

Racket, for shame, consider it is a lady you are speaking to, and your wife.

Rack. Yes, Sir, she is my wife—racks and tortures—she is my wife—I shall go mad.

Mrs. R. Why Mr. Racket, what's the matter?

Rack. The matter, Madam—why you or some of you, Madam, have sent me a shirt without buttons to the collar—not one button—do you mean to insult me, Madam? Must my time be taken up with changing shirts and buttoning collars?

Mrs. R. Is that all, Sir?

Rack. All!—Sufannah! all indeed!

Enter Sufannah.

Sufy get me a shirt, and examine if the buttons are on the collar—if you please; be quick, Sufy—all indeed. [Exit with Suf.]

Mrs. R. Oh Sir, that you should be a witness to such a scene.

Ran. Let not that distress you, Madam; we are all subject to our passions—his speaking so tenderly to Sufannah, must have been only to mortify you—for tho' she is a handsome girl, he certainly cannot be such a villain.

Mrs. R. Have you a smelling bottle, Sir?

Ran. Yes, Madam, pray lean on me.

Mrs. R. (leaning on Ran.) I die with shame.

Ran. Confide in me Madam, I have the tenderest feelings of your wrongs, was I—

Enter Col. Duncan, and Cartridge with a portmanteau.

Col. Cartridge, we have got in the wrong house!

Ran. Curse the intrusion! (both confused)

Col. I humbly beg pardon, Madam, I mistook this house for Mr. Racket's.

Car. Your honour, you are right; I am afraid Madam mistook that gentleman for her husband; tho'—

Col. What, Cartridge! yes, it is Maria—I am sorry, Madam, that I should interrupt so familiar a tete-a-tete.

Ran. Sir, by what authority?

Col. Young man, speak when you are spoken to; where's your husband, Maria?

Mrs. R. I fear, Sir, these unfortunate appearances will hurt me in your good opinion; but when you know the cause of my—

Col. Cause!—cause for leaning in the arms of such a companion! I would at least have shut the door.

Mrs. R. Sir, your ungenerous constructions rouse my resentment.

Ran. Permit me, Madam, to resent this indignity—Damn me, Sir—

Col. With all my heart, Sir; who are you? Take care, boy; I may perhaps at this time be too easily provoked to punish insolence as it deserves.

Car. (during the Colonel's speech, handles his sword.) Your honour, if there were two of them.

Enter Racket, speaking.

Rack. Heyday! what's the noise now? Oh Colonel, I am very glad to see you, Sir—(Aside) What has brought him this way?

Col. Who is this young man?

Rack. My friend, Capt. Ranter, Sir.

Col. Friend, Captain. (Contemptuously.)

Ran. Old gentleman, you shall hear from me—Come, Madam, this accident need not stop our walk.

Mrs. R. I will go with pleasure—I shall not trouble myself to explain matters any farther; come Captain.

[Exit Mrs. R. and Ran.]

Car. Captain! I thought we had some bad enough.

[Follows and exits.]

Col. Who is this friend of yours?

Rack. A British officer, Sir, who arrived the other day from Halifax;—he stays a few days to amuse himself—

Col. With your wife; very pretty and perfectly a la militaire.

Rack. Sir, my opinion of my wife's virtues, is not to be shaken by trifles.

Col. I hope she deserves it.

Rack. I do not know, Sir, what has given rise to your insinuation—but if you please to walk in and stay with us, I hope every prejudice you may have conceived will be removed.

Col. I will follow.

[Exit Racket.]

I fear I did wrong in giving my friend's daughter to this man; there is a strange alteration; I long to see her sister; when their father died, he call'd the pretty prattlers to his bed, and laying a hand on each, he looked in my face most wistfully, (Takes out his handkerchief) 'Duncan,' says he, 'these babes have lost an angel mother! I too am going; I have nought to leave them but you;—And I have lov'd them, Felton—(wipes his eyes)—If thy departed spirit views the deeds of once dear friends, surely thou art pleas'd to see, that I have dragg'd these aged limbs so many weary miles, to watch and guard their fortunes.—Yes, Felton, while this heart beats, they shall feel my protection; and when these grey hairs no longer rustle in the wind, still shall they feel and bless it.

[Exit.]

ACT II.

Enter Col. Duncan and Cartridge.

Col. WELL, Cartridge, since I have had your opinion of the rest of the family, what think you of Mr. Racket's aunt, Widow Grenade?

Car. Why, your honour, I think it's a pity she is not an officer's lady.

Col. Why so, Cartridge?