A. J. Keith · Hill

DOROTHY

A Comedy Opera in Three Acts.

WRITTEN BY

B. C. STEPHENSON.

MUSIC BY

ALFRED CELLIER.

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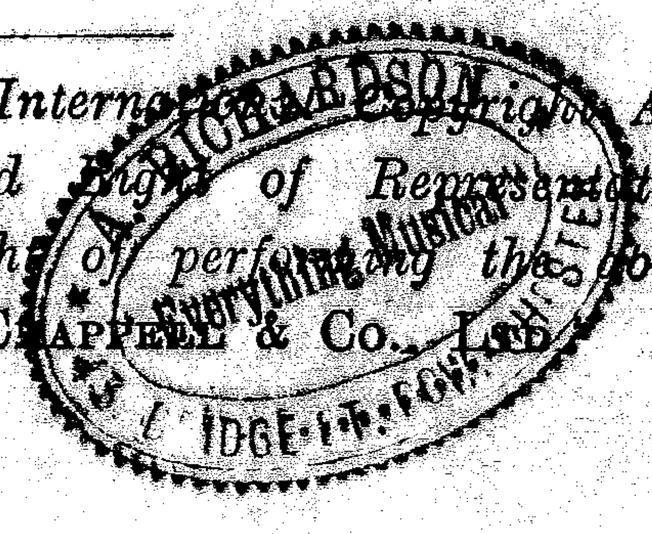

CHARACTERS.

Squire Bantam	(Bass)
Geoffrey Wilder	(Tenor)
Harry Sherwood	(Baritone)
John Tuppitt	(1st Bass)
Lurcher	(2nd Tenor)
Tom Strutt	(2nd Tenor)
The Parson.	
Footman.	
Dorothy Bantam	(Soprano)
Lydia Hawthorne	(Mezzo)
Phyllis Tuppitt	(Contralto)
Mrs. Privett	(Soprano)
Lady Betty	(Soprano)

Chorus of Hop Pickers, Peasants, Guests, Bridesmaids, &

ACT I.—The Hop Gardens.

ACT II.—Chanticleer Hall.

ACT III.—The Round Coppice.

The action takes place in the County of Kent in October, 1740.

ARGUMENT.

ACT I.

In the hop-gardens, which surround the inn belonging to old John Tuppitt, the countryfolk of the neighbourhood of Chanticleer Hall, in the County of Kent, the property of Squire Bantam, are enjoying themselves on the morning of an autumn day, in the middle of the last century. The picking is nearly over, and the pickers are looking forward to the feasting and jollity with which, thanks to their good-hearted old landlord, their labour is to end. Dorothy Bantam, the Squire's daughter, and Lydia Hawthorne, his niece, are not sorry for an opportunity to put off their hoops and furbelows and join in the festivities. They arrive on the scene just in time to find that Phyllis, old Tuppitt's daughter, has rashly promised to marry Tom Strutt, a yokel of the village, and that no warning of theirs will induce her to alter her mind. This is not at all what they like; for Dorothy and Lydia not only preach that woman should remain free from the fetters of matrimony, but they practise what they preach, and have sworn to remain single. It is possible that Dorothy's determination may arise from the fact that her father has already settled her wedded lot. If she marries any one, she must marry Geoffrey Wilder, Squire Bantam's nephew and heir, for the old man has set his heart on the match. But she has never seen her cousin, who has been living a pretty wild life in London. As luck will have it, however, on this very day Wilder, with the bailiffs at his heels, on his way to his uncle's house, compelled by the pressure of debt to cry "peccavi," and consent to Squire Bantam's terms, arrives from town, and, with his friend Sherwood, pulls up at Tuppitt's inn for refreshment for themselves and rest for the hacks, which have been put to their best speed in getting out of the way of a certain Sheriff's Officer, Lurcher by name, who has been close on the heels of Geoffrey all the way from London. Dorothy, ever ready for fun, takes advantage of the dresses in which Lydia and herself could hardly be recognized, even if her cousin knew her by sight, and passes herself and Lydia off as Dorcas and Abigail, Tuppitt's daughters. Wilder and Sherwood are impressionable, and the charms of Dorothy and Lydia take such an effect that the plan of submission to the uncle is given up, even at the risk of arrest, and Dorcas takes the place of Dorothy in the matrimonial schemes of Mr. Geoffrey Wilder. At this moment Lurcher, the Sheriff's Officer, overtakes his man, having got over the obstacles with which the fugitives have endeavoured to stop him. Wilder, determined not to marry Dorothy, has a scheme by which he thinks he can get the money from his uncle. Lurcher would listen to no schemes if it were not for the fact that he has aroused the indignation of the villagers by serving a writ on an old woman of the neighbourhood. Wilder saves him from a ducking, and, in return, he promises to help in the scheme, and to join the two gentlemen in their visit to the Squire's house that evening. Meantime, the attractions of her cousin have had a considerable effect on Dorothy; and Lydia, since she has seen Sherwood, is by no means so certain about perpetual spinsterhood. But, to test the value of the earnest protestations of their adorers, Dorothy gives her ring to Wilder and Lydia hers to Sherwood, the ladies extracting from the gentlemen the promise that they will never part with them.

ACT II.

A DANCE is being given by Squire Bantam to his neighbours. The festivities are going on merrily, when a servant announces the arrival of a stranger. This is no other than Lurcher, who, disguised as the Secretary of the Duke of Berkshire, has come to announce the breakdown of his Grace's carriage in the neighbourhood of Chanticleer Hall, and to beg the Squire's hospitality. The Squire wishes for nothing better than to receive a member of the aristocracy into his house, and Wilder is ushered in, accompanied by Sherwood. The two gentlemen do not recognize the ladies in their powder, and Wilder makes an express stipulation with his friend that he is not to be bothered with his cousin Dorothy. As the evening goes on the charms of Lydia have a very serious effect on Wilder, while Sherwood is at Dorothy's feet. And an opportunity soon occurs for Dorothy to show Lydia what "a base and faithless thing is man," by inducing Sherwood to give her up the ring which Lydia had given him in the morning; while Lydia, with Wilder at her feet, has no difficulty in gaining possession of Dorothy's ring. Meantime the night has come, lights are put out, the guests retire to rest, and in the dark, Wilder, Sherwood, and Lurcher proceed to carry out Wilder's scheme. Cloaked and masked, they rouse the Squire's attention and pinion him. At the same time Sherwood binds Wilder. The house is soon roused by the Squire's cries; but, when the guests reappear, every one is astonished to find that the robbers, whoever they are, have taken none of their host's money. The "Duke," however, has not been so fortunate. His money-box is empty. To allow a guest to be plundered in his house, without making good the loss, is what the old Squire cannot permit, and, after some little hesitation, his Grace accepts as a loan the amount which is stated by Lurcher to be missing, and which happens to correspond exactly with the amount claimed of Mr. Geoffrey Wilder by the Sheriff. The early dawn sets the men afoot with the hounds—for the Squire starts his late autumn day, now and then, with a gallop after a cub—and while the ladies retire to their broken slumber, the gentlemen get ready for a morning's exercise.

ACT III.

THE Act opens with the wedding of Phyllis to Tom Strutt. The bridesmaids and groomsmen come to fetch her. And now Dorothy and Lydia are going to see what is the real value of the protestations of their unfaithful swains. Wisdom has come with the morning. Wilder and Sherwood have returned to Dorcas and Abigail, and have written to withdraw their pledges of the night before to Dorothy and Lydia. In reply to their letters, they have received a challenge from two young gentlemen, who are prepared to call them to account for their conduct to Miss Dorothy Bantam and Miss Lydia Hawthorne; and the two ladies are waiting in Round Coppice to find out whether the men they have chosen will prefer a duel to giving them up. Lydia is nervous about the pistols, but Dorothy reassures her. They have brought their own pistols, which will only be loaded with powder. When, however, their adversaries arrive, it seems that they will have to use the pistols which those gentlemen have brought, and which will probably contain bullets. It is with a not entirely unmixed feeling of satisfaction that they hear that the gentlemen decline to marry Dorothy and Lydia, and are prepared to risk their lives for the sake of Dorcas and Abigail, so eventually flight seems to be the only way out of the difficulty. The Squire is on his way to the old oak in Round Coppice, where Tom and Phyllis, who have been married, come for his blessing. Lurcher has betrayed the plot. But the Squire is ready to forgive everything if his nephew is ready to marry Dorothy and eventually the old gentleman has his way. Dorothy marries her cousin; Lydia marries Sherwood; and the awkward circumstances under which Dorothy's ring found its way on to Lydia's finger, and Lydia's ring on to Dorothy's, are overlooked, for each lady knows that her lover was ready to die rather than marry her friend.

DOROTHY.

ACT I.

(*Ring up on 40th bar of Symphony.*)

SCENE—*The Hop Gardens* R. JOHN TUPPITT'S *house* L. *Path over foot-bridge from* R. U. E. *up* L. C. *opposite door of house. Hedgerow on* R. *with gate (practicable) down* R. *Another gate up* R. *This hedge borders Hop Gardens* R. *Entrance* R. 1 E., L. 1 E., *and* L. U. E. *Door in house facing audience* L. 1 E.

(*As the Curtain rises* CHORUS *are discovered.* HOP-PICKER BALLET *enter over bridge and come down* C. *and* R. *and go into Hop field.* CHORUS *consists of young men and women.*

No. 1.—CHORUS.

Lads and lasses round about the hop-pole trip,
While old age indulges in another sip;
With an arm around her waist,
Ev'ry lass shall have a taste;
Then each lad shall toast his lass
To the bottom of the glass.
See the maids their glossy golden locks entwine
With the fruit and blossoms of the thick-set bine;
Gaily tripping in and out,
Up and down and round about;
Age and youth with mirth combine—
'Tis the merry hopping time.

DANCE.

(*Enter* PHYLLIS R. U. E., *runs on to bridge, stops and beckons to* TOM, *who then runs on, but on seeing crowd halts.* PHYLLIS *has run down a few steps, then turns, and seeing him faltering, runs up, takes his hand and leads him down* R. C., *then pulls him to* C. TUPPITT *at same time has entered by door in cottage, greeting all jovially, but on seeing* TOM *and* PHYLLIS, *remains down* L. C. *looking annoyed.*)

CHO. 'Tis Phyllis and her lover!
And what a fool he looks!

TOM (C.). Oh, Muster Tuppitt, here I stand,
An honest lad you see;
To ask you for your daughter's hand,
That we may married be!

(*Turns and talks to* PHYLLIS, *taking her hands.*)

CHO. Oh, Muster Tuppitt, here they stand,
Two nice young folks you see; (TUPPITT *looks across.*)
Now give to him your daughter's hand,
That they may married be!

TUP. Never! (*Turns away to* L.)

CHO. He refuses!

(*The young couple are dismayed;* TOM *speaks to* PHYLLIS, *persuading her to plead with* TUPPITT—*she crosses to* C *with hesitation.*)

PHYL. Would you see your Phyllis weep,
Who ever was the gayest of the gay?
Lose her roses, miss her sleep,
And sob a disappointed life away?

(*On seeing* TUPPITT *still obdurate, she turns to* TOM, *who tries to comfort her. She is inconsolable.*)

CHO. Forbear defying
The course of true love!
By quite complying
Your better sense prove!

(PHYLLIS *breaks down and cries on* TOM'S *shoulder.*)

And see her!
She is crying!

TOM (*leaving* PHYLLIS *crosses to* C.).
Happy the home that waits your daughter,
Honest the heart that I have brought her,
Sturdy the arms that shall support her.
You will relent!
You must consent!
Give me your daughter.

(TUPPITT *unrelenting crosses to* C. *and goes up* C. *followed by* CHORUS TOM *crosses to* R. *to a Peasant* L.

CHO You will relent!
You must consent!

TOM (*to Peasant on his* L.).
Sure, never man required such pressing.

TUP. (*relenting, comes down* C.). I relent!

(*Shout of delight from* CHORUS.)

There, take the child, (*Places* PHYLLIS'S *hand in* TOM'S.)
And with her take my blessing.

(*Blesses them, and goes up.*)

CHO. Ha, ha, ha!

TOM. Henceforward I devote my life
To making her a happy wife.

(*Takes* PHYLLIS'S *hand in his.* PHYLLIS *goes* R., *and* TOM *to* L., *and both are congratulated,* TOM *by the Men,* PHYLLIS *by the Girls. They then join* TUPPITT *up* C., *and dance with him in* C., *for about twelve bars.* TUPPITT *up* C., *then receives a jug and two cups from a Peasant, and pours out beer into cups, and gives them to* PHYLLIS *and* TOM. PHYLLIS, *looking in cup at the little drop he has given her, asks for more.* TUPPITT *refuses. They all drink, then on "Gaily tripping," they have given up cups and jug to man again—again join in dance towards end of Chorus.* TOM *and* PHYLLIS *kneel* C., *and* TUPPITT *blesses them and goes up.* TOM *on knees asks* PHYLLIS *for a kiss, she refuses coyly, and on his again asking, slaps his face. They then go up arguing, and he puts his arm around her waist.*)

CHO. "Lads and lasses," &c

(*Dance and Exit.*)

TUP. (L., *taking* TOM *by arm, and putting him over to* L.). Now, my lad, I can't have any loitering here, my lass has got her work to do. You will have more than enough of her by-and-bye, if she takes after her poor mother.

TOM (L.). All right, Muster Tuppitt; I'll be off to parson to get him to name the day.

TUP. (C.). Day! what day?

TOM. The wedding day, to be sure! I was thinking that to-morrow would be a likely kind of day.

PHYL. (R. *crossing to* R. *of* TOM, *coquettishly*). Oh, to-morrow would be much too soon.

TUP. (R.). Nay, lass, what has to be done, should be done quickly.

TOM. Then to-morrow it shall be.

TUP. (*crossing to* L.). Settle it as you please, I shall have no peace till you have your own way. (*Turns to* PHYLLIS.) Now, Phyllis, bustle about and get the tables ready. I'll just go and taste that last cask of ours. Come along, Tom.

[*Exit* L., TOM *following*.

PHYL. (*going after and stopping* TOM). I say, Tom, father is very fond of that ale, he can't keep his lips off it. (*Turning* R., *coyly*.)

TOM (L., *bashfully*). It ain't easy for a man to keep his lips off anything that he is very fond of. (*Seizes her in his arms and kisses her, and exit* L.)

Enter DOROTHY *and* LYDIA, R. U. E., *over bridge*.

PHYL. (*running after* TOM). Lor, Tom, how could you?

DOROTHY (*as she passes down* C. *to* R.C.). Oh, Phyllis!

PHYL. (L., *seeing* DOROTHY *and blushing*). Miss Dorothy! (*Gets* C.).

LYDIA (*coming down* L. C.). Oh, Phyllis!

PHYL. (*turns and sees* LYDIA, L.). Miss Lydia! (*Pretending innocence.*) Oh, how you did frighten me!

DOR. (R., *turning to her*). Serve you right. (*Turns away.*)

LYDIA (L., *turning to her*). Why did you let him do it? (*Turns away.*)

DOR. (*same bus.*). Why didn't you slap his face?

LYDIA (*same bus.*). Why didn't you scream?

DOR. If it were only for the sake of appearances (*Turns away with gesture.*)

LYDIA. Really I am ashamed of you. (*Same bus.*)

PHYL. But I am going to be married, Miss ——

DOR. & LYDIA (*both turn towards her sharply*). To be married?

DOR. To whom?

PHYL. To Tom Strutt.

LYDIA (*with mock tone of pity*). Dear me, I am sorry for you.

DOR. (*same bus.*). What a pity to spoil such a nice girl.

PHYL. Lor, Miss, how you frighten me! why Tom is as handsome as paint, and as good as gold.

DOR. Paint, my dear, is often used to cover a hole in the plank.

LYDIA. And as for virtue in man, it is here to-day, and gone to-morrow. (*Cross to* R.)

DOR. (C.). You take my advice and draw back, or you will repent when it is too late.

LYDIA (*coming up towards them*). Don't you have anything to do with marriage.

PHYL. (*crossing to* LYDIA, C.). Dut what am I to do?

LYDIA (R.). Do without it.

DOR. (L.). As we do. Listen to me.

No. 2.—SONG, WITH TRIO.—DOROTHY, LYDIA, *and* PHYLLIS.

1

DOR. (L.).
Be wise in time,
Oh, Phyllis mine,
Have a care,
Maiden fair,
Pray beware.
Men that combine
Such traits divine
Ever dare,
Never spare,
Never care.
Would you your liberty resign,
To gain a golden ring?
'Twere best in spinsterhood to shine,
Than do so rash a thing.

PHYL. There comes a time,
Oh, mistress mine,
Mistress fair,
Have a care,
Pray beware.
When maids unkind
Are left behind;
Nor are there
Men to spare
Everywhere.

(*They go up lecturing* PHYLLIS.)

2.

(*As they come down,* DOROTHY *crosses* C.)

DOR. (C.). All men deny,
All men defy,
Warily,
Airily,
Charily!
Resume the tie,
And single die.

(*Takes* LYDIA'S L. *hand and* PHYLLIS'S R. *and comes solemnly forward.*)

Let all three
Swear to be
Ever free.

(LYDIA *indicates belief in the sentiment,* PHYLLIS *withdraws her hand, going* L. *doubtingly.*)

Take good advice and pray behave
As prudent maidens ought;
Recall the plight you rashly gave—
No man is worth a thought!

ENSEMBLE. Oh, be wise, &c.
There comes a time, &c.

DOR. (C.). Well, there, Phyllis, you have my opinion, and if you don't follow it you will get no pity from me. (*Crosses* L.)

LYDIA (R.). Nor from me. Now, what do you think of our dresses?

PHYL. (C.). They are beautiful.

DOR. Do you think anyone will notice us?

PHYL. Oh dear no, Miss. Nobody would possibly guess that you were *ladies*.

DOR. & LYDIA (*disappointed*). Oh!

(PHYLLIS, *seeing her words misunderstood, goes* L., *afterward tends to bird in cage* L.)

DOR. (*crossing to* L. *of* LYDIA). But, Lydia, you don't want anyone to guess who you are.

LYDIA (R.). I am not so sure of that.

DOR. (R. C.). Did we not agree that we would throw off our hoops and furbelows for one day and join in the village feast, as if we had done nothing all our lives but milk cows and clean cottage floors.

LYDIA. But they will know us for all our disguise.

DOR. Without our powder? Don't flatter yourself, my dear. Who will ever guess that I, Dorothy Bantam, the Squire's daughter, and you, Lydia Hawthorne, (LYDIA *gives a rustic curtsy*) his niece, are masquerading amongst the yokels of the village? Come, Lydia, pocket your pride, put on your best smile, and I promise you——

LYDIA. Something good?

DOR. That before the day is an hour older, some rustic swain shall be at your feet.

LYDIA (*with gesture of contempt*). A ploughman, perhaps.

DOR. What of that? A ploughman is better than no man.

PHYL. (L., *coming* L. C. *To* DOROTHY). Oh! and what am I to say, Miss, if any questions are asked?

DOR. Say what you please. (LYDIA *protests they must arrange something.*) Stay! We must agree in our story. Say that we are your sisters.

PHYL. (*laughingly*). But what will father say to that?

DOR. Let him be in the secret. He will find some tale to justify the sudden increase to his family.

PHYL. I will make him understand.

[*Exit* D. *in cottage, talking till off.*

DOR. (*goes down to table* L.). Poor girl! She will know more about it some day.

LYDIA. When it is too late. I pity her.

DOR. (*thoughtfully*). This is the *fifth* marriage that has taken place during the month.

LYDIA. Yes; and if we don't take care, we shall be the only spinsters left in the neighbourhood.

DOR. (*heroically*). But we shall never swerve from our determination to remain single.

LYDIA (*same tone*). Never!

DOR. Let us once more swear to——

LYDIA. Yes, let us swear. (*Both with hands raised solemnly.*)

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *without* R., *shouting*, "*Hulloa, there! House! Landlord!*")

(DOROTHY *and* LYDIA, *hearing voices, run up* C.)

DOR. (*gets on foot of bridge*). Why, who are these?

LYDIA (*by door* L.). Men, my dear! human creatures. They are coming this way.

DOR. Gentlemen! and good-looking, too. (*Runs down* C.)

LYDIA (*goes towards bridge*). They will take us for serving-maids. (*Runs down and across to* R.) We had best be going.

DOR. What! would you fly at the first sign of the enemy? (*Looks up* C.) Oh, lud! here they come. (*Goes over to* R.)

Enter WILDER R. *and over bridge.*

WILD. (*calling*). House! Landlord! Some of you! (*Goes to door and knocks.*)

(SHERWOOD *now follows on, also calling.*)

(WILDER, *finding no one answers, looks round, and seeing* DOROTHY *and* LYDIA, *goes down to them.*)

WILD. (C. R.). Pretty maidens, stay one moment! Turn and give your assistance to two honest fellows in distress. Our horses are lame; we have lost our way.

SHER. (L. C., *crosses* R. C.). And we would know——(*aside*) What a sweet girl!

WILD. (*again crossing to* L. *of Girls*). Where we can stay to-night. (*Aside to* SHERWOOD.) She is surprisingly handsome!

DOR. (*is now pushed by* LYDIA *to* C. *between gentlemen*). Really, gentlemen, if you would enquire in the house, they will help you. (*Turns to go towards* LYDIA R., *and finds herself stopped by* WILDER.)

WILD. (*detaining them*). Nay! why such haste?

(DOROTHY *turns to go* L., *and is stopped by* SHERWOOD, L.C.)

SHER. What! do you run away from your customers?

(**DOROTHY** *breaks away, runs down* C. *and* R., *dodging* WILDER, *gets to* L. *of* LYDIA. WILDER *gets* L.C.)

DOR. (*aside to* LYDIA). We must act up to our parts, cousin. Put your manners in your pocket.

(SHERWOOD *now crosses behind to* L. *of* LYDIA, *as* DOROTHY *crossing again to* C., *is stopped by* WILDER.)

No. 3.—QUARTET.

DOROTHY, LYDIA, WILDER, *and* SHERWOOD.

WILD. (L.). We're sorry to delay you. (*Spoken as* DOROTHY *tries to get to* L.) Don't go.

SHER. (R. C.). So pardon us, we pray you. (*Spoken as* LYDIA *tries to join* DOROTHY.) Ah, stay!

(LYDIA *tries to run to* DOROTHY. SHERWOOD *stops her. She runs through gate down* R. *into hop field.* SHERWOOD *stops her by standing at top gate, then on "Give us drink," she runs down out lower gate and over to* DOROTHY *up* C.)

WILD. Aching limbs and weary feet,
Palates parched with dust and heat;
With fatigue we're fit to sink,
Fetch us anything to drink.
Give us drink!

(LYDIA *runs across and up to* DOROTHY.)

Have you beer, or ale, or porter?
To make our anguish shorter.
Such a thirst
At the worst
We could almost quench with water!

(DOROTHY *comes down* L. C., *stands behind stove* R. *of table* L., LYDIA *ditto behind stool* L. *of table* L. WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *talk together. On "Be seated, sirs,"* WILDER *goes to* R. *of table,* SHERWOOD *crosses to* L. *of table.*)

DOR. (*to* WILDER). Be seated, sirs, we pray you. (*spoken*) Sit down!

(WILDER *sits* R. *of table.*)

LYDIA (*to* SHERWOOD). We will not long delay you.

(SHERWOOD *bows politely, does not sit for a moment; she takes him by the shoulders and pulls him on to the stool suddenly*)—Oh, sit down!

DOR. (*pouring out water from jug*).

We have drink and food for all,
Here you have the house of call
Where the food is of the best,
And the drink can stand the test.

LYDIA. We have but the best.

DOR. & LYDIA. Here is drink!

We have beer and ale and porter
To make your anguish shorter:
Such a thirst
At the worst
We can cure without cold water.

(*On repeat* ***Ensemble***, DOROTHY *goes to* R., *followed by* WILDER. SHERWOOD *rises, at end* DOROTHY *about to cross* L.)

WILD. Don't go yet. (*Arm round* DOROTHY.)

SHER. (*as* LYDIA, L., *about to go towards door, gets behind table and stops her*). You must not stir. (*Arm round her.*)

DOR. (R.). But if you do not let us go, how shall you quench your thirst?

WILD. (R. C.). I had forgotten that I had a thirst.

SHER. And I that I had anything but a heart.

WILD. (*aside to* SHERWOOD, *still holding* DOROTHY). They have the perfect mien of fine ladies at St. James's.

SHER. (*holding* LYDIA'S *hand*). I am surprised—such dialect too! Don't let her go, Geoffrey.

(LYDIA *breaks away, he stops her.*)

WILD. Not I.

DOR. (*trying to get away*). Pray, sir, as you are a gentleman—

WILD. You would not leave me all alone in a strange place?

DOR. Give me my hand, and let me go.

WILD. Not till you have told me who and what you are.

(DOROTHY *runs into hop-garden, he goes up outside hedge, following her.*)

LYDIA (*down* L. *followed by* SHERWOOD). Nay, sir! I beg of you!

SHER. (R. *of her*). It is impossible to see you and not to talk in raptures.

LYDIA. And yet you have only just set eyes on me.

SHER. A good reason for never having loved you before, and a better one for loving you now.

LYDIA. Your speech is involved, sir.

SHER. Shall I make my meaning plainer to your lips? (*About to kiss her.*)

LYDIA (*slaps his face* L., *escapes him and runs to* DOROTHY, *who meets her* C.). Oh, Dorothy, what shall I do?

DOR. (R. C.). What is the matter, cousin?

LYDIA (L. C.). He offered to kiss me.

DOR. Did he? How nice of him.

(LYDIA, *scandalized, turns from her.*)

WILD. (R.). Answer our question, and you shall be free to go where you will, provided you promise to return immediately.

DOR. (R. C.). You will forget all about us, even if I tell you who we are.

WILD. Never!

SHER. (L., *holding his cheek*). Forget you? Never!

DOR. Well, then, I am Dorcas, and this is my cousin Abigail.

LYDIA (L. C.). And we are both daughters of Farmer Tuppitt, who lives in yonder house. (*Confusedly turning to point to house.*)

(DOROTHY *pushes her into* L. *corner, as* SHERWOOD, *not understanding, crosses to* WILDER, *speaking to him.*)

DOR. (*aside, to* LYDIA). What are you saying, child?

LYDIA (*sees her mistake, then crosses to* L. C., *and turning to point to* DOROTHY, *bumps against* SHERWOOD. *Confused*). I mean that this is Dorcas, and I am my cousin Abigail.

WILD. (*laughing*). Now we know.

DOR. (*aside to* LYDIA, *who is* R. *of her, takes her by the arm to* L.). Come along, or you will mix up the relationship so that there will be no disentangling of the confusion. (*Cross* C. L.) And now, gentlemen, having satisfied your curiosity, we will bring you that which shall appease your thirst. Come, cousin.

{*Exit* DOROTHY, *door in cottage.* LYDIA *runs up following.*

WILD. (*crossing towards door*). Stay!

SHER. (R. C.). What is it?

WILD. (L. C.). The relationship in this fair hamlet seems somewhat mixed.

SHER. Simple enough, it seems to me.

WILD. What, when your charmer declared herself to be her own cousin?

SHER. (*crossing* L. *pettishly*). Do you doubt her word, sir?

WILD. (*getting* C. R. *behind, seeing* SHERWOOD *is disturbed*). Nay, Heaven forbid!

SHER. (L. *by door, turning to* WILDER). I would have you to understand, sir, that if she chooses she can be her own cousin—or anyone else's cousin.

WILD. I meant no offence!

SHER. And that any gentleman doubting her right, will have to deal with me.

(*Gives his hat a tap and Exit house* L.)

WILD. Hang your St. James's manners and brocades, say I. Give me dimity and sweet simplicity!

No. 4.—BALLAD.—WILDER.

1.

With such a dainty dame none can compare,
Ten thousand thousand Cupids play in her hair;
A million little loves within her eyes
Lie wanton waiting for some sweet surprise.
Her smile can bid me feel as light as air,
Her frown can throw me into deep despair!
Her varied charms to me such joy impart,
That I have given her my heart.

2.

But if my heart has now ceased to be mine,
However much I may thereto incline,
I could not, if I would, give what I lack,
Nor would I, if I could, receive it back.
Alas! I know not how, or when, or where,
But love, who never yet was known to spare,
Has fled victorious from his battlefield,
And left me with no heart to yield.

(SHERWOOD *re-enters from house* L.)

SHER. (L. C., *gazing rapturously off* L.). I never beheld any thing so charming.

WILD. (R. C.). What a shape!

SHER. What a neck!

WILD. What an instep!

SHER. What a foot!

WILD. (*turning on* SHERWOOD). You don't mean my girl, I hope, sir?

SHER. (*same bus.*). Nor you mine, I trust, sir?

WILD. Mine is the most beautiful flesh and blood.

SHER. Mine the sweetest, most angelic little rogue.

WILD. Then, sir, you accept my toast?

SHER. With all my heart—for my girl.

WILD. Of course.

SHER. And to think that we should have been wasting our time among the rouged and painted syrens of the ring, while such a pair of beauties were waiting for us.

WILD. Harry, I renounce the town and all its ways, from henceforth behold me the slave of my country goddess.

SHER. Until your rural peace be disturbed by our friend Lurcher.

WILD. Our worthy friend, the sheriff's officer; I had forgotten all about him.

SHER. He will not have forgotten all about you after the fall you gave him as we came out of the wells.

WILD. Ha, ha! and we took the last of the nags, and left him to pursue us on foot. (*Crosses* L.)

SHER. (*gets* R.). He is sure to track you here.

WILD. And if he does, I shall throw myself on my uncle's mercy, cry "peccavi," promise to be a good boy, and try my best to swallow my cousin Dorothy, though the pill will be a bitter one. (*Crosses* R.)

SHER. (L.). I wish you well out of your scrape with all my heart; what is the amount of the debt?

WILD. Nay, Harry, why worry our heads about the figures on a writ, when we have other figures to think of—and such figures.

SHER. There is a touch of gentility beneath those rustic ways.

WILD. (*crosses* L. *deep in thought*). There is some mystery about them.

SHER. We shall soon know, for here comes the father.

Enter TUPPITT, *door of house*.

TUP. (*down* C.). Gentlemen, your humble servant!

WILD. (L.). The landlord!

TUP. At your service, sir. Your horses have been attended to. Have you far to ride?

WILD. As far as Squire Bantam's.

TUP. Then you are close to the end of your journey, for he lives but two miles from here. (*Takes* WILDER *up* C., *pointing out Hall in distance.*)

SHER. (R., *aside*). I would it had been further by some miles.

TUP. (*comes down to* SHERWOOD). I will see that your nags are fed, and ready for you to proceed at once. (*Turns to go* L., SHERWOOD *pulls him back by hook of whip.*)

WILD. Nay, there is no great hurry, so that we find shelter at the Squire's to-night.

TUP. You will find a goodly company there, and a hospitable welcome. Do you know his Worship?

WILD. I should know him, but it is some years since we met. I am his nephew.

TUP. I am pleased to see you, sir.

WILD. (*taking* L., *aside*). Egad! it is more than my uncle will be.

TUP. (*to* SHERWOOD). Will you dine, sir? We have a beanfeast preparing.

SHER. The beanfeast by all means! What say you, Wilder?

WILD. It depends on the company who are bidden.

TUP. All the village.

WILD. Men?

TUP. And women.

WILD. Then the beanfeast by all means.

SHER. And in the meantime we would ask for a taste of your ale.

TUP. You shall have it, sir. My daughters have just gone to draw it.

WILD. Your daughters?

TUP. Yes, sir. (*Goes up* C.)

No. 5.—QUINTET.

DOROTHY, LYDIA, WILDER, SHERWOOD, *and* TUPPITT.

TUP. (*with a proud strut down stage*).

A father's joy and pride they are,
Renowned for beauty near and far;
They say they much resemble me,
The likeness you of course can see.

WILD & SHER. Of course the likeness we can see.

TUP. Their hair exactly mine, you know.

(*Turns up stage, his head is seen to be bald.*)

WILD. (*aside*). It might have been some time ago.

SHER. It is a most outrageous whim
To think that they resemble him.

TUP. I think I've got my story pat—
I wonder what they're laughing at?

WILD. & SHER. (*aside*).

Upon my word, it's hardly fair
The Beast with Beauty to compare.

(*They push him up stage implying that he is chaffing them.*)

Enter DOROTHY *and* LYDIA, D. *in cottage.* LYDIA *carrying jug of ale and two cups, during* DOROTHY'S *solo. She puts tray on table* L., *clears water jug and cups on to window ledge, then puts things from tray on table.*

TUP. Ah! here the liquor comes at last!
Fill up the foaming glass. (*Sits* R. *on chair under hedge.*)

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *cross* L. *and sit as before.*)

DOR. (*aside*, C.).

What sense is o'er my spirit stealing,
Half joy half pain to me revealing?
Why was I scorning
Only this morning
Maidens who suffered from any such feeling?
Nay, let me rather steel my heart
'Gainst the point of Cupid's dart;
Pride shall assist me,
None shall resist me,
I'll arm myself in every part. (*Goes up.*)

(TUPPITT *goes across back and exit door* L.)

(WILDER *rises at table, cup in hand.*)

WILD. Then fill up your glass to the brim
With a bumper of foaming October;
And drain the dregs in honour of him
Who never was sulky or sober.

SHER. Bravo! (TUPPITT *appears at door jug in hand, and long pipe in mouth.*)

TUP. Bravo!

DOR. Bravo!

LYDIA. Bravo!

ALL. Then fill up your glass, &c. (*Repeat.*)

(DOROTHY *crosses* R., WILDER *follows*, LYDIA *drops* L. C., SHERWOOD L., TUPPITT *comes down* C.)

(TUPPITT *turns* L. *as if to speak to* SHERWOOD, *but finding them spooning, turns to* WILDER *with same effect, then turns up laughing.*)

SHER. Here's a glass to the lady who loves me.
And one to the girl whom I love.

WILD. A bumper to her who adores me,
And another to her I adore.

ALL. Then fill up, &c.

(*At end of Symphony* LYDIA *takes* SHERWOOD'S *cup, steps across to* WILDER, *takes his cup and goes round* R. *up to* TUPPITT, *who is* C., *and puts cups in his jug.*)

TUP. Come, lasses, bustle about! The tables have to be laid.

[*Exit into house followed by* LYDIA *and* SHERWOOD. DOROTHY *crossing* C. *to* L. *and up.*

WILD. One word! (*Stops* DOROTHY *by taking her* R. *hand.*)

DOR. I must not listen to you.

WILD. (L.C., *putting an arm round her and bringing her down* C.). But you will, I can read it in your face.

DOR. And who are you, sir, that read so readily in the pages which you first studied half an hour ago?

WILD. (*releasing her*). I should have presented myself before. am Geoffrey Wilder.

DOR. Geoffrey Wilder!

WILD. (*kneels*). Your most obedient servant and slave, nephew to Squire Bantam of Chanticleer Hall, in this very neighbourhood, who lays himself, which is all he has, at your feet and implores——

DOR. (*interrupting*). Stay, sir! Has not the Squire a daughter called Dorothy?

WILD. (*taken aback and rising*). I understand that there is something of that kind about his premises. (*Goes* R.)

DOR. And you are the Mr. Wilder who is destined for the Squire's daughter. At least, so my father tells me.

WILD. (*brazening it out*). What! I marry Dorothy Bantam! A stuck-up, pert, conceited little minx.

DOR. (*aside*). Oh!

WILD. Who gives herself the airs of a beauty because, forsooth, she once managed to get up to town and squeeze herself into decent company. (*Turns* R.)

DOR. (*aside*). He shall suffer for this. (*aloud*) But you have never seen the lady, sir—(WILDER *turns to her as if to say*, "*How do you know?*") at least, so my father says.

WILD. No, thank Heaven! I was absent from town when she arrived. But I have heard of her.

DOR. Heard what of her?

WILD. Nay, child; do not let us discuss her further. It is you, and you alone I love. (*Kisses her hand. Takes* R. *hand in his right, puts his left round her waist. As she speaks, she tries to put his left hand away with her left, and facing audience passes him to* R. *He takes her left hand so that when she has got* R. *his right arm is now round her waist. During her speech he is kissing her left hand rapturously.*)

DOR. (R. C.). But you are bound to the Squire's house, and to-night you will see your cousin Dorothy, and you will swear that you love her, and you will kiss her hand. (*Knocking his hand away from her.*) Don't do that!

WILD. (R.). Never! I swear it. Not if she begs for it on her knees.

DOR. (*disdainfully going* L.). She is not likely to do that.

WILD. (*turning from her to* R.). One never knows what these little country girls are likely to do.

DOR. (*aside*). Oh, wait till we meet this evening!

(*Exit rapidly*, L. 1 E.

WILD. (*turning back as if expecting to find her still there*). And so, my darling—you—(*Misses her and runs* L. *in direction she has taken.*)

(*A sound of a slap is heard off* L. *cottage, and* SHERWOOD *is seen to run on from door to* C. WILDER, *hearing noise, turns and sees him.*)

WILD. Hulloa! How did you get there?

SHER. (C.). Tell me, is there a very red mark on my cheek?

WILD Yes, rather! Where did you get it?

SHER. (*looking off*). She is as powerful as she is beautiful.

WILD. Oh fie! (*Crossing* R.) Well, Harry, I have made up my mind to marry Dorcas.

SHER. (L.). To marry her? But how about your cousin Dorothy, and your plan to propitiate your uncle by accepting her hand, and having your debts paid?

WILD. (*turns to him*). I will have none of my cousin Dorothy and her fine airs. Give me divinity and sweet simplicity.

SHER. And the money?

WILD. Money! (*Comes up to* SHERWOOD *and sentimentally places hand on his shoulder.*) What is money compared to true love?

SHER. (*tapping him playfully on chest with his whip*). Have you ever tried that sentiment on your creditors? (*Turns up* L. C.)

WILD. Not yet. (*Goes* R. *laughing.*)

SHER. (*up* L., *by bridge*). Then now's your chance, for if I mistake not, (*pointing off* R. U. E.) here is our friend Lurcher close on your heels.

WILD. (*anxiously goes up* R. *of* SHERWOOD). What, the bailiff? I thought we had given him the slip.

SHER. He must have followed us.

WILD. What is to be done? (*They stand hesitating and talking.*)

(LURCHER *runs on* R. U. E. *over bridge, places a hand on each of their shoulders, and they come down together in step to music.*)

No. 6.—SONG AND TRIO—LURCHER, WILDER, *and* SHERWOOD

1.

LURCHER. I am the Sheriff's faithful man,
The King's own writ I hold, sir;
I'd say, why pay it if you can,
If I might be so bold, sir.
The debt amounts to twenty pound,
The costs to fifty more, sir;
The sum now owing will be found
To come to eighty-four, sir.
The bill of costs, be pleased to scan,
It surely is not much,
To levy from a gentleman,
For treating him as such,
So will you pay the debt you owe,
Or else, I am afraid, sir——

WILD. (*spoken*). Well?

LURCHER. That into prison you must go,
And stop until it's paid, sir.

TOGETHER. That into prison you must go, &c.

(*On Symphony* LURCHER *takes three steps towards* WILDER *showing Writ, then one towards* SHERWOOD, *to music.*)

2.

LURCHER. Attorney's bills do not decrease
In size by contemplation;
And arguing does not release
A debtor's obligation.
You surely would not let me see
A man in your position
Object to pay a little fee,
Or cavil at addition.
A six and eightpence less or more,
You really must not grudge, sir;
And two and two make more than four
When ordered by a Judge, sir.
So will you pay, &c.

(*At end* WILDER *passes* LURCHER *to* L., *and is about to go up.* LURCHER *pulls him back to* R.)

LUR. And since the costs in the writ have been incurred, there is a matter of personal damage to settle.

WILD. (*pointing to his coat*). Do you call these personal damages?

LUR. What do you call them?

WILD. I should say a sign for a rag shop

LUR. You object to the open work pattern? (*Showing holes and rents in coat.*) Look at my hat, gentlemen! Then there is a charge for delay, discomfiture, loss of temper, loss of time.

SHER. Well, you will be paid in time.

LUR. Paid in time! I'd rather be paid in money. Not a nag to be had at the last stage, my own worn down to knacker's meat. I have had to tramp through the mire six weary miles in discharge of my duty to the Court.

WILD. I have no doubt the Court will requite thee.

LUR. Will the Court give me a new hat?

WILD. Let me but give thee the slip once more (*crosses* C. *and up*), and my eternal gratitude.

LUR. Will eternal gratitude mend my breeches? And now, sir, are you going to pay? (*Goes* R. *and sits, looks at rents in his coat.*)

WILD. (*up* C. *turns to* LURCHER). It is a most preposterous thing to ask a man to pay when he has not got the money.

SHER. You will have to give in to your Uncle's wishes, and marry your cousin after all.

WILD What! give up Dorcas and divinity? never! Stay, I have an idea.

LUR. (*in difficulty with a tear in his coat*). Have you got a pin?

WILD. What if I can get the money?

LUR. How?

WILD. From my uncle.

LUR. Your uncle? There isn't one in the neighbourhood.

(LURCHER *rises—comes* R. C.)

WILD. I mean Squire Bantam. He shall lend me the money, and not know that he lends it to me. I'll extort it from him by stratagem.

LUR. But how?

WILD. You know the Squire?

LUR. Yes; he gave me fourteen days once, and we've never been on speaking terms since.

WILD. He is very fond of quality, and piques himself upon being the most hospitable man in the country.

LUR. What then, sir?

WILD. Why, then I will be a man of quality. I'll disguise myself as an elderly Duke. I'll clap a blue ribbon across my shoulder, and a patch up on my face.

LUR. Will you put a patch on my breeches?

WILD. And if you will both assist me, we will wait upon the Squire to-night, and be received with as much joy and ceremony as if we were really what we appeared.

SHER. And his Grace will play the Squire at picquet after supper, and bite him.

WILD. No, no, the Squire never plays. I have a more honourable design than that, I assure you.

SHER. What is it? Out with it, Geoffrey.

LUR. I prefer the honourable design, cards are vulgar. Let me play him at skittles, I'll do him in twice. (SHERWOOD *striking across* WILDER, *hits him on chest with whip.*) Do you take me for the front pin?

WILD. Why, when the family are fast asleep we will clap on our masks.

SHER. (*angrily*). And rob the house?

LUR. Rob the house! Oh, think of my feelings, gentlemen. (*humbly.*) I love you both very much, gentlemen, but I will not be hanged for your projects.

WILD. There shall be no robbery.

LUR. Nay, sir, I will not be fooled like this. I have a writ to serve on an old woman in the neighbourhood, and a distraint on her husband's false teeth. And I have to serve a writ on a cow.

SHER. A cow?

LUR. (*witheringly*). Yes, a female bull, and if the cow sees me before I seize her, I fear it will be a toss up between us. This will take me some five minutes, (*crosses* C.) and when I return to town, it must be either with you or your money. (*Goes up to Bridge.*)

WILD. But my good friend—
SHER. My worthy Lurcher— } (*Following up*).

LUR. It is impossible, gentlemen, I require no further equivoke.

WILD. But can't we make some arrangement? (*Leans hand on* LURCHER'S *shoulder*).

LUR. None of your familiarity.

SHER. Can't we put it off a little while?

LUR. Procrastination gathers no moss.

SHER. What do you say to weekly payments?

LUR. Weekly payments. (*disgusted*) Bah! What do you take me for? A sewing machine? Now a thousand words won't mend the matter. My mind's made up, and when I make up my mind to do a thing, *I never do it!*

[*Exit over bridge and* R. U. E.

WILD. (C.). What is to be done now?

SHER. (L. C.). You must carry out your design without him! Ah! here come our charmers once more.

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *go into hop field.*)

(*Enter* DOROTHY *and* LYDIA *door in stage.* DOROTHY *with table-cloth,* LYDIA *with tray, plates, knives and forks; she puts tray on table*).

DOR. (*door* R. *of table* L., *to* LYDIA). Now, cousin, if you will follow my lead, I will show you what a base and faithless thing is man.

LYDIA (L. *of table* L.). But how?

DOR. Have you the ring I gave you?

LYDIA. That with the green stone? I never part with it. (*Showing it.*)

DOR. Nor I with that you gave me with the red stone; but we shall have to part with them to-day.

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *coming out from* R. *get towards* L. *at back.*)

LYDIA. What! give them away!

DOR. Nay! Only loan them for a time. We shall recover them to-night.

LYDIA. What do you mean? (*Taking up tray.*)

DOR. Follow my lead, I say. Do as I do, and you shall see.

(DOROTHY, *about to lay cloth, throws it out loosely down stage, so as to make it spread across table.* WILDER, *who has dropped down* R. *of her, seizes table-cloth as it is thrown down towards him, by it pulls* DOROTHY *over to* R. C. *as he speaks.*)

WILD. (*to* DOROTHY.) Will you not let me help you? (*Bus. with table-cloth.*)

SHER. (*back of table, to* LYDIA). Let me show you the way.

(LYDIA *puts tray down again.*)

DOR. (*to* WILDER). Nay, no more love, I entreat you.

LYDIA (*to* SHERWOOD). I know by your looks what you mean.

SHER. Have you no pity?

(LYDIA *makes a movement as if about to slap his face again; he retreats alarmed up a little. She proceeds to lay table.* SHERWOOD *returns and tries to assist her. She resents his interference, replacing knives and forks which he has moved, as she had before placed them.*)

WILD. Nay, child; it is you and you alone that I love.

DOR. But can you love me for your life? A poor country girl without a position?

WILD. I would marry thee though I worked with my own hands. (*They go up* R. *talking.*)

(SHERWOOD *has a knife in one hand and a fork in the other, and clashes them together as in act of sharpening them as he finishes speaking.*)

SHER. I will not, cannot, live without you! (*Clashes knives and forks.*)

LYDIA (*aside*). Oh man! for flattery and deceit renowned——

WILD. (*to* DOROTHY). We must meet again.

DOR. Not to-day. But meet me here to-morrow at the same hour. (LYDIA *listens and overhears this.*) Take this ring—(*gives ring*) and show it to me to-morrow as a token of your promise. (*Goes across* C. *and up.*)

LYDIA (*to* SHERWOOD). Meet me here to-morrow at the same hour, and when you show me this ring you shall have my answer. (*Crosses* C. L. *and up.*)

WILD. I swear that it shall never leave my finger. (*Puts on ring.*)

SHEK I will never part with it. (*Putting on ring, goes down* L.)

No. 7.—QUARTET.

DOROTHY, LYDIA, WILDER, *and* SHERWOOD.

DOR. You swear to be good and true
To the maid whom you say you adore,
And tell her you love her as few
Have ever lov'd woman before.

DOR. } Then swear to be, &c.
LYDIA. }

WILD. I swear to be good and true
To the maid whom I fondly adore;
I never was in love before,

WILD. } 'Tis only you that I adore;
SHER. } We will devote our lives to you
And swear to be for ever true.

TOGETHER. Then swear to be, &c.

DOR. } Oh, never—never—never!
LYDIA. } Were such gay deceivers!
We will defy
The men who try
To make us weak believers.
And yet 'tis sweet
When, at your feet,
A lover kneels a-sighing,
And says it's true
He loves but you,
Or swears that he is dying.

(*Bus. They kiss the two girls, who run off into house.* WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *about to follow when they hear noise off* R. U. E., *point off and retire* R. U. E. *watching.*)

(*Enter* LURCHER, R. U. E. *without hat. His clothes torn. He runs wildly across to cottage, and as he reaches door, a blacksmith apparently coming out to find cause of the noise, appears at door simultaneously. The crowd (Tenors) rush on bridge from* R. *and point out to smith to stop* LURCHER, *who has by this time run down* C. *and over to* R., *only to be stopped by two men who appear* R. 1 E. LURCHER *turns back to* L. *and is seized by blacksmith who has followed him. Rest of* PEASANTS, *&c., enter different entrances.*)

No. 8.—CHORUS, WITH SOLO—LURCHER.

"Under the Pump."

Under the pump! Under the pump!
Over the brook with a kick and a jump.

(LURCHER *turns to* R. *and is met by a girl, who seizes his writs and tears them up, throwing them in his face. He goes* L. *and is threatened by others.*)

LUR. They've battered my hat, and they've ruined my clothes,
They've pulled out my hair, and they have assaulted my nose;
Each bone in my body has suffered a wrench,
And look at the writ of the Court of King's Bench.
Look at the writs!
Torn into bits!

CHO. Under the pump! &c.

We'll teach him his betters to grind and oppress,
By serving upon them a writ of distress;
He's frightened and bullied a helpless old wench,
And we don't care a rap for the Court of King's Bench!

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *have re-entered and watch bus. They now come forward,* LURCHER *sees them and clings to* WILDER; *gets behind him.*)

(*Melos continue all through following dialogue.*)

LUR. (*to* WILDER). Save me, sir, for mercy's sake!

WILD. (*aside to him*). One good turn deserves another; if I do, will you follow me to-night?

LUR. Indeed, I will, sir, anything you please.

WILD. (*to crowd*). My lads, this gentleman is a particular friend of mine. (*Crowd jeer unbelievingly.*) And anyone who touches him will have to deal with me. (*Crowd murmurs.*) Nay, this is no time for quarrelling, here comes the dinner.

[WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *escort* LURCHER *off* R. 1 E.

(*Crowd disperse and re-enter with tables and food.*)

(*Enter* DOROTHY *and* LYDIA *door of cottage with table cloths, they come down* C.; TOM *and* PHYLLIS *follow, he with a pie, which burns his fingers, she with tray cloth, three plates, knives, and forks. They cross to small table placed by peasant* R. C. TUPPITT *follows them.*)

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *re-enter* R. 1 E., *get* R. C)

(DOROTHY L. C., LYDIA R. C.)

DOR. (L. C.). Now take your seats at tables spread
With best of British beef and bread;
Potatoes, cabbages, all hot,
And bacon steaming from the pot.

SHER. (R. C.). Who can refuse?

WILD. (R.). Not I for one,
The rest already have begun.

(SHERWOOD *goes up and behind to* L. C., LYDIA *gets* L.)

DOR. (*crossing* L. *of* WILDER, R. *with curtsy*).
Be pleased, kind sir, to take a seat,

LYDIA (L.). And tell us what you wish to eat. (*Curtsy.*)

SHER. (R. *of* LYDIA).
The sight of you is more than quite
Enough to stay my appetite.

WILD. (R. *of* DOROTHY, *seizing her hand*).
There is no lady in the land
With such a dainty little hand.

DOR. Release my hand, for that at least
Is not included in the feast.

(*He tries to kiss her hand, she slaps his face and goes up,* LYDIA *follows.*)

CHO. Ha, ha, ha! that's right, my lass;
And now, my lads, another glass.

No. 9.—FINALE.

WILD. (*at* L. C., *gazing at* DOROTHY).
How perfect every feature!

SHER. (L., *gazing at* LYDIA).
A most delicious creature

WILD. My heart I must resign
To such a queen divine. (*Both go up.*)

TUP. (*back of small table* R.).
To-morrow let it be!

TOM (*stands on chair* L. *of table*).
And all we hope to see

(TOM *nearly falls in his excitement*, PHYLLIS *helps him down.*)

CHO. That's right, that's right!
And we will dance all night!

(DOROTHY *comes down* R. C., *takes* PHYLLIS *by hand to down* C.
TOM *busy with the dinner.*)

HOP-PICKERS (*Ballet*) *enter from* R. U. E. *over bridge and down* C. *behind characters, and as* CHORUS *sing, go through their dance in* C.

DOR. And are you not afraid,
You most imprudent maid,
To trust a lifelong's span
To any living man?
You'll find when it's too late,
You've brought about a fate
That you did not anticipate;
Believe me if you can!

(WILDER *comes down* R. *of* PHYLLIS. SHERWOOD *to* L. *of* DOROTHY. LYDIA *drops* L. *of* SHERWOOD. TOM *comes down* R. *of* WILDER.)

With indignation great
We must repudiate
The notion that such a doubtful fate
Awaits her with a man.

(DOROTHY *now turns* PHYLLIS *to* C., LYDIA *pulls* SHERWOOD *to* L., *so that* PHYLLIS *is between the Two Girls.* TOM *on seeing this, crosses* WILDER *to* R. *of* DOROTHY, *and endeavours to reach* PHYLLIS, *but is kept away by* DOROTHY. *At "He is a happy man,"* TOM *breaks past* DOROTHY, *crosses to and takes* PHYLLIS'S *hand, leading her* L., *he bowing, and she curtsying to* GUESTS *as they rise. They pass up* L. *across* C., *at back down* R. *On the last "Happy man,"* (*Chorus*) *Ballet file up stage and get on bridge* R. C.)

CHO. And why should any maid
Of wedlock be afraid?
As it a life's long span
Can't end as it began;
With such a pretty mate
We all congratulate
The bridegroom on his fate,
He is a happy man.

TOM. My love for her is great,
And she at any rate
Shall guide my future state,
I am a happy man.

PHYL. And why should any maid
Of wedlock be afraid
As it a life's long span
Can't end as it began;
My love for him is great,
And he at any rate
Shall guide my future fate,
Not any other man!

(WILDER *with* DOROTHY *going a little up* C. *as* SHERWOOD *and* LYDIA *go up*, SHERWOOD *gets on bridge*.)

WILD. } To-morrow, then, we meet.
SHER. }

DOR. & LYDIA To-morrow, then, we meet.

ALL (*rising and waving adieu*).
Farewell!

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE—*Chanticleer Hall. Scene represents the interior of* SQUIRE BANTAM'S *house, the hall with staircase leading* R. *and* L. *to a gallery on which the bedrooms are supposed to be situated. In the centre at back is a large door leading into the outer hall. Large old-fashioned mullioned windows. Fireplace* L. *Tables in corners of hall.*

(*The Guests are discovered in movement, promenading, meeting, bowing and curtsying.* MRS. PRIVETT *enters* R. 1 E., *and after meeting several couples gets* C. *and is met by* SQUIRE BANTAM *who enters* C. L. *above, and comes down stairs* L. *greeting each as he passes. All this during Symphony preceding Dance in which all those on stage level join with* SQUIRE *and* MRS. PRIVETT *down stage in* C. *The Parson is discovered* R. *of table* R. *mixing the "Parson's Brew." A Footman with a large salver standing on his* L. *above him. He receives two glasses of the brew and towards end of Dance goes up stage, looks off* R. *at back, and then comes down.*)

(*At end of Dance,* BANTAM *and* MRS. PRIVETT *down* C. *Servant with tray of glasses comes down to them.*)

No. 10.—INTRODUCTION AND COUNTRY DANCE.

BANTAM. (R. C. *to* MRS. PRIVETT). **Madam, I am your most obedient. Will you take any refreshment after your exertions?**

MRS. PRIVETT (L. C. *after declining, then accepting*). **Well, the tiniest drop—for I am afraid it will get into my head.**

BAN. You will not perhaps object to my putting my lips to the Parson's Brew, merely to test it. (*Drinks.*)

FOOTMAN (*behind them*). **A gentleman to speak to you.**

BAN. (*placing glasses on tray*). **A gentleman to speak with me? Bid him join us.** (*Leads* MRS. PRIVETT *to chair* L. *of table* R.)

FOOT. (*goes up* C. *and speaks off* R.). **Sir John is this way, sir.**

(*Enter* LURCHER, *who is dressed in the fashion* C. *from* R. FOOTMAN *bows him on, then takes tray off* R. U. E.)

LUR. **The old gentleman in brown?** (*Comes down* C.)

BAN. (R. C.). Sir, I am proud to know you——

LUR. My name, sir, is Blazes, Secretary to his Grace the Duke of Berkshire.

BAN. Sir, I am prouder to know you.

LUR. His Grace is on his way to the South Coast for the benefit of his health, but on his road his carriage has broken down.

(FOOTMAN *re-enters* R. 1 E.—PARSON *has now joined Guests up* C. R.)

BAN. In this neighbourhood?

LUR. At your very door.

BAN. (*crossing* L.). Lord! Lord! That any ruts of mine should so behave to his Grace!

LUR. (R.). And now he craves for us your hospitality for a night, until his carriage be repaired.

BAN. Craves it! Why, he should command it! And is his Grace's carriage without?

LUR. No, his Grace is without his carriage.

BAN. And where is he?

LUR. He is on the mat! (*Walks up* C. L. *slipping on polished floor, and bows off* R.)

BAN. (L.). Without! And here I am standing in my own hall with a duke knocking at my front door. (*Crossing* R.) Nobody of any degree or quality passes by my house. But I forgot myself, and must hasten to greet my noble guest.

LUR. (*calling off* R.). Noble guest! off the mat on to the kamptulicon.

(*Enter* WILDER C. *from* R. *down* L. C., *followed by* SHERWOOD, *both disguised.* LURCHER *drops down* L.)

BAN. (R.). Sir, I am your Grace's most obedient humble servant.

WILD. (C.). Mr. Bantam. I am your most faithful and obedient servant. I am glad of the accident which makes me your guest. I could by no means have excused myself if I had passed by and not paid my respects. (*Presenting* SHERWOOD, *who is* L. C.) My personal friend.

LUR. (L., *imitating the introduction*). Personal friend! Old Bantam—old Bantam, personal friend!

WILD. (*presenting* LURCHER). My secretary—a faithful soul.

LUR. How are you, old cock? (*Bus.*)

(SHERWOOD *reproves him aside*—BANTAM *then makes a very elaborate bow, which* LURCHER *tries to imitate.* LURCHER *gets his legs entangled, nearly falling, is caught by* SHERWOOD. LURCHER *then goes up.*)

BAN. (*crossing* C. WILDER *to* R., *bowing*). Gentlemen! I am proud to welcome you to my house, though 'tis but a dog-hole, may it please your Grace, a mere dog-hole. I have a clean bed or so—a bottle or two of good wine—(*bowing*) but your Grace's goodness.

LUR. (*drops* L. *of* BANTAM *and* WILDER). Bantam's a funny old cock—hear what he says! His gracious goodness. Ha! ha! ha! (*Gives* BANTAM *a heavy slap on back.*)

BAN. What? (*Collapses, coughing.*)

SHER. (*gets behind to* L. *of* LURCHER, *and aside to him*). Silence, fool! (*Pushes him away up stage.*)

WILD. (L. *of* BANTAM, *explaining to him*). My secretary is of a somewhat hilarious turn of mind. (*Crosses* R.) I love to be surrounded by mirth—(*bows to* MRS. PRIVETT, *who is seated* L. C.) —and beauty. (*Goes up* C., *joins* SHERWOOD.)

LUR. (R. C., *speaks across to* BANTAM). Ha! ha! That made you cough, old man! (BANTAM *turns to Guests up* C., *and speaks to them.*) You should try some bronchial trocaderos. (*Backs up stage, laughing, and sits in* MRS. PRIVETT'S *lap—she screams—aside.*) What have I done? Sat on the cat? (*Looks round—sees her and gives a long whistle and slinks to* R.)

WILD. (*a little up* C., *looking round—aside to* SHERWOOD). Where can they be?

SHER. (L. *of* WILDER. *Aside to* WILDER). Do you spy your cousin, Geoffrey?

WILD. Not I! But patience, she will be here in good time. Remember, I am not to be plagued with her. She is yours. (*Crosses* L.)

SHER. I accept the gift!

(LURCHER *now* R. *of* R. *table, has taken decanter from spirit stand, and is about to drink from it—Footman watching him offers him a glass.*)

BAN. (R. C., *noticing him*). Sir, sir! That is the raw material.

(SHERWOOD, L. C., *signals* LURCHER *to desist, then gets up* C. R.)

LUR. I prefer the raw material. It is warming to the stummick!

MRS. P. (*screams and rises*). Oh! He said *stummick!*

(BANTAM *gets* R. C.—L. *of her.*)

LUR. (*comes to* L. *of table—apologetically*). I beg your pardon I should have said *hinnards!*

MRS. P. Oh, he said *hinnards!* Oh, take me away, Squire.

(BANTAM *leads her* R. *then joins* WILDER *who endeavours to explain.*)

LUR. (*following round to* R. C. *bottle in hand. To her*). What! going away? Won't you have a nip before you go?

MRS. P. No!

LUR. Oh, do! (*Coaxingly.*)

MRS. P. No, no! (*aside*) How very dreadful! (LURCHER *smirking at her;* MRS. PRIVETT *melting.*) And yet—he is very fascinating.

LUR. (*flicking at her with his handkerchief*). Go 'long, you saucy old crumpet! (MRS. PRIVETT *runs off* R. *He calls after her.*) Your health, mum. (*About to drink from bottle.*)

WILD. (L., *calls over to him*). No, Mr. Blazes.

LUR. Sir—I mean your Grace.

SHER. (*drops* L. *of* LURCHER). Yes, say "Your Grace."

LUR. Eh?

SHER. Say Grace.

(LURCHER *clasps hands round bottle and looks up in sanctified manner and mumbles as if saying Grace.*) Put it down!

LUR. That's just what I was about to do. (*About to drink.*)

SHER. At once!

LUR. I don't think I could do it in once. I might manage I in twice.

SHER. Put the bottle on the table.

(LURCHER *is putting it under the table.*)

SHER. (*repeats*). Put the bottle *on* the table.

LUR. Oh! H'on the table, not h'under the table. (*Puts bottle on edge of table* R.)

(SHERWOOD *turns to* BANTAM; LURCHER *throws his handkerchief over it, thus hiding it, and later at convenient moment when no one is looking, picks up handkerchief and bottle with it, pockets both, and goes off* R.)

(FOOTMAN R. *of table sees this and is scandalised.*)

SHER. (R. *to* BANTAM). A good soul, but rough in his ways.

BAN. (C.). But serves you well, I doubt not, your Grace.

WILD. (L.). Serves me excellently well (*aside*) with writs. (*aloud*) You have a charming house, Squire.

BAN. Your Grace is pleased to admire my humble abode.

SHER. (*looking round sees strong chest* R.). And a cosy little strong box for the guineas, eh, Squire?

BAN. A paltry few, but, such as they are, entirely at his Grace's commands.

(SHERWOOD *looks* R. *accidentally, and apparently seeing* LURCHER *hurries off* R. 1 E.)

WILD. (*aside*). Egad, my dear uncle, I have a good mind to take you at your word.

BAN. Your Grace's condescension in observing these trifles quite overwhelms me.

BAN. I humbly crave your Grace's pardon.

(WILDER *haughtily crosses* R. BANTAM *bowing up, gets* L.)

No. 11.—SONG.

WILDER (*in disguise*) *and* CHORUS.

1.

Though born a man of high degree,
And greatly your superior,
I trust I know that courtesy
Is due to an inferior.
So conscious that a ducal bow
Will liquidate the debt I owe,
I bend my back and bow my head,
And thus accept your board and bed.

(WILDER *crosses* L. BANTAM *to* R.)

CHORUS.

He bends his back and bows his head,
And thus accepts your board and bed.

2.

Exalted rank should condescend
On festival occasion,
And even dukes must learn to bend
Before a host's persuasion.
So, being graciously inclined
To take whatever I can find,
I bend my back and bow my head,
And thus accept your board and bed.

CHORUS.

He bends his back, &c.

(*At end of song, enter* LURCHER, R., *tipsy, with his hat on and smoking long clay pipe, followed by* SHERWOOD, *who is protesting with him—he takes off* LURCHER'S *hat*—FOOTMAN *takes it.*)

BAN. If I may be permitted to say so, the grace—the ease—the facility—the excellence—the ——

(LURCHER *facing and talking to* SHERWOOD, R. *backs on to* BANTAM *—knocking him over to* L.)

BAN. Good lud! (*To* WILDER.) I humbly beg your Grace's pardon.

WILD. (*to* BANTAM). 'Tis granted!

BAN. (*to* LURCHER). What are you doing, fellow?

LUR. (*to* BANTAM). What are *you* flopping about like that for? Don't drink any more—take a small soda.

BAN. (*with dignity*). I don't take small sodas.

LUR. Then take a large one.

(SHERWOOD *takes the bottle, now empty, from* LURCHER'S *pocket, and gives it to servant, who holds up his hands in horror, and goes off* R. *with it, then returns.*)

(BANTAM *talks to guests* L., *apologising.*)

WILD. (L. *of* LURCHER, *to* LURCHER). Be careful, knave, or I will have you turned out of the house.

LUR. (C.). Do you think I don't know how to behave at a smoking concert?

SHER. (R. *of* LURCHER). It is not a smoking concert.

LUR. Well—a free and easy.

SHER. It's not a free and easy. It's an evening party.

LUR. Have you come to the evening party? Now, look here, I've got the writ in my pocket, and I budge not without your worship.

(*They push him up stage, he bumps against guest up* C. R.)

GUEST (*haughtily*). How dare you!

LUR. (*to guest*). What's the matter with you? You talk as if you'd been eating starch.

[*Exit* C. *and* R. *indignantly.*

WILD. Look to him, Harry, or his follies will mar our plot.

(SHERWOOD *goes up and watches him off.*)

BAN. (L. C.). Will your Grace be pleased to sup?

WILD. (C.). We have already supped on the road.

BAN. (*crosses* C.). Well, well, what news? What news in London? I have a nephew there. I have not seen the profligate these ten years. (*Exchange of glances between* WILDER *and* SHERWOOD, *who comes down* R. *of* BANTAM.) Who has been a very wild lad.

WILD. (L.). I am sorry for that.

BAN. (C.). He disobeys me, and yet he is my kin.

SHER. (R.). And spends your money, eh, Mr. Bantam?

BAN. Nay, none of that; he shall not have a groat of mine—while I live—but when I die, he must.

WILD. (*aside*). I must have a small matter while you live, dear uncle.

BAN. What's your Grace's pleasure? My ears did not rightly lay hold on your last words.

SHER. He says you should allow him a small matter while you live.

BAN. No, no, not while he squanders it as he does, and refuses to settle down and marry his cousin Dorothy.

WILD. Ah! he has a cousin!

BAN. My daughter, your Grace.

SHER. Like her father, no doubt, and surprisingly beautiful.

BAN. (*bowing*). You are pleased to flatter. (*Goes up* C.)

WILD. (*meets* SHERWOOD C.). Now, Harry, I will have none of my cousin Dorothy, I resign her to you.

SHER. Egad! I am content. (*Crosses* L.)

No. 12.—MUSIC *for the entrance of* DOROTHY *and* LYDIA.

(*Enter* DOROTHY C. *and* R. *then* LYDIA C. L. *Enter* MRS. PRIVETT *and* LADY BETTY R. 1 E. MRS. PRIVETT introduces LADY BETTY *to several guests. Guests rise and bow.*)

BAN. Here comes my daughter and her cousin.

WILD. (L. C.). Ye powers! What beauty! What enchanting grace!

SHER. (L.). In such a spot as this, quite out of place.

LYDIA (*up* L. C. *low curtsy*). Your Grace is welcome.

WILD. (Ma'am, I kiss your hand. (*Raises her and takes her down* L. C. *to* L.)

SHER. (*has passed up* L. *to* L. C. *to* DOROTHY). I am your most obedient to command. (*Raises her, she passes him and down to* R. *of* LYDIA.)

(WILDER *joins* SHERWOOD *up* L. C.)

DOR. That hand, that figure, I have seen before.

LYDIA. (L.). It cannot be!

(LURCHER *enters* C. *and* R. *with long pipe.*)

DOR. (L. C.). I have, and I am sure,
I recognise the ways.

LYDIA. It must be so!

DOR. They were our faithful swains not long ago. (DOROTHY *goes up* L. C. *looking at* WILDER *over her fan.*)

LYDIA. How could they think so shallow a disguise could serve to hide them from a woman's eyes? (*Joins* DOROTHY *up* L. C.)

WILD. (C.). My dear Sir John, I trust my presence here will never be allowed to interfere with any entertainment.

BAN. (C.). Please, your Grace,

(SHERWOOD *looking at Girls pulls* WILDER *round*—WILDER *turns to* SHERWOOD, *ignoring* BANTAM. MRS. PRIVETT *now touches* BANTAM'S *arm with fan—he turns and is introduced to* LADY BETTY.)

WILD. (*to* SHERWOOD, *ignoring* BANTAM). What teeth!

SHER. (*the same to* WILDER). What lips!

WILD. (*the same to* SHERWOOD). What eyes!

SHER. *the same to* WILDER). A perfect face!

(PARSON *now comes down* R. *and sits* R. *corner of* R. *table, and during Dance goes to sleep—leaning on his arm on table.*)

WILD. (*to* BANTAM *who has been waiting*). Your pardon What were you about to say?

BAN. That if your Grace would join us in the dance.

WILD. My limbs have long since lost their power to prance, but I could hobble through some stately measure. (*Crossing to* LYDIA, *now down* L.). If this fair lady lends her hand.

LYDIA. (L.). With pleasure.

(MUSIC — GRACEFUL DANCE. WILDER *dances with* LYDIA. SHERWOOD *with* DOROTHY. BANTAM *with* LADY BETTY. LURCHER *with* MRS. PRIVETT.)

No. 13.—GRACEFUL DANCE AND SONG.—DOROTHY.

What gracious affability! What condescension,
Of noble birth how great a proof!
When scions of nobility with kind intention
Honour with their presence a provincial roof.
With flattering felicity we tread the measure,
Each maiden blushing with surprise,
Deploring her rusticity accepts with pleasure
Compliments that fall on her from ducal skies.
Oh, how sweet
Eyes to meet!
Beaming admiration!
Eyes that fire
Or admire
Wrapped in contemplation.
What then can a helpless maiden say?
Pity her simplicity—spare her, pray.
With faltering felicity we tread the measure,
Each maiden blushing with surprise
At the simplicity,
The affability,
The true nobility
That meets her eyes.

(DOROTHY *and* SHERWOOD *go* R. C. *up as* LURCHER *and* MRS. PRIVETT *dance down. Couples* (*Guests*) *now get to places for Dance.* WILDER *and* LYDIA *get* L. BANTAM *and* LADY BETTY *to* R., *talking.*)

LUR. & MRS. P. Up and down and round and round,
With dainty feet that scorn the ground,
Weaving figures in and out,
See us whirling round about.

CHO. (*advancing*).
Gaily tread the dainty measure,
Dancing in the path of pleasure,
Hand in hand,
As gay a band
As any other in the land.

(DOROTHY *and* SHERWOOD *take* C. *again.* WILDER *and* LYDIA, BANTAM *and* LADY BETTY *to former places for continuation of Dance.*)

DOR. With faltering felicity, &c.

At end of Dance, DOROTHY *and* SHERWOOD *retire to* L. C. WILDER *and* LYDIA *to* L. *of table. Ladies sit.*)

BAN. (C., *bowing to* LADY BETTY). Your ladyship has greatly honoured me.

LADY B. Nay, sir, the honour is on the other side.

(FOOTMAN *pulls table* R. *to* C. R. *and in doing this takes support from* PARSON'S *arm, and he falls on stage—this occurs at end of* LADY BETTY'S *line.* BANTAM *and Footman pick him up and apologise.* LURCHER *and* MRS. PRIVETT *come down. Footman places two chairs* L. *of table and one* R. *of it, on which* PARSON *sits.* LADY BETTY *sits on one* L. *of next table. Large arm chair is next placed by Footman from* R. *to behind table, and* BANTAM *sits on it.*)

(THE FOUR PAGES *enter with small card tables and seats* R. *and* L. C., *and place them up* C. R. *and* L. SHERWOOD *invites* DOROTHY *to a game of cards, and leads her to table* L. C. *They sit. Other tables occupied by parties of Guests.* BANTAM *fills tray of glasses held* R. *of him by Footman with Parson's brew from punch bowl on table* R. C.)

LUR. (*coming down with* MRS. PRIVETT, *whispering*). Can I have the pleasure of a few moments' conversazione with you?

MRS. P. Nay, sir, after so short an acquaintance.

LUR. Yes, we haven't known each other long, have we? A little later on, perhaps?

MRS. P. (*laughingly*). Yes, a little later on. (*Strolls away—sits in chair* R. *of* L. *table.*)

LURCHER *goes* R., *and seeing vacant chair* C. R., *sits. Ogles* LADY BETTY, *she gives him a look and pulls her train close to her.* BANTAM *is filling glasses with brew—gives one to* LADY BETTY. LURCHER, *thinking it is for him, extends his hand across* LADY BETTY. BANTAM *gives him a look, and* LURCHER *subsides, smacking lips indicating he is thirsty.* BANTAM *fills another glass—bus.—*LURCHER *again.*)

BAN. That is not for you, sir. It is for the Vicar.

LUR. (*looking very disgusted, then tries to get up a conversation with* LADY BETTY). Nice change in the weather, marm.

BAN. (*taking it up*). No, it is *not* a nice change in the weather A little rain would do no harm.

LUR. No, a little wet would be very acceptable.

BAN. I said rain!

LUR. (*meaningly*). And I said wet! (*Pause.*) I notice you keep all the wet on your side. It's very 'ot.

BAN. I beg pardon?

PAR. (*joining in*). Hot! H.O.T., *Hot!*

LUR. Just what I said.
But whether it's wet or whether it's hot,
We have to weather it whether or not.

(LURCHER *rises, looks round, then whistles to* MRS. PRIVETT.)

MRS. P. Does he mean me? What an odd man!

LUR. You'll excuse me, but are you living with your parents now?

MRS. P. (*bursts into a hearty laugh*). Oh, that's too funny! Living with my parents! Ha, ha, ha!

LUR. I've tickled the old gal! You will at least tell me your name and address?

MRS. P. Well, my name is Priscilla.

LUR. Sarsaparilla?

MRS. P. No, Priscilla. (*Sings with a candenza.*)
They call me Priscilla!

LUR. Are you in pain? Is that the same voice you eat with? It's a sweet voice. Do you know that charming little pathetic air, "Close the shutters, the blackbird's moulting," or "Father's pants will soon fit Tommy."

MRS. P. No, it is not in my register.

LUR. Do you burn coal or coke? It's a pretty name, smacks of the country, hay-fields, and the mangled weazles.

MRS. P. Yes, quite pastoral.

LUR. (*muddled*). Yes, very pastoral—and buttery. Do you know, Priscilla, I believe you're a saucy little puss.

MRS. P. Ha, ha! you're a wag.

LUR. No, you're *mistook*, it is not my beauty, but pretty little ways.

(*Both go up laughing,* DOROTHY *a little before this has risen, and leaves* SHERWOOD, *joining* LYDIA, *sitting in chair vacated by* PRISCILLA. WILDER *at same time joins* SHERWOOD, *up* L. C.)

WILD. (*coming down* L. C.). No more dimity for me, say I.

SHER. (L.). Hang your beauty unadorned.

WILD. How like you my cousin Dorothy?

SHER. Exquisite! Enchanting!

WILD. I am glad of it. I give her up to you, Harry, be happy. As for me, I am all for Lydia.

BAN. (*has poured out glass of "Brew," and now comes forward to* C. *meeting* WILDER *and offering glass*). Your Grace must try the Parson's brew. Nay, I will not be denied.

WILD. (L. C.). Well, then, just a sip. (*Takes glass then gives it to footman, who stands a little up* C.)

SHER. (L.). Do you leave the toasts to your guests, Sir John?

BAN. (*to* WILDER). Nay, your Grace, by your leave, I will give you one. (*Returning to his chair behind table* R.)

ALL. Yes, yes, the Squire's toast!

(WILDER *goes over to* LYDIA L. *who rises, and he leads her to seat* L. *of* LADY BETTY. SHERWOOD *takes* DOROTHY *to chair* R. *of table* R., *and they each stand beside* LADY. LURCHER *and* MRS. PRIVETT *drop down* L. C., MRS. PRIVETT *sitting in chair* R. *of* L. *table*).

(*Four Pages enter* R. 1 E. *with trays and distribute wine to Principals and Chorus.*)

(*Footman serving most of Characters; Footman then stands behind* BANTAM *Pages get to stairs, top and bottom.*)

No. 14.—SONG.—BANTAM *and* CHORUS.

1.

BAN. Contentment I give you, and all that it brings,
To the man who is fully decided
To take what he has, and be thankful that things
Are such as his lot has provided.
Some strive for high rank, for preferment, for place,
Ever ready to sell at a price;
Tradition of family, fealty, or race,
In return for a jewelled device.

BAN. & CHO. But here's to the man who is pleased with his lot,
Who never sits sighing for what he has not,
Contented and thankful for what he has got;
With a welcome for all
To Chanticleer Hall.

(*Comes forward to* C. *front for verse* 2.)

2.

The old would be young, and the young would be
old,
The lean only long to grow fatter;
The wealthy want health, and the healthy want gold,
A change to the worse for the latter.
The single would wed, but the husband contrives
To consider his fetters a curse.
And half the world sighs for the other half's wives,
With the risk of a change for the worse.

BAN. & CHO. } But here's to the man who is pleased with his lot,
Who never sits sighing for what he has not,
Contented and thankful for what he has got;
With a welcome for all
To Chanticleer Hall.

(*At end of Song, Principals each place their glasses on table* R. C. FOOTMAN *removes arm chair to* R. *then wheels table to extreme* R. *Pages collect glasses from Guests and exeunt* R. 1 E., *then re-enter and clear small card tables and seats off* R. *and* L. C. FOOTMAN *clears chairs to* R. *and some off* R. 1 E. *then places table in recess* R.)

(LADY BETTY *rises and is about to go.*)

BAN. (C.). Your ladyship is not going to leave us so soon?

LADY B. (R. C.). It is late, Squire. The chance for beauty sleep is slipping away. Would you have us all moping about in the morning with our backs to the light?

BAN. Nay, Heaven forbid!

LADY B. Then let us give nature a chance of touching up her handiwork.

BAN. As your ladyship commands.

No. 15.—SEXTET AND CHORUS.

DOROTHY, LYDIA, WILDER, SHERWOOD, BANTAM, *and* LURCHER.

BAN. Now let's to bed. (*Goes up* C.)

(*All rise—General leave taking.*)

LUR. (*spoken*). Going to bed. (*Goes up* C.)

(MRS. PRIVETT *crosses behind to* R. *meeting* LADY BETTY.)

WILD. (C.). To bed so soon?

DOR. (C. R. *curtsying to* SHERWOOD.) Good-night! (*Crosses* L.)

WILD. (*as* LYDIA *passes him to* L.). We leave our hearts behind us.

LYDIA. (L. *of* WILDER, *with curtsy*). Most polite!

DOR. (L. *meeting* LYDIA L. C., SHERWOOD *gets* L. C. *behind. To* LYDIA.)

Alas! how soon can man forget!
To-day he swore that he'd be true
To me—yes, me alone—and yet
To-night he sighs and dies for you!

(LYDIA *crosses* R.)

WILD. (*to* LYDIA *as she crosses* R.). If you and I once more could meet.

SHER. (*drops* R. *of* DOROTHY). Our happiness would be complete!

BAN. (*comes down* C.). Good night, your Grace, and pleasant dreams!

ALL. Good night, your Grace, and pleasant dreams!

BAN. (*down* C. *turns up stage, showing way.*) This way!

WILD. (R. *of* LURCHER *and aside to him as* LURCHER *drops down* C. L.) Is all prepared?

LUR. (C. *aside to* WILDER.) All right! (*Goes up.*)

DOR. Your Grace, good-night!

WILD. (*to* SHERWOOD *on his* L.). We meet again to-night!

(WILDER *goes* R., SHERWOOD *behind* DOROTHY *to her* L.)

CHO. & PRIN. Pleasant dreams attend your slumber!
Happy fancies without number
Guide you in the land of sleeping,
While the fairies, vigil keeping,
Visions bright your sleep adorning,
Tend you till the light of morning,
Through the latticed window breaking
Tells you that the day is waking,
And through the pane
Creeps day again!
Your Grace—good-night!

WILD. (*to* LYDIA). One word when all the rest have gone.

SHER. (*to* DOR.). I want to speak to you alone.

CHO. And as every eyelid closes,
Nature shall repaint the roses.
Pink the cheek as is the duty
Of the tiring maid of beauty.
Virgin blush and bloom restoring,
Into eyes fresh flashes pouring,
Tenderly each face adorning,
Ready for the light of morning,
When thro' the pane creeps day again,
Good-night! Good-night!

[*Exeunt* BANTAM *up* R. *stairs and* R. C. LADY BETTY *and* PRISCILLA, R. 1 E. PARSON R. 1 E. *and* CHORUS.

(*Gradual check to all out. Firelight in Hall glow. Image of stained glass window on floor* C. *up.*)

(PAGES *come down and extinguish candles on stairs. Footman takes candelabra from table* R. *off* R. *then returns, crosses to table* L. *and on last repeat of "To-morrow is to-day," takes candelabra off* L. 1 E. *Pages at same time go upstairs, meet* C. *and go off* C. R. *and* L. *above.*

No. 16.—RECIT. AND QUARTET.

DOROTHY, LYDIA, SHERWOOD, *and* WILDER.

WILD. (R. C. *as* LYDIA *goes to door* R. 2 E.). One moment, pray!

SHER. (L. C. *same bus.* DOROTHY L.) Stay, don't run away!

LUR. (*As he goes off, shakes hands with armour figure up* R.) Good night, old man, good night. (*Very affectionate.*)
[*Then exits* C. *and* R.

(*All lights now off, excepting firelight and that from stained glass window.*)

DOR. (L. C.). Meet me to-morrow!

LYDIA (R.). Meet me to-morrow!

WILDER & SHER. To-morrow is to-day!

WILD. (*comes forward* R. C. *with* LYDIA).
Oh, fly not yet! 'Tis not too late
To bid me hope, or mourn my fate,
For lovers learn from early morn,
The cruel hand of time to scorn!

(WILDER *and* LYDIA *go up*)

SHER (*coming down* L.C. *with* DOROTHY).

1.

What matters what the hour may be?
Time was not made for you and me—
Then hear my whisper—ere we part,
The promptings of a beating heart!

DOR. (L.). And do you think the tests, sir,
Of love, so light a thing,
That maids will leave their nests, sir,
Like fledglings in the spring?

LYDIA (R.). Because they've wings to fly with,
And want to soar above,
The man I live and die with,
Must *prove* to me his love!

WILD. (*aside to* SHERWOOD)—SHER. (*aside to* WILDER).
Your ring pray give in token
Of vows ne'er to be broken;
On her finger you must place that ring.

DOR. (*aside to* LYDIA)—LYDIA (*aside to* DOROTHY).
Their rings they'll give in token
Of vows ne'er to be broken;
Oh! a man is but a faithless thing.

2.

WILD. (*to* LYDIA, *giving ring*).
This ring accept, it is a sign
That I am yours, and you are mine,
Then take it, pray, and let it be
A token of my constancy.

SHER. (*to* DOROTHY, *giving ring*).
This ring, I pray in token take,
That other maids I do forsake,
For never man shall prove as true
As I, my love, will be to you.

DOR. (C. L., *coming down* C., *and meeting and aside to* LYDIA R. C.)
How soon the vows were broken!
To you he pledged his love!
And now he gives your token
To me, his faith to prove.

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *meet at back.*)

LYDIA (*aside to* DOROTHY).

A master in deceiving,
Believe his word who can?
In truth there's no believing
In such a thing as man.

(WILDER *to* LYDIA—SHERWOOD *to* DOROTHY.)

Pray take from me this token
My vows are never broken,
Let me on your finger place this ring.

(DOROTHY *to* SHERWOOD—LYDIA *to* WILDER.)

Your vows will soon be broken,
This ring I take as token
That a man is but a faithless thing.

(*Each kisses his lady and* DOROTHY *runs off* D. L., *and* LYDIA D. R., *slamming doors after them.*)

WILD. (R. C., *pointing* R. *and* L.). There go the rings.

SHER. (L. C.). How shall we answer to dimity to-morrow for the loss of their love tokens?

WILD. (*with bravado*). To-morrow, Harry, is to-morrow, and will have to answer for itself. But now to business. You understand my plans?

SHER. Perfectly.

WILD. Has Lurcher the cloaks and vizards?

SHER. He brought them with him.

WILD. Where is the lazy scoundrel? Asleep, I'll wager.

SHER. I bid him wait in your room until we called.

WILD. I must go and see whether he has recovered from the "Parson's Brew"?

[*Exit* WILDER C. *and* R.

SHER. (*calling after him*). I will join you in a moment. (*Pauses, he hums or whistles snatch of last number, then going towards door* L., *in loud whisper.*) Miss Dorothy! One word! I have something very particular to say to you. (*Knocks at door.*) Miss Dorothy! No answer! I wonder if she's at all nervous? (*aloud*) Miss Dorothy Bantam, there's a dreadful smell of smoke. I am afraid the house is on fire. (*Knocks again*) Not a sign! Oh, this is cruel!

No. 16A.—BALLAD—SHERWOOD.

1.

I stand at your threshold, sighing,
As the cruel hours creep by;
And the time is slowly dying,
That once too quick did fly.
Your beauty o'er my being
Has shed a subtle spell;
But, alas! there is no fleeing
From the charms that you wield so well.
For my heart is wildly beating,
As it never beat before;
One word! one whispered greeting,
In mercy I implore!
For from daylight a hint we might borrow,
And prudence might come with the light;
Then why should we wait till to-morrow?
You are Queen of my heart to-night!

2.

Oh, say why if you intended
To treat my love with scorn;
Such rents as will never be mended
In this poor heart you've torn!
Why, why did your beauty enslave me?
And give me such exquisite pain;
Oh, say but the word that would save me,
And bid me hope again.
For my heart is wildly beating, &c.

(*At the end of Song,* LURCHER *staggers on* C. *from* R. *very tipsy, and unnoticed by* SHERWOOD *he lies on long seat up* R. C.)

SHER. It's no use! not a sound! Oh, Miss Dorothy, you have so turned my head that I don't know where I am. (*sighs*) Well, I must go and look after that victim of the parson's brew, or we shall have dawn upon us before we can carry out our plan. Which way did I come in? confound the dark! Ah, there's a passage. (*Looks* C. *and* R.) Perhaps that's the way.

[*Exit* C. *and* R.

LUR. (*asleep*). Put it outside the door. (*pause*) I say, put it outside the door. (*Tries to turn over as if in bed and falls on floor.*) Hallo! Where am I? (*On knees, smacks lips as if very dry, and feeling about.*) Where's the water-bottle? Oh, that parson's brew! The roof of my mouth is like a tinder-box, and my tongue's like a bit of blotting paper. To think that a respectable member of the Church of England should put his lips to such a vile compound. (*Gets up.*) Oh, my poor head! (*Knocks up against staircase.*) I beg your pardon. (*pause*) I say, I beg your pardon. Well, if you don't like it you can do the other thing—at all events, you're no gentleman! If I can only get out of this, may I be hanged, drawn, and quartered. (*Noise* L.)

(*A loud thud heard outside,* MRS. PRIVETT *just appears from door on gallery* L., *and gives suppressed scream.*)

Somebody's dropped their socks. I shall go to bed. (*Ascends staircase on hands and knees* R.)

MRS. PRIVETT (*aside*). Whatever could it have been? I feel so frightened. (*Comes down a step or two* L.)

LUR. This is the most uncomfortable house I ever was in. (*Pause on steps half way.*) The worst of these old-fashioned bedsteads, is they're so *high!* (*Goes on ascending steps, remarking as he sits down on the top stair with sigh of relief.*) That's a nice change! (*Then seeing* MRS. PRIVETT *on opposite steps, pauses, scared.*) Angels and ministers of grace, defend us! What's that? It's Juliet on the Grand Stand! (*relieved*) No, it's my Priscilla! (*calls*) Priscilla!

MRS. P. Ah! who calls?

LUR. It's me! Your sweet William—your John—Anthony—William——

MRS. P. Oh, I fear you are a bold, bad man.

LUR. Excuse the question, but when and where?

MRS. P. (*bashfully*). You would not be so daring as to meet me at the Hermit's Oak in Round Coppice to-morrow morning

LUR. (*muddled*). Meet you in the Round Cottage, in the Round Pond?

MRS. P. No, no, Hermit's Oak—Round Coppice—

LUR. Oh, wouldn't I? But, Priscilla, you will never leave me thus?

MRS. P. Oh, I know not what to say, I am so embarrassed.

LUR. Throw yourself on the Parish!

MRS. P. No, I say, I'm so embarrassed!

LUR. You will go to Paris! But, Priscilla, you will imprint one chaste salute on my baby brow!

MRS. P. Where is your baby brow?

LUR. (*sits suddenly*). I have it on the stairs. Excuse me, Priscilla, but will you come up to me, or shall I come down to you?

MRS. P. I think you had better come down to me.

LUR. (*slips on stairs and slides to bottom, sitting position*). You will excuse me, but *I am so embarrassed*, Priscilla dear! Where are you? (*rises*)

MRS. P. (*having come down stairs, is now* L. C.). I am here.

(LURCHER *discovers punch bowl, where it was left on the table, and hugs it to his bosom.*)

LUR. I can't see you; but I am with you in spirit! (*Staggers towards her*). They *have* been waxing this floor. Expect a long quadrille evening, I suppose? (*Gets* L. C., MRS. PRIVETT, R. C., *both feeling about—they meet.*)

MRS. P. I am afraid you are a wicked, dangerous man.

LUR. (*chuckling*). Yes, I feel devilish saucy! (*Struts about.*)

MRS. P. Have you no pity for a poor giddy little thing?

(*Noise,* L.) (*Another loud thud heard.*)

(WILDER *and* SHERWOOD, *enter* C. *from* R., *masked and cloaked, and cough threateningly.*)

[*She screams and runs off* R. *opening.*

(LURCHER *falls on his knees, and clutching at* SHERWOOD'S *cloak.*)

LUR. (*very scared*). Oh, Priscilla, don't leave me!

SHER. (*pulling cloak from him*). Get away!

WILD. (*in assumed voice to* LURCHER). Your money or your life.

LUR. (*in despair*). Highwaymen! I thought so! That makes my dream come true. Oh, gentlemen, take all I've got—but spare my life!

WILD. How much have you got?

LUR. Fourpence and a bit of string!

WILD. We will take the fourpence, and you may keep the string!

LUR. Gentlemen, you wouldn't harm a poor little sheriff's officer who wouldn't hurt a fly!

SHER. Not unless there was a writ out against it! Get up, you rascal. (*Gives him a kick.*)

LUR. Oh! I know that kick. Is it you, gentlemen? How you did frighten me!

WILD. (*holding out hand with pistol in it*). Let me help you up!

LUR. Thank you. (*Puts hand on pistol.*) Oh, it's something cold. It's a pistol! (*rises*) Oh, sir, for heaven's sake, think of it. We might all be hung for this job.

WILD. But I tell you, man, there is to be no robbery.

LUR. But assault and battery—and misdemeanour and forgery by strangulation. I know the law, sir.

SHER. Come, come, a little courage and you shall have your share, robbery or no robbery. (*Gives* LURCHER *a slap on the back.*)

LUR. Oh, don't do that, it does so shake up the liquor.

WILD. Now let me see whether I can drum your instructions into your muddled pate. First of all (*pointing pistol towards* LURCHER, *emphasizing words*).

LUR. First of all, point that pistol the other way. You should never trifle with fire-irons—I mean fireworks.

WILD. You mean firearms.

LUR. (*indignantly*). I know what I mean, sir.

WILD. First of all, we shall attract the notice of my worthy uncle.

SHER. His worthy uncle. Do you understand?

LUR. (*sleepily, as if offering pledge to pawnbroker*). How much on this, worthy uncle?

WILD. He is sure to think that his house is being robbed, and will be in terror for the safety of his guineas in yonder strong box.

SHER. Strong box—you understand? Over there. (*Pointing across* LURCHER *with pistol.*)

LUR. Point that pistol *over there*. (*Puts it away from him.*)

WILD. Then you shall come in terror from my room and declare that I have been robbed and bound.

LUR. And then? What then?

SHER. Then we shall see what we shall see.

WILD. Go into my room and be ready to obey my further instructions to the letter, or to perish in the attempt. (*Hustling him up stage.*)

LUR. Oh lud! My parents will be very angry when they hear of this. (*Maudling.*) Dear me, the way I am chivied about! (*As they push him off* C.) Gentlemen, where do I live—in the fowl's house? (*He is pushed off by them.*)

WILD. Now, Harry, are you ready?

SHER. Ready to do or die!

No. 17.—TRIO.—DUO BOUFFE.

WILDER, SHERWOOD, *and* BANTAM.

SHER. Are you sure that they are all in bed?

WILD. Silence, silence. Be careful how you tread.

SHER. (*throwing piece of rope round* WILDER *and tying it*). Let me bind you.

WILD Take care, not too tight!

SHER. Now's the time to wake our worthy friend the Knight!
(*Both go to foot of stairs* R.)

WILD. Ha! ha!

SHER. Ho! ho!

BAN. (*appearing in gallery* R.). Who's there?

WILD. Hush! here he comes!

BAN. (*coming down*). Speak! Who is there?

SHER. We've got him now!

BAN. (*slips on lower steps, and drops candle*). Confound the stair!

(*They seize and drag him forward, and throw him on his knees.*)

For mercy, sir, I humbly crave,
Pray take my cash and all I have,
But spare my life!

WILD. & SHER. We want your cash and all you have,
But not your life!

(SHERWOOD *binds* BANTAM *with another piece of cord, and forces him on to hands and knees*—SHERWOOD *then kicks him with flat of foot*—BANTAM *falls prostrate* C. WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *go up* C. WILDER *sits in chair up* R. C., *as if bound to chair.*)

(*Some Guests enter, some in dressing gowns, with candles. All very frightened.*)

No. 18.—CHORUS.

What noise was that waking us from our slumber?
What to goodness caused such a clatter?
Hand joined to hand—safety there is in numbers,
Let us find out—what is the matter?

BAN. (C. *on floor*). Help! help! I'm almost dead!

CHO. Help! help! raise up his head!

(*Enter* SHERWOOD C. R., *he goes to* WILDER. *Two Gentlemen raise* BANTAM. SHERWOOD *pretends to release* WILDER.)

WILD. Help! help! I'm almost dead!

CHO. Look at the Squire's head!

(*Enter* DOROTHY L. D., *and* LYDIA R. D. PRISCILLA *and* LADY BETTY *enter* R. 1 E., *and remain* R. C.)

DOR. (L.). Oh, father, what a dreadful sight,
To see you in so sad a plight!

(SHERWOOD *calls their attention to* WILDER.)

CHO. Oh! what a sight!

DOR. (*going with* LYDIA *up to* WILDER *and bringing him down*).
And see, most shocking to relate!

LYDIA. His Grace has met the selfsame fate!

BAN. & CHO. Too shocking, quite!
Oh! what a night!

CHO. Daring a duke to plunder,
What's coming next, we wonder?

BAN. (*having gone to strong box* R. *Comes* C. *again*).
My money's safe!

CHO. How very strange!

(LURCHER *enters* C. R., *and comes down with open cash box in hand.*)

BAN. There's not a penny missing!

WILD Ah!

BAN. Not one!

WILD. Speak! What is it?

LUR. Your Grace, I fear——

CHO. Ah!

LUR. Has been robbed!

CHO. Oh!

SHER. They've got the swag!

LUR. Yes, taken every mag.

SHER. See, not one shilling left!

WILD. Of everything bereft!

BAN. The sum must be repaid at any cost!

(WILDER *expresses in gesture he will not accept.*)

CHO. & BAN. Pray mention what amount your Grace has lost?

LUR. The sum amounts to eighty pound,
Perhaps a little more, sir,
And as a host, I think you're bound
The money to restore, sir.

CHO. Pray take the guineas, he feels bound
The money to restore, sir.

(BANTAM *crosses to* WILDER *who, after profuse denial, accepts bag of coin.*)

WILD. Well then, I take the money as a loan.

(BANTAM *gets to* L. WILDER *gives bag to* LURCHER, *who goes* R. *smiling.* SHERWOOD *gets* L. *behind* DOROTHY.)

CHO. His Grace, we own,
Accepts the loan,
With such a tone,
That one would feel inclined to think the gold was all his own.

SHER. And when his Grace returns this way
The money he is sure to pay.

LUR. & SHER. I'm much afraid
It won't be paid!

WILD., LUR., & SHER. Of course your loan will be repaid!

(*First Chime—all listen.*)

DOR. Hark! I hear the quarter chime!

(*Second Chime.*)

LYDIA. What on earth can be the time?

(*Third Chime.*)

DOR. Midnight not long past, be sure,
(*Fourth Chime*). Why the clock is striking four

(*Clock strikes Four.*)

BAN. Once more to slumber!

Cho. (*yawning and stretching sleepily*).
We must all to bed again,
Till the sun shines through the pane,
And the bright
Morning light
Brings us day again.

(WILDER *escorts* LYDIA *to door* R. BANTAM *ascends stairs* R. DOROTHY *is led to door* L. *by* SHERWOOD, MRS. PRIVETT, *and* LADY BETTY.)

[*Go off*, R. 1 E., *and* LURCHER *blows kiss to* MRS. PRIVETT.

(*The Guests are retiring to the Chambers grouping up the staircase. Hunting Horn heard. All pause and listen*). It's the waits.

Lur. (*spoken, calls off* R.). Priscilla, the Quadrille band has come.

Wild. (*spoken*). And as I live, your men are on foot with the hounds.

(*Everybody re-enters.* WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *go to door* R. *and* L. *and bring on* LYDIA *and* DOROTHY. DOROTHY *and* LYDIA *get up* C. L. *and* R. WILDER *and* SHERWOOD *below them.* SQUIRE *on stairs* R.)

No. 19.—FINALE.

(*Huntsmen heard without.*)
Hark forward! Hark forward, away!
A-hunting we'll go to-day!
And the early dawn of the Autumn morn,
Is ready to show the way!
Hark forward! Hark forward, away!
'Tis a beautiful hunting day,
And horse and hound
Shall skim the ground
To the sound of the horn so gay.

(*As* HUNTSMEN *enter, all* PRINCIPALS *get down to sides.* DOROTHY *and* SHERWOOD L., *others* R. BANTAM *descends and gets* R. C. *Door* C. *thrown open and* HUNTSMEN *enter.*)

Huntsmen. And the early dawn of the Autumn morn
Is ready to show us the way.

All. Tally ho!

And horse and hound shall skim the ground
To the sound of the horn so gay.

ALL. Tally ho! tally ho! tally ho!
A-hunting we will go to-day.
&c., &c.

(*All march forward then back up stage.* LADIES *gallop forward in two lines then back to sides and stairs.*)

SHORT DANCE.

(*Dance—Lady's chain.* WILDER *and* LYDIA *get to* L. SHERWOOD *gets* R. BANTAM *leads* DOROTHY *forward* C., *then retires up.*)

(DOROTHY *comes forward and sings.*)

DOR. A-hunting we will go to-day,
&c., &c.

Bus. as before. As HUNTSMEN *sing and come forward* PRINCIPALS *lead twelve steps forward and eight back as before, then as* LADIES *gallop forward they are led by* DOROTHY, *stepping backwards, then—*

Enter HUNTSMAN, *surrounded by fox hounds.*

TABLEAU.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE—"*Round Coppice.*" *A Forest Glade in the neighbourhood of* SQUIRE BANTAM'S *house. Through a break in the trees, up* L. *the village church is seen in the distance. And far to the right stands "Chanticleer Hall," an old fashioned Elizabethan house. On the* R. C. *of the stage is an ancient oak with withered and broken branches, and on a bench, which surrounds the tree, old women from the village are seated chatting to one another and knitting.*

Enter ballet of GROOMSMEN *and* BRIDESMAIDS.

No. 20.—BALLET.

(No. 1.) (*When the ballet is over the dancers retire up the stage and the old women rise and come forward.*)

No. 21.—OLD WOMEN'S CHORUS.

Dancing is not what it used to be
In the merry days when our tread was light,
When our feet were nimble and our hearts were free,
And we danced from dusk till the sun shone bright.
Eh! eh! eh! Tho' feeble we be,
Better than that we can dance, you'll see.

(*Old women dance.*)

(*Then retire* R. *and sit on seat and banks.*)

Enter PHYLLIS, *who is greeted by the old women and the dancers. Congratulations pass, and signs that they have come to fetch her to church.*)

No. 22.—BALLAD—PHYLLIS.

PHYL. (*by* L. *of tree*).

1.

The time has come when I must yield
The liberty I loved so well
To him to whom my heart revealed,
Sighed forth the love I dared not tell.
My love, my life, I freely give
Myself and all that in me is,
Henceforth in happiness to live
For him alone as only his.
But liberty to me so dear
I now resign without a fear.

(*Comes forward* C. *for verse* 2.)

2.

They say when wooing days are o'er,
And there is nothing left to gain,
That turtles coo their love no more,
And honeymoons get on the wane.
But I will bind him to my heart,
With love that shall not fly too soon,
And life shall be till death us part
One everlasting honeymoon.
PHYL. *with* CHORUS { And liberty to me so dear
I now resign without a fear.

CHORUS OF OLD WOMEN.

Eh, eh, eh! poor little dear,
Wait till she comes to the end of the year.

[*Exeunt* PHYLLIS *and ballet*, C. *and* L., *the old women off* R. 1 E.

(*Enter* PRISCILLA PRIVETT, L. 1 E.)

MRS. P. There goes Phyllis to be married. Heigho! I wonder when my turn will come again. (*Sits under tree.*)

(*Enter* LURCHER L. 3 E.)

LUR. (L. *aside*). They told me that this was the Hermit's Oak. Ah! there she is. (*aloud*) Priscilla!

(*She starts coyly* R.)

Enjoying the breezes under the treeses?

MRS. P. Oh, sir, how you frightened me.

LUR. My own peach blossom.

MRS. P. I am afraid you will think no good of me for keeping my promise. Don't—pray don't look at me like that, I implore you. (*Turns head away.*)

LUR. (*aside*). I wonder if Priscilla has anything in the way of oof? If there be no Privett, and there's anything reasonable in the way of settlements, I'll do it. (*Making love to* MRS. PRIVETT.) I can't help it, Priscilla; but do you know, whenever I look at you I find myself—looking at you. (*Hesitating, then suddenly.*) Madam! have you a heart?

MRS. P. How can you ask me such a thing?

LUR. When I say a heart, I mean have you a thing which goes bumping up and down, bibbity-bob! trying to burst your waistcoat buttons?

MRS. P. And can you say that that heart beats for me?

LUR. Save and excepting a taste of something short, this heart has never been moved by anything else.

MRS. P. Can you swear?

LUR. Can I swear? You ask 'em down our street—I mean, I should rather think I could. But I think you will find it better to take my word for it.

DUET.

MRS. P. You'll never be untrue,
To the lady you say you adore!

LUR. I swear I'll be ne'er untrue
To the daisy whom I adore;
Ah, never, never, never!

MRS. P. (*spoken*). Jamais!

LUR. Oh, never, so help me, never!

MRS. P. Though I cannot imagine what you could have seen in me, after your experience of all the fine ladies in London, who must be much more beautiful than I am.

LUR. You're quite right

MRS. P. Eh?

LUR. Oh, no!

MRS. P. Oh yes, I have no doubt you meet many of them in the Duke's society, at the Court.

LUR. (*aside*). I wonder if she means the Sessions or the County Court? (*aloud*) The Duke, what Duke?

MRS. P. Why the Duke of Berkshire, to be sure.

LUR. (*recollecting himself*). Ah, of course, yes. But I am not always in the Duke's society. (*Puts his arm round her.*)

MRS. P. But you are his secretary! Oh, don't do that. (*Bus. worked up.*) You make me feel so funny! (*With a little squeal.*)

LUR. No, I have other duties to attend to.

MRS. P. (*wheedling him*). And what are those other duties? (*Flicking his face playfully with her handkerchief.*) Come, you must keep nothing from me now.

LUR. You may continue that, Priscilla, I rather like it. (*aside*) I wonder if she takes me for a fly-paper? Yes, I have other duties. You know I am an officer?

MRS. P. An officer? I adore officers.

LUR. (*aside*). Some on 'em don't. (*aloud*) Yes, I belong to a deuced crack regiment, in fact we're all cracked down to the drummer. But what will Mr. Pivot say to this?

MRS. P. There isn't one

LUR. No Pivot? You have lost your Pivot? Then, my own Priscilla, you are a widow.

MRS. P. (*in his arms, bashfully*). I am four widows.

LUR. Four widows? you must have been busy, mum.

MRS. P. I will conceal nothing from you.

LUR. Yes, keep nothing back, let me know the worst.

MRS. P. Before Mr. Privett, there was Mr. Perkins.

LUR. What, Benjamin Perkins, the soap boiler? (*She nods.*) I remember Benjamin well. Ah, many's the bit of Brown Windsor I have had off him.

MRS. P. (*sorrowfully*). Ah, yes, he was a generous man.

LUR. Yes, he was quite round shouldered with it. (*aside*) He was the meanest man I ever knew; why he used to have his socks soled and heeled to save his boots. (*or*) He had a wart on the back of his neck, and he used it as a collar-stud.

MRS. P. (*continuing*). And before Mr. Perkins there was Mr. MacMurcott.

LUR. Bless me, I know all about your menagerie—marriages, I mean. Mr. Sandy Macpherson MacMurcott, a Scotch gentleman, a light complexioned individual.

MRS. P. Yes, when I look at you it reminds me of the poor dear man.

LUR. Do I remind you of Sandy?

MRS. P. Yes, his hair was very much after your colour.

LUR. Something after my own colour, eh? A sort of strawberry blonde.

MRS. P. No, I call it a delicate ginger.

(LURCHER'S *hair is carrotty.*)

LUR. He was a fine man. I remember seeing him once in his full regimentals. He had his kilt—and his claymore and his jelly bag—I mean his phillabeg——

MRS. P. Yes, he was going to the gathering of the clans.

LUR. Yes, I know he was out for the day. But do you know, it is very cruel—but they have circulated nasty, evil reports about the dear man. You know I feel it my duty to tell you, for it has been on the trapeze for some time. (*apologetically*) But the fact is, they say that the reason Mr. MacMurcott wore a kilt——. (*hesitates.*)

MRS. P. Well?

LUR. Oh, you cannot know.

MRS. P. Why not?

LUR. You're too young.

MRS. P. But *do* tell me.

LUR. Well, they say the reason Mr. MacMurcott wore a kilt—was his feet were so large that he couldn't get them through the bottom of his breeches.

MRS. P. (*weeping*). Oh, what a wicked thing to say!

LUR. Yes, a cruel thing to say behind a man's feet—I mean *back*. Still you must admit that he covered a deal of ground when he walked.

(BANTAM *has entered* L. U. E. *furiously but on seeing them halts and watches.*)

MRS. P. Yes, he was a bonny braw laddie.

LUR. Yes, I admit he was a *bony*—I mean a bonny braw laddie.

MRS. P. He had a good heart.

LUR. A good heart—but large feet.

MRS. P. Ah, yes, rest his memory.

LUR. *And* his poor feet!

MRS. P. Well, before Mr. MacMurcott there was—

BAN. (*coming forward* R.). Mrs. Privett, I am astonished!

MRS. P. (C.) Law, Squire, how you frightened me.

BAN. (R.). I trust I've frightened you in time, Madam! (*To* LURCHER.) And so, you villain, you have the audacity to pay your addresses to this lady?

LUR. (L.). Priscilla, *taisez-vous*. Squire, *allez-vous!* You are an incorrigible interloper.

BAN. I do not understand you, sir.

LUR. Pardon me, sir—you are *de trop*. (*Pronounced as spelt.*) If you do not understand French it means you have interrupted us.

MRS. P. Pardon me, Squire, this gentleman's social position as an officer—

BAN. Officer! Yes, a Sheriff's officer.

MRS. P. A Sheriff's officer! What do I hear? (*Collapses.*)

(*They catch her.*)

BAN. Who has been masquerading about with that rogue of a nephew of mine—and robbing me?

LUR Excuse me, old Cochin China—I mean Bantam. I protest against this robbery!

MRS. P. (*hysterically*). Sheriff's officer! Sherry—Sherry—Off . . .—Oh! (*Collapses again.*)

LUR. Sherry's off! Sherry's off! She's been at the decanter again. Why didn't you lock up the tantaliser? (*To* BANTAM.) Wretch! See what you have done? You have destroyed our little Eva.

BAN. What do you mean, "Eva?"

LUR. (*lifting her*). Just *'eave her* up a little.

BAN. We shall have to carry her back to the house.

LUR. All right, don't make a fuss. You take hold of her head and I'll catch hold of her——

MRS. P. (*suddenly recovering*). Never! Not while I'm a living woman. Sheriff's officer. Ugh! (*Going* L.) Sheriff's officer, indeed!

LUR. Oh, Priscilla, you will not leave your little Launcelot.

MRS. P. What will the neighbours say? (*To* LURCHER.) Don't touch me. "Come not near me. Let my wrongs make me sacred!"

[*Exit indignantly* L. 1 E.

LUR. (*with action, pointing to head signifying she is insane.* She's always like that after { muffins / pancakes } for tea. Does it run in the family, Squire?

BAN. Now, sir, I give you one minute to consider whether you'll make a clean breast of it and take a guinea, or whether I shall hand you over to the village constable.

LUR. Sir, you need not trouble the constable. I will subdue all personal feelings and I will take your guinea.

BAN. Then follow me and we will get to the bottom of it.

[*Exit* L. 2 E.

LUR. But——touching the guinea.

[*Exit following.*

Enter DOROTHY *and* LYDIA L. U. E., *disguised as men.* DOROTHY *appears* L. U. E. *and comes down,* LYDIA *following limply a moment afterwards.*)

DOR. Now, Lydia, a little more confidence—a dash of bravado. (*Gives her a slap on the back.*)

LYDIA (*startled*). Oh! I feel so strange in this dress. I fear that some one will see us.

DOR. What if they do, cousin. They will but take us for gallants from town. Have you the pistols?

LYDIA (*who has the case under her arm*). Here they are!

DOR. Set them down.

LYDIA (*crossing behind and putting pistol case on* L. D. *seat of tree*). Do you think they will come? (*Gets* L. *again.*)

DOR. I haven't a doubt of it. I know they received our letters this morning.

LYDIA. And what shall we do then?

DOR. (*taking pistol from case*). Why then, my dear, we shall give them the choice of a duel or a marriage with the ladies whom they met last night. (*Has taken pistol and is looking at it with muzzle towards* LYDIA.)

LYDIA. And if they consent to marry? (*Finds herself opposite muzzle and runs* L.) Oh, don't!

DOR. (C.). If they consent to marry we will never speak to them again. (*Puts pistol in case.*)

LYDIA (L.). But, Dorothy, what if they prefer to fight?

DOR. Then we shall know that they love us for ourselves, and then, Lydia, then——

LYDIA. But the pistols?

DOR. We shall take good care to load them ourselves only with powder. They will go off with a little puff. You will scream, I shall not. All will end happily, and who knows but Mr. Wilder may have to marry his cousin Dorothy after all. (*Goes up* C. L.)

LYDIA. Why—Dorothy!

DOR. (*up* C. L.). Why—Lydia! And I'll be bound to say that you will be content to pair off with his friend. (*Looking off* L.) Oh, lud! Here they come! (*Running down* C. *and to* R.). LYDIA *snatches up pistol case*). Let us watch them from behind this tree and see what effect our letters have had on them. (*Drags* LYDIA *behind the oak tree. They watch the following scene.*)

Enter SHERWOOD *and* WILDER L. U. E. SHERWOOD *has a case of pistols under his arm.*

WILD. (L.). This must be the spot, Harry.

SHER. (C.). And here is the tree under which these bloodthirsty provincials would call us to account. (*Places pistol case on seat of tree—producing letter from pocket.*)

WILD. One might almost treat the affair as a joke, if it were not for our honour which must needs stand up to be shot at for an opinion in favour of one woman against another. Let me see—(*producing letter from pocket—reads*). "Sir, your letter has been handed to me—"

SHER. (*reading letter.*) "Your letter has been handed to me—"

WILD. (*reading*). "By Miss Lydia Hawthorne—"

SHER. (*reading*). "By Miss Dorothy Bantam, and as that young lady's best friend, I insist upon an explanation or immediate satisfaction."

WILD. (*reading*). "You will find me ready for either at the Hermit's Oak in Round Coppice at eleven of the clock this morning.

Your obedient humble servant to command,
PERCY DASHER."

SHER. (*reading.*) "Tilbury Slocomb." The letters are identical in all respects except the name.

WILD. There's no doubt about it. They are in earnest—(*looking at watch.*) 'Tis close on eleven. Have you the pistols?

SHER. Here they are. (*pointing to pistols.*)

DOR. (*aside*). Good gracious! There'll be bullets in them!

LYDIA. Do you think there will?

WILD. (*solemnly.*) And now, Harry, if anything should happen to me—

SHER. Pshaw! man—what are you thinking of?

WILD. These rustic blades are dangerous fellows.

LYDIA. (*gaining courage—aside*). Do you hear that, Dorothy?

WILD. They shoot straight.

LYDIA. Oh lud! I wish we did!

WILD. You will not fail to tell my dear Dorcas that I remained faithful to her to the last. That I preferred death to giving her up.

DOR (*aside to* LYDIA). What do you say to that?

SHER. And how about the ring which she gave you, and which you so rashly handed over to Miss Lydia last night.

WILD. Say—say that you buried it with me.

LYDIA. (*aside to* DOROTHY). Oh! why, I have it on my finger now.

SHER. You can depend on me. And you will do the same by me with my sweet Abigail.

WILD. I will, Harry.

SHER. You will say that never for a moment was her sweet image absent from my heart.

WILD. And the ring you gave to my little cousin Dorothy?

SHER. (*adopting* WILDER'S *tone*). Say that it was so tightly and lovingly clasped in my death grasp that no effort could tear it away from my finger which it had never left!

DOR. (*aside to* LYDIA). Why, I have the ring on my finger now.

(DOROTHY *and* LYDIA *change places.* DOROTHY *now* R. LYDIA R. C.)

WILD. You can depend on me. If I lie in my grave.

SHER. (*shaking his hand*). *I* will lie for *you*. If I lie in my grave———

WILD. (*grasping* SHERWOOD'S *hand*). I will lie for you. (*Perceiving* DOROTHY *and* LYDIA *who come down a step*). Ah, here they come!

(*They bow.* DOROTHY *to* SHERWOOD. LYDIA *to* WILDER—*the bow is returned by* WILDER *and* SHERWOOD. *Then* DOROTHY *bows to* WILDER, *and* LYDIA *to* SHERWOOD.)

SHER. (*aside to* WILDER). Why surely these cannot be our opponents?

WILD. (*aside to* SHERWOOD). Straight from the nursery.

(DOROTHY *pushes* LYDIA *to* C.)

LYDIA. (*stammering nervously to* WILDER). Mr. Wilder, I believe.

WILD. At your service, young gentleman.

LYDIA. (*stammering*). **I am Mr. P-P-Percy Dasher.**

WILD. (*laughing*).

LYDIA. (*indignantly*). **Sir!**

WILD. Dasher! Dash me! **A fine Dasher!**

LYDIA. Ugh! (*Goes up.*)

(DOROTHY *walks across to* C. *bombastically.* SHERWOOD *pretends fear, then takes her height with hand—comparing it against tree and laughs.*)

DOR. (C. *to* SHERWOOD). Captain Sherwood, I presume.

SHER. (R.). You presume rightly, my young friend.

DOR. Gentlemen, we are here to resent an insult put upon Miss Dorothy Bantam.

LYDIA (*coming down* L. *of* DOR.). And Miss Lydia Hawthorne.

DOR. We have come to ask whether you are prepared to atone for your conduct by offering the only reparation possible, or whether you are ready to meet the consequences.

SHER. By reparation, I presume, you mean marriage.

DOR. I do.

WILD. And the consequences imply a duel?

LYDIA (*tremulously*). They do.

SHER. In point of fact, you mean matrimony or murder?

DOR. & LYDIA. Precisely!

WILD. (*sternly*). Then we prefer *murder!*

(HE *and* SHERWOOD *turn away.* DOROTHY *and* LYDIA *fall against each other for support.*)

SHER. Our words are pledged to two other ladies.

WILD. And we mean to keep them.

DOR. (*aside to* LYD.). Do you hear that, cousin? But we must keep it up until we are able to change our clothes. (*Aloud*). Then, gentlemen, you have only to choose your weapons.

WILD. Weapons! Young gentlemen, I should say that a birch-rod or a good bundle of nettles would best befit your age and dignity.

DOR. (*crosses to* R. *of* WILDER). I would have you to know, sir, that this is a serious matter, and that your jokes are as misplaced as they are ancient and ill-chosen.

WILD. (L.). Well, gentlemen, since yon will have it (*crosses* R. C.), the consequences be on your own foolish little pates.

(SHERWOOD *takes up his case of pistols.*)

DOR. (L.). I am ready to take the consequences.

LYDIA (*runs* L. *of* DOR., *scared*). We are *not.*

DOR. (*aside to* LYDIA). Where are the pistols? Recollect when you load them—powder first—and no ball.

(LYDIA *goes across to case on seat and takes it up.*)

(*Aloud.*) Here are the pistols.

WILD. (R. C.). Pardon me. We are the challenged. We have brought our own pistols.

DOR. (L.). And must we use them?

SHER. (R.). Certainly!

DOR. (*aside*). Good Heavens!

LYDIA. (C. L., *pleadingly*). Oh, *do* have these.

(WILDER *turns away.*)

(*Aside.*) What's to be done now? (*Puts down case.*)

SHER. In order that things should be perfectly fair, you will load one. (*Hands pistol to* LYDIA, *who takes it, holding it in finger tips at arm's length.*)

(SHERWOOD *now loads other pistol.*)

WILD. Have you the bullets, Harry?

SHER. Here they are.

LYDIA & DOR. (*aside*). Bullets!

(SHERWOOD *hands pistol to* WILDER.)

DOR. But how are we to know which of the pistols has no bullets?

LYDIA (*hysterically*). I don't know.

WILL. They will both have bullets inside them, and so may one of us presently.

DOR. Ah, don't point it at me! (*Avoiding pistol.*)

WILD. I did but anticipate a pleasure by a few moments. (*Turns* R.)

LYDIA (C. *holding pistol very awkwardly*). What shall I do with it, dear? (*To* DOROTHY.)

SHER. (*comes* R. *of and to* LYDIA). Allow me, sir. You seem unaccustomed to the ways of these little barkers. (*Takes pistol.*)

LYDIA (*avoiding pistol*). Ah, don't! (*Runs* L. *behind* DOROTHY.)

SHER. It's not loaded.

LYDIA. But it *might* go off. (*aside*) What are we to do?

(SHERWOOD *turns away and proceeds to load second pistol.*)

WILD. Now, gentlemen, as this is to be a duel to the death—

LYDIA & DOR. To the death!

WILD. I said to the death. It will be necessary for us to carry out the latest fashion of the duello. We can't all shoot at once. We must begin two and two.

DOR. Then perhaps if you two gentlemen would begin first.

SHER. We have no cause of quarrel.

DOR. Of course, I forgot. (*Aside to* LYDIA). Cousin, we must get out of this as quick as we can.

LYDIA (*aside to* DOROTHY). One of these pistols is sure to go off in a minute.

WILD. (*to* DOROTHY). You and I, sir, had best lead off.

DOR. Lead off—where? (*Runs up* C. L.)

WILD. One of us, possibly both of us to the grave. (*Flourishes pistol.*)

DOR. The grave! Don't point it at me.

WILD. Each will have his second; your friend will serve you. We will place ourselves back to back, each will walk five paces.

DOR. Only five paces?

WILD. Well, six, if you like it better. We shall then both turn on our heels. (*Presenting pistol.*)

DOR. & LYDIA (*afraid*). Ah!

WILD. And fire. (*Gravely*). One of us will fall, possibly *both!* (*Lightly.*) And then the others will have a turn.

DOR. (*aside*). A turn!

LYDIA (L. *aside*). No, I don't.

WILD. (*to* DOROTHY). Now, sir, to place yourself.

SHER. (*to* DOROTHY, *giving second pistol*). Here is your pistol.

DOR. (*aside to* LYDIA). Oh! if I only knew how to escape from this!

(WILDER *and* DOROTHY *place themselves back to back* C. DOROTHY *facing* L. *up*—LYDIA *at her side dolefully fanning* DOROTHY *with her hat.* WILDER *facing* R. *down*, SHERWOOD *at his side.*)

SHER. Now, gentlemen, are you ready?

WILD. Yes.

SHER. Then——go!

(DOROTHY *and* WILDER *march* L. *and* R.)

(*Counts.*) One, two, three——

(DOROTHY *dropping pistol, and* LYDIA *her, hat bolt off* L. U. E. *unseen by* SHERWOOD.)

(*He continues.*) Four—

(*Enter* BANTAM L. 1 E. *moodily, and not seeing what is going on,* LURCHER *following.*)

Five—six—

(WILDER *turns sharply and aims* L. BANTAM *looks up, sees muzzle of pistol, and waving stick and arms, shouts.*)

BANTAM. Stop! Murder! Thieves! Put that down, sir.

(LURCHER *runs up and gets behind tree* R. C., *climbing it.* SHERWOOD, *on hearing* BANTAM'S *voice, puts his hat over pistol.*)

WILD. (*startled at noise, lowers pistol*). Why, what's this?

(SHERWOOD *looks round, and missing* DOROTHY, *looks off* L.)

SHER. Our adversaries have fled. (*Takes* WILDER'S *pistol.*)

WILD. A pretty couple of cowards.

BAN. Pretty couple of murderers, sir.

WILD. My dear uncle, I congratulate you on a very narrow escape.

BAN. So, sir, it was you who assume the clothes and manners of your betters and impose upon your too confiding relatives.

WILD. Necessity, my dear uncle.

BAN. Necessity, sir, is the mother of thieves. (*Sees* LYDIA'S *hat at his feet and hits it up stage with stick.*)

(LURCHER *appearing between fork of branches.*)

LUR. (*to* SHERWOOD *and* WILDER.) Have you been shooting for nuts, gentlemen?

SHER. (*holding his fist to* LURCHER'S *head*). No, but I'll have a go at one directly.

LUR. No, don't, it's the only one I've got. (*Comes down.*)

SHER. You've peached, you rascal!

LUR. (L. *of* SHERWOOD). The promptings of my conscience, gentlemen.

SHER. And your pocket, I'll be bound. (*Throws him* R.)

BAN. (L. *angry to* WILDER, R. C.) Though born a man of high degree, eh, you villain. Give me my money back.

WILD. (R. C., *pointing to* LURCHER). I must refer you to this gentleman!

LUR. R. This gentleman refers you to the Court!

BAN. Who may possibly restore the money to my grandchildren after I have spent twice the amount in asking for it.

Enter TUPPITT L. U. E. *down* L. C.

TUPPITT (L. C.) I humbly crave pardon.

BANTAM (C.). What is it now?

TUP. The young couple are coming to meet your worship at the Old Oak.

BAN. What young couple?

TUP. Tom and my daughter Phyllis, who have just been married

Enter TOM *and* PHYLLIS L. *and* C. *down* C.

BAN. What do they want with me?

TUP. Your worship's blessing.

BAN. Blessing? Do I look like blessing?

(MUSIC. BANTAM *goes* L.)

Enter Villagers.

CHORUS AND BALLET.

TOM *and* PHYLLIS *drop down* C. SHERWOOD *meets them* R. C. PHYLLIS *curtsies to him, he chucks her under chin and flirts with her.* TOM *objects, but finding no notice taken turns to* SQUIRE, *pointing to* SHERWOOD *and protesting.* SQUIRE *angrily crosses to* SHERWOOD *shaking cane.* SHERWOOD *bolts to* R. BANTAM *then brings* PHYLLIS *to* C. R. *and now between* TOM *and he motions* TOM *to take his hat off.* TOM *does not understand him.* BANTAM *points again to hat.* TOM *takes it off and offers it to* BANTAM. BANTAM *throws it on ground, then motions them to kneel. Both kneel.* BANTAM *bestows his blessing and goes* R. C. TOM *and* PHYLLIS *rise to go to* TUPPITT *as* CHORUS *sing.*)

"Then send for the Parson."

(DANCE. BANTAM, TUPPITT, TOM *and* PHYLLIS. TUPPITT *between the young couple advance four steps*—BANTAM *meeting them. Then four steps back, four forward again leaving* TOM *and* PHYLLIS *either side of* SQUIRE. SQUIRE *then talks to them giving them advice till Symphony of Chorus when similar movement with* SQUIRE *between* TOM *and* PHYLLIS—*at end* TOM *is turned to* L. *corner by* TUPPITT.)

No. 23.—SEPTET & CHORUS.

(PHYLLIS, TOM, TUPPITT, WILDER, SHERWOOD, *and* BANTAM)

TOM, PHYLLIS & CHORUS.

What joy untold to feel at last
That all delay and doubts are passed,
His / My { future lot with { her / you } } is cast.
My own!

TUP. & CHO. A parent's feelings who can tell,
His satisfaction who can quell;
I wished to see her married well,
I own!

(WILDER, SHERWOOD *and* CHORUS, BANTAM *and* CONTRALTO.)

They are indeed a happy pair,
What lot on earth can now compare
With theirs? I only wish it were
My own!

(PRINCIPALS *and* CHORUS WITH DANCE.)

Now send for the parson and send for the ring,
So merrily let the bells chime;
For marriage to start with is not a sad thing,
It only gets gloomy in time.
The lover is ready, the maiden said "Aye,"
She'll make such a beautiful bride;
The knot, though remarkably easy to tie,
Is not quite so lightly untied.
Then let the bells chime,
Merrily let the bells chime!

DANCE.

BAN. (C. *to* WILDER R. C.). Now, sir, you may thank your stars that the sight of these young folks' happiness has put me in a better temper. (WILDER *bowing low.*)

BAN. None of your London manners with me, sir. I am ready to forgive you, and even to take you back to my heart where there has long been an empty corner waiting for you, if you will marry your cousin Dorothy.

(*Enter* DOROTHY *and* LYDIA *dressed in their peasant clothes of the First Act,* L. U. E. *down* C.)

WILD. That is impossible.

BAN. How impossible? Are you married already?

WILD. Nay, sir, but I hope soon to be.

BAN. To whom?

WILD. (*meeting and bringing* DOROTHY *down* C. R.). To this lady if she will so far honour me.

(SHERWOOD *goes up, meeting* LYDIA *and bringing her down* R.).

BAN. To her? Why that is your cousin Dorothy.

WILD. My cousin Dorothy!

DOR. (*with a curtsy*). The same!

SHER. (*to* LYDIA). Then you——

LYDIA (*with a curtsy*). I am Lydia Hawthorne, her cousin. (*Goes up a little.*)

(SHERWOOD *turns and seizes* LURCHER R., *who is laughing, by the throat.*)

LUR.) *releasing himself*). Pardon me, sir—that is my jocular jubilee vein.

WILD. Then, last night we—(*aside to* SHERWOOD). Oh, Harry, here's a pretty kettle of fish.

DOR. (C. *to* BANTAM, L. C.). Yes, father, I was anxious to find out whether a man could love a woman for herself and not for her money. The ring which I gave him, and which he now wears on his finger is a proof of his constancy. (*To* WILDER.) Show it, cousin.

WILD. (*hesitating*). I—(*aside*). What in the world is to be done?

LYDIA. (R.). And I, too, entrusted this gentleman with the ring, which he now wears on his finger. (*To* SHERWOOD.) Where is it?

LUR. (*to* LYDIA). I think he's pawn'd it, mum.

SHER. (*aside*). What shall I say?

(PRISCILLA *enters* R. 1 E., *and finding herself near* LURCHER, *pretends to be very indignant. He pleads and looks very penitent. They eventually make it up.*)

WILD. (*recovering his self-possession*). Ahem! I confess that recognising my cousin Dorothy last night, I returned to her as a keepsake, and—and—(*hesitating.*)

SHER. That is exactly what I wished to say myself.

DOR. (*to* WILDER). Did the stone change its colour in your pocket, cousin? (*Showing ring.*)

LYDIA (*to* SHERWOOD). Had my ring a green or a red stone? (*Showing ring.*)

WILD. I have nothing to say.

DOR. Well then, if that is all the explanation you have to make—(*giving* WILDER *her hand*). I accept it.

SHER. (*to* LYDIA). And you?

LYDIA (*giving her hand to* SHERWOOD). I suppose I must follow Dorothy's example.

BAN. That's right, young people.

DOR. (*to* WILDER). After all, you were ready to die rather than marry Lydia.

LYDIA (*to* SHERWOOD). I cannot forget that you preferred death to Dorothy.

No. 24.—FINALE.

DOR. You swore to be good and true
To the maid whom he dared to adore,
Who promised to love her as few
Have ever loved woman before.

LYDIA. Who swore, &c.

WILD. & SHER. We will devote our lives to you,
And swear to be for ever true.

BAN. (*placing* DOROTHY'S *hand in* WILDER'S—*then* LYDIA'S *in* SHERWOOD'S).

Then take her—be happy for what you have got,
Be thankful or never allow that you're not,
And on this occasion I ask the whole lot,
There's a welcome to all
At Chanticleer Hall.

PRINCIPALS *and* CHORUS.

And lucky the man who is pleased with his lot,
Who never sits sighing for what he has not,
Contented and thankful for what he has got;
There's a welcome to all
At Chanticleer Hall.

CURTAIN.

TOM JONES.

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