

## ACT VI

The scene represents a village street. To the right some old women are sitting on logs of wood with the Grandfather. In the centre, is a ring of women, girls, and lads. Dance music is played and they dance. Noise is heard from the hut, and drunken screams. An old man comes out and shouts in a tipsy voice. The Peasant follows him and leads him back.

GRANDFATHER. Ah, what doings! what doings! One would think, what more would any one want than to do his work on week days, and when Sunday comes round, to have a good wash, clean the harness, and rest a bit and sit with his family; or go outside and have a talk with the old folk about matters concerning the Commune. Or, if you're young, have a game. There they are playing,--and it's pleasant to look at them. It's all pleasant and good. [Screams inside the hut] But this sort of thing, what is it? It only leads men astray, and pleases the Devils. And it all comes of fat living!

Tipsy men come tumbling out of the hut, shout, and catch hold of the girls.

GIRLS. Leave off, Daddy Tom! What do you mean by it?

LADS. Let's go into the lane. It's impossible to play here.

Exeunt all who were playing in the ring.

PEASANT [goes up to Grandfather] What have you got now? The Elders will allot everything to me! [Snaps his fingers at him] That's what you'll get! So there you are! It's all mine and you've nothing! They'll tell you so themselves!

The four Elders speak all at once.

FIRST ELDER. 'Cos I know what's what!

SECOND ELDER.

"Fore all I'll be heard,  
'Cos I'm an old bird!"

THIRD ELDER. Friend! dear friend, dearest friend!

FOURTH ELDER.

"Jog along hut, jog along bed,  
The missis has nowhere to lay down her head!"

Now then, come along!

The Elders take each other's arms in couples and go off reeling, one couple following the other. The Peasant turns back to the hut, but stumbles before he reaches it,--falls down, and lies muttering incomprehensible words that sound like grunts. The Grandfather and those he was with, rise and exeunt.

Enter Labourer and Chief of Devils.

LABOURER. Did you see? Now the swine's blood has been roused in them, and from wolves they have turned into swine! [Points to Peasant] There he lies in the dirt and grunts like a hog!

CHIEF. You have succeeded! First like foxes, then like wolves, and now like swine! Well, that is a drink! But tell me, how did you make it? I suppose it's made of a mixture of foxes', wolves', and swine's blood?

LABOURER. Oh no! I only supplied him with too much corn! As long as he had only as much corn as he needed, he did not grudge his last crust, but when he had more than he knew what to do with, the fox's, the wolf's, and the swine's blood in him awoke. He always had beast's blood in him, only it could not get the upper hand.

CHIEF. Well, you're a fine fellow! You've atoned for your crust-blunder. Now they only need to drink spirits, and they're altogether ours!

Curtain.

END OF "THE FIRST DISTILLER."