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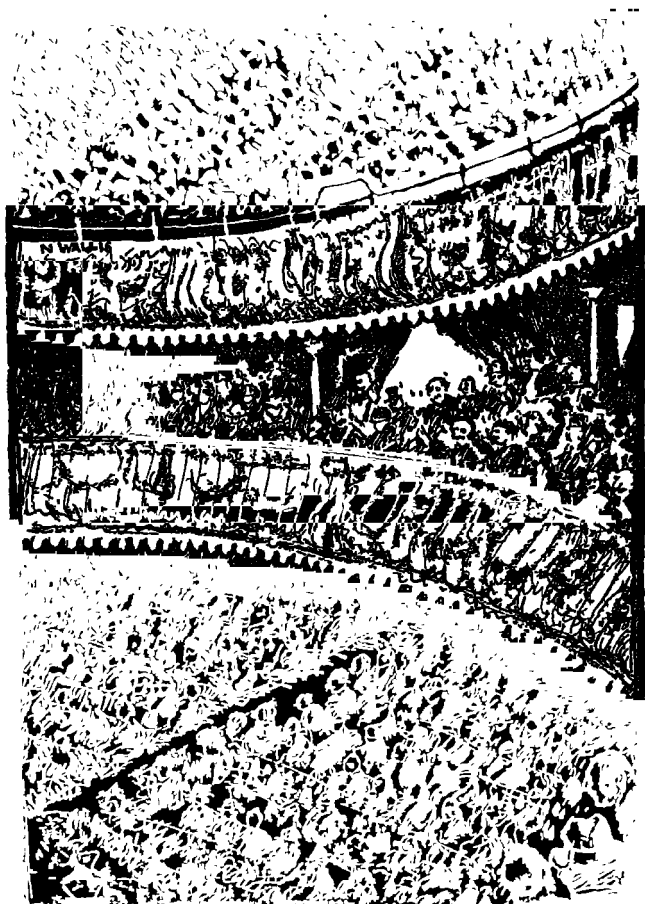
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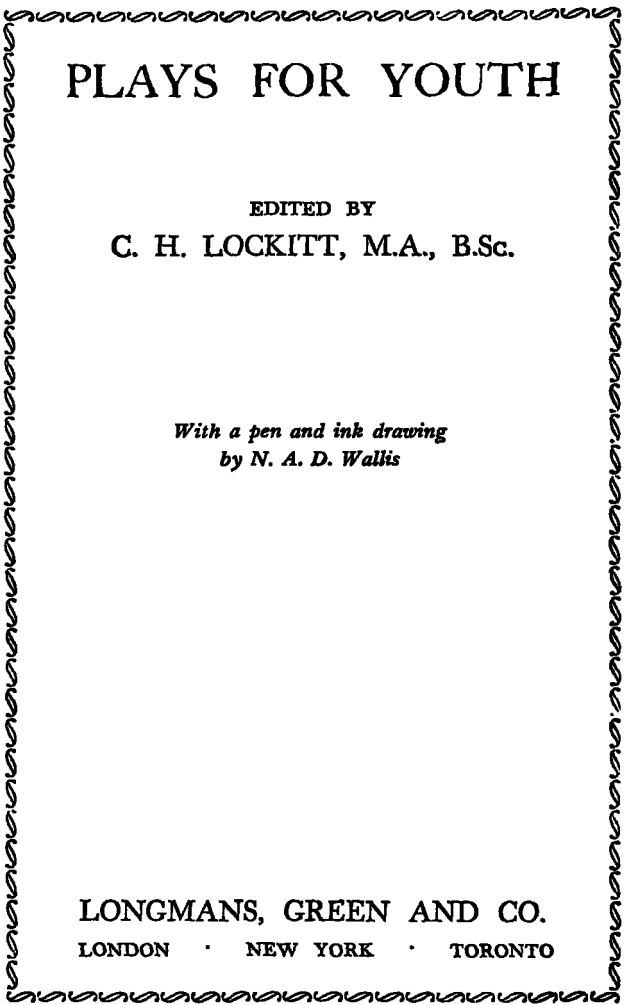
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*The Heritage of
Literature Series*

SECTION A NO. 24





PLAYS FOR YOUTH

EDITED BY
C. H. LOCKITT, M.A., B.Sc.

*With a pen and ink drawing
by N. A. D. Wallis*

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INTRODUCTION

To choose a book of simple plays, having in view the needs of young beginners, has not been an easy task; and it is possible that some critics may not approve my choice. Yet that choice has been the result of many, sometimes conflicting, considerations. In the first place, since the plays are to serve as an introduction to dramatic literature, some, at any rate, must be literature; some, on the other hand, should be dramatic, even if they are not destined to outlive the present generation. Secondly, I felt strongly that the emotions aroused must be emotions that young people can understand, and must be healthy emotions; hence I sought for plays in which honour, loyalty, generosity, courage and faith are triumphant. Then again, it seemed desirable that the volume should offer an opportunity for those who desired to use it as a vehicle for training speech; hence the inclusion of verse plays and the opening ballad-play drawn from Miss V. B. Lawton's admirable book entitled *Ballads for Acting* as well as one play definitely intended for broadcasting: the prologues prefixed to some of the plays will serve the same purpose. I tried, too, to keep in mind that the class, like Shakespeare's groundlings, probably loved a rough-and-tumble and would enjoy the beard-pulling in "The King's

INTRODUCTION

Warrant", Friar Bungay's experiment in aerial locomotion on the back of a demon—an old favourite of our ancestors in Tudor times, this—the chimney episode in "The King's Fugitives", not to mention posturing with a cricket bat in "The Captain", just as much as our Elizabethan forebears did. I chose several plays with an historical basis, because the realistic imagination of children enjoys visualizing the past, but I have tried to avoid mere dramatized history.

In short, if I may harp back to the division of the parts of a drama defined by Aristotle, whose study of the art of play-writing is as sound to-day as it was in the days of the Greeks, I have tried to keep in mind the claims of the Plot, the Characters, the Diction, the Sentiments and the Music; Aristotle's remaining part, the Decoration, is more a matter for the class-teacher than the Editor, though some of the plays carry their author's suggestions on production. The plots are *simple and such as the young will readily understand*; as a rule the characters have a certain nobility and ought to appeal to the ardent spirit of youth; their sentiments are not degrading; as for the diction, if it has not been invariably possible to tap the well of English pure and undefiled, yet the worst of contemporary vulgarisms are absent, as befits a book primarily intended for the English lesson; and most of the plays either require or invite the aid of music. And this is my apology for my choice, if apology be needed.

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THE PRETTY PLAY OF THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

BY V. B. LAWTON

CHARACTERS

N.B.—Characters bracketed can, if necessary, be taken by the same person.

THE BARD OR CHORUS

THE DUKE OF GORDON	ELIZABETH
CAPTAIN OGILVIE	MARGARET
AN OFFICER	JEAN
SOLDIERS	
SAILORS	
TWO MESSENGERS	}
A PORTER	
A BOY	

ATTENDANTS *ad lib.*

PROPERTIES

A couch (a bench draped, left standing against the background).
Two sealed missives.
A large doll for Lady Jean's baby.
A trunk.

ALTERED VERSES

IN THE BALLAD

I will not hang Captain Ogilvie
For no lord that I see;
But I'll gar him put off the broad
scarlet,
And put on the single livery.

If this be for bonny Jeannie
Gordon,
This penance I can take wi';
If this be for dear Jeannie
Gordon,
All this and mair will I dree.

Lady Jean had not been married
A year but only three,
Till she had a babe upon every
arm,
And another upon her knee.

Overseas now went the Captain,
As a soldier under command;
But a message soon followed
after,
To come home for to heir his
land;

Down the stair Lady Jean came
tripping,
With the saut tear in her e'e;
She had a babe in every arm,
And another at her knee.

N.B.—“Private” is substituted for “single” throughout the ballad.

IN THE PLAY

I will not hang Captain Ogilvie
For no lord that I see;
But I'll gar him put off the broad
scarlet,
And put on a private's livery.

If this be for bonny Jeannie
Gordon,
This penance I can take;
If this be for dear Jeannie
Gordon,
I will do it for her sake.

Lady Jean had not been married
A year but only three,
Till she found her life a
burden,
A burden she couldna dree

Overseas now went the Captain,
As a soldier under command;
But a message soon followed
after,
To come home to inherit his
land.

Down the stair Lady Jean came
tripping,
With the saut tear in her e'e;
Life to her had been a burden,
Wi'out her Ogilvie.

THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

FIRST EPISODE

The curtains open revealing the Duke's three daughters, dressed for travelling, standing C.; each curtseys as her name is sung by the Chorus, and all defiantly shake their heads and frown at the words "They would not stay," etc. During the last line and following incidental music, a boy enters L., and passes across and out R., carrying a trunk. The three daughters with stately steps, but merry smiles, turn and follow him.

Chorus.

The Duke of Gordon had three daughters,
Elizabeth, Margaret and Jean.

They would not stay in bonny Castle Gordon,
But they went to bonny Aberdeen.

Gay music which changes to something softer as Jean enters R., and Captain Ogilvie L.; they meet and make love. Captain Ogilvie kneels and entreats, as the Chorus sings.

Chorus.

They had not been in bonny Aberdeen
A twelvemonth and a day,

Lady Jean fell in love with Captain Ogilvie,
And awa' with him she would gae.

THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

(Lady Jean consents, and they escape on tiptoe, R. Soft music.)

SECOND EPISODE

As they go off R., the Duke enters L., and reclines on the couch. The sound of a galloping horse is heard. A messenger enters R., and with appropriate gestures and distressed looks evidently gives the news which the Chorus sings.

Chorus.

Word came to the Duke of Gordon,
In the chamber where he lay,
Lady Jean was in love with Captain Ogilvie,
And from him she would not stay.

(The Duke sits up, staring at the messenger with incredulous amazement. His face darkens, and he springs to his feet.)

Duke (almost shouting).

Go saddle to me the black horse,
And you'll ride on the grey,
And I will gang to bonny Aberdeen
Forthwith to bring her away.

(The messenger springs off R., and the Duke strides after him, shaking his fist in the air; and as the curtain is drawn and reopened, the sound of galloping horses can be heard.)

CURTAIN.

THIRD EPISODE

The Duke strides in L., followed by the messenger. Elizabeth and Margaret enter timidly R. As the Chorus sings, the Duke eyes them up and down fiercely, and they, trembling, cling to one another.
Chorus.

They were not a mile from Aberdeen,
A mile but only one,
Till he met with his two daughters—
But awa' was Lady Jean.

Duke (harshly).

Where is your sister, maidens?
Where is your sister now?
Say what is become of your sister,
That she is not walking with you?

(The two girls fall on their knees, weeping.)

Elizabeth and Margaret.

"O pardon us, honour'd father—
O pardon us," they did say;
"Lady Jean is wed with Captain Ogilvie,
And from him she will not stay."

(The Duke stamps his foot with rage, and strides off R., followed by the messenger and his two daughters, wringing their hands.)

The music changes to a march, and Captain Ogilvie enters L. with his men. They march round and form up at the back of the stage facing front.

THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

Chorus.

Then an angry man the Duke rode on,
Till he came to bonny Aberdeen,
And there did he see brave Captain Ogilvie
A-training of his men on the green.
Enter the Duke R., purple with passion.

Duke.

O woe be to thee, thou Captain Ogilvie!
And an ill death thou shalt dee.
For taking to thee my daughter Jean
High hangit shalt thou be.

(The Duke glares fiercely at Captain Ogilvie, who returns him a haughty stare, and as the Chorus sings the next two verses, he elaborately draws out a snuff-box, takes a pinch with ostentatious enjoyment, and flicks his laced tunic with a dainty handkerchief.)

Chorus.

The Duke has written a broad letter
To the King (with his own han');
It was to hang Captain Ogilvie,
If ever he hang'd a man.

"I will not hang Captain Ogilvie
For no lord that I see;
But I'll gar him put off the broad scarlet,
And put on a private's livery."

Enter R. an officer and the Duke's messenger, who hand Captain Ogilvie a parchment, on reading which he submits himself to be denuded of his gold-laced tunic,

V. B. LAWTON

sword, hat, etc.; these are taken by two of the soldiers, who hand him a private's tunic and hat. The Duke watches with a scornful smile. Drums roll ominously.
Chorus.

Now word came to Captain Ogilvie

In the chamber where he lay,

To cast off the gold lace and scarlet,

And put on a private's livery.

(The officer and men fall back, leaving the Captain, in private's uniform, alone C. He looks down at his new livery, then proudly throws back his head.)

Captain Ogilvie.

If this be for bonny Jeannie Gordon,

This penance I can take;

If this be for dear Jeannie Gordon,

I will do it for her sake.

(He takes his place in the ranks, and all march off R., the Duke waving his hand mockingly off L. Music.)

CURTAIN.

FOURTH EPISODE

Soft plaintive music. Enter L. Captain Ogilvie (as a private) and Lady Jean. Lady Jean carries the baby in her arms. She is limping and weary, and Captain Ogilvie supports her in his arms. They group L.

Chorus.

Lady Jean had not been married

A year but only three,

Till she found her life a burden,

A burden she couldna dree.

THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

(Lady Jean sinks down on a stone near by, and rocks herself to and fro.)

Lady Jean.

O but I'm weary of wand'rin'!

O but my fortune is bad!

It sets not the Duke of Gordon's daughter
To follow a soldier lad.

O but I'm weary, weary wand'rin'!

O but I think it lang!

It sets not the Duke of Gordon's daughter
To follow a private man.

(Captain Ogilvie kneels down beside her, and puts his arm round her.)

Captain Ogilvie *(tenderly)*.

O hold thy tongue, Jeannie Gordon;

O hold thy tongue, my lamb.

For once I was a noble Captain,

Now for thy sake a private I am.

(They rise and advance slowly across the stage.)

Chorus.

But when they came to the Highland hills,

Cold was the frost and snow;

Lady Jean's shoes they were all torn,

No farther could she go.

(Lady Jean stumbles. She makes a despairing gesture, thrusts the baby into her husband's arms, and, burying her face for a moment in her cloak, she gives herself over to grief. Then, raising a woe-

V. B. LAWTON

begone face, she sings mournfully, showing her worn shoes and shabby dress.)

Lady Jean.

Now woe to the hills and the mountains,
Woe to the wind and the rain!
My feet is sair wi' going barefoot:
No farther can I gang.

O were I in the glens o' Foudlen,
Where hunting I have been,
I would go to bonny Castle Gordon;
There I'd get hose and sheen!

(She passes out R., and the Captain follows her. Soft music.)

The Porter enters L. and stares under his hand out R.; then turning to the left wing, he shouts the words of the last line.

Chorus.

When they came to bonny Castle Gordon,
And standing on the green,
The porter out with loud, loud shout,

Porter.

"O here comes our Lady Jean!"

Enter R. Lady Jean and Captain Ogilvie. The Duke, followed by Elizabeth and Margaret and attendants, enters L. Jean runs towards her father, who takes her in his arms. An attendant comes forward and takes the baby.

THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

(Lady Jean sinks down on a stone near by, and rocks herself to and fro.)

Lady Jean.

O but I'm weary of wand'rin'!

O but my fortune is bad!

It sets not the Duke of Gordon's daughter
To follow a soldier lad.

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O hold thy tongue, my lamb.

For once I was a noble Captain,

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(They rise and advance slowly across the stage.)

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V. B. LAWTON

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Lady Jean.

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Woe to the wind and the rain!
My feet is sair wi' going barefoot:
No farther can I gang.

O were I in the glens o' Foudlen,
Where hunting I have been,
I would go to bonny Castle Gordon;
There I'd get hose and sheen!

(She passes out R., and the Captain follows her. Soft music.)

The Porter enters L. and stares under his hand out R.; then turning to the left wing, he shouts the words of the last line.

Chorus.

When they came to bonny Castle Gordon,
And standing on the green,
The porter out with loud, loud shout,

Porter.

"O here comes our Lady Jean!"

Enter R. Lady Jean and Captain Ogilvie. The Duke, followed by Elizabeth and Margaret and attendants, enters L. Jean runs towards her father, who takes her in his arms. An attendant comes forward and takes the baby.

THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

Duke.

You are welcome, bonny Jeannie Gordon,

You are dear welcome to me;

(He kisses her, and putting his arm round her, half turns to lead her into the castle.)

Duke *(fiercely)*.

You are welcome, dear Jeannie Gordon,

But awa' with your Ogilvie!

(He leads Lady Jean off L., the rest following. A loud clang denotes the shutting of the castle door. Captain Ogilvie is left sorrowful and alone. The Chorus utters a long sigh of pity. Sad music. Captain Ogilvie turns, and with bowed head passes out R., as the curtain is drawn.)

CURTAIN.

FIFTH EPISODE

Music. Soldiers and sailors grouped. Captain Ogilvie C., with arms folded, gazes over an imaginary sea. The sailors and soldiers, excited, point out R., and talk among themselves. A messenger enters R., with a letter which he presents to the Captain.

Chorus.

Overseas now went the Captain,

As a soldier under command,

But a message soon followed after

To come home to inherit his land.

V. B. LAWTON

Captain Ogilvie (excitedly reading letter).

"O what does this mean?" says the Captain;

"Where's my brother's children three?"—

Messenger (also excited).

"They are a' o' them dead and buried:

Come home, pretty Captain Ogilvie!"

Captain Ogilvie (waving the sailors off).

"Then hoist up your sail," says the Captain,

"And we'll hie back owre the sea:

And I'll gae to bonny Castle Gordon,

There my dear Jeannie to see."

(Music, to which the sailors dance off and the soldiers march. Captain Ogilvie, talking eagerly with the messenger, goes off L.)

SIXTH EPISODE

The music changes. Captain Ogilvie, still in private's uniform, strides in L., and blows a loud blast on a horn, which is answered by another blast from the right wing, from which steps the porter.

Chorus.

He came to bonny Castle Gordon

And upon the green stood he.

The porter out with a loud, loud shout,

Porter.

"Here comes our Captain Ogilvie!"

The Duke, Elizabeth and Margaret, and attendants

THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

enter R., to gay martial music. The Duke has heard of the Captain's good fortune, and is all urbanity. He doffs his hat with a flourish, and comes forward with one hand outstretched in welcome towards the Captain.

Duke.

You're welcome, pretty Captain Ogilvie;

Your fortune's advanced, I hear.

No stranger can come to my castle

That I do love so dear.

(Captain Ogilvie stands proudly erect, and puts his hands behind him.)

Captain Ogilvie (haughtily).

Put up your hat, Duke of Gordon;

Let it fa' not from your head.

It never set the noble Duke of Gordon

To bow to a private soldier lad.

(The Duke falls back discomfited.)

Captain Ogilvie.

Sir, the last time I was at your castle

You would not let me in!

Now I'm come for my wife and child,

No friendship else I claim.

All stand back to make room for Lady Jean, who runs in R. with the baby in her arms, and stands for a moment timidly hesitating, before flying to the Captain's open arms.

(The Chorus might sing the whole of the last two verses, leaving Captain Ogilvie free for the tableau.)

V. B. LAWTON

Chorus.

Down the stair Lady Jean came tripping,
With the saut tear in her e'e.
Life to her had been a burden
Wi'out her Ogilvie.

The Captain took her straight in his arms,
—O a happy man was he—
Saying, " Welcome, bonny Jeannie Gordon,
My Countess o' Cumberland to be! "

TABLEAU.

CURTAIN.

THE KING'S WARRANT

BY RONALD GOW

CHARACTERS

THE PEDLAR.

THE HOST.

THE SHERIFF.

THE BOY.

THE STRANGER.

LITTLE JOHN.

YEOMEN AND OTHERS.

SCENE.—An Inn on the Nottingham road.

All dramatic rights are reserved by the author. Applications regarding amateur performances of this play should be addressed to the League of British Dramatists, 11 Gower Street, London, W.C.1.

THE KING'S WARRANT

An inn on the Nottingham road. Some yeomen, clad in Lincoln green, sit at a table, singing. A Pedlar enters, carrying a pack. He sits down apart from the others. The Landlord attends to him. Soon the singing ceases, and the yeomen put their heads together, discussing the Pedlar.

Pedlar (to the Host). I am a Pedlar, and take my goods to Lincoln market. It is my hope, by the grace of God, and honest dealing, to win softer living in a hard world.

Host. There's small reward for honesty these days.

Pedlar. If a man has the wit to escape the law, he has but little strength to defy the barons. And if he be too small a prey for the barons, then thieves and robbers will have the picking of him.

Host. Aye, the roads are full of danger, even by day. And at night—well, he is either a fool or well armed that will venture on the roads by night.

Pedlar. Or else he's a robber.

Host. Aye, that's the trade for the dark.

Pedlar. I think this road runs by Sherwood.

Host. A part of it goes through the forest.

Pedlar. And belike that scoundrel Robin Hood and his men . . .

THE KING'S WARRANT

Host. Hush! Speak not so loud.

Pedlar (looking round). Oho? Is his name so dreaded that we must whisper it?

Host. A wise man knows when to whisper.

Pedlar. And when to wink, eh?

Host (laughing). Aye, and when to wink. Both eyes, sometimes.

Pedlar. Well said, mine host. Then I'll spend the night between sunset and cock-crow winking in thy best bed. How long to sunset?

Host. He's down behind the tree-tops already. I'll go now and prepare the candles.

Pedlar. And send me a cup of sack, host.

Host. The best in the country, my friend.

(The Host goes out. The sound of a horn comes from the distance. The men start. One goes to the window and peers out. They motion to each other, and having laid money on the table, depart hurriedly. The Host returns with the drink.)

Pedlar. So those are Robin Hood's brave men?

Host. Robin Hood has many brave men in his band. Maybe those were of his band, as you say.

Pedlar. And maybe that was their leader's horn calling them.

Host. Maybe we're hard of hearing in these parts.

(The Host is counting the money from the table.)

Pedlar. And so long as the money's sound, we'll keep our mouths shut, eh? Is that the way the tune goes?

Host. Aye, and thank the Lord for as honest a knave

RONALD GOW

as Robin Hood. I know the law would give golden crowns for his head, but I fear there would be a worse come after him. There's not a man in these parts, whose heart is sound, and whose conscience is clear, that goes in fear of the Sherwood men. *You're* an honest trader, now, and they'd never harm the like of you.

Pedlar. And yet, for all that, I'd be glad of the hundred crowns they offer for his head in Nottingham. I hear the Sheriff will pay that money for him, dead or alive.

Host. They'll not take him alive, and if they take him dead, I warrant they'll need a hundred men to hold him down.

Pedlar (slowly). A hundred crowns! (*He seizes the Host by the arm.*) Half of it would make you a rich man, mine host.

Host. Let the Sheriff keep his money. I'd as lief die poor, with no man's blood on my head.

Pedlar. But, man, 'tis the King's law. The Sheriff does no more than his duty.

Host. The Sheriff wants his revenge.

Pedlar. Why, how's that?

Host. Have you not heard the dance the outlaw leads him? How Robin went to Nottingham in the guise of a butcher and offered a herd of fat cattle to the Sheriff? And how the Sheriff, thinking to make a mean bargain, offered but half of the fair price? And how the outlaw brought the Sheriff to Sherwood, and for a herd of fat cattle, what do you think he showed him?

THE KING'S WARRANT

Pedlar. Nay, I know not your story.

Host (*laughing and slapping his thigh*). A herd of the King's own deer. Aye, he sold them to the Sheriff.

Pedlar. And was the Sheriff fool enough to buy?

Host. Fool or no fool, he ~~paid~~ the price. Maybe he thought a whole skin was cheap at any price. Aye, and that's not the only grudge the Sheriff bears the Sherwood men. Only last fair day . . .

(*A rider gallops up to the inn.*)

Host. Hear you that? A rider. Some traveller.

(*The Host opens the door. Enter the Sheriff of Nottingham, a black-bearded, overbearing man.*)

Sheriff. Have my horse looked to. And saddle me another from your stable. I return to Nottingham to-night.

Host. The Sheriff of Nottingham?

Sheriff. Aye, the Sheriff! Don't stand gaping at me, man!

Host. This is an honour for my humble roof.

Sheriff. Fool! Think you the High Sheriff of Nottingham travels abroad to taste the pleasures of this paltry sty? See to the horse, and bring me better wine than you sell to cut-throats.

Host. But your men? Is your worship alone?

Sheriff. I rode from Nottingham alone. But perhaps I shall return with a companion.

Host. Good Master Sheriff, I have done nothing unlawful. I am an honest landlord, and ply an honest trade——

RONALD GOW

Sheriff. Silence, jackanapes! Bring me wine.
(*The Host goes out. The Sheriff paces up and down, glancing out of the window and peering into corners.*)

Sheriff (to the Pedlar). And who might you be, sir?

Pedlar. I am a pedlar, travelling to Lincoln, where I hope, by the grace of God, and fair and honest dealing, to . . .

Sheriff. Tush! Leave your epitaph to the grave-stone maker, if you come to so honest-an-end. Has there been anyone here beside yourself?

Pedlar. Two or three fellows only, clothed in forest green, who went away some time ago.

Sheriff. Did you speak with them?

Pedlar. No, nor they with me.

Sheriff. Have you spoken with the landlord?

Pedlar. We were speaking when you came.

Sheriff. What did he tell you?

Pedlar. A great deal of nothing.

Sheriff. Come, sirrah, speak out! I must know everything.

Pedlar. He told me of an outlaw hereabouts called Robin Hood.

Sheriff. Aha! What did he say of Robin Hood?

Pedlar. He told me how he had hoodwinked some officer of the law in these parts. How this officer had been made to buy the King's deer.

Sheriff. Ten thousand gallows! Will that story never die? A host of yapping tongues have spread the

THE KING'S WARRANT

slander over half the shire, and not a tongue but adds a treasonable lie against my person. I'll have him hanging forty cubits high, and then I'll quarter him myself!

Pedlar. Mine host but told the tale to show the outlaw's wickedness. For my part, I was so angered I swore to win the hundred crowns you offer for his head.

(Enter the Landlord, bearing a candle and a flagon of wine, which he places beside the Sheriff.)

Sheriff. Bring me another cup. If your wine be poisoned, this fellow dies too.

Host. Very good, my lord. *(The Host goes out.)*

Sheriff. So, my brave fellow, you would win the hundred crowns?

Pedlar. Give me but the chance! There's not a man would stand up to my cudgel—nay, not even Robin Hood himself . . .

Sheriff (with a warning finger). Quiet. *(The Host returns, and sets down another cup.)* Leave us now, and see that we are not disturbed.

Host. Very good, sir.

Sheriff. Stay. If a fellow calls at the inn I must see him.

Host. Very good, sir. *(He goes out.)*

Sheriff. Now, my good friend, sit here at the table. Taste this wine for me.

Pedlar. Your worship is very good.

Sheriff. You never thought to take wine with the Sheriff of Nottingham, eh?

RONALD GOW

Pedlar. 'Tis a great honour, sir—and excellent wine. Your health—and your success.

Sheriff. My success? What have you guessed, you rogue?

Pedlar. I think that you are on the heels of Robin Hood.

Sheriff. You're a shrewd fellow. Come, sit closer. (*The Sheriff lays a parchment roll on the table.*) Listen. If you know aught of this man Hood, then you'll know he's a man of his word.

Pedlar. They tell me he has the manners of a nobleman.

Sheriff. I have always observed that the rogue keeps his promises. To-day there came a message to my castle in Nottingham. Here it is.

(*The Sheriff produces a letter and reads:*)

"To the High Sheriff of Nottingham.

"To-night, at sunset, in the tavern on the Nottingham road. Come alone and unarmed. I, too, shall come alone and unarmed.

"(Signed) ROBIN HOOD."

Pedlar. But this may be a trap.

Sheriff (smiling). I know the man too well. He has all the vanity of chivalry, and holds himself too proud for treachery. Curse him!

Pedlar. And have you come alone?

Sheriff. Look for yourself. I, the High Sheriff of Nottingham, who retain a band of one hundred stalwart

THE KING'S WARRANT

yeomen, am here alone to meet him. How far is it to sunset?

Pedlar. The sun is almost down.

Sheriff. Then quick! I must explain. I need a witness of this meeting. You seem an honest rogue.

Pedlar. Not so honest that I should refuse a bag of gold, and not so much a rogue that I wouldn't earn it.

Sheriff. Spoken like an Englishman. Now listen. I cannot lay lawful hands on Robin Hood without a warrant of arrest. Here I hold the King's warrant for the apprehension of this outlaw. Now mark me carefully. I am little match for the stalwart forester. Should he refuse to return with me to Nottingham on this warrant, then may I call on you to help me seize him. Remember—one hundred crowns.

Pedlar. I reckon myself a match for him any day.

Sheriff. Good. Then do as I bid you. But remember this—I have broken no pledge. I came alone and unarmed. *(There is a knock at the door.)* Hist! Here he comes. Over to your place. Remember, *he may be disguised.*

(The Pedlar moves back to his seat. The Sheriff stands waiting, his back to the door. A very small boy comes in.)

Sheriff (not looking at the new-comer). And so we meet again! *(He turns, to see the boy.)* What in the name of fury is that? How did this thing get in?

Pedlar. Alas, I know him not.

Sheriff. Out of here, impertinent young grasshopper!

RONALD GOW

Pedlar. Remember, Sheriff, *he may be disguised.*

Sheriff. Disguised. Ten thousand devils! Am I to be a laughing-stock in every country tavern?

Pedlar. What is it, boy?

Boy. Good sir, I seek my father.

Sheriff. His father! Tchah!

(He paces angrily up and down.)

Pedlar. Is your name Robin Hood?

Boy. No, sir.

Sheriff. Fool! Why not ask him if he's the Sheriff of Nottingham.

Boy. If you please, sir, I'm not.

Sheriff. Eh? Not what?

Boy. Not the Sheriff of Nottingham.

Sheriff (groaning). Oh!

(He turns away to find that a Stranger has entered the room. He is gaudily dressed, and walks in an elegant manner. He seats himself in the Sheriff's chair. The Sheriff surveys him cautiously.)

Sheriff. Good even to you, sir.

Stranger. Thank you, my good man.

Sheriff. Good m . . .

(He bottles up his indignation. The Pedlar whispers "Disguised." The Sheriff nods.)

Sheriff. Good sir, I'm an officer of the law, and must know your business.

Stranger. My business? Haw, haw, haw! Well . . . I go to a meeting.

Sheriff. Do you go alone?

THE KING'S WARRANT

Stranger. I go alone.

Sheriff. And unarmed?

Stranger. I go, as you say, unarmed.

(The Sheriff nods meaningly to the Pedlar.)

Sheriff. At what hour is your meeting?

Stranger. We meet at sunset.

Pedlar. Aye, but 'tis sunset already.

Stranger. I am one who believes that they should be kept waiting.

Sheriff. The plague you do! *(The Pedlar makes a movement suggesting that he should overpower the Stranger, but the Sheriff shakes his head, and waves him back.)* And what, sirrah, is the object of this meeting?

Stranger. To heal a breach that I have made in the heart of another.

Sheriff. What kind of a breach?

Stranger. Alas, I have sinned. I have been the cause of a bitter quarrel. I fear I have broken a heart I go to ask forgiveness.

Sheriff. Oho, so you repent, do you, my fine fellow?

Stranger. Never was repentance so deep as mine.

(He weeps.)

Sheriff. And what if it is too late?

Stranger. Then I shall die.

Sheriff. That's sure enough, anyway.

Stranger. Of a broken heart.

Sheriff. Of a broken neck, you mean. A truce to his nonsense!

RONALD GOW

Stranger. Nonsense?

Sheriff. An end to this tomfoolery!

Stranger (rising). Sirrah!

Sheriff. Why are you wearing that beard?

Stranger. But—this beard is my beard.

Sheriff. Off with it!

(The Sheriff seizes the Stranger by the beard. The Stranger dances round howling, but the beard does not come off.)

Sheriff. By all the saints, but that beard is well stuck on your face.

Stranger. Impudent scoundrell! You have pulled my beard!

Sheriff. But are you not disguised?

Stranger. Disguised! Sir, it took me three years to grow this beard!

Sheriff. Answer me, and no more quibbling. Are you, or are you not, Robin Hood?

Stranger. Am I Robin Hood?

Sheriff. That's what I said.

Stranger. Certainly not.

Sheriff. Then why in the name of Beelzebub do you come here, riddling and quibbling, and pretending that you *are* Robin Hood?

Stranger. My good man, I never . . .

Sheriff. Silence!

Stranger. But really, sir, after all, it is not unkind of you. I like it. Haw, haw, haw!

Sheriff. You like what?

THE KING'S WARRANT

Stranger. I like being mistaken for Robin Hood. I think the fair Eleanor will be pleased when I tell her.

Pedlar. And who is the fair Elcanor?

Stranger. Why, did I not tell you? She is the lady I go to meet.

Sheriff. A lady?

Stranger. We had quarrelled. Now all is well. She loves me. Here is a ballad I have composed in praise of her beauty.

(He produces a roll of parchment. The Sheriff snatches it from him and flings it on the table.)

Sheriff. A hundred thousand furies! How dare you come here masquerading and prating to me of your abominable woman? Do you know what I am?

Stranger. I think you're a very rude fellow.

Sheriff. I'd have you know, sirrah, that I'm the High Sheriff of Nottingham, and that insults against my person are insults against his gracious Majesty the King—God bless him! Get out!

Stranger. But . . .

Sheriff. Get out!

Stranger. But—my ballad.

Sheriff (picking it up and flinging it at him). Go, and tell the fair Eleanor that if she cannot find a better suitor in Nottinghamshire, she'd best be a spinster for the rest of her days.

(The Sheriff turns away, biting his nails in anger. As the Stranger goes he turns to the Pedlar.)

Stranger. After all, he did think I was Robin Hood,

RONALD GOW

didn't he? I feel so flattered. And the fair Eleanor will be pleased when I tell her of it, haw, haw, haw!

(He swaggers and postures himself out of the inn.)

Sheriff. Oh, that I should be plagued by fools!

Pedlar. Are you certain, sir, that he was not Robin Hood all the time?

Sheriff. Didn't I pull his beard?

Pedlar. They say he is a master of disguise, so that even those who know him best are most deceived.

Sheriff. By heaven, if Hood has fooled me again, I'll take a terrible revenge!

Pedlar. 'Tis past sunset, your worship.

Sheriff (shaking his head). Strange, strange. The scoundrel always keeps his word. *(He calls.)* Landlord! Landlord, I say!

(Enter the Host, running.)

Host. Coming, your worship, coming.

Sheriff. Tell me, is there anyone hiding in your house?

Host. Nay, your worship.

Sheriff (seizing him by the throat). If you deceive me now, I'll burn the inn about your ears.

Host. Have mercy, good sir, there is no one, no one at all.

(The small boy has been looking in the Pedlar's pack, and now draws out a suit of Lincoln green. The Pedlar tries to hide it, but he is too late.)

Sheriff. Stop! What's this? A suit of Lincoln green in a Pedlar's pack? You're a fine Pedlar, sirrah.

THE KING'S WARRANT

Pedlar. I do some small trade in old clothing, your worship.

Sheriff. And you are a master of disguise, perchance?

Pedlar. Nay, I . . .

Sheriff. That beard seems false!

(The Pedlar's beard comes off in the Sheriff's hand.)

Host. Robin Hood!

Sheriff. Robin Hood, by all the saints!

Robin. Who kept his promise, Master Sheriff?

Sheriff. Robin Hood, I'll hang you on the highest gallows ever built in England.

Boy (to Robin Hood). I'll help you.

Robin. Away, boy! You've done mischief enough to-night. *(The boy runs out.)* Good Master Sheriff, we have long been enemies, but never have I fooled you better.

Sheriff. There'll be no fooling with a hempen cord round your neck. Where's the King's warrant? *(He takes it from the table.)* Robin Hood, outlaw and traitor, I arrest you in the name of the King.

Robin. I claim to have the warrant read.

Sheriff. Here, Landlord, read the warrant, and witness this arrest.

Host (trembling). Yes, your worship. *(He reads:)*

“Thine eyes are like two stars,
Fair Eleanor, my love;
Thy lips are like red roses;
Fair Eleanor, my dove . . .”

RONALD GOW

Sheriff. Thunder and fury! What's this? Where's the warrant? Death and destruction, that fellow has taken it! (*Robin laughs.*) But this is not the end. (*He blows a silver whistle. The room fills with armed men.*) Men, come quickly! Bend your bows at him! Watch him close! This time he shall not escape. Robin Hood, I charge you with masquerading in a strange disguise, furthermore with unlawful intention, and as an officer of the law I arrest you.

Robin. Very clever, Master Sheriff, and very nobly spoken. (*Robin stands with folded arms, while the bowmen cover him.*) You relied upon my word to come alone. Did you come alone to the meeting-place?

Sheriff. Bah! One does not hunt mad dogs with chivalry. My men were standing by to ward off treachery.

Robin. Your men are stout fellows, Master Sheriff. I like well their looks.

Sheriff. Seize him and bind him!
(*The men do not move. The Sheriff is repeating the order, when he turns to find the bows directed at himself. Robin steps forward.*)

Sheriff. Why, what's this?

Robin. Little John, stand forward. Put up your bows, my men. Now, friend Sheriff, when I gave my word to come alone, I came alone, but my men were in the woods a mile away. Had you, too, come alone to the meeting-place they would not have interfered. Is not that so, Little John?

THE KING'S WARRANT

Little John. Those were our orders, Master Robin.

Robin. And you have obeyed them?

Little John. To the letter.

Robin. Then tell the Sheriff why you took a hand.

Little John. Well, sir, seeing the Sheriff here followed by a company of men, whom he bade hide within ear-shot of this house, we fell on them and bound them, giving them some hard knocks, by my faith. And then this boy ran to tell us of your peril, and hearing a signal, we came in.

Sheriff. A boy! Tchah!

Robin. Yes, Master Sheriff; not Robin Hood, but a boy has beaten you.

Sheriff. This game has gone far enough. Landlord, my horse!

Robin. Softly! Before you go, Sheriff, there is the little matter of the hundred crowns you promised me.

Sheriff. Insolent knave! What do you mean? I owe no money.

Robin. Who discovered my disguise? Was it not this boy? The money is rightfully his.

Sheriff (turning). Oh, this is a nightmare! I'll pay the whelp no money.

Robin. Stop! Remember, Robin Hood is a man of his word. Where are the crowns? (*The Sheriff sees that he is beaten, and produces a bag.*) Give them to the boy.

(*The Sheriff does so, and goes out in a very bad temper.*)

Robin. And now, my merry men, we'll drink a toast.

RONALD COW

Landlord, bring out the best in your cellar, and fill each
man a cup. My noble friends, I'll give you a toast. }
We'll drink to his worship the High Sheriff of Notting- }
ham, and long may he live to make us merry!
(*The noise of a horse galloping, a roar of laughter, and*
the curtain falls.)

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS .

BY, AUDREY HAGGARD

CHARACTERS

JUPITER (JOVE), *Chief of the Gods.*

HERMES, *his Son.*

PHILEMON, *an Aged Husbandman.*

BAUCIS, *his Wife.*

PROLOGUE AND EPILOGUE.

SCENE.—Phrygia.

*Application for permission to perform this play should
be addressed to Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 10-13
Bedford Street, London, W.C.2.*

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

A CHILDREN'S PLAY IN ONE ACT

*Adapted for acting from the Greek Legend of
"Philemon and Baucis"*

FOREWORD

An ancient legend tells how Zeus (Jove), having bestowed special favours, wealth, plenty, and fruitful crops, upon the people of Phrygia, decided to make secret test of their generosity and gratitude. Accordingly, the god disguised himself and his son, Hermes, as beggars, and the two wandered craving alms through the land they had blessed. They were disappointed. They found the inhabitants selfish, inhospitable, and avaricious. As they moved from house to house, refusals and abuse met them at every door, till they came at last to the humble cottage of a poor old husband-man, Philemon, and his good wife, Baucis. Here the wanderers were made heartily welcome, and shared with their hospitable hosts their last small provision of food, their last jar of wine. The meal proceeded merrily, but soon the old folks stared astonished at the pitcher in the hands of their ragged guests, for though the wine poured forth generously, the jar remained always full to the brim.

Thus did the gods make known their divine presence,

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

and in gratitude for the hospitality they had received, they appointed the good old folks as guardians of a temple, and further granted them their dearest wish—an assurance that one of them should not survive the other, and that they should never be parted.

In extreme old age, therefore, Philemon and Baucis did not die, but were transformed into two noble oak trees.

PROLOGUE

Enter Prologue before the curtain.

Prologue. Listen, my masters, soon you shall behold
An ancient legend of the days of old
Played here before your eyes. Believe you stand
For one short hour in a far-off land
Long, long ago, a land where springtide fills
The plains of Ilium and the Phrygian hills
With purple asphodel: where the cliff pine
Shadows the evening sea that's dark as wine;
Where Nereids dream on dreaming sands below,
Under white stars.

Here in the long ago
An aged couple dwelt in quiet bliss
And love, Baucis her name, Philemon his.
But they were poor, yet did they not forget
Others are hungrier, colder, poorer yet.
Watch now our play—but ere the Prologue ends
Her speech, she makes you one petition, friends.
When Jove with charmed wine the jars doth fill
Be not offended, neither deem ye ill

AUDREY HAGGARD

Of this his act; for though wine oft-times bring
Rage to the hearts of men, in everything
It is not ill; and in this old tale, Jove
Bestowed his nectar as a gift of love.
So in this legend tale, no ill we mean,
Nor aught unruly in our little scene
Shall ye behold, and nothing our intent
Save innocent mirth and simple merriment.¹

SCENE

The cottage of Philemon and Baucis, Phrygia. The room is humbly furnished with a table (a board laid on trestles), two stools and a small bench. A few jars and cooking-pots of copper and earthenware stand on a shelf or on the floor by an open hearth of brick, R., on which a fire of logs is burning, a soup pot boiling on the fire, and a small chest for flour, complete the furniture of the room. Right and left are doors leading into the garden. When the curtain rises Baucis is discovered examining a jar of olives.

Baucis (calling). Come, my Philemon!

Enter Philemon, L.

Look into our jar

Of olives. (*Philemon peers into the olive-jar.*)

Philemon. Woe! dear wife, I see there are

Not twenty left.

¹ The part of Prologue and Epilogue may be spoken by Jove or Hermes, should there not be sufficient actors to assume an extra part, or these speeches may be omitted altogether if desired.

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Baucis (setting olive-jar on shelf and opening lid of flour-chest). And in our chest of flour

A pinch of meal (*shuts lid: sadly*) and all the wine turned sour!

Saving this jar of vintage (*approaching shelf with jars, centre back, and pointing to one of them*) which I pressed

With better fortune, after all the rest.

(Comes to front of stage, followed by Philemon.)

How shall we prosper, when the winter snow
Mantles our thatch, and when the cold winds blow
Chilling our aged bones, if all our store
Be spent, and famine visit us before
Bountiful summer comes to us again,

Bringing sweet fruits and wine and golden grain?

Philemon (sitting down on a stool near the table). Oh, woe is me, my Baucis! We have dwelt

Together fifty years, nor ever felt

The pinch of hunger. We were ever poor,

(Shaking his head sadly.)

But never, since I led thee to this door

A bride of twenty summers, have we known

Such want as this. Ah me! now we are grown

Aged in years, though not in love, we must

Of our more prosperous neighbours beg a crust.

Baucis (emphatically). Never, Philemon! Rather would I die

Than beg of neighbours so unneighbourly!

Cleon, whose meadows pasture fourscore sheep,

AUDREY HAGGARD

(She moves to door, R., as she speaks and motions with her hand towards the distant village.)

Is yet so grudging that he will not keep
His aged grandfather, but sends him forth
To beg his crust of bread and bowl of broth;

(Turning.) And Lysias so much loves to hoard *his* gold.

He will not give his mother, bowed and old,
Enough to purchase wool, or coarsest yarn
To weave a mantle. Philo, in his barn,
Hath store of corn, but if a beggar come
And pray a crust, *he* will not give a crumb.

(Approaching Philemon as she speaks.)

Nay, my Philemon, never will I crave }
Of such—rather let famine dig my grave!

Philemon (shaking his head sadly). Well, well, little
contents me; but I pray

We somehow shall endure, for if thou slay
Our old grey goose, sooner, I swear, than carve
An inch of him, my Baucis, would I starve.
I would the gods would visit us, and bless
Our hard necessity with plenteousness.

Baucis. Well, I'll not weep until I've time for tears;
Have we not dwelt in joy for fifty years?

(Puts her arm round Philemon and kisses him. Sound of distant shouting is heard.)

But hearken, tell me, dost thou hear a sound
Of clamour in the street? Hath Lysias found,
Think you, the thief who robbed him, whom he
swore

If he could catch, to beat till he was sore?

(As she speaks, she takes the besom and begins to sweep the floor.)

Philemon (rising). I'll to the door, maybe my poor old eyes

Are not too dim to learn why all these cries

And clamour fill the village.

(He goes to door, R., and looks out, shading his eyes with his hand.)

Why, I see

Only two strangers standing by the tree

Before the house of Cleon; all the air

Resounds with shouts, the children run and stare,

And eager goat-herds drive their flocks, and thrust
Among the throng and fill the street with dust.

(While Philemon speaks Baucis pauses now and then at her work, and listens more intently.)

The strangers beg an alms, but Cleon stands

Hard-faced before his door with outspread hands,

Thus. *(He holds out his hands.)*

Now they move to Lysias' house, beside

The house of Cleon. Lysias opens wide

His door—and in their faces shakes his staff,—

He thinks upon his thief. Now the crowd
laugh

And clap their hands. Inhospitable crew! *(Turns.)*

Baucis (dropping the besom and staring through the doorway.) Hard-hearted village!

AUDREY HAGGARD

Philemon (pointing). See, they beg anew
At Philo's gate—but they may wait till morn
For all he cares, for Philo guards his corn
Sure as a miser, why, he counts, they say,
(*Baucis lifts the besom and again begins to sweep.*)
Daily his sacks, lest one be stol'n away.

Baucis. And now where go they?

Philemon. Still from house to house,
And still refused. Corystus' sly-faced spouse
Laughs in their faces.

Baucis (leaning on the besom). Oh! for shame, for
shame! (*Approaching Philemon.*)

Unnatural village! Husband, if they came
To our poor hearth, would we not offer all—
The best we have?

*Philemon (turning from the door, R., which he leaves
ajar).* Indeed, our store is small,
Yet would we bid them rest their weary feet,
And wash—and set before them such poor meat
As we could give them.

Baucis (leaning her besom against the wall). Doubtless
they will climb
Up to our door, and for the hundredth time
Crave food and lodging. Let us then prepare
For them the best we have, and with them share
E'en our last crust.

Philemon. Dear wife, thy heart is mine
In this, indeed; yet speak, how shall we dine.
Having no bread? (*Holds out his empty hands.*)

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Baucis (nodding her head). Fear not, they shall not fast.

Somehow, be sure, I'll compass such repast

As poor folk shall not scorn, for we have still

This jar of wine; come, fetch it here, and fill

(Philemon fetches the jar and places it on the table.

Baucis lifts a bowl from the shelf and sets it on the table; Philemon fills it with olives.)

This bowl with our last olives. I have too

(As she speaks she moves about the room fetching fruit and vegetables from the places where they are stored, and setting them on the table.)

A pot of cornel berries, and a few

Sweet fruits. And here are carrots, husband, peel

These too, I pray. I'll seek the cakes of meal

From yesterday. *(Exit Baucis, door L.)*

Philemon (sitting down and peeling the vegetables).

Jove! I thank thee that last night

My troubles banished so my appetite,

I could not eat my loaf, thus better fare

Shall light upon the guest.

Enter Baucis with two little brown loaves, and three eggs in the fold of her robe, which she has gathered up as an apron.

Baucis.

Would I had here

Another egg; see, husband, I have three.

(Showing eggs.)

(Regretfully.) Had we but four, one each, I presently

Would roast them in the ashes.

AUDREY HAGGARD

Philemon. Our old hen
Was clucking even now. (*Rising.*) My Baucis, then
Let us both hasten swiftly as we may
And seek her round brown egg. But first we'll lay
The board, and rub it cleanly with a cloth.

Baucis. And I will put those carrots in the broth.
(*She puts the vegetables which Philemon has peeled into the pot on the fire, while he rubs the table, sets four platters upon it, and also bread, olives, and the jar of wine. Exeunt Philemon and Baucis, door L. Jove and Hermes now approach door, R., which has been left ajar, and knock. They are disguised as beggars.*)

Jove (*humbly: outside*). Open the door, good people,
pray, and let—
Not your abundance make your hearts forget
Our want. (*Waits outside.*)

—What! still no answer?—Then I'll knock
Again.

(*Knocks again, pushes the door wide, and stands in the open doorway.*)

Hermes (*with indignation*). Are all hearts harder made
than rock,

In these most thankless parts? I thought there ran
Out from yon door a woman and a man
As we approached.

They enter the room and look about them.

Jove (*with bitterness*). They took their way from hence
As we drew nigh, doubtless to make pretence

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

That none were in, that thus they might escape
Bestowing even a crumb, or one small grape
On our necessity. They little know
That we are gods disguised, and that we go
Roaming as beggars that our careful arts
May learn the thoughts of men, and prove their
hearts.

Come, leave we this inhospitable hearth.

(Prepares to leave the room.)

Hermes (holding Jove back by the mantle). Tarry, great
Jove.—It may be that thy wrath
Too soon is kindled. See *(pointing)* this board
is spread

For four, and here are olives, wine, and bread.
It may be some good couple here have set
Their best to entertain us. Let us yet
Wait here awhile.

Jove (returning). If this be so in truth,
I will reward them greatly, but no ruth
From us shall light upon this village hard,
(Pointing through the door.)

Where they denied us even a crumb, and barred
On us their doors. But lest these good folk fear,
When they return, to see us standing here
Like thieves, by yonder bushes let us wait
Till they return; then knock upon the gate
Again, and crave an alms; thus shall we prove
Their hearts indeed.

Hermes.

So let us do, great Jove.

AUDREY HAGGARD

(Exeunt Jove and Hermes, R.)

Enter by the other door, Philemon and Baucis.

Philemon carries an egg and a comb of honey.

Baucis. Hast thou the egg?

Philemon.

I have it safe and sound.

(Gives the egg to Baucis.)

And see, my Baucis, see what I have found,

A comb of honey of Hymettus, stored

Against the winter. *(Shows honeycomb to Baucis.)*

Baucis (placing the eggs in the ashes on the hearth).

Set it on the board.

Our guests shall not go hungry.

(He lifts a platter from the shelf, places the honeycomb upon it, and sets it on the table.)

Philemon.

But I swear,

Almost I blush to lay such humble fare

(Lifts soup-bowls from the shelf, and wooden spoons, and lays the table as he speaks.)

Before these strangers. Forty springs have passed

Us by, since we played host and hostess last;

(Baucis puts logs on the fire and stirs the soup-pot.)

Dost thou remember when thy kinsman came,

Plautius of Troas, was not that his name?—

And I so much abashed I could but stand

And simper by, nor even clasp his hand.

(Pausing.) Tell me, my Baucis, tell me, I entreat,

When these our guests appear, how must I greet

Their entering? I would not have them come

And think me mannerless. I shall stand dumb

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

From very shame, that I must set before
Guests such poor fare.

Baucis (rising from the hearth and seating herself on the stool by the table). When they shall strike the door,

Rise—thus (*Rises, and walks with dignity to the door*) stately, as suits a host, unbar

The door (*Opens door.*) cry: “Welcome, strangers from afar.”

Philemon (interrupting her, and rubbing his hair in perplexity). Oh, ay, that’s very well, but if they come

But twenty stadia hence, or if their home
Lies hard by Ilium, and we greet them thus,
What graceless folk they will imagine us!
We should seem pretty fools if we should find
When we have hailed them thus, they dwell behind
The brow of yonder hill!

Baucis (thoughtfully). That’s true, that’s true.
(*Closes door, and returns to Philemon.*)

Well, let us greet them thus: “Welcome to you
Who come, the gods know whence.”

Philemon (shaking his head). Nay, that appears
Suspicious; now, by Zeus, I know my ears
Would tingle at such greeting for a week.

Nay, wife, we must more gracious welcome seek.

(*Slapping his leg.*)

Olympus! now I know a good device;
We will cry: “Welcome. welcome, welcome,” thrice!

AUDREY HAGGARD

Baucis (satisfied). So let us do indeed; and we will shout

It loud into their ears with voices stout;
For one is old and doubtless deaf. (*Nervously.*)

But now,

Before they come, my Philemon, do thou
Stand by the door, and play awhile the guest,
While I rehearse the hostess to thee, lest
I presently forget.

Philemon. With all my heart.

(*He goes outside the door, closes it, strikes loudly, and comes in.*)

(*Entering.*) I am here, I say, I am here.

Baucis (who has been preparing to receive him grandly, but is prevented by his untimely entrance.)

Nay, nay, thou art
Too swift in entering, a guest would stand
Without awhile, and wait until the hand
Of his good host unbarred——

Philemon (patiently). Well, I will feign
The guest once more, and strike the door again.
But tell me first, how long must I abide
Without?

Baucis (considering). Why, stand thou there for such
a tide

As—as it might take a man to count to ten.

(*While Baucis speaks Philemon listens attentively, counting on his fingers.*)

Then entering, greet me friendly; bid me then

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Good morrow, clasp my hand. (*Clasps his hand.*)

Call the day kind

That I was born. (*Motions with her hand.*)

Philemon (*perplexed, and rubbing his hair*). Stay, stay,
my wife, my mind

Will hold no more.

(*Exit Philemon, door R. He closes the door and knocks loudly on the outside.*)

Baucis (*rising and walking to the door in a dignified manner*). Who knocks?

Philemon (*outside: counting fervently*).

One, two, three, four.

Baucis (*opening the door half-way*). Answer me, friend.

What seek you at my door?

Philemon (*with downcast eyes and his fingers in his ears: continuing to count*).

Five, six.

Baucis (*in a loud whisper, shaking him by the shoulder*).

Speak, husband!

Philemon (*in distress*). Ah, me! my *Baucis*, you

Have broke my count: now must I start anew.

(*Counting on his fingers.*)

One, two, three, four, five, six—— (*Looking up*).

I have forgot.

What said you—ten?

Baucis.

Nay, nay, I bade you not

Count thus aloud. Abide thou for the space

In which thou *mightest* count ten, *then* show thy face.

AUDREY HAGGARD

Thus did I counsel thee.

Philemon (nodding his head with assurance). I have it clear,

I think, by Jove!

(Exit Philemon. Baucis closes the door, and seats herself beside the table again. Philemon knocks loudly at the door.)

Baucis (rising and approaching the door with stately steps, and speaking through the keyhole).

Good friend, what seek you here?

(A long pause follows, during which she listens intently.)

Philemon (in a loud whisper, opening the door a little way). Tell me, my Baucis, is it time to thrust My head beyond the door?

Baucis. Nay, nay, thou must
Enter with boldness; only thieves would pry
And peep, and creep into the chamber.

Philemon (loudly, with indignation). Why,
"Show thou thy face," thou saidst. By Jove, I
heard

Thee speak it clear; that was thy very word!
(Sighing.) Well, well, I'll knock again. How runs
the rhyme?

"If twice thou fail, try yet another time."

(Exit Philemon, closing the door behind him. He knocks on the outside.)

Baucis (from within). Welcome!

Philemon (outside; shouting). I scarce can hear thee
through this lath.

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Baucis (more loudly). Welcome!

Philemon (outside: hurriedly aside). Dear wife, our guests come up the path!

Baucis. Dost thou not hear me yet, or shall I cry
Yet louder?

Philemon (outside: aside). They'll be with us presently.

Baucis (shouting). Welcome!

(Flings open the door and lets him in, panting.)

Now will we sit awhile and wait.

(Philemon and Baucis seat themselves hastily, and listen expectantly, leaving the door ajar. Jove and Hermes approach the door outside, and knock.)

Hermes (in a pitiiful voice). Good people, if ye be com-
passionate

Give us an alms, we have wandered long in these

Hard stony ways; and since the Pleiades

Rose yester-e'en no bread hath passed our lips.

Behold, our flasks are dry, and in our scrips

Not one dry fig: no, nor a single crumb.

(Hermes thrusts his hand, holding an empty flask turned upside down, through the opening of the door.)

Philemon and Baucis (loudly: rising and hastening to the door, which they open wide).

Welcome, welcome, oh, welcome, strangers; come,
Enter our cottage!

Jove and Hermes enter. Philemon and Baucis draw forward the form for their guests.

Jove (aside to Hermes). We are like to find,

It seems, in this poor dwelling, hosts more kind

AUDREY HAGGARD

Than yon hard wretches. (*Aloud: humbly.*) May
your stars be blest,

For your compassion; we will sit and rest
Awhile, since gently you entreat us thus.

Hermes (with gratitude). The gods reward you for your
deed to us.

Philemon. Be seated, gentle strangers. (*With indig-
nation.*) We observed,

Here from our door, how ill our neighbours served
Your want.

Baucis. And ere you leave us, we would plead
Forgiveness to you for this most black deed
That stains their hearts, that deed the gods abhor
Of turning hungry strangers from the door.
But you are weary, sit and taste of such
Poor viands as we have.

(*Philemon takes his place at the head of the table. Jove
and Hermes sit on the little form behind it, facing
the audience.*)

*Philemon (cutting the loaves and offering bread to his
guests).* Oh, woe! not much

Of a dainty will ye find.

*Jove (cheerfully: helping himself to bread, and passing
a piece to Hermes).* Where friends invite,

There all is sweetened to the appetite,

At such repast good fellowship is sauce,

And every merry jest another course.

*Baucis (fetching the pot from the fire and pouring soup
into the four bowls on the table).*

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

How like you pottage of sweet herbs and leek?

Hermes (tasting the broth). You could not better this.
were you to seek

From Troy to Parium.

*(Baucis seats herself on the stool at the foot of the table,
and all begin to eat.)*

Philemon. Come you, then, from far?
Jove (talking as he eats). From a most distant land we
come, and are

Wanderers in this hard country. We are come
Begging through Dardanus and Ilium
And Pergamum, and everywhere we met
Hard-hearted folk who shut their doors, and set
Their dogs on us.

Hermes (eating). Then onward, still abused,
We tramped through Assos. There the folk refuse
To let us even rest beside their well.
So we pressed westward here; and it befell
That in the village yonder *(jerking his spoon
towards door, R.)* still they barred
Their gates on us.

Philemon (indignantly). Indeed their hearts are hard
Yonder, as Jove's own bolts, to him who begs!
*(Hermes kicks Jove under the table. Baucis collects the
empty soup bowls, she places clean platters on table,
and fetches eggs from the hearth.)*

Baucis. See, here are cakes of meal, good friends, and
eggs

Cooked lightly in the ashes.

AUDREY HAGGARD

(Before seating herself again, she hands round a platter with the eggs. Philemon chooses the largest eggs, and places them upon the plates of his guests.)

Jove (cracking his egg on the table). Most kind host
And hostess, this your deed to us almost
Makes us forget the sorrows of our lot,
When through the land we wandered.

Philemon (beginning to eat). Thank us not
For such poor fare, good friends, but rather tell
Us of yourselves and where your kinsfolk dwell.

Baucis. And have you children?

Jove (with modest pride: patting Hermes on the shoulder). Here, behold my son,

My agile Proteus, who thinks to run
In the Olympic games.

Baucis (with much interest). What, is he then
Swift-footed?

Jove. More than all the sons of men,
And in the race he could, I think, outspeed
Even swift Pegasus, the wingèd steed.

Philemon. Well, well, I wish him luck. But will ye dine
Without a draught? Come, fill your cups with wine.

Baucis (aside to Philemon: lifting the jug and fetching a metal goblet from the shelf).

Drink but a little, my Philemon, lest
There be not left sufficient for the guest.

Philemon (aside). Ay, ay, my wife. *(Aloud.)* Come
now, good friends, fill up
The goblet to the brim, and drain the cup

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

And fill again; but first upon the sods

I will pour forth libation to the gods.

(He spills a few drops of wine upon the hearth, then fills the goblet and passes it to Hermes, who drinks, and passes on to Jove. Philemon seats himself again at the table.)

Hermes (sipping from the goblet). This draught is sweet as nectar; why, I think

With small persuasion I could even drink

Twenty such cups.

Jove.

And I could taste a score,

I swear.

(Fills the cup again and proffers it to their hosts, but Philemon and Baucis refuse.)

Baucis (aside to Philemon). Ah me, how shall we give them more,

When this is spent? Why didst thou urge them so

To drink like trout, and fill again, as though

We owned ten wine-skins?

Jove.

Come, Proteus, pass along

The jug.—Now, friends, what say you to a song?

Philemon. Why, both of us are agèd, but in my day,

That's fifty years ago, I carolled gay

As any linnet. Jove! but I could sing!

Jove. A song makes glad the heart. (To Hermes.)

What! wilt thou cling

For ever to the cup? Ho! pass it here,

Or, by the gods, I'll smite thee on the ear.

AUDREY HAGGARD

Dost thou sit idle, fellow, nor attend

Upon the wants of our good host and friend?

*(Jove takes the cup from Hermes, and sets it before
Philemon, who shakes his head and passes it back.)*

Baucis (aside). Diana! how they feast!

Hermes (to Philemon). Speak, knowest thou then

The song of vintage that the husbandmen
Sing at their doors at even, when they press
The purple grapes with naked feet?

Philemon and Baucis.

Yes, yes,

We know it well.

Hermes.

Why, come then; one, two, three.

When I clap hands, we'll carol lustily.

(Claps his hands. They sing.)

Oh, we be happy husbandmen
Who labour on the hill,
We'll drink and drain and fill again,
We'll drink and drain and fill.

Who would not serve a rich man,
And labour in his mead,
And taste his goods, and hunt his woods,
And ride his noble steed?

Let grumblers envy rich men
-In palaces who sit,
While others steal their wine and meal,
We'll envy them no whit!

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

For we be merry husbandmen
Who labour on the hill;
We'll drink and drain and fill again,
And drink and drain and fill!

Jove. Ho! all together!

All. We'll drink and drain and fill again,
And drink and drain and fill!

Jove. By Bacchus, nobly sung. (*To Hermes.*) Come,
Proteus, come,

Thou art unmannerly, dost thou sit dumb,
Nor serve our hosts! Take that—(*hitting him*)—
thou lout, and fill

These empty wine-pots full for them, until
The jars are brimming all, that so they may
Have store to last them many a winter day.

Hermes (rising). And they shall find, I think, the
draught more choice

Than any in Greece.

(*Hermes and Jove carry the jug to the empty jars upon
the shelf, centre back of stage, where by tipping up
the jug close over the rim of each jar in turn, they
appear to fill them.*)

Baucis (huskily). Olympus! Why, my voice
Is wellnigh gone. But, my Philemon, sec,
Look how they fill our jars; assuredly
The wine's nigh spent, yet cease they not to pour
It forth, and ever flows it more and more!

(*Philemon approaches and watches, amazed.*)

AUDREY HAGGARD

Hermes (pausing in his task). Come, my good hosts,
you too must taste your draught.

Jove. Come, taste!

(Fills the goblet, and presses it on Philemon.)

Philemon (tasting). By Jupiter! I never quaffed
A better. *(To Baucis.)* Can this be the vintage
pressed

By thee?

*Baucis (dips her finger into the goblet and tastes:
astonished to Philemon).*

Why, this is better than the best
Red wine in all the land; no draught of mine
Is here—for this was pressed by feet divine.
And see the jars! they fill them to the rim,
And yet the jug still sparkles to the brim
With the red draught, sweet as the scent of flowers
Ambrosial—this wine is none of ours!

*Philemon (amazed: watching Hermes and Jove, who
have returned to their task and are occupied in
filling the jars).*

Is the jug charmed? Olympus! how it flows
Without an end. See how it froths and throws
A sparkle to the light, unendingly
It pulses from the pitcher!

Baucis (terrified: clinging to Philemon). Husband, see;
Oh, I shall die of terror. I entreat
Philemon, gaze on this young stranger's feet.

(Pointing.)

See but the charmed sandals, golden winged!

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Philemon (*astonished*). And where the rags are rent,
his arm is ringed

With hoops of gold—I see it with my eyes.

Can these be gods, come hither in disguise?

Oh, I shall die of fear! (*Clings to Baucis.*)

Jove (*to Hermes*). Come, let us cast

Aside our rags, and stand revealed at last.

(*They fling off their disguise.*)

Good folk, behold us!

(*Philemon and Baucis fall down at the feet of Jove.*)

Philemon and Baucis (*terrified*). Ye great gods, we plead
Forgive our wretched hut.

Jove. I am indeed

Olympian Jupiter, good folk, and by

Me stands my son, swift Hermes. He and I,

Disguised, have wandered through this land to
prove

Which hearts are filled with hate, and which with
love.

We roamed the land, but those that we had blessed
With wealth and plenty would not let us rest,

Because we went in rags, nor gave us food.

But they shall pay for their ingratitude;

But ye, the poorest of the poor, have spread

Your best before us; olives, salt, and bread,

And homely pottage. Rise, and be assured

That your good deed shall bring a great reward.

(*Philemon and Baucis rise, and stand with bowed heads
before him.*)

AUDREY HAGGARD

For by this humble dwelling shall arise
A marble temple, lovely to the eyes
Of gods and men. Sweet fruits shall there abound,
And by green groves shall it be girded round.
Gaze on yon hill; behold, already gleams
Its golden roof.

*(Points R. Philemon and Baucis look through the door,
astonished.)*

And ye, as best beseems
Such pious folk, shall dwell therein, and tend
Its fires in comfort, till your days shall end.

Hermes (coming forward). Nor is that all; for if, good
folk, you seek

Aught else we may bestow upon you, speak,
Tell us your wish.

Philemon (humbly and with awe). Ye gracious gods,
we give

Thanks for your gift,

Baucis. And only ask to live

In peace beside the temple and the grove
That ye have wrought.

Philemon and Baucis. And this we beg, great Jove,
That we may die in the same hour.

Philemon (kneeling). I crave

That I may never see my Baucis' grave,
Nor live to weep her fate.

Baucis (falling on her knees and clasping her hands).
Great Jove, and I

Pray never to behold Philemon die.

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Jove (motioning *Philemon* and *Baucis* to rise. *They obey*).

So shall it be. When Fate's immortal shears
Shall cut at last the thread of all your years,
You shall not perish, but green boughs shall spring
From all your limbs; eternal blossoming
Shall be your lot. You shall become two oaks
Of noble form; and when the summer cloaks
Your boughs with shining leaves and tasselled
fruits,

And asphodel blooms purple at your roots,
The men and maids that go along the dale
Shall pause before you, and repeat the tale
Of your compassion to the strangers poor,
Who long ago came begging to your door.

Philemon (with a low reverence). Again, ye gods, we
render thanks to you.

But woe to us who in our blindness knew
Not the great guests whom we did entertain!
I would, when ye approached, that we had slain
That which we hold most dear, our old grey
goose!

Jove. Your fare, good people, needeth no excuse,
You gave your last good wine to the poor guest,
But nectar sweet, better than mortal best,
The gods gave back again. (Sternly.) But ere from
hence

We pass, ye shall behold what recompense
Shall fall on yonder village. (Opens door, R.)

AUDREY HAGGARD

Philemon (gazing out through door: holding up his hands in astonishment). Woe is me!

A great flood rises like a mighty sea,
And covers all the fields.—Thy sky is dim
With falling rain, and all the people swim
Upon the waters.—How they shout and choke!
Olympus! why, they turn to frogs, and croak!

(Baucis peers over his shoulder, clasping her hands in horror.)

Jove. That is their end. Their houses all are bogs.
They are as they appear—dark, croaking frogs
Only would mock at strangers, only proud
And senseless mockers croak their scorn aloud.
But now, farewell.

Philemon and Baucis (anxiously). Great gods, where
will ye roam
From hence?

Hermes (coming forward. Philemon and Baucis listen astonished).

We must again to our Olympian home
That towers godlike on a purple hill
Flecked with the green of fruitful groves, that
fill

Its palaces with sweetness, where the tall
Pale Oreads garner fruits ambrosial;
Where fountains toss their waters in the hush
Of lily-sweetened eve; where the brown thrush
Hides drowsy in the myrtles. Then there wakes
The song of Philomel that sobbing shakes

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

The hearts of gods, and the dim minds of men
Till Slumber scatter wide his poppy. Then,
When god and myrmidon are sunk in sleep,
From shadowy woods the young-eyed Dryads creep
Scarce stirring the grey dew upon the lawn,
And tread their measure in the charmed dawn
With petal feet.

Or else with feast and song
Breaks the sweet-scented air, and in the long
Pale pillared halls, dim with amber light
Of golden lamps, we feast into the night
Outstretched about the wreathed board, upon
Cushions of gold and green and cinnamon,
Peacock and pearl, while low-voiced Ganymede
Proffers his cup.

Oh, we must haste indeed
To our Olympus, where our brethren dwell,
The bright-eyed gods.

Jove and Hermes. Therefore, farewell, farewell!
(*They hold up their right hands in farewell, and pass
out by door, R., hidden by the smoke that rises
from the hearth. Philemon and Baucis stand
amazed for a moment. Then hastening to the
door they fling it open, and stare out into the
twilight.*)

Baucis (with awe). What dost thou see, Philemon?

Philemon (lost in wonder). All the garth
Is empty.—Empty is the little path
That winds to find our door.

AUDREY HAGGARD

Baucis (with awe). How have they passed
From hence? For see (*points*) the stakes I bound
so fast

Across the gate, to hold the goats that stray
From out our little plot, still bar the way!

Philemon (rubbing his eyes). My Baucis, did we dream,
or did our eyes
Indeed behold the gods?

Baucis. Nay, their disguise
Lies at our feet upon the earthen floor.
This is no empty dream. (*Pointing R.*) Gaze
through the door;
The temple hath not vanished.

Philemon (solemnly). All was true.
The gods did visit us indeed.

(*Coming forward: to the audience.*)

And you,
Good friends, when strangers strike upon your gate,
Be not hard-hearted, but compassionate.
Press much or little in their outstretched palms,
It may be ye shall give an angel alms.

(*Exeunt Philemon and Baucis.*)

CURTAIN

After a little pause, the curtain rises again.

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Enter Epilogue.

Epilogue. The curtain falls at last, the story ends;
We thank you for your patience, gentle friends,
You who have come this evening to behold
This simple legend of the days of old;
And, ere you go, we wish you joy always,
As with this happy pair in ancient days.
The gods are just indeed, and soon or late
Give opportunity to small and great
To do good deeds and gentle, and to earn
By their own act a just reward in turn.
This the Immortals swear with promise true,
And they this very hour have shown to you
That where the deed is good no mortal bars
(Motions with her hand towards open door, R.)
May close the road that leadeth to the stars.
(Exit Epilogue.)

CURTAIN

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

A PLAYLET EXTRACTED AND ADAPTED FROM FRIAR BACON
AND FRIAR BUNGAY BY ROBERT GREENE (A.D. 1560-92)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FRIAR BACON. A learned friar living at Brazenose College, Oxford: famous for his magical powers.

PRINCE EDWARD. Son to King Henry III: in love with Margaret, though betrothed to Eleanor of Castile: afterwards Edward I.

MARGARET. The Fair Maid of Fressingfield: daughter of the Keeper of the King's forest.

FRIAR BUNGAY. Another learned friar, inferior to Bacon: he lives near Fressingfield.

LACY. Earl of Lincoln: bosom friend of Prince Edward.
A DEMON.

SCHOLARS, HUNTSMEN, ATTENDANTS, etc.

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

SCENE I: BACON'S CELL

The stage represents two places: in the foreground is Bacon's cell at Oxford, simply furnished with the bare necessities of life as becomes a holy friar: conspicuous in it is the magical glass through which Prince Edward and Bacon, who enter as the scene opens, are watching the happenings in the forest at Fressingfield, some 130 miles away: Bacon's chemical studies are suggested by a retort and other apparatus. Across the stage is a glade in the midst of the Forest, screened at the opening of the scene by a curtain. Prince Edward is tall and long-limbed, with abundant black hair; he has a slight droop of the eyelid. Friar Bacon is clad in the grey habit and cord of his Order, the Franciscan; his face bears the marks of anxious study.

(Enter Friar Bacon and Prince Edward.)

Bacon. Now, frolic Edward, welcome to my cell;

Here tempers Friar Bacon many toys,

Wherein the devils plead homage to his words.

Within this glass prospective thou shalt see

This day what's done in merry Fressingfield

'Twixt lovely Peggy and the Lincoln Earl.

P.Edw. Friar, thou glad'st me; now shall Edward try

How Lacy meaneth to his sovereign Lord.

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

Bacon. Stand there and look directly in the glass.
(*The curtain slowly reveals the Forest of Fressingfield.*
Enter Margaret and Friar Bungay, a jovial-looking
Friar in grey habit.)

What sees my lord?

P.Edw. I see the Keeper's lovely lass appear
As brightsome as the paramour of Mars,
Only attended by a jolly friar.

Bacon. Sit still and keep the crystal in your eye.

Margar. But tell me, Friar Bungay, is it true
That this fair courteous country swain
Who says his father is a farmer nigh
Can be Lord Lacy, Earl of Lincolnshire?

Bun. Peggy, 'tis true, 'tis Lacy for my life,
Or else mine art and cunning both do fail,
Left by Prince Edward to procure his loves;
For he in green that helped you run your cheese
Is son to Henry and the Prince of Wales.

Margar. Be what he will, his lure is but for lust;
But did Lord Lacy like poor Margaret,
Or would he deign to wed a country lass,
Friar, I would his humble handmaid be.

Bun. Why, Margaret, dost thou love him?

Margar. His wit is quick and ready in conceit
As Greece afforded in her chiefest prime;
Courteous, ah friar, full of pleasing smiles!
Trust me, I love too much to tell thee more.

Bun. Hath not each eye that viewed thy pleasing face
Surnamed thee Fair Maid of Fressingfield?

ROBERT GREENE

Margar. Yes, Bungay; and would God the lovely earl
Had won the prize that so many sought.

P.Edw. I think the friar courts the bonny wench:

Bacon, methinks he is a lusty churl.

Bacon. Now look, my lord.

(Enter, in the glass, Lacy, disguised as a farmer's son.)

P.Edw. Gog's wounds, Bacon, here comes Lacy.

Bacon. Sit still, my lord, and mark the comedy.

Bun. Here's Lacy, Margaret; step aside awhile

(Retires with Margaret.)

Lacy (to himself meditatively). Daphne, the damsel
that caught Phoebus fast,

And locked him in the brightness of her looks,

Was not so beauteous in Apollo's eyes

As is fair Margaret to the Lincoln Earl.

For shame, Lord Lacy, thou art put in trust:

Edward, thy sovereign's son, hath chosen thee,

A secret friend, to court her for himself,

And darest thou wrong thy prince with treachery?

Margar. Come, Friar, I will shake him from his dumps.

(Comes forward.)

How, cheer you, sir? a penny for your thought:

You're early up, pray God it be the near.¹

What, come from Beccles in a morn so soon?

Lacy. Thus watchful are such men who live in love,

Whose eyes brook broken slumbers for their sleep.

I tell thee, Peggy, since last Harleston fair

My mind hath felt a heap of passions.

¹ A reference to an old proverb "Early up and never the nearer."

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

Margar. (mockingly). A trusty man, that court it for
your friend!

Woo you still for the courtier all in green?
I marvel that he sues not for himself.

Lacy. Peggy,
I pleaded first to get your grace for him;
But when mine eyes surveyed your beauteous looks,
Love, like a wag, straight dived into mine heart
And there did shrine the idea of yourself.
Pity me, though I be a farmer's son,
And measure not my riches but my love.

Margar. You are very hasty; for to garden well,
Seeds must have time to sprout before they spring:
Love ought to creep as doth the dial's shade,
For timely ripe is rotten too too soon.

Bun. (coming forward). Deus hic: room for a merry
friar!

What, youth of Beccles, with the Keeper's lass?
'Tis well; but tell me, hear you any news?

Lacy. No, friar: what news?

Bun. Dwell'st thou in Beccles, and hear'st not of these
news?

Lacy, the Earl of Lincoln, is late fled
From Windsor court, disguised like a swain,
And lurks about the country here unknown.
Henry suspects him of some treachery,
And therefore doth proclaim in every way,
That who can take the Lincoln Earl shall have,
Paid in the Exchequer, twenty thousand crowns.

ROBERT GREENE

Lacy. The Earl of Lincoln! Friar, thou art mad:

It was some other; thou mistak'st the man.

The Earl of Lincoln! why, it cannot be.

Margar. Yes, very well, my lord, for you are he:

The Keeper's daughter took you prisoner.

Lord Lacy, yield, I'll be your gaoler once.

P.Edw. How familiar they be, Bacon!

Bacon. Sit still, and mark the conclusion of their loves.

Lacy. Then am I double prisoner to thyself:

Peggy, I yield. But are these news in jest?

Margar. In jest with you, but earnest unto me;

For why, these wrongs do wring me at the heart.

Ah, how these earls and noblemen of birth

Flatter and feign to do poor women ill.

Lacy. Believe me, lass, I am the Lincoln Earl:

I not deny but, 'tired thus in rags,

I liv'd disguised to win fair Peggy's love.

Margar. What love is there where wedding ends not love?

Lacy. I mean, fair girl, to make thee Lacy's wife.

Margar. I little think that earls will stoop so low.

Lacy. Say shall I make thee countess ere I sleep?

Margar. Handmaid unto the earl, so please himself:

A wife in name but servant in obedience.

Lacy. The Lincoln Countess, for it shall be so:

I'll plight the bands and seal it with a kiss.

P.Edw. (furiously). Gog's wounds, Bacon, they kiss! I'll stab them.

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

Bacon. O, hold your hands, my lord, it is the glass.

"Twere a long poniard, my lord, to reach between
Oxford and Fressingfield; but sit still and see more.

Bun. Well, Lord of Lincoln, if your loves be knit
And that your tongues and thoughts do both agree.
To avoid ensuing jars, I'll hamper up the match.
I'll take my prayer-book forth and wed you here.

Lacy. Friar content.—Peggy, how like you this?

Margar. What likes my lord is pleasing unto me.

Bun. Then hand-fast hand, and I will to my book.

Bacon. What sees my lord now?

P.Edw. Bacon, I see the lovers hand in hand,
The friar ready with his prayer-book there
To wed them both: then am I quite undone.
Bacon, help now, if e'er thy magic served:
Help, Bacon; stop the marriage now
If devils or necromancy may suffice,
And I will give thee forty thousand crowns.

Bacon. Fear not, my lord, I'll stop the jolly friar
For mumbling up his orisons this day.

Lacy. Why speak'st not, Bungay? Friar, to thy book.
(*Bungay is mute, crying 'Hud, Hud.'*)

Margar. How look'st thou, friar, as a man distraught?
Reft of thy senses, Bungay? show by signs,
If thou be dumb, what passion holdeth thee.

Lacy. He's dumb indeed. Bacon hath with his devils
Enchanted him, or else some strange disease
Or apoplexy hath possessed his lungs.

P.Edw. Why stands Friar Bungay so amazed?

ROBERT GREENE

Bacon. I have struck him dumb, my lord; and, if your honour please,

I'll fetch this Bungay straight from Fressingfield
And he shall dine with us in Oxford here.

P.Edw. Bacon, do that, and thou contentest me.

Lacy. Of courtesy, Margaret, let us lead the friar
Unto thy father's lodge, to comfort him
With broths, to bring him from this hapless trance.

Margar. Or else, my lord, we were passing unkind
To leave the friar so in his distress.

(Enter a devil who carries off Bungay on his back.)

O, help, my lord! a devil, a devil, my lord!
Look how he carries Bungay on his back!
Let's hence, for Bacon's spirits be abroad.

(Exit with Lacy.)

P.Edw. Bacon, I laugh to see the jolly friar
Mounted upon the devil, and how the earl
Flees with his bonny lass for fear.
As soon as Bungay is at Brazen-nose
And I have chatted with the merry friar
I will in post hie me to Fressingfield.
And venge these wrongs on Lacy ere 't be long.

Bacon. So be it, my lord: but let us to our dinner;
For ere we have taken our repast awhile,
We shall have Bungay brought to Brazen-nose.

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

SCENE II

Near the Keeper's lodge at Fressingfield.

Enter, from one side Prince Edward with his dagger in his hand, and, from the other, Lacy and Margaret.

P.Edw. Lacy, thou canst not shroud thy traitorous thoughts.

Did I not sit in Oxford by the friar,
And see thee court the maid of Fressingfield.
Sealing thy flattering fancies with a kiss?
Did not proud Bungay draw his prayer-book forth,
And joining hand in hand had married you,
If Friar Bacon had not struck him dumb,
And mounted him upon a spirit's back,
That we might chat at Oxford with the friar?
Traitor, what answer'st? Is not this all true?

Lacy. Truth all, my lord; and thus I make reply.
At Harleston fair, there courting for your grace.
Whenas mine eye survey'd her beauteous shape.
Love taught me that your honour did but jest,
That princes were in fancy but as men;
How that the lovely maid of Fressingfield
Was fitter to be Lacy's wedded wife
Than passing fancy to the Prince of Wales.

P.Edw. Injurious Lacy
Wert thou to Edward second to himself,
Sole friend, and partner of his secret loves?
And could a glance of fading beauty break
Th' enchained fetters of such private friends?

ROBERT GREENE

Base coward, false and too effeminate!
From Oxford have I posted since I dined,
To take revenge before that Edward sleep.

Margar. 'Twas I, my lord, not Lacy stepped awry:
For oft he sued and courted for yourself,
And still wooed for the courtier all in green;
But I, whom fancy made but over-fond,
I fed mine eye with gazing on his face.
And still bewitched loved Lacy with my looks.
Then, worthy Edward, measure with thy mind
If women's favours will not force men fall,
If beauty, and if darts of piercing love,
Are not of force to bury thoughts of friends.

P.Edw. I tell thee, Peggy, I will have thy loves.
England and England's wealth shall wait on thee;
Britain shall bend unto her prince's love,
And do due homage to thine excellence,
If thou wilt be but Edward's Margaret.

Margar. Pardon, my lord: if Jove's great royalty
Sent me such presents as to Danae;
Not all the wealth heaven's treasury affords,
Should make me leave Lord Lacy or his love.

P.Edw. At Oxford I have learned this argument
"Remove the cause, th' effect removes itself."
Lacy, the cause why Margaret cannot love
Nor fix her liking on the English prince,
Take him away, and then th' effect will fail.
Villain, prepare thyself; for I will bathe
My poniard in the bosom of an earl.

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

Lacy. Rather than live, and miss fair Margaret's love,
Prince Edward, stop not at the fatal doom,
But stab it home: end both my loves and life.

Margar. Spare Lacy, gentle Edward; let me die,
For so both you and he do cease your loves.

P.Edw. Lacy shall die as traitor to his lord.

Lacy. I have deserved it, Edward; act it well.

Margar. What hopes the prince to gain by Lacy's
death?

P.Edw. To end the loves 'twixt him and Margaret.

Margar. Why, thinks King Henry's son that Margaret's
love

Hangs in th' uncertain balance of proud time?
That death shall make a discord of our thoughts?
No, stab the earl, and 'fore the morning sun,
Margaret shall meet her lover in the heavens.

Lacy. If aught betides to lovely Margaret,
Europe's rich wealth nor England's monarchy
Should not allure Lacy to over-live.

Then, Edward, short my life, and end our loves.

Margar. Rid me and keep a friend worth many loves.

Lacy. Nay, Edward, keep a love worth many friends.

Margar. An if thy mind be such as fame hath blazed,
Then, princely Edward, let us both abide
The fatal resolution of thy rage.

P.Edw. (aside). Princely? Is't princely to dissever lover's
leagues?

To part such friends as glory in their loves?
Leave, Ned, and make a virtue of this fault,

ROBERT GREENE

And further Peg and Lacy in their loves :!
So in subduing fancy's passion,
Conquering thyself, thou gett'st the richest spoil—
Lacy, rise up. Fair Peggy, here's my hand :
The Prince of Wales hath conquered all his
thoughts,

And all his loves he yields unto the earl.
Lacy, enjoy the maid of Fressingfield;
Make her thy Lincoln Countess at the church,
And Ned, as he is true Plantagenet,
Will give her to thee frankly for thy wife.

Lacy. Humbly I take her of my sovereign,
As if that Edward gave me England's right,
And riched me with the English diadem.

Margar. And doth the English prince mean true?
Will he vouchsafe to cease his former loves,
And yield the title of a country maid
Unto Lord Lacy?

P.Edw. I will, fair Peggy, as I am true lord.

Margar. Then, lordly sir, whose conquest is as great,
In conquering love, as Cæsar's victories,
Margaret, both mild and humble in her thoughts,
Yields thanks, and, next Lord Lacy, doth enshrine
Edward the second secret in her heart.

P.Edw. Gramercy, Peggy: now that vows are past,
And that your loves are not to be revolt
Once, Lacy, friends again. Come we will post
To Oxford: for this day the king is there,
And brings for Edward Castile Elinor.

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

Peggy, I must go view my wife:
I pray God I like her as I loved thee.

And now we'll leave you for a week or two.

Margar. As it please Lord Lacy: but love's foolish looks
Think footsteps miles and minutes to be hours.

Lacy. I'll hasten, Peggy, to make short return.
But please your honour go unto the lodge,
We shall have butter, cheese, and venison;
And yesterday I bought for Margaret
A lusty bottle of neat claret-wine:
Thus can we feast and entertain your grace.

P.Edw. 'Tis cheer, Lord Lacy, for an emperor,
If he respect the person and the place.
Come, let us in: for I will all this night
Ride post until I come to Bacon's cell. (*Exeunt.*)

BROTHER SUN

BY LAURENCE HOUSMAN

*Applications regarding the amateur dramatic rights,
and for the use of the Incidental Music by Rutland
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Society of Authors, 11 Gower Street, London, W.C.1.*

BROTHER SUN

SCENE

The camp of the Saracens before Damietta, looking out eastward over the sands and lagoons.

In a large circular tent, gorgeously hung with arras of gold and scarlet, the Soldan sits enthroned on a high dais. Upon the steps to right and left, in order of rank, stand his Emirs and Councillors. Before the entrance are armed Soldiers and around the tent-walls Nubian Slaves and Arab Servants. Against the pole of the tent stands the Soldan's Sword-bearer. The door is wide open, revealing the red glare of an Eastern day now nearing its end. Before the Soldan stands the Captain of the Guard.

Soldan. Two men, you say, Captain? What like are they?

Captain. Beggars, Soldan, to look upon: ragged, bare-foot and very weary.

Soldan. Whence come they?

Captain. From the camp of the Infidel—so they say.

Soldan. Had they arms?

Captain. No, Soldan.

Soldan. How came they in?

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Captain. They were in our midst before we knew. Because the hand of Heaven seemed on them, our outposts had let them pass.

Soldan. The hand of Heaven?

Captain. As being of those afflicted ones on whom Allah bids us have pity, Soldan.

Soldan. Madmen?

Captain. Such I took them to be when first I saw them. But now, having questioned them, I am in doubt.

Soldan. Wherefor?

Captain. Because, though their speech is sane, what they do is contrary.

Soldan. Aye? How?

Captain. They seem to make mock of us, Soldan; and of the peril they stand in. When I warned them of death they did but smile; when we used them roughly, they seemed grateful to us; when we put chains on them they laughed and sang. Some say they be magicians, Soldan, and would have no dealings with them.

Soldan. Said they for what cause they came?

Captain. To bring thee peace, Soldan.

Soldan. Peace? Are they ambassadors?

Captain. I know not, Soldan. Their message, they said, was for thee.

Soldan. Well, I will see for myself. Bring them in.
(*The Captain goes, followed by his Guard. The Emirs and Councillors show perturbation.*)

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Councillor. O Soldan, is it forgiven if now we speak?

Soldan. Speak, any who will.

Councillor. Have a care, dread King! For though these men be not armed, they may have power of evil.

Soldan. Very like. Has not the Most High commanded us to fight evil?

Councillor. But these having no arms, Soldan, how canst thou fight them?

Soldan. How can they fight us?

Councillor. By evil enchantments, Soldan.

Soldan. And have we none wiser that can withstand them? See to it. To your charge I commit me. Do ye your office, while I do mine.

Councillor. Commander of the Faithful, it shall be done.

(One of the Councillors, taking from his finger a ring, threads it upon a red cord, the cord is drawn across the front of the dais, the ring suspended upon it during the scene that follows. A sound of chains is heard, and the tread of the Guard approaching. The voice of the Captain outside cries "Halt!" The Captain enters.)

Captain. The prisoners are here, Soldan.

Soldan. Bring them.

(Francis and Brother Illuminato are brought in, and kept closely guarded at a safe and respectful distance from the Soldan's person.)

Soldan. Who art thou?

Francis. Thy lover and servant, Soldan.

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Soldan. Who is this with thee?

Francis. He also is thy lover and servant, Soldan

Soldan. Whence come ye?

Francis. From the Camp of thine enemy.

Soldan. Of whom, also, ye are?

Francis. We are of the same race, Soldan.

Soldan. Wherefor, then, come ye here?

Francis. To set thee free, O King.

Soldan. From whom?

Francis. From fear.

Soldan. Fear? I fear no man.

Francis. 'Thou bearest arms, Soldan. He that is without fear bears none.

Soldan. Why then, in the Camp of the Christians also there is fear!

Francis. Aye. Very greatly they fear thee, Soldan.

Soldan. They do well.

Francis. They would do better if they did not fear thee.

Soldan. Dost not thou fear me?

Francis. No, Soldan.

(This causes no little stir among the Emirs and Councillors. The Swordsman's hand instinctively takes a better grip on his weapon, as with sidelong glance he waits the word of command.)

Soldan. Come! What art thou here for?

Francis. To take thy chains from thee.

Soldan. I have no chains.

Francis. O Soldan, are not these thy chains?

Soldan (grimly amused). Aye: but thou wearest them.

Francis. He that putteth chains upon others is chained also.

(*A murmur of angry astonishment comes from the assembled Councillors.*)

An Emir. When is this man to die, *Soldan*?

Soldan. Not at thy bidding, Emir. At mine.

Councillors (in a fierce whisper of impatience). Aye!

Soldan. Come hither!

(*The Guard bring Francis to the foot of the dais.*)

I said not "bring him hither." Stand back!

(*The Guard fall back. The Soldan comes down from his throne, takes hold of the fetters, and weighs them in his hand.*)

So these are my chains that thou wearest?

Francis. Very willingly, *Soldan*.

Soldan (sarcastically). I thank thee. . . . Thinkest thou that I am in fear of thee?

(*Francis looks from Soldan to suspended ring and back again; and there is a suspicion of amusement in his tone as he answers.*)

Francis. I know not, *Soldan*.

(*The Soldan snaps the thread. The ring falls. Francis stoops, picks up the ring, and hands it to the Soldan.*)

Councillor. Beware, *Soldan*!

Soldan (returning to his place). Take from him his chains: his also.

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(The chains upon Francis and Brother Illuminato are struck off.)

Stand away! Do not hold them! . . . Prisoner . . . where are my chains now?

Francis. Upon thy heart, Soldan; yea, and upon thy soul. To us thou hast been gentle and gracious; but not unto thyself. For though thou givest freedom to others, to thine own self thou art yet a prisoner.

(The Soldan lays by the talisman he has been holding.)

Soldan. And from this prison wherein I am,—who shall set me free?

Francis. Thou Prince of Majesty, holder of power and glory, give thyself into my hand, and I will lead thee.

Soldan. Whither?

Francis. To thy Lord and my Lord which died for us.

Soldan. My Lord, thou sayest!

Francis. Aye: for though thou see it not, His Light is already in thee. This is the Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

Soldan. And thou, also, art a Christian?

Francis. God knows I would I were worthy to be called so.

Soldan. Is the way, then, so hard?

Francis. Nay; but most sweet, and easy. and comforting. And yet I stray!

(There is a pause: outside the light of day begins to fail.)

Soldan. How wouldst thou make me—a Christian?

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Francis. I would show thee Christ. Soldan. Or, if by that name thou know Him not, then by His other name which is Love, wherein also dwell Joy and Peace. This have I come—to show.

Soldan. Yea: speak!

Francis. Oh, hearken, for this is wonder!

Light looked down and beheld Darkness.

“Thither will I go,” said Light.

Peace looked down and beheld War.

“Thither will I go,” said Peace.

Love looked down and beheld Hatred.

“Thither will I go,” said Love.

So came Light, and shone.

So came Peace, and gave rest.

So came Love, and brought Life.

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt
among us.

Then was He betrayed, and given up into the hands of sinful men: Light to the darkness of death. Peace unto the pains of Hell, Love to the separation of the grave. And because the power of Evil prevailed not against Him, these henceforth He holdeth, and they are His. So out of Darkness He wrought Light, and Peace out of the pains of Hell, and out of the prison-house of Death He bringeth us Life Eternal.

Soldan. Knowest thou this of thyself? or did others tell it thee?

Francis. O Soldan, were it not true, wouldst thou not already have slain me?

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Soldan. I may slay thee yet, prisoner: for I have not let thee go.

Francis. What I have spoken thou hast heard. How wilt thou fear me less when I am dead.

Soldan. I . . . fear thee?

Francis. When I am dead, Soldan, thou wilt remember me.

Soldan. Go on, prisoner. Say what thou hast to say, while yet there is time. (*It begins to get dark.*)

Francis. Soldan, as I came hither, there met me in the way a great army of ants,—many thousands of them, all hither and thither running without rest. What was their toil, whose word they obeyed, I could not tell; but they were all very full of it—in a world of their own. So I stood and looked at them; but though very plainly I saw them, they saw not me. I was nothing to them. Yet, had I so wished, I could have killed every one of them.

Soldan. Wherefor dost thou tell me this?

Francis. Because thou art a great king, Soldan, and I am in thy power; and which of us is to die first—thou or I—we know not. But God, whom we see not, knows.

Soldan. Which is to die first?

Francis. Aye.

Soldan. Knowest thou not?

Francis. No, Soldan: nor dost thou. For thou art in His hands, even as I am; and He careth for both alike, having for each of us the same compassion.

Soldan. As thou also for the ants?

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Francis. Yes, Soldan. And they may have had kings among them—yet I could not tell which *was* their king—they being all so much alike—even as we are.

Soldan (to an Attendant). Slave, bring in the lamps.
. . . Thou and I alike, dost thou say?

Francis. In the eyes of God, Soldan; aye, and of men also. For look!—thou hast hands, and feet, and so have I: and on each hand five fingers, and to each finger three joints; and at the end are nails. So also our bodies,—search as thou wilt, we are made alike. Also what thou seest, I see; and what thou hearest, I hear. In all these things we are alike, Soldan, because God has so willed who made us.

(Lights are brought in; over the Soldan's throne is set a lamp. Round the wall stand Torchbearers. The outer air goes dark.)

Soldan. That is true. Stand near, Brother Ant! I would look on thee, and see more of that likeness to myself whereof thou speakest. . . . Aye; thou hast a face and eyes, which now see; thou hast limbs, and there is blood in them; thou hast flesh that can feel pain; and thou hast a head and a neck, even as I have. But for all we be so much alike, hast thou power to do presently what I shall do?

Francis. No, Soldan. Many things thou canst do which I cannot.

Soldan. Whence comes that?

Francis. From God, Soldan: not from thy feet, nor

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thy hands, nor thy head. That which a man does comes from his heart.

Soldan. Truly said.

Francis. And thy heart and mine are two, not one. We be fellow men, but separate; we look upon each other as strangers. But it is not so that God sees. For we see each with a difference; but He, looking within, sees we are alike.

Soldan. How alike?

Francis. In heart we are alike, Soldan.

Soldan. Canst thou be sure of that?

Francis. Since God made us to the same end, that we might serve Him.

Soldan. I serve not thy God, Christian!

Francis. Many *do* serve Him, not knowing.

Soldan. The service which I do is—different.

Francis. Many wait on *thee*, Soldan, whose services are different. But for each there is a place, and all labour to one end. So thou and I,—serving God.

Soldan. What if I serve God by slaying thee?

Francis. Even so as, when good servants are hasty, platters get broken. Yet if thou break this poor platter, God shall pardon thee: and thou wilt still serve Him, though how I know not.

Soldan. And what says the platter, when it is broken?

Francis. I am willing to be broken, great King, if it make thee more careful of others. Many hast thou broken, and little good has it done thee. Peace comes

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not yet; and all thy breakings shall not bring it thee.

Soldan. Swordsman, draw!

(The Swordsman draws his sword, and stands ready.)

Emirs, Councillors, Judges, Servants of the Prophet, ye have heard this man and what he saith. How say ye? Is he innocent or guilty?

All. Guilty, O King.

Soldan. Unto what penalty?

All. Death.

Soldan. His offence?

Councillor. Great Soldan, this man is a dog and a blasphemer. Against thee, Sword of the Prophet, he hath said evil things, denying thy Kingship and power. Also against our holy faith he hath spoken falsely.

Soldan. What saith the Prophet concerning him?

Councillor. That all Infidels must perish.

Soldan. Even so, let it be. Swordsman, hither. Have ready thy sword. Make the prisoner to kneel down.
(Francis kneels. Brother Illuminato kneels also, looking toward Francis with a face full of joy.)

Brother Ant, I have heard thee. Hast thou said all thou wouldst say? . . . If not, now speak!

Francis. O Soldan, while I have breath needs must I plead. For I have short life, and little wisdom, and my tongue is feeble. But He, whose messenger I am, is almighty, and infinite, and eternal; and His glory is not as the glory of kings,—being without end. So, if I begin to tell of it, how may I finish?

Soldan (*pointing to an hour-glass beside him, the*

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sands of which are nearly run). A little time I yet give thee. While the sands in this glass still run, speak on!

Francis (stretching out his arms). As the sun be the King's reign! The wisdom of God be thy rule: the love of God thy possession: the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, be with thee, Soldan, when thou also comest to die!

Soldan (to the Swordsman). Man, put up thy sword! Loose him: and go! Take with you that other prisoner: do no harm to him. Councillors and Judges, what I do now, I do of myself. Go, all of you!

(They all go out. The Soldan remains seated, with Francis kneeling before him.)

Brother, come hither. . . . Sit near me. . . . Through all the world I have sought thee. Now, in the Camp of mine enemy, I find thee! Oh, wherefor didst thou come?

Francis. To be thy lover and servant, Soldan.

Soldan. That is well: I have great need of thee. In my service thou shalt have power, and riches, and great honour; for I will exalt thee, and make thee a ruler; also thou shalt be taught the truths of our holy faith, and become a believer.

Francis. That cannot be, Soldan. Power is of God, not of kings. Serving all, I rule none, and naught have I of possessions save Poverty. . . . Disband thine armies, Soldan. Fight not against the living God. Sheath thy sword, and possess thy land in peace.

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Soldan. Peace? Who offers peace?

Francis. He against whom thou fightest, Soldan.

Soldan. 'Tis of thy God thou speakest? Say then:
(*he rises*) and speak truth! If I seek Him in the Camp
of mine enemies—shall I find Him?

(*Francis bows his head, for it is a question he dares not
answer.*)

Francis. Seek Him in thine own heart, Soldan. There
shalt thou find peace.

Soldan. Thou hast answered well. . . . And yet thou
art still one of them!

Francis. I came to them a traveller from my own
land, Soldan.

Soldan. To fight for them?

Francis. Aye: even as I have fought for thee, saying
the same words: "Disband your armies; fight not
against God; sheath your sword; go back to your own
land in peace."

Soldan. And they?

Francis. They were like the ants, Soldan—very full
of themselves.

Soldan. Not heeding thee?

Francis. No man can heed that which he sees not
—neither with eyes nor with heart.

Soldan (with a touch of the visionary.) What, then,
have I seen? . . . Nay, I know not. Yet to my ears
hath come a voice.

(*The torches and the Torchbearers have gone; and the
only light now in the tent is the lamp which burns*

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above the dais. Soldan sits in thought; and for a while there is silence. Presently, as the voice of his reverie, Francis begins speaking.)

Francis. Look, Soldan, how bright in this tent shines the light! See, on walls, and roof, and armour, and jewels, how it glitters. But yonder at the door stands night, and thou seest naught of it,—neither the beauty, nor the spaces of heaven which lie over it, nor the stars which are contained there. Because this light has made a covering to thine eyes, therefor do the heavens look dark.

(Francis has risen, and stands looking out into the night.)

O Soldan, in thine own heart seek wisdom! The flame of Kingship and power is brief, and short-reaching, and by a breath it is put out. And with it shall depart the honour and fear and obedience and service which men render thee. These go, but thou remainest. Then, as a sleeper, that awakens when the lamp in his chamber is quenched, sees the door (which was darkness) changed to a window of light, and with his eyes searches the night, beholding the great spaces of heaven, and the stars that are hung in it, so in that day shalt thou see the standing of thy soul, and the home of thy inheritance to which thou travellest.

(The Soldan has risen, and coming down from the dais, he stands beside Francis.)

God is great, and infinite, and full of compassion. Thou art but a little thing: yet in His hand He holdeth

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and loveth thee. O Soldan, in that day of thine awakening, remember me, thy little lover and servant, and pray for me!

Soldan (drawing him to the light). Come; aye, closer; for again would I look upon thy face, and know more of thee. . . . *(They stand eye to eye under the lamp, silent awhile.)* Well said, Brother Ant. When I come to die, I shall remember thee.

(He mounts the dais, strikes a bell, and puts out the lamp. The night grows luminous without. Presently in the doorway two Attendants are seen standing motionless.)

There is thy road: there is thy star, and thy heaven! Go, thou art freer than I. Alas, that in my Kingdom never shall I see thee again.

Francis. In the Kingdom of God, Brother, I pray that I shall see thee.

Soldan. There, when thou comest, look for me in thine own heart. If thou find me, there shall I be.

Francis. Amen, Soldan. So—if God will!

Soldan. Take this signet, show it to the Captain of the Guard. Let him give command that thou and thy companion return in safety—to the Camp of mine enemy.

Francis. Alas, then, for peace have I failed!

Soldan. Who knows! . . . Farewell, Brother Ant.

Francis. Farewell, great and gracious King, Brother-servant of my Lord!

(Francis goes out, followed, at a signal from the Soldan,

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by the two Attendants. The Soldan stands looking after him.)

Soldan. Farewell, Brother Sun.

(From outside comes the cry of the Muezzin calling the faithful to prayer: "There is one God, Allah, and Mahomet is his Prophet!" The Soldan bares his feet, stands looking toward Mecca, and prays. The Curtain falls.)

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

BY R. F. HEATH

FOREWORD

The prologue is intended to be read aloud in front of the curtain before the scene and is an essential part of the performance.

The settings and stage directions have been made as simple as possible in order that the scenes may be adapted to various platforms and exits.

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CHARACTERS

FRANCIS DRAKE	<i>Captain-General.</i>
TOM MOONE	<i>Captain of the "Christopher," now on board the "Golden Hind."</i>
SHIP'S BOY	
CAPTAIN WYNTER	<i>Of the "Elizabeth."</i>
MR. PAULL	<i>Gentlemen Volunteers, friends of DOUGHTY.</i>
MR. COLLETT	
THOMAS DOUGHTY	<i>In command of the Land Forces in DRAKE'S Expedition.</i>

SCENE *Drake's cabin in the "Golden Hind."*

DATE *June, 1578.*

PROLOGUE

The second law is this :

A Scout is loyal.¹

When Sir Francis Drake set out to sail round the world, he took with him his great friend, Thomas Doughty. Now Drake sailed at the command of Queen Elizabeth, but that command was secret. Doughty revealed the secret to Lord Burleigh, the Queen's minister, who did everything in his power to prevent the expedition. Under Burleigh's instructions Doughty played false to his friend and to their common venture. He tempted the men to mutiny, cheated them of their lawful treasure, and made every effort to bring Drake's plans to ruin, even aiming at his life. Drake gave him chance after chance in proof of his own love and friendship, but the trouble became too great to be ignored, and at length after many complaints, Drake's captains obtained proof that Doughty had betrayed them. Drake summoned his friend to judgment: he was found guilty and sentenced to death. Thus Drake had to choose between loyalty to his friend and loyalty to what he believed to be right. He made the choice. In the hour of death the two friends were reconciled, and when the time came for Doughty to die, they parted with courteous words, each bidding the other, "God-speed."

¹ If desired the word "Guide" may be substituted for "Scout."

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

SCENE

Drake's cabin in the "Golden Hind."

(Drake is seated at a table with papers in front of him. His chin rests on his hand. He is deep in thought. Behind him on a side table there are charts lying, and beside them stands a flagon of wine and a loving-cup. The door is opposite Drake, to the right.)

Drake pulls a map towards him, but instead of looking at it he remains lost in thought. Enter Tom Moone without ceremony.)

Drake. What is it?

Tom. Captain Wynter's just come aboard, sir.

Drake. What now?

Tom. Captain Wynter reports that Mr. Doughty is raising mutiny among his men.

Drake. Captain Wynter is responsible for his men. Mr. Doughty must answer to me. Tom, what's at the back of this?

Tom (reverting to old ways). Treason, Cap'en.

Drake. To whom?

Tom. To yourself.

Drake. That passes. Mr. Doughty is my friend.

Tom (dryly). When I had him aboard the *Chris-*

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topher he was no friend of yours, nor of the Queen neither.

Drake (sternly). Mind what you are saying. (*Pause.*) I must see Wynter.

Tom. Cap'en, it won't do no good. 'Time's past for that kind of thing. There's been trouble ever since we started along o' the volunteers and the land forces. If they must come into a good ship let 'em learn ship's discipline. 'Tain't no manner o' use to leave 'em kicking their heels and brewing trouble.

Drake (sharply). I know it. (*Pause.*) Mr. Doughty is responsible for the land forces.

Tom. Ay, there's the rub! The men say he would break the expedition if he could . . . ruin you, and risk our fortunes. Bring him to trial, sir, and let's get on with the voyage.

Drake. He has taken every opportunity to add to our troubles. I made an example of him once. But it spreads, Tom. . . .

Tom (quickly). He aimed at your life.

Drake (ignoring this). He has tampered with the men. (*Suddenly.*) You know where we are?

Tom. Port St. Julian . . . and a sorry spot too.

Drake. Ay . . . Magellan hanged two Captains here for mutiny.

Tom. I'd hang a dozen if I had my way.

(*Enter Ship's Boy.*)

Boy. Captain Wynter, sir.

Drake. Ask him to come in.

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(Enter Wynter. Exit Boy.)

Drake (greeting him). I had your message.

Wynter (bluntly). The truth's worse than the message.
Read that.

(Hands papers. Drake reads and starts.)

Wynter (slowly). Those papers were found on Thomas Doughty. They prove him guilty of mutiny and treason.

(Drake lets the papers fall on the table.)

Drake. He was my friend.

Wynter (sharply). He is your enemy . . . the enemy of England. He hath boasted that he is protected by Burleigh.

Drake. Burleigh!

Wynter. And that the Council was bribed to wink at the expedition.

Tom. At last we have him. (Picks up the papers.)

Drake (to Wynter). Where is he?

Wynter. Here. I brought him with me. (With emphasis.) If Burleigh knows, and we fail, we are dead men.

Tom (exultingly). Here's his name!

Drake. He hath been misled. He was ever eager to believe in others. They have persuaded him.

Wynter. That is no excuse.

Drake. We were as brothers.

Wynter. And he plots to kill you.

Tom. Wherever you have put him he has preached mutiny. Every ship is full of it. He has worked to ruin the expedition. It is his boast.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

Drake (continuing his train of thought). And I must impeach him . . .

Wynter (forcing the point home). Of treason and mutiny.

Drake. Of treason and mutiny.

Tom. Heaven be praised!

(There are sounds of a struggle outside. Shouts are heard mingled with threats. The door is burst open.)

Paull (in doorway, wrestling with Ship's Boy who has clung to the handle). It's disgraceful . . . insulting . . . I must see the Captain-General. . . .

(He strides forward followed by Collett.)

Drake (indignantly). Mr. Paull.

Paull (losing his head). Captain Drake . . . I protest. . . . It is an insult. . . . You cannot be aware. . . . Mr. Doughty is accused . . .

Drake. Of what?

Collett (behind Paull). Go on! Speak!

Paull. They say . . . there is treason. . . . It is a lie . . . ridiculous. . . . You cannot accuse him. . . . *(His voice rises.)* He was your friend!

Drake. Mr. Paull, if I keep faith with my friend I break faith with my God. *(More quietly.)* You may leave the matter in my hands. Mr. Doughty shall have justice.

Paull. But it . . . it is impossible.

Collett. They cannot presume . . .

Paull. You have no authority . . .

Drake (haughtily). I would be private, sir.
(Exeunt Paull and Collett, muttering to each other.)

Drake (to Tom). Send for the other Captains.
(Exit Tom, pushing Ship's Boy in front of him and shutting the door. Drake sits at table. Wynter goes to door, listens there a moment, and comes back to his place.)

Wynter. There will be a ferment if this goes on.

Drake. The court must be convened at once. Get a jury empanelled and appoint a Provost-Marshal. I will have nothing to do with that.

Wynter. But you will preside?

Drake. I impeach him, therefore I cannot be his judge.

Wynter. If they ask for credentials?

Drake (rising). A man may be judged by his peers and I hold the Queen's commission. That is sufficient.

Wynter (preparing to go). Is there anything else?

Drake (slowly). Yes . . . I will see him, alone.

Wynter. That is more than justice.

Drake. No matter. I will answer to the court. Send him here and leave the escort at the door. Give me the papers.

Wynter. Francis, I will save him if I can.

(They look at each other but say nothing. Wynter turns sharply and goes. Drake paces to and fro across the cabin, his arms folded. There is a sound by the door. Doughty enters alone. The door is shut behind him from outside. Doughty is dressed in

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rich clothes, well-appointed. He is unarmed. He holds his head up but his hands betray him. He looks frequently at Drake and frequently away again.)

Drake (standing by the table). You know the truth? *Doughty.* What do you mean?

Drake. That I, having full proof of your deeds, must impeach you for mutiny and treason.

Doughty. Before whom? I am answerable to no man here.

Drake. You are answerable to me. (*He comes forward.*) Of your malice towards me I say nothing. I have striven to hide it when others murmured. But that you have worked to ruin this expedition, that you have corrupted my men, pilfered our common treasure, and by your own admission have betrayed our cause to those who would ruin our country, for these things I call you to account. -

Doughty (nervously). I have not betrayed. . . .

Drake. You revealed our plans to Burleigh, knowing that the Queen's commands were secret. You tempted my men to piracy, and assured them that their act should be condoned for there were those in England who would reward their return. Here, under your own hand is proof. -

Doughty (with a sneer). I write of what I know. A seaman should not meddle with politics. Do you flatter yourself that none knew what you would have kept secret? Your men . . . poor fools . . . were deluded

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with a tale of Egypt. but all the world knew that Francis Drake sailed for the Indies.

Drake. All the world did *not* know. Every soul was pledged to secrecy.

Doughty. With what purpose? Do you imagine that your presence here is any advantage? Do you pretend that Spain cannot crush you the instant you are discovered? A few captures . . . some booty . . . of what avail is that, save to arouse her wrath and to embroil England?

Drake. You deceive yourself. No man knows my purpose. And were it only what you believe, the facts are plain. You stand convicted.

Doughty. Francis, hear me. There are two sides to this question.

Drake. Yes, right and wrong.

Doughty (continuing). Have you not deceived your men? Would they have come had they known where you would lead them? You dream of lands and gold and conquest, but we have had nought but hardship How many are heart and soul behind you?

Drake. Wynter and Thomas. . . .

Doughty. How many do you lead to their deaths?

Drake (flashing). As many as have the courage to die!

Doughty (changing tactics). You flatter yourself you have the Queen's consent. What if you knew she were false?

Drake. Hold!

Doughty. I speak truth. . . .

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Drake (his hand on his sword). I will hear no word against the Queen.

Doughty (scornfully). I am unarmed. Listen to me. Behind you is a network of intrigue. They would be thankful for your death. They and not you will profit by any success you may achieve. Already the wrath of Spain is roused on your account and the vengeance will fall on England. Is she in a state to meet it? Can you do her one jot of good by this foolhardy venture? Do you not see the need to gain time? I am no friend to Spain, but when I see my country shaken by civil strife, lost to the faith, riddled with plots, and tottering on the verge of ruin . . . for war with Spain means ruin . . . shall I not strive to avert her doom, to check her madness, and bring her friends to reason? —

Drake. A pack of lies! They have tampered with thy soul.

Doughty. My cause is just.

Drake. Thy cause? The cause of Spain. Nay, thou shalt listen! *(He swings Doughty round by the shoulder.)* I have hid nothing from thee. For three years thou hast known my inmost heart. When I dreamed, did I not tell thee my dreams? When I planned this voyage, did I not trust thee with our lives and fortunes, nay, with the very honour of England! Spain's arms are everywhere. Her spies lurk by every hearth and threshold. If we are to outwit her . . . if the New World is to be won for England . . . are we to wait and trim our sails . . . gain time forsooth . . . and so miss

the tide? | When great issues are at stake, it is the coward's part to trick and cozen and lay snares for honest men. Now do you see? They have used you as a tool to pacify their fears and foil our plans. And God alone knows what will come of it.

Doughty (trembling as the result of Drake's outburst).
It is not true. . . .

Drake. It is truth itself.

Doughty (giving way). I had not meant . . . no more than the rest. . . . *(In his uncertainty he appeals to Drake.)* What can be done?

Drake. Justice can be done.

Doughty (still more uncertain and floundering deeper).
In England. . . .

Drake. Here and now. The Court is meeting.

Doughty (trying to hide his fear). What is this?

Drake. I have saved you more than twice or thrice.
I cannot save you now.

Doughty (attempting to throw off the nightmare).
Would you have me stand my trial?

Drake. I have no choice. If I set free a traitor I share his crime. I am bound in honour to bring the Queen's foes to justice.

Doughty. This is foolishness.

Drake. It is death.

Doughty (his worst fears realized, but with one forlorn hope). I am no sea dog. You cannot misuse a gentleman.

Drake (in anger). Do you take privilege on that? On

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my soul. Thomas, there are no distinctions in my ship. Do you think I would hang one man for a crime and set another free? *(Pause.)* You have confessed to mutiny and treason. You know the penalty.

(The roll of a drum is heard on deck. Doughty starts.)

Doughty. What is that?

Drake. The assembly.

(The realization of this brings Doughty to himself. A thought springs to his lips.)

Doughty. Francis, I meant thee no harm.

Drake *(quickly)*. There is no issue on that question.
Our friendship cancels it. I can make that plain.

Doughty. Your life is forfeit, through me.

Drake. I'll answer for my life.

Doughty *(weighing each word)*. And I will atone for mine.

(Drake sees the full meaning of this. He has won his friend to lose him. He must stand aside.)

Drake *(almost beneath his breath)*. God give us faith!
(Doughty sees and hears nothing. He is as a man in a dream. His hands touch the back of a chair, and mechanically he sits. Drake crosses and puts his hand on Doughty's shoulder.)

Doughty. The valley is very dark, Francis.

Drake *(answering where he may not follow)*. The way is through darkness to light. You have come to the dawn.

Doughty *(after a silence)*. It is hard to believe even so. If what I now see is right, then much that is good must

go . . . old beliefs . . . old friendships . . . customs . . . the training of years . . . the very order of the world. . . .

Drake. And in their place shall rise a New World, glorious, unstained, and England shall be mistress of it. (*He looks into the distance.*) Thomas, my purpose is to go beyond Magellan . . . to find the passage to the Indies, never to go back . . . never to go back . . . but to sail on to the west . . . the west . . . till we touch English shores again!

Doughty (springing up). Francis, thou art mad!

Drake (exultingly). Nay, I am sane.

Doughty (with a cry as he realizes the truth). And I . . . can never go with thee.

Drake (suddenly gentle). Thomas, let us be loyal to our own selves and to the light that is in us. By death thou wilt atone for thy fault and make thy peace with God. Here let us lay aside our sins and follies, our strife and anger. To-night we pay the forfeit. To-morrow I start to conquer unknown worlds, and thou . . . shalt go before me.

Doughty. Amen to that.

(*There is a stir at the door. Doughty turns away. Drake crosses. Enter Ship's Boy.*)

Boy. Captain Wynter, sir.

(*Wynter is at the threshold. He speaks without coming further.*)

Wynter. The Court is convened and awaits your orders.

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Drake. I am coming. By your leave, a moment. . . .

(Wynter bows and goes out.)

Drake (to Boy). A cup of wine for Mr. Doughty.

(The Boy goes to the side table and fills the loving-cup from the flagon. Drake takes the cup from him, and he goes. Drake hands the cup to Doughty.)

Doughty (with the cup in his hands). I drink to your good fortune, Francis, and I pray God to grant you victory.

(He drinks and hands the cup to Drake.)

Drake (taking it). I drink in friendship to the New World.

(He drinks and sets down the cup. They clasp hands. Doughty turns and goes out. Drake is left standing by the table alone.)

CURTAIN

THE KING'S FUGITIVES

A NARRATIVE PLAY

BY FRANK WHITBOURN

CHARACTERS

NICHOLAS RUNCORN.

MARTHA, *his wife.*

NICKY }
JENNY } *his children.*

CHARLES STUART.

LORD WILMOT.

A ROUNDHEAD CAPTAIN.

A ROUNDHEAD SERGEANT.

TROOPER WADE.

A RUSTIC.

THE FIRST NARRATOR.

THE SECOND NARRATOR.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

"The King's Fugitives" was written as a radio play, and was broadcast in the London Children's Hour on January 6th, 1937, with Mr. Richard Goolden in the part of Nicholas Runcorn. It is arranged here as a "Narrative Play"—rather in the manner of the "dialogue stories," familiar to Children's Hour listeners. It is, therefore, in its present form, more suitable for reading than for stage performance. It has been staged, however, in two scenes, with the short episodes that occur beyond the confines of the cottage, and the Narrator's parts omitted. The scene division was made just after the Sergeant's departure from the cottage, the curtain being lowered on Martha's line, "Where are the children?" To allow time for Lord Wilmot and Jenny to exchange clothes, a short dialogue between the King and Martha was interpolated. This is printed at the end of the present version of the play. The "exits" and "entrances" are, I think, sufficiently indicated by the actors' lines (as is necessary, of course, in a radio play), and no attempt has been made to mark them in the usual manner.

The stage setting can be simply managed with curtains, the windows being in the invisible "fourth wall." The fireplace, the chimney of which Lord Wilmot must climb up, and Martha climb down, presents

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a difficulty; but it should not be beyond the scope of the producer's ingenuity. The only furniture required is a table, four chairs, and a cupboard in which a man may reasonably be supposed to be concealed. The only elaborate costume is that worn by Lord Wilmot, and that need not necessarily be elaborate; a plain doublet, breeches and hose will serve, and these can be effectively made of casement cloth—a material offering a wide range of colours, and of infinite service to the school play producer.

The author will be glad to answer any inquiries with regard to the production of the play, addressed to him at Clayesmore School, Iwerne Minster, Dorset.

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The First Narrator: On the third day of September in the year sixteen hundred and fifty-one, the last army of Charles Stuart, King of England, was defeated by his enemies, the Roundheads, at Worcester. The King's friends, the Cavaliers, were scattered, and he himself was obliged to flee in disguise. A reward of one thousand pounds was offered for his capture, and to assist his escape in any way was declared to be an offence for which the punishment was death.

The Roundheads were combing the whole countryside for the King. But he made his way through Staffordshire and Shropshire, through Stratford-on-Avon, Bristol and Castle Cary, to Bridport in Dorset, where Lord Henry Wilmot was waiting to join him. He found the town in the possession of fifteen hundred Roundhead soldiers, and the few friends who were with him urged him to retreat; but he would not leave Lord Wilmot stranded, and went boldly up to the best inn in the town, alighted, and taking the horses, led them to the stable. The next day, Wilmot rode out of Bridport, towards Salisbury, taking with him a new groom, who said that his name was William Jackson. . . .

The Second Narrator: Some miles south-west of Salisbury lies the little village of Coombe in Dorset.

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And set apart from the rest of the village was the cottage of Nicholas Runcorn, a parson who had been deprived of his living by the Roundheads. He and his family were just about to sit down to their dinner.

Nicholas. . . . Benedictus, benedicat, per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen. . . . And now, Mistress Runcorn, let us see what is in this dish, after you have been cooking so busily this morning. H'm, ha. Smells good, Mistress Runcorn. I must just try a little. . . . Ha, h'm, tastes good, Mistress Runcorn! H'm, yes, very good! Pass that to your mother, Nicky, my boy. Hungry, Jenny, my dear? No need to ask Nicky. There, that's for you, Jenny. And this is yours, Nicky. . . .

Nicky. }
Jenny. } Thank you, father.

Nicholas. Well, the Lord shan't say I'm not grateful for having married a good cook. I've a mind to say another Grace. This is *very* good soup, Martha, my dear. . . .

Martha (wearily). It would be better if the Lord would provide a little more stock to make it from. There's a limit to the amount of soup that even a good cook can make from old bones.

Nicholas. The larder of a poor man, my dear, is—er—somewhat limited, I agree. But doubtless the Lord knows best, and inclines to the opinion that too much meat is not good for us. I confess, however, that I am

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a miserable sinner and do not entirely agree with him. I was always partial to a roast.

Martha. The nearest we shall ever get to a roast is a chicken—still in the egg. And we don't get many of them now.

Nicholas. To be sure, my dear, the hens are not laying very well. But I think they try very hard. And so does the cow—not to lay eggs, of course. No, dear me, no. . . . It is perhaps a pity that between them our livestock produce only eggs and milk when we would appreciate a more liberal diet. But one day perhaps we shall have some chicks from the eggs—if we are not so greedy as to eat them too soon—and perhaps the chicks will grow up and we may have a tender roast fowl. That will be very nice. H'm, yes. Meanwhile, I think we have some cider in the barrel. Nicky, take the jug, and go out and draw us some cider.

Nicky. Yes, father.

Jenny. Hurrah! I love cider.

Nicholas. There is still some soup, Jenny. Will you have a little more while you are waiting? You will? That's right. Pass your plate, my dear. Martha?

Martha. Is there any? Better leave it for Nicky.

Nicholas. There is plenty for both of you. Dear me, I think this must be a magic pot. It doesn't seem as though I can empty it. . . .

Martha (interrupting wearily). Did I tell you that Mistress Keane passed by this morning, Nicholas?

Nicholas. Did you, my dear?

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Martha. I think I did. But you were too deep in your old books to hear, I suppose.

Nicholas. I suppose I was. 'I was rather preoccupied with a most interesting passage in Thucydides, I fancy. And how was Mistress Keane?'

Martha. She said there's news in Coombe that the King was seen in Bridport a few days ago, recognized by a soldier. But he got away, they say.

Jenny. I've never seen the King. I wish I had. Have you ever seen him, father?

Nicholas. I saw his father once, my dear. But I don't think he noticed me. You remember, Martha, my dear? I told you—when Prince Charles was little more than a babe, quite a babe. And such a tall young man they say he has become—more than two yards tall.

Martha. And with a thousand pounds on his head.

Nicholas. Yes, to be sure, that is a disadvantage. I am glad that my own bald pate is not rated so high by the Parliament men. You and the children might be tempted to put me in pawn.

Nicky (returning from the kitchen). Father! There are two gentlemen at the kitchen door——

Nicholas. Gentlemen! Dear me. How pleasant. We must ask them in.

Martha. Mind, Nicky, you will spill the cider——

Nicky (whispering). They look very hungry, Jenny. We must have something to offer them. Don't eat any more of your soup. Put it back in the pot.

Nicholas (who has gone to welcome the strangers).

But you must come in, my dear sirs, and take some little refreshment. And you must allow me to present my family. Martha, my dear, here are Mr. Henry Wilmot and Mr. William Jackson. My wife, gentlemen, and my two young rascals, Nicky and Jenny. . . . We live very simply, gentlemen, as you see,—on a handful of hens and a cow. We planted some potatoes, this year, but they have not done very well. However, we harvested some good corn. And we have some cider. That reminds me. . . . H'm, ha, yes. Nicky, fill up the cups. . . . There, that's for you, Mr. Wilmot . . . and you, Mr. Jackson . . . pour some for yourself and your sister, Nicky . . . and for your mother . . .

Martha. Nicholas, you know I never touch it!

Nicholas. This once, my dear, please, you must. Now, have we all charged our cups? We have. That is excellent. We will drink a toast . . . to . . . your Majesty!

Martha. Your Majesty!

Jenny. }
Nicky. } The King!

Charles. And I thought this was a good disguise! Wilmot, we must think again. . . .

Wilmot. We're always having to do that.

Charles. Mistress Runcorn, young man, young mistress, please do not kneel . . .

Nicholas. I think His Majesty would be glad of a little soup, my dear. If you will be seated, Sir . . .

Charles. I'll be glad of anything. And so will Lord

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Wilmot here. We have not breakfasted to-day. How did you know me so easily, Master Runcorn?

Nicholas. Your Majesty is so tall. And I once saw your father, of blessed memory. . . .

Charles. And I take after him, do I? But I hope I'll keep my head yet. It's always my confounded inches that give me away.

Nicholas. They become a King, Sir.

Charles. I could do without some of mine. Six foot four . . . how many inches is that?

Nicky. Seventy-six, Sir.

Charles. Good for you, young cavalier! Is your lad to be a scholar, Master Runcorn?

Nicholas. I had hoped, Sir, that he would be ordained to the priesthood, like myself . . .

Charles. What, a parson are you?

Nicholas. I am, Sir, though unworthily so. The Parliament men and myself, however, have had a little difference of opinion on some matters of doctrine. As a consequence, I find myself now deprived of my living: which is particularly uncomfortable for me, as it was a very good living. . . .

Wilmot. Master Parson: I perceive that you have suffered for your faith. Am I mistaken in supposing that you would be willing to suffer also for your King?

Nicholas. I and all that I have—though I am afraid that it is not very much—you have no idea how grasping these Roundheads are, Lord Wilmot—are at His

Majesty's service. And I know that I can promise the same for my wife and family.

Charles. Master Parson, if ever the King of England sees happier days, you shall have your living again, by . . .

Nicholas (*coughing discreetly*). Ahem! Your Majesty's word is sufficient, without your Majesty's oath.

Charles (*laughing good-naturedly*). I see that I must remember your cloth, Master Parson.

Nicholas. It is not so much my cloth that I would have you remember, Sir, as the God whose poor instrument I am ordained to be. Lord Wilmot, I believe you were about to say. . . ?

Wilmot. Thank you, Master Parson, we've no time to spare. See here now. It is very likely that His Majesty and myself have been followed on our way from Bridport hither. We dare not stay long. Had you not recognized us, we should but have begged some refreshment and ridden on. But I believe that it lies in your power to do more than merely give us bite and sup. I believe you can help us to throw these confounded Roundheads off our track. These children of yours—can they ride?

Nicky. } I can ride . . .
Jenny. }

Wilmot. And what danger would you dare for His Majesty?

Nicky. Anything.

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Jenny. Yes, anything.

Martha. Jenny, you must not. Sir, do not ask . . .

Nicholas. My dear, you would not forbid her to serve her King, when I have promised . . . ?

Martha. My Lord, you should not put ideas into her head. She is only a child . . .

Jenny. I'm fourteen!

Charles. Mistress Runcorn is right, Wilmot. We cannot ask . . .

Wilmot. It's our only chance of throwing them off our track. And unless we do that it's not likely that we'll ever make the coast.

Charles. I know, I know. . . . (*He hesitates, but goes on with decision.*) We must find some other way.

Wilmot. It's the only way.

Charles. Some other way, Wilmot.

Wilmot. Very well.

Jenny. Oh, your Majesty, *please* . . .

Nicholas. At least let us hear Lord Wilmot's plan. Sir. It may not be so very dangerous.

Charles. H'm . . . well, what is your plan, Wilmot?

Wilmot (*cagerly*). This. The Roundhead troopers will almost certainly track us to this place. We must have been seen sometime during the journey. Our disguise is known. They'll pick up the tracks of our horses on that ride which led to this cottage through the woods. They'll come and search the place . . .

Martha. Oh, what a thing to happen!

Wilmot. But we'll be ready for them. Listen. As

soon as the Roundheads enter the ride—you remember, your Majesty, how we spotted the cottage from the top of it, about a quarter of a mile off?—they'll see two figures on horseback at the door, and they'll see Parson Runcorn here, pointing, as though he were showing them the road. And it'll be "Yoicks!" and "Tally-ho!" for those troopers and they'll ride after them, thinking they're on the heels of Charles Stuart and Henry Wilmot. But they'll be making a slight mistake. For it will be young Nicky and Mistress Jenny that they'll be riding after!

Nicky. You mean that Jenny and I should disguise ourselves in your clothes, which the Roundheads know, so that they will think that we are you and the King?

Wilmot. That's the idea. You haven't all His Majesty's inches, but you've enough to make a good show on horseback, viewed from a distance. And Mistress Jenny will make a prettier cavalier than I do, I'll be bound!

Charles. Half a minute, Wilmot. How about the horses? Has Parson Runcorn any horses?

Wilmot. They must take our horses. When they've ridden off to lay the false trail, you and I must foot it to Salisbury. There we can get horses from Colonel Stratton.

Charles. And if they wear our clothes, what shall we wear?

Nicholas. Your Majesty will do as you are. It is

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Lord Wilmot's dress which is too distinctive. Your Lordship shall have an old suit of mine.

Jenny. And when Nicky and I ride off, what are we to do?

Wilmot. You must let the Roundheads keep you in sight, but you mustn't let them catch you. You must keep just out of their reach, egging them on the whole time.

Nicky. And if they do catch us?

Wilmot. Well . . .

Martha. Jenny, you are not to go. And neither is Nicky. For shame, Lord Wilmot!

Jenny. Oh, mother, please . . .

Martha. I'll not hear of it. I—I did not tell you all Mistress Keane's news, Nicholas. To assist the King in his escape has been made an offence punishable with death.

Wilmot. But . . .

Martha. Not another word!

Charles. It's true, Wilmot. She's right. Mistress Runcorn, your children shall run no hazards for me. Too many have taken such risks already.

Nicholas. But, Martha, my dear, I do not see how we are able to help ourselves. We have drunk His Majesty's health, and given His Majesty our soup—by the way, will your Majesty have a little more? I think I can find a drop if I scrape the pot—No? You see, my dear, we are already liable to punishment. It certainly seems to me that we ought to have as good a run for our

money as we may and—er—be killed for sheep as well for lambs.

Martha. Oh, why did your Majesty come here? Haven't we troubles enough of our own, with the hens not laying . . .

Nicholas. My dear, you could hardly expect His Majesty to know *that* . . .

Charles. Come, Wilmot, we'll be off. We are unlucky friends to those that love us.

Nicholas. I beg your Majesty to stay. Martha, my dear, you must be brave. There, there. Your Majesty will understand, I know . . . Now, Lord Wilmot, if you will follow me we will effect a change of clothing.

Martha. Nicholas, you can't . . .

Nicholas. Indeed, my dear, I can. You just see. If your Majesty will follow . . . the lintel is rather low . . . I am afraid your Majesty must mind your head . . .

Charles. I'm used to doing that; if my father had been as tall as I . . .

Jenny. Oh, mother, don't cry. It's so glorious! Nicky and I—we are going to serve the King!

The Second Narrator: *Meanwhile, less than half a mile away, a detachment of Roundhead Troopers was jingling along the road. . . .*

The Captain. Sergeant!

The Sergeant. Sir?

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The Captain. D'you see that fellow in the field yonder?

Sergeant. I see him, Captain.

The Captain. Go and ask him if he's seen a couple of riders pass this way since noon.

The Sergeant. I will, Captain. . . . Hey, you there!

The Rustic Fellow. Be you calling me now?

Sergeant (jocularly). Yes, I be. Have you seen a couple of men on horseback pass this way to-day?

The Rustic. Oh, ay. I seed four men pass on horseback, different times like. Busy day it's been.

Sergeant. Did you see two pass together?

The Rustic. Now did I? Or did I not? Yes . . . I did now. All four on 'em passed together, but not *all* together like, see what I mean? One was together with one like, and t'other together with t'other. only together different times . . .

Sergeant. Did you notice a tall fellow with a dark face ride by, with a plaguey cavalier?

The Rustic. Oh, ay, I saw that 'un. Gurt fellow he was. And t'other all feathers and satin stuff like. Gone by more 'an half an hour back they have.

The Sergeant. It may interest you to know that one of them was the King. . . .

The Rustic. The King? I don't know 'ee.

The Sergeant. Which way did they go?

The Rustic. Ah, now, that do want some thinking about. I didn't rightly notice which way. . . . But I seed all they feathers.

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The Sergeant. Come, man, think, or it'll be the worse for you.

The Rustic. Oh, ay, maybe. Let me see then. . . . I should say they turned into the wood there; like as if they were going to Master Runcorn's cottage, him as used to be Parson Runcorn, but isn't Parson no more, poor gentleman, along of folks wasting other folks' time with thisyer wars. You can see the cottage from the top of the ride there—if so be as you take the trouble to look.

The Sergeant. Turned into the wood, did they? Are you sure?

The Rustic. Sure as mortal can be, these times, when folk come asking their plaguey questions instead of doing honest work. . . .

The Captain. Well, Sergeant?

The Sergeant. It's the right way all right, Captain. He saw 'em, and they turned into the wood yonder.

The Captain. After them, then! Forward!

The Second Narrator: And as the horses galloped towards his cottage, Nicholas is admiring the effect of one of his old suits of clothes upon Lord Wilmot.

Nicholas. Really, now, it becomes your Lordship very well. What do you think, Martha, my dear?

Wilmot. "So I, being master Parson, am master Parson!"

Nicholas. To think that my old suit should come in

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so neatly for your Lordship! Well, well! But we mustn't waste time in gossip now. Are the children ready?

Wilmot. They're at the door now, and straining at the leash!

Martha. Nicholas, I tell you again this is madness!

Nicholas. Quite so, my dear, quite so. But I think that a little madness now and again—not too often, of course—is an excellent holiday for the spirit. . . . Now as soon as the Roundheads come in sight and the children are sure that they have been observed, they must ride away. And I will pretend that I have shown them the road. Dear me, quite a little play. This is exciting. And now, if I might make a suggestion, I think it would be as well if I—er—battened your Majesty under hatches until the Roundheads have passed. . . .

Charles. Battened me. . . ?

Nicholas. Ycs, in the cider barrel. Fortunately it is rather less than half full. You will get a little damp, perhaps, but I do not think that otherwise you will come to much harm. But you must be very careful not to drink any, and you must try not to breathe in too much. I will take the precaution of securing the lid on your Majesty. . . .

Wilmot (whispering). Does your Majesty trust him?

Nicholas. What was that? Oh, I beg your pardon, I was not meant to hear. Naturally, you are suspicious. It would be so easy for me to screw His Majesty up in the cider barrel and then surrender him, lock, stock and

—er—barrel, to the Roundheads, would it not?

Charles. Master Parson, I beg you will accept . . .

Nicholas. Oh, don't apologize, your Majesty. A thousand pounds is a very tempting reward. But it does not tempt *me*. I am so sure that it would never be paid.

Wilmot. I'm sorry, Master Parson.

Nicholas. You see, in my little dispute with the Parliament men on theological matters, I became convinced that they are not a very honest lot. It is a great pity. However, doubtless the Lord in His own good time . . . But I must not digress. Lord Wilmot, I am afraid that the only asylum I can offer you is in the chimney. I understand, however, that it is a very good chimney as chimneys go. You will, I believe, find a most convenient recess in which you can hide. Now, is there anything else?

Nicky (calling). Father, they're coming!

Nicholas. To the cider barrel, your Majesty! Have they seen you, Nicky, my boy? I am coming. Martha, show Lord Wilmot to the chimney. . . .

Wilmot. It's a fine clean hearth, Mistress Runcorn, and a credit to you. Now then, up I go. . . .

Martha. Oh, my children! I shall never see them again! I shall never see them again! I know . . .

Nicholas (returning). There, there, my dear, of course you will. Now you had better go upstairs and lie down. It will never do if the Roundhead troopers find you here, weeping, and all at sixes and sevens. I must go and screw down His Majesty. Are you all right up there,

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Lord Wilmot? Good, good, that's right. Now, upstairs with you, my dear. . . . Coming, your Majesty, coming. . . !

The Second Narrator: And just then, at the top of the ride. . . .

The Sergeant. There they are, Captain! Look! At the door of the cottage!

The Captain. You're right! That's the traitor! Follow them, men! Sergeant, take a man and search the cottage. If the occupants have given any assistance to the traitor, arrest them and bring them to Salisbury.

The Sergeant. Ay, sir. Trooper Wade, follow me.

The Second Narrator: The troopers galloped away in pursuit of the fugitives. The Sergeant and his henchman made their way to the cottage, upon the door of which a few minutes later, Nicholas heard them knocking loudly.

The Sergeant. Ho, there! Open in the name of the Lord Protector! Open I say!

Nicholas. Dear me, what a very importunate person. You must wait just one moment, my good man: the latch is a little stiff. Ah, there we are. Good day. What can I do for you?

The Sergeant. You can let us in.

Nicholas. Why?

The Sergeant. Because I tell you to. Who were those

two men that rode away from here just now?

Nicholas. Oh, two very pleasant-spoken gentlemen. They stopped to ask the way to Tetbury. I told them it was a very long way. And so it is, you know.

The Sergeant. That's as maybe. I suppose you didn't happen to know who one of those pleasant-spoken gentlemen was, that you've just been so helpful to?

Nicholas. No. Who?

The Sergeant (maliciously). The traitor. Charles Stuart.

Nicholas. Dear me. Not really? Well it is a small world, isn't it?

The Sergeant, And you gave them assistance, didn't you?

Nicholas. Well, certainly I showed them the way. But I had no idea . . .

The Sergeant. No? Well . . .

Nicholas. But, Colonel, if you will forgive an old man for contradicting you upon what is almost an—er—military matter, I think you must be mistaken. I have seen Charles Stuart, but neither of those was the man.

The Sergeant. You needn't call me Colonel—yet.

Nicholas. Oh, but I thought . . .

The Sergeant. I'm a sergeant.

Nicholas. Oh, just fancy. I thought you looked at least . . .

The Sergeant. I wonder if you're as innocent as you look, old feller-me-lad. . . . Anyhow, just to make sure,

we are coming in to look at this little place of yours. There's never any knowing where Charles Stuart may not turn up. . . .

Nicholas. And do you really think he may turn up in my cottage?

The Sergeant. If he does, it'll be a thousand pounds for me, and a nasty end for you, my lad. Do you know what happens to anyone found guilty of aiding the escape of Charles Stuart?

Nicholas. No. What? Do tell me.

The Sergeant. Death. And not a nice death either.

Nicholas. Oh, dear. Death is so very final, I always think.

The Sergeant. Here, what's in this cupboard?

Nicholas. In there? Oh, I shouldn't look in there if I were you. . . .

The Sergeant. Open it!

Nicholas. Very well. Here is the key. . . .

The Sergeant. Now for it. . . . It's empty!

Nicholas. I know. That was why I advised you not to look in it.

The Sergeant. Here, are you being funny?

Nicholas. I? Funny? Dear me, no. I am a clergyman.

The Sergeant. H'm. . . . That's a pretty useful chimney you've got over there. . . .

Nicholas. Oh, very useful, very. I don't know what we should do without it. But it smokes. You can have no idea how it smokes.

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The Sergeant. It's not smoking now.

Nicholas. Oh, no. Not now. The fire isn't lit.

The Sergeant. I've got eyes. And I'm going to take a look at that chimney. The fire ought to be lit. It's not natural to have no fire in October. . . .

Nicholas. Oh, but, Captain, we've had such a wonderful summer . . .

The Sergeant. Sergeant, to you. Chimneys are handy places to hide in. Aren't they, Master Runcorn, eh . . . eh?

Nicholas. Well, I have never really thought about it . . .

The Sergeant. You can't fool me with your innocence! Let's look. . . . Can't see much. Black as night. . . . But that's just what it shouldn't be! You should be able to see the sky up a chimney as wide as that—if it were clear! Let me look again. . . . Ugh. . . . Soot! There is someone up there! Here, Trooper Wade. . . .

Trooper Wade. Sergeant!

Sergeant. Up that chimney with you, and look sharp about it! Up with you, man, up with you! There'll be a thousand pounds. . . !

The Second Narrator: Meanwhile, on the road towards Salisbury, Nicky and Jenny were galloping. . . .

Jenny. Are you sure they followed us, Nicky?

Nicky (breathlessly). Certain.

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Jenny. I—can't—see—them.

Nicky. Never mind. Don't keep looking back. We've got to keep ahead.

Jenny. But not too far, though. . . . Do you think they'll catch us?

Nicky. Their horses are probably fresher than ours. They may.

Jenny. What will happen, if they do?

Nicky. You heard what mother said. It's death for anyone who helps the King to escape.

Jenny (after a pause). Nicky, what do you think of him?

Nicky. Who? The King?

Jenny. Yes.

Nicky. All right. I liked the other fellow best.

Jenny. Oh, Nicky, you shouldn't . . . (*Another pause.*) Nicky, look behind. I can see them!

Nicky. Where? Oh, yes . . . that's them all right!

Jenny. They're not more than a quarter of a mile behind.

Nicky. Rather less, I think. . . . We must go faster. Can you?

Jenny. I can. It's this poor horse . . .

Nicky. We've got to. Come on.

Jenny. Do you think we are gaining?

Nicky. I don't know. I—I think so. Come on . . . faster . . . faster. . . .

The Second Narrator: At the cottage. . . .

The Sergeant. Are you coming down from that chimney now? Or do we have to light a fire to make it too hot for you?

Trooper Wade. He's coming, Sergeant!

The Second Narrator: *There is a great noise; a heavy fall of soot shrouds the room in dust, out of which there emerges . . .*

Martha (breathlessly). If you light that fire . . .

The Sergeant. Great sakes! It's a woman!

Trooper Wade. Is it, though! Maybe it's a disguise!

Martha. I'm not a disguise! Keep your hands off me, my man!

Nicholas. Dear me! Er—Sergeant—may I present my wife?

The Sergeant. Your wife?

Nicholas. Yes, my wife. Martha, my dear, how did you come to be up the chimney?

Martha. I climbed up. I was scared of the soldiers.

The Sergeant. You don't have to be scared of me mistress! Did you not trust your good parson husband here to protect you?

Martha. Him! Lot of use he'd be!

The Sergeant. H'm—perhaps you're right!

Nicholas. Ahem! Sergeant—some cider before you go?

The Sergeant. Well, now, I don't mind if I do. Hallo, been using a lot of cups, haven't you? Two—four—six. Six cups for two travellers . . . ?

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Nicholas. Ah, you must not jump to conclusions, Sergeant! I know what you are thinking! But the explanation is simple. We have indeed had other visitors besides those gentlemen you saw. Two persons whom I have long admired. They were so good as to call upon me on their way to Salisbury. It was extremely friendly of them and we felt called upon to celebrate the occasion with a little drink. . . . Your health, Sergeant!

The Sergeant. Your health, mistress! And I'm sorry we scared you so. You had the laugh on us, though. But I could wish you had been the traitor, Charles Stuart!

Martha. Shame on you, Sergeant!

The Sergeant. But I'll forgive you for your merry face! Well, here's bad luck to the traitor. I drink to his discovery in your excellent cider, Mistress Runcorn!

Nicholas. Dear me! What a capacity! A whole cup at a gulp! Truly the poet says, "What a piece of work is man!" Er—you have read Master Shakespeare's works, Sergeant?

The Sergeant. Master Shakespeare—what's he?

Nicholas. A writer of plays.

The Sergeant. Oh, one of them. I don't hold with such wickedness. Not but what I didn't enjoy a bear-baiting in the old days. Well, I must be going. Good day, mistress. Good day, master Parson. And if you see that traitor anywhere about, just you send for me and we'll share that thousand pounds.

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Nicholas. Most kind of you, most kind. We will remember your offer. Good day to you, Sergeant, good day . . . good day. . . .

Martha. They've gone!

Nicholas. Thanks to you, my dear! You were very brave. Or—were you really scared?

Martha. Fie, Nicholas! Yes, of course, I was scared—scared that they would go up the chimney. I had an intuition. I thought they'd feel happier if they found something and that maybe they would go without looking any further.

Nicholas. And they have gone.

Martha. Is it safe for Lord Wilmot to come down now, do you think?

Nicholas. Why, yes, I think so. Call him, my dear. I will go and—er—open up His Majesty . . .

Martha. The King's all right. Where are the children, though? That's what I want to know. Where are the children . . . ?¹

The First Narrator: The afternoon ticked by, a long period of weary waiting for Martha.

The Second Narrator: It is evening now. The candles have long been lit. Nicholas and Martha are sitting with the King before the fire.

Charles. This is a good fire, Mistress Runcorn.

Martha. I am glad your Majesty is comfortable. (A

¹ Here, in the stage version, the curtain should be lowered to indicate the passage of several hours.

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pause.) Nicholas. it has been dark for three hours now, and still the children are not back,

Nicholas. My dear, you must not fret about the children. The Lord will take care of them.

Martha. It's all very well to say that. But how do you know?

Nicholas. I have prayed.

Martha. You may pray: but will the Lord answer?

Nicholas. He always answers. . . . No, that's not quite true. Sometimes He knows better than I and does not answer. But He will look after the children. I think that He sometimes gets a little impatient with *me*, but he is very fond of *them*.

Charles. I am sorry, mistress. I should never have consented to this escapade. But if ever the King comes into his own again, I swear that you shall not regret the sacrifice you have made this day.

Martha. Forgive me, your Majesty. A mother's anxiety . . .

Charles. It is you who must forgive me, mistress. I shall not forget, either, the part you played in the chimney this afternoon. (*He chuckles.*) I wish I might have seen the Sergeant's face when you came down!

Martha. I am glad you did not see mine!

Charles. Were you covered with soot?

Martha. Smothered!

Charles. So was Wilmot, I'll wager! When do you reckon he should be back, master Parson?

Nicholas. It should not take him above two hours

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to walk to Colonel Weston's. And it will take him an hour to ride back with fresh horses for your Majesty and himself. He started . . . let me see, now, about an hour before sunset, was it not? He should be here at any minute now.

Charles. And I think your plan was a good one, master Parson. I ought to have remembered myself, though, that Colonel Weston lived so near. Then Wilmot and I could have ridden there in the first place instead of endangering your family.

Nicholas. It was perhaps as well that you did not. Colonel Weston's house is more likely to be suspected than mine.

Charles. Perhaps so. At any rate, as soon as Lord Wilmot returns, he and I will remove our dangerous presence from you and leave you in peace.

Martha. I shall have no peace until the children return.

Nicholas. Listen!

Charles. Horses!

Nicholas. I will go and see who it is. . . .

Martha. Your Majesty, there is no knowing who it may be. You must hide again . . .

Charles. In the cider barrel? Not again! And I do not think it will be necessary. I think I hear Wilmot's voice—and your children, mistress!

Martha. Oh, thank God, thank God!

Nicky. }
Jenny. } Mother!

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Martha. Oh, my dears, you're safe!

Charles. Welcome, young mistress, welcome, young man! What have you done with those rascally Round-heads?

Wilmot. They've left 'em guessing, I think; your Majesty!

Jenny. It was the nearest thing, though. We found they were gaining on us . . .

Nicky. Their horses were fresher than ours, your Majesty . . .

Jenny. But we knew we mustn't let them catch us. They were within a quarter of a mile . . .

Nicky. And they were gaining. We thought we were done for. Then Jenny had an idea . . .

Jenny. You know how winding the road to Salisbury is, don't you? Well, we turned a corner, and though they were only such a little way behind us, they couldn't see us . . .

Nicky. So we hid in a barn, horses and all, and they rode straight past us!

Jenny. We watched them. I counted them—twelve of them!

Nicky. And they rode on, thinking we were still ahead!

Jenny. I wonder if they've found out yet!

Charles. Well done, well done! A very pretty piece of work, Mistress Jenny!

Nicky. Then we came back over the fields. And then we thought we'd leave the horses with Colonel Weston,

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so as not to arouse suspicion when we got back.

Jenny. And there we met Lord Wilmot . . .

Wilmot. And here we all are! And I think it's time His Majesty and I were off.

Nicholas. Well, well, well! What did I say, Martha, my dear? The Lord takes care of the children!

Martha. Oh, my dears. . . .

Wilmot. If your Majesty is ready. . . ?

Charles. Quite ready. Farewell, Mistress Runcorn. Farewell, master Parson. Farewell, young man. Mistress Jenny, I am already your debtor, but I must increase my obligation. By your leave, I must take a kiss! And to you all, my thanks.

Nicholas. Good-bye, your Majesty. Good-bye, Lord Wilmot. . . .

Martha. Good-bye. . . .

Nicky. Good-bye, your Majesty. . . .

Martha. They've gone. . . .

Nicky. They've got good horses now.

Jenny. Mother, mother—he is the King of England, and he kissed me!

Nicholas. Dear me, what a very busy day! I wonder if it would be imprudent to draw off a little more cider?

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SUPPLEMENTARY SCENE

If it is preferred to act the play in the usual way, that is, without the Narrators' parts, the exterior scenes should be omitted, and the following scenes inserted after Martha's line: "Nicholas, you can't . . ."

Nicholas. Indeed, my dear, I can. You just see. To the lane, Nicky. If you will follow me, Lord Wilmot . . . and Jenny, you too. . . .

(Nicholas, Wilmot and Jenny go out through the kitchen door. Nicky goes out of the door leading to the lane.

Martha sits at the table, her head in her hands. Charles regards her sympathetically for a moment; then, as though to allow her time to recover her composure, goes to the door and calls to Nicky.)

Charles. I had quite forgotten the horses. They have ridden far to-day, and have farther still to ride. Do you think you could do something for them, young Nicky?

Nicky. Yes, your Majesty. . . .

Charles. Go and rub them down?

Nicky. Yes, your Majesty.

Charles. Thank you. The Roundheads won't be along just yet. . . .

(Charles comes quietly to Martha at the table and gently lays a hand on her shoulder.)

Charles. Are you angry with me, Mistress Runcorn? *(She does not answer.)* I see you are. I do not blame you. Believe me when I tell you that I am indeed sorry your children should run into any sort of danger for me.

Martha. They are so young. What are the quarrels of the King and the Parliament to them?

Charles. It is a world full of quarrels, mistress. At least, I find it so.

Martha. It is the Kings who make the quarrels.

Charles. I did not make this. But I wish with all my heart that I could mend it.

Martha. Why don't you? It takes two to make a quarrel, and two to keep it alive. Leave the Parliament men to their own devices, let them manage things in their own foolish way—they'll do well enough for most folks—and bide where you'll not bring honest people and their children into danger.

Charles. You would have me give all power into their hands? You would let me surrender to them my inheritance of authority?

Martha. Yes, yes. What would it matter? It would make peace in the land.

Charles (considering her words). Would it make peace? What sort of peace? Men's liberties taken from them by a set of psalm-singing merchants and shopkeepers—would that be peace? Mistress Runcorn, you

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will tell me that men have died for me. But it is not for me that they have died. They have died for the kingship which, however unworthily, it has fallen to my lot to bear and maintain. Their loyalty is not to me, but to my sovereignty. The loyalty which they owe to that, I also owe to them. The people owe homage to the King: the King owes homage to the people. His crown is the crown of their liberty. It is his authority over all petty factions that must preserve their liberty to them. For that authority he, as well as they, must be prepared to die. It was for that my father died. Your children are not risking their lives for me, mistress. Believe me, I would never allow them to do that. They are risking them for their countrymen, for all who cherish the sweet freedom of this realm. And though now I am on my way to leave it, I will find time to return: for without the King there will be little joy left in this kingdom. . . .

(Wilmot returns, dressed in a suit of parson's clothes.

Nicholas follows him.)

Wilmot. "So I, being master parson, am master parson . . ."

Nicholas. To think that my old suit should at last come in so very neatly for your lordship! But we mustn't waste time in gossip now. Jenny will be down in a moment.

Charles. Young Nicky is looking to the horses.

Nicholas. Excellent, excellent.

Martha. Nicholas, I tell you again this is madness.

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Nicholas. Quite so, my dear, quite so. But I think that a little madness now and again is an excellent holiday for the spirit. As soon as the Roundheads come in sight, and we are sure that the children have been noticed, they must ride off. And I will pretend that I have shown them the way. I shall have to do some play-acting, shan't I? You know, I always did rather wish I had been an actor. . . . Dear me, how I do run on. Now, let me see . . . oh, yes. If I might make a suggestion, I think it would be as well if I—er—battened your Majesty under hatches until the Roundheads have come and gone.

Charles. Batten me. . . ?

Nicholas. Yes—in the cider barrel. Just in case they come nosing around. Fortunately it is only half full. You will get a little damp, perhaps, but otherwise I don't think you'll come to very much harm. I will take the precaution of securing the lid on your Majesty.

Wilmot (in a whisper to Charles). Do you trust him?

Nicholas. What was that? Oh, I beg your pardon, I was not meant to hear. Naturally, you are suspicious. It would be so easy for me to screw His Majesty up in the cider barrel and then surrender him, lock, stock and—er—barrel, to the Roundheads, would it not?

Charles. Master Parson, I beg you will accept . . .

Nicholas. Oh, don't apologize, your Majesty. It is a wicked world, I know. And a thousand pounds are a tempting reward. But they do not tempt *me*. I am so sure they would never be paid.

THE KING'S FUGITIVES

Wilmot. I'm sorry.

Nicholas. In my little dispute with the Parliament men I became convinced that they are not a very honest lot. It is a great pity. However, doubtless the Lord, in His own good time . . . But I must not digress. Lord Wilmot, I am afraid that the only asylum I have to offer you is in the chimney. I have never been up it myself, but I understand that it is a very good chimney, as chimneys go. You will find a convenient recess in which you may hide. Now, is there anything else? (*Jenny comes in from the kitchen, dressed in Wilmot's cavalier costume.*) Ah, here is Jenny. Dear me, very dashing. . . .

Jenny. How do I look? Oh, mother, why are you crying. . . ?

(*She goes to Martha.*)

Martha. You must not go, Jenny, you must not go. . . .

Jenny (quietly). Yes, mother, I must.

Martha. No, no. . . .

(*Nicky runs in from the lane.*)

Nicky. Father, they're coming!

(*There is instant activity. Jenny tears herself from her mother's restraining embrace.*)

Jenny. Good-bye, mother.

Nicky (calling excitedly from the doorway). Good-bye, mother!

(*Jenny hurries out, followed by Nicholas. Charles is about to follow but Wilmot pulls him back.*)

FRANK WHITBOURN

Wilmot. We must not be seen, your Majesty.

Martha. I shall never see them again! I shall never see them again! •

(Charles goes to her. The sound of hoofs is heard softly, as the children ride off. There is an uncomfortable pause. Nicholas returns.)

Nicholas. There, there, my dear . . . you had better go upstairs and lie down. It will never do if the Round-head soldiers find you here, weeping, and—and—all at sixes and sevens. Now come along, your Majesty, I must screw you down. Can you find your own way up the chimney, Lord Wilmot? You can? Splendid, splendid. . . . Come along, your Majesty. Be careful of the lintel of this door, it's rather low. You must mind your head. . . .

Charles. I'm used to doing that. If my father had been as tall as I . . .

(They go out. Wilmot proceeds to clamber up the chimney. Martha is left alone. Looking about her, she notices the chimney. Wilmot has disarranged the hearth in his progress. She tidies it. As she does so, she pauses a moment and then peers up the chimney almost as though she contemplated the ascent also. But she appears to decide against this and goes out through the kitchen door.)

(The stage is empty for a moment. Then the sound of horses being reined up is heard, and almost

THE KING'S FUGITIVES

immediately comes an impatient hammering at the outer door.) .

A Voice (outside the door). Ho, there! Open in the name of the Lord Protector! *(He pauses for an answer which he does not get.)* Open I say!

(Nicholas bustles in from the kitchen. He opens the door and is confronted by an indignant Sergeant and a Trooper.)

Nicholas. Good day. Dear me. What can I do for you?

The Sergeant. You can let me in.

Nicholas. Why?

The Sergeant. Because I tell you to. Who were those two men that rode away from here just now?

From this point the play continues as in the narrative version. It will be found that time enough has been allowed for Wilmot and Jenny to make their changes of costume.

THE CAPTAIN

BY H. C. G. STEVENS

CHARACTERS

"GRANDS."

DOBSON.

MARJORIE.

*THE CAPTAIN.

NOTE.—It might seem, in certain cases, more effective if the Captain's speeches were delivered off stage, no character actually appearing.

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THE CAPTAIN

The action passes, on a summer afternoon, in "Grands' " little house in the country—in his "den."

It has open French windows, centre back; and through them one can see his beautiful garden. A door, L., leads to the hall.

The merest glance around this "den" reveals its owner's passion for the Game of Cricket. Old prints—and modern photographs—of groups and individual players are on the walls; a cricket cap hangs on the corner of this frame or that; one sees a well-labelled cricket-bag . . . and so on . . . and above the fireplace R., an old and rather battered-looking bat rests on brackets.

Down R., facing the audience in a comfortable arm-chair—by its side is a small table, with medicine bottle and glass to tell their own story, "Grands" is dozing when the curtain rises—during the closing bars of a short, quiet overture.

He is a veteran of eighty—in an old Norfolk coat and grey flannel trousers, maybe; a soft collar, and the tie of his cricket club.

He is dozing . . . but soon, the sound of a car in the drive outside startles him—and a few moments later, Dobson, his butler—just the sort of elderly retainer one would expect him to be, enters L.

THE CAPTAIN

Dobson. Er—you will pardon me, sir—but do you really think you . . .

"Grands" (his eyes still closed). Don't say it, Dobson—don't say it . . . I know what you *want* to say—that . . .

Dobson. Not at all, sir—I only felt . . .

"Grands." Oh, yes, you do—you *want* to say (*slightly burlesquing him*) "After the excitement of yesterday, sir—watching the village cricket match, sir—shouting so much—and upsetting your heart all over again—oughtn't I, sir, oughtn't I to . . ."

Dobson. B—but . . .

"Grands." ". . . oughtn't I to tell Miss Marjorie, sir, that . . ." (*opening his eyes and turning round to him.*) No, Dobson, no! Miss Marjorie looks forward to her few hours' leave from school, every now and then—and the ride in the car . . . and besides—damn it!—she wants to see her old grandfather. . . . No! She shan't be disappointed.

Dobson (resignedly). Very good, sir—as you wish. (*Dobson retires, and "Grands"—with some difficulty—stands himself in front of the mirror over the fire-place and hurriedly "smartens himself up" for his visitor; whose entrance is a little too early for him. Marjorie, his granddaughter, is a typical public-school girl. Very pretty, she wears a short blue skirt and a crested blazer.*)

Marjorie (at the door). Can't I help, Grands!

"Grands" (turning). You little rascal! Here am I.

trying to smarten myself up a bit—and in you come before I'm ready! . . . You know, I don't want you to think I've got *vain* again—for I *used* to be vain—oh, yes—I *used* to be!

Marjorie (crossing to him, as he crosses to her). I do think you've got vain again—and so you jolly well *ought* to! . . . (*kisses him sweetly*). So you *ought* to Grands!—why, you get handsomer every time I come! . . . But look—you must sit down. Dobson tells me you . . .

"Grands." Dobson's a silly old fool.

Marjorie. I dare say . . . but you *must* be careful, all the same . . . (*leads him back to his chair—then kneels at his feet*). Now let me have a *real* look!

"Grands." A *real* look—then say I get uglier—eh?

Marjorie. Not a bit of it! . . . (*taking her "real look"*) Grands! You might be Uncle Charles—you look so young.

"Grands." Uncle Charles! Don't you compare me with your Uncle Charles—whatever you do! Why! He was down here only last Sunday, Marjie—and—he actually had the nerve to admit that he hadn't played a game o' cricket since he was a boy—*think* of it!—hadn't touched a bat since he . . .

Marjorie. But, Grands—he's dreadfully busy—in the City—he probably hasn't had the time.

"Grands" (*like some judge on the bench*). A man, m' dear, who's worth his salt *never* hasn't the time for *cricket—never*. . . .

(*A slight pause.*)

THE CAPTAIN

. . . I remember, when—(*sees the crest on her blazer*)
—You didn't have *that* on last time?

Marjorie (standing up for admiration). That's some news I've got for you, Grands!—I've been given my colours—I'm in the eleven now!

"Grands" (*makes to stand also, but is gently pushed back*). In the eleven! . . . But that's fine, m' dear—fine! . . . I'm proud of you! . . . *That's* the sort o' thing I like to see in the family—even though y' *are* a girl!

Marjorie (protesting). But, Grands!

"Grands." I know what you mean—but, after all, a girl who played cricket in *my* day—she'd have been put straight into a lunatic asylum—now, wouldn't she! . . . the only pads *she'd* have seen would have been on her padded cell!

Marjorie (laughing dutifully). I say—how *awful*! . . . (*kneeling again*) Yes—I made 42 against St. Wini-fred's—and I took three wickets for 20! . . . Got my place at the very last minute—Mary Allison had the measles!

"Grands." What a bit o' luck, now—what a bit o' luck! . . . (*to himself*) They all help in the game—all help in the game . . . even measles . . . measles help . . . everybody—everything—does something for cricket . . . except Uncle Charles . . . that lazy—overfed—Charles . . . probably sits down to half a dozen City banquets every day of his life . . . ugh!

Marjorie (laughing). Poor Uncle Charles!

"Grands" ("coming back"). When did they put you in, m' dear—when did they put you in?

Marjorie. That was 'the most exciting part of it—I went in first!

"Grands." First, begad!

Marjorie. You see, I'd always gone in first—for the junior eleven—and that happened to be Mary Allison's place, too . . . so I went in first for the seniors—with the captain—Margaret—Margaret Howard—her brother plays for Gloucestershire.

"Grands." I know him—the left-hander . . . (*again to himself*) Went in first, with the captain . . . (*to Marjorie*) That's very funny, Marjie—very funny indeed. . . . Do you know—I went in first with the captain once . . . sixty years ago . . .

(*A pause.*)

Marjorie. Did you, Grands?

"Grands." Sixty years ago . . . July the—the . . . yes—it was just about this very time . . . sixty years ago . . .

Marjorie. How many did you make? Do tell me all about it!

"Grands." How many did I make! . . . *That's* what you'd like to know, is it! . . . (*very confidentially—almost in a whisper*) It was when I played for the Grasshoppers. . . . It was in the second innings. . . . We wanted a hundred and eighty to beat 'em. . . .

Marjorie. And you—do you mean that you . . . ?

"Grands." . . . a' hundred and eighty to beat 'em!

THE CAPTAIN

. . . I usually went in about half-way down the list—but this particular time I was put 'in—yes—first—to try and get the runs *quick*—with the captain . . . (*gravely*) It was late—and, if we didn't get 'em *quick*, we'd only draw—and you know how feeble a draw is—*much*' worse than losing!

Marjorie. How terribly exciting it must have been, Grands! . . . And. . . ?

"*Grands.*" . . . a hundred and eighty to beat 'em! . . . And now this is where the *trouble* started.

Marjorie (so very disappointed). Oh, Grands! Then you *didn't* . . .

"*Grands.*" . . . a hundred and eighty to beat 'em! . . . and every moment counting. . . . I'd got m' pads on all right—I put 'em on behind the tea tent—out of the sun. . . . But I couldn't find m' *bat*!

Marjorie. What a curious thing!

"*Grands.*" No—I just couldn't find m' *bat*. . . . I'd mislaid it. . . . Silly old fool. . . . Sort o' thing Dobson would have done. . . . And the captain came round the tent—all in a hurry to start—and bless my soul—I—I—couldn't find m' *bat*!

Marjorie. Where was it—in the end?

"*Grands.*" Oh—only under somebody's coat—round at the other side—only under somebody's coat . . . but it took me nearly five minutes to find it . . . and there was the captain, stamping and fuming—trying to make me use one of the other feller's bats—(*with scorn*) as if I *would*!

Marjorie. But when you went in, Grands. . . ?

"Grands." Ah! When we went in! . . . (*confidentially again*) Sh-sh! . . . We—we got the runs between us—without losing a single wicket! . . . and with nearly a quarter of an hour to spare! . . . Yes! . . . The captain made sixty—there was—let me see—one no-ball, and two byes—and—er . . .

Marjorie (pointing at him). Then you made a century, Grands! . . . Oh—how splendid! . . . (*She gets up to kiss him—and calm the excitement into which he has worked himself. . . . Then she looks up over the fireplace.*)

. . . And is that the famous bat itself—up there?

"Grands" (*growing almost solemn*). Yes; that's it. . . . It's one of my dearest possessions.

Marjorie. So I should think.

(*A pause.*)

"Grands" (*making to rise*). And now I—I want to take it down—and show it to you.

Marjorie (restraining him). No, Grands—let me—you really *mustn't* tire yourself. You know, Dobson did say . . .

"Grands." Dobson doesn't know what he's talking about. He means well—and for meaning well I've gone and left him two hundred pounds in my will—but he's a silly old fool, all the same . . . (*points to the medicine bottle*) makes me take *this* rubbish, every three hours—at my age!

Marjorie. But it'll do you lots o' good, Grands.

THE CAPTAIN

"Grands" (quite good-humouredly). Look here—I believe you're in some sort of a league with old Dobson! . . . (*forces himself to his feet*) so I will get m' bat down—to spite you—both of you! . . .

(*Going to the fireplace, the old man finds that the excitement of the last few minutes has made this getting down of the bat no particularly easy business . . . but he firmly withstands all Marjorie's attempts to help him. All she can do is stand by and watch. . . . He comes down with the bat to the centre of the stage, where he stands as if about, once more, to face the bowling.*)

. . . A hundred and eighty to beat 'em! . . .

(*He "takes his guard" and awaits the imaginary ball. Marjorie is an admiring spectator—but not so very certain that she oughtn't to risk it—and call Dobson.*)

. . . Come on, now—I'm ready for you! . . . (*the "ball" is "bowled," but he "misses" it*) I say! . . . (*to Marjorie*) That was a nasty one, Marjie—a very nasty one! . . . (*confidentially*) You see. I didn't want to be in too much of a hurry—and hit a four first time! . . . But now you watch! . . .

(*Back to the "bowling" he awaits his second "ball"—and with this one he does "hit a four"—standing as if to survey it on its flight—waving the imaginary batsman at the other end to stay where he is.*)

. . . Stay, sir, stay! . . . (*again to Marjorie*) This

really *did* happen—straight to the boundary with my second—straight to the boundary . . . and with my *third*, too—(*proudly*) for, after all, the time was short, you know—and we had to get 'em *quick*. . . . Let me show you! . . .

Marjorie (coming forward). But, Grands, you can't go through the whole innings—it would take *hours*!

"*Grands*" (*thoughtfully*). No—no—perhaps I can't—perhaps I can't . . . besides—(*he is obviously beginning to feel the strain on his heart*) besides, I'm just a little bit tired—I must confess that—yes: just a little bit. . . . But wait a minute—wait a minute! . . . I must show you *one* more . . . I remember now—I hit a *six*—yes!—a *six*—into the cabbage patch. . . . I'll just give you *that* one—you'll find it useful to know how to h-hit s-sixes—now that you're in the eleven! . . .

(*He stands up to "bat" once more, while Marjorie, who has grown really alarmed, slips out, L., unnoticed, to fetch Dobson. In her absence, the six is duly "scored"—with a tremendous hit . . . and the end of it all is that it brings the old man back to his chair in a state of real exhaustion. He is just "played out" . . . but he still clasps his beloved bat. . . . Soon, Marjorie returns, very quietly, with Dobson—and they go straight to the chair, Dobson discreetly standing behind it.*)

. . . (*feebly*) D-did you see it, M-marjie?

Marjorie. I should just think I *did*—a *marvellous* hit! . . . (*making him comfortable*) And now you

THE CAPTAIN

have a little rest, darling . . . (*kisses his forehead*)
you'll feel so much better for it. . . .

"Grands." But you w-won't leave me—you're not going back to school—j-just yet?

Marjorie. No, not just yet, Grands—I've till half-past five. I'll stay here with you . . . and then in a little while we can have *another* talk, about the—(*looks at him closely*) about the—(*to Dobson, in a whisper*) He's sound asleep!

(*Dobson tiptoes forward.*)

Dobson (*also in a whisper*). Is he, Miss Marjorie? . . . (*looks at him*) I don't very much like the look of him . . . I think I'd better stay, too.

(*He takes the bat from "Grands'" hand and gives it to Marjorie, who stands with it by the fireplace, where Dobson joins her. Side by side they are watching him . . . when music is heard—prelude to the entrance, through the open windows, of the vision of "Grands'" captain—a man of 30-35. He is ready—bat and pads of his day—for that famous second innings of the 'seventies. He comes down level with the armchair, and takes a position, from which he does not move, in the centre of the stage. Marjorie and Dobson never see nor hear him—nor do they hear the music.*)

Captain (*in a quiet, mystic voice*). Aren't you ready! . . . We want a hundred and eighty—and time's very short. . . . Come along, man—come along!

"Grands" (*in his sleep*). Right you are! . . . No;

H. C. G. STEVENS

we mustn't lose a minute. . . . See—I've got m' pads on.

(*The music ceases.*)

Marjorie. Oh, Dobson—he's *still* playing that match . . . I oughtn't to have encouraged him so much.

Dobson. I shouldn't have let him out yesterday . . . but he would have his own way. . . .

Captain (getting impatient). But where's your bat?

"*Grands*" (*feeling around his chair*). Yes—where's my b-bat! . . . It's very silly—but I—I can't *find* my bat . . . It's been mislaid . . .

Captain. Can't *find* it! . . . But you *must* find it! . . . Hurry up!

Marjorie (involuntarily). Oh, Grands!

"*Grands.*" I—it was here a m-moment ago . . . (*makes to rise*) I—I . . .

Captain. We'll never get those runs. . . . Take another bat—(*he points to an imaginary bat—some-where between the armchair and the fireplace*) take Parkinson's—that one there.

(*The music is resumed, continuing very softly till the end.*)

"*Grands*" (*now on his feet*). Parkinson's bat! . . . (*Dobson makes to move forward; but he fears to disturb him, and stands back.*)

. . . I'm not going to use anybody else's bat! . . . Let me look . . . (*with difficulty he feels over the fireplace*) . . . but the bat, of course, is not there . . . and then

THE CAPTAIN

at length he instinctively goes and takes it from Marjorie, who is now almost spellbound) . Here it is—here it is! I've got it! . . . (then he turns, and, for the first time, meets the Captain face to face—and, as he does so, all the Captain's look of severity gives place to a kindly smile, and he slowly beckons him to follow—and, in some new—and mystic—light, moves backwards towards the windows. . . . The old man changes too—for he has recognized in this captain of the match of long ago—he has recognized—the Messenger of Death. He tries to "pull himself up," and advances as far as the chair.)

. . . (in a voice that might almost be that of his youth). Yes! I'm ready for you! All ready . . . to go! (At the chair he stands, gazing after the Captain, who is now at the windows.)

Marjorie (terrified, unable to move). Dobson—I'm frightened!

Dobson (solemnly). Yes, Miss Marjorie . . . it's very strange. . . .

(In a great effort to follow, the old man collapses in the chair, his bat now falling at his feet. He is dead. . . . The Captain backs quietly away from sight—smiling still—his right arm extended in welcome. . . . Dobson comes forward and places his master's hands together. Then he looks over to Marjorie . . . then his eyes wander to the floor—and to the bat—which he picks up, and tenderly returns to the dead right hand.)

H. C. G. STEVENS

Marjorie (after a long pause, in a voice that is scarcely audible). . . . W-well p-played, Grands!

• *(She buries her little face in her hands . . . and the curtain slowly falls.)*

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THE PRETTY PLAY OF THE DUKE OF GORDON'S DAUGHTER

MOST of you will not have an individual part, but will be the members of the Chorus. The Greeks, who invented the drama, always had a chorus in their plays; the chorus was a band of singers and dancers who played the part—to quote a well-known comment—of the “ideal spectator”. What I want you to realize is that you, the Chorus, are here one combined actor and it will be your business, as it was in the greatest Greek tragedy, to render the emotions aroused by the story; for instance, when they “came to the Highland hills” and Lady Jean collapses, your voices must express the sorrow and sympathy the spectator feels. Our view of stage-plays is very different from that of the Greeks, and the use of scenery has to some extent made a chorus, like the chorus in Shakespeare’s “Henry V”, unnecessary; however, a few modern playwrights still make use of it, as does Mr. T. S. Eliot in his Becket play, “Murder in the Cathedral”, while some such device is frequently needed in radio plays to give eyes to the listeners. Thus, the narrators in “The King’s Fugitives” provide us with the means of realizing the setting as does the Chorus in the ballad play.

Perhaps in your literature you are reading some of the ballads, and, if so, you should find it quite easy to construct other ballad plays like it, because the ballads are essentially dramatic: even among modern ballads those like Tenny-

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son's "Lady Clare" or "The Revenge" would give you an opportunity to try your skill.

Just a word on the music. Miss Lawton's note on the music runs thus: "It is suggested that "Ho-ro, My Nut Brown Maiden" should be used as a motif for Captain Ogilvie's entrances; "Here's to Thy Health" as the soldiers' march; "The Mackintosh's Lament" for the degrading of Captain Ogilvie to the ranks; "O She's Bonnie" for Lady Jean's wanderings; "Will Ye No Come Back Again?" for the Duke's entrances with his suite. The "Keel Row" might be used in the ship episode. In the Greek plays music was a very definite part of the drama, and you will have noticed the same importance attached to music in radio plays.

THE KING'S WARRANT

Here we have a play based on the ballads, it is true, but using neither the words of the ballads nor even any existing ballad-story, as Mr. Ronald Gow, the author, frankly admits in his preface: what he does claim, however, is that "the stories of these plays are inspired by the ballads and could not have been invented without them." So you see that we have here quite a different type of ballad-play, the plot owing its spirit, but not its details, to the dramatic quality of ballad poetry. The adventure in "The King's Warrant" is the sort of thing Robin Hood often does do in the ballads, but there is no ballad that tells us that Robin did this particular thing.

There is no music in the play except the opening chorus of the "yeomen singing". Any traditional air may be used

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for this song; Mr. Gow himself suggests the airs included in Moffat and Kidson's "The Minstrelsy of England", published by Bayley & Ferguson, 54 Queen Street, Glasgow.

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

This play is drawn from a book entitled *Plays from Greek Myths*, which contains four plays all by Audrey Haggard. I chose Baucis and Philemon because I like this charming story of ancient hospitality, though I doubt whether I should have the generosity to feed two apparent beggars with my last crust, because you must not imagine that either Baucis or Philemon had the remotest idea that they were entertaining Jove and Mercury (or, to give them their Greek names, Zeus and Hermes). To give the impression of a street musician, Hermes should carry a flute—a penny whistle will do—and the authoress suggests that the record (H.M.V. No. B147) "Birds of the Field" may be used just before the entrance of the gods. For overtures she suggests the danse des Bacchantes and pastorale from Gounod's opera "Philemon and Baucis".

Unfortunately in a Greek play there must be Greek names, which may not be well known to you; thus, Ilium, Troas, Dardanus are all names of Troy; Hymettus was famous for its honey, which, by the way, the Ancient World used for sweetening as it knew not sugar; Pergamum was a town and district in Asia Minor; and Olympus the home of the gods. I expect you have heard of the two gods, Bacchus the god of wine, and Diana, "thrice-crowned Queen of Night", but the Oreads, nymphs of the mountains, and the Dryads, nymphs of the trees, are less usual words, and Ganymede was "Jove's own page".

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The Roman poet Ovid tells the story; the scene is described as once a land of dwelling-houses but now a lake, its waters thronged with coots and divers, while near by, on the Phrygian hills, stand the two trees, an oak neighbouring to a linden. According to Ovid the gods went to a thousand homes, desiring rest; a thousand doors were barred; yet one received them, a tiny cottage, roofed with thatch and the reeds of the marsh. The old couple produced quite a sumptuous meal, but one leg of the table was shorter than the others, and Baucis propped it on a shell. The most amusing part of Ovid's story tells how they tried to kill their cherished goose, but it gave them a mighty chase and at last took refuge with the gods, who bade them spare it. One day perhaps you will read the whole story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

THE MAID OF FRESSINGFIELD

The play begins where Prince Edward, having encountered Margaret by chance when hunting in the forest, and having helped her with her cheese-making, has become madly enamoured and ridden to Oxford to seek the help of Bacon; meanwhile he has left Lacy to woo the maiden for him and to plead his cause. The result is what might be expected: Lacy and Margaret fall in love with each other when they meet at Harleston Fair. All these places, Harleston, Fressingfield and Beccles, are on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Robert Greene, the author, was a contemporary of Shakespeare, and is well known to have been extremely jealous of him. "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" is rather a confusing play, with no unity of action, much horse-play and

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wizardry, and the love story you have here. Greene's English is more simple and direct than that of most of his contemporaries: unusual words there must be, naturally, and some of these I have replaced by more modern words: but even in the original text, Greene seems to possess some of the skill that springs from simplicity of language.

Elizabethan stages were furnished with a balcony which served a number of purposes: it might be the wall of a town, or the upper window of a house, and I think we may take it for granted that Greene designed to use it in the first scene for Bungay, Lacy and Margaret, while the other two characters used the stage proper.

You will find one or two classical allusions in this play too: Daphne fled from Apollo and was turned into a laurel bush; Danae was imprisoned in a tower and visited by Zeus in the form of a shower of gold. Deus hic means "God be with you"; Latin was the language of the Church.

BROTHER SUN

This is the story of this play: At the time when there was bitter war between the Christians and the Saracens, and their two camps were pitched over against each other, the little servant of God, Francis, taking with him only Brother Illuminato, determined to win entrance to the Soldan. After some time the bands of the Saracens met them, and taking them prisoner, amid manifold torturings and stripes, led them in chains to the Soldan's palace. When the Soldan demanded of Francis wherefore they had come, the undaunted servant of God replied that he had been sent, not by man, but by God, to show unto him and

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his people the way of salvation and to teach them the paths of truth. With such firmness and unconquerable faith did he answer the Soldan that the latter, seeing his courage and good intent, heard him gladly and besought him to tarry with him. Then the servant of God pleaded with him to put aside the law of Mahomet and to adopt that of Christ, offering to enter the fire with the priests of Islam that he might show which faith was the surer and holier. The Soldan replied that he knew well that his own priests would not enter the fire, whereat Francis again offered to do so if only the Soldan would become a Christian. Which offer the Soldan dared not accept, but offered gifts which Francis scorned. And so the Soldan sent Francis and Illuminato safely back to the Christian camp.

This story is to be found in the lives of S. Francis of Assisi who founded the Franciscan Order of Friars between 1209 and 1226; and the play is one of the Little Plays of S. Francis, written on the stories of the life of the Saint by Laurence Housman, the author of "Victoria Regina". In the play Mr. Housman omits the episode of the fire, but uses the title for Francis that best expresses his radiant and loving personality. In a recent book of reminiscences named *The Unexpected Years*, Mr. Housman says that he began the Little Plays, of which there are forty-five, during the War because "in the serene sanity of S. Francis I found such blessed escape from a world gone mad". I personally love the Little Plays just because they do breathe the radiant and happy serenity that you can discover some day for yourselves if you open that old book, *The Little Flowers of S. Francis*. Let me quote the song S. Francis himself wrote and which was sung to him by the Brothers on his death-bed:

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The Song of Brother Sun

Be thou praised, my Lord, with all thy creatures;
Above all Brother Sun
Who gives the day and lightens us therewith.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;
Of thee, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of Sister Moon and the Stars;
In the heaven hast thou formed them, clear and precious
and comely.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of Brother Wind
And of the Air and the Cloud and of all Weather
By the which thou givest thy creatures sustenance.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of Brother Fire
By which thou hast lightened the night
And he is beautiful and joyful and robust and strong.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of our Sister Mother Earth
Which sustains us and hath us in rule
And produces divers fruits with coloured fruits and herbs.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of those who pardon for thy love
And endure sickness and tribulations.

Blessed are they who will endure it in peace,
For by thee, Most High, they shall be crowned.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of our Sister, Bodily Death,
From whom no man living may escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.

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Blessed are they who are found in thy most holy will
For the second Death shall not work them ill.

Praise ye and bless my Lord and give him thanks
And serve him with great humility.

But it is impossible to express the beauty of the man's nature; you could, however, recite this song as an epilogue if you felt so inclined.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

The Prologue has told you the story. The trial took place at Port St. Julian where Magellan, for whose straits Drake was heading, had also hanged a mutinous vice-admiral: Doughty was executed. The expedition had faced terrible weather, the gentlemen-volunteers were at loggerheads with the sailors, and all had only a few days earlier realized for what destination they were bound; Doughty had, as Drake's friend, put the plan before Queen Elizabeth and was therefore the only one who knew it; knowing that the Queen had bidden Drake under no circumstance to let it reach the ears of Lord Burleigh, Doughty, possibly moved by jealousy, had deliberately told Burleigh and received instructions to wreck the expedition: the difficulties of the ships and the terrors of the men were his weapons. It was, in actual fact, not till the trial that Drake realized that Doughty had betrayed the secret to Burleigh. Doughty was placed first on the *Christopher* under Captain Moone, and then, after the *Christopher* was abandoned, on the *Elizabeth* under Captain Wynter: Drake had found him too troublesome on his own ship, the *Pelican*, which soon

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after Doughty's death was re-christened the *Golden Hind*, under which name it is famous. The play is published by the Boy Scouts Association.

THE KING'S FUGITIVES

This play, as you will see from the note which the author very kindly sent me, was designed for broadcasting. Radio plays are developing their own methods to meet their peculiar difficulties, of which the most obvious is the fact that the audience do not see the action; the narrators act as the eyes of the listeners, just as the Chorus in the Greek plays where the action took place off the stage. I included this because it seemed to me, apart from its own merits as a play, to provide an opportunity for the class to practise speaking by performing it as it was intended, the actors being screened from sight in some way. The author draws attention to another difference between the stage play and the radio play; in the former there is need to fill up the time required for a change of costume, in some way or other, whereas in the radio play, with the actors invisible, there is no interruption of the main action; he has added the supplementary scene required if the play is to be produced as a stage play.

THE CAPTAIN

This play is the fourth in a little volume published in 1930 entitled *To Meet the King and Three Other Plays*. Prefixed is a foreword by Mr. Henry Ainley, the famous actor, in which he says, "I venture to predict that these little plays will be constantly performed throughout the

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world for the reason of their sincerity, their simple beauty, and that inexplicable something which always compels success." All four plays, none more than "The Captain", breathe a love of cricket, and to all lovers of our national game the story of "The Captain" is most pathetic drama. This is the one play I have included in which the author makes it his business, as Aristotle says, "to give that pleasure which arises from the emotions of pity and terror"; excited not by the more violent passions of mankind, as in "Hamlet" or "King Lear", but by a passionate love of a game. There are people like "Grands" whose devotion to cricket colours their whole life: I have met them.

