

WIL. Phœbe's heart.

PHŒ. Oh, dear no—Phœbe's hand.

WIL. It's the same thing!

PHŒ. Is it?

[*Exeunt WILFRED and PHŒBE.*]

MER. (*looking after them.*) 'Tis pity, but the colonel had to be saved at any cost, and as thy folly revealed our secret, thy folly must e'en suffer for it! (*DAME CARRUTHERS comes down.*) Dame Carruthers!

DAME. So this is a plot to shield this arch-fiend, and I have detected it. A word from me, and three heads besides his would roll from their shoulders.

MER. Nay, Colonel Fairfax is reprieved. (*Aside.*) Yet if my complicity in his escape were known! Plague on the old meddler! There's nothing for it!—(*aloud*)—Hush, pretty one! Such bloodthirsty words ill-become those cherry lips! (*Aside.*) Ugh!

DAME. (*bashfully.*) Sergeant Meryll!

MER. Why look ye, chuck, for many a month I've—I've thought to myself—"There's snug love saving up in that middle-aged bosom for someone, and why not for thee—that's me—so take heart and tell her—that's thee—that thou—that's me—lovest her—thee—and—and—well, I'm a miserable old man, and I've done it—and that's me!" But not a word about Fairfax! The price of thy silence is—

DAME. Meryll's heart?

MER. No, Meryll's hand.

DAME. It's the same thing.

MER. Is it?

DUET—MERYLL and DAME CARRUTHERS.

DAME. Rapture, rapture!

When love's votary

Flushed with capture,

Seeks the notary,

Joy and jollity

Then is polity;

Reigns frivolity!

Rapture, rapture!