closer, I have been informed by certain sanguine brethren of the first class, that, in the height and orgasmus of their spiritual exercise, it has been frequent with them . . . ; immediately after which, they found the spirit to relax and flag of a sudden with the nerves, and they were forced to hasten to a conclusion. This may be further strengthened by observing, with wonder, how unaccountably all females are attracted by visionary or enthusiastic preachers, though ever so contemptible in their outward mien; which is usually supposed to be done upon considerations purely spiritual, without any carnal regards at all. But I have reason to think the sex has certain characteristics, by which they form a truer judgment of human abilities and performings than we ourselves can possibly do of each other. Let that be as it will, thus much is certain, that, however spiritual intrigues begin, they generally conclude like all others; they may branch upward toward heaven, but the root is in the earth. Too intense a contemplation is not the business of flesh and blood; it must, by the necessary course of things, in a little time let go its hold, and fall into matter. Lovers for the sake of celestial converse are but another sort of Platonics, who pretend to see stars and heaven in ladies' eyes, and to look or think no lower; but the same pit is provided for both; and they seem a perfect moral to the story of that philosopher, who, while his thoughts and eyes were fixed upon the constellations, found himself seduced by his lower parts into a ditch.

I had somewhat more to say upon this part of the subject; but the post is just going, which forces me in great haste to conclude,

Sir, yours, etc.

Pray burn this letter as soon as it comes to your hands.

A MEDITATION UPON A BROOMSTICK

ACCORDING TO THE STYLE AND MANNER OF THE HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE'S MEDITATIONS

THIS Parody is said by Mr. Thomas Sheridan to have been composed upon the following occasion:—

"In the yearly visits which Swift made to London, during his stay there he passed much of his time at Lord Berkeley's, officiating as chaplain to the family, and attending her ladyship in her private devotions; after which the doctor, by her desire, used to read to her some moral or religious discourse. The Countess had at this time taken a great liking to Mr. Boyle's Meditations, and was determined to go through them in that manner; but as Swift had by no means the same relish for that kind of writing which her ladyship had, he soon grew weary of the task; and a whim coming into his head, resolved to get rid of it in a way which might occasion some sport in the family; for which they had as high a relish as himself. The next time he was employed in reading one of these Meditations, he took an opportunity of conveying away the book, and dexterously inserted a leaf, on which he had written his own Meditation on a Broomstick; after which he took care to have the book restored to its proper place, and in his next attendance on my lady, when he was desired to proceed to the next Meditation, Swift opened upon the place where the leaf had been inserted, and with great composure read the title, 'A Meditation on a Broomstick.' Lady Berkeley, a little surprised at the oddity of the title, stopped him, repeating the words, 'A Meditation on a Broomstick! What a strange subject! But there is no knowing what useful lessons of instruction this wonderful man may draw from things apparently the most trivial. Pray let us hear what he says upon it.' Swift then, with an inflexible gravity of countenance, proceeded to read the Meditation, in the same solemn tone which he had used in delivering the former.

Lady Berkeley, not at all suspecting a trick, in the fulness of her prepossession, was every now and then, during the reading of it, expressing her admiration of this extraordinary man, who could draw such fine moral reflections from so contemptible a subject; with which, though Swift must have been inwardly not a little tickled, yet he preserved a most perfect composure of features, so that she had not the least room to suspect any deceit. Soon after, some company coming in, Swift pretended business, and withdrew, foreseeing what was to follow. Lady Berkeley, full of the subject, soon entered upon the praises of those heavenly Meditations of Mr. Boyle. 'But,' said she, 'the doctor has been just reading one to me, which has surprised me more than all the rest.' One of the company asked which of the Meditations she meant? She answered directly, in the simplicity of her heart, 'I mean, that excellent Meditation upon the Broomstick.' The company looked at each other with some surprise, and could scarce refrain from laughing. But they all agreed that they had never heard of such a Meditation before. 'Upon my word,' said my lady, 'there it is, look into that book, and convince yourselves.' One of them opened the book, and found it there indeed, but in Swift's handwriting; upon which a general burst of laughter ensued; and my lady, when the first surprise was over, enjoyed the joke as much as any of them; saying, 'What a vile trick has that rogue played me! But it is his way, he never baulks his humour in anything.' The affair ended in a great deal of harmless mirth, and Swift, you may be sure, was not asked to proceed any further into the Meditations."

This single stick, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner, I once knew in a flourishing state in a forest: it was full of sap, full of leaves, and full of boughs: but now, in vain does the busy art of man pretend to vie with nature, by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk: it is now, at best, but the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air; it is now handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery, and, by a capricious kind of fate, destined to make other things clean, and be nasty itself: at length, worn to the stumps in the service of

the maids, it is either thrown out of doors, or condemned to the last use, of kindling a fire. When I beheld this I sighed, and said within myself, *Surely man is a Broomstick!* Nature sent him into the world strong and lusty, in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, until the axe of intemperance has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk: he then flies to art, and puts on a periwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs (all covered with powder), that never grew on his head; but now, should this our broomstick pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, though the sweepings of the finest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellences and other men's defaults!

But a broomstick, perhaps, you will say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head; and pray what is man, but a topsyturvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational, his head where his heels should be, grovelling on the earth! and yet, with all his faults, he sets up to be a universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances, rakes into every slut's corner of nature, bringing hidden corruption to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before; sharing deeply all the while in the very same pollutions he pretends to sweep away; his last days are spent in slavery to women, and generally the least deserving; till, worn out to the stumps, like his brother besom, he is either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle flames for others to warm themselves by.

A TRITICAL ESSAY UPON THE FACULTIES OF THE MIND

TO ————

SIR,—Being so great a lover of antiquities, it was reasonable to suppose, you would be very much obliged with anything that was new. I have been of late offended with many writers of essays and moral discourses, for running into stale topics and threadbare quotations, and not handling their subject fully and closely; all which errors I have carefully avoided in the following essay, which I have proposed as a pattern for young writers to imitate. The thoughts and observations being entirely new, the quotations untouched by others, the subject of mighty importance, and treated with much order and perspicuity, it has cost me a great deal of time; and I desire you will accept and consider it as the utmost effort of my genius.

A TRITICAL ESSAY, ETC.

PHILOSOPHERS say, that man is a microcosm, or little world, resembling in miniature every part of the great; and, in my opinion, the body natural may be compared to the body politic; and if this be so, how can the Epicurean's opinion be true, that the universe was formed by a fortuitous concourse of atoms: which I will no more believe, than that the accidental jumbling of the letters of the alphabet, could fall by chance into a most ingenious and learned treatise of philosophy. *Risum teneatis amici?* This false opinion must needs create many more: it is like an error in the first concoction, which cannot be corrected in the second; the foundation is weak, and whatever superstructure you raise upon it, must, of necessity, fall to the ground. Thus men

are led from one error to another, until, with Ixion, they embrace a cloud instead of Juno; or, like the dog in the fable, lose the substance in gaping at the shadow. For such opinions cannot cohere; but, like the iron and clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, must separate and break in pieces. I have read in a certain author, that Alexander wept because he had no more worlds to conquer: which he needed not have done, if the fortuitous concourse of atoms could create one: but this is an opinion fitter for that many-headed beast, the vulgar, to entertain than for so wise a man as Epicurus; the corrupt part of his sect only borrowed his name, as the monkey did the cat's claw to draw the chestnut out of the fire.

However, the first step to the cure is to know the disease; and though truth may be difficult to find, because, as the philosopher observes, she lives in the bottom of a well, yet we need not, like blind men, grope in open daylight. I hope I may be allowed, among so many far more learned men, to offer my mite, since a stander-by may sometimes, perhaps, see more of the game than he that plays it. But I do not think a philosopher obliged to account for every phenomenon in nature, or drown himself with Aristotle, for not being able to solve the ebbing and flowing of the tide in that fatal sentence he passed upon himself, *Quia te non capio, tu capies me.* Wherein he was at once the judge and the criminal, the accuser and executioner. Socrates, on the other hand, who said he knew nothing, was pronounced by the oracle to be the wisest man in the world.

But to return from this digression: I think it as clear as any demonstration of Euclid, that nature does nothing in vain; if we were able to dive into her secret recesses, we should find that the smallest blade of grass, or most contemptible weed, has its particular use: but she is chiefly admirable in her minutest compositions; the least and most contemptible insect most discovers the art of nature, if I may so call it, though nature, which delights in variety, will always triumph over art: and as the poet observes,

Naturam expellas furcâ licet, usque recurret.

But the various opinions of philosophers have scattered through the world as many plagues of the mind as Pandora's

box did those of the body; only with this difference, that they have not left hope at the bottom. And if truth be not fled with Astrea, she is certainly as hidden as the source of Nile, and can be found only in Utopia. Not that I would reflect on those wise sages, which would be a sort of ingratitude; and he that calls a man ungrateful, sums up all the evil that a man can be guilty of,

Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dicis.

But, what I blame the philosophers for (though some may think it a paradox) is chiefly their pride; nothing less than an *ipse dixit*, and you must pin your faith on their sleeve. And though Diogenes lived in a tub, there might be for aught I know as much pride under his rags as in the fine-spun garments of the divine Plato. It is reported of this Diogenes, that when Alexander came to see him, and promised to give him whatever he would ask, the cynic only answered, "Take not from me what thou canst not give me, but stand from between me and the light;" which was almost as extravagant as the philosopher that flung his money into the sea, with this remarkable saying——

How different was this man from the usurer, who, being told his son would spend all he had got, replied, "He cannot take more pleasure in spending than I did in getting it." These men could see the faults of each other, but not their own; those they flung into the bag behind; *non videmus id manticæ quod in tergo est.* I may perhaps be censured for my free opinions by those carping Momuses whom authors worship, as the Indians do the devil, for fear. They will endeavour to give my reputation as many wounds as the man in the almanack; but I value it not; and perhaps, like flies, they may buzz so often about the candle, till they burn their wings. They must pardon me if I venture to give them this advice, not to rail at what they cannot understand; it does but discover that self-tormenting passion of envy, than which the greatest tyrant never invented a more cruel torment:

Invidiâ Siculi non invenere Tyranni
Tormentum majus.—

I must be so bold to tell my critics and witlings, that they can no more judge of this than a man that is born blind can

have any true idea of colours. I have always observed that your empty vessels sound loudest: I value their lashes as little as the sea did those of Xerxes, when he whipped it. The utmost favour a man can expect from them is, that which Polyphemus promised Ulysses, that he would devour him the last: they think to subdue a writer, as Cæsar did his enemy, with a *Veni, vidi, vici.* I confess I value the opinion of the judicious few, a Rymer, a Dennis, or a W——k; but for the rest, to give my judgment at once, I think the long dispute among the philosophers about a *vacuum* may be determined in the affirmative, that it is to be found in a critic's head. They are at best but the drones of the learned world, who devour the honey and will not work themselves: and a writer need no more regard them than the moon does the barking of a little senseless cur. For, in spite of their terrible roaring, you may, with half an eye, discover the ass under the lion's skin.

But to return to our discourse: Demosthenes being asked what was the first part of an orator, replied action: what was the second, action: what was the third, action: and so on, *ad infinitum.* This may be true in oratory; but contemplation in other things exceeds action. And, therefore, a wise man is never less alone than when he is alone: *Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus.*

And Archimedes, the famous mathematician, was so intent upon his problems that he never minded the soldiers who came to kill him. Therefore, not to detract from the just praise which belongs to orators, they ought to consider that nature, which gave us two eyes to see and two ears to hear, has given us but one tongue to speak; wherein, however, some do so abound, that the virtuosi who have been so long in search for the perpetual motion, may infallibly find it there.

Some men admire republics, because orators flourish there most, and are the greatest enemies of tyranny; but my opinion is, that one tyrant is better than a hundred. Besides, these orators inflame the people, whose anger is really but a short fit of madness.

Ira furor brevis est.

After which, laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through. But in

oratory the greatest art is to hide art. *Artis est celare artem.*

But this must be the work of time, we must lay hold on all opportunities, and let slip no occasion; else we shall be forced to weave Penelope's web, unravel in the night what we spun in the day. And therefore I have observed, that Time is painted with a lock before, and bald behind, signifying thereby, that we must take time (as we say) by the forelock, for when it is once past, there is no recalling it.

The mind of man is at first (if you will pardon the expression) like a *tabula rasa*, or like wax, which, while it is soft, is capable of any impression, till time has hardened it. And at length Death, that grim tyrant, stops us in the midst of our career. The greatest conquerors have at last been conquered by death, which spares none, from the sceptre to the spade: *Mors omnibus communis.*

All rivers go to the sea, but none return from it. Xerxes wept when he beheld his army, to consider that in less than a hundred years they would be all dead. Anacreon was choked with a grape-stone; and violent joy kills as well as violent grief. There is nothing in this world constant, but inconstancy; yet Plato thought, that if Virtue would appear to the world in her own native dress, all men would be enamoured with her. But now, since interest governs the world, and men neglect the golden mean, Jupiter himself, if he came to the earth, would be despised, unless it were, as he did to Danae, in a golden shower: for men now-a-days worship the rising sun, and not the setting:

Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos.

Thus have I, in obedience to your commands, ventured to expose myself to censure in this critical age. Whether I have done right to my subject must be left to the judgment of my learned reader: however, I cannot but hope that my attempting of it may be encouragement for some able pen to perform it with more success.

THE BICKERSTAFF PAPERS

I.—PREDICTIONS FOR THE YEAR 1708

WHEREIN THE MONTH, AND THE DAY OF THE MONTH, ARE SET DOWN, THE PERSONS NAMED, AND THE GREAT ACTIONS AND EVENTS OF NEXT YEAR PARTICULARLY RELATED, AS THEY WILL COME TO PASS. WRITTEN TO PREVENT THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND FROM BEING FURTHER IMPOSED ON BY THE VULGAR ALMANACK-MAKERS.

BY ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, ESQ.[1]

SWIFT, when he had written these humorous predictions, being at a loss what name to prefix to them, observed a sign over a blacksmith's house, and the name of Bickerstaff written under it. It struck his fancy, and he chose to call himself Isaac Bickerstaff. This amusing tract was seriously burnt by the inquisition in Portugal, as the author was assured by Sir Paul Methuen, then ambassador at that court.

I HAVE considered the gross abuse of astrology in this kingdom, and upon debating the matter with myself, I could not possibly lay the fault upon the art, but upon those gross impostors who set up to be the artists. I know several learned men have contended that the whole is a cheat; that it is absurd and ridiculous to imagine the stars can have any influence at all upon human actions, thoughts, or inclinations; and whoever has not bent his studies that way may be excused for thinking so, when he sees in how wretched a manner that noble art is treated by a few mean, illiterate traders between us and the stars; who import a yearly stock of nonsense, lies, folly, and impertinence, which they offer to the world as genuine from the planets, though they descend from no greater a height than their own brains.

I intend, in a short time, to publish a large and rational

[1] Not in Scott, who gives a quotation from Brown's *Vulgar Errors*, and few words of his own.

defence of this art, and therefore shall say no more in its justification at present, than that it has been in all ages defended by many learned men, and among the rest by Socrates himself; whom I look upon as undoubtedly the wisest of uninspired mortals: to which if we add, that those who have condemned this art, though otherwise learned, have been such as either did not apply their studies this way, or at least did not succeed in their applications, their testimony will not be of much weight to its disadvantage, since they are liable to the common objection, of condemning what they did not understand.

Nor am I at all offended, or do I think it an injury to the art, when I see the common dealers in it, the students in astrology, the philomaths, and the rest of that tribe, treated by wise men with the utmost scorn and contempt; but I rather wonder, when I observe gentlemen in the country, rich enough to serve the nation in parliament, poring in Partridge's Almanack to find out the events of the year, at home and abroad; not daring to propose a hunting march till Gadbury [1] or he have fixed the weather.

I will allow either of the two I have mentioned, or any other of the fraternity, to be not only astrologers but conjurers too, if I do not produce a hundred instances, in all their almanacks, to convince any reasonable man that they do not so much as understand common grammar and syntax; that they are not able to spell any word out of the usual road, nor, even in their prefaces, to write common sense, or intelligible English. Then, for their observations and predictions, they are such as will equally suit any age or country in the world, "This month a certain great person will be threatened with death or sickness." This the newspapers will tell them; for there we find at the end of the year, that no month passes without the death of some person of note; and it would be hard if it should be otherwise, when there are at least two thousand persons of note in this kingdom, many of them old, and the almanack-maker has the liberty of choosing the sickliest season of the year, when he may fix his prediction. Again, "This month an eminent clergyman will be preferred;" of which there may be many hundreds, half of them with one

[1] John Gadbury, bred a tailor at Oxford, long published an almanack which vied in reputation with that of Partridge.

foot in the grave. Then, "Such a planet in such a house shows great machinations, plots, and conspiracies that may in time be brought to light:" after which, if we hear of any discovery, the astrologer gets the honour; if not, his predictions still stand good. And at last, "God preserve King William from all his open and secret enemies. Amen." When, if the king should happen to have died, the astrologer plainly foretold it; otherwise it passes but for the pious ejaculation of a loyal subject: though it unluckily happened in some of their almanacks that poor King William was prayed for many months after he was dead, because it fell out, that he died about the beginning of the year.

To mention no more of their impertinent predictions, what have we to do with their advertisements about "pills and drinks for the venereal disease?" or their mutual quarrels in verse and prose of Whig and Tory, wherewith the stars have little to do.

Having long observed and lamented these, and a hundred other abuses of this art too tedious to repeat, I resolved to proceed in a new way, which I doubt not will be to the general satisfaction of the kingdom: I can this year produce but a specimen of what I design for the future; having employed most part of my time in adjusting and correcting the calculations I made for some years past, because I would offer nothing to the world of which I am not as fully satisfied as that I am now alive. For these two last years I have not failed in above one or two particulars, and those of no very great moment. I exactly foretold the miscarriage at Toulon,[1] with all its particulars; and the loss of Admiral Shovel,[2] though I was mistaken as to the day, placing that article about thirty-six hours sooner than it happened; but upon reviewing my schemes, I quickly found the cause of that error. I likewise foretold the battle of Almanza [April 25, 1707] to the very day and hour, with the loss on both sides, and the consequences thereof. All which I showed to some friends many months before they happened; that is, I gave them papers sealed up, to open at such a time, after which they were at liberty to read them; and there they found

[1] An attempt was made to besiege Toulon in 1707, but it miscarried.

[2] Sir Cloudesly Shovel's fleet was wrecked Oct. 22, 1707.

my predictions true in every article, except one or two very minute.

As for the few following predictions I now offer the world, I forebore to publish them till I had perused the several almanacks for the year we are now entered upon. I found them all in the usual strain, and I beg the reader will compare their manner with mine: and here I make bold to tell the world that I lay the whole credit of my art upon the truth of these predictions; and I will be content that Partridge, and the rest of his clan, may hoot me for a cheat and impostor if I fail in any single particular of moment. I believe any man who reads this paper will look upon me to be at least a person of as much honesty and understanding as a common maker of almanacks. I do not lurk in the dark; I am not wholly unknown in the world; I have set my name at length to be a mark of infamy to mankind if they shall find I deceive them.

In one thing I must desire to be forgiven, that I talk more sparingly of home affairs; as it would be imprudence to discover secrets of state, so it might be dangerous to my person; but in smaller matters, and such as are not of public consequence, I shall be very free; and the truth of my conjectures will as much appear from these as the other. As for the most signal events abroad in France, Flanders, Italy, and Spain, I shall make no scruple to predict them in plain terms: some of them are of importance, and I hope I shall seldom mistake the day they will happen; therefore I think good to inform the reader, that I shall all along make use of the old style observed in England, which I desire he will compare with that of the newspapers, at the time they relate the actions I mention.

I must add one word more; I know it has been the opinion of several learned persons, who think well enough of the true art of astrology, that the stars do only incline, and not force, the actions or wills of men, and therefore, however I may proceed by right rules, yet I cannot in prudence so confidently assure the events will follow exactly as I predict them.

I hope I have maturely considered this objection, which in some cases is of no little weight. For example; a man may, by the influence of an overruling planet, be disposed or inclined to lust, rage, or avarice, and yet by the force of reason overcome that evil influence; and this was the case of

Socrates; but the great events of the world usually depending upon numbers of men, it cannot be expected they should all unite to cross their inclinations, for pursuing a general design, wherein they unanimously agree. Besides, the influence of the stars reaches to many actions and events which are not any way in the power of reason; as sickness, death, and what we commonly call accidents, with many more needless to repeat.

But now it is time to proceed to my predictions, which I have begun to calculate from the time that the sun enters into Aries. And this I take to be properly the beginning of the natural year. I pursue them to the time that he enters Libra, or somewhat more, which is the busy period of the year. The remainder I have not yet adjusted, upon account of several impediments needless here to mention: besides, I must remind the reader again, that this is but a specimen of what I design in succeeding years to treat more at large, if I may have liberty and encouragement.

My first prediction is but a trifle, yet I will mention it, to show how ignorant those sottish pretenders to astrology are in their own concerns: it relates to Partridge the almanack-maker. I have consulted the star of his nativity by my own rules, and find he will infallibly die upon the 29th of March next, about eleven at night, of a raging fever: therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time.

The month of April will be observable for the death of many great persons. On the 4th will die the Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris; on the 11th, the young Prince of Asturias, son to the Duke of Anjou; on the 14th, a great peer of this realm will die at his country-house; on the 19th, an old layman of great fame for learning; and on the 23rd, an eminent goldsmith in Lombard Street. I could mention others, both at home and abroad, if I did not consider such events of very little use or instruction to the reader, or to the world.

As to public affairs: on the 7th of this month there will be an insurrection in Dauphiné, occasioned by the oppressions of the people, which will not be quieted in some months.

On the 15th will be a violent storm on the south-east coast of France, which will destroy many of their ships, and some in the very harbour.

The 19th will be famous for the revolt of a whole province or kingdom, excepting one city, by which the affairs of a certain prince in the alliance will take a better face.

May, against common conjectures, will be no very busy month in Europe, but very signal for the death of the Dauphin, which will happen on the 7th, after a short fit of sickness, and grievous torments with the strangury. He dies less lamented by the court than the kingdom.

On the 9th, a mareschal of France will break his leg by a fall from his horse. I have not been able to discover whether he will then die or not.

On the 11th will begin a most important siege, which the eyes of all Europe will be upon: I cannot be more particular; for, in relating affairs that so nearly concern the confederates, and consequently this kingdom, I am forced to confine myself, for several reasons very obvious to the reader.

On the 15th, news will arrive of a very surprising event, than which, nothing can be more unexpected.

On the 19th, three noble ladies of this kingdom will, against all expectation, prove with child, to the great joy of their husbands.

On the 23rd, a famous buffoon of the playhouse will die a ridiculous death, suitable to his vocation.

June. This month will be distinguished at home by the utter dispersing of those ridiculous deluded enthusiasts commonly called the prophets;[1] occasioned chiefly by seeing the time come when many of their prophecies should be fulfilled, and then finding themselves deceived by contrary events. It is indeed to be admired, how any deceiver can be so weak to foretell things near at hand, when a very few months must, of necessity, discover the imposture to all the world; in this point less prudent than common almanack-makers, who are so wise to wander in generals, and talk dubiously, and leave to the reader the business of interpreting.

On the 1st of this month a French general will be killed by a random shot of a cannon-ball.

On the 6th, a fire will break out in the suburbs of Paris,

[1] The Protestants in Dauphiné, called Casimars, being driven mad by persecution, became of course enthusiasts, and mingled miracles and prophecies with their religious fervour.

which will destroy above a thousand houses; and seems to be the foreboding of what will happen, to the surprise of all Europe, about the end of the following month.

On the 10th, a great battle will be fought, which will begin at four of the clock in the afternoon, and last till nine at night, with great obstinacy, but no very decisive event. I shall not name the place, for the reasons aforesaid; but the commanders on each left wing will be killed. I see bonfires and hear the noise of guns for a victory.

On the 14th there will be a false report of the French king's death.

On the 20th, Cardinal Portocarero will die of a dysentery, with great suspicion of poison; but the report of his intention to revolt to King Charles will prove false.

July. The 6th of this month a certain general will, by a glorious action, recover the reputation he lost by former misfortunes.

On the 12th, a great commander will die a prisoner in the hands of his enemies.

On the 14th, a shameful discovery will be made of a French jesuit giving poison to a great foreign general; and when he is put to the torture, he will make wonderful discoveries.

In short, this will prove a month of great action, if I might have liberty to relate the particulars.

At home, the death of an old famous senator will happen on the 15th, at his country-house, worn out with age and diseases.

But that which will make this month memorable to all posterity, is the death of the French king, Louis XIV., after a week's sickness, at Marli, which will happen on the 29th, about six o'clock in the evening. It seems to be an effect of the gout in the stomach, followed by a flux. And, in three days after, Monsieur Chamillard will follow his master, dying suddenly of an apoplexy.

In this month likewise an ambassador will die in London; but I cannot assign the day.

August. The affairs of France will seem to suffer no change for a while under the Duke of Burgundy's administration; but the genius that animated the whole machine being gone, will be the cause of mighty turns and revolutions in the following year. The new king makes yet little change either

in the army or the ministry; but the libels against his grandfather, that fly about his very court, give him uneasiness.

I see an express in mighty haste, with joy and wonder in his looks, arriving by break of day on the 26th of this month, having travelled in three days a prodigious journey by land and sea. In the evening I hear bells and guns, and see the blazing of a thousand bonfires.

A young admiral of noble birth does likewise this month gain immortal honour by a great achievement.

The affairs of Poland are this month entirely settled: Augustus resigns his pretensions, which he had again taken up for some time; Stanislaus is peaceably possessed of the throne; and the king of Sweden declares for the emperor.

I cannot omit one particular accident here at home; that near the end of this month much mischief will be done at Bartholomew Fair, by the fall of a booth.

September. This month begins with a very surprising fit of frosty weather, which will last near twelve days.

The pope having long languished last month, the swellings in his legs breaking, and the flesh mortifying, will die on the 11th instant: and in three weeks' time, after a mighty contest, be succeeded by a cardinal of the imperial faction, but a native of Tuscany, who is now about sixty-one years old.

The French army now acts wholly on the defensive, strongly fortified in their trenches: and the young French king sends overtures for a treaty of peace by the duke of Mantua, which, because it is a matter of state that concerns us here at home, I shall speak no further of.

I shall add but one prediction more, and that in mystical terms, which shall be included in a verse out of Virgil—

> Alter erit jam Tethys, et altera, quæ vehat, Argo,
> Delectos heroas.

Upon the 25th day of this month, the fulfilling of this prediction will be manifest to everybody.

This is the farthest I have proceeded in my calculations for the present year. I do not pretend that these are all the great events which will happen in this period, but that those I have set down will infallibly come to pass. It will perhaps still be objected, why I have not spoke more particularly of affairs at home, or of the success of our armies abroad, which

I might, and could very largely have done; but those in power have wisely discouraged men from meddling in public concerns, and I was resolved by no means to give the least offence. This I will venture to say, that it will be a glorious campaign for the allies, wherein the English forces, both by sea and land, will have their full share of honour: that her majesty Queen Anne will continue in health and prosperity: and that no ill accident will arrive to any in the chief ministry.

As to the particular events I have mentioned, the reader may judge, by the fulfilling of them, whether I am on the level with common astrologers; who, with an old paltry cant, and a few pot-hooks for planets to amuse the vulgar, have, in my opinion, too long been suffered to abuse the world: but an honest physician ought not to be despised because there are such things as mountebanks. I hope I have some share of reputation, which I would not willingly forfeit for a frolic or humour: and I believe no gentleman who reads this paper will look upon it to be of the same cast or mould with the common scribbles that are every day hawked about. My fortune has placed me above the little regard of writing for a few pence, which I neither value nor want: therefore let not wise men too hastily condemn this essay, intended for a good design, to cultivate and improve an ancient art, long in disgrace by having fallen into mean unskilful hands. A little time will determine whether I have deceived others or myself: and I think it no very unreasonable request, that men would please to suspend their judgments till then. I was once of the opinion with those who despise all predictions from the stars, till, in the year 1686, a man of quality showed me, written in his *album*, that the most learned astronomer, Captain Halley, assured him he would never believe anything of the stars' influence, if there were not a great revolution in England in the year 1688. Since that time I began to have other thoughts, and after eighteen years' diligent study and application, I think I have no reason to repent of my pains. I shall detain the reader no longer than to let him know, that the account I design to give of next year's events, shall take in the principal affairs that happen in Europe; and if I be denied the liberty of offering it to my own country, I shall appeal to the learned world, by publishing it in Latin, and giving order to have it printed in Holland.

II.—AN ANSWER TO BICKERSTAFF

SOME REFLECTIONS UPON MR. BICKERSTAFF'S PREDICTIONS FOR THE YEAR MDCCVIII

By A PERSON OF QUALITY

I HAVE not observed, for some years past, any insignificant paper to have made more noise, or be more greedily bought, than that of these predictions. They are the wonder of the common people, an amusement for the better sort, and a jest only to the wise; yet among these last, I have heard some very much in doubt whether the author meant to deceive others or is deceived himself. Whoever he was, he seems to have with great art adjusted his paper both to please the rabble and to entertain persons of condition. The writer is, without question, a gentleman of wit and learning, although the piece seems hastily written in a sudden frolic, with the scornful thought of the pleasure he will have in putting this great town into a wonderment about nothing: nor do I doubt but he and his friends in the secret laugh often and plentifully in a corner, to reflect how many hundred thousand fools they have already made. And he has them fast for some time: for so they are likely to continue until his prophecies begin to fail in the events. Nay, it is a great question whether the miscarriage of the two or three first will so entirely undeceive people as to hinder them from expecting the accomplishment of the rest. I doubt not but some thousands of these papers are carefully preserved by as many persons, to confront with the events, and try whether the astrologer exactly keeps the day and hour. And these I take to be Mr. Bickerstaff's choicest cullies, for whose sake chiefly he writ his amusement. Meanwhile he has seven weeks good, during which time the world is to be kept in suspense: for it is so long before the almanack-maker is to die, which is the first prediction; and, if that fellow happens to be a splenetic visionary fop, or has any faith in his own art, the prophecy may punctually come to pass by very natural means. As a gentleman of my acquaintance, who was ill

used by a mercer in town, wrote him a letter in an unknown hand, to give him notice that care had been taken to convey a slow poison into his drink, which would infallibly kill him in a month; after which, the man began in earnest to languish and decay, by the mere strength of imagination, and would certainly have died, if care had not been taken to undeceive him, before the jest went too far. The like effect upon Partridge would wonderfully rise Mr. Bickerstaff's reputation for a fortnight longer, until we could hear from France whether the Cardinal de Noailles were dead or alive upon the 4th of April, which is the second of his predictions.

For a piece so carelessly written, the observations upon astrology are reasonable and pertinent, the remarks just; and as the paper is partly designed, in my opinion, for a satire upon the credulity of the vulgar, and that idle itch of peeping into futurities; so it is no more than what we all of us deserve. And, since we must be teased with perpetual hawkers of strange and wonderful things, I am glad to see a man of sense find leisure and humour to take up the trade, for his own and our diversion. To speak in the town phrase, it is a bite; he has fully had his jest, and may be satisfied.

I very much approve the serious air he gives himself in his introduction and conclusion, which has gone far to give some people, of no mean rank, an opinion that the author believes himself. He tell us, " He places the whole credit of his art on the truth of these predictions, and will be content to be hooted by Partridge and the rest for a cheat, if he fails in any one particular," with several other strains of the same kind, wherein I perfectly believe him; and that he is very indifferent whether Isaac Bickerstaff be a mark of infamy or not. But it seems, although he has joined an odd surname to no very common Christian one, that in this large town there is a man found to own both the names, although, I believe, not the paper.

I believe it is no small mortification to this gentleman astrologer, as well as his bookseller, to find their piece, which they sent out in a tolerable print and paper, immediately seized on by three or four interloping printers of Grub-street, the title stuffed with an abstract of the whole matter, together with the standard epithets of *strange* and *wonderful*, the price brought down a full half, which was but a penny in its prime,

and bawled about by hawkers of the inferior class, with the concluding cadence of "A halfpenny a piece!" But *sic cecidit Phaeton;* and, to comfort him a little, this production of mine will have the same fate; to-morrow will my ears be grated by the little boys and wenches in straw hats; and I must a hundred times undergo the mortification to have my own work offered me to sale at an under value. Then, which is a great deal worse, my acquaintance in the coffeehouse will ask me whether I have seen the *Answer to 'Squire Bickerstaff's Predictions*, and whether I knew the puppy that writ it; and how to keep a man's countenance in such a juncture is no easy point of conduct. When, in this case, you see a man shy either in praising or condemning, ready to turn off the discourse to another subject, standing as little in the light as he can to hide his blushing, pretending to sneeze, or take snuff, or go off as if sudden business called him; then ply him close, observe his look narrowly, see whether his speech be constrained or affected, then charge him suddenly, or whisper and smile, and you will soon discover whether he be guilty. Although this seem not the purpose I am discoursing on, yet I think it to be so; for I am much deceived if I do not know the true author of *Bickerstaff's Predictions*, and did not meet with him some days ago in a coffeehouse at Covent Garden.

As to the matter of the predictions themselves, I shall not enter upon the examination of them; but think it very incumbent upon the learned Mr. Partridge to take them into his consideration, and lay as many errors in astrology as possible to Mr. Bickerstaff's account. He may justly, I think, challenge the 'squire to publish the calculation he has made of Partridge's nativity, by the credit of which he so determinately pronounces the time and the manner of his death; and Mr. Bickerstaff can do no less, in honour, than give Mr. Partridge the same advantage of calculating his, by sending him an account of the time and place of his birth, with other particulars necessary for such a work. By which, no doubt, the learned world will be engaged in the dispute, and take part on each side according as they are inclined.

I should likewise advise Mr. Partridge to inquire, why Mr. Bickerstaff does not so much as offer at one prediction to be fulfilled until two months after the time of publishing his

paper. This looks a little suspicious, as if he were desirous to keep the world in play as long as he decently could; else it were hard he could not afford us one prediction between this and the 29th of March; which is not so fair dealings as we have even from Mr. Partridge and his brethren, who give us their predictions (such as they are indeed) for every month in the year.

There is one passage in Mr. Bickerstaff's paper that seems to be as high a strain of assurance as I have anywhere met with: it is that prediction for the month of June which relates to the French prophets here in town; where he tells us, "They will utterly disperse, by seeing the time come, wherein their prophecies should be fulfilled, and then finding themselves deceived by contrary events." Upon which he adds, with great reason, "his wonder how any deceiver can be so weak to foretell things near at hand, when a very few months must discover the imposture to all the world." This is spoken with a great deal of affected unconcernedness, as if he would have us think himself to be not under the least apprehension, that the same in two months will be his own case. With respect to the gentleman, I do not remember to have heard of so refined and pleasant a piece of impudence; which I hope the author will not resent as an uncivil word, because I am sure I enter into his taste, and take it as he meant it. However, he half deserves a reprimand for writing with so much scorn and contempt for the understandings of the majority.

For the month of July, he tells us "of a general who, by a glorious action, will recover the reputation he lost by former misfortunes." This is commonly understood to be Lord Galway; who, if he be already dead, as some newspapers have it, Mr. Bickerstaff has made a trip. But this I do not much insist on; for it is hard if another general cannot be found under the same circumstances to whom this prediction may be as well applied.

The French king's death is very punctually related; but it was unfortunate to make him die at Marli, where he never goes at that season of the year, as I observed myself during three years I passed in that kingdom: and discoursing some months ago with Monsieur Tallard about the French court, I find that king never goes to Marli for any time, but about

the season of hunting there, which is not till August. So that there was an unlucky slip of Mr. Bickerstaff for want of foreign education.

He concludes with resuming his promise of publishing entire predictions for next year; of which the other astrologers need not be in very much pain. I suppose we shall have them much about the same time with *The General History of Ears*. I believe we have done with him for ever in this kind; and though I am no astrologer, may venture to prophecy that Isaac Bickerstaff, esq., is now dead, and died just at the time his *Predictions* were ready for the press: that he dropped out of the clouds about nine days ago, and, in about four hours after, mounted up thither again like a vapour; and will, one day or other, perhaps, descend a second time when he has some new, agreeable, or amusing whimsy to pass upon the town; wherein it is very probable he will succeed as often as he is disposed to try the experiment; that is as long as he can preserve a thorough contempt for his own time and other people's understandings, and is resolved not to laugh cheaper than at the expense of a million of people.

III.—THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE FIRST OF MR. BICKERSTAFF'S PREDICTIONS,

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF MR. PARTRIDGE, THE ALMANACK-MAKER, UPON THE 29TH INSTANT, IN A LETTER TO A PERSON OF HONOUR.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708

My Lord, in obedience to your Lordship's commands, as well as to satisfy my own curiosity, I have some days past inquired constantly after Partridge the almanack-maker, of whom it was foretold in *Mr. Bickerstaff's Predictions*, published about a month ago, that he should die the 29th instant, about eleven at night, of a raging fever. I had some sort of knowledge of him when I was employed in the revenue, because he used every year to present me with his almanack, as he did other gentlemen, upon the score of some little

gratuity we gave him. I saw him accidentally once or twice about ten days before he died, and observed he began very much to droop and languish, though I hear his friends did not seem to apprehend him in any danger. About two or three days ago he grew ill, was confined first to his chamber, and in a few hours after to his bed, where Dr. Case [1] and Mrs. Kirleus [2] were sent for to visit and to prescribe to him. Upon this intelligence I sent thrice every day one servant or other to inquire after his health; and yesterday, about four in the afternoon, word was brought me, "that he was past hopes:" upon which I prevailed with myself to go and see him, partly out of commiseration, and, I confess, partly out of curiosity. He knew me very well, seemed surprised at my condescension, and made me compliments upon it, as well as he could in the condition he was. The people about him said, "he had been for some time delirious;" but when I saw him he had his understanding as well as ever I knew, and spoke strong and hearty, without any seeming uneasiness or constraint. After I had told him "how sorry I was to see him in those melancholy circumstances," and said some other civilities suitable to the occasion, I desired him "to tell me freely and ingenuously whether the predictions Mr. Bickerstaff had published relating to his death had not too much affected and worked on his imagination." He confessed, "he had often had it in his head, but never with much apprehension till about a fortnight before; since which time it had the perpetual possession of his mind and thoughts, and he did verily believe was the true natural cause of his present distemper: for," said he, "I am thoroughly persuaded, and I think I have very good reasons, that Mr. Bickerstaff spoke altogether by guess, and knew no more what will happen this year than I did myself."

I told him "his discourse surprised me; and I would be glad he were in a state of health to be able to tell me what reason he had to be convinced of Mr. Bickerstaff's ignorance." He replied, "I am a poor ignorant fellow, bred to a mean trade, yet I have sense enough to know that all pretences of foretelling by astrology are deceits, for this manifest reason;

[1] John Case was many years a noted practitioner in physic and astrology. He was looked upon as the successor of Lilly and of Saffold.
[2] Widow of John Kirleus, son of Dr. Thomas Kirleus.

because the wise and the learned, who can only judge whether there be any truth in this science, do all unanimously agree to laugh at and despise it; and none but the poor ignorant vulgar give it any credit, and that only upon the word of such silly wretches as I and my fellows who can hardly write or read." I then asked him, "why he had not calculated his own nativity, to see whether it agreed with Bickerstaff's prediction?" At which he shook his head, and said, "Oh! sir, this is no time for jesting, but for repenting those fooleries, as I do now from the very bottom of my heart."—"By what I can gather from you," said I, "the observations and predictions you printed with your almanacks were mere impositions on the people." He replied, "If it were otherwise, I should have the less to answer for. We have a common form for all those things: as to foretelling the weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the printer, who takes it out of any old almanack as he thinks fit; the rest was my own invention, to make my almanack sell, having a wife to maintain and no other way to get my bread; for mending old shoes is a poor livelihood; and," added he, sighing, "I wish I may not have done more mischief by my physic than my astrology; though I had some good receipts from my grandmother, and my own compositions were such as I thought could at least do no hurt."

I had some other discourse with him, which I now cannot call to mind; and I fear have already tired your lordship. I shall only add one circumstance, that on his death-bed he declared himself a nonconformist, and had a fanatic preacher to be his spiritual guide. After half an hour's conversation I took my leave, being almost stifled with the closeness of the room. I imagined he could not hold out long, and therefore withdrew to a little coffeehouse hard by, leaving a servant at the house with orders to come immediately and tell me, as near as he could, the minute when Partridge should expire, which was not above two hours after; when, looking upon my watch, I found it to be about five minutes after seven; by which it is clear that Mr. Bickerstaff was mistaken almost four hours in his calculation. In the other circumstances he was exact enough. But whether he has been the cause of this poor man's death, as well as the predictor, may be very reasonably disputed. However, it must be confessed the

matter is odd enough, whether we should endeavour to account for it by chance or the effect of imagination: for my own part, though I believe no man has less faith in these matters, yet I shall wait with some impatience, and not without some expectation, the fulfilling of Mr. Bickerstaff's second prediction, that the Cardinal de Noailles is to die upon the 4th of April; and if that should be verified as exactly as this of poor Partridge, I must own I should be wholly surprised and at a loss, and should infallibly expect the accomplishment of all the rest.

IV.—'SQUIRE BICKERSTAFF DETECTED;
OR,
THE ASTROLOGICAL IMPOSTOR CONVICTED

By JOHN PARTRIDGE,
STUDENT IN PHYSIC AND ASTROLOGY

It is hard, my dear countrymen of these united nations, it is very hard that a Briton born, a Protestant astrologer, a man of revolution principles, an assertor of the liberty and property of the people, should cry out in vain for justice against a Frenchman, a papist, and an illiterate pretender to science, that would blast my reputation, most inhumanly bury me alive, and defraud my native country of those services which, in my double capacity, I daily offer the public.

What great provocations I have received let the impartial reader judge, and how unwillingly, even in my own defence, I now enter the lists against falsehood, ignorance, and envy; but I am exasperated, at length, to drag out this Cacus from the den of obscurity where he lurks, detect him by the light of those stars he has so impudently traduced, and show there is not a monster in the skies so pernicious and malevolent to mankind as an ignorant pretender to physic and astrology. I shall not directly fall on the many gross errors, nor expose the notorious absurdities of this prostitute libeller, till I have let the learned world fairly into the controversy depending, and then leave the unprejudiced to judge of the merits and justice of my cause.

It was toward the conclusion of the year 1707, when an impudent pamphlet crept into the world, entitled, *Predictions, etc., by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.* Among the many arrogant assertions laid down by that lying spirit of divination, he was pleased to pitch on the Cardinal de Noailles and myself, among many other eminent and illustrious persons, that were to die within the compass of the ensuing year; and peremptorily fixes the month, day, and hour, of our deaths: this, I think, is sporting with great men, and public spirits, to the scandal of religion, and reproach of power; and if sovereign princes and astrologers must make diversion for the vulgar—why then farewell, say I, to all governments, ecclesiastical and civil. But, I thank my better stars, I am alive to confront this false and audacious predictor, and to make him rue the hour he ever affronted a man of science and resentment. The cardinal may take what measures he pleases with him; as his excellency is a foreigner, and a Papist, he has no reason to rely on me for his justification; I shall only assure the world he is alive: but as he was bred to letters and is master of a pen, let him use it in his own defence. In the meantime I shall present the public with a faithful narrative of the ungenerous treatment and hard usage I have received from the virulent papers and malicious practices of this pretended astrologer.

V.—A TRUE AND IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq., AGAINST ME

The 28th of March, *anna Dom.* 1708, being the night this sham prophet had so impudently fixed for my last, which made little impression on myself; but I cannot answer for my whole family; for my wife, with concern more than usual, prevailed on me to take somewhat to sweat for a cold; and between the hours of eight and nine, to go to bed: the maid, as she was warming my bed, with a curiosity natural to young wenches, runs to the window, and asks of one passing the street, who the bell tolled for? Dr. Partridge, says

he, the famous almanack-maker, who died suddenly this evening: the poor girl, provoked, told him he lied like a rascal; the other very sedately replied, the sexton had so informed him, and if false, he was to blame for imposing upon a stranger. She asked a second, and a third, as they passed, and every one was in the same tone. Now, I do not say these are accomplices to a certain astrological 'squire, and that one Bickerstaff might be sauntering thereabout, because I will assert nothing here but what I dare attest for plain matter of fact. My wife at this fell into a violent disorder, and I must own I was a little discomposed at the oddness of the accident. In the meantime one knocks at my door; Betty runs down, and opening, finds a sober, grave person, who modestly inquires if this was Dr. Partridge's? She, taking him for some cautious city patient, that came at that time for privacy, shows him into the dining-room. As soon as I could compose myself, I went to him, and was surprised to find my gentleman mounted on a table with a two-foot rule in his hand, measuring my walls, and taking the dimensions of the room. Pray, sir, says I, not to interrupt you, have you any business with me?—Only, sir, replies he, order the girl to bring me a better light, for this is but a very dim one.—Sir, says I, my name is Partridge.—Oh! the doctor's brother, belike, cries he; the staircase, I believe, and these two apartments hung in close mourning, will be sufficient, and only a strip of bays round the other rooms. The doctor must needs die rich, he had great dealings in his way for many years; if he had no family coat, you had as good use the escutcheons of the company, they are as showish, and will look as magnificent as if he was descended from the blood royal.—With that I assumed a greater air of authority, and demanded who employed him, or how he came there?—Why, I was sent, sir, by the company of undertakers, says he, and they were employed by the honest gentleman who is executor to the good doctor departed; and our rascally porter, I believe, is fallen fast asleep with the black cloth and sconces, or he had been here, and we might have been tacking up by this time.—Sir, says I, pray be advised by a friend, and make the best of your speed out of my doors, for I hear my wife's voice, (which by the by is pretty distinguishable,) and in that corner of the room stands a good cudgel, which somebody has felt before

now; if that light in her hands, and she know the business you come about, without consulting the stars, I can assure you it will be employed very much to the detriment of your person.—Sir, cries he, bowing with great civility, I perceive extreme grief for the loss of the doctor disorders you a little at present, but early in the morning I will wait on you with all the necessary materials.—Now, I mention no Bickerstaff; nor do I say that a certain star-gazing 'squire has been playing my executor before his time; but I leave the world to judge, and he that puts things and things fairly together, will not be much wide of the mark.

Well, once more I got my doors closed, and prepared for bed, in hopes of a little repose after so many ruffling adventures; just as I was putting out my light in order to do it, another bounces as hard as he can knock; I open the window, and ask who is there, and what he wants? I am Ned the sexton, replies he, and come to know whether the doctor left any orders for a funeral sermon, and where he is to be laid, and whether his grave is to be plain or bricked?—Why, sirrah, says I, you know me well enough; you know I am not dead, and how dare you affront me after this manner?—Alack-a-day, sir, replies the fellow, why it is in print, and the whole town knows you are dead: why there is Mr. White the joiner is but fitting screws to your coffin, he will be here with it in an instant; he was afraid you would have wanted it before this time. Sirrah, sirrah, says I, you shall know to-morrow, to your cost, that I am alive, and alive like to be!—Why, it is strange, sir, says he, you should make such a secret of your death to us that are your neighbours; it looks as if you had a design to defraud the church of its dues; and, let me tell you, for one that has lived so long by the heavens, that is unhandsomely done.—Hist, hist, says another rogue that stood by him; away, doctor, into your flannel gear as fast as you can, for here is a whole pack of dismals coming to you with their black equipage, and how indecent will it look for you to stand frightening folks at your window when you should have been in your coffin these three hours?—In short, what with undertakers, embalmers, joiners, sextons, and your damned elegy hawkers upon a late practitioner in physic and astrology, I got not one wink of sleep that night, nor scarce a moment's rest ever since. Now, I doubt not

but this villainous 'squire has the impudence to assert that these are entirely strangers to him; he, good man, knows nothing of the matter, and honest Isaac Bickerstaff, I warrant you, is more a man of honour than to be an accomplice with a pack of rascals that walk the streets on nights, and disturb good people in their beds; but he is out if he thinks the whole world is blind; for there is one John Partridge can smell a knave as far as Grub Street, although he lies in the most exalted garret, and writes himself 'squire:—but I will keep my temper, and proceed in the narration.

I could not stir out of doors for the space of three months after this, but presently one comes up to me in the street, Mr. Partridge, that coffin you was last buried in I have not yet been paid for: Doctor, cries another dog, how do you think people can live by making of graves for nothing? next time you die, you may even toll out the bell yourself for Ned. A third rogue tips me by the elbow, and wonders how I have the conscience to sneak abroad without paying my funeral expenses.—Lord, says one, I durst have swore that was honest Dr. Partridge, my old friend; but, poor man, he is gone.—I beg your pardon, says another, you look so like my old acquaintance, that I used to consult on some private occasions: but, alack, he is gone the way of all flesh.—Look, look, look, cries a third, after a competent space of staring at me, would not one think our neighbour the almanack-maker was crept out of his grave to take the other peep at the stars in this world, and show how much he is improved in fortune-telling, by having taken a journey to the other?

Nay, the very reader of our parish, a good, sober, discreet person, has sent two or three times for me to come and be buried decently, or send him sufficient reasons to the contrary; or, if I have been interred in any other parish, to produce my certificate, as the act[1] requires. My poor wife is run almost distracted with being called widow Partridge, when she knows it is false; and once a term she is cited into the court to take out letters of administration. But the greatest grievance is, a paltry quack, that takes up my calling just under my nose, and in his printed directions, with N.B.—

[1] The statute of 30 Car. II. for burying in woollen, requires that oath shall be made of the compliance with this act, and a certificate thereof lodged with the minister of the parish within eight days after interment.

says, he lives in the house of the late ingenious Mr. John Partridge, an eminent practitioner in leather, physic, and astrology.

But to show how far the wicked spirit of envy, malice, and resentment can hurry some men, my nameless old persecutor had provided me a monument at the stone-cutter's, and would have erected it in the parish church; and this piece of notorious and expensive villainy had actually succeeded if I had not used my utmost interest with the vestry, where it was carried at last but by two voices, that I am alive. That stratagem failing, out comes a long sable elegy, bedecked with hour-glasses, mattocks, skulls, spades, and skeletons, with an epitaph as confidently written to abuse me and my profession as if I had been under ground these twenty years.

And after such barbarous treatment as this, can the world blame me, when I ask, what is become of the freedom of an Englishman? and where is the liberty and property that my old glorious friend came over to assert? we have drove popery out of the nation, and sent slavery to foreign climes. The arts only remain in bondage, when a man of science and character shall be openly insulted, in the midst of the many useful services he is daily paying the public. Was it ever heard, even in Turkey or Algiers, that a state astrologer was bantered out of his life by an ignorant impostor, or bawled out of the world by a pack of villainous deep-mouthed hawkers? though I print almanacks, and publish advertisements; though I produce certificates under the minister's and churchwardens' hands that I am alive, and attest the same on oath at quarter-sessions, out comes a full and true relation of the death and interment of John Partridge; truth is bore down, attestations neglected, the testimony of sober persons despised, and a man is looked upon by his neighbours as if he had been seven years dead, and is buried alive in the midst of his friends and acquaintance.

Now, can any man of common sense think it consistent with the honour of my profession, and not much beneath the dignity of a philosopher, to stand bawling before his own door—Alive! alive! ho! the famous Dr. Partridge! no counterfeit, but all alive!——as if I had the twelve celestial monsters of the zodiac to show within, or was forced for a livelihood to turn retailer to May and Bartholomew fairs?

Therefore, if her majesty would but graciously be pleased to think a hardship of this nature worthy her royal consideration, and the next parliament, in their great wisdom, cast but an eye toward the deplorable case of their old philomath, that annually bestows his good wishes on them, I am sure there is one Isaac Bickerstaff, esq. would soon be trussed up for his bloody predictions, and putting good subjects in terror of their lives: and that henceforward to murder a man by way of prophecy, and bury him in a printed letter, either to a lord or commoner, shall as legally entitle him to the present possession of Tyburn as if he robbed on the highway or cut your throat in bed.

I shall demonstrate to the judicious that France and Rome are at the bottom of this horrid conspiracy against me; and that culprit aforesaid is a popish emissary, has paid his visits to St. Germain's, and is now in the measures of Louis XIV. That, in attempting my reputation, there is a general massacre of learning designed in these realms: and through my sides there is a wound given to all the Protestant almanack-makers in the universe. VIVAT REGINA.

VI.—A VINDICATION OF ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq.

AGAINST WHAT IS OBJECTED TO HIM BY MR. PARTRIDGE, IN HIS ALMANACK FOR THE YEAR 1709

BY THE SAID ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq.

MR. PARTRIDGE has been lately pleased to treat me after a very rough manner, in that which is called his almanack for the present year: such usage is very indecent from one gentleman to another, and does not at all contribute to the discovery of truth, which ought to be the great end in all disputes of the learned. To call a man a fool and villain, an impudent fellow, only for differing from him in a point merely speculative, is, in my humble opinion, a very improper style for a person of his education. I appeal to the learned world, whether, in my last year's predictions, I gave him the least provocation for such unworthy treatment. Philosophers

have differed in all ages; but the discreetest among them have always differed as became philosophers. Scurrility and passion, in a controversy among scholars, is just so much of nothing to the purpose, and at best a tacit confession of a weak cause: my concern is not so much for my own reputation as that of the republic of letters, which Mr. Partridge has endeavoured to wound through my sides. If men of public spirit must be superciliously treated for their ingenious attempts, how will true useful knowledge be ever advanced? I wish Mr. Partridge knew the thoughts which foreign universities have conceived of his ungenerous proceedings with me; but I am too tender of his reputation to publish them to the world. That spirit of envy and pride, which blasts so many rising geniuses in our nation, is yet unknown among professors abroad: the necessity of justifying myself will excuse my vanity, when I tell the reader that I have near a hundred honorary letters from several parts of Europe (some as far as Muscovy) in praise of my performance; besides several others, which, as I have been credibly informed, were opened in the post office, and never sent me. It is true, the inquisition in Portugal was pleased to burn my predictions, [this is fact,] and condemn the author and the readers of them; but I hope at the same time it will be considered, in how deplorable a state learning lies at present in that kingdom; and, with the profoundest veneration for crowned heads, I will presume to add, that it a little concerned his majesty of Portugal to interpose his authority in behalf of a scholar and a gentleman, the subject of a nation with which he is now in so strict an alliance. But the other kingdoms and states of Europe have treated me with more candour and generosity. If I had leave to print the Latin letters transmitted to me from foreign parts, they would fill a volume, and be a full defence against all that Mr. Partridge or his accomplices of the Portugal inquisition will be ever able to object, who, by the way, are the only enemies my predictions have ever met with at home or abroad. But I hope I know better what is due to the honour of a learned correspondence in so tender a point. Yet some of those illustrious persons will perhaps excuse me for transcribing a passage or two in my vindication.[1] The

[1] The quotations here inserted are in imitation of Dr. Bentley in some part of the famous controversy between him and Mr. Boyle.

most learned Monsieur Leibnitz thus addresses to me his third letter:—"*Illustrissimo Bickerstaffio astrologiæ instauratori*," etc. Monsieur Le Clerc, quoting my predictions in a treatise he published last year, is pleased to say, "*Ita nu perrime Bickerstaffius, magnum illud Angliæ sidus.*" Another great professor, writing of me, has these words: "*Bickerstaffius, nobilis Anglus, astrologorum hujusce sæculi facile princeps.*" Signior Magliabecchi, the great duke's famous library-keeper, spends almost his whole letter in compliments and praises. It is true, the renowned professor of astronomy at Utrecht seems to differ from me in one article; but it is after the modest manner that becomes a philosopher; as, "*pace tanti viri dixerim:*" and, page 55, he seems to lay the error upon the printer (as indeed it ought), and says, "*vel forsan error typographi cum alioquin Bickerstaffius vir doctissimus*," etc.

If Mr. Partridge had followed these examples in the controversy between us, he might have spared me the trouble of justifying myself in so public a manner. I believe no man is readier to own his errors than I, or more thankful to those who will please to inform him of them. But, it seems, this gentleman, instead of encouraging the progress of his own art, is pleased to look upon all attempts of that kind as an invasion of his province. He has been indeed so wise as to make no objection against the truth of my predictions, except in one single point relating to himself: and to demonstrate how much men are blinded by their own partiality, I do solemnly assure the reader, that he is the only person from whom I ever heard that objection offered, which consideration alone, I think, will take off all its weight.

With my utmost endeavours I have not been able to trace above two objections ever made against the truth of my last year's prophecies: the first was, of a Frenchman, who was pleased to publish to the world "that the Cardinal de Noailles was still alive, notwithstanding the pretended prophecy of Monsieur Biquerstaffe:" but how far a Frenchman, a Papist, and an enemy, is to be believed in his own cause, against an English Protestant, who is true to the government, I shall leave to the candid and impartial reader.

The other objection is the unhappy occasion of this discourse, and relates to an article in my predictions, which foretold the death of Mr. Partridge to happen on March 29, 1708.

This he is pleased to contradict absolutely in the almanack he has published for the present year, and in that ungentlemanly manner (pardon the expression) as I have above related. In that work he very roundly asserts, that he "is not only now alive, but was likewise alive upon that very 29th of March, when I had foretold he should die." This is the subject of the present controversy between us; which I design to handle with all brevity, perspicuity, and calmness. In this dispute I am sensible the eyes, not only of England, but of all Europe, will be upon us; and the learned in every country will, I doubt not, take part on that side where they find most appearance of reason and truth.

Without entering into criticisms of chronology about the hour of his death, I shall only prove that Mr. Partridge is not alive. And my first agrument is this: about a thousand gentlemen having bought his almanacks for this year, merely to find what he said against me, at every line they read they would lift up their eyes and cry out, betwixt rage and laughter, "they were sure no man alive ever writ such damned stuff as this." Neither did I ever hear that opinion disputed; so that Mr. Partridge lies under a dilemma, either of disowning his almanack, or allowing himself to be no man alive. Secondly, death is defined by all philosophers a separation of the soul and body. Now it is certain that the poor woman, who has best reason to know, has gone about for some time to every alley in the neighbourhood, and sworn to the gossips that her husband had neither life nor soul in him. Therefore, if an uninformed carcase walks still about, and is pleased to call itself Partridge, Mr. Bickerstaff does not think himself anyway answerable for that. Neither had the said carcase any right to beat the poor boy, who happened to pass by it in the street, crying, "A full and true account of Dr. Partridge's death!" etc.

Thirdly, Mr. Partridge pretends to tell fortunes and recover stolen goods, which all the parish says he must do by conversing with the devil and other evil spirits, and no wise man will ever allow he could converse personally with either till after he was dead.

Fourthly, I will plainly prove him to be dead, out of his own almanack for this year, and from the very passage which he produces to make us think him alive. He there says, "he is

not only now alive, but was also alive upon that very 29th of March which I foretold he should die on: " by this he declares his opinion that a man may be alive now who was not alive a twelvemonth ago. And, indeed, there lies the sophistry of his argument. He dares not assert he was alive ever since that 29th of March, but that he " is now alive, and was so on that day: " I grant the latter; for he did not die till night, as appears by the printed account of his death, in a letter to a lord; and whether he be since revived I leave the world to judge. This indeed is perfect cavilling, and I am ashamed to dwell any longer upon it.

Fifthly, I will appeal to Mr. Partridge himself whether it be probable I could have been so indiscreet to begin my predictions with the only falsehood that ever was pretended to be in them; and this in an affair at home, where I had so many opportunities to be exact; and must have given such advantages against me to a person of Mr. Partridge's wit and learning, who, if he could possibly have raised one single objection more against the truth of my prophecies, would hardly have spared me.

And here I must take occasion to reprove the above-mentioned writer of the relation of Mr. Partridge's death, in a letter to a lord, who was pleased to tax me with a mistake of four whole hours in my calculation of that event. I must confess, this censure, pronounced with an air of certainty, in a matter that so nearly concerned me, and by a grave, judicious author, moved me not a little. But though I was at that time out of town, yet several of my friends, whose curiosity had led them to be exactly informed, (for as to my own part, having no doubt at all in the matter, I never once thought of it,) assured me I computed to something under half an hour, which (I speak my private opinion) is an error of no very great magnitude that men should raise a clamour about it. I shall only say, it would not be amiss if that author would henceforth be more tender of other men's reputation as well as his own. It is well there were no more mistakes of that kind; if there had, I presume he would have told me of them with as little ceremony.

There is one objection against Mr. Partridge's death which I have sometimes met with, though indeed very slightly offered, that he still continues to write almanacks. But this

is no more than what is common to all of that profession. Gadbury, Poor Robin, Dove, Wing, and several others do yearly publish their almanacks, though several of them have been dead since before the Revolution. Now, the natural reason of this I take to be, that, whereas it is the privilege of authors to live after their death, almanack-makers are alone excluded; because their dissertations, treating only upon the minutes as they pass, become useless as those go off. In consideration of which, Time, whose registers they are, gives them a lease in reversion, to continue their works after death.

I should not have given the public or myself the trouble of this vindication if my name had not been made use of by several persons to whom I never lent it; one of which, a few days ago, was pleased to father on me a new set of predictions. But I think these are things too serious to be trifled with. It grieved me to the heart, when I saw my labours, which had cost me so much thought and watching, bawled about by the common hawkers of Grub Street, which I only intended for the weighty consideration of the gravest persons. This prejudiced the world so much at first, that several of my friends had the assurance to ask me whether I were in jest? to which I only answered coldly, "that the event would show." But it is the talent of our age and nation to turn things of the greatest importance into ridicule. When the end of the year had verified all my predictions, out comes Mr. Partridge's almanack, disputing the point of his death; so that I am employed, like the general who was forced to kill his enemies twice over whom a necromancer had raised to life. If Mr. Partridge have practised the same experiment upon himself, and be again alive, long may he continue so; that does not the least contradict my veracity; but I think I have clearly proved, by invincible demonstration, that he died, at farthest, within half an hour of the time I foretold, and not four hours sooner, as the above-mentioned author, in his letter to a lord, has maliciously suggested, with a design to blast my credit, by charging me with so gross a mistake.

VII.—A FAMOUS PREDICTION OF MERLIN, THE BRITISH WIZARD

WRITTEN ABOVE A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, AND RELATING TO THE YEAR 1709, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES, BY T. N. PHILOMATH

LAST year was published a paper of Predictions, pretended to be written by one Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., but the true design of it was to ridicule the art of astrology, and expose its professors as ignorant or impostors. Against this imputation Dr. Partridge has learnedly vindicated himself in his almanack for that year.

For a further vindication of this famous art, I have thought fit to present the world with the following prophecy. The original is said to be of the famous Merlin, who lived about a thousand years ago; and the following translation is two hundred years old, for it seems to be written near the end of Henry VII.'s reign. I found it in an old edition of Merlin's prophecies, imprinted at London by Johan Haukyns, in the year 1530, page 39. I set it down word for word in the old orthography, and shall take leave to subjoin a few explanatory notes:—

Seven and Ten addyd to nine,
Of Fraunce ber Woe this is the Sygne,
Tamys Rivere twys y-frozen,
Walke sans wetyng Shoes ne Hozen.
Then comyth foorthe, Ich understonde,
From Towne of Stolle to fattyn Londe,
An Herdie Chyftan, Woe the Aborne
To Fraunce, that ever he was born.
Then shall the Fysbe beweyle his Bosse;
Nor shall grin Berrys make up the Losse.
Yonge Symnele shall again miscarrye:
And Norways Pryd again shall marry.
And from the Tree where Blossums feele,
Ripe Fruit shall come, and all is wele,
Reaums shall daunce Honde in Honde,

And it shall be merrye in old Inglonde,
Then old Inglonde shall be no more,
And no man shall be sorie therefore.
Geryon shall have three Hedes agayne,
Till Hapsburge maketh them but twayne

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Seven and Ten, etc. This line describes the year when these events shall happen. Seven and ten make seventeen, which I explain seventeen hundred, and this number added to nine, makes the year we are now in; for it must be understood of the natural year, which begins the first of January.

Tamys Rivere twys, etc. The River Thames frozen twice in one year, so as men to walk on it, is a very signal accident, which perhaps hath not fallen out for several hundred years before, and is the reason why some astrologers have thought that this prophecy could never be fulfilled, because they imagined such a thing would never happen in our climate.

From Towne of Stoffe, etc. This is a plain designation of the Duke of Marlborough; one kind of stuff used to fatten and is called marle, and everybody knows that borough is a name for a town; and this way of expression is after the usual dark manner of old astrological predictions.

Then shall the Fysshe, etc. By the fish is understood the Dauphin of France, as their kings' eldest sons are called; it is here said he shall lament the loss of the Duke of Burgundy, called the Bosse, which is an old English word for hump-shoulder, or crook-back, as that duke is known to be; and the prophecy seems to mean that he should be overcome or slain. By the green berrys, in the next line, is meant the young Duke of Berry, the Dauphin's third son, who shall not have valour or fortune enough to supply the loss of his eldest brother.

Yonge Symnele, etc. By Symnele, is meant the pretended Prince of Wales, who, if he offers to attempt anything against England, shall miscarry, as he did before. Lambert Symnele is the name of a young man, noted in our histories for personating the son (as I remember) of Edward IV.

And Norways Pryde, etc. I cannot guess who is meant

by Norway's pride [Queen Anne]; perhaps the reader may, as well as the sense of the two following lines.

Reaums shall, etc. Reaums, or, as the word is now, realms, is the old name for kingdoms: and this is a very plain prediction of our happy union, with the felicities that shall attend it. It is added that Old England shall be no more, and yet no man shall be sorry for it. And indeed, properly speaking, England is now no more, for the whole island is one kingdom, under the name of Britain.

Geryon shall, etc. This prediction, though somewhat obscure, is wonderfully adapt. Geryon is said to have been a king of Spain, whom Hercules slew. It was a fiction of the poets, that he had three heads, which the author says he shall have again: that is, Spain shall have three kings, which is now wonderfully verified; for, beside the King of Portugal, which properly is part of Spain, there are now two rivals for Spain, Charles and Philip; but Charles being descended from the Count of Hapsburg, founder of the Austrian family, shall soon make those heads but two, by overturning Philip, and driving him out of Spain.

Some of these predictions are already fulfilled, and it is highly probable the rest may be in due time; and I think I have not forced the words, by my explication, into any other sense than what they will naturally bear. If this be granted, I am sure it must be also allowed, that the author (whoever he were) was a person of extraordinary sagacity; and that astrology, brought to such perfection as this, is by no means an art to be despised, whatever Mr. Bickerstaff, or other merry gentlemen, are pleased to think. As to the tradition of these lines having been writ in the original by Merlin, I confess I lay not much weight upon it; but it is enough to justify their authority, that the book whence I have transcribed them, was printed 170 years ago, as appears by the title-page. For the satisfaction of any gentleman, who may be either doubtful of the truth, or curious to be informed, I shall give order to have the very book sent to the printer of this paper, with directions to let anybody see it that pleases, because I believe it is pretty scarce.

HINTS TOWARD AN ESSAY ON CONVERSATION

I HAVE observed few obvious subjects to have been so seldom, or at least so slightly, handled as this; and indeed I know few so difficult to be treated as it ought, nor yet upon which there seems so much to be said.

Most things pursued by men for the happiness of public or private life, our wit or folly have so refined, that they seldom subsist but in idea; a true friend, a good marriage, a perfect form of government, with some others, require so many ingredients, so good in their several kinds, and so much niceness in mixing them, that for some thousands of years men have despaired of reducing their schemes to perfection: but in conversation it is, or might be, otherwise; for here we are only to avoid a multitude of errors, which, although a matter of some difficulty, may be in every man's power, for want of which it remains as mere an idea as the other. Therefore it seems to me, that the truest way to understand conversation, is to know the faults and errors to which it is subject, and from thence every man to form maxims to himself whereby it may be regulated, because it requires few talents to which most men are not born, or at least may not acquire, without any great genius or study. For nature has left every man a capacity of being agreeable, though not of shining in company; and there are a hundred men sufficiently qualified for both, who, by a very few faults that they might correct in half an hour, are not so much as tolerable.

I was prompted to write my thoughts upon this subject by mere indignation, to reflect that so useful and innocent a pleasure, so fitted for every period and condition of life, and so much in all men's power, should be so much neglected and abused.

And in this discourse it will be necessary to note those

errors that are obvious, as well as others which are seldomer observed, since there are few so obvious, or acknowledged, into which most men, some time or other, are not apt to run.

For instance: nothing is more generally exploded than the folly of talking too much; yet I rarely remember to have seen five people together, where some one among them has not been predominant in that kind, to the great constraint and disgust of all the rest. But among such as deal in multitudes of words, none are comparable to the sober deliberate talker, who proceeds with much thought and caution, makes his preface, branches out into several digressions, finds a hint that puts him in mind of another story, which he promises to tell you when this is done; comes back regularly to his subject, cannot readily call to mind some person's name, holding his head, complains of his memory; the whole company all this while in suspense; at length says, it is no matter, and so goes on. And, to crown the business, it perhaps proves at last a story the company has heard fifty times before; or, at best, some insipid adventure of the relater.

Another general fault in conversation is that of those who affect to talk of themselves: some, without any ceremony, will run over the history of their lives; will relate the annals of their diseases, with the several symptoms and circumstances of them; will enumerate the hardships and injustice they have suffered in court, in parliament, in love, or in law. Others are more dexterous, and with great art will lie on the watch to hook in their own praise: they will call a witness to remember they always foretold what would happen in such a case, but none would believe them; they advised such a man from the beginning, and told him the consequences, just as they happened; but he would have his own way. Others make a vanity of telling their faults; they are the strangest men in the world; they cannot dissemble; they own it is a folly; they have lost abundance of advantages by it; but if you would give them the world, they cannot help it; there is something in their nature that abhors insincerity and constraint; with many other insufferable topics of the same altitude.

Of such mighty importance every man is to himself, and ready to think he is so to others; without once making this

easy and obvious reflection, that his affairs can have no more weight with other men, than theirs have with him; and how little that is he is sensible enough.

Where a company has met, I often have observed two persons discover, by some accident, that they were bred together at the same school or university; after which the rest are condemned to silence, and to listen while these two are refreshing each other's memory, with the arch tricks and passages of themselves and their comrades.

I know a great officer of the army who will sit for some time with a supercilious and impatient silence, full of anger and contempt for those who are talking; at length, of a sudden, demanding audience, decide the matter in a short dogmatical way; then withdraw within himself again, and vouchsafe to talk no more, until his spirits circulate again to the same point.

There are some faults in conversation which none are so subject to as the men of wit, nor ever so much as when they are with each other. If they have opened their mouths without endeavouring to say a witty thing, they think it is so many words lost: it is a torment to the hearers, as much as to themselves, to see them upon the rack for invention, and in perpetual constraint, with so little success. They must do something extraordinary in order to acquit themselves, and answer their character, else the standers-by may be disappointed, and be apt to think them only like the rest of mortals. I have known two men of wit industriously brought together in order to entertain the company, where they have made a very ridiculous figure, and provided all the mirth at their own expense.

I know a man of wit who is never easy but where he can be allowed to dictate and preside: he neither expects to be informed or entertained, but to display his own talents. His business is to be good company, and not good conversation; and therefore he chooses to frequent those who are content to listen, and profess themselves his admirers. And indeed the worst conversation I ever remember to have heard in my life was that at Will's coffee-house, where the wits (as they were called) used formerly to assemble; that is to say, five or six men who had writ plays, or at least prologues, or had share in a miscellany, came thither, and entertained one

another with their trifling composures, in so important an air as if they had been the noblest efforts of human nature, or that the fate of kingdoms depended on them; and they were usually attended with an humble audience of young students from the inns of court, or the universities; who, at due distance, listened to these oracles, and returned home with great contempt for their law and philosophy, their heads filled with trash, under the name of politeness, criticism, and belles lettres.

By these means the poets, for many years past, were all overrun with pedantry. For, as I take it, the word is not properly used; because pedantry is the too frequent or unseasonable obtruding our own knowledge in common discourse, and placing too great a value upon it; by which definition, men of the court, or the army, may be as guilty of pedantry as a philosopher or a divine; and it is the same vice in women, when they are over copious upon the subject of their petticoats, or their fans, or their china. For which reason, although it be a piece of prudence, as well as good manners, to put men upon talking on subjects they are best versed in, yet that is a liberty a wise man could hardly take; because, beside the imputation of pedantry, it is what he would never improve by.

The great town is usually provided with some player, mimic, or buffoon, who has a general reception at the good tables; familiar and domestic with persons of the first quality, and usually sent for at every meeting to divert the company; against which I have no objection. You go there as to a farce or a puppetshow; your business is only to laugh in season, either out of inclination or civility, while this merry companion is acting his part. It is a business he has undertaken, and we are to suppose he is paid for his day's work. I only quarrel, when, in select and private meetings, where men of wit and learning are invited to pass an evening, this jester should be admitted to run over his circle of tricks, and make the whole company unfit for any other conversation, beside the indignity of confounding men's talents at so shameful a rate.

Raillery is the finest part of conversation; but, as it is our usual custom to counterfeit and adulterate whatever is too clear for us, so we have done with this, and turned it all into

what is generally called repartee, or being smart; just as when an expensive fashion comes up, those who are not able to reach it, content themselves with some paltry imitation. It now passes for raillery to run a man down in discourse, to put him out of countenance, and make him ridiculous; sometimes to expose the defects of his person or understanding; on all which occasions, he is obliged not to be angry, to avoid the imputation of not being able to take a jest. It is admirable to observe one who is dexterous at this art, singling out a weak adversary, getting the laugh on his side, and then carrying all before him. The French, from whence we borrow the word, have a quite different idea of the thing, and so had we in the politer age of our fathers. Raillery was to say something that at first appeared a reproach or reflection, but, by some turn of wit, unexpected and surprising, ended always in a compliment, and to the advantage of the person it was addressed to. And surely one of the best rules in conversation is, never to say a thing which any of the company can reasonably wish we had rather left unsaid: nor can there anything be well more contrary to the ends for which people meet together, than to part unsatisfied with each other or themselves.

There are two faults in conversation, which appear very different, yet arise from the same root, and are equally blameable; I mean an impatience to interrupt others; and the uneasiness of being interrupted ourselves. The two chief ends of conversation are to entertain and improve those we are among, or to receive those benefits ourselves; which whoever will consider, cannot easily run into either of these two errors; because, when any man speaks in company, it is to be supposed he does it for his hearers' sake, and not his own; so that common discretion will teach us not to force their attention, if they are not willing to lend it; nor, on the other side, to interrupt him who is in possession, because that is in the grossest manner to give the preference to our own good sense.

There are some people whose good manners will not suffer them to interrupt you, but, what is almost as bad, will discover abundance of impatience, and lie upon the watch until you have done, because they have started something in their own thoughts, which they long to be delivered of. Meantime, they are so far from regarding what passes, that

their imaginations are wholly turned upon what they have in reserve, for fear it should slip out of their memory; and thus they confine their invention, which might otherwise range over a hundred things full as good, and that might be much more naturally introduced.

There is a sort of rude familiarity, which some people, by practising among their intimates, have introduced into their general conversation, and would have it pass for innocent freedom or humour; which is a dangerous experiment in our northern climate, where all the little decorum and politeness we have are purely forced by art, and are so ready to lapse into barbarity. This, among the Romans, was the raillery of slaves, of which we have many instances in Plautus. It seems to have been introduced among us by Cromwell, who, by preferring the scum of the people, made it a court entertainment, of which I have heard many particulars; and, considering all things were turned upside down, it was reasonable and judicious: although it was a piece of policy found out to ridicule a point of honour in the other extreme, when the smallest word misplaced among gentlemen ended in a duel.

There are some men excellent at telling a story, and provided with a plentiful stock of them, which they can draw out upon occasion in all companies; and, considering how low conversation runs now among us, it is not altogether a contemptible talent; however, it is subject to two unavoidable defects, frequent repetition, and being soon exhausted; so that, whoever values this gift in himself, has need of a good memory, and ought frequently to shift his company, that he may not discover the weakness of his fund; for those who are thus endued have seldom any other revenue, but live upon the main stock.

Great speakers in public are seldom agreeable in private conversation, whether their faculty be natural, or acquired by practice, and often venturing. Natural elocution, although it may seem a paradox, usually springs from a barrenness of invention, and of words; by which men who have only one stock of notions upon every subject, and one set of phrases to express them in, they swim upon the superficies, and offer themselves on every occasion; therefore men of much learning, and who know the compass of a language, are generally the worst talkers on a sudden, until

much practice has inured and emboldened them; because they are confounded with plenty of matter, variety of notions and of words, which they cannot readily choose, but are perplexed and entangled by too great a choice; which is no disadvantage in private conversation; where, on the other side, the talent of haranguing is, of all others, most unsupportable.

Nothing has spoiled men more for conversation than the character of being wits; to support which they never fail of encouraging a number of followers and admirers, who list themselves in their service, wherein they find their accounts on both sides by pleasing their mutual vanity. This has given the former such an air of superiority, and made the latter so pragmatical, that neither of them are well to be endured. I say nothing here of the itch of dispute and contradiction, telling of lies, or of those who are troubled with the diseases called the wandering of the thoughts, so that they are never present in mind at what passes in discourse; for whoever labours under any of these possessions, is as unfit for conversation as a madman in Bedlam.

I think I have gone over most of the errors in conversation that have fallen under my notice or memory, except some that are merely personal, and others too gross to need exploding; such as lewd or profane talk; but I pretend only to treat the errors of conversation in general, and not the several subjects of discourse, which would be infinite. Thus we see how human nature is most debased, by the abuse of that faculty which is held the great distinction between men and brutes: and how little advantage we make of that, which might be the greatest, the most lasting, and the most innocent, as well as useful pleasure of life: in default of which we are forced to take up with those poor amusements of dress and visiting, or the more pernicious ones of play, drink, and vicious amours; whereby the nobility and gentry of both sexes are entirely corrupted, both in body and mind, and have lost all notions of love, honour, friendship, generosity: which, under the name of fopperies, have been for some time laughed out of doors.

This degeneracy of conversation, with the pernicious consequences thereof upon our humours and dispositions, has been owing, among other causes, to the custom arisen, for some time past, of excluding women from any share in

our society, further than in parties at play, or dancing, or in the pursuit of an amour. I take the highest period of politeness in England (and it is of the same date in France) to have been the peaceable part of King Charles I.'s reign, and from what we read of those times, as well as from the accounts I have formerly met with from some who lived in that court, the methods then used for raising and cultivating conversation were altogether different from ours: several ladies, whom we find celebrated by the poets of that age, had assemblies at their houses, where persons of the best understanding, and of both sexes, met to pass the evenings in discoursing upon whatever agreeable subjects were occasionally started; and although we are apt to ridicule the sublime Platonic notions they had, or personated, in love and friendship, I conceive their refinements were grounded upon reason, and that a little grain of the romance is no ill ingredient to preserve and exalt the dignity of human nature, without which it is apt to degenerate into everything that is sordid, vicious, and low. If there were no other use in the conversation of ladies, it is sufficient that it would lay a restraint upon those odious topics of immodesty and indecencies, into which the rudeness of our northern genius is so apt to fall. And, therefore, it is observable in those sprightly gentlemen about the town, who are so very dexterous at entertaining a vizard mask in the park or the playhouse, that in the company of ladies of virtue and honour, they are silent and disconcerted, and out of their element.

There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company, with relating facts of no consequence, nor at all out of the road of such common incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scots than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstance of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little relieved by the uncouth terms and phrases, as well as accent and gesture peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable. It is not a fault in company to talk much; but to continue it long is certainly one; for, if the majority of those who are got together be naturally silent or cautious, the conversation will flag, unless it be often renewed by one among them, who can start new subjects, provided he does not dwell upon them, that leave room for answers and replies.

A COMPLETE COLLECTION OF GENTEEL AND INGENIOUS CONVERSATION[1]

ACCORDING TO THE MOST POLITE MODE AND METHOD, NOW USED AT COURT, AND IN THE BEST COMPANIES OF ENGLAND

IN THREE DIALOGUES

By SIMON WAGSTAFF, Esq.

INTRODUCTION

As my life has been chiefly spent in consulting the honour and welfare of my country for more than forty years past, not without answerable success, if the world and my friends have not flattered me, so there is no point wherein I have so much laboured as that of improving and polishing all parts of conversation between persons of quality, whether they meet by accident or invitation, at meals, tea, or visits, mornings, noon, or evenings.

I have passed perhaps more time than any other man of my age and country in visits and assemblies, where the polite persons of both sexes distinguish themselves; and could not without much grief observe how frequently both gentlemen and ladies are at a loss for questions, answers, replies, and rejoinders. However, my concern was much abated when I found that these defects were not occasioned by any want of materials, but because those materials were not in every hand: for instance, one lady can give an answer better than ask a question; one gentleman is happy at a reply; another excels in a rejoinder: one can revive a languishing conversation by a sudden surprising sentence; another is more dex-

[1] Swift, referring to these Dialogues, said they were intended "to reduce the whole politeness, wit, humour, and style of England into a short system for the use of all persons of quality, and particularly the maids of honour."

terous in seconding; a third can fill up the gap with laughing, or commending what has been said: thus fresh hints may be started, and the ball of the discourse kept up.

But, alas! this is too seldom the case, even in the most select companies. How often do we see at court, at public visiting days, at great men's levees, and other places of general meeting, that the conversation falls and drops to nothing, like a fire without supply of fuel! This is what we all ought to lament; and against this dangerous evil I take upon me to affirm, that I have in the following papers provided an infallible remedy:—

It was in the year 1695, and the sixth of his late majesty king William III., of ever-glorious and immortal memory, who rescued three kingdoms from popery and slavery, when, being about the age of six-and-thirty, my judgment mature, of good reputation in the world, and well acquainted with the best families in Town, I determined to spend five mornings, to dine four times, pass three afternoons, and six evenings every week in the houses of the most polite families, of which I would confine myself to fifty; only changing as the masters or ladies died, or left the town, or grew out of vogue, or sunk in their fortunes, or (which to me was of the highest moment) became disaffected to the government; which practice I have followed ever since to this very day; except when I happened to be sick, or in the spleen upon cloudy weather; and except when I entertained four of each sex at my own lodgings once in a month, by way of retaliation.

I always kept a large table-book in my pocket; and as soon as I left the company I immediately entered the choicest expressions that passed during the visit: which, returning home, I transcribed in a fair hand, but somewhat enlarged; and had made the greatest part of my collection in twelve years, but not digested into any method, for this I found was a work of infinite labour, and what required the nicest judgment, and consequently could not be brought to any degree of perfection in less than sixteen years more.

Herein I resolved to exceed the advice of Horace, a Roman poet, which I have read in Mr. Creech's admirable translation, that an author should keep his works nine years in his closet before he ventured to publish them: and, finding that I still received some additional flowers of wit and language,

although in a very small number, I determined to defer the publication, to pursue my design, and exhaust (if possible) the whole subject, that I might present a complete system to the world: for I am convinced, by long experience, that the critics will be as severe as their old envy against me can make them: I foresee they will object, that I have inserted many answers and replies, which are neither witty, humorous, polite, nor authentic; and have omitted others that would have been highly useful, as well as entertaining. But let them come to particulars, and I will boldly engage to confute their malice.

For these last six or seven years I have not been able to add above nine valuable sentences to enrich my collection: from whence I conclude that what remains will amount only to a trifle. However, if, after the publication of this work, any lady or gentleman, when they have read it, shall find the least thing of importance omitted, I desire they will please to supply my defects by communicating to me their discoveries; and their letters may be directed to Simon Wagstaff, Esq., at his lodgings next door to the Gloucester Head in St. James's Street, paying the postage. In return of which favour, I shall make honourable mention of their names in a short preface to the second edition.

In the meantime, I cannot but with some pride and much pleasure congratulate with my dear country, which has outdone all the nations of Europe, in advancing the whole art of conversation to the greatest height it is capable of reaching; and, therefore, being entirely convinced that the collection I now offer to the public is full and complete, I may at the same time boldly affirm, that the whole genius, humour, politeness, and eloquence of England are summed up in it; nor is the treasure small, wherein are to be found at least a thousand shining questions, answers, repartees, replies, and rejoinders, fitted to adorn every kind of discourse that an assembly of English ladies and gentlemen, met together for their mutual entertainment, can possibly want: especially when the several flowers shall be set off and improved by the speakers, with every circumstance of preface and circumlocution, in proper terms; and attended with praise, laughter, or admiration.

There is a natural involuntary distortion of the muscles,

which is the anatomical cause of laughter: but there is another cause of laughter, which decency requires, and is the undoubted mark of a good taste, as well as of a polite obliging behaviour; neither is this to be acquired without much observation, long practice, and sound judgment; I did therefore once intend, for the ease of the learner, to set down, in all parts of the following dialogues, certain marks, asterisks, or *nota benes* (in English, mark-wells) after most questions, and every reply or answer; directing exactly the moment when one, two, or all the company are to laugh: but, having duly considered that this expedient would too much enlarge the bulk of the volume, and consequently the price; and likewise that something ought to be left for ingenious readers to find out, I have determined to leave that whole affair, although of great importance, to their own discretion.

The reader must learn by all means to distinguish between proverbs and those polite speeches which beautify conversation; for, as to the former, I utterly reject them out of all ingenious discourse. I acknowledge, indeed, that there may possibly be found in this treatise a few sayings, among so great a number of smart turns of wit and humour as I have produced, which have a proverbial air; however, I hope it will be considered that even these were not originally proverbs, but the genuine productions of superior wits, to embellish and support conversation; whence, with great impropriety as well as plagiarism (if you will forgive a hard word), they have most injuriously been transferred into proverbial maxims; and therefore, in justice, ought to be resumed out of vulgar hands, to adorn the drawing-rooms of princes both male and female, the levees of great ministers, as well as the toilet and tea-table of the ladies.

I can faithfully assure the reader that there is not one single witty phrase in this whole collection which has not received the stamp and approbation of at least one hundred years, and how much longer it is hard to determine; he may therefore be secure to find them all genuine, sterling, and authentic.

But, before this elaborate treatise can become of universal use and ornament to my native country, two points, that will require much time and much application, are absolutely necessary.

For, first, whatever person would aspire to be completely witty, smart, humorous, and polite, must, by hard labour, be able to retain in his memory every single sentence contained in this work, so as never to be once at a loss in applying the right answers, questions, repartees, and the like immediately, and without study or hesitation.

And, secondly, after a lady or gentleman has so well overcome this difficulty as never to be at a loss upon any emergency, the true management of every feature, and almost of every limb, is equally necessary; without which an infinite number of absurdities will inevitably ensue. For instance, there is hardly a polite sentence in the following dialogues which does not absolutely require some peculiar graceful motion in the eyes, or nose, or mouth, or forehead, or chin, or suitable toss of the head, with certain offices assigned to each hand; and in ladies, the whole exercise of the fan, fitted to the energy of every word they deliver; by no means omitting the various turns and cadence of the voice, the twistings, and movements, and different postures of the body, the several kinds and gradations of laughter, which the ladies must daily practise by the looking-glass, and consult upon them with their waiting-maids.

My readers will soon observe what a great compass of real and useful knowledge this science includes; wherein, although nature, assisted by genius, may be very instrumental, yet a strong memory and constant application, together with example and precept, will be highly necessary. For these reasons I have often wished that certain male and female instructors, perfectly versed in this science, would set up schools for the instruction of young ladies and gentlemen therein.

I remember, about thirty years ago, there was a Bohemian woman, of that species commonly known by the name of gypsies, who came over hither from France, and generally attended ISAAC the dancing-master, when he was teaching his art to misses of quality; and while the young ladies were thus employed, the Bohemian, standing at some distance, but full in their sight, acted before them all proper airs, and heavings of the head, and motion of the hand, and twistings of the body; whereof you may still observe the good effects in several of our elder ladies.

After the same manner, it were much to be desired that some expert gentlewomen gone to decay would set up public schools, wherein young girls of quality or great fortunes might first be taught to repeat this following system of conversation, which I have been at so much pains to compile; and then to adapt every feature of their countenances, every turn of their hands, every screwing of their bodies, every exercise of their fans, to the humour of the sentences they hear or deliver in conversation. But, above all, to instruct them in every species and degree of laughing in the proper seasons, at their own wit or that of the company. And if the sons of the nobility and gentry, instead of being sent to common schools, or put into the hands of tutors at home, to learn nothing but words, were consigned to able instructors in the same art, I cannot find what use there could be of books, except in the hands of those who are to make learning their trade, which is below the dignity of persons born to titles or estates.

It would be another infinite advantage, that, by cultivating this science, we should wholly avoid the vexations and impertinence of pedants, who affect to talk in a language not to be understood; and whenever a polite person offers accidentally to use any of their jargon terms, have the presumption to laugh at us for pronouncing those words in a genteeler manner. Whereas I do here affirm that, whenever any fine gentleman or lady condescends to let a hard word pass out of their mouths, every syllable is smoothed and polished in the passage; and it is a true mark of politeness, both in writing and reading, to vary the orthography as well as the sound; because we are infinitely better judges of what will please a distinguishing ear, than those who call themselves scholars can possibly be; who, consequently, ought to correct their books and manner of pronouncing, by the authority of our example, from whose lips they proceed with infinitely more beauty and significancy.

But, in the meantime, until so great, so useful, and so necessary a design can be put in execution (which, considering the good disposition of our country at present, I shall not despair of living to see), let me recommend the following treatise to be carried about as a pocket companion by all gentlemen and ladies, when they are going to visit, or dine,

or drink tea; or where they happen to pass the evening without cards, as I have sometimes known it to be the case upon disappointments or accidents unforeseen; desiring they would read their several parts in their chairs or coaches, to prepare themselves for every kind of conversation that can possibly happen.

Although I have, in justice to my country, allowed the genius of our people to excel that of any other nation upon earth, and have confirmed this truth by an argument not to be controlled, I mean, by producing so great a number of witty sentences in the ensuing dialogues, all of undoubted authority, as well as of our own production, yet I must confess at the same time that we are wholly indebted for them to our ancestors; for, as long as my memory reaches, I do not recollect one new phrase of importance to have been added; which defect in us moderns I take to have been occasioned by the introduction of cant words in the reign of King Charles II. And those have so often varied, that hardly one of them, of above a year's standing, is now intelligible; nor anywhere to be found, excepting a small number strewed here and there in the comedies, and other fantastic writings of that age.

The Honourable Colonel James Graham, my old friend and companion, did likewise, toward the end of the same reign, invent a set of words and phrases, which continued almost to the time of his death. But, as these terms of art were adapted only to courts and politicians, and extended little further than among his particular acquaintance (of whom I had the honour to be one), they are now almost forgotten.

Nor did the late D. of R—— and E. of E—— succeed much better, although they proceeded no further than single words; whereof, except bite, bamboozle, and one or two more, the whole vocabulary is antiquated.

The same fate has already attended those other town wits, who furnish us with a great variety of new terms, which are annually changed, and those of the late season sunk in oblivion. Of these I was once favoured with a complete list by the Right Honourable the Lord and Lady H——, with which I made a considerable figure one summer in the country; but returning up to Town in winter, and venturing

to produce them again, I was partly hooted, and partly not understood.

The only invention of late years, which has any way contributed towards politeness in discourse, is that of abbreviating or reducing words of many syllables into one, by lopping off the rest. This refinement having begun about the time of the Revolution, I had some share in the honour of promoting it; and I observe, to my great satisfaction, that it makes daily advancements, and I hope in time will raise our language to the utmost perfection; although I must confess, to avoid obscurity, I have been very sparing of this ornament in the following dialogues.

But as for phrases invented to cultivate conversation, I defy all the clubs or coffee-houses in this town to invent a new one equal in wit, humour, smartness, or politeness to the very worst of my set, which clearly shows, either that we are much degenerated or that the whole stock of materials has been already employed. I would willingly hope, as I do confidently believe, the latter; because, having myself for several months racked my invention to enrich this treasure (if possible) with some additions of my own (which, however, should have been printed in a different character, that I might not be charged with imposing upon the public), and having shown them to some injudicious friends, they dealt very sincerely with me, all unanimously agreeing that mine were infinitely below the true old helps to discourse drawn up in my present collection, and confirmed their opinion with reasons, by which I was perfectly convinced, as will as ashamed of my great presumption.

But I lately met a much stronger argument to confirm me in the same sentiments; for, as the great Bishop Burnet of Salisbury informs us, in the preface to his admirable *History of his Own Times*, that he intended to employ himself in polishing it every day of his life (and indeed in its kind it is almost equally polished with this work of mine), so it has been my constant business, for some years past, to examine, with the utmost strictness, whether I could possibly find the smallest lapse in style or propriety through my whole collection, that, in emulation with the bishop, I might send it abroad as the most finished piece of the age.

It happened one day, as I was dining in good company of

both sexes, and watching, according to my custom, for new materials wherewith to fill my pocket-book, I succeeded well enough till after dinner, when the ladies retired to their tea, and left us over a bottle of wine. But I found we were not able to furnish any more materials that were worth the pains of transcribing: for the discourse of the company was all degenerated into smart sayings of their own invention, and not of the true old standard; so that, in absolute despair, I withdrew, and went to attend the ladies at their tea; whence I did then conclude, and still continue to believe, either that wine does not inspire politeness, or that our sex is not able to support it without the company of women, who never fail to lead us into the right way, and there to keep us.

It much increases the value of these apophthegms, that unto them we owe the continuance of our language for at least a hundred years; neither is this to be wondered at, because indeed, beside the smartness of the wit, and fineness of the raillery, such is the propriety and energy of expression in them all, that they never can be changed, but to disadvantage, except in the circumstance of using abbreviations; which, however, I do not despair in due time to see introduced, having already met them at some of the choice companies in Town.

Although this work be calculated for all persons of quality and fortune of both sexes, yet the reader may perceive, that my particular view was to the officers of the army, the gentlemen of the inns of court, and of both the universities; to all courtiers, male and female, but principally to the maids of honour; of whom I have been personally acquainted with two-and-twenty sets, all excelling in this noble endowment, till, for some years past, I know not how, they came to degenerate into selling of bargains and free-thinking; not that I am against either of these entertainments, at proper seasons, in compliance with company who may want a taste for more exalted discourse, whose memories may be short, who are too young to be perfect in their lessons, or (although it be hard to conceive) who have no inclination to read and learn my instructions. And, besides, there is a strong temptation for court ladies to fall into the two amusements above mentioned, that they may avoid the censure of affecting singularity against the general current and fashion of all about

them: but, however, no man will pretend to affirm that either bargains or blasphemy, which are the principal ornaments of free-thinking, are so good a fund of polite discourse as what is to be met with in my collection. For, as to bargains, few of them seem to be excellent in their kind, and have not much variety, because they all terminate in one single point; and to multiply them would require more invention than people have to spare. And as to blasphemy or free-thinking, I have known some scrupulous persons of both sexes, who, by prejudiced education, are afraid of sprites. I must, however, except the maids of honour, who have been fully convinced by a famous court chaplain that there is no such place as hell.

I cannot, indeed, controvert the lawfulness of free-thinking, because it has been universally allowed that thought is free. But, however, although it may afford a large field of matter, yet in my poor opinion, it seems to contain very little of wit or humour, because it has not been ancient enough among us to furnish established authentic expressions: I mean such as must receive a sanction from the polite world before their authority can be allowed; neither was the art of blasphemy or free-thinking invented by the court, or by persons of great quality, who, properly speaking, were patrons rather than inventors of it; but first brought in by the fanatic faction toward the end of their power, and after the Restoration carried to Whitehall by the converted Rumpers, with very good reason, because they knew that King Charles II., from a wrong education, occasioned by the troubles of his father, had time enough to observe, that fanatic enthusiasm directly led to atheism, which agreed with the dissolute inclinations of his youth; and perhaps these principles were further cultivated in him by the French Huguenots, who have been often charged with spreading them among us; however, I cannot see where the necessity lies of introducing new and foreign topics for conversation, while we have so plentiful a stock of our own growth.

I have likewise, for some reasons of equal weight, been very sparing in double *entendres;* because they often put ladies upon affected constraints, and affected ignorance. In short they break, or very much entangle, the thread of discourse; neither am I master of any rules to settle the discon-

certed countenances of the females in such a juncture; I can therefore only allow innuendoes of this kind to be delivered in whispers, and only to young ladies under twenty, who being in honour obliged to blush, it may produce a new subject for discourse.

Perhaps the critics may accuse me of a defect in my following system of polite conversation; that there is one great ornament of discourse, whereof I have not produced a single example; which indeed I purposely omitted, for some reasons that I shall immediately offer; and, if those reasons will not satisfy the male part of my gentle readers, the defect may be applied in some manner by an appendix to the second edition; which appendix shall be printed by itself, and sold for sixpence, stitched, and with a marble cover, that my readers may have no occasion to complain of being defrauded.

The defect I mean is, my not having inserted into the body of my book all the oaths now most in fashion for embellishing discourse, especially since it could give no offence to the clergy, who are seldom or never admitted to these polite assemblies. And it must be allowed, that oaths well chosen are not only very useful expletives to matter, but great ornaments of style.

What I shall here offer in my own defence upon this important article, will, I hope, be some extenuation of my fault.

First, I reasoned with myself, that a just collection of oaths, repeated as often as the fashion requires, must have enlarged this volume at least to double the bulk, whereby it would not only double the charge, but likewise make the volume less commodious for pocket carriage.

Secondly, I have been assured by some judicious friends, that themselves have known certain ladies to take offence (whether seriously or not) at too great a profusion of cursing and swearing, even when that kind of ornament was not improperly introduced, which, I confess, did startle me not a little, having never observed the like in the compass of my own several acquaintance, at least for twenty years past. However, I was forced to submit to wiser judgments than my own.

Thirdly, as this most useful treatise is calculated for all future times, I considered, in this maturity of my age, how

great a variety of oaths I have heard since I began to study the world, and to know men and manners. And here I found it to be true, what I have read in an ancient poet:

> For, now-a-days, men change their oaths
> As often as they change their clothes.

In short, oaths are the children of fashion; they are in some sense almost annuals, like what I observed before of cant words; and I myself can remember about forty different sets. The old stock oaths, I am confident, do not amount to above forty-five, or fifty at most; but the way of mingling and compounding them is almost as various as that of the alphabet.

Sir JOHN PERROT was the first man of quality whom I find upon the record to have sworn by *God's wounds*. He lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and was supposed to be a natural son of Henry VIII. who might also probably have been his instructor. This oath indeed still continues, and is a stock oath to this day; so do several others that have kept their natural simplicity; but infinitely the greater number has been so frequently changed and dislocated, that if the inventors were now alive, they could hardly understand them.

Upon these considerations, I began to apprehend that if I should insert all the oaths that are now current, my book would be out of vogue with the first change of fashion, and grow as useless as an old dictionary; whereas the case is quite otherwise with my collection of polite discourse; which, as I before observed, has descended by tradition for at least a hundred years, without any change in the phraseology. I therefore determined with myself to leave out the whole system of swearing, because both the male and female oaths are all perfectly well known and distinguished; new ones are easily learned, and with a moderate share of discretion, may be properly applied on every fit occasion. However, I must here, upon this article of swearing, most earnestly recommend to my male readers that they would please a little to study variety. For it is the opinion of our most refined swearers, that the same oath or curse cannot, consistently with true politeness, be repeated above nine times in the same company, by the same person, and at one sitting.

I am far from desiring or expecting that all the polite and

ingenious speeches contained in this work should, in the general conversation between ladies and gentlemen, come in so quick and so close as I have here delivered them. By no means: on the contrary, they ought to be husbanded better, and spread much thinner. Nor do I make the least question but that, by a discreet and thrifty management, they may serve for the entertainment of a whole year to any person who does not make too long, or too frequent visits in the same family. The flowers of wit, fancy, wisdom, humour, and politeness, scattered in this volume, amount to one thousand seventy and four. Allowing then to every gentleman and lady thirty visiting families (not insisting upon fractions), there will want but a little of a hundred polite questions, answers, replies, rejoinders, repartees and remarks, to be daily delivered fresh in every company for twelve solar months; and even this is a higher pitch of delicacy than the world insists on, or has reason to expect. But I am altogether for exalting this science to its utmost perfection.

It may be objected that the publication of my book may, in a long course of time, prostitute this noble art to mean and vulgar people; but I answer, that it is not so easy an acquirement as a few ignorant pretenders may imagine. A footman may swear, but he cannot swear like a lord. He can swear as often, but can he swear with equal delicacy, propriety, and judgment? No, certainly, unless he be a lad of superior parts, of good memory, a diligent observer, one who has a skilful ear, some knowledge in music, and an exact taste, which hardly fall to the share of one in a thousand among that fraternity, in as high favour as they now stand with their ladies. Neither has one footman in six so fine a genius as to relish and apply those exalted sentences comprised in this volume which I offer to the world. It is true, I cannot see that the same ill consequences would follow from the waiting-woman, who, if she had been bred to read romances, may have some small subaltern or second-hand politeness; and if she constantly attends the tea, and be a good listener, may, in some years, make a tolerable figure, which will serve, perhaps, to draw in the young chaplain or the old steward. But, alas! after all, how can she acquire those hundred graces, and motions, and airs, the whole military management of the fan, the contortions of every muscular motion in the face,

the risings and fallings, the quickness and slowness of the voice, with the several turns and cadences; the proper juncture of smiling and frowning, how often and how loud to laugh, when to gibe and when to flout, with all the other branches of doctrine and discipline above recited?

I am, therefore, not under the least apprehension that this art will ever be in danger of falling into common hands, which requires so much time, study, practice, and genius before it arrives at perfection; and, therefore, I must repeat my proposal for erecting public schools, provided with the best and ablest masters and mistresses, at the charge of the nation.

I have drawn this work into the form of a dialogue, after the pattern of other famous writers in history, law, politics, and most other arts and sciences; and I hope it will have the same success: for who can contest it to be of greater consequence to the happiness of these kingdoms than all human knowledge put together? Dialogue is held the best method of inculcating any part of knowledge; and I am confident that public schools will soon be founded for teaching wit and politeness, after my scheme, to young people of quality and fortune. I have determined next session to deliver a petition to the House of Lords, for an act of parliament to establish my book as the standard grammar in all the principal cities of the kingdom, where this art is to be taught by able masters, who are to be approved and recommended by me; which is no more than Lilly obtained only for teaching words in a language wholly useless. Neither shall I be so far wanting to myself as not to desire a patent, granted, of course, to all useful projectors; I mean, that I may have the sole profit of giving a licence to every school to read my grammar for fourteen years.

The reader cannot but observe what pains I have been at in polishing the style of my book to the greatest exactness; nor have I been less diligent in refining the orthography, by spelling the words in the very same manner as they are pronounced by the chief patterns of politeness at court, at levees, at assemblies, at playhouses, at the prime visiting-places, by young templars, and by gentlemen-commoners of both universities, who have lived at least a twelvemonth in Town, and kept the best company. Of these spellings the public will meet with many examples in the following book.

For instance, *can't, han't, shan't, didn't, cou'dn't, wou'dnt, isn't, en't,* with many more; besides several words which scholars pretend are derived from Greek and Latin, but now pared into a polite sound by ladies, officers of the army, courtiers and templars, such as *jommetry* for *geometry, vardi* for *verdict, lard* for *lord, learnen* for *learning;* together with some abbreviations exquisitely refined; as *pozz* for *positive; mob* for *mobile; phizz* for *physiognomy; rep* for *reputation; plenipo* for *plenipotentiary; incog* for *incognito; hypps,* or *hippo,* for *hypochondriacs; bam* for *bamboozle;* and *bamboozle* for *God knows what;* whereby much time is saved, and the high road to conversation cut short by many a mile.

I have, as it will be apparent, laboured very much, and, I hope, with felicity enough, to make every character in the dialogue agreeable with itself to a degree, that whenever any judicious person shall read my book aloud, for the entertainment and instruction of a select company, he need not so much as name the particular speakers, because all the persons, throughout the several subjects of conversation, strictly observe a different manner peculiar to their characters, which are of different kinds; but this I leave entirely to the prudent and impartial reader's discernment.

Perhaps the very manner of introducing the several points of wit and humour may not be less entertaining and instructing than the matter itself. In the latter I can pretend to little merit; because it entirely depends upon memory, and the happiness of having kept polite company; but the art of contriving that those speeches should be introduced naturally, as the most proper sentiments to be delivered upon so great a variety of subjects, I take to be a talent somewhat uncommon, and a labour that few people could hope to succeed in, unless they had a genius particularly turned that way, added to a sincere, disinterested love of the public.

Although every curious question, smart answer, and witty reply be little known to many people, yet there is not one single sentence in the whole collection, for which I cannot bring most authentic vouchers, whenever I shall be called: and even for some expressions, which, to a few nice ears, may, perhaps, appear somewhat gross, I can produce the stamp of authority from courts, chocolate-houses, theatres, assemblies, drawing-rooms, levees, card-meetings, balls, and

masquerades, from persons of both sexes, and of the highest titles next to royal. However, to say the truth, I have been very sparing in my quotations of such sentiments as seem to be over free; because, when I began my collection, such kind of converse was almost in its infancy, till it was taken into the protection of my honoured patronesses at court, by whose countenance and sanction it has become a choice flower in the nosegay of wit and politeness.

Some will perhaps object, that, when I bring my company to dinner, I mention too great a variety of dishes, not always consistent with the art of cookery, or proper for the season of the year; and part of the first course mingled with the second; besides a failure in politeness, by introducing a black pudding to a lord's table, and at a great entertainment; but, if I had omitted the black pudding, I desire to know what would have become of that exquisite reason given by Miss Notable for not eating it? the world, perhaps might have lost it for ever, and I should have been justly answerable for having left it out of my collection. I therefore cannot but hope, that such hypercritical readers will please to consider, my business was to make so full and complete a body of refined sayings as compact as I could, only taking care to produce them in the most natural and probable manner, in order to allure my readers into the very substance and marrow of this most admirable and necessary art.

I am heartily sorry, and was much disappointed to find, that so universal and polite an entertainment as cards, has hitherto contributed very little to the enlargement of my work. I have sat by many hundred times with the utmost vigilance, and my table-book ready, without being able, in eight hours, to gather matter for one single phrase in my book. But this, I think, may be easily accounted for, by the turbulence and justling of passions, upon the various and surprising turns, incidents, revolutions, and events of good and evil fortune, that arrive in the course of a long evening at play; the mind being wholly taken up, and the consequences of non-attention so fatal.

Play is supported upon the two great pillars of deliberation and action. The terms of art are few, prescribed by law and custom; no time allowed for digressions or trials of wit. Quadrille, in particular, bears some resemblance to a state

of nature, which, we are told, is a state of war, wherein every woman is against every woman; the unions short, inconstant, and soon broke; the league made this minute without knowing the ally, and dissolved in the next. Thus, at the game of quadrille, female brains are always employed in stratagem, or their hands in action. Neither can I find that our art has gained much by the happy revival of masquerading among us; the whole dialogue in those meetings being summed up in one (sprightly, I confess, but) single question, and as sprightly an answer. "Do you know me?" "Yes, I do." And, "Do you know me?" "Yes, I do." For this reason I did not think it proper to give my readers the trouble of introducing a masquerade, merely for the sake of a single question, and a single answer; especially when, to perform this in a proper manner, I must have brought in a hundred persons together of both sexes, dressed in fantastic habits for one minute, and dismiss them the next.

Neither is it reasonable to conceive that our science can be much improved by masquerades, where the wit of both sexes is altogether taken up in contriving singular and humorous disguises; and their thoughts entirely employed in bringing intrigues and assignations of gallantry to a happy conclusion.

The judicious reader will readily discover that I make Miss Notable my heroine, and Mr. Thomas Neverout my hero. I have laboured both their characters with my utmost ability. It is into their mouths that I have put the liveliest questions, answers, repartees, and rejoinders, because my design was, to propose them both as patterns, for all young bachelors and single ladies to copy after. By which I hope very soon to see polite conversation flourish between both sexes, in a more consummate degree of perfection than these kingdoms have yet ever known.

I have drawn some lines of Sir John Linger's character, the Derbyshire knight, on purpose to place it in counterview or contrast with that of the other company, wherein I can assure the reader, that I intended not the least reflection upon Derbyshire, the place of my nativity. But my intention was only to show the misfortune of those persons who have the disadvantage to be bred out of the circle of politeness, whereof I take the present limits to extend no further than London

and ten miles round; although others are pleased to confine it within the bills of mortality. If you compare the discourses of my gentlemen and ladies, with those of Sir John, you will hardly conceive him to have been bred in the same climate, or under the same laws, language, religion, or government; and, accordingly, I have introduced him speaking in his own rude dialect, for no other reason than to teach my scholars how to avoid it.

The curious reader will observe, that when conversation appears in danger to flag, which in some places I have artfully contrived, I took care to invent some sudden question, or turn of wit, to revive it; such as these that follow: "What! I think here's a silent meeting! Come, madam, a penny for your thought;" with several others of the like sort. I have rejected all provincial or country turns of wit and fancy, because I am acquainted with very few; but indeed chiefly, because I found them so much inferior to those at court, especially among the gentlemen-ushers, the ladies of the bedchamber, and the maids of honour; I must also add the hither end of our noble metropolis.

When this happy art of polite conversing shall be thoroughly improved, good company will be no longer pestered with dull, dry, tedious story-tellers, no brangling disputers; for a right scholar of either sex in our science, will perpetually interrupt them with some sudden surprising piece of wit, that shall engage all the company in a loud laugh; and if, after a pause, the grave companion resumes his thread in the following manner: "Well, but to go on with my story," new interruptions come from the left and the right, till he is forced to give over.

I have likewise made some few essays toward the selling of bargains, as well for instructing those who delight in that accomplishment as in compliance with my female friends at court. However, I have transgressed a little in this point, by doing it in a manner somewhat more reserved than is now practised at St. James's. At the same time, I can hardly allow this accomplishment to pass properly for a branch of that perfect polite conversation which makes the constituent subject of my treatise; and for this I have already given my reasons. I have likewise, for further caution, left a blank in the critical point of each bargain, which the sagacious reader may fill up in his own mind.

As to myself, I am proud to own that, except some smattering in the French, I am what the pedants and scholars call a man wholly illiterate, that is to say, unlearned. But as to my own language, I shall not readily yield to many persons. I have read most of the plays and all the miscellany poems that have been published for twenty years past. I have read Mr. Thomas Brown's works entire, and had the honour to be his intimate friend, who was universally allowed to be the greatest genius of his age.

Upon what foot I stand with the present chief reigning wits, their verses recommendatory, which they have commanded me to prefix before my book, will be more than a thousand witnesses. I am, and have been, likewise particularly acquainted with Mr. Charles Gildon,[1] Mr. Ward,[2] Mr. Dennis, that admirable critic and poet, and several others. Each of these eminent persons (I mean those who are still alive) have done me the honour to read this production five times over, with the strictest eye of friendly severity, and proposed some, although very few amendments, which I gratefully accepted, and do here publicly return my acknowledgment for so singular a favour.

And I cannot conceal, without ingratitude, the great assistance I have received from those two illustrious writers, Mr. Ozell and Captain Stevens. These, and some others of distinguished eminence, in whose company I have passed so many agreeable hours, as they have been the great refiners of our language, so it has been my chief ambition to imitate them. Let the Popes, the Gays, the Arbuthnots, the Youngs, and the rest of that snarling brood, burst with envy at the praises we receive from the court and kingdom.

But to return from this digression.

The reader will find that the following collection of polite expressions will easily incorporate with all subjects of genteel and fashionable life. Those which are proper for morning tea will be equally useful at the same entertainment in the afternoon, even in the same company, only by shifting the several questions, answers, and replies, into different hands; and such as are adapted to meals will indifferently serve for

[1] A well-known hero of the *Dunciad*.

[2] Edward Ward, who wrote doggrel verses upon the political occurrences of the day.

dinners or suppers, only distinguishing between day-light and candle-light. By this method no diligent person of a tolerable memory can ever be at a loss.

It has been my constant opinion, that every man who is intrusted by nature with any useful talent of the mind, is bound by all the ties of honour and that justice which we all owe our country, to propose to himself some one illustrious action to be performed in his life for the public emolument: and I freely confess that so grand, so important an enterprise, as I have undertaken and executed to the best of my power, well deserved a much abler hand, as well as a liberal encouragement from the crown. However, I am bound so far to acquit myself, as to declare, that I have often and most earnestly entreated several of my above-named friends, universally allowed to be of the first rank in wit and politeness, that they would undertake a work so honourable to themselves, and so beneficial to the kingdom; but so great was their modesty, that they all thought fit to excuse themselves, and impose the task on me; yet in so obliging a manner, and attended with such compliments on my poor qualifications, that I dare not repeat. And at last their entreaties, or rather their commands, added to that inviolable love I bear to the land of my nativity, prevailed upon me to engage in so bold an attempt.

I may venture to affirm, without the least violation of modesty, that there is no man now alive who has, by many degrees, so just pretensions as myself to the highest encouragement from the crown, the parliament, and the ministry, toward bringing this work to due perfection. I have been assured, that several great heroes of antiquity were worshipped as gods, upon the merit of having civilised a fierce and barbarous people. It is manifest I could have no other intentions; and I dare appeal to my very enemies, if such a treatise as mine had been published some years ago, and with as much success as I am confident this will meet, I mean, by turning the thoughts of the whole nobility and gentry to the study and practice of polite conversation, whether such mean stupid writers as the Craftsmen, and his abettors, could have been able to corrupt the principles of so many hundred thousand subjects, as, to the shame and grief of every Whiggish, loyal, and true Protestant heart, it is too manifest

they have done. For I desire the honest judicious reader to make one remark, that, after having exhausted the whole *in sickly pay-day*[1] (if I may so call it) of politeness and refinement, and faithfully digested it into the following dialogues, there cannot be found one expression relating to politics; that the ministry is never mentioned, nor the word king, above twice or thrice, and then only to the honour of his majesty; so very cautious were our wiser ancestors in forming rules for conversation, as never to give offence to crowned heads nor interfere with party-disputes in the state. And, indeed, although there seems to be a close resemblance between the two words politeness and politics, yet no ideas are more inconsistent in their natures. However, to avoid all appearance of disaffection, I have taken care to enforce loyalty by an invincible argument, drawn from the very fountain of this noble science, in the following short terms, that ought to be writ in gold,—"MUST is for the king:" which uncontrollable maxim I took particular care of introducing in the first page of my book, thereby to instil early the best Protestant loyal notions into the minds of my readers. Neither is it merely my own private opinion, that politeness is the firmest foundation upon which loyalty can be supported; for thus happily sings the divine Mr. Tibbalds, or Theobalds, in one of his birth-day poems:

> I am no schollard, but I am polite;
> Therefore be sure I am no Jacobite.

Hear, likewise, to the same purpose, that great master of the whole poetic choir, our most illustrious laureat, Mr. Colley Cibber:

> Who in his talk can't speak a polite thing
> Will never loyal be to George our king.

I could produce many more shining passages out of our principal poets of both sexes to confirm this momentous truth: whence I think it may be fairly concluded, that whoever can most contribute towards propagating the science contained in the following sheets through the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, may justly demand all the favour that the wisest court and most judicious senate are able to confer

[1] This word is spelt by Latinists *Encyclopædia*; but the judicious author wisely prefers the polite reading before the pedantic.

on the most deserving subject. I leave the application to my readers.

This is the work which I have been so hardy as to attempt, and without the least mercenary view. Neither do I doubt of succeeding to my full wish, except among the Tories and their abettors, who, being all Jacobites, and consequently Papists in their hearts, from a want of true taste, or by strong affectation, may perhaps resolve not to read my book, choosing rather to deny themselves the pleasure and honour of shining in polite company, among the principal geniuses of both sexes throughout the kingdom than adorn their minds with this noble art; and probably apprehending (as I confess nothing is more likely to happen), that a true spirit of loyalty to the Protestant succession should steal in along with it.

If my favourable and gentle readers could possibly conceive the perpetual watchings, the numberless toils, the frequent risings in the night, to set down several ingenious sentences that I suddenly or accidentally recollected, and which, without my utmost vigilance, had been irrecoverably lost for ever; if they would consider with what incredible diligence I daily and nightly attended at those houses where persons of both sexes, and of the most distinguished merit, used to meet and display their talents; with what attention I listened to all their discourses, the better to retain them in my memory, and then, at proper seasons, withdrew, unobserved, to enter them in my table-book, while the company little suspected what a noble work I had then in embryo: I say, if all these were known to the world, I think it would be no great presumption in me to expect, at a proper juncture, the public thanks of both houses of parliament for the service and honour I have done to the whole nation by my single pen.

Although I have never been once charged with the least tincture of vanity, the reader will, I hope, give me leave to put an easy question: What is become of all the King of Sweden's victories? where are the fruits of them at this day? or of what benefit will they be to posterity? Were not many of his greatest actions owing, at least in part, to fortune? were not all of them owing to the valour of his troops, as much as to his own conduct? Could he have conquered the Polish king, or the Czar of Muscovy, with his single arm? Far be it from me to envy or lessen the fame he has acquired;

but, at the same time, I will venture to say, without breach of modesty, that I, who have alone, with this right hand, subdued barbarism, rudeness, and rusticity, who have established and fixed for ever the whole system of all true politeness and refinement in conversation, should think myself most inhumanly treated by my countrymen, and would accordingly resent it as the highest indignity, to be put on a level, in point of fame, in after ages, with Charles XII. late King of Sweden.

And yet so incurable is the love of detraction, perhaps beyond what the charitable reader will easily believe, that I have been assured, by more than one credible person, how some of my enemies have industriously whispered about, that one Isaac Newton, an instrument-maker, formerly living near Leicester Fields, and afterwards a workman in the mint at the Tower, might possibly pretend to vie with me for fame in future times. The man, it seems, was knighted for making sun-dials better than others of his trade, and was thought to be a conjurer, because he knew how to draw lines and circles upon a slate, which nobody could understand. But adieu to all noble attempts for endless renown, if the ghost of an obscure mechanic shall be raised up to enter into competition with me, only for his skill in making pot-hooks and hangers with a pencil, which many thousand accomplished gentlemen and ladies can perform as well with pen and ink upon a piece of paper, and in a manner as little intelligible as those of Sir Isaac.

My most ingenious friend already mentioned, Mr. Colley Cibber, who does so much honour to the laurel crown he deservedly wears (as he has often done to many imperial diadems placed on his head), was pleased to tell me, that, if my treatise was shaped into a comedy,[1] the representation, performed to advantage on our theatre, might very much contribute to the spreading of polite conversation among all persons of distinction through the whole kingdom.

I own the thought was ingenious, and my friend's intention good: but I cannot agree to his proposal; for Mr. Cibber himself allowed that the subjects handled in my work being so numerous and extensive, it would be absolutely impossible for one, two, or even six comedies, to contain them: whence

[1] The proposal here stated in jest actually took place in Dublin.

it will follow, that many admirable and essential rules for polite conversation must be omitted.

And here let me do justice to my friend Mr. Tibbalds, who plainly confessed before Mr. Cibber himself, that such a project, as it would be a great diminution to my honour, so it would intolerably mangle my scheme, and thereby destroy the principal end at which I aimed, to form a complete body or system of this most useful science in all its parts: and therefore Mr. Tibbalds, whose judgment was never disputed, chose rather to fall in with my proposal, mentioned before, of erecting public schools and seminaries all over the kingdom, to instruct the young people of both sexes in this art, according to my rules, and in the method that I have laid down.

I shall conclude this long, but necessary introduction, with a request, or, indeed, rather a just and reasonable demand, from all lords, ladies and gentlemen, that while they are entertaining and improving each other with those polite questions, answers, repartees, replies, and rejoinders, which I have, with infinite labour and close application, during the space of thirty-six years, been collecting for their service and improvement, they shall, as an instance of gratitude, on every proper occasion, quote my name after this or the like manner: "Madam, as our Master Wagstaff says."—"My lord, as our friend Wagstaff has it." I do likewise expect that all my pupils shall drink my health every day at dinner and supper during my life, and that they, or their posterity, shall continue the same ceremony to my not inglorious memory, after my decease, for ever.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE

The Men.
Lord SPARKISH.
Lord SMART.
Sir JOHN LINGER.
Mr. NEVEROUT.
Colonel ATWIT.

The Ladies.
Lady SMART.
Miss NOTABLE.
Lady ANSWERALL.

ARGUMENT

LORD Sparkish and Colonel Atwit meet in the morning upon the Mall: Mr. Neverout joins them: they all go to breakfast at Lady Smart's. Their conversation over their tea: after which they part; but my lord and the two gentlemen are invited to dinner:—Sir John Linger invited likewise, and comes a little too late. The whole conversation at dinner: after which, the ladies retire to their tea. The conversation of the ladies without the men, who are supposed to stay and drink a bottle, but, in some time, go to the ladies, and drink tea with them. The conversation there. After which, a party at quadrille until three in the morning; but no conversation set down. They all take leave and go home.

ST. JAMES'S PARK

LORD SPARKISH *meeting* COL. ATWIT.

Col. WELL met, my lord.

Spark. Thank ye, colonel. A parson would have said, I hope we shall meet in heaven. When did you see Tom Neverout?

Col. He's just coming toward us. Talk of the devil—

NEVEROUT *comes up.*

Col. How do you do, Tom?

Never. Never the better for you.

Col. I hope you are never the worse: but pray where's your manners? Don't you see my Lord Sparkish?

Never. My lord, I beg your lordship's pardon.

Spark. Tom, how is it that you can't see the wood for trees? What wind blew you hither?

Never. Why, my lord, it is an ill wind blows nobody good; for it gives me the honour of seeing your lordship.

Col. Tom, you must go with us to Lady Smart's to breakfast.

Never. Must! why, colonel, must's for the king.

[*Col. offering, in jest, to draw his sword.*

Col. Have you spoke with all your friends?

Never. Colonel, as you are stout be merciful.

Spark. Come, agree, agree; the law's costly.

[*Col. taking his hand from his hilt.*

Col. Well, Tom, you are never the worse man to be afraid of me. Come along.

Never. What! do you think I was born in a wood, to be afraid of an owl? I'll wait on you. I hope Miss Notable will be there; 'egad, she's very handsome, and has wit at will.

Col. Why, every one as they like, as the good woman said when she kiss'd her cow.

LORD SMART'S *House: they knock at the door; the Porter comes out.*

Spark. Pray are you the porter?

Porter. Yes, for want of a better

Spark. Is your lady at home?

Porter. She was at home just now, but she's not gone out yet.

Never. I warrant this rogue's tongue is well hung.

LADY SMART'S *Ante-chamber.*

LADY SMART *and* LADY ANSWERALL *at the Tea-table.*

Lady S. My lord, your lordship's most humble servant.

Spark. Madam, you spoke too late; I was your ladyship's before.

Lady S. Oh! colonel, are you here?

Col. As sure as you're there, madam.

Lady S. O, Mr. Neverout! What, such a man alive!

Never. Ay, madam, alive, and alive like to be, at your ladyship's service.

Lady S. Well, I'll get a knife, and nick it down, that Mr. Neverout came to our house. And pray, what news, Mr. Neverout?

Never. Why, madam, Queen Elizabeth's dead.

Lady S. Well, Mr. Neverout, I see you are no changeling.

MISS NOTABLE *comes in.*

Never. Miss, your slave: I hope your early rising will do you no harm. I find you are but just come out of the cloth market.

Miss. I always rise at eleven, whether it be day or not.

Col. Miss, I hope you are up for all day.

Miss. Yes, if I don't get a fall before night.

Col. Miss, I heard you were out of order; pray how are you now?

Miss. Pretty well, colonel, I thank you.

Col. Pretty and well, miss! that's two very good things.

Miss. I mean I am better than I was.

Never. Why then 'tis well you were sick.

Miss. What! Mr. Neverout, you take me up before I'm down.

Lady S. Come, let us leave off children's play, and go to push-pin.

Miss. [*To Lady S.*] Pray, madam, give me some more sugar to my tea.

Col. O! miss, you must needs be very good humour'd, you love sweet things so well.

Never. Stir it up with the spoon, miss; for the deeper the sweeter.

Lady S. I assure you, miss, the colonel has made you a great compliment.

Miss. I am sorry for it; for I have heard say, complimenting is lying.

Lady S. [*To Sparkish.*] My lord, methinks the sight of you is good for sore eyes; if we had known of your coming, we should have strewn rushes for you: How has your lordship done this long time?

Col. Faith, madam, he's better in health than in good conditions.

Spark. Well, I see there's no worse friend than one brings from home with one; and I am not the first man has carried a rod to whip himself.

Never. Here's poor miss has not a word to throw at a dog. Come, a penny for your thought.

Miss. It is not worth a farthing; for I was thinking of you.

COLONEL *rising up.*

Lady S. Colonel, where are you going so soon? I hope you did not come to fetch fire.

Col. Madam, I must needs go home for half an hour.

Miss. Why, colonel, they say the devil's at home.

Lady A. Well, but sit while you stay, 'tis as cheap sitting as standing.

Col. No, madam, while I'm standing, I'm going.

Miss. Nay, let him go; I promise him we won't tear his clothes to hold him.

Lady S. I suppose, colonel, we keep you from better company, I mean only as to myself.

Col. Madam, I am all obedience. [*Colonel sits down.*

Lady S. Lord, miss, how can you drink your tea so hot? sure your mouth's pav'd. How do you like this tea, colonel?

Col. Well enough, madam; but methinks it is a little more-ish.

Lady S. O! colonel, I understand you.—Betty, bring the cannister. I have but very little of this tea left; but I don't love to make two wants of one; want when I have it, and want when I have it not. He, he, he, he! [*Laughs.*

Lady A. [*To the maid.*] Why, sure, Betty, you are bewitched; the cream is burnt too.

Betty. Why, madam, the bishop has set his foot in it.

Lady S. Go, run, girl, and warm some fresh cream.

Betty. Indeed, madam, there's none left; for the cat has eaten it all.

Lady S. I doubt it was a cat with two legs.

Miss. Colonel, don't you love bread and butter with your tea?

Col. Yes, in a morning, miss; for they say, butter is gold in a morning, silver at noon, but it is lead at night.

Never. Miss, the weather is so hot that my butter melts on my bread.

Lady A. Why, butter, I've heard 'em say, is mad twice a year.

Spark. [*To the maid.*] Mrs. Betty, how does your body politic?

Col. Fie, my lord, you'll make Mrs. Betty blush.

Lady S. Blush! ay, blush like a blue dog.

Never. Pray, Mrs. Betty, are you not Tom Johnson's daughter?

Betty. So my mother tells me, sir.

Spark. But, Mrs. Betty, I hear you are in love.

Betty. My lord, I thank God I hate nobody; I am in charity with all the world.

Lady S. Why, wench, I think thy tongue runs upon wheels this morning. How came you by that scratch upon your nose? Have you been fighting with the cats?

Col. [*To Miss.*] Miss, when will you be married?

Miss. One of these odd-come-shortly's, colonel.

Never. Yes; they say the match is half made; the spark is willing but miss is not.

Miss. I suppose the gentleman has got his own consent for it.

Lady A. Pray, my lord, did you walk through the Park in the rain?

Spark. Yes, madam, we were neither sugar nor salt; we were not afraid the rain would melt us. He, he, he! [*Laughs.*

Col. It rained, and the sun shone at the same time.

Never. Why, then the devil was beating his wife behind the door with a shoulder of mutton. [*Laughs.*

Col. A blind man would be glad to see that.

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, methinks you stand in your own light.

Never. Ah! madam, I have done so all my life.

Spark. I'm sure he sits in mine. Pr'ythee, Tom, sit a little further; I believe your father was no glazier.

Lady S. Miss, dear girl, fill me out a dish of tea, for I'm very lazy.

Miss *fills a dish of tea, sweetens it, and then tastes it.*

Lady S. What, miss, will you be my taster?

Miss. No, madam; but they say 'tis an ill cook that can't lick her own fingers.

Never. Pray, miss, fill me another.

Miss. Will you have it now, or stay till you get it?

Lady A. But, colonel, they say you went to court last night very drunk; nay, I'm told for certain, you had been among the Philistines: no wonder the cat wink'd, when both her eyes were out.

Col. Indeed, madam, that's a lie.

Lady A. 'Tis better I should lie than you should lose your good manners: besides, I don't lie; I sit.

Never. O! faith, colonel, you must own you had a drop in your eye; when I left you, you were half seas over.

Spark. Well, I fear Lady Answerall can't live long, she has so much wit.

Never. No; she can't live, that's certain; but she may linger thirty or forty years.

Miss. Live long! ay, longer than a cat or a dog, or a better thing.

Lady A. O! miss, you must give your vardi too!

Spark. Miss, shall I fill you another dish of tea?

Miss. Indeed, my lord, I have drank enough.

Spark. Come, it will do you more good than a month's fasting; here, take it.

Miss. No, I thank your lordship; enough's as good as a feast.

Spark. Well; but if you always say no, you'll never be married.

Lady A. Do, my lord, give her a dish; for they say maids will say no, and take it.

Spark. Well; and I dare say miss is a maid, in thought, word and deed.

Never. I would not take my oath of that.

Miss. Pray, sir, speak for yourself.

Lady S. Fie, miss; they say maids should be seen and not heard.

Lady A. Good miss, stir the fire, that the teakettle may boil.—You have done it very well: now it burns purely. Well, miss, you'll have a cheerful husband.

Miss. Indeed, your ladyship could have stirred it much better.

Lady A. I know that very well, hussy; but I won't keep a dog and bark myself.

Never. What! you are stuck [*sick*], miss.

Miss. Not at all; for her ladyship meant you.

Never. O! faith, miss, you are in Lob's pound; get out as you can.

Miss. I won't quarrel with my bread and butter for all that; I know when I'm well.

Lady A. Well; but, miss—

Never. Ah! dear madam, let the matter fall; take pity on poor miss; don't throw water on a drowned rat.

Miss. Indeed, Mr. Neverout, you should be cut for the simples this morning; say a word more and you had as good eat your nails.

Spark. Pray, miss, will you be so good as to favour us with a song?

Miss. Indeed, my lord, I can't; for I have a great cold.

Col. O! miss, they say all good singers have colds.

Spark. Pray, madam, does not miss sing very well?

Lady A. She sings, as one may say, my lord.

Miss. I hear Mr. Neverout has a very good voice.

Col. Yes, Tom sings well, but his luck's nought.

Never. Faith, colonel, you hit yourself a devilish box on the ear.

Col. Miss, will you take a pinch of snuff?

Miss. No, colonel, you must know that I never take snuff but when I am angry.

Lady A. Yes, yes, she can take snuff, but she has never a box to put it in.

Miss. Pray, colonel, let me see that box.

Col. Madam, there's never a C upon it.

Miss. Maybe there is, colonel.

Col. Ay, but May bees don't fly now, miss.

Never. Colonel, why so hard upon poor miss? Don't set your wit against a child. Miss, give me a blow, and I'll beat him.

Miss. So she prayed me to tell you.

Spark. Pray, my Lady Smart, what kin are you to Lord Pozz?

Lady S. Why, his grandmother and mine had four elbows.

Lady A. Well, methinks here's a silent meeting. Come, miss, hold up your head, girl; there's money bid for you.

[*Miss starts.*

Miss. Lord, madam, you frighten me out of my seven senses!

Spark. Well, I must be going.

Lady A. I have seen hastier people than you stay all night.

Col. [*To Lady Smart.*] Tom Neverout and I are to leap to-morrow for a guinea.

Miss. I believe colonel, Mr. Neverout can leap at a crust better than you.

Never. Miss, your tongue runs before your wit: nothing can tame you but a husband.

Miss. Peace! I think I hear the church-clock.

Never. Why, you know, as the fool thinks—

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, your handkerchief's fallen.

Miss. Let him set his foot on it, that it mayn't fly in his face.

Never. Well, miss—

Miss. Ay, ay; many a one says well that thinks ill.

Never. Well, miss, I'll think on this.

Miss. That's rhyme, if you take it in time.

Never. What! I see you are a poet.

Miss. Yes, if I had but the wit to show it.

Never. Miss, will you be so kind as to fill me a dish of tea?

Miss. Pray, let your betters be served before you; I'm just going to fill one for myself; and, you know, the parson always christens his own child first.

Never. But I saw you fill one just now for the colonel: well, I find kissing goes by favour.

Miss. But pray, Mr. Neverout, what lady was that you were talking with in the side-box last Tuesday?

Never. Miss, can you keep a secret?

Miss. Yes, I can.

Never. Well, miss, and so can I.

Col. Odd-so! I have cut my thumb with this cursed knife!

Lady A. Ay; that was your mother's fault, because she only warned you not to cut your fingers.

Lady S. No, no; 'tis only fools cut their fingers, but wise folks cut their thumbs.

Miss. I'm sorry for it, but I can't cry.

Col. Don't you think miss is grown?

Lady A. Ay, ill weeds grow apace.

A puff of smoke comes down the chimney.

Lady A. Lord, madam, does your ladyship's chimney smoke?

Col. No, madam; but they say smoke always pursues the fair, and your ladyship sat nearest.

Lady S. Madam, do you love bohea tea?

Lady A. Why, madam, I must confess I do love it, but it does not love me.

Miss. [*To Lady Smart.*] Indeed, madam, your ladyship is very sparing of your tea; I protest, the last I took was no more than water bewitch'd.

Col. Pray, miss, if I may be so bold, what lover gave you that fine etui?

Miss. Don't you know?—then keep counsel.

Lady A. I'll tell you, colonel, who gave it her: it was the best lover she will ever have while she lives—her own dear papa.

Never. Methinks, miss, I don't much like the colour of that ribbon.

Miss. Why, then, Mr. Neverout, do you see, if you don't much like it, you may look off it.

Spark. I don't doubt, madam, but your ladyship has heard that Sir John Brisk has got an employment at court.

Lady S. Yes, yes; and I warrant he thinks himself no small fool now.

Never. Yes, madam; I have heard some people take him for a wise man.

Lady S. Ay, ay; some are wise, and some are otherwise.

Lady A. Do you know him, Mr. Neverout?

Never. Know him! ay, as well as the beggar knows his dish.

Col. Well, I can only say that he has better luck than honester folks. But, pray, how came he to get this employment?

Spark. Why, by chance, as the man killed the devil.

Never. Why, miss, you are in a brown study: what's the matter? Methinks you look like Mumchance, that was hanged for saying nothing.

Miss. I'd have you to know, I scorn your words.

Never. Well, but scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings.

Miss. Well, my comfort is, your tongue is no slander. What! you would not have one be always on the high grin!

Never. Cry mapsticks, madam; no offence, I hope.

LADY SMART *breaks a teacup.*

Lady A. Lord, madam, how came you to break your cup?

Lady S. I can't help it, if I would cry my eyes out.

Miss. Why, sell it, madam, and buy a new one with some of the money.

Col. 'Tis folly to cry for spilt milk.

Lady S. Why, if things did not break, or wear out, how would tradesmen live?

Miss. Well, I am very sick, if anybody cared for it.

Never. Come, then, miss, e'en make a die of it, and then we shall have a burying of our own.

Miss. The devil take you, Neverout! besides all small curses.

Lady A. Marry, come up! What, plain Neverout! methinks you might have an M under your girdle, miss.

Lady S. Well, well, nought's never in danger. I warrant miss will spit in her hand, and hold fast.—Colonel, do you like this biscuit?

Col. I'm like all fools; I love everything that's good.

Lady S. Well, and isn't it pure good?

Col. 'Tis better than a worse.

Footman brings the COLONEL *a letter.*

Lady A. I suppose, colonel, that's a billet-doux from your mistress.

Col. 'Egad, I don't know whence it comes; but who'er writ it, writes a hand like a foot.

Miss. Well, you may make a secret of it, but we can spell, and put together.

Never. Miss, what spells b double uzzard?

Miss. Buzzard in your teeth, Mr. Neverout.

Lady S. Now you are up, Mr. Neverout, will you do me the favour to do me the kindness to take off the teakettle.

Spark. I wonder what makes these bells ring.

Lahy A. Why, my lord, I suppose, because they pull the ropes. [*Here all laugh.*

NEVEROUT *plays with a teacup.*

Miss. Now, a child would have cried half an hour before it would have found out such a pretty plaything.

Lady S. Well said, miss! I vow, Mr. Neverout, the girl is too hard for you.

Never. Ay; miss will say anything but her prayers, and those she whistles.

Miss. Pray, colonel, make me a present of that pretty penknife.

Spark. Ay, miss, catch him at that, and hang him.

Col. Not for the world, dear miss; it will cut love.

Spark. Colonel, you shall be married first; I was going to say that.

Lady S. Well, but, for all that, I can tell who is a great admirer of miss. Pray, miss, how do you like Mr. Spruce? I swear I have often seen him cast a sheep's eye out of a calf's head at you: deny it if you can.

Miss. O, madam, all the world knows that Mr. Spruce is a general lover.

Col. Come, miss, 'tis too true to make a jest on.

[*Miss blushes.*

Lady A. Well, however, blushing is some sign of grace.

Never. Miss says nothing; but I warrant she pays it off with thinking.

Miss. Well, ladies and gentlemen, you are pleased to divert yourselves; but, as I hope to be saved, there's nothing in it.

Lady S. Touch a gall'd horse, and he'll wince. Love will creep where it dare not go. I'd hold a hundred pound, Mr. Neverout was the inventor of that story; and, colonel, I doubt you had a finger in the pie.

Lady A. But, colonel, you forgot to salute miss when you came in; she said you had not been here a long time.

Miss. Fie, madam!—I vow, colonel, I said no such thing.—I wonder at your ladyship!

Col. Miss, I beg your pardon—

Goes to salute her; she struggles a little.

Miss. Well, I'd rather give a knave a kiss for once than be troubled with him; but, upon my word, you are more bold than welcome.

Lady S. Fie, fie, miss! for shame of the world, and speech of good people.

NEVEROUT *to* MISS, *who is cooking her tea and bread and butter.*

Never. Come, come, miss, make much of nought; good folks are scarce.

Miss. What! and you must come in with your two eggs a-penny, and three of them rotten.

Col. [*To Sparkish.*] But, my lord, I forgot to ask you how you like my new clothes?

Spark. Why, very well, colonel; only, to deal plainly with you, methinks the worst piece is in the middle.

[*Here a loud laugh, often repeated.*

Col. My lord, you are too severe on your friends.

Miss. Mr. Neverout, I'm hot, are you a sot?

Never. Miss, I'm cold, are you a scold? Take you that.

Lady S. I confess that was home. I find, Mr. Neverout, you won't give your head for the washing, as they say.

Miss. O! he's a sore man where the skin's off. I see Mr. Neverout has a mind to sharpen the edge of his wit on the whetstone of my ignorance.

Spark. Faith, Tom, you are struck! I never heard a better thing.

Never. Pray, miss, give me leave to scratch you for that fine speech.

Miss. Pox on your picture! it cost me a groat the drawing.

Never. [*To Lady S.*] 'Sbuds, madam, I have burnt my hand with your plaguy teakettle.

Lady S. Why, then, Mr. Neverout, you must say, God save the king.

Never. Did you ever see the like?

Miss. Never, but once at a wedding.

Col. Pray, miss, how old are you?

Miss. Why, I am as old as my tongue, and a little older than my teeth.

Spark. [*To Lady A.*] Pray, madam, is Miss Buxom married? I hear 'tis all over the town.

Lady A. My lord, she's either married or worse.

Col. If she ben't married, at least she's lustily promised. But is it certain that Sir John Blunderbuss is dead at last?

Spark. Yes, or else he's sadly wronged, for they have buried him.

Miss. Why, if he be dead, he'll eat no more bread.

Col. But, is he really dead?

Lady A. Yes, colonel, as sure as you're alive.

Col. They say he was an honest man.
Lady A. Yes, with good looking too.

Miss feels a pimple on her face.

Miss. Lord! I think my goodness is coming out, Madam, will your ladyship please to lend me a patch?
Never. Miss, if you are a maid, put your hand upon your spot.
Miss. There— [*Covering her face with both her hands.*
Lady S. Well, thou art a mad girl. [*Gives her a tap.*
Miss. Lord, madam, is that a blow to give a child?

LADY SMART *lets fall her handkerchief, and the* COLONEL *stoops for it.*

Lady S. Colonel, you shall have a better office.
Col. O, madam, I can't have a better than to serve your ladyship. Madam, has your ladyship read the new play, written by a lord? It is called "Love in a Hollow Tree."
Lady S. No, colonel.
Col. Why, then your ladyship has one pleasure to come.

MISS *sighs.*

Never. Pray, miss, why do you sigh?
Miss. To make a fool ask, and you are the first.
Never. Why, miss, I find there is nothing but a bit and a blow with you.
Lady A. Why, you must know, miss is in love.
Miss. I wish my head may never ache till that day.
Spark. Come, miss, never sigh, but send for him.

LADY SMART *and* LADY ANSWERALL *speaking together.*

If he be hanged, he'll come hopping; and if he be drown'd he'll come dropping.
Miss. Well, I swear you will make one die with laughing.

MISS *plays with a teacup, and* NEVEROUT *plays with another.*

Never. Well, I see one fool makes many.
Miss. And you are the greatest fool of any.
Never. Pray, miss, will you be so kind to tie this string for me, with your fair hands? it will go all in your day's work.

Miss. Marry, come up, indeed! tie it yourself, you have as many hands as I; your man's man will have a fine office truly: come, pray stand out of my spitting-place.

Never. Well, but miss, don't be angry.

Miss. No; I was never angry in my life but once, and then nobody cared for it; so I resolved never to be angry again.

Never. Well; but if you'll tie it, you shall never know what I'll do for you.

Miss. So I suppose, truly.

Never. Well; but I'll make you a fine present one of these days.

Miss. Ay; when the devil's blind, and his eyes are not sore yet.

Never. No, miss, I'll send it you to-morrow.

Miss. Well, well; to-morrow's a new day; but, I suppose, you mean to-morrow come never.

Never. O! 'tis the prettiest thing: I assure you there came but two of them over in three ships.

Miss. Would I could see it, quoth blind Hugh. But why did you not bring me a present of snuff this morning?

Never. Because, miss, you never asked me: and 'tis an ill dog that's not worth whistling for.

Spark. [*To Lady A.*] Pray, madam, how came your ladyship, last Thursday, to go to that odious puppet-show?

Col. Why, to be sure, her ladyship went to see and to be seen.

Lady A. You have made a fine speech, colonel: pray, what will you take for your mouth-piece?

Spark. Take that, colonel: but, pray, madam, was my Lady Snuff there? They say she's extremely handsome.

Lady S. They must not see with my eyes that think so.

Never. She may pass muster well enough.

Lady A. Pray, how old do you take her to be?

Col. Why, about five or six-and-twenty.

Miss. I swear she's no chicken; she's on the wrong side of thirty, if she be a day.

Lady A. Depend upon it, she'll never see five-and-thirty, and a bit to spare.

Col. Why, they say she's one of the chief toasts in town.

Lady S. Ay, when all the rest are out of it.

Miss. Well; I wou'dn't be as sick as she's proud for all the world.

Lady A. She looks as if butter wou'dn't melt in her mouth; but, I warrant, cheese won't choke her.

Never. I hear my Lord What-d'ye-call-him is courting her.

Lady A. What lord d'ye mean, Tom?

Miss. Why, my lord, I suppose Mr. Neverout means the lord of the Lord knows what.

Col. They say she dances very fine.

Lady A. She did; but I doubt her dancing days are over.

Col. I can't pardon her for her rudeness to me.

Lady S. Well; but you must forget and forgive.

FOOTMAN *comes in.*

Lady S. Did you call Betty?

Footman. She's coming, madam.

Lady S. Coming! ay, so is Christmas.

BETTY *comes in.*

Lady S. Come, get ready my things. Where has the wench been these three hours?

Betty. Madam, I can't go faster than my legs will carry me.

Lady S. Ay, thou hast a head, and so has a pin. But, my lord, all the town has it that Miss Caper is to be married to Sir Peter Gibeall; one thing is certain, that she has promised to have him.

Spark. Why, madam, you know promises are either broken or kept.

Lady A. I beg your pardon, my lord; promises and pie-crust are made to be broken.

Lady S. Nay, I had it from my Lady Carrylie's own mouth. I tell you my tale and my tale's author; if it be a lie, you had it as cheap as I.

Lady A. She and I had some words last Sunday at church; but I think I gave her her own.

Lady S. Her tongue runs like the clapper of a mill; she talks enough for herself and all the company.

Never. And yet she simpers like a firmity kettle.

Miss *looking in a glass.*

Miss. Lord, how my head is dress'd to-day!

Col. O, madam! a good face needs no band.

Miss. No; and a bad one deserves none.

Col. Pray, Miss, where is your old acquaintance, Mrs. Wayward?

Miss. Why, where should she be? you must needs know, she's in her skin.

Col. I can answer that; what if you were as far out as she's in?——

Miss. Well, I promised to go this evening to Hyde Park on the water; but I protest I'm half afraid.

Never. Never fear, miss; you have the old proverb on your side, Naught's ne'er in danger.

Col. Why, miss, let Tom Neverout wait on you, and then, I warrant, you'll be as safe as a thief in a mill, for you know, he that's born to be hang'd will never be drown'd.

Never. Thank you, colonel, for your good word; but faith, if ever I hang, it shall be about a fair lady's neck.

Lady S. Who's there? Bid the children be quiet, and not laugh so loud.

Lady A. O! madam, let'm laugh, they'll ne'er laugh younger.

Never. Miss, I'll tell you a secret, if you'll promise never to tell it again.

Miss. No, to be sure; I'll tell it to nobody but friends and strangers.

Never. Why then, there's some dirt in my teacup.

Miss. Come, come, the more there's in't, the more there's on't.

Lady A. Poh! you must eat a peck of dirt before you die.

Col. Ay, ay; it goes all one way.

Never. Pray, miss, what's a clock?

Miss. Why, you must know, 'tis a thing like a bell, and you a fool that can't tell.

Never. [*To Lady A.*] Pray, madam, do you tell me; for I have let my watch run down.

Lady A. Why, 'tis half an hour past hanging time.

Col. Well; I'm like the butcher that was looking for his knife and had it in his mouth: I have been searching my

pockets for my snuff-box, and, egad, here it is in my hand.

Miss. If it had been a bear, it would have bit you, colonel: well, I wish I had such a snuff-box.

Never. You'll be long enough before you wish your skin full of eyelet holes.

Col. Wish in one hand—

Miss. Out upon you: Lord, what can the man mean?

Spark. This tea is very hot.

Lady A. Why, it came from a hot place, my lord.

COLONEL *spills his tea.*

Lady S. That's as well done as if I had done it myself.

Col. Madam, I find you live by ill-neighbours, when you are forced to praise yourself.

Lady S. So they pray'd me to tell you.

Never. Well, I won't drink a drop more; if I do 'twill go down like chopt hay.

Miss. Pray, don't say no, till you are asked.

Never. Well, what you please, and the rest again.

MISS, *stooping for a pin.*

Miss. I have heard 'em say, that a pin a-day is a groat a-year. Well, as I hope to be married, forgive me for swearing, I vow 'tis a needle.

Col. O! the wonderful works of nature, that a black hen should lay a white egg!

Never. What! you have found a mare's nest, and laugh at the eggs?

Miss. Pray keep your breath to cool your porridge.

Never. Miss, there was a very pleasant accident last night at St. James's Park.

Miss. [*To Lady S.*] What was it your ladyship was going to say just now?

Never. Well, miss; tell a mare a tale—

Miss. I find you love to hear yourself talk.

Never. Why, if you won't hear my tale, kiss my, etc.

Miss. Out upon you, for a filthy creature!

Never. What, miss! must I tell you a story and find you ears?

Spark. [*To Lady S.*] Pray, madam, don't you think Mrs. Spendall very genteel?

Lady S. Why, my lord, I think she was cut out for a gentlewoman, but she was spoil'd in the making: she wears her clothes as if they were thrown on her with a pitchfork; and, for the fashion, I believe they were made in the reign of Queen Bess.

Never. Well, that's neither here nor there; for, you know, the more careless the more modish.

Col. Well, I'd hold a wager there will be a match between her and Dick Dolt: and I believe I can see as far into a millstone as another man.

Miss. Colonel, I must beg your pardon a thousand times; but they say, an old ape has an old eye.

Never. Miss, what do you mean? you'll spoil the colonel's marriage if you call him old.

Col. Not so old, nor yet so cold—You know the rest, miss.

Miss. Manners is a fine thing, truly.

Col. Faith, miss, depend upon't, I'll give you as good as you bring: what! if you give a jest you must take a jest.

Lady S. Well, Mr. Neverout, you'll ne'er have done till you break that knife, and then the man won't take it again.

Miss. Why, madam, fools will be meddling; I wish he may cut his fingers. I hope you can see your own blood without fainting.

Never. Why, miss, you shine this morning like a sh—n barn door: you'll never hold out at this rate; pray save a little wit for to-morrow.

Miss. Well, you have said your say; if people will be rude, I have done; my comfort is, 'twill be all one a thousand years hence.

Never. Miss, you have shot your bolt: I find you must have the last word—Well, I'll go to the opera to-night.—No, I can't, neither, for I have some business—and yet I think I must, for I promised to squire the countess to her box.

Miss. The Countess of Puddledock, I suppose.

Never. Peace or war, miss?

Lady S. Well, Mr. Neverout, you'll never be mad, you are of so many minds.

As Miss *rises, the chair falls behind her.*

Miss. Well; I shan't be lady mayoress this year.

Never. No, miss, 'tis worse than that; you won't be married this year.

Miss. Lord! you make me laugh, though I an't well.

Neverout, *as* Miss *is standing, pulls her suddenly on his lap.*

Never. Now, colonel, come sit down on my lap; more sacks upon the mill.

Miss. Let me go; ar'n't you sorry for my heaviness?

Never. No, miss; you are very light; but I don't say you are a light hussy. Pray take up the chair for your pains.

Miss. 'Tis but one body's labour, you may do it yourself; I wish you would be quiet, you have more tricks than a dancing bear.

Neverout *rises to take up the chair, and* Miss *sits in his.*

Never. You wouldn't be so soon in my grave, madam.

Miss. Lord! I have torn my petticoat with your odious romping; my rents are coming in; I'm afraid I shall fall into the ragman's hands.

Never. I'll mend it, miss.

Miss. You mend it! go, teach your grannam to suck eggs.

Never. Why, miss, you are so cross, I could find in my heart to hate you.

Miss. With all my heart; there will be no love lost between us.

Never. But pray, my Lady Smart, does not miss look as if she could eat me without salt?

Miss. I'll make you one day sup sorrow for this.

Never. Well, follow your own way, you'll live the longer.

Miss. See, madam, how well I have mended it.

Lady S. 'Tis indifferent, as Doll danced.

Never. 'Twill last as many nights as days.

Miss. Well, I knew it should never have your good word.

Lady S. My lord, my Lady Answerall and I was walking in the park last night till near eleven; 'twas a very fine night.

Never. Egad, so was I; and I'll tell you a comical accident; egad, I lost my understanding.

Miss. I'm glad you had any to lose.

Lady S. Well, but what do you mean?

Never. Egad, I kick'd my foot against a stone, and tore off the heel of my shoe, and was forced to limp to a cobbler in the Pall-Mall to have it put on. He, he, he, he! [*All laugh.*

Col. O! 'twas a delicate night to run away with another man's wife.

NEVEROUT *sneezes.*

Miss. God bless you! if you han't taken snuff.

Never. Why, what if I have, miss?

Miss. Why, then, the deuce take you!

Never. Miss, I want that diamond ring of yours.

Miss. Why, then, want's like to be your master.

NEVEROUT *looking at the ring.*

Never. Ay, marry, this is not only, but also; where did you get it?

Miss. Why, where 'twas to be had; where the devil got the friar.

Never. Well; if I had such a fine diamond ring, I wouldn't stay a day in England: but you know, far-fetch'd and dear bought is fit for ladies. I warrant, this cost your father 2½*d.*

COLONEL *stretching himself.*

Lady S. Why, colonel, you break the king's laws; you stretch without a halter.

Lady A. Colonel, some ladies of your acquaintance have promised to breakfast with you, and I am to wait on them; what will you give us?

Col. Why, faith, madam, bachelor's fare: bread and cheese and kisses.

Lady A. Poh! what have you bachelors to do with your money, but to treat the ladies? you have nothing to keep but your own four quarters.

Lady S. My lord, has Captain Brag the honour to be related to your lordship?

Spark. Very nearly, madam; he's my cousin-german, quite removed.

Lady A. Pray, is he not rich?

Spark. Ay, a rich rogue, two shirts and a rag.

Col. Well, however, they say he has a great estate, but only the right owner keeps him out of it.

Lady S. What religion is he of?

Spark. Why, he is an Anythingarian.

Lady A. I believe he has his religion to choose, my lord.

NEVEROUT *scratches his head.*

Miss. Fie, Mr. Neverout, ar'n't you ashamed! I beg pardon for the expression, but I'm afraid your bosom friends are become your backbiters.

Never. Well, miss, I saw a flea once in your pinner, and a louse is a man's companion, but a flea is a dog's companion: however, I wish you would scratch my neck with your pretty white hand.

Miss. And who would be fool, then? I wou'dn't touch a man's flesh for the universe. You have the wrong sow by the ear, I assure you; that's meat for your master.

Never. Miss Notable, all quarrels laid aside, pray step hither for a moment.

Miss. I'll wash my hands, and wait on you, sir; but pray come hither, and try to open this lock.

Never. We'll try what we can do.

Miss. We!—what, have you pigs in your belly?

Never. Miss, I assure you I am very handy at all things.

Miss. Marry, hang them that can't give themselves a good word: I believe you may have an even hand to throw a louse in the fire.

Col. Well, I must be plain; here's a very bad smell.

Miss. Perhaps, colonel, the fox is the finder.

Never. No, colonel; 'tis only your teeth against rain: but——

Miss. Colonel, I find you would make a very bad poor man's sow.

COLONEL *coughing.*

Col. I have got a sad cold.

Lady A. Ay; 'tis well if one can get anything these hard times.

Miss. [*To Col.*] Choke, chicken, there's more a-hatching.

Lady S. Pray, colonel, how did you get that cold?

Spark. Why, madam, I suppose the colonel got it by lying a-bed barefoot.

Lady A. Why then, colonel, you must take it for better for worse, as a man takes his wife.

Col. Well, ladies, I apprehend you without a constable.

Miss. Mr. Neverout! Mr. Neverout! come hither this moment.

Lady S. [*Imitating her.*] Mr. Neverout! Mr. Neverout! I wish he were tied to your girdle.

Never. What's the matter? whose mare's dead now?

Miss. Take your labour for your pains; you may go back again, like a fool, as you came.

Never. Well, miss, if you deceive me a second time, 'tis my fault.

Lady S. Colonel, methinks your coat is too short.

Col. It will be long enough before I get another, madam.

Miss. Come, come; the coat's a good coat, and come of good friends.

Never. Ladies, you are mistaken in the stuff: 'tis half silk.

Col. Tom Neverout, you are a fool, and that's your fault.

A great noise below.

Lady S. Hey, what a clattering is here! one would think hell was broke loose.

Miss. Indeed, madam, I must take my leave, for I an't well.

Lady S. What! you are sick of the mulligrubs with eating chopped hay?

Miss. No, indeed, madam; I'm sick and hungry, more need of a cook than a doctor.

Lady A. Poor Miss! she's sick as a cushion; she wants nothing but stuffing.

Col. If you are sick, you shall have a caudle of calf's eggs.

Never. I can't find my gloves.

Miss. I saw the dog running away with some dirty thing a while ago.

Col. Miss, you have got my handkerchief; pray, let me have it.

Lady S. No; keep it, miss: for they say possession is eleven points of the law.

Miss. Madam, he shall never have it again; 'tis in huckster's hands.

Lady A. What! I see 'tis raining again.

Spark. Why, then, madam, we must do as they do in Spain.

Miss. Pray, my lord, how is that?

Spark. Why, madam, we must let it rain.

Miss *whispers Lady* Smart.

Never. There's no whispering, but there's lying.

Miss. Lord! Mr. Neverout, you are as pert as a pear-monger this morning.

Never. Indeed, miss, you are very handsome.

Miss. Poh! I know that already; tell me news.

Somebody knocks at the door.

Footman *comes in.*

Footman. [*To Col.*] An please your honour, there's a man below wants to speak to you.

Col. Ladies, your pardon for a minute. [*Goes out.*

Lady S. Miss, I sent yesterday to know how you did, but you were gone abroad early.

Miss. Why, indeed, madam, I was hunch'd up in a hackney-coach with three country acquaintance, who called upon me to take the air as far as Highgate.

Lady S. And had you a pleasant airing?

Miss. No, madam; it rained all the time; I was jolted to death; and the road was so bad that I scream'd every moment, and called to the coachman, Pray, friend, don't spill us.

Never. So, miss, you were afraid that pride would have a fall.

Miss. Mr. Neverout, when I want a fool, I'll send for you.

Spark. Miss, didn't your left ear burn last night?

Miss. Pray why, my lord?

Spark. Because I was then in some company where you were extolled to the skies, I assure you.

Miss. My lord, that was more their goodness than my desert.

Spark. They said that you were a complete beauty.

Miss. My lord, I am as God made me.

Lady S. The girl's well enough, if she had but another nose.

Miss. O! madam, I know I shall always have your good word; you love to help a lame dog over the stile.

One knocks.

Lady S. Who's there? you're on the wrong side of the door; come in, if you be fat.

COLONEL *comes in again.*

Spark. Why, colonel, you are a man of great business.

Col. Ay, ay, my lord, I'm like my lord mayor's fool, full of business and nothing to do.

Lady S. My lord, don't you think the colonel's mightily fall'n away of late?

Spark. Ay, fall'n from a horseload to a cartload.

Col. Why, my lord, egad I am like a rabbit, fat and lean in four-and-twenty hours.

Lady S. I assure you, the colonel walks as straight as a pin.

Miss. Yes; he's a handsome-bodied man in the face.

Never. A handsome foot and leg; god-a-mercy shoe and stocking.

Col. What! three upon one! that's foul play: this would make a parson swear.

Never. Why, miss, what's the matter? you look as if you had neither won nor lost.

Col. Why, you must know, miss lives upon love.

Miss. Yes, upon love and lumps of the cupboard.

Lady A. Ay; they say love and pease-porridge are two dangerous things; one breaks the heart; and the other the belly.

Miss. [*Imitating Lady Answerall's tone.*] Very pretty! one breaks the heart, and the other the belly.

Lady A. Have a care; they say, mocking is catching.

Miss. I never heard that.

Never. Why, then, miss, you have a wrinkle——more than ever you had before.

Miss. Well; live and learn.

Never. Ay; and be hang'd and forget all.

Miss. Well, Mr. Neverout, take it as you please; but, I swear, you are a saucy Jack, to use such expressions.

Never. Why, then, miss, if you go to that, I must tell you there's ne'er a Jack but there's a Gill.

Miss. O! Mr. Neverout, everybody knows that you are the pink of courtesy.

Never. And, miss, all the world allows that you are the flower of civility.

Lady S. Miss, I hear there was a great deal of company where you visited last night: pray, who were they?

Miss. Why, there was old Lady Forward, Miss To-and-again, Sir John Ogle, my Lady Clapper, and I, quoth the dog.

Col. Was your visit long, miss?

Miss. Why, truly, they went all to the opera; and so poor pilgarlic came home alone.

Never. Alackaday, poor miss! methinks it grieves me to pity you.

Miss. What! you think you said a fine thing now; well, if I had a dog with no more wit, I would hang him.

Spark. Miss, if it is manners, may I ask which is oldest, you or Lady Scuttle?

Miss. Why, my lord, when I die for age, she may quake for fear.

Lady S. She's a very great gadder abroad.

Lady A. Lord! she made me follow her last week through all the shops like a Tantiny pig.

Lady S. I remember, you told me you had been with her from Dan to Beersheba.

COLONEL *spits.*

Col. Lord! I shall die; I cannot spit from me.

Miss. O! Mr. Neverout, my little countess has just litter'd; speak me fair, and I'll set you down for a puppy.

Never. Why, miss, if I speak you fair, perhaps I mayn't tell truth.

Spark. Ay, but, Tom, smoke that, she calls you puppy by craft.

Never. Well, miss, you ride the fore-horse to-day.

Miss. Ay, many a one says well, that thinks ill.

Never. Fie, miss; you said that once before; and, you know, too much of one thing is good for nothing.

Miss. Why, sure we can't say a good thing too often.

Spark. Well, so much for that, and butter for fish; let us call another cause. Pray, madam, does your ladyship know Mrs. Nice?

Lady S. Perfectly well, my lord; she's nice by name and nice by nature.

Spark. Is it possible she could take that booby, Tom Blunder, for love?

Miss. She had good skill in horse-flesh that could choose a goose to ride on.

Lady A. Why, my lord, 'twas her fate; they say, marriage and hanging go by destiny.

Col. I believe she'll ne'er be burnt for a witch.

Spark. They say, marriages are made in heaven; but I doubt, when she was married, she had no friend there.

Never. Well, she's got out of God's blessing into the warm sun.

Col. The fellow's well enough, if he had any guts in his brains.

Lady S. They say, thereby hangs a tale.

Spark. Why, he is a mere hobbledehoy, neither a man nor a boy.

Miss. Well, if I were to choose a husband, I would never be married to a little man.

Never. Pray, why so, miss? for they say, of all evils we ought to choose the least.

Miss. Because folks would say, when they saw us together, There goes the woman and her husband.

Col. [*To Lady Smart.*] Will your ladyship be on the Mall to-morrow night?

Lady S. No, that won't be proper; you know to-morrow's Sunday.

Spark. What then, madam! they say, the better day the better deed.

Lady A. Pray, Mr. Neverout, how do you like Lady Fruzz?

Never. Pox on her! She is as old as Poles (*St. Paul's Church*).

Miss. So will you be, if you ben't hanged when you're young.

Never. Come, miss, let us be friends: will you go to the Park this evening?

Miss. With all my heart, and a piece of my liver; but not with you.

Lady S. I'll tell you one thing, and that's not two; I am afraid I shall get a fit of the headache to-day.

Col. O! madam, don't be afraid! it comes with a fright.

Miss. [*To Lady Answerall.*] Madam, one of your ladyship's lappets is longer than t'other.

Lady A. Well, no matter; they that ride on a trotting horse, will ne'er perceive it.

Never. Indeed, miss, your lappets hang worse.

Miss. Well, I love a liar in my heart, and you fit me to a hair.

MISS *rises up.*

Never. Deuce take you, miss; you trod on my foot: I hope you don't intend to come to my bed-side.

Miss. In troth, you are afraid of your friends, and none of them near you.

Spark. Well said, girl! [*Giving her a chuck.*] Take that: they say a chuck under the chin is worth two kisses.

Lady A. But, Mr. Neverout, I wonder why such a handsome, straight young gentleman as you don't get some rich widow.

Spark. Straight! ay, straight as my leg, and that's crooked at knee.

Never. Faith, madam, if it rained such widows, none of them would fall upon me. Egad, I was born under a three-penny planet, never to be worth a groat.

Lady A. No, Mr. Neverout; I believe you were born with a caul on your head, you are such a favourite among the ladies: but what think you of widow Prim? she's immensely rich.

Never. Hang her! they say her father was a baker.

Lady S. Ay; but it is not, What is she? but, What has she? now-a-days.

Col. Tom, faith, put on a bold face for once, and have at the widow. I'll speak a good word for you to her.

Lady A. Ay; I warrant you'll speak one word for him and two for yourself.

Miss. Well, I had that at my tongue's end.

Lady A. Why, miss, they say good wits jump.

Never. Faith, madam, I had rather marry a woman I loved in her smock than widow Prim if she had her weight in gold.

Lady S. Come, come, Mr. Neverout, marriage is honourable, but housekeeping is a shrew.

Lady A. Consider, Mr. Neverout, four bare legs in a bed: and you are a younger brother.

Col. Well, madam, the younger brother is the better gentleman: however, Tom, I would advise you to look before you leap.

Spark. The colonel says true; besides, you can't expect to wive and thrive in the same year.

Miss. [*Shuddering.*] Lord! there's somebody walking over my grave.

Col. Pray, Lady Answerall, where was you last Wednesday, when I did myself the honour to wait on you? I think your ladyship is one of the tribe of Gad.

Lady A. Why, colonel, I was at church.

Col. Nay, then, I will be hang'd, and my horse too.

Never. I believe her ladyship was at a church with a chimney in it.

Miss. Lord, my petticoat! how it hangs by jommetry!

Never. Perhaps the fault may be in your shape.

Miss. [*Looking gravely.*] Come, Mr. Neverout, there's no jest like the true jest; but I suppose you think my back is broad enough to bear everything.

Never. Madam, I humbly beg your pardon.

Miss. Well, sir, your pardon's granted.

Never. Well, all things have an end, and a pudding has two, up-up-on me-my my word. [*Stutters.*

Miss. What! Mr. Neverout, can't you speak without a spoon?

Spark. [*To Lady Smart.*] Has your ladyship seen the duchess since your falling out?

Lady S. Never, my lord, but once at a visit, and she looked at me as the devil looked over Lincoln.

Never. Pray, miss, take a pinch of my snuff.

Miss. What! you break my head, and give me a plaster; well, with all my heart; once and not use it.

Never. Well, miss, if you wanted me and your victuals, you'd want your two best friends.

Col. [*To Neverout.*] Tom, miss and you must kiss and be friends.

NEVEROUT *salutes* MISS.

Miss. Anything for a quiet life: my nose itch'd, and I knew I should drink wine, or kiss a fool.

Col. Well, Tom, if that ben't fair, hang fair.

Never. I never said a rude thing to a lady in my life.

Miss. Here's a pin for that lie; I'm sure liars had need of good memories. Pray, colonel, was not he very uncivil to me but just now?

Lady A. Mr. Neverout, if miss will be angry for nothing, take my counsel, and bid her turn the buckle of her girdle behind her.

Never. Come, Lady Answerall, I know better things; miss and I are good friends; don't put tricks upon travellers.

Col. Tom, not a word of the pudding, I beg you.

Lady S. Ah, colonel! you'll never be good, nor then neither.

Spark. Which of the goods d'ye mean? good for something, or good for nothing?

Miss. I have a blister on my tongue, yet I don't remember I told a lie.

Lady A. I thought you did just now.

Spark. Pray, madam, what did thought do?

Lady S. Well, for my life, I cannot conceive what your lordship means.

Spark. Indeed, madam, I meant no harm.

Lady S. No, to be sure, my lord! you are as innocent as a devil of two years old.

Never. Madam, they say ill-doers are ill-deemers; but I don't apply it to your ladyship.

Miss, *mending a hole in her lace.*

Miss. Well, you see I'm mending; I hope I shall be good in time. Look, Lady Answerall, is it not well mended?

Lady A. Ay, this is something like a tansy.

Never. Faith, miss, you have mended as a tinker mends a kettle; stop one hole and make two.

Lady S. Pray, colonel, are you not very much tann'd?

Col. Yes, madam; but a cup of Christmas ale will soon wash it off.

Spark. Lady Smart, does not your ladyship think Mrs. Fade is greatly altered since her marriage?

Lady A. Why, my lord, she was handsome in her time; but she cannot eat her cake and have her cake; I hear she's grown a mere otomy.

Lady S. Poor creature! the black ox has set his foot upon her already.

Miss. Ay; she has quite lost the blue on the plum.

Lady S. And yet, they say, her husband is very fond of her still.

Lady A. O, madam, if she would eat gold he would give it her.

Never. [*To Lady Smart.*] Madam, have you heard that Lady Queasy was lately at the playhouse incog.?

Lady S. What! Lady Queasy of all women in the world! do you say it upon rep.?

Never. Poz, I saw her with my own eyes; she sat among the mob in the gallery; her own ugly phiz: and she saw me look at her.

Col. Her ladyship was plaguily bamb'd; I warrant it put her into the hips.

Never. I smoked her huge nose, and egad, she put me in mind of the woodcock, that strives to hide his long bill, and then thinks nobody sees him.

Col. Tom, I advise you hold your tongue; for you'll never say so good a thing again.

Lady S. Miss, what are you looking for?

Miss. O, madam, I have lost the finest needle—

Lady A. Why, seek till you find it, and then you won't lose your labour.

Never. The loop of my hat is broke, how shall I mend it? [*He fastens it with a pin.*] Well, hang him, say I, that has no shift.

Miss. Ay, and hang him that has one too many.

Never. O, miss, I have heard a sad story of you.

Miss. I defy you, Mr. Neverout; nobody can say black's my eye.

Never. I believe you wish they could.

Miss. Well, but who was your author? Come, tell truth and shame the devil.

Never. Come then, miss; guess who it was that told me? come, put on your considering cap.

Miss. Well, who was it?

Never. Why, one that lives within a mile of an oak.

Miss. Well, go hang yourself in your own garters, for I'm sure the gallows groans for you.

Never. Pretty miss! I was but in jest.

Miss. Well, but don't let that stick in your gizzard.

Col. My lord, does your lordship know Mrs. Talkall?

Spark. Only by sight; but I hear she has a great deal of wit; and, egad, as the saying is, mettle to the back.

Lady S. So I hear.

Col. Why, Dick Lubber said to her t'other day, Madam, you can't cry bo to a goose; yes, but I can, said she; and, egad, cry'd bo full in his face. We all thought we should break our hearts with laughing.

Spark. That was cutting with a vengeance; and, prithee, how did the fool look?

Col. Look! egad, he look'd for all the world like an owl in an ivy-bush.

A Child comes in screaming.

Miss. Well, if that child was mine, I'd whip it till the blood came; peace, you little vixen! if I were near you I would not be far from you.

Lady S. Ay, ay! bachelors' wives and maids' children are finely tutor'd.

Lady A. Come to me, master, and I'll give you a sugar-plum. Why, miss, you forget that ever you was a child yourself. [*She gives the child a lump of sugar.*] I have heard 'em say, boys will long.

Col. My lord, I suppose you know that Mr. Buzzard has married again.

Lady S. This is his fourth wife; then he has been shod round.

Col. Why, you must know she had a month's mind to Dick Frontless, and thought to run away with him; but her parents forced her to take the old fellow for a good settlement.

Spark. So the man got his mare again.

Lady S. I'm told he said a very good thing to Dick; said he, You *think* us old fellows are fools; but we old fellows *know* young fellows are fools.

Col. I know nothing of that; but I know he's devilish old, and she's very young.

Lady A. Why, they call that a match of the world's making.

Miss. What if he had been young and she old?

Never. Why, miss, that would have been a match of the devil's making; but when both are young, that's a match of God's making.

MISS, *searching her pocket for a thimble, brings out a nutmeg.*

Never. O, miss, have a care; for if you carry a nutmeg in your pocket, you'll certainly be married to an old man.

Miss. Well, if I ever be married, it shall be to an old man: they always make the best husbands; and it is better to be an old man's darling than a young man's warling.

Never. Faith, miss, if you speak as you think, I'll give you my mother for a maid.

LADY SMART *rings the bell.*

FOOTMAN *comes in.*

Lady S. Harkee, you fellow; run to my Lady Match, and desire she will remember to be here at six to play at quadrille: d'ye hear, if you fall by the way, don't stay to get up again.

Foot. Madam, I don't know the house.

Lady S. That's not for want of ignorance; follow your nose; go, inquire among the servants.

FOOTMAN *goes out, and leaves the door open.*

Lady S. Here, come back, you fellow; why did you leave the door open? Remember, that a good servant must always come when he's called, do what he's bid, and shut the door after him.

The FOOTMAN *goes out again, and falls down stairs.*

Lady A. Neck or nothing; come down, or I'll fetch you down: well, but I hope the poor fellow has not saved the hangman a labour.

Never. Pray, madam, smoke miss yonder, biting her lips, and playing with her fan.

Miss. Who's that takes my name in vain?

She runs up to them, and falls down.

Lady S. What, more falling! do you intend the frolic should go round?

Lady A. Why, miss, I wish you may not have broke her ladyship's floor.

Never. Miss, come to me, and I'll take you up.

Spark. Well, but, without a jest, I hope, miss, you are not hurt.

Col. Nay, she must be hurt for certain; for you see her head is all of a lump.

Miss. Well, remember this, colonel, when I have money, and you have none.

Lady S. But, colonel, when do you design to get a house, and a wife, and a fire to put her in?

Miss. Lord! who would be married to a soldier, and carry his knapsack?

Never. O, madam: Mars and Venus, you know.

Col. Egad, madam, I'd marry to-morrow, if I thought I could bury my wife just when the honeymoon is over: but, they say, a woman has as many lives as a cat.

Lady A. I find the colonel thinks a dead wife under the table is the best goods in a man's house.

Lady S. O but, colonel, if you had a good wife, it would break your heart to part with her.

Col. Yes, madam; for they say, he that has lost his wife and sixpence, has lost a tester.

Lady S. But, colonel, they say, that every married man should believe there's but one good wife in the world, and that's his own.

Col. For all that, I doubt, a good wife must be bespoke; for there's none ready made.

Miss. I suppose the gentleman's a woman-hater; but, sir, I think you ought to remember that you had a mother: and pray, if it had not been for a woman where would you have been, colonel?

Col. Nay, miss, you cried whore first, when you talked of the knapsack.

Lady A. But I hope you won't blame the whole sex because some are bad.

Never. And they say he that hates woman, sucked a sow.

Col. O madam; there's no general rule without an exception.

Lady S. Then why don't you marry and settle?

Col. Egad, madam, there's nothing will settle me but a bullet.

Spark. Well, colonel, there's one comfort, that you need not fear a cannon-bullet.

Col. Why so, my lord?

Spark. Because they say, he was cursed in his mother's belly that was killed by a cannon-bullet.

Miss. I suppose the colonel was crossed in his first love, which makes him so severe on all the sex.

Lady A. Yes; and I'll hold a hundred to one that the colonel has been over head and ears in love with some lady that has made his heart ache.

Col. O, madam, we soldiers are admirers of all the fair sex.

Miss. I wish I could see the colonel in love till he was ready to die.

Lady S. Ay, but, I doubt few people die for love in these days.

Never. Well, I confess, I differ from the colonel; for I hope to have a rich and a handsome wife yet before I die.

Col. Ay, Tom; live, horse, and thou shalt have grass.

Miss. Well, colonel; but whatever you say against women, they are better creatures than men: for men were made of clay, but woman was made of man.

Col. Miss, you may say what you please; but faith you'll never lead apes in hell.

Never. No, no; I'll be sworn miss has not an inch of nun's flesh about her.

Miss. I understumble you, gentlemen.

Never. Madam, your humblecumdumble.

Spark. Pray, miss, when did you see your old acquaintance, Mrs. Cloudy? you and she are two, I hear.

Miss. See her! marry, I don't care whether I ever see her again! God bless my eyesight!

Lady A. Lord! why she and you were as great as two inkle-weavers. I've seen her hug you as the devil hugged the witch.

Miss. That's true; but I'm told for certain she's no better than she should be.

Lady S. Well, God mend us all; but you must allow the world is very censorious; I never heard that she was a naughty pack.

Col. [*To Neverout.*] Come, Sir Thomas, when the king pleases, when do you intend to march?

Spark. Have patience. Tom, is your friend Ned Rattle married?

Never. Yes, faith, my lord; he has tied a knot with his tongue that he can never untie with his teeth.

Lady S. Ah! marry in haste, and repent at leisure.

Lady A. Has he got a good fortune with his lady? for they say something has some savour, but nothing has no flavour.

Never. Faith, madam, all he gets by her he may put into his eye and see never the worse.

Miss. Then, I believe he heartily wishes her in Abraham's bosom.

Col. Pray, my lord, how does Charles Limber and his fine wife agree?

Spark. Why, they say he's the greatest cuckold in own.

Never. O but, my lord, you should always except my lord mayor.

Miss. Mr. Neverout!

Never. Hay, madam, did you call me?

Miss. Hay! why, hay is for horses.

Never. Why miss, then you may kiss—

Col. Pray, my lord, what's o'clock by your oracle?

Spark. Faith, I can't tell; I think my watch runs upon wheels.

Never. Miss, pray be so kind to call a servant to bring me a glass of small beer: I know you are at home here.

Miss. Every fool can do as they're bid: make a page of your own age, and do it yourself.

Never. Choose, proud fool; I did but ask you.

Miss *puts her hand upon her knee.*

Never. What, miss, are you thinking of your sweetheart? is your garter slipping down?

Miss. Pray, Mr. Neverout, keep your breath to cool your porridge; you measure my corn by your bushel.

Never. Indeed, miss, you lie—

Miss. Did you ever hear anything so rude?

Never. I mean, you lie—under a mistake.

Miss. If a thousand lies could choke you, you would have been choked many a day ago.

Miss *strives to snatch* Mr. Neverout's *snuff-box.*

Never. Madam, you missed that, as you missed your mother's blessing.

She tries again, and misses.

Never. Snap short makes you look so lean, miss.

Miss. Poh! you are so robustious, you had like to put out my eye; I assure you, if you blind me, you must lead me.

Lady S. Dear miss, be quiet; and bring me a pincushion out of that closet.

Miss *opens the closet door and squalls.*

Lady S. Lord bless the girl! what's the matter now?

Miss. I vow, madam, I saw something in black; I thought it was a spirit.

Col. Why, miss, did you ever see a spirit?

Miss. No, sir; I thank God I never saw anything worse than myself.

Never. Well, I did a very foolish thing yesterday, and was a great puppy for my pains.

Miss. Very likely; for they say, many a true word's spoken in jest.

Footman *returns.*

Lady S. Well, did you deliver your message? you are fit to be sent for sorrow, you stay so long by the way.

Foot. Madam, my lady was not at home, so I did not leave the message.

Lady S. This it is to send a fool of an errand.

Spark. [*Looking at his watch.*] 'Tis past twelve o'clock.

Lady S. Well, what is that among all us?

Spark. Madam, I must take my leave: come, gentlemen, are you for a march?

Lady S. Well, but your lordship and the colonel will dine with us to-day; and, Mr. Neverout, I hope we shall have your good company; there will be no soul else, beside my own lord and these ladies; for everybody knows I hate a crowd; I would rather want victuals than elbow-room; we dine punctually at three.

Spark. Madam, we'll be sure to attend your ladyship.

Col. Madam, my stomach serves me instead of a clock.

Another Footman *comes back.*

Lady S. Oh! you are the t'other fellow I sent; well, have you been with my Lady Club? you are good to send of a dead man's errand.

Foot. Madam, my Lady Club begs your ladyship's pardon: but she is engaged to-night.

Miss. Well, Mr. Neverout, here's the back of my hand to you.

Never. Miss, I find you will have the last word. Ladies, I am more yours than my own.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE

LORD SMART *and the former company at three o'clock coming to dine. After salutations.*

Smart. I'm sorry I was not at home this morning when you all did us the honour to call here; but I went to the levee to-day.

Spark. Oh! my lord; I am sure the loss was ours.

Lady S. Gentlemen and ladies, you are come to a sad dirty house; I am sorry for it, but we have had our hands in mortar.

Spark. Oh! madam; your ladyship is pleased to say so; but I never saw anything so clean and so fine; I profess it is a perfect paradise.

Lady S. My lord, your lordship is always very obliging.

Spark. Pray, madam, whose picture is that?

Lady S. Why, my lord, it was drawn for me.

Spark. I'll swear the painter did not flatter your ladyship.

Col. My lord, the day is finely cleared up.

Smart. Ay, colonel; 'tis a pity that fair weather should ever do any harm. [*To Neverout.*] Why, Tom, you are high in the mode.

Never. My lord, it is better to be out of the world than out of the fashion.

Smart. But, Tom, I hear you and miss are always quarrelling: I fear it is your fault; for I can assure you she is very good-humoured.

Never. Ay, my lord; so is the devil when he's pleased.

Smart. Miss, what do you think of my friend Tom?

Miss. My lord, I think he's not the wisest man in the world; and truly he's sometimes very rude.

Spark. That may be true; but yet, he that hangs Tom for a fool may find a knave in the halter.

Miss. Well, however, I wish he were hanged, if it were only to try.

Never. Well, miss, if I must be hanged, I won't go far to choose my gallows; it shall be about your fair neck.

Miss. I'll see your nose cheese first and the dogs eating it; but, my lord, Mr. Neverout's wit begins to run low; for, I vow, he said this before; pray, colonel, give him a pinch, and I'll do as much for you.

Spark. My Lady Smart, your ladyship has a very fine scarf.

Lady S. Yes, my lord; it will make a flaming figure in a country church.

FOOTMAN *comes in.*

Foot. Madam, dinner's upon the table.

Col. Faith, I am glad of it; my belly began to cry cupboard.

Never. I wish I may never hear worse news.

Miss. What! Mr. Neverout, you are in great haste; I believe your belly thinks your throat is cut.

Never. No, faith, miss; three meals a-day, and a good supper at night, will serve my turn.

Miss. To say the truth, I'm hungry.

Never. And I'm angry; so let us both go fight.

They go in to dinner, and, after the usual compliments, take their seats.

Lady S. Ladies and gentlemen, will you eat any oysters before dinner?

Col. With all my heart. [*Takes an oyster.*] He was a bold man that first ate an oyster.

Lady S. They say oysters are a cruel meat, because we eat them alive: then they are an uncharitable meat, for we leave nothing to the poor; and they are an ungodly meat, because we never say grace.

Never. Faith, that's as well said as if I had said it myself.

Lady S. Well, we are well set if we be but as well served: come, colonel, handle your arms; shall I help you to some beef?

Col. If your ladyship please; and pray, don't cut like a

mother-in-law, but send me a large slice: for I love to lay a good foundation. I vow, 'tis a noble sirloin.

Never. Ay; here's cut and come again.

Miss. But pray, why is it called a sirloin?

Smart. Why you must know, that our king James I., who loved good eating, being invited to dinner by one of his nobles, and seeing a large loin of beef at his table, he drew out his sword, and in a frolic knighted it. Few people know the secret of this.

Spark. Beef is man's meat, my lord.

Smart. But, my lord, I say beef is the king of meat.

Miss. Pray what have I done, that I must not have a place?

Lady S. [*To Lady A.*] What will your ladyship please to eat?

Lady A. Pray, madam, help yourself.

Col. They say, eating and scratching wants but a beginning: if you'll give me leave, I'll help myself to a slice of this shoulder of veal.

Lady S. Colonel, you can't do a kinder thing; well, you are all heartily welcome, as I may say.

Col. They say there are thirty and two good bits in a shoulder of veal.

Lady S. Ay, colonel, thirty bad bits and two good ones; you see I understand you; but I hope you have got one of the two good ones.

Never. Colonel, I'll be of your mess.

Col. Then, pray, Tom, carve for yourself; they say two hands in a dish, and one in a purse: Hah! said I well, Tom?

Never. Colonel, you spoke like an oracle.

Miss. [*To Lady A.*] Madam, will your ladyship help me to some fish?

Smart. [*To Neverout.*] Tom, they say fish should swim thrice.

Never. How is that, my lord?

Smart. Why, Tom, first it should swim in the sea (do you mind me?); then it should swim in butter; and, at last, sirrah, it should swim in good claret. I think I have made it out.

Foot. [*To Lord Smart.*] My lord, Sir John Linger is coming up.

Smart. God so! I invited him to dine with me to-day, and forgot it: well, desire him to walk in.

SIR JOHN LINGER *comes in.*

Sir J. What! you are at it! why then I'll be gone.

Lady S. Sir John, I beg you will sit down; come, the more the merrier.

Sir J. Ay; but the fewer the better cheer.

Lady S. Well, I am the worst in the world at making apologies; it was my lord's fault: I doubt you must kiss the hare's foot.

Sir J. I see you are fast by the teeth.

Col. Faith, Sir John, we are killing that that would kill us.

Spark. You see, Sir John, we are upon a business of life and death; come, will you do as we do? you are come in pudding-time.

Sir J. Ay; this would be doing if I were dead. What! you keep court hours, I see: I'll be going, and get a bit of meat at my inn.

Lady S. Why, we won't eat you, Sir John.

Sir J. It is my own fault; but I was kept by a fellow, who bought some Derbyshire oxen of me.

Never. You see, Sir John, we stayed for you as one horse does for another.

Lady S. My lord, will you help Sir John to some beef? Lady Answerall, pray eat, you see your dinner; I am sure, if we had known we should have such good company, we should have been better provided; but you must take the will for the deed. I'm afraid you are invited to your loss.

Col. And pray, Sir John, how do you like the town? you have been absent a long time.

Sir J. Why, I find little London stands just where it did when I left it last.

Never. What do you think of Hanover Square? Why, Sir John, London is gone out of town since you saw it.

Lady S. Sir John, I can only say, you are heartily welcome; and I wish I had something better for you.

Col. Here's no salt; cuckolds will run away with the meat.

Smart. Pray edge a little, to make more room for Sir John: Sir John, fall to: you know half an hour is soon lost at dinner.

Sir J. I protest, I can't eat a bit, for I took share of a beefsteak and two mugs of ale with my chapman, besides a tankard of March beer, as soon as I got out of my bed

Lady A. Not fresh and fasting, I hope?

Sir J. Yes, faith, madam; I always wash my kettle before I put the meat in it.

Lady S. Poh! Sir John, you have seen nine houses since you ate last: come, you have kept a corner in your stomach for a piece of venison pasty.

Sir J. Well, I'll try what I can do when it comes up.

Lady A. Come, Sir John, you may go further and fare worse.

Miss. [*To Neverout.*] Pray, Mr. Neverout, will you please to send me a piece of tongue?

Never. By no means, madam: one tongue is enough for a woman.

Col. Miss, here's a tongue that never told a lie.

Miss. That was, because it could not speak. Why, colonel, I never told a lie in my life.

Never. I appeal to all the company, whether that be not the greatest lie that ever was told?

Col. [*To Neverout.*] Prithee, Tom, send me the two legs, and rump, and liver of that pigeon; for, you must know, I love what nobody else loves.

Never. But what if any of the ladies should long? Well, here take it, and the d——l do you good with it.

Lady A. Well; this eating and drinking takes away a body's stomach.

Never. I am sure I have lost mine.

Miss. What! the bottom of it, I suppose?

Never. No, really, miss; I have quite lost it.

Miss. I should be very sorry a poor body had found it.

Lady S. But, Sir John, we hear you are married since we saw you last: what! you have stolen a wedding, it seems?

Sir J. Well; one can't do a foolish thing once in one's life, but one must hear of it a hundred times.

Col. And, pray, Sir John, how does your lady unknown?

Sir J. My wife's well, colonel, and at your service in a civil way. Ha, ha! [*He laughs.*

Miss. Pray, Sir John, is your lady tall or short?

Sir J. Why, miss, I thank God, she is a little evil.

Spark. Come, give me a glass of claret.

FOOTMAN *fills him a bumper.*

Spark. Why do you fill so much?

Never. My lord, he fills as he loves you.

Lady S. Miss, shall I send you some cucumber

Miss. Madam, I dare not touch it: for they say cucumbers are cold in the third degree.

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, do you love pudding?

Never. Madam, I am like all fools, I love everything that is good; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Col. Sir John, I hear you are a great walker when you are at home.

Sir J. No, faith, colonel; I always love to walk with a horse in my hand: but I have had devilish bad luck in horse-flesh of late.

Smart. Why, then, Sir John, you must kiss a parson's wife.

Lady S. They say, Sir John, that your lady has a great deal of wit.

Sir J. Madam, she can make a pudding, and has just wit enough to know her husband's breeches from another man's.

Smart. My Lord Sparkish, I have some excellent cider; will you please to taste it?

Spark. My lord, I should like it well enough, if it were not treacherous.

Smart. Pray, my lord, how is it treacherous?

Spark. Because it smiles in my face, and cuts my throat.

[*Here a loud laugh.*

Miss. Odd so! madam; your knives are very sharp, for I have cut my finger.

Lady S. I am sorry for it: pray which finger? (God bless the mark!)

Miss. Why, this finger: no, 'tis this: I vow I can't find which it is.

Never. Ay; the fox had a wound, and he could not tell where, etc. Bring some water to throw in her face.

Miss. Pray, Mr. Neverout, did you ever draw a sword in anger? I warrant you would faint at the sight of your own blood.

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, shall I send you some veal?

Never. No, madam, I don't love it.

Miss. Then pray for them that do. I desire your ladyship will send me a bit.

Smart. Tom, my service to you.

Never. My lord, this moment I did myself the honour to drink to your lordship.

Smart. Why, then, that's Hertfordshire kindness.

Never. Faith, my lord, I pledged myself; for I drank twice together without thinking.

Spark. Why, then, colonel, my humble service to you.

Never. Pray, my lord, don't make a bridge of my nose.

Spark. Well, a glass of this wine is as comfortable as matrimony to an old woman.

Col. Sir John, I design, one of these days, to come and beat up your quarters in Derbyshire.

Sir J. Faith, colonel, come, and welcome: and stay away, and heartily welcome: but you were born within the sound of Bow bell, and don't care to stir so far from London.

Miss. Pray, colonel, send me some fritters.

COLONEL *takes them out with his hand.*

Col. Here, miss; they say fingers were made before forks and hands before knives.

Lady S. Methinks this pudding is too much boil'd.

Lady A. O! madam, they say a pudding is poison when it is too much boiled.

Never. Miss, shall I help you to a pigeon? here's a pigeon so finely roasted, it cries, Come eat me.

Miss. No, sir; I thank you.

Never. Why, then you may choose.

Miss. I have chosen already.

Never. Well, you may be worse offer'd before you are twice married.

The COLONEL *fills a large plate of soup.*

Smart. Why, colonel, you don't mean to eat all that soup?

Col. O! my lord, this is my sick dish; when I'm well I'll have a bigger.

Miss. [*To Col.*] Sup, Simon; very good broth.

Never. This seems to be a good pullet.

Miss. I warrant, Mr. Neverout knows what's good for himself.

Spark. Tom, I shan't take your word for it; help me to a wing.

NEVEROUT *tries to cut off a wing.*

Never. Egad, I can't hit the joint.

Spark. Why then, think of a cuckold.

Never. O! now I have nick'd it. [*Gives it to Lord Sparkish.*

Spark. Why, a man may eat this, though his wife lay a-dying.

Col. Pray, friend, give me a glass of small beer, if it be good.

Smart. Why, colonel, they say, there is no such thing as good small beer, good brown bread, or a good old woman.

Lady S. [*To Lady A.*] Madam, I beg your ladyship's pardon; I did not see you when I was cutting that bit.

Lady A. O! madam; after you is good manners.

Lady S. Lord! here's a hair in the sauce!

Spark. Then, madam, set the hounds after it.

Never. Pray, colonel, help me, however, to some of that same sauce.

Col. Come, I think you are more sauce than pig.

Smart. Sir John, cheer up: my service to you: well, what do you think of the world to come?

Sir J. Truly, my lord, I think of it as little as I can.

Lady S. [*Putting a skewer on a plate.*] Here, take this skewer, and carry it down to the cook, to dress it for her own dinner.

Never. I beg your ladyship's pardon; but this small beer is dead.

Lady S. Why, then, let it be buried.

Col. This is admirable black-pudding: miss, shall I carve you some? I can just carve pudding and that's all; I am the worst carver in the world; I should never make a good chaplain.

Miss. No, thank ye, colonel; for they say those that eat black-pudding will dream of the devil.

Smart. O, here comes the venison pasty: here, take the soup away. [*He cuts it up, and tastes the venison.*] 'Sbuds! this venison is musty.

NEVEROUT *eats a piece, and it burns his mouth.*

Smart. What's the matter, Tom? you have tears in your eyes, I think: what dost cry for, man?

Never. My lord, I was just thinking of my poor grandmother! she died just this very day seven years.

MISS *takes a bit and burns her mouth.*

Never. And pray, miss, why do you cry, too?

Miss. Because you were not hang'd the day your grandmother died.

Smart. I'd have given £40, miss, to have said that.

Col. Egad, I think the more I eat the hungrier I am.

Spark. Why, colonel, they say, one shoulder of mutton drives down another.

Never. Egad, if I were to fast for my life, I would take a good breakfast in the morning, a good dinner at noon, and a good supper at night.

Spark. My lord, this venison is plaguily pepper'd; your cook has a heavy hand.

Smart. My lord, I hope you are pepper-proof; come, here's a health to the founders.

Lady S. Ay; and to the confounders, too.

Smart. Lady Answerall, does your ladyship love venison?

Lady A. No, my lord, I can't endure it in my sight: therefore please to send me a good piece of meat and crust.

Spark. [*Drinks to Neverout.*] Come, Tom; not always to my friends, but once to you.

Never. [*Drinks to Lady Smart.*] Come, madam; here's a health to our friends, and hang the rest of our kin.

Lady S. [*To Lady A.*] Madam, will your ladyship have any of this hare?

Lady A. No, madam, they say 'tis melancholy meat.

Lady S. Then, madam, shall I send you the brains? I beg your ladyship's pardon; for they say, 'tis not good manners to offer brains.

Lady A. No, madam; for perhaps it will make me hare-brained.

Never. Miss, I must tell you one thing.

Miss. [*With a glass in her hand.*] Hold your tongue, Mr. Neverout; don't speak in my tip.

Col. Well, he was an ingenious man that first found out eating and drinking.

Spark. Of all vittles drink digests the quickest: give me a glass of wine.

Never. My lord, your wine is too strong.

Smart. Ay, Tom, as much as you're too good.

Miss. This almond-pudding was pure good; but it is grown quite cold.

Never. So much the better, miss, cold pudding will settle your love.

Miss. Pray, Mr. Neverout, are you going to take a voyage?

Never. Why do you ask, miss?

Miss. Because you have laid in so much beef.

Sir J. You two have eat up the whole pudding between you.

Miss. Sir John, here's a little bit left; will you please to have it?

Sir J. No, thankee; I don't love to make a fool of my mouth.

Col. [*Calling to the butler.*] John, is your small beer good?

Butler. And please your honour, my lord and lady like it; I think it is good.

Col. Why, then, John, d'ye see, if you are sure your small beer is good, d'ye mark? then, give me a glass of wine.

[*All laugh.*

COLONEL *tasting the wine.*

Smart. Sir John, how does your neighbour Gatherall of the Peak? I hear he has lately made a purchase.

Sir J. O! Dick Gatherall knows how to butter his bread as well as any man in Derbyshire.

Smart. Why he used to go very fine when he was here in town.

Sir J. Ay; and it became him, as a saddle becomes a sow.

Col. I know his lady, and I think she is a very good woman.

Sir J. Faith, she has more goodness in her little finger than he has in his whole body.

Smart. Well, colonel, how do you like that wine?

Col. This wine should be eaten, it is too good to be drunk.

Smart. I'm very glad you like it; and pray don't spare it.

Col. No, my lord; I'll never starve in a cook's shop.

Smart. And pray, Sir John, what do you say to my wine?

Sir J. I'll take another glass first: second thoughts are best.

Spark. Pray, Lady Smart, you sit near that ham; will you please to send me a bit?

Lady S. With all my heart. [*She sends him a piece.*] Pray, my lord, how do you like it?

Spark. I think it is a limb of Lot's wife. [*He eats it with mustard.*] Egad, my lord, your mustard is very uncivil.

Lady S. Why uncivil, my lord?

Spark. Because it takes me by the nose, egad.

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, I find you are a very good carver.

Col. O, madam, that is no wonder; for you must know, Tom Neverout carves o' Sundays.

NEVEROUT *overturns the saltcellar.*

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, you have overturned the salt, and that's a sign of anger: I'm afraid miss and you will fall out.

Lady A. No, no; throw a little of it into the fire, and all will be well.

Never. O, madam, the falling out of lovers, you know.

Miss. Lovers! very fine! fall *out* with him! I wonder when we were *in*.

Sir J. For my part, I believe the young gentlewoman is his sweetheart, there is so much fooling and fiddling betwixt them: I'm sure, they say in our country, that shiddle-come-sh—'s the beginning of love.

Miss. I own I love Mr. Neverout as the devil loves holy water: I love him like pie, I'd rather the devil had him than I.

Never. Miss, I'll tell you one thing.

Miss. Come, here's t'ye, to stop your mouth.

Never. I'd rather you would stop it with a kiss.

Miss. A kiss! marry come up, my dirty cousin; are you no sicker? Lord! I wonder what fool it was that first invented kissing!

Never. Well, I'm very dry.

Miss. Then you're the better to burn and the worse to fry.

Lady A. God bless you, colonel, you have a good stroke with you.

Col. O, madam, formerly I could eat all, but now I leave nothing; I eat but one meal a-day.

Miss. What! I suppose, colonel, that is from morning till night?

Never. Faith, miss; and well was his wont.

Smart. Pray, Lady Answerall, taste this bit of venison.

Lady A. I hope your lordship will set me a good example.

Smart. Here's a glass of cider fill'd: miss, you must drink it.

Miss. Indeed, my lord, I can't.

Never. Come, miss; better belly burst than good liquor be lost.

Miss. Pish! well, in life there was never anything so teazing; I had rather shed it in my shoes: I wish it were in your guts for my share.

Smart. Mr. Neverout, you ha'n't tasted my cider yet.

Never. No, my lord; I have been just eating soup; and they say, if one drinks with one's porridge, one will cough in one's grave.

Smart. Come, take miss's glass, she wish'd it was in your guts; let her have her wish for once: ladies can't abide to have their inclinations cross'd.

Lady S. [*To Sir J.*] I think, Sir John, you have not tasted the venison yet.

Sir J. I seldom eat it, madam; however, please to send me a little of the crust.

Spark. Why, Sir John, you had as good eat the devil as the broth he is boil'd in.

Col. Well, this eating and drinking takes away a body's stomach, as Lady Answerall says.

Never. I have dined as well as my lord mayor.

Miss. I thought I could have eaten this wing of a chicken; but my eye's bigger than my belly.

Smart. Indeed, Lady Answerall, you have eaten nothing.

Lady A. Pray, my lord, see all the bones on my plate: they say a carpenter's known by his chips.

Never. Miss, will you reach me that glass of jelly?

Miss. [*Giving it to him.*] You see, 'tis but ask and have.

Never. Miss, I would have a bigger glass.

Miss. What! you don't know your own mind; you are neither well, full nor fasting; I think that is enough.

Never. Ay, one of the enoughs; I am sure it is little enough.

Miss. Yes; but you know, sweet things are bad for the teeth.

Never. [*To Lady A.*] Madam, I don't like that part of the veal you sent me.

Lady A. Well, Mr. Neverout, I find you are a true Englishman; you never know when you are well.

Col. Well, I have made my whole dinner of beef.

Lady A. Why, colonel, a bellyful's a bellyful, if it be but of wheat-straw.

Col. Well, after all, kitchen physic is the best physic.

Lady S. And the best doctors in the world are Doctor Diet, Doctor Quiet, and Doctor Merryman.

Spark. What do you think of a little house well fill'd?

Sir J. And a little land well till'd?

Col. Ay; and a little wife well will'd?

Never. My Lady Smart, pray help me to some of the breast of that goose.

Smart. Tom, I have heard that goose upon goose is false heraldry.

Miss. What! will you never have done stuffing?

Smart. This goose is quite raw: well, God sends meat, but the devil sends cooks.

Never. Miss, can you tell which is the gander, the white goose or the grey goose?

Miss. They say, a fool will ask more questions than the wisest body can answer.

Col. Indeed, miss, Tom Neverout has posed you.

Miss. Why, colonel, every dog has his day; but I believe I shall never see a goose again without thinking of Mr. Neverout.

Smart. Well said, miss; faith, girl, thou hast brought thyself off cleverly. Tom, what say you to that?

Col. Faith, Tom is nonpluss'd; he looks plaguily down in the mouth.

Miss. Why, my lord, you see he is the provokingest creature in life; I believe there is not such another in the varsal world.

Lady A. O, miss, the world's a wide place.

Never. Well, miss, I'll give you leave to call me anything, if you don't call me spade.

Smart. Well, but after all, Tom, can you tell me what's Latin for a goose?

Never. O, my lord, I know that: why, brandy is Latin for a goose, and *tace* is Latin for a candle.

Miss. Is that manners, to show your learning before ladies? Methinks you are grown very brisk of a sudden; I think the man's glad he's alive.

Sir J. The devil take your wit, if this be wit; for it spoils company: pray, Mr. Butler, bring me a dram after my goose; 'tis very good for the wholesomes.

Smart. Come, bring me the loaf; I sometimes love to cut my own bread.

Miss. I suppose, my lord, you lay longest a-bed to-day?

Smart. Miss, if I had said so, I should have told a fib; I warrant you lay a-bed till the cows came home: but, miss, shall I cut you a little crust, now my hand is in?

Miss. If you please, my lord, a bit of undercrust.

Never. [*Whispering miss.*] I find you love to lie under.

Miss. [*Aloud, pushing him from her.*] What does the man mean! Sir, I don't understand you at all.

Never. Come, all quarrels laid aside: here, miss, may you live a thousand years. [*He drinks to her*

Miss. Pray, sir, don't stint me.

Smart. Sir John, will you taste my October? I think it is very good; but I believe not equal to yours in Derbyshire.

Sir J. My lord, I beg your pardon; but they say, the devil made askers.

Smart. [*To the butler.*] Here, bring up the great tankard, full of October, for Sir John.

Col. [*Drinking to miss.*] Miss, your health; may you live all the days of your life.

Lady A. Well, miss, you'll certainly be soon married, here's two bachelors drinking to you at once.

Lady S. Indeed, miss, I believe you were wrapt in your mother's smock, you are so well beloved.

Miss. Where's my knife? sure I ha'n't eaten it: O, here it is.

Sir J. No, miss; but your maidenhead hangs in your light.

Miss. Pray, Sir John, is that a Derbyshire compliment? Here, Mr. Neverout, will you take this piece of rabbit that you bid me carve for you?

Never. I don't know.

Miss. Why, take it, or let it alone.

Never. I will.

Miss. What will you?

Never. Why, I'll take it, or let it alone.

Miss. Well, you are a provoking creature.

Sir J. [*Talking with a glass of wine in his hand.*] I remember a farmer in our country—

Smart. [*Interrupting him.*] Pray, Sir John, did you ever hear of Parson Palmer?

Sir J. No, my lord; what of him?

Smart. Why, he used to preach over his liquor.

Sir J. I beg your lordship's pardon; here's your lordship's health; I'd drink it up, if it were a mile to the bottom.

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, have you been at the new play?

Never. Yes, madam, I went the first night.

Lady S. Well, and how did it take?

Never. Why, madam, the poet is damn'd.

Sir J. God forgive you! that's very uncharitable: you ought not to judge so rashly of any Christian.

Never. [*Whispers Lady Smart.*] Was ever such a dunce! How well he knows the town! See how he stares like a stuck pig! Well, but, Sir John, are you acquainted with any one of our fine ladies yet?

Sir J. No; damn your fire-ships, I have a wife of my own.

Lady S. Pray, my Lady Answerall, how do you like these preserved oranges?

Lady A. Indeed, madam, the only fault I find is, that they are too good.

Lady S. O, madam, I have heard 'em say, that too good is stark naught.

MISS *drinking part of a glass of wine.*

Never. Pray, let me drink your snuff.

Miss. No, indeed, you shan't drink after me; for you'll know my thoughts.

Never. I know them already; you are thinking of a good husband. Besides, I can tell your meaning by your mumping.

Lady S. Pray, my lord, did not you order the butler to bring up a tankard of our October to Sir John? I believe they stay to brew it.

The butler brings up the tankard to SIR JOHN.

Sir J. Won't your ladyship please to drink first?

Lady S. No, Sir John; 'tis in a very good hand; I'll pledge you.

Col. [*To Lord Smart.*] My lord, I love October as well as Sir John; and I hope you won't make fish of one and flesh of another.

Smart. Colonel, you're heartily welcome. Come, Sir John, take it by word of mouth, and then give it to the colonel.

Sir John *drinks.*

Smart. Well, Sir John, how do you like it?

Sir J. Not as well as my own in Derbyshire; 'tis plaguy small.

Lady S. I never taste malt liquor; but they say it is well hopp'd.

Sir J. Hopp'd; why, if it had hopp'd a little further, it would have hopp'd into the river. O, my lord, my ale is meat, drink, and cloth; it will make a cat speak and a wise man dumb.

Lady S. I was told ours was very strong.

Sir J. Ay, madam, strong of the water; I believe the brewer forgot the malt, or the river was too near him. Faith, it is mere whip-belly-vengeance; he that drinks most has the worst share.

Col. I believe, Sir John, ale is as plenty as water at your house.

Sir J. Why, faith, at Christmas, we have many comers and goers; and they must not be sent away without a cup of Christmas ale, for fear they should p——s behind the door.

Lady S. I hear Sir John has the nicest garden in England; they say, 'tis kept so clean, that you can't find a place where to spit.

Sir J. O, madam; you are pleased to say so.

Lady S. But, Sir John, your ale is terrible strong and heady in Derbyshire, and will soon make one drunk and sick; what do you then?

Sir J. Why, indeed, it is apt to fox one; but our way is, to take a hair of the same dog next morning. I take a new-laid egg for breakfast; and faith one should drink as much after an egg as after an ox.

Smart. Tom Neverout, will you taste a glass of October?

Never. No, faith, my lord; I like your wine, and won't put

a churl upon a gentleman; your honour's claret is good enough for me.

Lady S. What! is this pigeon left for manners? Colonel, shall I send you the legs and rump?

Col. Madam I could not eat a bit more if the house was full.

Smart. [*Carving a partridge.*] Well, one may ride to Rumford upon this knife, it is so blunt.

Lady A. My lord, I beg your pardon; but they say an ill workman never had good tools.

Smart. Will your lordship have a wing of it?

Spark. No, my lord; I love the wing of an ox a great deal better.

Smart. I'm always cold after eating.

Col. My lord, they say, that's a sign of long life.

Smart. Ay; I believe I shall live till my friends are weary of me.

Col. Pray, does anybody here hate cheese? I would be glad of a bit.

Smart. An odd kind of fellow dined with me t'other day; and when the cheese came upon the table, he pretended to faint; so somebody said, Pray take away the cheese: No, said I; pray take away the fool: said I well?

Here a loud and large laugh.

Col. Faith, my lord, you served the coxcomb right enough; and therefore I wish we had a bit of your lordship's Oxfordshire cheese.

Smart. Come, hang saving; bring us up a half-p'orth of cheese.

Lady A. They say, cheese digests everything but itself.

A footman brings a great whole cheese.

Spark. Ay; this would look handsome if anybody should come in.

Sir J. Well: I'm weily brosten, as they say in Lancashire.

Lady S. O! Sir John; I would I had something to brost you withal.

Smart. Come, they say, 'tis merry in the hall when beards wag all.

Lady S. Miss, shall I help you to some cheese, or will you carve for yourself?

Never. I'll hold fifty pounds, miss won't cut the cheese.

Miss. Pray, why so, Mr. Neverout?

Never. O, there is a reason, and you know it well enough.

Miss. I can't for my life understand what the gentleman means.

Smart. Pray, Tom, change the discourse: in troth you are too bad.

Col. [*Whispers Neverout.*] Smoke miss; faith, you have made her fret like gum taffeta.

Lady S. Well, but, miss (hold your tongue, Mr. Neverout), shall I cut you a piece of cheese?

Miss. No, really, madam; I have dined this half hour.

Lady S. What! quick at meat, quick at work, they say.

SIR JOHN *nods.*

Smart. What! are you sleepy, Sir John? do you sleep after dinner?

Sir J. Yes, faith; I sometimes take a nap after my pipe; for when the belly is full, the bones would be at rest.

Lady S. Come, colonel; help yourself, and your friends will love you the better. [*To Lady A.*] Madam, your ladyship eats nothing.

Lady A. Lord, madam, I have fed like a farmer: I shall grow as fat as a porpoise; I swear, my jaws are weary of chewing.

Col. I have a mind to eat a piece of that sturgeon, but fear it will make me sick.

Never. A rare soldier indeed; let it alone, and I warrant it won't hurt you.

Col. Well, it would vex a dog to see a pudding creep.

SIR JOHN *rises.*

Smart. Sir John, what are you doing?

Sir J. Swolks, I must be going, by'r lady; I have earnest business; I must do as the beggars do, go away when I have got enough.

Smart. Well, but stay till this bottle's out; you know, the man was hang'd that left his liquor behind him: and besides, a cup in the pate is a mile in the gate; and a spur in the head is worth two in the heel.

Sir J. Come then; one brimmer to all your healths. [*The*

footman gives him a glass half full.] Pray, friend, what was the rest of this glass made for? an inch at the top, friend, is worth two at the bottom. [*He gets a brimmer and drinks it off.*] Well, there's no deceit in a brimmer, and there's no false Latin in this; your wine is excellent good, so I thank you for the next, for I am sure of this: madam, has your ladyship any commands in Derbyshire? I must go fifteen miles to-night.

Lady S. None, Sir John, but to take care of yourself; and my most humble service to your lady unknown.

Sir J. Well, madam, I can but love and thank you.

Lady S. Here, bring water to wash; though really, you have all eaten so little, that you have not need to wash your mouths.

Smart. But, prithee, Sir John, stay a while longer.

Sir J. No, my lord; I am to smoke a pipe with a friend before I leave the town.

Col. Why, Sir John, had not you better set out to-morrow?

Sir J. Colonel, you forget to-morrow is Sunday.

Col. Now I always love to begin a journey on Sundays, because I shall have the prayers of the church to preserve all that travel by land or by water.

Sir J. Well, colonel, thou art a mad fellow to make a priest of.

Never. Fie, Sir John! do you take tobacco? How can you make a chimney of your mouth?

Sir J. [*To Neverout.*] What! you don't smoke, I warrant you, but you smock. (Ladies, I beg your pardon.) Colonel, do you never smoke?

Col. No, Sir John; but I take a pipe sometimes.

Sir J. I'faith, one of your finical London blades dined with me last year in Derbyshire: so, after dinner, I took a pipe: so my gentleman turned away his head: so, said I, What, sir, do you never smoke? so he answered, as you do, colonel, No, but I sometimes take a pipe: so he took a pipe in his hand, and fiddled with it till he broke it: so, said I, Pray, sir, can you make a pipe? so he said, No: so, said I, Why then, sir, if you can't make a pipe you should not break a pipe: so we all laughed.

Smart. Well; but, Sir John, they say, that the corruption of pipes is the generation of stoppers.

Sir J. Colonel, I hear you go sometimes to Derbyshire; I wish you would come and foul a plate with me.

Col. I hope you will give me a soldier's bottle.

Sir J. Come and try. Mr. Neverout, you are a Town wit: can you tell me what kind of herb is tobacco?

Never. Why, an Indian herb, Sir John.

Sir J. No; 'tis a pot herb; and so here's t'ye in a pot of my lord's October.

Lady S. I hear, Sir John, since you are married, you have foreswore the town.

Sir J. No, madam; I never foreswore anything but the building of churches.

Lady S. Well; but, Sir John, when may we hope to see you again in London?

Sir J. Why, madam, not till the ducks have eat up the dirt, as the children say.

Never. Come, Sir John: I foresee it will rain terribly.

Smart. Come, Sir John, do nothing rashly; let us drink first.

Spark. I know Sir John will go, though he was sure it would rain cats and dogs: but pray stay, Sir John; you'll be time enough to go to bed by candlelight.

Smart. Why, Sir John, if you must needs go, while you stay, make use of your time; here's my service to you, a health to our friends in Derbyshire: come, sit down; let us put off the evil hour as long as we can.

Sir J. Faith, I could not drink a drop more if the house was full.

Col. Why, Sir John, you used to love a glass of good wine in former times.

Sir J. Why, so I do still, colonel; but a man may love his house very well, without riding on the ridge; besides, I must be with my wife on Tuesday, or there will be the devil and all to pay.

Col. Well, if you go to-day, I wish you may be wet to the skin.

Sir J. Ay; but they say the prayers of the wicked won't prevail.

SIR JOHN *takes his leave and goes away.*

Smart. Well, miss, how do you like Sir John?

Miss. Why, I think he's a little upon the silly, or so: I

believe he has not all the wit in the world: but I don't pretend to be a judge.

Never. Faith, I believe he was bred at Hog's Norton, where the pigs play upon the organs.

Spark. Why, Tom, I thought you and he were hand and glove.

Never. Faith, he shall have a clean threshold for me; I never darkened his door in my life, neither in town nor country; but he's a queer old duke, by my conscience; and yet, after all, I take him to be more knave than fool.

Lady S. Well, come; a man's a man, if he has but a nose on his face.

Col. I was once with him and some other company over a bottle, and, egad, he fell asleep, and snored so hard that we thought he was driving his hogs to market.

Never. Why, what! you can have no more of a cat than her skin; you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Spark. Well, since he's gone, the devil go with him and sixpence; and there's money and company too.

Never. Faith, he's a country put. Pray, miss, let me ask you a question.

Miss. Well; but don't ask questions with a dirty face: I warrant, what you have to say will keep cold.

Col. Come, my lord, against you are disposed: here's to all that love and honour you.

Spark. Ay, that was always Dick Nimble's health. I'm sure you know he's dead.

Col. Dead! well, my lord, you love to be a messenger of ill news: I'm heartily sorry; but, my lord, we must all die.

Never. I knew him very well: but, pray, how came he to die?

Miss. There's a question! you talk like a poticary: why, because he could live no longer.

Never. Well; rest his soul: we must live by the living, and not by the dead.

Spark. You know his house was burnt down to the ground?

Col. Yes; it was in the *News*. Why, fire and water are good servants, but they are very bad masters.

Smart. Here, take away, and set down a bottle of Burgundy. Ladies, you'll stay and drink a glass of wine before you go to your tea.

All taken away, and the wine set down, etc.

Miss gives NEVEROUT *a smart pinch.*

Never. Lord, miss, what d'ye mean? d'ye think I have no feeling?

Miss. I'm forced to pinch, for the times are hard.

Never. [*Giving miss a pinch.*] Take that, miss; what's sauce for a goose, is sauce for a gander.

Miss. [*Screaming.*] Well, Mr. Neverout, that shall neither go to heaven nor hell with you.

Never. [*Takes miss by the hand.*] Come, miss, let us lay all quarrels aside, and be friends.

Miss. Don't be so teasing; you plague a body so! can't you keep your filthy hands to yourself?

Never. Pray, miss, where did you get that picktoothcase?

Miss. I came honestly by it.

Never. I'm sure it was mine, for I lost just such a one; nay, I don't tell you a lie.

Miss. No; if you lie, it is much.

Never. Well; I'm sure 'tis mine.

Miss. What! you think everything is yours, but a little the king has.

Never. Colonel, you have seen my fine picktoothcase; don't you think this is the very same?

Col. Indeed, miss, it is very like it.

Miss. Ay; what he says, you'll swear.

Never. Well; but I'll prove it to be mine.

Miss. Ay; do, if you can.

Never. Why, what's yours is mine, and what's mine is my own.

Miss. Well, run on till you're weary; nobody holds you.

NEVEROUT *gapes.*

Col. What! Mr. Neverout, do you gape for preferment?

Never. Faith, I may gape long enough, before it falls into my mouth.

Lady S. Mr. Neverout, my lord and I intend to beat up your quarters one of these days: I hear you live high.

Never. Yes, faith, madam; I live high and lodge in a garret.

Col. But, miss, I forgot to tell you, that Mr. Neverout got the devilishest fall in the park to-day.

Miss. I hope he did not hurt the ground: but how was it, Mr. Neverout? I wish I had been there to laugh.

Never. Why, madam, it was a place where a cuckold had been buried, and one of his horns sticking out, I happened to stumble against it; that was all.

Lady S. Ladies, let us leave the gentlemen to themselves; I think it is time to go to our tea.

Lady A. and Miss. My lords and gentlemen, your most humble servant.

Smart. Well, ladies, we'll wait on you an hour hence.

The Gentlemen alone.

Smart. Come, John, bring us a fresh bottle.

Col. Ay, my lord; and pray let him carry off the dead men, as we say in the army. [*Meaning the empty bottles.*

Spark. Mr. Neverout, pray, is not that bottle full?

Never. Yes, my lord, full of emptiness.

Smart. And, d'ye hear, John, bring clean glasses.

Col. I'll keep mine; for I think wine is the best liquor to wash glasses in.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE

The Ladies at their tea.

Lady S. Well, ladies; now let us have a cup of discourse to ourselves.

Lady A. What do you think of your friend Sir John Spendall?

Lady S. Why, madam, 'tis happy for him that his father was born before him.

Miss. They say he makes a very ill husband to my lady.

Lady A. But he must be allowed to be the fondest father in the world.

Lady S. Ay, madam, that's true; for they say, the devil is kind to his own.

Miss. I am told my lady manages him to admiration.

Lady S. That I believe; for she's as cunning as a dead pig, but not half so honest.

Lady A. They say she's quite a stranger to all his gallantries.

Lady S. Not at all; but, you know, there's none so blind as they that won't see.

Miss. O, madam, I am told she watches him as a cat would watch a mouse.

Lady A. Well, if she ben't foully belied, she pays him in his own coin.

Lady S. Madam, I fancy I know your thoughts, as well as if I were within you.

Lady A. Madam, I was t'other day in company with Mrs. Clatter; I find she gives herself airs of being acquainted with your ladyship.

Miss. O the hideous creature! did you observe her nails? they were long enough to scratch her grannum out of her grave.

Lady S. Well, she and Tom Gosling were banging compliments backward and forward: it looked like two asses scrubbing one another.

Miss. Ay, claw me, and I'll claw you: but, pray, madam, who were the company?

Lady S. Why there was all the world and his wife; there was Mrs. Clatter, Lady Singular, the Countess of Talkham (I should have named her first), Tom Gosling, and some others, whom I have forgot.

Lady A. I think the countess is very sickly.

Lady S. Yes, madam; she'll never scratch a grey head, I promise her.

Miss. And pray, what was your conversation?

Lady S. Why Mrs. Clatter had all the talk to herself, and was perpetually complaining of her misfortunes.

Lady A. She brought her husband £10,000: she has a town-house and country-house: would the woman have her a— hung with points?

Lady S. She would fain be at the top of the house before the stairs are built.

Miss. Well, comparisons are odious; but she's as like her husband as if she were spit out of his mouth; as like as one egg is to another: pray, how was she dressed?

Lady S. Why, she was as fine as fi'pence but, truly, I thought there was more cost than worship.

Lady A. I don't know her husband: pray what is he?

Lady S. Why, he's a counsellor of the law; you must know he came to us as drunk as David's sow.

Miss. What kind of creature is he?

Lady S. You must know, the man and his wife are coupled like rabbits, a fat and a lean; he's as fat as a porpus, and she's one of Pharaoh's lean kine: the ladies and Tom Gosling were proposing a party at quadrille, but he refused to make one: Damn your cards, said he, they are the devil's books.

Lady A. A dull unmannerly brute! well, God send him more wit, and me more money.

Miss. Lord! madam, I would not keep such company for the world.

Lady S. O, miss, 'tis nothing when you are used to it: besides, you know for want of company, welcome trumpery.

Miss. Did your ladyship play?

Lady S. Yes, and won; so I came off with fiddler's fare, meat, drink, and money.

Lady A. Ay; what says Pluck?

Miss. Well, my elbow itches; I shall change bed-fellows.

Lady S. And my right hand itches; I shall receive money.

Lady A. And my right eye itches; I shall cry.

Lady S. Miss, I hear your friend Mrs. Giddy has discarded Dick Shuttle: pray, has she got another lover?

Miss. I hear of none.

Lady S. Why, the fellow's rich, and I think she was a fool to throw out her dirty water before she got clean.

Lady A. Miss, that's a handsome gown of yours, and finely made; very genteel.

Miss. I am glad your ladyship likes it.

Lady A. Your lover will be in raptures; it becomes you admirably.

Miss. Ay; I assure you I won't take it as I have done; if this won't fetch him, the devil fetch him, say I.

Lady S. [*To Lady A.*] Pray, madam, when did you see Sir Peter Muckworm?

Lady A. Not this fortnight; I hear he's laid up with the gout.

Lady S. What does he do for it?

Lady A. I hear he's weary of doctoring it, and now makes use of nothing but patience and flannel.

Miss. Pray, how does he and my lady agree?

Lady A. You know he loves her as the devil loves holy water.

Miss. They say she plays deep with sharpers, that cheat her of her money.

Lady A. Upon my word they must rise early that would cheat her of her money; sharp's the word with her; diamonds cut diamonds.

Miss. Well, but I was assured from a good hand, that she lost at one sitting to the tune of a hundred guineas; make money of that!

Lady S. Well, but do you hear that Mrs. Plump is brought to bed at last?

Miss. And pray what has God sent her?

Lady S. Why, guess if you can.

Miss. A boy, I suppose.

Lady S. No, you are out; guess again.

Miss. A girl, then.

Lady S. You have hit it; I believe you are a witch.

Miss. O, madam, the gentlemen say, all fine ladies are witches; but I pretend to no such thing.

Lady A. Well, she had good luck to draw Tom Plump into wedlock; she ris with her a— upwards.

Miss. Fie, madam; what do you mean?

Lady S. O, miss, 'tis nothing what we say among ourselves.

Miss. Ay, madam; but they say hedges have eyes, and walls have ears.

Lady A. Well, miss, I can't help it; you know, I'm old Telltruth; I love to call a spade a spade.

Lady S. [*Mistakes the teatongs for the spoon.*] What! I think my wits are a wool-gathering to-day.

Miss. Why, madam, there was but a right and a wrong.

Lady S. Miss, I hear that you and Lady Coupler are as great as cup and can.

Lady A. Ay, miss, as great as the devil and the Earl of Kent.[1]

Lady S. Nay, I am told you meet together with as much love as there is between the old cow and the haystack.

Miss. I own I love her very well; but there's difference between staring and stark mad.

Lady S. They say she begins to grow fat.

Miss. Fat! ay, fat as a hen in the forehead.

[1] An old English saying that obtained from the reign of Edward the Confessor, no way complimentary to Goodwin, Earl of Kent.

Lady S. Indeed, Lady Answerall (pray forgive me), I think your ladyship looks thinner than when I saw you last.

Miss. Indeed, madam, I think not; but your ladyship is one of Job's comforters.

Lady A. Well, no matter how I look; I am bought and sold: but really, miss, you are so very obliging, that I wish I were a handsome young lord for your sake.

Miss. O, madam, your love's a million.

Lady S. [*To Lady A.*] Madam, will your ladyship let me wait on you to the play to-morrow?

Lady A. Madam, it becomes me to wait on your ladyship.

Miss. What, then, I'm turned out for a wrangler?

The Gentlemen come in to the Ladies to drink tea.

Miss. Mr. Neverout, we wanted you sadly; you are always out of the way when you should be hang'd.

Never. You wanted me! pray, miss, how do you look when you lie?

Miss. Better than you when you cry. Manners, indeed! I find you mend like sour ale in summer.

Never. I beg your pardon, miss; I only meant, when you lie alone.

Miss. That's well turn'd; one turn more would have turn'd you down stairs.

Never. Come, miss, be kind for once, and order me a dish of coffee.

Miss. Pray, go yourself; let us wear out the oldest; besides I can't go, for I have a bone in my leg.

Col. They say, a woman need but look on her apron-string to find an excuse.

Never. Why, miss, you are grown so peevish, a dog would not live with you.

Miss. Mr. Neverout, I beg your diversion: no offence, I hope; but truly in a little time you intend to make the colonel as bad as yourself; and that's as bad as can be.

Never. My lord, don't you think miss improves wonderfully of late? Why, miss, if I spoil the colonel, I hope you will use him as you do me; for you know, love me, love my dog.

Col. How's that, Tom? Say that again: why, if I am a dog, shake hands, brother.

Here a great, loud, long laugh.

Smart. But pray, gentlemen, why always so severe upon poor miss? On my conscience, colonel and Tom Neverout, one of you two are both knaves.

Col. My Lady Answerall, I intend to do myself the honour of dining with your ladyship to-morrow.

Lady A. Ay, colonel, do if you can.

Miss. I'm sure you'll be glad to be welcome.

Col. Miss, I thank you; and, to reward you, I'll come and drink tea with you in the morning.

Miss. Colonel, there's two words to that bargain.

Col. [*To Lady Smart.*] Your ladyship has a very fine watch; well may you wear it.

Lady S. It is none of mine, colonel.

Col. Pray, whose is it then?

Lady S. Why, 'tis my lord's; for they say a married woman has nothing of her own but her wedding-ring and her hair-lace: but if women had been the law-makers, it would have been better.

Col. This watch seems to be quite new.

Lady S. No, sir, it has been twenty years in my lord's family; but Quare put a new case and dial-plate to it.

Never. Why, that's for all the world like the man, who swore he kept the same knife forty years, only he sometimes changed the haft, and sometimes the blade.

Smart. Well, Tom, to give the devil his due, thou art a right woman's man.

Col. Odd so! I have broke the hinge of my snuff-box; I'm undone, besides the loss.

Miss. Alack-a-day, colonel! I vow I had rather have found forty shillings.

Never. Why, colonel, all that I can say to comfort you is, that you must mend it with a new one.

Miss *laughs.*

Col. What, miss! you can't laugh, but you must show your teeth.

Miss. I'm sure you show your teeth when you can't bite: well, thus it must be, if we sell ale.

Never. Miss, you smell very sweet; I hope you don't carry perfumes?

Miss. Perfumes! No, sir; I'd have you to know, it is nothing but the grain of my skin.

Col. Tom, you have a good nose to make a poor man's sow.

Spark. So, ladies and gentlemen, methinks you are very witty upon one another: come, box it about; 'twill come to my father at last.

Col. Why, my lord, you see miss has no mercy; I wish she were married; but I doubt the grey mare would prove the better horse.

Miss. Well, God forgive you for that wish.

Spark. Never fear him, miss.

Miss. What, my lord, do you think I was born in a wood, to be afraid of an owl?

Smart. What have you to say to that, colonel?

Never. O, my lord, my friend the colonel scorns to set his wit against a child.

Miss. Scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings.

Col. Well, miss, they say a woman's tongue is the last thing about her that dies; therefore, let's kiss and be friends.

Miss. Hands off! that's meat for your master.

Spark. Faith, colonel, you are for ale and cakes: but after all, miss, you are too severe; you would not meddle with your match.

Miss. All they can say goes in at one ear and out at t'other for me, I can assure you: only I wish they would be quiet, and let me drink my tea.

Never. What! I warrant you think all is lost that goes beside your own mouth.

Miss. Pray, Mr. Neverout, hold your tongue for once, if it be possible: one would think you were a woman in man's clothes, by your prating.

Never. No, miss; it is not handsome to see one hold one's tongue: besides, I should slobber my fingers.

Col. Miss, did you never hear that three women and a goose are enough to make a market?

Miss. I'm sure, if Mr. Neverout or you were among them, it would make a fair.

FOOTMAN *comes in.*

Lady S. Here, take away the tea-table, and bring up candles.

Lady A. O, madam, no candles yet, I beseech you; don't let us burn day-light.

Never. I dare swear, miss, for her part, will never burn day-light, if she can help it.

Miss. Lord! Mr. Neverout, one cannot hear one's own ears for you.

Lady S. Indeed, madam, it is blindman's holiday; we shall soon be all of a colour.

Never. Why, then, miss, we may kiss where we like best.

Miss. Fogh! those men talk of nothing but kissing.

[*She spits.*

Never. What, miss, does it make your mouth water?

Lady S. It is as good to be in the dark as without light; therefore pray bring in candles: they say women and linen show best by candlelight: come, gentlemen, are you for a party at quadrille?

Col. I'll make one with you three ladies.

Lady A. I'll sit down, and be a stander by.

Lady S. [*To Lady A.*] Madam, does your ladyship never play?

Col. Yes; I suppose her ladyship plays sometimes for an egg at Easter.

Never. Ay; and a kiss at Christmas.

Lady A. Come, Mr. Neverout, hold your tongue, and mind your knitting.

Never. With all my heart; kiss my wife, and welcome.

The COLONEL, *Mr.* NEVEROUT, LADY SMART, *and* MISS *go to quadrille, and sit there till three in the morning.*

They rise from cards.

Lady S. Well, miss, you'll have a sad husband, you have such good luck at cards.

Never. Indeed, miss, you dealt me sad cards; if you deal so ill by your friends, what will you do with your enemies?

Lady A. I'm sure 'tis time for honest folks to be a-bed.

Miss. Indeed my eyes draw straws.

She's almost asleep.

Never. Why, miss, if you fall asleep, somebody may get a pair of gloves.

Col. I am going to the land of Nod.

Never. Faith, I'm for Bedfordshire.

Lady S. I'm sure I shall sleep without rocking.

Never. Miss, I hope you'll dream of your sweetheart.

Miss. O, no doubt of it. I believe I shan't be able to sleep for dreaming of him.

Col. [*To miss.*] Madam, shall I have the honour to escort you?

Miss. No, colonel, I thank you; my mamma has sent her chair and footmen. Well, my Lady Smart, I'll give you revenge whenever you please.

FOOTMAN *comes in.*

Footman. Madam, the chairs are waiting.

They all take their chairs and go off.

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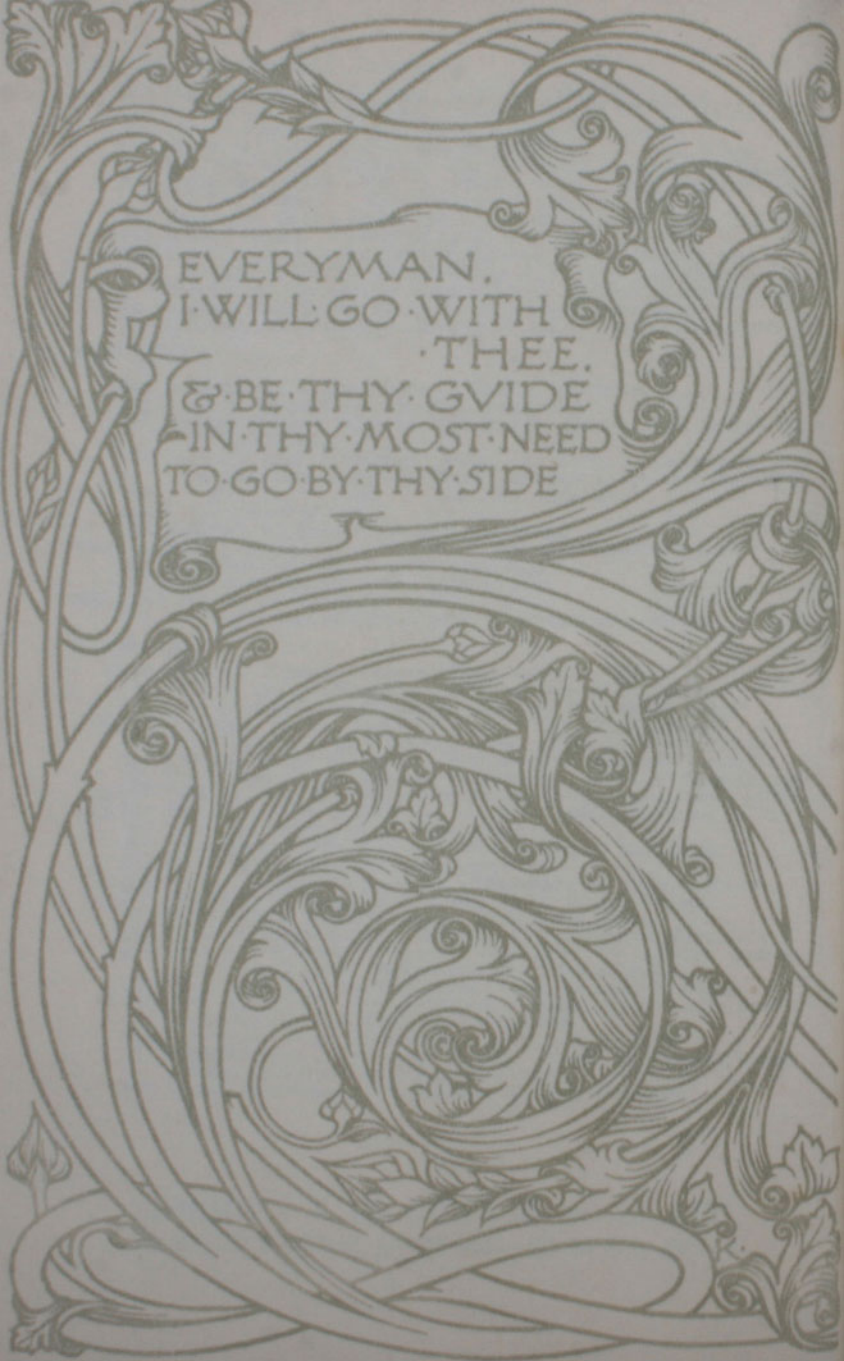
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THEE.
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE


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