

The Project Gutenberg eBook of A Fool's Paradise: An Original Play in Three Acts, by Sydney Grundy

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: A Fool's Paradise: An Original Play in Three Acts

Author: Sydney Grundy

Release date: December 18, 2012 [EBook #41647]

Most recently updated: February 16, 2021

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A FOOL'S PARADISE: AN ORIGINAL PLAY IN THREE ACTS ***

124 [POST FREE
In Great Britain only] 1s. OR 30 CENTS.

FRENCH'S ACTING EDITION
(Late LACY'S).

A FOOL'S PARADISE

The Amateur Fee for each representation of this piece is £5 5s., payable to SAMUEL FRENCH, Ltd., 89, Strand, London, W.C.

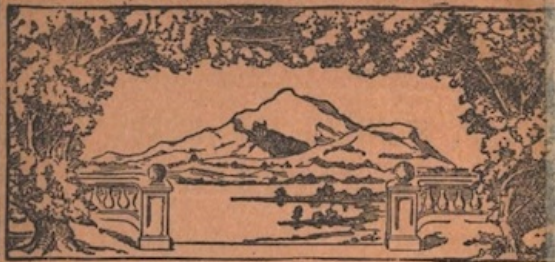
LONDON : SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD., PUBLISHERS, 89, STRAND.	NEW YORK T. HENRY FRENCH, PUBLISHER, 26, WEST 22ND STREET.
BELFAST — J. NICHOLSON, 26, Church Lane.	SHEFFIELD — GEO. SLATER, 54, Snighill.
BIRMINGHAM — W. H. SMITH & SON, 34, Union St.	BOMBAY — SOUNDY & CO. THACKER & CO.
BRADFORD — BILBROUGH & KITCHINGMAN, 5, Dale Street.	CALCUTTA — THACKER, SPINK & CO.
BRISTOL — E. DOLEMAN, 2, Rupert Street.	MADRAS — HIGGINBOTHAM & CO., 165, Mount Road.
DUBLIN — MORROW'S LIBRARY, 12, Nassau St.	SIMLA — SIMLA FANCY REPOSITORY.
EDINBURGH — H. ROBINSON, 111-116, Leith St.	CANADA — R. B. BUTLAND, Toronto.
GLASGOW — WM. LOVE, 221, Argyle Street.	CAPE OF GOOD HOPE — J. C. JUTA, Cape Town.
LEEDS — R. JACKSON, 18, Commercial St.	MELBOURNE — EDGAR DAVIS, 255, Bourke Street, E.
LIVERPOOL — J. FRANKLIN SHAW, 28-30, Colquhoun Street.	ADELAIDE — E. S. WIGG & SON, CAWTHORNE & CO.
MANCHESTER — JOHN HEYWOOD, Deansgate and Ridgfield.	NEW ZEALAND — J. BRAITHWAITE, Dunedin. G. T. CHAPMAN, Auckland. S. & W. MACKAY, Wellington.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE — THOMAS ALLAN, 34, Collingwood Street.	SYDNEY — S. J. KIRBY, 545, George Street.
PLYMOUTH — BURNELL and HOCKEY,	

(By Order) of all Booksellers in England and Colonies.
NEW DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE SENT POST FREE.

NO BOOKS EXCHANGED.

How to Make-up. A practical guide for amateurs. Price 2s.
Private and Stage Dancing With 24 illustrations 1s.
Tableaux Vivants. Arranged for private representations 1s.
Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works. Four Parts. 1s. each.
See Catalogue for complete description. Post free.

SCENERY.



With a view to obviate the great difficulty experienced by Amateurs (particularly in country houses) in obtaining Scenery, &c., to fix in a Drawing Room, and then only by considerable outlay for hire and great damage caused to walls, we have decided to keep a series of mounted Coloured Scenes which are ready for immediate use or they can be had unmounted on thirty sheets of strong paper and can be joined together or pasted on canvas or wood, according to requirement. Full directions, with diagrams shewing exact size of Back Scenes, Borders, and Wings, can be had free on application. The following four scenes are kept in stock.

GARDEN.—The above is an illustration of this scene. It is kept in two sizes. The size of the back scene of the smaller one is 10 feet long and 6 feet high, and extends with the wings and border to 15 feet long and 8 feet high. The back scene of the large one is 13 feet long and 9 feet high and extends with the Wings and Border to 20 feet long and 11½ feet high. It is not necessary to have the scene the height of the room, as blue paper to represent sky is usually hung at the top. Small size, with Wings and Border complete, 63s.; unmounted on paper sheets, 30s.; large size, mounted, 84s.; unmounted, 40s. Blue paper, 1s. per sheet, small size. A double quantity would be required if used for the large scene.

WOOD.—This is similar in style to the above, only a wood scene is introduced in the centre. It is kept in two sizes, as the previous scene, and blue paper can be introduced as before indicated. Small size, with Wings and Border complete, mounted, 63s.; unmounted, 30s. Large size, mounted, 84s.; unmounted, 40s.

FOLIAGE.—This is a sheet of paper on which foliage is drawn which can be repeated and cut in any shape that is required. Small size, 30 inches by 20 inches, 1s. per sheet; large size, 40 inches by 30 inches, 1s. 6d. per sheet.

TREE TRUNK.—This is to be used with the foliage sheets and placed at the bottom of the scene.—Price and size same as foliage.

DRAWING ROOM.—This scene is only kept in the large size, the back scene is 13 feet long and 9 feet high and extends with the Wings and Borders to 20 feet long and 11½ feet high. In the centre is a French window, leading down to the ground, which could be made practicable if required. On the left wing is a fireplace with mirror above, and on the right wing is an oil painting. The whole scene is tastefully ornamented and beautifully coloured, forming a most elegant picture. Should a box scene be required extra Wings can be had, consisting of doors each side, which could be made practical. Price, with Border and one set of Wings, mounted, 84s.; unmounted, 40s.; with Border and two sets of Wings, to form box scene, mounted, 106s.; unmounted, 50s.

COTTAGE INTERIOR.—This is also kept in the large size only. In the centre is a door leading outside. On the left wing is a rustic fireplace, and the right centre is a window. On the Wings are painted shelves, &c., to complete the scene. A box scene can be made by purchasing extra Wings, as before described, and forming doors on each side. Price, with Border and one set of Wings, mounted, 84s.; unmounted, 40s.; with Border and two sets of Wings, to form box scene, mounted, 106s.; unmounted, 50s.

The above can be seen mounted at 89, Strand, London. Full directions accompany each Scene.

A FOOL'S PARADISE

Characters

Necessary Properties

Act I

Act II

Act III

Transcriber's Note

A FOOL'S PARADISE.

AN ORIGINAL PLAY

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

SYDNEY GRUNDY.

Copyright, 1898, by Thomas Henry French.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
PUBLISHERS,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
T. HENRY FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
26, WEST 22nd STREET.

A FOOL'S PARADISE

*Produced at the Garrick Theatre on Saturday,
January 2nd, 1892.*

CHARACTERS.

Lord Normantower	MR. F. KERR.
Sir Peter Lund, Bart., M.D., F.R.S.	MR. JOHN HARE.
Philip Selwyn	MR. H. B. IRVING.
Hon. Tom Verinder	MR. GILBERT HARE.
Price	MR. S. B. BRERETON.
Kate Derwent	MISS KATE RORKE.
Beatrice Selwyn	MISS OLGA NETHERSOLE.
Mildred Selwyn	MISS BEATRICE FERRAR.
Johnson	MISS MINNA BLAKISTON.

ACT I.—THE HALL, AT RAVENHURST,
Philip Selwyn's Country House, near St. Alban's, Herts.

A Week Elapses.

ACT II.—THE BOUDOIR.
Morning.

ACT III.—THE BOUDOIR
Night.

NECESSARY PROPERTIES.

ACT I.—On R. table: China Bowl, books in case, newspapers, photo views, three letters and newspaper through post. Book on sofa. *Ready*: Tennis ball to throw on from between C. doors and R.W. Tennis bat for Kate R.U.E. *Hand Properties*: Basket of cut flowers for Kate. Work bag containing balls of wool and needles, and an apple, for Mildred. Snuff box for Sir Peter.

ACT II.—Water bottle and glass, magazine, and Punch, on L. table. Fire lighted. The hearth should be a solid sheet of slate for glass to break easily. Bell rope on flat, R. of opening R.C., bell pull on flat L., below fire-place. *Ready*: Medicine bottle and glass, L.D. *Hand Properties*: Water can (no water) for Kate. Two certificates of marriage, and one of death for Sir Peter. Cigarettes in case for Normantower.

ACT III.—Clear chair from back of table, and water bottle. Lighted lamp on piano. Ditto on pedestal in conservatory L.C. Small ditto on table, L.C. *Ready* R.U.D.: Six cups of coffee on salver, sugar and milk on small salver. *Ready* L.D.: Medicine bottle, wine glass and poison phial. Flower pot to smash on stone, R.U.E. Alarm bell to ring R.U.E. Large lock to work, R.U.E. *Hand Properties*: Book for Sir Peter. Snuff box for Sir Peter.

A FOOL'S PARADISE.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Hall of an old-fashioned Country House with staircase. Door C. Entrance, L. Door, R. Windows at back, looking into grounds. Letters on table. Gong.*

TOM and MILDRED *discovered together. MILDRED on sofa, L.C., TOM on foot-stool at her feet R. of her. She has some work in her hand, and a ball of wool in a satchel. [Note for TOM.—Before curtain rises, tie wool to button on waistcoat, and see the wool is free to "payout" for business.]*

TOM. Come, Mildred dear, say "Yes."

MIL. But I can't say "Yes."

TOM. You might help a fellow a bit. I never proposed to anybody before, and I daresay I've done it very badly—

MIL. No, Tom, you've done it very well.

TOM. (*rises and sits beside her, arm round her waist*) Say "Yes," then. Of course, I'm not good enough for a girl like you. But I may be some day. My brother Ned's a confirmed bachelor, and it's just on the cards I may be the next Earl of Normantower.

MIL. Yes, Tom, that's just it. I'm not fit to be a Countess.

TOM. Not fit to be a Countess? Why, some of 'em are awful.

MIL. My brother wouldn't hear of it, I'm sure.

TOM. Well, then, you shan't be a Countess. A confirmed bachelor's always the first to get married; and if Ned has a family, I shan't come in for the title. You wouldn't mind being Mrs. Verinder, would you?

MIL. Oh, Tom! I know ought to say I should, but I shouldn't.

TOM. (*half embracing her*) Say "Yes," then.

MIL. Someone's coming! (TOM *runs to opposite side of the stage and sits L. of table. She works; he pretends to read a book on table*)

Enter KATE DERWENT from grounds, C. from R., with a basket of flowers.

KATE. Well, children! (*comes down, puts basket of flowers on back of table, R.C., and goes down to C.*)

TOM. (*aside*) Children!

KATE. Why aren't you out of doors this beautiful morning?

MIL. Oh, I wanted to finish this slipper.

KATE. (*catching sight of the thread of wool, the end of which has got entangled on TOM's button and which stretches across the stage, connecting the two*) Really? And you, Mr. Verinder?

TOM. I? I was reading Hiawatha.

KATE. You don't say so! (*picking up the thread and drawing them together*) Now, how dare you tell me such stories? (*breaks the thread, throws it to MILDRED, crosses TOM to R. of table and fills a vase with flowers from her basket*)

TOM. It's no use trying to deceive you, Miss Derwent. I've been making love to Mildred.

KATE. Making love at ten o'clock in the morning? I'm ashamed of you. It's almost as bad as playing cards by daylight.

TOM. (C.) I want her to marry me and she won't! She says my family's too good for her—as if anything could be too good for Mildred! I'm sure the Verinders are poor enough. As for me, she forgets my father was cut off with a shilling, and

blew'd the lot?

KATE. (R.C.) Blew'd the lot.

MIL. Tom means, his father spent it. (C.L. of TOM)

KATE. Spent the shilling?

TOM. Every penny of it. Oh, we're a reckless lot, we Verinders!

PHILIP SELWYN *enters C. from L., he places his stick in stand L. of C. door, hat on small table up R.C., and goes slowly down to fire-place, R.*

MIL. And why was he cut off with the shilling?

TOM. Because he married the girl he wanted; instead of a girl he didn't want; and his son's going to do the same. (*placing his arm round her and taking her down to L.C.*)

KATE. Ah, Mr. Verinder! Marriage is a serious responsibility. (*goes to C., basket in hand*)

TOM. It's serious when you marry the wrong person, but I'm going to marry the right one.

KATE. Yes, but who is the right one?

PHIL. Surely, the right one is the one we love. (*sits, opening letters, in arm-chair R. of table*)

TOM. (*advances to C.*) You think so, Mr. Selwyn? (*turns to MILDRED, who sits on R. arm of sofa, searches in her work bag and finds an apple which he eats*)

KATE. (*sits R.C.*) Because you have been fortunate in your choice, but how many have made a mistake! Even love matches are often unfortunate. Love has a habit of being so one-sided. (*filling a bowl on table, with flowers*)

[Pg 7]

PHIL. I haven't found it so! and mine was a love match, if ever there was one. I met my wife quite casually at Brighton—fell in love, proposed, was accepted and married, all within a month.

KATE. You married in haste.

PHIL. And by all the laws of cynical philosophy, I ought to have repented at leisure. (*BEATRICE SELWYN enters, L. down staircase unobserved, and crosses slowly to back of table R.C.*) But I haven't repented. To the confusion of the philosophers, I'm the happiest husband and have the best wife in the world.

TOM. (*turns to KATE, his mouth full of apple*) There, Miss Derwent! What do you say to that? (*turns to MILDRED*)

KATE. That is one side of the picture, but I've seen the other. My mother also married for love.

PHIL. And what was the consequence?

KATE. That her daughter will never marry.

BEA. (*softly*) Don't say that, Miss Derwent. (*all start slightly, KATE rises, and sits again almost immediately, still filling bowl with flowers*) You are always severe on the gentlemen, but don't be so hard on them as that.

PHIL. Good gracious, Mousey, how you startled me! Your footsteps are so fairy-like, one never knows where you are.

BEA. Moral: never tell secrets to Miss Derwent, when you think I'm not listening.

PHIL. My dear, it's no secret that I have the best wife in the world.

TOM. Everybody thinks that, Mrs. Selwyn. (*going up C. towards her*)

BEA. (*goes to TOM, C.*) Not everybody. To wit—Sir Peter Lund.

MIL. Oh, what does it matter what that grumpy old bear thinks? (*goes to L. of sofa, and round behind it*)

BEA. (*crosses TOM to sofa, L.C., picks up a book and sits almost reclining, her back to PHIL. and KATE. TOM goes up C. and remains in doorway*) My dear Mildred, Sir Peter Lund is a most able and distinguished man. Having made his fortune as a fashionable physician, he has almost retired from the active pursuit of his profession to devote himself to his innumerable appointments, and to the

transactions of all sorts of royal and learned societies, where the clearing of his erudite throat is the signal of the most reverential attention. (TOM *signals to* MILDRED *who joins him up C.*)

KATE. And well it may be.

BEA. Forgive me, I quite forgot he was a friend of yours.

[Pg 8]

PHIL. And mine as well, my dear. When Sir Peter was an ordinary family practitioner, he brought both Mildred and myself into the world, he attended my father in his last illness, and in spite of the multitude of his engagements, he is good enough to take an interest in us still. What could be kinder than his voluntary proposal to run down here and see me, simply because he had heard casually that I was rather out of sorts?

KATE. Sir Peter is coming here?

PHIL. I expect him this morning.

BEA. I can only wonder that in "the multitude of his engagements" he can find the leisure.

PHIL. Sir Peter is one of those wonderful men, who get through the work of a dozen, yet never seem to have anything to do.

KATE. (*rises*) Who can always find time for an act of kindness, and are never too busy to remember an old friend. (*goes up and puts basket on table at back R.C., and joins TOM and MILDRED.*)

BEA. Well, I will make him as comfortable as I can.

PHIL. I know you will, and the more you see of him the more you will like him. (*opening another letter*) Hallo! Tom, a letter from your brother.

TOM. Ned! (*comes down L. of table, MILDRED L. of TOM.*)

PHIL. "A thousand thanks, old man, for your kind invitation to stay with you while Normantower is being prepared for the reception of my august person! How glad I shall be to shake hands with you once more! Expect me when you see me. Yours as always, Ned. P.S.—Fancy you putting up my cub of a brother! Surely the stables were good enough for him."

MIL. Well, I declare!

TOM. Ned always talks like that; but he's a very good brother to me, and always down with the dust, when he's any dust to down with. (*takes her up C. rejoining KATE*)

BEA. (*rises, crosses to L. of table, puts book in case on table, and then gets back of table, L. of PHILIP*) You see, Phil, Lord Normantower is quite grateful for your invitation.

PHIL. It was a happy thought of yours to suggest it; but when aren't your thoughts happy? They are always of others. (*BEATRICE kisses him.*)

Enter PRICE, L.D.

PRI. Sir Peter Lund. (*BEATRICE comes down C. KATE down R.C. corner of table, TOM and MILDRED behind arm-chair R.*)

Enter SIR PETER LUND. He comes to L.C.

[Pg 9]

PHIL. (*rises and crosses to SIR PETER, taking his hand*) Welcome to Ravenhurst! I scarcely expected you so soon. You must have risen early this morning. (*exit PRICE with SIR PETER'S hat and stick L.D.*)

SIR P. Always get up at five. (*crosses to BEATRICE*) How are you? (*shakes hands with BEATRICE*) How d'ye do? (*crosses BEATRICE to KATE, and waves his hand to TOM and MILDRED*) How are you, boy?

BEA. Always get up at five? (*L. of SIR PETER*)

PHIL. And never goes to bed before two. It's a marvel to me how you do it! (*front of sofa*)

SIR PETER. (*crosses to PHIL.*) It's a marvel to me how you don't do it. That's why you are out of sorts. You eat too much.

PHIL. Sir Peter!

SIR P. Drink too much.

BEA. Sir Peter!

SIR P. Sleep too much.

KATE. Sir Peter!

SIR P. (*turning on the ladies*) So do you!

BEA. (*turning to KATE*) Oh! (TOM and MILDRED *steal off into the grounds, C. to R.*)

SIR P. Of course you do. Everybody does. (*watch*) What time's the next up train?

PHIL. You're not thinking of going already?

SIR P. Certainly not. Not going for ten minutes.

BEA. Surely you'll stay to lunch?

SIR P. Lunch, what d'you want with lunch? If you've an appetite for dinner, thank heaven for it, and don't go and spoil it with lunch.

BEA. Do you ever eat?

SIR P. Eat? Like a cormorant.

PHIL. Drink?

SIR P. Like a fish. (PHILIP *reclines on sofa, R. of it*)

KATE. Sleep?

SIR P. Like a humming-top!

BEA. But you say, you oughtn't.

SIR P. Well? Do you never do what you oughtn't! I do. (*turns up to head of sofa and surveys PHILIP through pince-nez*)

BEA. Since Sir Peter is so pressed for time---

SIR P. Pressed for time? Not at all. (*getting behind sofa still looking at PHILIP*)

BEA. I understood you---

SIR P. You misunderstood me.

BEA. At any rate we'd better leave you with your patient. Come, Miss Derwent— (*bows—SIR PETER bows. Exit with KATE into grounds, C. to R.*) (SIR PETER *turns up stage and watches them off, then comes down, moves chair R. of sofa towards PHILIP, and sits*)

[Pg 10]

SIR P. Well, what's the matter with you?

PHIL. Really, Sir Peter! That's what I want you to tell me.

SIR P. You have a high opinion of the medical profession. Do you suppose we can tell you anything, if you don't tell us first?

PHIL. I have always supposed so.

SIR P. Error, sir. You tell us everything we tell you. The only difference is, you tell us in English, and we tell you in Latin. You take a fee out of your pocket; we put one in ours.

PHIL. Well, doctor, I can't tell you what's the matter with me. I should very much like to know.

SIR P. Why! What has it to do with *you*?

PHIL. (*smiling*) A great deal unhappily.

SIR P. Vulgar fallacy. A patient's complaint concerns nobody but his doctor. (*feels pulse—watch in hand*)

PHIL. I have no energy. I don't take my usual interest in what goes on around me. One day I'm restless—another, lethargic. There's nothing particular the matter with me, but I seem to have no pleasure in existence; and instead of getting better, I get worse.

SIR P. (*shuts watch*) Happy at home? (*after feeling his hand*)

PHIL. Perfectly.

SIR P. How has your marriage answered?

PHIL. My wife is simply a treasure.

SIR P. (*dryly*) Oh! Any money difficulties?

PHIL. None. My father left me beyond reach of any trouble of that sort.

SIR P. Any pain? (*feeling his chest*)

PHIL. No.

SIR P. I see, Miss Derwent is still with you.

PHIL. And I hope, will remain. Beatrice wouldn't be without her for the world, and I think Mildred almost worships her. I can't sufficiently thank you for the introduction.

SIR P. How's your appetite?

PHIL. It varies.

SIR P. I thought Miss Derwent would suit you. I picked her up at Guy's. She was a nurse there. Something about her struck me. Has it struck you?

PHIL. What?

SIR P. Her likeness to your father.

[Pg 11]

PHIL. Well, now you mention it, there is a likeness.

SIR P. Sleep pretty well?

PHIL. Too well. I'm always drowsy.

SIR P. So, altogether, you're quite a happy family?

PHIL. Yes, doctor. With more money than I know what to do with, heir to a name that is honoured wherever it is known, the husband of the dearest wife in the world, I sometimes think I am the happiest man on earth.

SIR P. Humph.

PHIL. You smile.

SIR P. I seem to have dropped into a little paradise.

PHIL. Yes, doctor.

SIR P. Where's the serpent?

PHIL. The serpent?

SIR P. There was a serpent even in paradise.

PHIL. There's none in mine.

SIR P. (*rises*) I'm sorry to hear it. (*crosses to C.*) There is only one sort of paradise in which there is no serpent.

PHIL. What sort do you mean?

SIR P. (*C.*) A fool's. (*takes snuff and goes to hearthrug, R., back to fire-place*)

PHIL. (*rises and crosses to R.C. and sits L. of table*) You are plain spoken, Sir Peter. Now tell me with equal candour what is the matter with me. Perhaps that is the serpent.

SIR P. Shall I tell you the truth?

PHIL. Of course.

SIR P. I don't know.

PHIL. Surely, with your experience—

SIR P. Sir, I have no experience.

PHIL. Well, with your knowledge—

SIR P. Sir, I have no knowledge. Knowledge is the monopoly of extremely young practitioners. I have been doctoring for forty years; and now, I stand here on your hearthrug, sir, a monument of triumphant ignorance.

PHIL. Nonsense, Sir Peter.

SIR P. Sense, sir, sense.

PHIL. Be candid and tell me frankly what is wrong with me.

SIR P. Your liver, probably.

PHIL. Only my liver?

SIR P. (*advances to table*) Don't speak disparagingly of your liver, sir. That eminently respectable organ has been much misunderstood. It is commonly supposed to serve certain functional purposes in the physical economy. Another fallacy! The liver was made, by a beautiful provision of nature, for the benefit of the medical profession. (*sits in arm-chair, R.*)

[Pg 12]

Re-enter MILDRED and TOM, followed by LORD NORMANTOWER, C. from R.

MIL. Phil, here's Lord Normantower. (*MILDRED runs on to back of table, followed by TOM, who gets R. of sofa, and sits on arm of it. SIR PETER rises and goes down two steps, R.*)

PHIL. Ned! (*rises and turns up to meet LORD NORMANTOWER*)

TOM. He's so brown, and he's grown such a beard!

NOR. (*up C.*) Well, Phil, old man, how are you?

PHIL. (*they come down stage together, C., PHILIP on R. of LORD NORMANTOWER, MILDRED crosses behind them to back of sofa, L. of TOM*) My dear Ned! I can't tell you how glad I am to see you. Sir Peter Lund—Lord Normantower. How kind of you to come and stop with us! How pleasant it will be to chat over old times! But first of all, let me congratulate you on your new dignity.

NOR. Dignity? My dear Phil, I have no dignity. I am a born Bohemian, and the idea of me dropping in for a peerage strikes me as so ludicrous, I've done nothing but laugh ever since I became a hereditary legislator. (*laughs*)

TOM. Ha, ha, ha!

NOR. (*suddenly serious*) What's the matter with you?

TOM. Fancy Ned a legislator!

NOR. Even Tom sees the joke. (*throws hat to TOM*)

TOM, suddenly serious, turns up to be consoled by MILDRED; exeunt, C. to R.; TOM hanging LORD NORMANTOWER'S hat on stick in stand.

PHIL. Lord Normantower and I were at Oxford together. We became great friends; and though circumstances have kept us a good deal apart—we've never quite lost sight of one another.

NOR. I haven't the pleasure of knowing Sir Peter myself, but I believe other members of my family have had that privilege.

SIR P. (*crosses to LORD NORMANTOWER, C.*) Sir, I had the honour of attending the last three Earls of Normantower. Your uncle—gout; your cousin Richard—lungs; your cousin John—delirium—humph—delirium! (*PHILIP drops down, R.C.*)

NOR. (*throws gloves on table, L.C.*) That branch of the family disposed of, the peerage devolved on me as the eldest son of my poor father—the only Verinder who never enjoyed the title, and the only one who deserved it.

SIR P. (*shaking him by the hand*) I quite agree with you. (*turns up C.*)

[Pg 13]

PHIL. Let us hope his son will be worthy of him.

NOR. (*sits in chair R. of sofa*) Ah, well, I'll do my best; but ten thousand a year, paid quarterly in advance, would have suited Ned Verinder's book better than an empty honour without a shilling to support it.

PHIL. (*crosses to LORD NORMANTOWER*) Well, there's one consolation. If it's a difficult matter for a peer to make money, it's very easy for him to marry it. (*SIR PETER comes down to fire-place, R.*)

NOR. Marry? Not me! No! I was born a bachelor, and am not going to fly in the face of Providence.

PHIL. You don't believe in marriage?

NOR. Of course there are exceptions; and I hope from the bottom of my heart,

yours is one of them. I haven't seen your wife yet, you know.

PHIL. I've married a most charming woman, Ned—haven't I, Sir Peter? (*going to L. of table, R.C.*)

SIR P. (*picks up Punch from table, R.*) Sir—your wife is my hostess, and one's hostess is always charming. (*bows and turns off—sitting R., reading*)

NOR. A charming woman? You arouse painful memories. I once knew a charming woman. To be quite frank, I was engaged to one.

PHIL. (*goes to LORD NORMANTOWER*) You have been engaged to be married! I never heard of it.

NOR. No, I kept it quiet. So did she. (*BEATRICE enters, C., from R., pausing to look in at window, R.C., and comes down behind chair, R.C.*) At the time, there was not the remotest likelihood of my ever succeeding to the title, and of course I was hard up. I always was. A gilded calf appeared upon the scene; and the charming woman wrote me a charming letter, protesting eternal fidelity, and announcing her approaching marriage.

PHIL. To the calf?

NOR. To the gilt.

PHIL. You had a lucky escape.

NOR. Luckier than I thought: for I discovered afterwards that the charming creature was a regular adventuress—a garrison hack—a boarding-house belle—the sole support of an aged father—a venerable old gentleman, with the manners of a patriarch and the morals of a welsher! She was a charming woman, for all that.

PHIL. I congratulate you on your escape. But who was the unfortunate calf?

NOR. I never took the trouble to inquire.

BEA. (*advancing—all start slightly as before*) And the charming creature? Pray, who was she? (*C.R. of PHILIP*)

[Pg 14]

NOR. (*rises*) Miss Challoner!

PHIL. (*proudly—introducing BEATRICE*) My wife. (*NORMANTOWER bows*) You know one another.

BEA. (*with perfect self-possession*) I believe, now that I see Lord Normantower, I once had the pleasure of meeting him. (*crosses to NORMANTOWER*) Let me see—where was it?

NOR. It sounds ungallant to say so, but I really forget for the moment.

BEA. Well, never mind that now. Tell us who was the lady who used you so shamefully. I am dying to know. (*looking him straight in the face*)

NOR. You must excuse me. Though I am ungallant enough to forget where I met Mrs. Selwyn, I am not so unchivalrous as to betray a lady's secret. (*moves away to L.C. in front of sofa*)

BEA. (*goes to PHILIP, R.C.*) Phil, dear, your friend is quite a hero of romance. If you have any more such friends, please lose no time in introducing them.

PHIL. My love, don't make me jealous. (*BEATRICE goes to NORMANTOWER. PHILIP turns and speaks to SIR PETER*)

BEA. (*giving her hand frankly to NORMANTOWER*) Thank you, Lord Normantower.

NOR. (*taking her hand, rather disconcerted*) For what, Mrs. Selwyn?

BEA. For your loyalty—to my sex. (*turns off up stage to back of table, calling SIR PETER, who rises and joins her. She shows him a book, which she takes from table*)

PHIL. (*crosses to NORMANTOWER, takes his arm, and draws him back to sofa*) You've had a narrow escape, evidently; but don't make the mistake of letting the unworthiness of one woman blind you to the merits of the rest. Believe me, there is no happiness like that of married love. (*sits on sofa. SIR PETER is looking at book; BEATRICE listening to conversation*)

NOR. (*sits L. of PHILIP*) Love! there is no such thing. We think we are in love, but we aren't. What is called love is an affliction of the brain, not an affection of the heart. Luckily, we soon get over it.

BEA. Men may—but women, never. Do they, Sir Peter?

SIR P. I never offer an opinion on matters I don't understand—(*lifting his forefinger*)—unless, mark, they are strictly medical. Love has no place in the British pharmacopœa. (*goes down R. of table, BEATRICE L. of it. She shows him some photographic views*)

PHIL. Yet it exists. I have even known cases of love at sight.

[Pg 15]

NOR. Love at sight! Now you're going too far for anything. I can imagine an enthusiast believing even in love, but love at sight! (*rises*) No, my dear Phil, that's too ridicu— (*a tennis ball comes flying in from the grounds, rolling down to L. corner; NORMANTOWER picks it up and gets L.C.*)

KATE *runs in after the ball, C. from R., she has a tennis bat in her hand, and comes down C.*

KATE. (*speaking off, as she enters*) Stay where you are! I'll get it for you, children! (*stops*) Has anybody seen— Oh! there it is! (*seeing it in NORMANTOWER'S hand*)

NOR. Allow me— (*goes to C. and gives it to KATE*)

KATE. Thank you, very much. (*running out*) Here you are! Catch! (*throwing ball off R. Exit KATE; NORMANTOWER turns up C., and stands gazing after her; pause. PHILIP rises and goes L.*)

NOR. (*to PHILIP*) Who is that lady? (*comes down C. to sofa*)

PHIL. (L.) That's Miss Derwent.

NOR. And who is Miss Derwent?

BEA. (R.C.) Only a companion. (*coldly*)

PHIL. You'll be delighted with her, when you know her, as of course you will, if you stay with us for a week or two.

NOR. I'll stop for a month. (*sits on sofa*)

SIR P. (*watch*) Well, my ten minutes are up. (*crosses to C.*) Before I go I'd like to see you alone. (*to PHILIP*)

PHIL. (*turns up L. behind sofa*) Come to my room. (*to NORMANTOWER, over back of sofa*) We shan't be very long. Meanwhile, I leave you in good company. (*goes to foot of stairs L., followed by SIR PETER*)

BEA. (*goes up C. to SIR PETER*) Good-bye, Sir Peter—if I don't see you again.

SIR P. You will see me again. I'll stay to lunch after all. (*follows PHILIP*)

PHIL. (*going upstairs*) That's right, doctor. Give yourself a holiday for once. (*exit L.*)

BEA. (*following SIR PETER to foot of stairs*) But your patients? What will they do without you? (*smiling sweetly*)

SIR P. (*on stairs*) What will they do? Recover. (*exit L.*)

BEATRICE *stands at the foot of the stairs, watching them off. NORMANTOWER is sitting with his back to staircase. He rises and crosses thoughtfully to R.C. corner of table. BEATRICE advances and stands looking at him.*

NOR. Are they gone?

BEA. (C.) Yes. Oh, Ned, can you ever forgive me? (L. of NORMANTOWER)

[Pg 16]

NOR. Forgive you? I forgave you long ago. Indeed I am grateful to you for teaching me a lesson which I shall never forget.

BEA. You are cruel; but I suppose I deserve it. (*on a line with NORMANTOWER*)

NOR. My grievance is a thing of the past. I have no wish to injure you or to cause you pain, and I should not have expressed myself so freely just now, had I known that you were present or that I was speaking of the wife of a friend. (*a step down*)

BEA. You have been misinformed. There is not a word of truth in what you have heard about me.

NOR. No doubt. People exaggerate so. (*standing below her*)

BEA. They invent so.

NOR. They invent so.

BEA. And you have believed them! What must you think of me? (*moves away a little*)

NOR. To be perfectly frank, Mrs. Selwyn, I endeavour not to think of you at all. (*goes to fireplace R.*)

BEA. (*goes up to L. of table*) You have forgotten me? You have stripped me from your mind?

NOR. I have done my best to forget you. (*leans on mantel, his back to her*)

BEA. (*moving away*) And this is constancy! (*down to L.*)

NOR. (*faces round*) Constancy! I am not more punctilious than most men, but surely it is scarcely my duty to be constant to a woman who has become the wife of another. (*advances to R.C.*)

BEA. (*goes up to C.*) Ah! it is easy to talk of one's duty but it is not always so easy to do it. (NORMANTOWER *looks at her*) Ned—may I call you so? Let me tell you the secret of my life.

NOR. You have a secret? (*comes to her C.*)

BEA. Yes—I was always constant. I was forced into this marriage. The letter I wrote breaking off our engagement was dictated to me. I never loved my husband. (*turns away to L.C.*)

NOR. (C.) Mrs. Selwyn, you forget, your husband is my friend. If you didn't know it when he asked me here, you know it now.

BEA. (*turns to him*) I always knew it. It was I who suggested the invitation. I could bear my unhappiness no longer. I felt I must see you again. Oh, if you could only look into my heart! Ned! Though I used you badly, you are bitterly avenged! (*drops into sofa L.C., and buries her face in her hands*)

[Pg 17]

NOR. (*goes up to head of sofa, looking down on her*) I have no wish to be avenged. I loved you—I lost you—and there is an end of it. (*turns up C.*)

BEA. (*rising*) Why was I born a woman? (*crosses to R.C. corner of table*) Why was I not a man? To amuse myself just for the moment, and then to be able to forget!

NOR. (*comes down behind chair R.C.*) You do us an injustice. We men are not so inconstant as you think. Sometimes we pretend to forget what we are half ashamed to remember. (BEATRICE *listens intently, watching him out of the corner of her eyes*) But the past is past. You are a wife now. (*goes to C.*)

BEA. If I were not a wife?

NOR. Then, it would be different.

BEA. (*close to him*) Hush! I have said, I do not love my husband; and if you say that, you will make me hate him. To think that he—and he alone—stands between me and happiness.

NOR. Beatrice! (*recoiling*)

BEA. Don't shrink from me! Is it so wicked to want to be happy? (*touching him*)

NOR. Happy?

BEA. If I were only free! (*goes down to R.C.*)

NOR. (C.) You forget, though I have dropped in for a title, I am almost as poor as ever.

BEA. (*goes up to him*) But I am not. (*laying her hand on his arm*) Philip has left me everything if I survive him.

SIR PETER *appears at the top of the staircase; she turns off suddenly, crossing*
NORMANTOWER, *who goes down to R.C.*

BEA. (*goes towards foot of stairs*) Well, doctor, how do you find your patient? (*up C.*)

SIR P. (*up L.C.*) Your husband is more seriously ill than I anticipated. (*she glances at NORMANTOWER*)

NOR. Ill!

BEA. What is the matter with him?

SIR P. (R. *of chair*, L.C.) Something occult—that's why I call it serious. There is nothing so serious as the unknown. (NORMANTOWER *turns up R. and looks out at window*)

BEA. Something *you* can't make out? It must be occult indeed.

SIR P. (*goes to front of sofa* L.C.) But something I *hope* to make out before I go.

BEA. Then you propose to stay here? (*disconcerted*)

SIR P. With your permission—for to-night, at any rate.

BEA. I'll have a room prepared for you at once. (*about to go* L.U.E., *returns C. and works to R.C.*)

SIR P. Don't trouble. The orders are already given. I've taken the liberty of choosing my own quarters. They open on the terrace, so I can take the air in the morning without disturbing the household. (*sits on sofa*)

[Pg 18]

Re-enter C. from. R., KATE DERWENT from grounds, TOM and MILDRED running up with her to the doors C. NORMANTOWER goes slowly down to R. corner.

KATE. That'll do, children, I'm quite out of breath. (*comes down C. TOM and MILDRED run off into grounds L.*)

BEA. I am afraid the children give you no rest, Miss Derwent. (R.C., L. *of table*)

KATE. Oh, I don't mind. I like it. I was a dreadful tomboy myself, when I was their age. I haven't forgotten how to play leap-frog yet.

BEA. Your memory is really wonderful.

KATE. And I believe I could give as good a back—(*stooping to give a back, NORMANTOWER down R. laughs. Catching sight of NORMANTOWER, puts her hand to her mouth and stops short*)

BEA. (*obliged to introduce them*) Lord Normantower—Miss Derwent. (*he bows*)

KATE. (*nodding*) How d'ye do? (*turns and speaks to SIR PETER*).

BEA. (*turns to NORMANTOWER, R.*) You have not been here lately—Philip has made such improvements! You'll scarcely know the old place again. May I have the pleasure of showing it you?

NOR. I shall be delighted. (*BEATRICE turns up a few steps C., NORMANTOWER crosses to KATE, C.*) Perhaps Miss Derwent will come with us. (*BEATRICE bites her lips*)

SIR P. (*rising*) Miss Derwent will stop here. (*BEATRICE smiles maliciously*) I want to speak to her.

KATE. You, doctor? (*SIR PETER goes L. and round behind sofa to C. as BEATRICE and NORMANTOWER exit*)

NOR. (*reluctantly*) Good-bye then, for the present.

KATE. Au revoir! (*goes to L.C., NORMANTOWER is "struck," and suddenly remembering turns. Exeunt LORD NORMANTOWER and BEATRICE into grounds C. to R.*)

SIR P. (*SIR PETER after watching them off, comes down R. of sofa and points*) Sit down.

KATE. Don't order me about in that way, doctor. We're not in the hospital now.

SIR P. Sit down. (*KATE sits, in burlesque obedience. He sits*) First let me deliver my messages. The entire medical staff at Guy's send you their kindest regards. (*Both on sofa, KATE L., SIR PETER R.*)

KATE. (*facing audience*) That's very nice of them. On your return, doctor, will you be so good as to give my kindest regards to the entire medical staff at Guy's?

[Pg 19]

SIR P. The house-surgeon, Mr. Kennedy, I regret to say, sends you his love.

KATE. Will you also give my love to Mr. Kennedy?

SIR P. The students send you a kiss apiece.

KATE. Will you please kiss the students all round. (*SIR PETER makes a gesture of objection.*)

SIR P. Are you sorry you changed your position?

KATE. No, Sir Peter. I have been very happy here. Mr. Selwyn has always treated me with such consideration that, I am afraid, sometimes I forget that I am not one of the family; Mrs. Selwyn has never been *unkind* to me, and Mildred I have learnt to love almost as a sister.

SIR P. Good. My object in introducing you here being accomplished, I feel myself at liberty to explain it. The medical profession has its romantic episodes. I am going to tell you one.

KATE. Go on. I love romances. (*faces* SIR PETER)

SIR P. Three years ago, a patient of mine died—nothing remarkable in that—it's a habit my patients have—leaving a grown-up son and a young daughter to inherit his very considerable fortune. He died beloved by his children and respected by all who knew him, but on his deathbed he confided to me a secret. He was a thief and a bigamist. When very young he had married a rich lady. This marriage he had concealed, and under a false name had married again. For some years he had lived a double life and had two families. By his first and lawful wife he had one child—a daughter; and having contrived to possess himself of the whole of this lady's fortune, ultimately he deserted her. The fortune of the first wife he left to his children by the second, who are to this day quite unconscious of their father's crime.

KATE. Sir Peter!

SIR P. In his later years, he had searched privately for his first wife and child, but he could find no trace of them. That search he bequeathed to me, and a pretty legacy it's been! For a long time my inquiries were unavailing, but at last I discovered that the mother was dead.

KATE. And the daughter?

SIR P. Was one of my own nurses at Guy's Hospital.

KATE. At Guy's!

SIR P. I had known her by sight for months, but had not happened to hear her name—Kate Derwent.

KATE. (*rising*) I?

SIR P. Sit down. (*KATE sinks back into seat*) What was I to do? All this man's children were my personal friends. The two, who had legally inherited your mother's fortune, morally were not entitled to a shilling. You, who legally are penniless, morally are entitled to it all. If ever there was a case for an amicable arrangement, this was one; and I thought it would facilitate a settlement, if you were all made acquainted with one another. With that object I introduced you into this house.

[Pg 20]

KATE. Surely you cannot mean——

SIR P. I can—I do.

KATE. That Mr. Selwyn—(*rising*)

SIR P. Is your brother.

KATE. Mildred——

SIR P. Your sister.

KATE. And their father——

SIR P. Yours. Now comes the question; what is to be done?

KATE. (*with determination*) Nothing.

SIR P. How nothing?

KATE. You say they don't know anything. Not that their father was—(*stops short*)

SIR P. A scoundrel? No.

KATE. Not that their mother——

SIR P. Was his victim? No.

KATE. Not who I am?

SIR P. Not who you are.

KATE. Then, let them never know it. (*crosses to R.C., L. of table*)

SIR P. Nonsense. I must see you properly provided for.

KATE. I am provided for. (*gets C.*) I have earned my living for years, and I can earn it to the end. I am not used to wealth, and should not know what to do with it. They are, and could not be happy without it. Let them remain in ignorance of the truth.

SIR P. (*rises and goes towards her, C.*) Miss Derwent, you are a most extraordinary person. I tell you, you are entitled to a fortune, and you don't ask how much it is. A woman—and no curiosity.

KATE. I don't care how much it is or how little. I don't want to know. (*turns away to front of table*)

SIR P. This is a matter of no less than two hundred thousand pounds. Well?

KATE. I said nothing.

SIR P. Then will you please say something?

KATE. I have nothing to say.

SIR P. A woman—and nothing to say. You regard two hundred thousand pounds with contempt. Think, how many new frocks it would buy. (*going to her*)

[Pg 21]

KATE. I do not regard money with contempt; for money can sometimes buy happiness. But we are all perfectly happy as we are. Why do you want to disturb us?

SIR P. (*R. of table*) You think only of the present; but consider the future. Some day, you may have a daughter of your own—

KATE. No, I shall never marry.

SIR P. Never what?

KATE. I am in earnest. (*goes down a few steps, R.C.*)

SIR P. A woman—and not want to be married! Hang me, if I believe you're a woman at all! (*goes to L.C.*)

KATE. Why? Because I want to be generous?

SIR P. (*above KATE*) Miss Derwent, there is a higher virtue than generosity, and that is justice. It is easy enough to be generous, but it hard indeed to be just—especially to oneself. This is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence.

KATE. (*works up to C.*) Pardon me, Sir Peter—this is a question of breaking the hearts of those who were kind to me when I needed kindness, who befriended me when I was alone in the world, whom I have already learned to love almost as what they are—my brother and sister. Their father—my father—is dead, but his memory is dear to them. I know they loved him—and I know they honoured him. How can I imperil that love, and how can I stultify that honour? How can I cloud the sunshine of my sister's life with the shadow of her father's sin? No, Sir Peter! If that is justice, justice is beyond me. I am only equal to generosity. I *am* a woman, only a woman—and I can't do it. Not for a hundred fortunes! Not for all the world. (*goes to L. of table and sits*)

SIR P. (*goes up to C.*) Yes, you are a woman after all—and as self-willed and silly as the rest. To throw away two hundred thousand pounds! Why, I've decimated my fellow creatures for half that. It's wicked—positively wicked. You deserve to die in a ditch.

KATE. (*rises*) I will die where heaven wills it, but I shall at least have the consciousness that I have done something to repair my father's wrong.

SIR P. Rubbish—romantic rubbish.

KATE. Promise me that you will keep this secret—that you will say nothing to my brother—promise me, Sir Peter.

SIR P. I shall promise nothing. I shall use my own discretion, as I always do. (*turns off, L.C.*)

KATE. Sir Peter! (*following him*)

SIR P. You are a foolish, obstinate, absurd—(*turns suddenly and takes both her hands*)—good, generous, true-hearted girl, and I am your friend always! Look here! I'm old enough to be your father—(*is about to kiss her. Re-enter PRICE, R.D.; aside*) Damn that man! (*goes L., PRICE sounds gong, R., below fire-place*)

[Pg 22]

Music in orchestra till act drop. Re-enter TOM and MILDRED, running in from grounds, followed by BEATRICE and LORD NORMANTOWER leisurely, C. from R.

TOM. (*throwing his hat on R. table*) Lunch, at last! Aren't I ready for it? (*runs off, R.D.*)

MIL. (*throwing hers on the table*) Tom! Wait for me. (*runs off R.D.*)

KATE *looks from MILDRED to SIR PETER pathetically. Exit PRICE, R.D. PHILIP appears on staircase, slowly coming down.*

BEA. (*coming down C.*) You must be hungry after your journey. (*R. of LORD NORMANTOWER*)

NOR. (*coming down C.*) Yes, thank heaven, my appetite is as redoubtable as ever. Miss Derwent may—(*about to offer arm*)

BEA. (*cutting in*) Sir Peter, will you bring Miss Derwent?

LORD NORMANTOWER *is obliged to offer his arm to BEATRICE. Exit LORD NORMANTOWER and BEATRICE, R. SIR PETER offers his arm to KATE whom he takes R.C.*

PHIL. (*on stairs*) Stop, doctor, stop. (*comes down to R. of KATE*) Don't monopolise all the good things. Suppose we go shares. (*offers his arm to KATE*)

KATE. (*between the two*) Don't be scandalised. (*to SIR PETER*) Mr. Selwyn often gives me his arm. Here—(*looking at PHILIP*) I am more like a friend than a dependant.

PHIL. (*looking at KATE*) More like a sister than a friend. (*exeunt, R.D.*)

SWELL MUSIC.

QUICK ACT DROP.

Time: Thirty Minutes. Wait: Thirteen Minutes.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A Boudoir, opening through a conservatory on to a terrace. Doors, R. and L. A water jug and goblet on table. A week has elapsed. Morning. Lights full up. Music for Act Drop.*

BEATRICE *enters, L., as curtain rises. KATE discovered watering plants in conservatory, up in opening, R.C.*

BEA. Good morning, Miss Derwent.

KATE. Good morning, Mrs. Selwyn.

BEA. At work, as usual. How industrious you are! (*comes down C., to sofa*)

KATE. Yes—I've been saying good-bye to all my favourites. (*pause—BEATRICE takes up a book—KATE goes on watering the plants*) How is Mr. Selwyn this morning?

BEA. He is not so well. (*her back is towards KATE*)

KATE. I'm sorry to hear that. I hope he will be well enough to shake hands with me before I go.

BEA. Then you are determined to leave us?

KATE. (*leaves can up R.C., and comes down C.*) I can't tell you how sorry I am, but I mustn't stop here for ever. Mildred learnt all that I can teach her long ago; and if I stay much longer, I shall be the pupil. Since Mr. Verinder's arrival I have had several lessons in the English language as it is spoken at Eton, and I flatter myself I shall soon be able to "cackle" as well as if I wore a remarkably short jacket and remarkably tight inexpressibles.

BEA. You under-rate your accomplishments. *I don't think there is much that Mildred could teach you.*

KATE. (*grimaces behind her back*) Don't make me blush, my dear.

BEA. You make *me* blush sometimes.

KATE. Then you ought to be extremely obliged to me, for nothing becomes you better. (*grimaces as before*) Mrs. Selwyn, we are now quite old friends. I cannot leave Ravenhurst without some little memento of our companionship—There are no horrid men about to hear us—Before I go, tell me (*dropping down near BEATRICE into an attitude of mock earnestness*) oh, tell me— (*behind sofa R. of BEATRICE*)

BEA. Well?

KATE. The secret of your complexion.

BEA. (*smiling*) It's a very simple one—Arsenic.

KATE. (*rises*) Arsenic! But that's a poison.

BEA. Yes, if you take too much of it; but if you take a little, it—

KATE. It what!

BEA. Improves the complexion.

KATE. Does it? Where do you get it?

BEA. From the chemist's, of course.

KATE. But will they sell it you?

BEA. Yes, if you're candid and confide in them. My love, if you want to look better than Nature intended you—

KATE. As, of course, I do—

BEA. Confide in your chemist. Make some ridiculous excuse—say that the family cat is in convulsions—and they will sell you nothing. They know it's absurd. Say that you want to improve your complexion, and they will sell you anything; they know it's the truth.

KATE. My dear Mrs. Selwyn—for this information much thanks. (*moves towards door, R.U.E.*)

BEA. Where are you going?

KATE. To the chemist's.

Enter LORD NORMANTOWER, R.U.D.

NOR. May I come in? (*comes well on stage*, R.C.)

KATE. (*up C.*) It seems to me you've come. (*between* NORMANTOWER *and* BEATRICE)

NOR. Yes; when I want to do anything particularly, I do it first and ask permission afterwards. It prevents disappointment, and it's so very easy to apologise.

BEA. In this case no apology is needed.

NOR. (*starting*) Mrs. Selwyn! excuse me for not seeing you. (*crosses down to* BEATRICE, *standing R. of sofa*. KATE *turns up and resumes watering plants*, R.C.) How is Philip to-day?

BEA. I'm sorry to say my husband is not at all well this morning.

NOR. Old Lund seems to be making him worse instead of better.

BEA. Sir Peter has now been here a week, and Philip has grown worse every day.

NOR. I'm sure *I* oughtn't to find fault with Lund; he's polished off nearly all my relations for me; but I'm not certain that I quite believe in the old boy. There's too much M.D.F.S.A. about him. I never knew a fool who hadn't half the alphabet at the end of his name. (*turns away a few steps*)

KATE. (*demurely*) At *which* end my Lord Edward, Arthur, Henry, Earl of Normantower? (*coming down to R. of* NORMANTOWER, R.C., *can in hand*. BEATRICE *rises and goes to fire L., taking book with her*)

NOR. Now, that's too bad of you, Miss Derwent. It's not my fault that I've enough names to christen the family of a curate.

[Pg 25]

KATE. Let this be a lesson to you. Don't throw stones at a friend of mine! (*goes up to opening* R.C.)

NOR. Mine was a very little stone; yours was half a brick. (KATE *continues watering the plants*)

PHIL. (*off L.*) Beatrice!

BEA. My husband! I must leave Miss Derwent to console you. She won't have many more opportunities. (*goes up L.*)

PHIL. Beatrice!

BEA. Yes, dear! I'm coming! (*exit L.D.*)

NOR. Not many more opportunities? What does she mean? (*standing puzzled C.—turning his head to KATE*)

KATE. (*in conservatory*) Mrs. Selwyn means that I am leaving Ravenhurst.

NOR. You're going away! (*goes up to KATE*)

KATE. This afternoon. (R.) }
} *of opening*, R.C.)

NOR. For good? (L.) }

KATE. For Mrs. Selwyn's good.

NOR. You don't mean to say she's given you notice.

KATE. (*comes down R.C., as far as piano*) Mrs. Selwyn is too amiable to give anybody notice; but when she wants to get rid of them, in the most charming manner in the world, she makes them so exceedingly uncomfortable that they give notice themselves.

NOR. (*comes down L. of her*) But she can't possibly want to get rid of *you*?

KATE. Why not?

NOR. We're all in love with *you*.

KATE. Are you? Perhaps that's the reason. Do you like plants? (*turns suddenly, can in hand, so that the water is supposed to splash* NORMANTOWER)

NOR. Blow plants! (*drawing back*)

KATE. (*stopping*) What plants? (*in opening* R.C.)

NOR. (*goes to fire, L., wiping his coat*) Any plants—all plants—I hate 'em.

KATE. (*crosses in conservatory to L.C.*) I love them. I have been watering my pets for the last time.

NOR. (L.) I see. You've been standing them a parting drink.

KATE. My lord! (*in opening* L.C.)

NOR. By the way, isn't tobacco very good for plants? (*crossing up to C.*)

KATE. Excellent. Why do you ask?

NOR. I was just thinking, while you are watering the plants in the conservatory, it might be doing them a service if I were to smoke a cigarette in the conservatory. (*producing case*)

[Pg 26]

KATE. (*puts can down, L.C., behind flat, and comes down to* NORMANTOWER, C.) Not for the world! Lord Normantower, let me tell you a shocking fact. The very odour of tobacco has such an effect upon me, that if you were to light a cigarette—

NOR. (*putting case back*) It would make you uncomfortable?

KATE. No! I should want to join you.

NOR. No!

KATE. There! you're shocked. (*goes down to sofa*)

NOR. Not a bit of it. I like you, Miss Derwent, because you say what you mean.

KATE. Sometimes I say a great deal more than I mean. (*sits on sofa*)

NOR. And sometimes I mean a great deal more than I can say. Miss Derwent— (*behind sofa, R. of KATE*)

KATE. (*sitting*) Lord Normantower?

NOR. What a strange thing it is that you have grown this old— (*KATE looks at him*) I mean, this young, without being married.

KATE. I shall never marry.

NOR. That's exactly my case. I've had one disappointment, and I don't mean to have another. Once bit, twice shy, they say.

KATE. You have been bitten?

NOR. (*goes to R.C.*) Badly. But it's all for the best. It's made me distrustful of women and a confirmed bachelor. (*returns to back of sofa*) Why do people want to get married?

KATE. I've often wondered.

NOR. (*about to take her hand*) Miss Derwent, I've been so awfully glad I'm a confirmed bachelor, ever since I met you.

KATE. (*removing her hand, which his hand follows*) What difference can that make?

NOR. Well, you see, if I wasn't a confirmed bachelor, I might have been married.

KATE. Well?

NOR. (*hand business repeated*) And if I was married, I couldn't marry again.

KATE. Of course not.

NOR. And if I couldn't marry again, I couldn't marry—

KATE. Go on. Finish your sentence.

NOR. (*seizing her hand*) You!

Enter SIR PETER, *through conservatory, suddenly*, R.U.E. *They take opposite sides of the stage*; KATE, L.C., NORMANTOWER, R.

SIR P. Ah! I saw you! (*comes down C.*)

KATE. Sir Peter, I believe you have eyes in the small of your back.

[Pg 27]

SIR P. Yes—and ears too. I heard you.

NOR. Then, why did you interrupt us?

SIR P. I thought it was time. You forget, that I am in the next room—that the rooms communicate through the terrace—and that you had not taken the precaution of shutting the outer door of the conservatory. (KATE and NORMANTOWER look at one another)

Re-enter BEATRICE L.D., *she goes down* L. to KATE.

BEA. Ah, doctor! Philip was asking for you. He has just got up. What time's your train, Miss Derwent?

KATE. Half-past two. I must be getting ready. (NORMANTOWER *turns up and opens* R.U.D., *standing above it*)

SIR P. Then, it's decided, you are going?

KATE. Quite. But I shall see you again. (*crosses in front of* SIR PETER *up to* R.U.D.)

BEA. (*comes to front of sofa*) The brougham is quite at your service. (KATE *bows and exit* R.U.D. NORMANTOWER *speaks through open door to her for a few moments*)

SIR P. (C.) So Miss Derwent is leaving you?

BEA. She wished to go. She has always been allowed to do as she pleased here, and she has availed herself of the privilege.

SIR P. (*looking at* BEATRICE) I see. (*enter* PHILIP L.D.)

BEA. Ah, here is Philip! (*goes to him, affectionately*)

PHIL. Good morning, doctor. (*coming down with his arm round* BEATRICE) Morning, Normantower. (*goes to sofa and sits. BEATRICE goes to back of table* L.C. *and sits*)

NOR. Sorry to hear you're not so well this morning. (*comes down* R. *and sits at piano, facing* PHILIP)

PHIL. I ought to get better, if the best of doctors and the most devoted of nurses are of any use; but somehow I don't.

SIR P. You get worse. (R. *of sofa*)

PHIL. I shouldn't mind so much, if I didn't find my temper giving way—just now, I spoke quite crossly to poor little Mousey here (*takes her hand*)—and she was only carrying out your instructions. (*to* SIR PETER)

BEA. The fact is, doctor, he's a very naughty boy, and won't take his medicine, though I always give it him with my own hands. He hasn't taken any to-day.

SIR P. Oh, you won't take your medicine?

PHIL. It's such horrid stuff; and somehow, I always feel worse after taking it.

SIR P. So much the better. Shows it's doing you good.

NOR. (*smiling*) That's all my eye, doctor. (BEATRICE *rises and goes towards* R.U.D.)

[Pg 28]

SIR P. No, sir, it's all his liver. Oblige me by not interrupting.

BEA. (*up* R.C.) Come, Lord Normantower. (NORMANTOWER *rises, turns up and opens* R.U.D. *for* BEATRICE, *who crosses in front of him. PHILIP rises and goes to* L.) Sir Peter would like to be alone with Philip. (*exit* BEATRICE R.U.D.)

NOR. (*following—aside*) And I'd like to be alone with Miss Derwent. (*exit* NORMANTOWER)

PHIL. Now I am at your service. (*arranges easy chair and sits*)

SIR P. (*goes to* R. *of table, L.C.*) Have you made your will?

PHIL. (*starts*) Well, you're a lively doctor!

SIR P. Have you made your will? (*with emphasis*)

PHIL. Am I so ill as that? (*aghast*)

SIR P. Yes, sir—you are.

PHIL. But if it's only my liver.

SIR P. It is *not* your liver.

PHIL. Is it my heart? Is anything wrong there?

SIR P. Nothing of any consequence. It's rather too large, and rather too soft—that's all that's wrong with your heart.

PHIL. What is it then?

SIR P. (*sits on sofa*) I can account for your condition, only on one hypothesis, and that one is out of the question.

PHIL. Mayn't I know what it is?

SIR P. Since it's out of the question, it's no use discussing it. You haven't answered me. Have you made your will?

PHIL. Yes—long ago. It was a very simple matter. Mildred is provided for; so I have left everything to my wife, absolutely. (*SIR PETER rises and rings the bell, below fire, crossing in front*)

PHIL. Do you want anything?

SIR P. Yes. The name and address of your solicitor.

PHIL. Old Merivale, of High Street! why? (*enter JOHNSON, R.U.D., she comes on to R.C.*)

SIR P. (*crosses to C.*) Mr. Selwyn's compliments to Mr. Merivale, Solicitor, High Street, and will he kindly come here at once? (*exit JOHNSON R.U.D. SIR PETER returns to R. of table*)

PHIL. What for?

SIR P. To draw your will.

PHIL. But I tell you, I've made it.

SIR P. You must make another. (*sits, produces documents, and puts on pince-nez*)

PHIL. Sir Peter, you are incomprehensible!

[Pg 29]

SIR P. Let me make myself clear. Your father, Philip Selwyn, was married to your mother, Mildred Kent, in July, 1865. I need not show you the certificate.

PHIL. Of course not.

SIR P. Two years before, in March, 1863, one Philip Derwent was married to one Kate Graham.

PHIL. Derwent? Kate? Miss Derwent's father, I presume?

SIR P. Yes. There is the certificate.

PHIL. I don't want to see it.

SIR P. But I want you to see it. (*gives it to PHILIP*)

PHIL. (*glances at it and returns it*) How does it concern me?

SIR P. It concerns *her*, doesn't it?

PHIL. Of course.

SIR P. And she being your half-sister, it concerns *you*.

PHIL. Miss Derwent, my half-sister! What do you mean?

SIR P. That Philip Selwyn and Philip Derwent were one and the same person.

PHIL. Sir Peter!

SIR P. Of that I have no proof, except your father's word.

PHIL. My father's word?

SIR P. Given to me on his death-bed. Do you *doubt* his word? Do you doubt mine?

PHIL. No—but I cannot grasp it! Am I awake, or am I dreaming? I have such strange dreams.

SIR P. You are awake—and for the first time in your life. Till to-day, you have been living in a dream.

PHIL. My father was a widower, when he married my mother? Why did he not say so? Why did he change his name?

SIR P. Because he was *not* a widower.

PHIL. Not a widower!

SIR P. Because his first wife was alive—

PHIL. Alive! (*leaning well forward*)

SIR P. There is the certificate of her death—twenty years later.

(PHILIP *takes it, looks at it blankly, drops back into seat.*)

PHIL. (*after a short pause*) Incredible!

SIR P. I haven't half done yet.

PHIL. Go on—go on. (*leaning forward again to table and placing certificate on it*)

SIR P. You inherited from your father everything you possess?

PHIL. Everything!

SIR P. He bequeathed to you, and your sister Mildred, all his fortune?

[Pg 30]

PHIL. All.

SIR P. Where did he get that fortune?

PHIL. Well?

SIR P. From his first wife.

PHIL. (*springing up*) It's false! it *must* be false!

SIR P. (*rises*) I have his word for it, and it can be proved. He left her penniless; and left his child to struggle with the world as best they could—and nobly they did it. Yes, sir, it is too true. The father you have loved and honoured *was*—

PHIL. (*extending his arms, as if to stop SIR PETER*) My father! (*SIR PETER stands for a moment, nonplussed*)

SIR P. Was your father—just so. (*turns off. SIR PETER picks up certificate from table and goes to R.C. down stage, folding papers which he returns to his pocket, PHILIP leans on mantel-piece—aside, looking at PHILIP*) Takes it very well.

PHIL. (*goes to L.C., helping himself by table*) I want to ask you one question. Dare I? (*they stand looking at one another for an instant*)

SIR P. You mean, your mother.

PHIL. Yes.

SIR P. She knew nothing of this.

PHIL. Thank heaven for that—thank heaven! (*falls heavily into sofa, and sobs upon the table*)

Re-enter BEATRICE, followed by KATE, in travelling dress, R.U.D. SIR PETER down R. PHILIP sits up.

BEA. (*up C.*) Philip dear, Miss Derwent has come to say good-bye to you. She is going. (*crosses behind and goes down L. of table*)

PHIL. (*rising*) She is *not* going. (*SIR PETER turns up to piano*)

KATE. (*crosses down to PHILIP*) The brougham is at the door, Mr. Selwyn, and I have left myself barely time to catch the train; but I could not go without shaking hands with you, and thanking you for all your kindness. I came here a stranger, and I have found almost a brother. (*offers her two hands*)

PHIL. (*taking and holding them*) Yes, you *have* found a brother; and *I* have found a sister.

KATE. Mr. Selwyn!

PHIL. Whom I have wronged without knowing it—of whose very existence I was unaware till this moment; but whom I know at last, and to whom I will make restitution.

BEA. Philip? (*advances a step; PHILIP turns to BEATRICE*)

KATE. (*turning to SIR PETER*) You have broken your promise!

[Pg 31]

SIR P. I made no promise. (*sits R. by piano, interested in scene*)

PHIL. Yes, Beatrice, this is my sister—

KATE. (C., *breaking out*) But you need not acknowledge me. I ask for nothing but to go away. Let the past be forgotten. Of what use is it to revive a sorrow that is dead, and to publish a sin that is unknown? (to SIR PETER) It cannot be right to make three beings unhappy, to do justice to one, when all that one asks is to go away.

PHIL. You know, then?

KATE. Everything!

PHIL. And you have said nothing!

KATE. (to R. of sofa) Because you have taught me to love you! (PHILIP *sinks on sofa*) I want you to be happy—I want to be happy myself—and if I wreck your happiness, I shall destroy my own. All I ask is to go—let me go! let me go! (*goes to SIR PETER who rises and checks her, and then sits again*)

PHIL. It is for me to go. This place belongs to you.

BEA. (L.C.) To her? (*front of table*)

PHIL. Yes, all I have is hers. (*turning to BEATRICE*) Beatrice, my father was not married to my mother legally—he was married before—Kate is his lawful child—the money he left me was her mother’s—and to her it must be restored, to the last shilling.

SIR P. (*rises*) Nonsense! this is quixotic!

PHIL. (*peremptorily*) I know what my duty is, and it shall be done. (to BEATRICE) Am I not right?

BEA. (*humbly*) Yes, Philip.

PHIL. (*goes to KATE, C., takes her hand and puts arm round her; to KATE*) You have battled with the world long enough. Now it is *my* turn. Till to-day I have been living in a fool’s paradise, but now I have awoken from my dream. I am not afraid, because I am not alone. (*goes slowly to BEATRICE and takes her hand*) Many things have been taken from me. My fortune, my good name, my father’s memory—all these are gone! but you are left to me. I have a wife to work for, whose love will sustain me; who will share my trials as she has shared my prosperity. (*goes towards KATE*) Don’t fear for me. I will fight and I will conquer. (*dropping exhausted*) Ah, if I were only stronger! (*on sofa; BEATRICE goes to fire, L.*)

SIR P. (*goes to KATE who is R. of sofa; to KATE who is about to speak*) You have said enough. Remember, your brother is an invalid. (*goes to R.C.*)

PHIL. But I *won’t* be an invalid—I’ll make my will to-day.

[Pg 32]

BEA. *Another* will? (*at fire*)

PHIL. Leaving Kate everything.

KATE. (to *back of sofa*, R. of PHILIP) Philip! I *must* speak, for our sister’s sake. If you have no thought for yourself, have some for her.

PHIL. Mildred is provided for already. I cannot deal with *her* money; but I can with my own.

KATE. It is not a question of money. Remember, if this secret is made known—

PHIL. Ah!

KATE. What will be said of her?

PHIL. That never crossed my thoughts.

KATE. (*goes down a few steps*, C.) Think of it now. It is not too late.

PHIL. Oh! (*pressing his hands to his temples*) What am I to do?

KATE. (to R. of sofa, *below it and kneels*) Do what is best for everyone. Accept a favour from a sister who asks you—on her knees! Keep our secret! Remain here—the master of Ravenhurst. Philip! For Mildred’s sake.

PHIL. (*opening his arms*) Kate! may God bless you!

KATE. Brother! (*falling into his arms. BEATRICE stands with her head bowed submissively*)

SIR P. (*comes to KATE who rises, he takes her away R.C. a few steps*) There, that’s settled. Now, let my patient have a little rest.

PHIL. (*to KATE, who moves away*) You won't go far? You won't leave Ravenhurst?

SIR P. (*prompting KATE*) No.

KATE. No.

PHIL. You will stay here—under this roof?

SIR P. (*prompting*) Yes.

KATE. If I am welcome—for the present—yes.

PHIL. And for the future?

BEA. (*crosses to C.*) Yes. Your sister will be always welcome here. (*takes KATE'S hand. KATE bows to her and exit R.I.D. BEATRICE turns to PHILIP caressingly*)

SIR P. (*following—aside*) Damn'd good actress, that woman! (*exit R.*)

PHIL. How can I thank you, Beatrice? How can I tell you how proud I am of you, and how I love you? (*holding both her hands, draws her down by his side*) Oh, my darling wife, how can I soften this blow which has fallen upon you? (*embracing her*)

BEA. Philip, don't think of *me*.

PHIL. (*R. arm round her*) But I *must* think of you, who never think of yourself. If I were to die? (*L. hand holding hers*)

[Pg 33]

BEA. Dearest, don't talk of death. (*withdraws hand*)

PHIL. (*takes his arm from her, and leans forward*) I am more ill than I seem—more ill than anybody knows. I can't help thinking of death, for every day it seems to draw nearer and nearer. I can feel it coming—slowly, mysteriously, weirdly—gathering about me—wrapping me round and round. (*almost to himself*)

BEA. (*rises*) Hush, Philip, hush! You are tired. (*goes away two steps to C.*) Shall I leave you for a while?

PHIL. No, no! Don't go away. (*holding out his hands as she moves up to back of sofa, R. of him*) You are all I have left, mousey. I am not tired; but oh, I feel so drowsy! I seem to get worse every day.

BEA. And why, my dear? Because you won't take your medicine. Come. Let me bring it you now. (*goes towards L.D.*)

PHIL. That beastly medicine! Perhaps I'd better take it; but I shall have no head to talk to old Merivale, when he comes.

BEA. You've sent for him? (*behind chair back of table*)

PHIL. I expect him every minute.

BEA. Then, there's no time to be lost. I'll bring it you at once. (*goes L.*)

PHIL. I'm doing right, aren't I, mousey? (*R. end of sofa facing her*)

BEA. In what way? (*at door L.*)

PHIL. In making this new will.

BEA. You always do right, Philip.

PHIL. I have your acquiescence?

BEA. Certainly.

PHIL. Then, I will lose no time. It shall be made to-day.

Exit BEATRICE, L.D.

PHIL. (*knock at door, R.*) Who is it?

Enter TOM R.U.D., followed closely by MILDRED, arm in arm.

TOM. (*up R.C.*) Only me, Mr. Selwyn.

MIL. (*up R.C.*) Only *I*, Tom.

TOM. Oh, bother grammar! (*releases her arm, they come down to C.*)

PHIL. Well, children? How are *you* to-day?

TOM. (L. of MILDRED) Oh, we're all right; but, I say, Mr. Selwyn, I wish everybody wouldn't call us "children." I don't like it.

MIL. And it's not true.

TOM. I'm turned sixteen.

MIL. And I'm fifteen next birthday!

[Pg 34]

PHIL. Well, then, my man and woman, what do you want?

TOM. You tell him, Mildred! }
} (*half whispered*)

MIL. No—you tell him, Tom! }

TOM. Are you quite well enough to stand a shock?

PHIL. What, are you studying electricity? Or is it some toy?

TOM. Electricity! (*with contempt—turns up C., and down again*)

MIL. A toy!

TOM. Mr. Selwyn, you make it jolly hard for a fellow to say what he wants to say—just when he wants a leg up.

MIL. Tom! "A leg up?"

TOM. Oh, bother style! Let me say what I mean.

PHIL. And what do you mean, my lad? (*smiling*)

TOM. If you please—we want to get married. (*rather frightened, taking MILDRED'S hand, and retreating with her up to R.C., facing PHILIP*)

PHIL. (*suddenly serious*) Want to get married?

MIL. That's the shock!

TOM. (*aside to her*) Now for it. (*holding her tight*) Don't run away—I won't!

PHIL. You are both too young to think about such things!

TOM. (*sturdily*) I'm sure we're not too young—(*down to C.*)

MIL. To *think* about such things.

PHIL. Well, to talk about them.

MIL. (*crosses TOM to PHILIP, back of sofa. Imploringly*) Philip!

TOM. Mildred, this is no place for you. (*hands her across to R.U.D.*) Leave me alone with Mr. Selwyn.

MIL. (*aside to TOM*) Tom! You won't come to blows? (*at R.U.D.*)

TOM. (L. of her, *aside to her*) I will control myself. I will not forget the respect that is due to the brother of my affianced wife.

MIL. That's right, Tom.

TOM. Wait for me—on the mat. (*exit MILDRED, R.U.D. TOM comes boldly down to C.*) Now, Mr. Selwyn, we are alone. We can discuss this matter as men of the world.

PHIL. My dear Tom— (*TOM draws himself up*) Mr. Verinder—Such a thing as marriage at your early age is, of course, preposterous; but I wish you distinctly to understand that the remotest idea of an engagement between you and Mildred is equally out of the question.

TOM. May I ask why, sir?

PHIL. You belong to a very proud family; and there are reasons which you would scarcely understand—

[Pg 35]

TOM. Mr. Selwyn!

PHIL. Which, at any rate, I can't enter into—that make it impossible you should ever marry my sister.

TOM. That is your ultimatum? (*a step towards PHILIP*)

PHIL. Yes. (*sighing*)

TOM. Good day, sir. (*walks to the door, R., with importance, suddenly breaks down—exit blubbing, R.U.D.*)

PHIL. (*rises*) Poor Tom! He's only a boy, but he's a gentleman! (*goes to fire, L., and leans on mantle*)

Re-enter BEATRICE, L.D., *pouring medicine out of a medicine bottle into a medicine glass, in which she has already put the poison. She comes down C. to R. of table.*

BEA. Here it is, Philip. (*hands glass to him*)

PHIL. Oh dear me, how tired I am of the horrid stuff! (*takes glass, and sits wearily L. of table*) Surely you have given me too much?

BEA. No—just the right measure. See! (*between table and sofa, holding up bottle*)

PHIL. How many doses are there left?

BEA. (*with bottle*) Only three more. (*puts bottle on R. of table, and goes round behind to back of PHILIP*) Now, drink it up without thinking about it; and if, like a good boy, you don't leave a drop, you shall have a kiss afterwards, to take the taste away.

PHIL. Well, I suppose I must. (*raises glass to his lips—about to drink, BEATRICE watches him eagerly*)

Enter JOHNSON, R.U.D., *quickly.*

JOHN. (*up R.C.*) Oh, if you please'm! (*pants*)

(*PHILIP puts glass down on L. side of table*)

BEA. (*annoyed*) What's the matter, Johnson? (*moves a little towards JOHNSON*)

JOHN. Miss Mildred— (*out of breath*)

PHIL. What of Miss Mildred?

JOHN. She is in hysterics.

PHIL. Mildred ill! (*rises and goes quickly across R. Exeunt JOHNSON and PHILIP R.U.D.*)

BEA. (*follows across to R.C. up stage*) Never mind Mildred! Philip dear! (*stamps her foot*) Only another second and— (*moves down C. looking at glass*)

PHIL. (*off*) Beatrice!

Re-enter TOM *breathless, R.*

TOM. Oh, Mrs. Selwyn, please do come to Mildred! She's in a fit, or something. (*R. of BEATRICE*)

BEA. Nonsense!

[Pg 36]

TOM. Do come, please! (*passes behind to L. of her*) The shock has been too much for her.

Re-enter PHILIP *quickly.*

PHIL. Beatrice! Quick! (*TOM has her L. hand, PHILIP her right; they force her to the door between them; as BEATRICE exits she looks back at glass on table*)

BEA. In a moment! (*glancing at glass*)

TOM. Come along!

PHIL. Beatrice! do come! (*exeunt R. upper door. The door shuts with a bang. Music in orchestra*)

SIR PETER *appears in the conservatory, and enters from R.*

SIR P. Nobody here. Perhaps he's lying down. (*taps at door, L.*) Nobody there. They've gone downstairs. (*comes down to C. passing behind sofa*) He must be better, then. (*music stops, pause, lost in thought*) Peter, my boy, if anyone had told you, you could study a case as you have studied this, for a week, and not be able to make head or tail of it, you would have kicked—pulled his nose for him. (*goes to R. of table.*) What *is* the matter with this man? Of course it *might* be—but that's out of the question. (*sits on sofa*) Ah, there's his medicine. What did he say? He always felt

worse after taking it. I don't know why he should. Only a tonic, with a nasty flavour. People like nasty medicine. Think it does 'em good. (*rises, tastes it*) Well—it is nasty. (*starts slightly as he tastes it on his tongue—lifts glass to light, examines it, then smells it, smells it again, tastes again cautiously by his finger, sets the glass down, and stands looking at it*) Nothing's out of the question! I ought to have known it. (*pours dose into the goblet, smells and tastes the bottle*) That's all right. (*music in orchestra. Pours out another dose into the glass, which he replaces exactly where he found it, recorks the bottle and exit slowly with goblet through conservatory, R., pausing in C. a moment to examine medicine.*)

Re-enter BEATRICE, R., *quickly, sees the medicine, stops short and resumes her wonted manner; down C. Re-enter* PHILIP, R.; *music stops.*

PHIL. She's better now; but I was rather alarmed. (*down to C.*)

BEA. Poor child! (*goes to fire L.*)

PHIL. She'll soon get over it. Only a girlish fancy. Where did I put that medicine? (*looking about*)

BEA. Here it is, dear. (*gives him the glass—advancing to him*)

PHIL. (*grimacing*) You can't think how I hate it.

BEA. Don't be so absurd. I declare, you're as great a baby as *she* is. (*backs up stage, watching him*)

[Pg 37]

PHIL. One—two—three! (*drinks it off. BEATRICE gives a sigh of satisfaction*) Ugh! Give me some water. (*goes to piano and puts glass down*)

BEA. (*passes behind table down to L. of it*) Why, the tumbler is gone! Who can have taken it? (*looking about*)

PHIL. Johnson, I daresay. (*sits R. by piano*) All right; I'm better now. That's one dose less to take. (*Re-enter* SIR PETER *through conservatory, with the goblet empty*) Three more, I think you said.

BEA. (*holds up bottle*) But there are only *two!* (*alarmed*) Someone's been here!

SIR P. Yes, *I* have. (*comes down C. to R. of sofa*)

BEA. (*terrified*) *You!*

SIR P. Your husband complained of his medicine. I thought I'd test it; so I took a dose.

BEA. (*dismayed*) You took it? (*puts bottle on table*)

SIR P. Yes. (*looking at her*)

PHIL. A doctor take a dose of his own medicine!

SIR P. Only to my room. (*advances to R. of table*) Allow me to return you the glass. (*gives goblet to BEATRICE*)

PHIL. And you have tested it?

SIR P. Yes.

BEA. (*prepared for the worst*) With what result?

SIR P. With none. As I expected, just what I prescribed. (*sits on sofa. BEATRICE, intensely relieved, turns aside to hide her emotion, as if to put goblet on mantel-piece, L.*)

PHIL. And what did you prescribe, Sir Peter? What is this stuff you're giving me?

SIR P. A very common medicine. (*crossing his legs*)

PHIL. But what is it?

SIR P. (*With his eyes fixed on BEATRICE*) Arsenic. (*PHILIP'S face falls. BEATRICE turns quickly, dropping the goblet, which is shattered to fragments*)

QUICK ACT DROP.

Time: Thirty minutes. Wait: Eleven minutes.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same as Act II. It is after dinner, the room is lighted. Evening dress. KATE is discovered at piano, finishing a song; NORMANTOWER standing beside her. TOM, L., and MILDRED, R., are seated on the centre seat, taking no notice of anybody, and looking the pictures of woe. BEATRICE'S fan on piano. Lights full up in front. Blue limes in conservatory.*

NOR. Thanks, awfully! (R. of KATE, above her)

KATE. That's Mr. Selwyn's favourite—(rising)—the music's pretty, but such stupid words. (crosses down to C., NORMANTOWER follows her)

NOR. Yes, but you sing them with such an expression.

KATE. Such an appropriate expression?

Enter SERVANTS, R.U.D., with coffee, etc., which they hand to KATE. PRICE enters first, followed by SERVANT. The former carries large salver with cups of coffee; the latter, sugar and milk on small salver. They go down to back of sofa.

NOR. Yes, that's what I meant. Such an appropriate expression!

KATE. (laughing) Of stupidity? (goes to sofa)

NOR. No, no! That isn't what I meant. Oh dear, I never *can* say what I want to say, to you.

KATE. Shall I assist you?

NOR. If you only would! (C.R. of sofa)

KATE. I mean to sugar.

NOR. *I* meant to sugar.

KATE. Cream?

NOR. Thanks awfully. (KATE hands cup to NORMANTOWER, and takes another herself, and sits on sofa, L. of it)

NOR. (aside) *I didn't* mean sugar, but I *must* agree with her.

SERVANTS offer coffee to TOM and then to MILDRED; they simply reverse their attitudes, without taking further notice. Exeunt SERVANTS R.U.D.

KATE. (cup in hand) Is that as you like it?

NOR. (seating himself by her) This is just as I like it. So, it's quite settled, you're going to stay here? (on sofa)

KATE. Yes, I find I can't tear myself away from Ravenhurst—I'm a fixture.

NOR. I say! are you a landlord's or a tenant's fixture?

KATE. Oh, I'm attached to the freehold—very much attached to it.

NOR. That's a pity. I thought perhaps you were removable.

KATE. What if I were?

NOR. I should like to remove you, that's all.

KATE. I thought you were a confirmed bachelor?

NOR. That's just it. That's what makes it so jolly, I being a confirmed bachelor, and you being a confirmed old maid—

KATE. *Old* maid?

NOR. I mean, you *will* be an old maid—in time.

KATE. You didn't say so.

NOR. But I *meant*, in time. So there's no danger. We can do what we like.

KATE. Of course, we can do what we like.

NOR. We can talk together.

KATE. We can walk together.

NOR. We can sing together!

KATE. Do you mean, in time?

NOR. Miss Derwent, it was *you* who were out of time yesterday. That was a crotchet.

KATE. Nay, it was a quaver.

NOR. A crotchet. } *(rising, crossing to R. and putting down cup on piano)*
} *ad lib.*

KATE. A quaver. } *(rising and putting down cup on table L. and then cross to R.C.)*

NOR. Here is the music—see. *(takes it from piano and comes to her R.C.)*

Enter BEATRICE, L.D., and sits unobserved, on sofa.

KATE. *(pointing to note)* What did I tell you?

NOR. You said a quaver.

KATE. No, I said a crotchet.

NOR. Oh!

KATE. Certainly, a crotchet. This is how it goes. *(takes the music, crosses him, and sits at piano and sings one verse of a song)*

NOR. *(enraptured)* Thanks—oh thanks, awfully. *(standing on her R.)*

BEA. Rather high for you, isn't it, my dear? *(both turn)*

NOR. Mrs. Selwyn! *(turns and advances C.)*

KATE. *(rises)* I beg your pardon?

BEA. Your voice is so charming, it is a pity to strain it.

KATE. *(goes down R.C.)* I wasn't aware I had an audience. I was simply endeavouring to convince Lord Normantower that a crotchet is not a quaver. I was not attempting to sing.

[Pg 40]

BEA. My love, you are too modest. I never heard you sing better. *(KATE grimaces aside)*

NOR. *(aside)* I think, I'd better turn the conversation. *(Goes to R. of sofa)* How is Philip, this evening?

KATE. Yes, how is Mr. Selwyn?

BEA. I'm glad to say, much stronger.

NOR. That's good news. I was afraid, as Sir Peter did not dine with us, your husband was worse.

BEA. Sir Peter has been with him all the afternoon, and has announced his intention of remaining till he has solved the mystery of Philip's illness. It is really very kind of Sir Peter.

KATE. Sir Peter is kindness itself. *(returns to piano, and sits)*

BEA. You can imagine what a satisfaction it is to me, to know that my husband is in such excellent care.

NOR. But has he formed no opinion as to what is the matter with Philip?

BEA. He seems to think, it is nothing worse than an aggravated case of dyspepsia, and he attaches the greatest importance to diet. He has forbidden poor Philip almost everything. Sir Peter is a little crotchety, but he is paying the greatest attention to the case. And he's so clever! I am charmed with him. *(NORMANTOWER crosses to piano, and stands R. of KATE who plays softly. TOM rises, crosses to MILDRED and takes her hand. She rises, and they advance down a step R.C.)*

TOM. *(aside to MILDRED)* Could you die, Mildred?

MIL. I want to, Tom.

TOM. Then let's die together!

MIL. Yes—but how?

TOM. I don't know. That's the worst of me. I'm so beastly ignorant.

MIL. There's a pond at the bottom of the garden.

TOM. Is there?

MIL. Six feet deep.

TOM. Let's go at once.

MIL. And throw ourselves in?

TOM. We'll have a look at it first. (*exit with MILDRED R.C. to R.*)

(PHILIP *heard off* L. KATE *stops playing.*)

KATE. Surely that's Mr. Selwyn! (BEATRICE *rises and goes across up to opening R.C., following TOM and MILDRED*)

(SIR PETER *heard off* L.)

NOR. Here they are, both of them.

[Pg 41]

Enter PHILIP, followed by SIR PETER, L.D. SIR PETER goes down L., puts snuff-box on mantel, and stands with back to fire; PHILIP comes to C. up stage, KATE rises and meets him.

KATE. You, Mr. Selwyn. Then you're better!

PHIL. Yes—feeling another man. I've even been attending to business, with my solicitor. (KATE *turns away up to R.C.*) I must admit, Sir Peter's treatment is justified by the result, but I can't say I altogether relish it. (*to NORMANTOWER*) What do you think he's giving me? (*down, front of sofa*)

NOR. What? (*advances to C.*)

PHIL. Arsenic. (*sitting on sofa*)

NOR. Gracious me! (BEATRICE *comes down, and sits R. by piano*)

KATE. (*comes down, L. of BEATRICE*) Arsenic! That's nothing! Many ladies take it.

NOR. Ladies take arsenic! (*turning to KATE*)

KATE. Don't they, Mrs. Selwyn?

BEA. I should hope not, Miss Derwent.

KATE. *You* never heard of such a thing, of course?

NOR. What do they take it for?

SIR P. My dear young gentleman, have you lived six and twenty years without discovering that the female complexion is usually an artificial product?

NOR. Well, I know a powder-puff when I see one, but arsenic! (*turns up a little C. with KATE*)

SIR P. Pooh! a common drug!

BEA. Miss Derwent, so sorry to trouble you—but the night dews are falling, and Mildred has gone out without a shawl.

KATE. I'll get one at once. (*exit, R., upper door*)

NOR. Yes—we'll get one at once. (*exit, R.U.D.*)

(*Directly NORMANTOWER is off, PRICE and SERVANT re-enter, R.U.D., with coffee, which they offer to BEATRICE, who is sitting R. by piano.*)

PHIL. I must say, I agree with Normantower. When you told me what you were giving me, it was rather a shock even to me, and it nearly frightened poor Beatrice out of her life.

BEA. Philip, don't speak of it. (*takes coffee*) Don't you remember what happened?

PHIL. You broke a glass.

BEA. And breaking glass is so unlucky.

[Pg 42]

(SERVANTS *cross and offer coffee to PHILIP, who takes a cup without milk and sugar, SIR PETER not noticing. They then pass behind to SIR PETER, who takes coffee. PRICE clears KATE'S cup from the table, then crosses, followed by SERVANT and exeunt R.U.D.*)

PHIL. Mousey, you'll make Sir Peter laugh at you. (NORMANTOWER *talks to KATE*)

SIR P. Why should I?

PHIL. Surely *you* don't believe in luck? (*takes coffee*)

SIR P. Everybody believes in luck, except fools, who attribute their successes to their merits. My experience teaches me differently. I know, one may study a case for a week, and master it only by accident—as I have mastered yours. (*exeunt SERVANTS*)

BEA. (*rises*) You've mastered Philip's? (*goes to C.*)

SIR P. Yes. As I suspected. Liver.

BEA. Ah! Then, after all, it is only dyspepsia?

SIR P. (L.) *Only* dyspepsia, madam! What's the word suffering from?—vice—crime—drink—poverty? What are they all? Indigestion.

PHIL. My wife means, nothing dangerous—one can hardly die of dyspepsia.

SIR P. Sir, one can die of anything. If you only knew the number of things one can die of, you'd wonder any of us are alive. (PHILIP *laughs and lifts his cup to drink*) What have you there? (*going up to back of table*)

PHIL. Only some coffee.

SIR P. Put it down, sir, instantly. (*hand on table*)

BEA. Mayn't he have coffee, doctor?

SIR P. (*crosses behind sofa to C.*) Coffee! Most indigestible! Have I not given my orders? He is to taste nothing more to-day, except one dose of medicine before going to bed. (BEATRICE *goes to piano, puts her cup down and picks up her fan*)

PHIL. Another dose, to-night?

SIR P. One more; it's most important. (*rises*)

BEA. Is Mr. Merivale still here? (*at piano*)

PHIL. Oh no, he went some time ago.

BEA. (*quickly*) Then have you made the will?

PHIL. Not yet. (SIR PETER *watches BEATRICE closely*) Merivale insists on making his own inquiries before taking any other steps in the matter. If Sir Peter's information is confirmed, he will accept my instructions. I am to see him again at twelve o'clock to-morrow.

BEA. Twelve o'clock?

SIR P. Now you must rest. You've had a trying day (*hand on PHILIP'S shoulder*) (PHILIP *rises and stands back to audience*)

BEA. (BEATRICE *advances to SIR PETER*) You needn't trouble, doctor. *I will go with Philip.*

SIR P. Thank you—it is no trouble. Come, my boy. (PHILIP *takes his R. arm, and they go up*)

PHIL. (*up L.C.*) How can I repay you for all your attention?

SIR P. By obeying me to the letter. Diet's the great thing; and the less the better. Eat nothing—drink nothing.

PHIL. But one dose of medicine.

SIR P. Just one more. (*exit with PHILIP, L.U.D., music in orchestra*)

BEA. (*behind sofa, R. of it*) One more! My last chance—and I dare not take it. At twelve o'clock to-morrow, all I have worked for, all I have schemed for, all I have married for, slips through my fingers. (*gets front of sofa*) And I can do nothing! No, it is too dangerous; and if I stop now, I am safe enough. But what is safety worth? Tied to my husband for his life, and at his death, a pauper! Whilst she—*she* will be the Countess of Normantower! Unless—unless—(*sits on sofa smiling to herself*). He

doesn't know that she is Philip's sister. It is arranged it shall be kept a secret. Then, why is Philip leaving her his fortune? If I could make him think there was another reason. He is in love, and love is always jealous. If I could only sow a doubt between them. Countess of Normantower! What I have thrown away! (*music stops*)

Re-enter NORMANTOWER, R.U.D.

NOR. (*goes to C.*) It's all right. We've found the shawl.

BEA. Did it take two to find it?

NOR. It took two to look for it. Miss Derwent looked everywhere for the shawl, and I looked everywhere for Miss Derwent.

BEA. You are great friends.

NOR. Oh, yes; we get along splendidly. I like Miss Derwent! she is just my sort.

BEA. I thought you hated all women.

NOR. On the contrary, I am never so happy as in the society of ladies.

BEA. You, who are always raving against marriage.

NOR. That's the reason. To marry is to devote oneself to an individual; whilst a bachelor can devote himself to the sex. Besides, I have to study economy—and it comes cheaper on taking a quantity.

BEA. Perhaps, you are right. Marriage is a terrible lottery.

[Pg 44]

NOR. You should be thankful you have drawn a prize.

BEA. Don't mock me.

NOR. I'm sure you couldn't have a better husband than Philip. He's one of the best fellows in the world.

BEA. Ah! there's only one prize—to a woman.

NOR. (*aside*) She means me. (*two steps away*)

BEA. All the rest are blanks. And sometimes worse than blanks.

NOR. (*aside*) This is damn'd awkward! (*a further movement R.C.*)

BEA. (*rises*) Lord Normantower, I owe you an explanation which I have had no opportunity of giving you. Your time is so much occupied, and we are so seldom alone.

NOR. (*aside, R.C.*) I wish somebody'd come!

BEA. (C.) When you first came to Ravenhurst, I made what must have seemed a very strange avowal.

NOR. Mrs. Selwyn, I have tried to forget it, and I hope you will assist me. And the best way to forget it, is not to say anything about it.

BEA. I have tried to be silent—but in justice to myself, I must speak. You know my marriage was not my own wish; but having married, do me the justice to believe I would have been a true and loyal wife, if Philip had been all you think he is.

NOR. Philip?

BEA. I have accepted my lot without a murmur. Even now, my only wish is that you should not think too harshly of my indiscretion; but at the sight of you, the old times came back so vividly, that words sprang to my lips which I should not have spoken, even under such provocation as mine.

NOR. I have known Philip nearly all my life, and this is the first breath I ever heard against him. I can't help thinking you must be mistaken.

BEA. Think so—by all means think so! I do not ask for pity or for sympathy. I only said so much in self-defence. Now I have done. (*goes to L.*)

NOR. (*aside*) Thank goodness!

BEA. But you are quite right to remain a bachelor. Marriage is a mistake. (*sitting in easy chair L.*)

NOR. (*goes to L.C.*) There are two ways of looking at it; and, after all, one ought to see both sides. I've looked at one for so long, I'm seriously thinking of taking a turn at the other. (*sits on sofa*)

BEA. You contemplate being married?

NOR. Well, I have had some thoughts of it. (*toying with BEATRICE'S fan which she has left on sofa*)

[Pg 45]

BEA. Whom shall I have the pleasure of congratulating?

NOR. Oh, I don't know. I haven't asked her yet—at least, not properly. I'm sort of—feeling my way.

BEA. I don't think you need fear.

NOR. D'you think she'll have me—really!

BEA. Of course, I don't know who the lady is.

NOR. Oh, yes you do, Miss Derwent.

BEA. (*rises suddenly*) Miss Derwent?

NOR. Yes, of course. You must have seen I'm awfully gone on her.

BEA. And you propose to marry her.

NOR. Well I should like to.

BEA. (*drops back into seat*) What am I to say?

NOR. What do you mean?

BEA. Nothing. I only meant—rather a *mésalliance*, isn't it?

NOR. I don't see that at all. I'm no great catch. I'm as poor as a church mouse.

BEA. A coronet is something.

NOR. Pooh! What's a coronet? A thing they stick about on hansom cabs. Sixpence a mile.

BEA. And don't you owe a duty to your family?

NOR. My family owe a great deal more to me, but there's precious little chance of their stumping up.

BEA. (*rises*) Let me see. How long have you known Miss Derwent? (*front of table*)

NOR. About a week. (*R. end of sofa, facing her*)

BEA. And don't you think it's dangerous, to marry on so short an acquaintance?

NOR. To marry anybody else, it would be. Not to marry *her*.

BEA. Have you told Philip?

NOR. No—what's *he* to do with it?

BEA. (*crosses to R.C.*) Nothing, of course! No, nothing. Why should I tell you! (*hand on chair L. of piano*) Why should I publish my own humiliation? And yet, we are such old friends, how can I stand by, and see your whole life ruined? No! Lord Normantower, this marriage is impossible. (*goes towards LORD NORMANTOWER*)

NOR. (*rises*) I don't see that at all.

BEA. You are in love, and blind! Has it never struck you? Why is Miss Derwent here?

NOR. Isn't she Mildred's governess?

BEA. Mildred requires no governess.

NOR. Well, her companion—yours.

BEA. Mine! *My* companion! Yes, you are right there. Yes, my companion—in my husband's heart. (*goes down to R.C.*)

[Pg 46]

NOR. Surely, you cannot mean—(*follows a step*)

BEA. My rival! Yes! I mean, that Philip is her lover.

NOR. Mrs. Selwyn!

BEA. Now I have told you my secret, and I leave it to your honour to respect it.

NOR. You accuse Miss Derwent—you accuse your husband—

BEA. Yes, I accuse them both. You know what happened this morning; Miss

Derwent was going away, and my husband insisted on her remaining; but you don't know what happened this afternoon. So mad is Philip's infatuation that he is even making a new will, bequeathing her every shilling he possesses, leaving me an outcast and a beggar.

SIR PETER *appears*, L.D.—*he observes them talking and goes into conservatory*,
L.C.

NOR. Surely you are mistaken. (*backing a step*)

BEA. I am *not* mistaken! Sir Peter knows of this will. He will tell you what I say is the truth. But not a word about my secret? I leave that to your honour. (*crosses and goes up C. to L.C.*)

NOR. (*aside*) I wish she wouldn't leave my honour legacies. (*turns up to opening*, R.C.)

SIR PETER *comes out from conservatory*, L.C., *intercepting BEATRICE as she goes to door*, L.

SIR P. Where are you going?

BEA. Only to sit with Philip. (*going L.*)

SIR P. (*blocking the way*) He is lying down, and must on no account be disturbed.

BEA. Surely a wife—

SIR P. Is the most likely person to disturb her husband.

BEA. (*pushing past, viciously*) Sir Peter, I *will* see him! (*exit*, L.D.)

SIR P. (*aside, looking after her*) But you can't. (*produces key, looks at it and replaces it in his pocket, then goes down L., and leans on mantel, on the opposite side of stage to LORD NORMANTOWER—both lost in thought*)

NOR. (*aside, leaning against column*, R.C.) How can I ask Sir Peter? How can I say, has Selwyn made a will, leaving his wife a beggar? I know what his answer would be. "Sir, what the devil has that to do with you?" And yet it has a lot to do with me. I regard Miss Derwent's reputation as my own, and I'm not going to have aspersions cast on it. If I could clear things up, I might be able to convince Mrs. Selwyn of her mistake. But how can I broach the subject? It's a teaser. (*sits up*, R.C., *in alcove*)

[Pg 47]

SIR P. (*sits L., aside*) Now, what am I to do? Give her a chance, or nail her to the counter? If I gave her a chance, would she take it? Not she! She would appeal to her husband—he would believe her implicitly and kick me out of the house—there would be an end of *me*—and there would be an end of *him*. I must convict her—there's no alternative. But how? If she plays any tricks to-night, I have her. But if she doesn't? (*blows his nose*) She has *me*! Well, the first thing to be done is, to make things safe for the night.

NOR. (*aside, rises and comes down a little*) I have it! Sir Peter knows I'm poor—I'll tell him I have thoughts of marrying, but I must marry money. I will inquire about Miss Derwent's circumstances—say, I've heard a rumour. Then I shall find out all about this will. Sir Peter will think I'm an awful cad, but what does it matter what Sir Peter thinks? Upon my word, statesmanship *is* hereditary, after all. I feel a regular Machiavelli! (*crosses to SIR PETER, aloud*) Sir Peter! May I have a word with you? (*R. of table*)

SIR P. (*watch*) How long are you likely to be?

NOR. Only a second.

SIR P. That means half-an-hour. I limit my consultations to ten minutes.

NOR. Ten minutes, then.

SIR P. Go on.

Re-enter KATE, R.C. *from R., unobserved, stops short on seeing them.*

NOR. (*sits on sofa*) It is about Miss Derwent.

SIR P. Oh, Miss Derwent! (*SIR PETER rises, takes snuff-box on mantel—and sits again L.*)

KATE. (*aside, smiling*) He's talking about me. I should like to know what he thinks of me. It's a mean thing to do—but I'll do it—just for fun. (*retires into conservatory, and crosses, going off* L.U.E.)

SIR P. Well, sir.

NOR. You know Miss Derwent very well, I think?

SIR P. Very well indeed—go on! (*leaning back*)

NOR. She's all right, isn't she?

SIR P. All right? (*starting forward*)

NOR. I mean, there isn't a screw loose anywhere?

SIR P. Screw loose?

NOR. You know, I have some thoughts of marrying.

SIR P. Her!

NOR. Well, yes, of marrying *her*.

SIR P. (*rises*) Then marry her, and don't bother me about it.

[Pg 48]

NOR. But I'm as poor as a rat, and I can't afford—

SIR P. Then, *don't* marry her. (*crosses* R.C.)

NOR. (*rises and follows* SIR PETER) But it has reached my ears, that Selwyn's going to leave her everything. (SIR PETER *pricks up his ears*) If that is really so, it would suit my book to a T; and I thought you might know something about it.

SIR P. Well, sir?

NOR. And tell me.

SIR P. In what capacity? As a physician?

NOR. No—as a friend.

SIR P. As Mr. Selwyn's friend—betray his confidence?

NOR. No—as *my* friend.

SIR P. But I am *not* your friend.

NOR. Well, as between two men of the world. Miss Derwent's an awfully nice girl, but you know, one must look after the dibs.

SIR P. Sir, I may be a man of the world, or I may not, but I do not hold consultations in that capacity. Good evening. (*going* R.)

NOR. Sir Peter! One moment! (*following. Exit* SIR PETER, *followed by* NORMANTOWER, R.I.D. KATE *staggers from conservatory, L.C., and drops into sofa, the picture of desolation.*)

Re-enter LORD NORMANTOWER, R.I.D. *Stops short on seeing* KATE.

NOR. (R.C.) There she is. (*stands looking at* KATE)

KATE. (*giving her eyes a final wipe and rising, aside*) I don't care. (*pockets handkerchief*)

NOR. (*goes to her*) Miss Derwent, you've been crying. Something's the matter.

KATE. Don't trouble about *me*. I'm "all right."

NOR. "All right?" (*aside*) Do sit down!

KATE. Thanks, I prefer to stand.

NOR. But I don't like you to stand.

KATE. I'm sorry if my attitude is not sufficiently elegant to satisfy your lordship's fastidious taste.

NOR. Miss Derwent!

KATE. But I was not born graceful. I don't think I was properly finished off. Nature has left "a screw loose" somewhere. (*crosses* R.)

NOR. (C.) "A screw loose?" (*nonplussed*)

KATE. What perplexes your lordship? (*sits R. by piano*)

NOR. (*goes to her*) Miss Derwent, tell me—why did you ever want to leave Ravenhurst? Don't think me impertinent. I have a reason for asking.

[Pg 49]

KATE. And I had a reason for leaving.

NOR. Were you uncomfortable?

KATE. Oh dear, no! Mr. Selwyn has always insisted on my being treated with every consideration.

NOR. Ah! Philip thinks a lot of *you*, doesn't he?

KATE. I think, he likes me. I don't know about "a lot."

NOR. Perhaps you felt yourself in rather a false position?

KATE. (*rises*) What do you mean?

NOR. Nothing—I only meant—I don't know what I meant.

KATE. Perhaps I thought, that I might *better* my position.

NOR. But if you were so comfortable—

KATE. Comfort isn't everything. Ravenhurst's an awfully nice place: but—(*facing him*) "You know, one must look after the dibs."

NOR. (*stands dumbfounded—pause*) Then, you heard my conversation with Sir Peter?

KATE. Every word of it.

NOR. Well, it serves me right. (*goes down to C.*)

KATE. (*advances towards him*) And me as well—for listening—but I'm glad I did. Now, I know what you are, and what you want. You are for sale! Heart, soul, mind, body and estate—without reserve, and open to all bidders. I am only a governess—I have no money to buy you, and I don't *want* to buy you! Knock yourself down to anyone you please! What do *I* care? (*a step or two away*)

NOR. Hear me, one moment. I have been misled. (*follows*)

KATE. (*turns sharply on him*) And so have I. I thought, at last, that I had met a *man!*—A man whom I could love—

NOR. Miss Derwent! (*enraptured*)

KATE. Whom I could honour—whom I could even obey!

NOR. Kate! (*holds out his hands*)

KATE. (*smacks his hands down and draws back up stage, R.C., a step; during speech, she backs towards R.U.D.*) Don't call me "Kate." It wasn't *you*. It was another man altogether—a creature of my fancy—whom I had met in dreams—but whom I loved—with such a love as never entered into your sordid soul—for whom I would have died—for whom I would have worked, toiled, slaved, from morning until night—who possessed the whole heart of a woman who has never loved before, but who has cast it from him and has broken it! (*at door; exit, R.U.D.*)

NOR. My last appearance as Machiavelli! (*goes to L.*)

Re-enter TOM moodily, R.C. from R.

TOM. (*comes down C.*) I don't like the look of the pond.

NOR. What pond? What are you talking about?

[Pg 50]

TOM. Oh, by the bye, I haven't told you what we're going to do.

NOR. Who's going to do?

TOM. Why, me and Mildred. Drown ourselves. At least we *were* going to drown ourselves, until we saw the pond. Now, we are going to think of something else.

NOR. (*goes to TOM*) Look here, Tom! it's quite time little boys were in bed. You'll have plenty of time to-morrow.

TOM. Ah! You don't know what it is, to love—and get the key of the street!

NOR. Don't I? I've got it.

TOM. *You've got it, Ned?*

NOR. Miss Derwent has just given it me.

TOM. I say, let's drown one another! You go first! (*puts NORMANTOWER across up towards R.U.D.*)

NOR. No, thank you, Tom. I'll go and make things up. (*exit, R.U.D.*)

Re-enter SIR PETER, R.I.D., lost in thought, he goes up a little, R.C.

TOM. (*down C., turning—seeing SIR PETER*) Sir Peter—the very man—I say, Sir Peter! (*turns up to SIR PETER*)

SIR P. Mr. Verinder?

TOM. Aren't you a doctor?

SIR P. I had the honour to belong to the medical profession before you were born.

TOM. A lot of things seem to have happened before I was born—and everybody takes care to let me know it.

SIR P. It is impossible to know too much.

TOM. Then, tell me. What's the pleasantest way of committing suicide?

SIR P. Hem! The question is scarcely usual. I regret to say, the etiquette of my profession precludes me from replying. (*mock bow. Goes up C.*)

TOM. Pompous old ass! I don't believe he knows. (*goes to L.C.*)

Re-enter MILDRED, R.U.D., with an open book in her hand.

MIL. Tom, Tom! (*comes down R.C.*)

TOM. What's that you've got?

MIL. "Kennedy on Poisons." (*reading from book. SIR PETER listens*) I found it in Miss Derwent's dressing-room.

TOM. Just what we wanted—let me have a look.

SIR P. (*advancing*) Give me that book. (*between them. MILDRED draws book away*)

TOM. But it's not hers—it's—

SIR P. (*peremptorily*) Give that book to me. (*MILDRED gives it him*) How dare you take this from Miss Derwent's dressing-room? [Pg 51]

MIL. (*begins to cry*) I didn't know that I was doing wrong. Mousey is always at Miss Derwent's bookcase.

TOM. How dare *you* take that from Miss Selwyn! Is it yours? (*facing him boldly*)

SIR P. By force of arms.

TOM. Force is not argument.

SIR P. (*in a voice of thunder*) Go away, boy, go! (*points R. TOM collapses, crosses to MILDRED, and exit with MILDRED R.I.D. quickly*)

SIR P. (*sits on sofa*) "Kennedy—Poisons"—(*opens fly-leaf*) "Kate Derwent—from her friend, the Author—Guy's Hospital, 17th April, 1888." Kennedy's pet lamb! Gives it right and left, and not got through the first edition yet. Nothing remarkable in that. But why does it open at arsenic? "Mousey is always at Miss Derwent's book-case."

Re-enter PRICE, R.I.D.

PRI. Mr. Learoyd, the chemist, is here, sir.

SIR P. (*rises*) I'll see him at once. (*PRICE is going. SIR PETER goes to him*) Stop—give this key to your mistress, with my compliments. (*gives PRICE the key*) You'll find her in her room. (*crosses and exit R.I.D.*)

PRICE crosses and knocks at door L. and withdraws to L.C. up stage. Re-enter BEATRICE, L. after a pause, she has medicine bottle and wine-glass in her hand.

BEA. What is it?

PRI. Sir Peter told me to give you this, madam, with his compliments. (*gives key and goes R. towards upper door*)

BEA. (*aside*) The key! (*goes down L. Aloud*) Price! I am going to bed. I shall not want Johnson. Put all the lights out, lock the outer door of the conservatory, and make up the house.

PRI. Yes, madam, but Sir Peter—

BEA. Do as I tell you.

Music in orchestra. BEATRICE *has put medicine and glass on table, and stands in front of table, deep in thought.* PRICE *puts out lamp on piano, then the one in conservatory, lower lights, then disappears R.U.E. A lock is heard to turn. Re-enter PRICE, R.C., he goes to R.U.D.*

PRI. Good-night, madam.

BEA. Good-night. (*exit PRICE.* BEATRICE *crosses and locks R.U.D. Up R.C., looking at key*) Then, he does not suspect me! When I found Philip's door locked, I was half afraid. Why am I such a coward?—Is he with Philip? (*exit L., music swells. Re-enter L.*) No! Philip is fast asleep. Can he be watching? (*goes down to R.I.D.*) No! (*opens door R., looks out, then shuts and locks it*) Good night, Sir Peter! pleasant dreams to you! (*stands looking at the key*) He suspects nothing. (*goes to L.C., R. of table. Produces medicine bottle and glass and pours out a dose*) It is a great temptation! (*produces phial from bosom*) Strange! how this fascinates me! With my life at stake, I scarcely can resist it. It possesses me! But, I suppose, I dare not. (*music dies away, knock at door R.*) Who can that be? (*second knock, aloud*) Who's there?

[Pg 52]

SIR P. (*off*) It's I—Sir Peter Lund! (*she puts away the phial*)

BEA. What an escape! (*unlocks the door and smiles sweetly*) Come in, Sir Peter. (*enter SIR PETER, R.I.D., leaving door ajar and holding the book behind his back*) I was just getting Philip's medicine. (*goes to L., crossing behind sofa and table*)

SIR P. (R.C.) So I see. (*aside*) It's all right. I'm in time—(*puts book down on piano*)

BEA. I scarcely expected to see you again to-night. Do you want Philip? (*on knees, mending fire*)

SIR P. No, Mrs. Selwyn, it is you I want. (*goes to C.*)

BEA. Me?

SIR P. I have something of the greatest importance to tell you. First, let me make sure that my patient cannot overhear us. (*goes towards L.D., back of sofa*)

BEA. (*rises*) He was asleep just now. (*goes up L. to door*)

SIR P. But he may have awakened.

BEA. Shall I see?

SIR P. Thank you. (*she goes L. and exits. SIR PETER watches her off, then goes to back of table and tastes the medicine in the glass, he puts it down, turns quickly, back to door L. signals towards door R., which he has left ajar; enter KATE, R.I.D.*) Into there! (*pointing to conservatory*) Quick! (*off R.C.*)

KATE. But what am I to do? Why have you brought me here? (*going up R.C., SIR PETER L. of her*)

SIR P. Keep your ears open, and you'll understand. (*exit KATE into conservatory, R., KATE in conservatory upsets a pot*) That's her confounded train.

Re-enter BEATRICE, L.D., comes down L. to L.C.

BEA. What was that noise?

SIR P. (*at door of conservatory*) Ten thousand pardons: I've upset a flowerpot. (*comes down to C.*)

BEA. You've been in the conservatory?

SIR P. Yes—to make sure that nobody was listening. In a case like this, one cannot be too careful.

BEA. Sir Peter, you alarm me. What dreadful secret are you going to tell me? (*goes to sofa*)

[Pg 53]

SIR P. (R. of her) Mrs. Selwyn, you are a woman of strong nerves, and you can bear a shock.

BEA. I think so.

SIR P. Well, I'm going to give you one—I've found it!

BEA. What?

SIR P. The serpent.

BEA. The serpent?

SIR P. Which Mr. Selwyn said did not exist, but the existence of which I suspected from the first.

BEA. A serpent in Ravenhurst?

SIR P. And a remarkably fine specimen, it turns out to be. Your husband is being poisoned. (BEATRICE *taken off her guard, reels, and sinks on sofa*) I can quite understand your emotion.

BEA. Poisoned?

SIR P. By arsenic, administered in his medicine.

BEA. But you put it there yourself. You told him, you were giving him arsenic.

SIR P. I was not. (BEATRICE *gazes at him as if fascinated*) I did not prescribe arsenic.

BEA. Might not the chemist—by mistake—

SIR P. I've seen him, and he assures me there was no mistake. Besides, though there was arsenic in the glass, there was *none in the bottle*. While you were all having your dinner, I took the liberty of analysing *that*. Mr. Selwyn is now in such a condition that the next dose may be fatal. The first thing to be done is, to protect his life. I have not left him since morning; but at the precise moment when the criminal, whoever it is, will probably administer the poison, I shall not be there to prevent it, because that moment will be when he takes the final dose of physic which I have ordered him, just before going to bed.

BEA. And knowing this, you have ordered it?

SIR P. With the object of detecting the culprit. Here I want your assistance. We must lay our plans carefully; for whoever is doing this, she is a very clever woman.

BEA. (*rises*) Woman! Then, you suspect—(*bell ready*)

SIR P. (*business*) Miss Derwent. (BEATRICE *starts*) What was that? (*no noise heard*)

BEA. (*astonished*) Miss Derwent!

SIR P. I thought I heard a noise in the conservatory.

BEA. No one is there. The doors have been locked.

SIR P. Someone may have opened them. Let us make sure. (*goes into the conservatory R.C., disappears R., re-enters in a moment and comes down to C.*)

BEA. Miss Derwent! (*down stage front of sofa*)

SIR P. (*returning*) Only the flower pot—caught in a plant, which must have given way. (*gets R. of sofa*)

BEA. Well? You were saying—

SIR P. I suspect Miss Derwent—She has, as humanity goes, a powerful incentive to this crime. On Mr. Selwyn's death, she expects to come into a large fortune.

BEA. Not until he has made a will in her favour.

SIR P. He said he would make it to-day. She heard him say so, and she knows that he has seen his solicitor.

BEA. (*sits on sofa*) Yes, but my husband has been ill some weeks. Miss Derwent had nothing to gain by his death until this will was made.

SIR P. (*sitting R. of her*) Therefore, she has not killed him. The process has been admirably timed. She began to compass his death when she had nothing to gain by it, and therefore was not open to suspicion; and on the point of its consummation, adroitly threw herself upon his generosity. You must admit the ingenuity of the scheme.

BEA. But the evidence?

SIR P. That is where you must help me. It is incomplete. But it is obvious enough, the criminal, whoever it is, is familiar with the properties of arsenic, which are not so simple as is commonly supposed. A bungler would have killed him long ago; but Miss Derwent is half a doctor. She was at Guy's for years. She is a particular friend of Dr. Kennedy's—and, strongest evidence of all, his book on toxicology is here—*(rises, crosses to piano, takes book, and recrosses to back of sofa, R. of it)* inscribed with her name—and has evidently been considerably studied. *(gives book to BEATRICE)* Especially, one chapter.

BEA. Which is that?

SIR P. Open it.

BEA. "Arsenic"!

SIR P. Look at the title page.

BEA. "Kate Derwent—from her friend, the Author."

SIR P. *(takes book again)* I submit that the case against her is one of the gravest suspicion *(crosses to back of table, L. of it)*

BEA. Then you accuse your friend and protégée.

SIR P. Science has no friendships. *Someone* is poisoning your husband. I suspect MISS DERWENT. *(KATE appears momentarily R.C.)* Accept my theory or reject it—*(raises his voice, to make sure KATE can hear him)* *Watch that glass!* If anybody touches it—

BEA. Who can, but me! When you have gone, and I have locked the door, no one can get into this room to-night. Where is this poison coming from? [Pg 55]

SIR P. Wherever it comes from, I know where it goes; into that glass. Therefore, please, *watch the glass!* If anybody tampers with it, ring this bell. *(indicates bell pull, going towards it up R.)*

BEA. *(rises)* What, the alarm-bell? *(goes to C.)*

SIR P. It will rouse the house. A miscreant will be brought to justice, and your husband's life will be saved. *(comes down R.C.)*

BEA. If no one touches it?

SIR P. He is safe for to-night, at any rate. Madam, I have the honour to wish you a very good evening. *(exit, R.I.D.)*

Music in orchestra.

BEA. *(locks door after him, and breaks into a low, hollow laugh)* Thank you, Sir Peter! thank you very much! *(goes to C.)* The case you have begun, I will complete. Now, I can not only save myself, but triumph! If I convict Miss Derwent of this crime, the will must be abandoned. *(gets R. of table, KATE appears R.C., watching her)* It is worth some risk! I can but fail: and if I do—*(produces phial, and pours the contents into the medicine, laughing)* I'll make this strong enough. There! Now to bring Miss Derwent. I will say Philip's dying, and has asked to see her. Then I will rouse the house, and she shall be found here—alone with this! *(goes to R.C.)* Sir Peter will corroborate me, Philip will be convinced, and my Lord Normantower—ha, ha!—can marry her! Thank you, Sir Peter, thank you! *(unlocks door, and exit, R.I.D.)*

KATE. Oh! *(in opening, R.C.)*

PHIL. *(off L.)* Beatrice!

KATE. My brother's voice—if I were found here now!

PHIL. *(nearer)* Beatrice!

(KATE retreats out of sight, R.)

Enter PHILIP, L.D. (PHILIP goes down L. to L.C.)

PHIL. Not here? Where can she be? *(watch)* Good gracious, I've been asleep for nearly three hours. *(yawning)* Well, I suppose she won't be very long; *(KATE appears again, watching PHILIP, who sits on sofa)* Ah, there's the medicine! That last dose, which old Lund said was so particular. I'd forgotten all about it. But Mousey hadn't. She forgets nothing—nothing! *(rises)* Well, the sooner I take it, the sooner it's over.

(*about to drink*)

KATE. (*rushing forward*) Philip! Stop! (*music stops*)

PHIL. Kate? (*sets down the glass*)

KATE. It's poison! (R. *of sofa*)

PHIL. Poison?

Re-enter BEATRICE, R.I.D.

KATE. Yes! (*hysterically*) She is killing you!

PHIL. (*confounded*) Who?

KATE. Beatrice! (PHILIP *drops into sofa*) Your wife! (*sobs at his feet. PHILIP sits as if stunned. BEATRICE stands, surveying them. Pause. BEATRICE rings the alarm bell—KATE springs to her feet. Re-enter* SIR PETER, R.I.D. KATE *goes up to C., PHILIP rises and goes L. Lights worked up imperceptibly*)

SIR P. Who rang the bell? (*crosses to R. of table*)

Re-enter LORD NORMANTOWER, R.I.D.

BEA. I rang!

NOR. (R.C.) What is the matter?

BEA. Sir Peter, you were right. This girl is poisoning my husband. (*comes down to C.*)

PHIL. Beatrice! (*goes to fire, and leans on mantel*)

KATE. Oh!

SIR P. Let Mrs. Selwyn speak. (*calmly tests the medicine by finger and gets to back to table, placing glass down there*)

BEA. You asked me to watch, and I have watched. I found her hidden here. My husband was about to drink this stuff—

PHIL. When she prevented me—

BEA. Because, of course, she heard my conversation with Sir Peter. Knowing she was suspected, she has sought to cast this horrible suspicion upon *me!*

KATE. Philip—I saw her!

BEA. Since I poured out that draught, I have not touched it.

KATE. Oh! (*retreating up L.C.*)

BEA. If it is poisoned—*she* has poisoned it.

SIR P. But when? Besides, you would have seen her—you were watching. This was not poisoned, when I left the room.

BEA. It *must* have been!

SIR P. I think not—and I tested it. (*advances to C., behind sofa*)

BEA. I didn't see you.

SIR P. No—I took care you shouldn't. (*pause*)

BEA. You suspected *me!*

SIR P. From the beginning.

BEA. This is a plot to ruin me! (BEATRICE *crosses to PHILIP who disregards her. SIR PETER goes to R.C., L. of LORD NORMANTOWER*) Philip, you don't believe this hideous charge? (PHILIP *makes no movement—she draws back, up L. to back of table, and stands at bay*) What was Miss Derwent doing in the room? If she is innocent, why was she *hiding* here?

SIR P. Perhaps I can throw some light upon that matter. (BEATRICE *confronts* SIR PETER) I brought Miss Derwent here. (*going up to C., KATE comes to him*)

BEA. You brought her—when?

SIR P. When *you* were in the other room, naturally. I took the liberty of putting

her into the conservatory, where, you will remember, she had the misfortune to upset a flower-pot.

BEA. I understand. You laid a trap for me?

SIR P. I took that liberty.

BEA. And you say, this is poisoned?

SIR P. I should think, fatally.

BEA. If I am guilty, why do I not get rid of it? You have given me plenty of opportunity.

SIR P. For a very excellent reason. Because you are quite clever enough to know, that to do so would be an admission of your crime.

BEA. I am not guilty, and this (*takes up glass*) is not poison.

SIR P. Sorry I am to contradict you—

BEA. See! I will prove it! (*drinks the poison and throws glass down behind her, it smashes. Movement from SIR PETER, NORMANTOWER and PHILIP*)

SIR P. Mrs. Selwyn!

BEA. You are too late, Sir Peter. (*goes up*) Now—good night to all of you. (*curtseying. Exit L., followed by SIR PETER*)

NOR. (*to PHILIP*) What was the object? (*crosses to C. As NORMANTOWER crosses he holds out his hand to KATE, which she accepts, KATE being L. of him, R. of sofa*)

PHIL. Normantower, Kate is my sister. The fortune which I have enjoyed for years is hers, and I was anxious to restore it. The object was, to prevent me. (*music in orchestra*) Oh, Kate, my heart is broken! (*KATE goes to R. of PHILIP and kneels*)

KATE. But time will heal it, Philip; for your heart is good; goodness and happiness are not strangers long.

Re-enter SIR PETER, L.D.

PHIL. Only to think, this woman is my wife!

SIR P. (*gently laying his hand on PHILIP'S shoulder*) But not for long. And she is better dead!

MUSIC FORTE.

MODERATE CURTAIN.

Time (Act) forty-two minutes. Time for whole, including waits, two hours, six minutes.

Transcriber's Note

This transcription is based on scanned images posted by Google from a copy in the Harvard Library.

Note that the Google scans are included in a set of four Sydney Grundy plays published by Samuel French posted under the title, *A Fool's Paradise*. Based on how the Harvard Library catalogs the individual copies, I assume Google combined the different scans into a single document. *A Fool's Paradise* is the first play in the set.

French's Acting Editions from the nineteenth century tend to have minor editorial inconsistencies and errors such as missing and inverted letters, missing and incorrect punctuation marks, and spelling errors. In addition, errors were introduced in the printing process, depending on the condition and inking of the plates. Thus, for example, it is at times difficult to determine whether a certain letter is an "c," "e," or "o" or whether a certain punctuation mark is a period or a comma. Where context made the choice obvious, the obvious reading was given the benefit of the doubt without comment.

The following changes were noted:

- Throughout the text, all abbreviations in the stage directions for stage position, entrances, and exits (e.g., "R.I.D.") have been made consistent so that there is no space between the letters.
- Throughout the text, the convention of long dashes at the end of lines has been made consistent.
- p. 3: Tennis bat for KATE R.U.E.—For consistency, changed "KATE" to "Kate".
- p. 5: You wouldn't mind being Mrs. Verinder, would you.—Changed period to a question mark.
- p. 6: KATE Why aren't...—Added period after "KATE".
- p. 7: Even love matches are often unfortunatate.—Changed "unfortunatate" to "unfortunate".
- p. 7: Love has a habit of being so one-sided—Added period to end of sentence.
- p. 7: ...a most able and distinguished man—Added period to end of sentence.
- p. 9: ...and waves his hand to TOM and MIL—Changed "MIL" to "MILDRED" in stage direction.
- p. 9: SIR. P. Drink too much.—Deleted period after "SIR".
- p. 9: KATE. SIR Peter!—Changed "SIR" from small caps to initial cap.
- p. 9: SIRP. Of course you do.—Inserted space between "SIR" and "P".
- p. 10: SIR P Any pain?—Inserted period after "SIR P".
- p. 11: SIR P. So, altogether. you're quite a happy family?—Changed what looked like a period after "altogether" to a comma.
- p. 11: With more money than I know what to do wi h...—Changed "wi h" to "with".
- p. 11: The liv r was made, by a beautiful provision...—Changed "liv r" to "liver".
- p. 12: *Re-enter* MILDRED and TOM, followed by LORD NORMANTOWER, C. from R.)—Deleted unmatched closing parenthesis.
- p. 12: (*they come down stage tonether*...—Changed "tonether" to "together".
- p. 12: ...and though circum tances have kept us a good deal apart—we've never quite ost...—Changed "circum tances" to "circumstances" and "ost" to "lost".
- p. 12: SIR P. (*crosses to* LORD NORMANTOWER. C.)—Changed period after "NORMANTOWER" to comma.
- p. 13: SIR P. (*picks up bunch from table*, R.)—Changed "bunch" to "Punch" based on the "Necessary Properties" list and on the stage direction following the next line of dialogue which has Sir Peter sitting and reading.
- p. 15: ...*she has a tennis bat in her hand, and comes down* C.)—Deleted unmatched closing parenthesis.
- p. 18: (*stoop- to give a back*, NORMANTOWER down R. *laughs*...—Changed "stoop-" to "stooping".
- p. 18: KATE (*nodding*) How d'ye do?—Added period after "KATE".
- p. 20: Nonsense I must see you...—Added period after "Nonsense".
- p. 21: ...but consider the future Some day...—Added a period after "future".
- p. 21: No, I shall never marry—Added a period at end of line.
- p. 22: You are a foolish, obstinate, absurd—(*turns suddenly and takes both her hands*) Good, generous...—Inserted dash after closing parenthesis, and changed "Good" to lower case.
- p. 23: ACT II—Inserted a period at end of heading for consistency.
- p. 23: ...remarkably tight inexpressibles—Added a period at end of line.

- p. 23: You under-rate your accomplishments. don't think...—Inserted the word "I" before "don't". Use of italics was based on spacing between words.
- p. 24: *Kate turns up and resumes watering plants*, R.C.—For consistency in stage directions, changed "Kate" to small caps in html version and all caps in text version.
- p. 29: No—but I cannot grasp it?—Changed question mark to an exclamation mark.
- p. 31: ...bnt now I have awaken...—Changed "bnt" to "but".
- p. 33: I'm doing right, aren't I, mousey—Added question mark to end of sentence.
- p. 33: I have your acquiescence?—Changed "acquiescence" to "acquiescence".
- p. 34: TOM. Are quite well enough to stand a shock?—Inserted "you" after "Are".
- p. 34: Yon won't come to blows?—Changed "Yon" to "You".
- p. 35: *Exeunt* JOHNSON and PHILIP R.U.D.—Added closing parenthesis.
- p. 36: TOM *has her L. hand.*, PHILIP *her right...*—Deleted period after "hand".
- p. 36: SIR. P. Nobody here.—Deleted period after "SIR".
- p. 36: ...*then smells it, smell it again, tastes again cautiously by his finger...*—Changed "smell" to "smells".
- p. 38: BEATRICE's *fan on piano*—Added period after "piano".
- p. 39: "*ad. lib.*"—Deleted period after "ad".
- p. 40: I am charmed with him—Added period at end of sentence.
- p. 41: PHILIP *comes to C. up stage*, KATE *rises and meets him*)—Changed closing parenthesis to a period.
- p. 41: SIR P My dear young...—Added a period after "P".
- p. 43: You've had a trying day—Added a period at end of sentence.
- p. 43: PHILIP *takes his R. arm, and they go up*)—Inserted a left parenthesis before "PHILIP".
- p. 43: SIR. P. By obeying me...—Deleted period after "SIR".
- p. 43: SIR P Just one more.—Added a period after "P".
- p. 43: (*behind sofa R. of it*)—Added a comma after "sofa".
- p. 43: Oh, yes; we get along splendidly. like Miss Derwent! she is just my sort.—Added "I" before "like".
- p. 43: ...a bachelor can devote himself to the sex,—Changed comma to a period.
- p. 44: Don't mock me—Added a period at end of sentence.
- p. 44: Lord Normantower, I owe you an explanation' which...—Deleted single quote mark after "explanation".
- p. 44: You contemplate being married—Added a question mark to end of sentence.
- p. 47: SIR. P. Oh, Miss Derwent!—Deleted period after "SIR".
- p. 47: ...*snuff-box...*—Changed dash to a hyphen.
- p. 48: As Mr. Selwyn's friend—betray his confidence—Added a question mark to end of sentence.
- p. 48: ...*drops into sofa, the picture of desolation.*—Added a closing parenthesis after "desolation."
- p. 48: I'm "all right."—Changed single closing quotation mark to double closing quotation mark.
- p. 49: Whom I could honor—whom I could even obey—Added an exclamation mark to end of sentence.
- p. 49: ...from morning nntil night...—Changed "nntil" to "until".
- p. 50: Don t I? I've got it.—Added an apostrophe between "Don" and "t".
- p. 50: I'll go and make things up. *exit*. R.U.D.)—Added left parenthesis before "*exit*"; changed period after "*exit*" to a comma.
- p. 50: (*turns up to* Sir PETER)—Changed "Sir" from initial cap to small caps in html and all caps in text version.
- p. 51: TOM. How dare *you* take that from Miss Selwyn?—Changed question mark to exclamation mark.
- p. 51: *Re-enter* BEATRICE, L. *after a pause, she has medicine bottle and wine-glass in her hand*)—Changed closing parenthesis to a period.
- p. 52: (*enter* SIR PETER, R.I.D , *leaving door ajar...*—Changed space after "D" to a period.
- p. 52: (*goes towards* L D., *back of sofa*)—Changed space after "L" to a period.
- p. 53: (BEATRICE *gazes at him as if fascinated*—Added closing parenthesis after "fascinated".
- p. 53: I thought I heard a noise in the conservatory—Added a period at end of sentence.
- p. 53: (*goes into the conservatory* R.C., *disappears* R. *re-enters...*—Inserted a comma after "R."
- p. 54: ...and on the point of it's consummation...—Changed "it's" to "its".

- p. 54: (*takes book gaain*)—Changed “gaain” to “again”.
- p. 54: I suspect Miss Derwent—Added a period at end of sentence.
- p. 55: (*indicates bell pull, going owards it up R.*)—Changed “owards” to “towards”.
- p. 55: *comes down* R.C.)—Added a left parenthesis before “comes”.
- p. 55: ...KATE appears R.C ,...—Changed space after “C” to a period.
- p. 55: (PHIL *goes down* L. to L.C.)—Changed “PHIL” to “PHILIP”.
- p. 55: (*sets down the glass*—Added closing parenthesis after “glass”.
- p. 56: *Re-enter* LORD NORMANTOWE, R.I.D.—Changed “NORMANTOWE” to “NORMANTOWER”.
- p. 56: BEA. *I rang?*—Changed question mark to an exclamation mark.
- p. 56: (*come down to C.*)—Changed “come” to “comes”.
- p. 56: (*retreating up* L C.)—Changed space after “L” to a period.
- p. 56: PHILIP *makes no movement...*—Added a left parenthesis before “PHILIP”.
- p. 57: If she is innocent, why was she hiding here—Added a question mark at end of sentence.
- p. 57: Perhaps I can throw some light upon that matter—Added a period at end of sentence.
- p. 57: (*going up to C , KATE comes to him*)—Changed space after “C” to a period.
- p. 57: SIR P I should think, fatally.—Added a period after “P”.
- p. 57: SIR P For a very excellent reason.—Added a period after “P”.
- p. 57: ...that to do so would be an admisson of...—Changed “admisson” to “admission”.

The html version of this etext attempts to reproduce the layout of the printed text. However, some concessions have been made. For example, on pages 25, 34, and 39 of the printed text a single curly bracket around two or more lines is used to indicate simultaneous action or dialogue. It is possible to reproduce this in html using tables, but html tables may not transfer well to the Project Gutenberg files generated from the html file. Thus, the use of html tables was avoided.

This play was inspired by the 1889 trial of Florence Maybrick, who was convicted of poisoning her husband with arsenic. A brief description can be found in William R. Cullen, *Is Arsenic an Aphrodisiac? The Sociochemistry of an Element* (Cambridge, U.K.: Royal Society of Chemistry, 2008), pp. 179-180, 183-185. See also Edgar Lustgarten, *Verdict in Dispute* (London: Allan Wingate, 1949).



PROSCENIUM AND DROP SCENE.

PROSCENIUM.—A most effective Proscenium can be formed by utilising the paper made for this purpose. Three pieces of wood are merely required, shaped according to the above design, and covered with the paper; the proscenium having the appearance of puffed satin panels, in gold frames, with Shakespearean medallion in the centre.

Puffed satin paper, light blue, size 20 inches by 30 inches, per sheet, 1s.

Imitation Gold Bordering, per sheet 1s., making 14 feet.

Shakespearean Medallion, 18 inches in diameter, 2s.

DROP SCENE.—The picture shown above is an illustration of this scene. It comprises four sheets of paper which are to be pasted in the centre of any sized canvas that may be requisite for the drop curtain. Size 6½ feet by 5 feet. Price 10s. 6d.

DOORS.—These comprise three sheets of paper each, and can be had either for drawing-room or cottage purposes. Size, 7 feet by 3 feet. Price complete, 6s. each.

WINDOW.—This is a parlour window formed with two sheets of paper, and could be made practicable to slide up and down by mounting on two pieces of wood, allowing one to groove into the other at the sides. The introduction of curtains each side would make it very effective. Size 3 feet by 4½ feet. Price 4s., complete.

FRENCH WINDOW.—Consisting of four sheets of paper, representing a window containing four large ornamental frosted glass panes with coloured glass round. Size 6½ feet high by 5 feet. Price 7s. 6d.

FIREPLACE.—This is also made with two sheets of paper. The fire is lighted, but should this not be required a fire-paper can be hung over it. It will be found most useful in many farces wherein a character has to climb up chimney, and many plays where a fireplace is indispensable. By purchasing a door, window, and fireplace an ordinary room scene could easily be constructed with the addition of some wall-paper. Size 3 feet by 4½ feet. Price, complete.

All canvas, calico, or other material used for scenery should be sewn in horizontal strips this prevents rucking when rolled up.

The Proscenium Paper, Medallion, Drop Scene, and French Window can be seen mounted at 88, Strand, London.

FRENCH'S ACTING EDITION — 7s. per Vol., 6d. each.

<p>VOLUME 135. 2011 Cheerful and Musical 2012 New Sub 2013 Pickpocket 2014 Happy go Lucky 2015 On the Beach 2016 Miss Impudence 2017 Shooting the Moon 2018 Queen Street 2019 Kissing goes by Favour 2020 Richard's Play 2021 Mr. & Mrs. Muffitt 2022 Confidential Clerk 2023 Mrs. Willis's Will 2024 Lot 49 2025 Midnight Charge</p> <p>VOLUME 136. 2026 Burglar and Judge 2027 Retiring 2028 Fancy Fair 2029 Midsummer Day 2030 Hester's Mystery, 1s. 2031 Setting of the Sun 2032 Three Hats 2033 Tragedy 2034 Theory and Practice 2035 A Love Suit 2036 Lady by Birth 2037 Outwitted 2038 Iron Founder 2039 Assault and Battery 2040 Well Played.</p> <p>VOLUME 137 2041 Between the Posts 2042 Snowdrift 2043 Nita's First 2044 Meddle and Muddle 2045 My Cousin 2046 He, She, and It 2047 Her New Dress-maker 2048 Leap Year 2049 In Danger 2050 Those Landladies 2051 Maria 2052 Floating a Company 2053 Snowstorm 2054 In Two Minds 2055 On Change</p> <p>VOLUME 138. 2056 Breezy Morning 2057 Gentleman Whip 2058 Gay Lothario 2059 Dancing Dervish 2060 Sixes and Sevens 2061 Faded Flowers 2062 Silver Keepsake 2063 Accepted by Proxy 2064 In An Attic 2065 A Fragment 2066 Turned Up 2067 Kieptomania 2068 Rain Clouds 2069 Retaliation 2070 Odd Trick</p> <p>VOLUME 139. 2071 Man Who Wasn't 2072 Comedy and Tragedy (Gilbert)</p>	<p>2073 Nine Days' Wonder 2074 In the Eyes of the World 2075 The Journey's End 2076 Pierrot and Pier.ette 2077 Sad Memories 2078 Stolen Kisses 2079 Love and Dentistry 2080 Villain and Victim 2081 Kitty Clive 2082 The Interview 2083 Merrifield's Ghost 2084 Meadow Sweet 2085 Paper Chase</p> <p>VOLUME 140. 2086 A Patron Saint 2087 Home Sweet Home 2088 Twilight 2089 Lady Interviewer 2090 Guinea Gold 2091 In Nelson's Days 2092 Jealousy 2093 An Old Garden 2094 White Stocking 2095 "Thrillby" 2096 In the Season 2097 Idyll of Closing Century 2098 Womans Proper Place 2099 Cross Roads 2100 Rats</p> <p>VOLUME 141. 2101 Two Jolly Bachelors 2102 Semi-Detached 2103 April Showers 2104 Advice Gracie 2105 Man With Three Wives 2106 Norah 2107 The Other Woman 2108 The Lady Burglar 2109 Friend in Deed 2110 Mystification 2111 Men. 7 2112 Vol. III 2113 Miss Cleopatra 2114 Counsel's Opinion 2115 Purely Platonic</p> <p>VOLUME 142. 2116 Imogen's New Cook 2117 Old Love Letters 2118 Man in the Street 2119 Balloon 2120 Barrister 2121 Lancashire Sailor 2122 Pair of Spectacles, 1s. 2123 Glass of Fashion, 1s. 2124 Fool's Paradise, 1s. 2125 Silver Shield, 1s. 2126 Six Persons 2127 Our New Butler 2128 Wayfarers 2129 Cross Questions and Crooked Answers 2130 Smoke, 1s.</p> <p>VOLUME 143 2131 Eternal Masculine</p>	<p>2132 Fashionable Intel- ligence 2133 A Perfect Cure</p>
--	---	--

Practical Hints on Stage Costume.
With illustrations. Price 1s.
Bazaar Fine Art Gallery. Price 1s.
Re Henry's Recitations. Price 1s.
Classical Recitations for Ladies. 1s.

Guide to Selecting Plays, describing 1,700 plays. 1s.
Shadow Pantomimes. With numerous illustrations. 1s
A amateurs' Guide, Handbook and Manual. 1s.
Iconologues a la Mode. By EVELYN FLETCHER. 1s.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A FOOL'S PARADISE: AN ORIGINAL PLAY IN THREE ACTS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this

agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you

prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.