

St. Patrick's Day

by

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Dramatis Personae

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE IN 1775

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

Drummer, Soldiers, Countrymen, and Servant.

SCENE--A TOWN IN ENGLAND.

ACT I

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

Enter SERJEANT TROUNCE, CORPORAL FLINT, and four SOLDIERS.

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

2 Sol. Right, Jack, we'll argue in platoons.

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

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

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

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

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

All. Agreed, agreed.

Flint. Oh, faith! here comes the lieutenant.--Now, Serjeant.

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

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR.

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

Sol. Ahem! hem!

Trounce. So please your honour, the very grievance of the matter is this:--ever since your honour differed with justice Credulous, our inn-keepers use us most scurvily. By my

halbert, their treatment is such, that if your spirit was willing to put up with it, flesh and blood could by no means agree; so we humbly petition that your honour would make an end of the matter at once, by running away with the justice's daughter, or else get us fresh quarters,--hem! hem!

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

1 Sol. There's the Red Lion an't half the civility of the old Red Lion.

2 Sol. There's the White Horse, if he wasn't case-hardened, ought to be ashamed to show his face.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Sol. Thank your honour.--Come along; St. Patrick, his honour, and strong beer for ever!
[Exeunt SOLDIERS.]

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

Enter DOCTOR ROSY.

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

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

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

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

O'Con. Oh, hang fortune,--let that take its chance; there is a beauty in Laretta's simplicity, so pure a bloom upon her charms.

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

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

Rosy. Right, right, my Alexander! my taste to a tittle.

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

Rosy. My taste, my taste!--Well, Laretta is none of these. Ah! I never see her but she put me in mind of my poor dear wife.

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

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

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

Rosy. Fair and ugly, crooked or straight, rich or poor--flesh is grass--flowers fade!

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

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

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

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

O'Con. How so, pray?

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

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

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

O'Con. [Aside.] Oh, the devil!--again!

Rosy. Life's a shadow--the world a stage--we strut an hour.

O'Con. Here, doctor. [Offers snuff.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rosy. Poor Dolly!

O'Con. 'Tis past twelve.

Rosy. Inhuman dropsy!

O'Con. The justice will wait.

Rosy. Cropped in her prime!

O'Con. For heaven's sake, come!

Rosy. Well, flesh is grass.

O'Con. O, the devil!

Rosy. We must all die--

O'Con. Doctor!

Rosy. Kings, lords, and common whores--

[Exeunt LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR forcing Rosy off.]

SCENE II.--A Room in JUSTICE CREDULOUS' House.

Enter LAURETTA and MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS.

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

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

Lau. Psha! you know, mamma, I hate militia officers; a set of dunghill cocks with spurs on--heroes scratched off a church door-- clowns in military masquerade, wearing the dress without supporting the character. No, give me the bold upright youth, who makes

love to- day, and his head shot off to-morrow. Dear! to think how the sweet fellows sleep on the ground, and fight in silk stockings and lace ruffles.

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

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

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

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

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

Lau. Why, Cousin Sophy married an officer.

Mrs. Bri. Ay, Laura, an officer of the militia.

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

Mrs. Bri. No, child, I tell you he was a major of militia.

Lau. Indeed, mamma, it wasn't.

Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS.

Just. Bridget, my love, I have had a message.

Lau. It was cousin Sophy told me so.

Just. I have had a message, love--

Mrs. Bri. No, child, she would say no such thing.

Just. A message, I say.

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

Mrs. Bri. Ay, girl, hold your tongue!--Well, my dear.

Just. I have had a message from Doctor Rosy.

Mrs. Bri. He ordered abroad! He went abroad for his health.

Just. Why, Bridget!--

Mrs. Bri. Well, deary.--Now hold your tongue, miss.

Jus. A message from Dr. Rosy, and Dr. Rosy says--

Lau. I'm sure, mamma, his regimentals--

Just. Damn his regimentals!--Why don't you listen?

Mrs. Bri. Ay, girl, how durst you interrupt your papa?

Lau. Well, papa.

Just. Dr. Rosy says he'll bring--

Lau. Were blue turned up with red, mamma.

Just. Laury!--says he will bring the young man--

Mrs. Bri. Red! yellow, if you please, miss.

Just. Bridget!--the young man that is to be hired--

Mrs. Bri. Besides, miss, it is very unbecoming in you to want to have the last word with your mamma; you should know--

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

Mrs. Bri. I am listening, my love, I am listening!--But what signifies my silence, what good is my not speaking a word, if this girl will interrupt and let nobody speak but herself?--Ay, I don't wonder, my life, at your impatience; your poor dear lips quiver to speak; but I suppose she'll run on, and not let you put in a word.-- You may very well be angry; there is nothing, sure, so provoking as a chattering, talking--

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

Mrs. Bri. Why, you little provoking minx----

Just. Get out of the room directly, both of you--get out!

Mrs. Bri. Ay, go, girl.

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