

# ON BAIL.

A FARCICAL COMEDY,

IN THREE ACTS.

ADAPTED FROM "LE REVEILLON"

BY

## W. S. GILBERT

AUTHOR OF

*Dulcamara or the Little Duck and the Great Quack; Allow me to Explain; Highly Improbable; Harlequin Cock Robin and Jenny Wren; La Vivandière, or True to the Corps; The Merry Zingara, or the Topsy Gipsy and the Pipsy Wipsy; No Cards (German Reed's); Robert the Devil, or the Nun, the Dun, and the Son of a Gun; The Pretty Druidess, or the Mother, the Maid, and the Mistletoe Bough; An Old Score; Ages Ago (German Reed's); The Princess, a Whimsical Allegory; The Gentleman in Black; Our Island Home (German Reed's); A Sensation Novel in Three Volumes (German Reed's); Randall's Thumb; Creatures of Impulse; Great Expectations; Palace of Truth; Pygmalion and Galatea; Thespis, or the Gods Grown Old; The Wicked World; Dan'l Druce, &c., &c.*

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## Dramatis Personæ.

Mr. Jonathan Lovibond.....	Mr. CHAS. WYNDHAM
Alfred Trimble ( <i>Leader of the Band</i> ).....	Mr. E. RIGHTON
Mr. Marcooly ( <i>Governor of County Jail</i> ).....	Mr. J. CLARKE
Wilcox ( <i>Sergeant of Police</i> ).....	Mr. J. FRANCIS
Hebblethwaite ( <i>Manager of the ----- Theatre</i> ) .....	Mr. ASHLEY
Portiboy ( <i>a Barrister</i> ) .....	Mr. C. TRITTON
Joseph ( <i>a Servant</i> ).....	Mr. SEACOMBE
Jackson ( <i>a Property Man</i> ) .....	Mr. H. RIDLEY
The Duke of Darlington ( <i>a Patron of the Drama</i> ) .....	.....
	Miss FANNY JOSEPHS
Fanny Lovibond .....	Miss EASTLAKE
Miss Montmorenci.....	Miss THOMPSON
Miss De Courcy .....	.....
Miss Fitzbattleaxe .....	Miss HOLME
Miss De Vere.....	Miss SPENCER
Mrs. Hebblethwaite.....	Miss NAUDAINE
Perkins ( <i>Mrs Lovibond's Maid</i> ) .....	Miss NELLIE BROMLEY
	Miss EDITH BRUCE

ACT I. –ROOM IN LOVIBOND'S HOUSE  
ACT II. – GREEN ROOM IN -----THEATRE.  
ACT II. – JAILER'S ROOM, COUNTY PRISON.

# ON BAIL.

## ACT I.

SCENE. – LOVIBOND'S sitting-room; sofa, L., table, R.C., window, U. E. L., small sideboard at back, dressing gown and smoking cap on chair, L. of R. table. Bell on table. As the curtain rises a violin is heard without. Enter PERKINS, R.H., with open letter in her hand.

PER. Dickens take the fiddler, what a noise he does make. (*looks out of window, L.*) Where on earth is he? I hear him but I don't see him. (*referring to letter*) Let me see, he will be at the old place at the old time, and he's dying to press me to his heart. The darling! (*kisses the letter*) Now, what excuse can I make to get out to him. Now, let me see, what can I say? (*elaborate flourish on violin*) Who can think while that abominable noise is going on? (*goes to window*) Here's a penny for you, drat you, and do for gracious sake go and worry somebody else.

*Enter FANNY, in great agitation, C.*

FAN. It must be he; nobody else can play like that. Besides, he's playing his own variations on the air; who should know it as I know it? What on earth does he want with me after all these years?

PER. If you please, ma'am, I've just had a letter from my aunt, who is very bad with lumbago, and wants her back rubbed.

FAN. (*not attending to her*) After four years! Why, I thought he had forgotten me by this time. I'm sure I had forgotten *him*.

PER. If you please, ma'am, she's been awake three blessed nights, and won't get a wink till her back's rubbed.

FAN. (*not attending to her*) Gracious goodness! Can he have come to show my letters to my husband – the letters in which I promised I would marry him?

PER. And, if you please, there's nobody in the house but the landlord.

FAN. (*not attending to her*) Then let him do it!

PER. (*shocked*) Ma'am, my aunt would rather die!

FAN. (*rises*) After all, what does it matter? There is nothing to be ashamed of. (*crosses to L.*)

PER. Well, ma'am, I'm surprised at you – I am indeed!

FAN. (*conscious at last of PERKINS'S presence*) What are you talking about?

PER. My aunt, ma'am, she's bad with the lumbago, and may I go and rub her back?

FAN. No, certainly not!

PER. Oh, please, ma'am –

FAN. I tell you you can't go; I want you. Leave the room.

PER. Well, ma'am, you needn't be cross with *me*. It isn't *my* fault if master's been took up by the police for assaulting a ticket collector on the Underground Railway.

Leave the room indeed! (*bounces out, R.H. door*)

*The violin, which has been heard at intervals during this conversation, is silent.*

FAN. Thanks goodness, he's gone at last! Oh, I must have been mistaken; but the coincidence was most remarkable.

ALFRED *appears at door, C., with his violin in his hand.*

FAN. Alfred! Then it *was* you!

ALF. Aye, false girl, it was indeed I! I told you I would haunt you to your dying day, and by George, I will!

FAN. How dare you come here? If my husband knew of it –

ALF. Your husband! Oblige me, if you please, by not mentioning my name in connection with that of a common felon.

FAN. Sir!

ALF. A miscreant who is at this very moment in the clutch of the outraged justice of this country – a reckless, lawless, reprobate, who has dared to defy the blameless by-laws of a great railway company.

FAN. Oh, no! no! no! he is far, very far, from being what you say. It is true that he should not have knocked down the ticket-collector, but the man had been very insolent to him, and Jonathan lost his temper. He is sure to be acquitted when the circumstances are explained.

ALF. And that ticket collector was an orphan!

FAN. Pray go, he may return at any moment, and if he finds you here he will be betrayed into another act of violence.

ALF. Well, I will go, on one condition.

FAN. Name it; make haste.

ALF. It is this: if he is convicted, as I humbly trust he may be, you will allow me to return, that I may explain at length my motive in calling on you.

FAN. Oh, no, no, no! On no account; it is quite out of the question.

ALF. Then here I remain. (*sits L. of R. table*)

FAN. But if he should come?

ALF. Let him come. I will face him as man should face man.

FAN. But he is a man of most violent disposition, and when he is roused –

ALF. I am just in the humour to rouse a violent disposition. But mark me, if he *should* come, I will widow you.

FAN. But he is sure to be acquitted.

ALF. Is he? Ha, ha!

FAN. Why, the magistrate is my own cousin Tom; he dines with us every Sunday. You don't suppose he would convict my husband?

ALF. Oh, if that is the case and if you think he is quite sure to be acquitted, I cheerfully admit that it makes a difference. But mark my words, false girl; if by any chance he *should* be convicted, why, as soon as I have fully satisfied myself that he is securely shackled within his dungeon walls, I will fearlessly return! Farewell! (*Exit, C.*)

FAN. But he can't be convicted – it's out of the question! Why, Cousin Tom is the dearest fellow in the world, and besides he owes Jonathan ever so much money! Oh, it's impossible! (*knock*) There he is! I knew it, I was sure of it!

*Enter LOVIBOND, C., from L., followed by PORTIBOY, his counsel. LOVIBOND is much agitated.*

FAN. My darling, I am so glad to see you back again.

LOV. Thank you, my love, thank you! (*to PORTIBOY*) Portiboy, I'm very much obliged to you for seeing me home. I – I feel it very much.

*He presses PORTIBOY's hand gratefully and sinks into a chair, L. of R. table.*

FAN. (L. C.) Now tell me all about it; how did it end?

LOV. It – it has ended.

FAN. Not ended? How is that?

LOV. Another time – another time, my love.

FAN. Oh, Mr. Portiboy, is he acquitted?

POR. (C.) Well, no, Mrs. Lovibond, I am sorry to say he is not exactly what you may call acquitted. In fact, he is committed for trial.

FAN. Committed for trial!

POR. Yes, at the sessions, which most fortunately sit tomorrow. It wasn't my fault, I did all I could for him, but he would take the case into his own hands, chaffed the Bench, called it "Tommy," and the consequence is that he's committed. He's out on bail, but he has to surrender to-morrow morning.

FAN. But what in the world will they do to him?

POR. Oh, not much; a week or two at the outside, perhaps not so much. We'll hope for the best. He seemed very depressed about it, so I thought I'd see him home. I shall appear for his defence in the morning, and you may be sure I'll do my best for him. Good evening, Mrs. Lovibond. (*Exit PORTIBOY, C. L.*)

FAN. (*in tears, crossing and kneeling to him*) Oh, Jonathan! Jonathan, to think of your picking oakum in a prison dress, and without your moustache!

LOV. It's a sickening prospect.

FAN. At what o'clock to-morrow must you give yourself up?

LOV. At nine o'clock, at the new prison.

FAN. At nine? Then you'll have to go by the eight o'clock train.

LOV. Yes, by the eight train. I've only come back to say good-bye, and to change my clothes.

FAN. What do you want to change your clothes for?

LOV. Why, you wouldn't have me take my place on the treadmill in the garb of a gentleman? No, I will wear the oldest of rags I can find.

FAN. (*weeping*) There's the old coat you use for gardening, and the trousers you wore when you fell in the duck-pond.

LOV. Are they very bad?

FAN. They'd disgrace a beggar.

LOV. Then they'll do. What have you got to eat?

FAN. Soup, fried sole, galantine, cold pheasant, and roly-poly pudding.

LOV. I'll have 'em all. I'll have one good meal before I surrender; who – who shall say when I shall get another?

FAN. (*rises*) But how came dear Cousin Tom to commit you?

LOV. (*rises*) Dear Cousin Tom! (*calming himself with difficulty*) As I was going to the police-court this morning, I met dear Cousin Tom in the train.

FAN. Yes; and what did he say?

LOV. Say! He said, "My dear Jonathan, you are the very man I wanted to see. You don't happen to have such a thing as a five-pound note about you?"

FAN. (L. C.) What, again?

LOV. (R. C.) Yes, again. Well, I lent him a fiver, and we parted. I didn't say anything about the charge against me, for I treated it as a trifle, and besides I wanted to enjoy his surprise when he saw me placed in the dock. Well, in the course of the afternoon I *was* placed in the dock, and, "Hullo, Tommy," said I, "here we are again" – like a clown, you know.

FAN. Yes; and what did he say?

LOV. He said, "I am extremely sorry to see a person of your apparent respectability in so disgraceful a situation." He then asked me my name. Well, I thought he was joking, so I smiled pleasantly. "If you don't give me your name," said he, "I'll commit you for contempt." "Name be hanged," said I; "a joke's a joke." "Justice never jokes," said he; "I insist upon knowing your name." "Oh, very good," said I, pulling out half a dozen of his I.O.U.'s, "if you really want to know my name, you'll find it on these." Will you believe that he actually committed me for trial?

FAN. The I.O.U.'s did it; you shouldn't have produced them in court! Did he return them to you?

LOV. No, he did not; he said that in the interests of justice he should detain them until I had worked out my sentence.

FAN. (*going, R. door*) Jonathan – that man shall never, never dine with us again.

(*Exit FANNY, R. door*)

LOV. Never, oh, never! Yes, once; I know an avenging sherry at one-and-nine, so hot, so strong that he who drinks thereof may never smile again!

*Enter HEBBLETHWAITE, C., in high spirits; he has a newspaper in his hand.*

HEB. How are you, my dear boy? I'm delighted to find you alone. (*comes down, L. C.*)

LOV. (*seated L. of R. table*) Sit down. (*HEBBLETHWAITE sits on sofa, L. C.*) You've heard the news?

HEB. Yes, you've got an edition of the evening paper all to yourself – I congratulate you.

LOV. What do you mean?

HEB. You'll see presently. I've a little supper to-night at my theatre; the Duke of Darlington and I give it together in the green-room after the performance; only half a dozen of us – my wife, Miss De Courcy, Miss Montmorenci, Miss Fitzbattleaxe – and the ladies all begged me to invite you. Now, what do you say?

LOV. Hebblethwaite, you're a third rate provincial manager and a twenty-fifth rate provincial low comedian, and consequently not a man from whom much delicacy of perception is to be expected, but I think even you might understand that there are situations which should be sacred from the ribaldry of the professional buffoon.

HEB. I don't think I quite follow you.

LOV. When an unfortunate poor devil is on the eve of surrendering his body to the

hands of justice, it is not delicate to tantalize him with an invitation to such a supper party as you have just descried. I'm surprised at you – surprised and hurt.

HEB. My dear boy, that's just the point of it. (*rises, and goes to LOVIBOND*) Suppose you hadn't got to surrender to you bail to-morrow, and I had invited you to a cozy supper at the theatre to-night, what would your wife have said?

LOV. My wife's knowledge of human nature would have prompted her to say, "Jonathan, you don't go."

HEB. Exactly; but as it is, all you have to do is to say, "My pet," or "my poppet" – I forget which expression you generally use –

LOV. Well, I say "pet" before strangers, and "poppet" when we are alone.

HEB. Very delicate! Very well, then you say, "My poppet, I told you I must surrender at nine o'clock to-morrow. It was a mistake. I should have said nine o'clock to-night." Off you go, and instead of going to the Sessions House –

LOV. (*rising*) I join you at the theatre. I see what you mean; it's ingenious, but I can't do it. I shouldn't be in spirits. With the prospect of a prison before one's eyes it's impossible to be jolly.

HEB. Bother your prison! Besides, I'll make that all right. Marcooly, the new Governor of the jail, is a great chum of mine. I'll speak to him, and he'll make it easy for you. Marcooly is a very good fellow; you'll be delighted with him; you and he will have many a cozy evening together in your cell, I'll be bound. He's as fond of a joke as you are. Do you remember the practical joke you played off on me four years ago?

LOV. What, the white cockatoo?

HEB. Yes, the white Cockatoo.

LOV. It wasn't bad.

HEB. Not bad for you, very bad for me. My wife was furious. However, never mind that now; the question is, will you come?

LOV. I shall like to, above all things. Who do you say gives the supper with you?

HEB. The Duke of Darlington.

LOV. Oho, the Duke, eh? And will he be there?

HEB. To be sure he will.

LOV. The Duke, eh? Dear me! Ah, well, I'm a Radical – hang your dukes! Who else?

HEB. Miss Montmorenci, Miss De Courcy, Miss –

LOV. (*shaking his hand*) Hebblethwaite, I'll do it! But, I say, it's rather awkward, this affair being in the evening paper. I shouldn't like your ladies to identify me as the man who's committed for trial. Don't you think I'd better assume a name for the occasion!

HEB. (*aside*) He's rising to it. (*aloud*) Certainly; I strongly approve of the suggestion. Fix on your name, and let me know what it is as soon as you arrive.

LOV. Good! I've just time to dress and catch the last train.

HEB. Have you dined?

LOV. No, I won't dine, I'll sup instead. Ha, ha! We'll keep it up, Hebblethwaite.

HEB. We will.

LOV. The last night of my liberty shall be a jolly one.

HEB. It shall.

LOV. (*sings*) For you shall dance and I will sing  
And merrily pass the day.

(*both*) For I hold it is the wisest thing  
To drive dull care away.

*They dance wildly about the stage; FANNY enters, C., unseen by them, with a very ragged suit of clothes on her arm; as soon as they become aware of her presence they stop abruptly and appear confused.*

FAN. (C., *surprised*) Jonathan! Mr. Hebblethwaite!

LOV. (R.) Oh, I beg your pardon, my dear, but Hebblethwaite, having read about my unfortunate case in the evening paper – in the evening paper, I say – having read of it – where’s the evening paper? (*finds it on the table, R.*) Here it is, you see! Well, having heard of it, he came like a good fellow to – to –

FAN. (C.) Yes?

HEB. (L.) To comfort him – to condole with him – and generally to do what I could to raise his spirits.

FAN. You seem to have succeeded. (*crossing, L., and putting clothes on the sofa and sits there.*)

HEB. I am glad to think that I have, ma’am. He is better – he – he is calmer, (*aside*) I think I’d better go. (*aloud*) Good evening, ma’am!

FAN. Good evening – thank you so much!

HEB. Not at all – not at all – don’t mention it. He’s better now – much better; as you came in just now – he was saying – just now – thank you! Good evening.

*Backs towards C. door; when he reaches it he digs LOVIBOND in the ribs, who returns it.*

*FANNY looks round unexpectedly and sees them, LOVIBOND is suddenly sobered, and comes down with a dismal expression as HEBBLETHWAITE goes off, C.*

FAN. Jonathan, what does this mean? You are on the point of leaving me for a prison, and you have the heart to dance and hum as if you were the happiest man in the world.

LOV. Humming! Was I humming? I believe you’re right. I was. Well, my dear, I am innocent, and why should I be downhearted? The guilty despair – the innocent hum! (*sits by her side on sofa, and see old clothes*) Hallo, what the deuce have you got there?

FAN. The old clothes you are going to wear in prison. Will you put them on now?

LOV. The old clothes? Oh, yes, to be sure. (*examines them*) Dear me, they *are* bad, aren’t they?

FAN. Bad, no doubt; but as you said very justly, anything is good enough to pick oakum in.

LOV. No doubt; but I’ve been thinking the matter over, and I’ve come to the conclusion that perhaps on the whole it would be better *not* to wear those clothes. The fact is I don’t think they’d like it.

FAN. Who? The other prisoners?

LOV. Yes, the other prisoners. I think they’d be hurt.

HEB. Oh, I shouldn’t think they’d mind.

LOV. Oh, wouldn’t they though; you don’t know what prisoners are now-a-days. They stand on their dignity I can tell you, prisoners do. No – on re-consideration I think it would be more considerate, more respectful to the other prisoners if I did *not* wear those

clothes. No, I'll just run upstairs, smooth my hair, pack up a sock and a half-a-dozen tooth brushes, and be off.

FAN. Off! Why I thought you were not going till the morning?

LOV. Oh, yes, to-night – didn't I tell you?

FAN. No, you said in the morning by the eight train.

LOV. The eight train! No, no, the late train, my dear – the late train! (*Exit, R.H. door*)

FAN. There is a wildness, an inconsistency in Jonathan's manner that makes me dread the very worst. Can this misfortune have affected his brain? The thought is terrible – too terrible! I mustn't think of that, and if Alfred should return –

*Enter PERKINS with supper tray.*

FAN. What is that?

PER. Master's supper, ma'am. Soup, fried sole, cutlets, a cold pheasant, galantine and a roly-poly pudding.

FAN. Very well, put it down. (*PERKINS arranges table*) He said he'd wait; if I refuse to see him he's quite mad enough to make a disturbance, and then there'll be a scandal, and – oh, I had better see him and tell him once and for ever that he must never dare to come near me again. But there's Perkins, she's such a chatterbox, how can I get her out of the way? Stop! I know. (*aloud*) Perkins, how's your aunt now?

PER. A great deal worse, ma'am. You can hear her back creak from here.

FAN. Indeed! Then I think it is most unkind, most unfeeling of you to absent from her at such a time. It is your duty – your *duty*, Perkins, to be near her, and I'm surprised – shocked, to think that you have no desire to go to her.

PER. Lor, ma'am, I asked half-a-dozen times, but you told me distinctly that you wouldn't let me go.

FAN. Did I say that? I dare say I did. I was thinking of something else. Go at once, by all means. (*violin is heard without*) There he is still.

PER. Yes, ma'am, there he is; but he isn't still. I gave him a penny just now.

FAN. A penny! Good gracious, and what did he do?

PER. Well, first he scorned it, then he pocketed it, and he's working it out.

*Violin stops.*

*Enter LOVIBOND, R. H., in black trousers, white tie, dress coat, and waistcoat.*

LOV. Now where on earth is the Eau de Cologne? It's a most extraordinary thing, but that Eau de Cologne is always missing when it's wanted. Go and fetch it, Perkins.

(*Exit PERKINS, R. H.*)

FAN. (L.C.) Why, Jonathan, you don't mean to say that you are going to wear a dress coat?

LOV. Well, yes, my dear, on calm reflection, I think it will be best to wear a dress coat.

FAN. And a white waistcoat?

LOV. And a white waistcoat.

FAN. And a white tie?

LOV. And a white tie!

FAN. To go to prison?

LOV. Of, course – why not?

FAN. I don't know – it seems odd.

LOV. Odd – not at all! A white tie is the recognized emblem of innocence – a type of purity. Clergymen wear white ties because they are pure; I wear a white tie because I am pure. Where the deuce is that Eau de Cologne? (*finds it on sideboard and sprinkles himself freely with it*) There, now I'm off.

FAN. Without your supper?

LOV. Oh, I shall have a supper there.

FAN. Supper in prison?

LOV. A – yes – that is, I can't eat; the guilty eat, the innocent have no appetite. No – hungry and with a broken heart I go to my dungeon! (*aside*) A quarter to eight. I shall miss my train and they'll begin without me. (*aloud*) Fanny, there is nothing left now but to say farewell.

FAN. Oh, my dear, dear Jonathan!

LOV. My pet! (*kissing her*)

FAN. Oh, don't go yet.

LOV. (*with his arms round her, he is putting on his white gloves, his hands being behind her back*) Fanny, in situations of this painful nature, a man has two courses open to him, either to give way to his feelings and indulge in farewells that have no end – that is what I should *like* to do – or to brace up his nerves like a man, and cut it as short as possible – that is what I *propose* to do. Don't you agree with me? Yes, I'm sure you do – then we'll cut it short – there! Farewell, Fanny! (*kisses her*)

FAN. Good bye, Jonathan, good bye! (*sinks on sofa, sobbing*)

LOV. (*aside*) I'm frightfully late, but I shall catch the last train if I run for it. (*he sprinkles himself again freely with scent*) Now, my hat – where the deuce is my hat! (*takes hat and overcoat from chair up R. and turns to go out; sees he has no flower in his button-hole, comes down to FANNY, takes one from her dress, and exits, C., putting flower in button-hole*) Farewell! farewell!

As LOVIBOND goes out, enter PERKINS, R.H.

PER. Are you going to sup alone, ma'am?

FAN. No, no. I can eat nothing; I am too sick at heart to eat.

PER. Oh, then, perhaps, ma'am, you'll not object to my taking the cold pheasant to my aunt? They say there's nothing like cold pheasant for lumbago; It's taken internally.

FAN. Oh, take what you like and go.

PER. Thank you, ma'am.

(*Exit PERKINS with pheasant, R. D.*)

FAN. I'll not see him. He shall *not* come in. He can only come through the garden gate, and I'll run and bolt that at once. Gracious goodness! It's too late – he's here.

*Enter ALFRED, C. FANNY is going C., sees him, falls on the couch. ALFRED takes off his cap, and approaches FANNY, who turns her back to him; he puts his handkerchief to his eyes and crosses to R. chair, and sits at table.*

ALF. (*seeing supper*) Supper for two! You expected me, and you prepared for me. It was a thoughtful attention. (*aside*) How rapturously this woman loves me!

FAN. Now do make haste and say what you have to say. Pray be quick, and then go.

ALF. (*eating voraciously*) I will tell you a story as I eat. Once upon a time there was a beautiful and highly accomplished young musician. He was beloved by a charming young lady. Shall I tell you that young lady's name?

FAN. Pity.

ALF. No, Fanny! In order to obtain access to her presence, that talented young musician condescended to give music lessons to that young lady on the ridiculously easy terms of a guinea a dozen. Ere he had earned a guinea and a half the learned to love one another! They exchanged vows of eternal fidelity; and full of love and hope, he tore himself away from her to go to Brighton for six weeks during the season to play on –

FAN. I know – the violin –

ALF. Wrong again – on the pier.

FAN. I don't know the instrument.

ALF. At the end of the season he returned to claim his Fanny. She was no longer *his* Fanny. She was another's Fanny.

FAN. I cannot deny it.

ALF. (*rising, recit.*) Oh, false one! (*sits*)

FAN. (*rises, and crosses to R. table*) Oh, be just! Oh, be merciful! Let me tell you that which I have hitherto kept from the whole world. I married Mr. Lovibond for your sake.

ALF. (*bitterly*) For my sake!

FAN. Yes, for your sake, cruel, cruel man. Papa said to me; Fanny, two alternatives are open to you – affluence with Lovibond, starvation with Alfred; take which you will.

ALF. And you took Lovibond.

FAN. Yes, I knew your refinement of feeling, I knew the delicacy of your sensitive nature, and I could not, Alfred, no, I could *not* inflict upon you the pain of seeing the woman you loved hungry, penniless, and in rags. Unhesitatingly, and for your sake, I chose Lovibond, and it will soothe your generous nature to know that with him I am happy. (*sits in chair, L. of R. table*)

ALF. After four long years the young musician came across the beautiful young lady – not as beautiful as she was, but still very nice. He braved all obstacles, for that young musician knew no fear, that young musician didn't, and stood face to face before her. (*loud knock and ring and voices heard off L. U. E.*) What's that? (*much alarmed*)

FAN. (*going to window, L.*) Good gracious, there are some people who are insisting on coming into the house!

ALF. (*terrified*) Robbers! I'll be off.

FAN. ROBBERS! No, worse than that – the police. They have come for my husband; they'll find you here and I shall be ruined. Put out the candles and try to escape. (*turns down lamp; stage dark*)

ALF. I will fly or perish in the attempt. (*going, C.*)

FAN. You can't go that way, you will meet them. There's no escape!

ALF. Stop – the window! (*goes to window, L.*)

FAN. Impossible, you will break your neck!

ALF. Break my neck! (*taking off coat*) What if I do? Where your honour, your

reputation are concerned, that for my neck! (*looking out of window*) Yes, by Jove, you're right; it's fourteen feet if it's an inch. What on earth is to be done! (*crosses, R.*) I know; I'll tie these together and let myself down. (*take off his coat which he is about to tie to LOVIBOND's dressing gown*) Too late! (*she crosses to sofa, L.*)

*Enter MARCOOLY, C.*

MAR. (C.) I beg your pardon, but I have come on a very unpleasant errand. I presume I have the pleasure of addressing Mrs. Lovibond. (*turns up the lamp*)

FAN. (L.) That is my name, sir.

MAR. Thank you. Allow me to introduce myself; I am Mr. Marcooly, the newly appointed governor of the county prison and I am happy to say a neighbour of yours.

FAN. Pardon my saying so, but this is an unusual hour for a mere visit of ceremony.

MAR. Most unusual, but I regret to say that my visit is *not* a mere visit of ceremony; I have a most difficult and I may add a most unpleasant duty to perform.

FAN. Unpleasant!

MAR. Unpleasant both to myself and to your husband. (*turns and sees ALFRED about to sneak off, C.*) I beg your pardon, sir! (*detains him*) One moment, if you please. I regret to say that there is something wrong about your bail.

ALF. (*returning down, R.*) About my bail! I don't understand you.

MAR. Yes, the gentleman you were polite enough to offer as your security is, I am sorry to say, a lodger. Now a lodger is disqualified; he must be a householder. Under ordinary circumstances I should have sent a police-sergeant to arrest you, but as a neighbour and one who hopes some day to rank as a friend, I thought it better, more delicate, to come in person and break the unpleasant news to you.

ALF. But, sir, you are entirely mistaken. I am not Mr. Lovibond.

MAR. (*laughs doubtfully*) Oh-h-h!

FAN. No, indeed; Mr. Lovibond is now on his way to surrender.

MAR. Mrs. Lovibond, what you say *may* be true, but the law don't admit the wife's evidence on behalf of the husband.

ALF. But I tell you this lady is not my wife.

MAR. Here we have another difficulty; the law don't admit the husband's evidence on behalf of the wife.

FAN. But, sir, this gentleman is Mr. Alfred Trimble, and old and intimate friend, who – who has just dropped in to supper.

MAR. Mrs. Lovibond, I will not insult you by believing you. Observe, I find you *tête-a-tête* with this gentleman (who, as it is a warm evening, had taken off his coat), at ten o'clock at night, in the dark – don't you see, in the dark. All I can say, Mrs. Lovibond, as a public man, and in some sort the guardian of public morals, is, that if he is not your husband, why, he ought to be.

ALF. Exactly, you're quite right; that's what *I* say. I ought to be, but I'm not.

MAR. Ought to be is enough for the law. Now come, Mr. Lovibond, don't raise any more objections, but come quietly and without disturbance.

ALF. Never!

MAR. Very well, then; there is no alternative but to resort to force. (*goes to door, C.*) Sergeant Wilcox!

*Enter WILCOX, C.; he exhibits handcuffs.*

MAR. No, no! No occasion for those, Wilcox; the gentleman will return with us quietly. He sees at once that resistance will be useless, and to avoid a scandal he will return quietly with us. Help the gentleman on with his coat, Wilcox.

*WILCOX helps ALFRED into LOVIBOND'S dressing-gown. ALFRED, stupefied, puts it on without noticing that it is not his coat. WILCOX puts LOVIBOND'S smoking cap on ALFRED'S head.*

MAR. Come, come, cheer up; the sentence will be a mere nothing. You will have no difficulty in doing it on your head. Now, make haste, I'm rather in a hurry. *(aside, looking at watch)* By Jove, the Duke and Hebblethwaite will have finished supper before I get there. *(aloud)* Come, come, I can't wait. Kiss your wife, and we'll be off.

ALF. *(stupefied)* Kiss my wife?

WIL. Come, sir, time's up.

ALF. Fanny, the law says I'm to kiss my wife. *(approaching her)*

FAN. If you dare, sir! Go away, sit, at once! *(crosses in front of him to R.)* Oh, can't you say something? Can't you think of something to do? *(crosses to L.)*

WIL. *(upstage, R.C.)* Come, ma'am, if I was you I shouldn't baulk myself; it may be months before you've another opportunity.

ALF. Fanny, the law says we are not to baulk ourselves. At this supreme moment let us respect the law. *(kisses her hand)*

WIL. You've no call to mind us ma'am.

MAR. My honest friend is right though he expresses himself in a homely fashion. Don't mind us, we are buried in reflection. Sergeant Wilcox, bury yourself in reflection.

*WILCOX drinks glass of wine.*

FAN. *(on sofa, L.)* Oh, my reputation, my reputation! What is to become of me! What is to become of me! *(faints)*

MAR. Come, come, now's your time; she's fainted. Better come away before she recovers.

ALF. *(C.)* Inhuman brute! Would you have me leave her in this condition?

MAR. I would. Now then, will you come or will you not?

ALF. As you leave it to me, I will not.

MAR. *(R.C.)* Then, Sergeant Wilcox, do your duty.

*Struggle; WILCOX and POLICEMAN seize ALFRED and drag him away, C. He struggles violently, exclaiming, "Fanny, my darling, they are taking me away from you." FANNY remains insensible on sofa.*

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE. – *Green Room in ----- Theatre. Doors, C. and R. Large oval table, C. Small sideboard. Supper laid on table, C. JACKSON, the property man, arranging it. Enter HEBBLETHWAITE, in evening dress, R.*

HEB. Half-past eleven! The Duke should have been here before this. Where's Mrs. Hebblethwaite?

*Enter MRS. HEBBLETHWAITE, C.*

MRS. H. I am here, Edward.

HEB. Ah, that's right. Everything is ready, my dear; his Grace has sent an admirable supper – oysters in the lower shell, a brace of pheasants, a Perigord pie, and a turkey stuffed with truffles. What do you say to that?

MRS. H. I confess I do not like the idea of the Duke providing the supper in our theatre. I may be oversensitive in my ideas, but I think we should contribute something; I do indeed, if it's only a pickle. When my papa kept house –

HEB. What a discontented woman you are. There's positively no satisfying you.

MRS. H. Crushed again!

HEB. Here! (to JACKSON) Where's the round of beef we use in the farce? Put it on the sideboard.

JACK. Round of beef! Why, that's a property, sir!

HEB. Property! Of course, it's a property, but what of that? Nobody will take any, and nothing gives such a look of solid, hearty, comfortable, British hospitality as a round of beef on the sideboard. And the vases of fruit we use in the burlesque, put them on the sideboard, too.

*Exit JACKSON, C.*

MRS. H. Are you going to give us anything to drink? or is his Grace to provide *all* the wine? When my papa kept house –

*Enter JACKSON with beef and vases, C.*

HEB. Oh, hang on your papa – you'll be the ruin of me! (*aloud*) Are there any bottles of champagne in the property room?

JACK. Four, sir; but they are all trick bottles made with squibs to go off.

HEB. Put them in ice, but be very careful only to open his Grace's. (*looking at beef*) Ah, that's capital; makes one quite hungry to look at it. (JACKSON *drops it off dish*) Now then, there you go, you clumsy fellow! Do you think properties cost nothing? (*picking it up and putting it on sideboard*) There, and a very nice little supper Darlington and I have provided between us. (JACKSON *exit, C.*)

*Enter DUKE, C.*

DUKE. Hallo, Hebblethwaite, how are you? I'm rather late, I'm afraid. Mrs. Hebblethwaite, delighted to see you; I hope you're very well?

MRS. H. I am not well, your Grace; I am very far from well.

DUKE. So sorry. (*crossing R., and putting cane and hat on chair, R.*) Well, and what sort of fun have you provided for us this evening?

HEB. The very best practical joke you ever heard of – you'll be delighted when you hear what it is.

MRS. H. I think not – I think not. For my part I hold a practical joke in utter contempt; it appears to me to be the most undignified form of reprisal.

HEB. Oh, of course *you're* not satisfied.

MRS. H. Crushed again! (*sits, R.*)

HEB. (L.C.) Yes, this dinner party is to be one huge practical joke. You know Lovibond?

DUKE. (R.C.) No, hang me if I know Lovibond.

MRS. H. How on earth should his Grace know Lovibond?

HEB. Well, he soon will. Lovibond played a practical joke on me four years ago, and to-night I take my revenge. Lovibond was charged this morning with assaulting a ticket collector, and he stands committed for trial. Now, Lovibond has to surrender to-morrow morning to Marcooly, the new governor of the county jail. You know Marcooly?

DUKE. No, hang me if I know Marcooly.

MRS. H. His Grace cannot possibly know Marcooly.

HEB. Well, he soon will; so I've invited Lovibond to meet Marcooly to-night. I'll tell each of them that the other is a man of title, then they're sure to become great friends (for they're both desperate Radicals), and when they meet to-morrow, Marcooly as jailor and Lovibond as his prisoner, why, it will be worth seeing – that's all – ha! ha!

DUKE. Ha, ha! Very pretty, Hebblethwaite, very pretty!

MRS. H. I cannot agree with your Grace. This man dared to play off a jest upon my husband. I would not joke with that man – as I'm a woman with a fist I would fell him.

(*Exit MRS. HEBBLETHWAITE, R.H.*)

DUKE. Most extraordinary person.

HEB. That woman's too good for this world – at least nothing in this world is good enough for her. (*noises of voices without, C.L., "I will come in!" "But you can't, sir." "I'm the Duke's guest; I will come in!"*) There's Lovibond at last – that's one of them. Perhaps your Grace wouldn't mind stepping into my dressing-room for a minute while I prepare his mind for what's coming.

DUKE. Not a bit. (*going towards sideboard, L.*) By Jove!

HEB. What's the matter?

DUKE. What's that? (*referring to beef*)

HEB. That-oh, that's a round of beef. You see Mrs. Hebblethwaite and myself couldn't think of your Grace providing all the supper.

DUKE. It looks awfully good.

HEB. (*preventing the DUKE going nearer to it.*) It does look awfully good from here. (*backing DUKE a little, R.*)

DUKE. It's like a picture.

HEB. In one sense it *is* like a picture – don't go too near it, it looks better from a distance; it looks magnificent from here. Here's Lovibond, I hear him coming.

DUKE. Deuced energetic fellow, Hebblethwaite; always in a hurry. (Exit, R.H.)

*Enter LOVIBOND out of breath, C.*

LOV. My dear fellow, I'm so sorry I'm late; I ran all the way from the station.

HEB. Never mind, Lovibond; the ladies are not ready yet.

LOV. Hush, my dear fellow, you mustn't call me Lovibond.

HEB. It's all right; we're quite alone.

LOV. But I wouldn't have it known for the world that I am the man who's paragraphed in the evening paper under the head of "Brutal Assault on an Orphan."

HEB. Well, what shall I call you?

LOV. Let's see; there's nobody coming but the Duke, is there?

HEB. Oh, there's Alfred Trimble, my leader.

LOV. (*disgusted*) Oh, he be hanged!

HEB. And Sir Ferdinand Bracebridge, of Bracebridge Hall.

LOV. Oho! Sir Ferdinand Bracebridge, eh?

HEB. Yes. Bracebridge is a capital fellow; you'll like him immensely – you – you'll be inseparable in a short time.

*HEBBLETHWAITE tires in vain to suppress laughter.*

LOV. What the deuce are you laughing at?

HEB. I? Never more serious in my life.

LOV. I never saw such a fellow as you are. You've always got some ridiculous joke on. But about Sir Ferdinand Bracebridge – from London, eh?

HEB. Oh, no; an old county baronet. He has a large place about ten miles from here.

LOV. I shall be delighted to meet him. Do you know, Hebblethwaite, while I *am* choosing a name I don't see why I shouldn't have a title, too.

HEB. To be sure; why not?

LOV. Exactly; not on my own account – dear me! I hope I know the value of such nonsense, but the ladies – I think it would gratify the ladies.

HEB. Certainly, it would only be kind.

LOV. They like that sort of thing, you know; it fetches them.

HEB. No doubt. Well, what shall we say?

LOV. I thought of a name as I came along. What do you think of Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross?

HEB. I don't think you could do better.

LOV. Runs well, don't it?

HEB. It runs admirably.

LOV. Then Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross be it. Baronet, of course?

HEB. Oh, baronet, of course.

LOV. I don't want to be taken for a confounded alderman, you know.

HEB. Well, hardly.

LOV. Then that's settled. Now about this Duke of yours. You know my opinions; I'm a Radical, and I am not ashamed of it. I've no objection to a duke *as* a duke; it's his misfortune, not his fault. He was born so, and he can't help it. But, Hebblethwaite, he

mustn't presume on his dukedom in *my* presence; let that be clearly understood. We must meet as man and man, not a duke and private gentleman.

HEB. (*correcting him*) Duke and baronet.

LOV. A – exactly – duke and baronet. As for his title, I hope I know how to value such distinctions.

HEB. (*shaking his hand*) My dear Fitz-Albatross, I am sure you do.

*Enter the DUKE, R.H. door.*

DUKE. (R.) Hebblethwaite, will you introduce me?

HEB. (C.) With pleasure. Allow me – Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross. (*goes up, L.C.*)

DUKE. Most charmed, I am sure, to make your acquaintance. Allow me. (*offers hand*)

LOV. (*aside*) Damned fiddler!

DUKE. Very good of you to come and take pot luck with us this evening.

LOV. (*aside*) Pot luck! Confounded cad!

DUKE. Won't you sit down?

LOV. (*aside*) It's one of the inconveniences of rank that one is exposed to the impertinence of every tuft-hunting little snob one meets. (*to HEBBLETHWAITE*) Who is this little ape?

HEB. Little ape! That's the Duke of Darlington.

LOV. That! Why, I thought it was your first fiddle!

HEB. Oh, dear no! That's the Duke! Distinguished looking man.

LOV. Magnificent, my boy, magnificent! (*Exit HEBBLETHWAITE, C.*) Really, your Grace, I'm extremely sorry; I had no idea whom I had the honour of addressing.

DUKE. No? It's of no consequence

LOV. Pray, forgive me; I – I was under the impression for the moment that I was addressing Hebblethwaite's first fiddle.

DUKE. (*blandly*) I have not the advantage of being a fiddle.

LOV. I mean his leader.

DUKE. I haven't the faintest idea what you men.

LOV. The leader of his orchestra – his first fiddle.

DUKE. You keep telling me that you thought I was fiddle and I keep replying that I have no idea what you are talking about; don't you think we had better let it rest there? (*takes chair from C. table and sits, R.C.*)

LOV. To be sure! (*takes chair from C. table and sits L.C.*)

*N.B. – Whatever action the DUKE assumes LOVIBOND slavishly imitates it.*

LOV. Charming weather!

DUKE. Yes, charming weather. (*pause and change position on chair, which LOVIBOND imitates*) Rather wet, though.

LOV. Yes, it is wet, but otherwise it's charming weather. (*awkward pause; aside*) The worst of a duke is that one never knows what to say to him. (*aloud, with a drawl*) Good fellow, Hebblethwaite, in his way.

DUKE. Oh, yes, good fellow, Hebblethwaite.

LOV. Coarse, perhaps, but honest. Not exactly the sort of man one's accustomed to associate with.

DUKE. What sort of man are you accustomed to associate with?

LOV. (*little pause, slightly embarrassed*) I – Oh, well – what I mean is – he's not exactly what one calls a gentleman. Bit of a cad, you know.

DUKE. Is he? You surprise me. He seemed to me to be all right.

LOV. Oh, yes, he's all *right*; no doubt of that; he's *right* enough.

DUKE. A good fellow.

LOV. Oh, a deuced good fellow.

DUKE. No humbug about him.

LOV. Never met a man with less humbug about him in the whole course of my life.

DUKE. Well-bred man, too.

LOV. Singularly – unusually well-bred.

DUKE. Almost an air of distinction about him.

LOV. Quite; I should call Hebblethwaite a remarkably aristocratic-looking man.

DUKE. Well, no. I shouldn't say aristocratic.

LOV. Well, no; he's not exactly aristocratic.

DUKE. But a good fellow.

LOV. One of the best fellows I ever met in the whole course of my life.

DUKE. (*rises, puts back chair, and pours out glass of sherry, C. table.*) Glass of dry sherry – as a whet?

LOV. Dry sherry as a whet! Ha! ha! that's not bad – that's one for you!

DUKE. (*who has filled his own glass, stands, R., about to drink*) Yes, this is one for me.

LOV. I was referring to the joke – dry sherry – as a *whet* – one of the best jokes I ever heard in my life.

DUKE. Indeed, you must have been very unfortunate; but you entirely misunderstand me. I never joke. I meant a whet – with an h – for your appetite.

LOV. Oh,. Of course – no doubt – very stupid of me – whet – with an h – for my *happetite* – (*corrects himself*) appetite. (*aside*) I'm making an ass of myself – I wish Hebblethwaite would come. (*aloud*) Hebblethwaite expects some ladies, I think?

DUKE. I believe he does. Would you like to brush your hair?

LOV. You are more than kind.

DUKE. (*going, R.*) If you'll come with me I shall be very happy to –

LOV. Oh, I couldn't think of troubling your Grace, I can brush it myself.

DUKE. Most extraordinary person! (*Exit DUKE, R.*)

LOV. Now I call that a most favourable specimen of our governing classes. Oh, if they were all like him there would be an end of all cavilling at hereditary legislation.

(*Exit after DUKE, R. H.*)

*Enter HEBBLETHWAITE, C., looking at watch.*

HEB. Now, is Marcooly coming or isn't he? If *he* don't come the whole thing will be ruined; and this magnificent supper that Darlington and I have provided completely wasted.

MAR. (*heard without, L.C.*) Where's Hebblethwaite?

HEB. By Jove, there's somebody asking for me! It is Marcooly at last. (*Enter MARCOOLY, C., in evening dress*) My dear Marcooly, I thought you had forgotten us altogether. (*shakes his hand*)

MAR. (L.) Hush, man! – not Marcooly. Pray be careful. If it got about that the new Governor of the jail had passed his first official evening at a supper-party he'd hear of it from the Home Office, my boy – he'd hear of it from the Home Office.

HEB. Well, well, Sir Ferdinand Bracebridge, as we arranged. But what has detained you?

MAR. A delicate business, my boy – a very delicate business!

HEB. (*interested*) Dear me!

MAR. Yes, painful, too – in fact, very painful indeed.

HEB. You don't say so. Tell me about it.

MAR. No, Hebblethwaite, no; you know my principles – don't violate them.

HEB. What do you mean?

MAR. There are two sides to my character. I am a man of business and a man of pleasure. Marcooly, the stern official, knows nothing of Marcooly, the votary of pleasure; and Marcooly, he votary of pleasure, has not had the advantage of making the acquaintance of Marcooly, the stern official. Keep 'em apart, as I do – as I do.

HEB. By all means.

MAR. I am here to-night as Marcooly, the votary of pleasure, and in that capacity I ask you, where are the ladies?

HEB. They are changing.

MAR. Women do change, don't they?

HEB. They are obliged after playing in a burlesque.

MAR. Oh, I see what you mean.

HEB. But the Duke is here and Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross.

MAR. Sir Albatross – who is he?

HEB. Oh, a wealthy baronet; he has a place about ten miles from here. I asked him because I know you like to know the county families.

MAR. Of course, I am – ha, ha! – an old county family myself. (*sings*) “With a fine old county residence, all of the olden time.” The county jail! But I say, don't baronets know all the other baronets, and won't he know that I'm not a baronet?

HEB. Not he; how should he?

MAR. But isn't there something about a baronet that speaks for itself – a sort of, you know – this sort of thing, eh? (*strutting*)

HEB. Well, no, I think it's more like this (*strutting in melodramatic fashion*) But there's a natural air of distinction about you that will carry conviction with it art once. Oh, here he is!

*Enter LOVIBOND, R. H. door.*

LOV. (R.) Oho – there is Sir Ferdinand, no doubt.

MAR. (*aside*) Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross, and a devilish aristocratic-looking fellow too.

LOV. Blue blood there, you can see it in his nose.

HEB. Allow me – Sir Ferdinand Bracebridge – Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross.

Delighted to make two county men acquainted. (*go up, C.*)

MAR. Really, Sir Adolphus –

LOV. Sir Ferdinand, I'm delighted.

MAR. Hebblethwaite was talking about you as you entered – said the most charming things.

LOV. So he did of you just now. In fact, I've been longing to make your acquaintance.

MAR. Allow me. (*shakes hands again*)

LOV. You have a place near here, I think?

MAR. I! Oh, no! at least, I think not.

HEB. (*comes quickly down on his L.*) Yes, you have – ten miles off; don't be a d—d fool.

MAR. Oh of course – I forgot – one has so many places. Yes – I have a place, a little place, about ten miles off – over in *that* direction. (*points, L.*)

LOV. Ah! So have I – quite a bandbox – a couple of hundred thousand acres or so – a – a – over in that direction. (*points, R.*)

MAR. Indeed! You must come and spend a week or two at my place. (HEBBLETHWAITE *tries to repress his laughter*) We'll make you very snug – we've plenty of room – lots of bachelor bed-rooms.

LOV. A week – I'll stop a month if you like.

MAR. You shall. Indeed we shall have no difficulty in making it three months. (HEBBLETHWAITE *bursting with suppressed laughter*) What the deuce are you laughing at?

HEB. Nothing – nothing – don't mind me – I was thinking of something that happened a great many years ago when I was quite a little boy.

MAR. Extraordinary spirits, our friend Hebblethwaite .

LOV. Extraordinary; quite a treat to see him.

HEB. But where's the Duke all this time? Come, Bracebridge, we'll go and find him. (*crossing, R. with MARCOOLY*)

MAR. By all means – but before I go (*leaving HEBBLETHWAITE and coming to LOVIBOND on his R.*) I must express once more the extreme gratification I feel in making the acquaintance of such a – particularly jolly – and – a – unaffected – a – a – baronet. Bless you, Fitz-Albatross.

*Exit MARCOOLY and HEBBLETHWAITE, R. H. door.*

LOV. Now, that's one of the most delightful men I ever met in the whole course of my life. No confounded stuck-up nonsense about him. I don't k now what it is, but there's something about a man of family that there's no mistaking. I wonder if I've got it.

*Enter MRS. HEBBLETHWAITE, C.*

MRS. H. Your name, sir?

LOV. Lovi – Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross. I – I have a card somewhere. (*feels for one*)

MRS. H. Ah, it matters little. I am Mr. Hebblethwaite's spouse.

LOV. (*aside*) And a devilish fine woman, too. I wonder if she gets on with her husband?

MRS. H. Understand me, sir, I am not with my husband in this thing.

LOV. Indeed! (*aside*) She don't get on with her husband.

MRS. H. My husband and I hold opposite opinions on many points, and I repeat, in this thing I am not with him.

LOV. (*aside*) She's one of the finest women I ever met in the whole course of my life. (*aloud*) Well, Mrs. Hebblethwaite, I am not surprised to hear it. Hebblethwaite means well, but he is not the superior article that a woman of your commanding attractions is entitled to expect.

MRS. H. And you who come here to batten on his beef, to fatten on his food, and to wallow in his wine, have the effrontery to tell me, his lawful wedded wife, to my very face, that he is not the superior article I am entitled to expect. Sir, I hold you in contempt and abhorrence.

LOV. (*aside*) Hang it! I was wrong; she does get on with her husband.

MRS. H. It may be that you are right – I do not say that you are not. It is true that he crushes me!

LOV. The brute!

MRS. H. But it comes with an ill grace from you, who are here as his guest, to luxuriate on the choice foods he in the liberality of his heart has provided for you. I say, sir, from you it comes with an ill grace.

LOV. I was wrong. I admit it. I blush –

MRS. H. You do well. But hearken to what I have to say. It is by *his* wish you are bidden to this banquet, not by mine. Once upon a time you grossly, cruelly, insulted him; he repays you with profuse and unbounded hospitality. Had he been guided by me, he would have flogged you till he dropped. (*go up, R. C.*)

LOV. (*aside*) After all, whether this person does get on with her husband or whether she does not, appears to me to be a matter of the very smallest importance.

*Enter the DUKE, C., followed by MARCOOLY, who has a tall lady on each arm, viz., MISS MONTMORENCI and MISS FITZBATTLEAXE, followed by MISS DE COURCY and MISS DE VERE.*

MAR. (*very excited, down, L.*) Ha, ha! Fitz-Albatross, I've stolen a march on you; I've got two of 'em.

LOV. Lucky fellow, but I'll cut you out presently. Hebblethwaite, will you introduce me.

HEB. I beg your pardon – Miss Montmorenci, Miss Fitzbattleaxe, Miss De Vere, Miss De Courcy, Sir Adolphus Fitz-Albatross.

LOV. (*aside*) They are the very loveliest women I ever met in the whole course of my life.

HEB. Now, then, Bracebridge, supper, supper. Come, Fitz-Albatross, we are all ready.

MAR. Confound his familiarity!

LOV. Hang his insolence!

MAR. Shall we stand it?

LOV. Oh, pass it over – he's not a gentleman.

MAR. No – he’s not one of us.

*They all gather round the table; general buzz of conversation.*

LOV. (*down, R., looking at his watch*) One o’clock; I’ve a couple of hours before me – and then I go to my dungeon. Oh hang it! never mind that now.

MRS. H. Sir Adolphus, you may sit here if you like. (*pointing to a chair on her R.*)

LOV. With pleasure; I wonder if this fine woman *does* get on with her husband?

DUKE. Miss De Courcy – Sir Ferdinand, will you sit there?

*They sit as following round oval table:--MISS DE COURCY, C., face to audience; LOVIBOND, R. C.; MARCOOLY, L.C.; MISS FITZBATTLEAXE facing MISS DE COURCY; the DUKE on R. of MISS DE COURCY; HEBBLETHWAITE on her L.; MRS. HEBBLETHWAITE, R., between the DUKE and LOVIBOND; MISS MONTMORENCI and MISS DE VERE, L., between HEBBLETHWAITE and MARCOOLY. Four of the DUKE’S servants in magnificent liveries wait on them. One of these remains behind LOVIBOND, another behind MARCOOLY, continually helping them to wine. General conversation in a muttered tone, broken sentences heard now and then; this last for nearly a minute. SERVANTS help wine.*

1<sup>ST</sup> SER. (*to LOVIBOND*) Château la Rose, or Chablis?

LOV. Eh! Both, my boy, both.

2<sup>ND</sup> SER. (*to MARCOOLY*) Château la Rose or Chablis?

MAR. Château la Rose in here. (*offering glass. SERVANT helps him and moves off*) Here, Chablis in here! (*indicates another glass, SERVANT helps him; in the meantime, MISS DE COURCY has taken several oysters*)

MISS M. Here, Topsey, don’t take all the oysters.

MISS DE C. Nonsense, there are plenty more where these came from, are there not, Mrs. Hebblethwaite?

MRS. H. I hope so, my dear. Fear nothing – eat, drink, and be merry; this is not a property supper.

HEB. Anything but it. (*to SERVANT*) Stand in front of that sideboard.

DUKE. Now, ladies, you can tell me something I particularly want to know. You often have suppers on the stage; why is it that a stage supper is always so intolerably dull?

MRS. H. Because the authors don’t give us anything good to say.

MISS M. And because the managers don’t give us anything good to eat.

MISS DE C. There is another reason why a stage supper is never like a real supper; on the stage people wait for their cues and always speak in turn one after another –

MISS F. Whereas at a real supper they all speak at once.

*All chatter together for some moments. HEBBLETHWAITE rises and endeavours to speak*

MRS. H. Ladies, ladies, one at a time! Mr. Hebblethwaite cannot hear himself speak.

LADIES. Oh, I beg your pardon.

HEB. Oh, never mind me, I can wait; my turn comes after supper.

MAR. After supper?

LOV. Referring, I suppose, to this wonderful joke of yours?

HEB. It may be so; I don't say no. (*laughing*)

LOV. (*getting tipsy*) Well, now, I'll lay you a case of champagne, and I call your noble friend, for he is my noble friend now, if he will allow me to call him so.

DUKE. Delighted, I'm sure. (*shaking hands with him*)

LOV. God bless you, Darlington! Well, I call my noble friend to witness –

MAR. (*speaking to LOVIBOND behind MISS MONTMORENCI'S chair*) Our noble friend.

LOV. No, I don't think he'd like it.

MAR. Oh, yes; I'm a baronet, you know.

LOV. I'll ask him; you wait there.

MARCOOLY *keeps his head over back of C. chair; LOVIBOND rises and speaks to DUKE through buzz of conversation, such words only heard as "Bracebridge," "baronet," "noble friend;" he then resumes his seat, and leans behind C. chair again.*

LOV. (*to MARCOOLY*) It's all right. I've managed it for you.

MARCOOLY *rises and shakes hands with DUKE across table, then resumes his seat, saying, "Bless you."*

LOV. Well, I call our noble friend to witness I lay you a case of champagne that *your* joke, whatever it may be, won't be a patch on the joke I played you four years ago.

HEB. Done with you!

LOV. Now, these ladies and gentlemen shall decide. (*to SERVANT who gives him wine*) Thanks, my boy, thanks.

DUKE. That's all very well, but before we can form an opinion we must know what your practical joke was.

LOV. (*chuckling*) Hebblethwaite, shall I tell them?

MRS. H. (*rising*) No, no, I charge you, no! Do not humiliate, my husband in the very eyes of his very company.

HEB. Nonsense! go on!

MRS. H. (*sinking back into her chair*) Crushed again.

ALL. Come, the story, the story.

LOV. Well, it took place four years ago, that is to say, two years before I was married.

ALL. Are you married?

LOV. (*confused*) I – oh – yes – a little!

MRS. H. What was your reason, sir, for keeping this from us?

LOV. My reason – oh, well – the question never arose.

LADIES. Oh, the question never arose.

MISS M. And how is her ladyship?

LOV. Her ladyship – whose ladyship?

HEB. (*making signs to LOVIBOND*) Why, Lady Fitz-Albatross, of course – your wife, my boy, your wife.

LOV. Oh, ah, yes, of course, I didn't quite understand; you said "her ladyship," and I thought you referred to somebody else's ladyship. I didn't know you meant my wife's ladyship. Oh, she's very fit, very fit indeed.

MISS DE C. Is she pretty?

LOV. Pretty – oh, yes – not so bad – very nice – very pretty. (*to SERVANT who helps him to wine*) Thanks, my boy, thanks. Oh, yes, she's decidedly pretty.

MISS F. And do you mean to say that your wife allows you to come out to supper without her?

LOV. Well, no, that is – I didn't tell her I was coming.

MISS M. Oh, I see; the questions never arose.

ALL. Go on with the story.

LOV. Where was I? (*stares stupidly at SERVANT*)

MAR. At the beginning, "two years before I was married."

LOV. True. Well, Hebblethwaite and I heard there was to be a fancy ball at the Pomona Gardens.

MISS DE C. Where's that?

LOV. Manchester.

MAR. Fine town, Manchester; the new prison is one of the finest buildings in the kingdom.

LOV. (*leaning over to him behind MISS MONTMORENCI*) I beg your pardon, what did you say about a prison?

MAR. (*same business*) I didn't say anything about a prison.

LOV. I could have sworn you said something about a prison.

MAR. What's a prison?

LOV. (*shaking his hand*) Bless you, my boy – bless you! Well, Hebblethwaite and I determined to go.

MISS DE C. Go where?

LOV. (*getting angry*) Why, to the fancy ball at the Pomona Gardens, to be sure! (*aside, to SERVANT on his R.*) That girl's a fool! Well, we stated – (*to SERVANT who helps him to wine*) Thanks, my boy, thanks!

MISS DE C. What did you go as?

LOV. I – I went as the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Hebblethwaite went as a white cockatoo.

MAR. (*sings*) I thought I were a bird!

ALL. Oh, do be quiet.

DUKE. And now about this white cockatoo. What was it like?

LOV. Well, it had a long beak and a great crest on the top of its head.

MAR. (*leaning over chair behind MISS MONTMORENCI*) A white crest?

LOV. (*Same business*) No – the crest wasn't white – the crest was yellow, and the beak was black.

MAR. Then, my boy, why did you say it was a white cockatoo?

LOV. Because, my boy, it was white in every respect, except the crest and the beak. The head, the wings, the legs, and the body were covered all over with little white feathers.

HEB. Oh, do go on with the story.

ALL. Yes, the story. (*then continue general conversation loudly, pull bon bons, &c.*)

LOV. Oh well, if you won't listen, I'll leave off.

ALL. No – no – go on.

LOV. Well, I made Hebblethwaite very tipsy – very tipsy indeed, because Hebblethwaite's head isn't strong, and he can't take so much as I can; but then I can take more than most men –

DUKE. Well, you do –

LOV. Without shewing it. Well, when he was as tipsy as he could be, I put him into an omnibus, and sent him home.

DUKE. Put him into a what?

LOV. An omnibus, your Royal Grace –

DUKE. What's an omnibus?

MRS. H. How should his Grace know what an omnibus is?

LOV. (*somewhat puzzled*) Well, it's a thing with a conductor. Well, we turned him out into the street, still dressed as a white cockatoo, and dressed as a white cockatoo he had to walk home through the streets of Manchester in broad daylight. (*laughs heartily*) That's my joke. (*towards end of speech he has risen from his chair, which unknowingly he pushes a little up stage; about to resume his seat, he misses it, and is held up by* SERVANT, *who catches him*)

LOV. (*angrily*) Come, come, I say, none of that. Leave me alone, sir! Keep your place, sir! There is no confounded pride about me; but keep your distance, sir, don't you do that again. (*SERVANT quite impassive*) Put me on the chair, sir, directly. (*SERVANT places him on chair*)

ALL. Come, come sir Adolphus!

LOV. Oh, it's all very well; I'm not proud, but I won't stand any confounded familiarity from anybody's flunkey. (*SERVANT helps him to wine*) Thanks, my boy, thanks!

*The LADIES put caps from bonbons on the heads of LOVIBOND and MARCOOLY.*

HEB. (*looking at watch*) Dear me, it's three o'clock.

LOV. Three o'clock, and I've got to surrender at the prison at nine. (*they rise, LOVIBOND on MARCOOLY'S R.*) I say, what a good fellow you are – so are you – (*turning to SERVANT on his R.*) – no, not you, you're not a good fellow – (*to DUKE, who is R., lighting a cigarette*) – so are you, though you *are* a duke. But you can't help that, it's congenital. But I say, a boy like you ought to have been in bed hours ago. It's too bad – he's a mere child – a mere child. (*all rise*)

DUKE. (*coming to them, R. C.*) I'm afraid the wine had disagreed with you.

MAR. (*L., tipsy*) What does he mean by that?

LOV. (*C.*) Wine disagreed with me – nothing of the sort, sir. How dare you say such a thing? It's my belief you're drunk, sir.

MAR. (*interposing*) Don't strike him, he's a baby.

LOV. He says I'm drunk. Baby says I'm intoxicated. (*recklessly*) Well, yes, I am intoxicated, but it's not with wine, not with wine, my Lord Grace.

DUKE. Indeed! with what then?

LOV. With beauty, my Lord Duke. I'm intoxicated with the beauty of the lovely women with whom you have surrounded us. (*kissing MRS. HEBBLETHWAITE'S hand*)

MRS. H. Sir, you are impertinent!

LOV. *Does get on with her husband!* (MISS DE COURCY *has seated herself at the piano, and commences to play*) What the doose are you playing the piano for?

SERVANTS *move table off, C., and chairs back, R. and L.*

DUKE. We are going to dance. Come, take your partners.

*They take partners. LOVIBOND takes MISS MONTMORENCI; MARCOOLY, MRS. HEBBLETHWAITE; HEBBLETHWAITE, MISS FITZBATTLEAXE; the DUKE, MISS DE VERE; they dance.*

QUADRILLE.

*Towards end of dance LOVIBOND pulls out his watch, and calls for his hat and coat. MARCOOLY imitates him, and SERVANTS enter, R. and L., with their hats and coats; they each put on the other's – shake hands with each other, hurriedly, and exeunt, LOVIBOND, C., and MARCOOLY, R.; the guests all fall into chairs about the room, bursting with laughter, and during the confusion the*

ACT DROP FALLS.

## ACT III.

SCENE – GOVERNOR’S offices in the County Jail. Table, L. H., with tea things, set, kettle over spirit lamp, gong bell, &c. Table on castors, and two chairs, R. H. Table against R. flat, with water bottle and glass on it. The music of Quadrille played in orchestra. Enter MARCOOLY, D.L.C.; his hat is over his eyes and his coat is buttoned awry; he tries to walk straight, looks round him, tires to make out where he is, tries to take off his overcoat, pulls at left sleeve with right hand; he waltzes slowly to music; eventually he gets off his coat and after business of hanging it up R. C., where there is no nail, makes tea with tipsy gravity, endeavours to steady himself and tries to appear sober. Eventually he speaks.

MAR. Come, come, this won’t do. I’ve got to make my first appearance in court in less than an hour, and I must be sober – it’s expected of me. Most unfortunate thing it should have happened to-night – no, to-day – no, last night – no, this morning – it’s the same thing – don’t often happen – happens very seldom – very seldom, indeed. Come, come, Marcooly, pull yourself together. Where’s Wilcox? (*rings bell*) He mustn’t see me like this – compromise dignity, never do! (*with great emphasis*) Come, come, pull yourself together, this will *not* do – better sit down, feel steadier sitting down – not that chair, arm-chair – feel steadier in arm-chair. (*sits in arm-chair, L. of L. table. Music of Quadrille again played in orchestra.*)

*Enter LOVIBOND, door, L. C. He removes his hat – the paper head-dress is still on his head.*

LOV. (*comes down to R. of L. table*) I beg your pardon, is this the county jail. (*sees MARCOOLY*)

MAR. Confound it! it’s Sir Adolphus Fitz-what-d’ye-call-it.

LOV. It’s the white cockatoo – he’s been kicking up a row and he’s in custody. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

MAR. Sir! I –

LOV. Never mind, old fellow – boys will be boys! What are you in for?

MAR. (*appearing much confused*) I – I am not in custody. I – in short, I think I’d better tell you the whole truth – you’re a baronet and a man of the world, and you won’t violate a confidence. Strictly speaking –

LOV. Good boy! always tell the truth.

MAR. Strictly speaking, I am not exactly Sir Ferdinand Bracebridge. I’m ’shamed to say I’m Mr. Marcooly, new governor of this prison.

LOV. (*with dignity*) The deuce you are! Then let me ask you how dare you assume a title and position to which you have no claim?

MAR. It was wrong I admit – ’shamed o’ myself, blush if you like; but I didn’t want it known first ’ficial evening spent at a supper party.

LOV. Inexcusable, sir, inexcusable. I shall report the circumstance to the Home Office.

MAR. No, no, don’t do that! Look it over this time, Sir Adolphus, and I’ll give you a cup of tea.

LOV. Thanks, my boy, thanks!

MAR. You see, Sir Adolphus –

LOV. Don't Sir Adolphus, me, sir – my name's Lovibond!

MAR. What? Then you're not a baronet?

LOV. Not yet.

*They look at one another for a moment, then both burst out laughing.*

LOV. I'm Jonathan Lovibond, committed for trial for assaulting a railway orphan, and I've come to surrender to my bail.

MAR. Hallo! what's this? You don't mean to tell me that you are Lovibond, the husband of Mrs. Lovibond?

LOV. I am that lady's husband.

MAR. Go along with you! Why, we've got you here.

LOV. (*bursting with laughter*) He's as drunk as a lord. (*drinks tea*)

MAR. Why, my good sir, I arrested Jonathan Lovibond at ten o'clock last night.

LOV. Go along!

MAR. I assure you I am speaking the truth.

LOV. (*chaffingly*) And where did you arrest him?

MAR. Where? Why, at Miranda Villa, Prospero Road.

LOV. (*staggered*) Say that again. (*putting down tea-cup*)

MAR. Miranda Villa, Prospero Road.

LOV. (*getting serious*) At what time did you say?

MAR. At ten o'clock last night.

LOV. I say, come now, a joke's a joke. Do you mean to tell me seriously that you arrested Jonathan Lovibond last night?

MAR. Distinctly.

LOV. Describe the room.

MAR. Nice room, two windows, green paper, crimson curtains, Duke of Wellington over the clock on the mantel-piece.

LOV. And when you arrested him he was alone?

MAR. Alone! not a bit of it – he was with his wife.

LOV. What! say that again!

MAR. He was with his wife – a very pretty woman – painful scene. Poor little lady, my heart bled for her. There's a devoted wife; she loves her husband if you like. If you could have seen them crying, and kissing, and hugging, when I took him away, it would have done your heart good and made you believe there was some good in human nature after all. Very painful scene.

LOV. Would it? Come now, a joke's a joke, but this is going a great deal too far.

MAR. Sir, I never joke in business. Marcooly, the man of pleasure, is one thing, Marcooly, the stern official, is another. Keep 'em apart, as I do – as I do.

LOV. (*with deadly calm*) Is this man, this Lovibond, here?

MAR. To be sure he is, and here he's likely to remain; he's in cell No. 12.

LOV. Let me see him.

MAR. Impossible, with out an order. (*coming down to L.C.*) Besides, I don't think you're quite in a fit state to see any prisoner; you're not sober, sir. Come again in an

hour; you'll be better then. But it's ten o'clock, I must go into court; you'll excuse me, I'm sure, the pressing nature of my duties is my apology. (*aside*) Hang it, Marcoolly, old man pull yourself together. Positively, this *will not* do. (*Exit, L.C.*)

LOV. What did he say? another man arrested in my place last night – in my house with my wife? Come, come, think this out; steady, steady – let me see old man, think this out. In that cell, No. 12, Jonathan Lovibond, and in this room there is also a Jonathan Lovibond – that is to say, I am here and I am also there, and when I ask if I can see myself I am told no, I cannot see myself because I am not sober enough, I must have an order. Difficult to follow – try again. (*sits, L. of R. table*)

*Enter WILCOX, with PORTIBOY, in wig and gown, L. C.*

WIL. (*crossing to door, R.*) If you'll sit down for one moment, Mr. Portiboy, I'll go and fetch Jonathan Lovibond. (*Exit, R.*)

POR. Hallo! (*sees LOVIBOND*) What is the idiot talking about? he's gone to fetch you, and here you are all the time.

LOV. That surprises you, don't it? Well, it doesn't surprise me; it's quite consistent with the duality of existence with which I have just had reason to believe I am endowed. I am here, I am there; I am at a supper party, and I am arrested in my own house; I want to see myself, and I can't because I haven't an order.

POR. (C.) Poor fellow, his misfortune has turned his brain.

LOV. What are you doing here?

POR. Doing here? Why, I have come to consultation.

LOV. With whom?

POR. With you – you sent for me.

LOV. Did I? I've no recollection of having done so. Very happy to see you, though.

POR. Why, a policeman came to me just now, and told me that Jonathan Lovibond wanted to see me at once in cell No. 12.

LOV. (*violently, staring up*) That's the other Jonathan Lovibond. Look here, Portiboy, you are a poor devil of a briefless barrister, you don't make bread and cheese by your profession, and you never will. I've been a mother to you, I've fed you, lodged you, helped you in every way – you're under stupendous obligation to me. Well, it's in your power to abolish this obligation in one blow.

POR. Tell me how, and by Heaven, I'll strike it.

LOV. Lend me your wig and gown for half an hour, and I'll cry quits.

POR. Never! This wig and gown shall never lend themselves to a lie.

LOV. I *said* you'd never make bread and cheese by your profession. Now, look here, Portiboy; I began quietly, but quietness won't do, so now I'll try violence. (*seizing him*) Portiboy, if you don't lend me that foolish wig for half an hour I'll throttle you. (*snatches off wig, he puts on, and PORTIBOY gives him gown*)

POR. Well, well, for half an hour only, mind, and then you'll return them. (*aside, going, L.C.*) Oh, my dear friend, only wait till I address the jury in your defence! (*Exit, L.C.*)

LOV. (*putting on gown*) There! now I can see myself without an order. (*Enter ALFRED, R. D., still in dressing gown and smoking cap.*) Who's this? 'Tis I! I mean, 'tis he! No, 'tis us! Now I shall know all.

ALF. My dear sir, it's very kind of you to dispense with the expensive intervention of a solicitor. I am delighted to see you.

LOV. (*sternly*) Sit down, sir! (*furiously*) Sit down, will you! (*aside*) My dressing gown!

ALF. (*goes to R. of R. table*) You don't know how anxiously I have been expecting you.

LOV. Will you sit down! (*sits, R.*) My smoking cap!

ALF. Now I'll tell you my case; you'll say it's the best joke you ever heard in all your life.

LOV. (*furiously*) Shall I, oh, shall I!

ALF. I beg your pardon!

LOV. I mean, I shall, I shall! Now let us commence this consultation quietly and calmly. (*furiously*) Who the devil are you?

ALF. (*rather frightened*) My name is –

LOV. Not Lovibond – don't say it's Lovibond – I won't have it – mind that!

ALF. No, no, that's just it; it's not Lovibond – that's the point of the joke. They would have it that I must be Lovibond because they found me in the dark with Lovibond's wife.

LOV. (*rising furiously*) Monster! (*beating his breast*) Down – down – down! (*sits*)

ALF. (*rises*) What do you mean down, down?

LOV. I mean sit down, sit down. Now then, once more, who the devil are you?

ALF. Alfred Trimble, leader of the band.

LOV. Oh, *you* are Alfred Trimble, are you? a damned fiddler!

ALF. A what?

LOV. A famed fiddler – a famous fiddler – I have heard of you; you are quite a ladies' man, eh, Alfred Trimble?

ALF. A ladies' man! That's my exact description. I adore the ladies; whatever you do, don't forget that in my defence.

LOV. Oh, never fear, I won't forget it. And so last night you dared to introduce yourself clandestinely into the house of this excellent man.

ALF. What excellent man? Lovibond?

LOV. Of course.

ALF. My dear friend, you mustn't call him an excellent man if you're going to defend *me*; you must paint him in the blackest colours, you must make him out to be one of the most infernal scoundrels unhung.

LOV. (*aside*) Down, down, down!

ALF. (*rises*) What *do* you mean by down, down, down?

LOV. I mean sit down.

ALF. (*sits*) There's something about this barrister's manner that don't seem to inspire me with confidence. (*aloud*) Now, pray bear in mind that if you are going to defend me, you must come down heavily on the husband.

LOV. All right, I'll look after him.

ALF. How do you propose to treat him?

LOV. (*furiously*) Treat him! like this. (*rises, leans over table, and half throttles him, then takes up table and bangs it down. ALFRED in great terror.*)

ALF. I say, there's no mistake? You are quite sure you come here to defend me?

LOV. Yes, yes, to defend you; don't mind me, it's my way (*resuming*) Now then; you said that when they arrested you, you were alone in the dark with this miserable woman.

ALF. But, I say, you mustn't call her a miserable woman, or you'll play the deuce with my case. No, no; you must make her out to be an angel – it will enhance the interest. Now, pray don't forget, the husband is a scoundrel, the wife an angel.

LOV. An angel! A wretched creature who, in spite of all her solemn vows, – for she had plighted solemn vows, mind that – (*crossing to L.C.*)

ALF. Yes, that's true – I had forgotten that; she certainly had plighted vows.

LOV. Vows that she has wilfully and shamelessly broken?

ALF. Vows that she had broken entirely, completely, and absolutely.

LOV. (*leaping upon him*) Absolutely, you said absolutely?

ALF. Of course; why, she married another!

LOV. Married another! What vows are you referring to?

ALF. Why, the vows she made before she married.

LOV. Oh! (*releasing him*) I beg your pardon; I was speaking of vows she made *when* she married.

ALF. (*on ground, L.*) I say, there's no mistake, you're quite sure you've come here to defend me? because you've the queerest way of showing it.

LOV. Don't mind me, it's my way; when I take an interest in a case I get excited. I'm always like that when I take an interest in a case. Sit down!

*ALFRED draws chair cautiously from table and sits, L.C.*

ALF. Well, then you must refer to our youthful days, you must draw an affecting picture of my heart-broken devotion to my beloved Fanny!

LOV. His beloved Fanny!

ALF. Yes, her name's Fanny. You must describe us as young, beautiful, tender, sympathetic, and absolutely devoted to one another. Then having fascinated the Court with this graceful picture, you can go on to the husband, the cowardly, brutal, and neglectful husband – give it him, give it him hot! don't spare him – but mind, not a word against Fanny, or she'll never speak to me again.

LOV. (*furiously*) Dog!

*LOVIBOND runs table up to him, follows with chair, leans over, shakes him, takes up table, and bangs it down.*

ALF. I beg your pardon, I didn't quite catch that last expression.

LOV. I said "dog;" and when I say "dog," you will understand that I mean "lucky dog."

ALF. I see, Well, perhaps altogether I am a lucky dog.

LOV. And since her marriage I suppose that you and she have often met?

ALF. What, on the sly?

LOV. Yes, on the sly.

ALF. Well, no; I saw her last night for the first time.

LOV. Tell me everything that took place last night; mind, everything. In stating your case to counsel, there must be absolutely no reserve. Now then, at what time did you see

her?

ALF. At nine o'clock.

LOV. And was she alone?

ALF. Quite alone.

LOV. And what was the first thing you did?

ALF. I dined!

LOV. Dined?

ALF. Yes, and devilish well, too! I had soup, fried soles, cutlets –

LOV. Galantine, cold pheasant, and roly-poly pudding!

ALF. (*surprised*) Yes; how in the world did you know that?

LOV. (*rather at a loss*) I guessed it; I – I am accustomed to cases of this kind, and I know that when a wife makes clandestine appointments with the leader of an orchestra that is the dinner that is usually provided. Well?

ALF. Well, I accused her of having betrayed me; she admitted it, and with tears implored my forgiveness; I was on the very point of forgiving her when I was arrested.

LOV. Is that all?

ALF. Yes, that's all.

LOV. You have forgotten nothing?

ALF. Nothing whatever!

LOV. (*relieved*) Then I forgive you. Stop, there's one thing still unexplained – two things; that dressing gown and smoking cap – take them off, sir.

ALF. But –

LOV. Not a word, sir; take them off, and give them to me, sir!

ALF. But I shall catch my death of cold. (*takes them off*)

*LOVIBOND takes off wig and gown, which ALFRED puts on.*

LOV. Now, sir, explain how you came to be possessed of these articles. You will never pretend that you called on this lady in a dressing gown and smoking cap.

ALF. No, no, they belong to the husband; that's the very point of the joke. I left mine at his house, and put on his by mistake.

LOV. (*flying at him and getting him down in R. corner*) Scoundrel! Villain! (*shaking him*)

ALF. (*quite helpless in corner*) I say, there's no mistake? You are quite sure you come here to defend me?

*Enter the DUKE, HEBBLETHWAITE, and MARCOOLY, C., with papers.*

MAR. Your Grace will find him here, in close consultation with his legal adviser.

DUKE. His legal adviser seems to be getting the worst of it. No wonder consultation fees are high!

HEB. Why, it's Alfred Trimble!

LOV. This villain was arrested last night in my house, with my wife, in my absence.

DUKE. Too bad of Trimble; but I wouldn't quite murder him if I were you.

LOV. Why not?

DUKE. Because the whole affair is a joke. It's a got-up thing. Hebblethwaite will tell

you so. The White Cockatoo is avenged.

LOV. Then do you mean to tell me that my wife did not invite this little idiot to my house last night?

ALF. Sir!

HEB. I am sure she didn't; and now I think you'll own you've fairly lost.

LOV. Over and over again. The White Cockatoo hasn't a feather to fly with; and I actually suspected my dear little wife! Why, I must have been mad to have supposed she could have cared for such a preposterous little ape as that. (*to ALFRED*) I beg your pardon; I don't know what I'm saying.

*Enter FANNY, C.*

FAN. Oh, my dear, Jonathan, such a terrible thing happened last night.

LOV. Fanny, I know all about it. Tell me that you forgive me, and I promise you to do my term of imprisonment on my head. (*kisses her*)

ALF. What, under my very nose!

LOV. No, under my very nose; I always take it there.

MAR. Hallo!

ALL. What's the matter?

MAR. Why, if the Grand Jury haven't thrown out the bill against Jonathan Lovibond. Well, I *am* surprised!

LOV. Hang the Grand Jury! Here's a much grander jury here, in whose hands I cheerfully leave the question of my guilt or innocence. (*to audience*) Ladies and gentlemen, I don't want to hurry you in your decision, I will gladly surrender again tomorrow night, if in the meantime you will allow me out for another twenty-four hours on bail.

HEB.	ALF.	DUKE.	FANNY.	LOV.	MARCOOLY.
R. H.					L. H.

*Curtain.*