

MATERNAL INGENUITY,

OR, TRYING TO HOOK A BACHELOR.

"Don't you think my daughter Zephyrina is a very fine figure?" said Mrs. Long, the other evening to Mr. Short, as she was sitting beside him on the sofa, and Zephyrina was playing on the harp. Mrs. Long had several daughters to dispose of, and Mr. Short was a bachelor well to do in the world. His temper was a little crabbed, and his wit a little sarcastic: but Mrs. Long had daughters to marry, the oldest of whom, Zephyrina, was none of the youngest. Her precise age we do not know, and if we did, it would not be polite to mention it.

"Don't you think my daughter Zephyrina is a very fine figure?" said Mrs. Long with a glance of maternal satisfaction.

"Umph!" muttered Mr. Short, as he tapped his snuff box for the third time, "very much like a figure 5, I think!"

"A figure 5!" said Mrs. Long, a little mortified, though she knew the disposition of Mr. Short. "A figure 5, do you say, Mr. Short? Oh, now you must be thinking of your interest table. Compare my daughter Zephyrina to a figure 5! Fie, fie on you, Mr. Short; you'll never get married as long as you live."

"If I don't it will be no fault of yours, Mrs. Long," said Mr. Short, as he threw a long pinch of snuff up his nose.

"True, true," said Mrs. Long, with a look of great kindness, "I take an interest in the welfare of my neighbours, and like to see all the single gentlemen provided for. Don't you think Zephyrina plays the harp and sings with a great deal or taste?"

"I think her execution is uncommon."

"I am glad you approve it, Mr. Short."

"I did not say I approved it, Mrs. Long; I merely said 'twas uncommon—very much like the noise of two cats in a gutter."

"You shocking man! Mr. Short—you've no taste, no feeling."

"But I can hear very sensibly, Mrs. Long," putting his fingers in his ears.

"You've no music in your soul, as Handmill says."

"That cursed noise has driven it all out."

"Indeed, Zephyrina's voice is not exactly in tune to night; but I think she plays and sings remarkably well, for one of her age, don't you Mr. Short?"

"Umph! ay—for that matter, she is indeed rather old to learn."

"Old! Mr. Short?"

"Ay, madam, you know they learn these things much better in their younger days."

"How old do you take my daughter Zephyrina to be, Mr. Short?"

"Lord! ma'am, how should I know? I was not at the christening. But she's no ebicken."

"As true as I'm alive, Mr. Short, she is only nine—"

"And twenty, Mrs. Long? Well, I'm not a judge of these matters, but I should say—"

"She looks ten years older than she really is. She has a very womanly look for one of her age—don't you think she has, Mr. Short?"

"Umph! I think she has some resemblance to a woman."

"She was as forward at fifteen, though I say it, as most girls are at twenty-five."

"I hate your forward chits."

"But you don't understand me, Mr. Short I mean she was as forward in womanly accomplishments, and in a womanly appearance."

"Oh, as to the appearance, I could swear she had been a woman these dozen years."

Dancing was now proposed, and as Mr. Short protested against shaking the foot, even though Zephyrina was ready to be his partner, Mrs. Long still entertained him with the accomplishments of her daughter.

"Don't you admire Zephyrina's dancing?"

"I can't say that I am a judge of those small matters, Mrs. Long."

"You're too modest, Mr. Short."

"It's a rare fault, Mrs. Long."

"Observe with what grace she moves; I really think she dances remarkably, for one of her age, don't you think so, Mr. Short?"

"Umph! I think she dances much better than the elephant. In fact, the elephant is a very clumsy dancer."

"Fie, fie on you! Mr. Short, to compare my daughter Zephyrina to a four legged beastess."

"Why, that's not her fault, you know ma'am."

"Whose fault?"

"Why, your daughter's that she was not made a beastess too, as you call the elephant."

"I hope no insinuations, Mr. Short?"

"Oh Lord! no ma'am, I hav'nt an insinuating turn."

"Don't you think Zephyrina is just about the right height?"

"I think she's rather Long."

"Do you indeed Mr. Short? I hope you don't think it an objection."

"Objection! Oh by no means—she may be Long—ay, as long as she pleases—I've no objection."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, Mr. Short, Zephyrina is certainly rather tall of her age."

"I hate a beanpole."

"How your mind is always wandering from the point, Mr. Short. If I talk of music, you talk of cats in the gutter; if I speak of a lady's dancing you talk of the movements of an elephant: if I speak of a tall young woman you immediately fly to a beanpole."

"That is my misfortune, Mrs. Long."

"Well, well, every body must have their little peculiarities. Did I ever show you my daughter Zephyrina's drawings?"

"Of beer, or cider?"

"What are you thinking of, Mr. Short?"

"Why, I Don't pretend to know, I'm sure, ma'am."

"I spoke about Zephyrina's drawing and you talk about beer and cider, I mean her drawings of birds and flowers, Mr. Short."

"Oh—ay—yes—I understand you."

"Just step to this table, Mr. Short, and we can examine them to more advantage. There! what do you think of that, Mr. Short?"

"That's a beautiful crow."

"A crow! Mr. Short—ha! ha! ha! a crow! Why, what in the world can you be thinking of? That's a robin red-breast."

"Well, I dare say it is, now you mention it Mrs. Long—but I really took it to be a crow. The truth is, these things should always have the name written underneath."

"So I told Zephyrina—but la! she said they'd speak for themselves."

"Caw! Caw! I beg your pardon, ma'am that's the note of a crow, and now I recollect you said this was a robin red-breast."

"This was one of Zephyrina's first attempts: the next is more perfect. Look at this, Mr. Short," turning over a leaf.

"What a pretty looking goslin!"

"Oh murder! Mr. Short—I thought you was a man of more taste."

"I admire a young goose, well stuffed and roasted."

"I mean in drawing."

"Did you ever see me drawing a cork, Mrs. Long?"

"Nononsense! Now you've got from beer and cider to corks. A gosling indeed! Why, this is a goldfinch, Mr. Short."

"I'm very glad you informed me Mrs. Long, for really my taste in painted birds is so small, that I took that to be a gosling. Ah, what's here? A codfish, as I'm alive, and a charming one it is."

"Oh, Mr. Short, Mr. Short, how can you be so stupid? That's a butterfly."

"Is that a butterfly! Mrs. Long! do you say, upon your honor, that codfish is a butterfly."

"Fie! fie! Mr. Short; I've as good a mind, as ever I had to eat, not to show you another living thing. You've no taste in ornithology. Perhaps you'll like the flowers better. Is not that beautiful?"

"What that cabbage? I never could abide a cabbage."

"Cabbage! Oh shocking! call that rose a cabbage."

"Is that a rose?"

"Indeed it is a damask rose. Look at this, Mr. Short."

"What, that mullein? Well, that is pretty I must confess—it's as natural as life."

"That's a carnation, Mr. Short."

"Oh! a carnation, is it? well I dare say you're right—yes, it must be a carnation, now I think of it."

"Don't you think on the whole, Mr. Short, that Zephyrina draws surprisingly for one of her age?"

"I must confess I never saw the like."

"I'm charmed to hear you say so, Mr. Short—the approbation of a man of taste is highly gratifying."

"I've very little taste in these things, as I said before."