

CUPS AND SAUCERS
A SATIRICAL MUSICAL SKETCH
WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY
GEO. GROSSMITH, JUN.

SCENE. MRS. NANKEEN WORCESTER'S MORNING ROOM. *Time, 7 o'clock. Piano L.*
Fashionable low teatable centre, with chairs on each side. MRS. EMILY NANKEEN WORCESTER
heard calling without:--

Jane! Jane! Fetch me from the third delf shelf "*Crackwell on old China*;" and Jane, if General Deelah calls this evening show him in; and Jane, covers for TWO, (*Enter MRS. WORCESTER R, with tea cup and saucer and a blue book. She is a fashionably dressed widow*), and Jane (*runs back to door*), Jane -- that will be all. (*She sits L. of the tea table, puts down cup and saucer after sipping tea, and becomes absorbed in book.*) Now let me read this most interesting and curious statement once more. "All the remains of Julius Caesar's favourite tea service is one little blue and white saucer. The remainder of these celebrated cups and saucers came to a melancholy end in consequence of a little dispute between Julius Caesar and his mother-in-law, who, self-invited, had been spending three months with him and showed no disposition to terminate her visit." How inconsiderate of her. "Hence the origin of the term '*Break a brick*,' now called '*bric à brac*.'" How intensely interesting, digging up the meaning of old words like this. "The saucer in question was found on a portion of waste land situated where Warder Street now stands, it having missed the head of Caesar in consequence of the Emperor dodging, and flown through the window of the Imperial residence near Cheyne or China walk,." How curious! "Mr. Caesar's mother was a lady of great *hurling* power, and is said to have distinguished herself at the Hurlingham matches of that period." Fancy Hurlingham matches in those early ages. I thought the Prince of Wales invented them. I would not part with this little book for worlds (*kisses it*). "The saucer was picked up some years after by William Rufus, from whose hands it passed, in course of a century or two, to George the IV, from whose treasury it was stolen by a *Sorceress* who had access to the court." Wonderful! "Since then the saucer *has never been found*." Oh! yes it has though! "But it is still in existence." Yes, in my dress (*points to her side pocket*). "It is marked underneath with an extended hand, the thumb of which is in contact with a rather indistinct monograph, somewhat resembling a nasal organ." How extremely remarkable! (*reads the sentence over again carefully*). Marvellous! It is the same, without doubt (*takes blue and white saucer carefully from her pocket*). La Duchess de Sèvrca says so. Lady T. Pottery has offered to stake her valuable collection of Dresden Pugs on the genuineness of my treasure. If such is the case, it is worth £10,000! What a surprise this will be for the dear General — General Deelah! I shall not tell him of its value until he — he *proposes to me*. He must marry me for myself (*sighs*). He ought to have declared himself before now. The late Mr. Nankeen Worcester was not ten-days before he laid his hand and fortune at my feet. His hand was very *large* and his fortune was very *small* — had it been otherwise — but why revert to the painful past (*rises and puts down book*). I am sure it is not my fault that General Deelah has failed to speak. I have given him every opportunity and encouragement. I wish I knew for certain if he is in possession of the valuable collection of old china with which society credits him. I must ascertain that! General Deelah is certainly most fascinating, even without china, but he would be so more so *with* it. I need scarcely say that when we are married I shall make him *sell the lot*. He must give up his old Derby and stick to his Joan. But it is certainly strange that he never refers to his china, stranger still that he does not refer to my decision on a still more delicate matter. Ah! well. Perhaps he finds courtship so fascinating, he has not the courage to terminate it. I will beguile the moments till he comes with singing my little china love song for the fourth time this week.

SONG No. 1 -- Sung by Mrs. Worcester

A friend most dear did give to me
That little saucer years ago;
I though the gift a jeu d'esprit
The saucers worth I did not know;
It seem'd to me to be a fright,

I used to put it out of sight,
It drove me mad,
It drove me mad,
And made me sing from morn till night.
This was the burthen of my song,
This was the burthen of my song!
I cannot love that little saucer,
That little saucer, no! not I!
I cannot love that little saucer,
And what is more, I'll never try!

Another friend, a connoisseur,
That saucer did perchance to see,
When quickly he pronounced its worth
To be ten thousand pounds to me;
It seemed no more to be a fright,
It never, never leaves my sight;
It drives me mad,
It drives me mad,
And makes me sing from morn till night.
This is the burthen of my song,
This is the burthen of my song!
I'll never leave my little saucer,
My little saucer, no! not I!
I'll never leave my little saucer,
And what is more I will not try!

At the end of song, enter GENERAL DEELAH. He is in evening dress, with opera hat under his arm. He is a hearty looking man with red face, very gray hair and moustache, and of over refined manners. MRS. W., who is kissing the saucer, hastily puts it away.

GEN. D. – Ah my dear Mrs. Worcester, my very dear Mrs. Worcester. How are you? *(detains her hand.)*

MRS. W. – Oh General. You completely surprised me.

GEN. D. – I assure you your charms have repeatedly surprised me.

MRS. W. – *(Shyly)* Oh, General. You are quite too complimentary.

GEN. D. – Oh, no. Its impossible to be too – to be too –

MRS. W. – Pray be seated General!

GEN. D. – *hands seat politely to MRS. W. L, and sits on another chair R. of table. Awkward pause, GENERAL taking off his gloves.*

GEN D. – How fine it was to day.

MRS. W. – It was.

GEN D. – It was.

MRS. W. – Yes, it was. *(Pause).*

GEN D. – And yet yesterday was wet.

MRS. W. – *(Quickly.)* It was.

GEN D. – It was.

MRS. W. – Yes, it was. *(Another pause.)*

GEN D. – Have you ever noticed –

MRS. W. – Oh, I have!

GEN D. – So have I, frequently! How much we are alike. But although the rain is disagreeable, yet, I always think it makes the grass – and the fields and flowers look – look – wet.

MRS. W. – Oh it does, and increases the growth of the simple *buttercups and saucers.*

GEN D. – What cups and saucers?

MRS. W. – How absurd. What will you think of me? I meant buttercups and daisies. (*Aside.*) He wont take the hint.

GEN D. – (*Rising and speaking aside.*) Will she never refer to that saucer? Lord Pekin declares she has it, and I wont propose till I know for certain. Why, after our marriage I could sell it for a fortune.

MRS. W. – General, you appear rather *distant!*

GEN D. – (*Seating himself beside her again, and gazing at her with a comical fond expression.*) Pardon my apparent rudeness. I was wondering upon what favoured object Mrs. Worcester was bestowing a kiss as I entered. I was vain enough, but for a moment, to imagine it was one of my letters.

MRS. W. – (*Tapping his shoulder playfully with her fan.*) Oh, how can you, General – you conceited man.

GEN D. – Was it not, really?

MRS. W. – Oh, no, General, how could you! You will smile perhaps. It was but a simple piece of china.

GEN D. – (*Aside and eagerly.*) She has got it. (*Aloud, calmly.*) A piece of china. Do you like old china?

MRS. W. – I adore it – do not you?

GEN D. – I worship it. Have you a large collection?

MRS. W. – No, but one small piece.

GEN D. – (*Aside.*) That's the one.

MRS. W. – (*Pointedly.*) You, I believe, have a very large collection.

GEN D. – (*Endeavouring to evade the point.*) Oh, ah! I have a large collection of china (*aside*) hundreds of miles away.

MRS. W. – Is it very *old* china?

GEN D. – I have a large collection of china (*aside*) in China. (*Aloud.*) Would it surprise you to learn that I am related to the Chinese!

MRS. W. – Dear me – really General –

GEN D. – Really! There is a legend of my relationship to Foo Choo Chan, which I will give you if it will not *bore you*.

MRS. W. – You could *not bore* me, General! (*Bus.*) Would you hand me my tea. (GENERAL DEELAH *does so, and gives his opera hat in mistake while gazing at her. Bus. ad lib. During the song*

MRS. NANKEEN WORCESTER *beats her cup with spoon at the refrain.*

SONG No. 2 -- Sung by General Deelah and Mrs. Worcester

General D.

Foo Choo Chan was a merchant of Japan,
 Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
 Who wished he'd been born an Englishman,
 Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
 He'd wives untold, and silver and gold,
 He'd shares in a Lisbon tram!
 All these he declared he would gladly have spared
 To be born of a British ma'am.

General D. and Mrs. W.

All these he declared he would gladly have spared
 To be born of a British ma'am.
 Singing ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
 Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!

Spoken (during symphony):

Mrs. W. — I do not see how you're related to the Chinese.
 General D. — You cannot expect it in the first verse!

General D.

To live in a land with gamblers bold,
Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
Where lovely daughters are bought and sold,
Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
Where thought is gagged and madmen free,
Where fashion holds the sway,
Where an old cracked plate, with an antique date
Is a curate's annual pay!

General D. and Mrs. W.

Where an old cracked plate, with an antique date
Is a curate's annual pay!
Singing ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!

Spoken (during symphony):

Mrs. W. — I don't yet see your relationship, General.

General D. — Ah, then I'll cut out the next thirty-two verses and come to the point.

General D.

Said Foo Choo Chan as I'm not an Englishman
Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
I'll wed an English lady if I can!
Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
He in London came and wedded a dame,
And I was related to the bride;
For she was the sister of my brother's second aunt,
By an uncle on my grandmother's side.

General D. and Mrs. W.

For she was the sister of my brother's second aunt,
By an uncle on my grandmother's side.
Singing ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!
Ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring, ching-a-ring China!

MRS. W. — That is perfectly clear. (GENERAL DEELAH *uses his opera hat as a tray to receive the cup and saucer from MRS. NANKEEN WORCESTER. He places them on table and then gazes fondly at her. She turns her back to him shyly.*)

GEN D. — Let us speak of something more adorable than china.

MRS. W. — What *could* be more adorable?

GEN D. — (*Seizing her hand.*) Yourself! (*She rises.*) I love you! In long I've loved you short. In mean, in short I've loved you long. Since I find we are alike in a keen appreciation of art, let me offer you the art I possess (*she turns to him*), the art with the "H." Be my wife!

MRS. W. — Oh, General, this is quite too awfully sudden.

GEN D. — (*Kneels.*) Answer me or I die at your feet.

MRS. W. — Oh, I'm fainting. (*Falls in chair. GENERAL DEELAH runs for his opera hat and fans her.*)

GEN D. — Oh, Emily, come in. Open your eyes. Your Edwin implores you. (*Aside.*) I wonder where that saucer is! (*He leaves her to look around the room. She looks up at him, but on catching his glance she falls back to again. He runs to her.*)

GEN D. – Oh, Emily, *my* Emily, will you never speak. This is genuine. What shall I do. I never was in such an embarrassing position before in my life. (*Runs to door R.*) Jane!

(MRS. W. *darts after him suddenly.*)

MRS. W. – Gracious goodness! What are you calling Jane for. Jane, we don't want you. (*Waving right hand.*)

GEN D. – (*Waving right hand also.*) Jane, we don't want you.

MRS. W. – Go away Jane.

GEN D. – Go away Jane.

MRS. W. – (*Falls in chair L. and fans herself.*) I'm better now. What ever made you call Jane?

GEN D. – (*Leaning on chair R. and fanning himself with opera hat.*) Whatever made me call Jane?

MRS. W. – I am better now (*sits on chair L.*), my dear Edwin. It is extremely gratifying to know you love me for myself. It is still more gratifying to be able to inform you that the little piece of china you saw me kissing is worth – calm yourself Edwin -- £10,000. (GEN. D. *expresses emotions of joy aside and then turns calmly to MRS. W.*)

GEN D. – Indeed!

MRS. W. – When you make me you take the saucer! On this point I have hitherto deceived you. It was a woman's weakness, Edwin; forgive me!

GEN D. -- (*Apparently indignant*), Emily! [Rest of this one is unreadable.]

MRS. W. – Generous and genuine General! (*Feeling in pocket.*) Here take my treasure.

GEN D. – No! no! I will not. (*Eager to clutch it.*)

(MRS. W. *given saucer, which the GENERAL seizes with his hands, and glances with a comical love expression at her.*)

GEN D. – My love! My life! (*Walks to R.*) (*Aside.*) I've got it. (*He gazes at it, turns it over, and a look of horror comes over his face. His back is to MRS. NANKEEN WORCESTER*)

MRS. W. – How delighted he appears. He can scarcely contain his joy. I knew he would be entranced.

GEN D. – (*Suddenly recovers himself and sits on chair.*) (*Aside.*) How foolish of me. (*Aloud.*) Emily!

MRS. W. – Yes, love.

GEN D. – Of course, this is not THE saucer?

MRS. W. – Yes – the only one I have in the world!

GEN D. – Ten thousand horrors!

MRS. W. – You mean ten thousand pounds!

GEN D. – (*Rising to R.*) What have I done. Fool! Fool!!! Fool!!!! (*Beats his brow and gazes in agony at the bottom of the saucer.*)

MRS. W. – Edwin! you alarm me! That is a genuine *curie*. See the rare mark. The finger to the nose.

GEN D. – Mark! Genuine! *It is my own make!*

MRS. W. – Your own make. Explain yourself, General! I tell you that is the saucer of the late Julius Caesar, Esq.

GEN D. – I tell you it is my own make. It is no more Julius Caesar's than its Julius B – B Benedict's (*falls weeping into chair R.*).

MRS. W. – (*Aside heroically*). Can this indeed be true. If so, this is the moment in which to show him of what his countrywomen are made. (*Aloud.*) Edwin – Edwin – do not weep for me.

GEN D. – (*Makes a weeping noise*).

MRS. W. – Do not weep for my sake. Fortified by your affection I will learn to bear up under this crushing calamity, and learn to love *your* collection of china even better than I have done my own. Edwin, I repeat it. Do not weep for me. (*She turns towards piano and buries her face in her pocket handkerchief.*)

GEN D. – (*Rises*). It is useless for me to deceive you, madam. It is useless for you to love my collection of china.

MRS. W. – (*Anxiously.*) Why? Why?

GEN D. – My collection of china *is my own make* as well!

MRS. W. – Your own make too? (*Falls hysterically into chair L. then rises in anger.*) Go! cruel deceiver! Go! You have broken my heart. Go on, sir! Complete the wreck which you have made by breaking the wretched saucer which is as false as yourself; leaving me – to the remembrance of what might have been (*Falls, overcome, in chair L.*)

GEN D. – (*R. smites his breast.*) Edwin, be a man! I obey your command, and leave you for ever. (*Walks to R.*)

MRS. W. – He shall not see what this decision costs me. I will dismiss him with an air as callous and indifferent as his own. (*MRS. WORCESTER seats herself at piano, and plays the Mazurka that forms the accompaniment to the “Farewell Song.” At the end of the song she falls with her head and arms on the treble keys of the piano, thereby making a discordant noise.*)

SONG No. -- Sung by General Deelah

Spoken melodramatically:

"Wilt thou not say good-bye? not one word of adieu? Ah! cruel one!"

Fare thee well, a long farewell! (*Mrs. W. cries aloud.*)

But where to go I cannot tell! (*Mrs. W. cries aloud.*)

Adieu, adieu, my native shore! (*Mrs. W. weeps.*)

She must have heard those words before.

Fare thee well, my Mary Anne,

For me Susannah don't you cry;

You will not kill me for my mother,

Good-bye, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye.

Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye.

Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye, good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye. (*Mrs. W. falls on keys.*)

GEN D. – I have lost her through being so mercenary! Farewell! (*Going.*)

MRS. W. – Stay! (*rises from keys.*) If you had only been mercenary, Edwin, I could have forgiven you. We are all rather mercenary at times. But it is clear you loved my china better than you loved me (*falls on keys as before. GENERAL DEELAH starts at the discordant noise.*)

GEN D. – (*Candidly and excitedly.*) Never! Never! I hate old china! But society has forced me with the alternative of being thought vulgar, to pretend an affection for its inartistic, ugly beauties at which my true soul actually revolts!

MRS. W. – (*Rising from keys.*) And yet you manufacture *new* china and sell it as *old*. Oh! modern sham uncle of *Aladdin* (*falls on keys.*)

GEN D. – (*Starts and says, aside.*) I wish she would weep in tune. (*Aloud.*) Oh, how you wrong me. Let me explain. A set of vagabonds who infest England have bought up every bit of Oriental ware, are doctoring it up, making it look dirty, cracking it, and then palming it off on would be fashionable folks as real oriental ware. One little town in Japan had been completely cleaned out of every cup and saucer, and the poor Japanese (*affected*) were compelled to drink their tea out of the bottles and blacking pots. I could not bear to see this. So I started a firm for the manufacture of *English* china to supply to wants of the natives, and I flatter myself I am doing very well.

MRS. W. – (*Rising to her feet.*) A very charitable and estimable thought Edwin, but is it now rather *vulgar*?

GEN D. – Oh dear, no. When I am away society is always under the impression that I am abroad on foreign service. There's always a war in the East somewhere or other. Besides, if the aristocracy make iron and sell tea why not make "*cups and saucers*?" They are my excuses, presuming I am found out!

MRS. W. – (*Shyly.*) Then what do you propose to do?

GEN D. – Again propose to *you*! And if your little income – (*anxiously*) – you have a little income, have you not?

MRS. W. – It is useless disguising the fact; I have, and you have a half-pay?

GEN D. – I have, and if they manage to keep us separately, why not together for ever!

MRS. W. – (*taking his hand.*) Agreed! (*Going to door R.*) Jane! Jane!

GEN D. – Here, don't call Jane!

MRS. W. – I am not going to. (*Calling.*) Jane hurry the dinner. General Deelah will stay. You will stay, Edwin, wont you?

GEN D. – Most certainly! and for many a dinner to come, I hope.

MRS. W. – And our future fate is –

GEN D. – To give up old china and life in Japan.

MRS. W. – And make cups and saucers?

GEN D. – As fast as we can.

SONG No. 4 -- Duet

Both

We'll give up old China and live in Japan,
We'll give up old China and live in Japan,
And make cups and saucers as fast as we can.
We'll give up old China and live in Japan,
We'll give up old China and live in Japan,
And make cups and saucers as fast as we can.
We'll add to their sale, for the poor Japanese
Shall soon learn the custom of five o'clock teas.

Mrs. W.

We will! we will!

General D.

We will! we will!

Mrs. W.

We will! we will! we will! we will!
we will! we will! we will! we will!
We'll marry as soon as we possibly can.
We'll marry as soon as we possibly can.
We will! we will! we will! we will!
We'll give up old China and live in Japan,
We'll marry as soon as we possibly can.
We'll marry as soon as we possibly can.
We will! we will! we will! we will!

General D.

We will! we will! we will! we will!
we will! we will! we will! we will!
We will! we will! we will! we will!
We will! we will! we will! we will!
We'll marry as soon as we possibly can!
We'll give up old China and live in Japan,
We will! we will! we will! we will!
We will! we will! we will! we will!
We'll marry as soon as we possibly can!

Both

We'll give up old China and live in Japan,
We'll give up old China and live in Japan!

CURTAIN