

Each moment did the hurly-burly increase! Every instant a perfect whirlwind and tornado of blows were inflicted upon the crazy door, which at last took the hint by flying open,—and presently the hurrying of steps was heard coming madly up the wooden stairs, making them quake and groan, as if a regiment of heavy dragoons were exercising thereon!

What could it be?

The ensign drew his glittering sabre; I, following his example, flourished a pair of silver-steel razors; and Mr. McShuttle (who, to do a weaver justice, showed no lack of valour and manhood) darted into a little closet which was convenient to the withdrawing-room, and re-issued with the Andrea Ferrara, which her ladyship's father wore in the Forty-Five. With this he threatened to cleave the intruder, be he man or fiend, to the brisket, without benefit of clergy. As for the women-kind, they convened in a heap at the far end of the chamber, where they stood as cowed-like as a convocation of domestic fowls, when a pirate hawk is making an inspection of the hen-house!

By this time the stranger, whoever he was, had gained the door of the apartment where we were congregated, which said door had been bolted and barricaded at the first *sough* of the disturbance.

Not long were we kept in suspense! In one instant the frail pine barrier was driven in with a noise like thunder, and in rushed—Guess who, for a groat?

Nobody else but the sober, douce, punctilious, velvet-shod Benjamin Balderston, Bachelor, and Beau of Dreepdaily!

Had I not seen him with my own een, I never could have credited that such a change as he presented, could have been wrought in a human being. Even at this distance of time, it looks like a dream, or night-mare.

His eyes stood in his head like two red-hot saucers, and glared and glanced after the manner of sheet-lightning! As to his muzzle, it was in a perfect mass of angry foam, reminding one of the frontispiece of a demented colley dog! Touching his wig, it was turned backside foremost, the tail of it hanging over his brow, like an elephant's trunk seen through an inverted telescope; and his brave red coat, which had cost a mint of money,

dangled about him, torn into a thousand shreds and stripes!

To complete the picture, one of his huge buckled shoes had taken French-leave of its companion. At first sight, indeed, the loss was not very obvious, as the white silken stocking on the widowed foot had been dyed black as an Ethiopian, with the mud and filth of the street!

But the metamorphose in his outward tabernacle was as nothing, compared to the change which seemed to have come over the poor Beau's manner and demeanour.

He danced and squealed, cursed and blasphemed like a Bess of Bedlam, who had slipped her chain. No sooner had he entered the room, than he jumped upon the French polished pembroke table, amongst the Chinacups and sweetmeats, where he capered and danced without intermission, whistling the devil's hornpipe with a diabolical energy. Having reduced the crockery and *vivers* to atoms, he leaped off the table, and snapping his fingers after a most desperate fashion, commenced, without so much as saying "by your leave," to denude himself of his silk, or swallow-tail, as Yankee milk-sops call them! This feat being accomplished, he flung the commodities right in the face of Miss Priscilla Pernickety, who, overcome, partly by fear, and partly by genteel disgust, fell down in a deplorable fit of the *exies*!

During the transaction of these astounding events, Lady Sourocks had remained, as it were, in a state of stupified amazement. After a season, however, she seemed to come to herself, and rushing up to her intended, she threw her arms around his neck, and adjured him, in the name of decency, to remember what he was doing, and where he was? She might as well have whistled to the winds! The Beau, in the twinkling of an eye, clutched up the helpless over-grown lap-dog by the tail, and made it play bang on the side of her head (which utterly demolished the fruits of my labour) cursing her between hands for an old withered runt! Nor was this the *omega* of his misdeeds! He seized in his arms Mr. McShuttle's daughter—a buxom lass, not out of her teens—and kissed her till he had not left a puff of breath in either of their bodies!

This was the signal for the on-lookers to interfere in right earnest. Having procured a