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Just 21/-
Court Theatre
on 21/14

No. 3087	
LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE.	
Name of Play.	Heroes Every One of Them
Theatre	Court Theatre
Date of Licence	Dec 14/14

700 MS 66084 3

HEROES. EVERY ONE of them.

Hili Laydon (Mrs Cyril Morris)
7 Ridgmount Gds
W.C.



LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,
ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.

Dec. 11th, 1914.

"HEROES, EVERY ONE OF THEM", in one act for production at the Court Theatre, on 21st Dec. 1914.

A sensibly-written discussion - in the kitchen-of the War, and the duties of loafers, who content themselves with critizizing French's operations in the intervals between football matches. Specimens of these stay-at-homes are the Cook's and the Housemaid's admirers, who_listen unconvinced to the arguments and chaff of their sweethearts, but are finally shamed by the example of a despised rival who, being egged on by the spirited Cook, enlists, and is promptly rewarded by the promise of her hand. A sound little object-lesson conveyed in racy natural dialogue.

Recommended for License,

(Sgd) Ernest A. Bendall.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be a stylized 'S' or 'E' with a long diagonal stroke extending downwards and to the left.

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ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.

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suggested on by the spirited Cook, enters, and is
promptly rewarded by the promise of her hand.

A sound little object-lesson conveyed in easy natural
dialogue.

Recommended for Lums
Ernest Ben Hall

14-XII-14

HEROES, EVERY ONE.

ETHEL (Cook)

JESSIE (UNDER HOUSEMAID)

THE GROCER.

BERT. (Pot man at the Prince of Wales Hotel.)

CONSTABLE.

The WORM.

The kitchen at the *Lucas-Cole's House. London.*

TIME: Present (8. p.m.)

well very able bodied young man ought to be at the
front.

HEROES EVERY ONE.

SCENE: Seated round table in centre of room
are ETHEL & JESSIE - BERT & the GROCER
- they have just finished supper -
ETHEL has just risen to clear away.

ETHEL.

See Well I've got my ideas on the war and no one
will alter them - Won't someone finish up this sar-
dine?

BERT.

Not after three helpings of roly jam pudding -

GROUCER

Your ideas - where do you get them from?

ETHEL.

The papers.

GROUCER

The papers. What do the papers know?

ETHEL.

A good deal more than the pubs I should say.
I hate wasting one sardine and it's hardly worth
messing up a clean plate for -

BERT.

Leave it in the tin.

ETHEL.

It turns 'em off at once.

JESSIE.

(Who is busy knitting) I wish the Germans was
as easy turned off.

GROUCER

(Laughs) That's not half bad -

~~ETHEL.~~

~~Good for Jessie.~~

ETHEL. You'll see 'em turned off - as soon as our Allies 'ave ~~unpacked properly~~ and got settled down at them, and we've sent them out a few men from Kitchener's new Army.

GROUCER. Not much, them Germans are all right as fighters Say what you like, and they've got some blooming fine guns, them Jack Johnsons and Black Marias.

ETHEL. You hold your noise. You wait till our "what-do-you-call-'em" start on them.

GROUCER. Never heard of them.

ETHEL. That's for not reading your papers. Here your sleeve is in the butter - messer, hold on a minute till I scrape it off.

GROUCER. *Nah say what for like*
"We aint got nothing that will ever touch them, and never will have (he strikes his fist on table and shouts)"

JESSIE. Well I'm not running the army don't shout - I can't help it.

BERT. Oh I don't know - our battle ships have got some jolly fine guns and don't you forget.

GROUCER. Yes but you can't run a Dreadnought up to the trench on a side car. Can you stupid?

BERT. Well you can't take a Black Maria out ^{to sea} in a canoe - can you, fool? So it cuts both ways - then what about the boys on the battle ships eh?

GROUCER. They aint no good - for fighting mines -

BERT.

Oh well, anyhow, we shan't see the Germans over here, that's all that worries me, that and how the devil the Hotspurs got a goal at all last Saturday with Charlie Ramsey gone to the front.

GROUCER.

Ah, he was a good man - he couldn't be spared - they'll never do no good this winter without him -

ETHEL.

(Coming to table to fetch more things.) Who couldn't be spared?

BERT.

(Filling his mouth with apple and trying to talk with it quite full) Charlie Ramsey first forward in the Spurs -

ETHEL.

Is he some Belgium general?

BERT.

Oh, Ethel, Ethel. Where is your learning? Charlie Ramsey - one of England's first footer men.

ETHEL.

Oh I can't worry about football, Lor! when this war's on.

BERT.

That's all very well - but how are us chaps to get any recreation if Football is to be knocked on the head. We are told to keep the Flag flying - and they are not feeling the pinch at the gate so ~~far~~. About the only entertainment that hasn't suffered since the war's been on.

ETHEL.

I can't understand how men can go and laugh and cheer themselves hoarse, when a man's knocked down by a football. When their brother citizens are being knocked out by thousands with cannon balls hourly.

BERT.

That's all very well for women to talk (He leans back in chair and tucks his thumbs into his waistcoat arm holes.) But football has made us men of England what we are to-day.

ETHEL. Judging from you two, that isn't much for football to make a song about.

BERT. Do you mean to say that football hasn't made the soldier what he is?

ETHEL. I'm not talking about the soldiers.

BERT. A good Englishman can't be beaten.

GROUCER. Don't you be too sure. I'd never be surprised to see an invasion - Swelp me I wouldn't.

JESSIE. (Stopping knitting) Not really. You don't mean it. You don't think we shall have those bul-
lies here and be treated like those poor Belgian
and French.

GROUCER. I shouldn't like to bet on it. Them Germans do a job pretty well when once they undertake one.

JESSIE. I'd die of fright if I thought that - Oh when you read what they've done to those others. I've got half me things packed ready now. I wish that dressmaker would send my new skirt home - it would be too bad if I had to leave that. Oh, isn't it all dreadful, dreadful.

BERT. Don't you worry - if an invasion was likely, I shouldn't be here.

GROUCER. Where would you be?

BERT. Join something.

ETHEL. The runaways.

BERT. Go on. I'll give you a kiss if you cheek me. I'm not afraid of no German.

JESSIE.

Oh, I shan't sleep at nights, if you think the Germans will land here - they do carry on so. I've had awful nights as it is, for I'm sure there's a mouse in the room. I've heard it.

ETHEL.

And I've seen it - it came out of behind the fireplace and winked his eye at me when I was doing my hair this afternoon. *glans*

JESSIE.

Whatever did you do?

ETHEL.

Threw the hot curling tongs at it.

JESSIE.

(In a state of alarm) I knew it - I had a presentiment there was a mouse in the house before I heard it squeak. Oh, Ethel what are we going to do.

ETHEL.

Get a trap, that's all there is to be done and wait.

JESSIE.

Oh, my dear, what with the mouse and the war I shall go mad. It's thoroughly upset me. I shall lose all my nerve if they are not both settled up soon.

BERT.

Did 'em - try a box of Dean's backache Pills dearie.

JESSIE.

Don't chaff. It's nothing to laugh ~~at~~. ~~There~~ now you've made me make this mitten too long.

BERT.

~~Don't undo it. Wouldn't it make one of them~~ tummy belts - it's wide enough.

JESSIE.

~~It would have to be a thin man (Holding it up)~~
Oh, what was that, I heard a footstep - there I told you my nerve's quite gone - oh look there's a man looking through the window at us.

ETHEL. Go on. So it is (goes to open door) Here what are you doing here. Groucer you open the door and let him have it straight.

GROUCER. (Opens door) What the devil do you want -

CONSTABLE. Who's in charge here?

ETHEL. I am.

CONS. (Special Constable enters - he is a fine arrogant looking man of about 55 years.) I thought Mr & Mrs. Lucas-Cole were in Scotland.

ETHEL. So they are - they went there when the war first broke out, and took all us servants in. Sir.

CON. So I understood, that's why I came down to enquire why the area gate was left open and the lights were on fully in the kitchen. Are you one of the servants?

ETHEL. I'm cook.

CON. Then how is it you aren't with Mr & Mrs. Lucas Cole.

ETHEL. When Madame heard a Zeppelin raid was expected, she was anxious someone should be here to look after the house so me and the second house maid came back to take care of the place.

CON. An excellent guard against bombs damage ~~I should say~~ - quite worthy of Mrs. Lucas-Cole.

JESSIE. That's what I said Sergeant. What use would two women be among a dozen bombs or so. Won't the officer join us with a sardine sandwich and a glass of ginger wine?

CON.

Does Mrs. Lucas-Cole allow followers?

ETHEL.

She told us to be sure and not feel lonely, Sir.

CON.

I should pull the blind down.

ETHEL.

The spring is broke sir.

CON.

What proof can you give me that you are Mrs. Lucas-Cole's servants?

ETHEL.

I've just told you I am.

CON.

That's hardly proof.

ETHEL.

(Annoyed at being doubted.) Well - I've cooked many a dinner for you sir, and Madam has always said we must allow 3 plates for Sir Arthur Rigg he has the most "absormal" appetite I've ever known."

CON.

Oh, I don't know about that.- perhaps it is that the dinners here are so good. Anyhow you remember me?

ETHEL.

I never forget a face once I've seen it - and I've often looked through the crack of the door at dinner parties, Sir.

CON.

Oh well now you've satisfied me you are the cook here. I've done my duty. We are all doing our little share in this great War. Good-eveing. I should try and get that blind down or hang up a tea-cloth or something. We don't want too bright lights about just now. Remember we are only a few yards from the Head Quarters, and I should make a point of keeping your area gate locked, besides encouraging tramps and burglars, it's dangerous. I leant against it just now, that's how I knew it was undone. (He brushes dirt off his shoulder with)

ETHEL.

I'll look it behind you sir - Won't you go out of the front door sir,

CON.

Oh no thanks, we are all prepared to make some sacrifices and rough it a bit during war time.

(ETHEL holds door open for him and he
EXITS followed by ETHEL.)

JESSIE.

What have I done. - I offered him a sardine sandwich, and he's a big swell.

GROUCER.

I knew he was one of them so called Specials. I saw his *badge* They aint no good, Waste of the country's money to elect 'em

BERT.

They are gratis.

GROUCER.

(Plunging hands into his pockets.) So they ought to be. Who listens to them.

BERT.

You'd 'ave to, they carries a truncheon in their pockets.

GROUCER.

Bah! - and I generally carries a couple of fists in mine. ~~I can hear him speak to a burglar - "I say is it all right for picking the lock of that door."~~

He is a one

(ENTER ETHEL)

ETHEL.

You've done it Jessie - didn't you recognise him?

JESSIE.

No, of course not. I'd never seen him before.

ETHEL.

I see he's doing his little share and I like him for it.

GROUCER. Little share - interfering old ass.

ETHEL. Not a bit of it - if he can't fight - it shows he wants to do something.

GROUCER. Or somebody.

BERT. Oh, come on, let's chuck the war, and come and sit on my knee Ethel, (He takes hold of her but she pulls away) When's it to be. I've seen a topping little ring just fit your fat little finger - garnets and pearls. When's it to be Ethel.

ETHEL. I'm in no hurry. (Pins tablecloth over window)

BERT. No, but I am, if you don't take your chance soon you'll find us eligibles a bit scarce at the end of the war. There'll be a great rush for a chap like me as there is for the 6d places at the Palace on Cup-final day.

Jessie
ETHEL.

Don't you believe it. The chaps what have served their country will be the only ones wanted.

BERT. Well I'm serving 'em all day - with beer.. They marries soldiers free now.

Jessie
ETHEL.

That's just it, you ain't one.

Comes down

BERT. No - they've got enough men, you should have seen the crowds of Khaki johnnies I saw hanging about Pentenville Rd, the other morning - I'm blowed if they couldn't find jobs for them all.

GROUCER. Don't you believe it. Our Army is a handful a "poultry" handful.

JESSIE.

Why don't you help and swell it up.

GROUCER.

What's the good of one man, we want millions
 my dear, millions. to be any good. *Finish paying the rent*

JESSIE.

What's that, I heard something move outside.

BERT.

You've got 'em proper - Jess old girl.

JESSIE.

I'm sure I heard a foot step outside.

~~ETHEL.~~~~Be funny if you didn't.~~

BERT.

It's the "Special" marking time (laughs)*There*
JESSIE.

(Rises and lifts up cloth at window.) There's
 someone trying to get out of our gate.

BERT.

You mean in.

GROUCER.

Another "Special's" found the lock faulty. (laughs)~~ETHEL.~~

(Goes to door and opens it.) Who's that?
~~Speak or I'll fire.~~

WORM.

It's only me.

ETHEL.

What's your other name?

WORM.

It's all right.

ETHEL.

Oh it's the worm - whatever are you doing here
 I locked the gate.

WORM.

After I was in though. (ENTERS - he is a thin dirty looking man about 26 - his knees are bent and he holds his head down all the time. His clothes are ill-fitting - and torn. He has a black cotton muffler round his neck - his hair when he takes off his cap is hanging over his eyes in greasy lank locks, and at the back of his head a sprout of hair sticks up straight.)

ETHEL.

(Closing door behind him.) You don't mean to tell me you've been hiding - You little --

WORM.

No I wasn't hiding, I only stood inside the coal cellar while the gentleman passed.

ETHEL.

What was you doing it for?

2 Jessie

If we didn't know what a poor you were, we'd think you was a spy.

1 WORM.

Oh I'd got nothing much to do to-night so - so

ETHEL.

Well go on.

WORM.

So I come to have a look at you through the window.

ETHEL.

What!

WORM.

I felt a bit worried and - and I ---

ETHEL.

Came to have a look at me -

JESSIE.

A kind of "pick me up."

BERT.

Sauce I calls it.

GROUCER.

What is this - (pointing to the Worm)

WORM. It's all right, I'll go if you'll give me the key Miss. I'm sorry to intrude.

GROUCER. Instead of the Special Constable locking the burglar out he's locked him in.

WORM. Do've mean me. Do you think I'm a burglar?

ETHEL. No stop it Groucer, this is the worm from the oil shop. I calls him that cos' he never seems to have a backbone.

BERT. What do you mean by coming to have a look at Miss Smithers?

WORM. She's always been very friendly to me.

BERT. (Going near to him) Friendly be blowed -

WORM. Only friendly, nothing more.

BERT. And I'll see you are no more - this is my property, do you understand cheeky little devil, Ethel Smithers is mine, mine, mine - so hook it.

ETHEL. Oh, give over, do. He doesn't mean no harm. What do you want?

WORM. It doesn't matter.

BERT. Doesn't it - Come on out with it. She's my bit of goods (Puts his arm round ETHEL.)

WORM. So I gathered.

BERT. Now then, are you trying to be funny?

ETHEL.

Oh, stop it Bert. Have a sardine, Worm?

WORM.

No thanks.

ETHEL.

Please yourself.

JESSIE.

Listen to this (READS) One of the soldiers letters.

"If the men who are hanging back for some reason or other could only witness our brave chaps facing fearful odds and still holding the enemy at bay, they would never remain at home. It is just the little extra strength that is needed to turn the tide rolling the opposite way, and the incessant cry of our officers 'If I only had another couple of dozen men' is a cry direct to those at home. I thank Heaven from the bottom of my heart that I am here, and these few words from my wife swell my breast with pride: 'I went to the ~~Palace~~ ^{hall} last night, and Miss Dare was singing the new song, 'Your King and Country want You.' and had you been sitting beside me in civilian clothes as dozens of others were there, I think I should have got up and gone out. ~~Before the war I was never so happy as sitting with you and baby at the Palace occasionally, but now I am much happier sitting at home and thinking of you out there, not only for your King and country but for me and baby too, for if somebody didn't go then our homes would soon be like the Belgians' and although I used to look forward to your coming home from work, just imagine what a greeting you will receive when you come back from the War.~~" Isn't it beautiful?

GROUCER.

Bunk'um, an advt for the song or the Music Hall I should say.

JESSIE.

Oh, you are a one.

BERT.

Well, you can hook it, do you hear.

WORM.

I wanted to speak a word to Miss here - (points to ETHEL)

ETHEL.

What do you want to say?

BERT.

I'll ring your dirty little neck if you hang about here any longer.

ETHEL.

Don't speak to him like that, and it's time you fellows cleared, the Special will be writing to the Mistress. You needn't go Worm, I'll hear what you've got to say. You needn't be jealous, Bert - of him - poor chap. Got about as much backbone as a filleted plaice. Come on it's closing time, who says overcoats?

GROUCER.

Come on, Jess, let's lets' 'ave a prowling round outside for Zeppelins. So long Ethel.

(EXIT JESSIE.& THE GROUCER.)

BERT.

I'm not going to have my gal talking to --

ETHEL.

I'm not your gal yet and don't you forget that. Go on up there's a sport and let the chap 'ave his say.

WORM.

I think I'd rather tell you another night, Miss.

ETHEL.

Oh go on, we may all be murdered before another night, if you men of England don't come up to the scratch.

BERT.

Are you coming up? (EXIT)

ETHEL.

In a minute.

WORM. That's what I wanted to talk to you about.

ETHEL. What, about being murdered?

WORM. No, the young men of Wngland.

ETHEL. Oh. (Cuts bread and butter and makes sandwich with the sardine.)

WORM. You know I'm between 19 & 38. I'm fit in 'ealth, a bit loose in the backbone, but fit otherwise, and I ain't got no ties. Not a single person who would care a couple of orange pips whether I was dead or not. I'm an orphan.

ETHEL. Then why the dickens don't you enlist?

WORM. That's what every one wonders, but I'm too short 5ft 6 is the size and I'm only 5ft. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$

ETHEL. Oh, well what did you raise me 'opes for.

WORM. Yes, I've been telling every one. If only I'd got another two inches. I'd be off tomorrow. I'd enlist and go and let them Germans 'ave it 'ot. That's what I've said to every body but when I've gone to me attic at night, I've thanked Gaud that he cut me short when giving out the height rashions.

ETHEL. What do you mean?

WORM. It was all talk, Miss, that's what I mean. I've read all the letters from the blokes out there, in the papers - every word of them - what being a soldier really means - it's hell - hell - with the shells aburstin' and the bullets wizzing past you and through you - and the cold steel bayonet splitting you through. Gaud! What them coves suffers and endures - they're heroes, every one - not a grum-

ble, not a grouse, legs blown off - arms crushed - blinded some - and they die by thousands, thousands, with no cry of regret, only sorry their little part in the great war is over. They are grand, Miss, grand.

ETHEL. You're right. Pity you can't go, feeling like that.

WORM. I can, Miss, the height standard came down three days ago - I've an inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ to the good now.

ETHEL. So you're going, well done.

WORM. No, Miss I am the worm you call me. I'm a coward. I'm afraid, that's what's stopping me. and night after night I've gone to bed, not to sleep only to toss about in a sweat of agony.- with those words written in front of me.

A CALL TO ARMS.

Are you between 19 & 28?

Are you physically fit?

Are you without home ties?

Then you are wanted for the war -

Sometimes I've fallen to sleep and dream't I was in the battle field, I heard the cannons roaring. I've been watching the shell burst nearer and nearer at last I've been struck - and I've come over in a cold sweat and my heart's stood still, and I wake gasping - to find it's all got to be lived through or dreamed over again, it's horrible. I feel I ought to go - but I'm afraid - I dare not - I'm a coward Miss, that's what I am.

ETHEL. I wish I was a man - give me a meat cover and a toasting fork - I'd play such havoc with the "Keiser" you wouldn't recognise him after I'd had five minutes with him.

WORM. You feel brave because there is no chance of going - I felt like that - or pretended I did, before

the height was lowered.

ETHEL.

If I could do any good to Country - I wouldn't mind being blown into little bits as small as hundreds and thousands sprinkled on a tipsy cake. We've all got to die once and only once. Isn't it better to die for something, than wait for old age or illness to creep with you into your grave. There's not much glory in that, and remember that all the soldiers are not killed.

WORM.

Yes, you are right.

ETHEL.

Still I wouldn't let it worry you like that. There's lots of fellows not gone yet, who ought to have gone. There's Bert feels it's absolutely necessary for him to go and split his throat cheering at every football goal taken - when his brother citizens are dodging the cannon balls. And there's the Groucer feels it's his job in life to sit in every public and criticise Kitchener, French, and Joffre's doings. After all we ain't all built alike - it takes a bit of doing to be a soldier. And God bless the ones that have done it, ~~they've got the knowledge they are doing the best thing a man can in offering their life to their King and Country.~~

Worm.

Yes, as you say, we've all got to die once ~~and only once~~ I never thought of that.

ETHEL.

Yes, but don't worry Worm. You can't help being made that way (gives him sandwich) I'm only sorry for you - there eat this - after all someone's got to deliver the wood and oil. You must be off now. Is that all you wanted to say?

WORM.

I hope you'll be very happy when you're married.

ETHEL.

Oh, I'll see you before that day.

WORM.

Oh yes - but I want you to be happy, more than any one I know.

ETHEL.

(Holding door open she EXITS behind him) Mind the cat's upset the milk and it's like a skating rink - I've nearly tripped up twice myself.
(EXIT)

CURTAIN.

(The CURTAIN is lowered for 3 minutes to indicate the passing of 18 weeks. When it rises ETHEL is DISCOVERED setting the table for supper. JESSIE is sitting by the fire knitting.)

ETHEL.

We'll get our supper over as soon as we can when Bert and Groucer turn up. I want to see the soldiers off across the way.

JESSIE.

I wonder where they are going. I was told they are off to France tonight.

ETHEL.

Here are the boys let 'em in dear.

(ENTER BERT & GROUCER they both have evening papers, BERT kisses ETHEL.)

ETHEL.

Well, what's tonight's news?

GROUCER.

The "Spurs" won the match to-day.

BERT.

~~Better~~. The Germans are on the run again.- backwards this time.

Jessie
ETHEL.

Good!

GROUCER.

Don't you be too sure, the Germans have got something up their sleeves. Our troops will meet a sledge hammer before long - you can take that from me. Our men have had to retreat at Dixmude

and it's pretty well on the way to Calais. So don't be too buckish.

ETHEL. Always merry and bright, Groucer.

JESSIE. What do you say to the Widows and Orphans' pay now?

BERT. There will be a lot hope ^{work and if by} they'll never see their men folks again. I call it 'andsome of the Government.

GROUCER. So they ought to, look what our lads do for the Government.

^{Jessie}
ETHEL. The Government is looking after the women, but what are most of the women doing for their husbands.?

GROUCER. Yes, poor beggars!

^{Jessie}
ETHEL. Poor beggars, I don't pity half of them when I'm near a public house - they swarm the place - a crying shame I call it.

^{That}
JESSIE. ^{Jessie} Ethel's right.

ETHEL. ~~Some are all right - but some well -~~

BERT. Well as half the men have gone, where would my job come in as potman, if the women gave it up. We're told to keep the Flag flying - and bless 'em they are doing it.

GROUCER. Poor beggar got to drown their sorrows in something.

JESSIE.

Half of them only too glad to get rid of their husbands and would drown them if they got half a chance.

Jess
ETHEL.

They should do as the lady does next door, her cook was telling me. She's an officer's wife. She never rides in taxis now the war's on - a bus is good enough for her ~~or walk~~ and she saves all her odd shillings and she's going to do up her husband's dressing room fresh. New carpet, new wall paper all for when he comes back.

BERT.

That's something like.

GROUCER.

Suppose he doesn't come back?

Jessie
ETHEL.

Peer lady - that's all.

JESSIE.

That's what I'd do if I had a chap fighting, save up and buy him comforts, or a easy chair so he could take it comfortable when he'd done his job and come home again, not spend it on beer - ~~it's the kids that suffer.~~

ETHEL.

Come on, let's start - I want to see them troop's go off to-night. Sit here Bert. Groucer. You can cut the bread.

BERT.

Has the "Special" been looking you up lately?

ETHEL.

No, only the once.

BERT.

For chipping him
Didn't like the ~~remark~~ about the amount of food he ate.

ETHEL.

Well, I had to prove I knew him.

GROUCER. I saw the little skunk looking in the window at you a week or two back.

ETHEL. Which skunk.

GROUCER. The oily little beggar what tried to pinch the coals.

ETHEL. Oh the Worm - when was it you saw him? He's left the oil shop - and no one sees him now. ~~I'm quite anxious about him,~~ he was very worried when I last saw him.

BERT. What about?

ETHEL. That's his business. ~~When did you see him?~~

GROUCER. ~~Oh, it was three or four weeks ago,~~

ETHEL. ~~I was beginning to wonder if he'd made away with himself - he's a nervy little feller.~~

BERT. ~~Well no one else would miss him.~~

JESSIE. He worshipped Ethel from afar.

BERT. It's just as well its afar, or I'd give him a thick ear.

ETHEL. I'm not yours yet and don't you forget it - I've never said I'll marry you.

GROUCER. (Reading) They done pretty badly at White Hart Lane on Saturday.

BERT.

So a chap I know told me - Slack play.

ETHEL.

Sardines - sardines? *well*

GROUCER.

Thanks. It was the London Cup Match.

ETHEL.

I want to see the soldiers off, so hurry up.

BERT.

I can't hurry with sardines. I've got a sensi-
tive throat - the least little bone gives me gip.

GROUCER.

I don't want to see 'em off. Scratch crew
I saw 'em forming up - all shapes and sizes.

ETHEL.

~~Each one a man for all that.~~

GROUCER.

If I couldn't have 'em decent I wouldn't have
'em at all if I was Kitchener.

JESSIE.

Good outsides are not much use when the works
are rotten inside. ~~Mark~~ There's someone at the
gate.

ETHEL.

(Jumps up and peeps behind the blind) It's
an officer. *Soldier*

BERT.

~~One of the~~ *Imms* ~~Specials~~ - attracted by the sardines,
eh Jessie? *(Laughs)*

JESSIE.

Is it a German spy?

ETHEL.

Soldier
It's a soldier - an officer in Khaki.

JESSIE.

Oh, he's come to warn us - You don't think the
Germans have landed?

ETHEL. (Opens door) Anything wrong - are the lights too high, sir?

WORM. Don't you know me?

ETHEL. No -

JESSIE. (arranging hair) Ask him in all the same Ethel, if he's a soldier.

(ENTER the WORM now in Khaki uniform he is well set up - face shining with soap hair beautifully done, and he stands erect He has full kit on)

WORM. Surely you remember me - don't you, miss?

ETHEL. It's not - it's not - not -

JESSIE. Yes it is, it's the Worm.

WORM. Right first go.

ETHEL. Whatever have you got those things on for?²

WORM. I'm one of 'em now.

ETHEL. Go on -

WORM. I am.

ETHEL. (Lost in admiration) I can't believe my eyes. How you've changed. Why you are quite nice looking!

JESSIE. I shouldn't mind walking out with you in Hyde Park.

ETHEL. You've such a figure.

JESSIE. (Walking round him) And so clean.

ETHEL. And straight.

BERT. (Annoyed) Go on - go on - "Oh what beautiful gold buttons," never seen a soldier before?

ETHEL. How have you done it, Worm?

WORM. The *Capt across the way* have done it for me + "Here you with the black scarf - third from the end - " "What have you lost?" I said 'Nothing sir' then he said *to God* God sake don't keep looking for it then' You should have heard the chaps laugh - he's never had to tell me again.

The first day I dressed him

ETHEL. (Enchanted) Well -

WORM. The King gave me my clothes, and a bit of old Parks motor grease got me hair into shape - (takes off cap) You remember me h'opprey - I coaxed it down atlaat - I wash twice a day now - I don't get nearly so dirty soldiering as I did in the oil shop - as soon as I took it off there I got it on again so I never bothered about washing.

ETHEL. *(Great admiration)* And they've made you a soldier. Well!

JESSIE. (Touching bottle.) What's this for?

WORM. Water.

JESSIE. Have a drop of ginger wine in it?

WORM. No, that's all right thanks.

JESSIE.

What's this for (inspecting haversack.)

WORM.

For me grub and hair brush.

Scene
ETHEL.

(Slips box of sardines in) Got room for this?

JESSIE.

And what's this for (touching ammunition pouch)

WORM.

The Germans.

GROUCER.

What are you dressed up like a Christmas tree
for? Do you usually swagger about in full kit.
~~that~~

WORM.

Wish him off tonight. & home

ETHEL.

(Singing)
Oh - You are not Ah you poor little feller.

WORM.

I've got over what I told you about, Miss. I kept on repeating what you said. We've got to die once, and I thought I'd do it in proper style while I'm about it, if it's got to be now. *and* I hope if I do go, the bullet who catches me will have spared a better man - who's got someone waiting at home for him. Yes you knocked all the fear out of me Miss.

ETHEL.

Oh, I'm not such a heroine as I made out when I spoke about "bishing the Kiser" up. Co's when the mouse jumped on my bed the other evening I screamed murder - and shut me'self in the wardrobe all night. So you see it was only talk.

WORM.

You are a woman and men love 'em timid (the bugle sounds.)

WORM.

I must be off - thought I'd just look in to say good-bye.

ETHEL.

I trust you are spared that bullet Private *Lander*
Because I shall be waiting for you. *Come back*

BERT.

'Ere, What's all this about, eh.

ETHEL.

(Quietly.) You've often worried me for my
answer Bert. I'll give it to you now. I can't
marry you - because I find I love a - a you know. *(Sighs)*

WORM.

You don't mean - you can't mean?

ETHEL.

When you come back I'll be waiting for you.
It was me who helped to make you a soldier, wasn't
it? *(WORM wrings her hand. & looks it -)*

JESSIE.

(All excitement.) Come on Captain they are
forming up - Come on Bert.

BERT.

It's raining. I'm not going to get wet.

JESSIE.

Come on Groucer. Ethel you must come. *Be they are
waiting for you - Ethel*

ETHEL.

I'll see him off from here.

WORM.

And you'll marry me if I come back?

ETHEL.

(Nods, she smiles but her eyes are full of
tears. and holds her face up to be kissed.)

WORM.

(tenderly) *(With a burst of joy)*
(Lifts his cap and kisses her tenderly) • Lord
lummy - let them Germans look out - (he then rushes
off as he passes JESSIE she kisses him.)

(The band starts)
(ETHEL stands centre stifling her sobs.)

(Call after him)
JESSIE. Give the Kiser one in the eye for me just for luck.

(The WOMAN gives his head a nod towards Ethel)
~~that~~ JESSIE should go to ~~ETHEL~~ her. She turns and takes her by the hand and pulls her to the window, they both stand on the table JESSIE has a tea-cloth in her hand. ~~ETHEL~~ her handkerchief, the band gets nearer and nearer playing "Long long way to Tipperary"

JESSIE. Look! Look there he is - there he is - *have to*
(Both wave to him.) him & Ethel have -

ETHEL. *(Waves her hand and kisses it to him - (after he passes she turns round and throwing out her arms cries with a voice full of pathos and pride.)*
"Oh, and to think I own a part of the King's army. (She throws her arms round JESSIE and sobs. The GROUCER and BERT sit each side of the table looking ashamed of themselves. The Music gets louder and louder. The GROUCER pretends to read his paper and BERT fills his pipe.)"

C U R T A I N.
