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Tantalising Tommy

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

PAUL GAVAULT and MICHAEL MORTON

PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE NET.

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TANTALISING TOMMY

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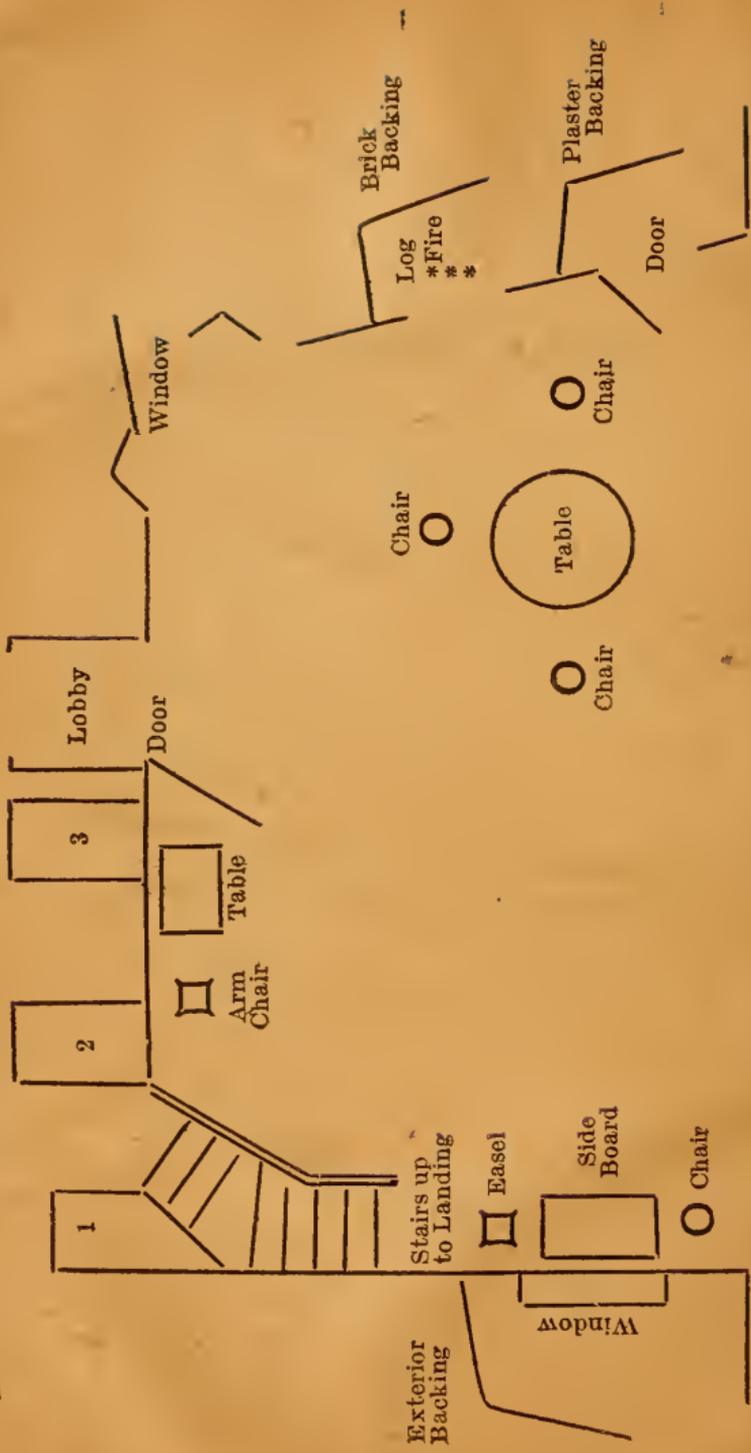
TANTALISING TOMMY

Produced on February 15, 1910, at the Playhouse, London
with the following cast—

JAMES COTTENHAM	.	.	.	<i>Mr. Cyril Maude</i>
HARRY KILLICK	.	.	.	<i>Mr. Kenneth Douglas.</i>
THOMAS H. PEPPER	.	.	.	<i>Mr. Fred Lewis.</i>
MR. EUSTACE TATHEM	.	.	.	<i>Mr. John Beauchamp.</i>
LORD ENDERBY	.	.	.	<i>Mr. Robert Averell.</i>
JENNINGS	.	.	.	<i>Mr. John Harwood.</i>
JACK MASON	.	.	.	<i>Mr. M. Wetherell.</i>
FRANK RICKETTS	.	.	.	<i>Mr. A. G. Onslow.</i>
SIMPSON	.	.	.	<i>Mr. C. B. Keston.</i>
ELSIE TATHEM	.	.	.	<i>Miss Sybil Ruskin.</i>
BERTHA	.	.	.	<i>Miss Maidie Hope.</i>
MAID	.	.	.	<i>Miss Eva Rowland.</i>
TOMMY	.	.	.	<i>Miss Marie Löhr.</i>

Exterior Backing

Landing and Bedrooms
2 turn Backings



"Tantalising Tommy." Acts I and II. Bean Ceiling. Brick Stage Cloth.

TANTALISING TOMMY

ACT I

*At rise of Curtain—*JIMMIE, HARRY and BERTHA
seated thus:—

JIMMIE

BERTHA

HARRY

playing Bridge. BERTHA with her hand raised holding one card hesitates three times—drawing out card, holding it up, and replacing it.)

JIMMIE. *(to BERTHA)* Play, please—no matter what, but *do* play.

BERTHA. Very well, then—clubs. *(plays)*

JIMMIE. *(smiles)* I knew that was coming!

(They all play.)

HARRY. Well played. *(take up cards)* It's our trick.

JIMMIE. *(to BERTHA)* Hadn't you any more hearts?

BERTHA. Yes, of course I had—the three and the two.

JIMMIE. But they were trumps! *(looks over*

her hand. You had two tricks to make and the game was yours. You'll never learn. (*marks the score*)

BERTHA. I've only been learnin' a fortnight. I 'ope I can make a few mistakes. (*rise, replace chair by table*) You make 'em yourself.

JIMMIE. I make mistakes?

BERTHA. Yes, you. And so does Mr. Killick. I don't see why *I* should take *all* the blame. (*gets L. opens door L. and gets nearly off L.*)

JIMMIE. Well, never mind. (*to HARRY*) What do you say to something to drink?

HARRY. I say yes, by all means.

JIMMIE. (*to BERTHA*) Bertha, bring some—
er—

HARRY. Whisky and soda.

BERTHA. (*looking back*) If I *did* lose the trick this time, you trumped 'earts last night. So now we're quits.

(*Exits down L. slams door.*)

JIMMIE. (*rises and comes to c.*) That girl's getting unbearable. Did you hear how she spoke to me?

HARRY. You began it, Jimmie.

JIMMIE. (R.C.) Well, suppose I did. I can correct her, can't I?—she's my servant.

HARRY. (*rises and goes to JIMMIE L.C.*) Yes, but—I wouldn't upset her like that if I were you. She'll end by refusing to play with us—and in this out of the way place where you've chosen to spend your

holidays, if we have no one to make a third at Bridge we should have to play double dummy, and that's an awful bore.

JIMMIE. My dear chap, if you're dull here with me——

HARRY. It's not madly exciting here; but I'm not complaining—I need country air.

JIMMIE. My dear old Harry, you'll do me the justice to believe it's you who do me a favour. Without you I should be most awfully lonely. And I who shall always be a nobody like to think that when you're a great man they will say in your biography, "Harry Killick—one of the masters of the modern school of painting, spent his holidays with his best friend, Mr. James Cottenham." I am very proud of you!

HARRY. Yes, I have great talent! I've a splendid future—what I lack——

JIMMIE. Is a present.

HARRY. No—an opportunity. (*sits chair R. of table*)

JIMMIE. That will come, old chap.

HARRY. I know it will, and I'm waiting for it here in this grim Forest which your peculiar fancy has made our country residence for the summer.

JIMMIE. Grim, but I like the New Forest very much. (*crosses and sits chair L. of table*)

HARRY. It isn't bad, but being a portrait painter a forest is not precisely what I require. However!

JIMMIE. But look how many delightful excursions one can make from here!

HARRY. Yes. Since the tandem bicycle arrived it has been fairly decent. What a fuss you did make about buying it! You said you couldn't cycle, you couldn't do this and you couldn't do that. You see now how useful it is to us. (*looks for tobacco in tin*)

JIMMIE. I never thought I should like it so much.

HARRY. You should always let yourself be guided by me. You're an awfully nice chap, but you have no initiative. You come of a small family——

JIMMIE. Small income——

HARRY. You have a small post in a Government office. It's all so narrow. My own outlook is so much broader. (*go c., look for baccy*)

JIMMIE. It is just because we are so different that we jog along so well together. You know how I dislike meeting strangers. I like old friends around me. (*goes to c.*)

HARRY. You're a tremendously good fellow, Jimmie, but you've one great fault. (*goes to JIMMIE, feels for his pouch in his pocket R.*) You don't think enough of yourself, you're too retiring. (*crosses in front of JIMMIE, and takes pouch from JIMMIE'S L. pocket*) Life wasn't given you to make little of—life's a birthday present, and what have you done with this glorious gift?

JIMMIE. I have a Government appointment, some rubber shares——

HARRY. That's bad enough. But you reach the

office every day exactly on time to the minute. Do you wish me to admire punctuality?

JIMMIE. The unpunctual never do.

HARRY. It's paltry. I believe in letting the other man wait—let the other man worry—the man who gets the best of everything is the man who takes it. (*puts JIM'S pouch in his own pocket—sit R. of table, leg on chair*) You'll never get on. Because you never complain—you never bother your chief, so he never bothers about you.

JIMMIE. (*go c.*) I hate to bother people—I hate anything in the nature of a disturbance; if it's necessary to make myself a nuisance in order to get on in life—then I shall never be anything.

HARRY. (*lights pipe*) Now look at my method. Do I paint?

JIMMIE. No. (*go R.*) Yes! (*turn c.*)

HARRY. No, I wait. And yet with my talent, I might take any model—your head for instance—

(JIMMIE *prides himself*)

which doesn't express anything, (*throws down match*) and a masterpiece would be the result, but no one would take the least notice of it. But let me make the acquaintance of some prominent person, I take out my palette, and in three months I become famous.

(*Enter BERTHA L., putssalver with syphon and glasses on table L.*)

JIMMIE. And I shall be jolly glad, old chap!

(picks up match, and crosses R. gets whisky from side-board)

HARRY. Jimmie! *(over to him L.C.)* You are charming! Your views are narrow, but you are charming.

(JIMMIE gives whisky to HARRY).

BERTHA. *(L. of table)* 'Ere's the soda water, sir. *(puts on table then goes up to window, covers canary cage and then goes C. to light three candles)*

JIMMIE. Thank you BERTHA. *(goes to R. of table and pours out soda)*

(HARRY gets L. of table below it, pours out whisky.)

(HARRY stands L. of table.)

JIMMIE. *(R. of table squirting soda water)* Ah! Life's a funny thing—here we are—three people of no consequence—who count for nothing, yet in say twenty years from now I shall be spending the summer here just the same and I shall say—Harry Killick has become famous—He's a Royal Academician after all. *(raising his glass)* To our future R.A.

(To HARRY, clinks glass at table.)

HARRY. *(L. of table, raising his glass)* Thanks—here's to you, Jimmy—Bertha, your health. *(filling glass)*

BERTHA. *(up C.) (sniggering)* Oh, Mr. Killick.

HARRY. Drink, my good girl—in spite of my prospects I am not proud—

BERTHA. Oh no, thank you, sir, it'll go straight to my head.

JIMMIE. (*crosses C. and to R.*) (*brings whisky to R. puts it on sideboard*) Twenty years from now you will have forgotten all your old friends.

HARRY. Come, come, buck up, Jimmie. It isn't at all sure that I shall become famous. (*sits R. side of table*)

BERTHA. (*up C.*) While you're waiting to become famous, sir, would you mind my getting a little sleep?

JIMMIE. Yes, yes, we're all going to bed now.

HARRY. That's one reason why I'm so fond of the country, one gets to bed early.

JIMMIE. Yes—and gets up beastly late, at least you do.

BERTHA. (*C. has lighted the candles. To JIMMIE*) Here is your candle, sir. (*giving it*)

JIMMIE. Thank you. (*taking it*)

BERTHA. (*to HARRY*) And yours, sir. (*puts it on table*)

(*HARRY takes his candle—Exit BERTHA L. with soda salver and glasses.*)

HARRY. (*going upstairs unbuttoning his clothes*) Good-night, old chap.

JIMMIE. Good-night! Don't snore so much to-night! I thought it was an earthquake.

HARRY. (*from the staircase taking letter out of pocket*) Oh, by the bye—a letter——

JIMMIE. A letter——

HARRY. Came for you this morning. I put it in my pocket and forgot all about it. Here, catch!
(*he throws it to him*)

JIMMIE. (*muffs catching it*) I hope it's not urgent.
(*picks it up*)

HARRY. There is nothing in the appearance of the envelope to suggest urgency.

(*Light up in Room 3.*)

JIMMIE. Too bad of you, Harry. (*puts candle on table—glancing at the envelope*) Mr. Tathem's writing.

HARRY. (*bumps his head*) Damn these low ceilings. (*puts candle in door 3*)

JIMMIE. (*reads the letter*) Bertha—

BERTHA. (*entering L.*) Yes sir? (*with duster by door L.*)

JIMMIE. Bertha, the Tathems are coming to lunch to-morrow.

BERTHA. The what, sir?

JIMMIE. I—I mean Mr. Tathem—he's a very important person—

BERTHA. Very good, sir. We'll kill a chicken.
(*up to him*)

JIMMIE. Kill a chicken? (*mystified for the moment*)

BERTHA. For lunch, sir.

(*HARRY at his door—3*)

JIMMIE. Oh, I see. Yes, that will do. (*goes R.*)

BERTHA. With Mr. Killick and you there will be three at table, then.

JIMMIE. (*walks about*) Oh, no! Confound it, no! Mr. Tathem and—and — (*cross R. and back to C.*)

HARRY. (*top landing*) Hallo, what's the matter—you seem worried.

JIMMIE. I? Not in the least! I'm quite calm. That will do, Bertha—you may go to bed.

BERTHA. But I haven't locked up, sir.

JIMMIE. Well—I'll do that.

BERTHA. Thank you, sir. Good-night, sir. (*cross C. to R.*)

JIMMIE. Good-night. Did you give the canary his water? How did he seem? Did he peck at the nest a bit?

(*Light up in Room 1.*)

BERTHA. Yes sir.

JIMMIE. Hasn't laid an egg has he?

BERTHA. I didn't find one, sir.

(*BERTHA takes candle from C. and Exits room 1, puts duster on table up C.*)

HARRY. (*coming downstairs*) I say, that fellow Tathem—isn't he your Chief? (*over bannister*)

JIMMIE. The Chief Clerk of my division. (L.C.)

HARRY. Well, I think it's very inconsiderate of him to show his face when you're having a holiday. (*by door 1*)

JIMMIE. (*stammering*) Well—the fact is—he—

er—thinks I'm lonely—you see I—well, I didn't tell him you were staying here——

HARRY. Oh! then he thinks you're here alone.
(*come R.C. on stage*)

JIMMIE. Yes.

HARRY. I understand—an officious—I mean an official visitor—a nod's as good as a wink to an Irishman—I am in the way—Good! then I'll go. I'll go by the first train in the morning. I must be called. (*goes to stair—calling*) Bertha!

BERTHA. (*off room 1—sleepy voice*) Yes, sir.

HARRY. Come here, please. (*pose on post at foot of stairs*)

BERTHA. (*her voice is heard once more*) At this time of night.

JIMMIE. (*up to HARRY*) Now don't get her started again, we shall never hear the last of it. I don't want you to go—don't be in such a hurry. We'll arrange things somehow. (*go c.*)

HARRY. Oh, very well. (*calling*) Bertha! (*at foot of steps*)

BERTHA. Don't flurry me, I'm coming as quick as I can.

HARRY. But don't come, I made a mistake—go to sleep.

BERTHA. (*sleepy tone*) All right. (*yawns*)

HARRY. Now I'm off to bed, old man. (*goes up between doors 1 and 2*)

JIMMIE. (*embarrassed*) You don't know Mr. Tathem. (*backs c.*)

HARRY. (*going upstairs*) No. (*leans on post below door 1*)

JIMMIE. He's a great friend of my aunt's. You don't know my aunt?

HARRY. Yes—she's your mother's sister.

JIMMIE. No, she's father's sister.

HARRY. But why this beating about the family bush?

JIMMIE. (*taps Ch. with letter*) I—er—I—don't quite know how I happened to think of my aunt just then, but—I was about to tell you that Mr. Tathem is not coming alone—that's why I—

HARRY. (*quickly.*) Ah! You're concealing something. (*runs down*) What? (*R.C. on stage*)

JIMMIE. His—er—his daughter. (*turn to L. by chair*)

HARRY. Jimmie.

JIMMIE. Yes.

HARRY. You are going to be married?

JIMMIE. I—I—I think so.

HARRY. Well, that's the last straw! (*crosses L.*)

(*BERTHA puts out the light.*)

JIMMIE. Nothing is decided yet. (*follows him L.*)

(*Light out in Room 1.*)

HARRY. Going to be married! So this is the end of fifteen years of close friendship.

(*JIMMIE groans.*)

Fifteen quiet, peaceful years.

(JIMMIE *groans.*)

Sharing everything equally ! I brought the pipe and my art, you the wretched money. It was ideal. One fine day a little goose comes waddling by—
(*down L.*)

JIMMIE. (*follows him down L.*) I beg pardon—she is not a little goose and she does not waddle—she's a very graceful girl—and I love her. (*swings leg*)

HARRY. Love her ! (*put pipe on table L.*) How do you know you love her ? (*backs him to c.*) Who told you you loved her ? Where are the signs ? Do you eat any the less ?

JIMMIE. No—more !

HARRY. Do you sleep any the less ?

JIMMIE. No.

HARRY. Is there any inward or outward disturbance in your every day respectable heart ?

JIMMIE. (*nervously*) I—I—don't think so.

HARRY. You haven't the time to love—you work all day—tired out, you sleep all night.

JIMMIE. No, I'm very restless sometimes.

HARRY. The Chief Clerk of your division says. "Marry my daughter," and you marry my daughter. But that isn't love—you can't love, when you're married. Love is the unexpected that comes like a flash of lightning and makes the heart jump and thump like a runaway motor, smashing reason and common sense and everything before it. (*go L.*)

JIMMY. (*looking dazed*) It sounds to me like an acute attack of appendicitis.

HARRY. That's *love*. (*contemptuously*) She has money, I suppose?

JIMMIE. A little.

HARRY. I thought so. I could have forgiven a marriage for fabulous wealth, there is something great in that, but marrying a little money is so ordinary, so unromantic, utterly unpardonable. Well—it's good-bye, Harry, good-bye everything. He turns his back on the ideal and *marries!* (*go L. a little*)

JIMMIE. I say Harry, how unreasonable you are! Will marriage prevent us from seeing one another? I shall come to your house and you——

HARRY. My house was your house. Where will my house be now? (*aggressively, crosses R. gets match and cigarette*)

JIMMIE. (*follow him to R.C.*) I'd no idea you'd take my marriage so much to heart—if I'd known, Harry, I assure you——

HARRY. I don't blame you, Jimmie. You are only acting in accordance with your middle class nature. You have an atavistic longing for a fireside companion——

JIMMIE. (*amazed*) Have I?

HARRY. It's in your blood. You can't help it; it's a fatality, I accept the inevitable. With a father-in-law and a fiancée coming there's *no* question. I must go—I should be *de trop*—not enough spoons. (*turns R. calling*) Bertha! (*foot of steps*)

BERTHA. (*off R. her voice is heard*) Yes, sir.

HARRY. Come here.

BERTHA. I can't. I'm in bed.

HARRY. Then get up, slip on a petticoat and come here.

BERTHA. I'll do nothing of the kind. I want you to understand, Mr. Cottenham, that at this time of night——

JIMMIE. I'm not asking you to come here. (*ner-
vously*)

HARRY. But *I* am—it's most important. (*crosses
L.*)

(*Light up in Room I.*)

BERTHA. Oh, very well—I'm coming. (*lights her
candle*)

JIMMIE. (*follows him L.*) But I don't want you to go—and you're all wrong in thinking my marriage is going to make any difference between us.

HARRY. It will never be the same again, there'll be no sharing anything. You'll have to give it all to her.

JIMMIE. (*L.C.*) Nothing of the kind. The day after my marriage I shall simply say to my wife—This is my best friend—he is an artist—a great artist—a magnificent artist—in his way—I shall say we must help him—then everything will go on as before.

HARRY. (*turns to him*) You'll do that—you really mean it? (*loudly*)

JIMMIE. Yes, do you suppose I should ever resign myself to never seeing you again ; it was very unkind of you to talk like that : I feel very much hurt.

HARRY. Well—no man can say Harry Killick ever shirked his duty as a friend. You need me, I will remain. (*puts his shoulder*)

JIMMIE. Then everything will go on as before.

HARRY. You swear it?

JIMMIE. I promise you faithfully.

HARRY. Then that's all right. (*shakes hands*)

JIMMIE. (*joyfully calling*) Bertha! (*to foot of stairs*)

BERTHA. (*impatiently*) Yes, I'm coming.

JIMMIE. No—no—don't come. Go to sleep.

BERTHA. (*her voice is heard again*) I can't—I've got all my clothes on now.

JIMMIE. She's got all her clothes on now.

HARRY. Well, take them off and go to bed again.

JIMMIE. Yes, take 'em all off.

BERTHA. I never seed such a house.

JIMMIE. Now go to sleep and don't talk any more.

BERTHA. I'm not talking—you're doing all the talking. (*voice dies away*)

JIMMIE. (c.) Will you be quiet? (*comes to HARRY L.C.*) Can't you say something to her?

HARRY. Peace! Woman!

JIMMIE. Yes, that's good. She loves a bit of Shakespeare. Everything's settled. Elsie and her father will lunch with us to-morrow. I thought we'd begin with—

HARRY. Is she dark or fair, your dear Elsie? (*puts his arm round JIM'S shoulders*)

JIMMIE. Let me think—it's difficult to say (*hands in pockets*)

HARRY. In that case I should say she's a chestnut.

JIMMIE. (*looks at HARRY*) She is modest, she is shy, I suppose you might call her a chestnut. What a nut—what a wife she'll make! Sometimes, Harry, when I'm sitting by the fire—

HARRY. Shall we go to bed now?

(*HARRY crosses R.*)

JIMMIE. Yes, yes, in my joy I was forgetting—forgive my enthusiasm.

(*JIMMIE gets candle from table and comes C.*)

Shot ready.

HARRY. Brave little Briton. (*foot of stairs R.*) We need such as you to perpetuate the race.

JIMMIE. Oh, I say Harry, don't be an ass!

(*HARRY goes upstairs followed by JIMMIE.*)

It's half-past eleven—this is nothing short of madness. (*go up to Room 3*)

(*JIMMIE follows upstairs.*)

(*Warn Motor*)

JIMMIE. Good-night. (*at the door of 2 room, to HARRY, who looks out*) I forgot to tell you her mother—her mother taught her a wonderful way of arranging the linen closet.

HARRY. You're getting excited.

(*Exit, slam door.*)

JIMMIE. Yes, I think I am. Good-night. Oh, what a wife she'll make.

(Enter BERTHA door 1 with candle.)

(Light out in Room 1.)

BERTHA. Did you lock up, sir?

JIMMIE. Er—no—oh no, I'm afraid I forgot.
(making movement to go downstairs)

BERTHA. Don't trouble yerself. I'll do it. I'd rather, then I shall know it's done right. You'd better go ter bed and ter sleep.

(Motor Start—Hand signal.)

JIMMIE. (hesitating for a moment) Er—er—thank you.

(Exits into room 2.) (light up in room 2)

(BERTHA descends, closes curtains R. puts candle on table C. at the back of the stage, puts up the shutters at the window.)

Bang.

There is dead silence for a moment and then a loud report is heard.)

BERTHA. Good 'eavens! (she goes out of the door C.)

(JIMMIE in shirt sleeves, and HARRY rush out with candles.)

(Lights out in Rooms 2 and 3.)

JIMMIE. Bertha, are you there?

BERTHA. (outside) Oh yes, sir. It's nothing—only a motor car burst up close by! (comes in, goes to window L., leaves door open)

JIMMIE. Oh, is that all? I thought it was that beastly comet. (*throws braces over shoulders*)

(*They Exeunt into rooms.*)

(*Lights up in Rooms 2 and 3.*)

(*Enter JENNINGS up c.*)

JENNINGS. (*entering*) Excuse me, miss. (*shuts door*)

(*BERTHA screams down stage L. of table.*)

Don't be frightened. I am the chauffeur of the car which has just had a puncture. I saw a light 'ere so I came. (*dust shoe*)

BERTHA. Well? What do you want?

JENNINGS. (*comes down*) Would you tell me if there's a mechanic anywhere about here. (c.)

BERTHA. I don't know what you mean, but I'm sure there ain't.

JENNINGS. Oh, are yer—well, d'yer know if there's a railway station here?

BERTHA. There's no station 'ere, the nearest one is seven miles.

JENNINGS. Phew! (*turns R.*)

(*Whistles.*)

BERTHA. Can't yer patch it up? (*comes to below table*)

JENNINGS. Yes—but it's not easy all alone with a big car like that. Is there a boy 'ere to lend a 'and?

BERTHA. No, sir, there's only me. (*smiles coyly*)

JENNINGS. (*smiles in return, takes off cap*) Oh, I couldn't bear to see such beautiful arms and 'ands as yours knocked about. Blow my eyes, but you're a beauty.

BERTHA. Go along with you.

JENNINGS. Yes, you are. (*putting his L. arm round her*) Come here!

BERTHA. Get off. (*slaps his hand and pushing him R.*) You ought to be at 'ome in bed and asleep instead of careering about at this time of night disturbing respectable people.

JENNINGS. Yer quite right—but what are yer ter do with a 'eadstrong young lady——(*dusts cap*)

BERTHA. A young lady all alone at this time of night.

JENNINGS. (*comes C.*) A only child and that spoilt. I begged 'er not ter go so far, but she would do it. I'll get all the blame. I'll lose my job if I don't get 'er 'ome to 'er father ter-night. She's not easy to deal with, she ain't—she'll play the deuce with me while I'm working—she gets on my nerves so that I——(*crosses R.*)

(TOMMY enters C., slams door.)

TOMMY. (C) What are you doing, Jennings?

JENNINGS. (R.) Yes, miss. (*touches forelock*)

TOMMY. Does it take you all this time to ask a simple question?

JENNINGS. I 'ave asked, miss, I 'ave . . . and there's no chance of any help here.

TOMMY. Well, you must set to work alone, then. How long will it take?

JENNINGS. Alone—a good half hour at least, miss.

TOMMY. Half an hour—impossible, Jennings—remember how late it is already. Is there no one here who can help?

BERTHA. No, miss.

TOMMY. Who lives here? (*goes L. to BERTHA*)

BERTHA. Mr. James Cottenham.

TOMMY. How old is he?

BERTHA. Twenty-nine, miss.

TOMMY. He ought to be strong enough at that age. Where is he?

BERTHA. In bed, miss.

TOMMY. Wake him.

BERTHA. I can't do that, miss—he——

TOMMY. Where is his room? (*turns back to audience*)

BERTHA. Up there, miss! (*points to room 2*)
The second one, with the lady on the door.

TOMMY. (*calling*) Mr. James Cottenham. (*getting R.C. to stairs*)

(JENNINGS crosses to top of table.)

BERTHA. (*to JENNINGS*) Well! I like 'er cheek!

TOMMY. Mr. James Cot-ten-ham! (*louder—at foot of stairs*)

JENNINGS. She'll get 'im down.

JIMMIE. (*R. of post, he appears half dressed, in*

(trousers, shirt and slippers) Who's that calling me?
(carries candle)

TOMMY. It's I, sir.

JIMMIE. Oh! I—er—I beg your pardon, madam.
(embarrassed—gets jacket from room)

TOMMY. Miss!

JIMMIE. I—er—I beg pardon, miss. *(jacket held
on breast)*

TOMMY. Is it true that you are twenty-nine years
of age?

(JIMMIE looks at BERTHA, drops jacket.)

JIMMIE. It is.

TOMMY. You don't look very strong for your age.

(BERTHA giggles.)

JIMMIE. I don't feel very strong—I don't quite
follow, I—er—may I ask to what I owe the honour.

TOMMY. To the fact that you are the only man at
hand—will you please come down?

JIMMIE. But what for? *(puts on coat)*

TOMMY. To help my chauffeur repair my car.
One of the rear tyres has just punctured.

JIMMIE. Oh, so it was you made that bang was
it?

TOMMY. Yes. I ought to have reached my home
in London long ago—my father will be dreadfully
anxious. Oh, dreadfully. So if you will kindly come
down—oh! why don't you come down—we're losing
time. *(turns down stage)*

HARRY. (*entering in bath wraps*) Damn it all, Jimmie—aren't we going—

TOMMY. Ah, there's a fine man—

(JIMMIE *views* HARRY *with candle.*)

(HARRY *delighted, folds arms.*)

He looks more promising. You're strong, aren't you ?

HARRY. (*astonished*) Er—I beg your pardon. (*leans on rail*)

TOMMY. I said strong—s-t-r-o-n-g (*spelling the word*), strong.

HARRY. To whom have I the pleasure of—

TOMMY. Will you please come down ?

(JIMMIE *comes down a little.*)

No, no not you—I mean the one who swears.

HARRY. (*to* JIMMIE) I say—what's up ? (*pulls JIMMIE up to him R. of post*)

JIMMIE. A puncture—and this young lady wants us to help her chauffeur repair the damage.

HARRY. Is that what you dragged me out of bed for ?

TOMMY. Yours was the only house in sight. I had no choice. *Do* come down.

(HARRY *moves, JIMMIE stops him.*)

JIMMIE. We are not mechanics, we know nothing about repairing motors.

HARRY. Speak for yourself, Jimmie. I think I

know a tyre when I see one. (*comes down past JIMMIE*)

TOMMY. You will only have to follow my chauffeur's instructions.

HARRY. I shall be delighted—I know a lot about motors.

TOMMY. We don't want brain—we want muscle. (*cross c. to JENNINGS*)

HARRY. She's quaint, isn't she? I like her.

JIMMIE. I don't at all.

TOMMY. It would be very nice of you, if you would make haste. I'm awfully late.

(*HARRY quickens pace and reaches stage*)

Thank you. I should have thanked you more if you'd come down at once without all this talk.

BERTHA. Can I hold the lantern for the show-foor, sir?

(*JENNINGS smiles and gives her a look.*)

JIMMIE. Yes, Bertha.

BERTHA. Thank you, sir.

(*Exit L. for lantern.*)

TOMMY. (*speaking up to JIMMIE*) I'm awfully sorry to trouble you, but I must get to London, mustn't I?

JIMMIE. Oh yes, certainly you must.

JENNINGS. Will you please come this way, sir?

HARRY. What make is your car? (*crosses up to door*)

JENNINGS. It is a 60 h.p. Napier 1911 model.

(HARRY beckons to JIMMIE with head, JIMMIE waves him off.)

(Exit HARRY C. to L.)

(BERTHA enters L. with lantern, is standing at door waiting for HARRY and JENNINGS to go out. After HARRY has gone, JENNINGS steps back and with elaborate politeness bows BERTHA out)

(They go out, their voices die away)

(JIMMIE makes to exit, then descends a little and sits on stairs, looks down at TOMMY uneasily, candle light on face, then look R.)

(TOMMY goes R. of table, sits and puts bag on table.)

TOMMY. What are you doing? (looks at JIMMIE)

JIMMIE. I'm waiting till they've repaired your car.

TOMMY. That is very kind of you, especially as you would much rather go into your room—bang the door and say—be—be hanged to me.

JIMMIE. (coldly) I should never dream of saying be—be—hanged to you or anybody. (looks through rail)

TOMMY. (critically) Yes—I believe you.

JIMMIE. If you would prefer to be relieved from the strain of conversation—(making movement towards his room) (opens door, rises)

TOMMY. Oh—it's no strain at all, not the slightest effort for me. They say at home I even talk in my sleep—I can talk about anything you like.

JIMMIE. I'm afraid I'm not interested in anything, at this time of night.

TOMMY. Well—suppose we talk about you. What do you do for a living?

JIMMIE. I am in the Colonial Office.

TOMMY. I might have guessed you were something under the Government.

(*Move from JIMMIE of annoyance.*)

You have a look of being all tied up with little bits of string.

JIMMIE. (*turning away*) Indeed. (*pause*)

TOMMY. Your friend is better looking than you.

JIMMIE. I never said he wasn't—I know he is, much better looking.

TOMMY. What is *he*?

JIMMIE. An artist.

TOMMY. An artist. Looks like it. And I suppose he talks about blue distance and violet seas.

JIMMIE. (*coldly*) I never heard him go on like that. (*sits again. Pause*) Will it take long to repair your car?

TOMMY. Half an hour. But if you are bored, you can go back to bed. You need not feel compelled—

JIMMIE. Excuse me, but I do feel compelled. This is my house, you are in it and it is my duty to—er—to—er—

TOMMY. Entertain me?

JIMMIE. Precisely.

TOMMY. In that case, would you mind coming down? (*he does not move*)

JIMMIE. No, I don't think—

TOMMY. If you don't I shall be obliged to come up.
(*rises, goes to foot of stairs*)

JIMMIE. Oh no, please don't (*begins to descend*)

TOMMY. I can't look up to you any longer—my neck won't stand the strain. (*gets c.*)

(*JIMMIE comes down slowly. On reaching the bottom he stands looking at her—slight pause; he observes her look and nervously tucks his braces which are hanging down, into his R. trouser pocket and buttons jacket.*)

(*TOMMY puts chiffon on table and goes up L. to cage saying "Sweet Sweet" to bird.*)

JIMMIE. Oh, don't wake him, please. He's asleep.

TOMMY. (*goes to cat on hearth*) Puss! Puss!

JIMMIE. Oh, please don't disturb the cat. (*comes c., poses*)

TOMMY. Is he asleep too? Everything's asleep in this house. (*down L. of table*)

(*Pause*)

You look tired.

JIMMIE. Oh, no, thanks; I'm all right.

TOMMY. Won't you sit down?

JIMMIE. Oh, I beg your pardon. (*quickly gets arm-chair for her down R. c.*) You see I'm not in the habit of entertaining ladies. Won't you take our chair?

TOMMY. (*comes c. and turns to chair R. of table*) I wouldn't have you change your habits on my account. I'll entertain you. You live here.

(*sits R. of table*)

JIMMIE. No not always.

(Back turned to her)

TOMMY. I don't believe you live anywhere.

JIMMIE. I don't quite follow you. *(looks at her)*

TOMMY. I mean you—er—only exist—if you'd just loosen those little bits of red tape you've tied yourself up in,

(JIMMIE feels for braces, shifts candle to R. hand)
and let yourself go—you know what I mean, don't you? I always let myself go. *(up)*

JIMMIE. Pray don't let me stand in the way.

TOMMY. No, I won't.

(Leans on table R. lower corner)

Would you like to know my name?

JIMMIE. No—I—I don't think so.

(Sits in arm chair, the seat breaks down; he attempts three times to put it right and finally sits uncomfortably on the front rail nursing candlestick and looking steadily to R., L. leg crossed over R.)

(She looks at him)

TOMMY. Oh! Perhaps you might be interested to know what my father's business is?

JIMMIE. I'm not interested in anybody's business but my own.

TOMMY. *(go L. a little)* I think you're the most disagreeable civil servant I have ever met. *(go L.)*

JIMMIE. As we are not likely to see each other again——

TOMMY. I sincerely hope not. (*turns quickly*)

JIMMIE. I trust your hopes will be realised.

TOMMY. Amen!

JIMMIE. I beg pardon.

TOMMY. I said Amen.

JIMMIE. Oh, I didn't quite catch the last word.

TOMMY. Are you a bachelor? (*below table*)

JIMMY. Not always—I mean—that is to say not exactly—I am engaged to be married.

TOMMY. You don't mean to say that some girl has fallen in love with you? (*sits chair R. of table*)

JIMMIE. (*proudly*) Yes—that is precisely what I do mean.

TOMMY. (*looking him over*) I can't understand it—it's extraordinary.

JIMMIE. I don't see anything funny in it myself.

TOMMY. Well, you *may* have good qualities, which can only be discovered on closer acquaintance! (*look him over*) You are shy.

JIMMIE. I am a man of few words.

(*shot ready.*)

TOMMY. I see; you are a man of action—(*up*) you believe in the maxim—"Up guards and at 'em." (*gesture, puts chair back*)

JIMMIE. Excuse me—I do nothing of the kind (*rise with difficulty*) and I have a perfect horror of the modern young person who ridicules most things and reverences none. (*looking to R.*)

TOMMY. Do you mean me? (*sits L. arm of chair*)

JIMMIE. Not at all.

TOMMY. You think I'm badly brought up, don't you?

JIMMIE. I can't say. I never brought anything up.

TOMMY. Come, say exactly what you think. I am ill-bred, eh? I'm not really, though—I'm only used to having my own way.

JIMMIE. (*with deep conviction*) I don't know whether you are ill-bred, but you certainly have a most peculiar and uncommon way of saying things.

TOMMY. You mean a rude way.

JIMMIE. I didn't say that exactly.

TOMMY. (*rises, moves away to c.*) But that's what you meant to say—you're quite right, it's true.

JIMMIE. Then you acknowledge it?

TOMMY. I said it was true—I didn't acknowledge it—I acknowledge nothing.

JIMMIE. (*turns to her*) You must acknowledge you came into this house where you know nobody and without the slightest ceremony send everybody flying about——

TOMMY. Well, why not? At home everybody flies about for me, and they don't grumble about it either.

bang

(*She is interrupted by a second report.*)]

JIMMIE. Oh I say, is that your car again?

TOMMY. It sounds very like it.

JIMMIE. Oh, hang it all! Is this game going on all night? (*go R.*)

(JENNINGS *re-enters C. in over-all*, BERTHA *follows, goes up L. to window.*)

JENNINGS. (*coming C.*) We're done for, miss—the other rear tyre's gone now!

TOMMY. Oh dear—oh dear—how exasperating. (*gets below table L.*)

JIMMIE. What kind of—er—thing is this you are careering about in?

TOMMY. It's the very latest model and very best make.

JENNINGS. But when it is messed about by a——

(HARRY *enters C.*, BERTHA *shuts C. door.*)

HARRY. (*C.*) Well, *you have* got some poor stuff on your wheels.

TOMMY. But I don't understand, Jennings—how could you burst a tyre when the motor's standing still?

(JIMMIE *speaks aside to HARRY.*)

JENNINGS. (*up L. C.*) I'm sure I don't know, miss; it was this gentleman who insisted on——

HARRY. I hope you don't mean to infer this new calamity is my fault.

JENNINGS. I do, sir.

HARRY. I thoroughly understand motors [I know what I'm about and I assure you, miss—

(*Cross L. exit L.*)

TOMMY. Now there's another half hour to be spent here. (*sits R. of table*)

JENNINGS. I'm sorry—it will be longer than that, miss!

TOMMY. It mustn't be longer than that—(*rises, up to JENNINGS*) I won't have it (*cross c.*) longer than that—do you hear, Jennings?

JENNINGS. Yes, miss. I'm very sorry, but I haven't a spare tyre with me.

JIMMIE. Then you can't go on?

JENNINGS. No, sir.

(HARRY reappears at door L. drying hands on towel behind door.)

JIMMIE. But you must go on. You will be obliged to go on. (*down a little*)

(JENNINGS goes up).

TOMMY. Of course we must go on, if we have to crawl on—can't we go on Jennings? Say yes—do say yes.

JENNINGS. I'll say yes if you want me to, miss. But we can't budge an inch—we're stuck here.

(HARRY closes door, stands L.)

TOMMY. (*to HARRY*) This is a nice thing you've done. I might have known what would happen with a man who was always in a blue haze.

HARRY. (*getting to L. c.*) Blue what?

TOMMY. I will not take advantage of your very

kind hospitality any longer. I shall go to the hotel here, if you will be so good as to direct me.

JIMMIE. The hotel. What hotel?

TOMMY. The nearest hotel, of course.

JIMMIE. The nearest hotel.

HARRY. (*go L.*) Delightful.

(BERTHA *laughs*, JENNINGS *grins*, JIMMIE *laughs dismally.*)

TOMMY. What have I said that is so extraordinary?

JIMMIE. There's not even an inn here.

TOMMY. What a place!

HARRY. It is picturesque . . . but from the tourist's point of view. . . rather inconvenient.

TOMMY. Well then, Jennings must take care of the car while you accompany me to the railway station.

(*General laughter—forced from HARRY and JIMMIE.*)

JENNINGS. (*comes down to her c.*) The nearest station, miss, is seven miles away. (*retires up again.*)

HARRY. Through the dark woods. I told you, Jimmie, how inconvenient this place was for everybody.

JIMMIE. Yes, I didn't take this place for *everybody's* convenience. (*up and down*)

TOMMY. There's only one thing for me to do.

JIMMIE. I shall be happy to lend you a lantern.

TOMMY. A lantern—what for?

JIMMIE. You will need it going through the woods, and you can't get to the station any other way—

TOMMY. You don't suppose I'm going to walk ten miles——

JIMMIE. Seven——

TOMMY. Nor seven miles through the dark wood, at this time of night, do you?

JIMMIE. Then what are you going to do?

TOMMY. I am going to sleep here! (*takes coat off, puts it on arm of chair with much dignity and as though the simplest thing in the world*)

(HARRY *delightedly claps hands and goes L.*)

JIMMIE. Oh no, no! I couldn't hear of it!

TOMMY. Why?

JIMMIE. Er—you can't—er—I can't—er—er—you—er—it's out of the question.

(*warn band*)

TOMMY. And why, pray?

JIMMIE. Why? Because in the first place—er—er—I have no room, and in the second—er—er——

HARRY. Go on Jimmie.

JIMMIE. ——it is not the correct thing for a young man to put up a girl he doesn't know for the night.

TOMMY. Well, that is your own fault—you very rudely refused the introduction which I offered.

HARRY. I'll soon put that right. I'll introduce you. This is Miss Pepper,

(*She bows, JIMMIE bows.*)

only daughter of T. H. Pepper & Co., Ltd.—the great

tea people. Commonly known to her intimates as Tommy.

TOMMY. (*to Harry*) How do you know that?

HARRY. Jennings informed me while we were doing the car.

TOMMY. Yes, everybody calls me Tommy—you may both call me Tommy. It's my name. You see papa expected a boy, and when I came he was fearfully disappointed and would insist on calling me Tommy—

JIMMIE. Extraordinary story!

TOMMY. ———although my mother christened me Evangeline. But I couldn't go through life an Evangeline, could I?

JIMMIE. No, I suppose not, I really don't know.
(*nose in air*)

HARRY. Now, you know, you've got Pepper & Co.'s tea in your house to-night.

JIMMIE. I take my tea in the afternoon. I don't want it so late at night.

(TOMMY *turns and goes up stage in disgust to JENNINGS. on L. of him in window*)

HARRY. (*cross to JIMMIE R. C.*) (*in low tones, not wishing TOMMY to hear*) It is quite certain that we can't turn Miss Pepper out.

BERTHA. (*in same tone*) Of course you can't, sir.
(*crosses to R. C.*)

JIMMIE. (*in same tone*) Who's asked you?
(*crosses C. between them*)

HARRY. You say you have no room—that's nonsense—you can give up yours.

JIMMIE. No I can't possibly, I'm not going to.

BERTHA. Yes—I changed the sheets this morning.

JIMMIE. I don't care if you changed the carpet.

BERTHA. Shall I lend her one of your pyjamas, sir.

JIMMIE. Quiet! (*pulling her to him*) Haven't you a nightgown of your own?

BERTHA. No, sir, it ain't come home from the wash. (*goes to stairs c.*)

JIMMIE. Can't you run round to your mother's?

BERTHA. Mother wears flannel ones, sir!

JIMMIE. (*turning to her by foot of stairs*) Quiet!
(*looks at TOMMY and kicks leg behind him*) (*Whispers*)
Let her have one of the new blue lot. In the bottom drawer.

(BERTHA goes upstairs, exits room 2)

(*returns R. c. pose—aloud—despairingly*) Well, I give up my room—and what then?

HARRY. Then you must lend the tandem to Jennings.

(TOMMY to down L.)

JIMMIE. Jennings can't sleep on a tandem.

HARRY. We don't want him to sleep. (*crosses c.*)
He will ride to the station, take the two o'clock train which reaches London at four in the morning; he will get to your Garage, Miss Pepper, at twenty minutes past four, select one of the twelve cars——

JIMMIE. Twelve!

HARRY. (to JIMMIE)—Mr. Pepper has twelve—put on full speed and arrive here at six o'clock in the morning to carry back to Pepper & Co., Ltd., his little lost packet of tea. (*up c.*)

(TOMMY *laughs*. HARRY *goes top of table*)

TOMMY. That will do very nicely.

JIMMIE. It's the best we can do for you. (*goes R.*)

(BERTHA *enters on stairs*)

TOMMY. We—I don't see that you are doing anything. (*picks up bag and chiffon from table*) (*to him c.*) You wouldn't have thought of that.

JIMMIE. Then it's understood, Miss Pepper—

TOMMY. Tommy.—(*comes c.*)

JIMMIE. Then it's understood, Miss Tommy, that at six o'clock to-morrow morning, you will leave in one of your twelve father's—father's twelve cars for—

TOMMY. Yes, that's right, at five minutes past six to-morrow I shall be gone.

BERTHA. (*appearing and coming down stairs c. on her L.*) The room is ready, miss; if you'll come with me, sir, I'll show you where the tandem is. (*crosses to L.*)

JENNINGS. (*down L. of table*) It's very hard to ride a tandem alone—

JIMMIE. (*cross c.*) Bertha, don't forget to wake me to-morrow morning at a quarter to six. (*puts candle on table L.*)—Tea and toast.

HARRY. Yes, and hot water for me—and a tangerine as usual.

BERTHA. I won't forget, sir.

(*Exit L.*)

JENNINGS. Good night, miss—I'll be in time.]

(*Exit L.*)

(HARRY *drops down L.*)

JIMMIE. (*to TOMMY.*) Bertha will show you—to my room.

TOMMY. *My room, if you please.*

(*Gets coat from chair, goes to stairs.*)

HARRY. Her room.

(JIMMIE *looks at HARRY.*)

JIMMIE. Bertha!

HARRY. (*repeats*) Bertha! (*below table*)

BERTHA *enters L. with lighted candle*)

JIMMIE. Show Miss Pepper to *her* room.

HARRY. (*repeats*) Miss Pepper—to *her* room.

(BERTHA *going upstairs crosses in front, up stairs followed by TOMMY.*)

(HARRY *bows repeatedly to her as she goes upstairs.*)

HARRY. Good night, Miss Pepper. Miss Tommy, good-night, good-night.

(JIMMIE *disgusted.*)

JIMMIE. Don't make an ass of yourself. (*when*

TOMMY *off*) You've got me into a nice scrape with your bungling!

(*Enter BERTHA from room 2—laughing*)

HARRY. Is it all right? (*cross c.*)

(*BERTHA shrieks with laughter, cross c. between them.*)

JIMMIE. (*alarmed*) What's the matter, what did she say? Her mother said she was like this. (*pats her back*)

BERTHA. She—she—it's those pyjamas, sir.

(*Shrieks with laughter and crosses L. and Exits L.*)

(*HARRY crosses L. after her and shuts door L.*)

JIMMIE. (*looks up to his room alarmed*) I say, Harry—

(*When BERTHA is off.*)

HARRY. You know the rear tyre? (*L. of table*)

JIMMIE. Yes, what about it?

HARRY. I did it on purpose.

(*JIMMIE dumbfounded R. of table.*)

JIMMIE. What—on purpose? Punctured the tyre on purpose?

(*Sits R. of table.*)

HARRY. (*looks off—L. of table*) Hush! Millions of pounds are lodged here to-night. Not if I had to puncture every tyre on the motor would I have those millions sleep in any other house to-night.

JIMMIE. Why?

HARRY. Because Miss Tommy is probably for me, the stepping stone to fortune.

JIMMIE. (*slowly*) You're gone clean—stark—staring mad!

HARRY. You haven't sense enough to be mad. (*throws tobacco tin into fireplace*)

(JIMMIE starts.)

She's the most delightful—charming—quaint little thing in millions I've ever seen (*crosses away to R.*)

JIMMIE. Nothing in millions has any charm for me.

HARRY. Ah! You've no imagination.

JIMMIE. Imagination you call it—brainless fiction.

HARRY. Very well, then—let me give you the common-sense reality. (*up to him, looks over R. shoulder*) One night by a stroke of unheard-of luck—a rare little humming bird lights on our tree.

JIMMIE. I don't like humming birds, and I wish she'd go and hum somewhere else.

HARRY. Don't you like Tommy?

(*warn curtain*)

JIMMIE. No—I don't like Tommy!

HARRY. Oh, well, you've no taste—but no matter—(*preparing to go upstairs*)—as it is—my fame will come through Tommy. I shall paint the Tea King's portrait; (*going upstairs*) it will be a speaking likeness—a masterpiece—the world will say “This man is a great artist”—the world—will say——

JIMMIE. (*rise c.*) Where am I going to sleep to-night?

HARRY. In her *motor*—

JIMMIE. Oh, I say. (*protests*)

HARRY. (*top landing*) You might do worse than sleep in a bed that cost a thousand pounds.

(*Exits into room 3.*)

(JIMMIE rises, looks round, then turns up collar, goes up c., looks round for something to put on neck, takes cover from birdcage as comforter and Exit c.)

BERTHA. (*entering L. followed by Jennings*) No, no, no, Mr. Jennings, I can't think of it. I can't really. (*puts L. lamp out on wall, first steadying bird-cage*)

JENNINGS. (*by door L.*) I'll give you the time of your life—What a chance. A tandem! And I'm so 'andy with the peddles. We'll 'ave a beautiful ride as far as the station, the moon shining in our eyes.

BERTHA. (c.) Shall we 'ave the moon? (*get candle from up c. comes c.*)

JENNINGS. Yes, all you 'ave to do is to sit behind—and enjoy yerself.

BERTHA. It'll be just like one of them stories in the Princess Novelette—but—I'm afraid—I—
(*crosses R. puts out R. lamp*)

JENNINGS. (*comes c.*) Now what 'ave yer got into yer little 'ead now? You've got nothing to risk. We shall be at the station at two, take the train, and you shall travel first class, my gurl.

BERTHA. First class! (*loudly*)

JENNINGS. Hush! Yes, first—we shall be in

London at four o'clock and I'll take out our six cylinder Mercedes and get yer a millionaire's run at sixty miles an hour!

BERTHA. Sixty miles an hour! Eh, something might 'appen! (*up stairs a little*)

JENNINGS. (*foot of stairs on L.*) Yes, one of two things might 'appen. We shall be either smashed up or arrive 'ere before any one knows you haven't been sleeping peacefully in your little white bed.

BERTHA. Go on with yer, Mr. Jennings. (*smacks his hand*)

JENNINGS. Well, come on. (*smacks her*) Come on, come on. (*follows her upstairs*) She 'oo 'esitates is lost.

BERTHA. Wait a minute while I get my 'at.

(BERTHA *takes hat from peg on door and coming to C.*)

JENNINGS. Pst! Some one coming.

BERTHA (*crosses*) L. Let's come out through the kitchen.

(*Exit L.*)

(JENNINGS *puts out candle and stands a moment whistling indifferently. Then saunters off L. shutting door,*)

(*Slight pause.*)

(JIMMIE *enters from C. with his coat collar turned up, is taken with a violent fit of sneezing—three sneezes and blows nose.*)

(HARRY *appearing at the door of his room.*)

HARRY. Is it you making that row? (*L. posts*)

JIMMIE. I was only sneezing and blowing my nose. I can't sleep in that car, it's an open one. (*tights candle on table L.*)

HARRY. You should have covered yourself over.

TOMMY. (*at her door—she is wearing JIMMIE'S pyjamas—bus.*) Oh, do please be quiet. I am accustomed to having quiet when I go to bed at home.

(*HARRY softly closes door, exits on tiptoe.*)

JIMMIE. I am very sorry. (*blows nose*) I beg everybody's pardon. (*pulls tablecloth off table, knocking chair over*)

TOMMY. What are you doing now?

JIMMIE. I'm accustomed to having a small light in my room. (*crosses to chair with candle and sits*)

TOMMY. I think you'd better put it out. Where there's light there's talk.

JIMMIE. But I'm accustomed—

TOMMY. Ssh!

(*JIMMIE sneezes out light, all is now silent—TOMMY closes door.*)

CURTAIN (*No picture*)

1st and 2nd call JIMMIE L. HARRY R. TOMMY look out from door 2. 3rd call JIMMIE L. HARRY C. TOMMY on stage R.

Time : 31 minutes.

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same as in Act I. It is 10 a.m.*

As the curtain rises JIMMIE is discovered fast asleep in an armchair in the R. centre of the stage, head pillowed on green cushion, mouth wide open, rug round knees. Enter HARRY from room 3 at 5th stroke. The clock strikes 10.

HARRY. (*catching sight of JIMMIE, calling*) Jimmie!
(*JIMMIE does not stir*) I say Jimmie. (*comes down stairs, advancing, opens curtains at R. window, removes rug, drops it R.*) Wake up, old chap. (*shakes him on his R.*)

JIMMIE. Oh, don't mother! (*waking with a start*) Hallo! What is it? (*throws off table cloth, which HARRY takes*)

HARRY. Morning.

JIMMIE. Morning, morning. (*looking round at table cloth*) What am I doing here?

HARRY. Sleeping. (*up to window L., open shutters, puts cloth on table in window*)

JIMMIE. I must have slept in this chair all night.

HARRY. Of course you have.

JIMMIE. But why—how! (*starting up*) By Jove!—now I remember, what time is it?

HARRY. Ten o'clock!

JIMMIE. Ten o'clock—then she's gone?

HARRY. Who? Tommy?

JIMMIE. Yes, Miss Tommy.

HARRY. I suppose so. I say, old chap, we've had no breakfast.

JIMMIE. No breakfast, I told Bertha to call me (*moves c., runs into chair c.*) What's this chair doing here? (*picks it up*) Awful mess this room's in—look at the cards all over the place. I told Bertha to call me at six o'clock this morning (*calling cross L.*) Bertha! (*to HARRY*) Oh, what a night I've had, such a nightmare. (*shut door L.*)

HARRY. Nightmare! Ah! but I had a beautiful dream last night. (*down c.*)

JIMMIE. More of your silly fiction.

(HARRY holds JIMMIE's coat.)

HARRY. (*sitting on lower end of table*) I dreamt I saw a great avenue of tall majestic trees and there walking together were Miss Tommy and your friend Harry. We were married.

JIMMIE. (*on his L., awestruck*) Oh, my lor! How awful!

HARRY. Yes, and there were lovely golden-haired children playing on a green velvety lawn—

JIMMIE. Oh, how sickening!

HARRY. And on the threshold of this Norman castle—Ruskin would have kissed every stone of that Norman castle—

JIMMIE. Poor devil! What a grind!

HARRY. (*in a matter-of-fact tone*) I feel sure it was Norman. (*resuming the previous dreamy tone*) You (*rise*) were standing in a suit of pure white flannel with a dash of red carnation in -your buttonhole (*stands L. C.*) revelling in the sylvan scene.

JIMMIE. What a rotten dream! (*opens door L.*)
Bertha! Bertha! Oh, what a night I've had.

(*Shuts door L.*)

HARRY. You're always thinking of yourself. *I'm* hungry!

(*Up to window L.*)

JIMMIE. Bertha will soon set that right. *Everything* is right now my nightmare is over, *she's* gone. (*to C. puts bird cover in chair C.*)

HARRY. What a pity! and without waking you—very nice of her I call it—she's a darling.

JIMMIE. (*picks up rug and puts it by foot of stairs*) Now she's gone I agree with you, she's a darling. (*cross R. going upstairs*) I'm off to my room to have a wash and dress. I think I shall put on my flannels—Elsie has never seen me in flannels.

HARRY. Well, do make haste. I'm famished.

JIMMIE. Find Bertha, will you—I shan't be long.

(*JIMMIE at the door of his room. He opens the door. A scream from TOMMY is heard within, and glass crash, he pulls door to quickly. HARRY L. of table.*)

JIMMIE (*he shuts the door, rushes down stairs, falling into HARRY'S arms c.*) Harry, she's there!

HARRY. (L.) So I heard.

JIMMIE (R. c.) Harry, I've committed a fearful indiscretion.

HARRY. You have. (*sit R. side of table*)

JIMMIE (*goes upstairs, stands at her door R. of it—knocks timidly*) Are you there, Miss Pepper?

TOMMY. (*voice*) Hullo! Are you there, Mr. Cottenham?

JIMMIE. I thought your people were to come for you at six o'clock this morning. (*through keyhole*)

TOMMY. (*voice*) I thought so too.

JIMMIE. Well, it's ten o'clock now. Two minutes past.

TOMMY. (*voice*) Yes, I know.

JIMMIE. What does it mean?

TOMMY. (*voice*) That they haven't come.

JIMMIE. (*faces front impatiently*) Are you. . . . Have you no intention of returning to London to-day?

TOMMY. (*voice*) Of course I have. I'm dressing as quickly as I can.

JIMMIE. Good business!

TOMMY. (*voice*) Just as polite in the morning as you are at night.

(JIMMIE comes down stairs on to stage R., cross to window L.)

HARRY. (*calling*) Good morning!

TOMMY. (*voice*) Oh, good morning, Mr. Killick. It's so nice to hear a friendly voice.

HARRY. (*to JIMMIE aside*) I'm getting on. (*to TOMMY*) What do you take for breakfast?

TOMMY. (*voice*) Tea, of course.

HARRY. I'll have some made for you.

TOMMY. (*voice*) Thank you.

HARRY. (*to JIMMIE*) You would never have thought of that. (*go R.*)

JIMMIE. (*arranges braces in window*) I can only think of one thing. The Tathems will be here at 11 o'clock and——

HARRY. And I can only think of one thing. That sweet little thing, the daughter of millions is still here, you don't know *my* luck—smile, Jimmie, smile.

JIMMIE. Smile, how can I possibly? (*bangs head on bird-cage*) Ah! How can I possibly smile. (*bird-cage swings and catches him again*) Ah!!! (*putting on coat upside down, comes L.C.*)

JIMMIE. I've sat up in that beastly chair all night—my head aches—my back aches—that sweet little thing as you call her won't go—nobody comes for her—nobody wants her—everything's wrong. (*sits chair R. of table, leans on table*)

HARRY. (C.) Everything's right. (*dig him in ribs*)

JIMMIE. Now don't go on like that, Harry. You—you—(*shivers*) can't you see my position? Suppose Mr. Tathem—who thinks I'm here alone, should make his appearance and find this—this tea girl

here—he won't listen to an explanation—he'll draw his own conclusions—and—and——

HARRY. (R.C.) Oh, I know—the sort of man who'd shut his eyes when passing a statue of the Venus de Medici and looks upon mixed bathing as the height of immorality—nasty minded beast! (*goes R.*)

JIMMIE. (*rise to go to HARRY*) That horrible girl *must* go.

HARRY. Well, she must have some breakfast before she goes. Find Bertha and tell her to make some tea at once.

JIMMIE. Yes . . . yes . . . I will. . . . I can't make out where she's got to. Do you think she's in her room? (*calling*) Bertha . . . Bertha . . . (*goes to room L. knocks*) Think I might look in? (*does so*) I don't understand it—she's not in her room—she never did this before. (*notices coat*) Oh, I say what have I done? (*puts it right*) Things used to go along peacefully and quietly, now everything is wrong. (*gets L., opens and shuts door L.*)

TOMMY. (*entering from room 2 descends stairs*) Good morning Mr. Killick. (*comes c.*)

HARRY. Good morning, Miss Tommy. (*shaking hands*)

TOMMY. I am very much distressed at this delay. I don't understand it. Papa ought to have been here long ago.

JIMMIE. (*down L.*) Oh, pray don't mention it. It's not of the slightest consequence.

TOMMY. (c.) If I stay here much longer I shall

begin to feel I'm putting you out. I can only explain the delay in one way. My father's car must have broken down.

JIMMIE. I don't know where your father gets his cars, but I do think he ought to try another make.

HARRY. (R.) Can you rely on your chauffeur following instructions?

TOMMY. When he's away from me, I can't rely on Jennings following anything but his own inclinations.

JIMMIE. Then he's missed the train; (*up to her a little*) that's as plain as the nose on your face.

TOMMY. The nose on my face is not plain.

JIMMIE. Beg your pardon. (*go L. of table*)

HARRY. I hope you slept well?

TOMMY. No, very very badly.

JIMMIE. Wasn't your bed comfortable?

TOMMY. Oh, the bed was all right. (*to JIMMIE*) But you have a duck which quac-quac-quac-quacked the whole night long.

HARRY. Yes, that's Frederick. He has a great SORROW——

JIMMIE. We ate his wife a week ago. (*looks to R.*)

TOMMY. (*to JIMMIE*) Please don't look as if you'd like to eat me. (*shrinks to HARRY*)

JIMMIE. I'm sorry. I'm nervous this morning—frightful nightmare last night.

TOMMY. You must have been sleeping on your back.

JIMMIE. No, I was sleeping on my feet most of the time.

(Pause)

TOMMY. Excuse my asking, (HARRY *attentive*) but do you have breakfast in this house?

HARRY. Jimmie! Breakfast—breakfast— (*commandingly—go R.*)

JIMMIE. (*cross c.*) I'm awfully sorry. I can't find my servant and I really don't know how to get breakfast ready.

TOMMY. I do. I'll prepare breakfast for you.

JIMMIE. Thank you very much—it's really very kind of you.

TOMMY. Take care, Mr. Cottenham; don't forget yourself and be nice to me.

JIMMIE. Why?

TOMMY. (*taking a seat R. of table*) Because then I might stay.

JIMMIE. Oh! I can't stand this. (*go to HARRY who throws him off*)

(JIMMIE *goes to stairs.*)

TOMMY. (*to HARRY*) How I frightened him! (*rising*) Where's the kitchen?

HARRY. I'll show you. (*going to door L. 1.*) Let me help you.

(TOMMY *goes out L., HARRY about to follow L.*)

JIMMIE. Harry (*on stairs*)

HARRY. (*stops*) Yes—(*in doorway*)

JIMMIE. (*from staircase, very humbly*) Harry, do you mind if I use your room?

HARRY. Not a bit, old man. (*shuts door*)

JIMMIE. Harry! And could I have a collar?
(*R. of post*)

HARRY. (*looking in again*) One. (*shuts door*)

JIMMIE. Harry—and a tie. (*through L. of post*)

HARRY. (*looks in again*) I've got it on.

(*Exit HARRY, L. Laughter and talk from HARRY and TOMMY in kitchen, also clatter of dishes.*)

(*JIMMIE goes slowly to HARRY'S room and Exits.*)

(*The stage is vacant for a moment. Enter BERTHA C. from garden with the tandem on her R.—picture in doorway. She stands a moment at door a/said to enter, then comes in looking hopelessly about, still clinging to the tandem—sighs.*)

(*Enter HARRY with the white table cloth L.*)

HARRY. It's all right. I think the sugar's here.
(*sees BERTHA leaning against the tandem, pause while he looks at her amazed*) Bertha! (*shut door L.*)

BERTHA. (C.) Yes, sir.

HARRY. (L.) Well. . . .

BERTHA. What time is it, sir?

HARRY. Half-past ten, you wretched female. Mr. Cottenham's been looking for you everywhere. What do you mean by this conduct? (*puts cloth on table from L.*)

BERTHA. Don't be 'arsh with me, sir. I can't bear

it. (*still leaning against the tandem, her eyes fixed on the table cloth*) You've got 'im on wrong side out, sir.

(*Enter JIMMIE from 3 bedroom.*) (*Feels collar*)

JIMMIE. (*as he comes downstairs*) I can't wear your collars—I should think you've got a withered neck.

BERTHA. (*to HARRY—her back to JIMMIE*) It's wrong side out.

(*HARRY keeping an eye on BERTHA turns cloth over.*)

JIMMIE (*coming downstairs R., of post with hair brushes*) So there you are. (*reaches stage, sees BERTHA and goes R. in horror, saying*) Oh, my lor'! (*sit chair*)

BERTHA. (*turns slowly and looks at JIMMIE when he gets on stage, then in same helpless tones*) I've brought back the tandem, sir.

JIMMIE. (R.) And where have you been?

BERTHA. (C) In the woods, sir.

JIMMIE. What are you doing with the tandem, and where's the chauffeur? (*rise, come to her*)

BERTHA. In London I 'ope, sir.

JIMMIE. What do you mean by "you 'ope," don't you know?

BERTHA. I told him it would end bad.

JIMMIE. Never mind what you told him—tell me what happened. (*taps bicycle with brush*)

BERTHA. Yes, sir, I will, sir. But take me easy,

sir. If you are sharp with me I'll cry me 'eart out, and I shan't be able to tell you nothing.

HARRY. (*sits L. of table*) Come now, pull yourself together, my good girl.

BERTHA. I couldn't 'elp it, sir, it was 'is heyes what did it.

(JIMMIE *looks at* HARRY)

JIMMIE. (R.) Did he take you with him?

BERTHA. (C.) He promised me that we should be back before you was up, sir. I've never been to London, sir, and he was going to take me first-class. I've never been first-class, sir, and 'e was going to bring me back in a motor-car, sir. I have never been in a motor-car, sir.

JIMMIE. Will you tell me what happened? (*puts brushes on dresser R.*)

BERTHA. We started on the tandem for the station. 'E did all the work—oh, it was lovely, sir. We got to the station all right—long before the train; we didn't know 'ow to pass the time, so he took me to see a little pond with the moon shining on it. (JIMMIE *groans*) E-eh, but it was lovely, sir, with the moon shining on the water.

JIMMIE. (*impatiently*) Never mind the moonshine. What happened then?

BERTHA. Well sir, then we sat down, 'e looked at the water. (*looking up with an ecstatic expression*) I looked at the moon.

JIMMIE. Oh! I say!

BERTHA. And 'e talked on and on and on—my word, them London chauffoors can talk.

HARRY. Skip the talk——

BERTHA. "'Ow old are you," ses 'e, putting 'is arm around me. "Get off it," I says—"some'un might see us." "Honly the birds, an' they're asleep," says 'e. (JIM *groans and goes R.*) (*She heaves a sigh—slight pause*) Then I 'eard a 'orrible screech—I jumped up, me 'eart in me mouth——

HARRY. It was the London train coming into the station.

BERTHA. Yes, sir, it was, sir.

JIMMIE. He ran for it.

BERTHA. Yes, sir. We both ran for it.

HARRY. And you missed it.

BERTHA. We did, sir.

JIMMIE. Then at what time did the silly fool start?

BERTHA. There was no train till six o'clock in the morning, sir.

JIMMIE. Six o'clock—then he would reach London at eight. What time is it now? (*looking to R.*)

HARRY. Twenty-five to 11. He can't be long now. (*comes front of table*)

BERTHA. I'm sure he'll come back, he promised to come back to see *me*, sir. (*pushes cycle to R. hitting JIMMIE on legs—he takes it*)

JIMMIE. What the devil—— Oh, did he?

BERTHA. You can send me away, sir, if you like. (*she cross L., HARRY goes towards JIMMIE*)

JIMMIE. (*look at HARRY*) Oh, I say, look at her.
(*to BERTHA*) Bertha, I'll keep you on if you promise to keep clear of chauffeurs in the future.

BERTHA. (*by door L.*) I'll try, sir. It's an ungrateful thing to say, sir, but if he asked me I'd go again, sir!

(*Exits L.*)

JIMMIE. With an irresponsible chauffeur like that how can we be sure that Miss Tommy will ever be called for?

HARRY. I don't care if she's never called for.

(*Sits R. of table.*)

JIMMIE. Well, I do—well, I'll take no chances.

(*Round up C. lifting tandem round, the front wheel nearly hits HARRY in the face.*)

(*HARRY jumps up hastily.*)

I'm going to wire Mr. Pepper that his daughter is here. Come along, you take the back seat—we're going like the wind.

(*Exits L.C.*)

HARRY. (*following*) But I can't go like the wind without anything to eat.

JIMMIE. (*outside*) Never mind—jump up. (*bicycle bell is heard*)

(*JIM and HARRY cross window L.*)

(*TOMMY enters with teapot L., followed by BERTHA with tray.*)

TOMMY. Here's tea. (*puts teapot on table*) Where can they be? (*up to window R., opens it, brings sugar basin to table*)

BERTHA. (*L. of table—who is helping to lay the table*) Don't know, Miss Tommy.

TOMMY. Well, I really can't wait, I'm so hungry. (*throws apron R.*)

(*She sits down R. of table and BERTHA waits on her.*)

(*R. of table*) Tell me, you've had more experience than I have. (*pours tea out*)

BERTHA. (*L. of table*) Oh yes, miss.

TOMMY. Then tell me—in your opinion what makes Mr. Cottenham dislike me so?

BERTHA. Oh, I'm sure he don't—who could dislike you, miss?

TOMMY. I'm sure he does—I wonder why?

BERTHA. Well, miss, you know he's engaged to be married, miss.

TOMMY. Well, I am engaged to be married too, but that doesn't prevent me from being nice to other men I meet. In fact, if there is any difference I am less agreeable to the man I am to marry.

BERTHA. That happens sometimes—when you are too fond of him. (*sighs deeply*)

TOMMY. Oh, does that make one disagreeable?

BERTHA. Sometimes.

TOMMY. Then I ought to love him very much, for I tease him from morning till night.

BERTHA. Do you, miss. Does he like it?

TOMMY. I think so. Unless he's pretending. You see father's so rich that I shall never be quite sure whether it's myself or my money I'm being loved for.

BERTHA. That's a nuisance isn't it. (TATHEM and ELSIE pass window) That's where I've got the better of you, miss, I can be always sure I'm loved for myself; but I wouldn't let it worry you, miss.

TOMMY. Oh! I don't make myself miserable over it. (eating. BERTHA holds plate of eggs)

(While they are engaged in conversation, TATHEM and ELSIE appear, and seeing TOMMY and BERTHA stand hesitatingly.)

TATHEM. (advancing softly by door) I beg your pardon.

(ELSIE smiles on his L.)

BERTHA. What is it, sir?

TATHEM. (to TOMMY) I must apologise for disturbing you. We have been misdirected and lost our way. (comes down a little) (BERTHA puts down eggs) We are looking for Mr. James Cottenham's cottage, my good woman.

BERTHA. This is Mr. Cottenham's, sir.

TATHEM. I thought he lived alone. (c.)

BERTHA. Not week-ends, sir. (TOMMY looks at TATHEM)

TATHEM. (coughs, looks startled—turns to ELSIE) Elsie, go and look at the view.

ELSIE. Yes, papa.

(ELSIE goes up to door—standing outside, back to audience.)

TOMMY. (*turns c.*) She can't see the view—there's a wall there.

TATHEM. (*who has kept an eye upon his daughter until she reaches the door, turns*) Now, if I may ask, how is it——

TOMMY. Perhaps you didn't understand me—I said it was no use your friend standing there. She can't see the view—there's a blank wall there.

TATHEM. That's of no importance.

BERTHA. Excuse me, sir, are you Mr. Tathem?

TATHEM. I am. It seems that I have arrived at a rather inopportune moment. (*go R. a little*)

BERTHA. We didn't expect him until 12 o'clock, Miss Tommy. Oh lor! and I ain't killed Emma yet. (*goes to door L.*)

TOMMY. What?

BERTHA. The chicken, miss.

(*Exit L.*)

TOMMY. And we all got up very late this morning. (*turns to him eating*)

TATHEM. (*splutters, astounded*) I should like to see Mr. Cottenham, at once.

TOMMY. You know it's quite silly to have your little friend staring at that wall?

TATHEM. My daughter, miss; but where is Mr. Cottenham? I don't understand it—why is he not here to meet me—why does he avoid me?

TOMMY. He can't help it if you come before your time, you know it puts people out more when their guests come too early than when they come too late. (*snappily*)

TATHEM. I do not regret having anticipated my arrival. It has given me an opportunity of learning something (*looking at picture*) of Mr. Cottenham's rural household. (*looking round*)

TOMMY. Don't you think that your daughter might stop looking at that wall?

TATHEM. She is better there.

TOMMY. Oh no, she isn't. Do come in. (*pours tea*)

(*ELSIE comes in a little c.*)

TATHEM. Excuse me, I should like to talk to you alone. Elsie, go and look at the garden.

ELSIE. Yes, papa.

(*She exits smiling at TOMMY c.*)

TOMMY. (*eats*) I shouldn't stand it—I always enjoy myself.

TATHEM. Evidently.

TOMMY. Oh, but you're not interested in young people.

TATHEM. But I *am* interested in you. (*to her c.*)

TOMMY. Really? Jimmie will be pleased. (*TATHEM startled*) Do you know what has been worrying him more than anything else—he didn't want you to meet me.

TATHEM. I can quite understand that. (*significant.*)

TOMMY. I don't care—a girl in my position doesn't care.

TATHEM. Naturally.

TOMMY. Cup of tea?

TATHEM. No thanks.

TOMMY. Whiskey and soda?

TATHEM. No. (*backs R.*)

TOMMY. Would you like a cigarette?

TATHEM. No thank you.

TOMMY. Won't you take a chair?

TATHEM. No, thank you. (*looking at broken chair*)

TOMMY. Oh, please do. I was always taught that it wasn't nice for young people to sit when old people were standing. (*move from Tathem*) You don't mind my calling you old, do you—some people are so sensitive about their age—but I'm sure you're too old for that.

TATHEM. You seem to have a great deal to say for one so young.

TOMMY. You should hear me at home.

TATHEM. May I ask when you came here, miss?

TOMMY. Somewhere about the middle of the night.

TATHEM. The middle of the night!

TOMMY. Silly little breakdown.

TATHEM. Breakdown?

TOMMY. Motor breakdown.

(*Pause in which they look at each other.*)

TATHEM. I have always been given to understand any mishap to a motor can be repaired—sufficiently to allow one to proceed——

TOMMY. I couldn't go on without tyres. (ELSIE appears c.) So Mr. Cottenham was kind enough to let me sleep in his room.

(ELSIE *disappears*.)

TATHEM. Hem! (*coughs violently to cover his surprise*)

TOMMY. Have you got a cold?

TATHEM. I shall be obliged if you will give Mr. Cottenham a message from me——

TOMMY. (*rise*) Oh! but you're not going—surely. (*tries to take hat. TATHEM puts hat and stick behind him*) Jimmie will be awfully disappointed, and do you know he's such a funny little man, he'll be sure to blame me.

TATHEM. He has no one to blame but himself, and will you please say to Mr. Cottenham—if he has anything to say and has the courage to say it—he can say it to me in my department.

TOMMY. Nasty snappy old thing. (*cross R.*) I'm sorry for Mr. Cottenham if he's going to be your son-in-law. (*upstairs*)

TATHEM. What did you say, miss? (*cross R.*)

TOMMY. Nothing.

TATHEM. What?

TOMMY. Nothing.

(TOMMY sings, "Yip-I-addy-I-ay!" and exit into room 2 slams door, still singing.)

TATHEM. (*reflects—going to door—calling*) ELSIE!

(TOMMY stops singing.)

(*enter ELSIE at c.*)

ELSIE. (*comes R. C.*) Yes, papa? (*smiling*)

TATHEM. (L. C.) My dear child, I know how sensitive you are, and I want to prepare you for—

ELSIE. For what, papa?

TATHEM. For a very serious thing.

ELSIE. What about, papa?

TATHEM. Your marriage with James Cottenham—it can never be.

ELSIE. Oh papa, and I was so looking forward to getting married. (*closes eyes*)

TATHEM. (*catches her back of hand and patting her hand comes a little R.*) Now Elsie, I implore you not to faint here. Do try and wait till we get home—it's very awkward in another person's house.

ELSIE. I won't faint, papa, if I can help it.

(JIMMIE and HARRY pass window L.)

TATHEM. Be brave my child, be brave.

ELSIE. Yes, papa—I will, but what's happened.

(*Enter JIMMIE C. followed by HARRY who bolts—door open*)

JIMMIE. So glad you've come, sir. (*hand out to Harry who bolts; he hastens towards them*) How do you do? But what a surprise, I didn't expect you so

early—(*tries to conceal his embarrassment—putting on coat, gets his hand caught in L. pocket*) I've been bicycling and got most fearfully hot.

TATHEM. Well, here we are.

(TOMMY appears at room door.)

JIMMIE. (*nervously*) Yes—here we all are—(*waving TOMMY back*) (*goes to Elsie, takes her hand, hesitates, he turns to TATHEM*) May I—?

TATHEM. (*coughs*) Yes, if you can do so with a clear conscience.

JIMMIE. Eh?

(*Pause in which TATHEM and JIMMIE look at each other.*)

Oh yes, quite clear. (*he is about to kiss ELSIE*)

TATHEM. (*quickly*) Elsie—(*she comes c.*) go and look at the garden.

ELSIE. Very well, papa.

(*Exit ELSIE up c. smiling at JIMMIE.*)

JIMMIE. Yes, the garden looks beautiful. We have never had so many new laid eggs before. (*going up R.*)

(TATHEM shuts door.)

TATHEM. Now sir.

(JIMMIE comes down R. c. *uneasily.*)

JIMMIE. I'm so glad you've come— isn't it a dear little place?

TATHEM. (L. c.) Charming. (*turns up stage*)

Just as you described it in your letter—every detail of it.

JIMMIE. Did you have much difficulty in finding the house?

TATHEM. None whatever.

JIMMIE. (*Nervously*) And—er—who—who—who received you?

(TATHEM looks at him then looks away, sits R. of table.)

(Sigh of relief from JIMMIE rather down stage R. C.)

TATHEM. Who could have received us, if you are living down here alone?

JIMMIE. (*embarrassed*) Yes, yes, of course. Perhaps I ought to tell you. . . . An artist friend—

TATHEM. Ah yes, an artiste friend—

JIMMIE. Artiste?

TATHEM. I see you have quite an artistic atmosphere here. But you would never invite your fiancée and her father under your roof if there were anything—er—(*coughs*) irregular going on.

JIMMIE. (*emphatically*) Certainly not—I'm sorry about these cards—

TATHEM. You know so well my ideas—how particular I am about such matters.

JIMMIE. You are quite right—absolutely right. (*stands up*) I am sorry about these cards.

(Goes to TATHEM.)

(TATHEM rises—JIMMIE backs.)

TATHEM. (*with sudden change of manner, that*

completely unnerves JIMMIE) Enough of this deception, sir.—I've seen her.

JIMMIE. Her—who—who—who?

TATHEM. Your friend Tommy.

JIMMIE. Oh, damn——! I beg your pardon, sir!

TATHEM. (*over to him*) That you should bring Elsie into contact with——

JIMMIE. I assure you—on my word of honour—sir—— (*deals cards nervously* L. C. R. *down.*)

TATHEM. Don't talk to me of honour, sir—your excuses are worse than your conduct—(*holds hat in L. hand so that most of the cards fall into it*) that you should expose the head of your division, your future father-in-law—to the insults of—of a girl called—Tommy—(*JIMMIE interrupts*) is beyond endurance—(*JIMMIE interrupts*) a man in my position cannot submit to such an outrage.

JIMMIE. She is going at once, and we shall never see her again. Tommy is going, Mr. Tathem——

TATHEM. No, it's I who am going. (*puts on hat, cards fall out; calling*) Elsie! (*turns to JIMMIE*) my son-in-law must be a man with more acceptable connexions—(*calling*) Elsie——

ELSIE. (*L. entering*) Yes, papa. (*down c.*) (*door open.*)

TATHEM. (*L.*) We are leaving here at once.

ELSIE. Without having any lunch? (*go to JIMMIE, who holds her hands.*)

TATHEM. Yes.

ELSIE. Without Jamesy!

TATHEM. Yes—you have been insulted—your father has been insulted—your engagement is broken (*swings her to L.*)—go to your room, sir. (*turns up stage with ELSIE.*)

JIMMIE. (*goes up stairs*) Mr. Tathem, I shall die of shame. (*over bannisters—TOMMY looks in from room 2.*)

TATHEM. (*seeing TOMMY*) Ah—ah—I hope you will. (*waves stick.*)

(*He goes, taking ELSIE C. to L.*)

JIMMIE. (*to TOMMIE*) Oh, what did you come out of my room for?

(*Enter HARRY L. seeing the tea on table.*)

HARRY. At last. (*sees JIMMIE*) You look chippy, old man. (*sit head of table.*)

JIMMIE. I feel chippy.

(*TOMMY comes down stairs.*)

TOMMY. Hasn't my father come yet?

JIMMIE. (c.) No—and I don't care if her never comes.

TOMMY. Oh—are you getting used to me?

JIMMIE. No. But as it is impossible for you to bring any more trouble upon me—(*shuts c. door*)

TOMMY. Why, what have I done now?

JIMMIE. (c.) I suppose it's hardly worth mentioning. You've only broken off my engagement. (*gets marmalade from table—puts sugar into it*)

TOMMY. I? (*swings on bottom bannister*)

JIMMIE. You. Mr. Tathem has informed me of your *very* pleasant interview. (*sits chair c.*)

TOMMY. (*cross c.*) I tried my best to entertain him and make him feel at home, I talked—well, you know—just as I talked with you the first time, without any ceremony—I tried to be as flattering as possible—it was very difficult.

HARRY. I'm sure it was.

TOMMY. You should have heard how he spoke to me—he frightened *me*.

JIMMIE. (*stirring marmalade*) Everything—one after another has gone wrong since last night.

TOMMY. It'll all come right soon (*comes to chair R. of table, takes it and sits next to JIMMIE on his L.*)

JIMMIE. I have my doubts about that.

(*Sees TOMMY sitting by him, moves chair down stage, she imitates him.*)

Oh, do go away. (*takes marmalade, disgusted*)

TOMMY. It's curious to me that you don't appreciate the charm of the unexpected! The unexpected is the one great pleasure in life!

HARRY. And in mine, but for that we must be philosophical.

TOMMY. Why, of course. Now look at me. (*touches JIMMIE'S shoulder*) There are thousands of reasons why I should be much more worried than you, Jimmie.

(*look from JIMMIE.*)

Mr. Jimmie—Mr. Jimmie.

JIMMIE. You worried?

(*Warn Motor*)

TOMMY. It seems to me that if my coming here last night is going to strike every one as it did Mr. Tathem——

JIMMIE. Of course it will—that is why I am compromised.

TOMMY. Then what about me? I also am engaged.

(HARRY hits table angrily, knocking plate off. JIMMIE rises and both he and TOMMY look at HARRY who eats egg furiously. JIMMIE puts marmalade on table L., picks up milk jug, crossing R. falls over TOMMY'S foot, spilling milk, he nurses foot leaning on dresser.)

TOMMY. Who knows what Lord Enderby will think?

HARRY. Is he a strong man?

TOMMY. No, weak, especially here. (*head.*)

HARRY. Lord Enderby should be very much upset about it, and quite right too.

TOMMY. Well, instead of worrying my soul out I look for the bright side. (*look at HARRY*) I look on the bright side.

(*Sings and pushes arm chair. JIMMIE picks up apron and folds it.*)

JIMMIE. You'll surprise me if you can find one.

(HARRY picks up plate.)

TOMMY. (*triumphantly and as though the easiest thing in the world for her*) I've done it—this affair is going to prove Enderby's love for me.

(*Motor start*)

JIMMIE. Oh, what nonsense! (*bored and annoyed*)

TOMMY. He'll be furious—he'll be terribly jealous of you.

(*JIMMIE looks alarmed, tries to put apron in drawer R.*) and he'll say a hundred foolish things, and the more he says the more I shall love him.

(*Motor stop*)

(*Up to c. door*)

BERTHA. (*looking through window L.*) Here's your father on his motor car, miss.

HARRY. She's great, that girl. (*pours tea*) I'm going to put a stopper on Enderby.

JIMMIE. You'd better put a stopper on yourself.

(*Brushes up cards with apron, goes R.*)

(*Enter BERTHA C. carrying live chicken*) (*TOMMY re-enters gets up L.*)

BERTHA. He is fat, isn't he? (*aside to HARRY.*)

JIMMIE. We shan't want the chicken now.

(*BERTHA goes off L. with chicken.*)

PEPPER. (*off c.*) Tommy, Tommy!

(*TOMMY hides in window; going to PEPPER on his L. as PEPPER enters C.*)

TOMMY. Good morning, papa!

PEPPER. (*up by door holding her off*) Good morning, you naughty girl. I'm very cross with you. Here am I——

(TOMMY calls his attention to JIM and HARRY.)

Introduce me to this gentleman! (*indicating HARRY who is brushing shoes in dancing attitude.*)

TOMMY. Mr. Harry Killick, a great artist.

(JIMMIE is bending down R. brushing dust off his trousers. PEPPER is astonished at his attitude.)

PEPPER. What is that?

JIMMIE. (*rising*) So sorry, sir!

TOMMY. Mr. Jimmie Cottenham, in the Colonial Office—There! Now you know them.

PEPPER. (*to JIMMIE—shakes hands*) I am very much very obliged to you for all your kindness to my daughter. My chauffeur Jennings has told me all about it.

JIMMIE. It was the least I could do.

HARRY. We were only too delighted.

(Crosses C. offers hand to PEPPER who puts hat in it;

HARRY throws hat up on to table up C. and goes L.)

PEPPER. Most kind, most considerate; (*hand bus.*) and now, you must excuse me, gentlemen (*hand bus. with JIMMIE*) It is absolutely necessary that I should give my daughter a good scolding——

JIMMIE. Yes.

HARRY. No.

PEPPER. If I don't do it at once I shall forget all about it. And really——

TOMMY. She deserves it. (*gets on his L.*)

(HARRY *gets aown L.* JIMMIE *goes up R.* *poses.*)

PEPPER. I rushed away without leaving word—fifty engagements this morning—if I don't return to London soon they'll have a special out—disappearance of T. H. Pepper—there'll be a fearful drop in tea shares.

(*Melts and embraces her.*)

Tommy, this is a very serious matter, and I must tell you, my darling, that it would be wrong to get into the habit of not returning home at night.

TOMMY. You're getting very severe with me Pappa Pepper!

HARRY. This time, sir, it was Fate——

(*Movement from JIMMY*) (*sits arm chair.*)

Nothing but Fate.

PEPPER. Of course (*to TOMMY*) I'm not angry—in fact I might say that I am pleased about it since it has given me the great pleasure of meeting you. (*speaks to JIMMIE*)

JIMMIE. (*with evident ill humour*) Believe me, Mr. Pepper, I feel quite jolly about it too.

PEPPER. Yes, yes—well, you don't look it.

TOMMY. Mr. Cottenham has just had a great disappointment. (*R. of table*)

PEPPER. Ah! that's too bad.

TOMMY. He was engaged and now the engagement is broken.

PEPPER. The devil! How's that? (*turns to JIMMIE*)

TOMMY. On account of a misunderstanding with his future father-in-law.

PEPPER. Ah, these things will happen!

TOMMY. It was about me. (*to L. C.*)

PEPPER. About you? (*turns to her*)

TOMMY. Yes—but it was all *his* fault.

JIMMIE. Not all?

(PEPPER endeavours to continue speech to TOMMY and JIMMIE continually interrupts by saying "This is my house" and goes R. ejaculating this at intervals. PEPPER replying: "Yes, but it's my daughter" etc.) JIMMIE. (*Leans on sideboard R.*)

PEPPER. Tommy (*up to her R. C.*) I have just been giving you a good scolding and I don't want to begin again, but I assure you, my darling, it would be wrong to get into the habit of breaking off the engagements of people you don't know. Mr. Cottenham, (*cross to him, puts out hand, tapping JIMMIE on back*) excuse me interrupting your morning devotions—

(JIMMIE *turns*)

You have my sympathy.

JIMMIE. (*not taking hand*) What time is it?
(*gives him milk jug*)

PEPPER. (*look at watch*) Eleven o'clock. (*puts jug on dresser*)

JIMMIE. There's no train till half-past. (*cross c.*) I shall be able to catch up to them before they reach the station. I'll go and throw myself once more on Mr. Tatham's mercy.

PEPPER. (*goes up above chair puts hat on table*) That's right—never say die.

JIMMIE. Thank you.

TOMMY. Hurry up, or you'll miss them. Run—run—can't you run?

(*JIMMIE rushes out crosses window.*)

There's no go in him. (*with a little gasp of relief sinks in chair c.*)

PEPPER. There's too much go in you, young lady. (*cross c.*) Your fiancé, Lord Enderby, came to see you this morning. I had a dreadful time with him.

TOMMY. Well?

PEPPER. Well!

TOMMY. What of it?

PEPPER. What of it? When he heard that you hadn't been home all night he was in a frightful state.

TOMMY. Oh, that's of no consequence.

PEPPER. Isn't it? He immediately jumped into his car to scour the country and look for you and is now at the Coleman Dayton's near here.

TOMMY. I don't care.

PEPPER. La—la—la—(*turns to HARRY*) You see she upsets her fiancé just as if he were her father.

HARRY. Yes, yes.

PEPPER. Tommy dear, we had better be saying good-bye now? (*towards door*)

TOMMY. Just a moment—I'll run up to my room first. (*cross to stairs*)

PEPPER. Your room?

TOMMY. Yes, the second up there—it's my room. I must put on my things. I shan't be a minute.

(*She runs quickly upstairs, opens door 2 and exits into room 2*)

HARRY. Really, Mr. Pepper, I must congratulate you on the way you have brought up your daughter. She is delightful. (*comes L. C. kisses finger tips—gesture*)

PEPPER. Ah yes—a little out of the ordinary, (*sits chair C.*) but delightful. (*imitates gesture*)

(TOMMY re-enters from room 2.)

TOMMY. (*from top of stairs*) Tell me, Mr. Killick, frankly, what do you think of dad? Sporting, isn't he?

HARRY. Yes, very sporting.

TOMMY. How old do you think he is?

PEPPER. Tommy!

HARRY. About forty, I should say.

(PEPPER beams.)

TOMMY. He's fifty-four.

PEPPER. Hush! Hush! (*disgusted*)

TOMMY. Don't you think the little man wears

well? And you know he knocks about a good deal.

PEPPER. Miss Tommy——

TOMMY. He never gets home before three in the morning.

PEPPER. Miss Pepper. (*he turns rising*)

(TOMMY *laughs, exits into room 2.*)

PEPPER. She's tantalising. (*comes to R. of table*)

(JENNINGS *crosses window.*)

HARRY. Very! (*down L.*)

PEPPER. But you can form no idea of what she's really like here—but when she's at home.

HARRY. I can quite believe it. (*goes L.*)

(*Enter JENNINGS C.*)

PEPPER. Ah, here you are. Are you ready to start?

JENNINGS. Very nearly sir.

PEPPER. (*smells tea pot by table L.*) Not mine. (*puts it down*)

HARRY. I always drink Pepper at home.

PEPPER. Shows your good taste. (*cross R.*) Have you put on those tyres?

JENNINGS. Yes, sir. I just want a little water for the engine.

HARRY. (*going to the door L.*) Certainly—Bertha!

(BERTHA *enters.*)

BERTHA. Yes sir—oh!

HARRY. Bring some water for the Chauffeur.

BERTHA. (L. *very brightly*) Oh yes, sir—at once, sir.

(*An oily smile comes over the face of the Chauffeur as he turns it in the direction of BERTHA'S voice.*)

(HARRY on seeing the Chauffeur's expression stares fixedly at him—there is a slight pause during which the Chauffeur's smile quickly fades and he stands staring into vacancy.)

(HARRY L. of table.)

HARRY. Did you speak?

JENNINGS. Not a word sir.

PEPPER. (to TOMMY) Hurry up, Tommy!

(Enter BERTHA.)

BERTHA. Here's the pail of water. (*imploring look at JENNINGS.*)

(JENNINGS puts out his hand for the pail c.)

BERTHA. I'll carry it for you. (*puts it in L. hand.*)

JENNINGS. (*taking it*) Oh no, thank you, miss.

(Exits c.)

(BERTHA watches him go out c. then quickly follows him and is drawing the door to gently after her, when HARRY calls.)

HARRY. Bertha——

BERTHA. (*meehly*) Yes, sir. (*opens door, leaving it open*)

HARRY. Where are you going?

BERTHA. To look for Miss Tommy, sir (*going out c.*)

HARRY. Miss Tommy is upstairs.

BERTHA. Thank you sir. (*walks with her nose in the air, cross L.*)

HARRY. I said upstairs.

(BERTHA *exits into kitchen.*)

(LORD ENDERBY *appears at open door.*)

ENDERBY. (*to HARRY*) Excuse me, but aw—
(*comes down c.*)

PEPPER. (*turning quickly*) It's Enderby—My dear fellow, what a delightful surprise. How did you manage to ferret us out here?

(HARRY *comes down L. and sizes LORD ENDERBY up.*)

LORD ENDERBY. (*takes off cap*) I was coming back from the Coleman-Dayton's quite sick with anxiety when I happened to see your car. Fearful fag this business—uses up all a chap's vitality—don't you think we'd better put the papers on the job?

PEPPER. No, everything's all right. Tommy's here. (*crosses c. and up*)

HARRY *lights cigarette.*)

ENDERBY. Here!

PEPPER. She's getting ready, and I'm just going to hurry Jennings up. (*turns*)

Oh, let me introduce you—Mr. Henry—

(HARRY *coughs.*)

HARRY. (*correcting*) Harry!

PEPPER. Harry Killick. (*aside to HARRY*) What did Tommy say you were?

HARRY. A great painter.

PEPPER. (*cross to ENDERBY, who rises about to speak*) Ssh! a great painter.

ENDERBY! Delighted—never heard of him, but delighted. (*dusts boots*)

PEPPER. And this is Lord Enderby—my—er—son-in-law. (*ENDERBY turns*) future—

(LORD ENDERBY *tries to look unconscious.*)

HARRY. Delighted—never heard of him—

(*ENDERBY disgusted*)

—but—er—delighted.

PEPPER. You two'll get on well together.

(*Exits C. to L. shuts door.*)

HARRY. (*haughtily*) Won't you sit down, Lord Enderby?

LORD E. Thank you. No, I am too nervous—I—
(*walks up and down R. and up steps*)

HARRY. Anxiety—no doubt.

LORD E. (*comes R. C.*) When the news came of Miss Pepper's disappearance—I thought I should have died.

HARRY. Oh, how wretched for you! Ah, that's all over now—Miss Pepper is in excellent health and spirits. (*comes C.*) I can tell you the whole story in

two words—just as the motor was passing the door of this cottage the four tyres burst——

LORD E. Four—one tyre, yes—but four—Oh no!
(*goes R.*)

HARRY. The whole four.

LORD E. At the same time?

HARRY. At the same time!

LORD E. You must acknowledge that's rather irregular.

HARRY. Not at all. What always surprises me is, that tyres as a rule burst independently of each other.

LORD E. Why?

HARRY. Coming from the same maker, going to the same place—running on the same road—they should, naturally, burst together.

LORD E. (R.C.) Ah—should they? (*goes R.*)

(HARRY *goes L.*)

Very well, but do you mean to say that there's not an inn in this absurd place, er—a—a hut, no matter how ramshackle, where a young girl could take shelter—if—if—if her tyres puncture? (*returns R. C.*)

HARRY. (*returns L. C.*) Not the smallest inn, not a ramshackle shelter. But you may rest assured that Mr. Cottenham did everything that was possible for your fiancée. Then we all made the tea together, and passed the time pleasantly awaiting the arrival of Mr. Pepper.

LORD E. Yes, but——

HARRY. There you have the whole story—chaste as an idyll—of this rural adventure.

LORD E. (*angry*) The whole thing is most irregular (*cross L.*) and I shall protest—I—feel quite shirty about it—(*sits on table L., puts hat on table.*)

HARRY. I trust you will not consider me presumptuous (*C.*) but it hurts me to think of that sweet girl exposed to the storm which I see gathering on your lordship's brow.

LORD E. (*rise L. C.*) I can't help it. I'm going to make a scene—I may break things—I feel it—nothing can stop me—I'm going to tell Tommy what I think of—of—this—er—rural adventure.

HARRY. It is not for me to interfere—who am I that I should offer a man of your experience a word of advice?

LORD E. Yes—who are you?

HARRY. (*L. C. taken aback*) Miss Pepper's confidant. Miss Pepper has been talking to me about you.

LORD E. (*starts*) Eh!

HARRY. (*L. C.*) Your position is a delicate one—and will require all the force of your subtle nature—to avoid a catastrophe.

LORD E. C—c—catastrophe? (*stutters*)

HARRY. I presume you are anxious that your marriage with Miss Pepper should take place?

LORD E. What a rotten question—

HARRY. She is not only delightfully fascinating—but a great catch— (*goes C.*)

LORD E. I haven't asked you for a picture of Miss Pepper, sir, I've seen her before.

HARRY. Oh! but you don't know her, Lord Enderby—if you feel the slightest resentment at this little affair of last night——

LORD E. (*emphatically*) Resentment—I'm furious sir. (*go L. and back to HARRY*)

HARRY. Then push your fury on one side—forget it. When you meet her don't make a single reproach—smile.

(ENDERBY *does not.*)

Smile. (ENDERBY *does so*) That's it—that's it—

HARRY. And no matter what is said—keep your temper. She declared that at the least word, the least sign of displeasure on your part, she would break off the engagement. Oh, she's terrible. (*moves away*
R. C.)

LORD E. Yes—I know—fearful! (*comes R. C.*)

(*Warn band.*)

HARRY. Dreadful!

LORD E. Thank you.

HARRY. Not at all. Well, I've warned you——

LORD E. Thank you, Mr. er—er—I'm fearful too when I lose my temper. I'll do my best to control myself, but it'll be extremely difficult—extremely——

(*Enter TOMMY at the top of the staircase. LORD ENDERBY goes L.*)

TOMMY. I'm ready—Alick!

HARRY. (*goes up stage to stairs, smiling*) Lord Enderby has just this moment arrived.

TOMMY. Hallo—Alick!

LORD E. Hallo, Tommy, how are you? (*forced smile*) (*turns to her*)

TOMMY. (*who has come downstairs*) Quite well, Alick, thank you.

(ENDERBY *go L.*)

HARRY. I'll leave you. (*goes upstairs*) You must have a thousand things to say to each other. (*level with her by door 1 on her R.*)

TOMMY. (*to HARRY*) I hope he's going to be very angry with me.

HARRY. He will, if he loves you. (*goes up below post pointing and smiling to ENDERBY*)

(TOMMY *comes down R. puts bag on dresser R.*)

LORD E. (*comes C.*) What a perfect morning, (TOMMY *astonished*) the birds shining, (TOMMY *astonished*) the sun's singing, everything's ripping. (*looks to HARRY for applause*)

(*Exit HARRY, smiling, room 3.*)

TOMMY. Alick, I know my conduct has been very, very wrong.

LORD E. (*smiling*) Oh, we won't talk about that. (*puts her coat on chair R. C.*)

TOMMY. Yes, yes, we *must* talk of it, (*turns to him*) and I want you to tell me everything—that is on your mind.

LORD E. Well, I'm thinking if the car goes well we shall reach London in time for lunch.

TOMMY. Oh, I don't care about lunch—I have a conscience—I know I deserve your reproaches. Scold me with all your heart and soul.

LORD E. (*forced smile*) I don't see anything to scold you about—"a rural adventure—"

(HARRY *peeps in.*)

"chaste as an Idyll"—charming—(*imitating HARRY*)
(*Going L. puts chair L. of table down to foot of table*)

(HARRY *disappears repeating "charming"*)

TOMMY. Really.

LORD E. Really!

TOMMY. (*to R. of table*) Then you think it perfectly natural for your future wife to run about the country alone at night, and still be away from home at eleven the next morning?

LORD E. It's impossible to foresee these motor accidents. (*smiling*)

TOMMY. And you accept everything without a word—

(LORD ENDERBY *nods.*)

—without demanding any explanation from me?

LORD E. (*smiling, nods, sits below table, cross legs*)

TOMMY. But what would you say if I told you that I had known this Mr. Cottenham before, and this "rual adventure" had been arranged between us—

LORD E. I should lose my temper. (*rise, backs her up c.*)

(HARRY *looks out.*)

TOMMY. (*pleased*) Really, you mean it?

LORD E. (*smiling*) No, no, no no.

(TOMMY *astonished goes R.*)

Ah! I said I should, but I don't—I smile and say nothing. (*follows her R.*)

(HARRY *disappears.*)

TOMMY. Never—never would I have believed that you would treat me like this.

LORD E. Tommy.

TOMMY. You've opened my eyes, now I know what you really are.

LORD E. I say—Tommy—don't rot,—don't—

TOMMY. If you had loved me properly you would have come here furious with anger, you would have treated me like dirt—you would have called me a good-for-nothing—

LORD E. No!

TOMMY. Yes. And worse than that—*worse* than that—then casting one last look of scorn and hatred on me, you would have said “All is over between us” and banging the door in my face you would have left me for ever. There!—that's what you should have done, Lord Enderby. (*right up to him*) Ah, how I should have loved you if you'd behaved like that! (*go R.*)

LORD E. (*up to her*) I swear to you I was going to behave like that—the moment you appeared on that beastly staircase.

(HARRY *looks out from room 3*)

I had the greatest trouble to control myself. You can ask that beastly artist.

(HARRY *disappears.*)

Now I'm going to lose my temper—I am going to tell you——

TOMMY. Too late, Lord Enderby, too late! (*cross L.*) You've shown you don't care. I shall never marry you, Lord Enderby. (*round L. and above table to C.*)

(ENDERBY *follows to L.*)

LORD E. Tommy! A row's a row but—you don't mean that! (*comes between chair, and table L.*)

TOMMY. (*up to C. putting on gloves*) Yes I do, and what's more, I'd rather be like that girl in the Bible, I forget her name—who remained an old maid till she was a hundred and sixty-seven years old—than marry you. (*cross R.*)

LORD E. Oh, I say—Tommy, but you're not going to treat *me* like that Johnny.

(*Enter PEPPER C.*)

LORD E. (*L. of PEPPER*) She's going to hold me off till I'm a hundred and sixty-seven years of age.

PEPPER. Then you're not going to——

TOMMY. No I'm not—never. (*goes C.*)

LORD E. Miss Pepper——

PEPPER. (*to LORD ENDERBY*) What have you done?

LORD E. It isn't what I've done. It's what I haven't done. That beastly artist——

TOMMY. (*up to PEPPER*) He has done me the greatest injustice, papa.

(*ENDERBY interrupts.*)

He never reproached me for staying out—he doesn't mind the least little bit—he's treated me shamefully.

LORD E. Mr. Pepper, she won't listen to me. Will you make her understand——

TOMMY. What?—that you were marrying me for money—that's easily understood. (*cross R.*)

LORD E. (*picks up tea cosy in mistake for cap, throws it down and gets cap*) All this is beastly irregular—and I shall cut. (*goes up R. C.*)

PEPPER. She doesn't know what she's saying—she's caught cold.

LORD E. (*bumps into PEPPER*) Bally irregular.

(*Rushes out C. and to L.*)

TOMMY. Idiot! Idiot!

PEPPER. And now, my dear, as there appear to be no more engagements left for you to break off here—we may as well go.

TOMMY. (*R.*) It's all your fault, papa!

PEPPER. (*c. starting back*) Eh! What's my fault?

TOMMY. You've completely spoilt me—you've brought me up to do exactly as I pleased, and every-

body followed your example—*everybody*—servants—relations—friends (*cross L.*) all laughed at every silly thing I said—all waited to see what silly thing I should do next—to amuse them.

PEPPER. And you say this to me——

(*Warn curtain.*)

TOMMY. Yes; never in my life has any one corrected me. I've had to go my own way—and rely on my own foolish ideas. I've never had any one to resist me. It's exasperating. (*goes L.*)

PEPPER. (*follows her L.*) Will you be quiet? You ungrateful child! You annoy me.

(*JIMMIE crosses window.*)

TOMMY. Ah! good—(*embraces him*) that's the first nice thing you've ever said to me. (*Both down L.*)

(*Enter JIMMIE C., HARRY peeps round bedroom 2 door.*)

JIMMIE. (*limping*) I went on the tandem, had an awful smash. (*sits chair c. puts on coat.*)

(*PEPPER gets hat from table up c.*)

TOMMY. You haven't had any breakfast. You're going to be very ill if you don't eat something.

JIMMIE. I saw Mr. Tathem. He called me a scoundrel before a whole lot of people. Elsie was still in a faint.

PEPPER. (*getting c.*) Well, we've not had altogether a merry time of it since you left—my daughter has shown Lord Enderby the door.

JIMMIE. (*rising goes R.*) And I don't care a hang! She brought it on herself, and the more unhappy she is the better I like it.

PEPPER. (*follows him R.*) I don't see why your disappointment should make you so bitter towards my daughter.

JIMMIE. (*pause*) *Are you going?* (*quietly*)

(HARRY *comes down slowly.*)

TOMMY. We are, Mr. Cottenham (*advances to L. of PEPPER.*)

JIMMIE. Good—good—but you're not going until I've told you some plain truths, Mr. Pepper.

PEPPER. How dare you—how—

TOMMY. Papa, I like him. Let him speak. (*pulls him to c. a little then goes below table.*)

JIMMIE. As for you, (*up to them*) (*backing them to L.*) you are the most ill-bred girl I've ever met. You go through life like a bull in a china shop absolutely regardless of the ruin you leave behind, and nobody—nobody dares to tell you how insufferable they think you. (*looking at PEPPER*) No one—very well. *I—I—tell you.*

TOMMY. (*draws a deep sigh of contentment*) Ah!

PEPPER. Enough sir. (*takes her arm*)

(TOMMY *pulls her arm away and PEPPER faces JIMMIE.*)

JIMMIE. No sir, it's not enough. (JIMMIE *knocks chair over*) You—you think because you are frightfully rich—richer than that—that your money can make up for everything. Well, you're wrong—there

are some crimes that all the Pepper millions couldn't pay for.

PEPPER. (*shaking his head at him*) Sir! (*bobbing up and down in rage.*)

(TOMMY smiles enjoying every word, evincing delight with JIMMIE.)

(HARRY striking angular attitude on stairs.)

JIMMIE. And if somebody had told you these things before it would have done you a lot of good.

PEPPER. How dare you speak to me like that, you—you——

JIMMIE. Teapot!

(*Music.*)

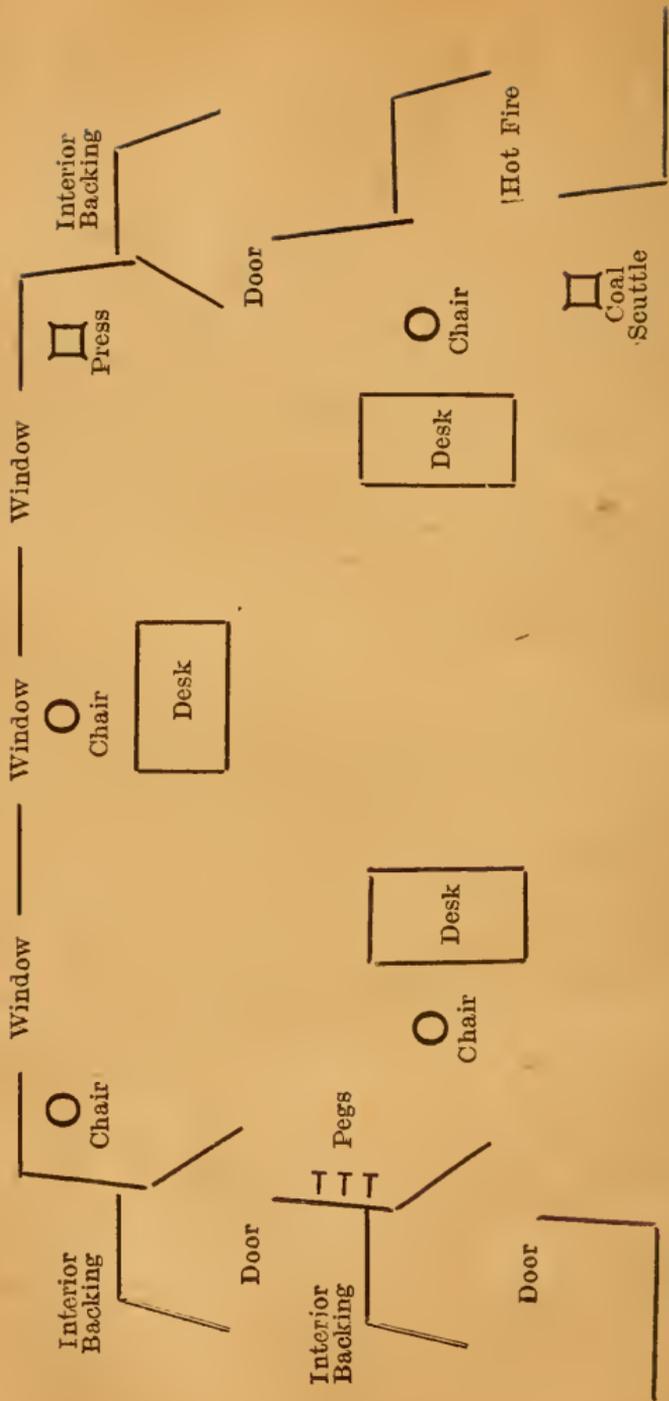
(*Exit C., PEPPER astounded rushes after him. TOMMY, delighted, follows up C., HARRY furious leans over bannisters, shaking fist.*)

CURTAIN.

No picture.

All on for call.

Backing. View of Whitehall. Green Trees.



"Tantalising Tommy." Act III. Green Baize Carpet. Ceiling.

ACT III

Telephone Bell.

SCENE.—*A room in the Colonial Office. Windows in the background; between the windows a desk. On the right, obliqued, is a door opening on to the hall. There is a desk down R. and a door down L. leading to the Chief Clerk's office. A third desk, left. JACK MASON and RICKETTS are seated at their desks. MASON is reading a newspaper. RICKETTS is writing—a smile is breaking over his face. Telephone on desk L.)*

MASON. (*at telephone*) Yes, sir—yes—yes—certainly sir. (*replaces telephone*) (*down L. of table L.*) What absolute bosh; (*throwing down paper*) here's a fool writing to the papers about giving the blacks a vote in South Africa—if this sort of thing goes on, it will be a distinction not to have a vote. What do you say, Ricketts? (*no answer*) Ricketts.

RICKETTS. (*table c.—still smiling*) Eh? I beg pardon, old man. (*looking up to R. writes more.*)

MASON. I asked you whether you were in favour of giving the blacks a vote.

RICKETTS. (*looks up—still smiling, his mind on what he is writing—goes on writing*)

MASON. Of course you have no opinion on the subject. You write musical rotteries,

(RICKETTS *hums and conducts band, face to audience.*)

and have no interest in anything but the merest trivialities. You care about as much for a national question, as you do for your duties in the Colonial Office.

RICKETTS. Really, old man—(*goes on writing and smiling*)

MASON. There's no bitterness in my remarks—I am no longer ambitious—you are one of these up-to-date men who think any means of advancement, or of adding to your meagre salaries, justifiable.

(RICKETTS *picks up writing paper and reads.*)

RICKETTS. But really, old man—I—er—yes. (*goes on writing*)

MASON. Go on with your scribbling. I should hate to interrupt you in the composition of some indecent lyric, pray go on.

RICKETTS. You haven't interrupted me—I've just finished a (*rises*) ripping little thing—I call it "I don't care what my people say." I'll sing it to you. (*comes c.*)

MASON. Don't—(*gesture*) don't sing it to me.

RICKETTS. Then I'll read it to you. "I'm going on the stage, I know I'll be the rage, I don't care what my people say."

MASON. Don't—don't—it's awful.

(RICKETTS *is intent on lyric, returns to desk, dancing—sits, goes on reading, slight pause.*)

Who's in charge to-day? (*no answer*) Mr. Ricketts,
I—

RICKETTS. So sorry, what did you say?

MASON. I asked who was in charge to-day?

RICKETTS. Don't know. Cottenham, I think.

MASON. He's very late this morning.

RICKETTS. The chief clerk will excuse him—
privilege of a prospective son-in-law.

MASON. He'll get no privileges from old Tathem—
he watches him like a cat.

(*Enter TATHEM L. comes up L. C. Both rise—MASON first, then RICKETTS, who hides paper under others.*)

TATHEM. Good morning.

MASON. } Good morning, sir.
RICKETTS. }

TATHEM. (L. C.) Mr. Mason. . .

(RICKETTS *sits.*)

MASON (*rises, hastening towards him, L. C.*) Yes,
sir.

TATHEM. Will you be good enough to draft a letter to Mr. Benton on the question relating to Basutoland—have it ready by four o'clock without fail and I'll pass it for signing on my return. Mr. Cottenham not here yet?

RICKETTS. No, sir.

TATHEM. He's late—bad habit that. (*towards his door L.*) Who's in charge to-day?

RICKETTS. Mr. Cottenham.

TATHEM. Good. Tell him to draft that letter, Mr. Mason, as soon as he arrives——

MASON. (*with alacrity*) Certainly sir.

TATHEM. And don't forget it's to be finished by four.

(*Exit TATHEM up L.*)

RICKETTS. Old fool—takes our written opinions, presents them as his own—and gets all the kudos. (MASON *sits again.* RICKETTS *produces paper again.*)

(*Enter JIMMIE up R.*)

JIMMIE. (*with a preoccupied air, hangs up his hat and overcoat R.*) Good morning.

RICKETTS. Morning.

MASON. Good morning, Cottenham. You're late.

JIMMIE. No, I'm not—the train's late.

MASON. You're not obliged to live in the country.

JIMMIE. Nor am I obliged to listen to your criticism, Mr. Mason—and I'd better tell you at once I'm in a very bad humour this morning. (*sits R. of table R.—whacks ruler down*)

MASON. Really.

JIMMIE. Yes. I beg your pardon for encroaching upon your prerogative.

(MASON *resents*)

RICKETTS. Old Tathem says you're getting into bad habits. (*rise, L. of desk*)

JIMMIE. (*startled*) He said that?

MASON. (*rise, brings draft over to JIMMIE*) He

was very much annoyed, and—er—he left this for you to go over—will you be good enough to draft a letter to Mr. Benton on the question relating to Basutoland. It's to be ready by four o'clock without fail. (*returns to his desk again and gets off cuffs, sits*)

JIMMIE. Only too delighted. It will keep me from thinking. (*sits down to write*)

RICKETTS. (*to MASON*) Doesn't want to think? (*goes above desk L.*)

MASON. He looks out of sorts.

(*Enter SIMPSON R. U. E., closes door and comes to top of COTTENHAM'S desk.*)

RICKETTS. I wonder what's wrong with him.

MASON. He's been betting.

RICKETTS. Cottenham betting.

MASON. Betting—And lost.

RICKETTS. He would. (*goes up to desk C.*)

(*SIMPSON stands above desk R.*)

SIMPSON. Are you lunching at the office to-day, sir?

JIMMIE. Yes, yes.

SIMPSON. What would you like, sir?

JIMMIE. What's going?

SIMPSON. Roast beef, Irish stew—

JIMMIE. Irish stew and a little salad—and a bottle of ginger ale.

MASON. Ginger! (*aside*)

SIMPSON. Very good, sir.

JIMMIE. One moment, bring me some brandy with the coffee.

(Exit SIMPSON R.)

RICKETTS. Brandy! (*aside to MASON, rise, get hat and stick up L.*)

MASON. (*up to RICKETTS*) (*gets hat up L. takes off cuffs, puts them on table*) If your double duties of Government clerk and poet will permit, I propose to play you a game of billiards for the lunch.

RICKETTS. (*rises*) I'll take you on, 50 up. Ta, ta, Cottenham. (*smacks JIMMIE'S desk with stick, C.*)

(JIMMIE starts.)

JIMMIE. Eh! what?

RICKETTS. I say, you have got nerves this morning—I'm afraid you're going the pace, old chap—going the pace—the blooming pace.

(*They put on their hats, after putting away their paper, and are preparing to go out. Enter SIMPSON up R. above desk R.*)

SIMPSON. (*announces*) Mr. Killick, sir.

HARRY. (*enters R.*) Good morning. (*up R.*)

MASON. } Good morning.
RICKETTS. }

HARRY. I hope I'm not driving you away?

(Exit SIMPSON.)

MASON. Not at all, no at all.

RICKETTS. We have finished a good morning's

work, so we can leave for lunch a little before the usual time with a clear conscience. (*going R.*)

(HARRY *crosses L.*)

Ta, ta, Cottiebags.

MASON. Don't swot too hard.

(*Exeunt RICKETTS and MASON up R.*)

HARRY. Why, Jimmie, boy, you look completely demoralised. (*puts hat on desk C.*)

JIMMIE. (*rises and goes to HARRY below desk down R. to C., carries pen*) I have every reason to be! I haven't seen Mr. Tathem yet, I wrote out a report of twenty-five pages, explaining everything that happened at the Cottage, placed it on his desk and I am awaiting the result. . . .

HARRY. (L. C.) Do let us talk of something more interesting. I've just come from the Peppers.

JIMMIE. (R. C.) You've been to see those people.

HARRY. Why not, they invited me. (*blows smoke in JIM's face*)

JIMMIE. Then that nasty cigar that you're smoking—

HARRY. Comes from T. H. Pepper & Co. Ltd.; nasty cigar, why it's a Corona—Corona, dear boy. The first two I smoked made me quite sick, but I'm getting used to them (*coughs*) I think!

JIMMIE. (*returns, sits at his desk, writes*) You're nothing but a lackey—to these people.

HARRY. (*sits on L. side of R. desk, leaning on R. arm towards JIMMIE*) Yes, I have seen the Peppers—I called on them again this morning, because there was one point I was not quite clear upon.

JIMMIE. What was that?

HARRY. Jimmie, you know the subtlety of my mind——

JIMMIE. No, I don't think so.

HARRY. How I guess, how I scent at a distance——

JIMMIE. Put it away, old man. (*referring to cigar*)

HARRY. Jimmie boy, I have great news.

JIMMIE. Well?

HARRY. You've cut me out with that little girl.
(*L. of desk R.*)

JIMMIE. What little girl? (*fist on table*)

HARRY. Why, Tommy.

JIMMIE. Now Harry, I—— (*throws down pen*)

HARRY. I've no feeling about it. I know you'll look after me as you always have Jimmy—you've made a great impression.

JIMMIE. Oh, shut up!

HARRY. (*rise*) It's not your fault. I did my best, but you won—you fascinating dog. (*throws ash off cigar*)

JIMMIE. (*gets down R. cross L.*) Now don't annoy me, Harry, don't aggravate me. I'd better tell you I'm in a very bad humour this morning. (*kick scuttle*) Miss Pepper is nothing to me and I am nothing to her. It's a case of mutual dislike, and

thank heaven we shall never see one another again.

(*turns to L.*)

HARRY. Never? (R. C.)

JIMMIE. Never: I swear it.

HARRY. I'm not so sure. (*turns him round to him*)

JIMMIE. (*walking up and down c. excitedly*) No, no, no! I'll have no more of it. That—that girl came into my life like a—a raging storm—a cyclone—very well—the storm over, I take up my old life again. But I advise her—no, I don't advise her—I——

(*Returns to desk, sits, writes.*)

HARRY. All right, all right—calm yourself, old man, it was an idea of mine, that's all. (*to L. of desk*) You shall marry the Tathem girl and don't be afraid, you shall remain the mediocrity that you are. Your wishes are mine.

JIMMIE. Do you think Mr. Tathem will change his mind?

HARRY. I'm absolutely sure he will. He will look at you closely and say "That face——"

JIMMIE. Oh, shut up!

HARRY. "That gentle manner, those meek eyes are not the characteristic of a gay Lothario. And he will give you his daughter, this young lady who plays "The Maiden's Prayer." (*eyes up*)

JIMMIE. Yes, yes; she does play that, on the harmonium.

HARRY. I was sure of it. Miss Tommy plays the

banjo! She has promised to come and twang the gay guitar in my studio. (*gets L.*)

JIMMIE. Your studio?

HARRY. Yes, in St. John's Wood—it's beautifully fitted up.

JIMMIE. You have a studio of your own?

HARRY. Yes—why not?

JIMMIE. Since when?

HARRY. Since this morning.

JIMMIE. Oh, shut up Harry!

HARRY. T. H. Pepper is sitting for me. (*come c.*) I'm launched now, while you continue to grovel—you——

(*Enter TATHEM up L. JIMMIE rises and calls HARRY'S attention to TATHEM'S presence.*)

However—— (*bows to TATHEM, go up c.*)

TATHEM. (*coming out of his office to up L. c.*) Oh, there you are, Mr. Cottenham.

JIMMIE. (*below desk*) Yes, Mr. Tathem.

TATHEM. Exactly—you're in charge and you make it an opportunity for receiving your friends. I have a great deal of work to give you to-day—a great deal.

HARRY. I'm off. (*picks up hat, goes up to door up R.*)

JIMMIE. One moment, Harry. (*comes R. c.*)

(*HARRY replaces hat on desk c., drops down R., looks at pictures, sits in chair R.*)

JIMMIE. (*to TATHEM*) Mr. Tathem. . . .

TATHEM. (L. C.) Yes, what is it?

JIMMIE. (C.) Have you had an opportunity of glancing through the little report which I placed on your desk?

TATHEM. I never glance through a report. I examine it carefully.

JIMMIE. I beg of you to read it! It's unjust that I should forfeit your good opinion because Miss Pepper——

TATHEM. Mr. Cottenham, if the only thing between us was the recollection of that young lady's impertinence, I should let it pass. But I have a certain misgiving with regard to you.

JIMMIE. A misgiving.

TATHEM. Yes, sir. The strange occurrence of that girl Tommy coming to your house at eleven o'clock at night, and being still with you at eleven o'clock the next morning . . .

JIMMIE. You will find all that explained on pages 19 and 20 of my report.

HARRY. (*comes front of desk R.*) Appearances are certainly against him . . . but he is innocent.

TATHEM. (*crosses to HARRY, puts up glasses—JIMMIE gets L.*) Unfortunately the testimony of such an intimate friend cannot be impartial.

HARRY. I swear—by—by—the head of my children.

(*JIMMIE coughs warningly and turns it off by continuing to cough.*)

TATHEM. (*turns slowly to him*) What's that?

JIMMIE. I think I've swallowed a fly, sir!

TATHEM. Now tell me—that disreputable looking servant——

JIMMIE. I take all responsibility for her. She's explained on pages 21 and 23.

TATHEM. That's enough. I'll read your report through carefully.

JIMMIE. You will?

TATHEM. And if I find in it anything to convince me—then I will reinstate you in my estimation.

JIMMIE. (*joyfully*) Mr. Tathem. (*advances, tries to take hand.* TATHEM *checks him.*)

TATHEM. But as I wish to be sure of bestowing Elsie on some one worthy of her, I shall put you under observation, and if I hear satisfactory accounts of your mode of life, in six months you shall marry my daughter. (*up to door L.*)

JIMMIE. (*follow up c.*) I'll wait—I'll wait—I have no fear of not standing the test.

TATHEM. When I go home, I shall inform my daughter. She will immediately sink into a chair and faint.

JIMMIE. Oh!

TATHEM. But no matter, it's a family failing.

JIMMIE. (*Goes over to TATHEM at door up L.*) Thank you so much, Mr. Tathem. (*takes his hand*)

TATHEM. No need to say more. Come to my room, I have some official business to discuss with you. (*to HARRY*) I wish you good-day, sir.

(Exit L. leaving door open.)

JIMMIE. (coming down to HARRY, C.) You nearly got me into trouble again.

HARRY. What do you want me to do? (up to him C.) I swore by the head of my children——

JIMMIE. You haven't any——

HARRY. Is that any reason why I should love them less?

VOICE OF TATHEM. Mr. Cottenham. . . .

JIMMIE. Yes, sir. (turns up L.)

HARRY. Go to your future father-in-law. (up to him)

JIMMIE. Don't be a fool, Harry.

(Exit JIMMIE up L. running off.)

HARRY. Ah. (shuts L. door after JIMMIE)

(Enter SIMPSON, R.)

SIMPSON. Mr. Pepper, sir, to see Mr. Cottenham.

HARRY. Oh yes, I'm here to meet Mr. Pepper. Mr. Cottenham will be here in a moment; show him in.

(Exit SIMPSON.)

(HARRY puts cigar in inkpot on L. desk. With an expression of satisfaction and relief he takes a photograph from his pocket, holds it up stage.)

What a pretty little thing she is, but not for me. (L. of table R., places it inside JIMMIE's blotting pad)

SIMPSON. This way, sir. (spoken as HARRY drops photo in blotter)

(HARRY gets L. C.)

(*Enters R. U. E.*) Mr. Pepper, sir. (*announcing*)

(*Enter PEPPER R.*) (*SIMPSON exits*)

HARRY. Good morning, Mr. Pepper. Where's Miss Tommy?

PEPPER. (*up c.*) In the ante-room. No lady visitors allowed in the offices, the shop-walker—chief clerk, said—and quite right too.

HARRY. What a nuisance—she must come in.

PEPPER. Why was Tommy so determined that I should bring her here? (*hat on desk R.*) She told me to ask you.

HARRY. Your daughter was anxious to apologise—

(*PEPPER gets down R.*)

to Mr. Cottenham, so I told her she would find him here and I was to meet her. Now we've had all our trouble for nothing.

(*TOMMY enters quickly up R. shuts the door, comes c., shakes hands with HARRY.*)

TOMMY. No, we haven't.

PEPPER. How did you get in?

TOMMY. Walked in—you don't suppose I would allow the chief clerk to regulate *my* movements.

PEPPER. You wish to apologise to Mr. Cottenham?

TOMMY. Yes.

PEPPER. But wasn't it he who insulted you?

TOMMY. Yes, but I insulted him.

PEPPER. Very well. Then you're quits.

TOMMY. Oh no, we're not. It was through me that his engagement was broken off.

PEPPER. Well, yours was *almost* broken off through him.

TOMMY. (*To HARRY*) Do you know why papa is in such a bad temper?

PEPPER. I'm not in a "bad temper."

TOMMY. Because I've upset all his plans. Papa has to be at a Board meeting at twelve—they made him chairman—because he tells them so many funny stories.

PEPPER. Tommy! (*hits desk*)

TOMMY. (*to PEPPER*) Now don't deny it, you know you're famous for your funny stories—whenever you put on your wonderful pearl pin I know you've got a new one which you're going to tell them when you take the chair.

PEPPER. Don't pay any attention, Mr. Killick—(*producing from pocket long lady's glove and attempting to put it on his L. hand*) Business is business and I'm a very busy man. (*Discovers his mistake and drops glove into his hat on desk R. confusedly.*)

(*HARRY covers face with hands. TOMMY observant.*)

TOMMY. That's quite true. You can see he's a busy man, and I've dragged him here (*takes his arm*) because I didn't think it looked the thing for a girl to come alone to a Government office.

PEPPER. I don't think it's the right thing either. (*to her a little*)

TOMMY. There's no need to worry, papa. We'll just stay for five minutes, and then you'll be free.

(Enter JIMMIE up L., sees TOMMY, staggered.)

JIMMIE. (speaking to TATHEM) All right, sir, I'll attend to it before you get back. (At sight of TOMMY and PEPPER) Oh! I say!

(PEPPER moves hat up to top of desk.)

HARRY. (L. of desk L.) There's some one come to see you.

JIMMIE. (L. C.) Oh, hang it all.

TOMMY. (C.) I'm afraid we've done wrong in calling?

JIMMIE. What! you here, Miss Pepper. And you too, sir. (to HARRY) And you—I shall have something to say to you later.

PEPPER. (R. corner of desk) I admit that we ought never to have come here—but my daughter wishes to apologise to you. (up to top of desk)

JIMMIE. Apologise.

TOMMY. Yes.

JIMMIE. I'm very much pressed for time.

TOMMY. I've only one word to say, Mr. Cottenham. When I've said it, I shall go away with papa, and you'll never see me again.

JIMMIE. Thank you very much, Miss Pepper!

TOMMY. I came here to tell you—(up to him)—you've got a spot of ink on your nose.

(JIMMIE tries to rub it off.)

No, not there—there—(points to it)

(JIMMIE *tries to rub it off again.*)

(c.) I wanted to know—you haven't got it off yet.

(JIMMIE *dabs nose.*)

Are you still bad friends with your father-in-law?

JIMMIE. Yes, I'm rather uncomfortable with him.

TOMMY. I know it was my fault—I'm very sorry, and I hope you don't bear me any ill-will for it.

JIMMIE. No! I don't, Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. Would you like my father and I to try and put matters right with Mr. Tathem?

JIMMIE. No, thank you—you'd only make a mess of it, *especially* if you went with your father.

(PEPPER *above desk R. resentful.*)

I think things will be arranged more satisfactorily without you. Fortunately, Mr. Tathem is out just now. It would have been very serious for me if he'd found you here.

TOMMY. I shall never set foot in this office again, Mr. Cottenham.

JIMMIE. Thank you so much, Miss Pepper. Good-bye, Miss Pepper. Good-bye sir. I am grateful to you, all the same, very grateful—Good-bye. (*backs on to L. table; to HARRY*) Will you see your friends out (*up to door L. HARRY upon his R.*) and I should like a moment with you afterwards.

(*Exit JIMMIE up L. HARRY tries to stop him and brushed aside.*)

TOMMY. (*shrug; c.*) He didn't receive my apology very graciously.

PEPPER. (R.) It's just what I expected.

TOMMY. I know why he was so disagreeable.

PEPPER. Why?

TOMMY. (*to her father*) He doesn't like *you*.

(HARRY *laughs loudly, till observed by PEPPER*).

I noticed it in the country. As soon as you came he became irritable.

PEPPER. I thought it would end up in being my fault.

TOMMY. Well, never mind, it's all over now, isn't it? (*to HARRY*) It does seem strange—all the men I know would crawl on their knees from one end of London to the other for a smile from me, and I come here to be snubbed by a little Government clerk—it is strange—very—strange.

PEPPER. (*goes up c.*) Well, my dear child, it may not have occurred to you, but there is only one way out of it: that is, for us to go. (*goes to R. door*) Good morning, Mr. Killick.

(*Exit R. U. E.*)

TOMMY. (*she follows PEPPER to door up R., she turns back; to HARRY*) Do you know when I'm with Mr. Cottenham I feel as though I were crunching unripe gooseberries, which set my teeth on edge, and yet I long for more.

(HARRY *turns away delighted.*)

PEPPER. (*from without*) Tommy!

TOMMY. (*annoyed*) I'm coming, papa. Good-bye, Mr. Killick. (*shakes hands*) I must say your friend has a frightful temper. I pity the people who are obliged to come in contact with him every day. (*goes towards door R., stands irresolute a moment in doorway, then comes back*)—Does he do his work in this room?

HARRY. (*stepping forward eagerly to desk R.*) Yes, this is his desk. (*on L. of it*)

TOMMY. And is this his chair? (*down R. of desk, puts bag on desk*)

(HARRY *shuts door, returns L. of desk.*)

HARRY. Yes, his own little chair, (TOMMY *pats chair*) and here are his pens, his pins, his ink and his blotter.

(TOMMY *touches each article and repeats the word.*)

TOMMY. And *this* is his blotter? (*goes to open it*)

HARRY. (*tragically, puts his hands on it*) No, no. Don't touch his blotter. (TOMMY *hands behind her*)—anything but that.

TOMMY. Why?

HARRY. He expressly forbade it. He said to me: "If Miss Tommy should manage to get in here please don't let her touch my blotter." He seemed to have a particular reason for not wanting you to touch his blotter.

(*Hands off, step back quickly, goes L. listens for her to open it.*)

(Pause. TOMMY hesitates, then raises the cover of the blotting case—catching sight of her photograph.)

TOMMY. Oh! (shuts it quickly)

HARRY. (with satisfaction) What is it? (goes to desk L.)

(TOMMY sits R. of desk R.)

(Re-enter PEPPER up R., stands in doorway breathless.)

PEPPER. Tommy!—My dear child,—I daresay you think it a joke to make me come up all these steps again . . . aren't you coming?

TOMMY. Thomas dear, (up to him on his L.) will you leave me two minutes with Mr. Killick?

PEPPER. You surely don't want to apologise to him now. Well, what do you want to say all of a sudden to Mr. Killick?

TOMMY. If I told you I shouldn't have to ask you to please go out while I said it.

PEPPER. And leave you to come home alone. No, no. (taking her arm and going outside door)

HARRY. Might I make a suggestion? (comes L.C.)

TOMMY. (pulls PEPPER back, saying,) Yes, yes, of course.

PEPPER. (R. C.) No, no, no.

HARRY. (L.) Are you taking the car?

PEPPER. No. I shall walk.

HARRY. Well then, I suggest you leave your daughter with me, and I'll take her home in the car, as we are all to meet at lunch.

PEPPER. No, no, certainly—certainly——

TOMMY. Thomas!

PEPPER. (*going out*) Very well, at two o'clock sharp.

(*Exit door R.*)

TOMMY. Good-bye, Thomas. (*stands dreamily L. of desk R.*)

HARRY. Won't you sit down? (*gets chair from up R. and puts it L. of desk R.*)

TOMMY. Oh!

HARRY. You were dreaming.

TOMMY. (*L. of desk*) No, I wasn't. Mr. Cottenham's manner was very, very distant.

HARRY. Yes—very.

TOMMY. He said that he never wished to see me again.

HARRY. He did express that wish.

TOMMY. Everything in Mr. Cottenham's actions proved that he is indifferent to me.

HARRY. (*emphatically*) It might almost be said that his feeling amounts to dislike.

TOMMY. Very well then. Will you kindly lift the cover of his blotter and see what there is inside. (*HARRY goes L. protestingly*) Please.

HARRY. (*crosses to R. of desk below—pause—hesitation*) (*He opens the blotting case*) Oh! (*with an exclamation of astonishment shuts it quickly, (with both hands, and jumps into chair R. of desk.)*)

TOMMY. (C.) There's no mistake about it, it's me—me—me! He keeps my photograph in his blotter. How do you account for that, Mr. Killick?

HARRY. (*greatly affected*) Fool! fool! Addlepated fool!

TOMMY. What is the matter? (*above table to him*)

HARRY. (*cross to L. of desk and sits on it, face averted from her*) No, no, I promised to say nothing—he made me swear.

TOMMY. Why did he make you swear?

HARRY. How comes he to have your photograph. Are they on sale?

TOMMY. Certainly not!

HARRY. Then what does it mean?

TOMMY. (*casually*) Then *what* does it mean? I don't know—do you?

HARRY. I know nothing about it. No one will drag a word out of me. (*sits chair L. of desk*) Wild horses wouldn't drag it out of me. Oh, what a rash fool I've been.

TOMMY. (*pick up bag, approaching him on his L.*) Is he in love with me? (*hesitatingly*)

HARRY. I never said so. (*joy from TOMMY*) You mustn't tell him I said so. (*looks to front*)

TOMMY. You dear old ingenuous thing—(*above him*)

(HARRY *assumes a look of sweet innocence—smiles, fold hands.*)

HARRY. Are you glad?

TOMMY. Glad? . . . I don't think so—I don't quite

know—I just feel topsy-turvy. (*little laugh. Go to L. desk*)

HARRY. (*rise R. C., over her shoulder*) Don't you see, his line of conduct is as clear as daylight. He's putting you on the wrong scent so that no one shall accuse him of wanting you for your money. A man who felt indifferent would at least be polite. He treats you like the dirt beneath his feet, (*TOMMY stamps*) which proves beyond doubt that he does care for you.

TOMMY. He loves *me*.

HARRY. Madly.

TOMMY. (*little laugh*) What am I going to do? (*turn to him sitting on desk L.*)

HARRY. (C.) But I shouldn't let it upset you. If you were to say to him: "What is my photograph doing there?" he would answer: "I don't know: I didn't put it there." Now be kind, go out of his life. Let him forget you, and resign himself to marrying the Tathem girl.

(*Telephone ready.*)

TOMMY. (*cross R. casually*) Well; I think it simply amazing that a man should have the courage to be rude to a girl, so that she should not know he was in love with her, it's quite out of the common. I'm so tired of people who all say the same things to me—it's so refreshing to meet some one different. Mr. Killick (*with sudden resolution*) I am determined

now not to leave here till I'm good friends with Mr. Cottenham.

(SIMPSON *throws open R. U. door.*)

HARRY. (*indicates*)

(TOMMY *hides L. of desk.*)

(*Enter SIMPSON up R. with tray covered which he places on JIMMIE'S desk.*)

HARRY. Mr. Cottenham will be here in a moment.

SIMPSON. Thank you, sir.

(*Exit R. U. E.*)

TOMMY. (*rises*) What's that man doing here?
(*whispering at desk*)

HARRY. He's brought in Jimmie's lunch. (*whisper at desk*)

TOMMY. Does he lunch here? (*cross R. to desk*)

HARRY. Whenever he's in charge.

TOMMY. At his desk?

HARRY. At his desk.

TOMMY. How nice! It must be amusing to be a Government clerk.

(*A ring on the telephone.*)

Do the married clerks have their wives to lunch with them here?

(*Another ring on the telephone.*)

HARRY. Oh no, that's not allowed. Mr. Tatham wouldn't allow it.

TOMMY. Nasty snappy old thing. That's a pity. I think it would be very nice for the wives.

(Telephone rings vigorously.)

TOMMY. I can't stand that—I'll answer it. *(cross L. takes receiver)* *(She speaks through the telephone)* Are you there? *(To HARRY)* It's a man. Who do you want? He isn't here. *(through the telephone)* I've told you he isn't here. . . . I'm to go and fetch him? You order me to—I'll do nothing of the kind—you're an old bore. *(HARRY interrupts)* *(Puts up receiver, holds her hand to her ears. Gets C.)* *(HARRY replaces telephone)* Oh—such language—there's no excuse for it except he was declaring war.

(Enter JIMMIE up L.)

JIMMIE. *(up L. with a bundle of papers)* What, still here?

(TOMMY cross down R.)

HARRY. *(R. C. goes up to desk up C. and takes up his hat)* We're simply going to say good-bye once more, and then leave you to your lunch.

JIMMIE. Thank you. *(comes L. C.)*

TOMMY. *(below desk R. going up stage looking at lunch)* Your little lunch smells so awfully good—and looks so tempting.

JIMMIE. You're joking, Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. I am not. I'm sure it must be delicious. What is it? *(lifts cover)*

JIMMIE. Irish stew.

TOMMY. Oh! (*covers it tenderly*) I've never tasted it . . . we have such rich things in our house.

JIMMIE. Naturally.

TOMMY. Well—good-bye. (*goes up R.*)

JIMMIE. Good-bye.

(*HARRY opens door.*)

TOMMY. (*returns between JIMMIE and HARRY*)
Come now, do make an effort and say something nice to me before I leave you.

JIMMIE. My compliments to your father . . .
That's nice, isn't it?

TOMMY. Very. Good-bye.

(*Exit R. JIMMIE puts paper on desk L. HARRY nudges JIMMIE and follows her laughing, shuts door.*)

(*JIMMIE kneels him off, left alone is relieved; cross R. of desk R., uncovers tray, moves coffee pot, milk and sugar up to top of desk, moves dish up to top, uncovers, smells stew, takes plate and helps himself to stew at top of desk, two spoonfuls and two searches for onion, replaces plate R., opens ginger ale, getting gas from same in eye as he does so, spills some, foot on it, pours out ginger ale, gets paper from pocket of overcoat, finds place, sits in chair, stands paper against cruet, takes napkin, salt, and commences his meal. After first mouthful break roll in two.*)

The door opens and TOMMY re-appears.

JIMMIE smiles at jokes in paper.

TOMMY comes in quietly, closes door silently, looks at

JIMMIE, *hangs her scarf on pegs R. then turns and knocks on door to attract his attention.*

JIMMIE *nervously looks to R. then up to her, rising, half uncertain whether to sit or stand, and mouth full of stew.*)

JIMMIE. Have you forgotten anything, Miss Pepper?

TOMMY. No, no . . . (*standing above chair L. of R. desk*)

JIMMIE. What have you come back for, then?

TOMMY. Irish stew.

JIMMIE. Really, Miss Pepper—I must insist—

TOMMY. I expected you'd receive me like this (*puts bag on desk R.*) But I came back just the same. I couldn't resist your Irish stew.

JIMMIE. You can get it in any restaurant, Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. Ah, but I want some of yours.

JIMMIE. I've already told you that if Mr. Tatham were to see you here—

TOMMY. I've been making inquiries . . . there's not the slightest risk. He never comes back before three—won't you please give me a little Irish stew?

JIMMIE. (*sits*) I can't very well refuse you, Miss Pepper, but really—

TOMMY. Oh, how nice of you! (*takes fork and meat*) You don't know, you will never know, what pleasure you're giving me. (*tastes*)

JIMMIE. I'm sure you won't like it. (*eats*)

TOMMY. (*standing top of desk*) It's perfectly delicious! It's a dream. I'd give my life for this Irish stew. (*tastes*)

JIMMIE. Much too fat for my taste.

TOMMY. You are rather partial to "lean." (*sit chair L. of desk*)

JIMMIE. What do you mean, Miss Pepper?

TOMMY. I noticed that when I saw Miss Tathem.

JIMMIE. Oh! Miss Tathem is not "lean" Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. Well: she's neither one nor the other. (*peeps round paper*) May I help myself to a little more? (*takes grape plate*)

JIMMIE. Certainly.

(*She helps herself.*)

JIMMIE. (*rises and up to door R.*) Oh, this is too much.

TOMMY. (*looking up quickly*) Shall I put some back?

JIMMIE. I didn't mean too much stew, Miss Pepper. (*opens and shuts door*) But your father—won't he be expecting you? (*sits again*)

TOMMY. Papa? Oh he must wait. Surely he ought to put himself out a little for you.

(*He drinks, shutting eyes.*)

(*She removes paper, throws it on floor C.*)

(*He rises questioningly, sits again.*)

TOMMY. If I were not taking a liberty, I would ask you——

JIMMIE. What for?

TOMMY. I'm simply dying of thirst.

JIMMIE. How thoughtless of me. But I have only one glass and I've already drunk out of it.

TOMMY. Oh, that doesn't matter in the least. But you may not like to use it after me.

JIMMIE. Oh! we mustn't be too particular.

(She takes glass.)

While I regret a familiarity to which I have no right——

(She drinks and gives him glass.)

I can quite well drink after you, Miss Pepper. *(drinking)*

TOMMY. They say that's a way of guessing another person's thoughts.

JIMMIE. *(eats)* I can guess yours quite easily. You thought, as I was the only man who until now had resisted your whims, it would be rather amusing to force me into this tête-à-tête.

TOMMY. No, not at all. My thoughts were far more stupid than that. When I left you just now, I felt frightfully bored at the thought of going home to find Lord Enderby.

JIMMIE. So he's made it up with you?

TOMMY. Oh no, but he has with papa. Lord Enderby is to lunch with us to-day.

JIMMIE. I see, to try and get friends with you again.

TOMMY. Yes. I thought of him waiting for me at home. Then I thought of the Irish stew and of you sitting here nibbling all alone. May I have a bit of ro^l. (*taking it*)

JIMMIE. Wouldn't you like this bit? (*offering ro^l*)

TOMMY. So I said to Mr. Killick: "Good-bye, I'm going to taste the stew." And here I am!

JIMMIE. I know—Just the fancy of an heiress—always looking for something new.

TOMMY. (*rises—moves salad—puts dirty plates together top of desk*) It's too bad. You're always reproaching me for being rich. It isn't my fault. I'm sorry enough for it. (*puts oil and vinegar in salad*)

JIMMIE. It's only the rich people can afford to say that—I'm not reproaching you, Miss Pepper, but you must confess you treat me like a mere play-thing—this I resent.

(*TOMMY sprinkles pepper plentifully on salad.*)

I know I am quite insig—— (*sneezes*)

(*TOMMY goes c. sneezing and holding pepper-pot.*)

JIMMIE. (*sneezing loudly, at which she starts*) I'm awfully sorry. I can't help making this row. I know I'm quite insignificant in the eyes of the world, but I think enough of myself to maintain my self-respect.

(*TOMMY puts salad on his plate.*)

TOMMY. Oh, I see, and because I nearly separate you from your Elsie, you sent me flying (*hands salad*)

plate to him) to maintain your self-respect. (*cross L. sit on desk L.*)

JIMMIE. There's something in that, Miss Pepper, but if you—etc.

(*TOMMY puts salad in cuffs on desk L.*) (*nervously looks round.*)

Oh, I say—Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. (*leave bowl on desk L.*) I don't know whether I'm prejudiced against your Elsie, (*gets bunch of grapes and goes c. eating them*) but I really can't make out what you see in her. I don't care what you say—she's scraggy.

JIMMIE. No, Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. She's a weak, washed-out, depressing person, and she is too little for you—that's quite certain, you can't say "No, Miss Pepper" to that. What you want is a bright jolly wife—(*dangles grapes over him, finally throwing them to him.*)

(*He catches them, one going up his sleeve, he gets it down, much amused*)

You need cheering up.

(*She seats herself on RICKETTS' desk.*)

Your life is so—monotonous. (*brushes off papers R.*)

JIMMIE. (*rises*) Pardon me, Miss Pepper, but you are upsetting Mr. Ricketts' papers. (*kneels c. picks up papers*)

(*TOMMY upsets L. papers.*)

TOMMY. Such dull stuff (*reading*) "Statistics of

rural imbecility in the outlying districts of the Bigrotta." (*brushing them off the desk*) Oh, it's enough to bore any one to death. (*sings*) "Yip-I-addy-I ay" (*and kicks desk*)

JIMMIE. Oh, please don't sing—don't kick the desk—they'll hear it downstairs and come rushing up. (*Putting papers on desk c.*) Will you please take some coffee.

(*Goes to desk R. and pours out coffee.*)

TOMMY. I shall be very pleased.

(*Sits L. of desk R.*)

JIMMIE. (*comes top of desk offering her his cup*) Will you do me the honour of drinking first.

TOMMY. I will.

JIMMIE. Sugar? (*taking up sugar tongs*)

TOMMY. No, never. (*drinks*)

JIMMIE. It's really absurd. We haven't a single taste in common. I always take four lumps.

TOMMY. Then you don't drink coffee—you drink treacle.

(*She puts in four lumps. JIMMIE laughs.*)

That's the first time I've ever heard you laugh—what a funny little laugh.

(*JIMMIE pleased, swings napkin, hitting chair.*)

It isn't so painful, is it?

JIMMIE. Oh no, it isn't a painful laugh.

TOMMY. What do you think of my fiancé?

JIMMIE. I've never seen him Miss Pepper (*sits R. of desk, takes coffee.*)

TOMMY. I wish I could say the same. I see him so often it's unbearable.

JIMMIE. You surprise me.

TOMMY. When you give us the pleasure of dining at our house—

(*Look from JIMMIE.*)

—you can't refuse now—you must allow me to return your hospitality—I'll introduce him to you. You'll see. He's far too tall for me. You'll see at once, Lord Enderby's utterly out of the question for me.

JIMMIE. It's a pity—he has such a nice face—I mean nice place, and he has a title.

TOMMY. He's all title—and no brains.

JIMMIE. Then why marry him?

TOMMY. I thought I ought to try and do one thing to please papa.

JIMMIE. I feel sure nobody who knows you, (*rises, down R.*) would believe that you would do anything except to please yourself.

TOMMY. (*rise*) You don't understand me at all. I appear headstrong because everybody gives way to me, but in reality I'm most submissive.

JIMMIE. (*laughing*) Ha, ha! That's really too good.

TOMMY. But it is so—just as you in reality have

an obstinate dominating character. (*sits on desk L. corner of same*)

JIMMIE. I—dominating—obstinate—

TOMMY. (*ticks off on fingers*) Yes. Now just think a moment. You didn't wish to take me in your house when my motor broke down.

JIMMIE. No!

TOMMY. You didn't wish to give me your room—

(JIMMIE. “No—er!”)

you didn't wish me to come here,—

(JIMMIE. “Er, er, no!”)

you didn't wish me to lunch with you.

(JIMMIE. “No!”)

Every little thing I've asked you, you've refused.

(JIMMIE *laughs*)

Now isn't that obstinate and dominating. (*wags finger*)

JIMMIE. (*turns head to her quite fascinated*) What a quaint little person you are, to be sure. (*up R. of desk, puts down cup, pours out brandy*)

(*She rises, gets c. a little.*)

TOMMY. What's in that. I haven't had any of that!

JIMMIE. Brandy. (*pours it out*)

TOMMY. Brandy—that's strong, isn't it?

JIMMIE. Yes, frightfully fiery spirit.

TOMMY. It's for men, isn't it?

JIMMIE. Yes, only for men.

TOMMY. I'll take a little.

JIMMIE. No—it's too strong for you, Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. Now there you are—what was I just saying to you? You won't let me have any brandy.

JIMMIE. I don't think that you ought to—of course if you insist. (*gives her glass*)

(*She takes glass—she tastes it.*)

TOMMY. And you're quite right, it is nasty . . . (*makes a face*) You drink it. (*returns glass, goes c.*)

JIMMIE. It serves you right. (*drinks*) (*sits front of desk in c. of same*)

(*Pause. TOMMY quietly comes and sits on front of desk to his L., He shifts an inch to R., She moves closer, He shifts again, She moves a third time and he shifts round the angle of desk to face R.*)

TOMMY. Do you know many Gaiety girls?

JIMMIE. Many Gaiety girls—I don't know one.

TOMMY. At your age—It's incredible!

JIMMIE. All the same it's true.

TOMMY. Lord Enderby knows one. He showed her to me at Newmarket; she was very pretty; they're awfully fascinating aren't they?

JIMMIE. I don't know. You'll have to ask Lord Enderby. (*rise goes R. of desk*)

TOMMY. (*rises*). Mr. Cottenham, I hope you'll bring your wife to see me when you're married. (*L. of desk*)

JIMMIE. I shall be delighted, that'll be awfully jolly. (*covers tray up, angrily*)

TOMMY. Mr. Cottenham—

(JIMMY returns, "Yes!")

look me straight in the eye. (*at desk*)

JIMMIE. You—In the eye? (*looks front*)

TOMMY. Are you happy at the idea of marrying Miss Tathem?

JIMMIE. Of course (*looks at her*) I am, frightfully happy!

TOMMY. Then tell me—why—

JIMMIE. Why—Why what?

TOMMY. Why did you keep my photograph in your blotter?

JIMMIE. There's no photograph in my blotter. (*opening the case, takes out photo.*) Why yes, there you are.

(TOMMY turns L. *delighted.*)

I suppose this is meant for a joke. (*puts photo in pocket, not seen by her*) I don't think it funny, it's very indiscreet. If Mr. Tathem had found it! . . .

TOMMY. (*go to him R.*) Bravo—bravo—A man who can conceal his true feelings like you do—must have a will of iron. (*go L.*)

JIMMIE. Ah?

TOMMY. I love to see it in a man. Oh, I never felt so angry at being rich.

JIMMIE. (*going to her*) Why?

(*She gets L. C.*)

TOMMY (L. C.) Oh, er—because——

JIMMIE. (*gets R. C.*) Because——

TOMMY. Oh nothing—you have a noble unselfish nature——

JIMMIE. I—noble—unselfish!

TOMMY. At any rate we shall be good friends, Mr. Cottenham, shan't we?

JIMMIE. Very good friends, I hope, Miss Pepper. (*returns R. C.*)

TOMMY. Men like you are very rare.

(*JIMMIE swings hand delightedly.*)

You're a delightful host—I should never have found that out if it hadn't been for that adorable Irish stew. Thanks to our little lunch—we are now the best of friends. (*giving him her hand*) Aren't we?

JIMMIE. (*forgetting all his old animosity is unconsciously falling in love, takes her hand*) Certainly we are. (*pause*) Certainly. (*laughs nervously and self-consciously, still holding her hand*) When two nations who have been at war make peace they usually sign a treaty.

TOMMY. Sign a treaty?

JIMMIE. Have you any objection to that? (*drops hand*)

TOMMY. Oh no. (*as though it were of no importance*) Well—go on—sign—write it out. (*moving round towards desk, cross in front*)

JIMMIE. One moment. (*catches her R. hand as she turns*) I sign this way—(*he bends and kisses her*)

hand) (pause, lets her hand drop, and backs to C., nervously crossing legs. R. heel in front; R. foot cross behind; R. foot cross in front)

TOMMY. (embarrassed) Must I sign too?

JIMMIE. (imperturbably) That's the law, both parties must sign the contract.

(TOMMY hesitates and seems at a loss what to do, suddenly comes to a determination and turns to her, holding out her arms; he backs nervously to L., then holds out his face as expecting a kiss.)

TOMMY. Sit down. (motions him to chair L. of desk)

JIMMIE. Oh. (disappointed)

(JIMMIE sits in chair facing audience. L. of desk—she quickly takes large quill pen from inkstand, dips it in the ink.)

JIMMIE. Whatever are you going to do—There's the pen and ink—but where's the paper?

TOMMY. Now don't you move—(sits on desk L. of it; puts her left arm round his shoulder to hold him down and writes on his white shirt front in large letters)
Peace—Tommy.

(JIMMIE laughs.)

(Warn band.)

What is it?

JIMMIE. It tickles. (squirms joyously)

(As TOMMY writes the door opens. TATHEM appears at door down R., shuts door, holds picture.)

TATHEM. Ahem! (R.)

JIMMIE. { (L. C. backs to L. then buttons coat and turns
and collar up) separating from one another)
TOMMY. { Oh! (R. C. up to R. window, catches flies
and bows to TATHEM.)

TATHEM. Of course—(R. puts hat on desk R.) I do not know who the good friend is who telephoned me to come here at once, but thanks to this anonymous friend I've found you out.

JIMMIE. I assure you that it was nothing but . . .

TATHEM. The chief wants to see you. (goes to door down R. and opens it)

JIMMIE. Ah! What for?

TATHEM. I don't know.

JIMMIE. Before I go, let me explain—

TATHEM. The chief cannot be kept waiting.

JIMMIE. (to TOMMY) Explain to him, Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. I will.

JIMMIE. Explain to him that I have not forfeited (cross to TATHEM) on page 15 and 16.

TATHEM. I order you to go to the chief at once. (step back)

(TOMMY holds out pen to JIMMIE as he goes.)

(Exit JIMMIE down R., he slams door, dragging TATHEM who is holding handle along with it.)

TOMMY. (L. C.) Now, Mr. Tathem—

TATHEM. (taking hat, moving to C.) Young woman, you'll have to clear out of here at once.

TOMMY. Have to clear out?

TATHEM. (R. C.) And consider yourself very lucky. Mr. Cottenham will not be long after you. I have every reason to believe that the Under-Secretary is about to ask for his resignation.

TOMMY. (L. C.) But how absurd, don't be so unreasonable. We were only signing a treaty—it's always done in Government offices.

TATHEM. Rubbish. Mr. Cottenham was most impertinent to the Under-Secretary over the telephone. (*indic. 'phone L.*)

TOMMY. (*looks towards 'phone*) Was *that* the Under-Secretary—then he ought to be ashamed of himself—his language would have done credit to Limehouse. Mr. Cottenham has done nothing. (*down L. and up to L. C. again*)

TATHEM. Nothing! he has insulted his superiors—he has converted the Colonial Office into a private dining room for—for doubtful acquaintances—he——

TOMMY. (*throws down pen*) How dare you talk to me like that? I move in the very best circle——

TATHEM. Then I'll give the very best circle five minutes to clear out. (*crosses her up to L.*)

TOMMY. (*go up R.*) Then it's quite understood that you don't want Mr. Cottenham for a son-in-law now?

TATHEM. Quite.

TOMMY. (*beginning to get together her various things very quickly*) Are you sure you won't regret it?

TATHEM. Nothing in the world would induce me to accept him now.

TOMMY. Thank you.

(*Rushes out R. U. E.*)

(TATHEM *exit L. to his room, muttering to himself.*)

(*Enter JIMMIE R. down.*)

(*JIMMIE crosses L.*)

(*Enter HARRY up R., gets C.*)

HARRY. Well, Jimmie, how did you get on?

(*JIMMIE crosses C.*)

JIMMIE. Get on? be damned—I'm dismissed the service. (*sit L. of R. desk*)

HARRY. Dismissed! What for?

JIMMIE. She took advantage of my absence to answer the telephone, called the Chief an old bore—

(*HARRY looks at 'phone.*)

—and—oh you know how she goes on. I told him the truth—but no one ever believes the truth—it's all over, I'm in the hands of fate. (*leans on desk*)

HARRY. Yes, fate will take care of you.

JIMMIE. (*looks up*) Yes, I had the pleasure of meeting the Chief for the first time—an awfully nice chap—didn't ask for any explanation—made no fuss at all—simply said most politely, "Mr. Cottenham, I shall be pleased to accept your resignation." I said: "Thank you, sir," and the interview ended. (*leans on desk*) I shall struggle no more. From now on I accept everything that happens to me with a smile.

HARRY. My dear Jimmie, what does it matter, you'll—

JIMMIE. Whatever comes now I'll laugh at it.
(Enter MR. TATHEM up L., comes down c. to them.)

HARRY drops back up c.)

TATHEM. My daughter, sir— (L. c.)

JIMMIE. (rises, laughing) Ah—ah—ah! (wagging hand at him)

(TATHEM steps back to L. of desk L.)

You have come to say that I am an utter scoundrel and that you will never give me your daughter.

TATHEM. Yes, sir.

HARRY. (delighted) Ah—

JIMMIE. (smiles) Please, don't trouble to explain it—I quite agree with everything you're going to say.
(returns R. c., waving hand)

TATHEM. You do. Well then, I shall ask you—

JIMMIE. And please don't trouble to ask for my resignation—the Chief has considered me of sufficient importance to ask for that himself. (waves handkerchief joyously)

TATHEM. I give you five minutes to leave this office.

(Exits up L.)

JIMMIE. Thank you very much, sir, Merry Xmas. (quietly) As there's nothing more doing I think I'd better be off. (buttons coat)

HARRY. Where to?

JIMMIE. I don't know. I shall walk straight ahead,

and the first stream of any importance that I come to—— (*crosses L.*)

HARRY. That will probably be the Thames——

JIMMIE. I shall throw myself into it. (*crosses c.*)

HARRY. Come now, Jimmie, you know you don't mean it.

JIMMIE. Don't I, though!

HARRY. (*turns him to him*) Your happiness is lying at the bottom of the tea-cup, if you'll only look at it.

(*Enter TOMMY with PEPPER up R.*)

(*HARRY gets L. of desk L.*)

TOMMY. Here he is, papa. (*pushes him to c.*)

JIMMIE. Ah!—ah! (*smiling*) Good morning, sir.

(*PEPPER retreats behind chair R. c.*)

PEPPER. I've seen you before. (*comes c.*)

JIMMIE. I don't care. Miss Pepper, I don't quite see what new calamity you can bring upon me, but I'm prepared. Go on sir.

PEPPER. Mr. Cottenham, when I first met you you were so abusive and objectionable that I had sworn never to see you again—unless it were to box your ears.

JIMMIE. Pray don't hesitate. (*bending face down*) Do it, do it.

PEPPER. (*restraining himself*) I have no great regard for you, sir, but you're a man of strong character and you command my respect, and at my

daughter's request I am here to ask you to dine with us to-night.

(TOMMY *smiles.*)

(*Warn Curtain.*)

HARRY. Bravo!

JIMMIE. What did you say, sir? (*angry*)

PEPPER. (*a tug from TOMMY, PEPPER smiles*) I said, would you do us the honour of dining with us to-night?

JIMMIE. (*restrains himself with great difficulty*) Never sir—never—a lunch with your daughter has been more than enough for me.

(HARRY *hits him with hat.*)

TOMMY. Don't believe him—he doesn't mean a word he says.

JIMMIE. Yes, I do.

TOMMY }
and } No you don't.

HARRY.)

JIMMIE. Yes, I do.

TOMMY }
and } No you don't.

HARRY.)

(PEPPER *and* TOMMY *drop down R. C.*)

JIMMY. Yes I do. I'd rather work—bareheaded—like a nigger—at the construction of—an—Ethiopian railway in the—middle of July than ever set eyes

on your daughter again for even sixty seconds of the day.

PEPPER. I will not listen. (*up to JIMMIE*)

JIMMIE. Yes, you will.

(*Seizes PEPPER by lapels wildly—move from HARRY restraining him.*)

Nothing can stop me now. (*puts PEPPER up L.*)

PEPPER. You! (*go up L.*) } (*together*)

TOMMY. Father!

JIMMIE. (*gesticulating wildly*) Take care, Miss Pepper (*c.*) lest the floor of this room gives way and the walls fall in upon you.

TOMMY. I ate his lunch—he's hungry.

JIMMIE. Yes, I *am* hungry, but I have still the strength left to tell you that you are the most abominable—the most outrageous little—little egoist that nature in love with monsters ever moulded out of—out of—terrestrial clay.

(*Goes down R., takes his hat, coat and umbrella—above desk R. HARRY crosses to c. by top desk.*)

Go back to your motor cars, your yachts and castles with your poor deluded father

(*Movement from PEPPER restrained by HARRY—exclamation of admiration from TOMMY.*)

who has ruined you with his over-indulgence! (*taps dish with hat*) The day will come when the voice of remorse will speak within your soul—on that day,

ashamed—terrified—(*puts on hat*) you will remember my words. (*slaps top of hat*) Good-bye for ever.

(*Exit R. HARRY dashes out after him R., PEPPER follows.*

TOMMY in exultation C. of stage raises hands to heaven.)

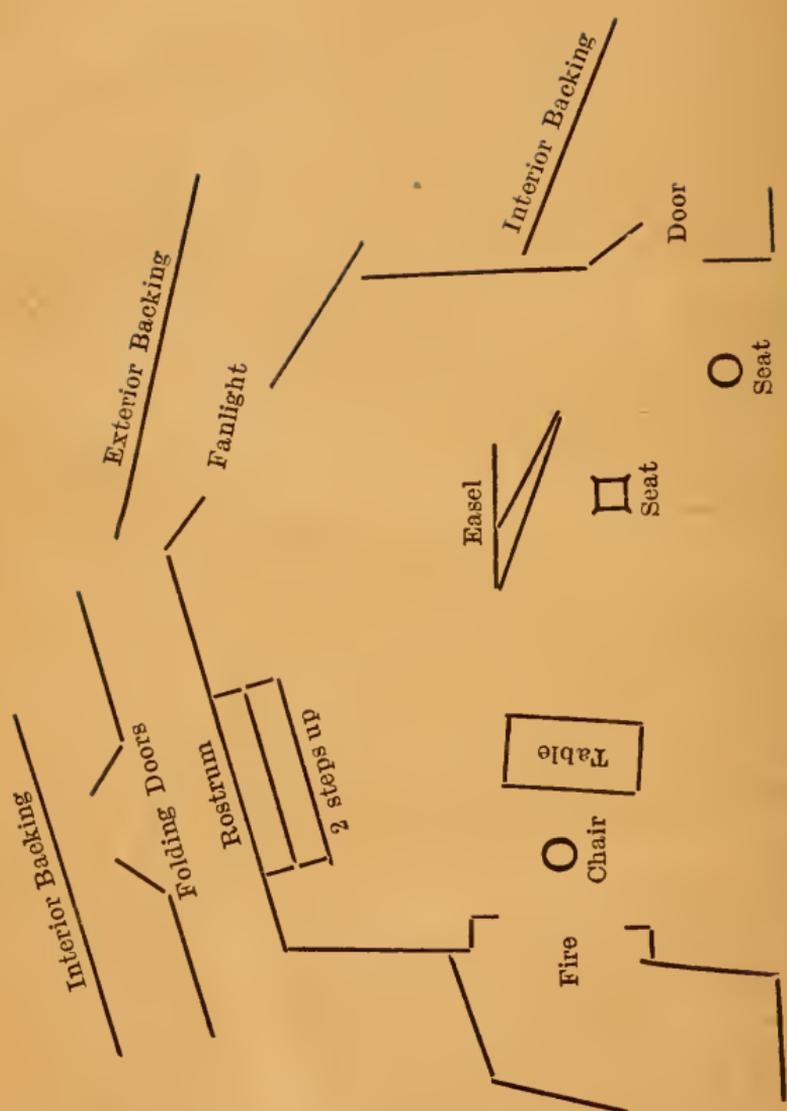
CURTAIN.

No picture. 1st Call HARRY R., TOMMY C., JIMMY L.

2nd Call, JIMMIE presents TOMMY pompously with lettuce as bouquet—he gets this from desk L. when curtain is down, she receives it smiling and bowing.

3rd Call, TOMMY curtsies deeply to JIMMIE.

Time—38 minutes.



"Tantalising Tommy." Act IV. Carpet. Ceiling.

ACT IV

SCENE.—*A modern studio artistically furnished. Entrance in the background. Doors up right and left*
I. E. L. C. PEPPER'S portrait facing down stage.
As the curtain rises HARRY is looking at the portrait down L. dressed in Japanese kimono richly embroidered with storks—in gold.

(JIMMIE enters, stands on steps a moment.)

JIMMIE. Good morning. (*top of steps*) Morning!

(HARRY adds final flourish to signature on picture, and swings easel round facing up stage. JIM sees picture, is horrified, and exclaims.)

JIMMIE. I say, old man, it'll kill old teapot. (*puts kat on table R.*)

HARRY. (*crosses R. to table and sits on L. side of it*)
How about that stream you were going to find oblivion in?

JIMMIE. (*embarrassed, sits stool*) There was a bridge over it—it gave me time to think, so I came back from Waterloo by the tube.

HARRY. You're a fool.

JIMMIE. What have I done?

HARRY. You have blighted all my hopes, you

have slipped from under me like a rotten ladder.

JIMMIE. What d'ye mean? I've done nothing to you. (*rise L. C.*)

HARRY. Nothing! Ye gods—and—and—and unemployed. (*Palette on table. Turning to JIMMIE*) You met one of the richest and prettiest girls in London, I decided that she should marry a mere nobody, and the mere nobody insults her! It's unbelievable. It's exasperating! (*into chair R. of Table*)

JIMMIE. (*excited*) What are you talking about? You decided——?

HARRY. (*calm and collected*) Yes, Mr. Cottenham, I. In my own interest I punctured four tyres, that's where I stopped—in *your* interests—I (*cross legs*) smoked cigars strong enough to make one's head swim, I stole photographs to put in your blotter——

JIMMIE. You stole that photograph?

HARRY. I telephoned Mr. Tathem to return to the office—when you were lunching with——

JIMMIE. You! So I've you to thank for that beastly Irish stew business, have I?

HARRY. I succeeded in getting you asked to dinner by T. H. Pepper himself—I lauded you to the skies—he would have accepted *you* as a son-in-law——

JIMMIE. (*dumbfounded*) A—a—what! (*leans on table R.*)

HARRY. A son-in-law.

JIMMIE. Rot. (*go L. a little*)

HARRY. I know it.

JIMMIE. I, the son-in-law of a man who looks for a peer for his money. I the husband of a girl who always hated me—my dear chap you're completely off the canvas—you've lost your background. (*return c.*)

HARRY. (*rise, comes R. C.*) You weakling. (*folds kimono*)

JIMMIE. What do you cover yourself with a lot of partridges for? (*alluding to kimono*)

HARRY. You—you, insignificant person——

JIMMIE. Do your people know of this?

HARRY. You've no ambition. (*go R.*)

JIMMIE. (*ditto*) Ambition—(*up and down c.*) ah, that's at the bottom of all your duplicity, *your* ambition. You've used me as a ladder you've built up your happiness on——

HARRY. My happiness! (*kimono open*) That hasn't lasted long. The portrait will never be paid for. Old Pepper's done with me.

JIMMIE. (*surprised*) Is that true?

HARRY. You don't suppose he wants to see me again after the way you treated him, and Miss Tommy. I'll have to leave here at once.

JIMMIE. Why, isn't this your studio?

HARRY. No.

JIMMIE. But you told me it was.

HARRY. I didn't know then I only had it by the hour.

(JIMMIE goes L.)

(MAID enters R. C.)

MAID (*announcing*) Mr. Pepper, sir.

HARRY. Pepper—ye gods!

JIMMIE. (*goes up*) I thought he'd done with you.
(*returns to HARRY*)

HARRY. He has come to tell me what he thinks of you, I suppose, and then kick me out. (*gets his palette, Resigned air*) Show him up.

(MAID *exit.*)

JIMMIE. (*starts back*) (*goes up*) I don't want to meet him again. (*runs up to steps*) Is there no other way out? (*down c.*)

(*Enter PEPPER R.*)

HARRY. None.

JIMMIE. No other room—(*cross L.*)—yes.

(HARRY *crosses to easel on R. side and poses*).

HARRY. (*very effusively*) Good morning, Mr. Pepper.

(JIMMIE *bolts into room L. I. E.*)

PEPPER. Was that Mr. Cottenham? (*angry*)

HARRY. (*goes to him*) Won't you sit, Mr Pepper—do sit down.

PEPPER. Wasn't that Mr. Cottenham?

HARRY. (*nervously*) Where, Mr. Pepper?

PEPPER. Where, Mr. Pepper, there Mr. Pepper—it was Mr. Cottenham—he runs away—he's afraid to meet me. (*hat on table*)

HARRY. He's a mystery to me, he annoys me.

PEPPER. You seem to be on good terms with this annoyance. (*get out cheque book*)

HARRY. Life compels us to be on good terms with many annoyances—the new—friends——

PEPPER. (c.) The new friends have not deserted you, Mr. Killick; here's a cheque for £500 for your caricat-teristic painting.

HARRY. Ah! (*pleased*) Do sit down.

(PEPPER crosses and sits seat L. HARRY puts palette by easel, cheque in pocket.)

To what may I attribute the return of your friendship, Mr. Pepper?

PEPPER. To Tommy.

HARRY. (c.) To Miss Tommy? She is thinking of me now. (*surprised*)

PEPPER. My daughter is turning my hair white. Ever since that miserable motor breakdown she has given me no peace. What do you think she did this morning?

HARRY. For the first time in my life, sir—I cannot think—tell me.

PEPPER. She did not come down to breakfast.

HARRY. She is ill?

PEPPER. Worse than that. (*gets out note*)

HARRY. You alarm me. (*close to PEPPER on his R.*)

PEPPER. She locked herself in her room—and sent me this note.

(HARRY gets stool and sits R. of PEPPER.)

(*reading*) “My dear Papa, since you insisted on my

marrying Lord Enderby, I have been reconsidering the matter. I accepted him in a moment of anger." Throwing over a title like that—she's absolutely mad.

HARRY. Oh, not absolutely.

PEPPER. She says she's going to take life seriously—a young girl—

HARRY. A young girl, take life seriously—Ah! then I know the reason—it is *love*! (*look at PEPPER*)

PEPPER. Love? I hope not.

HARRY. Without a shadow of a doubt. (*looks to R*).

PEPPER. *This concerns you. (letter in L. hand away from HARRY)*

HARRY. Me?

PEPPER. Yes, you.

HARRY. You don't mean to say that she—that I—

(*HARRY'S face changes, he turns away to hide his exultation.*)

Ah! I understand— (*rise go R.*) What a fool I've been. (*pose*)

PEPPER. (*sees HARRY smiling*) Well, of course, you know best.

HARRY. Go on, Mr. Pepper, I'm listening. (*resumes seat on stool*)

PEPPER. (*continues reading*) "Tell Mr. Killick I am sorry that I behaved badly to him and to one of his friends . . . whom I have forgotten" . . . Mr. Cottenham.

HARRY. (*face lights up*) Mr. Cottenham. (*carelessly*)

PEPPER. "I shall come to Mr. Killick this morning to ask his forgiveness—and beg him to keep all the things belonging to *me* at the studio—they will help to brighten it up for him." You see she's thinking of you.

HARRY. (*very much moved*) Only of *me*—(*ecstatically*)

PEPPER. And her father——

HARRY. (*turns to him*) Yes, of course.

PEPPER. Listen to this. (*touched. Continuing to read*) "Good-bye, dear Papa, you may stay out as late as you please now, (*HARRY amused*) for I shall pray for you."

HARRY. Good—kind little heart.

PEPPER. She's all heart. (*places letter in pocket*)

HARRY. Is she still locked in that room?

PEPPER. She was, but I went upstairs and *insisted* on seeing her.

HARRY. (*anxiously*) How did she look? Changed?

PEPPER. Don't ask me—she simply said quietly—"You shall not have any more worry about *my* marriage." I said she should marry whoever she pleased.

HARRY. (*rise C.*) (*eagerly, and pulling down waist-coat and fingering tie and collar*) You did—and what did she answer?

PEPPER. "Thank you, dear father.—I shall never marry."

(*A look of consternation comes into HARRY'S face.*)

HARRY. Never? (c.)

PEPPER. "I shall become a nun."

HARRY. I beg pardon?

PEPPER. A nun—in one of the Silent Orders—
silent Tommy!

HARRY. Silent!

PEPPER. And she's instructed the servants to call her "sister"—and she "sisters" and "brothers" them all with such a meek and humble air—(*blows nose*)—I can't bear it.

HARRY. Cheer up, Mr. Pepper; it won't last, it won't last. (*puts stool back*)

PEPPER. Won't it? (*rise, cross c.*) Why, she's given all her Paris gowns to the maids——

HARRY. Love. (*up by easel, foot on seat*)

PEPPER. (*annoyed*) Ah—she's locked up the piano—— (*go R.*)

HARRY. Love again.

PEPPER. And she's sent all her dogs to a home and she's given her banjo to a pierrot. (*below table R.*)

HARRY. All love! (*comes c.*)

PEPPER. (*gives in*) All right. I like her to have whatever she wants—but when it comes to convents and silent orders—I must draw the line somewhere.

HARRY. She doesn't want convents, Mr. Pepper, she wants love. (*to him c.*)

PEPPER. Ah! that's the one thing I can't buy for her.

HARRY. Very prettily expressed. Charming—(*shakes hands*) (*abruptly, as if having come to deter-*

mination) Mr. Pepper, I know your opinion of me as an artist.

(PEPPER *looks to front saying.*)

PEPPER. There can only be one opinion on that point.

HARRY. I should like your opinion of me, as a man.

PEPPER. I think you're a very clever—er, er. I began life like you mixing colours, but I found it more profitable mixing tea—I wish I had a man of your talents with me. (*takes hat from table*)

HARRY Thank you, father—er—Mr. Pepper, (*shakes hand*) a nod's as good as a wink to an Irishman. Miss Tommy will not go into a convent.

PEPPER. I can't prevent her—

HARRY. Go home in peace, Mr. Pepper—leave the rest to me. Miss Tommy will not enter a convent. (*takes him up to steps by arm*)

PEPPER. (*laughing—in high spirits*) You've given me new life—yes—I think she will listen to you. (*shakes hands*) Let me know as soon as possible. I shall be at my office waiting— anxiously—good luck to you.

(*Exit C. to R.*)

(*Enter JIMMIE L. comes C.*)

HARRY. Good luck to both of us! Art! Bah!
(*looks at some canvas on the steps, kicks them away*)
Tea for me. (*comes C.*)

(*JIMMIE stands looking amazed, gets L.*)

JIMMIE. Really, I should have thought it had been barley water. What do you think you're doing?

HARRY. Changing my background. (*takes off kimono*) T. H. Pepper has recognised my talent.

(JIMMIE *smiles quietly.*)

HARRY. And I'm travelling on the road to fortune. (*puts on coat, getting it from fireplace R. Puts kimono on R. chair.*)

JIMMIE. Then your rotten ladder has been of some use to you, after all. (*sits L.*)

HARRY. It wasn't the ladder—it was Tommy. She's been my good angel. (*by table L. of it.*)

JIMMIE. (*bitterly*) And mine. I don't know what I shall do.

HARRY. Your desk is still vacant—(*over to R. of JIMMIE*) Elsie is playing the Maiden's Prayer louder than ever—

JIMMIE. You told me she loved me?

HARRY. Who? Elsie?

JIMMIE. Elsie—no, no, Tommy.

HARRY. (*laughs loudly*)

JIMMIE. What are you laughing in that idiotic way for?

HARRY. Oh, that was all a mistake.

JIMMIE. A mistake!

HARRY. A *great* mistake, and now I come to think of it I cannot imagine how such a ridiculous idea *could* get into my head (*going R.*)

JIMMIE. (*angrily*) Can't you? (*rises, comes c.*) *That* subtle mind of yours, that scents things at a distance—*those* great ideas that come to you suddenly—seem to leave you quicker than they come. Now you say it was all a mistake and you nagged me and nagged me——

HARRY. Nagged you?—I'm not a woman——

JIMMIE. What right have you to muddle up people's lives in this irresponsible way.) (*cross R.*)

HARRY. (c). I—Irrresponsible! I am speaking on the highest authority, and I am convinced that I erred—I am human. I am a man——

JIMMIE. What am I—a monkey—(*up to him c.*)

HARRY. I tell you I *know* what I'm talking about. (*go to easel*)

JIMMIE. (*up c.*) You know—you know—if you didn't know so *much* you wouldn't make so many mistakes—you're—you're driving me mad with your mistakes. (*goes up c.*)

HARRY. It is only by mistakes we find the right way.

JIMMIE. (*pause—quietly comes down R. c.*) Is she going to marry?

HARRY. Who?

JIMMIE. (*by table R.*) Tommy, of course.

HARRY. What difference does it make to you whether *Miss Pepper* marries or not?

JIMMIE. (*indifferently*) Er—er—to me—oh, none at all—I just asked. I suppose now we shan't see her any more.

HARRY. (*go to JIM C.*) We—as friends Jimmy—(*offer hand*) you and I, are a collective body.

JIMMIE. (*feels for coin, then understanding says*) Oh, yes, I see! (*and shakes hands*)

HARRY. But in all matters relating to Miss Pepper (*drop hands*) I prefer to remain an individual. (*go L. a little*)

JIMMIE. Oh, just as you please. (*turns to him, sitting on table*)

HARRY. It isn't as I please. I tried to efface my personality but it insisted, willy nilly. I am the one factor that—

JIMMIE. (R. C.) You—you the one factor. (*astonished*)

HARRY. (C.) T. H. Pepper was most charming, and in a burst of generous confidence I learnt the truth—Jimmy boy—I am the man.

JIMMIE. You! (*breaks out into a peal of hysterical laughter*)

(*Bus. crosses L. then back to R. C. laughing, HARRY collars him by shoulders and laughs with him.*)

HARRY. Yes, we can both laugh now.

JIMMIE. (*laugh, suddenly ceases*) You silly old ass can't you see I'm laughing at you (*throws him off L.*)—can't you see how utterly preposterous it is—Miss Tommy—in love with you—Impossible! (*goes R.*)

HARRY. Am I so unattractive?

JIMMIE. A few minutes ago you swore that I was the man—and called me a fool for contradicting you

—you can't blow hot and cold like this, you have no right to—to—trifle with—with—this sweet young girl.

(*looking to R.*)

HARRY. Her father told me—

JIMMIE. Her father—oh you're trifling with him too. (*turns to HARRY*)

HARRY. Oh, I say—

JIMMIE. Oh, don't put on that innocent air—it's true, you know it, every word of it. (*go up c.*)

HARRY. That's enough—I won't listen to any more of— (*going up c.*)

JIMMIE. (*stops him*) I've listened to your twaddle for fifteen years—the least you can do is to listen to mine for fifteen seconds.

HARRY. (*snap fingers*) Twaddle on. (*L. c. sits seat L.*)

JIMMIE. I tell you—you're utterly unsuited to her, you're hot tempered.

HARRY. So is she.

JIMMIE. No—she's high spirited—you're as obstinate as a mule—

HARRY. So is she.

JIMMIE. She has a little determination—that's all.

HARRY. She's vain.

JIMMIE. So she ought to be—she's charming—fascinating— (*go R.*)

HARRY. So am I.

(*JIMMIE turns away up stage.*)

JIMMIE. Oh, my lor'! You! (*turns to him*) But

you don't love her, Harry. You don't know what love is.

HARRY. (*turns sharp*) I don't. (*rise*) That is the last straw! Love has been the study of my life. (*pose, arms folded*)

JIMMIE. Oh, my lor'! You can't know love— (*turns R. pause*) You must feel it.

HARRY. I do feel it!

JIMMIE. You, you have only one love in your life.

(HARRY *proud.*)

Yourself.

HARRY. (*folding his arms*) Thank you! You have placed me among the Great.

(JIM goes down R. Enter MAID up R. Comes down C. to R. of HARRY.)

MAID. (*to HARRY in low voice*) Sister Evangeline, sir.

HARRY. Show her up!

(SERVANT *exits.*)

JIMMIE. Somebody come to see you?

HARRY. (*to JIMMIE*) It's Tommy. To-morrow morning's *Post* will announce our engagement. We shall honeymoon in the sunshine of Italy—smile, Jimmie,—smile, you shall be my best man! (*goes L.*)

(TOMMY enters C. from R.—all her vivacity gone—her eyes are cast down—she stands the picture of humility. JIMMIE backs a step or two down R. They

stand looking at her with surprise. TOMMY comes down c. To HARRY, then turns and looks at JIMMIE.)

JIMMIE. Good-bye—I'm off. (*up R. of table*)

HARRY. Where are you going?

JIMMIE. To the devil. (*over L. shoulder*) Good
bye. . . .

(Exits quickly c. to R.)

TOMMY. (c.) Did you hear him say where he was going—it's terrible, Brother Harry, terrible. Can't you do something to stop him?

HARRY. (L. c.) There was a time, but he's quite beyond me now. I give him up, Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. Miss Pepper no longer exists. . . . Sister Evangeline, please.

HARRY. When I see you more charming than ever, despite the severity of your dress, and think of the future you have determined upon, Miss Pepper—

TOMMY. Sister—please. (*walks down R. a few steps*)

HARRY. I can't sister you.

TOMMY. (*looking at him, lively tone*) Oh yes, you must, it's the only way I can keep myself in the right mood. If people continue calling me Miss Pepper—I shall go back to all Miss Pepper's bad habits,

(Change of voice, resumes solemn tone.)

and I want to get rid of them, I *must* get rid of them before I enter the convent.

HARRY. Miss Pepper.

TOMMY. Sister—(*little down*)

HARRY. (*turns away L.*) I can't—I can't bear to think of one—so richly endowed—(*TOMMIE looks round at him*) by nature, giving up the world—the joy of living—my heart aches. (*up to her on her L.*)

TOMMY. Our conversation is becoming too worldly. (*cross L. slowly*)

HARRY. (R) I have your father's permission—

TOMMY. Father's!

HARRY. Yes. (*pathetically*) Think of that dear man, full of the fire of youth; he laughs no longer—his hair is turning white. (C.) What surer sign of grief could you have?

TOMMY. (*walks slowly up C., turns*) Do you think your friend will come back?

HARRY. (*up to her*) I can think of no one but you—*You*—do you know what you are giving up?

TOMMY. Everything I have.

HARRY. You are giving up more.

TOMMY. More?

HARRY. (*taking her hands*) (*earnestly*) Miss Pepper—Tommy—do you understand?

TOMMY. No. (*sadly and shaking her head—turns head to him*)—but it's awfully sad.

(HARRY crosses L.)

(*Warn band.*)

(TOMMY gets R. C.)

HARRY. (*disgusted, speaks in matter-of-fact voice, as if reciting a lesson*) You are going into a convent because you love a man— (*up to her on her L.*)

TOMMY. (*her head drooping—in a whisper, nodding her head*) Yes—h-h-how did you know?

HARRY. If *that* man loved you, would you go—into a convent?

TOMMY. (*forgetting herself*) Of course I wouldn't, you dear silly old thing.

HARRY. (*excitedly*) Ah! I knew it—(*taking her hand*) Have I your permission to go to your father and tell him?

(JIMMIE *appears on steps up c.*)

TOMMY. Yes—yes—(*thinking he means JIMMIE, gives an exclamation of joy. Go, go quick, tell father.*

(HARRY *rushes out after shaking hands forcibly with*

JIMMIE *saying "It's all right"; JIMMIE squirms*)

(TOMMY *backs up l. c. Pause—JIMMIE stands silent a minute.*)

TOMMY. Have you forgotten anything?

JIMMIE. Yes, I forgot my bowler.

(*Short pause—then points to picture.*)

There's your father's portrait, have you seen it?

TOMMY. I'll pray Heaven may forgive your friend—for that—

JIMMIE. It's a little trying on a hot day, isn't it?

TOMMY. Do you like it?

JIMMIE. It was a labour of love, on his part.

TOMMY. Love—for papa?

JIMMIE. (*comes down R. C.*) No—for you.

TOMMY. (*L. C.*) For me?

JIMMIE. This studio and everything in it speaks of your affection for him—The very first time I met you, you could not conceal your admiration for him.

TOMMY. No. No.

JIMMIE. I remember your words too well. You said “Your friend is much better looking than you are” (*turns away R.*)

TOMMY. (*smiles*) And you remembered that?

JIMMIE. I remember everything and I see now I’ve been a fool.

TOMMY. Oh no—that’s not true—I’m so thankful you came back, I wanted to see you, and ask your forgiveness before I went away.

JIMMIE. (*pause, looking away from, then turning to her*) Miss Pepper, have you carefully considered) the step you are taking?

TOMMY. Yes.

JIMMIE. But it’s so sudden, you’ve had so little time to think.

TOMMY. I’ve thought more in that little time than I have since I was born.

JIMMIE. Do you realise it is for a lifetime?

TOMMY. Oh no—not always.

JIMMIE. (*astonished*) Good gracious! You can’t enter into such a sacred contract in that spirit.

TOMMY. Oh yes, it’s quite usual—if girls change their minds they can go home to their parents.

JIMMY. But their lives are utterly ruined.

TOMMY. Oh no—they have a much better time in every way.

JIMMIE. Oh, my goodness me! (*go down R. and return*) You are too young to realise the full meaning of your words—You are face to face with a great danger.

TOMMY. Danger?

JIMMIE. The divorce court.

TOMMY. What have I to do with the divorce court?
(*natural tone*)

JIMMIE. You can't simply say to your husband, (*TOMMY smiles*) I've changed my mind—I'm going home.

TOMMY. Mr. Cottenham, I'm not going to get married.

JIMMIE. But you spoke of going away and Harry said——

TOMMY. I don't know what Harry said—but I'm going into a convent.

JIMMIE. (*pause, walk away R. then up to her*) Oh, I say—Is this a joke?

TOMMY. No—it's very serious. (*old tone*)

JIMMIE. But I don't understand—Harry said——
(*above her*)

TOMMY. Harry has nothing to do with it.

JIMMIE. (*delighted*) Nothing?

TOMMY. Certainly not. (*natural*)

JIMMIE. But it's so strange—a girl in your position giving up the world.

TOMMY. Oh! I'm nothing—Brother——

JIMMIE. (*groans*) As you haven't taken the veil yet—if you don't mind—er—it annoys me exceedingly to have you call me “brother.”

TOMMY. Just as you wish, “sir.” (*turns L. and up a little*)

(*A pause. JIMMIE walks across L. excitedly.*)

JIMMIE. (L.) You must be very unhappy to think of entering a convent.

TOMMY. (*comes slowly down to him L. c.*) My conscience is troubling me for the way I've treated you.

JIMMIE. Good gracious, I don't demand a life's expiation for that.

TOMMY. Are you beginning to hate me less? (*face lights up*)

JIMMIE. I don't know—I don't know (*cross R.*) but you haunt me. (*turns to her*) It seems to me that the people one hates, are more in one's mind than those one likes. (*L. of R. table*)

TOMMY. Then you only think of Elsie a little.

JIMMIE. A very little. I am touched when I think of her. But when I think of you, I want to break something.

(*TOMMY smiles.*)

I suppose you can't understand the feeling.

TOMMY. Yes I can—it's hate.

JIMMIE. Yes, I suppose it must be hate——

TOMMY. (*to c.*) (*sadly*) Oh, I know I've been

very wicked. I can see it *all* now—cut off from the world and its passions, and the frivolities of life.

JIMMIE. I still have to dabble in frivolities.
(*fingering hat*)

TOMMY. Don't lose courage. Your happiness will return to you. The terrible step I am about to take will open Mr. Tatham's eyes—

JIMMIE. (*bursting out*) I don't care if he never opens his eyes again, he's nothing to me.

TOMMY. Ah! (*joy*) What do you say, Brother James?

JIMMIE. (*turns to her, hands clasped*) (*lovingly*) I say, that the harm you have done me is more serious than you think. I say at my cottage I found you unbearable, at the Colonial Office you maddened me, and here, with your religious ideas, you exasperate me more than ever—That's what I say, Sister Thomas.
(*colloquially*) (*turns R.*)

TOMMY. Is it possible you hate me like that, but you were always disagreeable to me.

JIMMIE. (*quickly*) Ah—that was all a mistake—I was a mistake when I was born—and I've been a mistake ever since.

TOMMY. I was a mistake too, so don't feel so badly about it. Did they want a girl?

JIMMIE. (*puzzled*) Who? (*looking round at her*)

(*Warn Curtain.*)

TOMMY. Your parents.

JIMMIE. (*understanding*) Oh—Yes.

TOMMY. (*steps back—brightly*) Then you were the boy that my papa wanted, and I'm the girl your papa wanted.

JIMMIE. I *always felt* there was some sort of tie between us.

TOMMY. Well, good-bye, Brother James. (*going up c.*) (*on 2nd step*)

JIMMIE. (*following her gets on 1st step*) Where is the—convent—(*puts his hand on her arm*) you're going to?

TOMMY. I don't want to go to a convent in England, but there's a very good one in Austria—

JIMMIE. Austria's a long way from England, isn't it. (*down a little c.*)

TOMMY. A very long way. (*turns to go*)

JIMMIE. France will come between us. (*down a step*)

TOMMY. And Italy—

JIMMIE. And Upper Tooting—(*brings her down*)

TOMMY. (*greatly affected*) And Persia—

JIMMIE. Oh no; Persia's not in that direction—Persia's in—Persia-immon! Oh, we're both very unhappy aren't we Sister Tom? (*gets her R. hand*)

TOMMY. Yes, Brother Jim.

JIMMIE. (*turning away*) (*pause*) Don't you think we might—kiss each other good-bye, mother—sister! I mean.

(*She hesitates*)

TOMMY. And then will you go to the devil? (*head over his L. shoulder*)

JIMMIE. Yes, in a roundabout way.

TOMMY. Then I'll go with you, Jimmy boy!

JIMMIE. Tommy! (*he takes her in his arms*)

(HARRY enters with PEPPER beaming with anticipation)

HARRY. (*entering*) Come along, Mr. Pepper, it's all right— Well—I'm— (*On seeing the unexpected embrace of TOMMY and JIMMIE he drops the flowers he brought for TOMMY. Comes down R. C. JIMMIE shakes hands with him enthusiastically*)

JIMMIE. It's all right. Harry, it's all right!

(*Music.*)

CURTAIN.

1st Picture. JIMMIE still shaking hands; HARRY breaks away and goes up R. PEPPER sits in chair on steps.

Time 20 minutes.

PROPERTY PLOT.

ACT I.

- Sideboard down R. On sideboard—
Empty syphon.
Decanter of brandy.
Sugar in basin.
Pack of cards.
Box of matches.
Two cigarettes.
Lamp lighted.
- Chair down R. On chair—
Picture.
Box of paints.
Brushes.
- Picture on sketching easel up R.
Trick chair.
- Fishing rods. R. of door at back.
- Golf clubs.
- Oak table On table—
Three bedroom candlesticks
- Oval table L.C. On oval table—
Coloured cloth.
Three hands of cards.
Sheet of paper and pencil.
Long cherrywood pipe.
Two boxes of matches.
Ash tray.
Tin box.

Three chairs to table.
 Bird cage (over window).
 Small table in window. Duster on table.
 Cat on hassock (in fireplace).
 Seat.
 Large hooded fireplace.
 Clock and two candlesticks on mantelpiece.
 Written and stamped letter for HARRY.
 Jack towel behind kitchen door.
 Rug at foot of stairs. Rug in front of fireplace
 Cretonne and serge curtains to window (practicable).
 Flowers in window D.R.
 Gun and dust bin off L. for tyre effect.
 Motor effect.
 Syphon and tumbler on salver off L.
 Hat pegs and mirror in JIMMY'S bedroom.
 Glass crash in TOMMY'S bedroom.
 Hat in BERTHA'S bedroom.
 Picture painted on JIMMY'S door.
 " " on BERTHA'S door.
 " " below stericase.
 " " on kitchen door.
 Three pictures on walls.
 Tobacco in pouch for JIMMY.
 Charcoal and fuller's earth off L. for JIMMY and HARRY.
 Lighted lamp hanging L. of door at back.
 One stable lantern off L.
 Log fire.

ACT II same as ACT I.

Tray off P.S. containing—
 Three plates.
 Three cups and saucers.
 Milk jug and milk.
 Three egg cups with eggs.
 One plate and loaf of bread.
 Butter on plate.
 Pot of marmalade and spoon.

- Toast in rack.
 Three knives, three tea spoons, three egg spoons.
 Bread knife.
 White cloth.
 Tea cosy.
 Teapot with tea.
 Clock strike
 Tandem bicycle
 Live chicken
 Bicycle bell
- } Off p.s.

ACT III.

- Desk down right On desk—
 Blotter.
 Inkwell.
 Pens with black crayons.
 Pen box.
 Desk centre back On desk—
 Blotter.
 Pens.
 Inkstand.
 Plenty of papers, drafts,
 etc., on desk.
 Desk down left On desk—
 Pens.
 Inkwell.
 Blotter.
 Ruler.
 Paper knife.
 Copy of *Telegraph*.
 Telephone.
 Pair of paper cuffs
 Hat and coat hooks down R.
 " " " left back.
 Book press.
 Dummy blinds at window at back.

Bentwood chairs right back.

Mantelpiece stove, fender, fireirons down L.

On fireplace—

Water carafe.

Date calendar.

Ledger.

Map of Australia over mantelpiece.

Canadian Pacific Railway advertisements on walls.

Cigar for KILLICK.

Tray covered with cloth off O.P. containing—

Cruet.

Salad bowl and salad.

Tumbler.

Wine glass.

Large spoon, soup plate with cover for Irish stew.

Two forks.

Knife.

Salad spoon and fork.

Decanter of brandy.

Coffee pot.

Sugar basin, coffee, cup and saucer.

One large, one small, one salad plates.

Napkin.

Bunch of grapes.

Menu for waiter.

Office armchair to each desk.

One printed and written draft for TATHEM.

One printed, typed and written document for JIMMIE.

Green baize door.

One roll, one crust.

ACT IV.

Large easel with picture.

High stool L. of easel.

Oriental table R., with paint brushes, etc.

„ „ in front of fireplace.

Tapestry curtain to openings.

Plaster casts, ornaments, etc., to dress scene.

Oriental furniture to dress scene.
 Fireplace, overmantel, fender, ferns, to dress.
 Plenty of Oriental rugs.
 Six canvases on stairs for KILLICK to kick.
 Bunch of flowers off R.
 Palette, brushes, paint for KILLICK.
 Cheque for PEPPER.
 Large palm on stool R. of window.
 Italian cabinet and two in window.
 Bust on pedestal R. of window.
 Holland blind to window.
 Algerian overdoor and curtain to door down L.
 Portrait R. of window.
 Sconces hanging on scene.
 Picture over door down L.
 One cheque book with filled in cheque for PEPPER.
 Written letter for PEPPER.

LIGHTING PLOT.

ACT I.

Float . . Red and white full up start.
Battens . . None.
Lengths . . Amber in doorway L.H.
 Amber by window R.H. not alight in this Act.
 Small lengths by second door up staircase to
 light up when TOMMY appears at end of Act.
 Lights in each doorway up staircase to light up
 as artists enter and switch off when they leave.
 Lamp on sideboard R.H.
 Lamp on wall L.H. door at back.
 Fire alight and die out at end of Act.
Float . . To go down when BERTHA puts out lamps.
Limes . . o.p. Amber. p.s. side amber top, steel blue
 bottom. Blue behind window L.H.

ACT II.

- Float* . . . To come up as blinds are drawn "HARRY"
after rise of curtain.
- Batten* . . . None.
- Lengths* . . . Amber in doorway L.H. by window R.H.
Amber by window L.H.
Lights in each doorway up staircase to remain
alight.
Lamps on sideboard and on wall—out.
Fire out.
- Limes* . . . Perches. Dark amber top light, amber bottom
Amber behind each window.
- Motor Effect* in 1st and 2nd Act at CUE, viz.—
- 1st Act. BERTHA. Have you locked up, start, at ex-
plosion stop.
- 2nd Act. TOMMY. This affair is going to prove Enderby's
love for me.

ACT III.

- Float* . . . White and red full up.
- Batten* . . . White and red full up.
- Lengths* . . . Amber in each doorway.
Amber behind windows.
Telephones on table L.H.
- Limes* . . . Perches. Light ambers.
Amber on back cloth.

ACT IV.

- Float* . . . White and red full up.
- Battens* . . . White and red full up.
- Lengths* . . . Amber in each doorway.
Amber each side of recess up steps at back.
Amber in doorway at back of recess.
Two brackets side of fireplace.
One bracket side of door L.H. not alight.

- Limes* . Perches light ambers.
 . Light amber on cloth back on window L.H.
 . Light amber through same window.



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