

CAPT. G. Now, if there is any Power who looks after this world, will He kindly tell me what I have done? (Reaching out for the claret, and half aloud.) What have I done?

WITH ANY AMAZEMENT

And are not afraid with any amazement.--Marriage Service.

SCENE.--A bachelor's bedroom-toilet-table arranged with unnatural neatness. CAPTAIN GADSBY asleep and snoring heavily. Time, 10:30 A. M.--a glorious autumn day at Simla. Enter delicately Captain MAFFLIN of GADSBY's regiment. Looks at sleeper, and shakes his head murmuring "Poor Gaddy." Performs violent fantasia with hair-brushes on chairback.

CAPT. M. Wake up, my sleeping beauty! (Roars.)

"Uprouse ye, then, my merry merry men! It is our opening day! It is our opening da-ay!"

Gaddy, the little dicky-birds have been billing and cooing for ever so long; and I'm here!

CAPT. G. (Sitting up and yawning.) 'Mornin'. This is awf'ly good of you, old fellow. Most awf'ly good of you. 'Don't know what I should do without you. 'Pon my soul, I don't. 'Haven't slept a wink all night.

CAPT. M. I didn't get in till half-past eleven. 'Had a look at you then, and you seemed to be sleeping as soundly as a condemned criminal.

CAPT. G. Jack, if you want to make those disgustingly worn-out jokes, you'd better go away. (With portentous gravity.) It's the happiest day in my life.

CAPT. M. (Chuckling grimly.) Not by a very long chalk, my son. You're going through some of the most refined torture you've ever known. But be calm. I am with you. 'Shun! Dress!

CAPT. G. Eh! Wha-at?

CAPT. M. Do you suppose that you are your own master for the next twelve hours? If you do, of course-(Makes for the door.)

CAPT. G. No! For Goodness' sake, old man, don't do that! You'll see through, won't you? I've been mugging up that beastly drill, and can't remember a line of it.

CAPT. M. (Overturning G.'s uniform.) Go and tub. Don't bother me. I'll give you ten minutes to dress in.

(Interval, filled by the noise as of one splashing in the bath-room.)

CAPT. G. (Emerging from dressing-room.) What time is it?

CAPT. M. Nearly eleven.

CAPT. G. Five hours more. O Lord!

CAPT. M. (Aside.) 'First sign of funk, that. 'Wonder if it's going to spread. (Aloud.) Come along to breakfast.

CAPT. G. I can't eat anything. I don't want any breakfast.

CAPT. M. (Aside.) So early! (Aloud) CAPTAIN Gadsby, I order you to eat breakfast, and a dashed good breakfast, too. None of your bridal airs and graces with me!

Leads G. downstairs and stands over him while he eats two chops.

CAPT. G. (Who has looked at his watch thrice in the last five minutes.)  
What time is it?

CAPT. M. Time to come for a walk. Light up.

CAPT. G. I haven't smoked for ten days, and I won't now. (Takes cheroot

which M. has cut for him, and blows smoke through his nose luxuriously.)  
We aren't going down the Mall, are we?

CAPT. M. (Aside.) They're all alike in these stages. (Aloud.) No, my  
Vestal. We're going along the quietest road we can find.

CAPT. G. Any chance of seeing Her? CAPT. M. Innocent! No! Come along,  
and, if you want me for the final obsequies, don't cut my eye out with  
your stick.

CAPT. G. (Spinning round.) I say, isn't She the dearest creature that  
ever walked? What's the time? What comes after "wilt thou take this  
woman"?

CAPT. M. You go for the ring. R'clect it'll be on the top of my  
right-hand little finger, and just be careful how you draw it off,  
because I shall have the Verger's fees somewhere in my glove.

CAPT. G. (Walking forward hastily.) D---- the Verger! Come along! It's  
past twelve and I haven't seen Her since yesterday evening. (Spinning  
round again.) She's an absolute angel, Jack, and She's a dashed deal too  
good for me. Look here, does She come up the aisle on my arm, or how?

CAPT. M. If I thought that there was the least chance of your  
remembering anything for two consecutive minutes, I'd tell you. Stop  
passaging about like that!

CAPT. G. (Halting in the middle of the road.) I say, Jack.

CAPT. M. Keep quiet for another ten minutes if you can, you lunatic; and walk!

The two tramp at five miles an hour for fifteen minutes.

CAPT. G. What's the time? How about the cursed wedding-cake and the slippers? They don't throw 'em about in church, do they?

CAPT. M. In-variably. The Padre leads off with his boots.

CAPT. G. Confound your silly soul! Don't make fun of me. I can't stand it, and I won't!

CAPT. M. (Untroubled.) So-ooo, old horse You'll have to sleep for a couple of hours this afternoon.

CAPT. G. (Spinning round.) I'm not going to be treated like a dashed child. Understand that!

CAPT. M. (Aside.) Nerves gone to fiddle-strings. What a day we're having! (Tenderly putting his hand on G.'s shoulder.) My David, how long have you known this Jonathan? Would I come up here to make a fool of you--after all these years?

CAPT. G. (Penitently.) I know, I know, Jack--but I'm as upset as I can be. Don't mind what I say. Just hear me run through the drill and see if I've got it all right:—"To have and to hold for better or worse, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, so help me God. Amen."

CAPT. M. (Suffocating with suppressed laughter.) Yes. That's about the gist of it. I'll prompt if you get into a hat.

CAPT. G. (Earnestly.) Yes, you'll stick by me, Jack, won't you? I'm awfully happy, but I don't mind telling you that I'm in a blue funk!

CAPT. M. (Gravely.) Are you? I should never have noticed it. You don't look like it.

CAPT. G. Don't I? That's all right. (Spinning round.) On my soul and honor, Jack, She's the sweetest little angel that ever came down from the sky. There isn't a woman on earth fit to speak to Her.

CAPT. M. (Aside.) And this is old Gandy! (Aloud.) Go on if it relieves you.

CAPT. G. You can laugh! That's all you wild asses of bachelors are fit for.

CAPT. M. (Drawling.) You never would wait for the troop to come up. You aren't quite married yet, y'know.

CAPT. G. Ugh! That reminds me. I don't believe I shall be able to get into any boots Let's go home and try 'em on (Hurries forward.)

CAPT. M. 'Wouldn't be in your shoes for anything that Asia has to offer.

CAPT. G. (Spinning round.) That just shows your hideous blackness of soul--your dense stupidity--your brutal narrow-mindedness. There's only one fault about you. You're the best of good fellows, and I don't know what I should have done without you, but--you aren't married. (Wags his head gravely.) Take a wife, Jack.

CAPT. M. (With a face like a wall.) Va-as. Whose for choice?

CAPT. G. If you're going to be a blackguard, I'm going on--What's the time?

CAPT. M. (Hums.)--

"An' since 'twas very clear we drank only ginger-beer,  
Faith, there must ha' been some stingo in the ginger."

Come back, you maniac. I'm going to take you home, and you're going to lie down.

CAPT. G. What on earth do I want to lie down for?

CAPT. M. Give me a light from your cheroot and see.

CAPT. G. (Watching cheroot-butt quiver like a tuning-fork.) Sweet state I'm in!

CAPT. M. You are. I'll get you a peg and you'll go to sleep.

They return and M. compounds a four-finger peg.

CAPT. G. O bus! bus! It'll make me as drunk as an owl.

CAPT. M. 'Curious thing, 'twon't have the slightest effect on you. Drink it off, chuck yourself down there, and go to bye-bye.

CAPT. G. It's absurd. I sha'n't sleep, I know I sha'n't!

(Falls into heavy doze at end of seven minutes. CAPT. M. watches him tenderly.)

CAPT. M. Poor old Gandy! I've seen a few turned off before, but never one who went to the gallows in this condition. 'Can't tell how it affects 'em, though. It's the thoroughbreds that sweat when they're backed into double-harness.--And that's the man who went through the



guns at Amdheran like a devil possessed of devils. (Leans over G.) But this is worse than the guns, old pal--worse than the guns, isn't it? (G. turns in his sleep, and M. touches him clumsily on the forehead.) Poor, dear old Gaddy I Going like the rest of 'em--going like the rest of 'em--Friend that sticketh closer than a brother--eight years. Dashed bit of a slip of a girl--eight weeks! And--where's your friend? (Smokes disconsolately till church clock strikes three.)

CAPT. M. Up with you! Get into your kit.

CAPT. C. Already? Isn't it too soon? Hadn't I better have a shave?

CAPT. M. No! You're all right. (Aside.) He'd chip his chin to pieces.

CAPT. C. What's the hurry?

CAPT. M. You've got to be there first.

CAPT. C. To be stared at?

CAPT. M. Exactly. You're part of the show. Where's the burnisher? Your spurs are in a shameful state.

CAPT. G. (Gruffly.) Jack, I be damned if you shall do that for me.

CAPT. M. (More gruffly.) Dry' up and get dressed! If I choose to clean

your spurs, you're under my orders.

CAPT. G. dresses. M. follows suit.

CAPT. M. (Critically, walking round.) M'yes, you'll do. Only don't look so like a criminal. Ring, gloves, fees--that's all right for me. Let your moustache alone. Now, if the ponies are ready, we'll go.

CAPT. G. (Nervously.) It's much too soon. Let's light up! Let's have a peg! Let's--CAPT. M. Let's make bally asses of ourselves!

BELLS. (Without.)--

"Good-peo-ple-all To prayers-we call."

CAPT. M. There go the bells! Come an--unless you'd rather not. (They ride off.)

BELLS.--

"We honor the King And Brides joy do bring--Good tidings we tell, And ring the Dead's knell."

CAPT. G. (Dismounting at the door of the Church.) I say, aren't we much too soon? There are no end of people inside. I say, aren't we much too late? Stick by me, Jack! What the devil do I do?

CAPT. M. Strike an attitude at the head of the aisle and wait for Her.  
(G. groans as M. wheels him into position before three hundred eyes.)

CAPT. M. (Imploringly.) Gaddy, if you love me, for pity's sake, for the Honor of the Regiment, stand up! Chuck yourself into your uniform! Look like a man! I've got to speak to the Padre a minute. (G. breaks into a gentle Perspiration.) your face I'll never man again. Stand up! (Visibly.) If you wipe your face I'll never be your best man again. Stand up! (G. Trembles visibly.)

CAPT. M. (Returning.) She's coming now. Look out when the music starts. There's the organ beginning to clack.

(Bride steps out of 'rickshaw at Church door. G. catches a glimpse of her and takes heart.)

ORGAN.--

"The Voice that breathed o'er Eden,  
That earliest marriage day,  
The primal marriage-blessing,  
It hath not passed away."

CAPT. M. (Watching G.) By Jove! He is looking well. 'Didn't think he had it in him.

CAPT. G. How long does this hymn go on for?

CAPT. M. It will be over directly. (Anxiously.) Beginning to belch and gulp. Hold on, Gabby, and think o' the Regiment.

CAPT. G. (Measuredly.) I say there's a big brown lizard crawling up that wall.

CAPT. M. My Sainted Mother! The last stage of collapse!

Bride comes Up to left of altar, lifts her eyes once to G., who is suddenly smitten mad.

CAPT. G. (TO himself again and again.) Little Featherweight's a woman--a woman! And I thought she was a little girl.

CAPT. M. (In a whisper.) Form the halt--inward wheel.

CAPT. G. obeys mechanically and the ceremony proceeds.

PADRE.... only unto her as ye both shall live?

CAPT. G. (His throat useless.) Ha--hmmm!

CAPT. M. Say you will or you won't. There's no second deal here.

Bride gives response with perfect calmness, and is given away by the father.

CAPT. G. (Thinking to show his learning.) Jack give me away now, quick!

CAPT. M. You've given yourself away quite enough. Her right hand, man! Repeat! Repeat! "Theodore Philip." Have you forgotten your own name?

CAPT. G. stumbles through Affirmation, which Bride repeats without a tremor.

CAPT. M. Now the ring! Follow the Padre! Don't pull off my glove! Here it is! Great Cupid, he's found his voice.

CAPT. G. repeats Troth in a voice to be heard to the end of the Church and turns on his heel.

CAPT. M. (Desperately.) Rein back! Back to your troop! 'Tisn't half legal yet.

PADRE.... joined together let no man put asunder.

CAPT. G. paralyzed with fear jibs after Blessing.

CAPT. M. (Quickly.) On your own front--one length. Take her with you. I

don't come. You've nothing to say. (CAPT. G. jingles up to altar.)

CAPT. M. (In a piercing rattle meant to be a whisper.) Kneel, you stiff-necked ruffian! Kneel!

PADRE... whose daughters are ye so long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement.

CAPT. M. Dismiss! Break off! Left wheel!

All troop to vestry. They sign.

CAPT. M. Kiss Her, Gaddy.

CAPT. G. (Rubbing the ink into his glove.) Eh! Wha-at?

CAPT. M. (Taking one pace to Bride.) If you don't, I shall.

CAPT. G. (Interposing an arm.) Not this journey!

General kissing, in which CAPT. G. is pursued by unknown female.

CAPT. G. (Faintly to M.) This is Hades! Can I wipe my face now?

CAPT. M. My responsibility has ended. Better ask Misses GADSBY.

CAPT. G. winces as though shot and procession is Mendelssohned out of Church to house, where usual tortures take place over the wedding-cake.

CAPT. M. (At table.) Up with you, Gaddy. They expect a speech.

CAPT. G. (After three minutes' agony.) Ha-hmmm. (Thunders Of applause.)

CAPT. M. Doooid good, for a first attempt. Now go and change your kit while Mamma is weeping over "the Missus." (CAPT. G. disappears. CAPT. M. starts up tearing his hair.) It's not half legal. Where are the shoes? Get an ayah.

AYAH. Missie Captain Sahib done gone band karo all the jutis.

CAPT. M. (Brandishing scab larded sword.) Woman, produce those shoes Some one lend me a bread-knife. We mustn't crack Gaddy's head more than it is. (Slices heel off white satin slipper and puts slipper up his sleeve.)

Where is the Bride? (To the company at large.) Be tender with that rice. It's a heathen custom. Give me the big bag.

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Bride slips out quietly into 'rickshaw and departs toward the sunset.

CAPT. M. (In the open.) Stole away, by Jove! So much the worse for Gaddy! Here he is. Now Gaddy, this'll be livelier than Amdberan! Where's your horse?

CAPT. G. (Furiously, seeing that the women are out of an earshot.) Where the--is my Wife?

CAPT. M. Half-way to Mahasu by this time. You'll have to ride like Young Lochinvar.

Horse comes round on his hind legs; refuses to let G. handle him.

CAPT. G. Oh you will, will you? Get 'round, you brute--you hog--you beast! Get round!

Wrenches horse's head over, nearly breaking lower jaw: swings himself into saddle, and sends home both spurs in the midst of a spattering gale of Best Patna.

CAPT. M. For your life and your love-ride, Gaddy--And God bless you!

Throws half a pound of rice at G. who disappears, bowed forward on the saddle, in a cloud of sunlit dust.

CAPT. M. I've lost old Gaddy. (Lights cigarette and strolls off, singing absently):--



"You may carve it on his tombstone, you may cut it on his card, That a young man married is a young man marred!"

Miss DEERCOURT. (From her horse.) Really, Captain Mafflin! You are more plain spoken than polite!

CAPT. M. (Aside.) They say marriage is like cholera. 'Wonder who'll be the next victim.

White satin slipper slides from his sleeve and falls at his feet. Left wondering.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN And ye shall be as--Gods!

SCENE.--Thymy grass-plot at back of t!e Mahasu dak-bungalow, overlooking little wooded valley. On the left, glimpse of the Dead Forest of Fagoo; on the right, Simla Hills. In background, line of the Snows. CAPTAIN GADSBY, now three weeks a husband, is smoking the pipe of peace on a rug in the sunshine. Banjo and tobacco-pouch on rug. Overhead the Fagoo eagles. MRS. G. comes out of bungalow.

MRS. G. My husband! CAPT. G. (Lazily, with intense enjoyment.) Eb, wha-at? Say that again.

MRS. G. I've written to Mamma and told her that we shall be back on the 17th.

CAPT. G. Did you give her my love?

MRS. G. No, I kept all that for myself. (Sitting down by his side.) I thought you wouldn't mind.

CAPT. G. (With mock sternness.) I object awf'ly. How did you know that it was yours to keep?

MRS. G. I guessed, Phil.

CAPT. G. (Rapturously.) Lit-tle Featherweight!

MRS. G. I won' t be called those sporting pet names, bad boy.

CAPT. G. You'll be called anything I choose. Has it ever occurred to you, Madam, that you are my Wife?

MRS. G. It has. I haven't ceased wondering at it yet.

CAPT. G. Nor I. It seems so strange; and yet, somehow, it doesn't.

(Confidently.) You see, it could have been no one else.

MRS. G. (Softly.) No. No one else--for me or for you. It must have been all arranged from the beginning. Phil, tell me again what made you care for me.

CAPT. G. How could I help it? You were you, you know.

MRS. G. Did you ever want to help it? Speak the truth!

CAPT. G. (A twinkle in his eye.) I did, darling, just at the first. Rut only at the very first. (Chuckles.) I called you--stoop low and I'll whisper--"a little beast." Ho! Ho! Ho!

MRS. G. (Taking him by the moustache and making him sit up.) "A--little--beast!" Stop laughing over your crime! And yet you had the--the--awful cheek to propose to me!

CAPT. C. I'd changed my mind then. And you weren't a little beast any more.

MRS. G. Thank you, sir! And when was I ever?

CAPT. G. Never! But that first day, when you gave me tea in that peach-colored muslin gown thing, you looked--you did indeed, dear--such an absurd little mite. And I didn't know what to say to you.

MRS. G. (Twisting moustache.) So you said "little beast." Upon my word, Sir! I called you a "Crrrreature," but I wish now I had called you something worse.

CAPT. G. (Very meekly.) I apologize, but you're hurting me awfully.  
(Interlude.) You're welcome to torture me again on those terms.

MRS. G. Oh, why did you let me do it?

CAPT. G. (Looking across valley.) No reason in particular, but--if it amused you or did you any good--you might--wipe those dear little boots of yours on me.

MRS. G. (Stretching out her hands.) Don't! Oh, don't! Philip, my King, please don't talk like that. It's how I feel. You're so much too good for me. So much too good!

CAPT. G. Me! I'm not fit to put my arm around you. (Puts it round.)

MRS. C. Yes, you are. But I--what have I ever done?

CAPT. G. Given me a wee bit of your heart, haven't you, my Queen!

MRS. G. That's nothing. Any one would do that. They cou-couldn't help it.

CAPT. G. Pussy, you'll make me horribly conceited. Just when I was beginning to feel so humble, too.

MRS. G. Humble! I don't believe it's in your character.

CAPT. G. What do you know of my character, Impertinence?

MRS. G. Ah, but I shall, shan't I, Phil? I shall have time in all the years and years to come, to know everything about you; and there will be no secrets between us.

CAPT. G. Little witch! I believe you know me thoroughly already.

MRS. G. I think I can guess. You're selfish?

CAPT. G. Yes.

MRS. G. Foolish?

CAPT. G. Very.

MRS. G. And a dear?

CAPT. G. That is as my lady pleases.

MRS. G. Then your lady is pleased. (A pause.) D'you know that we're two solemn, serious, grown-up people--CAPT. G. (Tilting her straw hat over her eyes.) You grown-up! Pooh! You're a baby.

MRS. G. And we're talking nonsense.

CAPT. G. Then let's go on talking nonsense. I rather like it. Pussy, I'll tell you a secret. Promise not to repeat?

MRS. G. Ye-es. Only to you.

CAPT. G. I love you.

MRS. G. Re-ally! For how long?

CAPT. G. Forever and ever.

MRS. G. That's a long time.

CAPT. G. 'Think so? It's the shortest I can do with.

MRS. G. You're getting quite clever.

CAPT. G. I'm talking to you.

MRS. G. Prettily turned. Hold up your stupid old head and I'll pay you

for it.

CAPT. G. (Affecting supreme contempt.) Take it yourself if you want it.

MRS. G. I've a great mind to--and I will! (Takes it and is repaid with interest.)

CAPT. G, Little Featherweight, it's my opinion that we are a couple of idiots.

MRS. G. We're the only two sensible people in the world. Ask the eagle. He's coming by.

CAPT. G. Ah! I dare say he's seen a good many sensible people at Mahasu. They say that those birds live for ever so long.

MRS. G. How long?

CAPT. G. A hundred and twenty years.

MRS. G. A hundred and twenty years! O-oh! And in a hundred and twenty years where will these two sensible people be?

CAPT. G. What does it matter so long as we are together now?

MRS. G. (Looking round the horizon.) Yes. Only you and I--I and you--in

the whole wide, wide world until the end. (Sees the line of the Snows.)  
How big and quiet the hills look! D'you think they care for us?

CAPT. G. 'Can't say I've consulted em particularly. I care, and that's  
enough for me.

MRS. G. (Drawing nearer to him.) Yes, now--but afterward. What's that  
little black blur on the Snows?

CAPT. G. A snowstorm, forty miles away. You'll see it move, as the wind  
carries it across the face of that spur and then it will be all gone.

MRS. G. And then it will be all gone. (Shivers.)

CAPT. G. (Anxiously.) Not chilled, pet, are you? Better let me get  
your cloak.

MRS. G. No. Don't leave me, Phil. Stay here. I believe I am afraid. Oh,  
why are the hills so horrid! Phil, promise me that you'll always love  
me.

CAPT. G. What's the trouble, darling? I can't promise any more than I  
have; but I'll promise that again and again if you like.

MRS. G. (Her head on his shoulder.) Say it, then--say it! N-no--don't!  
The--the--eagles would laugh. (Recovering.) My husband, you've married a



little goose.

CAPT. G. (Very tenderly.) Have I? I am content whatever she is, so long as she is mine.

MRS. G. (Quickly.) Because she is yours or because she is me mineself?

CAPT. G. Because she is both. (Piteously.) I'm not clever, dear, and I don't think I can make myself understood properly.

MRS. G. I understand. Pip, will you tell me something?

CAPT. G. Anything you like. (Aside.) I wonder what's coming now.

MRS. G. (Haltingly, her eyes lowered.) You told me once in the old days--centuries and centuries ago--that you had been engaged before. I didn't say anything--then.

CAPT. G. (Innocently.) Why not?

MRS. G. (Raising her eyes to his.) Because--because I was afraid of losing you, my heart. But now--tell about it--please.

CAPT. G. There's nothing to tell. I was awfully old then--nearly two and twenty--and she was quite that.

MRS. G. That means she was older than you. I shouldn't like her to have been younger. Well?

CAPT. G. Well, I fancied myself in love and raved about a bit, and--oh, yes, by Jove! I made up poetry. Ha! Ha!

MRS. G. You never wrote any for me! What happened?

CAPT. G. I came out here, and the whole thing went phut. She wrote to say that there had been a mistake, and then she married.

MRS. G. Did she care for you much?

CAPT. G. No. At least she didn't show it as far as I remember.

MRS. G. As far as you remember! Do you remember her name? (Hears it and bows her head.) Thank you, my husband.

CAPT. G. Who but you had the right? Now, Little Featherweight, have you ever been mixed up in any dark and dismal tragedy?

MRS. G. If you call me Mrs. Gadsby, p'raps I'll tell.

CAPT. G. (Throwing Parade rasp into his voice.) Mrs. Gadsby, confess!

MRS. G. Good Heavens, Phil! I never knew that you could speak in that

terrible voice.

CAPT. G. You don't know half my accomplishments yet. Wait till we are settled in the Plains, and I'll show you how I bark at my troop. You were going to say, darling?

MRS. G. I--I don't like to, after that voice. (Tremulously.) Phil, never you dare to speak to me in that tone, whatever I may do!

CAPT. G. My poor little love! Why, you're shaking all over. I am so sorry. Of course I never meant to upset you Don't tell me anything, I'm a brute.

MRS. G. No, you aren't, and I will tell--There was a man.

CAPT. G. (Lightly.) Was there? Lucky man!

MRS. G. (In a whisper.) And I thought I cared for him.

CAPT. G. Still luckier man! Well?

MRS. G. And I thought I cared for him--and I didn't--and then you came--and I cared for you very, very much indeed. That's all. (Face hidden.) You aren't angry, are you?

CAPT. G. Angry? Not in the least. (Aside.) Good Lord, what have I done

to deserve this angel?

MRS. G. (Aside.) And he never asked for the name! How funny men are! But perhaps it's as well.

CAPT. G. That man will go to heaven because you once thought you cared for him. 'Wonder if you'll ever drag me up there?

MRS. G. (Firmly.) 'Sha'n't go if you don't.

CAPT. G. Thanks. I say, Pussy, I don't know much about your religious beliefs. You were brought up to believe in a heaven and all that, weren't you?

MRS. G. Yes. But it was a pincushion heaven, with hymn-books in all the pews.

CAPT. G. (Wagging his head with intense conviction.) Never mind. There is a pukka heaven.

MRS. G. Where do you bring that message from, my prophet?

CAPT. G. Here! Because we care for each other. So it's all right.

Mrs. G. (As a troop of langurs crash through the branches.) So it's all right. But Darwin says that we came from those!

CAPT. G. (Placidly.) Ah! Darwin was never in love with an angel. That settles it. Sstt, you brutes! Monkeys, indeed! You shouldn't read those books.

MRS. G. (Folding her hands.) If it pleases my Lord the King to issue proclamation.

CAPT. G. Don't, dear one. There are no orders between us. Only I'd rather you didn't. They lead to nothing, and bother people's heads.

MRS. G. Like your first engagement.

CAPT. G. (With an immense calm.) That was a necessary evil and led to you. Are you nothing?

MRS. G. Not so very much, am I?

CAPT. G. All this world and the next to me.

MRS. G. (Very softly.) My boy of boys! Shall I tell you something?

CAPT. G. Yes, if it's not dreadful--about other men.

MRS. G. It's about my own bad little self.

CAPT. G. Then it must be good. Go on, dear.

MRS. G. (Slowly.) I don't know why I'm telling you, Pip; but if ever you marry again-(Interlude.) Take your hand from my mouth or I'll bite! In the future, then remember--I don't know quite how to put it!

CAPT. G. (Snorting indignantly.) Don't try. "Marry again," indeed!

MRS. G. I must. Listen, my husband. Never, never, never tell your wife anything that you do not wish her to remember and think over all her life. Because a woman--yes, I am a woman--can't forget.

CAPT. G. By Jove, how do you know that?

MRS. G. (Confusedly.) I don't. I'm only guessing. I am--I was--a silly little girl; but I feel that I know so much, oh, so very much more than you, dearest. To begin with, I'm your wife.

CAPT. G. So I have been led to believe.

MRS. G. And I shall want to know every one of your secrets--to share everything you know with you. (Stares round desperately.)

CAPT. G. So you shall, dear, so you shall--but don't look like that.

MRS. G. For your own sake don't stop me, Phil. I shall never talk to you

in this way again. You must not tell me! At least, not now. Later on, when I'm an old matron it won't matter, but if you love me, be very good to me now; for this part of my life I shall never forget! Have I made you understand?

CAPT. G. I think so, child. Have I said anything yet that you disapprove of?

MRS. G. Will you be very angry? That--that voice, and what you said about the engagement--

CAPT. G. But you asked to be told that, darling.

MRS. G. And that's why you shouldn't have told me! You must be the Judge, and, oh, Pip, dearly as I love you, I shan't be able to help you! I shall hinder you, and you must judge in spite of me!

CAPT. G. (Meditatively.) We have a great many things to find out together, God help us both--say so, Pussy--but we shall understand each other better every day; and I think I'm beginning to see now. How in the world did you come to know just the importance of giving me just that lead?

MRS. G. I've told you that I don't know. Only somehow it seemed that, in all this new life, I was being guided for your sake as well as my own.

CAPT. G. (Aside.) Then Mafilin was right! They know, and we--we're blind all of us. (Lightly.) 'Getting a little beyond our depth, dear, aren't we? I'll remember, and, if I fail, let me be punished as I deserve.

MRS. G. There shall be no punishment. We'll start into life together from here--you and I--and no one else.

CAPT. G. And no one else. (A pause.) Your eyelashes are all wet, Sweet? Was there ever such a quaint little Absurdity?

MRS. G. Was there ever such nonsense talked before?

CAPT. G. (Knocking the ashes out of his pipe.) 'Tisn't what we say, it's what we don't say, that helps. And it's all the profoundest philosophy. But no one would understand--even if it were put into a book.

MRS. G. The idea! No--only we ourselves, or people like ourselves--if there are any people like us.

CAPT. G. (Magisterially.) All people, not like ourselves, are blind idiots.

MRS. G. (Wiping her eyes.) Do you think, then, that there are any people as happy as we are?

CAPT. G. 'Must be--unless we've appropriated all the happiness in the



world.

MRS. G. (Looking toward Simla.) Poor dears! Just fancy if we have!

CAPT. G. Then we'll hang on to the whole show, for it's a great deal too jolly to lose--eh, wife o' mine?

MRS. G. O Pip! Pip! How much of you is a solemn, married man and how much a horrid slangy schoolboy?

CAPT. G. When you tell me how much of you was eighteen last birthday and how much is as old as the Sphinx and twice as mysterious, perhaps I'll attend to you. Lend me that banjo. The spirit moveth me to jowl at the sunset.

MRS. G. Mind! It's not tuned. Ah! How that jars!

CAPT. G. (Turning pegs.) It's amazingly different to keep a banjo to proper pitch.

MRS. G. It's the same with all musical instruments, What shall it be?

CAPT. G. "Vanity," and let the hills hear. (Sings through the first and hal' of the second verse. Turning to MRS. G.) Now, chorus! Sing, Pussy!

BOTH TOGETHER. (Con brio, to the horror of the monkeys who are settling

for the night.)--

"Vanity, all is Vanity," said Wisdom, scorning me--

I clasped my true Love's tender hand and answered frank and free-ee

"If this be Vanity who'd be wise? If this be Vanity who'd be wise?

If this be Vanity who'd be wi-ise (Crescendo.) Vanity let it be!"

MRS. G. (Defiantly to the grey of the evening sky.) "Vanity let it be!"

ECHO. (Prom the Fagoo spur.) Let it be!

FATIMA

And you may go in every room of the house and see everything that is there, but into the Blue Room you must not go.--The Story of Blue Beard.

SCENE.--The GADSBYS' bungalow in the Plains. Time, 11 A. M. on a Sunday morning. Captain GADSBY, in his shirt-sleeves, is bending over a complete set of Hussar's equipment, from saddle to picketing-rope, which is neatly spread over the floor of his study. He is smoking an unclean briar, and his forehead is puckered with thought.

CAPT. G. (To himself, fingering a headstall.) Jack's an ass. There's