

A MEDICAL MAN.

A Comedietta.

BY W. S. GILBERT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALPHONSO DE PICKLETON, a dramatic author.

JONES, a manager.

BELINDA, a young lady.

SCENE: A particularly untidy and shabbily furnished apartment, the residence of Alphonso de Pickleton. The pictures on the walls are hung awry, the curtains are drawn unevenly, the tablecloth is carelessly spread, the floor is covered with books, manuscripts, and articles of clothing. Indications of extreme untidiness on the part of the occupier are everywhere visible.

Enter ALPHONSO, cleaning a pair of old and muddy boots.

ALPHONSO: Now then, to polish up these boots. And yet [*looking at them*] it seems no end of a pity to waste all this good ground. There's a rich loamy soil! Why, in their present condition, I'm a sort of landed proprietor on a small scale. I'm not sure that I'm not entitled to a vote for the county. But Alphonso de Pickleton was always a spendthrift, and thus he proceeds to squander the only landed estate he is ever likely to possess. [*Brushes vigorously*] There; it's some satisfaction to reflect that, although the land is no longer in my possession, the "rents" [*thrusting his finger through a hole in the boot*] still remain to me; and if I can derive any consolation from the fact that they're likely to increase day by day, why, I'm quite at liberty to do so. Whew! there's an aristocratic shortness of breath about me that makes it tolerably certain, to my mind, that Nature never intended that I should work. Why, I can't write a letter without going into a profuse perspiration; and the absolutely necessary operation of dressing in the morning so completely prostrates me, that I only recover from the effect in time to undress and go to bed at night. No; it's pretty clear that I was originally destined to be an eastern rajah on a striped sofa, with a couple of hundred fascinating young houris to fan me and draw my beer. That's clearly the line on which I was intended to run. but somehow or other, owing to some absurd mismanagement of the signals, I've got shunted off my own line on to that of somebody else, who, though in all probability a hard-fisted, long-winded, pudding-headed dock-labourer of a fellow by nature, is at present rolling in rose-leaves, and bathing his big muscular body in strawberries-and-cream; while I, the rightful heir, am cleaning a confounded pair of broken old boots—a miserable dramatic author without a shilling in his pocket, and with scarcely a coat to his back. And yet I don't know that, after all, I'm not better off than my friend the rajah. I can go out whenever I like—at least, I can after dark and all day on Sundays—without a running accompaniment of tom-toms; and as to the two hundred houris, why, I'm so exceedingly bashful in ladies' society, that I'd sooner have to do with two hundred devils. Not, mind you, that I don't admire them! Admire them? Why, I adore them all; my only difficulty is, that I never can make up my mind to tell 'em so. It's a very curious fact, that, bashful as I am in ladies' society, when I'm among men I've the impudence of

the old gentleman himself. Yet, bashful as I am, I'm remarkably anxious to get married. I feel that it's high time that I settled down into a respectable married man as quickly as possible. Impressed with this fact, I actually inserted a matrimonial advertisement in the extensively circulated columns of the *Halfpenny Teaser*. To this advertisement I received no fewer than two thousand three hundred and twenty-seven replies from ladies of all ages and all conditions, differing considerably in most material respects, but unanimous in one matter—an intense and all-absorbing desire to be united in the bonds of matrimony to the gentleman who is at present employed in cleaning this boot. One young thing was fifty, but rich—that was too old; another was twelve and a half, with three-and-sixpence and a doll's-house-well, that was too young. In short, of all the two thousand three hundred and twenty-seven replies, one only appeared to offer anything like a temptation. It purported to come from a beautiful being, Belinda, who said she was nearly twenty-one, small, but charming, and with three hundred a-year in house-property when she came of age. She was delightfully candid with me, and at once admitted that her only reason for answering my advertisement was that by marrying me, she would be able to escape from the clutches of an objectionable old father, who had determined to marry her to a repulsive old bill-discounter whom she absolutely abhorred. Her plan was to engage herself to marry me on the day she came of age, which event would take place in three weeks, and in the mean time hoodwink the objectionable old father by pretending to accept the addresses of his friend, the repulsive old bill-discounter. To the lovely and importunate Belinda I sent an ardent reply, making an appointment to meet her on the ensuing evening. But unfortunately, at the appointed time my confounded timidity stepped in, and I couldn't make up my mind to keep it. A reproachful letter from her raised my courage; and in order to bind myself down to keep the next appointment, I wrote her a formal promise of marriage, asking her to meet me on the ensuing evening. This appointment I also failed to keep; but I sent her my photograph, requesting the honour of hers in return. Well, in due course it came; but conceive my horror, rage, and disgust, when I discovered that, instead of a blooming young lady of one-and-twenty, I had given a formal promise of marriage to a battered old hag of seventy, without a tooth in her misshapen old mouth, or a hair on her antiquated old head! So, as my first and only matrimonial venture has turned out a decided and unmistakable failure, I've given up all hopes of ever getting married—provided, that is to say, that the affectionate old lady don't insist on her bargain—and spend an uncomfortable bachelor existence in this particularly uncomfortable old room;—at least, it looks untidy, but in point of fact it isn't. There isn't an article in it which hasn't its duly appointed place. For instance, I want the shining-brush. Very good. Now anybody, to judge from the present condition of this room, would be justified in regarding the task of finding a shining-brush as a new edition of the old feat of the needle and the bottle of hay. But, in point of fact, it is not so. I know, without looking, that that shining-brush is exactly three feet four inches sow-sow-west by sow southerly, distant from the off hind-leg of the mahogany chiffonier. Here [*picking up leg of chiffonier*] in the "off" hind-leg, and [*pointing to the brush*] there is the shining-brush in question. [*Polishes boot*] There! Now to put these rattletraps away. "A place for everything, and everything in its place;" that's my motto. Now let me see; the blacking-pot, if I recollect rightly, spends a cheerful and elevated existence on the mantelpiece nor-nor-east of the clock, and six inches three-eighths from the portrait of Anna Maria. There you are. [*Placing it. A noise as of a person falling downstairs is heard.*] Hullo! What's that? It can't be the whole of the second floor coming down to pay the parlours a visit,

although it certainly sounded uncommonly like it. [*Goes out, and returns immediately, bearing BELINDA, apparently insensible, in his arms.*] A lovely and accomplished female, who's just taken a tremendous and uncompromising header down two pair of stairs! I found her lying quite insensible at the foot of them. Poor little thing! I hope no bones are broken. But what in the world am I to do with her? Here's a pretty situation for a bashful man! I don't object to her now; but what'll become of me when she returns to her senses? I can't ring for my landlady; for, in the first place, I owe her five weeks' rent; and in the second place, she'd never believe I found her outside insensible. I have it! She tumbled down stairs, so she must be the property of the second floor. I'll go and see him about it directly.

[*Exit ALPHONSO. BELINDA then rises coolly, and smooths her dress.*]

BELINDA: So, here I am at last in Alphonso's apartment! The trouble I've had to get at him no mortal would believe. After answering his matrimonial advertisement, as the only means of escaping from the tyranny of my unreasonable old papa, and making two appointments, both of which he failed to keep, I received a letter from him asking for my photograph and enclosing his. Not being altogether ashamed of my personal beauty, I had no hesitation in forwarding the portrait in question; but judge of my horror when, after I had posted the letter, I discovered that, instead of enclosing my own photograph, I had sent that of my respectable old grandmother, who's eighty if she's a day! Of course, after once seeing that, he won't want to have anything more to say to me; and he would never believe, if I sent him a genuine photograph, that it wasn't an imposition. So I have adopted the ingenious plan of pretending to tumble downstairs, and so be picked up insensible at his door, in order that I may prove to him that I am not quite as bad as the photograph makes me out. But what a room! what a pig-sty! Gracious goodness, what a miserable man he must be, and what a happy man I'll make him! But here he comes. Good heavens! where in the world was I lying when he left the room? I'm sure I quite forget.

[*The door opens, and ALPHONSO enters. MISS B. throws herself on to a sofa opposite to the chair on which she was lying in the first instance, and resumes an appearance of insensibility.*]

ALPHONSO: No, nobody upstairs knows anything about her. It's a most extraordinary and perplexing thing. I've taken the precaution of borrowing a bottle of strong salts from the second floor [*smelling bottle*], and if that don't bring her to, the deuce is in it. [*Looks at chair*] Hullo! where in the world is she? [*Sees her on the sofa*] Well now, really this is a most remarkable circumstance! Do you know, I could have sworn that I left her on that chair. It really seems incredible, but she must have had a fit in my absence, and have wriggled herself off the chair on to the sofa! This is curious; this is decidedly curious. Now then, to administer the restorative. [*Takes a chair*] How nice she looks! I wonder who she is? I never enjoyed the society of a fainting woman before. It's much more agreeable than the waking article-not so obtrusively noisy. Somehow or other I don't feel any of that awkward nervous restraint that always seems to monopolise my faculties when I'm in the society of a lady who has all her senses about her. [*Getting nearer*] What a nice little girl! [*Strokes her hand*] Soft as velvet! Sly dog, Alphonso de Pickleton. [*Pokes himself in the ribs*] Leave her alone, you dog, leave her alone [*Strokes her cheek*] O, this is simply maddening! [*Gets closer*] Well, Alphonso, for a bashful man

you're getting on. I wonder if I might-eh? No one's looking, she'll never know. I never did yet. I think-yes, I'm sure I will. [*Getting closer to her, and putting her arm round his neck*] This is extremely sociable; I like it much. Pretty little girl! What lips! Shall I? I wonder if I might! O, I'm sure I might. [*Kisses her. She opens her eyes and screams.*]

BELINDA: Gracious, where am I?

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] This is embarrassing. Madam, you-a-

BELINDA: I insist, sir, on knowing where I am.

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] Just as we were getting on so comfortably together! That's always the way. As long as a woman is asleep, she's all right; but the moment she wakes, she begins to make herself disagreeable. [*Aloud*] My dear madam, pray compose yourself; you've no occasion to alarm yourself. Allow me to explain. [*Aside*] Confound this bashfulness! I can't get a word out! [*Aloud*] The fact is, I found you in a fainting-fit at the foot of the stairs, having apparently fallen headlong down them.

BELINDA: Headlong? [*about to scream.*]

ALPHONSO: Apparently headlong, but with the extremest possible propriety nevertheless. [*BELINDA relieved.*] You fell most gracefully! I picked you up and carried you in here, and I've spent the last five minutes in doing all in my power to restore consciousness.

BELINDA: But a hideous recollection forces itself upon me. I have an indistinct notion, that when I recovered, I found you with your arm round my waist and your face pressed against mine. Was that so?

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] What in the world am I to say? Why couldn't she have continued as she was? Just as we were getting on so comfortably together, too! [*Aloud*] Madam, to a certain extent it was so. I was adopting the recognised means of restoration in the case of a fainting-fit. I was engaged in biting your ear, when you revived.

BELINDA: Upon your honour, sir, was that all?

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] What the dickens am I to do? Alphonso would scorn a lie, but- [*Aloud*] Upon the honour of Alphonso de Pickleton, that was all!

BELINDA: Then I am satisfied, quite satisfied [*aside*] that the honour of Alphonso de Pickleton is not a particularly valuable security.

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] Well out of that scrape, anyhow.

BELINDA: Now, sir, there is nothing left for me but to thank you for your hospitality, and to wish you a very good-morning.

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] O, hang it! I can't let her go yet. How shall I stop her? O, I hate it! I'll say I'm a medical man. [*Aloud.*] Good heavens, madam! you surely would never dream of leaving this house in your present precarious condition?

BELINDA: [*aside*] I haven't the smallest intention of doing so. [*Aloud*] My precarious condition, sir? What in the world to you mean?

ALPHONSO: Madam, as a medical man of extensive experience, I must positively forbid your leaving the house for many hours, it may be days, to come! [*Aside*] I wonder if I look like a family doctor!

BELINDA: O, ho! So you're a medical man, are you?

ALPHONSO: A-precisely-O yes, a very medical man indeed! [*Aside*] Wish I'd a pair of gold spectacles!

BELINDA: O, if you're a medical man, why of course that is sufficient; but you are sure you're not deceiving me?

ALPHONSO: Madam, I am incapable of such a thing. It is useless for me to attempt to conceal the fact, but you have had an exceedingly ugly fall, and it's impossible to say what the consequences may be.

BELINDA: [*aside*] O, the impostor!

ALPHONSO: Exposure for one moment to the open air might, and probably would, induce rheumatic ossification of the pericardiac sal ammonia! Think how dreadful that would be!

BELINDA: Well, it doesn't sound nice, I must say!

ALPHONSO: Besides, I am very far from certain that no bones are broken!

BELINDA: Indeed!

ALPHONSO: I shall consider it my duty to ascertain that no bones are broken. [*Aside*] Well, for a bashful man, you're getting on, Alphonso.

BELINDA: [*aside*] Indeed, you'll do nothing of the kind. [*Aloud*] I assure you, sir, that there's nothing broken. There is not the slightest occasion for any investigation.

ALPHONSO: If you'd like a leg whipped off, I'll do it in a jiffey. Do have a leg off!

BELINDA: Thank you, sir, you are very obliging, but I won't trouble you.

ALPHONSO: Isn't there anything I can do for you to prove the strength of my affection?

BELINDA: O, I've already received a sufficiently convincing proof of that.

[*Clock strikes.*]

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] Half-past two! Why, that was the hour at which Jones, the manager of the little Snugborough Theatre, was to call about my sensation drama, the "Patriarch and the Precipice, or the Blue Pill of Despair." Hang it all, if he keeps his appointment, he'll spoil all!

BELINDA: So this is the room in which you usually see your patients?

ALPHONSO: This is the identical apartment. Not half an hour ago I whipped off three legs and an arm in the very chair you're sitting in.

BELINDA: But what an untidy place, to be sure! Look at the pictures; they're all awry. No, I insist upon your putting them straight!

ALPHONSO: No, no; you mustn't move. I hear your leg creaking; I'm sure it's broken.

BELINDA: Broken? Nonsense! it's all right. Look here [*dances*] There! [*places pictures square*] and there! [*again*] and there! [*again.*] Why, who's that?

[*Knock*]

ALPHONSO: Jones, by all that's miserable! What shall I do?

BELINDA: Jones? Who's Jones?

ALPHONSO: Jones? Why, Jones is a patient, my dear; he's a patient! [*Aside*] That's not true; he's confounded impatient-but no matter.

[*Enter JONES.*]

JONES: Morning, De Pickleton! How de do? O, busy? I'm afraid I'm intruding.

ALPHONSO: Intruding? Not a bit! [*Aside*] What in the world shall I do? I daren't send him away; he'll take offence if I do, and I can't afford to offend him. [*Aloud*] O, no; this is-ahem!-my aunt.

JONES: O, indeed! delighted, I'm sure! [*Aside*] Sly dog!

BELINDA: [*aside to ALPHONSO*] If this gentleman is a patient, I think I'd better go. [*Going.*]

JONES: Pray don't go, ma'am; it's quite unnecessary, I assure you. We've nothing to say to each other that you mayn't hear.

ALPHONSO: Confound him!

JONES: I've called about this "Blue Pill" of yours. Do you know, I'm afraid I can't take it.

ALPHONSO: Can't take it? Nonsense! why not?

JONES: Why, in the first place, there's a great deal too much of it.

ALPHONSO: Too much of it? Why, what do you mean?

JONES: Why, I mean that I don't think it will go down. I'm quite sure it wouldn't be long in the bill.

BELINDA: [*aside*] Long in the bill?

ALPHONSO: Never you mind whether it will be long enough in the bill; the question is, whether you're broad enough in the throat.

JONES: Broad enough in the throat? I don't understand you, sir.

ALPHONSO: Yes, for it to *go down*. It's a joke.

JONES: O, it's a joke, is it sir? Well, you're quite right to mention it.

ALPHONSO: My dear sir, don't be foolish, but take it at once.

BELINDA: Yes, do take it, sir; it will do you a great deal of good. He must know better than you.

JONES: The devil he must!

ALPHONSO: My dear sir, if you don't take it, I won't answer for the consequences.

JONES: Consequences? What consequences?

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] Why to me, of course.

JONES: O, I've nothing to do with them. Then, again, Miss De Montmorency isn't at pleased with what you've give her, and she is determined to throw it up.

BELINDA: O, the nasty creature!

JONES: And Belville don't like what you've done for him. He's uncommonly sore; but it's my opinion it will have to be cut very much in order to bring it closer together. He'll feel it very much, but it can't be helped.

BELINDA: O, poor Belville! how he will suffer!

JONES: Then Cholmondelay wants a combat. He says he must have a combat.

BELINDA: What in the world does he want a combat for?

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] O, Cholmondelay's mad; he's a raging maniac. [*To JONES*] Very well, he shall have a combat if he likes. Anything for peace and quietness.

BELINDA: Eh?

ALPHONSO: [*aside*] It's necessary to humour these madmen in their harmless little fancies sometimes.

JONES: Then there's another point. I see that you are going to kill Brown as soon as he discovers that I've run away with his wife.

BELINDA: O, the monster! [*To ALPHONSO*] Well, I should never have believed it of you-never! O, you medical men!

JONES: Well, Brown objects to being killed so soon. He says he must live and avenge his wife's faithlessness. What do you say to that?

BELINDA: I say that Brown's objections are perfectly natural; Brown is quite right.

ALPHONSO: O, you think Brown is right?

BELINDA: [*emphatically*] Quite right.

ALPHONSO: O, then, that settles it. Brown is respited.

JONES: Very well then, that settled. I've brought you back the manuscript [*giving manuscript*]. Now I'm off. Good-bye. [*Exit JONES*]

BELINDA: That's a very extraordinary patient.

ALPHONSO: Quaint, quaint, perhaps; nothing more.

BELINDA: Well, I really must go; so good-bye, and thank you for your kindness.

ALPHONSO: Good-bye? Nonsense! You don't leave this room to-day. The consequences, ma'am, would be disastrous. Stop here, ma'am, and make yourself at home.

BELINDA: But what am I to do all day?

ALPHONSO: Well, I'm going to breakfast; you may help me if you like.

BELINDA: O, very good. But where in the world do you keep your things? The place is in such a state, that it is impossible to find anything.

ALPHONSO: To find the tea-pot, align the right-hand corner of the chiffonier with the centre of the loo-table; carry your eye up, bearing thirty-five degrees to the right, and thirty-eight inches from the chiffonier you have it [*she obeys his instructions, and finds tea-pot*]; table-cloth under third chair from the right [*she finds it*]; butter behind coal-scuttle, six inches nor'-nor'-east [*she finds it*]; bread in bookcase, behind first six volumes of Cumberland's *Acting Dramas* [*takes out books, and finds bread*]; tea-cup-

BELINDA: [*interrupting*] Only one tea-cup?

ALPHONSO: Only one tea-cup at present.

BELINDA: But what am I to do?

ALPHONSO: You shall have the saucer. Tea-cup on armchair [*she finds it*]; tea on mantelpiece in tobacco-jar [*she finds it*]; and there you are.

BELINDA: [*proceeds to make tea*] Well, of all the untidy-Why, what in the world's this? [*looking in tea-pot.*]

ALPHONSO: Eh-what?

[**BELINDA** fishes out a number of pawn-tickets.]

ALPHONSO: [*much confused*] Those?-O, those are-*[Aside]* Confound it! what are those? [*Aloud*] Those, my dear, are bills-unpaid bills.

BELINDA: What curious bills-on little bits of cardboard!

ALPHONSO: Yes; it's a way they have down here.

BELINDA: But they are so small!

ALPHONSO: Yes; I couldn't pay them if they were large.

BELINDA: But I mean, they're so small in size. But the things seem cheap.

ALPHONSO: Yes, it's a cheap neighbourhood.

BELINDA: [*reading*] "Coat, 1s. 6d."

ALPHONSO: Yes, that was a decided bargain [*aside*] for the pawnbroker.

BELINDA: [*reads*] "Pair of boots, 9d." That's very cheap.

ALPHONSO: Ye-es-pretty well; single soles, though.

BELINDA: [*reads from different tickets*] "Shirt, 4d.;" "Pair of socks, 1d."-that's a halfpenny each.

ALPHONSO: What a head for figures! So it is.

BELINDA: Well, this is a rare neighbourhood for bargains.

ALPHONSO: Yes [*getting closer*]; it's possible to live very cheaply here, and what is enough for one is enough for two.

BELINDA: [*thoughtfully*] "Boots, 9d."

ALPHONSO: Yes, single soles, though.

BELINDA: O, then double soles are dearer?

ALPHONSO: Much.

BELINDA: Then if double soles are so much dearer, don't you think that, as we are single souls just now, we had better remain as we are?

ALPHONSO: But soles always go in pairs.

BELINDA: Always?

ALPHONSO: Always.

BELINDA: Has your soul always gone in double harness?

ALPHONSO: I think I may say always.

BELINDA: And, may I ask who-

ALPHONSO: [*interrupting*] You!

BELINDA: No, but before me?

ALPHONSO: O, before you? Well, let me see; there's Medusa. In a kind of way I'm promised to Medusa now.

BELINDA: And who is Medusa?

ALPHONSO: A monstrosity, who answered a matrimonial advertisement of mine inserted in the *Halfpenny Teaser*. I blindly engaged to marry her without ever having seen her, and I am hourly expecting her to arrive, and compel me to keep my promise. See, here is her photograph [*produces photograph*].

BELINDA: [*aside*] Poor grandmamma! [*Aloud*] My dear sir, I congratulate you! Heavens! what a lovely face!

ALPHONSO: Go along with you! She's seventy.

BELINDA: Yes; but what a noble old lady! O, if I were a man, I think I could be happy with such a one. No disguise here; no "make-up," no false teeth, no rouge, no false front-all that there is is true to Nature's self!

ALPHONSO: Yes, she's as bald as an egg. Now, do come to breakfast.

BELINDA: Breakfast? O, I can't breakfast in an untidy room. See here-what are all these things? [*puts various articles of clothing, books, &c. away*]. These pictures are all awry [*sets them straight*]. Books, papers of all kinds, all muddled up together-O, you untidy fellow! [*She bustles about the room, and puts everything in its place, until the room begins to look comfortable.*] There, now come to breakfast. [*They sit down. She pours out tea.*]

ALPHONSO: This is uncommonly snug.

BELINDA: I'm so glad you like it.

ALPHONSO: What a difference your bright cheery presence makes in these dull old chambers!

BELINDA: Thank you, that's a very pretty compliment.

ALPHONSO: Not at all. I mean it.

BELINDA: And when do you think I shall be well enough to go out?

ALPHONSO: Well enough? Not for months; it may perhaps be years before you are fit to be moved.

BELINDA: O, but what will Medusa say?

ALPHONSO: Medusa? O, I forgot Medusa.

BELINDA: The written promise, you know!

ALPHONSO: Yes; I quite forgot the written promise.

BELINDA: Perhaps she'll give it up.

ALPHONSO: O, not she. Why she's dying for me.

BELINDA: Is she?

ALPHONSO: O, she'll never give it up; depend upon it, the old girl knows when she's well off.

BELINDA: Does she? [*hands him a paper*].

ALPHONSO: Eh? Why, this is the identical document!

BELINDA: And I am the very identical lady.

ALPHONSO: You? Go along with you; why, Belinda's eighty!

BELINDA: No, but Belinda's grandmother is. Let me explain. Belinda in answering your note made a very stupid error, and enclosed her grandmother's portrait instead of her own. So, in order to remove the unpleasant impression she must have created, she thought her best plan was to come in person, and show you that she was not really as hideous as you believed her to be; so I pretended to fall downstairs outside your door; and you know how well my plan succeeded.

ALPHONSO: Then you-that is, I-

BELINDA: Well!

ALPHONSO: Then you were not really insensible when I-when I-

BELINDA: When you were endeavouring to restore consciousness. O dear no!

ALPHONSO: This is awkward. [*Knock*] Come in.

Enter JONES.

JONES: Well, it's all right. I'm quite willing to take your "Blue Pill," and not only that, but also to give you a commission to prepare something of the same kind to follow it; and here is a cheque for fifty pounds on account.

ALPHONSO: Fifty pounds! Congratulate me, and-

BELINDA: That's rather a heavy fee, isn't it,-fifty pounds for a blue pill?

ALPHONSO: Ha, ha! she thinks it's medicine, when it's a piece!

JONES: Ha, ha, ha!

ALPHONSO: Ha, ha, ha!

BELINDA: A piece!

ALPHONSO: Yes; I'm a dramatic author.

BELINDA: But you said you were a medical man!

ALPHONSO: Did I? That's so like me!

JONES: Sly dog!

BELINDA: O, it's too bad of you to deceive me on such a point.

ALPHONSO: But *have* I deceived you? Am I not a medical man? See here. Jones's theatre don't fill; he is hipped and melancholy; he comes to me, and I write him a piece that brings him thousands; he revives, and Jones is himself again. You [*to BELINDA*] are moping and miserable, living a desolate solitary life, and seeing nobody worth

naming, and you come to me; I provide you with some one to love, some one to cherish, some one to obey, and Belinda is herself again. I am unhappy in my solitude, I provide myself with a wife by prescription answers, and I am myself again. Am I not, under these circumstances, justified in describing myself as a singularly successful Medical Man?

[Curtain.]