

Plum Punch: The Life of Writers

P. G. WODEHOUSE

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Etext by Dagny
and the Blandings Group

AN UNFINISHED COLLECTION

A silence had fallen upon the smoking-room. The warrior just back from the front had enquired after GEORGE VANDERPOOP, and we, who knew that GEORGE'S gentle spirit had, to use a metaphor after his own heart, long since been withdrawn from circulation, were feeling uncomfortable and wondering how to break the news.

SMITHSON is our specialist in tact, and we looked to him to be spokesman.

"GEORGE," said SMITHSON at last, "the late GEORGE VANDERPOOP "

"Late!" exclaimed the warrior; "is he dead?"

"As any doornail," replied SMITHSON sadly. "Perhaps you would care to hear the story. It is sad, but interesting. You may recollect that, when you sailed, he was starting his journalistic career. For a young writer he had done remarkably well. The *Daily Telephone* had printed two of his contributions to their correspondence column, and a bright pen picture of his, describing how LEE'S Lozenges for the Liver had snatched him from almost certain death, had quite a vogue. LEE, I believe, actually commissioned him to do a series on the subject."

"Well?" said the warrior.

"Well, he was, as I say, prospering very fairly, when in an unlucky moment he began to make a collection of editorial rejection forms. He had always been a somewhat easy prey to scourges of that description. But when he had passed safely through a sharp attack of Philatelism and a rather nasty bout of Autographomania, everyone hoped and believed that he had turned the corner. The progress of his last illness was very rapid. Within a year he wanted but one specimen to make the complete set. This was the one published from the offices of the *Scrutinizer*. All the rest he had obtained with the greatest ease. I remember his telling me that a single short story of his, called *The Vengeance of Vera Dalrymple*, had been instrumental in securing no less than thirty perfect specimens. Poor GEORGE! I was with him when he made his first attempt on the *Scrutinizer*. He had baited his hook with an essay on Evolution. He read me one or two passages from it. I stopped him at the third paragraph, and congratulated him in advance, little thinking that it was sympathy rather than congratulations that he needed. When I saw him a week afterwards he was looking haggard. I questioned him, and by slow degrees drew out the

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story. The article on Evolution had been printed.

"Never say die, GEORGE,' I said. 'Send them *Vera Dalrymple*. No paper can take that.'

"He sent it. The *Scrutinizer*, which had been running for nearly a century without publishing a line of fiction, took it and asked for more. It was as if there were an editorial conspiracy against him."

"Well?" said the man of war.

"Then," said SMITHSON, "GEORGE pulled himself together. He wrote a parody of '*The Minstrel Boy*.' I have seen a good many parodies, but never such a parody as that. By return of post came a long envelope bearing the crest of the *Scrutinizer*. 'At last,' he said, as he tore it open.

"GEORGE, old man,' I said, 'your hand.'

"He looked at me a full minute. Then with a horrible, mirthless laugh he fell to the ground, and expired almost instantly. You will readily guess what killed him. The poem had been returned, *but without a rejection form!*"

A FORTHCOMING SOCIETY DRAMA

MR. PUNCH, SIR, It is the custom, I believe, in theatrical circles, for dramatists to submit a scenario of their threatened effort to the Manager whom they have marked down as their quarry. The Manager then extracts the best ideas, hands them over to a friend to work up, and returns the scenario to its gratified author as unsuitable for production. It is with a view to avoiding this fate that I send the following notes to you instead of to the usual address. My drama is based on the following paragraph, which has appeared in some of the papers: "SOCIETY CRAZE FOR TATTOOING. Philadelphia Society has adopted the tattooing craze. Many young girls, the daughters of the best families, are not only being tattooed themselves, but are taking lessons so that they may ornament their friends." You notice that the craze is at present in America. Exactly. What America thinks to-day, England will think in a year or so, which will enable me to have my play ready just in time.

The hero of my drama, EMERSON P. ROCKITT, a young but rising candy manufacturer of unimpeachable morals and appearance, has fallen a victim to the charms of MAGNOLIA J. KEGGS, the daughter of an eminent pork-packer. Her beautiful form and profuse illustrations have conquered a heart previously adamant in its dealings with the tattooed sex. At the beginning of the play the course of true love appears to be running smooth. The happy pair are engaged, and the inauguration of the connubial orgies is only delayed by the non-arrival of the bride's trousseau. Unhappily, however, my hero has a rival, JASPER W. MORGAN, a rich but unscrupulous scoundrel residing in the immediate vicinity. JASPER is the proprietor of a peripatetic Dime Museum, and hopes to add MAGNOLIA to the programme as a Tattooed Princess. He has offered her the part on several occasions, only to be indignantly repulsed, and he now determines to resort to guile. Accordingly, disguising his handwriting, he despatches an anonymous letter to EMERSON, in which he bids him, ere it be too late, to lift the curl that hangs over MAGNOLIA J. KEGGS' left temple. His reason for this singular instruction appears later.

The one flaw in EMERSON P. ROCKITT'S nature is a proneness to jealousy which is often found even in the best regulated bosoms. He lifts the curl this will be a great scene and starts back with a stifled groan. On the temple is tattooed a heart, and in the heart the initials S.B.P. "Farewell," he cries. "Stay," shrieks MAGNOLIA, "I can explain all." "'Tis useless," says he, "I can't wait." Off he goes, MAGNOLIA faints, and the curtain comes down on a powerful situation. End of Act One.

The rest of the play is, I am afraid, at present in a less completely thought-out condition. In Act Two, to give scope for scenic effects, I depict my hero's wanderings. I may make him go to Delhi, and work the Durbar in; or

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stranger with a strong German accent. It is Herr JULIUS SEETH. In consideration of being allowed a monopoly in performing lions for the space of his natural life, he offers to bring his peculiar methods of education to bear on the Strand rats, mobilise them into an Army Corps, and send them against the foe. The chapter descriptive of the final struggle between the trained rodents and the invaders is one of my most powerful bits of work. The hair of the reader will shoot up like a rocket. The rats win and the war is at an end. That, I think, is all to-day.

Yours, HENRY WILLIAM-JONES.

REVIVAL OF NATIVE GRAND OPERA

Dear Mr. Punch, Always on the lookout for long-felt wants, I have noticed signs of public feeling on the subject of English Opera. If England wants opera, I am the man to supply it. Please find enclosed certain samples.

Your obedient servant,
HENRY WILLIAM-JONES.

I. MY MEDICAL OPERA.

The opening scene of the drama is laid on the terrace in front of the ancestral castle of his Grace the Duke of PENGE. As the curtain rises, the entire domestic staff of the castle, together with all the gardeners but one, and a number of guests, are discovered singing, having evidently suspended work *en masse* for the purpose. The subject of their song is the missing gardener. Why has he not joined their merry throng? Once his reedy tenor was the mainstay of these choral celebrations. Now he walks apart, moody and silent. They repeat why is it? But soft he comes. "'Tis he young RUPERT. But why so sad?" He bursts into song:

My friends, there are maids and to spare
On the face of this globular planet,
But none are so neat, so astoundingly sweet,
As his Grace's fair child Lady JANET,
And I love her. Nay more, she loves me.
To some it may scarce appear seemly.
It's presumption, alas! in a man of my class,
Still, we worship each other extremely.

And if Marquis or Earl drop a card on her,
She feels that their rank has but jarred on her;
From the earliest date
She has known that her fate
Is to marry a poor under-gardener.
And I trust that you will not be hard on her
For loving a poor under-gardener;
My face and my form
Simply took her by storm;
She couldn't resist me. So pardon her.

After which he goes on to explain that marriage is at present impossible, owing to the fact that the Duke, if he knew, would disapprove. Hence his melancholy. The Duke and the Duchess accompanied by their deliriously beautiful daughter, now appear, and after some spirited dialogue go off (L), Lady JANET remaining to join RUPERT in a duet, which is overheard by the villain of the piece, one Lord JASPER MURGLESHAW, a most unpleasant man. As he himself is a suitor for the hand of Lady JANET, the duet, couched as it is in the most impassioned terms, has no small significance for him. RUPERT now goes off (R) to resume his horticultural

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duties, and JANET renders a sentimental number. Re-enter Lord JASPER. He reveals the fact that he has overheard all, but promises, on condition that JANET will accept his bi-weekly proposal of marriage (now due), not to let the matter go any further. Otherwise, he says, conscience will compel him to reveal everything to the Duke. Dared to do so by JANET, he obligingly gives her away in a vindictive solo. RUPERT, returning at this juncture, clasps JANET to his bosom, and prepares for the worst. The worst happens. The Duchess begins to sing:

Oh, man of spuds and flowers,
With thoughts your rank above,
Why waste your working hours
In hopeless dreams of love?
In vain within the minster
His book the vicar scans;
To you my child's a spinster,
For I forbid the banns.

To which RUPERT

Nay, pardon us, your Graces,
'Twere idle to deny
We should have known our places,
Her ladyship and I.
A gardener of gumption
Should fly at lowlier game;
Still, pardon my presumption,
And bless us all the same.

Then the Duke has his say:

I think on due reflection,
Considering who you are,
You let your young affection
Go very much too far.
The salient point to touch on,
Your blood is far from blue;
'Twould tarnish our escutcheon
Were she to marry you.

All is apparently over, when JANET puts the matter from her point of view:

Nay, father, hear your daughter.
Your heart, I'm much afraid,
Of bricks and stone and mortar
Must certainly be made.
Love is the only mentor
On whose advice I lean.
You give us your consent or
I'm off to Gretna Green.

A scene of indescribable confusion follows. Everybody present sings the melody, choosing his or her own words. JANET is extracted from RUPERT'S arms, and retreats in disgrace, and at the most interesting point of the whole discussion the curtain falls. End of Act One.

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Act Two takes place in the drawing-room of the Duke's Park Lane residence. RUPERT, it appears, received a month's pay in lieu of warning at an early date of the proceedings, and vanished with it into the unknown, while JASPER is engaged to JANET, and the wedding is to be celebrated within a week. A knocking is heard at the front door, and shortly afterwards a gentleman is announced.

And now we come to the more strictly medical part of the opera. The gentleman is a celebrated doctor. It seems that the Duke has fallen ill. A habit of drinking only one bottle of port after dinner, instead of the three prescribed by his medical adviser, has induced anaemia, and his life is despaired of.

But at the last minute a distinguished-looking but mysterious stranger is shown in. It is RUPERT disguised in a pasteboard nose, a red beard and large blue spectacles. He desires to see the Duke. There is a brief interval, and then the door opens once more, and RUPERT re-enters, the Duke leaning on his arm, practically recovered. The Duke explains his remarkable recovery in the following song:

Just now the doctors gave me up
I was so very ill;
In vain I quaffed the bitter cup,
And gulped the azure pill.
Transfusion of blood was my only hope!
I sighed with resignation;
For I couldn't see who was likely to
Submit to the operation.

Chorus
No, he could not see
Who on earth would agree
To submit to the operation.

My frame was reduced to bones and skin,
I felt extremely weak,
And when they showed this gentleman in
I hadn't the strength to speak.
Consider then my surprise and joy,
When I heard him say "I'll chance it;
Ye shrewd M.D.'s, step this way, please,
And kindly bring your lancet."

With a fortitude rarely, if e'er, surpassed,
The process he endured,
Till, to put it briefly, I found at last
That I was completely cured.
And, by the way (for we ought to pay
Rewards to those who serve us),
Come, name your fee: whatever it be,
I'll grant it: don't be nervous.

Chorus
All fears eschew,
Your fee is due,
So ask it: don't be nervous.

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RUPERT snatches off his disguise, explains to the Duke that, owing to lucky ventures on the Stock Exchange, he is now a wealthy man, points out that as the same blood runs in their veins they are practically equals, obtains from him a courteous consent, and clasps JANET to his bosom. JASPER, re-entering at the moment, recoils in anguish, and marries a housemaid.

Finale, rendered by the Duke:

Go, ring the bells of the local church
In a rollicking sort of way.
For the nearest clergyman up and search,
He shall marry you off to-day.
Yes, as soon as he can shall the clergyman
Proceed to make you one in law.
It's settled quite.

To rest:

The gent on my right
Is my excellent future son-in-law.

Chorus (amazed)
Your son-in-law?

Duke (decidedly)

My son-in-law!
My excellent future son-in-law.
And I'd like to suggest
That he's one of the best
Is

Chorus
Who?

Duke

My future son-in-law.

Quick Curtain, followed by deafening calls for the Author.

A NOVELIST'S DAY

[A writer in *The Globe* has recently pointed out that the man who curdles blood must first curdle his own. The life of any one who turns out three sensational novels a year must be a perfect misery to him. He can never feel safe.]

Monday. A strenuous day. Finished Chapter Eleven of *The Blood that Dripped on the Doormat*. Rather big scene where hero is lured into cellar and bitten by trained gazeka (poisonous) belonging to villain. (Mem.: Is this too much like the cobra incident in LE QUEUX'S latest?) Writing this took it out of me very much. Went for stroll along the Strand. Sinister incident opposite Exeter Hall. Man (perfect stranger) endeavoured to thrust paper into my hand. I leaped back, and, dodging under the wheels of motor-bus, escaped to other side of street, where I cocked my revolver and waited. Nothing further happened. My prompt action probably threw villains off scent. Escaped that danger, however, only to run into another. As I stood there, sinister foreigner accosted me. Dark man, probably Anarchist. Asked me to direct him to "Leicester Skvare." Kept my head, fortunately. Pointed

towards Charing Cross, and, while his attention was distracted, dashed across street again. (Mem.: New hat. How much?) Ghastly incident now took place. Scarcely had I arrived on opposite pavement when man again attempted to force paper on me. Took to my heels, dodging from right to left to avoid bullets. This must have baffled him, for I heard no shots. Small boy said, "Chase me!" and called me BAMBATA. Almost certainly some Anarchist code. To throw gang off scent once more took cab. Drove to Essex Street by way of Sloane Square, Putney, and Mortlake. Gave man shilling. He said, "What the blank!" Recognised instantly that he was in the pay of these scoundrels, and sprang into four-wheeler. Told man to drive to Southampton Street via the "Angel" at Islington. Looked out of window. Sinister hansom close behind. Man with whiskers in it. (Mem.: Hon. Secretary of Anarchists?) Rapidly disguised myself with blue spectacles and a yellow toupee. Hansom drove past and disappeared. Clever, but a little obvious. Block in traffic opposite the Oval. Seized with sudden inspiration (Mem.: Genius?), opened door quickly. Was slipping out when cabman happened to look round. Unpleasantness. Gave him shilling. Man said, "What the blank!" Another of the gang! Was I never to shake off these blood-hounds? I asked myself what *Smartleigh Trackenham* (detective in *The Gore that Distilled from the Crack in the China Vase*) would have done. Took Tube. Lift—man sinister. Covered him with revolver from inside pocket. He must have noticed this, for he made no move. Got into train. Alone in carriage. On the alert for sudden attack from conductor (a sinister man). Emerged cautiously at Bank. Changed my disguise in secluded corner of subway. Took off spectacles and put on brown beard. Policeman at Mansion House crossing, I think, Anarchist. Hid behind pillar—box, and watched Anarchists, disguised as clerks, search for me. Man asked me time. Controlled my voice and told him. My disguise so perfect that he suspected nothing. At five o'clock changed my disguise again (false nose, coloured at end, and black moustache), and sprang on to bus. Reached home, five-thirty, worn out. Went to bed after searching room and locking door. Nightmares.

THE COOKS AND THE GAIETY BROTH

SCENE A room at the Gaiety Theatre. The time is some weeks prior to the production of "The New Aladdin." The authors of that piece are gathered in a dense crowd at one end of the room. They are all talking at the same time, and the noise is deafening. Enter Mr. GEORGE EDWARDES, smiling paternally. His smile changes to a look of consternation as he surveys the excited mob before him. The authors rush towards him in a body, talking and gesticulating.

Mr. Edwardes (deprecatingly). Gentlemen! Gentlemen! (Confused shouting from the multitude.) Gentlemen, this is too much. You are not the Angry Mob in one of Mr. BEERBOHM TREE'S productions. You are gifted men of letters. Kindly behave as such.

The Authors (somewhat cowed by this severity). Well, but

Mr. Edwardes. Well, but what? What's the trouble?

Mr. Tanner. It's like this. We

Mr. Risque. It's this way. They

Mr. Adrian Ross. This is the position. Everybody

Mr. Grossmith. Listen to me. I

Mr. Greenbank. I can explain in a

Mr. Edwardes. Stop! Stop! One at a time. One at a time. TANNER! What's *your* trouble, TANNER?

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Mr. Tanner. It's like this. We can't make any headway at all. We've been fighting ever since lunch. We

Mr. Risque. It's your fault. You're so unreasonable.

Mr. Greenbank. You're just as bad.

Mr. Grossmith. I

Mr. Edwardes. Stop! Stop! Stop! (The noise dies away gradually to a sullen murmur). Now, TANNER?

Mr. Tanner. It's like this. My idea is that we want something absolutely new something perfectly fresh.

Mr. Risque. And then you go on to suggest EDMUND PAYNE as a page-boy?

Mr. Grossmith. Why drag in PAYNE? I

Mr. Tanner. My idea is something Gilbertian.

Mr. Risque. Well, you've got it, haven't you. Your stout fairy who nestles in a buttercup is copied from *Iolanthe*; your genie who has to talk in rhyme comes from *The Fairy's Dilemma*; your chorus of policemen from *The Pirates of Penzance*; and your policeman lost in London from *Peter Forth* in *The Bab Ballads*. One would think that that was enough Gilbert for one piece.

Mr. Grossmith. Now I

Mr. Tanner. What I say is, why not have a plot in the Second Act as well as the First?

All (scornfully). Shame! Shame!

Mr. Edwardes (more in sorrow than in anger). I never thought those words from JAMES TANNER!

[Mr. TANNER blushes, and hangs his head.]

Mr. Edwardes (breaking an awkward silence.) Well? Has anybody else any suggestion to make?

Mr. Grossmith. I've a notion, GEORGE, that you made a mistake in overcrowding your stage. Of course it gives a certain air of liveliness to a scene to have a lot of people about, but the audience soon gets tired of it. What you want is to drop all that, and strike out a new line altogether. Now, how about turning the Second Act into a humorous monologue? I shouldn't mind doing it. I must get off and change my clothes every now and then, of course; but the orchestra could play 'em a tune or two while I was away. How does that strike you?

Mr. Edwardes (doubtfully). Ye-es. And yet

Mr. Adrian Ross. The secret of success in musical comedy

Mr. Edwardes (coldly). I beg your pardon?

Mr. Adrian Ross. The secret of success in musical comedy, to my mind,—

Mr. Edwardes (with frigid politeness). At any other time, my dear fellow, I should be more than glad to listen to your doubtless sound views on that obsolete form of entertainment; but time presses, and we have not yet settled

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the details of our new (with icy emphasis) *extravaganza*.

[Mr. ADRIAN ROSS starts and colours uncomfortably.]

Mr. Greenbank. I say lyrics. That's what you want good lyrics. And (complacently) we've got those all right.

Mr. Grossmith (effusively). Thank you, PERCY, thank you!

Mr. Tanner (who has been slowly recovering during the preceding remarks). I have a bright idea. Why not try writing the part of a comic foreigner for ROBERT NAINBY?

Mr. Edwardes. Excellent. Do it.

Mr. Grossmith (doubtfully). *Must* he have a part? It crowds up the stage, you know, it crowds up the stage.

Mr. Tanner. We must *have* a comic foreigner, you know. It's the Gaiety.

Mr. Grossmith. Then how about me doubling the part with my own? I should want to get off and change my clothes every now

Mr. Risque. Something in the SHAW style would be my notion of extravaganza. Leave it to me, and I'll turn you out another *Major Barbara*.

Mr. Tanner. GILBERT would be my model, as I have said. You'd much better leave the whole thing to me.

Mr. Grossmith. Tell you what. Don't either of you Johnnies write anything. Simply let me come on and gag. How would that do?

Mr. Adrian Ross. Why not turn the thing into a concert? Nobody really wants to hear dialogue. What they want is to get on to the songs. I'll write you a dozen lyrics, and you can dole them out among the company. Then TANNER and RISQUE could take a holiday. I'm sure they want it. They're looking quite flushed.

All the authors (simultaneously). Nonsense! Why That's absurd! I Rot! Look here And then, you see I mean, it's this way

Mr. Edwardes (waving his hands agitatedly). Stop! Stop!

All. Sh h! Sh h!

Mr. Tanner. Can't you be quiet, ROSS?

Mr. Risque. Do shut up, GROSSMITH!

Mr. Grossmith. Just for one moment, TANNER.

Mr. Adrian Ross. You talk such a lot, GREENBANK. That's your trouble.

Mr. Greenbank. RISQUE, Mr. EDWARDES is speaking.

Mr. Edwardes. Please listen to me. I see now that I was wrong to let you meet together like this to talk things over. It was a mistake. The only wonder to me is that you are all still alive. What you must do now is to separate,

and work apart from one another. Each of you peg away exactly as you think fit, irrespective of the others. Then, when you've finished, we'll lump the whole lot together, and have it acted.

Mr. Tanner. And if the gallery don't like it, why, they must lump it.

Mr. Edwardes. And boo to the inevitable? Just so.

THE SOAP KING'S DAUGHTER (A Scenario)

TIME: Some sixty years hence. SCENE: the Park Lane drawing-room of the Earl of SUNLIGHT, grandson of our own Mr. W. H. LEVER. The old Earl is in earnest conversation with his charming daughter, Lady LUX LEVER. It seems that since the first Earl cornered soap in 1906 the price has been rising so rapidly that now almost the entire wealth of the British Empire flows automatically into the family's coffers. People, to preserve their self-respect, must be clean, at whatever cost. The consequence is that every penny that can be spared from the other necessities of life is spent on soap, at incredible prices. Lady LUX, the richest heiress (in fact, the only heiress) in the kingdom, is eagerly sought after by the impecunious noblemen, notably Lord JASPER SCRUBBS, the brother and heir of the old and decrepit Duke of BATH. So much being made clear by dialogue, the Earl of SUNLIGHT has a song:

When I was young I used to think,
Perhaps a little oddly,
That men might be as black as ink
So long as they were godly.
But wisdom comes, as years progress,
And Youth's ideals shatters:
And now I see that cleanliness
Is the only thing that matters.

The youth who would succeed in life,
All opposition squashing,
Who'd make a name, and win a wife,
Must never scamp his washing.
A girl who's sensible will feel
No diffidence in snubbing
A suitor who cannot conceal
His urgent need of tubbing.

Having touched thus on the brighter side of his position, Lord SUNLIGHT comes to the single fly in his ointment. There is one man in London, AUBREY JELLICOE, who has the spirit to defy convention, to abstain wholly from soap, and to remain rich and frankly grubby. Nothing can move him, not even the glowing advertisements written for the Earl's soap by Mr. HOOPER, the descendant of the great *Times* litterateur. What is Lord SUNLIGHT to do?

LUX goes out, and enter Lord JASPER, who propounds a devilish scheme. It should be mentioned that he loves Lady LUX (in his own vile way). He proposes that LUX shall lead AUBREY to fall in love with her, tell him that she cannot marry anyone who does not use soap regularly and in large quantities, and so induce AUBREY to spend his money. As a reward, he, JASPER, is to marry her. Lord SUNLIGHT consents. None of LUX'S suitors have any money, and JASPER is as eligible as any in point of rank. The scheme is mentioned to LUX. The dutiful daughter reluctantly agrees to play the part.

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Act II. TIME: three months later. SCENE: the terrace in front of Loofah Castle, the Earl of SUNLIGHT'S place on the Wash. Enter Aubrey. He is wonderfully changed. Before, he suggested Mr. TREE as *Caliban* , or Mr. CYRIL MAUDE as *The Pertick'ler Pet*. Now his face shines with repeated scrubblings. His linen is spotless. Music cue: " *I'm so happy I don't know what to do.*" SONG: AUBREY (Air, "*Mr. Chamberlain*," appropriately from *The Beauty of Bath*/).

Now who was the man whose face to scan would have taken you all
your time, Because it was so concealed, you know, behind a mask of grime?

Who was the chap who cared not a scrap for what the people said? Who is the man who, if he can, should hide his
shamefaced head?

It's AUBREY JELLICOE, it's AUBREY JELLICOE!

I said, "to wash is simply bosh!"

But now I know

That my views were most unsound;

So now I've changed my ground,

And I'm your clean, keen, AUBREY JELLICOE.

I said that I hoped that, if ever I soaped, you'd write me down

an ass: I felt no shame when the moment came to see myself in the glass. I never cared when people stared. It
didn't "amount to shucks," (As Americans say) until one day I fell in love with LUX;

And I'm AUBREY JELLICOE, the speckless JELLICOE!

No spot or stain can now remain

On me. Oh, no!

Though all my money's spent,

Yet I am quite content

To be your clean, keen, AUBREY JELLICOE.

Exit. Enter LUX. It appears that a hitch has occurred in the scheme. She has made AUBREY love her, and spend
all his fortune on soap; but now she, in turn, loves him. Will her father give his consent? Never. She asks him.

Lord SUNLIGHT. My child would wed a commoner without a penny!

Can I believe you? Lady LUX. Is there no hope then? Lord SUNLIGHT. Child, I won't deceive you.
Not any!

Big scene now. Enter JASPER. JASPER (sings):

Jasper. With the guile of a snake I have sought her,

And now may I claim my reward?

I worship your beautiful daughter:

Consent to our union, my Lord.

Lord Sunlight. Yes, I think you may fittingly clasp her.

My boy, here's my blessing. She's yours.

And, 'pon honour, you're lucky, young JASPER!

She's jilted her suitors in scores.

But since such a thorough success is

The neat little scheme that you planned,

I hereby approve your addresses,

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And formally give you her hand.

Enter AUBREY. He sees JASPER about to embrace Lady LUX, and overhearing Lord SUNLIGHT'S last words, breaks in:

Aubrey. Hullo, what's this little drama?

Hullo, what is this that I see?

You blot on this sweet panorama,

This Lady's engaged, Sir, to me.

The Earl explains. Dramatic pause. Then LUX plays the trump card which she has been holding back, which is that many years ago, quite by accident, she discovered an excellent substitute for soap. It is efficient and can be manufactured at an infinitesimal cost. Will her father give his consent to her marriage with AUBREY, or must she resort to the last, dread expedient of giving her secret to the world? JASPER slinks off R., Lord SUNLIGHT takes the centre of the stage, and with a hand on each of their heads, says in a low voice, as they kneel before him, "My children, bless you!"

(Curtain.)