

**GEORGE  
FARQUHAR**

THE  
RECRUITING  
OFFICER

**George Farquhar**  
**The Recruiting Officer**

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*The Recruiting Officer:*

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# George Farquhar

## The Recruiting Officer

### REMARKS

If the two last acts of this drama were equal to the three first, it would rank the foremost among Farquhar's works; for these are brilliant in wit, humour, character, incident, and every other requisite necessary to form a complete comedy. But the decrease of merit in a play, on approaching its conclusion, is, as in all other productions, of most unfortunate consequence.

The author was himself a recruiting officer, and possibly gathered all the materials for this play on the very spot where he has placed his scene – Shrewsbury. He has dedicated the piece "to all friends round the Wrekin," and has thanked the inhabitants of the town for that cheerful hospitality, which made, he adds, "the recruiting service, to some men the greatest fatigue on earth, to me the greatest pleasure in the world."

He even acknowledges, that he found the country folk, whom he has here introduced – meaning those most excellently drawn characters of Rose, her brother, and the two recruits, – under the shade of that beforementioned hill near Shrewsbury, the Wrekin; and it may be well supposed, that he discovered Serjeant Kite in his own Regiment, and Captain Plume in his own

person. Certainly those characters have every appearance of being copied from life – and probably, many other of his Salopian acquaintance have here had their portraits drawn to perfection.

The disguise of Sylvia in boy's clothes, is an improbable, and romantic occurrence; yet it is one of those dramatic events, which were considered as perfectly natural in former times; although neither history, nor tradition, gives any cause to suppose, that the English ladies were accustomed to attire themselves in man's apparel; and reason assures us, that they could seldom, if ever, have concealed their sex by such stratagem.

Another incident in the "Recruiting Officer" might have had its value a hundred years ago – just the time since the play was first acted; but to the present generation, it is so dull, that it casts a heaviness upon all those scenes, whereon it has any influence. Fortune-tellers are now a set of personages, in whom, and in whose skill or fraud, no rational person takes interest; and though such people still exist by their profession, they are so vile, they are beneath satire; and their dupes such ideots, they do not even enjoy sense enough, for their folly to produce risibility.

Perhaps, the author despised this part of his play, as much as the severest critic can do; but having expended his store of entertainment upon the foregoing scenes, he was compelled to supply the bulk of the two last acts, from the scanty fund of wasted spirits, and exhausted invention.

The life of Farquhar was full of adventures. – As a student, he was expelled the college of Dublin, for adventuring profane wit

upon a sacred theme, given to him by his tutor for his exercise.

As an actor, he forsook the stage in grief and horror, on having unknowingly made use of a real sword, instead of a counterfeit one, by which he wounded a brother performer, with whom he had to fence in a tragedy, nearly to the loss of his life.

In love, and marriage, his enterprises were still more unhappily terminated. – And merely as an author, and a soldier, can any events of his life be accounted prosperous.

As a dramatic writer, Farquhar was eminently successful; and in his military capacity, he was ever honoured and beloved – whether fighting with a great army in Flanders, or recruiting with a small party in Shropshire.

# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Captain Pheme	<i>Mr. Holman.</i>
Justice Balance	<i>Mr. Murray.</i>
Worthy	<i>Mr. Whitfield.</i>
Serjeant Kite	<i>Mr. Knight.</i>
Bullock	<i>Mr. Fawcett.</i>
First Recruit	<i>Mr. Munden.</i>
Second Recruit	<i>Mr. Emery.</i>
Welsh Collier	<i>Mr. Farley.</i>
Constable	<i>Mr. Thompson.</i>
Captain Brazen	<i>Mr. Lewis.</i>
Melinda	<i>Miss Chapman.</i>
Rose	<i>Mrs. Gibbs.</i>
Lucy	<i>Mrs. Litchfield.</i>
Sylvia	<i>Mrs. Johnson.</i>
SCENE — <i>Shrewsbury.</i>	

# ACT THE FIRST

## SCENE I

### The Market Place

**Drum beats the Grenadier's March. —**

***Enter Serjeant Kite, followed by Thomas Appletree, Costar Pearmain, and the Mob***

Kite. [*Making a Speech.*] If any gentlemen soldiers or others, have a mind to serve his majesty, and pull down the French king; if any 'prentices have severe masters, any children have undutiful parents; if any servants have too little wages, or any husband too much wife, let them repair to the noble Serjeant Kite, at the sign of the Raven, in this good town of Shrewsbury, and they shall receive present relief and entertainment. — [*Drum.*] — Gentlemen, I don't beat my drums here to insnare or inveigle any man; for you must know, gentlemen, that I am a man of honour: besides,

I don't beat up for common soldiers; no, I list only grenadiers; grenadiers, gentlemen. – Pray, gentlemen, observe this cap – this is the cap of honour; it dubs a man a gentleman, in the drawing of a trigger; and he, that has the good fortune to be born six foot high, was born to be a great man – Sir, will you give me leave to try this cap upon your head?

*Cost.* Is there no harm in't? won't the cap list me?

*Kite.* No, no, no more than I can. – Come, let me see how it becomes you.

*Cost.* Are you sure there is no conjuration in it? no gunpowder plot upon me?

*Kite.* No, no, friend; don't fear, man.

*Cost.* My mind misgives me plaguily. – Let me see it – [*Going to put it on.*] It smells woundily of sweat and brimstone. Smell, Tummas.

*Tho.* Ay, wauns does it.

*Cost.* Pray, Serjeant, what writing is this upon the face of it?

*Kite.* The crown, or the bed of honour.

*Cost.* Pray now, what may be that same bed of honour?

*Kite.* Oh! a mighty large bed! bigger by half than the great bed at Ware – ten thousand people may lie in it together, and never feel one another.

*Cost.* My wife and I would do well to lie in't, for we don't care for feeling one another – But do folk sleep sound in this same bed of honour?

*Kite.* Sound! ay, so sound that they never wake.

*Cost.* Wauns! I wish again that my wife lay there.

*Kite.* Say you so! then I find, brother —

*Cost.* Brother! hold there friend; I am no kindred to you that I know of yet. — Lookye, serjeant, no coaxing, no wheedling, d'ye see — If I have a mind to list, why so — if not, why 'tis not so — therefore take your cap and your brotherhood back again, for I am not disposed at this present writing. — No coaxing, no brothering me, 'faith.

*Kite.* I coax! I wheedle! I'm above it, sir: I have served twenty campaigns — but, sir, you talk well, and I must own that you are a man, every inch of you; a pretty, young, sprightly fellow! — I love a fellow with a spirit; but I scorn to coax; 'tis base; though I must say, that never in my life have I seen a man better built. How firm and strong he treads! he steps like a castle! but I scorn to wheedle any man — Come, honest lad! will you take share of a pot?

*Cost.* Nay, for that matter, I'll spend my penny with the best he that wears a head, that is, begging your pardon, sir, and in a fair way.

*Kite.* Give me your hand then; and now, gentlemen, I have no more to say but this — here's a purse of gold, and there is a tub of humming ale at my quarters — 'tis the king's money, and the king's drink — he's a generous king, and loves his subjects — I hope, gentlemen, you won't refuse the king's health.

*All Mob.* No, no, no.

*Kite.* Huzza, then! huzza for the king, and the honour of Shropshire.

*All Mob.* Huzza!

*Kite.* Beat drum.

*[Exeunt, shouting. – Drum beating the Grenadier's March.]*

### ***Enter Plume, in a Riding Habit***

*Plume.* By the Grenadier's march, that should be my drum, and by that shout, it should beat with success. – Let me see – four o'clock – *[Looking on his Watch.]* At ten yesterday morning I left London – an hundred and twenty miles in thirty hours is pretty smart riding, but nothing to the fatigue of recruiting.

### ***Enter Kite***

*Kite.* Welcome to Shrewsbury, noble captain! from the banks of the Danube to the Severn side, noble captain! you're welcome.

*Plume.* A very elegant reception, indeed, Mr. Kite. I find you are fairly entered into your recruiting strain – Pray what success?

*Kite.* I've been here a week, and I've recruited five.

*Plume.* Five! pray what are they?

*Kite.* I have listed the strong man of Kent, the king of the gipsies, a Scotch pedlar, a scoundrel attorney, and a Welsh parson.

*Plume.* An attorney! wert thou mad? list a lawyer! discharge him, discharge him, this minute.

*Kite.* Why, sir?

*Plume.* Because I will have nobody in my company that can write; a fellow that can write, can draw petitions – I say this minute discharge him.

*Kite.* And what shall I do with the parson?

*Plume.* Can he write?

*Kite.* Hum? he plays rarely upon the fiddle.

*Plume.* Keep him, by all means – But how stands the country affected? were the people pleased with the news of my coming to town?

*Kite.* Sir, the mob are so pleased with your honour, and the justices and better sort of people, are so delighted with me, that we shall soon do your business – But, sir, you have got a recruit here, that you little think of.

*Plume.* Who?

*Kite.* One that you beat up for the last time you were in the country. You remember your old friend Molly, at the Castle?

*Plume.* She's not with child, I hope?

*Kite.* She was brought to-bed yesterday.

*Plume.* Kite, you must father the child.

*Kite.* And so her friends will oblige me to marry the mother.

*Plume.* If they should, we'll take her with us; she can wash, you know, and make a bed upon occasion.

*Kite.* Ay, or unmake it upon occasion. But your honour knows that I am married already.

*Plume.* To how many?

*Kite.* I can't tell readily – I have set them down here upon the back of the muster-roll. [*Draws it out.*] Let me see — *Imprimis*, Mrs. Shely Snikereyes; she sells potatoes upon Ormond key, in Dublin – Peggy Guzzle, the brandy woman at the Horse Guards, at Whitehall – Dolly Waggon, the carrier's daughter, at Hull – Mademoiselle Van Bottomflat, at the Buss – then Jenny Oakum, the ship-carpenter's widow, at Portsmouth; but I don't reckon upon her, for she was married at the same time to two lieutenants of marines, and a man of war's boatswain.

*Plume.* A full company – you have named five – come, make them half a dozen – Kite, is the child a boy, or a girl?

*Kite.* A chopping boy.

*Plume.* Then set the mother down in your list, and the boy in mine; enter him a grenadier, by the name of Francis Kite, absent upon furlow – I'll allow you a man's pay for his subsistence; and now, go comfort the wench in the straw.

*Kite.* I shall, sir.

*Plume.* But hold, have you made any use of your fortune-teller's habit since you arrived?

*Kite.* Yes, yes, sir; and my fame's all about the country for the most faithful fortune-teller that ever told a lie – I was obliged to let my landlord into the secret, for the convenience of keeping it so; but he is an honest fellow, and will be faithful to any roguery that is trusted to him. This device, sir, will get you men, and me, money, which, I think, is all we want at present – But yonder comes your friend, Mr. Worthy – Has your honour any further

commands?

*Plume.* None at present. [*Exit Kite.*] 'Tis indeed, the picture of Worthy, but the life is departed.

### *Enter Worthy*

What, arms across, Worthy! methinks you should hold them open when a friend's so near – The man has got the vapours in his ears, I believe. I must expel this melancholy spirit.

Spleen, thou worst of fiends below,  
Fly, I conjure thee, by this magic blow.

*[Slaps Worthy on the Shoulder.*

*Wor.* Plume! my dear captain! welcome. Safe and sound returned!

*Plume.* I escaped safe from Germany, and sound, I hope, from London: you see I have lost neither leg, arm, nor nose. Then for my inside, 'tis neither troubled with sympathies, nor antipathies; and I have an excellent stomach for roast beef.

*Wor.* Thou art a happy fellow: once I was so.

*Plume.* What ails thee, man? no inundations nor earthquakes, in Wales, I hope? Has your father rose from the dead, and reassumed his estate?

*Wor.* No.

*Plume.* Then you are married, surely?

*Wor.* No.

*Plume.* Then you are mad, or turning quaker?

*Wor.* Come, I must out with it. – Your once gay, roving friend, is dwindled into an obsequious, thoughtful, romantic, constant coxcomb.

*Plume.* And pray, what is all this for?

*Wor.* For a woman.

*Plume.* Shake hands, brother. If you go to that, behold me as obsequious, as thoughtful, and as constant a coxcomb, as your worship.

*Wor.* For whom?

*Plume.* For a regiment – but for a woman! 'Sdeath! I have been constant to fifteen at a time, but never melancholy for one: and can the love of one bring you into this condition? Pray, who is this wonderful Helen?

*Wor.* A Helen, indeed! not to be won under ten years' siege; as great a beauty, and as great a jilt.

*Plume.* A jilt! pho! is she as great a whore?

*Wor.* No, no.

*Plume.* 'Tis ten thousand pities! – But who is she? – do I know her?

*Wor.* Very well.

*Plume.* That's impossible – I know no woman that will hold out a ten years' siege.

*Wor.* What think you of Melinda?

*Plume.* Melinda! why she began to capitulate this time

twelvemonth, and offered to surrender upon honourable terms: and I advised you to propose a settlement of five hundred pounds a year to her, before I went last abroad.

*Wor.* I did, and she hearkened to it, desiring only one week to consider – when beyond her hopes the town was relieved, and I forced to turn the siege into a blockade.

*Plume.* Explain, explain.

*Wor.* My Lady Richly, her aunt in Flintshire, dies, and leaves her, at this critical time, twenty thousand pounds.

*Plume.* Oh, the devil! what a delicate woman was there spoiled! But, by the rules of war, now – Worthy, blockade was foolish – After such a convoy of provisions was entered the place, you could have no thought of reducing it by famine; you should have redoubled your attacks, taken the town by storm, or have died upon the breach.

*Wor.* I did make one general assault, but was so vigorously repulsed, that, despairing of ever gaining her for a mistress, I have altered my conduct, given my addresses the obsequious, and distant turn, and court her now for a wife.

*Plume.* So, as you grew obsequious, she grew haughty, and, because you approached her like a goddess, she used you like a dog.

*Wor.* Exactly.

*Plume.* 'Tis the way of them all – Come, Worthy, your obsequious and distant airs will never bring you together; you must not think to surmount her pride by your humility. Would

you bring her to better thoughts of you, she must be reduced to a meaner opinion of herself. Let me see, the very first thing that I would do, should be, to lie with her chambermaid, and hire three or four wenches in the neighbourhood to report, that I had got them with child – Suppose we lampooned all the pretty women in town, and left her out; or, what if we made a ball, and forgot to invite her, with one or two of the ugliest.

*Wor.* These would be mortifications I must confess; but we live in such a precise, dull place, that we can have no balls, no lampoons, no —

*Plume.* What, no bastards! and so many recruiting officers in town! I thought 'twas a maxim among them, to leave as many recruits in the country as they carried out.

*Wor.* Nobody doubts your good will, noble captain, in serving your country; witness our friend Molly at the Castle; there have been tears in town about that business, captain.

*Plume.* I hope Sylvia has not heard of it.

*Wor.* Oh, sir, have you thought of her? I began to fancy you had forgot poor Sylvia.

*Plume.* Your affairs had quite put mine out of my head. 'Tis true, Sylvia and I had once agreed to go to bed together, could we have adjusted preliminaries; but she would have the wedding before consummation, and I was for consummation before the wedding: we could not agree.

*Wor.* But do you intend to marry upon no other conditions?

*Plume.* Your pardon, sir, I'll marry upon no condition at all —

If I should, I am resolved never to bind myself down to a woman for my whole life, till I know whether I shall like her company for half an hour. Suppose I married a woman without a leg – such a thing might be, unless I examined the goods before-hand. – If people would but try one another's constitutions before they engaged, it would prevent all these elopements, divorces, and the devil knows what.

*Wor.* Nay, for that matter, the town did not stick to say that —

*Plume.* I hate country towns for that reason. – If your town has a dishonourable thought of Sylvia, it deserves to be burnt to the ground – I love Sylvia, I admire her frank, generous disposition – there's something in that girl more than woman – In short, were I once a general, I would marry her.

*Wor.* 'Faith, you have reason – for were you but a corporal, she would marry you – but my Melinda coquets it with every fellow she sees – I'll lay fifty pounds she makes love to you.

*Plume.* I'll lay you a hundred, that I return it if she does – Look ye, Worthy, I'll win her, and give her to you afterwards.

*Wor.* If you win her, you shall wear her, 'faith; I would not value the conquest, without the credit of the victory.

### ***Enter Kite***

*Kite.* Captain, captain! a word in your ear.

*Plume.* You may speak out, here are none but friends.

*Kite.* You know, sir, that you sent me to comfort the good

woman in the straw, Mrs. Molly – my wife, Mr. Worthy.

*Wor.* O ho! very well. I wish you joy, Mr. Kite.

*Kite.* Your worship very well may – for I have got both a wife and a child in half an hour – But as I was saying – you sent me to comfort Mrs. Molly – my wife, I mean – but what d'ye think, sir? she was better comforted before I came.

*Plume.* As how?

*Kite.* Why, sir, a footman in a blue livery had brought her ten guineas to buy her baby-clothes.

*Plume.* Who, in the name of wonder, could send them?

*Kite.* Nay, sir, I must whisper that – Mrs. Sylvia.

*Plume.* Sylvia! generous creature!

*Wor.* Sylvia! impossible!

*Kite.* Here are the guineas, sir – I took the gold as part of my wife's portion. Nay, farther, sir, she sent word the child should be taken all imaginable care of, and that she intended to stand godmother. The same footman, as I was coming to you with this news, called after me, and told me, that his lady would speak to me – I went, and upon hearing that you were come to town, she gave me half a guinea for the news, and ordered me to tell you, that Justice Balance, her father, who is just come out of the country, would be glad to see you.

*Plume.* There's a girl for you, Worthy! – Is there any thing of woman in this? no, 'tis noble, generous, manly friendship. Show me another woman that would lose an inch of her prerogative that way, without tears, fits, and reproaches. The common jealousy

of her sex, which is nothing but their avarice of pleasure, she despises, and can part with the lover, though she dies for the man – Come, Worthy – where's the best wine? for there I'll quarter.

*Wor.* At Horton's.

*Plume.* Let's away, then. – Mr. Kite, go to the lady, with my humble service, and tell her, I shall only refresh a little, and wait upon her.

*Wor.* Hold, Kite – have you seen the other recruiting captain?

*Kite.* No, sir; I'd have you to know I don't keep such company.

*Plume.* Another! who is he?

*Wor.* My rival, in the first place, and the most unaccountable fellow – but I'll tell you more as we go.

*[Exeunt.]*

# SCENE II

## An Apartment

### *Melinda and Sylvia meeting*

*Mel.* Welcome to town, cousin Sylvia. [*Salute.*] I envied you your retreat in the country; for Shrewsbury, methinks, and all your heads of shires, are the most irregular places for living: here we have smoke, scandal, affectation, and pretension; in short, every thing to give the spleen – and nothing to divert it – then the air is intolerable.

*Syl.* Oh, madam! I have heard the town commended for its air.

*Mel.* But you don't consider, Sylvia, how long I have lived in it; for I can assure you that to a lady the least nice in her constitution – no air can be good above half a year. Change of air I take to be the most agreeable of any variety in life.

*Syl.* As you say, cousin Melinda, there are several sorts of airs.

*Mel.* Psha! I talk only of the air we breathe, or more properly of that we taste – Have not you, Sylvia, found a vast difference in the taste of airs?

*Syl.* Pray, cousin, are not vapours a sort of air? Taste air! you

might as well tell me I may feed upon air! but pr'ythee, my dear Melinda! don't put on such an air to me. Your education and mine were just the same, and I remember the time when we never troubled our heads about air, but when the sharp air from the Welsh mountains made our fingers ache in a cold morning, at the boarding-school.

*Mel.* Our education, cousin, was the same, but our temperaments had nothing alike; you have the constitution of an horse.

*Syl.* So far as to be troubled neither with spleen, cholic, nor vapours. I need no salts for my stomach, no hartshorn for my head, nor wash for my complexion; I can gallop all the morning after the hunting-horn, and all the evening after a fiddle. In short, I can do every thing with my father, but drink and shoot flying; and I am sure I can do every thing my mother could, were I put to the trial.

*Mel.* You are in a fair way of being put to't, for I am told your captain is come to town.

*Syl.* Ay, Melinda, he is come, and I'll take care he shan't go without a companion.

*Mel.* You are certainly mad, cousin!

*Syl.* "And there's a pleasure in being mad,  
Which none but madmen know".

*Mel.* Thou poor romantic Quixote! – hast thou the vanity to imagine that a young sprightly officer, that rambles o'er half the globe in half a year, can confine his thoughts to the little daughter

of a country justice, in an obscure part of the world?

*Syl.* Psha! what care I for his thoughts; I should not like a man with confined thoughts; it shows a narrowness of soul. In short, Melinda, I think a petticoat a mighty simple thing, and I am heartily tired of my sex.

*Mel.* That is, you are tired of an appendix to our sex, that you can't so handsomely get rid of in petticoats as if you were in breeches. – O' my conscience, Sylvia, hadst thou been a man, thou hadst been the greatest rake in Christendom.

*Syl.* I should have endeavoured to know the world, which a man can never do thoroughly without half a hundred friendships, and as many amours. But now I think on't, how stands your affair with Mr. Worthy?

*Mel.* He's my aversion.

*Syl.* Vapours!

*Mel.* What do you say, madam?

*Syl.* I say, that you should not use that honest fellow so inhumanly: he's a gentleman of parts and fortune, and besides that, he's my Plume's friend; and by all that's sacred, if you don't use him better, I shall expect satisfaction.

*Mel.* Satisfaction! you begin to fancy yourself in breeches in good earnest – But, to be plain with you, I like Worthy the worse for being so intimate with your captain; for I take him to be a loose, idle, unmannerly coxcomb.

*Syl.* Oh, Madam! you never saw him, perhaps, since you were mistress of twenty thousand pounds: you only knew him

when you were capitulating with Worthy for a settlement, which perhaps might encourage him to be a little loose and unmannerly with you.

*Mel.* What do you mean, madam?

*Syl.* My meaning needs no interpretation, madam.

*Mel.* Better it had, madam; for methinks you are too plain.

*Syl.* If you mean the plainness of my person, I think your ladyship's as plain as me to the full.

*Mel.* Were I sure of that, I would be glad to take up with a rakehelly officer, as you do.

*Syl.* Again! lookye, madam, you are in your own house.

*Mel.* And if you had kept in yours, I should have excused you.

*Syl.* Don't be troubled, madam; I shan't desire to have my visit returned.

*Mel.* The sooner, therefore, you make an end of this, the better.

*Syl.* I am easily persuaded to follow my inclinations; and so, madam, your humble servant.

*[Exit.*

*Mel.* Saucy thing!

### ***Enter Lucy***

*Lucy.* What's the matter, madam?

*Mel.* Did not you see the proud nothing, how she swelled upon

the arrival of her fellow?

*Lucy.* Her fellow has not been long enough arrived, to occasion any great swelling, madam; I don't believe she has seen him yet.

*Mel.* Nor shan't, if I can help it. – Let me see – I have it; bring me pen and ink – Hold, I'll go write in my closet.

*Lucy.* An answer to this letter, I hope, madam?

*[Presents a Letter.]*

*Mel.* Who sent it?

*Lucy.* Your captain, madam.

*Mel.* He's a fool, and I'm tired of him: send it back unopened.

*Lucy.* The messenger's gone, madam.

*Mel.* Then how should I send an answer? Call him back immediately, while I go write.

*[Exeunt.]*

# ACT THE SECOND

## SCENE I

### An Apartment

*Enter Justice Balance and Plume*

*Bal.* Lookye, captain, give us but blood for our money, and you shan't want men. Ad's my life, captain, get us but another marshal of France, and I'll go myself for a soldier.

*Plume.* Pray, Mr. Balance, how does your fair daughter?

*Bal.* Ah, captain! what is my daughter to a marshal of France? we're upon a nobler subject; I want to have a particular description of the last battle.

*Plume.* The battle, sir, was a very pretty battle as any one should desire to see; but we were all so intent upon victory, that we never minded the battle: all that I know of the matter is, our general commanded us to beat the French, and we did so; and, if he pleases but to say the word, we'll do it again. But pray, sir, how does Mrs. Sylvia?

*Bal.* Still upon Sylvia! for shame, captain! you are engaged already – wedded to the war: victory is your mistress, and 'tis below a soldier to think of any other.

*Plume.* As a mistress, I confess – but as a friend, Mr. Balance

---

*Bal.* Come, come, captain, never mince the matter; would not you seduce my daughter, if you could?

*Plume.* How, sir? I hope she is not to be seduced.

*Bal.* 'Faith, but she is, sir; and any woman in England of her age and complexion, by your youth and vigour. Lookye, captain, once I was young, and once an officer, as you are, and I can guess at your thoughts now by what mine were then; and I remember very well that I would have given one of my legs to have deluded the daughter of an old country gentleman like me, as I was then like you.

*Plume.* But, sir, was that country gentleman your friend and benefactor?

*Bal.* Not much of that.

*Plume.* There the comparison breaks: the favours, sir, that —

*Bal.* Pho, pho! I hate set speeches: if I have done you any service, captain, it was to please myself. I love thee, and if I could part with my girl, you should have her as soon as any young fellow I know; but I hope you have more honour than to quit the service, and she more prudence than to follow the camp: but she's at her own disposal; she has five thousand pounds in her pocket, and so – Sylvia, Sylvia!

[Calls.

## ***Enter Sylvia***

*Syl.* There are some letters, sir, come by the post from London; I left them upon the table in your closet.

*Bal.* And here is a gentleman from Germany. – [*Presents Plume to her.*] Captain, you'll excuse me; I'll go read my letters, and wait on you.

[*Exit.*

*Syl.* Sir, you are welcome to England.

*Plume.* You are indebted to me a welcome, madam, since the hopes of receiving it from this fair hand was the principal cause of my seeing England.

*Syl.* I have often heard that soldiers were sincere; may I venture to believe public report?

*Plume.* You may, when 'tis backed by private insurance; for I swear, madam, by the honour of my profession, that whatever dangers I went upon, it was with the hope of making myself more worthy of your esteem; and if ever I had thoughts of preserving my life, 'twas for the pleasure of dying at your feet.

*Syl.* Well, well, you shall die at my feet, or where you will; but you know, sir, there is a certain will and testament to be made beforehand.

*Plume.* My will, madam, is made already, and there it is; and if

you please to open that parchment, which was drawn the evening before the battle of Hockstet, you will find whom I left my heir.

*Syl. Mrs. Sylvia Balance.* [*Opens the Will, and reads.*] Well, captain, this is a handsome and substantial compliment; but I can assure you I am much better pleased with the bare knowledge of your intention, than I should have been in the possession of your legacy: but, methinks, sir, you should have left something to your little boy at the Castle.

*Plume.* That's home. [*Aside.*] My little boy! lack-a-day, madam! that alone may convince you 'twas none of mine: why, the girl, madam, is my serjeant's wife, and so the poor creature gave out that I was the father, in hopes that my friends might support her in case of necessity. – That was all, madam – my boy! no, no, no!

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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