St. Patrick's Day

by Richard Brinsley Sheridan

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Title: St. Patrick's Day; Or, The Scheming Lieutenant: A Farce in One Act

Author: Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Release date: October 1, 2004 [eBook #6707] Most recently updated: November 15, 2019

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6707

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ST. PATRICK’S DAY

OR, THE SCHEMING LIEUTENANT

A FARCE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE IN 1775

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR Mr. Clinch. DR. ROSY Mr. Quick. JUSTICE CREDULOUS Mr. Lee Lewes. SERJEANT TROUNCE Mr. Booth. CORPORAL FLINT…… LAURETTA Mrs. Cargill. MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS Mrs. Pitt.

Drummer, Soldiers, Countrymen, and Servant.

SCENE—A TOWN IN ENGLAND.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR's Lodgings.

Enter SERJEANT TROUNCE, CORPORAL FLINT, and four SOLDIERS.

FIRST SOLDIER. I say you are wrong; we should all speak together, each for himself, and all at once, that we may be heard the better.

SECOND SOLDIER. Right, Jack, we'll argue in platoons.

THIRD SOLDIER. Ay, ay, let him have our grievances in a volley, and if we be to have a spokesman, there's the corporal is the lieutenant's countryman, and knows his humour.

CORPORAL FLINT. Let me alone for that. I served three years, within a bit, under his honour, in the Royal Inniskillions, and I never will see a sweeter tempered gentleman, nor one more free with his purse. I put a great shammock in his hat this morning, and I'll be bound for him he'll wear it, was it as big as Steven's Green.

FOURTH SOLDIER. I say again then you talk like youngsters, like militia striplings: there's a discipline, look'ee in all things, whereof the serjeant must be our guide; he's a gentleman of words; he understands your foreign lingo, your figures, and such like auxiliaries in scoring. Confess now for a reckoning, whether in chalk or writing, ben't he your only man?

CORPORAL FLINT. Why the serjeant is a scholar to be sure, and has the gift of reading.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Good soldiers, and fellow-gentlemen, if you make me your spokesman, you will show the more judgment; and let me alone for the argument. I'll be as loud as a drum, and point blank from the purpose.

ALL. Agreed, agreed.

CORPORAL FLINT. Oh, faith! here comes the lieutenant.—Now, Serjeant.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. So then, to order.—Put on your mutiny looks; every man grumble a little to himself, and some of you hum the Deserter's March.

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Well, honest lads, what is it you have to complain of?

SOLDIER. Ahem! hem!

SERJEANT TROUNCE. So please your honour, the very grievance of the matter is this:—ever since your honour differed with justice Credulous, our inn-keepers use us most scurvily. By my halbert, their treatment is such, that if your spirit was willing to put up with it, flesh and blood could by no means agree; so we humbly petition that your honour would make an end of the matter at once, by running away with the justice's daughter, or else get us fresh quarters,—hem! hem!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Indeed! Pray which of the houses use you ill?

FIRST SOLDIER. There's the Red Lion an't half the civility of the old Red Lion.

SECOND SOLDIER. There's the White Horse, if he wasn't case-hardened, ought to

be ashamed to show his face.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Very well; the Horse and the Lion shall answer for it at the quarter sessions.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. The two Magpies are civil enough; but the Angel uses us like devils, and the Rising Sun refuses us light to go to bed by.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Then, upon my word, I'll have the Rising Sun put down, and the Angel shall give security for his good behaviour; but are you sure you do nothing to quit scores with them?

CORPORAL FLINT. Nothing at all, your honour, unless now and then we happen to fling a cartridge into the kitchen fire, or put a spatterdash or so into the soup; and sometimes Ned drums up and down stairs a little of a night.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Oh, all that's fair; but hark'ee, lads, I must have no grumbling on St. Patrick's Day; so here, take this, and divide it amongst you. But observe me now,—show yourselves men of spirit, and don't spend sixpence of it in drink.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Nay, hang it, your honour, soldiers should never bear malice; we must drink St. Patrick's and your honour's health.

ALL. Oh, damn malice! St. Patrick's and his honour's by all means.

CORPORAL FLINT. Come away, then, lads, and first we'll parade round the Market-cross, for the honour of King George.

FIRST SOLDIER. Thank your honour.—Come along; St. Patrick, his honour, and strong beer for ever! [Exeunt SOLDIERS.]

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Get along, you thoughtless vagabonds! yet, upon my conscience, 'tis very hard these poor fellows should scarcely have bread from the soil they would die to defend.

Enter DOCTOR ROSY.

Ah, my little Dr. Rosy, my Galen a-bridge, what's the news?

DR. ROSY. All things are as they were, my Alexander; the justice is as violent as ever: I felt his pulse on the matter again, and, thinking his rage began to intermit, I wanted to throw in the bark of good advice, but it would not do. He says you and your cut-throats have a plot upon his life, and swears he had rather see his daughter in a scarlet fever than in the arms of a soldier.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Upon my word the army is very much obliged to him. Well, then, I must marry the girl first, and ask his consent afterwards.

DR. ROSY. So, then, the case of her fortune is desperate, hey?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Oh, hang fortune,—let that take its chance; there is a beauty in Lauretta's simplicity, so pure a bloom upon her charms.

DR. ROSY. So there is, so there is. You are for beauty as nature made her, hey! No artificial graces, no cosmetic varnish, no beauty in grey, hey!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Upon my word, doctor, you are right; the London ladies were always too handsome for me; then they are so defended, such a circumvallation of hoop, with a breastwork of whale-bone that would turn a pistol-bullet, much less Cupid's arrows,—then turret on turret on top, with stores of concealed weapons, under pretence of black pins,—and above all, a standard of feathers that would do honour to a knight of the Bath. Upon my conscience, I could as soon embrace an Amazon, armed at all points.

DR. ROSY. Right, right, my Alexander! my taste to a tittle.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Then, doctor, though I admire modesty in women, I like to see their faces. I am for the changeable rose; but with one of these quality Amazons, if their midnight dissipations had left them blood enough to raise a blush, they have not room enough in their cheeks to show it. To be sure, bashfulness is a very pretty thing; but, in my mind, there is nothing on earth so impudent as an everlasting blush.

DR. ROSY. My taste, my taste!—Well, Lauretta is none of these. Ah! I never see her but she put me in mind of my poor dear wife.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. [Aside.] Ay, faith; in my opinion she can't do a worse thing. Now he is going to bother me about an old hag that has been dead these six years.

DR. ROSY. Oh, poor Dolly! I never shall see her like again; such an arm for a bandage—veins that seemed to invite the lancet. Then her skin, smoothe and white as a gallipot; her mouth as large and not larger than the mouth of a penny phial; her lips conserve of roses; and then her teeth—none of your sturdy fixtures—ache as they would, it was but a small pull, and out they came. I believe I have drawn half a score of her poor dear pearls—[weeps]—But what avails her beauty? Death has no consideration—one must die as well as another.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. [Aside.] Oh, if he begins to moralize—-[Takes out his snuff-box.]

DR. ROSY. Fair and ugly, crooked or straight, rich or poor—flesh is grass—flowers fade!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Here, doctor, take a pinch, and keep up your spirits.

DR. ROSY. True, true, my friend; grief can't mend the matter—all's for the best; but such a woman was a great loss, lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. To be sure, for doubtless she had mental accomplishments equal to her beauty.

DR. ROSY. Mental accomplishments! she would have stuffed an alligator, or pickled a lizard, with any apothecaru's wife in the kingdom. Why, she could decipher a prescription, and invent the ingredients, almost as well as myself: then she was such a hand at making foreign waters!—for Seltzer, Pyrmont, Islington, or Chalybeate, she never had her equal; and her Bath and Bristol springs exceeded the originals.—Ah, poor Dolly! she fell a martyr to her own discoveries.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. How so, pray?

DR. ROSY. Poor soul! her illness was occasioned by her zeal in trying an improvement on the Spa-water by an infusion of rum and acid.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Ay, ay, spirits never agree with water-drinkers.

DR. ROSY. No, no, you mistake. Rum agreed with her well enough; it was not the rum that killed the poor dear creature, for she died of a dropsy. Well, she is gone, never to return, and has left no pledge of our loves behind. No little babe, to hang like a label round papa's neck. Well, well, we are all mortal—sooner or later—flesh is grass— flowers fade.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. [Aside.] Oh, the devil!—again!

DR. ROSY. Life's a shadow—the world a stage—we strut an hour.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Here, doctor. [Offers snuff.]

DR. ROSY. True, true, my friend: well, high grief can't cure it. All's for the best, hey! my little Alexander?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Right, right; an apothecary should never be out of spirits. But come, faith, 'tis time honest Humphrey should wait on the justice; that must be our first scheme.

DR. ROSY. True, true; you should be ready: the clothes are at my house, and I have given you such a character, that he is impatient to have you: he swears you shall be his body-guard. Well, I honour the army, or I should never do so much to serve you.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Indeed I am bound to you for ever, doctor; and when once I'm possessed of my dear Lauretta, I will endeavour to make work for you as fast as possible.

DR. ROSY. Now you put me in mind of my poor wife again.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Ah, pray forget her a little: we shall be too late.

DR. ROSY. Poor Dolly!

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. ’Tis past twelve.

DR. ROSY. Inhuman dropsy!

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. The justice will wait.

DR. ROSY. Cropped in her prime!

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. For heaven’s sake, come!

DR. ROSY. Well, flesh is grass.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. O, the devil!

DR. ROSY. We must all die—

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Doctor!

DR. ROSY. Kings, lords, and common whores—

[Exeunt LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR forcing Rosy off.]

SCENE II.—A Room in JUSTICE CREDULOUS’ House.

Enter LAURETTA and MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS.

LAURETTA. I repeat it again, mamma, officers are the prettiest men in the world, and Lieutenant O’Connor is the prettiest officer I ever saw.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. For shame, Laura! how can you talk so?—or if you must have a military man, there’s Lieutenant Plow, or Captain Haycock, or Major Dray, the brewer, are all your admirers; and though they are peaceable, good kind of men, they have as large cockades, and become scarlet, as well as the fighting folks.

LAURETTA. Psha! you know, mamma, I hate militia officers; a set of dunghill cocks with spurs on—heroes scratched off a church door— clowns in military masquerade, wearing the dress without supporting the character. No, give me the bold upright youth, who makes love to- day, and his head shot off to-morrow. Dear! to think how the sweet fellows sleep on the ground, and fight in silk stockings and

lace ruffles.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Oh, barbarous! to want a husband that may wed you to- day, and be sent the Lord knows where before night; then in a twelvemonth perhaps to have him come like a Colossus, with one leg at New York, and the other at Chelsea Hospital.

LAURETTA. Then I'll be his crutch, mamma.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. No, give me a husband that knows where his limbs are, though he want the use of them:—and if he should take you with him, to sleep in a baggage-cart, and stroll about the camp like a gipsy, with a knapsack and two children at your back; then, by way of entertainment in the evening, to make a party with the serjeant's wife to drink bohea tea, and play at all-fours on a drum-head:—'tis a precious life, to be sure!

LAURETTA. Nay, mamma, you shouldn't be against my lieutenant, for I heard him say you were the best natured and best looking woman in the world.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Why, child, I never said but that Lieutenant O'Connor was a very well-bred and discerning young man; 'tis your papa is so violent against him.

LAURETTA. Why, Cousin Sophy married an officer.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Ay, Laura, an officer of the militia.

LAURETTA. No, indeed, ma'am, a marching regiment.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. No, child, I tell you he was a major of militia.

LAURETTA. Indeed, mamma, it wasn't.

Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Bridget, my love, I have had a message.

LAURETTA. It was cousin Sophy told me so.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I have had a message, love—

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. No, child, she would say no such thing.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. A message, I say.

LAURETTA. How could he be in the militia when he was ordered abroad?

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Ay, girl, hold your tongue!—Well, my dear.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I have had a message from Doctor Rosy.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. He ordered abroad! He went abroad for his health.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Why, Bridget!—

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Well, deary.—Now hold your tongue, miss.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. A message from Dr. Rosy, and Dr. Rosy says—

LAURETTA. I'm sure, mamma, his regimentals—

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Damn his regimentals!—Why don't you listen?

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Ay, girl, how durst you interrupt your papa?

LAURETTA. Well, papa.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Dr. Rosy says he'll bring—

LAURETTA. Were blue turned up with red, mamma.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Laury!—says he will bring the young man—

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Red! yellow, if you please, miss.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Bridget!—the young man that is to be hired—

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Besides, miss, it is very unbecoming in you to want to have the last word with your mamma; you should know—

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Why, zounds! will you hear me or no?

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. I am listening, my love, I am listening!—But what signifies my silence, what good is my not speaking a word, if this girl will interrupt and let nobody speak but herself?—Ay, I don't wonder, my life, at your impatience; your poor dear lips quiver to speak; but I suppose she'll run on, and not let you put

in a word.— You may very well be angry; there is nothing, sure, so provoking as a chattering, talking—

LAURETTA. Nay, I'm sure, mamma, it is you will not let papa speak now.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Why, you little provoking minx——

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Get out of the room directly, both of you—get out!

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Ay, go, girl.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Go, Bridget, you are worse than she, you old hag. I wish you were both up to the neck in the canal, to argue there till I took you out.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. Doctor Rosy, sir

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Show him up. [Exit SERVANT.]

LAURETTA. Then you own, mamma, it was a marching regiment?

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. You're an obstinate fool, I tell you; for if that had been the case——

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. You won't go?

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. We are going, Mr. Surly.—If that had been the case, I say, how could——

LAURETTA. Nay, mamma, one proof——

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. How could Major——

LAURETTA. And a full proof——

[JUSTICE CREDULOUS drives them off.]

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. There they go, ding dong in for the day. Good lack! a fluent tongue is the only thing a mother don't like her daughter to resemble her in.

Enter DOCTOR ROSY.

Well, doctor, where's the lad—where's Trusty?

DR. ROSY. At hand; he'll be here in a minute, I'll answer for't. He's such a one as you an't met with,—brave as a lion, gentle as a saline draught.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Ah, he comes in the place of a rogue, a dog that was corrupted by the lieutenant. But this is a sturdy fellow, is he, doctor?

DR. ROSY. As Hercules; and the best back-sword in the country. Egad, he'll make the red coats keep their distance.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. O the villains; this is St. Patrick's day, and the rascals have been parading my house all the morning. I know they have a design upon me; but I have taken all precautions: I have magazines of arms, and if this fellow does but prove faithful, I shall be more at ease.

DR. ROSY. Doubtless he'll be a comfort to you.

Re-enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. There is a man below, inquires for Doctor Rosy.

DR. ROSY. Show him up.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Hold! a little caution—how does he look?

SERVANT. A country-looking fellow, your worship.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Oh, well, well, for Doctor Rosy; these rascals try all ways to get in here.

SERVANT. Yes, please your worship; there was one here this morning wanted to speak to you; he said his name was Corporal Breakbones.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Corporal Breakbones!

SERVANT. And Drummer Crackskull came again.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Ay, did you ever hear of such a damned confounded crew? Well, show the lad in here! [Exit SERVANT.]

DR. ROSY. Ay, he'll be your porter; he'll give the rogues an answer.

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR, disguised.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. So, a tall—Efacks! what! has lost an eye?

DR. ROSY. Only a bruise he got in taking seven or eight highwaymen.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. He has a damned wicked leer somehow with the other.

DR. ROSY. Oh, no, he's bashful—a sheepish look——

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Well, my lad, what's your name?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Humphrey Hum.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Hum—I don't like Hum!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. But I be mostly called honest Humphrey——

DR. ROSY. There, I told you so, of noted honesty.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Well, honest Humphrey, the doctor has told you my terms, and you are willing to serve, hey?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. And please your worship I shall be well content.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Well, then, hark'ye, honest Humphrey,—you are sure now, you will never be a rogue—never take a bribe hey, honest Humphrey?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. A bribe! what's that?

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. A very ignorant fellow indeed!

DR. ROSY. His worship hopes you will not part with your honesty for money.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Noa, noa.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Well said, Humphrey—my chief business with you is to watch the motions of a rake-helly fellow here, one Lieutenant O'Connor.

DR. ROSY. Ay, you don't value the soldiers, do you, Humphrey?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Not I; they are but zwaggerers, and you'll see theu'll be as much afraid of me as they would of their captain.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. And i'faith, Humphrey, you have a pretty cudgel there!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Ay, the zwitch is better than nothing, but I should be glad of a stouter: ha' you got such a thing in the house as an old coach-pole, or a spare bed-post?

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Oons, what a dragon it is!—Well, Humphrey, come with me.—I'll just show him to Bridget, doctor, and we'll agree.—Come along, honest Humphrey. [Exit.]

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. My dear doctor, now remember to bring the justice presently to the walk: I have a scheme to get into his confidence at once.

DR. ROSY. I will, I will. [They shake hands.]

Re-enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Why, honest Humphrey, hey! what the devil are you at?

DR. ROSY. I was just giving him a little advice.—Well I must go for the present.—Good-morning to your worship—you need not fear the lieutenant while he is in your house.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Well, get in, Humphrey. Good-morning to you, doctor.—[Exit DOCTOR ROSY.] Come along, Humphrey.—Now I think I am a match for the lieutenant and all his gang. [Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Street.

Enter SERJEANT TROUNCE, DRUMMER and SOLDIERS.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Come, silence your drum—there is no valour stirring to-day. I thought St. Patrick would have given us a recruit or two to- day.

SOLDIER. Mark, serjeant!

Enter two COUNTRYMEN.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Oh! these are the lads I was looking for; they have the look of gentlemen.—An't you single, my lads?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Yes, an please you, I be quite single: my relations be all dead, thank heavens, more or less. I have but one poor mother left in the world, and she's an helpless woman.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Indeed! a very extraordinary case—quite your own master then—the fitter to serve his Majesty.—Can you read?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Noa, I was always too lively to take to learning; but John here is main clever at it.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. So, what you're a scholar, friend?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. I was born so, measter. Feyther kept grammar-school.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Lucky man—in a campaign or two put yourself down chaplain to the regiment. And I warrant you have read of warriors and heroes?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Yes, that I have: I have read of Jack the Giant Killer, and the Dragon of Wantly, and the—Noa, I believe that's all in the hero way, except once about a comet.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Wonderful knowledge!—Well, my heroes, I'll write word to the king of your good intentions, and meet me half an hour hence at the Two Magpies.

COUNTRYMAN. We will, your honour, we will.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. But stay; for fear I shouldn't see you again in the crowd, clap these little bits of ribbon into your hats.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Our hats are none of the best.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Well, meet me at the Magpies, and I'll give you money to buy new ones.

COUNTRYMAN. Bless your honour, thank your honour. [Exeunt.]

SERJEANT TROUNCE. [Winking at SOLDIERS.] Jack! [Exeunt SOLDIERS.]

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR.

So, here comes one would make a grenadier—Stop, friend, will you list?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Who shall I serve under?

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Under me, to be sure.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Isn't Lieutenant O'Connor your officer?

SERJEANT TROUNCE. He is, and I am commander over him.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. What! be your serjeants greater than your captains?

SERJEANT TROUNCE. To be sure we are; 'tis our business to keep them in order. For instance, now, the general writes to me, dear Serjeant, or dear Trounce, or dear Serjeant Trounce, according to his hurry, if your lieutenant does not demean himself accordingly, let me know.— Yours, General Deluge.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. And do you complain of him often?

SERJEANT TROUNCE. No, hang him, the lad is good-natured at the bottom, so I pass over small things. But hark'ee, between ourselves, he is most confoundedly given to wenching.

Enter CORPORAL FLINT.

CORPORAL FLINT. Please your honour, the doctor is coming this way with his worship—We are all ready, and have our cues. [Exit.]

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Then, my dear Trounce, or my dear Sergeant, or my dear Serjeant Trounce, take yourself away.

SERJEANT TROUNCE. Zounds! the lieutenant—I smell of the black hole already. [Exit.]

Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS and DOCTOR ROSY.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I thought I saw some of the cut-throats.

DR. ROSY. I fancy not; there's no one but honest Humphrey. Ha! Odds life, here comes some of them—we'll stay by these trees, and let them pass.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Oh, the bloody-looking dogs!

[Walks aside with DOCTOR ROSY.] Re-enter CORPORAL FLINT and two SOLDIERS.

CORPORAL FLINT. Halloa, friend! do you serve Justice Credulous?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. I do.

CORPORAL FLINT. Are you rich?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Noa.

CORPORAL FLINT. Nor ever will be with that old stingy booby. Look here— take it. [Gives him a purse.]

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. What must I do for this?

CORPORAL FLINT. Mark me, our lieutenant is in love with the old rogue's daughter: help us to break his worship's bones, and carry off the girl, and you are a made man.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. I'll see you hanged first, you pack of skurry villains! [Throws away the purse.]

CORPORAL FLINT. What, sirrah, do you mutiny? Lay hold of him.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Nay, then, I'll try your armour for you. [Beats them.]

ALL. Oh! oh!—quarter! quarter!

[Exeunt CORPORAL FLINT and SOLDIERS.]

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. [Coming forward.] Trim them, trounce them, break their bones, honest Humphrey—What a spirit he has!

DR. ROSY. Aquafortis. O'Con. Betray your master!

DR. ROSY. What a miracle of fidelity!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Ay, and it shall not go unrewarded—I'll give him sixpence on the spot. Here, honest Humphrey, there's for yourself: as for this bribe, [takes up the purse,] such trash is best in the hands of justice. Now, then, doctor, I think I may trust him to guard the women: while he is with them I may go out with safety.

DR. ROSY. Doubtless you may—I'll answer for the lieutenant's behaviour whilst honest Humphrey is with your daughter.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Ay, ay, she shall go nowhere without him. Come along, honest Humphrey. How rare it is to meet with such a servant! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—A Garden.

LAURETTA discovered. Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS and LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Why, you little truant, how durst you wander so far from the house without my leave? Do you want to invite that scoundrel lieutenant to scale the walls and carry you off?

LAURETTA. Lud, papa, you are so apprehensive for nothing.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Why, hussy——

LAURETTA. Well, then, I can't bear to be shut up all day so like a nun. I am sure it is enough to make one wish to be run away with—and I wish I was run away with—I do—and I wish the lieutenant knew it.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. You do, do you, hussy? Well, I think I'll take pretty good care of you. Here, Humphrey, I leave this lady in your care. Now you may walk about the garden, Miss Pert; but Humphrey shall go with you wherever you go. So mind, honest Humphrey, I am obliged to go abroad for a little while; let no one but yourself come near her; don't be shame-faced, you booby, but keep close to her. And now, miss, let your lieutenant or any of his crew come near you if they can.

[Exit.]

LAURETTA. How this booby stares after him! [Sits down and sings.]

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Lauretta!

LAURETTA. Not so free, fellow! [Sings.]

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Lauretta! look on me.

LAURETTA. Not so free, fellow!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. No recollection!

LAURETTA. Honest Humphrey, be quiet.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Have you forgot your faithful soldier?

LAURETTA. Ah! Oh preserve me!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. 'Tis, my soul! your truest slave, passing on your father in this disguise.

LAURETTA. Well now, I declare this is charming—you are so disguised, my dear lieutenant, and you look so delightfully ugly. I am sure no one will find you out, ha! ha! ha!—You know I am under your protection; papa charged you to keep close to me.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. True, my angel, and thus let me fulfil——

LAURETTA. O pray now, dear Humphrey——

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Nay, 'tis but what old Mittimus commanded. [Offers to kiss her.]

Re-enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Laury, my—hey! what the devil's here?

LAURETTA. Well now, one kiss, and be quiet.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Your very humble servant, honest Humphrey! Don't let me— pray don't let me interrupt you!

LAURETTA. Lud, papa! Now that's so good-natured—indeed there's no harm. You did not mean any rudeness, did you, Humphrey?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. No, indeed, miss; his worship knows it is not in me.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I know that you are a lying, canting, hypocritical scoundrel; and if you don't take yourself out of my sight——

LAURETTA. Indeed, papa, now I'll tell you how it was. I was sometime taken with a sudden giddiness, and Humphrey seeing me beginning to totter, ran to my assistance, quite frightened, poor fellow, and took me in his arms.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Oh! was that all—nothing but a little giddiness, hey!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. That's all, indeed, your worship; for seeing miss change colour, I ran up instantly.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Oh, 'twas very kind in you!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. And luckily recovered her.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. And who made you a doctor, you impudent rascal, hey? Get out of my sight, I say, this instant, or by all the statutes—

LAURETTA. Oh now, papa, you frighten me, and I am giddy again!—Oh, help!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. O dear lady, she'll fall! [Takes her into his arms.]

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Zounds! what before my face—why then, thou miracle of impudence!—[Lays hold of him and discovers him.]—Mercy on me, who have we here?—Murder! Robbery! Fire! Rape! Gunpowder! Soldiers! John! Susan! Bridget!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Good sir, don't be alarmed; I mean you no harm.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Thieves! Robbers! Soldiers!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. You know my love for your daughter—

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Fire! Cut-throats!

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. And that alone—

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Treason! Gunpowder!

Enter a SERVANT with a blunderbuss.

Now, scoundrel! let her go this instant.

LAURETTA. O papa, you'll kill me!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Honest Humphrey, be advised. Ay, miss, this way, if you please.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Nay, sir, but hear me——

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I'll shoot.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. And you'll be convinced——

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I'll shoot.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. How injurious——

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I'll shoot—and so your very humble servant, honest Humphrey Hum. [Exeunt separately.]

SCENE III.—A Walk.

Enter DOCTOR ROSY.

DR. ROSY. Well, I think my friend is now in a fair way of succeeding. Ah! I warrant he is full of hope and fear, doubt and anxiety; truly he has the fever of love strong upon him: faint, peevish, languishing all day, with burning, restless nights. Ah! just my case when I pined for my poor dear Dolly! when she used to have her daily colics, and her little doctor be sent for. Then would I interpret the language of her pulse—declare my own sufferings in my receipt for her—send her a pearl necklace in a pill-box, or a cordial draught with an acrostic on the label. Well, those days are over: no happiness lasting: all is vanity—now sunshine, now cloudy—we are, as it were, king and beggar—then what avails——

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. O doctor! ruined and undone.

DR. ROSY. The pride of beauty——

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. I am discovered, and——

DR. ROSY. The gaudy palace——

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. The justice is——

DR. ROSY. The pompous wig——

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Is more enraged than ever.

DR. ROSY. The gilded cane——

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Why, doctor! [Slapping him on the shoulder.]

DR. ROSY. Hey!

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Confound your morals! I tell you I am discovered, discomfited, disappointed.

DR. ROSY. Indeed! Good lack, good lack, to think of the instability of human affairs! Nothing certain in this world—most deceived when most confident—fools of fortune all.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. My dear doctor, I want at present a little practical wisdom. I am resolved this instant to try the scheme we were going to put into execution last week. I have the letter ready, and only want your assistance to recover my ground.

DR. ROSY. With all my heart—I’ll warrant you I’ll bear a part in it: but how the deuce were you discovered?

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. I’ll tell you as we go; there’s not a moment to be lost.

DR. ROSY. Heaven send we succeed better!—but there’s no knowing.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Very true.

DR. ROSY. We may and we may not.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Right.

DR. ROSY. Time must show.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Certainly.

DR. ROSY. We are but blind guessers.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Nothing more.

DR. ROSY. Thick-sighted mortals.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Remarkably.

DR. ROSY. Wandering in error.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Even so.

DR. ROSY. Futurity is dark.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. As a cellar.

DR. ROSY. Men are moles.

[Exeunt LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR forcing out ROSY.]

SCENE IV.—A Room in JUSTICE CREDULOUS’ House.

Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS and MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Odds life, Bridget, you are enough to make one mad! I tell you he would have deceived a chief justice; the dog seemed as ignorant as my clerk, and talked of honesty as if he had been a churchwarden.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Pho! nonsense, honesty!—what had you to do, pray, with honesty? A fine business you have made of it with your Humphrey Hum: and miss, too, she must have been privy to it. Lauretta! ay, you would have her called so; but for my part I never knew any good come of giving girls these heathen Christian names: if you had called her Deborrah, or Tabitha, or Ruth, or Rebecca, or Joan, nothing of this had ever happened; but I always knew Lauretta was a runaway name.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Psha, you're a fool!

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. No, Mr. Credulous, it is you who are a fool, and no one but such a simpleton would be so imposed on.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Why zounds, madam, how durst you talk so? If you have no respect for your husband, I should think unus quorum might command a little deference.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Don't tell me!—Unus fiddlestick! you ought to be ashamed to show your face at the sessions: you'll be a laughing-stock to the whole bench, and a byword with all the pig-tailed lawyers and bag-wigged attorneys about town.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Is this language for his majestu's representative? By the statutes, it's high treason and petty treason, both at once!

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. A letter for your worship.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Who brought it?

SERVANT. A soldier.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Take it away and burn it.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Stay!—Now you're in such a hurry—it is some canting scrawl from the lieutenant, I suppose.—[Takes the letter.— Exit SERVANT.] Let me see:—ay, 'tis signed O'Connor.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Well, come read it out.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. [Reads.] Revenge is sweet.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. It begins so, does it? I'm glad of that; I'll let the dog know I'm of his opinion.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. [Reads.] And though disappointed of my designs upon your daughter, I have still the satisfaction of knowing I am revenged on her

unnatural father; for this morning, in your chocolate, I had the pleasure to administer to you a dose of poison!—Mercy on us!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. No tricks, Bridget; come, you know it is not so; you know it is a lie.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Read it yourself.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. [Reads.] Pleasure to administer a dose of poison!—Oh, horrible! Cut-throat villain!—Bridget!

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Lovee, stay, here's a postscript.—[Reads.] N.B. 'Tis not in the power of medicine to save you.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Odds my life, Bridget! why don't you call for help? I've lost my voice.—My brain is giddy—I shall burst, and no assistance.—John!—Laury!—John!

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. You see, lovee, what you have brought on yourself.

Re-enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. Your worship!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Stay, John; did you perceive anything in my chocolate cup this morning?

SERVANT. Nothing, your worship, unless it was a little grounds.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. What colour were they?

SERVANT. Blackish, your worship.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Ay, arsenic, black arsenic!—Why don't you run for Dr. Rosy, you rascal?

SERVANT. Now, sir?

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Oh, lovee, you may be sure it is in vain; let him

run for the lawyer to witness your will, my life.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Zounds! go for the doctor, you scoundrel. You are all confederate murderers.

SERVANT. Oh, here he is, your worship. [Exit.]

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Now, Bridget, hold your tongue, and let me see if my horrid situation be apparent.

Enter DOCTOR ROSY.

DR. ROSY. I have but just called to inform—hey! bless me, what's the matter with your worship?

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. There, he sees it already!—Poison in my face, in capitals! Yes, yes, I'm a sure job for the undertakers indeed!

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Oh! oh! alas, doctor!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Peace, Bridget!—Why, doctor, my dear old friend, do you really see any change in me?

DR. ROSY. Change! never was man so altered: how came these black spots on your nose?

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Spots on my nose!

DR. ROSY. And that wild stare in your right eye!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. In my right eye?

DR. ROSY. Ay, and, alack, alack, how you are swelled!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Swelled!

DR. ROSY. Ay, don't you think he is, madam?

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Oh! 'tis in vain to conceal it!—Indeed, lovee, you are as big again as you were this morning.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Yes, I feel it now—I'm poisoned!—Doctor, help me, for

the love of justice! Give me life to see my murderer hanged.

DR. ROSY. What?

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I'm poisoned, I say!

DR. ROSY. Speak out!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. What! can't you hear me?

DR. ROSY. Your voice is so low and hollow, as it were, I can't hear a word you say.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I'm gone then!—Hic jacet, many years one of his majestu's justices!

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Read, doctor!—Ah, lovee, the will!—Consider, my life, how soon you will be dead.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. No, Bridget, I shall die by inches.

DR. ROSY. I never heard such monstrous iniquity.—Oh, you are gone indeed, my friend! the mortgage of your little bit of clay is out, and the sexton has nothing to do but to close. We must all go, sooner or later—high and low—Death's a debt; his mandamus binds all alike—no bail, no demurrer.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Silence, Dr. Croaker! will you cure me or will you not?

DR. ROSY. Alas! my dear friend, it is not in my power; but I'll certainly see justice done on your murderer.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I thank you, my dear friend, but I had rather see it myself.

DR. ROSY. Ay, but if you recover, the villain will escape.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Will he? then indeed it would be a pity you should recover. I am so enraged against the villain, I can't bear the thought of his escaping the halter.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. That's very kind in you, my dear; but if it's the same

thing to you, my dear, I had as soon recover, notwithstanding.—What, doctor, no assistance!

DR. ROSY. Efacks, I can do nothing, but there's the German quack, whom you wanted to send from town; I met him at the next door, and I know he has antidotes for all poisons.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Fetch him, my dear friend, fetch him! I'll get him a diploma if he cures me.

DR. ROSY. Well, there's no time to be lost; you continue to swell immensely. [Exit.]

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. What, my dear, will you submit to be cured by a quack nostrum-monger? For my part, as much as I love you, I had rather follow you to your grave than see you owe your life to any but a regular-bred physician.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I'm sensible of your affection, dearest; and be assured nothing consoles me in my melancholy situation so much as the thoughts of leaving you behind.

Re-enter DOCTOR ROSY, with LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR disguised.

DR. ROSY. Great luck; met him passing by the door.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Metto dowsei pulsum.

DR. ROSY. He desires me to feel your pulse.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Can't he speak English?

DR. ROSY. Not a word.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Palio vivem mortem soonem.

DR. ROSY. He says you have not six hours to live.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. O mercy! does he know my distemper?

DR. ROSY. I believe not.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Tell him ’tis black arsenic they have given me.

DR. ROSY. Geneable illi arsnecca.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Pisonatus.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. What does he say?

DR. ROSY. He says you are poisoned.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. We know that; but what will be the effect?

DR. ROSY. Quid effectum?

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Diable tutellum.

DR. ROSY. He says you’ll die presently.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Oh, horrible! What, no antidote?

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Curum benakere bono fullum.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. What, does he say I must row in a boat to Fulham?

DR. ROSY. He says he’ll undertake to cure you for three thousand pounds.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Three thousand pounds! three thousand halters!—No, lovee, you shall never submit to such impositions; die at once, and be a customer to none of them.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. I won’t die, Bridget—I don’t like death.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Psha! there is nothing in it: a moment, and it is over.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Ay, but it leaves a numbness behind that lasts a plaguy long time.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. O my dear, pray consider the will.

Enter LAURETTA.

LAURETTA. O my father, what is this I hear?

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Quiddam seomriam deos tollam rosam.

DR. ROSY. The doctor is astonished at the sight of your fair daughter.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. How so?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Damsellum livivum suvum rislibani.

DR. ROSY. He says that he has lost his heart to her, and that if you will give him leave to pay his addresses to the young lady, and promise your consent to the union, if he should gain her affections, he will, on those conditions, cure you instantly, without fee or reward.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. The devil! did he say all that in so few words? What a fine language it is! Well, I agree, if he can prevail on the girl.— [Aside.] And that I am sure he never will.

DR. ROSY. Greal.

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Writhum bothum.

DR. ROSY. He says you must give this under your hand, while he writes you a miraculous receipt. [Both sit down to write.]

LAURETTA. Do, mamma, tell me the meaning of this.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Don't speak to me, girl.—Unnatural parent!

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. There, doctor; there's what he requires.

DR. ROSY. And here's your receipt: read it yourself.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Hey! what's here? plain English!

DR. ROSY. Read it out; a wondrous nostrum, I'll answer for it.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. [Reads.] In reading this you are cured, by your affectionate son-in-law, O'CONNOR.—Who in the name of Beelzebub, sirrah, who are you?

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR. Your affectionate son-in-law, O'Connor, and your very humble servant, Humphrey Hum.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. ’Tis false, you dog! you are not my son-in-law; for I’ll be poisoned again, and you shall be hanged.—I’ll die, sirrah, and leave Bridget my estate.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Ay, pray do, my dear, leave me your estate; I’m sure he deserves to be hanged.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. He does, you say!—Hark’ee, Bridget, you showed such a tender concern for me when you thought me poisoned, that, for the future, I am resolved never to take your advice again in anything.— [To LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR] So, do you hear, sir, you are an Irishman and a soldier, ain’t you?

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. I am sir, and proud of both.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. The two things on earth I most hate; so I tell you what—renounce your country and sell your commission, and I’ll forgive you.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Hark’ee, Mr. Justice—if you were not the father of my Lauretta, I would pull your nose for asking the first, and break your bones for desiring the second.

DR. ROSY. Ay, ay, you’re right.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Is he? then I’m sure I must be wrong.—Here, sir, I give my daughter to you, who are the most impudent dog I ever saw in my life.

LIEUTENANT O’CONNOR. Oh, sir, say what you please; with such a gift as Lauretta, every word is a compliment.

MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS. Well, my lovee, I think this will be a good subject for us to quarrel about the rest of our lives.

JUSTICE CREDULOUS. Why, truly, my dear,—I think so, though we are seldom at a loss for that.

DR. ROSY. This is all as it should be.—My Alexander, I give you joy, and you, my little god-daughter; and now my sincere wish is, that you may make just such a wife

as my poor dear Dolly. [Exeunt omnes.]

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ST. PATRICK'S DAY; OR, THE SCHEMING LIEUTENANT: A FARCE IN ONE ACT ***

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