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THE COLLECTED PLAYS OF
NOEL COWARD



PLAY PARADE
VOL. II

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NOEL COWARD

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VOL. II



WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD
MELBOURNE :: LONDON :: TORONTO

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INTRODUCTION

SOME years ago my publishers suggested to me that it would be a good idea to make a book of two of my revues: *This Year of Grace* and *Words and Music* together with two of my musical plays: *Conversation Piece* and *Operette*. This, they added gaily, will be just the thing to catch the Spring trade! Thus, as far as I could see, pre-supposing that the reading public, in the fine flush of Primavera, was unaccountably easier to please than at any other time of the year. Well, the book was published and, while marsh birds were calling piercingly to each other across the Lincolnshire Fens, while the orchards from John-o'-Groats to Lands End were putting out their first tender blossoms, and while the sap was rising in every direction, a few people bought it. Now, undismayed by the fact that neither then nor in the years following has there ever been a really frantic demand for *Play Parade* Volume 2, my publishers have resolutely decided to re-issue it, this time with the addition of two straight plays which, they assure me, will give the whole thing more "body". The "body givers" in this particular instance are *Eas*' *Virtue* and *Fallen Angels*.

When *Fallen Angels* was first produced at the Globe Theatre, London, in the Spring of 1925 it was described by a large section of the press as, amoral, disgusting, vulgar and an insult to British womanhood. It was of course none of these things. They might with truth have said that it was extremely slight and needed a

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stronger last act; they might, with equal truth and more kindness, have said that it had an amusing situation, some very tunny lines, two excellent parts for two good actresses, and was vastly entertaining to the public. It was, I am glad to say, a great success and was played brilliantly by Edna Best and Tallulah Bankhead I cannot honestly regard it as one of my best comedies but it is gay and light-hearted and British womanhood has been cheerfully insulted by it on various occasions for almost a quarter of a century. So has French womanhood, American womanhood, Italian womanhood, German womanhood, Spanish womanhood and, I believe, Scandinavian womanhood. Russian womanhood, up to date, has been spared, but I cannot help feeling, as the second act portrays two ladies of the bourgeoisie drinking too much champagne while waiting for their former lover, that it is liable to be popped on in Moscow at any moment as a striking example of the decadence of Western democracy.

From the "Eighties" onwards until the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war the London theatre was enriched by a series of plays, notably by Somerset Maugham or Arthur Pinero, which were described as "Drawing-room Dramas". I suppose that the apotheosis of these was *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* but there were many others; *Mid-Channel*, *Lady Frederick*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebb-smith*, *His House in Order*, *Jack Straw*, *The Tenth Man*, *Smith* etc., etc. There were also the more specialised Oscar Wilde comedy-dramas and the too infrequent, beautifully constructed plays of Haddon Chambers.

All of these "Drawing-room Dramas" dealt with the psychological and social problems of the upper middle classes. The characters in them were, as a general rule,

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wealthy, well-bred, articulate and motivated by the exigencies of the world to which they belonged. This world was snobbish, conventional, polite, and limited by its own codes and rules of behaviour and it was the contravention of these codes and rules—to our eyes so foolish and old-fashioned—that supplied the dramatic content of most of the plays that I have mentioned. The heroine of *His House in Order* rebelled against the narrow pomposities of the family into which she had married. Lady Frederick, by gallantly and daringly exposing the secrets of her dressing-table, deflected the attentions of a young man who was infatuated by her, into a more suitable alliance. In a recent revival of the play this scene still proved to be dramatically impeccable. The unhappy Paula Tanqueray tried valiantly to live down her earlier moral turpitude but ultimately gave up the struggle and perished off stage in an aura of righteous atonement just before the final curtain. It is easy nowadays to laugh at these vanished moral attitudes but they were poignant enough in their time because they were true. 'Those high-toned drawing-room histrionics are over and done with.' Women with pasts to-day receive far more enthusiastic social recognition than women without pasts. The narrow-mindedness, the moral righteousness and the over-rigid social codes have disappeared but with them has gone much that was graceful, well-behaved and endearing. It was in a mood of nostalgic regret at the decline of such conventions that I wrote *Easy Virtue*. When it was produced, several critics triumphantly pounced on the fact that the play was similar in form and tone and plot to the plays of Pinero. I myself was unimpressed by their perception, for the form and tone and plot of a

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Pinero play was exactly what I had tried to achieve. *Easy Virtue* was played by Jane Cowl both in New York and London and, being an expert actress with great personality and charm, she swept the play into success in both countries.

This Year of Grate and Words and Music are both revues, and revue being an ephemeral form of entertainment, many of the sketches and numbers in these two have by now inevitably become dated. I feel therefore that the only appeal they are likely to have to anyone unversed in the complications and abbreviations of theatrical phraseology (for whom, incidentally, I have included a glossary of stage terms on page xv) is the fact that I am publishing them in their original form as working scripts. Perhaps, from the maze of dress plots, scene plots, black-outs, exits right, exits left, time schedules etc., a reader at all interested in the technical aspects of revue production might gather a certain amount of slightly bewildering information.

Naturally I am unable to read them myself without a host of memories crowding into my mind. Memories of long agonising dress-rehearsals; of cold-blooded, ruthless "cutting" conferences; of company supper parties in Manchester, where both these revues were originally tried out; of spirited quarrels, black despairs and certain triumphs. I remember Jessie Matthews in tears over her dance for "A Room with a View" and my own tears over my dance for the same number when I did it later in New York.

This Year of Grace is always dominated for me by the rich, comic personality of Maisie Gay. I can see her so

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clearly *in* my memory standing, flurried and helpless, waiting for that imaginary bus; clutching all those parcels and the balloons for the children while her hat got pushed farther and farther on to one side and her hair began to come down from sheer exertion.

I can remember Beatrice Lillie in the New York production sitting at a high desk, dressed as a grubby little office-boy and singing, with infinite pathos "World Weary" while she munched an apple.

Then, when I read *Words and Music* I remember the terrible night when I had to conduct the orchestra unexpectedly, never having done so before; the breathless agony on the faces of Joyce Barbour and John Mills when I took the tempo of "Something to do with Spring" so fast that they couldn't fit their very complicated dance to it and finally staggered off the stage cursing and exhausted. The reader of course cannot hope for any of this specialised nostalgia but maybe he will be able to find in the words of a song here and there, enough to remind him of a gay evening in the theatre.

Conversation Piece was conceived, written and composed as a vehicle for Yvonne Prmtemps and as such I must proudly say it was a success. She, being a fine actress in addition to having one of the loveliest voices it has ever been my privelege to hear, endowed the play with a special magic and, in spite of the tact that her English began and ended with "Good moening" "Yes" and "No", she contrived to enchant the public, the critics, the supporting cast, the orchestra, and even the stage hands. It is also an undoubted tribute to her that, by the end of the London and New York runs, most of the company spoke French fluently.

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The play itself has, I think, a certain amount of charm in its own right. The lyrics are good and the music excellent. The original production was tremendously enhanced by the exquisite settings and dresses of G.E. Calthrop. Upon re-reading it I find that the story rambles a bit here and there and that there are also two startling anachronisms of which, at the time of writing it, I was blissfully unaware. It is never explained for instance why, in the last scene, Melanie has completely dismantled a rented house in Brighton the furniture of which obviously doesn't belong to her! Also the sentimental emphasis on the gleaming lights of the packet-boat sailing to France is unfortunate considering that in 1811, the year in which the action of the play passes, England and France were at war! However apart from these minor defects it is a pleasant entertainment and I hope that one day, if we can ever find an artiste half as good as Yvonne Printemps, it may be revived.

Operette from my point of view is the least successful musical play I have ever done. The reason for this is that it is over-written and under-composed. The story of an imaginary "Gaiety Girl" of the early Nineteen Hundreds who achieves over-night stardom and then has to sacrifice her love life to her career, while not fiercely original, is an agreeable enough background for gay music and lyrics and beguiling "period" costumes. Unfortunately however the plot which should have been the background became the foreground, and the music, which should have dominated the action, established the atmosphere and whirled the play into a lilting success, was meagre and, only at moments, adequate. The principal waltz song "Dearest Love" wasn't bad but it

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was not nearly as good as "Ill See You Again" or "I Follow My Secret Heart". "Where Are the Songs We Sung" was melodic but depressing and the only real lyric success of the entertainment was "The Stately Homes of England" which had very little connection with the story.

The four principal players were Peggy Wood, Fritzi Massary, Irene Vanbrugh and Griffiths Jones. Fritzi Massary, one of the greatest stars of middle Europe, emerged from her retirement and studied English for months in order to play "Liesel Haren". Her performance was exquisite and her behaviour magnificent. She knew as well as I knew, during the try-out in Manchester, that neither her part nor the songs she had to sing were worthy of her but never, at the time or since, has she ever uttered a word of reproach. I hasten to add that she made an enormous personal success but I am forced to admit, with the utmost regret, that it was more her fault than mine. Peggy Wood, as usual, sang and acted with consummate taste and charm. Irene Vanbrugh played her one boring scene with unassailable dignity. 'Poor Griffiths Jones, uneasily aware that he couldn't sing a note, acted well on the rare occasions that he had an opportunity to do so and for the rest of the time stood or sat about attentively while other people sang at him. Another aspect of *Operette* was the triumphant confusion it established in the minds of the audience. This was cunningly achieved by the switching of the action back and forth between the stage play and the real play. I remember peering from my box in the Opera House Manchester and watching bewildered playgoers rustling their programmes and furtively striking matches in a frantic effort to discover where they were

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and what was going on. By that time however it was too late to do anything about it beyond cutting and simplifying wherever possible. In order really to save the situation then it would have been necessary to re-write and re-construct the entire play; re-rehearse the company and scrap and rebuild the scenery. It would also have helped it I had sat down and dashed off a half a dozen entrancing new musical numbers. Unfortunately however we were due to open at His Majesty's in two weeks and, even if the management had agreed to treble the production costs which such drastic alterations would inevitably have entailed, there was no time.

In the last analysis it was not the dead failure I feared it would be, but it was far from being the success I had hoped it would be when I first conceived and wrote it. If the reader of this volume is interested in how *not* to write a musical play, in how to overload a light, insignificant story with long stretches of accurate but uninspired dialogue, and in how to reduce an audience of average intelligence to a state of frustrated confusion, he will probably enjoy it immensely.

STAGE TERMS

I.E.L.	1st Entrance Left Stage.
R.	Right Stage.
L.	Left Stage.
I.E.R.	1st Entrance Right.
Tabs.	Curtains—usually of travelling kind.
Fade Out	Lighting of Scene taken out completely or dimmed.
B.O.	Black Out—sudden extinguishing of lights.
C.	Centre.
L.C.	Left Centre.
R.C.	Right Centre.
Full Set	Set taking maximum room on stage.
Dress Plot	A plan for allocating costumes, shoes, wigs, etc., to the Actors.
D.R.C.	Down Right Centre.
Running Order	A list of the Scenes in their correct order.
In One } In Two }	In One means a cloth, draping or hanging piece in the 1st hanging bay—usually 6 or 8 feet from the footlights, each succeeding bay 6 feet upstage.
Scrim	American term for a Gauze Cloth.
Rostrum	Platform.
Boxed in	Part of Stage surrounded by a three or fourfold Scene set down to the Proscenium or False Proscenium.
X.	Cross (the Actor crosses over).
X's.	Crosses.
Window Flat	Framed piece of scenery to allow for practicable window.
Cyc.	Cyclorama or Panorama—a back cloth with curves each end to form an horizon when lit.
D.S.	Down Stage.
P.	Prompt or L.
O.P.	Opposite Prompt or R.
Bus.	Business. Mark to indicate movement (usually funny) suiting the particular situation.



THIS YEAR OF GRACE



CHARACTERS

BANK CLERK

LIFT MAN

FRED

HARRY

LADY GWENDOLYN VERNEY

THE HON. MILLICENT BLOODWORTHY

CHARLES

MARY

1ST GIRL

2ND GIRL—ETC.

URCHIN

OPENING SCENE—THE TUBE

The scene is the booking-office of an underground railway station. There is a newspaper stand on the left and on the right on an angle up stage are the lift gates which are closed.

THREE PEOPLE come on quite quietly—buy papers and tickets at the slot machines, then take their stand by the lift. They open their papers and read them—a DIRTY LITTLE URCHIN enters, gets a ticket and also takes his stand, then gradually two by two and in groups the entire company come on (with the exception of a few principals required in the ensuing scene). All buy papers and tickets and queue up waiting for the lift. Everyone is completely preoccupied and dressed in ordinary work-a-day clothes, and there should be no sound at all but the click of the slot machine and the rustle of newspapers. Suddenly the little URCHIN who has been unable to afford a paper begins to whistle through his teeth—quite softly at first. One or two people lower their papers and regard him rather impatiently for a moment—the tune he is whistling is a very definite dance rhythm—he whistles a little louder—a woman a few feet away from him, without looking up, begins to shuffle her feet unconsciously. The man with her stops her with an irritable nudge. The URCHIN continues to whistle—an elderly business man immersed in his paper begins to shuffle his feet—then the woman starts again—gradually as the BOY'S whistle gets louder, everyone starts moving slightly—the MAN at the book-stall takes up the tune and hums it carelessly, then almost

imperceptibly at first, the orchestra takes up the tune—it swells louder until everybody is dancing hard. At this moment a young BANK CLERK rushes in hurriedly, buys a ticket and a paper—looks at everyone jigging about—recognises the tune and sings it.

BANK CLERK sings one verse, one chorus. BANK CLERK and CHORUS sing one chorus, and into DANCE as arranged.

"WAITING IN A QUEUE "

Verse.

In a rut
 In a rut
 In a rut
 We go along
 Nothing but
 Nothing but
 Nothing but
 The same old song,
 To those who view us lightly
 We must seem slightly
 Absurd,
 We never break the ritual
 One habitual
 Herd.

Refrain.

Waiting in a queue
 Waiting in a queue
 Everybody's always waiting in a queue,
 Fat and thin
 They all begin

To take their stand—it's grand—queueing it.
Everywhere you go
Everywhere you go
Everybody's always standing in a row,
Short and tall
And one and all
The same as sheep—just keep—doing it.
No one says why
No one says how
No one says what is this for,
No one says no
No one says go
No one says this is a bore,
If you want to do
Anything that's new,
If you're feeling happy, furious or blue,
Wet or fine
You get in line
For everybody's waiting in a queue.

At the end of the Number the lift comes up—the ATTENDANT dances out and EVERYONE dances in, the YOUNG MAN and the ATTENDANT last.

The gates close and the lift disappears and the MAN in the bookstall stops humming as the rhythm dies away in the orchestra.

Enter I.E.R. LADY GWENDOLYN VERNEY and THE HON. MILLICENT BLOODWORTHY, elaborately and expensively dressed. They look round, slightly bewildered.

LADY G.: What do we do now, darling ?

MILLICENT : Get our tickets, I suppose.

LADY G.: Yes, but where ? Life's agony, isn't it ?

MILLICENT : Torture, dear—but it's no use grumbling—we can't possibly use our cars with all the roads up— We must just be brave and do what the common people do.

LADY G. : It all seems very complicated. (*Turns and sees ticket machines?*) Look at these funny grey things !

MILLICENT : Those must be the ticket machines.

LADY G. : My dear, how delicious I We must put in some pennies, or something.

MILLICENT : I haven't any change

LADY G. : Neither have I. We'll, get it at the book-stall.

MILLICENT (*crosses to news-stand*): Have you got *Vogue* ?

FRED *is in front of newspaper stand.*

FRED : 'Ave I got wot ?

MILLICENT : *Vogue.*

FRED : Wot's that ?

LADY G.: It's a paper, I'm afraid.

FRED : I got *Tit-Bits, Answers*, an' all the "dailies."

MILLICENT : Have you change for a pound ?

FRED : Mostly in pennies, mum.

LADY G. : How divine—we can buy things with them.

FRED : I shouldn't do that, ma'am, if I was you. I should send them to the British Museum as curiosities. (*Goes to back of stall and gets change.*)

MILLICENT : Here's the pound.

FRED (*counting out change*): There y'are, lady. There's three-and-six in coppers, five and five's ten, and ten's a pound.

MILLICENT : Thank you a thousand times.

FRED : It's a pleasure, so 'elp me God.

LADY G.: Come along, darling. (*Crosses to machines*)

MILLICENT (*putting a penny in the ticket machine*): It's really quite an adventure, isn't it ?

The ticket comes out.

LADY G.: I'm thrilled—we must have some more. (*She puts in several pennies!*)

MILLICENT (*also cramming pennies in*): What tremendous fun!

FRED: 'Ere, 'ere, 'ere, wot you think you're doing ? (*He comes over to the machine.*)

LADY G.: I'm afraid it's stuck.

FRED: This ain't Wembley, you know. (*He shakes the machine.*)

MILLICENT: There now—I've got fourteen. How many have you, darling ?

LADY G.: I've got tons.

FRED: Wot's the idea ? That's what I want to know. Wot's the idea ? Where d'yer want to go ?

LADY G.: Well, we want ultimately to get to the Ritz.

FRED (*crosses to R., shouting*): 'Arry, 'Arry, come cre !

HARRY: 'Allo !

HARRY, *the booking-clerk, comes out of his office and comes to centre.*

What's the matter ?

FRED: 'Ere's a couple of bejewelled duchesses bunging up one of the " 'ow-d'yer-do's."

HARRY (*shaking the machine*): What d'you want to come mucking about 'ere for ? You ought to be at home looking after your children.

MILLICENT: We happen to be unmarried.

FRED: I shouldn't 'ave thought you'd let a little thing like that stand in yer way.

LADY G.: Horrible brute !

FRED : Who's 'orrible ?

MILLICENT : Come away, Gwen dear, they're insulting us.

Goes off I.E.L.

LADY G. : There are your ridiculous tickets.

She throws them over both the MEN and goes out grandly i.E.L.

HARRY : Well, I'll be damned !

FRED : There you are—that's class.

HARRY : Class, phew ! If my old woman made up 'er eyes like that, I'd lock 'er in the scullery !

FRED : Wot do they want to come nosing round 'ere for—bloated aristocrats?

HARRY : You know the trouble with you, Fred, is you're a bit Bolshic.

FRED : No, all this democracy makes life 'ellish uncomfortable.

HARRY : What we want in England is more and better birth control.

FRED : Oh no, we don't.

HARRY : Oh yes, we do.

FRED : It's men like you as is responsible for the birth-rate falling.

HARRY : Well, if you're responsible for it rising, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. This country's overpopulated.

Enter CHARLES, a very exquisite young man. Crosses to centre, looks at them and then goes up to ticket machines.

FRED : No, it ain't. It's all right—you've won. I'm all for birth control.

CHARLES puts a penny in the slot machine and cannot work it.

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CHARLES : I say !—attendant—it's stuck.

Lift rises.

FRED : Give it a shake.

CHARLES *shakes it gently.*

CHARLES : I'm afraid it's still stuck.

Lift doors open. Exit Two PEOPLE R. and L.

FRED : I said shake it—not stroke it! 'Ere ! (FRED comes over to machine.) Where d'you want to go—anyhow ?

CHARLES : Queen's Gate.

FRED *gives the machine a violent shake—gets ticket out, gives it to CHARLES, then pushes him into the lift.*

FRED : Take him away, Hubert—'e's breaking my 'cart.

LIFT MAN : Right I

The lift goes down.

FRED : 'Arry, that's wot the Russian Ballet's done for England.

MARY *enters l .E.R. She is charmingly dressed and she is reading a book in which she is so engrossed that she collides with FRED, who has crossed to R.C.*

MARY : Oh, I *am* so sorry.

FRED : That's all right, miss.

MARY : Could you tell me the time, please ?

FRED : About eleven o'clock.

MARY : Thank you. It doesn't matter if I wait here for a little, does it? (*Crosses to centre.*)

FRED : You can wait here as long as you like.

Two GIRLS come on from i.E.L., big tickets and wait for the lift.

MARY : I'm expecting a friend.

FRED : Boy friend, I'll be bound.

MARY : You're quite right.

IST GIRL *suddenly sees MARY and crosses to L. of her.*

IST GIRL : Mary !

MARY : Hallo !

IST GIRL : What are you doing here " ?

MARY : I'm waiting for Jack Burton.

ZND GIRL : Jack ! We've just left him—

MARY : Oh ! Perhaps I mistook the time—

IST GIRL. : Didn't you have a row with him last night ?

MARY : Yes—but not a serious one.

ZND GIRL : Are you sure ?

IST GIRL : You're so difficult, you know—you won't be content with men as they are—you're always trying to alter them.

MARY : Only because they never seem a bit like what they're made out to be in books.

IST GIRL : Books ! Who cares about books ?

MARY : I do.

Lift rises.

2ND GIRL (*crosses to R.*) : Life comes first, duckie. If I were you, I'd step out of my beautiful dreamland and face a bit of reality—it's more comforting in the long run.

MARY : You think I'm a fool, don't you ?

Lift doors open—exit Two PEOPLE.

2ND GIRL : Not exactly—but you're always pretending things are what they're not.

IST GIRL : Here's the lift. Good-bye, Mary.

MARY : Good-bye.

THEY enter lift and it goes down.

CLOSE No. 1 TABS

NUMBER

" *Mary Make Believe* "*Verse.*

I have been reading in this book of mine
 About a foolish maiden's prayer
 And every gesture, word and look of mine
 Seems to be mirrored there.
 She had such terribly pedantic dreams
 That her romantic schemes
 Went all awry
 Her thoughts were such
 She claimed too much
 And true love passed her by.

Refrain.

Mary make-believe
 Dreamed the whole day through
 Foolish fancies
 Love romances
 How could they come true ?
 Mary make-believe
 Sighed a little up her sleeve
 Nobody claimed her
 They only named her
 Mary Make-Believe.

During this Refrain
 8 GIRLS enter from
 l.E.R. and 8 from
 l.E.L.

Counter melody to be sung by CHORUS.

She's just a girl who's always blowing mental bubbles
 Till she's quite out of breath—quite out of breath
 She seems to have the knack of magnifying troubles

Till they crush her to death—crush her to death.
She's just a duffer of the ineffective kind
She's bound to suffer from her introspective mind
Her indecisions quite prevent her visions—coming true.
Imagination is a form of flagellation
If a sensitive child—lets it run wild
It dims the firmament till all the world is permanently
blue.

She's simply bound to make a bloomer
Until she's found her sense of humour
If love should touch her ever
She'll never, never see it through.

And MARY sings the Refrain at the same time
CHORUS *sing Counter melody.*

DANCE *as arranged.*

As CHORUS exit—8 GIRLS R. and 8 GIRLS L.

MARY is in centre of stage.

FADE OUT *as GIRLS exit.*

CLOSE TABS *on MARY'S last note.*

THE THEATRE GUIDE

ANNOUNCEMENT

The ANNOUNCER enters from I.E.R.

ANNOUNCER : Ladies and gentlemen, the fact that the Theatre Advertisements in the daily newspapers are extremely inadequate has for a long while been a source of

ACT I THIS YEAR OF GRACE

great sorrow to Mr. Cochran; he feels that the public are not sufficiently warned as to what they are to expect, by the bare unilluminating titles of plays, so therefore we propose in this Revue to give you nightly a brief impression of the current dramatic successes of London—we will first condense into as brief a space as possible the general theme and trend of each important play running at the moment, so that before rushing blindly to Keith Prowse to book seats, you will have some idea as to what you are going to see.

The four PLAYS given here are examples only. This Scene must be kept up-to-date with current successes.

Between each of the following Scenes a sign bearing the name of the play is shown to the audience by a GIRL in Page's dress. She enters from I.E.L. and exits same place.

THE TRIAL OF MARY DUGAN

SCENE : *Judges High Desk up L. Table and one chair R. on which is seated OLD MAN. Chair R. on which is seated THE WIDOW. Chair L on which is seated MARY. BROTHER is standing behind OLD MAN. COUNSEL at back of table.*

As curtains open all the characters are speaking at the same time.

JUDGE : *Objection overruled. Objection sustained. He bangs front of desk with small hammer every time he speaks.*

THIS YEAR OF GRACE ACT I

COUNSEL : You killed Edgar Rice. (*Pointing at MARY.*)

BROTHER : She's my sister. (*Appealing to AUDIENCE.*)

WIDOW *opens veil several times and screams every time she does it.*

OLD MAN *is discovered seated at table eating a sandwich, which he finishes, then brushes crumbs off table, puts his hat on and exits R.*

When he starts to go EVERYBODY stops till he is off, then starts speaking again.

POLICEMAN : Order in Court \ (*Repeating this all the time.*)

THE SILVER CORD

A YOUNG MAN *in a dressing-gown is pacing up and down thinking and smoking a cigarette. Suddenly outside the door is heard a terrible crash, followed by some shots and screams, a motor horn, a siren, a police whistle and another appalling crash.*

YOUNG MAN : What's that ?

A charming ELDERLY WOMAN puts her head round the door.

WOMAN : It's only Mother I

BLACK Our

ACT I THIS YEAR OF GRACE

YOUNG WOODLEY

SCENE : *School blackboard and easel at back. Small bench in front of blackboard.*

BOY (*standing behind bench*) : How do babies come ?

BOY (*seated on bench sharpening a pencil*) : I will tell you.

BLACK OUT

ANY NOEL COWARD PLAY

Six PEOPLE *are discovered standing on stage when the curtains open, PRINCIPAL in centre with large bunch of flowers. She comes forward. Loud applause and cries of "Speech."*

PRINCIPAL : Ladies and gentlemen, this is the happiest moment of my life.

Boos and catcalls.

BLACK OUT

DANCE DUET: (BOY AND GIRL)

" Mad about You"

BOY *and* GIRL *enter*—BOY R., *and* GIRL L.

Verse.

HE : Dear, your personality
Is bad for my morality
It's more than I can bear.

SHE : Tho' I surmise it isn't wise
To set my cap at you
Fve lost all control and on the whole
I can't live through a single minute
Dear, without your image in it.

HE : When you are inclined to be
Encouraging and kind to me
I simply walk on air
Maybe I'll wake up soon and break my heart
To find that you—aren't here.

Refrain.

HE : I'd like to tell you that I'm mad about—
Mad about you—mad about you

SHE : But there is one thing that I'm sad about
Sad about—sad about too.

HE : When you met me you swore
You were essentially nice
But I wasn't so sure
When we had kissed once or twice.

SHE : For all I know you're just a gadabout
Gadabout—gad-about who
Is always eager to exchange old love for new.

ACT I T H I S Y E A R O F G R A C E

BOTH: I've a feeling—you've been concealing
A thousand or two

Mad about, mad about, mad about you I

THEY *exit* I.L.E.

8 TAP DANCERS *enter* z.E.L. *Dance as arranged
and exit* 2.E.L.

8 TOE DANCERS *enter* 2.E.L. *Dance as arranged
and exit* z.E.L.

SPECIALITY DANCERS (HOLLAND *and* BARRY.)

At end of Number:

CLOSE TABS

8 TAP DANCERS *cross in front, followed by the* 8 TOE
DANCERS, *followed by the* z SPECIALITY DANCERS.

BLACK OUT

THE BUS RUSH

SCENE : *Park Railings Cloth, with an ordinary bus sign
R.C. down on footlights.*

PRINCIPAL, *a middle-aged LADY with several parcels,
and balloons, enters from* I.E.L. *She has been shopping.
She crosses to sign, looks at it and takes up her position
waiting for a bus.*

Enter from I.E.R. WORKMAN, WIFE *and small*

CHILD. *THEY look at bus sign ; then take up their position R. of LADY and wait.*

Enter from I.E.L., a middle-class WOMAN, looks at sign and stands in front of LADY. LADY, annoyed, comes in front of her and waits.

Enter from I.E.L., THREE GIRLS. THEY look at sign, and stand in front of LADY. SHE comes around them and stands in front of them.

Enter from I.E.L., Two MEN and ONE GIRL. THEY cross to sign, look at it and stand in front of LADY. She, very much annoyed, comes round in front of them.

A.t this moment a motor horn is heard off R. THEY all look out front, eyes slowly travelling around till they get to P. side. THEY all rush off P. side and the Two MEN and one GIRL go right off. There is an altercation with the Bus CONDUCTOR. Bus bell rings and they ALL come slowly back on stage to their former positions by sign.

A motor horn is heard. Exactly the same business as before, all looking round house and rushing off. This time the THREE GIRLS go right off.

WORKING MAN, WIFE and CHILD and middle-class WOMAN come on and take up positions by sign. LADY comes on, looks at them, and waits left C. of stage.

MIDDLE-CLASS WOMAN sees this, crosses in front of LADY and takes up position L. of her. WORKING MAN, WIFE and CHILD cross in front of them and take up positions to L. of MIDDLE-CLASS WOMAN.

Motor horn off R. THEY all rush to R. When THEY get to sign, bus bell heard off L. They ALL stop—same business as before, all looking round bouse and rushing off. Motor horn off R. Same business as before. Altercations with Bus CONDUCTOR and the LADY comes to C.,

ACT I THIS YEAR OF GRACE

very much beragged and parcels all crushed and pulled to pieces.

LADY *whistles and calls : "TAXI I TAXI / "*

BLACK OUT

" Lorelei"

SCENE : *Full set.*

SINGER *comes on I.E.R. and takes up position by Floats, sings 1 Verse and 1 Refrain.*

Verse 1.

When the day
Fades away
Twilight dies
Sirens rise
Combing their hair with cool green fingers
Crooning out their song
Let him beware who loves and lingers
Over-long.

Refrain 1.

Lorelei, Lorelei,
Call to sailors drifting by
Coo, coo, come hither,
While they're sailing a voice is wailing
A beckoning tune.
No use praying they'll all be paying
A reckoning soon
Under the moon.

TABS *open.* MERMAID *discovered on rock.* Bus: *while SINGER is singing last seven lines of refrain.* Old-fashioned sailing ship passes from R. to L.

Lorelei, Lorelei,
Silver voices fade and die.
Smiling with glee
Into the sea they slither
Down in the depths profound
Where passionate joys are drowned
There lie the lovers wooed by the Lorelei.

SINGER *stops singing but remains on stage.* ORCHESTRA *plays one verse undone refrain.* MERMAID *on rock ; business as arranged, with SAILOR who comes from back of rock.*

SINGER *now takes up another Refrain.*

Lorelei, Lorelei,
Call to sailors drifting by
Cooo, cooo, come hither,
While they're sailing a voice is wailing
A beckoning tune.
No use praying, they'll all be paying
A reckoning soon,
Under the moon.

Lorelei, Lorelei,
Silver voices fade and die
Smiling with glee
Into the sea they slither
Down in the depths profound
Where passionate joys are drowned
There lie the lovers wooed by the Lorelei.

-r4/ *end of Refrain* SINGER *exits* R.

TABS CLOSE

MAN *singer comes on from I.E.L. and takes up position by Floats, sings 1 Verse and 1 Refrain.*

All that is past
And now at last
Everything's altered and changed about
Progress goes on
Glamour has gone
From where the schooners once ranged about.
Speed and power
Hour by hour
Liners tower high
Onward churning
Never turning
For a yearning cry
Coal dust and grime
No one has time
For any simple romance at all
Beckon and coo
Till you are blue
Mermaids have got no damned chance at all.

TABS OPEN : MERMAID *discovered bus : of appealing to SAILORS on ships passing.*

1 *Small Schooner passes from left to right.*

1 *Submarine passes from left to right.*

1 *Large Schooner passes from left to right.*

When in centre it belches forth a large column of smoke all over the MERMAID. She turns and faces audience mlh face all covered with black. While this business is on the MAN SINGER is singing the 2nd Refrain.

2nd Refrain.

Lorelei, Lorelei,
Sit around and weep and cry
Days are so long
Everything's wrong
Completely.

All the sirens in these environs
Are sorry they spoke
Coaling steamers are belching streamers
Of horrible smoke
Making them choke.
Lorelei, Lorelei,
Sadly sigh and wonder why
Every new ship
Gives them the slip
So neatly.

What could be more obscene
Than vamping a submarine
Pity the languid left-alone Lorelei,

BLACK OUT

SNOWBALL

[SNOWBALL was a little coloured boy who played the Banjo.]

ACT I THIS YEAR OF GRACE

IGNORANCE IS BLISS

SCENE I

SCENE : *The scene is a hotel bedroom of the 'Nineties.*

A young HUSBAND and WIFE are ushered in by a very fat PROPRIETRESS—a chambermaid comes in after them with their luggage. The furniture is ugly and heavy and on the R. is a large double brass bed.

PROPRIETRESS : Put the things down over there Annie.

ANNIE *puts bags at the end of sofa.*
Come this way, please.

THEY *come on and across to front of sofa.*
I think you'll be very comfy here. (*Shakes up bed.*)

HUSBAND : Thank you.

WIFE : (*with an effort*) I'm sure we shall.

PROPRIETRESS : Married to-day?

HUSBAND & O h | n o !

WIFE (*together*) ; | Oh yes !

PROPRIETRESS (*rubbing her hands*) : Now, now, now now" ! You mustn't be shy. (*to the MAID.*) Don't stand there gaping, Annie—run away.

ANNIE : Yes'm.

She crosses back of sofa and exits door C.

PROPRIETRESS : Do you know Worthing well ?
(*Crosses to window O.P. side.*)

HUSBAND : No.

PROPRIETRESS : You can get a lovely view of the sea from this window 'ere—here.

WIFE (*gulping*) : How nice.

PROPRIETRESS (*archly*): But I don't suppose you'll be

looking out of the window much, will you ? (*Crosses to centre.*)

WIFE : Oh, Harry !

HUSBAND : That will be all now, thank you, Mrs. Blake.

PROPRIETRESS (*crosses up to door centre*) : If you want anything, you've only got to ring for it, you know.

HUSBAND : Thanks—thanks very much.

PROPRIETRESS : Not at all—a pleasure—I like to see young things standing on the threshold of life, as it were.

She stands and looks at them smiling— There is a long pause.

HUSBAND *crosses to WIFE and takes off coat.*

HUSBAND : Quite.

PROPRIETRESS (*conversationally, coming down stage*) : I was born 'ere, you know, born and married and widowed all in Worthing.

WIFE (*nervously*) : How nice.

PROPRIETRESS : It's the close season now—but it's very gay in the summer.

HUSBAND : It must be. (*Puts coat down on sofa.*)

PROPRIETRESS : Last year we had no less than twenty-seven honeymoon couples—they all 'ad this room—separately, of course.

WIFE : Oh, Harry !

HUSBAND : That will be all now, thank you, Mrs. Blake.

PROPRIETRESS : Well—ring if you want anything, you know.

HUSBAND : Yes,—thank you.

PROPRIETRESS (*roguishly*) : I don't suppose you'll ring much though, will you ?

WIFE : Oh, Harry I

HUSBAND : Oh, good night.

PROPRIETRESS (*laughing gaily*): It's me as should be saying that to you—Sir.

She goes out, door C.

WIFE : Oh, Harry! (WIFE *sits on sofa*.)

This whole scene to be played in an agony of embarrassment.

HUSBAND *sits on sofa*.

HUSBAND : Well—here we are.

WIFE : Yes—here we are.

HUSBAND : Quite a nice room, isn't it

WIFE: Delightful.

HUSBAND : It all went off very well, didn't it ?

WIFE : Yes.

HUSBAND : Yes, and now—er—well—here we are.

HUSBAND *gets up from sofa*.

WIFE : Yes—here we are.

HUSBAND : When we've unpacked, we can put the bags under—the— (*he looks in agony at the bed*) sofa.

WIFE : Yes—we can—can't we ?

HUSBAND : Yes—we can, can't we? Who's going to unpack first, you or me ?

WIFE : I don't know.

HUSBAND : We'll toss up—tails you do—heads I do.

WIFE : Oh, Harry ! (*Gets up from sofa—crosses to HARRY*.)

HUSBAND (*throwing coin*): It's heads—that's you !

WIFE : Oh!

HUSBAND : I'll—er—go downstairs and order breakfast for the morning—while you—er—get into—er—start to unpack.

WIFE : Very well.

HUSBAND (*kissing her hurriedly*): Cheer up, dear.

WIFE : Oh, Harry !

He goes out quickly.

She falls on her knees by the sofa.

(*Wailing.*) Oh, mother—oh, mother—oh, mother !

BLACK OUT

SCENE II

A very modern hotel bedroom.

A HUSBAND and WIFE are ushered in by the BOOKING CLERK. A PAGE BOY enters with the luggage.

PROPRIETOR : I hope you'll be comfortable here.

WIFE : Oh yes—divine. (*She thumps the bed with her fist.*) Bed feels all right.

HUSBAND : Got a stinker on you ?

WIFE : Yes, here—(*She gives him one.*)

HUSBAND (*to CLERK*) : Send up two dry Martinis, will you ?

The WIFE opens a portable gramophone and puts on a dance record. Then starts to undress.

WIFE : Here, Harry—unhook me.

HUSBAND (*doing so*): Right—Ouch !

WIFE : What is it ?

HUSBAND : I always scratch myself with this damned hook!

BLACK OUT

ACT I THIS YEAR OF GRACE

HANDS NUMBER

(Miss Losch)

[This was an exquisite creation by Tilly Losch, in which she only used her hands.]

DUET : *"A Room with a View "*

SCENE : *A Window Flat.*

BOY *and* GIRL *behind centre of Tabs. THEY open Tabs and are discovered in each other's arms.*

Verse.

HE : I've been cherishing
Through the perishing
Winter nights and days
A funny little phrase
That means
Such a lot to me
That you've got to be
With me heart and soul
For on you the whole
Thing leans.

SHE : Won't you kindly tell me what you're driving at
What conclusion you're arriving at ?

HE : Please don't turn away
Or my dream will stay
Hidden out of sight
Among a lot of might—
Have-beens !

Refrain.

HE : A room with a view—and you
And no one to worry us
No one to hurry us—through
This dream we've found
We'll gaze at the sky—and try
To guess what it's all about
Then we will figure out—why
The world is round.

SHE : We'll be as happy and contented
As Birds upon a tree
High above the mountains and the sea

BOTH: We'll bill and we'll coo—ooo—oo
And sorrow will never come
Oh, will it ever come—true
Our room with a view.

TABS OPEN. *Window discovered.*

BOY *exits* R. GIRL L.

THEY *go round and appear in window, which they open.*

Verse 2.

SHE : I'm so practical
I'd make tactical
Errors as your wife
I'd try to set your life
To rights.
I'm upset a bit
For I get a bit
Di2zy now and then
Following your mental flights.

ACT I THIS YEAR OF GRACE

HE : Come with me and leave behind the noisy
crowds,
Sunlight shines for us above the clouds.

SHE ; My eyes glistened too
 While I listened to
 All the things you said
 I'm glad I've got a head
 For heights.

Refrain 2,

SHE : A room with a view—and you
 And no one to give advice
 That sounds a paradise—few
 Could fail to choose
 With fingers entwined we'll find
 Relief from the preachers who
 Always beseech us to—mind
 Our P's and Q's.

HE : We'll watch the whole world pass before us
 While we are sitting still
 Leaning on our own window-sill.

BOTH: We'll bill and we'll coo—ooo—oo,
 And maybe a stork will bring
 This, that and t'other thing—to
 Our room with a view.

GIPSY enters I.E.R., crosses to Centre with BOY, bumming 2nd Refrain. She sees them in window and asks for money. He gives her money. She spreads four cards on stage, then holds up four fingers to BOY and

GIRL *in window, indicating for babies, and rocks arms as if rocking baby, picks up cards and waives good-bye and exits i.E.L.*

BOTH: We'll bill and we'll coo—ooo—oo,
And maybe a stork will bring
This, that and t'other thing—to
Our room with a view.

He slowly takes her in his arms. She turns her back to audience—sees that they are exposed to passers-by. They slowly close windows. They kiss. Shadow shows on window. They close curtains.

BLACK OUT

GRIFFITHS BROTHERS

HORSE POGO

[The Griffiths Brothers were in reality father and son. I forget which was the front legs of Pogo and which was the back, but whichever way which the result was to make Pogo not only a Pantomime horse but a very definite character.]

" TEACH ME TO DANCE LIKE GRANDMA "

SCENE : *Pink Velvet Curtains.*

PRINCIPAL *enters from R. as TABS open.*

Verse.

I'm getting tired of Jazz Tunes

Monotonous

They've gotten us

Crazy now.

Tho' they're amusing as tunes

Music has gone somehow.

I hear the moaning—groaning of a saxophone band

It simply shakes me—makes me—want to play a
lone hand.

Please understand

I want an age that has tunes

Simple and slow

I'm feeling so

Lazy now.

Refrain.

Teach me to dance like Grandma used to dance

I refuse to dance—Blues.

Black Bottoms, Charlestons, what wind blew them in

Monkeys do them in Zoos.

Back in the past the dancing signified just a dignified

They didn't have to be so strong [glow.

Tho' they revolved the whole night long.

Teach me to dance like Grandma used to dance

Sixty summers ago I

8 GIRLS *enter from i.E.L.*

THEY *sing one refrain and dance and bus : to Thret
refrains and exit i.E.L. with PRINCIPAL.*

FINALE : ACT I

SCENE : *Full set, silver Cyc., etc.*

CURTAINS OPEN

DANCER *discovered up stage G, in old-fashioned Polka Dress.*

DANCE : *Po/ka—to tune of Grandma's Days as in score. End of Dance—*

MAN *enters l.E.L. in old-fashioned dress, THEY dance—Mazurka (as in score), twice through. End of dance—*

He exits l.E.L. She exits i.E.R.

FOUR LITTLE GIRLS *and* FOUR LITTLE BOYS *enter z.E.L. THEY dance Polka as arranged, " Bric-d-Brac " as in Score.*

Exit 2.E.R.

EIGHT BIG GIRLS *and* EIGHT BIG BOYS *enter z.E.L. THEY dance Polka as arranged in Score.*

Exit z.E.R.

The THREE GRACES : *First one enters 2.E.L., comes down C. Second one enters 2.E.R., comes down R. Third one enters 2.E L., comes down L.*

DANCE *as arranged in Score.*

Portions of Ballet from " Robert the Devil."

THEY *exit R. and L.*

VALSE : HOLLAND AND BARRY SPECIALITY

ACT I THIS YEAR OF GRACE

Enter 3.E.L. Dance as arranged.

FINALE. FULL COMPANY. VALSE.

EIGHT SMALL GIRLS *enter z.E.L.* When they are all on EIGHT BIG GIRLS and EIGHT BIG BOYS *enter from l.E.R.* and valse around SMALL GIRLS who are waltzing in middle of stage.

TEN COUPLES OF PRINCIPALS *enter from l.E.L.* and valse around outer edge of other dancers till curtain—then THEY reverse.

CURTAINS *open—they waltz round once more.*

CURTAIN

Wa/tz Refrain : " Teach Me to Da we " as in Score.

CHARACTERS

THE LIDO BEACH

THE CONTESSA

LADY FENCHURCH

SIR CHARLES FENCHURCH

YOUNG MAN

BARONESS KURDLE

MR. CLARK

LADY MILLICENT

LADY SALTWOOD

LADY VERLAP

VIOLET

JANE

BABY

GRACE

ACT II

THE LIDO

OPENING.

The scene is the luido 'Reach. There should be a back-cloth with "Excelsior Hotel" on it up against bright blue sky. In the foreground a row of cabanas with coloured striped awnings and coloured mattresses and cushions.

When the curtain rises the CHORUS is discovered in a straight line across the stage, with their bands on their knees looking out front. Some are in bathing dresses, and some in gaily coloured pyjamas. There is a general air of sunshine and colour and gaiety.

Opening Chorus.

ALL : A narrow strip of sand
 Where Byron used to ride about,
 While stately ships would glide about
 The sea on either hand.
 But now the times have changed,
 For civilised society
 With infinite variety
 Has had it rearranged.
 No more the moon
 On the still Lagoon
 Can please the young enchanted,
 They must have this
 And they must have that
 And they take it all for granted.

They hitch their star
To a cocktail bar
Which is all they really wanted,
That narrow strip of sand
Now reeks with assininity
Within the near vicinity
A syncopated band
That plays the blues—all the day long—
And all the old Venetians say
They like a nice torpedo
To blow the Lido away.

CHORUS *go up stage and form several groups.*

Two WIVES *enter top E.R. and Two top E.L. and come down to footlights.*

WIVES : Beneath the blue skies
 Of Sunny Italy,
 We lie on the sand
 But please understand
 We're terribly grand.
 We firmly married
 The old nobility,
 But we can spend happy days here,
 Take off our stays here,
 Tarnish our laurels,
 Loosen our morals.
 Oh 1 you'll never know
 The great relief it is
 To let our feelings go,
 We're *comme il faut*
 You see and so
 It doesn't matter what vulgarity
 We show!

Two HUSBANDS *enter top R. and Two top L. and come down and take up positions on left of each WIFE.*

HUSBANDS : Ladies of abundant means
 And less abundant minds,
 Although we're not romantic
 We crossed the cold Atlantic
 To choose a few commercial queens
 Of different sorts and kinds.
 Returning with a cargo
 Of girlhood from Chicago,
 Tho' we regret it more from day to day
 We think it only fair to you to say:
 It wasn't for your beauty that we married
 you,
 It wasn't for your culture or your wit,
 It wasn't for the quality that Mrs. Glyn
 describes
 As " It," just it.
 It wasn't your position in society
 That led us on to making such a fuss.

FOUR WIVES *start going off L. FOUR HUSBANDS start going off R. singing the last three lines.*

Forgive us being frank,
 But your balance in the bank
 Made you just the only wives for us.

At exit of HUSBANDS and WIVES, CHORUS form a straight line across stage and sing this verse :

ALL : This narrow strip of sand
 Makes something seem to burst in us,
 Brings out the very worst in us,
 But kindly understand

We've got the blues all the day long
 And every year we always say
 We'd like a nice torpedo
 To blow the Lido away!

Half exit R. Half exit L.

At the end of the Opening Chorus there is a general buzz of conversation. FOUR PEOPLE playing bridge outside a cabana on the L. are quarrelling furiously.

LADY M. *is lying on mattress R.*

CONTESSA : What did you play that for ?

SIR C. : Because it seemed to me the most suitable card to play.

CONTESSA : I've always thought you a dreary old fool, Charles.

LADY F. : Darling Contessa—don't be so tiresome.

CONTESSA : We're playing bridge—not animal grab.

A YOUNG MAN *in a bathing suit approaches the table l.E.L.*

YOUNG MAN : Are we lunching upstairs dressed, or down here undressed ?

CONTESSA : Mind your own business !

YOUNG MAN : It is my business. I'm paying for lunch.

LADY F. : Upstairs then, dear—it's more expensive.

YOUNG MAN : Look—here comes a photographer.

EVERYBODY *at once screams and rushes eagerly off the stage.*

SIR CHARLES *stops and looks at cards and then rushes off.*

After a moment they return smiling with satisfaction. The YOUNG MAN lies down at bottom of mattress R.

SIR C.: Well, I double.

The BARONESS KURDLE, an elderly woman, comes out of her cabana in a dressing-gown—she is large and extremely feminine. She is followed by MR. CLARK from top E.L.

LADY M.: Who's this ? I'm new to the Lido.

CONTESSA : That's the Baroness Kurdle. Just an Austrian girl.

BARONESS : Where iss my oil ?

LADY M.: Your what, dear ?

BARONESS : Oil—somebody have pinched him.

MR. CLARK : Pinched who ?

BARONESS : My oil. It iss my hour for sunburn.

LADY M. (*holding up bottle*) : Is this it ?

MR. CLARK *pulls mattress down stage.*

BARONESS : Ach yes—Mr. Clark, you will please rub my back—I, my front can do myself—

LADY M.: I never know, Baroness, why you go to all this trouble, anyhow.

BARONESS (*taking off her dressing-gown and displaying a slightly inadequate bathing costume*): Sunburn is very becoming—but only when it is even—one must be careful not to look like a mixed grill. (*She undoes her shoulder-straps of her bathing suit and lies face downwards on a mattress.*) Mr. Clark, you will please begin.

MR. CLARK *dutifully begins to rub her back with oil.*

LADY M.: Look—there's a photographer.

BARONESS : My wrap—my God ! my wrap—my God!

EVERYBODY *at once rushes off all entrances* L. *The BARONESS is the last one off the stage.*

VIOLET, JANE, BABY and GRACE *enter top E.R. They are all exquisitely dressed.*

VIOLET : What's that crowd over there ?

JANE : Only a camera-man.

BABY : Really, the way these people rush after publicity is disgusting—we don't go on like that.

GRACE : They're amateurs, dear—and we're professionals.

THEY *come down stage to footlights.*

QUARTETTE : "*Little Women*" (VIOLET, JANE, BABY and GRACE).

Verse i.

business as arranged.

ALL: We're little girls of certain ages
 Fresh from London Town,
 Like an instalment plan of Drage's
 We want so much down.
 We have discovered years ago
 That flesh is often clay,
 We're not a new sin
 We're on the loose in
 Quite the nicest way.
 We have renounced domestic cares
 For ever and for aye,
 We're not so vicious,
 Merely ambitious,
 If there must be love
 Let it be free love.

Rifra/n.

We're little women,
 Alluring little women,
 Cute but cold fish
 Just like goldfish

Looking for a bowl to swim in.
We lead ornamental
But uncreative lives,
We may be little women
But we're not good wives.

VIOLET : I am just an ingenue
And shall be till I'm eighty-two
At any rude remark my spirit winces,
I've a keen religious sense
But in girlish self-defence
I always have to put my faith in princes.

ALL : Do not trust them, gentle maiden,
They will kick you in the pants.

RUTH : I'm not a type that is frequently seen
I wear my hair in a narrow bang,
I have remained at the age of eighteen
Since I left home in a charabanc
Tho' men all pursue me
When they woo me
They construe me as innocent,
But when I hear things suggestively phrased
I'm not unduly amazed.

ALL : It takes far more than that to wake
Sweet wonder in her eyes.

JANE : I waste no time on things
That other girls are arch about,
I much prefer to march about alone.

I am a baby vamp,
 I'd take a postage stamp,
 I just believe in grabbing
 Anything that's offered me.
 If Mother Hubbard proffered me—a bone
 I should not be upset,
 Have the darned thing re-set.

ALL : Much further than the Swanee River
 She keeps her old folks at home.

IVY : I am a girl whose soul with domesticity
 abounds,
 I know a man of six foot three who's worth
 a million pounds (*n>oops*)
 Tho' he is like a brother
 I haven't told my mother
 He's given me a lovely house and grounds 1

ALL : Be it ever so humbug
 There's no place like home.

2nd Refrain.

ALL : We're little women
 Alluring little women,
 Cute but cold fish,
 Just like goldfish
 Looking for a bowl to swim in.
 Tho' we're very clinging
 Our independence thrives
 We may be little women
 But we're not good wives.

THEY *all exeunt* I.E.L. *on the last four bars.*

THE ENGLISH LIDO

CHARACTERS

MR. FREEMAN

MRS. FREEMAN

ALICE

FRANKIE

OFFICIAL

MR. HARRIS

MRS. HARRIS

PHYLLIS

VI

GEORGIE

MRS. CLARK

MRS. JONES

MADGE

DORIS

DAISY KIPSHAW

HOCKEY PLAYERS, CHILDREN, CAMERA-
MEN, BATHERS, etc.

Preliminary Speech. ANNOUNCER *comes on in front of Tabs.*

ANNOUNCER : Ladies and gentlemen, it has been suggested in several newspapers of late that English seaside resorts hold out fewer attractions to visitors than Continental ones. Any true patriotic Englishman naturally resents this reflection on our national gaiety and Mr. Cochran perhaps more keenly than anyone—so he has determined to prove conclusively once and for all that no holiday resort in the world can equal in charm, gaiety and light-hearted care-free enjoyment an average watering-place on the shores of the English Channel.

OPENING CHORUS.

ALL the CHORUS are discovered in a straight line across the stage. MR. and MRS. HARRIS in middle of line, MR. and MRS. FREEMAN to the left of them.

ALL : Hooray, hooray, hooray !
 The holidays !
 The jolly days
 When laughter, fun and folly days
 Appear.
 Hooray, hooray, hooray !
 The laity
 With gaiety
 And charming spontaneity
 Must cheer.

MR. HARRIS : I've left my bowler hat and rubber collar far behind.

MRS. H: I wish to God you'd left that awful
Panama behind,
It looks gaga behind.

ALL : But never mind because the holidays are here,
Our tastes are very far from Oriental,
We have a very fixed idea of fun,
The thought of anything experimental
Or Continental
We shun.
We take to innovations very badly,
We'd rather be uncomfortable than not
In fighting any new suggestion madly
We'd gladly
Be shot !
We much prefer to take our pleasures sadly
Because we're really quite contented with our
lot.

The scene is structurally the same as the Lido Scene, except that in place of cabanas there are bathing machines. The sky is leaden-grey and there is a violent wind blowing. Some of the characters wear ill-fitting bathing costumes with Burberrys and mackintoshes over them, others are dressed respectably in flannels and blazers and plus-fours and cloth coats and skirts and very rumpled summer dresses. There broods over everything that air of complacent dreariness which is inseparable from any English seaside resort.

When the Opening Chorus is over, a very well-developed WOMAN of about thirty runs in from I.E.R. to centre.

WOMAN : I say, girls, what about a game of beach hockey ?

1ST GIRL : Topping !

2ND GIRL : Righto !

3RD GIRL : Good egg !

About NINE of them go off—leaving the stage empty except for the harassed family on the R. They sit in the two end chairs. And the FREEMAN family on the L. and a few odd people strolling about. MRS. FREEMAN is vainly trying to put up a deck-chair R. of bathing machine. Finally she sits down. An OLD MAN climbs up steps of bathing machine and looks through hole in the door. MR. FREEMAN sits down R. of bathing machine with a newspaper.

MR. F. : 'I, come on out of it, nosy!

OLD MAN *goes top* E.R.

MRS. F. (*sits down*) : That's the first time I've been 'ot for ten days. (*If knitting.*)

MR. F. : What are you grumblin' about ?

MRS. F. : I'm not grumblin', but it's my belief this place isn't as bracing as they said it was. I feel awful.

MR. F. (*wearily*) : Oh, what's the matter with you ?

MRS. F. : Well, I'll tell you—I've got a cold, wind under the 'eart, I feel sick and me feet hurt I

MR. F. : What d'you think you are—a medical magazine ?

MRS. F. : Well, if you 'adn't 'ad hiccoughs all night I might 'ave got a bit of sleep and felt better.

MR. F. : Where's Alice ?

MRS. F. : 'Elping Frankie on with his bathing things —'e loves the water.

Shrill screams of rage come from inside the bathing machine.

MR. F. : Yes, it sounds like it, don't it ?

ALICE, *a girl of about sixteen, in a very voluminous*

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

bathing-gown comes out of the bathing machine leading FRANKIE, a little boy of ten, clad only in striped bathing drawers—be is yelling loudly. Cross to R.

Can't you keep the child quiet, yer ma's not feeling well.

ALICE : 'E found a beetle in 'is bucket.

MR. FREEMAN *goes over to FRANKIE.*

MR. F. : 'Ere, 'ere, 'ere, Frankie, stop it—you're getting a big boy now—making all that fuss about a poor innocent beetle.

MRS. F. : That child's been a bundle of nerves ever since we took him to see " *Chang* "

An OFFICIAL in uniform walks on and taps MR, FREEMAN on the shoulder.

OFFICIAL : Excuse me, this little lad must have a top to 'is bathing dress.

MR. F. : Why—what for ?

OFFICIAL : Corporation's rules.

MRS. F. *gets up from chair and comes down stage.*

MRS. F. : Lot of nonsense—the child's under age.

OFFICIAL : Can't 'elp that, madam.

ALICE : 'E 'asn't got a top.

OFFICIAL : The Corporation's very strict about indecent exposure.

MR. F. : Well, it's coming to something if a child of ten can't enjoy a state of nature without giving a lot of old ladies ideas.

OFFICIAL : England don't 'old with states of nature.

MRS. F. : 'Ere—'e'd better 'ave my crochet sports jacket. (*Cross to R. She gives it to ALICE, who drapes it round FRANKIE.*) Will that do ?

OFFICIAL : Yes—sorry to 'ave troubled you.

He goes off 2.E.L.

MR. F. : Well, I'm damned!

ALICE : Come on, Frankie.

Takes him off l.E.R.

MR. F. : That boy looks effeminate. You going to have a bathe this morning?

MRS. F.: Not unless you want me to die this afternoon.

MR. F.: I'm off to 'ave a paddle. (*Cross to R.*)

MRS. F.: Mind you take plenty of soda with it.

MR. FREEMAN *is going off and collides with MADGE and DORIS on the way. They are crossing from R. to L.*

MR. F.: Pardon.

DORIS : Granted.

SHE and MADGE stroll across.

MADGE : Where was I ?

DORIS : He was just holding your hand and the band was playing the *Mikado*.

MADGE : Oh, yes—well, dear—I said, keep your hands to yourself and he said, why? and I said, you know why, and he said, come off it, Miss High and Mighty, and I said, don't be saucy, and he bought me some nougat and I didn't get home till two in the morning.

THEY go off.

MRS. H. (*reading the paper*) : Fred !

HARRIS (*who has been sleeping*): 'Allo !

MRS. H.: That murderer's been caught.

HARRIS : Which one ?

MRS. H.: Last Tuesday's.

HARRIS : Oh !

MRS. H.: You can go and see the 'ouse where it 'appened. It's quite near 'ere. Mabel went yesterday

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

and said it was lovely—blood all over everything.

HARRIS : Coo I We might take the children this afternoon.

MRS. H. : All right. I'll cut some sandwiches.

Two CHILDREN, GEORGIE and VI, *come running in screaming from I.E.R. They go to their MOTHER.*

HARRIS : What's up now ?

VI : Georgie hit me with his iron spade.

GEORGIE : No, I never!

VI : Yes, he did !

GEORGIE : No, I never I

MRS. H. : Come 'ere, Georgie—that's the third time you've 'it Vi in two days—I'll teach you.

She bends him across her knee and smacks him—the noise is deafening.

HARRIS : Can't you leave the blighter alone ?

MRS. H. : Don't you tell me 'ow to bring up me own children I

HARRIS : The poor little bloke didn't mean it.

VI : Yes, 'e did.

HARRIS : You shut up, you———(H' *slaps her. She fits up a terrible bowl.*)

VI (*screaming*) : Ow ow ow I Father 'it me I

MRS. H. : You great brute, you I (*Getting up and taking VI in her arms.*)

HARRIS : Brute, am I ?

MRS. H. : Be quiet, VI—stop that noise I

HARRIS : I can't stand this—I'm going to get drunk—
Goes off top E.L.

MRS. H. ; That'll be a change—

A. harassed mother, MRS. CLARK enters pushing a screaming child in front of her. They get to centre.

MRS. CLARK : I brought you 'ere to enjoy yourselves

and enjoy yourselves you're going to ! Now go on—
paddle.

She smacks her hard and the CHILD goes off screaming, GEORGE and VI follow I.E.R.

MRS. CLARK *sits down exhausted next to* MRS. FREEMAN R,

I'll never come to this place again as long as I live.

MRS. F. : I don't think I shall live long enough to be able to.

MRS. HARRIS *is fanning herself with her paper.*

MRS. JONES, *a weary-looking woman, comes on top E.R. and sits down next to her.*

MRS. JONES : Good morning, Mrs. Harris.

MRS. HARRIS : Good morning.

MRS. JONES : I've just come from the 'ospital, my little Albert fell off a rock yesterday and cut 'is 'ead open—

THEY *all come down stage.*

" Mother's Complaint:"

We're all of us mothers,
We're all of us wives,
The whole depressing crowd of us
With our kind assistance
The Motherland thrives.
We hope the nation's proud of us
For one dreary fortnight
In each dreary year
We bring our obstreperous families here.
We paddle and bathe while it hails and it rains
In spite of anaemia and varicose veins,
Hey nonny, ho nonny, no no no.
Our lodgings are frowzy

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

Expensive and damp,
The food is indigestible
We sit on the beach
Till we're tortured with cramp
And life is quite detestable.
The children go out with a bucket and spade
And injure themselves on the asphalt parade,
There's sand in the porridge and sand in the bed,
And if this is pleasure, we'd rather be dead,
Hey nonny, ho nonny, no no no!

Vr, PHYLLIS *and* GRORGIE *rush on from* I.E.R.

Vi : Mum, mum, Cissie Parker's seen a whale.

MRS. H. : Don't you tell such lies, Violet Harris.

PHYLLIS : It's true, it's true—I saw it too—look there!

ALICE *and* FRANKIE FREEMAN *rush on*.

ALICE : Mother—mother—a great big whale.

MRS. F. : May God forgive you, you wicked little fibber.

SEVERAL *other* CHILDREN *rush on screaming, and all the* CHORUS : "A whale, a whale / " *Also grown-ups—finally the* OFFICIAL *re-enters top* E.L. *and comes to centre of stage.*

OFFICIAL : 'Ere, 'ere, 'ere—what's all this noise ?

MRS. H. : There's a whale—my Vi's seen a whale.
Look, there it is !

Lots more people rush on, the OFFICIAL *produces some glasses and looks through them.*

OFFICIAL : That's not a whale—that's Daisy Kipshaw, the Channel swimmer. She gets 'ere regularly every Friday morning from Boulogne.

Everybody cheers. THREE MEN *come on with cameras and finally* DAISY KIPSHAW, *a very large*

woman in a bathing suit, enters from I.E.L. The THREE MEN with cameras take photos of her, one as she turns to pick up her cloak which she has dropped on getting to centre of stage. As she enters all the CHORUS take tip lines across stage on O.P side.

FINALE and Number for DAISY KIPSHAW.

She comes centre.

CHORUS : Hail, Neptune's daughter
 The pride of Finsbury Park,
 Behold a modest clerk
 Is goddess of the water.
 Hail, pioneer girl
 Tho' rain and wind have come
 You've swum and swum and swum
 You really are a dear girl.

DAISY : Kind friends, I thank you one and all
 For your delightful greetings.
 I merely heard my country's call
 At patriotic meetings.

CHORUS : Just think of that,
 Just think of that,
 She got her inspiration at
 A patriotic meeting.
 Oh, tell us more,
 Oh, tell us more,
 Oh, tell us what you do it for,
 It must be overheating.

DAISY : Kind friends, I thank you all again
 And since you ask me to
 I will explain.

SONG : " Britannia Rules the Waves " (*Daisy.*)

Verse.

DAISY : Like other chaste stenographers
I simply hate photographers,
I also hate publicity.

CHORUS : She lives for sheer simplicity.

DAISY : For any woman more or less
A photo in the daily press
Is horribly embarrassing.

CHORUS : It must be dreadfully harassing.

DAISY : The British male
May often fail,
Our faith in sport is shaken,
So English girls awaken
And save the nation's bacon.

Refrain 1

(Sung by DAISY alone first.)

Up girls and at 'em,
And play the game to win,
The men must all give in
Before the feminine.
Bowl 'em and bat 'em
And put them on the run,
Defeat them every one
Old Caspar's work is done,
We'll do our bit till our muscles crack
We'll put a frill on the Union Jack,

If Russia has planned
To conquer us and
America misbehaves,
Up girls and at 'em,
Britannia rules the waves I

Business with chorus as arranged.

Refrain 2.

DAISY & Up girls and at 'em,
CHORUS : And play the game to win,
The men must all give in
Before the feminine.
Bowl 'em and bat 'em,
And put them on the run,
Defeat them every one
Old Caspar's work is done.

DAISY : We'll do our bit till our muscles crack,

CHORUS : We'll put a frill on the Union Jack.

DAISY : If Russia has planned to conquer us and
America misbehaves,
Up girls and at 'em,
Britannia rules the waves.

Refrain 3. (Spoken.)

DAISY : Up girls and at 'em,
Go out and win your spurs,
For England much prefers
Applauding amateurs.
Man is an atom
So break your silly necks
In order to annex

Supremacy of sex.
 Valiantly over the world we'll roam
 Husbands must wait till the cows come
 The men of to-day [home.
 Who get in our way
 Are digging their early graves,
 Up girls and at 'em,
 Britannia rules the waves.

Refrain 4.

DAISY & Up girls and at 'em,
 CHORUS : And play the game to win,
 The men must all give in
 Before the feminine.
 Bowl 'em and bat 'em
 And put them on the run,
 Defeat them every one
 Old Caspar's work is done.
 We'll do our bit
 Till our muscles crack,
 We'll put a frill
 On the Union Jack.

DAISY : Here's to the maid
 Who isn't afraid
 Who shingles and shoots and shaves.

CHORUS : Up girls and at 'em,
 Britannia rules the waves.

Business of CHORUS BOYS getting in her way' They lift her up. As they all drop on stage—

BLACK Our

" THE LEGEND OF THE LILY OF THE
VALLEY."

DRESS PLOT.

FLANNELETTE : Beaded Shaftesbury Avenue evening frock, necklace of ping-pong balls—brown leather aviator's cap, cricket pads and bare feet.

BERGAMOT : American Union two-piece bathing suit, bare legs ; boots with spats and an admiral's hat—bow and arrow.

FEMALE COURTIERS: Pink flannel drawers, lace camisoles, Russian boots. The framework of hoop skirts composed of gas piping—head-dress traditional of eighteenth century with dolls' furniture festooned in the hair.

MALE COURTIERS : Jaeger long-legged combinations — football boots—brass-studded leather belts with small jewelled swords—small gold crowns on elastic.

FAIRIES : Burberrys, bowler hats, long rope wigs reaching to the floor—gossamer wings—pink satin ballet shoes.

MARQUIS DE POOPINAC : Plus-fours—Harlequin shirt with spangles, tight-fitting cap with a celluloid windmill. Bare legs with carpet slippers.

SCENE : *The scene should be angular with factory chimneys and wheels turning. The choreography should be almost entirely posturing in the most unattractive attitudes possible.*

INTRODUCTORY SPEECH

Ladies and gentlemen, as a sop to those of you who are bored and satiated with usual superficialities of light musical entertainments, Mr. Cochran has asked me to announce the production of a short ballet in which beauty, austerity and intellectuality are blended together with that spirit of progressive modernity which we have learned to demand and expect from the striking performances of Diaghelief's Russian Ballet. We live in an age of Revolution in Art and perhaps the most vital and tremendous movement in this revolution is the stern reversion to bare primitive simplicity.

The ballet we are about to present is entitled *The Legend of the Lily of the Valley*. The atmosphere is definitely early eighteenth-century French, smacking of gently undulating country life, and then again, smacking ever so slightly of the debauched life at court. The actual legend is simplicity itself. Flannelette, a dainty shepherdess of the period, is guarding her flock, occasionally she dances to them, but they pay no heed—suddenly from over the hill comes striding Bergamot, a shepherd who loves her. They execute what is technically described as a Pas de Deux, which leaves Flannelette exhausted—Bergamot plays his pipe to her for a moment and then goes sadly away. Flannelette is left dreaming on the grass, during which the love theme is repeated in the orchestra for three flutes and the cophatican. Then six fairies enter and execute with considerable spirit a Pas du Tout—Flannelette starts up amazed—Suddenly a bugle call is heard. The fairies rush off and a coach drives by—stops, and disgorges

the evil and depraved Marquis de Poopinac with several court ladies whose tinkling false laughter sounds strangely incongruous in such sylvan surroundings. This jarring note is brought out in the music with astounding effect by a muted oboe and six clavabaladals. The Marquis, observing Flannelette, is immediately inflamed by her beauty. He flirts with her and she, flattered by his attention, accompanies him to a neighbouring coppice, during which the courtiers dance a stately Pavanne which is interrupted by the re-entrance of Bergamot, who is searching wildly for Flannelette—be questions each of the courtiers in mime, or dumb show, but they only laugh mockingly—suddenly a cry is heard. Flannelette comes running in with her fichu extremely ruffled, followed by the Marquis. Bergamot attacks him and the Marquis runs him through with his sword, and the story closes to music of transcendental beauty.

OPEN BLUE WITH Music

RULES OF THREE

ANNOUNCEMENT.

ANNOUNCER *comes on from I.E.R. to centre.*

ANNOUNCER : Ladies and gentlemen, there has been a good deal of argument in the papers lately as to the general staleness of the English Drama. There have been bitter complaints to the effect that there *are no new*

ideas any more. We now intend to demonstrate to you *our* point of view on the matter, which is that new ideas are not necessary, and that it is only the *treatment* that is important. We propose to show a perfectly commonplace situation as it would be handled by three celebrated dramatists. The situation is the Eternal Triangle. A wife is surprised during a scene with her lover by the unexpected entrance of her husband.

Moves to P.S.

First of all as Sir James Barrie would write it.

Exit I.E.L.

1. SIR JAMES BARRIE

Characters :

THE WIFE

THE HUSBAND

THE LOVER

The WIFE is darning 'ocks by the fire.

WIFE (*pensively*): Ah me—I often wonder if all the little pink toes of all the little pink babies in the world were counted, how many there would be.

F. nter L. the LOVER.

LOVER : Jeannie !

WIFE (*rising, comes D.R.C.*): Why have you come ?

LOVER : I heard your voice in the wood.

WIFE : You couldna' have heard any such thing, James MacTagget, and it's a great fanciful fool you are.

LOVER : Jeannie !

WIFE : Whisht man—away with you.

LOVER : I love you, Jeannie. I've loved you since ever I was a bairn no higher than a hiccough!

WIFE : Are you forgetting that I am a wife, James ?

LOVER : Nay, I'm remembering it. The wife of a man who doesna' love or understand your ways.

WIFE : Ah, but you're wrong—John's well enough—my ways are not so difficult to grasp—I'm naught but a little shrivelled nut of a woman—

LOVER : You're a pixie to me.

WIFE : Thank you, James—a pixie's a chancy thing to be.

LOVER (*passionately*): I had a mind to be a great poet once, but the fairies made mock of me and I became an insurance agent.

WIFE : A great big brown insurance agent.

LOVER : Behind each of the company's policies I hear your laugh, and a winsome, cuddlesome sort of laugh it is. It seems to say, come away, James MacTagget, and learn how not to grow up. I'll teach you. I'll ceach you.

WIFE : I *could* teach you that.

LOVER : Will you ?

WIFE : Listen now—do you know how many babies there are in the world ?

LOVER : No.

WIFE : Then multiply the answer by seven and you'll make a rainbow.

LOVER : Jeannie—comewithme. (*He crushes her to him.*)

WIFE : No, no !

LOVER : Don't send me to the workhouse of might-have-beens.

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

Enter the HUSBAND R.

HUSBAND : Jeannie!

WIFE : Oh !

HUSBAND : What does this mean ?

WIFE (*laughing*) : What a solemn face—sit down while I get your tea—you'd better be going, James.

HUSBAND : Tea—I'll not taste your tea.

WIFE ; Go, James.

HUSBAND : Stay.

WIFE : Go—what fools men are—

HUSBAND : Stay!

WIFE : Vera well, stay—you great quarrelsome schoolboys, if I were the mother of either of you, I'd spank you and put you to bed—come, shake hands now.

LOVER : I'll not shake hands—I love Jeannie, John, and I'll make no bones about it. Good-bye.

He goes out L.

HUSBAND : Is this true ?

WIFE : Yes.

HUSBAND : Why did you not go with him ?

WIFE (*putting her head on HUSBAND'S shoulder*) : Because it's you I love—you with your great laugh and your great hands and the tenderness in your eye when you see a baby having its bath and the gentleness in your voice when you take me in your arms and call me Mrs. Woodlesome Whatnot.

HUSBAND (*taking her in his arms*) : Mrs. Woodlesome Whatnot !

BLACK OUT. CLOSE TABS.

ANNOUNCER *comes on I.E.L.*

ANNOUNCER : And now as Frederick Lonsdale would treat it,

Exit I.E.L.

2. FREDERICK LONSDALE.

The WIFE is discovered dancing to a gramophone.

The LOVER enters L.

LOVER : Duchesses don't dance as well as they used to.

WIFE : No, my dear, but much more.

LOVER : Where's Johnnie ?

WIFE (*stopping the gramophone*) : Still in the House of Lords, I think.

LOVER : My God, Jean, you look chic.

WIFE : It isn't difficult to look chic nowadays, One only needs line and lipstick.

LOVER : I saw the Duke of Belgravia at lunch.

WIFE : I thought he was dead.

LOVER : He is, but he won't lie down.

WIFE : Do you think it was quite decent of you to come here ?

LOVER : Decency be damned, I love you.

WIFE : As a man loves a woman or as a gentleman loves a gentlewoman ?

LOVER : All four.

The BUTLER enters with cocktails R.

WIFE : I've got a new cocktail for you.

LOVER : What's it called ?

WIFE : The Debrett Dollop !

LOVER : Do you like being a butler, Finsbury ?

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

BUTLER : Very much, your Grace. We are the only class left with any manners.

LOVER : What about the Upper Ten ?

BUTLER : They only have bedside manners.

He goes out R.

WIFE : I don't know what the lower orders are coming to.

LOVER : You're a silly woman, Jean, with the brains of a louse.

WIFE : Dear James, you're drunk—you must have been lunching with your mother.

LOVER : Nevertheless, I love you.

WIFE (*surrendering herself to him*) : Kiss me like you did last Wednesday in the Royal Enclosure at Ascot.

He kisses her violently.

The HUSBAND enters R.

HUSBAND : My dear Jean—you might have left the door open.

LOVER (*looking up*) : Hullo, Johnnie.

HUSBAND : By God, Jimmie, you're an awful swine—is there any cocktail ?

WIFE : Not a drain. I love Jimmie, you know.

HUSBAND : Of course I know—everybody knows. It makes a damned good story—I've been dining out on it for weeks.

LOVER : What shall we do about it ?

HUSBAND : What is there to do?—I can't divorce her because I have to have a mistress for my father's old place.

WIFE : Don't discuss me so cold-bloodedly—I'm not an electric hare.

LOVER : Well, we'd better go on as we are, I suppose.

HUSBAND : All right. (*Crosses to C.*) Here's an extra latch-key.

LOVER : Thanks—cheerio !

Exits L.

HUSBAND : Nice fellow.

WIFE : Johnnie, I'm awfully fond of you.

HUSBAND : Why ?

WIFE : Because you're a very great gentleman.

HUSBAND : What is a very great gentleman ?

WIFE : I don't know. I go to so few theatres.

BLACK OUT. CLOSE TABS.

FRENCH FARCE

Characters:

JEANNE

JACQUES

JEAN

ANNETTE

The scene is Jeanne's bedroom. This whole episode must be played at lightning speed.

The telephone rings.

ANNETTE runs on.

ANNETTE (*at telephone*): 'Allo—yes, m'sieu—no, m'sieu—yes, m'sieu—no, m'sieu—certainly, m'sieu—

She rushes off.

JEANNE rushes on in highly coloured pjamas.

JEANNE (*at telephone*): Jacques—darling—yes, angel.

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

No, angel—quickly, quickly— (*Makes kissing noise.*)

Yes, yes—darling, darling— (*She bangs up telephone.*)

Annette—Annette—

ANNETTE *rushes in.*

ANNETTE : Yes, madame.

JEANNE : My peignoir, quickly.

ANNETTE : Yes, madame.

She rushes off.

JEANNE *goes to telephone.*

JEANNE (*at telephone*) : Elysee 9468—yes, yes—no, no—Hallo—Gaston—is it you?—Yes—No, I don't think so—very well—hurry— (*She puts telephone down.*)

ANNETTE *rushes in—a bell rings.*

Quickly, Annette—quickly—it is he—answer the door. (*She puts on her peignoir.*)

ANNETTE *rushes off.*

JACQUES *rushes on.* JEANNE *flies into his arms.*

They kiss passionately.

JACQUES (*between kisses*) : Darling—beloved—angel—precious—saint—divinity—

ANNETTE *rushes on with a pair of pyjamas.*

ANNETTE : Here, m'sieu.

JACQUES *rushes off.*

JEANNE : You can go now, Annette.

ANNETTE : Yes, madame.

There is the sound of the front door slamming.

JEANNE : My God, my husband!

JEAN *rushes on.*

JEAN (*claspng her in his arms*) : My darling wife—I have returned from Lyons three days earlier than I expected—

JEANNE : Jean, Jean—how glad I am— (*She casts an anxious look at the door.*)

JEAN : You seem worried, my angel.

JEANNE : It is the heat—will you go and close the spare room window?

JEAN : Certainly, beloved.

He rushes off L.

JACQUES *rushes on R. in pyjamas.*

JACQUES (*clasping her in his arms*) : My enchantress—

JEANNE (*pushing him back*) : Hide quickly, quickly—

JACQUES : Very well—

He rushes off R.

JEAN *rusts on L.*

JEAN : There is no window in the spare room.

JEANNE : My foolish darling—it was a joke—Run and fetch my handbag for me, it is on the piano.

JEAN : Imperious angel,

He rushes towards R.

JEANNE : No, no—on the piano.

JEAN : How stupid—I'd forgotten the piano was in the bathroom.

He rushes off L.

JACQUES *rushes on R.*

JACQUES (*taking her in his arms*): Wonderful—wonderful—wonderful—

JEANNE : Quick, quick, my husband—

JACQUES *leaps into bed.*

JEAN *rushes on with a pair of shoes.*

JEAN : Here are your shoes. They were in the bureau.

JEANNE ; My darling.

JEAN *sees JACQUES'S hat.*

JEAN (*furiously*) : What is this ?

JEANNE : It is your mother's. She came here this afternoon.

JEAN : Where is she ?

ACTII THIS YEAR OF GRACE

JEANNE (*hysterically*): *In there I (She points R. and—*

JEAN *rushes off.*)

JFANNE *jumps into bed with JACQUES.* ANNETTE
rushes on in pyjamas, looks round and then beckons.

JEAN *rushes on.*

ANNETTE : *It's all right—the coast's clear.*

JEAN (*clasping her in his arms*): *My darling !*

BLACK OUT

"DANCE LITTLE LADY"

SINGER *comes on from l.e.r. and takes position
extreme R.*

Verse.

Tho' you're only seventeen
Far too much of life you've seen
Syncopated child.
Maybe if you only knew
Where your path was leading to
You'd become less wild.
But I know it's vain
Trying to explain
While there's this insane
Musk in your brain.

OPEN TABS *slowly.* DANCER *discovered in centre of
stage. Dance is arranged.*

Refrain.

Dance, dance, dance little lady,
Youth is fleeting—to the rhythm beating
In your mind.
Dance, dance, dance little lady,
So obsessed with second best
No rest you'll ever find,
Time and tide and trouble
Never, never wait.
Let the cauldron bubble
Justify your fate.
Dance, dance, dance little lady.
Leave tomorrow behind

Patter.

SINGER *crosses to extreme L.*

When the saxophone gives a wicked moan
Charleston hey hey,
Rhythms fall and rise
Start dancing to the tune
The band's crooning—for soon
The night will be gone,
Start swaying like a reed
Without heeding the speed
That hurries you on.
Nigger melodies
Syncopate your nerves
Till your body curves
Drooping—stooping,
Laughter some day dies
And when the lights are starting to gutter
Dawn through the shutter
Shows you're living in a world of lies.

Six BOYS and Six GIRLS—*dancers, in masks, enter from 2.E.L. Dance as arranged. They dance to three and a half refrain as in scone and—*

Exits 2.E.R. DANCER exits a.E.R. SINGER exits i.E.L.

BLACK OUT

CHAUVE-SOURIS

INTRODUCTION.

(Speech before Curtain.)

Ladies and gentlemen, ass you see I find him verrey deeficult to spik Eenglish. There iss an old Russian proberb wheech say that a dead rhinosceros iss nearer to the starrs than a leetle child who steecks a peen eento iss old grandmother, all of wheech have no bearing whatever upon the lettle scene wheech my Company wecl preesent.

Eet iss a peecneck een olt Russia. The caviare iss all up eaten and the samovar dry and the peasants play peculiar games weeth one another and seeng and seeng and seeng.

OPEN WITH Music

"Quintette"

Profile Boat—FOUR MEN and ONE WOMAN standing behind it. They are dressed in burlesque Russian costumes.

Ish con broshka
"VChoops dad illoshka
Whoops dad illoshka
Inkle drop vaard.

Ish con broshka
Whoops dad illoshka
Whoops dad illoshka
Inkle drop vaard.

Wheeshka eeglec
Wheeshka bombolom
Wreeshka weedlewee
Chock chock wish laa.

Wheeshka eegle
Wheeshka bombolom
Wheeshka weedlewee
Inkle drop vaard.

TABS CLOSE ON LAST NOTE.

ANNOUNCER *comes from Centre, bows to audience.*

ANNOUNCER: I hope you have liked him and will tell all your friends about her—and ask them all to come.

Exits through Centre.

" Try to Learn to Love "

BOY and GIRL enter i.E.R. DANC B as arranged.

Verse 1.

HE : In kindergartens
In country or town
Our education begins
Like little Spartans
We're taught to crush down
The inclination to sin.
When we change to gentle adolescence
Things get rather strained.
There's a strange, peculiar effervescence
No one has explained.

Chorus 1. (Repeat.)

First you learn to spell a little bit,
Then, if you excel a little bit,
Other things as well a little bit
Come your way ;
Though the process may be slow to you
Knowledge of the world will flow to you.
Steadily you grow a little bit,
Day by day ;
Though you're too gentle, sentimental
In fact, quite a dreary bore,
Though you're aesthetic, apathetic,
To all men but Bernard Shaw,
Use the velvet glove a little bit,
Emulate a dove a little
Try to learn to love a little bit more.

Verse 2.

SHE : The art of wooing,
I'm firmly resolved
For men is terribly crude.
To be pursuing
Is not so involved
As having to be pursued.
Doubts and fears
Make woman work much faster
Tho' they're frail and weak
Taking years
Successfully to master
Feminine technique.

Refrain 2.

First you droop your eyes—a little bit,
Then if you are wise—a little bit
Register surprise—a little bit
If he's bold,
Stamp your foot with some celerity,
Murmur with intense sincerity
That his immature temerity
Leaves you cold.
But when you get him
You must let him
Have the joy he's yearning for,
And whisper sweetly
Indiscreetly
He's the boy that you adore.
Use the moon above a little bit,
Emulate the dove a little bit,
Try to learn to love—a little bit more.

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

TABS OPEN.

They Dance i Chorus and exit 2.E.L.

CHORUS *enter from z.E.R. Sing first refrain as they come on. Dance as arranged—exit z.E.R.*

BOY and GIRL *enter i.E.L. Dance to two choruses as arranged.*

CLOSE TABS *at end of Dance.*

" It Doesn't Matter How Old You Are "

MAISIE GAY *before Green Tabs.*

Verse i.

Life is just a gamble
And without preamble
I should like to state my case.
I'm no Messalina
I've a slightly cleaner
Outlook on the human race.
Don't imagine that I'm hewn from
Marble or stone,
I'm not utterly immune from
Pangs of my own.
Tho' I'm over forty
I can still be naughty
In an unassuming way.
Beauty doesn't always win the day
I say.

Refrain 1.

It doesn't matter how old you are
If the joys of life are sweet.
It doesn't matter how cold you are
If you've still got central heat.
I've seen raddled wrecks
With false pearls hung round their necks
Get away with lots of sex appeal.
And tho' I may have been through the mill
I'm a creature of passion still
It doesn't matter how old you are
It's just how young you feel.

Verse 2.

Tho' I'm not a gay girl
I'm a "come-what-may" girl,
Nothing in my life is planned.
Men with love get blinded
But I'm so broad-minded
I just smile and understand,
Men don't always want to marry
They're not to blame,
I'm quite certain that Dubarry
Felt just the same.
Too much love is nauseous
One can't be too cautious
Cupid's such a wily foe,
Tho' I never let myself quite go,
I know.

Refrain 2.

It doesn't matter how old you are
If your heart can still beat fast,
It doesn't matter how bold you are

When the dangerous age is past.
 Tho' my face is lined
 And my outlook too refined
 I shall never let my mind congeal,
 Pompadour found her love a curse
 But I'll go further and fare much worse,
 It doesn't matter how old you are
 It's just how young you feel.

Refrain 3.

It doesn't matter how old you are
 If you've still the strength to care,
 However naughty you're told you are
 It's entirely your affair.
 Tho' I come a smack
 And go rolling off the track
 It will never be from lack of zeal.
 You may laugh when you look at me
 But watch the papers and wait and see 1
 It doesn't matter how old you are
 It's just how young you feel.

SPANISH BALLET

FIVE GIRLS *in Spanish dress discovered.*

DANCE *as arranged.*

Two RIDING GIRLS *and* ONE SPANISH GIRL *enter from top entrance R. and top entrance L. PRINCIPAL from Centre.*

At the end of Dance—ALL exit R.

SPECIALITY DANCE (HOLLAND *and* BARRY).

Enter I.E.L. DANCE. Exit I.E.L.

LAW AND ORDER

The scene is a street in London. This is a cloth painted with park railings and a lamp-post R.

POLICEWOMAN PELLET enters from right—advances to centre of stage, bends and straightens herself in traditional fashion and stands left of lamp-post. An OLD WOMAN, selling matches, enters from left—walks across and meets P.W. PELLET.

PELLET : Move on—you're loitering.

OLD WOMAN : I can't move any faster—I've got fallen arches. (*Spits.*)

PELLET: Don't argue. Don't argue. You're loitering. Move on. (*Sniffs.*)

The OLD WOMAN goes off I.E.R.

PELLET sniffs and stands still—a GIRL enters from right, walks to the middle of the stage—stoops down to tie her shoe-lace. A YOUNG MAN enters also from right and bumps into her.

MAN : I beg your pardon.

GIRL : Not at all.

The MAN, goes off left and P.W. WENDLE strides on I.E.L.

WENDLE : Now then, now then—

GIRL : What d'you mean " Now then " ?

WENDLE : None of that.

GIRL : None of what?

WENDLE : None of what you were thinking of.

GIRL : How dare you ! (*Crosses to left.*)

WENDLE : I've been watching you—flouncing about.

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

GIRL : Don't you talk to me like that or I shall call a policeman.

She marches off with her head in the air.

WENDLE : Impertinence !

PELLET (*sympathetically*) : They're all alike. The girls of to-day—fast, over-dressed, *and* saucy !

WENDLE : I don't know what London's coming to—the higher the buildings the lower the morals.

PELLET : Been in the Force long ?

WENDLE : About three months—my husband went to Australia.

PELLET : On business ?

WENDLE : No, on purpose.

PELLET : It's the woman who pays, and pays.

BOTH : And pays.

PELLET : Men are all alike.

WENDLE : Only some more than others. I'm not a suspicious woman, but I don't think my husband 'as been entirely faithful to me.

PELLET : Whatever makes you think that ?

WENDLE : My last child doesn't resemble him in the least.

PELLET : What you must have gone through I

WENDLE : Bottles and bottles—of aspirin.

PELLET (*producing paper bag*) : 'Ave a choc ?

WENDLE : Not on duty.

PELLET : Come on—there's no one about.

WENDLE : Well, as long as they 'aven't nut on 'em.
(*She takes one.*)

They both munch.

There is a loud bang offstage,

PELLET : What was that ?

WENDLE : Only one of them balloon tyres burst.

PELLET : I see the Croydon Ramblers beat the Lyons Corner House girls last Tuesday.

WENDLE : No stamina in that Lyons lot.

PELLET : Oh, I don't know—Minnie Packer's a loveiy centre-forward.

WENDLE : She had to leave the field.

PELLET : Why ?

WENDLE : Lost 'er bust bodice in a scrum.

PELLET : Go on !

WENDLE : Lily Burton finished the game—and you know what she is—all hips and hysteria.

PELLET : I wish I'd been there—I 'ad to do extra duty—Vera Pearn got special leave to go to the white sales.

WENDLE : Favouritism.

PELLET : I gave Inspector Rogers a piece of my mind, I can tell you.

WENDLE : She's a mean cat, that Inspector Rogers, if ever there was one.

PELLET : And common !—My dear—do you know she—

They draw closer—PELLET whispers.

WENDLE : She *didn't* I

PELLET : She did—right in me face.

WENDLE : What did you do ?

PELLET : I saluted and swept out—but I couldn't 'elp crying a bit when I got me 'elmet off. But luckily Sergeant Leggat came in and she lent me 'er puff and we got to talking, she told me all about Jessie Lucas.

WENDLE : What about her ?

PELLET : She's in 'ospital.

WENDLE : What—again I

PELLET : No. She was on duty at Victoria Station

and got three ribs broken trying to see Adolphe Menjou.

WENDLE : Adolphe Menjou ?

PELLET : I love Adolphe Menjou—he's so suave.

WENDLE : He's suave right enough, but I prefer Ronald Colman—he's more bellicose—don't misunderstand, I mean more up and doing. Did you see that film—John Gilbert and Greta Garbo ?

PELLET : My dear ! After the first kiss T quivered like an aspern.

WENDLE : They oughtn't to do it, you know—it's past a joke. After all, we're only human—

Both bend.

PELLET : Do you remember that robe de nuit she wore ?

WENDLE : The one with the black chiffon ?

PELLET : Yes, I saw the spitting image of it in Swan and Edgar's.

WENDLE : Did you get it ?

PELLET (*giggling*): Well, I know it was terribly naughty of me, but I just couldn't resist it.

WENDLE : Is it cut V shape ?—too divine !—

PELLET : Well, dear, I must say I 'ad to alter it a bit—

Shouts off right.

WENDLE : —See your skin through it—

Their conversation is here lost in a terrible commotion offstage. Shouts and screams of " Murder!" A. MAN rushes across the stage clutching a knife, followed by Two WOMEN screaming and another MAN brandishing a revolver. PELLET and WENDLE are so engrossed that they don't see them—when the FOUR PEOPLE have gone off there is suddenly a loud, single scream and a shot.

PELLET : What was that ?

WENDLE : Only another one of those tyres burst.

BLACK OUT

FINALE

SCENE : *Stage door.*

STAGE DOOR-KEEPER *discovered in box.*

EIGHT STAGE HANDS *enter l.E.R. and cross stage,
singing :*

We're eight stage hands,
Weary and winsome,
Embassy Club be blowed.
We've got wives and a nice drop of gin
Somewhere in the Old Kent Road.
Good night! Good night!

Exit i.E.L.

EIGHT CHORUS GIRLS *enter l.E.R. Some give
keys to door-keeper, they come down to footlights and
sing:*

One, two, three, four,
Five, six, seven, eight
All going home to bed.
Nobody's asked us to supper,
We wish we were dead.
Tho' we know quite
Well if we are late
Mother will leave the light,

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

We're feeling depressed

'Cos no one wants us;

THEY *exit* I.E.L., *singing last two lines.*

So it would be best

For us to say good night.

EIGHT SHOW GIRLS *enter* I.E.R. *Spread across stage at footlights.*

You'll never know girls

Nicer than show girls,

For our behaviour

Reeks of Belgravia,

We're so restrained that

Men have complained that

THEY *exit* I.E.L., *singing last two lines.*

We've nothing left to show,

Good night, good night, good night.

SMALL PARTS *enter* I.E.R. *Some give keys to door-keeper. Spread across stage at footlights.*

Tho' we hardly speak parts

We support the weak parts

In our unpretentious way.

Now that you have seen us

Kindly choose between us

We shall all be stars some day.

THEY *exit* I.E.L., *singing last two lines.*

Good night and in the next revue that Cochran produces

We'll see our talents have more definite uses.

All PRINCIPALS *enter* I.E.R., *cross to straight line at footlights.*

Now you know our

Personalities

What is it all about ?

We're most surprised to discover
You haven't walked out.
We've exhausted
Our vitalities,
Sorry we've been so bright,
Just hurry and go
And put your coats on
We've come to the moment
When we say good night,
Good night, good night, good night.

BLACK OUT

All the COMPANY are discovered in motor-cars.

We are the cause
Of all the traffic jam in Piccadilly,
Motoring laws
We disregard because they are so silly,
Toot-toot—toot-toot,
Toot-toot—toot-toot—toot-toot.
We're driving home in our
Driving home in our
High-powered cars,
You'd better hurry and take cover
For our knowledge of driving is slight,
Toot-toot—toot-toot,
Toot-toot—toot-toot—toot-toot,
So good goody good good night.

You've seen the Revue
Right through.
We hope you're applauding too

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

For it's according to
You—the money speaks.
We hope you can rouse
Keith Prowse
To something sensational,
Their approbation'!!
House us here for weeks.
We thought it best to have a try-out,
We're not allowed to shirk,
Please don't let us fly out
Of work.
The best we can do
It's true
May not make you yearn again
Soon to return again to
This dreary Revue.

CLOSE CURTAINS

FINALE'

ANNOUNCEMENT :

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Cochran has suddenly arrived, rather tardily I fear, at the realisation that our Revue is completely lacking in the two essentials of American musical entertainment—pep and speed—so therefore we propose to remedy these deficiencies as best we can in the short time left to us.

OPENING CHORUS

Playing the game
 You have to biff the ball
 And bang the ball
 In playing the game
 You have to whiff the ball
 And whang the ball
 And rah rah—rah rah—rah rah—rah rah—rah rah—
 We're so Collegiate—so Collegiate—
 You are to blame
 For all the speed of it
 Your need of it
 Is really a terrible shame
 Rah rah—rah rah—rah rah—rah rah—rah rah—
 Everybody plays the game.

*At the end of the opening chorus dance—the BOYS
 and GIRLS rush off and*

*HELEN and HARRY rush on from opposite sides of
 the stage.*

HELEN : Oh, Harry I

' Alternative Finale used in the American production.

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

HARRY : How's your Prep—

HELEN : Oh, Harry—

HARRY : Say, girlie, if I win the big game to-day it will be for you.

HELEN : Oh, Harry I

NUMBER :

" *The Sun, the Moon, and Your*

At the end of which all the BOYS and GIRLS rush off and HELEN and HARRY again rush on.

Verse i.

Little girlie

Late or early,

I just dream of you.

Since that happy Tuesday when we met

If you only knew,

One and one are two

That's a thing you never should forget.

Refrain.

I want the sun, the moon and you,

They simply thrill me through and through,

The little stars that shine above

Just fill me full of thoughts of love,

My heart is throbbing,

For you're robbing

Me of all my pride,

So listen, baby,

Don't say maybe

You will be my bride.

Sweetheart, I could never be blue

With just the sun, the moon and you.

BOYS and GIRLS *rush off.*

HELEN and HARRY *again rush on.*

HARRY : Say, listen, girlie, I've got a peach of a scheme.

HELEN : Oh, Harry I

HARRY : And if you'll just say yes, everything will be jake.

HELEN : So do do de-o Harry I

Reprise of " The Sun, the Moon and You."

Full Chorus and FINALE.

DUET: "*Lilac Time.*"

HE : Oh tell me, little maiden pray
 Why should you choose to hide away
 On such a lovely summer's day ?

SHE (*aside*) : He does not know that I am the Princess,
 disguised as a beggar maid. Ah me !

To him.

Kind sir, I know not who you are
 But if you should presume too far
 I shall seek refuge with mamma.

HE (*aside*) : She does not know that I am the Crown
 Prince, disguised as a gardener—Ah me !

SHE : Spring is the time for folly—Ah ah—ah ah—

HE : Fly away melancholy—ah ah—ah ah—

SHE : Spring is the time

HE : Spring is the time

SHE : Spring Is the time

HE : Spring is the time

SHE: For folly,

HE : So melancholy fly away—

For it is spring and life is gay and jolly.

Refrain 1.

BOTH: Lilac time, lilac time
 Blossoms are o'er the lea.

HE : Birds are chirruping love's sweet song

SHE : Church bells ring-a-ding-ding-ding-dong !

HE : Steal a kiss,
 Just like this,

He kisses her.

SHE : You are too bold and free, (*She slaps him
 roguishly.*)

BOTH: That is why it's lilac time
 Under the chestnut tree.

Verse 2.

SHE (*holding up book*):

I am engrossed as you can see
 In reading some philosophy.

HE : Literature this year must be
 So very much in vogue,
 Why should you bury that dainty nose
 In so much dry and dusty prose ?

SHE : You're making love to me, I suppose,

HE : You charming little rogue,

SHE : A charming little rogue,

BOTH: A charming, charming, charming little rogue.

Refrain 2.

BOTH: Lilac time, lilac time
 Blossoms are o'er the lea.

HE : Birds are mating near and far

SHE : Tra-la-lalala—la, la, la.

HE : Steal a kiss
 Just like this. (*Kisses her.*)

SHE : You are too bold and free, (*She slaps him lightly*)

BOTH: That is why it's lilac time
 Under the chestnut tree,
 Ah ah—ah ah—
 Ah ah—ah ah—ah ah ah ah ah ah
 Heigho nin nonny no
 Heigho whack jolly-o
 Heigho nin nonny no
 Heigho, lackaday do
 That is why it's lilac time
 That is why it's lilac time
 Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

" *World Weary.*"

Verse 1.

When I'm feeling dreary and blue,
 I'm only too glad to be left alone,
 Dreaming of a place in the sun.
 When day is done, far from a telephone;
 Bustle and the weary crowd
 Make me want to cry out loud,
 Give me something peaceful and grand
 Where all the land slumbers in monotone.

Refrain 2.

I'm world weary, world weary,
 Living in a great big town,
 I find it so dreary, so dreary,

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

Everything looks grey or brown,
I want an ocean blue, great big trees,
A bird's-eye view of the Pyrenees,
I want to watch the moon rise up
And see the great red sun go down,
Watching clouds go by through a wintry sky fascinates
me
But if I do it in the street,
Every cop I meet simply hates me,
Because I'm world weary, world weary,
I could kiss the railroad tracks,
I want to get right back to nature and relax.

Verse 2.

Get up in the morning at eight,
Relentless Fate,
Drives me to work at nine ;
Toiling like a bee in a hive
From four to five
Whether it's wet or fine,
Hardly ever see the sky,
Buildings seem to grow so high,
Maybe in the future I will
Perhaps fulfil
This little dream of mine.

Refrain 2.

I'm world weary, world weary,
Living in a great big town,
I find it so dreary, so dreary
Everything looks grey or brown,
I want a horse and plough,

Chickens too,
Just one cow
With a wistful moo,
A country where the verb to work
Becomes a most improper noun;
I can hardly wait
Til I see the great open spaces,
My loving friends will not be there
I'm so sick of their God-damned faces,
Because I'm world weary, world weary,
Tired of all these jumping jacks,
I want to get right back to nature and relax.

" I Can't Think:"

Verse i.

It was early in September
That we met each other first,
And my entrance, I remember,
Was distinctly unrehearsed.
I had been to buy some butter
And some raspberries and some eggs,
When I slipped up in the gutter
And clasped him round the legs.

Refrain 1.

I can't think why he looked at me so queerly,
I can't think why he scowled and walked away,
I feel, as I apologised sincerely
He might have — well, perhaps I shouldn't say.
I can't think how he managed to resist me,

ACT II THIS YEAR OF GRACE

Perhaps the wish was father to the thought,
I can't think why he didn't even kiss me,
But I *do* think he did nothing of the sort.

Verse 2.

It was later in October
When we met—heigho !—once more,
I believe that I was sober,
But I couldn't be quite sure.
It was early in the morning
And the air was pure and sweet,
When I staggered without warning
And fell prostrate at his feet.

Refrain 2.

I can't think why my balance so betrayed me,
I can't think why he hiccoughed and then frowned,
I feel as he had not the strength to raise me
He might have least have joined me on the ground.
I can't think why his manners so depressed me,
Perhaps he was too social and refined,
If you think he attempted to molest me,
I do think he did nothing of the kind.



WORDS AND MUSIC



RUNNING ORDER

PART ONE

(1) Opening Chorus	Set	Full Stage
Continued	Tabs	In One
Continued	Cyc.	Full Stage (Revolve)
(2) Debutantes	Tabs	In One
(3) Let's Live Dangerously	Set	In Two
(4) Children of the Ritz	Tabs	In One
(5) Mad Dogs & Englishmen	Set	In Three
(6) Debutantes	Tabs	In One
(7) Let's Say Good-bye	Set	In Two
(8) Hall of Fame	Tabs	In One
Continued	Painted Tabs	In Two
(9) Mad About The Boy	Tabs	In One
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Tableau	(Boxed in)
(10) Journey's End	Tabs	In One
Continued	Scrim.	In One
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Trees	In One
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Trees	In One
Continued	Set	In Two

WORDS AND MUSIC

Continued	Trees	In One
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Scrim.	In One
Continued	Cyc.	Full Stage (Revolve)

RUNNING ORDER

PART TWO

(1) Housemaids' Knees	Tabs	In One
(2) Fairy Whispers	Tabs	In Two
Continued	Tabs	In Three
(5) Children of the Ritz	Tabs	In One
(4) Ballet Announcement	Tabs	In One
Club	Set	In Two
Boarding House	Set	In Two'
Creche	Set	In Two
(5) Something to do with Spring	Tabs	In One
Continued	Tabs	In Three
(6) Wife of an Acrobat	Tabs	In One
(7) Younger Generation	Tabs	In Three
(8) Midnight Matinee	Tabs	In One
Continued	Set	In Two
Continued	Set	In Three
(9) Debutantes	Tabs	In One
(10) The Party's Over Now	Drop	In One
Continued	Full Stage	

' Between each ballet there is a short announcement in Number One Tabs.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Ivy St. Helier:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Dresser | Opening Chorus |
| (2) Governor's Lady | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (3) Postmistress | Hall of Fame |
| (4) Announcer | Journey's End |
| (5) Betty | Fairy Whispers |
| (6) Old Lady | Boarding House Ballet |
| (7) Wife of an Acrobat | (Single) |
| (8) Mrs. Rowntree | Midnight Matinee |
| (9) Lady Skeffington | The Party's Over Now |

Rodney Brent:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Missionary | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (2) Indiarubber Bath Man | The Hall of Fame |
| (3) Stanhope | Journey's End |
| (4) Narrator | Fairy Whispers |
| (5) Doctor | Creche Ballet |
| (6) Stuart Ingleby | Midnight Matinée |
| (7) Lord Skeffington | The Party's Over Now |

Joyce Barbour:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) Children of the Ritz | |
| (2) Announcer | The Hall of Fame |
| (3) Woman of the World | Mad About The Boy |
| (4) Frou-Frou | Journey's End |
| (5) Children of the Ritz | |
| (6) Something to do with
Spring | |
| (7) Mrs. Draycott Salome | Midnight Matinee |
| (8) Hostess | The Party's Over Now |

WORDS AND MUSIC

John Mills:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Let's Live Dangerously (Bobby) | |
| (2) Gergyman | The Hall of Fame |
| (3) Harry Happy | Journey's End |
| (4) Roger | Fairy Whispers |
| (5) Bank Clerk | Boarding House Ballet |
| (6) Something to do with
Spring | |
| (7) Young Man | The Party's Over Now |
| (8) Englishman | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |

Namara :

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Let's Say Good-bye | |
| (2) Marie Françoise | Journey's End |
| (3) Mamma | Younger Generation |
| (4) Singer | Boarding House Ballet |
| (5) Finale | |

Steffi Duna:

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| (1) Lilli | Let's Live Dangerously |
| (2) Tart | Mad About The Boy |
| (3) Raleigh | Journey's End |
| (4) Matron | Creche Ballet |
| (5) Leonora | The Party's Over Now |

Dons Hare :

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Jane | Let's Live Dangerously |
| (2) Planter's Wife | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (3) Servant Girl | Mad About The Boy |
| (4) Journey's End | |
| (5) Joan | Fairy Whispers |
| (6) Clergyman's Wife | Boarding House Ballet |
| (7) Marie | Younger Generation |
| (8) Young Girl | The Party's Over Now |

WORDS AND MUSIC

Joan Clarkson :

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| (1) 2nd Mother | Let's Live Dangerously |
| (2) Planter's Wife | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (3) Life Story | The Hall of Fame |
| (4) Journey's End | |
| (5) Jane | Fairy Whispers |
| (6) Invalid | Boarding House Ballet |
| (7) Westmorsham | Blessington |
| | Midnight Matine'e |
| (8) Finale | |

Norah Howard:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Planter's Wife | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (2) School Girl | Mad About The Boy |
| (3) Journey's End | |
| (4) Dotsie | Fairy Whispers |
| (5) Tennis Girl | Boarding House Ballet |
| (6) Miss Spence | Joan of Arc |
| | Midnight Matinee |
| (7) Finale | |

Effie Atberton :

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Planter's Wife | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (2) Holiday Mermaid | The Hall of Fame |
| (3) Journey's End | |
| (4) Housemaids' Knees | |
| (5) Announcer | Ballets |
| (6) Lemworth | Nell Gwynn |
| | Midnight Matine'e |
| (7) Finale | |

WORDS AND MUSIC

Ann Codrington :

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| (1) 1st Mother | Let's Live Dangerously |
| (2) Planter's Wife | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (3) Secretary | Mad About The Boy |
| (4) Journey's End | |
| (5) Mrs. Harrison | Fairy Whispers |
| (6) Proprietress | Boarding House Ballet |
| (7) Ponting | Marie Antoinette |
| | Midnight Matinee |
| (8) Finale | |

Gerald Nodin:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Governor | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (2) Shrimp Catcher | The Hall of Fame |
| (3) General | Journey's End |
| (4) Clergyman | Boarding House Ballet |
| (5) Policeman | The Party's Over Now |

Mtllie Sim :

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Planter's Wife | Mad Dogs & Englishmen |
| (2) Friend | Mad About The Boy |
| (3) Journey's End | |
| (4) Fairy Queen | Fairy Whispers |
| (5) Spinster | Boarding House Ballet |
| (6) Hogan | Diane de Poitiers |
| | Midnight Matinee |
| (7) Finale | |

Moya Nugent: (1) Four Little Debutantes are We

Phyllis Harding : (2) The Gin is Lasting Out

Betty Hare: (3) Nuns. Journey's End

.....? (4) Younger Generation

(5) Four Little Debutantes so Tired

WORDS AND MUSIC

LAY OUT

1ST PART ;

1. Opening Chorus Set. Tabs. Cyc.
Twelve Girls
Dresser : Ivy St. Helier
Call Boy
Twelve Men

2. Debutantes Tabs. Spotlight
Moya Nugent
Phyllis Harding
Betty Hare
Pauline Barran

3. Let's Live Dangerously Set in Two
1st Mother : Ann Cod-
rington
2nd Mother: Joan
Clarkson
Lilli: Steffi Duna
Jane : Doris Hare
Bobby : John Mills

4. Children of the Ritz Tabs
Joyce Barbour
Eight Show Girls

5. Mad Dogs & Englishmen Frame Drop in Two
Romney Brent
Twelve Girls

WORDS AND MUSIC

5. Mad Dogs & Englishmen *Planters' Wives:*
Norah Howard
Ann Codrington
Doris Hare
Effie Arherton
Millie Sim
Joan Clarkson
Two Coolies
Snake Charmer
Governor: Gerald Nodin
Governor's Lady : Ivy St.
Helier
Policeman :
Contortionist
Two Englishmen, etc.
6. Debutantes
Tabs. Spotlight
Moya Nugent
Phyllis Harding
Betty Hare
Pauline Barran
7. Let's Say Good-bye
Set in Two. Rostrum
Gina : Namara
Paul :
8. Hall of Fame
Tabs. Drop in Two
Ivy St. Helier
Effie Atherton
Joan Clarkson
Announcer : Joyce
Barbour
Gerald Nodin
Romney Brent
John Mills

WORDS AND MUSIC

9. Mad About The Boy Drop in One. Four Sets'
Tableau
Crowd
Society Woman : Joyce
Barbour
Friend: Millie Sim
School Girl: Norah
Howard
Friend: Joy Sprigg
Servant Girl: Doris Hare
Tart: Steffi Duna
The Boy
Secty : Ann Codrington
10. Journey's End Scrim. Dug Out (Set in
Two). Trees
Platform. Revolve & Cyc
Announcer : Ivy St. Helier
Marie Fransoise: Namara
Stanhope: Romney Brent
Trotter:
Raleigh : Steffi Duna
Frou Frou : Joyce
Barbour
Harry Happy : John Mills
General: Gerald Nodin
The Emperor:
Six Show Girls
Six Dancing Boys
Full Company
Six Typists
Six Generals
Four Nuns. (Drabs)

WORDS AND MUSIC

2ND PART :

11. Housemaids' Knees Number One Tabs
Twelve Chorus Girls
Effie Atherton
12. Fairy Whispers Two Sets
(^o)
Mr. Harrison:
Mrs. Harrison : Ann
Codrington
Molly : Joy Spring
Joan: Doris Hare
Cuthbert:
(^o)
Betty : Ivy St. Helier
Dotsie: Norah Howard
Jane : Joan Clarkson
Roger: John Mills
Narrator: Romney Brent
Fairy Queen: Millie Sim
Four-Piece Orchestra
Children of the Ritz :
Joyce Barbour
13. Ballets Three Sets
Announcer: Effie Atherton
(i) *Club*
Colonel (Acrobatic)
Page Boy
Waiter:
Four Bridge Players
Two Old Men (News-
papers)

WORDS AND MUSIC

13. Ballets
- Three Men with Glasses
(2) *Boarding House*
Old Lady : Ivy St. Helier
Proprietress : Ann
Codrington
Tennis Girl: Norah
Howard
Invalid : Joan Clarkson
Spinster : Millie Sim
Clergyman's Wife :
Doris Hare
Skivvy : Joy Spring
Bank Clerk : John Mills
Clergyman: Gerald Nodin
Singer: Namara
(3) *Creche*
Matron: Steffi Duna
Doctor: Romney Brent
Eight Nurses
14. Something to do with
Spring
- Tabs One and Three
Joyce Barbour
John Mills
Twelve Girls
Twelve Men
Ivy St. Helier
- 15' Younger Generation
- Set in Three
Mamma : Namara
Maid : Doris Hare
Moya Nugent
Phyllis Harding
Betty Hare
Pauline Barran
Twelve Men

WORDS AND MUSIC

16. Wife of an Acrobat Drop in One
17. Midnight Matinee Tabs in One. Set in Two.
 Tabs. Rostrum and
 Frame in Two

Septette Ivy St. Helier
 Namara
 Joan Clarkson
 Millie Sim
 Joyce Barbour
 Norah Howard
 Effie Atherton

Mrs. Rowntree (Organiser)	Ivy St. Helier
The Vise. Hogan : Diane de Poitiers	Millie Sim
Lady M. Hedley : Cleopatra	Namara
March, of Lemworth : Nell Gwynn	Effie Atherton
Hon. Mrs. D. Draycott: Salome	Joyce Barbour
Miss E. Ponting : Marie Antoinette	Ann Codrington
Lady E. Sherrel: Court Lady	Joy Spring
Miss R. Mosenthorpe : Court Lady	Sifa Treble
Lady P. Gainton : Little Page	
Hon. J. Porrage : Little Page	
Miss Spence : Joan of Arc	Norah Howard
Lady Westmorsham : Lady Blessington	Joan Clarkson
Mrs. F. N. J. Wilson : Lady Godiva	
Stuart Ingleby (Announcer)	Romney Brent
Lady Crouche: Angel	
Mrs. Phillip Mere : Angel	
Greek Chorus	Twelve Girls

WORDS AND MUSIC

OPENING CHORUS.

The Scene is the Chorus dressing-room. It is circular with twelve dressing places and twelve mirrors. There is a stand in the middle upon which the dresses are hanging, before the curtain rises the GIRLS are heard singing. There are twelve of them seated on stools before each mirror-, dressed in their underclothes and shoes and stockings. MAGGIE, a typical old theatrical dresser, is bustling about.

The curtain rises.

GIRLS : We shan't be on to-night
We shan't be on to-night
Because the overture is near
We're paralysed with fear
The opening chorus
Is too complicated for us
In this damned Revue
We've far too much to do
We sing 'til our throats are aching
Dance 'til our backs are breaking
During the applause
We rush and change our drawers
Tearing at ribbons while our hands are
Always getting dressed [shaking
Without a moment's rest
We're worked to death
Out of breath
Nervous of every music cue
Anxious the whole performance through
Maggie I

IST 2ND : Have you the scissors handy

WORDS AND MUSIC

ALL : Maggie!

3RD 4TH: We want a port-and-brandy

ALL : Maggie 1

5TH6TH : Our brassieres don't set right

ALL : Maggie 1

7TH8TH: We've upset all our wet-white

MAGGIE : Oh my God don't hurry me

You'll miss your entrance if you worry me
Flurry me

ALL : Maggie !

These aren't our first-act stockings
Maggie!

Our shoes are tight

Maggie Maggie 1

Our trunks are far too baggy

We shan't be on to-night.

MAGGIE (*going to different girls*) :

Now, Freda dear, you must

Do *something* with your bust

You'd best tie a knot, dear

You can't show them all you've got, dear

Dorothy my duck

Your eyelashes ain't stuck

You can't look in every scene, dear

Just like an Aberdeen dear

Rosie 'old this pin

And keep your stomach in

And don't do a pratfall in your first
routine dear

Nora, there's a smear

Of eye-black on your ear

You must look right

WORDS AND MUSIC

Every night
You know until the show is through
I have to take the blame for you.

ALL: Maggie 1

9TH 10TH: We want an orange stick, dear

ALL: Maggie 1

11TH 12TH: We're feeling rather sick, dear

ALL: Maggie !

Our mirrors need adjusting

Maggie 1

Our make-ups look disgusting

MAGGIE : Oh, my God, don't hurry me

You'll miss your entrance if you worry me

Flurry me

ALL: Maggie 1

Our shoulder-straps are slipping

Maggie 1

There's nothing right

Maggie Maggie !

They've made our wigs too shaggy

We shan't be on to-night.

Maggie Maggie Maggie Maggie !

Maggie Maggie 1

Maggie Maggie Maggie Maggie 1

We shan't be on to-night.

The CALL BOY raps on the door.

CALL BOY : Overture Beginners.

ALL : La lalalalalalala

Lalalalala la

La lalalalalalala

Laialalalal la

The CALL BOY enters.

WORDS AND MUSIC

CALL BOY: Overture Beginners !

MAGGIE : All right all right.

CALL BOY *exits.*

ALL : La lalalala la la la
 La lalalala la la la
 La lalalala la la la
 La lalalala la la la la
 We shan't be on to-night
 We shan't be on to-night.

THEY *all struggle into their dresses, and on a certain music cue, march out of the room. MAGGIE is left alone, fussing about and tidying up.*

MAGGIE (*Repose*):

They must look right
Every night
Worked to death
Out of breath
I'll stay and tidy up a bit
And pray the blasted show's a hit I

THE LIGHTS FADE

(*In front of Tabs.*)

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,
You'll be tickled to death
To recognise the Chorus
And as we're opening the Show
It's really comforting now and then
To discover for once
That you are here before us
It may astonish you to know

WORDS AND MUSIC

We're Mr. Cochran's Young Invincibles
He much prefers us to the Principals
For every scene he cuts out
He says "Just send the Sluts out"
And that's the reason why we have to work our guts
out.

Hallo !
We're always on the trigger
Hallo!
Please note our girlish vigour
Hallo!
We have to hop and bustle
Hallo!
We're straining every muscle
While we break our necks we feel
That so much animation wrecks appeal
Sex appeal
Never
Can show when there's too much
Endeavour
It lays it low
We don't mind now
We're really quite resigned now
Hallo Hallo Hallo !

DEBUTANTES.

(O

Four little Debutantes are we
Born of these restless, changing years
Conscious of vague, ,willing fears

r I I
}

WORDS AND MUSIC

What is our Destiny to be ?
Shall we escape the strange " ennui "
Of civilised futility ?
When we are old and wearied through
Shall we regret how wise we were ?
Shall we at last have time to spare
Tears for the dreams we never knew ?

CHILDREN'S HOUR

The scene is a Nursery.

LILLI, JANE and BOBBY are demurely playing with their toys, which consist of a rocking-horse', a doll's house, a clockwork train, etc. The two MAMMAS are watching them complacently.

IST M.: They seem to be getting along splendidly.

2ND M. : It is more than good that my Lilli should have playmates of her own age. At home in Vienna her little friends are so formal, so comme il faut. Here everything is more free and gay.

IST M. : Fm afraid that my two are terrible little tomboys sometimes, they play the naughtiest practical jokes, but I always say that it does children no harm to run wild occasionally.

2ND M. : You English are so sensible. It is wunderbar.

TST M. : I think we might leave them now, don't you, so that they can really get to know one another ?

2ND M. : Certainly. Be good, my Lilli.

WORDS AND MUSIC

LILLI: Yes, Mamma.

IST M.: Show Lilli your doll's house, Jane, and let her play with Laura. (*To 2ND MAMMA.*) That's her best doll, you know. I always encourage t'em to be unselfish.

JANE: Yes, Mamma.

IST M.: Don't make too much noise.

BOBBY: No, Mamma.

The Two MOTHERS go out.

The THREE CHILDREN look at each other.

JANE (*to LILLI*): Is it true about your friends in Vienna being so formal?

LILLI: Quite true. Most of them are damned little prigs.

BOBBY: Environment, I expect, it's all a question of environment.

JANE: We're better off here I think on the whole, we keep our presents in ignorance of the facts of life until the last possible moment.

LILLI (*laughing*): You English are so sensible. It's wunderbar.

BOBBY: I think the moment has come for you to show Lilli your doll's house, Jane.

JANE: It's rather amusing really, we got the idea from the Shaneborough children, they had theirs done when their mother was in Carlsbad.

She opens the doll's house and displays a perfectly fitted little cocktail bar.

LILLI: Absolutely charming—(*examining it*)—and a little machine for making ice as well.

BOBBY: We keep all the extras such as olives and salted almonds in a little drawer in the rocking-horse's behind. (*He demonstrates this.*)

WORDS AND MUSIC

JANE : Chic, don't you think ?

LILLI : Quite, quite marvellous. I shall write to Fritzi and tell her all about it.

JANE : Mix us a drink, Bobby. Who's Fritzi ?

LILLI : A friend of mine in Vienna, she's a bit passe' now, over fifteen, but she gives very gay parties.

BOBBY : Martini ?

JANE : Yes, with a dash.

BOBBY *proceeds to mix a cocktail*

LILLI : And not too sweet.

JANE : Cigarette ?

LILLI : I'll smoke my own if you don't mind—your English cigarettes play hell with my throat.

She produces a small cigarette case which is banging from a little gold chain inside her dress.

BOBBY *(over his shoulder)* : It's all a question of habit.

JANE : How is child life on the whole in Central Europe ?

LILLI : We've been going through rather a bad suicide phase during the last year, all these stupid sex obsessions, you know.

JANE : It's high time people stopped making such a ridiculous fuss about sex—after all, what *can* it matter ?

LILLI : Too much introspection, that's the trouble really, far too much introspection.

BOBBY : Freud started it of course, all that absurd dream nonsense. *(He hands them cocktails.)* Here, try these.

LILLI *(sipping one)* : Very good.

JANE : A shade too much lemon, I think.

BOBBY : The basis of most of the unrest nowadays is just simply lack of courage.

LILLI : Very true.

WORDS AND MUSIC

BOBBY : Nobody seems to have the guts to look at themselves as they really are.

JANE : Or at Life as it really is.

BOBBY : After all, we only have so many years and then phtt I

LJLLI (*smiling*): Why not enjoy them ?

BOBBY : Exactly.

JANE : Live every moment for what it's worth. Take every risk, every chance, live dangerously.

TRIO: LET'S LIVE DANGEROUSLY

Verse.

Life won't fool us
Because we're out to lick it
We've got its ticket
And we'll kick it
In the pants
Fate will never catch us asleep
We'll be ready to leap
When there's the slightest chance
Life won't rule us
Determined to subdue it
We'll give the raspberry to it
Do it in the eye
We believe in following through
All we're ready to do
Or die.

Refrain

Let's live dangerously dangerously dangerously
Let's grab every opportunity we can

Let's swill
 Each pill
 Destiny has in store
 Absorbing life at every pore
 We'll scream and yell for more
 Let's live turbulently turbulently turbulently
 Let's add something to the history of man
 Come what may
 We'll be spectacular
 And go 'Hey Hey'
 In the vernacular
 And so until we break beneath the strain
 In various ways
 We're going to be raising Cain.

Refrain 2

Let's live dangerously dangerously dangerously
 Let's all glory in the bludgeonings of chance
 Let's win
 Out in
 Spite of the angry crowd
 And if the simile's allowed
 Be Bloody but unbowed
 Let's live boisterously boisterously roisterously
 Let's lead moralists the devil of a dance
 Let's succumb
 Completely to temptation
 Probe and plumb
 To find a new sensation
 Where we'll end up
 Nobody can tell
 So pardon the phrase
 We mean to be raising Hell 1

WORDS AND MUSIC

CHILDREN OF THE RITZ

PART ONE

Children of the Ritz
Children of the Ritz
Sleek and civilised
Fretfully surprised
Though Mr. Molyneux has gowned us
The world is tumbling around us
Without a sou
What can we do?
We'll soon be begging for a crust
We can't survive
And keep alive
Without the darling Banker's trust
In the lovely gay
Years before the Crash
Mr. Carder
Never asked for cash
Now shops we patronised are serving us with writs
What's going to happen to the Children of the Ritz?

We owe Elizabeth Arden
Several thousand pounds
Though we can't pay
We just blow in
If we're passing that way
While we're going
On our rounds
We'll persevere
Till our arteries harden

WORDS AND MUSIC

Then we shan't much care
Whether our chins
Have a crinkle in them
Whether our skins
Have a wrinkle here and there
We shan't much mind
For we shall then have left our dreary lives behind.

Children of the Ritz
Children of the Ritz
Vaguely debonair
Only half aware
That all we've counted on is breaking into bits
What shall we do
What's going to happen to
The foolish little Children of the Ritz?

MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

The scene is a street in any tropical British Colony. The set should be stylised and slightly burlesqued, with labels reading 'Government House? 'English Club? 'Anglo Anglo Bank? etc. The English Club is on the left with a small terrace on which are seated two Englishmen in white drill suits, sipping drinks at a table. On the right are two rickshaws with their owners squatting beside them. There are various natives wandering about and a few bank clerks, also a snake-charmer sitting on the ground wearing a fe, and placing a reed pipe. There should be as much noise as possible with an undercurrent of music running through it. Every now and then there is suddenly

WORDS AND MUSIC

a dead silence and the two Englishmen say respectively "Have this one on me? 'No, have this one on me,' whereupon they both clap their hands for the waiter -, and the 'noise is resumed. A. native policeman enters , walks to the centre of the stage and strikes a small triangle which he carries, at the same time lifting his leg casually and slowly above his head, Everyone immediately stops whatever they happen to be doing and sings:

Chorus

The Sun never sets on Government Houce
For English Might
Selected the site

No matter how much the Communists grouse
The Sun never sets on Government House.

The Sun never sets on Government House
The Nation smiles
O'er thousands of miles
No matter how much we sozzle and souse
The Sun never sets on Government House.

The street noises are all resumed, and to a very marked rhythm in the orchestra six planters' wives enter dressed in frilly garden party dresses and solar topis. Again the policeman strikes the triangle and lifts his leg. The planters' wives advance to the centre and sing

PLANTERS' WIVES

Our Hushands deal in Sugar and in Rubber
Our Husbands deal in Coffee and in Tea
Whenever we meet the Vicar's wife we snub her

WORDS AND MUSIC

To prove our vast superiority
We're usually sour and apathetic
In tropical heat
Nobody who's sweet, survives
We powder and primp
And try to be sympathetic
Oh dear
It's queer
That only with men
We're thoroughly energetic
We're Planters' Wives.

At the end of this the street noises are resumed for a moment, then everybody stands stock-still, and shouts 'The Governor,' 'The Governor's Lady,' 'The Governor' 'The Governor's Lady.' A very small native boy enters in uniform and announces : 'Sir Ronald Mullenly, Lady Mullenly? SIR RONALD and LADY MULLENTY enter in rickshaws. As they descend from them everybody sinks to the ground in a low curtsy. SIR RONALD bows courteously, LADY MULLENTY waves her hand girlishly. LADY MULLENTY and SIR RONALD sit down on special chairs just below the club. The native policeman approaches them and bows.

POLICEMAN : He has been sighted, Your Excellencies.

SIR RON. : Who has been sighted, my man?

POLICEMAN : The Lost Missionary, Your Excellency.

LADY M. : That's the third we've lost since Whitsun.

SIR RON. : Who is he?

POLICEMAN : The Reverend Inigo Banks. He has been lost for seventeen years in the very heart of the trackless jungle.

WORDS AND MUSIC

LADY M. : We must ask him to lunch.

Amid a lot of cheering from the crowd, the REV. INIGO BANKS enters in a rickshaw accompanied by twelve natives. He is wearing a tropical suit, very creased, a pepper-and-salt solar topi with a veil flowing from it, and pince-ne,. He carries an umbrella and a parrot in a cage. He also has three bearers with him carrying strange-looking luggage. He springs brightly from his rickshaw, bows low before SIR RONALD and LADY MULLENTY and goes straight into his number ;

MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

In tropical climes there are certain times of day
When all the citizens retire
To tear their clothes off and perspire.
It's one of those rules that the greatest fools obey,
Because the sun is much too sultry
And one must avoid its ultry-violet ray.

Papalaka papalaka papalaka boo,
Papalaka papalaka papalaka boo,
Digariga digariga digariga doo,
Digariga digariga digariga doo.

The natives grieve when the white men leave their
huts,
Because they're obviously definitely Nutsl

WORDS AND MUSIC

Mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.
The Japanese don't care to,
The Chinese wouldn't dare to,
Hindoos and Argentines sleep firmly from twelve
to one.

But Englishmen detest a Siesta.
In the Philippines there are lovely screens
To protect you from the glare.
In the Malay States there are hats like plates
Which the Britishers won't wear.
At twelve noon the natives swoon
And no further work is done.
But mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.

It's such a surprise for the Eastern eyes to see,
That though the English are effete,
They're quite impervious to heat.
When the white man rides ev'ry native hides in
glee,
Because the simple creatures hope he
Will impale his solar topee on a tree.

Bolyboly bolyboly bolyboly baa,
Bolyboly bolyboly bolyboly baa,
Habaninny habaninny habaninny haa,
Habaninny habaninny habaninny haa.

It seems such a shame when the English claim the
earth
That they give rise to such hilarity and mirth.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.
The toughest Burmese bandit
Can never understand it.
In Rangoon the heat of noon
Is just what the natives shun.
They put their Scotch or Rye down and lie down.
In a jungle town where the sun beats down
To the rage of man and beast
The English garb of the English Sahib
Merely gets a bit more creased.
In Bangkok at twelve o'clock
They foam at the mouth and run,
But mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.

Mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.
The smallest Malay rabbit
Deplores this stupid habit.
In Hong Kong they strike a gong
And fire off a noonday gun
To reprimand each inmate who's in late.
In the mangrove swamps where the python romps
There is peace from twelve till two.
Even caribous lie around and snooze,
For there's nothing else to do.
In Bengal, to move at all
Is seldom, if ever done,
But mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.

DEBUTANTES

The Gin is lasting out
No matter whose
We're merely casting out
The Blues
For Gin, in cruel
Sober truth
Supplies the fuel
For Flaming Youth
A drink is known
To help a dream along
A Saxophone
Provides our Theme Song
Though we dishevel
Our girlish bloom
To the Devil
With Gloom I
The Gin is lasting out
No matter whose
We're merely casting out
The Blues
For Gin, in cruel
Sober-truth
Supplies the fuel
For Flaming Youth
We can't refuse
The Gin is lasting out
We're merely casting out
The Blues!

LET'S SAY GOOD-BYE

The Scene is a terrace overlooking the sea. It is a moonlight night and across the bay there are lights twinkling. GINA and PAUL are seated at a little table upon which there is a shaded light. They have finished dinner and are drinking coffee and liqueurs. GINA is a well-dressed handsome woman in the thirties', PAUL is about the same age. Somewhere, not very far away, music is playing softly.

GINA : Well, my dear, what are you thinking ?

PAUL : You know perfectly well.

GINA : The evening has been so gay and charming, we mustn't let it die into silence.

PAUL : How much do you mind me going away ?

GINA : What a foolish question !

PAUL : We're so near the end. I'm hating it bitterly.

GINA : Not "bitterly," please.

PAUL : Sadly, then.

GINA : That's better. A little sadness, not too much, just enough to colour your memory.

PAUL : Are you so sure, so absolutely convinced that we are not causing ourselves unnecessary suffering ?

GINA : Quite sure. So are you, in your heart.

PAUL : No, I'm not, really I'm not. There's no real reason why you shouldn't come away with me, why we shouldn't be married.

GINA : Every reason. We've loved each other for a little while, and it has been perfect, why spoil it ?

PAUL : Why are you so certain that it would spoil it ?

GINA : Because—because———(She sings.)

WORDS AND MUSIC

LET'S SAY GOOD-BYE

Verse.

Now we've embarked on this love affair
 Don't let's destroy it with tears.
Once we begin
To let Sentiment in
 Happiness disappears.
Reason may sleep
 For a moment in Spring
But please let us keep
 This a casual thing
Something that's sweet
 To remember through the years.

Refrain.

Let our affair be a gay thing
 And when these hours have flown
 Then, without forgetting
 Happiness that has passed
 There'll be no regretting
 Fun that didn't quite last
Let's look on love as a plaything.
 All these sweet moments we've known
 Mustn't be degraded
 When the thrill of them has faded
 Let's say 'Good-bye' and leave it alone.

*A.t the end of the Song, the sound of a ships siren is
beardin the distance.*

GINA : That was your ship, I expect.

PAUL (*looking away*) : Yes. I expect it was.

WORDS AND MUSIC

GINA : It sails in an hour, doesn't it ?

PAUL: Yes.

GINA : Look at me.

PAUL (*toning his head*): Well ?

GINA : We shall both of us suffer quite a lot during the next few weeks, and the colour will go out of everything for a bit, but when we do meet again, somewhere far away in the future, it will be gay and sweet and terribly exciting, because however many others we have loved in the meantime and however old and tired we may be, we shall have between us a perfect memory.

The siren sounds again.

Will you go now quickly, there's a dear, because you've never seen me cry either, and I don't want you to.

PAUL : Darling—oh, darling . . .

GINA : Please—please . . .

PAUL : I love you.

GINA : I love you.

He kisses her once and goes away.

She sings the refrain of the song very softly as the lights fade.

THE HALL OF FAME

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen
In this peculiar Era
Communal unity
Is daily drawing nearer

WORDS AND MUSIC

We are indebted to the papers
For thus dispersing of the vapours
Which have hitherto concealed
A lot of simple lives that should have been revealed
Think, what Publicity
Means to the teeming masses
Think what it signifies
To all those lads and lasses
Who, but for being advertised
Might have lived all their days unrecognised
So we and they together bless
The kindly efforts of the Press.

THE MAN WHO CAUGHT THE BIGGEST SHRIMP

I'm the man who caught the biggest shrimp in the world
And the second biggest prawn as well
I live at Ryde
And I take great pride
In the tale I have to tell.
The Reporters flock
To examine every rock
And to explore each stretch of sand
Though why they choose
Me to figure in the News
I shall never understand.

THE OLDEST POSTMISTRESS IN ENGLAND

I'm the very oldest Postmistress in England
And probably the oldest on the Earth
I've been asked by all the Papers for a statement

WORDS AND MUSIC

So I give you these few facts for what they're worth
My appetite is absolutely splendid,
There's nothing in the world I can't digest
I seldom feel uneasy or distended
And I'm never disagreeable or depressed
I still deliver all the letters daily
Though my memory is just as good as new
I've a hazy recollection of Disraeli
And I lived in Bray in Eighteen Forty Two
I think the Modern Girl is very pretty
I've never smoked a single cigarette
I think all this Divorcing is a pity
And I'm sorry that the Nation is upset
I well recall in Eighteen Thirty Seven
My parents lived in Weston Super Mare
I'm actually one hundred and eleven
But I cannot see why anyone should care I

THE MAN WHO ROWED ACROSS LAKE WINDERMERE IN
AN INDIARUBBER BATH

For years and years and years and years
I've burned to satisfy
A passionate desire in me
To catch the Public Eye
When living in obscurity
In Station Road Penarth
I thought of crossing Windermere
In an indiarubber bath.

ALL : He rowed across Lake Windermere
In an indiarubber bath I

WORDS AND MUSIC

The Press responded to a man
I'm known from coast to coast
And eighty lonely women
Have proposed to me by Post
I'm made a lifelong member
Of a most exclusive Club
For I rowed across Lake Windermere
In an indiarubber tub.

ALL : He rowed across Lake Windermere
In an indiarubber tub !

I'm grateful to the Mirror
And the Sketch for my success
And also to the Telegraph
The Mail, and the Express.
It doesn't matter now to me
What shadows cross my path
For I rowed across Lake Windermere
In an indiarubber bath.

ALL : He rowed across Lake Windermere
In an indiarubber bath !

THE HOLIDAY MERMAID

I'm a Typist from Putney, and once every year
I stay with my Aunt at Torquay
And Jast time I went there, as no one was near
I decided to bathe in the sea
I'd put on me costume and folded me frock

WORDS AND MUSIC

And was tying me 'air in a veil
When two men nipped out from behind a big rock
And gave me this kid with a pail
Now me face wasn't powdered, me fringe wasn't curled.
And me parents are properly wild
'Cos me photo's been published all over the world
As a ' Holiday Mermaid With Child I'

THE CLERGYMAN WHO'S NEVER BEEN TO LONDON

I'm the Clergyman who's never been to London
I'm the Clergyman who's never been to Town
An enterprising journalist approached me
And every word I said he jotted down
I had to face a battery of cameras
And hold an extra service in the snow
And all because I've *never* been to London
And haven't got the *least* desire to go !

MY LIFE STORY

I've been paid by kind Lord Rotherbrook
A very handsome sum
Though I'm stupid and illiterate
And practically dumb.
I cannot really count
How many choruses I've graced
But the story of my life
Is in the very best of taste

WORDS AND MUSIC

I was on the stage at seventeen
And off at twenty-three
And living with a business man
At Birchington-on-Sea
My Appendix caused me trouble
And in order to survive
I had it taken out three times
In nineteen-twenty-five
In April nineteen-twenty-eight
I married Lord St. Lyne
Divorcing him in January
Nineteen-twenty-nine
I've been photographed four hundred times
On foot, and in my car
And that's the human story
Of how I became a Star !

CHORAL FINALE

Long Live the Press
Long Live the Press
We're grateful for its subtlety
Its power and its finesse
It's brought us from obscurity
To well-deserved success
Long live the Daily Press I

MAD ABOUT THE BOY

The first scene is the outside of a cinema at night. There is a quern of people waiting to go in for the second performance; a man is playing a penny whistle while another man goes along with a hat. There are the various noises of traffic blending in with the music, which supplies a continuous undercurrent. A variegated crowd of people come out of the cinema, mostly typists and working girls with their young men, among them a street-walker', a servant girl, a school-girl, and a smartly dressed woman in an evening gown and cloak. Suddenly the audience should become aware that everybody is whispering one phrase over and over again, 'Mad About The Boy' The four principals step forward for a moment in order that they may be remembered later. The street-walker goes off by herself, the school-girl goes off with a girl friend, the servant girl goes off with a seedy-looking young man, and the society woman with her woman friend steps down to hail a taxi. There is a black-out during which the music and whispering continue, then the lights go up on a smart flat in Mayfair. The society woman enters with her friend switching on the lights as she does so.

WOMAN : Want a drink ?

FRIEND : I'd love one, darling.

WOMAN (*taking off her cloak*) : I'm breaking up, that's what I'm doing, breaking up.

FRIEND (*smiling*): Never mind.

WOMAN : I mind violently. I feel deeply humiliated. That young man is common dull, excessively stupid

WORDS AND MUSIC

and far too short, I met him once and I know. And yet I wouldn't miss one of his pictures for anything in the world. I go and sit there slaving over him like a half-witted kitchen-maid. I've got a photograph of him in my bedroom. I solemnly kissed it last Tuesday all by myself. I'm crazy about him, I tell you, and it's undoubtedly the beginning of the end.

FRIEND : When did you meet him ?

The woman sings the song.

At the end of the song the lights fade and the stage Moves round disclosing a middle-class drawing-room with the school-girl doing her home-work at the table while her younger sister is practising at the piano. The school-girl is staring at a photograph propped up against a pile of books while she mumbles to herself 'J'aime, Tu aimes, il aime'—etc.

She sings her verse and refrain and the lights fade. The stage moves round, disclosing a scullery with a sink and plate-rack, etc. : The servant girl is busy washing and drying the crockery. There is the inevitable photograph propped up on the plate-rack. She sings her verse and refrain to it, at the end smashing a plate on the floor.

The lightsfade and the scene changes to a bedroom in a cheap lodging-house. The street-walker comes in wearily, takes off her coat and hat, sits on the bed and lights a cigarette. She sings her verse and refrain of the song, at the end of which she comes out of the set in a spot light, the other three join her also in spot lights. A.II four of them sing the refrain, joined gradually by the whole chorus in the background, they are all again whispering to music 'Mad About The Boy,' working up into a crescendo.

WORDS AND MUSIC

When the climax is reached there is a black-out and an inset of the boy himself is shown. He is sitting in an elaborate dressing-gown having his nails manicured. His feet are in a mustard bath and he obviously has a bad cold. He also wears pince-ne., as, off the screen, his eyes are weak. His secretary stands beside him with a pile of 'Fan mail.' He tosses the letters casually aside merely saying gloomily, 'Send a photograph, send a photograph.'

BLACK OUT

Verse.

SOCIETY W.:

I met him at a party just a couple of years ago
He was rather over-hearty, and ridiculous
But as I'd seen him on the Screen
He cast a certain spell.
I basked in his attraction for a couple of hours or so
His manners were a fraction too meticulous
If he was real or not, I couldn't tell
But like a silly fool, I fell.

Refrain.

Mad about the boy
I know it's stupid to be mad about the boy
I'm so ashamed of it
But must admit
The sleepless nights I've had about the boy.
On the Silver Screen
He melts my foolish heart in every single scene

WORDS AND MUSIC

Although I'm quite aware
That here and there
Are traces of the cad about the boy
Lord knows I'm not a fool girl
I really shouldn't care
Lord knows I'm not a school-girl

In the flurry of her first affair.
Will it ever cloy ?
This odd diversity of misery and joy
I'm feeling quite insane
And young again
And all because I'm mad about the boy.

Verse.

SCHOOL-G. :

Home work, home work
Every night there's home work
While Elsie practises the gas goes pop
I wish, I wish she'd stop
Oh dear, oh dear,
Here it's always ' No, dear,
You can't go out again you must stay home
You waste your money on that common Picturedrome
Don't shirk—stay here and do your work
Yearning, yearning,
How my heart is burning.
I'll see him Saturday in ' Strong Man's Pain'
And then on Monday and on Friday week again
To me he is the sole man
Who can kiss as well as Coleman,
I could faint whenever there's a close-up of his lips
Tho' John Barrymore is larger

WORDS AND MUSIC

When my hero's on his charger
Even Douglas Fairbanks Junior hasn't smaller hips
If only he could know
That I adore him so.

Refrain.

Mad about the boy
It's simply scrumptious to be mad about the boy,
I know that quite sincerely
Housman really
Wrote ' The Shropshire Lad' about the boy.
In my English Prose
I've done a tracing of his forehead and his nose
And there is, honour bright
A certain slight
Effect of Galahad about the boy.
I've talked to Rosie Hooper
She feels the same as me,
She says that Gary Cooper
Doesn't thrill her to the same degree
In ' Can Love Destroy ?'
When he meets Garbo in a suit of corduroy,
He gives a little frown
And knocks her down
Oh dear, oh dear, I'm mad about the boy.

COCKNEY VERSE

COCKNEY:

Every Wednesday afternoon I get a little time off from
three to eleven,
Then I go to the Picture House and taste a little of my
particular heaven

WORDS AND MUSIC

He appears in a little while, through a mist of tears I can
see him smiling
Above me.
Every picture I see him in
Every lover's caress
Makes my wonderful dreams begin
Makes me long to confess.
That if ever he looked at me and thought perhaps it was
worth the trouble to
Love me.
Fd give in and I wouldn't care however far from the
path of virtue he'd
Shove me,
Just supposing our love was brief
If he treated me rough
I'd be happy beyond belief
Once would be enough.

Kefrain.

Mad about the boy
I know I'm potty but I'm mad about the boy.
He sets me 'eart on fire
With Love's desire
In fact I've got it bad about the boy.
When I do the rooms
I see 'is face in all the brushes and the brooms
Last week I strained me back
And got the sack.
And 'ad a row with Dad about the boy.
I'm finished with Novarro
I'm tired of Richard Dix
I'm pierced by Cupid's arrow
Every Wednesday from four till six.

WORDS AND MUSIC

'Ow I should enjoy
To let 'im treat me like a plaything or a toy
I'd give my all to him
And crawl to him
So 'elp me Gawd I'm mad about the boy.

Verse.

TART :

It seems a little silly
For a girl of my age and weight
To walk down Piccadilly
In a haze of love
It ought to take a good deal more to get a bad girl
down
It should have been exempt, for
My particular kind of Fate
Has taught me such contempt for
Every phase of love,
And now I've been and spent my last half-crown
To weep about a painted clown.

'Refrain.

Mad about the boy
It's pretty funny but I'm mad about the boy
He has a gay appeal

That makes me feel
There's maybe something sad about the boy
Walking down the street,
His eyes look out at me from people that I meet
I can't believe it's true
But when I'm blue,
In some strange way I'm glad about the boy.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Fm hardly sentimental
Love isn't so sublime
I have to pay my rental
And I can't afford to waste much time,
If I could employ
A little magic that would finally destroy
This dream that pains me
And enchains me,
But I can't, because I'm mad about the boy.

JOURNEY'S END

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen
Forgive my strange appearance
Our kindly author has
With splendid perseverance
Worked without stint for your enjoyment
And in this age of un-employment
He decided on a plan
To utilise as many aliens as he can
For, like Sir Oswald Stoll
He feels an obligation
To do his level best
To help the German Nation
And if Charell would condescend
To make a spectacle of ' Journey's End '
It is our author's little scheme
To show this strange ' Teutonic Dream I'

WORDS AND MUSIC

MUSICAL VERSION OF ' JOURNEY'S END

As Produced by Erik Charell

Characters in the order of their appearance :

MARIE FRANCOISE	Namara.
STANHOPE	Romney Brent.
TROTTER	
RALEIGH	Steffi Duna.
FROU-FROU	Ivy St. Helier.
HARRY HAPPY	John Mills.
GENERAL	Gerald Nodin.
THE EMPEROR	

The first scene is a transparent painted curtain representing a French village. From the back of the theatre and down the centre gangway comes MARIE FRANCOISE in National Peasant costume singing a yodelling song, followed by six show-girls also in elaborate National costume carrying large baskets. They clamber up on to the stage by means of two small rostrums on either side of the proscenium and exit, MARIE FRANCOISE last, still yodelling. The interior of the dug-out gradually becomes apparent through the transparent curtain, which finally rises. STANHOPE is discovered seated at a table upon which is a lace table-cloth, a silver bowl of fruit, a bottle of champagne and a glass, and an elaborate silver candelabra.

STANHOPE (*in a thick Spanish accent*): Three years of this Hell. Will it never end ? God I I am tired. Only wine can keep me going. God I I am tired, tired, tired I (*He drinks a glass of champagne.*)

Enter TROTTER.

WORDS AND MUSIC

TROTTER : Lieutenant Raleigh, sir.

STANHOPE : Leave me alone. We don't want any more snivelling subalterns. *(His voice rises to an hysterical scream.)* Leave me alone, I tell you ! Leave me alone !

TROTTER ! Lieutenant Raleigh, sir.

TROTTER *goes out right.*

Enter RALEIGH attired in a military overcoat and a tin hat. STANHOPE starts to his feet.

STANHOPE : You !

RALEIGH : None other.

STANHOPE : Why did you come ? Why did you not stay in your so beautiful England where the grass is so green and there is peace, far away from this so terrible war ?

RALEIGH : I came to be near you, Mein Klein Pupchen.

She tears off her overcoat disclosing an evening dress made of khaki sequins. She sings a dashing song, ' Klein Pupchen,' in course of which she steps out of the scene. The dug-out fades behind her. Two sets of trees (ground rows) are pushed on, one from each side of the stage, also two sign-posts with 'Herren' on one and 'Damen' on the other. A tank is pushed on from the Prompt side (flat) which disgorges twelve chorus girls, also dressed in khaki sequins and wearing tin hats. The tank is pushed off again and at the end of the number RALEIGH and all the girls exit Prompt side. As they go off a movable platform slides on O.P. side, upon which are six small narrow tables with a Diamond typewriter on each, six fantastically dressed typists with sequin eye-shades and cuffs, and, standing behind them, six staff officers. The officers dictate to music for a few seconds and then the

WORDS AND MUSIC

platform slides back again, at the same moment as the trees are pushed off, disclosing the dug-out again. STANHOPE is still sitting at the table.

STANHOPE : Three years of Hell I Will it never end ?
God I I am tired. Only wine can keep me going. Wine
and memories.

He produces a guitar from under the table, covered in American cloth with probably a few more sequins on it, and sings a Spanish serenade, during which six beautiful ' Senoritas ' appear in elaborately stylised Spanish costume with mantillas, and dance round him, clicking castanets, They exit and TROTTER re-enters.

TROTTER : The German prisoners, sir.

STANHOPE (*hysterically*): Leave me alone I Leave me
alone, I tell you ! I don't want any German prisoners.
Leave me alone!

TROTTER (*inexorably*) : The German prisoners, sir.

Six German prisoners enter laughing merrily, in National costume. They execute a violent 'slapping' dance interspersed with loud whoops of pleasure, in course of which the dug-out fades behind them and the trees are pushed on again. This time 'Hommes' and 'Dames' // painted on the sign-posts. As the German boys exit Prompt side, the movable platform slides on again from O.P. identically as before, and slides off again. A gondola is pushed on from the Prompt side out of which step FROU-FROU and HARRY HAPPY. HARRY is a typical low comedian in comic Tyrolean costume, and FROU-FROU is the 'cute' variety of soubrette, with very large bows on her shoes and a very small hat. They sing a duet called 'A Gondola on the Somme,' during which six saucily dressed nuns appear in a spotlight O.P. side

*
WORDS AND MUSIC

and sing in harmony. At the end of the number they all exit, the trees disappear, and once more STANHOPE is discovered sitting in the dug-out.

STANHOPE : Three years of Hell I Will it never cod ?
God ! I am tired. Only wine can keep me going. God !
I am tired, tired, tired !

TROTTER *enters.*

TROTTER : The General to see you, sir.

STANHOPE (*frantically*) : Leave me alone! Leave me alone, I tell you ! I don't want the General. Leave me alone !

TROTTER : The General to see you, sir.

TROTTER *goes out right.*

The GENERAL enters and goes straight into a spirited number, ' Love and War.' He steps out of the dug-out which fades away. The movable platform slides on again from the O.P. side. The trees also reappear, this time with ' Caballeros' and ' Senoras' on the sign-posts. TROTTER and RALEIGH come on with a table (painted flat), also FROU-FROU and HARRY with another one. All the chorus rush down from the back of the theatre,, also with small painted tables which they plant in the aisles singing madly. At the end of the number they all disappear and once more the dug-out is disclosed.

STANHOPE : Three years of this Hell——

TROTTER *enters.*

TROTTER (*interrupting him*) : The attack, sir !

The scene fades , there is a distant booming of guns. The trees come on again, this time there is Chinese miting on the sign-posts. A small boy in a surplice walks across the stage whistling. Four chorus rush across

WORDS AND MUSIC

shouting 'The Emperor!' 'The Emperor!' The movable platform slides on, conveying, in addition to the conference, MARIE FRANCOISE in still more elaborate National costume. At the same moment an illuminated dreadnought is pushed on from the Prompt side, from which steps the Kaiser.

MARIE (*curtsying low*): Sire.

KAISER (*in a strong Scotch accent*): My child !

MARIE : I am unhappy, Sire.

KAISER : Happiness is ever-fleeting. Journey's end
in Lovers Meeting.

MARIE (*again curtsying*): Oh, sire.

She is whisked off backwards on the movable platform while the KAISER retires to his dreadnought. Suddenly from everywhere voices are heard shouting 'Stanhope!' 'The attack!' 'Stanhope!' 'The attack!' The trees go away, and through the transparent curtain which has been used for the KAISER'S scene, the big attack is seen to be in progress. The transparent curtain rises as the stage begins to revolve. In the centre of the revolve is a small hillock with a ruined village on it. Below this, the stage is divided into four sections by illuminated barbed-wire entanglements, over which the chorus, representing the Germans and the British respectively, are leaping gaily and pelting each other with coloured-paper streamers. All the principals make a grand chain up and down the front of the stage, shooting puffs of powder out of "diamante" rifles. From the orchestra, pit and the stage boxes coloured balloons are flung on to the stage. The orchestra plays 'Deutschland Uber Alles.'

WORDS AND MUSIC

YODELLING SONG (MARIE FRANCOISE)

MARIE : La dalaito

La dalaito

Swift mountain streams

Play the music of dreams

La dalaito

La dalaito

Morning sweet morning

So happily gleams

La dalaito—La dalaito—etc., etc.

" KLEINE PUPCHEN "

Kleine Pupchen

Boop oop adoop-chen

You are my own vis-a-vis

Kleine Pubchen

Boob oob adoob-chen

My sweetheart some day you'll be

So if you leave me

Don't go too far

Da da un dahda

This is my firm protocol

Hold me in your arms a bit

Till my heart calls a bit

Display your charms a bit

There could be no harm in it

For you're my Baby Doll 1

WORDS AND MUSIC

" TE QUIERO "

In an old Spanish Garden I found you
The Hibiscus was shining all round you
The guitars in the distance were playing
All the love songs I longed to be saying
'Neath the stars that were gleaming above you
I laid all my dreams at your feet
Tho' now I have lost you, I love you
" Te Quiero," my sweet Senorita.

Duet: A GONDOLA ON THE RHINE

BOTH : You and me in a Gondola
Just a Gondola
On the Rhine

SHE: Gazing without ending
In each other's eyes

HE: I shall catch you bending
On your Bridge of Sighs

BOTH : We'll tour all round the Mond-ola
We'll abscond-ola
Pom, pom !
And maybe
One day there will be three
In our Gondola on the Rhine.

WORDS AND MUSIC

LOVE AND WAR

Love and War
Those are the games worth playing
No man could ask any more
When the bugles and trumpets bray
Love and War
Open Adventure's door
All that men sigh for
Live, Laugh and Die *for*
Love and War!

PART TWO

HOUSEMAIDS' KNEES

Verse.

Pretty little housemaids proper and sedate
 Urn um umum um um um.
We seldom go to bed too early and we rise extremely late.
Pretty little housemaids eager to improve
 Um um umum um um um
Each shining hour, by slightly widening our small
 [domestic groove.
We wish to help the Nation
 To forget its pence and pounds
Our little innovation
 Is on patriotic grounds.

Refrain.

Make England brighter
 That's what we try to do
Our clothes are lighter
 Our skirts are shorter too
When there's the slightest breeze
You see these
Housemaids' knees. *
When there's a Crisis
 Forget it while you can
Our firm advice is
 To every business man

WORDS AND MUSIC

Just take a look at these
Housemaids' knees.
In our domestic and our personal relationships
You must forgive us if our consciousness of 'station'
slips
A little beauty
May stop you feeling blue
We feel our duty
Is to enable you
To gaze at skittish
Absolutely British
Housemaids' knees I

FAIRY WHISPERS

The Scene is the dining-room of a suburban villa.

MR. and MRS. HARRISON and MOLLY are seated
round the table having just finished tea. JOAN enters.

JOAN : Sorry I'm late all, but I've just got a new
record. Vi gave it to me.

MRS. H. : I do hope it's not all Vo do deo dos like the
last one she gave you.

JOAN : It's called 'Fairy Whispers' and it's a twelve-
inch.

MR. H. : Twelve inches of Fairy Whispers sounds a
bit fishy to me.

JOAN : Wait until you hear it, it's sweet.

MRS. H. : Well if we don't like it we can always send
it to the hospital.

MOLLY : rut it on, Joan, it ought to be lovely.

WORDS AND MUSIC

MR. H.: You'd better try a new needle, we've used that one for seven months.

JOAN (*putting the record on the gramophone*): Keep quiet because it says it's descriptive.

MR. H. : I should think Fairy Whispers would need to be a little descriptive.

JOAN : Here we go.

They all sit and listen to the record. At the end of it the lights fade and the scene changes to the interior of the gramophone studio. Four elderly women and two men are grouped round the microphone. In the background there is a four-piece orchestra consisting of two violins, one 'cello, and a piano. None of the artists seem to care for one another very much, but nevertheless they proceed solemnly to make the record that we have just heard.

NARRATOR : It is midnight, and the little silver clock in the nursery strikes " Ding dong, ding dong " . . . Hush ! Not another sound but the snoring of Rover in his kennel in the yard . . . Ohoo, what's that ? . . . It is little Betty waking up . . .

BETTY : Oh dear—oh dear—quickly, Roger, quickly—it is midsummer night and there will be fairies on the lawn.

ROGER : I'm sleepy.

BETTY : Oh Roger, you pwomised.

ROGER : All right then, but I don't believe in fairies.

BFTTY : Quickly, quickly, I'll wake Dotsie and Jane.

NARRATOR : Dotsie and Jane, little sleepy heads just refuse to wake for ever and ever so long, finally, out of bed they hop helter-skelter.

WORDS AND MUSIC

DOTSIE : Fairies I Oh pease we would so like to see the fairies.

JANE : Woger I Wogerl do hurry, Oh Woger I

NARRATOR : Tiptoe the madcaps scamper down the wide famed-oak staircase and out on to the dew-drenched lawn—Hush Hush or Rover will awake and kick up—Oh such a din I

JANE : Oh Woger, aren't the fairies wonderful ?

DOTSIE : It's all wonderful—too too wonderful!

NARRATOR : See this dainty gossamer creature approaching—a Bluebell come to life ... a veritable flower.

FAIRY : I am the Fairy Queen.

BETTY : And I am the littlest girl.

FAIRY : Will you sing for us, Littlest girl, although you are only a mortal we should enjoy it very much indeed.

BETTY : Ess I will. (*She sings.*)

FAIRY : Now we'll all dance.

Gay dance music interspersed with childish laughter.

NARRATOR : Hush I Rover is barking—quick, back to bed—Hurry—scamper—scurry—Ooo-Ooo if Nurse should awaken—but no, all is quiet again. Good-bye, fairies . . .

FAIRIES : Sweet dreams, mortals.

GOOD NIGHT.

CHILDREN OF THE RITZ

Children of the Ritz
Children of the Ritz
Mentally congealed
Lilies of the Field

WORDS AND MUSIC

We say just how we want our quails done,
And then we go and have our nails done,
Each single year.

We all appear

At Monte Carlo or at Cannes.

We lie in flocks

Along the rocks

Because we have to get a Tan.

Though we never work,

Though we always play,

Though we always shirk,

Things we ought to pay

Whatever crimes the Proletariat commits

It can't be beastly to the Children of the Ritz.

We all economise madly

Now in every way.

Only one car,

An Isotta,

Though it doesn't go far

Still we potter

Through the day,

The times are changing—

We realise sadly

That we're near the brink.

Nothing to wear

We're in tatters,

And we honestly swear

That it shatters us to think,

It's really grim

To wonder just how long we're going to sink or swim

Children of the Ritz,

Children of the Ritz,

WORDS AND MUSIC

Though our day is past—

Gallant to the last—

Without the wherewithal to live upon our wits.

Please say a prayer

For all the frail and fair

And futile little Children of the Ritz.

DESCRIPTION OF BALLETS

1st Ballet. The scene is a men's club smoking-room and the ballet is danced by four elderly members of the club.

2nd Ballet. The scene is a boarding-house dining-room, the dancers are typical guests at a seaside boarding-house.

3rd Ballet. This is danced by the doctor, matron and nurse of a creche, the "babies" being large rubber balls with faces painted on them.

These are used in the routine of the ballet.

Ballet music as in score.

BALLET ANNOUNCEMENT

i.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next scene needs explaining
And Mr. Cochran hopes

You'll find it entertaining.

It is his firm determination

To make you use imagination

WORDS AND MUSIC

And to gather at a glance
The charm of ordinary life in terms of dance.
Think of an English Club
 On lines of Russian Ballet.
Picture those dear old men
 Cavorting musically;
What could be prettier to see
Than angry Colonels in captivity,
Pointing the light fantastic toe
As through their daily lives they go !

2.

. . . See how the 'Dance' can bring to bloom
Even a boarding-house in Ilfracombe.
The Ballet Spirit as portrayed
At number five Marine Parade.

3.

. . . Now for the sake of our Revue
You'll see a creche of infants under two.
Note the effect of airy grace
In this clean sanitary place !

SOMETHING TO Do WITH SPRING

Verse.

HE : The Spring is here, dear
Oh dear, Oh dear, dear
Can't you see
 The simple agonising sheen
On every angry little tree ?

WORDS AND MUSIC

- SHE : I must admit it's rather fun
 To think that every single thing
 That Nature ever does is overdone.
- HE : I know exactly what you mean.
 It all looks far too clean—
 A badly painted scene,
 The grass is far too green.
- SHE : Perhaps there's something we have missed.
- HE : I never could have kissed
 A sentimentalist.
- SHE : Still there's something in the atmosphere
 That makes me happy here.
- HE : Don't make me giggle, dear.

Refrain i.

- SHE: The sun is shining where clouds have been—
- HE : Maybe it's something to do with Spring
- SHE: I feel no older than seventeen—
- HE : Maybe it's something to do with Spring.
- SHE: A something I can't express,,
 A sort of lift in the air,
 A lyrical loveliness
 Seems everywhere.
- HE : That sheep's behaviour is most obscene.
- BOTH: Maybe it's something to do with Spring.

Refrain 2.

- HE : The dewdrops glitter like diamond links—
- SHE : Maybe it's something to do with Spring.
- HE : They say that rabbits have minds like sinks—
- SHE : Maybe it's something to do with Spring.

WORDS AND MUSIC

HE : The way that the sows behave
 May seem delightfully quaint,
But why should the cows behave
 With *no* restraint ?

SHE : I'd love to know what that stallion thinks—

BOTH: Maybe it's something to do with Spring.

THE WIFE OF AN ACROBAT

Verse.

Always travelling to and fro, and always packing to go
 Is apt to derange one.

I believe I should lose my head if once I slept in a bed
 That wasn't a strange one.

Never topping the Bill at all, in each Variety Hall
 We open or close them.

Apart from waving my hand about
 When he's finished a trick

I do nothing but stand about
 Feeling slightly sick.

Even if I had lovely legs I'm not the type of a girl
 Who blatantly shows them.

When I look at the pair I've got it seems a little bit hard
 To have to expose them.

People say that a pride in Tricks
 Every animal feels.

I'd prefer to be one of six
 Old Performing Seals.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Refrain 1.

I'm the wife of an Acrobat
And the world has passed me by.
I'm dressed in tights
To play the ' Twice a Nights '
And only God knows why.
What a life I
For an Acrobat
As he flies from hoop to hoop
I have a sort of feeling, when our souls have passed away
When giving shows in Heaven, three performances a day,
I'll say what all the angels are expecting me to say
'Allez OOp—Allez OOp—Allez OOp !'

Refrain 2.

I'm the wife of an Acrobat
And our eldest boy's a scout.
I hate the lad
To come and see his dad
Entirely inside out.
Now the wives of the Acrobats
Form the most exclusive group
You'll seldom see us riding ' Haute Ecole ' along the park
And many of us look as if we'd come out of the Ark
Our conversation meagrely consists of one remark
' Allez OOp—Allez OOp—Allez OOp !'

Refrain 3.

I'm the wife of an Acrobat.
When my old man don't feel well—
To hold each prop
And wonder if he'll drop

WORDS AND MUSIC

Is my idea of Hell.
What a life for an Acrobat!
When I watch him loop the loop
I wonder what he's thinking upside down on the trapeze
And if he's really happy with his head between his knees
And then his face gets crimson and I know he's going to
sneeze!
' Allez OOp—Allez OOp—Allez OOp !'

Refrain 4.

I'm the wife of an Acrobat
When our kids are in their cots
It's kind of sad
To realise their Dad
Is tying himself in knots.
Now the wife of an Acrobat
Is the ' Dead Pan ' of the troupe
I've stood about for twenty years, my hair is turning grey
I hear my old man gasping as I watch him swing and
sway
And if he broke his bloody neck I know I'd only say
' Allez OOp—Allez OOp—Allez OOp !'
(Close tabs.)

THE YOUNGER GENERATION

(Scene : Mamma's bedroom,)

Verse.

SIRLS : Mother, tell us, mother
Have you anything in your heart to tell the
four of us
Are you perfectly sure of us.
We are eager to know?

WORDS AND MUSIC

MOTHER : I trust you everywhere you go.

GIRLS : Mother, tell us, mother

If the dreams that you dreamed in Spring-
time have come true for you,
What Love promised to do for you
Did it actually do ?

MOTHER : With Love the whole wide world seems
new.

GIRLS : Teach us to understand this magic flame,
As you did when at first your lover came,
What did he bring to you ?
What melodies did he sing to you ?

MOTHER : The same . . .

Melodies that lovers sing
Whenever the heart is gay with Spring
And Youth is there
I assure you the truth is there.
The years hurry for young love is brief
Tears follow with the fall of the leaf
Age may bring you sadly to grief
Unless you're wise and realise
That dignity is the greatest prize to guard.

GIRLS : We'll try so hard.

MOTHER : Once on a time I was young and fair like
you

GIRLS : We know.

MOTHER : Happily dreaming my adolescence through

GIRLS : Ileigho

MOTHER : Then I married your father

Gay and handsome and frank
But it shattered me rather
When I found he drank.

GIRLS : Oh what a shock, that was really too too bad

WORDS AND MUSIC

MOTHER : So sad
Then I took stock of the assets that I had
GIRLS : We're glad
MOTHER : Ten long years I had sly love
Then I whispered to my love
Get thee behind me
Life has resigned me
I'd never stoop to buy love.

Refrain.

MOTHER : Age calls the tune
Youth's over soon
That is the natural law.
There's a younger generation
Knock knock knocking at the door.
Why sit and fret ?
Vainly regret
Things that have gone before ?
There's a younger generation
Knock knock knocking at the door
Though the world is well lost for love
dreams
There's wisdom above dreams
To compensate mothers and wives
This should last them
All their lives
I've had my fun
All that is done
Why should I sigh for more ?
There's a younger generation
Knock knock knocking at the door.

WORDS AND MUSIC

GIRLS : Dear dear Mamma
Your wise advice to us
Has made us see that the doubts in our
hearts were vain.

MAMMA : Love comes
But once or twice to us,
If it is wise love, the memory will remain
Through the years,
Have no more fears,
For Age brings peace
Sweet release
From all
The fetters that have bound you,
Call
Your memories around you
All your troubled dreams will cease.

Spoken.

1ST : Good night, Mamma.

2ND : Good night, Mamma.

3RD : Good night, Mamma.

4TH : Good night, Mamma.

MAMMA : Enjoy yourselves, my darlings.

1ST : Are you sure that you won't be sad, left here all
alone ?

MAMMA : Quite sure.

2ND : Have you got your spectacles ?

MAMMA : Yes, thank you.

3RD : And your library book ?

MAMMA : Yes, thank you.

4TH : And your hot-water bottle ?

MAMMA : Yes, thank you.

1ST : Good night, Mamma.

2ND : Good night, Mamma.

WORDS AND MUSIC

3RD : Good night, Mamma.

4TH : Good night, Mamma.

MAMMA : Remember one thing, my darlings, I may be an old old woman but I am resigned to tranquillity, and happy. Happy in my daughters and happy in my remembrance of things long past.

GIRLS (*together*) : Yes, Mamma.

They all kiss her and file out of the room one by one.

When they have gone MAMMA'S gentle manner drops away from her, and with great animation she runs across to the bell-rope and tugs at it.

MAMMA (*singing*) : Marie—Marie—MARIE !

MARIE, *the maid, enters hurriedly.*

Don't keep me waiting

Can't you see how very very late I am ?

MARIE : May I venture to state, Madame

That I answered the bell.

MAMMA (*speaking*) : My dress quickly.

MARIE *unhooks her dress and she steps out of //, wearing a white evening gown underneath.*

Singing.

So aggravating

Can't you see in what a nervous state I am ?

MARIE (*singing*) : It's a quarter to eight, Madame.

MAMMA (*speaking*) : Very well, very well. (*She looks at herself in the glass.*)

MARIE (*speaking*): Your shoes, Madame.

MAMMA (*speaking*): Yes, quickly.

She sits down in front of her mirror, MARIE bands her a shoe-horn and kneels at her feet to help her on with her white shoes.

Singing.

I waste a lot of time on those damned girls,

WORDS AND MUSIC

I think I'll wear the rubies and the pearls.

MARIE (*singing*):

They're in the jewel case.

But hadn't you better do your face

And hair ?

MAMMA (*snatching off her white wig*) :

All right then, there I

She turns round and pats her hair into place in front of the mirror, singing to herself.

La lala la la lalalala lala la

Lalala lala lalala—lalala lala la

MARIE (*singing*):

This wig must be sent to be dressed,

And could I be allowed to suggest

That before retiring to rest

You lock the door,

And in this drawer

Hide every garment that you wore

From sight.

MAMMA: All right—all right. *Singing.*

Who would suppose I was nearly forty-three

Ah Me !

I can knock spots off those simpering

' Jeunes Filles '

You see

Virgin charms don't allure men

They need something beyond.

All the wise and mature men

Need a ' Femme du Monde '

I can be tender

And wise and witty too

It's true

I don't surrender.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Before surrender's due.

A few—

Lovers may have betrayed me

When my heart disobeyed me

But I've escaped now

I have them taped now

Life has indeed repaid me.

MARIE *goes out.*

Age can be gay

Age can betray

Destiny's foolish law

Though the Younger Generation's

Knock knock knocking at the door

Age is a joke

Planned to provoke

Dreams that the fools ignore

When the younger Generation's

Knock knock knocking at the door

I shall still be gay and attractive

As long as I'm active

I'll savour each delicate sin

Not until my footsteps stagger

And I'm "Gaga"

I'll give in.

Give me a Moon

Give me a tune

Give me a dancing floor

There's a Younger Generation

Knock knock knocking at the door.

There is a loud knocking at the door, and as the lights fade an endless stream of YOUNG MEN in evening dress march into the room.

WORDS AND MUSIC

MIDNIGHT MATINEE

OPENING CHORUS

We're going to do a Midnight Matinee I
We're going to do a Midnight Show I
We're not *quite* sure
What Charity it's for
But probably the Press will know,
We're going to have a talk on Saturday
To make a list of friends who'll go.
The Season's such a bore
We haven't had much excitement since the War
And so ...
We'll do a Midnight Show.

Last year we did a " Feather Parade "
That was a great success.
But some got bent
And some would break
And a lot got sent
To Melton by mistake
At Easter we went mad I'm afraid
We really must confess
We gave a great—
Big "Circus Ball"
But forgot the date
So no one came at all.

We're going to do a Midnight Matinee I
We're going to do a Midnight Show !
A sort of " Masque "
Where everyone will ask

WORDS AND MUSIC

And nobody will *ever* know.
We're going to have a talk on Saturday
To make a list of friends who'll go
God knows how much we'll fetch
But we shall have all our pictures in the *Sketch*
And so—
We'll do a Midnight Show.

Characters:

MRS. ROWNTREE (Organiser)	
VISCOUNTESS HOGAN	Diane de Poitiers
LADY MILLICENT HEADLEY	Cleopatra
THE MARCHIONESS OF LEMWORTH	Nell Gwynn
THE HON. MRS. DOUGLAS DRAYCOTT	Salome
MISS ESME PONTING	Marie Antoinette
LADY ELEANOUR SHERREL	Court Lady
Miss REBECCA MOSENTHORPE	Court Lady
LADY PATRICIA GAINTON	Little Page
THE HON. JULIAN FORRAGE	Little Page
Miss SPENCE	Joan of Arc
THE LADY WESTMORSHAM	Lady Blessington
MRS. F. N. J. WILSON	Lady Godiva
MR. STUART INGLEBY (Announcer)	

After the Opening Chorus, which is sung by Six LADIES and MRS. ROWNTREE, the scene changes to a smart drawing-room in which the committee meeting is being held. EVERYONE present has a cocktail, except MRS. ROWNTREE, who has a pencil and paper. The VISCOUNTESS HOGAN rises.

WORDS AND MUSIC

HOGAN : Darlings, I must fly—I've got to dress.

MRS. R. : You *carft* go yet, we haven't settled *anything!*

HOGAN : Diane de Poitiers—I shall be Diane de Poitiers, it's all arranged.

MRS. R. (*miserably*) : I don't even know who she was.

LEMWORTH : Effie, how can you I She was Henry the something's little piece.

WESTMORSHAM : She died in the most dreary agonies owing to having the wrong child at the wrong moment and having the wrong doctor as well and everything being awful.

HOGAN : Anyhow she's the one I'm going to be. Pinkie will do me a dress, it will probably be nothing but oilcloth and isinglass—you know how he loves being a little different, but it's sure to look lovely in the lights. You *mil* arrange about the lights properly this time, Effie. I don't want that Mona Lisa business all over again. Good-bye everybody. Come on, Millie. ...

She and LADY MILLICENT HEADLEY *go out.*

MRS. R. : I did so want her to be Mary Queen of Scots.

MRS. WILSON : The thing that worries me is, ought I to have a real horse or not ?

MRS. R. : Don't give it another thought, Mrs. Wilson, it will be perfectly easy to get a horse.

Miss SPENCE : After all they had camels in *Chu Chin Chow*.

LEMWORTH : And a bus in *Cavalcade*.

MRS. WILSON : And I suppose I should have the hair sewn to the tights, just in certain places ?

WESTMORSHAM : You might have it sewn to the horse.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Miss SPENCE : You do think it would be better to have her victorious, don't you, and not just a simple girl?

MRS. R.: Who ?

Miss SPENCE : Joan of Arc, of course.

MRS. R.: Don't give it another thought, Miss Spence. She must undoubtedly be completely victorious.

MRS. DRAYCOTT : You will arrange for me to have a nice lot of space, won't you, Effie dear, and no obstructions—I haven't danced for years and I'm sure to be nervous.

LEMWORTH : Do you cover *much* more ground when you're nervous, darling ?

MRS. DRAYCOTT (*ignoring her*) : And no tin tacks on the stage either because I shall have bare feet.

MRS. R. : Don't give it another thought, Mrs. Draycott. Tin-tacks. (*She makes a note.*)

LEMWORTH : I think I ought to have real oranges, don't you ? Those papier-mache ones look so unappetising.

WESTMORSHAM ; Certainly—it will be divine, we'll eat them all up at rehearsals.

Miss PONTING : You know I am just the teeniest little bit worried about that ship.

MRS. R. : Which ship ?

Miss PONTING : The one Marie Antoinette had in her hair, there was a lot of talk about it at the time, I believe.

LEMWORTH : Talk to Pinkie about it, darling, he'll probably give you a wreath of Aquitanias.

WESTMORSHAM : If it's too small no one will be able to see the ship, and if it's too big no one will be able

WORDS AND MUSIC

to see you, so I should leave it altogether if I were you.

Miss SPENCE (*discouraged*): Perhaps I'd better be Catherine the Great after all.

LEMWORTH: She wasn't a Bygone Enchantress, she was just an angry old girl with idle fancies.

WESTMORSHAM: Do you know that for the last ten minutes I've been absolutely at war with myself?

LEMWORTH: How very uncomfortable. Why?

WESTMORSHAM: Lady Blessington or Flora Macdonald, which shall I be?

LEMWORTH: Neither.

MRS. R.: Not Flora Macdonald, dear Lady Westmorsham, she was really such a drab little thing, if you know what I mean, and so terribly difficult to convey. Unless you came on in a rowing boat I don't think anyone would know who you were, people are so dreadfully silly nowadays.

WESTMORSHAM: If I'm Lady Blessington I shall walk with a very high stick, imperiously, you know.

LEMWORTH: Why?

WESTMORSHAM: Because I wish to, Violet.

LEMWORTH: I don't believe Lady Blessington had a very high stick.

WESTMORSHAM: Darling, how could you possibly know? There's nothing in history to prove that she didn't have hundreds and hundreds of sticks and seventeen French poodles.

LEMWORTH: I have no intention of appearing in the same programme with seventeen French poodles.

WESTMORSHAM: That, darling, wouldn't matter nearly as much as you think it would.

MRS. R. (*peaceably*): Lady Westmorsham, please . . .

WORDS AND MUSIC

MRS. WILSON : I must say I find this discussion very tedious.

MRS. DRAYCOTT : It's always the way, nobody ever gets anything done. . . .

MRS. R. : I don't see why you say that, Mrs. Draycott; after all I'm sure I'm doing my best . . .

Miss SPENCE : No one has told me yet where I am to go for my armour. . . .

LEMWORTH : These ridiculous arguments about sticks and poodles. . . .

Suddenly the quarrel dies away as two flashlight photographers enter. EVERYBODY smiles amiably. LADY WESTMORSHAM even goes so far as to lean girlishly over LADY LEMWORTH'S shoulder.

BLACK OUT

TWELVE GIRLS in Grecian costume walk on in front of the Number One Tabs, and arrange themselves in a group centre. They are all wearing very beautifully made masks, so the extremely witty introductory speech in verse which they recite in unison is rather lost on the audience.

GIRLS : Een arrarah ola brure
Taala caana effalure
Tar Apollo nuraling
Jupiter abalaching

Tanger weero avaloy
Burel ammalee to Troy
Baara weether dolaser
Mount Olympus bolaser.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Een arrarah ola brure
Taala caana effalure
Tar Apollo nuraling
Jupiter abalaching.

Hola jaaga ammo purtain
Borrodah anula curtain.

Upon finishing this descriptive prelude THEY all walk off a trifle untidily.

MR. STUART INGLEBY *enters from the Prompt side becomingly attired in Louis Quinsy court dress, glittering with rhinestones and carrying a large sailor doll. He is greeted by a little desultory applause from the orchestra and is obviously exceedingly nervous.*

MR. INGLEBY : Your Royal Highness, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. I—er—take—er—er—very great pleasure—er—in the—er—privilege of—er—having been asked—er—to appear before you in aid of this ABSOLUTELY SPLENDID Charity—We all—er—as you know owe a very—er—deep debt to—er—absolutely ANYBODY who—er—has absolutely ANYTHING to—er—do with the Sea and—er—particularly in these trying times when everything seems so—so—um—INFINITELY—er—CHAOTIC, if you know what I mean—therefore this—er—particular cause, embracing as it undoubtedly does and stretching as it undoubtedly does to the—er—furthest corners of the far-flung—er—EMPIRE—I feel—and I am sure you feel too—that nothing we any of us do could ever be—er—TOO MUCH so therefore I—er—have been asked by our brilliant Organiser, MRS. ROWNTREE—

Applause.

WORDS AND MUSIC

—who over so many years has done such **SPLENDID** work for every conceivable charity—who indeed could forget her Feather Fantasy of last year, and her Milky Way Ball of the year before, to say nothing of her "Amants Inconnus " Raffle at the Palladium in 1929 ? I have been asked by Mrs. Rowntree to auction this beautiful doll, which has been personally made by the **DUCHESS OF ENDLBROOK**, who as you know is almost completely an **INVALID** and seldom if ever leaves her very lovely house near **WINDERMERE**. I have already been offered twenty-five pounds by Lord Ackle—now then—who will offer me thirty ? . . . Thirty pounds for this exquisitely wrought sailor—er doll—Come now—surely thirty pounds is not very much to ask in such an admirable cause—

Dead silence.

—Any advance on twenty-five pounds ? Look how **ABSOLUTELY SPLENDIDLY** it has been made, perfect to the last detail, accurate even to the **LANYARD** ! Thirty pounds, please—

Dead silence.

MRS. ROWNTREE calls "Thirty-five Pounds" from the side of the stage.

—Thank you, Mrs. Rowntree—I have been bid thirty-five pounds by Mrs. Rowntree—any advance on thirty-five pounds— ?

Dead silence.

Going—going—come now, forty pounds—will no one offer forty pounds ?

Utter silence.

Going at thirty-five pounds—Going—Going—**GONE**.

MRS. ROWNTREE enters from Prompt side amid applause, attired in an elaborate evening dress with a

WORDS AND MUSIC

large spray of orchids. She takes the doll from MR. INGLEBY with a brief and angry little bow, and marches off again.

Now, Your Royal Highness, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, we come to the Pageant of Bygone Enchantresses.

He nods to the Musical Director, who proceeds to play soft music. The curtains roll back, the Prompt-side one sticks a little, but this is remedied by MRS. ROWNTREE, who has been accidentally discovered behind them. She tugs at the curtain and finally coaxes it off all right. There is a frame at the back Centre with a few steps leading up to it, and a terrace balustrade running along the top of the rostrum. The background of the frame is blue sky with fleecy clouds painted on it. The rest of the stage is masked in with black velvet.

Bygone Loves and bygone Lovers

Live again in History's pages

As one turns them one discovers

Love's Romance across the Ages

DIANE DE POITIERS—THE VISCOUNTESS HOGAN.

The music swells and the lights go out, a spotlight picks up the Prompt-side corner of the rostrum and moves slowly along the terrace, down the steps and round the stage and off O.P side, followed hurriedly by THE VISCOUNTESS HOGAN as Diane de Poitiers, who is unfortunately unable to catch up with it and is therefore practically indiscernible.

Queen of every fascination

This Enchantress lives again

Siren of the Restoration

Mistress Gwynn of Drury Lane.

WORDS AND MUSIC

NELL GWYNN—THE MARCHIONESS OF LEMWORTH.

Nothing happens for a moment and so he says again " NELL GWY ..." and changes rapidly to " CLEOPATRA " as he sees over his shoulder LADY MILLICENT HEADLEY being borne on in a litter. The litter is obviously a trifle heavy for the BEARERS, and tilted a little to one side, but LADY MILLICENT rises above it by assuming an expression of slightly apprehensive serenity and is conveyed down the steps and off stage in triumph>, to NELL GWYNN'S Music.

Queen of every fascination

This Enchantress lives again

Siren of the Restoration

Mistress Gwynn of Drury Lane.

NELL GWYNN—THE MARCHIONESS OF LEMWORTH.

This time it is really THE MARCHIONESS OF LEMWORTH as NELL GWYNN. She comes dancing on girlishly, determined not to be put out by the violently Eastern Cleopatra music which is being played by the orchestra. She carries a large basket of oranges, and just as she reaches the foot of the steps, the bottom of the basket falls out and all the oranges roll about the stage. She gives a gay, if rather false little laugh, and dances merrily off the stage.

Eastern Stars your light grows less

Oh Eastern Moon your beauty pales

Before this sinister Princess,

Salome of the Seven Veils.

SALOME—THE HONOURABLE MRS. DOUGLAS DRAYCOTT.

The lights change to blue, and MRS. DRAYCOTT enters to suitable music as SALOME. She steals sinuously along the terrace, scantily dressed and carrying a large head on a charger. On reaching the foot of the steps she suddenly

WORDS AND MUSIC

realises that she has never rehearsed with the head on the charger and will be unable to dance with it, so with great sang-froid she hands it to MR. INGLEBY, who reluctantly accepts //, and stands holding it, looking extremely uncomfortable while MRS. DRAYCOTT endeavours to dance effectively without treading on any of the oranges. Finally she goes off looking faintly disagreeable before her music is quite finished. MR. INGLEBY, supremely embarrassed by the head on the charger, looks miserably after her in the vain hope that she may come back and fetch //. Then, still holding //, he begins his next speech, stops short, and places the charger on the staff just behind him.

Tragic Queen of Tragic Story

Memory that haunts us yet

Here we see you in your glory

Lovely Marie Antoinette.

MARTE ANTOINETTE—Miss ESME PONTING. COURT LADIES—LADY ELEANOUR SHERREL and Mrs REBECCA MOSENTHORPE. PAGES—LADY PATRICIA GANTON and THE HONOURABLE JULIAN FORRAGE.

Miss PONTING, as *Marie Antoinette*, with the COURT LADIES and PAGES enter briskly together, and owing to the width of their hoop skirts become jammed on the steps and have to retreat and come down sideways. Having succeeded in manipulating the steps they go off with a great air of Eighteenth-century dignity which is slightly marred by JULIAN FORRAGE, the smallest page, wailing miserably throughout.

MR. INGLEBY is about to embark upon his next announcement when he hears a strange clicking just behind him. He is obviously *pulled* but doesn't look round for fear of looking awkward. The clicking is caused by

WORDS AND MUSIC

MRS. ROWNTREE, *who is endeavouring to hook the charger off the stage with a walking-stick. Finally she gives it up and comes on bravely and carries it off.*

Battle Queen of History

Gallant Memory, Brave Romance

Welcome, Welcome, Hail to Thee

Joan of Arc. The Maid of France I

JOAN OF ARC—Miss SPENCE.

Miss SPENCE *enters as Joan of Arc. The orchestra plays an appropriate trumpet call. She is attired in shining armour with a very Jong blue cloak flowing behind her. She comes to an abrupt halt at the foot of the steps and is nearly strangled owing to her cloak catching in the balustrade at the top of the steps. She stands stock-still in a brave effort not to betray that anything is wrong. MR. INGLEBY goes up to her and falling on one knee repeats the last two lines of his verse. "Welcome, Welcome, Hail to Thee, Joan of Ari, the Maid of France" She shoots an agonised look at him which he doesn't understand and so he goes back to his place at the side of the stage. The orchestra plays her music through again, at last MRS. ROWNTREE is seen crawling along the terrace on her hands and knees. She unhitches the cloak and crawls back again. Miss SPENCE marches off very quickly.*

Beauty rare, and stately calm

England holds your memory dear

Queen of Fashion, Queen of Charm

Lady Blessington is here.

LADY BLESSINGTON—THE LADY WESTMORSHAM.

LADY WESTMORSHAM, *as Lady Blessington', walks on with great dignity and a very high stick. Nothing goes amiss with her until she is just about to go off, when her*

WORDS AND MUSIC

stick catches in a hole in the stage and she has to go back for it. Apart from this her appearance is a triumphant success.

Lady sweet beyond compare
Strange the legend, strange the deed
Shielded by your flowing hair
Riding on your snow-white steed.

LADY GODIVA—MRS. F. N. J. WILSON.

Nothing happens at all. MR. INGLEBY looks anxiously behind him and repeats the verse again. Still nothing happens, a lot of whispering and scuffling is heard offstage, interspersed with the clip-clopping of horses' hooves and an occasional neigh. MRS. ROWNTREE is heard to give a little shriek and say in audible tones : " There—look what it's done now ! " Finally MRS. WILSON stumps along the terrace down the steps, and off on foot, looking very cross indeed. The music changes and all the BYGONE ENCHANTRESSES come on together', some from the terrace at the top and some from downstage. With only a very slight muddle they take up their positions on the steps for the Grand Tableau. LADY BLESSTNGTON, who enters from the terrace rather late, trips on the top step and falls headlong, knocking Marie Antoinette's wig a little on one side. The OTHERS do their best to conceal this mishap from the audience by crowding round her prone figure, so that until the end she remains completely bidden from view. Two angels on wires slide on at the back, about six feet above the assembled company. They bump into each other in mid air and remain hunched together in not quite the attitude that had been rehearsed. The orchestra plays a very loud chord and the lights fade.

WORDS AND MUSIC

DEBUTANTES

PRELUDE TO FINALE

Four little Debutantes, so tired.
 Yearning to seek our virgin beds
 Longing to rest our aching heads
Weary of all that we desired
When in the morning we awake
Shall we be glad to undertake
 Further exhausting hours among
Pleasures and joys so carefully planned
Shall we continue to withstand
 The heavy task of being young ?

THREE WHITE FEATHERS

BOTH are seated in a motor-car. He a Guardsman. She a Debutante.

SHE : We haven't moved for an hour and three-quarters.

HE : I know.

SHE : I suppose there's no chance of us slipping out and nipping in the back way ?

HE : I don't believe there is a back way.

SHE : There must be, they couldn't take the groceries past those sentries.

WORDS AND MUSIC

HE : I can't understand you being so nervous.

SHE : Nervous ! Pm petrified. Pd rather fare a Monday night audience at the Bolton Hippodrome.

HE : Relax, my dear, just relax.

SHE : How can I relax with all those rubber necks gaping at me ?

HE : You ought to be used to people looking at you. YouVe been on the stage since you were four.

SHE : I wish I'd never married you. I do really.

HE : Darling.

SHE : Not that I don't love you, I do, but T wish to God you were a nice comfortable comedian.

HE : It'll soon be over.

SHE (*looking out of the window*): That woman in the red hat's laughing at me.

HE : Pay no attention.

SHE : Saucy cat. (*Out of the window!*) Go on, have another look and enjoy yourself.

HE : Darling, please.

SHE : I'm sorry, but you'd think they'd have something better to do.

HE : You really must be a little more dignified.

SHE : Dignified with three feathers perched on my head: I feel like one of the horses in *Cinderella*.

HE : Keep calm.

SHE : It's all very fine for you, you're used to it. Here am I, a dancing soubrette for fifteen years suddenly shoved on in the Palace scene without a rehearsal.

HE : Why don't you try to forget the theatre for a little ?

SHE : It's all I have to remember, that and father's pawnshop. This isn't my cup of tea and I believe they all know it.

WORDS AND MUSIC

HE : Nonsense, darling—you look lovely and I'm very proud of you.

SHE (*patting his hand*) : Sweet, I won't let you down, honestly I won't. I'll be serene and dignified and everything you want me to be. (*She looks out of the window and waves violently*) Oo-oo-oo-oo—

HE. (*pulling her back*) : Dearest, don't for heaven's sake.

SHE : Don't be silly—that's mum :

Verse i.

I can't help feeling
Fate's made a fool of me rather,
It placed me where I shouldn't be
And really couldn't be by rights ;
We lived at Baling,
Me and me Mother and Father,
I've scaled the social ladder
And I've never had a head for heights ;
We had a pawnshop on the corner of the street,
And Father did a roaring trade.
I used to think those rings and necklaces were sweet,
Though now I wouldn't give them to my maid.

Refrain.

I've travelled a long, long way
And the journey hasn't been all jam ;
I must admit
The Rolls in which I sit
Is one up on the dear old tram,
I say to myself each day,

WORDS AND MUSIC

In definitely Marble Halls.
To-day it may be three white feathers,
But yesterday it was three brass balls.

Verse 2.

By easy stages
Though my beginnings were humble
I've studied each small movement
Of my self-improvement
From the start,
I've toured for ages,
I'll never falter or stumble ;
I'll give an air of breeding
And a first-rate reading
Of the part
You must forgive me if I kid myself a bit,
In me tiara and me gown,
And though my accent may not altogether fit,
Don't be afraid I'll let you down.

Refrain 2.

I've travelled a long long way,
And had a lot of jolts and bumps,
I'll concentrate
And be ahead of fate,
Whichever way the old cat jumps ;
I'll wink as I slyly drink
To the ancestors who line our halls,
To-day it may be three white feathers,
But yesterday it was three brass balls.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Refrain 3.

I've travelled a long long way,
And now I've found the man I love;
I'll do my share, so long as he is there,
To help me with a gentle shove. . . . (*She stops
singing.*)

SHE : We're moving.

*SHE winks, but they assume a dignified attitude as
the lights fade.*

CLOSE WHITE TABS

FINALE

THE PARTY'S OVER NOW

- (1) *Scene in One.*
- (2) *Full Set.*

WORDS AND MUSIC

Characters:

(1)

FOUR DEBUTANTES
POLICEMAN
1ST STREET CLEANER
2ND STREET CLEANER
LAMP-LIGHTER

Gerald Nodin

CO

YOUNG GIRL
YOUNG MAN
HOSTESS
LEONARA
LADYSKEFFINGTON
LORD SKEFFINGTON

Doris Hare
John Mills
Joyce Barbour
Steffi Duna
Ivy St. Helier
Romney Brent

FULLCOMPANY

At the end of the Prelude sung by the FOUR DEBUTANTES, the light fades out, and in the darkness two lighted windows appear, dimly at first and then, as they grow brighter, the party music is heard and the silhouettes of the dancers are thrown on to the blinds. The scene appears dimly in a blue light and it is seen to be the outside of a house, with a lamp over the front door and painted steps leading to it.

A POLICEMAN walks on from the side and meets the Two STREET-WASHING MEN with their barrow and hose.

WORDS AND MUSIC

1ST S.C. : Party goin' on ?

POLICEMAN : What did you think it was—a Tennis Tournament ?

1ST S.C. : All right, all right.

2ND S.C. : You'd never think there was a Crisis, that's wot I say—you'd never think it, not for a moment you wouldn't.

POLICEMAN : No 'arm in enjoying yourself even if there is.

2ND S.C. : Funny way to enjoy yourself, staying up all night when you don't 'ave to.

1ST S.C.: Cheer up, Frank, the Season's nearly over.

2ND S.C. : And wot a Season it 'as been! My ol' woman's been fairly rushed orf 'er feet, I give you my word. Winkle Parties and Fried Fish Cabarets every night, just a ceaseless raound of social activities.

The LAMP-LIGHTER comes on from R. and puts the lamp out above the front door of the house. The lights allfade, and in the darkness the front scene goes up, and the same house is seen again at the back, but this time it is built and the steps are solid.

The door of the house opens and a YOUNG GIRL and a YOUNG MAN come down the steps.

Y. GIRL : We can get a taxi at the corner of the Square.

Y. MAN : All right—darling.

He tries to kiss her.

Y. GIRL : No, dear, not now.

Y. MAN : Why not ?

Y. GIRL : It's over.

Y. MAN : What's over ?

Y. GIRL : The Party, silly, all that was part of the

WORDS AND MUSIC

Party, now we're tired. It's no use going on with things when you're tired and spoiling them.

Y. MAN : Not just once ?

Y. CTRL (*smiling*): If you must.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately.

Y. GTRL (*escaping from him*) : No more, my sweet—the Party's over now.

THEY sing : " *The Party's Over Now*," and after a short dance they go off.

The Front Door opens again and the HOSTESS comes out on to the steps with LEONARA.

HOSTESS : Are you sure you won't let me telephone for a taxi for you ?

LEONARA : There's a rank at the corner. I can see it from here.

HOSTESS • It was so sweet of you to come, and dance for us so beautifully. I'm tremendously grateful.

LEONARA : I've had a lovely time and enjoyed every minute of it, thank you so much.

HOSTESS : I'll send you your cheque in the morning.

LEONARA : I really haven't earned it.

HOSTESS : Yes, you have. Good night, my dear.

LEONARA : Good night.

The HOSTESS goes in again and LEONARA comes down the steps.

The Music swells from inside the house and she begins to dance a graceful little waltz, by herself. When she has gone, the door opens again and LORD and LADY SKEFFINGTON come out.

LADY S. (*disagreeably*): Why isn't the car here ?

LORD S.: I sent it home.

LADY S.: Quite typical of you and extremely irritating.

WORDS AND MUSIC

LORD S. : You've been excessively disagreeable all the evening. It would be properly consistent to keep it up all the way home.

LADY S. : You know, dear, you'd spoil a good party for anyone, let alone a dreary one like that.

LORD S. : I do hope you haven't been drinking, my love.

LADY S. : That is one thing you can be perfectly sure of. I haven't touched a drop of Millicent's champagne for seventeen years.

LORD S. : A bad principle; it might at least make you more amiable or kill you.

THEY sing the second half of the Refrain.

Though we hate

Abominate

Each party we're invited to

To stay out

And dance about

Because we've nothing else to do.

Though every night

We start out bright

And finish with a row

We've been so bored

Thank the Lord

That the Party's over now !

THEY go off, and out of the house comes the HOSTESS followed by all the GUESTS, singing a full Refrain.

Verse.

Night is over, dawn is breaking

Everywhere the Town is waking,

Just as we are on our way to sleep.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Lovers meet and dance a little,
Snatching from romance a little
Souvenir of happiness to keep.
The music of an hour ago
Was just a sort of " Let's pretend "
The melodies that charmed us so
At last are ended.

Refrain.

The Party's over now
The dawn is drawing very nigh
The candles gutter, the starlight leaves the sky
It's time for little boys and girls
To hurry home to bed
For there's a new day waiting just ahead.
Life is sweet
But time is fleet
Beneath the magic of the moon
Dancing time
May seem sublime
But it is ended all too soon.
The thrill has gone
To linger on
Would spoil it anyhow
Let's creep away from the day
For the Party's over now.



OPERETTE



To

FRITZI MASSARY

with my love and admiration

Operette was produced at His Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket, London, on March 16th, 1938, with the following cast:

MAISIEWELBEY	Phyllis Monkman
(PANSY BROWN in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	
PHILIPJOHNS	John Lauri
(MONSIEUR FELIX in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	
EDDIE GOSLING	Edward Cooper
(MONSIEUR POM-POM in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	

SEXTETTE in *The Model Maid*:

GRACE MENTEITH	Pamela Randell
VIOLET TRAVERS	Linda Gray
ROZANNE GRAY	Peggy Wood
LALA MONTAGUE	Lisa D'Esterre
ELEANOR WEST	Hedli Anderson
DOREEN MANNERS	Jean Barnes

LIESL HAREN	Fritzi Massary
(COUNTESS MITZI in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	
DUGGIE (a Call-boy)	Tommy Hayes
DECIMADRURY	Winifred Davis
(DUCHESS OF TRENTON in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	
EDGAR FAWCETT	Gerald Nodin
(DUKE OF TRENTON in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	
PAUL TREVOR	Max Oldaker
(MARQUIS OF FAIRFIELD in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	

OP E R E T T E

ALBERT (Paul Trevor's Dresser)	Duncan Rider
ELSIE JEWELL	Muriel Barron
(MARY DALE in <i>The Model Maid</i>)	
DORA (Elsie Jewell's Dresser)	Gladys Henson
TRUDI (Liesl Haren's Maid)	Violet Oldak
LILY (a Dresser)	Molly Lumley
CHARLES (Liesl Haren's Butler)	Charles Peters
NIGEL VAYNHAM	Griffith Jones
THE HON. DAVID MESSITER	Peter Yokes
(his Brother)	
LORD ELDERLEY	Hugh French
LORD CAMP	Kenneth Carten
LORD SICKERT	John Gatrell
LORD BORROWMERE	Ross Landon
THE HON. HUMPHREY GORDON	Danis Carew
JENNER	J. Grant Anderson
(Stage Door-keeper of the Jubilee Theatre)	
MABEL (a Gallery Girl)	Marcelle Turner
DORIS (a Gallery Girl)	Rosemary Lomax
GEORGE (a Waiter)	Leonard Morris
JOHNNY KNOWLES	Richard Haydn
(Stage Manager, Jubilee Theatre)	
BLANCHE WALLACE	Moya Nugent
CHARLES HOBSON	George Butler
THE COUNTESS OF MESSITER	Irene Vanbrugh
GENTLEMEN OF THE	{ Anthony Nicholls Gordon Brand Dunstan Hart Peter Gibson Donald Gordon Angus Menzies
SEXTETTE	

OP E R E T T E

LADIES OF THE CHORUS

Judy Bennett
Winifred Comstock
Janet Dunn
Phyllis Edmundsen
Peggy Hale
Maria Luth
Diana Nash
Dilys Rees
Adele Siviere
Edna Brough
Daphne Day
June Spencer Dyke
Jacqueline Le Geyt
Doris Ingham
Dorothy Moync
Ida Nicklin
Jessica Roland
Nina Terry
Iris White

GENTLEMEN OF THE CHORUS

Denis Carew
Charles Gillespie
Peter Luxton
Ronald Pope
Richard Richards
R. J. Thurgood
Peter Evans
John Lauri
Hugh Moor
Farleigh Price
Richard Stovold
Brian Vogel

LIST OF SCENES

ACT I

- Scene I. (*Prologue.*) *The Strand: A Row of Hansom Cabs.*
- Scene II. *The Stage of the Jubilee Theatre (a few minutes later).*
(*Act I, The Model Maid, Trouville.*)
- Scene III. *The Green Room (a few minutes later).*
- Scene IV. *The same as Scene II (a few -minutes later).*
- Scene V. *The Drawing-room of 'Liesl's House in Hill Street (late the same evening).*
- Scene VI. *A. series of six Hansom Cabs (later still the same evening).*
- Scene VII. *Outside the Stage Door of the Jubilee Theatre (11.30 p.m. five weeks later).*
- Scene VIII. *A. Private Room at Romano's (a few minutes later).*
- Scene IX. *The same as Scene III (two weeks later).*
- Scene X. *The Stage of the Jubilee Theatre (a few seconds later).*
(*Finale Act III, The Model Maid— The Pre Catalan.*)

ACT II

- Scene* I. (*Prologue.*) *The Strand: A. Row of Hansom Cabs.*
- Scene* II. *Rozanne's Dressing-room at the Jubilee Theatre (10 p.m. An evening in April).*
- Scene* III. *The Stage of the Jubilee Theatre (a minute later).*
(*Finale Act III, The Model Maid, The Opera Ball.*)
- Scene* IV. *The Drawing-room of Liesl's House (a few days later).*
- Scene* V. *The Strand: (Quartette).*
- Scene* VI. *A Private Room at Romano's (three months later).*
- Scene* VII. *Rozanne's Dressing-room at the Jubilee Theatre (the same evening).*
- Scene* VIII. *The same as last Scene, Act I (a few seconds later).*

ACT I

SCENE I

PROLOGUE

The period is 1906. The scene is a row of six hansom cabs in which are seated Six LADIES and Six GENTLEMEN. The rhythm of the horses' hooves and the jingling of the bells are sustained in the orchestra.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
With your very kind permission
In accordance with tradition
We appear.
Unsentimental men
May declare us nauseating,
But by clear articulating
We are bent upon creating
Atmosphere.
We represent those carefree days
That still retained a bland hypocrisy
And looked upon Democracy
As quaint—
A certain transitory phase
Which every accurate historian
Has blamed upon Victorian
Restraint.
Our life was gay,
Champagne adorning it,
It passed away

And left us mourning it.
We've run our race,
Time can't replace
These years of grace.
Non-temperamental men,
We implore you to surrender
To a mood of gay and tender
Sentiment.
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Tho' we wish our words were clearer,
If they've brought your memory nearer
To the light Edwardian Era
We're content—
We've said our fill
Without much skill,
But thank you very very much for keeping still.

ACT I

SCENE II

SCENE : *The Jubilee Theatre. A few minutes later.*

The curtain is down and the overture to The Model Maid is playing. The house lights are out and there is a glow from the footlights on the curtain.

The Model Maid is a modern Musical Comedy, that is to say, it is of the period of 1905, having been produced in the preceding September. It is a Charles Hobson Production, which means that it is the best that London has to offer. CHARLES HOBSON is the King of Theatrical

Producers. He owns several theatres and the most important of these is the Jubilee. His flair for discovering talent and making stars is famous the world over. The Press, in referring to his discoveries, invariably and monotonously describe them as "Hobson's Choice" This slightly threadbare slogan has come in handy for many years and shows every indication of continuing indefinitely.

The Model Maid is planned according to the usual Hobson-Jubilee formula. That is to say, it is sprightly in tone with an elastic story providing opportunities for such well-known "London favourites as ELSIE JEWELL (a gracious soprano), MAISIE WELBEY (a charming light soubrette and dancer', notable for her overnight triumph in The Girl from Brazil in 1903), PAUL TREVOR, a fine upstanding tenor (whose performances in the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas were much commented upon), and EDDIE GOSLING, the famous comedian. (EDDIE GOSLING, after years in the provinces, finally achieved his first London success in The Girl from Yokohama in 1901.) In addition to these glittering luminaries, the sagacious CHARLES HOBSON has imported from the Continent a famous Viennese star, LIESL HAREN (whose performance in Eine Frau von Zurich took Central Europe by storm).

The famous "Hobson's Choice" SEXTETTE of singing Snow-Girls is, of course, a principal feature of the show, and the LADIES and GENTLEMEN of the CHORUS, the singing and dancing, the music and scenery and dresses are all above reproach.

The curtain rises on the Opening Chorus of The Model Maid. The scene is Trouville. On the right is the terrace of the Hotel de la 'Plage. On the left is the

Casino. At the back there is the bright blue sea. The LADIES and GENTLEMEN of the CHORUS are attired in various light sporting costumes as befit the climate and atmosphere.

OPENING CHORUS

Hurray! Hurray!
We're ever so gay
And French as French can be,
We say " Merci "
And " This is the Vie "
Without exactly proving much,
We might as well be Russian or Dutch
Or Japanese,
Our sole intention is to please;
We're so vivacious
That we carry all before us
Prancing about beside the silver sea,
But goodness gracious
If it wasn't for the Chorus
Dancing about where would the Peerage be ?
Hurray! Hurray!
We're ever so gay,
We smile and smirk and grin
Through thick and thin,
We'll never give in,
And tho' we tear ourselves to shreds
And wear these foolish hats on our heads
And do high kicks,
We all rehearsed with Seymour Hicks
In Trouville—Trouville—Trouville—Nineteen
Six.

On the Plage
Where the shady little ladies are at large,
It's a Continental Hades
Where you sell your soul for this and that and
those,
Spend your money
On milk and honey
And frills and furbelows.
If you're rich
You can take Yvette
To play roulette,
For which
She'll overcharge;
But nevertheless when day is done
A man must have a little fun,
And fun is fun at Trouville on the Plage.

At the end of the vocal chorus there is a spirited dance by all concerned, at the end of which PANSY BROWN (MAISIE WELBEY) comes running on. She is breathless and only just manages to get to the centre of the stage before collapsing.

PANSY : Girls—girls—I'm exhausted !

ALL (*in unison*) : Why, whatever is the matter?

PANSY : I've run all the way from the harbour.

No. I GIRL : But, Pansy, that's a good two miles.

PANSY : Good two miles ! It's the worst two miles I've ever struck.

Everybody laughs.

ALL : What's happened?

PANSY : Being confidential secretary to the most famous dressmaker in the world is no joke, I can tell you. He told me he was not arriving until to-morrow,

and this morning, just as I was having my breakfast in my little hotel, I looked out of the window and there was his yacht coming into the port. He's bringing all his newest mannequins for the Beauty Parade on Thursday and I haven't booked any of their rooms yet.

MONSIEUR FELIX, *the Manager of the Hotel de la Plage, pushes his way through the crowd.*

M. FELIX : Bon jour, mademoiselle—what it is zat I can do for you?

PANSY : Oh, Monsieur Felix, you're just the man I wanted to see. I want six rooms for Monsieur Pom-Pom's young ladies.

M. FELIX : Double or single?

PANSY : Single in theory, but double in practice.

M. FELIX : But my hotel she is full. Zere is only ze Bridal Suite free.

PANSY : Put them all in there, please, please, Monsieur Felix—Monsieur Pom-Pom will dismiss me if he arrives and finds there is nowhere for his girls to sleep.

M. FELIX : When is it that he arrives?

PANSY : Listen I

M. FELIX : Listen ?

ALL : Listen!

Everybody listens attentively. There is the noise of a motor-car off stage, then a series of loud explosions.

PANSY : That's Monsieur Pom-Pom's new car. He's had it three weeks and it's only blown up fourteen times.

ALL : He's here—He's here—He's here I

The music in the orchestra swells and everybody sings.

ALL (*singing*):

· Hurrah—Hurrah!
Wherever we are

We'll cheer until we're blue
The famous new
Couturier who,
With velvet, crepe de Chine and lace,
Can help us in the horrible race
To commandeer
The nearest eligible Peer,
So lift your voices up and cheer
For Pom-Pom—Pom-Pom—Darling
Pom-Pom's here!

With one more loud explosion a cardboard motor-car slides on to the stage. It is driven by MONSIEUR POM-POM (EDDIE GOSLING), and in it are SUZETTE, BABETTE, LOLOTTE, FIFI, YVETTE and KIKI (the famous Hobson's Choices, ELEANOR WEST, LALA MONTAGUE, ROZANNE GRAY, GRACE MENTEITH, VIOLET TRAVERS and DOREEN MANNERS). The LADIES are all dressed in motor-coats and caps and veils.

Upon arrival in the centre of the stage, the car collapses. The LADIES emerge from the disaster with casual dignity, but MONSIEUR POM-POM does a semi-somersault and lie' flat on his back. Everybody screams and PANSY runs to him.

PANSY : Are you hurt—are you hurt ?

POM-POM : No, dear—just put out.

He rises and dusts himself down.

Girls, are you all right ?

GIRLS : Yes, thank you, Monsieur Pom-Pom.

POM-POM : Haven't broken your contracts?

GIRLS : No, thank you, Monsieur Pom-Pom.

POM-POM : What a journey—what a journey! We left Southampton in a cloud of steam, and then just as

we passed the Needles Fifi dropped her needlework over the side and it got caught in the screws, then just off Shanklin the funnel got stopped up, then we had lunch and then the wind hit us amidships.

PANSY : What happened then ?

POM-POM : Everything.

PANSY : Were you seasick ?

POM-POM (*moaning*): Don't remind me of it—I kept going off into a semi-colon.

PANSY : What on earth's that ?

POM-POM : A coma with a dot on it.

Everybody laughs.

Now then—to business—to business. Girls—are you all here ?

GIRLS : Yes, Monsieur Pom-Pom.

POM-POM : Let's see if you remember your new names—call the roll, Pansy.

PANSY : Elsie.

1ST GIRL : Suzette.

POM-POM : Correct.

PANSY : Daisy.

2ND GIRL : Babette.

PANSY : Vi.

3RD GIRL : Lolotte.

POM-POM : That's right.

PANSY : Ada.

4TH GIRL : Fifi.

PANSY : Gertie.

5TH GIRL : Yvette.

PANSY : Vera.

6TH GIRL : Kiki.

POM-POM : Very good, girls—that's atmosphere, that is—now then, you'd better run along and change—

I can't have you promenading about the promenade in those dusty dust-coats.

M. FELIX : I very much regret, monsieur, but the hotel she is full and there is only ze Bridal Suite vacant.

POM-POM : Good heavens ! We can't put the girls in there, it'll give them ideas.

M. FELIX : The Countess Mitzi Nikinikolay is here—she has the whole first floor for her entourage and the whole second floor for her luggage—

POM-POM : What does she keep on the third floor—rabbits ?

M. FELIX : She herself lives in that villa on the hill.

POM-POM : Where does she get her money from ?

M. FELIX : Nobody knows, monsieur—some say she is an international spy—some say she is the daughter of a Hungarian millionaire—some say she is a—ahem—
(*He coughs discreetly.*)

POM-POM : Well, she must be a pretty successful Ahem if she can use all that space—where does she buy her clothes ?

M. FELIX : Worth, monsieur.

POM-POM : We'll soon put a stop to that.

PANSY : How ?

POM-POM : I intend to charm her.

All the GIRLS giggle.

One more titter out of you girls and you all sleep in a bathing-hut.

M. FELIX : I very much regret, monsieur, but all ze bathing-huts zey are occupied by Countess Mitzi's pets.

POM-POM : Pets ?

M. FELIX : She has seventeen greyhounds, two zebras, a litter of lion-cubs, a honey-bear—a few snakes and a giraffe.

POM-POM : All she needs is a bandstand and she could open on Sundays—lead me to her.

M. FELIX : That is not necessary, monsieur, for here she comes——

The music swells in the orchestra, everyone draws aside expectantly and waits for the COUNTESS MITZI to appear, which she does with great Continental vivacity.

MITZI : Guten Morgen—Bon jour—Buenas dias—Bon giorno—Good morning.

POM-POM : Good God ! (*He steps forward.*) Madame Livingstone, I presume ?

MITZI : Non, monsieur—they call me Countess Mitzi.

MITZI sings a song with the FULL CHORUS: "Countess Mify."

Towards the end of it the lights begin to fade and as they fade the voices fade also until there is silence.

" COUNTESS MITZI "

VERSE I

MITZI : My Father was Hungarian,
My Mother came from Spain,
I've several Aunts
In the South of France
And a Grandmamma—Maternal Grand-
mamma
In the Ukraine.

CHORUS : She went too far—poor Grandmamma,
For it's cold in the old Ukraine.

MITZI : My Uncle is Bavarian,
I'm quite a pet of his,
So if I'm not

A Polyglot

I should like to know who is I

CHORUS : If she's not a Polyglot we should like to
know who is.

REFRAIN

MITZI : They call me Countess Mitzi,
But I can't imagine why,
For my name is really Ludovika
Anastasie Frederika Isabel Rosa Mariposa
Nikinikolay.

CHORUS : We can perfectly well see why
That to alter it people try;

MITZI : For they'd rather say " Countess Mitzi/"
Just a teensy weensy bitsie,
Than a string of names like Ludovika
Anastasie Frederika Isabel Rosa Mariposa
Nikinikolay.

VERSE 2

MITZI : My Grandpapa on Mother's side
Was far more East than West,
He spent his life
With a Chinese wife
In a mental home—half-oriental home
In Bukarest.

CHORUS : What cruel fate !
We'd simply hate
To be "batty" in Bukarest.

MITZI : My Grandma on the other side
Was Russian to the core,
She danced in Kiev
But came to grief
In a brawl in Singapore.

CHORUS : Ah, what a blow
To sink so low
As a brawl in Singapore.

REFRAIN

Mrrzi: They call me Counters Mitzi——

etc.

The lights slowly come up again and the scene has changed to the Green Room of the Theatre.

As the lights come up, the music and voices come up too, but this time in the distance, as the stage is a little away from the Green Room and the show can only be heard going on when the door is open.

DECIMA DRURY, a middle-aged character actress, is seated bolt upright on a sofa left. She is elaborately dressed for the part of the Duchess of Trenton. EDGAR FAWCETT (the Duke of Trenton) is arranging his cravat in front of the mirror.

PAUL TREVOR (the Marquis of Fairfield) is in his shirt-sleeves at the other side of the room, having his throat sprayed by ALBERT, his dresser.

PAUL : Once more.

PAUL : A-a-a-a-h—that's better——(He sings a few notes.)

EDGAR : Damn this blasted tie I

DECIMA : I wonder what they're like to-night.

EDGAR : A bit Mondayish, I expect.

DUGGIE, the call-boy, puts his head round the door.

DUGGIE : Number nearly over.

ELSIE JEWELL comes hurriedly in, followed by her maid, DORA. DECIMA rises and looks carefully at herself in the glass.

DECIMA : Lots of time, dear.

ELSIE : I thought I'd be off—how's your voice, Paul ?

PAUL : A bit better—it's this fog.

ELSIE *takes off the cotton wrap which covers her gown and gives it to DORA.*

ELSIE : Tell Mrs. Pitcher I shall want clean gloves to-morrow night.

DORA : All right, dear, you shall 'ave 'em if I 'ave to clean 'em myself.

ELSIE : How's Liesl singing to-night ?

EDGAR : Haven't been listening.

ELSIE : I thought she was just the teeniest bit off-key on Saturday—didn't you, Paul ?

EDGAR : She varies.

ELSIE : Poor darling—such a hard worker. Paul dear—you know when I sing the " For ever and a day " phrase in the verse—would you mind coming just a scrap further downstage—you were so far up on Saturday matinee that you looked as if you were standing in the sea—you actually did——(*She giggles affectedly*)

PAUL : I wasn't aware of it.

ELSIE (*more sharply*): Well, Madame Lavani was in front and said it looked very silly.

PAUL : Well, you can tell Madame Lavani from me **to** mind her own business—which is apparently to ruin people's voices.

ELSIE : My dear Paul, if you just took a few lessons from Lavani you'd find you wouldn't have to use so many throat sprays—it's all a question of placing, you know.

PAUL : You're a very strong woman, Elsie, and you've survived Lavani's method longer than most people—but mark my words—a time will come——

ELSIE : I'm sure I had no intention of reopening this age-old argument—it's too ridiculous, really it is—all I ask is that you should come just a little tiny bit further downstage so that I don't have to sing the entire verse with my back to the audience.

PAUL : I'll be only too pleased to do anything I can to help you, dear.

ELSIE (*acidly*) : Thank you.

She sweeps out. PAUL gives a look at the others and follows her.

The number on the stage comes to an end—there is the sound of applause.

LIESL *comes in followed by EDDIE and MAISIE.*

LIESL : I would like to kill that man—he either takes the tempo so fast that I cannot say the words, or so slow that I wish to lie down on the stage and go to sleep——

DECIMA : What are they like to-night ?

EDDIE : Lot of cods'-heads.

MAISIE : They'll warm up presently.

LIESL : Where is Trudi with my lemon ?

DORA : I'll go and hurry her up, dear.

She goes off,

EDDIE *scrutinises his make-up in the glass.*

EDDIE : Me Lady Dainty looked a bit haughty just now, she nearly knocked me down in the passage.

MAISIE : She's had another row with Paul, I expect.

EDGAR : Not another one, the same one.

EDDIE : " Breath control," " When I sang at the Ope'ra Comique " or " Lavani " "

DECIMA (*laughing*): Lavani.

MAISIE : Well, it's a good repertoire as far as it goes.

LIESL *draws a chair up to a small table upon which*

is a pack of cards. She begins to lay them out for a game of Patience.

DECIMA : Come on, Edgar—it's getting near.

EDGAR : This damned tie's choking me.

DECIMA : Perhaps I shall be able to get a few lines over for a change.

EDGAR (*gaily*): That's a gross libel—you're as bad as Elsie.

DECIMA : No, dear—not *quite* as bad as Elsie.

They go off.

TRUDI, LIESL'S *maid*, comes in with a glass of lemon-juice. *The following few lines between them are spoken in German'*

TRUDI : Here's your lemon-juice.

LIESL : You know perfectly well I like to have it the moment I come off the stage.

TRUDI : I was making arrangements over the telephone—Karl said the oysters hadn't come.

MAISIE : My God! I wish I could speak foreign languages.

LIESL : We were discussing the oysters for supper to-night. (*To TRUDI.*) Go back to the telephone and tell him to ring up Scott's.

TRUDI : Yes, madame.

TRUDI goes off.

EDDIE : Have you invited Elsie ?

LIESL : No. It is quite a small party—only the people I like—I mean perhaps the people who like me.

MAISIE : Elsie is a bit of a bitch, I must say.

LIESL : What is " bit-of-a-bitch " ?

EDDIE : English theatrical term for soprano.

LIESL : She is very sweet Elsie. We have them like that in Vienna—they always cry at rehearsals.

MAISIE : She was upset from the beginning over this production. To start with, she saw that you were going to make a success—then the Guv'nor wouldn't let her have a swing song—she's had a swing song in the last three shows——

EDDIE : In " Mademoiselle Mathilde " the Guv'nor tried to make a change and give her a number with a donkey, but the donkey kept making messes, so back went the swing!

The door opens and the Six SHOW-GIRLS come trooping in, taking off their motor-coats and hats as they do so and handing them to LILY who follows them.

VIOLET : He's there again.

LIESL : Who ?

VIOLET : Lala's madman.

GRACE : Right at the end of the second row—I saw him just as we were going off.

LALA (*with a rather grand drawl*) : He keeps on writing the most absurd letters asking me to send him my old gloves—it's too silly——

ROZANNE : "I was at a finishing school in Bruxclles for two years, and so naturally I speak French like a native."

ELEANOR : Oh, do be quiet, Rosie, you're driving us all mad.

EDDIE : What's up ?

DOREEN : Laura Whitney's going on tour so the Guv'nor's given Rosie Elsie's understudy—she's been at it all the evening in the dressing-room.

ROZANNE : I know the numbers, but I haven't looked at the lines.

GRACE : You can go straight home and put a wet towel round your head.

ROZANNE : And miss Liesl's party ? Catch me I
" Everything seems to have changed—the sea, the sky—
it all looks more beautiful—more gay——"

VIOLET : Oh, my God !

ELEANOR : You'll make an overnight triumph if you
say it like that, dear.

ROZANNE : Where's the part, Lily ?

LILY : You left it on the sofa before you went on.

ROZANNE *finds the part and sits down on the sofa to
study //.*

DUGGIE *rushes into the room.*

DUGGIE : Miss Jewell's just fainted in the middle of
the scene—Miss Gray has to go on immediately!

ROZANNE (*shooting up from the sofa*) : What!

DUGGIE : Don't excite yourself—just my little joke—
toodle-oo.

DUGGIE *runs out.*

ROZANNE : I'd like to murder that little beast.

LIESL : That was very cruel.

ROZANNE : Oh !—I feel quite sick.

VIOLET : Got a cigarette, Eddie ?

DOREEN : Don't let the Guv'nor catch you.

EDDIE (*giving her one*) : Here you are.

VIOLET : You don't mind, do you, Liesl ?

LIESL : Of course not.

GRACE (*showing an emerald ring to LIESL*) : Look——

LIESL : My dear ! That is very good——(*She holds
GRACE'S hand with the ring on it up to the light.*) Yes, it
really is—very very good I

GRACE : It came to-night—in the middle of a bunch
of roses.

LIESL : Stubby?

GRACE (*complacently*): Yes—he really is rather sweet

—if only he wasn't a second son——(*She sighs.*)

VIOLET : If a second son can buy an emerald like that on his allowance, lead me to his great big brother.

GRACE : His brother's horrid—one of the ladida's—I met him at Henley in the summer—he kept on talking about the honour of the family. After all, they're only coal.

VIOLET : What do you mean " *only coal* " I

DOREEN : Did he look healthy ?

GRACE : Really, Doreen.

LALA : You are inexpressibly vulgar sometimes, Doreen, honestly you are.

LIESL : Do you want me to ask him to the party to-night ?

GRACE : No, thank you, darling—David will be there and you know what dreadful scenes he makes——

ROZANNE : —" So that was all it was to you—a joke ! A cruel, cowardly joke ! "

GRACE (*sharply*): What !

ELEANOR : Oh dear, she's off again

LILY, *who has gone off with the coats and hats, returns carrying six parasols.*

LILY : Got your feather boas, girls? I left 'em on the pegs.

VIOLET : Yes, Lily—mine's beginning to look a bit shaggy—you'd better tell Mrs. Pitcher,

LILY : I'll take it up to the wardrobe after the number.

DUGGIE (*putting bis bead round the door*): Waltz just starting.

The lights begin to fade. The GIRLS are preening before the mirror. LIESL is playing her Patience. The conversation—which is general—fades with the lights.

In the darkness PAUL TREVOR'S and ELSIE JEWELL'S voices are heard speaking.

PAUL (JOHN) : May I call you Mary ?

ELSIE (MARY) : Of course—we've only just met—
but somehow—somehow——

JOHN (*caressingly*) : Somehow what, Mary ?

MARY : I feel as though we were old friends.

JOHN : Oh, my dear——

MARY : No, don't—don't come any nearer——

JOHN : Why are you afraid ?

By this time the lights have come up and the scene is Trouville again.

The stage is empty except for JOHN and MARY, who are sitting on a seat slightly left centre. Their voices rise with the lights.

MARY : Fm not afraid—that is—not exactly.

JOHN : Love at first sight—I never believed in it before—but now——

MARY : Everything has changed—the sea—the sky—it all looks more beautiful—more gay.

JOHN : My love.

He sings.

I saw your face,
Shadows of the morning cleared,
I knew that suddenly
The world had dropped away.

MARY : Somewhere in space
Some new lovely star appeared
To rule our destiny
For ever and a day

JOHN : I knew, the moment that I touched your hand,
The gods had planned
Our meeting.

MARY : Now in this instant in the whole of Time
Our lovers' rhyme
Is near completing.

JOHN : I saw you turn away and for fit while
My poor heart drooped and faltered;
And then I saw your strange elusive smile
And aD my life was altered.

BOTH : My dearest dear,
For evermore
The happiness we've waited for
At last is here.

REFRAIN

JOHN : Dearest Love,
Now that I've found you
The stars change in the sky,
Every song is new,
Every note is true,
Sorrows like the clouds go sailing by.

MARY : Here, my Love,
Magic has bound you
To me—ever to be
In my heart supreme,
Dearer than my dearest dream,
The only love for me.

JOHN : Skies that were cloudy are clear again,
All other people seem
Like figures in a dream ;

MARY : Every song that I loved I seem to hear again,
Time goes by like a murmuring stream.

JOHN : Love has enchanted the two of us,
A magic we can share,
A something in tne air,

MARY : Proving that Destiny knew of us.
Now Heaven is at our feet,
This happiness complete
Could not be merely chance,
This exquisite romance

BOTH : For ever has us bound,
For this that we have found
No time or tide could sever—ever.
Dearest Love,
Now that I've found you
The stars change in the sky,
Every song is new,
Every note is true,
Sorrows like the clouds go sailing by.
Here, my Love,
Magic has bound you
To me—ever to be
In my heart supreme,
Dearer than my dearest dream,
The only love for me I

The Orchestra crashes out the final chords, and they walk off with arms entwined—returning after a moment to take a call—and exiting again.

The DUKE and DUCHESS OF TRENTON come on from the left, followed by MONSIEUR FELIX.

DUCHESS : But who is this woman, Monsieur Felix ?
You say the girl is her ward—I fear I do not understand ?

DUKE : The girl is apparently English.

M. FELIX : That is so, your Grace.

DUCHESS : Perhaps you would be so kind as to ask this Countess Mitzi to come and speak to us ?

M. FELIX : Mais certainement, your Grace.

He goes off.

DUCHESS : It looks suspiciously to me as though the woman and her ward were adventuresses.

DUKE : For heaven's sake be tactful, Penelope—you know what you are.

DUCHESS : I know what you are too, Archibald, and k has caused me many a sleepless night.

DUKE : Not since Christmas 1886, my love.

The COUNTESS MITZI comes out of the hotel.

Mrrzi: Monsieur Felix said that you wished to speak to me.

DUKE : That is so, Countess.

MITZI : I fear we have not met.

DUKE : I am the Duke of Trenton and this is my wife.

MITZI : How charming.

DUCHESS : I understand that this Miss Mary Dale is your ward ?

MITZI : You say " This Miss Mary Dale," madame, as though there were a great many Mary Dales—or is it my English that is at fault ?

DUKE : I am sure you are never at fault, Countess.

MITZI : How gallant to speak so politely to a woman in my unfortunate situation.

DUCHESS (*horrified*) : Unfortunate situation I

MITZI : Alas, yes—the life of an adventuress is not an easy one.

DUCHESS : Adventuress 1

MITZI : Hasn't Monsieur Felix warned you—I live by my wits. (*Slyly.*) Sometimes very well——

DUCHESS : Come away, Archibald.

MITZI : Ah, do not take him away—he is so—"gemutlich," as we say in Austria.

DUCHESS : It is a matter of supreme indifference to me what you say in Austria.

DUKE : Now then, Penelope.

DUCHESS : Are you coming or are you not ?

MITZI nudges the DUKE.

DUKE (*firmly*) : No I

DUCHESS (*furiously*) : Oh !

She marches off.

MITZI : That was very, very brave—I love brave men.

DUKE : You are a very mischievous little lady.

MITZI (*sweetly*) : What is " mischievous " ? I do not understand.

DUKE (*wagging his finger at her*) : I think you do.

MITZI : Come along to my suite and we will have a little tiny glass of wine just to prove that we are good friends—and you shall tell me all about how you learned to be so gallant with ladies, and I will tell you——

DUKE (*amorously*) : What will you tell me——?

MITZI : Wait and see——

Singing:

Beware of Countess Mitzi,
The world will tell you why,
For my name is really
Ludovika—Anastasie—Frederika
Isabel—Rosa—Mariposa
Nikinikolay.
You can perfectly well see why
People think I've a naughty eye
For they'd rather say Countess Mitzi
Just a teensy weensy bitsie
With a string of names like
Ludovika—Anastasie—Frederika
Isabel—Rosa—Mariposa
Nikinikolay!

She leads him off the stage by the hand.

There is a slight pause, then, from the left side of the stage enter SUZETTE, BABETTE, LOLOTTE, FIFI, YVETTE and KIKI. At the same moment SIR FREDDIE, SIR REGGIE, SIR PERCY, SIR CHARLIE, SIR BERTIE and SIR MONTY come on from the right.

DOUBLE SEXTETTE:

" FOOLISH VIRGINS "

MEN : Here are ladies,
Charming ladies,
A fascinating flock of them—
Our hearts are taking stock of them;
No well-respected amonist
Could be expected to resist
This lovely group
Of femininity,
So we stoop
On bended knee. (*They kneel.*)

GIRLS : Here are gentlemen,
Handsome gentlemen,
Tho' conscience may be muttering,
Our hearts insist on fluttering;
We feel to-day our luck is in
But can't betray our genuine
Relief to meet
So much virility
At our feet
In all humility,
None the less
Our gay fragility
They mustn't guess.

MEN : Dear little ladies, we beseech you
Not to be deaf to what we say,
If our romantic thoughts could reach you
Maybe you'd consent to stay
And not be too offended ;
We should think it splendid
If you'd just consent to stay.

GIRLS : If we were offended
We'd go away,
But we must not appear too willing
Lest you should think us not quite nice,
Tho' we admit it might be thrilling
Just for once to sacrifice
Our sense of obligation
To our education,
Which was very strict and stern.

MEN : What is education
If not to learn ?
Just a stroll beside the ocean
Might be a notion
More or less acceptable to moral views.

GIRLS : It really would be too ungracious to refuse.

MEN : After that delicious ramble
We might enjoy a little gamble :

GIRLS : Backing your luck may be a thrill,
But we prefer a game of skill.

MEN : Later on with Moët Chandon
You might abandon
All disturbing fears of what Mamma would
think.

GIRLS : You surely don't suppose we'd ever take to
drink!

MEN : Later still we might persuade you

To take a swim as Nature made you.

GIRLS : Fie and for shame, you go too far,
Kindly remember that we are:

REFRAIN

One little
Two little
Three little
Four little
Five little
Six little
Foolish Virgins
Eager to be some good man's wife
And learn the facts of life.
Neat little
Sweet little
Shy little
Sly little
Meek little
Chic little
Chicks emergin'
Out of the shell that held them fast
At last—At last—At last.
Please excuse our artless prattling,
We're as green as nuts in May,
On the loose and almost rattling
For the matrimonial fray.
We've one little
Two little
Three little
Four little
Five little
Six little
Egos urgin'

Any rich man we chance to see
To take us on a spree
With a substantial guarantee,
Foolish Virgins We.

This Refrain is repeated, after which there is a dance, during which the lights fade on the Scene.

ACT I

SCENE V

SCENE : *The Drawing-room of LIESL's House in Hill Street.*

This is a pleasant, rather over-furnished room. On the audience's right there is a fireplace with a fire brightly burning in it. In the centre, at the back, there are double doors opening into the hall, and downstage, on the left, other double doors opening into the dining-room.

In addition to a lot of photographs in frames, cushions and various other bibelots, there is a grand piano on the left just above the dining-room doors, draped with a rich oriental shawl. There are quantities of flowers everywhere.

When the lights come up on the scene it is about 1 a.m. and the room is empty, but from the dining-room on the left comes the noise of a supper party in full swing. "

There is a ring at the front-door bell. CHARLES (LIESL's butler) comes out of the dining-room, crosses over and goes into the hall. In a moment he reappears, ushering in NIGEL VAYNHAM. NIGEL is a handsome

young man in the thirties, unmistakably military in bearing and, at the moment, wearing what is known as a "set" expression.

CHARLES : What name, please ?

NIGEL : Lord Vaynham.

CHARLES : I will tell Madame Haren that you are here.

NIGEL : No, please don't do that—I—er—I do not know Madame Haren. I wish to speak to my brother—Mr. David Messiter—it's very important. Do you think you could ask him—quite quietly without disturbing anybody—to come and speak to me for a moment ?

CHARLES : Well, my lord—I am not sure that I know which he is.

NIGEL (*impatiently*): He is tall and fair, he will be sitting next to Miss Menteith—I suppose you know Miss Grace Menteith ?

CHARLES : Oh yes, my lord.

NIGEL : Please do it as quietly as possible.

CHARLES : Yes, my lord.

He goes into the dining-room.

NIGEL, *left alone, looks rather contemptuously round the room. There is a framed photograph on the mantel-piece of an obviously royal personage in uniform. He scrutinises this, raises his eyebrows slightly, then frowns irritably. He lights a cigarette and stands waiting judiciously in front of the fireplace.*

DAVID *comes out of the dining-room. He is also nice-looking, but without the poise of his brother.*

DAVID : Nigel!

NIGEL : You are a bloody little fool.

DAVID : What the hell are you talking about ?

NIGEL : You know perfectly well what I'm talking about.

DAVID : Well, I do think this is a bit thick, I must say.

NIGEL : So do I.

DAVID : Forcing your way into Liesl's house like this without being invited—it's very embarrassing for me.

NIGEL : You needn't be embarrassed for long—you're coming away with me now.

DAVID : I'm not going to do anything of the sort. How did you know I was here, anyhow ?

NIGEL : I guessed you'd break your promise to father—I went to the Savoy and Romano's and Rule's, then I went to the theatre, and the fireman told me that this woman was giving a supper party.

DAVID (*iullenJy*): Father forced me to make that promise against my will—it was a—a sort of moral blackmail.

NIGEL : You'll get worse blackmail than that if you're not careful.

DAVID : You've no right to come here and order me about.

NIGEL : Now look here, David—for God's sake be sensible. You swore you'd pull yourself together and not go on making a fool of yourself over this chorus-girl—

DAVID : She's not a chorus-girl—she's one of the sextette.

NIGEL : You're one of a sextette too, I expect.

DAVID : Very funny.

NIGEL : You know perfectly well she doesn't give a damn for you—she's just out for what she can get—she's playing up Stubby Vivian for all she's worth.

DAVID (*hotly*): That's not true !

NIGEL : If you must sow your silly wild oats, why the hell don't you choose a nice honest tart, instead of one of these expensive pampered rich men's darlings ?

DAVID : You don't know Grace—you've no right to talk like that.

NIGEL : I know what she's got out of Stubby Vivian—the whole Regiment knows—it's a standing joke. But that's Stubby's look-out—he can afford it—you can't.

DAVID : Grace is fond of me—I know she is—one can always tell. She's not seeing Stubby any more—she promised.

NIGEL : It may interest you to know that Stubby went to Percy Edward's this afternoon at three-thirty precisely and bought an emerald ring valued at seventeen hundred pounds, which he gallantly placed in a bunch of roses valued at three pounds thirteen shillings and sixpence, and sent it by special messenger to Miss Grace Menteith, Stage Door, Jubilee Theatre, at ten minutes past eight p.m. Greenwich time.

DAVID (*furiously*): How do you know ?

NIGEL : Because I went with him.

DAVID : It's a bloody lie I

NIGEL : Ask her.

DAVID : You bet I will——

He make' a movement to go back Into the dining-room.

NIGEL *catches his arm.*

NIGEL : Just a minute——

DAVID : Let go of me.

NIGEL : Never do anything in a rage, David—it's a grave mistake——

DAVID : It's all very fine for you—you don't know

that it means to be in love with somebody—you're far too disciplined and controlled and correct—you never think of anything but your damned regimental dignity.

NIGEL : Nonsense—I've been in love several times—or at least imagined I was—I merely wasn't quite so spectacular about it as you seem to want to be. Love—if it's worth twopence—should be a private emotion—not a damned parade.

DAVID : Let go of my arm.

NIGEL : Listen to me—you go calmly back into the dining-room and s y very quietly to your hostess—this Madame whatever her name is—that you have a racking headache and are going home——

LIESL has come quietly in during this speech. She closes the dining-room door behind her.

LIESL : The name is Haren—Liesi Haren. If you have any further doubts about it, you might apply to the Austrian Embassy.

NIGEL (*letting go of DAVID*) : Oh—I beg your pardon.

LIESL : Who are you, please ?

DAVID : This is my brother, Liesl—Nigel—Lord Vaynham.

LIESL : I am charmed to see you in my house—perhaps you would like a little supper ?

NIGEL (*extremely embarrassed*) : No, thank you—I'm afraid I must go now.

LIESL (*smiling*) : How sad—another time perhaps ?

NIGEL (*mumbling*) : Thank you very much—that would be delightful.

LIESL (*holding out her hand*) : Good night.

NIGEL (*taking it*) : Please forgive me for intruding like this—I had to talk to my brother—it was rather important.

LIESL : Would it be impertinent if I asked why your voices were so angry just now ? You see, my chair is at the end of the table—just near the door—I heard most strange sounds.

NIGEL : I am dreadfully sorry—it was all my fault——

DAVID : Nigel was trying to make me leave the party.

LIESL : Why ? Do you not consider this a suitable place for your brother to be ?

NIGEL : Of course not—it wasn't that at all——

DAVID : Oh yes, it was—you know very well——

LIESL (*sharply*) : David—I would like to talk to your brother for a little. Will you go into the dining-room and tell them I will only be a few minutes ?

DAVID : But, Liesl!

LIESL : Please.

DAVID : Very well.

DAVID, *with rather a triumphant look at NIGEL, goes into the dining-room and closes the door after him.*

NIGEL and LIESL stand for a moment looking at each other. LIESL laughs.

LIESL : Will you not sit down ?

NIGEL (*awkwardly*) : Thank you. (*He sits.*)

LIESL (*also sitting*) : There—now we can be friendly and cosy—or are we still embarrassed ?

NIGEL (*with a slight smile*) : Still a little embarrassed.

LIESL : There is still a slight strain, is there not ? What can we do to make it go ?

NIGEL : I can say again how sorry I am.

LIESL : No, no—that would only make it worse.

NIGEL (*handing her his cigarette-case*) : Will you have a cigarette ?

LIESL (*taking one*): Yes, I will—it is bad for *my* voice—but at a moment like this——

NIGEL : You are very gracious.

LIESL : I am very amused—and a little puzzled. You are worried about your brother ?

NIGEL : Yes, I am rather.

LIESL : He is being a bad boy ?

NIGEL : I think he is being a trifle foolish.

LIESL : He is very young—one is so often foolish when one is young. Are you never foolish ?

NIGEL : Sometimes. But then, you see, I am not as young as I was.

LIESL : Ah—we middle-aged people—we can afford to be tolerant—we who have learned our lessons and become so wise.

NIGEL : You're laughing at me.

LIESL : Do you mind ?

NIGEL : No—but I wouldn't like you to think me a prig.

LIESL : What is that ?

NIGEL : Someone who's rather conceited—rather too morally sure of themselves.

LIESL : I know—we have a word for that in German—"Bin Gebildeter." No—I do not think you that.

NIGEL (*pith a rush*) : I am worried about my brother because he has fallen in love with one of the girls in your play, and my father and mother are very upset about it—you see, he is spending a lot of money on her that he really can't afford—and—and I don't honestly think that she cares for him at all •—

LIESL : Have you any proof of that ?

NIGEL : Well, yes—I have—in a way.

LIESL : What is it ?

NIGEL : Well—she has been—er—the mistress of one of the officers in my Regiment for over a year and——

LIESL : Perhaps she is tired of him.

NIGEL : He is very rich—much richer than David.

LIESL (*laughing*): I see you have a very bad opinion of women.

NIGEL : Haven't you ?

LIESL : On the whole I think they are horrible—but there are exceptions.

NIGEL : What do you think of Grace Menteith ?

LIESL : Is that a fair question ? After all, she is a guest in my house at this very moment.

NIGEL : No—of course it wasn't—I beg your pardon.

LIESL : But if you really wish to know, I think she is very, very sweet.

NIGEL : You said that rather strangely.

LIESL (*with a lit tie grim ace*): I do not like sweet things.

NIGEL : I was frightened of you at first—but I'm not any more.

LIESL : I was frightened of you. You were so fierce and proper. You made me feel that I should be wearing jet on my bosom and an aigrette—like a Madame.

NIGEL : Will you help me ? (*He smiles.*) Madame ?

LIESL : On one condition—or rather two.

NIGEL : What are they ?

LIESL : The first one is this : That you stay and have a glass of wine with me.

NIGEL : Agreed.

LIESL : The second one is that in no circumstances whatever you tell your brother that I consented to interfere with his private "amour."

NIGEL : I promise.

LIESL : There is still another condition—actually it is more in the nature of personal advice—and you need not abide by it if you don't want to.

NIGEL : I am feeling a little frightened again.

LIESL : Perhaps I am wrong to feel that we are so soon old friends, but I don't think I am.

NIGEL : You are most definitely right.

LIESL : What I have to say is this : I am a woman who is no longer young. I have seen a lot of life—and a lot of love—there are so many different kinds. As far as your brother is concerned you are quite right—he is young and foolish and also in a little danger—but not very serious danger—you and I will be quite able to prevent it becoming serious. You, however, are in greater danger.

NIGEL (*astonished*) : I ?

LIESL : You have clear eyes and, I suspect, too much honour. When you fall in love it will be deep. You will be alone when you are in love—and probably very unhappy. But when it is all over and you are older and wiser and have learned to laugh at the whole business, come and see me again—I shall be very much older still—you will find me, I expect, in some dusty Opera House somewhere—and we will have a little supper after the performance and you shall tell me your story. I think that will be a gay moment to look forward to.

NIGEL : That's another promise.

LIESL : Now I think we will have our glass of wine.

She goes to the dining-room door and opens it.

Come in here, all of you, and meet an old friend of mine—Charles, bring some more champagne.

LALA, ELEANOR, ROZANNE, GRACE, VIOLET, DOREEN and MAISIE WELBEY come in laughing and talking, followed by DAVID, HUMPHREY GORDON, LORD BORROWMERE, LORD ELDERLEY, LORD SICKERT, LORD CAMP and EDDIE GOSLING. *Everyone is very gay with the exception of DAVID, who goes rather sulkily over to a corner and sits by himself.*

Oh dear—to introduce people is so very difficult. How must I begin?—Maisie—This is Lord Vaynham—a very old friend—we have been discussing old times—new times too—(*She smiles at NIGEL.*)—This is Miss Maisie Welbey—

NIGEL : How do you do ?

MAISIE : Delighted, I'm sure—

LIESL : Now then—Miss Violet Travers—Miss Lala Montague—Miss Rozanne Gray—Miss Grace Menteith—Miss Eleanor West and Miss Doreen Manners—Lord Vaynham—Thank God !

There is a chorus of " How do you do's ? "

LORD S. : Hallo, Nigel.

LORD B. : I'd no idea you knew Liesl !

NIGEL : But, of course—we have been friends for years—we first met in—I always forget—was it Vienna or Bruxelles ?

LIESL : I am ashamed of you, Nigel—you forget too easily—it was Prague.

NIGEL : Of course—what a fool I am !

LIESL : We went to that little cafe by the river where the Gipsy told your fortune—

NIGEL : She told me I was in great danger.

DAVID : Nigel's never been to Prague.

LIESL (*laughing*): Ah well—perhaps it was London after all.

LALA (*affectedly*) : What an *extraordinary* conversation.

EDDIE : Something fishy about the whole thing, if you ask me—Liesl's got a twinkle in her eye.

LIESL : I always have a twinkle in my eye—it is a professional mannerism—you must not be deceived by it.

DAVID : You ought to go home, Nigel—Father will be getting anxious.

ROZANNE : Are you going to allow your young brother to talk to you like that ?

NIGEL : I'm afraid I can't stop him.

GRACE : David's frightfully disagreeable to-night, anyhow—I don't know what's the matter with him.

ROZANNE (*to NIGEL*) : Were you at the show to-night ?

NIGEL : No—I regret to say I haven't seen it yet.

LALA : Really, that's the most extraordinary thing I've ever heard.

NIGEL : I've been soldiering in India—I'm home on six months' leave. I've only been back just over a week.

LIESL : That was where we met, of course—India.

NIGEL : Those wonderful nights in the jungle.

VIOLET : Big-game hunting, I suppose.

DOREEN : Speak for yourself, dear.

CHARLES *comes in with a tray on which are several glasses of champagne.* TRUDI *follows with an ice-bucket with two bottles in it.*

ROZANNE : More champagne ! Oh, Liesl—I shall never be able to rehearse to-morrow.

NIGEL : Do you still have to rehearse when the play has been running for months ?

ROZANNE : I'm understudying Elsie Jewell—they only told me to-night—I'm frightfully excited about it.

NIGEL : That means that if she gets ill you act her part, doesn't it ?

EDDIE : Oh dear ! Oh dear ! Oh dear !

ROZANNE (*smiling at him*) : Yes, it does.

NIGEL (*holding up his glass*): What shall we wish her—a nice broken leg ?

ROZANNE : Yes—but not for another week or two.

NIGEL (*toasting*): Elsie Jewell—Compound fracture—Tuesday the twenty-fifth.

ROZANNE : Make it Wednesday the twenty-sixth—Td rather go on for the first time at a matinee just to break myself in.

NIGEL : All right.

They drink.

Is it a large part ?

ROZANNE : About fifty pages—look. (*She fishes in her bag and produces it.*) It's the lead.

LALA : Part's out of the bag again, girls !

NIGEL (*turning the pages*): I can't make head or tail of it.

ROZANNE : The words at the end of the lines of dots are what other people say—they're the cues. Here—you see he says—" What a charming accent you have "—there you are—" Accent you have," and I say—" I was at a fishing school in Bruxelles for two years and so naturally I speak French like a native."

DOREEN : Oh, my God !

VIOLET : She's off again.

NIGEL : What does he say to that ?

ROZANNE (*giggling*) : " May I call you Mary ? "

NIGEL : " May I call you Mary ? "

ROZANNE (*with great demureness*): " Of course—we've only just met—but somehow—somehow——"

VIOLET (*looking over NIGEL'S shoulder*): Go on—you say " Love at first sight—I never believed in it before—but now " pause——

ROZANNE: No—you've cut something.

NIGEL: " Love at first sight—I never believed in it before—but now——"

ROZANNE (*VIOLET, ELEANOR and DOREEN say it with her*): " Everything has changed—the sea—the sky—it all looks more beautiful—more gay."

NIGEL: Now what ?

DOREEN: " My love."

NIGEL (*ardently*): " My love ! "

The Orchestra comes in very softly—NIGEL reads from the part.

(*Reading*): I saw your face,
Shadows of the morning cleared,
I knew that suddenly
The world had dropped away.

ROZANNE (*singing*): Somewhere in space
Some new lovely star appeared
To rule our destiny
For ever and a day.

NIGEL: I say—you have got a pretty voice.

ROZANNE: Elsie Jewell's is much stronger.

DOREEN: Strong as an ox !

NIGEL: Go on——

ROZANNE (*singing*): Now in this instant in the whole
of Time
Our lovers' rhyme
Is near completing.

NIGEL (*reading*) : I saw you turn away and for a while
My poor heart drooped and fal-
tered ;
And then I saw your strange
elusive smile
And all my life was altered.

ROZANNE (*singing out*) :
My dearest dear,
For evermore
The happiness we've waited for
At last is here.
Dearest Love,
Now that I've found you
The stars change in the sky,
Every song is new,
Every note is true,
Sorrows like the clouds go sailing
by.
Here, my Love,
Magic has bound you
To me—ever to be
In my heart supreme,
Dearer than my dearest dream,
The only love for me.

There has been a certain buzz, of general conversation behind the first part of the song. This dies away when ROZANNE begins to sing the waltz refrain. Now everybody joins in.

ALL (*singing*): Skies that were cloudy are clear
again,
All other people seem
Like figures in a dream;

ROZANNE (*singing*): Every song that I loved I seem to
hear again,
Time goes by like a murmuring
stream.

NIGEL (*reading*): Love has enchanted the two of us,
A magic we can share,
A something in the air,

ROZANNE (*singing*): Proving that Destiny knew of us.
Now Heaven is at our feet,
This happiness complete
Could not be merely chance ;
This exquisite romance
For ever has us bound,
For this that we have found
No time or tide could sever—
ever——

ALL (*singing*) : Dearest Love,
Now that I've found you,
The stars change in the sky,
Every song is new,
Every note is true,
Sorrows like the clouds go sailing
by.

The voices grow softer as the lights begin to fade.

Here, my Love,
Magic has bound you
To me—ever to be
In my heart supreme,
Dearer than my dearest dream,
The only love for me !

*The lights fade completely on everyone else and NIGEL
and, RozANNE are left for an instant—looking at each other.*

The music swells up and the lights go out entirely.

ACT I

SCENE VI

This Scene is a series of six vignettes in six different bansom cabs.

The first one contains VIOLET TRAVERS and LORD SICKERT.

An hour or so has passed since the preceding scene.

The orchestra very softly plays the Prologue music as an undercurrent to the dialogue.

VIOLET : What an evening—I really feel quite exhausted.

LORD S. : I feel a bit tight myself.

VIOLET : Oh, Brownie—you are naughty.

LORD S. : Will your mother be waiting up for you ?

VIOLET : Of course—she always does.

LORD S. : I do hope she manages to get some sleep during the day.

VIOLET : You always sound sort of sarcastic when you talk about mother.

LORD S. : I don't think she likes me very much.

VIOLET : She's devoted to you.

LORD S.: I'd rather you were.

VIOLET (*after a slight pause*) : Brownie—I don't know whether I've ever mentioned this before, but if you keep your hand on one place on a silk dress for long, **it** makes it all puckered.

LORD S. : !!! move it.

VIOLET : Oh, Brownie, you are naughty I

The lights fade.

Another hansom: ELEANOR WEST and LORD ELDERLEY.

LORD E. : Are we nearly there ?

ELEANOR : We haven't crossed the bridge yet.

LORD E. : Will your Aunt Lilian be waiting up for you ?

ELEANOR : Of course—ever since I first went on the stage Aunt Lilian has always waited up for me.

LORD E. : Damn her eyes.

ELEANOR : Freddie, how dare you! You're not to say things like that.

LORD E. (*ardently*): What about a little kiss——?

ELEANOR : Not until you've said you're sorry.

LORD E. : All right—I'm sorry.

ELEANOR (*after he has kissed her*) : I don't know what I should do without Aunt Lilian.

LORD E. (*kissing her again*) : I do.

The lights fade.

Another hansom: LORD CAMP and DOREEN MANNERS.

LORD C. : I always thought Walham Green was quite near London.

DOREEN : Never mind, duckie, it's a lovely night.

LORD C. : Will your mother be waiting up for you ?

DOREEN (*melting into his arms*) : Good God, no !

The lights fade'

Another hansom: LALA MONTAGUE and LORD BORROWMERE.

LORD B. :——we managed to get across the stream all right, but I never thought we'd reach the clearing—however, finally—after what seemed hours—we struck the native track again—I let out a shout of relief—the

bearers, of course, were scared out of their wits—the elephants were getting a bit frightened too, which was a bad sign—you know that funny noise elephants make when they're frightened?

LALA (*suppressing a yawn*): The only elephants I've ever seen were in the Zoo, and I've never heard them make a funny noise.

LORD B: Well, it's not exactly a whine and it's not exactly a whimper——

LALA: You're sure they were frightened?

LORD B.: Oh yes, rather—one can always tell—why?

LALA: I thought they might have been crying from sheer boredom!

The lights fade.

Another hansom: GRACE MENTEITH and HUMPHREY GORDON.

GRACE (*crying*):——I've never been so humiliated in all my life—David making that horrid scene and saying those awful things to me in front of everyone——

HUMPHREY: He'd had too many drinks, the damn fool!

GRACE: How could he have known I had Stubby's emerald ring in my bag?—somebody must have told him.

HUMPHREY: Probably his brother.

GRACE (*wailing*): But how could he possibly have known? It must have been Lies!—I showed it to her in the theatre.

HUMPHREY: Cheer up, old girl—David's a bit of an ass, anyway.

GRACE: If it was Lies! I shall never speak to her again as long as I live—after all, it isn't as if David had

the slightest right to tell me what to do or what not to do—all he's ever given me was a brooch on my birthday and it was so antique that two of the stones fell out the first time I wore it—and they were only garnets, anyhow——

HUMPHREY : Never mind—don't worry about it any more.

GRACE (*sniffing*): You've been awfully sweet and understanding—bringing me all this way home, too.

HUMPHREY : Is it much farther ?

GRACE : No—we shall be at Addison Road in a minute and then we're nearly there.

HUMPHREY : Will your mother be waiting up for you ?

GRACE : No—she's away on tour—they're at Huddersfield this week.

HUMPHREY (*slipping his arm round her waist*): Good.

GRACE : Now then, Humphrey—I think it only fair to warn you—I don't feel in the mood for any naughtiness. (*Relenting.*) Still, we might have a little cocoa——

The lights fade.

Another hansom : ROZANNE and NIGEL.

ROZANNE : I feel dreadfully guilty—dragging you all this way.

NIGEL : I'm enjoying it. A little fresh air is a good thing when one is angry.

ROZANNE : Don't be angry any more.

NIGEL : He made such an ass of himself.

ROZANNE : Poor boy.

NIGEL : It's all very fine to say " Poor boy," he's old enough to know better.

ROZANNE : People so often behave badly when they're in love.

NIGEL : He doesn't know what being in love means.

ROZANNE : It does mean different things to different people, you know—you mustn't be too high and mighty about it.

NIGEL : Am I being high and mighty ?

ROZANNE : A little, I think.

NIGEL : It always seemed to me that good behaviour is rather important however unhappy you feel inside.

ROZANNE : I'm sure you're right, but still it must be awfully difficult to be young and proud and jealous all at the same time.

NIGEL : Have you ever been in love ?

ROZANNE : Yes—I didn't enjoy it very much. Except at moments, of course—it seemed to unbalance everything so.

NIGEL : You're very sane, aren't you ?

ROZANNE : I'm very ambitious and I've no time to waste—I'm over thirty and if I don't get on soon it will be too late and I shan't get on at all.

NIGEL : You have no desire to marry a title ?

ROZANNE (*laughing*): No—you're quite safe. I want to be a star, not a Duchess—I'd like to be like Liesl—gay and wise and independent—without any borrowed dignity—secure in my own right.

NIGEL : I do hope that everything goes well for you

ROZANNE : You said that very sadly.

NIGEL : Did I ?

ROZANNE : What's the matter ?

NIGEL : I suddenly felt lonely.

ROZANNE : Why ?

NIGEL : Our worlds are so far apart.

ROZANNE : That doesn't prevent us saluting each other—from our different stars.

NIGEL : I would never have expected an actress from the Jubilee Theatre to be in the least like you.

ROZANNE : You're rather a surprise to me too, you know—you haven't once mentioned polo or pig-sticking or the honour of the regiment.

NIGEL (*laughing*): I will—with the slightest encouragement.

ROZANNE : Is it tremendously important to you—that strange, far-away life you lead—I don't mean the pig-sticking, I mean the regiment ?

NIGEL : More important than anything in the world.

ROZANNE : Yes, I can hear it in your voice—a strong pride.

NIGEL : Perhaps it's only sentimentality—it's hard to say. I know I mind deeply about little things—things that seem unimportant and irrelevant like—dining in Mess and drinking the King on Guest Nights out of our special regimental silver mug—talking to the troops after musketry drill in that blazing heat and finding them still ready to make jokes and swear—that's sentimental, I'm sure—but it's somehow part of everything I've been brought up to believe in—am I boring you ?

ROZANNE : No—you're not boring me.

NIGEL : I thought you sang that song to-night very beautifully.

ROZANNE : Did you ?

NIGEL : Are we nearly there ?

ROZANNE : Yes—this is the Common—we just go across that little straight bit where the trees are and it's the first turning on the left.

NIGEL : Will anyone be waiting up for you ?

ROZANNE : No—you can come in for a minute if you like, we can make some tea over the gas-ring—but you

mustn't stay long because I've got a rehearsal in the morning.

NIGEL : Ten minutes.

ROZANNE : A quarter of an hour.

NIGEL : All right.

The lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE VII

SCENE : *The Stage Door of the Jubilee Theatre.*

*A few weeks have elapsed since the preceding scene.
The time is about 11.30 p.m.*

The Scene begins with a Quartette : " The Stately Homes of England" sung by LORD ELDERLEY, LORD BORROWMERE, LORD SICKERT and LORD CAMP. At the end of which they exit.

QUARTETTE :

" THE STATELY HOMES OF ENGLAND "

VERSE I

Lord Elderley, Lord Borrowmere,
Lord Sickert and Lord Camp
With every virtue, every grace,
Are what avails the sceptr'd race.

Here you see—the four of us,
And there are so many more of us,
Eldest sons that must succeed.
We know how Caesar conquered Gaul
And how to whack a cricket ball;
Apart from this, our education
Lacks co-ordination.
Tho' we're young and tentative
And rather rip-representative,
Scions of a noble breed,
We are the products of those homes serene and
 stately
Which only lately
Seem to have run to seed !

REFRAIN I

The Stately Homes of England
How beautiful they stand,
To prove the upper classes
Have still the upper hand ;
Tho' the fact that they have to be rebuilt
And frequently mortgaged to the hilt
Is inclined to take the gilt
Off the gingerbread,
And certainly damps the fun
Of the eldest son—
But still we won't be beaten,
We'll scrimp and screw and save,
The playing fields of Eton
Have made us frightfully brave—
And tho' if the Van Dycks have to go
And we pawn the Bechstein Grand,
We'll stand by the Stately Homes of England.

VERSE 2.

Here you see
The pick of us
You may be heartily sick of us
Still with sense
We're all imbued.
Our homes command extensive views,
And with the assistance from the Jews
We have been able to dispose of
Rows and rows and rows of
Gainsboroughs and Lawrences,
Some sporting prints of Aunt Florence's,
Some of which were rather rude.
Although we sometimes flaunt our family con-
ventions,
Our good intentions
Mustn't be misconstrued.

REFRAIN 2

The Stately Homes of England
We proudly represent,
We only keep them up for
Americans to rent.
Tho' the pipes that supply the bathroom burst,
And the lavatory makes you fear the worst,
It was used by Charles the First
Quite informally,
And later by George the Fourth
On a journey north.
The State Apartments keep their
Historical renown,
It's wiser not to sleep there

In case they tumble down ;
But still if they ever catch on fire
Which, with any luck, they might,
We'll fight for the Stately Homes of England.

REFRAIN 3

The Stately Homes of England,
Tho' rather in the lurch,
Provide a lot of chances
For Psychological Research—•
There's the ghost of a crazy younger son
Who murdered, in Thirteen Fifty-One,
An extremely rowdy Nun
Who resented it,
And people who come to call
Meet her in the hall.
The baby in the guest wing,
Who crouches by the grate,
Was walled up in the west wing
In Fourteen Twenty-Eight.
If anyone spots
The Queen of Scots
In a hand-embroidered shroud,
We're proud
Of the Stately Homes of England.
QUARTETTE *exeunt.*

A few " STAGE-DOOR HANGERS-ON " appear out of the surrounding darkness. Various MEMBERS of the COMPANY come out—calling " Goodnight " to JENNER as they do so—and disappear—sometimes with a FRIEND who has been waiting for them, sometimes alone.

JENNER appears in the doorway. Two women, DORIS and MABEL, detach themselves from the crowd.

MABEL : She 'asn't gone yet, 'as she?

JENNER : No—not yet.

MABEL : There you are, Dorrie—I told you so.

DORIS : My friend would 'ave a cup of coffee directly after the show—I said " What about later ? " and she said " What about now ? " and I said " We'll miss 'er sure as Fate, look what 'appened last Tuesday," and she said——

MABEL (*testily*) : Well, we 'aven't missed 'er this time, 'ave we ?

DORIS : And small thanks to you at that.

MABEL : Well, shut up about it then—you give me a 'eadache.

JENNER : You'd better stand back a bit—you're blocking up the gangway.

They fall back and relapse into a hissing private conversation, HUMPHREY GORDON comes on from the left.

HUMPHREY : Good evening, Jenner.

JENNER : Good evening, sir.

HUMPHREY : Can I wait inside—it's a bit draughty out here ?

JENNER : Righto, sir.

HUMPHREY *goes inside.*

DUGGIE *appears for a moment.*

DUGGIE : Miss Jewell's carriage.

JENNER : All right.

DUGGIE *goes inside again.*

JENNER *blows two short blasts on a whistle. There is a slight murmur among the crowd. Two CHORUS GIRLS come out, talking as they go.*

IST GIRL :——and he kept the cab waiting the whole time ?

2ND GIRL : He certainly did—and then, my dear, we went home to his place and he introduced me to his sister as cool as you please and, believe it or not, she was the spitting image of Princess Ena !

1ST GIRL : Well I never !

ELSIE JEWELL *appears in the doorway. She is resplendent in evening dress and carries a large bouquet. She is followed by a rather depressed-looking ELDERLY GENTLEMAN.*

ELSIE : Is Roberts there, Jenner ?

JENNER : Just coming up, miss.

A VOICE : Good evening, Miss Jewell.

ELSIE (*vaguely, but with great sweetness*) : Good evening.

VOICE : Thank you for signing my postcard.

ELSIE : Not at all, it was a pleasure.

GIRL (*audibly*): Isn't she lovely !

ELSIE (*smiling affectedly*): Ridiculous creature—
here——

She detaches a flower from her bouquet and gives it to the GIRL.

GIRL : Oh, thanks ever so.

ELSIE : There's Roberts—come along, Roland.

VOICES : Good night.

ELSIE (*waving gracefully*) : Good night—thank you for being so loyal and sweet——

She goes off.

DORIS : What does she mean, "loyal" ?

MABEL (*irritably*) : Oh, shut up.

DORIS : All right, Miss Disagreeable.

MAISIE WELBEY and EDDIE GOSLING *come out together.*

EDDIE : Good night, Jenner.

MAISIE : Good night, Jenner.

JENNER : Good night, sir—Good night, miss.

MAISIE : If Mrs. Harrison comes, tell her we've gone to Rule's.

JENNER : All right, miss.

EDDIE and MAISIE *disappear amid a chorus of " Good nights."*

A rather plain CHORUS GIRL comes out dressed in ordinary day-clothes. She poses for a moment at the door.

GIRL : Is my carriage here, Jenner ?

JENNER : No, dear—the 'orse got bronchitis.

GIRL : Oh, fiddlededee, I shall have to go by that common twopenny tube!

Some of the CROWD laugh as she goes off.

Another GIRL comes out; a MAN steps out of the crowd.

MAN : You are late to-night.

GIRL : Sorry, darling—we rang down later than usual——

They disappear.

Two CHORUS BOYS *come out.*

ISTBOY :——and all he got after seven years of dog-like devotion were two old silk dressing-gowns and six bound volumes of *The Yellow Book*.

2ND BOY (*horrified*): Outrageous I

They go off right.

A few more people come out.

LORD B. : Can we wait inside, Jenner ?

JENNER : Certainly, my lord.

They go in as PAUL TREVOR comes out.

PAUL : Whistle for a cab, will you, Jenner ?

JENNER : Righto, sir. (*He whistles.*)

A shabbily dressed GIRL comes out of the crowd and bands PAUL a rather tattered bunch of flowers.

GIRL (*breathlessly*): Will you please take these ?

PAUL : It's very kind of you—thank you.

GIRL : You sang wonderfully to-night.

PAUL : Thank you again.

GIRL : They're with my love I

She runs off.

Some of the crowd titter. PAUL looks after her and then whispers to JENNER.

PAUL : The next time she comes, Jenner, tell Albert to bring her out one of my signed photographs.

JENNER : Very good, sir. Here's your cab.

PAUL : Thanks, Jenner. Good night.

JENNER : Good night, sir.

NIGEL comes on from the left. He is carrying a large bunch of violets.

NIGEL : Good evening, Jenner.

JENNER : 'Evening, sir—d'you want to wait inside ?

NIGEL : Anybody else there ?

JENNER : Just one or two, sir, you know.

NIGEL : I'll be all right here, thanks.

DUGGIE reappears.

DUGGIE : Madame Haren's carriage.

He goes in again.

There is a definite buzz among the crowd. JENNER blows three blasts on his whistle. MABEL and DORIS push forward a little. NIGEL withdraws as far as he can into the shadow.

Two or THREE OTHERS come out and then LIESL appears in the doorway. Some of the crowd applaud—LIESL smiles and waves to them. TRUDI comes immediately behind her carrying large bouquets of flowers.

MABEL (*shrilly*) : Better than ever, Miss Karen—

DORIS : You were lovely to-night.

LIESL : Thank you—thank you very much.

VOICE : Will you sign a postcard if I send it in with a stamped addressed envelope ?

LIESL : Of course—with pleasure.

DORIS : I kept your flower.

LIESL : It must be dead by now—you must have another—Trudi——

MABEL : Can I have one, too ?

VOICE : And me ?

There is a clamour of voices—LIESL take' a large bunch from TRUDI and gives them out.

JENNER : 'Ere, 'ere, 'ere now—take it easy—the poor lady won't 'ave any left.

LIESL : Never mind, Jenner.

JENNER : Your carriage is 'ere, madame.

LIESL : Thank you, Jenner. Good night—good night, everybody——

There is a loud chorus of " Good nights" LIESL is about to go, then she goes up to NIGEL and hands him a flower.

(*Laughing?*) And one for this poor young man standing so lonely in the shadows—a rose goes well with violets—good luck!

She goes away before he has time to say a word. One or two of the crowd eye him curiously. The crowd begins to disperse.

MABEL : Nothing much else to wait for.

DORIS : Mabel, how can you? There's Lala Montague and Violet Travers——

MABEL : Oh, they're always last—that sextette, and dull at that—let's go.

DORIS : Oh, all right.

They go.

Two or THREE OTHERS come out of the stage door;
then ROZANNE appears.

NIGEL (*stepping forward*) : Hallo.

ROZANNE : Have I been very long ?

NIGEL : I don't mind waiting—it's rather fun.

ROZANNE : Where are we going ?

NIGEL : Do you like Romano's ?

ROZANNE : Yes—very much. (*She laughs.*)

NIGEL : Liesl spotted me and gave me a rose.

ROZANNE : Liesl never misses anything.

NIGEL (*giving her the violets*): These are for you—I'm afraid they'll die if I clutch them much longer.

ROZANNE (*burying her face in them*): They're so lovely—I should hate them to die young.

NIGEL : Come along—I've a cab waiting at the corner.

ROZANNE : All right. Good night, Jenner.

NIGEL : Good night, Jenner.

JENNER : Good night, miss—Good night, my lord.

The lights fade and the music swells as they go off.

ACT I

SCENE VIII

The Scene Is a private room in Romano's Restaurant.

When the lights go up, GEORGE, a waiter, is putting the finishing touches to a supper-table laid for two.

ROZANNE and NIGEL come in. NIGEL helps her off with her cloak, which he lays on the sofa.

NIGEL : Good evening, George.

GEORGE : Good evening, my lord.

ROZANNE : Good evening, George.

GEORGE : Good evening, miss.

NIGEL : Everything ready ?

GEORGE : Yes, my lord—the soup will be right up.
Shall I open the champagne, my lord ?

NIGEL : Yes, please, George.

GEORGE *goes out.*

ROZANNE : Wouldn't it be dreadful if we came here one night and couldn't have this room ?

NIGEL : I should burn the place down.

ROZANNE : But someone very grand and important—a Maharajah or somebody—might want it specially.

NIGEL : I should go up to them most politely and tell them to go to hell.

ROZANNE : It has become too much part of our lives—I don't think we ought to let things get as necessary as that.

NIGEL : Do stop being so wary, darling—give yourself up.

ROZANNE (*sitting at the table*) : I don't believe I ever could—entirely.

NIGEL (*also sitting*) : Not ever ?

ROZANNE (*smiling*) : Oh, dear.

NIGEL : You haven't said "I love you" yet—we drove all the way from the theatre here——

ROZANNE : Four minutes.

NIGEL : And you never even mentioned it.

ROZANNE : Try to understand and forgive.

NIGEL : I shall forgive—but the fact remains I am deeply hurt.

ROZANNE : Never mind, dear—let's have some champagne.

NIGEL (*rising*): That's all you glittering beauties ever think of—champagne and jewellery.

ROZANNE : I believe our minds sometimes stray to expensive furs !

NIGEL : What would you do if I gave you a fur coat ?

ROZANNE : Faint dead away.

He pours some into her glass and some into his own.

ROZANNE : I wonder why people make such a fuss about champagne ?

NIGEL : It's a wine with a very distinct personality—it suggests a certain gay licentiousness.

ROZANNE (*holding up her glass*) : I love you.

NIGEL (*putting his arms round her*): Has it gone to your head already ?

GEORGE *comes in with the soup, which he places before them.*

GEORGE : Wine all right, my lord ?

NIGEL : Excellent.

ROZANNE : How is business, George ?

GEORGE : Very good, miss—it's crowded out downstairs—there's an Indian Prince of some sort giving a party for twenty——

ROZANNE (*to NIGEL*) : There you are, you see.

GEORGE : It started very refined.

GEORGE *goes out.*

NIGEL : Every time I sit opposite you I discover something new in your face.

ROZANNE : What is it this time ?

NIGEL : Your left eyebrow.

ROZANNE : It's always been there,

NIGEL : It lifts up a little bit at the end.

ROZANNE *rises and goes to a mirror on the wall.*

ROZANNE (*at mirror*) : No, it doesn't.

NIGEL *gets up too and comes and stands behind her.*

NIGEL : Yes, it does—look—there.

ROZANNE : Perhaps it's only when I'm talking to you.

NIGEL (*putting his arms round her and resting his chin on her shoulder*): Talk to me a little more.

ROZANNE : Whenever you put your arms round me—I feel like a nervous blushing girl of sixteen—breathless and trembling.

NIGEL : You must have been very sweet when you were sixteen.

ROZANNE : I was too fat.

NIGEL : I expect that's why you were breathless and trembling.

ROZANNE : Oh, Nigel!

NIGEL : I shouldn't have minded how fat you were.

ROZANNE : I was abandoned, too—over-eager—one always is at that age. I fell in love desperately with the leading man in the company my mother was working for. It was all most unsuitable—but a little touching——

NIGEL : Where are the snows of yesteryear?

SONG:

" WHERE ARE THE SONGS WE SANG ?"

VERSE

Once in a lifetime

When we are very very young—and Love
Comes out to greet us for the first time,
We open wide our arms and say to him
This is the only, and the last time.

That young surrender
We can remember when some little tune
Recalls our hearts to vanished splendour
Like organ music in a sunny street
So sweetly flat—so sadly tender.

And so when Love again rides by
We sometimes sigh.

Where are the songs we sung
When Love in our hearts was young ?
Where, in the limbo of the swiftly passing years,
Lie all our hopes and dreams and fears ?
Where have they gone—words that rang so true
When Love in our hearts was new ?
Where, in the shadows that we have to pass among,
Lie those songs that once we sung ?

Where are the songs we sung
When Love in our hearts was young ?
Can you remember all the foolish things we said,
The plans we planned—the tears we shed ?
Where is it now—that enchanted dawn
When Love in our hearts was born ?
Where, in the shadows that we have to pass among,
Lie those songs that once we sung ?

*At the end of the song he kisses her—and holds her
in his arms for a moment—she gives a little laugh and
disengages herself.*

ROZANNE : Darling—this is all very silly and the
soup's getting cold!

NIGEL (*leading her back to the table*) ; Why silly ?

ROZANNE (*sitting*): Well— isn't it ?

NIGEL (*also sitting*): If the moon and stars and all the poets are silly—yes.

ROZANNE : Perhaps they are.

NIGEL : You are so difficult, my darling—I fear I shall have to speak to you very seriously.

ROZANNE (*smiling*) : What will you say ?

NIGEL : Will you marry me ?

ROZANNE (*after a slight pause—staring at him*): Oh, Nigel—don't be so idiotic,

NIGEL : I mean it.

ROZANNE (*looking down*) : I wish you hadn't said it

NIGEL : Why ?

ROZANNE : Because it's foolish.

NIGEL : If it's a question of your not loving me enough——

ROZANNE : You know perfectly well it's not that.

NIGEL : Why is it foolish and idiotic, then ?

ROZANNE : It can't come true—it wouldn't be right if it did—I know it.

NIGEL : I've thought about it a lot, you know—it isn't a casual thing—an impulse of the moment.

ROZANNE : We've known each other exactly five weeks——

NIGEL : The world can change in less than that.

ROZANNE : We've been lovers for three of them.

NIGEL : I think I knew at the very beginning.

ROZANNE (*almost angrily*) : Nonsense—romantic nonsense !

NIGEL : How can you be so unkind ?

ROZANNE : I must be—don't you see ? I have to be.

NIGEL : No, I don't.

ROZANNE (*gently*) : Listen, my love—my dear love——

NIGEL: Well?

ROZANNE : I was going to say, darling, that I love you with all my heart—more than I've ever loved anybody before—I'm sure of that—and more than I shall ever love anybody again—I'm sure of that, too—it's been very surprising and sudden and swift—and it's the loveliest thing I've ever known—and because of it—I don't want to marry you.

NIGEL : You said I was foolish—that seems to me the greatest foolishness I've ever heard.

ROZANNE : We've talked so much about everything—about how much better it was to be wise about life—and sane—that was what brought us together in the first place—seeing things the same way.

NIGEL : This, to me, is both wise and sane. I love you and I want you to be my wife.

ROZANNE : Oh no, darling—No. There's too much in the way.

NIGEL : Nothing that can't be overcome.

ROZANNE : I've got to make you see somehow.

NIGEL : Go on, my dear—do your damndest—it won't be any good.

ROZANNE : To begin with, there are your mother and father. However much you love me you couldn't expect them to be anything but horrified. Mothers and fathers don't as a rule welcome their son's mistresses into the family.

NIGEL : My mother and father would understand—if they knew you.

ROZANNE : I wonder how many times that has been said before ?

NIGEL : Go on.

ROZANNE : I don't think you're making it very easy—staring at me like that.

NIGEL : I don't want to make it easy.

ROZANNE : I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

NIGEL : Don't do either—just go on pulling our love down to the ground—making it look vulgar and conventional—the usual Chorus Girl and Peer business—

ROZANNE : You're very angry, aren't you ? I've never seen you angry before.

NIGEL : You won't succeed—because it isn't that at all.

ROZANNE : It's too near it to be comfortable.

NIGEL : Go on.

ROZANNE : I don't care how angry you are—you've got to see my point of view as well as your own. Listen—I shall be thirty-one next birthday—I have earned my own living since I was seventeen. I've toured the provinces for years and now—at last—I've got to the West End—and not only the West End, the Jubilee Theatre, Charles Hobson's management—the goal of every struggling actress in the profession.

NIGEL : The ante-room to the Peerage. Don't forget that.

ROZANNE : Not for me. That's just it. I loathe all the title-snatching and money-grabbing that goes on—the Theatre to me is much more important than that—I want to be good in it—better than anybody else—I want my success in life, if any, to be my own—you see how self-centred I am. If you were only an ordinary man—a solicitor or a stockbroker or an actor—I'd marry you to-morrow—because then I could go on with my own life and be myself—but if I married you, as you are—I should have to be somebody else—shouldn't I ?

NIGEL : What you mean is that you don't love me enough ?

ROZANNE (*breaking down*) : Don't be so cruel.

NIGEL (*more gently*) : Listen to me now—just for a minute—I love you so much that my heart aches every moment that you are not there—it aches, too, when you are there, because I want you so desperately to be my own—part of my life—for ever. I know it has all happened very quickly—too quickly to appear really reasonable, but the greatest loves in the world have become true in the passing of a second—Time doesn't count—in magic. I understand everything that you've said—believe me I do—more clearly than you realise. But I'm self-centred too—and I need you, so much more than you need me. If you were my wife you would have to leave everything that you have worked for—give up all your ambitions—endure a certain amount of social rebuffs from people with snobbish, common minds. You would have—later on—to run efficiently, a large house in the English country and another in London—give parties and receptions and open dreary charity bazaars—none of it would be easy and most of it you would hate—anyhow at first. You would have children, too—I hope—and have to look after them and love them and engage nurses and governesses for them—and the only compensation for all this would be that I should be with you all the time—sharing everything with you and loving you. Perhaps it isn't enough, but it is all I have. Will you marry me ?

ROZANNE *looks up at him. There are tears in her eyes.*

ROZANNE : Yes, darling,

The music swells and the lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE IX

SCENE : *The Green Room of the Jubilee Theatre. Two weeks have elapsed since the preceding scene.*

When the lights go up the situation is exactly as it was in the earlier Green Room scene.

The sound of "The Countess Mitzi" number can be heard going on on the stage.

DECIMA DRURY *is sitting bolt upright as she was before and EDGAR FAWCETT is arranging bis cravat before the mirror.*

PAUL TREVOR—in his shirt-sleeves—is having his throat sprayed by ALBERT, his dresser.

PAUL : A-a-ah ! Here, give it to me.

He takes the spray from ALBERT and uses it himself,

DECIMA : I wonder what they're like to-night ?

EDGAR : A bit Mondayish, I expect.

DUGGIE puts his head round the door.

DUGGIE : Number nearly over.

He disappears.

ELSIE JEWELL *sweeps in, followed by DORA, her maid. She is obviously in a tearing rage.*

DECIMA : Lots of time, dear.

ELSIE : Mind your own business.

DECIMA : Well—I'm sure I only——

ELSIE goes up to PAUL TREVOR and stands directly in front of him.

ELSIE (*ominously*): I understand that you had the

impertinence to complain about my performance to Mr. Hobson. Is that true ?

PAUL : My dear Elsie.

ELSIE : Is it true ? Kindly answer me.

PAUL : I would rather not discuss it just now, if you don't mind—we have the show to consider.

ELSIE : Never mind about that. Did you or did you not ?

EDGAR : Paul's quite right, you know, dear—you don't want to get all worked-up just before you go on.

ELSIE : Please don't interfere. (*To PAUL :*) I'm waiting.

PAUL : You can go on waiting for all I care.

ELSIE (*loudly*) : Will you answer me I

PAUL (*equally loudly*) : No, I will not, so there.

ELSIE : We'll see about that.

She snatches the throat-spray from his hand and dashes it on to the floor. DECIMA gives a little shriek.

PAUL : My good woman—have you gone mad ?

ELSIE : Don't you " good woman " me—you up-start !

PAUL : This is disgraceful—Edgar, will you please send for the stage manager ?

EDGAR : Look here, old man——

PAUL : Please do as I say.

LIESL comes in furiously, followed by EDDIE and MAISIE.

LIESL : Will you please be quiet in here—you can be heard all over the theatre.

ELSIE : That's more than can be said for you, anyway.

LIESL : I do not like to be spoken to like that—please do not do it again.

ELSIE : I shall speak as I choose.

LIESL (*turning away*): You are a very foolish woman—and a very bad actress. Where is Trudi with my lemon?

ELSIE : Bad actress ! I was a star when you were singing in the gutter.

MAISIE : Look here—you calm yourself down and shut up.

PAUL : Pay no attention to her, Liesl—she's probably been drinking.

ELSIE (*shrieking*) : Drinking !

PAUL : You must be either drunk or mad to behave like this.

EDDIE : Look here, old man—why bandy words with her——

ELSIE (*to PAUL*) : You had the impertinence to complain to Mr. Hobson about my performance——

PAUL (*violently*): Yes, I most certainly did—and what's more, if you don't improve it—or at least get it back to what it was—I shall complain again.

ELSIE : How dare you ! How dare you !

DECIMA (*interceding*): Elsie dear—please—please don't upset yourself—you have to go on in a minute—you know you're both devoted to each other really—Paul—you're devoted to Elsie really, aren't you——?

She makes a meaning grimace at him.

PAUL : Just as devoted as I am to a puff-adder !

JOHNNY KNOWLES, *the stage manager, comes flying into the room.*

JOHNNY : What the hell's going on in here ?—I've never heard such a bloody noise in all my life——

ELSIE (*screaming at PAUL*) : You're an incompetent, conceited amateur. Your only idea of acting is to stand

stock-still in the centre of the stage and bawl your lungs out—

PAUL (*yelling*): And you're so passe that you can't sing an E flat without the veins standing out on your neck like lead pencils !

ELSIE : You're the laughing-stock of the English Theatre and you have been for years—I've put up for long enough with your hawking and spitting and gargling—I've also put up with your stays creaking all through my love scenes—but, so help me God, I'm not going to put up with any more I

She gives him a ringing slap on the face and turns grandly to stalk from the room. JOHNNY intercepts her.

JOHNNY : Listen, Elsie—for God's sake—you're on in three minutes—

ELSIE : Oh ! I'll never set foot on the stage with that bastard again as long as I live !

She sweeps out as the SEXTETTE GIRLS come in.

DUGGIE *rushes in too.*

JOHNNY and EDDIE *rush out after her.*

DUGGIE : Miss Drury—Mr. Fawcett—you're off—you're off I

DECIMA *gives a shriek and rushes to the door.*

DECIMA : Let us through, girls, we're off—!

She dashes on to the stage followed by EDGAR.

DOREEN : What's going on, " Sir Roger de Coverley " ?

JOHNNY, *who has followed ELSIE out, comes rushing back.*

JOHNNY : Rozanne—you'll have to go on—she's walked out of the theatre—

ROZANNE (*gasping*) : Now ?

JOHNNY : Yes, now—I'll make an announcement.

ROZANNE : My clothes—what about my clothes ?

JOHNNY : Go on in those—we'll get the understudy dresses down from the wardrobe in time for your next change——

He rushes out.

ROZANNE (*tearing off her motor-coat and hat*) : My first line—what's my first Line——?

PAUL : " We have never met before—I fear you must be mistaking me for someone else."

ROZANNE : Oh yes. (*Gabbling:*) " We have never met before—I fear you must be mistaking me for someone else." Oh dear !

PAUL (*hurrying into his coat*): Don't be frightened—I'll help you through. If you dry up just give me a nod—we'll manage all right.

MAISIE (*at the door*): He's making the announcement—listen——

ROZANNE (*to PAUL*) : I'll be all right—I'm so grateful—thank you so much——

Through the open door JOHNNY'S voice can be heard making the announcement:

"Ladies and Gentlemen—the Management very much regrets that owing to the sudden indisposition of Miss Elsie Jewell, she will not be able to appear to-night. The part of Mary Dale will therefore be played by Miss Rozanne Gray."

There is a slight pause and then a spatter of applause.

ROZANNE (*nervously*): They don't seem very pleased, do they ?

PAUL : They damn well ought to be.

LIESL (*kissing ROZANNE*) : Good luck, my dear—play slowly at first until you feel the house—try to enjoy it——

PAUL : Come along.

Amid a whispered chorus of " Good luck, dears"
ROZANNE goes out with PAUL, as the lights fade.

The music continues to play softly.

In the darkness DUGGIE'S voice can be heard at intervals calling:

" Waltz just starting—all down for the Sextette."

" Act Two beginners, please."

" Curtain up Act Two, please."

" All down for Finale Act Two, please."

" Act Three beginners, please."

" Curtain up Act Three, please."

" Everybody down Finale Act Three, please."

His voice dies away and the lights come up again.

ACT I

SCENE X

This time the scene is the Last Act of " The Model Maid"
—The Pré Catalan. It is a typical Musical Comedy set,
lit with a certain amount of blue and with coloured
fairy lamps in the trees.

As the lights come up, EDDIE GOSLING (MONSIEUR
POM-POM) is discovered singing the last part of a topical
song, assisted by the CHORUS. All are in evening dress.

" THE ISLAND OF BOLLAMAZOO "

REFRAIN I

- ALL : On the Island of Bollamazoo
 Life is almost too good to be true.
- POM-POM, : You can fish on a reef
 Wearing pearls and a leaf
 Which at Brighton you never could do.
 For a few coloured beads from the Penny
 Bazaar
 You can buy luscious oysters wherever
 you are,
 And you don't have to wait for a month
 with an R
 On the Island of Bollamazoo.
- ALL : On the Island of Bollamazoo
 Life is almost too good to be true.
- POM-POM : You don't have to care what your neigh-
 bours might think
 If a charming young lady should give you
 a wink,
 You can buy her outright for the price
 of a drink
 On the Island of Bollamazoo.

REFRAIN 2

- ALL: On the Island of Bollamazoo
 Life is almost too good to be true.
- POM-POM : No one ever gets warm
 Over Tariff Reform
 And the thought of Home Rule is taboo.

Unlike Campbell-Bannerman's dignified
pose

The local Prime Minister welcomes his
foes

With a club in one hand and a ring
through his nose

On the Island of Bollamazoo.

ALL: On the Island of Bollamazoo

Life is almost too good to be true.

POM-POM: The ladies are dusky, domestic and fair,
For the suffragette movement they
wouldn't much care,

And they'd think " Votes for Women "
were something to wear

On the Island of Bollamazoo.

At the end of this he and the whole CHORUS exit.

*The stage is empty for a moment. Then PAUL
TREVOR (LORD FAIRFIELD) comes on (full evening
dress). He glances at his watch and taps his foot
impatiently. LIESL (COUNTESS MITZI) enters—she is
holding a mask up to her face.*

MITZI: Have I kept you waiting?

LORD F.: At last—the masked stranger.

MITZI: None other.

LORD F.: I received your note—you asked me to
meet you here—tell me—who are you?

*The orchestra very softly breaks into the last part
of the " Countess Mitzi " refrain. MITZI laughs and
unmasks.*

MITZI: They call me Countess Mitzi.

LORD F.: Mitzi—you!

MITZI: You have been a very foolish boy—Mary is
here—I have explained everything.

LORD F. (*brokenly*): How can she ever forgive me ?

MITZI : My dear—you have played a very dangerous game—both of you—Love is not a thing to be trifled with——

LORD F.: I have been a fool.

MITZI : Listen——

MARY'S voice is heard singing offstage.

LORD F.: Mary !

MITZI : I will leave you now—I have a few words to say to Monsieur Pom-Pom. All men are fools, but sometimes—fortunately—women are fools also. Good luck!

She kisses her band to him and goes off.

MARY comes on from the right—singing a reprise of the waltz song—she sees LORD FAIRFIELD and stops—but the music continues.

MARY : You!

LORD F.: My darling.

MARY : It seems years since I heard you say that.

LORD F.: It has all been a hideous misunderstanding.

MARY : I know—Mitzi told me.

LORD F. : I love you.

MARY (*simply*): I know that too.

He enfolds her in his arms, both of them singing. The CHORUS and the FULL COMPANY all come on, also singing. When the song reaches its climax the curtain falls. It rises again and again. The PRINCIPALS all take a call and make a great business of pushing ROZANNE forward. Finally, she takes a call alone. As she does so, a large bunch of Parma violets is flung at her feet from one of the boxes. She looks up and smiles and holds it close to her.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I

PROLOGUE

The Strand. A. row of hansom cabs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Tho' it wasn't our ambition
To succeed the intermission,
Here -we are.
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Do not think us too ironic
If we hope youVe quenched your chronic
Thirst for Scotch or Gin and Tonic
In the Bar.
We now begin the Second Act
Which we believe will be effectual
And not too intellectual
A bore—
But still we cannot blink the fact
That tho' you get a little wit through us
It's hard to have to sit through us
Once more.
The only vindication for us is
We're like those classical Greek Choruses
Who made the curse
Of laboured verse
A great deal worse.

Bluff Regimental men
Would—we feel—prefer a frolic
To this rather mock-symbolic
Rhymed refrain.
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Do not think the author cheated,
This effect has been repeated
Just to get you safely seated
Once again;
Although we lack
Charm and attack
We thank you very, very much for coming back

ACT II

SCENE II

SCENE : ROZANNE'S *Dressing-room at the Jubilee Theatre.*
Several weeks have passed since the preceding scene. The time is about 10 p.m. The room is comfortably furnished and fitted with flowers.

NIGEL *is alone in the room. He is sitting on the sofa reading a paper.*

DUGGIE'S *voice can be heard calling In the passage :*
"Everybody down, please—Supper scene just started."

NIGEL *puts down the paper slightly irritably and wanders about the room. He looks at the cards on some of the bouquets, makes an obvious exclamation of*

annoyance at one of them, then helps himself to a whisky-and-soda from a small table on the left, and sits down again. DORA, who was once ELSIE JEWELL'S maid and is now Roz ANNE'S, comes bustling in carrying an armful of clothes, a mirror and powder-puff in one hand and a pair of shoes in the other. She proceeds to hang the clothes up behind a screen.

DORA : She'D be off in a few minutes—the supper scene's just started.

NIGEL : Oh—thanks.

DORA : That's a terribly quick change—we have to do it in the Green Room, there's no time to get up here—everybody comes barging in and out—it's enough to drive you mad.

NIGEL : How long do you have to do it in ?

DORA : Just two and a quarter minutes—she comes off gasping for breath after " Spring is in my Heart Again " and before you can say Jack Robinson, she's on in her mask and domino for " Champagne and Laughter 1 "

NIGEL : It certainly sounds strenuous.

DORA : It's all right now Miss Gray's playing it—we get through it in no time—but you should have seen Miss Jewell doing that change——My word 1 It took ten years off my life every night of the week—all the fussing and fuming and cursing going on—you could hear her at Charing Cross.

NIGEL : I gather that Miss Jewell was none too sweet-tempered.

DORA : It all depended on what she'd had before the show.

NIGEL : Do you mean she drank ?

DORA : Well, I wouldn't exactly say "drank"—not spirits, that is—but she could do very nicely, thank you, on light wines.

NIGEL (*smiling*): I see.

DORA : We could always tell if her gentleman had given her a nice dinner or not—she'd come on in the first act bright as a button—you know—all teeth and eyelashes—then Lily, that's the girls' dresser, Lily'd say to me, "Sparkling Burgundy to-night, dear, you're in for it!" and I was.

LIESL *comes in, dressed in her rather elaborate costume for Act Two of "The Model Maid"* NIGEL rises.

LIESL (*with a twinkle in her eye*): Nigel! What a surprise!

NIGEL : Hallo, Liesl.

LIESL : I fear I shall have to speak seriously to your brother about you—by the way, how is he?

NIGEL : He's forsaken this theatre for Daly's—Miss Maudi Lovell.

LIESL : Ah well—the glamour of the Stage—how potent it is! Dora——

DORA : Yes, madam?

LIESL : Will you tell Miss Gray that Prince Lichtenstein is in front again and is coming to my dressing-room after the play? He is most anxious to meet her.

DORA : Yes, madam.

LIESL : Perhaps she would come to my room or I could bring him in here—whichever she likes.

DORA : Very well, madam—I'll ask her.

DORA *goes out*.

NIGEL : Who is Prince Lichtenstein?

LIESL : He is a very old friend of mine, Nigel, but

you needn't be afraid—he is quite respectable now. Actually, if you must know, he is a fragment of my past—that mysterious past of mine that will keep on cropping up.

NIGEL : You mean he was in love with you ?

LIESL : Passionately! For nearly three weeks he came to the theatre every night—he used to sit in my dressing-room—just as you sit in Rozanne's——

NIGEL : Did you love him ?

LIESL : To distraction! His uniform was very " chic " and he had two rows of medals which made a little " carillon " when he breathed heavily—I regret to say he was rather given to breathing heavily. Then, alas, one evening he came to fetch me without his uniform—wearing an opera hat that was just a little bit too small. There is nothing so damping to passion as a little bit too small opera hat!

NIGEL : And now he wants to meet Rozanne.

LIESL : I intend to be very brave over the whole thing—I shall not allow him to see how my heart is aching.

NIGEL : I wish you wouldn't introduce these old roués to Rozanne.

LIESL : There, there, now—I promise you he won't give her expensive presents—unless he's changed with the years.

NIGEL : You're incorrigible.

LIESL : I do not know what that is—but it sounds not very nice.

NIGEL : I don't believe the Stage has much glamour for me—I think I hate it.

LIESL (*patting his arm*) : Never mind—it won't be for much longer—soon you'll have her to yourself. **No**

more waiting about in dressing-rooms—no more wicked admirers to be jealous of——

NIGEL : Do you think she'll be happy without it all ?

LIESL : That will depend on you.

NIGEL : Is she happy now ?

LIESL : Of course she is. All that she has ever hoped for has come true. She is that fantastic Cinderella story of the Theatre—the understudy that becomes a star overnight. Every minute of her day is occupied Singing lessons—rehearsals—new clothes to be fitted—interviews for the papers. She is having success for the first time in her life, and success is very sweet—at the beginning. In addition to all this, she has you.

NIGEL (*a little bitterly*) : In addition to all this.

LIESL : She really loves you.

NIGEL (*looking down*) : I know—I love her, too—beyond everything.

LIESL : Dear Nigel—the Gipsy warned you—do you remember ?

NIGEL : Yes—I remember.

LIESL : So many worlds have been lost for love—even mine once—but I was lucky—I got it back.

NIGEL : How ?

LIESL : I think I laughed before it was too late.

She goes out.

NIGEL *stands pensively looking after her for a moment, then he wanders over to the mirror and stares at himself in it. ROZANNE comes in, followed by DORA.*

ROZANNE : Hallo, darling—what are you doing ? Counting your grey hairs ?

NIGEL : I was wondering what you see in me.

ROZANNE : Well, we'll go into that when we have more time. Oh dear—that scene was dreadful to-night

—Dora—ask Mr. Knowles to see me after the performance.

DORA : All right, dear.

DORA *goes out.*

NIGEL : What was wrong ?

ROZANNE : Oh, just Eddie again. He's very sweet, but I could kill him.

NIGEL : Liesl's been talking to me.

ROZANNE (*sitting at her dressing-table*) : She really is amazing—I was watching her to-night doing that song at the beginning of the second act—every line, every gesture—perfect—I'd give anything to be able to time like that, but I don't suppose I ever shall—it's more than technique—it's genius.

NIGEL (*kissing her*) : Oh, darling.

ROZANNE : What's the matter ? You look very solemn.

NIGEL : Nothing—I was just rather lonely up here without you.

ROZANNE : Did Dora give you a drink ?

NIGEL : I helped myself.

ROZANNE : Did you see that vast bouquet ?

NIGEL : Yes.

ROZANNE : Do you know whom it's from ?

NIGEL : Yes—I looked at the card.

ROZANNE : I hope you were impressed.

NIGEL : I was furious—pompous old fool!

ROZANNE : That's not the way to speak of a Duke, darling—a real fat large-as-life Duke—although I must say that I'm a little offended that he never noticed me when I was in the Sextette. I expect he's a bit of a snob.

NIGEL : Will you see him if he comes round ?

ROZANNE : Of course—I must be polite—and it will save me writing to thank him for the flowers.

NIGEL : I suppose it must all be very lovely really—very exciting.

ROZANNE : What ?

NIGEL : Everything.

ROZANNE : It's very funny.

NIGEL : Is it ?

ROZANNE : Things become ordinary so quickly—my whole life has changed round in such a very little while and yet here I am living it as though it hadn't changed at all.

NIGEL (*putting his arms round her*): It's going to change even more.

ROZANNE (*a little ruefully*) : It's quite nice as it is.

NIGEL • I can still see room for improvement.

ROZANNE : Call Dora—will you ? She's probably tactfully loitering in the passage.

NIGEL : I love you.

ROZANNE : Oh, Nigel—this is so sudden.

NIGEL *goes to the door but DORA comes in just as he gets to it.*

DORA : Mr. Hobson is here, dear.

ROZANNE : The Guv'nor ! Oh dear, I wonder what I've been doing wrong—Come in——

CHARLES HOBSON *enters. He is a stoutish man in the fifties. He is wearing evening dress and smoking a cigar. Altogether there is an air of discreet splendour about him.*

HOBSON : Good evening, my dear.

ROZANNE : Were you in front to-night ?

HOBSON : I saw most of the first act.

ROZANNE : You know Lord Vaynham ?

HOBSON (*shaking hands with NIGEL*): Yes—we've already met—how are you ?

NIGEL (*with a slight edge on his voice*) : Very well indeed, thank you,

HOBSON : I knew your father, you know—many years ago—perhaps it's indiscreet of me to mention it ?

NIGEL : Not at all. My father's light association with the Theatre is one of my mother's favourite stories.

HOBSON (*sifting down*) : Is it really ? (*To ROZANNE* :) Were you photographed to-day ?

ROZANNE : Yes—I was there all the afternoon. I couldn't use my first-act dress because it was being cleaned, but I had the hat, so he just took heads. The other dresses were all there.

HOBSON : Good.

There is a slight pause.

NIGEL : Do you want to talk business, Mr. Hobson ?

HOBSON : As a matter of fact there are one or two things I should like to discuss with Rozanne.

NIGEL : I'll wait outside——

ROZANNE : No, darling—go and talk to Liesl—she's not on again in this act——

NIGEL : All right. (*He bows to HOBSON.*) Good night.

HOBSON : Good night.

NIGEL goes out followed by DORA.

ROZANNE : Was I good to-night? Were you pleased ?

HOBSON : You were excellent, my dear—I was more than pleased.

ROZANNE : How lovely.

HOBSON (*benignly*): Are you happy ?

ROZANNE : I've never been so happy in my life.

HOBSON : Good. I should like you to come and see

me in my office to-morrow morning at eleven. You haven't a rehearsal, have you ?

ROZANNE : No—it's a matinee day.

HOBSON : I want you to meet Harry Chalmers and George Allen.

ROZANNE : I should love to.

HOBSON : They are writing my next show for this theatre, you know.

ROZANNE : Yes—I heard they were—there's been a great deal of talk about it in the Green Room.

HOBSON (*casually*) : I think the part will suit you.

ROZANNE : Part! Do you mean——?

HOBSON : It's a charming idea—the setting is Japanese.

ROZANNE : Is it a big part ?

HOBSON : It's the leading part.

ROZANNE (*with a slight gasp*) : Oh !

HOBSON : The story is about a beautiful Geisha girl, Yo Yo San, who falls in love with a warrior.

ROZANNE : I'm afraid I shouldn't be any good for a Japanese part—I mean, I'm not very oriental-looking, am I ?

HOBSON : Neither is anybody else in the cast.

ROZANNE : Oh, I see.

HOBSON : The score is by Franz Knuhlman.

ROZANNE : Knuhlman! That will be wonderful, won't it ?

HOBSON : In my opinion it's the finest score he's ever written—better even than " Love from Vienna." He has a melody in the second act that——

ROZANNE (*with an effort*) : Oh, Mr. Hobson——

HOBSON : What?

ROZANNE : Please don't say any more—you'll never

know how grateful I am to you for wanting me—but—I'm afraid it won't be any use my coming to see you to-morrow—I mean—you see, I'm going to leave the Stage when this run finishes—I'm going to be married—nobody knows about it yet, it's still a secret, but it's all settled.

HOBSON : But, my dear girl—that's extremely foolish.

ROZANNE : I know it sounds foolish—but it isn't really.

HOBSON : But this is the chance of your life. How many years have you been on the Stage ?

ROZANNE : Since I was seventeen—fourteen years.

HOBSON (*rising*): I shall expect you in my office to-morrow morning at eleven.

ROZANNE : Yes, but, Mr. Hobson——

HOBSON (*indulgently*): Never make a decision in a hurry, my dear.

ROZANNE : But this decision is already made—it was made six weeks ago when I was still in the Sextette.

DUGGIE'S *voice calls outside*:

" Miss Gray—Finale Act Two, please !"

HOBSON : You are no longer one of the Sextette.

ROZANNE : Please, Mr. Hobson—I really mean it—I can't even think of it——

HOBSON : There's no hurry—think it over very carefully. Come and see me to-morrow week instead—Knuhlman will be here then—he can play you some of the music——

DORA *appears round the door*.

DORA : Getting near, dear——

HOBSON : Next week ?

ROZANNE : Thank you very much—really I mean that—I must go now——

HOBSON : Run along——

The lights fade as ROZANNE runs out of the room.

DUGGIE is heard shouting :

" Everybody down for Finale Act Two, please I"

ACT II

SCENE III

The scene is the stage of the Jubilee Theatre immediately after the preceding scene.

The finale of the second act of " The Model Maid " is in progress.

The scene is the foyer of the Opera House during the annual Opera Ball Everyone is dressed in red and white dominoes and masks.

When the lights go up, MARY DALE (ROZANNE) is singing with the FULL CHORUS.

MARY (*singing*) :

Rhapsody—There is rhapsody
In the atmosphere.

CHORUS : The lady is enchanted.

The lady is enchanted.

MARY : My dearest wish is granted,

My heart has found wings,

Each moment brings

My lover near.

CHORUS : Each fleeting moment brings him near.

MART : Every note of my song he'll hear,
True and clear,
Love is here,
Love is here,
He'll answer.

Sing for Joy,
I will echo it,
Sing for Joy,
Let the music play,
Lifting us away
Beyond retreating,
Lyrically meeting
To the tune that our hearts are beating.
This moment is divine, love,
Yours and mine, love,
This melody enthralling,
Calling—Calling.
Sing for Joy,
I will echo it,
Tra la la—tra la la,
Tra la la—tra la la,
Sing for the joy of love.

MARY : Ah Ah Ah Ah
Ah Ah Ah Ah.

CHORUS : Let their heaven last,
The future and the past
Merging in the dream they're sharing.

MARY : Ah Ah Ah Ah
Ah Ah Ah Ah.

CHORUS : Now no matter how the gods conspire
This moment is their hearts' desire.

MARY : Joy is the song I sing to you.
Ever new,
Ever true.

Sing for Joy,
I will echo it,
Sing for Joy,
Let the music play,
Lifting us away
Beyond retreating,
Lyrically meeting
To the tune that our hearts are beating.
This moment is divine, love,
Yours and mine, love,
This melody enthralling,
Calling—Calling.
Sing for Joy,
I will echo it,
Tra la la—tra la la,
Tra la la—tra la la,
Sing for the joy of love,

*The DUKE and DUCHESS OF TRENTON enter,
followed by MONSIEUR POM-POM and PANSY.*

DUCHESS (*ominously*) : Miss Dale ?

MARY : Yes, that is my name.

DUCHESS : I am the Duchess of Trenton. I have a letter for you from my son.

MARY : A letter ? I don't understand.

DUCHESS : You will understand better when you have read it.

MARY *takes the letter and stands looking at it.*
I fear your little plan has failed.

PANSY : What does she mean ? Mary—what is the matter ?

DUKE : My son is unable to come here to-night, Miss Dale.

DUCHESS : The elopement—the romantic elopement that you so cleverly arranged will not take place.

PANSY : Mary!

MARY (*dully*): I see.

She slowly opens the letter and reads it—to the music.

(*Singing*:)

" My dear Miss Dale,
When you receive this letter
I shall be far away,
And hope you will forgive me when I say
That it is better
For you and I
To say good-bye——"

(*Spoken* :) But why ?—but why——? It was only to-day—he said—he said he loved me——

DUCHESS (*inexorably*) : Go on.

MARY (*singing*):

" Trust must prevail,
And in our hearts' confusion
Whatever love we give
It's better far that we should learn to live
Without illusion——"

*The CHORUS softly sings a melody', bouche fermée—
MARY sings against it.*

MARY (*singing*):

What have I done that you should treat me so ?
What bitter Fate should wish to cheat me so ?
Why should this hour of happiness supreme
Change to despair with the swiftness of a troubled
dream ?

I only know all my love I gave to you
With happy heart willingly a slave to you.
This foolish heart that you have so cruelly betrayed
I now withdraw from you,
For ever more from you,
For ever more !

MARY (*bursting into tears*): Oh, how could he—how
could he——!

POM-POM : There, there, dear—there are just as good
fish in the sea as ever came out of it.

PANSY : Don't cry, dear. No man is worth a single
tear.

DUKE : Come, Penelope.

MARY (*recovering herself*): One moment.

DUCHESS : There is nothing more to say.

MARY (*with spirit*): Oh yes, there is.

DUCHESS : As my son says in his letter—" Truth
must prevail."

MARY : He loved me and I loved him—that was
true.

DUCHESS : You lied to him.

MARY : No, no I

DUKE : My dear—you were foolish—it is always
foolish to pretend to be something you are not.

DUCHESS : Sometimes it is apparently necessary.

MARY : What do you mean ?

DUCHESS : You tried to trap our son into marrying you. Fortunately we discovered in time that both you and your so-called guardian, Countess Mitsi, are nothing more nor less than adventuresses.

MARY : How clever you are—and how sure !

DUCHESS : I am a woman of the world.

MARY : It is you who have lied to him—not I.

DUCHESS : I do not understand.

MARY : I would not expect you to understand. My love for your son was true and real and infinitely dear to me. You—as a woman of the world—have decided to break it—because you know so much. I have nothing more to say except that I never wish to see you or your son again as long as I live ! Go !

DUCHESS : How dare you speak like that !

MARY : Go ! Go ! Go ! And you may take this letter back to him !

She tears the letter across and throws it at their feet. The DUKE slowly stoops and picks it up. They turn to go.

(Wildly :) Play something gay—I want to dance—to dance——!

The music breaks into a gay waltz, MARY whirls round two or three times and then falls swooning into PANSY'S arms as——

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE IV

The Scene is the Drawing-room of LIESL'S house.

A few days have elapsed since the preceding scene. The time is about 4..30 p.m.

LIESL is giving a tea-party to the SEXTETTE GIRLS. There is now a new one who stepped into ROZANNE'S shoes when she took over the leading *part*: BLANCHE WALLACE. She is fair and pretty.

Tea is over. ELEANOR, DOREEN and GRACE are grouped round the piano. VIOLET is attempting to play, not very successfully, extracts from an old vocal score which she has found among the pile of LIESL'S music. LALA and BLANCHE are still seated at the tea-table with LIESL.

LIESL :——It should go quicker than that, Violet——it was a very gay song——

VIOLET : I know, dear—but it's the most complicated accompaniment I've ever seen.

LIESL (*to BLANCHE*) : You're sure you won't have any more tea ?

BLANCHE : No, thank you.

LALA : Is Rozanne going to move into a flat or is she staying with you indefinitely ?

LIESL : I hope she will stay with me—anyhow for as long as she can. She is no trouble—she has her own latch-key——

DOREEN (*turning the pages of the music*) : There, dear—try that one—it hasn't got so many black notes——

LALA : Is it true about her and Nigel Vaynham—I mean, do you really think he'll marry her ?

LIESL : She will be in at any moment now—you must ask her.

ELEANOR : There—that's better——(*She starts to hum.*)

LIESL : No, no—not that tune, please——

LALA : Why, Liesl—is it full of lovely romantic memories for you ?

LIESL : No, but I had to sing it seven hundred times—it was the longest run I ever played.

BLANCHE : What show was it ?

LIESL : *La Belle HJ/ene.*

ELEANOR (*coming over to LIESL*) : What was the most exciting thing that ever happened to you ?

LIESL (*dramatically*): When Love first came to me, Eleanor—I can remember it as though it were yesterday. The moon, the stars, the Danube murmuring gently through the night——He had been a handsome, distinguished young officer in the Emperor's Body-guard—unfortunately when I first met him he was seventy-two.

DOREEN (*laughing and leaving the piano*) : Oh, Liesl—you spoil everything.

LALA : When did you make your first real triumph ?

LIESL : Too long ago to remember with discretion.

VIOLET : Pd rather hear about your love affairs——

LIESL : I've always been true to my first love.

GRACE : Who was he ?

LIESL : He was very cruel to me—particularly in the beginning—then as the years went on he became kinder.

LALA : Did he give you lovely jewels ?

LIESL : Everything I have.

GRACE (*some of the others say it with her*): Who was he ?

LIESL : The Theatre !

There is a general sigh of disappointment.

DOREEN : Was it very hard in the beginning ?

VIOLET : Did you starve ?

ELEANOR : Did you have to tour for years ?

DOREEN : But there must have been some love, too—
all mixed up with it——

BLANCHE : Was it in Vienna—the first time ?

GRACE : Or Berlin—or Budapest—or where ?

LALA : Tell us, Liesl. Tell us——

The music strikes up.

SONG : " OPERETTE "

GIRLS : Tell us, darling Liesl, please,
How you became a star :
Was it hard in the beginning ?
Were you sinned against ?—Or were you
sinning ?

LIESL : In reconstructing my career for you
I must make one thing clear for you,
That's only fair.

GIRLS : We'll concentrate with all our might.

LIESL : Be under no misapprehension,
I do not intend to mention
Who my lovers were.

GIRLS : How disappointing, but how right !

LIESL : But all the same
You will agree
An artist's life can never be
Quite free from blame.

But don't forget
And try to see
That everything in life to me
Is Operette.

Ever since a child of tender age
The world has been a stage
For me to dance upon;
Wedding bells could never ring for me,
The only thing for me
Was " Getting On."
I made my start
While other girls were having love affairs
I set my heart
Upon a destiny above affairs,
Throughout my lonely youth
I knew too much reality,
So now my only truth
Is artificiality.
But if some light refrain
Can make me live again
Then you can really clearly see
All that I am or wish to be.

REFRAIN

Something remembered of joy and regret,
That's Operette—That's Operette I
Melodies that call to mind forgotten laughter,
Songs that linger in the memory for ever after,
That was my start,
That is my heart,
Life for me is ever orchestrated,
Everywhere my scene is set,

Singers of songs have the world in their debt,
Memories that Time can never stop,
For ever Operette 1

The GIRLS sing the second refrain with her.

At the end of it she sinks down on to the sofa.
CHARLES, *the butler, enters.*

CHARLES : A lady to see you, madam.

LIESL : A lady—who ?

CHARLES : She first of all asked for Miss Gray, then when I said she wasn't in, she asked to see you. She said I was to say it was Lady Messiter.

LALA : That's Nigel Vaynham's mother I

DOREEN : My dear !

LIESL (*with a slightly puzzled frown*) : Ask her to come in.

CHARLES *goes off.*

VIOLET : I think we'd better go, Liesl—don't you, Eleanor ?

ELEANOR : Yes——

DOREEN : I wonder what she wants ?

CHARLES *re-enters.*

CHARLES : Lady Messiter.

LADY MESSITER *comes in. She is a charming, dignified woman of about fifty. She loo k', just for a second', nonplussed at such a bevy offemininity.* LIESL *goes to greet her.*

LIESL : How do you do ?

LADY M.: How do you do ? Please forgive me for appearing unexpectedly like this—but I am up in London for the day—and I thought I would take the opportunity of calling on Miss Gray. She is a great friend of my eldest son—Nigel—I expect you know him.

LIESL : Of course I do—I am very fond of him. I am expecting Rozanne at any moment—won't you sit down and have some tea ?

LADY M.: You're most kind.

LIESL : Charles—bring some fresh tea, please.

CHARLES *exits*.

LADY M. : Please don't bother.

LIESL : I should like another cup myself—now I must introduce you—This is Miss Eleanor West—Miss Doreen Manners—Miss Blanche Wallace—Miss Violet Travers—Miss Grace Menteith—Miss Lala Montague.

LADY M. (*smiling*): How do you do ?—I have admired you all so much—My husband and I have been to your play twice already—Miss Menteith—I've heard so much about you from my other son, David.

GRACE (*slightly embarrassed*): Oh yes—we're old friends——

LADY M. : I'm so glad.

LIESL : Will you not sit here, Lady Messiter—by the fire?

LADY M. (*sitting*): Thank you. One welcomes a fire on a day like this—it was perishing, coming up in the train this morning.

LIESL : Is it far—your home in the country ?

LADY M. : No, not really—we live in Kent—but the train service is appalling—that dreadful South-Eastern and Chatham Railway——

LALA (*socially*): It's a most *extraordinary* railway, isn't it ?—those fearful tunnels—and the smuts—quite, quite horrid.

DOREEN : It put me off Margate for three seasons.

VIOLET : Doreen, do be quiet I Come along, Eleanor—we really must go——

ELEANOR : Good-bye, Liesl—we've had a lovely afternoon.

VIOLET : Good-bye, Lady Messiter.

LADY M. : Good-bye.

LIESL : Until to-night.

ELEANOR *and* VIOLET *go off.*

LADY M. : I expect you must find that acting the same part night after night is very tiring.

LIESL : When the audience is kind, it is very happy work.

LADY M. : May I say how tremendously I enjoyed your performance—I suppose everybody says that to you.

LIESL : It is always charming to hear—thank you.

DOREEN : We must be going too, Liesl. Are you coming, Grace ?

GRACE : Yes.

DOREEN : Blanche ?

BLANCHE : Good-bye, Liesl—thank you for letting us come.

GRACE : Good-bye, Lady Messiter—give my love to David when you see him.

LADY M. : Certainly—good-bye.

LALA : Good-bye, Lady Messiter. It has been such a pleasure to meet you—I believe you know a great chum of mine—Lord Borrowmere ?

LADY M. : Yes, indeed—I was at his christening.

She goes out with the other THRIIEE—after a few more "good-byes."

CHARLES *comes in with fresh tea, places it on the table and goes out again.* LIESL *and* LADY MESSITER *are left alone.*

LIESL (*pouring out tea*): You have never met Rozanne?

LADY M. : No—I am naturally very anxious to.

LIESL : She is very remarkable.

LADY M. : Remarkable ?

LIESL : Apart from her talent—she has wisdom and understanding—they are both rare qualities.

LADY M.: Does she wish to marry my son ?

LIESL : Sugar ?

LADY M.: No, thank you—and only very little milk.

LIESL (*giving her the tea*) : There.

LADY M.: I beg your pardon—I know she is your friend—I really didn't mean to ask you to betray any of her confidences.

LIESL : It is very difficult for you—I know.

LADY M.: You said you were very fond of Nigel—is that true ?

LIESL : Very true indeed. He is a dear boy—I am most fond of him.

LADY M.: In your opinion—obviously you needn't answer me if you don't wish to—does she really love my son ?

LIESL: Yes.

LADY M. : Oh !

LIESL : Would you rather I had said " No " ?

LADY M. (*making an effort to smile*) : Yes.

LIESL : Lady Messiter, you must believe me when I say that I understand very well how worried you are. But I wish to convince you of something—now—so that you may not make any mistake in talking to Rozanne. She is not like many of the other girls who use the Stage to show how attractive they are and to get rich husbands. She loves your son truly. She loves

him enough to be prepared to give up her whole life to him. And her life—her life in the Theatre, I mean—is only just beginning now—everything is at her feet. If you wish for my true honest opinion I think she will be a fool to marry your son.

The door opens and ROZANNE comes gaily into the room. She is taking off her coat and hat and furs.

ROZANNE : I meant to get here ages ago, but Nigel wouldn't let me—we've been to the Zoo of all places. He's gone to the Club and is picking us both up here presently——(*She breaks off on seeing LADY MESSITER.*)

LIESL : This is Nigel's mother—Lady Messiter.

ROZANNE : Oh. How do you do ?

LADY M. (*rising*) : I've wanted to meet you so much.

ROZANNE : I've wanted to meet you, too.

LIESL (*with decision*): I am going to change my dress, Rozanne.

ROZANNE (*with panic in her voice*): But, Liesl——

LIESL : Lady Messiter has come all the way from the country to see you. To change my dress is the least I can do.

ROZANNE : Yes, of course—I see.

LIESL (*to LADY MESSITER*) : Good-bye—I hope that one day we shall see each other again.

LADY M. (*shaking hands with her*): If anyone had told me that you were more charming off the stage than on I should never have believed them—but it's true.

LIESL : You are very kind, madame—thank you—Auf Wiedersehen.

LADY M.: Auf Wiedersehen.

LIESL *goes out.*

ROZANNE (*after a slight pause*): I'm afraid I look rather untidy.

LADY M. : The Zoo always makes one untidy. You seem to have survived It extremely well.

ROZANNE : Shall we sit down ?

LADY M. : Of course.

They sit. There is another pause.

ROZANNE : You've come to see me about Nigel ?

LADY M. : Yes. My husband wished to come with me, but I dissuaded him—I felt that I would rather talk to you alone—my husband is delightful, but slightly vague. Nigel takes after me, I think. At any rate he isn't in the least vague.

ROZANNE : No—not in the least.

LADY M. : The embarrassment of this situation is heightened for me by the fact that I have seen your play—I cannot quite banish a certain sense of unreality—I almost feel that we should sing—I am haunted by the spectacle of that richly garbed Duchess being so abominably rude to you.

ROZANNE : The finale of the second act ? Yes—I thought of that, too.

LADY M. : Not that the situation could be considered at all the same.

ROZANNE : What you mean is that it is the same ?

LADY M. (*hastily*): No, my dear—please don't misunderstand me—I was only trying to lighten the intolerable awkwardness of these few moments by a little foolishness—believe me, I really don't feel any more in the mood for the joking word than you do. I am actually desperately worried and very unhappy.

ROZANNE : Oh, please don't say that.

LADY M. : I know no details—only that my son intends to marry you. Is that so ?

ROZANNE : Yes—that's so.

LADY M.: You love him ?

ROZANNE (*looking at her clearly*) : Yes, Lady Messiter. I love him.

LADY M. : Have you been—(*There is a slight pause.*)
—everything to each other ?

ROZANNE : Yes.

LADY M. : There is no question of—of any complications ?

ROZANNE : No.

LADY M. : You must forgive me if I ask you some more questions—you see, I really know nothing whatever about you.

ROZANNE : Naturally—I quite understand—please ask me anything you like.

LADY M. : You have not been married before ?

ROZANNE : No.

LADY M.: Have you a mother and father ?

ROZANNE : No—they're both dead. My father was Canadian—he died when I was a baby. My mother brought me to England when I was four. She did dressmaking, which helped to eke out the very little money that my father had left. She worked very hard. Then she got a position as Wardrobe Mistress with a touring theatrical company. She managed to send me to a Roman Catholic school near Brighton, but I spent all my holidays with her wherever she happened to be. When I was seventeen, she died, and the manager of the company she had worked for gave me a part in the chorus. After that I was lucky enough to get work more or less continuously—in the provinces, of course, not in London—then, two years ago, Mr. Hobson's manager saw me playing in a pantomime in Liverpool and engaged me for chorus and understudy at the

Jubilee. Then in the next show I got into the Sextette because one of the girls had appendicitis, and now I'm playing the leading part because the star had a bad temper.

LADY M.: It hasn't been an easy life.

ROZANNE : I never expected it to be.

LADY M.: Do you think that you will be able to make Nigel happy ?

ROZANNE (*a trifle strained*) : How can I tell ? I only know that I love him and that he loves me and that I'll do my best.

LADY M. : I believe what you say. And if my son marries you I promise you that I will do my best, too—to make things as smooth as possible for you.

ROZANNE (*with a break in her voice*) : Do you mean that?

LADY M. : Yes.

ROZANNE : It's very generous of you.

LADY M. : But I must be absolutely frank. I know you so little—that I cannot say—much as I would like to—that I am anything but heart-broken over the whole affair.

ROZANNE : Am I so very much less than what you hoped for Nigel ?

LADY M. : Personally—I could not be sure so soon—but your position is certainly gravely less.

ROZANNE : It's a perfectly honest position.

LADY M.: That, unfortunately, is not sufficiently appreciated in this world of sadly confused values.

ROZANNE (*with a touch of temper*): You mean my social level is not high enough ?

LADY M.: Your social level has nothing to do with it—your theatrical level has a great deal. You are—in

the eyes of Nigel's world—an actress from the Jubilee Theatre.

ROZANNE : And why should Nigel's world be so contemptuous of actresses ?

LADY M. (*with a slight smile*): My dear—in all fairness—it has had certain reason to be.

ROZANNE : Do you realise what I am giving up to marry Nigel ?

LADY M.: Do you realise what Nigel is giving up to marry you ?

ROZANNE : No, I don't.

LADY M. : Up until the time that he met you, Nigel's whole life was wrapped up in his Regiment.

ROZANNE : I know—he talks about it a lot.

LADY M. : Doesn't it seem a pity to you—that all his years of training and hard work, as well as yours, should have to be wasted ?

ROZANNE : I don't understand——

LADY M.: It seems a very high price to pay for love, however important it may be to both of you at the moment—how can you be sure that it will be strong enough to survive the sacrifices entailed ?

ROZANNE : Believe me, Lady Messiter—I've said that to him—really I have, from my own point of view—how can one ever be sure ?

LADY M.: Your own point of view, although I fully sympathise with it, is naturally less urgent to me than his.

ROZANNE : I still don't understand what, beyond a certain amount of gossip and unpleasantness, Nigel is sacrificing by marrying me ?

LADY M. : Everything—his whole career.

ROZANNE : But why—why ?

LADY M.: He is sending in his papers.

ROZANNE : Sending in his papers ?

LADY M.: There is a hard-and-fast rule in his Regiment that any officer who marries an actress automatically resigns his commission.

ROZANNE (*after a pause*) : Is that true—really true ?

LADY M.: Do you mean to say that you didn't know that?

ROZANNE (*iniserably*): No—I didn't know that.

LADY M. : I am afraid I misjudged you, my dear—I'm very sorry.

ROZANNE : I suppose he wasn't going to say anything to me until he'd resigned—until it was all finished and done with. Oh, how could he be such a fool—how could he——?

She breaks down.

LADY M.: Hush—don't cry.

ROZANNE (*recovering herself with an effort*) : What will he do—tell me, please—what will he do if he gives up the Army?

LADY M. : I don't know—I suppose he'd lead an ordinary life of some sort—perhaps he'd go into business—although he certainly hasn't had any training for it.

ROZANNE : I don't really see him—in business.

LADY M. : Well, it isn't exactly what we had planned for him. It has been a tradition in our family for several hundred years that the eldest son should always be a soldier.

ROZANNE : I see—traditions shouldn't be broken ever, should they ? Not for anything.

LADY M. : I don't know. I think that rather depends on the importance of the tradition—I suppose it's only

a point of view really. Everything's changing—perhaps one minds too much about such things.

ROZANNE : You would mind dreadfully, wouldn't you—if Nigel left the Regiment ?

LADY M. : Yes—both my husband and I would mind very much.

ROZANNE : And he'd mind too—however much he pretended—I expect he'd mind always.

LADY M. : That would depend on whether the happiness he found with you was deep enough—and lasting enough.

ROZANNE : I do love him so.

LADY M. : Yes—I am sure you do. It's a curse of the human race that we can so seldom love and be detached at the same time. If only we could see a little further—if only we could discover our truths a little earlier and without quite so much heart-break. How can we tell—you and I sitting here—what will be for the best ? We can only decide by our own experience—by what we know. You know that you love Nigel and will do everything in your power to make him happy. I know that he will never be happy if he sacrifices the life he loves and the traditions he upholds. One of us must be right, but how can we tell which ?

ROZANNE (*rising and walking about the room*): How mercilessly clever you are.

LADY M. : Clever ?

ROZANNE : Perhaps it isn't your cleverness—perhaps it isn't you at all—perhaps it's the circumstances behind you that are so strong.

LADY M. : I think you are being a little unjust to me. I neither had, nor have, any particular desire to be clever.

ROZANNE : I'm sorry—I didn't mean it quite like that.

LADY M.: I think the cleverest thing I could do now would be to go away.

ROZANNE : Yes—(*She tries to force a smile.*)—I think perhaps it would.

LADY M, (*rising*): Will you tell him—that—we've talked together ?

ROZANNE : I don't know.

LADY M. : I can only ask you, without any right, but most humbly, to do what you think best—for him.

ROZANNE : I'll try, Lady Messiter.

LADY M. : Please forgive me if I have hurt your feelings in any way.

ROZANNE : It isn't you that have hurt my feelings.

LADY M.: Good-bye.

ROZANNE (*dully*) : Good-bye.

LADY MESSITER *looks at her quietly for a moment, then, quite uneffusively, kisses her.*

LADY M. : Thank you for loving him so much.

LADY MESSITER *goes out.*

ROZANNE *stands for a moment quite still then she sinks on to her knees at the end of the sofa and buries her head in her arms as the lights fade.*

ACT II

SCENE V

The Sfrand.

QUARTETTE :

" THE STATELY HOMES OF ENGLAND "

VERSE 3

Lord Elderley—Lord Borrowmere,
Lord Sickert and Lord Camp
Behold us in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy and hard to please.
Reading in Debrett of us
This fine Patrician quartette of us
We can feel extremely proud
Our ancient lineage we trace
Back to the cradle of the Race
Before those beastly Roman bow-men
Bitched our local Yeoman.
Tho' the new democracy
May pain the old Aristocracy
We've not winced nor cried aloud
Under the bludgeonings of chance what will be—
will be.
Our heads will still be
Bloody but quite unbowed 1

The Stately Homes of England
In valley, dale and glen
Produce a race of charming,
Innocuous young men.

Tho' our mental equipment may be slight
And we barely distinguish left from right,
We are quite prepared to fight—for our principles,
Tho' none of us know so far
What they really are.
Our duty to the nation
It's only fair to state,
Lies not in pro-creation
But what we pro-create ;
And so we can cry
With kindling eye
As to married life we go,
What ho 1 for the Stately Homes of England I

The Stately Homes of England
Altho' a trifle bleak,
Historically speaking,
Are more or less unique.
We've a cousin who won the Golden Fleece
And a very peculiar fowling-piece
Which was sent to Cromwell's niece,
Who detested it,
And rapidly sent it back
With a dirty crack.
A note we have from Chaucer
Contains a bawdy joke.
We also have a saucer—that Bloody Mary broke.
We've two pairs of tights—King Arthur's Knights
Had completely worn away.
Sing Hey 1 for the Stately Homes of England!

ACT II

SCENE VI

A private room at Romano's.

GEORGE, *the waiter*, is setting a dinner-table for two.

ROZANNE and NIGEL enter. They are both in day clothes.

ROZANNE : Good evening, George.

GEORGE : Good evening, miss.

NIGEL : Good evening, George.

GEORGE : Good evening, my lord.

NIGEL : Dinner ready ?

GEORGE : Yes, my lord, it's here. You didn't order anything to drink, my lord.

NIGEL : What would you like ?

ROZANNE : Nothing—not before the show—just some water.

NIGEL : I'll have some beer.

GEORGE : Light lager, my lord ?

NIGEL : Yes—that'll do.

GEORGE *goes out*.

ROZANNE : I think this was silly of us.

NIGEL : I expect it was rather.

ROZANNE *comes to the table and stands for a moment looking at a bowl of Parma violets in the middle of it*.

ROZANNE : I see you've remembered everything.

NIGEL : Yes—I shall always remember—everything,

ROZANNE : Oh, darling—do be careful.

NIGEL : **Sorry.**

ROZANNE : The room feels strange—I expect it's because we're not dressed up and it's dinner and not supper.

NIGEL : Promise me you'll never come to this room with anybody else ?

ROZANNE : I don't have to promise—I know I couldn't.

GEORGE *comes in again with the drinks.*

NIGEL : How's business to-night, George ?

GEORGE : Quite a crowd, my lord, taken all in all. Will you be in to supper after the show, my lord ?

NIGEL : No, George—I'm afraid we shan't be in to supper again for a long time—I'm going away.

GEORGE : Oh, I'm sorry to hear that, my lord.

ROZANNE : Lord Vaynham is sailing for India the first thing in the morning. He's rejoining his Regiment.

GEORGE : Fancy now—I've got a nephew in India, in Calcutta he is, I believe—he's in the shipping business—doing very nicely.

NIGEL : Calcutta ?

GEORGE : Yes, my lord—Calcutta. My sister had a card from him Christmas. He said it was very hot.

NIGEL : Yes—Calcutta can be very hot.

GEORGE : Yes—so it seems, my lord. Everything all right, my lord ?

NIGEL : Yes, thank you.

GEORGE *takes the tray and goes out.*

It's only chicken—I ordered something very light on purpose.

ROZANNE : Yes, darling.

NIGEL : Aren't you going to eat it ?

ROZANNE : No, darling.

She puts her head down and bursts into tears.

NIGEL : Don't, my dearest—please, please don't.

ROZANNE : I'll be better in a minute—let's not try to be brave any more—let's stop being afraid of letting each other see we're unhappy—let's give in.

NIGEL : Very well, my darling—let's give in.

ROZANNE : There's nothing to say really—that's what's so silly. I'd like to find words—lovely loving words for you to take away with you, to remember me by—but I can't.

NIGEL : They're all there, between us, there's no need to search for them.

ROZANNE (*trying to smile*) : Yes, darling. (*There is a pause.*) I had a letter from your mother.

NIGEL : When?

ROZANNE : This morning—she asked me to go down and stay after the show closes.

NIGEL : Shall you go ?

ROZANNE : Not for a long time yet.

NIGEL : I'd like you to go—a little later on—when you feel you can bear it. I'd like to think of you there.

ROZANNE : That's sentimental of you, darling, and dreadfully selfish.

NIGEL (*smiling*) : Perhaps it is rather.

ROZANNE : It won't exactly ease my heartache to visit your world without you there to hold my hand. The house will be too full of you. When your mother says something quite ordinary to me and smiles, it'll be your smile. I've never seen your father but I know that you will be in his voice, or in the way he stands in front of the fire, or in the way he moves his head. There'll be memories of you everywhere—pictures of you as a little boy riding your first pony—I'm sure there must be a picture of you on your first pony 1

NIGEL : I'm afraid there is.

ROZANNE : Oh, darling, you can't ask me to endure all that—you can't expect me to wander about all alone through your early years that I never even knew.

NIGEL : Oh, God, I feel suddenly that we're being incredibly stupid—to say good-bye.

ROZANNE (*quickly*): Yes, but we knew we should feel that in these last few moments—for three months we've been steeling ourselves for it—we mustn't weaken now.

NIGEL : Please forgive me—I ought to be the strong one—not you.

ROZANNE : We shouldn't have been happy for long if you'd given up your life and I'd given up mine—those sort of sacrifices are too great a price to pay for love—however important it may seem to both of us at the moment.

NIGEL : We've said that to each other so often—it sounds true—but I wonder if it is—really.

ROZANNE : It's such an old story—it only seems new and agonising because it's happening to us. The circumstances that part us seem foolish and unnecessary and cruel—but they're there—strong as steel—and there they'll stay until the world changes. Your life must be lived according to the rules—you can't break those rules for a personal love, however dear it may be to you. If you did you'd lose everything—even the love.

NIGEL : Please remember that I shall always love you and that however much time and space separate us the memory of you will never quite fade. And please remember too that to the end of my days I shall be grateful to you—not only for this brief loving happiness that we've had—but for your strength in helping me

to put my duty—and all the foolish traditions that go with it—before my heart.

ROZANNE : I'll remember.

NIGEL (*trying to smile*): I know you will.

ROZANNE (*breathlessly*): It's suddenly become intolerable, this—you do see what I mean, don't you ?

NIGEL : Yes, I see.

ROZANNE : Sit still, quite still—I want to have a picture of you clear in my mind sitting there where I've so often looked at you—but it's no use because there are tears in my eyes, and I can hardly see you at all. I'm going now—I must——

NIGEL : Please—just a minute——

ROZANNE : I love you.

NIGEL : I love you. Oh, darling—five years isn't so very long.

ROZANNE : Too long—you know that as well as I do. It won't be the same again—it couldn't be—ever. Let's look at it truly and keep it clear. It's better like that really. We believe we'll wait for each other—and love each other again—and that time won't have changed us—perhaps we're right—but later on—when we do see each other again, don't let's spoil the memory of this by trying to stretch it into something that, by that time, we may neither of us want——Good-bye, my love—my dearest, tender love—good-bye.

ROZANNE *takes her hat and goes out.*

NIGEL : " Where in the shadows that we have to pass
among
Lie those songs that once we sung ?"

The lights fade.

ACT II

SCENE VII

ROZANNE'S *Dressing-room.*

Less than an hour has passed since the preceding scene ROZANNE is sitting at her dressing-table mechanically completing her make-up. DORA is bustling about, she occasionally shoots an anxious glance at ROZANNE.

DUGGTE (*offstage*): Overture beginners, please—overture beginners, please.

DORA : He's calling the overture, you know, dear.

ROZANNE: Yes—I know.

DORA : You haven't got any too much time.

ROZANNE *does not answer.*

The whole theatre's in an uproar to-night.

ROZANNE (*with an effort*) : Is it ?

DORA : Yes—when I came in Lily met me at the stage door—white as a sheet she was—I said " Why, whatever's the matter ? You look as if you'd seen Jack the Ripper !" and she said " Romance is in the air to-night, dear, I feel quite sick," and I said " What in 'Haven's name are you talking about ? " and she said " She's done it——"

ROZANNE : Please, Dora, don't talk to me just now—I've got a very bad headache——

There is a knock at the door.

DORA : Who is it ?

JOHNNY : Can I come in ?

DORA : It's Mr. Knowles, dear.

ROZANNE (*wearily*): Come in, Johnny.

JOHNNY KNOWLES *enters*.

JOHNNY : Good evening, Miss Gray.

ROZANNE : Good evening, Johnny.

JOHNNY : I thought I'd better warn you, there's an understudy on in the Sextette to-night—Grace Menteth's not playing.

ROZANNE : What's the matter with her—is she ill ?

JOHNNY : No, she's married.

ROZANNE (*dully*): Oh—is she ?

JOHNNY : Yes—Lord Borrowmere—she got him to a Registry Office this afternoon and sent a note down only half an hour ago saying she was retiring from the Stage.

DORA : Well, I hope she'll be more lively in the Peerage than she was in the Sextette.

JOHNNY : Well, I thought I'd just let you know.

ROZANNE : Thank you, Johnny.

JOHNNY : Is anything the matter?

ROZANNE : I don't feel very well.

JOHNNY : Anything I can do ?

ROZANNE : Mo, thank you, Johnny—I'll be all right.

JOHNNY : Rjghto.

As he gets to the door LIESL comes in. She is carrying a glass of champagne JOHNNY goes out.

LIESL : Wait outside for a minute, will you, Dora—I want to speak to Miss Gray.

DORA : Very well, madam.

DORA *goes out*.

LIESL : Drink this, my dear.

ROZANNE : I don't think I'd better—before I go on.

LIESL : Please—it will do you good.

ROZANNE : Thank you'

She takes the glass, tries to drink a little and then puts it down.

Oh, Liesl——!

ROZANNE *bursts into hopeless sobs.* LIESL *puts her arm around her.*

LIESL : Hush—don't cry.

ROZANNE *(brokenly)*: It's all over—all over and done with——

LIESL : Don't give way.

ROZANNE : I can't play to-night—I can't go through the performance—I know I can't.

LIESL : You will play to-night, to-morrow matinee, and to-morrow night. You can be as emotional as you like on Sunday.

ROZANNE : Don't be angry with me.

LIESL : Listen, Rozanne—you must learn to control yourself better than this. We are in the theatre now, and the theatre comes first. You're giving way to your nerves and that is very bad. You are allowing your private worries to interfere with your performance, and that is worse.

ROZANNE : I don't care—nothing matters now——

LIESL : Don't talk such nonsense.

ROZANNE : It isn't nonsense—look at me—I'm not alive any more——It isn't fair for the public to pay to see someone who's dead.

LIESL : That is very dramatic but it is not true. You are very unhappy, I know that. You have said good-bye to your love, I know that too, but your life is here in the Theatre—it always has been and it always will be. Oh, my dear, don't be so foolish. If you must love somebody, it is better for you to love them too much than too little, and at least as things are you will never

have to reproach yourself. You have made your decision, don't think about it any more until you have time. You have your work to do now. Go on and act—act better than you have ever acted in your life !

DUGGIE *comes rushing in.*

DUGGIE : Miss Haren—your introduction's just started——!

LIESL : My God—now I am allowing *your* private worries to interfere with *my* performance !

LIESL *and* DUGGIE *rush out.* ROZANNE *stares at herself in the glass for a moment, then she takes the glass of champagne and drinks it.*

DORA *comes In.*

DORA : You'll be off, dear, if you don't look sharp.

ROZANNE : Dora. Please put those violets where I can't see them until the end of the performance.

DORA (*flustered*): Very well, dear.

She takes the vase from the dressing-table and puts it behind the screen. ROZANNE *slowly rises, still looking at herself in the glass.*

ROZANNE : My dress, Dora.

DORA *stands with her pink first-act dress and hat.*

ROZANNE *begins to slip off her wrapper.*

DUGGIE (*offstage*): Everybody down for the Waltz, please !

The lights fade.

In the darkness DUGGIE'S voice is heard.

DUGGIE : " Act Two Beginners, please."

" Curtain Up, Act Two, please."

" Everybody Down, Finale Act Two, please."

" Act Three Beginners, please."

" Curtain Up, Act Three, please."

" Everybody Down, Finale Act Three, please."

ACT II

SCENE VIII

A few seconds later.

In the darkness DUGGIE'S voice can be heard calling ' All down for the finale, please " When the lights go up the scene is again the last act of " The Model Maid " only this time it is seen from the back. That is to say the audience is in the place of the back wall of the stage. The people on the stage are facing an imaginary auditorium, therefore all their actions', as far as the real audience are concerned, are done with their backs to them.

As before, MONSIEUR POM-POM is singing the last part of his comic song " Bollamazoo " with the CHORUS. When they all make their exit many of them are still seen standing about in the wings.

PAUL TREVOR—*just before making his entrance—stands still for a moment for ALBERT to spray his throat.*

He goes on—glances at his watch—and taps his foot impatiently. LIESL, who has been talking in whispers to ROZANNE on the other side, makes her entrance.

MITZI : Have I kept you waiting ?

LORD F.: At last—the masked stranger.

MITZI : None other.

LORD F. : I received your note—you asked me to meet you here—tell me, who are you ?

The orchestra very softly breaks into the " Countess Mifzi."

MITZI : They call me Countess Mitzi.

LORD F. : Mitzi—You !

MITZI : You are a very foolish boy. Mary is here—I have explained everything.

LORD F. : How can she ever forgive me ?

MITZI : My dear—you have played a very dangerous game—both of you. Love is not a thing to be trifled with.

LORD F. : I have been a fool.

MITZI : Listen——

ROZANNE, peeping through a hole in the canvas side wing to get the beat from the conductor, starts to sing.

LORD F. : Mary !

MITZI : I will leave you now. I have a few words to say to Monsieur Pom-Pom. All men are fools but sometimes, fortunately, women are fools also——Good luck!

She kisses her hand to him and goes off.

ROZANNE, waiting until MITZI has gone off, makes her entrance, singing. She sees LORD F. and stops, but the music continues.

MARY : You !

LORD F. : My darling !

MARY : It seems years since I heard you say that.

LORD F. : It has all been a hideous misunderstanding.

MARY : I know—Mitzi told me.

LORD F. : I love you.

MARY : I know that, too.

He enfolds her in his arms. The CHORUS and FULL COMPANY, who have been assembling in the wings, come on singing.

When the song reaches its climax, the curtain—that is to say, the curtain that screens the Company from the imaginary audience—falls. It rises again immediately and continues to rise and fall to the sound of applause coming out of the further darkness.

Finally, after the CHORUS have gone off and the row of PRINCIPALS have taken their calls, ROZANNE takes her call alone. As she is doing so from out of the darkness a large bouquet of Parma violets falls at her feet. She picks it up and the curtain falls. She turns—and it is apparent that her eyes are full of tears. She moves slowly away from the curtain—singing very softly :

Dearest Love,
Waking or sleeping,
I think only of you.
Tho' our story's told,
Tho' our world is cold,
Tho' we have to build our lives anew.
Here my love
Lies in your keeping,
Till all memories die,
Tho' we have to part,
Thank you for your loving heart.
My only Love—Good-bye.

A number of STAGE HANDS come on and begin to strike the scenery. ROZANNE walks slowly into the wings as—

THE CURTAIN FALLS



CONVERSATION PIECE



To

G. E. CALTPIROP

*This Play is Gratefully and Affectionately
Dedicated*

This play was first produced at His Majesty's Theatre on Friday, February 16th, 1934, with the following cast (in order of appearance) :

SOPHIE OTFORD	Heather Thatcher
MARTHA JAMES	Moya Nugent
MRS. DRAGON	Betty Shale
PAUL, Due DE CHAUCIGNY- VARENNES	Noel Coward
MELANIE	Yvonne Printemps
ROSE (Her Maid)	Maidie Andrews
THE MARQUIS OF SHEERE	Louis Hayward
THE EARL OF HARRINGFORD	George Sanders
LORD BRACEWORTH	Pat Worsley
LORD DOYNING	Antony Brian
MR. HAILSHAM R	Sidney Grammer
THE DUCHESS OF BENEDEN	Winifred Davis
THE DUKE OF BENEDEN	Athole Stewart
LADY JULIA CHARTERIS	Irene Browne
HANNAH (Her Maid)	Elizabeth Corcoran
A TIGER	Tommy Hayes
Miss GOSLETT	Everley Gregg
Miss MENTION	Molly Lumley
LORD KENYON	Penryn Bannerman
LORD ST. MARYS	Kim Peacock
	Reginald Thurgood
	William McGuigan
FISHERMEN	Evan Jones
	Roy Hall
COUNTESS OF HARRINGFORD	Sheila Pattrick
LADY BRACEWORTH	Betty Elburn

CONVERSATION PIECE

MRS. HAILSHAM	Winifred Campbell
HON. JULIAN KANE	St. John Lauri
MR. AMOS	Alex Robertson
BUTLER	Claude Farrow
MR. JONES	Leonard Michel
COURTESAN	Jean Barnes
	{ Albert Dudley
SOLDIERS, GUESTS, etc.	{ Ronald Pope
	{ Geoffrey Brighton
	{ Esmond Wilding
	{ Maysie Andrews
	{ Jean Beckworth
	{ Dorothy Drover
	{ Grace Gorrod
MILLINERS, LADIES OF THE	{ Valerie Hobson
TOWN, VISITORS, etc.	{ Vivienne Maurice
	{ Beryl Norman
	{ Enid Settle
	{ June Spencer-Dyke
	{ Marcelle Turner
	{ Winifred Talbot
	{ John Jaques
	{ Henry Bryce
	{ Ryall Corderey
CHILDREN	{ Lydia Craddock
	{ Constance Bowdler
	{ Betty Parker
	{ Celia White

The whole of the action of the play occurs at Brighton, 1811.

ACT I

SCENE I

PROLOGUE

At the end of the Overture, the Curtain rises disclosing a painted curtain, which depicts, in pastel colours, the Brighton of the Regency.

SOPHIE, MARTHA and DRAGON come in, exquisitely dressed in the fashion of 1811, and each carrying a little mask on an ivory stick. They stand, formally, side by side, with their masks held before their eyes. They lower them in order to speak, and retire behind them again when they are silent.

BOTH : Ladies and Gentlemen.

SOPHIE : A Prologue to a play is out of date,
A leisurely technique of past decades,
So please regard us as two friendly shades
Returning down the years to indicate,
More by our presence, than by what we say,
The atmosphere and tempo of this play.

MARTHA : My friend has explained it most concisely,
She always was one to put things nicely 1

SOPHIE : We represent the fine but faded flower
Of that old " Demi Monde " that used to be
At Vauxhall, and at Brighton by the sea
Before the pure in heart came into power,
Before a great, but sanctimonious Queen
Firmly rang down the curtain on our scene.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE II

MARTHA : Please don't suppose *our* flowers were faded,

Others were pushed, *we* were persuaded !

SOPHIE : The interruptions of my friend are meant

To clarify for you our " Status Quo "

A social level neither high nor low

With which we were entirely content

And which provides the background, may I say,

Of this polite, but faintly raffish play.

To music, and with great dignity, they part the curtains on the first scene.

ACT I

SCENE II

The Scene is part of the Parade at Brighton. There is a railing running the whole length of the stage and, behind it, a row of demure Georgian houses. There is room only for pedestrians to pass between the railing and the houses.

When the curtain rises it is about eleven o'clock on a sunny spring morning. There are two FISHERMEN leaning against the railing with expressions of static resignation. Several people pass and re-pass along the "Parade. Two SOLDIERS in scarlet coats stop and talk to a neat little milliner's assistant with a hat box. A LITTLE BOY runs across bowling a hoop, and two LITTLE GIRLS walk along sedately with their NURSE.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

The whole picture seems fresh and gay and alive , and the orchestra, which plays continually throughout the scene, celebrates the entrance of any particular character with a pleasant little burst of individual melody. "Finally, SOPHIE OTFORD and MARTHA JAMES walk on from the left. They are both pretty-, and charmingly dressed, and a certain manner and quality about them suggest that they are of the superior courtesan class. They walk languidly and chatter with a vivacity that one cannot help feeling is just a trifle artificial. PAUL, the Due de Chaucigny-Varenes, enters from the right. He is a superbly dressed, neat little man of about forty-five. He appears to exude an aroma of perfection. His gestures possess an authentic grace, and although they are precise they are not in the least overdone. He turns to the front door of MELANIE'S house and rat-tat-tats briskly on the knocker as the lightsfade.

ACT I

SCENE III

The Scene is the interior of MELANIE'S house—to be exact , the living-room. It is charmingly furnished, and the windows at the back open on to a small balcony which looks out over the Parade and the sea. There are two doors. The one up stage right leads into a little hall and to the rest of the house. The one opposite to it up stage lejt leads to MELANIE'S bedroom.

As the lights rise on the scene the rat-tat-tat of the

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

knocker can be heard, this rat-tat-tat theme being a motif in the music which recurs throughout the play. The music continues, and ROSE enters. She is MELANIE'S English maid, a pretty girl in the twenties. She casts a careful glance over the room to see that everything is tidy, and then runs downstairs to open the front door. After a moment she follows PAUL into the room. He walks in with an air of complete authority and hands her his hat,, gloves, and cane.

PAUL: Chocolate?

ROSE : All ready, sir.

PAUL : No lumps in it ?

ROSE : Not one, sir.

PAUL : Good.

He goes over to the desk, and, placing some glasses upon his nose, seats himself at it. In a methodical business-like manner he looks through a pile of bills and papers. ROSE goes out to fetch the chocolate. She returns in a moment with a neatly arranged tray which she places on the desk.

ROSE : You're sure you wouldn't like an egg, sir ?

PAUL : Quite sure, thank you.

ROSE : Nor a nice crisp bit of bacon ?

PAUL : It would kill me.

ROSE : I see, sir.

PAUL (*pouring himself some chocolate*): How is Made-moiselle ?

ROSE : Gay as a lark, sir.

PAUL : Good. How is her English this morning ?

ROSE : I don't know, sir, but my French is improving by leaps and bounds.

PAUL : Then consider yourself dismissed.

ROSE : You don't really mean that, do you, sir ?

PAUL: No.

ROSE : I didn't think you did really, sir.

PAUL : But I am very displeased with you. The rule of the house is that no one must speak French to Mademoiselle under any circumstances.

ROSE: I only said " Mon Dieu " when I dropped the nail file.

PAUL : Stick to " My God," it's more blasphemous and far more expressive,

ROSE : Very well, sir.

PAUL : This butcher's bill seems very high.

ROSE : It's the veal, I expect. Mademoiselle dearly loves a bit of veal, and I keep telling her it's unreliable.

PAUL : It isn't its integrity I question, but its cost.

ROSE : Yes, sir.

PAUL : In future no more veal except on special occasions. (*He holds out a bill.*) What does this mean ?

ROSE : Humbugs, sir.

PAUL : What are they ?

ROSE : Sort of big bull's eyes.

PAUL (*horrified*) : Bull's eyes ?

ROSE (*laughing*): Oh, not real ones, sir, they're sweets. You tuck one in your cheek and it keeps you going for hours.

PAUL : Disgusting.

ROSE : Mademoiselle's very partial to them, sir. She saw some in a shop a long time ago, and since then we've 'ad 'em regular.

PAUL : That will be all for the moment, Rose.

ROSE (*curtseying*): Thank you, sir.

She goes out right. PAUL continues to check the accounts. After a moment MELANIE comes out of her

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

bedroom. She is wearing a négligé and looks radiant, but her face is slightly distorted by an obvious bulge in the left cheek. PAUL springs to his feet and bows.

PAUL : Good morning, Melanie.

MELANIE (*indistinctly*): My God I

PAUL : What's the matter ?

MELANIE (*gracefully disposing of the humbug in a small handkerchief*) : Mon cher, personne ne m'a dit que——

PAUL (*sternly*): Anglais.

MELANIE (*demurely*): I did not know you were here.

PAUL : What were you eating ?

MELANTE : A 'oomboog. Tu veux le voir ?

PAUL : Non, No, certainly not.

MELANIE : They are delicious. Good morning.

PAUL : You slept well ?

MELANIE : Oui.

PAUL: Yes.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : You have been speaking French to Rose.

MELANIE : Only a little.

PAUL : You have also been eating too much veal. I am very angry with you.

MELANIE : Please, I am sorry.

PAUL : Veal is unreliable and expensive. Those dreadful sweets are bad for your skin, and unless you learn English quickly we shall have to go away, just as we came, without money, without position, without anything.

MELANIE : Ah, ne sois pas fâché, mon cher, it is so difficult, when I awake the morning comes in at the window and makes me gay and I wish to talk very quick to Rose and say how the waves of the sea are

pretty and how the sun shines and I learn better every day, I promise I do, but at the very beginning my brain does not wake itself enough and I cannot wait to find the stupid English words.

PAUL : It is so important. So very, very important.

MELANIE : Oui, je sais bien c'est important, mais——

PAUL : Anglais.

MELANIE : Zut! Je ne peux pas.

PAUL : You must.

MELANIE : Please do not be angry with me this morning. It is my birthday.

PAUL : Again ?

MELANIE : Well, it feels like my birthday.

PAUL : You mean that you feel particularly happy ?

MELANIE : Oui—yes.

PAUL : Why ?

MELANIE : Je ne sais pas.

PAUL : You feel happy to-day without reason, just as yesterday you felt miserable without reason. You are a creature entirely lacking in balance.

MELANIE : I was an acrobat once.

PAUL : Kindly remember that you are my ward, the daughter of my dear friend the Marquis de Tramont, and that you have never even seen an acrobat, let alone been one.

MELANIE : Allez Oop! (*She performs an acrobat's pose.*)

PAUL : Melanie I

MELANTE : Oh, comme vous êtes fastueux ce matin. Je parie que c'est encore a cause de votre foie.

PAUL : Mon foie est en parfaite santé.

MELANIE : Alors ! Pourquoi cet air de bravache ? C'est affolant. Vous m'accusez d'être heureuse sans

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

raison, mais vous, mon ami, vous êtes âpre et désagréable également sans raison.

PAUL : Vous me désespérez.

MELANIE : Pourquoi ?

PAUL : J'insiste que vous parliez en anglais.

MELANIE : Je ne peux pas et je ne veux pas quand j'ai quelque chose d'important à dire vite, et à ce moment j'ai beaucoup à dire vite. Je travaillerai très fort. Je ferai tout ce que vous dites, mais pas quand vous êtes sévère, pas quand vous refusez de rigoler avec moi. Je vous défie !

PAUL : Soyez raisonnable, ma chère. (*He goes to for, pleading.*)

MELANIE : Riez ! Allez riez !

PAUL : Non.

MELANIE : Allons, un tout petit peu. Allez-y pour me faire plaisir.

PAUL : J'ai dit non.

MELANIE : Bon. Je ne parlerai pas un mot d'anglais jusqu'à ce que vous souriez. (*She sits with decision.*)

PAUL (*without mirth*): Ha, ha, ha! ..

MELANIE: That is better.

PAUL : How can I make you realise that Life is serious ?

MELANIE : Because it is not serious.

PAUL : Look at these bills.

MELANIE : I see them.

PAUL : We have been here a month.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : Nothing has happened at all.

MELANIE (*she rises and walks away*) : We have enough money for three months.

PAUL : Not at this rate.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

MELANIE (*turning on him*): What would you have me do? Have no food, have no clothes? Go out into the street in rags and say "Marry me. Marry me" to every man I see?

PAUL: Don't be ridiculous.

MELANIE: Listen. I will be sensible, even in English I will try to be sensible, but you must not ask me to be serious. This adventure must be gay and funny. We will cheat and lie and pretend to everyone because that is agreed, but there must be truth between us, ourselves.

PAUL (*smiling*): Entendu I

She indicates the sofa. He sits at the end.

MELANIE: Have you ever had a dear friend called the Marquis de Tramont?

PAUL: No.

MELANIE: Did he ever have a daughter?

PAUL: No.

MELANIE: Did you ever by chance visit a cafe called Le Petit Girondin?

PAUL: Oui.

MELANIE: Anglais!

PAUL: Yes.

MELANIE: It was very ditty, and there was sand on the floor, and men got drunk and spat on to the sand, sometimes they were sick——

PAUL (*sharply*): That is enough.

MELANIE: And there was a girl who sang and danced and made acrobatics like this——(*She does a trick.*) Do you remember?

PAUL (*admonishing*): Melanie! I remember an old grey chateau with a walled garden, and a sweet fair-haired little girl feeding the swans——

MELANIE: **Liar!**

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

PAUL : And there was peace inside the garden, and memories of much happiness, but outside the walls there was horror and bloodshed and revolution, and presently the walls crumbled and the father and mother of the little girl were led away to die——

MELANIE : Stop, please. That is too near your own truth. It has nothing to do with mine.

PAUL : If you insist on truth you shall have it. (*He firmly places her on the sofa.*) You are uneducated, illiterate, a child of the gutter, aren't you ?

MELANIE : Yes.

PAUL : Penniless ?

MELANIE : Yes.

PAUL : I am a *ci-devant* aristocrat, and old.

MELANIE (*quickly*): No.

PAUL : Middle-aged then.

MELANIE : Yes.

PAUL : Educated, cultured, and useless.

MELANIE : Yes.

PAUL : And equally penniless.

MELANIE : Yes.

PAUL : But fortunately possessed of an inherent talent for obtaining credit.

MELANIE : Fortunately.

PAUL : You are my only possible business asset.

MELANIE : Let us talk of something else.

PAUL (*continuing*): Attractive, young, and, surprisingly enough, a virgin.

MELANIE : Please stop now. I will be good, really I will.

PAUL : You are my ward, are you not ? The forsaken daughter of my dear old friend the Marquis de Tramont ?

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : You spent your lispng carefree childhood in an old grey chateau, didn't you ?

MELANIE: What's "lispng"?

PAUL : Never mind. (*He stalks round the room, engrossed in the story.*) You have never been to Paris in your life, have you ?

MELANIE : No, Paul.

PAUL : What is Le Petit Girondin ?

MELANIE : I suppose it must be a very little man from Bordeaux.

PAUL : Correct. (*He goes to the table, places a chair for her to sit.*) Come ! Business ! Now then, what did Lord Sheere say to you last night ?

MELANIE (*seated*): Not very much, but he was very ardent.

PAUL : Good. He is coming here this morning.

MELANIE: This morning ?

PAUL : Yes. I wrote him a little note from you. I will receive him and when I have talked to him for a little he will propose marriage.

MELANIE : He seemed last night to wish for something a little less binding.

PAUL : Never mind. When he proposes, you will accept him.

MELANIE : When may I love somebody, please ?

PAUL : Not until you are safely married, and then only with the greatest discretion.

MELANIE (*quietly*): I see.

PAUL (*after a slight pause*) : What's the matter ?

MELANIE : It doesn't feel like my birthday any more.

(*Singing*)

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

A cloud has passed across the sun,
The morning seems no longer gay.

PAUL (*sptaking*): I want to get on with these bills.
You had better go and dress.

MELANIE (*listlessly*): Very well———(*Sinffng*)

With so much business to be done,
Even the sea looks grey.

PAUL (*tpeaking*): Don't be silly.

MELANIE (*singing*):

C'est vrai. C'est vrai.
It seems that all the joy has faded from the day
As though the foolish world no longer wants
to play.

PAUL (*speaking*): Go and dress.

MELANIE (*speaking*): What shall I wear? A black
crêpe with a little bonnet?

PAUL : What on earth is the matter with you this
morning?

MELANIE : White, white for a bride. But the sun
ought to shine on a bride.

PAUL : You're not a bride yet.

MELANIE : But I shall be soon, shall I not? A very
quiet aristocratic bride with a discreet heart! (*Singing*.)

You ask me to have a discreet heart
Until marriage is out of the way,
But what if I meet
With a sweetheart so sweet
That my wayward heart cannot obey
A single word that you may say?

PAUL (*speaking*): Then we shall have to go away,

MELANIE (*singing*):

No.

For there is nowhere we could go
Where we could hide from what we know
Is true.

PAUL (*speaking*): Do stop talking nonsense.

MELANIE (*speaking*): It is not nonsense. You are so sure that everything in life can be arranged just so, like arithmetic.

PAUL : Why not ? Emotion is so very untidy.

MELANIE : The sun has come out again. I feel a little better.

PAUL (*writing something on one of the bills*) : Good.

MELANIE (*goes to the window humming, then returns to the desk and leaning across it she pats PAUL'S hand*): I'm sorry. (*Singing*)

Don't be afraid I'll betray you
And destroy all the plans you have made,
But even your schemes
Must leave room for my dreams.
So when all I owe to you is paid
I'll still have something of my own,
A little prize that's mine alone.

I'll follow my secret heart
My whole life through,
I'll keep all my dreams apart
Till one comes true.
No matter what price is paid,
What stars may fade
Above,
I'll follow my secret heart
Till I find love.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

When she has sung this waltz refrain she goes into her room. PAUL rings a little bell on the desk. ROSE enters.

PAUL : Rose, prenez le plateau——

ROSE takes up the tray.

PAUL : I am expecting the Marquis of Sheere. He should be here at any moment.

ROSE (*raising her eyebrows*) : Oh !

PAUL : Why do you say " Oh." like that ?

ROSE : It seems funny a gentleman of his position calling in the morning.

PAUL : Why funny ?

ROSE : In my last place the gentlemen always called in the evening.

PAUL : I think the sooner you wipe your last place from your mind the better.

ROSE : Yes, sir.

There is a rat-tat-tat on the door downstairs, and ROSE, with a knowing look in her eye, goes out. PAUL rises as ROSE re-enters.

ROSE (*announcing*) : The Marquis of Sheere.

The MARQUIS OF SHEERE (EDWARD) comes in quickly^ wearing an air of expectancy, which changes to slight confusion when he sees PAUL. He is a good-looking romanticyoung man in the twenties.

PAUL (*going to him*) : Lord Sheere ?

EDWARD : Yes.

ROSE goes out.

PAUL : Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Due de Chaucigny-Varenes.

EDWARD : Oh, how do you do ?

They shake hands.

PAUL : Melanie, my ward, will be here in a moment.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

EDWARD (*relieved, but pulled*): Oh, I'm so glad.

PAUL : In the meantime, can I offer you a little wine ?

EDWARD : No, thank you.

PAUL : At least I beg you will be seated. (*He indicates the sofa and draws up a chair for himself.*)

EDWARD (*sitting down*) : Thank you.

PAUL : Tell me, do you speak French ?

EDWARD : Oui, un peu.

PAUL : I never think that's enough, do you ?

EDWARD (*slightly crestfallen*) : I suppose not.

PAUL (*charmingly*) : Never mind, we will talk English. In the old days before the revolution my mother engaged an English governess for all of us. I remember she had a very pink nose, but her syntax was above reproach.

EDWARD : I'm so glad.

PAUL : It is not a matter for unrestrained jubilation, but we will leave it for the moment as we have things of more importance to discuss.

EDWARD : Have we ?

PAUL : I understand that you wish to marry my ward ?

EDWARD (*rising, extremely startled*): What! I beg your pardon ?

PAUL : You seem embarrassed ?

EDWARD (*floundering*): Well—I—er—I——

PAUL (*sententious ly*): Ah, Love, Love, that fond foolish ecstasy I It ties the tongue in knots as well as the heart, does it not ?

EDWARD : Yes, but you see—I really feel——

PAUL : Come now, there is no need to look so confused. I am a man of the world, old enough to be

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

your father—you can be perfectly frank with me. Please sit down again.

EDWARD *sits*.

EDWARD : I had no idea that Melanie, Mademoiselle de Tramont, had a—a——

PAUL : Guardian.

EDWARD (*gulping*): Guardian.

PAUL : She is the daughter of my dear old friend the Marquis de Tramont. The whole family was wiped out, father, mother, five sons and four daughters.

EDWARD : A large family.

PAUL : Very large. Melanie alone escaped. She was smuggled out of the chateau by one of the serving maids, a rude homely girl, who, after many vicissitudes, managed to convey her to me in Amiens, where I was in hiding.

EDWARD : How old was she ?

PAUL : A mere child.

EDWARD : I see.

PAUL (*leaning forward*): I have watched over her and cared for her all these years. I have seen her grow from childhood to girlhood, from girlhood to womanhood. We have wandered together lonely exiles, through strange countries. Her youth and sweetness have kept my heart alive when everything I loved was dead, and now you come, a stranger, and wish to take her from me——

EDWARD : You misunderstand, sir, I assure you——

PAUL (*holding up his band*) : No, no, 'do not protest. I understand only too well. I have known that this would happen. It is the penalty of age to be lonely, and I am quite prepared.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

EDWARD (*firmly*): I have not proposed marriage to Melanic.

PAUL : That does credit both to your upbringing and your personal integrity. I unfortunately am not in a position to put your fears entirely at rest. I cannot tell for certain whether or not she really loves you, but, if you will take the advice of an old man, don't give up hope, don't despair too soon—(*He rings the bell on the desk.*)

ROSE *enters very quickly, having obviously been listening at the door.*

ROSE : You rang, sir ?

PAUL : Ask Mademoiselle if she would be kind enough to come here.

ROSE : Yes, sir.

She goes into the bedroom.

PAUL : You understand, her happiness is all that matters to me. I have naturally taken care to make discreet enquiries as to your character and way of life, forgive me being frank, but as a foreigner, such precautions I think may be excused. You may rest assured that at the earliest possible moment, I shall give myself the honour of calling upon your parents.

EDWARD (*terrified*): For God's sake don't do that!

PAUL (*smiling fondly*) : Foolish boy !

MELANIE *comes in from the bedroom, very beautifully dressed, and rather pale. She curtsseys to PAUL.*

MELANIE : Bonjour, mon oncle.

PAUL (*sweetly*): Fie done, Melanie. Anglais, je t'en prie. N'oublie pas ta promesse.

MELANIE : Non. I am sorry. (*She curtsseys to EDWARD.*) Good morning, Monsieur le Marquis.

EDWARD : Good morning, Mademoiselle I

PAUL : There is no need to be so formal, my dear. We all understand one another. Lord Sheere and I have had a little talk.

MELANIE (*slightly apprehensive*) : Oh—vraiment ?

PAUL (*taking both her hands*): My little Melanie.

MELANIE (*drawing back—suspiciously*) : Qu'est-ce qu'il y a ?

PAUL : Qu'est-ce qu'il y a ? (*In a very beautiful voice.*) Be gentle with him, my Melanie, gentle and kind. True love is over-sensitive. I will leave you for a while.

MELANIE : No, Paul—please stay——

PAUL : It is better that I should go. (*He places his hand upon EDWARD'S shoulder and gazes searchingly into his eyes for a moment.*) My boy I

PAUL *bows gracefully and goes out, leaving behind hint an atmosphere of considerable embarrassment.*

MELANIE *and EDWARD stand staring at each other until she can bear it no longer, and breaks the strain by going to the window,*

MELANIE (*at window*): It is a very nice day, is it not ?

EDWARD : Very nice.

MELANIE : So pretty—everything here in England looks so fresh and clean—regardez ce petit bateau a voiles—sail boat ?

EDWARD (*coming also to the window*) : Yes—that's a sailing boat.

MELANIE : Léger sous le soleil, comme un papillon blanc——

EDWARD : Yes. Oh, yes, indeed——

A pipe organ begins to play softly in the street below.

MELANIE : Music too.

EDWARD (*staring at her*): Yes—music too——

MELANIE : Why do you look like that ?

EDWARD : It's true.

MELANIE : What is true ? Je ne comprends pas——

EDWARD : What he said—your guardian—about love.

MELANTE (*turning away*): Oh.

EDWARD : I didn't understand.

MELANIE : The music is too loud.

EDWARD : Why not ? Why shouldn't it be loud ? It plays everywhere, doesn't it—that sort of music—all over the world ?

MELANTIE : You speak so quickly—please do not speak so quickly.

EDWARD : Who are you, really ?

MELANIE (*she sits on the sofa, closing her eyes as though repeating a lesson*): I am Melanie de Tramont, the daughter of the Marquis de Tramont, he—my father—was killed in the revolution—my mother also, and my little brother Armand——

EDWARD : And your other brothers and sisters ?

MELANIE : All dead.

EDWARD : What were their names ?

MELANIE : Je ne comprends pas.

EDWARD : How many were there ?

MELANIE : Many—a great many.

EDWARD : You loved them ?

MELANIE : Yes, they were very nice.

EDWARD : And your mother and father ?

MELANIE : Very nice indeed.

EDWARD : Guillotined ?

MELANIE : Please—I cannot bear to speak of it.

EDWARD : I'm sorry.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

MELANIE : It is long ago now, but I can never quite forget.

EDWARD : And your guardian—you love him ?

MELANIE : Yes.

EDWARD : I see.

MELANIE : As a father.

EDWARD : Who are you—really ?

MELANIE : Oh—go away—please go away,

EDWARD : Who are you—really ?

MELANIE : I do not know.

EDWARD (*suddenly he sits next to her*) : I love you.

MELANIE (*painfully*) : No.

EDWARD : Before, when I have seen you in the distance, and last night when I talked to you, I wanted you—but now—now I love you——

MELANIE : No, no——

EDWARD : It's true, I know it—it happened suddenly a moment ago—it feels strange, as though I were not quite awake, and yet at the same time more awake than I have ever been before. You see I am not very old, not very experienced yet, and it's—it's the first time.

MELANIE (*she rises, walks away, clasping and unclasping her hands*) : Oh—this is very uneasy.

EDWARD : Why? Didn't you expect it ?

MELANIE : No—not like this.

EDWARD : You know—you wanted me to love you, didn't you? Both you and your—your guardian—wanted me to love you——

MELANIE (*retreating from him*): No, no——

EDWARD : You see I am not quite so young as all that, not quite a fool—my eyes are wide open—there is a lot that I don't understand, a trick, some sort of trick, I feel it with all my instincts, but I don't care—I

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

feel more than that—I feel that you are very lovely, and very sweet too, and that is enough—will you please—please be my wife ?

MELANIE (*sinking into a chair and covering her face with her hands*): Laissez-moi, je vous en supplie, laissez-moi——

EDWARD: Look at me.

MELANIE: Non, non——

EDWARD (*gently taking her hands away from her face*): Melanie.

MELANIE (*whispering*): Go away—please, please go away.

EDWARD: Very well. (*He smiles rather tremulously.*) But I shall come back.

MELANIE: Yes, come back—but think a little before you come back—see me once again from the distance——

EDWARD: I am afraid it is too late for that.

MELANIE (*curtseying, with her eyes averted from him*): Thank you, Monsieur le Marquis.

EDWARD (*bowing*): Mademoiselle !

He looks at her for a moment, and then goes out swiftly. When he has gone she goes to the window and sings very softly, " I'll follow my secret heart " as the lights fade on the scene.

ACT I

SCENE IV

QUARTETTE : " REGENCY RAKES."

Verse

You may think
Looking at the four of us
Food and drink
Constitute the core of us.
That may be,
But still you'll see
Our names on posterity's page.
You will read
Histories galore of us
Strutting England's stage.
We represent
To a certain extent
The ineffable scent
Of our Age.

Refrain

We're Regency Rakes
And each of us takes
A personal pride
In the thickness of hide
Which prevents us from seeing
How vulgar we're being
Without making us wince.
We're ruthless and rude
And boast of a crude

And lordly disdain
Both for mind and for brain.
Tho' obtuse and slow-witted,
We're not to be pitied,
For we follow the Prince,
Every orgy
With our Georgie
Lasts till dawn without a lull.
We can venture
Without censure
To be noisy, drunk, and dull!
We revel in Sport,
Madeira, and Port,
And when we pass out
With Sclerosis and Gout,
All our children will rue our mistakes,
Roystering Regency Rakes.

2nd Refrain

We're Regency Rakes
And each of us makes
A personal issue
Of adipose tissue
But still notwithstanding,
Our stomachs expanding,
We all yearn for romance.
We frequently start
Affairs of the heart,
Sublimely unheeding
That long over-feeding
Has made so disgusting
Our loving or lusting
That girls eye us askance,

Tho' we wonder
 As we blunder
 Into this or that bordel,
 Whom we know there,
 Why we go there,
 But we're far too drunk to tell,
 Tho' over-jocose,
 Unfunny and gross,
 We don't lose a fraction
 Of self-satisfaction.
 Complacency never forsakes
 Roystering Regency Rakes I

ACT I

SCENE V

The Scene is MELANIE'S room again. It is about three o'clock in the afternoon.

When the Curtain rises the room is empty. Presently ROSE ushers in SOPHIE OTFORD, MARTHA JAMES and MRS. DRAGON. MRS. DRAGON is an ample lady attired austerely in black, enlivened here and there by an occasional glitter of jet.

ROSE : Mademoiselle will be with you in a moment.

SOPHIE : Thank you.

ROSE : I will inform Mademoiselle that you are here.

MARTHA : Thank you.

SOPHIE (*conversationally*): Such a nice little house.
 Which is the Due de Varennes' room ?

ROSE : Monsieur le Dook don't live here.

MARTHA (*triumphantly*): There you are.

She goes up to examine the quality of the wine-glasses on the sideboard.

SOPHIE : He just visits Mademoiselle, I suppose ?

ROSE : Yes, every morning.

MARTHA : Only in the morning ?

She tests one of the glasses with a snap of her finger—it rings clearly.

SOPHIE : Don't be crude, Martha.

ROSE : Monsieur le Dook is Mademoiselle's guardian.

SOPHIE : That's right, my dear. You're a very good girl

MARTHA : Have you been with Mademoiselle long ?

ROSE : Ever since she arrived in England, Madame.

MARTHA : I seem to know your face. Have I ever seen you before ?

ROSE : I don't think you could have, Madame.

SOPHIE : Where do you come from ?

ROSE : I was brought up in Wales, Madame. In a little village by the sea.

MARTHA : You haven't got a Welsh accent.

ROSE : I know. That's what's so funny. My mother and father never 'ave been able to understand it.

SOPHIE : Well, if they can't, nobody can.

MARTHA : Were you engaged by Monsieur le Duc, or by Mademoiselle herself ?

SOPHIE : Martha I

MARTHA : Well, I want to know.

ROSE : I was engaged through a friend.

SOPHIE : Who ?

ROSE (*exasperated*): Mrs. Edwards, the one who arranged your little affair with Lord Meadowfield.

SOPHIE : Don't be impudent.

ROSE : Well, mind your own business, then.

She goes out.

MARTHA : I thought as much. Do sit down, Dragon.

MRS. DRAGON *sits down.*

SOPHIE : Guardian, indeed I

MARTHA : None of my gentlemen have ever spoken to her alone yet.

SOPHIE : Not even His Grace ?

MARTHA : Not even His Grace.

ROSE *returns from the bedroom and the visitors invent charming conversation, until ROSE goes out the other door.*

SOPHIE : There's something fishy about it.

MARTHA : There's always something fishy about the French !

MELANIE *enters.* Everyone curtseys with great enthusiasm.

MELANIE : Ah, chères Mesdames, mes chères Mesdames, comme je suis enchantée de vous voir——

SOPHIE : This is Mrs. Dragon.

MELANIE : 'Ow do you do ?

MRS. DRAGON *curtseys, but doesn't say anything.*

MARTHA : We've been admiring your charming house.

MELANIE : I am so glad, please sit you down, and the tea will be here soon.

The guests sit on the sofa.

SOPHIE (*with an effort*) : Est-ce que vous trouvez que Brighton est joli ?

MELANIE (*smiling gaily*): Ah 9a, c'est defendu. Monsieur le Due ne me permet pas de parler un mot de francais, parce que, enfin, c'est absolument néessaire que jc fasse des progrès en anglais.

SOPHIE : Ob—er oui—je vois, je vois.

They all laugh.

MELANIE : Mais je souffre, ah, mon Dieu, comme je souffre ! Quand je tâche de chercher les phrases, je me sens perdu. C'est idiot!

SOPHIE (*giving up*): There now.

MELANIE : Mais, vous savez, je fais des progrès, mais quand même je continue a dire des bêtises affreuses, surtout lorsque je me trouve dans une situation delicate. C'est vraiment inoui. Ma langue fourche, et je dis des choses que je ne devrais pas, et Paul, Monsieur le Due, me regarde d'un petit air narquois, et je veux cacher ma tôte comme une autruche.

SOPHIE : I always love the Austrians.

MARTHA : Such charming manners.

ROSE *enters with the tea-things which she sets up on a littk table.*

MELANIE : Please take the tea ?

SOPHIE : Thank you.

They all sit round the table.

MELANIE (*dispensing tea*): It was so kind of you to arrive.

SOPHIE : Martha and I are giving a little party this evening, just cards and conversation and a few friends. His Grace the Duke of Twickenham has promised to honour us, we would be so pleased if you would come too.

MELANIE : It would delight me, but I fear I cannot.

MARTHA : What a shame! You have another engagement ?

MELANIE : No, I have to work in the evening with Monsieur le Due.

SOPHIE : As well as the morning ? How tiring !

MELANIE : Another time I should be so glad if you will invite me.

MARTHA : But, of course, we would like to know you better. When we spoke to you the other day on the Steyne we thought you looked so nice and so lonely, with only your maid for company.

SOPHIE: That was a delightful bonnet you were wearing.

MELANIE : The green plush ?

SOPHIE : Yes.

MELANIE : I have two new ones, more pretty, and a cramoisie dress, velvet, for walking—you would like to see?

MARTHA : Oh yes.

MELANIE : They all came from the little shop of Mrs. Baxter—Rose, please bring the boxes from my room.

ROSE : Yes, Mademoiselle.

She curtseys and goes out.

SOPHIE : Mrs. Baxter is very expensive.

MELANIE : Alas yes, but the line she makes is good.

MARTHA : Are you staying here long ?

MELANIE : I do not really know. My guardian has the business to make, when that is done we will return.

SOPHIE : What is his business ?

MARTHA *and* DRAGON *are* " all ears."

MELANIE : It is financial—I do not know words to explain correctly, but there must be a—a—transaction. That I know very well.

SOPHIE : I see.

MARTHA : Were you born in Paris ?

MELANIE : Oh, no, I lived as a child on the Loire—an old grey chateau, with a small water where there were swans—

SOPHIE: Very pretty.

MELANIE : Yes, it was pretty; I spent all my early days lispng there.

ACT 1 CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

MARTHA : You haven't got a lisp now.

MELANIE : No, I lost it in the Revolution.

ROSE *enters from bedroom carrying several dress and hat boxes.*

ROSE (*putting them down*): There, Mademoiselle.

MELANIE : Merci, Rose. (*To SOPHIE.*) You wish to see ? (*To ROSE.*) The mull dress with marabout and the turban——

ROSE *opens one of the boxes and takes out a turban. SOPHIE and MARTHA give appropriate cries of appreciation. ROSE opens another box and takes out a dress. The music, which has been playing softly throughout the scene, falls into a more set rhythm, and ROSE, MARTHA, SOPHIE and MELANIE sing a quartette while they all try on different garments and hats. In course of this, a fife-and-drum band is heard outside on the Parade, and they all run to the window to wave to the soldiers marching by. Towards the end of the song, there is a rat-tat-tat at the front door. None of them hear except ROSE, who runs down to answer it.*

QUARTETTE :

SOPHIE : Charming ! Charming ! Charming !

ROSE : This gown is for the morning,
When Mademoiselle goes out,
As Madame sees
In the slightest breeze
The feathers float about.

SOPHIE . }
MARTHA : } Charming ! Charming ! Charming !

ROSE : This jacket is for driving,
Or strolling beside the sea

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

SOPHIE : Pretty as it seems to be
 It's a little too full in the sleeves for me.

ALL: Ah la la la—la la—la la.

SOPHIE : Pretty as it seems to be
 It's a trifle full in the sleeves for me.

MELANIE : This dress is for the evening,
 To wear when I meet my dear,
 Whenever that may chance to be.
 In the moment that he looks at me
 The skies will suddenly clear.
 I'll know him then for my destiny,
 And so through each changing year
 I shall leave him never, for evermore.

ROSE: Don't you think these pinks and blues
 are sweet ?

 This stuff is sent especially from France.

MELANIE : Oh, please, please say you think these
 satin shoes are sweet
 They make me feel I want to dance.

Danser—Danser—La Vie est gaie,
 Je me sens libre, abandonnée.
 Le chant trouble mon cœur
 Qui done m'envoie ce doux bonheur,
 Mon corps, mes pieds, ensorcelés
 Légers, ailes, vont s'envoler.
 Tra la la la la—la la la—la la la la la,
 Tra la la la la—la la la—lalalalalala—la—la

SOPHIE : }
 MARTHA : }
 ROSE : } Look for a love that's gay and sweet.
 MELANIE : }

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

SOPHIE : }
 MARTHA : } Music to guide your dancing feet.
 ROSE : }
 MELANIE : }

SOPHIE : } Follow your secret strain
 And you won't be living in vain,
 MARTHA : } Treat your desire by word and deed
 ROSE : } Lightly—lightly—
 And if at first you don't succeed
 Try and try again.

MELANIE : Mon corps, mes pieds, ensorcelés
 Légers, ailes, vont s'envoler.
 Tra la la la la—la la la—la la la—la—la
 Tra la la la la—la la la—

SOPHIE (*speaking*) : Soldiers !

MARTHA (*rushing to window*) : Quickly—let's see——

ROSE (*also rushing to window*) : I do love soldiers.

MELANIE (*joining them*) : Oh, they are so pretty, so pretty in their red coats.

SOPHIE : They're some of the guards from the Pavilion.

ROSE (*singing*) : When I see the soldiers marching by
 With fife and drum
 Beneath a summer sky

SOPHIE : }
 and } Little dears who love to do and die
 MARTHA : }

ROSE : My spirit sings
 And spreads its wings to fly.

SOPHIE (*spoken*) : Nicely put, my girl, but a trifle affected.

ROSE : Well, it's true.

MARTHA : Look at the officer leading them.

SOPHIE : I must admit he could leave his shoes under my bed any time he liked.

ROSE (*singing*):

Think of all the battles they have won

MELANIE (*singing*):

So brave and strong

They march along

Like little boys

Who play with toys

For fun.

SOPHIE

and

MARTHA :

} Little boys who frolic in the sun.

ROSE : Right—right—right left right——

ALL: Right—right—right left right left——

March, little soldiers, we all adore
you,

We'd swoon before you

If we thought that you would care,

Whate'er befalls you,

Where duty calls you,

We should love to be there,

To share

All your troubles, but we'd never dare,

But we're quite prepared to cheer you to
victory,

To joy or despair,

Joy or despair,

That's only fair.

Dear little soldiers,

Should you admire us
 And feel desirous
 On returning from the fray,
 We'd soon surrender,
 You'd find us tender
 And sublimely unresisting
 In assisting
 You to spend
 Your soldiers' pay pay pay.

At the end of the song, when MELANIE, MARTHA, and SOPHIE are twirling gaily about the room, ROSE re enters and announces in rather gloomy tones: The Duke and Duchess of Beneden. The music stops dead as they enter. They are elderly; haughty and grim.

DUCHESS (*stiffly*): Mademoiselle de Tramont ?

MELANIE (*curtseying*): Oui !

DUCHESS : I am the Duchess of Beneden. Please forgive us for calling upon you so—so unexpectedly. I believe you are acquainted with my son, Lord Sheere ?

DUKE : A moment, my love, just a moment, do not rush matters.

MELANIE : I think you do not know Mrs. James and Mrs. Otford.

DUCHESS (*icily*) : I do not.

MELANIE (*charmingly*): Then it is easy that you should because they are here.

She indicates them with a polite gesture; they both curtsey low. The DUCHESS bows almost imperceptibly.

SOPHIE : This is Mrs. Dragon.

MARTHA : Of Dorset.

DUCHESS (*without the faintest sign of recollection*): Indeed ?

SOPHIE (*after a slight pause*) : Nice weather, taken all in all?

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

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ACT X CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

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MARTHA : Of Dorset.

DUCHESS (*without the faintest sign of recognition*): Indeed ?

SOPHIE (*after a slight pause*) : Nice weather, taken all in all?

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

MELANIE : Will you not sit yourselves down ?

DUCHESS : No, thank you.

MELANIE : Perhaps you would like the tea ?

DUCHESS (*with an atrocious accent*): Non merci, Je pense qu'il serait mieux si nous parlons en frangais.

MELANIE : Au contraire, Madame, my friends do not understand French.

MARTHA (*with great refinement*): Oh, please don't bother about us, we shall have to go now, anyhow.

MELANIE : Oh, no, please stay a little longer.

SOPHIE : We really must go, we have an appointment with the Duke of Twickenham (*Pertly to the DUCHESS.*) He is your cousin, I believe ?

The DUCHESS turns away without answering.

MARTHA : Come on, Dragon. (*She goes, to the door.*)

SOPHIE : Good-bye, my dear Duke—it's ages since we last met, isn't it ? Do you remember ? That New Year's party at Mrs. Johnstone's—a very gay evening, wasn't it ? (*She turns to MELANIE.*) Au revoir, Mademoiselle. (*She curtseys.*)

MARTHA (*also curtseying*): We must meet again very soon.

SOPHIE : Et merci beaucoup !

MELANIE : Au revoir.

MRS. DRAGON *does a slightly abortive curtsey to everyone and the three of them go out, followed reluctantly by ROSE. When the door has closed behind them the DUCHESS turns.*

DUCHESS : As I said before, I believe you are acquainted with my son ?

MELANIE : Yes.

DUCHESS : You would be doing my husband and

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENS V

myself a great service if you discontinued that acquaintance.

MELANIE : You are come here to ask a service ?

DUKE : Yes, Mademoiselle, we have.

MELANIE (*to the DUCHESS*) : Then I do not understand how your manner is so unpolite.

DUKE : My wife is upset, naturally upset.

MELANIE : Pourquoi ?

DUKE : Edward is our only son.

MELANIE : Is that not more your fault than mine ?

DUCHESS : It is no use bandying words, Frederick, and wasting time. (*To MELANIE.*) I am a woman of the world, Mademoiselle, and I fully realise your position.

The DUKE looks appraisingly at MELANIE, through his quizzing glass.

MELANIE : I fear I do not understand.

DUCHESS : Things may be different in France. I am sure I do not know about that since that dreadful Bonaparte has ruined the country, but here in England, there are still two distinct worlds. You belong to one, and my son belongs to the other. Those two worlds do not mix.

MELANIE : I would prefer that you speak to my guardian of these things.

DUCHESS (*sniffing*) : Guardian !

MELANIE : Monsieur le Due de Chaucigny-Varenes.

DUKE : Perhaps, my love, that, after all, would be a better plan.

DUCHESS : Please, Frederick, allow me to deal with this. (*To MELANIE*) My son is infatuated with you, but he is young and that infatuation will not last. It must not last. I wish you to give me your word that you will

never see him again. My husband and I are fully prepared to compensate you within reason.

MELANIE : Compensate ? Que-ce que c'est ca—compensate ?

DUCHESS (*laconically*): Money.

MELANIE : .Money! You will pay me money ?

DUCHESS : Yes.

MELANIE : To see your son never again ?

DUCHESS : Yes.

MELANIE : If I love him, what then ?

DUCHESS : That is beside the point.

MELANIE : I think you will perhaps go away now.

DUCHESS : Five hundred pounds.

MELANIE : He is very charming, your son, and his eyes are very clear and true. I think he will be angry.

DUCHESS : A thousand pounds.

MELANIE (*ringing the bell on the desk*) : I am tired, Madame. I cannot sit down until you go.

DUKE : Mademoiselle, I beg of you—my wife is distraite——

MELANIE : That is not of interest to me.

DUCHESS (*losing control slightly*) : I would like to make one thing clear to you. My son is not yet of age. If he marries without his parents' consent he will not have a penny. Not a penny ! Do you understand that ?

DUKE : Geprgina, Georgina—please——

MELANIE : He would make a very sweet husband, your son, even without a penny, because he is kind.

ROSE *enters, and stands by the door.*

DUKE : Come, Georgina.

The DUCHESS looks at MELANIE furiously for a moment in silence, and then, without a word, turns her back on her and sweeps out of the room followed by the

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

DUKE. *The DUKE turns at the door and bows with the suspicion of a smile. ROSE follows them out, and MELANIE runs to the window to peep through the curtains at them. In a moment or two ROSE returns.*

MELANIE : Ca y est !

ROSE : What's that ?

MELANIE : Some Madeira, quickly, my legs will not stand. *(She sinks down on the sofa.)*

ROSE runs to a little side table and pours her out a glass of Madeira.

ROSE : My goodness ! Her face when she went out !

MELANIE : Mon Dieu ! Her face when she came in.

ROSE : That bonnet !

MELANIE *(starting to laugh)*: Like a pheasant.

ROSE : Feathers and all. *(She starts to laugh too.)*

MELANIE *(laughing more wildly)*: The Duke—the poor, poor man——

ROSE : Looked like a corpse, and no wonder——

They are both laughing weakly when PAUL comes into the room.

PAUL : Why was the front door open ?

ROSE : Oh, dear !

PAUL : What is the matter ?

MELANIE *(hysterically)*: Five hundred pounds—a thousand pounds—not enough—not quite enough—but better than nothing !

PAUL : That will do, Rose.

ROSE : Yes, sir.

She goes out, wiping her eyes.

PAUL : Now, what has happened ?

MELANIE : Je vous raconterai ce qui vient de passer. On m'a insulté et si cela ne me faisait pas tant rire j'aurais envie de pleurer.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE V

PAUL : Qui vous a insulté ? Que voulez-vous dire ?

MELANIE : La très charmante mere de Monsieur le Marquis, ils sortent d'ici, le Due et la Duchesse, je ne suis pas encore assez bien elevee—j'avais envie de lui cracher a la figure—c'est un grossier vieux chameau—elle s'est conduite avec moi comme envers une grue !

PAUL : J'espère que vous ne lui avez pas donné de raison pour vous prendre comme telle.

MELANIE : Du reste tout ceci est dc votre faute. Je n'avais aucune envie de connaitre tous ces gens. J'etais bien plus heureuse la ou j'etais.

PAUL : Ca c'est idiot !

MELANIE : Mais c'est vrai ! Vous voulez que je l'epouse votre Marquis ? Ah bien, soit: et puis apres, vous verrez, il sera sans le sou, et moi, je serai forcée de retourner chanter dans un café—Madame la Marquise au cafe chantant ! Ca sera du joli, et ca sera bien faire pour vous !

There is a rat-tat-tat at the door. MELANIE runs to the window.

C'est le Due, et tout seul cette fois.

PAUL : I'll talk to him.

MELANIE : No.

PAUL : But, my dear Melanie—

MELANIE : Go into the bedroom.

PAUL : But I—

MELANIE : Go quickly—listen at the door—and do not come out until I say—

PAUL : You will call me ?

MELANIE : I will say, " The sea is so pretty." Go on—quickly—

PAUL goes into the bedroom. MELANIE pushes the boxes to the back of the room. ROSE enters.

ROSE (*with a slight leer*) : The Duke of Beneden.

MELANIE *is now seated, posing for the interview.*

The DUKE enters. He bows with almost overdom politeness. ROSE goes out.

DUKE : Mademoiselle, I—I—have returned.

MELANIE : I see you have.

DUKE : I ask your forgiveness.

MELANIE : Thank you.

DUKE : My wife——

MELANIE : She is upset ?

DUKE : Yes.

MELANIE : Distrainte ?

DUKE : Exactly.

MELANIE : Ill-mannered ?

DUKE : Yes—er—I mean—well, you understand ?

MELANIE : I do not understand.

DUKE (*with a charming smile*) : Please try.

MELANIE : That is better.

DUKE : You are very pretty, Mademoiselle, and very charming.

MELANIE : Oh !

DUKE : I am sure that you cannot possibly be hard-hearted.

MELANTE : It is difficult to have the soft heart when one is insulted.

DUKE : My wife does not understand as I understand.

MELANIE (*averting her eyes*) : Oh, Monsieur le Due.

DUKE : Do you love my son ?

MELANIE (*still looking down*) : I do not know.

DUKE : He loves you ?

MELANIE : Yes.

DUKE : Do you wish to marry him ?

MELANIE : Please—I do not know.

DUKE : All his money is controlled by his mother, if you did become his wife, she would cut him off entirely.

MELANIE : I see.

DUKE : Whereas I——

MELANIE (*looking up sharply*): You ?

DUKE (*with slight embarrassment*) : I find myself in an extremely awkward position.

MELANIE : Why ?

DUKE : I do not want to bore you with my troubles, but you are so sympathetic.

MELANIE (*going to him*): What is it you would say ?

DUKE : I have a little house in London, a deal little house very nicely furnished just near Berkeley Square, and it is unhappy because it is not lived in, the pretty furniture is covered up and the blinds are drawn.

MELANIE : How sad !

DUKE : You see, I am an old man now.

MELANIE : Non, Monsieur.

DUKE : Well, elderly.

MELANIE : Perhaps.

DUKE : And my heart, like the house, is covered up, and the blinds are drawn.

MELANIE (*turning away*): Your wife, does she know about the little house ?

DUKE : No.

MELANIE : And your heart ? Does she know about that ?

DUKE : No.

MELANIE (*resting her hand lightly on his arm*): Poor Monsieur le Due, life is very difficult, is it not ?

DUKE : I knew you would understand. (*H' holds her bandy almost as though he didn't notice it.*)

MELANIE : What is the rent of the little house ?

DUKE : That is all paid.

MELANIE : And is there a little carriage with white horses and a footman on the box ?

DUKE : How did you guess ?

MELANIE : And every month, the bills of the house ? They will be much ?

DUKE (*tentatively*): Two hundred pounds ?

MELANIE (*firmly*): Three hundred pounds.

DUKE (*smiling*): Three hundred pounds.

MELANIE : On the first day of every month ?

DUKE (*pulling her a little towards him*) : On the first day of every month.

MELANIE (*surrendering*): But I do not yet know about London.

DUKE : It is delightful ! You would love it.

MELANIE : But I love it here in Brighton.

He takes her in his arms.

The sea is so pretty.

PAUL enters from the bedroom. The DUKE starts back and hurriedly disentangles himself from MELANIE.

PAUL (*sternly*): Melanie I

MELANIE (*terrified*): Ah, mon Dieu !

PAUL : Monsieur, I do not think I have the pleasure of your acquaintance.

DUKE : I am the Duke of Beneden.

PAUL : Melanie, go to your room.

MELANIE : Mais, mon oncle, je——

PAUL : Immediately. Do as I tell you.

MELANIE : Oui, mon oncle.

She drops a hurried little curtsey to the DUKE, curtseys to PAUL, makes a wry face and goes out.

PAUL : Now then, Monsieur !

DUKE : I see it all now.

PAUL : You are the father of the Marquis of Sheere ?

DUKE : Yes.

PAUL : I see. Good-bye, Monsieur.

DUKE : I would like to explain.

PAUL : There is nothing to explain. It is all depressingly clear. (*He rings the bell.*) I will call upon you and the Duchess later when I have decided what course to take.

DUKE : Look here, sir, I——

PAUL : The Due de Chaucigny-Varennnes. At your service.

ROSE *enters.*

Rose, kindly conduct his Grace downstairs.

ROSE : Yes, sir.

DUKE : I fear you don't quite understand. There is some mistake——

PAUL : There is a very grave mistake, and I understand perfectly. Good-bye. (*He bows abruptly.*)

The DUKE still hesitates for a moment, then bows stiffly and goes out followed by ROSE, who has the impertinence to wink broadly at PAUL over her shoulder.

The music swells and MELANIE puts her head round the bedroom door. PAUL beckons to her, and they both tip-toe in time to the music to the window, where, shaking with silent laughter, they peep through the curtains as the lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE VI

TRIO: MARTHA, SOPHIE *and* DRAGON.
 " THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT THE
 FRENCH."

Verse I

SOPHIE : A life of Love is curious
 But not injurious
 If you are wise,

MARTHA : For you get pleasure,
 Leisure,
 Knowledge to treasure
 After the gay life dies ;

SOPHIE : Tho' men we seldom bind to us
 They're often kind to us,

MARTHA : And entre nous

BOTH : English Gentlemen,
 Spanish Noblemen,
 Indian Merchantmen too
 Always play the game,
 Never cause us shame.

Refrain I

BOTH : But there's always something fishy about
 the French !
 Whether Prince or Politician
 We've a sinister suspicion
 That behind their " savoir faire "
 They share

A common contempt
For every mother's son of us.
Tho' they smile and smirk
We know they're out for dirty work,
So we're most polite
But don't put out the night-light I
Every wise and thoroughly worldly wench
Knows there's always something fishy
about the French I

Refrain 2

BOTH : Oh, there's always something fishy about
the French !
As a Race, they're conscientious
But undoubtedly licentious,
Tho' the compliments they pay
Are gay
And ever so nice,
We don't believe a word of them.
They may kiss our hands
And talk to us of foreign lands,
We "Toi" and "Moi"
And watch for "Je ne sais quoi."
Every time their fingers begin to clench—
Well, we know there's something fishy
about the French I

After a short dance they go off left as the lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE VII

This Scene is the Public Gardens.

It is evening, and there are lights in the Pavilion windows.

Down stage on the left is a stone or wooden seat.

When the curtain rises there is a mixed collection of people on the stage. Residents. Visitors. A few soldiers. A man with a hurdy-gurdy. Several ladies of the town, some with escorts, some without. Everyone has his back turned to the audience, and is obviously craning to see somebody pass by. Miss GOSLETT and Miss MENTION, two elderly maiden ladies, have actually stood upon the seat in order to see better. After a moment or two, the tune that the band is playing comes to an end with a little flourish of brass. Everyone relaxes, and proceeds to stroll about. Miss GOSLETT and Miss MENTION climb down off the seat and sit on it.

Miss GOSLETT : He's certainly getting very fat.

Miss MENTION : Perhaps it's dropsy.

Miss GOSLETT : Surely not, at his age.

Miss MENTION : A friend of mine died of dropsy when she was only twenty-three. They kept on tapping her and tapping her, but it was no good.

Miss GOSLETT : That poor Princess Caroline, it does seem a shame.

Miss MENTION : Such a common face.

Miss GOSLETT : She can't help that, to be sure.

Miss MENTION : This place is certainly much more lively than Exeter, although I *do* miss the cathedral.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE VII

The man with the hurdy-gurdy approaches them, playing busily.

Miss GOSLETT (*fumbling in her reticule*): I must give him some pence.

Miss MENTION : It will only encourage him.

Miss GOSLETT hands the man a few pennies', and he goes off. The band starts again, this time playing a slightly more sentimental tune. The DUKE OF BENEDEN strolls across accompanied by the MARQUIS OF SHEERE.

EDWARD : But, Papa, I assure you, she is different—

DUKE : My dear boy, that sort of woman is never so very different.

EDWARD (*hotly*) : You cannot possibly tell what sort of woman she is.

DUKE : I shall make it my business to find out.

They go off. SOPHIE walks on accompanied by LORD KENYON, an immaculately dressed dandy, who is obiwusly a little the worse for drink.

SOPHIE : Not to-night. I have already told you, I have another engagement.

LORD KENYON : Just a little drive.

SOPHIE : I do not trust your horses.

LORD KENYON : What is wrong with them ?

SOPHIE : They make conversation impossible.

They meet MARTHA with LORD ST. MARYS.

MARTHA : My dear, I've been searching for you everywhere.

SOPHIE : I can't think why.

MARTHA : Lord St. Marys wants to be presented to Mademoiselle what's-her-name.

SOPHIE (*raising her eyebrows*) : Oh, does he ? (*To LORD ST. MARYS.*) For your own benefit, or somebody else's ?

LORD ST. MARYS : I cannot give away State secrets.

SOPHIE : I thought as much.

MARTHA : I hope this—this commission of yours won't prevent you from coming to the Assembly Rooms later on ?

LORD ST. MARYS : That all depends, neither my heart nor my soul is my own these days——

They pass out of sight, all four of them, as the DUKE OF BENEDEN and EDWARD come on right, in time to meet LADY JULIA CHARTERIS who is strolling down from the back, accompanied only by her maid. She is a handsome authoritative woman, exquisitely gowned middle-aged, and slightly over-made-up.

DUKE (*bowing*): My dear Julia ! I thought you were in Spain.

JULIA : I'm grateful even for the thought, Frederick. The last ten years have seemed singularly barren without your attentions.

DUKE (*hurriedly*) : This is my son, Julia.

JULIA (*smiling in response to EDWARD'S bow*): We have met before.

EDWARD : Madame—I——

JULIA : Don't look confused. You couldn't possibly remember. It was years ago, in London. We stopped to converse for a moment, your nurse and I, and you were permitted to bite my glove.

EDWARD : I never tasted a more delicious glove.

JULIA : This has been a strange day, my first in England for a long while. A day of ghosts. Out of the past they come, one after the other, looking almost as real as when they were alive. You are the sixth, Frederick, there really should be seven. Seven is my lucky number.

DUKE : You still gamble as much as ever ?

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE VII

JULIA : Yes, with the difference that I know now that it is far too late to win.

They exchange bows. The DUKE and EDWARD stroll off up stage. JULIA has just reached the seat on btr way off, when PAUL hurries on. He is obviously searching for someone. He passes JULIA without looking at her.

JULIA (*stopping dead*) : The seventh I

PAUL (*turning*) : I beg your pardon ?

JULIA (*singing softly*) : Au clair de la lune, mon ami Pierrot——

PAUL (*staring at her*) : Julie !

JULIA : I thought you were dead.

PAUL (*warmly kissing her hand*) : Oh, how charming to see you again, how very, very charming.

JULIA : English, too ! Almost without an accent.

PAUL : How long ago is it ?

JULIA : Let us both try *not* to remember.

PAUL : It is so difficult—seeing you again so suddenly, so unexpectedly—conjures up so much of the past.

JULIA : The past is dead—perhaps happily.

They sit.

PAUL (*incredulously*) : It isn't true. Do you remember the salon of Madame de Plessier ?

JULIA : And Father Francois, and the little pink cakes with seeds in them——?

PAUL : And the day you cried over the dead dog !

JULIA : I've cried over many dead dogs since then—

At this moment MELANIE comes on. She goes swiftly up to PAUL.

MELANIE : Ah, mon cher, enfin I J'ai pensé que vous etiez perdu.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE VII

PAUL : Julia, I want to present to you my ward, Melanie de Tramont.

MELANIE and JULIA *both curtsey.* JULIA *Is palpably very puzzled.*

JULIA : De Tramont ?

MELANIE : Oui, Madame. I am the daughter of the dear old Marquis de Tramont.

JULIA : I shouldn't boast of it, my dear, as he was unmarried.

MELANIE *(to PAUL)* : Je ne comprends pas.

PAUL : I will explain later. Lady Julia Charteris and I are very old friends——

At this moment, MARTHA appears with LORD ST. MARYS.

MARTHA : Oh, Mademoiselle, will you please allow me to introduce a friend of mine, Lord St. Marys.

MELANIE *curtseys,* LORD ST. MARYS *bows.*

MELANIE : Enchantee, Monsieur.

LORD ST. MARYS : Please forgive me for imposing myself upon you, Mademoiselle, but I have been commanded to approach you on behalf of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

MELANIE : Ah, mon Dieu I Son Altesse ?

LORD ST. MARYS : His Royal Highness wishes to know whether you would do him the honour of taking supper with him this evening ?

PAUL : Will you please tell His Royal Highness with our most deep thanks that this evening it would not be possible as she is a little ill.

JULIA : This situation seems a trifle delicate. I hope to continue our reminiscences very soon, Paul. Au revoir, Mademoiselle de Tramont. Come, Hannah.

She goes off with her maid.

ACT I CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE VII

LORD ST. MARYS : I fear that Mademoiselle does not quite understand. My request, coming from such an exalted quarter, amounts practically to a command.

PAUL : Mademoiselle de Tramont, my ward, has not yet had the honour of being presented to His Royal Highness.

LORD ST. MARYS : The fact, His Royal Highness is the first to deplore——

PAUL : Surely, it is a matter soon remedied ?

LORD ST. MARYS : If Mademoiselle will allow me to tscort her now, I, myself, will take great pleasure in presenting her.

PAUL : I fear, Monsieur, there is some mistake. Will you kindly bear my homage to His Royal Highness, and inform him, with all due respect, that I will be honoured to present my ward to him myself, on a more formal occasion.

LORD ST. MARYS (*stiffly*): My regrets, Monsieur.

PAUL (*amiably*) : And mine.

LORD ST. MARYS *bows abruptly, and goes off with*

MARTHA *and* DRAGON *follows.*

MARTHA : Well, really !

PAUL : Come, Melanie.

He crooks his arm, and MELANIE, after bowing politely to MARTHA, takes it. The band strikes up a particularly gay little tune. As they walk away, MELANIE turns her head towards DRAGON, who winks broadly at her, kicking up the back of her dress, as——

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE I

The painted curtains again.

SOPHIE and MARTHA appear before them as in the Prologue.

SOPHIE : This play, or let us say, this pantomime,
Being too small in scope, too tenuous,
Too personal to illustrate the strenuous
And glittering excitements of the time,
We feel it, in a sense, obligatory
To hint at what goes on *behind* the story.

MARTHA : My friend, though a trifle too rhetorical,
Means it should be more historical.

SOPHIE : We ask you to imagine, if you please,
That just around the corner of the tale,
Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince inhale
The selfsame air, the same urbane sea-
breeze.

Imagine that this world is living still
And passing just beneath the window-sill.

MARTHA : You've left out Brummell, the pert
impostor,
And what about Pitt ? And the Duke of
Gloucester ?

SOPHIE : Picture a little further if you will
The neat Pavilion Gardens, and the
Steyne.

The little band that orchestrates the scene.
 The Fireworks, the Races, the Quadrille,
 And furthermore, the bawdy, merry Hell
 Created by our lordly clientele 1
They curtsey, and go off, left and right.

ACT II

SCENE II

The Scene is MELANIE'S room again.

When the Curtain rises it is early afternoon. MELANIE is seated at a table upon which is a pile of books. She is wearing large horn-rimmed glasses, and an expression of rather depressed concentration. She is also sucking a pencil, and there is a paper bag of humbugs on the table by her side. She sings a song, half in French and half in English, dealing entirely with the intricacies of language.
English Lesson : MELANIE.

Verse

The Tree is in the Garden,
 The water is in the Pot;
 The Little sheep
 On the mountain sleep,
 The fire is very hot.

Refrain

Oh ! c'est dur,
 Tous ces mots obscurs
 Me rendent triste;

Rien n'existe
 Que le malheur qui insiste ;
 Dicu, je tâche d'apprendre, mais voilà
 Je ne peux pas.

Verse 2

The fire is *not* in the garden,
 The tree is not in the pot,
 The silly sheep
 On the something sleep,
 But whether they do or not,
 I do not care a jot;
 I don't care if they're cold
 Or if they're hot.

The CHILDREN sing, "La—la—la," etc., outside the window. She shuts it, and the CHILDREN stop singing.

Refrain 2

Oh l c'est dur,
 Tous ces mots obscurs
 Me rendent triste;
 Rien n'existe
 Que le malheur qui insiste ;
 Dieu, je tâche d'apprendre, mais voilà
 Je ne peux pas.

At the end of it, she rests her head wearily on her hands, and is obviously on the verge of tears. ROSE enters.

ROSE : There is a lady downstairs to see you.

MELANIE (*perking up slightly*): Is it Mrs. James or Mrs. Otford ?

ROSE : No. She said the name was Lady Julia Charteris.

MELANIE : Tall, with a painted face ?

ROSE : Yes, and very grandly dressed. She came in a curricle.

MELANIE : I do not wish to see her. I do not wish to see anyone.

ROSE : Shall I say you're out ?

MELANIE : Yes, please—say I am a long way away.

At this moment LADY JULIA comes into the room.

MELANIE *jumps to her feet.*

JULIA : Please forgive me, but it was so very draughty in the hall.

MELANIE : I am at my work, Madame.

JULIA : So I see. How interesting.

MELANIE : I fear that Monsieur le Due is not here.

JULIA : I know. It was you I wished to see.

MELANIE (*making the best of the situation*) : I am very happy, Madame. Perhaps you will sit yourself?

JULIA (*looking round the room*) : Not just for a moment, thank you. I want to enjoy this charming room. What pretty curtains—and what a lovely view.

MELANIE : Yes, the view is pretty.

JULIA : I believe they are arranging for a new ship to travel between here and Dieppe. That will be so convenient, won't it ?

MELANIE : I do not very much like ships.

JULIA : I have so much to talk to you about. Your guardian and I are old friends, you know. We spent a great deal of our childhood together in France.

MELANIE : That is very nice.

JULIA : Is it entirely necessary for your maid to chaperon us ?

MELANIE : You will bring the tea, please, Rose.

ROSE : Yes, Mademoiselle.

She goes out reluctantly, taking the writing-table.

JULIA : It was such a pleasant surprise to see Paul—your guardian—again. I had thought he was dead.
(JULIA sits on the sofa.)

MELANIE : No, he is alive.

JULIA : I suppose you are too young to remember his wife, and his mother and father ?

MELANIE : Yes, I was young.

JULIA : I understand that you, too, were bereaved of your parents during the Terror.

MELANIE : What, please, is "bereaved" ?

JULIA : I mean that they died. That they were guillotined.

MELANIE : Please, I would rather not speak of it.

JULIA : I understand that perfectly. I knew your father many years ago.

MELANIE : Yes ?

JULIA : A most witty and delightful man.

MELANIE : Yes, he was very nice.

JULIA : It was so strange of him to keep his marriage such a secret. Paul, apparently, was the only one who knew anything about it.

MELANIE sits.

MELANIE : It was a secret because of the Jesuits.

JULIA : The Jesuits ?

MELANIE : Yes—my father made them a promise, when he was very little, that he never would take wife and make marriage with himself.

JULIA : I see.

MELANIE : The Jesuits are very powerful.

JULIA : They must be. Where did you live when you were a child ?

ACT II CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE II

MELANIE : A grey walled chateau near Bordeaux. It is all very distant in my mind.

JULIA : The Chateau de Tramont, no doubt ?

MELANIE : Yes. There were swans.

JULIA : Graceful creatures, but disagreeable.

MELANIE : Yes, they were very disagreeable.

JULIA : There was a moat, too, I expect, and tall trees, and I suppose you were brought to Paris by your faithful old nurse ?

MELANIE : Yes.

JULIA : You were not dressed as a boy by any chance, were you ?

MELANIE : No, why should I be boy ?

JULIA : Merely a matter of convention. Perhaps you're really a boy now. Perhaps you're the Dauphin. That's quite an interesting idea.

MELANIE : I think you are laughing.

JULIA : You remember very little about your early life?

MELANIE : It is so far away.

JULIA : So very far away from the truth !

MELANIE (*rising and drawing herself up with great dignity*): Madame I

JULIA : My dear child, don't be absurd. The whole story is idiotic. You have been very badly rehearsed. Paul should be ashamed of himself.

MELANIE : I do not understand what you speak, Madame.

JULIA : Nonsense. You understand perfectly well.

MELANIE : And I do not understand why you come here.

JULIA : I came to find out what you were like. To see what sort of mistress Paul had picked out for himself.

MELANIE : Mistress ! I am no mistress.

JULIA : Oh, come, come, you can hardly expect me to believe that.

MELANIE (*furious*) : How dare you speak these words to me.

JULIA (*rising*): There is no necessity for you to lose your temper, my dear.

MELANIE: Do not please call me "my dear"—do not please call me any name. Go away.

JULIA : Certainly. I have found out all that I wanted to know.

MELANIE : You have found nothing, because what you know is not true.

JULIA : You can hardly blame me for that, as you have been lying steadily to me for the last ten minutes.

MELANIE : You wish to find about me, do you ? You wish to tell all your friends and make a joke. I will explain to you more, very much more. Listen—I am the daughter of a Mandarin in China—he was my first father—my second father was a Russian Jew in Prague—he sold silks, and little jewellery, and furs for your neck—I lived in Spain—I lived in Italy—I was born in the far Indies—my mother was black, black, black ! My brothers and sisters were slaves—no, they were little pigs—they ran about in the fields trying with their big noses to find out things—like you, Madame—I am a cocotte from the streets—I am a singer of songs—I am the new wife of Napoleon Bonaparte—take these tales, Madame—take them for your friends—but take them very quickly—now, at this moment—because if you do not go away and leave me alone I will smack your painted face and pull out your dead hair by the roots!

JULIA (*quietly*) : Obviously a gutter-snipe.

At this moment PAUL enters. MELANIE runs to him.

PAUL and MELANIE speak to each other from now onwards in French, unless otherwise indicated.

PAUL : My dear Julia, what a charming surprise—

MELANIE : Dites-lui de s'en aller—elle me rend folle.

PAUL : Melanie—je vous prie de vous surveiller.

MELANIE : Non, je ne me surveillerai pas. J'en ai assez de me surveiller. J'en ai assez de ces vieilles rosses anglaises. Si elles se regorgent rant, si elles relevent si haut le nez, c'est sans doute pour ne pas sentir la puanteur de leur fausse moralite. . . .

JULIA : I congratulate you, Paul.

PAUL : My dear Julia—

MELANIE : Appelez-la : " machère "; appelez-la : " ma bien-aimée " si vous voulez, mais que je ne la vo'e plus.

PAUL : Lady Julia est une vieille amie, et je ne supporterai pas que vous lui parliez sur ce ton.

MELANIE : Je ne me soucie pas de savoir depuis quand elle est votre amie, mais je sais qu'elle n'a pas le droit de venir ici, chez moi, pour m'insulter.

PAUL : Alors chaque fois que je tourne le dos quelqu'un vous insulte—cela devient fatigant.

MELANIE : C'est pourtant vrai—on m'insulte. Cette vieille bête curieuse m'a jete a la figure que j'etais votre maltresse—Je ne le supporterai plus—Je ne resterai pas dans ce pays, pas même pour vous—pas même pour l'amour de Dieu. Je retourne chez les miens—chez les honnêtes et braves gens de la rue—Je n'ai pas besoin de leur mentir à eux—Je n'ai pas besoin d'etre polie avec eux, ni de leur faire des sourires, quand j'ai envie de les etrangler—Je vous dis que je retourne en France—Je partirai demain, quand je devrais nager jusque-la.

She whirls off into the bedroom and slams the door.

PAUL *and* JULIA *stand looking after her for a moment, then JULIA laughs.*

JULIA : That was all very interesting.

PAUL : I hope, Julia, that since the old days your French has not improved too much.

JULIA : I could understand the gist of what she was saying, if not the actual words.

PAUL : How fortunate.

JULIA : I think, if only on account of our early years, some explanation is required.

PAUL : It was unkind of you to come here and bully the child.

JULIA : I didn't bully her. I merely wanted to find out who and what she was. Then she flew into a strange fury and was extremely rude. I do not like people being rude to me.

PAUL : She shall apologise later on.

JULIA (*grandly*) : This is quite unnecessary.

ROSE *enters with tea. While she is arranging it upon the table, JULIA and PAUL talk of other things.*

PAUL : I suppose you have been to the Pavilion ?

JULIA : Yes. I supped there the other evening. It is quite hideous.

PAUL : Very informal, I believe ?

JULIA : Oh yes, and very agreeable. One plays cards and dances a little. Mrs. Fitzherbert plays very high, but then she always has, hasn't she ?

ROSE *goes out.*

PAUL : It is only by shutting the eyes of my mind very tight that I can conjure up the school-girl I used to know.

JULIA : Surely that is quite natural. Twenty-five years leaves an adequate margin for change—and decay !

ACT II CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE II

PAUL : Decay ? (*Sadly.*) Perhaps you are right.

JULIA : Now, tell me, Paul—what does all this mean ? Why are you here ?

PAUL : It is an odd story, quite fantastic. I think I need you a little.

JULIA : What can I offer you ? My heart, my advice, or merely a little tea? (*She goes to the table.*)

PAUL : All three.

JULIA : Surely not the first, when your own is apparently so very much engaged.

PAUL : I fear you misunderstand the situation.

JULIA : I shall be only too pleased to be enlightened. Here is the tea, anyhow. (*She hands him a cup of tea.*)

He stands opposite to her.

PAUL : I feel at a loss—guilty—and yet I have nothing to be guilty about really.

JULIA : I think it was rather unkind of you to take poor Maurice de Tramont's name, and fasten it on to the first little light-of-love you meet.

PAUL *raps his cup sharply on the saucer.*

PAUL (*icily*) : Melanie is not my light-of-love.

JULIA (*smiling incredulously*) : My dear Paul!

PAUL : It's perfectly true. She has never been anybody's light-of-love. That is her greatest asset.

JULIA : Asset ?

PAUL (*he sits*): Yes. Business asset. She is my plan. My trick to be played upon the world. My livelihood.

JULIA : Have you gone mad ?

PAUL : No. I have merely transformed myself, owing to hard circumstances, from an effete aristocrat into a cunning and unscrupulous adventurer.

JULIA : That sounds faintly theatrical.

PAUL (*rising*): The murder of my wife and child was

theatrical enough—the deaths of my mother and father and sister on the guillotine were equally theatrical. My life from then onwards, as a fugitive, was an endless succession of serio-comic stage effects. I was a baker's assistant—a lawyer's clerk—a tutor to the children of nouveaux riches parvenus. Two years ago I found Melanie singing in a cafe. She seemed to me to be better material than my snivelling little bourgeois pupils, so I took her away from the cafe and kept us both on my savings. Every now and then I procured for her an engagement to sing at a private house. Five months ago I had a stroke of luck. I managed to sell two pictures from the old house, which somehow or other had been overlooked by the revolutionaries. With that money I brought her here.

JULIA: Why?

PAUL: She is to make a rich marriage.

JULIA: And you take commission?

PAUL: Yes.

JULIA: In England, we describe that as pimping!

PAUL: At that rate every fondly ambitious mother is a pimp.

JULIA: That is hardly the same thing.

PAUL: Well?

JULIA: Well—I think it is a good joke, in very bad taste.

PAUL: Taste is too expensive a social luxury for a poor man.

JULIA: I suppose the poor little thing is in love with you?

PAUL (*startled*): In love with me I! What nonsense!
(*He laughs?*)

JULIA: I should have thought it was inevitable.

PAUL : I appreciate the compliment, Julia, but I think it is a trifle far-fetched. This whole plan has been understood completely between us from the first as a business arrangement.

JULIA : How wise.

PAUL : Will you help me ?

JULIA : With all your worldly experiences, Paul, you have contrived to remain singularly naïf.

PAUL : At any rate, even if you cannot help, please make me a promise that you will not hinder.

JULIA : Of course if it's money you want you could always marry me. I have plenty.

PAUL (*shocked*): Julia !

JULIA : We could find some employment for Melanie. She might even be my maid.

PAUL : I see I have made a mistake.

JULIA (*rising with decision, and patting his shoulder*) : No, Paul. Don't be afraid. I won't give away your secret, and I'll help you all I can. It should be amusing at least.

PAUL : How much do you despise me for it ?

JULIA : Just a little. If it matters to you.

PAUL : I'm sorry.

JULIA : Cunning, unscrupulous adventurers have no time to waste on conscience. Call her in. We will discuss possibilities.

PAUL : Do you think that is wise ?

JULIA : I can manage her.

PAUL : Very well. (*He goes to the bedroom door.*)
Melanie. Venez ici.

After a moment MELANIE comes in. She sees that

JULIA // still there and her face hardens immediately.

PAUL : Melanie. I wish you to apologise to Lady Julia.

MELANIE (*firmly*): No.

PAUL (*sternly*): Please do as I tell you.

MELANIE : I have nothing to say.

JULIA : But it is for me to say I am sorry. I was over-inquisitive, and I jumped to conclusions too hastily. Mademoiselle, I ask your forgiveness.

MELANIE (*bowing*) : Merci, Madame.

JULIA : Shall we be friends ?

MELANIE : Je ne comprends pas.

PAUL : You are being very ungracious, Melanie.

MELANIE : I am sorry.

PAUL : I have told Lady Julia everything. She has promised to help us.

MELANIE : You have told her—what ?

JULIA : A story. Just a story, Mademoiselle, but it is a very interesting story, and I should like, as Paul and I are such old friends, to help to bring it to a happy ending.

MELANIE *looks searchingly from one to the other, and then, with a great effort, smiles.*

MELANIE (*curtseying*) : Merci beaucoup, Madame. I understand now.

JULIA *also curtseys.*

JULIA (*briskly*) : Come now—to business.

MELANIE (*with great manner*) : Madame will sit ?

JULIA (*sitting down*) : Thank you.

MELANIE (*enquiringly to PAUL*) : What business shall we begin ?

PAUL : We can talk quite freely in front of Lady Julia.

MELANIE : That is very nice.

JULIA : In the first place, whom do you know here ?

MELANIE (*bumming softly*) : Even the sea looks grey.

PAUL : Melanie !

MELANIE (*fiercely singing*) : C'est vrai!

JULIA (*politely*) : I beg your pardon ?

MELANIE : It is nothing, Madame, but when business is here to be talked—(*Singing*) , seems that all the joy has faded from the day—as though the foolish world no longer wants to play—

JULIA : Really, these vocal outbursts are most disconcerting.

PAUL : Do be good, Melanie.

MELANIE : Very well—I will be good.

PAUL : Lord Sheere is our only definite proposal so far.

JULIA (*to MELANIE*) : Do you like him ?

MELANIE (*singing*):

I'll follow my secret heart my whole life
through.

I'll keep every dream apart till one comes
true.

No matter what price is paid,
What stars may fade—above
I'll follow my secret heart
Till I find—Love.

She rises while she is singing this, and walks over to the window. She finishes with her back turned.

PAUL (*irritably*): Melanie! Will you kindly concentrate ?

JULIA : I do see how difficult it must be, for anyone so young and so charming, to banish sentiment entirely.

MELANIE (*turning*): You are sympathetic, Madame, but it is not so very difficult really. Sentiment is very silly. (*She looks at PAUL and her voice hardens.*)

JULIA : How wise.

MELANIE : There is no sentiment in the whole world that is real.

JULIA : Wiser still.

MELANIE : Real enough to waste the time upon— Paul has spoken me that very often.

JULIA : How very sensible of him.

MELANIE : I will be sensible too and make business. *{She puts a chair by the table and sits.}* I have three with which to begin.

JULIA : Three !

MELANIE : Yes, I make the progress. First there is the Prince Regent. He wishes to sleep with me.

PAUL : Melanie !

MELANIE *(quickly)* : Do not be shocked, Paul. That is true, and we are speaking of truth.

JULIA *(laughing)* : Admirable.

MELANIE : If I do that—there is a risk—a risk that I may not stay in the royal heart long enough to gain large money for Paul.

PAUL : I will not have you speaking like that—it is intolerable.

JULIA : She is quite right, Paul. It ill becomes you to be so outraged. Remember how unscrupulous you are.

MELANIE : Then there is the Duke of Beneden. He has a little house with pretty furniture and a coach with brown horses and three hundred pounds on the first day of every month—these things would be useful, would they not ,

JULIA : Hard work, but a little more lasting than the other.

MELANIE : Then there is Lord Sheere.

JULIA : That's better.

MELANIE : He loves me.

JULIA : Excellent.

MELANIE : But if we marry, there is no money at all.

JULIA : That can soon be remedied if your social position is improved. You must first of all be presented—more or less informally, here—at the Pavilion.

PAUL : But how ? Who will present her ?

JULIA : I will, but before that you must give a little supper party. I will arrange it, and invite the guests. Lord St. Marys must come, and the Benedens, and Lord Sheere, and the Harringfords—they are very useful.

MELANIE (*rising sharply*): Are they rich ? Have they a foolish son ? (*She goes to the window.*)

JULIA (*ignoring her, to PAUL*) : You must have cards, and good wine—Mademoiselle might sing a little—she has such a charming voice, but I should suggest songs more closely allied to the Classics than to the cafe chantant.

PAUL (*going over to her*) : I can never begin to express my gratitude, Julia—

JULIA : Not at all. Old friends must be kept from starving. If all else fails I shall take up a subscription for you.

PAUL : I am still very low in your eyes, I see.

JULIA : You share that position with almost everyone I know. (*Rising.*) I will leave you now. Call upon me to-morrow and we will discuss the party invitations.

PAUL : I will send for a carriage.

JULIA : My curricule is outside. (*She crosses to MELANIE and curtseys!*) Au revoir, Mademoiselle.

MELANIE : Au revoir, Madame.

JULIA : And please accept my admiration. Your common sense is magnificent—(*she laughs*). But you will

ACT II CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE III

be careful, won't you, not to betray too much hardness of heart. Cynicism in the young is so unbecoming.

She sweeps out, followed by PAUL. MELANIE, when they have gone, picks up JULIA'S handkerchief from the floor, sniffs it contemptuously, and pitches it into the waste-paper basket—as the tights fade.

ACT II

SCENE III

QUARTETTE : FISHERMEN.

" There was once a little village."

There was once a little village by the sea,
Where we lived our lives in amiable tranquillity.
We were humble in our ways
And we swam through all our days
As little fishes swim—in immobility ;
We watched for gales in the evening sky
And we trimmed our sails till the night went by,
No less, no more,
Than stones on an English shore.

Then whimsical Fate,
Resenting our state,
Decided to break us
And mould and re make us;
Our sweet isolation
From civilisation

ACT II CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

Has all vanished away.
We're urban and proud,
Supporting a crowd
Of Doxys and Dandys
And Regency Randys,
Who fiddle and faddle
And piddle and paddle
And turn night into day.
The Pavilion
Cost a million
As a monument to Art,
And the wits here
Say it sits here
Like an Oriental tart!
The dashing "beau monde "
Has ruffled our pond,
And even the turbot
Know Mrs. Fitzherbert.
We're richer than ever before
But Brighton is Brighton no more.

ACT II

SCENE IV

The Scene is a larger room on the ground floor of MELANIE'S house. // is circular and the ceiling is supported by pillars. There are two sets of double doors upstage right and left. Downstage, almost on the footlights, there are two curved benches. There is a buffet on the

left side of the stage upon which are jugs of iced wine and elaborate cakes and other delicacies. From behind the right-hand double doors comes the sound of music. There are candles on the buffet', and in sconces on the walls. Hanging in the centre is a large crystal chandelier. Up at the back of the stage between the door there is a low dais upon which is a clavisan.

When the Curtain rises the GUESTS are grouped, with JULIA and PAUL in the centre, forming a beautiful "stil" picture. This attitude is held through a phrase of music, when, at a given point, the "picture" comes to life, and the party is in progress.

Note : Throughout this Scene there are musical "stops" to allow the dialogue to be heard. All guests, etc., not actually concerned in dialogue, remain immovable, in whichever positions they may be.

There is the sound of laughter and dancing from ballroom. GUESTS are strolling about and chatting to one another. There are several people clustered round the buffet.

PAUL and JULIA are standing centre. A. BUTLER flings open the doors left, and announces, in succession:

BUTLER : Lady Mosscock. The Earl and Countess of Harringford.

The HARRINGFORDS enter and PAUL goes forward to receive them. The conversation is too general for their exact greetings to be heard. They come over to JULIA and talk for a little, meanwhile the BUTLER announces in succession: MR. and MRS. HAILSHAM, THE LADY BRACEWORTH, THE HONOURABLE JULIAN KANE, LORD DOYNING. (Musical stop.)

LADY H. (*to JULIA*) : What a charming house, and what a lovely party. You must come to tea to-morrow and tell me the name of our host over and over again. I know I shall never remember it.

JULIA : The Due de Chaucigny-Varenes.

LADY H. : The French do seem to go out of their way to make things hard for us, don't they ? All those hyphens.

LORD H. : Where's the girl you told us about ? The ward or niece or whatever she is.

JULIA : You shall see her soon. She is very lovely.

Music resumes.

They pass on to talk to someone else. The BUTLER announces THE DUKE and DUCHESS OF BENEDEN.

When they enter PAUL receives them politely but with a certain hauteur. Presently the DUCHESS takes JULIA'S arm and walks her downstage left. They sit for a few moments on the curved bench. (Musical stop.)

DUCHESS : Julia. I must, tell you frankly. I do not understand at all. I am completely at a loss.

JULIA : Why, Georgina ?

DUCHESS : Frederick made me come, I still don't approve——

JULIA : You have no reason not to approve. You merely jumped to conclusions too hastily. As usual.

DUCHESS : Do you mean to tell me——

JULIA : I don't mean to tell you anything, Georgina, except that I have known the Chaucigny-Varenes family all my life, and that Paul is one of my oldest friends.

DUCHESS : But the girl—I can't believe——

JULIA : You made a grave mistake, and all I can suggest is that you remedy it as soon as possible. Melanie will be down soon.

The DUKE joins them.

DUKE : Is Edward here ?

JULIA : I haven't seen him yet.

DUCHESS : He hasn't spoken to me for four days.

JULIA : You really can't be surprised. You both of you made a bad blunder.

DUCHESS : But those dreadful women! Trying on each other's hats.

JULIA : Melanie is a stranger here. How was she to know whom to receive and whom not to receive ?

DUCHESS : Very well, Julia, I'll take your word for it, for the time being, but I'm still not convinced.

Music resumes—Short phrase—Musical stop.

She moves away to talk to LADY HARRINGFORD.

JULIA : Really, Frederick, Georgina is more disagreeable than ever.

DUKE : She is upset.

JULIA : You've been saying that for twenty years.

DUKE : It's been true for twenty years.

JULIA : I don't know how you've stood it.

DUKE : On the contrary, you should know better than anyone.

JULIA (*laughing*): Yes, Frederick, perhaps I should. Poor Georgina.

DUKE : The years have changed you very little.

JULIA : Thank you, Frederick.

DUKE : Dear Julia. (*He kisses her hand.*)

JULIA : That gesture was reminiscent—almost painfully so. Fortunately the light is too strong to allow us to deceive ourselves.

DUKE : Deceive ourselves ?

JULIA : Into a momentary belief that we were young again.

DUKE : Julia—do you remember—— ?

JULIA : I remember nothing. That is one of my greatest virtues. Who is your mistress at the moment ?

DUKE : Really, Julia I

JULIA : Or have you retired from public love ?

(Music resumes.)

She curtseys to him rather mockingly, and goes over to PAUL. The DUKE moves over to the buffet. There is a general buzz of conversation during which LORD SHEERE and LORD ST. MARYS are announced and make their entrance. PAUL receives them.

(Musical stop.)

MELANIE comes in quite quietly and unostentatiously, but even so, her entrance is the signal for the conversation to die down. People turn, with elaborate casualness, to scrutinize her. She looks pale, but very lovely.

MELANIE *(to PALL)* : My dress would not manage itself. I am so sorry. *(She curtseys to JULIA.)* Madame.

JULIA : You look delicious, my dear.

MELANIE : Merci, Madame.

She curtseys to EDWARD and LORD ST. MARYS.

JULIA *(to the DUCHESS OF BENEDEN)* : Georgina—I want to present to you Mademoiselle Melanie de Tramont.

DUCHESS *(stiffly)* : How do you do ?

MELANIE *(curtseying low)* : I am honoured, Madame.

DUCHESS *(with an effort)* : I am delighted to see you again.

MELANIE : Again ? Ah, forgive me, Madame, but I am so quite sure that we have never, never met before.

DUCHESS : That is very charming of you, Mademoiselle.

The DUKE comes up.

ACT II CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

PAUL : Ah, Monsieur le Due, I wish to present my ward, Melanie de Tramont.

The DUKE bows low, and again MELANIE curtsseys.

DUKE : T hope you are enjoying yourself in England, Mademoiselle ?

MELANIE : Yes, I love it here. The sea is so pretty !

(Music resumes?)

(Musical stop.)

The BUTLER flings open the doors and announces:

MRS. JAMES, MRS. OTFORD and MRS. DRAGON.

There is a horrified silence for a moment or two.

PAUL : Melanie ! Did you invite them ?

MELANIE : Pourquoi pas ? They are my friends.

SOPHIE and MARTHA enter , followed discreetly by

MRS. DRAGON. *They are extravagantly dressed and over-bejewelled.*

SOPHIE : My dear, what a lovely party.

MARTHA : So sweet of you to ask us.

They curtsey. MELANIE greets them with enthusiasm.

JULIA (to PAUL) : This is idiotic !

PAUL : We must get rid of them.

JULIA : It's too late now. Oh, what an abysmal mistake !

DUCHESS (to PAUL, sweetly) : Good night, Monsieur, It has been so delightful.

PAUL : But surely, Duchess, yoo are not leaving ?

DUCHESS : A sudden headache. It will be better in the morning. My husband, I am sure, will be delighted to stay.

She bows coldly to JULIA and goes out. LADY HARRINGFORD comes up to PAUL.

LADY H. : Good night, Monsieur—I have to drive to London early to-morrow and I am very tired.

ACT II CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

(Music resumes.)

PAUL bows, and she goes off after the DUCHESS.

Nearly all the women in the room come up in turn to say good-bye to PAUL, but you do not hear the exact excuses they give because MELANIE has led SOPHIE and MARTHA and MRS. DRAGON downstage right to the bench.

(Musical stop.)

JULIA *(to PAUL)* : You see ! *(She sits.)*

SOPHIE : We should scold you, Melanie.

MELANIE : What is " scold " ?

MARTHA : Be angry.

MELANIE : Angry ! Why ?

SOPHIE : We didn't know it was this sort of party.

MELANIE : I do not understand.

SOPHIE : We never like meeting these sort of women.

MARTHA : Most of them are the wives of our gentlemen, you know. It's very awkward.

SOPHIE : Don't stand there twiddling your fingers, Dragon. Go and get yourself some claret.

MRS. DRAGON *goes over to the buffet.*

MELANIE *(noticing what is happening)* : They have all gone away—all the ladies.

SOPHIE : That's our fault.

MELANIE *(suddenly angry)* : I understand now—very, very well—Paul——

PAUL *comes over to her.*

Paul—I do not believe you know Madame Otford and Madame James.

PAUL *(bowing coldly)* : Enchanted.

MELANIE : These ladies have been very kind to me—I should like that you know that—they have made me happy——

PAUL : That is delightful.

SOPHIE : I think we had better go, Martha. I feel quite faint.

MELANIE : If you go, I will go with you.

PAUL : Don't be ridiculous, Melanie.

MELANIE (*to SOPHIE*) : You must not go—you must stay for me to sing—it is all arranged—Lord Sheere—Lord St. Marys—

EDWARD *and* LORD ST. MARYS *come over to her.*

PAUL : Melanie !

MELANIE : This is my party, Paul. I wish to enjoy myself. Lord Sheere, Lord St. Marys—I have something to say to you—where is the Duke ?—I have something to say to him also.

JULIA (*rising*) : What is happening ?

MELANIE : Nothing, Madame, except that I am going to sing—it was planned that I should sing—because I sing so charmingly, do I not ? (*To EDWARD and LORD ST. MARYS.*) Messieurs, you will sit, please, next to my two friends—ah, Monsieur le Due de Beneden—I wish that you pay very special favour to a lady much in my esteem—Mrs. Dragon—

She darts to the buffet and brings MRS. DRAGON over to the DUKE. MRS. DRAGON looks slightly flustered owing to having a glass of claret in one hand and a large sandwich in the other. However, she manages to curtsey, a trifle unsteadily.

Where is Mr. Jones ? He is to play—please find Mr. Jones, Paul—

JULIA (*laughing, none too pleasantly*): Excellent—the whole situation is most entertaining.

MELANIE : I am glad if you are gay, Madame—I would ftkce that everybody is gay.

PAUL ^u (to MELANTE) : Melanie—ecoutez ! Je veux vous dire quelque chose cTimportance—

MELANIE : Do not speak in French, Paul—I cannot understand—I can understand only English among my English friends—ah, there is Mr. Jones—please play for me, Mr. Jones—Mr. Jones plays very light, very pretty—everybody will please sit—Monsieur le Marquis—it is from the distance that you see me now—please for me remember that—Monsieur le Due—when you are in your small house in London, with the shutters drawn—think sweetly of me, because I shall be far away—Lord St. Marys, you have proposed such kind honours, but I am too little in life to say Yes or No—I may only say merci—

MR. JONES *begins to play the clavisan. Everybody sits down, looking faintly bewildered. PAUL remain standing, near JULIA. MELANIE starts to sing. First she sings to EDWARD, briefly, but with very genuine sweetness. Then she turns to the DUKE OF BENEDEN. For bim, the words she sings are tinged with gentle malice. She sings to LORD ST. MARYS smilingly and with a certain mocking deference. Last of all she turns suddenly towards PAUL. To him she sings in French, an unmistakable love song. Her whole heart is in her voice. PAUL starts back in horrified amazement. JULIA'S face hardens into an expression of ill-repressed fury.*

(Musical Finale.)

MELANIE : Dear Friends,
 Will you forgive me, pray,
 If many of the words I say
 In English may be wrong.

ALL : She hasn't been in England very long.

MELANIE : A stranger in a foreign land,
 I beg that you will understand
 How gratefully I find
 The gentlemen so very kind,
 So very kind.

(*To the* DUKE OF BENEDEN.)

The offer of protection
 That Monsieur le Due has made
 I set aside,
 For my foolish pride
 Would feel itself betrayed.

ALL : Charming—Charming—Charming I

MELANIE (*to* LORD ST. MARYS) :

Monsieur, my Lord St. Marys
 Has made me an offer too.
 Royal though his scheme may be,
 It could never be part of a dream for me.

ALL : Ah la la la—la la—la la.

MELANIE : Handsome though your Prince may be,
 He is far too broad in the beam for
 me.

(*To the* MARQUIS OF SHEERE.)

But there is one, one only,
 Who honours me with his heart,
 Although I'm not the wife for him
 I shall cherish all my life for him
 A feeling somehow apart.
 I'd suffer sorrow and strife for him.
 Though we may be lovers never,
 We're friends for ever—for evermore.

(*Spoken.*)

Thank you, my dear, for being so sweet to me.

EDWARD (*kissing her hand*): Melanie !

MELANIE : There is only room for one true love in my heart—my secret heart.

EDWARD : I understand.

MELANIE : I know you do.

JULIA : This is most illuminating.

MELANIE : Paul!

PAUL (*horrified*): Melanie—please——

MELANIE (*simply*): It is you I love, I always have, from the very beginning——(*She sings.*)

C'est assez de mensonge,
 Le secret qui me ronge,
 Que tout au fond de moi
 J'ai tendrement garde.
 Enfin avec franchise
 Il faut que je vous disc,
 Avouant mon secret,
 Que tu n'as pas compris
 Plus de cœur discret,
 C'est toi qui par Famour,
 Toi qui m'as delivrée,
 Je suis a toi toujours.
 Esclave de mon cœur,
 Me rendras-tu la vie.
 Je t'en supplie, crois-moi,
 Lorsque je dis c'est toi
 Plus de cœur discret.
 C'est toi qui par l'amour,
 Toi qui m'as délivrée,
 Je suis a toi toujours.
 Esclave de mon cœur,
 Me rendras-tu la vie.
 Je t'en supplie, crois-moi,
 Je t'en supplie, crois-moi,

Cest Toi.

Parmi le monde entier c'est toi que j'aime.

Je t'en supplie,

Crois-le si meme

Tu ne le veux.

Toi,

Parmi le monde entier c'est toi que j'aime,

Je suis a toi Toujours.

At the end of the song MELANIE swoons. There is an immediate buzz of excited conversation. SOPHIE runs forward, followed by MARTHA. LORD ST. MARYS hurries forward with a chair.

SOPHIE : Dragon—fetch some wine—quickly——

MARTHA : Feathers—burn them under her nose—
here——(*She tears some feathers out of her hair.*)

SOPHIE : That's no good.

JULIA : A strange performance.

PAUL (*quivering*) : Please go now—I wish that everyone should go.

All the men start to go.

JULIA : Very well—poor Paul—I am so sorry.

PAUL : To-morrow—we will talk to-morrow.

JULIA : Frederick I—Edward—will you please see me to my carriage ?

JULIA and the DUKE exeunt.

SOPHTE (*to MELANIE*) : It's all right, dear—we're all going——

MELANIE (*opening her eyes*) : Paul.

MARTHA : Just lie still a minute.

SOPHIE : Come away, Martha.

MARTHA : All right, all right, I'm coming——

They go to the door, call DRAGON and all go out. During this scene nearly everyone has gone. MELANIE

ACT II CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

is sitting on a chair, very white and quite still. PAUL sees the last guest, EDWARD, out, and closes the door.

PAUL (*in a cold voice*): Well—I hope you're satisfied.

MELANIE (*pleadingly*): Paul!

PAUL : Everything is ruined—everything is finished.

MELANIE : Je vous aime.

PAUL : Ne vous moquez pas de moi.

MELANIE : Non, c'est vrai. Je vous ai toujours aimé.

PAUL : Vous avez d'étranges façons de me témoigner votre amour; en me rendant ridicule.

MELANIE : Est-ce si ridicule d'être aimé de moi ?

PAUL : Il ne peut pas y avoir d'amour entre nous; une folie—voilà tout.

MELANIE : Non, c'est vrai.

PAUL : Savez-vous seulement ce qui est vrai ? Vous avez manqué à tous vos engagements, vous m'avez menti, vous êtes jouée de moi.

Angrily he crosses to the sofa L.

MELANIE : Et pourquoi m'en serais-je privée ? Dans toutes vos adroites combaisons avez-vous un seul instant—pense—a moi ? Jamais !

PAUL : Pardon—tout était convenu entre nous dès le début. Vous saviez tout et vous aviez tout accepté.

MELANIE : Bien sur, j'avais tout accepté. Une fille dans la situation où j'étais, aurait été folle de ne pas tout accepter.

PAUL : C'était un contrat d'affaires, et vous y avez manqué.

MELANIE : Pouvais-je répondre de mon cœur ?

PAUL : De votre cœur !

MELANIE : Je vous aime, vous entendez. Vous pouvez dire que je suis folle, vous pouvez vous pei-

suader que tout ceci est stupidement romanesque : cela vous met a votre aise, n'est-ce pas ?

PAUL : Je suis parfaitement à mon aise.

MELANIE : Mais c'est vrai, et mon amour est au fond de moi, au plus profond de moi. De ma vie, aucun sentiment n'a poussé en moi des racines si profondes. Regardez-moi maintenant — regardez-moi bien ! — je vous en prie, vous qui êtes si sage et si stupidement cruel—vous—Phomme le plus adroit que je connaisse et, de loin, le plus imbecile.

PAUL : Merci !

MELANIE : Vous avez pour toujours renoncé a Pamour, quand votre femme a e t é e , n'est-ce pas ? Dieu merci, vous me Pavez assez souvent répété.

PAUL : Melanie, je vous en prie !

MELANIE : Et alors vous pensez pouvoir traverser la vie a l'abri, inaccessible, dans une magnifique securite, n'est-ce pas ?

PAUL : Je me passerai fort bien de vos conseils.

MELANIE : Vous m'avez ramassée dans le ruisseau et vous m'avez appris la reverence et à faire les manières et a mentir à la vie.

PAUL : C'était bien nécessaire.

MELANIE : Mais voila que, tout a coup, la vie a pris sa revanche, et elle s'est jouée de vous—et elle s'en jouera toujours. La vie est trop puissante en moi pour que j'accepte vos combinaisons. C'est vrai la vie—et c'est important—plus important que votre tranquillite et que votre cynisme prudent.

PAUL : Vous perdez le sens.

MELANIE : Allez-vous-en, et réfléchissez un peu. Allez-vous-en, et comprenez brusquement quel mal infini vous avez essayé de me faire.

PAUL : Cen est trop I

MELANIE : —et a vous aussi——

PAUL : Cen est trop !

MELANIE : —je t'aime—je t'aime—je t'aime—et toi aussi quelque part au fond de toi—tu m'aimes.

PAUL *starts to go.*

Tout me le crie. Chacun de mes instincts, chaque battement de mon cceur, chaque bouffée d'air que je respire. Vous allez essayer de m'echapper—cela aussi je le sais—mais vous ne le pourrez pas——

He is just going out of the door and she breaks down completely.

—vous ne le pourrez pas——

She sinks into the chair, sobbing. The last chords of her love song to him crash out in the crchestra as—

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT III

SCENE I

The Scene is " The Steyne " and the time of day is about noon. It is a clear sunny morning and there are a good many people strolling about. As usual, there is an under-current of music to the whole scene , and Characters pass as in the first A.ct.

Miss GOSLETT and Miss MENTION walk slowly across, talking.

Miss GOSLETT : You don't put the nutmeg on until afterwards.

Miss MENTION : I still don't understand. Surely if you leave it too long to cool, it gets lumpy.

Miss GOSLETT : Not if you stir it enough in the first place.

Miss MENTION : And why a *wooden* spoon ?

Miss GOSLETT : It says so in the recipe.

Miss MENTION,; Well, personally I prefer to remain faithful to the ordinary tapioca.

They both pass out of sight.

The LADY BRACEWORTH enters right with the DUCHESS OF BENEDEN. They meet MRS. HAILSHAM centre; who has come on from the left.

DUCHESS : Good morning, Amelia.

MRS. HAILSHAM : My dear. *(They kiss.)*

LADY B. : Amelia.

MRS. HAILSHAM : My dear. *(They kiss.)*

DUCHESS : How is Mortimer ?

MRS. HAILSHAM : Worse, I'm afraid. He had a shivering fit at three this morning. I've been up half the night.

LADY B. : How dreadful !

MRS. HAILSHAM : When he crept into my bed at about six he seemed calmer, but his nose was very hot and dry.

DUCHESS : You really should take him to the Vet.

MRS. HAILSHAM : I intend to this afternoon.

LADY HARRINGFORD joins *them*.

LADY H. : Georgina.

DUCHESS : Ettie. (*They kiss.*)

LADY H. : Amelia !

LADY B. : Good morning, Ettie. (*They kiss.*)

LADY H. : Louisa !

MRS. HAILSHAM : My dear. (*They kiss.*)

LADY H. : I've had a horrible morning. Nono was sick three times at breakfast.

DUCHESS : Perhaps it's an epidemic.

LADY H. : I shall take him to the Vet. this afternoon.

LADY B. : Is he a really good Vet. ?

MRS. HAILSHAM : Charming, my dear, absolutely charming.

LADY B. : Then I shall come with you this afternoon and bring Fifi.

DUCHESS : Is she ill too ?

LADY B. : Well, not exactly ill, but moody.

LADY H. : There's probably something in the air here, it's very strong.

DUCHESS : Funnily enough it seems to suit Boney very well. He's much brighter here than in Shropshire.

MRS. HAILSHAM: Shropshire *is* enervating.

DUCHESS : I can't decide whether it's the sea air or the sulphur tablets, but he's certainly a different dog.

LADY B. : I'm so glad, because I never cared for him very much as he was.

DUCHESS : It betrays a small mind, Louisa, to be offended iust because he didn't take to you at the very first moment.

MRS. HAILSHAM : I don't like animals to be too friendly.

DUCHESS : At any rate he is a remarkably good house-dog.

LADY B. : I should say more thorough than good.

DUCHESS : Really, Louisa !

MRS. HAILSHAM : How is Frederick ?

DUCHESS : I really don't know, he didn't come home until four.

LADY H. : Neither did James.

MRS. HAILSHAM : Nor Robert.

LADY B. : Desmond hasn't come home yet.

LADY H. : It's such a bad example for the children. They ask such difficult questions.

DUCHESS : That dreadful party, and those appalling women. I shall never forgive Julia.

LADY B. : She must be mad.

LADY H. : The French Duke seemed polite, I thought, but peculiar.

MRS. HATLSHAM : My dear, (*to music*) there's always something fishy about the French.

DUCHESS : As a race they're erotic.

LADY B. : And completely idiotic.

LADY H.: Still, they have a certain air.

MRS. HAILSHAM : A " flair."

DUCHESS : Whatever you say, I don't believe a word of it.

They all talk together.

MRS. HAILSHAM : I didn't object to the girl so much, of course she was quite obviously common——

LADY B. It's all very fine to excuse them on the grounds of being foreigners, but really——

LADY H. : Never in all my life have I had such a shock as when the door opened and those women came into the room——

DUCHESS : It's entirely Julia's fault. She gave me her solemn promise that she had known the Duke for years——

On the last phrase of "Fishy about the French" which the orchestra has been playing softly during this scene, they all sing suddenly together.

ALL FOUR : There's *always* something fishy about the French !

This last line leads them into their quartette, " Mothers and Wives" during which SOPHIE, MARTHA, MRS. DRAGON and another courtesan trip gaily across the scene on the arms of the DUKE OF BENEDEN, MR. HAILSHAM, LORD BRACEWORTH and LORD HARRINGFORD.

QUARTETTE : " MOTHERS AND WIVES."

In an atmosphere of bawdy jeu d'esprit
 We contrive to be tenaciously conventional,
 Tho' intelligent, we hope,
 Our imaginative scope
 When all is said and done
 Is one-dimensional.

Our appearance should be ample guarantee
 Of our vigorous and rigorous morality,
 We regard our husbands' gout
 As a proper and devout
 And Godly recompense
 For sensuality.

But when we look at our greying hairs
 We sometimes sigh as we say our prayers,
 Dear Lord,
 We're bored,
 Is virtue enough reward ?

Finally, at the end of the quartette, the mothers and wives go disconsolately away, leaving the stage comparatively empty save for a few pedestrians who pass and re-pass from time to time. JULIA and PAUL enter from the left. During this scene, characters pass by at given moments.

JULIA : My dear Paul, such sentimentality is utterly ridiculous.

PAUL : That is how I feel.

JULIA : Those feelings may do credit to your heart, but certainly not to your intelligence.

PAUL : It has nothing to do with my heart.

JULIA : Are you sure ?

PAUL (*vehemently*, : Quite sure.

JULIA : Then be sensible. This idiotic charade cannot go on any further, you must see that.

PAUL : Yes, I see that.

JULIA : She is a nice little thing and, I am sure, perfectly sincere, but as is only to be expected, when a girl of her class is suddenly plumped down in an entirely different milieu, her values have become hopelessly confused.

ACT III CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE I

PAUL : How can I send her away ? She has done her best.

JULIA : It was a business contract between you, and now it is over.

PAUL : I know, but——

JULIA : She made a fool of you last night. She took your pride from you, and your position from you, and those are all that you have left.

PAUL : Not intentionally.

JULIA : Look at me for a moment, Paul, carefully and clearly. I am middle-aged and lonely and, oddly enough, I love you.

PAUL : Julia!

JULIA : Don't affect such surprise. You must know it perfectly well. You must have known that I would not have taken all this trouble to help you with a scheme of which I heartily disapproved if I had not realised, in the first moment of seeing you again, that over all these years, and through all our strange adventures, you are the one man in the whole world that I love, and that I have always loved.

PAUL : What can I say to you, Julia ?

JULIA : The truth, whatever it may be.

PAUL : I don't believe I know it.

JULIA (*smiling*): Dear Paul.

PAUL : Are you laughing at me ?

JULIA : Just a little.

PAUL : I am sure you are right to laugh, but please don't, I feel small enough already, and cheap, and of no account.

JULIA : You are worrying about Melanie ?

PAUL : Of course.

JULIA : Listen to me. She is not happy here, she

never has been. We will send her back to Paris with enough money to keep her in comfort until she finds a nice husband for herself of her own class.

PAUL : I have no money.

JULIA : I have, a lot.

PAUL : Julia !

JULIA : Please, please, I beseech you to be sensible. Money cannot matter between us, just as the wild ecstasies of passion cannot matter between us. I am rich and, as I said before, lonely. You are poor, and equally lonely. We have still time for many years of happiness together—Paul——

She knocks at the door.

PAUL : If only I could have known before.

JULIA : Fate has offered us a wonderful chance. It would be foolish to allow it to slip away.

PAUL : Perhaps you are right—perhaps this is the truth.

JULIA : The truth is here, very clear and simple. Two very old friends have suddenly, unaccountably, found each other again——

She holds out her hand to him and he kisses it. During this scene all the lights have faded except on the exact spot where they are standing. As JULIA turns to go into the house, this light also fades.

ACT III

SCENE II

The Scene is MELANIE'S room again.

When the Curtain rises MELANIE and EDWARD are discovered clasped tightly in each other's arms. They do not move until ROSE enters.

ROSE : Mademoiselle.

MELANIE (*over EDWARD'S shoulder*) : Yes ?

ROSE : It was only the milkman.

MELANIE (*irritably*): Oh———(*To EDWARD.*) Then we will sit down again.

ROSE : Do you want some fresh chocolate ?

MELANIE (*feeling the chocolate pot on the fable*) : No, this is still quite hot.

ROSE *goes out.*

EDWARD : I think I should like a little.

MELANIE (*pouring it out*) : Here———(*She motions him to sit.*) There is a little cake, too, if you would care.

EDWARD : No, thank you.

MELANIE (*eating one*) : They are delicious.

EDWARD : Very well, I will try one. (*He takes a cake.*)

MELANIE : What will we speak of?

EDWARD : I don't know.

MELANIE (*smiling*) : You are so very sweet.

EDWARD : I don't think we will speak of that, anyhow.

MELANIE : And very, very kind.

EDWARD : No, really I'm not.

MELANJE : And my very, very good friend.

EDWARD : I hope so. I do hope so.

MELANIE : Would you have another small cake ?

EDWARD : Yes, please.

MELANIE : I will also.

They both have another cake.

MELANIE : In Paris there are very lovely cakes.

EDWARD : There must be.

There is a rat-tat-tat at the front door. They both put their chocolate cups down hurriedly.

MELANIE : Quickly.

EDWARD : I say, my mouth's full.

MELANIE : Never mind—so is mine.

They fly into each other's arms and stand motionless.

Presently ROSE re-enters.

ROSE : It's only the girl from Mrs. Baxter's, with a bill.

MELANIE : Send her away.

ROSE : I have.

She goes out.

MELANIE (*going to the window*): I am so very sorry.

EDWARD : He must come soon, mustn't he ?

MELANIE : Yes, he is late now.

EDWARD : I wish that you loved me, really.

MELANIE : So do I. You would be so easy to love,

EDWARD : Are you unhappy ?

MELANIE : Yes.

EDWARD : Because you love him so much ?

MELANIE : Because he does not love me—enough.

EDWARD : Do you think he ever will ?

MELANIE : Yes. I know it.

EDWARD : I shall remember you always—whatever happens to me.

MELANIE : I will remember you too. I will remember how you put away your own happiness to help me, and even if we see each other again very little, and even when we become very old people, and even when the day comes when I must die, you will be in my heart truly as a kind and dear friend.

" NEVERMORE." MELANIE.

Verse.

Dear Friend,
 If hearts could only be
 Content with love and sympathy.
 How sweetly we could live,
 We both of us have so much love to give.
 No matter how our minds conspire,
 Imprisoned by our own desire,
 We are not free to choose.
 What love we gain,
 What love we lose,
 We cannot choose.

Refrain.

Nevermore. Nevermore,
 Can life be quite the same.
 The lights and shadows change,
 All the old familiar world is strange,
 Evermore. Evermore,
 Our hearts are in the flame.
 Others may regain their freedom,
 But for you and me,
 Never-nevermore.

EDWARD : Melanie!

He takes her in his arms and kisses her. PAUL enters quietly and sees them. He looks angry for a moment, and then assumes a charming smile.

PAUL : I hope I am not intruding.

MELANIE (*breaking away*) : Paul!

PAUL : I see that you have returned to reason.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : I am glad.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : Lord Sheere, I congratulate you.

EDWARD (*stiffly*) : Thank you.

PAUL : It is so pretty to see Youth—in love.

EDWARD : Love is a very strange sensation, Monsieur le Due—for Youth, particularly so. When one is young one feels things so strongly. One feels—foolishly perhaps—that the very fact of loving is enough—worth making all sacrifices for. It is sad—almost tragic—to think that with age so much of the best in life loses its savour. You have my sympathy, Monsieur le Due.

He bows abruptly to both of them and goes out. PAUL goes to the writing table.

PAUL : You should be very happy with him. He seems to be quite suitably unbalanced.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : You are going to marry him ?

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : I am very glad.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : But I think it is a little vulgar of you to fall into his arms with such abandon, so soon after the scene you made last night.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : The game is over now, so you can speak in French if you like.

MELANIE : Oui, Paul.

PAUL (*irritably*) : Qu'est-ce que vous avez ce matin ?

MELANIE : I think I would prefer to talk in English.

PAUL : Pourquoi ?

MELANIE : Because it feels more happy—to-day.

PAUL : You are in love ?

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : So am I.

MELANIE : Oh I (*She laughs.*)

PAUL : Why do you laugh ?

MELANIE : I thought you would say that.

PAUL : I am going to marry Lady Julia.

MELANIE (*calmly*): Yes, Paul.

PAUL : Can you say nothing else but " Yes, Paul " ?

MELANIE : There is nothing else to say.

PAUL : The whole thing has been a mistake—a ridiculous horrible mistake.

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : When are you going to be married ?

MELANIE : Soon—very soon.

PAUL : What about money ?

MELANIE : That will not matter. It never does.

PAUL : I will see that you have everything you want.

MELANIE : That is very kind—of Lady Julia.

PAUL : Why do you stare at me like that ?

MELANIE : I am sorry.

PAUL : Have you anything to reproach me with ?

MELANIE : No.

She shrugs her shoulders and walks away.

PAUL : Melanie——(*He goes to her.*)

MELANIE : Yes, Paul.

PAUL : I am sorry—very sorry.

MELANIE : No, no, I am good now—you cannot make me cry.

PAUL : I don't want to make you cry. I wish with all my heart for you to be happy.

MELANIE : I will be happy then.

He stirs a cup of chocolate.

PAUL : Will you stay here ? The rent is paid for six weeks more.

MELANIE : I do not know.

PAUL : I am going to London.

MELANIE : When ?

PAUL : To-morrow.

MELANIE : So soon ?

PAUL : But I will come back—in a little while—to make all arrangements for your marriage.

MELANIE : Very well.

PAUL : Does that satisfy you ? (*He drops a spoon noisily.*)

MELANIE : Yes, Paul. (*She turns away.*)

PAUL : Please don't look sad.

She walks away.

MELANIE : It is not real sadness.

PAUL : All comedies must come to an end.

MELANIE (*turning again*): I have one thing to ask—it is very small.

PAUL : What is it ?

MELANIE : Come once more to see me before you go.

PAUL : No—no——

MELANIE : Please—it is not much to ask—come this evening to a little supper—I will invite Lady Julia also, and Edward, my fiance—it will be to celebrate that we are all so happy.

PAUL : C'cst un enfantillage.

MELANIE : It will be very gay, and at the same time it will be a little sad—but please, please in memory of our happy days together—please say you will come ?

PAUL : But, Melanie—my dear child——

MELANIE (*very softly*): Please ?

PAUL : Very well.

MELANIE : Merci, mon cher, cher ami——

She goes up to him quite simply and kisses him on the mouth. He instinctively succumbs to her kiss for a moment, and then, breaking away from her abruptly, he goes hurriedly from the room. She is left standing still for a moment, and then, with an expression of triumph on her face, she runs to the window to see him go. She begins to sing gaily and a trifle hysterically, and she is still singing as she runs towards her room as the lights fade.

ACT III

SCENE III

The following Seem is cued to music.

This Scene is the gardens again. It is evening, and although most of the lights are still shining, there are very few people about. Occasionally a couple stroll across and are lost to sight among the shadows. The orchestra plays softly and sentimentally. Presently PAUL enters. He stands looking about him for a moment, as though he were lost. Two lovers cross in front of him, so engrossed

ACT III CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

in each other that they do not even notice him. He walks slowly down to the bench left. As he is about to sit down upon it, two more lovers pass. They stop still for a moment in a close embrace and then go on their way. PAUL sits down disconsolately. Somewhere in the distance MELANIE'S voice is heard singing. PAUL starts to his feet sharply, and then sinks back again, realising that the voice is only in his mind. The little boy who bowled the hoop in the first scene comes on, but this time his hoop is looped over his left arm while his right encircles the waist of a little girl. They giggle happily across the stage and disappear. The music swells, and with it, MELANIE'S voice grows louder. PAUL rises with his hands to his ears and starts to move away, but wherever he turns he is met by lovers. The whole scene slides almost imperceptibly into a form of ballet. Finally with all the lovers circling round him and tormenting him, he breaks away and runs off the stage, as the lights fade.

ACT III

SCENE IV

The Scene is MELANIE'S room again. The room has been completely dismantled. There are neither curtains, rugs, nor furniture left. The floor is covered with straw and shavings and pieces of rope, all the paraphernalia of packing. The windows are wide open, and strong moonlight floods into the room, which, itself, is lit only by a few meagre candles. The noise of the waves on the

ACT III CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

shingle can be plainly heard. Arranged round the room are various boxes and trunks and packing cases. At one of these ROSE is kneeling, with a pile of clothes on the floor beside her.

There is a knock on the door.

ROSE (*over her shoulder*) : Come in.

EDWARD *enters. He gives a little start of astonishment. ROSE rises to her feet.*

EDWARD : The front door was open, so I came straight——

ROSE : I left it open on purpose, in case I didn't hear.

EDWARD : What has happened ?

ROSE : There is a note for you.

EDWARD : Where is Mademoiselle ?

ROSE : She has gone.

EDWARD : Gone!

ROSE : The note will explain everything. Here it is.

She hands him a note, which is lying on one of the packing cases.

EDWARD : Thank you. (*He opens it and reads it by the light of one of the candles?*)

ROSE *resumes her packing.*

EDWARD : Where has she gone ? She doesn't say.

ROSE : France. She left on the evening boat for Dieppe. You can see its lights out there, the sea is calm, so it isn't going very fast.

He crosses sadly to the opposite window', looks out, then reverently kisses the note. While he is standing looking out of the window there are footsteps on the stairs and LADY JULIA sweeps into the room.

JULIA : Good Heavens I

EDWARD : I fear that Mademoiselle is not entertaining this evening after all.

JULIA : Obviously.

EDWARD : She has gone.

JULIA : Do you know, I almost gathered that.

ROSE : There is a note for you, Madame.

JULIA : How polite. It would have saved me considerable inconvenience if she had sent it to my house.

ROSE (*curtly*): Here it is, anyhow.

JULIA (*taking it*) : Thank you.

She, too, reads by the light of one of the candles. When she has finished it, she laughs.

JULIA : Extraordinarily well phrased for a gutter-snipe.

EDWARD (*hotly*) : Melanie was not a gutter-snipe.

JULIA : I'm so sorry. I had forgotten your great tenderness for her.

EDWARD : I never shall.

JULIA (*smiling*) : Faithful unto death !

EDWARD : Yes. I am her friend, for always.

JULIA : How touching. All the same I cannot help feeling that it is just as well for you that she has gone away.

EDWARD (*turning away*) : I wouldn't expect you to understand, Madame.

JULIA (*loosening her cloak*) : Well, I suppose we had better wait here and break the news to Paul.

ROSE (*still packing*): That would be waste of time, Madame.

JULIA : Why, what do you mean ?

ROSE : Monsieur le Dook sailed with Mademoiselle on the evening boat for France.

[ULIA (*sharply*) : What!

ACT III CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

ROSE : You can still see the lights from the window. They look ever so pretty reflected in the water.

JULIA (*furiously*): You're lying I Monsieur le Due couldn't possibly have sailed.

ROSE : That's as may be, but I did happen to see him on to the boat myself. They was very gay—both of them.

JULIA (*controlling herself*): I see. (*Bitterly.*) How very, very amusing.

ROSE : A joke's a joke all the world over, I always say.

JULIA : Lord Sheere, will you kindly escort me to my house ?

EDWARD : With pleasure, Lady Julia.

JULIA : I fear my cook will be in bed, but I can offer you a little wine.

EDWARD : Thank you.

JULIA : We can drink a toast—to absent friends !

Without looking at ROSE, she walks out of the room.

EDWARD is about to follow her, then he hesitates and comes back.

EDWARD : Good-bye, Rose.

ROSE (*jumping to her feet, and curtsying*): Good-bye, my lord.

EDWARD (*giving her a little purse of money*) : Will you please keep this in remembrance of me ?

ROSE : Oh, yes, my lord—thank you.

He goes to the door and turns.

EDWARD : If—if you should ever see her again—give her my love.

ROSE : Yes, my lord.

EDWARD goes out.

ROSE stands looking after him and after a moment

ACT III CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

or two she resumes her packing, humming to herself meanwhile. Presently there are hurried footsteps on the stairs and PAUL bursts into his room. His face is white, and he is trembling.

PAUL: Rose I What's the matter? What is happening?

ROSE (*rising to her feet*): You've missed them, sir.

PAUL: Missed whom?

ROSE: Lady Julia and Lord Sheere. They just went out.

PAUL: Where is Mademoiselle? (*He rushes towards the bedroom door.*) Where is Mademoiselle?

ROSE: You've missed her too, sir.

PAUL: What do you mean?

ROSE: She has gone.

PAUL: Gone!—where—where has she gone?

ROSE: France, sir—she left a note for you—here it is.

She takes a note from the bosom of her dress and gives it to him. He takes it mechanically, with an expression on his face of utter despair. ROSE watches him, she starts to sing quietly. When he has finished reading it, he walks slowly across the stage.

PAUL (*to ROSE—stamping his foot*): Stop singing I (*Speaking with great difficulty.*) She doesn't give any address—she doesn't say where I can find her—

He turns slowly round, goes up to the window and looks out at the sea, then, resting his head on his arms he breaks down completely. ROSE looks at him for a moment, and then slams down the lid of the trunk she has been packing and walks into the bedroom, her heels clattering sharply on the bare floor. In a moment or two her footsteps are heard again, but this time it is MELANIE who comes out of the bedroom. She clatters

ACT III CONVERSATION PIECE SCENE IV

in with the same tread as ROSE. She is dressed for travelling and carries a paper bag of humbugs in her hand. She looks at PAUL in indecision for a second., then she marches across the room and slams down the lid of another trunk. He does not look round. She goes to another box and slams down the lid of that. Still he pays no attention. Finally, when she has slammed all the lids of all the boxes, she goes quietly up to him, and sinks on to the floor behind him. She takes his hand which is hanging down by his side, and very tenderly kisses it. He turns slowly, and she proffers him the paper bag.

MELANIE : Mon cher amour—would you like a oomboog ?

CURTAIN.



FALLEN ANGELS



To
EDWARD MOLYNEUX

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JULIA STERROLL
FREDERICK STERROLL
JANE BANBURY
WILLIAM BANBURY
MAURICE DUCLOS
SAUNDERS

The action of the play takes place in the STERROLLS' flat.

ACT I

The scene is the dining-room of the STERROLLS' flat—the wall separating it from the drawing-room has been abolished, therefore the two rooms are used as one. There is a grand piano, R. The rest of the furniture can be left to the producer's discrimination.

When the curtain rises FRED is having his breakfast and JULIA is sitting in an arm-chair, L., reading the newspaper and dangling her legs over the arm. She is dressed plainly and appropriately for an ordinary London day in which nothing particular may be expected to happen. There must not be the faintest suggestion of the usual elegant silks and satins so beloved by the theatrical dress-maker. FRED is in golfing clothes.

JULIA : You'll only get hiccups if you gobble like that.

FRED : I'm not gobbling.

JULIA : What time's Willy coming ?

FRED : He ought to be here now.

There is a slight pause.

JULIA (*rustling newspaper*) : I say—Muriel Fenchurch is divorcing her husband.

FRED : That's uncommonly generous of him.

JULIA : Do you want any more coffee ?

FRED : No thanks, dear.

There is another pause. JULIA goes on reading.

JULIA : There was an old lady found dead on Clapbam Common last night.

FRED : Another!

JULIA : Don't be silly, Fred, the last one was Wandsworth Common.

FRED : Oh !

JULIA : I think you'd better have some more coffee.

FRED : Why?

JULIA : Because I want you to see our new treasure.

FRED : Oh I all right, I didn't know we had one.

JULIA : She seems a nice girl, but rather grand. (*She rings.*)

FRED : Thank God what's-her-name's gone; I couldn't bear her.

Enter SAUNDERS.

FRED : Good morning.

SAUNDERS : Good morning, sir.

FRED : What's your name ?

SAUNDERS : Jasmin, sir.

FRED : Oh!

JULIA : We have arranged that she shall be called Saunders.

FRED : Oh ! good. I shan't want any more coffee, Saunders.

SAUNDERS : Yes, sir. (*She exits.*)

JULIA : She seems all right, doesn't she ?

FRED : Quite. (*He rises from the table.*) I wish Willy'd learn to be punctual.

JULIA : Never mind, you've got the whole day; sit down quietly and smoke, and he'll be here in a minute.

FRED *sits in arm-chair*, JULIA *sits on the edge and lights his cigarette.*

FRED : What are you going to do ?

JULIA : Nothing in particular. I'm lunching with lane, and we shall probably go to a matinee.

FRED : There now, didn't I tell you your day would pan out perfectly normally ?

JULIA : Yes, but I *did* have a presentiment when I first woke up.

FRED : But it was nothing definite, you said so.

JULIA : Of course it wasn't; you can't define a presentiment exactly, that's what's so horrid, the feeling of being unsettled.

FRED : I expect its indigestion.

JULIA : No, I really felt quite odd, as though something damnable were going to happen.

FRED : If you go on thinking in that vein, something damnable *will* happen.

JULIA : You're being rather taciturn and important this morning.

FRED : I don't like to see you worrying yourself over nothing.

JULIA (*laughing*) : I'm not really—I'm very happy.

FRED : Are you—honestly ?

JULIA : Of course.

FRED : Sure ?

JULIA : Positive.

FRED : Good ! I think it's awfully silly of people to lead unhappy lives, don't you ?

JULIA : Yes, I suppose so. We shall both know the first minute we go off one another.

FRED : We've been married five years.

JULIA : A divine five years.

FRED : Yes—wonderful.

JULIA : We're not in love a bit now, you know.

FRED : I don't know anything of the sort.

JULIA : It's true.

FRED : The first violent passion is naturally over——

JULIA : Thank God I

FRED: Why?

JULIA : It's so uncomfortable—passion.

FRED : Yes, but it's a thoroughly fundamental thing, one couldn't do without it.

JULIA : You mean we couldn't.

FRED : No, I don't, we can and are doing without it.

JULIA : One can't be really in love without passion, that's why I said we weren't any more.

FRED : Don't be annoying, Julia, you know perfectly well we've reached a remarkable sublime plane of affection and good comradeship, far above——

JULIA : Just ordinary "being in love". I quite agree.

FRED : We *are* in love.

JULIA : Hypocrite, we're not.

FRED : We are—in a different way.

JULIA : There is no different way. It's exactly the same with everybody, I've discussed it with Jane.

FRED : Damn Jane.

JULIA : By all means, but she knows—just as I do.

FRED : You're psycho-analytical neurotics both of you.

JULIA : That sounds lovely, Fred.

FRED : Do you always discuss everything with Jane ?

JULIA : Yes, everything.

FRED : Even the most intimate relationships—us ?

JULIA : Yes, you know I do, I always have.

FRED : I think that's dreadful—it shocks me.

JULIA : Nonsense, you discuss everything with Willy.

FRED : Yes, but differently.

JULIA : Less accurately, I expect, that's the only difference.

FRED : I'm sure married hie was much easier in the Victorian days.

JULIA : If you think women didn't discuss everything minutely in the Victorian days just as much as they do now you're very much mistaken.

FRED : But it was all so much simpler.

JULIA : For the men.

FRED For the women too ; they didn't know so much.

JULIA : They didn't give themselves away so much, poor dears, they were too frightened.

FRED : Anyhow, on the whole I'd rather be as we are.

JULIA : That's right, dear.

FRED : But you're wrong when you say I don't love you any more. .

JULIA : I didn't say that at all. I know you love me very much, and I love you, too—you're a darling. But we're not " in love ". Can't you see the difference ?

FRED : I suppose so, but I don't want to.

JULIA : Well, we won't go on about it any more—you shall go and play your golf and quarrel with Willy, and I'll stay at home and quarrel with Jane, and we'll all be awfully happy. Are you coming home to-morrow ?

FRED : Perhaps to-night if the weather's bad.

JULIA : Well, you might telephone and let me know.

FRED : All right.

There is the sound of the front door bell.

JULIA : There is Willy.

FRED : I'll let him in and save Jasmin the trouble.

JULIA : Saunders.

FRED : Saunders, then. (*He goes out into the hall, and after a moment ushers in WILLY, also in plusfours and looking very nice in them.*)

WILLY : Good morning, Julia—how are you ?

JULIA : I'm feeling grand. Fred and I have just had a little psychological romp—it was very stimulating.

FRED : It's depressed me for the day.

WILLY : Jane's been a trifle difficult this morning.

JULIA : In what way ?

WILLY : She woke up with a presentiment.

FRED : Good Lord !

WILLY : She went on about it all through breakfast.

JULIA : How tactless of her—I at least waited until after breakfast.

WILLY : Have you had one, too ?

JULIA : Yes, a beast! But don't ask me to explain it, it's quite intangible at present.

FRED : We'd better go, Willy, and leave them to their dreary forebodings, we'll be very hearty and jolly all day and drink a lot of beer at lunch.

WILLY : The car's downstairs.

FRED : Come on then.

WILLY : Have you got your clubs ?

FRED : They're in the hall.

WILLY : Good-bye, Julia—don't encourage Jane too much for Heaven's sake !

JULIA : Whatever encouragement there is will be mutual—I feel in a particularly heart-to-heart mood to-day.

FRED : Good-bye, darling. (*He kisses her.*)

JULIA : Good-bye, love—don't forget to telephone.

FRED and WILLY go out amicably. JULIA rings the bell and goes over to the piano—she sits down and begins

to play absently. Re-enter SAUNDERS with tray to clear away the breakfast things.

JULIA : Does it feel awful to be in a new place, Saunders ?

SAUNDERS : No, ma'am—not particularly.

JULIA : I'm so glad—I'm sure I should be terrified and break everything.

SAUNDERS : It's just getting used to things, ma'am.

JULIA : I hope you're not secretly hurt at our refusing to call you Jasmin ?

SAUNDERS : Oh, no, ma'am—I don't mind.

JULIA : It's a sticky name, isn't it—for the house ?

SAUNDERS : I've never thought about it much, ma'am.

JULIA : That's right, then you won't miss it, will you ?

SAUNDERS : No, ma'am.

JULIA : If rather a strange-looking man calls during the morning will you take him straight to the bathroom ?

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am.

JULIA : He'll probably be the plumber.

SAUNDERS : Very good, ma'am.

SAUNDERS *goes out with the tray.* JULIA *begins to sing lightly.*

JULIA (*singing*):

Même les Anges succombent a l'amour,

C'est pourquoi done je vous en prie—

Dieu qui arrange les jours et les séjours

Laisse moi encore une heure de paradis.

Tous mes amours me semblent comme des fleurs,

Leurs parfums restent douces quand même

Donne moi tes lèvres, ton âme, et ton cœur,

Parce que follement je t'aime—je t'aime—je t'aime.

There is a ring at the front door bell. After a moment JANE enters in travelling clothes and carrying a suitcase. She looks extremely startled.

JULIA (*still singing without noticing her*) :

Je t'aime—je t'aime—je t'aime——

JANE (*in a stifled voice*) : Julia, stop singing that song.

JULIA : My dear, what a fright you gave me.

JANE (*tragically*) : You don't know—that's all—you just don't know !

JULIA : Why, what on earth's the matter ?

JANE : I should like a glass of water.

JULIA : What nonsense, you've only just finished breakfast.

JANE (*plumping her suitcase down*) : We must both go away at once.

JULIA (*amiably*) : All right, where shall we go ?

JANE : Don't be maddening, Julia, I'm serious.

JULIA : If you'd stop trying to get dramatic effects and just explain what it's all about——

JANE (*handing her a postcard*) : Read that.

JULIA : It's the Blue Grotto at Capri.

JANE (*impatiently*) : I know it is, read it.

JULIA (*turning it over*): Good God! (*She reads it carefully.*)

JANE : There now !

JULIA: This is frightful! (*She rings bell.*)

JANE : What are you ringing for ?

JULIA : I want a glass of water.

JANE : What are we to do ?

JULIA : Think—we must think!

Enter SAUNDERS.

Two glasses of water please, SAUNDERS.

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am. (*She goes out.*)

ACT I F A L L E N A N G E L S

JULIA : When's he coming ?

JANE : Now, I suppose—to-day—any moment !

JULIA : Oh, Jane, I wonder if he's changed.

JANE : I don't expect so—that type never does.

JULIA : Don't say " that type " like that—it's most irreverent.

Re-enter SAUNDERS with two glasses of water on a salver.

JANE (*taking one*) : Thank you.

JULIA (*a/so taking one*) : Thank you, Saunders.

Exit SAUNDERS.

JANE : I packed just a few things very hurriedly—I thought perhaps Brighton for a day or two until our passports were properly *visé'd*.

JULIA : Passports ?

JANE : Yes, for America.

JULIA : Don't be ridiculous.

JANE : You must forgive me, darling, but I'm worked up—it was a most frightful shock, and the funny part of it was that I had a presentiment when I woke this morning.

JULIA : So did I.

JANE : There, you see !

JULIA : We must keep calm, and talk it over quietly, it's the only way. Have a cigarette. (*She bands JANE box.*)

JANE (*taking one*) : Thanks, dear.

JULIA (*also taking one and lighting both*) : We've got the whole day before us.

JANE (*fervently*): I only hope we have.

JULIA : You don't think he'll arrive before lunch ?

JANE : He might, he never had the slightest restraint. Oh, after seven years, I do think it's cruel! (*She takes off her hat in front of the glass over the mantelpiece and fluffs out her hair.* JULIA *is sitting on the sofa.*)

JULIA : It might have happened before; that would have been much worse.

JANE : I wonder—perhaps we should have had more strength to—to—resist.

JULIA : Oh, no, we've never been exactly bursting with that kind of strength.

JANE (*intensely*) : You know what we are, don't you ? We're the slaves of coincidence—we always have been, it does make life so dreadfully difficult.

JULIA : Yes, but easier at moments ; we can at least face it together.

JANE : It's going to be perfectly awful—facing *him* together!

JULIA : We must be firm; after all, we're not in love with him any more.

JANE : Not at the moment, but suppose when he arrives he's just as attractive and glamorous as ever ? We shall go down like ninepins.

JULIA : I shan't, I've changed in seven years—I'm too fond of Fred.

JANE : I've been bolstering myself up like that all the morning, arguing that I'm too fond of Willy, and that everything is quite different now, but I don't know—I'm afraid, terribly afraid. You see, we might just as well face facts—we're not really *in love* with our husbands. I had a scene with Willy about it only last night. We're awfully happy, and there's a lovely firm basis of comradeship and affection and all that, but the real " being in love " part is dead. You couldn't expect it to be anything else after all this time.

JULIA : Yes, I told Fred all that this morning.

JANE: Oh, Julia, I do wish we hadn't—when we did!

JULIA : It's a fat lot of good wishing that now.

JANE : Give me back the Blue Grotto.

JULIA (*banding it to her*) : It's typical of him to send that, anyhow.

JANE (*looking at it*): Maurice ! It gives me a fearful sort of illegitimate thrill even to look at his name.

JULIA (*warningly*) : Now then, Jane.

JANE : I wonder if he realises that he's been the one Grand Passion in both our lives.

JULIA : Of course he does, it's almost his profession !

JANE : Our love for our husbands has been on an entirely different plane all along—much nicer and worthier and everything, but not half so soul-shattering.

JULIA : I wonder if he can speak English now.

JANE : I hope not, he was so lovely in French.

JULIA : What would Willy and Fred say if they knew ?

JANE (*shuddering*) : Don't !

JULIA : Fred would be sensible, I think, after the first shock had worn off.

JANE : Willy wouldn't.

JULIA : It isn't as if we'd been unfaithful *since* marriage, it all happened before.

JANE : Yes, but men never forgive that sort of thing, whenever it happened.

JULIA : It seems so unfair that men should have the monopoly of Wild Oats.

JANE : They haven't really, but it's our job to make them think they have.

JULIA : When I think of Italy, and the Cypresses and Moonlight and the wonderful romance of it all——

JANE : Don't dear, you'll only upset yourself.

JULIA : Do you remember me writing to you in Scotland and telling you all about it ?

JANE : Yes.

JULIA (*far away*) : How I adored him I And nobody knew—nobody knew a thing. I left Aunt Mary a week earlier than I said, and got out of the train at Pisa—he was waiting for me—we used to go and look at the Leaning Tower night after night—Carrara marble, dear—too marvellous !

JANE : I was so worried because I guessed——

JULIA : And that lovely song he used to sing all the time—sometimes on the terribly cracked piano at the hotel, and sometimes just walking along the street. (*She goes to piano and begins to sing*) :

" Meme les Anges succombent á l'amour
C'est pourquoi done je vous en pne——"

JANE : Don't, don't—he sang that to me afterwards—

JULIA (*still ringing*):

" Donne moi tes lévres, ton áme, et ton cceur——"
JANE joins in and they sing the last line together.

BOTH : " Parce que follement je t'aime—je t'aimc—je t'aime——"

SAUNDERS enters with a postcard on a salver—she takes it to JULIA.

JULIA (*jumps slightly—in stifled tones*): That will do, Saunders.

Exit SAUNDERS.

JANE (*with her eyes tight shut*) : Don't tell me, dear, I know it's the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

JULIA : Of course it is.

JANE : What a devil!

JULIA (*reading*) : J'arriverai à Londres cette semaine—J'espere avec tout mon cœeur que me n'oubliez pas.—Maurice.

JANE : Cette semaine ! And to-day's Saturday. Oh, God!

JULIA : Listen, Jane, we're in for a bitter time—we must summon up all our courage and face it properly.

JANE : Yes, give me another cigarette.

JULIA (*handing her box*) : We must get the whole situation laid out quite clearly, like Patience, then we shall know where we are.

JANE (*lighting both cigarettes*) : Yes—oh, yes !

JULIA (*sitting back on sofa*) : Now then.

JANE : Now then what ?

JULIA (*in business-like tones*) . Two wretchedly happy married women——

JANE : Yes.

JULIA : Both during the first two years of their married lives having treated their exceedingly nice husbands to the requisite amount of passion and adoration——

JANE : Yes.

JULIA : As is usual in such cases—after a certain time the first ecstasies of passionate adoration subside, leaving in some instances an arid waste of discontent——

JANE : Lovely, darling !

JULIA : In some instances rank boredom and rampant adultery on both sides——

JANE : Don't be gross, dear.

JULIA : And in other rarer instances such as ours—complete happiness and tranquillity devoid of violent emotions of any kind with the possible exception of golf.

JANE : Quite.

JULIA : And there lies the trouble—the lack of violent emotion, fireworks, etc.

JANE : I don't want fireworks.

JULIA : Neither do I—not the nice part of me, but there's an unworthy, beastly thing in both of us waiting to spring—it sprang once before our marriage, and it will spring again—it hasn't been fed for a long, long time——

JANE (*shocked*) : Julia !

JULIA : To put it mildly, dear, we're both ripe for a lapse.

JANE (*going into peals of laughter*) : A Relapse, Julia.— Oh, dear!

JULIA (*also collapsing*) : It's perfectly appalling, and we're laughing on the very edge of an abyss !

JANE : I can't help it, it's hysteria.

JULIA : By a semi-humorous malignity of fate we both happened to throw our respective bonnets over the same windmill——

JANE (*giggling weakly*) : Oh, do stop——!

JULIA (*relentlessly*) : And now, at a critical moment in our matrimonial careers, that windmill is coming to wreck us.

JANE (*wailing*) : I don't want to be wrecked ! I don't want to be wrecked !

JULIA : Shhh, dear ! Saunders will hear you.

JANE (*panic-stricken*) : Don't you see ? What I suggested in the first place, it's the only way—we must go—at once—anywhere out of London.

JULIA : I shall do nothing of the sort, it would be so cowardly.

JANE : A blind goat could see through that, dear !

JULIA : All the same, I shall stay and face it.

JANE : If you do, I shall.

JULIA : There is not the least necessity for us both to suffer.

JANE : If you imagine I should enjoy being by myself in Brighton while you were gallivanting about London with Maurice——

JULIA : I should be too much upset to gallivant.

JANE : No, dear, it won't do.

JULIA : What do you mean, " It won't do " ?

JANE : We stand or fall together.

JULIA : I don't mind standing together, but I won't fall together, it would be most embarrassing.

JANE : Whatever happens, I am not going to be left out.

JULIA : Very well, then I'll go away and you stay.

JANE (*eagerly*) : All right.

JULIA : What about standing or falling together ?

JANE (*nobly*) : I'm willing to sacrifice myself for you.

JULIA : Liar!

JANE : Julia, how can you——?

JULIA : I thought so.

JANE (*airily*) : I don't know what you mean.

JULIA : Oh, yes, you do.

JANE : If you're going to be bad-tempered I shall go.

JULIA : I'm not in the least bad-tempered, I'm only seeing through you, that's all.

JANE : Seeing through me, indeed ? What about you not going away because it would be cowardly ? Huh !

JULIA (*sweetly*) : Are you insinuating, dear, that I *want* to stay ?

JANE : Not insinuating—I'm dead certain of it.

JULIA (*laughing forcedly*) : Ha ha ! Really, Jane——

JANE : You're simply longing for him.

JULIA : Jane!

JANE : You are, you know you are I

JULIA : So are you.

JANE : Certainly I am.

JULIA : Oh, Jane, we must be very careful.

JANE : I'm always careful.

JULIA : I don't mean about him, I mean about us.

JANE : Oh!

JULIA : Don't you see what's going to happen ?

JANE : Yes—yes, I do.

JULIA : It's always the way, when sex comes up it wrecks everything. It's a beastly rotten thing——

JANE : It didn't wreck us before.

JULIA : We weren't together before—if we had been we should have been the blackest enemies in five minutes.

JANE : Yes, as it was you were a bit upset when I met him afterwards.

JULIA : I was awfully sweet about it.

JANE : It was too late for you to be anything else—I took jolly good care not to let you know until it was all over.

JULIA : Yes, that's true.

JANE : We've been filends, real friends, ever since we were eight and nine respectively——

JULIA : And in all probability this will break all that up.

JANE : Certainly—unless we circumvent it.

JULIA (*firmly*): I won't go away.

JANE : Neither will I—we're both firmly agreed on that point.

JULIA : It's only natural, after all, that we should want to see him again.

JANE : And it's also only natural that when we do see him again we shall fight like tigers.

JULIA : I wonder if we shall—really ?

JANE : It's unavoidable—we almost started just now out of sheer anticipation.

JUHA : Oh, Jane darling, how miserable I am.

JANE : Nonsense, you're thoroughly thrilled and excited.

JULIA : Not altogether, I'm torn between my better self and my worse self. I never realised there were two of me until this moment so clearly defined. I want terribly badly to be a true, faithful wife and look after Fred and live in peace, and I want terribly to have violent and illicit love made to me and be frenziedly happy and supremely miserable.

JANE : We're both in exactly the same boat. But the most horrible contingency is that one of us may give in utterly and leave the other shrouded for ever in unrewarded virtue.

JULIA : Meaning the one he fancies most ?

JANE : Exactly.

JULIA : Well, there won't be any virtue at all—just biting jealousy.

JANE : We must make a vow that however badly one or both of us behaves during the black and scarlet period before us—when it's all over and died down we can reinstate ourselves on the same concrete plane of friendship and intimacy without the slightest sacrificing of pride on either side.

JULIA : Oh, yes, yes, Jane—I vow it now.

JANE (*kissing her*) : Darling! So do I—whatever we do, and whatever we may say when temporarily unhinged by sex—

JULIA : Whatever we do and whatever we say—

JANE : Afterwards—perfect friendship again.

JULIA : Perfect friendship again—and *no* apologies !

JANE : Not one !

JULIA (*suddenly*): Jane—I can't go through with it after all.

JANE : Now, Julia——

JULIA : It's no use—I can't—it will be frightful.

JANE : Agony.

JULIA : Let's do your plan, and fly.

JANE : Together ?

JULIA (*impatently*) : Yes, oh, yes, together.

JANE : He'll think it so rude.

JULIA : Jane, don't be weak.

JANE : Frenchmen are so particular about that sort of thing.

JULIA : It can't be helped, one can carry good manners too far.

JANE : We ought to be hospitable.

JULIA : Well, as we can neither of us be hospitable without giving him the run of the house, we'd better leave him to freeze on the door-step !

JANE : I know ! We can leave him a letter.

JULIA : Saying we've been called away.

JANE : Yes—that would ease my conscience.

JULIA : Quick then, you write it while I pack——
Saunders—Saunders——

JANE : Your French is much better than mine

JULIA : Never mind—I'll help——

Enter SAUNDERS.

Saunders, I want you to pack a small suit-case—I've been called away——

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am.

They both go off into bedroom, L., leaving door open.

JANE (*at desk*) : Shall I start, Mon cher Maurice ?

JULIA (*off*): No, " Notre cher, " it's less compromising.

JANE (*after writing for a moment*): Listen—" Notre cher Maurice—nous sommes désolée, mais il n'est pas possible pour nous vous voir cette fois——"

JULIA (*off*): Not " cette fois, " it sounds so sly.

JANE: What shall I put, then ?

JULIA: While you are in London——No, Saunders, I shan't need those sort of things at all——

JANE: What's " while " ?

JULIA: Pendant.

JANE (*writing*): " Pendant vous êtes à Londres. " Do let me put " cette fois" now, it sort of rounds it off.

JULIA: All right. (*To SAUNDERS.*) Yes, it's on the dressing-table—no, the pink one——

JANE: Listen—" Nous sommes mariee maintenant très heureusement——"

JULIA (*off*): Isn't that a little crude, dear ?

JANE: I think he ought to know.

JULIA: Well, put " Isn't it fun " after it.

JANE: I don't know how to.

JULIA (*off*): Cest amusant, n'est pas ?

JANE: That sounds so facetious—and, anyhow, it isn't particularly.

JULIA: It probably will be to him, he'll rock with laughter,

JANE: Oh, very well. (*She writes.*)

JULIA: Put " Have you got a beard yet ? "

JANE (*laughing*): All right. (*She writes.*) Wouldn't it be awful if he had ?

JULIA: Much safer. That's right, Saunders, in the top drawer among my stockings——

JANE : Is beard masculine or feminine ?

JULIA : I'm not sure, make it feminine, he'll appreciate it more.

JANE (*writing hard*): That's all that's necessary now, don't you think ?

JULIA : Tidy up, Saunders. (*She enters in travelling things and carrying a small suit-case.*) Yes, dear, finish it off gracefully.

JANE : " Nous esperons pour vous voir quelquefois bientôt. " We must put that—it's mere politeness.

JULIA : Yes, now we'll both sign our names.

They do so.

I'll address the envelope while you put on your hat.

JANE (*putting on her hat hurriedly before glass*): We ought to explain to Willy and Fred.

JULIA : We haven't time to leave any more notes, we'll telephone——

JANE : Where from ?

JULIA : Aberdeen—come on ! Saunders, there's a note here for a foreign gentleman when he calls.

SAUNDERS (*off*): Very good, ma'am.

JULIA : Hurry up, Jane.

JANE : All right—I'm ready.

JULIA (*exultantly*): I'm glad! I'm tremendously glad—we're doing the right thing—don't you feel marvellous ?

JANE : No—awful.

JULIA : Never mind—our better selves have won in spite of everything.

JANE : Yes, I suppose they have.

They go towards the door with their bags. They almost reach it, when there comes a loud ring and knock at the front door. They both stand stilly as though they

ACT I

FALLEN ANGELS

bad been struck—looking at one another. Then with one accord they plank their bags down.

JULIA (*with determination*): Anyhow, it will be good for our French !

CURTAIN

ACT II

The scene is the same as Act I, and it is the evening of the same day.

When curtain rises; JULIA is looking out of the window. JANE is seated on the sofa. They are both elaborately dressed. The dinner-table is laid for two, and there are some lovely flowers in the room.

JANE : I'm extremely hungry, Julia.

JULIA : So am I—ravenous.

JANE : It's getting on for nine.

JULIA : I know.

JANE : There's not the least likelihood of him arriving at this time.

JULIA : He might, especially if the Paris train were late.

JANE : We don't know whether he was coming from Paris.

JULIA : Where else would he be coming from ?

JANE : Don't snap at me, Julia—he might be coming from the Channel Islands, or Brussels, or anywhere—he's frightfully cosmopolitan.

JULIA : I'm quite sure he's coming from Paris.

JANE : Well, anyhow, the idea was for him to arrive unexpectedly and discover us quietly dining together in charming domestic surroundings—not sitting twiddling our thumbs with eager strained expressions, and the room decorated like a Bridal Suite.

JULIA : That, dear, was not in the best of taste. Would you like a salted almond ? (*She goes to table.*)

JANE : Yes, please—it may assuage the pangs a little.

JULIA (*throwing her one*) : Here you are.

JANE (*missing it, and picking it up from the sofa*) : Thanks.

JULIA : The table looks pretty, doesn't it ?

JANE (*weakly*) : Lovely, dear.

JULIA (*sitting down beside her*) : It's been the most shattering day.

JANE : I shall never forget your face when, after all that suspense, the plumber arrived.

JULIA : I'm thankful he did all the same.

JANE : Why ?

JULIA : Domestic reasons.

JANE : Why do you suppose Violet Coswick chose to-day of all days to come to tea ?

JULIA : And talk exclusively of Paris and Frenchmen—

JANE : She has an awfully unpleasant mind, poor Violet, I suppose it must be the result of so much repression.

JULIA : Repression of what, dear ?

JANE : Oh, everything.

JULIA : She lacks opportunities—it's her clothes, I think.

JANE : They don't lack opportunities, they grab them whole-heartedly.

JULIA : I've never seen so many things on any woman.

JANE : What was the meaning of that hat, anyhow ?

JULIA : It appeared to be kept on by suction. Shall we have a cocktail ?

JANE : It isn't very wise, is it ? On empty stomachs.

JULIA (*ringing bell*): I shall get black depression if I don't.

JANE (*resignedly*): We shall just lapse into complete silliness, and when Maurice does come we shall giggle helplessly at him and our heads will wobble.

Enter SAUNDERS.

JULIA : Cocktails, please, Saunders.

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am.

JULIA : Strong ones.

JANE : Julia !

SAUNDERS : Very good, ma'am.

Exit SAUNDERS.

JULIA : I don't believe he ever will come.

JANE : Neither do I.

JULIA : It's probably all a sort of elfin joke—he was always being elfin.

JANE : And so terribly unreliable.

JULIA : I wouldn't trust him an inch.

JANE : I never did.

JULIA : But still, he was a darling.

JANE : Adorable, damn him !

JULIA : And he doesn't know many people in England.

JANE : I think he *will* come.

JULIA : So do I.

JANE : He'll kiss our hands and look up at us while he does it—you remember ?

JULIA : Oh, yes, I remember all right.

JANE : And he'll laugh and show all his teeth.

JULIA : Many more than are usual.

JANE : You know what we're doing, don't you ?

JULIA : What ?

JANE : We're working ourselves up.

JULIA : We have been all day.

JANE : I should like to scream now—scream and scream and scream and roll about on the floor———

JULIA : So should I, but we must restrain ourselves.

JANE : It's want of food, you know.

JULIA : Yes, that's what it is.

SAUNDERS *comes in with cocktails.*

JANE : Oh, Julia—don't let's wait any longer.

JULIA : All right. (*She takes cocktail and hands it to JANE.*) Here you are, dear.—Dinner, please, Saunders.

JANE : Quickly.

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am. Shall I open the champagne?

JANE (*beseechingly*) : Julia !

JULIA (*firmly*) : Yes, Saunders.

SAUNDERS *goes out.*

JANE : Listen ! There's a taxi stopping outside.

JULIA : Quick!

They both rush to the window and peer out.

JANE : I can't see—it's so dark.

JULIA : He's got a black hat.

JANE : It must be—it must be !

JULIA : It's the beastly woman from upstairs—how dare she drive about in taxis.

JANE : Look, there's another coming round the corner.

They both crane round to see.

Re-enter SAUNDERS with oysters.

SAUNDERS : Dinner is served, ma'am.

JULIA : It's no use—come and eat.

JANE : It was lovely of you to think of oysters,
ing

JULIA : They do give one a "grand" feeling. It's awfully necessary for us to feel " grand " to-night.

They both sit down.

JANE : Wouldn't it be dreadful if Fred and Willy came home ?

JULIA (*with a warning look towards SAUNDERS*) : Shhhh I

JANE : Drunk.

JULIA : What do you mean ?

JANE : I say wouldn't it be dreadful if Fred and Willy came home drunk ?

JULIA : Why should they ?

JANE (*grimacing towards SAUNDERS*) : Don't be silly, Julia.

JULIA : Oh, I see—yes, dreadful. I'd forgotten it was Saturday.

JANE : Saturday ?

JULIA : Yes, naturally depressing in November because of the fog.

JANE : But only if you pay your subscription in advance.

SAUNDERS, *having served champagne and oysters, goes out.*

JULIA : Poor Saunders.

JANE : She looked extremely startled.

JULIA : You must be careful.

JANE : I'm sorry, darling, I quite forgot she was there.

JULIA : Wouldn't it be wonderful if he arrived suddenly now !

JANE : I should choke.

JULIA : You're sure you left a thoroughly clear message at your flat in case he went there ?

JANE : Of course.

JULIA : We shall probably have a fearful shock when we do see him.

JANE : I don't see why, really.

JULIA : He's sure to have got fat, or bald, or something'.

JANE : No, he'll be the same as ever; he wouldn't come at all if he weren't—he's much too conceited.

JULIA : Not conceited, a little vain perhaps, naturally.

JANE : With those eyes one can't blame him.

JULIA : And those hands——

JANE : And teeth——

JULIA : And legs ! Oh, Jane I

JANE : Oh, Julia !

Re-enter SAUNDERS with " (Eufs au plat Bercy " on separate dishes.

JULIA : The cushions of the carriages are always so dusty.

JANE : She ought never to have been burnt at the stake because she was such a nice girl.

JULIA : I can hardly wait until strawberries come in again.

SAUNDERS (*putting dish before JANE*) : Be careful, ma'am—it's very hot.

JANE : Thank you, I will.

JULIA : More champagne ?

JANE : Yes, darling. (*She holds out her glass and JULIA fills it.*)

JULIA (*filling her own*) : I'm feeling better now, aren't you ?

JANE : Yes, I adore this little sausage with my egg.

JULIA : It is sweet, isn't it ?

SAUNDERS *goes out.*

JANE (*leaning back*) : It's all such a wonderful adventure.

JULIA : It hasn't started yet.

JANE: Oh, yes it has—I've enjoyed my day enormously.

JULIA: How can you? It's been damnable!

JANE: But frightfully exciting. I love something to break the monotony.

JULIA: Don't be "young", Jane.

JANE: You're being awfully superior, but you're as thrilled as I am.

JULIA: I see such blackness ahead if we're not careful

JANE: We mustn't lose our heads.

JULIA: Perhaps he won't want us to this time.

JANE: I have sudden beastly pangs about Fred and Willy.

JULIA: So do I.

JANE: We're being so disloyal.

JULIA: Only in thought so far.

The telephone rings.

BOTH: My God!

JANE (*rising*): I'll go.

JULIA (*also rising*): It's my house.

JANE: Quick—toss for it—rough or smooth, see!
(*She picks up a fork.*)

JULIA: Rough.

JANE (*tossing it*): Rough it is.

JULIA (*at telephone*): Hallo!—Yes, Park 8720—yes—
(*To JANE in a hoarse whisper.*) It's a call office.—Hallo!
—yes, speaking—(*She jumps.*) It is—it is—! Is
that you, Maurice?

JANE (*rushing up and trying to hear*): It can't be—it
can't be—

JULIA (*crossly*): Oh! Uncle Hugo, is that you—I
thought it was someone else.

JANE: Damn I

JULIA (*impatiently*): No, he won't be home until to-morrow, he's playing golf with Willy.

JANE : Damn—damn—damn !

JULIA : Shut up, Jane.—Yes, all right, I'll tell him—Good-bye.

JANE : Stupid old fool.

JULIA : I hate all Fred's relations, anyhow.

They go back to the table.

JANE : He's probably gone straight to an hotel and had a lovely hot bath and changed his clothes and will come on here afterwards.

JULIA : I wonder.

JANE : Of course, he always has a hot bath after a journey.

JULIA : I hadn't forgotten, dear.

JANE : He'll probably wear a soft silk shirt with his dinner-jacket—so beautifully careless.

JULIA : Stop, Jane, I'm beginning to feel dreadful.

JANE (*dreamily*) : I can see him now threading his way between the tables outside Florian's in the Piazza San Marco—we used to have coffee there always, then we used to stroll languidly along to the Piazzetta—I had a lovely green shawl—and then drift over the lagoon—and we'd hitch our gondola to a serenata and lie back and look up at the stars while darling little men in white shirts poured out their sentimental souls in the most shattering tenor voices. Sometimes we wouldn't stop at all, but just glide on through the Picolo Canales until we suddenly came out into that big lagoon behind Venice—away from everywhere—just one or two buildings rising up like ghosts out of the mist, then Maurice used to—

SAUNDERS *enters with Tournedos and sauce Eearnaise and Pommes Dauphine.*

JULIA : The worst of a circus is, I'm always so *terrified* that they ill-treat the animals.

JANE : Poor George and he *was* so charming before he married. (*Take away plates.*)

JULIA : I hope you haven't forgotten the sauce Bearnaise, Saunders ?

SAUNDERS : No, ma'am—it's here.

JANE : How delicious.

JULIA : Have some more champagne ?

JANE : All right.

JULIA (*refilling both glasses*) : We ought to have some of those little wooden things in coloured paper to take the gassiness out.

JANE : They're such fun !

There is suddenly a loud ring at the front door bell.

JULIA *gives a cry, and JANE, who is drinking, chokes.*

JULIA : Jane, pull yourself together.

JANE (*choking badly*) : I can't—it's agony——

JULIA : Leave the potatoes, Saunders, and answer the door.

SAUNDERS : Very good, ma'am.

JULIA (*to JANE*) : Eat some bread quickly.

JANE (*recovering a little*) : Oh, don't let him in—not yet——

JULIA : Eat some bread—here———(*She rushes round the table and administers bread and water to JANE.*)

JANE (*weakly*) : It's all right now. I'm better. (*She rises and grabs her bag, then proceeds to powder her nose frantically.*)

Re-enter SAUNDERS.

SAUNDERS : It's a foreign gentleman, ma'am.

JANE : There, now!

JULIA : Why didn't you show him in ?

SAUNDERS : He says he won't come in. He only wants to know if there's a Madame Gambelitti living here.

JANE : What's he like ?

SAUNDERS : Quite respectable, ma'am, but with a long moustache.

JULIA : Come on, Jane, we'll peep.

*They go to the door and peep round it into the hall
—then return to the table crestfallen.*

JULIA : Why didn't you tell him there was no Madame What's-her-name here, and get rid of him ?

SAUNDERS : You said you were expecting a foreign gentleman, ma'am, and I thought I'd better keep him in case.

JULIA : Well, get rid of him now.

SAUNDERS : Very good, ma'am.

Exit SAUNDERS.

JANE (*almost in tears*): It's downright cruel, that's what it is.

JULIA : It's the first time that anybody not aggressively English has rung that bell since we've been here.

JANE : And he would come after his beastly Madame Gambelitti to-night of all nights. It's indecent!

JULIA : More champagne ?

JANE (*loudly*): Yes.

JULIA : Well, don't shout.

JANE : I shall if I want to, Julia; you mustn't be dictatorial.

JULIA fills bOth glasses again.

JULIA : Let's have a toast!

JANE (*rising and holding up her glass*) : Maurice Duclos.

JULIA (*also rising*): Maurice Duclos ! No heel taps.

They both drain their glasses.

JANE (*sitting down quickly*): That was silly of us, Julia.

JULIA (*also sitting*): Eat some steak quickly.

There is silence for a moment while they devote themselves to their food.

JANE: Wouldn't it be awful if a tree blew down and killed Fred and Willy on the golf links?

JULIA (*shocked*): Jane, how can you!

JANE: It would serve us right.

JULIA: It would be too awful—I should never forgive myself.

JANE: Neither should I.

JULIA: There's a dreadful gale blowing.

JANE: Things like that do happen!

JULIA: No, they don't—not if you don't think about them. Mind over matter.

JANE: I do admire you, Julia, you're so strong—and sensible.

JULIA: Nonserise, dear, I'm just not *afraid* of life.

JANE: You're brave.

JULIA: No braver than you.

JANE (*verging on tears*): We must both be brave always, Julia.

JULIA (*slightly maudlin*): Whatever happens.

JANE: Even if Fred and Willy *were* killed we should have to bear it.

JULIA: Yes, Jane—we wouldn't break down—we'd face the world with a smile.

JANE: Not quite a smile, dear, it might be misunderstood.

JULIA: Poor darling Fred, I can see him now being carried in on a stretcher——

JANE : With Willy on another stretcher. Oh, dear
——(*She breaks down.*)

JULIA : Jane dear—don't——

Re-enter SAUNDERS with sweet—"profiteroles au chocolat".

JANE : I've eaten much too much already.

JULIA : So have I, but we must go on, it will keep up our strength.

JANE : They look lovely.—Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor——

JULIA (*giggling*) : No, you do that with cherry stones.

JANE (*also giggling*) : I like doing it with these.

JULIA : Have some more champagne ?

JANE : No, thank you.

JULIA : Here you are. (*She pours it out.*)

JANE : Thanks, darling.

JULIA : What's so silly is that I'm beginning to feel sleepy.

JANE : I'm not—exactly—just cosy.

JULIA : Bring the coffee straightaway, Saunders.

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am.

Exit SAUNDERS.

JANE : What a pretty girl Saunders is !

JULIA : Yes, isn't she ?

JANE : She ought to be a great success in life, she's so calm.

JULIA (*suddenly bursting out laughing*) : Oh, dear——I

JANE : What are you laughing at ?

JULIA : You look frightfully funny !

JANE : What's the matter with me ? (*She gets up just a little unsteadily and looks at herself in the glass.*)

JULIA (*giggling hopelessly*) : I don't know—you just do !

JANE : So do you.

JULIA (*also getting up and looking in glass*) : It's our heads, I think—they're far too big.

JANE : We've had too much champagne.

JULIA (*agreeably*) : Much too much.

JANE : Let's sit down again.

JULIA : All right.

They return to the table.

JANE : I feel awfully warm and comfortable.

JULIA : A child could play with me.

The telephone rings.

JANE : There now !

JULIA : It must be him this time.

JANE : It's my turn; come and stand close to me.

JULIA : All right—I'll sit on the edge of the sofa.

JANE (*at telephone—loudly*) : Hallo !

JULIA : He isn't deaf.

JANE : Hallo ! Yes, this is Park 8724.

JULIA : It isn't.

JANE : Keep quiet, I can't hear——

JULIA : Look on the thing ; it's not 8724.

JANE (*gives a quick look at telephone number*): No, it isn't—it isn't—it's 8720—hallo! Exchange——They've gone. Julia, it's a trunk call; what *am* I to do ?—Exchange, hallo——!

JULIA : Hang the receiver up.

JANE : It will only go on ringing and ringing and ringing if I do.—Exchange, hallo I (*She bangs receiver up and down.*) Oh, this is agony !

JULIA : Here, give it to me. (*She snatches the telephone out of JANE'S hand.*) Hallo ! No, you've got the wrong number.—No, I'm not; I'm somebody quite different. (*She slams receiver down.*) It's a shame ! What on earth

did you say we were Park 8724 for? You ought to know the number by now.

JANE : I couldn't help it; he jumped at me.

JULIA : You were in such a flutter because you thought it was Maurice——

JANE (*with dignity*) : I was as calm as a cucumber.

JULIA : You were shaking all over.

JANE : So were you—simply bobbing up and down on the sofa.

JULIA : Why you said it was Park 8724 I can't imagine.

JANE : I told you I couldn't help it.

JULIA : Don't argue, Jane, when you've been stupid over anything it's much better not to argue.

JANE (*irately*) : Stupid indeed !—I like that. Why, if you——

The telephone rings.

JULIA : Leave it alone.

JANE : It may be him.

JULIA : No, it's only that trunk call again. It'll probably go on all night because you told him it was Park 8720.

JANE : I didn't—I said Park 8724.

JULIA : Jane, how can you ! You said 8720 !

JANE : It *is* 8720.

JULIA : It isn't.

JANE : Look there. (*She shows her.*)

JULIA : I shall go mad, that's all, and it will serve you right.

The telephone continues to ring.

JANE : Oh, stop it, for God's sake !

JULIA : There. (*She takes off receiver and puts it on table.*)

Enter SAUNDERS with coffee. JULIA and JANE both sit down at the table again.

JANE : I don't mind what happens now—I'm just past everything.

JULIA : Have some coffee.

JANE (*taking it from SAUNDERS*) : Thank you.

JULIA : A liqueur ?

JANE (*giggling*) : Don't be ridiculous.

JULIA : Cordial Medoc, Saunders.

JANE : Shall we "have it in tumblers ?

JULIA : I ordered it specially—it rounds off a dinner so nicely.

JANE : It certainly will.

SAUNDERS goes to sideboard' pours out two liqueurs and puts them down on the table.

JULIA : Thank you, Saunders—that will do now.

SAUNDERS : Very good, ma'am.

SAUNDERS goes out with the remains of the sweet on a tray.

JANE (*sipping her liqueur*) : It's terribly strong I

JULIA (*airily*) : It's supposed to make one feel rather—rather——(*She waves her hand vaguely.*)

JANE : How thoughtful of you, dear.

JULIA : Have some fruit ?

JANE : I couldn't.

JULIA : Do, it rounds off the dinner so nicely.

JANE : For Heaven's sake stop rounding off the dinner, it's getting on my nerves.

JULIA : Don't be temperamental.

JANE : Do you think it would matter if I took off my shoes ?

JULIA : Not at all—they always do in Japan, I believe.

JANE (*kicking off her shoes*): If Maurice had any

instincts at ail he'd arrive at this moment—looking marvellous.

JULIA : And make the most lovely sort of baffled sceneI

JANE : What would baffle him ?

JULIA : Us, of course, because we'd be so gloriously aloof and stately.

JANE : I shouldn't—I should give in without a murmur.

JULIA : Then he'd want me more.

JANE : If you feel that's the only way to make him, you'd better encourage me.

JULIA : You don't need any encouraging.

JANE : What do you mean by that ?

JULIA : What I say.

JANE: Oh!

JULIA : Anyhow, I should never let you cheapen yourself.

JANE (*affronted*): How dare you, Julia.

JULIA : How dare I what ?

JANE : Insult me.

JULIA : I didn't.

JANE : You did—you went too far—it was past a joke.

JULIA : It wasn't intended to be a joke ---I hate jokes, bitterly.

JANE : Then you meant it ?

JULIA : Meant what ?

JANE : How can anyone carry on a conversation when you keep on saying what, what, what, what, what, what, what all the time ! If you can't quite grasp what I say, you'd better go to bed.

JULIA : That was exceedingly rude, Jane.

JANE : I'm sorry, Juha, but you're annoying me.

JULIA : Unfortunately, this happens to be my flat.

JANE (*looking round*): Never mind, dear, you'll get used to it in time.

JULIA : Stop bickering, Jane.

JANE : How can you expect me not to bicker when you sit there abusing me.

JULIA : I never abused you.

JANE : Yes, you did—you insinuated that I was brazen.

JULIA : Well, so you are—sometimes—we all are, it's human nature.

JANE : Nothing of the sort.

JULIA : Don't contradict everything I say—it infuriates me.

JANE : Brazen I It was you who refused to run away this morning, anyhow.

JULIA : Why should I run away ?

JANE (*laughing loudly*): That's funny.

JULIA (*coldly*): I'm glad you think so.

JANE : Why should you run away—ha-ha !

JULIA : I think you must be going to have a cold, Jane.

JANE: Why?

JULIA : Your voice is so strident.

JANE : I shall whisper for the rest of the evening.

JULIA : Do, it's more soothing.

JANE (*in a hoarse whisper*) : Anyhow, there's this to be said—if you hadn't met Maurice first and gone on with him like that in Pisa——

JULIA : You're being insufferable.

JANE : Not at all—I'm merely pointing out that it's no use riding a high horse now because the whole affair's been entirely your fault from beginning to end.

JULIA (*rising*): I'm awfully disappointed in you Jane, —I thought you had a nicer mind than that.

JANE: Mind! What about yours? I suppose you imagine it's a lovely gilt basket filled with mixed fruit and a bow on the top!

JULIA: Better than being an old sardine tin with a few fins left in it!

JANE (*rising*): You'll regret that remark in your soberer moments.

JULIA: Have a cigarette.

JANE (*taking one*): Thank you.

JULIA (*striking a match*): Here!

JANE (*with dignity*): Thank you.

JULIA (*grandly*): Perhaps you'd like a little music? Shall I put the gramophone on?

JANE: Do, if you feel it would put you in a better temper.

JULIA (*ignoring her—conversationally*): I had such an amusing letter from Aunt Harriet this morning.

JANE (*rudely*): Did you really? I thought she was dead.

JULIA (*with a superior frown*): I'm afraid you must be muddling her up with someone else.

JANE: Go on, dear—tell me some more news. I love you when you're offended.

JULIA (*sadly*): I'm not offended, Jane. A little hurt, perhaps, and surprised—

JANE (*suddenly furious*): How dare you draw yourself up and become the outraged hostess with *me*!

JULIA: I'm sorry—I must have lost my sense of humour—perhaps because I'm tired—we've been together so much lately, we've probably grated on one another's nerves.

JANE : Yes, you're right there. Where are my shoes ?

JULIA (*disdainfully*) : I really don't know—they can't have gone far.

JANE : I should like to shake you, Julia, shake you and shake you and shake you until your eyes dropped out!

JULIA : Indeed ?

JANE : Yes, when you're superior and grand like that you rouse the very worst in me——

JULIA : Obviously.

JANE : You make me feel like a French Revolution virago. I'd like to rush up and down Bond Street with your head on a pole I

JULIA : You'd better pull yourself together and I'll ask Saunders to help you to your flat.

JANE : If she comes near me I'll throttle her.

JULIA : I've never seen you violent before—it's very interesting psychologically.

JANE (*with sudden determination*) : I could bring you down to earth in one moment if I liked.

JULIA : Vulgarity always leaves me unmoved.

JANE : This is not vulgarity—it's something I was more ashamed of than vulgarity, but I'm not ashamed of it any more—I'm glad ! I've kept something from you, Julia.

JULIA : I wish you'd go home, Jane.

JANE : I must have realised subconsciously all the time that you were going to turn out false and beastly——

JULIA : What are you talking about ?

JANE : Where are my shoes ?

JULIA : Never mind about your shoes—what do you mean?

JANE : Give me my shoes.

JULIA (*moving over to the mantelpiece*) : They're probably under the table—you'd better get them and go.

JANE (*finding them and putting them on savagely*) : And now I'm thankful to God I *did* keep it to myself.

JULIA : That's right.

JANE : You're still too grand to be curious, I suppose.

JULIA : Don't be cheap, Jane.

JANE : It concerns Maurice.

JULIA (*turning*) : Oh ! it concerns Maurice, does it ?

JANE : Yes, I thought that would rouse you I

JULIA : I think you'd better tell me—if you don't want to wreck our friendship for ever.

JANE : It will wreck our friendship all right when I *do* tell you—and I don't care. It's this—*I know where he is!*

JULIA : It's a lie !

JANE : No, it isn't. He rang me up while I was dressing to-night.

JULIA : Jane !

JANE : Yes, I didn't want to tell you because I thought it would have hurt your feelings. But now I know that you haven't got any feelings to hurt—only a shallow sort of social vanity——

JULIA : Where is he, then ? Tell me !

JANE : I shall do nothing of the sort. I don't want you to rush round there and make a fool of yourself.

JULIA (*losing all control*) : How dare you ! How dare you ! I'll never speak to you again as long as I live. You're utterly completely contemptible ! If it's true, you're nothing but a snivelling hypocrite ! And if it's false, you're a bare-faced liar ! There's not much to choose between you. Please go at once I

JANE : Go—I'm only too delighted. You must curb your social sense, Julia, if it leads you to drunken orgies and abuse !

JULIA (*in tears*) : Go—go—go away——!

JANE : Certainly I shall—and it may interest you to know that I'm going *straight to* Maurice !

JULIA (*wailing*) : Liar—Liar !

JANE : I'm not lying—it's true. And I shall go away with him at once, and you and Fred and Willy can go to hell, the whole lot of you !

JANE *flounces out*. JULIA *hurls herself on to the sofa in screaming hysterics*.

CURTAIN

ACT III

The same scene. It is the next morning. JULIA is finishing her breakfast gloomily. She rings the bell at her side. Enter SAUNDERS.

JULIA : When I say a " Soft-boiled egg ", Saunders, I don't mean an un-boiled egg.

SAUNDERS : I'm sorry, ma'am.

JULIA : There was also a long dark hair in the marmalade.

SAUNDERS (*anxiously*) : Was there, ma'am ?

JULIA : I haven't the remotest idea how it got there, we are both distinct blondes; perhaps it was Mr. Robertson's.

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am.

JULIA : Anyhow, please search the marmalade in future.

SAUNDERS : Very good, ma'am.

JULIA *goes over to the telephone.*

JULIA (*at telephone*) : Park 5703—yes, please—03—Damn ! (*She slams the telephone down and goes over to the window and drums her fingers on the pane—// // pouring with rain. She picks up the paper, looks at it in disgust for a moment, then throws it away. She goes more once to the telephone.*)

JULIA : Hallo I—Park 5703—yes, please.—Oh I (*She holds the receiver away from her ear as the engaged signal is deafening. After a pause*): It can't possibly still be engaged I—Very well—hallo—My good girl, you suffer from being both incompetent *and* stupid I (*She slams*

down receiver. There is a ring at the front door bell. She jumps. After a moment WILLY enters.)

WILLY : Good morning, Julia.

JULIA : Willy ! What on earth are you doing here ,
Where's Fred ?

WILLY (*gloomily*): I left him at the Grand Hotel,
Littlestone. Where's Jane ?

JULIA (*coldly*) : I don't know.

WILLY : You don't know ?

JULIA : I haven't the faintest idea—she might be any-
where by now.

WILLY : What d'you mean " By now " ?

JULIA : Just " By now ".

WILLY : What's the matter ?

JULIA : Nothing.

WILLY : What's happened ?

JULIA : Everything probably—by now!

WILLY : What are you talking about ?

JULIA : Oh, don't be tiresome !

WILLY : I made sure Jane would be with you. Where's
she gone ?

JULIA : Do stop cross-questioning me—anyone
would think I'd murdered her and put her in a box.

WILLY : Well, from the furtive way you're behaving
I shouldn't be in the least surprised.

JULIA : Anyhow, what do you mean by leaving Fred
all alone in the Grand Hotel, Littlestone ?

WILLY : We had a row last night.

JULIA : Oh, did you !

WILLY : Yes, Fred infuriated me.

JULIA (*with sarcasm*): I'm sure I'm very sorry—I'll
speak to him severely.

WILLY : And I felt I couldn't bear to meet him at

breakfast and go all over it again—so I crept out and left by the early train.

JULIA : What did you row about ?

WILLY : Nothing.

JULIA : That's the worst kind.

WILLY : Have you quarrelled with Jane ?

JULIA : Yes, bitterly.

WILLY : What about ?

JULIA : Nothing+I

WILLY : Oh !

JULIA : We got drunk.

WILLY : What!

JULIA : Extremely drunk.

WILLY : Julia!

JULIA : Jane was much worse than I was, and—well, we quarrelled.

WILLY (*incensed*) : If I can't go away for a quiet game of golf without you making Jane drunk——

JULIA : I didn't make her drunk—it was voluntary.

WILLY : Disgusting, I call it.

JULIA : And she banged out of the flat.

WILLY : Where is she now ?

JULIA : I don't know, and I don't care.

WILLY : Don't be callous, Julia.

JULIA : She's probably at home in bed sleeping it off.

WILLY : She isn't—I've just been there.

JULIA : I thought you came straight here.

WILLY : No, I had a large bag and golf clubs.

JULIA : Are you sure she isn't at home ?

WILLY : Perfectly, but I didn't worry because I thought she'd be with you.

JULIA (*turning away*): Then it *was* true, then——

WILLY : What was true ?

JULIA (*biting her lip angrily*): Oh !—Oh !

WILLY : What in God's name's the matter ?

JULIA : I was going to ring her up and make friends again. I didn't believe for a moment—I didn't think that——Oh!

WILLY : Didn't believe *what!*

JULIA : She must have been deceiving me steadily all through dinner. How dare she ! Oh, oh, oh !

JULIA *begins striding up and down the room.*

WILLY : Julia, will you stop still and explain what's happened ?

JULIA (*stopping*): Explain! Oh, yes, I'll explain all right—the sly, underhand little——!

WILLY (*with dignity*): Will you please remember that you are referring to my wife.

JULIA: Your wife !—Huh! Optimist !

WILLY : Julia!

JULIA (*irately*) : Yes, my poor Willy—my poor, poor Willy.

WILLY : You're maddening me, Julia.

JULIA (*beginning to stride again*) : To have behaved like that—after all these years. Oh, it's contemptible !

WILLY (*catching her by the shoulders*): What's happened to Jane ? Where's she gone ?

JULIA : I should like to break it to you gently, Willy—she's gone off with a man !

WILLY: What!

JULIA (*defiantly*) : A Frenchman.

WILLY : Nonsense, she can't have.

JULIA : I tell you she has.

WILLY : I don't believe it—you're unhinged, that's what it is.

JULIA : I'm perfectly hinged. It's true.

WILLY : I'm sorry, Julia, but I don't believe it. I know Jane too well; she'd never rush off like that at a moment's notice.

JULIA (*bitterly*) : She knew where he was all the time, and she went to him.

WILLY : She was pulling your leg.

JULIA : Don't be so pig-headed, Willy, this is one of the few big moments in your life, and you're behaving like a ninny !

WILLY : If you think stamping up and down the room and blackguarding Jane is a big moment in my life you're very much mistaken.

JULIA (*exasperated*) : It's true ! She's known him for years. She was in love with him before she married you—before she ever met you.

WILLY : Don't be ridiculous !

JULIA : Your smug complacency is beyond belief. I suppose you feel quite sure that no woman could beat to leave you ?

WILLY : Jane couldn't—she'd hate it.

JULIA : There's going to be a shattering awakening for you.

WILLY : I say, Julia, don't go on ramping any more—just calm down and explain things quietly. I'll pour myself out some coffee, if I may.

He Joes so. JULIA watches him in silence.

JULIA : Willy—I———Oh ! (*She bursts into tears.*)

WILLY : What's up now ?

JULIA : I'm a beast—a traitress———(*She sobs.*)

WILLY : No, you're not—you're just thoroughly hysterical—you'll be better in a moment. (*He drinks some coffee.*)

JULIA (*controlling herself*): Listen, Willy!—I'm sorry

—but I'm afraid what I said just now was the truth.

WILLY (*amiably*): I'm trying hard to understand. I can't help feeling that there's something awfully silly behind all this—it doesn't seem to ring true.

JULIA (*with sarcasm*): Perhaps you think I'm playing an amusing practical joke on you?

WILLY: No, it isn't that, but you've either deceived yourself into believing it or else you're making a mistake.

JULIA: But, Willy—

WILLY: If Jane really had left me, I know I should have some sort of feeling about it—but I haven't.

JULIA: That'll come later all right.

WILLY: Who is this man she's supposed to be with?

JULIA: He's a Frenchman—Maurice Duclos. Jane and I both knew him before we married.

WILLY: Did you know him well?

JULIA: Extremely well.

WILLY: And Jane? Was Jane in love with him then?

JULIA: Yes, violently! We both were.

WILLY: Did you—er—did you——?

JULIA: Yes, Willy.

WILLY: Where?

JULIA: Pisa.

WILLY: And did Jane ever——?

JULIA: Yes, Willy.

WILLY: Good God, where?

JULIA: Venice.

WILLY: This is horrible—incredible——

JULIA: Willy, I'm sorry I——

WILLY (*abruptly*): You'd better save your apologies for Fred. I'm going to find Jane.

JULIA: I'll come too.

WILLY : Has she seen this man since we've been married ?

JULIA : No—at least—I don't know—she's such a liar.

WILLY : When did *you* last see him ?

JULIA : Seven years ago on the railway station at Pisa. We were both going to Paris, and at the last moment he said he wanted a Salami sandwich, and as I hated garlic, we had a row. He was far too temperamental, anyhow, so I pushed him out on to the platform just as the train was starting. I repented it bitterly at the time—but now I'm glad.

WILLY : I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

JULIA : I didn't push him very hard.

WILLY : I don't mean about that—I mean the whole affair.

JULIA : Are you daring to disapprove of me, Willy ?

WILLY : Yes. You're devoid of the slightest moral sense.

JULIA : What about Jane ?

WILLY : Jane's different—she's just weak. You probably set her a bad example.

JULIA : Willy !

WILLY (*hotly*) : I wouldn't mind betting you met the beastly man first and then told Jane all about it and generally egged her on.

JULIA : She didn't need any egging—she met him and never said a word to me for ages afterwards.

WILLY : She was probably too ashamed and repentant.

JULIA : Repentant my foot.

WILLY : Anyhow, it's more than you are—you're positively glorying in your—your—shame !

JULIA : If I'd known what a smug little man you were I'd never have let Jane marry you at all.

WILLY : And if I'd known how utterly lacking you were in all the finer feelings I'd never have let Fred come near you.

JULIA : I should think it would be as well to stop hurling abuse at me and go in search of your weak but strictly virtuous wife, who, if she hasn't succeeded in finding Maurice Duclos, is probably roaming about the streets in deep evening dress and hiccuping.

WILLY : You must come with me.

JULIA : I shall do nothing of the sort.

WILLY : You said you would.

JULIA : That was before your insults.

WILLY : Julia, do come ?

JULIA : Where could we go first—Vine Street ?

WILLY : She can't have gone far.

JULIA : Judging by her condition when she left this flat she's probably gone farther than our wildest dreams.

WILLY : Please come, Julia.

JULIA : I'll come back to your flat—she may have left a note or something.

WILLY : I never thought of that.

JULIA : Wait a moment. (*She goes into the bedroom and issues forth in a small hat and a coat over her arm.*)

WILLY : Look here, Julia, I'm sorry for what I said just now.

JULIA : So you ought to be.

WILLY : But I still don't believe it all—quite.

JULIA : I want you to understand one thing clearly. I'm not coming with you just to help you. I'm coming because I wish to find Jane and tell her exactly what I think of her.

WILLY : I say, Julia, don't be beastly to her. She's probably feeling pretty awful.

JULIA : I don't care if she's feeling heavenly, she won't be when I've finished with her!

They go out. SAUNDERS just catches sight of them as they vanish. SAUNDERS, humming to her self, begins to pile the breakfast things on a tray. The telephone rings.

SAUNDERS (*at telephone*) : " Hallo !—yes—yes, sir.—No, sir, she isn't in at present.—I don't know, sir, she didn't say.—Yes, sir, what name, sir?—One moment, sir, I'll write it down— " (*She writes on block.*) Maurice Duclos—Park 9264.—Yes, sir, I'll tell her. " (*She hangs up the receiver and continues to clear away. She is on her way to the door when FRED comes in.*)

FRED : Good morning, Saunders.

SAUNDERS : Good morning, sir.

FRED : Where's the mistress ?

SAUNDERS : She's gone out, sir.

FRED : Gone out ? But it's pouring.

SAUNDERS : Yes, sir.

FRED : Where's she gone ?

SAUNDERS : I don't know, sir.

FRED : She's with Mrs. Banbury, I expect. Run up, will you, and tell her I've come back ?

SAUNDERS : What number is it, sir ?

FRED : Number five—two floors up.

SAUNDERS : Very good, sir. (*She goes out.*)

FRED *lights a cigarette and wanders about the room aimlessly. He goes over to the piano and plays absently the tune of " Me me les Anges " with one finger. He also hums it a little.*

JANE *enters rather draggled, in evening dress and a cloak.*

JANE : Fred ! What are you doing ?

FRED (*turning*): Playing the piano. Good heavens !

JANE : What ?

FRED : Have you been out all night ?

JANE : Yes.

FRED : Lucky for you I left Willy at Littlestone.

JANE : Oh, you did, did you ?

FRED : Yes, sleeping like a hog. I left early in the car.

JANE: Why ?

FRED : We had rather a row last night. If you'll forgive me saying so, your husband is a fool sometimes.

JANE : I've always found him extremely intelligent.

FRED : Where have you been ?

JANE : Mind your own business, Fred !

FRED : Don't jump down my throat—it was quite a harmless question.

JANE : I object to your dictatorial tone.

FRED : Well, to come in like that at eleven o'clock in the morning is a little——

JANE : It I choose to come in naked on a tricycle it's no affair of yours. Where's Julia ?

FRED : I don't know, she went out before I arrived.

JANE : Out—where ?

FRED : I haven't the faintest idea. I thought she'd probably be with you.

Re-enter SAUNDERS.

SAUNDERS : The mistress isn't at Mrs. Banbury's, sir. (*She sees JANE.*) Oh !

JANE : Don't look so surprised, Saunders. You left the door open so I walked in.

SAUNDERS : Yes, ma'am.

FRED : What time did the mistress go out, Saunders ?

SAUNDERS : Just before you came in, sir.

FRED : Was she alone ?

SAUNDERS : No, sir, there was a gentleman with her.

JANE (*tensely*) : A what ?

SAUNDERS : A gentleman, ma'am.

FRED : Who was it ?

SAUNDERS : I don't know, sir, he didn't give any name when I opened the door; he just walked straight in.

JANE : What was he like ?

SAUNDERS : About medium height, ma'am, and dark.

JANE (*ominously*) : Dark was he !

FRED : Why, what's the matter ?

JANE : I'm sorry for you, Fred, extremely sorry for you.

FRED (*startled*) : That will do, Saunders.

SAUNDERS : Very good, sir. (*She goes out.*)

FRED : What do you mean, Jane ?

JANE : Don't speak to me for a moment, just don't speak to me—I'm trying to control myself, and I should like a cigarette.

FRED (*giving her one—very puzzled*) : What's all this mystery about ?

JANE (*austerely*) : There is no mystery, I'm afraid, any more—it's all far too clear.

FRED : Jane—tell me at once—what's happened ?

JANE : You'll know all too soon, Fred dear. Julia *was* my friend—I have no intention of being disloyal.

FRED : Jane—tell me what's happened !

JANE (*sadly*) : I'm sorry, Fred, but I can tell you nothing. Julia may be double-faced, treacherous, and thoroughly immoral. But I repeat, she was my friend.

FRED (*relieved*): Oh, I see—you had a row last night, too.

JANE Yes, we did.

FRED What about ?

JANE I don't know—Julia spoke rather indistinctly.

FRED Do you know where she's gone now ?

JANE I have a shrewd suspicion, but my lips are sealed.

FRED Tell me at once !

JANE I can't possibly. I——(*She catches sight of MAURICE'S name on the telephone block. She gives a gasp of fury.*) Oh!—Oh!

FRED : What's the matter now ?

JANE : So she knew—all the time—Oh !

FRED (*frantically*) : Knew what ?

JANE : How dare she—how dare she—it's contemptible—it's—Oh———(*She takes up the telephone block and hurls it to the ground.*) The sneaking hypocrite ! Oh ! the despicable squalor of it all—to be deceived like that by one's best friend, and for such a sordid purpose.—Oh ! —Oh I—Oh ! (*She positively stamps with rage.*)

FRED *picks up the block and reads the name on it.*

FRED: Who's this ?

JANE : Don't speak to me—don't speak to me !

FRED : What does it mean ?

JANE : It means that Julia has deserted you, Fred.

FRED : Deserted me ?

JANE : Yes, she's gone off with that man Maurice Duclos—she's known him for years—long before you were married—in Italy.

FRED : Are you mad, Jane ?

JANE : No—I'm terribly sane.

FRED : You don't seriously expect me to believe that

Julia would leave me suddenly without rhyme or reason ?

JANE : She'd do anything ! She hasn't a single scruple or a pang of conscience anywhere—she'd lie, slander, forge, thief, murder, anything ! She's a thorough out-and-out bad lot—she's a—a——

JANE *bursts into violent tears.*

FRED : Pull yourself together, Jane, you're overwrought just because you've had a little row with Julia——

JANE : Go away—go away—leave me alone.

FRED : You know perfectly well you like her better than anyone else in the world, and always will.

JANE : Don't, Fred—stop !

FRED : I expect she's feeling just the same as you at this very moment.

JANE : Not she, she's far too busy.

FRED : Jane, do control yourself.

JANE (*making an effort*) : I came here first—even before going home—because I wanted to make up the row. I've had a wretched night all by myself in an hotel in Bayswater.

FRED : Why on earth Bayswater ?

JANE : Because the taxi man took me there. I'll tell you everything—it's awful. Julia and I were both drunk, and before we were married we both had an affair with the same man, and he's come to England, and we were terrified we'd fall in love with him again, and we worked ourselves up and waited for him, and Julia got grand after dinner, and ordered me out of the house, and I pretended I knew where he was and was going straight to him, and I went to the Granville Hotel, Bayswater.

FRED : Was he there ?

JANE : Don't be such a fool; of course he wasn't.

FRED : Where is he then ?

JANE: With Julia.

FRED : Impossible.

JANE : Nothing of the sort—here's his name in capitals on the telephone block and Saunders saw them go out together.

FRED : You say you both knew him in Italy before you married ?

JANE : Yes, Fred.

FRED : And you both——

JANE : Yes, Fred.

FRED : How dare you stand there and say "Yes, Fred "!

JANE : Well, it's true.

FRED : You appal me absolutely ! Your dreadful matter-of-fact callousness.—" Yes, Fred. " Oh, my God!

JANE : Don't be melodramatic.

FRED : Melodramatic ! It's horrible—awful——

JANE : You were playing the love song he used to sing to us both when I came in—" *Même les Anges succombent à l'amour*——"

FRED : I suppose you feel proud of yourself, having led Julia into that blackguard's clutches !

JANE : Led her ! Ha-ha—that's funny.

FRED : Yes, led her—deliberately. You've got a depraved mind.

JANE: You're insufferable and pompous, you like wallowing in a quagmire yourself and you think everybody else likes wallowing in a quagmire.

FRED : Don't be ridiculous. You ought to be

humble and ashamed instead of truculent.

JANE : Humble and ashamed. Why ? Do you expect me to believe you led a model life before marriage ?

FRED : That's beside the point.

JANE : No it isn't. If you had, Julia would never have married you at all; you'd have been too dull!

FRED (*shocked*) : Jane 1

JANE : Yes, it's no use going on like that—it's just silly—the great thing is what are you going to do now ?

FRED : Do ! I'm going to find Julia.

JANE : That'll be nice.

FRED : And you're coming with me.

JANE : Oh, no, I'm not. I've seen quite enough of Julia to last me for a long time.

FRED (*firmly*) : You're coming with me. (*He takes her arm.*)

JANE : Let go.

FRED : Come on.

JANE : I can't go like this.

FRED : You'll have to.

JANE (*losing all control and bursting into hysterical tears*) : Let me go—how dare you pull me about. Fred, Fred, let go at once——'

FRED : I'm quite determined.

JANE : Oh ! help ! help ! help !——

They struggle for a moment or two.

Re-enter JULIA and WILLY.

JULIA : Fred !

WILLY : Jane 1 Where have you been ?

JANE (*slowly—aghast*): It was *you* who went out with Julia and not—not——

JULIA (*coldly*) : Good morning, Jane.

JANE: Julia—Julia—I've done the most awful thing I

JULIA (*turning away*): I'm not at all surprised.

FRED (*to WILLY*): How did you get up here?

WILLY: I left by the early train.

JANE: Julia, you must listen—I haven't been where you think—I've been all by myself at an hotel in Bayswater.

JULIA: What?

JANE: I came back here to make it up with you and found Fred—and Saunders said you'd just gone out with a dark man, and then I saw that I (*She shows her telephone block.*)

JULIA (*under her breath*): What are we to do now? (*Loudly.*) Jane, I think it only fair for you to know that I have told Willy everything.

JANE: Julia!

JULIA: Yes, everything.

JANE: I've told Fred a good deal, too.

JULIA: Jane!

FRED: I want to get this cleared up, please. Willy, what has Julia told you?

WILLY: About Jane and a snivelling Frenchman in Venice.

JANE (*to JULIA*): Hypocrite!

WILLY: What's Jane told you?

FRED: About Julek and a Frenchman in Pisa.

JULIA (*to JANE*): I'll never look at you again as long as I live.

JANE (*hysterically*): It's not true, any of it—it's all a joke—we made it up between us—just to—just to——

FRED: She's lying. Julia, tell me the truth.

JULIA (*firmly*): Certainly I will—it's all a ridiculous

fuss about nothing. Jane and I have been perfectly faithful to you both—always.

WILLY : Before marriage ?

JANE : We couldn't be faithful to you before we met you, could we ?

FRED (*loudly*): Is this Frenchman story true ?

JULIA : Jane—Jane—I'm sorry, d'you hear ? I'm sorry for everything. We've got to stand together now ; they're going to be perfectly beastly.

JANE : All right. Willy, listen to me, I——

JULIA : Fred, you must listen——

SAUNDERS *enters*.

SAUNDERS (*announcing*): Mr. Maurice Duclos.

There is a dead silence. Enter MAURICE, beautifully dressed, most attractive, and exceedingly amiable.

SAUNDERS *goes out*.

MAURICE (*kissing JULIA'S hand*) : Julia ! Après sept ans—c'est émotionnant !

JULIA (*snatching her hand away*): Oh !

MAURICE (*kissing JANE'S hand*): Jane ! Je suis enchanté—ravi—Ma chère, Jane !

JANE (*helplessly*) : Julia !

JULIA (*beginning to laugh*): This is agony ! Sheer agony—— !

JANE (*with an effort*) : Willy, let me present Monsieur Duclos—my husband.

WILLY (*coldly*): Good morning.

MAURICE (*puzzled*) : How do you do.

JULIA (*hysterically*): My husband—Maurice, this is my husband.

MAURICE (*shaking FRED'S hand warmly*) : How do you do. I had no idea—I haven't seen Julia for so long——

WILLY (*sharply*): When did you last see Jane ?

MAURICE : I beg your pardon ?

JANE : Shut up, Willy !

JULIA : You speak English very well now.

MAURICE : Yes.—Seven years.—It seems like yesterday.

There is an awful silence.

JANE (*conversationally*) : Do you think we've changed ?

MAURICE : Not at all. (*To WILLY.*) I met your wife abroad, years ago. It is so strange renewing old friendships.

WILLY : Damned strange.

JANE: Willy!

MAURICE *raises his eyebrows slightly and looks at JULIA, who makes a meaning grimace at him.*

MAURICE (*to FRED*) : My first day in London—and look at it—it's too bad.

FRED : I should like to have a little chat with you sometime, Monsieur Duclos—there are several things ! want explained.

MAURICE : I shall be charmed.

There is another awful silence.

WILLY : I can't stand this any longer ! (*To MAURICE.*) Look here, you've arrived at a very opportune moment. We've just discovered——

MAURICE : What have you discovered ? (*He gives a quick glance at JULIA and JANE, who look appealingly at him. JANE grimaces wildly.*)

JULIA : I'll explain. Maurice, our husbands have found out that you and Jane and I were very intimate friends in Italy seven years ago. They've just found out this moment. I must apologise for their surly behaviour, but they're naturally upset.

MAURICE (*laughing*): *Mon Dieu !* It's succeeded beyond your wildest dreams, hasn't it ?

WILLY : What do you mean ?

JANE and JULIA *look at him blankly.*

MAURICE (*to JULIA, still laughing*): It was cruel of you to ask me here this morning—without warning me—cruel of you. It would serve you right if I gave you away.

FRED : You needn't trouble, they've done that for themselves.

MAURICE (*to JANE*): Please, please, let me tell them the truth now—it places me in such an embarrassing position.

JULIA (*eagerly*): Yes, yes—you'd better—tell them the truth——

JANE (*mystified*): I'm going mad !

JULIA : Be quiet, Jane.

WILLY : I'm afraid we know the truth; there's nothing much more to be said.

MAURICE : Do you love your wife, monsieur ?

WILLY : Mind your own business.

FRED : What do you mean ? What are you getting at ?

MAURICE (*to JULIA*): I have your permission to speak ?

JULIA : Yes—yes——

MAURICE : Well, I am afraid it has all been rather what you would call a " Put-up job " !

WILLY : Put-up job ?

MAURICE : Yes, you see I haven't known Jane and Julia for a very long while—we are great friends—they confide in me.

FRED: The hell they do !

MAURICE: You would make it much easier, monsieur, if you were not so angry. I give you my word there is nothing to be angry about.

WILLY: I'm glad you think so—we have rather a different sense of values in England.

MAURICE: An obvious remark, monsieur, and not very much to the point.

FRED: What is the point?

MAURICE: Has not the suspicion ever crossed your minds that here in England husbands take their wives a little too much for granted sometimes?

WILLY: So they ought to.

MAURICE: It is a little dull for the wives. In France, of course, it is all arranged so differently—there are so many diversions.

FRED: What are you trying to say?

MAURICE: Perhaps Jane and Julia require a bit more attention than you are prepared to give?

WILLY: Rubbish!

JANE: It isn't rubbish, is it, Julia?

JULIA: Certainly not.

MAURICE: You've been married now for how long?

JULIA *holds up five fingers behind FRED'S back—unperceived.*

Five years, is it not?

FRED: What I want to know is, whether this revolting story's true. Is it or isn't it?

MAURICE: Of course it isn't. We made a plan, Julia, Jane and I——

WILLY: Damned impertinence.

MAURICE (*ignoring him*): Five years brings one to rather a critical matrimonial period as a rule. The first

Romance is over—everything seems slightly " gauche ". Our plan was to rouse you up to a sense of your responsibilities—don't you see ?

FRED : That was extremely kind of you.

JULIA : Fred darling, don't be cross any more—it's all such absurd nonsense.

WILLY : I don't understand at all.

JULIA : We've muddled it so dreadfully—or at least you did by coming home unexpectedly—it's taken ail the wind out of our sails. Jane was going to break it to Fred that *Yd* run off with Maurice, and I was going to break it to Willy that *she'd* run off with Maurice—as it was you appeared much too early, before we were properly rehearsed. It's all so supremely ridiculous—please forgive us.

FRED (*to MAURICE*) : How long have you been in London ?

MAURICE : Three weeks.

FRED : Was this what you were hinting at when you said yesterday morning that you had a presentiment, and that I didn't love you any more ?

JANE (*laughing loudly*): Yes, don't you see ? She was paving the way; that's what she was doing!

JULIA : Shhhh, Jane !

JANE (*hysterically*): I won't shhh—it's so stupid, but we were right, it's cleared the air—they were much too sure of us—much, much, much, much, much too—
Oh dear——

JULIA : Would you like something to drink, Maurice ? Fred is still too flurried to be hospitable.

FRED : I'm sorry—it never struck me ! Whisky and soda ?

MAURICE : No, thank you—I really only came down

for a minute. I have the flat exactly above this one for a year.

JANE : Oh dear ! Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha———(*She sinks hysterically into a chair.*)

MAURICE : And Juha and Jane promised to help me choose an attractive cretonne for my curtains.

JULIA : Yes, we did, didn't we ? Pull yourself together, Jane.

MAURICE (*to* WILLY) : Perhaps you'd all come up—it's rather untidy at present—but you won't mind ?

WILLY : No, thanks, I've got to change.

MAURICE : They're sending for the patterns back at twelve o'clock.

JULIA : We'll come up now.

FRED : Look here, Julia, I——

JULIA : Would you rather I didn't, Fred ?

FRED : No, no—it's all right. (*To* MAURICE.) I must apologise to you for being so boorish. It was all very puzzling.

JULIA : Come on, Jane.

JANE (*still giggling weakly*) : Oh dear ! oh dear !——

MAURICE : Will you all lunch with me to-day ? It is so dull being alone.

WILLY : Thanks, but I think I——

FRED : Yes—it's very nice of you—we'd be delighted.

WILLY : Look here, I——

FRED : Shut up, Willy.

JULIA (*kissing* FRED) : You are a darling. Come along, Maurice—we shan't be more than ten minutes, Fred.

JANE : Don't be cross, Willy.

WILLY : I don't quite see why——

JANE : Don't try to see any more——

WILLY : But——

JANE : No more buts——

WILLY : But *why* are you in evening dress ?

JANE (*wildly*) : That was part of the plan, dear—you were to discover me dead drunk in the downstairs hall—we were going to rehearse this morning——

Exit with MAURICE and JULIA.

FRED (*beginning to laugh*): It's damned funny—it really is——

WILLY : What?

FRED : The way we arrived and wrecked their little game.

WILLY : But look here, Fred——

FRED : Have a drink ?

WILLY : All right.

FRED (*giving him drink*) : You never know what Jane and Julia will do next when they start discussing things analytically.

WILLY : It isn't what they'll do next—it's what they did last! Thanks.

FRED : I don't think he's a bad chap, that Frenchman——

WILLY : I wouldn't trust him an inch.

FRED (*laughing*): The lies they told !

WILLY : You seem to have completely wiped it from your mind seriously—the whole thing——

FRED : I never believed Jane from the first when she told me that lurid story about Italy.

WILLY : It seems very queer to me still.

FRED : Oh, dry up !

WILLY : But it does—even if they'd got away with their scheme—what good would it have done them ?

FRED : Made us jealous.

WILLY : Don't be an abject fool, Fred. He was bluffing us—the whole damned thing's true from beginning to end—I'm sure of it.

FRED: Why?

WILLY : I've never seen Jane hysterical like that before—she must have been upset over something——

FRED : Are you serious ?

WILLY : Yes, I am. Do you realise that we've let them both go up to his flat—alone ?

FRED (*startled*): Willy—I——

His speech is cut short by the sound of music above. They both listen. MAURICE'S voice can be plainly heard singing the last phrase of " Môme les Anges ". He is singing it with great feeling—" Je faime—je t'aime—je t'aime. " FRED and WILLY gaze at one another with stricken faces.

CURTAIN.



EASY VIRTUE



To
BASIL DEAN

DRAMATIS PERSONS

COLONEL WHITTAKER

MRS. WHITTAKER

JOHN

Their son,

MARION

Their eldest daughter.

HILDA

Their youngest daughter.

SARAH HURST

CHARLES BURLEIGH

PHILIP BORDON

FURBER

MR. HARRIS

NINA VANSITTART

THE HON. HUGH PETWORTH

BOBBY COLEMAN

LUCY COLEMAN

HENRY FURLEY

MARY BANFIELD

MRS. HURST

MRS. PHILLIPS

LARITA WHITTAKER

The action of the play takes place in the hall of COLONEL WHITTAKER'S bouse in the country.

ACT I

The WHITTAKERS' house is typical of wealthy upper-middle-class England. The furniture is good and the chintz obvious, but somehow right for the atmosphere. There are three French windows down the right-hand wall. A flight of stairs up L., with the lobby leading to the front door. Down L. double doors open into the dining-room. A big bureau where MRS. WHITTAKER does her accounts, etc., occupies a space between two of the windows. There is a comfortable sofa set in the centre', with a table behind it, on which are books and papers and flowers of some sort. A statuette of Venus de Milo on small pedestal L.

When curtain rises, it is a morning in early April. The hall looks quite gay with spring flowers, but rain can be seen beating against the windows.

MRS. WHITTAKER, attired in a tweed skirt, shirt-blouse, and a purple knitted sports-coat, is seated at her bureau. She is the type of woman who has the reputation of having been " quite lovely " as a girl. The stern repression of any sex emotions all her life has brought her to middle age with a faulty digestion which doesn't so much sour her temper as spread it. She views the world with the jaundiced eyes of a woman who subconsciously realises she has missed something, which means in point of fact that she has missed everything.

MARION is seated on the sofa, reading her letters. She is largely made and pasty, with big lymphatic eyes. In fifteen years' time she will have the reputation of having

been " quite lovely as a girl". Her clothes are *slightly* mannish.

COLONEL WHITTAKER is reading " The Times ". He is a grey-haired man of about fifty — his expression is generally resigned.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I've written a strong letter to Mrs. Phillips.

MARION : What have you said ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Listen. (*She reads.*) " Dear Mrs. Phillips — I feel it my duty to write to you with regard to the advisability of sending the unfortunate Rose Jenkins to London. As you know, she was in my service for a year, and I was quite convinced when I discharged her that a girl of her character could ultimately come to no good. I was therefore extremely surprised when I heard that you had engaged her. As you have appealed to me for advice in the matter, I suggest that you should get rid of her at once, as her presence in the village might quite conceivably corrupt the morals of the other girls. I will endeavour to use my influence with Mrs. Faddle, who, as you know, is a prominent member of the Y.W.C.A., and perhaps later on a respectable berth of some sort may be obtained for her. I sadly fear, however, that our efforts on her behalf will be useless, as recent unpleasant events prove that the wretched girl is entirely devoid of any moral responsibility.

"Sincerely yours,

"Mabel Whittaker. "

MARION : I must go and see Rose Jenkins and have a talk to her.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'm afraid you wouldn't do any good.

MARION : You never know. A straight-from-the-shoulder chat might make her see things in a better light.

COLONEL : Why not leave the poor girl alone ?

MARION : Because, father, if there's any chance of helping someone to see the truth, I consider it shirking to disregard the opportunity.

MRS. WHITTAKER : It's no use arguing with your father, Marion—he doesn't understand.

COLONEL : No, I don't. What is the truth ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : The truth is, Jim—that Rose Jenkins, by her immoral behaviour, has caused unpleasantness in the village, and therefore must suffer accordingly.

COLONEL : It's her own village—she was born here,

MRS. WHITTAKER : That's not the point.

COLONEL : Yes, it is—it's for her parents to decide what's to be done with her.

MARION : Mother's right, you know, father. It's better for her to be sent to London.

COLONEL : I'm glad you think so.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I wish you wouldn't be so tiresome, Jim dear. I'm sure I've enough worries and responsibilities without——

COLONEL : I fail to see that the Rose Jenkins business is any affair of yours—she isn't in your service any more.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I think we won't discuss it any further.

COLONEL : Very well, dear.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Do you think that letter's all right, Marion ?

MARION : Perfectly. You've put it very clearly.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Mrs. Phillips is so hopelessly lacking in stamina. (*She puts letter in envelope and sticks it down.*)

COLONEL : I'm going down to see Jackson for a minute.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You'd better tell him what we decided about that bed in front of the sundial.

COLONEL : All right. I suppose Hilda took the dogs with her to the post office, didn't she ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : I expect so—you'll probably meet her.

COLONEL WHITTAKER *goes out.*

MARION : Poor old father.

MRS. WHITTAKER : He's so fearfully annoying about things.

MARION : Edgar's exactly the same. Men never will see.

MRS. WHITTAKER : When is Edgar coming back ?

MARION : I don't know—I had a long letter from him this morning. It will mean another four or five months out there, I'm afraid.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Do you think he's really behaving himself ?

MARION : I had a straight talk with him the day before he sailed—I think I made him realise things a bit better.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Who would have imagined he'd turn out like that ?

MARION : Oh, Edgar's all right—it's his upbringing. We'll always be pals—he's not really a marrying man, you know. I think I realised that all along, and now I've found other things in life to occupy my mind, thank God!

MRS. WHITTAKER : It couldn't have been John's upbringing altogether—could it ?

MARION : John's different—he's exactly like father.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes, I'm afraid he is.

MARION : He was always weak, you know.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I've tried to shut my eyes to it.

MARION : It's no use doing that, mother—everything must be faced.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I lie awake at nights, wondering what's going to happen eventually.

MARION : You mustn't worry.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Worry ! It's on my mind always—naturally I've got over the first shock, to a large extent.

MARION : She may not be so bad, after all.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*bitterly*) : It's the greatest catastrophe that ever happened—your father's affairs were nothing to this—nothing.

MARION : Have you heard from John lately ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Not since that postcard two weeks ago.

MARION : He's bound to bring her home soon.

MRS. WHITTAKER : He's taken good care to explain nothing about her in his letters. If he hadn't been apprehensive of what we should think of her, he would have brought her home at once, instead of waiting three months.

MARION : He did say she was ill.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'll! Yes, I expect she was.

MARION : I'm glad I shall be here, anyhow.

MRS. WHITTAKER : So am I. I wouldn't have faced it alone—and Jim's no help ; he never has been, especially over anything of this sort.

MARION : Is Sarah coming to-day ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes ; she's bringing a man over to lunch—they've got a houseful of people.

MARION : I suppose she was broken-hearted when she heard ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : She was splendid ; she wrote me the sweetest letter—saying that John's happiness was the thing to be considered before anything else, and that she was sure it would all turn out wonderfully.

MARION : That was to comfort you.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes.

Enter HILDA. She possesses all the vivacity of a deficient sense of humour. She is nineteen, and completely commonplace.

HILDA : Here's a wire, mother—they gave it to me at the post office.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*startled*): A wire ?

HILDA (*giving it to her*) : They were going to send the boy with it, but I said, " Oh no, don't do that, because I'm just going straight through the village and round. "

MRS. WHITTAKER *reads it and closes her eyes.*

MARION : What it is ? What's the matter ? ... John ?

MRS. WHITTAKER (*nodding*) : Yes.

She gives it to her.

HILDA : Let me see—let me see. (*She cranes over MARION'S shoulder.*) To-day—this morning—they're arriving this morning !

MARION (*handing the wire back*): How typical of him.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*bowing her head*): This is terrible.

MARION : When was it handed in ?

HILDA (*snatching the wire from MRS. WHITTAKER*) : Ten-five. They must have sent it just as they were starting.

ACT I

EASY VIRTUE

MRS. WHITTAKER : Ring the bell, Hilda.

HILDA (*jumping up and doing so*): It's terrifically exciting.

MARION : Why on earth didn't he let you know before ? He must be mad ! Nothing's ready, or anything.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I've long ago given up expecting any consideration at Johnnie's hands.

MARION : Are you going to stick to your original plan about the schoolroom ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes.—Don't drum your heels, Hilda.

HILDA : I'm thrilled !

Enter FURBER.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Furber, Mr. John is arriving with his wife almost immediately. Will you see that fires are lit in the schoolroom and dressing-room ?

FURBER : Yes, ma'am.

MRS. WHITTAKER : If by any chance they're late, we'll wait lunch.

FURBER : Very good ma'am.

He goes out.

MARION : Sarah ! What about Sarah ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : What shall we do ? Put her off ?

MARION : She's bound to meet her sooner or later—

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes, but we don't know yet—what she's like.

MARION : Sarah doesn't matter—it might be a good thing for her to be here—in one way.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Go and find your father, Hilda.

HILDA : Where is he ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : With Jackson, I think. Also tell Jackson to send in some flowers at once.

HILDA : All right—lovely ! I'll arrange them.

She rushes off girlishly.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*putting out her hand*): Marion—I shall need your help—badly.

MARION (*patting her*) • Cheer up, mother.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I feel so unequal to it all to-day—I didn't sleep a wink last night, and I woke with a racking headache

MARION : Shall I get you some aspirin ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : No ; it wouldn't do me any good—the blow's fallen, you see—the blow's fallen.

MARION : Don't mother !

MRS. WHITTAKER : I feel as though I were going mad. John—my John—married to this—this—woman ! It's unthinkable.

MARION : She may be a good sort.

MRS. WHITTAKER : It's no good bolstering ourselves up—I know in my heart——

She cries a little.

MARION (*embracing her dutifully*): It will all come right in the end, mother, if only you have enough faith.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Faith ! All my life I've had to battle and struggle against this sort of thing. First your father—and now John—my only son. It's breaking my heart.

MARION : We must just put our trust in Divine Providence, dear. I'll have a straight talk to John. If she really is—well, quite hopeless—something must be done.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Nothing can be done—I tell you I know—she's got him, and she'll stick to him.

MARION : If she's the sort of woman we imagine, she's probably realised her mistake already.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Why should she have married him? Except for what she can get out of him—money and position. He's been made a fool of, just as your father was made a fool of—hundreds of times. We know she's older than John—I don't suppose there was any love, as far as she was concerned; she's just twisted him around her little finger.

MARION: It's no use upsetting yourself *now*—you must pull yourself together and face it bravely.

MRS. WHITTAKER: I thought he would at least have had the decency to give me fair warning.

MARION: I expect they came over from France yesterday.

Enter HILDA and COLONEL WHITTAKER.

HILDA: I've told father the news.

COLONEL: I suppose they're motoring down.

MARION: Yes.

HILDA: It was luck me going to the post office like that, wasn't it? I nearly as anything didn't go out at all this morning—what with the rain and everything.

COLONEL: Are their rooms ready?

MRS. WHITTAKER: I've told Furber to have tires lighted.

HILDA: It's too exciting for words—wondering what she'll be like.

MRS. WHITTAKER: (*bitterly*): I wish I could share your feelings.

HILDA: And it's so romantic—the old schoolroom being turned into a boudoir for John's wife.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Sitting-room, not boudoir.

HILDA: Sitting-room, then. Do you think she'll be dark or fair?

MRS. WHITTAKER: I don't know.

MARION : Do be quiet, Hilda.

HILDA : I think fair and larky !

MRS. WHITTAKER : I see no reason to suppose anything of the sort.

HILDA : But guessing at people is such fun—Jackie Coryton and I do it lots—she's awfully good at it. What do you think she'll be like, Marion ?

MARION : Stop asking absurd questions.

HILDA : I'm dying to see. I wonder if she drinks

MRS. WHITTAKER (*sharply*) : Hilda !

HILDA : Well, you never know—living abroad like that.

MARION : Can't you see mother's upset and doesn't want to be worried ?

COLONEL : I fail to see the object of working yourself up into a state before you've set eyes on her.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You wouldn't see, Jim, because you don't care—you never have cared. As long as you're comfortable you don't mind if your son goes to the dogs.

COLONEL : He had to marry somebody—she's probably a very interesting woman.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I've no doubt you'll find her so.

HILDA : She may be frightfully sweet.

MRS. WHITTAKER : When you've reached my age, Hilda, you'll probably realise that the sort of women who infest French watering-places are generally far from being "frightfully sweet".

HILDA : Cannes isn't exactly a French watering-place—I mean it's better than that—I mean everyone goes there.

COLONEL : Everything's changing nowadays, anyhow.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I fail to see that that makes the slightest difference.

MARION : Father means that social barriers are not quite so strongly marked now, and perhaps, after all——

MRS. WHITTAKER : I know quite well what your father means.

HILDA : But everybody's accepted so much more—I mean nobody minds so much about people—I mean——

MRS. WHITTAKER : You don't know what you mean—you don't know anything about it.

HILDA : But, mother——

MRS. WHITTAKER : Your attitude towards the whole affair is ridiculous, Hilda, and I'm surprised at you. *(She sniffs.)*

HILDA : Oh, mother, don't cry—it will only make your eyes all red——

FURBER *enters, with a tray on which there are some vases, a jug of water and some flowers.*

FURBER : Jackson sent these in just after breakfast, ma'am.

HILDA : These will be enough, mother. I'll arrange them.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Tell Jackson not to pick any more.

FURBER : Very good, ma'am. *(He goes out.)*

HILDA *pounces on the flowers with girlish enthusiasm.*

HILDA : Aren't they lovely ?—I expect she's used to orchids and things. These are so fresh—they'll be a gorgeous surprise.

MARION : We ought to warn Sarah—it might be a shock for her.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Yes—you'd better telephone.

MARION: I'll just say that we should like her to come, but if she feels that she'd rather not, we quite understand.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Don't splash that water all over the table, Hilda.

MARION: What's the number?

MRS. WHITTAKER: 60.

MARION (*at telephone*): Hullo—60, please.

HILDA (*conversationally*): I saw Mrs. Phillips coming out of Smith's.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*tidying up the papers on bureau*): Did you?

HILDA: She went over to talk to Mrs. Jenkins. Rose was peeling potatoes in the porch.

MARION: Hullo!—is that you, Sarah? It's Marion. Listen, old girl; prepare yourself for a shock. John's coming home with Larita, or whatever her name is, this morning.—Oh, I thought it would be rather. . . . I'm glad you feel like that, anyhow. We wanted to know if you'd come over to lunch just the same. . . . Yes, of course, bring him. . . . All right. Good-bye, old thing. (*She bangs up receiver.*) That's that.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Have you seen my glasses anywhere?

MARION: Aren't they on the desk?

MRS. WHITTAKER: They must have slipped down behind—

HILDA: Did Sarah seem upset?

MARION: She laughed.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*shocked*): Laughed!

MARION: I think she's pretending—even to herself—that she doesn't mind.

ACT I

E A S Y V I R T U E

MRS. WHITTAKER : If only everything had been different—it might have been Sarah he was bringing home.

HILDA : It wouldn't have been half so exciting.

MARION : I wish to Heaven it were. She's a damned good sort, that girl.

HILDA : What's the man's name who's coming over with her ?

MARION : Charles Burleigh.

HILDA : I'm dying for lunch—it's going to be too thrilling for words.

MARION (*finding glasses*): Here are your blinkers, mother.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*forcing a wan smile at MARION'S ebullient phraseology*) : Thank you, Marion.

COLONEL : I wonder how John's looking.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*jumping*) : What a fright you gave me, Jim. I'd forgotten you were here.

COLONEL : The return of the Prodigal is always such a momentous occasion, isn't it ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : I wish you wouldn't talk like that—it's not amusing.

COLONEL : I'm sorry. I thought perhaps a little light irony might alleviate the prevailing gloom.

MRS. WHITTAKER : If you think constant reminders of your callousness over the whole affair—

COLONEL : I'm not callous, Mabel; I'm just waiting with a more or less open mind.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*bitingly*) : Open mind !

HILDA : There—those look sweet, don't they ? I'll take them up.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Take the tray into the kitchen first.

HILDA : All right.

She rushes off with the fray.

MARION : What's the time ?

COLONEL : A quarterpast twelve—if I maybe so bold.

MARION : They might be here at any minute now.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'm going upstairs to look at the schoolroom. Tell Hilda to bring that other vase—I'll take these.

She goes upstairs.

COLONEL (*lighting his pipe*) : I'm glad your mother's getting cross. I prefer irritability to hysteria.

MARION : I don't think you're being very decent to mother, father.

COLONEL : You know, Marion, you're the only thoroughly Christian woman I've ever known who has retained her school-girl phraseology.

Re-enter HILDA, breathlessly.

HILDA : Where's mother ?

MARION : She's gone up to the schoolroom with the flowers. Will you take that other vase up ?

HILDA : All right. Don't you feel *terrifically* excited, father ?

COLONEL : Terrifically.

HILDA runs joyously upstairs with the vase.

MARION : Hilda's irrepressible.

COLONEL : How is Edgar ?

MARION : He's all right. Why do you ask—suddenly like that ?

COLONEL : I have such a friendly feeling for him since you broke off your engagement.

MARION : Do you imagine I don't see when you're sarcastic and bitter, father ? It's been growing lately. You're always saying unkind things.

ACT I

EASY VIRTUE

COLONEL : Am I ?

MARION : You must be very unhappy.

COLONEL : Perhaps that accounts for it.

MARION : Then you are ?

COLONEL : Do you want to have a straight talk to me, Marion ?

MARION : I suppose you despise me for trying to help other people ?

COLONEL : You and your mother are always trying to help lame dogs over stiles—even if they're not lame and don't want to go.

MARION : You don't appreciate mother.

COLONEL : I appreciate you both enormously.

MARION : Mother's played fair all her life, anyhow.

COLONEL : And I haven't. I quite see that.

MARION : I'm glad you admit it.

COLONEL : I'm surprised that you're glad—it generally annoys people to be agreed with.

MARION : Don't you ever think of other things, father ?

COLONEL : What sort of other things ?

MARION : You know quite well what I mean.

COLONEL : Don't try to save my soul, Marion. I can defend myself.

MARION : I don't mind your taunts a bit.

COLONEL : Good !

MARION : But mother does.

COLONEL : My dear girl, your mother stood by me through my various lapses from grace with splendid fortitude.

MARION : You realise that ?

COLONEL : I realise the fact but distrust the motive.

MARION : What motives could she possibly have had other than loyalty and affection ?

COLONEL : I don't believe you know.

MARION : I certainly don't.

COLONEL : Well, I won't disillusion you,

MARION : Father

COLONEL (*politely*): Yes ?

MARION : She needs your help and support now—badly.

COLONEL : Why ?

MARION : You can seriously stand there and ask why ?

COLONEL : She has built up in her mind a black-hearted monster of a woman who has enslaved her babe, and she expects me to combine in a superhuman effort to oust her.

MARION : Nothing of the sort, father.

COLONEL : As I said before, I'm waiting with an open mind—and whatever John's wife is or has been, I shall do my utmost to make her happy and comfortable here.

Re-enter MRS. WHITTAKER and HILDA.

HILDA : The car's coming up the drive—I saw it from the landing window.

MARION : Now for it!

MRS. WHITTAKER (*appealingly*): Jim.

COLONEL (*amiably*) : Yes, dear ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Nothing—it doesn't matter.

HILDA : Oh, I wonder what she'll be like—I wonder—

COLONEL : We shall soon see.

They wait in silence. Then JOHN bursts in. He is young, good-looking, with great charm ; his eagerness is perhaps a shade overdone.

JOHN : Mother !

He kisses her.

MRS. WHITTAKER : But, John, where——

JOHN : She's still in the car—powdering her nose. She said she wanted me to get the first joys of reunion over. Father!

He shakes hands with the COLONEL.

COLONEL : I'm glad you're back, John.

JOHN : I do so hope you'll like her.

He kisses MARION and HILDA.

HILDA : I know I shall.

JOHN : I feel terrified. It will be so wonderful if you do like her, and so awful if you don't.

MRS. WHITTAKER : It's a little late to think of that now.

JOHN (*his facefalling*) : Mother !

LARITA *comes in. She is tall, exquisitely made-up and very beautiful—above everything, she is perfectly calm. Her clothes, because of their simplicity, are obviously violently expensive ; she wears a perfect rope of pearls and a small close travelling-hat.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : How-do-you-do.

LARITA (*taking both her hands*): How-do-you-do seems so hopelessly inadequate, doesn't it, at a moment like this ? But perhaps it's good to use it as a refuge for our real feelings.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*coldly*): Did you have a nice crossing yesterday ?

LARITA (*sensing her attitude and smiling emptyly*) : Perfectly horrible.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'm so sorry. This is my eldest daughter, Marion,—and Hilda. No doubt you've heard John speak of them.

LARITA (*shaking hands with MARION*) : But of course I

have—hundreds of times. (*She kisses HILDA.*) You're like Johnnie, you know.

The family wince at the diminutive.

MRS. WHITTAKER : And this is my husband.

LARITA (*shaking hands with the COLONEL*) : You looked dazed—I suppose I'm very unlike what you expected—or perhaps not ?

COLONEL : I'm delighted to welcome you home.

LARITA (*gratefully*) : Oh, thank you.

HILDA (*excitedly*): You're not a bit like what I expected.

LARITA : I'm very much older, probably. (*She looks at MRS. WHITTAKER.*) I'm awfully sorry about that.

JOHN : Don't be silly, Lari.

LARITA : There *have* been a good many happy marriages even though——

JOHN : It doesn't matter how many there have or haven't been, as long as ours is.

LARITA : That's right, Johnnie darling.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You must be tired after your journey. Perhaps you'd like to go upstairs.

HILDA (*eagerly*): We've turned the old schoolroom into a boudoir for you.

LARITA : How divine ! It will be full of memories of Johnnie as a grubby little boy.

COLONEL : I'm sure you'd rather smoke one cigarette and get to know us all a little better first.

He offers her his case.

LARITA (*smiling*) : You're right—I should. Do you mind if I smoke one of my own ? I have a special kind. Try one. (*She produces a beautiful case.*)

COLONEL (*taking one*) : Thanks.

LARITA (*looking round*) : Would anyone else like one ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : No, thank you.

LARITA (*sitting down*) : You know, it's such a relief being here at last. I've been wondering so frightfully what it was going to be like——

The COLONEL lights her cigarette.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'm so sorry it's such bad weather.

LARITA : The house looked fascinating from outside—I'm longing to go all over it.

JOHN : I'll take you after lunch.

LARITA : I want Mrs. Whittaker to show it to me.

JOHN : Oh, Lari darling, not Mrs. Whittaker. It's mother now.

LARITA : Not quite yet, Johnnie—I don't think.

MARION : Did you get down without any mishaps ?

LARITA : Yes, it was a perfect run.

HILDA : Have you ever been in England before ?

LARITA : Oh yes, several times. I used to come here a lot with my first husband.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Your first husband ?

LARITA : Yes.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*stiffening*) : I never realised you had been married before. John told us so little.

LARITA : That was awfully tiresome of you, Johnnie.

JOHN : He was a perfect brute to her, mother.

MRS. WHITTAKER : How dreadful! It must have been almost a relief when he died.

LARITA : He didn't die—he divorced me.

MARION (*horror-struck*) : Divorced you !

LARITA : Yes, I ran away. I was very young and silly—I should have waited, shouldn't I ? and borne it stoically. It would have been braver.

JOHN : I don't see that at all. He was an absolute devil.

HILDA : I think it's the most thrilling thing I've ever heard!

LARITA : It does sound picturesque now.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I suppose you went back to your parents ?

LARITA : No—I couldn't go as far as that. They were both dead.

COLONEL (*kindly*) : It's awfully nice of you to tell us this.

LARITA : Johnnie ought to have explained it all, really—it would have cleared the way.

JOHN : You can't write things like that in letters.

MRS. WHITTAKER : No, I suppose not.

LARITA (*to* MRS. WHITTAKER) : You must have been very anxious and surprised and worried. We should have come home at once, only I stupidly got ill—pleurisy, you know. I've had it before—perfectly infuriating.

MARION : Beastly thing, pleurisy.

LARITA : But Johnnie was absolutely wonderful to me, and here we are at last. Can your butler speak French ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : I beg your pardon ?

LARITA : I say, can your butler speak French ? You see, my maid——Do go and rescue Louise, Johnnie ; she's probably having a bad time.

JOHN : All right. Take Lari up, mother. (*He goes off.*)

HILDA : No, let me—do let me.

LARITA : I should love you to.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I hope you'll find everything quit comfortable.

LARITA : I'm sure I shall. Come along, Hilda.

She takes her band.

HILDA : I've put some flowers up there, but the rooms aren't very warm yet, I'm afraid. You see, the fires have only just been lighted.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I think perhaps I'd better come.

LARITA : No, please don't trouble. Hilda will look after me perfectly all right—won't you Hilda ?

HILDA (*eagerly*) : Rather. Do let me, mother.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Very well. Lunch will be ready quite soon.

LARITA (*as she goes upstairs with HILDA*) : Lovely. I'm ravenous. I was too excited to eat any breakfast.

They go off. There is silence for a moment.

MARION : She seems a good sort—I like her.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Do you, Marion ?

MARION : Don't you ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : She's exactly what I expected—in every detail. (*She turns away.*)

COLONEL : Surely not in *every* detail ? She wasn't drunk——

MRS. WHITTAKER : Jim, please !

MARION : Father—how can you say things like that ?

COLONEL : Larita's an extraordinarily pretty name.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Excellent for musical comedy.

She turns her back and goes over to the window.

JOHN *enters, and sees that LARITA has gone.*

JOHN (*eagerly*) : Well ?

COLONEL : I congratulate you, John.

JOHN (*shaking his hand violently*) : Oh, father, thank you—I—*am* glad !

MARION : I hope you managed the French maid all right ?

JOHN : Oh yes. I'm used to her. Mother———(*He goes to her.*)

MRS. WHITTAKER (*turning and kissing him without warmth*) : Well, John, I hope you'll be very happy.

JOHN : I am, mother—frightfully.

MRS. WHITTAKER : She's very beautiful.

JOHN : Do you think so, honestly ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes, of course.

JOHN : And you've no idea what a darling she is. All the time she was ill she was splendid—so brave and everything.

MARION : Is she a Catholic ?

JOHN (*nonplussed*) : I say—I'm afraid I don't know. You see, we weren't married in church.

MARION : Oh!

JOHN (*Bulling himself together*): What a fool I am! She's a Catholic, of course ; I remember now.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Sarah's coming over to lunch.

JOHN : Is she ? How ripping. I've been longing to see her again. I want her to meet Lari, too.

MRS. WHITTAKER : The Hursts have been entertaining a lot this winter. Sarah's been very much in demand. They gave a most successful dance in London.

JOHN : Good old Sarah !

MRS. WHITTAKER : If you've got any aspirin in your room, Marion dear, I should like some. My headache's rather bad.

MARION : All right. Will you come up, or shall I fetch it ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'll come up.

JOHN : I'm so sorry, mother. I suppose I ought to have let you know before that we were coming.

MRS. WHITTAKER : It doesn't matter.

JOHN : I did so want it to be a surprise.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I hope you'll see that your—
Larita has everything she wants, John.

JOHN : Rather ! Thanks, mother,—of course I will.

MRS. WHITTAKER : That's right.

She goes upstairs with MARION.

JOHN : I suppose mother's upset, isn't she ?

COLONEL : A little, I think.

JOHN : You think she'll get over it, though, don't
you ?

COLONEL : I expect so. Don't worry.

JOHN : It must have been an awful shock for her—
for you both.

COLONEL : My dear boy, this sort of thing's always
a shock—it's unavoidable.

JOHN : You like Lari, though, don't you, father ?

COLONEL : She seems charming.

JOHN : Oh, she is—she's more than that—she's
wonderful.

COLONEL : She's older than I thought.

JOHN : Yes, but that doesn't matter really, does it ?—
I mean if people really care for one another.

COLONEL : I don't know. It might—later on.

JOHN (*haltingly*) : You mean—children ?

COLONEL : Not altogether.

JOHN : I don't suppose we shall have any children.

COLONEL : No—I don't suppose you will.

JOHN : But Marion's married, and Hilda will be
soon.

COLONEL (*gently*) : That's not quite the same thing, is
it ?

JOHN : Are you cut up about it ?

COLONEL : What's the use of being cut up, John ?
When a thing's done, you've got to stand by it.

JOHN : Father—I do love her terribly ; she's my life's happiness.

COLONEL : That's all right, then. Run up and look after her—she's probably feeling a little shattered.

JOHN : All right. Thanks, father.

He goes upstairs, two at a time.

The COLONEL sighs, takes "The Times" and goes off into the library.

FURBER *enters, followed by SARAH HURST and CHARLES BURLEIGH. SARAH is boyish and modern and attractive. CHARLES BURLEIGH is a pleasant-looking man somewhere between thirty and forty.*

SARAH : Where's everybody, Furber ?

FURBER : I don't know, miss, Mr. and Mrs. John have just arrived. They're probably all upstairs. I'll tell them you're here.

SARAH : No, don't do that—we'll wait.

FURBER : Very good, miss.

SARAH : How's your neuritis, Furber ?

FURBER : It's been rather bad, miss.

SARAH : I meant to bring you over that stuff, but I forgot. I'll send it to-night.

FURBER : Thank you very much, miss.

He goes out.

CHARLES : I suppose this is a slightly momentous day in the lives of the Whittakers.

SARAH : Very momentous.

CHARLES : Is your heart wrung with emotion ?

SARAH (*lightly*): Don't be a beast, Charles.

CHARLES : I think it's spirited of you to come.

SARAH : I want to see her.

CHARLES : I feel secretly embarrassed—as though I oughtn't to be here at all.

SARAH : Nonsense—you're moral backing for me.

CHARLES : Thank you, Sarah,—it's an attractive role.

SARAH : I wasn't really officially engaged to John—
it was just a sort of understood thing.

CHARLES : I see.

SARAH : And I've had a nice three months to get
over being upset about it.

CHARLES : And you have?

SARAH : Entirely.

CHARLES : Well, that's a comfort, isn't it ?

SARAH : A great comfort.

CHARLES : Shall we be discovered intimately looking
over the *Tatler* together ?

SARAH : No—that would be overdoing it.

CHARLES : Perhaps it would.

SARAH : I'm extremely hungry.

CHARLES : That's a healthy sign.

SARAH : Whatever she's like, you must be awfully
nice, and pay a lot of attention to her.

CHARLES : Certainly.

SARAH : I think I'm going to get the giggles.

CHARLES : For Heaven's sake, don't.

SARAH : It is funny, you know.

CHARLES (*gloomily*) : Excruciatingly.

SARAH : You'll realise just *how* funny it is when you
see Mrs. Whittaker.

CHARLES : I shall try to control myself.

SARAH : And Marion.—Oh, dear Marion !

CHARLES : Shut up, Sarah—you're unnerving me

SARAH : I can't help it.

She giggles hopelessly.

CHARLES : Pull yourself together. Someone's coming.

HILDA *rushes downstairs.*

HILDA : Sarah !

SARAH : Hullo !

HILDA (*breathlessly*) : Oh, Sarah, she's too beautiful for words !

SARAH : No, really.

HILDA : And the most heavenly clothes.

SARAH : This is Mr. Burleigh—Hilda Whittaker.

HILDA (*shaking hands*) : How-do-you-do. We're all fearfully excited, you know—John's new wife just arrived.

CHARLES : Yes ; Sarah told me.

HILDA : She's got a scream of a French maid—I nearly died !

SARAH : How's Mrs. Whittaker ?

HILDA : She's got a headache. John's talking to her in her room. I've got to dash down to the garage to give a message to the chauffeur—he's a new man. Come with me.

She proceeds to drag her hand.

SARAH : I can't leave poor Charles all alone.

HILDA (*persistently*) : You must—it's only for a minute. I've got such lots to tell you.

SARAH : All right. Do you mind, Charles ?

CHARLES : Very much.

HILDA : She shan't be long—honestly. I haven't seen Sarah for ages, and I shan't get another opportunity of talking to her.

SARAH (*laughing*) : Charles is such a timid man, it'll do him good. Come on.

CHARLES : Here, I say—Sarah—

SARAH : We shan't be very long !

She goes off with HILDA.

CHARLES (*alone*) : Oh, God!

He wanders about the hall, then finally sits down on the sofa with the "Tatler".

LARITA *comes downstairs, having taken off her hat and generally reinstated herself.*

CHARLES *rises to his feet.*

LARITA : Oh, how-do-you-do.

CHARLES (*shaking hands*) : How-do-you-do.

LARITA : Arc you lunching here ?

CHARLES : Yes ; I came over with Sarah Hurst. I'm staying with them—a few miles away.

LARITA : I've heard Johnnie speak of them.

CHARLES : You've only just arrived, haven't you ?

LARITA : Yes, this morning. We came over from Paris yesterday. (*There is a slight pause.*)

CHARLES : It's always rather an anti-climax, isn't it ?—arriving anywhere.

LARITA : Why ? Do I look bored ?

CHARLES : Not at all.

LARITA : I know what you mean, though ; one feels sort of dead.

CHARLES : It's only temporary.

LARITA : Oh yes—I hope so.

CHARLES : Do you know if anyone else is lunching ?

LARITA : Only you and Miss Hurst, I believe—outside of the family.

CHARLES : Good!

LARITA : Why do you say " Good " so emphatically ?

CHARLES : It must be bad enough for you to have to meet a bunch of brand-new relations—let alone total strangers. I feel quite an interloper.

LARITA : Please don't. I don't mind meeting new people a bit—on the contrary, it's rather a comfort, in a way—it eases things a little.

CHARLES (*offering case*) : Will you smoke ?

LARITA : I'll smoke one of my own, if you don't mind. I get a bad throat if I change. I smoke far too much.

She fakes a cigarette out of her case.

CHARLES (*lighting hers and his own*) : That's an enchanting case.

LARITA : It *is* a darling.

CHARLES : Carrier ?

LARITA : No ; Lacloche. I've had it for years.

CHARLES : Were you in Paris long ?

LARITA : Only a week. I had to get some new clothes and fortify myself.

CHARLES : Naturally.

LARITA : Where is everybody ?

CHARLES : I don't know.

LARITA : They're discussing their first impressions of me, I expect. It must be horrid for them.

CHARLES : I don't see why.

LARITA (*smiling*) : You do—perfectly well.

CHARLES : I suppose it's always rather a shock for people when their sons marry.

LARITA : Do you know Johnnie ?

CHARLES : No.

LARITA : He's an angel.

CHARLES : I don't know any of them- I'm more of a stranger than you.

LARITA : I'm so glad. It gives us a sort of bond in common, doesn't it ?

CHARLES : Yes.

LARITA : Tell me about Sarah Hurst.

CHARLES : How shall I begin ?

LARITA : Don't look apprehensive. I know about

her and Johnnie—when they were young, and everything.

CHARLES : She's a charming girl—unaffected.

LARITA : Thank God for that.

CHARLES : Not very emotional—and quite a sense of humour.

LARITA : I'm looking forward to seeing her.

CHARLES : Are you ?

LARITA : No.

CHARLES (*laughing outright*) : I quite understand.

LARITA : I know you do. Is she pretty ?

CHARLES : Not exactly. More attractive than piety.

LARITA : Dark or fair ?

CHARLES : Fairish. She's rather like a young edition of a very old friend of mine. She lives in Paris. I wonder if you've met her.

LARITA : Who ?

CHARLES : Cécile de Vriaac.

LARITA (*delighted*) : Cécile ! Do you know Cecile ?

CHARLES : I've known her for years.

LARITA : How extraordinary ! What's your name ?

CHARLES : Charles Burleigh.

LARITA : Of course ! She has shown me snapshots of you. I knew I recognised your face, somehow. She is such fun, isn't she ?

CHARLES : I'm devoted to her.

LARITA : And Freddy I

CHARLES : Oh Freddy !

They both laugh.

LARITA : That's all over now.

CHARLES : No ?—Is it ?

LARITA : Yes—last August, in Venice—or rather the Lido, to be accurate.

CHARLIE : I don't wonder. That beach would kill any passion.

LARITA : You know Zushic Wincott, of course ?

CHARLES : Rather ! What's become of her ?

LARITA : I tremble to think—judging by the way she was behaving in Cannes at Christmas.

CHARLES : With George, I suppose ?

LARITA : No, not *with* George—at George.

CHARLES : Poor old Zushie ! She's rather a dear, really.

LARITA : She's so utterly uncontrolled—always making scenes. I loathe scenes.

CHARLES : You first met John at Cannes, didn't you ?

LARITA : Yes. He'd been Banco-ing recklessly and losing everything. I was well up on the day, so I lent him some plaques, and it changed his luck.

CHARLES : In more ways than one.

LARITA : I wonder.

CHARLES : I'm sure of it.

LARITA : It's sweet of you to say so. I'm dreadfully fond of him you know

CHARLES : I can see that.

LARITA : Can you ? How ?

CHARLES : By the way you talk of him.

LARITA : He's awfully young and—well, almost ingenuous sometimes. I think that must have been what attracted me to him at first—it was refreshing.

CHARLES (*nodding*): Yes.

LARITA : And then we kept on meeting, you know. Cannes is a small place—and I was so tired of everybody.

CHARLES : People run dreadfully in grooves.

LARITA : Always the same faces—and the same expressions and the same motives.

CHARLES : Motives ?

LARITA : You know what I mean.

CHARLES : Yes.

LARITA : It's amusing and fun for a little while, and then one begins to realise that perhaps—after all—it's a trifle cheap.

CHARLES : It's certainly astonishing how quickly one becomes disillusioned over everything.

LARITA : Everything ?

CHARLES : Well, practically everything.

LARITA (*with a sigh*) : Yes, that's true.

CHARLES : Are you going to live here indefinitely ?

LARITA (*slowly*): I don't know. Through the summer, anyhow.

CHARLES : I hope you'll be very happy.

LARITA : Thank you. (*She looks out of the window.*) I wish it wasn't raining.

CHARLES : There's a ridiculous picture of Harry Leftwich in the *Tatler*, walking along the terrace at Monte Carlo with that dark woman who went to share a studio with Maud Callish in the Rue Bonaparte.

LARITA : Oh, Suzanne—do let me see—Suzanne Fellini——

She comes over to the sofa, and they both bend over the "Tatter".

CHARLES (*finding it*): There.

LARITA : Yes, that's Suzanne—doesn't she look fierce ? It's so absurd when people are photographed with their legs sticking straight out in front of them like that.

CHARLES (*laughing*): Poor dears !

LARITA : Oh, do look at her hat.

They both laugh a good deal.

MRS. WHITTAKER *comes downstairs, followed by JOHN and MARION.* MRS. WHITTAKER'S *face freezes slightly.* CHARLES *gets up.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : How-do-you-do. You are Mr. Burleigh ?

CHARLES (*calmly*) : Yes; your youngest daughter came and spirited Sarah away. I don't know where they've gone.

JOHN (*going to LARITA*) : I couldn't think where you were, Larita.

LARITA : I thought everyone was down here.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*to LARITA*) : I suppose you and Mr. Burleigh have introduced yourselves ?

LARITA : Oh yes ; we've discovered lots of mutual friends.

MRS. WHITTAKER : How nice. (*To CHARLES.*) This is my eldest daughter.

CHARLES (*shaking hands*): How-do-you-do.

MRS. WHITTAKER : And my son.

JOHN : How are you ? (*He also shakes hands.*)

HILDA and SARAH *re-enter.*

SARAH (*kissing MRS. WHITTAKER*) : Hilda dragged me off to see a perfectly strange chauffeur. Have you all met Charles ?

CHARLES : Yes, you're too late—it's all over.

SARAH : Hallo, John—I'm terribly pleased to see you.

JOHN (*taking her hand*) : Sarah, I want you to meet my wife, Larita. I do hope you'll be friends

LARITA (*shaking hands*) : I hope so, too.

SARAH : Of course we shall. You're utterly different from what I imagined.

ACT I

E A S Y V I R T U E

LARITA (*smiling*) : Am I really ?

SARAH (*laughing*): Yes—I pictured you fair and fluffy.

LARITA : How absurd !

FURBER *enters*.

FURBER : Lunch is served.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Let's all go in, then. Tell the Colonel, Furber.

FURBER : Yes, ma'am.

The COLONEL enters.

HILDA : Come on, father; lunch is ready.

SARAH *takes LARITA'S arm and walks into the dining-room with her. LARITA throws a look over her shoulder at CHARLES, who smiles. Everyone goes in talking. FURBER wags, and then follows them, closing the folding doors after him.*

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE : *Three months have passed since Act I. It is a warm summer day—warm for England, anyhow—which means that unless you hurl yourself about on tennis-courts or indulge in some sort of strenuous exercise all the lime, you get extremely cold. The sun-awning has been let down over the veranda.*

LARITA *is lying on the sofa, reading "Sodom and Gomorrah", by Marcel Proust. Outside in the garden tennis noises can be heard, occasional shouts and laughter. LARITA throws her cigarette-end out on to the veranda, but it goes on the carpet, so she has to get up and throw it again, which she does with a slight display of temper. She lights herself another and lies down again; then discovers that Marcel Proust has eluded her and is reclining carelessly on the bureau. With an expression of resigned fury she gets up again and fetches it. When she is once more ensconced on the sofa, MRS. WHITTAKER enters.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : Why don't you go and watch the tennis, Larita ?

LARITA : The excitement's so intense, my nerves won't stand it.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*at window*) : I wish you wouldn't throw cigarette-ends on to the veranda; it looks so untidy. (*She picks it up and throws it into the garden.*)

LARITA : I'm sorry.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Fancy lying indoors on a lovely day like this.

LARITA : It's very chilly outside.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Not in the sun.

LARITA : I get a headache if I sit in the sun.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I wonder you don't play tennis with the others.

LARITA : I'm so awfully bad that it annoys everybody.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You'd soon improve if you practised.

LARITA : I don't know that the end would altogether justify the means.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Have you seen Marion ?

LARITA : Not since lunch.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I wonder where she is.

LARITA : Upstairs, I think.

MRS. WHITTAKER : She had a letter from Edgar this morning.

LARITA : Did she ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : He's coming home.

LARITA : How lovely.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*shooting a suspicious glance at her*) : You've never met him ?

LARITA : Never. I meant it was lovely for Marion that he was coming home—not for me.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Where's Jim ?

LARITA : He went out, I think.

MRS. WHITTAKER : How irritating ! I wanted to talk to him particularly.

LARITA : Perhaps he didn't know.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I think we shall have to get ml of Jackson.

LARITA : What a pity ! He seems such a nice man.

MRS. WHITTAKER : He's been neglecting the garden disgracefully.

LARITA : It must be awfully difficult to be a gardener.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'm worried to death about to-night.

LARITA : I'm so sorry. Why ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : If it's wet we can't have the buffet on the veranda.

LARITA : Perhaps it will be fine.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Only half the things I ordered have arrived from Fortnum's.

LARITA : Can I do anything ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : No, thank you, Larita. I'm quite used to all responsibilities of this sort falling on to my shoulders. The children are always utterly inconsiderate. Thank Heaven, I have a talent for organisation.

She goes out with a martyred expression. LARITA,
with a sigh, once more plunges into her book, Enfer
MARION, *downstairs.*

MARION : Hallo ! old thing. Why aren't you watching the tennis ?

LARITA : I'm afraid of discouraging them.

MARION : Have you seen mother ?

LARITA : Yes, she's just gone into the garden.

MARION : I think she's getting a bit fussed about to-night.

LARITA : She has a talent for organisation.

MARION : Things are certain to turn out all right, if you don't worry about 'em.

LARITA : That must be a very comforting philosophy.

MARION : You seem a bit snappy, old girl. Has anything upset you ?

LARITA (*putting down her book*) : I'm sorry—I didn't

mean to be snappy. What shall we talk about ?

MARION : I'm afraid I haven't time to talk now—too many things to see to. You know, only half the stuff's arrived from Fortnum's.

LARITA : Why not telephone them ?

MARION : I have.

LARITA : Are they sending the rest down ?

MARION : Yes.

LARITA : Well, that's all right, then, isn't it ?

MARION : Have you seen father ?

LARITA : He went out, I think.

MARION : Typical of him to shelve everything on to mother and me.

LARITA : Perhaps he'll come back soon bristling with ideas.

MARION : I think mother's wrong about having the buffet on the veranda—it's sure to rain. (*She goes out.*)

LARITA *lies back and closes her eyes. She is about to read again when JOHN rushes in from the garden, very hot.*

JOHN : Hullo ! Why don't you come and watch the tennis

LARITA : There seems to be a conspiracy among everybody to lead me on to that very exposed tennis-court.

JOHN : Well, you needn't come if you don't want to.
He begins to go upstairs.

LARITA : Where are you going ?

JOHN : To get Sarah's sweater—she left it in the schoolroom before lunch.

LARITA : You might bring down my fur coat.

JOHN : Fur coat ? What on earth for ?

LARITA : I'm cold.

JOHN : I don't wonder—lying about indoors all day.

LARITA : Don't be intolerant, darling.

JOHN *goes off.*

LARITA *bites her lip and looks extremely unhappy. After a moment JOHN returns, with SARAH'S sweater over one arm and LARITA'S coat over the other.*

JOHN: Here you are. (*He gives it to her.*)

LARITA : Thank you, Johnnie. (*She puts it on.*)

JOHN : You wouldn't be cold if you took some exercise.

LARITA : Come for a walk with me.

JOHN (*irritably*): How can I ? We're in the middle of a set.

JOHN *goes out.*

LARITA (*calling*): Johnnie !

JOHN (*reappearing*) : What is it ?

LARITA (*hopelessly*) : Nothing. It doesn't matter.

JOHN *goes out.*

LARITA *sits on the sofa, her fur coat round her and her chin cupped in her hands ; her eyes fill with tears, so she takes a handkerchief from her bag and blows her nose.*

COLONEL WHITTAKER *enters. He regards her thoughtfully for a moment.*

COLONEL : Hullo ! What's the matter ?

LARITA (*jumping*) : Oh—I never heard you.

COLONEL : You seem plunged in gloom.

LARITA (*lightly*): It's only a mood.

COLONEL : Cheer up.

LARITA : You won't ask me why I'm not watching the tennis, will you ?

COLONEL : No, my dear. Nor will I inquire why you

are wearing your fur coat—the reasons are obvious: you are bored and cold.

LARITA : Exactly.

COLONEL : Shall we play bezique ?

LARITA (*shuddering*): No, thank you.

COLONEL : Do. It's such a thrilling game.

LARITA : I don't remember how——

COLONEL : Neither do I—that will give it an added piquancy.

He goes to the bottom drawer of the bureau & produces a bézique set.

LARITA (*laughing*) : You really are absurd.

COLONEL : Stay where you are, and I'll bring up this dear little table. (*He does so.*)

LARITA : It is sweet, isn't it ?

COLONEL (*sitting down opposite her*): I forget how to deal. It's either nine or thirten.

LARITA : I believe it's eleven.

COLONEL (*dealing her two cards and himself two*) : Turn them up.

LARITA (*turning them up*): Card.

COLONEL (*turning bis up*) : Nine.

LARITA : I'm more used to this sort of bezique.

He deals out four more cards.

Turning up eight.

Eight.

COLONEL (*passing her the pack*): There now.

LARITA (*dealing*): I feel my nostrils quivering like a war-horse.

COLONEL : Card, please.

LARITA (*Turning up her cards*) : Useless.

COLONEL : Are you preparing to have a run ?

LARITA : Certainly.

She deals again.

COLONEL (*turning up*): Eight.

LARITA (*also turning up*): I'm so sorry—nine !

COLONEL: Devil,

LARITA (*foaling again*): Faites vos jeux.

COLONEL (*turning up*): Carte.

LARITA: Nine I

COLONEL: Lucky at cards, unlucky——

LARITA: Don't say that to me—it's a malicious treason.

She deals again.

COLONEL: Carte.

LARITA (*giving him one and herself one*): Now then.

COLONEL: Damn!

LARITA: Nine!

COLONEL: There's something underhand about this.

LARITA: I shall have you turned out of the Casino if you accuse me of cheating.

COLONEL: One more go, please.

LARITA (*dealing*): There !

COLONEL: Eight.

LARITA (*laughing*): My poor friend ! Nine.

COLONEL (*hurling the pack on to the floor*): Disgusting.

LARITA: Don't be a cad !

They both go down on to the floor and proceed to pick up the cards.

COLONEL: I should like to get a shoe and a couple of seedy croupiers, and start a gambling-hell in this village.

LARITA: It would be grand.

MRS. WHITTAKER *enters*.

MRS. WHITTAKER: What on earth are you doing ?

COLONEL: Gambling.

LARITA : I'm afraid the Colonel forgot he was an English gentleman, and lost his temper.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Have you been down to the village, Jim ?

COLONEL : Yes.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Well, all I can say is, you might have told me you were going—you could have seen Harry about fixing the Japanese lanterns.

COLONEL : I did see Harry.

MRS. WHITTAKER : What did he say ?

COLONEL : He's coming up at half-past five.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Well, I think you might have let me know.

Going. She goes upstairs.

COLONEL : It is *such* fun giving a dance.

LARITA : You must control your excitement.

COLONEL : There, that's all, I think. (*He rises.*)

LARITA : There's an angry Queen of Hearts secreting herself under the sofa. (*She retrieves if and rises.*) I feel better now, thank you.

COLONEL : Splendid.

LARITA : Who's coming to-night ?

COLONEL : The county. You'll see dresses that will make your mouth water.

LARITA : I must be careful—it will be my social debut.

COLONEL : What will you wear ?

LARITA : Something non-committal and austere.

COLONEL : Not black ?

LARITA : No—that would clash with the Dowager's.

COLONEL : White ?

LARITA : Too *ingénue*.

COLONEL : There's always lavender.

LARITA : Yes—much more appropriate.

COLONEL : Your friend Charles Burleigh's coming.

LARITA : Yes, I know—I'm awfully glad. He's a nice man.

COLONEL : I tremble for you sometimes.

LARITA : Why ?

COLONEL : This life must be so deadly for you.

LARITA : Don't say that.

COLONEL : It is though—isn't it ?

LARITA : Now and then—perhaps.

COLONEL : Do you regret everything ?

LARITA : What's the good ? I must get used to it.

COLONEL : I try my best, with bczique and small-talk, to make things brighter for you.

LARITA : I know you do. You've been a darling all along

COLONEL : Do you think you'd be happier if you and John settled down in London ?

LARITA : I don't know. I feel frightened of making any definite plans. Everything depends on John.

COLONEL : I'll talk to him.

LARITA : No, please don't; let him decide on his own whatever he wants to do.

COLONEL : He must see you're being bored stiff.

LARITA : I'm not—all the time. I just get moods——

COLONEL (*patting her hand*) : I understand.

LARITA : I wouldn't mind how bored and out of place I was—if only——

COLONEL (*gently*) : If only what ?

LARITA : If only John were with me a little more.

COLONEL : He's inconsiderate—but he doesn't mean to be.

LARITA : He's getting a bit sick of me, I'm afraid.

COLONEL : What nonsense I

LARITA : I ought to be so much more adaptable—but it's difficult. I've tried terribly hard during the three months I've been here, but I've only succeeded in making everyone more or less used to me. I've established a sort of truce, that's all.

COLONEL : That in itself is an achievement. We're an insular, hidebound set.

LARITA : Nobody really likes me—except you.

COLONEL : Sarah does.

LARITA : Yes, I'd forgotten Sarah. It's queer of her, isn't it ?

COLONEL : She places a high value on intelligence where no one else recognises it.

LARITA : Marion is persistently pleasant because she feels she owes it to her religious views.

COLONEL : Marion—though I says it as shouldn't—is a fool.

LARITA : I've got an unworthy passion for popukrity—it hurts my vanity not to be an unqualified success.

COLONEL : Rubbish !—it's nothing to do with your vanity.

LARITA : Please—I want it to be my vanity that's hurt, and nothing else.

COLONEL : You mustn't expect results too soon, you know. Three months is a very short time.

LARITA (*suddenly, with vehemence*): Oh, what's the use of going on about it ?—throwing dust and trying to obscure the truth. You know and I know—it's all a rotten failure 1 (*She goes upstairs.*)

The COLONEL shrugs his shoulders and lights a cigarette.

MARION *comes infrom the garden.*

MARION : I think if we had the lanterns just along the veranda and across to the cedar it would be all right, don't you ?

COLONEL : Quite. There aren't enough to go further, anyhow.

MARION : Mother thought there ought to be a few round the summer-house.

COLONEL : Fairy lamps would be much better there, and there are more of them.

MARION : I wish you'd tell her what you think. (*She sees LARITA'S book and picks it up.*) Hullo ! what's this ? *Sodom and Gomorrah*. Why does Lari read such silly muck?

She flings it don'n again.

COLONEL (*gently*): Don't be sweeping, Marion. Marcel Proust happens to be one of the few really brilliant novelists in the world.

MARION : Pity he chooses such piffling subjects, then.

COLONEL : Have you ever read him ?

MARION : No—but all French writers are the same—sex—sex—sex. People think too much of all that sort of tosh nowadays, anyhow. After all, there are other things in life.

COLONEL : You mean higher things, don't you, Marion ?—much higher ?

MARION : I certainly do—and I'm not afraid to admit it.

COLONEL : You mustn't be truculent just because you've affiliated yourself with the Almighty. (*He goes into the library.*)

MARION *snorts crossly*; and MRS. WHITTAKER *comes downstairs*.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*obviously*): Oh, there you are, Marion.

MARION : Father's intolerable.

MRS. WHITTAKER : What's the matter ?

MARION : He never loses an opportunity of jeering at me.

MRS. WHITTAKER : He's an exceedingly selfish man—he knows perfectly well how rushed and worried I am, and he never attempts to help. I found him in here, on the floor, with Larita.

MARION : On the floor ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes ; they'd been playing cards, and dropped them, or something.

MARION : I wish Larita wouldn't slack about indoors all day. It isn't healthy.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*seeing " Sodom and Gomorrah"*): Whose is that book ?

MARION : Hers, of course.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Well, please take it up to her room. I don't like that kind of literature left in the hall—especially when there are young people about.

MARION : You'd think she'd make some effort to adapt herself to our ways, wouldn't you ? instead of—

MRS. WHITTAKER : Please don't let's discuss her, Marion; you know it upsets me—and Heaven knows I've got enough on my mind to-day.

MARION : I should like to give her a little advice about things.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Do, dear; but wait until after to-night—we don't want a scene.

MARION : I don't think she'd cut up rough if I was tactful. You see, she doesn't quite understand—

MRS. WHITTAKER : How can you expect her to ?

MARION : And father's always encouraging her, and saying ridiculous things, and making her laugh.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Your father has a certain horrible streak in him that nothing will eradicate—no one's more aware of that than I. It's caused me years of suffering.

MARION: I know, mother.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Birds of a feather——

MARION (*alarmed*): But I think Larita's all right—really, mother, don't you? I mean——

MRS. WHITTAKER: My dear Marion, I flatter myself I'm a woman of the world. We have no proof of the sort of life Larita has led, and we don't want any proof—she is John's wife, and as long as he cares for her nothing can be done——

MARION: What do you mean by "nothing can be done?"

MRS. WHITTAKER: This was never anything but a mad infatuation—and mad infatuations don't last.

MARION: But, mother, he's married to her.

MRS. WHITTAKER: There is such a thing as divorce.

MARION: I don't approve of divorce, and I never have.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Neither do I—but in a case like this it's rather different.

MARION: I think she's fond of him, you know.

MRS. WHITTAKER: Time will show.

HILDA *comes in from the garden; she is flushed and hot.*

HILDA: Philip and I won the set. Is there any lemonade, or anything?

MRS. WHITTAKER: You'd better go into the pantry and get some. Furber's very busy.

HILDA: Where's Larita?

MRS. WHITTAKER: I don't know.

HILDA : She was making sheep's eyes at Philip all through lunch.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You mustn't say things like that, Hilda.

HILDA : Well, she was. I nearly *died* of shame.

MARION : You'd better go and fetch the lemonade.

HILDA : You'd think she'd know how to behave at her age.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Hilda, that will do.

HILDA : I'm fed up with her. Look how she went on with Harry Emsworth. She'd better be careful, I can tell you——

Enter JOHN, SARAH and PHILIP BORDON—be is a callow, lanky youth.

JOHN : Where's the drink ?

HILDA : I'm just going to fetch it.

SARAH (*sinking down*) : I'm dead.

PHILIP : It's jolly hot.

JOHN : Why didn't you play, Marion ?

MARION : Too busy. Anyhow, you were four.

SARAH : Give me a cigarette, John.

JOHN : I've only got stinkers.

SARAH : I'll take one of Lari's ; she won't mind.

Takes one from LARI'S case on the sofa. JOHN lights it.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I wonder if two extra girls will be enough, with Furber and Ellen.

MARION : I should think so.

MRS. WHITTAKER : We can get Mrs. Pollock's married daughter, you know. They're only just down the road.

MARION : It won't be necessary.

Re-enter HILDA, with tray of drinks.

HILDA : Furber had it all ready.

JOHN : Put it on the veranda, Hilda.

PHILIP : Let me help.

He and HILDA retire on to the veranda with the drinks.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Come into the library, Marion, and help me with the dinner list.

MARION : Father's in there.

MRS. WHITTAKER : We'll go up to my room, then. If Harris comes, don't let him go before I've seen him, John.

JOHN : All right, mother.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*as she and MARION go upstairs*): We shall have to put Lady Gibbons next to your father.

MARION : He hates her.

MRS. WHITTAKER : It can't be helped.

They go off.

SARAH : Bring me some lemonade in here, John—it's so nice and cool.

JOHN (*going out on to the veranda*): I wish you were dining too.

SARAH : I've got to be at home and help mother with our party. I ought to be there now, really.

JOHN (*off*): Wouldn't you rather have ginger-beer ?

SARAH : No—lemonade, please.

JOHN : Right.

After a moment he returns with lemonade for SARAH and ginger-beer for himself.

SARAH (*taking it*): Thanks.

JOHN : Pretty hot player, Philip.

SARAH : He nearly killed me.

JOHN : Keep a lot of dances for me to-night, won't you ?

SARAH : Of course.

JOHN : It ought to be fun, if it keeps fine.

SARAH : Where's Lari, I wonder ?

JOHN : Reading somewhere, I expect.

SARAH : She looked divine at lunch.

JOHN : It's funny you liking her. I was afraid you wouldn't.

SARAH : Why ?

JOHN : Oh, I don't know—she's so utterly different.

SARAH : I expect that's the reason.

JOHN : I wish she wouldn't slack indoors so much.

SARAH : I don't see that it matters, if she wants to.

JOHN : It's all very well in the winter, but in this sort of weather——

SARAH : You mustn't be grumpy just because people don't like doing exactly the same things as you.

JOHN : I'm not grumpy.

SARAH : Yes, you are—a little.

JOHN : It's annoying, though.

SARAH : Don't let it be.

JOHN : You're such a sport, always ready for anything.

SARAH : But I haven't got Lari's beauty or charm or intelligence.

JOHN : Here, I say !

SARAH : I mean that.

JOHN : She is clever, isn't she ?

SARAH : Yes, and being clever she's a little bored.

JOHN : She wouldn't be if only she entered into things.

SARAH : Perhaps she can't enter into things. You must remember this sort of life is entirely new to her.

JOHN : Yes, I know, but——

SARAH : You're all right, because you're on your

own ground. I think you ought to give a bit more.

JOHN : How do you mean ?

SARAH : Do what she wants now and then, instead of only what you want.

JOHN : But I do. I took her for miles in the car yesterday—she said she needed air.

SARAH : That's right.

JOHN : So you see——

SARAH : Don't make excuses ; you know what I mean.

JOHN : I don't.

SARAH : Well, I can't explain; it's something you must find out for yourself.

JOHN : I do think it's most frightfully decent of you to stand up for her.

SARAH : That wasn't my object.

JOHN : I say, you have changed lately ; you never used to go on like this.

SARAH : Like what ?

JOHN : Well, all serious and preachy.

SARAH (*laughing*): I'm sorry you think I'm preachy ; you see, I'm growing up, and you're not.

JOHN : Oh yes, I am.

SARAH : Well, not in the way you should, then.

JOHN : You've got ever so much nicer-looking.

SARAH : Thank you.

JOHN : Are you going to marry, too ?

SARAH : Certainly.

JOHN (*anxiously*): Who ? Charlie ?

SARAH : Good Heavens, no ! He's much too old.

JOHN: Oh I

SARAH (*repentantly*): I'm awfully sorry. I didn't mean that exactly.

JOHN : It's ail right.

SARAH : He's not my type at all; if I loved him, I wouldn't care how old he was.

JOHN : I can't imagine you married.

SARAH : What a pity ! I have a vivid mental picture of it.

JOHN : Is there anybody you *are* in love with ?

SARAH : Not at the moment, but I'm keeping my eyes open.

JOHN : I've often meant to ask you something, but I hadn't the courage.

SARAH : Well, don't then.

JOHN : I must.

SARAH : Give me a cigarette First.

JOHN : Stinker ?

SARAH : Yes ; anything

JOHN (*giving her one*) : Here.

SARAH : Thanks. Go ahead.

JOHN : Did you think I behaved like a cad, marrying Lari like that, without letting you know ?

SARAH : Of course not.

JOHN : Are you sure ?

SARAH : Quite. I understood perfectly.

JOHN : It's been on my mind rather.

SARAH : You took your opportunity and married for love, John, and I respect you for it. If we'd married, it would have been for friendship and convenience.

JOHN : Would it ?

SARAH (*firmly*): Yes—we knew one another far too well.

JOHN : Do you think that's a disadvantage ?

SARAH : In married life, certainly.

JOHN : I don't.

SARAH : It would have been so dull and ordinary—no excitement at all.

JOHN : I don't want excitement.

SARAH : I do. I want thrills and glamour and passionate love-letters—all the trappings.

JOHN : I could have written you love-letters.

SARAH : Well, why didn't you ?

JOHN : I don't know. I——

SARAH (*triumphantly*) : The fact that you didn't proves that you couldn't—you didn't feel that way about me, ever.

JOHN : It was a different sort of feeling.

SARAH : Don't be a hypocrite, John, and try and deceive yourself.

JOHN : I did love you, all the same.

SARAH (*rising*): How touching.

JOHN : I do still.

SARAH : Shut up, John!

JOHN : You see, I'm beginning to realise I've made rather a mess of things.

He puts his face in his hands.

SARAH (*furiously*): Shut up, I tell you, or I'll never speak to you again. That's behaving like a cad, if you like—an utter cad !

JOHN (*miserably*) : Sarah——

SARAH : You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Haven't you got any sense of decency ? Let me tell you one thing—you're not fit to wipe Lari's boots.

LARITA *appears at the top of the stairs in time to catch the last sentence.*

LARITA (*lightly ; coming down*): Hallo !—what are you two squabbling about ?

SARAH : John's infuriating—he always gets bad-tempered when he loses a set.

LARITA : I ought to have watched, after all, to keep him in order.

SARAH : I stole a cigarette out of your rich and rare-case, Lari.

LARITA : That was revolting of you. I don't think I can forgive it.

HILDA *and* PHILIP *come in front veranda.*

HILDA : Aren't you going to play any more, John ?

JOHN (*eagerly*): Yes, rather.

SARAH : I should stay and talk to Lari if I were you, John—you've neglected her shamefully.

PHILIP : I'll stay with Mrs. John.

LARITA : You're all very kind and considerate—I really only want someone to hold my knitting.

She makes a gesture of winding wool.

HILDA : I want Philip to play.

LARITA : I'll come and glare at you all with eyes starting out of my head like prawns.

SARAH : No, don't. There's nothing so hideously dull as watching people play games you're not particularly interested in. Come on, Hilda—you and I will play Philip. He can beat us easily.

HILDA (*satisfied*) : All right.

SARAH : Come along.

LARITA (*lightly*) : Thanks, Sarah darling. (*She blows a kiss to her.*)

SARAH, HILDA, *and* PHILIP *go off.*

JOHN (*noticing LARITA is still wearing her coat*): Are you still cold ?

LARITA : No, not really. I'll take this off if it annoys you. (*She does so.*)

JOHN : I don't mind.

LARITA : What shall we do ? Go for a nice drive in the motor ?

JOHN : Would you like to ?

LARITA : No, dear—don't look so scared ; I should hate it.

JOHN : I'm sorry if you think I've been neglecting you lately, Lari.

LARITA : Sarah put that into your head ; I didn't.

JOHN : But have I ?

LARITA : No. I think I've been neglecting you.

JOHN : I'm afraid I've been thoughtless and beastly.

LARITA (*smiling*) : Dear Johnnie. (*She pats his hand.*)

JOHN : I say, you have got some strong scent on.

LARITA : It's very good, though, isn't it ?

She leans forward so that he can smell it better.

JOHN (*with forced enthusiasm*) : Lovely.

LARITA : Why are you looking so depressed ?

JOHN : I'm not depressed.

LARITA : I hope you haven't been overtirng yourself—at tennis ?

JOHN : Of course I haven't.

LARITA (*seriously*): Kiss me, Johnnie.

JOHN : All right.

He Joes so.

LARITA : I think I'd better put on my fur coat again.

JOHN : What's the matter with you to-day, Lari ?

LARITA : Don't you know ?

JOHN : No.

LARITA : We're married.

JOHN : What do you mean ?

LARITA : That's what's the matter with both of us.

JOHN : There's nothing the matter with me.

LARITA : Isn't there ?

JOHN : I feel a bit tired, that's all.

LARITA : Yes, I believe you do.

JOHN : I think you were right—I *have* been rather strenuous to-day.

LARITA : Poor darling !

JOHN : And we've got this awful dance to-night.

LARITA : Aren't you looking forward to it ?

JOHN : Not particularly.

LARITA : Let's run away secretly to Deauville.

JOHN : How can we ?

LARITA (*smiling*): It's all right. I didn't mean it ; that was a joke.

JOHN : Oh, I see.

LARITA : You mustn't be dull. (*She laughs,*)

JOHN : Oh, do stop twitting me !

LARITA : Twitting ! What a ridiculous expression.

JOHN : You're always in some mood or another.

LARITA : Surely that's quite natural ?

JOHN : I suppose it's my fault, really, for leaving you alone so much. But still, I *do* think——

LARITA : If you're going to be magnanimous, do it gracefully.

JOHN : There you are, you see. Whenever I try——

LARITA (*sharply*): You weren't trying hard enough.

JOHN : Anyone would think I'd been deliberately planning to annoy you.

LARITA : Deliberately or not—you've succeeded.

JOHN : I don't see what I've done.

LARITA : You play tennis eternally—tennis—tennis—tennis ! Such a pretty game.

JOHN : It's healthier than sitting indoors, anyway.

LARITA : I believe it develops the muscles to an alarming extent.

JOHN : You don't want me to be flabby, do you ?

LARITA : Mentally or physically ?

JOHN : Lari, look here, I——

LARITA : I'm getting flabby mentally—and I can't bear it.

JOHN : Well, it's not my fault.

LARITA : Yes, it is.

JOHN : How ?

LARITA : Come away—come abroad again.

JOHN : We can't—you know we can't—possibly.

LARITA : Why ?

JOHN : It's unfair of you to ask me.

LARITA : Yes, it is—I suppose.

JOHN : After all, this is my life, and it always will be.

LARITA : Will it ?

JOHN : Of course.

LARITA : And mine ?

JOHN : Naturally.

LARITA : How secure that sounds.

JOHN : Secure ?

LARITA : Yes. Words are such silly things. When you said " Naturally " like that it sounded like everything I want in the world ; but I know in my heart it meant nothing.

JOHN : I don't understand.

LARITA : That's why it meant nothing.

JOHN : Are you really dissatisfied ?

LARITA : Yes.

JOHN : You're not happy here at all ?

LARITA : No.

JOHN : Why ?

LARITA : Because you've stopped loving me.

JOHN (*startled*) : Lari !

LARITA : It's true.

JOHN : But you're wrong—I haven't stopped loving you.

LARITA (*tightly*) : Liar !

JOHN : Look here, you're hysterical and upset because I've been neglecting you.

LARITA : No, dear, it isn't that.

JOHN : I've never heard anything so ridiculous in my life.

LARITA : Neither have I.

JOHN : Why, we've only been married six months.

LARITA : It might be six years.

JOHN : It looks more as though you'd stopped loving me.

LARITA : Oh, John, don't be *silly*.

JOHN (*hotly*) : I'm not silly ! You're always irritable and snappy these days—you never used to be.

LARITA : I'm sorry.

JOHN : If you were a bit more interested in everything here and didn't retire into your shell so much, you'd be far happier.

LARITA : Does your mother want me to be interested ?

JOHN : Of course she does.

LARITA : Then why does she snub me and discourage me whenever I make the slightest effort ?

JOHN : She doesn't mean to. You're too sensitive.

LARITA : Sensitive ! (*She laughs.*)

JOHN : Yes, you think everybody's against you.

LARITA : So they are—except your father and Sarah.

JOHN : Marion's been sweet to you, and Hilda—

LARITA : Hilda evinced a high-school passion for me

when I first arrived—which has since reacted into black hatred.

JOHN: Rot!

LARITA: It isn't rot. Marion is gratuitously patronising.

JOHN: She's nothing of the sort.

LARITA: Her religious views forbid her to hate me openly.

JOHN: It's beastly of you to say things like that.

LARITA: I'm losing my temper at last—it's a good sign.

JOHN: I'm glad you think so.

LARITA: I've repressed it for so long, and repression's bad. Look at Marion.

JOHN: I don't know what you mean.

LARITA: No—you wouldn't.

JOHN: But I suppose it's something unpleasant.

LARITA: Quite right—it is.

JOHN: Well, will you please remember that Marion is my sister.

LARITA: I shouldn't think of her at all if she weren't.

JOHN: You're behaving like a child.

LARITA: I can't tell you what a wonderful relief it is.

JOHN: It's damned inconsiderate.

LARITA: Yes—my turn now!

JOHN: Look here, Lari—

LARITA: Don't try and stop me. Let me go on and on—or I shall burst.

JOHN: Don't talk so loudly.

LARITA: Why not? No one would be in the least surprised to find me rolling about on the floor, soaked in drugs and hiccupping. They almost expect it of me.

Surely a little shouting won't matter—it will gratify their conception of my character.

JOHN : I've never seen you like this before.

LARITA : No, it doesn't happen often.

JOHN : Thank God for that!

LARITA : Splendid! Repartee helps. I like you to play up. This is our first row, you know.

JOHN (*sullenly*) : I hope it will be our last.

LARITA : It may be—quite possibly.

JOHN : As far as I can see, you're just thoroughly bad-tempered because I haven't been dancing attendance on you all the time.

LARITA : If you can only see as far as that, you're extraordinarily short-sighted.

JOHN : All the same, I'm right.

LARITA : How I wish you were !

JOHN : If things have been upsetting you for so long, why on earth didn't you tell me before ?

LARITA : I was hoping against hope that you'd see for yourself.

JOHN (*turning away irritably*) : Oh, what's the use of arguing and bickering like this ? It doesn't lead anywhere.

LARITA : You never know—it might lead to the end of everything.

JOHN : Do you want it to ?

LARITA : Do you ?

JOHN : No, I don't. All I want is peace and quiet.

LARITA : You're far too young to make a remark like that seriously.

JOHN : I can't help my age.

LARITA : You said just now that you loved me still.

JOHN : I certainly don't when you go on like this.

LARITA : I wanted to see how much it would stand.

JOHN : Wasn't that rather silly ?

LARITA : No, it *wasn't* silly. Three months ago you'd never have spoken to me as you have to-day. Whatever I'd done. I've been watching your passion for me die. I didn't mind that so much; it was inevitable. Then I waited very anxiously to see if there were any real love and affection behind it—and I've seen the little there was slowly crushed out of you by the uplifting atmosphere of your home and family. Whatever I do now doesn't matter any more—it's too late.

JOHN : Look here, Lari——

LARITA : I've shown myself to you quarrelsome and cheap and ugly for the first time—and it hasn't hurt you; it's only irritated you. You're miles away from me already.

JOHN : You're utterly unreasonable—you imagine things.

LARITA : Do I ?

JOHN : I realise that I'm to blame for leaving you alone so much—and, honestly, I'm sorry.

LARITA : Do you really believe that that accounts for it all ?

JOHN : Yes.

LARITA : Well, let's pretend it's true—for a little longer.

JOHN : There's no need to pretend.

LARITA : Give me my handkerchief, will you ?—it's in my bag.

JOHN (*finding it*) : Here you are.

LARITA : Thanks. (*She dabs her eyes and blows her nose.*)
I hope I'm not going to have a cold.

JOHN : I'll sec that you don't get miserable and upset any more.

LARITA (*half smiling*): Will you, Johnnie ?

JOHN : Yes—and I'll talk to mother.

LARITA : No, don't do that.

JOHN : I will. I don't think she's been quite fair.

LARITA : Please don't say a word—promise me you won't. It wouldn't do the slightest good. She's your mother, and I do see her point, you know.

JOHN : As a matter of fact, I should rather like to go abroad again in September—Venice or somewhere.

LARITA : It would be lovely. (*She laughs.*)

JOHN (*suspiciously*): Why are you laughing ?

LARITA : Because I feel happier.

JOHN : Or Algiers—I've never been to Algiers.

LARITA : If we went to Algiers, we could stay with the Lessings.

JOHN : I don't know them.

LARITA : They're darlings. She's an American. She used to design people's houses. We had great fun in New York.

JOHN : I never knew you'd been to New York.

LARITA : I must have told you—I was there for ages.

JOHN : You didn't. Was it before you married ?

LARITA : No ; after.

JOHN : I thought you lived in Paris all the time.

LARITA : Not all the time.

JOHN : Why did you go ?

LARITA : Oh, I don't know—the tall buildings and the champagne air—so fascinating.

JOHN : Did you go alone ?

LARITA : Yes—but the boat was crowded.

JOHN : Why didn't you tell me ?

LARTTA : I thought I had. It doesn't matter though' docs it ?

JOHN : What did you do there ?

LARITA : Really, Johnnie—nothing particular.

JOHN : You never told me much, you know—about anything.

LARITA : I'll write my memoirs one day; then all will be disclosed.

JOHN : Is Francis alive now ?

LARITA : Oh yes ; he's kicking about somewhere.

JOHN : You never hear from him ?

LARITA : Of course not. I don't consider it chic to receive chatty letters from ex-husbands.

JOHN : I only wondered.

LARITA : Well, you needn't have.

JOHN : Mother's always trying to pump me about your early life.

LARITA : And what do you say ?

JOHN : Nothing. I feel rather a fool.

LARITA : Never mind, dear.

JOHN : It's natural that she should be curious, I suppose.

LARITA : Oh, quite.

JOHN : And that I should be, too.

LARITA : I never realised you were.

JOHN : You are my wife, after all.

LARITA : Yes, isn't it lovely ?

JOHN : Do you regret anything ?

LARITA : Hundreds of things.

JOHN : But seriously——

LARITA : The home atmosphere is certainly having its effect on you.

JOHN : How do you mean ?

LARITA : You never cross-questioned me before.

JOHN : I'm not cross-questioning you.

LARITA : Yes, you are—a little.

JOHN : I'm sorry. I won't any more.

LARITA : It betrays a certain lack of trust.

JOHN : Lari, how can you I

LARITA : You see, when we married, we married because we loved one another—no explanations were necessary on either side.

JOHN : They're not necessary now, only——

LARITA : Only you're feeling a little uncomfortable—is that it ?

JOHN : No, not exactly.

LARITA : It's all a question of values.

JOHN : Values ?

LARITA : Yes, the scales are awfully erratic. When we met and fell in love, nothing else mattered as long as we were together. But when the first fine careless rapture wears off, other things begin to obtrude themselves—one has to readjust oneself to see clearly. What had happened to either of us in the past didn't count a bit at first—why should it ?—everything was new and exciting. Now it's not new and exciting any more ; we've grown used to one another, so to alleviate the monotony we start prying about behind the scenes—trying to find out things about each other that haven't any real bearing on the case at all. It's inevitable with such a hideously intimate relationship as marriage.

JOHN : I don't want to find out anything.

LARITA : You may not want to, but you'll persevere until you do. It's human nature.

JOHN : I'd hoped there was nothing to find.

LARITA : There's always something—somewhere.

JOHN : Don't let's say any more about it.

LARITA : Very well.

She takes out her powder-puff and powders her nose.

JOHN : I trust you absolutely.

LARITA : Whatever happens in the future, dear, I want you to remember one thing—I've never deceived you and I've never lied to you. There are many things that I've purposely left unexplained, because they don't concern you in the least and don't apply in any sense to our life together.

JOHN : Darling !

He kisses her very sweetly, and she smoothes his hair.

LARITA : You've rubbed all the powder off my nose.

JOHN : I don't care a bit.

LARITA : Go and play some more tennis—you've been in the house far too long ; it isn't healthy.

JOHN : Don't be a beast.

LARITA : Away with you—I'm going to rest before tea.

JOHN : I'll come and rest too.

LARITA : No, you won't. We should go on talking and talking and talking until our heads fell off.

JOHN : Oh, all right.

He kisses his hand lightly and goes into the garden.

LARITA *is about to go upstairs when MARION comes down.*

MARION : Hallo ! old girl.

LARITA : Hallo !

MARION : Are you going upstairs ?

LARITA : I *was*. I thought of lying down a little.

MARION : You're always lying down.

LARITA : Yes, isn't it strange? I expect there's something organically wrong with me.

MARION (*anxiously*): I hope there isn't.

LARITA (*beginning to go*): Well, I'll see you later on——

MARION (*touching her arm*): Don't go. I've been wanting to talk to you.

LARITA : To me ? Why—what about ?—anything important ?

MARION : No ; just everything.

LARITA : That ought to take several years.

MARION (*laughing forcedly*) : I didn't mean it literally.

LARITA : Oh, I see.

MARION : Have you got a cigarette on you ?

LARITA : Yes, certainly. Here. (*She hands her case.*)

MARION (*taking one*): Thanks.

LARITA (*amiably*): Why aren't you watching the tennis ?

MARION (*insensible of irony*): I've been too busy all the afternoon.

LARITA : How are all the preparations for to-night going ?

MARION : All right. You're sitting next to Mr. Furley.

LARITA : Splendid. Is he nice ?

MARION : He's a damned good sort—rather High Church, you know ; almost ritualistic.

LARITA : He won't be ritualistic at dinner, will he ?

MARION : And you've got Sir George on the other side of you.

LARITA : Sir George who ?

MARION : Sir George Bentley. He's awfully well up in dead languages and things.

LARITA : I do hope I shall be a comfort to him.

MARION : Very interesting man, George Bentley.

LARITA : How many are dining altogether ?

MARION : Only twelve—we haven't really room for more comfortably.

LARITA : I hope it will all be an enormous success.

MARION : You won't be offended if I ask you something—just between ourselves ?

LARITA : That depends, Marion. What is it ?

MARION : Speaking as a pal, you know.

LARITA (*vaguely*): Oh yes—well ?

MARION : Don't encourage father too much.

LARITA : In what way—encourage him ? I don't understand.

MARION : Well, you know—you and he are always getting up arguments together.

LARITA : Why shouldn't we ?

MARION : It annoys mother so when he tries to be funny.

LARITA : I've never noticed him trying to be funny—he's a very intelligent man.

MARION : Sometimes when you're discussing certain subjects, he says things which are not quite——

LARITA : You say "certain subjects" in rather a sinister way, Marion. What subjects do you mean particularly ?

MARION : Well, sex and things like that. You were talking about the Ericson divorce case the other day at lunch, when Harry Emsworth was here——

LARITA : It's an extraordinarily interesting case.

MARION : Yes, but one doesn't discuss things like that openly in front of strangers—I mean to say, it doesn't matter a bit when we're by ourselves; no one **could** be more broad-minded than I am—after all,

what's the use of being in the world at all if you turn your eyes to things ?

LARITA (*crisply*): Exactly.

MARION : You're not angry, are you ?

LARITA : Angry ?—no.

MARION : You see, I like you, Lari; we get on well together. I grant you we see things from different points of view, but that's only natural.

LARITA : Yes—oh yes.

MARION : I knew you'd be a sport about it and not mind. You see, my philosophy in life is frankness. Say what you've got to say, and have done.

LARITA : In other words—moral courage.

MARION : Yes, that's it.

LARITA : Why didn't you attack the Colonel on these little breaches of etiquette ? He seems to be more to blame than I.

MARION : A woman always understands better than Aman.

LARITA : Surely that's a little sweeping.

MARION : It's true, all the same. I knew you'd see.

LARITA : You weren't by any chance afraid that he'd laugh at you ?

MARION : Good Heavens, no I I don't mind being laughed at.

LARITA : How extraordinary ! I hate it.

MARION : What does it matter ? If you've got something to say, say it.

LARITA : According to your code, the fact of having spoken like that about your father doesn't strike you as being disloyal in any way, does it ?

MARION : Not between pals like us.

LARITA : Of course, yes—pals. I keep forgetting.

MARION : I believe you *arc* angry.

LARITA : I'm not—but I'm very, very interested.

MARION : Look here, Lari, it's like this. Father's been a bit of a dog in his day. Mother's had a pretty bad time with him, and she's stood by him through thick and thin.

LARITA : How splendid !

MARION : Some men *arc* like that—no moral responsibility. Edgar, you know, was just the same.

LARITA : You say " was ". Has he reformed ?

MARION : I think I've made him *sec*—but it's been a tough struggle.

LARITA : What have you made him *sec* ?

MARION : I've made him *sec* that nothing matters if you keep your life straight and decent.

LARITA : There are so many varying opinions as to what is straight and decent.

MARION : God admits of no varying opinions.

LARITA : Your religion must be wonderfully comforting. It makes you so sure of yourself.

MARION : If you're going to take up that tone, we won't discuss it.

LARITA : No—we'd better not.

MARION (*gently*): You mustn't jeer at religion, old girl. (*She puts her hand on her arm.*)

LARITA (*shaking her off*) : I don't jeer at religion—but I jeer at hypocrisy.

MARION : I'm not a hypocrite—if that's what you mean.

LARITA (*quietly*) : I'm afraid you *arc*, Marion—and a disloyal one, too, which makes it all the more nauseating.

MARION : How dare you speak to me like that!

Enter PHILIP BORDON from the garden.

PHILIP (*to LARITA*) : Hallo !—I wondered if you were still here.

LARITA : You must be exhausted. You've been at it steadily all the afternoon.

PHILIP : John and Sarah are playing a single now, and Hilda's sitting on the steps, scoring.

MARION, *livid with rage, fakes a writing-block off the bureau and marches into the library. "Looks after her in some surprise.*

What's up ?

LARITA : We've been arguing about the dinner guests—it's all very difficult.

PHILIP : I wish I was dining.

LARITA : But you're coming directly afterwards, aren't you ?

PHILIP : Rather ! About ten of us.

LARITA : Good Heavens !

PHILIP : Will you keep a dance for me ?

LARITA : Certainly.

PHILIP : What number ?

LARITA : I don't know.

PHILIP : Three ?

LARITA : Perhaps you won't be here in time.

PHILIP : Say five, then, and six.

LARITA (*laughing*) : Not two running ! We should be bored stiff with each other.

PHILIP : Five and seven, then ?

LARITA : All right.

PHILIP : You won't forget ?

LARITA : Of course not.

PHILIP : I'm sure you dance wonderfully.

LARITA : Why ?

PHILIP : Because of the way you move.

LARITA : Oh, thank you very much.

PHILIP : I mean it.

LARITA : Well, it's very sweet of you. (*She sits on sofa.*)

PHILIP : May I sit next to you ?

LARITA : Certainly, if you like. (*She makes room for him.*)

PHILIP (*sitting down*) : I'm afraid I'm awfully hot and sticky.

LARITA (*laughing out loud*): I don't mind as long as you keep your end.

PHILIP : Don't laugh at me.

LARITA : I'm sorry—but you are rather funny.

PHILIP (*gloomy*): Everyone says that.

LARITA : Never mind. Be frank—speak straight from the shoulder—say what you have to say, and have, done.

PHILIP (*surprised*) : I beg your pardon ?

LARITA : It's all right—I was only quoting.

PHILIP : Oh, I see.

LARITA : You must forgive me if I'm a little dis-trait—I've had a rather trying afternoon.

PHILIP : Everybody fussing round, I suppose, over the dance ?

LARITA : Yes—more or less.

PHILIP : People take things so damned seriously.

LARITA : You don't think it's a good plan to take things seriously ?

PHILIP : Oh, sometimes, of course, but——

LARITA : I'm inclined to agree with you.

PHILIP : Life's too short to worry over things.

LARITA : It is miserably short, isn't it ?

PHILIP : Rather!

LARITA : I sometimes wonder why we're here at all—it seems such a waste of time.

PHILIP : You're laughing again.

LARITA : Not altogether.

PHILIP : No one ever thought old John would marry anyone like you.

LARITA : Do you know that remark positively made me jump.

PHILIP : You're so different and so alive. He's a lucky devil.

LARITA : You must be careful with your compliments. If you go peppering them about like that they'll lose value.

PHILIP : They're not compliments—they're true.

LARITA : Do you always go on like this ?

PHILIP : Of course not. I wouldn't dare.

LARITA : Forgive me for asking—but do you lead a straight and decent life ?

PHILIP (*alarmed*): What !

LARITA : It's *so* important. Whenever you feel yourself slipping, think of me.

PHILIP : I don't quite understand.

LARITA : On second thoughts, it would be better if you thought of Marion.

PHILIP : I'd rather think of you.

LARITA : Good ! I must leave you now—I've been trying to get to my room for the last hour. (*She rises.*)

PHILIP (*catching her hand*) : Please don't go yet.

HILDA *bounces in in time to see LARITA withdrawing her hand from PHILIP'S grasp.*

LARITA : I must, really.

HILDA (*furiously*) : Oh I

PHILIP (*rising*) : Hallo ! Have they finished ?

HILDA : I wondered where you were—I might have known.

She shoots a malignant glance at LARITA.

LARTTA (*frowning*): Hilda I

HILDA : I hope I'm not intruding.

LARITA (*irritably*) : This is too much !

HILDA : Yes, it is !

LARITA : If you adopt that rather rude tone to me, Hilda, I'm afraid I shall have to poach on Marion's preserves and have a straight talk to you.

PHILIP : Look here, Hilda——

HILDA : Don't speak to me !

FURBER *enters with various tea-things.* MRS.

WHITTAKER *comes downstairs.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : Has anyone seen my little blue notebook ? I can't thmk where I left it.

FURBER *finds // on the bureau.*

FURBER : Is this the one, ma'am ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes—thank you, Furber. It's really too annoying, Harris has never come—you'd better send down after tea.

FURBER : Very good, ma'am.

SARAH *and JOHN come in.*

JOHN (*to LARITA*) : Did you get your rest, darling ?

LARITA : No—but it doesn't matter.

SARAH : Mrs. Whittaker, Philip and I must really go now. I've left mother all alone with herds of strange people.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Won't you have some tea first ? It's all ready.

SARAH : No, honestly!—I daren't. She'll be cross as it is.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Very well. Be in good time to-night.

SARAH : I don't intend to miss one dance. Come along, Philip.

PHILIP (*shaking hands with MRS. WHITTAKER*) : Good-bye, and thanks awfully.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Until to-night.

PHILIP : Rather! (*He goes to LARITA.*) I say——

He looks at HILDA, who glowers at him.

LARITA : Good-bye for the moment—you must make me laugh some more to-night.

PHILIP : Remember—five and seven.

LARITA : I won't forget.

SARAH : Come *on*, Philip ! See you later Lari.

LARITA : Yes. Good-bye.

SARAH *and* PHILIP *go off.* FURBER *brings m the teapot.*

JOHN : I'm going up to have a bath—I don't want any tea.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Oh, John—just one cup.

JOHN : No, mother. I've had tons of ginger-beer during the afternoon. Come up after, Lari.

LARITA : All right, dear.

JOHN *bounds off upstairs.*

MARION *and the COLONEL come in from the library.*

MARION *is fuming.*

COLONEL : If you don't like my opinions, you shouldn't ask for them.

MARION : I'm not used to having that sort of thing said to me.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*with a look towards FURSER*) : Marion, please I

MARION (*flopping down*): Father's impossible !

FURBER *goes out.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : I do wish you'd control your temper in front of the servants, Marion.

HILDA : Other people besides Marion ought to control themselves.

MRS. WHITTAKER : What do you mean, Hilda ?

HILDA : Ask Larl—she knows what I mean.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Come and sit down and have your tea.

HILDA : Disgusting, I call it!

MARION : What's disgusting ?

HILDA : Ask Lan.

LARITA (*quietly*) : Hadn't you better explain yourself, Hilda, instead of referring everyone to me ?

HILDA : I pity John—that's all.

COLONEL (*angrily*) : Have you gone mad, Hilda ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : What on earth's the matter ?

HILDA : I came in suddenly, and found Lan canoodling on the sofa with Philip.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Don't use such expressions, Hilda—I'm surprised at you. Come and sit down, Lanta.

LARITA : I think I'll go to my room, if you don't mind.

HILDA : She's frightened because she knows I've found her out.

LARITA *stifles an exclamation of rage.*

COLONEL : Stop, Hilda ! I forbid you to say another word.

HILDA (*hysterically*) : I won't stop—I know something you none of you know, only I wasn't going to say anything about it—until after the dance. (*She goes, in dead silence, to the bookcase, takes down a book, and takes a news-*

paper cutting out of it; she gives it to MRS. WHITTAKER.)
Look at that, mother. I got it from Sir George when I went there on Tuesday—he keeps all the back numbers of *The Times*, in tiles. I cut it out when he was in the garden.

MRS. WHITTAKER (reading cutting): Marion—Jim——

She puts out her hand.

MARION *approaches and reads the cutting too. The*

COLONEL *turns away.*

LARITA : I should like some bread-and-butter, please.

COLONEL : Here you are, my dear. (*He hands it to her.*)

HILDA : And I'm glad I did—glad.

COLONEL (*ignoring her*): Do you want any jam with it?

LARITA : No, thanks; I always drop it all over myself.

HILDA (*shrilly*) : It's no use pretending to be so calm. You know the game's up now, don't you ?

LARITA (*serenely*): Specially strawberry—the runny kind.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Hilda, be quiet.

She sits back and closes her eyes.

MARION : We'd better have this out and face it, hadn't we ?

LARITA : By all means. What happened ?

MARION (*handing her cutting*) : I suppose you don't deny that that's you ?

LARITA (*glancing at it and handing it back*) : I've always hated that photograph.

MARION : You'd better read it, father.

COLONEL : Certainly not. I haven't the faintest desire to see it.

LARITA (*taking it and handing it to him*): Please do—

all my friends know about this. I ought to have told you before, really, but it didn't seem necessary.

COLONEL : Really, I'd rather not.

LARITA : Please—it's necessary now.

There is silence while the COLONEL reads the cutting.

LARITA *drinks a little tea.*

COLONEL : Well, what of it ? (*He fears up the cutting.*)

HILDA : Father !

LARITA : That was unkind. Hilda went to such a lot of trouble to get it.

MRS. WHITTAKER : This is appalling !

COLONEL : Why ? Larita's past is no affair of ours.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You seem to forget—she's married to our son—our son——(*She breaks down.*)

MARION (*putting her arm round her*): Mother, don't give way.

COLONEL : I must apologise for this unpleasant scene, Lari.

LARITA : It had to occur, sooner or later.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*raising her head; to LARITA, -bitterly*) : I hope you're satisfied.

LARITA : I'm not at all satisfied. I think—with the exception of the Colonel—that you're all behaving ridiculously.

MARION : It's easy to adopt a light tone—when you've brought degradation on to us.

COLONEL : Don't be a fool, Marion.

MARION : I'm not surprised at your attitude, father. Larita's your sort, isn't she ?

LARITA : That's one of the nicest things that have ever been said to me.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Don't talk like that, Marion—it's useless.

MARION (*firmly*): The question is—what's to be done? (*To LARITA*.) Does John know about this?

LARITA: Mind your own business.

FURBER *enters*.

FURBER (*announcing*): Mr. Harris.

MRS. WHITTAKER *gives a gasp of horror, and*

HARRIS *enters. He is a thick-set, affable little man.*

HARRIS (*brightly*): Sorry I couldn't come up before Mrs. Whittaker, but we've 'ad a busy day down at the White 'Art, what with one thing and another.

There is silence for a moment, then MARION speaks.

MARION (*with an effort*): My mother's not feeling very well, Harris; perhaps you'd call a little later.

HARRIS (*sympathetically*): Oh, I *am* sorry to 'ear that—but time's getting on, you know—I've got to get back inside of 'arf an hour. If you'd just tell me where you want the fairy lights put, I could run 'em up right away.

MARION (*helplessly*): I don't really think——

LARITA (*rising*): I can show you from here——

HARRIS: Oh, thanks very much—if it isn't troubling you——

LARITA: Not at all. Look—(*she moves to the window*) we want chains—between those four big trees—and some on the arch leading to the rose garden.

HARRIS (*jotting it down*): Mixed colours, or shall I make it a scheme?

LARITA: Mixed colours would be better, I think.

HARRIS: Right you are.

LARITA: And if you could arrange some round the summerhouse——(*To COLONEL*) Just a few, don't you think?

COLONEL: Oh yes, certainly; it will brighten it up,

HARRIS (*still jotting*): Rose h'arch—summer-'ouse. —What about the Chinese lanterns ?

LARITA : Furber can manage those, I think. We've got them all here.

HARRIS : Righto, then, that's that. I'll get 'em up in no time. It ought to look very pretty and gay.

LARITA : I'm sure it will.

HARRIS : Can I go out this way ?

LARITA : Oh yes, by all means.

HARRIS : Thanks very much. Sorry to have troubled you. Hope you'll be feeling better by to-night, Mrs. Whittaker. Good afternoon. (*To HILDA.*) Good afternoon, miss.

HILDA (*jumping*) : Oh—good afternoon.

He goes importantly out on to the veranda and out into the garden.

LARITA *sits down again and goes on with her tea.*

MRS. WHITTAKER *has been busy regaining her self-control ; her face is slightly suffused with rage.*

MRS. WHITTAKER (*with forced calm*): Larita, will you oblige me by going to your room, please ? We will discuss this later.

LARITA : Certainly not. I haven't finished my tea.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Doubtless you imagine that you are carrying off this—this abominable situation with a high hand, but your callousness only goes to prove that your senses must be blunted to all decent feelings.

LARITA (*quietly*): Nothing I have ever done warrants your speaking like that.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You have married my son !

LARITA : I married John because I loved him.

MARION : Under false pretenses.

LARITA : There were no false pretenses.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Do you think he'd have married you if he'd known ?

LARITA : I expect so.

MARION : Then why didn't you tell him ?

LARITA : Because I didn't consider it necessary. We took one another on trust. What happened before I met him concerns no one but myself. I've never let John down in any way—I love him.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You married John because you wished to break away from your disgraceful life and gain a position to which you were not entitled.

LARITA : It's natural that you should think that, but it's not true.

COLONEL : Larita, please go upstairs, and let me deal with this.

LARITA : No—honestly, I'd rather stay. I understand Mrs. Whittaker's attitude perfectly, and I sympathise with it. It's horrible for her—but I don't want her to labour under any misapprehension.

MARION : In the face of everything, I'm afraid there's very little room for misapprehension.

LARITA : Your life is built up on misapprehensions, Marion. You don't understand or know anything—you blunder about like a lost sheep.

MARION : Abuse won't help you.

LARITA : That's not abuse—it's frankness.

MRS. WHITTAKER : This is beside the point.

LARITA : Not altogether—it's an attitude of mind which you all share.

COLONEL : Instead of jumping to the worst conclusions at once, wouldn't it be better to give Larita a little time to explain ? We may be doing her an injustice.

LARITA : That's kind of you. I haven't the faintest intention of making excuses or trying to conceal anything—that newspaper cutting was perfectly accurate—as far as it went. I *was* concerned in that peculiarly unpleasant case. I changed my name afterward for obvious reasons. The papers rather over-reached themselves in publishing the number of my lovers—only two of the list really loved me.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You were responsible for a man killing himself.

LARITA : Certainly not. It was his weakness and cowardice that were responsible for that—not I.

MRS. WHITTAKER : It's incredible—dreadful—I can hardly believe it.

LARITA : I felt like that at the time, but it's a long while ago.

MARION : Fifteen years ! John was a child.

LARITA : Thank you. I quite realise that.

MRS. WHITTAKER : And how have you lived since this—this—scandal ?

LARITA : Extremely well.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Your flippancy is unpardonable.

LARITA : So was your question. I've only explained so far because, as you're John's mother, I felt I owed it to you ; but if you persist in this censorious attitude I shall say no more.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Do you realise what you've done ?

LARITA : Perfectly, and I regret nothing. The only thing that counts in this instance is my relationship with John. Nothing that has occurred in the past affects that in the least.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Your marrying him was an outrage.

LARITA : Why ? I've told you before, I love him.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You prove your love by soiling his name irreparably.

LARITA : Nonsense.

COLONEL : Do you think it's quite fair, Mabel, to set ourselves up in judgment on Larita ? We know none of the circumstances which led to these bygone incidents.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You've failed me too often before, Jim, so I'm not surprised that you fail me now.

LARITA : The Colonel's not failing you—it's just as bad for him as for you. You don't suppose he *likes* the idea of his only son being tied up to me, after these—revelations ? But somehow or other, in the face of overwhelming opposition, he's managed to arrive at a truer sense of values than you could any of you ever understand. He's not allowed himself to be cluttered up with hypocritical moral codes and false sentiments—he sees things as they are, and tried to make the best of them. He's tried to make the best of me ever since I've been here.

MARION : That hasn't astonished us in the least.

LARITA : No doubt, with your pure and unsullied conception of human nature, you can only find one meaning for the Colonel's kindness to me.

MARION : I didn't say that.

LARITA : You think it, though, don't you ? Only this afternoon you asked me not to encourage him.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Marion !

LARITA : You disguised your unpleasant lascivious curiosity under a cloak of hearty friendship—you were pumping me to discover some confirmation of your pretty suspicions. One thing my life has taught me,

and that is a knowledge of feminine psychology. I've met your type before.

MARION : How dare you ! How dare you !

MRS. WHITTAKER (*rising*) : This is insupportable.

LARITA (*sharply*) : Yes, it is.—Sit down.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*impotently*) : I—I——

She sits down.

LARITA : I want you to understand one thing—I deny nothing. I have a perfect right to say what I like and live how I choose—whether I've married John or whether I haven't, my life is my own, and I don't intend to be browbeaten.

MARION : I hope God will forgive you.

LARITA : Don't you rather overrate the Almighty's interest in the situation ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : In the face of your brazen attitude, there's nothing more to be said.

LARITA : You're wrong. There's a good deal more to be said. According to you, I ensnared John in my toils in order to break away from my old life and better my position. If that were the case, what do you mean by deliberately trying to crush down my efforts to reform myself? How do you reconcile that with your stereotyped views of virtue and charity? But you needn't worry; I didn't marry John to reform myself. I don't consider my position in this house a step up, socially or spiritually. On the contrary, it's been probably the most demoralising experience that's ever happened to me.

MRS. WHITTAKER : You're a wicked, wicked woman.

LARITA : That remark was utterly fatuous and completely mechanical. You didn't even think before you said it—your brain is so muddled up with false values

that you're incapable of grasping anything in the least real. Why am I a wicked woman ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : You betrayed my son's honour by taking advantage of his youth and mad infatuation for you. He'd never have married you if he'd known.

LARITA : I suppose you wouldn't consider it betraying his honour if he'd had an affair with me and not married me ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : It would certainly have been much more appropriate.

LARITA : Unfortunately, I don't consider John worthy of me in either capacity—I realised a long time ago that our marriage was a mistake, but not from your point of view—from my own.

MARION : It's easy to talk like that now.

LARITA : It isn't easy—it's heartbreaking. I love John more than I can ever say, but it's not blind love—unfortunately—I can see through him. He's charming and weak and inadequate, and he's brought me down to the dust.

MRS. WHITTAKER : How dare you say such vile things ! How dare you !

LARITA : It's true. You can't appreciate my feelings about it. I don't expect you to.

MARION : I should think not.

LARITA : Your treatment of all this shows a regrettable lack of discrimination. You seem to be floundering under the delusion that I'm a professional *cocotte*. You're quite, quite wrong—I've never had an affair with a man I wasn't fond of. The only time I ever sold myself was in the eyes of God to my first husband—my mother arranged it. I was really too young to know

what I was doing. You approve of that sort of bargaining, don't you ?—it's within the law.

MARION (*contemptuously*) : Huh !

LARITA : Why do you make that peculiar noise, Marion ? Does it indicate approval, contempt, or merely asthma ?

MARION : Do you think this is the moment to be facetious ?

LARITA : You're an unbelievable prig.

MARION : I hope you don't imagine that your insults could ever have any effect on me ?

LARITA : If only you knew it, I'm at your mercy completely, but you're too silly to take advantage of it—you choose the wrong tactics.

MARION : We're certainly not experienced in dealing with women of your sort, if that's what you mean.

LARITA : It *is* what I mean—entirely. I'm completely outside the bounds of your understanding—in every way. And yet I know you, Marion, through and through—far better than you know yourself. You're a pitiful figure, and there are thousands like you—victims of convention and upbringing. All your life you've ground down perfectly natural sex impulses, until your mind has become a morass of inhibitions—your repression has run into the usual channel of religious hysteria. You've played physical purity too high and mental purity not high enough. And you'll be a miserable woman until the end of your days unless you readjust the balance.

MARION (*rising impetuously*) : You're revolting—horrible!

LARITA : You need love and affection terribly—you'd go to any lengths to obtain it except the right

ones. You swear and smoke and assume an air of spurious heartiness because you're not sure of your own religion and are afraid of being thought a prude. You try to establish a feeling of comradeship by sanctimonious heart-to-heart talks. All your ideals are confused and muddled—you don't know what to ask of life, and you'll die never having achieved anything but physical virtue. And God knows I pity you.

MARION, *with as much dignity as she can command, walks into the library without a word, and slams the door.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : You're achieving nothing by all this.

LARITA : How do you know ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Because you're a moral degenerate—lost to all sense of right and wrong.

LARITA : I respect you for one thing, anyhow—you *are* sure of yourself.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I don't want your respect.

LARITA : You're the only one here with the slightest grip. You've risen up like a phoenix from the ashes of your pride. It's quite, quite excellent—and infinitely pathetic.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I don't wish to speak to you any more—until to-morrow. I shall be very grateful if you will remain upstairs this evening—I will make suitable excuses for your absence.

LARITA : You mean you're frightened that I should make a scene ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : That is neither here nor there—I certainly don't desire an open scandal.

LARITA : You've run to cover again. I was afraid you would.

MRS. WHITTAKER : This has been painful beyond belief.

COLONEL : You're right—it has.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I don't feel capable of bearing any more.

LARITA : You intend to confine me to my room like ft naughty child ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : The simile is hardly appropriate, but I hope you will have the decency to remain there.

She goes upstairs in silence.

COLONEL : Lan——

LARITA : Please go away—I don't want anyone to speak to me at all for a little. I must think—think——

She is trembling hopelessly and making a tremendous effort to control her nerves.

COLONEL : Very well.

He goes out into the garden.

HILDA, *who has been standing aghast throughout the entire scene, suddenly bursts into floods of tears and rushes at LARITA.*

HILDA (*hysterically*) : Lari—Lari—forgive me ! I didn't mean it—I didn't mean it——

LARITA (*pushing her gently away*) : Don't be a little toad, Hilda. Try to have the courage of your convictions.

HILDA rushes out into the garden, weeping hysterically.

LARITA *bites her lip ; then, still trembling violently, she lights a cigarette and takes " Sodom and Gomorrah " off the bureau. She settles herself on the sofa, obviously exerting every ounce of control, and opens the book methodically ; she attempts to read, but her eyes can't focus the page ; she is acutely conscious of an imperfect statuette of the Venus de Milo which is smirking at her front a pedestal by the dining-room doors. Suddenly,*

ACT II EASY VIRTUE

with all her force, she hurls the book at ft, knocking it to the floor and smashing it.

LARITA : I've always hated that damned thing!

CURTAIN FALLS

When it rises once, she has buried her face in the sofa cushion, and her shoulders are heaving, whether with laughter or tears it is difficult to say.

ACT III

SCENE : *The same. When the curtain rises the dance is in full swing. The actual dancing takes place in the dining-room, because the floor is better. The hall and library are the sitting-out places ; the buffet is on the lower end of the veranda, just out of sight of the audience. The festoons of Japanese lanterns and fairy lights look—as MR. HARRIS prophesied—very pretty and gay.*

There is a group of YOUNG PEOPLE clustered round the buffet ; their light-hearted conversation can be heard intermittently. Several people are littered about the hall. MISS NINA VANSITTART, attired in a strikingly original rose-taffeta frock, with a ribbon of the same shade encircling her hair the wrong way—giving more the impression of a telephone apparatus than a head ornament—is seated on the sofa, basking enthusiastically in the illuminating conversation of the HON. HUGH PETWORTH, healthy young man, whose unfortunate shape can be luckily accounted for by his athletic prowess. He has had the forethought to wear white gloves which have wrinkled up slightly, displaying below his cuffs a mercifully brief expanse of blood-red wrists.

HUGH : It was a frightful rag.

NINA : I wish I'd been there.

HUGH : If you'd seen old Freddie fall off the roof of the taxi——

NINA (*delightedly*) : I should have *died*—I know I should I

HUGH : And you should have seen the way old Minky Taylor lammed into the commissionaire chap outside the Piccadilly——

NINA (*with whole-hearted sincerity*) : Oh, lovely !

A cherubic boy—BOBBY GOLEMAN by name—approaches them.

BOBBY : I say, Nina—this is us.

NINA : What number is it ?

BOBBY : Nine.

NINA (*rising*) : I'll leave my bag here. Keep your eye on it, Hughie.

HUGH : I'm supposed to be dancing this with Lucy.

NINA : Never mind ; it will be all right there.

HUGH rises automatically, and subsides again as

BOBBY and NINA go into the dancing-room. Two

YOUNG PEOPLE walk across and out on to the veranda.

1ST YOUNG PERSON : Jolly good tune, that.

2ND YOUNG PERSON : Lovely.

1ST YOUNG PERSON : The garden looks awfully pretty, doesn't it ?

2ND YOUNG PERSON : Yes, awfully pretty. (*They go off.*)

HILDA comes out of the library. She is wearing such a pretty blue dress, with stockings to match.

HILDA (*to HUGH*) : Why aren't you dancing ?

HUGH : I'm supposed to be—with Lucy. Have you seen her anywhere ?

HILDA : Yes, she's in the library. I'm looking for Philip Bordon. Have you seen him anywhere ?

HUGH : No. I'll go and get Lucy. Will you dance later ?

HILDA : Missing two.

HUGH : Righto. (*He goes off.*)

HILDA *goes towards the veranda and meets PHILIP entering.*

HILDA : Oh, there you are. This is ours.

PHILIP : Oh—is it ?

HILDA : Yes—nine. You said so this afternoon.

PHILIP : Where's Lanta ?—Mrs. John——?

HILDA : She's upstairs with a bad head—she's not coming down at all.

PHILIP : I say—what a shame I (*Despondently,*)

HILDA (*with meaning*) : Yes, isn't it ?

PHILIP (*resigned*) : Come on.

They go into the dancing-room' The music stops, and everyone can be heard clapping. Then it goes on again.

HUGH *comes out of the library with LUCY, a pretty girl with badly-bobbed hair ; her dress is awfully pretty—yellow, with shoes and stockings to match. They go into the dancing-room. They meet SARAH and CHARLES coming out, and exchange a few meaningless words.*

SARAH flops down on the sofa.

CHARLES : Do you want an ice or anything ?

SARAH : No, thanks.

CHARLES (*sitting down*): That dining-room's far too small and hot to dance in. Why didn't they have the band here ?

SARAH : The floor's better in there.

CHARLES : I hadn't noticed it.

SARAH : I'm worried, Charles—about Larita.

CHARLES : Yes—I know.

SARAH : I tried to slip up and see her when we arrived, but Marion stopped me; she said she'd asked particularly to be left alone.

CHARLES : I'm extremely disappointed—I wanted to see her too.

ACT III EASY VIRTUE

SARAH : Something's happened—I'm sure of it,

CHARLES : What could have ?

SARAH : I don't know exactly, but I've got a feeling.

CHARLES : What shall we do about it ?

SARAH : Nothing, yet—but I mean to see her somehow, before we go.

CHARLES : John seems quite happy.

SARAH : Mrs. Whittaker doesn't, though, and I haven't seen the Colonel.

CHARLES : They're a tiresome family.

SARAH : Very.

CHARLES : Have you danced with John ?

SARAH : Yes—just after we got here.

CHARLES : Did he say anything ?

SARAH : Only that she'd got a racking headache and was in bed.

CHARLES : You'd have been able to tell from his manner if anything was wrong.

SARAH : He's either being cleverer than I thought him, or he just doesn't know.

CHARLES : She seemed all right this afternoon, didn't she ?—You were here ?

SARAH : Yes—more or less.

CHARLES : How do you mean—more or less ?

SARAH : I'm furious with John.

CHARLES : Why ?

SARAH : He's making her utterly wretched.

CHARLES : That was inevitable.

SARAH : I don't see why.

CHARLES : She's all wrong here—right out of the picture.

SARAH : I know, Charles ; but he oughtn't to let her down—it's filthy mean of him.

CHARLES : He can't help it—he doesn't see anything.

SARAH : But he should see. If she's unhappy here, he must take her away.

CHARLES : That wouldn't do any good—ultimately.

SARAH : It was all a fiasco, from the first. I knew that directly I saw her. But still, he ought to play up and stand by her.

CHARLES : I can't imagine anyone of her intelligence being silly enough to marry him.

SARAH : She adores him.

CHARLES : Yes, but—she might have known it would end badly.

SARAH : It hasn't ended badly yet.

CHARLES : It will.

SARAH : Don't be so certain.

CHARLES : You're just as certain.

SARAH : Oh, Charles, I wish she'd been a cheap, loud-voiced cat—it would have been funny then.

CHARLES : Would it ?

SARAH : Well, less difficult, anyhow. There would be some excuse for John.

CHARLES : That's what's worrying you, is it ?

SARAH : Of course. I used to be awfully fond of him, but he's shrunk over this beyond all recognition—gone tiny.

CHARLES : An observant mind is painful sometimes, isn't it ?

SARAH : Damnably.

CHARLES : Would you like to marry me, Sarah ?

SARAH : Don't make me laugh, Charles—just now.

CHARLES : I believe I mean it.

SARAH : You're a darling—but you don't. The

intoxicating atmosphere of this revelry has gone to your head.

CHARLES : Perhaps.

SARAH : You're not in the least in love with me.

CHARLES : I don't know.

SARAH : But it is frightfully sweet of you to ask me, and I do appreciate it.

CHARLES : We might be awfully happy together.

SARAH : We probably should, but something would be wrong somewhere.

CHARLES : I wonder.

SARAH : You know perfectly well——

CHARLES : I've been paying pretty marked attentions to you during the last six months—surely that proves something ?

SARAH : It proves that you like being with me very much, and I like being with you.

CHARLES : Well, then——?

SARAH : Marriage would soon kill all that—without the vital spark to keep it going.

CHARLES : Dear, dear, dear. The way you modern young girls talk—it's shocking, that's what it is !

SARAH : Never mind, Charles dear, you must move with the times.

CHARLES : I didn't know you thought so highly of the vital spark, anyhow.

SARAH : Of course I do. It's a fundamental instinct in everybody. Being modern only means twisting things into different shapes.

CHARLES (*rising*) : The garden looks awfully pretty, doesn't it ?

SARAH (*also rising*) : Oh, yes, frightfully pretty,

CHARLES (*as they move away*): All those coloured lights and everything—so attractive.

SARAH : Terribly sweet I

CHARLES : It's extraordinary how pretty a garden *can* look.

SARAH : Oh, shut up ! (*They go off on to the veranda.*)

FURBER *crosses the hall, with a tray of clean glasses. The music stops, and desultory clapping can be heard. Several couples belch out of the dining-room', among them MARION with HENRY FURLEY, an earnest young man with a pinched face and glasses. MARION, for some obscure reason, is in white, with a black Indian scarf speckled with gold, and gold shoes which hurt her a little. They walk across, talking. MARION is being painfully jolly and gay—she slaps PHILIP BORDON heartily on the back in passing.*

MARION : We'll have you turned out if you twirl about like that, you know.

PHILIP (*with equal jocular*) : I shan't go quietly.

MARION : I bet you won't.

Several people laugh at this volley of wit, including the perpetrators of it.

To MR. FURLEY.

Damned good tune that.

FURLEY : Yes, I enjoyed it.

MARION : You lugged me round like a Trojan.

FURLEY (*politely*) : Not at all.

MARION : You know some tricky steps—we'd do well on the stage,

FURLEY (*laughing*) : Yes, wouldn't we ?

MARION : Be a good chap and get me a glass of something—I'm dry as a bone.

FURLEY : Claret-cup ?

MARION : Yes, rather. That'll do. I'll wait here.

She sits down, up-stage, and fans herself with her hand.

MR. FURLEY *departs in search of claret-cup.*

Two YOUNG PEOPLE *who have been sitting on the stairs, rise.*

GIRL : You really are awful—I don't believe a word of it.

BOY : It's true—I swear it is.

They both go into the dancing-room, where the music has restarted.

MRS. WHITTAKER *comes in, wearing a good many brooches on a mauve dress; she also has a diamanté butterfly in her hair. She is accompanied by MRS. HURST, a tall, handsome woman in black.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : But you really mustn't—it's quite early yet.

MRS. HURST : I'm just going to slip away without anybody noticing. Sarah can collect our party and come home when she wants to.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Of course, if you're really tired——

MRS. HURST : I'm so sorry your daughter-in-law is so seedy.

MRS. WHITTAKER : It is tiresome, isn't it ?—Poor Larita.

MRS. HURST : Tell her how disappointed I was not to have seen her, won't you ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Certainly.

MRS. PHILLIPS, *a pale white-haired woman' approaches.*

MRS. PHILLIPS (*effusively*): There you are, Mrs' Whittaker! It's all going off most successfully, isn't it?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes; I think the young people seem to be enjoying themselves.

MRS. PHILLIPS : So fortunate that it kept fine.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I've been on absolute tenterhooks all day.

MRS. HURST : I was just saying what a pity poor Mrs. John is missing it all.

MRS. PHILLIPS : I know—it's dreadful. What *is* wrong with her, exactly ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : A blinding headache—she has them, you know, quite often. I'm always trying to make her go to a specialist.

MRS. PHILLIPS : Poor dear ! It *is* a shame—to-night of all nights.

JOHN *comes in with* MARY BANFIELD, *a dark girl with whom he has been dancing.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : But still, it's much better, if you do feel ill, to stay quite quiet.

MRS. PHILLIPS : Oh, much, much I Do tell her how sorry I am, won't you ?

CHARLES *and* SARAH *wander in from the veranda.*

MARION *has been rejoined by* MR. FURLEY, *and is sipping her claret-cup.* JOHN *and* MARY BANFIELD *sit on the bottom step of the stairs and light cigarettes.*

MRS. HURST : Sarah, dear, I'm just going to slip away. When you come home, you will remember to lock up and turn out all the lights, won't you ?

SARAH *{joining the little group with* CHARLES) : All right, mother.

MRS. PHILLIPS : The Chinese lanterns look so pretty, don't they ?

CHARLES (*amiably*) : Perfectly charming—quite Venetian.

SARAH : Mrs. Whittaker, I'm so sorry about Lari. Do you think I could run up and see her ?

MRS. WHITTAKER (*hurriedly*): No, dear, really—she asked particularly to be left alone; you know what these headaches are——

SARAH : Yes, but——

MRS. WHITTAKER : The only thing to do is just rest and keep quiet.

SARAH : Poor darling !

MRS. WHITTAKER : She may have dropped off to sleep by now.

At this moment LARITA appears at the top of the stairs. Her dress is dead-white and cut extremely low ; she is wearing three ropes of pearls, and another long string twined round her right wrist. Her face is as white as her dress and her lips vivid scarlet. Her left arm positively glitters with diamond, ruby and emerald bracelets; her small tiara of rubies and diamonds matches her enormous ear-rings ; she also displays a diamond anklet over her cobweb fine flesh-coloured stocking. She is carrying a tremendous scarlet ostrich-feather fan. There is a distinct gasp from everybody.

MARION *rises and drops her glass of claret-cup.*

CHARLES : Marvellous—marvellous.

MRS. PHILLIPS : Well.

LARITA : Get out of the way, Marion dear, or I shall tread on you.

MARION : Larita—I——

MRS. WHITTAKER : My dear Larita, this is a surprise.

LARITA : Why ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : We thought you weren't coming down.

LARITA: I've been dressing and doing my face, it always takes me hours.

MRS. WHITTAKER : We understand you had a bad headache.

LARITA : Forgive me but that is quite untrue—you didn't understand anything of the sort.

MARION (*flustered*): Larita—I——

LARITA : If you have been building up a few neat social lies on my account, it is very unwise of you—I don't live according to your social system.

SARAH (*kissing her*) : You look perfectly lovely, Lan, and I'm fnghtlully glad to see you.

LARITA : I'm dying for something to eat—I didn't feel inclined for any dinner and now I'm starving—Oh, get me a sandwich or something, Johnnie. There's a darling.

JOHN : What's the matter—I don't understand——

LARITA : And some champagne—(*There is a blank pause.*) If there isn't any, plain water will do.

JOHN : Oh, all right.

LARITA : How divine the garden looks. Hello, Charles Burleigh, I hoped you were coming—I haven't seen you for ages.

MRS. PHILLIPS : We were just sending you up messages of sympathy—we understood you were prostrate.

LARITA : So I was—my maid has been massaging me—perfect agony.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Well, anyhow I'm sure I'm glad you're better now—and changed your mind about coming down.

LARITA : Why do you persist in this ridiculous fallacy of my being ill ? This afternoon you had the imperti-

nence to command me to remain in my room. That was quite unpardonable and you must take the consequences. I have nothing more to say to you. QOHN *enters with sandwich.*) Thank you, Johnnie.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Marion, I'm sure the band ought to be given something to eat and drink—they've been playing for such a long time.

MARION : Righto, mother—I'll see Furber about it.

She looks at LARITA contemptuously.

LARITA : How charming you look, Marion—and what a lovely scarf. I'm sure it came from India.

MARION, *ignoring her, goes on to the veranda.*

MRS. HURST : I really must be off now.

MRS. PHILLIPS : I don't think I can tear myself away
--yet--

MRS. HURST : Good-bye and thank you so much.

MRS. PHILLIPS (*seating herself beside LARITA*) : I must stay a little longer.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Please do—It's so early.

She walks towards the door with MRS. HURST.

LARITA (*to MRS. PHILLIPS*) : How is your girl, Rose Jenkins, progressing in London, Mrs. Phillips ? You seemed so worried about her when you came to tea last week.

MRS. PHILLIPS : I really don't know—I'm afraid she's a hopelessly bad character.

LARITA : I'm sure she'll get on in the profession you've sent her to.

MRS. PHILLIPS (*stiffly*) : I sent her to no profession.

LARITA : How stupid of me ! I thought you had.

MRS. PHILLIPS, *sensing underlying meaning, moves away.*

JOHN : Lari, why on earth are you dressed up like this?

LARITA : I just felt like it, Johnnie. I'm wearing all the jewellery I've got in the world—it's a heavenly sensation.

She jingles her bracelets.

JOHN : It looks ridiculous.

LARITA : Don't be an ass, John.

JOHN : But it does—honestly.

LARITA (*brushing him with her fan*) : Run away and dance if you can't be pleasant to me.

JOHN : But look here, Lari——

LARITA (*with suppressed fury*): Perhaps you don't realise that I'm serious ?

JOHN : Oh, all right—if you're going on like that.

He slams off in a rage.

LARITA : John's lost grip of things terribly lately, hasn't he ?

SARAH : Lari dear, what's happened ?

LARITA : Lots and lots and lots of things.

SARAH : Are you upset ?

LARITA : You don't suppose I should do this—ordinarily—do you ?

SARAH : Tell me.

LARITA : Not yet, Sarah—later on.

PHILIP BORDON *rushes up.*

PHILIP : I *am* glad you're all right.

LARITA : Thank you.

PHILIP : You've cut both the dances you promised me by coming down late.

LARITA : I'm so sorry. Let's have this one.

PHILIP : Rather !

LARITA (*to SARAH*) : Later on, dear.

CHARLES : Next dance, please.

LARITA : Missing eight.

CHARLES : No—the next one.

LARITA : All right.

She goes into the dancing-room with PHILIP.

CHARLES : You must says she's magnificent.

SARAH : She's wretched.

CHARLES : I've never seen such an entrance in my life.

SARAH (*smiling*) : Poor Mrs. Whittaker.

CHARLES : Serve her right.

SARAH : I wonder what Lari's object is—in all this.

CHARLES : Swan song.

SARAH : Charles—what *do* you mean ?

CHARLES : Wait and see.

SARAH : Come and dance, then.

CHARLES : I feel pleasantly thrilled.

SARAH : Well, you ought to be ashamed of yourself

They go into the dance-room. NINA VANSITTART and HUGH PETWORTH are standing by the dancing-room door.

NINA : That's her in white.

HUGH : Phew !

NINA : I've never seen anything like it.

HUGH : Look at her pearls.

NINA : Downright vulgar, I call it.

HUGH : Come on in. (*They go in.*)

MRS. WHITTAKER *intercepts* MARION *coming from the veranda, and draws her aside.*

FURBER *goes into the dance-room with drinks for the band.*

MRS. WHITTAKER : This is outrageous ! How dare she!

MARION : Nothing can be done.

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'm so ashamed.

MARION : If I can get her alone I'll give her a piece of my mind.

MRS. WHITTAKER : No, no ; ignore her—don't say a word. We don't want a repetition of this afternoon.

MARION : We shall never hear the last of it. Did you see Mrs. Phillips' face ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : I'm sure I don't know what I've done to be so humiliated.

MARION (*fearing a breakdown*): Mother—for Heaven" sake——

HILDA *rushes in from the dance-room.*

HILDA (*frantically*) : Mother—Lan's come down ! She's dancing !

MARION : Yes, yes, we know.

HILDA : I've been telling everybody she was ill.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Don't speak so loudly, Hilda.

HILDA : She looks a sight. What are we to do ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Nothing. Ignore her completely—behave as if she wasn't there at all, and don't discuss her with anybody.

HILDA : But everybody's talking about her.

MARION : I don't wonder.

HILDA : It's too awful.

FURBER *approaches them.*

FURBER : The sit-down supper's ready in the tent now, ma'am.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Well, tell everybody. You'd better stop the band.

MARION : No, there won't be room if they all troop out. I'll go in and just tell some of them.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Yes, do,

HILDA : I'll come too.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Remember, Hilda—don't be aware of anything unusual at all.

HILDA : All right.

HILDA *and* MARION *go into the dance-room.*

MRS. WHITTAKER *passes her hand hopelessly across her forehead.*

JOHN *comes in.*

JOHN : Mother—I'm fearfully sorry about this.

MRS. WHITTAKER : Don't John—don't.

JOHN : But I don't understand—it's so unlike Lari to make an exhibition of herself like this.

MRS. WHITTAKER (*bitterly*): Unlike her!

JOHN : Something's happened. What is it ?

MRS. WHITTAKER : Don't worry me now, John; can't you see I'm at my wits' end ?

JOHN : I mean to find out.

Several people come in, among them SARAH and CHARLES.

MRS. WHITTAKER *goes out to the supper-tent.*

SARAH (*lightly*): Don't look so gloomy, John.

JOHN : Something's happened to Lari—what is it ?

SARAH : She's dancing at the moment with Philip Bordon.

JOHN : Why did she pretend to have a headache, and not come down to dinner or anything ?

SARAH : She didn't feel like it, I suppose.

JOHN : I'm going to find out what's wrong.

SARAH (*taking his arm*) : No, you're not; you're going to give me some supper. Come along, or there won't be any room.

JOHN : But, Sarah——

SARAH : Come *along.*

She drags him off, throwing a meaning look at

CHARLES *over her shoulder.* CHARLES *nods, and lights a cigarette.*

BOBBY COLEMAN *walks across with a GIRL.*

BOBBY : I think she looks jolly attractive.

GIRL : Fancy all those bracelets, though ! (*They go off-*)

LARITA *comes in with PHILIP, followed at a discreet distance by HILDA, scowling malignantly.*

LARITA : No—I couldn't eat a thing at the moment. If I'd known supper was so close I should never have had that sandwich.

She sits down on sofa.

PHILIP : Can I get you anything to drink ?

LARITA : No, thanks—nothing. Go and have supper with poor little Hilda, and we'll dance again afterwards.

PHILIP : But, I say——

LARITA : Please ! I want to rest for a minute.

PHILIP : Oh, very well.

HILDA *marches out, with her head in the air.* PHILIP *follows despondently.*

LARITA (*to CHARLES*) : Come and talk to me.

CHARLES : I've been wanting to do that.

LARITA : How sweet of you. Where's Sarah ?

CHARLES : With John—having supper.

LARITA : Oh I

She opens her cigarette-case and offers him one.

CHARLES : Thanks.

He lights hers and his own.

LARITA : Such a good floor, don't you think ?

CHARLES : Perfectly awful.

LARITA : I wonder if your attention has been called to those fascinating Japanese lanterns ?

CHARLES : Several times.

ACT III

E A S Y V I R T U E

LARITA : You must admit it's a fine night, anyhow.

CHARLES : How you've changed.

LARITA : Changed ?

CHARLES : Yes. Meeting you just now and then, as I've done, makes it easier to observe subtle differences.

LARITA : In what way have I changed ?

CHARLES : You're dimmer.

LARITA : Dimmer !—with all these ?

She fingles her bracelets.

CHARLES : Yes, even with those.

LARITA : You wouldn't have thought me dim if you'd seen me this afternoon.

CHARLES : Why, what happened ?

LARITA : Several things.

CHARLES : I don't want you to think I'm angling for your confidence, but I *am* interested.

LARITA : I know that. It's interesting enough. Do you remember saying, the first day I met you, that one was disillusioned over everything ?

CHARLES : You've been disillusioned lately ?

LARITA : Yes—I didn't know I was capable of it.

CHARLES : That's one of the greatest illusions of all.

LARITA : You've been awfully nice to me.

CHARLES : Why not ? We speak the same language.

LARITA : Yes—I suppose we do.

CHARLES : And naturally one feels instinctively drawn—particularly in this atmosphere.

LARITA : English country life. (*Shesmiles.*)

CHARLES : Yes, English country life.

LARITA : I wonder if it's a handicap having our **sort** of minds ?

CHARLES : In what way ?

LARITA : Watching ourselves go by.

CHARLES : No, it's a comfort in the end.

LARITA : I'm face to face with myself all the time—specially when I'm unhappy. It', not an edifying sensation.

CHARLES : I'm sorry you're unhappy.

LARITA : It can't be helped—you can't cope adequately with your successes unless you realise your failures.

CHARLES : It requires courage to do either.

LARITA : I've always had a definite ideal.

CHARLES : What is it ?

LARITA : One should be top-dog in one's own particular sphere.

CHARLES : It's so difficult to find out what *is* one's own particular sphere.

LARITA : I'm afraid that's always been depressingly obvious to me.

CHARLES : You feel you've deviated from your course.

LARITA : Exactly—and it's demoralised me.

CHARLES : Why did you do it ?

LARITA : Panic, I believe.

CHARLES : What sort of panic ?

LARITA : A panic of restlessness and dissatisfaction with everything.

CHARLES : That's a black cloud which descends upon everyone at moments.

LARITA : Not everyone—just people like us.

CHARLES : When you live emotionally you must expect the pendulum to swing both ways.

LARITA : It had swung the wrong way with a vengeance when I met John. Marrying him was the most cowardly thing I ever did.

CHARLES : Why did you ?

LARITA : I loved him quite differently. I thought that any other relationship would be cheapening and squalid—I can't imagine how I could have been such a fool.

CHARLES : Neither can I.

LARITA : Love will always be the most dominant and absorbing subject in the world because it's so utterly inexplicable. Experience can teach you to handle it superficially, but not to explain it. I can look round with a nice clear brain and see absolutely no reason why I should love John. He falls short of every ideal I've ever had—he's not particularly talented or clever; he doesn't *know* anything, really ; he can't talk about any of the things I consider it worth while to talk about; and, having been to a good school—he's barely educated.

CHARLES : Just a healthy young animal.

LARITA : Yes.

CHARLES : Perhaps that explains it.

LARITA : If my love were entirely physical, it would ; but it isn't physical at all.

CHARLES : That *is* a bad sign.

LARITA : The worst.

CHARLES : What do you intend to do ?

LARITA : I haven't decided yet.

CHARLES : I think I know.

LARITA : Don't say that.

CHARLES : Very well; I'll tell you afterwards if I guessed right.

LARITA : Go, and send Sarah to me—alone ; will you ?

CHARLES (*rising*): All right.

LARITA (*putting out her band*): We shall meet again, perhaps, some day.

CHARLES : I was right.

LARITA (*putting her fingerto her lips*): Sshhh !

CHARLES *goes out*.

People have passed backward andforward during this scene , talking and laughing. Now the hall is practically deserted. HUGH PETWORTH and BOBBY COLEMAN appear on the veranda. Seeing LARITA alone , they whisper and nudge each other. Finally HUGH comes in.

HUGH : I say, Mrs. John, will you dance ?

LARITA : No, thank you—I'm rather tired.

HUGH : It's a jolly good band.

LARITA : Do you know, I don't believe I've ever met you before.

HUGH : Well, as a matter of fact, we haven't been introduced officially. My name's Hugh Petworth.

LARITA : Really. How much would you have won from your little friend if I had agreed to dance with you ?

HUGH (*flummoxed*) : Here, I say, you know,—I——

LARITA : You're far too young and nice-looking to be so impertinent. If I were you, I should run away and recover yourself.

HUGH (*blushing*) : I'm awfully sorry.

LARITA : Don't apologise—it's quite all right.

HUGH PETWORTH *bows awkwardly, and goes hurriedly out to rejoin BOBBY, who has disappeared. He cannons into SARAH, who is coming in.*

HUGH : I beg your pardon.

SARAH : Not at all. Hullo ! Lari.

LARITA : I want to talk to you, Sarah—importantly. There isn't much time.

SARAH : Why ? What do you mean ?

LARITA : I'm going away—to-night.

SARAH : Lari!

LARITA : For good.

SARAH : Oh, my dear I—what on earth's the matter ?

LARITA : Everything. Where's John ?

SARAH : In the supper-tent.

LARITA : Listen. There was a dreary family fracas this afternoon.

SARAH : What about ?

LARITA : Hilda had unearthed a newspaper cutting, disclosing several of my past misdemeanours——

SARAH : The unutterable little beast ! I made her swear——

LARITA : You knew about it ?

SARAH : Yes, she showed it to me three days ago.

LARITA (*slightly overcome*): Oh, Sarah !——

SARAH : I said I'd never speak to her again if she showed it to anybody, and I shan't.

LARITA : It was all very unpleasant. The Colonel stood by me, of course—John wasn't there—he doesn't know anything yet.

SARAH : But Lari dear, don't give in like this and chuck up everything.

LARITA : I must—you see, they're right; it's perfectly horrible for them. I'm entirely to blame.

SARAH : But what does it matter ? The past's finished with.

LARITA : Never. Never, never, never. That's a hopeless fallacy.

SARAH : I'm most frightfully sorry.

LARITA : I wouldn't give in at all—unless I was sure. You see, John's completely sick of me—it was just silly calf-love, and I ought to have recognised it as such.

But I was utterly carried away—and now it's all such a hopeless mess.

SARAH : John's behaved abominably.

LARITA : No—not really. I expected too much. When you love anybody, you build in your mind an ideal of them—and it's naturally terribly hard for them to play up, not knowing——

SARAH : But, Lari, don't do anything on the impulse of the moment.

LARITA : It isn't the impulse of the moment—I realised it weeks ago.

SARAH : It may all come right yet.

LARITA : Be honest, Sarah—how can it ?

SARAH : Where are you going ?

LARITA : London to-night, and Paris to-morrow. I've ordered a car. Louise is packing now.

SARAH : Where will you stay ?

LARITA : The Ritz. I always do.

SARAH : I wish I could do something.

LARITA (*pressing her band*): You can.

SARAH : What ?

LARITA : Look after John for me.

SARAH (*turning away*): Don't, Lari.

LARITA : I mean it. You're fond of him—you ought to have married him, by rights. He needs you so much more than me. He's frightfully weak, and a complete damn fool over most things, but he has got qualities—somewhere—worth bringing out. I'm going to arrange for him to divorce me, quietly, without any fuss.

SARAH : I don't love him nearly as well as you do.

LARITA : All the better. Women of my type are so tiresome in love. We hammer at it, tooth and nail, until

it's all bent and misshapen. Promise me you'll do what I ask.

SARAH : I can't promise ; but if circumstances make it possible, I'll try.

LARITA : All right—that'll do.

SARAH : Shall I see you again—ever ?

LARITA : Yes, please.

SARAH : Well, we won't say good-bye, then.

LARITA : It's such a silly thing to say.

She gets up.

SARAH : Good luck, anyhow.

LARITA : I'm not sure that that's not sillier.

JOHN comes in.

JOHN : Sarah, I've been looking for you everywhere.

SARAH : Well, you've found me now.

JOHN : Lari, I'm sorry I was beastly just now—about your dress. You are rather a Christmas tree, though, aren't you ?

LARITA : It was done with a purpose.

JOHN : What purpose ?

LARITA : It was a sort of effort to re-establish myself—rather a gay gesture—almost a joke !

JOHN : Oh!

SARAH : You'll find me in the garden, John.

LARITA (*quickly*) : Don't go, Sarah—please. (SARAH *ttops.*) I'm rather tired, so I'll say good night.

JOHN : The dance will go on for hours yet—this is only a lull.

LARITA : Yes, I know; but I'm dead.

JOHN : Oh, very well.

LARITA : Good night, darling.

She kisses him.

JOHN : I'll try not to disturb you.

LARITA : I'm afraid you won't be able to help it.

SARAH : Come and dance, John.

JOHN : What's the matter, Lari ? Why are you looking like that ?

LARITA : I think I'm going to sneeze.

BOBBY COLEMAN and NINA *rush across, laughing ; he's delving into her bag and she's trying to recapture it.*

JOHN and SARAH *go into the dance-room.*

FURBER *enters from veranda.*

LARITA : Is the car ready, Furber ?

FURBER : Yes, ma'am. Your maid is waiting in it.

LARITA : Get my cloak from her, will you, please ?

FURBER : Very good, ma'am. (*He goes off.*)

LARITA, *left quite alone, leans up against one of the windows and looks out into the garden. The light from the lanterns falls on her face, which is set in an expression of hopeless sadness. She fans herself, then lets her fan drop.*

FURBER *re-enters with her cloak, and helps her on with it.*

LARITA : Thank you very much, Furber. You won't forget what I asked you, will you ?

FURBER : No, ma'am.

LARITA : Then good-bye.

FURBER : Good-bye, ma'am.

He holds open the door for her, and she walks out. There is a burst of laughter from the veranda. The band continues to play with great enthusiasm.

CURTAIN

