

IN THE TRENCHES

by

Ralph Roberts

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CHARACTERS

LIEUT. SPELLTHORPE

CORPORAL DICK SUMMERS

PRIVATE JOE HIGGINS

PRIVATE BILL HOLLOWAY

PRIVATE TOM SPRATT

PRIVATE HARRY JENKINS

POSTMAN

MDLLE DELYSIA

BRITISH TRENCH

TOM, DICK, HARRY AND BILL DISCOVERED PLAYING
CARDS. JOE LOOKING OVER PARAPET.

JOE: (SINGING) "You gave me a beautiful rose ..."

TOM: 'Ere dry up, Joe - I can't see 'ow many pips I've
got on my cards wiv that row goin' on.

JOE CONTINUES - THEY THROW THINGS AT HIM.

BILL: Lor lumme Joe - 'oo ever told yer yer could sing?

JOE: Nobody, pudden-face. I guessed it.

BILL: Well all I can say is you're a rotten guesser.

JOE COMES DOWN AND WATCHES GAME.

TOM: Pass.

DICK: Two.

HARRY: Pass two.

BILL: I'll risk it - nap!

JOE: You can't get it.

BILL: Why not?

JOE: 'Cos you've got the two of spades and 'Arry's keepin' the ace for you. (HE LAUGHS)

BILL: Wot the 'ell do you want to tell 'em that for? Course I lose now.

JOE: Course you do, pay up and look pleasant.

BILL: Shan't, it's cheatin', that's wot it is. Why don't yer mind yer own blinkin' business?

JOE: It is my business. I don't like to see a fine young feller like you a riskin' your princely pay and disobeyin' orders.

ALL: Come on, pay up, Bill - you lost.

TOM: You couldn't 'ave got it any'ow.

BILL: It's daylight robbery, that's wot it is (PAYS OUT) Never mind, I'll be even with you, you knock-kneed, undersized two penn'orth of nothing.

JOE: Go and boil yerself.

BILL: Don't aggravate me - if I start on yer -

JOE: You start - you couldn't start a conversation let alone anythink else.

BILL: Wot!

THEY ARE ABOUT TO SCRAP WHEN LIEUT.
SPELLTHORPE ENTERS.

DICK: Attention!

SPELLTHORPE: Hello, what's up? Anything doing round here?

DICK: No, sir.

SPELLTHORPE: All quiet?

DICK: Yes, sir.

SPELLTHORPE: It didn't sound very quiet as I came along. What was it?

JOE AND BILL BOTH START TO EXPLAIN.

For the Lord's sake one at a time. Now Corporal - let's hear what it's all about.

DICK: Well sir, we was 'avin' a little game of cards -

SPELLTHORPE: Cards? Against orders.

DICK: Yes sir.

SPELLTHORPE: Carry on.

DICK: And Bill Holloway went nap, sir. 'Iggins who wasn't playin' chips in and tells us wot Bill 'as in 'is 'and.

JOE: I only said 'e 'ad the two o' spades.

SPELLTHORPE: Silence. Go on, Corporal.

DICK: Well Tom 'avin' the ace of spades sir, of course he keeps it and Bill loses.

SPELLTHORPE: I see, but Higgins pays.

BILL: Oh no, he don't, sir. I paid.

SPELLTHORPE: No, no. Higgins pays - how much was it?

BILL: Threepence each, sir - ninepence.

SPELLTHORPE: Come along Higgins - out with it - we'll never lick the enemy if we don't play fair amongst ourselves - hand it over.

JOE: (COUNTING MONEY INTO BILL'S HAND) Very good, sir. (TO BILL) There's a tanner. (WHISPERS FIERCELY) I 'ope the beer yer buys with it poisons yer. (ALOUD) There's a penny - sevenpence. (WHISPERS) If ever I catch yer alone I'll fillet yer. (ALOUD) Eightpence - (WHISPERS) I 'ope the next fag yer smoke chokes yer - (ALOUD) Another penny - ninepence.

SPELLTHORPE: That's better Higgins.

JOE: (ASIDE) I've been trying to get rid of that bad tanner for months.

SPELLTHORPE: Corporal, I ought to put you under arrest for allowing cards in this particular trench - still things seem beastly quiet today. Higgins, don't let me hear any more of this kind of thing about you.

JOE: No, sir.

SPELLTHORPE: And Higgins -

JOE: Yes, sir.

SPELLTHORPE: I don't suppose you meant any harm - so I'll just toss you double or quits. (TOSSES)

JOE: (ASIDE) Suppose 'e wins! (ALoud) Woman, sir.

SPELLTHORNE: I shouldn't wonder. (GIVES COIN WITHOUT LOOKING AT IT) And remember the next time I catch you gambling in any shape or form, it'll be heavy fatigues for the lot of you.

EXITS

DICK: That's a gentleman - ev'ry inch of 'im.

JOE: 'E's more than a gentleman - 'e's a toff - (TO BILLY) 'Ere, shake 'ands pudden-face.

BILL: All right - monkey brand.

SENTRY: (OUTSIDE) Halt - who goes there?

POSTMAN: (OUTSIDE) Post.

SENTRY: (OUTSIDE) Pass Post.

ENTER POSTMAN - ALL CROWD ROUND HIM -
CLAMOURING, "ANY FOR ME?" ETC.

POSTMAN: Steady on - 'oos 'ere? Let's see - one at a time - now then.

BILL: 'Olloway - 17543.

POSTMAN: 'Ere y'are - 'Olloway - letter and newspaper.

TOM: Spratt - 20694.

POSTMAN: Spratt - Spratt - no, nothing for Spratt. Never mind, better luck next time, mate.

BILL: 'Ere y'are Tom. 'Ave a look at my paper while I reads me letter.

TOM: Right y'are - thanks - but it was a letter I wanted - nobody never writes to me.

JOE: 'Iggins - 18307.

POSTMAN: 'Iggins - no - yes, 'ere y'are - only one.

JOE: Well 'ow many do yer think I want? One's enough - it's from 'er!

HARRY: Jenkins - 19255.

POSTMAN: Jenkins - letter and paper.

DICK: Summers - 17608.

POSTMAN: 'Ere y'are - letter and parcel - so long.

EXITS

DICK: 'Ooray - fags - tons of 'em - 'ere 'elp yerselves - only no smoking in the trenches, mind.

TOM: (SITTING DOWN BY JOE) Who's your letter from, Joe?

JOE: Ah!

TOM: It's from a girl.

JOE: Wot if it is - noseey!

TOM: Read us a bit of it, Joe - I never gets no letters.

BILL: (READING NEWSPAPER) Listen to this, boys. "The London Scottish covered themselves with glory - no regular troops could have - "

JOE: Oh, chuck it, Bill. Never mind about our bein' blasted 'eroes. Wot won the New Derby? (SNATCHES PAPER - STAGE BUSINESS)

TOM: Go on, Joe - wot's 'er name?

JOE: Wot's that got to do wiv you?

TOM: It's Halice -

JOE: 'Tain't - it's Hemma.

TOM: Wot's she say?

JOE: You want to 'ear?

TOM: Yus.

JOE: Well I don't mind you - as yer ain't got a gal of your own. (READS) "My darling Joe -

TOM: Darling, does she say that - straight?

JOE: There it is - look for yourself.

TOM: Darling - gor blimey - fancy anyone callin' yer "darling".

JOE: Sounds rum, don't it? But women are soppy ain't they?

TOM: They must be.

JOE: (READS) "As I ain't got much to do I take up my pen to send you a few lines hopping you are quite well and not killed as this leaves me at present. - Mary Trussel - Mary Spark as was when she worked at 36 - 'as 'ad a baby, 'er 'usband's in the Bantams, I've seem 'im. If the kid takes after its father it won't live through the winter. I met your pal Tom Pratt who is working on munitions. He seemed very sorry for me being separated from you and took me to the pictures so as I shouldn't feel lonely. He was very kind and said he was so fond of you that he would look after your girl for you all he could. He seemed quite upset and 'eld my 'and all through the show and kept squeezin' it and sayin' it was a shame that I should feel lonely and wasn't there anything he could do. We had some stout afterwards and going 'ome on the bus he put 'is arm round me, not because he wanted to, but because he thought it wer' his duty to you, seein' these night winds is so treacherous. 'E's goin' to call for me tomorrow. 'E sez he does 'ope you'll get through all right but from what 'e 'ears I mustn't build on it. When we meet again will you - please turn over" - eh what? (STAGE BUSINESS) Oh, I see - turn over the page - "grow a moustache like Tom's as they are so becoming and make a soldier look like a man. Must close now. Mother sends you her best respects. She is quite well but mad with toothache. Hopping you are the same. Your affectionate wife that is to be, xxxxxxxx Emma xxxx" See them crosses?

TOM: Yeh - wot's them for?

JOE: Them's kisses.

TOM: Garn - for you?

JOE: Course - they're for me.

TOM: 'Oo's Tom Pratt?

JOE: Pal o' mine - used to work in the same place - only 'e never was a fighter - went in for war work instead.

TOM: Conscientious objector?

JOE: Something of that sort. Why?

TOM: Oh, nothing - but if you can get anything from the Quartermaster Sergeant to hurry that moustache of yours up, I should get it - that's all.

HARRY: Look 'ere, you fellows. Blowed if there ain't a bloomin' tart comin' along 'ere.

JOE: Crikey - p'raps it's Emma.

DICK: Emma be blowed - it's a lydy.

HARRY: Looks like a Frenchy.

DELYSIA: (OUTSIDE) Ah, my good Mr Scotch soldier, I am so pleased to see you.

SENTRY: (OUTSIDE) What might be your business Miss?

DELYSIA: (OUTSIDE) I have lost - how you say - the road.

SENTRY: (OUTSIDE) You won't find it in there m'um but you may go and look.

DELYSIA: (ENTERING) Ah bon jour gentlemen.

JOE: Oh, bon jour - pate de fois gras and oui oui -

DELYSIA: I want to get back to the French Trenches. I am afraid I have come the wrong way.

JOE: Yes, lydy - you ought to have changed at Shepherd's Bush.

DELYSIA: Shepherd's Bush - but you are droll. How can I find my way?

JOE: Well, miss - Lieutenant Spellthorpe was here just now. He mostly takes charge of any females in distress on this section.

DICK: Here he comes. 'Shun!

ENTER LIEUTENANT SPELLTHORPE

SPELLTHORPE: Good gracious - a lady - most irregular.

DELYSIA: Oh sir - you will please excuse me - I have been visiting some of our brave soldiers and I lose my way.

SPELLTHORPE: If you will allow me - why - great Scott, surely it's little - Delysia?

DELYSIA: So - you know me?

SPELLTHORPE: Rather - I spent nearly every night of my last leave at the Ambassadors.

DELYSIA: You like it - yes?

SPELLTHORPE: It was absolutely topping - but goodness knows when I'll get leave again and these chaps have never heard you - so be a sport and give us a song now.

DELYSIA: (TURNING TO MEN) You like to 'ear me sing?

JOE: Not 'alf!

ALL: Rather! Bravo! Etc.

DELYSIA: Very well then - here is a song specially written for you.

FINALE

LIFE IN A TRENCH

Words by:
D. S. PARSONS

Music by:
PAUL RUBENS

1.

Living in the trenches where we've been
Germans may be heard but seldom seen,
You go out on patrol in the dickens of a funk,
And lie in a hole where a shell has sunk;
You think about a tale to tell the boss,
Consider you deserve the Military Cross,
You say you've cut the enemy's wire,
And everybody says, "What a blinking liar!"

REFRAIN

Oh, what a life! Living in a trench!
Oh, what a life! Fighting with the French!
You haven't got a wife, or a pretty little wench,
But everybody's happy in an old French trench.
How's your father? All right!

2.

Everybody's happy, everybody's glad,
'Cos it is the seventeenth shell they've had,
Two inch, three inch, four inch too,
Five point nine, and nine point two.
Coal-box, whiz-bang, shrapnel high,
Help us all to make the time pass by;
Rifle grenades and sausages galore,
And a Gawd-damned mine underneath the floor.

3.

Sniped all the day and sniped all night,
Bombs on the left and bombs on the right,
But nobody seems to care a damn
So long as we get our Tickler's jam;
Lovely iron rations for our grub,
Dug-outs in the evening for our pub.
The sergeants love to pinch our tot of rum,
Strafe 'em all to Hallelujah Kingdom Come!

CURTAIN

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

by

Ralph Roberts

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

ENTER A NURSE, READING A LETTER.

NURSE: "- if it is that we meet again - or if it is that we do not meet again - always for me there must be only one woman. Adieu or au revoir, as Fate and the guns decide - Victor." (PUTS LETTER AWAY)
'Fate and the guns' - poor boy! Six months since those words were written and never another line. Probably it is just six months since they were forgotten - for I know from his comrades that he is well - I suppose when he was ill he thought he loved me, but when he got well - ah! that was another story! Why should I care? I won't! I'll never give him another thought

ENTER VICTOR SINGING A SNATCH OF FRENCH SONG.

VICTOR: (SEEING NURSE) Oh, pardon, mam'selle - bon jour.

NURSE: (ASIDE) Victor! Bon jour, m'sieur.

VICTOR: (RECOGNISING HER - EAGERLY) Nurse! My Nurse! Nurse Rosse! (ASIDE) Oh, I forgot! (ALoud) It is great happiness to see you again.

NURSE: (ASIDE) His is afraid I am going to remind him of his foolishness - (ALoud) I am so glad to see you have quite recovered.

VICTOR: Oh, but yes - I have been since five months in field. I come but now from the trench.

NURSE: How well you are looking! Now we meet again it seems more like six minutes than six months since you left the hospital.

VICTOR: Oh yes - for one so busy, and who has so many friends the time passes very quickly, no doubt - but for the soldier -

NURSE: Yes?

VICTOR: There are long hours of watching at night when every minute seems an eternity and one can only think, think - think - !

NURSE: Oh, we nurses have a good deal of watching to do one way and another. Sometimes our patients' lives

depend on our keeping awake when we are - oh, so sleepy!

VICTOR: And in those long watches, you too perhaps think of absent friends?

NURSE: It doesn't do to let one's mind wander - medicine must be given at the exact time the doctor orders.

VICTOR: (ASIDE) Medicine! - she talks of medicine when I would speak of love. (ALOUD) So then it is true you never think of old friends?

NURSE: When I'm off duty, of course, I think of old friends, but I have very few friends.

VICTOR: Mam'selle, have you never had one little moment - one of those little off-duty moments - to remember me?

NURSE: Oh, I've often thought of you.

VICTOR: You remember all the things I said?

NURSE: I shouldn't like to remember some of the things you said when I gave you your medicine - especially the oily mixture. It's a good thing I don't understand French too well.

VICTOR: Always - now as then - you make the fun of me - are you never serious?

NURSE: What is the good of being serious? It gives one wrinkles - and makes one look old.

VICTOR: You have no heart.

NURSE: No, - I lost it.

VICTOR: Ah - where?

NURSE: Oh, ever so long ago.

VICTOR: And he?

NURSE: He?

VICTOR: Yes - he - the lucky finder.

NURSE: Oh, 'he' didn't appreciate it. He went away and - well, it wasn't very polite of him - but to be perfectly candid, he forgot all about me!

VICTOR: Ah - these Englishmen have always the cold blood.

NURSE: I think his temperature was normal - sometimes. But tell me about yourself. - What have you been doing since you left hospital?

VICTOR: One two-week I go on leave. I go to see my mother and little brother - I tell them of you, and we speak all day of you.

NURSE: Ah! You were only beginning to get better then.

VICTOR: Then I am strong again and go back to the Front, but it was you who make me well. Do you remember the last day I was with you? The tears were in my eyes to leave my enchanted castle.

NURSE: Enchanted castle! For a base hospital it was the barest, ugliest building I've ever seen.

VICTOR: But to me the most beautiful, for it was there I met you.

NURSE: Don't, Victor, don't - you had forgotten until you met me just now - let me forget too.

VICTOR: There is nothing for you to remember - I was a fool that is all - but I did not know how much a fool until you send me back my letter.

NURSE: (QUICKLY) What letter?

VICTOR: The letter I send you before I return to the Front, and ask you to meet me just once before I go.

NURSE: But I received no letter from you.

VICTOR: Pardon me - I have here the letter and the cruel words you wrote. (PRODUCES LETTER)

NURSE: I wrote! Please show me.

VICTOR: Look then - here is the letter and here is what you wrote. "Sorry you were wounded - glad you are quite well again, but I don't even remember you, so please don't write any more nonsense! You must mean somebody else."

NURSE: But that is not my writing - let me look. (LOOKS AT ENVELOPE) "Nurse Rosse" - but I am not Nurse Rosse. She was the little dark woman in the next ward. My name is Fleming.

VICTOR: But you - I do not understand - I - was - everybody call you Nurse Rosse.

NURSE: No - no, 'Rose', my Christian name - my 'little' name, you know. They always called me Rose because there was another nurse named Fleming, and they thought it would prevent mistakes.

VICTOR: Prevent mistakes! - and then to make the greatest mistake of all! And you never wrote that? Oh, it is good - splendid! Are we down-hearted? No!

NURSE: I thought you had forgotten me and never written.

VICTOR: Forgotten - never for one moment. I cannot eat my food, thinking of you. I cannot sleep at night - thinking of you. Yesterday when I make the shave, I cut myself - thinking of you. And you are here - you go no more to the hospital where - we were?

NURSE: No, I applied for a transfer, when - when I lost all hope of hearing from you -

VICTOR: But why did you want to leave? One hospital is as good as another.

NURSE: Perhaps it had grown into an enchanted castle for me too - and my fairy prince had gone away.

VICTOR: But now he has returned - and he will not go away unless you send him. He still wants nursing, you know.

NURSE: Good gracious! - then I can't trust you. You know
The devil was sick, the devil a saint would be,
The devil got well - but the devil a saint was he!

VICTOR: You laugh again - always laughing - but you see I am not sick, and I am not the devil. Won't you say 'yes'?

NURSE: I want to - but I don't know if I ought to.

DUET

DUET

NURSE AND SOLDIER

SOLDIER

Out of the sky one radiant star
Looks down at night on me -
If it can shed its beams so far
How bright those beams must be!
Softly it burns so far above
So radiant and so true
Oh lovely star - oh star of Love
How can I come to you?

(Refrain)

Lady - Lady - fair to see
In your Nurse's dress -
Eyes that seem to smile at me
Full of tenderness -
Healing is your noble trade
But if we must part -
Can you heal the wounds you've made
In my aching heart?

NURSE

Out of the sky the stars must fade
Before the light of day -
Men may forget the vows they made
When night has passed away!
Poor little star so weak and small
Faint and more faintly cries -
And when the sun shines over all
Sad and forsaken dies!

(Refrain)

Soldier - soldier - good to see
In your manliness -
It might not be well for me
If I answered 'yes' -
Wounding is a warrior's trade
But if we should part -
Who would heal the wounds you made
In my aching heart?

(2nd Refrain)

SOLDIER: Lady - Lady - fair to see etc.

NURSE: Soldier - soldier - good to see etc.

CURTAIN

CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE TRENCHES

by

Ralph Roberts

In a Prologue (the Author of which discreetly prefers to remain anonymous until after the bricks have been thrown.) a Carolian Interlude and One Scene.

CHARACTERS IN THE PROLOGUE

THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN	MR GEORGE ROBEY
Mr POPULAR COMEDIAN	MR ARTHUR PLAYFAIR
THE IDEAL LADY	MISS VIOLET LORAINÉ
THE GOOD FAIRY (Adjectives exhausted)	MISS JULIA JAMES

SCENE 1 IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN

ENTER ARTHUR PLAYFAIR

PLAYFAIR: Ladies and Gentlemen ...

FOLLOWING QUICK UPON THE WORDS, GEORGE ROBEY AND VIOLET LORAINÉ ENTER THROUGH THE TABS: THE ONE MOVES DOWN R., THE OTHER L. EACH CARRIES A SANDWICH BOARD. ON GEORGE ROBEY'S ARE PRINTED THE WORDS IN LARGE LETTERS, "A PERFECT GENTLEMAN". ON VIOLET LORAINÉ'S "THE IDEAL LADY".

Hullo! What do you want?

ROBEY: Isn't he wonderful!

LORAINÉ: Asks us what we want!

PLAYFAIR: And I'll be glad if you inform me.

ROBEY: Vi, cover him with gladness as with a garment.

LORAINÉ: (SHYLY) It's not for a lady to make the first advances.

PLAYFAIR: Look here ...

ROBEY: Pardon the observation, but it is not a pleasing prospect you invite us to gaze upon.

LORAINNE: What's the matter with me, if you want a really uplifting view?

ROBEY: Ah, indeed, what? Swish!

ARTHUR PLAYFAIR GIVES THEM AN ANGRY GLARE
AND TURNS AGAIN TO THE AUDIENCE.

PLAYFAIR: Ladies and Gentlemen ...

ROBEY: You've already said that.

LORAINNE: Try something fresh.

ROBEY: Last week's kipper, for instance.

PLAYFAIR: This is beyond all bounds.

LORAINNE: Then kick off again.

ROBEY: If there's any kicking to be done I'm an expert.

PLAYFAIR: Silence. I'm here to address the audience.

LORAINNE: Have they asked you to address them?

PLAYFAIR: Of course not ...

ROBEY: Seems like taking a bit of a liberty, doesn't it?

PLAYFAIR: I can't go on if you interrupt every second word I say.

LORAINNE: We'll make it every first word, if you like.
Anything to oblige.

PLAYFAIR: (TO ROBEY) Do go away. With you on that side and Miss Loraine on this it fairly gets on my nerves.

ROBEY: Delicate little plant. Alright, we'll change over. Any objection, Vi?

LORAINNE: No, we only want to please him.

THEY CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION AS THEY
MEET C.

Seems a trifle crotchety, does he not?

ROBEY: Whimsical, distinctly whimsical.

LORAINNE: Shouldn't care to be his wife.

ROBEY: Don't suppose he's got one, although it's marvellous what a woman'll put up with just to get married.

LORRAINE: True. That reminds me, how's Mrs Robey?

ROBEY: O, she ... I say, you don't mean to suggest ...

LORRAINE: Nothing, nothing. But Mr Playfair is growing impatient. Bong soir. A tootle heure. (SHE GOES R.)

ROBEY: (GOING L.) If there's one thing I detest it's a double entender from a feminine gender. Swish!

PLAYFAIR: Ha! Now perhaps we'll get on. (ADVANCING) Ladies and Gentlemen ...

ROBEY:) (TOGETHER) That's us!
LORRAINE:)

PLAYFAIR: You!

LORRAINE: Yes. He's the Perfect Gentleman ...

ROBEY: And she the Ideal Lady. But, mark me well, only for one afternoon.

PLAYFAIR: Still, I don't understand ...

LORRAINE: (TOUCHING FOREHEAD) Complete lack of grey matter.

ROBEY: Come hither, little one, and light shall be shed on your ignorance. 'Tis this way. An audience, psychologically considered, is less a heterogeneous collection of segregated units than a homogeneous and highly individualized assemblage of diversified entities fused and compressed into one solid and corporate mass. You follow me?

LORRAINE: Who wouldn't - with such a face?

ROBEY: In this manner the complex is resolved into a simple denomination ... in other words, a number of individuals becomes solidified into a compact body from which springs a single head, or, an all-embracing protagonist, charged with the duty of voicing the thoughts, feelings and sentiments of the multitude. Thus, when you say Ladies and Gentlemen, just like that, you really mean Miss Loraine as the representative Ideal Lady, and myself as the representative Perfect Gentleman.

LORAINÉ: What could be simpler?

PLAYFAIR: Oh, nothing. Well, that's that. Now let's go ahead.

ROBEY: Let's.

PLAYFAIR: Ladies and Gentlemen ...

ROBEY: The same old tune! A priceless boon. As moon at noon, or grouse in June! Some poet, eh, what?

PLAYFAIR: I am here today to address you on the subject of Plum Puddings.

LORAINÉ: How well he knows his way to the heart of the British Public.

PLAYFAIR: Plum Puddings and our boys at the front.

ROBEY: Loud and prolonged applause.

PLAYFAIR: You know what our object is. To see that each of them, from the Somme to Salonica, gets his bit of pudding on Christmas Day. And for that we want Sixty Thousand Pounds.

ROBEY: (TO AUDIENCE) Hope you've brought your cheque-books with you.

PLAYFAIR: There! You're beginning to interrupt again.

ROBEY: Why, we never stopped.

PLAYFAIR: That's what I complain of.

LORAINÉ: I suppose he thinks he's bought the place.

PLAYFAIR: (HOTLY) Whether or not, I demand silence.

ROBEY: Now he's losing his temper.

PLAYFAIR: Losing my temper ... (BOILING OVER) I ... I ...

LORAINÉ: Looks like having a fit presently.

PLAYFAIR: I protest ... I was never more grossly insulted in my life ...

THEY ALL COMMENCE TO TALK AT AND TO EACH OTHER AT THE TOP OF THEIR VOICES. AT THE HEIGHT OF THE UPROAR, ENTER THE GOOD FAIRY, THROUGH TABS.

GOOD FAIRY: Hold!

THEY FALL BACK ABASHED.

'Tis no time for bickering and brawling,
For shrill abuse or strident caterwauling.
Attune your voices to a gentler mood,
And breathe no word that is not kind and good.
We're here to set the others an example,
On tender corns not ruthlessly to trample,
Just for an instant give a pause to gagging:
Let your unruly tongues refrain from wagging.
You've had your innings ... wherefore, then,
repine
If I suggest the moment's come for mine.
Do take a friend's advice and rest awhile,
For, to be frank, your efforts to beguile,
Seemed just a teeny, weeny bit funereal.
But then, what chance had you with such material?

TO AUDIENCE

They did their best, poor darlings, to be funny,
Now to be serious. We want your money.
And if you seek the wherefore and the why,
This in the fewest words is my reply.

I sing - and hope you'll pardon my intruding -
The deathless fame of English Christmas Pudding.
Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
"Give me one slice, and come then, come what may,
On! On! With new-found stomach, to the fray!"?
Think of our Tommies who have risked their all,
To save fair England from a tyrant's thrall.
Think of them dreaming, far across the foam,
Or Christmas Day ... and all its joys ... at
home.

And then, awakening to the pleasant thought,
That pudding also is to be their lot.
Such is the picture that I fain would show,
To you, with other things, before I go.
One wave of this, and with unfaltering ease,
'Tis done: as you shall see. Now, quiet, please.

SHE WAVES HER WAND. THE CURTAINS PART,
REVEALING THE STEDMAN CHOIR WHO SING A
CHRISTMAS CAROL. MEANWHILE, ALL THE OTHERS,
EXCEPT THE FAIRY, HAVE DISAPPEARED.

THE CAROL ENDED, THE CURTAIN ONCE MORE
FALLS. THE GOOD FAIRY SPEAKS AGAIN.

And so, that's that. Next picture will portray,
Tommy ... Somewhere in France ... on Christmas
Day.

ONCE MORE SHE WAVES HER WAND AND THE CURTAIN
GOES UP ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE TRENCHES.

THE HOME ROAD

Words by
LENA GUILBERT FORD

Music by
JEAN NOUGUÈS

There's a road that leads to glory,
There's a road that leads to gain;
And sometimes you will wander
In the road that leads to pain.
Sometimes there is a pathway
With branches overgrown
But there's roses all a-blowing
In the road that leads back home.

Refrain

So ...
Let the home road call you,
Whatever may befall you,
East or West, however far away you roam!
Though the day be dreary
And the way be weary
Don't forget there is a road that leads back home.

If a friend has proved unfaithful,
If a rose its thorn has shown;
You have won if with each sorrow
Smiles of courage you have worn.
If the pathway makes you weary,
Look into the starry dome.
And when getting tired, remember
There's a road that leads back home.

Refrain

Do you hear the bagpipes playing,
Do you hear the bugles blow?
Do you hear our brave boys singing,
As to Victory they go?
It's a long way they are going,
It's a weary mile to roam
It's a long, long way to go, but -
It's the road that leads back home.

Refrain