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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OH! SUSANNAH! ***

OH! SUSANNAH!

By Mark Ambient

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No. 84.

Oh! Susannah!

A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts

BY

MARK AMBIENT

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OH! SUSANNAH!

Produced at the Eden Theatre, Brighton, on September 6th, 1897, afterwards played at the Royalty Theatre, London, with the following cast:—

JOHN SHEPPARD, M.D. (A young doctor).....	Mr. Chas. Glenny.
LIEUT. ANDREW MERRY, R.N. (His greatest friend).....	Mr. L. Power.
HON. WAVERLY VANE (Merry's friend).....	Mr. H. Farmer.
M. PLANT (A Southsea Solicitor)..	Mr. Alfred Maltby.
TUPPER (The Doctor's buttons)...	Miss Clara Jecks.
MISS SUSANNAH SHEPPARD (His Maiden Aunt).....	Miss Alice Mansfield.
FLORA (His Bride)	Miss Mary Milton.
RUBY }	Miss Bella Graves.
PEARL } (Mr. Plant's "precious jewels.")	Miss Grace Vincent.
MRS. O'HARA (The Landlady)....	Miss Kate Kearney.
AURORA (The Maid).....	Miss Louie Freear.

SCENE :—Doctor's Consulting Room, 13 Marmalade St., Pimlico.

TIME :—Lady Day, 4 p. m. to 6 p. m.

The action is continuous throughout the 3 Acts.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.

ACT I. 53 minutes.

ACT II. 32 minutes. (One hour and three quarters.)

ACT III. 20 minutes.

PROPERTIES.

On bureau. Whiskey decanter, water, glasses.

Below bureau. Pail with water and house flannel.

In med. chest. Small bottles of coloured water, medicine-glass and roll of lint.

On steps Feather brush.

On ped. cupboard. Case of surgical knives.

On doctor's table. Microscope, test tubes, phials, double stethoscope, eye-glass, stationery cabinet with note-paper, pen, pencil, calendar, Bradshaw, blotter, scribbling block, hand bell, ash-tray with cigarette ends and matches.

In mirror. Invitation cards (Sir Peter—Mrs. O'Hara).

On sofa. Cushions.

Off stage. Front door bell.

HAND PROPERTIES.

DOCTOR. Act 1. Gladstone bag packed with books, papers and one collar. Photo of Flo in pocket, also 7½d in bronze.

Act 2. Aunt's letter, also Flo's photo and coppers.

ANDREW. Act 3. Pipe and baccy.

WAVERLY. Act 1. Detective camera in form of turnip watch.

Act 2. Walking stick (for Pearl's Bus.)

PLANT. Act 1. Pocket hair brush—mirror at back.

Act 3. Small black bag—deed inside.

TUPPER. Act 1. Crumpled telegram in pocket. Landlady's account book.

FLO. Act 2. Two bags and two parcels.

Act 3. Bundle of aunt's clothes (wet).

RUBY. Act 1. Andrew's letter.

Act 2. Visiting card.

PEARL. Act 2. Sporting Times.

Act 3. Pearl necklace in case.

AURORA. Act 1. Six letters in blue envelopes, pair of paste hair combs (in pocket), duster, tea-things, grotesquely big brown earthenware tea-pot, milk, sugar, cups and saucers, stale quartern loaf, knife and butter.

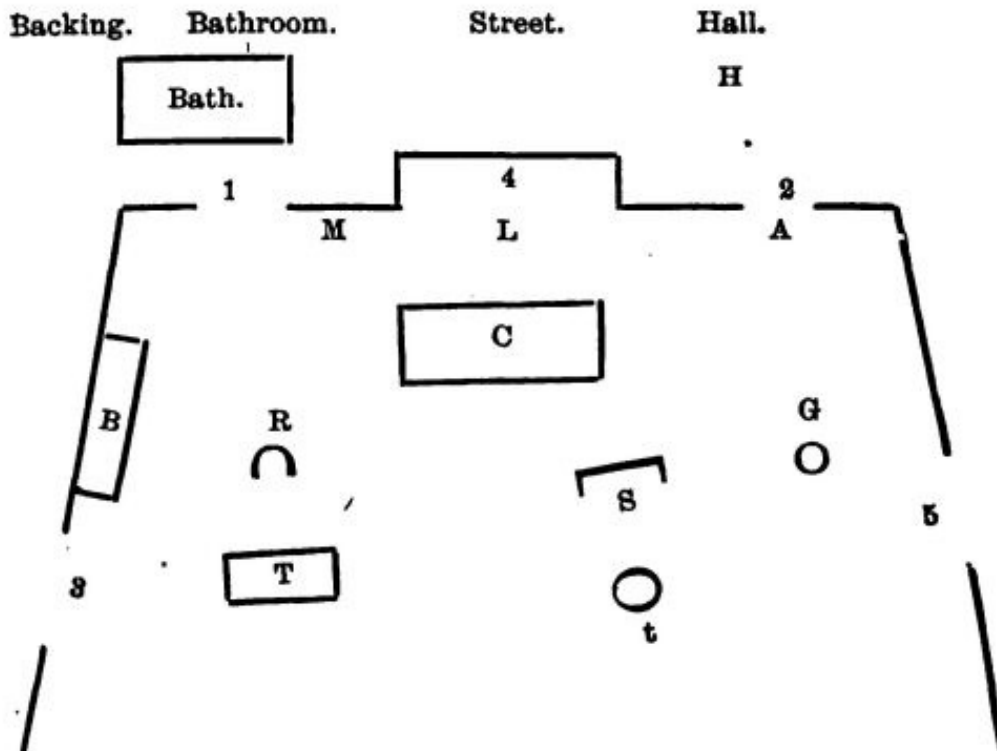
Act 2. Lady's letter—thick paper, gold crest.

Act 3. Telegram.

COSTUMES.

- DOCTOR. Act 1. Frock coat and high hat.
Act 2. Changes to pyjamas and Turkish dressing-gown.
- ANDREW. Act 1. Blue serge yachting suit and cap.
Act. 2. As aunt, in picture.
- WAVERLY. Very smart.
- PLANT. White hat, loud waistcoat, outré.
- TUPPER. In buttons.
- AUNT. Quiet, old-fashioned, almost Quakerish.
- FLO. Modern tailor-made costume and smart hat.
- RUBY & PEARL. Dressed alike, in sailor hats and serge costumes, with sailor collars.
- MRS. O'HARA. Eccentric Irish landlady.
- AURORA. Slatternly slavey frock, soiled white apron, cap awry, large slippers tied on with string.
(During ACT 3: changes to grotesque colored dress: orange blossoms in hair.)

Scene Plot.



The scene is a Doctor's consulting room on the ground floor of a lodging-house in Pimlico.

- (1) Door R. at back to bathroom (not opened till middle of Act II (showing about half of bath, taps, etc).
- (2) L. at back, to passage, showing hat stand.
- (3) Down R.
- (4) Window c., commanding view of similar houses across street.

FURNITURE.

- (B) Bureau with practicable drawers.
 - (M) Medicine chest (hung between door R. and window).
 - (C) Operating couch in front of window.
 - (L) Step ladder, between couch and window at rise of curtain.
 - (P) Pedestal cupboard.
 - (H) Hatstand.
 - (A) Picture of Aunt, over door L.
 - (S) Sofa for three—half facing fire.
 - (T) Doctor's table. (t) Tea table.
 - (R) Revolving chair behind Doctor's table.
 - (G) Grandfather's chair at fireplace.
 - (c) Ordinary chairs.
- Mirror and clock over fire, fender and fire-irons. Poker used.

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OH! SUSANNAH!

ACT I.

SCENE. *The DOCTOR'S consulting room. Ground floor, 13 Marmalade Street, Pimlico. (See Scene Plot.)*

(AUBORA, the slavey, discovered laying out DOCTOR'S letters lovingly on his writing table; she kisses each one as she lays it down—all are in blue envelopes.)

AUBORA. They're all for 'im—the dear doctor. Won't 'e be pleased when 'e comes back and finds all this little lot! 'E went off quite sudden two days ago. Gone to see a patient, I expect, none ever comes 'ere, so 'e must go to them. *(crosses L., looks in mirror)* Oh, why was I born so rudely 'ealthy? *(on sofa)* I would like to be 'is patient. I'd a-bear anythin' with the dear doctor to see to me, 'e's got sich a sorft 'and. *(jumps off sofa and stands c. looking at aunt's picture, curtseys)* I wonder if she's 'is fancy? 'Er with the diamond combs. You ain't the only one, my lady, with diamond combs! I'll struggle with yer. *(produces combs from her pocket)* Tenpence a pair—in the Strand. *(going to put them on, stops)* No, I'll wait till 'e comes 'ome. They're all for 'im, the dear doctor—all for 'im! *(end of sofa)*

(Enter TUPPER, a fat little page.)

TUPPER. I say, Aurora, the missus is a'goin' to do the thing in style this afternoon, two fiddler blokes—an' a planner an' a programme o' the dances pinned up over the mantelpiece over 'ead. *(picks up cigarette end off ash tray and smokes it)*

AUBORA *(down c.)* Lor, you don't say! An' printed invitations an' all. *(takes card from mirror)* 'Ark at this! "Mrs. O'Hara requests the honor of Doctor Sheppard's company—"

OH! SUSANNAH!

ACT I.

Scene. The Doctor's consulting room. Ground floor, 13 Marmalade Street, Pimlico. (See Scene Plot.)

(Aurora. the slavey, discovered laying out Doctor's letters lovingly on his writing table; she kisses each one as she lays it down—all are in blue envelopes.)

Aurora. They're all for 'im—the dear doctor. Won't 'e be pleased when 'e comes back and finds all this little lot! 'E went off quite sudden two days ago. Gone to see a patient, I expect, none ever comes 'ere, so 'e must go to them, *(crosses L., looks in mirror)* Oh, why was I born so rudely 'ealthy? *(on sofa)* I would like to be 'is patient. I'd a-bear anythin' with the dear doctor to see to me, 'e's got sich a sorft 'and. *(jumps off sofa and stands C. looking at aunt's picture, curtseys)* I wonder if she's 'is fancy? 'Er with the diamond combs. You ain't the only one, my lady, with diamond combs! I'll struggle with yer. *(produces combs from her pocket)* Tenpence a pair—in the Strand, *(going to put them on, stops)* No, I'll wait till 'e comes 'ome. They're all for 'im, the dear doctor—all for 'im! *(end of sofa)*

(Enter Tupper, a fat little page.)

Tupper. I say, **Aurora.** the missus is a'goin' to do the thing in style this afternoon, two fiddler blokes—an' a planner an' a programme o' the dances pinned up over the mantelpiece over 'ead. *(picks up cigarette end off ash tray and smokes it)*

Aurora *(down C.)* Lor, you don't say! An' printed invitations an' all. *(takes card from mirror)* 'Ark at this! "Mrs. O'Hara requests the honor of Doctor Sheppard'ss company—"

Tupper. 'E won't come back for that. I wish 'e would.

Aurora. Why not, **Tupper?** Where's 'e gone? *(comes C.)*

Tupper. Gie us a kiss, an' I'll tell yer.

Aurora. *(moving away)* A kiss! There's bloomin' cheek! I never did!

Tupper. *(coming to her)* Oh yes, you did—only larst Friday, an' it's Friday agin, an' what's more, it's *Lady Day.*

Aurora. *(innocently)* Is it, **Tupper?** Well, as it's *Lady Day.* *(puts her cheek up, aside)* It's all for 'im! *(kiss Bus.)* Now tell me.

Tupper. 'E's gorn to get married, *(goes down r. puffing cigarette hard)*

Aurora. *(with concern)* No, **Tupper,** don't say that! *(changes her tone)* I mean, 'ow do you know?

Tupper. *(turning round)* Gie us another, an' I'll tell yer!

Aurora. Go hon!

Tupper. I will when I got summat to go hon with. *(comes to her)*

Aurora. *(impatiently)* Oh, there, then! *(kissed him—aside)* They're all for 'im!

Tupper. Well, as you know, *(gets on table)* **Aurora.** the doctor's a wonderful gentle gentleman, as gentle as—well, there 'e is gentle!

Aurora. *(more impatiently)* I know that. I give you them kisses to tell me summat I don't know.

Tupper. Well, I'm goin' to. When 'e was packing to go away, 'e was that excited 'e couldn't 'ardly strap the bag.

Aurora. Well, what o' that? A gentleman can get excited without gettin' married, yer silly kid! *(goes to steps)*

Tupper. Ah, but 'e put on a new frock coat, an' a bran noo pair o' trasers—

Aurora. The dear doctor! I'll bet 'e looked a toff! *(start on steps)*

Tupper. An' then 'e 'ad a brandy and soda—wot for? *(up to couch)*

Aurora. 'Cos 'e was thirsty, o' course, yer silly kite.

Tupper. Thirsty! It was to bring 'im up to the scratch!

Aurora. *(aside)* The scratch! My 'eart! My 'eart! *(top of ladder)*

Tupper. I bet my buttons 'e's enj'ying 'is 'oneymoon in 'is noo clothes, an' forgotten all abart me an' mine. *(up stage R.)*

Aurora. *(curiously)* Your noo clothes?

Tupper. Yes, I was loored into these under false pretences. When Mrs. O'Hara engaged me, she says she'd let orf 'er ground floor to a very risin' doctor.

Aurora. So 'e is! The day *will* come, 'e'll be the most risin'—*(gesticulates with feather-duster, on steps, nearly falls)*

Tupper. Do you want to 'ear abart my trasers, or do you not? *(sits on couch)*

Aurora. Yes, **Tupper,** o' course I do—get 'em orf yer chest.

Tupper. Well, Mrs. O'Hara, *she sez,* 'e'll find yer in clothes, she sez, an' think of all the gratooities—

Aurora. Great—who?

Tupper. Gratoocities from grateful patients—shillins an' 'arf-crowns, she sez. Well, we been at it three months to-day—

Aurora. (*sadly*) An' not a blessed patient 'as called yet. (*comes down*)

Tupper. No, but the *tailor's* called, lots o' times, an' larst time 'e was very cross—said 'e'd 'ave these clothes orf me if they wasn't paid for Lady Day. (*crosses to R. of table*)

Aurora. Oh! the person! Never mind; the day will come.

Tupper. The day 'as come! (*takes up pile of letters*)

Aurora. Well, never mind, look at all these—all from lady patients, (*sits in Doctor's chair, puts on his eye-glasses*)

Tupper. (*laughing*) Lady patients! Why, they're bills. That's the butcher, (*puts it down*) An' that's the chemist.

Aurora. Oh! 'e can read!

Tupper. (*puts it down*) I know 'em all! (*reads*) "Cummerbund and Co., Tailors." Oh lor! That's me! (*drops the pack suddenly*) I call it downright selfish of the doctor to go away and never think of me. (*produces crumpled telegram from pocket*) Oh, I forgot, this is for you! (*hands it to her*)

Aurora. Silly kid!

Tupper. Who's it from? Your young man? (*reads wire over Aurora's shoulder*)

Aurora. (*opening it*) 'Arf a mo'! It's from the dear Doctor. (*aside*) I'd know 'is 'and writing anywheres, it's sich a sorft 'and. (*reads word for word*) "Expect — me — back — at — half — past — four — and —: please — have — my — tea — ready."

Tupper. (*counts words on his fingers—sadly*) There's extravagance. Blues a tenpence on a telegram, an' my clothes owin' for.

Aurora (*aside*) 'Ave 'is tea ready! That I will! As if I wouldn't 'ave it ready whenever 'e comes, bless 'im! (*stuffs telegram in bosom, then fusses about room, putting things straight, starts scouring bureau*)

Tupper. (*watching her*) I believe you're in love with the "Dear Doctor." (*picks another fag end off ash-tray and lies on couch smoking it*)

Aurora. Oh, go smoke! Little boys should be seen and not heard!

Tupper. Well, any'ow yer always tidyin' up 'is things an' neglectin' the missus, an' yer only 'arf 'is, yer know.

(*Front door bell rings.*)

Aurora. (*snatches ladder quickly and goes to the door, saying to herself*) 'Arf 'is, indeed! No! It's all for 'im—all for 'im!

(*Exit Aurora. L. U. E.*)

Tupper. (*laughs*) That's *sure* to be for the missus. She 'as lots o' callers. She's a widder. If I was a woman, I'd be a widder. (*jumps off couch*) Oh lor, if it's the tailor, (*crosses to fire, stands back to it, legs apart*) I wouldn't mind so much, only I sold my old clothes to 'ave a bit on a dead cert, wot didn't come orf—dead certs never do—I wish my clothes was a dead cert.

(*Enter Aurora, followed by Pearl, then Ruby, then Plant, in single file. Tupper works behind arm-chair and gets up stage and puts out cigarette*)

Aurora. (*aside*) Our fust! (*fussily shaking sofa cushions, standing behind sofa*) Take your seats, please! (*motions girls to sit*)

(*Ruby sits r. of Pearl.*)

Make yourselves quite at home—and don't be frightened.

(*Girls turn round and stare at her.*)

'E'll treat yer kindly—'e's got sich a sorft 'and! (*soothingly to Ruby*) Would yer like a cup o' tea, miss, to buck yer up? **Ruby.** No, thank you.

Aurora. (*to Ruby*) Oh, the doctor allus gives 'is ladies tea.

(*Tupper, sitting on couch, bursts out laughing and shoves his handkerchief in his mouth.*)

Pearl. No, thank you.

Plant. (*looking round*) Is the doctor out?

Aurora. (*bustling about dusting*) Yes, sir.

(*Girls rise.*)

—But 'e'll be back at 'arf past, if the ladies'll kindly wait.

(*Girls sit.*)

'E's been called orf to see a lady who couldn't wait.

(*Tupper same Bus.—Aurora goes to him.*)

Plant. (*coughs.*) Ahem! That will do. (*aside*) Fancy setting up for a ladies' doctor in Pimlico! How can he earn bread and butter in Marmalade Street. No. 13, too!

Aurora. (*to Tupper*) 'Old yer row! They're lady patients. 'Appy girls! I wonder what they've got?

Tupper. Nuffiin'. They're a bit off *all* right! (*laughs*)

Aurora. (*sadly*) Are they, **Tupper**? Then why do they come 'ere?

Plant. (*aside*) What has *he* done to deserve a rich aunt who has instructed me to draw up a deed settling a thousand a year on him? It's disgusting! (*sits, head on hand*)

Tupper. (*sees Plant, head on hand—aside to Aurora*) Oh, p'raps it's 'im! (*comes to him*) Anythin' wrong

with yer 'ead? (*touches his hair*)

(*Girls laugh—Plant looks dumbfounded.*)

Aurora. The doctor's wonderful clever for 'eads. (*same Bus.*)

Plant. Don't do that!

Tupper. Yus, 'e cured mine in a jiffy. I rekkemmend 'im to all *my* friends.

Plant. Ah, then I presume Doctor Sheppard has a large practice.

Aurora. (*cheerily*) Oh yes, sir, 'e's allus practisin'—'e practised all larst week on the milkman's baby. It 'ad the direfearier, sir, in its throat, and the doctor was afraid the cows'd catch it and spile the milk. 'E stopped up all night for a week nussin' that baby. (*goes on scouring bureau*)

Tupper. Oh, he's a wonderful gentle gentleman, is the doctor.

Plant. (*aside*) A "Gentle Sheppard?" Just what his rich aunt hopes to find him. I must get a word with **Ruby**.

Ruby. (*to Tupper*) Ah, you hear what his grateful patients think of him.

Tupper. (*comes down*) Grateful patients? (*shakes head sadly*) No, miss, not yet.

Plant. You carry the medicine round, don't you?

Tupper. No, sir, not yet.

Pearl. But you're the doctor's boy, aren't you?

Tupper. No, miss, not yet—only 'arf of me, the other 'arf belongs upstairs. You see, the doctor ends orf where the stair-carpets begin; 'e shares me with the missus—an' 'e shares the gal too.

Plant. (*rises, coughs*) Ahem! That will do! Is the room always so full of smoke?

Aurora. (*coming to him quickly*) Oh yes, sir, wuss generally, (*flaps wet flannel in his face*) The doctor's a wonderful gentleman for smoke, 'e lies on that couch smokin' all day long, an' read in' this 'ere book, (*fetches it*) You look at it. (*comes down C.*)

(*Girls go up to her,*)

You can't make 'ead nor tail of it, 'cep' the pictures, an' they is—well, there!

Plant. Ahem! That will do! (*takes it from her before his daughters see it*) What are the doctor's hours?

Aurora. I dunno, sir—all hours. Sometimes out all day. Sometimes don't come home all night—

Plant. Ahem! That will do!

Tupper. Wednesday 'e went out, an' ain't back yet

Ruby. Two days ago? That lady's case must be serious! (*comes to back of sofa and sits L. end*)

Aurora. It is serious, miss, I tell yer. (*confidentially*) It's a case of—

Plant. (*yells in her ear*) Ahem! That will do!

Aurora. Sorry I spoke!

Plant. Very unusual for smoke to hang about for forty-eight hours.

Tupper. Oh, that's nothin', sir. 'E's wonderful unusual in 'is 'abits.

Aurora. 'As a biled egg for 'is dinner orfen. (*to Ruby*)

Ruby. (*to Pearl*) Poor fellow! He must be starving!

(*Tupper looks admiringly at Ruby. and goes to fire, stands back to it, legs apart.*)

Plant., (*aside*) "Poor fellow!" He'll be rich enough before the day's out. It's hard not to tell one's own daughter—but I mustn't betray a professional confidence.

Tupper. (*aside*) Fine gels! (*to Ruby*) 'E'll be wonderful glad to see you, Miss.

Ruby. How do you know?

Tupper. 'Cos 'e's settin' up as a ladies' Doctor. miss, an' you're the fust callers we've ever 'ad. (*aside*) Bar the tailor.

Ruby. The first? (*to Pearl*) He *is* starving!

Aurora. Oh, 'e'll cure yer, whatever yer got. (*crosses to Plant*) He's wonderful clever. 'E'd see through you, sir, weskit an' all. 'E don't hax no hex rays to tell 'im. (*to Ruby*) 'E knows all what's goin' on in yer innards—

Plant. Ahem! That will do. Er—no doubt, no doubt.

Tupper. No bloomin' doubt, sir. (*going to him*) But I do 'ope you'll pay afore leavin'—'cos it's Lady Day, an these 'ere clothes ain't paid for yet—an' if they ain't—they're a-comin' orf.

Plant. That'll *do!* We don't want to hear any fairy tales.

Tupper. (*sadly*) There ain't no tails about these 'ere. (*looking at his jacket*) It's a norrible fac'!

Plant. You can go—(*to Tupper*) both of you. (*to Aurora*)

Aurora. (*having fetched pail—to Tupper*) Come aw'y, you talk too much. *I'm* the doctor's local demon when 'e's aw'y.

(*Exeunt Tupper and Aurora.*)

Plant. Nice sort of servants for a doctor to have. (*puts book on couch*)

Pearl. (*to Ruby. who is reading a letter*) Who's that from?

Ruby. Lieutenant Merry!

Pearl. Oh, let me read it!

(*They read it together.*)

Plant. (*aside*) A thousand a year for an unbusinesslike young fool, and here am I, her own cousin's husband, and she's never given me a penny, except what I've borrowed. (*Bus. with pocket hairbrush, mirror*)

at back) I did think my chance had come when she sent for me to Cumberland. I got the hair-dresser to touch out all the grey ones, thinking I might fetch the old girl, but as soon as she saw me she was very rude, called me a fright, and began asking some damned awkward questions about my late wife's trust money. Just my luck! (*sits at writing table*)

Pearl. (*reading from letter which Ruby holds*) "And, my darling **Ruby**—if your father dies"—there's not much "if" about it. He does. (*taps her hair*) I've seen the bottle.

(*Both giggle.*)

Plant. (*aside, looking in pocket mirror*) So I took the next train back to Southsea, and romped my daughters up to town. If **Ruby** can only hook the doctor before the aunt arrives, I'm saved—if she can't—I'm—ahem!

Ruby. (*aside to Pearl*) And only think, **Pearl.** when he's an Admiral, I shall be Lady Merry—perhaps a Duchess!

Pearl. But, father—

Ruby. Oh, he'll be delighted. We're keeping it as a surprise for his birthday.

Pearl. He'll be 63 next birthday—he looks more like 36.

(*Both laugh.*)

Plant. (*to them*) Stop that silly giggling! (*crosses over to the two, sends Pearl across to table*) Go and sit over there. **Ruby.** my precious jewel, I have something very solemn to say while we are waiting to see the doctor.

Ruby. (*jumping up, excitedly*) Pa, don't say you've brought us for the doctor to sound us.

Pearl. (*quietly, sitting still*) He shan't sound *me!*

Plant. On the contrary, I've brought you to sound the *doctor*, (*pulls Ruby down again and sits r. of her on couch*)

Ruby. (*excitedly*) What about?

Plant. You are aware that although we are strangers to Doctor Sheppard, he is our cousin.

Ruby. Second cousin, pa!

Pearl. On mother's side.

Ruby. Three times removed.

Plant. Well, well, let us hope he won't be so far removed in the future. I regret very deeply that we have never yet enjoyed the friendship of—er—*dear* cousin Jack.

Pearl. You have frequently remarked, it was not worth while to cultivate *any* of our poor relations.

Plant. (*hotly*) Do you want your pocket money stopped? The fact is. **Pearl.** you're bringing my grey hairs— (*stroking his black locks*)

Pearl. (*quietly*) Your what?

Plant. (*jumping up*) I stop your pocket money for a month! Ooh! (*puts his hand to his back*) This lumbago is unbearable. When a man gets to my time of life—

Pearl. (*quietly*) What time is it now?

Plant. (*hotly*) I stop your pocket money for *three* months!

Pearl. (*rises*) Really, father, a solicitor should be more cautious. I meant to say the time is getting on, (*points to clock and crosses to couch—stands behind Ruby*) and you have not yet informed us of the "very solemn" something you have to say.

Plant. I accept your explanation—without prejudice. (*stands R. of couch*) I say when a man gets to my time of life—the future happiness of his offspring becomes an all-engrossing theme. You are aware that when exalted personages contemplate a matrimonial alliance, they neyer look outside the family. Living as we do, in so fashionable a resort as Southsea, we cannot be too —er—"tony" in such important matters. Now you are both—as I know, being your father—heart-free.

(*Pearl digs Ruby hard in the ribs.*)

Ruby. (*crying out*) Oh!

Plant. How dare you interrupt me!

Ruby. I didn't, pa, it was—

Pearl. Sneak! (*pinching her arm*) **Ruby.** It was nothing!

(*Pearl sits in big armchair.*)

(*aside to Pearl*) Little cat!

Plant. I accept your explanation, without prejudice. You have heard from that stupid Buttons what a noble character the doctor bears, and no man is a hero to his—his Buttons. The *one* thing the doctor wants is a *wife*.

Pearl. To look after his buttons?

Plant. Silence, miss! And you, my dear **Ruby**, my favourite, I mean my first-born, have all the qualifications for a doctor's wife.

Ruby. A doctor's wife? (*looks at Pearl*)

Plant. It has always been the dream of my life to see you united in matrimony to *dear* Jack.

Ruby. *Cheap* Jack! He hasn't a penny!

Plant. Oh hasn't he?—er—(*aside*) Nearly let it out that time, (*to her*) I mean should he be clever enough to win my **Ruby.** my **Ruby** mine—er—this afternoon, he will be rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Alas, I have no dowry to give you, save the blessing of your dear old—your dear fond, *fond* father, (*kisses her forehead*)

But only obey me in this, and Lady Fortune will smile on us all—smile—*smile*.

Ruby. (*bursts into tears*) I can't smile—I won't! (*turns to Pearl*)

Pearl. (*comes to meet her—aside to her*) Of course you won't—I'll get you out of it.

Plant. (*angrily*) Stop that silly crying. He'll be in soon, and you look a perfect fright with your eyes all red. You've never obeyed me in your life—either of you—but I've made up my mind this time, and damme—I'll make you obey me. I swear *that dear cousin Jack shall be my son-in-law*. (*crosses C.*)

Pearl. (*going quietly to him, standing between him and Ruby*) If such is your determination, I will sacrifice myself.

Plant. (*contemptuously*) You!

Ruby. (*rushing to Pearl*) You shan't!

Pearl. I will—what is it after all? Marriages aren't made in heaven now-a-days.

Ruby. No, no, **Pearl.** you're too good. I'd rather marry him myself.

Pearl. You can't—you know you can't—you're engaged.

Ruby. Sneak! (*pinches her arm*)

(*Pearl howls.*)

Plant. (*shouts*) Stop quarrelling! Such rivalry between sisters is most unseemly. What do I dress you alike for?

Pearl. To save expense.

Plant. No, miss, to save *jealousy*, and I'll have no Jealousy about this. Settle it amicably between you, (*aside, crosses to R.*) Good idea! They'll go it faster without me. I'll leave 'em alone with him. (*aloud*) Dear, dear, I've forgotten something I particularly want to show Jack. I'll step over to our apartments—

Ruby. Pa, you can't leave us alone in a bachelor's room!

Plant. Hang it, you're cousins, and you're two to one. Now, remember, *one of you two must marry Jack*—that's my last word, and you know my word, like my profession, is law!

(*Exit Plant.*)

Pearl. We've got a nice thing in fathers, (*looking out of window*) He's brought us up to London to put us on the market

Ruby. Yes, and by a cheap excursion. (*goes L.*)

Pearl. Now we know why we've come to encamp just across the street—it's to lay siege to a penniless cousin. (*picks up "Quayle on Muscles" off couch, takes it to table*)

Ruby. (*at small table up stage L., opens case, shrieks*) Ach! knives!

Pearl. (*looks up from book*) You wouldn't do for a doctor's wife, whatever Pa says, (*looks at picture*) Besides, you're not free, but I am. (*sadly*)

Ruby. Pearl. there's Waverly! (*coming to her, looking over her shoulder at picture*)

Pearl. Yes, there's Waverly, but he's (*turns to next picture*) most disappointing. He's been staying at Southsea with Lieutenant Merry for a whole week, (*turns page*) and father's been away the whole time. (*turns page*) And I've given him every possible encouragement. (*looks at picture*) At least, of course I didn't go so far as you did with Lieutenant Merry. You were—simply—(*turns page*)

Ruby. (*looking at picture*) Shocking! (*shuts book and puts it back on couch*)

Pearl. Yes, you were! (*laughs*)

Ruby. How dare you! I never gave Andrew the slightest encouragement, (*sits on sofa*)

Pearl. My dear **Ruby.** I judge by results. He proposed to you the second day. (*comes and sits by her on sofa*)

Ruby. What about you? You let Waverly kiss you.

Pearl. Only once—just there; (*touches her cheek*) and that was after a dance, which doesn't count. No, I've gone as far with Mr. Vane as any girl, who isn't a born flirt, (*pointedly looking at Ruby*) can go, and he's said nothing—yet So I'm going to get father to invite Doctor Sheppard down to Southsea, and I'll flirt *desperately* with him.

(*Ruby crosses C.*) You see, I shall be obeying father—I shall get you out of your difficulty, and it will force Waverly to say something—definite, (*sits on the word*)

Ruby. Oh, **Pearl!** What a clever idea! (*thinks*) Andrew hasn't been *quite* so attentive since I accepted him. And, as you say, dear papa must be obeyed, so I'll flirt with Doctor Sheppard too, before Andrew—it'll do him a *world* of good.

Pearl. Doctor Sheppard!

Ruby. No, **Andrew,** of course. Oh, **Pearl.** I wonder how they're getting on without us? Do they ever talk about us, do you think?

Pearl. Of course they do—*everybody* talks about us—in Southsea.

Andrew. (*heard off*) Not in? P'raps he's got a patient. (*laughs*)

Ruby. It's **Andrew!** How do I look? (*jumps up and looks in mirror*)

(*Pearl tries to pull her away from it—Enter Andrew, followed by Waverly.*)

Waverly. (*looking at girls' backs and nudges Andrew*) P'raps he's got two patients.

Andrew. Oh, Susannah! (*takes double stethoscope off table, aside to Waverly*) Let's have a lark. I'll pretend to be the doctor.

Waver. No, no, never joke about business, (*scuffles to get stethoscope*)

(Ruby looks round.)

Andrew. **Ruby!** *(goes to her with outstretched arms)*

(Pearl looks round.)

Waver. *(aside)* **Pearl!** Oh, lor! *(goes down r.)* **Pearl.** *(coyly)* Mr. Vane! What attraction has brought you all the way from Southsea? *(follows him)*

(Waverly looks confused.)

Andrew. *(to Ruby)* What's brought you? We called at Clarence Parade this morning and found that you'd flown up to London by the excurs—the early train, so we thought what a lark it'd be to run up on the chance of meeting you.

Waver. We didn't expect to find you at the doctor's.

Andrew. No. *(to Ruby. anxiously)* Are you ill?

Ruby. *(laughing)* No.

Waver, *(to Pearl. wearily)* Don't say it's you.

Pearl. I'm *never* ill. What's the matter with you?

Waver. *I've only come with Andrew, (tries to cross to Andrew)*

(Pearl pulls him back.)

Ruby. *(screams)* Oh **Andrew.** then it's *you!!!* What's the matter with you?

Andrew. *(laughing)* Nothing! Sound me if you like. *(offers stethoscope)*

Ruby. But *why* have you come to see a *doctor?*

Andrew. *(laughs)* I haven't—I've brought Vane to introduce him to my old school-fellow, dear old, serious, studious, short-sighted, absent-minded Jack Sheppard.

Ruby and Pearl. *(together)* You know *Jack?*

Waver, and **Andrew.** *(surprised)* Jack?

Ruby. Cousin Jack! Didn't you know?

Andrew. No, you never told us you *had* any cousins. What a lark! Jack's my greatest friend—because we're such opposites, I suppose. I call him Dull Boy, because "all work and no play makes Jack——" see? Rather smart for me, and he calls me "Merry **Andrew**"—**Andrew** Merry—Merry **Andrew**—see? Oh, that was Jolly smart for Jack—only joke he ever made.

(Ruby sits on couch—Andrew behind couch.)

Waver. Why have you never mentioned his name?

Ruby. We haven't seen him since he was a little boy in kilts.

Pearl. We saw lots of him then, we were both of us *awfully* in love with him.

Ruby. And we're longing to see him again! *(pointedly)*

Andrew. *(laughing)* Oh, are you? Well, I shan't be jealous of *serious* old Jack.

Ruby. *(aside)* Oh, won't you?

(Ruby and Pearl exchange looks, smiling.)

Waver. Where is he?

Ruby. *(quickly)* He won't be back till half-past—*(coyly)* How shall we kill time?

Andrew. I know, come and shoot tin dickie-birds at the Aquarium—I must have exercise.

Ruby. Oh, what fun! Come along!

(Exeunt Ruby and Andrew.)

Waver. *(breaking away—aside)* I shall never have the pluck to break it to her that I've got engaged to another girl.

Pearl. *(looking at door, then at Waverly, drops Tier eyes)* Well!

Waver. *(stands facing audience, back to writing table—to her)* Miss **Plant.** there's something I want to say to you—something—I—I—I don't know how to *say* it.

Pearl. *(coquettishly)* Then don't say it. Write me a little note, *(taps his arm, goes to table, holds up note-paper and pen)*

Waver. Thanks awfully! *(sits and writes)*

(Pearl walks away.)

(Pauses, aside, alarmed) Does she mean business? She's not a lawyer's child for nothing. She might make a Breach of Promise out of this, *(tears up letter and pockets the pieces)* I'd better blurt it out. *(goes to her)* I say, it's not—er—it's not that.

Pearl. Not what?

Waver. I mean—er—*(absently takes from his pocket a kodak made like a large turnip watch, and fumbling nervously with it)* I mean I've been and got—er—I've been and got—

Pearl. A watch?

Waver. No. *(aside)* But it'll gain time, thank goodness.

Pearl. What is it? *Do* tell me.

Waver. A detective camera that *defies* detection.

Pearl. *(rises)* Oh, what fun! *(takes it from him)* Let's go and take snap-shots at **Andrew** and **Ruby** when they're not looking, then they shall take us—when we're not looking, *(takes his arm)*

(Enter **Tupper**.)

Waver. (aside) She does mean business.

(Exeunt **Waverly** and **Pearl**.)

Tupper. (looking after them) I don't like the look of those two gents, (takes cigarette end off ash-tray, lights it) They've gorn and eloped with the fust two customers we've 'ad. (lies on operating couch) Oh, well, I don't interfere with other people's business. I got enough to do to look after my own.

(Enter **Doctor** in high hat, frock coat, overcoat, carrying a Gladstone bag, looks as if he had something on his mind.)

(Jumping off couch) I am glad to see you back, sir.

Doctor. Thank you, **Tupper**—a kind boy—unpack these, (hands him bag)

Tupper. (finds bag very heavy, drops it down by bureau, opens bottom drawer, looks in, aside) Empty—must 'ave pawned the lot to buy the noo ones, (takes out pile of books and papers and one collar) I wonder if 'e's spliced, 'e looks un'appy enough. I'll arsk 'im. (chucks books, MSS., collar, etc., into drawer, anyhow, crosses on tiptoe to **Doctor**) 'Ave yer brought 'er with yer, sir?

Doctor. (swinging round on revolving chair facing **Tupper**, who has backed to bureau alarmed) Don't talk, I'm busy! (opening his letters—aside) Can that boy have guessed? No, how could he? (picks up **Cummerbund's** letter)

Tupper. (aside) 'E's got the letter! (closes drawer)

Doctor. (throwing down letters savagely) Bills, bills, bills—nothing but bills! (walks up and down shying things about)

Tupper. (aside, stealing out on tiptoe) It's my last day out o' bed, I know it is.

(Exit **Tupper**.)

Doctor. (takes card out of mirror) "Sir Peter and Lady Quayle request the pleasure——" That's what did it, that dinner of Quayle's. Sir Peter told me over dessert, that for the first six months after he started in practice, he was starving. Then he met a young governess who was starving too, and with what their friends called "sublime imprudence" they got married. And he never looked behind him after. Then he said if I meant to get on as a gynaecologist, I must get married. "Your wife will prove a mascotte like mine did," he said, "and patients will flow in—simply flow in." Well, I believe in Quayle. That was Tuesday night; on Wednesday I ran down to Lowesloft, proposed to Flo on Thursday, we were secretly married this morning at the Registry Office, she's gone back to her people, and I've come back to town; and what do I find? Nothing but bills, and I can't pay one of them. After settling for the special license, my fare back to town, and that telegram to **Aurora**. (feels in pocket, produces coppers) I've got sevenpence half-penny in the wide world and a wife! It's all Quayle's fault! Damn Quayle! I'll never believe in him again. I don't even know where my next meal is coming from, (walks up and down)

(Enter **Aurora** with the tea—goes to small tea-table.)

Aurora. 'Ere's yer tea, sir. I was glad to get your telegram. Mrs. O'Hara was getting quite anxious about you.

Doctor. (aside) About her rent, more likely.

Aurora. She wondered where you'd got to, but I knew, sir. 'Ow is the pore lady? Do you think she'll get over it, **Doctor**?

Doctor. Don't talk, my good girl, I'm busy, (cuts bread)

Aurora (getting behind couch—aside) "'Is good girl," that I am, it's all for 'im. I know 'e's starving. 'E goes for that stale quartern like the pore prodigal gentleman with the 'usks, but I've got a treat for 'im, that there card put it in my 'ead. (points to Quayle's card in mirror) I've bought 'im a beautiful bird, that'll give 'im a relish, (to **Doctor**) Couldn't you fancy something light with yer tea, sir? (back of couch)

Doctor. Yes, I think I could—I'll finish that tin of potted pig I left, (rises, gets cC)

Aurora. (aside) My stars! An' **Tupper's** ate it!

Doctor. (opens drawer of bureau) Hullo! It's gone!

Aurora. (to him) G-gone bad, sir.

Doctor. (suspiciously) Gone bad?

Aurora. Yes, sir, an' I've fr—fr—

Doctor. Fried it?

Aurora. No, sir, frowed it away!

Doctor. All of it? (goes to medicine chest)

Aurora. Yes, sir, all of it. (one step back, nods hard)

Doctor. (aside) She's eaten it. (to her) **Aurora**. show me your tongue. H'm! you'd better take this. (pours out a draught)

Aurora. (aside, rapturously) 'Is patient at larst! (takes it) Thank you, sir. (gasps) I've touched 'is 'and.

Doctor. You won't like it.

Aurora. I will, sir, if I die arter it. (aside) I'm in seven 'eavens already! (drinks, pulls an awful face) It's all for 'im!

(**Doctor** puts glass back, **Aurora** takes big lump of sugar from tea-table.)

Doctor. (seriously) You might have died of ptomaine poisoning, eating that decayed tinned stuff, (crosses to sofa, sits again)

Aurora. Oh, sir, I never touched a mossel. (big lump in her cheek)

Doctor. (*surprised*) You didn't eat it?

Aurora. Not me, sir! I ain't no thief! (*takes another lump*)

Doctor. (*smiles*) Well, never mind. That won't hurt you.

Aurora. Please, sir, (*looking at him fondly—hesitatingly*) Mrs. O'Hara, she arsked me to say—as it's Lady day, would you allow 'er—

Doctor. I know—something on account.

Aurora. Oh, no, sir—would you allow her to send up a beautiful bird for yer tea?

Doctor. No, thanks, I—I've just dined, (*eats ravenously*)

Aurora. (*aside*) Lord forgive 'im. (*watches him eating*)

Doctor. (*aside*) Mrs. O'Hara has tried that dodge before, but I'm not taking any.

Aurora. I'm sure you'd like it, sir, it's a quail on toast.

Doctor. (*aside, jumping up*) Quail on toast! Damn it! Do you want to drive me mad? (*shouts to her*) No! Go! (*sits and pours out another cup*)

Aurora. (*aside*) No go. 'E don't love me, or 'e wouldn't say that?

(*Bell rings.*)

Oh, that bell! (*comes back and quickly removes the things*)

Doctor. (*still holding teapot in left hand*) What are you doing now?

Aurora. Clearing away, sir, in case it's for you.

(*Exit Aurora with tea-tray.*)

Doctor. What's she done that for? I wish Flo was here to look after me. It was hard to leave her at Lowestoft, (*takes photo from pocket, stands it up before him on table*) Dear little Flo! The one girl I've loved all my life! (*arm outstretched, teapot in L. hand*) To think that you're my wife at last! (*slowly closing his arms*) My wife! (*hugging teapot, yowls*) It seems too good to be true. And where are the patients Quayle said would flow In? Simply flow In! (*waves teapot, tea, goes all over the stage*) Hello! its flowing out.

(*Enter Plant.*)

(*loudly*) I say, where are my patients? (*loudly, coming down stage, not seeing Plant*)

Plant. (*more loudly*) And I say *where* are my daughters?

Doctor. (*seeing him*) My first! Quayle's right, after all. (*comes to Plant teapot in hand, assumes professional air*) Good afternoon, won't you sit down? (*seats himself and writing table, puts teapot on blotter. He is always absent-minded when absorbed in his science*)

Now! (*earnestly*) What can I do for you? What's the trouble, eh?

Plant. (*aside*) Well, upon my word, he's a cool customer. (*stands R. of table*)

Doctor. Come, come, let's hear what it is, or how I can help you; you know I'm in the habit of hearing confidences, (*sees teapot, puts it under table*)

Plant. (*indignantly*) Sir, I'm a father!

Doctor. (*bowing*) Sir, I congratulate you. (*writes "Father" on note pad—to Plant cheerfully*) Is it a boy or a girl?

Plant. (*hotly*) Two girls, sir.

Doctor. Dear, dear, I sympathize with you. (*makes a note "two girls"*) Mother doing well?

Plant. (*gesticulating wildly*) The mother's dead, sir!

Doctor. (*with sympathy*) Ah, now I understand your agitation, (*makes note*) And the twins—are *they* well?

Plant. (*wildly*) Damn it, Sir, they're not twins, and I've lost 'em.

Doctor. Dear, dear! (*aside*) Lost his wife and both the poor little babies, (*writing on note pad*)

Plant. (*chokingly*) Only half an hour ago, and I've come to you—

Doctor. (*putting up his hand*) No, no, if your own Doctor won't grant a certificate, it's no use coming to me. (*tears up notes*)

Plant. I tell you I left 'em here, on this sofa.

Doctor. (*rises indignantly*) Oh *my* sofa! Then you'd no business to. How dare you leave the poor things lying on my sofa? Where are they? (*looking under sofa cushions*)

Plant. Hang it, sir, that's what I've come to ask *you*. What have you done with them?

(*Enter Tupper.*)

Tupper. (*to Doctor*) Please, sir, Mrs. O'Hara says—(*hands him her account book*)

Plant. (*seizing Tupper*) Where are my daughters? (*crosses C, shaking Tupper—threatening him with big stick*)

Tupper. I dunno, sir—give it up.

Plant. No prevarications! You saw the two young ladies.

Doctor. (*surprised*) Two young ladies! I see now!

Tupper. Are you their *father*, sir? I didn't think you was old enough.

Plant. (*pleased, releases him, pats his head*) Good lad! (*crosses down L.*)

Doctor. Where have they gone, **Tupper**?

Tupper, I dunno, sir—they was fetched.

Plant. Fetched? Who by? (*rushing at Tupper furiously*)

Tupper. I dunno, sir, two gentlemen—they didn't leave no name, they simply come, saw the ladies—and carried 'em off.

(Bus.—Plant threatening Tupper—Tupper arm up.)

(Exit Tupper quickly.)

Doctor. *(aside)* Just my luck—lost two cases!

Plant. A plot, sir—a vile plot—whoever the scoundrels are, they shall pay heavily for this wounded heart.

Doctor. *(seriously)* Heart? Cardiac? *(hand on Plant's heart, listens)*

Plant. *(half crying, on Doctor's arm)* My precious jewels! Two dear girls, **Doctor.** who have never caused me a moment's uneasiness all their blessed lives.

Doctor. Apparently not. Hadn't you better go and look for them?

Plant. *(excitedly walks up and down)* Ah, you are not a father—

Doctor. *(aside, looking through microscope)* Hope not—only married this morning.

Plant. —or you couldn't stand there unmoved. I am struck down in the flower of my days; this is a stroke, sir, a fatal stroke. Ach! *(cries out with pain—puts hands to his back)*

Doctor. That's not a *stroke*—that's *lumbago*.

Plant. *(hotly)* Hang it, sir, I speak in parables—I'm not a patient!

Doctor. Not a patient! Then what do you come here for? Parables are no good to me. I've got my living to earn! *(rings bell)* Good afternoon!

(Enter Aurora.)

Aurora. 'Ere's a letter for you, sir.

Doctor. *(taking it)* Thanks, and show this gentleman out.

Aurora. Very good, sir, we *are* busy to-day, sir. *(to Plant)* This way out. *(at door)*

Plant. *(to Doctor)* You little know whom you are insulting. Some day, sir, your eyes will be opened—and you will discover that the country cousin—

(Aurora listens and mimics him.)

—whom you spurned from your door, was none other than a fairy prince, who will this very day lift you from the slough of grovelling poverty to the realms of affluence and prosperity. Good day, sir!

(Aurora crosses and exits behind Plant.)

Doctor. *(alone)* "This very day"—"Affluence and prosperity"—"fairy prince"—oh, he's off his dot! *(looks at postmark)* "Ambleside." Why, it's from *(rises and crosses L.)* Aunt Susannah! "My dear Nephew: I have heard glowing accounts of your success." My success! "I long to see my brilliant nephew —I'm coming up to London to-morrow." To-morrow—to-morrow, *(looks at calander)* that's Saturday, good job it's not to-day. Mrs. O'Hara's got an Irish party on upstairs and Aunt Susie's so awfully quiet she can't stand the slightest noise, *(reads)* "It is my constant joy to know that you are devoting your days—and I daresay many of your nights—to the noble work of alleviating human suffering." *(looks at her picture—reads)* "I mean to do all that my money can do to help you to pursue your glorious profession with everything in your favor." Its too good to be true! *(rises)* No, it isn't Quayle's right again! Flo *has* brought me luck, and on our wedding day! *(pause)* The very day! That's what that silly old man with the dyed hair meant. By Jove! he is a fairy prince! Oh, Flo, Flo, what a honeymoon we'll have! *(dances all over the room with delight, seizing a sofa cushion to dance with)*

(Enter Aurora, followed by Ruby, Pearl, Waverly and Andrew in single file.)

Aurora. The Doctor'll see you directly. Take your seats, please.

(Ruby and Pearl sit on couch, Ruby L. of Pearl; Andrew and Waverly R. C, laughing.)

TABLEAU.

Doctor. *(stops dancing suddenly—aside)* Quayle's right again! They're flowing in, simply flowing in! *(sits at table—to Waverly down r.)* Good afternoon. Won't you sit down?

(Waverly sits O. P. corner.)

Now what can I do for you? What's the trouble, eh?

Andrew. *(behind Doctor, slaps him on back, laughing)* What do you take us for, Dull Boy?

Doctor. *(turning round)* Why, it's Merry **Andrew!**

Andrew. Of course it is! How are you? This is Mr. Vane, old friend of mine.

Waver. *(other side of Doctor)* How are you? *(shakes hands)*

Doctor. *(between them)* Not a patient? *(to Andrew)* Who are the ladies?

Waver. Don't you know your own cousins?

Doctor. *(mystified)* Cousins, what cousins?

Ruby. *(coming down L. of him—Andrew gives way)* Second cousins.

Pearl. *(coming down r. of him—Waver, gives way)* On mother's side.

Doctor. I know, you're the **Plants** from Southsea? But how could I recognise you? I haven't seen you for so long.

Pearl. *(making eyes at Doctor)* We hope to see you every day now; we're in town for a week.

Doctor. *(aside)* What does she make eyes at me like that for?

Ruby. Yes, just across the road—*dear* Jack!

Doctor. *(aside)* "Dear Jack?" This is very sudden! *(to them)* Er—have some tea? *(rings bell on table)*

Pearl. Oh, thank you. I love tea.

(Girls go to sofa—Boys follow.)

(Enter Aurora.)

Doctor. Some more tea, please, **Aurora**—hot, strong and quick!

Aurora. Yes, sir—hot, strong and quick, *(dives under knee-hole of table)*

Doctor. What are you doing there?

Aurora. *(coming through)* Getting out the teapot, sir.

TABLEAU. *(Exit Aurora.)*

Doctor. *(back of sofa, to Ruby)* And have you come up from Portsmouth with Merry **Andrew**?

Ruby. *(confused)* No—of course not, my dear Jack!

Doctor. But aren't you—eh?

Andrew. *(laughs)* You've guessed it in once, Dull Boy! But it's a secret.

Doctor. *(pleased)* I'm never wrong in a diagnosis. *(shakes hands with Andrew)* I congratulate you. *(looks at Pearl)* And you and Mr. Vane are— *(shaking hands with Waverly)* I congratulate you—

(Pearl shakes her head.)

—Er—I mean I beg your pardon.

Waver. Don't mention it.

Andrew. You were having a jolly good caper when we came in; what's up?

Doctor. She's coming! *(waves hand vaguely towards picture and sits on sofa between girls)*

(Enter Aurora with tea.)

Andrew. *(laughing)* Oh, you've got a "she," have you? You dog! *(back at sofa)*

Aurora. *(aside)* 'E's got a she! *(gasps audibly)*

Ruby. Dear Jack!

Andrew. *(to her)* Here, not so much of your "dear Jack!"

Ruby. Don't be absurd, **Andrew.** he's my cousin.

(Andrew goes C.)

I congratulate you with all my heart, dear Jack! *(kisses him)*

(Aurora gasps again, louder.)

Pearl. And I congratulate you too! *(kisses him)*

(Aurora gasps a third time, loudest, and puts tray on tea-table, upsetting milk jug onto tray. Takes everything off tray quickly, pours spilt milk back into jug, wipes tray and mops milk off floor with apron, goes to fire and wrings out apron in fireplace.)

Doctor. *(rises, goes up)* You've got something on your chest, **Aurora**—

Aurora. Yes, sir. *(takes out loaf of bread and puts it on the table)*

Doctor. I must give you a tonic.

Aurora. *(with fervour)* Oh, do, sir. *(goes C., aside)* 'Is patient again! I wonder what colour it'll be this time? *(to Doctor as he hands her the draught)* Will this 'ere mix with that there, sir? *(pointing at it)*

Doctor. *(snatching it back)* No, I'm hanged if it will! *(puts it down)*

Aurora. *(aside)* I was a little silly to speak. I did want to touch 'is 'and again. 'E's got sich a sorft 'and!

(Exit Aurora. sadly.)

Ruby. And what is your lady-love like?

Doctor. *(pointing to Aunt's picture)* That!

Pearl. Oh, isn't she pretty! *(looks at Ruby grimacing)* Who is she?

Doctor. My maiden aunt Susannah!

Andrew. Oh, Susannah! Now you're having a lark with us.

Doctor. No, I'm not—I leave larking to you. She's coming to-morrow.

Waver. To-morrow? We've got a box at the Hippodrome; you must come and bring your aunt.

Andrew. Yes, we'll trot her round.

(Doctor handing cigarettes to Andrew. who hands them to Waverly, and Waverly to girls.)

Doctor. No, no, she's not a trotter. She lives at Ambleside, and she's awfully quiet.

(Pearl takes a cigarette from Waverly, strikes match on her shoe, lights it.)

She'd think a visit to the Ballad Concerts was reckless dissipation, and if she saw a girl riding a bicycle or smoking a cigarette she'd say—*(sees Ruby and Pearl—stops confused)* I—I—don't know what she'd say.

Andrew. *(roars and slaps him on the back)* Just the same serious old Jack. You must come out with Vane and me to-night.

(Doctor writhes when Andrew slaps him.)

Waver. Yes, we'll paint London red for you—it's the season for spring-cleaning.

Doctor. With pleasure, but mind you, no larks after to-night. I know what a fellow you are for practical jokes, but if you played any joke on auntie, I'd never forgive you. She's one of the best, and I want her to enjoy her visit in her own quiet way. *(looks through microscope)*

Andrew. So she shall, old fellow! We'll take her to the Zoo to see the lions fed.

Pearl. That *will* be quiet!

(All laugh.)

Doctor. *(aside)* Where's that specimen? *(rings bell)* Oh, I remember, in there—*(points to door R. I. E., to them)* Will you excuse me for a moment?

(Exit R. U. E.)

(Andrew crosses to sofa, Pearl pulls Waverly on to sofa. The Quartette sit around tea-table, talking and laughing.)

(Enter Aurora.)

Aurora. *(aside)* Where's the dear doctor? What have they done with him?

Andrew. *(who has his arm round Ruby. aside to Waverly)* Lend me your detective camera?

Aurora. *(aside)* Detective? I'm in this—it's all for 'im! *(hides behind operating couch)*

Waver. Here, no larks, Merry **Andrew.** what do you want it for? *(nervously indicating that Pearl's taken his arm and put it round her waist)*

Andrew. *(with smothered laughter)* I'll show you! *(takes it from him)*

(Waverly nervous tries to get his arm away—Andrew takes snap-shot at Aunt's picture, Aurora watching, her eyes just above couch.)

All over!

(Aurora bobs down.)

Ruby. What's the joke?

Andrew. I'm going to that wig-maker fellow to get him to make me up just like this snap-shot of that picture, he'll do it in half an hour, dress and all. I'll come back before you're gone, and Jack'll think I'm his "she."

Aurora. *(aside)* Will he? Not if I can help it! *(bobs down)*

Andrew. And you'll all be larking and smoking and kicking up no end of a row, and poor old Jack's serious face'll be a study.

Aurora. *(aside)* Will he? I'll learn you to make fun of the dear **Doctor.** see if I don't! *(creeps to door)*

(Exit Aurora. unobserved.)

(Re-enter Doctor—Waverly withdraws his arm suddenly, Pearl puts it back.)

Pearl. *(to Doctor)* Jack?

(Doctor doesn't hear, absorbed in microscope.)

Jack, dear, has any one been here while we were away? *(toying with Waverly's hand)*

Doctor. *(still looking through microscope)* Only a Billy old lunatic with dyed hair and a touch of lumbago.

Ruby and Pearl. *(jumping up suddenly)* Father!

(Andrew sits on couch with Waverly.)

Doctor. *(aside)* Oh, lor! *(aloud)* I'm awfully sorry I didn't know he was your father, he said he was a fairy prince.

Pearl. How like him! *(laughs)*

Ruby. Where's he gone?

Doctor. To look for someone—I think it was you. *(points to Waverly and Andrew)*

Pearl. Had he his big walking stick? *(seriously)*

Doctor. *(nods)* He had! He practised with it on **Tupper.**

Andrew and **Waveb.** *(together, rising)* I think we had better be going now.

Ruby. *(to Andrew)* Yes, do, you don't know papa when he's roused.

(Waverly looks around nervously and goes up.)

Andrew. Oh, I'm not afraid, but I've an appointment. *(winking and smiling)*

Ruby. *(smiling)* With a lady? *(pointing at picture)*

Andrew. *(smiling)* Yes!

Waver. I'll come with you, I'd like to see her.

Andrew. Right! Shan't be long, Jack, and when we come back we're going to take you out to have one jolly good caper for the last, *(slaps him hard on back.)*

Doctor. *(absently)* The last before auntie comes.

Andrew. *(laughing and nudging Waver.)* As you say, before auntie comes.

(Exit Andrew and Waverly.)

Pearl. *(to Ruby)* He's looking at us! Suppose he's fallen in love with us!

Ruby. He mustn't for worlds—father would accept him at once!

Pearl. *(to Ruby)* We must be very distant cousins now.

(Girls sit on sofa.)

Doctor. *(aside)* I'm no match for the two of 'em. *(sits on couch between girls—cheerily)* Now make yourselves quite at home, let me give you some more tea? *(to Ruby.)*

Ruby. *(freezingly)* No, thank you. *(moves to armchair)*

(Pearl goes to window and looks out.)

Doctor. *(C. aside)* Very sudden change! What have I done?

Pearl. (*looking out of window*) Father's back!

(*Bell rings. Ruby and Pearl rush back and sit one on each side of Doctor, cuddling close to him, each holding one of his hands.*)

Doctor. (*to them*) Father's back? Oh, yes, I know, *lumbago!* I'll cure it.

(*Enter Plant.*)

Plant. Ah, here you are, my precious jewels!

(*Doctor rises, girls rise with him, still holding his hands.*)

Sir, accept a father's thanks!

(*Holds out his hand, which Doctor cannot take—Bus. then girls release him—shaking Doctor's hand.*)

Forgive my harshness this afternoon—a father's feelings, you know.

Doctor. On the contrary, you ought to forgive *me*—I know now how much I owe you—my fairy prince!

(*Girls laugh and sit on sofa.*)

Plant. (*quickly*) Hush! Not before the girls! (*goes to them, stands back of sofa*) My precious jewels, how thankful I am to find you safe and well, (*aside*) I'll give it you when I get you home. I know *all!* (*to Doctor*) Two dear girls, **Doctor.** who have never given me a moment's uneasiness all their blameless lives, (*aside to Ruby*) Have you settled? Which is it to be?

Ruby. (*aside to him*) Me.

Pearl. (*aside to him*) And me too!

Plant. (*savagely to Pearl*) I shall lock you up in our room, miss, for the rest of the day.

Ruby. (*ruefully*) Oh, papa, how unkind!

Plant. (*aside to Ruby*) And you too! (*aside*) I can get on better without you. (*to Doctor, stroking their hair*) Ah, **Doctor.** the man who would dare to rob me of my precious jewels, **Ruby** and **Pearl.** will have much to answer for.

Doctor. Don't distress yourself, no man would be so heartless, (*looking through microscope*)

Plant. Ahem! Not such a fool as he looks! These girls are no match for him. I must get him alone. (*aloud*) Well, **Doctor.** we mustn't waste your precious time; I see you're busy.

Doctor. No, no, not on a Friday, to-morrow's my day. (*nearly dances, checks himself, aside—to Plant*) Besides I'm expecting an old school fellow directly, he's a lieutenant in the navy, and my greatest friend.

(*Consternation of Ruby and Pearl.*)

You *must* stop.

Plant. My dear Jack, we should be charmed to meet any friend of yours, but really during our short stay in town we have so many engagements, (*to Ruby*) Say good-bye and kiss him!

Ruby. I have kissed him once. (*rises*)

Plant. Good! Do it again for luck!

(*Pearl crosses towards Doctor*)

Not you! (*stops her*)

Pearl. (*to Plant*) I wasn't going to.

Plant. I wouldn't trust you.

Pearl. Good-bye, **Doctor.** I wish you every success. (*shakes hands and goes up stage*)

Ruby. Good-bye! (*pause*) Dear Jack! (*pause*) I (*going to kiss him, catches her father's eye, aside to Plant*) I can't when you're looking.

Plant. (*aside to her*) Idiot! (*aloud*) Come, my precious jewels!

(*Puts his arms round them; swing Bus.*)

The sunshine of my widowed home, Jack, a humble place, but when you come to visit us at Southsea, you will echo the words of the immortal bard, and join with us in singing, (*sings*) "Ours is a happy little home!"

(*Exit Plant, Ruby and Pearl, all quarrelling loudly.*)

Doctor. (*alone*) What a strange man! I wonder why he's pleaded my cause with Aunt Susannah? (*looks at aunt's picture, sitting end of sofa*) Poor Aunt Susie, when she was quite a girl she fell in love with a man who turned out all wrong; that's why she's lived such a lonely life all these years. Dear Aunt Susie! I'll do all I can to give you a good time, (*goes back to microscope*)

(*Enter Aurora.*)

Aurora. (*excitedly*) If you please, doctor—

Doctor. Don't bother me now, **Aurora.** I'm busy.

Aurora. (*sadly*) I don't want to bother you, sir, I've come to give you *warning.*

Doctor. You want to leave me?

Aurora. *Never,* sir, not till I'm took feet front. I want to warn you about that detective, sir, as the gent brought in his pocket. His friend let it off at that picture, sir.

Doctor. (*mystified*) Let *what* off?

Aurora. Detective camera, sir, an' 'e's comin' back dressed up like 'er.

Doctor. (*smiling*) Who is?

Aurora. 'Im as 'is friend calls "Merry **Andrew.**" sir.

Doctor. (*rubbing his hands*) Oh, is he? It's my profession to cure people, and I'll cure *you,* Master Merry **Andrew.** of this insane love of practical joking, (*thumps on table*)

Aurora. *Do, sir, I don't believe there's no ailment, male nor female, what you couldn't not cure, sir.*

Doctor. Thank you, **Aurora.** *(crosses to fire)*

Aurora. Excuse the liberty I've took, sir, but I thought I'd best warn you, sir, lest when 'e come dressed up, you might think it was—it was *she*—and—and be disappointed, *(half crying)*

Doctor. So I should have been—*very* disappointed. *(looking at picture)* Thank you very much.

Aurora. Still gazin' at 'is fancy! The time 'as come. It's now or never—I'll struggle with yer! *(gets on chair, looks over into mirror, takes combs from pocket, puts them on, pauses)* I do 'ope **Tupper** was wrong; if 'e's gorn and married 'er, I'm the miserablest girl in all Pimlico—South Belgraviar, I mean, *(jumps down)*

Doctor. *(turning round and seeing her)* What on earth are you doing? Do you want to bring the house down?

Aurora. I can't 'elp my weight, sir.

Doctor. *(smiling)* What a swell you look, **Aurora!**

Aurora. *(effusively)* 'E's seen my combs—my diamond combs, *(shakes head to make them sparkle)*

Doctor. *(laughing)* Did Mrs. O'Hara give you those paste things to wear for her party?

Aurora. *(disappointed)* No, sir, they *ain't* for Mrs. O'Ara, and they *ain't* pastry things, *(aside)* 'E don't know diamonds when 'e sees 'em!

Doctor. They're like those in my aunt's picture.

Aurora. *(joyfully)* Is that your h'aunt, sir?

Doctor. Yes.

Aurora. Ho! I h'am glad! *(aside)* There's 'ope, there's 'ope!

Doctor. But those combs have gone out since that picture was painted; you're a long way behind the times—a long way. *(bursts out laughing and rushes out)* Ha! ha! ha!

(Exit Doctor. R. I.E.)

Aurora. *(alone, sobbing)* I'm "gorn out"—"be'ind the times," there's no 'ope, I shall never wear 'em again—*(takes them off)* But I'll 'ave 'em buried with me. *(pockets them)* I shall die an old maid now—I can't wait till **Tupper's** growed up. Oh, it's an 'ard world for us maids, a very 'ard world!

(Exit Aurora. sobbing, L.U.E.)

Aunt. *(heard off)* Is Doctor Sheppard in?

Aurora. *(heard off, sobbing)* I'll see, mam, I'll s-ee!

(Enter Aurora. followed by Aunt Susannah.)

Aunt. *(to her)* What's the matter with you, my good girl? *(c. up stage)*

Aurora. *(sobbing)* N-othin', mum. We're a b-bit b-busier to-day than usual, that's all.

Aunt. Is this the doctor's consulting room? *(looks round with affectionate interest—sits at his table)*

Aurora. One of 'em, mum—I expect 'e's in one of the h'inner rooms, engaged with some patients, 'e's always very busy on a Friday—you couldn't 'ave picked a worse day to come and see the great **Doctor.** 'Ave you got an appointment?

Aunt. I wrote to him. He expects me about this time.

Aurora. Oh! *(Bus.—mimicking her intonation)* Then I'll tell him. *(knocks at door R.I.E.)* A lady to see you, sir.

Doctor. *(heard off)* All right! Tell him to take a chair.

Aurora. *(at door)* It ain't an 'im, it's an 'er!

Doctor. *(heard off, laughing)* Oh, then tell *her* to take the couch.

(Aunt crosses L.C., looks at tea-table.)

Aurora. *(aside)* The h'operating couch! Pore thing! If it ain't a h'arm, it's a leg! *(looks at her sympathetically)*

Aunt. *(looking at picture over door)* My picture! How sweet of the dear boy! Oh, Jack, what a happy time we shall have together.

Aurora. *(coaxingly)* If you please mum, the doctor says as you're to take the couch, and he'll take your case next, mum. *(puts her arm round her waist and walks her up to couch)*

TABLEAU.

Aunt. *(smiling)* My case! *(sits on sofa)* **Aurora.** Yes, buck up, mum! *(slaps her on back)*

Aunt. *(amused, aside)* Am I *very* pale, I wonder? If I am, it's with the joy of looking forward to clasping my dear brother's child in my arms.

Aurora. *(kindly)* It'll soon be over. He'll be very gentle with yer, he's got sich a sorft 'and. *(puts her legs up)*
(Enter Doctor.)

Doctor. *(sotto voce)* Damn good get-up. *(loudly)* Damn good!

Aurora. *(shocked)* Oh, doctor!

Doctor. *(to Aurora)* Don't you see? It's the picture—my Aunt Susie! *(points to picture, then to her)*

Aurora. *(comes to join him, they stand c, backs to audience, roars)* So it is, an' I said, "If it ain't a h'arm, it's a leg." *(roars)*

Doctor. It's *both* arms and *both* legs, **Aurora.** and we'll have 'em off in a twinkling, *(takes coat off, rolls up shirt sleeves)*

Aunt. *(flabbergasted)* Both arms! Both legs!

Aurora. Right you are, sir, you fetch the larfin' gas, while I sharpen the knives, (*sharpens two long knives from case against each other*)

Aunt. (*screams*) Knives! Murder! Murder! Let me out!
(*Exit quickly.*)

Doctor. (*calls after her*) Don't go—Old Soosie-Toosie!

Aurora. (*laughing*) We've cured him, sir, we've cured him!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. No time elapses.*

DOCTOR. (*alone*) Good old Merry Andrew! What a sight he looked! Fancy expecting me to take his lumbering carcass for my gentle aunt. Why, I could see his trousers. (*laughs, picks up bills, suddenly stops laughing*) I must sober down now and remember I'm a married man with a lot of responsibilities—and no money, not yet! But auntie's coming to-morrow—the real aunt—coming like a good fairy to make everything rosy! (*looks at photo*) Flo, dear little Flo!

(*Bell.*)

(*not hearing bell, engrossed in photo*) I'm longing to tell you the good news! I'll write to you. (*sits and writes*) "Dear Madam." (*tears it up*) I mean "Darling Flo." (*writes*)

(*Enter FLORA, shown in by AURORA. She carries a bag in each hand, and parcels under each arm.*)

AURORA. This way, miss. The doctor's very busy, but—

DOCTOR. (*not hearing, writes*) "What wouldn't I give to have you here now." (*takes out coppers*) Sevenpence ha-penny!

FLORA. (*slyly behind him c.*) Is Doctor Sheppard in?

DOCTOR. (*absently*) Good afternoon. Won't you sit down? Now, what can I do for you? What's the trouble, eh?

FLORA. The trouble?

DOCTOR. Oh, it's my wife! (*rushes into her arms*) Flo!

FLORA. Jack! (*kisses him*)

AURORA. (*gasps, aside*) 'Appy patient!

(*Exit AURORA.*)

DOCTOR. Delighted to see you, my dear Flo—most unexpected pleasure—only sorry you can't stop the night.

Scene.—Same as Act I. No time elapses.

Doctor. (*alone*) Good old Merry **Andrew**! What a sight he looked! Fancy expecting me to take his lumbering carcass for my gentle aunt. Why, I could see his trousers, (*laughs, picks up bills, suddenly stops laughing*) I must sober down now and remember I'm a married man with a lot of responsibilities—and no money, not *yet!* But auntie's coming to-morrow—the *real* aunt—coming like a good fairy to make everything rosy! (*looks at photo*) Flo, dear little Flo!

(*Bell.*)

(*not hearing bell, engrossed in photo*) I'm longing to tell you the good news! I'll write to you. (*sits and writes*) "Dear Madam." (*tears it up*) I mean "Darling Flo." (*writes*)

(*Enter Flora. shown in by Aurora. She carries a bag in each hand, and parcels under each arm.*)

Aurora. This way, miss. The doctor's very busy, but—

Doctor. (*not hearing, writes*) "What wouldn't I give to have you here now." (*takes out coppers*) Sevenpence ha-penny!

Flora. (*slyly behind him C.*) Is Doctor Sheppard in?

Doctor. (*absently*) Good afternoon. Won't you sit down? Now, what can I do for you? What's the trouble, eh?

Flora. The trouble?

Doctor. Oh, it's my wife! (*rushes into her arms*) Flo!

Flora. Jack! (*kisses him*)

Aurora. (*gasps, aside*) 'Appy patient!

(*Exit Aurora.*)

Doctor. Delighted to see you, my dear Flo—most unexpected pleasure—only sorry you can't stop the night.

Flora. (*surprised*) Jack! I've come to stop for ever.

Doctor. (*releasing her suddenly*) You can't—you mustn't!

Flora. But I can and I must! I can't live apart from you, Jack. I've tried it all the morning, and I can't. (*falls in his arms*)

Doctor. But you must live apart from me—for—for a day or two. There's a lady coming to-morrow who mustn't see you here for anything.

Flora. (*by sofa C.*) A lady! The first day of our honeymoon! Who is she? (*pauses*) A patient?

Doctor. (*smiling and shaking his head*) Better than a hundred patients.

Flora. What's she coming for? Tell me—tell me at once.

Doctor. (*putting his arm round her assuredly*) My dear little wife, she's only my maiden aunt.

Flora. Oh, Jack, are you *sure* she's a maiden aunt?

Doctor. Quite! Here's her letter, (*crosses to sofa, takes it from his pocket and gives it to her*) Now are you satisfied, jealous little woman?

Flora. Forgive me, Jack. I can't help being jealous of everybody and everything—I love you so much!

Doctor. (*round on to sofa*) I know you do—and see what luck you've brought me. (*pointing to letter which she is reading*) I told you we shouldn't go wrong if we followed Quayle's advice. Auntie's coming to-morrow, and she's going to do all that money can—

Flora. (*reading letter*) To-day, Jack—she's coming *to-day*. This letter was written yesterday.

Doctor. (*suddenly*) What a fool I am! Where's the Bradshaw? (*crosses to table, turns over leaves of Bradshaw, hurriedly*) Ambleside! A! Where's A! Acton, Aldersgate, Ambleside, here we are! Good gracious! She's nearly here! (*crosses to Flo*) Flo, it will never do to greet her with a story of a secret marriage—she'd be simply horrified! It's very hard to part—it's been a short and unsatisfactory honeymoon, (*kisses her*) But—Where's that Bradshaw? (*crosses to table, fumbles to find the place*) Lowestoft? L! L! Where the devil is L?

(*Enter Aurora with letter.*)

Aurora. 'Ere, sir—a letter for you, sir—and the boy's waiting, (*R. C.*)

Doctor. (*takes letter*) Look out the next train, you *must* catch it! (*throws Bradshaw to Flo*)

(*Doctor reading letter—Flo reluctantly looking out train, in Bradshaw, half crying.*)

Aurora. (*aside*) You shall catch it, impudent 'ussy! I see yer kiss 'im! They all kiss their dear **Doctor.** excep' me. (*turns up her nose at Flo, crosses R. of table c.*)

Flora. (*glancing at Aurora*) I don't like the look of that girl, (*starts*) She's reading his letter, and I haven't seen it!

Aurora. (*to Doctor*) Any answer, sir?

Doctor. Yes, I'll write a note to this lady.

Flora. (*jealously*) A lady!

Aurora. (*aside, reading the letter*) I'll learn 'er bloomin' symptoms—I must be 'is patient.

Flora. (*watching her*) The forward minx! (*shuts Bradshaw with a bang*) I won't go back to Lowestoft. A wife's place is by her husband's side, (*takes her hat off and sits twisting Bradshaw, viciously*)

Doctor. Give the boy this.

Aurora. Yes, sir. (*takes note, crosses to Flo*) Can I show you your place—

(*Flo indignant.*)

—in the Bradshaw, miss? P'raps you ain't beyond the A. B. C.

Flora. (*haughtily, snatching it back*) No, thank you—I can manage myself.

Aurora. (*aside*) Can yer? I'll struggle with yer—I've learnt 'er symptoms, (*as she goes out*) Impudent 'ussy!—kissing the dear doctor. I'll struggle with yer, my gal!

(*Exit Aurora.*)

Flora. (*looking at Doctor, who is absorbed reading letter*) He's forgotten me already, (*pause*)

Doctor. (*rubbing his hands*) Good business! Call on you this evening, my dear lady—of course I will! I wish it was time now. (*looks at watch*)

Flora. (*jealously*) Who's that letter from, Jack? (*kneels on sofa*)

Doctor. A lady in Grosvenor Road.

Flora. How long have you known her?

Doctor. I've never *seen* her yet.

Flora. Who is she? (*stands*)

Doctor. A patient, Flo—my first—at last!

Flora. (*with a sigh of relief*) Oh, only that!

Doctor. "Only that!" My dear Flo, a doctor's wife can't afford to be jealous. You'll frighten away all my most paying patients.

Flora. Oh, no, Jack, I won't, (*runs and kneels by him*) I'll try and look as if I liked them, but I can't help being jealous. My jealousy's only love the wrong side up—that's all.

Doctor. I know it is, and I'm so glad that my first case has come when you were here. You are a mascotte indeed! (*stoops and kisses her*)

Flora. If I stop, I'm sure lots and lots and lots will come.

Doctor. (*not noticing, absorbed in letter*) This is the very case I've always been hoping for, and I've got it at last! Just look at the gold crest, and the thick paper. No, don't read it. Oh, it's worth three guineas a week, if it's worth a penny, and it's a three years' job—bar accidents.

Flora. What's she got?

Doctor. Hysterical paraplegia—she's afflicted with all sorts of abnormal fancies and longings.

(*Front door bell rings.*)

Flora. (*jumping up suddenly from her knees*) Who's that? Another lady afflicted with all sorts of longings?

Doctor. (*seriously, rubbing his hands*) I hope so—devoutly, (*rises suddenly*) By George! If it's auntie! She mustn't find you here.

Flora. (*running about aimlessly*) Where shall I go? (*crosses L., runs towards bathroom R. U. E*)

Doctor. (*stopping her*) Not in my bedroom!

Flora. Why not? I'm your wife!

Doctor. Oh, yes, I forgot. But aunt may want to take her things off, and if she found *you* there, the whole story'd have to come out, and she might think it was a fairy tale, and that would be awful! I know—on my operating couch.

Flora. (*shrieks*) Ach! Operating!

(*Runs down O. P., crosses R. corner and then round table C., followed by Doctor.*)

Doctor. It's all right! It won't bite you! (*takes up rug*) I'll chuck this rug over you. She'll think it's something anatomical. She'll never suspect it's my blushing bride.

Flora. Oh, Jack, why should you hide your blushing bride? She's sure to find me *here*.

Doctor. No, no, she won't!

Flora. She *will*! I'm so conspicuous! (*sits on sofa*)

Doctor. The *more* conspicuous the better, when you want to hide anything. It disarms suspicion, (*down stage*)

Flora. (*jumps off couch, and stalks down to him in a towering rage*) Jack! You've done this *before*!!

Doctor. Never! I swear! Do help me now, and all will come right, (*drags her back and covers her up*)

Flora. (*popping her head out*) Oh, hubby, are you *sure* we're *properly* married?

Doctor. Quite. Lie still, (*same Bus.*)

Flora. (*same Bus.*) It doesn't feel like it a bit. Oh, it's a horrid, horrid wedding day! (*kicks and disarranges rug*)

Doctor. (*putting it back*) She's coming! Lie still, do lie still! Flo, please—for my sake! Do lie *quite* still—

(*Flo kicks.*)

and don't kick.

(*Enter Plant.*)

Plant. My dear cousin Jack! (*putting out his hand*) I'm so glad to find you alone. My mission is of rather a delicate nature.

Doctor. (*aside*) Oh, Lord! (*looks at couch nervously to Plant*) I'm rather busy to-day. You couldn't call some other time, could you? (*feels his pulse*)

Plant. My dear Jack, you misunderstand me—it's not me—it's my precious jewels. I've left them lying in their room, their sobs were distressing to hear, they are suffering terribly.

Doctor. (*aside*) Another case! Quayle's right again! They're flowing in.

Plant. (*aside*) Locked up, and serve 'em right. I'll get on better without 'em. (*aloud*) They are both—(*sobs*)

—both—

Doctor. Two of 'em! The more the merrier! I'll come at once, (*putting on his hat*)

Plant. No, you misunderstand me—they are simply overcome with the way—to use their own phrase—the "affectionate" way in which you received them this afternoon.

Doctor. (*aside*) And Flo can hear every word. It's all up!

Plant. They can talk of nothing else.

(*Doctor pulls Plant's coat.*)

It's Jack, dear Jack, darling Jack, (*same Bus.*) Ah, you have robbed me of my precious jewels.

Doctor. (*glancing nervously at couch, with assumed levity*) Nonsense!

Plant. (*indignant*) It's not nonsense at all, it's very *serious*. Heaven forbid that I should speak, harshly to a young man with a rich—ahem!—future—but as their father—from whom they have never had a secret all their blameless lives—(*crosses R.*) I tell you, sir, you have broken *two* hearts in one afternoon.

Doctor. (*gloomily*) Oh, good afternoon! (*sits at table*)

Flora. (*aside*) I shall go home by the next train.

Plant. They're wasting the best years of their lives, and all for you, sir—all for you! (*cross L., waves his stick excitedly*)

Doctor. (*half to himself*) I can't commit bigamy.

Plant. I don't ask you to marry both—(*whacks*)—of them, but one or the other you must—(*whacks*)—and shall—(*whacks on table*)—after all you have said and done, (*up*) Now, my dear sir, (*walking about waving his stick C.*) I speak to you as a bachelor—(*whacks rug with walking stick*)—without encumbrances, (*whacks*) What have you got there? (*whacks*)

Doctor. (*gets up*) My encumbr—er—my model! (*R. of chair*)

Plant. Your model?

Doctor. (*intercepting him*) Yes, my ana—

Plant. Anna?

Doctor. Anatomical model. Look out, you'll break it—and these things cost money, you know.

Plant. I accept your explanation—without prejudice, Well, to return to our muttons—I mean my poor lambs

Doctor. (*aside*) Oh, damn your lambs! (*crosses L.*)

Plant. I ask you, as a father, what are your intentions?

Doctor. (*aside*) Can't tell him I'm married—he'd tell auntie.

Plant. (*severely*) Answer me, sir—what are your intentions with regard to my two daughters? (*Bus. Flo.*)

Doctor. (*sofa, aside*) If he wasn't my fairy prince, I'd brain him! (*spots Flo's hat and collars it, confused*) Flo's hat! Oh —er—honourable, you know—strictly honourable, (*tries to hide Flo's hat*)

Plant. (*pointing to Flo's hat*) What is *that*, sir? (*works right round sofa*)

Doctor. (*following*) A lady's *hat*, sir.

Plant. Don't be flippant, sir. (*seizes hat and waves it*) You're deceiving my girls, two girls with but one single thought, two hats—hearts that beat for Jack.

Doctor. (*to Plant*) I'm deceiving no one—that hat belongs to one of my patients.

Plant. (*aside*) A patient, indeed! He's got none. (*goes for hat*)

Doctor. A lady in whose case I take the deepest interest. Can't tell you—it would be a breach of professional etiquette.

Plant. (*goes to Doctor over R., throws his hat and stick on sofa*) Ah, now you're talking business. The legal and medical professions are sisters, and should have no secrets.

Doctor. (*shakes his head*) No, no, it's a delicate case. (*Bus.*)

Plant. Delicate cases are my speciality, and if I can be of any assistance to you—(*aside*)—or you to me—(*aloud*) I'm at your service. Proceed.

Doctor. (*aside*) I'll break it to him gently why I can't marry his daughters, (*to Plant*) Well, to begin with, she's a married woman—

Plant. Is she? She'll cost her husband a pretty penny in hats.

Doctor. (*airily*) Oh, he can afford it. (*speaks low so that Flo can't hear*) He's a great friend of mine—in fact, the greatest friend I have in all the world.

Plant. (*loudly*) Then what's his wife's hat doing here?

Doctor. (*aside*) That's just like a d——d lawyer!

(*softly*) Don't you see, they married secretly, without her parents' consent, and she went back to her people, and—and time went on—and at last she could bear it no longer, so this afternoon she came up to town to find her husband—

Plant. Your greatest friend?

Doctor. Er—precisely!

Plant. (*aside*) It's that lieutenant in the navy. I must remember that.

Doctor. And she came straight to me, and she had a fit of hysteria and she fell—

Plant. Fell?

Doctor. Yes—in my arms.

Plant. Sir!

Doctor. Fainted—fainted! And now she's lying down, and the question is, when she recovers, where is she to go?

Plant. Go? To her husband, of course! Where is he?

Doctor. Ah, that's the question!

Flora. (*aside, popping her head out*) I've got the cramp! I shall shriek in a minute.

Plant. (*aside*) I'll put him under an obligation, (*to Doctor—effusively, loudly*) My dear cousin, my door is ever open to the weary wanderer, and if the fair owner of that hat—

Doctor. No, no! It's very kind of you, but I won't hear of it. The fair owner of that hat is perfectly comfortable where she is.

(*Doctor and Plant up.*)

Flora. Ooh! (*sits up*)

TABLEAU.

She's not a bit comfortable where she is, Doctor Sheppard!

Plant. (*aside*) Ah, the old story! (*crosses R. of table*)

Flora. I've got pins and needles.

Doctor. My poor child, let me— (*goes to her O. P. side of table*)

Flora. Go away—don't touch me. (*lies on couch, rubbing her leg, aside to Doctor*) I'm not your poor child any longer. I shall get the registrar to cancel our certificate.

Plant. (*to Doctor. who comes down C., looking miserable*) So that's your anatomical model, eh? Your friend's wife? You Don Juan! (*digs him in ribs. In his ear*) "These things cost money, you know." (*laughs—to Doctor*) If it comes to a divorce, look me up. I'll pull you through on reduced terms.

Doctor. No, no, you don't understand.

(*To Flo, who comes down between them*)

Are you all right now?

Flora. (*coldly, crossing from him to Plant*) Yes, thank you, Doctor Sheppard. (*aside*) Now I'll find out all about Jack and these precious jewels! (*crosses r. to Plant*) I accept your kind offer of hospitality, sir.

(*Doctor pulls Flo to him, she gets away, and sits down r.*)

Plant. (*aside*) He'll have to marry my daughter after this, (*goes to Flo*)

Doctor. (*aside*) I hate letting her go with **Plant.** but P'raps it's the best way out. Anyway she'll not see auntie, I must get 'em oft before she comes, (*to Plant*) My fairy prince, how can I thank you for this double act of kindness?

(*Slaps him hard on the back—Plant doubles up with lumbago.*)

Don't double up like that—you might be struck so. I'm more grateful to you (*same Bus.*) than I can express. (*same Bus again*) I've moved him at last! Good!

(*Doctor goes to Flo, who crosses L. to sofa at once.*)

Plant. I must get out of this. Ah, my dear young lady, allow me. Your hat. (*hands Flo hat from off sofa, watching Doctor—to Flo*) Ah, he's a sad dog, always full of fun! That's why all the girls are so madly in love with him.

Flora. (*severely*) They must be mad to be in love with him! (*at sofa back, putting her hat on, looking in mirror*)

Plant. (*aside*) Tired of him already. She'll be wanting to go back to her husband—good business for the lawyer—(*rubs his hands*)—and especially for yours truly, (*goes up in front of mirror—crosses round sofa*) I must find out what her husband's name is. I'm quite ready when you are, my dear Mrs.—er—Mrs.—

Doctor. (*crosses C. quickly, aside to Plant*) Garden—. better call her Miss Garden for the present.

Plant. (*aside to Doctor*) I say, this mustn't be used against me in evidence. It's only for your sake, you gay dog! (*offers his arm to Flo*) Come, my dear Miss Garden—you must confide in me as in a second father.

(*She takes his arm.*)

Doctor. (*aside*) I hope she won't!

Plant. (*at door*) I say, Jack—"a lady in whose case I take the deepest interest!" (*nods towards her*)

Doctor. (*to Flora. as they go out*) Flo! Speak to me.

Flora. (*going—angry*) No, I won't speak to you.

Plant. (*as they go out arm in arm, winks at Doctor*) No, sir, we won't speak to you.

(*Exit with Flora.*)

(*Bell rings.*)

Doctor. (*alone*) I should like to have that gentleman for a surgical patient! I half wish I hadn't let her go. Those girls are sure to talk about me, and Heaven only knows what they'll say! I wonder if they're really in love with me? No! not likely. I'm not the sort of fellow girls fall in love with. No girl ever fell in love with me except Flo—dear jealous little Flo! Ah, well, I love her all the more for being so jealous, and I know she loves me. Thank Heaven one woman loves me, and only one.

(*Exit R. I. E..*)

(*Enter Aurora. followed by Aunt.*)

Aurora. This way, mum. The doctor's very busy.

Aunt. (*aside*) I'm calmer now! (*her lips are set, and she looks anything but calm*) And I'll make him explain

his outrageous conduct, (*crosses right round writing table*)

Aurora. Will you take a chair, mum—and I'll tell the doctor—

Aunt. (*with suppressed indignation*) Engaged with some poor suffering patient, I presume? (*sits*)

Aurora. (*aside*) I don't like her tone of voice, (*comes down and looks in her face—aside*) It's 'im! (*aloud*) Is the doctor expectin' of you back, or was you took wuss? What's your complaint, eh? (*taps her on the shoulder*)

Aunt. (*indignantly*) My complaint? *You!* (*shoves her away*) Go and tell the doctor that I am here, at once.

Aurora. (*not moving*) Oh, yuss, if not sooner. What name, eh? (*same Bus.*)

Aunt. (*loudly*) No name.

Aurora. (*not moving*) Oh, the doctor won't see no lady without no name. 'E's very particular.

Aunt. (*with suppressed rage*) Then tell him Susie-Toosie wants to see him. (*crosses sofa and sits*)

Aurora. Oh! what ho! (*laughing*) Susie-Toosie—oh, if it's that you needn't wait. Come along, outside. (*tries to pull her out of her chair*) 'Op it!

(*Enter Doctor. Aurora stops suddenly.*)

Doctor. (*surprised*) **Aurora!**

Aurora. (*to him*) It's Susie-Toosie, sir. (*laughs*) Come back again.

Doctor. (*laughing*) So it is. Go on, **Aurora.** turn it out, that thing's my aunt, (*sings*) "For she's a jolly good fellow."

(*Bell rings.*)

Aurora. (*leaving go of Aunt*) Drat that bell, it's spoilt my day.

(*Exit Aurora.*)

Doctor. (*quietly*) Look here, you merry **Andrews** take your hair off. (*pulls it*) Oh, by George!, he has stuck it on tight! (*pulls it harder*)

Aunt. (*indignantly*) Sir!

Doctor. Don't put on that silly voice, I know all about you. I'll make him jealous, (*sings*) "There were two jolly sailor girls from Portsmouth town"—the little one makes eyes at me. But it's the tall one I like, she calls me "dear Jack." Oh, she's *dead gone* on me. *Her father wants me to marry her.* (*aside*) That's shut him up! (*aloud*) And look here, you've got to take your hook. I'm fagged out after my railway journey—I'm going to have a bath before *she* comes—you know I'm a great believer in the water cure.

(*Takes off his frock coat and throws it down, goes to bath room, turns on hot and cold taps in sight of audience, noise of water flowing into bath.*)

Now, don't sit there looking a silly ass. (*shies something at her at the last word*)

(*Aunt sits facing audience, speechless with indignation.*)

You know you're not a bit like a lady, and nobody but a lunatic would take you for one. Hurry up and get some decent togs on, and come back for me at 7:30. Do you hear, you old joker, it's no use keeping it up—

(*Aunt sits motionless.*)

Oh, well, I can't wait, (*undoes his braces*) But look here, if you don't clear out before *she* comes I'll break every bone in your body. Au reservoir!

(*Doctor exits into bath-room.*)

Aunt. (*crosses to table*) And that is my brother's only child! A shameless monster, lost to all sense of decency, and carrying on with two sailor girls! Horrible! But after all, he's my nephew and I must do my duty by him. What is my duty, I wonder? (*comes back and sits on sofa*) His father was such a gentle soul, and to think that this brutal ruffian is his son.

(*Enter Tupper.*)

Tupper. (*looks round, sees no one, hears splashing in next room*) 'E's 'avin' a bath, now's my time for a quiet smoke, (*picks cigarette end off ash tray*)

Aunt. (*to herself*) Oh, my poor head!

Tupper. (*starts and comes to her, cigarette in mouth*) Summat wrong with yer 'ead?

Aunt. Go away, you horrid boy!

Tupper. The doctor'll cure it in a jiffy, take my tip, but 'e's 'avin' a bath just now. You know he's a great believer in the water cure. He says if we 'ad cleaner bodies we'd 'ave cleaner minds—do *you* 'old with that? I spec he'll give *you* the water cure. I say—you must pay for it afore you go, 'cos 'e's stoney. Goes on tick for every think. 'Ave you got a light?

Aunt. Go away!

Tupper. All right, no offence, (*gets match from mantelpiece*) The doctor could make lots of money if he'd only try, but 'e don't. 'E just lies on that couch all day reading books with 'orrible pictures of people 'aving their arms and legs chopped orf, and such like. (*coming round*) This is the wust—ain't it blood-curdling? But the lady don't seem to mind—she looks quite calm and peaceful-like, don't she? (*shows Aunt the book*)

Aunt. Take it away, you dreadful boy!

Tupper. All right—keep your 'air on. (*goes up stage*) 'E's wonderful clever; you should see 'im with these 'ere knives, golly! ain't they sharp! (*trying one*) 'E'd slice yer up as soon as look at yer, *and yet* no patients don't come. Why's that? Do you think 'e's too expensive—it's a pound a time.

(*Bell rings.*)

I say, the proper way is to leave it in a h'envelope on this 'ere table. Don't forget, 'cos there 'ere clothes

ain't paid for yet, and if they ain't to-day, they're a-comin' orf.

Aunt. You rude boy! Go! (*sits in grandfather's chair*)

Tupper. (*aside*) Well, it ain't *my* fault if 'e don't get on! I says all I can!
(*Exit Tupper R. I. E. above table.*)

(*Enter Ruby and Pearl. shown in by Aurora—they don't see Aunt.*)

Aurora. I'll tell the **Doctor.** (*goes towards bath-room door*)
(*Splashing heard.*)

He's very busy—but—
(*Louder splashing.*)

Ruby. Pray don't disturb him.
(*Bell rings.*)

Pearl. We don't want to see him *just* yet. We'll wait
(*Exit Aurora.*)

That stupid cabman never suspected anything. He called him "Mum."
(*Both laugh.*)

Ruby. Let's bring her in now, before Jack comes in.
(*Enter Aurora. followed by Flo.*)

Aurora. I'll tell the **Doctor.** (*goes to bath room*) E's *very* busy now—but—
(*Splashing heard.*)

Flora. (*to Aurora*) Not yet—I want to speak to these ladies first.

Ruby. (*backing down stage astonished, to Pearl*) Miss Garden! What does she want to come for—and spoil our fun?

Pearl. (*to Flo*) You said you had a headache, and were going to lie down.

Ruby. (*to Flo*) Yes, that was only an excuse for coming to see Jack.

Aunt. (*aside*) She calls him Jack!

Aurora. (*aside*) I must 'ear this—it's all for 'im. (*stays at back, pretending to tidy*)

Flora. It was no excuse at all. I was pulling the blind down to darken the room, when I saw you two horrid things crossing the road to this house—when you *said* you were going shopping. That was only an excuse to come and flirt with *my* Jack!

Aunt. (*aside*) Oh, he's *her* Jack, is he?

Flora. And I followed you, though my head's splitting, for I love him with all my heart, and I won't let *anyone* come between us.

(*Aurora gasps.*)

Ruby. You brazen girl, and you're married to his greatest friend!

Flora. I'm not! (*descends on Ruby*)

Ruby. You know you are! Pa said so!

Flora. Did he? Then he basely betrayed my husband's sacred confidence, (*crosses back again*)

Pearl. (*with sarcasm*) Your husband's sacred confidence! If you're really a respectable married woman, my dear Miss Garden, instead of coming here to slander my father, you'd better go back and lie down.

Flora. And leave you alone with my Jack? No, thank you! What are *you*, I'd like to know? Two horrid fast girls who ran away with two young men only this morning, and had to be locked up.

Aunt. (*aside*) And *these* are my nephew's *friends*!

Flora. And you picked the lock with a hairpin, and came here all alone to flirt with my Jack!

Ruby. *Your* Jack? How dare you! (*crosses to Flo and comes back*) He's my Jack!
(*Aurora gasps again.*)

Aunt. (*aside*) Oh, he's *her* Jack now! It gets worse and worse!

Pearl. To be strictly accurate, Doctor Sheppard is our Jack!

Aunt. (*aside*) Our Jack! This is too much!
(*Aurora gasps louder.*)

Flora. What do you mean?

Pearl. It is my father's wish that one of us should marry him.

Aurora. (*screams*) Oh, 'Evvings! They're going to marry my Jack! (*coming down—falls on her knees facing audience C.*)

Aunt. (*aside*) Her Jack! That's four of them! They all love Jack!

Flora. (*to Aurora*) Your Jack!

Aurora. (*kneeling*) Yuss! I love Mm with a secret passion and I don't care who knows it! (*rises*)

Aunt. It's a perfect harem! (*makes her escape towards door and Exits still unobserved.*)

Aurora. (*C.*) Don't you think because I'm only a servant, a common slavey with £5 a year and a 'alf a pound o' sugar a week, that I'm a-goin' to 'ave the *dear doctor* took from me!

Flora. How dare you love him!

Aurora. And why not? 'Cos I wears a cap? Look 'ere! you three girls is all settin' your caps at 'im. I'm in it

too. (*throws down cap*)—and I chucks darn the gimlet.

Pearl. You little stupid!

Aurora. (*crying*) Yuss! I know I'm a little stupid, but which o' you would put yer 'ole soul into cleanin' 'is boots, as I does? Which o' you would buy 'im wittles out o' yer perks as *I* does? I may be a little stoopid, but I loves 'im more than all of yer put together, and I'll struggle with yer, see if I don't!

(*Exit Aurora.*)

Ruby. (*to Flo*) Are you going, Miss Garden, or are you not?

Pearl. It'll make your headache much worse if you stay here.

Flora. I shall ask the doctor to give me something to send it away, (*makes herself comfortable on sofa, back to Pearl*)

Pearl. (*to Ruby*) Isn't she a spiteful little cat!

Ruby. (*to Pearl*) Never mind, she shan't interfere with our fun; we can't leave those two sitting in that four-wheeler all day. (*rises, comes to Pearl*)

Pearl. No, come along, We'll go and tell "auntie" to come in.

(*Exeunt Ruby and Pearl.*)

Flora. (*aside*) I'll make Jack explain about those girls, or I'll break off our—our honeymoon; they talk as if he was engaged to both of them. Now I know why he was so desperately anxious to hide me when their father called.

(*Enter Doctor. in pyjamas and eccentric Turkish dressing gown, rubbing his head with a towel—Flo doesn't see him.*)

Oh, Jack, jack, I never thought you'd turn out such a monster as this!

Doctor. (*surprised to see her*) Good afternoon, (*fumbles for his eye-glass which is hanging down his back*)

What can I do for———(*recognizes her*) My darling wife! This is a pleasant surprise.

Flora. (*starting up*) Go away, you object! (*crosses R.*) It's not a *pleasant* surprise, and I'm *not* your wife any longer! I know all—oh, Jack!

Doctor. (*aside*) Those precious jewels have said something. Confound them! (*advancing to her, timidly*) My dear Flo, if you will only give me time, I can explain everything!

Flora. (*eagerly*) Oh, do, Jack, do! (*rushes into his arms*)

(*Enter Ruby and Pearl.*)

Ruby. (*seeing Doctor and Flo together*) Oh, we didn't know you were engaged.

Pearl. There's another lady wants to see you.

Flora. (*jealously*) Another lady? (*turns away*)

Doctor. (*eagerly*) In hysterics?

Pearl. No—in a four-wheeler.

Ruby. She said she'd rung twice, but couldn't make anyone hear.

Doctor. **Tupper's** never awake when the bell rings. I'll discharge that boy—at least my *half* of him!

Ruby. I told her I'd see if you were disengaged, and she scribbled her name on her card; here it is. (*reads*) Miss Susannah Sheppard!

Doctor and Flora. Auntie!

Doctor. (*to Flo*) She mustn't see me like this—(*looks at the dressing gown*)—and she mustn't see you *at all*, you must fly!

Flora. (*clinging to Jack, who is pale and agitated*) Oh, Jack! I can't go and leave you with them, (*looking at Ruby and Pearl*) Can't you say that I'm one of your patients?

Doctor. Good idea, how clever of you. Get back there, (*on operating couch*)

Ruby. Oh, what fun! Let's all be patients! (*nudges Pearl*)

(*Ruby and Pearl sit down and pretend to be suffering.*)

Doctor. (*to girls*) All right! All be patients. It'll impress auntie, (*takes off dressing-gown and flings it into bathroom, is just going in—stops*) No! No time to change, (*snatches his frock coat off chair, and buttons it over his pyjamas*) Remember! This is the supreme moment of my life. Whatever I say to you—whatever I *do* to you—you mustn't mind.

Ruby and Pearl. We won't, (*stifling a laugh*)

Doctor. Hush!

(*Enter Andrew dressed as Aunt, followed by Waverly.*)

(*to Andrew*) My dear aunt, I'm so glad to see you. Won't you sit down? (*leads him down to sofa*)

(*Pearl runs to Waverly, and drags him down O. P. corner.*)

Pearl. Come and sit here! Pretend to be a patient! **Waver.** Why?

(*Pearl explains in dumb show.*)

Doctor. (*at settee to Andrew*) I must apologize for this worn-out attire—I'm always worn out on Friday, my worst day. I wish you'd come *any other day*. No! I don't mean that! I mean I'm awfully glad you've come today, but I'm awfully sorry I'm so busy I can't talk to you. No, no! I don't mean that! I mean I'm awfully glad, of course, that I'm so busy I can't talk to you! No, no, of course I don't mean that—I mean—I don't quite know what I do mean. You see it's Friday—oh! what a fool she must think me! Will you excuse me just two minutes while I settle off a few patients?

(Trio 1st laugh—Doctor crosses quickly to them.)

(aside to them, softly) Don't laugh at her! and don't look so beastly healthy! Look pale! Faint! Do something!

(Bus.—Ruby makes a sling for her arm out of her handkerchief.)

(crosses quickly back to Aunt) I'm so sorry to keep you waiting, my dear aunt; won't you amuse yourself with a book or something? *(goes to couch at back, fetches "Quayle on Muscles," comes back quickly to Aunt, opens it)* Here you are. *(shuts it quickly and shies it down, aside)* What do ladies read?

(Crosses quickly to Pearl, who is reading "Pink 'Un," snatches it from her.)

Thank you very much, *(crosses quickly to Aunt)* Here you are, aunt, this is a lady's paper! *(gives it to her and runs to Flo at back—aside anxiously)* I'll explain everything when they've gone! *(loudly, holding her hand)* Ah! your nerves are run down a little, *(goes to medicine chest)*

(Trio 2nd laugh.)

Confound those **Plant** girls—I'll pay them out! *(flings roll of lint at Pearl, then pours sal volatile from bottle into measuring glass, then into tumbler, adds a little water—to Flo)* There! drink that! You'll soon be better.

(During this Bus. Pearl picks up roll of lint, puts a bandage round Waverly's face—Ruby steals across stage and kisses Andrew—Doctor turns round just after.)

Ruby. *(C., confused, comes to table)* Could you take my case next, doctor? I'm so bad!

Doctor. You are. *(Bus.—with stethoscope)* I mean—with pleasure! I'll write you a prescription, *(writes)* I should advise a long voyage with a merry companion.

(Andrew shakes his fist at Doctor unobserved by him.)

Better start at once, *(hands her prescription, saying aside)* Go! *(rings bell on table)*

(Enter Tupper.)

Show this lady to her carriage, **Tupper.**

(Ruby doesn't move from table.)

(aside) Go! Go! What are you waiting for?

Ruby. *(aside to him, stifling a laugh)* My sister, of course. I'm not going to leave her here, *(crosses C., then on to Andrew)*

Doctor. Pray don't.

(Doctor rushes at Pearl, who is hobbling across stage on Waverly's walking stick and takes stick from her.)

(aside) Do you want to give me away to my aunt?

(then loudly) I'll write to your school mistress about you. I think a little physical treatment *locally applied* *(brandishing stick)* will put you right very soon. Good afternoon, *(aside)* Go! Go! *both* of you! *(rings bell)*

(Re-enter Tupper.)

More carriages for this lady, **Tupper.** *(to Pearl)* You needn't wait, little girl.

Pearl. I shall wait for Mr. Vane; and I won't be called a little girl! *(goes to Ruby)*

(Bell rings.)

Doctor. *(getting desperate)* Shall I never get rid of 'em! *(rushes at Vane and grips him by the arm)* I'll take you next, sir. *(loudly)*

(Waverly laughs.)

Stop that infernal laughing. I know my aunt will see through it soon, *(punches him on back)*

(Waverly cries out.)

Ah, it's still there! *(loudly)* That'll have to come out! *(punches him harder)*

(Waverly cries louder.)

Yes! *(severely)* We must remove that at once. Step into my operating room.

(Drags him oft to bath-room—opens door, turns on taps and leaves them running. Waverly runs back to his chair, Doctor runs back after him.)

Come along, now—be a man! **Waver.** Not to-day, thank you all the same.

(Enter Aunt, shown in by Tupper.)

Aunt. *(C.)* I'll give him *one last chance.*

Doctor. *(seeing her—rushes at her—aside to her)* Take 'em off, you fool! She's come! Take 'em off, I say, or I'll take 'em off for you!

(Andrew starts up and takes his bonnet and wig off.)

Andrew. *(calls loudly)* Jack! Jack!

(Doctor far too preoccupied to hear him, pushes Aunt into bath-room—she falls head foremost into bath, her heels go up—loud splash. Doctor bangs door, turns round, sees Andrew.)

Doctor. *(aghast)* Merry **Andrew!!!**

Andrew. Yes, Dull Boy!

Doctor. Then who's in here? *(opens door)*

TABLEAU.

(Flo rushes into bath-room and shuts door quickly.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The same as Acts I and II.*

(DOCTOR discovered alone, in frock coat and pyjama trousers, and just going to knock at bath-room door.)

DOCTOR. (*hand up, listening*) I must apologize to her! No, I simply daren't. (*comes down c.*) It was such an awful thing to do, I'll—I'll wait till Flo comes out to— to tell me how she is. (*listens*) No, I can't. I know! I'll go to her in my professional capacity! (*puts on high hat, and does to door, just going to knock, looks at pyjamas*) I can't go in these. Where are my trousers? (*looks round*) Of course, in there! (*points to bath-room*) I know! I'll go to ask for my trousers! (*same BUS.—about to knock*) No that's a silly idea! I'm losing my wits. (*comes down c. and sits at writing table*) Suppose something happens to her? There'll be an inquest, and it'll be all in the papers: "Brutal Conduct of a West End Doctor.." Oh, my cup of misery is full!

(*Enter AURORA with telegram.*)

AURORA. (*to DOCTOR*) Here you are, doctor—a telegram for you, sir. We are busy to-day!

DOCTOR. (*opens telegram, starts, aside*) From my father-in-law. (*reads to himself*) "Have learnt from local registrar your cowardly conduct in eloping with my daughter—am on my way to London to horsewhip you."

AURORA. (*cheerily*) Any answer, sir? (*c.*)

DOCTOR. (*gloomily*) No! It's nothing—only an appointment—I shan't keep it.

AURORA. Don't look so sad, sir.

(*Music upstairs heard off, some appropriate music-hall tune.*)

You go h'upstairs to the tea-fight. 'Ere's yer invite. (*takes card off mantel*) There's plenty to eat and drink

ACT III.

Scene.—The same as Acts I and II.

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Aurora. Don't look so sad, sir.

(Music upstairs heard off, some appropriate music-hall tune.)

You go h'upstairs to the tea-fight. 'Ere's yer invite. *(takes card off mantel)* There's plenty to eat and drink and nothin' to pay; you done quite enough work for one day, sir.

Doctor. Quite!

(Bath-room bell rings.)

Aurora. *(mystified)* That's your bath-room bell a-ringing, sir.

Doctor. *(funereally)* Yes! Answer it.

Aurora. *(hesitating)* Who's inside, sir?

Doctor. Two ladies.

Aurora. Two of 'em—oh, doctor!

(Enter Flo, from bath-room, with bundle of Aunt's clothes, dripping wet.)

Doctor. *(penitently)* My dear Flo, let me help you!

Flora. *(indignantly to Doctor)* Don't touch me! I wonder you aren't ashamed to. This is your work! *(crosses to Aurora quietly)* Take these, and dry them as quickly as possible!

Doctor. Flo! My darling, won't you give me one word?

Flora. Brute!

(Exit Flo. into bathroom, banging door after her.)

Doctor. Got it!

Aurora. Oh, sir, what 'ave you been a-doin' of?

Doctor. Don't ask silly questions. Do as you're told. I don't know what it is, but do it!

Aurora. *(aside)* If the missus sees these she'll turn the dear doctor into the street. I know she will! But she shan't see 'em, if I can 'elp it. *(hugs them closely)* It's all for 'im! Oh, ain't they wet, but they can't squelch the flame that's burnin' 'ere for the dear doctor. *(coming down)* I must tell him, I must! *(throws wet clothes down on stage)*

Mrs. O'H. *(heard off)* H'Aurora!

Aurora. Yus, mum! *(hides clothes behind her)*

(Enter Mrs. O'Hara.)

Mrs. O'H. 'Ow dare you wait on lodgers as can't pay their rint? *(by sofa)* Go h'upstairs and wait on my lady friends.

(Exit Aurora.)

(leans on back of sofa, to Doctor) Pardon me for callin' when you're so busy, *(with sarcasm)*

Doctor. *(absent-minded)* Don't mention it. Won't you sit down? Now, what can I—oh, it's the landlady!

Mrs. O'H. Quite a *stream* of patients!

Doctor. *(absently)* Oh, yes! Flowing in—simply flowing in!

Mrs. O'H. I'm glad to 'ear it. If a man can't h'earn a honest livin' at your time of life, 'e may as lief—*(hiccough)*—drown 'isself.

Doctor. *(aside)* "Drown"—the water-cure—*my* cure!

Mrs. O'H. I needn't remind you as it's Lady Day.

Doctor. *(picking up pile of bills)* No, I've been reminded, but I'm afraid I must trouble you to wait.

Mrs. O'H. *Ho, of course!* The pore lone widder must always wait.

Doctor. I wish the lone widder would go to the devil!

Mrs. O'H. As I was just remargin' to Widder Smith, as is honnering my party h'upstairs—

Doctor. *(rising)* Don't let me keep you from your friends, *(half rising)* They'll be getting impatient.

Mrs. O'H. (*rising*) H'impatient indeed. (*crosses C.*) Their company manners is just as good as *your* friends, I'll warrant. Which reminds me that Widder Smith 'as met you in (*hiccough*) in sassiety.

Doctor. (*absently*) Widow Smith? (*shakes his head*) Never heard her name.

Mrs. O'H. Ho! of course not! (*comes to him*) You'll say next you never gave her a bath—(*hiccoughs*)

Doctor. (*rises, astonished*) Gave her a bath?

Mrs. O'H. (*very indignant*) A bath bun—I was a-goin' to say, and a cup o' coffee, at the Penny Reading—(*crosses C. again*)

Doctor. (*smiling grimly*) Oh, I remember that Penny Reading—I gave a comic recitation—it *was* funny! (*sits again*)

Mrs. O'H. Fairly so, she says, 'for a hamatoor. Somethin' about the water-cure, wasn't it?

Doctor. (*writhing*) I believe it was. (*aside*) The water-cure! It's fate!

Mrs. O'H. Well, out o' charity to a pore lodger as can't pay 'is rent, I'm goin' to take yer h'upstairs to to say that there recitltation to my lady friends. Come along!

Doctor. (*rising*) No, no, I'm not in a funny humour!

Mrs. O'H. Ho! but I'm going to take 'arf a crown off the rint-book for yer doin' of it—ap come along! (*drags him*)

Doctor. No, no—I really can't—I've had a terribly busy day and I'm too—tired!

Mrs. O'H. Too proud, you mean. But, mark my word, if you don't come h'up—

Doctor. (*aside, absently*) I *shall* come h'up three times.

Mrs. O'H. Your pride'll 'ave a fall, and a very 'umblin' fall!

(*Exit Mrs. O'Hara, with dignity.*)

Doctor. (*alone*) I wonder if the fall from the Albert Suspension is worse than Waterloo Bridge? (*sits looking miserable*)

(*Enter Aurora, looking more miserable.*)

Aurora. (*aside*) It's now or never. I must tell 'im, I must.

Doctor. (*aside*) I wonder if I ought to keep that appointment with my father-in-law first. No! I'll spare him the trouble.

Aurora. (*aside*) Now, when I come to think of it, there's not only them three girls settin' their frills at 'im, but there's the lady without any clothes in there, (*points to bathroom*) That's four of 'em, but I'll struggle with the lot.

Doctor. (*aside*) I'll go now. (*rises*) Oh, I do feel so nervous, (*pours out whiskey, going to add water*) N—no! I shall get enough water afterwards, (*drinks*)

Aurora. (*aside*) I'll be 'is patient! They all do it that way. I've learnt the symptoms off the letter, I'll see if I know 'em. (*repeats them to herself with action*)

Doctor. (*aside*) Courage, courage! (*strikes his chest, going*) No, I can't go in these! (*looks at pyjamas*) I can't drown myself in pyjamas, and I've left my only trousers in there, and I can't get 'em—how—how very annoying, (*sits again, much relieved*) I can't drown myself.

Aurora. (*standing C. end of sofa, leaning head on cushion*) Ho, sir, I do feel queer.

Doctor. (*looking round*) What's the matter?

Aurora. I've got all sorts of normal fancies, an'— longin's—hawful longin's, sir—I think I'm longin' to drown myself.

Doctor. (*suddenly*) Don't say that! I'm surprised at you—don't you know it's only cowards who want to drown themselves. Come now, sit down! What's the trouble, eh?

Aurora. (*vacantly*) The trouble, sir?

Doctor. What can I *do* for you?

Aurora. I dunno, sir, what *can* you do for me?

Doctor. No, you don't understand. What are your symptoms?

Aurora. (*effusively*) Oh!! My symptoms, sir? (*aside*) I know 'em all by 'eart! (*whispers in his ear*)

Doctor. Most extraordinary! I've heard of a case exactly like that. Whose was it? (*sees letter on table*) Of course! The lady in Grosvenor Road. My only patient, and I'd forgotten her! I must pull myself together. I've got my work to do—my work, (*picks up aunt's letter*) "The noble work of alleviating human suffering!" Ah, that's what she said—before she had a bath—(*looks at bathroom, sighs. To Aurora*) **Aurora.** your case is deeply interesting.

Aurora. Oh, thank you, sir.

Doctor. It's complicated.

Aurora. It's 'oo, sir? (*crosses C.*)

Doctor. It's complicated!

Aurora. Oh, it is *that*, sir.

Doctor. Now tell me. (*Bus. with scribbling block*) Do you suffer from your heart?

Aurora. Oh, don't sir. (*simpers*) My 'eart, oh, don't I just! You 'ark at it, sir! (*rushes at him, jumps on his knee, and presses his head to her heart*) It goes bumpity-bump, and it's all for you, sir, all for you.

(*Enter Flo. from bathroom.*)

I loves yer! (*wildly*)

(Flo. shrieks, and enter Aunt quickly from bathroom in Doctor's Turkish bath-towel dressing gown, and wearing his Turkish smoking-cap and bedroom slippers.)

Aunt. *(severely)* What does this mean?

Aurora. *(looking at Aunt)* What is it? I shall go off into highstrikes in a minute, I know I shall.

Aunt. *(more severely)* Answer me, sir, what does this mean? *(crosses to sofa)*

(Aurora goes off into hysterics lying on sofa.)

Doctor. *(looking at Aurora)* I—I don't quite know. I think it's some form of hysteria, *(bending over her)*

Aurora. *(suddenly recovering and sitting up)* It's a complicated case, mum. *(laughs and falls back)*

Aunt. *(to Aurora)* Hold your tongue! *(to Doctor)* coward! to try to sneak out of it like that! I've done with you.

Flora. *(bursting into tears)* So have I! *(crosses C. to meet Aunt)*

Aunt. Don't cry, dear—he's not worth it.

Flora. *(quickly)* Oh, but he is—that's the worst of it.

Aunt. *(aside)* I'll save this sweet girl from him, my way. *(to Flo.)* Go in there, dear, while I talk to him.

(Exit Flo. into bathroom.)

Aurora. *(behind Doctor)* Buck up, sir—I'll stand by yer.

(Aunt descends upon him, he backs into Aurora. Bus. [ad lib.])

Aunt. So, sir, you're not satisfied with your outrageous treatment of me—your loving aunt, who came to London to be your best friend—*(C.)*

Doctor. If you'll only give me—

Aunt. Hold your tongue sir, I won't give you anything *(L. C.)*

Aurora. Give 'im a chance, mum, that don't cost nothin'—*(end of sofa)*

Aunt. Silence, the pair of you!

Aurora. *(taking Doctor's arm—looks up at him lovingly)* "The pair of us!"

Aunt. You shameless Don Juan; you've bragged to me about your goings on with two sailor girls—

Aurora. 'Tain't 'is fault, mum, they will kiss 'im! *(c.)*

Aunt. Silence! You're breaking the heart of that dear girl in there, *(pointing to bathroom)* Who's worth a hundred such creatures as *you*—a murderer who tried to drown his own aunt!

Aurora. Drown yer! Why, the dear doctor wouldn't drown a kitten, and you ain't no kitten, 'Amlet!

Aunt. *(furious)* And to crown all—I find you in the arms of this—

Aurora. This! Who are you callin' "this?"

Aunt. A disreputable Pimlico lodging-house kitchen girl! *(crosses R. and back again)*

Aurora. 'Ere! Cheese it! I may be a kitchen girl, but I ain't disreputable!

Aunt. *(very furious)* There's only one thing left for you to do, sir.

Doctor. I know—the water cure!

Aunt. You shall marry this girl, sir.

Aurora. *(in a dream)* Marry the dear doctor!

Doctor. *(aghast)* Marry—**Aurora!**

(Aurora turns away delighted.)

(aside) I'd rather drown myself! *(crosses R. corner)* **Aunt.** Yes, and I'll make you do it. *(with scorn)*

She's a fit—

Aurora *(surprised—kneels)* Oh, thank you for those blessed words, mum! You darlin' lady! I'll go and see to your clothes now, auntie! *(going, comes back)* Kiss me, Jack! Kiss your Financy!

(Doctor leans with his back to table—Aurora climbs up on table and kisses him.)

(aside) I'm a lady at larst!

(Exit Aurora.)

Aunt. Who's that poor girl in there? *(pointing to bathroom)*

Doctor. *(absently)* Oh, that is Miss Garden.

Aunt. *(seating herself end of sofa, and putting rug over her, aside)* She shall come and live with me! I know what it is to have loved a worthless man! *(looks severely at Doctor)* I pity her!

Doctor. *(very timidly)* Aunt, may I explain? I'm not—*(crosses to sofa)*

Aunt. *(loudly)* Silence, sir!

(Enter Plant with bag, hurriedly, shown in by Tupper.)

Plant. *(not seeing Aunt, meets Doctor going towards door)* Bear up, Jack, I've bad news for you—Miss Garden's bolted—gone back to her husband, I'm afraid.

Aunt. Her husband?

Plant. *(staggered, recovers himself)* My dear Miss Sheppard! *(aside to Doctor)* What's the matter with her?

Doctor. I don't know—complicated case.

Plant. Ahem! So this joyful meeting between aunt and nephew has taken place—how I wish I'd been here to witness it—and my daughters, too. *(to Aunt)* They're devoted to dear Jack. Ah, I'm afraid the rascal means to rob me of one of my precious jewels. He's a gray dog!

(Doctor looks anything out gay.)

Aunt. *(aside)* The sailor girls. They're his daughters! *(cross to fireplace)* Ugh!

Plant. *(aside to Doctor)* Is the old girl ill? What's up?

(Doctor is silent.)

Ah, but he'll be a great physician—ahem—some day. *(aside to Doctor)* When the daisies are growing over auntie, eh? *(end of sofa)* **Aunt.** *(severely)* John!

(Doctor doesn't move.)

Plant. *(same tone)* John!

(Doctor turns.)

Aunt. John, leave us!

(Doctor rises as if in a dream, shakes hands with Plant at end of sofa, and goes towards bathroom where Flo. went out.)

John!

(He turns.)

Not *that* way, sir! *(points door R. I. E.)*

(Doctor exits below R. I. E.)

Plant. *(aside)* He's upset her, somehow—I wonder how? Ah, well, I must pour oil on the troubled waters. *(to Aunt)* A Wonderful character—er—John. I congratulate you on having such a nephew—he combines all the tenderness of a woman with the more muscular qualities of a man. Did I tell you the story of his kindness to the milkman's baby?

Aunt. *(loudly)* Bother the milkman's baby! *(sits sofa)*

Plant. Certainly—er—bother the milkman's baby. *(aside)* She's strangely cross to-day.

Aunt. I told you to draw up a deed settling a thousand a year on my nephew.

Plant. *(producing it blandly—Bus.—bag C. table)* And I have consumed the midnight oil to complete it.

(He hands it to her, over back of sofa, she pitches it into the fire—he tries to snatch it out.)

My dear lady, that document's worth a lot of money! *(rushes round sofa)*

Aunt. Let it alone!

Plant. *(aside)* It's all off!

(Aunt is poking vigorously, she hits Plant on purpose—)

(hops away, rubbing his leg) I'm in a damned awkward corner. My dear Miss Sheppard, I fail to comprehend the meaning of your action. If ever there was a gentleman Sheppard it's your dear nephew.

Aunt. Tell that to the—the—milkman's baby. I could tell you a story of my nephew that would freeze your blood, *(gesticulates with poker)*

Plant. You astound me—any insanity in the family?

Aunt. *(L. C, rising indignantly)* Mr. **Plant!**

Plant. No, no, of course not—I beg pardon—*(sees she is wearing Doctor's bath-towel dressing gown—aside)* By George! it looks like it, though! What has happened?

Aunt. Who's Miss Garden's husband? *(back to fireplace)*

Plant. *(R. C, aside)* Ahem! I must make a bit out of this, anyway. My dear lady, I mustn't betray a professional confidence, by mentioning his name, *(aside)* Even if I knew it, which I don't, *(to her)* But, strictly between ourselves, he's Jack's greatest friend.

Aunt. She's married to Jack's greatest friend?

Plant. Yes—a lieutenant in the navy.

Aunt. Disgraceful! *(crosses to table)*

Plant. Yes, *(at sofa)* I mustn't say more, *(aside)* Don't know any more, *(to her)* You see, she's a client of mine—of course I shall try and save Jack from the Divorce Court, but it's gone rather far, and these things cost money, you know.

Aunt. What do you mean? *(end of sofa)*

Plant. Only this afternoon I found her concealed on that couch—beneath that very rug you're now wearing

(Bus.—Aunt flings it off.)

—and; when I remonstrated with Jack—as a father—*(end of sofa)* he actually tried to pass her off as an Anatomical model.

Aunt. *(at table, back to fire)* Then, why do you call him a 'Gentle Sheppard?' Every word you say only makes it worse.

Plant. *(aside)* Ahem! I've gone too far! *(crosses to R.)*

Aunt. Bad as he is, I shall do my duty by him—I'm going to find him a wife.

Plant. I'm afraid he can't support a wife—yet.

Aunt. I shall settle an income on her—she'll take better care of it. *(crosses to sofa)*

Plant *(aside)* It's all on again, *(to her, crosses to table C.)* A noble resolve, *(gets out pocket-book)* Shall I take your instructions now? How much shall I say?

Aunt. Not yet. *(crosses C.)* I want you to send your daughters to me. *(crosses to sofa, puts sofa cushions behind her head. Only the Doctor's cap is visible to anyone entering room)*

Plant. With pleasure! (*aside, putting up pocketbook*) I've done the trick, (*to her*) Two dear girls, who have never caused me a moment's uneasiness all their blameless lives.

(*Enter Mrs. O'Hara, sees fez, and naturally takes Aunt for Doctor.*)

Mrs. O'H. Now, then, **Doctor.** me an' my friends are all waitin' upstairs to 'ear the funny story.

Plant. What funny story?

Mrs. O'H. About the Lady and the Water Cure.

Aunt. (*aside*) The Lady and the Water Cure? That's me. (*jumping up*) I forbid Doctor Sheppard to tell that story!

Mrs. O'H. (*seeing her for the first time*) And who are you when you're at home? I took you for the doctor. 'Ow dare you come to my 'ouse, dressed in that indecent way? (*crosses C.*) We're respectable in Marmalade Street—I'm ashamed of my lodger for lettin' you in—'e just shall tell that story now, or pay 'is rint.

Aunt. There is my lawyer—he'll pay your rent.

Plant. Certainly. Come with me, old fireworks!

Mrs. O'H. Thank you, sir—you're a gentleman!

(*Exeunt Plant and Mrs. O'Hara.*)

Aunt. (*alone C.*) Actually going to make fun of me before a lot of vulgar people to get out of paying his, rent, is there anything he won't do? (*sits in grand-father's chair*)

(*Enter Andrew.*)

Andrew. (*seeing Aunt's cap, mistakes her for the Doctor*) I say, Dull Boy, where is she? Still in the bath? (*roars*)

(*Aunt does not move.*)

(*aside, Bus. fills pipe, etc.*) He's got the hump! Poor Jack! I say, I'm awfully sorry I've got you into such a deuce of a scrape, but you know you distinctly said the old lady wasn't coming till to-morrow.

Aunt. (*aside*) Old lady!

Andrew. And to-night we said we'd have one jolly good caper for the last. Now, did we say so, or did we not? (*pause*) You won't speak to me? Well, I dare-say I deserve it, and I'm awfully sorry, but you know if I'd had the slightest notion she'd turn up to-day, I'd never have dressed up like that picture.

Aunt. (*aside*) Like what picture?

Andrew. But, by George, it was a lark when the old girl came, and you thought she was me dressed up—and you—oh, lor! (*laughs*)

Aunt. (*aside*) I begin to understand! (*smiles at audience*)

Andrew. (*up stage*) Oh, don't be so beastly serious, there's no harm done. I'll put matters right with your aunt—you say she's an awfully good sort, and a sailor can always get the soft side of a lady—so come! Give us your hand and say you forgive.

(*Pause—Aunt doesn't move.*)

Oh, come on! (*digs her in the ribs*)

Aunt. (*jumping up*) Sir!

Andrew. (*staggered*) Oh, Susannah! (*R. C.*)

Aunt. Sir!

Andrew. I didn't mean you—I always say that—I mean—I'm most awfully sorry—can you forgive me? (*end of sofa*)

Aunt. I can and do, because I'm so delighted to find that I've misjudged Jack, and that you were the real culprit. Pray tell me to whom I am indebted for the unexpected pleasure of my bath?

Andrew. My name's **Andrew** Merry, I'm Jack's greatest friend.

Aunt. His greatest friend? Are you a lieutenant in the navy?

Andrew. I have that honor.

Aunt. What shall I do? I have it. (*crosses to bathroom*) I've a great surprise for you—but you must not think any the worse of her—she's here with me—(*opens bathroom door*) Come in, my dear.

(*Enter Flo.*)

There! (*points to Andrew*) Kiss him and make it up!

Andrew. Oh, Susannah!

Flora. (*C. aghast*) Kiss him? I've never seen this gentleman before.

Aunt. Mr. **Plant** told me you were man and wife.

Flora. Mr. **Plant** would say anything horrid!

Andrew. Oh, thanks!

Flora. He wants one of his daughters to marry Jack.

Andrew. Does he? Well, **Ruby**'s engaged to me, and **Pearl**—well, don't worry about her, and as for dear old Jack, he's only cared for one girl all his life. I've never seen her yet—but he's told me more than once that her name was **Flora** Garden.

Flora. I'll never be jealous again!

Aunt. (*aside*) Jack's not so bad after all!

(*Andrew crosses r. of table. Enter Aurora dressed very grandly and eccentrically, orange blossoms in her hair and wearing her diamond paste combs—she carries a bundle of clothes.*)

Aurora. (to Aunt, affectionately) 'Ere you are, mum, 'ere's your clothes—auntie! (*hands clothes to Aunt*)
(*Flo. takes them and exits into bathroom.*)

(*calls after her*) 'Ere, they won't fit you! 'Ow can I thank you? You done it all, mum. The dear doctor's never give me the slightest encouragement of a word or a look.

Aunt. (*with blank astonishment*) He never has?

Aurora. No, mum. It was all a one side, and I should never 'ave 'ooked him if you 'adn't said the word.

Aunt. I breathe again, (*aside*) Jack's a perfect angel, (*to Aurora*) I'll see you again, my good girl, before I go.
(*Exit Aunt into bathroom.*)

Aurora. I 'ope we shall see you h'often when were married. You'll always be welcome. She don't know what she's done for 'im. (*at sofa side*)

Andrew. I think it's about time I met my future father-in-law—I shall have two or three things to say to him.
(*Aurora sits on couch and puts her feet up. Andrew sits in Doctor's chair. Enter Waverly, shown in by Tupper.*)

Waverly. Where's Doctor Sheppard? (*L. C.*) **Andrew.** Out. I'm waiting to tell him the good news—I say, such a lark!

(*Waverly sits on table.*)

I've told auntie all about the bath business by mistake.

Waverly. By mistake?

Andrew. Yes, I took her for Jack.

Waverly. How could you?

Andrew. She'd got his things on.

Waverly. (*putting his hand over his face*) Oh, Susannah!

(*Enter Doctor R. I. E., sees Aurora on sofa, and rushes off again, yowling.*)

Andrew. (*to Waverly, neither having seen Aurora on sofa*) Has he got 'em? Come on, we must tell him the good news.

(*Exeunt Andrew and Waverly after Doctor R. I. E.*)

Aurora. (*alone, fondly*) My love! Ain't he coy? I like a bashful lover. It's so gentlemanly, (*sits at writing-table*)

(*Enter Tupper excitedly.*)

Tupper. Please, sir—(*sees Aurora. laughs*) Well, you do look a guy! 'Oiler, boys, 'oiler, 'ere's another guy!

Aurora. You don't know who you're talking to. I shall be your missus soon—I'm going to marry the dear doctor!

Tupper. Oh, don't say that, **Aurora!** (*cries*)

Aurora. Ah, you ain't the only one as'll cry when they 'ear the news. There's the butcher and the baker and my cousin, in the h'E division, he'll bust! Poor little **Tupper**, don't cry. Look 'ere, you shall come and kiss me in the vestry, after it's all over—that's more than I'll let the butcher do. Buck up, it'll soon be over—

Tupper (*drying eyes*) Oh, I forgot, there's a servant come from Grosvenor Road.

Aurora. Tell 'er to wait.

Tupper. But she says the lady's going to have a fit!

Aurora. Tell 'er to wait, we are not to be disturbed.

Tupper. All right! (*aside*) Oh, ain't she lovely! She looks like an 'eavenly h'angel, now I've lorst 'er for h'ever!

(*Exit Tupper.*)

Aurora. (*picks up letter*) I'll see to her case myself. It wants a woman in the case. (*Bus.*) I'll work this business different when I'm boss. I'll get 'im a lot of patients.

(*Enter Plant. Ruby and Pearl.*)

What! Back again! These visits'll 'ave to be paid for. We don't give nothing away heah! (*writes on scribbling block*) To three consul'ations in one day at a pound a time—and there's three of yer, three three's—that's eleven—kindly part up! (*knocks on table*)

Plant. My good girl, this is not a professional visit We've come to see Miss Sheppard.

Aurora. (*with dignity, sitting at writing table*) Well, you can't. Auntie's changing 'er clothes—as she told yer the news?

Plant. What news?

(*Ruby signals to Pearl behind Plant's back.*)

Aurora. (*haughtily*) A mere trifle! There's goin' to be a weddin' from 'ere very soon.

Pearl. A wedding?

Plant. (*to Ruby and Pearl. rubbing his hands, ready to take Ruby and Pearl over R.*) What did I tell you?

Aurora. The dear doctor's the 'appy man!

Ruby. And who is—the lady?

Aurora. Ah, how embarrassing! No, you must ask auntie, she'll tell yer.

Plant. (*to girls*) I told you Miss Sheppard wanted to see you both, (*takes girls R. corner*) She's going to choose between you.

Pearl. Hadn't Jack better do that? (*nudging Ruby*)

Plant. There's not time!

(*Mrs. O'Hara calling off,*)

Mrs. O'H. (*off*) H'Aurora!

Aurora. (*putting her hair back*) Thank goodness, I shan't be at this low game much longer!

(*Enter Mrs. O'Hara.*)

Mrs. O'H. 'Ow dare you dress grander than your missus? Take 'em off, at once, and put on yer cap, then get along h'upstairs and wait on my lady friends. (*slaps her shoulder*)

Aurora. (*aside*) Oh, when I 'ave servants of my own, won't I give 'em O'Hara!

(*Exeunt Aurora and Mrs. O'Hara L. U. E.*)

(*Enter Doctor. Andrew and Waverly R. I. E.*)

Plant. Yes, there is time, just time. My dear Jack, there's not a moment to lose, (*takes him to fireplace*) The Old girl has cut you off without a penny.

(*Doctor falls into his arms.*)

Don't give way! (*holds him up*) There's still hope. My daughters love you—

(*Doctor falls in a heap on the stage.*)

—and will marry you without a penny.

Doctor. (*sitting on stage*) Both of 'em!

Plant. No, sir, either of 'em. You've only to choose and your aunt will forgive you everything—I've arranged it all! Which is it to be? Quick—your answer!

Doctor. (*pointing to the two couples*) There's your answer.

TABLEAU.

Plant. (*seeing Waverly and Andrew for the first time*) What the devil's up now? Those dear girls have never given me a moment's peace in all their blessed lives!

(*Doctor at table C.*)

Pearl. (*comes down*) Papa, see what Mr. Vane's given me. (*shows him Pearl necklace*) Precious **Pearls!** Isn't that appropriate? I think Mr. Vane has something to say to you. (*pushes him forward*)

(*Waverly is silent.*)

Plant. Don't speak, sir—I know what you're going to say.

Waverly. I'm hanged if he does!

Plant. (*pockets necklace*) No man shall rob me of my precious jewel, (*hugs Pearl*) whoever he is. (*aside to Pearl*) who is he? (*passes her over to R.*)

Pearl. (*aside to Plant*) His father's an earl—

Plant. (*aside*) An earl! (*to Waverly, putting out his hand*) My dear sir, forgive me—a father's feelings—(*sobs*) You must give me time—

Waverly. Certainly! There's—there's no hurry! (*crosses L. to Ruby*)

Ruby. (*bringing Andrew down*) Pa, this is—**Andrew!**

Andrew. Mr. **Plant**—I—

Plant. Don't speak, sir—I know what you're going to say!

Andrew. Does he?

Plant. (*taking Ruby in his other arm, and hugging the two girls closely*) Another thief—after my precious Jewels! (*aside to Ruby*) Has he got any money?

Ruby. (*aside to Plant*) Lots!

Plant. (*aside*) Good! (*aloud*) You're breaking my heart, gentlemen, but I mustn't be selfish. Take my precious jewels—and wear them! I wonder if it would run to a dinner? (*counts his money*) No! a lunch! Come to lunch to-morrow, both of you.

Aurora. (*off*) Jack!

(*Enter Aurora. Doctor sees her, and ducks behind curtains C. hiding from her; she crosses to door R. I. E., and taps gently—no answer.*)

Jack! Where's my Jack?

Plant. (*looking at Ruby and Pearl*) Ah, two dear girls who have never caused me a moment's uneasiness all their blameless lives.

Aurora. Ho! then it's all to come, for they told me as their pa 'ad set 'is 'eart on their marrying the dear doctor.

Plant. How dare you! My daughters are Doctor Sheppard's cousins, and nothing would induce me to sanction a marriage between cousins, (*going to her*) You're a very naughty little girl.

Aurora. (*haughtily, seating herself and spreading her frock out*) Little girl! Pardon me, my good man—do you know who you're talking to? You don't know: my position in this 'ouse. I'm auntie's choice.

Plant. Are you? You're not *mine!*

Aurora. Yes! She's chosen me to marry the dear doctor!

(*Ruby and Pearl laugh.*)

Let them laugh as wins. You tried your best, but I don't bear no h'ill-will. I said I'd struggle with yer, and I've done it. If you're good girls, I may ask you to be bridesmaids—it's better than nothing, (*crosses L. C.*)

Plant. (*to Doctor under table*) I say, Jack, is this true? You have my deepest sympathy—and if it should come to a breach of promise—look me up!

Doctor. (*coming out*) If ever I do look you and your precious jewels up, I'll bring a stick twice as big as yours.

Plant. And that is gratitude!

(*Enter Flo. and Aunt—they listen.*)

Ruby. (*hotly*) I don't care *who* marries Jack!

Pearl. Nor I—he's not *my* style!

Aunt. (*to Doctor*) This dear girl has told me all about you—forgive me for my mistakes, but they weren't all my fault—(*shaking her finger at Andrew*) I hope you'll have a very happy married life.

Aurora. (*crossing*) I'm sure 'e will.

Aunt. (*to Doctor*) I shall do all I can to make it so.

Aurora. (*coming to her*) Oh, thank you, mum, and would you please name the day?

Doctor. (*absently*) My wife! (*sees Aurora. shakes her off*) Oh, go to! go to—(*goes to Flora*) This lady is my wife—we were married this morning.

Aurora. *My Jack married!* Then I'm a widder!

(*She falls flat on the stage.*)

CURTAIN.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OH! SUSANNAH! ***

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