

**OUR CHARADES
AND HOW WE
PLAYED THEM**

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Our Charades and How We Played Them by Jean Francis

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JEAN FRANCIS

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AND

HOW WE PLAYED THEM

WITH A FEW PRACTICAL HINTS ON THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF
THIS FAVOURITE AND MOST INTERESTING PASTIME

BY

JEAN FRANCIS



LONDON

HOULSTON AND WRIGHT

65, PATERNOSTER ROW

MDCCLXVI.

LIST OF THE CHARADES

AND THE

COSTUMES FOR EACH.

CHARADE FIRST.—“INSPECTOR.”

FIRST SYLLABLE, “INN.”

TERENCE O'RYAN—travelling costume, cap.

MISS TRIMMINGS—a broad-brimmed hat, blue veil, long cloth cloak,
two umbrellas, and shawl.

LANDLADY—white muslin cap, French black dress, apron.

GARÇON—white apron over waiter's dress.

SECOND SYLLABLE, “SPECTER.”

LADY—full ball dress, chaplet of flowers, fan, bouquet, and opera cloak
thrown over her shoulders.

FIRST GHOST—soldier's uniform.

SECOND GHOST—naval uniform.

THIRD GHOST—black evening suit, with shirt collar turned down, hair
long, hanging down straight.

FRIZZLE—high black silk dress, white muslin apron.

ENTIRE WORD, “INSPECTOR.”

INSPECTOR—morning dress, hat, and cane.

REV. ARTHUR VILLARS—black frock coat, white bands.

ADA MERTON—grey alpaca dress, black silk apron.

CHARADE SECOND.—“ROMANTIC.”

FIRST SYLLABLE, “ROMAN.”

Morning dress of ancient Rome.

CORNELIA and LADIES—in bright-coloured shawls, arranged mantlewise, looped up over one shoulder with a cameo. Hair *à la classique*, bound back with pearls.

GRACCHI—in white togas, with crowns of laurel.

SECOND SYLLABLE, “TIC.”

LADIES—in morning dress.

MR. MUDLARK—in dressing-gown, wig, and spectacles.

YOUNG MUDLARK—velvet shooting coat.

ENTIRE WORD, “ROMANTIC.”

ADELAIDE—muslin dress, straw hat with broad blue ribbon, which she holds in her hand.

AUNT—in walking dress and bonnet.

CHARADE THIRD.—“PYGMALION.”

FIRST SYLLABLE, “PIG.”

PAT—as an Irish peasant, corduroys, long grey stockings, frieze coat, caubeen* dangling in his hand.

JUDY—dress pinned behind, showing a short blue linsey petticoat, handkerchief pinned across her chest, check apron, red handkerchief over her head and tied under her chin as a cap.

MAGISTRATE—as magistrates dress generally.

CLERK—as clerks dress generally.

SECOND SYLLABLE, “MAY.”

GIRLS—dressed in white muslin, with garlands of hawthorn.

MEN—with garlands round their hats, holding the pole ornamented with flowers and ribbons.

* Broken, battered hat.

LAST SYLLABLE, "LION."

- ANDROCLEES—tunic, bare arms, fetters on them, as Roman escaped slave.
 CAPTAIN OF THE GLADIATORS, and LICATORS—tunics, battleaxes, and sandals.
 LIONS—full suit of furs.

ENTIRE WORD, "PYGMALION."

- PYGMALION—grey blouse made tunicwise; arms bare, holding a chisel; sandals.
 THERMOPHYLER—same dress, holding a pipe.
 STATUE—white muslin drapery.

CHARADE FOURTH.—"RINGLET."

FIRST SYLLABLE, "RING."

- LADY FLORA—white muslin morning dress, with blue sash and ribbons, lace *fanchon* on her head.
 MRS. DASH—walking dress.
 CAPTAIN DASH—velvet shooting coat.
 JAMES—livery.

SECOND SYLLABLE, "LET."

- MRS. PODDLES—brown dress, lace cap.
 MR. PODDLES—frock coat, &c., rather shabby.
 MARY—lilac calico dress, round white cap, white apron.

ENTIRE WORD, "RINGLET."

- GREENE—in a most unexceptional get up—frock coat, light trousers, hat, small blue tie, gold-headed cane, eyeglass.
 BROWNE—shooting coat, jerry hat.

CHARADE FIFTH.—"PARCEL."

FIRST SYLLABLE, "PARR."

- MRS. MUFFIN—black silk dress, curled front, lace cap.
 DOCTORS—full black suit, white ties.

SECOND SYLLABLE, "SELL."

MRS. STEPHENS—walking dress, brown hat, a scroll of music in her hand.

MR. STEPHENS—suit of shepherd's plaid.

MARK—short cut-away coat, plaid pantaloons, shirt collar turned down, beard and moustache very *pronounced*.

MARY—as maid of all work.

ENTIRE WORD, "PARCEL."

DAZZLE—light travelling suit.

MARY—muslin dress, jacket, and round hat.

JOHN—tiger's dress, top boots.

ANN—as lady's maid.

CHARADE SIXTH.—"PRETENDER."

FIRST SYLLABLE, "PRETEND."

ELEANOR—mauve muslin morning dress.

MARGARET—blue muslin morning dress.

SECOND SYLLABLE, "ERR."

MR. HARDTOPP—blue coat, brass buttons, velvet collar, gaiters.

MISS KITTY—grey dress, tight high body, white net neckerchief, tight-fitting lace cap, front with short brown curls, *no* crinoline, skirt of dress narrow and short.

WALTER GRAHAME—black velvet shooting coat, coloured tie, jerry hat.

ENTIRE WORD, "PRETENDER."

MALCOLM—light travelling suit.

WALTER, as STUBBS—broad striped pantaloons, short brown coat, red neckerchief, planter's hat with broad brim.

INTRODUCTION.

No, one should attempt to write Charades except those who have been in the habit of playing them. They alone can understand the difficulties which, though not apparent to the unpractised student, are sometimes nearly insurmountable. In order to overcome these stumbling-blocks I shall give my readers a few hints as to how we managed "Ours;" and these, if attended to, will, I believe, prove useful in making the production of Charades easier than they are generally found to be.

I. *The Characters.*—As charades almost invariably form one of the staple amusements of a party staying at a country house, and also at those gatherings of friends which now and then break the monotony of our domestic circles, it is important to avoid having too many "characters." Some charades have as many as ten "characters," besides a "stage manager," "prompter," "curtain lifters," &c. In such a case the party must needs be a large one, otherwise there would be no audience. Four, or at most six, "characters" are amply sufficient for any charade if it be desired to make it successful.

II. *The Costume.*—Have as little change of costume as possible, in order that the course of the action may not be impeded; for the time which slips away so pleasantly behind the

curtain while making arrangements, the squabbles and sparings that invariably take place, not to mention the numerous small flirtations equally unavoidable, lags terribly with the expectant audience.

III. *The Scenery.*—Have the scenery as simple as possible. Sometimes, of course, a little stage effect is necessary, but in most cases even this cannot be conveniently managed. I recently introduced the following very simple plan, and it proved most successful. Get at a stationer's some pieces of millboard, each about eighteen inches long by ten or twelve broad; but even smaller than this would do. Cover one side with white paper, and then write or paint the name of the locality where the action of the piece is supposed to take place, such as "Street in London," "Restaurant," "Village School," &c., &c., as the case may be, in large bold characters. Hang the board up in such a position that when the curtain rises the name of the place may be distinctly visible to the audience.

Lastly.—Aim only to *amuse* your audience. Do not attempt to *affect* them by trenching on the domain of the legitimate Drama. To enjoy this last properly, there is "Drury Lane," the "Princess's," the "Lyceum," &c., &c., and, besides, it is very difficult to come out as a Kean, or a Phelps, or a Fechter, at a few hours' notice.

One hint more. If possible, have your Charade so constructed as to bear a little on the "Word" it is intended to illustrate, never losing sight of the fact that audiences, even of the highest intelligence, are wonderfully slow in guessing what appears so plain to the initiated.

With these few preliminary remarks I shall proceed to tell my readers how "Our Charades" arose, and how we acted them. Two years ago, a party of us agreed to spend the last months of summer at a pretty little village on the south-east