

GEORGE GROSSMITH
SONGS AND SKETCHES

ITEMS FROM THE
GEORGE GROSSMITH BIRTHDAY BOOK

Edited by David Trutt

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The George Grossmith Birthday Book was compiled and released in 1904 by Sylvia Grossmith Bevan and Cordelia Grossmith, daughters of George Grossmith. The book contains 366 different quotations from the writings of Gee-gee: his books, plays, skits, speeches, remembrances and songs.

This George Grossmith Songs and Sketches book contains a selection of complete items from which extensive quotations have been taken for The George Grossmith Birthday Book. Included herein are the complete songs:

THE DUKE OF SEVEN DIALS	Page 4
THE HAPPY OLD DAYS AT PECKHAM	Page 5
HIS NOSE WAS ON THE MANTELPIECE	Page 6-7
AN AWFUL LITTLE SCRUB	Page 8- 9
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THE BABY ON THE SHORE	Page 14
HE WAS A CARELESS MAN	Page 15
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Highlighted in bold are the song parts which are also in the Birthday Book.

Also included are the complete musical sketches of:

CASTLE BANG	Page 17-31
CARROTTINA	Page 32-44

Highlighted in bold are the sketch parts which are also in the Birthday Book.

The songs within the sketches are in this type; **the song parts which are also in the Birthday Book are highlighted in this bold type.**

The editor concluded The George Grossmith Birthday Book with complete songs of “The Duke of Seven Dials,” “The Happy Old Days at Peckham” and “His Nose Was On the Mantelpiece.” These are also included in this book; there may be differences in words, which reflect a variation between the original sources and what Sylvia and Cordelia remembered or chose to use.

“The Lost Key” is a parody of “The Lost Chord,” with words by Adelaine Procter and music by Arthur Sullivan. Both songs have been shown herein.

“His Nose Was On the Mantelpiece” refers to the Irish folk song lament “Molly Bawn,” where a young lover accidentally shoots his intended bride. Both songs are included.

“Castle Bang” and “Carrottina” have been edited to remove stage directions in order to provide a user friendly reading copy. The Grossmith sisters attribute their Birthday Book August 27 entry to “Castle Bang” but it is from “Carrottina”:

**I am a very wicked man, as any one can see,
Excuse the grammar, but there ain't a chap as bad as me.**

I fell in love with Dolly on the Twenty-First of June,
 I asked her when she'd wed me, she replied, "Oh! very soon."
 I introduced her to my Ma, and to my uncle Giles,
 And I ventured to introduce her to the Duke of Seven Dials.
 I shall never forget my Dolly, I shall never forget her smiles;
 But I'm sorry I introduced her to the Duke of Seven Dials.

Our courting days were happy—ah! as happy as could be.
 My Dolly was most charming and affectionate to me.
 She gained the best opinions of my Ma and Uncle Giles;
 And one of her great admirers was the Duke of Seven Dials.
 I shall never forget my Dolly, I shall never forget her smiles;
 Yet I'm sorry I introduced her to the Duke of Seven Dials.

I took a little villa on the Bedford Park Estate,
 But shopping is a process that I positively hate.
 I did not then foresee the future, or my Dolly's wiles,
 Or she shouldn't have done her shopping with the Duke of Seven Dials.
 I shall never forget my Dolly, I shall never forget her smiles;
 But I'm sorry I introduced her to the Duke of Seven Dials.

The wedding-day arrived, but Dolly never came to Church.
 I hunted for her high and low—we all joined in the search.
 A party said he saw her getting over country stiles,
 And enter a Registry Office with the Duke of Seven Dials.
 I shall never forget my Dolly, I shall never forget her smiles;
 Yes, I'm sorry I introduced her to the Duke of Seven Dials.

I really felt inquisitive about this noble "Dook."
 In vain I hunted *Burke* and *Dodd* and every Peerage Book.
 I ascertained at last His Grace's proper name was Biles,
 And he'd purchased for eighteenpence the title "Duke of Seven Dials."
 I shall never forget my Dolly, I shall never forget her smiles;
 And I'm sorry I introduced her to the Duke of Seven Dials.

I hurried to my villa on the Bedford Park Estate,
 But every stick had been removed at quite a recent date.
 I meant, of course, to find a home for Dolly and her smiles,
 But I'm hanged if I meant to find a home for the Duke of Seven Dials.
 I shall never forgive my Dolly, I shall never forgive her smiles;
 But I'm sorry in future I must cut the Duke of Seven Dials.

I was once a very vulgar little shop-boy,
 Though now so many millions I have made.
 At a charity school I soon became the top boy,
 And I've earned the same distinction in my trade.
 My bread was spread with very little butter,
 In the impecunious days gone by.
 And I used to play at marbles on the gutter,
 In a little street somewhere in Peckham Rye.

Chorus: I shall never forget those happy old days at Peckham,
 The recollection sets my heart aglow,
 I'd dance and sing, and loved a swing,
 And had a fling at kiss-in-the-ring;
 But of course that was a' many years ago.

I grew a man and then became ambitious!
 To advance my prospects I was always prone.
 I seized an opportunity propitious—
 To start a little business on my own.
 I thought my shaky grammar I'd embellish,
 And with spelling I would get in better touch.
 I acquired a voice considered rather swellish,
 And I didn't drop my H's quite so much.

Chorus.

With a single shop my way was rather narrowed,
 So I started building houses by the scores.
 Now they quite eclipse the gorgeousness of Harrod,
 Or the multiplicity of Whiteley's stores.
 I sell everything from boots and shoes and cows, *and*
 There's not a single thing you cannot get.
 To charities I always give a thousand,
 That's why I've been created baronet!

Chorus.

My wife was known as "little Podgy Betsy";
 She is now "Her ladyship," I may remark.
 She revels in my well-earned baronetcy,
 Observed of all observers in the park.
 This curious world is quite replete with fallacies,
 Our social rise we couldn't then foretell;
 Now we dine with kings and queens within their palaces,
 And kings and queens have dined with us as well.

Chorus.

**Pray give me your attention, I will not detain you long;
I'll show you how to write a modern comic Irish song.
To make the song successful you must always bear in mind
You must *not* be intellectual, you must *not* be too refined.**

Pat Doolen gives a party, he has got a wooden leg;
And what is more inviting, he has got a whiskey keg.
The people take too much to drink and knock the host about,
And then there comes the charming chorus, which you all must shout:

***Chorus:* His nose was on the mantelpiece, his mouth was on the floor,
His teeth were hanging on a peg behind the kitchen door.
At last there came McCarthy who finished the whiskey keg;
We then broke up the party with Pat Doolen's wooden leg.**

**I've often been to Ireland, and I love the dear old place,
I've seen the Irish dancing with decorum and with grace.
They may indulge in blarney, but they don't indulge in blows.
And they never come away with other people's eyes and nose.**

But in the modern Irish song the audience expect,
The guests treat each other with the greatest disrespect.
They never thank the host for all his hospitality,
But smash him into little bits and then they sing with glee:

Chorus.

**Now in the *best* society we always used to think
One never ought to sing a song with reference to drink;
And men and women fighting at a ball was rather strong,
But of course that was before the days of modern Irish song.**

But now the Irish immigrant will make the people yawn;
They'll go to sleep by dozens if you sing them *Molly Bawn*.
Yet you can always rouse them up and make the rafters ring,
And they'll join you in the chorus if this sort of thing you sing:

Chorus.

Come all you young fowlers that handle a gun,
Beware of night rambling by the setting of sun;
And beware of an accident that happened of late
To young Molly Bawn and sad was her fate.

She was going to her uncle's when a shower came on.
She went under a green bush the shower to shun.
With her white apron round her, he took her for a swan,
But a-hush and a-sigh, it was his own Molly Bawn.

He ran home to his father with his gun in his hand,
Saying, "Father dear father, I have shot Molly Bawn.
I have shot that fair damsel; I have taken the life
Of the one I intended to take as my wife."

"She was going to her uncle's when a shower came on.
She went under a green bush the shower to shun.
With her white apron round her, I took her for a swan.
Oh, father, will I be forgiven for the loss of that swan?"

"Oh, Johnny, my Johnny, do not run away,
Do not leave your own country till your trial day;
Don't leave your own country till your trial comes on,
For they never will hang you for the loss of that swan."

The night before Molly's funeral her ghost did appear,
Saying, "Mother, dear mother, young Johnny is clear.
I was going to my uncle's when a shower came on.
I went under a green bush the shower to shun.
With my white apron round me, he took me for a swan.
Won't you tell him he's forgiven by his own Molly Bawn?"

All the girls of this country are all very glad
Since the pride of Glen Alla, Molly Bawn, is now dead;
And the girls in this country, put them all in a row,
Molly Bawn would shine above them like a mountain of snow.

**Do you think I'm asking much of you, my mother?
I have been without a collar for a week;
That I have only one 'tis true, my mother,
For which you must admit I vainly seek.
I know 'twas looking very black, my mother,
Black and shiny, mother, as your own golosh;
But I long to have that collar back, my mother,
Oh! when may I expect it from the wash?**

Oh! when may I expect it?
Oh! when may I expect it?
Expect it from the wash, mother dear,
*From the wash, my mother,
Wash my mother, wash my mother,*
Expect it from the wash, my mother dear?

**I went to school this morning early, mother,
The Board Inspector came to see us, dear;
He's plain and tall and rather burly, mother;
I knew my lessons well, and had no fear.
But soon he found I had no collar, mother,
And suggested that my face required a rub;
He boxed my ears, and made me holloa mother,
And said I looked 'an awful little scrub!'**

He said I looked a scrub,
He said I looked a scrub,
An awful little scrub, mother dear,
*Like a scrub, my mother,
Scrub my mother, scrub my mother,*
Like an awful little scrub, my mother dear.

**I cannot stand it any more, my mother,
 My little heart is well nigh rent in twain;
 I must confess my grief is sore, my mother,
 I'm young, too young, to bear such abject pain!**

My observation is not slow, my mother,
 The sneers of vulgar boys will surely cease,
 When my garments do not plainly show, my mother,
 Such patches and such holes and spots of grease.

Such patches and such holes,
 Such patches and such holes,
 Such holes and spots of grease, mother dear,
*Spots of grease, my mother,
 Grease my mother! Grease my mother!*
 Such holes and spots of grease, my mother dear.

I think I'll take a situation, mother,
 My uncle has a fishing smack, you know,
 He offers me some occupation, mother,
 On board—if you will only let me go.
 I shall rid me of unruly imps, my mother,
 In fifteen years perhaps I may come back.
 I'll learn the lobsters and shrimps, my mother,
 To boil on board my uncle's fishing smack.

To boil on board my uncle's,
 On board *to boil my uncle's*,
 My uncle's fishing smack, mother dear,
*Fishing smack my mother,
 Smack my mother, boil my uncle's*,
 Boil my uncle's fishing smack, my mother dear!

Seated one day in her carriage,
She was lounging well back at her ease,
And her fingers wandered idly,
In her pocket for her keys.
She thought—as the bunch was missing,
In her wardrobe it must be,
So she struck one note of discord,
Like the sound of a big, big D.
Like the sound of a big, big D.

She thought of the sweet little trinkets,
Whose loss she would sadly mourn,
Then she thought of her frocks and mantles,
Some of which she had not yet worn.
She thought of her precious diamonds,
She thought of the square plate-chest,
For at home, in that large old wardrobe,
She kept everything she possess'd.

**Then she thought of the sweet love letters,
Received with many a ruse,
Then she suddenly thought that the servants
Those letters would surely peruse.
Then she thought, with a feeling of horror!
That the neighbours would surely be shown,
A piece of black hair neatly plaited,
Which was not exactly her own.**

So she dived to the bottom of her carriage,
Turned the matting all upside down.
Then she dived beneath the cushions,
And the lining of her green silk gown.
She dived in the depths of her mantle,
And into her muff dived she,
But only at home in her wardrobe,
Would be found that lost, lost key !

Seated one day at the organ,
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wandered idly
Over the noisy keys.

I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then;
But I struck one chord of music,
Like the sound of a great Amen.

It flooded the crimson twilight,
Like the close of an Angel's Psalm,
And it lay on my fevered spirit
With a touch of infinite calm.

It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife;
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.

It linked all perplexéd meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence
As if it were loth to cease.

I have sought, but I seek it vainly,
That one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the Organ,
And entered into mine.

It may be that Death's bright Angel
Will speak in that chord again,
It may be that only in Heaven
I shall hear that grand Amen.

**A fig for the set of Lancers,
 A fig for the old Quadrille,
 They may suit some kind of dancers,
 But their dulness makes me ill;
 A fig for the stately waltzing,
 Which really is absurd;
 On the smart cotillion, unsuited to the million,
 I will not waste a word.**

***Chorus:* You should see me dance the Polka,
 You should see me cover the ground,
 You should see my coat-tails flying,
 As I jump my partner round.
 When the band commences playing,
 My feet begin to go;
 For a rollicking, romping Polka
 Is the jolliest fun I know.**

I've danced it in the ball-room.
 And there would dance it still;
 I've danced it in a small room,
 I've danced it on the hill.
 With every kind of partner,
 In every kind of hall,
 I've even had to suffer, by dancing with a duffer,
 Who couldn't do the step at all.

Chorus.

**I know I'm rather active,
 And not devoid of grace,
 But still I'm unattractive,
 In feature, form, and face;
 I have a simple fortune,
 And lead a simple life,
 You know what an old maid is? Well fourteen of those ladies
 Offered to be my wife.**

Chorus.

One of my rich relations
 Was very fond of me;
 From him I'd expectations
 In form of a legacy.
 I calculated surely
 On a house and an acre or two;
 So I went and got married, but my hopes miscarried,
 And what was I to do.

He left me a copy of a Polka,
 And on the cover I found,
 A sketch of my coat-tails flying,
As I jump my partner round.
When the band commences playing,
My feet begin to go;
For a rollicking, romping Polka
Is the jolliest fun I know.

But now I'm old and shaky,
 My back is bent, you see;
 My limbs are rather quaky,
 And scarcely bear with me.
 I'm never asked to dances,
 I'm placed upon the shelf,
 But altho' I am rheumatic, still as long as I've an attic
 I'll dance it by myself.

You should see me dance the Polka,
You should see me cover the ground,
You should see my coat-tails flying,
 As I hobble myself around.
 If I hear an organ playing,
 So long as my strength don't give,
 I'll dance that rollicking Polka
 So long as aye I live.

**The sun was shining brightly,
Yes, shining as it never shone before;
We were thinking of the old folks at home,
And we left the baby on the shore.
Yes, we left the baby on the shore,
A thing which we've never done before;
Oh, way down the old Swanee river,
You will find the baby on the shore.
We are leaving, leaving now for ever,
A thing which we've never done before;
If you see the mother tell her gently,
She will find her baby on the shore.**

**In the far, far west the sun was setting,
Yes, setting as it never *sat* before;
We were thinking of the old folks at home,
And we found the baby on the shore.
Yes, we found the baby on the shore,
A thing which we've never done before;
So, get the pipes and whiskey ready,
And we'll feed the baby on the shore.
Yes, we'll feed the baby on the shore,
A thing which we've never done before;
Oh, way down the old Swanee river,
We will feed the baby on the shore.**

**The moon was slowly rising,
Yes, rising as it never rose before;
We were feeling weary, very weary,
And we sat upon the baby on the shore.
Yes, we sat upon the baby on the shore,
A thing which we'd never done before;
If you see the mother, tell her gently,
That we sat upon her baby on the shore.
The baby's quietly sleeping,
A thing which it never did before;
So, after all it is better
To leave the baby on the shore.**

**There was a man whose carelessness obtained for him a name.
 He never looked at tradesmen's bills or questioned any claim.
 He thought that time was made for slaves, he grieved when folks were vexed.
 And never did a thing to-day that could be done the next.**

Chorus: He was a careless man, he was a careless man;
 It troubled him much, to think he was such
 A very careless man.

**To pass as a philanthropist it was his constant aim,
 And no subscription list appeared without his noble name.
 Compared with his donation every other seemed a speck,
 But purely through forgetfulness he never sent his cheque.**

Chorus.

**His generosity was thought to be his noblest gift,
 He'd call a hansom cab to give a wealthy aunt a lift.
 Although it was a fact of which he then was unaware,
 He always got out first and left his aunt to pay the fare.**

Chorus.

He took a first class seat on the railway bus, alas
 He was so very negligent he traveled by first class.
 He always had refreshments 'till he heard the station bell,
 And when the train was moving off, he hurried off as well.

Chorus.

**Whene'er he went to any kind of party, I am told,
 He always wore an overcoat, not only cheap but old;
 He hung it in the hall, and when he bade the host adieu
 Went off in someone else's coat that happened to be new.**

Chorus.

He never lived in one place long, his nature was to roam,
 And when the gas and poor rates man called, he never was at home.
 He well insured his furniture, a precaution wisely turned,
 But rashly spilled some paraffin and every stick was burned.

Chorus.

There was a man who boasted that from trouble he could keep;
 He always followed out the motto, "Look before you leap."
 He took such strong precaution, that the nation soon began
 To own there never was or could be such a careful man.
 In June he wore an overcoat to guard against the storm,
 And took it off in winter time in case it should turn warm.

Chorus: He was a careful man, he was a careful man.
 Where'er he went, 'twas his intent
 To be a careful man.

He knew how cabmen will impose if people don't take care,
 By charging them for a mile or two beyond the proper fare.
 So not to be defrauded, he instructed his attorney
 To have the distance measured e'er he started on a journey.

Chorus.

He never went to dances either in or out of town,
 Because by chance one night he slipped and pulled his partner down.
 He ne'er would look by any chance a lady in the face,
 For fear of misconstruction and a breach of promise case.

Chorus.

He joined a local vestry and attended every week,
 But, lest he should break down and fail, he never tried to speak.
 He had no fixed opinions, but would not be thought a dunce,
 So rather than go wrong by chance, he never voted once.

Chorus.

For banting [dieting] he went in, presuming that he might get stout.
 He had his bed made on the floor—he dreaded falling out.
 He seldom knew the time—it may appear a silly thing,
 But he never would wind up his watch in case he broke the spring.

Chorus.

It may appear absurd, but his sobriety was such
 He never took a glass of wine in case he took too much.
 And water he would never touch because he heard it stated
 That water very often is so much adulterated.

Chorus.

He kept a man to think for him and so preserve his brain;
 He mackintoshed his garden up to keep it from the rain.
 Although he paid with pleasure every single debt he had,
 He'd not be paid himself in case the money should be bad.

Chorus.

CHARACTERS

BARON BANG	A refined and thoroughbred villain.
JOE VAT	The poetical landlord of "The Green Bull."
BOB SHOCKER	A mysterious detective.
MYRA MYRTLE	The Maid of the Inn.
MRS. IBBINS	A most respectable charwoman.

SCENE—The Parlour at "The Green Bull."

BOB SHOCKER (*to audience*). If you have any ambition to know who I am, your ambition shall be gratified—Bob Shocker—detective! Perhaps you would like to see my disguise. Good; you shall—here it is. (*Takes from pocket a palpably false nose with moustache attached, and places it on his face.*) I have only to assume this disguise and no one could recognise me. Perhaps I ought not to have shown it to you in case I may have to meet you officially at any time. However, I trust not, for your sake. (*Takes off hat to bow, and nose falls on the ground.*) Bother! That's always happening. If you will kindly give me your attention for a few minutes, I will tell you in a song "How I became a Detective." If you think for one moment that this song is cribbed from the style of Gilbert and Sullivan—you are quite right.

HOW I BECAME A DETECTIVE.

**When I was a boy I went to school, but suffered so much from dizziness
That I poked my nose, as a matter of course, into other people's business.
I never knew my lessons—in fact, I never could begin them;
I was always peeping in other boys' desks to see what there was in them.
The other boys were very good boys, and never used invective;
But said I was only fit to be a Scotland Yard Detective.**

I next went out in service, and became a boy in buttons [attendant]
To a Doctor Screw, who fed us all on tinned Australian muttuns;
He sold such heaps of medicine during closing hours on Sunday—
So I opened some, and found 'twas rum, and got discharged on Monday.
The doctor used his stethoscope in a manner most effective,
And said I was only fit to be a Scotland Yard Detective.

I next went out as footman to a man whose name was Hitchen—
 I found his cook a-carrying on with a party in the kitchen;
 The party she encouraged was a most conceited *cockatoo*—
 One night I found him carrying off some silver plate and a *clock or two*:
 I got him charged, and in the dock he used a strong adjective,
 And said I was only fit to be a Scotland Yard Detective.

A private detective I became, but ever since I've been one,
 In spite of rogues and thieves at large, I've never even seen one;
 And as I cast my eagle eye among you gents and *women all*,
 I can't define a single sign of a downright, first-class *criminal*:
 But if there is, pray give yourself up, and do not be reflective—
 You'll get five years, but make the name of this Sherlock Holmes Detective.

BOB (*hurriedly*). Hush! I hear the approach of Myra Myrtle. She is a mystery!
 Baron Bang—he's a mystery! This house is a bag of mystery. So am I a
 mystery. Ha! Ha! (Exit BOB. Enter MYRA.)

MYRA MYRTLE (*song to audience*). MERRILY DUST THE CHAIRS.

I merrily dust the chairs,
 And I cheerfully clean the grate;
 And though I'm compelled to sweep the stairs,
 Why nobody knows my future fate,
 Nobody knows my future fate—Nobody knows, nobody knows,
 Nobody knows my future fate.

I dust with a laugh this oleograph [picture printed on canvas];
 When cleaning is done I have such fun;
 I serve in the bar our special brew [beer]—
 With a "What's for you?" and a "What's for you?"
 Though only a barmaid, let me state
 That nobody knows my future fate! Knows, knows, knows,
 Knows, knows, knows, knows, knows, knows, knows, knows—
 Though I take my broom and sweep the room,
 And drop a dish and crack a plate,
 Nobody knows my future fate, nobody knows my future fate!

BOB (*enter, holding note-book*). Sorry to interrupt you. Name, please.

MYRA. Myra Myrtle.

BOB (*makes note*). Good.

MYRA. Yes, pretty good name. What's yours?

BOB. Bob Shocker—detective!

MYRA. What have you come here about?

BOB. You're not allowed to cross-examine me. I've come here to cross-examine you!

MYRA. All right. Produce your warrant.

BOB. I haven't got one.

MYRA. No detective from Scotland Yard has authority to enter a private house without a warrant. Such a thing is only done in a novel.

BOB. But this is not a private house; it's a public-house.

MYRA. Still, it's a private public-house.

BOB. I see. Besides, I'm not a Scotland Yard detective.

MYRA. What sort of detective are you, then?

BOB. Oh, I'm one of those shilling sensational novel private detectives who always impede the progress of the story.

MYRA. I understand. But where's your disguise?

BOB. Here. Would you like to see it on?

MYRA. Certainly. (BOB *puts on false nose*.) Ah! now you look more like yourself.

BOB (*indignantly*). What do you mean?

MYRA. I mean more like a detective. Good morning.

BOB. What! Are you going?

MYRA. No; but you are. Be off! (*Pushes him*.) I've had enough of you. Be off! (*Pushes him again*.)

BOB. You pushed me. I shall make a note of that. (*Makes note*.)

MYRA. Do. And make a note of that, too. (*Pushes him off stage*.) I am getting so tired of these detectives. They are a regular nuisance!

MYRA (*song reprise*). MERRILY DUST THE CHAIRS.

Though I take my broom and sweep the room,
And drop a dish and crack a plate,
Nobody knows my future fate, nobody knows my future fate!

Enter JOE VAT. Ah! good industrious Myra! I like to hear you sing over your work. The nightingale trills while moulting in his watery nest. Why should not you—sweeter than all the nightingales—croon even during the unpoetical but necessary occupation of cleansing the humble pot of pewter!

MYRA. My heart and voice are always in my work.

JOE. Have we had any thirsty customers lately?

MYRA. Not for weeks until yesterday, when two gentlemen in evening dress and long drab coats came and ordered a bottle of champagne.

JOE. This is indeed news! But how did you manage? for my cellar, which, as you know, is a wine-cellar and coal-cellar combined, is lacking of the desired nectar.

MYRA. With limbs of quicksilver I fled to Mr. Jarpickle, the grocer, who supplied me with a sparkling sillery of last year's vintage; so I was enabled to serve the gentlemen and make you a fair profit—but alas! alas! (*Sadly weeping.*)

JOE. What now, Myra? The tears tip thy lashes like the dew upon the grass from the early worm—I should say morn.

MYRA. Good master—the two gentlemen did order another bottle.

JOE. Real gentlemen!

MYRA. And while I did hie me again to Mr. Jarpickle, the real gentlemen got over the garden wall and decamped without paying.

JOE (*gasping*). What? (*Controlling his temper with difficulty. Aside to audience.*) If I had not secretly discovered that this girl is the heiress to Castle Bang, I should have called her an unmitigated idiot, and discharged her on the spot.

MYRA. You are not angry with me, dear master?

JOE (*with forced glee*). Angry? Oh dear, no. We all do these little things. Pray let's change the subject. Grace this chair, I have something to say. (*Both sit.*) You know, Myra, **I'm not a man to beat about the bush!** Some people say in a month what can easily be said in a day! **Now I am a man who can say in a minute what some men don't say in a lifetime.**

MYRA. **And that is—**

JOE. **Be my wife!** (MYRA *quite unconcerned.*) Excuse my kneeling, but I place myself and fortune at your feet. My fortune is not so large as your feet—still the smallness of my coffers shall be eclipsed by the largeness of my heart. What is your reply?

MYRA. **Candidly speaking, you are not all my fancy painted.**

JOE. No, I feel that—I'm with you there.

MYRA. **You are not a Romeo or an Abelard.**

JOE. No, **I feel that. There's not much Abelard about me.** I only thought so this morning when I looked in the glass. **No; I am quite as disappointed about my looks as you are.**

MYRA. Of course you could not deceive me about them—still I am happy to think you have never deceived yourself.

JOE. I have deceived no one about my looks—nay, **I have boasted of the many flattering offers that I have received for the 5th of November.**

(BOB SHOCKER *appears at the back with nose on. He listens and takes notes.*)
And mind me, Myra, I will marry you at once.

MYRA. You have acted honourably and with candour. I admire modesty; regard me as yours. (BOB *disappears.*)

JOE (*aside*). Well, that's fixed. (*Aloud.*) Let us celebrate this bright spot of sunshine in my hitherto eventless life with a terpsichorean measure.

MYRA. Is that a pint measure?

JOE. No, no, my love; a dance, a dance.

MYRA. I have no gloves; besides this is the day that Mrs. Ibbins, the charwoman comes. What will she think of the noise over her head?

JOE (*enthusiastically*). What will she think? Let her think that two otherwise sober and worldly minds are intoxicated by the joyous bounding of two happy hearts, warmed by the glorious fire of the future snow-white prospect of united peace. Let her think that!

MYRA. Oh! I'll let her think it; but a charwoman is generally a poor hand at imagining a poem-picture.

JOE. Madam—accept my courtesy. (JOE *bows to MYRA as they take places for the dance. They dance with each other.*)

(*Towards the end of the dance BOB SHOCKER appears at back with disguise and note-book—unseen. He begins taking notes. Dance ends and ALL exit.*)

(Enter MRS. IBBINS, with a small hand-broom and a dust-pan.)

MRS. I. Well, some one's been a-making a fine noise over my 'ead. It sounded like the brokers, and reminded me of my poor fust. Ah! he did have the brokers in often—not so often as my second husband. He *did* have 'em in often. There was always some of them staying in the house. The neighbours used to think we were always giving parties, and wondering why they was never asked. Lor! we never gave no parties. I've never done much in the society line, and yet I feel I was born to a life in society. Of course, I don't mean to say I *never* go out. Why, only last week I went to the birthday-party at Mr. Blubbers', the tripe-dresser round the corner. Of course it was pleasant, and Mr. Blubbers did the thing well. There was no stint of ham or beer. But I mean downright good society. I feel I ought to have been a lady.

MRS. IBBINS (*song to audience*). I OFTEN GET THINKING.

I often get thinking, while eating and drinking,
Why was I never born a lady true?

I'm sure Missis Ibbins, in laces and ribbins,
Would look like all the titled ladies do.

I'd soon get their manner, and learn the pianner.
The swells upon the stairs I often meet;
Their manner I'd pick up, that kind of a stick-up,
And learn to shake your hands like the élite.

Oh, how I long just for a song—In society, in society!
Oh, for a chance, just for a dance—In society, in society!

I'd look very moddis, in quite a low bodice,
You'd scarcely think I had one on at all!
I'd ask Mr. Si-mons, to lend me some di-mons,
And I would be the queen at ev'ry ball.

I'd go in for flirting, and dances with skirting,
And then I would enjoy a scrumpious feast;
For in circles upper, they go down to supper
Quite half a dozen times the very least.

Oh, how I long just for a song—In society, in society!
Oh, for a chance, just for a dance—In society, in society!

(Enter BOB SHOCKER, with nose on.)

BOB. I must trouble you for your name.

MRS. I. Oh, indeed, Mr. Somebody, and who are you?

BOB. Bob Shocker—detective. (*Attitude, and MRS. IBBINS gives a long whistle.*)
Are you the society whistling lady?

MRS. I. Not me! I'm Ann Ibbins, the charwoman.

BOB. Thanks; that will do. I won't trouble you.
(*Raises his hat, and nose falls on the floor. He does not notice it and exits. MRS. IBBINS picks up the nose and walks slowly to the door.*)

MRS. I (*calling*). Hi! Shocker. Here, you—Shocker!

BOB (*enters excitedly*). What is it? Have you found the rightful heir?

MRS. I. Rightful heir? Not me! Only you left your disguise behind, and some one may discover who you are. You're not much *with* your nose; you're nothing without it.

BOB. Thanks. Good morning, Mrs. Ibbins.
(*In his hurry to get off, BOB collides with BARON BANG, as he enters.*)

BARON (*with haughty dignity*). Be careful, sir. Look where you are coming.
Remember my position, and do not forget your own.

BOB (*hiding his face while he puts on nose*). (*Aside.*) He must not recognise me.
(*Aloud.*) A thousand apologies, sir.

BARON. Don't "sir" me; I'm a lord.

BOB (*mysteriously*). I know who you are well enough; but you don't know who I am. You a lord indeed! Ha! ha! (BOB *exits*.)

BARON. That voice! Where have I heard that voice? (*Sits on dust-pan and rises in disgust.*) Woman, how dare you leave your disgusting dust-pan about?
(MRS. IBBINS *removes it*. BARON *returns to chair.*) Where have I heard that voice? (*Sits on broom.*) And your still more disgusting broom.

MRS. I. I am sure I beg your pardon, sir.

BARON. Don't "sir" me, woman; I'm a lord.

MRS. I. I beg your pardon, your grace.

BARON. That is better! That voice is painfully familiar to me.

MRS. I. I can tell you who it is. It's—

BARON. Hush! So are *you* painfully familiar. Don't address me until I address you.

MRS. I. Very well, sir.

BARON. And don't "sir" me. I'm a lord.

MRS. I. All right, your worship.

BARON. That's better! Is this the Green Bull Hotel?

MRS. I. (*Curtseys her reply.*)

BARON. I am going to stay here for the night. I may stay here a day—perhaps a week or a month—perchance a year; in point of fact, several years; in short, I may stay here the whole of my life, or even longer.

MRS. I. Longer, lord?

BARON. Yes, longer; for I will haunt the place after my death if I don't discover the heir to Castle Bang.

MRS. I. Oh, how awful!

BARON. Yes, it is awful; still not so awful as *you* are. If I stay here I must have something more cheerful to wait on me than you; you're the most depressing-looking creature I have ever seen. (*Turning his head.*) I can't look at it—I positively can't look at it. Upon my word, you *are* unattractive.

MRS. I (*sarcastically*). You're very complimentary, I'm sure.

BARON. Oh no, I'm not. If you waited on me you would absolutely spoil my appetite.

MRS. I. Now, you never allow nothing to spoil your appetite. When I has my dinner surrounded by black beadles—

BARON. Tush! woman—silence! How dare you mention your beadles to me! I thought they were an extinct race.

MRS. I. Oh, rather! they race all over the floor, and I—

BARON. You horrid female! Go, send the landlord to me.

(MRS. IBBINS *exits in a fright.*)

BARON. Now, let me think. After the death of my poor dyspeptic uncle, the late Baron Bang, to whom I administered a pill which I said would do for him, and which eventually *did* do for him, his eldest son, Ethelbert Ethelred Egbert Bang, succeeded to Castle Bang and the estates. This was natural, but uninteresting and invaluable to me.

Well, I took him for a walk over a dangerous part of the Matterhorn. We were both cheerful. I was gaily yodeling, and he was cheerfully singing, "Oh, dear, what can the Matterhorn?" I said "Bravo!" slapped him on the back, and he fell down a crevasse. I, of course, became heir to Castle Bang—at least, so I thought. But he evidently never got over the fact that his lamented father never got over the pill, and, suspecting me, left the entire estates to his sweetheart, a girl named Catherine Countroyal.

Unfortunately, I have never been able to get hold of the will to destroy it, so I ordered my men to lock up Catherine Countroyal in the haunted chamber until the time should arrive for me to make her my wife. But one of my hired ghosts took it into his head to let the girl free. She has escaped, and I believe is acting in a humble capacity, under an assumed name, and under this very roof. I have never seen her, but I will not leave till I have secured her. I am getting depressed again. I will cheer myself up a bit.

THIS IS THE WAY I TRY TO FEEL GAY

I am a wicked baron! When e'er I chance to think of it,
I seek the poisoned cup, and raise the vessel up,
But lack the courage to drink of it! Yes, lack the courage to drink of it!

I sail round the Isle of Arran,

Or spend my time in France a bit:

No good! for the only way, by which I can e'er feel gay,

Is to suddenly sing and dance a bit.

This is the way I try to feel gay, this is the way I try to feel gay. (*Start dancing.*)

I think of the crimes committed. And then get fits of the bluest kind—

I fly to the claret cup, and try every pick-me-up,

And medicines of the newest kind, and medicines of the newest kind!

Of course I am never pitied,

I'm one of the worst of the laity;

But it's nothing to do with you; so off with my fit of blue,

And on with a fit of gaiety!

This is the way I try to feel gay, this is the way I try to feel gay. (*Stop dancing.*)

(Enter JOE VAT, bowing.)

BARON. Bow lower; bow lower!

JOE. I'm very sorry sir; but, unfortunately, I am wearing some ready-made clothes; and, sir—

BARON. Don't "sir" me! I'm a lord! In fact, your land-lord.

JOE. Well, sir, would you mind stepping down and looking at the kitchen grate? We want a new one badly. As for the sink—

BARON. How dare you address me on such a subject? Write to the agent. And pray don't fidget; and *do* sit down. (JOE sits nervously on chair.) How many servants do you keep?

JOE. With a good season, five or six, my lord; but now we have only one, and an occasional charwoman.

BARON (*aside*). That was the horror I encountered. (*Aloud.*) Don't bother me with your charwoman, and stand up when I am addressing you. (JOE rises nervously.) Well, you say you keep five or six dozen servants?

JOE. No, my lord; no, my lord! I said five or six—

BARON. How tiring you are. Don't fidget, my good man; and *do* sit down. (JOE sits.) I suppose your servant is that fright I saw just now?

JOE. Fright! my lord. She is generally supposed to be good-looking.

BARON. Allow me to be the judge of who is good-looking. How dare you argue with me! Why, you'll be saying that *you* are good-looking next.

JOE. Indeed no, sir. I was only telling my *fiancée* this morning that I was no Abelard.

BARON (*furiously*). Stand up when you address me. (JOE stands, uncertain whether to stand or sit.) What are your vulgar flirtations to me? And keep still, sir. Why are you bobbing up and down like a Margate bathing-woman? Either stand up or sit down. Don't do both. (*Rising.*) I shall be back in a moment. Let your servant be here when I return. (*To audience, aside.*) If that woman I insulted is the heiress, I must apologize and marry her; then take her for a walk on the Matterhorn. I can be a gentleman at a push. (*Exit BARON. As he makes his exit he collides with BOB SHOCKER, who enters with his disguise on.*)

BOB. Ah! He did not recognise me. Nobody except those in the know knows me in this nose. (*To JOE VAT.*) Good morning, sir. Bob Shocker—detective. (*He raises his hat, and nose falls on the ground as before.*) (*Aside.*) Confound the thing! That's the third or fourth time that's happened today. (*Puts nose on.*)

JOE. Don't put it on again for me.

BOB. That's awfully kind. It is rather a nuisance. (*Puts nose in pocket.*) There is no time to be lost. You are about to marry Myra Myrtle, under the impression that she is the heiress of Castle Bang.

JOE. How did you know that?

BOB. I have it on my notes. You beware! Learn from me that she is not anything of the sort. She is *not* the heiress.

JOE. Not the heiress! Then I must back out of the marriage in the most honourable manner possible. (*Wedding bells heard outside.*)

BOB. You must. Hush! She comes. (*Exit BOB. Enter MYRA.*)

MYRA. Hark to the wedding bells. I ought to be so happy. Poor Ethelbert. (*Sighs.*) 'Tis wrong to sigh for another on one's wedding day.

JOE. My dearest, something awful has happened. A thunderbolt hurled by mighty Jove with deadly aim—

MYRA (*interrupting*). You don't mean to tell me you are going to put off our wedding?

JOE. You anticipate me. I cannot explain, but I must—I must go and stop those wedding bells. (*Exit JOE. The bells stop. MYRA stands dazed. Enter BOB.*)

BOB. Bob Shocker—detective.

MYRA. I am in no mood for theatrical attitudes. Do be natural for once.

BOB (*aside*). If she only knew who I was! If she only knew!

MYRA. 'Adone with your *asides*. Speak out.

BOB. I will. (*Slowly.*) You—are—Catherine—Countroyal!

MYRA (*startled*). How did you know that?

BOB. I have it on my notes.

MYRA. Don't betray me. I am hiding from Baron Bang. He locked me in his haunted chamber, and if it had not been that one of his ghosts had been drinking, and left the door open, I should have been no more by now.

BOB. He has been here. He is coming again. Don't be afraid. He believes you to be the Bang to Castle Heiress—I mean the Castle to Heiress Bang—I should say—

MYRA. If you didn't gabble on so, You would not make so many mistakes. I understand.

BOB. Get hold of Mrs. Ibbins, and let *her* declare *she* is Catherine Countroyal. Baron Bang will then marry her. See my plot?

MYRA. Yes. But who is the real heir?

BOB. Only one person knows. I know—I, Bob Shocker.

MYRA. Never mind the usual attitude [affected pose].

BOB. Thanks, awfully. Go to Mrs. Ibbins at once. (MYRA *runs off*. BOB *puts on nose and runs off, colliding with* BARON BANG, *who enters*.)

BARON. **A plague on the fellow. He is always running into me. Any one would think I was a public-house. It would be a terrible thing for me if that charwoman turns out to be the real heiress. I can't look at her—but I must marry her. After all, one is not bound to look at one's own wife.**

(Enter MRS. IBBINS.)

BARON (*with cheerful and polished manner*). Oh! my good lady, I believed I implied you were not exactly ornamental?

MRS. I. You did, your worship.

BARON. Don't trouble to "worship me" just now. Would you mind telling me what your *real* name is?

MRS. I. Well, no one really knows what their real name is, but I have been told—mind you, *told*—that my name is Catherine Countroyal. (BARON *nearly faints*.)

BARON. Say no more.

MRS. I. What ails you?

BARON. I love a sight—I mean at first sight. Come with me to the nearest registry-office. I will marry you instantly.

MRS. I. As I *am*? (*Indicating untidiness*.)

BARON. Yes—as you are. Take my arm. (*He drags her off, colliding with* BOB *as they go off*. Exit BARON and MRS. IBBINS. Enter BOB.)

BOB. There they go. Hurray! Hallo, Vat. (*Enter JOE VAT.*) That's a pretty sight—a very pretty sight! (*Enter MYRA MYRTLE.*) And so is this a pretty sight.

MYRA (*with straws in her hair à la Ophelia, with melancholy voice*).

They are not for me, those bells of glee, they are not for me.

Over the sea, with the busy bee. And a fiddle-de-dee, at a five o'clock tea.

The bells of glee are not for me. Hey, nonny, nonny!

BOB (*aside to JOE*). I say, old chap, I never did care for these drawing-room recitations.

JOE. Hush! we are interrupting.

MYRA. The merry, busy, bounding bee—in my bonnet thou shouldst be;
Aye, thou mayst depend upon it—thy home is surely in my bonnet.
To be or not to be—that *is* the point. (*Exit MYRA.*)

JOE (*aside to BOB*). I fear she is suffering from temporary mental aberration.

BOB. That's your pretty way of putting it. I think she is off her chump, and you are the heartless scoundrel who is the cause of it.

JOE. I quite see that—I'm with you there. But she will recover at the next offer of marriage.

BOB. Then, there's hope. Hush! Stand back. (*Hurriedly pushes JOE back and assumes false nose. Enter BARON BANG and MRS. IBBINS. They march to the front.*) Why these alarms and excursions?

MRS. I. We ain't going any excursions.

BARON. Hush! my love.

MRS. I. I am too dazed to realize my position.

BOB. And you my lord will be too dazed when you realize yours. You married her because you believed her to be the wealthy Catherine Countroyal—heiress to Castle Bang. Learn that *that* is Catherine Countroyal. (*Indicating MYRA who is standing at the back, not listening.*)

BARON (*fiercely to MRS. I.*). Why, you said that you were Catherine Countroyal.

MRS. I. Pardon me, Edward—I said I had been *told* I was Catherine Countroyal—that is quite another story.

BARON. I have been deceived.

BOB. A great deal more than you think. Learn more. Catherine Countroyal is not the heiress to Castle Bang!

BARON. Who is, then?

BOB. Ethelbert Ethelred Egbert Bang!

BARON. But I threw him down a crevasse—I mean, he slipped down a crevasse.

BOB. True; but he stuck half way, and was rescued by the Ball's Pond Amateur Alpine Club.

BARON. Where is he?

BOB. Here! the heir is none other than Bob Shocker—detective. (*Raises hat, and nose falls off.*) Ethelbert Ethelred Egbert Bang; otherwise Baron Bang!

BARON. Well, I thought I recognised the voice. (*To MRS. I.*) Ann!

MRS. I. Yes, Edward!

BARON. I've not been a very good man, and as I cannot legally shuffle out of this most unfortunate marriage, I will try to atone for the past by being a moderately good husband.

MRS. I. That is all one can expect nowadays.

MYRA (*wandering*). Oh *what's to become of me?* For my love is o'er the sea.

BOB. No, Kate, he isn't. Your Ethelbert is here. Come and be Baroness of Castle Bang.

MYRA (*altering manner*). You have indeed brought me to my senses. I am ever yours, Ethelbert.

JOE (*wandering*). And *what's to become of me*, and my poor old hostelree?

BARON. You have been a mean, contemptible rascal.

JOE. I quite see that. I'm with you there.

BARON. But you have not been so bad as I have, so I will present you with this valuable property.

BOB. Don't you be so liberal with other people's property.

BARON. I forgot for the moment, sir.

BOB. And don't "sir" me. I'm a lord.

BARON (*depressed*). *What's to become of me*, and my fine old pedigree?

MYRA. As long as you behave, you and your dear wife shall have a princely allowance from Baroness Bang.

FINALE — I ONCE WAS A NOBLE BARON

BARON.

I once was a noble Baron,
With money, and loved the chink of it;
Behold, this merciless gang
Have robbed me of Castle Bang—

JOE.

Which never was yours, when you think of it!
No, never was yours, when you think of it!

BARON.

Oh, I forgot that!

MRS. IBBINS.

I have been Ibbins and Jones and Maclaren!
And thought I was Baroness, you know!

MYRA.

Now pray contented be,
You're much indebted to me
For getting him out of a mess, you know!

BOB.

I beg to state it's not too late
To take a course effective:
If he sins any more I'll hand him o'er
To a Scotland Yard detective.

BARON.

You're right, you're right in all that you say—
Let's all be good and jolly and gay!

ENSEMBLE.

Hooray! We're right in all that we say—
So let's be good and jolly and gay,
And this is the way we try to feel gay!
This is the way we try to feel gay!

ALL DANCE.

CURTAIN.

CHARACTERS

- DUKE OF DAGGERNAUGHT Everything that is bad..
- STABBARINO Supposed to be a bandit in the employ of the Duke, but in reality he is Peter the Pleasant Peasant, and everything that is good. In love with Carrottina.
- PISTOLI Also supposed to be one of the Duke's bandits, but in reality he is Job Robinson, an early nineteenth century School Board Officer, who looks after his own interests and everybody else's grammar.
- MRS. SELLERBEER The landlady of "The Empty Barrel," and guardian of Carrottina.
- CARROTTINA PEAS The gardener's daughter, and the very model of what a good girl ought to be. In love with Peter the Pleasant Peasant.

VILLAGERS

SCENE—A RUSTIC VILLAGE

On the right is an inn, "The Empty Barrel." A small round table and two chairs are arranged for out-door customers. On the left is the gardener's cottage; over the door is painted "Mr. Peas, Wholesale Gardener." There is a small garden seat.

VILLAGERS (*Air—Duke of Seven Dials*). OPENING CHORUS.

We should never be melancholy, we should never bestow a thought
On the terrible face, of his ugly Grace
The Duke of Dagger-naught.

We should never be melancholy, we should never bestow a thought
On the terrible face, of his ugly Grace
The Duke of Dagger-naught.

(*Enter Pistoli and Stabbarino. They wear moustaches, beards, long hair, and slouch hats.*)

STAB. Here we are again.

PIST. Don't say that. It's so like a clown in a pantomime.

STAB. You are always correcting me.

PIST. Well, my boy, I do it for the best. Your English is sometimes shocking.
(*Villagers draw close, and endeavour to listen to the conversation.*)

STAB. This appears to be an *inn*.

PIST. Yet every one appears to be *out*.

(*Villagers laugh and say to one another, "That's very good!" "Capital!"*)

STAB. I presume, good people, you are villagers.

VILLAGERS. We are; we are.

STAB. It was very kind of you to laugh at my friend's miserable joke; but I think it only right to inform you that we are bold, bad brigands, and if you are honest and respectable people, you ought not to be seen in our company.

VILLAGERS. Thank you. We will withdraw. (*Exeunt singing opening chorus.*)

We should never be melancholy, we should never bestow a thought
On the terrible face, of his ugly Grace
The Duke of Daggernaught.

STAB. They seem happy.

PIST. That is more than you do, old chap. Let us make merry. As the poet has it:
"Our hearts let us cheer, with the sparkling ginger beer." Don't be down-
hearted, Stabbarino; you are richer than I am, suppose you call for some
refreshment.

STAB. Certainly. Porter, porter, come here, porter.

PIST. No, no, my boy. This is not a railway station. Waiter, waiter.

STAB (*aside*). Corrected again. (*Aloud.*) Waiter. (*Enter MRS. SELLERBEER.*)

MRS. S. Coming, gentlemen, coming. What is it you require?

PIST. My friend wants some spirits.

MRS. S. I'm very sorry, gentlemen, but we don't keep 'em.

PIST. I don't mean that, for we are teetotalers ourselves. I mean he wants
cheering up, that kind of spirits. Two bottles of ginger beer.

MRS. S. Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

PIST. That seems a nice woman, the little I saw of her. I often think, Stabbarino, I
should like to give up this wicked life and settle down to marry a nice
comfortable woman like that. But she must have money. I could not throw
myself away, for I am worth purchasing.

STAB. Fear not. You'll be *sold* one day.

(*Re-enter* MRS. SELLERBEER *with bottles and glasses*. STABBARINO *pays for the refreshment*. MRS. SELLERBEER *is about to depart when PISTOLI detains her, and mysteriously draws her aside.*)

PIST. Excuse my asking you a question on such a short acquaintance, but do you ever think of marrying again?

MRS. S (*indignantly*). Sir!

PIST. Oh, you need not be indignant. Most people at your time of life would be delighted at being asked such a question.

MRS. S. To dare to address me without a proper introduction!

PIST. Madam, you are right. If I have forgotten that you are a lady, I must not forget that I am a gentleman. Here, Stabbarino, will you present me to this lady?

(STABBARINO *rises, and with much courtesy presents* PISTOLI.)

STAB. Madam Sellerbeer, permit me to present Signor Pistoli.

(PISTOLI *bows profoundly, and* MRS. SELLERBEER, *much puzzled, curtsies.*)

MRS. S. Yes, (*to* STABBARINO) you have introduced me, but I don't know *you*.

PIST. Madam is right. But as you know *me* now, I can present Signor Stabbarino to you, Mrs. Beerseller.

MRS. S. No, Mrs. Sellerbeer, if you please.

PIST. Tut, tut, I meant Mrs. Sellerbeer—Permit me to present Signor Stabbarino.

STAB. Madam Sellerbeer, permit me to present Signor Pistoli.

PIST. Now that we have been properly introduced, may I ask if you ever think of marrying again?

MRS. S. In truth sir, I am always thinking of it.

PIST. So am I, so am I. This little inn is your property, I presume?

MRS. S. It is, sir.

PIST. Do you derive a good income from it?

MRS. S. Pretty well.

PIST. That's good. Then may I ask, as you are thinking of again taking a good husband, that you will give me the first refusal?

MRS. S. With great pleasure. I refuse you at once.

(She flounces off, and is about to enter the inn, when STABBARINO takes her hand, and leads her to the side away from PISTOLI.)

STAB. Tell me, do you know aught of the loveliest damsel in the world?

MRS. S. Oh! sir. You make me blush.

STAB. I don't mean you. I mean an angelic creature of the name of Carrottina.

MRS. S. Carrottina, the gardener's daughter? She lives opposite, my lord. There! *(Points to house.)* I am almost her entire guardian, for her father, Mr. Peas, is troubled with rheumatics, and seldom leaves his room.

STAB. Your story interests me. I thought a gardener's work was the healthiest in the wide world.

MRS. S. So it is my lord, but he has other work which is trying to the system. After the daily work, he attends evening parties.

STAB. Does he go out much in society?

MRS. S. A great deal, sir—*as a waiter*. The hours are very late, and then I'm sorry to say, sir, he takes too many ices and gets a chill.

STAB. That is sad. Then the sweet Carrottina is not married yet?

MRS. S. No, sir. Her heart is true to one Peter, known as the Pleasant Peasant.

STAB. Then she still loves me!

MRS. S. Eh? Loves *you*?

STAB. No, no—of course not—not me. No, I mean this Peter. *(Aside.)* Fool, I nearly betrayed myself.

MRS. S. I think, sir, you had better drink your ginger beer before it gets flat.

STAB. Truly said.

(Exit MRS. SELLERBEER into house and STABBARINO sits at the table with PISTOLI and they carouse.)

PIST. Here's to our noble master, the Duke of Daggernaught.

STAB. Hooray! He has always been a good master to us. Ain't he?

PIST. Don't say "Ain't he." Have! Have!

STAB (*aside*). He's commenced correcting me again. (*Aloud.*) All right.
Haven't he?

PIST. That's better.

STAB. And mind you—we have been very good servants to him. Whenever he has required us to rob some poor inoffensive bank we have always done it.

PIST. We have! And I was always the first to attack a weak and defenceless woman.

STAB. You *was*.

PIST. How dreadful! You *were*.

STAB. No I wasn't, *you was*.

PIST. You don't understand. I am correcting your grammar.

STAB (*getting angry*). Now look here—just stop it, please. You can't expect a bad Italian brigand to speak good English grammar. This isn't the School Board.

PIST (*much agitated, and aside*). School Board! Surely he can't suspect. Yet what made him say School Board?

STAB. Ain't you—I mean *aren't* you well?

PIST. Nothing, a mere nothing—but see, here comes our noble master!

STAB. The Duke of Daggernaught. (*The two brigands walk up to meet the DUKE OF DAGGERNAUGHT, who swaggers on, shaking hands with both.*)

DUKE. Good morning, my faithful minions.

"A day so bright, followed by night, that showed no light, is welcome sight."

STAB. You have the art of a poet, my liege.

PIST. Do say "heart," you always drop your "h's."

STAB. I said "*art*" and I meant "*art*."

PIST. No you didn't. You said "art," but you meant "heart."

DUKE. Steady, Pistoli. Stabbarino, though a good minion sometimes needs correction, but I think he meant “art,” A–R–T, so do not quarrel over it.

STAB. I wonder you have never taken up poetry as a profession, my liege.

DUKE (*smiling*). You flatter me, Stabbarino.

PIST. It would Stabbarino and myself much pleasure if you sing us your history this bright morning.

STAB. Hear! Hear!

DUKE. I don't think I could sing it *here*.

PIST. He means *hear–hear*!

DUKE. I know what he means well enough, but I don't care for singing it *here*. There may be eavesdroppers about.

PIST. We have dispersed them. A song, my liege, a song!

STAB. Bravo! Bravo!

DUKE (*severely*). Of course, we are all “bravoes,” but don't keep shouting it out, there's a good fellow. I fear I cannot sing. I have left my music at home in the castle pantry.

STAB (*eagerly*). Give me the key, sir, and I will go and fetch it.

DUKE. No. I never allow any one in my castle.

STAB (*aside*). Another chance lost! How strange he won't part with the key. I will enter that castle one day, I will get the key some day!

DUKE. What are you muttering there, cur?

STAB. Oh! nothing. I was only hoping you would sing.

DUKE (*trying his voice*). I fancy I have a cold.

STAB. A little 'usky p'r'aps.

PIST. My dear fellow, do aspirate, and don't say “p'r'aps”—perhaps.

DUKE. Quite right, Pistoli, always correct him. Very well, here goes.

DUKE (*Air—He went to a Party*). I AM A VERY WICKED MAN.

**I am a very wicked man, as any one can see,
Excuse the grammar, but there ain't a chap as bad as me.
Observe my piercing eyes and nose and beetle brows and fore'ed,
In fact my black moustache is quite enough to show I'm horrid.
When only three months old I poured the ink upon my frocks,
I tore my little hat, and ate a pair of worsted socks.
When two years old I swaggered out, and terrified my nuss
By driving off in hansom cabs instead of tup'ny bus.
And now I often help myself to things that are not mine,
I do not even care a rap at whose expense I dine;
When posting letters for a friend I always steal the stamp,
To cut it short, I am a most unmitigated scamp.**

STAB & PIST. Hooray! Well done!

PIST. Well done, my liege. I wonder you don't go in for penny readings.

DUKE. Miserable dog! (*Seizes PISTOLI by the collar and forces him to the ground.*) Do you wish to insult me? Penny readings indeed! I once had an offer to go on the operatic stage, but my aunt objected. She was stiff and starch in her notions, having once been a fashionable laundress. Get up. Now for business. You will learn with pleasure that I am about to—

STAB & PIST (*interrupting*). Hooray!

DUKE. Humph. I am about to—

STAB & PIST (*interrupting again*). Hooray!

DUKE (*seizes each by the collar and forces them to the ground*). That will teach you not to interrupt. As I was saying (*the two rise*) when you rudely said "Hooray!"—which, by-the-by, should be pronounced "Hoorah!"—I am about to marry Carrottina, the gardener's daughter. At present I have a notion that my love is not returned.

STAB & PIST. It is not, my liege.

DUKE. I have a hated rival—Peter the Pleasant Pheasant.

PIST. Pardon me, my liege, *peasant*, not *pheasant*.

DUKE. I say *pheasant*.

PIST. And I say *peasant*.

DUKE. How dare you correct me? Correct Stabbarino as much as you like. Down, down, dog (*forces PISTOLI down*). To-night Peter dies.

STAB (*eagerly*). Give me the castle key, and I will prepare a deep dark dank dungeon at the bottom of the castle coal-cellar.

DUKE. Nay, my servant. You two find Carrottina and Peter, and I will prepare the cellar. Go. (*Exit PISTOLI.*)

STAB. I go sir. (*Aside.*) I cannot get the key of the castle! He little knows my secret. He thinks I am his minion—that's his opinion. Halloh! that's poetry: It's his opinion, I'm his minion. By Jove, I'm a poet too. (*Exit STABBARINO.*)

DUKE. I don't think I quite like that man. My idea of a man is, that his countenance should be always open, and his mouth shut. I will hide me behind a tree and watch. (*Exit DUKE OF DAGGERNAUGHT.*)

CARROTTINA (*entering from cottage*). Oh where, oh where is my Peter? Dear old Peter—which of course means dear *young* Peter. It is a pity his income is not a little more. It is so difficult to keep up a house and servants on then shillings a week, and that is all poor Peter earns. A carriage, horses, and a box at the opera, of course are quite out of the question. And yet I could have all these luxuries and more, and even the title of Duchess, were I to marry the Duke of Daggernaught; but he is a bold and wicked lord. He stays up late at night, smokes, and robs banks, and does other deeds unworthy of a gentleman. No, I'd rather marry Peter and his ten shillings a week, and dance the polka with him on the village green, than wed the infamous duke and lead off the cotillion with him on the magnificent parquet floor of his blazoned Van Dyked behung ballroom.

CARROTTINA (*Air—See me Dance the Polka*). SOME LADIES FEEL QUITE HAPPY.

**Some ladies feel quite happy when gliding at a ball,
With a namby pamby chappie who cannot move at all;
He's afraid he'll crease his collar, and spoil his white cravat.
Though he might be willing, I wouldn't give a shilling
To dance with a doll like that.**

You should see me dance with Peter,
You should see us cover the ground,
Ah! nothing could be sweeter
Than the way he swings me round.
When we hear the polka's metre
Our feet begin to go,
For a rollicking dance with Peter
Is the happiest time I know.

(STABBARINO enters without his hat, false beard and cloak. He is dressed like an ordinary peasant of period 1810.)

STAB. **Carrottina!**

CAR. **What, Peter—dear Peter? I am so happy to see you again.** (*They embrace.*)

STAB. **Not so happy as I am to see you. It is a fine day isn't it?**

CAR. **Yes.**

STAB. **The sun is so bright.**

CAR. **Yes.**

STAB. **And so warm.**

CAR. **Yes. Have you any more interesting news?**

STAB. No, dear, that is all of importance. The only other news that I have—but I fear it won't interest you—is that I disguise myself with a false beard, a long cloak and slouch hat, and pass as Stabbarino, one of the worst minions of the Duke of Daggernaught, my object being to obtain the key of his castle, enter it, and overthrow him and his band.

CAR. Don't they play well?

STAB. You misunderstand me. I mean band of robbers—not music. I shall get a reward for doing so from the Government, and we shall be comparatively rich. At all events, we shall be able to enjoy a week's honeymoon at Margate, instead of a single happy day at Rosherville, as we originally intended.

CAR. Oh, that will be nice!

DUKE (*who has been watching, though not able to hear anything, approaches*).

(*To CARROTTINA.*) **What are you doing with this miserable pheasant?**

(*To STABBARINO.*) **Go, begone, or I will shoot you immediately.**

STAB. **I am not a pheasant, I am a poor but honest peasant, my lord.**

DUKE. **I repeat that you are a low born miserable *pheasant*.**

CAR. **Then you dare not shoot him till October.**

DUKE. Foiled and defeated by a mere gal!

STAB (*aside*). I will not betray myself yet. (*To CARROTTINA.*) Farewell, Carrottina, I shall return soon. (*Exit STABBARINO.*)

DUKE (*aside*). I could have sworn that was Stabbarino. Pish, stuff, tush, pooh and nonsense. I am mistaken. (*Aloud.*) Carrottina, be seated. (*CARROTTINA and DUKE sit next to each other.*) It is no use disguising the fact that I am the richest and most noble gentleman in the county.

CAR. So I'm told, sir.

DUKE. And that you are the most beautiful girl within a thousand miles.

CAR. So I'm told, sir.

DUKE. It therefore follows that you must be my wife.

(*Enter MRS. SELLERBEER. She listens at back.*)

CAR. You honour me, sir, but I must decline.

DUKE. You will be enormously rich.

CAR. And receive begging letters all day long.

DUKE. You will be a Duchess.

CAR. And have to spend the whole of my time in going to parties and opening bazaars.

DUKE. Will you come with me and see my castle?

CAR. "Will you walk into my parlour? said the spider to the fly."

MRS. S (*coming over*). Bravely spoken, child.

DUKE. Oh, madam. I believe you are Miss Peas's chaperon.

MRS. S. What do you mean, sir?

DUKE. Well, I mean to marry you little friend Carrottina.

MRS. S. Oh! that will be delightful! Of course you will take me too—we cannot be parted.

DUKE. Well, I did not think of *that*.

MRS. S. You need not think of it. I shall dance with Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons, Baronets, and City Knights.

DUKE. I do not desire to dash your spirits one jot, but though you may manage to dance with them, I am quite certain they won't dance with you.

MRS. S. They will dance with Carrottina, I presume.

DUKE. Yes, because she will be a beautiful Duchess.

MRS. S. Then what shall I be?

DUKE. I am much afraid, since you ask me, that you will still remain plain Mrs. Sellerbeer. The laws of society are a problem which I cannot solve. But you shall not lose by it. You shall become the proprietress of a thriving West End penny ice shop, and some foreign count will probably marry you for your money. Now please retire to your hostelry. (*Exit MRS. SELLERBEER.*)

CAR. I have thought the matter over most carefully, and I absolutely decline to be your bride.

DUKE. Why?

CAR. One reason if that if society declines to received poor kind clean Mrs. Sellerbeer, it will not welcome my father, whose occupation, though not interfering with his kindness, occasionally does with his cleanliness. He is often covered with mould.

DUKE. **He is a good gardener?**

CAR. **Oh yes, and he *hoes* a good deal.**

DUKE. **I will pay his debts.**

CAR. **You misunderstand me, I mean “hoe,” not “owe.”**

DUKE. **Oh!**

CAR. **No, not *owe*!**

DUKE. ***You don't understand me—I mean “Oh!” an ejaculation.***

CAR (*seeing it*). **Ah!**

DUKE. **Well “*Ah!*” if you like. It's all the same, *Oh!* and *Ah!***

CAR. The other reason why I cannot marry you, is, I will marry no one but Peter.

DUKE. Then I must use force, and bear you away to yon castle.

(*He is about to seize her by the wrist, when she frees herself and flings him to the ground.*) Perhaps, after all, it is unfair to touch a weak and defenceless woman—without assistance. (*Calls.*) Help! Help! Stabbarino, Pistoli, here! (*Enter STABBARINO and PISTOLI in cloaks and slouch hats.*) Seize that girl!

STAB. Right my lord, I will do so. (*Seizes CARROTTINA. Aside to her.*) Hush, I am Peter, your Peter. Keep up the struggle; pretend to try to get away from me. (*CARROTTINA affects to struggle.*)

DUKE. Pistoli! Go and help Stabbarino.

PIST. Never! Your time is come, and I prefer to seize you. (*Holds the DUKE down on the ground.*)

DUKE. What! Betrayed!

STAB (*to the DUKE*). Give me the castle key, sir, and I will imprison the girl and come back and assist you.

DUKE (*throws key*). Here it is. Take her away, and return quickly.

STAB (*to CARROTTINA*). At last I have the key of the castle. Victory! Victory! (*Exit with CARROTTINA still struggling.*)

PIST. You have had your day.

DUKE. And you shall have a night you won't easily forget when the faithful Stabbarino returns.

PIST. Faithful? Ha! ha! ha!

DUKE. You won't laugh when he returns.

PIST. You mean *you* won't. Ha! ha! ha! (*Enter MRS. SELLERBEER.*)

MRS. S. I hear sounds of revelry. (*Sees them.*) There's a pretty sight, master and servant romping like boys at play upon the village green. (*She is about to pull PISTOLI off, when STABBARINO and CARROTTINA enter with piles of documents.*)

CAR. Release him, Pistoli. (*DUKE is released and gets up.*)

STAB. We have in the space of one minute ransacked the castle, and have found these papers, which prove that the rightful heir to Cowslip Castle was not the Duke of Daggernaut, but none other than Peter, your long lost son.

DUKE. What, the pleasant pheasant?

PIST. No, peasant.

DUKE (*to PISTOLI*). Pardon me, this is not the time for correcting people. The situation is too serious.

STAB. I think it is. For a long time you have thought me your minion. Learn then, I ain't.

PIST (*correcting him*). Am not.

STAB. Do be quiet. Behold your long lost son Peter. (*Throws off cloak and disguise.*)

DUKE. Come to my arms, my boy. (*Embraces STABBARINO.*)
 (*To PISTOLI.*) But I have not done with you, miserable 'ound.

PIST. Hound, if you please.

DUKE. Worm!

PIST. True, and the worm will turn. I am none other than Job Robinson, the
 School Board officer. (*Throws off cloak and disguise.*)

DUKE. What, from St. Pancras?

PIST. Yes.

DUKE. Then you are the long lost father of my aunt's second cousin Eliza's eldest
 boy's nephew.

ALL (*except MRS. SELLERBEER.*) Oh, joy!

MRS. S. Then who am I?

DUKE. It is not the question of who you *are* but who you *will be*.

MRS. S. Well, if you don't mind, your worship, I would rather be Mrs. Job
 Robinson. (*PISTOLI embraces her.*)

DUKE. Oh, I wasn't going to propose to you.

STAB. And if you promise to reform, Carrottina and I will come and live with
 you, comfort you, and you shall allow us a princely income.

DUKE. Agreed, and there shan't be a happier trio than the Duke.

STAB. The Pleasant Peasant.

CAR. And Carrottina the Gardener's Daughter.

ALL (*Air—The Duke of Seven Dials*). CLOSING CHORUS.

We shall be very jolly and shall ever bestow a thought,
 On that noble man, without a clan,
 The Duke of Daggernaut.

We shall be very jolly and shall ever bestow a thought,
 On that noble man, without a clan,
 The Duke of Daggernaut.

CURTAIN.