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THE
FEMALE CONSISTORY

OF

BROCKVILLE:

A MELO-DRAMA IN THREE ACTS,

BY

CAROLI CANDIDUS, ESQ.,

A Citizen of Canada.

BROCKVILLE :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.
1856.

F 47



MEMORANDUM

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DEDICATION.

To the Ladies of Brockville.

My Dear Ladies,—

To you who are so distinguished in the Province as patrons of the Drama, of Preaching, and of Horticulture,—I dedicate this little work.

Your judgment of it will at once seal its condemnation, or open to it the door of popular favor. In either case, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I am judged by discerning and impartial judges. None know better than you whether it be true to nature. None know better whether it be true in fact. None know better whether the portraits are drawn from life. None know better whether they are daubs or photographs.

Therefore, with implicit confidence in your usual good taste, fine feelings, and liberal sympathies, I commit it to your patronizing care.

And that you may never lose your partonizing celebrity of waxflowers, preachers, and playactors, is the fervent hope of

Your very humble Servant,

CAROLI CANDIDUS.

GLENTATTLE, *February*, 1856.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

- SIR GEORGE MULISH, { *Of Half-House Hall, Baron of
the Court of Contra, and
Chief Kinbo of the Squatters'
Sessions.*
- OLD MULISH.....*Father of the Baron.*
- SQUIRE WATERSON,
THE BEADLE,
LADY MULISH*Wife of the Baron.*
- LADY DOWAGER MOORESS.
MADAME WATERSON.
MADAME NOHEART.
- MISS PRIM PROBOSCIS..... { *A member of the Baron's
family.*
- ANN LIMPER.....*The Baron's Protegc.*
- SALLY RUBKNOCKER.....*Nursery Maid.*
- MARGORY CRUCKLEBUCK.....*Maid-of-all-Work.*

ACT I.

"L' ENVOYÉ."

"O, ye women! which be inclined
By influence of your nature,
To be as pure as gold yfined,
And in your truth for to endure,
Armeth yourselves in strong armure,
(Lest men assail your sickness),
Set on your breast, yourself to assure,
A mighty shield of doubleness."

—CHACER.

SCENE I.—*Parlour in Half-House Hall.*

Enter OLD FATHER MULISH *and* LADY MULISH.

Old Mulish. I wonder what wud St. Paul say about this female government in the Kirk?

Lady Mulish. St. Paul does not favour the ladies, Mr. Mulish. But, you must know, a great many things have been discovered since St. Paul's time.

Old Mul. O yes, I ken that: the Bloomer costume has been discovered since his time, and twa—three mair sic-like things.

Lady Mul. Yes, Mr. Mulish; and equality is better understood now than in his days.

Old Mul. Na, feint a bit o' that—for he tells us there's

nae difference between Jew and Gentile—bond and free, —but a' nations are made of one blood.

Lady Mul. You mistake my meaning, Mr. Mulish ; I mean equality of the sexes.

Old Mul. Superiority, I rather think ye mean, my Leddy.

Lady Mul. Superiority, sir, if you will. The Rights of Woman are now beginning to be better understood, and to bring to light her long-buried capabilities. It has lately been discovered that woman is the equal of man: equal in counsel—equal in debate—equal in judgment—equal in eloquence—equal in courage—equal in every quality, but that of brute force,—a poor superiority, enjoyed by them in common with the beasts of burden.

Old Mul. Na, but ye'd better let the men bear the burden o' the bairns tae.

Lady Mul. That, Sir, is one of woman's inalienable rights—had it not been so, man (the selfish creature) would, I believe, have appropriated it long ere now.

Old Mul. That certainly wud be an awfu' greedy stretch of the selfish propensity. That wud be what phrenologists wud ca' a striking illustration of the philogenitive faculty. But, what have women to do with Church affairs ?

Lady Mul. Women are of the same weight as men in the Church : indeed, they are its moving spirits.

Old Mul. I grant ye they're the *moving spirits*, for, were it no' for them and their movements, especially their tongue movements, all would stand still in peace and quietness. But, what wud John Knox say to this female dominancy in the kirk ? You that's a staunch Presbyterian, can ye tell me that ?

Lady Mul. John Knox was a boor, and knew nothing of the delicacy and deference due to the female character.

Old Mul. He agreed with you in one respect: he tho'ht them moving spirits; but he wished to blaw them awa'. Ye've heard o' his *Three blasts o' the trumpet against the horrible regimen of women?*

Lady Mul. Mr. Mulish drop this subject, or you and I shall quarrel.

Old Mul. Na, but if ye mean to rule the Kirk, ye maun listen to reason. Ye ken this is the age o' moral suasion—nae physical force noo-a-days:—this is anither thing that has been discovered sin' Paul's time.

Enter Lady Dowager Mooress.

Lady Mul. I wish you men had only the nineteenth part of the reason that belongs to us women—in church affairs—and all would go as it ought.

Lady Dowager Mooress. Yes tell him that—I wonder how you can support a man that kicks his wife, Mr. Mulish.

Old Mul. Did you ever see him kick his wife?

Lady D. Moor. No—o,—a—hem!

Old Mul. How do you know it then?

Lady D. Moor. No I never saw him, but a—hem!—hem!

Old Mul. How do you undertake to say it then?

Lady D. Moor. I asked him one day if he approved of men beating their wives? and he laughed like a hyena, and said, O yes, a beating sometimes drives the dust out of things.

Old Mul. And do you call that proof?

Lady D. Moor. I would never ask another proof.

Lady Mul. Where is your reason now Mr. Mulish?

Old Mul. Weel that's certainly reasonable. But I think the man must have been laughing in his sleeve when he tauld ye sic a story.

Lady D. Moor. Laughing! yes, and that was the strongest confirmation of the proof—What would you ask, for proof, if that be not proof?—reason! indeed.

Old Mul. O that's reasonable—very reasonable—a little siller gangs far when it's weel guided. 'Tak' care o' your proof—hoard it up weel—and it will gather. You'll soon get plenty o' that kind o' proof. There is na doubt a snaw ha' will grow big if ye keep rowin' it.

Lady Mul. We are determined to roll the ball, Mr. Mulish, till the snow melts.

Old Mul. O very weel; but tak' care that ye dinna row yersels in tilt—for then ye'll may be carried awa' wi' the flood—like the antedeluvians.—Hah! ha! ha! hch! he! [*Exit shaking with laughter.*]

Lady D. Moor. We must prepare and set the wheel in in order to spin the thread, to weave the web of this unruly fellow's downfall. He'll not be ruled by us, then we must teach him who are masters here. Besides, I owe him a bitter grudge for reflecting on my domestic management. He scruples not to say that these step-children of mine are not properly brought up.

Lady Mul. Intolerable audacity: it must not go unpun-

ished.—And do you know the girl I hired and sent to the house, he has turned her off, alleging she's a thief.

Lady D. Moor. What, Jane ?

Lady Mul. Yes, Jane.

Lady D. Moor. Our espionage is then foiled ?

Lady Mul. For the present at least. But we must just be all the more reserved and wary ;—Jane was dear to me for her sister's sake—they had served me faithfully for years ;—and dear to Madame Waterson for her mother's sake—she had been nurse to Madame Waterson in her pleurisy ;—and dear to the sovereign for her father's sake—he is the sovereign's chief body servant. But we will be avenged. I've sworn we will be avenged.

Lady D. Moor. But how, my Lady, how !

Lady Mul. Go you—he'll not suspect you—and hire two servants for his house ; discharge the old ones ; and keep the new in your own hand—you comprehend ? From them know every thing that passes in the house ; and then you'll see what a train of consequences will ensue.

Lady D. Moor. But how can I accomplish this ?

Lady Mul. Nothing more simple. Make up a case with Madame Noheart, that the present servants must be all dismissed—that their insolence to Madame Noheart cannot be longer borne. Tell him it is the talk of all the town, and as he values the honor of the Church to discharge them without one day's delay. Go and be bold, firm and persevering, and you'll see how it will work.

Lady D. Moor. Suppose I threaten to leave the Church ?

Lady Mul. Good! excellent!

Lady D. Moor. And say that you will too.

Lady Mul. You may—if Sir George does not get word of it. Be cautious!

Lady D. Moor. We'll teach him.

Lady Mul. We will.

He'll find our deep intrigues possess a force
Denied to bone and muscle—man and horse.

Exeunt.

Scene 2nd. The Tea-table of Half-house-hall.

Enter SIR GEORGE MULISH and LADY MULISH.

Sir George Mulish. I say, all past experience proves it true. Women have been at the bottom of all mischief since the world began. In the days of the great Comble did not your intrigues all but upset the Kirk?

Lady Mul. You do speak unadvisedly with your lips, But for my peculiar tact and management, the whole fabric even then had tumbled down. Comble was my near kinsman whom I loved, and for whose sake I could have gone through fire and water. And you know Sir George, my father, brother, grandsire, and many more of my collaterals held office in the Kirk; and therefore it is that I do deem it a sacred duty—a hereditary right—to guide and direct its office-bearers, and to see that they do fulfil their public duties, and order their houses with discretion—and moreover, Sir George, you know 'twas I that made you an office-bearer in the Kirk: but for me and

my influence, you had still been in the pews of black Prelacy.

Sir George Mul. (sheepishly) That, doubtless, is true. But why should you busy yourself with what is altogether beyond the prerogative of woman?

Lady Mul. The prerogative of woman! The prerogative of women in Ecclesiastical matters is like the rights of kings—it is a right *divine*.

Sir George Mul. Tut! tut!—talk to old maids and shrews about the rights of women. The rights of women are to get wed as speedily and as comfortably as they can.

Enter LADY DOWAGER MOORESS, MADAME WATERTON,
MADAME NOHEART, *and* OTHERS.

Lady Mul. O ty! Sir George. But hush! here come the other members of the Consistory to consult. Good evening ladies: just come in the nick of time. Sir George and I have been consulting on the Kirk affairs.

Lady D. Moor. You find, I hope, a ground of process?

Sir George Mul. (shaking his head). No grounds of process, a man may chastise his wife—if he does it in reason.

All voices at once cry out. O! Sir George, Sir George!

Sir George Mul. But I tell you he may. A man's wife is a member of his family. He may whip any member of his family who revolts, or disobeys his lawful commands,—provided he always does it in reason,—that is, breaks no bones and leaves no scars..

Lady D. Moor. But, Sir George, is this the law ?

Sir George Mul. It is the statue law,—and, I fear, the Common law too.

Madame Waterson. This is dreadful !

Lady D. Moor. Dreadful !

Lady Mul. Most dreadful !—what shall we do ?

Lady D. Moor. We must not give it up.—Let me see —(to *Sir George*.) Sir George, pray tell me this. Have not Kings been suspended in their regal functions for insanity ? and why should not ministers ? Call in the lawyer and the docter, you'll find they both pronounce him mad.

Madame Waterson. Mad as a March hare !

Sir George Mull (gravely). That is certainly, a ground of suspension. I'll fetch the statutes relative to the case of George the Third. (*Here Sir George fetches down from his library shelves an armful of musty folios. Reads, half looking on, half off.*) The first precedent touching insanity—that is regal insanity—as affording grounds for the suspension of George III, is that recorded in act 9th, cap. 12, sec. 3, 1217. This act is dubious, and admits of five constructions: 1st, there is the downright *non-compos mentis*, that is the total abnegation of those functions which a sound mind ought, or should, or is expected to have.—2nd, There is the *aberratio mentis*; that is the mind in the wandering state,—or occasional erratic tendencies a condition pertaining less or more to most men. 3rd, There is the *Lycanthrophy*: this is properly speaking the wolf or dog madness, sometimes called the *rabies*; or species of *hydrophobia* peculiar to the genus *homo* of the species *snapatem*

Then again, 4thly, you have the *distractio-mentis*—that is the mind torn from itself,—driven about, drifted from its moorings—a species of lunacy derived from *Luna*, the moon.

Mudame Noheart (interrupting). That's it, Sir George, that's it. It all goes by the moon, the disease all goes by the moon,—it returns, ey, at the full o' the moon!

Sir George Mul. (snappishly). Hold your tongue, woman, hold your tongue, until I give the construction of the statute—and, 5thly and finally, There is the madness *furiosa*,—that is fierceness of madness, or *furor*,—or madness of anger or rage—which last appears to me to be the madness of the minister. But there are other cases in point, viz.: that which occurs in 1326 and 1377, and of 1422 and 1455; and, lastly, that of 1788, all of which, you will perceive, have affinity to the case in point, and must be—

Lady Mul. Have done, pray have done, Sir George, with your critical niceties and legal constructions.

Sir George Mul. Have done, woman! How can you form a legitimate judgment of the case, unless you have recourse to all the precedents, and carefully collate the law pou the subject?

Lady Mul. Oh! You must know, Sir George, that we, women, love to come to our end by shorter means. We have resolved to hang the man—or, as Ecclesiastics say, suspend him. Find us the shortest way to come to that?

Sir George Mul. The shortest way is certainly a rope—three yards and a half of rope. But look you here, unless the thing be done legally and formally, and gravely and

deliberately, and according to the statute, I shall have no finger in it (*Putting up his folios*). No Lynching for me.

Lady D. Moor. The rope, I vote for the rope. I shall subscribe a quarter, to procure the rope.

Lady Mul. It will make him kick tremendous. He has kicked some of us too much already, — (*casting a knowing look at Madame Noheart,*)—and then, too, what horrid names he'll call: were it not better to tie up his tongue?

Madame Noheart. Oh aye, that's the cure. I ken how to cure hams and tongues, and tie them, jeest like the folk in Glesska.

Madame Waterson. Should not his feet be tied, too?

Lady D Moor. I vote for the rope, tongue tying, feet tying,—all the three. We must catch him and corner him up. Mind what I tell you,—We'll never be secured from his madness till he be suspended, tongue cured, and foot bound. It is not woman's way to do these things by halves.

Madame Waterson. But wont we shave his head first? 'Twould look humane. And you know we must not forget our sex, or what would people say?

Lady Mul. You Madame Waterson counsel wisely, and like a female Solomon; we must not overlook the tenderness which to our sex pertains, or we shall play a losing game. I, therefore, would recommend only the tongue tying and head shaving.

Madame Waterson. Oh! the feet, the feet, Lady Mu-

lish,—the feet, too, must be bound over to keep the peace.

Lady Mul. What is Madame Noheart's opinion of the feet? She is the most competent to speak upon that point.

Madame Noheart. O'd! I could like the feet bro'ht in, it would heighten the effec' upon the public mind.—Everybody would shudder, and shake their heads, and cry—"He maun be an awfu' man"!

Lady D. Moor. Feet and tongue, neck, head, and hands must all be fixed. Let all be put in one rope, even as Nero wished the Romans were. Mind, I tell you nothing else will do. Take my advice, *I know how to corner him up.*

Lady Mul. But, my dear Lady Mooress, we must look to the effect upon the public mind. If we allow our *tender feelings* to outravel that, we go too fast.—Although we sacrifice this victim we must not loose our hold on the affections of the people; we must cherish and maintain the Kirk; we must hold fast our power and patronage. All must seem to the good simple people to be done for the honour of the Kirk.

Sir George Mul. Yes, you'll make a fine Kirk and a mull of it.

Lady Mul. We intend no less, sir, than to turn this Kirk into a mill, wherein this shaven Samson may grind for our amusement.

Sir George Mul. O, then, you'd better put out his eyes at once.

Lady Mul. We'll leave that to others; our business is

first to *shave* him. But who will be the barber? You can *shave*, Sir George.

Sir George Mul. I have often *shaved*. But I always did it on my own account, and not for others.

Madame Noheart. I have jest been thinking that we maun bring in the childer tae. If we could only make him appear cruel to them, it would have a great effect in this country. For without illusage of them, folk will wonder for what he maltreated me. They'll be apt to think there's something awfu' bad about me, when he was so kind to everybody else.

Lady Mul. Very shrewdly bethought, dear Madame Noheart,—We'll try to place the children on the front of our attack. But, Ladies, we must decide. What shall it be?

Lady D. Moor. The rope.

Madame Noheart. Let the tongue be cured, and the feet fettered first.

Madame Waterson. And the head shaved.

Madame Noheart. An' the bairns—O min' to bring in the bairns.

Several voices,—

All, all,—the head and feet, neck, tongue, and hands,
For he has dared dispute our dread commands.

*The curtain descends, amidst a confused
chorus of voices.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Consistory discovered in Session*—LADY MULISH *in the Chair.*

Lady D. Mooress. Ladies! I hold in my hand the draft of a petition to the venerable Delectables, which, with your permission, I shall read.

Lady Mulish. Proceed.

Lady D. Mooress. The Prayer of the Petition is to bring our rebellious subject before the Court of Capables, to answer for his revolt against our time-honoured jurisdiction.

Mid. Waterson. Precisely what we desire.

Mal. Noheart. But a' for the guid cause.

Several voices. That's it!

Mid. Waterson. Let us hear.

Lady Mulish. Go on.

Lady D. Moor. (*reads*)—

Unto the true Delectables,
The sneaks of snob respectables,
And members of the Club of Bathurst,
Who at our shepherds many a thrust
Have deftly dealt in days gone by,
When gossips raised the hue and cry.
'Tis still with gratitude remembered

That you this church well-nigh dismembered,
 Upon a former great occasion,
 Incited by our soft persuasion ;
 When Shepherd Hogg was nicely mangled,
 We only wish he had been strangled.
 But now we want our Shepherd Light
 Hanged up at once, and choked outright,
 He's grown so haughty and unruly.
 He raves and rages like a bully,
 Or like a Bedlamite in bed,
 Who's got a crack across his head.
 Our yoke, he says, he'll not submit to ;
 Against us flashes out his wit, too.
 Yea, he proposes to preach down
 The gossip of dear Darlington,—*
 Denies that wisdom lies in talking,
 (For which, we hope, you'll send him walking,)
 Denounces idleness and prattle,
 Condemns the most delightful tattle ;
 And says such things as can't be told,
 Which make our very blood run cold.
 Moreover, on inquiry, you'll find,
 That is, if so you have a mind,
 He uses many antic tricks,
 With parasols, and cups, and kicks,
 Within his house, both day and night,
 And puts the inmates in a fright.
 These charges all we'll prove to you,
 By servants, *honest, faithful, true* :
 And therefore, that you may amend him,

* We are at a loss to know whether this should be Darlington, or Snarlington. Antiquaries say the latter.—*Printer.*

Be pleased directly to suspend him.
 This is our motto and our prayer—
Corner him up, and do not spare!
 And, with the dames of the Consistory,
 You'll have a place in coming history.

Lady Mulish. It appears to me, Lady Mooress, that the subject is much too grave to be treated of in so light a style. Now, although we dearly love to laugh at the Incapables—I mean the Capables—in secret, yet we must sink every other feeling and passion, to compass and secure his overthrow, who has so openly defied our dear authority.

Mad. Noheart. 'Od, I would think they would be a' the better pleased wi' that; it sounds nice—it jingles fine to my lug.

Lady M. l. You mean your ear, Madame Noheart.

Mad. Noheart. Ear or lug,—it's a' the same. You'll find them baith between the twa brods o' your dictionary.

Mad. Waterson. Madame Noheart is quite right. And, though I, too, like the arrangement in the draft, we cannot run the risk of letting our prey escape us. I, therefore, must support the *char*.

Lady D. Mor. I must say, I did calculate, that they would treat our petition with more consideration and respect, expressed in measured language, than in common prose; and I could perceive no other way in which we could so well introduce that emphatical expression—“*corner him up*”—which, in my opinion, is the point in which the whole pith of the prosecution will lie.

Lady Mul. I grant you, Lady Moress, that "corner him up" is a most forcible expression,—a most womanly expression,—nay, altogether a lady-like expression,—moreover, a most telling phrase,—it tells us how the wind blows,—yea, also, it distinctly demonstrates the direction and strength of your mental energy in the good cause. But our object now is not so much to show our parts and rhetoric, as to enforce our authority and power, as an ecclesiastical Consistory. Nay, our strength lies in our weakness—in seeming as simple as St. Salvador's aborigines, and as demure as saints. Sink all considerations, say I, to crush the wretch who will not bow to our direction, and who dares refuse to put the keys of the Kirk into our hands.

Lady D. Moor. I do entirely concur in what you say; but still it's my opinion that this is the best form of petition that can be drawn. I shall, therefore, put it to the vote.

Lady Mul. Very good, my lady, I shall put it. (*Takes the vote.*) The motion is *for* the draft,—the amendment *against*. What say you, Madame Waterson?

Mad. Waterson. Against the draft.

Lady Mul. Madame Noheart?

Mad. Noheart. Can I vote baith for and against?

Lady Mul. O no, you must vote for either the one or the other.

Mad. Noheart. That's queer, na; for I would like to vote for them baith.

Lady Mul. Explain yourself, Madame Noheart; tell us what you mean.

Mad. Noheart. I would like to vote baith for his motion and amendment. Ye see, though they move him, if they dinna amend him, it'll a' come to naething.

Lady Mul. (in a great puzzle.) I surely do not hear very well!

Mad. Waterson. O yes, I see it quite well. Madame Noheart is right again. She wishes a motion that may move him out of his propriety, and mend matters so far as to make her a person of consequence, at his expense. Is not that it, Madame Noheart?

Mad. Noheart. Something o' that sort, I suppose.

Lady Mul. But, dear Madame Noheart, you must enable us to facilitate business, by favouring us with your vote, at present, merely—For or Against.

Mad. Noheart. O then, I say *for* the draft.

Lady Mul. Miss Prim Proboscis, what say you?

Miss Prim Proboscis. Against!

Lady Mul. Lady Dowager Mooress?

Lady D. Moor. For!

Lady Mul. The votes are equal. I give my casting vote against.

Lady D. Moor. What now is to be done?

Lady Mul. I see no other way than to get Sir George to file an information for us to the Court of Capables, against the culprit.

Omnes. Agreed! agreed!

Lady D. Moor. But will Sir George be brought to this?

Mrs. Waterson. Leave him to her! (pointing to the chair.)

Lady Mul.—

I think I know where both his strength and weakness lie ;
If I don't manage him, I'll know the reason why ;
I've taught some Madams how to rule their lords before,
Think not that I shall fail in mine own especial lore !

The curtain drops, 'mid a great flourish of white handkerchiefs.

— o —

SCENE II.—*A public road.*

Enter OLD MULISH (solus).

Old Mul. Heigh, Sirs! things are turning serious noo. I doubt I'll need to look for ither lodgings. I'm ordered to leave the house, if I say anither guid word for the minister. All must be snubbed and snuffed out, and treated like dogs, that dare stand up for justice and fair play. They withdraw their nod frae this ane, and their custom frae that ane, and turn up their nose at every ane that dares enter the church door. And now they are plotting and counter-plotting, and training little servant-girls for the witness-box. They make them go through their parts just as if they were so many play-actors. Every ane has her story by note, just as the bairns got up their catechism in my young days. They get it up just as its put in their mouth, like spoon-meat. If ye tak' them aff their track, they're completely bewildered and bamboozled. Preserve me! Some folk wud cut aff their nose to spite their face. They're gaun a fine length,

and a' for the sake o' a woman without heart, without head, without hands,—discontented in her ain house, slandering in her neighbour's house, faithless to her husband, false to her children, deceitful to everybody—a walking epitome of imposture, as ignorant as a Hottentot, as forward as a dragoon, as vain as a peacock, as fierce as a pole-cat, and with a tongue like the tails o' Samson's foxes. But whare will a' this end? I doubt—

Enter PEDESTRIAN, behind.

Pedestrian or Beadle. What do you doubt.

Old Mul. I doubt—you're no' the man I took ye for.

Beadle. What do you mean?

Old Mul. I mean jeest what I said.

Beadle. Who did you take me for?

Old Mul. I took ye for auld Nick.

Beadle. And you were gladly disappointed, I guess?

Old Mul. Not greatly,—I took you for your faither—that's a'.

Beadle. Good day, Mr. Mulish.

[Exit.

Old Mul. Good day, good day. There goes a fine skinfu' o' bones. That's the Beadle o' the Consistory—the eves dropping impertinence. Had he lived in the days o' the Pillory, he would have got his lang ears cropped, and his brazen nose slit, the impertinent loon! I hae nae charity for sic twirl thooms. To curry favour wi' the women o' the Consistory he'll insult and persecute the minister. I heard that he had been busy in their ser



vice already, cajoling witnesses, and trying to entice unprincipled servant-girls to swear that white's black.

But I must travel on, or I'll be late ;
This thinking makes me travel like a coach in state.
Exit.

— o —

SCENE III. *Parlour in Half-house Hall.*

LADY MULISH *discovered.* Enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir George Mulish. The minister threatens to bring you before the session.

Lady Mul. Me before the session ?

Sir George Mul. Yes, you and Lady Mooress.

Lady Mul. By all the blood of all the Stewarts, if he attempt such a thing, it will be the last session he will ever hold. Him, he ! what is he ? who brought him here ? — what did we bring him here for ? — was he not appointed to the place by our patronage ? — does he not hold it by our sufferance ? — could not a word of mine blast him, here, elsewhere, and forever ? And, pray, what am I to be brought before the session for ?

Sir George Mul. For slander and schism.

Lady Mul. As for the slander, I shall cause the tongues of others so to blacken him, that my slander shall seem but as the shading to their colouring ; and as to the schism, there shall be none : — the church, and every member in it, shall follow me, nor shall there be three left to acknowledge his authority. This shall be accom-

plished, if there is invention in my head, or blood in my body, or life in my heart !

Sir George Mul. Be calm, my Lady, be calm. Remember that, meantime, he is the head of the session.

Lady Mul. Head ! head ! head ! Him head ? I would his head were in a sack, and rolling down the St. Lawrence, where his wife's mutilated rich satin dress was cast.

Sir George Mul. But how do you know the satin dress was cast there ?

Lady Mul. I know it was—I'm sure it was—I am positive it was—'Tis said it was.

Sir George Mul. But did you see that it was ?

Lady Mul. See—I see—How could I see, when it was done in midnight darkness ? I have not got cat's eyes.

Sir George Mul. (*aside*—Nor cats wit either.) But how do you know that it was done ?

Lady Mul. There is no doubt but that it was done. It must have been done.

Sir George Mul. But where did you make out the must ?

Lady Mul. O pray, dont tease me about that paltry dress.

Sir George Mul. Paltry ?—but you said it was a rich satin dress.

Lady Mul. I said, Sir, it was a dress—a dress—a mutilated dress—a black dress, if you will,—make it anything you like—a fine thing to make a work about.

Sir George Mul. Nay I don't want to make a work about, nor to make anything out of it.

Lady Mul. I thought you wished to fish it up out of the river—to see all about it.

Sir George Mul. How you will distort my words.—I tell you I want to know how you know that the dress was cast into the St. Lawrence.

Lady Mul. Dear me, Sir, George; when will you leave the lawyer on the bench and learn to speak like an upright and honest man?

Sir George Mul. Tut! tut! will you—

Lady Mul. Will you be silent? you have put me in a fever—me before the session? I'd sooner go into my winding sheet! Hark ye, Sir, bring me out of this predicament, or you shall get your house, and church, and children, and all to manage by yourself—from this day forward and for ever. [Exit.

Sir George Mul. (solus) I have gone too far. I see now I must follow suit. I must fall on some scheme to take her out of this most uncomfortable position. She'll go distracted, else she will incontinently leave me. I know her indomitable force of will. This wound is to her spirit what the demon was to him called *Legion*,—no man can bind it, no not with chains. The parson's fame, ay, and his children's staff of life must both be broken. Better they than that my peace be broken. But how to effect this, and yet preserve all legal forms,—this I must find out. The laws must be complied with, or seem to be; the forms must be preserved; as for the spirit, it is as flexible as a

lawyer's conscience. Conscience ! What is conscience but convenience ? I never yet could feel wherein they differed ;—

Most men find out that they are both akin ;
But he who boasts the most, has mostly least within.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Nursery in Half-House-Hall.*

Enter SALLY, singing.

O ! who can bear
This scanty fare,
Said a nursery maid at twenty,
While down below
The cook can stow
Her gab with every dainty ?

Her sweethearts, too,
Come there to woo
For her pudding, cakes, and plenty,
While not a bit,
Nor spark to sit
With me comes up to twenty.

How long shall I
Sob here and cry
For the turkies, geese, and pudding,
Where nee'r a one
In shape of man,
Puts in his nose intruding ?

Do you suppose
 But for his nose—
 Without your heart deluding—
 He in would look
 To see the Cook,
 Or taste her cake and pudding ?

I do declare
 I'll have a share
 Of every good thing that's going ;
 Both beaus and buns,
 And all that runs
 To kitchen pans, so knowing.
 Sing hey for the pot, sing ho for the pan—
 Sing hey for the pudding and cake man !

Enter MISS PRIM PROBOSCIS.

Miss Prim Proboscis. Your name is Sally Rubknocker ?

Sally. Yes ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. You were in the minister's family
 for some time—were you not, Sally ?

Sally. Yes ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. What can you tell about the Kick-
 ings, Knockings, and other things ? But you must
 distinctly understand that no one tells you what to say.

Sally. No ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. Well, have you seen him kick his
 wife ?

Sally. No ma'am. But Lady Mooress says I must have
 seen it,—and so ma'am I suppose I must. She told me

also, that modesty was the finest feather in a young woman's cap, and that there was no truer sign of modesty than to give up my memory and judgment to those of my superior. Her Ladyship's opinion must be right—and so I wish to say what's right.

Miss Prim Prob. Bless me, what a wise child you are. Lady Mooress has been your friend ever since you came to this country, I believe.

Sally. She has, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. And a friend to your sister, has she not ?

Sally. She has, ma'am. My sister has been living out with Lady Mooress for the last seven years, and it was she who sent me to the minister's, to watch and report all that occurred in the house.

Miss Prim Prob. And you have fulfilled your mission well, Sally, I hope ?

Sally. I should like to do whatever she desires, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. O, Sally, you are a smart girl ; you will do very well ; you will get on in the world. Continue to do just as my Lady Dowager wishes you, and your fortune is made. But, remember, no one told you what to say.

Sally. O no, ma'am

Miss Prim Prob. Send up Ann Limper.

Sally. Yes, ma'am

[*Exit.*

Miss Prim Prob. That one is pretty well drilled. She has been at the right school. O what an admirable disciplinarian the Lady Dowager Mooress is!

Enter ANN LIMPER.

Come hither, Ann. You were a servant in the minister's house for some time?

Ann Limper. Yes, ma'am

Miss Prim Prob. Where are you now?

Ann Limp. No place, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. Have you been in no place since you left the minister's?

Ann Limp. O yes, ma'am. I was in Mr. Squashups.

Miss Prim Prob. Squashups? Squeezeup you mean.

Ann Limp. Squashup or Squeezeup,—I'm not sure that's the name.

Miss Prim Prob. Why did you leave him?

Ann Limp. Because they blamed me for taking the loan of things, and forgetting to put them back again.

Miss Prim Prob. That is certainly a very unfortunate habit, Ann. But where were you before you went to the minister's?

Ann Limp. I was in Mr. Sharp's, the ancient minister's.

Miss Prim Prob. And why did you leave him?

Ann Limp. Because—O, ma'am—it is rather a delicate question.

Miss Prim Prob. I believe you, Ann, to be a very modest, good girl. You will suit Lady Mulish very well, (*aside*, for a month, at least). Of course, you saw the minister kick his wife?

Ann Limp. No, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. Well, then, you are of no use to Lady Mulish. I thought you wanted a place?

Ann Limp. I do, very much, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. If you can say that you saw the minister kick his wife, you shall have a good place, Ann.

Ann Limp. O yes, ma'am, I can say it if you wish.
(*Aside.* I will say to her account—not my own.)

Miss Prim Prob. And throw a cup of tea on her?

Ann Limp. O yes, ma'am—tea or coffee, or anything you wish.

Miss Prim Prob. And call her bad names?

Ann Limp. O yes, ma'am, bad names.

Miss Prim Prob. Horrible names, names such as no well disposed person would wish to hear or to utter?

Ann Limp. O yes, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. Very well, Ann. You may go down stairs: keep mind of all you have said and heard.

Ann Limp. O yes, ma'am. I'll say to his face what I would at his back.

Miss Prim Prob. That's a brave girl. Send up Marjory Crucklebuck.

Ann Limp. Yes, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. And, Ann, remember no one told you what to say.

Ann Limp. O no, ma'am. [Exit.

Miss Prim Prob. A very creditable witness! I am only afraid that Squeezeup's house-keeper will expose Ann's peccadilloes, and impair her evidence. But let me see—Sir George will manage that. The house-keeper, and Squeezeup, too, will cower under his frown and influential patronage.

Enter MARJORY CRUCKLEBUCK.

You saw a very strange scene in the minister's house once, Marjory ?

Marjory Crucklebuck. I did.

Miss Prim Prob. What was that, Marjory ?

Marjory. I saw the minister lying sick on the floor of a bed-room, in great agony, with a pillow under his head, when in slipped Madame Noheart, and kicked the pillow away.

Miss Prim Prob. Hush ! hush ! Marjory. You must not speak of that. Have you seen nothing else ?

Marjory. I have.

Miss Prim Prob. What else, Marjory ?

Marjory. I have seen Madame Noheart bathe her face with opium liniment, and wrap it up in a napkin, and tell me to say it was caused by the minister striking her.

Miss Prim Prob. But, Marjory, my dear girl, don't you think she was an ill used woman ?

Marjory. She was the most indulged woman I ever seen.

Miss Prim Prob. But don't you think her temper was often tried ?

Marjory. No, but I think his temper was tried more than ever a man's was. Indeed, I was sometimes afeerd that her conduct would drive him out of his mind.

Miss Prim Prob. O, Marjory, Marjory ! you must not speak of these things. You know you must be careful of Madame Noheart's character. You know it is a chris-

tian duty, Marjory, not to injure our neighbours' good name.

Marjory. I know that, ma'am, but when I am asked—

Miss Prim Prob. O yes. Marjory, you are a pious young woman. You belong to the Baptist persuasion, don't you?

Marjory. I do.

Miss Prim Prob. Good people, they are all. But, dear Marjory, did you never see Madame Noheart have her face wrapped up with a napkin?

Marjory. I have, many's the time.

Miss Prim Prob. And why, my dear Marjory, do you think had she her face wrapped up in that way?

Marjory. Because, in cold frosty weather, she was very much afflicted with the face ache, and as I have told you, used always to be bathing it with opium liniment.

Miss Prim Prob. But, Marjory, did you never see any mark on her face or head?

Marjory. I never seen any thing more than a pimple on her face; as for her head, I never heard her complain of that.

Miss Prim Prob. But, Marjory, Madame Noheart says she wrapped up her face to hide the blows.

Marjory. What blows, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. The blows she got from somebody.

Marjory. From whom, ma'am?

Miss Prim Prob. Well, Marjory, you should know that best.

Marjory. I know no body except Mr. John Frost.

Miss Prim Prob. You are a shrewd girl, Marjory. But did you ever see Madame Noheart rub her face with opium liniment, except after a scolding?

Marjory. Many's the many a time I've seen her rub it up when the minister was from home.

Miss Prim Prob. But where did she get the opium?

Marjory. She got some from Lady Mulish, and sometimes I got it out of the apothecarie's for her.

Miss Prim Prob. But, Marjory, do you think Madame Noheart would tell a lie?

Marjory. I don't know, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. And do you think I would tell a lie.

Marjory. I hope not, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. And do you think Lady Mulish would tell a lie?

Marjory. O no, ma'am, every body believes her to be a saint—and you too, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. Well, then, you surely will not set up your opinion in opposition to our opinion. You know meekness is a great virtue—a christian virtue; you surely won't place your judgment above Lady Mulish's judgment, and above my judgment, and above the Consistory's judgment?

Marjory. O no, ma'am. I should not like to do that.

Miss Prim Prob. No, my dear girl, I am sure you have too much humility to do that. A proud spirit is not a right spirit, Marjory, nor a self-sufficient spirit.

Marjory. I know that, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. Well, then, you surely will admit that you may be wrong and we may be right.

Marjory. Certainly, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. And when your testimony is called for, you must give Madame Noheart's version of everything. Here, Marjory, here is a small present for your mother, and all your expenses shall be handsomely paid to and from Toronto. It will be delightful, Marjory, to get a trip up and down the lake this fine weather. You are living with Judge Pritchard, in Toronto, are you not?

Marjory. Yes, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. And your mother will be so glad to see you down. Good bye, Marjory, and remember to tell everything in the most telling way. You know what I mean? Think well, Marjory, think well before you speak. And remember the story about the broken parasol, and the buckram petticoat—the child's petticoat you know, and how it was cut, and shaken in her face.

Marjory. But she was not present.

Miss Prim Prob. O well, she might have been present: that is a very trivial circumstance. And don't forget the morning he ordered you to get up to get hot water to bathe his feet. I suppose he came to you in his night-gown?

Marjory. O no, ma'am.

Miss Prim Prob. Now, was it not long after bedtime?

Marjory. Yes, ma'am, it was about two o'clock.

Miss Prim Prob. And how could he come to you at that hour, but in undress?

Marjory. He had just come home from a journey, and the night was bitter cold, and he was sick, and wanted hot

water to wash his feet, and Madame Noheart would not rise, and—

Miss Prim Prob. O Marjory, Marjory, that will never do; you had better see Madame Noheart, and compare notes with her; she will recall things to your memory as they ought to be stated. And now, Marjory, you may go. Remember every thing right. We depend much upon you. Lady Mulish will look after your mother and your little blind sister—poor dear girl. (*Marjory going.*) But stay, Marjory, did you speak of these things to anybody?

Marjory. I told Mrs. Sharp, the furrier's wife, that I believed Madame Noheart would put the minister out of his mind yet,—or drive him insane,—or words to that effect; and I think I said the same to Mr. Mowatt, the moulder.

Miss Prim Prob. O Marjory, how unfortunate! (*aside*—But I must have recourse to Sir George Mulish to bring us out of this difficulty. He can twist the inside out of an eel.) Be careful, Marjory; be careful for the future; and Lady Mulish will look to your mother and sister—the dear creatures. [*Exit Marjory.* (*Solo.*) Marjory's mother and her poor blind sister—we will be kind to them.—Charity covereth a multitude of sins.

If there be any wrong in what I do,
T'will make amends to hand about a tract or two.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*Law Office.*

SIR GEORGE MULISH *discovered writing.*

Sir George Mulish. (Reads) I happened to be dispensing law—*(speaks)*—I should say justice. Law and justice are the same; in theory they are one, in practice they may differ;—the winner holds them to be the same, the loser thinks they differ. Yes, justice is the better word. *(Resumes revisal of his letter.)* I happened to be dispensing justice in our Court of Contra when your last communication reached me. I am glad that you have taken the initiative in this prosecution; all the Ladies of the Consistory will esteem and love you the more. They will continue to you your gowns—you that have them; and to those that are without, they will doubtless supply ones. The silk will be of the best corded, and the cut, the true Geneva. But the make and quality will, of course, as is to be expected, somewhat depend upon your diligence in carrying out the wishes of the Consistory. You ask my opinion of the flagellation and of the case in general. I cannot believe anything else than that the law allows a man to whip his wife—if he confine himself to reasonable limits, and do it from pure motives, and the *pater familias spirit*. But as to the case in general, my opinion is, that the minister is forever floored in Clatterville.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours with great affection,

GEORGE MULISH.

To the Delectable Sandy Sly,
Convener of the Committee Inquisitorial.

(*Speaks*)—This last sentence strikes the nail right on the head. It will be like Tallyho! among the hunters. They will go at him like a pack of hounds, unleashed. I know their metal; at a signal from my forefinger, they are off—through mud and mire, cross creek and swamp. I've seen them chase a boar before, and they would have caught him, too, and cut him up, but for the ungracious rescue of the Notables of Montreal. Fie upon them for that untimed lenity. I love mercy well enough, but when others mar my sport with their mercy, it is not mercy to me—but cruelty and disappointment: it robs me of my lawful prey. I am tender-hearted, too, as other men—nay, I have a woman's heart. I shed tears like any girl in her teens, if I but see a piteous sight or hear the least pathetic tale. How often, oh! how often has a novel heroine wrung tears from my relentless eyes? Mercy is my failing—the weak point in my character. But I shall work this plot more warily. I'll lead the Capables, and all the while I shall seem to be dragged into it. But here comes Squire Waterson.

Enter WATERSON.

Good morning to you, Squire.

Waterson. Good morning, Sir George. I see you are busy. I shall call again.

Sir George Mul. Stay, stay. I've just to seal a letter (*seals*). What think you of this intrigue of the Consistory. They wish to oust the minister.

Waterson. To oust him?

Sir George Mul. Yes.

Waterson. Do you tell me so ?

Sir George Mul. I tell you for a fact.

Waterson. (*aside*—The day of my deliverance draws nigh). That is the very subject for which I called to speak with you. Do you know he requires an account of my receipts and disbursements, whilst I was treasurer.

Sir George Mul. Well, I see no harm in that—you know there is a motion to that effect already upon the Session Record.

Waterson. But you must know, Sir George, my cash-book is in rather an— an unbalanced state.

Sir George Mul. Yes, I suppose it lost its balance ever since that Bank affair ? When a man draws too much in one direction, he is very apt to lose his balance.

Waterson. No more of that, Sir George ; no more of that.

Sir George Mul. I cannot object to your giving count and reckoning of the kirk funds, at least. When I was treasurer every penny was as accurately debted and credited as in a merchant's ledger.

Waterson. But who can keep accounts with you, Sir George ? Look how strongly the calculating faculty is developed in your capacious head ! Your comparison and acquisitiveness would be quite a study for the phrenologist.

Sir George Mul. Yes, my memory is good. And I understand pounds, shillings, and pence pretty well.

Waterson. But there I am at fault. My memory is extremely treacherous, especially in cash-books.

Sir George Mul. That is the very reason why your entries should all bear day and date.

Waterson. But can you not be satisfied this time with a slump-sum statement ?

Sir George Mul. I will neither make nor mar in such a matter.

Waterson. But, Sir George, Lady Mulish says you must befriend me in this matter.

Sir George Mul. O that alters the case, if she says it.

Waterson. Yes, Sir George, she positively says it.

Sir George Mul. Well, then, your best course to get out of the difficulty is to join the conspiracy. The Consistory alone can undermine the minister,—and nothing else will cover you.

Waterson. I believe it,—and I shall give it my service with all my heart. I would give ten pounds to see him bundled up and shipped to the other side of the Atlantic. I shall kick the fellow out at the door, if he ever again cross my threshold.

Sir George Mul. But, my dear sir, you must be cautious—you must be cautious, or you will mar all.

Waterson. I shall, Sir George, be guided entirely by your, and her Ladyship's suggestions.

Sir George Mul. Well, then, I shall let you into our councils. The first step is to devise some scheme that will cause him to clear out. This will be the easiest, and best, and shortest way to deliver us out of all our troubles.

Waterson. You speak like an oracle !

Sir George Mul. Yes, my muttering goes as far as another man's roar. But listen, suppose we get Madame Noheart to run off with the children? The explosion will fall like a bomb, and scatter his wits to the four winds. He will then, I expect, take French leave.

Waterson. You fill me with admiration!

Sir George Mul. O, leave him to me. My model of strategy is Fabius Maximus. If I don't dodge him, may I never draw another mortgage. But the plot must work naturally and spontaneously, you perceive?

Waterson. I see it all. It will work sweetly, and no one seem to have a hand in it but Madame Noheart alone.

Sir George Mul. Precisely. But should it fail, we must be able, like a skilful general, to make a safe retreat. We must have something else to fall back upon.

Waterson. What shall that be?

Sir George Mul. Why, apply to the Delectables to prosecute for maltreatment of ones wife.

Waterson. Admirable! most admirable! But will the Delectables go into it.

Sir George Mul. Do you see this piece of red tape? I'll twist them round my thumbs as easily as I do this. A bow from Baron Mulish, of the Court of Contra, and Chief Kimbo of the Squatter Sessions, or a dinner cooked under the superintendence of Lady Mulish, or a seat at the table of Half-house Hall, will transmute them into so many walking-sticks.

Waterson. With which, Sir George, you may belabour him just as you have a mind. But is there any precedent in Church Courts for such a charge? and then the proof?

Sir George Mul. Proof? The Consistory will manage that; and as to the matter of precedent, you know everything must have a beginning. His case will be a precedent in all similar cases,—in all time to come.

Waterson. When I hear you speak, Sir George, the thought occurs to me (pardon me if I give it utterance), that Her Majesty has lost a very great prop of the empire in not having you in her Cabinet Councils. You would find a clue to every intricacy, and a solution to every problem. But especially in the financial department, your services would be inestimable.

Sir George Mul. I have long held that opinion myself. But it was only my own private opinion. I never could get it worked up into public opinion. You know that stupid, tyrannical thing, public opinion, is often the ruin of many a great man. It has always been a drawback on me.

Waterson. (*Aside.*—O, how the yeast works! you might flatter him to cut his wind-pipe.) And on other great men, as you say, Sir George.

Sir George Mul. But now—

Be close in this that I have told you.

Let Chrysalis-like secrecy enfold you.

[*Exit Waterson.*]

Sir George Mul. Eliza is most unfortunate in her partialities. She always comes to the rescue of vagabonds. It was through her meddling that I was tricked out of seven hundred pounds by that rascal Saunderbundle. And here is another of her partialities,—*another of the same.*

But I suppose my wisdom is to bear ;
Alas! the better horse is the grey mare.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

—o—

SCENE I.—*Back-casement, top flat in Half-house Hall.**Enter* LADY MULISH.

(*sola*). Hush ! hush ! the carriage waits, and all's prepar'd
To carry Noheart and the Children off.
Oh ! how I wish that they were gone. A day
May pass before he knows that they are off,
For not a whisper has he heard as yet ;
His study door is locked, and he within.
It now is morning, and before the night
They may have driven forty miles, or more ;—
'Tis only sixty miles to Cornwall.
Next day they easily will reach the manse
Of Parson Queerheart. There they'll stay
Until our man of study quits his books and runs ;
For run he must : he cannot choose but run.
For very shame he will be off, and hide
His head among the Rocky Mountains, or
The crowded streets of some great city.
He will not bide the brunt of the exposure.
How can he stay ? I know that he will run ;
For Madame Noheart has declared to me,
A thousand times, that he would run right off,
The very moment that she quits the house.

What would I give to see him when the truth
Shall flash upon his mind : he'll stand as dumb ;
Then waver ; wait ; then think how he will face
The public. No, it cannot be, he must
Decamp. Oh ! how I wish that lucky Wrong
May manage right. I've sent her there to help
Dear Madame Noheart to get the children out.

But here comes Lady Dowager Mooress. What news ?

Enter LADY DOWAGER MOORESS.

Lady D. Moor. Deplorable ! Our plot has failed.

Lady Mul. How failed ?

Lady D. Moor. That cunning man, Robert Peerthrough,
Who takes delight in mischief, got his ears
But touched with some quiet rumor of our plot ;
Then down he hurries to the Minister's,
And in he comes just at the very time
That lucky Wrong had seized the eldest child
To hand it out to Madame Noheart, who
Was waiting in the archway, close at hand.
At once, he snatched the boy fast by the arm,
And cries, "No, no ; I know your scheme ; let go
"The boy : it must not be." And straight way up
The stairs he limps, and gives him to his father ;
Says "If you would wish to keep your children, keep
"A good look out." This roused suspicion,
And now the sleepy, studious man is up,
And rampant like a lion, nor will he
Allow the children even cross the door.

Nay storms, and vows that none shall take them out
 Except they take them over his dead body.
 What will we do ?

Lady Mul. Oh dear ! what can we do ?
 That fellow Peerthrough ! Oh that Peerthrough ! wretch !
 I'll never set a foot within his store
 Again.

Lady D. Moor. Nor I, nor any that I know,
 If I can keep them out. What shall we do ?

Lady Mul.—

Cut Peerthrough ! Cut him dead ! No notice take
 If he should meet you in the street and bow.
 Officious man ! If he would but attend
 To his own private business, and leave
 The public weal to us to manage, but
 Especially the Church affairs, his *till*
 Would fill the faster for it, I believe.

Lady D. Moor. I guess so, too. But now, what shall
 We do ?

Lady Mul.—

What can we do ? What can we do without
 Sir George ? 'Tis most perplexing to perceive
 We can't get on without a man.

Lady D. Moor.—————'Tis so.

Lady Mul. We must assemble the Consistory,
 Immediately to deliberate.

Lady D. Moor.—

I will go and tell the Beadle to give notice.

Lady Mul. Ay, do, dear Lady Mooress. What trouble
Obstructs our path, before we can suspend
This man. Oh! if we had him once secured!
Confound all dilatory forms, say I.

Lady D. Moor.—

Amen! and thrice amen! is my reply.

Lady Mul. Oh! would they but give us his ordeal.

Lady D. Moor. We would administer a cordial.

Lady Mul. That would be balm unto our wounded hearts.

Lady D. Moor.—

And heal the rankling anger here, that smarts.

[*Exeunt, laying their hands on their hearts.*]

SCENE II.—*The Consistory in Session.*

LADY MULISH *in the Chair.*

Lady Mul. You all have heard, dear friends, of our mishap;
This monster whom we hunt has foiled our toils;
Our net is broken through, and he's not caught.
What shall we do? Dear Madame Noheart now
Has not a home: she left it yesterday.
She has become an exile from her home—
A voluntary exile for our cause.
We must not cast her off, when she has done
Such signal service to the general weal.
What say you, Lady Dowager Mooress?

Lady D. Moor. I guess that Madame Noheart must abide
With me ; until, at least, we get our prey
Right cornered up. I'll give her my best room :
There she may sleep at ease, and rise betimes.
There she needs fear no razors, nor the whip,
With which, she publicly avers, her life
Perpetually was haunted. Nor shall tea—
Except of very weak infusion—
For which you, Ladies, know my board is famed—
Be given to hurt her nerves, which must be braced
Up tight to meet her coming catechism,
Which soon, I hear, she must prepare to say.
The Capables have sat, and their Committee
Inquisitorial will soon be here,
To take her statement down in black and white.
I hear that those appointed to this work
Are three most trusty men, and notable ;
Devoted to the cause. Their names are John
Morine, and Sandy Sly, and Billy Bone,
All champions of Matrimony ; nay
The very Dons of Woman's rights supreme ;
Who rather would upset the Church, and turn
A house right upside down : yea, drive a man
To beggary, than that a wife should not
Be lord and master in her own quiet house ;
And rule, and turn her husband like a snipe,—
Just as the vane is by the changing wind.
When they have come, and catered up our tales,
Then we will screw him up, I guess. Meantime,
I wish to know, how stands the evidence ?
Has Miss Prim Proboscis got that put right ?

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Miss Prim Proboscis—

Permit me, Ladies, to report, that I
 Have had the witnesses all precognosed.
 I think they will acquit them well, and that
 Without a blush. They hold their heads so nice,
 And look so simple. that you would suppose
 They never had an ill thought in their heads.
 And, as for steadiness and drill, they would
 Outface a regiment of dragoons. But still
 I trust, Sir George will marshal them again,
 And keep them under cover at the time,
 And all the time they are in action.

Madame Waterson—

I move that this report be now sustained ;
 And also that a vote of thanks be given
 To dear Miss Prim Proboscis, for her care
 And diligence in getting up the proof.

Omnes. Agreed ! agreed !

Lady Mul. But here come visitors.

Enter SIR GEORGE MULISH and SQUIRE WATERSON.

Sir Geroge Mul.—

Success, at last, is sure ;—the Capables
 Have served him with a libel. Now the whole
 Depends on you, and your witnesses.

Omnes. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Lady Mul. Be well assured, Sir George, we shall not fail ;
 We've drilled our damsels so, that, by your help,
 We think they may be risked to testify
 Against our proud and dexterous rebel.

Lady D. Moor.—

But you, Sir George, must play the guardian ;
 And, like a faithful watch-dog, bark and howl
 Whenever you perceive the fox approach ;
 Our tender chickens else may flutter up,
 And get their borrowed plumes a little ruffled.

Sir George Mul. Oh ! I will watch him, if they only let
 Me take my seat as member of the club.

Waterson—(in great tripidation)—

But can there be a doubt of that, Sir George ?

Sir George Mul.—

Some doubt. You see my membership expired
 At the rising of the last great council.
 If, therefore, I be not anew elected,
 I have no legal title to a seat.

Waterson. If you, Sir George, should be excluded, I
 Tremble for the consequences.

Sir George Mul. (aside—And well you may.)

Madame Waterson—

Oh, dear Sir George, you must be there. You must.

Sir George Mul. I must and shall, if in my power ; and yet
 The practice in the Parent Church is clear ;
 Which practice, if they knew, would keep me out.
 But here the council have no law specific
 Upon this point. And if the doors are shut,
 I think I may cajole the Capables
 To gloss it over, and let me hold my seat.

Waterson. I thought, Sir George, that your authority,
 On points of law, would set aside all forms ?

Sir George Mul. It will among the Capables, in civil law ;
 But, then, their Ordinances Ecclesiastical



Are independent ; as in their Records shown,
 If only they had wit to look them up.
 But most of them have got as much knowledge
 Of their church-laws as I have got of Greek.
 Their ignorance allows me room to play
 Upon their grave and pompous wisdomships.
 But wherefore should you fear ? You may depend
 They have the will to screw him up as well
 As you ; and *where there is a will*, you know
There is a way.

Waterson. Most true, Sir George, most true.

Sir George Mul. Already they have threatened, to his face,
 " *We will take the majesty out of you.*"
 Cheer up, they're all with us.

Lady Mul.————— Oh it revolts
 My very heart, the bare idea of being
 Subjected to his cross-questioning.
 I'll not endure it !

Lady D Moress. Nor yet shall I.

Madame Waterson————— Nor I.

Sir George Mul. Hush ! hush ! You must.

Trio.————— We wont.

Sir George Mul.————— You must, I say,
 If you would have your victim pinioned up.
 Just listen here—

(Enter Beadle.)

Beadle. The Capables are come.

Sir George Mul.—

They are ? Come now then, Ladies, fall to work ;
 Screw up your courage ; get all your forces
 Marshalled. Keep an eye upon the girls ;
 Have them ready at a moment's warning.

Cheer up their spirits ;—keep them close. Let none
Have access to them, nor speak with them,
Till I have got them snug beside my elbow,
Before the Court of Capables.

I'm off. [*Exit.*]

Madame Waterson. Oh, dear me, how my heart flutters.

Lady D. Mooress.——— Mine leaps

For joy ! Now we shall have him cornered up.

Waterson. Oh ! Ladies, do your duty, like brave men ;

My peace, my safety, sanctity, and all,

Is in your custody. Oh cast your *aegis*,

Like Minerva, over me ! adieu ! [*Exit.*]

Lady Mul. I must, dear friends, dissolve our meeting now.

Keep secret, and keep cool. And let us vow

By heart and hand, and as we hold our breath,

We part, to meet in victory or death !

[*Exit omnes.*]

SCENE III.—*The Vestibule of Consistory Pavilion.*

Enter OLD MULISH. (solus.)

Old Mul. Oh ! what a trial ! Trial, did I say ?

It is a sham, the greatest sham that e'er

Was played before the face of man,—a farce

A solemn farce,—a mockery of justice ;

A foul conspiracy to blast the name

And reputation of an upright man ;

An envious machination of the Presters

To pull him down and cast him to the dust,

Because he is a brighter and a better man

Than they. Oh ! it is the story of Joseph

And his brethren enacted once again.

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The brethren from envy sell their brother.
 Not that alone—they open wide the door
 For every female Potipher to bring
 A lying charge against his innocence ;
 And now, with all their suppleness and shams,
 They see that they are likely to be foiled.
 And so, at once, they cut the evidence
 For the defence abruptly off,—adjourn to Perth,
 Full forty miles from this, and advertise
 Him, that if he would have his cause heard out,
 He must produce his witnesses out there ;
 And failing that, they shall proceed to judgment.
 Oh ! bare-faced juggle ! oh ! wretched shift ! Who
 Can take a witness there ? Not one will go !
 There's no constraint—they are unpaid. A club
 Of untamed savages had shown more mercy.
 Nay, more descretion and more business-like
 Procedure would be found among a tribe
 Of Caffres. Fy ! Oh fy ! It will alight
 Upon themselves—else God and justice sleep.
 Preserve me from the mercies of such men,
 And from the power of women in their rage.

Enter LADY MULISH.

Lady Mul. Well, father, now you're satisfied, I hope ?

Old Mul. I am satisfied.

Lady Mul.————— I am glad to find
 That you have found your error out at last.

Old Mul. But stop ! I'm satisfied that you have done.
 What never can be undone ;—what may cost
 You many a sigh and many a pang ;



Ay, and, alas! your children too! Yes them!
 For this goes deeper than you think. You've struck
 The sceptre—the parental sceptre, from
 Your own frail grasp, and broke it in your rage,
 When you struck him who bore the moral rule.
 You've satisfied your rage—but at a cost
 For which you should not have bought the world,
 Had it been offered you at such a price.

Lady Mul. Stop father, stop,—you over-rate the cost,
 One minister is sacrificed—that's all.

Old Mul. That's all! That were enough, if that were all;
 But that's not all—you'll find that you have sapped
 The foundations of society itself:
 I'm satisfied that you have brought yourselves
 Much obliquy, and the church much damage.

Lady Mul. Tush! tush! We soon will put the church to rights.
 Give us a preacher to our mind, and then—

Old Mul. A preacher to your mind? was ever man
 So great a favourite with you Ladies
 As this man was, when first he came among you?

Lady Mul. O that, indeed. But why should he be set
 To rule the Church, who cannot rule his house?

Old Mul. A monstrous speach! He tries to rule his house,
 And in you step, and cry out—No, oh no,
 He shall not rule his house, but as we please.
 His very children must not be chastised
 But as we shall prescribe the how and when:
 Nay, we shall rule his house as well as rule
 The church. And so you baffle his attempts
 To rule. You say, "Here keep the waters in;"
 And still you lift the sluice to let the waters out.

O wisdom most profound! O sophistry.
Of subtlest essence! If A Man had uttered
Such a speech, he surely would have grown
Again, at once into a boy,—nonage:
Purity itself would be ashamed of it.

Lady Mul. You take it, father, far too seriously.
How often have I heard you blame our sex
For fickleness. How should you think it strange
That we should be a little fickle in
Our preacher. But for once?

Old Mul.———Nay—not for once,
My Lady! say for twice, thrice, ay four times.
Was not your cousin Comble glad to get
Away? Was Crookedlegs not jilted too?
And did you not attempt to bundle up
That good man Hogg, as if he were a bale
Of cotton, ay, and pack him right away
To Liverpool *via* New York?—And now
This is the fourth you send right face about.

Lady Mul. (*aside* I do declare he is a stubborn mule.
Why should I speak to him? It but provokes
And ruffles up my temper to hear him talk.)

Enter BEADLE, with a letter.

Beadle. A letter for my Lady Mulish.

Lady Mul.———From Perth?

Oh! this is news indeed—so soon? Welcome!
So!—they have made quick work with him at last.
Go, call together the Consistory. [*Exit Beadle.*]

(Reads)

Dear Lady Mulish,

Permit me to lay my duties at your feet. [Old Mul.—aside—
He would lay his head there to please her.] *The man whom
you hated with so good a cause—[without a cause]—has now re-
ceived a mortal wound, and is suspended, SINE DIE.* [Old Mul.—
aside—A desperate sin.] *He nno will trouble you no more.—
[He'll haunt you while you live.] Your protege, Squire Water-
son, is safe [Not quite so safe as you think.] We have seized
the Session Records—[To hide what?]—and at our earliest
opportunity will expunge the blots. [The blots will not come
out; you'll only make them bigger.] Both you and Lady Dow-
ager Mnoress shall now escape exposure before the Session.—
[But not before the world] Pray remember our gowns—[send
him a petticoat.]—and we shall be forever bound to you. [Bound
to her apron-strings.] Your children will reap the blessed fruits
of this transaction. [Ay, that they will !] Rejoice, therefore,
and be exceeding glad, for all will now be hushed. [A calm be-
fore the storm.] We deliver him up now to your tender
mercies. [Then heaven have mercy on him !] His body you
may dispose of as you may seem most meet. [You may well
give up the body, when you have destroyed his soul.] *But we
would recommend that you should deposit him, as soon as possi-
ble, in Coventry. [Which, like Westminster Abbey, holds the
remains of many a good and great man.] Farewell. [So say
I, too—Farewell.—Exit.] With best wishes for your welfare,**

I am, dear Lady Mulish.

Yours, in bands and gown,

BILLY BONE,

Clerk of the club of Bathurst.

Lady Mul. Dear Bone ! Oh, how this will rejoice the hearts
Of my dear sisters of the Consistory.
Their faces now will wear a sweeter smile,
Their limbs a more elastic step, their hearts
A lighter throb, their eyes a brighter glance,
Their brows a smoother aspect. Here they come !

*Enter in solemn procession, carrying a litter, upon which is
laid the body of the victim.*

Lady D. Moress. Rejoice, dear friends, rejoice, and sing a song
Of triumph ! Sing ! for this day crowns our toils,
And well rewards our struggles in the cause
Of feminine intrigue and sweet revenge.

Lady Mul. This is, indeed, a day of victory.
We meet to sing the requiem of a man
Whom once we loved, whom now we hate ; whose voice
Has often sounded sweetly in our ear,
But never fell upon our heart. That's past.
Forget it all, nor more remember him ;
Nor let his shadow haunt our waking thoughts
Or sleeping dreams. Our motto now is kill !
So perish all who dare resist our will.
Strike up the chaunt, and let our hearts rejoice.
His head is low,—and silent is his voice.

[They sing the Chaunt.]

THE CHAUNT IO PAEAN.

Sing ! mortals, sing !—the victim now is seized ;
Hush ! furies, hush !—your rage shall be appeased.

We've caught him, and him *cornered up*,—

We've hitched him, and him haltered up,—

Draw forth from your sheaths,

Strike him while he breathes !

We've bound him, and suspended him,

Spite of the hearts that defended him :

We thought it would have ended him,

But still he breathes !

Strike ! females, strike !—his heart must now be crushed :

Pull it out, pull !—his tongue, too, must be hushed ;

Nor word of defence must he speak.

Bind him down, like the dead, lest he squeak,

And pierce through our wiles,

Or denounce our guiles.

We have raised a famous *fama*-sound,

We have cast his honor to the ground ;

We have him now forever bound,—

But still he smiles !

Up ! women, up !—lay well about the brain :
Hoorah ! dames, hwoor !*—the victim's now insane,—
Tis better this than he were slain,—
His blood on us will leave no stain.
But look how he laughs !
And the free air quaffs !
We've struck his head, we've struck his heart,
Expended all our female art,
But still his life will not depart,—
For see,—he laughs !

Cheer ! matrons, cheer !—let him run if he will :
Slander, tongues !—squirt !—slander him your fill !
Stands he yet this battery of tongues ?
Alas ! he is proof against our lungs !
Find some other hands
To do our commands :
For after all that we have done,
We find our work is but begun :
We thought, at least, he would have run ;
But still he stands !

* An interjection used by the North American Indians when scalping an enemy.

Help! Presters, help!—there's nothing now but to choke :
Hand here the rope! This would the saints provoke,
That we can't kill him as we wish to,
Without showing our fingers in the dish too :
Or our brazen beaks—
Or our crimson cheeks—
For, after many a horrid blow,
See signs of life still in him show :
He moves—he strikes—he kicks—looks—lo !
At last he speaks !

[Here the mangled body of the victim rises, and scatters the

CONSISTORY.

FINIS.

