

**THE STANDARD ELOCUTIONIST; AND GEM-
BOOK OF BRITISH AUTHORS: CONTAINING A
SELECTION OF PIECES ADAPTED FOR PUBLIC
RECITATION, OR PRIVATE READING, FROM
SHAKESPEARE, MILTON, YOUNG, ADDISON,
HOOD, CAMPBELL, POPE, BURNS, SCOTT,
BYRON, SOUTHEY, GRAY, &C. &C.**

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The Standard Elocutionist; And Gem-Book of British Authors: Containing a Selection of Pieces Adapted for Public Recitation, or Private Reading, from Shakespeare, Milton, Young, Addison, Hood, Campbell, Pope, Burns, Scott, Byron, Southey, Gray, &C. &C. by A. Cunningham

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A. CUNNINGHAM

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THE STANDARD ELOCUTIONIST.

SCENE FROM "THE RIVALS."

Sheridan.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGOER and ACRES, with pistols.

Acres. By my valour; then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance. Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

Sir Lucius. Is it for muskets or small field pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you.—[*Measures paces along the stage.*] There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Lucius. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, Sir Lucius; but I should think forty, or eight-and-thirty yards—

Sir Lucius. Pho! pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no!—by my valour! there is no merit in killing him so near: do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot:—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me!

Sir Lucius. Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand—

Sir Lucius. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus!

Sir Lucius. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir Lucius. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Lucius. Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files!—I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius—there.—[*Puts himself in an attitude.*] A side front, hey? Odd, I'll make myself small enough: I'll stand edgeways.

Sir Lucius. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—

[*Levelling at him.*]

Acres. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir Lucius. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Lucius. Pho! be easy.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side—'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir Lucius. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him*]—let him see the broadside of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir Lucius. Ay—may they—and it is much the genteelst attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ee! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one; so, by my valour! I will stand edgeways.

Sir Lucius. [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no, faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!—

Sir Lucius. Ay.—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them indeed!—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir Lucius. Run!

Acres. No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir Lucius. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir Lucius. O fy!—consider your honour.

Acres. Ay—true—my honour. Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir Lucius. Well, here they're coming.

[*Looking.*]

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—If my valour should leave me!—Valour will come and go.

Sir Lucius. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is cer-

tainly going!—it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands!

Sir Lucius. Your honour—your honour.—Here they are.

Acres. O mercy!—now—that I was safe at Clod-Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir Lucius. Gentlemen, your most obedient.—Hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Abs. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Lucius. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame you saluting the gentleman civilly.—[*To FAULKLAND.*] So, Mr. Beverley, if you'll choose your weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my particular friends.

Sir Lucius. What, sir, do you not come here to fight Mr. Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir Lucius. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out.

Abs. O pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter—

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland;—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian.—Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir Lucius. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why no—Sir Lucius—I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face!—If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Lucius. Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity—

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute?—Not if he were fifty Beverleys! Zounds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Lucius. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the Abbey here; or

pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-Hall, or anything of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Lucius. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir Lucius. Well, sir?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls—

Sir Lucius. Well, Sir?

Acres. I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Lucius. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres—he is a most determined dog—called in the country Fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week—don't you, Bob?

Acres. Ay—at home!

Sir Lucius. Well, then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor—[*Draws his sword*]—and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

Abs. Come on then, sir—[*Draws*]; since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

SAMSON ON HIS LOSS OF SIGHT.

Hilton.

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
 Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
 Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
 Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
 And all her various objects of delight
 Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eased.
 Inferior to the vilest now become
 Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me:
 They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed
 To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
 Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
 In power of others, never in my own;
 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
 O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
 Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
 Without all hope of day!
 O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
 "Let there be light, and light was over all;"
 Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
 The sun to me is dark
 And silent as the moon,
 When she deserts the night,
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
 Since light so necessary is to life,