

WIL. But I have never given thee cause for jealousy. The Lieutenant's cook-maid and I are but the merest gossips.

PHŒ. Jealous of thee! Bah! I'm jealous of no craven cock-on-a-hill, who crows about what he'd do an' he dared. I am jealous of another and a better man than thou—set that down, Master Wilfred. And he is to marry Elsie Maynard, the little pale fool, set that down, Master Wilfred, and my heart is well nigh broken! There, thou hast it all! Make the most of it!

WIL. The man thou lovest is to marry Elsie Maynard? Why, that is no other than thy brother, Leonard Meryll!

PHŒ. (*aside*) Oh, mercy, what have I said?

WIL. Why, what manner of brother is this, thou lying little jade. Speak! Whom is this man whom thou hast called brother, and fondled, and coddled, and kissed—with my connivance, too! Oh! Lord, with my connivance! Ah! should it be this Fairfax! (PHŒBE *starts*.) It is! It is this accursed Fairfax! It's Fairfax! Fairfax, who—

PHŒBE. Whom thou hast just shot through the head, and who lies at the bottom of the river!

WIL. A—I—I may have been mistaken. We are but fallible mortals, the best of us. But I'll make sure—I'll make sure (*going*).

PHŒ. Stay—one word. I think it cannot be Fairfax—mind I say I *think*—because thou hast just slain Fairfax. But whether he be Fairfax or no Fairfax, he is to marry Elsie—and—as thou hast shot him through the head, and he is dead, be content with that, and I will be thy wife!

WIL. Is that sure?

PHŒ. Aye, sure enough, for there's no help for it? Thou art a very brute—but even brutes must marry I suppose.

WIL. My beloved! (*embraces her*.)

PHŒ. (*aside*.) Ugh!

*Enter* LEONARD, *hastily*.

LEON. Phœbe, rejoice, for I bring glad tidings. Colonel Fairfax's reprieve was signed two days since, but it was foully and maliciously kept back by Secretary Poltwhistle, who de-