

The Fool's Hour
The First Act of a Comedy

By John Oliver Hobbes
and George Moore

CHARACTERS OF THE COMEDY

Lord Doldrummond
Cyril, *his Son* (Viscount Aprile)
Sir Digby Soame
Charles Mandeville, *a tenor*
Mr. Banish, *a banker*
The Hon. Arthur Featherleigh
Mr. Samuel Benjamin, *a money-lender*
Lady Doldrummond
Julia, *an heiress*
The Hon. Mrs. Howard de Trappe, *her mother,*
a widow
Sarah Sparrow, *an American prima donna*

Act

Act I

SCENE—*The Library in Lord Doldrummond's house at Brighton.*

The scene represents a richly-furnished but somewhat oppressive room. The chairs and tables are all narrow, the lamp-shades stiff, the windows have double glasses. Lord Doldrummond, a man of middle-age, handsome, but with a dejected, browbeaten air, sits with a rug over his knees, reading "The Church Times." The Butler announces "Sir Digby Soame." Sir Digby is thin and elderly; has an easy smile and a sharp eye; dresses well; has two manners—the abrupt with men, the suave with women; smiles into his beard over his own witticisms.

Lord Dol. Ah, Soame, so you are here at last?

Soame. [*Looking at his watch.*] I am pretty punctual, only a few minutes late.

Lord Dol. I am worried, anxious, irritable, and that has made the time seem long.

Soame. Worried, anxious? And what about? Are you not well? Have you found that regularity of life ruins the constitution?

Lord Dol. No, my dear Soame, no. But I am willing to own that the existence which my wife enjoys, and which I have learnt to endure, would not suit every one.

Soame. I am glad to find you more tolerant. You used to hold the very harshest and most crude opinions. I remember when we were boys, I could never persuade you to accept the admirable doctrine that a reformed rake makes the best husband!

Lord Dol. [*Timidly.*] Repentance does not require so large an income as folly! This may explain that paradox. You know, in
my

my way, I, too, am something of a philosopher! I married very young, whereas you entered the Diplomatic Service and resolved to remain single: you wished to study women. I have lived with one for five-and-twenty years. [*Sighs.*]

Soame. Oh, I admit at once that yours is the greater achievement and was the more daring ambition.

Lord Dol. I know all I wish to know about women, but men puzzle me extremely. So I have sent for you. I want your advice. It is Cyril who is the cause of my uneasiness. I am afraid that he is not happy.

Soame. Cyril not happy? What is he unhappy about? You have never refused him anything?

Lord Dol. Never! No man has had a kinder father! When he is unreasonable I merely say "You are a fool, but please yourself!" No man has had a kinder father!

Soame. Does he complain?

Lord Dol. He has hinted that his home is uncongenial—yet we have an excellent cook! Ah, thank heaven every night and morning, my dear Digby, that you are a bachelor. Praying for sinners and breeding them would seem the whole duty of man. I was no sooner born than my parents were filled with uneasiness lest I should not live to marry and beget an heir of my own. Now I have an heir, his mother will never know peace until she has found him a wife!

Soame. And will you permit Lady Doldrummond to use the same method with Cyril which your mother adopted with such appalling results in your own case?

Lord Dol. It does not seem my place to interfere, and love-affairs are not a fit subject of conversation between father and son!

Soame. But what does Cyril say to the matrimonial prospect?

Lord

Lord Dol. He seems melancholy and eats nothing but oranges. Yes, Cyril is a source of great uneasiness.

Soame. Does Lady Doldrummond share this uneasiness?

Lord Dol. My wife would regard a second thought on any subject as a most dangerous form of temptation. She insists that Cyril has everything which a young man could desire, and when he complains that the house is dull, she takes him for a drive!

Soame. But *you* understand him?

Lord Dol. I think I do. If I were young again——

Soame. Ah, you regret! I always said you would regret it if you did not take your fling! The pleasures we imagine are so much more alluring, so much more dangerous, than those we experience. I suppose you recognise in Cyril the rascal you might have been, and feel that you have missed your vocation?

Lord Dol. [*Meekly.*] I was never unruly, my dear Soame. We all have our moments, I own, yet—well, perhaps Cyril has inherited the tastes which I possessed at his age, but lacked the courage to obey.

Soame. And so you wish me to advise you how to deal with him! Is he in love? I have constantly observed that when young men find their homes unsympathetic, it is because some particular lady does not form a member of the household. It is usually a lady, too, who would not be considered a convenient addition to any mother's visiting-list!

Lord Dol. Lady Doldrummond has taught him that women are the scourges of creation. You, perhaps, do not share that view!

Soame. Certainly not. I would teach him to regard them as the reward, the compensation, the sole delight of this dreariest of all possible worlds.

Lord Dol. [*Uneasily.*] Reward! Compensation! Delight! I
beg

beg you will not go so far as that. What notion would be more upsetting? Pray do not use such extreme terms!

Soame. Ha! ha! But tell me, Doldrummond, is it true that your wife insists on his retiring at eleven and rising at eight? I hear that she allows him nothing stronger than ginger ale and lemon; that she selects his friends, makes his engagements, and superintends his amusements? Should he marry, I am told she will even undertake the office of best man!

Lord Dol. Poor soul! she means well; and if devotion could make the boy a saint he would have been in heaven before he was out of his long clothes. As it is, I fear that nothing can save him.

Soame. Save him? You speak as though you suspected that he was not such a saint as his mother thinks him.

Lord Dol. I suspect nothing. I only know that my boy is unhappy. You might speak to him, and draw him out if occasion should offer—but do not say a word about this to Lady Doldrummond.

[*Enter Lady Doldrummond.—She is a tall, slight, but not angular woman. Her hair is brown, and brushed back from her temples in the simplest possible fashion. Self-satisfaction (of a gentle and ladylike sort) and eminent contentment with her lot are the only writings on her smooth, almost girlish countenance. She has a prim tenderness and charm of manner which soften her rather cutting voice.*]

Lady Dol. What! Cyril not here? How do you do, Sir Digby? I am looking for my tiresome boy. I promised to take him to pay some calls this afternoon, and as he may have to talk I must tell him what to say. He has no idea of making himself pleasant to women, and is the shyest creature in the world!

Soame. You have always been so careful to shield him from all responsibility,

responsibility, Lady Doldrummond. Who knows what eloquence, what decision, what energy he might display, if you did not possess these gifts in so pre-eminent a degree as to make any exertion on his part unnecessary, and perhaps disrespectful.

Lady Dol. Ah! mothers are going out of fashion. Even Cyril occasionally shows a certain impatience when I venture to correct him. As if I would hurt any one's feelings unless from a sense of duty! And pray, where is the pleasure of having a son if you may not direct his life?

Lord Dol. Cyril might ask, where is the pleasure of having parents if you may not disobey them.

Lady Dol. [*To Soame.*] When Herbert is alone with me he never makes flippant remarks of this kind. [*To Lord Doldrummond.*] I wonder that you like to give your friends such a wrong impression of your character. [*Turning to Sir Digby.*] But I think I see your drift, Sir Digby. You wish to remind me that Cyril is now at an age when I must naturally desire to see him established in a home of his own.

Soame. You have caught my meaning. As he is now two-and-twenty, I think he should be allowed more freedom than may have been expedient when he was—say, six months old.

Lady Dol. I quite agree with you, and I trust you will convince Herbert that women understand young men far better than their fathers ever could. I have found the very wife for Cyril, and I hope I may soon have the pleasure of welcoming her as a daughter.

Soame. A wife! Good heavens! I was suggesting that the boy had more liberty. Marriage is the prison of all emotions, and I should be very sorry to ask any young girl to be a man's gaol-keeper.

Lord Dol. Sir Digby is right.

Lady

Lady Dol. The presence of a third person has the strangest effect on Herbert's moral vision. As I have trained my son with a care and tenderness rarely bestowed nowadays even on a girl, I think I may show some resentment when I am asked to believe him a being with the instincts of a ruffian and the philosophy of a middle-aged bachelor. No, Sir Digby, Cyril is not *my* child if he does not make his home and his family the happiest in the world!

Soame. Yes?

Lady Dol. He has no taste for cards, horses, brandy, or actresses. We read together, walk together, and drive together. In the evening, if he is too tired to engage in conversation, I play the piano while he dozes. Lately he has taken a particular interest in Mozart's classic light opera. Any interest of that kind is so elevating, and I know of nothing more agreeable than a musical husband.

Lord Dol. You see she is resolved on his marriage, and she has had Julia de Trappe on a visit with us for the last five weeks in the hope of bringing matters to a crisis.

Lady Dol. And why not? Our marriage was arranged for us, and what idle fancies of our own could have led to such perfect contentment?

[Lord Doldrummond *avoids her eyes.*]

Soame. Julia de Trappe? She must be the daughter of that Mrs. Howard de Trappe who gives large At Homes in a small house, and who spends her time hunting for old lovers and new servants.

Lady Dol. I own that dear Julia has been allowed to meet men and women who are not fit companions for a young girl, no matter how interesting they may be to the general public. Only yesterday
yesterday

yesterday she told me she was well acquainted with Mr. Mandeville, the tenor. Mrs. de Trappe, it seems, frequently invites him to dinner. Still, Julia herself is very sensible, and the family is of extraordinary antiquity.

Soame. But the mother? If she has not been in the divorce court, it is through no fault of her own.

Lady Dol. [*Biting her lip.*] Mrs. de Trappe is vain and silly, I admit; but as she has at last decided to marry Mr. Banish, the banker, I am hoping she will live in his house at Hampstead, and think a little more about her immortal soul.

Soame. Does Cyril seem at all interested in Miss Julia?

Lady Dol. Cyril has great elegance of mind, and is not very strong in the expression of his feelings one way or the other. But I may say that a deep attachment exists between them.

Soame. A man must have sound wisdom before he can appreciate innocence. But I have no desire to be discouraging, and I hope I may soon have the pleasure of congratulating you all on the wedding. Good-bye.

Lord Dol. What! Must you go?

Soame. Yes. But [*aside to Lord Dol.*] I shall bear in mind what you say. I will do my best. I have an engagement in town to-night. [*Chuckles.*] An amusing one.

Lord Dol. [*With envy.*] Where?

Soame. At the Parnassus.

Lady Dol. [*With a supercilious smile.*] And what is the Parnassus?

Soame. A theatre much favoured by young men who wish to be thought wicked, and by young ladies who *are*. Good-bye, good-bye. [*Shakes hands with Lord and Lady Doldrummond and goes out.*]

Lady Dol. Thank goodness, he is gone! What a terrible example

example for Cyril. I was on thorns every second lest he should come in. Soame has just those meretricious attractions which appeal to youth and inexperience. That you should encourage such an acquaintance, and even discuss before him such an intimate matter as my hope with regard to Julia, is, perhaps, more painful than astonishing.

Lord Dol. They are both too young to marry. Let them enjoy life while they may.

Lady Dol. Enjoy life? What a degrading suggestion! I have often observed that there is a lurking taste for the vicious in every Doldrummond. [*Picking up Cyril's miniature from the table.*] Cyril is pure Bedingfield: my second self!

[*The Butler announces Mrs. De Trappe, Mr. Arthur Featherleigh, Mr. Banish. Mrs. de Trappe is a pretty woman with big eyes and a small waist; she has a trick of biting her under-lip, and looking shocked, as it were, at her own audacity. Her manner is a little effusive, but always well-bred. She does not seem affected, and has something artless, confiding, and pathetic. Mr. Featherleigh has a nervous laugh and a gentlemanly appearance; otherwise inscrutable. Mr. Banish is old, well-preserved, rather pompous, and evidently mistakes deportment for dignity.*]

Mrs. de Trappe. [*Kissing Lady Dol. on each cheek.*] Dear Edith, I knew we should surprise you. But Mr. Banish and I are house-hunting, and I thought I must run in and see you and Julia, if only for a second. I felt sure you would not mind my bringing Arthur [*indicating Featherleigh.*] He is so lonely at the prospect of my marriage that Mr. Banish and I have promised to keep him always with us. We have known each other so long. How should we spend our evenings without him? James admits they would be tedious, don't you, James? [*Indicating Banish.*]

Banish.

Banish. Certainly, my dear.

Lady Dol. [*Stiffly.*] I can well understand that you have learned to regard Mr. Featherleigh as your own son. And as we advance in years, it is so pleasant to have young people about us.

Mrs. de Trappe. [*After a slight pause.*] How odd that it should never have struck me in that light before ! I have always thought of Arthur as the trustee, as it were, of my poor fatherless Julia [*To Banish.*] Have I not often said so, James ?

Banish. [*Dryly.*] Often. In fact I have always thought that Julia would never lack a father whilst Arthur was alive. But I admit that he is a little young for the responsibility.

Feather. [*Unmoved.*] Do not forget, Violet, that our train leaves in fifty-five minutes.

Lord Dol. [*Catching a desperate glance from Lady Doldrummond.*] Then I shall have time to show you the Russian poodles which the Duke of Camdem brought me from Japan.

Mrs. de Trappe. [*Peevishly.*] Yes, please take them away. [*Waving her hand in the direction of Banish and Featherleigh.*] Edith and I have many secrets to discuss. Of course she will tell you [*to Lord Dol.*] everything I have said when we are gone, and I shall tell Arthur and James all she has said as we go home. But it is so amusing to think ourselves mysterious for twenty minutes. [*As the men go out laughing, she turns to Lady Doldrummond with a sigh.*] Ah, Edith, when I pause in all these gaieties and say to myself, Violet, you are about to marry a second husband, I cannot feel sufficiently thankful that it is not the third.

Lady Dol. The third ?

Mrs. de Trappe. To face the possibility of a third honeymoon, a third disappointment, and a third funeral would tax my courage to the utmost ! And I am not strong.

Lady

Lady Dol. I am shocked to see you so despondent. Surely you anticipate every happiness with Mr. Banish ?

Mrs. de Trappe. Oh, yes. He has money, and Arthur thinks him a very worthy sort of person. He is a little dull, but then middle-class people are always so gross in their air when they attempt to be lively or amusing ; so long as they are grave I can bear them well enough, but I know of nothing so unpleasant as the sight of a banker laughing. As Arthur says, City men and butlers should always be serious.

Lady Dol. Do you think that the world will quite understand—Arthur ?

Mrs. de Trappe. What do you mean, Edith ? A woman must have an adviser. Arthur was my late husband's friend, and he is my future husband's friend. Surely that should be enough to satisfy the most exacting.

Lady Dol. But why marry at all ? why not remain as you are ?

Mrs. de Trappe. How unreasonable you are, Edith ! How often have you urged me to marry Mr. Banish, and now that it is all arranged and Arthur is satisfied, you begin to object.

Lady Dol. I thought that you liked Mr. Banish better.

Mrs. de Trappe. Better than Arthur ? No, I am not so unkind as that, nor would James wish it. I am marrying because I am poor. My husband, as you know, left nearly all his money to Julia, and I feel the injustice so acutely that the absurd settlement he made on me is spent upon doctor's bills alone. If it were not for Arthur and one or two other kind friends who send me game and other little things from time to time, I could not exist at all. [Draws off her gloves, displays a diamond ring on each finger, and wipes her eyes with a point-lace pocket-handkerchief.] And when I think of all that I endured with De Trappe ! How often have I been roused from a sound sleep to see the room illuminated and De

Trappe,

Trappe, rolled up in flannel, sitting by the fire reading "Lead, kindly Light." What an existence! But now tell me about Julia. I hope she does not give you much trouble.

Lady Dol. I only hope that I may keep her always with me.

Mrs. de Trappe. How she must have improved! When she is at home I find her so depressing. And she does not appeal to men in the least.

Lady Dol. I could wish that all young girls were as modest.

Mrs. de Trappe. Oh, I daresay Julia has all the qualities we like to see in some other woman's daughter. But if you were her mother and had to find her a husband, you would regard her virtues in another light. Fortunately she has eight thousand a year, so she may be able to find somebody. Still, even money does not tempt men as it once did. A girl must have an extraordinary charm. She is so jealous of me. I cannot keep her out of the drawing-room when I have got callers, especially when Mr. Mandeville is there.

Lady Dol. I have heard of Mr. Mandeville. He is an actor, a singer.

Mrs. de Trappe. A lovely tenor voice. All the women are in love with him, except me. I would not listen to him. And now they say he is going to marry Sarah Sparrow—a great mistake. I should like to know who would care about him or his singing, once he is married.

Lady Dol. And who is Sarah Sparrow?

Mrs. de Trappe. Don't you know? She is the last great success. She has two notes: B flat and the lower G—the orchestra plays the rest. You must go to the Parnassus and hear her. To-night is the dress rehearsal of the new piece.

Lady Dol. And do you receive Miss Sparrow?

Mrs. de Trappe. No, women take up too much time. They
say,

say, too, that she is frantically jealous because Mandeville used to come and practise in my boudoir. He says no one can accompany him as I do!

Lady Dol. I hope Cyril does not meet Mr. Mandeville when he goes to your house.

Mrs. de Trappe. Let me see. I believe I introduced them. At any rate, I know I saw them at luncheon together last week.

Lady Dol. At luncheon together! Cyril and this person who sings? What could my boy and Mr. Mandeville have in common?

Mrs. de Trappe. They both appear to admire Sarah Sparrow very much. And I cannot find what men see in her. She is not tall and her figure is most innocent; you would say she was still in pinafores. As for her prettiness, I admit she has fine eyes, but of course she blackens them. I think the great attraction is her atrocious temper. One never knows whom she will stab next.

Lady Dol. [*Half to herself.*] Last week Cyril came in after midnight. He refused to answer my questions.

Mrs. de Trappe. You seem absent-minded, my dear Edith. [*Pause.*] I must be going now. Where are Arthur and James? We have not a moment to lose. We are going to choose wedding presents. James is going to choose Arthur's and Arthur is going to choose James's, so there can be no jealousy. It was I who thought of that way out of the difficulty. One does one's best to be nice to them, and then something happens and upsets all one's plans. Where is Cyril?

Lady Dol. I am afraid Cyril is not at home.

Mrs. de Trappe. Then I shall not see him. Tell him I am angry, and give my love to Julia. I hope she does not disturb you when you are in the drawing-room and have visitors. So difficult to keep a grown-up girl out of the drawing-room. Where can those men be? [*Enter Lord Doldrummond, Mr. Featherleigh,*

leigh, *and* Mr. Banish.] Ah! here they are. Now, come along; we haven't a moment to lose. Good-bye, Edith.

[*Exeunt (after wishing their adieux) Mrs. de Trappe, Mr. Featherleigh, and Mr. Banish, Lord Doldrummond following them.*]

Lady Dol. [Stands alone in the middle of the room, repeating.] Cyril and—Sarah Sparrow! My son and Sarah Sparrow! And he has met her through the one woman for whom I have been wrong enough to forget my prejudices. What a punishment!

[*Julia enters cautiously. She is so unusually beautiful that she barely escapes the terrible charge of sublimity. But there is a certain peevishness in her expression which adds a comfortable smack of human nature to her classic features.*]

Julia. I thought mamma would never go. I have been hiding in your boudoir ever since I heard she was here.

Lady Dol. Was Cyril with you?

Julia. Oh, no; he has gone out for a walk.

Lady Dol. Tell me, dearest, have you and Cyril had any disagreement lately? Is there any misunderstanding?

Julia. Oh, no. [*Sighs.*]

Lady Dol. I remember quite well that before I married Herbert he often suffered from the oddest moods of depression. Several times he entreated me to break off the engagement. His affection was so reverential that he feared he was not worthy of me. I assure you I had the greatest difficulty in overcoming his scruples, and persuading him that whatever his faults were I could help him to subdue them.

Julia. But Cyril and I are not engaged. It is all so uncertain, so humiliating.

Lady

Lady Dol. Men take these things for granted. If the truth were known, I daresay he already regards you as his wife.

Julia. [*With an inspired air.*] Perhaps that is why he treats me so unkindly. I have often thought that if he were my husband he could not be more disagreeable! He has not a word for me when I speak to him. He does not hear. Oh, Lady Doldrummond, I know what is the matter. He is in love, but I am not the one. You are all wrong.

Lady Dol. No, no, no. He loves you; I am sure of it. Only be patient with him and it will come all right. Hush! is that his step? Stay here, darling, and I will go into my room and write letters. [*Exit, brushing the tears from her eyes.*]

[*Butler ushers in Mr. Mandeville. Neither of them perceive Julia, who has gone to the window.*]

Butler. His Lordship will be down in half an hour, sir. He is now having his hair brushed.

Julia. [*In surprise as she looks round.*] Mr. Mandeville! [*Pause.*] I hardly expected to meet you here.

Mandeville. And why, may I ask?

Julia. You know what Lady Doldrummond is. How did you overcome her scruples?

Mandeville. Is my reputation then so very bad?

Julia. You—you are supposed to be rather dangerous; You sing on the stage, and have a tenor voice.

Mandeville. Is that enough to make a man dangerous?

Julia. How can I tell? But mamma said you were invincible. You admire mamma, of course. [*Sighs.*]

Mandeville. A charming woman, Mrs. de Trappe. A very interesting woman; so sympathetic.

Julia. But she said she would not listen to you.

Mandeville. Did she say that? [*A slight pause.*] I hope you will not be angry when I own that I do not especially *admire* your mother. A quarter of a century ago she may have had considerable attractions, but—are you offended?

Julia. Offended? Oh, no. Only it seems strange. I thought that all men admired mamma. [*Pause.*] You have not told me yet how you made Lady Doldrummond's acquaintance.

Mandeville. I am here at Lord Aprile's invitation. He has decided that he feels no further need of Lady Doldrummond's apron-strings.

Julia. Oh, Mr. Mandeville, are you teaching him to be wicked?

Mandeville. But you will agree with me that a young man cannot make his mother a kind of scribbling diary?

Julia. Still, if he spends his time well, there does not seem to be any reason why he should refuse to say where he dines when he is not at home.

Mandeville. Lady Doldrummond holds such peculiar ideas; she would find immorality in a sofa-cushion. If she were to know that Cyril is coming with me to the dress rehearsal of our new piece!

Julia. It would break her heart. And Lord Doldrummond would be indignant. Mamma says his own morals are so excellent!

Mandeville. Is he an invalid?

Julia. Certainly not. Why do you ask?

Mandeville. Whenever I hear of a charming husband I always think that he *must* be an invalid. But as for morals, there can be no harm in taking Cyril to a dress rehearsal. If you do not wish him to go, however, I can easily say that the manager does not care to have strangers present. [*Pause.*] Afterwards there is to be a ball at Miss Sparrow's.

Julia.

Julia. Is Cyril going there, too?

Mandeville. I believe that he has an invitation, but I will persuade him to refuse it, if you would prefer him to remain at home.

Julia. You are very kind, Mr. Mandeville, but it is a matter of indifference to me where Lord Aprile goes.

Mandeville. Perhaps I ought not to have mentioned this to you?

Julia. [*Annoyed.*] It does not make the least difference. In fact, I am delighted to think that you are taking Cyril out into the world. He is wretched in this house. [*With heroism.*] I am glad to think that he knows any one so interesting and clever and beautiful as Sarah Sparrow. I suppose she would be considered beautiful?

Mandeville. [*With a profound glance.*] One can forget her—sometimes.

Julia. [*Looking down.*] Perhaps—when I am as old as she is—I shall be prettier than I am at present.

Mandeville. You always said you liked my voice. We never see anything of each other now. I once thought that—well—that you might like me better. Are you sure you are not angry with me because I am taking Cyril to this rehearsal?

Julia. Quite sure. Why should I care where Cyril goes? I only wish that I, too, might go to the theatre to-night. What part do you play? And what do you sing? A serenade?

Mandeville. [*Astounded.*] Yes. How on earth did you guess that? The costume is, of course, picturesque, and that is the great thing in an opera. A few men can sing—after a fashion—but to find the right clothes to sing *in*—that shows the true artist.

Julia. And Sarah; does she look *her* part?

Mandeville. Well, I do not like to say anything against her,
but

but she is not quite the person I should cast for la Marquise de la Perdrigonde. Ah! if you were on the stage, Miss de Trappe! You have just the exquisite charm, the grace, the majesty of bearing which, in the opinion of those who have never been to Court, is the peculiar distinction of women accustomed to the highest society.

Julia. Oh, I should like to be an actress!

Mandeville. No! no! I spoke selfishly—if you only acted with *me*, it would be different; but—but I could not bear to see another man making love to you—another man holding your hand and singing into your eyes—and—and—— Oh, this is madness. You must not listen to me.

Julia. I am not—angry, but—you must never again say things which you do not mean. If I thought you were untruthful it would make me so—so miserable. Always tell me the truth.

[*Holds out her hand.*]

Mandeville. You are very beautiful!

[*She drops her eyes, smiles, and wanders unconsciously to the mirror.*]

[*Lady Doldrummond suddenly enters from the boudoir, and Cyril from the middle door. Cyril is handsome, but his features have that delicacy and his expression that pensiveness which promise artistic longings and domestic disappointment.*]

Cyril. [*Cordially and in a state of suppressed excitement.*] Oh, mother, this is my friend Mandeville. You have heard me mention him?

Lady Dol. I do not remember, but——

Cyril. When I promised to go out with you this afternoon, I forgot that I had another engagement. Mandeville has been kind enough to call for me,

Lady

Lady Dol. Another engagement, Cyril?

[*Lord Doldrummond enters and comes down, anxiously looking from one to the other.*]

Cyrl. Father, this is my friend Mandeville. We have arranged to go up to town this afternoon.

Lady Dol. [*Calmly.*] What time shall I send the carriage to the station for you? The last train usually arrives about——

Cyrl. I shall not return to-night. I intend to stay in town. Mandeville will put me up.

Lord Dol. And where are you going?

Mandeville. He is coming to our dress rehearsal of the "Dandy and the Dancer."

Cyrl. At the Parnassus. [*Lord and Lady Doldrummond exchange horrified glances.*] I daresay you have never heard of the place, but it amuses me to go there, and I must learn life for myself. I am two-and-twenty, and it is not extraordinary that I should wish to be my own master. I intend to have chambers of my own in town.

Lady Dol. Surely you have every liberty in this house?

Lord Dol. If you leave us, you will leave the rooms in which your mother has spent every hour of her life, since the day you were born, planning and improving. Must all her care and thought go for nothing? The silk hangings in your bedroom she worked with her own hands. There is not so much as a pen-wiper in your quarter of the house which she did not choose with the idea of giving you one more token of her affection.

Cyrl. I am not ungrateful, but I cannot see much of the world through my mother's embroidery. As you say, I have every comfort here. I may gorge at your expense and snore on your pillows and bully your servants. I can do everything, in fact, but live.

live. Dear mother, be reasonable. [*Tries to kiss her. She remains quite frigid.*]

[*Footman enters.*]

Footman. The dog-cart is at the door, my lord.

Cyril. You think it well over and you will see that I am perfectly right. Come on, Mandeville, we shall miss the train. Make haste : there is no time to be polite. [*He goes out, dragging Mandeville after him, and ignoring Julia.*]

Lord Dol. Was that my son? I am ashamed of him! To desert us in this rude, insolent, heartless manner. If I had whipped him more and loved him less, he would not have been leaving me to lodge with a God knows who. I disown him! The fool!

Lady Dol. If you have anything to say, blame *me!* Cyril has the noblest heart in the world; I am the fool.

Curtain.