

IN THE SULK!

A New and Original Vaudeville

Written by FRANK DESPREZ

Composed by ALFRED CELLIER



Characters.

LIVERBYA Man of Business.
GEORGINAHis Wife.
JOSEPHBoy in Buttons.

One Muta Persona.



IN THE SULK!

SCENE;—A room fit LIVERBY'S. Chairs, armchairs, &c; a door at back, at R. ; at front, a window; side-doors ; at back of L. a chimney-piece, mirror, two vases, clock, &c; an ottoman and a chair, at R.; a little work-table, a sofa, a barometer, at back of R; a chair near the door at back of L. ; furniture, &c., &c.

(When the curtain rises JOSEPH is seated near the ottoman at L. with a large child's A. B. C. in his hand. On each page is a letter of the alphabet with conspicuous illustrations. JOSEPH turns over leaves as he sings the following :)—

JOSEPH. "A was an Archer, who shot at a frog:
B was a Butcher, who had a big dog," &c.

JOSEPH. It's awkward not to be able to read; at my age, too! Fust of all people thinks you've 'ad no heducation : and then again, I aint able to read

master's paper, or 'is letters either, when he leaves 'em about. I'll make haste and learn, anyhow. (Chanting) " A was an Archer."

(Enter GEORGINA at R. She is slightly agitated and goes hastily to window R.)

GEORGINA. That odious young man still staring up at my window.

JOSEPH. (aside, rising briskly). Oh! it's missus!

GEORGINA. (seeing him hiding his book). What have you got there, Joseph! "Dick Turpin, or the Hero of Hounslow Heath," I suppose?

JOSEPH. No, ma'am, I never read 'em.

GEORGINA. What! Joseph ?

JOSEPH. No, ma'am, because I can't.

GEORGINA. What can the School Board have been about.

JOSEPH. Ah! I was before their time, ma'am. When I entered the service, there was no School Boards, ma'am. Would you mind hearing me, ma'am? (giving her hook.) "A was an Archer that"—

GEORGINA. Stay, Joseph ! Has your master come in ?

JOSEPH. Not yet, ma'am, it's only half past three. " B was a Butcher"—

GEORGINA. That will do. Go to the study and put everything in order.

JOSEPH. Yea, ma'am. "Study:" ah, wot may it not accomplish! "A was an Archer, &c." (going, returns.) Excuse me, ma'am, but I can't help feeling a hinterest in you.

GEORGINA. Joseph!

JOSEPH. I am but a poor buttons, ma'am, but I 'as a 'art.

GEORGINA. Had I not supposed such was the case I should never have engaged you.

JOSEPH. Well, ma'am: what I hask myself his — whot's the matter with master?

GEORGINA. I believe Mr Liverby is in very good health. Did he not make a good breakfast this morning ?

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am. There's a hawful gulf in the 'am.

GEORGINA. Well, Joseph. What then ?

JOSEPH. The happetite, ma'am, haint heverythink. It's halmost heverythink, but it aint heverythink. Now, ma'am, 'ow is it he doesn't speak to you ?

GEORGINA. Joseph, I'm surprised at you !

JOSEPH. It's the 'art, ma'am, it's the 'art! Ah, I've been noticing of you making yourself agreeable, dressing of yourself up in muslin and tool!

GEORGINA. Joseph, you are forgetting yourself !

JOSEPH. It aint right, ma'am, it aint right for 'im to treat you so! I'm only a poor servant, but I 'as my feelin's!

GEORGINA. Joseph, you mean well, but you are ignorant and inexperienced. Control yourself.

JOSEPH. I can't, ma'am, I can't! When I sees 'im sitting there for all the world like a stuffed himage, when I sees you looking so serious—(represses his feelings).

GEORGINA. Mr. Liverby's health, Joseph, is not always good. You must be very careful not to annoy him !

JOSEPH. His health, ma'am ! Don't tell me — it's 'is temper! It's that nasty, sulky disposition of his! He's got the hump, and what's worse, he sticks to it!

GEORGINA. I cannot listen to such language! Leave the room immediately!

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am. I respects you, ma'am. Oh, I should like to— (makes gesture as if pommelling an imaginary individual "in Chancery.") Ugh! (exit sharply L.)

GEORGINA. (seating herself and taking up work). Poor Joseph! He has a good heart, after all! What a pity it is that James has such a temper! Sometimes he wont speak to me for days! And for some ridiculous reason, too insignificant for a moment's reflection. It was only yesterday (she rises) at dinner I was unfortunate enough to mention one of his cousins with whom he had quarrelled — a poor boy whom I never saw in my life, but whom he had turned out of his office for some trifling fault — and naturally I undertook the unfortunate youth's defence. At last, my amiable husband ordered me to be silent. I obeyed him, and called him "a grizzly bear!" Since then he hasn't spoken to me a single word, in short, he's in the sulks. (She is now standing at glass arranging flower in her hair, &c.)

(Enter LIVERBY at back. He has tin umbrella under his arm. He takes off his gloves in silence.)

GEORGINA. (watching him aside.) Still sulky. (Aloud turning.) What, dear! Did you take out an umbrella? Why, the weather was beautiful! I was saying to myself just before you came in — "if James comes home early to-day, we will go for a little walk before dinner." (LIVERBY does not answer, and goes and puts his umbrella in a corner.) Very well, don't answer unless you like!

(She goes and sits R. and takes up her work. LIVERBY rings. JOSEPH appears at back. (During this scene, JOSEPH has great difficulty in repressing his chivralrous indignation. Whenever he is behind LIVERBY, it breaks out in offensive gesticulations, he menaces his head with his fists, &c.)

JOSEPH. Did you ring, Sir?

LIVERBY. (sternly.) My dressing-gown!

(JOSEPH takes dressing-gown sternly from chair near chimney-piece, and puts it on for him.)

JOSEPH. Anything else, Sir ?

LIVERBY. No, you can go !

JOSEPH. (aside). I wish I 'ad my way with you. (Exit at back.
LIVERBY seats himself on chair near L., and wipes his forehead.)

GEORGINA. You seem quite hot, dear! (rising). Stay, here is your smoking cap! (She takes it from the work-table and brings it to him.) Don't sit in a draught, dear! You know how easily you take cold. (She puts the cap on his head.) There — say, "ta!" Not say "ta?" Ah, naughty boy! Kiss me then, and be good. (LIVERBY lets her kiss him in silence, without moving a muscle of his face.) Don't be so cross! (taking his chin and moving it up and down). Well, wont you speak ? Come, one smile for your little wifey ! Your little Georgey-Porgey! Come.

SONG.—GEORGINA.

Don't your heart and features harden !
Oh! unbend that stupid brow,
Few the flowers in Life's garden,
Must we fail to pluck them now ?
Can it fail your heart to soften
To hear me plead like this ?
To have to ask you often
For just one little kiss?

(Business.)

Time was when of your kisses.
You were only too profuse,
Talked of rapture, love, and blisses,
And complained did I refuse !
Now all's changed! How soon men alter,
Is it even come to this ?
(Kneeling.) I kneel . . . you hear me falter

As I ask you for a kiss.

GEORGINA. (rising irritated). Very well then, don't! (LIVERBY rises and appears to search for something.) What's he about now ? Oh, looking for the evening paper ! Ah ! (She takes up paper smartly and puts it in drawer.) (Aside.) Now if you want it, you'll please to ask for it. (She goes on working, while LIVERBY goes to the back and continues searching.) (Aloud.) Are you looking for anything, dear ? (LIVERBY takes no notice.) (Aside.) He'll do without the latest news, rather than open his lips! I can't put up with it any longer! (She throws her work into her basket and rises.) I'll find a way to make you speak! (She goes to back, and takes up her shawl and hat from a chair. LIVERBY goes towards barometer, which he taps.) (Aloud.) Good bye, dear, I'm going out! (putting on shawl and hat before the glass.) It's four o'clock, I shan't be home till six ... if I'm not back to dinner, don't wait! (She goes to back, then returns.) You want to know where I'm going? (LIVERBY taps barometer.) Well I'm going to call on an old school-fellow! She has a brother in the 10th Hussars! She has promised to introduce us to each other! It will be such fun! Good bye, dear, good bye. (Coming back.) The 10th Hussars, mind; good bye! (Exit.)

LIVERBY. (after seating himself gloomily on couch). "A grizzly bear!" The principal of the firm of Liverby, Brummagen & Co. a "grizzly bear." If my hair is turning a little, she need not refer to it in that way! If there's anything that disgusts me it's an allusion to my personal appearance! It's a thing I can't forgive. "A grizzly bear!" Humph! "A grizzly bear!" (He rings. Enter JOSEPH.) Where's the Evening Standard ?

JOSEPH. Don't know, sir.

LIVERBY. Don't know, sir? But you ought to know, sir!

JOSEPH. (aside). He's beginning to speak now, at any rate.

LIVERBY. Look for it. (JOSEPH looks.) No, it's not anywhere about here.

JOSEPH. Missus was reading it. Perhaps it's in her room. (Going.)

LIVERBY. Stop. I'll go and look for it myself. (Exit.)

JOSEPH. Very well, sir! (Aside.) Here's missus again! Why, she's been out!

GEORGINA enters, much agitated.

GEORGINA. What impertinence! What impertinence! An utter stranger to accost me in the street! And a mere boy, too ! (To herself.) He actually followed me up to the very door! Would he have the impudence to ring ? (A ring at the house door.) He has! Joseph, go to the door. Say I'm not at home. . . . that he must have made a mistake in the house, that I don't live here, that you don't know of such a person ! (Exit JOSEPH.) I noticed this young man following me for several days. ... If I were to tell my husband he would thrash him to a jelly!

JOSEPH. (entering at back, carrying a pair of lady's boots). It's all right, ma'am. He left these, he didn't ask for his bill!

GEORGINA. (surprised). My boots?

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am. Beauties I call 'em!

GEORGINA. So it was the shoemaker who rang ?

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am. I told him he had made a mistake, you didn't live here, I never heard of such a person. He said I was having a lark with him.

GEORGINA. Thank Heaven, it was no worse !

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am?

GEORGINA. Take them into my dressing-room.

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am. (Going.) Aint she got a nice little foot!

GEORGINA. What did you say, Joseph ?

JOSEPH. Nothing, ma'am, nothing. (Exit R.)

GEORGINA. So the little wretch isn't so impudent as I feared. But still, to-morrow, he may annoy me again if I go out! What shall I do ? If I tell

James, perhaps he'll sulk still more - very likely say I must have given him some encouragement! or abuse me. . . Ah, a capital idea! I'll make him jealous! You wont speak, wont you, Mr. James Liverby? Perhaps you will when you read this letter — a love letter, Mr. Liverby, not to you, though! I wonder if I can disguise my handwriting? Yes, that will do capitally. (Reading.) " Dear Madam, I love you to distraction." (I don't think he can recognise that scrawl.) " My eyes have already told you so, and yours have answered them! My lips only wait an opportunity to repeat it! I shall be in the Zoo to-morrow at four close to the hippopotamus. You will recognise me by" (what should I recognise a young man by?) " by the pallor of my complex and my green gloves — dogskin. Yours ever devotedly, Arthur" —Arthur what? Something aristocratic—" De Lacey Fitz-Barrington." Now to address it to myself. " Mrs. Liverby, 22, Crocus Crescent, Regent's Park." Now, how shall I send it ? (Enter JOSEPH, R.) Ah, Joseph can't read! He will do! (hiding the letter) "Where is my husband?"

JOSEPH. In the study, ma'am.

GEORGINA. What is he doing?

JOSEPH. He aint doing nothing. I told him you'd come in, ma'am.

GEORGINA. (rising). Here, Joseph, take this letter to the commissionaire at the hotel. Tell him to take it to the address at once. Here is a shilling for you to give him.

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am ! (aside). A shilling to a bloomin' commissioner to carry a letter! I'll put a penny stamp on it and post it myself (putting the money in his pocket), elevenpence saved is elevenpence gained!

GEORGINA. Now, Joseph, go at once, and make haste, mind.

JOSEPH. Very well, ma'am, very well. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you, ma'am. But as for 'im!— (Exit unable to adequately express his sentiments.)

GEORGINA. The experiment is rather a dangerous one, certainly! (Enter LIVERBY R.) Ah, here he comes! Still in the sulks it seems! (LIVERBY sits on couch and makes a cigarette.) I'm afraid, dear, I've been out a long

time? Weren't you getting uneasy at my not coming back? Speak, can't you!

(She knocks off one of the vases from the mantel-piece, it smashes on the floor.)

LIVERBY. (turning suddenly.) Oh, damn it, don't do that!

GEORGINA. (aside theatrically.) At last . . . he has spoken! Well, is that all? Nothing but that solitary ejaculation?

Enter JOSEPH at back.

JOSEPH. (with letter.) A letter for you, ma'am.

LIVERBY. Well, what is it?

JOSEPH. A letter, sir.

GEORGINA. (aside). My sham love-letter.

LIVERBY. Bring it here.

JOSEPH. The bearer said it was for missus.

GEORGINA. Give it to your master, since he asks for it. (To LIVERBY.) Pray open it, my dear.

LIVERBY. (to JOSEPH). You can go.

JOSEPH. Thank you, sir, thank you. (Exit.) (Business with fists.)

GEORGINA. I expect it's from my dressmaker, asking for her little account. (LIVERBY, reading letter, is disturbed.) What's the matter, my dear? This letter seems to annoy you! Oh, don't make such faces!

LIVERBY. (exploding). Mrs Liverby, this is too much!

GEORGINA. Well, dear, we must get her to take something off.

LIVERBY. No madam, nothing shall be taken off! So you are carrying on an amatory correspondence?

GEORGINA. I? (Aside.) Now it's coming!

LIVERBY. You allow a gentleman to write to you in such terms?

GEORGINA. (pretending uneasiness). What, has he been imprudent enough to write?

LIVERBY. Imprudent, you may well call it! So he shall find! I'll break every bone in his body!

GEORGINA. (theatrically). James, kill me if you like! But do not break every bone in his body! (She throws herself on her knees.)

LIVERBY. (dragging her up). Rise, wretched woman! I understand now! This old school-fellow — this officer in the 10th Hussars. . . . You to doat on the military! If everyone were like you, what would the nursery maids do? I ask you, as a reasonable being, what would the nursery maids do?

GEORGINA. (feigning despair). James, I was wrong, I did not reflect on the consequences!

LIVERBY. Enough. Your mother shall know all. I'll write to her at once. (He seats himself at table, L.)

GEORGINA. Ha! ha! ha! What an old donkey you are!

LIVERBY. Donkey, Mrs. Liverby?

GEORGINA. You shant write a word! There goes your pen and there goes your paper. (She throws both over her head.)

LIVERBY. Mrs. Liverby, are you insane?

GEORGINA. I knew I should make you speak.

LIVERBY. What do you mean?

GEORGINA. Don't you see that I wrote this letter myself?

LIVERBY. You?

GEORGINA. I was determined to make you talk to me, even if I had to make you jealous; so I wrote this letter, which Joseph gave to a commissionaire who brought it here.

LIVERBY. Oh! so that young scamp was in the plot?

GEORGINA. Without knowing it. Don't be angry with him! But aren't you ashamed of yourself to reduce me to such expedients?

LIVERBY. Well, why did you persist in defending my idle young cousin whom I've dismissed from the office?

GEORGINA. Oh, bother your cousin! I wish he'd never been invented!

LIVERBY. And why did you call me "a grizzly bear"?

GEORGINA. I meant that as a compliment. The grizzly bear is the monarch of the mountains.

LIVERBY. But you won't do it again?

GEORGINA. Not if you don't like it.

LIVERBY. Well, in return I promise never to sulk again as long as I live.
(Going towards sofa.)

GEORGINA. Ah, so you say — but I would wager that before the evening you'll be as bad as ever.

LIVERBY. Well now, what will you bet? Come now. Ah, that bracelet that you wanted me to buy you last month.

GEORGINA. And which you said you couldn't afford. I remember.

LIVERBY. Well, I promise to get it for you the very next time I am in the sulks.

GEORGINA. Very well. Get your money ready.

LIVERBY. All right. My money's safe enough. (She goes to sofa.) So then this young officer of Hussars was a myth?

GEORGINA. Could you imagine otherwise for a moment?

DUET.—LIVERBY and GEORGINA.

GEORGINA. How could you dream I could deceive
"When only six months wed?
How could you, dear, ever receive
Such fancy in your head?
For slight caprice to thus betray
A trusting husband? No!
Banish such thought far, far away,
I love you, love you so!

Oh ne'er believe I could deceive,
Away suspicions throw!
I'll e'er be true, dear James, to you,
I love you, love you so!

LIVERBY. How could I thus, in sullen state,
Such gentle love disdain,
And in a silence obstinate
For two dull days remain?

Oh, ne'er again I'll sulk, I swear!
GEORGINA. That tale to others tell.
You'll break your resolution, dear!

LIVERBY. I love you far too well.
I'll ne'er believe you could deceive
A trusting husband. No,
Away alarms! Come to my arms!
You love me, love me so!

LIVERBY. (after conclusion of symphony). Ah, well, that's settled!

GEORGINA. It annoyed you, then?

LIVERBY. You might have struck me with a feather when I read "Madam, you are beautiful, be as kind" — (Opening letter.)

GEORGINA. (laughing). Oh, you are amusing. Why, there's nothing of the sort there!

LIVERBY. Yes, but there is ... (referring to letter.)

GEORGINA. No, I have some modesty in my composition. I don't write such things to myself — whatever I may think!

LIVERBY. Well, I suppose I may trust my eyes, at any rate. Here it is, as plain as possible. (Pointing and reading.) "Madam, you are beautiful, be as kind as you are handsome."

GEORGINA. Eh, what?

LIVERBY. "Pity an unfortunate wretch who has followed you for a week without daring to address you."

GEORGINA. (aside.) It must be that young man!

LIVERBY. (reading). "Consent to hear his appeal; on you depends all his happiness." That's all. No signature.

GEORGINA. (much perplexed). But this letter — it is not mine. That is not what I wrote to myself!

LIVERBY. Not what you wrote? Who did write it then?

GEORGINA. (much annoyed). I think I know — it was a young man who has been following me about for some days since.

LIVERBY. (getting excited). A young man!

GEORGINA. I was afraid to tell you.

LIVERBY. A young man who dares to write to you such a letter as this? You must have given him some encouragement!

GEORGINA. I knew you would say that.

LIVERBY. Humph! (suddenly stopping, he looks sharply at her, then bursts out laughing.) Ha, ha, ha! That's very good, very good, indeed! But I knew it, I knew it all the time!

GEORGINA. (surprised). Knew what?

LIVERBY. You want to make me lose my bet, eh?

GEORGINA. But, my dear—

LIVERBY. No, no, you don't catch me twice in the same way; look at me now — I am quite calm and collected — I kiss you. I'm not sulky — not in the least, my dear, not in the least. (He pirouettes gaily, ostentatiously pleasant.)

GEORGINA. But I assure you, you are under a mistake!

LIVERBY. No, my dear, you are under a mistake in thinking you could impose upon me. The head of the firm Liverby, Brummagem & Co. is not so easily taken in as all that! You did it capitally — quite capitally! But you wont get your bracelet this time!

GEORGINA. I assure you, James, upon my honour this is a serious matter!

LIVERBY. Not at all, my dear, not at all! Now it's all of no use, you wont get your bracelet, so it's no good your trying. Still as I have been in luck to-day, I don't mind standing you a dinner, anywhere you like, and we'll go to the theatre afterwards. There now, go and dress . . .

GEORGINA. But, James, I must explain to you.

LIVERBY. Not another word! I tell you it's of no use! I'm not to be had! Not another word! I'm not to be had!

GEORGINA. Good heavens! If the house was on fire he wouldn't believe it! (Exit, R.)

LIVERBY. I'm not quite so soft as to be gammoned twice over by the same trick! No, no, Mrs. Liverby! A young man, indeed!

Enter JOSEPH at back.

JOSEPH. (apostrophising LIVERBY). Ah, you may laugh! But I've got something to tell you as will hrritate you!

LIVERBY. (Seeing him). Well, what is it, Joseph?

JOSEPH. Oh, sir! I wouldn't like to be in your place!

LIVERBY. What do you mean, you young hound?

JOSEPH. Oh, nothing, sir, nothing. Only as I was coming in just now, a young man who was standing in the porticole—

LIVERBY. The portico, I suppose you mean?

JOSEPH. Oh, very well, have it so!

LIVERBY. What about this young man?

JOSEPH. Well, sir, he offered me five shillings if I would get him to see missus, (with emphasis) when you was out, sir!

LIVERBY. Oh! (Aside.) This is another attempt. But it wont do, Mrs. Liverby, it wont do. (Aloud, feigning credulity.) Indeed, and what is he like, this young man?

JOSEPH. Thin, small, pale — much uglier than you, sir! but there's no accounting for women's fancies!

LIVERBY. Ha! Just show me those five shillings.

JOSEPH. I wouldn't take them, sir!!

LIVERBY. You refused?

JOSEPH. Certainly, sir; I says to him, sir, "What do you take me for?" sir, and I come and told you at once, sir—

LIVERBY. (sarcastically). Hoping to make me lose my bet, eh?

JOSEPH. Your bet, sir? I didn't know as you had a bet!

LIVERBY. (taking him by the ear). Now, you may thank your stars I'm in a good humour, Mr Joseph; but just remember for the future, I don't like practical jokes to be played upon me (pinching), especially by my servants, remember— especially by my servants.

JOSEPH. There aint no practicable joke in the matter.

LIVERBY. It's of no use for you to deny it, because I've heard all about the affair from beginning to end. Let me hear no more of it.

JOSEPH. Very well, sir, just as you like. What am I to say to the young man?

LIVERBY. (aside). I never saw such an obstinate young rascal in my life. But I wont lose my temper with him. (Aloud.) The young man . . . Oh, take his five shillings, and show him up!

JOSEPH. What, sir, show him up?

LIVERBY. Yes, say I'm out.

JOSEPH. (staring). What, say you're out, sir?

LIVERBY. Yes, can't you hear me. (Going to kick him.)

JOSEPH. (escaping). All right, sir, all right. [He menaces LIVERBY in doorway. LIVERBY turns. JOSEPH escapes.]

LIVERBY. They didn't catch me that time. I shall have to settle accounts with Mr. Joseph for his impudence. After all, my wife was most in fault. It's always best to keep servants at a distance.

Enter GEORGINA, R.

GEORGINA. Well, dear, here I am. ... How do I look? When one's going to dine with one's husband, you know. (Seeing LIVERBY repressing a laugh.) How merry you look! (LIVERBY bursts out laughing.) Why, what's the matter with you?

LIVERBY. (laughing). As if you didn't know!

GEORGINA. I? How should I know?

LIVERBY. It wouldn't do, though ... no ... it wouldn't do.

GEORGINA. What wouldn't do?

LIVERBY. Really, though, you shouldn't have sent Joseph. That boy's much too impudent already!

GEORGINA. Sent Joseph? What do you mean?

LIVERBY. Besides, he told the story very badly.

GEORGINA. What story?

LIVERBY. Now, it's no use your pretending any more? The story about the young man who offered Joseph five shillings to get him to see you when I was out of the way. (He bursts out laughing.)

GEORGINA. (aside). It must be the same one as this morning!

LIVERBY. I bothered Joseph finely!

GEORGINA. What did you say?

LIVERBY. I told him (laughing) to show the young man up!

GEORGINA. What? Oh! you shouldn't have done that! Oh, dear, dear! (She sinks into chair.)

Enter JOSEPH.

JOSEPH. The young man is here, sir!

GEORGINA. Where? Oh, he will be beaten to a jelly! (Rushes to LIVERBY'S walking stick, umbrella, then to the poker, and throws them all out at window.) At all events, I have removed his weapons!

LIVERBY. I say! Heads below there! (Looking out.) Oh, all right. They've fallen into the area! You see, I'm in a beautiful temper.

JOSEPH. The young man is waiting in the next room, sir!

LIVERBY. Very good, I'll see him at once.

GEORGINA. (rushing before him, in terror). My dear, do not enter, I beg of you!

LIVERBY. (aside). She is clever! (Aloud.) My dear, you amuse me very much, but you don't impose on me. I know very well there's nobody there.

JOSEPH. But, see, here are the five shillings he gave me!

LIVERBY. (getting annoyed.) Look here, Mr. Joseph, I shall have to teach you a lesson, I see! Remember, I may joke with my wife, but not with my buttons, remember, not with my buttons! No more of your lies, now!

JOSEPH. Lies, indeed!

LIVERBY. Silence, or I discharge you on the spot!

TRIO.

GEORGINA. Don't you hear what we are saying,
That your honour is at stake?

LIVERBY. At the game that they are playing
How my sides with laughter shake!

GEORGINA. But my dearest James . . .

LIVERBY. No, never
Will you take me in again!
JOSEPH. Ah! he thinks himself so clever
I must laugh . . .
GEORGINA. I can't refrain.

ENSEMBLE.

GEORGINA. Ha, ha, ha; I can't help laughing,
Though I almost faint with fear!
He believes that I am chaffing
When I tell him danger's near!
LIVERBY. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing!
It is really too absurd!
I'm too clever — they shall never
Catch me twice, upon my word!
JOSEPH. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing
Aint he awful obstinate!
Oh, I blushes as he rushes
'eadlong thus upon 'is fate!

II

GEORGINA. But I'm serious in saying. . .
LIVERBY. Do not speak another word!
GEORGINA. But it's not a part I'm playing!
JOSEPH. Aint he obstinate, oh Lord!
This young man, sir, here. . .
LIVERBY. (sternly) No more, sir!
GEORGINA. This young man is. . .
LIVERBY. (mildly). No, my dear!
(to JOSEPH). I have heard your tale before, sir,
Silence, leave the room, d'you hear!

ENSEMBLE AS BEFORE.

JOSEPH. Well, he shall see him anyhow. (Aloud.) I'll go and fasten the door at the foot of the other staircase.

GEORGINA. (aside.) The staircase door! Then he will be shut in, whoever he is! Oh, I'm afraid there will be a fight between them! What shall I do? My dear, I'd rather tell you everything! I'd much rather!

LIVERBY. Go ahead, my dear, go ahead! You see I'm quite calm: go on, keep it up — keep it up!

GEORGINA. Well, then, this young man . . .

LIVERBY. Oh! You stick to the young man, then, he's in the house, I suppose? (ironically.)

GEORGINA. (overcome.) Yes.

LIVERBY. (imitating her.) Yes! That "Yes" was capitally done! (Aloud.) And as Joseph has shut the door at the top of the staircase he must come out through this room.

(Here a young man shows himself at door L.,
then goes in quickly on seeing LIVERBY).

GEORGINA. (who sees him, screaming). Ah!

LIVERBY. (very calm). Ah! that's the young man! That scream was first-rate, really — first-rate. But you see it had no effect. . . . My features were of marble. . . . Now, well suppose he goes out. . . . Stay, I'll turn my back and read my paper. There!

LIVERBY sits near sofa R., reading his paper. The young man re-appears L., and crosses the scene on the tips of his toes.

GEORGINA signs him to escape. Just as he is going out, he knocks over a chair, near the door : it falls, and he goes out briskly R.

LIVERBY. (without turning). Mind the furniture!

GEORGINA. (aside). How clumsy!

LIVERBY. Well, is he gone at last?

GEORGINA. (recovering herself). Yes, yes!

LIVERBY. Then I'm off guard again!

GEORGINA. (aside). Thank Heaven, it went off so well! (Aloud.) I see it's of no use trying to put you out of temper to-day.

LIVERBY. Impossible, quite impossible! A young man, indeed! As if one would dare— (noise outside).

JOSEPH. (outside). Come along! I've got yer!

GEORGINA. Ah!

LIVERBY. What's that row, I wonder?

JOSEPH. There's a young monkey for you!

LIVERBY. Where, sir, where?

JOSEPH. Why he's safe out of the house by this time! I cotched hold of him, so as to show you I wasn't humbugging of you, but he slips his purse into my hands, and then of course, it bewilders me like—

LIVERBY. A purse? Then it is true! There was a young man!

GEORGINA. Haven't we been telling you so for the last half hour?

JOSEPH. Yes, haven't we been telling you?—

GEORGINA. Silence, Joseph!

JOSEPH. Yes, ma'am!

LIVERBY. (opening purse). Sixpence and a visiting card!

JOSEPH. Only a bloomin' tanner! He's swindled me!

LIVERBY. "Ernest Liverby." Why it's my little cousin, that I gave the sack to for his tricks at the office!

JOSEPH. That's what he said to me: he says, "I want to see Mrs. Liverby, to ask her to intercede for me with her husband." Not I! I knew all his interceding meant!

GEORGINA. So that is why he was following me about!

LIVERBY. I'll forgive the young rascal. The fact is, I was a little put out that morning.

GEORGINA. In short, in the Sulks: but you'll never be so any more?

LIVERBY. Never.

GEORGINA. That you may lose your bet, and I may win my bracelet!
(JOSEPH is affected.)

FINALE

REPRISE OF TRIO

GEORGINA. Why should husbands' surly fancies
 Make their wives unhappy, too?
 Why indulge in sulky glances
 When our eyes are meant to woo?
 From our tiff I draw the moral,
 Advantageous to our play,
 Wives, don't with our nonsense quarrel,
 Husbands, don't be sulky, pray.

TRIO. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing
 When I think of what is past!
 Let me say that at our play
 This laugh of ours is not the last!

CURTAIN