

He drew her toward him, but, laughing lightly and happily, she slipped from his grasp and was gone.

When July returned, there was no one there but his patient, who did not have so quiet a night as they had anticipated, being restless, tormented apparently by troubled dreams.

THE HAT.

RECITED BY M. COQUELIN, OF THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

IN Paris, monologues are the fashion. Some are in verse; some are in prose. At every *matinée*, dinner party, or *soirée* the mistress of the entertainment makes it her duty to provide some little scenic recitation, to be gone through by Saint-Germain or Coquelin. The one which enjoyed the greatest success last winter was *The Hat*, which we here offer in an English version:

Mise en Scène: A gentleman holding his hat.

Well, yes! On Tuesday last the knot was tied—
Tied hard and fast; that can not be denied.
I'm caught, I'm caged, from the law's point of view,
Before two witnesses, good men and true.
I'm licensed, stamped: undo the deed who can;
Three hundred francs made me a married man.

Who would have thought it! Married!
How? What for?
I who was ranked a strict old bachelor;
I who through halls with married people crammed
Infused a kind of odor of the damned;
I who declined—and gave lame reasons why—
Five, six, good comfortable matches; I
Who every morning when I came to dress
Found I had one day more, and some hairs less;
I whom all mothers slander and despise,
Because girls find no favor in my eyes—
Married! A married man! Be-yond—a—
doubt!

How, do you ask, came such a thing about?
What prompted *me* to dare connubial bliss?
What worked the wondrous metamorphosis?
What made so great a change—a change like that?

Imagine. Guess. You give it up?

A hat!

A hat, in short, like all the hats you see—
A plain silk stove-pipe hat. *This* did for me.
A plain black hat, just like the one that's here.

A hat?

Why, yes.

But how?

Well, lend an ear.

One day this winter I went out to dine.
All was first-rate—the style, the food, the wine.
A concert afterward—*en règle*—just so.
The hour arrived. I entered, bowing low,
My heels together. Then I placed my hat
On something near, and joined the general chat.
At half past eight we dined. All went off well.
Trust me for being competent to tell!
I sat between two ladies—mute as fishes—
With nothing else to do but count the dishes.
I learned each item in each course by heart.
I hate tobacco, but as smoke might part
Me from those ladies, with a sober face
I took a strong cigar, and kept my place.
The concert was announced for half past ten,
And at that hour I joined a crowd of men.
The ladies, arm to arm, sweet, white, we found,
Like rows of sugared almonds, seated round.
I leaned against the door—there was no chair.
A stout, fierce gentleman, got up with care
(A cuirassier I set him down to be),
Leaned on the other door-post, hard by me,
Whilst far off in the distance some poor girl
Sang, with her love-lorn ringlets out of curl,
Some trashy stuff of love and love's distress.
I could see nothing, and could hear still less.
Still, I applauded, for politeness' sake.

Next a dress-coat of fashionable make
Came forward and began. It clad a poet.
That's the last mode in Paris. Did you know it?
Your host or hostess, after dinner, chooses
To serve you up some effort of the Muses,
Recited with *rim*, gestures, and by-play
By some one borrowed from the great Français.

I blush to write it—poems, you must know,
All make me sleepy; and it was so now.
For as I listened to the distant drone
Of the smooth lines, I felt my lids droop down;
And a strange torpor I could not ignore
Came creeping o'er me.

"Heavens! suppose I snore!
Let me get out," I cried, "or else—"

With that
I cast my eyes around to find my hat.

The *console* where I laid it down, alas!
Was now surrounded (not a mouse could pass)
By triple rows of ladies gayly dressed,
Who fanned and listened calmly, undistressed.
No man through that fair crowd could work
his way.

Rank behind rank rose heads in bright array.
Diamonds were there, and flowers, and, lower
still,

Such lovely shoulders! Not the smallest thrill
They raised in me. My thoughts were of my hat.
It lay beyond where all those ladies sat,
Under a candelabrum, shiny, bright,
Smooth as when last I brushed it, full in sight,
Whilst I, far off, with yearning glances tried
Whether I could not lure it to my side.

"Why may my hand not put thee on my head,
And quit this stifling room?" I fondly said.

"Respond, dear hat, to a magnetic throb.
Come, little darling; cleave this female mob.
Fly over heads; creep under. Come, oh, come!
Escape. We'll find no poetry at home."

And all the while did that dull poem creep
Drearly on, till, sick at last with sleep,
My eyes fixed straight before me with a
stare,

I groaned within me:

"Come, my hat—fresh air!
My darling, let us both get out together.
Here all is hot and close; outside, the weather
Is simply perfect, and the pavement's dry.
Come, come, my hat—one effort! Do but try.
Sweet thoughts the silence and soft moon will
stir
Beneath thy shelter."

Here a voice cried:

"Sir,
Have you done staring at my daughter yet?
By Jove! sir."

My astonished glance here met
The angry red face of my cuirassier.
I did not quail before his look severe,
But said, politely,

"Pardon, sir, but I
Do not so much as know her."

"What, sir! Why,
My daughter's yonder, sir, beside that table.
Pink ribbons, sir. Don't tell me you're unable
To understand."

"But, sir—"

"I don't suppose
You mean to tell me—"

"Really—"

"Who but knows
Your way of dealing with young ladies, sir?
I'll have no trifling, if you please, with
her."

"Trifling?"

"Yes, sir. You know you've jilted five.
Every one knows it—every man alive."
"Allow me—"

"No, sir. Every father knows
Your reputation, damaging to those
Who—"

"Sir, indeed—"

"How dare you in this place
Stare half an hour in my daughter's face?"
"*Sapristi, monsieur!* I protest—I swear—
I never looked at her."

"Indeed! What were
You looking at, then?"

"Sir, I'll tell you *that*—
My hat, sir."

"*Morbleu!* looking at your hat!"
"Yes, sir, it *was* my hat."

My color rose:
He angered me, this man who would suppose
I thought of nothing but his girl.

Meantime
The black coat maundered on in dreary rhyme.
Papa and I, getting more angry ever,
Exchanged fierce glances, speaking both to-
gether,

While no one round us knew what we were at.
"It was my daughter, sir."

"No, sir—my hat."
"Speak lower, gentlemen," said some one near.
"You'll give account for this, sir. Do you hear?"
"Of course, sir."

"Then before the world's astir
You'll get my card, sir."

"I'll be ready, sir."

A pretty quarrel! Don't you think it so?
A moment after, all exclaimed, "Bravo!"
Black coat had finished. All the audience made
A general move toward ice and lemonade.
The coast was clear; my way was open now;
My hat was mine. I made my foe a bow,
And hastened, fast as lover could have moved,
Through trailing trains, toward the dear thing
I loved.

I tried to reach it.

"Here's the hat, I think,
You are in search of."

Shapely, soft, and pink,
A lovely arm, a perfect arm, held out
My precious hat. Impelled by sudden doubt,
I raised my eyes. Pink ribbons trimmed her
dress.

"Here, monsieur, take it. 'Twas not hard to
guess
What made you look this way. You longed
to go.

You were so sleepy, nodding—see!—just so.
Ah, how I wished to help you, if I could!
I might have passed it possibly. I would
Have tried by ladies' chain, from hand to hand,
To send it to you, but, you understand,
I felt a little timid—don't you see?—
For fear they might suppose— Ah! pardon me;
I am too prone to talk. I'm keeping you.
Take it. Good-night."

Sweet angel, pure and true!
My looks to their real cause *she* could refer,
And never thought one glance was meant for
her.

Oh, simple trust, pure from debasing wiles!
I took my hat from her fair hand with smiles,
And hurrying back, sought out my whilom foe,
Exclaiming:

"Hear me, sir. Before I go,
Let me explain. You, sir, were in the right.
'Twas not my hat attracted me to-night.
Forgive me, pardon me, I entreat, dear sir.
I love your daughter, and I gazed at her."
"You, sir?"

He turned his big round eyes on me,
Then held his hand out.

"Well, well, we will see."

Next day we talked. That's how it came
about.

And the result you see. My secret's out.
It was last Tuesday, as I said, and even
Add, she's an angel, and my home is—heaven.
Her father, mild in spite of mien severe,
Holds a high office—is no cuirassier.

Besides—a boon few bridegrooms can command—
He is a widower—so—you understand.

Now all this happiness, beyond a doubt,
By this silk hat I hold was brought about,
Or by its brother. Poor old English tile!
Many have sneered at thy ungainly style;
Many, with ridicule and gibe—why not?—
Have dubbed thee “stove-pipe,” called thee
“chimney-pot.”

They, as æsthetes, are not far wrong, maybe;
But I, for all that thou hast done for me,
Raise thee, in spite of nonsense sung or said,
With deep respect, and place thee on my head.

A DAY IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

IT is not our purpose in this paper to treat of any event which has taken place in the “New Palace” at Westminster, erected in 1840, but to what transpired in the old building on a certain day a little more than a century ago. The day to which we refer was Wednesday, the 30th of May, 1781, and the debate of which we are to speak had reference to American affairs.

The war of the Revolution had been “dragging its slow length” along for more than six years. In spite of the numerous reverses which the British arms had experienced, the government saw, or thought it saw, signs of hope that the summer campaigns of 1781 would put an end to the struggle. The most vigorous efforts had been made to add to the efficiency of the army, and both the naval and the land forces were in a better condition than ever to do the work assigned to them. Favorable news, moreover, was coming from the seat of war to the effect that even at that early period of the year success was following the military movements of Lord Cornwallis. It was announced through the London papers that he had had a decisive engagement with General Greene, in which the entire American army had been taken and destroyed. “This last and fortunate stroke of Lord Cornwallis,” said the editor of the *London Chronicle*, “will probably put a final period to the rebellion.”

It was when these hopes of final success, and the confident expectation of soon bringing to a close the long war of which people were becoming so weary, were bracing up the government, that the House of Commons met on the day to which we have referred, May 30, 1781. Some of the

most eminent men that ever sat on that floor were present. Those least familiar with English history will readily recognize the names of Lords North and Germaine, and those of Fox, Pitt, and Burke. These were among the most distinguished speakers in the House. The last three, as is well known, stood prominent among the leaders of the opposition, who for years had been fighting the government and pleading the cause of America. It seemed just now to be a forlorn hope in which the friends of liberty were indulging, that the United States would ever be able to achieve their independence, and make good their determination forever to dissolve their connection with England. Never to the eye of sense did the prospect of success seem darker. The plans of George III. and his ministry had prospered to the measure of their most sanguine expectations. The “rebels” must soon come to terms, and the States once more return to their colonial relations to the mother country. Keeping all these circumstances in mind, let us enter the House of Commons, and recall by such aids as are at our command what is about to take place on this May day of which we are speaking.

On the government side of the House we can not help noticing the feeling of encouragement which shows itself in the faces of the members. Their recognized majority over the members who sit in the opposition is large and influential. We may keep within the bounds of probability if we suppose that before being called to order they are freely talking over the latest news from America. In yesterday's *London Chronicle* they had read that in a recent bloody battle Lord Cornwallis had been left in complete possession of the field, that General Lafayette had been killed, and that Arnold (Benedict, the traitor) had completed a junction with Lord Cornwallis. No doubt Lord North met his associate, Lord Germaine, with a happy, cheerful countenance on this auspicious day. The government felt itself more than usually strong, and prepared, with a bold front, to meet the attacks of the opposition. Some preliminary business is attended to immediately after the opening of the session, and then discussion on American affairs is the order of the day. There is a movement on the opposition side of the House, and Colonel Hartley, the earnest