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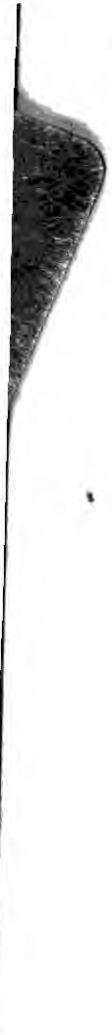
FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

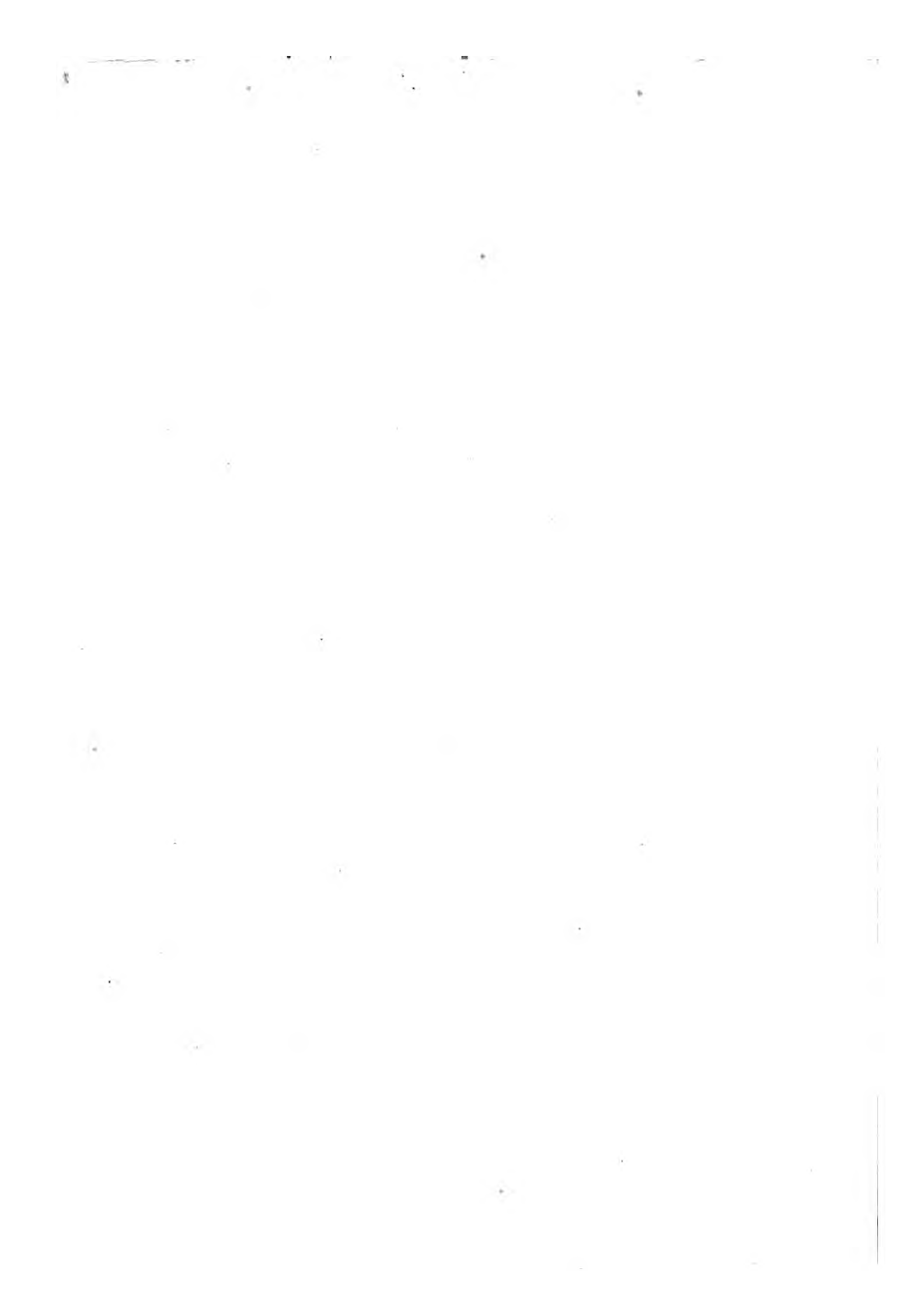
Seven  
Juvenile  
Plays



By

GEORGE FULLER

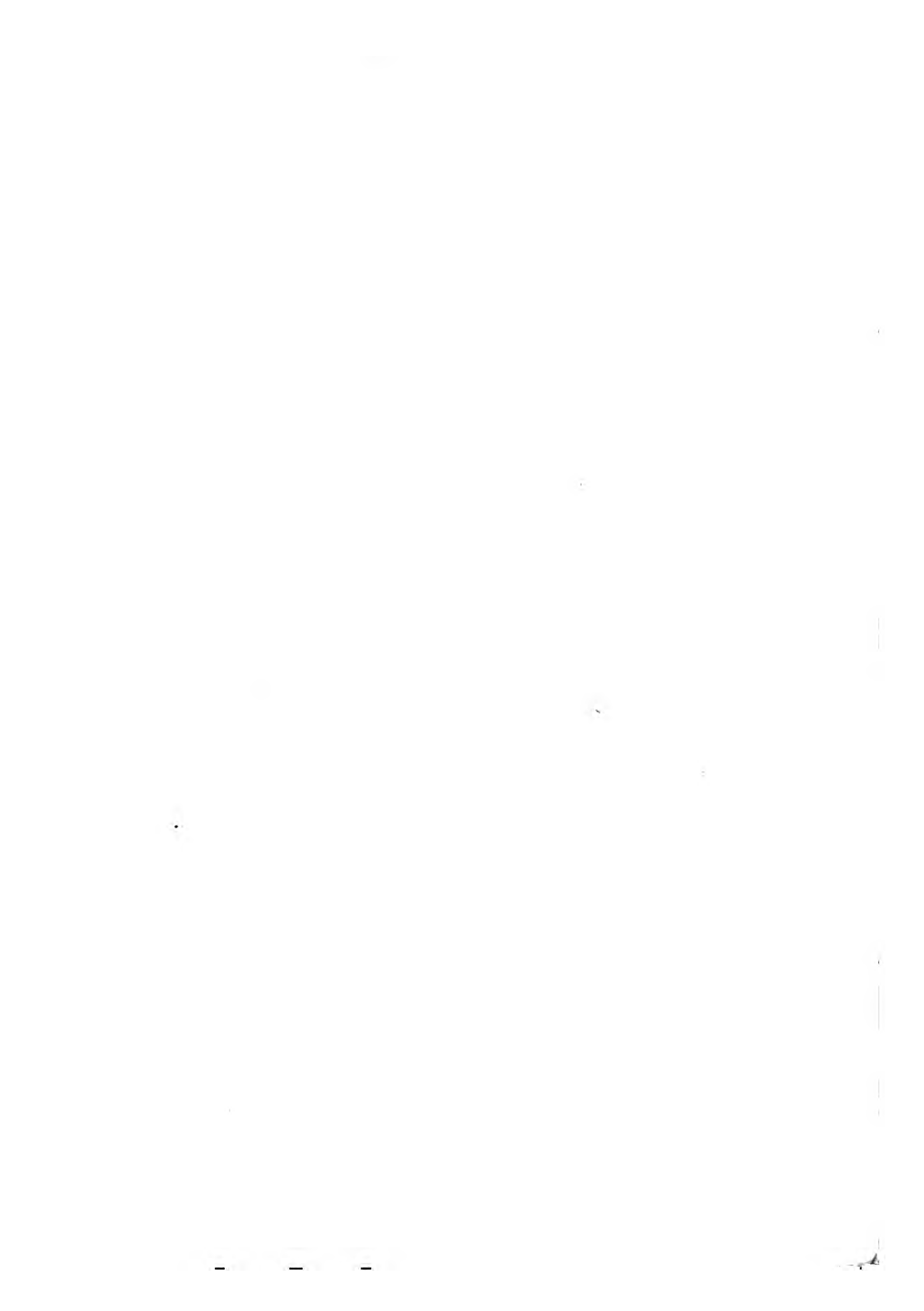








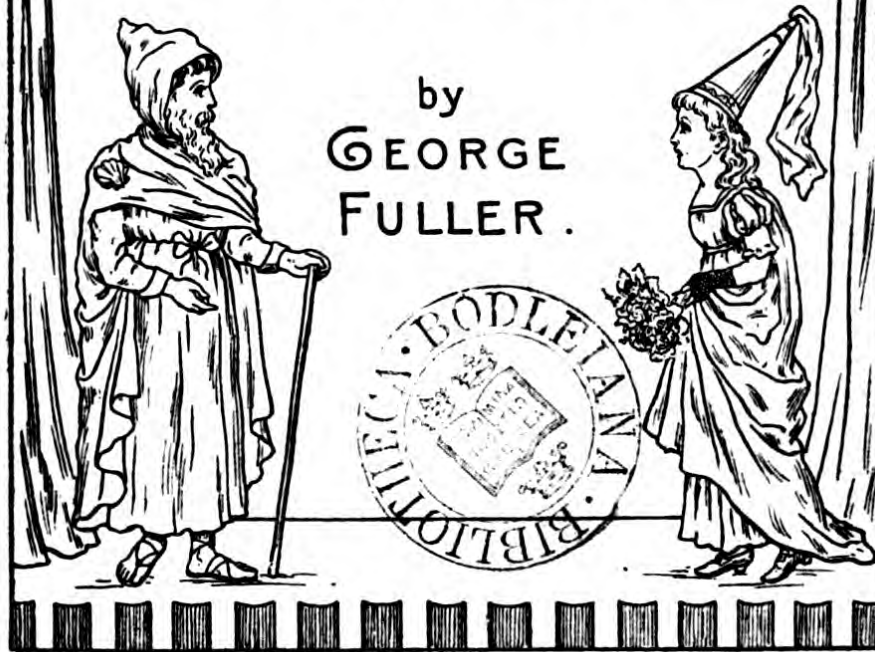
SEVEN JUVENILE PLAYS



FOR  
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.  
SEVEN  
JUVENILE PLAYS

Art for Art's sake is now the Artist's saw  
At hint of moral purpose, he cries pshaw!

by  
GEORGE  
FULLER.



LONDON  
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## P R E F A C E .



THE following were written for the Author's children and their young friends ; but, as they have been found to amuse both performers and audiences, the writer thinks they may be of some use to those who, at Christmas time, are seeking small plays for small actors.

The majority of them are in doggerel, to facilitate the commitment of the parts to memory ; but accuracy of rhyme has no more been studied than accuracy of reason. The characters, for the most part, being creatures of impulse, must not be considered altogether accountable for their words or actions ; so it will not be fair for parents and guardians to reason as to the probable future of the young actors from their conduct on the stage.

The writer feels he will have no right to take umbrage at the critic—if so slight a performance meets with one—who quotes against him, “Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no way but in’s own house;” though he would like to suggest in preference, “Excellent! why, this is the best fooling when all is done.”



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## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

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### PERSONS REPRESENTED.

KING,	...	...	...	ZETA.
1ST LORD,	...	...	...	LADY.
2ND LORD,	...	...	...	HECLA.
QUEEN,	...	...	...	1ST FAIRY.
PRINCESS,	...	...	...	2ND FAIRY.
NURSE,	..	...	...	3RD FAIRY.

### ACT I.

*Room in the Palace. KING and QUEEN seated.*

*King.* Fair Queen, it seems like yesterday  
I sought you at your father's court;  
Who would have thought that we, so gay,  
Of boredom soon would be the sport?

[KING and QUEEN rise.]

My kingdom I have now in order,  
I've thrashed my friends beyond the border;  
I've floated all my Three per Cents,  
And put the screw on for my rents.

No rebel dares to wag his head,  
No beggar dares to ask for bread—  
For then he, by our law, partakes  
Of your most bilious-looking cakes,  
Which only rise when they are down  
Below the belt.

*Queen.* Oh, do not frown,  
My gracious lord, for you must know  
That in this wicked world below  
Cakes only rise when made with butter,  
And cannot rise when you do cut her  
Weakly weekly money off.

*King.* Stuff!  
Of your excuse I've heard enough.  
My money does not melt, I know,  
In frying-pan, but goes for show  
Upon your back. To make display,  
You rush to Whiteley's every day,  
And spend on silly lace and ruffles  
What might be better spent on truffles.

*Queen.* Is it for this I left Papa,  
And came to you with my guitar?  
You told me then, with smiling face,  
That I should have no end of lace,  
Silk by the mile, and satin too,  
To make a jupon or a shoe.  
My dresses then quite won your praises,  
I never heard a word like "blazes,"  
And now you do not care a button—  
Except when dinner is cold mutton,  
And then your language, dear, is shocking,  
It always sets my poor head rocking.

*King.* Talk not of rocking ; that does bring  
Before my mind its greatest sting,  
Who can forget our berceaunette,  
Which should be filled, is not so yet?

*Queen.* Alas ! my Lord, that is quite true,  
But then, what can—what can I do ?  
I've finished robes for heavy twins,  
And got Robb's biscuits all in tins,  
What more to do I'm sure I know not.

[*Uses her handkerchief.*]

*King.* What ! tears, fair Queen ; oh, let them flow  
not.

*Enter 1ST LORD.*

*1st Lord.* Your Majesty will please remember,  
To-day's the First day of September.

*King.* Adieu, fair Queen, I must away,  
Or I shall shoot no birds to-day.

[*Exit KING and 1ST LORD.*]

*Queen.* Where shall I turn in this my sorrow—  
Would it be right for once to borrow ?  
No ! out base thought, though at the Stores  
No doubt they keep those little bores.  
But here comes Zeta.

*Enter ZETA.*

*Zeta.* Oh, my Queen !  
Was ever such affliction seen ;  
What is it makes those pretty eyes,  
To water like the April skies ?  
What is it makes that form to tremble ?

*Queen.* It is—from you I'll not dissemble—  
Because my quiver I can't fill,  
And this my lord takes very ill.



*Zeta.* I know quite well a poor Professor,  
 Who's quite a saint, and half confessor ;  
 His quiver must be full, I ween—  
 For such a brood was never seen.  
 Oft have I seen him, fasting, running  
 At dewy morn for Doctor Dunning ;  
 But after doctor's smiled adieu,  
 The poor Professor's looked quite blue !

*Queen.* Talk not to me of a Professor,  
 Of children he may be possessor,  
 But how from him can I get aid ?  
 It's quite beyond him, I'm afraid.

*Zeta.* I only mentioned him to note  
 That Science might your wish promote,  
 For now I hear that things organic  
 Are made, which used to be botanic,  
 So p'haps on babies they have hit,  
 Though that were folly, I admit.

*Queen.* Professor might, for sake of fame,  
 Perhaps for once try on that game,  
 But he would never nurs'ry stuff :  
 For Science, one would be enough.  
 No doubt the wife of your dear friend,  
 On babies all her might does spend.

*Enter 1ST FAIRY.*

But who is this I now behold ?  
 May I to question make so bold.

*1st Fairy.* I come from the east, I come from  
 the west,  
 I search the world round, and I know no rest,  
 When affliction takes hold on a kindly heart,  
 I catch the dew-drops from the eyes that start ;

Then under full moon's fair shadowy light,  
Distil off the sighs till the wish comes bright;  
And then with the speed of lightning I run,  
And know no rest till the good work's begun.

Before the sun

A year has run,

Will thy fair arms

Enclose the charms

Of a sweet daughter, strong and bright,  
Whose fate will have both shade and light.

[*Exit* 1ST FAIRY.]

*Queen.* This within my breast I'll keep,  
My joy's so great that I must weep.

---

A C T I I.

*Feast prepared.* KING, QUEEN, LORDS, &c.

*King.* Sound out the trumpet's long-drawn note,  
And make it echo o'er the moat,  
For we high festival do make,  
And bid the world with us partake.

*1st Lord.* That invitation's rather wide.

*2nd Lord.* Not more so than the day will bide.

*King.* Our feast will celebrate the day  
Our daughter's led to the right way.

*Queen.* My Lord, a word with you, I pray;  
I would remind you that one day  
A golden platter was quite lost,  
And now we've only three at most.

*King.* Oh yes, my love, I do remember,  
It was a day in last December;

That day your mother left our hall  
In such a hurry for a ball.

*Queen.* I trust, my Lord, you do not think  
Our mother—

*King.* Oh, I did not wink!  
But mothers, when they are by law,  
Are not particular to a straw.  
But be not sad, my gentle Queen,  
Because the platter can't be seen;  
I've made the matter right, you'll see,  
By only sending cards to three  
Of the wise women; so the fourth  
Must stay at home and nurse her wrath.

*March.* *Enter* Wise Women, &c., *and they sit down o*  
*supper.*

*King* [*rising*]. My gentle consort, lords, and ladies,  
Drink to our loving toast—the babies!

*Enter* Nurse *with* PRINCESS. *Ladies of the Court*  
*rush to kiss* PRINCESS. *Presents given by*  
Lords *and* Ladies.

*1st Fairy.* From the land of palms, from the  
home of charms,  
I come to welcome thee;  
And I bring bright joy, which without alloy  
The term of thy life shall see.  
To thee is given, from highest heaven,  
The love no sorrow knows;  
Thy life shall be free as a bird o'er the sea,  
And light shall be thy woes.

*2nd Fairy.* Little darling, I do bring  
Golden gifts without a sting;

Beauty sit upon thy brow,  
Happiness upon the prow  
Of your little bark that glides  
Down life's slowly ebbing tides.

*Enter HECLA.*

*Hecla.* What is this feast to which Hecla's not  
bid?

Where is the host who thus thinks to get rid  
Of her who can bless like still-falling dew,  
Or blast like the lightning's death-darting blue?

*King.* Good mother, do not take amiss  
An oversight: the fact is this—  
We thought that this our little feast  
Would suit your taste not in the least.

*Hecla.* Away, false man! To me deceit  
Is vain! I know you deem'd not meet  
To ask me to your feast to-night  
When for me was no platter bright.  
Listen! I can a tale unfold,  
Will make your hearts beat thick and cold!  
It was the witching time of night,  
Nor moon nor star shed any light,—  
A dreary mist, fast falling, dank,  
Shrouded the palace, and the rank  
Odour of flesh rotting slowly  
Clung around the senses wholly.  
Hark! a footfall, like a whisper,  
Who is it so late does rove  
To the lake whose ice is crisper  
Than the glass by fairies wove?  
Why, Queen mother, do you so late  
Steal from your daughter's castle gate?

Whose heart is in that dish of gold,  
They sink with splash in the water cold.

*Queen.* False hag! if you do speak another  
Word against our dearest mother,  
We'll tear your tongue out by the roots,  
And fling it forth to feed the brutes.

*Hecla.* Enough! Now listen to the fate  
Of her you love, of her I hate.

If any needle, any pin,  
But prick her through her shining skin,  
And draw of blood but one poor drop,  
She dies! [*Exit* HECLA.]

*King.* Go, seize the hag, and stop  
Her e'er she takes to instant flight.

*1st Lord.* And rides on broom-stick quite from  
sight.

*3rd Fairy.* Hecla's curse it was too deep,  
She has not the power to keep  
The life extinct. Those who reap  
Her curse, years one hundred sleep.

*King.* Proclaim it through our kingdom wide,  
That from this moment, woe betide  
Our subject who does not destroy  
Both pins and needles! This our joy  
Must run no risk from such a cause:  
So we proclaim it by our laws,  
It's death to him who one possesses.

*Zeta.* Oh, what to do about our dresses!

*2nd Lord.* Your dresses! wrap yourselves in skin—  
But what's a tie without a pin.

*Nurse.* I think we might as well begin  
To sleep at once—without a pin,

---

We shall look like the blessed martyrs,  
Our dresses all bound up with garters.

—  
A C T III.

*Room in Castle Tower. HECLA sewing.*

*Enter PRINCESS singing.*

How the merry lark does sing  
On the wing,  
Scattering both far and wide  
O'er the tide  
Cheerful notes in endless trill  
With a will—  
I, like lark, could ever sing  
Whilst the spring  
Of life's journey is so green  
And so keen.

*Hecla.* She comes.

For this one moment fifteen years,  
List'ning to the wind's wild wail,  
Have I here watched, distraught with fears,  
Lest my prophecy should fail.

*Princess.* This chamber have I never seen ;  
Why does so oft my mother Queen  
So strangely urge me keep away  
From this high turret old and grey ?  
I'm not a Blue Beard's loving wife—  
Here are no corpses large as life ;  
If she had said I might come in,  
I should not then have cared a pin—

But what's a pin? I do declare  
That, though I'm now a lady fair,  
The only pins we've from the stores  
Are rolling pins and pin-a-fores.

[*Sees HECLA.*

I'm not alone; who can this be—  
A woman! and not taking tea!  
I will accost her. Mother, tell  
What work is that you do so well?

*Hecla.* Fair princess, ere the sun descend,  
I have a heavy task to end—  
This combination for a witch  
I have, without a pause, to stitch.

*Princess.* Could I assist you in your task?

*Hecla.* Would you from me a needle ask?

*Princess.* A needle! Oh, dear mother, please  
Let me a real live needle seize;  
For father, just for some strange fad—  
Between ourselves it is too bad—  
Has kept all needles from my sight,  
So I, of course, am dying quite  
To see one. [Takes needle.

*Enter QUEEN and ZETA, followed by KING.*

*Queen.* Oh, my daughter dear,  
How came you in this turret here?  
You know my nerves are never strong,  
And you were told it was quite wrong  
To come up to this awful turret,  
And give your mother such a worret.

*King.* You little baggage! Oh! these stairs,  
Mortal can't mount you but he swears.



I wish it were not quite so wrong  
To use those words, so nice and strong.  
How came you here, you little sinner,  
You've nearly made me lose my dinner?

*Zeta.* Oh, Queen! I must for once make bold.

[*Rushes to* PRINCESS.]

She has a needle eyed with gold  
In her fair hand, and one slight slip  
Brings down what fell from Hecla's lip.

*Princess.* Oh, mother dear! Oh, do come quick!  
The needle's been, and gone, and prick——

[*Sleeps.*

*Queen.* -ed me, she would have——

[*Sleeps.*

*King.*  
Have——

If she could

[*Sleeps.*

*Zeta.* Said before she went to sleep——

[*Sleeps.*

---

ACT IV.

*Enter* PRINCE *before the Curtain.*

*Prince.* I've lost my stag! I've lost my way!  
And through these woods the livelong day  
I've wandered on through brake, through briar,  
And now my limbs begin to tire,  
So I will rest me here awhile,  
And with a pipe the time beguile—  
But what is this, an open door?  
I'll enter, for I would see more.

[*Exit* PRINCE.]

*Curtain drawn*—PRINCESS, QUEEN, &c., *asleep.*

*Enter* PRINCE.

*Prince.* Whom have we here? what! all asleep;  
No one on guard the watch to keep—  
A king and court within this wood,  
That for these hundred years has stood  
Within my father's royal domain,  
And where so many stags I've slain!  
It must be magic or black art.

[*Sees* PRINCESS.

But stay the beating of my heart—  
Oh, what a lovely form is here!  
Never have eyes beheld her peer;  
Look how her arm, with gentle curve,  
Pillows her head. Who would not serve,  
Like Jacob, years and years of toil,  
If he for once might take the spoil  
From those sweet lips. Does her heart beat,  
Or is she only but the seat  
Of dull perfections? Surely mind  
Must in this iv'ry casket find  
A dwelling. Caution is ever weak—  
One kiss, fair lady, on that lovely cheek.

[*Kisses her and retires.* PRINCESS *awakes.*

*Princess.* Ah, me! I feel not quite awake,  
My limbs, like martyr's at the stake,  
Feel cramp'd. My blood is slow to run,  
Like life were ended, not begun;  
Yet my heart beats without a pause,  
And spreads a web of crimson gauze

Over my cheeks. Was it a dream,  
A prince bent o'er and made me scream?

[PRINCE *comes forward.*

*Prince.* No dream, fair lady, but the sweetest  
fact;

You know, in life, oft we're obliged to act  
On our discretion.

*Princess.* Thus a maid to treat  
Shows your discretion was not quite discreet.

*Prince.* Fair lady, say not so—one little kiss.

*Princess.* A kiss! who ever heard the like of this?  
I'll tell mamma, and you will then be chid;  
For Princes thus to——what was it you did?

[PRINCE *kisses her, and they retire.*

*Queen.* My gracious liege, my gracious king,  
Did in your ears a something sing?  
I think we must asleep have been.

*King.* Asleep, my Queen! what do you mean?  
I closed my eyes, I do allow,  
But only between then and now.

*Queen.* When I awoke and looked around,  
I thought you just now made a sound.

*King.* I do admit I sometimes doze,  
Never the music of the nose.

[PRINCE *comes forward.*

*Prince.* Fair ladies, in this forest deep  
You've been one hundred years asleep.

[ZETA *and Lady come forward.*

*Zeta.* A hundred years! Oh, my back hair,  
How it will make all people stare!  
Our fashion was to be all fluffy,  
I've no doubt now it's something stuffy.

*Lady.* Zeta, why think of your back hair,  
No one for it a pin does care?  
Now, if a skirt's an inch too short,  
The eyes of men may be too caught ;  
But then, if it's too long an inch——

*Zeta.* You would put tuck in at a pinch.  
I'm sure you never hid from view  
The inch and half above your shoe.

*Lady.* Now, Zeta, do not be so cross,  
Or you will make yourself quite hoarse ;  
Because your ankles are the size  
Of oxen fatted for a prize,  
Am I to blame? My own light shoes  
Are, when they fit, small number two's.

*Zeta.* I, whilst you look on things below,  
On higher things regard bestow.

*Lady.* I cannot stand your cool assertion.

*Zeta.* Then don't, for you are my aversion.

[*Retire severally.*]

*Princess.* But surely, love, I have not seen  
Of years one hundred and fifteen?

*Prince.* Yes, like the flower of the palms,  
Only long years unfold such charms.

*King.* Are all my courtiers quite awake?  
Does no one feel inclined to take  
Forty winks more? My herald call,  
And let him now proclaim to all  
That we our kingdom do resume ;  
But let no tenant dare presume  
To think he has prescriptive right,  
Because we've taken a long night.

No ; they must all pay up arrears,  
E'en though they have to coin their tears.  
For when I slept—I now bear mind—  
A sixpence it was hard to find ;  
So providence p'haps made me sleep,  
That compound interest I might reap.  
Now through the land let this be sent,  
That with our loving, royal consent,  
This Prince our Princess will lead forth,  
And at the altar plight his troth.

*Queen.* I'm glad you thought of that, my dear,  
Young men so often now fight clear  
Of their engagements. 'Tis not right  
To put mammas in such a fright.

*King.* As now we've had a hundred years of Lent,  
A hundred days of meals won't be misspent.

*As they begin to move off, enter 1ST FAIRY.*

*1st Fairy.* Your highness, for one moment stay,  
All mark the words I'm bid to say,—  
King! you have now got back your crown,  
Be sure not on the good to frown.  
Queen! now your daughter fears no pin,  
Be careful lest she take you in.  
Prince! all through life remember this,  
Each pretty girl you meet you kiss.  
Beauty! I dare say now you feel  
Pins have brought you more woe than weal ;  
But e'er you end the moon call'd honey,  
Make certain that you get pin-money.  
And as for yon pert little Zeta,  
I wonder will her husband beat her :

He ought, though husband's little ways  
From Justice Hannen gain no praise.  
And now, farewell! If we our duty  
Have been enabled well to keep,  
Our little play of Sleeping Beauty  
Will not disturb your beauty-sleep.





ABBON HASSON ;  
OR,  
THE SLEEPERS AWAKENED.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

HAROUN ALRASCHID, Caliph.	GULNARE.
ABBON HASSON.	HASSON'S MOTHER.
MESROUR, Grand Vizier.	SUGAR PLUM.
IMAN.	HARD CASH.
PROFESSOR.	FRICASSEE.
SLAVE.	FRICANDEAU.
ZOBEDIE, Sultana.	EAU-DE-VIE.

A C T I.

SCENE. *Bridge at Bagdad.* ABBON HASSON *walking up and down.*

*Abbon Hasson.* Now, really, this is too provoking,  
My poor old mother will be croaking,  
And saying, since the world did spin,  
Was never such a deadly sin



As over-boiling, over-roasting,  
 Over-baking, over-toasting,  
 Over-frying, over stewing,  
 And, in general, over-doing  
 Meats that, when by knife dissected,  
 Should blush like school-boy just detected  
 With finger in a pot of jam,  
 Or in an awfully big cram.  
 But if no stranger will appear,  
 What I'm to do is not quite clear.  
 Across the bridge I'll look once more—  
 Though I am sure I've looked a score  
 Of times at least; but ne'er say die!  
 Why—Yes! No! Yes! I think I spy  
 A turban bobbing up and down;  
 And surely it must gird the crown  
 Of Moslem, who, I truly hope,  
 Is not too orthodox to cope  
 With me in tossing off a glass  
 Of sparkling wine or extra Bass.  
 Yes! now I see my look'd-for guest:  
 He seems in haste. If he's in quest  
 Of lodgings and of supper, too,  
 Won't we carouse till all is blue!

[ABBON HASSON *retires to back of stage.*

*Enter* CALIPH, *dressed as a Merchant, and Slave,*  
*with Portmanteau.*

*Caliph.* It is too bad! yes! we will write  
 A letter, filling two sheets quite,  
 And send it to the Bagdad "Times,"  
 To warn the world that he who dines—

Dines, did I say?—oh! that's a joke—  
On eggs with chickens for a yolk;  
On sandwiches of bread and fat,  
Flavoured by Colman's Mustard, that  
Is genuine, as we believe—  
Advertisements do not deceive.  
But we must pause: we must well scan  
This letter-to-the-paper plan.  
Good gracious! yes! There is no telling  
But we might make a mess at spelling;  
Then what a leader would appear,  
Making to Moslem world most clear,  
That even though an Alexander,  
And of the Faithful the commander,  
We to a board-school should be sent  
To learn at least the rudiment  
Of placing e's before our i's,  
Except of course when otherwise.

[ABBON HASSON *comes forward.*

*A. H.* Most gracious sir, may I make free  
To give you welcome to our re-  
nowned City of Bagdad!

*Caliph.*                                Your  
Kindness, sir, I make quite sure,  
Is from the heart as from the head;  
Therefore, I will, as it is said,  
Strike whilst the iron it is hot,  
And ask you boldly, is this not  
A city where a stranger may  
Be taken in, not once a-day,  
But all day long?

*A. H.* I must allow  
Bagdad's hotels have raised just now  
Their prices. So I let you know  
The figures that the guide books show  
Are not at all to be relied on ;  
Let me for you this once decide on.

*Caliph.* Talk you to me of Bradshaw's misty page,  
Its endless figures sicken me with rage ;  
I can call spirits from the vasty deep,  
I can, in places where I ought not peep,  
I can do deeds that would appal the free ;  
I can work sums in double rule of three ;  
I dare do all that doth become a man,  
But make out Bradshaw—hang me if I can.

[*Throws down Bradshaw.*]

*A. H.* My sympathy is with you there :  
Bradshaw with fractions can compare.  
Both, without doubt—it's very sad—  
Have found men fools, and left them mad.

*Caliph.* Sir, your remark, p'rhaps kindly meant,  
Is one that many might resent ;  
But I, from earliest youth have found,  
The better course, when there is ground  
For getting in an awful rage,  
Is to let off, upon one's page,  
Or any handy slave that's by,  
By kick or blow upon the eye,  
One's steam. Then, after ruffle slight,  
Is more of sweetness, more of light.

[*Turns to Slave.*]

Why do you stare, you skulking scamp?  
Look ! my portmanteau's in the damp.

Take that, you lazy, loitering lout! [*Kicking him.*  
Alliteration's not gone out  
Of fashion yet. So you should feel  
My manner with you's quite genteel.

*Slave.* Not your manner, but your matter  
Make my very teeth to chatter;  
Oh that I were out of reach,  
Or more honoured in the breech.

*A. H.* Accept, sir, pray, my best excuse;  
I really wish to be of use;  
And if you will a night accept  
Of board and lodging, I expect  
I can before you put such cheer,  
You'll remember many a year.  
But pray don't stop, unless quite blown,  
Your kicking! for it is well known,  
A little exercise 'fore meals  
Improves the appetite for eels;  
I trust at eels you're quite a whale,  
Of course I mean when they're not stale.

*Cal.* Such true delicate attention,  
I have never heard made mention;  
It surpasses all in story,  
Solomon in all his glory,  
Never with such grace requested,  
Never on such good fare rested.  
But tell me, stranger, tell me true,  
Is not your method somewhat new,  
To ask to board and lodging one  
You ne'er before have looked upon?

*A. H.* Sir, there's method in my madness,  
I have found the world all badness.

When on a bed of sickness lay  
 The author of my being male,  
 He said to me, beware the day  
 When your effects are up for sale,  
 For then you'll find a friend may buy  
 A glass to keep you in his eye,  
 If it goes cheap. On the morrow,  
 Fear that you from him may borrow,  
 Will close quite tight his pockets up ;  
 He turn'd, and then like rockets up,  
 His spirit flew to win the prize  
 Of the soft gaze of Hourî's eyes.

*Cal.* [*using freely his pocket handkerchief*] Stay,  
 oh stay ! this is affecting ;  
 Oh, my heart you are dissecting,  
 My feelings you have cut to strings,  
 And ev'ry fibrous nerve it brings,  
 From crown of head, from sole of feet,  
 A feeling that I am dead beat.

[*Turns to Slave, who is smiling.*  
 Have I you in grin detected,  
 Whilst your master's so affected ?

[*Cuffs Slave, and then turns to A. H.*  
 But stay, I hope besides advice,  
 Your father left a pretty slice  
 Of consols, bank stock, safe debentures,  
 Though I trust no mining ventures.

*A. H.* He did.  
 But to be brief—for it is writ—  
 Brevity is the soul of wit ;  
 Half of my fortunes first I spent,  
 Then pull'd up sharp before all went ;

Around me came a pleasing crowd,  
They kindly made themselves at home ;  
They said in whispers, said aloud,  
We from such cheer will never roam ;  
But when from ortolans and snipe,  
They fell to mutton cold, and tripe,  
A change came o'er the spirit of their dream,  
They thought me vulgar, called me mean.  
Oh, what a trial for life's beginner !  
Friendship, thy name is a good dinner.

*Cal.* It's said experience must be bought,  
To bear the value that it ought.

*A. H.* Exactly so. I quite agree ;  
But then I think, 'tween you and me,  
None of us would so much dread it,  
Could we buy it all on credit.  
Here on this bridge I came in quest  
Of some fair stranger for a guest ;  
One meal, one night we spend together,  
And then farewell, I trust for ever !

*Cal.* I thank you, sir, for your invite,  
It happens it will suit me quite ;  
For long before to-morrow's sun  
Is out of bed to take his run,  
I must be off !

*A. H.* Then you agree  
For this one night to have a spree.

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## A C T II.

*Room in HASSON'S House. His Mother laying supper.*

*Hasson's Mother.* I hope my boy will not be late—

Oh, what a very dirty plate!  
 How fortunate that I have found  
 This out in time, or, I'll be bound,  
 I should a nasty slap have caught:  
 The poor boy's temper is but short—  
 I wish his arm it were so too,  
 My eye would then not be so blue.  
 Shortness of temper's in the blood;  
 From his dear father oft a thud  
 Did I, in those sweet happy days,  
 Get on the back; but then his ways  
 Were so amusing. How he laughed!  
 One would have thought him nearly daft,  
 When, with a stick, he broke my head,  
 Or kicked me till he thought me dead.  
 But those sweet joys are gone and fled,  
 Their days are numbered with the dead.  
 No more do I, at break of day,  
 With smiles give welcome to my lord;  
 No more, when eve steals forth in grey,  
 Do I with garlands deck his board.  
 I hope the Houris treat him kindly,  
 In rage he strikes so very blindly.

*Enter IMAN.*

*I.* Good mother, say if I intrude.  
 As I the cud of fancy chewed,



Passing your door, I felt a thrill  
That told of devill'd bones or grill;  
And as it is an Iman's care  
To keep his flock from deadly snare,  
I enter but to let you know  
Hot suppers smack of realms below.

*H. M.* Ah, saintly father, few like you  
All creature comforts can eschew!

*I.* Well, yes, no doubt, to be a saint  
Needs all one has of self-restraint;  
To eat your bread sans jam, sans butter,  
And not a strong expression utter;  
To drink cold water from the tap,  
And look you do not care a rap,  
Requires strong faith; you'll have your turn  
When your fat friends begin to burn.  
But tell me, does your son amend,  
Or does he still his life misspend?

*H. M.* Oh, father, he minds naught I say,  
But eats and drinks his lands away;  
This supper that gives you offence  
Is one of every-day expense.

*I.* [*aside*] The rascal knows a right good spread,  
The scent alone might raise the dead.

[*Aloud*] Good mother, I feel slightly faint—  
It's not uncommon with a saint—  
Fastings and prayers are rather windy.

*H. M.* I have wind pills of Coates and Grindy,  
So let me fetch some from my store,  
A dose is either two or four.

*I.* Thanks, my dear mother, do not hurry,  
Quick movement puts me in a flurry.



*H. M.* Ah, poor dear man, he looks so pale,  
How can my son at Iman's rail?

[*Exit H. M.*]

[*IMAN, after looking carefully round the room,  
goes up to the table and takes the bottle.*]

*I.* Ah! ah! good Iman, now's your time, [*drinks*]  
Good boy, his sack has got no lime—  
But let me see what's on this platter.

[*Takes off cover.*]

Oh, what a sight, could not be fatter!  
Now, really, this does look so nice,  
I think I will take just one slice.

[*Sits down and takes up knife and fork.*]

But stay! before I get my fill,  
The old girl comes back with her pill!  
What's to be done? Saints sometimes trip,  
So here all goes into my scrip.

[*Puts fowls into his scrip and replaces cover.*]

*Enter H. M.*

Thanks, thanks, good dame, I feel much better,  
I must be off to post a letter!

*As IMAN moves off, enter ABBON HASSON.*

*IMAN retires.*

*A. H.* What means this, mother, who is here?

*H. M.* Do you not see our Iman dear?

*A. H.* What does he here, the canting knave?

*H. M.* He comes you from yourself to save.

Poor man, from want of earthly food,  
He nearly fainted as he stood.

You do not know him, Hasson dear,  
His saintly life is so austere.

*A. H.* Well, mother, if such is his state,  
We must not thrust him from our gate  
Without some food. What have you here?

*[Takes off cover.]*

Well, this is very lively cheer!

*H. M.* They are the best I could procure,  
And brown'd fit for an epicure.

*A. H.* It seems it's we who are done brown,  
For, look you, both your birds are flown.

*H. M.* Well, really, sure as eggs is eggs,  
Trussed fowls can't walk off on their legs;  
Nor can they fly—this must be magic—  
Poor fowls, their end is very tragic!

*A. H.* No, mother, I can guess their fate;  
Your scrip, dear father, carries weight.

*I.* Some scraps I for the poor collect—  
Son, you should not a saint suspect;  
But now I have no time to stay.

*[He tries to leave, but is seized by HASSON.]*

*A. H.* Turn out your scrip—dare disobey!

*I.* [*reluctantly taking out fowls and replacing them*] It was ever thus, from childhood's hour,  
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;  
I never stole a nut or flower,  
But it from me was forced away.

*A. H.* [*pushing him out*] Be off, you wretched,  
canting rogue,  
No doubt with saints your way's in vogue!  
Come, mother, settle all things straight,  
My guest is here, it's getting late.

*H. M.* [*aside*] My boy is always much too warm ;

I'm sure our Iman meant no harm,  
But took them for his hungry flock.  
Poor man, he has had quite a shock.

*A. H.* Here comes my guest.

*Enter CALIPH and Slave.*

I trust you'll find  
What we've provided to your mind.

*Cal.* Thank you ; I never felt before  
So anxious as to what's in store  
For a night's banquet.

*A. H.* No banquet this,  
But a slight supper—not amiss  
For hungry men.

*Cal.* [*sitting down first*] Oh, I forgot,  
I always like to take it hot !

*A. H.* [*aside*] He seems to me to take it cool ;  
Good manners do not seem his rule.

*Cal.* You may not this a banquet call ;  
But, for my part, I think that all  
Your wines and dishes are so choice,  
That I should very much rejoice  
If every day I got such food :  
The eels so fresh, the fowls so good—  
But do you every night make feast,  
And eat it with a stranger guest ?

*A. H.* Oh, yes—for when my friends forsook,  
At once a mighty oath I took,  
That never should a cork be drawn  
For any of this city's spawn.

*Cal.* Do you not think that oaths so wide  
Leave difficulties to decide?

Suppose the Caliph sent one day  
To say that he with you would sup,  
Would it not then be rash to say—  
Sorry! but he must give it up?

*A. H.* Rash! I believe you. How my soles  
At the bare thought feel all in holes.  
Our Caliph, when his way is crossed,  
Is like the sea by tempest tossed,  
Or like a hungry beast of prey,  
Whose dinner has been spoilt one day.

*Cal.* You quite surprise me! Is it so?  
From one who, I think, ought to know  
I heard report your Caliph had  
A disposition far from bad,  
A temper p'rhaps a little quick,  
A little free use of the stick,  
A little tying up in sack,  
A gentle stretching on the rack.  
But he gives all in such good part,  
That no one really has the heart  
To make a fuss or to lament,  
When all at least is kindly meant.

*A. H.* [*aside*] I think I have too freely spoken,  
Upon the wheel I may be broken.  
[*Aloud*] Pray to not me misunderstand,  
Our Caliph is in all most bland—  
I may say quite his people's father—  
And, like that near relation, rather  
Inclined to give a swinging whack  
To his most loving children's back.

It does not do to be too mild,  
To spare the rod and spoil the child.

*Cal.* Yes, with you there I quite agree,  
The use of birch rods should be free.  
Mankind with little justice thrive

When they're let off on no pretext ;  
It keeps a people more alive

When no one knows whose turn is next.

[*Rising*] Hark ! is not that the cock's first crow ?  
Thanks for your feast. I did not know  
That Bagdad held so good a host.  
What can I do will please you most ?  
I wish to make return to you.

*A. H.* Thanks ; my requirements are so few,  
That I a want can not recall.

*Cal.* Think o'er again.

*A. H.* Oh, after all,  
I think there's one thing I should like,  
Though, no doubt, strange it will you strike.

*Cal.* Whate'er it is, I'll do my best  
To carry out what you request.

*A. H.* It is to act as Caliph for a day.

*Cal.* May I ask why you wish his part to play ?

*A. H.* Because our Iman and his friends  
Should now I think make me amends  
For all the trouble they have brought  
Upon our district. They have wrought  
No end of mischief with their lips,  
The wicked, thieving, cross old rips ;  
And I should like that they might have  
Something would make them well behave.

One hundred blows upon the sole,  
With rod that is not quite a pole,  
Would be a lesson not soon lost,  
And to the rates of little cost.

*Cal.* [*aside*] Here's a joke of a formation  
Worthy of my reputation.

[*Aloud*] One can't be sure of one's own power  
To ope' for you the Caliph's bower.  
But let us drink just one more toast,  
And then farewell, my worthy host.

[*CALIPH puts powder into A. H.'s glass. A. H.  
falls into a dead sleep.*

[*To Slave*] Now, stupid, carry off this lump,  
It will not care about a bump;  
Go take it home, and tell my Moor  
It's to be left till it's called for.

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ACT III.

*Room in the CALIPH'S Palace.*

ABBON HASSON *asleep on a couch.* CALIPH, ZOBEDIE,  
MESROUR *in front.* GULNARE, SUGAR PLUM, HARD  
CASH, &c., *forming a circle ready to attend on* ABBON  
HASSON *when he wakes.*

*Cal.* Mesrour, is all in order quite,  
See that they all their parts have right.

*Mes.* Sire! your commands are all obeyed.

*Zob.* Then let us be no more delayed.

Oh! when he wakes, it will be fun,  
My lips with laughter will o'errun,



But it must very noiseless be,  
Like ripple folding on the lea.

*Cal.* Now to our places let us hie,  
And see my newest comedy.

[*CALIPH and ZOBEDIE hide themselves, one  
on each side the stage.*]

*Gul.* [*sings*] O'er the hills the day is breaking,  
In the vales the buds are waking,  
Mists up mountain sides are curling,  
Morn her banner red's unfurling.

*Chorus*—Mighty brother of the sun,  
Wake! oh wake! the day's begun.

*Gul.* The stars have melted in the blue,  
In hopes their brightness to renew;  
And Sol peeps o'er the mountain crest,  
As Luna fainting seeks the west.

*Chorus*—Mighty Brother of the sun,  
Wake! oh wake! the day's begun.

*Zob.* [*from her hiding-place laughing*] The stars  
have melted in the blue,  
Because they've nothing else to do;  
And Sol peeps o'er the mountain crest,  
Because he is not yet quite drest.

*A. H.* [*stretching*] Oh my! I feel so very  
slothful.

*Mes.* Great Commander of the Faithful!

*A. H.* How dare you, stranger, come in here,  
I see no guest till eve is near.

*Mes.* The Caliph does not sure forget  
His orders, that I was to let  
Him know the hour of morning prayer.

*A. H.* I'm glad our Caliph is aware

That he's expected to be pious ;  
But why you should be so officious  
Is more than I can tell? I'm sure  
A Caliph's life must be a bore.

*Mes.* P'rhaps, if your majesty will look around,  
You'll see that for my conduct there is ground.

*A. H.* [*looking around*] Sure fancy does my  
mind o'errun.

*Chorus*—Hail to the Brother of the Sun!

*A. H.* A dream! Great Allah, grant that I wake  
soon.

*Chorus*—Hail to the Cousin of the Moon!

*A. H.* [*throwing himself back*] At best we are  
but dreaming beggars.

*Chorus*—Hail to the Brightness of the Stars!

*Mes.* Your majesty seems much disturbed.

*A. H.* Disturbed! say rather my mind's curbed,  
By seeing what my fancy works,  
And dreaming will still in me lurks.  
Can I be mad?

*Mes.* Try but to sweep  
Away these dreams, these ghosts of sleep!

*A. H.* I may, perchance, have dreamed a life!  
I'll test these phantoms. Here's a strife  
Would make the war of elements  
Seem calm. Here! I'll test these figments.

[*Beckons to SUGAR PLUM, who approaches.*

Ah! here's the movement of the wave,  
And not the glide, whose bourne's the grave.  
Your name, sweet maiden, tell me—come!

*Sug. Pl.* I am by name called Sugar Plum,  
D



Because, more potent far than thumps,  
I can cure mortals of the dumps.

*A. H.* Your looks are sweeter than your name ;  
Your skin is fairer than your name ;  
Your gaze more melting than your name.  
Send me your neighbour.

[*HARD CASH approaches.*] What's your name ?

*H. C.* By comrades I am called Hard Cash ;  
Men, though they often call me trash,  
Do never feel paternal joys,  
Till they've a nest of yellow boys.

*A. H.* Your name is a fortune, my pretty maid,  
You may choose where you like, as you ne'er fade ;  
The doctor, the lawyer, the noble peer :  
But never, oh, never the engineer.  
Now let me see that double star :  
Come, tell me, tell me, who you are ?

[*FRICASSEE and FRICANDEAU approach.*

*Fric.* My name, my lord, is Fricassee,  
My sister here is Fricandean,  
The hearts of men we touch, you see,  
By acting upwards from below.

*A. H.* Yes, you are right, a woman's heart  
May be obtained by a trousseau ;  
Whilst man's requires the higher art  
Of titillating his swallow !

[*A. H. beckons to EAU-DE-VIE, who approaches.*

*E.-d.-v.* My name, my lord, is Eau-de-vie,  
I'm of an old French family ;  
You'll see, if Debrett you've quite handy,  
I'm no connection of British Brandy.

*A. H.* Oh yes, I see well at a glance  
Your native land is "la belle France;"  
And all must own, without a doubt,  
You're sweet hot with or cold without.

[*Turning to MESROUR, and pointing to GULNARE.*

But tell me, who is that fair girl?  
She seems to me the very pearl  
Of all perfections. Her bright eyes,  
If set by Allah in the skies,  
Would shed a light so soft, so pure,  
That ev'ry wanderer on life's shore  
Would gaze his fill, as from above  
Shone o'er his path the light of love.

*Zob.* [*aside*] I thought the world had had enough  
Of such outrageous kind of stuff.  
The idea! Her eyes in the skies  
More like gooseberries in fruit pies;  
But what he said might well apply  
To eyes I know that match the sky.

*Mes.* That maiden's name it is Gulnare,  
She here is fairest of the fair,  
Save your Sultana, whose bright face  
Outshines all is of earthly grace.

*Zob.* [*aside*] I must say I think Mesrour's taste  
In female beauty is most chaste.

*A. H.* I never felt before like this,  
I really wonder what's amiss—  
My heart seems cut to little bits,  
And from my eyes shoots forth by fits.  
I'm sure I am the Caliph now,  
And could of that take solemn vow;

For Caliph's hearts are always weak,  
 And must have new loves once a-week.  
 Now he I dreamt of, Abbon Hasson,  
 Was a complete and thorough ass on  
 This very point. He did not care  
 A button for a lady fair.

*Cal.* [*aside*] I think perhaps it's quite as well  
 He can't on Zobedie's charms dwell ;  
 For if I got a little cross,  
 Poor Hasson's skin would suffer loss.

*Mes.* When will the Caliph business hear,  
 Of late there has been much arrear ?

*A. H.* At once and here, like Brother France,  
 A bed of justice we will hold ;  
 We'll overlook Police, Finance,  
 And find out where to screw out gold.

*Cal.* [*aside*] Why, by an instinct, he has caught  
 The way to govern as one ought.

*A. H.* Mesrour, we must at once despatch  
 The day's reports, as I can snatch  
 Few moments from a state affair  
 That must be done with all good care.

[*Aside*] For these sweet girls I do so pine,  
 My state affair is all moonshine.

*Mes.* Caliph, the money comes in slow,  
 And can't be got without a blow.

*A. H.* Unless the money comes in fast,  
 This day I swear shall be your last.  
 Ah! I remember, send at once—  
 Do not look such an awful dunce—  
 One hundred purses told in full—

*Mes.* [*aside*] Our treasury can't stand that pull—

*A. H.* To our beloved Hasson's mother,  
As present from the Full Moon's brother.

*Mes.* Commander of all true believers,  
I am not one of those deceivers  
Who say at once they'll do a thing  
That can't be done for god or king.

*A. H.* Oh, Mesrou, kindly bring a string,  
You'll find my bow upon its ring.

*Mes.* [*kneeling*] I bow my neck before my lord.  
If fifty purses would afford——

*A. H.* Bargain with me! you wretched worm,  
My will in full you must perform!

*Mes.* If but the Caliph grant me time,  
I could with ease impute some crime  
To a rich merchant; then, with screw,  
Could pick up purses not a few.

*A. H.* Mesrou, we're sure, with any test,  
Your morals would prove none the best;  
In early youth, we much suspect,  
Your copy-slips you did neglect—  
But now no more. Go take a troop,  
And on the Iman's district swoop.  
Let Iman's blows two hundred reach,  
On his three friends one hundred each—  
Business first and pleasure after,  
Now for frolic, fun, and laughter.

[*CALIPH and ZOBEDIE come forward.*

Who's here?—my merchant friend!

*Cal.* And more,  
Your Caliph. Be not troubled sore.

*A. H.* But I'm the Caliph! Ask this man.  
If he speaks false, his hide I'll tan.

*Cal.* What! Abbon Hasson, have you lost  
All memory how you played the host?

*A. H.* Will no one tell me who I am?  
Mesrour, you scamp, was it a cram  
About the Brother of the Sun.

*Cal.* You wished that just for one day's run  
You might be Caliph.

*A. H.* Now I see  
You all have made a fool of me.  
But stay! the day is not yet gone.

*Cal.* Ask what you like, and it is done.

*A. H.* Here stands a maid; give me her heart,  
So we in life may never part.

*Zob.* What says to Abbon Hasson's love  
My fairest slave?

*Gul.* Allah above  
Knows that, your kindness to repay,  
Gulnare in all things will obey.

*Zob.* No fetters must enclose the heart,  
Love without freedom will depart.  
Shall we these lovers leave awhile?  
It's hard to court whilst others smile.

*Cal.* With all my heart; no greater bore  
Than lovers, or than lovers' lore.

[*Exit* CALIPH, ZOBEDIE, MESROUR, &c.]

*Gul.* [*aside*] I thought he would be at my feet,  
Of course it's nice to be discreet;  
But if he does not show some heat,  
I don't see how our lips can meet.  
He really seems a shocking dolt,  
I've quite a mind to make a bolt.

*A. H.* Madam, of course you are aware——

*Gul.* That I by name am called Gulnare.

[*Aside*] I have no patience with the man ;  
If he can't speak, at least I can.

[*Aloud*] Sir, I have heard your kind desire,

And thank you for so much regard ;  
Will you permit me to retire,  
I see your words I quite retard.

*A. H.* Gulnare, my tongue by love you tie,  
My eyes speak, and they cannot lie ;  
Words can but faintly tell how much  
The heart is moved. Oh, for one touch  
Of that fair hand ! Do you not feel  
That palm to palm gives more relief  
Than fiery words ; they but appeal  
To fancy, beautiful but brief.

*Gul.* [*aside*] Well, I declare, this is not bad,  
Better, perhaps, a thought more mad.

[*Aloud*] Wish you to palm your love on me ?  
You know quite well I am not free ;  
An order from my mistress can  
Transfer this chattel to this man.

*A. H.* Oh, speak not thus. I would not take  
Your person, though my heart did break,  
Unless with it the total sum  
Of your affections did succumb.

*Gul.* But can the heart so soon be moved ?

*A. H.* Oh yes, quite easily, that's proved,  
The eye sends message to the heart ;  
Here is a maid whose every part  
Is simply perfect. Then at once  
The heart goes off with a great bounce.



*Gul.* Now, though your best friend could not say  
That you were very strong in beard,  
All would admit you do display  
A taste in beauty oft not heard.

*A. H.* Well, then, Gulnare, let us make haste.

*Gul.* I don't think talking thus is waste  
Of time that might be better spent.  
What do you think of this new scent?

*A. H.* Bother the scent! We must not tarry,  
Or we may lose the chance to marry.

*Gul.* [*giving her hand*] With this let me then  
seal the bond

That makes a slave, alas! too fond,  
The partner of your joys and fears.

*A. H.* I never heard, in all my years,  
Of acting thus in such a case ;  
The man should always, with a grace,  
Take his fair partner to his arms,  
And, soothing thus her nestling charms,  
And knowing she can't be the giver,  
With kisses thus sign, seal, deliver.

[*Kisses GULNARE three times.*]

Oh, by-the-bye, you've quite forgot  
To speak a word about the dot!

*Gul.* Dear Hasson, not another word,  
Here comes my mistress and your lord.

*Enter CALIPH, ZOBEDIE, MESROUR, &c.*

*Cal.* How silly both of them do look,  
I'm sure she's been and gone and took  
The poor boy in. Well, never mind,  
Hasson, we're all like you, you'll find.



*Zob.* That you each other understand  
A glance reveals. Give me your hand.  
May you, Gulnare, be ever true,  
And may your love be ever new.

*Cal.* Well, Hasson, I do like your face,  
So I will take you in my grace;  
Within my palace you shall live,  
Sufficient income I will give,  
So that Gulnare and you will find  
A master and a mistress kind.

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ACT IV.

*A Room in the Palace.* ABBON HASSON *with a bottle labelled "Poison, to be taken cold."* A. H. *sitting at table.*

*A. H.* I'll do it! yes, I'll do it now,  
Whilst my mischance bedews my brow!  
I cannot see again Gulnare,  
As she so oft has made me swear  
That I would never touch a card.  
I do think swearing very hard  
Is not much use—at least with me  
The good it's done I cannot see.  
I must not pause; business like this  
Upon the spurt one must dismiss.  
Let me see—"To be taken cold!"  
What irony does this unfold!  
I, shivering thus, must take it cold.  
Oh, if I had to take it hot,  
With calmness I could meet my lot,

And, without a shade of sorrow,  
Take it easily to-morrow !

*Enter GULNARE.*

*Gul.* Why, Hasson, do you look so pale,  
And why your eyes before mine quail ?

*A. H.* Oh, nothing, dearest. Oh, my tooth,  
It is so painful ! Yes, forsooth.

*Gul.* Oh, I see you've got a lotion.  
Let me see it ! I've a notion  
That often they are of no use.  
Give it to me.

*A. H.* Do not traduce  
The healing drug that poppies give.

*Gul.* Give it to me.

*A. H.* How positive  
You are, my dear, in little things.

*Gul.* Give it to me. Your carriage brings  
Most hideous thoughts into my mind.

[*Takes phial.*

What have we here ? Oh, heaven, be kind !

*A. H.* Gulnare, I stand before you here  
Without a hope, without a tear ;  
My heart is, like my promise, broken,  
My mind does early death betoken.

*Gul.* What means all this ? But yesterday  
The Caliph show'ed on us gold  
More than enough. Why, bless the day,  
We can't so soon be nearly sold.

*A. H.* [*taking cards out of his pocket*] Gulnare,  
you know the game I play,  
Caution with boldness is my way ;

My hand contained the highest club,  
My partner trumped! the fool! the cub!  
Oh, as you have a soul to save,  
I'm sure you would have back'd that knave.

*Gul.* Back'd a fool if I had back'd you.  
Why have you not excuse more new?  
You always would have won with ease,  
But something's done no one foresees.  
I have not patience with you, man;  
How do you think that now I can  
Get dresses from Madame Elise?—  
Just now there's something new in sleeves—  
When not a piastre she has had  
These twenty months. It is too bad.  
How do you think I can look nice  
In dresses that I have worn thrice?

*A. H.* Spite of the anguish you I've cost,  
Spite of the greatness of this squall,  
It's better to have gamed and lost,  
Than never to have gamed at all.

*Gul.* Over spilt milk it's no use crying;  
You've been a goose, there's no denying;  
But as you have no golden egg,  
What use is killing you, I beg?  
The point is now what can be done?

*A. H.* Would it not do—it was such fun—  
For me to die again to-day?  
The Caliph showed so much dismay,  
That, really, I quite felt for him,  
And silent tears my eyes did dim.

*Gul.* No, that's a trick we can't play twice,  
So we must find some new device.

E'en Caliphs are not in such clover  
As pay a funeral twice over.

*A. H.* I've an idea!

*Gul.* No doubt most wise.

*A. H.* Gulnare, don't sneer.

*Gul.* You can't devise

A scheme that will——

*A. H.* Oh, but I can.

You think that you can only plan—  
Listen! suppose you die to-day,  
Zobedie then I'm sure will pay  
To have you buried quite in style,  
So we get money for a while.

*Gul.* For you that's really not so bad,  
And as more money must be had,  
Suppose we try it now at once.

*A. H.* Never again call me a dunce ;  
But one thing strikes me—if, by chance,  
The Caliph spoke to Zobedie,  
I think we should be made to dance,  
And get relief from nobody.

*Gul.* Oh, never fear, they do not meet,  
The highest circles are discreet ;  
For when such people can't agree,  
Simply they don't each other see.

*A. H.* Let me begin to lay you out.

[*A. H. lays out GULNARE with a sheet over her.*  
I think, Gulnare, you're getting stout.

*Gul.* What nonsense, Hasson, it's my band,  
My waist a necklet wouldn't expand ;  
At all events, I'll not forget  
To have at once a new corset.

*A. H.* Gulnare, oh, what are you about,  
To be so worldly when laid out?  
But who comes here?

*Enter SUGAR PLUM.*

*S. P.* I come to say  
That the Sultana's on the way  
To pay a visit to Gulnare.

*A. H.* Alas! alas! do but look there.  
A flower cut down in early spring,  
A ring-dove stricken on the wing. [*weeps.*]

*S. P.* What! Gulnare dead!

*A. H.* Oh yes, look there.

*S. P.* Oh, how my mistress will despair,  
She was so fond of poor Gulnare;  
And, for my part, I can't refrain  
From weeping, though I know it's vain.

*A. H.* Why, Sugar Plum, our bluest skies  
Quite pale before your pretty eyes.

*S. P.* Oh, nonsense, Hasson, 'tis not right,  
At such a time, with such a sight,  
To talk like this.

*A. H.* Oh, but it is;  
For when we talked of this sad crisis,  
Gulnare would say, when I am dumb,  
I think you'll find in Sugar Plum  
A partner worthy of your choice;  
And I, for one, should quite rejoice  
If you such sweetness could obtain  
To wean your heart from so much pain.

*S. P.* Oh, if Gulnare thought as you say,  
It might be wrong to say you nay;

For we should always try to meet  
 The wishes of our late dear friends,  
 And show our love for them's complete  
 By hast'ning to fulfil their ends.

*A. H.* How happy it would make Gulnare  
 If she could now but be aware  
 Of your devotion. [GULNARE *groans.*

*S. P.* Did you hear  
 A sound? I feel so full of fear!  
 Oh, Hasson, don't let's talk like this.

*A. H.* Oh, don't be nervous, naught's amiss,  
 Gulnare's quite dead.

*Enter ZOBEDIE.*

[*Exit SUGAR PLUM.*

*Zob.* Who? Who is dead?  
 It cannot be that life has fled  
 From that bright soul, my sweet Gulnare.  
 A little longer death might spare  
 One whose fair form did but reflect  
 A heart with every virtue deck'd.  
 Oh, Hasson, say this is not so,  
 Say that my heart is spared this woe.

*A. H.* Oh, madam, think, if you thus feel,  
 What I do. E'en a heart of steel  
 By such a sudden blow would break.

*Zob.* Hasson, let me your grief partake,  
 Sorrow in twain is not so keen,  
 As when alone its face is seen.  
 How did this happen? let me know ;  
 Detail does often soften woe.

*A. H.* Sudden it was. I sometimes think  
Temper is often worse than drink ;  
The latter gives some little time,  
D.T.'s not rapid in this clime.  
But temper——

*Zob.* Sure you don't pretend  
That Gulnare's temper caused her end.

*A. H.* Appearances do oft deceive.  
Could you a moment this believe,  
That whilst she smil'd on all abroad,  
At home she always at me jaw'd ;  
That for a little private peace,  
My public visits ne'er did cease.  
I'm thankful now that she is past,  
My love for her I never hampered ;  
Oft have I thought each day my last,  
As from the house I've quickly scampered.

*Zob.* I never for a moment thought  
You in Gulnare a Tartar caught.

*A. H.* Madam, we hardly know ourselves,  
How can we then take from the shelves  
The life-book of some other heart,  
And say, because we've read a part,  
We know its very deepest mines,  
When so much lies between the lines?

*Zob.* Most true ; but no one could have thought  
So fine a nature could be brought  
To act the part that you have said.

*A. H.* Let us think kindly of the dead ;  
My sufferings now are in the past,  
And memory will, no doubt, at last



Cling fondly to the brighter side  
 Of her who once was all my pride.  
 But, madam, will you let me know  
 If you would wish me to bestow  
 Upon her funeral some cost,  
 Say twenty purses at the most?  
 Esteem is very often shown  
 By such display for those we moan.

*Zob.* I think expense you should not spare  
 To show respect to poor Gulnare.

*A. H.* It's pity at a time like this  
 My funds should be so much amiss ;  
 But lately I've had constant call  
 Upon a purse at best but small.  
 Societies now so abound—  
 Lady collectors I can't wound—  
 Soup Kitchens, Hospitals, and Coals,  
 Alleys for ginger beer and bowls ;  
 For quick converting of the Pope,  
 And washing little boys with soap ;  
 Extracting money from old screws,  
 And making what they can of Jews.

*Zob.* At such a time one's mind is lost  
 In other things save those of cost.  
 Here, take these purses. I will go  
 And let my tears in silence flow.

[*Throws down two purses.*

[*Exit ZOBEDIE. GULNARE jumps up.*

*Gul.* Hasson, for this I owe you one,  
 A mean advantage you have taken ;  
 Next time it's you who shall be done,  
 When knaves can't trust, one's faith is shaken.

*A. H.* Come, don't be cross, let's take a turn,  
To spend all this my fingers burn.

[*Each seizes a purse, and they waltz together.*

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A C T V.

*ZOBEDIE'S apartment in the Palace.*

*Zob.* So fair a flow'r so soon cut off,  
No warning given, not e'en a cough  
To show that nature was distress,  
And 'gainst wrong change did make protest.  
Oh, if some time had but been given,  
Her chord of life might be unriven.  
Poor Gulnare's fate—such a reproof  
I have not had beneath this roof.  
My temper, no doubt, is not quite  
So good but what, at times, the sight  
Of others having their own way,  
Makes me to tantrums quite a prey.  
I will turn over a new leaf,  
And when my temper wants relief,  
A little crockery I'll smash.  
Stay, will not that be rather rash?  
Unless, indeed, I fill my shelf  
Not with Queen Anne, but common Delf.  
Here comes the Caliph! this is strange;  
When last we met, he swore no change  
Would ever him induce to come  
Within the corners of my room.

*Enter CALIPH.*

*Cal.* Zobedie, when last we parted,  
My heart your sarcasms so smarted,

E

That I believed I never more  
Would pass again your chamber door ;  
But lately a quite sudden death  
Has o'er my spirits thrown a breath  
Of musing sadness. I do find  
The joys that I have left behind  
Come strangely up before my mind.  
Amongst those joys the sweetest far  
Is Zobedie, my evening star.

*Zob.* A recent loss has cleared my sight,  
I see my conduct was not right ;  
If, Caliph, you had not sought me,  
I should have sent to ask to be  
Again restored to your grace.

*Cal.* Oh, Zobedie, let us retrace  
The steps that have, by slow degree,  
Brought us sometimes to disagree.  
Our tempers are p'rhaps rather short,  
You know, love, yielding's not your forte.

*Zob.* P'rhaps so, but then I never can  
Get you to own that you began——

*Cal.* Well, never mind, let's now enjoy  
Felicity without alloy.

My blood feels it has youth again,  
As now once more your looks enchain  
My heart. Let us make vow that never  
Shall ought again our two hearts sever.

*Zob.* Moments like this are worth a life,  
One feels there's pleasure in the strife  
Of being, when one fears no fall,  
Renewed love sustaining all.

*Cal.* And yet I feel, with all this bliss,  
At times a shudder, as when hiss  
Of venom'd serpent makes one start,  
And hear the beatings of one's heart.  
Across Al Sirat's arch, with fear,  
Alone poor Hasson has to steer.

*Zob.* That's very sudden—Hasson dead!

*Cal.* Yes, ere I could get to his bed,  
He breathed his last. I was quite moved  
To hear his love for me, he proved  
By sending with his latest breath  
To be remembered after death.

*Zob.* It really seems as if the fates  
Against our house pour'd all their hates.  
Poor Hasson gone! and poor Gulnare—  
Who knows whom destiny will spare?

*Cal.* You well may say, and poor Gulnare,  
Her eyes on vacancy did stare;  
No colour left upon her cheek,  
Her voice was gone, she could not speak.

*Zob.* You saw her, then? I was too moved  
To glance at one I had so loved.

*Cal.* Oh, she will, no doubt, very soon  
Be quite recovered; a longish swoon  
For a young widow's quite a boon.

*Zob.* Caliph, this humour's out of place,  
Poor Gulnare's death doth too much chase  
All power of laughter from my face.

*Cal.* Gulnare, too, dead! you stop my breath.  
The cause, no doubt, was Hasson's death.

*Zob.* But Gulnare was the first to die.

*Cal.* No. It was Hasson I saw lie

In winding sheet ; with cold lament  
Poor Gulnare voiceless o'er him bent.

*Zob.* But Hasson showed me poor Gulnare  
In death's cold arms, I will declare.

*Cal.* My dear, you must have made mistake,  
The awe of death doth so much shake  
The firmest nerves. If you but think  
How life from death does always shrink,  
You will not be at all surprised  
That your first thought must be revised.

*Zob.* But, Caliph, I feel very sure  
My mind was not at all obscure.

*Cal.* But then, dear, think, a room that's dark  
Makes forms not easy to remark.

*Zob.* No, Caliph, no. You know my sight  
Is better far for a dull light  
Than yours. I see how this arose.  
She who came to you to disclose  
Poor Hasson's death was not Gulnare,  
But one who her old dress did wear.

*Cal.* Zobedie, you are much too sharp,  
I would not at a trifle carp ;  
But first, Gulnare I know so well,  
And on her charms so often dwell,  
I could not this mistake have made,  
Confuse the mistress with the maid ;  
And then, again, who brought the news ?  
Mesrour, no fit for Gulnare's shoes.

*Zob.* Caliph, you say this to provoke,  
Or only mean it for a joke.  
You know I saw poor Gulnare's corse,  
You know that Hasson mourned her loss,

And as for Hasson's being dead,  
I don't believe a word you've said.

*Cal.* Madam, do you give me the lie?  
Unless you are prepared to die,  
You really should not thus provoke me,  
My rage I'm sure will nearly choke me.

*Zob.* Yes! bully thus a poor, weak wife,  
P'rhaps you would like to use a knife,  
Or take example from Othello,  
And do it so your wife can't bellow.

*Cal.* Your sneers put me upon the rack,  
They may put you inside a sack.  
I tell you, Hasson he died first:  
Do not provoke me to the worst.

*Zob.* [*aside*] I cannot bear this contradiction,  
It is such awful mental friction;  
I do feel getting very hot,  
The remedy I quite forgot.

[*Throws down some china.*]

*Cal.* Good heavens! what is all this row?

*Zob.* Oh, nothing, I feel better now.

[*Aside*] It certainly brings much relief,  
This making china come to grief.

[*Aloud*] Caliph, let us leave off dispute,  
By words we neither can refute  
The other. Let us go and see  
What is the truth 'tween you and me.

*Cal.* Zobedie, now you talk some sense,  
You should not show such vehemence;  
Why not, as I do, keep quite cool,  
And be not always passion's tool?  
Come, Zobedie, you'll find I'm right.

*Zob.* If so, I'll eat up Hasson quite.



## ACT VI.

ABBON HASSON'S *apartment in the Palace.*

GULNARE *taking five o'clock tea.*

*Gul.* How sweet it is, this quiet hour,  
When tea rules o'er the lady's bower,  
One can collect one's wandering thought,  
And think what dress must next be bought.  
This time I will not spare expense,  
I'm sure it will be only sense  
To spend the money in hot haste  
Ere Hasson has had time to waste  
It on his very foolish betting.  
I really think it's no use fretting  
On husband's ways. As husbands go,  
I think my Hasson's not below  
The average. No doubt he's weak,  
But then I am allowed to speak,  
And that makes up for a good deal.  
Strong husbands oft put down the heel  
So very firmly on the wife,  
That if she speaks, she feels her life  
No company would it insure,  
And not to speak, who could endure?

*Enter HASSON in haste.*

*Has.* Gulnare, Gulnare, all, all is lost.

*Gul.* Well, never mind. Men always boast  
They better bear the ills of life ;  
But only give a woman tea,  
And then I'm sure, 'tween you and me,  
They're always equal to the strife.



*A. H.* But, Gulnare, this you'll find no joke.

*Gul.* Oh, I suppose you've had a stroke  
Of what you call ill luck. But I,  
With calmness, can more wisely spy  
That your ill luck is only folly,  
So never mind, let us be jolly.

*A. H.* Jolly! the Caliph's on the stairs,  
And if he takes us unawares,  
And finds me taking ev'ning muffin,  
He will soon make me fit for stuffing.

*Gul.* Why did you not say this before?  
I think our bark has run ashore.  
With shudder, I do feel my back  
Slipping within that awful sack.

*A. H.* No doubt the sack is rather close,  
And too much water at a dose  
Must be a draught not over nice.  
But think of bowstring! In a trice,  
Like a cold serpent winding round  
Your neck, and dying like a hound.  
How sad a fate to feel your gullet  
Getting too narrow for red mullet.

*Gul.* It is not right to speak like that,  
Jokes at such times are always flat;  
You should think of your life misspent,  
And know that now, at all event,  
Of pleasure there must be a dearth—  
I should so like my sack from Wörth.

*A. H.* What do you think we'd better do?

*Gul.* The only thing is for us two  
To die as 'fore. The Caliph then—  
The chance is only one to ten—

May think we are both really dead,  
And feel there can no more be said.

*A. H.* I do not see another way,  
So let us both begin the play.  
My mind feels very far from easy,  
My throat feels very, very squeezezy.

[*A. H. and GULNARE lay themselves out.*

*Gul.* To die together's very sweet.

*A. H.* I wish off me you'd take your feet.

*Gul.* But, Hasson dear, should worst befall,  
You'll think of me at death's last call.

*A. H.* I'm thinking now you've too much sheet,  
See how you do expose my feet ;  
And if there's any talk of sticks,  
They both will blush as red as bricks.

*Enter CALIPH, ZOBEDIE, and Attendants.*

*Cal.* Now, Zobedie, I'm sure I'm right.

*Zob.* Oh, Caliph, you have blown me quite.

*Cal.* Oh, here they are. But we've forgot,  
As both are dead, that they can not  
Help us to find out which died first ;  
And then again, and this's the worst,  
Not any one can give us word  
How this strange deathbed has occur'd.  
I think appearances do show  
That Hasson went the first below.

*Zob.* No, there from you I do quite differ,  
Gulnare to me appears the stiffer.

*Cal.* That's in my favour, he alone  
Has now his *rigor mortis* done.

*Zob.* [*aside*] I never can or will see things  
That any one against me brings.

*Cal.* Mesrour, you must discover this,  
Or else you stand by an abyss.

*Mes.* But, Caliph, I know naught of this.

*Cal.* Now you stand nearer the abyss.

*Mes.* What shall I do, I feel quite sick,  
To know what I don't know so quick  
Is difficult ; and Caliphs are  
So ready with their scimitar.

[*Enter Professor.*

Oh, here's a wise man from the West,  
He may have something to suggest.  
Stranger, pray tell me, if you can  
A body make speak like a man?

*Prof.* A Professor I am,  
Though I am one by cram ;  
I've a doctor's degree,  
But, between you and me,  
The money it cost  
I look on as lost.  
I know little Classics,  
Not much Mathematics ;  
My spelling is weak,  
But not so my cheek.  
Without any duplicity,  
I know Electricity,  
Voltaic and Static ;  
When not too erratic,  
I bottle up tight,  
So don't have a fright ;

Though, if they get loose,  
 They do play the deuce,  
 There is no denying,  
 As I don't like lying.  
 But give me a body,  
 If not made of shoddy,  
 And you will have panic,  
 When I send Galvanic  
 Current from battery  
 Right through its artery ;  
 Then, if it don't talk,  
 Or go out for a walk,  
 Or display by some sign,  
 Though not more than a whine,  
 Or a try to be sneezy,  
 That it does not feel easy,  
 I shall see that all science  
 It sets quite at defiance,  
 And has no respect for  
 A Doctor Professor.

*Cal.* Well, try your science on these two,  
 And we shall see if you speak true.

*[Professor sends a first shock, and the arms of A. H. and GUL. lift themselves simultaneously; he then sends a second one, and their thumbs move to their noses, and then their arms fall.]*

*Prof.* What do you say to this result?  
 I pass quick by their poor insult ;  
 We can't expect a body can  
 Have more of manners than the man.

*Cal.* It is no use, it does not solve  
Which first of these death did dissolve.  
Oh, if I only could but know,  
Ten thousand sequins I'd bestow  
Upon the person who could say  
Which of these two first passed away.

[ABBON HASSON *and* GULNARE *both sit*  
*up and say together—*

*A. H.* That I died first, I'll take an oath;  
Where are the sequins for us both?

*Cal.* Ah! now I see you've play'd a trick;  
Hasson, you're no doubt fond of stick.

*Has.* Before you judge, let us be heard,  
How on this rock deceit we steered.  
Caliph, when you are short of funds,  
And are all day the prey of duns;  
When your best paper hardly floats,  
And nowhere will raise many groats;  
When your dear wife will have more dresses,  
And your sweet person no one blesses,  
The time has come, I think you'll say,  
When it's mere weakness bills to pay.  
But then the tug of war begins!  
Though debts of honour, when one wins,  
Are the most pleasant kind of debts,  
The debts of honour, when your bets  
Have taken an unpleasant turn,  
Are awful, 'cause you can't adjourn  
Their payment like a tradesman's bill,  
And say you have been used most ill.  
Thus honour has led me astray,  
And so for me the only way

To raise the funds to keep me straight,  
Was my poor life to abdicate.

*Zob.* Let us now hear from you, Gulnare,  
What in this business was your share?

*Gul.* Madam, you've heard my husband say  
Honour he took to guide his way ;  
Now you have taught me that the wife,  
In passing through this mortal strife,  
Should always to her husband cling,  
Not only when good fortunes bring  
A lightsome heart, but also when  
His mind becomes the denizen  
Of gloomy thought and anxious fear,  
As faith abandons his career ;  
To soothe then, though the heart is sad,  
With smiling face, so not to add  
To her dear husband's present pain,  
Shows her her life is not in vain.

*Cal.* It strikes us that you are a pair  
Of humbugs quite beyond compare ;  
We should, to give you both your due,  
Order at once a sack for two ;  
But if we served all humbugs so,  
The price of sacking up would go ;  
Then we might want one for a wife,  
And could not get one for dear life ;  
So, not to raise the price of sacking,  
We'll let you off with such a whacking  
As will teach both to be discreet,  
And not again your Caliph cheat.

*A. H.* Great Caliph, will you hear one word,  
To soothe the wrath we've both deserv'd.



---

When I died first——

*Cal.*                    That word again!  
Ah, Zobedie, you would maintain  
That Gulnare was the first to die;  
No longer can you now deny  
That I, as usual, was right;  
You need not look so full of spite.  
Hasson, a hand! I feel so pleased,  
My wrath you now have quite appeased;  
I like a joke as well as most,  
Except when it is at my cost;  
For then, though it may be most funny,  
It's not what I like for my money.

*Prof.* Great Caliph, with your usual tact,  
The right way you have found to act.  
I come from a far western clime,  
Where beef and mutton both are prime;  
From land girt by the stormy wave,  
Where men learn to out-brave the brave;  
Where women dress to make you stare,  
And still are fairest of the fair;  
Though, being guarded by a cliff,  
I own their manners are but stiff.  
You might think there, with manners cold,  
Men would reality uphold;  
That when the face of truth they know,  
They would serve it at once. But no;  
In court, in camp, in hall, in bower,  
Humbug's supreme; for, by its power,  
Appearance can be made to seem  
More like to virtue than herself,  
And e'en from wisdom gain esteem,  
And, what's more liked, no end of pelf.



So, Caliph, though these two, no doubt,  
Have made your language not devout,  
Still you must see, as this world goes,  
Some little humbug always flows  
Along our path. We can't expect  
The truth always. But, recollect,  
A joke that for a moment cheers,  
Is something in this vale of tears.





## THE MAGIC RING.

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### PERSONS REPRESENTED.

KING BEDER.	FATIMA.
PRINCE ZEYN.	NOURMAHAL.
MERCHANT.	FAIRY.
ALCHEMIST.	ATTENDANT.
VIZIER.	TWO SLAVES.

### ACT I.

PRINCE ZEYN *in Prison, chained, with some thin water gruel before him.*

Z. Why am I here, thus in these chains?  
Better my blood had soaked those plains,  
Where oft King Beder I have met,  
And hand-to-hand, with teeth firm set,  
Have, with my sabre, dealt such blows  
As man for home and wife bestows;  
Better my blood had thus been shed  
Than stagnate here. Surely the dead  
Seek the bright visions of the past,  
And grief does not the flesh outlast.

[*Takes up gruel and stirs it.*]

This is the most unkindest cut of all,  
This keenly shows the greatness of my fall.

[*Takes up a spoonful and pours it back.*]

Had it been thick, I might have borne my fate,  
And proudly smiled—victim of Beder's hate;  
But thus to see it run with limpid flow,  
Brings on a fear that I to lymph may go:  
Then how, with stately mien and flashing eye,  
Can I meet Beder, and his hate defy?  
But stay! have I not heard that bones and muscles,  
From Liebig's fluid beef will take corpuscles?  
Of course I know that we are three parts water,  
But surely grits are not the other quarter.  
Ah! misspent youth, why did I cut my classes,  
And take for books the bright eyes of the lasses?  
Oh! why of lectures did I not take note,  
And learn digestive functions off by rote?

*Enter KING BEDER, with two armed Slaves.*

*B.* Prince Zeyn, I think that you must own  
Your usurped sway is now o'erthrown;  
Your vaunted fastness could not keep,  
With all its wall along the steep,  
Your treasures; though you oft made boast,  
That Beder's might, that Beder's host,  
Could pluck the eaglets from their nest,  
Sooner than seize your mountain crest.

*Z.* Your might, your host had been in vain,  
Without foul treason's loathsome stain.

*B.* Exactly so!

*Z.* Have you no shame?  
Do you think thus you can get fame?

Her breath is only for the few  
Who all but honour bid adieu.

*B.* Oh, as to that, it's all the same  
Whether I gain, or don't gain, fame.  
Remember, at my time of life,  
One loses all the fun of strife.  
Of course I must have my own way;  
That's only reasonable, you'll say,  
As for my whistle I can pay.

*Z.* You think the world is rul'd by buying.

*B.* Well, not quite so, a little lying  
At times will more assist our views  
Than much hard cash or I O U's.

*Z.* Better be dog and bay the moon,  
Than gain one's end like a poltroon!

*B.* Prince Zeyn, you are so very young.  
Is it not better to have flung  
Away some cash than lost my breath—  
Shortness of wind to me means death.

*Z.* You are no doubt so vilely stout,  
The battle-shout would puff you out.

*B.* What do you mean, you bag of bone,  
I don't weigh more than eighteen stone!  
Such language is not at all wise,  
When one's so near to his demise——

*Z.* Would'st murder me in this dark cell?

*B.* A light one would do just as well.

*Z.* No, Beder, not for such foul deed!

*B.* That is mere prejudice—indeed  
A little light makes such jobs sure.

*Z.* Oh, Beder, think again once more,  
Before to death you me consign,  
I am the last of all my line.

*B.* Oh youth! youth, youth, of course you are,  
That is why I no cost did spare.

Think you I should take all this bother,  
To catch and kill you for a brother!

*Z.* There's something in your point of view  
I must confess.

*B.* Oh! if you knew  
The worry you of late have brought me.

*Z.* You no doubt think it should have taught me  
To bear my fate with smiling face,  
E'en though the last of all my race.

*B.* Well, p'rhaps that's going rather far;  
A little sadness wouldn't impair  
The grace of making your adieu  
To this old world and starting new.

[*BEDER signs to the Slaves, who place  
themselves on each side of ZEYN.*]

*Z.* Then farewell life! though few my days,  
I've had my fling in many ways;  
I can't reproach myself with aught—  
Except of course with being caught!  
Zeyn, you must now quite play the Prince,  
And at the awkward fix not wince.  
Strike home, base slaves, your lord obey,  
I march to light, by death's dark way.

[*Slaves seize PRINCE ZEYN.*]

*B.* Hold! I forgot I gave a pledge  
That you should have the chance to hedge  
Your fate.

[*Aside*] This recollection is most lucky,  
I like the boy, he is so plucky,

And if I don't give him this chance,  
My daughter will lead me a dance.  
[*Aloud*] I have a daughter, she is fair,  
And with the Houris will compare ;  
It's said that her most sweet expression  
Was first in her dear Pa's possession.  
But let that pass ; if her you'll wed,  
You from this dungeon shall be led.

Z. [*Aside*] Though I no doubt am up a tree,  
It seems to me that this would be  
From frying-pan into the fire,  
If she at all is like her sire.

B. Prince Zeyn, she is an only daughter ;  
And though, in truth, I oft have fought her,  
Still her own way she always gets,  
For if sulks fail, she's off in fits.  
Now what she calls her mind is bent,  
With or without Papa's consent,  
On giving to your loving arms,  
As lawful bride, her ample charms.

Z. [*Aside*] If in the dark one has to jump,  
It's better p'rhaps to take it plump.

B. No answer, Prince !

Z. I'm so amazed,  
Such sudden turn makes me quite dazed.

B. Well, take your time, I know I'm hasty,  
I see it makes you look quite pasty.

Z. King Beder.

B. Well.

Z. May I explain  
Why your kind offer is in vain.

*B.* Good gracious, boy! do you reject  
My offer? I'd have you reflect  
That, though p'rhaps wiving is a bore,  
A twisting neck is rather sore.

*Z.* But listen, Beder, it's my fate.

*B.* Not a word more.

*Z.* Let me relate  
How, by a fairy's gift——

*B.* Enough ;  
I'm not the man to bear rebuff.  
Slaves, do your duty, seize Prince Zeyn,  
You need not haste him out of pain.

[Slaves *seize* PRINCE ZEYN, and  
*enter* FATIMA.

*F.* Father, how's this! Is this the way  
Your daughter's wishes you obey?

*B.* I'm sure that I have done my best,  
And in your cause have shown much zest.

*F.* Father, I know you mean most kindly,  
But haste oft makes you act quite blindly.

*B.* Act then yourself. I wash my hands  
Of everything—except his lands.

*F.* Prince, do you hear? My hands now hold  
Your life. Think me not then too bold  
To offer freedom with myself;  
For at my birth appeared an elf,  
Who did predict that I must wed  
A prince and captive of my sire,  
Or else be numbered with the dead  
The day my fourteen years expire.  
I want one week of fourteen years.

*Z.* Madam, in you such charm appears,



That were I free to make a choice,  
Such pleading accents of my voice  
Would steal into your dainty ear,  
At once of hope, at once of fear,  
That you, for pity's sake, would give  
A little hope on which to live.

*F.* I'm glad you think I am so winning ;  
From Pa's remarks I was beginning  
To think that I had too much waist,  
I'm too developed for Pa's taste.

*Z.* Whilst rosebuds do boys' hearts excite,  
The full-blown rose is man's delight.

*F.* How nice it is a prince to find  
Whose taste in contour's so refin'd.  
Oh, I shall make you a rare wife,  
From me you have both love and life.

*Z.* But, madam, listen.

*F.* Not a word ;  
Love is too subtle to be heard,  
Except in whispers soft and cooing,  
In sylvan glades, whilst birds are wooing.

*Z.* But, madam, I've a wife already.

*B.* Oh, two will make you much more steady.

*F.* What means this, father? Where's his wife?

*B.* I do not know, upon my life.

*Z.* I left her in my castle keep.

*B.* I'm sure you then for her may weep,  
For, when I have a place to sack,  
My men have strict commands to hack  
To pieces all, both small and great.  
I don't do this at all in hate,

But, from experience, I have found  
When no one's left to make a sound,  
It really does stop all complaint.

*Z.* Wretch! to heaven you've sent a saint.

*F.* I'll help you weep for your sweet wife,  
In me you shall renew her life.

*Z.* It cannot be, though I am sure  
Such love as yours would life endure.  
A ring binds up my love on earth,  
A fairy gave it at my birth,  
And said my heart should only turn  
To whoso wore it. In return,  
Their heart to me should constant be,  
E'en though it had sweet liberty.

*B.* I'm not surprised you don't mind dying,  
Such constancy must be too trying.

*F.* Pa, don't be coarse. The gem you name  
Can be distinguished by its flame?

*Z.* Oh yes, it is a flood of light,  
Nothing on earth's been seen so bright.

*F.* At once this gem then shall be sought  
In every cranny of your fort.  
Let us at once go forth and search.

*B.* And leave your new friend in the lurch?

*F.* Prince, you'll excuse us, I am sure.

*Z.* Fair maid, for you I would endure  
The darkest dungeon's deepest den  
That e'er was dug for beasts or men ;  
And, what is more, for such a jewel  
I'll try and like my water gruel.

*F.* Pa, is this true? A prince on grits!  
Beware, or I am off in fits.

*B.* Oh, any thing to make you happy.  
Guards, stuff the prince with Strasburg Patty.

[*Exit FATIMA and BEDER.*

*Z.* I will thank heaven upon my knees  
That still I have the power to sneeze ;  
But if with Patty I'm o'erfed,  
How I shall toss about my bed.

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ACT II.

*Bazaar, with Merchant at his shop setting out his wares.*

*Two Soldiers at the back of stage.*

*Enter FATIMA and Attendant.*

*A.* But, madam, is the gem not found ?

*F.* No, though we searched each inch of ground.

*A.* But if the jewel is so bright,  
It surely ought to come to light.

*F.* Well, everything below the sun  
That could be thought of has been done ;  
The searchers, to let nothing slip,  
Were constantly beneath the whip,  
And, to encourage all the others,  
We had two kill'd—I think twin brothers.

*A.* That must have made the rascals strive—  
Of course I mean those left alive.

*F.* What now to do I do not know,  
I feel so very, very low.

*A.* Oh, cheer up, madam. No Prince Zeyn  
Should ever thus my heart enchain.

*F.* You have not seen him : if you had,  
I'm sure you would be just as bad ;

For he is such a nice young man,  
And when he is all spic-and-span,  
He must look lovely. Even now,  
Though quite unkempt, you would allow  
His figure worthy of Apollo,  
All other gods he beats quite hollow.

*A.* Was not Apollo rather spare?  
Your taste, I've heard you oft declare,  
Was for substance, not for shadow,  
Flesh and fat, not bones and marrow.

*F.* Oh, don't be foolish. You should know  
What in a female form will show  
As soft and gently-swelling curves,  
That set off well a smiling face,  
In man's firm form quite well deserves  
To be call'd pury or obese.

*A.* Well, mistress, when I get the chance,  
To fat or lean I make advance.

*[Retire to back of stage.]*

*Enter PRINCESS NOURMAHAL disguised.*

*N.* Now hope is gone, my limbs refuse  
Their task. I can no longer choose,  
I must eat here—here in this town,  
Whose cursed walls heard his last moan,  
Or else I feel my strength will fail  
To bear me where I may bewail  
The death of my poor peerless prince.  
With fasts and tears I will convince  
High heaven that justice must not sleep,  
But it in haste, with one fell sweep,

---

Seize Beder and all Beder's band,  
And hurl them to the Stygian strand.

[*Feels for money.*]

Oh, I remember, my last groat,  
With trembling hands, I did devote  
To bribe his guard. What can I do?  
I do not know the tone to sue  
For alms. And if I did, I'd rather  
Sink on this spot than travel farther  
By aid from Zeyn's most ruthless foes.  
Ah yes! [*taking off ring*] as love no longer glows  
Within the magic of this stone,  
It's value seems to me all gone.  
I'll sell it here, and, after food,  
Will quickly seek some refuge good;  
Reverent mothers are like honey  
To novices with lots of money.  
I never thought this fine carbuncle  
Would ever thus go to my uncle.

[*Examines Merchant's wares.*]

*M.* Never was business here more slack,  
Yet now all competition's gone,  
Since Prince Zeyn's town was put to sack,  
And all its people kill'd save one.  
Can there to this in theory be objection?  
Sure killing is the best of all protection!  
Well, really, this is a great fix,  
So I will my tobacco mix;  
And, whilst I smoke my honey dew,  
I'll tot up all my money due.  
I don't quite like that woman's ways,  
Though p'rhaps she has seen better days.

*N.* Sir.

*M.* Madam, can I in aught you serve,  
I've much your notice does deserve.

[*Aside*] I must look sharply to my locket,  
She has such awfully deep pockets.

*N.* Sir, I have not come here to buy.

*M.* [*aside*] But pocket things upon the sly.

*N.* I wish to know if you would buy  
A ring. I think its beauties vie  
With anything I see around.

*M.* In that case, madam, you have found  
A gem indeed.

*N.* Found! what mean you?

*M.* Oh, nothing, I just take for true  
Whatever statement may be made,  
I think it's always best for trade.

*N.* This ring my lost one did bestow.

*M.* Yes, giv'n or found, it's always so.  
Well, let me see this precious ring. [*Takes ring.*  
Moses! a stone fit for a king.  
Look how it burns with its own fire,  
More fiercely than an eye in ire.

[*Whilst Merchant is looking at the ring,*  
FATIMA and Attendant pass.

*F.* Look, Zillah, look! a flash I caught,  
Which makes me feel that what I sought  
Is now within that merchant's hand.  
Let us watch close whilst here we stand.

*M.* Why did you bring this in the day?  
You might have come by its own light.

[*Aside*] Oh, what a bargain's thrown away,  
Oh, what a world this is of spite;



But, as the Princess saw the stone,  
I fear I must leave it alone.

[*Aloud*] Woman, this ring you found or stole—  
Come, me you cannot thus cajole,  
By saying that to you was given  
A ring that might have come from heaven.

*N.* Base slave, I'll have your lying tongue  
Pull'd from your throat! Oh, I forgot,  
My subjects I am not among,  
And how far fall'n my present lot.

*M.* Well, really, that's not badly done,  
You must upon the stage have shone;  
But you can't humbug me like that,  
You need not try, I tell you flat.

*N.* Oh, Sir, you surely would not vex  
A pilgrim of the weaker sex?

*M.* Oh, there, I'm sure you touch me nearly,  
But spooning may be bought too dearly.

*N.* What insults will you next employ?

*M.* Ah! ah! now we are mighty coy.  
Guards, here's a wench you must take up,  
As soon as ever you wake up.

*N.* Oh, spare me, you can keep the stone—  
Oh that I were once more alone!

*M.* [*aside*] What a fine stroke of business's here,  
If Fatima were not so near.

[*Aloud*] My honour, woman, is at stake,  
I would do much for such a take;  
But, when it can't be help'd, you see,  
No one takes higher grounds than me;  
E'en more than that, with equal gain,  
I always walk in virtue's train.



Guards, take this wench before King Beder,  
And if she screams, you need not heed her.

[Guards *take* NOURMAHAL *away*.]

*F.* Merchant, place in my hands that ring.

*M.* What ring?

*F.* A pretty tune you'll sing  
Unless at once you give it me.

*M.* Princess, do you not clearly see  
That I must it produce in court?

*F.* Oh, if you won't, I must resort  
To measures p'rhaps a little strong—  
Two hundred lashes with a thong.

*M.* Such reasoning quite makes me wince,  
It does so suddenly convince.

Here, Gracious Princess, take the ring,  
You must then show it to the king.

[*Aside*] Thus to resign what ought to be my prey  
Is quite enough to make my hair turn grey.

*F.* Well, Zillah, now we need not linger,  
I'll place the ring upon my finger;  
Then we shall see if Zeyn spake true,  
And if this ring is his heart's clue.

*A.* Mistress, from here we need not stray,  
For, see, the Prince he comes this way.

*Enter* PRINCE, *led by* Guards.

[*FATIMA holds up her finger with  
the ring on it.*]

*Z.* Ah, there I see my life of life,  
There stands the maid must be my wife;

The world ne'er held so bright a jewel,  
And heaven's blue pales before her eyes ;  
My heart's ablaze, like patent fuel,  
Which can't go out e'en if it tries.

*F.* Prince, over-praise is an insult.

*Z.* Oh, fair one, if you would consult  
My heart, you'd find that I feel bound  
To praise not over but all round,  
Which in this case, I must declare,  
Is farther far beyond compare.

*F.* It's always best to have enough,  
Your wasp-like figure is frail stuff.

*Z.* Venus herself in skin and bones,  
I'm sure would prove as cold as stones.  
I do not like to see a joint,  
I like a little em-bon-point.

[PRINCE *falls on his knees.*

Here, at your feet, upon my knees,  
I beg that dear fat hand to squeeze ;  
And, if quite proper, let me sip  
The dew from that full pouting lip.

*F.* [*aside*] For such salutes all maids are gluttons,  
But if I bend, pop go my buttons.

[*As FATIMA tries to bend, curtain falls.*

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ACT III.

KING BEDER *holding Court.* Vizier, &c.

*B.* Vizier, as now we have, with even scale,  
Dispensed out justice to our subjects frail  
Who sought our judgment seat, we wish to hear  
Report from you of how our state doth steer

Among the cross waves of these chopping times.

*V.* Sire, since you have chopp'd to pieces, for  
their crimes,

Prince Zeyn's vile horde, our neighbours are quite  
tame ;

Of course we have our riots just the same,  
But nothing worthy your august attention  
Has taken place, unless, perhaps, I mention  
The advent of a stranger from the West,  
Whose mind seem'd, like his body, oddly dress'd,  
For he spoke to your people strange conceits,  
That it is right, not wrong, to eat pig-meats ;  
That women cover 'cause they have no beauties,  
That subjects have their rights as well as duties.

*B.* Their rights! The man must be stark,  
staring mad.

That subjects have their duties is not bad ;  
But, though I try to think with all my might,  
For life of me! what means a subject's right?

*V.* No doubt it is obscure, and, in the West,  
Such questions often lead to great unrest.

*B.* They do ; our brothers near the setting sun  
Have many of them lately had to run ;  
And yet I do remember being told  
By western sage, that it was there they hold  
As maxim true, "The king can do no wrong."  
A saying wise, and not a bit too strong.

*V.* New notions put into a subject's mind,  
Might his allegiance loosen and unbind.  
In order, then, that no more might be said,  
I made my slaves cut off the stranger's head.

*B.* Vizier, that showed in you too much the milk  
Of human kindness ; think, you thus did bilk

Justice of her own due. A case like this  
Would show the poetry of punishment, by preference  
For some device that had a special reference  
To his unruly member. Might you not  
Have torn it out with pincers made red hot?

*V.* Oh, happy thought! but now, alas, too late,  
To miss such pleasure always is my fate.  
But who comes here?

*Enter* NOURMAHAL, *guarded, and* Merchant.

*M.* Hail, mighty king!  
Duty compels me here to bring  
Before your throne a woman frail,  
Who brought to me a gem for sale  
Of such great price, that I believe  
It from its owner she did thief.

*B.* Show me the gem.

*M.* I have it not.  
Your daughter princess on the spot  
Forc'd it from me.

*B.* [*aside*] How like her sire,  
To make force wait upon desire.  
[*Aloud*] Let the accused now stand in view,  
Whilst we determine what is true.  
Woman, your face you must unveil,  
Justice of looks doth oft avail.

[NOURMAHAL *lifts her veil.*

[*Aside*] This gem must be of beauty rare  
If with that face it can compare.

[BEDER *rises and says aloud.*

We now at once dismiss this sitting;  
We do not think it would be fitting

To hear this case in open court.  
 Our daughter seems—of course in sport—  
 To hold possession of the ring ;  
 We, therefore, deem it right to bring  
 This matter to our private ear.

[*All leave except B. and N.*

Now, charmer, speak, you've nought to fear.  
 [*Aside*] I thought my heart, as I'm a sinner,  
 Would only beat for a good dinner ;  
 But now it makes far greater clash  
 Than e'er it did for Calipash.

[*Aloud*] What! not a word! think of my power,  
 A nod sends you to castle tower  
 To pine alone. By Beder's side  
 All will say you have caught the tide  
 Upon the flood that leads to fortune.  
 What! still no word! Kings don't impórtune.

*N.* Dread sire, you see before you one  
 Whom fate has done her best to stun,  
 By taking from her love and hope.

*B.* Oh, it's all nonsense thus to mope.  
 Whenever I can't get my way,  
 A little swearing does allay  
 All irritation. If that fail,  
 My subjects then have cause to quail.  
 But now, dear maid, give me your heart,  
 Let hope and love here make new start.

*N.* But, sire, I'm wedded to another.

*B.* Well, really, now that is a bother.  
 Still, that's a trifle light as air ;  
 A new divorce bill we'll prepare

And sign at once. It shall permit  
An easy matrimonial fit.

*N.* The only hope that I have left,  
Now that I am of peace bereft,  
Is to find home in lonely cell,  
And on the peace of heaven dwell.

*B.* Convents are well for girls quite plain,  
Or those who have not got a grain  
Of common sense. But your sweet bloom  
Should keep from out the living tomb.  
Here on my knee—— [*BEDER kneels on one knee.*  
[*Aside*] This is no joke.  
This pose means apoplectic stroke.

*Enter FATIMA and ZEYN. NOURMAHAL veils.*

*F.* Oh, father dear, I feel so glad.  
Ah! what is this? It is too bad.  
At your age, sir, you should know better—  
And kneeling! send for a blood-letter.  
I'm sure he will now have a fit,  
At prayers he always has to sit;  
And kneeling to a thorough dowdy,  
His mind of late's been getting cloudy.

*B.* Hold, daughter! say but one word more,  
And, though you may think it a bore,  
I'll give to you a young step-mother,  
Who then may give you half a brother.  
Your fortune then you will bewail,  
For my estates I will entail  
Upon the little squeaking male.

*Z.* Oh, Fatima, respect your father,  
The more so as I think he rather



Means more than what you might suppose.  
 Half-brothers are most awkward foes,  
 And, though no doubt you would be willing,  
 Boys take, like cats, a deal of killing.

*F.* Oh, never fear, I quite well know  
 How far I can with safety go.  
 He often says strong words in spite,  
 His bark is much worse than his bite.

*Z.* From my experience in a fight,  
 Give me his bark and not his bite.

*B.* If no one helps me from my knee,  
 Out comes a word begins with *d*.

*[Z. and F. go to help him.]*

Now, both at once, come, heave away.

*[They pull in opposite directions.]*

Why do you pull so much astray?  
 Fools, if you pull like that in line,  
 The angle's naught, and has no sine;  
 Go back to school and work like horses,  
 And learn to find resultant forces.

*[They pull BADER up.]*

Now that my blood has left my brain,  
 King Beder feels himself again.

*[To Fatima]* You should my anger not arouse,  
 It was your cause I did espouse.

*Z. [aside]* His daughter's cause is all a sham,  
 I'm sure he's told an awful cram;  
 Old gentlemen are oft so warm,  
 A pretty face takes them by storm;  
 And then farewell to sense and duty,  
 No doubt the veil'd one is a beauty.



*F.* Well, father, I forgive you quite,  
Though you, I own, gave me a fright;  
Such mothers as you mention are  
I always think one step too far.  
But now, Papa, with me rejoice,  
I feel so happy in my choice.  
I have the ring, I have his love,  
Is there more bliss in realms above?

*B.* Well, as to that I cannot say,  
Nor do I mind a long delay  
In finding out. What says Prince Zeyn?

*N.* Good heavens! Is my hearing vain?

[*Turns and sees* PRINCE ZEYN.]

It's he; but sure he's not so vile  
As whilst I live on others smile?

*Z.* King Beder, though on fields of slaughter,  
We hand to hand have met in strife,  
If I had known of this fair daughter,  
My hate would then have wanted life.  
With her soft presence by my side,  
I feel that life will ever glide  
With peaceful and with gentle flow.  
No adverse winds will turn our prow;  
For winds and waves, though often bold,  
On yielding natures take no hold.

*B.* This may be right, but in my day,  
Instead of such a wild display  
Of ranting nonsense, we young sparks,  
Without a word, were up to larks.

*F.* Fie, Pa! for shame! that's not refined,  
Kissing 'fore crowds must be declined.

But come, Prince Zeyn, come for my sake,  
And see my bower within the brake.

[*Exit* ZEYN and FATIMA.

N. King Beder, you but lately said  
That on my looks you only fed;  
You ne'er shall see me till you bring,  
And on my finger place the ring  
Your daughter stole.

B. If that is all,  
You have it. I don't mind a squall.  
At once I'll hasten to her bower,  
If she refuse, bread and a tower;  
And, if I must, I will use force,  
And tear it from her quivering corse.

[*Exit* BEDER.

N. Ah, Fatima, you'll find that dowdy  
Has got a mind that's far from cloudy.  
When once the ring I have again,  
Your love will be Chateau in Spain.  
For what can Zeyn see in your carriage,  
That he should think of you in marriage?  
His taste has always been refined,  
Except when he too well has dined.  
He likes a figure slight and slim,  
One free in carriage, light in limb,  
And not so bulky as to dwarf us,  
Especially when it's amorphous.  
Yet I must walk with careful tread,  
Or off my shoulders goes my head.  
But who would not for such a duck  
Be really pleased to risk her luck?

ACT IV.

*Room in the Palace. FATIMA and Attendant.*

*F.* Have you not found it? Did you look  
In every corner, cranny, nook?

*A.* Yes, madam, I have searched in vain,  
My eyes, neck, arms I did so strain,  
That, if it had been in the room,  
I must have found it; with my broom  
I swept each spot not reached by hand—  
It's gone, as sure as here I stand.

*F.* It's very strange, before I slept,  
I'm sure I had it, and I kept  
One hand upon the other tightly,  
And in love one sleeps but lightly.

*A.* Madam, I'm not so sure of that;  
It's often very weary work,  
Lovers so oft the offer shirk,—  
Why mayn't we put the question pat?

*F.* You may be right that men are much too  
cool,  
And do think twice before they play the fool.  
With us, I think, it would not go much faster,  
The doubt makes us forget we take a master.  
But I will go and look again,  
I don't think I shall search in vain.

[*Exit* FATIMA.]

*A.* If princesses have so much toil and trouble  
In working out this sum of being double,  
What must the labour be to me, poor maid,  
Who have no rank, no money to persuade.

*Enter* NOURMAHAL.

*N.* I've just been told I here should find  
King Beder's daughter. Be so kind  
As let her know I wait her here.

*A.* [*aside*] This is too cool. I'll try a sneer.

*N.* Did you not hear?

*A.* Madam, I go.

[*Aside*] How, by the tone, we servants know  
When it is safe some cheek to use,  
And when to mind our P's and Q's.

[*Exit* Attendant.

*N.* I think this plan is for the best,  
No better will my mind suggest ;  
In Fatima I will confide,  
And from her bosom nothing hide.  
No doubt this leap is in the dark,  
And if she's jealous, light a spark  
That will inflame both sire and daughter,  
Then Zeyn and I shall get no quarter.  
Had I not better fly from here?  
What! leave Prince Zeyn to fill the ear  
Of Fatima with lover's vow,  
And with my wifhood her endow!  
I am not jealous, not at all,  
But, sooner than see Zeyn recall  
His vows, I would much rather see  
This earth—this vast rotundity—  
Hurl'd from its centre, and go crash  
In one great everlasting smash.  
I think p'rhaps that's a little strong,  
But wifely feeling can't go wrong.

Now I must think. If I regain  
The ring, I must with care refrain  
From using it before the King  
And Prince; for that would no doubt bring  
A fatal crisis. Who comes here?

*Enter KING BEDER with the ring.*

*B.* I've found you here, my little dear :  
You see now I have got the ring ;  
Your lightest wish gives me the wing  
Of swiftest bird.

*N.* [*aside*] Oh ! what a sight,  
To see King Beder in full flight ;  
A porpoise flying like a bird—  
Upon my life it's too absurd.

[*Aloud*] I trust, king, that your loving daughter  
Gave you no need to take to slaughter?

*B.* Well, no. I'm really very glad,  
For it is no doubt very sad  
To have to kill your only child,  
And then one is so much revil'd.

*N.* She gave it, then?

*B.* Oh no, not she,  
You do not know her pedigree.  
No daughter of the house of Beder  
Ever lets go unless you bleed her.

*N.* To what plan, then, had you recourse?

*B.* Craft often gains as such as force.  
She slept, her heaving bosom rose  
And fell with rhythmic pause. Her pose  
Showed, by its easy, careless graces,  
That trust which time too soon effaces.

A pillow lay close to my hand;  
 I seized it, but who could withstand  
 That look? No, no. I could not smother  
 The breathing image of my mother.

*N.* Let no one now in future say,  
 Beder goes straight to his own way.

*B.* Her hands were clasp'd, the ring I sought  
 Was much too firmly held, methought,  
 To be withdrawn without such force,  
 As I had fear to have recourse.  
 With lightest down I touched her cheek,  
 One hand that part at once did seek;  
 A moment, and the ring was mine,  
 And now, fair stranger, shall be thine.

[*BEDER puts ring on NOURMAHAL'S finger.*]

*N.* [*aside*] Oh joy, I have it back at last,  
 Now cureless grief is in the past.  
 [*Aloud*] Thanks, king, it was most featly done,  
 And now I think I'd best be gone.

*B.* Gone! Now that is a likely joke!  
 I see you only wish to poke  
 Your fun at me.

*N.* Oh, not at all,  
 I really have to make a call.

*B.* Woman, don't think to humbug me,  
 To service render'd where's the fee?  
 I'll take it partly with my lips,  
 And partly with my finger tips.

[*Seizes N. and draws her towards him.*]

*N.* Help! oh, help! [*Enter PRINCE ZEYN.*]  
 [*Aside*] Good heavens, it's Zeyn!

*Z.* Who calls for help, calls not in vain,



For, lady, know Prince Zeyn is here.

*B.* Confound you, Zeyn, don't interfere,  
I will have payment at all cost.

*N.* [*aside*] Oh lucky thought, all is not lost.

[*N. slips ring upon BEDER'S finger.*]

*Z.* Ah, Beder, now my heart has found  
In your sweet self the solid ground  
On which to build a life's devotion—  
A life of joy and deep emotion.

*B.* Sweet Prince, oh, think me not too bold,  
If I confess my heart doth hold  
Within its most concealed recess  
Your image, free from earthly dress.

*Z.* [*Taking BEDER'S hand, and pressing it to his heart*] By this hand which I embrace,  
By that sweet, yet spotty face ;  
By those lips I long to taste,  
By that much developed waist ;  
By that form whose rounded line  
Shows you know well how to dine ;  
By you all, from top to toe,  
Beder, I do love you so !

*N.* Now this is really, on my soul,  
Of all jokes I have heard most droll ;  
But if a joke is pressed too far,  
The joker often gets a scar.  
What now to do I cannot think,  
And from the end of this I shrink.

*B.* Oh, Zeyn dear, spare, oh, spare my blushes,  
A lover's cheek more quickly flushes  
By praises, though quite well deserved,  
Than dinners where champagne is served.



Z. When modesty to beauty is allied,  
 One feels with them the world may be defied.  
 Come, let these arms your beauties interlace,  
 And hold you in one long—one fond embrace.

BEDER and ZEYN embrace. Enter FATIMA.

F. Lady, I'm sorry you have had to wait;  
 Not finding what I sought has made me late.  
 But what means this?

N. It is, I deem,  
 The hand and seal to love's young dream.

F. But have they both quite lost their wit.

N. Yes, if you watch them, you will split  
 Your sides with laughter.

F. Do you know,  
 How met their wits this overthrow?

N. Beder has on the magic ring,  
 So Zeyn's love now is for the king.

[ZEYN chucking BEDER under the chin.]

Z. My pretty one, my pretty chick,  
 Come tell me by what art or trick  
 I have so gained your young affections.

B. My mind's not given to dissections;  
 But still I have not deep to seek,  
 It is, I think, your boundless cheek.

F. [Goes up to BEDER] I wonder what you will  
 do next?

Remember, Pa, the holy text—

“Him what steals what isn't his'n,  
 When he's caught is sent to pris'n.”

[Takes ring off BEDER'S finger and  
 throws it on the ground.]

[*To Zeyn*] And as for your professed devotion,  
It's not worth that [*snaps her fingers*], for I've  
a notion

It turns with ease from flower to thorn :  
For fickle love I've only scorn.

Z. Young lady, it's all very well,  
But when a party's under spell,  
He has to do as fates decree ;  
But still I hope you'll never see  
Me thus again with such a feeder ;  
It's rather warm work loving Beder.

B. [*putting his hand to his forehead and sighing*]  
So strange a dream, sure nothing could surpass,  
Methought I was enamoured of an ass.

Z. Now, Beder, don't. Now don't say that ;  
Though not a genius, I'm no flat.

B. Well, Zeyn, my boy, I'm all at sea,  
With this affair 'tween you and me ;  
Why did you play a trick so scurvy ?  
It has quite turned me topsy-turvy.

N. Of your mistake this is the source—  
The ring you wore has magic force.

B. What ring ?

N. The ring you just now gave  
To her you swore you were the slave.

B. The ring I took from my fat lass.

F. A father who has Falstaff's mass  
Should not shoot off reproach so low ;  
Whose fault is it when sires o'erblow ?

B. Well, Fatima, I do retract ;  
The question now is how to act ?

[*N. steps forward and throws off disguise.*]

N. Let me now show myself to all,  
I am the Princess Nourmahal !

Z. What, Nourmahal ! what, come to life !

N. Yes, Zeyn, here is your late dear wife,  
And she is very grieved to see  
You making love so very free-  
ly with the daughter of this king.

Z. Oh, Nourmahal, it is that ring.

N. Well, p'rhaps it was that ring before  
That had bewitch'd you, when you swore  
You only lived on my sweet looks.

Z. I wish that I were off the hooks,  
I am so worn. No heart can last,  
That has to turn about so fast.

B. Now though I've thought upon this case,  
I can't yet see how to efface  
The magic of this dratted ring.  
Before my council I will bring  
The entire question. Their advice  
May cut this hard knot in a trice.

F. But who's to touch it? don't ask me.

N. Nor me.

Z. Nor me.

B. Well, let me see!

[*Clapping his hands. Enter Slave.*

Take up that ring.

Z. Oh, Beder, stay,  
The slave will steal my heart away !

B. Then bring the tongs.

Z. Oh, let me beg  
That what is used has not a leg.

*B.* Well, botheration, let him use the shovel ;  
You are more am'rous than Miss Harlow's Lovel.  
[*Slave takes ring up in shovel, and as they  
begin to follow, curtain falls.*]

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A C T V.

KING BEDER *seated, and surrounded by his Court.*  
*Ring on a cushion in front.*

*B.* Thanks, councillors, for your most sage advice,  
It's wise in matter, and in form concise ;  
I know it sound, for it agrees quite well  
With what I think we should do with this spell ;  
Of good advice one cannot have enough,  
Advice we don't agree with is poor stuff.  
Vizier, now let our Alchemist be called ;

[*Vizier signs, and Attendant shouts  
out, "Alchemist!"*]

I did not say let Alchemist be bawled.

[*Enter Alchemist.*]

Respected sage, may we now make so bold  
As steal one moment from your search for gold ?  
We know quite well gold's all-pervading power ;  
Like love, it rules the court, the camp, the bower.

*A.* Great king, as far as my weak powers will  
reach

You can command.

*B.* Then, my good father, teach  
Us how we can destroy this magic stone.

*A.* May I examine it myself alone ?

*B.* No, no ; you must not even touch the gold.

*A.* How can I then its mystery unfold ?

*B.* So much the Sage's mind's eye doth descry,  
That oft Philosophy seems all-my-eye.

Can't you, then, tell us, by a close inspection,  
How we must act to cause this gem's dissection ?

[Alchemist *examines stone.*

*A.* Great king, I see it's cleavage is so clear,  
That I with ease can it in fragments shear.

*Z.* For goodness' sake, do not do that, I pray,  
I'm sure my heart each fragment will obey !

*A.* That will be so, for each minutest crumb  
Will hold the virtue that pervades the sum.

*V.* Could not the fragments on the waves be  
spread ?

*B.* Remarks uncalled for often cost a head.  
No, sage, our trouble will not be abated  
Till this rare gem is quite annihilated.

*A.* Annihilated !

No savant, e'en for sake of notoriety,  
Has ever sent to Chemical Society  
A paper on such disassociation.

*B.* Remember, I have studied mutilation,  
And when my will is not at once obeyed,  
My first start is a tender part well flayed.

*A.* Such treatment will not better care command,  
A man in bits must surely be off hand.

*B.* Life, my dear sage, is full of contradiction.

*A.* This show, O king, be open to conviction,  
I will do all that mortal science can—  
I'll bake it, boil it, stew it in a pan,

And, if it will not yield to method placid,  
I then will try my strong sulphuric acid.

Z. But if your methods don't destroy the atom,  
A bit of heart must follow each—oh, drat-em!

*Enter Fairy.*

*Fairy.* I have come on swift wing  
From a dark fairy ring  
That circles on breeze-loving down,  
Where with light bound we skip,  
With no harebell to trip,  
Or dewdrop poor fairy to drown.

By that power supreme,  
Of which men can but dream,  
Has been given a limited sway  
Over mortals on earth,  
From their moment of birth,  
To the good and the trick-loving fay.

On the rim of the cot,  
Where the little wee dot  
First doubles his fist at the world,  
We move with a flutter,  
As o'er him we utter  
The fate that around him is curl'd.

And to some we impart,  
By the aid of our art,  
A charm that will temper their lives;  
Though our charms often fail,  
And no art will avail,  
To soften the temper of wives.

*N.* When a fairy's ill bred,  
Really naught can be said  
Why such kind of being survives ;  
I am sure we all feel  
It's not nice or genteel,  
This vulgar assault upon wives.

*B.* Do keep to the point ; the long and the short  
Of what we have now before this our court,  
Is not what should be the length of the tongue,  
Shortness of temper, or volume of lung  
Of wives who too oft make one lower one's tone,  
But what now to do with this dratted stone.

*Fairy.* It seems that a fairy  
Should be very chary  
Of granting her favours to men,  
As the forces that move  
Man's life often prove  
Too dark and too deep for her ken.

So, king, with your leave,  
As I quite well perceive  
From trouble my gift does not save,  
I will bear it away  
From the bright light of day,  
And hide it in dark fairy cave.

*B.* Good fairy, thanks for taking back the ring,  
I'm sure all present here feel, with their king,  
Lighter of heart. But if I might suggest,  
To one who takes such friendly interest



In our affairs, would it not be the better  
To leave this world of ours without the fetter  
Of extra mundane force? No doubt our life  
Is tossed about in such a whirling strife,  
That we appear to wander, like the straw  
Upon the flood, without the charge of law.  
But this we know, appearances deceive,  
So that, without offence, we may believe  
That all that's human moves in rhythmic dance,  
Too mazed for mortal ken, too tuned for chance.

[*Fairy takes ring, and exit. KING rises  
and comes forward.*]

Well, now, we can our lives arrange  
Without the fear of magic change :  
Sweet Princess, can you look with grace  
On one who feels the magic of your face?

*Z.* You said that at your time of life  
You did not see the fun of strife.  
Don't, therefore, seek another wife.

*B.* Prince Zeyn, when your advice I ask,  
You then may seize the pleasing task  
Of teaching how to suck her eggs  
Your grandmother. King Beder begs  
This fair Princess grant him one word.

*N.* No, no, great king, that's too absurd ;  
You well may act the heavy father,  
But, as a lover, I had rather  
Have something less in bulk and age.

*F.* Now don't be getting in a rage,  
We all agree you must not wed.

*B.* Think you I will by you be led?

*F.* Of course I do, it's always so,  
You bluster first, then knuckle low.

*B.* Well, this is really most unkind,  
I thought you with Prince Zeyn to bind;  
To quit you then of Nourmahal,  
I meant to take her, cheek and all.

*F.* No, father, that plan will not do,  
Prince Zeyn, I am sure, requires two  
Wives at the least. For don't you think  
That this is like a case of drink,  
You must not cut down to one glass,  
And Zeyn would pine with one fair lass?

*B.* Oh, as to that, remember size  
Will make one only glass suffice;  
Are not your charms on such a scale  
That in this case will quite avail?

*F.* I wish, Papa, you would talk sense;  
Prince Zeyn, don't keep us in suspense.

*Z.* Fair ladies both, now that I'm free,  
My heart I'm sure would like a spree;  
But princes must example set,  
Be tied in marriage, free from debt;  
So then I think I can't do better,  
Than learn to run in double fetter.  
Of course, king, with this full-blown flower  
I quite expect a thumping dower.

*B.* Oh, do you!

*Z.* Yes, my lands restored  
Is what I'm sure you can afford;  
And as my subjects are all dead,  
From you I'll borrow ten-score head.

*B.* Coolness, thy name is son-in-law.  
Think you that now I will withdraw  
From lands that are so very rich,  
And split from mine but by a ditch?

*F.* Father, Prince Zeyn is in the right,  
That property will suit us quite ;  
But you must build a new chateau,  
And furnish it from Grant & Co.  
We must not be co-operated,  
Nor must our spoons and forks be plated.  
I think, Prince, I shall meet your wishes  
By making Pa get silver dishes.

*Z.* Yes, dearest, and might I suggest,  
Some ready money to invest?  
Fathers-in-law so swear, with sorrow,  
When sons-in-law begin to borrow.

*F.* I'll see that all is settled nicely,  
And care that it is done precisely ;  
But fathers should not have the power  
Of cutting off a daughter's dower.

*B.* Well, I'll agree to ought in reason,  
But recollect that at this season  
Money is tight ; so if a bill——

*F.* No, we must have it from the till.

*Z.* But surely Beder wouldn't protest.

*F.* Don't interfere, I know him best.

*N. to Z.* You seem to me to quite ignore me.

*Z. to N.* At such a moment, pray don't bore me.

*B. to N.* You see, now, you have made a blunder,  
Youth turns from beauty after plunder ;  
Now we of riper years have got  
The plunder that the fates allot :

So time and trouble we don't mind  
In tempting ladies to be kind.

*N.* Well, Beder, what you say is wise,  
And your remarks uncloset my eyes;  
I see Prince Zeyn is very green,  
Whilst at your side I shall be Queen;  
Princesses now are nowhere rare,  
Whilst at a Queen all people stare;  
And to be looked at is so very nice,  
It must be the great joy of Paradise.

*B.* Well, now, I do feel vastly glad,  
This world I'm sure is not so bad  
As Imans preach. A pair of eyes  
Will make us think of heavenly skies;  
And from sweet lips to take love's seal,  
Will make the veriest sinner kneel.

*F. to Z.* In this new plan there may be danger.

*Z. to F.* If followed by a little stranger.

*B.* Well, child, to make you quite at ease,  
You shall not wait for my decease;  
I will at once give to Prince Zeyn  
A realm where you and he may reign.

*F.* [*throwing herself into her father's arms*] Oh,  
now you are my own dear father.

*N.* A daughter's love's expensive! rather.

*B.* To seal these happy bonds, first to the priest,  
And then we'll start our new lives with a feast.

*N.* But, king, I'm still Prince Zeyn's fair wife.

*B.* Oh, I forgot, upon my life.

Vizier, run to my office table,  
And write as fast as you are able  
A new divorce bill. Make it supple,

---

And take good care a married couple  
Shall have no trouble to get free,  
Though make them pay a heavy fee.

*N.* This will take time.

*B.* Oh no, not it.  
Vizier, unless you have it writ,  
And ready quite for me to sign  
Before we can get to the shrine,  
You will pay for it with your head.  
So, dearest, no more need be said.

[*BEDER gives his hand to NOURMAHAL.*





## THE INDISCREET PRINCESSES.

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### PERSONS REPRESENTED.

KING.		HINDA.
ALI BABER.		LEILA.
IMAN.		MAID.

### ACT I.

*Room in Palace. HINDA reading. LEILA working.*

*H.* [*closing her book and throwing it down*] "And they lived happy ever after."

That joke is much too stale for laughter;  
Existence, to be always happy,  
Must have consistence rather pappy;  
Joan must yield to Darby's freaks,  
Soft he give ear to all she speaks.

*L.* Our happiness must be before,  
For, though our years are near a score,  
No suitor will the king permit us,  
At which dear friends begin to twit us.

*H.* Do they? oh, that I cannot stand,  
I must be married quite off-hand!

*L.* I think that's easier said than done.

*II.* Surely I am not, like a nun,

Forbid e'en sight of manly smalls.

*L.* Have you not noticed, to our halls  
No prince is by our father brought?

*H.* Well, no, of that I have not thought;  
My studies show that fathers try  
To force the market with a daughter,  
And generally are not shy  
In seeking followers to court her.

*L.* Yes, that's the rule when dearest daughter  
Bleeds a dear father to support her;  
But then I think that alters, rather,  
When daughter bleeds to keep her father.

*H.* What do you mean? Papa's so kind.

*L.* Of course he is; you must be blind;  
Whilst we are kept in single state,  
Papa can live in style first-rate;  
But when our dow'r he has to give,  
He won't have much on which to live.

*H.* Why cannot he raise one more tax.

*L.* His subjects now are empty sacks:  
Except, I think, the air they breathe,  
There's naught on earth, above, beneath,  
The King has not got in his budget.

*H.* If I were he, I should just fudge it,  
And show a balance unexpended.

*L.* That little game is now quite ended;  
Kings are not what they used to be,  
With subjects they can't make so free,  
As when they reign'd by right divine,  
And proved by texts that naught was thine,  
But all for them was held in trust.

*H.* No wonder kings now show disgust;



What is the use of being king,  
If you in all can't have your fling?

*L.* All have to bear the nuisance of their birth :  
P'rhaps that of kings is not the worst on earth.  
Our fate gives father with not credit high,  
So we in single blessedness must die.

*H.* My reading shows that daughters often marry,  
And think no more of bills than of old Harry!

*L.* That would, no doubt, be one solution  
Of our distressing persecution.  
But do you know of any covers,  
Where we could wing a pair of lovers?

*H.* My books make lovers very shy ;  
You must use mask, or off they fly.  
At feeding-time they oft will stand,  
When crops are full, their hearts expand ;  
And they will let you then come round them,  
And throw your net and so impound them.

*L.* Your novels, no doubt, paint the way  
Of with a lover making play ;  
But do they show you how to start  
Without supplies upon the mart?  
There must be fish before you hook it ;  
There must be hare before you cook it.

*H.* Oh no, they always take for granted,  
Young men are offering when wanted ;  
So that I think our present state,  
By no one is prognosticate.

*L.* Oh, if some princes did but know  
That here two maidens feel so slow ;  
That they to change their state are ready,  
Provided the young men are steady.

*H.* What is the use of all this dreaming?  
You always are so good at scheming ;  
Do think of something !

*L.* I have got it !  
Oh no, alas ! I cannot spot it ;  
Such wholesale business getting two,  
If one small lover would but do.

*H.* Well, I can't even think of one.

*L.* I have it now, it will be fun—  
I fear the quarry is small game ;  
That can't be help'd—but, what's his name ?  
You know him well—my tongue's the verge on ;  
Don't look a goose—the Barber-Surgeon.

*H.* What ! Ali Baber ! Well, I never !  
I always thought you very clever ;  
I never should have thought of him,  
Though now I think he's nice and slim ;  
But still I fear this won't be quite correct,  
And, if not proper, we should be select.

*L.* Why, Hinda, you forget your reading,  
Heroes oft show great want of breeding ;  
Though they at last turn out of rank,  
Bad manner oft is chic when frank.

*H.* Yes, that is true, a barber-surgeon  
May prove to be roy'l fish, like sturgeon.

*L.* Of course he may ; but here's the hitch,  
Though both of us may him bewitch,  
He must make choice of only one !  
Well, p'rhaps, that will add to the fun.

*H.* But how are we to get the chance  
To make our hand-in-hand advance ?

*L.* Oh, that's your business ; you must make  
Occasion for his love to wake.  
But see, our father comes this way,  
Let's try once more, for p'rhaps he may  
Yet open to the light of reason,  
And get us married both this season.

*Enter KING.*

*K.* Oh, Leila, you are looking sweet ;  
And your dress, Hinda, just complete,  
It suits your clear and bright complexion,  
Its choice shows mind of deep reflection.

*H.* Well, p'rhaps I have some taste in dress.

*K.* You are, my dear, a great success.

*L.* But mine, I think, is rather nice,  
I know I did not spare in price.

*K.* It's lovely ; and you were quite right,  
It never pays to look a fright ;  
You know that I have always tried  
That you in naught should be denied.

*H.* Oh yes, Papa, you're always kind,  
And all our wishes are divined.

*L.* Hinda, in that you go too far !  
We think a ride in nuptial car  
Is wanted to complete our bliss,  
One may, you know, be too long Miss ;  
We wish, before we end our days,  
To sit behind a pair of greys.

*H.* We think it's time to settle down,  
With box in park and house in town.

*K.* Oh, daughters, you do tear my heart in twain,  
Some drops I think my manly cheek will stain ;

Sharper than serpent's tooth, to draw it mild,  
It always is to have a thankless child.  
Say, have you e'er in modes and robes been stinted,  
Or ever had to put on dress that's printed?  
Have you been asked to have a robe re-dipped  
Or turned, and told it will look new when clipped?  
I really wonder either has the face  
To grumble, after what you spend in lace;  
And that last bill! I can't say I have paid it,  
But I don't clearly see how to evade it.  
A father's heart, no doubt, expands *ad lib.*;  
But fathers' pockets—I don't tell a fib—  
Have limits!

L. Have we not been left a dowry?

K. Who ever said you had! oh, not a cowrie.  
Your mother was a very prudent wife,  
And knew child's independence leads to strife;  
So she from me would never take all power,  
By leaving to her daughters any dower.

L. Oh, but I heard that it was her dear father.

K. Fathers are humbugs! No, I mean they  
rather

Give too much thought to their dear children's ease,  
And never think enough themselves to please.

H. I'm sure, dear father, it can't be great task  
To get us husbands, and that's all we ask;  
As, though we don't profess to have much passion,  
We feel it only right to be in fashion.

K. You really don't know what you seek;  
Husbands are either strong or weak.  
If strong, you have to bear a deal of cuffing;  
If weak, they bore your life with constant huffing.

*H.* But, father dear, our mother was a wife!

*K.* Ah, yes; but then I led her such a life—  
Of happiness, and all that sort of thing.  
But now I must away; my subjects bring  
Before my court the most important matter,  
And punctuality in kings is said to flatter.  
We'll speak again upon this knotty point,  
And take our time in making nuptial joint.

[*Exit KING.*]

*L.* It's always thus, each now must help herself,  
Or we shall both be laid upon the shelf.

*H.* Well, if we fail, we must return to dress,  
Or life will be a blank or something less.

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A C T II.

*Room in Palace. KING walking up and down.*

*K.* Ah, life, you are so full of trouble,  
And children I'm sure more than double  
The cares that must fall to man's lot,  
Yet still men haste to tie the knot.  
Men must be daft to vow to be supporters  
Of unknown quantities of sons and daughters!  
For which was it of all my sins  
That nature sent me female twins?  
It must have been of awful size,  
It could not be for needful lies,  
As nature rarely makes a fuss  
Unless your lies are overplus;  
And I have always shown discretion,  
By stopping when I've made impression.

But what, I think, most stirr'd my gall,  
And was unkindest cut of all,  
Was that, whilst I, with humblest mien,  
Scarce breathed the cause of all my spleen,  
My wife quite waded her twins about,  
And not one moment had misdoubt  
But that she had done something clever,  
And could go on at twins for ever.  
I see my prospect is not bright,  
Old maids are often such a sight,  
That I, who have a heart that feels,  
Quite fear their looks will spoil my meals.  
And yet my daughters must not wed,  
In debt I'm over heels and head ;  
So if it were not for their dowry  
My Jewish friends would make avowry.  
To square your interest with your duty  
Is sweet, and has much moral beauty ;  
But when you must make choice of one,  
Int'rest, of course, must have its turn.

[*Enter HINDA, with her arm in a sling.*

Hinda !

What is the matter with your arm ?

*H.* There is not cause for much alarm ;  
You see, papa, I cannot move it,  
I'll take the sling off, that will prove it.

*K.* Ah, but I saw it fall a bit,  
Not very much, I must admit.

*H.* That was an optical delusion.  
You know that there is oft confusion  
In knowing really what's in motion ;  
And, in this case, I have a notion



It was your head that moved about,  
You know you're shaky since your gout.

*K.* P'rhaps so, my years begin to tell,  
Though still I feel both strong and well;  
But long devotion to God Bacchus  
Oft give the nerves the pow'r to rack us;  
And I must own a great devotion  
To Bacchus whilst he leaves me motion.  
But tell me, when was it you found  
You could not swing your arm around?

*H.* My temper is a trifle strong,  
To-day my maid did something wrong;  
I thought a box upon the ear  
Would make her duties much more clear.  
How oft we find our highest aim  
By fate is brought to instant shame.

*K.* What! did your maid, in self-defence,  
Produce this awkward consequence?

*H.* Oh no; my blow was never dealt,  
My arm was not above my belt  
When it got fixed, just as you see.

*K.* This is a strange calamity.  
But hither come, and let me see,  
Your arm may bend in some degree.

*H.* Oh, please don't try.

*K.* Oh, this is silly.

*H.* The thought of touch makes me quite chilly.

*K.* If you are ever to be cured,  
Somebody's touch must be endured.

*H.* Yes, father, but let's get advice;  
I think a surgeon, in a trice,



Could make my arm as good as new,  
And then my maid shall get her due.

*K.* Yes, after all, I think you're right ;  
What's grave to us, to them is slight.

*H.* Don't you think Ali Baber clever ?

*K.* Well, if it were an arm to sever,  
He might do well.

*H.* Oh, I am sure  
This is a case that he can cure ;  
I've heard of many just such cases  
That he has cured in various places.

*K.* Well, I will think on all these points,  
We must get one who's great in joints.

*H.* Baber has studied joints in Paris.

*K.* Pooh ! pooh ! tell that to Mrs. Harris.  
Leave me, be sure I'll do my best.

[*Exit* HINDA.]

Of course I shall, this is no jest ;  
For, if aught happens to my girls,  
My credit to the dogs it hurls.  
It is a bore to be a father ;  
I almost think that I had rather  
Had mother's part. Yet they have rubs,  
For mothers must get bored by cubs,  
Who all day long keep yelling "Ma"—  
Cubs have their doubts disturbing Pa.  
Still, what a time man has to pass  
When there is born a boy or lass.  
With sickly smile he then appears  
To hide disgust too deep for tears ;  
Then all his females take such airs,  
He scarce gets dinner on the stairs ;

And, if he does, they think him heartless,  
And make him take his dinner tartless.  
But what is p'rhaps the greatest blow,  
Is, as they pass him to and fro,  
They cast a glance which quite implies  
He can't do this howe'er he tries.  
When, as in my case, there are twins,  
It makes you sick to see the grins  
That pucker up each female face—  
Born twins are always out of place.

*Enter Maid.*

*M.* Oh, sire, I am in such alarm.

*K.* Good heavens! not another arm!

*M.* I don't know, sire, what you can mean,  
But Princess Leila can't be seen;  
For in the night she's grown a beard,  
That ne'er the like's been seen or heard.

*K.* Good gracious! what is to be done?  
Misfortunes never come alone.  
How do you think this came about?  
Beards do not thus so quickly sprout.

*M.* I think it must be evil fairy  
Who's been and made my mistress hairy.

*K.* Nonsense! but see, she's coming here,  
And we shall learn the worst there is to fear.

*Enter LEILA with beard.*

*L.* Oh, father, I have been most rash,  
And of my life have made a hash.  
You know my scientific taste:  
I lately bought some Osman's paste,

That's said to make your hair to grow  
Where'er you like from top to toe.  
This seemed to me quite necromantic,  
Or humbug of a size gigantic.  
I therefore thought, in merriment,  
That I would try experiment;  
So I last night upon my chin  
Rubb'd all the nasty stuff well in.

*K.* Well, really, for its time of life,  
Your beard seems wonderfully stiff.

*L.* Don't touch it, pray, it is so tender,  
All things have nerves of female gender.

*M.* Oh, my poor mistress, not the pertest grin  
Will gain you now a chuck under the chin.

*L.* Oh, that I very well can spare,  
But what to do with all this hair?

*K.* Well, Leila, you must take to shaving,  
And of your lather not be saving;  
And Pears's soap, from what I gather,  
Is said to make the strongest lather.  
Then, as to razors, keep them sharp,  
And don't at prices too much carp;  
For they should be of hardest steel,  
And temper'd to the right anneal.  
With these I think you fate may brave,  
And learn the pleasure of an easy shave.

*L.* Oh, talk not thus, it's too distressing,  
Think of the waste of time in dressing;  
Of being asked by pert young Azor,  
When did you blunt your gov'nor's razor?  
Do find some way, my father dear,  
By which I can of this get clear.

*K.* Well, child, I have a sort of notion  
That I've seen advertised a lotion,  
That does remove all hairs not wanted,  
Or was it that they were transplanted,  
So that a man could from his chin  
Take hairs to fill up places thin?

*L.* P'rhaps Ali Baber may have heard  
Of this new treatment of a beard.  
Would it be well to send for him?  
At all events he might mine trim.

*K.* Yes, he shall see what he can do,  
Though this I fear to him is new.  
He must come here to see your sister,  
Whose arm he may p'rhaps have to blister.

*L.* Has sister Hinda sprained her wrist,  
Or giv'n her arm an ugly twist?

*K.* Well, no, it's something just as vexing,  
And, I should fancy, more perplexing—  
But here she comes.

*Enter HINDA.*

*H.* Who have we here?

*L.* What, Hinda, don't you know me, dear?

*H.* Leila! what means this masquerade,  
Why make yourself a hairy maid?

*L.* Alas! this is not done in frolic,  
I fear it's something diabolic;  
The hair, you see, grew in a night,  
Does it not make me look a fright?

*H.* You know, dear, even at your best,  
So much depends on how you're drest.

Now, e'en full dress'd, your friends will think  
That they have found the missing link.

*L.* Better to be the missing link,  
Than have no brains with which to think.  
And you, you are not such a lily  
As makes amends for being silly.

*K.* [*lifting up his finger*] My dears, "Birds in  
their little nest  
Don't fight, but only make protest."  
How soothing oft are lines of noble bard,  
Though to remember they are plaguy hard.  
But now we must consider what to do :  
I think, on passing all things in review,  
Command to Ali Baber shall be sent,  
That here, at once, he must himself present ;  
Then, as we can't expect he can cure both,  
I shall before you all take mighty oath,  
That her he fails to cure he shall directly wed,  
And if he can cure neither, lose his stupid head.  
That we may be prepared to act in either case,  
An Iman shall attend to give the nuptial grace.

*L.* [*aside*] Well, I will make young Baber see  
That Hinda he must cure, not me.

*H.* [*aside*] To Baber I'll send word that he  
Must Linda cure, and marry me.

*K.* Go to your rooms, but when I send,  
Be quite prepared here to attend.

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ACT III.

*Room in the Palace. ALI BABER alone.*

*A. B.* This being sent for in such hurry  
Has put me quite into a flurry ;

And then these notes from the princesses  
Are open to the vaguest guesses.  
Why am I wanted here so quickly?  
Neither of them at all is sickly ;  
Though women, to my cost I know,  
Miscalculate all sickness so,  
That oft at night a lovely snooze  
Is spoilt by "don't a moment lose."  
Well, as I've time, I will again  
See if these notes hold ought that's plain.

[*Reads. From PRINCESS LEILA.*

"My sister's arm is all a plant—  
Don't mind her when she says she can't  
Give motion to it. One good haul  
Will cure her, though no doubt she'll squall ;  
But if you first try me to cure,  
I'll murder you, of that be sure."  
There's something in that note precise,  
Though I can't say I think it nice.

[*Reads. From PRINCESS HINDA.*

"Baber, if you would see more days,  
Would like a wife with pretty ways ;  
One who from books has learned to love,  
And, though your station much above,  
Will for your sake make sudden drop,  
Provided you will shut up shop—  
Then mind, before you look at me,  
You make my sister Leila free  
Of all the hair about her chin—  
Don't mind if you pull off some skin.  
I'm sure it's only some poor trick ;  
I hate deceit, it makes me sick."



Well, putting two and two together,  
I think it will take art to weather  
The storm that's brewing o'er my head.  
One writes as wishing me to wed :  
That's awkward, for I am not daring ;  
And I have always heard that pairing  
Is quite a vicious time with game,  
And with all mammals much the same.

*Enter KING and IMAN.*

*K.* I'm glad to find you've made such proper  
haste,  
And this attention has not been misplaced ;  
For kings are worried by procrastination,  
And subjects thus are saved decapitation.

*A. B.* You know, dread sire, commanding is  
your part,  
Whilst ours, to keep our heads by being smart ;  
Though, no doubt, subjects' necks have been  
made jointed,  
To save all trouble to the Lord's anointed.

*K.* That is a quite new point of view,  
And seems as scientific as 'tis true.  
But now we must no more delay,  
We must to business straight away.  
Have you the puissance, by your art,  
To cure by hearing of the part  
That is affected by disease ;  
Or have you to all over squeeze  
Your patient, ere you can make out  
What her diseases are about?



*A. B.* A diagnosis made with zeal,  
Takes punching from the head to heel;  
For we have lately quite made out  
That all diseases gad about.  
Thus patient says, "Oh, my right eye;"  
We say, "That's nerves in your left thigh."

*K.* Well, then, your patients you shall see,  
And to their ailments find the key.  
Good Iman, please tell the Princesses  
To come at once—not mind their dresses.

[*Exit* IMAN.]

*A. B.* But, sire, you know we quite allow  
We can't cure all disease e'en now.

*K.* Oh, Ali Baber, that won't do,  
I'm well read up in each review.  
There, ev'ry month, I see internal ills  
Fly after use of Jones's patent pills;  
Nor can external sore, like nasty boil,  
Stand e'en one rub of pure electric oil.

*A. B.* No one would care that heaven should  
be achieved,  
If all advertisements could be believed.

[*Enter* LEILA, HINDA, and IMAN.]

*K.* Our Barber-Surgeon, at our urgent need,  
Has come to see you both with all due speed;  
Before, howe'er, we have each case attack'd,  
We first will tell him how we mean to act.  
E'en we do not expect that mortal man  
Can do for us much better than he can,  
We therefore think that we take moderate measure,  
When we inform him it's our royal pleasure

That he at once must cure at least one daughter,  
Or else be led away to instant slaughter.  
Don't speak! We do not say you must cure both,  
For we to take strong measures are most loth.  
One other point we may as well p'rhaps mention:  
He weds the one not cured—that's our intention.

*A. B.* [*aside*] Ah, now these letters I can quite  
explain,

Baber, you rogue, you are a killing swain;  
For your sweet sake two princesses to pine,  
Shows that to woo the sex must be your line.  
Stay! I remember, if the one I wed,  
The other gets me knock'd upon the head.  
This shows I have a ticklish card to play:  
If hearts are trumps, I may p'rhaps win the day;  
But if it's clubs! the thought quite makes me sick,  
From childhood's hour I never liked the stick.

[*Aloud*] Sire, such resolve commends your heart  
and head,

And, though I soon must wed or else be bled,  
E'en with such awful fates before my face,  
I humbly pray that Allah bless your grace.

*K.* Well, Ali Baber, do not waste our time.

*A. B.* To do so, sire, would be the greatest  
crime.

May I proceed to make examination?

*K.* Oh yes, I think there must be inflammation.

[*A. B. goes up to HINDA.*

*A. B.* Fair lady, let me feel your pulse?

*H.* A touch this arm will quite convulse.

*A. B.* But I will use the other wrist.

*H.* Take care you do not give a twist.

[*A. B. feels pulse.*

*A. B.* This pulse shows that your blood is flowing.

Don't fear, we doctors are so knowing,  
That e'en if blood goes eighty miles an hour,  
To make it walk is quite within our power.  
[*Touching her forehead*] You feel oppression in  
the head?

*H.* Oh no.

*A. B.* Exactly what I said.

But you feel some distaste for food?

*H.* Oh, not a bit, if it is good.

*A. B.* That's what your little pulse is telling!  
But p'rhaps you've lost the sense of smelling?

*H.* Well, really, that I cannot say.

*A. B.* Just as I thought. But tell me, pray,  
How feel you as to temp'rature?

*H.* I feel quite cool, of that I'm sure.

*A. B.* I knew you did! One other question.  
I'm sure you suffer indigestion?

*H.* Oh no, I don't.

*A. B.* Well, then, you should,  
Your case without it is no good;  
If symptoms won't act on the square,  
How can we settle where we are?

*H.* Go cure my sister; you had better  
Remember what I said by letter.

*A. B.* This case seems quite beyond my pow'r.

*H.* Dear Ali, I've a pretty dow'r.

*A. B.* Her sister's case may I review?

*K.* I hope to hers you'll find some clue.

[*A. B. goes up to LEILA, who turns  
her back to him.*]

*A. B.* Abnormal hirsuteness I see,  
Combined with bashful modesty.  
Fair lady, let me see your chin?

*L.* One touch, and I will thrust this pin  
From point to head in tenderest part.

*A. B.* I must have facts from which to start.

*L.* To touch a Moslem's beard is an affront,  
And if you can't cure me without it, don't!

*A. B.* This juncture now is quite alarming,  
How to cure one, however charming,  
Without e'en slight examination,  
Is quite beyond all calculation.

*K.* Well, Baber, do you give it up?

*A. B.* With angels I don't wish to sup.

*K.* Well, then, you must at once look sharp,  
As I for dinner have some carp;  
And, you'll admit, you'd better die,  
Than that my fish should over-fry.

*A. B.* I really cannot see it thus.

*K.* Dare you with me a point discuss?

*A. B.* On sudden thought, I've found the clue  
That points to what these ills are due.

*K.* The fear of death, I have been told,  
Will oft dilemma quick unfold.

*A. B.* Dread sire, are not your daughters twin?

*K.* Why with my keenest grief begin?

*A. B.* Know that when each frail child sees light,  
Two fluids do its blood excite;  
Electric is their origin proclaimed,  
One Positive, one Negative, is named.  
In normal child these have an equal start,  
And pulling adverse ways no ills impart;

But, in the case of twins, we do discover,  
 Each child has more of one than of the other ;  
 So that they both are always cross and cranky,  
 And often also feeble, pale, and lanky.  
 Your daughters clearly show this want of poise,  
 That I have just explain'd all health destroys.  
 This Princess is too Negative I see,  
 That always keeps the joints from working free.  
 This hair is what we call Electric brush,  
 It's Positive, and goes off with a rush.

*K.* But all this, Ali Baber, is mere talk,  
 And you must cure at once, or off you walk.

*A. B.* When once we know the cause of a  
 disease,

We always make a cure with perfect ease.  
 Here the two fluids I must make unite,  
 And then your daughters fair will be all right.  
 See, with this wire I join the arm to beard—  
 Fair ladies both, you need not be afraid ;  
 Now, if you please, just hold these ends of wire,  
 Whilst I, for just one moment, do retire.

[*Exit A. B.*

*K.* Iman, go see he does not try to fly.

*I.* I'll watch him well, you may on me rely.

[*Exit IMAN.*

*L.* If both are cured, we have not gained our  
 point.

*H.* What's, then, the use of having a bad joint?

[*A. B. sends an electric shock. LEILA and  
 HINDA both scream, and rush apart.  
 LEILA'S beard comes off, and HINDA  
 works her arm about frantically.*

*Enter A. B. and IMAN.*

*A. B.* Great king, I think this is a perfect cure,  
And one we may expect will long endure.

*K.* Yes, Ali Baber, you have cured the pair,  
And this, I think, must end the whole affair.  
You were to marry the princess not mended;  
But, as they both are cured, the matter's ended.  
After this trying work I will retire,  
Those carp, by this time, must be on the fire.

[*Exit KING.*

*L.* Well, Hinda, when shall we be wed?

*H.* This scheme of ours has lost its head.

*L.* But shall we not have one more try?

*H.* If you some other plan can spy.

*L.* Just now we had to fight for one,  
With two I think we might have won.

*H.* What mean you?

*L.* Don't you see this pair?  
Our Iman suits me to a hair;  
And Ali Baber's to your taste,  
So don't let us a moment waste.

*H.* Oh, Leila, what a bright idea,  
Both to be wed within the year!

*L.* Sirs, we have something to suggest  
That is of deepest interest.  
So will you kindly, when we've supp'd,  
As here some one might interrupt,  
Come over to our private hall.

*I.* Madam, your looks so me enthrall,  
That I shall ev'ry minute tell  
Till I have heard the evening bell.



*H.* And, Ali Baber, you wont fail?

*A. B.* Madam, of that you may be bail.

*L.* Well, then, adieu till lamps are lit,  
We then shall need your sharpest wit.

[*Exit LEILA and HINDA.*

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A C T I V.

PRINCESSES' *Apartment.* LEILA *and* HINDA.

*L.* Heigho!

I wonder is it worth this bother.

*H.* Oh, if we only had a mother,  
We then could rest in perfect ease;  
For nature's instinct makes her seize  
All wealthy partis on the mart,  
To feed her female offspring's heart,  
And to reject, with equal vigour,  
All those who have too small a figure.

*L.* But, even so, is it worth while?

*H.* Why, Leila, you quite make me smile;  
Have you review'd the single state,  
When age is of uncertain date;  
How old maids must give way to others,  
Or else be thought most awful bothers?

*L.* Well, then, we will at once begin;  
I hear our friends, so let them in.

*Enter IMAN and ALI BABER.*

*I.* I trust we have not made you wait.

*L.* We are just ready to debate  
The point on which we wish your aid.

*I.* You ask, and are at once obey'd.



*L.* Well, I'm not quite so sure of that ;  
Upon the fire will be the fat,  
When our dear father is aware  
Of what you two with us must share.

*A. B.* Oh don't, pray, cause your father anger,  
I never feel at home in danger ;  
And kings take measures, oh, so quickly,  
You're dead before you've e'en been sickly.

*H.* Why, Ali Baber, where's your daring ?

*A. B.* Mine all evaporates in swearing.

*H.* But instinct leads men to attack.

*A. B.* My instinct makes me turn my back,  
Though more in sorrow than in anger,  
It grieves me so to look on danger.

*L.* Well, p'rhaps, there mayn't be much to fear,  
But I will now my scheme make clear.  
It is the fate of all Princesses,  
That they must first pay their addresses  
To their young men—this is not nice ;  
But, then, young men can't break the ice ;  
For all would say—not beauty's power,  
But sweeter charms of thumping dower,  
Had led the youth to make his tender.

*I.* Can youth 'gainst love be such offender ?

*L.* Oh, youth is often not so green,  
As age opposed to beauty's sheen.

*I.* True, age, though said to be so chilly,  
In beauty's rays gets warm and silly.

*L.* Well, but to business ; time is short,  
And we now progress should report ;  
Hinda and I, with glance of love,  
Have view'd you both. Do you approve ?

*I.* Oh yes, of course ; but tell me, which  
Have I the honour to bewitch ?

*L.* That's mere detail ; but, if you care,  
Know that I, Leila, am your share.

*I.* Oh, by your side I could defy man,  
And be for aye your own true Iman.  
But how get sanction from your father ?

*L.* Well, that's a difficulty, rather.

*A. B.* Oh, don't let us make too much hurry ;  
The king our hides at once will curry,  
Unless we can him circumvent,  
And act as if with his consent.

*L.* Oh, his consent I mean to get,  
Or else our dow'r we shall regret ;  
My plan is this :—you make a pill  
That is not strong enough to kill,  
But will make patient very ill ;  
I give it father ; he, I know,  
Will think his time's up here below.  
Then you and Iman he will call,  
You two must then keep up the ball.

*I.* I see the part I have to play ;  
Your will, dread sire, won't bear delay ;  
And to depart at peace with church,  
You can't leave children in the lurch.

*L.* Exactly so ; and [*to A. B.*] you thus speak :  
Your pulse, dread sire, is now so weak,  
The slightest sneeze I'm sure will stop it,  
Then off the twig of life you'll hop it.

*A. B.* Oh no ; I cannot take such part,  
I'm sure I should feel faint of heart ;

And likely more to come to grief  
Than any pill-tormented chief.

*H.* Oh, nonsense, for so great a prize,  
You must for once your fear disguise.

*A. B.* Veneer my fear! oh, I can't do it,  
Courage won't stick, and one can't glue it!

*I.* Come, Ali Baber, hear now reason,  
This to the king has naught of treason;  
Your pill is but the harmless preparation,  
To fit his body for intimidation.

*A. B.* Harmless!  
You never know what pill may do;  
Sometimes it fools about, it's true,  
But then, at others, off it goes,  
And where it'll stop no doctor knows.

*L.* The scheme depends upon your pill,  
And we shall take it very ill,  
If it breaks down because you fear  
A little near the wind to steer.

*A. B.* Oh, madam, if an easy shave  
Would do, I could quite well behave;  
But doctors fear all doctor's stuff,  
So oft the spark of life they snuff.

*L.* What can we do? [*Enter Maid.*

*M.* Madam, one word;  
The king is coming.

*L.* That's absurd!  
The king he always goes on drinking,  
Till he can't even think he's thinking,  
And then his steps he can't control.

*M.* Madam, he comes, upon my soul!

*A. B.* What shall we do? I told you so;  
My mother always said, you know,

Don't, Ali Baber, don't go courting,  
It is a risky kind of sporting;  
And she was right, that's sure enough,  
The course of true love's always rough.

*H.* Now, Ali Baber, be a man,  
Show a bold front—I'm sure you can.

*A. B.* I'm in your room, not you in mine,  
So what you say's all very fine;  
But if I'm found here by the king,  
For this intrusion I shall swing.

*L.* Well, something must at once be done.

*I.* I fear there scarce is time to run.

*M.* No, no, the King I know you'd meet,  
If now you try to beat retreat.

*I.* Could we from out this window jump?

*A. B.* Good gracious! no. I don't mind bump,  
But being spitted upon spikes  
Is more than tend'rest lover likes;  
Oh dear, oh dear, I won't again  
Be brought to act the loving swain;  
And if this time I cut evade,  
It is the closest shave I've made.

*L.* Both hide you here, don't make a sound,  
Then you I'm sure will not be found.

*Enter KING.*

*K.* Leila, no, Hinda—which is which—  
It's odd how all my floors do pitch,  
Remind me that I have to-morrow  
Them all refix'd—I want to borrow;  
No, that's not it; I know quite well,  
Exactly what I came to tell.

*L.* Dear father, will you not retire?

*K.* Retire! no, no—reply by wire;  
I've order'd more of forty-four,  
I keep it only for the poor;  
I scarcely ever wet my lips,  
I think it wicked taking nips,  
Better to stick at it all day.

*H.* But, father, you came here to say——

*K.* I won't by child be contradicted;  
What if by twins I am afflicted,  
I've always borne it like a man,  
And if at times I drain the can,  
It is because my heart is broken  
By my late wife's affection's token.

*L.* But, father, won't you go to bed,  
And be by Ali Baber bled.

*K.* Yes, that is it; I felt quite sure  
That all things were not all obscure;  
Oh, he I must at once destroy.

*H.* Why, what has he done to annoy?

*K.* Humbugg'd his king!

*H.* Oh, that was joke!

*K.* No Baber that e'er liv'd shall poke  
His fun at me.

*H.* 'Twas in defence  
He made his joke at our expense.

*K.* That joke I say I cannot pass,  
I won't again be made an ass;  
No, he shall hang, like Haman, high,  
And, what is worse, shall do so dry.

*H.* But, father, sleep on Baber's case,  
This step you may wish to retrace.

*K.* Before to-morrow's evening bowl,  
 Baber shall swing from his own pole.

[*Exit KING. ALI BABER and IMAN  
 come forward.*]

*A. B.* What! hang his barber! I shall faint!

*L.* Oh yes, the king—though not a saint—  
 Has never broken yet his word,  
 E'en though by int'rest to it spurr'd.

*I.* So, Ali, if ought's on your mind,  
 Or you would message leave behind,  
 You know it is the church's care,  
 That all who die she should prepare;  
 So I will be with you to-morrow,  
 And try to soothe you in your sorrow.  
 I'm not, you know, an early bird,  
 But you shall see me, on my word.

*A. B.* Don't talk in that cold-blooded way,  
 Do think of something to delay  
 This hanging; can't you from the king,  
 By stratagem, my pardon wring?  
 Oh, what good is there in a church,  
 If thus it leaves one in the lurch?

*L.* Well, something you must do quite quickly.

*A. B.* Do think for me, I feel so sickly.

*I.* Why, then, not carry out our plan?  
 You make the pill, and then we can  
 Give it the first thing e'er he rise.

*A. B.* Well thought; a pill I will devise,  
 Would make e'en Cockle ope his eyes.  
 Ah! now I feel some hope. The pill's the thing  
 To work compassion's bowels within the king.



A C T V.

*Room in the Palace. LEILA alone.*

L. I fear in this we have done wrong,  
P'rhaps Baber's made the pill too strong ;  
And now the king may not recover :  
This is too much to pay for lover.  
He's selfish, but then that's of course,  
They all are so, if nothing worse.  
It's odd, whilst we are made so nice,  
All men by nature have a spice  
Of some brutality or other.  
Would it not, then, be well to smother ?  
No ! that wont do. Though, p'rhaps, in cage,  
We might their ingrain'd vice assuage.

[*Enter HINDA.*

Well, Hinda, what is your last news ?

H. Father all nutriment eschews,  
And I was told he feels quite chill'd,  
I fear he has been over-pill'd.

L. That's what I fear ; do let us send,  
That Ali Baber may attend ;  
Some antidote he may possess,  
May cause the king to suffer less.

H. To carry out our scheme intently,  
He must be antidoted gently ;  
For, were the king again at ease,  
Consent from him we ne'er shall squeeze.

L. That's true. Oh, see, here comes my maid.

*Enter Maid.*

M. Madam, the king comes here for aid.

L. Is he no better ?







*K.* No, that I can't. Who sent that brute?  
She made hers neat, but mine dilute.  
You'd better see your best friend quartered,  
Than right good liquor over-watered.

*L.* But, father, she shall not come near you,  
We will do ev'rything to cheer you.

*K.* But, Leila, I am in such pain,  
I think all nursing will be vain.

[*Enter ALI BABER and HINDA.*

*L.* Oh, don't say so, for here at last  
Is Ali Baber, and his skill  
Soon makes all illness in the past,  
Though in the future comes his bill.

*A. B.* This illness, when did it attack?

*K.* Oh, when I rise I take a snack,  
And then I think I something bolted  
At which my nature has revolted.

*A. B.* Ah yes, when patients eat too fast,  
They very often eat their last.  
Your tongue, please show me—far from clean—  
It shows a nature full of spleen;  
One that, for trifle light as air,  
Would hang a friend without a care.  
And now your pulse—ah! much too quick,  
I'm not surprised that you feel sick;  
I lately had a case like this,  
Poor fellow! he soon went to bliss.

*K.* Good gracious! that was very horrid.  
But had he not complexion florid?  
I've often heard that bright complexions  
Hold on to life by slight connections.

*A. B.* But his was of a dirty white,  
A sort of whitey-brown like yours ;  
And now I think—yes, I am right—  
Such cases are not often cures.

*K.* Unless at once you make me well,  
You shall enjoy my deepest cell ;  
And if I have to cross the Styx,  
I'll place you in the self-same fix.

*A. B.* The faculty's above compulsion.  
I will now order an emulsion ;  
And we shall you with brandy rub ;—  
But mind, you must not touch a drop,  
For even the very mildest shrub  
Would make your vital functions stop.

*K.* What! brandy, brandy everywhere,  
And not a drop to drink ;  
At such a price I do not care  
How soon in death I sink.

*L.* Dear father, would it not be right,  
If you it would not o'er excite,  
To ask our Iman——

*K.* What's up now ?  
Oh, do you think I might endow  
His mosque, or give him gold for alms?  
It is much cheaper singing psalms.

*H.* But, father, as you are so ill,  
Ought you not now to make a will?

*K.* But I don't really mean to die.

*A. B.* We never know our destiny,  
It's always best to be prepared ;  
And oft odd moments can be spared,  
So that such time we do not waste,  
When getting all our sins effaced.

*K.* Well, call our Iman. Oh! that twinge  
Would nerves of Saladin unhinge.

[*Exit LEILA for IMAN.*

*A. B.* Dread sire, your state alarms me much.

*K.* I cannot stand the faintest touch,  
I fear I'm worse than I was thinking.

*A. B.* Your dang'rous state it's no use blinking.

[*Enter LEILA and IMAN.*

*K.* Ah, Iman, I am very weak.

*I.* Then now's the time the church should speak.  
[*Aside*] For those that are at all robust,  
Chop logic, to our great disgust;  
Won't take for gospel all we say,  
And sometimes at our creed inveigh.  
A penitent may be too healthy,  
Though never can he be too wealthy.

*K.* Well, Iman, tell me what to do;  
It is not much I can go through.

*L. to A. B.* I hope you no mistake have made;  
I wish this trick we had not played.

*A. B.* Oh, never fear, I can with ease  
Cure him as soon as e'er I please.

*I.* Now, being at the grave's sad border,  
It's right you set your house in order.  
You, sire, will leave two daughters fair,  
Who, when you're gone, will know not where  
To find a safe and sure protection:  
This must for you be sad reflection.

*K.* My subjects soon would them upset—  
Of that I'd make a heavy bet;  
Ah, betting days are in the past,  
The odds are now I'm going fast.

*I.* Well, sire, I think the only plan  
Is that they marry, if they can ;  
For husbands on the whole act fairly,  
They stamp upon their wives but rarely,  
So we may leave that out of count.

*K.* Yes, but how can you this surmount ?  
Here are no husbands for my daughters,  
We cannot now become importers.

*H.* Dear father, here, in prime of life,  
Are two, and neither has a wife.  
As time with you now seems so brief,  
And we are all in midst of grief,  
We can assume all courting done,  
And marry ere the set of sun.

*K.* Of this I never should have thought.

*H.* Oh, when each day you think of nought  
But how you can get nicely settled,  
All combinations you do make,  
And one would really be quite nettled  
To miss a chance one ought to take.

*K.* I like sweet candour in one's child—  
Oh my, this pain will drive me wild !

*L.* I think, dear father, Hinda's right,  
It'll ease your mind to expedite  
This trifling matter, and leave time  
To sponge out some of all your crime.

*K.* That's very thoughtful, Leila dear ;  
It'll take a good large sponge, I fear.  
Let some one then a not'ry call.     [*Exit* IMAN.  
My hand will now but make a scrawl ;  
Still I will try and do my best,  
Before I sink to my last rest.



*L.* Oh, father, you will soon get well.

*A. B.* I think that I could soon dispel——

[*HINDA pulling A. B. by the sleeve.*]

*H.* Don't be a fool, he has not signed!

*A. B.* [*aside*] For marriage I'm not much inclined,  
So if Miss Hinda now I braved,  
My head and hand might both be saved.

*Enter IMAN with Notary, and they take paper to the  
KING to sign.*

*L. to H.* This time I think we do not fail.

*H. to L.* Why, at such times, do men turn pale?

*L.* Men's courage is much over-rated,  
They face a danger that is stated;  
But the unknown quite sinks their hearts,  
And wedded life has hidden starts.

*I.* Just here. [*Pointing to KING to sign.*]

*K.* Well, there, I've scrawled my name!

*I.* Now earth on you has no more claim.

*K.* I wish it had!

*A. B. to I.* Is it all right?

*I.* Yes, signed and sealed, and all quite tight.

*A. B.* Might I now give the King relief?

*I.* We can't get more from the old thief!

*A. B. to K.* Sire, as your symptoms are not  
chronic,

I've just bethought me of this tonic.

*K.* Well, give it me. A change with me  
Must better me, or set me free.

[*KING drinks tonic.*]

This is a most surprising cure,  
I ne'er felt better, I am sure.



But what was that I signed just now?

I had such pain across my brow,  
That what it was is not quite clear?

*L.* Our marriage contracts, father dear.

*K.* Well, then, it was not all a fancy.

*L.* Oh no, nor even necromancy.

*I.* As, Sire, you thought your end was near,  
You your last moments tried to cheer,  
By making settlement on us,  
Which p'rhaps we need not now discuss.

*K.* But don't you think it somewhat queer,  
To part with property to cheer?

*I.* In this case there was quite a set-off,  
For both your daughters now you get off.

*K.* That is most true, and nicely put,  
Though you in it have put your foot;  
That deed, no doubt, conveys to you  
All that to those dear girls is due.

*I.* Just so!

*K.* Well, then, you ought to know—  
I trust it will not be a blow—  
That we've been living on our daughters' credit;  
Their capital! Oh, long ago it fled it.  
I, by their mother, was made sole trustee,—  
'Twas odd, she knew that I was up a tree,—  
But wives, I think, of madness have a dash,  
For men they can't e'en trust with petty cash;  
They oft give pow'rs that ought to go to saints,  
And not to men who cannot bear restraints.

*I.* But surely there are left some bonds, some  
deeds!

*K.* It's sad to think that when the poor have needs,

The line gets faint that sep'rates right and wrong,  
It's pity all our natures aren't made strong.

*I.* Surely your daughters both are not bereft  
Of all; there must be still some money left;  
And we to get it will ourselves bestir.

*K.* My eyes have not seen cash for many a year,  
It's a sweet mem'ry of a far-off past;  
This paying ready money cannot last,  
It's against nature. Co-operative stores,  
The brighter spirits now admit, are bores.  
Why should we pay? the roof and crown of things,  
I know it's said that peace of mind it brings;  
But as by suff'ring moral natures grow,  
Some loss of peace of mind is right, you know.

*L.* But has our property all taken wing,  
And shall we to our husbands nothing bring?

*K.* Not so, my daughters; it is never nice  
To go with empty hand to husband's side;  
So, as I've nothing else, here's some advice,  
That's better than a fortune to a bride.

Well, as of course you are quite new beginners,  
My first note is—be careful of the dinners;  
For husbands will stand much on many points,  
But get quite fierce before all ill-cooked joints.  
Then, as of course you wish to get your way,  
Be circumspect; never say flatly, Nay;  
But after dinner, if it is but good,  
A little coax can rarely be withstood;  
Then you can turn him round your little finger,  
If you show tact, and do not too long linger;  
For husbands very easily are bored,  
And wives, who have at first been quite adored,

By keeping with their tongues a constant clack,  
Oft get upon their heads an awful crack.  
These words I trust, as wives, will stand you well.

*A. B.* Iman, I think this is a thorough sell.

*K.* We never sought for your most grand alliance.

*H. to A. B.* So that's the way you treat my fond  
reliance!

*A. B.* No, no, we'll make the best of a bad job;  
But still it's very hard—not e'en one bob.

*L. to I.* You feel, I'm sure, you have not drawn  
a blank,

What dow'r is wanting is made up by rank.

*I.* Madam, no doubt we've had an awful wrench,  
But Lady wives put Imans on the Bench!

*K.* Well, after all, there's some bright side to life,  
To wed one's twins and be without a wife  
Lightens the heart; and, though my pocket's light,  
And on my credit hangs an awful blight,  
Still, as we know, the sun shines on us all,  
So whilst there's life, why not keep up the ball?  
For happiness may shine upon the needy,  
If he dress well, and keep from looking seedy.  
But not to bore with any more remarks,  
Except one word to you who've got your sparks;  
Your schemes, dear daughters, have been great  
successes,  
And yet you are two Indiscreet Princesses.



BLUE BEARD;  
OR,  
ONE TOO MANY.

---

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

BLUE BEARD.		NINA'S MOTHER.
OTHMAN.		NINA.
SELIM.		SISTER ANN.
AMBASSADOR.		

ACT I.

BLUE BEARD *seated at supper; waited upon by*  
OTHMAN.

*B. B.* [*pushing away his plate*] It is no use;  
take it away;

The appetite will hold no sway  
When the heart's sick. Fill me a glass  
Of sparkling wine. Though that, alas!  
Whilst drowning care, re-animates the heart,  
And that's the region where I feel the smart.

*Oth.* To please, but not excite, and yet give tone,  
The virtuous, I have heard, use Zoedone.

*B. B.* Do they ! It's passing strange ; one often  
thinks

Virtue makes one acquainted with strange drinks.  
But hither come ; I have within my breast  
A sorrow keen that will not give me rest  
Till I have told it to a friendly ear.

*Oth.* You can command my sympathy sincere.

*B. B.* Say not command ; for sympathy should  
flow

Like streams in flood when they their banks out-  
grow ;

Should move by law of nature, not of man.

*Oth.* I'll do as much as any mortal can,  
And if I really do not sympathise,  
It shall not be for want of flowing eyes.

*B. B.* Somewhat too much of this. Hear now  
the cause

Why I with fork uplifted often pause ;  
Why from my table oft with groan I rise,  
And leave untasted soup, fish, meat, and pies.

*Oth.* Patience on monument, smiling at grief,  
Is not so affecting as shunning one's beef !

*B. B.* I see my suff'ring you quite well discern.  
But to proceed, for I would have you learn  
The cause of my complaint. My father's line  
Ends now with me, the last of all his nine ;  
I was the youngest, frailest of his brood,  
And looked to spend my days in doing good ;  
Yet now you see me ruling this domain,  
And all my brothers where they must remain ;  
Though I have thought, if I had eldest been,  
My brothers might, perhaps, more days have seen ;

But it is vain for us to try to scan  
 The ways of Providence, when helped by man.  
 What now affects me is, my house must end,  
 Unless I have a son—you comprehend?  
 And, therefore, that it is my bounden duty  
 Not to let die so much of manly beauty ;  
 But to leave copy certified by priest,  
 That all is quite canonical at least.

*Oth.* Sire, a resolve like yours is grandly brave,  
 To take such pains your likeness to engrave ;  
 I've seen the greatest hero turn quite pale,  
 As with slow steps he neared the fatal rail ;  
 Whilst the fair maid, with wreath-encircled brow,  
 Glanced at her friends, and looked—He can't shirk  
 now!

*B. B.* No one can say I've shirked the marriage tie,  
 Ten wives in twice four years gives that the lie ;  
 And yet no children call me dear Papa,  
 Or ask that awkward question—Where's Mamma ?

*Oth.* So many wives !

*B. B.* Ah yes, you cannot know  
 How rapid change of wives at last gets slow.

*Oth.* But why, my lord, as wiving's not your taste,  
 Have you of youthful brides made such a waste ?

*B. B.* I take it you have been amongst mankind,  
 And know thus far, that oft there is behind  
 The scenes of fam'ly life a something veiled,  
 That into closet very oft is nailed ;  
 A skeleton I've heard it called by some—  
 P'rhaps here the one the many should become.  
 Now I have heard that you can keep most true,  
 To him who pays you what you think your due ;



That you no trifle in your way let stand,  
When he who pays is he who does command.

*Oth.* To serve my lord I feel it only right  
To let what moral sense I have take flight.

*B. B.* [*embracing* Othman] Give me that man  
that is not moral's slave,  
Him will I on my heart of hearts engrave ;  
For he that for a friend at nothing sticks,  
Is in this shuffling world a brick of bricks.  
But now this mystery I will unfold,  
Why I, though young in years, in wives am old.  
My father, after years of wifely lying,  
Met his sad end by his dear Consort's prying :  
This made such firm impression on his head,  
That, though we made him snug in earthly bed,  
I'm sure he was not easy in his berth,  
For part of him at once came back to earth.

*Oth.* Fathers should know what to their sons is  
due—

Oh, if you had but used my patent screw.

*B. B.* You quite mistake ; let not this you afflict,  
The part returned could knock, but not evict ;  
For greater knocking came about my rooms,  
Than twenty housemaids, wielding twenty brooms.

*Oth.* What meant the noise ?

*B. B.* I had the raps translated,  
And thus they ran—"Whenever you are mated,  
Do not be bored by a dear wife's verbosity,  
But give her rope regarding curiosity."

*Oth.* Oh yes, I see how you now give the rope,  
For spirits use not metaphor nor trope.



*B. B.* I find you quick at reading puzzle,  
But mind your mouth you must quite muzzle.

*Oth.* Oh yes, my lord, my mouth I'll gag,  
Which please remember in the swag;  
But aren't you fearful of detection,  
Now there's sanitary inspection.

*B. B.* To stop each locomotive germ,  
I rub them well with best of sperm;  
And as I can't afford them spice,  
I really keep them very nice,  
By using freely Wenham's ice;  
For their temperature must be  
Below freezing, two or three  
Of the centigrade degree.

*Oth.* Oh what a debt to Nature we do owe,  
When, as Preserver, she herself doth show!  
But, though a prying wife is in the wrong,  
Is not your remedy a little strong?

*B. B.* My father's spirit would not stop his  
knocking,  
Till I had promised, with an oath quite shocking,  
To try each wife in manner he suggested,  
And if she failed, to make her lungs congested;  
And if at times I any weakness show,  
He overcomes it with his noise below.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

That does announce my embassy's return;  
Bring them at once, to hear their news I burn.

[*Exit* OTHMAN.

This marrying seems the business of my life,  
Now I must go a-field to get a wife;

And if I use them up at such a pace,  
Girls will become extinct, and so our race.  
Why did not nature, whilst she was about it,  
Make us like broccoli, and let us sprout it,  
When we an offspring want to keep our line?  
Or might she not have followed that design  
That makes Amœbæ cut themselves in two?  
No! then would come the question—Which is you?  
And your dear son, to grab at your estate,  
Would swear that he was you at awful rate.

[*Enter* Ambassador, Othman, &c.]

Well, Cousin, let us hear what you report,  
And, not to bore us, cut it rather short?

*Am.* Dread Sire, if I in detail were to show  
The pains and troubles we did undergo  
Upon our journey to the noble court  
Where we——

*B. B.* Is this the way to make it short?

*Am.* I thought, my lord, that you would like to  
hear.

*B. B.* Tell me, will Nina to my suit give ear?

*Am.* My lord, I don't know where I should begin.

*B. B.* Oh anywhere, but don't a long yarn spin.

*Am.* Well, then, my lord, I think I you shall  
please,

By making headlong plunge *in medias res*.  
Her mother, when I opened up your case,  
Seemed not at first your wishes to embrace;  
But when I showed the diamonds and lace,  
A sweet smile o'er her keen-eyed face did chase;  
So that I saw we now had made impression,  
But it took all the silks to gain concession.

*B. B.* But did her father not object?

*Am.* Oh no, for I did soon detect  
That he of money very short was kept,  
So fingered gold at once made him accept.

*B. B.* It's sweet the young affections thus to  
gain,

A prudent marriage puts on them slight strain;  
So fate I hope this venture new will bless.

[*Aside*] The girl I trust has got some taste in  
dress,

For, if I have to use the fatal knot,  
One dowdy in that room will spoil the lot.

[*Aloud*] Well, let us all to-night join in a feast,  
Your news has whet my appetite, at least;  
My heart, just now, is light and full of joy,  
Like child who gets possessed of some new toy.

*Oth.* [*aside*] And, like a child, I'm sure he'll  
either bang it,  
Or, what's more likely, go and hang it.

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ACT II.

*Room in a Palace.* NINA *arranging flowers, takes up  
a rose.*

*N.* Ah, how now shall I place this rose?  
It must be where its beauty shows;  
And yet I should in part conceal it,  
For beauty, when you all reveal it,  
Leaves nought on which the fancy works;  
And surely in the mind there lurks

A wealth of beauty not expressed  
By nature, e'en with blossoms dressed.  
Yes, let me see. I think if spray  
Of maidenhair be made to stray,  
And, all unconscious of its task,  
With graceful curve it form a mask,  
To spare the blushes of my rose.  
Yes, that will do. Ah me! who knows  
How soon a spray I shall require  
To hide my blushes from the fire  
Of cousin Selim's burning gaze?  
For I am sure, these last few days,  
His sweet attentions have been marked;  
And our young trees are nearly barked,  
By "Nina," cut in large, round text.  
I wonder what he will do next?  
I think I could to him suggest  
Some sweeter way love to attest.  
Ah, from myself I cannot hide  
How sweet to be young Selim's bride.

*Enter SELIM.*

*S.* What! Nina posing full of thought.  
One might, I deem, have sooner caught  
A lake, swept o'er by shifting breeze,  
Unbent reflecting rocks and trees.

*N.* [*sighs*] This life is not, as it discloses,  
All strawberries and beds of roses.

*S.* Well, roses often scratch severely;  
But strawberries! you touch me nearly.

*N.* Do you not find such pleasures cloy?  
We are no longer girl and boy.

S. Well, Nina, I must truly own  
Meals I have not, as yet, outgrown.

N. But, Selim, don't you sometimes feel  
For merriment a want of zeal.

S. Oh yes; for when I have to grind,  
It is no joke, as you would find.

N. But have you never, when we part,  
A palpitation of the heart?

S. My heart's all right. I'll run a mile,  
With hair unturn'd, in first-rate style.

N. [*aside*] The boy's a goose, and I'm a fool  
To be by fancy made the tool.

[*Going up to SELIM, and placing her  
hand on his shoulder.*]

[*Aloud*] Well, Selim, let us still enjoy  
The love that binds the girl and boy.

S. [*aside*] Ah, what is this? I feel so queer,  
I tremble, but it is not fear;  
My heart feels trammell'd in its beat,  
Yet o'er me flows a gentle heat.

N. Will not one word, nor yet one glance,  
Recall our old, yet young romance?

S. Nina, it's said we can't see final cause,  
But only look at Nature through her laws.  
That's nonsense; for I now discover  
The arm was made to clasp a lover.

[*Puts his arm round NINA'S waist.*]

N. I call this nice.

S. And so do I.

N. Why can't we through eternity  
For ever thus entwined remain?

S. Well, p'rhaps it is not too much strain

When lover thus his love he wheedles ;  
But constant pose means pins and needles.

*N.* I hear a step ! Your arm unloose.

[*Aside*] Well, after all, he's not a goose.

[*Enter* SISTER ANN.

It's only sister Ann, I do declare.

You dear old thing, you gave us such a scare.

[*Goes up and embraces* S. A.

*S. A.* Why, Nina, what does all this fondness  
mean ?

*N.* It means, dear sister, you must intervene  
Between a pair of young and tender doves,  
Who wish through life to coo in shady groves,  
And those stern parent birds, who always speak  
Of heaps of grain as all a pair should seek.

*S. A.* You are a pair of foolish chits ;  
Our mother would be off in fits  
If she suspected aught of this.  
I'm sure this is your doing, Miss.

*S.* No, cousin Ann, if aught is wrong,  
Let blame to me alone belong ;  
A man must take on his own back  
Whate'er may lead to sounding thwack.

*S. A.* A man ! A boy. Go pass your classes,  
Before you think of love or lasses ;  
But get you gone, don't tarry here,  
Your aunt is coming, and I fear,  
If she suspects this, off you go.

*S.* Oh, do I ? P'rhaps you do not know  
That uncle is my sole trustee ;  
And I suspect, 'tween you and me,



That his accounts are not quite square ;  
 For I have often heard him swear  
 He never has been to the Jews,  
 And you know, *qui s'excuse s'accuse*.

*N.* Selim, this is a manly feat,  
 To hint our dear Papa's a cheat.

*S.* [*aside*] Oh, goodness ! I'll be off this minute,  
 I fear my foot I have put in it.

[*Aloud, going*] Forget not, Nina, this sweet meeting,  
 It's all mistake about the cheating.

*N.* Dear Selim, I forgive you quite,  
 And nothing shall our true love blight.

[*Exit* SELIM.

*S. A.* Oh nonsense, Nina, he's well enough,  
 But clear your head of all this stuff.  
 Now listen. Something is not right,  
 Mamma herself is in a fright,  
 And said, as far as she could see,  
 We must accept this embassy.

*N.* What embassy ?

*S. A.* Have you not heard  
 That Blue Beard, swearing by his beard,  
 Has sent to say that he would wed  
 Your little self.

*N.* Would I were dead !

*S. A.* Oh, don't say that.

*N.* Oh yes, I do.

How can I give my heart anew ?  
 You know to Selim I have sworn  
 That ne'er from him will I be torn.

*S. A.* Oh, I forgot about your heart ;  
 I did not hear that that was part



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Asked for by Blue Beard.

*N.* Dearest Ann,  
I'm sure you could not love the man  
Who asks to wed you in such hurry.  
Old gentlemen are such a worry!

*S. A.* No one for me has shown much haste,  
No doubt that is from want of taste.

*N.* To see you married would be funny;  
Your looks, dear sister, are not sunny.

*S. A.* All do not like a constant grin.

*N.* Nor anyone their rib too thin.

*S. A.* There is not time for more of banter,  
Or I could beat you in a canter.

The boy was not so very wrong,  
Though p'rhaps his language was too strong.  
Pa is in what he calls a crisis,  
So to mamma not very nice is;  
He smokes and drinks, I'm sure, too much,  
And in his temper is so touch-  
y, that this house you soon will know  
Is not a little heaven below.

*N.* But really now I cannot see  
What all this has to do with me.

*S. A.* Our land is mortgaged to the hilt;  
This house not paid for, which Pa built;  
Blue Beard hints that he will foreclose;  
Then, as they say, poor Papa's nose  
Will out of joint be sadly put,  
And we to stand on not a foot.

*N.* Then is my hand to set you free?

[*Throws herself on S. A.'s neck.*]

Oh heaven! what will become of me?

*S. A.* Now, dearest Nina, don't take on so,  
If you don't like, you sha'n't be won so.  
Pa must again try in the city,  
Though there I know—the more's the pity—  
His signature is hawked about,  
And all our plate is up the spout.

[*Enter* MOTHER.]

*N.* Oh mother, say this is not true.

*M.* What true, my child?

*N.* That I must rue  
The day on which I first saw light;  
For sister says you will unite  
Me to old Blue Beard, who, I've heard,  
Has had more wives than hair in beard.

*M.* That is a gross exaggeration,  
I think I might say fabrication.  
Blue Beard, no doubt, in matrimony,  
Has not shown much of parsimony.  
Not every one who's rid of wife,  
Likes to begin again the strife;  
A nature full of hope this shows.  
And as for wives all hung in rows,  
That must be nonsense. Why should he,  
Whose castle beetles o'er the sea,  
Take so much trouble, when a trip  
Would equally their wind let slip?

*N.* Dear mother, it is not consoling  
To hear Blue Beard can set me rolling  
Adown his cliff with so much ease.  
I fear my nature is to tease;  
So I should not, to save his time,  
For ev'ning walk his crag upclimb.

But if, mamma, to save you all!

*M.* Why, this is really comical!

*N.* Ann says we are, it's plain to see,  
What Selim calls quite up a tree.

*M.* Why, Ann, where did you get this notion?  
Is this to me your strong devotion,  
To fill this head with idle babble?  
How do you think I got this sable,  
This silk which is of costless price,  
These trinkets of the last device,  
If, to use phrase of high degree,  
Your parents both are up a tree?

*S. A.* Mamma, I am so very sorry.

*M.* Well, Ann, you need yourself not worry,  
We all at times make some mistake;  
But join me now, for Nina's sake,  
In urging Blue Beard's pressing suit.

*S. A.* [*aside*] I'm not at all a good recruit.

*M.* This step, dear Nina, is most grave,  
And if in aught my mind misgave,  
I should, of course, be first to warn  
From path that would be spread with thorn.  
True happiness, as you will find,  
Is satisfying heart and mind.  
This will give satisfaction to your heart,  
As joy to all your friends it will impart;  
And to your mind! oh, it's beyond my power  
To state in full the charms of Blue Beard's dower.

*N.* [*aside*] Of Selim I am quite afraid to speak,  
My mother makes me feel a thorough sneak.

[*Aloud*] Dear mother, I have not a heart to give.

*M.* That kind of thing you will quite soon  
outlive.

*N.* But is it right to give your hand  
When the heart——

*M.* Oh, this I cannot stand.  
A daughter's duty's to obey,  
And not stand haggling all the day.  
Oh yes, of course, your feelings are so fine,  
That you at once will go into decline.  
Away, proud girl! Don't come near me!  
Oh how this world has changed, dear me!  
My mother did at once flare up,  
And by the roots my hair tear up,  
If I did her at all annoy.  
And now some smooth-faced, snub-nosed boy  
Will cause you break a mother's heart.

*N.* Oh mother, you I will not thwart.  
[*Aside*] But though mamma I can't oppose,  
The stake I'd brave for Selim's nose.

*M.* Well, dearest Nina, sweetest love,  
I always knew that you would prove  
A dear, devoted, loving child;  
Your father will with joy be wild,  
So I to him will take this news.

[*Aside*] I wonder will he miss his Jews.

[*Exit* MOTHER.]

*N.* Dear sister Ann, what could I do?

*S. A.* You're right, love, from my point of view.

*N.* Sister, oh say you'll not forsake me?

*S. A.* Oh, if I do, may Old Nick take me.

ACT III.

*Room in BLUE BEARD'S Castle. OTHMAN alone.*

*Oth.* Now, as I am for once alone,  
I'll sum up what is to be done.  
First, I must wed this Sister Ann :  
The dose's repulsive, but who can  
All bitters in this world elude !  
Next, little Nina must intrude  
Upon that band of near connexions,  
Whose strong point can't be their complexions.  
[*Makes two thrusts with his dagger.*]  
Then Blue Beard first, and Selim after,  
Will leave me what they call the master  
Of as pretty a situation  
As ever I have heard narration ;  
And then may Sister Ann and I  
On plenty and respected age rely.  
Who comes here ! oh, my sweet charmer,  
At all events I don't harm her.

*Enter SISTER ANN.*

*S. A.* Othman, I've slept on all you said,  
And though I never thought to wed,  
As at my years——

*Oth.* Dear Ann, say days,  
They more accord your youthful ways.

*S. A.* No, Othman, no ; I can't disguise  
That for my youth I'm not a prize ;  
I own my feelings are still young,  
And, Nina's handmaids placed among,

I think my feet would beat as fast,  
Nor would my lightness be surpass'd.

*Oth.* Lightness, I hope, of heels—not manner!

[*Aside*] Her skin looks just come from the tanner.

*S. A.* My marriage would be one of duty.

*Oth.* [*taking S. A. round the waist*] But mine,  
sweet Ann, of love and beauty.

*S. A.* You stopp'd me, or I should have added  
To duty sympathy.

*Oth.* [*aside*] By Jove, she's padded!  
Without her padding, bones, and skin,  
What would be left for me to win?

*S. A.* What! musing, Othman, on your bliss;  
I've read that lovers sometimes kiss.

*Oth.* Yes, love.

[*Aside*] Oh that I must postpone,  
It's bad enough to clasp this bone;

[*Aloud*] I think, dear, we should be discreet,  
And keep back something for a treat.

*S. A.* Ah, p'rhaps I should have said you nay,  
Though when there's sunshine you make hay.

*Oth.* [*aside*] The old girl sure is getting amorous,  
Soon for a hug she will be clamorous;

[*Aloud*] Dear Ann, our moments are but few,  
I think you said you wish'd you knew——

*S. A.* Ah yes, my Othman, can you tell  
Why Blue Beard treats me far from well?

His manners often are so bad,  
Sometimes I think he must be mad.

I've heard him say, confound all sisters,  
They're worse by far than any blisters;

And as for sisters so by law,  
He would no longer stand their jaw.



*Oth.* Blue Beard agrees quite with his bishop,  
That it is wrong to go and dish up  
Sisters-in-law as lawful wives;

And Hittites were not hit too hard,  
But only met their just reward,  
When Jews by order used their knives.

*S. A.* I know what to myself belongs,  
I would not touch him with the tongs.

*Oth.* Your coldness may have hurt his feeling,  
And he's not clever at concealing.

But I forgot: the time is near  
That Blue Beard said he would appear.

*S. A.* Not here!

*Oth.* Yes, here.

*S. A.* What shall I do?

*Oth.* [*aside*] He must not know that Ann I woo,  
Or he by it would soon be led  
To hit the right nail on the head.

[*Aloud*] Why did you to my chamber come?

At your age you should know much better  
Than come into a young man's room;

Why did you not send word by letter?

*S. A.* At my age, Othman! oh, you wretch!  
For your sake I decorum stretch;  
And then it in my teeth you fling,  
That I am not still in my spring.

*Oth.* [*aside*] As she can fling her teeth at me,  
I think I must more civil be;

[*Aloud*] Dear Ann, I fear some imputation  
Upon your spotless reputation,  
So let us not lose time in tiffing.

[*Aside*] I wish she would give up her sniffing.



S. A. Oh, let me go, my blushes spare,  
 For maidens' reputations are  
 So brittle, they oft crack by chance,  
 Like china under housemaid's glance;  
 And then, if Nina found me here,  
 The joke would last her quite a year,  
 And she would never cease from laughing—  
 On serious themes I hate all chaffing.

Oth. You cannot go the way you came,  
 For I hear Blue Beard's manly tread;  
 The only way to save your fame  
 Is to hide here. This screen I'll spread,  
 And you can get quite well behind it:  
 But what you hear you must not mind it,  
 As I may have for once to speak  
 What is not true. So, mind, don't shriek.

S. A. No; I will keep as still as mouse.  
 You need not fear, I shall keep close.

[S. A. goes behind screen.]

*Enter BLUE BEARD.*

B. B. Othman, I seek you here to ease my mind,  
 By speaking of those wicked oaths that bind  
 Me to pursue the course I fain would not,  
 That gives both me and wives a wretched lot;  
 I knew that here we should be quite alone,  
 As we have naught to fear from ears of stone.

Oth. Would it not be, my lord, much more  
 secure,  
 To find within your park some dell obscure,  
 Where never whisper stirs the drowsy air,  
 Save when the quivering aspens low confer.

*B. B.* No, no; this den I know is quite remote,  
So no one can be near our words to note.  
I have not, since you came, been in this room;  
It seems to me you make yourself at home.

*Oth.* Only to those whose hearts I wish to gain.

*B. B.* Bah! rather say, pockets you wish to drain.

*Oth.* Not so, my lord, I am not one of those  
Who think by sounding words they can impose.

*B. B.* We are alone, waste not that stuff on me—  
Before I speak in door-lock, turn the key;  
And now that screen before the fire-grate put,—  
Quick, man! you might have lead upon your foot.

*Oth.* Is it not more convenient in its place,  
It's fixed to hide what might offend your grace?

*B. B.* Othman, you'll make my language some-  
what coarse.

[OTHMAN *over the screen to S. A.*

*Oth.* You can get up the flue as last resource.

*S. A.* Oh no, I can't, my figure is too plump.

*Oth.* P'rhaps from the window you could take a  
jump.

[*Aloud*] Should it not to the window form a  
screen,

No fear then of our being heard or seen.

*B. B.* Good gracious, man, just place it as you're  
told,

Or soon your body will be rather cold.

[OTHMAN *takes up screen; ANN keeps behind  
it, but kicks against something.*

*B. B.* What noise was that?

*Oth.* Oh, did you hear a  
sound?

I must have knocked the screen against the ground.

*B. B.* Don't humbug me, the noise was much too loud.

*Oth.* Your father p'rhaps was hinting what you vow'd.

*B. B.* That must be it; he gives me here no peace :

I'll advertise this house to let on lease,  
Then he may rap away to hearts' content,  
And I sha'n't care a rap, except for rent.  
No, that won't do, I tried it on with Alice,  
He follow'd me, and knock'd with greater malice;  
How it will grieve me if I must deposit  
Poor little Nina in my hanging-closet.

*Oth.* But p'rhaps this wife may nobly stand the test.

*B. B.* No, no; I'm sure she will be like the rest,

For it, you know, is quite notorious,  
All charming women are most curious;  
But I much wish, if possible, to keep  
Nina from taking that most awful peep.

*Oth.* Can I do ought to aid you in your plan?

*B. B.* Yes, for I want the aid of Sister Ann,  
And I have lately often seen you walk  
With her upon your arm, in friendly talk.  
What earthly can you see to care a button  
For that detestable old scrag of mutton?

*S. A.* [*aside*] The foul-mouth'd, wicked, wife-consuming wretch,

Oh that I could his stumpy bull-neck stretch!

*Oth.* Slimness of figure tends to virtue's way,  
I never heard our bones cause us to stray,

So that, with Sister Ann, life would be blest—  
A safe repose on what she's pleased to call her  
breast.

*B. B.* Well, you and Sister Ann must try per-  
suade

My Nina that sad chamber not invade ;  
But, mind, no word of this must ever reach an ear,  
My oath by this is rather stretch'd, I fear ;  
But I would strain a point for Nina's sake—  
Go and call Nina—I the plunge will make.

[*Exit* OTHMAN.]

Without exaggeration, I do think,  
The last few days I have not slept a wink,  
My milk of human kindness it quite sours,  
I do think ghosts should keep to business hours.

[*Enter* NINA.]

Nina, I have a journey far to make,  
So I, for some few days, must you forsake.

*N.* Oh, my dear lord, what means this sudden  
call,

I trust it's not to quell some horrid brawl.

*B. B.* No, Nina, no, though it in blood may end.

*N.* Oh, say not so, for I do not pretend  
To have more courage than becomes a wife—  
Say for a little matrimonial strife.

*B. B.* Nina, my oath requires me thus to leave  
you,

But let not my departure too much grieve you ;  
Here are the keys from basement to the attic—  
But mark now what I say, for it's emphatic :  
Of these you may use all—but here's a key  
You must not use on any kind of plea ;

It ope's the chamber leading out of yours,  
Not to the right, but with the folding doors.  
It's only full of disused odds and ends,  
One does not like to part with—but ne'er mends.

*N.* I will not touch it, put it up again;  
You think that I shall use it—that is plain;  
But you mistake if you think I am curious,  
Such imputation is to me injurious.

*B. B.* Then if you take the key, no harm is  
done.

*N.* Well, no; you may be sure that room I'll  
shun;  
But Blue Beard, dear, come back with all due  
speed,  
Think of your wife, and do not spare your steed.

*B. B.* I will—I will—be careful!

*N.* Do not doubt.

*B. B.* Oh, if you want advice or have misdoubt,  
Othman you'll find in all things most discreet.

*N.* I shall require no counsel till we meet.

[*Exit* BLUE BEARD.]

So this is Othman's room; it's very nice,  
That's more than I should say for his advice.  
But as I'm here I'll take a glance around,  
I shall find something curious, I'll be bound.  
But what would Ann say if she found me here,  
How she would wag her head and look severe!  
And say that she had always been discreet,  
And would much rather cut off both her feet  
Than by them to a young man's room be carried;  
And if by great misfortune she were married,

She would know better than to make a scandal,  
By giving to the world so good a handle.

[*Looks round.*]

What have we here? a lady's glove, I vow;  
Well, p'rhaps it's only here to make a show;  
Othman's a coxcomb, that I know quite well.

[*Finds a handkerchief.*]

But this is odd. I'm sure from Ann this fell,  
She always wears this wrapped around her neck,—  
I can't mistake it, for I know the check,—  
But surely Sister Ann is such a prude,  
That she would sooner die than here intrude

[*SISTER ANN comes forward.*]

*S. A.* No, she would not, for she at duty's call  
Would sacrifice for you her name, her all.

*N.* Would sacrifice for me?

*S. A.* Yes, yes, for you!

Listen! it's needless I should tell what drew  
Me here; but I such awful words have heard  
Between his henchman and Blue Beard,  
That they would chase all colour from your cheek,  
And make your voice unknown, if you should  
speak—

Would make you wish you still your maiden pillow  
pressed,

Or else that you in your cold winding sheet were  
dressed.

*N.* But this is madness!

*S. A.* Oh, that it were so;  
But to my room this instant I must go,  
And if you can be saved it shall be so.

*Exit* *SISTER ANN.*



*N.* Well, Sister Ann, I'm sure I you have caught,  
 But I'm no equal match for such a talker;  
 And as for all this mischief being wrought,  
 I think our cousin Selim would say, "Walker."

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A C T I V.

*NINA'S Room in Palace. SISTER ANN working.*

*NINA walking about.*

*N.* Well, sister, I do not believe  
 That you at all mean to deceive;  
 But you must own that what you heard  
 May be deformed by what you feared.

*S. A.* But is it not a confirmation,  
 That you, whate'er your inclination,  
 Must not, by Blue Beard's strict command,  
 Unlock that door?

*N.* This little hand  
 'Gainst husband's wish could never act,  
 Though he did not, I think, show tact  
 In making of it so much stir;  
 For moralists do all concur  
 That Eve would not have cared for apple,  
 E'en though with red most sweetly dapple,  
 If she had been kept in the dark  
 About the fruit within her park.

*S. A.* Well, then, I think we've nought to fear,  
 As Blue Beard will so soon appear.  
 I think you said he comes to-day.

*N.* Yes, but the time seems far away;  
 I cannot settle down to aught;  
 I wish now that I had been taught

To use, like you, a needle deftly,  
It seems to make the time pass swiftly.  
I think I'll go again once more  
Through all the rooms on ev'ry floor.

[*Exit* NINA.]

S. A. Unless Blue Beard is just at hand,  
Nina I doubt will not withstand  
This test much longer—nor should I.

[*Goes to door and tries to look  
through keyhole.*]

Ah, what is that I think I spy?  
Oh yes, it is. No, no, it's not.  
I thought I saw a dark red spot.  
Why are not keyholes larger made?  
It's mean all peeping to evade.  
Well, I for one should like to know  
What Blue Beard in that room doth stow.  
Here Othman comes, his sad, sweet smile  
Would Ursula's ten thousand virgins all beguile.

[*Enter* OTHMAN, *frowning.*]

*Oth.* You here!

S. A. Yes, dearest.

*Oth.* Where's your sister?

[*Takes hold roughly of S. A.'s arm.*]

S. A. Don't, that's what Selim calls a twister,  
You should not be so very rough.

*Oth.* Excuse me if I'm rather bluff,  
But time is precious; I've just heard  
We may at once expect Blue Beard.

S. A. Yes, that is so, and Nina dear  
Will then have nothing more to fear.

*Oth.* You are a goose, go, get you gone,  
I would see Nina here alone.

[*Exit* SISTER ANN.

I fear my schemes are breaking down,  
And I can't trust that sister Ann  
With any part of my sweet plan.  
Nina, I thought—this I must own—  
Before this would have seen that room,  
And then she would have fixed her doom.

[*Enter* NINA.

*N.* Where's Ann? I just now left her here.

*Oth.* I think she said she must appear  
More fitly dress'd Blue Beard to meet—  
Ann's nothing if she's not discreet.

*N.* The best of us will sometimes trip,  
And once I had her on the hip.

*Oth.* But you, fair lady, naught would make  
you stray,  
You keep the even tenor of your way ;  
E'en curiosity seems not to vex,  
Though said to be the foible of your sex.

[*Pointing to room.*

*N.* That room! oh, why of it remind me?  
All thought of it I thrust behind me.

*Oth.* That room I think I can divine  
Is used by Blue Beard as a shrine  
For sweet divinity, or why  
Should he make all this secrecy?  
Therefore be wise, and do refrain  
From seeing what would cause you pain.

*N.* The room is only full of trash.

*Oth.* Is it not sometimes rather rash

To blindly take a husband's word?

*N.* To doubt him would be quite absurd.  
What object has he to deceive me?

*Oth.* Oh, madam, here you may believe me :  
No wife knows all her husband's past,  
And p'rhaps that's best, if love's to last.

*N.* You no doubt think that very clever,  
But loving hearts you can't dis sever.

*Oth.* But is there love without full trust?  
With all your talk, you dare not thrust  
Within that room your little head.

*N.* Why dare you me? when you just said  
The sight within would cause me pain.

*Oth.* Because I see that you do feign  
Belief, when you are full of doubt,  
And that my word you try to scout.  
It's better far to know the worst,  
Then doubt for ever is dispersed.

*N.* A trusting heart may be devout,  
But has no joy with shade of doubt.  
Oh, villain! I can read your heart ;  
I see quite well you wish to part  
Two loving hearts.

*Oth.* Oh, don't think so ;  
You could look in, and he not know.

*N.* But know he shall, if I go there.  
Leave me.

*Oth.* [*aside*] I think I've sown the tare  
That will choke up affection's growth,  
And Blue Beard then will keep his oath.

[*Exit* OTHMAN.]

*N.* Ah! ah! I did that rather well,  
Othman will think that I shall tell ;

If in that room I take a peep,  
A weasel he may catch asleep;  
But Mrs. Blue Beard is too smart  
To be the tool of Othman's art.  
I'm to be jealous!—how absurd!—  
Of my old gentleman, Blue Beard.  
Now, had I married Cousin Selim,  
My nails would quite have itched to peel him,  
If he at any girls made eyes,  
Or even went as far as sighs.  
But see I must that room's contents,  
And never mind if Blue Beard vents  
His anger in unmanly swearing.  
Why should we wives be always caring  
What husbands say? Must we be slaves,  
And howsoe'er our lord behaves,  
In silence bow? That's not my way;  
For, first of all, I have my say,  
Which, truth to speak, is far from short;  
But if he takes it with a snort,  
I then most gracefully give in,  
By putting on my sweetest grin,  
So that he thinks he has his way—  
It pleases him. I don't say nay.  
I think I've made them all believe  
That Nina never can deceive,  
And has as little taste for prying  
As Briton bold has got for crying.  
So now I will let nature go,  
All self-control is very slow.  
But here comes Ann—this is unlucky,  
As she, I think, is far from plucky.

[*Enter* SISTER ANN.]

Ann, I now think, at duty's call,  
I'll brave the danger of a squall,  
And see what Blue Beard keeps in there.

*S. A.* I thought you would, I'm glad I'm here.  
I think you're right to enter there;  
I hope there's something very rare.

*N.* Blue Beard said only odds and ends;  
But man, we know, most oft commends  
Such stupid things as guns and books,  
And all the sweetest things o'erlooks.  
So p'rhaps that room is the abode  
Of all that is the latest mode;  
And I must own I have a passion  
For all that is of newest fashion.

*S. A.* No husband knows, how'er he probes,  
The mysteries of modes and robes;  
So he could never make selection  
That would be worth a babe's inspection.

*N.* P'rhaps there are gems of water rare  
Would make both Hunt and Roskill stare,  
And of such perfect, rare device,  
Would make e'en you, dear Ann, look nice.

*S. A.* What is the use of all this prattle?  
You have the key, that's half the battle.

*N.* All very fine to egg me on,  
Suppose Blue Beard is here alone.

*S. A.* He need not know, if you are quick.

*N.* It is not you would get the stick.

*S. A.* I hear a step! who can it be?  
I trust not Blue Beard back for tea.



Better it was, in days of old,  
When husband, heedless of a cold,  
Long wound his horn and waved his banner,  
So wife had time to choose the manner  
Of welcoming her lord and master—  
Latch-keys have led to much disaster.

[*Enter* SELIM.]

*N.* What, Selim! why have you come here?

*S.* I've come to aid you, Nina dear,  
There is some plot against your life.

*N.* That's nonsense, Selim; Blue Beard's wife  
Must be preserved in Blue Beard's hall.

*S.* Yes, I have heard his wives are all  
So well preserved, that their young bloom  
Gives quite a colour to the room.

*S. A.* Selim, you must at once be off,  
Blue Beard will cut up rather rough  
To find you after Nina dangling,  
It may end in a case of strangling,  
Which would, I think, quite spoil your beauty,  
And we have now an urgent duty.

*S.* Well, I'll be off.

*S. A.* Quick, don't delay,  
You've not much time to get away.

*S.* But let me know if ought's not right.

*S. A.* Keep you this casement well in sight,  
I'll signal from it.

*S.* I'll look out.

[*Exit* SELIM.]

*S. A.* Now, Nina, let us solve our doubt.

*N.* I can't help feeling rather nervous.

*S. A.* There's no one here who can observe us.

N. Well, I will go, but you wait here.

[NINA opens door and exit.]

S. A. I must say I feel somewhat queer.

[Re-enter NINA.]

N. Oh, Ann, they are a ghastly crew,  
They are in rows, it is too true.

S. A. What are in rows?

N. Blue Beard's late wives,  
And I feel sure that he derives  
Some frightful pleasure from the view  
Of such a ghastly avenue.  
For they are ranged in longs and shorts,  
With dresses of most varied sorts,  
Which, though in detail far too crude,  
Are not so bad at distance view'd.  
But, Ann, I saw one empty place,  
Where your poor Nina will grimace,  
And dance on the unsteady air,  
So for my fate I will prepare.  
My blue will the effect enhance :  
This struck me at a moment's glance.

S. A. Oh, talk not so, no one need know  
That you have seen this awful show ;  
But I should like to take a peep,  
To know what for I silence keep.

N. I find I must have dropp'd the key ;  
Please seek it, Ann, and bring it me.

[Exit ANN.]

I must put on my artless look,  
But that sad sight my nerves so shook,  
That they still make me so to tremble,  
I shall have hard work to dissemble.

[*Re-enter ANN.*

S. A. Here, Nina dear, here is the key,  
 Hide it so Blue Beard may not see.  
 The room I found was deadly cold,  
 The sight most awful to behold.  
 But did you see her on the right,  
 The one with body rather tight?  
 I'm sure you o'er the world might seek  
 In vain for such a moire-antique;  
 And then the one in apple-green,  
 She must have been of graceful mien,  
 Her dress hung in such lovely fold,  
 Pity she could not tell where sold.

N. I hear commotion in the hall,  
 That's Blue Beard's voice, I know his call,—  
 Quick, he must find us each with simplest look;  
 You take your sewing, I will take this book.

[*NINA sits with her back to the door.*

*ANN takes up her sewing.*

*Enter BLUE BEARD and OTHMAN.*

B. B. [*aside*] I'm glad to find my fears were  
 groundless,  
 My faith in her will now be boundless.  
 How well her neck supports her head,  
 I'm sure that's better, when all's said,  
 Than that it should support her heel.

[*NINA turns round, and throws away  
 her book.*

N. What! Blue Beard! Ah, now let me kneel  
 In thanks for your so safe return;  
 But I insist that you adjourn

All story of your late affairs  
Till I go see your cook prepares  
Some dishes that I know are tasty.

[NINA tries to go.

*B. B.* No, Nina, no, don't be so hasty ;  
Before I even go to dress,  
Give it to me—I'm sure you guess.

*N.* What?

*B. B.* The key that does unlock that door :  
You've not been in, of that I'm sure.

*N.* I've lost it, Blue Beard, on my oath,  
I knew it would be best for both ;  
For husbands, I'm sure, should not step  
Where wives are not allowed to peep.

*B. B.* Nina, at lying you're not able—  
Look, there's the key upon the table.

*N.* Oh, tell us, Ann, where you did find it?

*S. A.* Near to the safe, I think behind it.

[*B. B. takes up key.*

*B. B.* Nina, the key is deadly cold.

*N.* Blue Beard, you know you always scold  
If all your things are not well iced.

*B. B.* Nina, your lying is too spiced :  
I see you've entered that sad room,  
Therefore prepare to meet your doom.

*N.* I'll tell Papa, yes, that I will,  
If you his daughter use so ill,  
And Selim will, I'm sure, not stand it.

*B. B.* Not a word more, when I command it.  
Othman, take both to castle keep.  
Not to show haste, on this I'll sleep.

*Oth.* Business like this should be done quickly,  
According to law it is not strictly.

*B. B.* Take them away.

## A C T V.

*Room in BLUE BEARD'S Palace. BLUE BEARD alone.*

*B. B.* I'm sure I never felt before  
 Tempted to care not what I swore;  
 But Nina is so very charming,  
 That it can not be so alarming  
 To stretch a little in her aid,  
 And just for once my oath evade.  
 My subjects they with oaths make free,  
 When they fill up their Schedule D;  
 But they, I hear, can sleep a wink,  
 Because they've been forsworn in ink;  
 Whilst I, who had to swear by rap,  
 Not for one moment get a nap;  
 Yet I will little Nina save,  
 And Pa must learn to well behave.

[*Knocking heard.*]

Peace, peace! I hear! alas! poor knuckle,  
 You'll be worn out, unless I truckle,  
 And quite give in to your hard ways,  
 Though Othman, like a sceptic, says,  
 What energy can ghosts remit,  
 When they've of matter not a bit.

[*Furious knocking.*]

That's to consider much too curiously,  
 And so Pa thinks by knocking furiously.  
 Well, after all, for sake of peace,  
 Nina I must at once release  
 From this sad world. It is my duty,  
 And then in time she'd lose her beauty.

[*BLUE BEARD whistles. Enter OTHMAN.*]

Othman, go bring your pris'ners here,  
Against my wish their fate draws near.

*Oth.* Shall I bring both?

*B. B.* Yes, bring them both,  
Nina's sufficient for my oath;  
But Sister Ann would make such fume.  
You've no objection, I presume?

*Oth.* As I'm engaged to Sister Ann,  
It would oblige me if you can  
For just one day her case delay.

*B. B.* Of course, don't mention it, I pray—  
Though bring them both.

[*Exit* OTHMAN.

I hate these jobs,  
Wives should remember men hate sobs.

[*Enter* OTHMAN and Attendants, with  
SISTER ANN and NINA dressed  
in blue.

Nina, you must prepare to die,  
Oblige me if you can, don't cry.

[NINA and SISTER ANN throw themselves  
on their knees.

*N.* Oh, Blue Beard, pause! oh, hear me speak!  
I thought you liked your women weak,  
And did not mind a slip or two,  
So long as they to you were true.  
And, though I am so very young,  
I'm sure I never you have stung  
By flirting with your young retainer,  
And how shall I now be the gainer  
If you thus kill me in my spring?  
Better if I had had my fling,



And Othman was so very kind.

*B. B.* Ah, now I see I have been blind.  
Away with Othman to his grave.

*Oth.* Blue Beard, in this your wife does rave.

*B. B.* If I find she does falsely speak,  
You shall have tomb of verde antique ;  
And that, for one of your low station,  
Will make amends for strangulation.  
But I have now no time for trifling,  
It won't hurt much, though rather stifling.

[*Signs, and OTHMAN is taken away.*]

*S. A.* Blue Beard, oh, spare my Othman dear,  
His love is all for me, I'll swear ;  
From him, I'm sure, you've naught to fear.  
Nina, your eyes I could out-tear.

*N.* His love for you was all a fudge,  
You must, dear Ann, have lost your judge-  
ment, if you think he cared a pin  
For one his mother might have been.

*S. A.* You are not kind. It is not true,  
Of life I've now more chance than you ;  
And living ass, the world admits,  
Beats a dead lion all to fits.

*N.* I would not, Ann, your life thus wring,  
If yours, as mine, hung by a string.

*B. B.* Ladies, to business we must stick,  
I fear this talk is merely trick.  
Come, Nina, say good-bye to Ann,  
Remember life is but a span.

*N.* But mine you're cutting to an inch,  
In imitating Justice Lynch.

Give me, I pray, some moments more,  
That all my sins I may deplore.

*B. B.* Well, you may be upon your knee,  
Whilst I just take an S. and B. ;  
But mind, now, when I do return,  
Business I won't again adjourn.

[*Exit* BLUE BEARD.]

*N.* Oh, sister, try, oh, try to save me,  
I never more will misbehave me !  
You shall perform the marriage rite,  
You would look sweet all dress'd in white.

*S. A.* What can I do ?

*N.* You are so clever.

*S. A.* Those window bars we cannot sever.  
Could we make exit through that room ?

*N.* I dare not step into my tomb.

*S. A.* P'rhaps by this door we may pass out—  
No, no, I find it's barr'd without.

*N.* Oh, if young Selim were but here,  
I feel we then need nothing fear.

*S. A.* Ah, happy thought ! I quite forgot  
I told him, if things grew too hot,  
I'd make a signal he could see.

*N.* Oh, let this handkerchief wave free,  
The colour will attract his eye.

*S. A.* And, as I'm sure he is quite nigh,  
If only he is looking out,  
He will be here without a doubt.

*N.* Oh, wave it more. If you it tire,  
I'll try if I can't wave it higher.

*S. A.* Nina, look there, there to the right ;  
I think you have the better sight.

*N.* I tremble, so I can't see ought.

*S. A.* It's water that the sunlight's caught.

*N.* P'rhaps on the left—oh, try that side.

*S. A.* Thank God, he comes with swiftest stride :  
Moments are worth Golconda's mines.

Oh, how my breast my heart confines !

Quick, on your knees, I hear Blue Beard,

Thus his cruel work may be deferr'd !

*NINA and SISTER ANN both kneel, and  
move their lips without making a  
sound.*

*Enter BLUE BEARD.*

*B. B.* Oh, this won't do ; you cut it short,  
Or I shall, in the last resort,  
Drag you from here to yonder room,  
As there my wives all meet their doom.

*S. A.* Hush ! hush ! her mind's beyond the grave,  
Such moments oft the hopeless save.

*B. B.* That sort of thing should not be left  
Till one of life's so near bereft ;  
My chaplain has the strictest charge  
To never let my sins grow large ;  
So that, in twinkling of an eye,  
I'm in good form to tread the sky.

*[Noise heard.*

*B. B.* Ah, is that treason's cry I hear,  
Or my retainers' call for beer ?

*Enter SELIM, flourishing his sword.*

*S.* I've forced the guard, and with this brand,  
With eye to guide, and trick of hand,

Your soul from body I'll divorce,  
And then wed Nina—that's of course.

*B. B.* Tut, tut! boy, sheath your carving-knife,  
And stop this nonsense, or your life  
Will not be worth secession bond,  
Or bank when all the board abscond.

[*NINA puts herself by SELIM'S side.*

*N.* Now, Selim, I'm no more afraid.

*B. B.* Nina! before your own Blue Beard—  
The wife's part is by husband's side,  
Till he's a ghost, or has to hide.

[*They fight.*

*S.* Lay on, Macduff—pardon, I mean Blue  
Beard—

And hang'd be he who first says he's afraid.

*B. B.* Come on, you scrimpy, beardless boy,  
One blow from me will make you coy  
Of rushing into people's houses,  
And making love to their dear spouses.

*S.* Don't boast, your wind is getting short;  
What's death to you, to me is sport.

*B. B.* Take that, you bony, bilious bragger,  
That is enough to make you stagger.

*S.* Oh my, Blue Beard, that was an awful  
stunner,

But there's a lunge will make a scarlet runner.

[*Gives BLUE BEARD a thrust, and he falls.*

*B. B.* Poor Blue Beard from his occupation's  
going,

And what he must do next there is no knowing;  
It's right that he has tried to keep his oath,  
Though thus to meet his end he's rather loath.

His mission, for the which he now is dying,  
Was to suppress for ever female prying.

[*Dies.*

*S.* Men who have missions will at nothing stick,  
And think all's fair until they've done the trick ;  
Thus he, to cause a little fault to perish,  
Hung without mercy those he swore to cherish.

*N.* So ends dream number one of wedded life :  
Is it worth while again to be a wife ?  
Is it worth while to chance again mishap ?  
Oh that I could but stand the widow's cap !

*S.* Nina, to see your laughing eyes  
Peeping from out those endless plies  
Of stuff, you know, wound in a roll,  
Would really be absurdly droll.

*N.* I would not join that widow band  
That all day at Jay's window stand,  
With noses flat, to scan with greed  
The last thing out in widow's weed.  
No, I will rather bear the scoff  
Of those old girls who can't get off ;  
Selim, shall we at once be married ?  
How vote you ? [SELIM *kisses* NINA.

Well, then, that is carried ;  
But to the world this might appear  
To show neglect to my late dear ;  
To ever keep his memory green,  
And to assuage my grief so keen,  
I will endow to end of time  
A monument to him sublime.  
That room, with all its frozen crew,  
Shall to the public be on view

From ten a.m. to six p.m.  
And as I think this novel gem  
To ev'ry wife should open be,  
The manager shall charge no fee :  
For husbands do keep wives so tight,  
That oft for pence they have to fight.  
And as Blue Beard held liberal view,  
On Sundays it shall ope' like Kew.  
And, Selim, after my last pang,  
I wish in that sad room to hang ;  
And if your love keep warm and true,  
Mind you suspend me dressed in blue.







## A SAXON PENELOPE.

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### PERSONS REPRESENTED.

IVANHOE.

DE BRACY.

ATHELSTANE.

ROWENA.

EDITH.

### ACT I.

ROWENA *with a basket full of socks before her, and mending one.* EDITH *in attendance, with a large book open before her.*

*R.* Edith, how many years have slowly dragged,  
Since my Lord Ivanhoe went forth and bragged  
That he the Holy Sepulchre would gain,  
Or else become a saint by being slain?

*E.* Twice ten, my lady, for I do remember,  
That he took ship the first of that December  
That follow'd on the birth of your poor son,—  
And he, you know, would have been twenty-one.

*R.* It's even so; and ever thus I darn,  
My only solace list'ning to the yarn  
Of saintly lives. As far as we have gone,  
No female saint was left so long alone.

*E.* Not one of them. In all the lives we've  
read,

Too much of husband was the rock ahead ;  
So you, dear lady, will go down in story,  
Of matchless constancy the female glory !

*R.* No, Edith, no ; perfection's but a dream,  
Saints never are quite up to what they seem ;  
My constancy, I own, is part lymphatic,  
And part the fear of high rat-haunted attic,  
If Ivanhoe should some day cease to hide,  
And his Rowena find De Bracy's bride.

*E.* The law, I think, would quite be on your side,  
This world is not so very, very wide,  
That husbands have a right, *ad lib.*, to roam—  
I always doubt when husbands can't get home.

*R.* Doubt what ?

*E.* Oh, that it's business keeps them far,  
And not some lady's window with guitar.  
I've heard, when master knock'd about the world,  
And oft from saddle by a poke was hurl'd,  
A certain Jewess always turned up handy,  
With poultices and texts, good looks and brandy ;  
And when you married, she went to the East :  
I think things look suspicious at the least.

*R.* Oh yes, I see it now ; I have been blind,  
By Isaac's child this absence was design'd ;  
The best of husbands oft are led astray,  
When early loves won't keep themselves away.  
Whilst here at home I've shelved my lovers' woes,  
Till all these socks had got new heels and toes,  
And to be constant to my Ivanhoe,  
Have ev'ry ev'ning burst out ev'ry toe,

He has no doubt been dangling at her side,  
 And cutting jokes at his light Saxon bride;  
 Oh, I should like to catch his dark Rebecca,  
 These nails would soon in bleeding visage deck  
 her.

*E.* "Never too late to mend," I've heard it  
 said.

*R.* But after all these years, if he's not dead?  
 I cannot from my mind all doubts dismiss.

*E.* One must take chances in a case like this:  
 And even if he should turn up at last,  
 De Bracy's trumpet blows as loud a blast.

*R.* Edith, I feel a miserable, cold douche,  
 When I remember Ashby-de-la-Zouche.

*E.* Well, then, big Athelstane's a heavy weight,  
 It won't be nuts to wipe him off the slate.

*R.* He's short of wind, and now too fat to tilt,  
 And, like a barrel, would at once be spilt;—  
 But take these socks and thrust them from my  
 sight—

At all events they'll keep their toes to-night—  
 And then lay supper, for it's getting late,  
 And neither of my lovers likes to wait.

[*EDITH takes away socks and lays supper.*  
 I little thought, when I was Queen of Beauty,  
 That I should e'er be bored by "What's my duty."  
 Yet now between a spouse I can't think nice,  
 And those who wish to act his part as vice,  
 I really feel—I don't know how I feel—  
 I do wish husbands had less taste for steel;  
 Yes, p'rhaps I'd better go on fast and loose—  
 To marry, then be murder'd, is no use.

And then, besides, I like our nightly feast,  
Two lovers make them lively, at the least ;  
Whereas with one they would most sadly drag—  
Just Ivanhoe again, and all his brag.

[*Enter DE BRACY and ATHELSTANE.*

*E.* The knight De Bracy and Lord Athelstane.

[*ATHELSTANE pushes before DE BRACY.*

*A.* Lords first, De Bracy, nature's laws ordain.

*D. B.* I'm not cut up, though you a march do  
steal,

It's Saxon calf cuts up as Norman veal.

[*They kiss ROWENA'S hand.*

*D. B.* Your cheeks, fair lady, roses still adorn,  
Your ev'ning is as blushing as your morn.

*A.* That's just like me, at eve my colour's high,  
When I have taken in my night's supply.

*D. B.* Like you, indeed! compare our Queen  
Rowena

With one whose mien's as mean as his demeanour!

*A.* De Bracy, just you mind what you are saying :  
When Athelstane is roused, he's great at slaying.

*D. B.* Pooh, pooh, remember Ashby's ugly mêlée,  
Where sluggard knight reduced you to a jelly.

*A.* If supper were not laid, you dared not dare  
me.

*R.* Such conduct, gentlemen, you well might  
spare me.

*D. B.* A thousand pardons, pray have no alarm,  
Such words 'twixt I and Athy don't mean harm :  
Our acts are cool, e'en though our words are rash ;  
Now credit's gone, we only fight for cash.

[*DE BRACY seats himself at head of table.*

*A.* Your acts, De Bracy, certainly are cool,  
 Don't you perceive you have Rowena's stool.  
 [*Aside*] If Bracy helps that soul-distracting stew,  
 Poor Athelstane may whistle for his due.

*D. B.* [*rising*] A Norman's nothing if he's not  
 a gent,  
 Unconscious acts are not impertinent.

[*D. B. resigns stool to ROWENA, and they  
 sit and take supper.*]

*R.* I think you know my yellow-seal'd Canary.

*A.* Don't we! It's pure as milk from purest  
 dairy.

*D. B.* Oh, what aroma! beats a bed of roses;  
 It's pity that it turns to red in noses;  
 And that a great devotion to Canary,  
 Should make our manners oft a trifle airy.

*A.* Manners be hang'd! Rowena, pass the platter;  
 Supper's a time to eat, and not to chatter.

[*Takes the dish and works his bread  
 round in it.*]

*D. B.* It nearly makes one sick to see that  
 brute.

*A.* De Bracy, have a care!

*R.* Pray, don't dispute;  
 Know that my tale of socks is now quite mended.

*D. B.* Then, now, our time of trial is nearly  
 ended.

*R.* Well yes, De Bracy, yet I still have doubt,  
 Not knowing yet what Ivanhoe's about.

*D. B.* He must be dead.

*A.* Dead as a nail in door.

*R.* A husband not alive or dead's a bore:

For if he live, and you perchance do marry,  
He then will turn up sharp, and play Old Harry ;  
But if he's dead, of time it is a waste  
To live without a spouse—if that's your taste.

*Enter* EDITH.

*E.* Madam,  
A Palmer from the East is at your gate :  
Shall I admit him—though it's rather late ?

*R.* Let him come here, if he, poor man, is able,  
Palmers, like priests, though snobs, have place at  
table. [*Exit* EDITH.]

*D. B.* We may of Ivanhoe now get some thread.

*R.* No one will ever prove that he is dead :  
I give it up, for surely twenty years  
Are quite enough to knock up hopes and fears.

*D. B.* [*going down on one knee and taking  
ROWENA'S hand*] Then thus De Bracy urges  
now his suit.

*A.* [*going down on one knee and taking ROWENA'S  
other hand*] And, supper finish'd, Athelstane's  
not mute.

[*Enter* IVANHOE *disguised as a Palmer.*

*R.* Thanks, gentlemen, my handkerchief is here.  
[*They both rise.*

Good Palmer, say your vow's not so austere  
But you can break your fast within our door ?  
I fear our feast to-night is rather poor.

*I.* My Saxon appetite and Norman taste  
Are suited by a feast so huge, yet chaste.

*D. B.* P'rhaps, my good Palmer, whilst you  
take your meal,  
Some news from the far East you could reveal ;



In all your travels did you ever hear  
Of Ivanhoe—a knight not much to fear?

*I.* Hear! why, the babbling hills give all their  
time

To echo forth his name from clime to clime:  
And I have often heard, when in the sacred land,  
No dozen knights before his lance could stand!  
And mothers there, to hush a howling child,  
Shriek “Ivanhoe!” and then it draws it mild.  
My breath would fail to tell you all his deeds—  
Bois-Guilbert there turned up on best of steeds.

*D. B.* Bois-Guilbert! he fell dead at Templestowe.

*I.* Oh, not a bit; that was a sham, you know:  
No, Ivanhoe has fought him on and off  
These twenty years, and made him each time doff  
A suit of armour, worth as many shekels  
As there are spots upon a face with freckles.

*R.* This news is strange!

*I.* Of him I could give stranger,  
But then I think of doubt there would be danger.

*A.* But surely you will tell us he is dead,  
And that at last he’s knocked upon the head.

*I.* [*aside*] I think, to keep up my disguise,  
I’ll advertise my own demise.

[*Aloud*] Oh yes, one day upon a field all gory,  
He fell at last, wrapt round with mud and glory!

*D. B.* [*passing money to IVANHOE, who refuses it*]  
Come, Palmer, take this money—yes—forsooth,  
It’s all I’ve left from Isaac’s last back tooth;  
But you are welcome, for you bring such news,  
That never shall I draw again on Jews.  
This lady, as spouse number one is dead,  
By number two to altar will be led;

---

And that high post——

*A.* Is mine ; I tell you, Bracy,  
Your stories of free lances, though so racy,  
Won't weigh against the best blood of the Saxon.

*D. B.* Pooh, pooh, on all your race we have a  
tax on ;

A Norman knight weighs down a heap of boors.

*A.* Dare tell me that when we are out of doors,  
And on your head of blows will fall a shower.

*D. B.* I'll tell it you in court, in camp, in bower.

*R.* Now, gentlemen, pray do not get excited,  
Perhaps to neither I shall be united.

*D. B.* You must take one, we've wasted all our  
youth,

And now are both hard up in very truth.

*R.* I like romance, and thus to be so courted.

*A.* Now he is dead, your lovers must be sorted.

*R.* You're very hard upon a widow lone ;

On such sad news she should have time to moan ;  
And then, as both with noble qualities are stuff'd,  
And I so wish that neither should be huff'd,  
I really feel I can't make up my mind.

*A.* A toss might show which way fate is inclined.

*R.* No, Athelstane, of that we can't avail,  
I ne'er will be the sport of head or tail.

*D. B.* Then here we are in quite enough of fix  
To make one mad,—just like a woman's tricks !

*A.* What say you ? shall the Palmer here decide ?

*D. B.* That's smart ! your wits, dear Athy, are  
belied.

*I.* Oh, this won't do. It is no Palmer's duty  
To sit in judgment and award a beauty.

*R.* Palmer, I'm sure, before you put that rag on,  
You've toasted beauty when you've drain'd the  
    flagon.

*I.* Madam, in early years, I do allow,  
I never was averse to any row ;  
I've couch'd a lance for honour and for ladies,  
But things so change with middle age and babies.

*R.* Too true ; but, as you know so much of life,  
You well may act as umpire in this strife.

*I.* But my award may not be to their taste ;  
And if not follow'd, I shall be disgraced.

*R.* It shall be follow'd ; when I say a thing,  
From me no pow'r on earth a change can wring ;  
My late dear husband, though so strong a lance,  
Was weak at home, as oft I've made him dance  
With rage, when I, as always, took my way,  
With naught of argument, but much of say.  
He then would swear,—I've turned you inside out ;  
But as I cared not what he was about,  
And just repeated o'er and o'er again,  
He felt that all, save smothering, was vain.

*I.* Well, madam, for the sake of your great  
    beauty,  
I'll act as judge, and try to do my duty ;  
But as I'm travel-sore, and need some sleep,  
I think my judgment for a night will keep.

*R.* Yes, gentlemen, the Palmer's in the right,  
He shall award to-morrow, not to-night.

ACT II.

*Same scene.* EDITH *alone, rubbing her eyes.*

*E.* Oh, what a night I've had!  
It really is too bad  
To call me up so oft  
From bed so downy soft,  
To listen to her talk,  
As up and down we walk,  
In dress so light and airy,  
Not decent for a fairy.  
On Palmer ran her head;  
His voice comes from the dead,  
And calls before her mind  
The years left long behind.  
[*Yawns*] Friends' memories of former days  
With maximum of boredom weighs.

*Enter IVANHOE as Palmer.*

*I.* Good morn, fair maiden; no one takes  
amiss  
When saintly Palmer gives the morning kiss.

*E.* A likely thing from you! kiss me, indeed!  
You can't have pasture where your betters feed;  
A Norman knight or shoot of Saxon king  
Might p'rhaps, if very pressing, do the thing.

*I.* The shoot from king shall off by kick be  
shot,  
And knight De Bracy get it very hot.

*E.* If you speak thus, I'll see my mistress knows,  
And she will have you shot by her two beaux.  
Ah, here she comes; but, as I'm not embraced,  
I will say nought. This Palmer has some taste.

*Enter ROWENA.*

*R.* I trust, good Palmer, that a night's sound  
rest

Has made you clear to what you would suggest  
For meeting now my delicate dilemma.  
Rowena fears the world will much condemn her.

*I.* Not so, fair lady. Marriage is a lottery,  
And troublesome as making pairs in pottery.  
A thrifty wife, who acts with all due care,  
Besides a room, will have a husband spare;  
So that, if loss or breaking-up occur,  
Replacement can be made without much stir.

*R.* Thanks, Palmer, for the simple view you state,  
I knew I'd acted rightly by my late  
Departed spouse. You are from bias free,  
So it affords me pleasure to agree  
With your most weighty and most sound advice;  
I always act on counsel I think nice.

[*Enter DE BRACY and ATHELSTANE.*

*R.* Good morning, friends. Now, Palmer, please  
prepare

A plan, to settle which will have to share  
My deepest feelings, plus this fine estate.  
And, Palmer, hear, before it is too late,—  
My heart is quite in poise between these knights,  
So think not of my feelings, but their rights.

*I.* Their rights! I do not think I catch you  
quite!

*D. B.* You should, as wrong by time oft comes  
to right.

*A.* No, no, De Bracy, that won't do, you see,  
Don't give us any French philosophy.

---

If we can't win Rowena on the square,  
She shall remain a widow, that I swear.

*D. B.* Swear what you like, I do not care a fig,  
A Norman knight can stick a Saxon pig.

*A.* De Bracy, do not move me, for my mass  
Will pulverise a Frenchified fine ass.

*D. B.* Don't boast of size; remember it is brain  
That guides the eye and keeps the hand in train.  
Oh, I could pepper you in fifty places,  
Before you could make half-a-dozen faces.

*A.* And has it come to this? Can Bracy chuckle  
While thinking that his noble friend will knuckle  
Under to him? Is all the past a blank?  
No thought of nights when we so freely drank,  
That morn has found us lying side by side,  
Without a dream that ought could us divide?  
How calm would be this world without a huffer!

*D. B.* When Athelstane his Bracy will not suffer  
To make one philosophical remark,  
The world to Bracy is, he must say, dark.

*A.* Oh, Bracy, there is danger to the heart  
In being metaphysically smart.  
I'd rather see my Bracy lying dead,  
Than that his heart should suffer through his head.

*D. B.* But should a friend with microscopic eye  
Examine all his friend's morality?  
I'd rather be a goose, with naught but cackle,  
Than thus a bosom friend so hotly tackle.

*A.* Forgive me, Bracy, you have struck a chord  
That touches deeper than a lunge from sword;  
When Athy snubs his Bracy so again,  
Let him for dinner range this world in vain.



*D. B.* [*throwing his arms round ATHELSTANE*]  
Then thus shall Concord fold her shelt'ring wings,  
As Bracy to his heart his Athy brings.

*I.* How sudden storms do clear the sullen air;  
It's worth some noise to form so sweet a pair.  
But let me now explain what I propose.  
Whichever way things turn, you'll not be foes?

*D. B.* Never!

*A.* And he who this day gains his end,  
Will always ask his friend to help him spend.

*D. B.* Spoken, dear Athy, like a man and brother.

*I.* Allow me now to put to you one other  
Question—Supposing Ivanhoe's not dead?

*A.* Not dead!

*D. B.* Things cannot go on thus!

*A.* You said  
You were quite sure he had to death been hit.

*I.* No, no, I only heard report of it.  
But do not be so down upon your luck;  
No doubt, if he returns, you will want pluck,  
For, just before from Eastern lands I flitted,  
Four knights upon a single spear he spitted;  
And then, with sad, sweet voice, most neatly swore  
He was quite ready for another four.

*A. to D. B.* I think, De Bracy, things look rather  
queer.

*D. B. to A.* Dangers I do not see I do not fear.

*R.* I feel I need not fear with either knight.

*I.* Madam, I think you there are in the right;  
But I this possibility have kept in view,  
In making up the plan we should pursue:  
The safest match will be the strongest knight,  
For then return of husband won't give fright.

*D. B.* What! I fight Athy!

*A.* I my Bracy lunge!  
Not if I know it.

*D. B.* I would rather plunge  
Into the strongest castle's deepest moat.

*A.* No, Bracy, say not so, with your weak throat.

*I.* I would not two such dear friends put at  
odds;

My plan is only that the one who prods  
With Ivanhoe's great bow through two-inch deal  
Shall be the one this lady's heart to steal.

*D. B.* Palmer, I think you've settled for the  
best,

And thank you much for fixing such a test.  
I feel that under beauty's favouring eye,  
Ulysses' bow would not my arm deny;  
In fact I feel, in such a case as this,  
I could not, if I would, contrive a miss.

*A.* De Bracy, do not boast before the end,  
A stiffish bow takes muscle to extend;  
And you, De Bracy, though you are so handy,  
Are not too strong, though fortified with brandy.

*D. B.* Art, my dear Athy, is all men need ask.  
It's art that guides the lance to rounded casque;  
It's art that, when the blows are falling thick,  
Gives cunning to the knight to dodge them quick;  
And if I now can't draw a bow by art,  
I will, with grace, resign this lady's heart.

*A.* For all your art I do not care a rag,  
Though you, I think, make quite an art of brag.

*D. B.* My family their prowess never hid;  
'Bout Hastings' bloody field my grandsire did

A long-bow pull. How much there is in blood!  
 In me all comes from it that is no good;  
 So if my boasting ever you offend,  
 Slang Bracy's ancestors, and not your friend.

*R.* There is a question that I fain would ask—  
 A question that I never asked before—  
 Supposing neither's equal to the task,  
 Will any say what is for me in store?

*D. B.* Oh, never fear, for I will pull you through.

*I.* Madam, I think, from your new point of view,  
 It will be best, whoever bends the bow,  
 By that a title to your hand shall show.

*R.* Let it be so. Edith, I did deposit  
 The bow and shafts within the attic closet—  
 Fetch them. [*Exit* EDITH.]

It's often sad to watch the rise  
 Of some memento of departed friend;  
 How from saloon, from under tear-dimm'd eyes,  
 It mounts, and in the garret finds its end.

*D. B.* [*working his muscles*] My blood through  
 all my veins more freely dances  
 Than when I made so free with my free lances.

*A.* [*aside*] I fear that for this bow-extending test  
 My breakfast has made much too tight my vest;  
 And yet I dare not even loose one button,  
 Or Bracy will abuse me for a glutton.

[*Enter* EDITH *with bow, and gives*  
*it to* IVANHOE.]

*I.* Well, knights and gentlemen, are you quite  
 ready,  
 Or would you like delay your nerves to steady?

*D. B.* No, not for me, though pulling bows is  
knack  
That is developed by a cup of sack.

[*EDITH gives D. B. some sack.*

*I.* First string the bow, then to the shaft give  
wing,  
That it pass through that door, and onward sing.

[*BRACY takes bow, and tries to string it.*

*D. B.* Edith, there's some mistake, this is of  
iron,  
It would quite break the heart of Cœur-de-Lion.

[*Throws down bow.*

*A.* I told you so. You are of art too sure ;  
You think it is of all the perfect cure.  
Now see what muscle without art can do.

[*ATHELSTANE takes up bow, and strings  
it with difficulty.*

This is a task that can be done by few.

*D. B.* It's my turn now to say, don't be a  
bragger ;

You cannot draw the bow, with all your swagger.

*A.* Can't I? just see. It is a little stiff.

*D. B.* Athy, keep cool, don't get into a tiff.

[*After trying in vain, ATHELSTANE  
throws down bow.*

*A.* I do not think the beastly thing's a bow ;  
We both are fools this test to undergo.

*R.* And must I then put on the widow's cap,  
With sable folds my pretty figure wrap ;  
And force the trickling drop from arid eye,  
To make a doubting world believe I cry?

*I.* Not so, fair lady, there is one chance more.

[*Takes up bow and fixes arrow.*]

I'll try the bow, p'rhaps I can make a score.

[*Sends the arrow through the door.*]

*D. B.* Since Robin Hood gave up the gentle craft,

It's only Ivanhoe could wing such shaft.

*I.* [*throwing off his pilgrim's dress*] And Ivanhoe is here! pray don't be shocked.

*D. B.* [*aside, tumbling against ATHELSTANE*] I could with lightest feather down be knocked.

*A. to D. B.* Let's slope away before there is a squall,

His youthful blows I did not like at all.

[*Exit A. and D. B.*]

*R.* [*aside*] What, Ivanhoe returned! What will he think?

I'd better charge him home e'er he can wink.

[*Aloud*] Oh, doubtless your Rebecca's round the corner,

Though, if she is, I think that you should warn her,

That she again can't take Rowena in

\* With Holy Moseses and pensive grin;

And I suppose you are all over bruises—

Don't interrupt! Oh, I don't want excuses—

Pray go and fetch Rebecca and her spice,

Though maidens rubbing knights is not quite nice.

*I.* Stop, stop, Rowena.

*R.* [*aside*] Have I said enough?

*I.* All this about Rebecca is sad stuff,

For she has gone to fat, and is now nosey,

And then her Jewish talk got sadly prosy.

*R.* I knew it was just so. Whilst twenty years  
Rowena has been toss'd by hopes and fears,  
Her Ivanhoe has roam'd from land to land,  
With much-develop'd Jewess hand in hand.  
Can faithfulness find dwelling in this life?  
Yes! home of Constancy is heart of wife.

*I.* No; there, Rowena—there you go too far,  
I do not think I am particular;  
But how about your own two gentle suitors?

*R.* Oh, they are merely here as private tutors;  
And of Ulysses we have lately read,  
Why how like him it is you are not dead?

*I.* I have come home to lead a quiet life,  
For even killing palls, and late in strife  
I have not always had the best of it—  
Those wretched Templars have learnt how to sit.  
So, fair Rowena, let us live in peace,  
And of the past let recollections cease.

*R.* Oh, Ivanhoe, when I was Queen of Beauty,  
You did not speak in this cold-blooded way.

*I.* But don't forget that then you were a beauty,  
And when in love men don't care what they say.

*R.* I fear our life will now be very slow,  
And never more with keen excitement glow.

*I.* You need not think all life is vain,  
Whilst you have dress and rosary;  
And I can brag of Templars slain,  
Whilst stirring sack with rosemary.





## DOCTOR DALTON'S DAUGHTERS.

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### PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DR. DALTON, LL.D., F.R.S., &c.	MRS. DALTON, Wife of Dr. Dalton.
FRANK FAIRSIDE, Nephew of Doctor Dalton.	CAROLINE, } Daughters HELEN, } of LUCY, } Dr. Dalton.
CAPT. EDWARD MEEKING.	

### A C T I.

*Breakfast Parlour in Dr. DALTON'S House.*

*Enter LUCY with breakfast things on tray, and sets them down on table.*

*L.* To lay a breakfast for others to eat, and to eat a breakfast by others laid, how near they are in words, how far apart in action. From my experience of both, I decidedly prefer the latter; but then, Lucy, if you will have a scientific papa, you must take the consequences. Why could he not let me remain the maid in the parlour, instead of making me for half each day the parlour-maid? But I must arrange the breakfast things. But how? If I were to sit down to eat the breakfast, I should know at once if the muffins had

usurped the place of the teapot, and the proper relative positions of the butter and eggs; but, as parlour-maid, I am quite confused. [*Pushes things about.*] What shall I do? I think perhaps I had better sit down and pretend I am at breakfast. [*Sits.*] Pretence is, however, too far from reality to solve the problem, so I will help myself to a cup of tea, and then the teapot, by the laws of association, as Papa would say, will find its proper place. [*Helps herself to tea, and puts the teapot on the muffins.*] This will not do. The muffins under the teapot! No doubt they will keep each other warm; but comfort, at times, must be sacrificed to appearance.

[*Arranges things in a confused manner.*]

*Enter CAROLINE as housemaid, with broom.*

C. What! the breakfast not laid! You know Papa never likes to wait for his meals, he always says it is such a waste of time.

L. That is just one of Papa's fads. He is always saying time is wasted, unless you are proving something or improving somebody. Now the only proof I care for is the proof of the pudding; and as for improvement, some people's personal appearance may be improved, whilst others—— [*Draws herself up.*]

C. Can no more be improved than their minds.

L. Now don't be cross. I never interfere with your mental improvement. In fact, I always tell people that your depth of intellect is such that, like the well at Carisbrooke Castle, it requires a donkey to draw it.

C. In that case, Miss Impudence, when I am in the society of a certain captain, who shall be nameless, my intellect must be excessively drawn upon.

*L.* What! call my captain a donkey! Oh, Carry! I allow his name is Ned, and the patience he displays under my small shafts would even be an example to that useful but neglected animal; but think of his intellect—his boots are not brighter. Only the other day, I heard him answer, quite off-hand, without slate or pencil, one of those terribly confusing questions in which money and yards are so awfully muddled together.

*C.* But was his answer correct?

*L.* Correct—well—how *can* you, Carry, imagine anyone who dresses so correctly doing anything incorrectly?

*C.* Well, Lucy, we will not dispute about the contents of the volume—everyone allows that the binding is in the best modern style. But what would he say if he saw us in our present dresses, and occupied in housework?

*L.* As to my dress—well, I do not know, but I do not think I look very much amiss. No doubt a cotton print is a cotton print however put on, and is rather too printy for the highest art. But then, you must allow, style may raise it to the heights of an alpaca, and that in the best circles may pass, so long as you keep it off your umbrella.

*C.* But will not your cleaning the grates rather grate upon the keen susceptibilities of your young hero?

*L.* I forgive you your small joke, if you promise to keep secret this “most foul and unnatural conduct of Papa, as at the best it is.”

*C.* Oh, do not say that; you know Papa is only carrying out his ideal of female education. To me, scouring the heavens with a telescope would be pleasanter than scouring floors.

*L.* That is, you prefer a crick in the neck to one in

the back. But I must not waste my time with you, I must ring the breakfast bell. [*Going, and then returning.*] By-the-bye, I think it is very kind of me talking with you so familiarly. You must remember the social status of the parlour-maid is much above that of the housemaid. But Papa says it is right to try and sympathise with the feelings of the lower orders, so, if you do not presume on my condescension, no harm will have been done.

[*Exit* LUCY.]

C. Poor Lucy! the Arts and Sciences with her seem to be confined to Millinery and Military. I wonder what Papa would think of this result of his many-sided female education. Perhaps, however, it is not many-sided enough, for he seems to forget that women's hearts require quite as much education as their minds. Here, in a family brought up in the strictest sect of the evolutionists, most of its members, who ought to be developing into non-marrying angels, are evidently cases of reversion, and, if something is not done, will fall back into the Darby and Joan state of existence. Lucy is hopeless, and I am afraid Helen is past praying for. Well, there is some excuse for her; Cousin Frank's cleverness and brightness are very fascinating. Why, I think if my early affections had not been won by the fleeting charms of the unstable tadpole, I, even I, should— [*Sighs.*] Well, I had better not say what, or my tadpoles may grow jealous and refuse to change their skins, and then what would become of development? But I must now return, as the poet sings, "to the vile dust from whence I sprung." By-the-bye, it is said there is a great deal of philosophy in dust. I only wish those gentlemen who take such an interest in it would relieve me

of my broom, and help themselves here. They might stuff eyes, nose, and mouth with cotton wool, and still my dust would inoculate them. [*Looking at her hands.*] Like the new method of taking morphia, it is absorbed through the skin.

*Enter* Dr. DALTON.

*Dr. D.* Well, my young philosopher, contemplating—not thinking of extracting sunbeams from cucumbers?

*C.* No, Papa, I am rather thinking of extracting notes from fingers. But here is a difficulty I wish, Papa, you would solve—When two theories practically interfere with each other, what should govern the following of one rather than of the other?

*Dr. D.* That, my dear, is rather an indigestible question to attack before breakfast.

*C.* Well, the case is this:—Your theory of female education requires me to perform certain things which your germ theory renders most appalling. The use of my broom raises millions of germs, each looking out for his favourite nidus, in which to make himself quite at home, and to commence the apparently suicidal but really paternal act of cutting himself up into offspring. Now, after a short exercise with my broom, I feel from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet all nidus; and even if I were incased in a full suit of mail, some germs, I am sure, would take advantage of a missing link.

*Dr. D.* Well, Carry, your fear is certainly not groundless; but you must remember that, when a danger exists, Nature—perhaps, as we are alone, I may say Providence—generally provides a remedy. Now, in this case, a well-



known philosopher has shown that the germs are destroyed by passing them over red-hot iron; therefore, I think, without going beyond the bounds of logic, we may infer that passing red-hot iron over the germs will produce a like effect. Could you not, therefore, whilst using your broom with one hand, with the other wield a red-hot poker. Our young friend, Captain Meeking, seems an amiable young man, and, I dare say, would teach you the sword exercise.

*C.* But will not that be rather inconvenient?

*Dr. D.* Well, perhaps so; but I do not see that Providence is bound to make antidotes convenient.

*C.* But, Papa, even with your patent cut-and-thrust red-hot poker, I fear the germs will find me out, and I may be laid up with two or three diseases at once.

*Dr. D.* Ah, now, that would be interesting—three diseases at once! Why, we should then have fought out, close under our eyes, the great struggle for existence we are taught is always going on, unless indeed they showed the white feather, and went and sulked in different extremities. But really, now, if it would not be very inconvenient to you, only think of the microscopic sections we might get; and perhaps, Carry, my dear, as you of all my daughters are the only one, I fear, with any real love for science, you might not object to a little injection, it would so bring out the beauties of the different germs; and then the monograph we would publish—why, we would make it a joint affair, and your name would go down to posterity.

*C.* Oh, my name might enjoy that, but I had much rather my whole skin went a little farther along the road to posterity; and I tell you what it is, Papa, if you go



on talking like this, I shall put myself under the protection of the Anti-Vivisection Society.

*Dr. D.* Well, child, you have not got the diseases yet, so we will not follow that will-o'-the-wisp, the pleasure of anticipation. But here comes Mamma.

*Enter Mrs. DALTON.*

*Mrs. D.* You here, Carry, with your broom in the breakfast parlour! it is wanted in the hall. I saw a gorged spider on the ceiling as I came down stairs.

*C.* Oh yes, I saw it this morning, but I thought Papa would like it preserved. *[Exit CARRY.*

*Mrs. D.* Well, Doctor, we are rather late, so let us sit down at once to breakfast. Just look in what confusion Lucy has left the table! Ever since your new domestic arrangement, everything about the house is at sixes and sevens.

*Dr. D.* No; excuse me, my dear, not everything. The children's getting up in the morning is, I am sure, more eights and nines than sixes and sevens.

*Mrs. D.* And whose fault is that? How can my alarum act conscientiously, when half its time you keep it under the exhausted receiver of your air-pump, working its inside out, and not making a sound.

*Dr. D.* I am sure I have not had the alarum more than half-a-dozen times to show my new arrangement of that old experiment; and the unpunctuality of my children is like my rheumatism—chronic. Perhaps the children wish to show that as, when you make up your mind, you can wake at a bidden time, so, if you make up your mind, you can sleep at a forbidden time.

*Mrs. D.* Well, suppose we now discuss our breakfast, and not the philosophy of our children's laziness.

[*They sit down.*

*Dr. D.* [*taking off cover from dish*] What, resoles again! Really, Helen shows a great want of imagination. Why, we had resoles for dinner last night!

*Mrs. D.* Yes; and they were so hard, they rolled about my plate. I could scarcely get my fork into them.

*Dr. D.* Oh, I should not have cared if they had confined themselves to rolling on my plate. They have, alas! been rolling about all night. I applied brandy as a break, but that only seemed to convert their rolling into a grinding motion, which was worse.

*Mrs. D.* Well, Doctor, if you will try experiments in everything, you must be prepared for the consequences. I am sure I told you what would be the result of carrying out this last fad of yours.

*Dr. D.* Oh yes, I never complain, my dear, of your not speaking your mind, though perhaps the language in which it is expressed might sometimes be altered with advantage. Do you know the exact meaning of the word "fad" you used just now?

*Mrs. D.* Oh—well—yes, of course I do. It means that you are what is called "faddy."

*Dr. D.* I hope, like some microscopes, your power of penetration is higher than that of definition.

*Mrs. D.* I am sure I am not like any such useless thing. What is the use of magnifying a flea to the size of a lobster, when, after all your trouble, you cannot even flavour a sauce with it?

*Dr. D.* I doubt if a microscope has ever been looked at from your point of view before; but does not the idea

of penetrating into Nature's most hidden secrets make you feel that no trouble is too great to lift even a corner only of her veil?

*Mrs. D.* Nature may keep her veil and her secrets to herself, if only I could find out Helen's. I am sure there is something between her and Nephew Frank; and as you say he has behaved so disgracefully—though I am sure I cannot make out exactly how—I think we ought to break off all communication between them.

*Dr. D.* Of course we ought; but I cannot think a daughter of mine would have so little self-respect as to hold communication with any one who had been expelled the house.

*Mrs. D.* Oh, Doctor, I think you understand chemical better than human nature. You are always talking of the wonderful strength of chemical affinity; but, to my thinking, it is weak in comparison to that between two young people of opposite sex.

*Dr. D.* Well, if that is the case, we must proceed as we should in chemistry, and find something of greater affinity to tear Helen away from her infatuation. What do you think of a thorough scientific course of some subject that is not at all dry—say mineralogy, for instance? I am sure, tracing the modifications produced in the angles of crystals by alterations in their chemical composition would be so exciting that it would leave no room in the mind for any other subject.

*Mrs. D.* I think you forget that, in this case, it is not the mind we have to engage, but the heart.

*Dr. D.* Surely the heart has enough to do to mind its pumping and look after its valves.

*Mrs. D.* You did not always take this mechanical

view of the heart. Do you not remember our meetings under the old oak beside the brook? You said then many pretty things about the heart.

*Dr. D.* Oh yes, now you recall it, I do remember saying many foolish things. At the time, I could not make out what was urging me to such eccentricity—there seemed to be something within myself that was not myself, that was making a fool of itself. I suppose, as you say, it was the heart.

*Mrs. D.* Now, Doctor, you are overdoing your part of cynic. Time and a long course of offensive gases may have altered your feelings with regard to myself, but I know you still have a warm corner in your heart for your daughters.

*Dr. D.* Oh, do not think that, Kate; you still are *facile princeps* there. You must bear with your old doctor. To be constantly believing oneself on the point of grasping a new idea, and yet feeling it just beyond one's powers of mental reach, sickens the heart and tends to sour the disposition. Oh, if Frank were only with me still! His mind is like a still, deep lake; and my somewhat muddy and confused ideas, after passing through it, possess all the clearness of the Rhone at Geneva.

*Mrs. D.* But was Frank's conduct so utterly base as to leave no hope for future amendment?

*Dr. D.* Oh yes, yes. A man who steals the ideas of other people, and then publishes them as his own, is hopeless—hopeless.

*Mrs. D.* Well, Doctor, I suppose we women cannot sympathise in such cases. I am sure, if Taffy came to my house only to steal my ideas, I might think his

conduct unbecoming a Welshman and a gentleman ; but if he left my provisions alone, I should not be very hard upon him.

*Dr. D.* In the case you suppose, Mr. Taffy would certainly "steal from you that which ne'er enriches him." But I must not stay a moment longer. I have remained too long already, as I have an experiment in progress that may result in an explosion if the heat is continued too long.

*Mrs. D.* Oh, pray then, Doctor, don't wait a moment ; please take off the heat at once, and if that will not stop it, a little Eau-de-Cologne is very cooling.

*Dr. D.* You need not excite yourself. In this case, even if it does explode, it will do little harm. I can't, however, say that for all my experiments. I do not tell you when I am compressing gases with a pressure of 500 atmospheres ; for then you might, with cause, be a little nervous.

*Mrs. D.* Oh, Doctor, if, when with all your worldly goods you me endowed, you had endowed me with fewer diabolical explosive instruments, I should be a happier wife, and might hope to depart this life in peace, and not in pieces, as I very much fear will now be the case. [*Explosion heard.*] Ah, there it goes.

*Dr. D.* And so must I, or my laboratory will be flooded. [*Exit Dr. D.*]

*Mrs. D.* Oh, what a life is mine ! The wife of an experimental philosopher is perhaps the most awful position a lady can be placed in. Talk about the trials of a soldier's wife ! If an accident does happen, she has a grateful country's sympathy, not to mention the pension list ; whereas, in my case, I have constantly to feel that



at any moment all that is dear to me may, like the looks of the saintly nun, be "commercing with the skies." Still, as the Doctor is so fond of saying, there are two sides to every question; and as far as my experience goes, give a natural philosopher a little line as to crotchets, and you may lead him with a cobweb. But I must say they show some sense in this; for in all questions of the least practical importance, a baby might impose upon them.

*Ente LUCY with a letter in her hand, which she gives to Mrs. DALTON.*

*L.* I found this, Mamma, just now in the letter-box. It must have been overlooked last night by Caroline.

*Mrs. D.* As parlour-maid, Lucy, you must not bring a letter to your mistress in your hand, you should bring it on a salver. You must, Lucy, try and remember better the details of your work. It is the finish given to detail that marks the true artist.

*L.* I am afraid, Mamma, I shall never make an artistic parlour-maid—unless, indeed, taking pains with dressing the part would be of service.

*Mrs. D.* Well, child, you must do your best. You know Papa thinks that those who have to command should be competent to perform the work they order; and not only that, but he thinks, if fortune should ever forsake you, you might perhaps find employment as a lady-help.

*L.* If that sad case should ever occur, I can only say, God help the lady.

*Mrs. D.* Now, child, take away the breakfast things, and then see to the grate. [*Reads letter.*] "Captain



Meeking presents his compliments to Mrs. Dalton, and he will have the honour of waiting upon her to-morrow morning, at 10 a.m., if not inconvenient, as he wishes to consult her upon an affair of importance." [*Looks at her watch.*] He will be here almost immediately. I must just go upstairs for a minute. Oh, Lucy, you need not be long with the grate this morning. [*Exit Mrs. D.*]

*L.* How curious it is that parents, after such opportunities for observation, should so little know the character of their children. How could it enter into Mamma's head that I should ever be long at anything I did not like. [*LUCY cleans the grate, then pauses.*] Well, I do think I am getting something of a polish now. It begins to look nearly as bright as the face of that native missionary we heard last Sunday. I wonder if polishing the consciences of niggers is cleaner work than polishing grates. I fancy it is better paid; and that ought not to be. I shall strike for higher wages, and not again be deceived by the syren notes of "all found." Let me see, 2½d. a-day extra would by the end of the month come to—let me see—yes—no. [*Counts on her fingers, and gets confused.*] Well, now, if Captain Meeking were only by my side, he could tell me at once, without the use of his fingers.

*Enter* CAPTAIN MEEKING, *shown in by* CAROLINE.

*Capt. M.* Oh, thank you; pray, do not hurry Mrs. Dalton. I can wait. [*Exit CAROLINE.*] I should rather think so. I feel already a sort of all-overish sensation—a feet-in-mustard-and-water-and-water-gruel sensation. Why, really, I thought I was more of a man; I never felt so down in the mouth before. I have sought

the bubble reputation e'en in the cannon's mouth ; and though I must confess I have felt deuced nervous during the search, yet never before did I feel in such an abject state of funk. I do not know whether, after all, a masterly retreat would not display the best generalship. No, no ; I should then expose my flank as I passed through the hall. I think, however, I will get behind this table ; we are always having it dinned into us that a soldier's first duty is in all cases to entrench himself.

[*Gets behind the table and sees LUCY.*] What, Lucy !

*L.* [*rising and curtseying*] My name is Lucy, sir.

*Capt. M.* I beg a thousand pardons, Miss Dalton.

*L.* Oh, I am not Miss Dalton.

*Capt. M.* [*aside*] A most surprising likeness ; but now, when I look again, I see it is only superficial. [*Aloud.*] Why, Lucy, I have been in all the four quarters of the world, and have never seen such a fascinating little cap.

*L.* I am very glad you think so, sir. It washes beautiful.

*Capt. M.* I am sure it does ; everything about you not only washes beautiful, as you say, but is beautiful.

*L.* Oh no, sir ; there you are mistaken. This print [*points to her dress*], though it cost 6½d. a-yard, has not one fast colour in it ; and more shame for it, as the young man who sold it to me took his Bible-oath that they were all as fast as he.

*Capt. M.* But perhaps he was a slow young man, and so was not forsworn.

*L.* Oh no, sir ; all the gentlemen behind the counter must be fast, or we should buy nothing from them.

*Capt. M.* But, Lucy, never mind about the dress ; it is not the fastness of the colour in it, but in your eyes,

cheeks, and lips, that give me such an interest in you. You must know I always have a soft place in my heart for a pretty girl.

*L.* I have heard my papa say there are more soft places in people's heads than in their hearts.

*Capt. M.* Why, Lucy, your papa must be quite a cynic.

*L.* What is that, sir?

*Capt. M.* Oh, it's a kind of a—you know what I mean—a sort of an unpleasant fellow in a tub.

*L.* Oh, I see; a kind of dog. Thank you, sir, for taking such pains to explain so clearly to a poor uneducated girl. But I do not think it very nice of you to call my papa a dog.

*Capt. M.* [*aside*] By Jove, I think the little hussy must be poking fun at me. [*Aloud*] No, no; you have mistaken me, Lucy; you can only metaphorically call a cynic a dog. A cynic bites with his tongue and not with his teeth.

*L.* Is that, sir, when the unpleasant fellow is in his tub or out of his tub?

*Capt. M.* Oh, bother the cynic! You must know, Lucy, I quite envy you the pleasure of waiting upon the Miss Daltons, and especially upon your namesake, Miss Lucy.

*L.* Oh yes, sir; it is no doubt a great privilege to wait on Miss Lucy, though she does make me wait rather long for her dresses. The fact is, sir, though you will hardly believe it, Miss Lucy's dresses lead quite a chameleon existence. What with dyeing and turning, and turning and dyeing, when they come to me, I do not think a single part of the dress knows how to behave itself properly.

*Capt. M.* Oh, Lucy, you should take example by the doctors, and not unfold the mysteries of the dissecting room.

*L.* As, sir, you say I ought not to disclose the secrets of the dressing-room, perhaps I ought not to disclose those of the drawing-room; but I have heard master say that, if ever Miss Lucy married, her husband would have more than he bargained for, as a girl with more spontaneous impudence he had never, in a long and varied experience, heard, seen, or read of.

*Capt. M.* That's rather too strong, don't you think, Lucy?

*L.* Not so strong as Miss Lucy's fingers; they do pinch hawful.

*Capt. M.* Oh, nonsense, don't tell me. It must be quite a pleasure to be squeezed by such dear, delicate little fingers.

*L.* Well then, perhaps, sir, you would find it pleasant to carry about with you the marks of eight incisors—four canine, and—well, I will say this for the molars, their number is indeterminate, and marks faint.

*Capt. M.* Good heavens! Oh, I see; you saucy little monkey, you are only joking.

*L.* Oh dear no, sir; in my circle it is never considered proper to joke with Her Majesty's forces or the police.

*Capt. M.* Why so?

*L.* Because, sir, out-of-door duty seems to develope the frame at the expense of the——[*Touches her forehead.*] But I hear Missus coming. I must run away. [*Aside*] What a dear delightful puzzle-head it is. [*Exit Lucy.*]

*Capt. M.* I can't make out that girl—so like Miss Lucy Dalton in face and figure, and, by Jove, also in

pertness ; and yet she is evidently the parlour-maid. One would require all one's wits about one in this house. The worst of having anything to do with these awfully clever people is, it is so fatiguing. Perhaps, after all, I am making a great mistake ; but then Lucy is so charmingly pretty.

*Enter Mrs. DALTON.*

*Mrs. D.* Good morning, Captain Meeking.

*Capt. M.* Good morning, Mrs. Dalton ; I am sure I must apologise for being such an early visitor, but I wished so much to consult you on a subject that is of the utmost importance to myself, and in which you also will naturally take an interest.

*Mrs. D.* Whatever is of importance to Captain Meeking will always be of interest to me.

*Capt. M.* Oh, thank you, Mrs. Dalton, for saying so ; you thus render my task easier.

*Mrs. D.* Perhaps if we seated ourselves it would be more convenient. [*Seat themselves.*]

*Capt. M.* The fact is, Mrs. Dalton, you—you have a daughter ?

*Mrs. D.* To be strictly accurate, I have three daughters.

*Capt. M.* Oh yes, of course, three Graces and that sort of thing ; but I was thinking only of your youngest daughter, Miss Lucy Dalton.

*Mrs. D.* Well, sir, and what about my daughter Lucy ?

*Capt. M.* Oh, pray don't speak in that tone, or I am sure I shall break down ; you have no idea what a memory I have got, or rather have not got, or I am sure you would not confuse me. Oh, now please let me begin again. You have a daughter, and I really don't know



what I shall do unless you let me marry her. [*Aside*]  
Thank heaven, it is out at last.

*Mrs. D.* Am I then to understand that this is a formal proposal of marriage to my youngest daughter?

*Capt. M.* Oh dear no, Mrs. Dalton, I know I ought not yet to go so far as that; but, you see, Dr. Dalton is so awfully clever that I am afraid to speak to him, so I thought if, some day when he is not quite so clever as usual, you would kindly put in a word for me, it might have a good effect.

*Mrs. D.* Well, I will do the best I can for you, though I ought perhaps to inform you that Dr. Dalton holds very strong views as to the importance of education in married life, and I have heard him say that he would not be doing his duty if he did not examine every young man that put in a claim for the hand of one of his daughters.

*Capt. M.* Good heavens! Examined again! Why, I did think a captain in Her Majesty's forces had been so turned inside-out by examinations that the poor fellow would be let alone until his great final above. Marriages, they say, are made in heaven; I wish to goodness all examinations were made there too.

*Mrs. D.* Oh, you need not fear. I do not think the Doctor requires much—say the Differential and Integral Calculus, and just enough of the mechanical theory of heat as will show you take a warm interest in science.

*Capt. M.* I would go through fire and water for the hand of Miss Lucy; but surely the Doctor cannot expect me to go through thermo and hydro-dynamics?

*Mrs. D.* Well, well, we shall see. I will speak to the Doctor; and if you call upon him this evening, he will, I am sure, feel honoured by your visit.



*Capt. M.* Thank you, Mrs. Dalton, for all your kindness. I shall be sure to call this evening; and in the meantime I shall mug up the Binomial Theorem for fractional indices, as the Doctor may hit upon that by chance. [*Exit Capt. M.*

*Mrs. D.* I doubt if we could do better for Lucy. He is well connected—has some money—will have more; and though it would be an exaggeration to say he is a modern Solomon, still he is not such a bad young fellow after all; and in these latter days they are not as plenty as blackberries.

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ACT II.

*Kitchen in Dr. DALTON'S house. HELEN, as cook,  
mincing meat.*

*H.* My poor fingers, how tired they are! What with chopping all the morning, and Chopin all the afternoon, they have scarcely a semi-quaver's rest. I am surprised at Papa having not only strength of mind but strength of body to go on with this domestic experiment of his. He must have a splendid constitution, and the digestion of an ostrich. But how shall I get the dinner cooked to-day? my wretched ovens either remain as cold as a stone, or get red hot, so that my finished works either have the ruddy tints of a Danby, or the burnt umber shades of a Salvator Rosa. But I have sent for the plumber. Oh, this reminds me. I must see at what time he will call. Oh, here is the letter. [*Takes letter from her pocket—reads.*] "Miss Helen Dalton." Why, this is Frank's handwriting. [*Opens letter and reads.*] "Helen darling, I must sun myself in your soft, beaming

eyes, and quench my thirst at the fountain of your rose-tinted lips, or speedy death will be the portion of your inconsolable Frank—so be surprised at nothing. I shall be a very Proteus to gain sight of your pretty little self." I always do like Frank's letters; they are so simple; nothing exaggerated about them. I wonder, however, what he means by being a "Proteus." Oh, I remember, Proteus was the gentleman who turned himself into anything and everything nasty. But I'm sure Frank can't do that, even if he tried. [*Enter CAROLINE, who seeks about.*]

*H.* Oh, I am so very, very sorry, Carry.

*C.* Why, what's the matter?

*H.* You will be so vexed; but I really could not help it. I am sure it was quite an accident.

*C.* An accident! What was an accident?

*H.* Why, I was making stock. That, you must know, Carry, is rather a dirty, messy-looking stuff that we cooks, by our art, turn into the brightest-looking soups; that is to say, when we have luck, and——

*C.* Good gracious! you put my tadpoles into your stock?

*H.* Oh no, Carry, not so bad as that. I was pouring out my stock to cool, and your glass with the tadpoles was, unfortunately, on the table; but I discovered the mistake in time—yes, I discovered it in time. I am afraid, however, the tadpoles must have undergone a very sudden change of climate; but I believe they have not suffered from it, as I immediately put them out of the window to cool.

*C.* [*goes to the window and finds tadpoles stuck in a jelly. Holds up glass*] What, Helen, do you call this not suffering from your mistake?

*H.* Oh, I am so very sorry. But do you not think, if we slowly melted the jelly, some of them might still be alive?

*C.* No, no, you have suffocated the dear little creatures. But I must say, Helen, I am surprised at one thing. From my unhappy experience of your soups, I should never have thought that, even at their best moments, they would have gelatinised.

*H.* Then, dear, you have learnt something from this unfortunate experiment.

*C.* Yes; but at what a cost! I was just upon the point of demonstrating that the observation of that conceited young man, Professor Allsight, was quite wrong; and that the tadpole does not begin his change by nibbling off bits of his tail, but by rubbing his tail against his head—a most important difference.

*H.* Yes, yes, I see; of course it is, because how would he know when to stop? He might go on till he nibbled his own head off.

*C.* Oh, nonsense, Helen. How can you be so foolish? The beauty of my observation lies in this, that it is another illustration of the important doctrine that Nature always takes the shortest way of accomplishing her ends; for do you not see, as the tadpole changes both his head and tail, what a waste of time it would be if he only nibbled his tail? Whereas, by the friction of his tail against his head, he gets rid of both at once; and not only this, but, as the mechanical theory of heat teaches us, he keeps himself warm at the same time.

*H.* Why, Carry, how awfully clever you are! I never could have thought of all this; and it strikes me its truth is only equalled by its importance. [*Aside*] A little butter is useful in other things besides cooking.

*C.* Oh yes, dear, questions of this kind require long and anxious consideration ; and of course it is not everyone who can, whilst probing the minutest details, keep a firm grasp of general principles.

*Enter* Dr. DALTON.

*Dr. D.* Helen, could you lend me, for an hour or so, your frying-pan? I want to use it as a temporary sand bath.

*H.* Well, if you will be a very good papa, perhaps I can ; but you must remember, if at any future time your cutlets have rather a gritty taste, it will not be my fault.

*Dr. D.* From my experience of children, nothing ever is their fault. Parents and predestination now have to answer for everything.

*C.* If children never commit faults, sisters do ; for, look ! here, Papa, are my tadpoles embedded in the stock for soup.

*Dr. D.* You don't mean to say, Helen, you were flavouring our soup with tadpoles? [*Aside*] Really the education of my daughters is becoming more difficult every day. I see Helen ought not to have been sent into the kitchen till she had gone through a course of Natural History. She has evidently been mistaking Amphibiæ for Mollusca.

*H.* No, Papa, my mistake was not so bad as that, though I do not think you should be surprised if I do make great blunders. You can hardly expect the arts of cooking and music not to be sometimes out of harmony. How can I whip a cream properly whilst an adagio movement is running in my head? Of course, if one could always command one's feelings, the remembrance

of an allegro with staccato passages in it would probably assist the operation.

*C.* Still, Helen, you must remember there is a higher unity between your occupations as cook and musician, than between mine as savant and housemaid; for, recollect, in yours taste governs both, whilst it would be a bold assertor indeed who maintained that intelligence ever governed a housemaid.

*H.* Are you, Carry, bringing your science to bear upon the making of beds? for, ever since you have made mine, my feet have always appeared to be running down to my head.

*C.* Oh, you have observed that!

*Dr. D.* I do not know about observing it, but, now Helen speaks of it, I recollect that each morning lately I have been awakened by a nightmare. I have always credited it to Helen's practice of the art of cookery; but I have now no doubt it is due to the slope of the bed.

*C.* Well, Papa, I do make the beds slope downwards from the foot to the head, and I do so on principle.

*Dr. D.* When anyone tells me he does something from principle, I always feel sure the practice will be unpleasant.

*C.* But you are constantly telling us we ought to have a reason for everything we do; and mine in this case, I am sure, you will quite approve.

*Dr. D.* Yes; but how about the nightmare?

*C.* Oh, that is a detail. I am sure, Papa, when I make any objection to a point in a theory of yours, you always say it is a mere detail.

*Dr. D.* [*aside*] The education of daughters must stop somewhere; and I think that point must be overstepped when the theories of fathers are not held sacred.



*H.* I do hope, Carry, your theory is not one of the fashionable development kind, or we may soon be sleeping with our heads downwards.

*C.* Oh, you need not fear that; there is, no doubt, some difficulty in finding the correct constant to use in my equation for the angle of slope; but it would have to be infinity to give a vertical position; and I propose to try and obtain its true value by experiment.

*Dr. D.* Goodness gracious me! You don't mean to say you are going to experiment in this cold-blooded way on your own flesh and blood?

*C.* Oh yes, Papa; you have always taught us that, for the discovery of truth, human conveniences should not be considered; though, of course, I have not altered my own bed, as I have heard you many times most eloquently descant on the necessity of getting rid of any personal bias in working out a result.

*Dr. D.* [*aside*] I begin to think with Mrs. Dalton that it is quite time Caroline was married and settled.

*C.* But, Papa, would you not like to hear my theory?

*Dr. D.* Oh, I have not time now to give it the consideration I am sure it deserves. Helen, I hear the plumber has been sent for about the boiler; let me know when he comes, as I wish to speak to him about a new arrangement I have thought of for the overflow pipe.

[*Exit Dr. D.*

*C.* That is always the way with Papa; he never will listen to my theories, though I am sure they are quite as good as his—that, however, is not saying much for them. But I will go over again all my observations; for I will say this for poor Papa, he is quickness itself in finding out my mistakes. Parents, though doubtless very nice, are rather trying.

[*Exit CAROLINE.*



*H.* [*laughing*] I have always been taught that the philosophic temperament is one of calmness, relieved from dulness by reflection; but really, Miss Caroline, your little tempers would quite harmonise with those of the enraged musician. But now I am alone, and could think of the meaning of Frank's letter if the dinner were not on my mind. How easy it is in the drawing-room to keep the keenest edge upon my feelings; whilst here, with soup, fish, and entrées always on my mind or on the fire—not in the fire, Miss Lucy—I have not time to serve up sentiments as well. I am getting quite weary of this drudgery; I think I shall at least strike for a kitchen-maid. Life without somebody to bully is too humiliating.

*Enter Mrs. DALTON.*

*Mrs. D.* I am afraid I am rather late, but I have been detained by Captain Meeking. Let me see what you have, that we may settle upon to-day's dinner? [*HELEN produces some cold mutton.*] Well, what shall it be, mutton broiled or mutton hashed?

*H.* Oh, Mamma, do fix on the second; I can always make a hash of anything.

*Mrs. D.* On second thoughts, however, I think we must take more pains with our dinners. Your dear papa has the temper of a saint; but I do think his deep calm is sometimes ruffled by the sameness of his dinners. You know he holds that with dining, as with every other art, there should be unity with variety. Now the unity we certainly do accomplish; but do you not think, Helen, it is within your power to get some variety by giving a veal-cutletty air to our old friend the mutton chop? a few slices of lemon artistically arranged now,

and the chops floating in that thick, muddy gravy of yours, might perhaps, for a brief moment, give the doctor a glimpse of that unity with variety that the artistic side of his nature requires.

*H.* Oh, I can do the slices of lemon, and the chops most certainly will not sink in my gravy; but will not the flavour betray the illusion?

*Mrs. D.* I do not think so. You will find, Helen, that appearances go so far in this world, that the little space left for reality is not of much consequence. Helen, there is something else I have to speak to you about. I hope you remember that your father, when he said all communication between any of his family and your Cousin Frank must cease, was quite in earnest, and meant what he said.

*H.* Yes, Mamma. But, Mamma dear, you do not think Cousin Frank did anything that was wrong, do you?

*Mrs. D.* All I know is, that your father is convinced that he did; and what we have to do is to carry out his orders to the letter.

*H.* No doubt, Mamma; but don't you think strict obedience to one law sometimes causes you to disobey another and perhaps a higher one?

*Mrs. D.* That may be so; but to us Papa's dictum should be as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

*H.* Oh, Mamma dear, that's quite old-fashioned; that went out with Sir Anthony Absolute. Papa always says obedience is not worth anything unless founded on reason. Now is it reasonable to believe that Cousin Frank, who, as you know, has all his life been the soul of openness, should suddenly commit the awful meanness Papa fancies?

*Mrs. D.* I do think, child, there has been some mistake, and I trust time will clear it up. In the meantime, we must act as Papa desires. [*Exit Mrs. D.*]

*H.* Mamma is, after all, quite right. I shall let Frank know, if he comes here, that I will never speak to him again. [*Enter FRANK, dressed as a plumber.*] Good heavens! Frank.

*F.* Did you not get my letter?

*H.* Yes; but Proteus never took the form of a plumber.

*F.* No, no; we are not plumbers now—hydraulic engineers, if you please; and Proteus was at the head of a water company.

*H.* But, really, Frank, you ought not to come here. If Papa were to discover you, I am sure we should never meet again. You ought to have more patience, dear Frank. In time this dark cloud will pass away.

*F.* My dear little woman, let patience follow prudence to the dogs; I'll none of them. Do you think I can live only on mental and bodily food? No, my heart requires nourishment as well; and I mean not to starve it, but to give it a full meal whenever and wherever I can get the chance. [*Caresses her.*] But you need not be alarmed; my uncle will never suspect me in this disguise.

*H.* Oh, but I have to let him know you are here, as he wishes to speak to the plumber about the boiler.

*F.* The deuce he does; that makes things serious.

*H.* But that is not the worst; from what Mamma has just been saying to me, I am sure she suspects that we still communicate with each other; and she is so much sharper than Papa in all practical matters, that I feel sure she will find this out. Oh, I do wish I were a real

cook in a genteel family—of course I mean where followers are allowed. What nice walks we would have on Sundays!

*F.* But, Helen, unroll the picture farther, and see the once gay follower—perambulator driven by one arm, fat sleepy boy clasped by the other, followed one step behind by the *ci-devant* cook, decidedly developed, and, like Falstaff, larding the lean earth as she struggles waddlingly along.

*H.* As for that, Frank, every human picture, unrolled far enough, gives so gloomy a scene, that even humour fails to lighten it.

*F.* Then let us leave it in the dark. I, like the busy bee, will improve the present shining hour, by gathering the honey from these sweet lips. [*Kisses her.*

*H.* Now don't, Frank; you should not do such things; besides, it's not proper.

*F.* Not proper!

*H.* Of course not.

*F.* There, Helen, you are quite wrong. Rosalind says that, under the circumstances, the proper thing——

*H.* Who cares what Rosalind says? A nasty, forward thing, that went about the world in a pair of——

*F.* May I suggest continuations?

*H.* You may suggest nothing of the kind, sir—doublet and hose you know I meant. Kissing may be a light matter to you men, but to us it is most sacred.

*F.* I am very sorry, Helen. I grant I did it too lightly; but let me make amends, and do it now as a sacred duty.

*H.* No, no, duty's sacred call must wait—but let us

be serious ; cannot you get to the bottom of this mistake of Papa's ?

*F.* Oh yes, I think I can ; I am only waiting for a letter ; but what is more to the purpose, I have been most fortunate in a recent investigation ; and I am sure, if I were the old gentleman himself, the other old gentleman would now forgive me anything.

*H.* But I don't want you to be forgiven anything. My Frank must be *sans reproche*.

*F.* Oh, must he ? then I am deuced sorry for your Frank—nothing so fatiguing as having too good a character. But, Helen, we must think of some safe method of holding communication. How can we do it ? Your woman's wit should be able to invent a plan.

*H.* No, Frank, we must not meet like this again. I feel I ought not now to be speaking to you, knowing as I do Papa's expressed wishes. Oh, don't tempt me, dearest Frank.

*F.* This is all nonsense, Helen ; all's fair in love and war.

*H.* Oh no, no ; Papa so trusts to our honour. It really cannot be.

*F.* That is to say, you don't care to see me.

*H.* That is too cruel. You want, Frank, to have your own way in everything. I think it would have been better for you if you had been brought up with brothers, and not only with your three cousins.

*F.* Quarrelling with brothers must no doubt be an education in itself.

*H.* Oh, I hear Papa coming ! What shall we do ? Oh, what will become of us ? You could not hide yourself anywhere, could you ? No, no, that is no use ;



Papa wants to speak to you. I am sure I shall break down.

*F.* For goodness' sake, don't do that, or I shall not be able to play my part. But you must tell me what is the matter with the boiler. We have forgotten all about it.

*H.* The matter with the boiler! The matter with the boiler! What shall I do? I can't think of anything. Oh, the boiler! Oh, it has the most contrary disposition; nothing seems to please. I am sure I am pulling out and pushing in dampers all day long, and still it goes on making the most hideous noises, and driving me out of my wits.

*F.* Is not some pipe wrong?

*H.* All the pipes must be wrong. What is the use of having the plumber if they are all right?

*F.* But we must have something definite to tell Uncle about the boiler.

*H.* That is always your way, Frank. When one is in a flurry, you are always wanting something definite. Why, I remember, when we used to meet in the shrubbery, and I was rather in a flutter, you were always insisting upon something definite.

*F.* Well, then, I must make up what is the matter, and you must assent to everything I say. [*Frank retires to the boiler, and Helen goes on with her work.*]

*Enter* Dr. DALTON.

*Dr. D.* Helen, I have just this moment heard that the plumber is here, so I have come to speak to him.

*H.* [*comes up to her father and puts her hand to his mouth.*] Hush! hush! don't speak to him, Papa. He says he is one of those workmen who must not be disturbed at his work.



*Dr. D.* That is just the sort of man I like—one with an enthusiasm for turning out good work. I hope you explained to him what was wrong?

*H.* Oh yes ; at least as well as I could. I don't think, however, I was very clear ; but he seemed to know more about it than I did myself.

*Dr. D.* That is the good workman all over—thoroughly up to everything relating to his trade. I think I should like to say a word to him.

*H.* Oh, pray, Papa, don't. I am sure, if you do, there will be an explosion.

*Dr. D.* Well, child, perhaps I had better wait until he has finished the job ; let me know before he leaves.

[*Exit* Dr. DALTON.]

*H.* Oh, how my heart beats ! I was never in such a fright before.

*F.* [*coming forward, his face and hands black*] Why, dearest, you have out-Helened Helen. Your finessing has been in the highest style of art. Any woman could run away from Menelaus.

*H.* Good heavens, Frank ! I thought you came to see to the boiler, and not to sweep the chimney.

*F.* Oh, I am rather black, am I ? Well, then, take care, or, like that sooty devil, black Othello, I shall begin to get jealous.

*H.* [*going, and putting her hand on Frank's shoulder*] I am not afraid of that with you, Frank ; your character is too open to enclose so mean a passion.

*F.* I don't like having such a very open character ; open characters are always being imposed upon.

*Enter* LUCY.

*L.* Oh, Helen ! what is the meaning of this ? I never

thought a sister of mine would stoop so low. What will poor Frank think? Just three weeks banished, and ere those shoes are old that kicked him out! Hamlet's mother was constancy itself to this.

*H.* Lucy, Lucy, don't you see it is only Frank!

*L.* Oh, Helen, add not lying to your other human frailties. Frank is open as day, and not like your new friend there—black as night.

*H.* But it is really Frank; he is disguised as a plumber.

*L.* Thank goodness, *we* are not reduced so low as this. My Captain would cut a Turk's head off as soon as look at you; but he would scorn to cut off a head of water.

*H.* *Your* Captain, indeed! I wonder you are not ashamed to talk like that! Captain Meeking would, I am sure, be quite shocked if he heard you.

*L.* Well, even if I did shock him, he would not get so black in the face as *your* Frank.

*F.* Do not let us dispute now. You see, Lucy, we are rather in a mess.

*L.* You certainly are.

*F.* Now be a dear girl, as you are, and help us out of this difficulty; we expect Uncle back every minute, and if he finds me here——

*L.* He will dust your jacket; and it seems to me not before it wants it.

*F.* Now, Lucy, do for one moment moderate your sharpness, and be a little serious.

*H.* Do, Lucy, try and think of some plan; you are so clever at getting out of a difficulty of this kind.

*L.* Well, Frank, if you have to speak to my father, your voice will betray you.

*H.* But if I send the plumber away, Papa will be sure to suspect something.

*L.* Well, then, we must send Frank away and retain the plumber.

*H.* Oh, Lucy, do not joke with our distress.

*L.* I mean what I say; send Frank away at once, and I will be the plumber.

*H.* But do you think you will be able to act the part well enough to deceive Papa?

*L.* Having lately bamboozled a commissioned officer, I feel it is child's play imposing upon a philosopher. Do you think, because I am not always poking my nose into books, I know nothing? [*Puts on Frank's coat and cap.*] I tell you the plates want rivetting; the taps want boring; the pipes want screwing; and unless the boiler is at once reset, everything about it, temper of cook included, will be upset.

*H.* I think, Frank, we may trust Lucy. If Mamma does not come here, we shall be safe.

*F.* I do not like sneaking away and leaving Lucy to bear the brunt of my imprudence.

*H.* Oh, Lucy will enjoy it.

*F.* Well, then, I will go now; but remember, mine is the case of the moth and the candle. [*Exit FRANK.*]

*H.* Lucy, Lucy, for goodness' sake, be quick! I see Papa coming.

*Enter Dr. DALTON.*

*Dr. D.* I think the plumber ought to have done by this time.

*H.* Yes, Papa, he is just finishing his work. [*Lucy humming and singing.*]

*Dr. D.* He seems rather musically inclined.

*H.* Yes, he says he is a lineal descendant of the Harmonious Blacksmith.

*Dr. D.* Well, plumber, and what was the matter with the boiler? I think my daughter was, most likely, needlessly alarmed.

*L.* Oh no, sir. The diseases of boilers, like those of children, cannot be taken too early—neither can explain themselves, so we have to di-a-nose very much in the dark.

*Dr. D.* But what has been wrong in this case? The boiler is a new one!

*L.* That's just it. My master always says that if a family want a lively time of it, he should recommend them to try a new boiler.

*Dr. D.* But these boilers are now so common; they ought to be made exactly to pattern, and so give no trouble.

*L.* There is no more accounting for boilers than for babies. Can Mr. and Mrs. Jones make the Master Joneses all alike? Can't be done at any price; each one has his own hidious-sinkery.

*Dr. D.* Idiosyncrasy, my man; if you use long words, do pronounce them correctly.

*L.* I am surprised, sir, to hear you take exception to my talk, for master always says, "Jim," says he, "the neatness of your work is only surpassed by the illigance of your wocablary."

*Dr. D.* But all this time you have not explained what was wrong.

*L.* Then, sir, I am afraid I have not made myself very clear.

*Dr. D.* You certainly have not ; but I want to speak to you about a new arrangement of the waste pipe.

*H.* [*aside*] Now everything will be discovered.

*L.* Oh, about the waste pipe, sir. Well, in regard to that, sir, I don't feel at liberty to take any 'sponsability. Master alway says, "Jim," says he, "mind and have nothing to do with waste pipes, you never know where they will lead you."

*Dr. D.* They will evidently not lead you on to fortune ; for a workman with more words and fewer ideas I have never spoken to.

*Enter Mrs. DALTON.*

*Mrs. D.* How is this ? [*To Helen*] Who is here ? I have seen the plumber leaving, and he walked very much like Nephew Frank.

*H.* Then he ought to be ashamed of himself, imitating his betters ; but please, Mamma, don't interrupt. Papa is having a discussion with the plumber's assistant. I never thought the subject of waste pipes could be so interesting.

*Mrs. D.* Plumber's assistant, indeed ! I saw the plumber enter without any assistant.

*H.* [*aside*] Why is Mamma so sharp ? Why did not Papa marry a philosopher ? [*Mrs. D. goes towards Lucy.*] Mamma, Mamma, pray do not interfere ; plumbers' assistants are so touchy.

*Mrs. D.* [*going up to Lucy and taking off her cap*] Well, Lucy, you are a nice young woman. You are distinguishing yourself in this disguise.

*Dr. D.* What ! Lucy, I declare. Why are you always at some tomfoolery ? Will nothing keep you serious ?



I believe that girl has so little reverence, she would play a practical joke upon a saint.

*L.* No, Papa, I shall never go lower than a philosopher. It is such fun watching them try to turn a sharp corner with their over-weighted intellects. Like a will-o'-the-wisp, I lead them such a dance.

*Dr. D.* If you try such games on with me again, I'll convert you from a dancing to a howling dervish. You have made me dance to your tune ; next time you shall sing to mine.

*H.* Papa, you must not be too hard on Lucy, it was only a joke.

*Dr. D.* Only a joke? Some subjects should be held sacred. Why, if she so far forgets herself with plumbing, the art of glazing is not safe.

*Mrs. D.* Well, Doctor, I think you must forgive her this time.

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ACT III.

*Drawing-room in Dr. DALTON'S house. Mrs. DALTON working. CAROLINE with microscope. HELEN copying music. LUCY walking about.*

*L.* With me, Mamma dear, the morning's amusements do not bear the evening's reflections ; for when I look in the glass, I still see a veil of motes surrounding me ; and though a little dust may be becoming to the Venus de Medici, I feel sufficiently dressed of an evening to do without it.

*C.* Now, Lucy, do be still for a moment. How can I keep a diatom in the field of view, whilst you are prancing about the room like a young elephant ?



*L.* You call yourself a naturalist, indeed! Who ever heard of an elephant prancing? Captain Meeking told me that the monster has some sort of a twist about his knees; so you might as well expect him to dance as to prance.

*H.* What a fortunate girl you are, Lucy! In Captain Meeking you seem to have found that rare combination, the military hero and the walking encyclopædia.

*L.* You need not sneer at Captain Meeking, Helen. You ought to know that a soldier must now be a perfect Mangnall, and pass muster in all sorts of miscellaneous information before he even begins to study the art of killing.

*H.* It always seems to me curious that the arts of killing enemies and ladies should be so closely allied.

*L.* Not at all, not at all; do you not see that in both cases a striking deportment is everything?

*C.* One could partly forgive the killing of enemies, if any scientific use could be made of them afterwards.

*L.* Oh, Carry, only think what an instructive collection of specimens would now be in existence if Cain had started a museum by bottling Abel in spirits!

*C.* Such a collection would be more important than you think. Why, do you not see, the edges on the wounds of Abel might settle the point as to whether he belonged to the palæolithic or neolithic period?

*L.* One would think that, at all events, A-bell must belong to the bronze period.

*C.* That is just your way, Lucy, turning aside serious matter by some poor jest.

*L.* To give you your due, that is certainly not your way.

*Mrs. D.* Now, Lucy, if possible, do be quiet for an instant. When, Caroline, shall we hear the result of your examination?

*C.* The list will be published this evening; but I have no fear, as I did better than I expected; and I think my essay for the diploma, on the early development, life-history, and future prospects of the blue-bottle, was quite exhaustive.

*L.* Would you be surprised to hear that the examiner was exhausted too?

*Mrs. D.* Do be quiet, Lucy. If your father would only put you under the exhausted receiver of his air-pump instead of my alarum, we might have some peace.

*L.* Well, Mamma, if my tongue must stop, some other part of me must be moving; so I shall go and practise the new waltz step with my favourite partner, the cane-bottomed chair. [*Exit* LUCY.

*Mrs. D.* Your success, Caroline, will give great pleasure to your father, as he has always held that the intellects of women are quite as capable of being developed as those of men—though he thinks their minds are not so original.

*H.* I do not see that, Mamma; for which sex gets the credit of original sin?

*Mrs. D.* The less we say about that unfortunate little affair, dear, the better.

*Enter* Dr. DALTON, excitedly, with a pamphlet.

*Dr. D.* Oh, Kate! look here! My views on the connection of Electricity and Heat are being confirmed. This pamphlet, which has been sent to me by a Professor Franks, of the University of Utah, is quite enthusiastic

on my theory. Listen to this. [*Reads.*] “The first idea of this noble theory is contained in a paper read before the Royal Society of England, five years ago, by the celebrated Dr. Dalton; but, being evidently too far advanced for its time, it has been, as often happens in such cases, neglected.” Again, here. [*Reads.*] “It is only occasionally that such a great step is made by a single philosopher, and it will render his name famous till the end of time.”

*Mrs. D.* Well, I am sure we are all very pleased if you are so.

*Dr. D.* Pleased! that is not the word. Think of the greatness of the discovery. Think of unborn generations blessing the name of Dr. Dalton. Why, Archimedes, for a much smaller matter, ran naked through the streets of Syracuse, crying “Eureka! Eureka!” What would he have done had he made such a discovery as this?

*Mrs. D.* Why, dressed himself, and ran home again, I hope, and behaved less like a lunatic.

*Dr. D.* Oh, Kate, Kate! I believe if I had discovered the Elixir of Life, you would take it coolly.

*Mrs. D.* I would not take the Elixir either hot or cold. Life is long enough as it is, if one lives to see one's family nicely settled; and that reminds me that Captain Meeking will be calling directly to propose for the hand of Lucy.

*Dr. D.* Oh, very well; but don't you see my theory——

*Mrs. D.* Never mind your theory at present, Doctor; this is a much more important matter.

*Dr. D.* What do you mean? more important! Why, daughters are married every day; but to weld together a theory of Nature that will not be divorced in six months is the work of a century.

*Mrs. D.* And does it not often take nearly half that time settling a daughter ?

*C.* Mother, I protest against your old-fashioned views. We no longer need to be settled, as it is called. The friendship of books and the society of the dissecting room are enough for us.

*H.* Speak only for yourself, Carry, as I personally prefer my society not dis-jointed.

*Mrs. D.* Now, girls, I think you had better retire, as I hear the hall bell, and your father will wish to see Captain Meeking alone.

*C.* This is always the way with you, mother ; I never get a perfectly illuminated field but some domestic crisis occurs. Why can't Lucy's lover propose at a reasonable hour ?

*H.* Come away, Carry, you will never be quite happy with your little beasts

“Till your lamp at midnight hour  
Is seen on some high lonely tower.”

[*Exit CARRY and HELEN.*

*Mrs. D.* Now, Doctor, do for a few minutes forget your theory, and clinch this matter with Captain Meeking. He is a very fair match for Lucy ; and fathers, if they will make their daughters scientific, must not be too particular.

*Dr. D.* But that is why they should be particular, and not throw away their daughters upon ignorant block-heads.

*Mrs. D.* [*aside*] I fear if the Doctor puts the Captain on that particular hobby-horse of his, poor Lucy's lover will be thrown.

*Enter Servant.*

S. Captain Meeking.

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*Enter* Captain MEEKING. [*Exit* Servant.

*Capt. M.* Good evening, Mrs. Dalton ; good evening, Doctor.

*Mrs. D.* I have informed my husband of the purpose of your visit, Captain Meeking, and so will leave you to discuss the matter together.

*Capt. M.* [*to Mrs. D.*] I think I am all right ; though I trust the Doctor will be quick about the examination, as I feel formulæ leaking out of me at every pore.

*Mrs. D.* [*aside to Capt. M.*] Pray keep up your courage. As a last resource, if driven very hard, ask him about his new theory.

[*Exit* Mrs. DALTON.

*Dr. D.* I am sure, Captain Meeking, we feel highly honoured by the offer of your hand to our youngest daughter ; but the step you propose is so important to both of you, that I feel sure you will forgive me questioning you upon some points.

*Capt. M.* Oh certainly, Dr. Dalton ; I am quite prepared for an examination. [*Aside*] I trust he will not begin with the asses' bridge, as I always make a stumble over its lattice bars.

*Dr. D.* Well, well, I am not wishing to examine you, though I hope you take an interest in science, as it is pleasant to have such a bond of sympathy between those who will necessarily be often in each other's society.

*Capt. M.* Oh yes, Dr. Dalton, I think I may say I take a very warm interest in science. My feelings with regard to the proof of the Binomial Theorem for fractional indices are very warm indeed—quite hot, I may say. Why, don't you see, to raise  $(a)$  plus  $(b)$  to the



power of ( $p$ ) divided by ( $q$ ), you have only to mind your  $p$ 's and  $q$ 's, and there you are. [*Aside*] I think I have brought that in rather neatly.

*Dr. D.* Oh, speaking of that theorem, I once published a proof of it.

*Capt. M.* Indeed, yes ; everybody knows Dr. Dalton's celebrated proof. What a flood of light it throws upon what, it must be confessed, is rather foggy. To me it was like light shining in a dark place. [*Aside*] When I begin to tell fibs, how poetical I get ?

*Dr. D.* Well, now, I am very pleased to hear this. I thought my proof fell rather dead ; one critic had the impudence to say that my proof failed, even though I assumed the theory in my premises.

*Capt. M.* Oh, did he ! I should just like to have caught that fellow alone in the dark on my premises ; I would soon have made him confess you threw light upon the subject. Why, Dr. Dalton, if any fault can be found with your proof, it is that it is too clear ; it leaves too little for intellectual effort.

*Dr. D.* [*aside*] This must be a very clear-headed young fellow, as it is only now and then, by a sort of side look, that I fancy I understand my proof ; but I will not go on with this subject, or he will find out my weak point.

*Capt. M.* [*aside*] Oh, if the Doctor goes on with this subject, farewell Lucy. [*Aloud*] But, Dr. Dalton, what is this I hear about your new theory ?

*Dr. D.* My new theory ! Oh, how foolish I am, wasting my time here ! I expect every moment a learned professor who has been developing my theory ; though you must remember I, Dr. Dalton, first propounded it ;



so the chief credit of it is due to me. I must ask you to excuse me. I will send my daughter Lucy here, and you can talk to her, and then see Mrs. Dalton, and arrange everything; I really have not now time for such details, as I must go and read over again my paper to the Royal Society, or I fear Professor Franks will know more about my theory than I do myself.

*Capt. M.* Certainly; do not let me detain you.

*Dr. D.* Thank you! [Exit Dr. DALTON.]

*Capt. M.* This is much more hopeful than I expected. But what a strange family this is! The Doctor runs away before he has heard one word of what I came to say; and then the maid, who is the very image of Miss Lucy Dalton in the morning, is a carrotty-headed, undersized young female in the afternoon.

*Enter LUCY.*

*L.* Good evening, Captain Meeking; I thought Mamma was here.

*Capt. M.* Did not Dr. Dalton tell you I wished to see you?

*L.* No; I passed Papa in the hall, but he said nothing.

*Capt. M.* Well, I have his permission, and also your mother's, to speak to you on what concerns my future happiness. I am sure you must have seen, dear Miss Dalton, how strong a hold you have on my affections; you must have noticed how I have lately dodged you about like your shadow.

*L.* But I am afraid, Captain Meeking, your affections, like my shadow, take one direction in the morning, and an opposite one in the evening.

*Capt. M.* Oh no ; I assure you I am as constant as the pole star, and that sort of thing.

*L.* But I have been told, on the very best authority, that you always have a soft place in your heart for a pretty girl.

*Capt. M.* For one pretty girl, yes ; but for all others, my heart is a perfect nether millstone.

*L.* Why, then, you are like my papa, quite a cynic.

*Capt. M.* [*aside*] What a puzzling house this is. Lucy must have heard me talk this morning to the maid.

*L.* Do you think, Captain Meeking, it becomes an officer and a gentleman to flirt with the maid in the morning and propose to the mistress in the evening ?

*Capt. M.* What ! you heard me make a few casual remarks to that maid of yours when I was shown into the breakfast parlour this morning ; she seems a poor flighty creature. I really think you should look after her.

*L.* You seemed to think her rather pretty.

*Capt. M.* It is always *en règle* to call a maid pretty ; they like it, and it opens well a field of conversation.

*L.* Oh, then, you do not think our maid pretty ?

*Capt. M.* Why, I hardly looked at her.

*L.* Then you will not be able to say if I am like her. Our likeness to each other has been considered remarkable.

*Capt. M.* It is most wonderful.

*L.* But you hardly looked at her.

*Capt. M.* Well, to confess the truth, I gave a sort of a side glance at her.

*L.* That was sweetly modest.

“ He gives a side glance, and looks down.”

*Capt. M.* [*savagely*] If I did not give sufficient attention to the upper part of your faces, I have heard enough from both to perceive a very strong likeness in your style of jaw.

*L.* Capital! Capital! That is fairly retorted, and shows that under my sweet influence you will soon be sharp enough to enter a philosopher's family. I must acknowledge to a strong family likeness to your retiring young friend of this morning, for I was the parlour-maid.

*Capt. M.* Well, I thought as much; but I must apologise for my indiscreet manner in the parlour.

*L.* Oh, but I rather prefer a little indiscretion; it does away with so much mannerism.

*Capt. M.* Then long live indiscretion! [*taking Lucy round the waist, and kissing her.*]

*L.* Don't you think, Edward, that though distance lends enchantment to the view, proximity lends enchantment to the lover?

*Capt. M.* We are made for each other, my dear little Lucy; that is exactly my sentiment.

[*Bell heard.*]

*L.* That is the visitors' bell. Who can it be?

*Capt. M.* I forgot, Lucy, in the excitement of the moment, to tell you your cousin Frank is coming here this evening disguised as a professor, and he wishes Mrs. Dalton told of it.

*L.* Well, he shows some prudence in that; but why can't he keep away? we are now so much engaged. Helen can do for a short time very well without him.

*Capt. M.* But, Lucy, I hope you would not be able to do without me for ever so short a time.

*L.* Oh, that's quite different—I can't trust you out of

my sight; remember this morning. But Frank is one of those awfully constant lovers, who, if not so handsome and clever, would be a bore; and though Helen is very nice, there are other nice young ladies in the world.

*Enter Servant.*

S. Professor Franks.

[*Enter FRANK, disguised as a Professor, with spectacles on. Exit Servant.*

L. Well, Frank, I should have thought you had had enough of disguises this morning; and, though I undertook the plumber's business without a moment's warning, I will not engage in professing except on adequate notice.

F. The part would certainly not suit you, Lucy, as the whole art is to look profound and say little.

L. I am sure I can look as solemn as a judge.

F. But how about saying little?

L. I give that up: I must either speak or die. But I hear Mamma at the door; let me prepare her for this.

[*FRANK retires to back. Enter Mrs. DALTON.*

Mrs. D. Well, young people, let me congratulate you. I see you understand each other; and Captain Meeking, I am sure you will find in my Lucy a bright and affectionate companion.

L. But I fear, Mamma, Edward likes to take his companions as Froissart says we English take our pleasures—sadly.

Capt. M. Nonsense, Lucy. Only just now you said I was sparkling with wit.

L. One swallow does not make a summer.

Mrs. D. [*turning and seeing FRANK*] But who is this stranger?

*L.* Mamma, it is Frank, who has come to call as a Professor, and he asked me to tell you, as he knows you do not like surprises.

*Mrs. D.* [*going up to FRANK*] What new conjuring trick are you after now, Frank?

*F.* Why, Aunt, I have sent a paper to Uncle, which is sure to give him so much pleasure, that I think he will at once forget our little misunderstanding.

*Mrs. D.* But you give me your word, Frank, that you did nothing disgraceful?

*F.* Yes, Aunt. In a day or two I can prove to Uncle that he has been quite mistaken; but I could not wait so long to see Helen.

*Mrs. D.* Then I will help you.

*Enter Dr. DALTON.*

*Dr. D.* I hope, Professor Franks, you will excuse my delay in welcoming you; but I was, at the moment you were announced, reading again the paper referred to in your pamphlet.

*F.* I reckon, Doctor, it requires no excuse.

*Dr. D.* I trust, as a fellow-worker in science, you will overlook ceremony, and take up your quarters with us during your stay in town.

*F.* Thank you. I reckon your hotels might expand considerable without knocking a hole in the sky; but, as the immortal Touchstone says, "Travellers must be content."

*Dr. D.* Then may we send for your luggage?

*F.* No, thank you; no. I reckon part of my baggage would cause you considerable surprise.

*Dr. D.* Oh, if Mrs. Franks is with you, I am sure it will give Mrs. Dalton great pleasure to entertain her, and it would give us more time for discussion.



*L.* [*pulling Dr. D. by the sleeve, and whispering*] Papa, remember he comes from Utah ; so, unless you ask all his wives, there may be a domestic shindy.

*Dr. D.* Nonsense, Lucy.

*Mrs. D.* I think, Dr. Dalton, that at all events, for this evening, Professor Franks will be better accommodated at his hotel.

*Dr. D.* Well, let it be so. But, though it seems there must be some delay in welcoming you here, there shall be none in my thanking you for the splendid manner in which you have vindicated my theory, and placed it on a sound basis. I wish to show my appreciation, not only in words, but in action ; so if there is anything, Professor Franks, I can do for you during your stay in this country, you will only be rendering me an obligation by using my services.

*F.* In my country, sir, we are too cautious to sign a blank cheque in that fashion.

*Dr. D.* Whatever I can do for you, I shall still feel myself in your debt.

*F.* Well, sir, if that is the case, as I wish to secure for myself an English wife whilst in this country, and I have heard such enthusiastic reports of the beauty and talent of Dr. Dalton's daughters, I reckon one of these young misses would suit me to a tee. If I mistake not, this is one of them. [*Turns, and talks to LUCY.*]

*Mrs. D.* Perhaps, Doctor, as it is the custom of his country, Professor Franks might prefer to marry all three.

*Dr. D.* But, my dear, only think !

*Mrs. D.* Oh, you modern philosophers are uprooting all our old landmarks, so I have ceased to be surprised at anything.



*Dr. D.* But poor Frank !

*Mrs. D.* Oh, you know he acted so dishonourably !

*Dr. D.* Yes, yes ; but still——

*Mrs. D.* No ; Franks, not Frank, must be the lucky man. Go, Lucy, and bring Helen here. [*Exit LUCY.*]

*Dr. D.* But, Kate, don't you think a philosophical daughter is sometimes a trial in the domestic circle ? and we may not get such another chance.

*F.* Miss Lucy Dalton has been speaking to me of the beauty and charm of her sister Helen ; so, Doctor, I beg to make a formal request for her hand.

*Dr. D.* This, of course, Professor Franks, takes me quite by surprise, but I will not go back from my word ; and though in this country we cannot use force——

*F.* Oh, I have no fear, sir. [*Enter HELEN and LUCY.*]

*Dr. D.* Helen, I have to ask you to make good a father's word. I am under the deepest obligation to this gentleman, Professor Franks, and have therefore promised to grant him any request he may make. He now asks me to keep my word, and to give him your hand in marriage.

*H.* Oh, Papa, this is very sudden ; but, for the sake of duty, that daughter must be lost indeed to every feeling of her higher nature who would not, at any sacrifice of personal inclination, hasten to redeem a father's promise. [*Goes up to FRANK, and they embrace.*]

*Dr. D.* [*aside*] Goodness gracious me ! Women are all alike. Why, it was only yesterday she was looking the colour of her own pastry for poor Frank, and now——

*Mrs. D.* This devoted conduct of dear Helen's will, I hope, convince you, Doctor, that in the noble instinct of self-sacrifice women are pre-eminent.

*Dr. D.* It convinces me that, so long as they marry, they do not care who it is.

*L.* There is a good deal in what you say, Papa ; for when they can't get a military hero, they will stoop to a philosopher.

*Enter CAROLINE, with newspaper.*

*C.* Oh, Papa, you will be so pleased ! Look here ! the list is out, and I am placed first in the first class.

*Dr. D.* I am very pleased, Carry, though not surprised, as it quite confirms my theory that the female mind can be as well crammed as the male.

*C.* I am sure, Papa, my work was not cram. [*Turning and seeing FRANK, who has displaced his spectacles.*] And here is Cousin Frank, who I have mostly to thank for my success, and who will assure you that all my work was perfectly genuine.

*Dr. D.* Carry, this is Professor Franks, of the University of Utah. Let me introduce you.

*C.* Nonsense, Papa ! It is Cousin Frank, though I am sorry to see there is something the matter with his eyes.

*Dr. D.* My nephew Frank !!

*F.* Yes, Uncle—drat these glasses—and he hopes that, having been so fortunate as to throw some light upon your favourite theory, you will forget any little misunderstanding.

*Mrs. D.* Now, Doctor, don't look so dazed. You ought to be thankful, after your rash promises, that all your female belongings are not packed up and labelled, "University of Utah—very frail—this side up—with care."

*Dr. D.* Twice in one day! I think a philosopher must be placed in this world to be humbugged.

*L.* Or to humbug the world by guessing at things he can't understand.

*Mrs. D.* Whilst not understanding what a child would guess. But, Doctor, we won't be hard upon you. You have not done so badly. Helen and Lucy engaged, and Caroline——

*C.* Now prepared and certified as competent to engage in the great cause of Truth *versus* Error.

*L.* Will you have to wear a wig, Carry, when you plead in that cause? I think it would suit your style: they say the plainer the wearer, the more becoming it is.

*C.* Poor Lucy, you do not see that the world is so changing, that female intellect is quite supplanting female beauty.

*Mrs. D.* Don't be too sure of that, Carry. The beauty of the articles has had, I fancy, most to do with the reduction by sixty-six per cent. of the stock-in-hand of Dr. Dalton's daughters.





