

oured, honourable, courted, and favoured, and withal a man in whom nobility of sentiment is united with graceful and elegant bearing, and a fluent command of language, she becomes in turn the wooer—but in vain. Wrapt up in his remembrance of the “gentle maid,” who had won from him the first of affection’s tributes, he sees not her beauty—her wit falls pointless upon his ear—her attention to himself he deems but a caprice of coquetry, and passes her by unharmed.

Sir Philip, meanwhile, wounded in his vanity—for though a brave and gallant soldier, he is a beau besides—pursues his suit in vain, and takes lessons in the art of wooing from Lady Anne; but, unfortunately, she learns the danger when too late of “playing governess to a pupil with a beard.” She actually falls up to the chin in love with the beau, Sir Philip, and he with her.

The parties being mated, the denouement becomes comparatively easy. The Lady Blanche pays court in masquerade to the frigid Colonel—finds out that he is in love, but cannot learn with whom. She believes, however, he has forgotten the yeoman’s maid, and gives herself up to a kind of laughing melancholy. She

Thinks much, speaks little, sighs incontinently,
 Falls off in appetite, hates company,
 Shuns pleasure, loves to pass the time alone,
 Makes of one hand a pillow for the cheek,
 One for her heart of the other—sitting thus
 For hours together * * * * *
 And if you come to tears,
 She could weep rivers, would she!—

At length, however, to ascertain her fate, she determines to try again in her character of the yeoman’s maid; she doffs the satin to resume the linsey woolsy, and appears at an unexpected moment before the eyes of the despairing lover. The result may be easily foreseen. The gallant Colonel is “struck into a maze,”—makes a speech to her, and winds it up by making a declaration, which, it would be heresy to doubt, is at once and “thankfully received.”

Sir Philip, also, has not been less successful, and the sworn champions of old maidism sink quietly into the yoke as wives.

The closing scene, as a lesson for such as may feel inclined to try the game in which these ladies fair were foiled, we have quoted here. It is a conversation that occurs between the ladies after they have determined to forswear “old maidism,” and become loving dames:—

LADY BLANCHE.

A man is something after all!

LADY ANNE.

Yes, with our help—I made one of Sir Philip.

LADY BLANCHE.

Nay, Anne, my eyes are opened. We require Men’s help as well—except for Colonel Blount I ne’er had been a woman. Much I question If you yourself are past improving by them.

LADY ANNE.

Oh, Blanche!

LADY BLANCHE.

Oh, Anne! the older, still the wiser,
 And won’t I titter when you say “obey”
 Before the parson! Will you say it?

LADY ANNE.

Yes.

LADY BLANCHE.

And “love” and “honour” too?

LADY ANNE.

I will!—won’t you?

LADY BLANCHE.

Devotedly, Anne, as e’er I said my prayers.
 But, Anne, the pass we’re come to! Don’t you
 know?
 How shall we answer to old maids for this?

LADY ANNE.

Lay heads together, and concoct a speech.
 Proceed you.

LADY BLANCHE.

Nay, I never opened school,
 On which account take you precedence, Anne!
 I’ll help you to the first word—“Ladies!”—well?

LADY ANNE (TO BLANCHE)

Ladies—I’ll lay the fault upon the men.

LADY BLANCHE (ASIDE)

They lay the fault first who are most to blame.

LADY ANNE.

But for the men, we had been still old maids.
 Accept of our regrets.

LADY BLANCHE.

Nay, Anne, tell truth—
 We don’t regret at all! Let me go on,
 I’ll make a grace of our defection, Anne—
 Ladies, applaud us martyrs in the cause,
 For which, contending with more zeal than heed,
 We were ta’en captive by the common foe.
 Profit by our example, don’t despise
 An enemy, though slight, and if you fail
 As we have done, endure it with good grace.
 Believe you put on wreaths in wedlock’s chains,
 And turn with loving faith the links to flowers,
 Of which the poorest beggars liberty.