

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Richard Brinsley Sheridan

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ACT I.

SCENE I.

Mr. and Mrs. **Dangle** at Breakfast, and reading Newspapers.

DANGLE (reading.)

"**Brutus** to **Lord North**." "Letter the second on the **State of the Army**" Pshaw! "To the first L dash D of the A dash Y." "Genuine Extract of a Letter from **St. Kitt's** ." "**Coxheath Intelligence**." "It is now confidently asserted that **Sir Charles Hardy**." Pshaw! Nothing but about the fleet, and the nation! and I hate all politics but theatrical politics. Where's the **Morning Chronicle**?

Mrs. DANGLE.

Yes, that's your gazette.

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DANGLE.

So, here we have it.

"Theatrical intelligence extraordinary," "We hear there is a new tragedy in rehearsal at Drury-Lane Theatre, call'd the **Spanish Armada**, said to be written by Mr. **Puff**, a gentleman well known in the theatrical world; if we may allow ourselves to give credit to the report of the performers, who, truth to say, are in general but indifferent judges, this piece abounds with the most striking and received beauties of modern composition" So! I am very glad my friend **Puff's** tragedy is in such forwardness. Mrs. Dangle, my dear, you will be very glad to hear that **Puff's** tragedy

Mrs. DANGLE.

Lord, Mr. Dangle, why will you plague me about such nonsense? Now the plays are begun I shall have no peace. Isn't it sufficient to make yourself ridiculous by your passion for the theatre, without continually teasing me to join you? Why can't you ride your hobby-horse without desiring to place me on a pillion behind you, Mr. Dangle?

DANGLE.

Nay, my dear, I was only going to read

Mrs. DANGLE.

No, no; you will never read any thing that's worth listening to: you hate to hear about your country; there are letters every day with Roman signatures, demonstrating the certainty of an invasion, and proving that the nation is utterly undone. But you never will read any thing to entertain one.

DANGLE.

What has a woman to do with politics, Mrs. Dangle?

Mrs. DANGLE.

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And what have you to do with the theatre, Mr. Dangle? Why should you affect the character of a Critic? I have no patience with you! haven't you made yourself the jest of all your acquaintance by your interference in matters where you have no business? Are not you call'd a theatrical Quidnunc, and a mock Mæcenas to second-hand authors?

DANGLE.

True; my power with the Managers is pretty notorious; but is it no credit to have applications from all quarters for my interest? From lords to recommend fiddlers, from ladies to get boxes, from authors to get answers, and from actors to get engagements.

Mrs. DANGLE.

Yes, truly; you have contrived to get a share in all the plague and trouble of theatrical property, without the profit, or even the credit of the abuse that attends it.

DANGLE.

I am sure, Mrs. Dangle, you are no loser by it, however; YOU have all the advantages of it: mightn't you, last winter, have had the reading of the new Pantomime a fortnight previous to its performance? And doesn't Mr. Fosbrook let you take places for a play before it is advertis'd, and set you down for a Box for every new piece through the season? And didn't my friend, Mr. Smatter, dedicate his last Farce to you at my particular request, Mrs. Dangle?

Mrs. DANGLE.

Yes; but wasn't the Farce damn'd, Mr. Dangle? And to be sure it is extremely pleasant to have one's house made the motley rendezvous of all the lackeys of literature! The very high change of trading authors and jobbing critics! Yes, my drawing-room is an absolute register-office for candidate actors, and poets without character; then to be continually alarmed with Misses and Ma'ams piping histeric changes on **Juliets** and **Dorindas**, **Pollys** and **Ophelias**; and the very furniture trembling at the probationary starts and unprovok'd rants of would-be **Richards** and **Hamlets**! And what is worse than all, now that the Manager has monopoliz'd the Opera-House, haven't we the Signors and Signoras calling here, sliding their smooth semibreves, and gargling glib divisions in their outlandish throats with foreign emissaries and French spies, for ought I know, disguised like fiddlers and figure dancers!

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DANGLE.

Mercy! Mrs. Dangle!

Mrs. DANGLE.

And to employ yourself so idly at such an alarming crisis as this too when, if you had the least spirit, you would have been at the head of one of the Westminster associations or trailing a volunteer pike in the Artillery Ground? But you o'my conscience, I believe if the French were landed to-morrow your first enquiry would be, whether they had brought a theatrical troop with them.

DANGLE.

Mrs. Dangle, it does not signify I say the stage is "the Mirror of Nature," and the actors are "the Abstract, and brief Chronicles of the Time:" and pray what can a man of sense study better? Besides, you will not easily persuade me that there is no credit or importance in being at the head of a band of critics, who take upon them to decide for the whole town, whose opinion and patronage all writers solicit, and whose recommendation no manager dares refuse!

Mrs. DANGLE.

Ridiculous! Both managers and authors of the least merit, laugh at your pretensions. The **Public** is their **Critic** without whose fair approbation they know no play can rest on the stage, and with whose applause they welcome such attacks as yours, and laugh at the malice of them, where they can't at the wit.

DANGLE.

Very well, Madam very well.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mr. Sneer, Sir, to wait on you.

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DANGLE.

O, shew Mr. Sneer up.

[Exit Servant.]

Plague on't, now we must appear loving and affectionate, or Sneer will hitch us into a story.

Mrs. DANGLE.

With all my heart; you can't be more ridiculous than you are.

DANGLE.

You are enough to provoke

Enter Mr. SNEER.

Hah! my dear Sneer, I am vastly glad to see you. My dear, here's Mr. Sneer.

Mrs. DANGLE.

Good morning to you, Sir.

DANGLE.

Mrs. Dangle and I have been diverting ourselves with the papers. Pray, Sneer, won't you go to Drury-lane theatre the first night of Puff's tragedy?

SNEER.

Yes; but I suppose one shan't be able to get in, for on the first night of a new piece they always fill the house with orders to support it. But here, Dangle, I have brought you two pieces, one of which you must exert yourself to make the managers accept, I can tell you that, for 'tis written by a person of consequence.

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DANGLE.

So! Now my plagues are beginning!

SNEER.

Aye, I am glad of it, for now you'll be happy. Why, my dear Dangle, it is a pleasure to see how you enjoy your volunteer fatigue, and your solicited solicitations.

DANGLE.

It's a great trouble yet, egad, its pleasant too. Why, sometimes of a morning, I have a dozen people call on me at breakfast time, whose faces I never saw before, nor ever desire to see again.

SNEER.

That must be very pleasant indeed!

DANGLE.

And not a week but I receive fifty letters, and not a line in them about any business of my own.

SNEER.

An amusing correspondence!

DANGLE (reading.)

"Bursts into tears, and exit." What, is this a tragedy!

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SNEER.

No, that's a genteel comedy, not a translation only *taken from the French*; it is written in a stile which they have lately tried to run down; the true sentimental, and nothing ridiculous in it from the beginning to the end.

Mrs. DANGLE.

Well, if they had kept to that, I should not have been such an enemy to the stage, there was some edification to be got from those pieces, Mr. Sneer!

SNEER.

I am quite of your opinion, Mrs. Dangle; the theatre in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment!

Mrs. DANGLE.

It would have been more to the credit of the Managers to have kept it in the other line.

SNEER.

Undoubtedly, Madam, and hereafter perhaps to have had it recorded, that in the midst of a luxurious and dissipated age, they preserv'd *two* houses in the capital, where the conversation was always moral at least, if not entertaining!

DANGLE.

Now, egad, I think the worst alteration is in the nicety of the audience. No double entendre, no smart inuendo admitted; even Vanburgh and Congreve obliged to undergo a bungling reformation!

SNEER.

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Yes, and our prudery in this respect is just on a par with the artificial bashfulness of a courtesan, who increases the blush upon her cheek in an exact proportion to the diminution of her modesty.

DANGLE.

Sneer can't even give the Public a good word! But what have we here? This seems a very odd

SNEER.

O, that's a comedy, on a very new plan; replete with wit and mirth, yet of a most seriour moral! You see it is call'd "**The Reformed Housebreaker**;" where, by the mere force of humour, **Housebreaking** is put into so ridiculous a light, that if the piece has its proper run, I have no doubt but that bolts and bars will be entirely useless by the end of the season.

DANGLE.

Egad, this is new indeed!

SNEER.

Yes; it is written by a particular friend of mine, who has discovered that the follies and foibles of society, are subjects unworthy the notice of the Comic Muse, who should be taught to stoop only at the greater vices and blacker crimes of humanity gibbeting capital offences in five acts, and pillorying petty larcenles in two. In short, his idea is to dramatize the penal laws, and make the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey.

DANGLE.

It is truly moral.

Enter SERVANT.

Sir Fretful Plagiary, Sir.

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DANGLE.

Beg him to walk up. [*Exit Servant.*] Now, Mrs. Dangle, Sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs. DANGLE.

I confess he is a favourite of mine, because every body else abuses him.

SNEER.

Very much to the credit of your charity, Madam, if not of your judgment.

DANGLE.

But, egad, he allows no merit to any author but himself, that's the truth on't tho' he's my friend.

SNEER.

Never. He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six-and-thirty: and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works, can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

DANGLE.

Very true, egad tho' he's my friend.

SNEER.

Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures; tho', at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorch'd parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism: yet is he so covetous of popularity, that he

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had rather be abused than not mentioned at all.

DANGLE.

There's no denying it tho' he is my friend.

SNEER.

You have read the tragedy he has just finished, haven't you?

DANGLE.

O yes; he sent it to me yesterday.

SNEER.

Well, and you think it execrable, don't you?

DANGLE.

Why between ourselves, egad I must own tho' he's my friend that it is one of the most He's here [*Aside*] finished and most admirable perform [*Sir Fretful without.*] Mr. Sneer with him, did you say?

Enter Sir FRETFUL.

Ah, my dear friend! Egad, we were just speaking of your Tragedy. Admirable, Sir Fretful, admirable!

SNEER.

You never did any thing beyond it, Sir Fretful never in your life.

Sir FRETFUL.

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You make me extremely happy; for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there isn't a man in the world whose judgment I value as I do yours. And Mr. Dangle's.

Mrs. DANGLE.

They are only laughing at you, Sir Fretful; for it was but just now that

DANGLE.

Mrs. Dangle! Ah, Sir Fretful, you know Mrs. Dangle. My friend Sneer was rallying just now He knows how she admires you, and

Sir FRETFUL.

O Lord I am sure Mr. Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to A damn'd double-faced fellow!

[Aside.

DANGLE.

Yes, yes, Sneer will jest but a better humour'd

Sir FRETFUL.

O, I know

DANGLE.

He has a ready turn for ridicule his wit costs him nothing.

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Sir FRETFUL.

No, egad, or I should wonder how he came by it.

[Aside.

Mrs. DANGLE.

Because his jest is always at the expence of his friend.

DANGLE.

But, Sir Fretful, have you sent your play to the managers yet? or can I be of any service to you?

Sir FRETFUL.

No, no, I thank you; I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it. I thank you tho'. I sent it to the manager of **Covent-Garden Theatre** this morning.

SNEER.

I should have thought now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at **Drury-Lane**.

Sir FRETFUL.

O lud! no never send a play there while I live harkee! *[Whispers Sneer.]*

SNEER.

Writes himself! I know he does

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Sir FRETFUL.

I say nothing I take away from no man's merit am hurt at no man's good fortune I say nothing. But this I will say through all my knowledge of life, I have observed that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy!

SNEER.

I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir FRETFUL.

Besides I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.

SNEER.

What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary?

Sir FRETFUL.

Steal! to be sure they may; and, egad, serve your best thoughts as gypsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for their own.

SNEER.

But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and **he**, you know, never

Sir FRETFUL.

That's no security. A dext'rous plagiarist may do any thing. Why, Sir, for ought I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

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SNEER.

That might be done, I dare be sworn.

Sir FRETFUL.

And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole.

DANGLE.

If it succeeds.

Sir FRETFUL.

Aye, but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.

SNEER.

I'll tell you how you may hurt him more

Sir FRETFUL.

How!

SNEER.

Swear he wrote it.

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Sir FRETFUL.

Plague on't now, Sneer, I shall take it ill. I believe you want to take away my character as an author!

SNEER.

Then I am sure you ought to be very much oblig'd to me.

Sir FRETFUL.

Hey! Sir!

DANGLE.

O you know, he never means what he says.

Sir FRETFUL.

Sincerely then you do like the piece?

SNEER.

Wonderfully!

Sir FRETFUL.

But come now, there must be something that you think might be mended, hey? Mr. Dangle, has nothing struck you?

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DANGLE.

Why faith, it is but an ungracious thing for the most part to

Sir FRETFUL.

With most authors it is just so indeed; they are in general strangely tenacious! But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me; for what is the purpose of shewing a work to a friend, if you don't mean to profit by his opinion?

SNEER.

Very true. Why then, tho' I seriously admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection; which, if you'll give me leave, I'll mention.

Sir FRETFUL.

Sir, you can't oblige me more.

SNEER.

I think it wants incident.

Sir FRETFUL.

Good God! you surprize me! wants incident!

SNEER.

Yes; I own I think the incidents are too few.

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Sir FRETFUL.

Good God! Believe me, Mr. Sneer, there is no person for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference. But I protest to you, Mr. Sneer, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded. My dear Dangle, how does it strike you?

DANGLE.

Really I can't agree with my friend Sneer. I think the plot quite sufficient; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If I might venture to suggest any thing, it is that the interest rather falls off in the fifth.

Sir FRETFUL.

Rises; I believe you mean, Sir.

DANGLE.

No; I don't upon my word.

Sir FRETFUL.

Yes, yes, you do upon my soul it certainly don't fall off, I assure you No, no, it don't fall off.

DANGLE.

Now, Mrs. Dangle, didn't you say it struck you in the same light?

Mrs. DANGLE.

No, indeed, I did not I did not see a fault in any part of the play from the beginning to the end.

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Sir FRETFUL.

Upon my soul the women are the best judges after all!

Mrs. DANGLE.

Or if I made any objection, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece; but that I was afraid it was, on the whole, a little too long.

Sir FRETFUL.

Pray, Madam, do you speak as to duration of time; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out?

Mrs. DANGLE.

O Lud! no. I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir FRETFUL.

Then I am very happy very happy indeed, because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play: I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste; but, on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs. DANGLE.

Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr. Dangle's drawling manner of reading it to me.

Sir FRETFUL.

O, if Mr. Dangle read it! that's quite another affair! But I assure you, Mrs. Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and an half, I'll undertake to read you the whole from beginning to end, with the Prologue and

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Epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs. DANGLE.

I hope to see it on the stage next.

DANGLE.

Well, Sir Fretful, I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the news–paper criticisms as you do of ours.

Sir FRETFUL.

The **News–papers!** Sir, they are the most villainous licentious abominable infernal Not that I ever read them No I make it a rule never to look into a news–paper.

DANGLE.

You are quite right for it certainly must hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take

Sir FRETFUL.

No! quite the contrary; their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric I like it of all things. An author's reputation is only in danger from their support.

Mr. SNEER.

Why that's true and that attack now on you the other day

Sir FRETFUL.

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What? where?

DANGLE.

Aye, you mean in a paper of Thursday; it was compleatly ill–natur'd to be sure.

Sir FRETFUL.

O, so much the better. Ha! ha! ha! I wou'dn't have it otherwise.

DANGLE.

Certainly it is only to be laugh'd at; for

Sir FRETFUL.

You don't happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you?

SNEER.

Pray, Dangle Sir Fretful seems a little anxious

Sir FRETFUL.

O lud, no! anxious, not I, not the least. I But one may as well hear you know.

DANGLE.

Sneer, do *you* recollect? Make out something.

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[Aside.

SNEER.

I will, *[to Dangle.]* Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Sir FRETFUL.

Well, and pray now Not that it signifies what might the gentleman say?

SNEER.

Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention, or original genius whatever; tho' you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir FRETFUL.

Ha! ha! ha! very good!

SNEER.

That as to **Comedy**, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your common place-book where stray jokes, and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the LOST-and-STOLEN-OFFICE.

Sir FRETFUL.

Ha! ha! ha! very pleasant!

SNEER.

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Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to *steal* with taste. But that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir FRETFUL.

Ha! ha!

SNEER.

In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares thro' the fantastic encumbrance of it's fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms!

Sir FRETFUL.

Ha! ha!

SNEER.

That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your stile, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsey-wolsey; while your imitations of Shakespeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's Page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir FRETFUL.

Ha!

SNEER.

In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating; so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize!

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Sir FRETFUL. (after great agitation.)

Now another person would be vex'd at this.

SNEER.

Oh! but I wou'dn't have told you, only to divert you.

Sir FRETFUL.

I know it I *am* diverted, Ha! ha! ha! not the least invention! Ha! ha! ha! very good! very good!

SNEER.

Yes no genius! Ha! ha! ha!

DANGLE.

A severe rogue! Ha! ha! ha! But you are quite right, Sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir FRETFUL.

To be sure for if there is any thing to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it, and if it is abuse, why one is always sure to hear of it from one damn'd good natur'd friend or another!

Enter SERVANT.

Sir, there is an Italian gentleman, with a French Interpreter, and three young ladies, and a dozen musicians, who say they are sent by **Lady Rondeau** and **Mrs. Fuge**.

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DANGLE.

Gadso! they come by appointment. Dear Mrs. Dangle do let them know I'll see them directly.

Mrs. DANGLE.

You know, Mr. Dangle, I shan't understand a word they say.

DANGLE.

But you hear there's an interpreter.

Mrs. DANGLE.

Well, I'll try to endure their complaisance till you come.

[Exit.]

SERVANT.

And Mr. **Puff**, Sir, has sent word that the last rehearsal is to be this morning, and that he'll call on you presently.

DANGLE.

That's true I shall certainly be at home. *[Exit Servant.]* Now, Sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer Egad, Mr. **Puff's** your man.

Sir FRETFUL.

Pshaw! Sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it?

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DANGLE.

True, I had forgot that. But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr. Sneer

Sir FRETFUL.

Zounds! no, Mr. Dangle, don't I tell you these things never fret me in the least.

DANGLE.

Nay, I only thought

Sir FRETFUL.

And let me tell you, Mr. Dangle, 'tis damn'd affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt, when I tell you I am not.

SNEER.

But why so warm, Sir Fretful?

Sir FRETFUL.

Gadslife! Mr. Sneer, you are as absurd as Dangle; how often must I repeat it to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the damn'd nonsense you have been repeating to me! and let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen and then your disrespect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms and I shall treat it with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt and so your servant.

[Exit.]

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SNEER.

Ha! ha! ha! Poor Sir Fretful! Now will he go and vent his philosophy in anonymous abuse of all modern critics and authors But, Dangle, you must get your friend **Puff** to take me to the rehearsal of his tragedy.

DANGLE.

I'll answer for't, he'll thank you for desiring it. But come and help me to judge of this musical family; they are recommended by people of consequence, I assure you.

SNEER.

I am at your disposal the whole morning but I thought you had been a decided critic in musick, as well as in literature?

DANGLE.

So I am but I have a bad ear. Efaith, Sneer, tho', I am afraid we were a little too severe on Sir Fretful tho' he is my friend.

SNEER.

Why, 'tis certain, that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of any writer, is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve; but where a base and personal malignity usurps the place of literary emulation, the aggressor deserves neither quarter nor pity.

DANGLE.

That's true egad! tho' he's my friend!

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SCENE II.

A Drawing Room, Harpsichord, &c. Italian Family, French Interpreter, Mrs. Dangle and Servants discovered.

INTERPRETER.

Je dis madame, ja'i l'honneur to *introduce* & de vous demander votre protection pour le Signor **Patticcio Retornello** & pour sa charmante famille.

Signor PASTICCIO.

Ah! Vosignoria noi vi preghiamo di favoritevi colla vostra protezione.

1st. DAUGHTER.

Vosignoria fatevi questi grazie.

2d DAUGHTER.

Si Signora.

INTERPRETER.

Madame *me interpret*. C'est à dire in English quils vous prient de leur faire l'honneur

Mrs. DANGLE.

I say again, gentlemen, I don't understand a word you say.

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Signor PASTICCIO.

Questo Signore spiegheró.

INTERPRETER.

Oui me interpret. nous avons les lettres de recommandation pour Monsieur Dangle de

Mrs. DANGLE.

Upon my word, Sir, I don't understand you.

Signor PASTICCIO.

La **Contessa Rondeau** e nostra padrona.

3d DAUGHTER.

Si, padre, & mi **Ladi Fuge**.

INTERPRETER.

O! me interpret. Madame, ils disent *in English* Qu'ils ont l'honneur d'etre proteges de ces Demes. *You understand?*

Mrs. DANGLE.

No, Sir, no understand!

Enter DANGLE and SNEER.

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INTERPRETER.

Ah voici Monsieur Dangle!

All ITALIANS.

A! Signor Dangle!

Mrs. DANGLE.

Mr. Dangle, here are two very civil gentlemen trying to make themselves understood, and I don't know which is the interpreter.

DANGLE.

Ebien!

INTERPRETER. Speaking together.

Monsieur Dangle le grand bruit de vos talents pour la critique & de votre interest avec Messieurs les Directeurs a tous les Theatres.

Signor PASTICCIO. Speaking together.

Vosignoria siete si famoso par la vostra conoscensa e vostra interessa colla le Direttore da

DANGLE.

Egad I think the Interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two!

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

Why I thought, Dangle, you had been an admirable linguist!

DANGLE.

So I am, if they would not talk so damn'd fast.

SNEER.

Well I'll explain that the less time we lose in hearing them the better, for that I suppose is what they are brought here for.

[Sneer speaks to Sig. Past. They sing trios, &c. Dangle beating out of time. Servant enters and whispers Dangle.]

DANGLE.

Shew him up.

[Exit Servant.]

Bravo! admirable! bravissimo! admirablissimo! Ah! Sneer! where will you find such as these voices in England?

SNEER.

Not easily.

DANGLE.

But **Puff** is coming. Signor and little Signora's obligatissimo! Sposa Signora Dangelena Mrs. Dangle, shall I beg you to offer them some refreshments, and take their address in the next room.

[Exit Mrs. Dangle with the Italians and Interpreter ceremoniously.]

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Re-enter SERVANT.

Mr. **Puff**, Sir!

DANGLE.

My dear **Puff**!

Enter PUFF.

My dear Dangle, how is it with you?

DANGLE.

Mr. Sneer, give me leave to introduce Mr. **Puff** to you.

PUFF.

Mr. Sneer is this? Sir, he is a gentleman whom I have long panted for the honour of knowing a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendant judgment

SNEER.

Dear Sir

DANGLE.

Nay, don't be modest, Sneer, my friend **Puff** only talks to you in the stile of his profession.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

His profession!

PUFF.

Yes, Sir; I make no secret of the trade I follow among friends and brother authors, Dangle knows I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself *vivâ voce*. I am, Sir, a Practitioner in Panegyric, or to speak more plainly a Professor of the Art of Puffing, at your service or any body else's.

SNEER.

Sir, you are very obliging! I believe, Mr. Puff, I have often admired your talents in the daily prints.

PUFF.

Yes, Sir, I flatter myself I do as much business in that way as any six of the fraternity in town Devilish hard work all the summer Friend Dangle? never work'd harder! But harkee, the Winter Managers were a little sore I believe.

DANGLE.

No I believe they took it all in good part.

PUFF.

Aye! Then that must have been affectation in them, for egad, there were some of the attacks which there was no laughing at!

SNEER.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Aye, the humourous ones. But I should think Mr. Puff, that Authors would in general be able to do this sort of work for themselves.

PUFF.

Why yes but in a clumsy way. Besides, we look on that as an encroachment, and so take the opposite side. I dare say now you conceive half the very civil paragraphs and advertisements you see, to be written by the parties concerned, or their friends? No such thing Nine out of ten, manufactured by me in the way of business.

SNEER.

Indeed!

PUFF.

Even the Auctioneers now, the Auctioneers I say, tho' the rogues have lately got some credit for their language not an article of the merit their's! take them out of their Pulpits, and they are as dull as Catalogues. No, Sir; 'twas I first enrich'd their style 'twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyric superlatives, each epithet rising above the other like the Bidders in their own Auction-rooms! From ME they learn'd to enlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor: by **me** too their inventive faculties were called forth. Yes Sir, by ME they were instructed to clothe ideal walls with gratuitous fruits to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary groves to teach courteous shrubs to nod their approbation of the grateful soil! or on emergencies to raise upstart oaks, where there never had been an acorn; to create a delightful vicinage without the assistance of a neighbour; or fix the temple of Hygeia in the fens of Lincolnshire!

DANGLE.

I am sure, you have done them infinite service; for now, when a gentleman is ruined, he parts with his house with some credit.

SNEER.

Service! if they had any gratitude, they would erect a statue to him, they would figure him as a presiding Mercury, the god of traffic and fiction, with a hammer in his hand instead of a caduceus. But pray, Mr. Puff, what first put you on exercising your talents in this way?

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

Egad sir, sheer necessity the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention: you must know Mr. Sneer, that from the first time I tried my hand at an advertisement, my success was such, that for sometime after, I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

SNEER.

How, pray?

PUFF.

Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

SNEER.

By your misfortunes!

PUFF.

Yes Sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it.

SNEER.

From sickness and misfortunes! You practised as a Doctor, and an Attorney at once?

PUFF.

No egad, both maladies and miseries were my own.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

Hey! what the plague!

DANGLE.

'Tis true, efaith.

PUFF.

Harkee! By advertisements "To the charitable and humane!" and "to those whom Providence hath blessed with affluence!"

SNEER.

Oh, I understand you.

PUFF.

And in truth, I deserved what I got, for I suppose never man went thro' such a series of calamities in the same space of time! Sir, I was five times made a bankrupt, and reduced from a state of affluence, by a train of unavoidable misfortunes! then Sir, tho' a very industrious tradesman, I was twice burnt out, and lost my little all, both times! I lived upon those fires a month. I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs! That told very well, for I had the case strongly attested, and went about to collect the subscriptions myself.

DANGLE.

Egad, I believe that was when you first called on me.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

In November last? O no! I was at that time, a close prisoner in the Marshalsea, for a debt benevolently contracted to serve a friend! I was afterwards, twice tapped for a dropsy, which declined into a very profitable consumption! I was then reduced to O no then, I became a widow with six helpless children, after having had eleven husbands pressed, and being left every time eight months gone with child, and without money to get me into an hospital!

SNEER.

And you bore all with patience, I make no doubt?

PUFF.

Why, yes, tho' I made some occasional attempts at *felo de se*; but as I did not find those *rash actions* answer, I left off killing myself very soon. Well, Sir, at last, what with bankruptcies, fires, gouts, dropsies, imprisonments, and other valuable calamities, having got together a pretty handsome sum, I determined to quit a business which had always gone rather against my conscience, and in a more liberal way still to indulge my talents for fiction and embellishment, thro' my favourite channels of diurnal communication and so, Sir, you have my history.

SNEER.

Most obligingly communicative indeed; and your confession if published, might certainly serve the cause of true charity, by rescuing the most useful channels of appeal to benevolence from the cant of imposition. But surely, Mr. **Puff**, there is no great *mystery* in your present profession?

PUFF.

Mystery! Sir, I will take upon me to say the matter was never scientifically treated, nor reduced to rule before.

SNEER.

Reduced to rule?

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

O lud, Sir! you are very ignorant, I am afraid. Yes Sir, **Puffing** is of various sorts the principal are, The **Puff direct** the **Puff preliminary** the **Puff collateral** the **Puff collusive**, and the **Puff oblique**, or **Puff by implication**. These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of **Letter to the Editor Occasional Anecdote Impartial Critique Observation** from **Correspondent** , or **Advertisement from the Party**.

SNEER.

The puff direct, I can conceive

PUFF.

O yes, that's simple enough, for instance A new Comedy or Farce is to be produced at one of the Theatres (though by the bye they don't bring out half what they ought to do) The author, suppose Mr. Smatter, or Mr. Dapper or any particular friend of mine very well; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received I have the plot from the author, and only add Characters strongly drawn highly coloured hand of a master fund of genuine humour mine of invention neat dialogue attic salt! Then for the performance Mr. **Dodd** was astonishingly great in the character of **Sir Harry**! That universal and judicious actor Mr. **Palmer** , perhaps never appeared to more advantage than in the **Colonel** ; but it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr. **King**! Indeed he more than merited those repeated bursts of applause which he drew from a most brilliant and judicious audience! As to the scenery The miraculous power of Mr. **De Louthembourg's** pencil are universally acknowledged! In short, we are at a loss which to admire most, the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and liberality of the managers the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers!

SNEER.

That's pretty well indeed, Sir.

PUFF.

O cool quite cool to what I sometimes do.

SNEER.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

And do you think there are any who are influenced by this.

PUFF.

O, lud! yes, Sir; the number of those who go thro' the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed!

SNEER.

Well, Sir, the **Puff Preliminary**?

PUFF.

O that, Sir, does well in the form of a *Caution*. In a matter of gallantry now Sir **Flimsy Gossimer**, wishes to be well with **Lady Fanny Fete** He applies to me I open trenches for him with a paragraph in the Morning Post. It is recommended to the beautiful and accomplished Lady F four stars F dash E to be on her guard against that dangerous character, Sir F dash G; who, however pleasing and insinuating his manners may be, is certainly not remarkable for the *constancy of his attachments* ! in Italics. Here you see, Sir **Flimsy Gossimer** is introduced to the particular notice of Lady **Fanny** who, perhaps never thought of him before she finds herself publickly cautioned to avoid him, which naturally makes her desirous of seeing him; the observation of their acquaintance causes a pretty kind of mutual embarrassment, this produces a sort of sympathy of interest which, if Sir Flimsy is unable to improve effectually, he at least gains the credit of having their names mentioned together, by a particular set, and in a particular way, which nine times out of ten is the full accomplishment of modern gallantry!

DANGLE.

Egad, Sneer, you will be quite an adept in the business.

PUFF.

Now, Sir, the **Puff Collateral** is much used as an appendage to advertisements, and may take the form of anecdote. Yesterday as the celebrated **George Bon-Mot** was sauntering down St. James's-street, he met the lively Lady **Mary Myrtle**, coming out of the Park, 'Good God, **Lady Mary**, I'm surprised to meet you in a white jacket, for I expected never to have seen you, but in a full-trimmed uniform, and a light-horseman's cap!' 'Heavens, **George**, where could you have learned that?' 'Why, replied the wit, I just saw a print of you, in a new publication called The **Camp Magazine**, which, by the bye, is a devilish clever thing, and is sold at No. 3, on the

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

right hand of the way, two doors from the printing-office, the corner of Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row, price only one shilling!

SNEER.

Very ingenious indeed!

PUFF.

But the **Puff Collusive** is the newest of any; for it acts in the disguise of determined hostility. It is much used by bold booksellers and enterprising poets. An indignant correspondent observes that the new poem called **Beelzebub's Cotillion, or Proserpine's Fete Champetre**, is one of the most unjustifiable performances he ever read! The severity with which certain characters are handled is quite shocking! And as there are many descriptions in it too warmly coloured for female delicacy, the shameful avidity with which this piece is bought by all people of fashion, is a reproach on the taste of the times, and a disgrace to the delicacy of the age! Here you see the two strongest inducements are held forth; First, that nobody ought to read it; and secondly, that every body buys it; on the strength of which, the publisher boldly prints the tenth edition, before he had sold ten of the first; and then establishes it by threatening himself with the pillory, or absolutely indicting himself for **Scan. Mag.!**

DANGLE.

Ha! ha! ha! 'gad I know it is so.

PUFF.

As to the **Puff Oblique, or Puff by Implication**, it is too various and extensive to be illustrated by an instance; it attracts in titles, and presumes in patents; it lurks in the *limitation* of a subscription, and invites in the assurance of croud and incommodation at public places; it delights to draw forth concealed merit, with a most disinterested assiduity; and sometimes wears a countenance of smiling censure and tender reproach. It has a wonderful memory for Parliamentary Debates, and will often give the whole speech of a favoured member, with the most flattering accuracy. But, above all, it is a great dealer in reports and suppositions. It has the earliest intelligence of intended preferments that will reflect *honor* on the *patrons*; and embryo promotions of modest gentlemen who know nothing of the matter themselves. It can hint a ribband for implied services, in the air of a common report; and with the carelessness of a casual paragraph, suggest officers into commands, to which they have no pretension but their wishes. This, Sir, is the last principal class in the **Art of Puffing** An art which I hope you will now agree with me, is of the highest dignity yielding a tablature of benevolence and public spirit; befriending equally trade, gallantry, criticism, and politics: the applause of genius! the register of charity! the triumph of heroism! the self defence of contractors! the fame of orators! and the gazette of ministers!

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

Sir, I am compleatly a convert both to the importance and ingenuity of your profession; and now, Sir, there is but one thing which can possibly encrease my respect for you, and that is, your permitting me to be present this morning at the rehearsal of your new trage

PUFF.

Hush, for heaven's sake. *My* tragedy! Egad, Dangle, I take this very ill you know how apprehensive I am of being known to be the author.

DANGLE.

'Efaith I would not have told but it's in the papers, and your name at length in the Morning Chronicle.

PUFF.

Ah! those damn'd editors never can keep a secret! Well, Mr. Sneer no doubt you will do me great honour I shall be infinitely happy highly flattered

DANGLE.

I believe it must be near the time shall we go together.

FUFF.

No; It will not be yet this hour, for they are always late at that theatre: besides, I must meet you there, for I have some little matters here to send to the papers, and a few paragraphs to scribble before I go.

[Looking at memorandums.]

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Here is 'a CONSCIENTIOUS **Baker**, on the Subject of the Army Bread;' and 'a **Detester of visible Brick-work**, in favor of the new invented Stucco;' both in the style of **Junius**, and promised for to-morrow. The Thames navigation too is at a stand. **Misomud** or **Anti-shoal** must go to work again directly. Here too are some political memorandums I see; aye To take **Paul Jones**, and get the **Indiamen** out of the **Shannon** reinforce **Byron** compel the **Dutch** to so! I must do that in the evening papers, or reserve it for the Morning Herald, for I know that I have undertaken to-morrow; besides, to establish the unanimity of the fleet in the Public Advertiser, and to shoot **Charles Fox** in the Morning Post. So, egad, I ha'n't a moment to lose!

DANGLE.

Well! we'll meet in the Green Room.

[Exeunt severally.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The THEATRE.

Enter DANGLE, PUFF, and SNEER, as before the Curtain.

PUFF.

No, no, Sir; what Shakespeare says of ACTORS may be better applied to the purpose of PLAYS; *they* ought to be 'the abstract and brief Chronicles of the times.' Therefore when history, and particularly the history of our own country, furnishes any thing like a case in point, to the time in which an author writes, if he knows his own interest, he will take advantage of it; so, Sir, I call my tragedy The **Spanish Armada**; and have laid the scene before **Tilbury Fort**.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

A most happy thought certainly!

DANGLE.

Egad it was I told you so. But pray now I dont understand how you have contrived to introduce any love into it.

PUFF.

Love! Oh nothing so easy; for it is a received point among poets, that where history gives you a good heroic out-line for a play, you may fill up with a little love at your own discretion; in doing which, nine times out of ten, you only make up a deficiency in the private history of the times. Now I rather think I have done this with some success.

SNEER.

No scandal about Queen **Elizabeth**, I hope?

PUFF.

O Lud! no, no. I only suppose the Governor of Tilbury Fort's daughter to be in love with the son of the Spanish Admiral.

SNEER.

Oh, is that all?

DANGLE.

Excellent, Efaith! I see it at once. But won't this appear rather improbable?

ACT II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

To be sure it will but what the plague! a play is not to shew occurrences that happen every day, but things just so strange, that tho' they never *did*, they *might* happen.

SNEER.

Certainly nothing is unnatural, that is not physically impossible.

PUFF.

Very true and for that matter **Don Ferolo Wiskerandos** for that's the lover's name, might have been over here in the train of the Spanish Ambassador; or **Tilburina**, for that is the lady's name, might have been in love with him, from having heard his character, or seen his picture; or from knowing that he was the last man in the world she ought to be in love with or for any other good female reason. However, Sir, the fact is, that tho' she is but a Knight's daughter, egad! she is in love like any Princess!

DANGLE.

Poor young lady! I feel for her already! for I can conceive how great the conflict must be between her passion and her duty; her love for her country, and her love for **Don Ferolo Wiskerandos!**

PUFF.

O amazing! her poor susceptible heart is swayed to and fro, by contending passions like

Enter UNDER PROMPTER.

UNDER PROMPTER.

Sir, the scene is set, and every thing is ready to begin if you please.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

'Egad; then we'll lose no time.

UNDER PROMPTER.

Tho' I believe, Sir, you will find it very short, for all the performers have profited by the kind permission you granted them.

PUFF.

Hey! what!

UNDER PROMPTER.

You know, Sir, you gave them leave to cut out or omit whatever they found heavy or unnecessary to the plot, and I must own they have taken very liberal advantage of your indulgence.

PUFF.

Well, well. They are in general very good judges; and I know I am luxuriant. Now, Mr. **Hopkins**, as soon as you please.

UNDER PROMPTER to the Musick.

Gentlemen, will you play a few bars of something, just to

PUFF.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Aye, that's right, for as we have the scenes, and dresses, egad, we'll go to't, as if it was the first night's performance; but you need not mind stopping between the acts.

[Exit Under Prompter.]

(Orchestra play. Then the Bell rings.)

Soh! stand clear gentlemen. Now you know there will be a cry of down! down! hats off! silence! Then up curtain, and let us see what our painters have done for us.

SCENE II.

*The Curtain rises and discovers **Tilbury Fort** . Two Centinels asleep.*

DANGLE.

Tilbury Fort! very fine indeed!

PUFF.

Now, what do you think I open with?

SNEER.

Faith, I can't guess

PUFF.

A clock. Hark! (*clock strikes.*) I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience it also marks the time, which is four o'clock in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and a great deal about gilding the eastern hemisphere.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

DANGLE.

But pray, are the centinels to be asleep?

PUFF.

Fast as watchmen.

SNEER.

Isn't that odd tho' at such an alarming crisis?

PUFF.

To be sure it is, but smaller things must give way to a striking scene at the opening; that's a rule. And the case is, that two great men are coming to this very spot to begin the piece; now, it is not to be supposed they would open their lips, if these fellows were watching them, so, egad, I must either have sent them off their posts, or set them asleep.

SNEER.

O that accounts for it! But tell us, who are these coming?

PUFF.

These are they **Sir Walter Raleigh**, and **Sir Christopher Hatton**. You'll know Sir **Christopher**, by his turning out his toes famous you know for his dancing. I like to preserve all the little traits of character. Now attend.

Enter Sir WALTER RALEIGH and Sir CHRISTOPHER HATTON.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"True, gallant Raleigh!

DANGLE.

What, they had been talking before?

PUFF.

O, yes; all the way as they came along. I beg pardon gentlemen [*to the Actors*] but these are particular friends of mine, whose remarks may be of great service to us. Don't mind interrupting them whenever any thing strikes you. [*To Sneer and Dangle.*]

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"True, gallant Raleigh!

"But O, thou champion of thy country's fame,

"There *is* a question which I yet must ask;

"A question, which I never ask'd before

"What mean these mighty armaments?

"This general muster? and this throng of chiefs?

SNEER.

Pray, Mr. Puff, how came Sir Christopher Hatton never to ask that question before?

PUFF.

What, before the Play began? how the plague could he?

DANGLE.

That's true efaith!

PUFF.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

But you will hear what he thinks of the matter.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"Alas, my noble friend, when I behold
"Yon tented plains in martial symmetry
"Array'd. When I count o'er yon glittering lines
"Of crested warriors, where the proud steeds neigh,
"And valor-breathing trumpet's shrill appeal,
"Responsive vibrate on my listning ear;
"When virgin majesty herself I view,
"Like her protecting Pallas veil'd in steel,
"With graceful confidence exhort to arms!
"When briefly all I hear or see bears stamp
"Of martial vigilance, and stern defence,
"I cannot but surmise. Forgive, my friend,
"If the conjecture's rash I cannot but
"Surmise. The state some danger apprehends!

SNEER.

A very cautious conjecture that.

PUFF.

Yes, that's his character; not to give an opinion, but on secure grounds now then.

"SIR WALTER.

"O, most accomplished Christopher.

PUFF.

He calls him by his christian name, to shew that they are on the most familiar terms.

"SIR WALTER.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"O most accomplish'd Christopher, I find
"Thy staunch sagacity still tracks the future,
"In the fresh print of the o'ertaken past.

PUFF.

Figurative!

"SIR WALTER.

"Thy fears are just.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"But where? whence? when? and what
"The danger is Methinks I fain would learn.

"SIR WALTER.

"You know, my friend, scarce two revolving suns,
"And three revolving moons, have closed their course,
"Since haughty **Philip**, in despite of peace,
"With hostile hand hath struck at **England's** trade.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"I know it well.

"SIR WALTER.

"**Philip** you know is proud, **Iberia's** king!

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"He is.

"SIR WALTER.

" His subjects in base bigotry
"And Catholic oppression held, while we
"You know, the protestant persuasion hold.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"We do.

"SIR WALTER.

"You know beside, his boasted armament,
"The fam'd Armada, by the Pope baptized,
"With purpose to invade these realms

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

" Is sailed,
"Our last advices so report.

"SIR WALTER.

"While the Iberian Admiral's chief hope,
"His darling son

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

" Ferolo Wiskerandos hight

"SIR WALTER.

"The same by chance a pris'ner hath been ta'en,
"And in this fort of Tilbury

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

" Is now
"Confin'd, 'tis true, and oft from yon tall turrets top
"I've mark'd the youthful Spaniard's haughty mien
"Unconquer'd, tho' in chains!

"SIR WALTER.

"You also know

DANGLE.

Mr. Puff, as he *knows* all this, why does Sir Walter go on telling him?

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

But the audience are not supposed to know any thing of the matter, are they?

SNEER.

True, but I think you manage ill: for there certainly appears no reason why Sir Walter should be so communicative.

PUFF.

For, egad now, that is one of the most ungrateful observations I ever heard for the less inducement he has to tell all this, the more I think, you ought to be oblig'd to him; for I am sure you'd know nothing of the matter without it.

DANGLE.

That's very true, upon my word.

PUFF.

But you will find he was *not* going on.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"Enough, enough, 'tis plain and I no more
"Am in amazement lost!

PUFF.

Here, now you see, Sir Christopher did not in fact ask any one question for his own information.

SNEER.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

No indeed: his has been a most disinterested curiosity!

DANGLE.

Really, I find, we are very much oblig'd to them both.

PUFF.

To be sure you are. Now then for the Commander in Chief, the **Earl of Leicester!** who, you know, was no favourite but of the Queen's. We left off 'in amazement lost!'

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"Am in amazement lost.

"But, see where noble Leicester comes! supreme

"In honours and command.

"SIR WALTER.

"And yet methinks,

"At such a time, so perilous, so fear'd,

"That staff might well become an abler grasp.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"And so by heav'n! think I; but soft, he's here!

PUFF.

Aye, they envy him.

SNEER.

But who are these with him?

PUFF.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

O! very valiant knights; one is the Governor of the fort, the other the master of the horse. And now, I think you shall hear some better language: I was obliged to be plain and intelligible in the first scene, because there was so much matter of fact in it; but now, efaith, you have trope, figure, and metaphor, as plenty as noun-substantives.

Enter Earl of LEICESTER, the Governor, and others.

"LEICESTER.

"How's this my friends! is't thus your new fledg'd zeal
"And plumed valor moulds in roosted sloth?
"Why dimly glimmers that heroic flame,
"Whose red'ning blaze by patriot spirit fed,
"Should be the beacon of a kindling realm?
"Can the quick current of a patriot heart,
"Thus stagnate in a cold and weedy converse,
"Or freeze in tideless inactivity?
"No! rather let the fountain of your valor
"Spring thro' each stream of enterprize,
"Each petty channel of conducive daring,
"Till the full torrent of your foaming wrath
"O'erwhelm the flats of sunk hostility!

PUFF.

There it is, follow'd up!

"SIR WALTER.

"No more! the fresh'ning breath of thy rebuke
"Hath fill'd the swelling canvass of our souls!
"And thus, tho' fate should cut the cable of
[All take hands.]

"Our topmost hopes, in friendship's closing line
"We'll grapple with despair, and if we fall,
"We'll fall in Glory's wake!

"EARL OF LEICESTER.

"There spoke Old England's genius!
Then, are we all resolv'd?

"ALL.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"We are all resolv'd.

"EARL OF LEICESTER.

"To conquer or be free?

"ALL.

"To conquer, or be free.

"EARL OF LEICESTER.

"All?

"ALL.

"All.

DANGLE.

Nem. con. egad!

PUFF.

O yes, where they *do* agree on the stage, their unanimity is wonderful!

"EARL OF LEICESTER.

"Then, let's embrace and now

SNEER.

What the plague, is he going to pray?

PUFF.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Yes, hush! in great emergencies, there is nothing like a prayer!

"EARL OF LEICESTER.

"O mighty Mars!

DANGLE.

But why should he pray to *Mars*?

PUFF.

Hush!

"EARL OF LEICESTER.

"If in thy homage bred,
"Each point of discipline I've still observ'd;
"Nor but by due promotion, and the right
"Of service, to the rank of Major-General
"Have ris'n; assist thy votary now!

"GOVERNOR.

"Yet do not rise, hear me!

"MASTER OF HORSE.

"And me!

"KNIGHT.

"And me!

"SIR WALTER.

"And me!

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"And me!

PUFF.

Now, pray all together.

"ALL.

"Behold thy votaries submissive beg,
"That thou will deign to grant them all they ask;
"Assist them to accomplish all their ends,
"And sanctify whatever means they use
"To gain them!

SNEER.

A very orthodox, quintetto!

PUFF.

Vastly well, gentlemen. Is that well managed or not? Have you such a prayer as that on the stage?

SNEER.

Not exactly.

(Earl of Leicester to Puff.)

But, Sir, you hav'nt settled how we are to get off here.

PUFF.

You could not go off kneeling, could you?

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

(Sir Walter to Puff.)

O no, Sir! impossible!

PUFF.

It would have a good effect efaith, if you could! exeunt praying! Yes, and would vary the established mode of springing off with a glance at the pit.

SNEER.

O never mind, so as you get them off, I'll answer for it the audience wont care how.

PUFF.

Well then, repeat the last line standing, and go off the old way.

"ALL.

"And sanctify whatever means we use to gain them.

[Exeunt.

DANGLE.

Bravo! a fine exit.

SNEER.

Well, really Mr. Puff.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

Stay a moment.

The CENTINELS get up.

"1ST CENTINEL.

"All this shall to Lord Burleigh's ear.

"2d CENTINEL.

"'Tis meet it should.

[Exeunt Centinels.

DANGLE.

Hey! why, I thought those fellows had been asleep?

PUFF.

Only a pretence, there's the art of it; they were spies of Lord Burleigh's.

SNEER.

But isn't it odd, they were never taken notice of, not even by the commander in chief.

PUFF.

O lud, Sir, if people who want to listen, or overhear, were not always conniv'd at in a Tragedy, there would be no carrying on any plot in the world.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

DANGLE.

That's certain!

PUFF.

But take care, my dear Dangle, the morning gun is going to fire.

[Cannon fires.]

DANGLE.

Well, that will have a fine effect.

PUFF.

I think so, and helps to realize the scene.

[Cannon twice.]

What the plague! *three* morning guns! there never is but one! aye, this is always the away at the Theatre give these fellows a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it. You have no more cannon to fire?

PROMPTER from within.

No Sir.

PUFF.

Now then, for soft musick.

SNEER.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Pray what's that for?

PUFF.

It shews that **Tilburina** is coming; nothing introduces you a heroine like soft musick. Here she comes.

DANGLE.

And her confidant, I suppose?

PUFF.

To be sure: here they are inconsolable to the minuet in Ariadne!

(Soft musick.)

Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT.

"TILBURINA.

"Now has the whispering breath of gentle morn,
"Bad Nature's voice, and Nature's beauty rise;
"While orient Phoebus with unborrow'd hues,
"Cloaths the wak'd loveliness which all night slept
"In heav'nly drapery! Darkness is fled.
"Now flowers unfold their beauties to the sun,
"And blushing, kiss the beam he sends to wake them.
"The strip'd carnation, and the guarded rose,
"The vulgar wall flow'r, and smart gillyflower,
"The polyanthus mean the dapper daizy,
"Sweet William, and sweet marjorum, and all
"The tribe of single and of double pinks!
"Now too, the feather'd warblers tune their notes
"Around, and charm the listning grove. The lark!
"The linnet! chafinch! bullfinch! goldfinch! greenfinch!
" But O to me, no joy can they afford!
"Nor rose, nor wall flow'r, nor smart gillyflower,
"Nor polyanthus mean, nor dapper daizy,

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"Nor William sweet, nor marjoram nor lark,
"Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove!

PUFF.

Your white handkerchief madam

TILBURINA.

I thought, Sir, I wasn't to use that 'till, 'heart rending woe.'

PUFF.

O yes madam at 'the finches of the grove,' if you please.

"TILBURINA.

"Nor lark,
"Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove!
[Weeps.

PUFF.

Vastly well madam!

DANGLE.

Vastly well indeed!

"TILBURINA.

"For, O too sure, heart rending woe is now
"The lot of wretched Tilburina!

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

DANGLE.

O! 'tis too much.

SNEER.

Oh! it is indeed

"CONFIDANT.

"Be comforted sweet lady for who knows,
"But Heav'n has yet some milk-white day in store.

"TILBURINA.

"Alas, my gentle Nora,
"Thy tender youth, as yet hath never mourn'd
"Love's fatal dart. Else wouldst thou know, that when
"The soul is sunk in comfortless despair,
"It cannot taste of merriment!

DANGLE.

That's certain.

"CONFIDANT.

"But see where your stern father comes;
"It is not meet that he should find you thus.

PUFF.

Hey, what the plague! what a cut is here! why, what is become of the description of her first meeting with Don Wiskerandos? his gallant behaviour in the sea fight, and the simile of the canary bird?

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

TILBURINA.

Indeed Sir, you'll find they will not be miss'd.

PUFF.

Very well. Very well!

TILBURINA.

The cue ma'am if you please.

"CONFIDANT.

"It is not meet that he should find you thus.

"TILBURINA.

"Thou counsel'st right, but 'tis no easy task
"For barefaced grief to wear a mask of joy.

Enter GOVERNOR.

"How's this in tears? O Tilburina, shame!
"Is this a time for maudling tenderness,
"And Cupid's baby woes? hast thou not heard
"That haughty Spain's Pope-consecrated fleet
"Advances to our shores, while England's fate,
"Like a clipp'd guinea, trembles in the scale!

"TILBURINA.

"Then, is the crisis of *my* fate at hand!
"I see the fleets approach I see

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

Now, pray gentlemen mind. This is one of the most useful figures we tragedy writers have, by which a hero or heroine, in consideration of their being often obliged to overlook things that *are* on the stage, is allow'd to hear and see a number of things that are not.

SNEER.

Yes a kind of poetical second-sight!

PUFF.

Yes now then madam.

"TILBURINA.

"I see their decks
"Are clear'd! I see the signal made!
"The line is form'd! a cable's length asunder!
"I see the frigates station'd in the rear;
"And now, I hear the thunder of the guns!
"I hear the victors shouts I also hear
"The vanquish'd groan! and now 'tis smoke and now
"I see the loose sails shiver in the wind!
"I see I see what soon you'll see

"GOVERNOR.

"Hold daughter! peace! this love hath turn'd thy brain:
"The Spanish fleet thou *canst* not see because
" It is not yet in sight!

DANGLE.

Egad tho', the governor seems to make no allowance for this poetical figure you talk of.

PUFF.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

No, a plain matter-of-fact man that's his character.

"TILBURINA.

"But will you then refuse his offer?

"GOVERNOR.

"I must I will I can I ought I do.

"TILBURINA.

"Think what a noble price.

"GOVERNOR.

"No more you urge in vain.

"TILBURINA.

"His liberty is all he asks.

SNEER.

Egad Sir, I can't tell. Here has been such cutting and slashing, I don't know where they have got to myself.

"TILBURINA.

Indeed Sir, you will find it will connect very well.

" And your reward secure.

PUFF.

O, if they had'nt been so devilish free with their cutting here, you would have found that Don Wiskerandos has been tampering for his liberty, and has persuaded Tilburina to make this proposal to her father and now pray observe the conciseness with which the argument is conducted. Egad, the *pro & con* goes as smart a hits in a fencing match. It is indeed a sort of small-sword logic, which we have borrowed from the French.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"TILBURINA.

"A retreat in Spain!

"GOVERNOR.

"Outlawry here!

"TILBURINA.

"Your daughter's prayer!

"GOVERNOR.

"Your father's oath!

"TILBURINA.

"My lover!

"GOVERNOR.

"My country!

"TILBURINA.

"Tilburina!

"GOVERNOR.

"England!

"TILBURINA.

"A title!

"GOVERNOR.

"Honor!

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"TILBURINA.

"A pension!

"GOVERNOR.

"Conscience!

"TILBURINA.

"A thousand pounds!

"GOVERNOR.

"Hah! thou hast touch'd me nearly!

PUFF.

There you see she threw in *Tilburina*, Quick, parry cart with *England!* Hah! thrust in teirce a title! parried by honor. Hah! a pension over the arm! put by by conscience. Then flankonade with a thousand pounds and a palpable hit egad!

"TILBURINA.

"Canst thou

"Reject the *suppliant*, and the *daughter* too?

"GOVERNOR.

"No more; I wou'd not hear thee plead in vain,

"The *father* softens but the *governor*

"Is fix'd!

[*Exit.*

DANGLE.

Aye, that antithesis of persons is a most establish'd figure.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"TILBURINA.

"Tis well, hence then fond hopes, fond passion hence;

"Duty, behold I am all over thine

*"WISKERANDOS
without.*

"Where is my love my

"TILBURINA.

"Ha!

*"WISKERANDOS
entering.*

"My beauteous enemy

PUFF.

O dear ma'am, you must start a great deal more than that; consider you had just determined in favour of duty when in a moment the sound of his voice revives your passion, overthrows your resolution, destroys your obedience. If you don't express all that in your start you do nothing at all.

TILBURINA.

Well, we'll try again!

DANGLE.

Speaking from within, has always a fine effect.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

Very.

"WISKERANDOS.

"My conquering Tilburina! How! is't thus
"We meet? why are thy looks averse! what means
"That falling tear that frown of boding woe?
"Hah! now indeed I am a prisoner!
"Yes, now I feel the galling weight of these
"Disgraceful chains which, cruel Tilburina!
"Thy doating captive gloried in before.
"But thou art false, and Wiskerandos is undone!

"TILBURINA.

"O no; how little dost thou know thy Tilburina!

"WISKERANDOS.

"Art thou then true? Begone cares, doubts and fears,
"I make you all a present to the winds;
"And if the winds reject you try the waves.

PUFF.

The wind you know, is the established receiver of all stolen sighs, and cast off griefs and apprehensions.

"TILBURINA.

"Yet must we part? stern duty seals our doom:
"Though here I call yon conscious clouds to witness,
"Could I pursue the bias of my soul,
"All friends, all right of parents I'd disclaim,
"And thou, my Wiskerandos, should'st be father
"And mother, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt,
"And friend to me!

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"WISKERANDOS.

"O matchless excellence! and must we part?

"Well, if we must we must and in that case,

"The less is said the better.

"PUFF.

Hey day! here's a cut! What, are all the mutual protestations out?

TILBURINA.

Now, pray Sir, don't interrupt us just here, you ruin our feelings.

PUFF.

Your feelings! but *zounds*, *my* feelings, ma'am!

SNEER.

No; pray don't interrupt them.

"WISKERANDOS.

"One last embrace.

"TILBURINA.

"Now, farewell, for ever.

"WISKERANDOS.

"For ever!

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"TILBURINA.

"Aye, for ever.

[Going.

PUFF.

S'death and fury! Gadslife! Sir! Madam! if you go out without the parting look, you might as well dance out Here, here!

CONFIDANT.

But pray Sir, how am *I* to get off here?

PUFF.

You, pshaw! what the devil signifies how *you* get off! edge away at the top, or where you will *[Pushes the confidant off.]* Now ma'am you see

TILBURINA.

We understand you Sir.

"Aye for ever.

"BOTH.

"Ohh!

[Turning back and exeunt.

[Scene closes.

DANGLE.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

O charming!

PUFF.

Hey! 'tis pretty well I believe you see I don't attempt to strike out any thing new but I take it I improve on the established modes.

SNEER.

You do indeed. But pray is not Queen Elizabeth to appear?

PUFF.

No not once but she is to be talked of for ever; so that egad you'll think a hundred times that she is on the point of coming in.

SNEER.

Hang it, I think its a pity to keep *her* in the green room all the night.

PUFF.

O no, that always has a fine effect it keeps up expectation.

DANGLE.

But are we not to have a battle?

PUFF.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

Yes, yes, you will have a battle at last, but, egad, it's not to be by land but by sea and that is the only quite new thing in the piece.

DANGLE.

What, Drake at the Armada, hey?

PUFF.

Yes, efaith fire ships and all then we shall end with the procession. Hey! that will do I think.

SNEER.

No doubt on't.

PUFF.

Come, we must not lose time so now for the **under plot**.

SNEER.

What the plague, have you another plot?

PUFF.

O lord, yes ever while you live, have two plots to your tragedy. The grand point in managing them, is only to let your under plot have as little connexion with your main plot as possible. I flatter myself nothing can be more distinct than mine, for as in my chief plot, the characters are all great people I have laid my under plot in low life and as the former is to end in deep distress, I make the other end as happy as a farce. Now Mr. Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Enter UNDER PROMPTER.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

UNDER PROMPTER.

Sir, the carpenter says it is impossible you can go to the Park scene yet.

PUFF.

The Park scene! No I mean the description scene here, in the wood.

UNDER PROMPTER.

Sir, the performers have cut it out.

PUFF.

Cut it out!

UNDER PROMPTER.

Yes Sir.

PUFF.

What! the whole account of Queen Elizabeth?

UNDER PROMPTER.

Yes Sir.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

And the description of her horse and side-saddle?

UNDER PROMPTER.

Yes Sir.

PUFF.

So, so, this is very fine indeed! Mr. Hopkins, how the plague could you suffer this?

HOPKINS, from within.

Sir, indeed the pruning knife

PUFF.

The pruning knife zounds the axe! why, here has been such lopping and topping, I shan't have the bare trunk of my play left presently. Very well, Sir the performers must do as they please, but upon my soul, I'll print it every word.

SNEER.

That I would indeed.

PUFF.

Very well Sir then we must go on zounds! I would not have parted with the description of the horse! Well, Sir, go on Sir, it was one of the finest and most laboured things Very well, Sir, let them go on there you had him and his accoutrements from the bit to the crupper very well, Sir, we must go to the Park scene.

SCENE II.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

UNDER PROMPTER.

Sir, there is the point, the carpenters say, that unless there is some business put in here before the drop, they shan't have time to clear away the fort, or sink Gravesend and the river.

PUFF.

So! this is a pretty dilemma truly! Gentlemen you must excuse me, these fellows will never be ready, unless I go and look after them myself.

SNEER.

O dear Sir these little things will happen

PUFF.

To cut out this scene! but I'll print it egad, I'll print it every word!

[Exeunt.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Before the Curtain.

Enter PUFF, SNEER and DANGLE.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

Well, we are ready now then for the justices.

[Curtain rises; Justices, Constables, &c. discovered.]

SNEER.

This, I suppose, is a sort of senate scene.

PUFF.

To be sure there has not been one yet.

DANGLE.

It is the under plot, isn't it?

PUFF.

Yes. What, gentlemen, do you mean to go at once to the discovery scene?

JUSTICE.

If you please, Sir.

PUFF.

O very well harkee, I don't chuse to say any thing more, but efaith, they have mangled my play in a most shocking manner!

ACT III.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

DANGLE.

It's a great pity!

PUFF.

Now then, Mr. Justice, if you please.

"JUSTICE.

"Are all the volunteers without?

"CONSTABLE.

"They are.

"Some ten in fetters, and some twenty drunk.

"JUSTICE.

"Attends the youth, whose most opprobrious fame

"And clear convicted crimes have stampt him soldier?

"CONSTABLE.

"He waits your pleasure; eager to repay

"The blest reprieve that sends him to the fields

"Of glory, there to raise his branded hand

"In honor's cause.

"JUSTICE.

"'Tis well 'tis Justice arms him!

"O! may he now defend his country's laws

"With half the spirit he has broke them all!

"If 'tis your worship's pleasure, bid him enter.

"CONSTABLE.

"I fly, the herald of your will.

[Exit Constable.]

ACT III.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

Quick, Sir!

SNEER.

But, Mr. Puff, I think not only the Justice, but the clown seems to talk in as high a style as the first hero among them.

PUFF.

Heaven forbid they should not in a free country! Sir, I am not for making slavish distinctions, and giving all the fine language to the upper sort of people.

DANGLE.

That's very noble in you indeed.

Enter JUSTICE's LADY.

PUFF.

Now pray mark this scene.

"LADY.

"Forgive this interruption, good my love;
"But as I just now past, a pris'ner youth
"Whom rude hands hither lead, strange bodings seiz'd
"My fluttering heart, and to myself I said,
"An if our **Tom** had liv'd, he'd surely been
"This stripling's height!

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"JUSTICE.

"Ha! sure some powerful sympathy directs

"Us both

Enter SON and CONSTABLE.

"JUSTICE.

"What is thy name?

"SON.

"My name's **Tom Jenkins** *alias*, have I none

"Tho' orphan'd, and without a friend!

"JUSTICE.

"Thy parents?

"SON.

"My father dwelt in Rochester and was,

"As I have heard a fishmonger no more.

PUFF

What, Sir, do you leave out the account of your birth, parentage and education?

SON.

They have settled it so, Sir, here.

PUFF.

Oh! oh!

"LADY.

ACT III.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"How loudly nature whispers to my heart!

"Had he no other name?

"SON.

"I've seen a bill

"Of his, sign'd *Tomkins*, creditor.

"JUSTICE.

"This does indeed confirm each circumstance

"The gypsey told! Prepare!

"SON.

"I do.

"JUSTICE.

"No orphan, nor without a friend ar't thou

"I am thy father, *here's* thy mother, *there*

"Thy uncle this thy first cousin, and those

"Are all your near relations!

"MOTHER.

"O ecstasy of bliss!

"SON.

"O most unlook'd for happiness!

"JUSTICE.

"O wonderful event!

[They faint alternately in each others arms.]

PUFF.

There, you see relationship, like murder, will out.

ACT III.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"JUSTICE.

"Now let's revive else were this joy too much!
"But come and we'll unfold the rest within,
"And thou my boy must needs want rest and food.
"Hence may each orphan hope, as chance directs,
"To find a father where he least expects!
[Exeunt.

PUFF.

What do you think of that?

DANGLE.

One of the finest discovery-scenes I ever saw. Why, this under-plot would have made a tragedy itself.

SNEER.

Aye, or a comedy either.

PUFF.

And keeps quite clear you see of the other.

Enter SCENEMEN, taking away the Seats.

PUFF.

The scene remains, does it?

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SCENEMAN.

Yes, Sir.

PUFF.

You are to leave one chair you know But it is always awkward in a tragedy, to have you fellows coming in in your playhouse liveries to remove things I wish that could be managed better. So now for my mysterious yeoman.

Enter A BEEFEATER.

"BEEFEATER.

"Perdition catch my soul but *I* do love thee.

SNEER.

Haven't I heard that line before?

PUFF.

No, I fancy not Where pray?

DANGLE.

Yes, I think there is something like it in Othello.

PUFF.

Gad! now you put me in mind on't, I believe there is but that's of no consequence all that can be said is, that two people happened to hit on the same thought And Shakespeare made use of it first, that's all.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

Very true.

PUFF.

Now, Sir, your soliloquy but speak more to the pit, if you please the soliloquy always to the pit that's a rule.

"BEEFEATER.

"Tho' hopeless love finds comfort in despair,

"It never can endure a rival's bliss!

"But soft I am observ'd.

[Exit Beefeater.

DANGLE.

That's a very short soliloquy.

PUFF.

Yes but it would have been a great deal longer if he had not been observed.

SNEER.

A most sentimental Beefeater that, Mr. Puff.

PUFF.

Hearke I would not have you be too sure that he *is* a Beefeater.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

SNEER.

What! a hero in disguise?

PUFF.

No matter I only give you a hint But now for my principal character Here he comes **Lord Burleigh** in person!
Pray, gentlemen, step this way softly I only hope the Lord High Treasurer is perfect if he is but perfect!

[Enter BURLEIGH, goes slowly to a chair and sits.]

SNEER.

Mr. Puff!

PUFF.

Hush! vastly well, Sir! vastly well! a most interesting gravity!

DANGLE.

What, isn't he to speak at all?

PUFF.

Egad, I thought you'd ask me that yes it is a very likely thing that a Minister in his situation, with the whole affairs of the nation on his head, should have time to talk! but hush! or you'll put him out.

SNEER.

Put him out! how the plague can that be, if he's not going to say any thing?

ACT III.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

There's a reason! why, his part is to *think*, and how the plague! do you imagine he can *think* if you keep talking?

DANGLE.

That's very true upon my word!

[Burleigh comes forward, shakes his head and exit.]

SNEER.

He is very perfect indeed Now, pray what did he mean by that?

PUFF.

You don't take it?

SNEER.

No; I don't upon my soul.

PUFF.

Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even tho' they had more justice in their cause and wisdom in their measures yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.

SNEER.

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

The devil! did he mean all that by shaking his head?

PUFF.

Every word of it If he shook his head as I taught him.

DANGLE.

Ah! there certainly is a vast deal to be done on the stage by dumb shew, and expression of face, and a judicious author knows how much he may trust to it.

SNEER.

O, here are some of our old acquaintance.

Enter HATTON and RALEIGH.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"*My* niece, and *your* niece too!

"By heav'n! there's witchcraft in't He could not else

"Have gain'd their hearts But see where they approach;

"Some horrid purpose low'ring on their brows!

"SIR WALTER.

"Let us withdraw and mark them.

[They withdraw.

SNEER.

What is all this?

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

PUFF.

Ah! here has been more pruning! but the fact is, these two young ladies are also in love with Don Whiskerandos. Now, gentlemen, this scene goes entirely for what we call **situation** and **stage effect**, by which the greatest applause may be obtained, without the assistance of language, sentiment or character: pray mark!

Enter the TWO NIECES.

"1st NIECE.

"Ellena here!

"She is his scorn as much as I that is

"Some comfort still.

PUFF.

O dear madam, you are not to say that to her face! *aside*, ma'am, *aside*. The whole scene is to be *aside*.

"1st NIECE.

"She is his scorn as much as I that is

"Some comfort still!

[Aside.

"2d NIECE.

"I know he prizes not Pollina's love,

"But Tilburina lords it o'er his heart.

[Aside.

"1st NIECE.

"But see the proud destroyer of my peace.

"Revenge is all the good I've left.

[Aside.

"2d NIECE.

ACT III.

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"He comes, the false disturber of my quiet.

"Now vengeance do thy worst
[Aside.

Enter WHISKERANDOS.

"O hateful liberty if thus in vain

"I seek my Tilburina!

"BOTH NIECES.

"And ever shalt!

"SIR CHRISTOPHER AND SIR WALTER come forward.

"Hold! we will avenge you.

"WHISKERANDOS.

"Hold *you* or see your nieces bleed.!

[The two nieces draw their two daggers to strike Whiskerandos, the two Uncles at the instant with their two swords drawn, catch their two nieces arms, and turn the points of their swords to Whiskerandos, who immediately draws two daggers, and holds them to the two nieces' bosoms.]

PUFF.

There's situation for you! there's an heroic group! You see the ladies can't stab Whiskerandos he durst not strike them for fear of their uncles the uncles durst not kill him, because of their nieces I have them all at a dead lock! for every one of them is afraid to let go first.

SNEER.

Why, then they must stand there for ever.

PUFF.

So they would, if I hadn't a very fine contrivance for't Now mind

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Enter BEEFEATER with his Halberd.

"In the Queen's name I charge you all to drop

"Your swords and daggers!

[They drop their swords and daggers.

SNEER.

That is a contrivance indeed.

PUFF.

Aye in the Queen's name.

"SIR CHRISTOPHER.

"Come niece!

"SIR RALEIGH.

"Come niece!

[Exeunt with the two nieces.

"WHISKERANDOS.

"What's he, who bids us thus renounce our guard?

"BEEFEATER.

"Thou must do more, renounce thy love!

"WHISKERANDOS.

"Thou liest base Beefeater!

"BEEFEATER.

ACT III.

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"Ha! Hell! the lie!

"By heav'n thou'st rous'd the lion in my heart!

"Off yeoman's habit! base disguise! off! off!

[Discovers himself, by throwing off his upper dress, and appearing in a very fine waistcoat.]

"Am I a Beefeater now?

"Or beams my crest as terrible as when

"In Biscay's Bay I took thy captive sloop.

PUFF.

There, egad! he comes out to be the very Captain of the privateer who had taken Whiskerandos prisoner and was himself an old lover of Tilburina's.

DANGLE.

Admirably manag'd indeed.

PUFF.

Now, stand out of their way.

"WHISKERANDOS.

"I thank thee fortune! that hast thus bestow'd

"A weapon to chastise this insolent.

[Takes up one of the swords.]

"BEEFEATER.

"I take thy challenge, Spaniard, and I thank

"Thee Fortune too!

[Takes up the other sword.]

DANGLE.

ACT III.

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That's excellently contrived! it seems as if the two uncles had left their swords on purpose for them.

PUFF.

No, egad, they could not help leaving them.

"WHISKERANDOS.

"Vengeance and Tilburina!

"BEEFEATER.

"Exactly so
[They fight and after the usual number of wounds given, Whiskerandos falls.]

"WHISKERANDOS.

"O cursed parry! that last thrust in tierce
"Was fatal Captain, thou hast fenced well!
"And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene
"For all eter

"BEEFEATER.

" nity He would have added, but stern death
"Cut short his being, and the noun at once!

PUFF.

O, my dear Sir, you are too slow, now mind me. Sir, shall I trouble you to die again?

"WHISKERANDOS.

"And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene
"For all eter

The CRITIC, OR A Tragedy Rehearsed

"BEEFEATER.

" nity He would have added

PUFF.

No, Sir that's not it once more if you please

WHISKERANDOS.

I wish, Sir you would practise this without me I can't stay dying here all night.

PUFF.

Very well, we'll go over it by and bye I must humour these gentlemen!

[Exit Whiskeran.

"BEEFEATER.

"Farewell brave Spaniard! and when next

PUFF.

Dear Sir, you needn't speak that speech as the body has walked off.

BEEFEATER.

That's true, Sir then I'll join the fleet.

PUFF.

If you please.

ACT III.

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[Exit Beefeater.]

Now, who comes on?

Enter GOVERNOR, with his hair properly disordered.

"GOVERNOR.

"A hemisphere of evil planets reign!
"And every planet sheds contagious phrensy!
"My Spanish prisoner is slain! my daughter,
"Meeting the dead corse borne along has gone
"Distract!

[A loud flourish of trumpets.]

"But hark! I am summon'd to the fort,
"Perhaps the fleets have met! amazing crisis!
"O Tilburina! from thy aged father's beard
"Thou'st pluck'd the few brown hairs which time had left!

[Exit Governor.]

SNEER.

Poor gentleman!

PUFF.

Yes and no one to blame but his daughter!

DANGLE.

And the planets

PUFF.

True. Now enter Tilburina!

ACT III.

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SNEER.

Egad, the business comes on quick here.

PUFF.

Yes, Sir now she comes in stark mad in white satin.

SNEER.

Why in white satin?

PUFF.

O Lord, Sir when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin don't she, Dangle?

DANGLE.

Always it's a rule.

PUFF.

Yes here it is (*looking at the book.*) 'Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen.'

Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT mad, according to custom.

SNEER.

But what the deuce, is the confidant to be mad too?

ACT III.

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PUFF.

To be sure she is, the confidant is always to do whatever her mistress does; weep when she weeps, smile when she smiles, go mad when she goes mad. Now madam confidant but keep your madness in the back ground, if you please.

"TILBURINA.

"The wind whistles the moon rises see
"They have kill'd my squirrel in his cage!
"Is this a grasshopper! Ha! no, it is my
"Whiskerandos you shall not keep him
"I know you have him in your pocket
"An oyster may be cross'd in love! Who says
"A whale's a bird? Ha! did you call, my love?
" He's here! He's there! He's every where!
"Ah me! He's no where!

[Exit Tilburina.

PUFF.

There, do you ever desire to see any body madder than that?

SNEER.

Never while I live!

PUFF.

You observed how she mangled the metre?

DANGLE.

Yes egad, it was the first thing made me suspect she was out of her senses.

ACT III.

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SNEER.

And pray what becomes of her?

PUFF.

She is gone to throw herself into the sea to be sure and that brings us at once to the scene of action, and so to my catastrophe my sea-fight, I mean.

SNEER.

What, you bring that in at last?

PUFF.

Yes yes you know my play is *called the Spanish Armada* , otherwise, egad, I have no occasion for the battle at all. Now then for my magnificence! my battle! my noise! and my procession! You are all ready?

PROMPTER within.

Yes, Sir.

PUFF.

Is the Thames drest?

Enter THAMES with two Attendants.

THAMES.

ACT III.

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Here I am, Sir.

PUFF.

Very well indeed See, gentlemen, there's a river for you! This is blending a little of the masque with my tragedy a new fancy you know and very useful in my case; for as there *must be a procession*, I suppose Thames and all his tributary rivers to compliment Britannia with a fete in honor of the victory.

SNEER.

But pray, who are these gentlemen in green with him.

PUFF.

Those? those are his banks.

SNEER.

His banks?

PUFF.

Yes, one crown'd with alders and the other with a villa! you take the allusions? but hey! what the plague! you have got both your banks on one side Here Sir, come round Ever while you live, Thames, go between your banks. (*Bell rings.*) There, soh! now for't! Stand aside my dear friends! away Thames!

[Exit Thames between his banks.

[Flourish of drums trumpets cannon, &c. &c. Scene changes to the sea the fleets engage the musick plays 'Britons strike home.' Spanish fleet destroyed by fire-ships, &c. English fleet advances musick plays 'Rule Britannia.' The procession of all the English rivers and their tributaries with their emblems, &c. begins with Handels water musick ends with a chorus, to the march in Judas Maccabæus. During this scene, Puff directs and applauds every thing then]

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PUFF.

Well, pretty well but not quite perfect so ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we'll rehearse this piece again to-morrow.

CURTAIN DROPS.