

THE WEDDING MARCH

BY

W. S. GILBERT

1873

Edited by David Trutt

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WRITING AS F. LATOUR TOMLINE

“AN ECCENTRICITY IN THREE ACTS”

Translated from *Le Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*
[*The Italian Straw Hat*]
by Eugene Labiche

First produced at the Royal Court Theatre

Saturday, November 15, 1873

Play script provided courtesy of Arthur Robinson
Introduction by David Trutt

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On November 15, 1873, Gilbert's play *The Wedding March* debuted at the Court Theatre, written under his pseudonym F. Latour Tomline. It was an adaptation of Eugène Marin Labiche's *Un Chapeau de Paille d'Italie* ("The Italian Straw Hat"). The play was first to have been called *Hunting a Hat*, but the title was changed to capitalize on the popularity of Wagner's "Wedding March" from his *Lohengrin*. The play ran for about 92 performances, into March 1874.

The name of the hero, Woodpecker Tapping, was taken from Thomas Moore's ballad, *I Knew By The Smoke*:

It was noon, and on flowers that languished around
In silence reposed the voluptuous bee;
Every leaf was at rest, and I heard not a sound
But the woodpecker tapping the hollow beech-tree.

Poppytop, the bride's father is a market-gardener; a market-garden comprises a relatively extensive area in which vegetables are grown for market.

There are a number of references to music playing *Haste to the Wedding*. This refers to a popular Irish song. Perhaps this is the source of the title of the Gilbert and Grossmith operetta produced twenty years later, which is a musical version of *The Wedding March*.

Doctors' Commons, a destination for the wedding party in Act I, was a society of lawyers practising civil law in London. The society had buildings with rooms where its members lived and worked and a big library. Court proceedings of the civil law courts were also held in Doctors' Commons. A motion to dissolve the society was entered in 1858 and the last meeting took place in 1865. The buildings of Doctors' Commons were sold in 1865 and demolished soon after. It may have been a Gilbertian joke to propose having it visited in 1873.

The reader will recognize many snippets and phrases which have found their way into the Savoy Operas.

CHARACTERS

MR. WOODPECKER TAPPING	(a Bridegroom)
POPPYTOP	(a Market Gardener)
UNCLE BOPADDY	(a Deaf Gentleman)
THE DUKE OF TURNIPTOPSHIRE	(an Emotional Noble)
MAJOR-GENERAL BUNTHUNDER	(a Companion of the Bath)
CAPTAIN BAPP	(of the Guards)
COUSIN ALFRED FOODLE	
CRIPPS	(a Milliner's Book-keeper)
WILKINSON	(a Policeman)
JACKSON	(Woodpecker's Servant)
BARNS	(an old Retainer at Market Harborough)
MARCHIONESS OF MARKET HARBOROUGH	(an Emotional Noblewoman)
ANNA MARIA POPPYTOP	(a Bride)
SOPHY CRACKTHORPE	(a Milliner)
MRS. LEONORA BUNTHUNDER	
PATTY	(a Lady's Maid)
LADY POPTON	

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(The dresses of the Wedding Party should be quaint country and rather old-fashioned in character, but not too much exaggerated. Indeed the success of the piece depends principally on the absence of exaggeration in dress and "make-up." Major-General Bunthunder, Captain Bapp, the Policeman, Woodpecker, Poppytop, and the Duke of Turniptopshire, should rely for the fun of the parts on the most improbable things being done in the most serious manner by persons of every-day life. A certain amount of exaggeration is permissible in Uncle Bopaddy, Cripps, and Cousin Foodle. The Marchioness should be particularly lady-like and Major-General Bunthunder and Captain Bapp are in full uniform.)

(Act I, Scene 1.—Room at Mr. Woodpecker Tapping's house. Doors at center, right, left; three chairs discovered; hall clock seen through center door. JACKSON discovered arranging chairs. Enter PATTY, on tip-toe.)

PATTY. Is all right, Mr. Jackson?

JACKSON. All is right, Patty. *(kisses her)*

PATTY. Now, none of that, if you please. Mr. Woodpecker Tapping, your master, is to be married to-day, and you told me I might come and see the wedding presents. Where are they?

JACK. In the next room. We've plenty of time.

PATTY. *(looking at clock)* Just one! *(surprised as JACKSON kisses her)* What did you do that for?

JACK. You said "just one," and I gave you "just one."

PATTY. I meant the time.

JACK. Nonsense; it isn't [yet] ten—that clock's stopped [at one o'clock]—it's a wedding present, and hasn't any works.

PATTY. But how comes it that the wedding takes place from the bridegroom's house, and why are all the presents sent there?

JACK. Because the bride, Miss Anna Maria Poppytop, lives at Pettytwiddleum, in a remote corner of Wales, and as Mr. Tapping can't get leave to go down to Wales—Wales has come to him. The wedding party will arrive directly, but before they come, "just one." *(kisses her)*

(Enter UNCLE BOPADDY, with a band-box in his hand; he is very deaf.)

BOPAD. Don't mind me. It's only Uncle Bopaddy. Nobody minds Uncle Bopaddy. Anybody come yet?

JACK. (*with much apparent deference*) Not yet, you old humbug. Not yet, you old ragbag.

PATTY. Hush! hush! you'll make the old gentleman angry.

JACK. He's as deaf as a post—he can't hear. (*shouting to him*) You can't hear, can you? (*to PATTY*) I always talk to him like that, it amuses me very much. (*to BOPADDY*) Don't you think that at your age you might be better employed than in kicking up your dissipated old heels at a wedding? Don't it occur to you that to see an old gentleman with one leg in the grave—kicking up the other one behind and before—is rather a melancholy spectacle? Candidly, now don't you?

BOPAD. Yes, yes—I told him all that—so he said he'd come himself. So like Poppytop, ain't it? (*crossing to PATTY*) Here, my dear, take this. (*giving band-box*) It's a little present for the bride—now be very careful of it, there's a good girl.

PATTY. All right, old sixpenn'orth of ha'pence.

(*Exit PATTY, with band-box.*)

BOPAD. (*much amused*) Yes—you're quite right—I often do so myself—ha! ha! What a nice little gal—very nice little gal. Don't know that I ever saw a nicer little gal.

JACK. Go along—you wicked old sinner—you ought to be ashamed of yourself, at your age. There—(*gives him chair*)—sit down, and hold your wicked old tongue.

(*Exit JACKSON*)

BOPAD. (*sits*) Thankye, kindly—very civil well spoken young man, to be sure!

(*Enter WOODPECKER TAPPING*)

WOOD. Well, here's a pretty piece of business!

BOPAD. My nephew! my dear nephew! (*shakes his hands*) Where's the wedding party? have they arrived?

WOOD. They're coming in eight cabs—I counted them. But listen to my adventure—I was riding through Hyde Park just now, and accidentally I dropped my whip—

BOPAD. (*shaking his hand*) My boy—those sentiments do honour to your head, and your heart.

WOOD. What sentiments? Oh, I forgot—he's deaf—no matter. As the whip is mounted in silver, I dismounted in haste; left my horse, in order to pick it up, and then discovered that in the meantime the spirited animal had bolted and was at that moment half-a-mile away.

BOPAD. But I go farther than that—I go so far as to say that a good husband makes a good wife!

WOOD. Here's an old fool.

BOPAD. Thank you, my boy—I am, I am, always.

WOOD. Well, I made enquiries, and after a long run, I came up with my spirited grey, and found him in the act of devouring a Leghorn hat [*a hat made of leghorn, a fine plaited straw*], trimmed with poppies, which was hanging from the bough of a tree, and which belonged to a young man and lovely lady, who was indulging in an affectionate *tête-à-tête* with a military gentleman on a seat underneath.

BOPAD. Oh, that's wrong, that's quite wrong, my boy—quite wrong; I was born two days after the battle of Trafalgar [*1805, which makes Bopaddy 68 in 1873*].

WOOD. I began to apologise to the lady, when the military gentleman interposed. He abused me; I abused him; he struck at me, I ducked my head, and avoided the blow. I jumped on to my horse, threw him a sovereign [*equals 20 shillings*], or it may have been a shilling—I'm sure I don't know, and this is all the change I get out of it. (*showing the remains of a straw hat*)

BOPAD. Dear me! that's a very nice straw—a very nice straw indeed. Now, that's very curious.

WOOD. Eh?

BOPAD. No matter. It's very curious. It's a coincidence. Yes, it's a beautiful straw—I'm in the trade, you know—just like the one I ordered for Anna Maria—ha!—at what time is the wedding?

WOOD. Eleven. (*shows him on fingers*)

BOPAD. Eh?

WOOD. (*shouting*) Eleven!

BOPAD. You must speak louder, I can't hear.

WOOD. (*whispering*) Eleven.

BOPAD. Oh, eleven! Why didn't you say so at first? (*looking at watch*) Half-past ten, just time for a glass of sherry. I saw it on the sideboard as I came up; you'll find me at the sideboard as you go down.

(*Exit BOPADDY*)

WOOD. So, in one hour I shall be a married man! married to the daughter of a human porcupine—one of the most ill-tempered, unreasonable, exacting old market-gardeners in Great Britain. Anna Maria is a charming girl; she has only one drawback—a cousin, Alfred Foodle, who was brought up with her. He kisses her—I don't know why cousins kiss each other, but in some families it's permitted. It's permitted in hers. The best of the joke is, I'm not allowed to kiss her; the market-gardener thinks it's dangerous. "Wait," says he, "your time will come;" and in the meantime, I, who am engaged to be married to her, am compelled to sit quietly by, and see Cousin Foodle take liberties which are at present denied to me. I know it's all right—because they were brought up together—but it puts a bridegroom in an entirely false position. Who's this?

(Enter CAPTAIN BAPP and LEONORA)

CAPT B. This is the scoundrel's house—and here is the scoundrel! (*fuming*)

LEON. Dear Captain Bapp, be careful!

WOOD. It's the lady with the Leghorn hat, and her military admirer.

LEON. Now, then, dear Captain Bapp, collect yourself; be calm—be very calm.

CAPT B. Leonora, leave this to me—I will not be dictated to. Sir! Here I am—you see me—don't you?

WOOD. Distinctly.

CAPT B. Well, sir—suppose you offer this lady a seat, sir! (WOODPECKER gives LEONORA a chair, and is about to sit himself) Don't sit down yourself, sir! How dare you attempt to sit down in this lady's presence? Now sir, to business. You insulted this lady in Hyde Park. You, first of all, eat her hat.

WOOD. My horse ate her hat.

CAPT B. You are responsible for his actions, sir; you, first of all, eat this lady's hat, and then you have the impertinence to throw her this insignificant coin! (*crossing to WOODPECKER, with shilling in his hand*)

WOOD. (*aside*) It was a shilling! I thought it was. (*aloud*) Captain, it was a mistake; allow me to rectify it. There! (*gives him a sovereign*)

CAPT B. Fire and fury! What's this?

WOOD. A sovereign for the hat.

CAPT B. Insult upon insult! Sir! we have not come here for pecuniary compensation; I return your sovereign. (*throws it down*)

WOOD. Then, what the deuce *have you* come for?

CAPT B. In the first place, an apology.

LEON. No, no, I forgive him—come away—it isn't necessary.

CAPT B. Leonora, *will* you leave this to me? Sir! Apologise to this lady for having eaten her hat.

WOOD. But, I tell you, my horse ate her hat. My horse is a well-bred animal, and will, perhaps, apologise if you represent the facts to him with temper and gentlemanly moderation. Now, what is the moral of this, Leonora—

LEON. Sir!

CAPT B. Fire and fury!

WOOD. I call you Leonora, because I don't know your other name. The moral of this—if you will walk out in Hyde Park, with captains in the army—

LEON. Sir, you are in error. This gentleman is my cousin. We were brought up together.

WOOD. Oh, I see, he's your Foodle.

CAPT B. This Lady's *what*, sir?

WOOD. Her Foodle—I say you're her Foodle. You don't know what I mean, but you may depend upon it you are. (*aside*) I wish these people would go.

CAPT B. You are an idiot. Will you apologise?

WOOD. Certainly, if it will get rid of you. I apologise—now go.

CAPT B. But I haven't done yet. This hat which you have eaten, is a present from this lady's husband.

WOOD. What, there's a husband, is there? Oh, that's wrong.

LEON. Yes; the most jealous man in the world, and if I go home without it, he, who looks at everything in the blackest light—will look at this—

WOOD. In the yellowest—I see. But what's to be done?

LEON. My husband knows every straw of this hat, and if I go home without it he will kill me. There's only one thing to be done—

WOOD. To get another exactly like it; of course, with pleasure—to-morrow.

CAPT B. To-morrow! And what's to become of the lady in the meantime?

LEON. Oh, I'll remain here. (*sits*)

WOOD. Here—in my house? Impossible! Why, I'm going to be married to-day! The wedding party is below at this moment.

CAPT B. The devil take your wedding party.

WOOD. Captain!

CAPT B. Will you procure this hat for this lady immediately, or will you not?

LEON. A straw hat—of the very finest description, and trimmed with poppies.

WOOD. But I tell you I'm going to be married. (*POPPYTOP heard without*)

POPPY. Woodpecker!

WOOD. That's my father-in-law elect. (*shouts*) Coming. Stop; I see a way of doing it. I'll invent an excuse to call at a milliner's on the way to the church, and tell her to send it here.

POPPY. (*without*) Woodpecker!

WOOD. Coming. Will that do?

CAPT B. (*to LEONORA*) Will that do?

LEON. That will do.

CAPT B. (*to WOODPECKER*) That will do.

POPPY. (*without, very angrily*) Woodpecker!

WOOD. He's coming up. He mustn't find you here. Go in there; quick. (*Music plays "Haste to the Wedding;"*) CAPTAIN BAPP *exits right* and LEONORA *exits left*) Just in time.

(Enter POPPYTOP [*bride's father*], center, very red and furious, and the wedding party: ANNA MARIA [*bride*] escorted by FOODLE [*cousin*], BOPADDY [*uncle*] with a myrtle in flower-pot under his arm.)

POPPY. It's off! It's all off!

WOOD. What's off?

POPPY. The wedding. I won't have it. You've insulted your father-in-law—you've insulted your bride—you have kept them waiting on your wedding-day. It's off. Come home, Anna Maria, you shall marry Cousin Foodle.

FOODLE. Anna Maria! (*kisses her*)

WOOD. But if I apologise?

POPPY. Then it's on again.

WOOD. Then I apologise.

POPPY. It's on again! (*to FOODLE, who is embracing ANNA MARIA*) Foodle, my boy, it's on again.

FOODLE. Anna Maria! (*weeping, goes upstage*)

ANNA. Oh! (*screams*)

ALL. What's the matter?

ANNA. Oh, something's pricking me. (*tries to get at a pin in her back*)

WOOD. A pin. Allow me (*coming to her*)

POPPY. (*stopping him*) How dare you, sir.

ANNA. How dare you.

ALL. For shame.

POPPY. Foodle, remove the pin. (*FOODLE comes over, removes the pin, kisses it, and goes up stage again*)

POPPY. (*to WOODPECKER, who is furious*) They were brought up together. Now then, are we all ready? Then away we go. (*music commences—"Haste to the Wedding"—all start off dancing*)

WOOD. (*after a bar*) Stop a bit. (*music stops; aside*) I must make some excuse for calling at the milliner's—what shall I say? I can't tell them I've got to stop and buy a hat for one lady, on my way to be married to another. Ha! I know. (*aloud*) It's very awkward—I've lost the licence!

ALL. Lost the licence!

POPPY. (*furious*) It's off—another instance of insulting neglect! It's off—Foodle shall have her!

FOODLE. Anna Maria! (*embrace*)

WOOD. Don't be absurd—it's very easily rectified. We must call at Doctors' Commons on the way to the church, and get a new one. You can remain below in the cabs while I go for it. (*aside*) They're all country people, and don't know the difference between Doctors' Commons and a milliner's shop. (*aloud*) Will that do?

POPPY. It's on again—it's on again! (*to FOODLE, who is embracing ANNA*) Foodle, my boy, it's on again! (*to BOPADDY*) Come, give me my myrtle, and we'll be off.

WOOD. A myrtle—what's that for?

POPPY. It's an emblem—I brought it from North Wales. It's a secret at present; but you'll see.

WOOD. But let the servant take it.

POPPY. Entrust this myrtle to a servant—never! Wild horses shouldn't drag it from me! Foodle, take the bride—pair off, and away we go!

(*Music plays—"Haste to the Wedding"—ALL dance off, except Woodpecker, BOPADDY last, with the myrtle*)

WOOD. If ever I marry again, it shall be into a family without a Foodle!

(*Exit WOODPECKER*)

END OF ACT I - SCENE 1

(Act I, Scene 2.—*A Milliner's Ante Room. Opening, center, backed by interior. Doors right and left; four chairs; table at back, with bonnet boxes and two dolls' heads; high desk with books on it. The sides of the desk are boarded in from right. Enter SOPHY CRACKTHORPE, a Milliner.*)

SOPHY. (*calling off stage*) Now pray make haste, young ladies; attend to your work, and don't chatter. Upon my life, I've been very fortunate. I've only been in business four months, and I've quite a large connection already. Who's this?

(*Enter WOODPECKER, in great haste.*)

WOOD. Madam, a straw hat—a Leghorn hat, trimmed with poppies. I'm in a great hurry.

SOPHY. A Leghorn hat. (WOODPECKER *turns, she sees his face*) Heavens, it's he!

WOOD. (*aside*) Sophy Crackthorpe, by all that's unlucky! An old flame, and my wedding party at the door in eight cabs! (*aloud*) You don't keep them? Very good. Good morning. (*going*)

SOPHY. (*stopping him*) Come back, sir. Where have you been these six months, if you please?

WOOD. I've been at—at—(*aside*) Infernal nuisance this meeting.

SOPHY. So this is how you treat a girl who loves you! (*crying*)

WOOD. Well, I did treat you rather cavalierly, I own.

SOPHY. *Rather* cavalierly. You offer to take me to Cremorne—we start—we are caught in a shower—and instead of offering me a cab, you offer me a portico [*covered building entrance*]!

WOOD. (*aside*) It was caddish, I own.

SOPHY. You then tell me to wait, while you fetch an umbrella. I wait accordingly, and at the end of six months you return—without the umbrella.

WOOD. I forgot the umbrella. I'll go and fetch it. (*going*)

SOPHY. (*stops him*) Not if I know it.

WOOD. (*aside*) Confound it—and the wedding party at the door. (*aloud*) Sophy, my darling Sophy, you know how fondly I love you.

SOPHY. To think that this creature actually promised to marry me.

WOOD. (*aside*) How infernally unlucky. (*aloud*) But I will marry you, upon my soul. I will marry you and no other.

SOPHY. Oh, I should like to catch you marrying another—I'd tear her eyes out.

WOOD. As if I'd dream of anybody else. Now then, I want a Leghorn hat trimmed with poppies. (*gives torn hat*)

SOPHY. (*jealous*) Oh, for some other woman, I suppose!

WOOD. Another woman—what an absurd idea. No, it's for a captain in the Guards, who wants it as a birthday present for—for his colonel.

SOPHY. Well, you shall have it, on one condition.

WOOD. Name it.

SOPHY. That we dine together at Greenwich this afternoon.

WOOD. (*aside*) Very likely.

SOPHY. And that you take me to the Royal Grecian this evening.

WOOD. Capital—a capital idea! I've nothing whatever to do to-night, and I was just saying to myself, as I came in, "what in the world shall I do with myself this evening"—the Royal Grecian is the very thing. Where are the hats?

SOPHY. Here, in the showroom—come along; and don't let me catch you making eyes at my young ladies.

(*Exit SOPHY*)

WOOD. (*in despair*) Here's all the wedding party coming up stairs.

(*Enter POPPYTOP, ANNA MARIA, FOODLE, BOPADDY, and WEDDING PARTY, all dancing round stage to music—Music, "Haste to the Wedding"*)

POPPY. So here we are in Doctors' Commons; this is Doctors' Commons.

WOOD. Yes, yes—but why in the world have you left your cabs?

POPPY. Have you got the licence? Where is the Registrar?

WOOD. In one moment—he'll be here directly. I'm going to fetch him—wait.

(*Exit WOODPECKER*)

POPPY. So this is Doctors' Commons? My friends, let us be very careful—we are in Doctors' Commons. Let those who have gloves put them on. Confound this myrtle, I wish I'd left it in the cab. I am much agitated, and you, my daughter?

ANNA. Papa, the pin is still here.

POPPY. Walk about, my child, and it will work down. Here is the register. (*at desk, takes up book*) We shall all have to sign our names in it.

ANNA. Papa, what are they going to do to me?

POPPY. Nothing, my dear. The Registrar will say to you "Do your parents consent to your marriage?" and you reply "I am"—that's all—damn the myrtle! (*crosses to left of stage*)

(*Enter at center, unseen by POPPYTOP, the Milliner's Book-keeper CRIPPS who is out of breath.*)

CRIPPS. Bless my heart, how I've been running—how hot I am to be sure—how it is raining—I'm wet through—I must change all my clothes—fortunately I keep a complete change under the desk (*goes to desk and stoops down to get clothes; as he rises again, POPPYTOP sees him*)

POPPY. Now then—here's the Registrar—bow—bow to the Registrar! (*the wedding party all bow low to CRIPPS, who don't see them; to FOODLE*) Put on your glove, will you! (*CRIPPS disappears under desk*)

FOODLE. I've lost it.

POPPY. Then put your hand in your pocket. (*FOODLE puts the gloved hand in*) Not that one—the other! Now, once more—all bow. (*they all bow—CRIPPS is under desk*) Hullo! he's gone! (*crossing and leaning over desk*) Sir!

CRIPPS. (*looking up*) Sir!

POPPY. This is my daughter—and this is her wedding party—bow. (*they all bow*)

CRIPPS. They are very polite; but I wish they'd let me get my clothes.

POPPY. Will you begin by taking our names?

CRIPPS. With pleasure. (*aside*) A country wedding party come to make purchases, I suppose.

POPPY. Now then—Anthony—Emilius—Bayboy—Poppytop.

CRIPPS. (*very politely*) The Christian names are immaterial.

POPPY. Born at Pettywiddleum—

CRIPPS. (*very politely*) Your place of birth is also immaterial.

POPPY. On the 18th June, 1801.

CRIPPS. (*angry*) My dear sir, I don't want your biography—you have told me quite enough.

POPPY. (*to CRIPPS*) Very good. (*to BOPADDY in normal voice*) Now it's your turn. (*loudly*) Now it's your turn. (*in a whisper*) Now it's your turn.

BOPAD. Oh! (*advancing with dignity*) Sir, (*to CRIPPS*) before I consent to become a witness in this matter—

CRIPPS. Eh?

BOPAD. I should like to give you my views as to the qualifications of a witness.

CRIPPS. What is he talking about?

BOPAD. An efficient witness, sir, should combine three qualities—

CRIPPS. But—

BOPAD. In the first place, he should be of full age; in the second, he should be a Briton born, or naturalised; in the third—

FOODLE. (*who has gone up to door, looking off stage*) Oh, uncle—uncle—look here! (*during the dialogue that follows BOPADDY is much pleased with a doll's head on the Milliner's table—business*)

POPPY. (*going up to door*) What! my son-in-law, elect, kissing a young woman! Stop—it's off, it's off! Foodle, my daughter is yours!

FOODLE. Anna Maria! (*putting his arms round her*)

(*Enter WOODPECKER*)

WOOD. Why in the world haven't you gone back to your cabs?

POPPY. Sir, it's off!

WOOD. Very good.

POPPY. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

WOOD. What have I done?

POPPY. Your conduct is infamous!

WOOD. Will you tell me what I've done?

POPPY. You dare to ask that, when I saw you through that door with a young woman in your arms?

WOOD. (*aside*) He saw me! (*aloud*) I admit it, sir.

ANNA. He owns to it. (*all cry*)

FOODLE. My darling! (*embraces her*)

WOOD. Will you stop that hugging?

FOODLE. She's my cousin—we were brought up together.

POPPY. It's quite allowable—she's his cousin!

WOOD. His cousin! Oh, then, that lady whom I kissed just now is *my* cousin!

ALL. Oh, indeed—that's quite another matter!

POPPY. Introduce me to your cousin, I'll invite her to the wedding.

WOOD. (*aside*) Sophy, at Anna Maria's wedding! (*aloud*) It's no use, she won't come—she's in mourning.

POPPY. What! in a pink dress?

WOOD. Yes; it's for her husband.

ALL. (*convinced*) Oh!

POPPY. Foodle, give her up—Tapping, take her again.

FOODLE. (*aside*) Old Teetotum!

POPPY. Now, we're quite ready. (*all sit in a row, opposite desk*)

WOOD. What the deuce are they doing?

CRIPPS. I really must find an opportunity of making a complete change. I'll go into this room; there's no one there. (*going to door on right with clothes under his arm*)

POPPY. Where are you going?

CRIPPS. I shall catch my death of cold if I don't—I really can't help it—You must excuse me.

(Exit CRIPPS)

POPPY. My friends, let us follow the Registrar.

(They all follow CRIPPS in procession, BOPADDY last, with a doll's head. All dancing as before—Music plays "Haste to the Wedding," to end of Act, forte when the party cross the stage, pianissimo when they are off. WOODPECKER is left alone.)

WOOD. Where the deuce are they all going?

(Enter SOPHY)

SOPHY. Here is your specimen. *(giving the remains of hat)* I'm very sorry, but I can't match it.

WOOD. What?

SOPHY. It's a very fine straw. You won't find it anywhere. It must be made expressly for you.

WOOD. Here's a pleasant state of things.

SOPHY. If you like to wait three weeks I can get you one from Florence.

WOOD. Three weeks?

SOPHY. I only know of one like it in London.

WOOD. I buy it, mind, I buy it.

SOPHY. It's not for sale. I sold it a week ago to—

WOOD. To whom? Her name?

SOPHY. The Marchioness of Market Harborough.

(Exit SOPHY)

WOOD. A Marchioness—that's awkward. I can't call on a Marchioness, and ask her how much she wants for her hat!

(Enter CRIPPS, door right, with his clothes in his hand—he runs across stage, and exits, door left, followed by all the WEDDING PARTY, dancing as before, BOPADDY last with the doll's head—Music, forte while they are on.)

WOOD. Hi! Mr. Poppytop. *(WOODPECKER is about to follow POPPYTOP)*

(Enter JACKSON)

JACK. Sir, I've just come from home.

WOOD. Well, is the Captain there still?

JACK. Yes—he's there—but he ain't still—he's stamping like fury, and smashing all the chairs.

WOOD. Hang him!—and the lady?

JACK. The lady has fainted—the Captain sent for a doctor, who says she mustn't leave the house on any account.

WOOD. What, in my house? I won't have it. Wrap her up in a blanket, and send her home. (*Exit JACKSON*) A lady at my house, and a doctor attending her, on my wedding day. I must have this hat at any rate. The Marchioness of Market Harborough—she lives in Carlton Gardens. I'll get married first, and then I'll call upon her. But what shall I do with the wedding party? I know—I'll shut 'em up in the Duke of York's Column. I'll say to the keeper "I take this column for twenty-four hours—let no one out."

(*Exit WOODPECKER*)

(*Enter CRIPPS, with his clothes.*)

CRIPPS. Why the deuce do these people follow me everywhere! It's impossible that I can change my clothes.

(*Enter all the WEDDING PARTY, dancing; music forte, as before; CRIPPS runs round stage and off, followed by WEDDING PARTY; BOPADDY last with the doll's head, he is much exhausted with running.*)

END OF ACT I.

(Act II.—*Reception Room at the MARCHIONESS OF MARKET HARBOROUGH. A handsomely-furnished Drawing Room. Three doors in flat, right and left and center, to discover handsome chamber backing; door and window at left; two doors at right, one with lock and key; two chairs at back; small table with vase and bouquet of flowers; piano and music stool; handsome luncheon seen through doors at back. Enter BARNES, a Servant.*)

BARNES. (*announcing*) The Duke of Turniptopshire!

(*Exit BARNES. Enter the DUKE OF TURNIPTOPSHIRE.*)

DUKE. Admirable—magnificent! What gorgeous decorations—what refined taste! What have we here? (*looks through door at back*) A most luxurious cold collation—seven and sixpence a head, if it cost a penny. I wonder if—(*looking about him*)—I wonder if—there's no one coming—if I might venture to take just one tartlet—I will—(*takes a tartlet from table, eats it*)

(*Enter the MARCHIONESS OF MARKET HARBOROUGH*)

MARCH. Well, Duke.

DUKE. Marchioness—(*with his mouth full*) delighted to see you.

MARCH. (*more in sorrow than in anger*) Ah, duke, duke—you've been picking the luncheon again. Now, that's too bad.

DUKE. I'm very, *very* sorry; forgive me—it was thoughtless, criminal, if you will—but I was ever a wayward child, accustomed to have his every whim gratified; and now, in middle age, I find it difficult to shake off the shackles that custom and education have riveted on me. (*in tears*)

MARCH. (*in tears*) You were my late husband's early friend.

DUKE. (*with an effort*) And now, my dear marchioness, whom do you expect at your concert this morning? Tell me all—do not fear, you can trust me implicitly.

MARCH. I feel I can. Well, then, there's Lord and Lady Popton, the Duke and Duchess of Deal, Prince Coketown, the Dowager Duchess of Worthing, Lord and Lady Pentwhistle, and the Archbishop of Bayswater.

DUKE. (*aside*) All dem [*damn*] snobs. (*aloud*) And who sings?

MARCH. The most delightful creature in the world—no other than the eminent tenor, Nisnardi, who arrived only a week ago from Bologna, and whose name is already in everybody's mouth.

DUKE. Gad bless me!

MARCH. You've no idea how delightfully eccentric he is. I asked him to sing two songs this afternoon, and sent him a cheque for three thousand guineas—here is his reply—(*reads*) “Madam,—You ask me to sing two songs, I will sing three—you offer me three thousand guineas, it is not enough.”

DUKE. Dem foreigner!

MARCH. “It is not enough—my terms are a flower from your bouquet!”

DUKE. A what?

MARCH. “A flower from your bouquet!” Is it not romantic?

DUKE. It affects me to tears! Pardon this weakness. (*wipes his eyes*)

MARCH. Dear—dear Duke. (*wipes her eyes*) You know the Princess Polpetti—with the pretty feet?

DUKE. I know her pretty feet.

MARCH. What do you think were his terms for singing at her concert?

DUKE. I haven't the remotest idea! He seems fond of flowers—perhaps a pot of mignonette?

MARCH. Nothing of the kind—one of her old slippers!

DUKE. (*in tears*) Don't—Dimme—I can't stand it—I can't, indeed!

MARCH. What tenderness! What sympathy! You were my late husband's early friend. (*she presses his hand—a noise of carriages heard*) Gracious! Here are my guests, and I've been crying. I can't see them in this state. Duke, oblige me by receiving them—I'll be down in one minute.

(*Exit MARCHIONESS*)

DUKE. (*takes out a snuff box, opens it as if about to take a pinch—produces powder-puff, and powders his face to remove traces of tears—all this action as if about to take snuff*) Now I am prepared to face the hollow world once more!

(*Enter BARNS*)

BARNS. Your grace, a gentleman is below who desires to speak with her ladyship.

DUKE. (*with startling energy*) His name—his name—do not deceive me, varlet, or I'll throttle you! (*seizes him*)

BARNS. I have know your grace, man and boy, these eighteen months, and I have never told you a lie yet. The gentleman declines to give his name—but he says, he wrote to her ladyship this morning.

DUKE. It is he—the tenor, the eccentric Nisnardi! Show him up, and treat him with the utmost courtesy—he is a man who has refused three thousand guineas.

BARNS. (*with his hands elevated*) Three thousand guineas!—three thousand guineas!

(*Exit BARNS, in amazement.*)

(Enter WOODPECKER, *very timidly*.)

WOOD. I say, John Thomas, can I see the Marchioness of Market Harborough? (*at door, to the DUKE*)

DUKE. In one moment; pray walk in—the Marchioness will be here directly! in the meantime, allow me to introduce myself—the Duke of Turniptopshire!

WOOD. The what?

DUKE. The Duke—

WOOD. A real duke?

DUKE. Certainly: observe. (*twirls round and postures*) Are you convinced?

WOOD. I am. (*aside*) And I took him for a flunkey. I'm speaking to a real duke, and I'm going to speak to a real marchioness. What am I going to say to her? Why I'm going to ask her how much she wants for her hat! Oh, I can't do it!—it would be an outrage; the very family pictures seem to say to me, "Get out, this ain't a bonnet shop!" and they are right.

DUKE. (*aside*) He speaks English very well, but he's clearly an Italian—he's got such a rummy [*queer*] waistcoat. I'll draw him out a bit. (*aloud*) Pretty feet—old slippers—songs—Polpetti—ah, you dog!

WOOD. (*not understanding*) Pretty feet? you flatter me, your grace.

DUKE. Yes, pretty feet—oh, very pretty feet. I've heard all about you, you see.

WOOD. Yes, pretty feet, quite so. (*aside*) Wonder what he means. (*aloud*) *Could I see the Marchioness?*

DUKE. Oh, yes, I'll send word to her. Ha, ha, (*with deep meaning to WOODPECKER*) old slippers—songs—three thousand guineas—flower from a bouquet. My dear sir, you're delicious, you're simply delicious.

(*Exit DUKE*)

WOOD. What does he mean by old slippers, and three thousand guineas? So I'm married at last, really and truly married. On leaving Sophy Crackthorpe's, we started for the church, and Anna Maria and I were made one, and now there's nothing to be done but to get the hat from the Marchioness. (*looks out of window*) Yes, there is the wedding party in eight cabs, waiting patiently until I come down. I told them, ha, ha! that this was St. James Hall, and that if they would remain below, I would go up and make arrangements for the wedding breakfast. I hear the Marchioness. I hope she got my note, I worded it very prettily. I concluded with this touching appeal—"Remember that becoming, as the hat may be, self-sacrifice is, after all, woman's noblest coronet." Pretty idea. It's so true.

(Enter MARCHIONESS, *she approaches him melodramatically.*)

MARCH. Glorious man!

WOOD. Your ladyship? (*very nervous, puts on his hat, takes it off again, buttons up his coat, &c.*)

MARCH. Pardon me for having kept you waiting! Do you find it cold?

WOOD. Infernally cold!

MARCH. What a wealth of southern emphasis. Ah, sir, I can offer you a hospitable welcome, and an appreciative company; but I cannot, alas, I *cannot* offer you an Italian sky.

WOOD. Oh, never mind, it's of no consequence if you haven't got it handy.

MARCH. Ah, Bella Italia! It's a lovely country!

WOOD. Ma'am, my lady, I—how am I to begin? I did myself the honour of writing a note to your ladyship.

MARCH. A most delightful note, and one that I will carry about me as long as I live! I will never part with it—never!

WOOD. No, my lady—thank you, my lady. I may remind your ladyship that self-sacrifice, is, after all, woman's noblest coronet! (*with deep significance*)

MARCH. (*puzzled*) Oh, no doubt.

WOOD. In that note I ventured to ask you to grant me a slight favour.

MARCH. Oh, of course—how extremely dull of me. But, do you mean to say that, when you made that request, you really were in earnest?

WOOD. Earnest, my lady! damned earnest! I beg your ladyship's pardon!

MARCH. What Italian fervour of expression! I will keep you in suspense no longer—you shall have what you asked for, though you're a bold man.

WOOD. But, immediately?

MARCH. Immediately.

WOOD. (*with fervour*) Bless you! At last—at last—I shall obtain possession of that infernal hat! I wonder how much she wants for it—shall I beat her down? No, no; hang it all—a Marchioness—let's do the thing handsomely—I'll give her her price!

MARCH. (*takes a flower from bouquet at side table*) There is what you asked for—bold, bad man! (*gives it to WOODPECKER*)

WOOD. What do you call this?

MARCH. The flower—you remember!

WOOD. But, I want a hat.

MARCH. A hat?

WOOD. Didn't you get my note?

MARCH. Yes, here it is. (*gives him note*)

WOOD. (*reads*) "My terms are, a flower from your bouquet—Signed, Nisnardi." Oh, I see—then, I'm Nisnardi.

MARCH. Eccentric creature—of course you are.

WOOD. (*aside*) They take me for somebody called Nisnardi. (*aloud*) But—
(*Enter BARNS*)

BARNS. (*announcing*) Lord and Lady Popton, Prince Coketown, and the Duke and Duchess of Deal.

(*Exit BARNS. Enter LADY POPTON and another LADY and three GENTLEMEN.*)

WOOD. Here's a fix. I shall get kicked out if I don't take care. What the deuce shall I do?

MARCH. My dear Duke, my dear Lady Popton, allow me you to present to the incomparable Nisnardi. (*all bow to him*)

LADY P. And are you really Nisnardi?

WOOD. Madam, I really am Nisnardi.

LADY P. And are you really going to favour us with a specimen of your marvellous talents?

WOOD. With the greatest pleasure.

MARCH. Signor Nisnardi is most kindly going to sing three songs.

ALL. How delightful!

WOOD. (*aside*) Oh, I am a singer, am I? I can't sing a note. I must get out of this somehow. (*aloud*) Marchioness, I have a most extraordinary, and I am afraid you will say unreasonable, request to make.

MARCH. Oh, anything, I'm sure.

WOOD. But it's a secret.

MARCH. Oh, I am sure our friends will excuse us. (*GUESTS bow and exit.*) Now we are alone.

WOOD. You will think me mad when you hear what I have to say. Marchioness, I am the slave of impulse.

MARCH. I know you are.

WOOD. Well, it's a most remarkable thing, but when a whim enters my head, I lose my voice until it is gratified. A whim has just entered my head, and listen. (*grunts*)

MARCH. My goodness, he won't be able to sing. (*earnestly*) What do you require? What ever it is, it is yours.

WOOD. I—I—hardly know how to ask for it.

MARCH. I will save you the trouble. I know instinctively what you want.

WOOD. You do?

MARCH. I do—take it; it is yours! (*takes off her shoe and gives it him—she hops about on her foot*)

WOOD. No, no—it is not that!

MARCH. Not that?

WOOD. No—it's the other end!

MARCH. The other end?

WOOD. Yes—you wear [*pronounced 'were'*] a straw hat.

MARCH. I was—I mean, I do.

WOOD. (*sepulchrally*) It is for that straw hat—that I have conceived this indescribable longing.

MARCH. Oh, is that all!

WOOD. That is all—is it not a mad idea?

MARCH. Oh, not at all—I understand perfectly—you want it as a “pendant” to the slipper.

WOOD. (*aside*) The aristocratic mind seems to go about in slippers!

MARCH. You shall have it at once. Oh, divine creature!

(*Exit MARCHIONESS, hopping off.*)

WOOD. In two minutes, the hat is mine! Ha, ha! I wonder how old Poppytop is by this time? swearing like a Trojan, I'll be bound. (*looks out of window*) There's his cab—I can almost hear him growl.

(*Enter POPPYTOP, rather tipsy. his mouth full.*)

POPPY. Where the dickens can Woodpecker have got to? Why there he is! (*calls*) Woodpecker!

WOOD. Eh! Why, Poppytop! What are you doing here, sir? explain yourself at once.

POPPY. Doing? Why, I'm breakfasting—and breakfasting devilish well, too! My boy, you have done the thing uncommonly well.

WOOD. I'll be hanged if the old gentleman hasn't been devouring her ladyship's luncheon!

POPPY. Uncommon well they seem to be doing these things at St. James's Hall—a better breakfast I never sat down to.

WOOD. But hang it all, sir—do you know what you've been doing?

POPPY. Yes, and I mean to do it again.

WOOD. But where are the others?

POPPY. The others? oh, they're all right.

WOOD. But where are they? Not breakfasting too?

POPPY. Oh, yes; and breakfasting devilish well.

BOPAD. (*within center door, back to audience, facing WEDDING PARTY*) Ladies and gentlemen; as the oldest friend of Anna Maria Poppytop—

VOICE. Tapping.

BOPAD. I beg to propose the health of the bride! Twenty-two years ago—

VOICES. Oh, oh!

VOICE. Come to the point, Bopaddy!

BOPAD. In one word—in one word—I propose the health of the bride—“for she’s a jolly good fellow!” (*all the WEDDING PARTY sing the refrain—great cheering*)

WOOD. Here’s a pleasant state of things! We shall be all kicked out—given into custody—a honeymoon in Holloway Jail. (*ALL shout within*) Will you be quiet? (*to POPPYTOP*) Come away!

POPPY. Hullo! Oh!

WOOD. What’s the matter?

POPPY. My myrtle—I’ve lost my myrtle!

WOOD. It’s in the cab, I dare say. Will you come?

POPPY. But I can’t get on without my myrtle.

(*Enter BARNS, he opens center door and sees WEDDING PARTY at breakfast.*)

BARNS. Eh, what’s all this?—help—help!

WOOD. If he gives the alarm, all is lost! (*flies at BARNS*) Hold your tongue!

BARNS. (*very slowly and emphatically*) I have known your grace, man and boy, these eighteen months—

WOOD. Go in there! (*pushes BARNS into room on right, and sticks him in—calls to him*) There—do as much as sneeze, and I’ll pitch you out of window!

(*Enter MARCHIONESS, still hopping.*)

MARCH. Well, have they brought you the hat?

WOOD. (*trying to hide POPPYTOP*) Not yet, my lady. If you would kindly ask them to hurry a little—

MARCH. (*sees POPPYTOP*) Who is this gentleman?

WOOD. That gentleman? Oh, this gentleman is Mr. Poppytop, who always accompanies me everywhere.

MARCH. Your accompanist? Indeed? A good accompanist is most valuable.

WOOD. (*aside*) She takes him for a musician.

MARCH. (*to POPPYTOP*) And you, sir, are also Italian?

POPPY. (*also hopping, sympathetically*) I—oh, I come from Pettytwiddleum.

WOOD. (*hastily*) Pettytwiddleum—a romantic village on the Abruzzi. His name is Poppoppi—he was formerly a brigand, but he’s reclaimed. He’s quite harmless.

MARCH. A reclaimed brigand! How very interesting!

POPPY. I wish I could find my myrtle.

MARCH. Your what?

POPPY. I’ve lost my myrtle.

MARCH. Your myrtle—what myrtle?

WOOD. (*hastily*) It’s a song called “My Myrtle.” Very pretty this—goes like this—
(*sings to “Groves of Blarney”*) “Though spring of myrtle

May deck my kirtle

Do not—

POPPY. (*suggesting*)

Mock turtle.

WOOD. Hold your row, do.

MARCH. If everything is ready, my guests shall come in—they’re dying to hear you.
(*to POPPYTOP*) Will you oblige me with your arm?

POPPY. (*gives his arm, going out with MARCHIONESS*) More guests! What a wedding this is, to be sure. Woodpecker certainly is doing the thing uncommonly well.

(*Exeunt, both hopping.*)

WOOD. I’m going mad, I feel it. My reason totters on its throne.

(*Enter PATTY, with band-box.*)

PATTY. Here is the straw hat.

WOOD. The straw hat! Hurrah! At last—saved, saved. (*kisses her*) Here, take this; here is my purse—be happy.

PATTY. Why, what’s the matter with the gentleman?

WOOD. At last—at last! (*takes out a black straw hat*) A black straw—positively a black straw. Come here, miss, this is not the one. I want the Leghorn hat, trimmed with poppies.

PATTY. Oh, my lady gave that one to her niece, Mrs. Major-General Bunthunder.

WOOD. Just my luck. All the ground to cover again! Mrs. Major-General Bunthunder, where does she live?

PATTY. Number 12, Park Street, Grosvenor Square.

WOOD. Very good—vanish. (*Exit PATTY*) My course is clear. I must be off, and leave my father-in-law and the wedding party to square matters with the Marchioness. Now then for 12, Park Street, Grosvenor Square.

(*Exit WOODPECKER, rapidly, door left.*)

(*Re-enter MARCHIONESS and POPPYTOP, door right, and her GUESTS.*)

MARCH. Now, my dear friends, if you will kindly take your places, the concert will commence. Why, where is Signor Nisnardi?

POPPY. I don't know the gentleman. Does anybody know Signor Nisnardi?

ALL. Here he is; here he is. (*Enter DUKE, door left, leading WOODPECKER.*)

DUKE. He was actually bolting.

POPPY. (*aside*) That ain't Nisnardi. (*goes upstage*)

DUKE. I napped him just as he was getting into his cab.

WOOD. No, no, I assure you. I had forgotten my tuning fork; left it in a cab. (*aside*)
Oh, dim, dim, dim.

ALL. (*applauding*) Bravo, bravo.

MARCH. Signor Nisnardi, we are quite ready when you are.

WOOD. Certainly; delighted, I'm sure.

ALL. Hush, hush.

WOOD. This is most awkward. My voice is like an old tin kettle. Hem, hem.
(*clearing his throat*)

ALL. Hush, hush.

WOOD. What the devil shall I sing them.

POPPY. (*making a ridiculous noise with the piano*)

WOOD. (*sings a line or two of a comic song*)

VOICES. (*heard behind center door*) "Long live the bride—long live the bride."

(*GUESTS much astonished—a galop is heard—the three doors in flat open suddenly—the WEDDING PARTY burst into the room crying, "A dance—a dance"—they take the MARCHIONESS'S GUESTS and galop round the stage as Act drop falls quickly. POPPYTOP dancing with MARCHIONESS, BOPADDY with LADY POPTON, FOODLE with ANNA MARIA.*)

END OF ACT II.

(Act III, Scene 1.—*Dressing Room in MAJOR-GENERAL BUNTHUNDER'S house. Large screen; with footbath and hot-water can; chair in center; boot-jack behind screen. MAJOR-GENERAL BUNTHUNDER discovered within screen, taking a footbath—a blanket conceals his legs—his shoes are near his chair—he is dressed in full regimentals.*)

BUN. It's a most extraordinary thing that my wife should not have returned—I can't understand it at all. My wife said to me this morning, at a quarter to nine o'clock, "Bunthunder, I'm going out to buy a pint of Barcelona nuts;" and it's now twenty minutes past five in the afternoon, and she has not yet returned; she can't possibly expect that I shall believe that it takes eight hours and thirty-five minutes to buy a pint of Barcelona nuts—unless, indeed, she went to buy them in the land of their birth. By dint of worrying myself about my wife, I've got a splitting headache, and for a splitting headache there's nothing like putting one's feet in hot water. Where can she be? (*suddenly*) Oh, Leonora, Leonora, (*rising*) if I thought you were deceiving me, there is no vengeance that would be too dire! (*knock at street door*) There she is—there she is at last—she's coming upstairs (*knock at room door*) Come in, come in—I'm taking a footbath, but come in.

(*Enter WOODPECKER*)

WOOD. (*out of breath*) Beg pardon, are you Major-General Bunthunder?

BUN. A stranger—who is this gentleman? I *am* Major-General Bunthunder, sir; but I'm not at home.

WOOD. Indeed. (*sits quietly*)

BUN. No, sir, I am *not* at home; but you, sir, appear to be very *much* at home.

WOOD. They kicked us all out of the Marchioness's house. Poppytop is furious, he's going to write to the *Times* complaining of his treatment at St. James's Hall! (*rises*)

BUN. What's all that to me? Will you go, sir?

WOOD. Why? (*crossing room*) Oh! (*raising blanket*) I see you are taking a bath.

BUN. (*furious*) I won't listen to you. I'm not well. I've got a headache.

WOOD. Then try some more hot water? (*pours water from can*)

BUN. Ho! High! Hold hard! Will you be quiet? What do you want? Who are you?

WOOD. Woodpecker Tapping, Esquire, married this morning, the wedding party are in eight cabs, at your house.

BUN. I don't know you, sir! I don't want you!

WOOD. And I don't want you!

BUN. Whom do you want then?

WOOD. Your wife!

BUN. My wife! Do you know my wife?

WOOD. Not at all, but she possesses something that I am most anxious to purchase!

BUN. We don't sell it. Will you go?

WOOD. Not till I've seen Mrs. Bunthunder.

BUN. She's not at home.

WOOD. Nonsense. I know better. I dare say she's in here—at all events, I mean to look!

BUN. He's a thief! a burglar! monster, avaunt! (*takes up water can to throw at him;*

WOODPECKER closes the screen round him, and conceals him from audience, by this means BUNTHUNDER'S boots are left outside; WOODPECKER then runs into room, on right, concealed from view) Wait one moment, only one moment, till I've finished dressing.

(*Enter POPPYTOP, limping with his myrtle.*)

POPPY. My son-in-law is a most remarkable person; he invites us to his house, and when we get there, he shuts the door in our faces; fortunately the lock didn't catch, and here I am; now—now I shall be able to take off these confounded tight—tight boots, which have been bothering me all day.

BUN. (*in screen*) One moment—only one moment!

POPPY. Hullo! Woodpecker—there, is he? Ha! (*sees boots*) The very thing, that's lucky. (*takes off his boots, and puts on others by screen, they are much too large for him, and have spurs*) Dear me, what a relief. (*puts his boots where BUNTHUNDER'S were*)

BUN. (*reaching round screen for his boots, takes POPPYTOP'S*) Now for my boots—just wait one moment.

POPPY. I say, my boy, your wife is below.

BUN. Oh—my wife is below, is she? Just one moment—I'm nearly ready.

POPPY. All right, I'll just step into the next room, and wait there.

(*Exit POPPYTOP, to room on left. Enter BOPADDY, on left, from same door.*)

BUN. My feet seem much swollen. I can scarcely get my boots on—but no matter. (*coming out of screen, seizes BOPADDY, whom he takes for WOODPECKER, and swings him round*) Now, you scoundrel, I've got you!

BOPAD. No—no—I won't dance any more, thank you. I'm quite done up—very much obliged to you—but I'm really quite done up.

BUN. It's not the same—it's another of the gang. (*takes water can and presents it at BOPADDY*) Robber! where's your Captain?

BOPAD. Not another drop, thank you—I've done capitally and not another drop. (*BUNTHUNDER hears noise in room to the left*)

BUN. He's in there. (*rushes into room on the left*)

BOPAD. Another wedding guest, whom I don't know, and in regimentals, too—what a swell. Yah—yah—*(yawns)* I'm very sleepy. I wish I could find a boot-jack. *(goes upstage)*
(Enter POPPYTOP with his myrtle, and FOODLE, ANNA MARIA, and WEDDING PARTY, all dancing, Music—“Haste to the Wedding.”)

POPPY. Now my dears, come in—Woodpecker has just finished dressing, behind that screen—he's nearly ready—make haste, my boy—*(to screen, which is open and contains nobody)* Your bride is here, and I'm going to avail myself of the opportunity to make a little speech—a little affecting speech.

ANNA. Oh, papa, I'm so agitated.

POPPY. Naturally, my daughter. When I make one of my affecting speeches, all who hear them are agitated. Now then, Woodpecker, come along. Not ready yet? No matter; stop where you are. You can hear what I've got to say. Foodle, my myrtle. I've been carrying it about all day for this. Give it me—the supreme moment has arrived.

FOODLE. Here it is. *(in tears, gives it to POPPYTOP)*

POPPY. My children, my dear children.

BOPAD. *(coming downstage)* Have you seen a boot-jack?

POPPY. Next door but one—go and hang yourself.

BOPAD. Thank ye. Yes, I will. *(goes upstage)*

POPPY. Confound him. Where was I?

FOODLE. Next door but one. Go and hang yourself.

POPPY. Oh, thankee. Now, Woodpecker, my son-in-law, my dear son-in-law, listen to what I'm going to say. My daughter, my flower, the apple of my eye, is yours. I have given her to you. Love her, honour her, cherish her—you hear—cherish her. *(pause)* Do you hear—cherish her. No answer; yes, I think I hear him sobbing. *(to the others)* Woodpecker is sobbing. *(they all sob)* As for you, my daughter, observe this myrtle. I planted it on the day you were born. Let it be your emblem through life; let its evergreen boughs remind you that you have a father, that you had a mother, that you may have—no matter—that—that—let its evergreen boughs remind you—*(aside)* I can't remember any more.

BOPAD. *(coming down with boot-jack)* Hurrah, I've found it.

ANNA. What?

BOPAD. The boot-jack.

POPPY. There, now go into the next room. We're going to have tea.

(Music—“Haste to the Wedding,” WEDDING PARTY, except POPPYTOP, all dance off through right door.)

(Enter WOODPECKER, through another door.)

WOOD. Can't find her anywhere. Why, what are you doing here? I left you in the cab, and shut the door in your face.

POPPY. You did—your conduct was disgraceful, sir. We will not disturb the harmony of the evening by quarrelling now—to-morrow we will have it out.

(Exit POPPYTOP, to join the WEDDING PARTY.)

WOOD. Most extraordinary thing—found plenty of hats of all colours, blue, yellow, green, grey, plaid, but not one Leghorn hat among them.

(Enter BUNTHUNDER)

BUN. Here he is! Now I've got you. (*seizes him*) Thief!

WOOD. Thief! Nonsense! let go—you don't understand; this morning my horse devoured a Leghorn hat, belonging to a lady who was engaged in flirting with a Captain in the Guards.

BUN. Well, sir, what's that to me?

WOOD. But you don't understand; that lady is now at my house and won't leave it.

BUN. Why don't the young widow go home?

WOOD. Widow! good gracious! she ain't a widow. (*whispers*) she's a married woman, and her husband knows nothing about it.

BUN. Ha! ha! (*laughing*)

WOOD. The worst of it is that her husband is a miserable one—a grinning idiot of a washed-out Othello—who would thrash her if he found her out.

BUN. I can quite understand it.

WOOD. But we'll hoodwink the humbug, with your help—sly dog, you—won't we, eh?

BUN. Sir—I don't think I ought to connive at—and yet—ha! ha! ha!

WOOD. Ha! ha! ha! Make haste now—here are the fragments. (*producing hat*)

BUN. Good heavens!

WOOD. Leghorn hat, trimmed with poppies.

BUN. (*aside*) It's hers—it's my wife's—and the Barcelona nuts were a miserable subterfuge. Murder will come of this. (*aloud*) Sir, this lady who is stopping at your house is my wife.

WOOD. This is pleasant! This hat that I've been chevyng [*chasing*] all over London all day long, with my wedding party at my heels, turns out to be no other than the very hat my horse ate this morning!

BUN. Come along, sir.

WOOD. Where?

BUN. To your house. Where do you live?

WOOD. I decline to say. You shall never know.

(Enter POPPYTOP)

BUN. Where does this young man live?

POPPY. Number 8, Little Pickleboy Gardens, Mulberry Square, South West.

BUN. Eh, good, come along.

WOOD. *(whispers)* But, my dear sir, this lady, who is at my house, is a negress, she's as black as your boots.

BUN. Artful evasion, sir—artful evasion! Come, sir—come, sir!

(Drags him off stage through door at left—POPPYTOP goes to right, beckons WEDDING PARTY, they enter and follow POPPYTOP off stage—BOPADDY last with the myrtle.)

END OF ACT III - SCENE 1

(Act III, Scene 2.—*A Public Square. Night. WOODPECKER TAPPING'S house on the left; another house next to it; police station on the right; a lamp, center stage, connected with each side by an iron bracket; lamp post; view of square, with illuminated windows on back cloth; doors practicable to houses; window practicable to police station; door steps to houses, right and left; a gutter across stage at back; it is supposed to be raining. Enter WEDDING PARTY, dancing round stage with umbrellas, except BOPADDY, who endeavours vainly to get shelter by running first under one umbrella and then under another. Music as before.*)

POPPY. (*leading them*) This way, my friends—this way! Hulloo, look out for the gutter! (*He jumps over it, all the WEDDING PARTY follow, jumping over it in procession.*)

ANNA. Oh, papa, where's Woodpecker?

POPPY. Eh, ain't he here? No! Why, he's given us the slip.

ANNA. Papa, dear, I'm so tired. I can't go any further. (*sits on step*)

FOODLE. And my new boots hurt me, so that I must sit down. (*crosses and sits on step*)

POPPY. (*in BUNTHUNDER'S large boots*) Ha, ha! so did mine, but I've changed them.

ANNA. Oh, papa, papa, why did you send away the cabs?

POPPY. Why? I've paid 'em eleven pounds fifteen shillings already—ain't that enough? But where are we?

ALL. I don't know.

ANNA. Woodpecker told us to go straight to his house, Number 8, Little Pickleboy Gardens, Mulberry Square.

POPPY. Perhaps this is Mulberry Square. (*to BOPADDY*) Your great grandfather used to live in London. Is this Mulberry Square?

BOPAD. Yes—yes! Splendid—splendid weather for ducks and peas. (*Enter WILKINSON, a policeman*) Ha, ha! oh, yes; for ducks and green peas. (*chuckles*)

POPPY. Ugh—you old fool!

WILK. Tissue! (*sneezes*)

POPPY. Here's a policeman; I'll ask him. (*very politely*) I beg your pardon, is this Little Pickleboy Gardens, Mulberry Square, South West?

WILK. (*sternly*) Move on. (*Exit WILKINSON*)

POPPY. And I pay taxes, in advance, to support that pampered menial! I feed him, I clothe him, I lodge him, and I pay him—and he tells me to move on! It's too dear—it's a deal too dear.

FOODLE. (*who has climbed up lamp post, and read name at corner of street*) Hurrah! Little Pickleboy Gardens. It's all right—here we are.

POPPY. And here's Number 8. (*knocks*) Get up, my dear. (*to ANNA MARIA*)

ANNA. Papa, dear, it's no use; I must sit down somewhere.

POPPY. Not in a muddy road, my dear, in a thirty-seven and sixpenny dress. Why don't they come? (*knocks*)

FOODLE. Oh, there's a light in the first floor.

POPPY. Then Woodpecker must have arrived before us. (*calls*) Woodpecker—Woodpecker! Make haste—it's pouring—come down!

ALL. Come down—come down!

(*Re-enter WILKINSON*)

WILK. (*to BOPADDY, who has fallen asleep on step*) Now, then, can't have that noise here. (*shakes him*) Move on! (*shakes him*) Move on!

BOPAD. Thank you, my dear sir. Don't you trouble yourself to brush it off; I'll do that when I go in.

(*Exit WILKINSON. JACKSON opens door.*)

POPPY. Hurrah, here we are. Come in.

JACK. Out of the question.

POPPY. Eh?

JACK. It's impossible, more than my place is worth. Why, the lady's still upstairs.

(*ANNA faints into FOODLE'S arms*)

POPPY. A lady? What lady?

JACK. The lady who's stopping with master. The lady without a hat.

POPPY. A lady stopping with master!

FOODLE. On his wedding day!

ANNA. And without a hat!

POPPY. Come along; I'll get you divorced, my dear. It's off—it's off. Foodle shall have you.

FOODLE. Anna Maria! (*embrace*)

POPPY. Come along back to Pettytwiddleum. There's a train at eleven; we shall just catch it. (*all going*)

ANNA. Oh!

POPPY. What's the matter?

ANNA. (*melodramatically*) Am I never to see Woodpecker again?

POPPY. Never.

ANNA. Then—hadn't I better take my wedding presents?

POPPY. My dear, you're a very sensible girl. To be sure you had. (*to JACKSON*) Go and bring out all my daughter's wedding presents; mind, every one. Be off. (*sits down on step; Exit JACKSON into house.*)

(Enter WOODPECKER)

ALL. Here is the monster.

WOOD. Father-in-law, I'm exhausted. Let me sit on your lap. (*sits on POPPYTOP'S lap*)

POPPY. It's off—off—off. (*screaming*)

WOOD. (*suddenly listening*) Hold your row; be quiet. I hear him—he's coming.

POPPY. Who's coming?

WOOD. Major-General Bunthunder. No, he's missed me. He's got tight boots and can't run. There's time to get Leonora out of the house before he arrives.

POPPY. Leonora! Oho, so you own to Leonora.

WOOD. Why, of course I own to Leonora.

ALL. Oho! he owns to Leonora!

(Enter JACKSON, with parcels.)

JACK. Here are the wedding presents.

POPPY. My friends, let each of us take a parcel. (JACKSON gives parcel to each of the WEDDING PARTY; POPPYTOP gets the band-box given by BOPADDY, in ACT I) And then off we go to Pettywiddleum!

WOOD. What's all this?

JACK. Wedding presents, sir. (*Exit JACKSON, into station.*)

WOOD. Oh, this won't do—drop those things directly! (*they all drop parcels*)

POPPY. Nonsense—pick them up again! (*they pick up parcels—WOODPECKER and POPPYTOP struggle for band-box*)

BOPAD. Ho, take care, you'll crush it—it's a Leghorn hat, worth twenty pounds!

WOOD. What?

BOPAD. It's my wedding present! I'm in the trade—I sent to Florence for it for my little niece.

WOOD. Give it here. (*takes band-box from POPPYTOP—takes out straw hat, trimmed with poppies, and compares fragments*) Great Heavens!—it is the very thing—the very thing—exact—red poppies, and all! Hurrah, hurrah! (*he shakes hands with everyone*)

POPPY. (*aside*) A hat worth twenty pounds—he shan't have it—scoundrel! (*he takes the hat out of band-box, under WOODPECKER'S left arm, and shuts up box again*)

WOOD. (*who has not seen this*) Wait one moment. I'll give her her hat, send her off, and then we'll all go in and enjoy ourselves!

(*Exit WOODPECKER, into house.*)

POPPY. Now, my friends, off we go to Pettywiddleum! (*ALL going*)

(Enter WILKINSON)

WILK. Hullo—what's all this—what are you doing with those parcels?

POPPY. We—we are moving.

WILK. What, at this time o' night? This won't do, you know—I know you!

POPPY. Sir!

WILK. What have you got here—eh?

POPPY. There? That? Oh, that's a carriage clock.

WILK. (*opens muff-box and finds muff*) That's very like a carriage clock? Come along o' me—all of yer—in yer go!

(*Music, "Haste to the Wedding"—they all go into station-house*)

BOPAD. Twenty pounds—if it cost a penny, twenty pounds! (*walking slowly off*)

WILK. Now, then; in yer go—come along!

(BOPADDY waits—WILKINSON *taps him on the shoulder; and points to station, then seizes him by collar*—BOPADDY *suddenly turns furious, flies at WILKINSON, upsets him, takes out his staff, pummels him furiously, and drags him into station*)

(*Enter WOODPECKER, CAPTAIN BAPP, and LEONORA, from house.*)

WOOD. Come along; you are saved! I've found the hat, make haste—your husband knows all—put it on, and, for goodness sake, go before he arrives! (*he gives them the band-box—they open it, it is empty*)

ALL. Empty!

WOOD. It *was* there—I'll swear it was! My old villain of a father-in-law has collared it. (*to WILKINSON, who has entered from station*) Where is he—where's my father-in-law?

WILK. Where? Why, in the station 'us.

WOOD. And the wedding party?

WILK. Station 'us—run 'em all in. (*Exit WILKINSON, into station.*)

WOOD. And they've got the hat; what am I to do?

CAPT B. Wait a moment. I know—I know the Inspector.

(*CAPTAIN BAPP, crosses and exits into station.*)

WOOD. Hurrah!

BUN. (*without*) Stop! cabman—hi! put me down here.

LEON. Heavens, my husband! (*going*) I'll run and hide in your house.

WOOD. No, no! he's going to search the house!

LEON. But, what shall I do?

WOOD. I know—I'll give you in charge. Would you like to be given in charge?

LEON. (*delighted*) Oh, yes!

(Enter WILKINSON, from station.)

WOOD. Hi, policeman! *(gives him coin)* Take this woman away. Drunk and disorderly.

WILK. What agin? *(crosses to her)* Come along, I know yer. *(walks her into station)*

(Enter BUNTHUNDER, hobbling.)

BUN. So here you are. You escaped me when I wasn't looking. Open your door. I'll blow her brains out [*Leonora*], and his brains out [*Captain Bapp*], and your brains out [*Woodpecker*], and my own brains out. *(Exit BUNTHUNDER, into house.)*

WOOD. No objection if you'll only begin with yourself.

(CAPTAIN BAPP appears at window of station, first floor, with hat.)

Capt B. Quick, quick; here's the hat.

WOOD. Saved, saved; throw it out; make haste. Her husband's in there. *(CAPTAIN BAPP throws the hat, which rests on lamp)* Confound it. *(tries to unhook it with his umbrella—he can't reach it)*

(Re-enter BUNTHUNDER, from house.)

BUN. She's not there. Forgive me. I've been unjust.

WOOD. You have. Come under my umbrella. *(takes BUNTHUNDER'S arm and hides hat with umbrella)*

BUN. No, no; it doesn't rain. Put the umbrella down. It's quite fine overhead.

WOOD. But it's so wet under foot.

BUN. I've made a great fool of myself, sir.

WOOD. You have. *(he jumps to unhook the hat with his umbrella, and makes BUNTHUNDER jump too)*

BUN. I apologise, sir.

WOOD. I think you should, sir. *(jumps again)*

BUN. Forgive me, sir.

WOOD. I do, sir. *(jumps again)*

BUN. What are you jumping for?

WOOD. Violent cramp, indigestion. Can't help it. Always takes me so.

BUN. Indeed, have you tried—*(WOODPECKER jumps again)* Don't, sir.

(WOODPECKER jumps, and comes down on BUNTHUNDER'S toes. Enter LEONORA from station, followed by the GUESTS of the WEDDING PARTY, one of whom unhooks hat, which falls to stage; LEONORA picks it up, puts it on, and comes forward.)

BUN. I won't be trodden on like this, sir!

LEON. *(to BUNTHUNDER)* So, sir, I've found you out at last!

WOOD. (*aside*) She's got the hat!

LEON. Here's pretty behaviour for a married man!

BUN. She's got the hat!

LEON. All day long have I been waiting for you—at my aunt's.

BUN. You have? Forgive me! But the Barcelona nuts—you have *not* got the Barcelona nuts!

WOOD. She's got the hat! You've got it, haven't you?

LEON. Sir—I haven't the pleasure of your acquaintance.

WOOD. No—of course—oh, no—but you've got the hat. (*to the CROWD*) Has she the hat, or has she not?

ALL. She has!

BUN. (*crosses*) Leonora! (*embrace*)

(*Enter POPPYTOP, ANNA MARIA, FOODLE, CAPTAIN BAPP, JACKSON, and WILKINSON, from station.*)

POPPY. My son-in-law, your hand—it's all right—it's on again.

WOOD. What, the hat?

POPPY. No, the marriage. Your servant has told me all—you have behaved nobly. Foodle, let her go—take her, Tapping—kneel, my children. (*ANNA and WOODPECKER kneel*) Kneel while we sing the affecting little farewell which we have prepared for you this morning. Out music, and out handkerchiefs, all.

(*Everybody produces bits of music and pocket handkerchiefs, singing the Finale.*)

(*Air, "Il était un petit navire."*)

ALL. To see you both for life united,
To hear your wedding promise plighted,
To this Metropolis we've come!
And, as the night is dark and dirty,
We'll go home by the eleven-thirty,
To Petty-petty twiddleum!

(*During these lines the BRIDE and BRIDEGROOM bid farewell, and go towards the house—all the others gradually moving off, except BOPADDY, who proposes to enter the house with the BRIDAL COUPLE—he is brought back by POPPYTOP, as the curtain falls.*)

END OF ACT III.

CURTAIN.