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## *The English Revolution, 1917*

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No. 1080  
LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE.

Name of Play. { The English Revolution  
(For "Airs & Graces")

Theatre { Palace W.

Date of Licence { 30. 7. 17

*Jan 21/2*  
*Palace Theatre*

"THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION"

-----@@@-----

LCP 1917/16J

Add MS 66171 J



July 26<sup>th</sup> 1917.

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LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,

ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.

"The English Revolution", a play in 1 act  
To be produced at the Palace Theatre.

This is an amusing little sketch & the title is apt, for the only Revolution any sensible person wants in England is to be delivered from the minor tyrannies. A wealthy householder appears in the guise of a beggar - begging not for money but for servants, taxis and so forth. A flagseller strangely offers him money instead of demanding it, but finding that he has not read the morning paper, starts bullying him. The same thing happens with a cook, a profiteering tradesman & a taxi driver: each is obliging & obsequious until discovering that "he does not know", when each becomes truculent & bullying. Then the secret is out: there has been a revolution to compel these little tyrants to behave properly. I think it was a mistake to include flagsellers, who are harmless, but for the rest it is fair exaggeration & to the point. I suppose it is merely a scene in the Palace Revue.

Recommended for Licence.

G.S. Street

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(Sd.) G.S. STREET.



C H A R A C T E R S

-----@ @ @ @ @ @-----

A BEGGAR

A KIND LADY

A FLAG SELLER

A COOK

A WAR PROFITEER

A TAXI DRIVER.

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"THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION"

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SCENE:- A Street, showing the exterior of a large house.

(In the doorway of this house stands the BEGGAR. He is dressed in the height of fashion - tall hat, morning suit, patent leather boots)

(Enter the KIND LADY. She is very smartly dressed. As she crosses the stage, the BEGGAR accosts her)

BEGGAR Kind lady, could you assist a poor fellow who has seen better days?

KIND LADY Go away. I never give money to beggars.

BEGGAR Money, kind lady? I don't want money. I've got barrels of it. Why, I use £5. notes for shaving paper. What I want is help.

LADY Help? What do you mean?

BEGGAR Let me tell you, my sad story. This is my house - £500. a year rent I pay for it. But I can't live in it.

LADY Why - is it haunted?

BEGGAR No, kind lady. But I can't get any servants.

LADY Then why don't you go to a hotel?

BEGGAR All the hotels have been commandeered for Government offices. Besides, even if they weren't, I could never get to one.

LADY Why not?

BEGGAR No taxi will take me. For some reason they don't



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seem to like my face. They ignore my signals.

LADY Blow a whistle.

BEGGAR Not allowed.

LADY Of course, I forgot. Because it keeps wounded soldiers awake.

BEGGAR No - because it annoys the taxi-men.

LADY Then why don't you walk?

BEGGAR Down at the bottom of the street there's a Flag-seller. Whenever I venture out of the house with enough money on me to buy a meal at a restaurant, she tears it off me, and I have to go home again hungry. I'm getting very hungry, kind lady.

LADY Order in provisions from a shop.

BEGGAR They won't deliver them. They're War-Profiteers. Take it or leave it - that's their motto.

(Enter FLAG-SELLER R.)

BEGGAR There's that little vampire!

LADY What little vampire?

BEGGAR The Flag-Seller.

LADY Flag-Seller! I'm off!

(Exit hurriedly, L.)

(The FLAG-SELLER advances towards BEGGAR, who cowers timorously in doorway)

FLAG  
SELLER Excuse me, sir, but would you allow me to give you a £5. note?

BEGGAR (Bounding) What did you say?



SELLER (Pleadingly) Oh, do let me give you one -

BEGGAR Help!

SELLER (Pressing note into his hand) Thank you so much.

BEGGAR I'm going mad! (To FLAG SELLER) But what about your flags?

SELLER Oh, I wouldn't think of bothering you to take one of those.

BEGGAR Do you mind pinching me?

(She does so)

No, I'm not dreaming. What has happened?

SELLER (Startled) Haven't you seen the morning papers?

BEGGAR No, I don't take a paper now. All the papers came out with such earnest appeals to us not to buy them that I thought it would be more patriotic not to.

SELLER Then you don't know?

BEGGAR Know what?

SELLER What is happening.

BEGGAR No.

(The manner of the FLAG-SELLER changes instantly. From being gentle and wheedling, she becomes harsh and tyrannical.)

SELLER Then buy that flag!

BEGGAR (Taken aback) B-but - what is it for?

SELLER Never you mind that it's for. You buy it.



BEGGAR C-c-certainly. How much?

SELLER How much have you got?

BEGGAR One minute. I'll just see. (Gets out note-case.  
- she snatches it from him)

I say, steady on! There's nearly a £100. in there.

SELLER Only £100? Haven't you got any more?

BEGGAR (Trembling) I'm afraid not.

SELLER Then go to your Bank at once and get some more.  
Don't you dare loaf about my beat without any money  
on you or you'll hear about it.

BEGGAR I'll go in and write some cheques at once.

(He is just going into the house when enter  
L. the COOK. She holds out her arms to him  
affectionately)

COOK Master!

BEGGAR Go away - you wicked woman!

COOK Don't you remember me - your dear old cook?

BEGGAR Oh yes, I remember you! Who walked out of my house  
the night I'd asked the Prime Minister to dinner? I  
shall never forget you.

COOK Forgive me, Master! It was all done under a mis-  
apprehension. Oh, do be kind to me! Don't look at  
me so harsh.

BEGGAR What do you want?

COOK Dear Master - have you a vacancy in your establish-  
ment for a cook?



BEGGAR      Vacancy for a cook? I've got a vacancy for everything. I'm all vacancies.

COOK      If you'll take me into your service, I shall be only too happy to do the entire work of the house - including the boots. No afternoons out - and no beer.

BEGGAR      (Puzzled) It's some sort of practical joke.

(FLAG-SELLER signals wildly to COOK)

COOK      (Crossing to FLAG-SELLER) What's the matter?

SELLER      He doesn't know.

COOK      (Startled) Are you sure?

SELLER      Perfectly certain.

(The COOK's manner changes to one of extreme truculence)

COOK      He doesn't know, doesn't he? Ho!

BEGGAR      (Who has seen nothing of the foregoing) Very well, Mrs Gump, if you promise to behave yourself I'll take you back into my service - on one condition.

COOK      Really? On one condition? Sure you couldn't make it two? (Working herself up) Do you think I'm some sort of White Slave - to be ordered about by you? Now, understand me - I'll come and cook your lunches for you - no dinners, mind - I don't do dinners, they cut too much into my evening - on the distinct understanding that my time's my own after three o'clock in the afternoon.

BEGGAR      (Humbly) It shall be, Mrs Gump.

COOK      I must have a maid - and seven women to help in the kitchen.

BEGGAR      But where am I to find them?



COOK That's your business. And no guests in - ever.  
Is that clear?

BEGGAR Perfectly.

COOK And never more than two courses.

BEGGAR I shouldn't dream of it.

COOK Very well. On those terms I'll think it over.

BEGGAR (Humbly) That's very kind of you.

COOK That's not to say that I'm coming, mind.

BEGGAR Of course not.

COOK Very likely I shan't.

BEGGAR Just as you please. But if you can possibly see  
your way to oblige me, I shall take it as a great  
favour.

COOK Yes - and then put upon me. I know what you are.

(Enter the WAR-PROFITEER)

COOK (To FLAG-SELLER) Hullo, here's that chap from the  
stores.

SELLER I thought tradesmen never called for orders now.

COOK Call for orders? I should think not. Why, it's  
as much as you can do to persuade those War-Profiteers  
to sell you anything after you've waited in a queue  
outside the shop for an hour.

WAR-PROFITEER (Very politely to BEGGAR) Good morning, sir. I  
just called, sir, to enquire if there was anything  
I could have the pleasure of supplying you with this  
morning?



BEGGAR (Reeling) You don't mean to say you're actually calling for orders?

WAR-P- (Getting out note-book) Oh yes, sir. Now, what would you be requiring? Any sugar? Potatoes? Coal?

BEGGAR I want all those things and lots of others - but you won't deliver them - and I can't carry home a ton of coal under my arm.

WAR P- But most certainly we'll deliver them! With the greatest pleasure, sir. To any address you like, sir.

BEGGAR (Aside) I'm dead - that's what's the matter and I've gone straight up to Heaven. I didn't deserve it - but that's where I've gone. (Aloud) Send me heaps of potatoes and tons of sugar - and pounds of coal.

WAR P- (Making notes) Yes, sir. Certainly, sir. Any particular quantities?

BEGGAR Use your own discretion. But don't stint yourself. Let yourself go.

WAR P- I will, sir. And it's such a pleasure to have such a customer as you, that you really must allow me to give you a discount of 10% on the marked prices.

BEGGAR No - not 10%.

WAR P- Fifteen, then?

BEGGAR No - I don't want any discount.

WAR P- Oh, please, sir. To oblige me. Otherwise I shall be making a profit out of you and I shouldn't like that.

(COOK plucks at his sleeve - he turns)

What's the matter?



COOK (In a hoarse aside) You idiot! He doesn't know.

WAR P- (Disgustedly) Well, you're a nice couple! Why couldn't you have said so at first, instead of letting me waste my time? And him perhaps the last customer I shall ever be able to bully!

BEGGAR (Who has seen nothing of the foregoing) I should like you to send your van with all those things as quickly as possible. Cook's waiting for them.

(WAR PROFITEER is about to give a truculent reply, but COOK cuts in first)

COOK Oh no, she isn't! I've decided not to come to you, after all.

BEGGAR (Imploringly) Oh, Mrs Gump, I implore you! Any wages you like!

COOK That's no inducement. I can get any wages I like with people that know how to treat a lady as she has a right to expect - not put upon her the way you would. I know your kind.

SELLER That's right. He's just a bully - that's what he is. Been keeping me waiting I don't know how long for a miserable little cheque - not half what he would give me if he was anything like a man.

COOK Go on, you coward! Write the lady her cheque.

BEGGAR (Meekly) All right, I was just going in to do it. (To WAR PROFITEER) Deliver those things as quickly as possible, will you?

WAR P- (Ferociously) Deliver those things, did you say? Think I got nothing better to do than to dance attendance on the likes of you! Am I a negro slave to be ordered here and ordered there by any miserable little upstart with a pound or two in his pocket? Think you're doing me a favour by buying my goods? Deliver the things, indeed! If you want anything from my shop come and fetch it - see? Yes - and as likely as not I won't let you have it! Anyhow - if you want a pound



of sugar you got to have a grand piano from the Music Department. Understand?

BEGGAR (Humbly) Certainly. (Aside) It's all right, I'm not dead after all.

WAR P- Yes - and if you want any potatoes you got to buy, as well, a first-class Funeral from the Undertaking Department - see? You needn't have the funeral, mind you - but you got to pay for it.

BEGGAR (Humbly) With pleasure.

WAR P- With an addition of 20% on to our ordinary charges on account of the War.

BEGGAR That sounds very reasonable.

WAR P- And anything you want, you got to fetch. Grasp that?

BEGGAR Of course. But what am I to fetch it in?

WAR P- That's your affair.

(Enter the TAXI MAN. He goes up to BEGGAR, raises his hat respectfully, and speaks with the greatest urbanity)

TAXI MAN Excuse me, sir, am I labouring under a misapprehension or did I see you raise your hand as a signal that you required the use of my taxi-meter Metropolitan Hackney carriage? I trust I am in the right, sir - for, believe me, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have an opportunity of placing my poor services at your disposal. Distance, I can assure you, is no object, sir. And if you've got any luggage, sir, I shall be only too happy to carry it down for you, sir. And if you wouldn't mind doing me a very great favour, sir - will you please give me only my strictly legal fare? Anything in the nature of a tip, sir, would unman me.

(During this address, the BEGGAR stares at him with goggling eyes - the OTHERS signal wildly to TAXI MAN, trying to attract his attention)



BEGGAR You're not ill, are you?

TAXI MAN No, sir - I'm in the best of health, as I hope you are, sir.

BEGGAR Then it's me that's mad!

(He passes his hands wildly through his hair.  
the TAXI MAN suddenly catches sight of the  
OTHERS' signals and crosses to them)

TAXI MAN Whatever are you making those signs at me for?

THE  
THREE He doesn't know!

TAXI MAN (Furious) He doesn't know! And I been carrying on all this time as if - as if - (words fail him) Hold me back - or I shall kill him.

COOK That's right - you do! He deserves it.

SELIER Keeping me waiting all this time for my cheque -

WAR P- Ordering goods from me as if I was a Kaffir or something.

BEGGAR (To TAXI MAN) If you really meant what you said just now, I wish you'd bring round your cab at once.

TAXI MAN (Advancing with clenched fists) Say that again! Just once again, that's all! Say it! Say it!

BEGGAR W-w-what's the matter?

TAXI MAN Whatcher mean by hailing me just now - waving yer impudent hand to me like this - Hi! hi! (Imitating) Think I'm one of them Russian scurfs? Think I got nothing better to do with my cab and my time than go wherever you want! You! You - ! There - ! You aren't worth wasting good bad language on.

COOK You're right.



WAR P- Scum - that's what he is -just scum.

SELLER Dirt.

TAXI MAN I got a good mind to give you in charge for insulting behaviour. 'Ow dare you call my cab!

BEGGAR I didn't! I assure you I didn't. It's quite a mistake.

WAR P- Yes, you did. And you insulted me, too.

COOK And me. Asking me to take a situation in his measly house.

TAXI MAN (Taking off his coat and threatening BEGGAR) What-cher mean by treating a lady like that?

THE OTHERS (Growling menacingly) Aaah!

(Terrified, the BEGGAR turns to flee into his house. The OTHERS hustle him, crashing his hat over his eyes and pulling his coat off. He cowers timorously before them - Suddenly there is a sound off of loud cheering, and joy-bells clang clamorously. The Four desist from their hustling and look nervously in the direction of the sound)

SELLER What's that?

WAR P- (Terrified) They're coming this way!

TAXI MAN (Same) We better be off!

SELLER Where can we hide?

COOK In the coal cellar - I know the way!

(They make a rush for the house - the cheering grows louder - In rushes the KIND LADY - she now has on her head the conventional red cap of Liberty and is waving a flag)



KIND  
LADY (Excitedly shouting) Liberty! Liberty!

(THE FOUR crouch, with every manifestation, of alarm in the doorway)

BEGGAR What has happened?

LADY Revolution!

BEGGAR Good Heavens - do you mean to say that England is now a Republic?

LADY" A Republic? Don't talk nonsense. But - (with a stern glance at the FOUR) We've deposed one tyrant at last!

FOUR (Holding up their hands) Kamerad! Kamerad!

LADY (Sternly) No use howling for mercy now - it's too late. (To BEGGAR) Armed forces have seized all the shops and are compelling the shop-keepers to behave like civil human beings.

(A shudder from the WAR PROFITEERS)

The Cooks of London are being driven into situations at the point of the bayonet.

(Same business from COOK)

Snipers are being posted at every street corner to pick off any Flag-Seller who dares to show her nose.

(Same business from the FLAG SELLER)

And the taxis of London have all been commandeered by the patient public, who are taking joy-rides, all round the four-mile radius!

BEGGAR (Taking off his hat and waving it) Hurrah! Free - free - at last!

(He embraces KIND LADY - the cheering breaks out afresh, and the joy-bells ring. THE FOUR stand in Napoleonic attitudes, such as baffled tyrants conventionally assume. Picture. Band plays 'Rule Britannia'.)

CURTAIN.



(Excitedly shouting) Liberty! Liberty!  
(THE FOUR crouch, with every manifestation of alarm  
in the doorway)  
What has happened?  
Revolution!  
Good Heavens - do you mean to say that England is  
now a Republic?  
A Republic? Don't talk nonsense. But - (with a  
stern glance at the FOUR) We've deposed one tyrant  
at least!  
(Holding up their hands) Kamerad! Kamerad!  
(Sternly) No use howling for mercy now - it's too  
late. (To BEGGAR) Armed forces have seized all the  
shops and are compelling the shop-keepers to behave  
like civil human beings.  
(A shudder from the WAR PROTESTERS)  
The Cocks of London are being driven into situations

KIND  
LADY  
BEGGAR  
LADY  
BEGGAR  
LADY  
FOUR  
LADY

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CURTAIN.

BEGGAR