

# THE BLOCKHEADS: or the Affrighted Officers, A Farce

by Mercy Otis Warren

(1776)

***Entered by hand by Richard Seltzer***

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from a Xerox of the original edition found in the Boston Public Library

Spelling and punctuation have been updated for readability

**Note:** Profanity that had been indicated by abbreviations (such as s\_\_t, a\_s, H\_\_\_\_\_n etc.) are HERE spelled out.

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## Dramatis Personae

**Captain Bashaw**, Admiral

**Puff**, General

*Officers:*

**Lord Dapper**, Lord P----y

**Shallow**, G---t

**Dupe**, Who you please

*Refugees and Friends of Government:*

**Meagre**, G--y

**Surly**, R-----s

**Brigadier Paunch**, B---e

**Bonny**, M----y

**Simple**, E----n

**Jemima**, Wife to Simple

**Tabitha**, Her Daughter

**Dorsa**, Her Maid

*Soldiers, Women, etc.*

## PROLOGUE

Your pardon first I crave for this intrusion.

The topic is such it looks like a delusion.

And next your candor, for I swear and vow,

Such an attempt I never made till now.

But constant laughing at the desperate fate

The bastard sons of Mars endured of late

Induced me thus to minute down the notion

Which put my risibles in such commotion.

By Yankees frightened too! Oh dire to say!

Why Yankees sure at red coats faint away!

Oh yes -- they thought so too -- for lack-a-day,

Their general turned the blockade to a play:

Poor vain poltroons, with justice we'll retort

And call them blockheads for their idle sport.

***FINIS***

**ACT I, SCENE I**

*A ROOM WITH THE OFFICERS, ETC.*

**Puff:**

Well, gentlemen, a pretty state for British generals and British troops -- the terror of the world become mere scarecrows to themselves. We came to America, flushed with high expectations of conquest, and curbing these sons of riot. We toured away in the senate as if our success was certain; as if we had only to curb a few licentious villains, or hang them as spectacles for their brethren. But how are we deceived? Instead of this agreeable employ, we are shamefully confined within the bounds of three miles, wrangling and starving among ourselves.

**Shal.:**

Cursed alternative, either to be murdered without, or starved within. These Yankee dogs treat us like a parcel of poltroons; they divert themselves by firing at us, as at a flock of partridges. A man can scarcely put his nose over the entrenchments without losing it; another loses eyes, only looking through the ambuseirs. They have a set of fellows called riflers. They would shoot the very devil if he was to come within a league of them.

**Capt. Basb.:**

Gentlemen, it will not do to set groaning here; let us determine upon some plan quickly to be done, otherwise I shall bid you farewell, and you may follow after as well as you are able. You find every night brings them nearer and nearer; they raise a hill and fortify it in six hours. I expect soon to see a fortification grow out of the channel, and our ships of war to be blown up by some damned machine. Such devils are capable of any thing; the power of miracles is put into their hands, and they improve the patent to admiration. You must do something to dispossess them of those fortifications, otherwise we shall not only be staved, but absolutely murdered.

**Lord Dapper:**

Staved or murdered are trifles, compared to being taken prisoners, to be dragged before their congresses, committees, etc. A pack of mutton-headed fellows, with their rustic muskets, are more dread visitors than a tribe of furies, just arrived from hell. Therefore let us do something in earnest, or perhaps we shall be too late for relief.

**Puff.:**

The eminence on Dorchester Hill which they began last night, they must at all hazards be dispossessed of. We must rally our weak numbers, and drive them if possible. But such is our situation, our men are become mere skeletons. Their resent diet renders them more capable of terrifying their enemies, than fighting of them. They will think the ghosts of their forefathers are coming to battle against them. Poor devils! I pity their miserable state, but so the fates have ordered it, we can only laugh or pity each other.

**Lord Dapper:**

Cursed cruel fate! That we should thus be penned up. Churchill's description of Scotland is but a shadow to it. If that great genius was now alive, we should soon have a new edition with amendments. He represents their flies and spiders etc. as starving, but here they are absolutely starved -- poor innocent insects, I forgive you your former tormenting of my legs; you sucked till you could find no nourishment,

and then fell at my feet and died. Thousands have lain gasping within the small circle of my char. Their case is truly deplorable. I felt their state by experience. My case is somewhat parallel to the prodigal son. I may well adopt his words, "how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, while I perish with hunger."

**Shal.:**

We shall all be obliged to follow his example. I never thought to make an improvement of a parable, but our case is now so truly deplorable that necessity prompts me to it. Hard crusts and rustic bones have never till now become my diet. They do not suit my digestion. My teeth are worn to stumps, and my lips are swelled like a blubber mouth negro's, by thumping hard bones against them. My jaw bone has been set a dozen times, dislocated by chewing hard pork, as tough as an old swine's ass.

**Puff.:**

Well gentlemen, we are all acquainted with each other's circumstances, but however, we cannot mend them by recounting them. Let us rally our men and drive those rebels from their fortifications, or else we may soon expect to be introduced to their honor's Adams and Hancock, with sundry other gentlemen of distinction. My Lord Dapper must have the command, and I doubt not we shall be able to dispossess them. Let us keep up our spirits for we have nothing else to feed on, though it is a poor dish for a greedy appetite.

**Lord Dapper:**

Some pretence must be made, as our honor is at stake.

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## **ACT I SCENE II**

### *A ROOM WITH REFUGEES AND FRIENDS TO GOVERNMENT*

**Sur.:**

Nothing can be more wretched than our state -- vagabonds and outcasts in the world -- here we are -- friends we have none -- we fled here for protection, but how are we disappointed! Those on whom we depended are as miserable as ourselves! We have been cajoled into all this by that cursed Heaven. He pleased us with pensions, posts of honor, and profit, but the villain has fled, and left us to shirk for ourselves. My dwellings I have forsaken, my family are left to feed on the charity of friends, if they can find any; while I, poor wretch, have thrown myself upon the mercy of those who are unable to help me. My money I have let out on government security, and poor security too, I am afraid; from affluence and splendor. I am reduced to wretchedness and misery, and skulk about the streets like a dog that has lost one ear. Oh cursed ambition! Much better had it been if I had stayed among my countrymen and partook quietly of the produce of my farm. Why need I have meddled in politics, or burnt my fingers dabbling in this sea of fire. My tenants and my oxen would have been much more agreeable companions than these herd of stalking poltroons, swaggering with their swords at their ass and afraid to draw them from the scabbard.

**Simple:**

We have reason to blame ourselves. We have brought affairs to the present state. We were fond of the titles of Colonel, Esquire, etc., a geegaw of a commission was sufficient to render us enemies to our country. We contrived a thousand tricks to make ourselves obnoxious to our countrymen, that we might be noticed as friends to government. We thought this would recommend us to some lucrative post. We embraced the shadow of grandeur but the substance has fled. A bow from a general or an officer is all the satisfaction we have for our loyalty. I am become almost ashamed of my company. A pack of strutting pedantics, looking like elopers from the grave "grinning horribly their ghastly smiles", gallanting their drosly nymphs, haggard with constant use. Sometimes I am ready to heave myself upon the mercy of my injured country, but the awful ideas of committees, courts of enquiry, etc. terrify me from this expedient. Besides, shall we stoop to submission to these miscreants -- we Colonels, Esquires, Judges, etc., bow to the lordly sway of these vile villains? I will rather perish than do it.

**Sur.:**

Our pride is our only cordial. We have nothing else to feed on. Damned poor nourishment! We have been long fed on the sumptuous dish of expectation of relief. But alas! We had so keen an appetite for that, we quickly devoured it. The general has no further supply left him, and we are now left to famish till a fresh supply comes. We have fled here as friends to government, but how are we treated? We are despised, our wives ravaged, and our daughters debauched. Honor or profit we have none. Abuse and ruin we have our ample shares of. Much happier had we been, if instead of bowing and cringing to the great, we had minded the concerns of our farms. And instead of calculating the revenue of the nation, we had considered the income of our own stocks.

**Paunch:**

Alas! WE have all been deceived. WE have been pleased with the expectation of large reinforcements -- that conquest was certain -- and that the rebels would be speedily crushed. Flushed with these sanguine hopes, we have buoyed ourselves amid these seas of tumult and outrage, but now we find ourselves woefully deceived, without any remedy. Victory seems to declare in favor of the country. She had fled from these brave sons of Mars and takes refuge within the cells and cottages of America.

**Sttr.:**

Well, gentlemen, you may all whine and cry. For my part, I am determined to keep up my spirits and hope for better times. Why should we be so discomforted because we have met with a little rugged treatment? We must expect to encounter with many such trifles, but shall they discourage us? Can we expect to gain honor in a silver slipper? No, we must engage with all Hell rather than give up our point. It's true, friend Paunch cannot meet with his dainty soups., nor feast on his favorite fish and oil, but shall this render him peevish and fretful? I hope not. We are now to try our loyalty, by the grand touchstone of affliction. Let us act like men, and I doubt not we shall be well rewarded. His Majesty will regard us as the faithful of the land, and will recompense our fidelity with ample tokens of his affection. Your poor dejected countenances are a disgrace to the cause we are engaged in. Reconcile yourselves to your present state, and I doubt not a happy deliverance will speedily arrive.

**Meagre:**

Deliverance is a poor worn out, unmeaning word. I am tired with the sound -- a word with so little meaning you cannot produce in a gross of dictionaries. Loyalty and deliverance are pleasing words when used with propriety, but they are now maimed with often handling.

**Sim.:**

Loyalty, damn the word and its meaning. It is only a court watch word, to entrap men, and then fleece them of their property.

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## **ACT II SCENE I**

*A ROOM*

*TABITHA AND DORSA*

**Tabitha:**

When did you receive this letter?

**Dorsa:**

His servant left it with me last night.

**Tabitha:** He acquaints me that he intends to attend at the back gate this evening, and that he shall expect me there. I shall put great confidence in your friendship. If you deceive me I am undone.

**Dorsa:** If I deceive you, may your ruin fall on me.

**Tabitha:** Lord Dapper has addressed me in very honorable terms. He proposes to carry me to England, after the present campaign. But my father (an old prig) is greatly against it, and seems tired with the company of these red coats (as he calls them). But this person I am determined to have at all hazards. Why should I deny myself the pleasures and honors of this life to please an old fool that is just leaving of them. The title of lady is very agreeable. It is what many would jump at. Such matches do not offer every day, and I shall improve the time as dexterous as I can.

**Dorsa:** Make hay while the sun shines is a very good maxim. Indeed, madam, I approve your determination. I should think you quite mad to determine otherwise. Who would not have a young spark if they could meet with one? For my own part, I would not lodge another night without one, if I could meet with a good offer.

**Tabitha:** All our correspondence must go through your hands. You must be cautious and watchful, for the least mishap will disconcert the whole plan.

**Dorsa:** I am used to these tricks of gallantry. I have introduced many a young sweet heart -- you may safely trust your security in my hand. But one thing I would mention (excuse my boldness) this Lord Dapper labors under the disgrace of inability.

**Tabitha:** Inability. What do you mean? I hope he is not wanting in any thing to render the marriage state agreeable. If he is, I shall quickly throw him out the window and appoint a better person in his room. It's true, since you hint this, it makes me somewhat suspicious. He looks like a baboon on stilts. And I begin to be fearful of his abilities. However, he will serve for a cully to fleece for my indulgences in dress and fashion.

**Dorsa:** That he may do. But for anything else (if reports are true) I had rather marry my old grandfather.

*EXEUNT.*

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## **SCENE II**

### *SIMPLE AND HIS WIFE*

**Simple:**

The worst job that ever I did to move to this accursed place. A friend to government! Damn connection! My family ruined. Myself a despised old fool.

**Wife:**

My dear, do not be so childish. I am sure we are agreeably situated excepting our scantiness of provisions. But great folks do not mind such trifles. Roast beef etc. only becomes hard-skinned plough joggers. Eating and drinking became us while we were rough farmers. But now I should be ashamed to be seen setting around a smoking table of provisions, cramming and stuffing like a yoke of oxen. These delicate gentlemen and ladies would despise us as Yankees, to see us munching bread and cheese, etc. They would have very nasty ideas about us, for what goes in must come out. Oh it makes me sick to think of it!

**Simple:**

You will be more sick before it is over. I wish I had now a good belly full of what you mention. I would willingly bear the ridicule as to the manner of its coming out. I believe the most delicate lady among them would be glad of such stable contents and risk the hazard of its appearing again to the world. However, my dear, I have no notion of being merry.

I have more serious affairs to think of. I must acquaint you that I am absolutely ruined. My whole fortune fell either into the hands of the rebels without or was lent upon the security of chance to those within. My resources are entirely exhausted. I have pleased myself with some appointment in office, but I find that will fail. We have so many needy fellows among us that one must make interest to be even groom to the light horse. What to do I know not.

**Wife:**

Now forsooth you are going on your old whining scheme. Because you see I am acquainted with the gentry, you begin on these canting topics. You are afraid I shall ask you for a silk gown or a new cap, that I shall want to see the plays etc., and that you must have to bring forth some of those rustic joannes, which you have pilfered from your neighbors, when you were a justice. You may depend on it, I shall begin to want these things and shall expect no hesitation or denial. Do not think I am to lead my life like a mope as when we were rustic farmers. We are now gentle folks and shall expect to do like gentle folks. Our daughter Tabitha, she must also be introduced into the fashionable company, not always be a drudge about house. She has now no filthy butter to churn. She is no longer a dairy maid, but a lady and a government lady too, and as such she shall be supported. Who knows but some rich gentleman may fancy her and carry her to London and perhaps take us with her. Then for it. She shall see life, and perhaps then you may get a little beef, or something else to fatten your paunch. In short, you look so

much like a skeleton I am afraid to go to bed with you, almost begin to wish for another husband. Come, my dear, rouse yourself. Don't think about your fat farm. Let it go. It is all dirty stuff, only fit for yankees.

**Simple:**

Poor foolish woman! How you feast on pride! Is it possible you are in earnest? Can so much folly dwell in women? I always thought women to be but one degree above a she ass, but you seem many degrees below. You may pretend to vaunt in all these prudish airs, but depend on it, you shall get no support from me. As for your daughter, she may expect to incur my displeasure, if she goes romping among these ladies of quality. As to rich upstarts, I had rather marry her to a good monkey than to any figure of a man in the garrison. What signifies putting a young girl to bed with a poor famished image!.

**Wife:**

You old fool. Do you think I am to be frightened out of my desires? No, I will learn you to treat your wife with a little more good manners. I wish you would become a little more polished and go into the company of gentlemen and ladies. You would there hear nothing of she asses, and such filthy farm terms. My dear and my honey are the terms there made use of. Thousand pretty things which I never before heard of are whispered round. They can talk to one another with their eyes, and you can almost guess what they mean. None of your coarse language defiles their conversation. Nothing but my former habitation, to hear the grunting of hogs. I should die with the spleen. As to your not supplying me, I am no way concerned about it. If you won't, another will.

And you may expect a pair of horns grow out of your head as large as your old bulls.

**Simple:**

Do and welcome. But stand clear if you come within reach of them.

*EXEUNT.*

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**SCENE III**

*A GARDEN.*

*ENTER LORD DAPPER AND TABITHA.*

**Lord Dapper:**

Well, my dear, we have met, agreeable to appointment. I hope your old dad of a father has become more reconciled. The old prig is as obstinate as a mule. Neither offers of profit or friendship have any avail with him. However, let us not disappoint ourselves of the pleasure of matrimony to gratify the whim of a gray-headed old fool. All things are ready. Fly from this place of confinement, and let us celebrate our long expect nuptials.

**Tabitha:**

My paper, sir, remains as determined as ever. He seems tired with being confined within the garrison. He had rather be among his farm neighbors, which makes him so fretful with all of your party. I do not think it possible ever to get his consent, but such a trifle shall never baulk my inclination. I shall throw off all reserve and put myself entirely under your protection, shall quit the family and depend on your honor.

**Lord Dapper:** *[aside]*

Poor girl, you will find but little of that.

Come, let us hasten as fast as possible, as delays of this kind may prove fatal.

*[AS THEY ARE GOING OFF, HER FATHER APPEARS.]*

**Simple:** Villain, what business have you with my daughter?

*[LORD DAPPER DRAWS HIS SWORD, AND SIMPLE RUNS AWAY.]*

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#### SCENE IV

*HERE IS EXHIBITED A PROSPECT OF THE LIGHT HORSE, BEING SO WEAK, ARE SUPPORTED BY ROPES TO KEEP THEM ON THEIR LEGS. THE GROOM BUSY IN GIVING THEM GLISTERS. ALSO, A REVIEW OF THEIR TROOPS. THE WHOLE LOOKING LIKE FRENCH COOKS, IN A HOT DAY'S ENTERTAINMENT. EACH COMPANY FAVORED WITH A CLOSE STOOL PAN.*

**Officers:**

Gentlemen soldiers, we are now going to fight against these rebel dogs. Be not discouraged, but let us play the man.

**Soldiers:**

We had much rather fight for a good pudding.

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#### ACT III, SCENE I

*ENTER OFFICERS, ETC.*

**Puff:**

Heaven and earth are against us. The party are entirely defeated from heaven. The wind has been so boisterous as to drive them back. You see, gentlemen, our situation.

Our enemies are gaining on us hourly. One night more perhaps will make us their prisoners. For heaven's sake let us determine on something speedily, whether to quit the town or try once more to rout these rebels.

**Shal.:**

Why will you desire us to go to battle? Are you for seeing another Bunker Hill frolic? Those devils would glory to have us come out to them. It would be sport to the dogs to see us breaking our shins, tumbling over each other. I esteem my life beyond my honor and am not for throwing it away for the diversion of a parcel of Yankees. If we cannot hold the garrison by keeping in, for God's sake, let's beat a retreat. But the Lord knows where. However, I had rather heave myself on the mercy of the sea than be taken their prisoner. Who but a mad man would trust himself out of these entrenchments? It is certain death. I am



for fighting where there is some prospect of coming off clear. But here venture yourself out and I would not insure you for 100%. Damn the devils. They excel their very father Beelzebub for fighting. I had rather engage with a squadron just arrived from the lower regions than with those cursed fellows on yonder hill.

**Lord Dapper:**

You are quite right. Such herds of men are enough to scare Hannibal and all the heroes that ever lived. Look at what millions there are! The inhabitants of the four quarters of the globe (excepting ourselves) are now on those hills! For heaven's sake, let us improve the time and retreat as fast as possible. I shall expect all the fishes of the sea to turn men and become our enemies. Let us improve our passport while the inhabitants of the sea are at peace.

**Dupe.:**

Now Burgoyne, here is more matter for humor. You may now give us a second edition of your farce. This is beyond all expectation! A fine story to tell my Lord Nash! But he is at helm. He may risk his own head if he will. I am determined not to hazard mine for his whims. He may go fight them one after another, if he pleases. He shall not catch me to run his tom-fool errands. The ministry and the parliament may come over and hold their courts in Boston and may send forth and execute their acts if they think fit. They shall not find me fool enough to run my head against a cannon ball, to execute their damn silly acts. I never would have come on this expedition if I had had the least intimation of the bravery of this people. I thought a bright sword and a smart cocked hat would effectively have terrified these fellows into submission. But I find the contrary and have no inclination to try their sill at man killing.

**Shal.:**

If I had a scolding wife, perhaps I would venture myself within a hundred yards of those hills. But while I have not, you shall find me far enough from them. And I don't care how much farther. Our ministry think soldiers were made to be fired at as sport. But I hope on this occasion they will find themselves deceived. For my part, I am determined to secure a place of safety. If any have a mind to go out, let them. They have my good wishes for their return. But if they regard their lives, I advise all and every one to keep within the entrenchments. I would rather shit my breeches than go without these forts to ease myself.

**Puff.:**

Damn them. I know the fellows by experience. I remember Bunker Hill. I shall never forget them for their civility to me. Their cocked eye taking fight makes my very blood run cold. How I came off alive is a miracle. Whiz, whiz, whiz. Good Lord, how it makes me shudder to think of it! No, no, my lads, you shan't catch me among you. While I am out of your reach, I will keep out. In short, gentlemen, it will not do to be looking at them. They seem preparing to come nearer us. Let us give out the alarm for a retreat immediately. We must determine where to go after we are without the reach of these disagreeable visitors.

**All:**

As speedy as possible.

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**ACT III SCENE II***A ROOM WITH REFUGEES AND FRIENDS TO GOVERNMENT***Sur.**

A retreat, is it possible! Shall the British troops ever suffer such disgrace as to flee from a parcel of yankees? We have been fed up with high notions of the power and resolution of these troops. But I find when the matter becomes serious, they are terrified as old women. The General has made a sham attempt to dispossess them of their fortifications, but has withdrawn them with the pretence of the wind being too boisterous. What a pretty hobble we are in to be driven away from our only place of security. But I find our strongholds are become mere shadows of safety. A very agreeable employ for gentlemen to be running after a pack of cowards and what is more miserable to depend on them for protection. If I could once get clear of my present state, you should never find me again to depend on a broken reed.

**Bon.:**

It signifies nothing to fret and find fault among ourselves, but let us be for securing a retreat as fast as possible. Let us be packing up our alls, and making our beset way off. I have ruined my fortune tagging after these poltroons. I will now trouble them with my company. If they cannot protect me, they shall maintain me. While they have any thing to eat themselves, I am determined to partake. Poor encouragement for friends to government. If they don't find better reception than we met with, they will have be few volunteers.

**Simple:**

As to depending on their generosity for maintenance, I have no notion of. I have a more effective way to support myself. I shall look out for snacks among the booty left in the town by their runaway owners. I shall improve the opportunity while pilfering is in the fashion. The General has set up a very pretty example.

**Mea.:**

Is this the sad alternative, either to heave ourselves on the mercy of our countrymen or run away with a parcel of cowards? But however, as matters are so circumstanced, we must make the best of it. I have a considerable quantity of province money, which will serve to procure me a scanty maintenance in our retreat -- sad state! Half famished on land, and pent within the garrison for ten months, I am now obliged to put to sea to vomit up what little guts I have remaining. I curse cruel fate! Are our high expectations come to this? Reinforcements, and the Lord knows what, all become mere bug bears? Farewell Boston, the once happy seat of my residence. Farewell friends and countrymen. I leave you all to go I know not where.

**Brigadier Paunch:**

Gentlemen, we have just received orders from the General to prepare speedily for a retreat. The garrison is all in alarm. Everyone is driving helter skelter. You must be careful how you walk the streets. otherwise you will break your necks or perhaps your neck in the general confusion. If I was not so intimately convinced the fight would be the most diverting that ever beheld, but our circumstances will not admit of speculation. Let us be gone, for the rebels are just upon us.

*EXEUNT.*

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**ACT III SCENE III***A ROOM WITH SIMPLE AND WIFE***Simple:**

Well, my dear, what think now of your agreeable situation, your filthy farm and coarse roast beef, etc. Nasty stuff! What is the matter with your refined company that they fly away so abruptly. Methinks they might have been polite enough to have given us some little notice of their retreat, not to run away like a parcel of mice, when the cat comes among them. I have for a long while been fearful of this, but found my mistake too late. I have outstayed my day of grace and find I must follow these ranters a wild goose chase over land and sea. I am tired of the chase! My family is ruined and my daughter I am afraid is debauched by a painted monkey who I saw with her at the gate. The villain drew his word on me, but like a true British general, I thought fit to run away.

**Wife:**

I wonder, my dear, you should complain at going aboard. I am fond of seeing the world. What signifies always to be pent up within the smoke of our own chimneys? Why should we not travel like other gentle folks to learn the manners and customs of other nations? Must we always remain as ignorant as our brown bread neighbors and know nothing more of the world than what is transacted within our own parish? For my part, I am determined to extend my knowledge and follow the fleet from one end of the world to the other, rather than remain as ignorant as our parson's wife. The rumor is that we are going to Halifax, a rich flourishing populous city, where nature wantons in all her luxury, where we may enjoy and divert ourselves without being fazed with the constant alarms of the devilish yankees. Curse them, I wish they were all under your cider press and I had the screwing of it. Rouse up you old Lazarus and betake yourself with your wife and family aboard the ships. Don't you hear the drums beat the alarm?

**Simple:**

Worse and worse! Greater fool than ever. I seems to grow on you. I presume you have made geography your study. You are so well acquainted with the \_\_\_ and soil of Halifax. Rich and luxurious to admiration! Experience is the best school master. You are for seeing the world and here perhaps you may be satisfied by seeing the ass of it. I find you are a fresh water sailor and will make but a miserable figure aboard the ship, along side of your polite company. I shall pity your modesty when what is in will come out and perhaps at both ends. Pray, my dear, was you ever sea sick? I presume not. Oh! I shudder at the thought!

**Wife:**

Don't tantalize me no longer. I will not bear any more of your freedom. Pray what do you mean by coming out at both ends? I like no such coarse phrases. If I had 50 ends, my modesty should forbid any thing from coming out of either. I know how to behave myself and keep all ends safe. Let us be going quickly.

**Simple:**

Gang along, with the devil to you. Curse my fate to be yoked to an old fool of a wife and scampering after a herd of runaway cowards.

*[A BARRACKS WITH SOLDIERS AND WOMEN]*

**Soldier:**

Ha, ha, ha. Yankee doodle forever. I with Lord North was here to see his brave troops in their present plight, running away with their breeches down. Who can help laughing at what a tom fool's errand we have been sent upon. We were sent here to ransack the country and hang up a parcel of leading fellows for the crows to pick, and awe all others into peace and submission. Instead of this, in our first attempt, we were driven through the country like a pack of jack asses. Nor stopped running until we had got within Boston, where we had been fortified for six months. Here we were confined, reduced to skeletons, our bones standing sentry through our skins. We ventured out once more to dispossess them of Bunker Hill. We gained the ground, but if we are to purchase the whole land of America at so dear a rate, the Lord have mercy on us. We have received reinforcements, but they only served to fill up the vacancies made at Bunker Hill frolic. A large force of artillery, light horse, and the devil knows what, have come to our assistance. But what has been our luck? Loss of men, of honor, of flesh, and to the crown the whole, are now running away, as fast as we can scamper.

**Soldier:**

A pretty story this in the British annals -- an everlasting disgrace will attend the transactions in America. Our best generals, with a force of artillery sufficient one would think to storm the regions of Beelzebub. The most experienced troops his Majesty has. A capital navy yet. With all this force, our generals dare not peep over the entrenchments, are confined within three miles of garrison, writing and acting comedies, dismantling meeting houses to exercise their horses, to prevent their having the scurvy. Our troops haggard and famished for want of nourishments. Our navy lying at anchor, while the privateers are depriving us of our supplies. "Mysterious! Unexampled! Incomprehensible!" Disgrace too great of the spirit of Britons! Not an action have we done that has been any way to our honor or profit. It is true we have set a few towns on fire, but, like champions, took care to go where there was not even a pistol for defense.

**Soldier:**

Nothing can be more diverting than to see the town in its present situation. All is uproar and confusion. Courts, trucks, wheel barrows, handbarrows, coaches, chaise are driving as if the very devil was after them. Our generals look as wild as stags when pursued by the hounds. They are startled at every noise. They think the rebels are just upon them. Orders are given for blocking up the streets that the rebels may break their shins if they pursue us. We have also a parcel of stuffed images, looking like devils behind the Pope, to be fixed up as sentries -- a fit emblem of ourselves. Burgoyne could not have contrived a prettier satire -- our ambusers are filled with wooden giants. Damn such wooden-headed commanders. To crown the whole, they should have had an effigy with a barber's blockhead, as engineer. Oh Briton! Your disgrace makes my very blood dance the hornpipe. The poor Yankee refugees run backwards and forwards like a parcel of cats let out of a bag. I would give half my pay that some droll blade was here to describe the ludicrous scenery.

**Soldier:**

The beauty of the whole is aboard the ships. The Yankee refugees with their wives cut a most ridiculous figure -- vomiting, crying, cooking, eating, all in a heap. I was ready to burst my sides in laughing to see the ladies scampering into the vessels, tumbling one over another, showing their legs, etc. One fellow, in his hurry, pitched overboard and was kind enough to remain there. The whole scene was sufficient to raise the risibles of the crying philosopher. In short, words cannot describe it. The stow like a litter of pigs, or like a young brood of spaniels. they even spew in one another's mouths.

**Women:**

Good enough for them. They have brought it on themselves. They had better have minded their farms, not have run here to be a ridicule to both parties. If I had a good farm, I would see government to the devil, before they should catch me here, to be frozen, famished, ridiculed. Curse them and their spiritless protectors, and let's conclude with huzzas for America.

***FINIS***

**SOLILOQUY, BY WAY OF EPILOGUE**

*Spoken by Mrs. Simple after her arrival at Halifax*

Modest! Polite! Genteel! Heavens what deceit  
Dwells in the breast of those I termed great!  
But now too late, my shame and grief appear.  
I'm lost! Undone! Stopped short in my career.  
A barn my dwelling, paltry fish my food,  
With insults, scorn, and execrations lewd.  
Oh sad disgrace! But this is not the worst.  
I'm by my husband and my daughter cursed.  
Our Bashaw, too, forever in a tease,  
Vents his dire spleen on us, poor refugees.  
Accursed state, from towering hopes I've fell,  
To her with transports and such devils dwell.  
One tear my injured country weep for me,  
And for that tear, may you be ever free.