

THE
INTERLOCUTOR:

A

COMEDY,

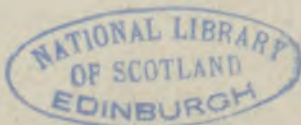
OF

ONE ACT, IN VERSE:

ASCRIBED TO
ALEXANDER PENNECUIK,
M. D.

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1803.



Dramatis Personæ.

Sir JOHN, } *A Knight, Just-Ass of Peace, and
Sheriff Depute of the county of
Peebles*.*

MR GRUE, *the Procurator Fiscal.*

JULY, *the Maid of the Inn.*

PLACE, *the inside of the Inn at Peebles.*

TIME, *two hours in the evening.*

* See a Letter to a Knight, who shot at the
Author's doves, and killed them on the Dovecot-
head, among Doctor Pennecuik's Poems.

THE
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A
COMEDY.

SCENE FIRST.

*A dark Passage and Stair in the Inn, at Peebles,
Sir JOHN enters softly, a tiptoe.*

SIR JOHN.

DID they mark my fine air when I walk,
How sentimentally I can talk;
How much, upon nothing I can say;
These women, to me, would soon give way.
When I think how in words I abound,
And that my decisions are so sound,
Upon my soul, I'm quite thunderstruck,
At their gross blindness, and my bad luck.—
If with my eyes she saw my figure,
She would not treat me with such rigour,
As to slight me, almost past bearing,
By not once giving me a hearing,
Though I steal from passage to passage,
And watch her course at every message.—
If she were not as dull as an ass,
She'd be as kind as my looking-glass;
Like it, at least, return smile for smile,
And think she was honour'd all the while.

LANDLADY, *without.*

July! go bring the kettle and stand?
 Why don't you notice what I command?—
 Still trifling with that fellow, alone!—
 Has any one seen the Knight, Sir John?—
 I wish the coxcomb may not be lost!
 Of such another we'd ne'er again boast;
 So just a judge, so batter'd a beau,
 With so little substance, and much show.

JULY, *without.*

Poor Just-ass! O, he'll be gone to rest,
 So 'bout him you need not be distrest.
 In some nook he'll be taking repose,
 To relieve from the weight of his nose;
 It, and his head, on some place to lay;
 Sure, plaguily, 'tis oft' in his way.*

SIR JOHN.

Zounds! I'll betake myself to this Case;
 They'll not search for me in such a place

l (He steals into, and seats himself, with elegant anguishing dignity, in the press under the stair.)

If July comes past, to her alone,
 To her I'll try to make myself known:
 May-hap even from such a snug recess
 My suit may meet with greater success.—
 Suppose now, till my sweet creature come,
 So's not to be heard, a tune I hum;
 But lest too much I stretch my shrill throat,
 I believe, though, I'd much better not,

* See a Lady's character of her lover, &c. in
 Doctor Pennecuik's Poems.

Till I get out of this my bird's cage,—
 Oh! ere she's here, 'twill be a long age.—
 Lud!—Women too are so monstrous queer!
 'Tis birds, they say, make love by the ear:
 They wonder how I can bear about,
 Such a large crooked Toucan like snout;
 Cry, singing, fool! becomes not a judge—
 Hist! hist! who comes here?—hist!—let's not
 budge!

SCENE SECOND.

*Enter JULY, puffing and blowing as she passes,
 with a large kettle and stand.*

Sir JOHN, *from the box, (with a low voice.)*

July!—July my dear!—What's your haste!
 Here I'm!—Here I'm!—In dark corner plac'd!
 O Lud!—Ohon!—Oh! favour me kettle!
 By thy weight at this place make her settle!—
 She's gone!

SCENE THIRD.

SIR JOHN, *solus.*

Still, though, I will here remain,
 Till, unloaded, she returns again—
 Oh!—alas!—Oh!—anee!—Hee!—How!—Wow!—
 I hear her coming, puffing not now
 Like fat broken winded mare—no wheeze—
 No cough—now, reliev'd, she moves at ease.

SCENE FOURTH.

*JULY enters, returning, without the kettle and
 stand.*

SIR JOHN.

July!—'Sdeath!—July! or ass, or broom,
More you'd heed, when passing to a room.

JULY, (*stopping.*)

'S life!—Just-Ass o'-Peace!—Is that you there?

SIR JOHN.

Yes—in this dark press behind the stair,
Where you throw old besoms, boots, and shoes.—
Come here, and tell me what is the news?—
Your opinion of things in general?—
Your stories? I know you've got several.

JULY.

My stars!—In that nasty black box there!—
Good b'ye Just ass!—I've no time to spare.
Sir, you sit with so much ease and grace,
Company would but confuse the place.

SIR JOHN.

My black haired beauty, with skin like snow;
With plump cheeks, red as roses in blow;
With fat corpus, as sleek as a mole;
O, do not leave me here in this hole!
Better than money's a friend in court,
Take pity and you'll get favour for't!
Private motives are always my guides,
And for you, right or wrong, I'll decide.
You need not doubt it, though I mention
The purity of my intention,
For this I hold up, by way of blind,
E'en when nothing less directs my mind.

JULY.

What!—Are you afraid to be alone?—
 I fear you've been unjust to some one;
 Have played the villain, to please your spite,
 And, through envy, done what was not right.
 Indeed you own you betray your trust;
 That oft you are purposely unjust.
 Keep me both from your favour and court!
 Thus with honour and justice to sport.—
 But we'll hear, if you meet with mischance,
 And send to your 'Sub' for assistance.
 Mean time, of conscience to drown the voice,
 Just-Ass, were this a fit place for noise,
 You might set up a strain, to your mind,
 As I'm told you're of the singing kind;
 But, as 'twould alarm the house to bray,
 You had best remain, quiet, there and pray.—
 I hear your Fiscal coming this way!
 Would you like him you here to surprize,
 With your long nose, lean jaws, and dead eyes?

SIR JOHN.

My Ewe-necked staring Procu'tor here!—
 And I in this coal-hole!—Run! my dear!—
 Rather than that grue should find, should start,
 Or hunt me from hence like hare or hart,
 To furnish diversion, and a chace,
 To the beagles and bitches of the place,
 I'd for a post lick fifty spittles,
 To feed my envy, lose my victuals,
 Be stung by my conscience to the quick,
 And then, for injustice, join Old Nick.
 And so, my dear, I wish you good b'ye!
Finds this Case too small for two, in July;
Sists process till some future box day.

JULY.

Whunaby, if in your box you'll stay,
I'll bring a candle, to let you see.

SIR JOHN.

To light my fiscal to you and me!—
Of it he'd soon make a pretty joke,
By a glimpse, should he any thing smoke!—
No—Let's do without help, when we can;
I'll soon follow a much wiser plan,
By which he shall neither see nor hear;
Neither shall I in the scheme appear.—
Shoes off, I'll steal to a room up stairs,
I' th' dark.

(takes off his shoes.)

JULY.

But you've not yet said your prayers.

SIR JOHN.

I'll not do that 'till guilt I renounce,
And get a discharge for all at once;
One long prayer will then clear the account,
When we know, exact, the full amount.—

(coming out of the Box.)

Lud! I've cut my shins on these sharp coals!

JULY.

So much good, from being found in such holes.
Had you allowed me to bring a light,
Your legs had still been heal, clean, and right.

SIR JOHN.

I hear the grue, as sure's I'm alive!

JULY.

Hurry up stairs then ere he arrives.
But 'gainst the doors drive not your long nose!
On the steps break not your shoeless toes!

(*Whilst July speaks, the Knight hurries up stairs
with his shoes in his hand, and disappears.*)

SCENE FIFTH.

Enter Mr Grue, the Procurator Fiscal.

MR GRUE.

Ha! ha! ha!--So Nosy's left his box,
Barefooted, without or shoes or socks;
With flead shins, i' th' dark to get hard knocks!--
The rare Interlocutor, July,
And *box-day* I'll remember duly!
A worthy Judge of Session truly!--
As I protest he thinks himself one
That a gown is already his own!
Who in wonder's name gave him a *box*:
Unless he gets one, with keys and locks!
By dint of selfish civility,
And interested servility.

JULY.

Tut man! you forget the one he left
Under the stair, you're of wits bereft!
As for the gown to give him some weight,
He needs it, and a wig for his pate.
If you observe, though screeches an owl,
It yet seems wiser than other fowl.

MR GRUE.

From the passage, treasuring up each word,
Your Mistress and I the whole o'erheard.

JULY.

You did!—'Twas love from the grave indeed!
 From bloodless cheeks, and brainless head!—
 O! I wish you much joy!—I hear't spoke,
 Of young fiscals you'll soon have a flock,
 That, the night before last, Mistress Grue
 Brought you two boys with little ado!

MR GRUE.

Where the duce picked you up that cursed lie?
 For neither a boy, nor girl, have I!—

JULY.

Mayhap! o' the Snipe 't has been been the wife.

MR GRUE.

The Snipe! He bring a creature to life!
 With thighs like the legs of a sparrow,
 Smoked hams wanting blood, and bones marrow.
 Marry—come—up! with his withered shins,
 A pretty one indeed to get twins!
 You're hard pushed sure, when, down the water,
 You seek him, to father such chatter!
 You'd best give them to your friend up stairs;
 All his weans, 'tis said, are sent in pairs.—
 Did you observe the shaughland legged wight,
 With his poker, in the yard alight?

JULY.

What!—He and his pimp!—Both of them
 here!—

Tush!—I must go get supper, and beer.
 Whenthey've done with beggars, boys, and wives,
 The peevish wretch will pester our lives,

As he does his family at home,
 Unless toasted cheese, to fill his wame,
 At supper appears, tender, and fat,
 For him to nibble and tarrow at.—
 Good b'ye! I can here no longer stay.
Sist process, till some future box day.

(exit.)

SCENE SIXTH.

MR GRUB, *solus.*

Than obey that old maid in breeches,
 With his envy, spite, and fine speeches;
 Such a vain fool, unprincipled ass;
 I'd most at this Inn door be a bass,
 For the use of servile footmen's feet,
 Besmeared with the filth of every street.—
 Fine names! "Ewe-necked, staring, Procu'tor,"
 Forsooth!—Box, and Interlocutor,
 I'll remember for that!—The rascal!
 Thus to abuse the honest fiscal.—
 I think I smell the cheese for supper!
 Better, than walk, sit on the crupper;
 I hear like chops broiling on the fire!
 If the scrub is returned, with his squire,
 The cheese mite, with the long punch soker,
 The slender tongs, with the straight poker;
 I'll try to meet them, as if by chance,
 And regale myself at their expence,
 Whilst they laugh at the Interlocutor.—
 Scoundrel! "Ewe-necked, staring, Procu'tor."

(exit.)

F I N I S.

