

Original Plays by W. S. Gilbert: fourth series: containing The Fairy's Dilemma, The Grand Duke, His Excellency, Haste to the Wedding, Fallen Fairies, The Gentleman in Black, Brantingham Hall, Creatures of Impulse, Randall's Thumb, The Fortune-Hunter, Thespis

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The Fairy's Dilemma.

AN ORIGINAL DOMESTIC PANTOMIME, IN TWO ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SUPERNATURALS.

The Demon Alcohol

Mr. Jerrold Robertshaw.

The Fairy Rosebud

Miss Jessie Bateman.

Imps, Goblins, Fairies, etc.

UNNATURALS.

Col. Sir Trevor Mauleverer, Bart., of the Household Cavalry
(Afterwards Clown.)

Mr. Arthur Bouchier.

The Rev. Aloysius Parfitt, M.A., of S. Parabola's (Afterwards
Harlequin.)

Mr. O. B. Clarence.

Mr. Justice Whortle, of the High Court of Judicature (Afterwards
Pantaloon.)

Mr. Sydney Valentine.

The Lady Angela Wealdstone, Daughter of the Marquis of Harrow
(Afterwards Columbine.)

Miss Violet Vanbrugh.

Clarissa, Daughter of Mr. Justice Whortle

Miss Dorothy Grimstone.

Mrs. Crumble, Housekeeper to Mr. Parfitt

Miss Ewell.

ACT I.

Scene 1 THE ABODE OF THE DEMON ALCOHOL

Scene 2 THE VICARAGE

ACT II

Scene 1 MR. JUSTICE WHORTLE'S CROQUET LAWN

Scene 2 CLOUDLAND

Scene 3 GRAND TRANSFORMATION SCENE: The Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation!

Scene 4 PASTRYCOOK'S AND CHEESEMONGER'S SHOPS

Scene 5 THE VICARAGE

ACT I.

Scene 1.

—*The Abode of the Demon Alcohol.*

Imps discovered round cauldron, labelled 'Rhymes.' They bustle about, fetching words that rhyme with each other, and putting them into the cauldron, over which an imp presides. An imp goes off and fetches a label, 'Bones'; another goes off and fetches another label, 'Jones.' They both put labels into cauldron, which the presiding imp stirs up. A third imp fetches a label, 'Town'; a fourth fetches a label, 'Brown.' Both labels are thrown into cauldron. First imp fetches label, 'Myth'; second imp fetches label, 'Smith.' Both labels thrown into cauldron. Presiding imp stirs them all up together. Flames issue from cauldron as each pair of labels is thrown in. Gong. The Demon Alcohol appears through scene.

Alcohol.

It is a Demon's fate that every time
He speaks he must express himself in rhyme,
And though to do my utmost I endeavour,
For rhyme and metre I've no ear whatever.
So, business being slack, I've ordered you,
My faithful imps (a most painstaking crew),
With careful judgment and discretion wary,
To cook me up a Rhyming Dictionary,
Which I can study in my hours of leisure.
Is the job finished?

Imps imply assent. A large volume labelled 'Rhyming Dictionary' rises out of cauldron amid flames. Alcohol takes it and opens it.

Here's indeed a treasure!

(to imps)

Be off! I thank you all!

(They go off.)

Now that they've gone

I'll have an hour's study all alone.

(Cauldron sinks through trap.)

Alcohol sits on rock and opens book.

Of jingling rhymes here is a storehouse, quite—

(reads)

'White, bright, light, tight, fight, might, sight, bite, hight, kite';

'Clue, Jew, true, blue, rue, new, too, few, do, cool!'

Gong— Fairy Rosebud appears.

(annoyed)

Come in!

Rose.

Good morning!

Alcohol.

Who the deuce are you?

Rose.

A fairy—and my name is Rosebud.

Alcohol.

Is it!

Greatly indebted to you for this visit.

What do you want?

Rose.

With worry I'm quite dizzy:

(imploringly)

I want your help!

Alcohol. *(reverting to book).*

Some other time: I'm busy.

Rose.

That's very rude, and rudeness I detest.

(pitiably)

I'm in an awful fix!

Alcohol.

Are you? Poor old girl! All right, I'll do my best.

Rose *(almost crying).*

Of all good fairies I'm the most unlucky!

For everything goes wrong!

Alcohol.

Now look here, ducky,

I twig your methods. Every blessed time

You make a point of leaving it to me to find the rhyme;

That's an old dodge of yours—your favourite ticket—

It's all very well, young woman, but it isn't cricket.

Rose *(speaking prose).*

Come, I don't want to be hard on you. We're quite alone, and nobody will know. Your verse is abominably faulty; suppose we drop into prose?

Alcohol.

Well, that's very nice of you. It'll save a lot of trouble. These confounded rhymes simply drive me crazy.

Rose.

Yes—they're not your strong point. I've heard you rhyme 'side-board' with 'school-board'!

Alcohol.

Well, what's the matter with that?

Rose.

And 'well-wisher' with 'extinguisher'! You know you're a perfect goose!

Alcohol.

Well, never mind that now. Sit down, Rosy, and let's be cosy. Come, that's not so bad!

Rose.

Cosy, indeed! You surely don't expect me to be cosy with a person of your stamp! You seem to forget that I'm a good fairy. Good fairies have to be very particular.

Alcohol.

How dull.

Rose.

It is dull. Now, I've an aunt who is a bad fairy— dark, black hair, heavy eyebrows, dresses in black and red satin—

Alcohol.

I know her.

Rose.

Well, you've no idea what a good time she has— although she's not received. However, to business.

Alcohol. *(seductively).*

Now, come and sit here—do!

Rose.

You've such a way with you, I never did! Well, just for once, although it's really very wrong.
(*She sits by him; he puts his arm round her waist.*)

Now, do behave!

(*Removes his arm.*)

I'm not my aunt, you know! Now, it's my duty as a Good Fairy to watch over respectable young couples and bring their courtship to a happy termination, and it's your duty as a Demon to thwart this intention by every means in your power. Now, there's been very little doing in my line of late—and I've received a pretty strong hint from the Fairy Queen that if I don't find a worthy young couple to protect, whose courtship is threatened with destruction by a Malevolent Demon, my office will be abolished, and I shall be relegated to dance in the back rows with the stout ones. And that's a pretty look-out, isn't it?

Alcohol.

It isn't cheery. But where do I come in?

Rose.

I'll tell you. After a deal of trouble I've found the very people I want—a mild young clergyman of blameless life, and a very respectable hospital nurse, who are over head and ears in love with each other. Now, the hospital nurse—

Alcohol.

Pretty?

Rose.

Fine girl—is pursued by Colonel Sir Trevor Mauleverer, a wicked Baronet in the Life Guards, whose intentions towards her are too dreadful to talk about. Will you believe it, this bold, bad man actually intends to carry her off to his flat in—

Alcohol.

I know—Shaftesbury Avenue.

Rose.

Not this time—Whitehall Mansions.

Alcohol.

Oh, naughty, naughty! But are you sure of your facts?

Rose.

No doubt at all about them. Why, I've seen him making love to her!

Alcohol.

Sure he doesn't want to marry her?

Rose.

Want to marry her! Don't I tell you he's a Baronet!

Alcohol.

I see—a bad Baronet!

Rose.

Why, aren't all Baronets bad? One would think you'd never read a shilling shocker in your life! Now, I want you to introduce yourself to Sir Trevor Mauleverer and explain that you're his Familiar Spirit—that you know he entertains the worst designs against this young woman, and that you are willing to help him in every way. He'll jump at your offer. You'll carry her off to Whitehall Mansions, and I'll interfere just in time—before any mischief happens, you know—and restore her to the arms of her faithful clergyman.

Alcohol. (*who has been listening in amazement.*)

Well, I'm da—

(*recollects himself*)

—I beg pardon!

Rose.

Oh, don't mind me, George.

Alcohol.

I really couldn't help it. It relieves one's feelings. Besides, it's so expressive.

Rose.

And so true.

Alcohol.

Eh? Ah—yes—yes—exactly. But look here, for a Good Fairy you're an uncommonly cool hand.

Rose.

Good Fairies are naturally cooler than Demons.

Alcohol.

But, I say, aren't you playing it rather low down for a Good Fairy?

Rose.

What do you mean?

Alcohol.

Respectable young girl, you know—clerical lover—bad Baronet—flat in Whitehall Mansions, eh?

Rose.

Well, you are squeamish! Don't I tell you that I mean to rescue her and restore her to her young man before any harm can possibly happen?

Alcohol.

Yes, you did say that. But, Rosy—come a little nearer.

Rose.

No, it's not right. Besides, your scales scratch.

Alcohol. (*wheedlingly*).

What am I to get for this, eh?

Rose.

Get for it? Oh, you don't want to get anything for it. A good action is its own reward.

(*Aside.*)

He's rather a dear! I wish he wasn't so spotty!

Alcohol.

Now, if I get you out of this scrape—(I'm thinking of settling, you know)—if I get you out of this scrape, and we make it all trumps, eh? What do you say, Rosy?

Rose.

Oh, I couldn't think of it! That is a matter that I must absolutely decline to discuss—at present.

Now, I must be off. I've got to change a respectable young plumber and a good plain cook into Harlequin and Columbine—and the electric light is a consideration.

Backing towards opening.

Alcohol.

But look here, don't be in a hurry. Suppose it turns out all right, eh?

Rose.

Well, if you carry off the young woman—and if I interfere just in time—and if I succeed in reuniting the young people—and if the Fairy Queen is pleased—and if I'm not relegated to the back rows among the stout ones—and if it all turns out trumps—

Alcohol. (*eagerly*).

Well?

Rose.

Well, I'll see!

She steps back into opening, which closes. Stage darkens.

End of Scene I.

Scene II.

Interior of the Vicarage of S. Parabola.

The Rev. Aloysius Parfitt discovered playing 'The Lost Chord' on harmonium. Camera with stand, etc., Mrs. Crumble, his housekeeper, also discovered.

Aloy.

Mrs. Crumble—

Mrs. C.

Yes, sir.

Aloy.

I am expecting a few friends to luncheon. Sir Trevor Mauleverer, Miss Clarissa Whortle—

Mrs. C.

The young lady which he's going to marry, sir?

Aloy.

Never mind that—and Nurse Jane Collins, who is in attendance on Lady Whortle.

Mrs. C.

Yes, sir—the young lady which you're going to marry, sir.

Aloy.

Sir Trevor and I are certainly engaged to these young ladies, but that is not now the question. We will confine ourselves, if you please, to the question, which is—what do you propose to give us for luncheon?

Mrs. C.

There's yesterday's chicken, sir, which will make a beautiful 'devil.'

Aloy.

Er—no, I think not. I should prefer yesterday's chicken cooked in any other way. A salmi, for instance.

Mrs. C.

And there's a nice little leg of lamb that came from Wales yesterday. That, with apple dumplings and an open jam tart and custards—

Aloy.

Will do extremely well. At half-past one, Mrs. Crumble.

Mrs. C.

It shall be ready, sir. Oh, sir, I do hope Miss Clarissa will be happy with Sir Trevor!

Aloy.

Why should you concern yourself about that, Mrs. Crumble?

Mrs. C.

Why, sir, these military baronights! Well, I can't say as I holds with military baronights.

Aloy. (*reproachfully*).

How unjust you are! What harm have military baronets ever done to you, Mrs. Crumble?

Mrs. C.

Lor, sir, no harm whatever! The idea! Only in all the stories as I ever read, whenever I come across a military baronight I know as he's going to turn out unsatisfactory.

Aloy.

You need have no apprehension in this instance. Sir Trevor Mauleverer is one of my oldest friends—a thorough English gentleman of the best type.

Mrs. C.

I'm very glad to hear it, sir, for Miss Clarissa—

Aloy.

Now never mind Miss Clarissa. You can go, Mrs. Crumble.

Mrs. C.

Yes, sir.

Exit Mrs. Crumble.

Aloy.

Mrs. Crumble's questions are inconvenient, and her deductions incorrect, but I am happy to say that I have contrived to answer her without any violation of the truth. Sir Trevor is engaged, but not to Clarissa Whortle. I am also engaged, but not to Nurse Collins. So far, all is satisfactory, but what did Mrs. Crumble mean by her remark about military baronets? Mere ignorant prejudice, of course. Trevor would never—no, no, of course not. It's merely manner on his part— nothing but manner.

Still, I do sometimes wish that he—

(Noise without.)

Who is that? Not the new curate, I hope.

Enter Sir Trevor in undress uniform.

Sir T.

Aloysius, my dear fellow—

Aloy.

Trevor, my old friend!

They shake hands.

Sir T.

This is a critical moment, Aloysius! In an hour's time we shall have achieved the good deed to which we solemnly pledged ourselves a year ago! In one hour we shall be married men!

Aloy.

Yes—still, I cannot help wishing that the humane and unselfish work to which we have so earnestly dedicated ourselves could have been achieved without resort to a deception which, harmless though it be, is a deception nevertheless.

Sir T.

I think you are, perhaps, over-sensitive on this point. Recollect that, maddened with righteous indignation at the oppression to which weak, helpless, and submissive women are but too often subjected at the hands of arbitrary, dictatorial, and mercenary parents, we solemnly vowed that we would devote ourselves, heart and soul, to the emancipation of the very first instances of such oppression that came to our knowledge— even though it were necessary to take the extreme course of marrying them in order to release them from such inhuman thralldom.

Aloy.

No doubt, no doubt. Clarissa's father, Mr. Justice Whortle, an extremely irritable, arbitrary, and dictatorial old person, insisted upon her marrying one of three men of wealth and title.

Sir T.

I had the honour of being one of the three.

Aloy.

You had the honour of being one of the three. Seeing no other way to avert the doom with which the helpless girl was threatened, I promised her that as soon as she came of age I would go so far as to make her my wife. She came of age yesterday, and we are to be married before the Registrar to-day.

Sir T.

Prompt.

Aloy.

Yes, short reckonings make long husbands. Nurse Collins is, I have no doubt, equally the victim of some description of oppression, and you, I am convinced, have equally sacrificed yourself at the altar of altruistic self-abnegation.

Sir T. *(after a pause).*

Aloysius, I am about to confide to you a secret which, hitherto, I have confided to no one. The lady whom you know as Jane Collins, the hospital nurse, is no other than the Lady Angela Wealdstone, only child of the haughty and despotic Marquis of Harrow!

Aloy.

The lady who ran away from home a year ago? Bless my heart, you don't say so!

Sir T.

The Marquis had insisted on her marrying the wealthy but disreputable Duke of Danderly, whom she regarded with absolute detestation. At that time Lady Angela was a year under age and a Ward in Chancery. So, at my suggestion, she left her home, and, changing her name to Jane Collins, she entered herself as probationer at Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital.

She is now a fully qualified nurse, and as such I procured her an engagement to attend on Lady Whortle, who, as you know, is a chronic invalid. Lady Angela also came of age yesterday, and we are also to be married before the Registrar to-day.

Aloy.

Yes. There are, however, two points upon which I confess my conscience is uneasy. Although I embarked upon my engagement to Clarissa from a simple sense of duty, I cannot conceal from myself that, despite a certain tendency to frivolity, which it will be my constant study to correct, I have grown to be strongly attached to Clarissa.

Sir T.

And, between ourselves, I am devotedly fond of Angela.

Aloy.

Indeed! I had no idea of this.

Sir T.

I am devotedly fond of Angela, but as her affection for me is based entirely on the belief that I am sacrificing my life's happiness to her interests, it won't do to let her know, just yet, how particularly happy I am to be permitted to do so. Now, what is the second point that exercises you?

Aloy.

Why, the deception to which I have been a passive party—my having allowed everyone to suppose that I was engaged to Lady Angela, whereas I was really engaged to

Clarissa! It is true that I never said as much to anyone, but—I never contradicted it.

Sir T.

My dear boy, the arrangement was made with the full consent and connivance of both ladies, and no one has any right to complain. After all, what does it amount to? You are supposed to be engaged to Lady Angela, whereas you are really engaged to Miss Clarissa. I am supposed to be engaged to Miss Clarissa, whereas I am really engaged to Lady Angela—and both ladies enter, heart and soul, into the arrangement!

Enter Clarissa Whortle, and Lady Angela Wealdstone. Lady Angela is dressed in the costume of a professional hospital nurse, with long cloak, cottage bonnet, grey dress, white bib and apron, etc. Clarissa wears a handsome mantle and elaborate picture hat.

Clar. (*politely*).

Good morning, Sir Trevor. Aloysius, my dearly loved one!

(Embraces Aloysius .)

Lady An. (*politely*).

How do you do, Mr. Parfitt? Trevor, dearest Trevor, are we late?

(Embracing Sir Trevor .)

Sir T.

My dear Angela, you could never be too soon, and you never are too late.

Lady An. (*alarmed*).

Hush, Trevor—you forget!

Sir T.

No. I have confided our secret to Mr. Parfitt.

Lady An.

Have you? And I have told Clarissa!

Clar.

Yes; Jane—I mean Lady Angela—has told me everything.

Lady An.

You are not angry with me, Mr. Parfitt, for this innocent little deception?

Aloy.

I have, alas! forfeited all right, Lady Angela, to be hypercritical where an innocent deception is concerned.

Lady An.

Oh, don't take a professional view of so small a matter, Mr. Parfitt! If I had passed under my own name, I should have been discovered at once, and restored by my trustees to my inhuman father's custody.

Aloy. (*calmly*).

And is Clarissa happy?

Clar.

Happy! I should think so! Are we not to be married to-day? Am I not to be made his whose noble altruism has rescued me from a doom worse than death itself?

(Recollecting herself.)

Oh, I beg your pardon, Sir Trevor!

Sir T.

Pray don't! I quite understand.

Clar.

What I mean is that marriage, under compulsion, with any gentleman, however eligible, must be distasteful to a girl who—

Sir T.

But I was not eligible. I was already engaged to Lady Angela.

Clar.

Now, if you had been free—

Aloy.

Clarissa, let us not pursue this painful theme into the embarrassing fields of illusive hypothesis. It is enough that your father insisted upon your marriage with a gentleman who, for whatever reason, was not to your taste, and that I interfered to prevent it.

Lady An.

It's like a tale of old chivalry! Two poor helpless maidens, in dire straits, rescued by two gallant knight-errants, who had pledged themselves to sacrifice their life's happiness in their service! Ah, Trevor, I would that I were worthy of you!

Sir T.

Take heart, Angela, it may be that you are.

Lady An.

Dearest!

Clar.

In one short hour we shall be each other's. But before that can be, my father, who is going to open the Commission, will stop here on his way that you may photograph him in his robes.

Aloy.

It was so arranged yesterday. Everything is prepared. There is one point to which I should like to draw your attention. In the presence of the Judge it is unhappily necessary that I should address myself in terms of endearment to Lady Angela, and that Trevor should direct his attentions to yourself. May I suggest that we do not over-act our parts?

Lady An.

I'm sure, Mr. Parfitt, you are always most particular upon that point. Such perfunctory endearments as are necessary to the situation have been performed by you with a delicacy—a self-restraint which—

Aloy.

A—yes. I—I was not referring to myself, Lady Angela. But, to be frank, I have noticed a tendency—unintentional, I need hardly say—on the part of our good friend Trevor in his attentions to Clarissa to unnecessarily accentuate the situation. That he does so and that she reciprocates it in the warmth of their enthusiasm in a good cause, I am convinced; but still—they do it.

Sir T.

My dear fellow, if I am to be natural, I must not be hampered. It has ever been the maxim of the Mauleverers to do what they had to do with all the energy at their command. It's in the blood.

Aloy.

I see. I didn't know it was in the blood—that makes a difference, of course. At the same time—

Clar.

Aloysius, I think you are unjust. You cannot but be aware that we have to create a certain impression, and that we must be realistic if we are to be convincing. I love you, dearest Aloysius, with a fervour—with a devotion—

Enter Mr. Justice Whortle in full robes and full-bottomed wig, ushered by Mrs. Crumble .

Clarissa, turning to Sir Trevor with simulated affection, continues—

—with a devotion, with an enthusiasm which I can scarcely expect you, dearest Trevor, to rival in the overflowing fullness of its intensity. It is not in man's nature to do so, and I do not complain.

(Lady Angela has crossed affectionately to Aloysius, who, formerly holding her at arm's length by the waist, is much preoccupied by the proceedings of Clarissa with Sir Trevor .)

Lady An.

Aloysius, dearly loved one, tell me, shall the little sitting-room be pink or blue?

Aloy. *(preoccupied).*

I think, perhaps, a quiet plaid—

Judge *(who has been watching them).*

Nearly finished your endearments? They're a little cloying!

Clar. *(in affected surprise).*

Papa! you here already!

Judge.

Yes, come now, be quick. I can't keep the Grand Jury waiting. Where shall I sit? Here?
(Goes to chair up stage.)

Aloy.

That will do excellently, Sir John. Permit me.
(Arranges robes, then focuses, rather nervously.)

Lady An.

Sir John, you must allow me to compliment you upon the impressive effect of your judicial robes.

Judge.

Rather tasty, I think. But it's not so much the robes as the wig. There's a great deal more in this wig than you'd suppose, Miss Collins.

Lady An.

That I can quite believe, Sir John.

Judge.

Yes. Now observe. Without it
(taking it off)

I am simply an intellectual middle-aged gentleman of a refined and cultivated type; but with it, Miss Collins

(putting it on),

I am at once the embodiment of the abstract Majesty of the Law— three centuries of the concentrated wisdom of both Houses of Parliament in tabloid form.

(Business of focusing.)

Clar. (aside to Lady Angela).

Papa always keeps his wig by his bedside at night, and whenever argument runs high he puts it on, and mamma knocks under at once.

Aloy.

How would you like to be taken, Sir John? Solemnly, as delivering a judgment?

Judge.

No, I think not. Humorously, as cutting a judicial joke. Judicial humour is my strong point. A trial at law is an extremely serious matter for both parties, and both parties are generally in a condition of heart-aching despondency until the verdict is delivered. I hold it to be a kind act, a considerate act, and a consolatory act on the part of the Judge to relieve that depression, to dissipate that despondency, and to cause both parties to forget, if possible, the important issues at stake by indulging them with a course of jocular comment—of light-hearted facetiae, and in short, with a display of general a—a—

Sir T.

Tomfoolery?

Judge.

A—well, yes—thank you, Sir Trevor—that's not quite the word I wanted, but something of that description. I flatter myself that 'Roars of laughter, in which the learned judge could not help joining,' is a paragraph that appears more often in cases tried before me than in any other Court of Justice in the kingdom.

Aloy. (timidly).

But, if I may venture to make a suggestion, Sir John, a jocular attitude would be scarcely in keeping with—

Judge (angrily).

But you may not venture to make a suggestion, Mr. Parfitt. I am not here to receive suggestions!

(Aloysius in great terror.)

I am here to be photographed in my own fashion, and unless I am photographed in my own fashion, I will not be photographed at all.

(Very angry.)

Clar.

But, papa, do listen to reason—

Judge.

Great Seal! Haven't I been listening to reason all the time I've been talking?

(Getting up.)

However, there's an end of the matter. Call my carriage.

(Comes down.)

Aloy.

Oh, Sir John, pray don't be angry! Indeed, I meant for the best!

Judge.

'Meant for the best!'

Clar.

Papa, I'm so sorry I vexed you!

Judge.

'Sorry you vexed me!'

Sir T.

Come, Sir John, don't be severe with my darling Clarissa—poor little popsy-wopsy, tiddle toddlecums!

(Fondling her.)

Judge.

'Popsy-wopsy, tiddle toddlecums!'

(During this, Aloysius has been expressing annoyance at Sir Trevor's display of affection towards Clarissa, and is gesticulating to him to refrain.)

If you are an epileptic, sir, say so, and you shall be treated accordingly.

(Sulkily resumes his seat. Aloysius at camera.)

I am but little accustomed to be dictated to, and I will not submit to it—I will not submit to it.

(Boiling with suppressed anger.)

Are you ready, sir?

Aloy.

Quite ready, Sir John.

(Judge suddenly assumes a grotesque and jocular attitude and expression, in strong contrast with his recent anger.)

Steady, Sir John—keep your eye upon this picture.

Judge *(furious).*

I will not keep my eye upon that picture. I shall look where I please.

(Resumes jocular attitude.)

Aloy. *(very frightened).*

Now then—one, two, three, four!

(Puts cap on camera.)

Thank you, Sir John.

Judge *(resuming his fury).*

And so you may, sir. It is the last time I put myself to this inconvenience to meet your wishes.

(To Mrs. Crumble).

Call my carriage. Good morning.

Exit.

As soon as he has gone Clarissa rushes to Aloysius, Lady Angela to Sir Trevor .

Lady An.

Now that that grumpy old gentleman has gone we can talk at our ease.

Clar.

Dearest Aloysius, you are vexed. Don't be angry with poor papa! He's really very funny in Court.

Aloy.

It is not your papa, Clarissa, with whom I am vexed. I do think, Trevor (I am sure it's unintentional), but I do think that you and Clarissa overdo it.

Sir T.

My dear fellow, I must play the game!

Judge heard speaking without. Clarissa runs to Sir Trevor, Lady Angela to Aloysius. Clarissa and Sir Trevor as affectionate lovers, Aloysius holding Lady Angela in a constrained attitude at arm's length.

Judge enters.

Judge.

My three-cornered hat—I forgot my three-cornered hat! Oh, here it is!
(*Finds his hat and exit.*)

Lady An.

Has he really gone, Clarissa?

Clar.

Yes, dear; the carriage has driven off at last!

Clarissa reverts to Aloysius and Lady Angela to Sir Trevor .

Aloy.

Then, my dear Clarissa, we should do well to repair at once to the Registrar, and beg the good man to unite us with all convenient despatch. I confess that it pains me to have to resort to an opposition establishment—it savours of disloyalty to my cloth—but there is no other way, and we will be married in church as soon as the civil process has made you mine beyond dispute. The fly is waiting.

Sir T.

And when you come back it will be our turn to enlist that gentleman's good services—and then it will be our painful duty to break the news to our respective fathers-in-law—I to the Marquis—that won't be pleasant—

Aloy.

And I to the Judge. That—that will require a little tact.

Sir T.

Just a little tact. By the way, excuse me for two minutes. They've been altering the regimental uniform—

Lady A.

What, again?

Sir T.

Yes—and I want to send a wire to my tailor. I'll be back directly.

Exit Sir Trevor .

Clar.

Are you ready, dear Aloysius?

Aloy.

Yes, yes; I'm ready. But if you will allow me to make a suggestion, Clarissa, it seems to me that the hat and mantle you are wearing are scarcely in accordance with the modest and unobtrusive nature of the process to which we are about to submit ourselves. We—we desire rather to avoid observation than to court it.

Clar.

Why, I bought this hat on purpose to do honour to the occasion! Besides, it's too late now—I can't go home and change.

Lady An.

Let me make a suggestion. Pin up your skirt, take my bonnet and veil and apron and cloak, and then anyone who sees you will be sure to take you for me.

Aloy.

Really, my dear Clarissa, Lady Angela's kind and thoughtful proposal appears to me to solve the difficulty.

Clar. (*removing hat and mantle*).

Do you think so? Well, if you wish it, of course it shall be done. But oh, Aloysius, I gave seven guineas for that hat!

Exit with Angela's cloak, bonnet, veil, and apron, leaving her own behind.

Aloy. (*very respectfully*).

And now, Lady Angela, that we are alone, permit me to express a modest hope that the perfunctory embraces which the unfortunate but autocratic necessities of the situation have compelled me to bestow upon you have been conceived and executed with as much delicacy and personal repression as the distressing circumstances of the case permitted.

Lady An.

Mr. Parfitt, you have been, if anything, too discreet.

Aloy.

Thank you, Lady Angela. If, in the reckless abandonment of the moment, I have been too fiery—if I should unhappily have exceeded the strict limit of what is customary between engaged couples, I beg you will not attribute it to a desire to take an unmanly advantage of the relations which are supposed to exist between us.

Lady An.

Mr. Parfitt, you have shown yourself throughout the transaction to be a gentleman who is actuated by an exaggeratedly delicate appreciation of what is due to a lady whom circumstances have placed in a most difficult and equivocal situation.

Aloy.

Lady Angela, I most respectfully beg to thank you for—

Gong. At this moment the Fairy Rosebud appears through back of scene. They are both conscious that a third person is present, though they have not seen her. Aloysius suddenly changes his manner, and addressing Lady Angela with effusion, continues—

As I was saying, I respectfully thank you for the overwhelming love—the whole-souled affection—the unutterably tender devotion with which you have so amply endowed me, my respectfully adored young friend!

Lady An. (*as if suddenly conscious of the presence of a third person*).

But hush, my Aloysius, we are observed!

They are much surprised at seeing the fairy.

Lady An.

Dear me, what a very singular young person!

Aloy.

May I be permitted to ask—whom I have the pleasure of addressing!

Rose.

I am the Fairy Rosebud. I am here
To help both you and Mr. Parfitt, dear.
Such love as yours we fairies much admire,
And I'll afford the aid that you require.

Aloy.

But there's some mistake—we are not in need of any assistance at present. And in this costume—and at a Vicarage! In all my experience I never saw anything so—so inadequate!

Lady An.

It's perfectly scandalous—in a Vicarage!

Rose.

I understand your feelings, and would spare 'em,
But I'm a Fairy, and I've got to wear 'em.
In the fond love that you've just now protested
As a Good Fairy I'm much interested;
Though threatened by a scheme of foulest tissue,
Your love I'll pilot to a happy issue!

Aloy.

But, really—

Lady An.

I think, Mr. Parfitt, that if we make it quite clear to this young person that we are thoroughly competent to conduct our own affairs without supernatural intervention, she will, perhaps, be so good as to apply her protective machinery to some young couple to whom it may be of service.

Aloy.

Really, Miss—a—a—I did not catch your name?

Rose.

I am the Fairy Rosebud—I am here—

Aloy.

Really, Miss Rosebud. I assure you that we have no occasion for your services. And if you are blessed with parents who are still living, may we suggest that you repair at once to old Mr. and Mrs. Rosebud, and point out to them the absolute necessity of their providing you with an outfit that shall be in stricter accordance with prevailing prejudices.

Rose.

Don't be absurd, but listen ere I go.
A Wicked Demon, my official foe,
Intends to carry off your bosom's pride—
The fair Jane Collins, standing by your side—
And place her in your hated rival's power:
This he'll effect in less than half-an-hour.
But do not fear, I shall be close at hand
To thwart the ill my demon foe has planned.
Going to opening.

Aloy.

But, my good woman, permit me to assure you that you are entirely mistaken in supposing—

Rose.

Mistaken! Happily for both your sakes
The Fairy Rosebud never makes mistakes:
You'll live her faultless judgment to extol—
But one word more—Beware of Alcohol!
(Disappears.)

Lady An.

Well, this places us in a pleasant predicament, Mr. Parfitt! That muddle-headed young woman is about to put her foot into it to an extent of which she has no notion.

Aloy.

It's extremely embarrassing, Lady Angela. She wouldn't give me time to explain.

Lady An.

And then, 'Beware of Alcohol' indeed! As if we were addicted to anything of the kind.

Aloy.

I am sure, Lady Angela, we are most abstemious— most abstemious. A glass of light claret or a little ginger beer—

Lady An.

Do you really think she's a fairy?

Aloy.

Well, Lady Angela, I set up no pretensions to be considered a judge of fairies, but she certainly appeared and disappeared in a most unaccountable manner.

Lady An.

Here comes Clarissa—how astonished she will be—

Aloy.

I think, perhaps, Lady Angela, it would be better for me to break this embarrassing little incident to Clarissa on our way to the Registrar's. Ah, here she is!

Enter Clarissa in Lady Angela's bonnet, apron, cloak, streamers, etc., and looking, with her veil down, exactly as Lady Angela looked at her entrance.

Lady An.

My dear Clarissa, the disguise is perfect. No one would know you. Enter Sir Trevor .

Sir T.

I've sent the wire.

(Sees Clarissa and takes her for Lady Angela .)

My dear Angela, they'll be back in half-an-hour and then it will be our turn.

(About to kiss her, with his arm around her waist.)

Clar. *(raising veil).*

Sir Trevor, you mistake!

Aloy.

Really, Trevor, it is getting beyond a joke. I don't want to be selfish, but I beg you to remember that, after all is said and done, Clarissa is engaged to me.

Sir T.

My dear fellow, a thousand pardons! Really, Miss Whortle, I took you for Angela. I did, indeed. It's a compliment to the disguise, Miss Whortle, and should be so taken.

Aloy.

Well, I think perhaps we had better be off before these compliments become overwhelming. By the way, Clarissa, a rather remarkable incident has happened. I'll tell you all about it as we go. As I was talking to Lady Angela—

Exeunt Aloysius and Clarissa, talking.

Sir T. (to Angela).

Our turn next, Angela.

Lady An.

Yes, our turn next! Oh, Trevor, when I gaze upon you and reflect that, solely to rescue me from the detestable clutches of a profligate old scarecrow you have consented to sacrifice the instincts, the emotion, the æsthetic essence of a lifetime, I am lost in adoring wonder!

Sir T.

My dear Angela, you exaggerate—you do, indeed. It really gives me great pleasure to render you this service.

Lady An.

I exaggerate nothing! One cannot exaggerate such heroic self-effacement. There are no words in the English language to express it. I doubt if it could be done even in German! How true it is that nobility of character is the only source of enduring love! Before I saw you I had formed my own ideal of manly perfection—it was not at all like you. But when I came to know the calm beauty of your character, the noble and undemonstrative heroism with which you had devoted yourself to the succour of the helpless and the oppressed, I realized how insignificant were questions of mere physical attributes, and I longed to soar into the moral Empyrean on the wings of such an Angel of Altruism as I had discovered my Trevor to be!

Sir T.

Thank you very much. But, really, I am almost to be envied, for, if you will permit me to say so, you are really an extremely attractive lady.

Lady An.

Attractive? bah! Why, look at me! What am I? I ask you, am I the kind of woman to inspire a heroic passion?

Sir T.

I think so—I think so. Pledged as I was to rescue, by process of matrimony, the very first oppressed woman I came across, without regard to age, station, or personal appearance, I consider myself most fortunate in having found an oppressed one who is not only endowed with considerable personal advantages, but who is, moreover, a very agreeable and intelligent companion.

Lady An.

Ah, you say this to comfort me!

Sir T.

No—no. When I think what you might have been and see what you are, I consider that I have really very little reason to complain.

Lady An.

Oh, Trevor, how happy you make me!

Sir T.

And now may I suggest that, as Mr. and Mrs. Parfitt may return at any moment, you would do well to clothe yourself in her hat and cloak? Then if we are seen on our way to the Registrar by anyone we know I shall be supposed to be merely taking a drive with the young lady to whom I am supposed to be engaged.

Lady An.

How thoughtful you are! I won't be two minutes!

Exit Angela .

Sir T. (looking after her).

Now that's a most heavenly girl, and I'm the very happiest man in the world! Dearest Angela! She little guesses that I have occupied myself for many nights past in composing a ballad in which the full intensity of my affection has been (not unhappily, I think) expressed.

Sits down at harmonium—plays a Symphony. At this moment the Demon Alcohol rises from trap immediately behind him, unperceived by Sir Trevor . The Demon is dressed like a man about town,

but otherwise presents the same aspect as in Act I. Sir Trevor sings the first note of the song, and the Demon, standing behind him, joins in. Sir Trevor wheels round on music stool, and looks coolly at him, glass in eye.

Alcohol.

Good morning, guv'nor! Hope you're pretty well?

Sir T.

May I ask whom I have the pleasure of addressing?

Alcohol.

Now, what d'ye take me for?

Sir T.

Really it is difficult to say. Not the new curate, I should imagine.

Alcohol.

Bah! I'm no curate, though a man of merit.

Buck up, old hoss! I'm your Familiar Sperrit!

Sir T. (*stiffly*).

I recognize the familiarity.

Alcohol.

I am here

To help you if you mean to persevere

In your pursuit of Jane, attractive gipsy!

Oh, she's a fascinating pipsy-wipsy!

Digs Sir Trevor in ribs.

Sir T. (*coldly*).

If this conversation is to be pursued, I must beg that when you have occasion to refer to that lady, you will observe a becomingly respectful reticence. Otherwise—

Alcohol.

All right, I'm fly, and don't you ever doubt it.

Now give it lip, and tell us all about it.

Sir T.

Really, sir, you make a very cool request. You can scarcely expect me to discuss my most delicate private affairs with the very first Demon I happen to come across.

Alcohol.

To that remark I merely answered Pooh!

If you won't tell me, why then I'll tell you.

You love Jane Collins, nurse to some girl's mother,

But—but

(bothered for rhyme)

—but she's a girl of taste, and loves another!

Sir T.

Allow me to assure you that you entirely misconceive the situation. Miss Collins is no other than—

Alcohol.

Now do be quiet: it's the worst of crimes

To interrupt a poor devil of a Demon when he's fishing for his rhymes.

To carry her away some means you search,

And—and

(bothered for rhyme)

—and leave your hated rival in the lurch.

Sir T.

Once for all—no, I will speak. Once for all I tell you that my intentions towards the young lady to whom you allude are of the most honourable description. In half an hour—

Alcohol.

Get out! Don't try to veil your conduct shady.

Why, Jane, by this time, is a married lady!

Sir T.

Nothing of the kind, sir!

Alcohol.

Oho! you roquey-pogey! bad young man!
But never fear, I will assist your plan.
Your rival shall be paid out, tit for tat.
In half an hour you'll find her at your flat!
Sinks through trap.

Sir T.

Here—stop! Gone! What can he mean? Does he presume to suggest that I, Sir Trevor Mauleverer, the last representative of a long line of blameless Baronets, upon whose escutcheon there has never been the shadow of a shade, am capable of entertaining designs against the purity and peace of mind of my devoted Angela?—Angela, who will be my wife in half an hour! But this is what it is to be a Baronet in the Life Guards. It is too generally assumed by those who derive their ideas from works of sensational fiction that we are all abandoned profligates! Even my old friend Aloysius seems to misconstrue my artificial attentions to his bride. In my moments of leisure I have composed a lament upon the subject which may tend, not infelicitously, to correct this unfortunate misconception. *Symphony in orchestra. He takes music from his pocket and comes down as if to sing. At this moment enter Aloysius and Clarissa; Aloysius somewhat preoccupied, Clarissa in high spirits.*

Clarissa (*dancing about the room*).

We are married, Sir Trevor! Married, married, married! I am Mrs. Parfitt, Sir Trevor, and my beloved husband may defy my flinty-hearted father to do his worst!

Sir T. (*taking Clarissa by both hands*).

My dear Mrs. Parfitt, I heartily congratulate you.

Aloy. (*gently withdrawing her from Sir Trevor, as if apprehensive that he is about to embrace her*).

Yes. Thank you. I confess I do not contemplate the prospect of defying Sir John Whortle without a certain degree of nervous apprehension. I am afraid he may not be altogether pleased at what has occurred.

(Aside, sniffing.)

Curious smell of cheap lucifer matches!

Sir T.

He'll be furious—simply volcanic—

Aloy. (*alarmed*).

Oh, you think he will?

Sir T.

I'm sure of it; but what of that? You can snap your fingers under his very nose, and he can do nothing.

Aloy.

Oh, yes, I could do that. No doubt I could do that. But I'm not at all sure that snapping my fingers under the very nose of an extremely irritable Judge of the High Court is quite the best thing I do.

Sir T.

You must practise. It's very easy. Like this—

Sir Trevor snaps his fingers. Aloysius imitates him with indifferent success.

Enter Angela in Clarissa's hat and cloak.

Lady An.

I'm quite ready, Trevor. Clarissa, my dearest Clarissa, a thousand congratulations! How do I look?

Clar.

Oh, too sweet!

Lady An.

Come, Trevor.

(Sniffing.)

What a curious smell of cheap lucifer matches!

Sir T.

Yes. A rather remarkable incident has happened since you left the room.

Lady An.

An incident? **Sir T.**

Yes. I'll tell you all about it as we go.

(Talking as he goes off.)

As I was sitting down to the harmonium just now—

Exeunt Sir Trevor and Angela .

Clar. *(at feet of Aloysius).*

And now, Aloysius, that we are alone together, and our married life has really begun, you must be frank with me and tell me all my faults, and I'll try to correct them.

Aloy.

Will you, really, Clarissa? That is indeed joyful news. Now, in the first place, I think my little girl is disposed, perhaps, to attach undue importance to the matter of costly raiment.

Clar.

Costly raiment?

Aloy.

If you knew how well a modest garb becomes you— such as the dress you are now wearing—

Clar.

Oh, Aloysius, I look a pretty guy in these clothes!

Aloy.

Then I fear that frivolous and worldly distractions are not without a certain allurement for you.

Clar.

Of course I like to amuse myself, dear. Harmless amusement—

Aloy.

Oh, I was not referring to school-feasts and mothers' meetings. I allude to dinner parties, dances, and theatres.

Clar.

Of course, Aloysius, I shall do exactly as you wish. But have you ever been to a theatre, dear?

Aloy. *(with energy).*

Never! Most surely never!

Clar.

They are really not so bad as you think. Good gracious! what's that!

The Demon Alcohol appears through wall. Both rise, Clarissa clinging to Aloysius in great alarm.

Clar.

Oh, Aloysius, protect me!

Aloy.

Sir, this intrusion is unseemly. Who are you, and whence do you come?

Alcohol.

I come from where it is extremely warm,

A most unpleasant duty to perform.

For your return I have for sometime tarried.

Aloy. *(shortly).*

I am engaged.

Alcohol.

You're more than that—you're married!

But you've a rival, though you may forget—

A bold, bad, buccaneering Baronet!

And though you fancy you can now pooh-pooh him,

I am his agent—and I take you to him!

Demon seizes Clarissa, whisking her away from Aloysius' arms on to trap. They slowly descend.

Aloysius exclaims, 'Clarissa!' She screams, 'Aloysius, save me!' He endeavours to follow, but is restrained by half a score of imps, with flaming torches, who form a fiery circle round him. Clarissa and Demon disappear from view, Clarissa holding on to edge of trap, from which she is with difficulty dislodged by imps.

Picture. Red Fire.

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

—*Croquet Lawn at Sir John Whortle's Country House.*

Fairy Rosebud appears through a rosebush.

Rose.

Now I wonder what has happened? Alcohol was to have met me here at four to report progress, but of course he's behind time. I do hope he hasn't made some stupid mistake!

(Alcohol appears through juniper bush.)

Oh, here you are at last! You're late!

Alcohol.

A thousand pardons! Driving here from town
My brand-new Demon motor-car broke down;
A puncture long delayed me—this fatality
Affects one's character for puncture-ality.

Rose.

Oh, don't talk nonsense! How are matters progressing?

Alcohol.

Capitally. I did just as you told me. The Clergyman and the Hospital Nurse were married by the Registrar this morning.

Fairy.

Good!

Alcohol.

As soon as they returned home I appeared to them—tore the Hospital Nurse from her husband's arms, and conveyed her to Sir Trevor's flat, where she now is.

Rose *(much relieved).*

Excellent! Nothing could be better! I was getting quite anxious. Ah, you don't know how we Good Fairies fret and worry when anything goes wrong! You see, we take such interest in our work, and we're so conscientious!

Alcohol.

It must be a wearing life. But look here, Rosy, I hope you won't leave her there too long. It's rather a compromising position for a young girl who's just married.

Rose.

Well, you are a soft-hearted Demon!

Alcohol.

Not particularly. But, frankly, to snatch a newly-married bride from her husband's arms, and carry her off to the flat of a wicked Baronet, is playing it rather low down, even for a gentleman in my profession. It's true I stuffed up the keyhole with beeswax, so he can't get at her. Still, you oughtn't to leave her there too long.

Rose.

Well, you're a good fellow, and I'll take care that she's restored to her husband before any harm happens. I'll see to it at once. Now trot along like a good boy, and leave it all to me.

Alcohol.

But, Rosy—before I go—just one!

Rose.

I won't! Get along with you!

Alcohol.

Bother!

Vanishes through juniper bush.

Rose.

My fairies, hither!

Music. Fairies appear tripping down stage. They make obeisance.

Rose.

It has come to pass

There's a young girl of decent middle class

To whom we've promised our protecting mercies:
D'you know Jane Collins?

1st Coryphee.

Well: her sphere's a nurse's.

Rose.

Well, she is in mortal peril, there's no doubt of it,
And you must help me, please, to get her out of it.

(impressively)

She's in the power of Alcohol, my foe,

(Sensation.)

And we must rescue her; but ere you go,

Dance on the sward before these stucco portals

(to audience)

(Which I may state are Mr. Justice Whortle's),

And when you've finished wing yourselves away

And bring Jane Collins here without delay!

Exit Fairy Rosebud.

Ballet.

(At the end the Fairies exeunt.)

Enter Mr. Justice Whortle, in plain clothes.

Judge.

Well, I've done an excellent day's work. A breach of promise, damages fifteen hundred; a serious libel action, damages five thousand; and a magnificent clerical scandal to top up with. They all 'went' magnificently! Court convulsed throughout! Never heard such roars of laughter in a Court of Justice before! But where's Clarissa? I must tell Clarissa all about it. Clarissa!

(Angrily.)

Where is that girl? It's a most unaccountable thing, but whenever I want that girl she's—Halloa, sir!

What's the matter with you?

Enter Aloysius, breathless with terror and agitation.

Aloy.

Sir John—a dreadful thing—a terrible thing has occurred.

(Panting.)

I—I hardly know how to begin!

Judge.

Collect yourself, sir—and after you've collected yourself, recollect yourself, sir.

Aloy.

I'm doing my best, Sir John! Your daughter, sir—!

Judge.

My daughter, sir? How are you concerned with my daughter, sir?

Aloy.

Sir John, be prepared for a blow. Your daughter, Clarissa—

Judge *(with dignity).*

If you allude to Miss Whortle, sir, be good enough so to describe her.

Aloy.

Pardon me, it would be a misdescription. It—it would be untrue!

Judge.

Untrue?

Aloy. *(trembling violently).*

The lady who was Miss Whortle is now—Mrs. Parfitt!

Judge *(in a violent passion).*

Why, you—!

Aloy. *(warningly).*

Clergyman of the Church of England, Sir John!

Judge *(swallowing his fury).*

Do you mean to tell me that you— you —with a stipend of two hundred a year—have presumed to marry my daughter?

Aloy.

Yes, Sir John—in a way. I mean that we were married this morning before the Registrar!

Judge.

Before the Registrar?

Aloy.

Before the Registrar. I don't know when the Registrar was married, but, whenever it was, we were married before him.

(Aside.)

I don't know what I'm saying!

Judge.

Well, of all the acts of audacity that have ever come under my notice—

(Suddenly.)

And what will Sir Trevor say? Great Chancellor! what will Sir Trevor say?

Aloy.

Oh, that's all right—

Judge.

All right!

Aloy.

Yes—he knows all about it, and he's delighted!

Judge.

Delighted!

Aloy.

Yes—he presents his compliments and begs me to explain that his engagement to Clarissa—

Judge *(furiously)*.

Miss Whortle!

Aloy.

To Mrs. Parfitt—was a blind.

Judge *(astounded)*.

His engagement to Clarissa a blind! House of Lords and Commons!

Aloy.

But—but that is not the worst—

Judge *(who is pacing up and down in great agitation)*.

It is! It is! There could be nothing worse! nothing!

Aloy.

As soon as we returned from the cere—from the process—a Demon appeared—

Judge *(severely)*.

It served you right, sir! What less could you expect?

Aloy.

And wrenching Cla—Mrs. Parfitt from my arms, carried her—down below!

Judge.

Down? Where?

Aloy.

It—it is impossible to say, Sir John. I can only conjecture, but I fear the worst. I have not seen Clarissa—

Judge *(furiously)*.

Miss Whortle!

Aloy.

Mrs. Parfitt—since. And I have come here as fast as a hansom would carry me to implore your pardon and beg your assistance to recover her!

Judge.

Recover her! How am I to recover her? A writ of Habeas Corpus doesn't run down there!

(Struggling with his fury.)

May a Judge's curse—

Fairy Rosebud appears through bush.

Rose.

Hold! Say not that which may not be unsaid!

Judge.

And who may you be, madam?

Rose (*to Aloysius*).

Although most stupidly your scheme is laid,
My fairy power, which once you did disdain,
Will rapidly put matters right again!

Aloy.

Miss Rosebud, I cannot sufficiently thank you for your kind promise of assistance, or my regret for the thankless and inconsiderate attitude I adopted towards you this morning. If you can by any means restore to me my bride—

Judge.

But, confound it, madam, they're married! How can you put that right? Whoever you are, you're certainly not the Judge Ordinary!

Rose (*ignoring him*).

I'm not concerned with this abrupt old man,
My duty is to thwart the Demon's plan,
And join again these two young lovers dear:
(*Waving wand.*)

Jane Collins, come! Appear! Appear! Appear!

Aloy.

But, pardon me, there's some mistake—

Judge.

Jane Collins! Nobody wants Jane Collins!

Lady Angela rises through trap. She has been interrupted at her toilet and appears standing in front of looking-glass on a small toilet table, in dressing jacket, with her hair down and brush in her hand; also a long tail of false hair. Judge and Aloysius put on their spectacles.

Lady An. (*angrily*).

What is the meaning of this most indelicate intrusion on my privacy?

(*Sees Rosebud.*)

Ah! I thought it was you. How dare you presume to bring me here before these people without waiting until I was fit to appear?

(*During this she is doing up her hair.*)

I never was submitted to such an outrage in my life—never!

(*To Aloysius and Judge.*)

I really beg your pardon, both of you, but—will you be so good as to look the other way for a moment, until I'm fit to be seen.

(*Judge and Aloysius take off their spectacles and look away.*)

Rose (*humbly*).

I'm really awfully sorry, I had no idea that—

Lady An.

No idea! No, you never have any ideas, except wrong ones!

Rose.

I really meant to do you a good turn. Don't be cross with me or I shall cry! Indeed, I had no idea you were at your toilet, or I never should have thought of bringing you here! Do give credit at least for good intentions!

Lady An. (*her mouth full of hairpins*).

I'll give you credit for being a thoroughly wrong-headed, meddling, mischievous little donkey!

Rose (*crying*).

I'm not a donkey! I'm a g—g—good Fairy.

Lady An.

You're a good-for-nothing Fairy! Why did you bring me here?

Rose (*sobbing*).

Who, to rescue you from the b—bold—b— bad—b—baronet of course; and restore you to the arms of your own true love!

Lady An.

I thought as much! Oh, you purblind little idiot!

(To Judge and Aloysius).

You can look now.

She has finished with her hair. Judge and Aloysius put on their spectacles again.

Aloy.

Let us be just to Miss Rosebud. I have no doubt that the lady was actuated by a laudable motive, but she has gravely erred. I am neither engaged nor married to Miss Collins. My wife is Cla—

(checks himself as he catches the Judge's eye)

is the daughter of Mr. Justice Whortle!

Rose.

Of Mr. Justice Whortle!

Judge.

Yes, madam, of Mr. Justice Whortle, a Judge of the High Court of Judicature. Now this comes of meddling with matters you don't understand. I trust it may be a lesson to you.

Rose.

I can't make it out! I'm quite bewildered!

Judge.

I'll make it quite clear to you, ma'am—

Lady An.

Yes, and I'll make it quite clear to you—

Judge, Lady Angela, and Aloysius all proceed to explain at once. As they all speak together, very volubly and very excitedly, nothing definite is heard.

Rose *(stopping her ears and stamping angrily).*

Will you all be quiet?

(They stop gradually, each wanting the last word.)

Alcohol! Come here!

(Demon appears through vampire in bush.)

What does all this mean? Didn't I tell you to carry off Mr. Parfitt's bride, the Hospital Nurse, and take her to Sir Trevor's flat?

Aloy.

How discreditable!

Alcohol. *(puzzled).*

Well, so I did.

(Aloysius, Lady Angela, Judge and Fairy all begin to speak to him at once. Stopping his ears.)

Will you be quiet?

(All stop gradually as before.)

Judge.

Will you be good enough to tell me—what have you done with Miss Clarissa Whortle?

Alcohol.

Miss Whortle? Don't know the lady.

Aloy.

Yes—Clarissa.

(Catches Judge's eye .)

Mrs. Parfitt. You took her from me, and I must beg you to restore her to me at once. Where is Cla—

Mrs. Parfitt?

Enter Sir Trevor with Clarissa .

Sir T.

Mrs. Parfitt is here. I found her at my flat, and brought her here without a moment's delay.

Clar.

Aloysius!

Lady An.

Trevor!

Clarissa rushes to Aloysius, Lady Angela rushes to Sir Trevor . Fairy aghast and tottering. Demon puzzled.

Aloy. (*embracing Clarissa*).

Dearest, don't fear—I'll yield you up to no man!

Rose (*to Demon*).

You've been and carried off the wrong young woman!

Fairy faints in Judge's arms. Demon stands confounded. Aloysius embraces Clarissa. Trevor embraces Lady Angela .

Scene Darkens. End of Scene 1.

SCENE 2.

Cloudland.

Demon Alcohol and Fairy Rosebud discovered .

Rose.

Well, we've made a nice mess of it between us!

Alcohol.

We've muddled it up somehow; but, frankly, Rosy, I cannot see that I'm to blame.

Rose.

Don't 'Rosy' me! You've simply capsized the entire fairy apple-cart, and what to do I don't know!

Alcohol.

My dear child, I'm extremely sorry, but I did exactly as you told me.

Rose. (*angrily*).

Did I or did I not tell you to carry off Jane Collins and take her to Sir Trevor's flat, and have you or have you not done so? I only ask that—that's all!

Alcohol.

You never said a word about Jane Collins—

Rose.

What!

Alcohol.

You merely told me to carry off the hospital nurse who was engaged to Mr. Parfitt.

Rose.

Well, suppose I did say 'hospital nurse'—that's no reason why you should carry off Clarissa Whortle, who was never in a hospital in her life!

Alcohol.

The young woman was dressed like a hospital nurse, and had just been married to Mr. Parfitt; so I took her off to the flat of the Bold Bad Baronet, just as you told me. Oh, you are hard on a Fiend, Rosy, you are indeed!

Rose.

There again—there's another mistake. He isn't a bad Baronet; he's a good Baronet, and is honourably in love with Jane Collins, and has married her like the real gentleman he is!

Alcohol.

Well you said you knew all about him. Anyway, we've made a nice mess of it between us!

Rose.

It'll be a nice mess for me if it gets about! I'm not going to be put back among the extra ladies at a pound a week, and only allowed to walk on without a word to say! There's only one way out of it. We must transport them at once to the Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation, and transform them into Harlequin, Columbine, Clown, and Pantaloon. That will get us out of the difficulty, and no questions asked.

Alcohol.

Humph! Rather rough on these poor people, isn't it?

Rose.

Oh, I never saw such a Demon as you—you're always raising conscientious difficulties! I ask you— isn't it the very greatest kindness that you can do two young people to change them into Harlequin and Columbine?

Alcohol.

It's a matter of taste. I shouldn't like it myself. And the others?

Rose.

Oh, the others must take their chance. They'll all have a good time, anyway. Now, away we go! Did you ever see the Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation—telegraphic address, 'Realms'?

Alcohol.

Never.

Rose.

Of course not. Demons are not admitted. Well, it's all Revolvers—

Alcohol. (*startled*).

What?

Rose.

Yes. I mean everything turns round—like that. It makes you giddy at first, but you soon get used to it. You shall see a photo.

(*Producing one.*)

There—it's a sweet spot.

Alcohol.

Pretty, pretty! Are these real girls?

Rose.

Yes—no expense spared. That scene cost five-and-twenty pounds, without the gas.

Alcohol.

Might I have a peep?

Rose.

Certainly not! Never heard of such a thing! Now— toddle!

Alcohol.

Ta! ta! See you later on!

(*Descends through trap.*)

Rosebud waves wand. Scene disappears. Trap half opens, and Demon slyly puts his head through. Fairy sees him, and says: 'Now that's a most ungentlemanly thing to do!' Demon disappears. By this time scene has cleared off, revealing—

GRAND TRANSFORMATION SCENE. The Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation.

Sir Trevor, Lady Angela (in her nurse's dress, Aloysius, and Judge (in full robes and full-bottomed wig), discovered, looking up stage with their backs to the audience (Sir Trevor represented by a 'double') The Fairy Rosebud goes up stage and stands on pedestal.

Rose.

Attend to me—your destinies are strange:

Prepare to undergo a startling change.

Happy young lovers who have plighted troth,

A rich and rare award attends you both.

You, Mr. Parfitt, a new life begin,

As twirling, twittering, glittering Harlequin!

Aloy.

As what? I beg your pardon, I didn't catch that remark.

Rose.

As twirling, twittering, glittering Harlequin!

Aloy.

But, pardon me, I don't know what that is.

Rose.

You'll soon learn—it's quite easy. Come, Mr. Parfitt, you must do as you're told.

She touches him with wand. His clothes fly off him, and he is changed to Harlequin, retaining his spectacles.

Aloy.

But this is most embarrassing. I beg you will return me my coat and things at once. What on earth have I got on? This is certainly not the underclothing I put on this morning.

Rose.

Now you must dance, you know.

Aloy.

But really I can't dance. It's quite out of my line.

Rose.

Then I'll give you a lesson.

Waves wand over him. Aloysius makes involuntary galvanic movements, awkwardly suggesting 'animation' business.

Rose.

You, Jane—his faithful Jane—henceforth shall shine
With him as his most loving Columbine!

Lady An.

Indeed I shall do nothing of the kind! Are you aware that you are addressing the Lady Angela Mauleverer, and that this gentleman is my husband?
(*Indicating Sir Trevor.*)

Rose.

I think you are a very obstinate young woman. Will you do as I tell you? You must—it's the game!

Aloy. (*who has been dancing very awkwardly, stops.*)

But permit me to assure you that this lady is not related to me in any way whatever. The arrangement you suggest is extremely inconvenient and unbecoming, and must prove most compromising to both of us.

Rose.

I can't go into that. Will you or will you not change into Columbine?

Lady An.

No, I will not.

Rose.

Then I shall have to resort to force. Give me my wand.

Takes wand and waves it. Lady Angela changes to Columbine.

Lady An.

Well, of all the intolerably disgraceful liberties—!

(*Becomes suddenly conscious of her ballet skirts.*)

Oh! oh!

Bends her knees so that skirts touch the ground.

Rose.

Come, dance—both of you!

Lady An.

Never! Give me back my frills directly!

Rose.

Oh dear! dear! dear!

Waves wand. Aloysius and Lady Angela dance, Aloysius galvanically as before. Lady Angela with her knees bent.

Lady An. (*dancing.*)

Oh, Mr. Parfitt—pray don't look!

Aloy. (*dancing.*)

Not for bishoprics, Lady Angela!

(*Speaking together.*)

Judge., Sir T.

But I energetically protest—

Angela, I must beg you to desist—

Rose.

And as for you, you old High Court buffoon,

Keep up that character as Pantaloon!

Judge changes to Pantaloon, his wig flying into the air. He comes down leaning on crutch-stick, and coughing.

Judge.

Deary me! it's not as great a change as I should have supposed!

(*Looking at scene.*)

Oh, what a lot of barley sugar!

Rose.

And you, Sir Trevor, wander through the town,
As merry madcap mischief-making Clown!

Sir Trevor's 'double' waltzes off stage, the real Sir Trevor (as Clown) taking his place.

Sir T.

Hallo! here we are again!

(Dancing about.)

Oh dear, I do feel so loose and careless!

(Sees Lady Angela.)

Oh, what a pretty butterfly! Catchee! catchee! catchee!

(Pursues her, then suddenly.)

Hallo!

Lady An. *(anxiously).*

What is it, dear Trevor?

Sir T. *(diving deep in his pockets).*

I've lost my Sunday farden!

Lady An.

Oh, is that all!

(relieved)

—that is quite unimportant!

(Aside.)

Excessive altruism has affected his reason!

Fairy ceases to wave wand, Sir Trevor suddenly appears as one dazed. He gradually reverts to his original demeanour.

Sir T.

Angela! What has happened? What does it all mean? Am I dreaming?

Lady An.

Alas, no! It is but too real! And oh, Trevor, how changed—how sadly changed you are!

Sir T.

But tell me what has happened?

Aloy.

Trevor, my dear old friend, we have all undergone a remarkable, and, to me, quite unaccountable, change. I am led to believe that, in my case, it is the reward of a virtuous life. If that be so, the moral that is to be drawn from it is deplorable.

Judge.

A more flagrant case of Contempt of Court I have never encountered. I have had experience of many cases of contempt of the Court over which I preside, but never anything to equal this!

Sir T. *(to Rosebud).*

Madam, you have presumed to take a series of unwarrantable and most unbecoming liberties with my lady and myself. You have, moreover, dared to interfere in a most discreditable manner with my friend, Mr. Parfitt, and with his father-in-law, Sir John Whortle. (Oblige me by bending your knees, my dear Angela.) I desire to give you notice that I shall at once place the matter in the hands of my solicitor!

Rose.

In the whole course of my experience I've never had to do with such an obstinate troupe of pantomimists. But you're quite helpless—I shall never be very far off, and whenever I wave my wand you'll be obliged to play the game! Now begin!

Waves wand. Pantomime rally, Sir Trevor and the Judge doing the 'business' like old hands.

Aloysius dancing automatically and Lady Angela dancing as gracefully as is consistent with extreme propriety. Sir Trevor and Judge 'give the slap.' All four form ring and dance round. Aloysius and Lady Angela dance off, Sir Trevor, on Judge's back off.

Scene Closes.

Scene 2.

—*Pastrycook's Shop and Cheesemonger's.*

Enter Lady Angela and Aloysius (as Harlequin and Columbine) very depressed.

Lady An.

This is a most embarrassing state of things, Mr. Parfitt.

Aloy.

Terrible, Lady Angela, terrible! And so entirely unforeseen. Leaving my parish at a moment's notice will, I fear, involve a most angry interview with my churchwardens. And what explanation can I give? I can't imagine what has happened!

Lady An.

Oh, I know what has happened well enough! That meddlesome fairy has taken the liberty of changing us into Harlequin and Columbine.

Aloy. (*puzzled*).

Harlequin and Columbine?

Lady An.

Yes. I've often seen it happen to other people at Christmas time, but I never, never thought it would happen to me.

Aloy.

I beg your pardon—it's extremely stupid of me—but I cannot quite remember—am I a Harlebine or a Columquin?

Lady An.

Neither—you're a Harlequin, and a very bad one.

Aloy.

Oh, I'm extremely sorry, Lady Angela, to appear to be so uninstructed upon a point of knowledge that seems to be so generally understood, but what, exactly, are the duties of a Harlequin?

Lady An.

Well, you'll have to dance polkas and hornpipes about the streets with me.

Aloy.

In the mud—and in all weathers?

Lady An.

Certainly.

Aloy.

I shall require my goloshes.

Lady An.

Then you'll have to change things.

Aloy. (*eagerly, alluding to his clothes*).

Shall I be permitted to change these things?

Lady An.

No, no. You'll have to change things into other things. For instance, a man comes along in a fifteen hundred pound motor-car with 'FISCAL POLICY' on it. You slap the car with your bat, and it changes into a costermonger's barrow labelled 'FREE FOOD FOR EVERYBODY.'

Aloy.

But that is not at all in accordance with my political views!

Lady An.

Then you'll have to jump through people's windows into their houses.

Aloy.

I? Never! No consideration shall ever induce me to take such a liberty! It would be a most unpardonable intrusion upon the domestic privacy of an absolute stranger. Nothing could excuse it. Ah, here at last is Sir Trevor in his new uniform. I am given to understand that these constant changes are very expensive to young officers.

Enter Sir Trevor as Clown.

Sir T.

Angela! at last we meet!

Lady An. (*rushing to his arms*).

Trevor—my beloved husband—where in the world have you been?

Sir T.

At the Law Courts, making butter-slides for the Lords Justices, while the learned Judge bonneted the jurymen-in-waiting. The Fairy was present all the time, and we had to conduct ourselves in a manner which was an absolute outrage on the most rudimentary sense of decency!

Lady An.

My poor high-minded darling!

Sir T.

But whom have you with you? Not Aloysius? My dear fellow, I'm delighted to see you!

Aloy.

Yes, Trevor, I am that most misplaced man!

Lady An.

He has been so good to me—so noble! He has always looked the other way!

Sir T. (*much affected*).

My dear friend!

(*Grasps his hand.*)

Aloy.

Tell me, Trevor, have you seen my Clarissa?

Sir T.

Not recently, but here comes the learned Judge, her father. He may give you news of her.

Enter Judge as Pantaloon.

Aloy.

Sir John, if you will permit one who has but little claim on your tolerance to express his profound sympathy with you in the painful degradation to which you have been submitted—

Judge.

Not a word, sir! You have robbed an elderly gentleman of his daughter!

Aloy.

But she loved me so tenderly, and you would have wedded her to one with whom she would have been utterly miserable.

(*Recollects that Sir Trevor is present.*)

Oh! I—I beg your pardon—

Sir T.

Not at all. I should have made a most unsuitable husband for Miss Whortle, whereas with Angela—

Enter Fairy Rosebud.

Rose.

Oh, here you are, all of you! I've been looking for you everywhere. Now, this loafing won't do.

Come, get to work! Jane Collins (*addressing Lady Angela*), leave Sir Trevor and rejoin Mr. Parfitt.

Lady An.

But Sir Trevor is my husband—

Rose.

Not a word! I'm really surprised at you! A Columbine leaving her Harlequin to hug a Clown! Such a thing was never heard of before!

(*Lady Angela sadly rejoins Aloysius.*)

Now, begin and enjoy yourselves at once! No nonsense! Come!

Waves wand. They resume their pantomimic characters. Music. Angela and Aloysius dancing together as before. Sir Trevor and Judge go to cheesemonger's shop, lick butter and steal string of sausages. Business of both trying to cram sausages into their pockets, each beginning at opposite ends. Aloysius slaps Sir Trevor on back with wand, and then dances off with Lady Angela. Sir Trevor thinks blow was inflicted by Judge, and gives him the 'slap.' Judge falls backwards. Sir Trevor picks him up by his breeches.

Enter Pastrycook from shop, with large placard—'Wanted a handy young man.' Displays it to audience and places it against shop-front. Re-enters shop.

Sir T.

Oh, he wants a handy young man! I'll apply for the situation!

Judge.

Yes, yes, Joey—go and try—there's a good boy!

Sir Trevor slaps three times on door post, then lies across doorway. Pastrycook comes out and tumbles over him.

Sir T. *(with his hand on his heart).*

Oh, I beg yer parsnips!

Pastrycook very angry, and expresses his feelings in gesture. Sir Trevor takes him confidentially by the arm.

Sir T.

I say, do you want a handy young man?

Pastrycook's anger vanishes, and he expresses that he does.

Sir T.

Then I'm the chap for you! Tuppence a month, paid the year before next, and find my own motor-car!

Pastrycook is pleased with the suggested terms, takes off his apron, and puts it on to Sir Trevor, then exit into shop. Apron much too long. Sir Trevor stumbles over it half-a-dozen times. During this Judge has cautiously crept into Pastrycook's shop, and stolen a tray of sausage rolls.

Judge.

Look here, Joey! See what I've found!

Sir T.

Oh, what bee-youtiful sausage rolls! Let's sit down, and I'll divide 'em.

Judge.

Fairly, Joey, fairly!

Sir T.

Oh, upon my honour!

(Placing his hand on his heart.)

They sit side by side on stage facing audience. Judge R.C. Sir Trevor L.C.

Sir T.

Now, there's one for you, and there's one for me—

Gives sausage roll to Judge, who places it on his R. Sir Trevor places his sausage roll on his L.

Sir T. *(taking another).*

And there's one for you, and there's one for me—

Takes first sausage roll from R. of Judge, behind his back, and gives it to him again. Judge supposes it to be a second sausage roll, and again places it on his R., Sir Trevor placing another sausage roll on his own L. This business is repeated three or four times, until Sir Trevor has four or five sausage rolls, while Judge has only one. Eventually Judge detects the cheat.

Judge.

Now I saw you do it that time. You ain't playing fair, Joey!

Sir T.

What! not playing fair?

Judge.

No. I've only got one!

Sir T.

Then there's another.

Slaps him. He falls over backwards.

Judge.

I won't stand it! I'll go and fetch a Policeman!

Exit Judge.

Sir Trevor begins to eat sausage rolls. Loud 'miaw' heard as he puts it to his mouth. Tries again: another 'miaw' heard. Tries a third time. Loud 'miaws' heard from all directions as a large number of profile cats appear everywhere. Sir Trevor throws down sausage roll disgusted, saying, 'Why, it's cold pussy-cat!'

Policeman enters.

Sir T. *(simply).*

Oh! how-de-do, Mister Po-liceman?

(Showing rolls.)

See what I've found!

Police.

Found, eh? That won't do, you know! Here, come along with me. I know yer!
Collars him.

Sir T. (*howling*).

Oh, don't take me away to prison, Mister Po-liceman! Think of my par and my mar!

Police.

I'll par and mar you! Come along!

Sir T.

Oh, he's going to par and mar me!
(*suddenly, and with great excitement*).
Oh, oh!

Police.

What's the matter now?

Sir T. (*pointing to the sky*).

Bal-loon! Bal-loon!

Police. (*much interested*).

Where? Where?

Takes his hand off Sir Trevor's collar, and shading his eyes with it, gazes upwards.

Sir T.

There!

Bonnets Policeman and smashes Pastrycook's tray on his head. Policeman calls for help and runs off stage with long strides. Sir Trevor convulsed with laughter. Fairy Rosebud, who has been on and off during the scene, exits. Sir Trevor at once resumes his original individuality.

Sir T. (*as if awaking from a trance*).

What have I been doing? What detestable acts of unbridled profligacy have I been committing? I, a Colonel of Household Cavalry, a Baronet of the United Kingdom, a Deputy-Lieutenant for half-a-dozen counties, a landed proprietor, and Chairman of Quarter Sessions! Surely, I so far forgot my manhood as to strike an aged man—and that aged man, a Judge of the High Court!

Enter Judge, as Pantaloon. He is very angry.

Judge.

You did, sir, and you did much more. You have been guilty, sir, of an act of common dishonesty, which should exclude you from the society of gentlemen for the term of your natural life.

Sir T. (*haughtily*).

Sir John, you can scarcely be aware of the full import of your words. I must request you to be so good as to justify them, or withdraw them without qualification.

Judge.

I will justify them, sir, and very briefly. A few sausage rolls are but a small matter in themselves, but even in small matters a gentleman does not resort to trickery and deception. I trusted you, sir!

Sir T.

Sir John, you must be aware that, under the singular influences by which we are controlled, I, like yourself, am but the sport and toy of circumstances. I deplore the distressing necessity which compels me to commit acts which revolt my sense of what is due to yourself as a Judge of the High Court, and to myself as a gentleman of hitherto untarnished honour. But when that Judge of the High Court has himself been guilty of the indiscretion of deliberately abstracting a tray of pastry from a confectioner's shop, I feel that I am entitled to expect that he will, at least, place a charitable construction upon acts which, under that supernatural control, I find myself compelled to commit.

Judge (*horrificed*).

Did I do that? God bless my soul, I believe I did! But, Sir Trevor, to constitute a criminal offence, the animus furandi must be proved, or reasonably presumed. In the absence of the mens rea the case comes under neither statute nor common law. I can lay my hand upon my heart and proudly say that, to all intents and purposes, I am innocent of this larceny!

(*Much agitated.*)

Sir T.

Judge, I believe you.

(Grasping his hand.)

We are two most unhappy and most deeply injured men whom an unholy influence compels to commit outrages from which our manhood recoils.

(Fairy enters and listens.)

For instance, I perceive a nursemaid approaching wheeling a double perambulator, and accompanied by a Corporal Major of my own regiment of Household Cavalry. Conceive my distress when I tell you that I instinctively feel that it will be my painful duty to trip up that Corporal Major, and rob the poor girl of her hat, boa, and other cheap finery, while you sit upon the perambulator, and squash her helpless innocents!

Judge *(horrificed).*

No, no! I am a father—I cannot do it—I cannot do it!

Fairy waves her wand; they resume their pantomimic characters.

Sir T.

Oh, here's such a lover-ly gal! Oh, nicey-spicey! Nyum, nyum, nyum!

Judge.

Yes, she's a beauty, Joey—she's a beauty!

Sir Trevor takes a pound of butter from cheesemonger's shop, and makes butter-slide. Enter nursemaid with perambulator with life-guardsman as described. Soldier slips down on butter-slide, and makes ineffectual attempts to get up. Nursemaid proceeds, not having noticed what happened. Sir Trevor goes up to nurse saying, 'I loves yer to substraction!' Steals her hat, feather boa, and parasol, and puts them on. Judge sits on perambulator, and children squeal. Nurse runs off screaming. Sir Trevor pushes perambulator off, walking affectedly like a woman. Soldier by this time has got up, and taking Sir Trevor for nursemaid, walks alongside, flirting.

Fairy remains, leaning on wand, and looking regretfully after them.

Rose.

Poor fellows! I'm really sorry for them! A truer, stauncher English gentleman than Sir Trevor doesn't exist, and it's really sad to see him reduced to the condition of a dishonest street buffoon! And his bride—a noble lady of exalted rank as it appears—doomed to dance through life in the society and companionship of a gentleman who, worthy though he be, is nevertheless little more than a casual acquaintance! I've been very stupid over this, and I begin to think I've mistaken my profession.

Demon Alcohol appears through scene.

Alcohol.

Why, Rosy, you seem out of sorts. What's wrong?

Rose.

Well, the fact is I'm not at all comfortable. These poor people whom I've transformed—highly respectable, all of good social position, and much looked up to in their respective capacities—and we've taken this monstrous liberty with them just to save our faces, and avoid confessing that we've made donkeys of ourselves!

Alcohol.

Ye—es. I always thought it rather an unhandsome thing to do.

Rose.

What, really?

Alcohol.

Yes. It was a shifty way out of the difficulty, and I hate anything underhanded.

Rose.

Do you? Upon my word, you're rather a dear!

Alcohol.

The fact is I'm not in love with my profession, and I'm thinking of retiring from business and selling the stock, fixtures, and goodwill at a valuation.

Rose.

Are you? Well, now, if you did that —

(Coyly.)

Alcohol. *(sitting by her on front of shop).*

Yes, if I did that?

Rose.

And never got tipsy any more—

Alcohol.

Eh? Oh, well, yes—

Rose.

And went through a course of waters to improve your complexion—

Alcohol.

I see. Marienbad.

Rose.

Well, I don't know but that I should be disposed to say

(very bashfully)

'yes,' if we could only find a clergyman who would consent to perform the ceremony! Don't! You do squeeze so, I never did!

Alcohol.

You would! Oh, Rosy, Rosy, Rosy, what a cosy little Rosy-posy you are! As for a clergyman, there's Mr. Parfitt! He'd do it.

Rose.

I don't know—I'm not so sure about that, and I fancy he's just a teeny weeny wee bit vexed with me for changing him into Harlequin. People are very ungrateful. However, we can but ask him; he's now at the Vicarage trying to jump through the portrait of his great aunt, for practice. We'll go and speak to him at once.

Scene Darkens.

SCENE THE LAST.

The Vicarage, as in Act I.

Sir Trevor, Judge, Aloysius, and Lady Angela, discovered in their pantomime characters, all in very low spirits. Judge smoking cigar. Sir Trevor lighting cigarette. Lady Angela at Sir Trevor's feet. Aloysius at harmonium, playing 'The Lost Chord.'

Lady An.

Thank you, Mr. Parfitt, you play charmingly; your musical gifts will help to make the time pass during our enforced seclusion.

Aloy.

There is but one course open to us, Lady Angela—to confine ourselves strictly within the four walls of the Vicarage, and to deny ourselves to all comers while this embarrassing state of things continues. Mrs. Crumble, my housekeeper, to whom I have explained everything, is discretion itself, and no one will know anything about our most painful, and, to me, quite unaccountable adventures.

Judge.

Mr. Parfitt, you have acted with timely discretion. It is most important that the discreditable events with which we have been associated should be kept strictly to our four selves.

Sir T.

Most certainly. No one else must ever know.

Judge.

Except, of course, Clarissa. I see Clarissa coming; we must necessarily take her into our confidence, and in acknowledgment of the services you have rendered me, Mr. Parfitt, I withdraw my opposition to your union, and congratulate you both on having acquired each other.

Enter Clarissa with The Times in her hand. She rushes to Aloysius.

Clar.

Aloysius—my own!

Aloy.

Clarissa—I mean, Mrs. Parfitt—

Judge.

No, no—

(with an effort)

—you may call her Clarissa now!

Aloy.

May I? Oh, thank you, Sir John! Clarissa, dearest girl, at last we meet!

Judge (*overcome*).

Bless you, my children! bless you!

Clar.

Oh, papa, how odd you look in that dress! And Aloysius, how strange to see you thus!

Aloy.

Dearest Clarissa, I will explain all.

Clar.

It is unnecessary. I know everything.

All.

What!!!

Clar.

Everybody knows—it's all over the town! Here's a favourable notice, a column and a half long, in—of all papers— *The Times* !

Judge.

Ruined! Ruined!

Sir T.

A favourable notice in *The Times* ? Let me see it.

Takes paper and opens it hurriedly.

All.

Read it! Read it!

Sir T. (*reads*).

'Thereupon the Fairy Rosebud transported all the principal characters to the Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation (a scene inspired, no doubt, by the Horatian description of the Groves of the Platonic Academeia), and there effected a transformation, clearly suggested by the First and Second Essences of the Categories of Aristotle. Lady Angela became a graceful and singularly modest Columbine, whose movements were widely differentiated from the Dithyrambic Bacchanalia of the Attic-Ionic race—'

Lady An.

Yes! I should think so!

Sir T. (*continuing*).

'Mr. Parfitt will, perhaps, with a little practice, develop into an agile Harlequin.'

Aloy.

Yes. I was getting on nicely.

Judge (*taking the paper from Sir Trevor*).

'While Sir Trevor's Clown, which recalled the pantomimic triumphs of Pylades and Bathyllus—'

Sir T. (*taking the paper from Judge*).

'Was ably supported by Mr. Justice Whortle's Pantaloon, a marvellous picture of senile infamy, having but little in common with the Ciceronic conception of dignified old age.'

Judge.

Ruined! My instant removal from the Bench will be peremptorily demanded by both Houses of Parliament!

Aloy.

The Bishop and all my parishioners! How shall I explain it all to them?

Lady An.

My father the Marquis! It will break even his stony old heart!

Sir T.

And I shall be tried by Court-martial for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman!

Wall opens. Fairy Rosebud appears in plain clothes. All the characters at once begin to act pantomimically. Lady Angela dancing, Aloysius endeavouring to jump through his great aunt's portrait. Sir Trevor taking red-hot poker out of fire and burning Judge, who runs off. He is replaced by a 'double,' who enters immediately.

Rose.

Stop!

(*All stop.*)

It's not necessary to do that.

(They resume their original characters.)

I—I have come to make an interesting announcement. I—I have got a young man!

Sir T.

It is nothing to us, madam. It is no concern of ours.

Rose.

Now don't be so cross when I'm so happy!

(Goes to wing.)

Come in, George—don't be shy!

Demon Alcohol enters very bashfully in plain clothes, his head somewhat humanized by absence of horns and his wearing a smooth black wig. His complexion is improved, and he has an air of having done his best to look respectable.

Rose *(coily).*

This is my young man!

(Aside to Demon Alcohol .)

Buck up, George, it's all right—they can't eat you!

(To Aloysius .)

We're going to be married, and we want you to perform the ceremony!

Aloy.

Impossible! On no consideration whatever!

Lady An.

I should think not indeed!

Rose *(disappointed).*

Oh, Mr. Parfitt, you are ungrateful! Such a beautiful Harlequin as I made you!

Aloy.

I decline altogether to have any dealings with persons of your description!

Judge.

Quite out of the question!

Rose.

But please we've both decided to retire from business as soon as we can make the necessary arrangements—haven't we, George?

Alcohol. *(civilly).*

Yes, sir. I'm thinking of buying a snug little concern in the firework line.

Rose.

Yes. And I'm going into the typewriting!

Aloy.

Well, in that case, and if you really mean to abandon your present discreditable calling, I consent on condition that, before the ceremony is performed, you restore us all to our original individualities.

Judge.

Mind, all.

Sir T.

All.

Lady An.

All.

Rose.

All!

She waves her wand. Scene darkens for a moment. When the lights are turned up Sir Trevor, Lady Angela, Aloysius, and Judge have been changed back to their original characters— Sir Trevor, Lady Angela, and Aloysius by means of 'doubles,' Judge (who left stage at Fairy's entrance) appearing 'in propria persona.' Fairy and Demon kneel. Judge on a chair standing over them and blessing them. Aloysius embracing Clarissa, and Sir Trevor embracing Lady Angela .