett, as—as my *Hamlet* (*aside*) and equally unappreciated. Miss Ferret, you would make a charming actress—you have grace, beauty-----

MRS. M. (*who has been glancing suspiciously at him*) Mowbray !

MOBBS. (*very humbly*) My dear!

MRS. M. Have a care, sir! have a care ! have a care !  
*(sits R. c. and immediately grows sleepy—FANNY goes up R. and joins BROWN and BUTTS—all three look in some surprise at MRS. MOBBS)*

MOBBS. (c.) I shall in all my best obey you, madam.  
*(aside)* Why can't she go to sleep ?

BROWN. *(coming down L. C.)* I'm glad you have brought Mrs. Mobbs.

MOBBS. I didn't bring her, bless you. She brought herself, *(whispers)* She guessed you would have some ladies here, don't you see ?

BROWN. Jealous, eh ?

MOBBS. Jealous! An Othello in petticoats, sir—a slave to the green-eyed monster, sir. Flattering, but inconvenient.

BROWN. She is a very agreeable lady.

MOBBS. You will find her so. She will not be in the way. She'll go to sleep presently—she always does, and if you should want her assistance in the piece, though she has given up professional labour, owing to her unfortunate propensity to drop into the arms of Morpheus in the middle of the most exciting scenes, I'm sure she'll be pleased to — *(turns R.)* By Jove, she's off already.

BROWN. Thank you; her services would be invaluable, but I scarcely like to-----

MOBBS. I pledge you my word she'll be delighted, and when she knows, as the Bard of Avon says " my honour is at pawn." *(while speaking, he takes handkerchief from pocket with a flourish, and drops a small card on stage.)*

BROWN. *(aside)* And something else, too, seemingly. *(picks up card and gives it)* You have dropped something. *(FANNY crosses and comes down R.)*

MOBBS. *(aside)* Oh, my prophetic soul, *(takes card, looks at it)* My uncle! *(aloud)* Thank you, thank you! *(puts card confusedly into his pocket)* Ahem ! My dear sir, as I was saying, she will be delighted. By the way, I was telling Miss Ferret she is admirably calculated for the stage. I shall be charmed to instruct-----

MRS. M. *(waking)* Mowbray, have a care ! have a care, sir! have a care, *(sleeps.)*

MOBBS. "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!" *(goes up—removes cloak—a knock, then another, then a third.)*

BROWN. There are the others, Butts, help me to move this table will you? *(they move table, L, a little up stage.)*

Enter GREGORY GRIPP, TOM TUCKER, and HARRY HAYBAND.

FANNY goes up R., she and MOBBS talk apart.

GREG. (*as he enters, laughing*) Good joke, wasn't it ?

HARRY. Capital.

TOM. First rate. How d'ye do, Brown? (HARRY and TOM shake hands and talk apart with FANNY, MOBBS, and BUTTS.)

BROWN. Good evening, Tom. Ha, Gregory ! I am glad you are come. Fanny said she thought you would as the governor has gone out.

GREG. Yes, with old Ferret. They are specials you know, and it's my opinion they'll get themselves into a special fix some day.

BROWN. How ? (FANNY at table, R.)

GREG. Why, they won't be easy till they have taken somebody up. There never were such a couple of enthusiasts. They ought to be in Scotland Yard, the pair of 'em, if their skill is equal to their zeal—which I rather doubt.

MOBBS. (C.) Well, gentlemen, are you ready? I beg your pardon, Miss Ferret, I should have said, are you ready ? (*all take written parts out of their pockets, and study.*)

FANNY. (*comes down R.*) Yes, Mr. Mobbs.

MRS. M. (*half awaking*) Mowbray.

MOBBS. Yes, my dear.

MRS. M. Have a care, sir! have a care! have a c----- (*sleeps.*)

MOBBS. (*aside*) Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of " care." (*imitating—goes to BUTTS and the others, L.*)

BROWN. (X'S to R. C.) Fanny, Mrs. Mobbs is jealous of you.

FANNY. Are you jealous of Mr. Mobbs ?

BROWN. No ; nor of Newington Butts.

FANNY. I should think not, indeed, (*goes up, studying part.*)

MOBBS. (C.) Now, gentlemen, we will commence.

BROWN. I say, Mobbs, it's dry work rehearsing, and-----

MOBBS " Give the dry fool drink, then the fool is not dry," as the Immortal Bard somewhere observes.


BROWN. Ha, ha! very good.

GREG. I say, Brown, I'll go for it, if you like.

BROWN. Will you ? much obliged—here take my latch key. (x's L., gives key.)

GREG. You won't begin till I come back, or I shall lose my first scene.

BROWN. Oh, no. (*gives money*) Here is the money, (*goes up.*)


MOBBS. (*zing L. c.*)  think I'll go with you, Mr. Gripp, if you have no objection, (*aside to GREGORY*) Just a quiet glass of brandy and water before we begin—a little of the cup that cheers, and *does* inebriate, eh? what do you say? (*aloud*) "Anon we'll drink a measure the table round."

MRS. M. (*waking—with increasing loudness and emphasis*) Mowbray, Mowbray! Mowbray!!


MOBBS. Had I three ears I'd hear thee! (x's c.) Yes, my dear.

MRS. M. Have a care! have a care! have a c----- (*sleeps.*)

MOBBS. "Oh, why rebuke you him that loves you so,  
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe-----"  
Talking of bitter, let us go for the beer.

(*Exeunt MOBBS and GREGORY, L. 1 E.*) 

BROWN. Tom, come into my room a minute.

(*exeunt BROWN and TOM TUCKER, D. L.*) 

BOTTS. (*up stage, c.*) Don't you think the room is rather warm, Miss Ferret? I'll open the window, if you don't object.

FANNY. Oh no, not in the least, (*he opens window.*)

HARRY, (*leaning out of window*) I say, Butts, it's so jolly here. Let us go out and have a smoke.

BROWN. All right, I'm your man. (*they go off by window, and R.*)

FANNY. What creatures men are for beer—now there will be ever so much time lost.

*Enter SALLY, L., in great haste.*

SALLY. Oh, miss----- (*stops as if choking.*)

FANNY. Why, Sally, what's the matter? Speak, can't you? I declare the girl's too frightened to speak.

SALLY. No, miss, it's a—a s'rimp.

FANNY. Bother the shrimps, (*patting her on the back—suddenly, as if vexed.*)

SALLY. (*recovering herself*) That's all right—it—it was going the wrong way. Oh, if you please, miss, master's coming, and Mr. Gripp along with him. He came in the back way, miss.

FANNY. Very well, that will do.



SALLY. But he—he's coming upstairs, miss.

FANNY. Up here?

SALLY. (*talking very fast*) Yes, oh, he's in a hawful way, and looks quite ferocious. He says he won't have such goings on in his house. Oh lor', I hear him coming, miss—he mustn't find me here.

FANNY. Nor me either. Here, Sally, let us hide in the closet, and keep quiet till he has gone, (*they go into closet.*)

*Enter FERRET and GRIPP, L., each with a staff. FERRET with a resolute air, GRIPP timidly keeping behind him.—each has a pistol placed conspicuously in his dress.*

GRIPP. I say, Ferret, how many are there of 'em ?

FERRET. (L. C, *looking round*) Why the place is empty !

GRIPP. Empty, eh? (*swaggers past FERRET*) Come on then.

FERRET. (*sees MRS. MOBBS*) No, there is some one.

GRIPP. Eh ! (*starting to R.—recovers himself*) Why, it's a lady!

FERRET. A lady, not a bit of it. You are not half wide awake.

GRIPP. That's more than she is, for she's fast asleep.

FERRET. Don't be absurd, I tell you it's not a she, it's a man disguised. They don't want any women here. Besides, you can see it's a man.

GRIPP. Don't be a fool, Ferret. I say it's a woman.

FERRET. It's a man. I'll bet you what you like it's a man.

GRIPP. It's very fast asleep, whatever it is.

FERRET. Sleep! nothing of the kind, all pretence, depend upon it. (*takes MRS. MOBBS by the arm*) Now then, enough of this!

Mrs M. (*waking*) Have a care ! have a o-----(*looks up staring in astonishment.*)

FERRET. Oh, we'll have a care. Now then, take off those clothes.

MRS. M. (*rising, indignantly*) Sir !

FERRET. I say, take off those clothes.

MRS. M. What do you mean ? Who are you, wretch ?

FERRET. Never mind who I am. Here, Gripp, lend a hand.

GRIPP. I say, you're quite sure it's-----

FERRET. Sure? of course I am. I tell you it's a disguise. (*pulls chignon from, MRS. MOBBS' head*) There! there's a part of it.

MRS. M. (*theatrically*) Ruffian! monster! Mobbs! Mobbs! where are you?

FERRET. Ha! you'd like a mob, or several mobs I dare say, but we have got you safe here you see. Now then, Gripp.

GRIPP. But I say, you're quite sure? It's a very feminine voice.

FERRET. Feminine fiddlesticks! I tell you it's a man. Don't you see it takes two to hold him.

GRIPP. (*holding MRS. MOBBS by the arm*) Pooh! she's got no muscle for a man.

MRS. M. How dare you pinch my arm like that, you rude man. (*she turns upon GRIPP, striking him, calls*) Mobbs!

GRIPP. (*aside*) I don't know if it's a man or no, but I've changed my opinion about the muscle. (*FERRET and GRIPP struggle with her.*)

*Enter MOBBS, L., with a large pewter pot.*

MOBBS. It is my love that calls upon my name, (*aside*) Ha! they have commenced. So Mrs. M. plays Dame Pattens—second scene—some fresh arrivals, (*drinks from, jug, and puts it down on table L., takes part from pocket-acting*) Seize her men! away with her!

MRS. M. Mobbs, Mobbs!

MOBBS. (L.) Don't put me out. (*acting*) Heed not her cries! away, I say! she would have betrayed me. I have the proofs.

MRS. M. How dare you say so, you false man? What do you mean? (*aside*) He has been having too much beer.

MOBBS. (*aside*) What is she talking about? (*acting*) Away with her to the deepest dungeon of the castle. There let her perish. Ha! ha! such be the fate of all Black Brandon's foes.

MRS. M. (*aside*) Bless me, he is reading his part.

FERRET. }  
and } Black Brandon!  
GRIPP. }

MOBBS. (*looking at his part*) Ay, Black Brandon, the Fugitive Felon of Fingal.

FERRET. (*to GRIPP*) An escaped convict. We had better make sure of him.

GRIPP. All right you tackle him.

FERRET. No, you.

GRIPP. Both together, then.

FERRET. Agreed, (*both leave MRS. MOBBS, and seize MOBBS—GRIPP, R.—FERRET, L.*)

MOBBS. Hullo! what are you doing ? (*looks at part*) That's not right.

MRS. M. Leave my husband alone. How dare you; Mobbs, be a man. Defend yourself, (*sits in chair, R. c, and sleeps.*)

MOBBS. A man! (*aside*) I shall be a mummy presently. (*aloud*) Yes, my dear, but I don't understand. What does it all mean ? (*aside*) She's off already.

*Enter BROWN, door, R., in countryman's dress and wig—crosses to R. c, adjusting dress.*

FERRET. (*holding MOBBS*) Hullo ! Gripp !

GRIPP. What's the matter ?

FERRET. See there ! He has got the dress and wig on. We are just in time, (*starts*) Good gracious !

BROWN. (*aside*) Hullo, what's going on here ?

GRIPP. I wish you wouldn't jump and start so, Ferret. You are enough to ruin a man's nervous system.

FERRET. But look—look there! That bill downstairs. Don't you remember—one hundred pounds reward—fair hair, blue eyes—that's the man.

GRIPP. (*still holding MOBBS, whom they each pull round while speaking*) No, you don't say-----

FERRET. I do. He has got a scar on his arm.

GRIPP. Which arm ?


FERRET. It doesn't say—and a mark on his leg.

GRIPP. Which leg ?

FERRET. I don't know.

MOBBS. Well, gentlemen, when you have quite finished trying to dislocate my arms-----

GRIPP. } A hundred pounds reward ! (*they both throw*

and } MOBBS off, and rush to BROWN— R.

FERRET. } FERRET L.—*throw him into chair R., a gin*

*pulling up the sleeves of his dress.*)

MOBBS. (*aside*) A hundred pounds reward ! What are they talking about ? (*looks at part*) It's my opinion every-

one has brought a part to this rehearsal out of a different play, (*turns to MRS. MOBBS*) My dear, by Jove! she's off again! (*adjusts dress, drinks from jug, and goes up.*)

FERRET. He is my prisoner.

GRIPP. No, he is mine.

FERRET. (*baring arm*) Here's a scar.

GRIPP. (*baring other arm*) Here's a mark, (*they drag him to c.*)

BROWN. (*struggling*) Let me go. What do you mean by this insolent treatment ? Let me alone, I say.

FANNY. (*comes down R. from closet followed by SALLY*) George's voice, (*screams*) Father, are you mad ? George, dear George, (*going c.—SALLY runs off L.*)

FERRET. Back, girl. What, are you in league with him ? Do you know who and what he is ?

FANNY. To be sure I do, and I know what he *is to be*—my husband. So now its out.

*Enter GREGORY L., hastily, carrying a jug or pewter pot.*

GREG. (*takes part from his pocket*) A scream—that's my cue. I am just in time, (*looks at part—puts jug down, table L.*)

MOBBS. (*who has been displaying increasing surprise and disgust, aside*) I can't stand this any longer, (*comes down c.*) Ahem, gentlemen, you must allow me to resign my office, I—

GREG. (*assumes theatrical attitude*) Avast there, my lads, will ye. (*hitches up trousers*) What two upon one, you swabs you. Belay there, you cowardly land lubbers, or I'll pour a broadside into ye as sure as my name's----- (*as he speaks he seizes FERRET and throws him off L.—FANNY goes up c.*)

GRIPP. (*turns suddenly, handling his staff*) Gregory!

*Enter BUTTS and HARRY at vindow, they come down L. C;—TOM appears at door R., he x's up stage to L.—BROWN takes off dress, which he places on chair L. c, and talks apart with FANNY.*

GREG. (*aside*) The governor, by all that's horrible.

MOBBS. (*angrily, comes down c.*) Gregory! Nonsense, my dear sir, Ben Binnacle.

GREG. (*aside to MOBBS*) It's the governor.

MOBBS. (*aside*) Oh, the governor of the prison, I suppose. No, that can't be. This is the most extraordinary rehearsal I ever attended, (*he goes up.*)

GRIPP. (*to GREGORY*) What business have you here, sir? How is it I find you in such company ?

GREG. (L. C.) For the matter of that, governor, how is it I find *you* here ? To think that *you* should go in for this sort of thing, at your time of life, and take a part in special performances.

GRIPP. Special performances, and why not ? why not,

sir ? I know my duty, sir—I know my duty, (*flourishing staff.*)

GREG. (*aside*) It's just as I expected. He's going to take somebody up. (*he crosses to R.*)

FERRET. We find you in league with a band of miscreants, sir. Here are the proofs, (*points to dress on chair*) and here, (*goes to table*) here is a paper containing the details of the plot.

GRIPP. (*crosses to c.*) Yes, and the names ! the names!

BROWN. (*comes down L. C.*) Well, sir, and what then ?

ALL. Yes, what then, what then? (*BUTT comes down R.—GREGORY goes up R. to FANNY and appears to be explaining to them.*)

GRIPP. Why, then, sir, according to the distinct acknowledgment of that ruffian, (*pointing to BUTTS.*)

BUTTS. Who are you calling a ruffian ? (*threatens him.*)

GRIPP. (*going behind FERRET*) Keep him off, Ferret, keep him off. Why, you are about to enact some fearful tragedy !

MOBBS. (c.) Precisely "Richard the Third" I play Richard. A horse ! a horse ! my kingdom for a horse.

GREG. (*aside to BROWN and FANNY*) Don't you see ?

FANNY. (*comes down c. laughing*) Papa, allow me to introduce you to Black Brandon, the Fugitive Felon!

MOBBS. (R. C.) Otherwise Mowbray Mobbs, sir, of the Theatre Royal, Pentonville, at your service. Though falling into the " sear and yellow leaf," as the Immortal Bard observes -----

FERRET. (*crosses L. c.*) Drat the immortal bard, sir! Gripp, this is your doing.

GRIPP. (R. C.) Oh, that's right. Blame me.

FERRET. You suggested it.

GRIPP. You carried it out.

FERRET. Well, we have made a couple of asses of ourselves—that's all. The fact was we took you for—here, Gripp, you explain, (*all come down stage—GREGORY, R.—TOM and HARRY, L.*)

GRIPP. I shan't. Do it yourself.

BROWN. (C.) My dear sir, explanation is not necessary. We know all about it.

FERRET. Well, I beg pardon for-----

BROWN. Oh, don't apologise. The mistake was made in a good cause and is excusable, (*talks apart with FANNY.*)

GRIPP. As for this lady, I'm sure I don't know how to apologise for-----(*going to Miss. MOBBS.*)

MOBBS. (R. C.) All right, my dear sir. I'll express your

apologies to her when she awakes. You have been a little too much for her, and she is taking a nap a trifle sounder than usual.

BROWN. I think you owe me, personally, some compensation for this intrusion Mr. Ferret. I propose you give it to me in the shape of-----(*brings FANNY down L. C.*)

FERRET. My daughter, sir ? Nothing of the kind, I decline most absolutely. (*passes FANNY to L.*)

BROWN. You had better think it over, (*aside to him*) I do a little on the daily papers. You wouldn't like your little escapade to go the round of the press, would you ?

GRIPP. (*hearing him*) Good gracious! no. We should be laughed out of the parish. I say, Ferret, you had better give in.

FERRET. Well, well, I consent. (*FANNY crosses to BROWN, c.*)

MOBBS. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply. Sir, your generosity does you credit—Miss Ferret is a most talented and amiable lady-----

MRS. M. (*awaking*) Mowbray, have a care! have a care ! have a care.

MOBBS. (*aside*) Oh, dear !

FERRET. We will talk the matter over to-morrow and-----

FANNY. Oh, thank you, papa, and you'll let me act, won't you, and you'll take seats-----

GREG. (*to GRIPP*) And you, governor.

MOBBS. (*to boxes*) And you, ladies.

MRS. M. Have a care, sir ! have a care!

BUTTS. (*to pit*) And you-----

BROWN. (*to gallery*) And you-----

GRIFF. For our " SPECIAL PERFORMANCES."

BUTTS.  
GREGORY.  
MRS. MOBBS.  
MOBBS.  
FANNY.  
GRIPP.  
FERRET.  
TOM.  
HARRY.

R.

C.

L.

CURTAIN.