

TWO MERRY MONARCHS

BY

ARTHUR ANDERSON & GEORGE N. LEVY
(LIBRETTO)

ARTHUR ANDERSON & HARTLEY CARRICK
(LYRICS)

ORLANDO MORGAN
(MUSIC)

1910

Edited by Scott Farrell and David Trutt

TWO MERRY MONARCHS
AN EDWARDIAN MUSICAL COMEDY

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ARTHUR ANDERSON AND GEORGE N. LEVY

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First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London
Thursday, March 10, 1910
Under the management of Mr. C. H. Workman

Libretto provided courtesy of Scott Farrell

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This opera first appeared at the Savoy Theatre on March 10, 1910 under management of Charles Workman, and ran there for 43 performances. Workman was the principal comedian at the Savoy, and famous for his portrayals of the comedy roles in Gilbert and Sullivan operas. He played roles such as the Major General and Sir Joseph and KoKo and Jack Point, and he was very famous in London and the provinces. Upon retirement of Mrs. D'Oyly Carte in March 1909, Workman took over Savoy management in an effort to keep Savoy traditions in London going, and rather than produce the works that made him famous, he presented entirely new pieces in the same way that Richard D'Oyly Carte did in the 1890s when Gilbert and Sullivan were not working together.

The 1909 production of *The Mountaineers* was the first production in Workman's season of light opera. This was succeeded by Gilbert's *Fallen Fairies*, which proved to be an immediate failure. In an effort to give the public what they wanted, instead of trying to lead them to higher things, he produced a musical comedy: *Two Merry Monarchs*, his third production at the Savoy. The work was the last piece that could be considered a Savoy opera.

After the short Savoy run it transferred to the Strand Theatre in London, where it ran for an additional six performances, from 30 April to 6 May 1910, and a provincial tour in the late summer of 1910. Another tour was given in the spring of 1911. The score is apparently lost, having never been published.

Workman's last production at the Savoy was a brief run of Gluck's *Orpheus* which closed after 23 performances. Workman relinquished control of the Savoy. Mrs. Carte and then her son, Rupert D'Oyly Carte, leased the theatre to other managers, and no more new Savoy operas were produced.

The Libretto version presented herein is the license copy of the musical; a post-production libretto reflecting the first night and subsequent performances was not published. If it was, I have not located one. The Act 2 Finale of the musical is a spurious one—finales are usually not given in the license copy, and with nothing else to go by, I have inserted a fair guess at what the finale may have been.

Those who are unfamiliar with the opera may wish to begin with the SYNOPSIS on Page 82. For more information about this opera, please see my book *The Final Savoy Operas: A Centenary Review*, now available on www.lulu.com. On lulu Find, insert "Final Savoy Operas".

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING PAUL (of Esperanto)	Mr. Robert Whyte, jr.
KING UTOPS (of Utopia)	Mr. Lennox Pawle
ROLANDYL (Postmaster General and Assessor of Taxes in Esperanto)	Mr. C. H. Workman
HELVANOISE (A herald of King Paul)	Mr. Leslie Stiles
MANDAMUS (Lord Chief Justice of Utopia)	Mr. George Neville
HEAD FLUNKEY	Mr. Francis Pater
PRINCE CHARMIS (Governor of Police in Esperanto)	Mr. Roland Cunningham
PRINCESS CYNTHIA (adopted daughter of King Paul)	Miss Daisy le Hay
PRINCESS IRIS (Principal Lady-in-waiting)	Miss Alma Barber
CAROLINE (A public agitator)	Miss Mayne Young
DOROTHY (Ladies-in-waiting to Princess Cynthia)	Miss Aileen Peel
HERMIA	Miss Marie West
CARMENITA	Miss Betty Heaps
JEAN	Miss Joan Adair
CELESTE	Miss Adeline Waterlow
GRETCHEN	Miss Laurie Opperman
CHORUS of Populace consisting of:	
Commoners	
King's Bodyguard	
Out-of-work Judges	
Flunkeys	
Policemen	
Wreath-bearers	
Ballroom Guests.	

ACT 1. Courtyard outside the Royal Palace of Esperanto. Page 5

ACT 2: Reception room in the Royal Palace of Esperanto Page 43

[See Page 82 for a Synopsis of *Two Merry Monarchs*.]

(ACT 1 - Scene: A Public Square outside the Palace at Esperanto. Music to take up Curtain which rises to empty stage. The tocsin-bell peals three times. CHORUS of Populace runs on at the sound of the bell, form into groups and excitedly discuss the situation.)

CHORUS. Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!
 Why is the tocsin pealing, pealing?
 Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong bell!
 Wait we the explanation, kneeling, kneeling!
 Ding-dong bell!
 In great anxiety we all assemble
 For, the truth to tell,
 It provokes a funny feeling.
 We have learnt to fear and tremble
 At the message of the Tocsin-bell!

(There is silence as the bell peals again three times.)

CHORUS. Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!
 SOLO. We all do know and know full well
 That three loud peals of the Tocsin-bell
 Do summon all from near and far,
 And in obedience, here we are.
 We come in fear and trepidation
 To a Royal Proclamation!

(Enter HELVANOISE, with a scroll.)

SOLO. We greet you, Helvanoise, the herald of our king.

CHORUS. We greet you, Helvanoise. What message do you bring?

HELVANOISE. Be it known to all our subjects that,
 Whereas we have received information
 That our people are indulging,
 As we could not have believed,
 In promiscuous and vulgar osculation,
 With due deliberation, we
 By virtue of our Majestee,
 Do publish, order and decree
 As follows—

HELVANOISE. As labial embracing is absurd, in our opinion,
 We intend to put it down, without delay.
 And so it is forbidden in our up-to-date dominion
 For a year, that is a twelvemonth, from to-day.
 And in case our royal diction your poor craniums may fuddle,
 Our decree in simpler phrasing comes to this—
 You may ogle and canoodle, you may flirt and even cuddle,
 But the punishment is banishment for those of you who kiss!
 Of course all married couples from this edict are exempted
 But to single folk our orders are precise.
 Though, if perchance by Cupid past endurance you are tempted,
 You can always get permission at a price.
 If you're satisfied that kissing of enjoyment is the acme,
 If you're anxious our Exchequer to refill,
 You can always buy a licence for a paltry thousand drachmae
 From our great and valued minister, the worthy Rolandyl.

CHORUS (*kneeling*). Although distressed and sad are we,
 To hear the message that you bring,
 We reverently bow the knee,
 It is the Edict of the King! (*Exit* HELVANOISE.)

GIRLS (*rising*).

Here's a dreadful situation!

MEN.

What are we to do, girls?

GIRLS.

What can be the explanation?

MEN.

We have not a clue, girls.

GIRLS.

We could weep in our vexation—

MEN.

Useless to boo-hoo, girls.

GIRLS.

Here's a dreadful situation!

MEN.

Kissing is taboo, girls.

CHORUS.

Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!

(Exit chorus, leaving the six ladies-in-waiting: HERMIA, DOROTHY, JEAN, CARMENITA, CELESTE and GRETCHEN on stage.)

HERMIA (*sadly*). This is a pretty state of things.

DOROTHY. Horrid.

JEAN. No kissing for twelve months!

CARMENITA. And even then the Edict may be renewed!

CELESTE. If it is, girls, I can see myself getting married.

GRETCHEN. I wish *I* could!

HERMIA. Don't look so miserable, Gretchen, if the worst comes to the worst, we can always get licences.

DOROTHY. But they are horribly expensive.

JEAN. That wouldn't affect us. Any man would think it is a privilege to pay.

CARMENITA. But it would take away all the romance.

CELESTE. True. Heigh-ho, what are we to do?

(*Enter PRINCESS IRIS.*)

GIRLS (*sighing*). Heigh-ho!

IRIS (*laughing*). Hullo, girls. What's the matter?

GRETCHEN. Go on, Iris, laugh away, you don't know about the proclamation.

IRIS. Don't I! I've known it for three days.

GRETCHEN. Three days! How?

IRIS (*loftily*). What's the good of being engaged to the Postmaster General if you can't tap the telephone wires?

HERMIA. We never knew you were engaged. Are you really?

IRIS. Well, not exactly. The fact is we're negotiating.

DOROTHY. What a horrid word! It sounds as if it were a business transaction.

IRIS. It is. When Cupid comes to tea with me, he's got to bring a banker's reference and two sureties.

CARMENITA. You are mercenary. Has Rolandyl found them?

IRIS. Not yet; *he's* negotiating.

JEAN. You're very fond of that word. I don't even know the meaning of it.

IRIS. Poor Jean! Then ye're no the canny Scot your name implies.

(*Song - IRIS with LADIES-IN-WAITING*)

IRIS. If a maiden wants to marry, she has lots of things to learn,
I'm assuming that she wants to marry nicely;
 Ere she chooses out a lover,
 It behooves her to discover
 What attractions he can offer her.

GIRLS. Precisely!

IRIS. She must keep her suitors waiting, she must favour each in turn
 And at times, but only when it's necessary,
 Tell a lie, a little white one
 Till she hits upon the right one,
 Do you think such tactics reasonable?

GIRLS. Very!

IRIS. It's a matter of negoti-oti-ation.
 It's a duty, it's a pleasure, it's an Art.
 You will never dream of jibbing
 At a little honest fibbing
 If you only take my principles to heart.
 But the moment you begin it,
 Poor Sapphira won't be in it,
 If you only take my principles to heart!
 When the honeymoon is over and they've settled down in life,
 By permission of "His Majesty the Baby,"
 He will shun domestic blisses
 Such as bread and cheese and kisses
 And will long for some variety—

GIRLS. It may be!

IRIS. Well, of course, she might be hasty, but if she's a clever wife,
 She will humour him in this and other small ways,
 At the price of, say, a bonnet
 For 'm sure he'll look upon it
 As a very welcome proposition—

GIRLS. Always!

IRIS. It's a matter of negoti-oti-ation.
 It's a duty, it's a pleasure, it's an Art.
 And his purse will be affected
 Every time you are neglected
 If you only take my principles to heart.
 And your life will all be honey
 With unlimited pin-money
 If you only take my principles to heart.

IRIS. If the bonnets grow in number, and she's more than she can wear,
 She should pull him up and tell him to go lightly,
 For it might provoke a scandal
 If he's more than she can handle,
 And she doesn't want to risk it—

GIRLS. Very rightly!

IRIS. But if matters reach a crisis, and it's more than she can bear,
 For she finds he's playing "Veni, Vidi, Vici,"
 A judicious application
 For "judicial separation"
 Will avoid the publication of—

GIRLS. A "Nisi"!

IRIS. It's a matter of negoti-oti-ation.
 You agree that you'll be happier apart,
 And as soon as you've decided
 That your house shall be divided,
 You divide from one another, as a start!
 You will leave him little Sonny
 While he pays the alimony
 If you only take my principles to heart!

GIRLS. It's a matter of negoti-oti-ation,
 You agree that you'll be happier apart,
 And as soon as you've decided
 That your house shall be divided,
 You divide from one another, as a start!

(All laugh.)

HERMIA *(to IRIS)*. You seemed to have tapped the telephone wires pretty extensively.

CELESTE. Yes, I'm sorry for Rolandyl; you do know a lot.

IRIS. There's nothing that escapes me.

JEAN. Then perhaps you can tell us the reason of this Edict.

IRIS. Ah, that *is* a poser!

DOROTHY. But I thought you knew everything.

IRIS. Give me time, girls. I shall get it out of Rolandyl before very long.

CARMENITA. Still negotiating? That is disappointing. You were our last hope; but perhaps you're not interested.

IRIS. On the contrary, I'm just as anxious as you are.

CELESTE. Well, if you can't find out, nobody can, unless—

ALL. Yes? Who?

CELESTE. I thought perhaps Princess Cynthia—

IRIS. Great idea! We'll ask her.

CELESTE. When?

IRIS. No time like the present. (*takes pocket telephone*) Hullo-hullo-hullo! Are you there? 4 Y Palace, please. What's that? Why? Because I want it. Did I say why? No, you said "why." Oh, I see, 4 Y, that's right. Hullo, hullo. Is that you, Cynthia? We want you. Yes, Iris. Will you come in the Square? Why not? Oh, bother, can't you put it off? It's most important. Won't wait—You will come? Good! (*replaces telephone*) It's all right, girls, she's coming now. (*telephone bell goes*) Hullo! Is that you, Cynthia? No, then who is it? The Exchange? Well, what is it? What? Haven't paid for the last call? I beg your pardon; I beg yours. Well, how dare you? I'll speak to the Postmaster General about this. Will you? We'll see about that! Bah! Person! (*rings off*) And that's what they call the *Civil Service*!

(*Enter CYNTHIA.*)

CYNTHIA. Well, what is it? I didn't know princesses were at the beck and call of their Ladies-in-waiting.

IRIS. We're all so upset about this proclamation, we can't think what's the meaning of it.

CYNTHIA. More can I; I've been asking Rolandyl.

IRIS. What did he say?

CYNTHIA. He assumed his Official Department manner, said nothing at great length, and promised to communicate further in due course.

IRIS. I think *I* could pump him.

CYNTHIA. If you could get near him.

JEAN. Why?

CYNTHIA. Oh, he's simply besieged. The male half of the population are applying for licences, and the other half are hoping they'll get them.

CARMENITA. And we've been wasting our time here. Come along, girls.

(*Exit LADIES-IN-WAITING.*)

CYNTHIA. They seem in a great hurry. Who are the lucky men?

IRIS. Lucky men? Lucky *man*.

CYNTHIA. You mean?

IRIS. There's only one.

CYNTHIA. Indeed, and he is—

IRIS. Charmis, of course.

CYNTHIA. Oh!

IRIS. You don't seem pleased.

CYNTHIA. It isn't that; I happen to know he has other views. (*IRIS laughs as she goes toward exit.*) You seem to be amused.

IRIS. Yes, I think I know somebody else who has other views.

CYNTHIA. Really? Who?

IRIS (*handing mirror*). Can I lend you my mirror? (*Laugh and Exit.*)

CYNTHIA. Somebody else? I wonder who she means. (*Looking at mirror.*) I suppose you don't happen to know? Oh, yes you do, or else you wouldn't blush so. And you haven't seen him for a whole half hour. No wonder you look so serious.

(*Song - CYNTHIA*)

CYNTHIA.

A maiden feels so lonely
 When her lover is not near,
 Two little words "If Only"—
 Seem to whisper in her ear.
 If only this, if only that—
 Oh! What is Cupid at?
 It makes her heart go pit-a-pat—
 If only!

Hey! Lackaday! And alack! And alas!
 And it's "How the time drags; will the day never pass?"
 An occasional sigh, and a plaintive "if only"—
 That's love, when a maiden is lonely.

Her heart is over yonder
 When her lover is away;
 Her thoughts must ever wander
 From the duties of the day.
 She cannot smile, she does not sing,
 Or care for anything,
 But spends her moments wondering—
 If only!

Hey! Lackaday! And alack! And alas!
 Etc.

(*PRINCE CHARMIS is heard off stage and takes up the refrain as he enters.*)

CHARMIS.

Hey! Lackaday! And alack! And alas!
 And it's "How the time drags; will the day never pass?"
 An occasional sigh, and a plaintive "if only"—
 That's love, when a lover is lonely.

(*Picture.*)

CHARMIS. Cynthia.

CYNTHIA. Charmis. (*He advances hastily towards her, places his arm around her and is about to kiss her. Cynthia holds up her hand.*) One moment. (*coyly*) All tickets, please.

CHARMIS. Tickets!

CYNTHIA. Well, perhaps I should say "licences." Haven't you got one?

CHARMIS. No, what for?

CYNTHIA. Surely you've heard the proclamation?

CHARMIS. What proclamation?

CYNTHIA. Against kissing.

CHARMIS. Not a word.

CYNTHIA. What! You, the Governor of Police, don't know the law?

CHARMIS. We're not expected to know the law; it's as much as we can do to enforce it.

CYNTHIA. But how can you if you don't know?

CHARMIS. Nothing is impossible to the police.

CYNTHIA (*hopefully*). Then perhaps they can evade the law.

CHARMIS. I have been known to do that! But it wouldn't be right for me to countenance such a thing. You were going to suggest?

CYNTHIA. Hardly suggest. I was only thinking it's rather a pity you happen to be the Governor of Police.

CHARMIS (*sighs*). In the circumstances, yes.

CYNTHIA (*sighs*). With a conscience.

CHARMIS (*sighs*). It is a drawback, isn't it?

CYNTHIA. Undoubtedly. If you hadn't a conscience it wouldn't matter so much your being Governor of Police. It's the unusual combination that's so awkward.

CHARMIS. But you said something about licences. Are they difficult to obtain?

CYNTHIA. Quite easy; it's merely a matter of a thousand drachmae.

CHARMIS. Then the sooner I get one, the better. (*Goes to exit, stops, hesitates and returns.*) By the way, does one have to give any particulars?

CYNTHIA. Only the names of the two consenting parties.

CHARMIS. That makes it rather awkward.

CYNTHIA. Why?

CHARMIS. Everyone will know we are engaged.

CYNTHIA. Does it necessarily follow?

CHARMIS (*bowing*). When the lady happens to be the Princess Cynthia.

CYNTHIA (*sighs*). I'm afraid you're right. It's very unsatisfactory, isn't it?

CHARMIS (*sighs*). Very, very.

CYNTHIA. I suppose you wouldn't care to risk it?

CHARMIS. Cynthia! (*Puts his arm round her.*)

CYNTHIA. Of course, you know the penalty.

CHARMIS. Penalty?

CYNTHIA. Yes. Banishment! Rather severe, isn't it?

CHARMIS. That depends. Would it be banishment for both?

CYNTHIA. Naturally.

CHARMIS (*eagerly*). Together?

CYNTHIA. I don't know. I never thought of that.

CHARMIS. Well, it's rather an important point. (*Pause.*)

CYNTHIA *and* CHARMIS. I wonder!

CHARMIS. By Jove, it must be! Cynthia—

CYNTHIA. Yes?

CHARMIS. Banishment means exile from one's native country. There only two countries in the world, Esperanto and Utopia. And Utopia with you—of course I will. (*Embrace. Duet - CYNTHIA and CHARMIS.*)

CHARMIS. I am longing, dear, to kiss you
Even though it is taboo.
And will gladly raise the issue
Whatsoever may ensue.

CYNTHIA. In your aspiration sharing,
I'm prepared to take my cue.
For, although you're very daring,
I am just as brave as you.

CHARMIS. For a kiss I'm simply dying;
What have you to say?

CYNTHIA. Are you sure there's no one spying?
Do be careful, pray!

BOTH. Cupid, when a Royal Diet
Issues Edict fell,
Oft transgresses, on the quiet;
Prudence flies, when love run riot,—
Kiss and never tell!

CHARMIS. Why should we affection smother?
There is nobody in view!
One kiss deserves another,
Won't you let me make it two?

CYNTHIA. There's a quaint old-fashioned saying,
Which in principle is sound:
"When the piper you are paying
In for penny, in for pound!"

CHARMIS. For another I am dying, Etc.

(After duet, CHARMIS and CYNTHIA exeunt.)

(Confused murmuring off; crowd rush on all talking at once, followed by CAROLINE.)

CAROLINE. Silence! *(Noise decreases but continues.)*

1ST COMMONER. Silence for Caroline.

2ND COMMONER. We will hear Caroline.

CAROLINE. My friends, we must redress.

ALL. Redress!

CAROLINE. And we mean to have it.

ALL. We do!

CAROLINE. We are not satisfied with the Government of our country.

ALL. Down with Rolandyl!

CAROLINE. Exactly. Who is responsible for this unnatural edict?

ALL. Rolandyl!

CAROLINE. Who is responsible for these exorbitant taxes?

ALL. Rolandyl!

CAROLINE. Who takes cent per cent of our income and forces us to live on our capital?

ALL. Rolandyl!

CAROLINE. Who wants a good talking to?

ALL. Rolandyl!

CAROLINE. And who means to see that the gets it?

ALL. Rol- !

1ST COMMONER. No! Caroline!

ALL. Hurrah for Caroline.

CAROLINE. My friends, the power is now in your hands; your demands are just.

ALL. Yes!

CAROLINE. Your demands are reasonable.

ALL. They are!

CAROLINE. But you cannot voice them yourselves. You call on me to speak for you.

ALL. We do!

CAROLINE. If I did not respond to your appeal, I should be unworthy of the noble name I bear. You shall not find us wanting. I come of a fighting race; I am proud to be your leader, and I will proclaim your grievances even to the prison door.

ALL. Hurrah for Caroline!

(CAROLINE goes to Palace bell and rings. ROLANDYL appears at Palace window overlooking the Square. Crowd groans.)

ROLANDYL. My friends. (*Crowd groans.*) Not bad, but a trifle throaty. (*Crowd groans.*) That's horrible. Now then, take a deep breath and say 'ninety-nine.' (*Crowd groans.*) Your voices are very bloodshot this morning.

ALL. Down with Rolandyl! We want the King!

ROLANDYL. All right, all right; give me time to deal.

CAROLINE. Down with the tyrant!

ROLANDYL. Naughty, naughty! I've never done you any harm.

CAROLINE. Bah! I'm not speaking for myself; I am "Vox Populi." (*Crowd cheers.*)

ROLANDYL. Sh-h! My friend "Nux Vomica" wishes to address you.

CAROLINE. I stand for the sacred cause of Freedom, the cause of the downtrodden.

ROLANDYL. Good for you, Sal Volatile—she'll chain herself to the railings in a minute.

ALL. Down with Rolandyl!

ROLANDYL. Your kind reception touches me.

ALL. The King! The King! We want the King!

ROLANDYL. His Majesty shall be informed. (*Exit ROLANDYL.*)

(*Crowd cheers amid fanfare of trumpets. Gates thrown open. Enter the king's bodyguard, followed by KING PAUL.*)

CHORUS. Hail! All hail!
 All hail to our king!
 King Esperanto!
 Hail! All hail!
 In unison sing
 A welcoming canto!
 Hail! Hail!
 Bow the knee!
 Hail! Hail!
 Dutiful we!
 Hail! Hail!
 Mighty is he!
 King Paul of Esperanto!

KING PAUL (*graciously*). We are overwhelmed by these touching evidences of your loyalty and goodwill. (*Bluntly*.) What do you want?

ALL. Redress! Redress!

KING PAUL. Do you mind saying that again? And don't bark it this time.

ALL. Redress! Redress!

KING PAUL. We haven't quite caught it now. Do you happen to travel with an interpreter?

CAROLINE. If your Majesty pleases—

KING PAUL. Our Majesty graciously condescends to listen. (*Bluntly*.) Get on with it.

CAROLINE. We are here to protest against this unnatural edict; we are here to convince your Majesty that it is unfair, unreasonable and prejudicial to the best interests of the commonweal.

KING PAUL. Heah! Heah!

CAROLINE. But your Majesty does not understand!

KING PAUL. On the contrary, our Majesty repeats—Heah! Heah! (*Crowd turns to one another and look surprised and pleased*.)

CAROLINE (*delighted*). Then your Majesty admits the justice of our demands?

KING PAUL. Undoubtedly. It's a perfect scandal.

CAROLINE. Then your Majesty will grant our petition?

KING PAUL. Well, we won't go so far as that. We applaud your sentiments—

ALL (*eagerly*). Yes?

KING PAUL. But unfortunately, our hands our tied.

ALL. Oh!

KING PAUL (*aside*). Interjection! denoting pain, surprise, sorrow. Compare medieval "I don't think," French "la la," and Hebraic "Half a mo!" (*Aloud*.) My people, you forget that the edict has now passed into law.

CAROLINE. A law can be repealed, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. True, and we will remove your grievances as soon as possible.

ALL. Hurrah!

KING PAUL. One moment. Unfortunately, as you know, by the rule of our Constitution, no law once passed can be repealed within a year. You see, that's where you feel the draught. You see our difficulty, don't you?

CAROLINE. Quite, your Majesty, but it's nothing to ours. What are we to do in the meanwhile?

KING PAUL. Either become total abstainers, or pay your money and take your choice.

CAROLINE. But it's so expensive, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. Necessaries always are. Besides, what you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts; you pay out large sums during the year, but as we work our kingdom on a profit-sharing basis, it follows that your dividend at the end of the year will be correspondingly increased.

CAROLINE. True, your Majesty, we hadn't thought of that.

1ST COMMONER. Oh, that *will* be nice!

2ND COMMONER. Long live the King!

ALL. Long live the King!

KING PAUL. Another moment, please—draught number two—there's a finnickin' little clause in our Articles of Association which says that we, as King, are entitled to seventy-five per cent of the profits. But that's one of those little things that might happen to anybody. It simply can't be helped.

CAROLINE (*insinuatingly*). Unless we alter the Articles of Association.

KING PAUL. Yes, I see what you mean, and I should love to do it, only I'm afraid it would never pass the Upper House.

CAROLINE. Then the Upper House must go.

KING PAUL. We think we've heard that before.

ALL. Redress! Redress!

KING PAUL. Redress! But we thought everything was satisfactorily arranged. (*sniffing*) You're very unreasonable. (*Crowd looks at one another, astonished.*) We don't see why you should bully us when we can't help ourselves. (*Crowd looks concerned and expostulate in dumb show with CAROLINE. One of the crowd gives KING PAUL a handkerchief. He wipes his eyes with it.*)

CAROLINE (*going to KING PAUL*). There, there, we didn't mean to be unkind.

KING PAUL (*weeping*). It's very hard; especially when we're trying to do our best for all concerned. (*Sobs bitterly.*)

(*Song - KING PAUL with CHORUS*)

KING PAUL (*recit.*). Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

CAROLINE. Alas! How true!

CHORUS. How very true!

KING PAUL. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now,
 My lot in life is sadness,
 I would atone, if you could tell me how,
 'Twould fill my heart with gladness.
 But then I can't do everything
 The law has got me on a string
 And to neglect the duties of a King
 Were simply madness.

KING PAUL. Alas! You do not comprehend
 You will not treat me as a friend,
 You seem to look upon me as your quarry.

CHORUS. Quarry, quarry.

KING PAUL. I'm very, very much distressed
 I only acted for the best
 Be mine the blame, and for the rest—
 I'm sorry, (*sobs*) Very sorry!

CHORUS Come! Come! Cheer up and dry your eyes.
 Your Edict caused us some surprise,
 But since you now apologize,
 We're sorry—very sorry!

KING PAUL. Your pardon, while I dry the silent tear,
 I wish I could be jolly!
 But woe is me! It seems that for a year,
 I'm doomed to melancholy.
 I feel I'd like to pay each fine,
 And fill my people's purse from mine,
 But to indulge such feelings asinine
 Were simply folly!
 Ah! Now I see you comprehend,
 You look upon me as a friend
 It only makes my life a Purgatory.
 —tory, tory.

CHORUS. —tory, tory.

KING PAUL. And so I grovel at your feet,
 The while your pardon I entreat
 And for the rest can but repeat
 I'm sorry, (*sobs*) Very sorry!

CHORUS. Come! Come! Cheer up and dry your eyes,
 In this direction madness lies.
 Don't worry! *We* apologize:
 We're sorry, very sorry!

(*Chorus exeunt leaving KING PAUL on steps, weeping.*)

(ROLANDYL *appears at window.*)

ROLANDYL (*in a loud whisper*). Have they gone?

(KING PAUL *continues to sob*. ROLANDYL *whistles*. KING PAUL *looks cautiously around, then whistles back.*) Have they gone, your Majesty?

KING PAUL. Yes.

ROLANDYL. Are you sure?

KING PAUL. Quite.

ROLANDYL. Then my place is by your side. I'm coming down.

KING PAUL. Good. I'll be on the look out.

(KING PAUL *rises, looks cautiously off back of stage*. ROLANDYL *enters from Palace.*)

ROLANDYL. What's all the bother about?

KING PAUL. The Edict. They don't like it.

ROLANDYL. It's not the first Licensing Bill that's been unpopular. What have you done?

KING PAUL. Wept them into submission. Tears, tidal tears.

ROLANDYL. The sovereign remedy against all ills. By the by, your Majesty, I don't want to be curious, but what's your little game?

KING PAUL. Sh-h! Can I trust you?

ROLANDYL. Till Saturday. (*They grip hands.*)

KING PAUL. I have decided to tell you the story of my life. (ROLANDYL *starts.*)

ROLANDYL (*taking out watch*). I'm rather busy; won't some other day do?

KING PAUL. Sh-h! No time like the present. Besides, to-day is my birthday.

ROLANDYL. Indeed. Many happy returns of the day. May I ask what age?

KING PAUL. I am nine hundred and fifty-eight.

ROLANDYL. Well, upon my word, you don't look it. What are you playing? A thousand up? But seriously—

KING PAUL. I am serious.

ROLANDYL. Then it's about time you made your will.

KING PAUL. I shall never make one.

ROLANDYL. I say, your Majesty, this is a serious matter to me. Don't joke about it.

KING PAUL. I'm not joking, Rolandyl.

ROLANDYL. Then where do *I* come in?

KING PAUL. You?

ROLANDYL. Yes, you don't think I've been doing your dirty work for nothing, do you?

KING PAUL. I'm sure you haven't. You've touched me too often.

ROLANDYL. I naturally expect to succeed when you die.

KING PAUL. I shall never die.

ROLANDYL. Then you'd better see a doctor.

KING PAUL. No, I'm not mad; I'm immortal. Nine hundred years ago, I discovered the Elixir of Life. I was then a poor struggling alchemist.

ROLANDYL. You've got on a bit since then. It must be good stuff, that. You don't happen to have a drop about you, do you? I should like to drink your Majesty's health!

KING PAUL. I'm afraid I haven't. I distilled only enough to fill one small phial.

ROLANDYL. Do you mean to say you drank it all yourself?

KING PAUL. No, I drank only one half.

ROLANDYL. Then I'll trouble you for the second half.

KING PAUL. Mine *was* the second half.

ROLANDYL. Then who had the first?

KING PAUL. My assistant. It was this way: when I discovered the secret, I hid the phial and prescription, thinking to sell it for untold gold. My assistant discovered my secret, and was in the act of drinking the Elixir when I entered the laboratory. He saw me and swallowed half of the precious liquid before I snatched it from his hand and drank the remainder.

ROLANDYL. Then there are two of you merry Methuselahs about. What's become of the other?

KING PAUL. I neither know nor care. He was a poor, brainless creature. In all probability he is eking out existence in some obscure garret longing for the death that will never come.

ROLANDYL. Anyhow, the tonic seems to have agreed with *you*, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. Yes, I've gone a long way, but not as far as I mean to.

ROLANDYL. You're a pushing young fellow for your age.

KING PAUL. Nothing shall stand between me and my goal.

ROLANDYL. And the goal is?

KING PAUL. To be king of the universe. Listen—there are only two kingdoms in the whole world.

ROLANDYL. Esperanto and Utopia.

KING PAUL. Twenty years ago, when I succeeded to the throne, I adopted the Princess Cynthia, infant daughter of the late King, and betrothed her to the king of Utopia, whom I have never seen.

ROLANDYL. A risky proceeding, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. Possibly—for her, not for me; that is how I began to acquire the kingdom of Utopia.

ROLANDYL. Oh, you *have* begun.

KING PAUL. I have almost finished. Since her infancy, under pretence of enhancing her beauty, I have brought her up on certain drugs. Those drugs were slow poisons.

ROLANDYL. I'm glad you didn't adopt *me*. But surely, your Majesty means no harm?

KING PAUL. Not to the Princess. I have merely been inoculating her in order to get her suitor into my power. Do you follow me?

ROLANDYL (*mystified*). I'm sorry. I'm afraid I've revoked.

KING PAUL. To-day the last trick will be played. To-day the king of Utopia comes to claim his bride. To-day the Princess Cynthia is so inoculated that she will be able to take a dose of deadly poison without any harm to herself. That is where *you* come in.

ROLANDYL (*nervously*). Oh-h, then I do come in, do I?

KING PAUL. Of course, my man; here, what's the matter with you? What are you shaking for?

ROLANDYL (*nervously*). I was afraid I was going to be left out.

KING PAUL. Don't worry. You shall, yourself, take the poison—

ROLANDYL. I—I—mercy—mercy—

KING PAUL. And administer it to the princess.

ROLANDYL. I'm a postman, not a doctor!

KING PAUL. I will entrust the poison to your keeping. (*Hands ROLANDYL a small box.*)

ROLANDYL. It's against postal regulations to carry poisons.

KING PAUL. Rubbish!

ROLANDYL (*with hands shaking*). Would you mind putting it in my pocket? I'm afraid I might drop it. (KING PAUL *does so.*) Thank you. I hope it's properly sealed.

KING PAUL. Then you understand!

ROLANDYL. But what happens when the drug is administered?

KING PAUL. The lovers meet; the lovers kiss; by that kiss, the poison takes effect; the king of Utopia is about to die; I hold the only antidote; he will barter crown and country for the antidote. Rather neat, eh?

ROLANDYL. Your Majesty! But how does the Edict fit in with this scheme?

KING PAUL. Merely a simple but necessary precaution. One cannot depend upon young girls; even princesses have been known to be foolish; our daughter has an affectionate nature and might kiss anyone. For instance, she is very fond of her ladies-in-waiting. We don't wish to poison the innocent.

ROLANDYL. Certainly not.

KING PAUL. Hence the Edict.

ROLANDYL. Then the princess does not know?

KING PAUL. Not even that she is betrothed.

ROLANDYL. I'm not quite so sure.

KING PAUL. Nonsense. How could she? The King has never even—

ROLANDYL. Oh, I wasn't referring to Utopia.

KING PAUL. Who else would have dared?

ROLANDYL. Cherchez la force!

KING PAUL. La force! Charmis? Never! What do you know?

ROLANDYL. Nothing, your Majesty, but I suspect.

KING PAUL. Pooh—there may be nothing in it; and if there is, I fancy the Edict will put a stop to his little game.

ROLANDYL. You never know; he is a brave man—for a policeman. Besides, it doesn't require much pluck to pay a fine.

KING PAUL. Ah, that's where *I* come in. I think, Rolandyl, yes, I think a capable monarch in such circumstances might squeeze in a charge of High Treason.

ROLANDYL. Isn't he clever? But still, I can't quite understand how your Majesty has attained to your present exalted position.

KING PAUL. Very simple, my dear Rolandyl. Immortality and a brain—

ROLANDYL. A very useful double, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. When I discovered the Elixir, I recognized that only three things were necessary to ensure success: diplomacy, a way with women, and a reputation for bravery. Each man in his time plays many parts. Some of the parts I played have become historical.

(*Duet* - KING PAUL and ROLANDYL)

KING PAUL. Once I made a resolution, which I put in execution,
To become a wily sharp among the flats;
And by dint of steady practice I succeeded till the fact is
I was soon the very prince of diplomats.
Entre nous there's no denying that my principles went flying—

ROLANDYL. What! You didn't stoop to lying, did you?

KING PAUL. Rats!

KING PAUL. Have you heard of Ananias?

ROLANDYL. Have I heard of Ananias?
Have I ever learnt to say my A B C?

KING PAUL. Now concerning Ananias—

ROLANDYL. Get along with Ananias—

KING PAUL. Well, I *was* old Ananias!

ROLANDYL. So I see!

KING PAUL. But I swiftly apprehended that my vogue would soon be ended
If the ladies were not graciously inclined,
So I cultivated matrons who were just the kind of patrons
That a rising politician wants to find.
And those dames of lofty station rather liked my conversation

ROLANDYL. That about your reputation?

KING PAUL. Never mind!

KING PAUL. Have you read about Don Juan?

ROLANDYL. *Have* I read about Don Juan?
Why, I don't believe I skipped a single word!

KING PAUL. So you've heard about Don Juan?

ROLANDYL. Till I'm sick of old Don Juan!

KING PAUL. Well, I really *was* Don Juan!

ROLANDYL. So I've heard!

KING PAUL. Later on, my dress civilian I discarded for vermilion,
As a private in the gallant thirty-third;
Though to tell the truth my nerve is not sort for active service,
It was always *moral* courage I preferred.
Still in battles grim and gory I would hack my way to glory—

ROLANDYL. Did you dream that fairy story?

KING PAUL. Not a word!

KING PAUL. Have you heard about Bill Adams?

ROLANDYL. *Have* I heard about Bill Adams?

Do I know that every dog was once a pup?

KING PAUL. Apropos of old Bill Adams -

ROLANDYL. What about old Billy Adams?

KING PAUL. Well, you see, I *was* Bill Adams!

ROLANDYL. Sew it up!

KING PAUL. I have frequently been wedded but monotony I dreaded,
For the same old face is very apt to cloy,
So if my wife would vex, it meant her very speedy exit
To another and a better land of joy;
If upon my nerves she grated, or become too antiquated
She was soon decapitated—

ROLANDYL. Naughty boy!

KING PAUL. Have you ever heard of Bluebeard?

ROLANDYL. *Have* I ever heard of Bluebeard?

Has November ever heard about a fog?

KING PAUL. Now regarding Mr Bluebeard—

ROLANDYL. Hurry up with Mr Bluebeard—

KING PAUL. Well, *I* happened to be Bluebeard!

ROLANDYL. Lucky dog!

(Enter CHARMIS, with marconigram)

CHARMIS *(saluting)*. A Marconigram, your Majesty.

KING PAUL *(reading)*. Central Aeroplane Station, 6258 Milky Way, “Sighted Utopia and suite en route Esperanto; arriving to-day, wind and petrol permitting.”

CHARMIS. The king of Utopia coming here, sire?

ROLANDYL. They’re off!

CHARMIS. For what purpose?

KING PAUL. To claim his affianced bride, the Princess Cynthia.

ROLANDYL *(aside)*. That’s a nasty jar for Robert.

CHARMIS. The princess betrothed to the king of Utopia?

ROLANDYL. That’s the idea.

KING PAUL. Have you any objection?

CHARMIS *(confused)*. No, your majesty.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). Have I heard of Ananias?

KING PAUL. Good. That saves a lot of unpleasantness. You may leave us. (CHARMIS *salutes and goes to exit.*)

ROLANDYL (*aside*). Exit blue, snookered.

KING PAUL. But stay—

CHARMIS. Your Majesty?

KING PAUL. We are anxious about our royal daughter.

ROLANDYL (*nervously*). Excuse me, your majesty, private?

KING PAUL. Not to you, Rolandyl.

ROLANDYL. You're very kind. I thought I'd better make sure.

KING PAUL. It is rumoured that she has lost her heart to a certain member of our court.

CHARMIS (*confused*). Indeed, sire, may I ask to whom?

ROLANDYL (*hurriedly*). Your Majesty, are you sure I'm not in the way? (KING PAUL *waves him aside.*)

KING PAUL (*to CHARMIS*). No name has been mentioned.

ROLANDYL (*aside, with relief*). God save the King!

CHARMIS. Surely, your Majesty has been misinformed?

KING PAUL. We have it on the authority of our worthy Rolandyl.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). That's done it!

CHARMIS (*looking fiercely at ROLANDYL*). Then your Majesty cannot have been misinformed.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). I've made another friend!

KING PAUL. At any rate, we must be on our guard. The Princess must be watched.

CHARMIS. Watched, sire?

KING PAUL. And by someone whom we can implicitly trust.

ROLANDYL. Your Majesty flatters me. (KING PAUL *waves him aside.*)

KING PAUL (*to CHARMIS*). As a mark of our esteem, we depute the task to you.

ROLANDYL. The favourite's *beat*!

CHARMIS. But your Majesty—

KING PAUL. Spare your thanks, you will guard her carefully, and remember that the Edict applies equally to her. The man, woman or child who kisses the princess Cynthia must pay the penalty.

CHARMIS. Of banishment?

ROLANDYL. Pardon me, not banishment.

CHARMIS. What, then?

ROLANDYL. Well, I can't quite remember the correct term, but it means 'snuffed out.'

CHARMIS. But surely the Edict says banishment.

KING PAUL. Quite so, but kissing a royal princess comes under the heading of High Treason, and High Treason is a capital offence.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). So's kissing, sometimes!

KING PAUL. Is that quite clear?

CHARMIS (*nervously*). Quite, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. Good; we shall rely upon you. Come, Rolandyl, we go to inform the princess Cynthia of her betrothal. (*Exit KING PAUL.*)

ROLANDYL (*following*). More trouble! (*Exit ROLANDYL.*)

(*Song - CHARMIS*)

CHARMIS.

Love of my life, are you false to me?

Love of my life, is it true?

Will, in the future, another be

All that I once was to you?

Shall I become but a memory,

Fading at last from your view?

Heart of my heart,

Must we then part?

Is it "farewell" for ever?

Light of mine eyes, forgive me if I doubt you

Dream of my dreams, come back to me again.

For oh! the world is but a waste without you,

Life is desolate and love is vain.

Love of my life, though the skies be grey,

Love of my life, you are true.

I will believe in you, come what may,

Sure of your honour and you.

Live in the promise of yesterday,

Keeping it always in view!

Heart of my heart,

Never to part,

True to our love for ever.

Dream of my dreams! No longer will I doubt you,

Light of mine eyes! Come back to me again.

For oh! the world is but a waste without you,

Life is desolate and love is vain. (*Exit CHARMIS.*)

(Enter the six ladies-in-waiting. Concerted Number - LADIES-IN-WAITING)

JEAN. Lucky Princess! to Utopia plighted,
According to royal decree,
Soon to be fondly and firmly united—
Ah me! ah me! I would I were she!
I wish it would happen to me.

HERMIA. Fortunate maid! For a monarch intended—
A prince of the highest degree—
Lord of dominions and palaces splendid—
Ah me! ah me! I would I were she!
I wish it would happen to me.

CARMENITA. Embryo Queen of an empire unbounded—
A Paradise over the sea—
Ruling in splendour, with homage surrounded—
Ah me! ah me! I would I were she!
I wish it would happen to me.

ALL. Though we envy her lot
And we plan and we plot—
For we'd give all we got
To be crowned,
It is clear we cannot
For we, all of us wot
That there aren't enough kings to go round, go round,
There are not enough kings to go round.

DOROTHY. Lucky Princess! to Utopia plighted,
Your cheeks must be surely aglow;
Should I refuse him, if I were invited?
Heigho, heigho! I'd take him in tow,
I don't think that I'd let him go.

GRETCHEN. Fortunate maid, for a monarch intended,
Felicity soon you will know;
Should I refuse a position so splendid?
Heigho, heigho! I'd take him in tow,
I don't think that I'd let him go.

CELESTE. Embryo Queen of an Empire unbounded,
Where kissing is never 'de trop'
If such an offer to me he propounded,
Heigho, heigho! I'd take him in tow,
I don't think that I'd let him go.

ALL. Though we envy her lot
Etc.

(Enter IRIS and HELVANOISE.)

IRIS *(to girls)*. Hullo! Why are you all looking so glum? What's wrong?

HERMIA. Oh, nothing much.

HELVANOISE *(laughing)*. That generally means a great deal.

DOROTHY. I don't suppose Iris would think it much.

CARMENITA *(sadly)*. We do.

IRIS. Well, what is it?

JEAN. Some girls have all the luck.

HELVANOISE. Which particular one are you envying now?

CELESTE. Oh, we're not envious.

IRIS. Of course not, but who is the lucky girl?

GRETCHEN. Cynthia, naturally.

HELVANOISE. Because she's betrothed to Utopia?

ALL THE GIRLS. Of course. *(IRIS and HELVANOISE laugh.)*

HERMIA. I don't see anything to laugh at.

IRIS. Neither does Cynthia!

DOROTHY. What! Isn't she pleased?

HELVANOISE. Apparently not.

CARMENITA. When she's got the only king in the pack!

IRIS. What does that matter, if he isn't the King of Hearts. Don't be foolish, girls.

JEAN. Oh, we didn't think it would interest you. *(Exit JEAN.)*

CELESTE. No, we're not *all* engaged. *(Exit CELESTE with DOROTHY.)*

GRETCHEN. Some of us are not even negotiating!

(Girls laugh sarcastically. Exit GRETCHEN with CARMENITA.)

HELVANOISE *(to HERMIA)*. You seem to have a very keen sense of humour. What's the joke?

HERMIA. Hadn't you better ask Iris? *(Laughs and Exit.)*

HELVANOISE. What do they mean?

IRIS. How do I know? I'm not a mind-reader.

HELVANOISE. Iris, you're playing with me. There's someone else.

IRIS. I hope so. No girl likes to think she has only string to her bow.

HELVANOISE. Who is he?

IRIS. I don't carry the list about with me.

HELVANOISE. The list! Iris, you're a heartless little wretch!

IRIS. Oh well, if you're going to be insulting, I shall cross your name out. It seems a pity, though, because you were one of the favourites.

HELVANOISE (*eagerly*). First favourite?

IRIS. At any rate, I don't suggest you're an outsider. (*Enter ROLANDYL, unobserved. He listens to conversation.*)

HELVANOISE. But those girls suggested you were engaged. Are you?

IRIS. Hardly that; but I can be, if I like.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). That's right; she's quite right.

IRIS. And I think I shall like. I've been approached, and I've got a very good option.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). I don't think it's a bad one, myself.

HELVANOISE. I wouldn't have believed you could have been so mercenary. You speak as though it were a business transaction.

IRIS. It's funny you should mention that because that's what the girls said.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). Oh, did they?

HELVANOISE. Bah! I've no patience with you. Who is the insect?

ROLANDYL (*aside*). Wrong again!

IRIS. Well, if you must know—Rolandyl. (*ROLANDYL slaps his chest and swaggers about at the back of the stage.*)

HELVANOISE. Rolandyl!

ROLANDYL (*aside*). Awkward pause!

HELVANOISE. Rolandyl!!

ROLANDYL (*aside*). Pretty name, isn't it?

HELVANOISE. You mean to tell me you think of marrying such a mean, underhanded, undersized, grasping little worm as— (*ROLANDYL coughs; HELVANOISE stops, turns, sees him and looks confused.*)

ROLANDYL. The worm has re-turned!

HELVANOISE. Oh, you're there, are you?

ROLANDYL. Yes, I'm in the neighbourhood.

HELVANOISE. You would be. You're the sort of low, paltry, lop-eared anaemic little rat who would listen.

ROLANDYL (*reverently*). What a gift!

HELVANOISE. Why, you haven't even the pluck to get annoyed.

ROLANDYL. Annoyed? Why should I? I've won!

(Trio - ROLANDYL, IRIS and HELVANOISE)

ROLANDYL. Since the day is mine,
 Why should I repine?
 Seems to me that you're the one to feel upset.
 Though it's not good form
 So to rave and storm,
 This is not the time to study etiquette.

HELVANOISE. Rolandyl, beware!
 Taunt me, if you dare!
 I shall lose my temper if you jeer at me—

IRIS. Gentlemen, I pray!
 Just a moment stay—
 Surely your behaviour is a trifle free?
 You should never raise your voices,
 You should never come to blows,
 For it makes one think your manners rather shady,
 Such remarks you ought to edit,
 For they do not do you credit.
 You forget you're in the presence of a lady!

HELVANOISE. Madam, I obey,
 Sir, your pardon, pray.
 Freely I apologise at your command.

ROLANDYL. I will do the same,
 Mine alone the blame,
 Helvanoise, I willingly extend my hand.

IRIS. All respect is due,
 Gentlemen, to you,
 Now you give me evidence of culture rare.
 Noble your amends,
 So the quarrel ends—
 Of your future courtesy I'll not despair.
 You must always curb your passions
 If you wish to be polite,
 Never dreaming of indulging in a stray D
 You must bottle up all swear-words
 You must recognise that they're words
 Never mentioned in the presence of a lady!

(Dance. Exit ROLANDYL.)

HELVANOISE. That finishes it.

IRIS. Finishes what?

HELVANOISE. Everything between you and me. You're just as deceitful as the rest of your sex; there isn't one of you to be trusted.

IRIS. You're very rude.

HELVANOISE. I can't help it. You've treated me abominably. You don't love me.

IRIS. I never said so.

HELVANOISE. But you've shown it pretty conclusively.

IRIS. Needs must when the devil drives.

HELVANOISE. Meaning Rolandyl? If he's been intimidating you, I'll break every bone in his body. (*Starts to go.*)

IRIS (*stopping him*). Come back; you do rush to conclusions; I never said Rolandyl.

HELVANOISE. No one else would have the impertinence.

IRIS. Oh, I don't know. Kings can be a little uppish, sometimes.

HELVANOISE. The King! But you don't mean to tell me you're going to marry a little lizard like Rolandyl just to please the king.

IRIS. There you go again. Did I say a word about marriage? I shall probably have to be engaged by Rolandyl; I may even have to marry him, but we won't anticipate trouble.

HELVANOISE. That may be all very well, but it's a rotten position for me.

IRIS. It's worse for me. (*Enter CHARMIS and CYNTHIA.*)

HELVANOISE. We're the unhappiest couple on earth.

IRIS. We are.

CYNTHIA. What about us?

IRIS. We'd forgotten all about you.

CYNTHIA. You've, at any rate, got a little grace. I haven't.

CHARMIS. You haven't committed a capital offence; *I* have.

HELVANOISE *and* IRIS. Capital offence!

CHARMIS. Yes, you haven't risked it. *We* have.

IRIS. What? Kissing?

CHARMIS (*nods*). Umps.

HELVANOISE. But that's only banishment.

CHARMIS (*nods*). Umps; but when it's a royal princess, it's banishment to kingdom-come.

HELVANOISE *and* IRIS. Nobody knows?

CHARMIS. No, but we can't repeat the offence.

IRIS. We're all in the same boat as far as that's concerned.

CYNTHIA. All we can do is sympathise with one another.

(*Madrigal* - CYNTHIA, IRIS, CHARMIS *and* HELVANOISE)

So drear the day!
 So long the way!
 When hope, at last, becomes infinitesimal;
 Fate proves unkind,
 We sadly find
 Our share of joy is but a modest decimal.

Tis not for us to frolic gaily round,
 Tis not for us to wear a smile,
 But pursue our melancholy daily round
 Though our hearts are breaking all the while.

Saddest we of mortals on this earth,
 What is rank or even riches worth?
 If we have not love to crown each task,
 Why then, we ask—
 “Of what avail is birth?”

Dead is the Past,
 Too sweet to last
 Those days that seemed to suit our feelings to a T;
 Moments of bliss
 Oh, how we miss
 The soft caress of lips in contiguity!

No wonder that we sigh collectively;
 No wonder we are full of woe;
 Tis because we’re kissing—retrospectively,
 We are living in the long-ago.

Saddest we of mortals on this earth,
 What is rank or even riches worth?
 If we have not love to crown each task,
 Why then, we ask—
 “Of what avail is birth?”

(Enter KING PAUL and ROLANDYL.)

KING PAUL (to CHARMIS). Have you any further news of Utopia?

CHARMIS. None, your Majesty, but I have arranged that as soon as he is sighted, the siren will hoot.

KING PAUL. Good. You and Helvanoise will see that all the preparations are properly carried out. (CHARMIS and HELVANOISE salute and exeunt.)

(KING PAUL rubs his hands and turns to CYNTHIA.) A glorious day, my dear, and a propitious omen for your approaching marriage. There is an old saying—Let me see—what is that old saying, Rolandyl?

ROLANDYL. There are so many, sire. Does your Majesty refer to the old-fashioned saw or the time-worn adage? Ah, I have it; “What is one man’s sweetmeat is another man’s poison.”

KING PAUL. Sh-h, you’ll give the game away. Try again.

ROLANDYL. Oh, I see, you want the trite and true, not the new and nutty. How’s this? “One half of the world never knows *why* the other half lives.”

KING PAUL. No, I want something merry and bright.

ROLANDYL. “Dead men tell no tales.”

KING PAUL. You’re very cheerful this morning. You don’t quite follow me; it’s something about the sun.

ROLANDYL. Oh, that’s easy: “It’s a wise son that knows his own father.”

KING PAUL. That will be all from you. I’ve got it, my dear: “Happy the bride the sun shines on.”

CYNTHIA (*miserably*). I’m sure I’m not happy. I don’t want to be a bride. (IRIS runs to console her.)

ROLANDYL. Bravo! You’ve bucked her up a lot!

KING PAUL (to CYNTHIA). Ah, it’s nervousness, that’s all; and very proper, too. I like to see it in a young girl about to be married. Why, you ought to be all smiles. (CYNTHIA weeps, IRIS takes CYNTHIA’S handkerchief.)

CYNTHIA (*weeps*). Don’t, father.

ROLANDYL. Come away, can’t you see you’re not a success?

KING PAUL (*waving him aside, to CYNTHIA*). My dear, we mustn’t weep. (*Aside to ROLANDYL*.) Except on business. (*To CYNTHIA*.) There, there, we want cheering up, don’t we? Now, what do we say to a nice little sweetie?

(*Aside to ROLANDYL*.) The dose!

ROLANDYL (*aside*). Must we?

KING PAUL. It’s all right; it won’t hurt her.

ROLANDYL. Then you do it. It won't hurt *you* to be hanged.

KING PAUL. You dare to hesitate?

ROLANDYL. No, I hesitate to dare. Besides, the Jockey Club bars doping.

KING PAUL. Then you refuse?

ROLANDYL. You put it so bluntly.

KING PAUL. You shall suffer for this. (*Takes box from ROLANDYL and goes to CYNTHIA.*)

Now, my dear, here we are.

CYNTHIA (*weeping*). I don't want any sweets. I want to be left alone.

KING PAUL. But these are extra special! (*Puts a sweet in her mouth.*) Come, there, what do we think of that?

CYNTHIA (*changing from tears to smiles*). It isn't bad! (*KING PAUL returns box to ROLANDYL. They shake hands surreptitiously behind KING PAUL'S back.*)

IRIS (*to CYNTHIA*). That's better. Perhaps it's all for the best. Dry your eyes and give me a good hug.

ROLANDYL. Stop!

KING PAUL. What is it, Rolandyl?

ROLANDYL. She's trying to kiss her.

KING PAUL (*catching hold of IRIS and throwing her towards ROLANDYL*). You naughty girl, would you break the law before our very eyes?

IRIS. I don't see any harm in it.

ROLANDYL. Would you argue with the king?

KING PAUL. Impertinent minx; here, Rolandyl, give her a sweet.

IRIS. Yes, do let me have one.

ROLANDYL (*putting sweets behind his back*). No, you mustn't.

IRIS. Why not?

ROLANDYL. Well, you see, these are the king's own particular.

IRIS. But he said I might have one.

ROLANDYL. Very well, then, you shall. (*Looks in box.*) What a funny thing! There isn't one left.

IRIS. Oh!

KING PAUL. Never mind, my dear, run along with Cynthia, and get ready to receive the king of Utopia. (*IRIS shakes her fist at ROLANDYL, and goes with CYNTHIA to Exit.*) (*To ROLANDYL.*) Splendid!

ROLANDYL (*miserably*). I'm glad you like it.

CYNTHIA (*coming back*). Father—

KING PAUL (*starting*). Yes, dear?

CYNTHIA. I can't bear the thought of this marriage, but I'm sorry I made a scene just now. You will forgive me, won't you?

KING PAUL. Of course, I will.

CYNTHIA. Then kiss me. (KING PAUL *falls into* ROLANDYL'S *arms*.) What is it, father?

KING PAUL. Oh, a little faintness, that's all.

CYNTHIA. It's a shame to worry you, especially when you were so generous with the sweets.

KING PAUL (*recovering*). Oh, the sweets! Rolandyl thought of them. Kiss *him*.

ROLANDYL (*nervously*). That's only your father's modesty. I'd no idea—

KING PAUL. Don't believe him, Cynthia. Kiss him and thank him nicely.

CYNTHIA. If you wish it, father.

ROLANDYL. Princess, you are too condescending; I should die—of modesty! Besides, Iris might be jealous.

IRIS. If Cynthia doesn't mind, I don't.

ROLANDYL. Much as I should appreciate the honour, it would never do.

CYNTHIA. Very well, if you object—

ROLANDYL. Object! I would gladly perish— of modesty; but, you see, it wouldn't do for me to break the Edict.

CYNTHIA (*laughing*). Fancy thinking of Edicts at such a time! Come along, Iris, it's plain I'm not appreciated here. (*Puts arm round* IRIS.)

ROLANDYL. Don't do it. (CYNTHIA *and* IRIS *laugh and exeunt*.)

KING PAUL. Whew! That was a close shave. ROLANDYL, don't you ever leave me alone with my daughter. She's positively dangerous.

ROLANDYL (*laughing*). You seem to have forgotten you're immortal.

KING PAUL. I'm so excited, I could forget anything. For this relief, much thanks.

ROLANDYL. Yes, but what about me, and what about Iris?

KING PAUL. Well, *what* about her?

ROLANDYL. Well, what about *her*?

KING PAUL. Well, what *about* her?

ROLANDYL. You don't seem to grasp the fact that she's running great risks. Don't you think we'd better have a barrel of that antidote on tap in case of emergencies?

KING PAUL. Oh, we can't bother about Iris. She knows the penalty.

ROLANDYL. Yes, but I'm engaged to her.

KING PAUL. That's your trouble. (*A siren is heard off stage*.) At last, the king of Utopia. (*Siren*.)

ROLANDYL. That's *his* trouble. (*Exit* KING PAUL *and* ROLANDYL *to Palace*.)

(*Trumpets and Drums offstage from Palace. Populace assemble hurriedly and excitedly*.)

(*Song* - CHORUS)

CHORUS. There is obviously something most important in the air,
 For the populace and town are all ahum,
 There are noises in the palace, there are noises in the square,
 It's enough to strike a body deaf and dumb;
 So we're absolutely certain there is something in the air,
 And to ascertain the reason we have come,
 Of the bustle and confusion and excitement everywhere,
 It is pande-pande-pandemonium.

For the cocks are crow-crow-crowing,
 While the cows are low-low-lowing,
 And the lambs are greeting
 In anxious meeting.
 Hear them bleating
 As the dogs bark back!
 What with donkeys bray-bray-braying
 And the horses neigh-neigh-neighing
 There is something brewing
 For the cats are mewing
 And the ducks go quack-quack-quack! (*Trumpets offstage from Palace.*)

(*Enter* HELVANOISE.)

HELVANOISE. What is the reason of these scenes uproarious?
 Long live King Paul of Esperanto, great and glorious.
 From across the main
 In an aeroplane
 By his Bodyguard attended,
 To the sound of drums
 King Utops comes
 His journey safely ended.
 And we call on you,
 Our subjects, who,
 We know, are leal and loyal,
 For the welcome true,
 And obeisance due
 To a potentate so royal.

CHORUS. So, as subjects who
 Are tried and true
 And on occasional loyal
 We will show what's due
 To the blood that's blue
 And a potentate so royal.

*(Entrance of Chorus of KING UTOPS' Bodyguard:
Out of work Judges dressed in robes and wigs)*

CHORUS OF JUDGES. We were high and mighty judges of the K.B.D.
 But the outlook for the Bench looked blue
 For we found the population
 Of our law-abiding nation
 Did not view with acclamation
 The expense of litigation;
 To our horror and vexation
 They bestowed their approbation
 On the charms of arbitration
 So we took a long vacation
 For we hadn't any work to do!

 So we gave up our writs
 And our ermine and mitts,
 But we stuck to our wigs
 And the rest of our kits,
 They were things that we couldn't discard
 And no longer as wits
 Do we send them in fits
 With our sly little digs
 And our neat little hits,
 We've signed on as the King's Bodyguard.

(Flourish. Enter KING UTOPS, dressed in a Greek costume with a puce garland on his head and carrying a sceptre. He is accompanied by MANDAMUS, his Lord Chief Justice.)

(Solo - KING UTOPS)

In me, you see the majesty of a monarch of high degree as free
 As ever sat upon a royal throne;
 In state I wait my future mate who will soon be here for a *tete-a-tete*
 When I shall claim her for my very own.
 She'll try to sigh and may be shy, but after a while she and I will hie
 Away to far Utopia o'er the sea,
 Where right is might, where skies are bright, and even the servants are quite polite,
 And everyone is happy as can be.
 We're a Do as we Like little Race,
 In a Go as you Please little Place.
 Where there always is plenty of *dolce niente*,
 Of work there is never a trace.
 We are smart and select,
 As of course you'd expect,
 And we never commit a *faux pas*.
 For the girls do not mope,
 And the men never tope,
 Never tope in Utopia.

It's bliss in this abode to kiss some sweet and affectionate miss, I wis,
 The local maids are very hard to beat;
 Each girl a pearl whose wavy curl can soon set the heart of an Earl awhirl;
 A coronet is often at her feet.
 Not vain or plain she does not deign to read any books that might strain her brain,
 Her business is to look her very best.
 She's fair as fair and what is rare she's a girl who knows how to wear her hair,
 And dainty, ducky dimples do the rest.
 We're a Do as we Like little Race,
 In a Go as you Please little Place,
 Even old maids are placid
 And never get acid
 When lovers drop out of the chase;
 Though it makes them go pink,
 They are trying to think
 Danny Cupid is not very far;
 So they fake and they dope,
 While there's life, there is hope
 There is hope in Euhopia.

(Solo - KING UTOPS)

My Court, in short, is just the sort where you never need want to sport, you ought
 To try it when you find you've got the blues;
 We play all day, we're always gay, and we've nothing at all to pay away,
 For money is a thing we never use.
 My laws, because they have no flaws, provoke very hearty applause, a cause
 Of undiluted happiness to me.
 To bind and grind I'm disinclined; a monarch of merciful mind you'll find
 I always was and still intend to be.
 We're a Do as you Like little Race
 In a Go as you Please little Place.
 If you're courting a lady
 Our Court is so shady,
 It almost invites an embrace.
 So whenever a pair
 Are enjoying the air,
 There is nothing their pleasure to mar,
 For to give you more rope,
 Chaperons are *de trop*,
 Quite *de trop* in Detropia.

KING UTOPS (to MANDAMUS). A pretty welcome, Mandamus. No guard of Honour, no flags, not even a salvo of guns.

MANDAMUS. P'raps we've come to the wrong house, Sire.

KING UTOPS. Nonsense! Am I to be kept waiting for ever? (To 1ST COMMONER.) Ho there, my old college chum, canst tell me whose is yonder model dwelling?

1ST COMMONER. Tis the palace of His Imperial Majesty, King Paul.

ALL. Long live the King!

MANDAMUS. That sounds more encouraging, your Majesty.

KING UTOPS. Yes, but they don't say *which* king.

CHARMIS (*offstage*). Left turn! Quick March! (Enter the Guard from the palace.)
 Halt! Attention! Salute! (Enter CHARMIS.)

MANDAMUS. We must have been a bit before our time, Sire. They were expecting a breakdown. That's what it is!

(Enter from palace KING PAUL, CYNTHIA, SIX LADIES-IN-WAITING, IRIS, HELVANOISE and ROLANDYL.)

ALL. Long live the King!

MANDAMUS. There they go again, your Majesty.

KING UTOPS. Yes, they do seem to like me.

KING PAUL. Welcome, King Utops, thrice welcome! A thousand apologies! We had not expected you so soon. (*Presenting CYNTHIA.*) Our royal daughter, the princess CYNTHIA.

KING UTOPS (*to MANDAMUS*). I'm not sorry we stayed! (*Bowing to CYNTHIA.*) Princess, for years I have longed for this moment.

ALL. Long live Utopia!

KING UTOPS (*to MANDAMUS*). They do mean me.

KING PAUL (*to CYNTHIA*). Come, my dear. Welcome our guest. (*CYNTHIA reluctantly advances and extends her hand for KING UTOPS to kiss.*) No, my dear, not that way. You are betrothed.

KING UTOPS (*aside*). I'm glad I stayed.

CYNTHIA. Father! I can't.

KING PAUL. Nonsense, my dear, don't be nervous. It's always done.

KING UTOPS (*putting his arm round CYNTHIA and about to kiss her*). Princess!

CHARMIS. Hold! (*General surprise.*)

KING PAUL. What is the meaning of this unseemly interruption? Who speaks?

CHARMIS. I.

KING PAUL. By what authority?

ACT 1 FINALE.

CHARMIS. In the name of the Law!

ALL. In the name of the Law!

Now what is this and what is that?

My heart goes pit-a-pit-a-pat!

It's very sad;

He must be mad;

Whatever is he driving at?

CHARMIS. In the name of the Law!

My duty lies before me and it's clear that I must do it,

Though the culprit be a king of high degree;

Behold the proclamation, will your Majesty look through it

You will find the Edict plain as plain can be.

And in case our royal diction your poor craniums may fuddle,

Our decree in simpler phrasing comes to this:—

You may ogle and canoodle, you may flirt and even cuddle,

But the punishment is banishment for those of you who kiss!

CHORUS. You may ogle and canoodle, you may flirt and even cuddle,

But the punishment is banishment for those of you who kiss!

KING UTOPS

(to CHARMIS).

Upon my word,
It's too absurd!
Whatever do you mean?
To so intrude
In manner rude,
And try to make a scene?

(to KING PAUL).

I don't know how
You can allow
This man to come between, sir;
However, I'm
Convinced it's time
For you to intervene, sir.

KING PAUL.

Your Majesty, such arrogance we very much regret;
Such insolence we can't forgive and never shall forget.

(to CHARMIS).

Enough, sir; how dare you
Behave in this way?
We warn you, beware you
What else you may say.

IRIS *and* HELVANOISE.

You hear what their Majesties say;
It's dangerous, very, to stay;
Before there is trouble
Be off at the double;
You'll find it is best to obey.

CHORUS.

You hear what their Majesties say;
It's dangerous, very, to stay;
Before there is trouble
Be off at the double;
You'll find it is best to obey.

CHARMIS.

I know not how or even why the law was made,
But so it ran;
And as my duty is to see it is obeyed,
I do the best I can.
I merely do as I am told
When I impose a ban—
Condemn the office which I hold
But do not blame the man.

CHORUS. His principles are good as gold,
 A sense of duty makes him bold,
 And since he does what he is told,
 You cannot blame the man!

ROLANDYL. I claim your kind attention for a minute.
 His argument is plausible at best;
 For, when you come to look, there's nothing in it
 Because you can't apply it to a guest.

(to CHARMIS). You may watch like any eagle,
 Show the cunning of a beagle,
 Or the care of Mother Seagull
 For her nest,
 But in matters that are legal
 You will never, never me gull
 For his Majesty is regal
 And a guest!

CYNTHIA. For the Law is the Law
 To be treated with awe,
 By the low and the high in degree;
 If the Edict be just
 For our people, it must
 Be intended, I take it, for me.

CHORUS. For the Law is the Law
 To be treated with awe,
 And your Majesty, therefore, will own
 If the Edict be just
 For the people, it must
 Be observed by the king on his throne.
 Though our greetings appear
 Somewhat cold and severe,
 Pray remember you are not at home.
 Do not think us unkind,
 Leave your customs behind
 And behave like a Roman in Rome.

(Tableaux. Curtain.)

CURTAIN - END OF ACT 1

(Enter CHARMIS. The FLUNKEYS stand at attention and salute.)

CHARMIS. Great heavens! That will never do! You mustn't salute.

MANDAMUS. Pardon, your Highness, surely it's customary for the police to salute their superiors.

CHARMIS. Certainly; but you aren't police; you're flunkeys. You evidently don't know the nature of your duties.

MANDAMUS. We were given to understand we were wanted for some secret service.

CHARMIS. Exactly. The people are incensed against the new Edict and we have been warned that there may be some disturbance this evening. I have, therefore, called in a posse of constables to act as flunkeys. His Majesty, the King of Utopia, has been graciously pleased to offer the assistance of his bodyguard; but you must clearly understand that you are in disguise. Is this perfectly plain?

ALL (*saluting*). Perfectly.

CHARMIS. There you go again. Don't do it. Now do you follow me?

ALL (*saluting*). We do.

CHARMIS (*presenting revolver*). I shall report some of you in a moment. Have you got it right now?

ALL (*half saluting, then remembering*). We have, your Highness.

CHARMIS. That's better. Now are you prepared for all emergencies? (POLICE *produce truncheons* and JUDGES *put on black caps*.)

ALL. We are!

MANDAMUS (*presenting writ*). Returnable in eight days.

CHARMIS. What on earth have you got there? Poetry?

MANDAMUS. No, no, plain prose.

CHARMIS (*stepping back*). It looks like a writ.

MANDAMUS. It is.

CHARMIS. Then take it away, you idiot; that's no good in a rough and tumble.

MANDAMUS. But it might come in very handy afterwards.

CHARMIS. Now you'll all go about your business and remember, the more natural your behaviour, the more convincing your disguise.

HEAD FLUNKEY. Excuse me, your Highness, I've never been a flunkey before. I don't know what to do.

CHARMIS. And you call yourself a policeman? How many stripes have you got?

HEAD FLUNKEY. Three, your Highness.

CHARMIS. I make it two.

HEAD FLUNKEY. I had three this morning, your Highness.

CHARMIS. Well, you've only two now. Has any one else any doubts?

ALL. No, your Highness.

CHARMIS. I thought not. Attention! Mandamus, swear them in.

MANDAMUS. Will you speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

ALL (*producing notebooks*). We will!

CHARMIS. Then, remember, anything I say may be used as evidence against me.

(*Song - CHARMIS and FLUNKEYS*)

CHARMIS. If you would be of service to the nation,
 Assisting her upon her proper course,
 If you would win your country's admiration,
 If you would be a credit to "The Force,"
 You've got to be a man of tact,
 In time of danger swift to act,
 Combining condescension with resource.
 You've got to guard the King's Highway
 To rob the felon of his prey,
 To lead each scheming gang agley,
 And fearlessly unmask it.
 You've got to circumvent all crime,
 And if to favour you would climb,
 I'm told you've got to know the time
 Whenever people ask it!

FLUNKEYS. You've got to circumvent all crime,
 And if to favour you would climb,
 I'm told you've got to know the time
 Whenever people ask it!

- CHARMIS. The life is one of peril and of dangers
 And this may seem a paradox to you
 Though peace and you are generally strangers,
 You've always got to keep the peace in view.
 But such a wonderful result
 Although extremely difficult
 Must never baulk a bonny Boy-in-Blue:
 You've got to guard the King's Highway
 To rob the felon of his prey,
 The law of Justice to obey
 And temper it with mercy.
 You've got to war with evil men,
 You've got to raid the gambling den
 And take the name of Robert, when
 Your proper name is Percy.
- FLUNKEYS. You've got to war with evil men,
 You've got to raid the gambling den
 And take the name of Robert, when
 Your proper name is Percy.
- CHARMIS. You stand for Esperanto, Home and Beauty,
 You also have to stand from five to four.
 You stand upon your dignity and duty
 Until you cannot stand it anymore.
 And so you slumber safe and sound
 That is, until the chief comes round,
 And then you go on standing, as before.
 You've got to guard the King's Highway
 To rob the felon of his prey.
 To seize the spell without delay
 And rightfully restore it;
 You've got to be prepared to stand
 One man, alone, against a band,
 And when you want a helping hand,
 You've got to whistle for it.
- FLUNKEYS. You've got to be prepared to stand
 One man, alone, against a band,
 And when you want a helping hand,
 You've got to whistle for it. (*Exit FLUNKEYS and MANDAMUS.*)

(Enter CYNTHIA.)

CYNTHIA. Ah, Charmis, I was hoping to see you. I want to thank you. You were splendid.

CHARMIS. I? When?

CYNTHIA. In the Square this morning.

CHARMIS. Oh, yes, I suppose I am rather affectionate; but you put the idea into my head.

CYNTHIA. I?

CHARMIS. Who else?

CYNTHIA. Charmis! I never said a word.

CHARMIS. Cynthia! How can you?

CYNTHIA. I'm sure I never said anything.

CHARMIS. Oh, yes, you did!

CYNTHIA. When?

CHARMIS. In the Square this morning. If you hadn't suggested it, I should never have dreamt of such a thing.

CYNTHIA. I suggested it? Why, I wasn't near you at the time.

CHARMIS. Well, I like that, but I suppose you're sorry now.

CYNTHIA. Haven't I just said it was splendid? It seems to me it's you who are sorry. Why, I don't believe you'd do it again if you had the chance.

CHARMIS (*about to embrace her*). Wouldn't I?

CYNTHIA (*stopping him*). That's high treason!

CHARMIS. Cynthia, you're simply impossible. First you ask me to, then you won't let me.

CYNTHIA. What *are* you talking about?

CHARMIS. Why, in the Square this morning.

CYNTHIA. It was so embarrassing before everybody.

CHARMIS. But there was no one there.

CYNTHIA. Don't be absurd! When?

CHARMIS. In the Square this morning.

CYNTHIA. Oh, I see you don't choose to remember.

CHARMIS. Or else you want to forget!

CYNTHIA. Forget! I shall never forget. It was too awful. I can see them all now—the populace expectant—Rolandyl and the King pushing me forward, King Utops coming towards me, and then—you!

CHARMIS. Oh, you mean *that* little business. I meant our little affair. You see both happened.

CYNTHIA *and* CHARMIS. In the Square this morning!

CYNTHIA. Why, I believe you knew all the time, only you were too modest.

CHARMIS. On the contrary, I was only too proud!

CYNTHIA. I should take that as a compliment, only I'm too unhappy.

CHARMIS. About King Utops? Why, they can't compel you to marry him.

CYNTHIA. But what am I to do? What am I to say?

CHARMIS. As little as possible.

CYNTHIA. But he'll be making love to me; in fact he's begun already.

CHARMIS. Very likely!

CYNTHIA. What! You mean I'm to let him?

CHARMIS. Why not? If he likes to do so in my presence!

CYNTHIA. But supposing you aren't there—

CHARMIS. Don't worry; I shall be there.

CYNTHIA. Not always—you won't be allowed.

CHARMIS. I think I shall. My instructions are precise. His Majesty has commanded me to be in constant attendance.

CYNTHIA. Upon me? Impossible! Why?

CHARMIS. It seems that he suspects us especially after this morning—in the Square.

CYNTHIA. How do you know?

CHARMIS. From Iris. Rolandyl is in the King's confidence and Iris, of course, can twist him round her finger.

CYNTHIA. But if that is true, surely he would want to keep us apart—unless he means it for the refinement of cruelty.

CHARMIS. That's the idea, depend on it.

CYNTHIA. Whatever it is, Rolandyl is sure to be in it, and I mistrust Rolandyl; he frightens me.

CHARMIS. Well, it's no good meeting troubles halfway. There! You can go and receive your guests with a light heart. Whatever happens you can rely on me. It's a long lane that has no turning.

(Duet, sung together - CYNTHIA and CHARMIS)

Night comes ever before the morn!
 Darkness always precedes the dawn!
 When hope hovers near its end
 Then be sure your luck will mend.
 What though the way seems long and weary!
 What though the clouds loom dark and dreary!
 Once more will the sky be blue
 If you wait till the sun shines through.
 Fate may mould for us pleasure or pain,
 Fortune hold for us Sunshine or Rain,
 What care we, my love? Trust in me, my love,
 You know you'll never, never trust in vain.
 In adversity, cling to me still,
 Only come to me—ask what you will!
 All-in-all, my love. When you call, my love,
 You know you'll never call in vain!
 Hope on! While you have life and breath!
 Hope on! I will be true to death!
 My heart is not mine, Mine own,
 It is yours, it is yours alone.
 While we have Love at hand to guide us
 No power on earth shall e'er divide us—
 Two hearts will beat as one
 Till the journey of life is run.

Reprise.

Fate may mould for us pleasure or pain,
 Fortune hold for us Sunshine or Rain,
 Etc. *(Exit CYNTHIA and CHARMIS into ballroom.)*

(Enter KING PAUL, R. and ROLANDYL, L.)

KING PAUL. So you're here at last!

ROLANDYL. All that's left of me, sire.

KING PAUL. What! Have you lost something?

ROLANDYL. Weight, sire. Weight!

KING PAUL. That's what we've been doing. Be more punctual in the future.

ROLANDYL. Your Majesty misunderstands me. Since this morning, I have lost seven pounds.

KING PAUL. I have not seen it, my gentle boy. From the Treasury?

ROLANDYL (*patting himself*). No, your Majesty, from the Corporation.

KING PAUL. Ha! Ha! How did you manage that? Have you been running?

ROLANDYL. Yes. Running the risk of a terrible death. I've been anxiously watching the Princess.

KING PAUL. What for?

ROLANDYL. What for? Your Majesty seems to forget that she's practically a perambulating infernal machine.

KING PAUL. Bah! Why worry about trifles?

ROLANDYL. I beg your pardon—Iris is no trifle, and she doesn't know the danger.

KING PAUL. Iris! Pooh!

ROLANDYL. Pardon me, sire—she may be only an Interjection to you, but to me, she is the entire Nuttall.

KING PAUL. But she hasn't kissed the Princess?

ROLANDYL. Not as far as I know, but all the time I was in the Office, chased by would-be chaste saluters, I was wondering whether Iris was with the Princess. The position was awful. Every time I heard a paper-boy shouting I nearly fainted, but I pulled myself together with one hand, and raked in the money with the other. I stood like Casablanca on the burning deck with one eye glued to the till and the other on the Princess' apartments. Then I saw her Royal Highness on the balcony overlooking the Square. A regiment of your Majesty's guards marched by, saluting. The Princess kissed her hand to them.

KING PAUL. Never!

ROLANDYL. Nineteen men and two drummer boys are in the hospital.

KING PAUL. What! From a kiss of the hand?

ROLANDYL. Yes, your Majesty, it's very penetrating stuff, that.

KING PAUL. Good heavens—and the rest?

ROLANDYL. In the Canteen, sir, complaining of sunstroke.

KING PAUL. Good. King Utops doesn't stand an earthly.

ROLANDYL. But that's not all, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. What! More soldiers disabled?

ROLANDYL. Worse than that. The latest victim is your Majesty's favourite cat. The Princess kissed it—poor pussy!

KING PAUL. Speak, man; not dead?

ROLANDYL. No, sire.

KING PAUL. What then?

ROLANDYL. Alas! she has only eight lives left.

KING PAUL. Well, no great harm has been done so far.

ROLANDYL. But think of my nerves. Think of the risks I've run. The Princess saw me gazing at her. She raised her hand. I feared she might blow a kiss to me. I held my breath and prepared for the worst.

KING PAUL. But you're all right.

ROLANDYL. Fortunately she was only chasing a fly from her royal nose and I was saved. The fly is in Nirvana; I'm here.

KING PAUL. Which is more than you deserve.

ROLANDYL. Your Majesty is pleased to jest.

KING PAUL. Our Majesty is in deadly earnest.

ROLANDYL. Don't say 'deadly.' It's so suggestive.

KING PAUL. Did we not command you to provide King Utops with a License immediately on his arrival?

ROLANDYL. True, sire.

KING PAUL. Then why was the License not delivered? If you had not blundered, the betrothal kiss would have taken place.

ROLANDYL. Permit me to remind your immortal Majesty that it was not I that stopped the buss.

KING PAUL. Stopped the buss!

ROLANDYL. Yes, the old, original free-to-all buss with two "esses" and no "osses." Charmis held that up. May I respectfully ask your deathless Highness who put him in the position to do so?

KING PAUL. He was there by my orders.

ROLANDYL. Precisely. You put him in the van and he upset the apple cart. Why did your Majesty do it?

KING PAUL. To give him a hint that we suspected him—to test him.

ROLANDYL. But it's dangerous for him to be near the princess.

KING PAUL. That's his risk. He knows the penalty.

ROLANDYL. But he'll be stopping King Utops again.

KING PAUL. Not now. His Majesty has his License?

ROLANDYL. Yes sire.

KING PAUL. Then he dare not. Come; we must to the ball-room to receive our guests. Friend King Utops will be impatient.

ROLANDYL. Ah, he wouldn't be in such a hurry if he knew!

(Exit KING PAUL and ROLANDYL to ballroom.)

(Fanfare of trumpets. MANDAMUS and HEAD FLUNKEY appear and take their stand at top of stairs leading to the ball-room. Enter the six LADIES-IN-WAITING, L. They cross the stage and go up steps. MANDAMUS and HEAD FLUNKEY bar their way.)

JEAN. What is the meaning of this impertinence?

HERMIA. Stand aside, and let us pass.

MANDAMUS. Pardon, ladies, the Princess is receiving. You are too late.

DOROTHY. Nonsense, nonsense. We must enter.

MANDAMUS. It's no use, ladies, my orders are precise, unless you're on the press—

CARMENITA. But we're the ladies-in-waiting.

CELESTE. Yes, we are indeed.

MANDAMUS. Then I'm very sorry, ladies, but you'll have to do your waiting *outside*.

GRETCHEN. Stand aside. We will go in.

MANDAMUS. It's out of the question, Miss.

GRETCHEN. Then you're an impertinent, interfering person and you'll be very sorry for this. *(Enter HELVANOISE from ballroom.)*

HELVANOISE *(as he enters)*. Silence! This isn't Downing Street! *(Laughing.)* Hulloo, girls, you're in disgrace.

HERMIA. Yes, I know we are. We want you to get us out.

HELVANOISE. How?

HERMIA. By getting us in.

HELVANOISE. It's no good appealing to me; it's the King's orders.

CELESTE. Then you really mean we've got to wait outside?

HELVANOISE. That's about the size of it.

GRETCHEN. It's no good, girls; he won't let us in till Iris comes.

HELVANOISE. Iris is inside.

CARMENITA. Oh, you saw to that, did you?

HELVANOISE. She was in time; besides, she's nothing to me.

DOROTHY. That means she's anything to you. So you haven't got over it yet?

HELVANOISE. I don't quite follow you.

DOROTHY. Well, the sooner you do, the better. Take my advice—she's not worth it.

HELVANOISE. If you'll excuse me, it's time I returned to my duties.

(Goes to leave. HERMIA and JEAN stop him.)

HERMIA. Oh, no, you don't. If we stop, you stop.

JEAN. And what's more, you've got to entertain us.

HELVANOISE *(laughing)*. I'm afraid I haven't any parlour tricks. Or a License!

GRETCHEN. Well, do the best you can; tell us a story.

HELVANOISE. I don't know any.

DOROTHY. Good; now tell us another.

HELVANOISE. No! it's your turn now; you look as though you know one or two.

ALL. Yes, come along Dorothy.

DOROTHY. Well, you must be very good, very quiet and promise not to interrupt.

HELVANOISE (*to MANDAMUS and FLUNKEY*). You'd better go inside. You're too young. (*Exit MANDAMUS and FLUNKEY.*)

DOROTHY. Once upon a time—

HELVANOISE. Oh, anything but that!

ALL. Don't interrupt!

DOROTHY. Once upon a time, at a certain court there dwelt a certain young man who occupied the rather showy but quite unimportant position of Herald.

ALL (*clapping their hands*). Brava, Dorothy!

HELVANOISE (*rises to leave*). Oh, if you're going to be personal—

CELESTE. Sit down!

JEAN. No one mentioned your name.

CARMENITA. You're not the only cornet in the band!

DOROTHY. In appearance he was, what shall we say girls—strikingly handsome?

ALL. H'm.

DOROTHY. Perhaps you are right. Well—very intellectual?

ALL. H'm.

DOROTHY. No? I've got it; in appearance he was by way of being rather good looking.

ALL (*looking at HELVANOISE*). Not bad!

DOROTHY. And he set his heart on a certain designing person—

ALL. That's good!

DOROTHY. Who was already booked! (*HELVANOISE rises impatiently.*)

CELESTE. Sit down!

GRETCHEN. It's no use. You've got to go through it.

DOROTHY. But regardless of that fact, he pined and moped when all the time there was at least one—

GRETCHEN. Two.

CELESTE. Three.

CARMENITA. Four.

HERMIA. Five.

JEAN. Six.

DOROTHY. Six, modest, unassuming, retiring but far more fascinating little flowers waiting to comfort him.

ALL. Splendid! Go on!

DOROTHY. That's all.

HELVANOISE (*rising*). Well, I don't think much of that.

DOROTHY. No, I didn't expect you would; but the point of the story is in—

ALL. The application!

(Concerted Number - HELVANOISE and six LADIES-IN-WAITING)

GIRLS. When a maiden refuses to grant you your wishes
And life looks as bleak as can be,
Pray remember, good sir, that a lot of good fishes
Continue to swim in the sea.

HELVANOISE. Your appearance assures me that such is the case,
And I own I am keen on the curls
Of petite little, sweet little, neat and complete little,
Prim and discreet little girls.

GIRLS. Six little hearts to let,
Tenants for life will get.
Love and attention
And, we may mention,
Live in domestic clover.

HELVANOISE. Six little wives? Oh, no,
Six into one won't go.
One would be queen, girls,
Then what a scene, girls—
Think of the five left over!

GIRLS. It appears that our offer has rather misled you,
But here's a way out of your fix:
There's only one maid at a time who may wed you,
You've not got to marry the six.

HELVANOISE. But I really can't say whom I really prefer,
You are all of you palpably pearls
Of polite little, bright little, slight and upright little
Want-to-unite little girls.

GIRLS. Six little hearts to let.
See how we pine and fret?
Can you refuse one?
Surely you'll choose one
Out of the six who woo you?

HELVANOISE. One little wife? Not I!
But, little maids, don't sigh.
Though, as to wedlock,
We're at a deadlock,
I'll be a sister to you! *(Dance, then exeunt ALL.)*

(Enter GUESTS from ball-room, dancing.)

CHORUS. Music and mirth
Reign o'er the earth
Tread we a measure in festive frivolity;
Laughter and love
Potently prove
Cupid proclaims universal equality.
Seizing your chance,
Join in the dance,
Cynics may sneer at a tender romance—
But mope as they may,
None can gainsay
Men will be merry and girls will be gay.

(Enter IRIS with partner. Segue.)

IRIS. There are men who say
That a maiden's way
Cannot cause their hearts to flutter;
There are men who think
That a maiden's wink
Cannot melt their hearts like butter.
There are men who doubt
That a maiden's pout
Ever rent their souls asunder;
"Very well," say I
But I've heard girls sigh,
And I've watched the men go under.

CHORUS. Since the world began
There never was a man
Could resist the seduction sly
Of a dreamy dance
And a tender glance
From a roguish maiden's eye.

IRIS. There are men who hold
 What a maiden bold
 Never makes them long to ramble;
There are men who claim
 That the old, old game
 Never makes them long to gamble.
There are men who swear
 That they would not care
If the maid they wooed should say "No,"
 "Very well," say I
 But I let them lie
 And I take their word *cum grano!*

CHORUS (*reprise*). Since the world began
 There never was a man
 Could resist the seduction sly
 Of a dreamy dance
 And a tender glance
 From a roguish maiden's eye.

IRIS. There are men, I've heard,
 Who have pledged their word
 That they love their golf-clubs only;
There are simply scores
 Of bachelors
 Who declare they're never lonely.
There are those who state
 That our sex they hate,
 For we're only foolish riddles;
 "Very well," say I
 But I wonder why
 They should tell such taradiddles!

CHORUS (*reprise*). Since the world began
 There never was a man
 Could resist the seduction sly
 Of a dreamy dance
 And a tender glance
 From a roguish maiden's eye.

CHORUS GIRL. Bravo, Iris. I pity the poor men. It sounds as though you intend breaking more than one heart to-night.

IRIS. Not a bit of it. I'm only advertising the new licensing department. Are you all keeping your partners up to the scratch?

ANOTHER CHORUS GIRL. We're doing our best but we can't find Rolandyl.
(Enter ROLANDYL.)

ROLANDYL. At your service, ladies, what can I show you this evening? (*All the GIRLS leave their partners and crowd around ROLANDYL, all chattering. He tries to wave them aside.*) One at a time, if you please. Don't push so, you're not catching the last bus. Now then, my dear, (*to one of the group*) what's your little trouble?

CHORUS GIRL (*pointing*). He is. He wants a License.

ROLANDYL. He looks as if he wanted a tonic. Cheer up, Willis.

ANOTHER CHORUS GIRL. My partner wants one too.

ROLANDYL (*looking at the man*). Then he's not one of that lot. They want to sell something!

IRIS. Rubbish! They're only bashful. They're all dying for Licenses.

ROLANDYL. Observe the moribund martyrs! I'm afraid I can't oblige them.

CHORUS GIRL. Oh!

ROLANDYL. Now, it's no use getting peevish with me. I'm off duty.

CHORUS GIRL. Oh!

ROLANDYL. Hark at her. She won't be happy till she gets it.

IRIS. But the man won't wait!

ROLANDYL. Won't they? I haven't noticed any champing of bits.

IRIS. Don't be heartless, Rolandyl; you mustn't spoil their whole evening; surely it can be managed somehow.

ROLANDYL. Certainly, it seems a little more expensive, that's all. (*To GIRLS.*) Apply at the Special late-fee Licensing Department.

ALL. Where's that?

ROLANDYL. No. 7 in the Basement—no bottles—down the stairs, first to the left, second to the right and pay at the desk. Please examine your change, if you can get it. For mixed kissing, apply at the strip-ticket counter. Ladies not admitted—unless accompanied by a gentleman. All gay dogs must be kept under proper control. Is that quite clear?

GIRLS. Quite. (*They run to exit; the MEN still stand sheepishly by themselves.*)

(*To MEN.*) Come along; you'll be late.

(*GIRLS Exeunt laughing.*)

(*The MEN walk slowly and stolidly across stage and Exit. ROLANDYL and IRIS are alone onstage.*)

ROLANDYL. Where *are* the boys of the old brigade? (*To IRIS*). Shall we join them?

IRIS. Why?

ROLANDYL. It does make your mouth water a bit, doesn't it?

IRIS. The idea!

ROLANDYL. What! You don't think much of it? Well, have a pop at the reality.

IRIS (*drawing back*). Certainly not; besides, it isn't allowed.

ROLANDYL. Oho, isn't it? You don't catch Rolandyl napping. (*Producing bundle of Licenses.*) Oblige me by casting the cold and piercing over these.

IRIS (*looking*). Licenses! You *have* got a Stock!

ROLANDYL. All cum-dividend and all for you, my baby Perrier.

IRIS. But why so many?

ROLANDYL. Well, don't you see, if you do happen to be feeling playful, I'm prepared for all emergencies. I have taken out the Provincial, Colonial, and Continental rights.

IRIS (*going away*). Well, at any rate, I'm a going concern.

ROLANDYL. What? After all I've spent on you!

IRIS. It was a wicked waste of money.

ROLANDYL. But surely you love your little Roly?

IRIS. That depends!

ROLANDYL. Depends! What do you mean?

IRIS. Well, I do and I don't.

ROLANDYL. Gentlemen, charge your glasses and pray, silence for the do and don't. Unfold, fair wench, the meaning of these cryptic utterances.

IRIS. Well, speaking of you as Rolandyl, the man, I'll be hanged if I have anything to say to you.

ROLANDYL. That's very cheery. That's on the 'don't' side of the Ledger, I presume.

IRIS. You do!

ROLANDYL. Now let's have a bit of the 'do'.

IRIS. Whereas, in your position of Rolandyl, the Postmaster General, I would lay down my life for you.

ROLANDYL. Gentlemen, the 'dos' have it. That's good enough for me. You shall marry the Postmaster General. That's all settled. Now let's talk of love and thing. Now, what date would suit you? To-morrow?

IRIS. Rolandyl!

ROLANDYL. Well, let's make it yesterday. I don't mind. In fact I'd rather.

IRIS. Don't worry about the date. There's something far more important than that to decide.

ROLANDYL. Of course, the openworks.

IRIS. No, the trousseau's nothing.

ROLANDYL. So much the better. We shan't have to take so much luggage for the first three weeks of delirious joy.

IRIS. I wasn't thinking of the honeymoon.

ROLANDYL. Then I give it up.

IRIS. So shall I, unless we can come to an arrangement.

ROLANDYL. But I thought we had arranged everything. You've been very candid. No more compliments, please.

IRIS. The fact is you and I are not on the same side.

ROLANDYL (*crossing*). That's easily remedied. I don't mind where I stand.

IRIS. I mean, politically. You're for the King and Utopia.

ROLANDYL. I see you.

IRIS. I'm for Charmis and Cynthia.

ROLANDYL. That's a straight, and I've got a pair of Kings. You win!

IRIS. Then you will come over to our side?

ROLANDYL. Come over to your side! My dear child, you've been doing me a cruel wrong.

IRIS. What do you mean?

ROLANDYL. Sh-h! Is there anyone about? (*Business.*) Are you the one woman in the world who can keep a secret? I've been on your side all the way through.

IRIS. Then why have you always supported the King?

ROLANDYL. He's a very old man, my dear; some years older than he looks. And have I supported him? Against the people, yes, against Charmis—never. No one knows what I've done for Charmis. Why, I saved his life among other things!

IRIS. You did?

ROLANDYL. Only this morning, the King said to me,

“Rolandy!” says he, “It's a black business.”

“Granted, your Majesty” says I, “But what is?”

“We are anxious,” says he, “about our daughter Cynthia.”

“With good reason, your Majesty” says I, “But why?”

“Are you for the Monarchy?” says he.

“Chicane” says I, giving the countersign.

“Then we may trust you,” says he.

“With all you've got” says I, hoping against hope.

“Rolandy!” says he, “we fear that a certain member of our Court is philandering with our royal daughter.”

“Never!” says I, with a catch in my voice, fearing the worst, “Who would dare?”

“Cherchez la force,” says he, ambiguously.

“Charmis” says I, knowing the language!

“The very same” says he, with a nasty glint in his eye.

“Impossible” says I, back-answering him.

“Alas!” says he “we fear it is only too true.”

ROLANDYL (*turns to IRIS*). Iris, it was not the moment to think of self. The thought of you gave me courage. Drawing myself up to my full height, I said “Your Majesty, I will answer for Charmis. If he prove unfaithful, let my life be the forfeit.” And there the matter dropped. Someone had to go—I went! Now, do you believe me?

IRIS. Well, I do and I don’t!

ROLANDYL. The old complaint; you aren’t going to have a relapse, are you?

IRIS. Oh, you seem sincere, but, you see, I know you of old.

ROLANDYL. How can I prove it to you?

IRIS. By your future conduct.

ROLANDYL. But when will you be satisfied?

IRIS. When the Princess is publicly betrothed to Charmis!

ROLANDYL. And then?

IRIS. It will be time for me to think of marrying.

ROLANDYL. Your own little Roly?

IRIS (*curtseying*). The Postmaster General.

(*Duet - IRIS and ROLANDYL*)

ROLANDYL. As soon as we’re merrily mated

IRIS. –Mated.

ROLANDYL. Royally, loyally wed

IRIS. We’re sure to be frequently feted

ROLANDYL. –Feted.

IRIS. Eagerly, regally fed.

ROLANDYL. At dances and dinners society sinners

Our advent will always acclaim;

IRIS. And we’ll live in a hurrying, scurrying, flurrying

Ferment of fashion and fame.

BOTH. High jinks! High jinks!

When you’re married to me—to me

The envy of all we shall be—shall be

When we’re at the top of the tree—the tree

What wonderful things we will do!

Our tricks and our capers

Will stagger the papers;

So marry, don’t tarry,

We’ll kick up old Harry

As soon as I’m married to you!

ROLANDYL. We'll go to the ruinous races
 IRIS. –Races.
 ROLANDYL. Speedily, greedily bet!
 IRIS. And mix with her gadabout Grace's
 ROLANDYL. –Grace's
 IRIS. Flibberty, gibberty set.
 ROLANDYL. Let stolid old stagers be wary of wagers,
 We'll carelessly chance all the chips.
 IRIS. As the clickety-clackety, rickety-rackety,
 Regular, rollicking rips!
 BOTH. High jinks! High jinks!
 Etc.
 ROLANDYL. We'll yearly to marvellous Monte
 IRIS. –Monte
 ROLANDYL. Merrily, cheerily roam;
 IRIS. And gamble at Trente et Quarante,
 ROLANDYL. –rante.
 IRIS. Make a bit, take a bit home;
 ROLANDYL. We'll challenge the chances, and follow our fancies
 And fearlessly flutter a franc,
 IRIS. In a manner which is fully, wistfully, blissfully
 Bent upon breaking the Bank!
 BOTH. High jinks! High jinks!
 Etc. (IRIS and ROLANDYL Dance and Exeunt.)

(Enter KING UTOPS and CYNTHIA, followed by CHARMIS. He hides and listens to their conversation.)

KING UTOPS. A perfectly delightful dance, Princess; entirely due, if I may say so, to the charms of my partner.

CYNTHIA. Your Majesty is pleased to flatter.

KING UTOPS. Not at all. I merely speak as I feel. That's the way I've been brought up. In Utopia we don't understand the meaning of the word 'flattery'. Our one idea is to enjoy ourselves; now the only way to enjoy oneself is to be natural, therefore, we not only do what we want, but say what we like.

CYNTHIA. But isn't anyone ever offended?

KING UTOPS. Never! Everyone enters into the spirit of the thing. It's quite easy to get into when you give your whole mind to it, and you'd be surprised to find what a good game it is—especially for two. Now you had a perfectly horrible time this morning, didn't you?

CYNTHIA. I did!

KING UTOPS. Quite so. But if you'd had a proper Utopian training, you would have avoided all the unpleasantness.

CYNTHIA. Then I only wish I had!

KING UTOPS. Now, even when that Pass-along fellow shouted, "I forbid the banns," he followed his natural inclination, so I didn't blame him, but you didn't!

CYNTHIA. Indeed I did. I resisted.

KING UTOPS. That's just it. You resisted your natural inclinations. In other words, you drew away from me when all the time you were longing to make a fuss of me.

CYNTHIA. I wasn't!

KING UTOPS. You were, and you know you were. But after all, there were a lot of people about, so perhaps your shyness was natural then. But we're alone now.

(Disappointed reaction from CHARMIS.)

CYNTHIA. It makes no difference to me.

KING UTOPS. Ah, you're coy. Well, a moiety of coyety is at times becoming, but you're overdoing it, you know. Now, be honest; enter into the spirit of the thing and say what you'd really like.

CYNTHIA. You confuse me; this is so sudden.

KING UTOPS. Nonsense! It will all be over in a second.

CYNTHIA. Must I? *(Uncertain reaction from CHARMIS.)*

KING UTOPS. Won't you?

CYNTHIA. Then I will. I'd simply love—

KING UTOPS. Yes?

CYNTHIA. An ice!

(CHARMIS smiles and Exit.)

KING UTOPS. The girl who took the wrong turning! *(Recovering himself and laughing.)* You're getting to it! With pleasure! I shan't be long! *(Going to exit.)* She's played the game before!

(Exit KING UTOPS.)

(*Re-enter* CHARMIS.)

CHARMIS (*laughing*). Brava!

CYNTHIA. What! You were there?

CHARMIS. All the time.

CYNTHIA. It was so uncomfortable for me, Charmis.

CHARMIS. It was worse for me.

CYNTHIA. Surely, you never doubted me?

CHARMIS. I hardly knew what to think.

CYNTHIA. Have no fear. You may rely on me.

CHARMIS. And you on me—always.

(*Exit* CHARMIS.)

(*Re-enter* KING UTOPS *with ice*.)

KING UTOPS (*handing ice*). How's the game going, Princess?

CYNTHIA. I'm thinking I've changed my mind.

KING UTOPS (*eagerly*). About the kiss?

CYNTHIA (*returning ice to him*). About the ice!

KING UTOPS. That's cold comfort. Come, Princess, be merciful. A joke can be carried too far. Enough of all this pretence. (*Business with ice*.)

CYNTHIA. Pardon, your Majesty, I am serious.

KING UTOPS. Then you don't understand me. In Utopia, we not only say what we feel and do as we like; we get what we want.

CYNTHIA. Your Majesty forgets himself.

KING UTOPS. I only remember that you are betrothed to me. (*Advancing*.) Kiss me you shall! (*Enter* CHARMIS.)

CYNTHIA (*struggling*). Your Majesty! We are not alone.

KING UTOPS. What! (*Looks round to find* CHARMIS *scowling into his face*.) Good heavens! Here he is again! How dare you dog my footsteps, sir? You've done nothing but pester me since my arrival. By what right do you follow me about?

CHARMIS. By the King's orders, sire. I am commanded to be in constant attendance on the Princess.

KING UTOPS. Is that your wish, Princess?

CYNTHIA. It is for my protection, your Majesty.

KING UTOPS (*sneering*). The Force is a vain thing for safety. But, my good fool, have you no sense of the fitness of things? This is not meant for me. The Princess can come to no harm while I am here to protect her.

CHARMIS. It seems, sire, the Princess might.

KING UTOPS. In what way, fellow?

CHARMIS. You yourself have just now attempted to defy the royal edict.

KING UTOPS. Oho, that's your little trouble, is it? Look here, young man, I had enough of you this morning. You may have been right then, but you're exceeding your authority now. (*Produces license.*) You see that? Now perhaps you'll run away and look after the traffic.

CHARMIS. With pleasure, sire—when I am satisfied!

KING UTOPS. But I've just shown you the license.

CHARMIS. The license!

KING UTOPS. Yes, my worthy idiot! What more do you want? Read it!

CHARMIS (*takes paper, reads it and snickers*). As I thought sire.

KING UTOPS. What do you mean, "you thought?"

CHARMIS. This is a very serious matter. This isn't a kissing license at all. You've been trying to obtain honey under false pretences.

KING UTOPS. But I asked for a license.

CHARMIS. A very serious mistake. Under our Aliens Act, subsection 3, this renders you liable to deportation. Fortunately for you, it's never enforced, so I'll let you off this time, but if you do it again, I shall have to send you home. (*Valse music starts.*) And now, if your Majesty will excuse me. (*To CYNTHIA.*) Princess, our dance.

KING UTOPS. Pardon, mine, I believe.

CYNTHIA. I think not. Number 11 - P.C.

KING UTOPS. What's that? Police constable?

CHARMIS. No, Prince Charmis.

KING UTOPS. Preposterous!

CHARMIS. But it's down on the programme! Sire!

KING UTOPS. Where?

CHARMIS. There! It's plain enough, sire!

KING UTOPS. You've written your initials over mine.

CHARMIS. I've done no such thing, sire!

KING UTOPS. You have!

CHARMIS. I have not! Your Majesty!

(*Trio* - CHARMIS, CYNTHIA *and* KING UTOPS)

CHARMIS.

Is there any need for altercation?
 Though to differ we may be inclined
 Cannot we review the situation
 In a more complaisant frame of mind?

KING UTOPS.

Gladly I will aid you if I can, sir;
 Pray allow me to suggest a plan, sir;
 It is for the lady here to answer.

BOTH.

Madam, will you deign to be so kind?

CYNTHIA.

In a case like this, if you wish to be impartial
 To the partners who are partial to you,
 You must walk away
 Till the men have had their say—
 That's the only thing a girl can do!

CHARMIS and KING UTOPS.

In a case like this, you can scarcely be impartial
 To the partners who are partial to you,
 'Tis for you to say
 Who shall go and who shall stay.
 That's the only thing a girl can do!

CYNTHIA.

If to make a choice I condescended,
 If to solve the riddle I should deign,
 One of you would surely be offended,
 One of you, I'm certain, would complain.

CHARMIS and KING UTOPS.

Such a thing is far from our intention,
 We will guarantee there's no dissension,
 So for your judicious intervention
 Madam, we beseech you once again.

CYNTHIA.

In a case like this, if you wish to be impartial
 To the partners who are partial to you,
 It will save their pride
 If your favours you divide,
 That's the only thing a girl can do!

ALL.

In a case like this, if you wish to be impartial
 To the partners who are partial to you,
 Though you may be loth
 To amuse yourself with both—
 That's the only thing a girl can do!

(*After trio, Exit CYNTHIA with CHARMIS to ball-room. Frustration of King Utops, who leaves by the opposite exit.*)

(*Enter ROLANDYL, looking very miserable, sighing and scratching his head.*)

ROLANDYL (*takes out coin*). Well here goes, Heads—Iris, Tails—the King.

(*Tosses coin.*) Heads! (*Joyfully.*) That means Iris! (*Mournfully.*) Yes, but wait a minute, it also means bread and cheese and kisses—without the bread and cheese. Best of three!

(*Tosses.*) Tails! It's a close finish!

(*Tosses.*) Tails again! (*Joyfully.*) That means the King. (*Mournfully.*)

Yes, but what about Iris? Best out of five!

(*Tosses.*) Heads! All square at the 17th.

(*Enter KING PAUL. ROLANDYL again tosses.*)

KING PAUL. Heads! (Rolandyl *looks surprised, looks at coin, put it in his pocket and goes to exit.*) Not so fast! Where are you going?

ROLANDYL. I—nowhere, your Majesty. I—I lost my head.

KING PAUL. You haven't but you will. Come along, hand it over. (ROLANDYL *gives it reluctantly.*) I know it's mine, it's got my portrait on it. Let that be a lesson to you not to gamble. Have you seen anything of our royal guest?

ROLANDYL. No, your Majesty; I've been too busy looking after the royal chest. We can hardly cope with the demand for licenses; money is simply rolling in.

KING PAUL. Good. Nothing like healthy employment. Satan finds some mischief still—

ROLANDYL. Then Helvanoise must be keeping him pretty busy. He's had half a dozen licenses already. It's positively indecent.

KING PAUL. Nonsense! The more the merrier. There are times when I could do with a little license myself.

ROLANDYL. It's all very well for you, your Majesty, but what about me?

KING PAUL. Why, what have you got to complain of?

ROLANDYL. Oh, nothing, your Majesty. After all, it doesn't matter about me (*sadly*) so long as you're merry and bright.

KING PAUL (*patting his back*). Come, confide in us.

ROLANDYL (*weeping*). Oh, it's nothing; it really isn't worth speaking about.

KING PAUL. Cheer up; don't give way. What is it?

ROLANDYL. I've got a bad hand.

KING PAUL. Go spades!

ROLANDYL. No, no, it's writer's cramp.

KING PAUL. Writer's cramp? Why, some Government officials do much more writing than you—for the Daily papers.

ROLANDYL. Yes, but I've got rheumatism as well. The royal office in the royal basement is a royal death trap.

KING PAUL. But what do you want us to do? Turn the place upside down?

ROLANDYL. I thought you might see your way to appoint a deputy—let someone else have a slap at it. I hate being a martyr.

KING PAUL. But there's so much at stake.

ROLANDYL. Very well, your Majesty, duty is duty. You'll tell them I went well at the end, won't you? I've left everything to you including my debts.

KING PAUL. What! Is it as bad as that? Well, I'll tell you what we will do: you shall fit up temporary offices here.

ROLANDYL. Here? Your Majesty?

KING PAUL. Why not? It's a splendid position, magnificent accommodation, and within easy distance of the conservatory.

ROLANDYL. But it's so public.

KING PAUL. All the better. It will be Protection against Free Trade.

ROLANDYL. It's been that for a long time. (*Enter KING UTOPS.*)

KING PAUL. Now about that little affair of King Utops and Cynthia—

ROLANDYL (*seeing KING UTOPS*). Sh-h, your Majesty.

KING PAUL. What do you mean? Don't sh-h me!

ROLANDYL. But your Majesty—

KING PAUL. Will you keep quiet when I'm speaking to you? I say—regarding the matter of King Utops and Cynthia—

ROLANDYL. Sh-h.

KING PAUL. Your imitation of a railway engine is getting on my nerves. That's the second time you've done that. Shut off steam.

KING UTOPS. Wouldn't it be better to discuss the matter with me?

KING PAUL. Ah, the very King I was looking for. Rolandyl, shunt, you may leave us.

KING UTOPS. One moment!

ROLANDYL. Meaning me, sire?

KING UTOPS. Your Majesty, this fellow has grossly insulted me.

KING PAUL. Is this true, Rolandyl?

ROLANDYL. I haven't said a word, sire; I think there must be some mistake.

KING UTOPS. There *is* a mistake. I applied to you in due course for a license, and paid for it. To begin with, you were very rude about my cheque.

ROLANDYL. Your Majesty will permit me to explain. The cheque was brought by a minion, one Mandamus, a plausible hireling, which fact in itself seemed suspicious. We've had foreign princes' cheques before. Moreover, not knowing your Majesty's signature, I submitted the document to our handwriting expert.

KING PAUL. And what did he say?

ROLANDYL. He simply gave it up, your Majesty, and referred me to the Physician-in-Ordinary who in turn expressed the opinion that, whatever it might be, it had been penned in a moment of great alcoholic recklessness.

KING UTOPS. How dare you?

ROLANDYL. Pardon, sire, I am quoting the Physician-in-Ordinary. However, not wishing in any way to offend, I took refuge in the fact that we are not allowed to accept cheques and returned it to your Majesty not only in an envelope but also with the compliments of the season. Could anything have been more affable? Moreover, when your Majesty came in person, not only did I listen patiently to certain disparaging remarks anent my personal appearance and family tree, but also accepted the cheque, and handed the license without demur.

KING PAUL. But his Majesty denies that he has received the license.

KING UTOPS. Oh, no, I don't. I've got a license right enough—to sell wines and spirits to be consumed on the premises.

KING PAUL *and* ROLANDYL. Impossible!

KING UTOPS. Read for yourself. (KING PAUL *takes it and* ROLANDYL *reads over his shoulder.*)

KING PAUL. Your Majesty is mistaken.

KING UTOPS. Mistaken!

ROLANDYL. He doesn't know what he wants.

KING PAUL. Rolandyl, you forget yourself. Leave us.

ROLANDYL (*bowing*). Your Majesty. (*Aside as he Exits.*) I wonder if his people know?

KING PAUL. This is quite in order.

KING UTOPS. Is that really so?

KING PAUL. Quite. Haven't you read it?

KING UTOPS. No, I trusted someone, and it seems I've been made a fool of.

KING PAUL. By whom? Surely not our royal daughter.

KING UTOPS. Oh, I haven't anything to say against the princess, but I can't stand her chaperon.

KING PAUL. Chaperon?

KING UTOPS. Yes, little boy Blue.

KING PAUL. Blue?

KING UTOPS. Yes, the idiot who keeps following us about—the Copper.

KING PAUL. Oh, you mean Charmis, my Governor of Police.

KING UTOPS. That's the man. I call him Copper because I can't get any change out of him. We simply can't get rid of him and when I expostulate, he says he's acting under your orders. It's getting on my nerves. In fact, I think it would be best for all parties to call the deal off.

KING PAUL. Oh, don't be in too great a hurry. Perhaps I can explain. It certainly was my order that Charmis should always be in attendance upon the princess but, of course, I never meant it to apply to you. I hope your Majesty will accept my apologies.

KING UTOPS. That's all right, don't mention it.

KING PAUL. And now if you will excuse me, I will at once take steps to prevent any further annoyance to you. *(Goes to exit.)*

KING UTOPS. By the way, perhaps after all I'd better take charge of the passport.

KING PAUL *(handing it)*. Certainly, I quite intended to return it.

KING UTOPS. Thanks. I thought I'd better mention it. It's nearly time for the supper dance. It wouldn't be much good to you, would it?

(Both laugh and Exit in opposite directions.)

(Enter ROLANDYL and MANDAMUS from opposite sides.)

ROLANDYL. What's all this mean? Where's the office?

MANDAMUS. I understood it was to be here, but it's no easy matter to move a Government Office.

ROLANDYL. What about furniture? Where are the armchair and cushions? Where are the blue pencils and red tape?

(Enter HEAD FLUNKEY and others with an immense roll of red tape, rolled on by two men and other necessary office equipments which they proceed to put in their places.)

ROLANDYL. Ah, that's more like it. Do you know where everything has to go?

FLUNKEYS. Yes, sir.

ROLANDYL. Then be quick about it. Being the responsible official, I shall leave the office work to you, Mandamus. I shall sit at the desk and write a novel while you will stand and issue licenses at the counter.

MANDAMUS. You know, I didn't come all the way from Utopia to give you a holiday.

ROLANDYL. Lie down. You've been put at our disposal for the evening. If you say any more, I shall put you in charge of the cloak room. You'll find it quite easy; the main thing is to get the money; only don't you regard everything you take as profit. At the same time, if there's any case that requires tact, don't attempt to deal with it yourself. Refer the matter to me. I shall be over there in the corner of the room and you will be here in the centre of the draught. Now, have you got everything, License forms, ink, pens, etc?

MANDAMUS. Everything—except change.

ROLANDYL. Change! Ridiculous! We don't cater for that kind of business. *(Enter HEAD FLUNKEY with water jug and glasses on salver.)* What on earth have you got there?

FLUNKEY. Water, Sir.

ROLANDYL. Horrible. Is anything the matter with it?

FLUNKEY. No, sir.

ROLANDYL. It looks very anaemic. What's it for?

MANDAMUS. We thought it might be handy in case of emergencies. We had to refuse a lady a license just now and she fainted.

ROLANDYL. Put it down then. (HEAD FLUNKEY *puts it down on ROLANDYL'S table.*) No, not there—on the Counter. I never drink in business. Are we all ready?

ALL. Yes, sir.

ROLANDYL. Then open the doors and prepare to receive chivalry.

(ROLANDYL *sits at table as the FLUNKEYS open doors. Enter chorus of guests from ballroom, each girl on the arm of her partner.*)

(CHORUS)

GIRLS. Don't be shy—
 Don't be shy—
 Come and buy!
 Come and buy!
 Of a bashful nature, beware, beware,
 For a faint heart ne'er won a lady fair
 If you want something nice
 Made of sugar and spice,
 Don't be shy—come and buy!

MEN. Your invitations muddle us;
 It's wrong of you to cuddle us;
 We do not mind a frolic or a bit of harmless fun;
 But kindly do not rush at us,
 It's rude of you to gush at us
 In fact, it's just the kind of thing that's never, never done.

ROLANDYL (*to men*). You seem to me to need a lot of coaxing,
 You haven't got a pennyworth of pluck;
 You think the pretty dears are only hoaxing;
 You need not be afraid to try your luck!

CHORUS. Don't be shy
 Do not sigh
 Come and buy!
 We will buy.

ROLANDYL. My friends, this is most encouraging. I thank you one and all for rallying round us. An inspection of these palatial premises, which we cordially invite, will convince you that we have spared neither trouble nor expense in preparing accommodation suitable in every way to the requirements of our numerous and influential clientele.

ALL. Hear, hear.

ROLANDYL. There are two new features in our enterprise to which we desire to call attention. Firstly, we have made special arrangements with our colonial cousins for a choice consignment of New Seasons goods which may arrive, or not, at any moment. Vide our Half-seas over edition.

ALL. Hear, hear.

ROLANDYL (*clerically*). Secondly, on the first Thursday of each month there will be a special Remnant Sale which myself and colleagues will personally superintend, when we shall offer without reserve our entire stock of oddments at a ridiculous sacrifice.

MANDAMUS. Cheers, and counter-cheers!

ROLANDYL. Thanking you for your kind patronage in the past, and hoping by strict attention to business to merit a further continuance of your favour, we remain, dear sir or madam, yours faithfully, the old firm.

MANDAMUS. A-d-v-t.!

ROLANDYL. There is just one thing more. To meet the wishes of some of our regular customers who not only believe that variety is charming but also consider that there is safety in numbers, we have decided to issue a special Rover ticket which will provide you with all the Fun of the Fair at store prices.

ALL. Bravo!

ROLANDYL. It will entitle you to the peck penitential, the embrace effeminate, the caress cousinly, the fondle flirtatious, the hug halcyon, even the clasp celestial.

ALL. Hurray!

ROLANDYL. All that we require is a certificate signed by a Justice of the Peace, an outside broker, and three householders to the effect that you have never been in receipt of parish relief.

ALL. Hurray!

ROLANDYL. Mandamus, do your worst!

MANDAMUS. This way for Rover tickets. (*Men rush across to counter, leaving girls.*)

(Enter HELVANOISE who joins the men and struggles for first place.)

ROLANDYL. There they go, bless 'em. All helping me to my little 10% commission.
(To girls, bowing.) They also serve who only stand and wait!

HELVANOISE *(to ROLANDYL waving Rover ticket)*. My congratulations. This is a masterpiece.

ROLANDYL. Yes, it's a neat little idea, isn't it? But don't you find it a bit expensive?

HELVANOISE. Possibly, but it's well worth it. Rather rough on you though!

ROLANDYL. Think so? Why?

HELVANOISE. Well, you see, I'm a rover. This entitles me to kiss anybody I like—anybody I like—see? *(Laughs and goes to exit.)* Any message for Iris? *(Exit.)*

(Enter CAROLINE, who goes to desk and puts down money for a license.)

ROLANDYL *(shaking fist at HELVANOISE)*. If the Minstrel Boy isn't careful, I shall do him a grievous injustice!

MANDAMUS *(to CAROLINE)*. One moment, please! *(To ROLANDYL.)* Is this in order?

ROLANDYL *(turns and sees CAROLINE)*. I don't know. It looks to me as though it ought to be in a pond. What is it? *(CAROLINE turns round.)* Oh, my stars, it's broken out in a fresh place. *(To Caroline.)* Animal, vegetable, or mineral, how dare you come in here?

CAROLINE. Don't you be rude to me, young man. I want a kissing license.

ROLANDYL. What for?

CAROLINE. That's *my* business.

ROLANDYL. I'm glad it's not mine. But anyhow you've no business here. You're not a guest.

CAROLINE. If you choose to have your offices here, it's not my fault.

ROLANDYL. No, it's my misfortune. *(To MANDAMUS.)* That's all right. Mandamus, never turn away good money. Let her have a license.

MANDAMUS. But she won't give the poor fellow's name, sir.

ROLANDYL. Oho, that's the way the wind blows. *(To CAROLINE.)* You want to cook your hare before you've caught him. Now take my advice, don't throw your money away. You haven't an earthly. I'll tell you a stable secret—men are not as plucky as you think.

CAROLINE. Don't you insult me, you wretched little whipper-snapper! Let me get at you, I'll tear—

(ROLANDYL blows whistle. FLUNKEYS rush on, take out truncheons and hustle CAROLINE off stage.)

ROLANDYL. That's a nice return for all my kindness. What could she hope to kiss? A picture postcard at best. I was trying to save her money. Upon my word, some of you people don't seem to know when you need a license and when you don't.

(*Song - ROLANDYL with CHORUS*)

ROLANDYL. If you're keen upon kissing your wife when you're wed,
Well, you won't want a license for that!
It is merely a sign that you're losing your head,
So you won't want a license for that!
But if you should find your companion for life
Has developed a taste for connubial strife,
And you fancy a kiss from another man's wife,
Well, you must have a license for that!

CHORUS. Yes, you must have a license for that—
It's a dangerous game to be at;
Stolen kisses are best
So by special request
We have issued a license for that.

ROLANDYL. If your coachman is clad in vermilion and puce,
Well, you won't have a license for that!
It may call from the cabby sarcastic abuse,
But you won't want a license for that!
If you think a fur tippet will add to his charms,
You can lend him your old one without any qualms,
But if you indulge in a new coat-of-arms,
Well, you must have a license for that!

CHORUS. Yes, you must have a license for that—
It's the mark of the aristocrat;
It may be what you will,
Either rampant or still,
But you must have a license for that.

- ROLANDYL. If an actress is *passee* and plays the soubrette,
 Well, she won't need a license for that!
She may even have reached second childhood, and yet
 There's no need of a license for that!
But supposing a manager wants to engage
Someone graceful and slim for the part of a page,
And he chooses a child that is just under age—
 Well, he must have a license for that!
- CHORUS. Yes, he must have a license for that—
 Till the kitten grows into a cat,
If a flapper of two
Wants to make her debut,
 We can issue a license for that!
- ROLANDYL. You may all keep canaries, keep cats, or keep fit,
 And you won't want a license for that!
Keep a messenger keeping a place in the pit,
 And you won't want a license for that!
A boy may keep rabbits, a sailor a log,
A woman keep youthful, a king keep incog.
But the moment you think about keeping a dog,
 Well, you must have a license for that!
- CHORUS. Yes, you must have a license for that—
If your income is not very fat,
It will fill up your cup
When the dog has a pup,
 You will want a new license for that!

(Exit all except ROLANDYL and MANDAMUS.)

ROLANDYL. Well, what's the total?

MANDAMUS. 375 ducats, 87 lous, 10 marks, 1 rupee, 5 pfennigs and a ha'penny stamp.

ROLANDYL. Good. Go and pop it in the Bank, all except the Stamp.

MANDAMUS. What shall I do with that?

ROLANDYL. Stick to it!

MANDAMUS. Which Bank is it?

ROLANDYL. Mine!

MANDAMUS. Where's that?

ROLANDYL. Well, you know the state apartments?

MANDAMUS. Yes.

ROLANDYL. And the King's room?

MANDAMUS. Yes.

ROLANDYL. Well, it's not there. You leave that severely on the left and make a bee-line for my dressing room. Facing you as you enter you will find a wardrobe. Take the third drawer down, fourth stocking on the right, and there you are!

(Exit MANDAMUS with the cash box.)

(Enter KING PAUL.)

KING PAUL. Quick, man, they're coming.

ROLANDYL. The King and the Princess?

KING PAUL. Yes.

ROLANDYL. Have you got rid of Charmis?

KING PAUL. I have.

ROLANDYL. And you've brought the antidote?

KING PAUL *(showing it)*. Trust me! They mustn't see us. Where can we hide?

ROLANDYL. Which way are they coming?

KING PAUL. That way.

ROLANDYL. Sh-h. Behind the pillars.

(ROLANDYL and KING PAUL hide as CYNTHIA and KING UTOPS enter.)

KING UTOPS. At last, princess. For the first time, we're really alone. I am a King, you are to be my queen. Surely you will no longer be cold to me? *(Advancing.)*

CYNTHIA *(stepping back)*. But, your Majesty, you and I have only known one another for a few hours. You wrong yourself.

KING UTOPS. Then you have not yet learnt to love?

CYNTHIA. You wrong me.

KING UTOPS. You *do* love? Tell me, Cynthia, he is a king?

CYNTHIA. A king? Ay, every inch of him!

(*Song* - CYNTHIA)

There is a man I love—
 And he loves me—
 No Knight of old
 Was half so bold,
 So brave was he.
 And wheresoever I may rove,
 His praises I will sing;
 A man of worth,
 Of royal birth;
 Ay, every inch a king!

Not mine to say him Yea or Nay;
 My heart is his and therefore,
 Though nobly born,
 I do not scorn
 To serve the man I care for.
 Come good or ill—my life shall still
 To him alone belong;
 By right divine
 His will is mine;
 My King can do no wrong!

There is a man I love—
 And he loves me—
 Within my eyes
 The secret lies
 For all to see.
 And no one else my heart can move,
 For aye to him I cling.
 One lord I own
 Who reigns alone
 Ay, every inch a king!

(*Reprise.*)

Not mine to say him Yea or Nay;
 Etc.

KING UTOPS (*advancing*). Princess, the prize was worth the waiting.

CYNTHIA. But, sire, you do not understand. I did not mean—

KING UTOPS. You cannot stop me now. You, yourself, have told me.

(KING UTOPS *kisses her*. CYNTHIA *struggles, breaks away crying, and Exit.*)

(*He holds the picture astonished, then runs after her, but stops at exit and laughs.*)

KING UTOPS. What's the use of running after a bus when you've caught it? That's what she wants me to do. No; let her come to me.

(*Enter KING PAUL and ROLANDYL*)

KING PAUL. Your Majesty is alone?

KING UTOPS (*shaking KING PAUL's hand*). I've done it; I've done it. I've done it.

ROLANDYL (*aside*). He has!

KING PAUL. You mean you've kissed her? You young dog, I knew you would, but where is the princess?

KING UTOPS. Oh, she won't be long. She'll be back in a minute.

KING PAUL. You young dog. (ROLANDYL *has been anxiously looking at KING UTOPS.*)

ROLANDYL (*supporting KING UTOPS*). Steady, your Majesty, steady.

KING UTOPS. Go away, what are you doing?

ROLANDYL. Pardon, your Majesty, but you look simply awful.

KING PAUL. He's right; you do.

KING UTOPS. Nonsense!

ROLANDYL. Are you sure there's no singing in your ears?

KING PAUL. Or heartburn?

ROLANDYL. Or pains between the shoulder-blades? Every picture tells a story!

KING UTOPS. I tell you I never felt better.

KING PAUL. Poor fellow!

ROLANDYL. My heart bleeds for you.

KING UTOPS. Are you both mad?

ROLANDYL. I'll get him a chair.

KING UTOPS. I don't want a chair. How dare you?

ROLANDYL. Look out, sire, he's foaming at the mouth. Sit on his head!

(KING UTOPS *pushes them away.*)

KING UTOPS (*very slowly*). Enough of this. I'm a peaceable man, but my patience has a limit. (*To ROLANDYL.*) If you're not out of my sight before I count to ten, I shall exterminate you. One—two—

ROLANDYL. Very well, very well. Good-bye, if I don't see you again. (*Exit.*)

KING UTOPS (*to KING PAUL*). Now, sir, what does all this mean? I didn't come here to be insulted. If I had you in Utopia, I'd have you shot.

KING PAUL (*laughing*). That's very rich. You'd be a clever man if you could harm me. And let me tell you, you'll never see your Utopia again. Pull yourself together, man; you've only a few moments to live. (KING UTOPS *laughs*.) It's no laughing matter. Your Majesty is poisoned.

KING UTOPS (*laughing*). Indeed, by whom?

KING PAUL (*melodramatically*). By me!

KING UTOPS (*laughing*). Splendid! I'm quite fond of poison. Have you got any more about you? *You'd* be a clever man if you could harm *me*.

KING PAUL. We shall see. I can afford to wait.

KING UTOPS. So can I.

KING PAUL. I'm going to live for ever.

KING UTOPS. What! So am I!

KING PAUL. I've taken the Elixir of Life.

KING UTOPS. You have? So have I!

KING PAUL. Great Heavens, I know you now—my old assistant!

KING UTOPS. My old master! (*Tableau. Pause.*) Well, what are we going to do?

KING PAUL. Do? The world isn't big enough to hold both of us.

KING UTOPS. Granted, but we can't very well fight a duel.

KING PAUL. Oh, yes, we can. I am the greatest alchemist the world has ever known. I have an antidote even to the Elixir of Life. It means death even to the immortal.

KING UTOPS. Yes, but I'm not anxious to die. But you've given me an idea. I'm a greater alchemist than you. I too have an antidote—a colourless, odourless liquid which does not kill but makes the immortal mortal. We will fight a duel. We fill one glass with plain water; the other with the antidote. Then blindfold you take one, I the other; and the Fates decide.

KING PAUL. Agreed, but we must have seconds.

KING UTOPS. Mandamus will serve me.

KING PAUL. For me, Rolandyl.

KING UTOPS. Not much! As your guest, I claim the right to object!

KING PAUL (*sneering*). Now you want to back out of it. That sort of objection might go on for ever.

KING UTOPS. It might, but it won't. I bar only Rolandyl.

KING PAUL. Then I choose Charmis. You never thought of that, did you?

KING UTOPS. No matter. I agree.

KING PAUL. It remains only to fix the place and time of meeting.

KING UTOPS. Let it be here and now.

(*Enter* ROLANDYL)

ROLANDYL. Is he dead yet? (*Sees* KING UTOPS.) What a constitution!

KING PAUL. Rolandyl, send Prince Charmis and Mandamus here immediately.

ROLANDYL. Very good, your Majesty. (*Aside.*) What is this four-handed game?

KING PAUL. Ah, here are glasses and water. Give me your antidote.

KING UTOPS. Thank you, I'll attend to that. You can stand by and see all is fair.

KING PAUL. Yes, I should like to watch. (*They prepare glasses.*)

(*Enter* CHARMIS and MANDAMUS.)

CHARMIS. Your Majesty sent for us.

KING PAUL (*to* KING UTOPS). Perhaps we should have a few moments with our seconds to discuss affairs of state in case of accidents.

KING UTOPS. As you will.

(MANDAMUS *goes to* KING UTOPS; CHARMIS *to* KING PAUL)

KING PAUL. Charmis, the King of Utopia and I are about to fight a duel. We cannot fight as ordinary men because we are immortal.

CHARMIS. Immortal!

KING PAUL. We have both taken the Elixir of Life. One of those glasses contains pure water; the other an antidote which will make the drinker mortal as he was before he took the Elixir.

CHARMIS. Your Majesty—

KING PAUL. There is a reason why you should not love King Utops. Listen! Unknown to him, I still have in my cabinet a small phial of the Elixir. Here is the key. (*Gives him a key.*) As soon as chance has decided between us, you will bring the Elixir to me. Understand?

CHARMIS. Perfectly.

KING PAUL. I'll run no risks. (*To* KING UTOPS.) Is your Majesty ready?

KING UTOPS (*to* MANDAMUS). My scarf.

KING PAUL (*to* CHARMIS). And mine. (*Business of blindfolding.*)

(*After blindfolding, CHARMIS goes to glasses with* MANDAMUS.)

CHARMIS (*aside to* MANDAMUS.) Have you been told? (MANDAMUS *nods.*) Would you be King of Utopia?

MANDAMUS. King of Utopia?

CHARMIS. Sh-h. You shall. (CHARMIS *mixes the drinks in the two glasses.*) All is prepared, your Majesties.

(CHARMIS *hands a glass to KING PAUL*. MANDAMUS *hands a glass to KING UTOPS*.)
 (CHARMIS *Exits*. The KINGS *drink and snatch off their scarves upon completion*.)

KING PAUL *and* KING UTOPS. I wonder!

KING PAUL. Heavens—we don't know who has taken which.

MANDAMUS (*chuckling*). I do!

KING PAUL *and* KING UTOPS. Impossible!

MANDAMUS. You're both in the cart. He mixed your drinks! (*Business*.)

(*Enter* CHARMIS, CYNTHIA, *all the* PRINCIPALS *and the* CHORUS.)

KING PAUL (*to* CHARMIS). Quick, the phial!

CHARMIS. Too late. The Princess and I have taken the Elixir. We are going to live for ever as King and Queen of Esperanto.

KING PAUL. Never! My people will have something to say to that.

CHARMIS. Let them speak.

ALL. Long live King Charmis!

CHARMIS. You've mismanaged the country too long. I care not for the law. The edict shall be repealed at once by royal example. (*Dips* CYNTHIA *for a long romantic kiss*.)

ALL. Hurray!

CHARMIS. Mandamus, you will be King of Utopia.

KING UTOPS. But what's to become of us?

CHARMIS. You? Well, we won't be hard on you.

(*To* KING PAUL.) You shall be my Governor of Police.

(*To* KING UTOPS.) And you shall be MANDAMUS' Lord Chief Justice.

(*ALL laugh derisively*.) Helvanoise, old friend, I appoint you my Postmaster General.

ROLANDYL. But what about me?

CHARMIS. The less said about you, the better.

ROLANDYL. If I had served my King half as well as I have served myself, it would serve me right. (*To* IRIS.) As it is, I must be content with you.

IRIS (*haughtily*). I beg your pardon!

ROLANDYL. But you promised me when they were publicly betrothed, you would marry me.

IRIS. Not you—the Postmaster General. (*Goes to* HELVANOISE.)

CHARMIS (*to* KING UTOPS). In the circumstances, perhaps you will excuse me if I rob you of the supper dance.

(Assumed Finale - ENSEMBLE)

CHARMIS. Enough, sir; how dare you
Behave in this way?
CYNTHIA. We warn you, beware you
What else you may say.
IRIS *and* HELVANOISE. You hear what their Majesties say;
It's dangerous, very, to stay;
Before there is trouble
Be off at the double;
You'll find it is best to obey.
CHORUS. You hear what their Majesties say;
It's dangerous, very, to stay;
Before there is trouble
Be off at the double;
You'll find it is best to obey.

(CHARMIS and CYNTHIA and ALL waltz round, leaving KING PAUL, KING UTOPS and ROLANDYL disconsolate as the Curtain falls.)

CURTAIN - END OF ACT 2

ACT 1

The scene is a laburnum-hung Courtyard outside the Royal Palace of Esperanto. A tocsin-bell summons the populace, who rush out to hear the king's herald, HELVANOISE, announce a new law: Kissing is now forbidden for one year under penalty of banishment. Those who wish to continue to kiss must purchase a kissing license from ROLANDYL, the Post-Master General. PRINCESS IRIS has known about the law for the past three days because she is engaged to the Post-Master General. PRINCESS CYNTHIA, KING PAUL'S adopted daughter, is in love with PRINCE CHARMIS, the Governor of Police. They agree to keep their engagement a secret and do not get a kissing license.

The public is incensed about the new law, and led by CAROLINE, they protest the edict on the steps of the palace. KING PAUL justifies his decision to enact the law, and when the crowd does not accept his argument, he weeps them into submission.

KING PAUL tells his life story to ROLANDYL. Nine hundred years ago, KING PAUL was an alchemist who discovered the Elixir of Life, and when he drank it, he became immortal. His bonehead assistant stole some of the Elixir and drank it as well; it is not known where the assistant is now. Twenty years ago, when he assumed the throne, KING PAUL adopted the daughter of the late King. He then betrothed her to the King of Utopia, who comes to Esperanto today to claim his affianced bride. KING PAUL has brought up PRINCESS CYNTHIA on slow poisons so that she may take a heavy dose of poison without feeling the effects. KING PAUL plans to get her to kiss the King of Utopia, and he will barter crown and country for an antidote, then KING PAUL will rule throughout the world.

Meanwhile, HELVANOISE is furious to learn that IRIS has been flirting with ROLANDYL. KING PAUL tells CYNTHIA about her betrothal, and when she begins to cry, he gives her an "extra special sweet" to make her feel better. KING UTOPS of Utopia arrives, accompanied by MANDAMUS and the King's Bodyguard. PRINCESS CYNTHIA is presented to him, and when he tries to kiss her hand, CHARMIS interrupts him and informs him that he must get a license before kissing anybody.

ACT 2

The Reception Room inside the Royal Palace of Esperanto. Evening. CHARMIS has called in the constables to act as flunkies in case of any disturbance this evening. He swears he will protect CYNTHIA from KING UTOPS at any cost. Six ladies-in-waiting are late for the ball, so MANDAMUS will not admit them. They press HELVANOISE to choose a girl from the six of them, but he declines to make a selection. The ballroom guests appear with IRIS, who tells the ladies where they might get a kissing license, even though the men show no interest in purchasing one. IRIS decides that when CYNTHIA and CHARMIS announce their engagement, she will announce her engagement to the Post-Master General.

KING UTOPS works his charm on CYNTHIA, and when he moves to kiss her, CHARMIS interrupts them again. UTOPS produces his license—a license to sell wines and consume liquor on the premises! UTOPS complains to PAUL that ROLANDYL sold him the wrong license, and that he doesn't like CHARMIS hanging around CYNTHIA. KING PAUL orders ROLANDYL to set up his office in the reception room and sell licenses to the public.

UTOPS finally kisses CYNTHIA, but when UTOPS fails to respond to the poison, he admits that he was PAUL's assistant when he discovered the Elixir of Life. The world isn't big enough for two immortal kings, so they decide to fight a duel, in which they drink from two glasses. One is filled with water, the other is filled with a liquid which makes the drinker mortal. So that there is no cheating, CHARMIS and MANDAMUS are summoned to supervise the duel

KING PAUL tells CHARMIS about the Elixir and explains that he still has a phial in his cabinet in case he loses the duel. CHARMIS is to get the phial and bring to him at once. Unbeknownst to the Kings, CHARMIS made up both drinks, half-water & half-liquid, while the kings were blindfolded, and when they drink, they are both no longer mortal.

CHARMIS returns with CYNTHIA, saying that they drank the Elixir and will live forever as King and Queen of Esperanto. MANDAMUS is appointed King of Utopia, UTOPS becomes his Lord Chief Justice, and PAUL becomes CHARMIS' Governor of Police. HELVANOISE is named the new Post-Master General, and when ROLANDYL tries to speak to IRIS, she reminds him that she will marry the Post-Master General, who is now HELVANOISE. The kissing law is repealed, and the happy couples leave ROLANDYL, UTOPS and PAUL disconsolate.