

His Excellency

An Original Comic Opera in Two Acts

Written by W.S. Gilbert

Music by F. Osmond Carr

First produced at the Lyric Theatre, London, October 27, 1894,
under the management of George Edwardes.

Dramatis Personae

THE PRINCE REGENT, *disguised as Nils Egilsson, a Strolling Player*

GEORGE GRIFFENFELD, *Governor of Elsinore*

ERLING SYKKE, *a Young Sculptor*

DR. TORTENSSEN, *a Young Physician*

MATS MUNCK, *Syndic of Elsinore*

CORPORAL HAROLD, *of the King's Hussars*

A SENTRY

FIRST OFFICER

SECOND OFFICER

CHRISTINA, *a Ballad Singer*

NANNA, *Griffenfeld's daughter*

THORA, *Griffenfeld's other daughter*

DAME HECLA CORTLANDT, *a Lady of Property*

BLANCA, *a Vivandière*

ELSA, *a Peasant Girl*

[Chorus of Hussars, Peasant Girls, Townspeople, etc.]

ACT I. Market Place of Elsinore.

ACT II. Courtyard of the Castle.

DATE. 1801.

[The text — dialogue and lyrics — is taken from *Plays and Poems* by W.S. Gilbert. For this archive version, the stage directions throughout refer to Mats Munck as 'Syndic' and Governor Griffenfeld as 'Griffenfeld'. — ed.]

ACT ONE.

SCENE. *Marketplace of Elsinore. The townspeople, led by Mats Munck, the SYNDIC, are assembled to congratulate ERLING SYKKE on the completion of the statue of the Prince Regent of Denmark, which occupies the center of the stage. Colours flying, bells ringing, cannons firing, and general symptoms of rejoicing.*

OPENING CHORUS.

Set the merry bunting flying,
Fire the cannon — ring the bells —

Our great townsman glorifying,
 Who with sculptor's skill undying,
 All competitors excels.
 He, with his artistic spells,
 So the stubborn marble quells,
 That, to all intents elastic,
 It assumes, in manner plastic,
 Shapes heroic — shapes fantastic,
 As his mighty will compels!
 SYNDIC. Chosen from his fellow creatures
 By our King — 'twas wisely done —
 To perpetuate the features
 Of the Regent Prince, his son —
 Then created, by a penmark,
 At our gracious King's decree,
 Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
 And the Royal Familee!
 ALL. Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
 And the Royal Familee!
 Leisure take — festina lentè —
 You have time before you, plenty,
 When at only two-and-twenty,
 (Nemine dissentientè)
 You're created with a penmark
 Sculptor to the Court of Denmark —
 Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
 And the Royal Familee!

RECITATIVE. — ERLING.

Most worthy Syndic and all friends assembled,
 I thank you for your kind and cordial greeting —
 But when you sing my praises, oh remember,
 How many worthier brethren pine and perish
 For lack of that sunbeam of Royal favour,
 Which by sheer April chance, had fallen on me
 And warmed by budding powers into blossom!
 CHORUS. No, no!
 No April chance is here —
 Thine art hath no compeer —
 It triumphs all completely:
 And, sooth to say, 'twere well
 If Royal sunbeams always fell
 So wisely, so discreetly!
 So scatter flowers at his feet,
 Sing him songs of jubilation,

And the king of sculptors greet
 With a rosy coronation! (*Crowning him with flowers.*)
 MEN. Raise him on our brawny shoulders
 Cynosure of all beholders. (*They do so.*)
 WOMEN. Hail him, scholar — hail him, gownsman —
 As your worthiest fellow townsman!
 ALL. Hail him, dunce and ignoramus,
 For his fame will make you famous —
 Hail him great and small,
 Hail him one, and hail him all!

They carry him round stage, then place him on his feet; then exeunt all except ERLING and CHRISTINA, who is discovered at the foot of the pedestal.

RECITATIVE. — ERLING.

My pretty one, why silent and alone?
 Why sit you thus in pensive meditation?
 Has melancholy marked you for her own,
 Or sad disaster checked your heart elation?
 I pray you reply!

RECITATIVE. — CHRISTINA.

Good sir, although I sit apart all day,
 I am no prey to grief or sad disaster.
 Truth is, I cannot tear myself away
 From this fair form — thy work, oh, mighty master!
 I'll tell you why!

BALLAD. — CHRISTINA.

I see with a silent awe,
 In this faultless form allied
 The exquisite grace
 Of a royal race,
 And the glory of knightly pride:
 No blemish, or fault, or flaw,
 But perfect in all is he,
 I've learnt, in fine,
 What a god divine
 A chivalrous knight may be.
 As gentle as lover's lay,
 Or the dawn of a bright May-day,
 Yet cast in the knightly mould
 Of the glorious days of old —

My eyes are opened; at last I see
What he who would win my heart must be.

Why look at the men we've known —
Their mouths will open and close —
They've ears likewise,
And a couple of eyes,
And the usual nubbly nose;
Each has a head of his own,
They've bodies, and legs, and feet —
I'm bound to admit
That in every whit
The catalogue's quite complete: —
But where is the godlike grace
That lights that marvellous face?
Where is the brow serene?
Where is the lordly mien?
Ah, dullards and dolts are all I've known,
Compared with that marvellous, matchless stone!

Exit CHRISTINA.

ERLING. That's a typical instance of feminine perversity — doesn't fall in love with me, which would be rational enough, but with the senseless inanimate work of my hands! My dear fellow (*addressing statue*), I little thought, when I cut you out, that in course of time you'd return the compliment!

Enter TORTENSSEN

TORTENSSEN. Erling, congratulate me! I've just received my patent of appointment as Personal Physician to His Majesty King Christian. I have let my house, sold my practice, and I start for Copenhagen this day week!

ERLING. My dear friend, I'm overjoyed. I'm in daily expectation of a Royal command to take up my office as Sculptor Extraordinary to the Royal Family — and we'll travel together. Of course, you've heard that I've been promised a Countship?

TORTENSSEN. And I am to be created a Baron!

ERLING. You don't say so! To think that we two, who have toiled in obscurity from boyhood for a bare subsistence, should both be raised at the same moment to such social and professional distinction!

TORTENSSEN. It seems incredible! It can't be — but, no — that's out of the question.

ERLING. What can't be?

TORTENSSEN. It can't be one of Governor Griffenfeld's practical jokes?

ERLING. My dear fellow, don't suggest such a thing. It would be too cruel — why, it would be our ruin!

TORTENSSEN. But he is cruel. When a scheme for a practical joke enters his head he sticks at nothing in its accomplishment. Why, he has caused the very soldiers of the

garrison — war-worn veterans as they are — to be drilled as ballet-girls, and to perform all their evolutions to dance steps, simply in order to make them ridiculous in the eyes of the girls they're engaged to!

ERLING. He's a malicious devil enough, but he would hardly venture to play pranks in the name of his Sovereign. Besides, there's the statue — a commission from the King.

TORTENSSEN. True. By the way, I suppose it *is* a commission from the King? *That's* not one of his Excellency's practical jokes?

ERLING. Nonsense! Now, does that look like a practical joke? Why, I'm to get ten thousand rix-dollars for it! Now, as you know, I love his daughter Nanna devotedly, and she has hitherto treated me with contempt, because, as she says, I'm a mere tuppenny-halfpenny stonecutter. Of course, that's only her humorous way of putting it.

TORTENSSEN. And I adore Thora, who has always treated my pretensions with derision, because, as she says, I'm only a pitiful pill-roller. That's her epigrammatic way of expressing it.

ERLING. But now that our positions are so immensely improved, surely we might renew our proposals with every prospect of success!

TORTENSSEN. The very idea that occurred to me! My incomparable Thora ——

ERLING. Your what!

TORTENSSEN. My incomparable Thora ——

ERLING. Ah — exactly! But — don't think me inquisitive — why don't you think Nanna incomparable?

TORTENSSEN. Why, my dear fellow, if for no other reason, because you do.

ERLING. What an obstinate dog you must be to refuse to consider her the divinest creature in the world, because I do! And you call yourself my friend!

TORTENSSEN. Well, but really

ERLING. It's most unjust to the poor girl.

TORTENSSEN. But if I loved Nanna you'd call me out.

ERLING. What, you — call *you* out? Call out my old friend because he was of the same way of thinking as myself? — no!

TORTENSSEN. But suppose I were successful?

ERLING. Ah, but you wouldn't be. That is a contingency that we need not consider. Now do give up Thora and love Nanna — do, to oblige me.

TORTENSSEN. Do you want everybody to love Nanna?

ERLING. Of course I do. What I want is that all the world shall go mad over her, and that I shall be triumphant. Surely that's an intelligible position! Now mark: —

SONG. — ERLING.

When I bestow my bosom's store,
No room for doubt
Must I descry:
All men must love whom I adore,
Or we fall out,
All men and I.

Though poor their chance and slight their hope
Who with my suit presume to cope,
Yet must all men to gain her try,
Or we fall out, all men and I.

When I am wed I'll hold them cheap
Who sing and shout
With joyous cry.
At such a time all men must weep,
Or we fall out,
All men and I.
As all men must my rivals be,
When Nanna gives her hand to me,
All men must, broken-hearted, sigh,
Or we fall out, all men and I.

If I my lady vainly woo
And, her without,
I pine and die,
Mankind at large must perish, too,
Or we fall out,
Mankind and I.
Who loves when I find life too long
Would seem to say that I am wrong.
When I expire, all men must die,
Or we fall out, all men and I!

Enter NANNA and THORA

NANNA (*pretending not to see ERLING and TORTENSSEN*). And they're so clever, said I — such talented young men — so extraordinarily good-looking, too — and so kind to their poor old mothers!

THORA. And now that they're going to be raised to the peerage they'll have nothing to say to a couple of middle-class nobodies like us! (*Suddenly.*) Oh my goodness, here they are! Oh what have I said!

DUET. — NANNA *and* THORA.

THORA. Oh, my goodness, here's the nobility!
NANNA. Gracious me, how very embarrassing!
THORA. We're such every day gentility —
Bless me, how exceedingly harassing!
NANNA. Pray, you pardon us!
Don't be hard on us!
THORA. Most confusing you regard on us!
BOTH. Never was I so dazed, I think!

Into the ground I'd like to sink.

THORA. Can't you see they're high society?
NANNA. Don't they sneer like people of quality?
THORA. If we seem to lack propriety,
Pray forgive our silly frivolity!
NANNA. Treat with charity
Our vulgarity —
THORA. 'Twixt us there's so much disparity.
BOTH. Very superior persons, you!
Gracious goodness, what shall we do?

ERLING. Then, Miss Nanna, you've heard of our good fortune?
NANNA. Indeed I have! I'm quite uncomfortable in the presence of such grandees!
THORA. We're so unaccustomed to aristocratic circles that really we hardly know how we ought to address you!
TORTENSSEN. Oh, we haven't been ennobled yet.
THORA. Haven't you really? Come, that makes conversation easier. Still, a Personal Physician to the King —
NANNA. And a Sculptor Extraordinary to the Royal Family —
THORA. And we're only the daughters of an obscure provincial Governor! Oh, really I think we'd better go. It's so much wiser to keep to one's own rank in life!
ERLING. Miss Nanna, pray be reassured; we have no desire to presume on our promotion. Indeed, you overrate our importance.
THORA. It seems impossible. I really think we'd better go.
TORTENSSEN. No, don't do that. Be quite unembarrassed — entirely at your ease, and try to imagine that we are nobody in particular.
THORA. Oh, but that demands a tremendous effort of the imagination. Still, I'll try. (*Tries.*)
TORTENSSEN. Have you got it?
Thora. Not yet, but I won't be beaten. I'll try again. (*Tries again.*)
NANNA (*trying*). Oh, I shall never do it! Did you say nobody in particular?
ERLING. Just a couple of mere everyday, commonplace professional men.
NANNA. Well, it can't be done — that's all! It's ridiculous to expect it.
ERLING (*aside*). Now's my time, I think! (*Aloud.*) Miss Nanna, as you know, we have both loved you and your sister — and we've often told you so, and you snubbed us, and we deserved it. But now that we are well off, and Court personages, and going to be ennobled, we venture to — to —
NANNA. Not to offer us your hands. No — don't say that — don't turn our heads and give us ideas above our station!
THORA. Oh! (*crying out*). Oh, I've got an idea above my station! Oh, it's all the way up there, ever so high! (*Pointing up.*)
THE OTHERS (*looking up*). Where? Where?
THORA. Bal-loon! Ha! ha! ha!
ERLING. I do believe you are laughing at us!
THORA (*to NANNA*). Oh, aren't the nobility shrewd?
NANNA. And isn't the aristocracy quick at grasping a situation?

THORA. But come, we'll be serious. Are you really in earnest when you make us this intoxicating offer?
TORTENSSEN. Absolutely.
ERLING. More serious than we ever were in our lives.
NANNA. Very good, that's business, and I'll tell you what we'll do.

QUARTET. — NANNA, THORA, ERLING, *and* TORTENSSEN.

NANNA. If all is as you say —
If honour and wealth and glory
Of every sort
Are yours —
THORA. In short,
If you're not telling a story —
NANNA. If you're a Count some day —
THORA. A Baron if you're created —
And all turns out
Beyond all doubt
Precisely as you've stated —
NANNA. Court sculptor and a peer,
With eversomuch a year,
Precisely as you've stated —
THORA. Physician to the King
With honours and everything,
Precisely as you've stated —
NANNA *and* THORA. Then I will be your bride —
ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Oh joy!
NANNA *and* THORA. And I your bride will be!
ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Then let us make merry,
It's evident, very,
That day we soon shall see —
NANNA *and* THORA. When you are qualified —
ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Oh joy!
NANNA *and* THORA. To marry you we agree!
ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Oh happy decision!
Oh vision Elysian!
That day we soon shall see!

ERLING. Compared with our own
All others are inkiness!
TORTENSSEN. They are, alone,
Two visions of pinkiness!
ERLING. Pinkiness, veiled
With ivory pellicle —
TORTENSSEN. Everywhere hailed
As simply angelical!

NANNA. That isn't true.
Ridiculous chatterer!

THORA. Go along, do,
Unscrupulous flatterer!

NANNA. Only a sweet
Individuality!

THORA. Dainty and neat,
But merely mortality!

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Merely mortality? Merely mortality?
With such a bewitching *individuality?*

NANNA *and* THORA. Merely too pretty young ladies of quality,
Piquante and pleasant — but merely mortality!

ALL. Then I/you will be your bride — oh joy!
And I your/you my bride will be! etc.

Dance and exeunt ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN.

NANNA. Oh, Thora! (*laughing.*)

THORA. Oh, Nanna! (*laughing.*)

NANNA. They believe it all!

THORA. Every word!

NANNA. What geese!

THORA. Personal Physician to the King!

NANNA. Sculptor Extraordinary to the Royal Family!

THORA. It serves them right for presuming to aspire to our affections. It was papa's idea!
Oh, it's a grand thing to have a father who will condescend to play practical jokes
on the very meanest rather than allow the family dignity to be insulted.

NANNA. Dear papa! He has such humour!

THORA. So much invention!

NANNA. Such an uncontrollable flow of animal spirits!

THORA. Such a gentle, harmless, refined, and utterly inoffensive notion of fun! Here he
comes, attended by his guard — all drilled as ballet-girls. Now there's a happy
idea!

NANNA. Delightful! Dear papa is never so happy as when he is making dignified people
ridiculous!

Enter Chorus of Girls, led by ELLA.

CHORUS.

Here are warriors all ablaze,
Sabre and epaulettes, ha! ha!
All of them ordered to spend their days
Practicing minuets, ha! ha!
Never was seen such tawdry trickery,

Soldiers, tough as oak or hickory,
Turned to votaries of Terpsichore,
 Mincing marionettes, ha! ha!
Never was seen in soldier's training
Spectacle half so entertaining!
Never was seen such tuppenny trickery —
Soldiers, tough as oak or hickory,
Turned to votaries of Terpsichore,
 Mincing marionettes, ha! ha!

Enter soldiers dancing, led by HAROLD and followed by BLANCA.

HAROLD. Though I'm a soldier, all pugnacity,
 Into your presence I'm made to come
In the contemptible capacity
 Of a confounded teetotum!

SOLDIERS. In the contemptible capacity
 Of a confounded teetotum!

HAROLD. Although the Governor's jokes are numerous,
 This is a joke we fail to see —
If this is the Governor's fun so humorous,
 Bother the Governor's fun, say we!

SOLDIERS. If this is the Governor's fun so humorous,
 Bother the Governor's fun, say we!

HAROLD. Oh you may laugh at our dancing-schoolery —
 It's all very well, it amuses *you*,
But how would *you* like this dashed tomfoolery
 Every day from ten to two?

SOLDIERS. How would *you* like this dashed tomfoolery
 Every day from ten to two?

HAROLD (*to Soldiers*). You can halt for a moment. The Governor's stopped to make a butter
slide on the Syndic's doorstep. (*Soldiers halt — to BLANCA.*) It's a little unkind to
laugh at us, Blanca, for you know *we* can't help it — from 10 to 2.

BLANCA. It's a little unkind to complain of our laughing at you, for you know *we* can't help
it — from 10 to 2.

ELSA. We can none of us help it — you're all so ridiculous!

HAROLD. I think my betrothed wife might sympathize with the absurdity of my position. I
think *all* our betrothed wives might sympathize with the absurdity of *all* our
positions.

ELSA. We sympathize with you as hard as we can, *after* 2. We can't do it *before* 2,
because we're laughing all the time.

BLANCA. From 2 to 10 you're men, and we're engaged to you. From 10 to 2 you're
hoppedegigs, and it's off.

ELSA. That exactly describes it.

HAROLD. Yes, but at that rate we shall never get any forrarder. Besides, who knows what

may happen from 10 to 2? You might get engaged to somebody else — to the Sergeant-Major, for instance — he's always fooling around you.

BLANCA. Well, of course we don't want to waste our mornings; but even if I were engaged to him from 10 to 2, I should always be true to you from 2 to 10.

HAROLD. It's not enough. It's incomplete.

ELSA. Take care, the Governor's coming.

HAROLD. Oh, confound it — off we go again! (*Soldiers resume dancing.*)

Enter GOVERNOR GRIFFENFELD. He has a pound of butter in his hand.

GRIFFENFELD (*to Soldiers*). Ah, my fine fellows, still at it? Got your second wind? That's right — capital exercise! Nothing like it. Here, you can eat this — I've done with it. (*Giving butter to HAROLD.*) The Syndic went down like a shot!

HAROLD (*dancing*). I beg your Excellency's pardon, but — may we halt for a moment? We've danced for nearly three miles uphill, and it's a hot day, and we're feeling a little faint.

GRIFFENFELD. Always craving for some unreasonable indulgence! Selfish dogs, all of you! Well, you may halt for five minutes.

HAROLD. Thank you very much. (*To Soldiers.*) Selfish dogs — Halt! (*They halt.*)

GRIFFENFELD. Anything else?

HAROLD. Well, I *have* a request to make. The fact is, the troops do feel the humiliation of being drilled like ballet-girls.

GRIFFENFELD. Bless my heart, you surprise me! Don't they like ballet-girls?

HAROLD. Oh, they're very fond of ballet-girls, but they don't want to *be* ballet-girls, because when you *are* a ballet-girl, you don't seem to care so much about ballet-girls as you do when — when you're something quite different.

GRIFFENFELD. But don't your men see how much amusement they create? Can't they see that all the girls are laughing at them? Have they *no* sense of humour?

HAROLD. Oh, they've a distinct sense of humour; but to enjoy this sort of thing completely you want to see it from a distance. *You* see it from a distance, and it ought to be devilish funny; but *we* are close to it — in fact, *we are* it — and when you *are* it, you don't seem to care so much about it, as you do when — when you are something quite different. The fact is, the point of a joke is like the point of a needle — hold the needle sideways and it's plain enough, but when it is directed straight at you — well, it's not always very easy to see the point of it.

GRIFFENFELD. Nonsense! I can see a joke plain enough even when I'm its victim. Take my unfortunate love affair —

HAROLD. Ah, ridiculous business that! (*Soldiers laugh.*)

GRIFFENFELD. No comments, sir!

HAROLD (*to Soldiers*). No comments, gentlemen!

GRIFFENFELD. Take my unfortunate love affair. The late Governor, when I was only his deputy, was about to be married to an elderly lady of a singularly explosive disposition. They simply doted on each other. Now when you see two old donkeys simply doting on each other, your course is obvious — you set to work —

HAROLD. To wheedle the old lady —

GRIFFENFELD. Away from the old gentleman.

HAROLD. Ha! ha! you little rogue! (HAROLD *digs* GRIFFENFELD *in the ribs*.)

GRIFFENFELD. Don't do that, sir!

HAROLD (*to Soldiers*). Don't do that, gentlemen!

GRIFFENFELD. Well, after some respectful attention, she accepted me in this letter (*producing a letter*) in which she stipulated that the matter should be kept a profound secret until an excuse could be found for sending the old gentleman about his business. But, as luck would have it, the Governor died suddenly and I succeeded him, before I had time to explain that it was only my fun —

HAROLD *and* SOLDIERS. Ha! ha! (*Suddenly serious*.) I beg your pardon — I don't know what they're laughing at.

GRIFFENFELD. And so there I was — regularly trapped into a ridiculous engagement, which I can't for the life of me see my way out of. The situation is most unpleasant — *most* unpleasant. But do you suppose I don't see the fun of it? Why, I can't think of it without going into convulsions! Ha! ha!

HAROLD *and* SOLDIERS. Ha! ha! ha!

GRIFFENFELD. She's sixty!

HAROLD *and* SOLDIERS. Ha! ha! ha!

GRIFFENFELD. Wears a wig!

HAROLD *and* SOLDIERS. Ha! ha! ha!

GRIFFENFELD. Don't overdo it, sir!

HAROLD. Don't overdo it, gentlemen!

GRIFFENFELD. That's quite enough. It's a very good joke, but not as good a joke as all that. Impudent puppies! — be off with you.

HAROLD (*to Soldiers*). Impudent puppies! — inwards turn — Chassez!

HAROLD *and* SOLDIERS *dance off, followed by girls laughing and chattering*.

GRIFFENFELD. Upon my word, there's no such thing as gratitude. I do all I can to make my soldiers amusing — I place them in all kinds of ridiculous situations — I make them a source of entertainment to a whole township of attractive girls, and instead of being pleased and grateful for the attention, they growl like so many sore-eared bears!

Enter DAME CORTLANDT *skittishly, with a folded note in her hand*

DAME. Why, here's my little man after all! I've been looking for him everywhere. Why does he hide himself away from his loving Hecla?

GRIFFENFELD. Eh? Oh, it's you, is it? (*She puts her arm round his neck*.) Don't do that — you rumple me. What have you got there?

DAME. It's a note, you jealous boy! Not for you — oh dear no! it's a pretty little pink and white *billet doux* addressed to a pretty little pink and white gentleman, begging him to make an appointment to meet a pretty little pink and white lady, all alone! That's me! Now what do you think of *that*?

GRIFFENFELD. Well, if you ask me, I don't think he'll come.

DAME. Oh yes, he will! He'll come fast enough. But there — it's cruel to keep my pet in suspense —

GRIFFENFELD. God bless me, you don't suppose *I* care whom you meet!

DAME (*suddenly furious*). What's that? Say that again! Once more! Come, out with it!

GRIFFENFELD (*alarmed*). I say that I've such perfect confidence in your moral character that I don't trouble myself to inquire whom you make appointments with.

DAME (*relieved*). Oh, was that all? But you shouldn't upset me, George. Within this fragile body two tremendous powers are in perpetual antagonism — a Diabolical Temper and an Iron Will. At first it didn't seem to be any affair of mine, and I determined to let them fight it out among themselves; but this internal conflict of irresistible forces is very wearing, George, and I begin to wish they'd settle it one way or the other.

GRIFFENFELD. Oh, what's the odds?

DAME (*temper rising*). About seven to two on the Temper just now, George. (*Struggling to repress it.*) No, the Will triumphs! (*Playfully.*) Now, shall I tell my little man who it is? (*Placing her arm round his neck.*)

GRIFFENFELD. Oh, bother! Don't go on like that! You're too old!

DAME (*suddenly furious*). Eh? What was that? Too old! I'm too old! Oh, hold me down — hold me down! Bottle me up, and tie down the cork, or I shall go mad! mad! mad!

GRIFFENFELD. Don't go on like that — it's so jumpy!

DAME (*struggling with herself*). You — you said I was too old!

GRIFFENFELD. Well, *I'm* too old. You're not, but I am. Can't *you* take a joke? Can't anybody take a joke?

DAME. You were not in earnest?

GRIFFENFELD. Earnest! Am I ever in earnest?

DAME (*with an effort*). All right, dear — don't be afraid — it's down again! Well, then, this is a letter requesting Master Mats Munck, the Syndic, to take my instructions for drawing up the settlements with a view to my forth-coming marriage. But I shan't tell *you* how I'm going to deal with my property. That will be a little surprise for you during the honeymoon.

GRIFFENFELD (*aside*). A letter to the Syndic? The very thing! It may help me to carry out my plot for compromising her with him. (*Aloud.*) Give it to me. I shall see him presently, and I'll hand it to him.

DAME. To be sure I will. (*Giving it to him.*) And now about the date.

GRIFFENFELD. What date?

DAME. Why, the date of our marriage, you ardent creature!

GRIFFENFELD. Oh, yes! — come and sit down, and we'll talk it over. (*She sits at his feet.*) There — like that. Cosy, isn't it?

DAME (*shyly*). Oh, George!

GRIFFENFELD. Now suppose — I only say suppose, you know —

DAME. Yes — like a fairy tale.

GRIFFENFELD. Exactly like a fairy tale. Now suppose that one fine morning you discovered that all this lovemaking of mine was only one of my practical jokes! Ha! ha! ha!

DAME. Ha! ha! ha! (*working herself up into a rage*). Stop a bit! stop a bit! They're fighting it out.

GRIFFENFELD (*earnestly*). Two to one on the Will! Two to one on the Will!

DAME. Wins easy, George! It's all right again. Go on, dear.

GRIFFENFELD. No, but really now, what would you say if you found out, quite unexpectedly, that

I wasn't in earnest, and that I only proposed to you because — because somebody bet me I wouldn't?

DAME (*working herself up*). Bet you you wouldn't — bet you you wouldn't! What would I do — what would I do — what would I do?

GRIFFENFELD. Now don't go on like that! It's most unpleasant. I don't think you know how creepy you are when you do that. Oh, Lord, she's off again!

DUET. — GRIFFENFELD *and* DAME CORTLANDT.

DAME. Now what would I do if you proved untrue, and the suit you pressed were an idle jest, and the conjugal yoke a brainless joke, and if marry your darling you couldn't?

GRIFFENFELD. Yes, what would you do if I proved untrue,
And if marry my darling I couldn't?

DAME. What would I do if you owned some day that, a wager to win, you had taken me in, and the fact disclosed that you just proposed because somebody bet you you wouldn't?

GRIFFENFELD. If I owned some day that I sang that lay,
Because somebody bet me I wouldn't?

DAME. Why the trembling rock from an earthquake's shock, and the ocean's roar on the rock-bound shore, and the hell-babe's scream were a peaceful dream, to the terrible broth of my brewing;
The tiger's gnash, and the cut-throat's gash, and the foeman's clash, and the thunder-crash of eternal smash were unmeaning trash, compared with my hullaballoing!

ENSEMBLE.

GRIFFENFELD (*aside*).
It might, perhaps, be rather rash
The truth upon her mind to flash
If an earthquake's shock were idle trash
Compared with her hullaballoing!

DAME.
Take care, you'll find it rather rash
My matrimonial hopes to dash,
For an earthquake's shock were idle trash
Compared with my hullaballoing!

DAME. Like grey screech-owl (that hideous fowl) in midnight cowl I'd slink and prowling till a horrible howl and a tiger's growl had told the world I'd found you!

With abject fell and a yelp and yell, on Vengeance's wing at my foe I'd spring, and face to face in a close embrace I'd wind my arms around you! Your heart I'd tear from its loathsome lair — I'd pluck out your eyes, and your tongue likewise — and limb from limb, with a growling grin, I'd rend him who pooh-poohs me!

(*recovering herself*). Excuse me, please — when people tease, by slow degrees I kick up a breeze which you can't appease — it's quite a disease — I'll go and lie down — excuse me!

Exit DAME CORTLANDT.

GRIFFENFELD. This is getting a little too hot to be pleasant. But this letter to the Syndic is simply providential. It's exactly what I wanted to make my innocent little plot complete (*tears it up*). Now where are those two girls of mine? They ought to be back by this time. (*Enter NANNA and THORA.*) Oh, here you are! Well, have you seen the Syndic?

NANNA. Yes, and we've carried out all your instructions.

GRIFFENFELD. Good girls.

NANNA. We told him that we had the best possible reason to know that the wealthy old lady was particularly well disposed towards him, and that a declaration from him would receive polite and immediate attention.

THORA. So the silly old gentleman went off his head with joy — did extraordinary things with the office-stool, and at once wrote his declaration, and gave to us to deliver (*produces it*). Here it is.

GRIFFENFELD. Thank you (*giving her the letter which he formerly received from DAME CORTLANDT*). The old lady's reply.

THORA. What, already?

NANNA. Wonderful invention, steam!

GRIFFENFELD. Hush! (*Aside to them.*) It's the very letter in which she accepted me under seal of secrecy, when I was only Deputy Governor!

NANNA. Oh, you sly old papa!

GRIFFENFELD. Ha! ha! ha! It will do for him just as well as it did for me, and it will make him so happy!

TRIO. — GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA.

ALL. Oh what a fund of joy jocund lies hid in harmless hoaxes!
What keen enjoyment springs
From cheap and simple things!
What deep delight from sources trite inventive humour coaxes,
That pain and trouble brew
For every one but you!

GRIFFENFELD. Gunpowder placed inside its waist improves a mild Havanah,
Its unexpected flash
Burns eyebrows and moustache.

NANNA. When people dine no kind of wine beats ipecacuanha,
But common-sense suggests
You keep it for your guests —

THORA. Then naught annoys the organ boys like throwing red-hot coppers,
NANNA. And such amusement bides
In common butter-slides:

GRIFFENFELD. And stringy snares across the stairs cause unexpected croppers.

THORA. Coal-scuttles, recollect,
Produce the same effect.

GRIFFENFELD. A man possessed
Of common-sense

Need not invest
 At great expense —
 NANNA. It does not call
 For pockets deep,
 THORA. These jokes are all
 Extremely cheap.
 ALL. If you commence with eighteenpence — it's all you have to pay;
 You may command a pleasant and a most instructive day.

GRIFFENFELD. A good spring gun breeds endless fun, and makes men jump like rockets —
 THORA. And turnip-heads on posts
 Make very decent ghosts.

GRIFFENFELD. Then hornets sting like anything, when placed in waistcoat pockets —
 NANNA. Burnt corks and walnut juice
 Are not without their use.

GRIFFENFELD. No fun compares with easy chairs whose seats are stuffed with needles —
 THORA. Like shrimps their patience tax
 When put down people's backs —

GRIFFENFELD. Surprising too what one can do with a pint of fat black-beetles —
 NANNA. And treacle on a chair
 Will make a Quaker swear!
 THORA. When sharp tin tacks
 And pocket squirts —

GRIFFENFELD. And cobbler's wax
 For ladies' skirts —
 NANNA. And slimy slugs
 On bedroom floors —

GRIFFENFELD. And water jugs
 On open doors —
 ALL. Prepared with these cheap properties, amusing tricks to play,
 Upon a friend a man can spend a most delightful day!

Exeunt.

Enter two Officers, who look cautiously round

1ST OFFICER. Is the coast clear?

2ND OFFICER. Quite — there's no one in sight.

FIRST OFFICER *beckons off*. *Enter the REGENT dressed picturesquely as a tattered vagabond.*
Both Officers bow deferentially.

REGENT. Who were those who left as you arrived?

1ST OFFICER. The Governor Griffenfeld, your Royal Highness, and his two daughters.

REGENT. The fellow whose disgraceful practical jokes are the subject of such general complaint?

2ND OFFICER. The same, sir.

REGENT. Well, the expostulations of the townspeople have reached us in shoals, and we are resolved to judge for ourselves as to their truth or falsehood. For the purpose of our present disguise, we are Nils Egilsson — a strolling player — a vagabond — and as such you may describe me if any question as to my identity should arise. You can leave me now, but hold yourselves in readiness in case of emergency.

1ST OFFICER. As your Royal Highness pleases.

Officers bow and exeunt.

REGENT. Whom have we here? (*looking at statue*). Oho! my princely self, eh? Upon my word, fairly good for a provincial town. In truth, a very public-spirited thing to have done. Governor Griffenfeld must have inspired this — upon my word, my heart softens towards the little scoundrel. But no — on second thoughts, *he* would have commissioned a caricature. (*Enter CHRISTINA with her guitar.*) Who is this? A dainty maiden indeed!

CHRISTINA (*not seeing him*). It is a strange fascination that draws me hither! I have yet three principal streets, two squares, and the Castle Green to sing to — and they are all sure pay. (*Puts down her guitar.*) Then how comes it that I find myself, every half hour, instinctively drifting towards the Market-place. It is not market day, and there's nobody here except — (*looking at statue*) and if I sing to him he does not hear me, and if I talk to him I must needs talk for two. As thus: Good-morrow, my Lord. "Ah, Christina — hast thou done well to-day?" But indifferent well, my lord Prince, for I have taken naught and given all! "That were idly done, Christina. What hast thou given, and to whom?" My heart, my lord Prince, and to your Highness, for look you, I love you passing well — even I, who never loved a living man! "Somewhat unmaidenly, this avowal — is it not, Christina?" It may seem so, my Lord. "Thou shouldst have waited until I gave some sign." I might have waited long, my lord, for your Highness is strangely reticent; and I might have peaked, pined, dwindled, drooped, and died in the waiting. "That were pitiful indeed, Christina?" I thank your lordship. Will you hear a poor ballad, my lord? "If it be fairly sung, Christina, and not too long?" It is not long, my lord, and I will sing it with all my poor skill, so it shall please you. "Well, tune up, Christina — but I have no change?" I thank your Highness; I sing to you, not for your money, but for your love. The song runneth thus: — (*sees REGENT, who comes forward, offering her his guitar.*) Oh, sir! Ah! (*Looks at statue, then at REGENT, and shows signs of terror.*)

REGENT. Why, what is amiss with thee?

CHRISTINA. Sir, I am frightened! I thought at first — but I am a silly fool! I ask your pardon; but — you are so strangely like the Regent's statue, that, for the moment, I — oh, *who* are you?

REGENT. I am Nils Egilsson — a strolling player — a flotsam and jetsam on the world's tide — tossed hither and thither as the wild waves will; but come good, come ill, always at the service of all pretty maids who need my offices.

CHRISTINA. Then — you are not a prince?

REGENT. Not a prince? Oh, but I *am* a prince — very often! Every prince in turn from

Nebuchadnezzar down to Louis the Sixteenth, when an engagement offers. A trifle out of repair just now, but even your theatrical princes have their vicissitudes, and Elsinore is not stage struck. But times may mend, and who knows but that I shall yet play Hamlet on his native battlements?

CHRISTINA. Still! a real Prince —

REGENT. Is not to be envied, take my word for it. Why, the very fact that he can't show his nose out of doors without an everlasting accompaniment of National Anthem is enough to make him turn Revolutionist, and cry aloud for his own downfall!

SONG. — REGENT.

A King, though he's pestered with cares,
Though, no doubt, he can often trepan them;
But one comes in a shape he can never escape —
The implacable National Anthem!
Though for quiet and rest he may yearn,
It pursues him at every turn —
No chance of forsaking
Its *rococo* numbers;
They haunt him when waking —
They poison his slumbers!
Like the Banbury Lady, whom everyone knows,
He's cursed with its music wherever he goes!
Though its words but imperfectly rhyme,
And the devil himself couldn't scan then,
With composure polite he endures every night
That illiterate National Anthem!

It serves a good purpose I own:
It strains are devout and impressive —
Its heart-stirring notes raise a lump in our throats
As we burn with devotion expressive:
But the King, who's been bored by that song
From his cradle — each day — all day long —
Who's heard it loud-shouted
By throats operatic,
And loyally spouted
By courtiers emphatic —
By soldier — by sailor — by drum and by fife —
Shall blame if he thinks it the plague of his life!
While his subjects sing loudly and long,
Their King — who would willingly ban them —
Sits, worry disguising, anathematizing
That Bogie, the National Anthem!

CHRISTINA. It is pleasant to know that we are of kindred lot, for if you are a strolling player, why I am but a poor ballad-singer, and our callings have much in common. I am

at my ease now, but at first — you will laugh at me, I know — I almost thought I was speaking to the Regent himself!

REGENT. I have been given to understand that there is a certain resemblance.

CHRISTINA. It is marvellous! Do you know his Highness, sir? (*Anxiously.*)

REGENT. Well, I can scarcely say. We have never met, face to face.

CHRISTINA (*disappointed*). Then you do *not* know him.

REGENT. Very good — then I do *not* know him: but — I know his tailor.

CHRISTINA. His tailor?

REGENT. Yes. I frequently see his tailor, and his tailor tells me, in strictest confidence, that (*impressively*) his Highness is at *least three inches more round the waist* than he is here represented to be! So be prepared for a disappointment!

CHRISTINA (*laughing*). Why, sir, I believe there is nothing in this wide world that concerns me less than the measure of his Highness's waist! Such a trifle weighs but little with me.

REGENT (*aside*). It weighs a good deal with *me!* (*Aloud.*) And do you pass much time in the society of his highness's effigy?

CHRISTINA. Why, in truth, much more than is prudent.

REGENT. Oh, *he* won't hurt you — I should say that you were quite safe with *him*. But beware of the Regent himself, for men say that he is a terrible Turk!

CHRISTINA. The Regent, sir, is nought to me. Yet, to speak truly, I am loth to believe that there can be aught but good in one whom that statue so strongly resembles!

REGENT. Then — I may take it that you do not believe there is much of evil in me?

CHRISTINA (*confused*). Why, sir — in truth — nay, this is scarcely fair dealing. I spake not of yourself, but of the Regent.

REGENT. And I so strongly resemble him!

CHRISTINA. I think, sir, I will go.

REGENT. Nay, be not angry with me for drawing so pleasant a conclusion from premises of your own making! (*Tenderly.*) I would fain hope that you are not angry with me.

CHRISTINA. Nay, sir, I am not angry. I spake foolishly, and — I am well served. But I have tarried too long; I have to go to the Castle Green — I am to sing there.

REGENT. Why, I am likewise bound thither, for I have to see the Governor. (*Tenderly.*) Who knows but that we may meet again!

CHRISTINA (*moved*). It is very like. (*Recovering herself.*) But the day is speeding, and I have to sing for my supper. So fare you well, Master —!

REGENT. Nils Egilsson. (*Kissing her hand.*)

CHRISTINA (*dreamily*). Nils Egilsson: I shall not forget that name, be very sure!

Exit CHRISTINA.

REGENT. Well, as a bachelor heir-apparent, I've had a tolerably comprehensive experience of young ladies; but of all the maids I ever met, this is the fairest, the most winning, and the most original! What a refreshing experience! It's like the breath of the hay-field after a season of hot ball-rooms! We shall meet again, my pretty ballad-singer, unless I greatly err. And now to encounter this precious Governor.

Enter GOVERNOR GRIFFENFELD

GRIFFENFELD. The Syndic has received his charmer's letter, and he's on the tip-toe of expectation and delight. I shall get rid of her — I shall get rid of her!

REGENT. Not knowing the lady, but speaking on general principles, I should say that you couldn't do better.

GRIFFENFELD. Hallo, sir, who are you to presume to convert into a duologue that which was intended for a soliloquy?

REGENT. I'm Nils Egilsson — strolling player — sadly out of repair, and greatly in need of a handsome salary, paid weekly in advance.

GRIFFENFELD. A professional rogue, eh?

REGENT. Well — a technical rogue — much as a lawyer is a technical gentleman — that is to say, by Act of Parliament.

GRIFFENFELD. You pipe to a sharp note, sir. We keep a cage for such gaol-birds as you. (*Aside.*) Where have I seen this fellow's face?

REGENT. Well, I think I sing best behind bars.

GRIFFENFELD (*aside*). Where have I seen this fellow's face?

REGENT. Surely you're not the Governor?

GRIFFENFELD. Yes, sir, I am the Governor of this Province.

REGENT. A thousand pardons! I took you for the borough constable. A hasty conclusion based upon a commendable absence of that superficial polish which the vulgar are but too apt to associate with the conception of a gentle man. The Governor! (*Bowing.*) A worshipful gentleman, I'll be sworn, appearances notwithstanding. A thousand pardons!

GRIFFENFELD (*who, during this speech, has been studying the REGENT's face*). I have it! It's the statue! Why, he's marvellously like it! (*Aloud.*) Hark ye, sirrah! you are an actor, you say?

REGENT. A poor actor.

GRIFFENFELD. Ready at a moment's notice to play any part that may be entrusted to you? Kings, princes, and so forth?

REGENT. Why, I'm famous for my kings. There's an air of aristocratic impudence about me — you may have remarked it — which is eminently suited to your monarchs of genteel comedy. My tyrants, too, are much admired. "What, bearded to our face, and by a very boy? The moat is dry — load him with chains, and stifle him in its reeking mud! Ha! ha! I will be obeyed!"

GRIFFENFELD. Yes — that's not good, you know. Rather amateurish, I should say. Played a long engagement in the Theatre Royal Back Drawing Room, I should imagine. By the way, have you ever heard it remarked that you bear a dose resemblance to a very dignified personage?

REGENT. Eh? Oh, you mean the man who mends boots on the quay. That's very likely — he's my aunt.

GRIFFENFELD. The man who mends fiddlesticks!

REGENT. I don't think I know him.

GRIFFENFELD. No, sir — not to the man who mends boots — to no less a person than the Prince Regent of Denmark.

REGENT. The Prince Regent?

GRIFFENFELD. There he is. He's a common-looking fellow, and you are singularly like him.

(*Pointing to statue.*)

REGENT. You flatter me, I'm sure (*looking at statue*). Well, some fellows have the deuce's own luck. Here is a man — the heir to a throne — caressed, courted, and flattered by the highest in the land — pampered with every luxury that the ingenuity of the devil or man can devise — and, hang me! if, in addition to all this, he isn't exactly like me! It's enough to turn the fellow's head!

GRIFFENFELD. He's an ugly fellow, sir, and so are you. Therein lies the chief resemblance. Now attend to me. If you will consent to personate His Highness for twenty-four hours, acting exactly as I shall prescribe to you, you shall have — well, you shall have five golden Friedrichs!

REGENT. Five golden Friedrichs!

GRIFFENFELD. Then you consent?

REGENT. Consent? What is there that I wouldn't consent to for five golden Friedrichs? But my dress — it's a convenient outfit for summer weather; but not, I should say, what the Regent of Denmark would wear — except, perhaps, in the bosom of his family after the cares of State are over for the day.

GRIFFENFELD. I've provided for that. The sculptor of that statue borrowed a left-off suit of the Regent's from His Highness's valet — for artistic purposes. It's now at the Castle, packed up, ready to be returned. I should say it would fit you to a nicety.

REGENT (*aside*). I've not the least doubt of it. When am I to begin?

GRIFFENFELD. To-morrow morning. It'll be great fun!

REGENT. It will be a tremendous joke.

GRIFFENFELD. So original! With such possibilities! Fancy — a sham Regent dispensing sham wealth and sham honours untold on all my sham friends — and then their disappointment when they discover that it's only my fun!

REGENT. Ha! ha! I'm longing to begin!

During the last few lines, CHRISTINA has entered. She listens, concealed behind statue.

DUET. — REGENT *and* GRIFFENFELD.

REGENT. I've grasped your scheme, if I can say as much without intrusion:
As Regent-Prince I must ennoble all without exclusion,
And scatter honours all around with liberal profusion —
Then you'll step in and, with a word, dispel the fond illusion!

GRIFFENFELD. Then I'll step in —

REGENT. Then you'll step in —

GRIFFENFELD. And with a word —

REGENT. And with a word —

Then you'll step in and, with a word, dispel the fond illusion!

GRIFFENFELD (*excitedly*). Exactly so! exactly so! exactly so! exactly so!

For understand what I require —

Give every man his heart's desire,

Then I'll explain the ins and outs —

In half an hour or thereabouts!

BOTH. Then I'll/he'll explain the ins and outs —

In half an hour or thereabouts!
 Oh, human joy at best is brief —
 Alas, too soon it's turned to grief!
 So it's our duty, you'll allow,
 Our fellow creatures to endow
 With happiness complete and vast —
 Although that happiness may last —
 Although that happiness may last —
 But half an hour or thereabouts!
 But half an hour —
 But half an hour —
 But half an hour or thereabouts!

REGENT.
 GRIFFENFELD.
 BOTH.

Exit GRIFFENFELD. CHRISTINA comes forward from behind statue.

CHRISTINA. I overheard!
 REGENT. You did? Confusion!
 But not a word
 Of this delusion —
 No single phrase —
 No faint suggestion —
 To haply raise
 A doubt or question!
 If fault or blunder visible
 I make in this experiment —
 Control your muscles risible,
 And check untimely merriment.
 Address me most respectfully —
 Regard with silent shyness me —
 With eyes cast down subjectively; —
 And mind you "Royal Highness" me!
 Now don't forget — now don't forget,
 Be sure you "Royal Highness" me!
 CHRISTINA. With all devotion beautiful,
 I'll favour your expedient —
 I'll be your very dutiful —
 I'll be your most obedient —
 You'll find me all docility,
 You miracle of slyness, you!
 I'll curtsy with humility,
 And always "Royal Highness" you!
 I won't forget — I won't forget —
 I'll always "Royal Highness" you!
 BOTH. Oh, never was seen
 Such a pearl of a Prince,
 With his/my dignified mien

He is/I am sure to convince:
In his/my gracious address
There is Royalty shown —
And a baby could guess
He's/I'm the heir to a throne!
Ha! ha! ha! ha! — Ha! ha! ha! ha!
Oh a baby could guess he's the heir to a throne!

Exit in opposite directions.

Enter the SYNDIC, with DAME CORTLANDT's letter in his hand

SYNDIC. It's a singular thing, but I never yet proposed to a very unattractive old lady without being immediately accepted. Now here is an unattractive old lady — about to be married to no less a personage than the Governor of this Province, and I have only to beckon to her, and down comes the confiding, old dove with no further thought about the governor, except to stipulate that her change of intention shall be kept a secret from him for the present! Here comes the old dear, true to the appointment of her own making. How — how rich she looks, to be sure!

Enter DAME CORTLANDT.

DAME (*bashfully*). Master Munck — I — I ventured to send you a letter this morning.

SYNDIC. A most delightful letter, and one that, believe me, I shall prize while I live!

DAME (*surprised*). You are vastly obliging! (*Aside.*) Collecting autographs, I suppose. (*Aloud.*) Now, you will understand that, for the reasons explained in my letter, I am most anxious that the subject of our conversation shall be kept a profound secret.

SYNDIC. Madam, I will be most careful. You — you are the discreetest little gipsy in Denmark!

DAME. Sir!

SYNDIC. Quite right — can't be too cautious, even between ourselves. I quite grasp the idea.

DAME (*aside*). He is singularly effusive for a confidential family lawyer! (*Aloud.*) I daresay that you are aware that I am well to do.

SYNDIC. Well, I certainly have heard that Dame Cortlandt is a lady of some means — but oh, she does her lover a grave injustice if she imagines that he allowed a mercenary consideration to influence him.

DAME (*surprised*). Why, of course I know that!

SYNDIC. Such a dainty, tight, trim, bewitching little rogue requires no ——

DAME (*suddenly furious*). Eh? What's that? I'm a little rogue! This man presumes to tell *me* that I am a little rogue!

SYNDIC. But, my dear lady —

DAME. Don't speak — they're fighting it out — they're fighting it out!

SYNDIC. Bless my heart, how very interesting!

DAME (*having swallowed her anger — severely*). It's all right, Master Munck, and, for the moment, the Tempter is floored, but don't try that again. Perhaps — perhaps we

had better discuss my affairs at another time — when you have slept it off, whatever it is.

SYNDIC. No, don't go — let me gaze a little longer on — (DAME *about to break out.*) I didn't say it! I didn't say it! I stopped in time!

DAME (*aside*). He's very eccentric for a confidential family lawyer! (*Aloud.*) I wish you to take instructions about the settlements on the occasion of — (*bashfully*) my forthcoming marriage.

SYNDIC. My dear lady! (*Takes out notebook.*)

DAME. There are my two freehold farms, the three houses in Dentheim, and twelve thousands rix-dollars in Government securities. I wish to settle all this, absolutely, on my dear husband.

SYNDIC. What, all!!!

DAME. Every penny.

SYNDIC. Dearest! (DAME *about to break out again.* SYNDIC *checks himself.*) I didn't say it! I didn't say it! I thought it, but I didn't say it!

DUET. — DAME and SYNDIC.

DAME. Now all that we've agreed upon, O —
And all that's passed between us —
No human soul must know,
Be he a friend or foe.

SYNDIC. You lean no broken reed upon, O —
In Courts of Law and Venus
(I've practiced much in both)
I'm always on my oath!

DAME. What always?

SYNDIC. Always!

DAME. Always?

SYNDIC. Always!

Always on my oath!

You'll find I am

Discreetly dumb,

So trust me, ma'am —

DAME. The word is mum —

SYNDIC. Of all I know

I'll give no clue,

You little ro-

Guey poguey, you!

You little roguey poguey!

DAME (*indignantly*).

Sir!

SYNDIC. You little roguey poguey!

DAME. Sir!!

SYNDIC. You roguey poguey, roguey poguey, roguey poguey!

DAME. Sir!!!

ENSEMBLE.

DAME (<i>aside</i>).	SYNDIC (<i>aside</i>).
Although of men's vulgarity, O —	If called upon in charity, O —
I'm no unfair inquisitor,	To justify my visitor,
I hate familiarity, O —	I'll quote my popularity, O —
In a family solicitor!	As a family solicitor!

BOTH. As a family, family, family, family — A family solicitor!

DAME. Your tone is not professional, O —
It's neither grave nor courtly:
Such lack of common-sense
Inspires no confidence.

SYNDIC. By gradual steps progressional, O —
I'll reach the haven shortly;
But till the moment sweet
I'll never be indiscreet.

DAME. What never?

SYNDIC. Never!

DAME. Never?

SYNDIC. Never!

(*dancing*). Never be indiscreet!

Those lips command,
And I obey,
Though close at hand
That joyous day
When I may sip
Their honey dew —

You little pip-
Sy wipsy you!
You little pipsy wipsy!

DAME. Sir!

SYNDIC. You little pipsy wipsy!

DAME. Sir!!

SYNDIC. You pipsy wipsy pipsy wipsy pipsy wipsy!

DAME. Sir!!!

ENSEMBLE.

DAME (<i>aside</i>).	SYNDIC (<i>aside</i>).
What sentiments transgressional! O —	These gradual steps progressional, O —
It's bad, I've understood, for them,	Wait any time I would for them —
When gentlemen professional, O —	When gentlemen professional, O —
Take more than is quite good for them!	Gain widows rich, it's good for them!

BOTH. When gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen —
{Take more than is good for them!}

{Widows gain, it's good for them!

Exeunt separately.

Enter ERLING SYKKE, *with large unopened official letter in his hand*

ERLING. At last — the reply to my letter announcing to His Majesty the completion of the statue! Every hope and every fear of my life lies within the four corners of this document. What may it not contain? Perhaps an order on the King's Treasurer for my ten thousand rix-dollars! Perhaps my appointment as Court sculptor! Perhaps even my patent of Countship! I tremble so that I can scarcely open it!

NANNA *has entered at the back. She creeps up to him with suppressed fun in her face.*

NANNA. Oh, what a big letter! Whom is it from, and what's it all about?

ERLING. Nanna, this letter is to seal your destiny and mine — so, as you are as much concerned with it as I am, I think we ought to open it together. It's — it's from the King's private Secretary!

NANNA. Oh, do be quick and let's see what's in it!

ERLING. You open it — I can't! (*Giving her the letter.*)

NANNA. I can. Now then — one! two! three! (*NANNA opens it.*)

ERLING. Read — read!

NANNA (*looking at it*). Oh! I don't think you'll like it. Oh! I'm sure you won't like it! (*Reads.*)

“Sir — In reply to a letter in which you announce the completion of a statue of His Royal Highness Prince Frederick, alleged by you to have been commissioned by His Majesty, I have to inform you that His Majesty knows nothing about it.”

ERLING (*stunned*). Knows nothing about it!

NANNA. There seems to be some mistake.

ERLING. Some mistake! Why, what do you mean?

NANNA. Why that, at the first blush, it bears the appearance of being one of dear papa's practical jokes.

ERLING. But it's ruin! Absolute ruin! Why, I spent every penny I possessed on the marble alone!

NANNA. I'm so sorry!

ERLING. Sorry! I can't realize it! It stuns me! It's too cruel — too cruel! And the promise you made me ——

NANNA. Oh, the promise! Yes — es — the *conditional* promise.

ERLING. Don't tell me that was a hoax too! Give me some hope to cling to! I can bear it all if you'll only tell me that *you* won't discard me!

NANNA. Really, it's extremely awkward; but one must be a little prudent. I'm a very expensive young lady, and as it seems that you have no immediate prospect of being able to maintain an establishment, it would be really criminal on my part to involve you in further embarrassments.

ERLING *sinks helplessly on pedestal of statue, and buries his head in his hands.*

SONG. — NANNA.

My wedded life
Must every pleasure bring
On scale extensive! —
If I'm your wife
I must have everything
That's most expensive —
A lady's maid —
(My hair alone to do
I am not able) —
And I'm afraid
I've been accustomed to
A first-rate table.
These things one must consider when one marries —
And everything I wear must come from Paris!
Oh, think of that! Oh, think of that!
I can't wear anything that's not from Paris!
From top to toes
Quite Frenchified I am,
If you examine.
And then — who knows? —
Perhaps some day a fam —
Perhaps a famine!
My argument's correct, if you examine,
What should we do, if there should come a f-famine!

Though in green pea
Yourself you needn't stint
In July sunny,
In Januaree
It really costs a mint —
A mint of money!
No lamb for us —
House lamb at Christmas sells
At prices handsome:
Asparagus,
In winter, parallels
A Monarch's ransom.
When purse to bread and butter barely reaches,
What is your wife to do for hot-house peaches?
Ah! tell me that! Ah! tell me that!
What is your wife to do for hot-house peaches?
Your heart and hand
Though at my feet you lay,
All others scorning!

As matters stand,
There's nothing else to say
Except — good morning!
Though virtue be a husband's best adorning,
That won't pay rates and taxes — so, good morning!

Exit NANNA.

ERLING. Cruel, cold calculating girl! What on earth am I to do? Ruin and desolation stare me in the face!

Enter TORTENSSEN *in great excitement with an open letter in his hand*

TORTENSSEN. Erling! I am tricked, swindled, undone! I have just received a letter from the King's secretary to say that my appointment is a hoax! I've sold my local practice, let my house, and Thora repudiates me with indignation and contempt!

ERLING. Again the Governor's doing! I, also, have just learnt that the commission for the Regent's statue is a heartless fabrication, and I, too, am ruined — utterly and completely ruined!

TORTENSSEN. My poor Erling!

ERLING. But this is no time for idle regrets. A term must be put to this scoundrel's practices. We will call the people together, tell them of the infamous trick that has been played upon us, and then away to Copenhagen to lay the whole matter before the Regent himself!

TORTENSSEN. We will, we will!

FINALE OF ACT I.

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Come hither, every one,
Come hither, all!
Let every mother's son
Obey our call!
Come hither in your might,
In stern parade,
And learn the deadly slight
Upon you played!

During this the Chorus, CHRISTINA, HAROLD, and BLANCA have entered.

ALL. Why, who the deuce has dared to play
A trick, at Elsinore, to-day?
Come, tell us quick,
This scurvy trick,
Why, who the deuce has dared to play?

ERLING (*passionately*). That statue — who commissioned it?

ALL. The King!
 ERLING. And on that spot positioned it?
 ALL. The King!
 ERLING. Court sculptor who created me,
 And told me rank awaited me,
 Which pleased you and elated me?
 ALL. The King!
 TORTENSSEN (*furiously*). Who raised me from obscurity?
 ALL. The King!
 TORTENSSEN. And gilded my futurity?
 ALL. The King!
 TORTENSSEN. Physician who appointed me?
 With baron's rank anointed me,
 'Till foolish pride disjointed me?
 ALL. The King!
 The King he did and said it all,
 He did this noble thing!
 Give him the fame and credit all,
 His Majesty the King!
 God save the King!
 Hurrah!
 ERLING. A lie! No monarch honoured you by honouring us,
 Or for that cursed statue gave commission;
 No monarch with perception generous,
 Appointed Tortenssen his Court Physician!
 No royal sunlight on our labours shone —
 You have been cheated, tricked, and played upon!
 ALL. We have been cheated, tricked, and played upon!
 Oh, shame! Who is the culprit? We've no time for trifling!
 With choking indignation we are stifling!

Enter DAME CORTLANDT in a towering rage, followed by SYNDIC, who tries in vain to appease her.

DAME. The truth's revealed, the mystery dispelled —
 The culprit is — the Governor Griffenfeld!
 He doesn't confine to lowly folks
 His base barbarian dealings,
 But dares to play his practical jokes
 Upon *my* tenderest feelings!
 Assuming that for you I glowed (*to SYNDIC*),
 You Syndical mountebank, you!
 He —
 ALL. Pray be careful or you'll explode!
 DAME (*with an effort*). I'm keeping it under, thank you!
 ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

She's keeping it under, thank you!

DAME. Henceforth I vow with hate intense
To crush that Governor pagan!
Whatever the cost, at my expense,
We'll go to Copenhagen.
There to the Regent we'll complain,
In volleys of vocal thunder — (*further symptoms of outbreak*)
ALL. Now steady, or you'll be off again!
DAME (*with effort*). All right, I'm keeping it under!
ALL. Brava! Brava! Brava! Brava!
Dame Cortlandt's keeping it under!

Enter GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA.

ALL. Ah!
Here's the monkey undiscerning,
Who, all thought of mercy spurning,
Dares with men of light and learning
Thus to play the pranksome fool!
Launch at him our loudest thunder —
Tear him limb from limb asunder!
Long enough we've suffered under
His detested monkey-rule!

GRIFFENFELD. What means this uproar which my comfort shatters!
Explain, I beg! Are ye March hares, or hatters?

DAME. No madmen we — but matters not to mince,
To Copenhagen we depart,
With rage and fury in each heart,
To interview our sovereign Regent-Prince!

GRIFFENFELD. The Regent?

ALL. Aye, the Regent!

GRIFFENFELD. Not so loud.
Be pacified, I beg, excited crowd!
This state of indignation do not foment —
The Regent's here, in Elsinore, at this moment!
ALL. The Regent here!

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, THORA. In Elsinore, at this moment!

TRIO. — GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA.

After a travelling troublesome,
Quit of the Court and the quality —
Weary of bobbery bubblesome —
Weary of party and polity,

Full of a jolly jocosity,
Out of the pale of propriety —
Hating the pride of pomposity —
Sick of that sort of society,
Regent is resting his brain
Here in our little domain! (*repeat.*)

Seeking a time of tranquility,
Free from all fear of formality,
Finds it in jolly gentility
Here in this lovely locality —
Doffing all duty and dignity
(Follies that fidget him fearfully),
Vows that our merry malignity
Favours his chirruping cheerfully —
Vows he'll again and again
Visit our little domain! (*repeat.*)
ALL. Seeking a time of tranquility, etc.

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA *dancing through this.*

CHORUS. This is our chance to explain —
Tell of our sorrow and pain!

SEXTET. — ERLING, TORTENSSEN, SYNDIC, HAROLD, CHRISTINA, *and* DAME CORTLANDT.

HAROLD. This is our opportunity —
It may not come again.

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA (*in affected terror*). No, no!

ERLING. To lay bare with impunity
Our misery and pain.

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA (*in affected terror*). No, no!

TORTENSSEN. We'll beg, with due severity,
His speedy punishment.

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA (*in affected terror*). No, no!

THE SIX. And that with all celerity
To gaol he might be sent!

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA (*in affected terror*). No, no!

No, no! not that; avert our doom!

Why it would be our ruin!

Can you resist when we assume

This attitude to sue in? (*kneeling — repeat.*)

ALL. Yes, yes! Ha, ha!

Yes, yes! Ha, ha!

We can resist though you assume

That attitude to sue in!

(*laughing derisively at GRIFFENFELD and daughters*). Ha, ha! Ha, ha! etc.

GRIFFENFELD and DAUGHTERS (*as if crying*). Ho, ho! Ho, ho! etc.

GRIFFENFELD. Oh, pray have mercy! Do not pour
Upon a hapless Governor,
Who treads a rather devious path,
The vials of your mighty wrath!

NANNA and THORA. Oh, pray you be magnanimous
'Twill ruin him and ruin us —
In sheer good humour it was done —

Oh, haven't you any sense of fun?

ALL THREE. Oh, haven't you any sense of fun?

Oh, haven't you any sense of fun?

THORA. Ah, don't be hard on one whose passion ruling
Was, from his birth, a taste for April fooling!

ALL THREE. Ah, don't be hard, etc.

ERLING and TORTENSSEN. Go, traitress, go!
On such a foe
I scorn the vain appeal.
With rage I fume.
Your father's doom
This day the Prince shall seal.
In vain you cry,
And sob and sigh,
In vain you kneel, I say!

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, and THORA. Oh, pity me, pity me, pity me, pity me,
Pity me, pity me, pray!

CHORUS. Of all that's mean
And vile, I ween,
In an underhanded way,
Epitome-pitome-pitome-pitome-
Pitome-pitome they!

ENSEMBLE.

ALL. GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, and THORA (*aside*).
Shall we endure this outrage, say? When a governor triumphs though quibble and quiddity
Are we but toys to serve his whim? He may employ with cheerful avidity,
Is he on heartstrings thus to play, Any amount of tol-lol-the-rol-liddity,
As may, perchance, seem good to him? Tol-the-rol, lol-the rol, lol-the-rol-lay!

ALL. To the Regent, away!

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, and THORA. Tol-the-rol-the-rol-lay!

ALL. To the Regent, away!

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, and THORA. Tol-the-rol-the-rol-lay!

ALL. To the Regent — the Regent — the Regent, away!

GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, and THORA. Tol-the-rol, lol-the rol, lol-the-rol-lay!

All rush off furiously, except CHRISTINA, who remains laughing upstage, and GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, and THORA, who sink, exhausted with laughter, on seat at foot of statue.

ACT TWO.

SCENE. *The Castle Court-yard.* ERLING, TORTENSSEN, SYNDIC, DAME CORTLANDT, CHRISTINA, and Chorus of men and girls discovered. *A sentry is mounting guard on the castle gate.*

OPENING CHORUS.

With anger stern
And fierce determination,
We wait to learn
The fate of our appeal.
To Regent just
We've given information,
And this, we trust,
The tyrant's doom will seal.

ERLING.

The mite of a man who'll plot and plan
To ruin us all for his delight —

TORTENSSEN.

The mannikin ape in human shape —

DAME.

This tuppenny ha'penny lump of spite!

ALL.

This tuppenny ha'penny, tuppenny ha'penny,
Tuppenny ha'penny lump of spite!

CHRISTINA *comes forward.*

RECITATIVE. — CHRISTINA.

Be comforted — his downfall I foresee,
All who exceed the bounds of strict simplicity,
And, yielding to a taste for eccentricity,
Fly in the face of orthodox morality,
Must dearly pay for their originality —
You know the story of the wilful bee?

ALL (*furiously*).

We don't! We never heard it!

ERLING.

Who was he?

SONG. — CHRISTINA (*guitar accompaniment*).

A hive of bees, as I've heard say,
Said to their Queen one sultry day —
“Please, your Majesty's high position,
The hive is full and the weather is warm,

We rather think, with due submission,
The time has come when we ought to swarm?"

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Outspake their Queen, and thus spake she —
"This is a matter that rests with me,
Who dares opinion thus to form?
I'll tell you when it is time to swarm!"

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Her Majesty wore an angry frown,
In fact Her Majesty's foot was down —
Her Majesty sulked — declined to sup —
In short Her Majesty's back was up.

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz,

Her foot was down and her back was up!

The hive contained one obstinate bee
(His name was Peter), and thus spake he —
"Though every bee has shown white feather,
To bow to fashion I am not prone —
Why should a hive swarm all together?
Surely a bee can swarm alone?"

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Upside down and inside out,
Backwards forwards round about,
Twirling here and twisting there,
Topsy turvily everywhere —

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Pitiful sight it was to see
Respectable elderly high-class bee,
Who kicked the beam at sixteen stone,
Trying his best to swarm alone!

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz,

Trying his best to swarm alone!

The hive were shocked to see their chum
(A strict teetotaller) teetotum —
The Queen exclaimed, "How terrible, very!
It's perfectly clear to all the throng
Peter's been at the old brown sherry.

Old brown sherry is much too strong —

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Of all who thus themselves degrade
A stern example must be made,
To Coventry go, you tipsy bee!"
So off to Coventry town went he.

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

There, classed with all who misbehave,
Both plausible rogue and noisome knave,
In dismal dumps he lived to own
The folly of trying to swarm alone!

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

All came of trying to swarm alone.

ALL. All came of trying, etc.

Enter SYNDIC from Castle.

ALL. Well, well — what news?

Does he refuse

Our rightful dues?

What news — what news?

SYNDIC. Good news! the Regent, whom we all revere,
Will read the neatly drawn appeal (I drew it!)

Without an hour's delay he'll meet you here,

And if we prove our case the Governor'll rue it!

ALL. Hurrah!

SYNDIC. If these our charges home we bring,

He swears the Governor's neck he'll wring:

And when he says he'll do a thing,

He'll do it!

ALL. Hurrah!

The sorrows that damped our lives are past,
And happily all will end at last.

As soon as the audience has been held,

Good-bye to the Governor Griffenfeld!

MEN. Good-bye!

GIRLS. Good-bye!

MEN. Good-bye!

GIRLS. Good-bye!

ALL. Good-bye to the Governor Griffenfeld!

Enter NANNA and THORA. They come forward humbly.

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN (*recit.*). Ah, false one!

THORA. With humbled head — in desperation dire —
I tidings bring from my repentant sire.

He much regrets his foolish whim.

NANNA. And hopes you'll intercede for him;

For though his gore at retractation rises,

He's very sorry — and apologizes,

THORA. He can't say more —

BOTH. He's very sorry — and apologizes!

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Be comforted — I can't resist that tear!

SOLDIERS.
HAROLD.
SOLDIERS.
HAROLD.
REGENT.
ALL.

May it please your Royal Highness!
And encounter, generally,
Any quantity of scars —
May it please your Royal Highness!
Yet for mischief, principally,
He has turned us into ballet,
And we feel it personally —
It is rough on brave Hussars!
Yes, it's rough on brave Hussars!
Yes, you're right, your Royal Highness, it is rough on brave Hussars!

HAROLD.
SOLDIERS.
HAROLD.
SOLDIERS.
HAROLD.
ALL.
REGENT.
ALL.

If we urge, in accents courtly,
That it wounds our proper pride —
May it please your Royal Highness!
Why, he answers us retortly,
And for mutiny we're tried —
May it please your Royal Highness!
We are soldiers grave and portly,
And it aggravates us mort'ly,
For, to put the matter shortly,
Well, it is not dignified!
No, it isn't dignified!
No, it isn't dignified!
Look at this, your Royal Highness — it is far from dignified!

BALLET OF HUSSARS.

SONG. — REGENT.

My people, who've submitted to the Governor's absurdities,
I sympathize most heartily with every word you say;
His Excellency's conduct is too bad — upon my word it is —
But all his wrongs I'll rectify without undue delay.
On Erling, who has suffered from his mischievous malignity,
We shed the sunny summer of our Sovereign benignity,
And ratify all promises of dollars and of dignity:
So consequently Nanna will be his this very day.
So consequently Nanna will be his this very day.

ALL.

ENSEMBLE.

REGENT (*aside to GRIF.*).
Your orders I am trying to obey,
I hope I don't exceed in any way;
For so nobly you array me,
So magnificently pay me,
That your orders I am anxious to obey.

GRIF. (*aside to REGENT*).
My orders you implicitly obey,
Proceed with perfect certainty you may;
Now unmercifully flay me,
And with punishment dismay me,
Or my orders you will surely disobey.

ERLING (*aside*).
Oh, Nanna will mine this very day.
And all my sorrows hide themselves away;
For the trick he dared to play me
It will handsomely repay me,
If Miss Nanna will be mine this very day.

NANNA (*aside*).
It's unfortunate that this is all in play.

THORA, OTHER PRINCIPALS *and* CHORUS.
Oh, Nanna will be his this very day,

I shouldn't like to marry him to-day;
It would terrible dismay be,
If he really came to claim me,
It is lucky that it's only said in play.

And all his sorrows hide themselves away;
I will handsomely array me
In my very best to play me,
For Miss Nanna will be his this very day!

REGENT. You, Tortenssen, — who Griffenfeld with impudent audacity
Appointed our Physician — why, that gift is ratified
With promised rank of Baron — in that dignified capacity
He's warranted in claiming pretty Thora as his bride.
And Harold, gallant Corporal, whom with spite oppressional,
Was made to twist and turn about like ballet-girl professional,
Dispensing with the many intermediate steps progressional,
A Colonel he's created at one mighty giant stride!
ALL. A Colonel he's created at one mighty giant stride!

ENSEMBLE.

REGENT (*aside to GRIF.*).
I trust your Excellency's satisfied,
To carry out your wishes I have tried —
If I haven't acted rightly
You will mention it politely,
But I trust your Excellency's satisfied.

GRIF. (*aside to REGENT*).
So far, my Excellency's satisfied,
To carry out my wishes you have tried;
When you fail to do it rightly
I will mention it politely,
But, so far, my Excellency's satisfied.

HAROLD and TORTENSSEN.
Upon my word, I'm truly gratified,
To justify your choice will be my pride;
For I think you've chosen rightly,
And I thank you most politely,
For upon my word, I'm truly gratified.

THORA (*aside*).
If he thinks that I intend to be his bride,
He'll find it a mistake unqualified,
If I know my feelings rightly,
I will thank him most politely,
And decline, on any terms, to be his bride.

OTHER PRINCIPALS and CHORUS.
Upon my word, we're truly gratified,
To justify your choice will be their pride;
For we think you've chosen rightly,
And we thank you most politely,
For upon my word, we're truly gratified.

REGENT. And now for Governor Griffenfeld — we highly to extol you meant,
But, finding you're addicted to discreditable pranks,
We strip you of your dignity, position, and emolument,
And name Mats Munck as Governor — we don't want any thanks.
And, as in these proceedings we are banded all in unity,
I think we couldn't find a more convenient opportunity
Of proving that imposture can't be practised with impunity.
(to GRIFFENFELD). For all your impositions you're degraded in the ranks!
ALL. For all your impositions you're degraded in the ranks!

ENSEMBLE.

REGENT (*aside to GRIF.*).
I think I've done exactly as you said,
I'm sure I hope I haven't been misled;
When I receive my payment
payment,
I'll surrender all this raiment,
And resume my old habiliments instead.
wed.

GRIF. (*aside to REGENT*).
You've done it pretty nearly as I've said,
If you hadn't you'd have sacrificed your head.
You shall now receive your payment,

So take off that handsome raiment,
And resume your old habiliments instead.

SYNDIC.
Now really this is like to turn my head,
For I'm to rule as Governor instead!
When I get my quarter's

I'll buy all his left-off raiment,
And it's possible Dame Cortlandt I may

NANNA and THORA (*aside to each other*). CHORUS and OTHER PRINCIPALS.
Did you hear what that audacious fellow said?
My goodness, how exceedingly ill-bred!
Let us give this man his payment,
Then he'll doff his splendid raiment,
And resume his old habiliments instead.

Assuredly there's nothing to be said,
He's lucky in escaping with his head!
He loses all his payment,
And his most expensive raiment,
And he'll take his turn at sentry-go instead!

REGENT. Now all you men and maidens true,
Who troth have duly plighted —
(I understand you're not a few)
Your wrongs shall all be righted:
At his expense a banquet to
You're cordially invited,
And in the Castle Chapel you
This day shall be united!

ALL.
(*all dancing*). Hurrah!
Oh, bright delight — go find a priest!
The wedding and the wedding feast,
At your expense, will soon be held,
So thank you, Private Griffenfeld!
Ha, ha, ha, ha, etc.
At your expense they will be held,
Three cheers for Private Griffenfeld!
So thank you —

GRIFFENFELD. Thank you —
ALL. Thank you —
GRIFFENFELD. Thank you —
ALL. Thank you Private Griffenfeld!

All dance off in couples, except GRIFFENFELD and REGENT.

REGENT (*changing his manner — very humbly*). I trust I've fairly carried out your Excellency's instructions?

GRIFFENFELD. You've done pretty well, sir — only pretty well!

REGENT. May I ask in what respect I have failed?

GRIFFENFELD. Your manner is not sufficiently dignified for a Royal Prince — you want a great deal more of this sort of thing — (*business*) — you are not at all Royal, sir!

REGENT. I see what you mean. (*Imitating him.*) Thank you, I'm sure — it will be most useful to me in my profession, and I'll take care to remember it. But pray bear in mind that, as a poor stroller, I have not enjoyed your Excellency's many opportunities of making myself acquainted with the department of the very highest classes.

GRIFFENFELD. True, but I told you this afternoon that you must endeavour to assume an air of — of this sort of thing — (*business*). Then again, your instructions were to order me to be shot in twenty-four hours. Why didn't you do that?

REGENT. Well, I was about to give the order, but when I saw the temper of the people and how cordially you are detested — most unjustly, I'm sure — I was afraid to do so lest, in their fury, they should execute the order on the spot.

GRIFFENFELD. I see what you mean.

REGENT. I might not have had time to stop them.

GRIFFENFELD. Very true.

REGENT. But it's not too late — they can be sent for directly and the order given, without

delay. (*About to go off.*)

GRIFFENFELD. No — on second thoughts it's not necessary. It will do as it is.

REGENT. I trust you think I exercised a wise discretion?

GRIFFENFELD. Well, on the whole, perhaps yes. I say — it's — it's a good joke, isn't it?

REGENT. It's a perfect monument of practical humour. Only — forgive the suggestion — isn't it a little risky?

GRIFFENFELD. Risky? What do you mean?

REGENT. Somehow these practical jokes have such a tendency to recoil on the heads of their perpetrators. Now, mere verbal humour is so much safer — a quip, a crank, a jibe, jape or jest —

GRIFFENFELD. Nonsense, sir, don't talk to me about japes and jests! Return to the Castle, and when you've resumed your rags, I will pay you the golden Friedrichs I promised you. Be off!

REGENT. As your Excellency pleases. (*Exit REGENT into Castle.*)

GRIFFENFELD. What does he mean about practical jokes recoiling on their perpetrator? I ought to know. I've played them with impunity for five-and-forty years! It's all very well to talk about verbal humour, but where is it to come from? Why, everything of the kind has been said — there's absolutely nothing left!

SONG. — GRIFFENFELD.

Quixotic is his enterprise, and hopeless his adventure is,
Who seeks for jocularities that haven't yet been said.
The world has joked incessantly for over fifty centuries,
And every joke that's possible has long ago been made.
I started as a humorist with lots of mental fizziness,
But humour is a drug which it's the fashion to abuse;
For my stock in trade, my fixtures, and the goodwill of the business
No reasonable offer I am likely to refuse.
And if anybody choose
He may circulate the news
That no reasonable offer I am likely to refuse.

Oh happy was the humourist — the first that made a pun at all —
Who when a joke occurred to him, however poor and mean,
Was absolutely certain that it never had been done at all —
How popular at dinners must that humourist have been!
Oh the days when some stepfather for the query held a handle out,
The door-mat from the scraper, is it distant very far?
And when no one knew where Moses was when Aaron put the candle out,
And no one had discovered that a door could be a-jar!
But your modern heroes are
In their tastes particular,
And they sneer if you inform them that a door could be a-jar!

In search of quip and quiddity I've sat all day, alone, apart —

And all that I could hit on as a problem was — to find
Analogy between a scrag of mutton and a Bony-part,
Which offers slight enjoyment to the speculative mind:
For you cannot call it very good, however good your charity —
It's not the sort of humour that is greeted with a shout —
And I've come to the conclusion that the mine of jocularity,
In present Anno Domini, is worked completely out!
Though the notion you may scout,
I can prove beyond a doubt
That the mine of jocularity is utterly worked out!

Exit into Castle.

Enter HAROLD, now dressed as Colonel, followed by BLANCA.

HAROLD. Now, don't worry me — I can't attend to you now. I've the responsibility of a Regiment on my shoulders, and I've no time to listen to chatterboxes. If you've anything to say, mention it to the Sergeant-Major.

BLANCA. The Sergeant-Major? Oh, very good — only if I tell the Sergeant-Major what I was going to tell *you*, the Sergeant-Major'll do something affectionate, that's all. (*Going.*)

HAROLD. Stop! Now you are not going to say anything to the Sergeant-Major that will unsettle him and make him neglect his duties?

BLANCA. Only his Regimental duties. Not the others.

HAROLD. Oh! It would be a pity to unsettle the Sergeant-Major. Well, what was it you were going to say?

BLANCA (*nestling up against him*). Only this, dear — that this sudden rise — dear — from corporal to colonel at one step — dear — is more like fiction than fact, isn't it, dear?

HAROLD. Is that all? Cut out the "dears," and I don't think it'll hurt him. But, as you say, it *is* remarkable.

BLANCA. What a novel it would make!

HAROLD. A three-volume novel! So it would. Let's write it together.

BLANCA. Very well — you begin.

HAROLD. Now, let me see —

DUET. — HAROLD *and* BLANCA.

HAROLD. There once was a corporal bold —
BLANCA. Yes — gawky, round-shouldered, and lean —
HAROLD. No, very good-looking with plenty of dash,
In battle courageous, hot-headed, and rash,
With a small but extremely becoming moustache —
BLANCA. Ah! it isn't the one that I mean.

HAROLD (*speaks*). Now it's your turn.

BLANCA. There was once a Vivandière —
HAROLD. Old,
 Short, stumpy, red-headed, and vain —
BLANCA. Not at all — very young with no sort of defect,
 Exceedingly lovely and highly correct.
HAROLD. Oh, don't make her pretty — these girls, recollect,
 Are always remarkably plain!

BLANCA (*speaking*). Rather rude, isn't it?
HAROLD. Not a bit. True to life — that's all. Now we must have an incident.
BLANCA. Suppose we make her — (*Whispers.*)
HAROLD. No — Mudie wouldn't take it. No, I don't think that would do. Stop, I have an
 idea for a sensational incident of a striking and dramatic character.

 The Regent one morning, by chance,
 Observing the Corporal, said —
 “It would be nothing short of a public disgrace
 To keep such a trump in a Corporal's place —
 So we'll make him a Colonel, all covered with lace.”
BLANCA (*to audience*). The Regent was weak in the head!
HAROLD. She, taking the facts at a glance,
 To his bosom unblushingly flew —
BLANCA. And he was so deeply in love, I declare,
 That he married her then, and he married her there —
BOTH. So it ends with a wedding at Hanover Square,
 And a three volume novel should do!

Exeunt together.

Enter SYNDIC, now dressed in GRIFFENFELD's uniform.

SYNDIC. When a man is promoted unexpectedly to a position of the highest official
 distinction, it is always a satisfactory circumstance when his figure is calculated
 to set off his uniform to advantage. (*SENTRY presents arms to him.*) Eh? Oh,
 thank you very much. You're extremely polite, I'm sure!
SENTRY. Please to remember the sentry.
SYNDIC. Eh? Oh, certainly. (*Gives him money.*)

Enter DAME CORTLANDT unobserved. She comes forward

DAME (*putting her arm round him*). Mats! Little man!
SYNDIC. Eh? Oh, it's you. Don't. I'm busy now (*Aside.*) It was all very well when I was
 only a Syndic, but as a Governor I can look a good deal higher than this sort of
 person. (*Aloud, to sentry.*) Will you kindly do that again?
SENTRY. Certainly. (*Presents arms.*)

SYNDIC. Most gratifying, I'm sure! (*Tips him again. DAME again embraces SYNDIC.*) Now, don't worry — can't you see that I have business with a gentleman? (*Reverts to sentry.*)

DAME (*suppressing her rage with difficulty*). Mats! Take care! This is strange treatment — at the very outset of our engagement!

SYNDIC. But, my good soul, you speak of our engagement as if ——

DAME. Don't deny it, Mats. I have your letter of proposal in my pocket — you have my letter of acceptance in yours! I'm trying to keep it down, Mats.

SYNDIC. But as you very properly observed, that wasn't addressed to me but to the ex-Governor.

DAME. It does just as well for you, Mats. I accepted the Governor, and you *are* the Governor.

SYNDIC. If it comes to that, you were proposed to by the Syndic, and I'm not the Syndic. Go find the Syndic — go seek, go find — there's a good girl! (*Reverts to sentry.*) Will you oblige me once more? (*Giving him money.*)

DAME (*heaving with suppressed rage*). I'm doing my best to subdue it, Mats, but it's a tremendous effort.

SYNDIC. Hold your breath and count six, my dear.

DAME (*does so*). It's all right, dear — it's down again!

SYNDIC (*occupied with sentry*). So glad!

DAME. We must settle this at once, Mats. It's a very nice point. Shall we refer it to arbitration?

SYNDIC. By all means. I find this gentleman (*indicating sentry*) full of delicate appreciation — suppose we leave it to him?

DAME. You will undertake to abide by the result, Mats?

SYNDIC. With pleasure. (*Aside.*) I've tipped him till he doesn't know whether he stands on his head or his heels!

QUARTET. — SYNDIC, DAME CORTLANDT, SENTRY, *and afterwards* GRIFFENFELD.

SYNDIC (*to SENTRY*). One day, the Syndic of this town
(Whose time of life is shady)
Affectionately kneeling down,
Proposed to this old lady.
Now your opinion give politely
And riddle me this and riddle me rightly —
Who claims her hand? (*aside.*) Here's half-a-crown! (*tipping him.*)

SENTRY. No doubt the Syndic of this town.

SYNDIC (*dancing*). Exactly so — the truth you speak —
(*to DAME*). Away — your love-sick Syndic seek —
You have no claim upon me, for
Unhappily I'm the Governor!

SENTRY. Oh yes, he is the Governor!

SYNDIC. There!

SENTRY. No doubt he is the Governor!

SYNDIC. There!

SENTRY. Against you, ma'am, I must declare —
The gentleman is the Governor!

SYNDIC. There!

DAME. But bless my soul —

SYNDIC. The man is right!

DAME. That's not the whole —

SYNDIC. It's settled quite!

ENSEMBLE.

DAME.	SYNDIC.
It's now <i>my</i> turn my wrongs to air,	I've taken steps the Court to square,
So Governor Munck for squalls prepare!	So fire away, ma'am — <i>I don't care!</i>

During the Ensemble a corporal's guard enters — the SENTRY is relieved, and GRIFFENFELD, now dressed as a private Hussar, is left in his place. The change is not noticed by the DAME or SYNDIC.

DAME. One moment, pray — your words retrace,
Oh, sentinel shortsighted!
I to the Governor of this place
My troth securely plighted —
Now pray don't treat the question lightly,
But riddle me this and riddle me rightly —
Who claims my conjugal embrace?

GRIFFENFELD. Of course, the Governor of this place!
DAME (*dancing*). Exactly so! you well decide!
I am, ha! ha! the Governor's bride —
The Governor you, you can't deny —
Argal, the Governor's lady, I!

GRIFFENFELD. She *is* the Governor's lady!

SYNDIC. What!

GRIFFENFELD. Of course, the Governor's lady!

SYNDIC. What!

GRIFFENFELD. You *are* the Governor's lady!

SYNDIC. What!

GRIFFENFELD. You *are* the Governor, are you not?
Then she's the Governor's lady!

SYNDIC. What!

DAME (*still dancing*). But bless my heart —

SYNDIC. That man is right!

DAME. That's but a part —

DAME. It's settled quite!

ENSEMBLE.

DAME.	SYNDIC.	GRIFFENFELD (<i>aside</i>).
Though basely you may plan and plot,	If I consent, may I be shot,	How capitally I plan and plot

With me you'll share the Governor's lot! With her to share my Governor's lot! To cleverly cut the Gordian knot!

DAME *dances off in front of SYNDIC, who tries in vain to escape.*

GRIFFENFELD (*alone*). It's alright! they're both committed to it, and *that* little difficulty is off my hands at last! Hallo! what's wrong now?

Enter NANNA and THORA tidying their caps and much out of temper.

THORA. Papa, a joke's a joke — but I don't think it fair to make us plot against ourselves!

NANNA. I'm sure I enjoy a hit of fun as much as anybody, but when it comes to our being coupled, if only for an afternoon, with a brace of penniless admirers, who are disposed to take every advantage of the position in which they temporarily find themselves, why, it's going a little too far — that's all!

GRIFFENFELD. Why, what have they been doing?

THORA. Why, they've been unnecessarily realistic in their attentions.

GRIFFENFELD. Unpleasantly so?

THORA. I said unnecessarily so. Goodness knows, I don't mind realism when there's any prospect of its coming to anything definite, but as neither of these young men has a penny, the sooner it's put a stop to the better!

GRIFFENFELD. Hasn't a penny! What are you talking about? Why, they're magnificent matches — Court Physician with the rank of Baron! Sculptor Extraordinary to the Royal Family with the title of Count! Why, you grasping girls, what more do you want?

NANNA. Oh, papa! that's all nonsense! If these persons were really what they believe themselves to be, we wouldn't mind, but as they're both penniless young men, and we are penniless young ladies, the sooner we tell them the truth, the better.

GRIFFENFELD. But, my good girls, consider! Don't go and spoil it all! Think of the fun of it when they discover how they've been cheated! Oh, my dear girls, there's a rich and rare treat in store for us all!

The girls, who have been chuckling through his speech, burst into hearty laughter.

THORA. Upon my word, it ought to be extremely amusing!

PATTER-TRIO. — GRIFFENFELD, NANNA, *and* THORA.

GRIFFENFELD. When a gentleman supposes that he comfortably dozes on a pleasant bed of roses (which are singularly rare) —

NANNA. And discovers that it bristles with uncomfortable thistles, in intemperate epistles his annoyance he'll declare —

THORA. When a man his temper loses his remarks he never chooses, but expressive language uses, with a tendency to swear —

GRIFFENFELD. And when lovers are discarded their upbraiding will be larded with some epithets unguarded — you had better not be there!

NANNA (*disappointed*). We had better not be there?

THORA (*disappointed*). We had better not be there?

GRIFFENFELD (*decidedly*). You had better not be there!

ALL. We/You had better not be there!

NANNA *and* THORA.

When these gentlemen conceited both discover they've been cheated, all our fun will be defeated — that's a thing we couldn't bear —

So, however you may rave it, we'll unquestionably brave it; you may take your affidavit we will certainly be there!

ALL. We/They will certainly be there —

We/They will certainly be there! —

Though you/I flout it, never doubt it, we/they will certainly be there!

GRIFFENFELD. Their despair and their distraction and their keen dissatisfaction — their exaggerated action, and the tearing of their hair —

NANNA. Their disgust and desperation when they see the situation some congenial occupation for the lawyers will prepare —

THORA. We shall find their loud abusing both intrusive and amusing, and of violent accusing there'll be symptoms in the air —

GRIFFENFELD. And their libellous expressions and their angry indiscretions will be tried at Quarter Sessions, when I occupy the chair!

NANNA (*gleefully*). When you occupy the chair —

THORA (*gleefully*). When you occupy the chair —

ALL. When/I you occupy the chair —

GRIFFENFELD. When the case is quite completed, then the prisoner defeated with severity is treated as you're probably aware —

For it's awfully provided that the jury will be guided by my summary one-sided — which distresses Labouchere.

ALL. It is rough on Labouchere —

It is rough on Labouchere —

Oh, the dickens, how it sickens tender-hearted Labouchere!

Exit GRIFFENFELD.

NANNA. Really, Thora, I can't help feeling rather conscience-stricken. Poor boys! I'm really afraid we've broken their hearts.

THORA. It's a pity they're such nobodies. I sometimes think between ourselves ——

NANNA. Hush! So do I — but here they come.

Enter ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. *The girls retire up stage and listen*

TORTENSSEN. Do you know, I don't care to be repulsed by a girl I'm engaged to, Count.

ERLING. They certainly treated us very coldly, Baron. Mere innocent attention — such as every girl expects from the man she's going to marry ——

TORTENSSEN. Remember, Count, we are no longer a couple of adventurers, we are great men, and we are entitled to expect that attentions shall be paid to *us*, now. (*Girls indulge in suppressed chuckles.*) I think a little condescension on our part, a little stand-offishness, an air of doing them a considerable favour, would not be

misplaced.

ERLING. I see what you mean, Baron. A little of this sort of thing — “Good-day to you, my dear; good day to you. Pleased to see you, pleased to see you ——”

TORTENSSEN. “A little further off, please. We’ll tell you when we want the mixture as before.”
Don’t you think so, Count?

ERLING. I really think it’s only what is due to us, Baron, I do indeed.

The Girls come forward pretending to weep bitterly.

NANNA (*in affected tears*). Oh, please, we’ve been thinking it over, and we’re very sorry we were so un-kuk-kuk-kuk-kind to you just now.

ERLING (*condescendingly*). Thank you, thank you. Pray don’t name it.

TORTENSSEN. We thought you’d like a little attention — but it’s not of the smallest consequence. There — go away — there’s good girls.

THORA (*pretending to sob*). Oh, but we *did* like it-only — (*Bursts into tears.*)

NANNA (*sobbing*). We thought it more mai-mai-maidenly to be cuc-cuc-cuc-coy! (*Tears.*) By such a par-par-particular pa-pa-papa!

THORA. And we’re *so* afraid of Mrs. Gug-gug-gug-Grundy! (*Violent burst of tears.*)

Both burst into floods of tears.

Together.

[ERLING. Now, my darling child — Nanna dearest — don’t cry like that! I can’t bear it! See, on my knees I swear to you that I will always — always love you as I love you now! Oh, don’t cry like that — you’ll break my heart — indeed you will!

[TORTENSSEN. My dearest Thora — you mustn’t — really you mustn’t! It’s dreadful to see those pretty eyes so red with weeping — Oh, I was a brute to be unkind to you, there — don’t be a little goose! I didn’t mean it — upon my word I didn’t!

Both men are on their knees trying to console the two girls. The girls, who have been pretending to weep hysterically through this, suddenly burst into peals of hearty laughter.

ERLING (*springing up*). Tortenssen, I do believe they’re laughing at us!

THORA. Oh, aren’t the nobility shrewd!

NANNA. And isn’t the aristocracy quick at grasping a situation!

DANCING QUARTET. — NANNA, THORA, ERLING, *and* TORTENSSEN.

NANNA. So this is how you’d have us sue you —
Bowling, bending — turning to you —
But you don’t exact it, do you?

That’s so kind. (ERLING *kisses her.*) Impertinence! (*aside*)

THORA. Pleading party pray you pity!
You are wise and wondrous witty —

Don't despise our doleful ditty!

Thanks so much. (TORTENSSEN *kisses her.*) What impudence! (*aside*)

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Ha, ha! ha, ha! Ha, ha! ha, ha!

NANNA *and* THORA. Ha, ha! ha, ha! Ha, ha! ha, ha!

ALL. Topsy turvy turn the tables!

Tit for tat and tat for tit —

As in fusty fairy fables,

Badly is the biter bit!

Takes a time to tame a Tartar!

Dad's delightful darling darter,

Mostly makes a man a martyr —

Here's a hero hardly hit!

ERLING. As you sue for pardon sweetly
Though you've acted indiscreetly,
We forgive you both completely,

Thus I'll prove it — (*tries to kiss her*)

NANNA. That you won't!

TORTENSSEN. Though you've ridiculed us sadly —

Cheated and deceived us badly,

And we love you fondly — madly —

We forgive you — (*trying to kiss her*)

THORA. No, you don't.

ALL. Topsy turvy turn the tables, etc.

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN *dance off* — *waving an adieu to the two girls, who remain on the stage.*

THORA (*sighing*). Oh, Nanna, they're good fellows! I wish it was all real!

NANNA. No use wishing, dear. We'd better try and forget all about them. (*Looking off.*) Oh — look! All the people coming to get married!

THORA. Poor people! We — we must go and find our bridegrooms.

NANNA. Poor bridegrooms? It's — it's a capital joke! (*About to cry.*)

THORA. Capital! (*Looking at NANNA's face.*) Why, a real tear, I do believe!

NANNA (*holding it on her finger*). Yes, it's real this time.

THORA (*examining it*). Funny, isn't it?

NANNA. Very amusing.

THORA. Put it back. (NANNA *does so.*) All right now?

NANNA (*brightly*). All right now!

Exeunt in opposite directions.

March. Enter men and girls in couples for wedding. They come two and two down stage.

CHORUS (*to bell accompaniment*).

Ring the bells and bang the brasses!
Cut the cake and fill the glasses!
Lovers and their blushing lasses
 Will be duly coupled soon.
When, in Castle chapel plighted,
Man and maid are once united,
Off they'll go in mood delighted
 On a happy honeymoon.

Enter GRIFFENFELD, *also* NANNA *with* ERLING, THORA *with* TORTENSSEN, DAME CORTLANDT
with SYNDIC, *and* CHRISTINA *alone*

GRIFFENFELD. Stop! You can all go home. There will be no weddings to-day.

ALL. What do you mean?

GRIFFENFELD. I mean that you've all been imposed upon — deluded — cheated. The Regent is no Regent, but a common vagabond personating him. Ha! ha! ha! Here comes His Royal Highness in his true colours!

Enter REGENT *in his vagabond dress*. CHRISTINA *runs to his arms*

ERLING (*to* REGENT). Now, sir, the truth. Are you a prince to be worshipped or a swindler to be whipped?

REGENT. Really it's a point upon which I'm not quite satisfied myself! I'll think it over and let you know.

Enter the two OFFICERS

1ST OFFICER (*kneeling*). Sir, the enemy's fleet has entered the Baltic, and your immediate presence at Copenhagen is indispensable. (*Giving a dispatch to* REGENT.)

GRIFFENFELD. Why, what's all this? Who are these jack-a-dandies?

REGENT (*reading dispatch*). Merely two of my trusted officers. They bring me weighty news indeed!

GRIFFENFELD. Why, you don't mean to tell me that you are the Regent, after all?

REGENT. The very Regent, at your service. (*All kneel.*)

GRIFFENFELD. I've made an ass of myself!

REGENT. Don't say that. We are indebted to you for some invaluable hints for promotions, appointments, and marriage arrangements, all of which will take effect to-day — as indeed will the best and wisest of your suggestions — your permanent degradation to the ranks. (REGENT *sees* CHRISTINA *weeping.*) Why, Christina in tears!

CHRISTINA. I weep, sir, because my heart is broken, and, alas, it is your Highness's doing, for your Highness gave me Nils Egilsson, and he has gone from me for ever!

REGENT. Nay, Christina, be not so sure of that. I have found the very love I have sought this many a year, and if my being heir to a crown is to stand in my way, why I'll e'en be Nils Egilsson to the end!

CHRISTINA (*amazed.*) Sir!

REGENT. Come, Christina, what say you?
CHRISTINA. Sir, I am your Highness's handmaid!

They retire up stage together.

FINALE OF ACT II.

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Now all that we've agreed upon, O,
And all that's passed between us;
Ere half an hour go by
We'll surely rectify.

NANNA *and* THORA. As life's career we speed upon, O,
So fondly we'll demean us;
Thy love shall never say
That she repents this day.

ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. What, never?
NANNA *and* THORA. Never!
ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Never?
NANNA *and* THORA. Never!
ALL FOUR. Never repents this day!
ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. Resentment sink
My own { Nanna/Thora }.

NANNA *and* THORA. But only think
Of poor papa.
Position low
Degraded to!

(pointing to GRIFFENFELD, who is standing sentry.)
ERLING *and* TORTENSSEN. You little ro-
Guey poguey, you —
SYNDIC. You little roguey poguey —
GRIFFENFELD *(hurt)*. Sir!
HAROLD. You little roguey poguey —
GRIFFENFELD. Sir!!
ALL. You roguey poguey, roguey poguey, roguey poguey.
GRIFFENFELD. Sir!!!
ALL. Who love with all sincerity, O,
And pleasure is elating us —
Away with all celerity, O,
The priest is there awaiting us!
In verity, verity, verity, verity,
Priest is there awaiting us!

All except REGENT and CHRISTINA dance off in couples into the Castle, waving an adieu to GRIFFENFELD, who stands as sentry, presenting arms to them as the curtain falls.

CURTAIN.