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G. Belbah, *Hullo! Projectiles*, 1917

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A REVUE.

HULLO PROJECTILES!

By George Melbah.

SCENE 1 OUTSIDE THE WORKS.

OPENING CHORUS OF MUNITION GIRLS ETC.

Hullo, Hullo, How do,
Here we are with our revue,
With song and dance,
And dress and scenes so pretty,
So kick off let it go,
We'll start our merry show,
We beg to introduce our new revue.

REPEAT.

(ENTER FOREMAN.)

FOREMAN. Here's a fine thing, the buzzer hardly gone half a minute, and here you all are, outside the works, how the dickens you manage it I don't know, I shall have to report this.

2.

GIRL. Well, you see, I smiled sweetly at the sergeant at the gate and he let us through.

FOREMAN. No one one check is supposed to leave the works till the buzzer goes.

GIRL. Well how do you manage to be out so quickly?

FOREMAN. Oh, I'm a foreman, I'm on staff.

GIRL. Oh girls, some foreman.

(ALL LAUGH.)

FOREMAN. You're a lively lot, aren't you, if you were all as lively first thing in the morning you'd do.

2ND GIRL. Why, I'm sure we all come to work merry and bright.

FOREMAN. I don't think. I've seen you in the morning with your mouth all over eggs and bacon.

GIRL. Where?

FOREMAN. Down the Caton road.

(ENSEMBLE.)

DOWN THE CATON ROAD.

(EXIT EVERYBODY.)

GIRLS CHANGE COWBOY DRESS.

(DRESSES) – SNIFFLES Comedy Make up

GIRLS As opening.

3.

(ENTER SNIFFLES THE CARDWRITER.

FOLLOWED BY GIRLS LAUGHING.)

SNIFF. Yes and I know a worse one than that.
 GIRLS. (SHOCKED) Oh.
 SNIFF. Here, come here and I'll tell you the story of, "There was an old girl of Calcutta" (WHISPERING TO GIRLS).
 GIRLS. Oh, for shame.
 SNIFF. Yes, Alice Murgatroyd told me.
 GIRL. Who told her?
 SNIFF. The General Manager of the Glutapumps.
 GIRL. Do you like working here, Sniffles?
 SNIFF. Like it? It's a herb of a job.
 GIRL. What do you do?
 SNIFF. Well, you've seen those girls on the tables that keep hammering shells ...
 GIRL. (INTERESTED) Yes?
 SNIFF. Well, I'm the chap that listens, but I'm starting on a new job.
 GIRL. What is it, Sniffles?
 SNIFF. I'm going to be a cardwriter on a fishing smack.

(ALL LAUGH AND EXIT LEAVING SNIFFLES ON.)

SNIFF. I thought that would shift them. I wonder where Kitty the typewriter is, I do love that girl. I proposed to her the other night, she said, "Oh Dudley", (you know Dudley's my maiden name on my father's side before I was breeched) she said "Dudley, I can never marry you, think of your awful past. " I said "Oh, that don't matter, I can blot that out." She said, "You might, but you're not using me as a blotting pad."

4.

(ENTER MAGGIE MARCHALL (DRESS – A LA LOUIE FREAR) – SHE IS CRYING AND DOES SO AT INTERVALS RIGHT THROUGH FOLLOWING SCENE WITH SNIFFLES.)

MAGGIE. Oh, what shall I do – what shall I do.
 SNIFF. Oh for Heaven's sake hush.
 MAGGIE. Oh I'm in awful trouble.
 SNIFF. What's the matter, have you got too much bonus?

MAGGIE. No, I've got my notice, oh what is going to happen to Little Frankie?

SNIFF. Little Frankie?

MAGGIE. Yes, Mother will never let me take him home.

SNIFF. Is it as bad as that?

MAGGIE. Yes, and I haven't a friend in the world.

SNIFF. I wonder if she's going to touch me for a dollar.

MAGGIE. You have a kind face.

SNIFF. I knew it. I knew it.

MAGGIE. Will you do me a favour?

SNIFF. How much do you want?

MAGGIE. I don't want money. I want you to look after my little Frankie. I daren't take him home. Oh! Oh! Oh!

SNIFF. Hey! Shut up, they'll think I'm sticking a pig.

MAGGIE. Will you do it?

SNIFF. Yes, I'll look after Little Frankie, where is he?

(EXIT MAGGIE WHO BRINGS ON DOG & PUTS IN SNIFFLES' ARMS.)

MAGGIE. Here he is, my darling Frankie.

SNIFF. Hey, come back, that's a dirty trick. I was going to buy you a present, now I'll not.

5.

MAGGIE. Oh Sniffles, buy me something for my birthday.

SNIFF. When is your birthday?

MAGGIE. My birthday's tomorrow.

SNIFF. And how old are you tomorrow?

MAGGIE. I've seen 17 golden summers.

SNIFF. Yes, and you've seen a few rusty winters since then, but what would you like me to buy you?

MAGGIE. I'd like a nice fat monkey.

SNIFF. And why would you like a nice fat monkey?

MAGGIE. So that I shouldn't miss you when you're out.

SNIFF. Now I was going to but you something, but I won't now.

MAGGIE. Oh, do buy me something.

SNIFF. Well, will you guess, for what I'm going to buy you?

MAGGIE. Yes. (SHUTS EYES.)

SNIFF. Well, what can you see?

MAGGIE. Nothing.

SNIFF. That's what you'll get.

(LINES TO BE INTRODUCED FOR DUET.)

(EXIT.)

(DRESSES) –

PRESTON BOYCE SMART MORNING SUIT.

CLERKS LOUNGE SUITS.

6.

(ENTER PRESTON BOYCE, HE IS FOLLOWED BY CLERKS.)

BOYCE. Make the reports up as quickly as you can, that new consignment must be ready to despatch tomorrow.

(EXIT CLERKS.)

My ambition is realized at last. I'm a rich man, and a self-made man at that, I never thought a few years ago I'd be the owner of that splendid munition factory. There's only one thing I want now to complete my success. My son's marriage to Lady Trickers. Hullo, there's an old saying, speak of a certain gentleman, he's sure to appear.

(ENTER JACK. – (DRESS- LOUNGE SUIT -))

JACK. Hullo Dad.

BOYCE. Hullo Jack. I've been looking for you.

JACK. What's the matter Dad, any bad news?

BOYCE. No my boy, I think I can say it's good news. Now Jack, don't you think it's about time you settled up & settled down?

JACK. Well Dad, that's strange, I was going to mention the subject. I want to get married.

BOYCE. I'm glad, my lad, & I've found you the girl.

JACK. That's very kind of you Dad, but I've found one for myself.

BOYCE. The Devil you have, & who is she?

JACK. Kitty Fay.

BOYCE. My typist? I'll never give my consent.

JACK. Oh Dad, I love her.

BOYCE. Love her, you sloppy idiot, fancy my son in love, and with all things above earth, a woman. But he'll never get my consent. No, I'm hanged if he will. (EXIT.)

7,

JACK. It strikes me the old man's going to cut up rusty.

(ENTER KITTY FAY.)

JACK. Kitty!

KITTY. Jack! Have you seen your dad, Jack?

JACK. Yes, I've seen him.

KITTY. And has he consented?

JACK. No darling, he's not, well, not up to this moment.

KITTY. Oh Jack, I can see we shall never be married.

JACK. Oh yes we shall, darling, even if we have to elope to do it.

KITTY. Elope, Jack? Where to?

JACK. To a land where the skies are always bright and all the world's a beautiful tune.

KITTY. Where's that Jack? Skerton?

JACK. No darling.

(ARIZONA.

12 COW GIRLS

DUET ARIZONA & ENSEMBLE.

12 COW BOYS

EXIT.)

(ENTER SNIFFLES, JACK ETC.

FOOTBALL MATCH GAG & EXIT.)

8.

(ENTER SANDY MCKAYE.)

SANDY. Do you hear me, shut that door, there's a draught and I ken where it's going. De ken I've come down here to work on munitions. I and I've brought all my sisters.

(LINES TO INTRODUCE.)

(SCOTCH SONG & ENSEMBLE. & GENERAL EXIT.)

(GIRLS' DRESSES – CRANE SUITS.

DRESSES – KITTY – BRIDE'S DRESS.

JACK – MORNING SUIT & TOP HAT.)

(ENTER JACK & KITTY.)

JACK. It's not a bit of use, kiddie, the dad won't listen to reason, so there's only one thing to do, we must get married at once.

KITTY. How is it going to be arranged?

JACK. Sniffles the cardwriter has promised to help us.

(ENTER SNIFFLES.)

JACK. Now Sniffles, what's your plans?

SNIFF. Now you want to get married?

BOTH. YES!

SNIFF. Have you any bride's cake?

BOTH. No.

9.

SNIFF. Have you any old boots?

BOTH. No.

SNIFF. Any cradles?

BOTH. No.

SNIFF. Any children?

BOTH. Certainly not.

SNIFF. Then come with me to the Co-op, we can get all you require there, but you wait here, and for the sum of £5 I will procure a parson who will marry you forthwith.
(JOINS THEIR HANDS) Bless you, my children, bless you, and may the Devil take the first man that comes between you.

(WALKS BETWEEN THEM & EXIT.)

(ONE VERSE & CHORUS WEDDING DUET – JACK & KITTY – ENSEMBLE OF 12 BRIDESMAIDS.)

(ENTER SNIFFLES AS PARSON.)

SNIFF. Do'st thou wish to get married, my son?

JACK. I dost.

SNIFF. And dost thou wish to get married, my daughter?

KITTY. I dost.

SNIFF. Then verily thou art a couple of dusters.

(CONGREGATION BOB, RISE. THEY ALL DO SO.)

SNIFF. Hast thou taken this maiden for long walks?

JACK. I hast.

10.

SNIFF. Hast er and hast thou taken her down Freemans Wood?

JACK. I hast.

SNIFF. Hast er. (WHISPERS TO JACK BUZ.) - and hast thou always kept on walking?

JACK. I hast.

SNIFF. Verily thou art a liar.

(CONGREGATION BOB, RISE. THEY DO SO.)

The gentleman at the end bob by himself.

(CLOTH TEARING BUZ.)

SNIFF. Wilt thou have this woman for thy lawfully wedded wife?

JACK. I will.

SNIFF. And wilt thou have this man for thy lawfully wedded husband?

KITTY. No I won't.

ALL. Oh!

SNIFF. You won't, and why not?

KITTY. I've taken a sudden dislike to him.

JACK. Oh darling, do marry me!

KITTY. Will you be very good to me?

JACK. I'll promise anything.

KITTY. Then I will marry you.

ALL. Thank goodness!

SNIFF. Congregation bob, rise. (THEY DO SO.) Wilt thou have this man for thy lawfully wedded husband?

KITTY. I will. (SHE SINGS THE WORDS.)

11.

SNIFF. (MOCKS HER) Oh, will yer? And wilt thou have this woman for thy lawfully pain and strife?

JACK. No I won't.

ALL. Oh!

SNIFF. And why not?

JACK. Because I've taken a sudden dislike to her.

KITTY. But do marry me, Jack!

JACK. Will you be very good to me?

KITTY. Yes.

JACK. Will you darn all my socks?

KITTY. Yes, both pairs.

JACK. Then I will marry you.

ALL. (ON END) Thank Goodness!

SNIFF. How dare you carry on like that during this grim execution, I mean solemn ceremony. You are sentenced to go into the pantry & eat Lux for the rest of your existence. Never mind, I forgive you. Here (WHISPERS) I'll see you in the vestry after the ceremony. Wilt thou have this man for thy lawfully wedded husband?

KITTY. I will. (VERY TREMBLING VOICE.)

SNIFF. Your voice is very blancmangy. And wilt thou have this woman for thy lawfully wedded wife?

JACK. I will.

SNIFF. Then sneel.

(THEY ALL DO SO.)

SNIFF. (SINGS) Wilt thou have this woman and be joined together in wedlock? To kiss her and press her. And make her spend your Jimmy-o-Goblins. Do so. Buy her trousseaux, and when it comes nagtime, you must let her jaw till her face turns red. Pinch all the clothes, when she's in bed. And if not, I forbid all the bands in ragtime.

12.

(REPEAT CHORUS OF WEDDING ENSEMBLE.)

(END OF SCENE ONE.)

13.

SCENE 2.

HULLO PROJECTILE.

A GATEHOUSE EPISODE.

(POLICEMAN DISCOVERED.)

POLICE. What a herb of a job. I wouldn't change it for all the Chief Constables at Torisholme. I've had some cases last night to report. 14 electricians in power house playing a billiard handicap. 22 for having football final on scrap heap. 3 apprentices playing banker.

(ENTER MAN.)

MAN. Mr Sergeant, I've lost 15 John Bradbury's.

POLICE. Where did you lose 'em?

MAN. Playing crown and anchor.

(LAUGHS AND EXITS.)

(ENTER BIG NAVVY, CRYING.)

POLICE. What's the matter, my man?

NAVVY. The boys in the 9.2" won't play with me. (EXITS.)

POLICE. Gee I'm hungry, I could eat the off side of a 60pdr and wash it down with Gluta. You know, I've lost my appetite since I came in these works. I've had nothing to eat all night, well nothing to speak of. Bar 17 beef sandwiches, 4 cans of tea and 9 bottles

14.

of Shell Ale. Shell Ale, oh that's the stuff to get your back up. (BUZZER GOES.) Hullo, better open up the gates.

(ENTER WORKERS & EXIT.)

(ENTER SNIFFLES WITH LARGE SUITCASE & SET OF GOLF CLUBS.)

POLICE. Here, what do you want?

SNIFF. Have you got a sitting room and bedroom?

POLICE. Here, what's your check number?

SNIFF. 19. 20. 21. 22. 2s a pair, one for his nob.

POLICE. What's your name?

SNIFF. Sniffles.

POLICE. How do you spell it?

SNIFF. Snif. Snif. Les. Les. Etc.

POLICE. Here, I said spell it, not spill it. Well, 19.20.21.22, I've had instructions not to let you in.

SNIFF. What, carn't I come in?

POLICE. No, you've been out since last July.

SNIFF. But I've been on my holidays to South Hanisbrug.

POLICE. Well, you'd better get back to Joe Africa, you carn't check on today.

SNIFF. What, carn't I come in?

POLICE. No. (TURNS BACK.)

SNIFF. Oh, I shall have to talk pretty to him. Sebastin!

POLICE. My name's not Sebastin, my name's Marmaduke Cuthbert Vivian Rolain Murgatroyd.

SNIFF. That's not a name, it's a decease. Can I come in?

15.

POLICE. No. (TURNS BACK.)

SNIFF. Oh! Don't be unkind, think what it means. Oh Sergeant, Daddy V. C., don't have me quarter houred, think of the shame of it, I should never be able to face an honest man again. Don't get me check stopped. They stopped tap on me last night at the

Yorkshire House, I could bear that, but the thought of having my check stopped, it's too much, in fact it's three much. Oh, Harcount, think if you were in my position of great responsibility, a card writer for one, who's never done a wrong action to anyone, loved by all the press house. Picture my poor wife and my rabbits waiting for Daddy coming home with his 29/6 plus 4d insurance, think of it – 29/6d. 27/6d in bottled beer and 2/- in silver. Think of my return home, think of my little baby girl, waiting in the garden of my semi-detached villa in Brewery Lane. Oh, kiss me, Sergeant! Think of my little baby running in to her mother and saying – "Oh! Mother, here's Daddy come home sober". Think of it, oh Hindenberg, think of it! I want you to grant me one favour, one little favour, will you grant it?

POLICE. Yes, 19. 20. 21. 22. If it's in my power, I'll grant it. What is it?

SNIFF. Can I come in?

POLICE. No!

SNIFF. Oh!

(ENTER FLAPPER.)

POLICE. Good morning miss.

FLAPPER. Good morning Sergeant, isn't it a lovely morning?

SNIFF. (PUSHES PAST HER) Excuse me, you must get at the back of the queue, this is the early door.

FLAPPER. Cheeky bounder.

SNIFF. Oh Gwendoline.

FLAPPER. My name's not Gwendoline. My name's Lanoline.

SNIFF. Oh Lanoline, squeeze me and I'll come out.

FLAPPER. Cheeky cad.

SNIFF. Perhaps you're right.

FLAPPER. (TO SERGEANT) And have you been on your holidays, Sergeant?

16.

POLICE. Yes, I had a couple of days at Blackpool.

SNIFF. Can I come in?

POLICE. No.

SNIFF. Oh!

POLICE. Where did you go for your holidays?

FLAPPER. Oh, I went to Baden-Baden.

SNIFF. Yes, and I've been to Skerton-Skerton.

FLAPPER. Dirty pup.

SNIFF. No, I'm an unclean bow-wow. Can I come in?

POLICE. No.

SNIFF. Oh!

FLAPPER. I wish this horrid war was over. Awful thing for the Empire.

SNIFF. Well, you'll have to go to the Hippodrome. Can I come in?

POLICE. No.

SNIFF. Oh!

FLAPPER. Well, I must be getting in.

SNIFF. Yes, for the love of Mike, hop it.

FLAPPER. Good morning Sergeant ...

SNIFF. Oh, kiss me Sergeant. Can I come in?

POLICE. No.

SNIFF. Oh. Well, can I have a cup of cold water?

POLICE. Go and boil your face.

SNIFF. (PANTOMIMES – CAN I COME IN?)

(ENTER DUDE.)

17.

DUDE. Thank goodness I'm here at last; I've run all the way & I'm completely prostrated.

SNIFF. Oh, he's the 1st of May.

(DUDE GOES TO ENTER; POLICEMAN STOPS HIM.)

POLICE. Do you work here?

DUDE. Yes, in those works I do my bit.

SNIFF. Yes, and a darn little bit too. Can I come in?

POLICE. No.

SNIFF. Oh.

POLICE. What's your name and check number?

DUDE. My name's – Ponchus Clarence Ermetude de Lacey.

SNIFF. Oh, tread on it. Can I come in?

DUDE. And my number's fimfty five.

SNIFF. Oh, he's got a peppermint in his speech.

POLICE. Well, you carn't come in today.

DUDE. How dare you! It's imperative I come in.

SNIFF. Yes, and it's imper – er – er – what he said as I come in with him too.

POLICE. Oh, go to blazes!

DUDE. What's he mean?

SNIFF. The Welchmen in the Press House.

POLICE. Get out of it, you couple of pie cans.

DUDE. Pie cans – what's a pie can?

SNIFF. Oh, a pie can is a man with blue blood in his veins.

DUDE. Then allow me to tell you that all my family were pie cans.

POLICE. Go on, hop it, we want no more dirt about here.

18.

(BUZ PULLING OUT COAT.)

SNIFF. I tell you there's only one way to get in, get his rag out. We must challenge him to fight – I'll hold your coat.

DUDE. I will. Let me get at him. (BUZ.) I'll fill his mouth with grass.

SNIFF. No, get a wild poll parrot to peck his eyebrows out.

DUDE. There, you dirty dog. (BUZ.)

(HITS POLICEMAN A LA NANCE.)

SNIFF. Go on, nose bore him.

DUDE. I'll show him – there, you cheeky cat.

(HITS POLICEMAN AS BEFORE.)

POLICE. You're not half asking for it.

(BUZ. BOBBING.)

SNIFF. (TO DUDE) Go on, Hachensmidt brute.

DUDE. Pig. Dog. Hog. And farmyards, there, I've sworn at you. And again I fell you to Mother Earth.

(HITS HIM AS BEFORE.)

POLICE. Here, I've just had about enough of this. I don't think the Sergeant will be back for a few minutes, I've just about time to make you ready for an undertaker.

19.

(POLICEMAN TAKES COAT OFF.)

SNIFF. Oh, it's a fight, it's a fight.

(RUNS UP AND DOWN STAGE LIKE AN EXCITED SCHOOLBOY WHO IS ABOUT TO SEE A FIGHT. THEY SQUARE UP FOR A FIGHT DURING THIS. SNIFF PUTS ON POLICEMAN'S COAT & HAT, BLOWS WHISTLE. ENTER TWO MORE POLICEMEN.)

SNIFF. (TO POLICEMEN) Arrest those men!

(THEY TAKE POLICEMAN AND DUDE INTO CUSTODY & EXIT R.)

SNIFF. (L.) I'm in Meredith, I'm in! (EXITS INTO WORKS.)

(RE-ENTER DUDE.)

DUDE. Dirty lot of dogs. Never mind, I'm leaving here, I've got my lying time.

(SONG – LYING TIME.)

(END OF SCENE.)

SCENE 5.

Of

HULLO PROJECTILE.

MUNITIONERS ON THE FARM.

OPENING CHORUS.

GIRLS & BOYS.

DANCE ENSEMBLE.

(AT THE END OF THE DANCE ENTER PRESTON BOYCE.)

BOYCE. Now then you people, you'd better hop it, this is no place for enjoyment.

ALL. Oh!

BOYCE. Owe what you like, only don't owe me anything.

ALL. You'd watch that.

BOYCE. Curse this popularity.

(THEY ALL GROAN.)

BOYCE. Groans from the Labour Party, why don't you like me, haven't I treated you fairly well?

ALL. No – no!

BOYCE. Unanimous. Haven't I been kind to you sometimes?

ALL. No.

BOYCE. Once again carried. Haven't I lavished money on you, haven't I opened up this farm to enable all my workers in their turn to have a nice rest cure in the country?

GIRL. Yes, a nice rest planting seed potatoes.

BOYCE. Would you like me to go away?

ALL. Yes.

BOYCE. I'm losing my popularity with them, I must kid to them slightly. Now people, you have all worked so hard lately, I feel you are in need of a little recreation, so I have decided to have an entertainment on the farm.

ALL. Oh, how lovely!

BOYCE. I have decided it shall take place in the form of a revue, and to help to make the matter a success, I have engaged special artists all the way from the Royal Opera House, Caton.

(ALL GIRLS EXCITED.)

(ENTER SNIFFLES AS GARDENER, HE HAS FLOWER POTS ETC. IN ARMS.)

SNIFF. Brought me down here for a rest cure, up every morning at 4.30 & working till 7.30. I've worn my feet out, you know these aren't my proper feet. No, these are bits of my legs turned up to walk on.

(ENTER MAZIE.)

SNIFF. Good morning Miss. Stroll with me midst the bulrushes.

MAZIE. Oh, what a beautiful array.

SNIFF. Yes Miss, very rare.

MAZIE. Show me some flowers with a language.

SNIFF. Yes Miss, the language of flowers.

MAZIE. Now here's one, what's this?

SNIFF. That Miss, is the Popularte – Songitatio – Tomatate – Tomartate.

MAZIE. And what does it mean?

SNIFF. It means "Love me and the world is mine."

MAZIE. (PICKS ANOTHER ONE) And this?

22.

SNIFF. That's a tea rose.

MAZIE. And this one?

SNIFF. That's a Sandows Coco Rose.

MAZIE. But this is a pretty flower.

SNIFF. Yes Miss. That's the pride of the sixty pounder. It's the dandelion.

MAZIE. And what can the dear little dandelion mean?

SNIFF. When I was a little boy my mother used to say (WHISPERS) No I shouldn't, send any for the children, but I bet you can't guess what this one means.

MAZIE. No, what does it mean?

SNIFF. (BLOWING FLOWER) He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me, he loves me not, I wonder if he will, I think he's too sloppy.

MAZIE. And what would the two combined mean?

SNIFF. There's dirty work knocking about somewhere.

MAZIE. Now I want you to make me up a bouquet for a couple of friends of mine, who got married this morning.

SNIFF. Was it a love match?

MAZIE. No, he married her for her money and property.

SNIFF. Scandalous. And his name?

MAZIE. Mr. Harvest.

SNIFF. Harvest. Harvest. You mustn't send Harvest flowers, you must send Harvest a text.

MAZIE. But what text do you think would be useful?

SNIFF. All is gathered in. X.

(ENTER BOYCE, DUDE & JACK.)

BOYCE. Well, if we are to make it a success we must have a glee party. Hullo, here's Mazie, of course we can rely on your assistance.

MAZIE. Oh, certainly.

23.

BOYCE. And you, Sniffles.

SNIFF. Oh, most deciddilley.

BOYCE. It will be a most distinguished audience, the Mayor will be there.

SNIFF. The Mayor!

BOYCE. Yes, you know what a mayor is, don't you?

SNIFF. Yes, a horse's sister.

JACK. Fool.

BOYCE. Ninconpoop.

MAZIE. Idiot.

DUDE. Bally ass.

SNIFF. Praps you're right.

JACK. Now the burning question of the moment is, "What are we going to sing"?

BOYCE. I know a nice one, "The Valley on the Hill".

ALL. No, no!

MAZIE. I know a nice one entitled "Why do they Build the Sea so Near to the Shore?"

ALL. No, don't like it.

DUDE. I know one.

ALL. What is it?

DUDE. "Who's the fellow with the 9.2?" (BUZ.)

SNIFF. I know one.

ALL. What's yours?

SNIFF. A little bottle of Guinness.

ALL> Song!

SNIFF. You can drive a horse to drink, but a pencil must be lead. I know "Excelsior" to new words. I have the copies here.

(CONCERTED "EXCELSIOR" AND EXIT.)

24.

(SPECIALITY DANCE.)

25.

LABOUR

BUREAU

SCENE.

CHARACTERS.

CUTHBERT

SNIFFLES

NAVY

BOY

OLD SOLDIER

MACHINIST

FLAPPER.

CUTHBERT. (TO OPEN) Hullo, where's everybody? Probably gone to the canteen. What a life this is, absolutely extra, and the girls, they come here in dozens, hundreds, why, I've got one for every day of the week.

(SONG & ENSEMBLE, I'VE GOT A GIRL FOR MONDAY.)

(AFTER ENSEMBLE EXIT ALL BUT CUTHBERT.)

CUTHBERT. (LOOKING AT WATCH) Twelve o'clock and the work not commenced, must get a move on, and open up the early doors. (CALLS) Sniffs!

(ENTER SNIFFLES.)

CUTHBERT. Sniffles, admit the mob!

(SNIFFLES OPENS DOOR, ENTER WOMAN.)

26.

WOMAN. Is this the Labour Bureau?

SNIFF. No, it's Lockhart's Coca Foundry.

CUTHBERT. Are you seeking employment on munitions?

WOMAN. Yeth thir (yes Sir.)

SNIFF. Oh, she speaks like that.

CUTHBERT. Have you got your unemployment card?

WOMAN. Yeth thir.

SNIFF. Oh yeth thir, thirtinly.

CUTHBERT. (LOOKING AT CARD) Oh, I see you want a job as a machinist.

WOMAN. Yeth thir.

CUTHBERT. Have you ever worked a machine before?

WOMAN. Yeth, this thixteen years in Skerton.

CUTHBERT. You can start in the morning as a sweeper up.

WOMAN. But I don't want to be a thweeper up.

CUTHBERT. Sweeping up or nothing.

WOMAN. But I want a job where I can earn bonus.

SNIFF. I'll give her thome bonus in a minute. Shall I remove her, boss?

CUTHBERT. Yes, put it on the mat.

WOMAN. Now what about this sweeping up?

SNIFF. (A LA CRICKET) Are you going to hop it?

WOMAN. Yes, when I get started properly.

SNIFF. If you're not gone by the time I count three, I shall hit you to the boundary for four.

WOMAN. But I thay ...

SNIFF. 1. 2. 3. (RUSHES HER OFF.)

CUTHBERT. What's that?

SNIFF. Maiden over.

27.

(BUMPING BIZ AT BACK.)

(ENTER FLAPPER.)

CUTHBERT. Good morning Miss, what can I have the pleasure of doing for you?

FLAPPER. I want employment on munitions.

CUTHBERT. Have you had any previous experience in national work?

FLAPPER. Oh, yes. I was once the secretary in a bazaar given to provide clean socks for tired soldiers.

CUTHBERT. Then you have never had any experience as a munition worker?

FLAPPER. Oh no, I never work.

SNIFF. Oh no, I never eat.

CUTHBERT. Well, I think I can find you a nice cushy department, will you be here tomorrow morning at 11.30? You can commence as a forewoman over the comfifty bounders?

FLAPPER. Oh, thank you so much!

(PUTS HAND IN PURSE, GIVES MONEY AND EXIT.)

(ENTER OLD SOLDIER.)

SOLDIER. Are you the commanding officer of the Labour Bureau?

SNIFF. Oh crikey, it's old Moore. Oh, what lovely face fungus, are you trying to grow 'em out of your system?

CUTHBERT. What's your name?

SOLDIER. I'm an old soldier, Serg. McMullins. I'm too old to fight, but I can still do my bit for Mother England. (SALUTES.)

CUTHBERT. Have you ever been in action?

SOLDIER. Yes, when Carnforth declared war on Bolton Le Sands, I was the first in the charge.

28.

SNIFF. Liar.

SOLDIER. Listen to me & I'll tell you the story of how I got the D.S.O. – the Dirty Shove Out – it was a warm Xmas Day in the middle of a frosty night, my comrades were snoring peacefully in their dugouts, sleeping off the effects of some Shell Beer which they had pinched from the canteen. Not a sound could be heard except a pair of socks barking in the distance. There we were – a handful of men surrounded by 20,000 of the enemy – suddenly a bugle call rang out – not a man moved. A second blast echoed through the midnight air – I sprang to my feet, crawled on my hands and

knees to the Colonel's tent. Directly he saw my face, he shouted "Private, it's washing day tomorrow and we haven't a drop of water – what can we do?" I replied, "Colonel, drink it neat" – "For God's sake man", he said, "Don't desert us in our hour of need, there's a river not a hundred miles from here – which you can reach in three minutes – will you volunteer to cut the dam?" "I'll be damned if I will", said I – "Bravely spoken, my man" he replied, "You can have a pass out until 8pm." With that, I sprang on my Rolls-Royce, which I had purchased the previous evening, for half a potato, and swam out into the dark daylight.

For miles and miles I flew through the blinding snow, while the perspiration dropped off me, like shavings from a 9.2.

Presently from out of the gloom a thousand of the enemy appeared – "Will you surrender?" shouted their leader. "Yes – a thousand times yes" I whispered, and pulling off my only sock, I hurled it into the midst of the approaching millions – not a single man was left to tell the tale – they were all gassed! On! Still on! I spurred my faithful charger – more and more of the enemy appeared – I slashed to the right of me – I slashed to the left of me – I slashed behind me – heads, legs and arms flew in every direction – all at once the blade of my shilling safety razor melted with the heat of the battle – my heart was in my mouth! Quickly spitting it out, I pulled a tank out of my waistcoat pocket and continued my wild ride – but the odds against me were too great – I was hemmed in on all sides – above me hovered a great aeroplane, while underneath me, the periscope of a submarine appeared – helpless – I raised the white flag of submission, and surrendered to the enemy. I was hastily dragged before the commanding officer, and searched for the valuable dispatches I was carrying, but all they found was my pay line, and a couple of bonus cards – my throat became parched with the thoughts of my impending fate – "Water! Water!" I cried, "I must have water!" but they only jeered at my torture and gave me beer. I had given all up for lost, when in the distance I could hear a band playing. Nearer and nearer it came, until at last, I could distinguish the martial strains of that beautiful anthem – "We are the Press House Boys" – "Saved! Saved!" I cried. My captors shuddered in their shoes, knowing full well their time had come, and fled in all directions! They were hotly pursued by the Caton Cavalry, the Loyal Lunes and the Skerton Scouts – "Charge! Charge!" shouted the Colonel. My God! How they

29.

fought – Cut! Parry! Slash! & Thrust! And all the while the big guns belched forth their missiles of death – "We win! We win!" I cried, and then with a mighty crash, a great shell burst in front of me – I fell out of bed and woke – to hear the buzzer blowing.

