

22 July 1915

Lee class H. A.

Centre, 22nd July 1915.

THE THREE PATRIOTS

While on the [REDACTED] men prove themselves

3500
LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE.

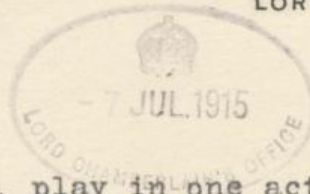
ING BRIGHT,
Green Street,
Leicester Square, W.C.

J. K. JEROME
Monks Corner
Marlow.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,

ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.

6th July 1915.



"THE THREE PATRIOTS", play in one act by J. K. Jerome, for production at the Queen's Theatre, 22nd July 1915.

The patriots are a young German, a young Englishman and a young servant who waits on them in their London lodgings before the war, on the declaration of which each of the lads goes off to fight for his country, much to the distress of the girl, who is in love with the German. In the second scene by a marvellous coincidence all three are brought together again on the field of battle where both men prove themselves chivalrous foes and where, as Red Cross nurse, the girl is killed by a ~~man~~ shell while uttering the prayer "forgive me for having loved a German!"

Quite effective in its harmlessly stagey way: and

Recommended for License.

(Sgd.) ERNEST A. BENDALL.

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

6th July 15

"The Three Patriots" by J. H. Jerome, to be set
for production June, 22nd July 15.

The Patriots are a young German, a young
Englishman, and a young woman who waits on
them in their London lodgings before the war, on
the declaration of which each of the latter goes off
to fight for his country, much to the distress of
the girl, who is in love with the German. In
the second scene of a marvellous coincidence
all three are brought together again on

CHARACTERS

SCENE I

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SCENE:- The floor front of a small old-fashion-
FREDERICK *artist* Old Kent Road. A worn carpet covers
the floor. A few cheap engravings decorate the
faded wall-paper. The door in the corner opens
into a narrow passage. A table in the corner
before it on a small table a bottle of ink and a pen
struggles

HENRY *brush. Chas. P. Davis*
congenial surroundings. Against the wall
LADYSMITH light of the door is an ancient glass some-
what out of tune. In the centre of the room stands
a round table covered with a coloured cloth and
against the wall opposite the window a side-board.
A few ornaments of the usual lodging-house pattern
are scattered here and there. A three-branch gas-
lamp hangs from the centre of the ceiling.

A DOCTOR *Cent. Beran.*

The Time is between seven and eight P.M.

(HENRY, (more commonly pronounced "Henry") is seated
at the piano. He is a young man, about 25 years of age,
and discovers him to be a good-looking, well-built,
cheerful young bouncer. A rather striking type of
his class. A kindly, good-natured fellow.)

SCENE I England, August 1914.

A Lodging-house in the Old Kent Road.

After a few seconds the door opens and FREDERICK
ENTERS, wearing a stiff hat and carrying over his
" II Flanders, November 1914. tall, slight youngster
with a fair moustache. He pauses at the door)
A cowshed near to the Frontier.

FREDERICK Good evening!

(A close observer might detect a German accent as
he speaks, but to the ordinary listener it is
imperceptible - He turns)

HENRY (He is still playing) Here! Want you, Eastman
Junior. Don't go away.

(The other has gone out. He returns the next moment
having hung up his coat and hat in the passage. He
closes the door behind him)

THE THREE PATRIOTS

SCENE I

SCENE:- The first floor front of a small old-fashioned house in the Old Kent Road. A worn carpet covers the floor. A few cheap engravings decorate the faded wall-paper. The door in the centre opens upon a narrow passage. To the right as one enters is the window, draped with green rep curtains. Before it on a small table a feeble geranium struggles against uncongenial surroundings. Against the wall to the right of the door is an ancient piano somewhat out of tune. In the centre of the room stands a round table covered with a coloured cloth and against the wall opposite the window a side-board. A few ornaments of the usual lodging-house pattern are scattered here and there. A three-branch gasolier hangs from the centre of the ceiling.

The Time is between seven and eight p.m.

(HENRY, (more commonly pronounced "Enery") is seated at the piano. When, a little later, he turns round, one discovers him to be a good-looking, well-made, cheerful young bounder. A rather superior type of his class. A kindly, good-natured young egoist. He is laboriously picking out the notes of an accompaniment to a song. The sound he produces suggests nothing in particular.

After a few seconds the door opens and FREDERICK ENTERS, wearing a silk hat and carrying over his arm a light overcoat. He is a tall, slight youngster with a fair moustache. He pauses at the door)

Good evening!

(A close observer might detect a German accent as he speaks, but to the ordinary listener it is imperceptible - He turns)

(He is still playing) Here! Want you, Beethoven Junior. Don't go away.

(The other has gone out. He returns the next moment having hung up his coat and hat in the passage. He closes the door behind him)

Play this accompaniment for us, there's a good chap.
(He rises) Strictly speaking, I'm not a pianist.

FREDERICK No. One gathers that. (He laughs. Seats himself)
What is it?

HENRY Oh, just a new song I heard the other evening. Silly words, but there's something in it that gets hold of you, somehow. Thought I'd give it them at our Smoker to-morrow night. Go easy at first.

(FREDERICK begins to play the accompaniment. Under his hands, one discovers what the song really is)

FREDERICK Is that too high for you?

HENRY I don't think so. Now when I get into it.

(The note arrives. He begins to sing:)

"Up to mighty London came an Irishman one day.
As the streets are paved with gold, sure everyone was gay."

(ENTER LADYSMITH)

(LADYSMITH (commonly called "The Kid") is a childish-looking girl of about 16. It is her evening out, and in preparation she has dressed herself in her best clothes. She brings in FREDERICK's tea on a tray. She places it on the table)

Kid, come here!

"Singing songs of Piccadilly, Strand and Leicester Square,
Till Paddy got excited, then he shouted to them there.

(LADYSMITH has come across. She stands the other side of the piano)

Can you read music?

LADYSMITH Just enough to get the tune.

HENRY More than some of them can. Chorus!

(They all three sing:)

"It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go.
It's a long way to Tipperary, to the sweetest girl I know
Food-bye Piccadilly, good-bye Leicester Square
It's a long long way to Tipperary, but my heart's right
there.

HENRY

Once again! (To the KID) And put more heart into it
this time. Think of the only boy you ever loved.

(All three sing again)

"It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go.
It's a long way to Tipperary, to the sweetest girl I know.
Good-bye Piccadilly, good-bye Leicester Square
It's a long long way to Tipperary - "

(The postman's knock is heard. It is repeated)

(LADYSMITH, singing "but my heart's right
there" as she crosses, goes out)

(FREDERICK and HENRY finish the chorus, and HENRY
goes on to the second verse)

"Paddy wrote a letter to his Irish Molly O,
Saying: 'Should you not receive it, write and let me know.'
If I make mistakes in - "

(LADYSMITH has RE-ENTERED. She puts two letters
beside the tray. She has a large brown paper parcel
in her hands)

HENRY

(Breaks off) What's that?

LADYSMITH

(Reading the label) Sergeant Henry W - -

HENRY

Just what I've been waiting for. (He snatches the
parcel from her) You're not going out, are you?

FREDERICK

Not for a little while.

HENRY

I'll be down in ten minutes.

(Dashes out with the parcel)

LADYSMITH It's his new uniform. He's just been made a sergeant.

FREDERICK (He has risen) I suppose they take themselves quite seriously - these territorials of yours?

LADYSMITH Seriously! Foreigner, aren't you?

FREDERICK They think themselves soldiers?

LADYSMITH Well, aren't they! (solicous sigh) No, I thought you weren't. You're so quiet.

FREDERICK (He shrugs his shoulders) Perhaps, one day, we shall find out. (he) You don't like foreigners?

LADYSMITH My father was a sergeant - of Volunteers. He wanted to go to the Boer War but mother wouldn't let him. You see the Germans might have taken the opportunity to invade us.

FREDERICK What kind of foreigner do you - least object to?

FREDERICK Were you afraid of the Germans, even then?

LADYSMITH I don't know. I suppose the French are all right, now. Father didn't think much even of them. But that was a

LADYSMITH Not afraid. Father was never afraid of anyone. - Are you French?

FREDERICK Except "mother?"

FREDERICK No. I'm a - Pomeranian.

LADYSMITH You see I was just going to be born and mother didn't want to be left alone. (they were dogs)

FREDERICK I am so glad he didn't go. I wouldn't have had anything happen, just then, to upset your - (He breaks off) And so they christened you Ladysmith?

LADYSMITH Oh! I'm glad you're not a German.

LADYSMITH (She nods, gravely) Father said I must always try to be worthy of it. (I'm not a German?)

FREDERICK (He turns away to hide a smile) What was your father?

LADYSMITH He was a watchmaker, till the Stores came. (He is confused)

AREN'T YOU LETTING YOUR TEA GET COLD?

FREDERICK I'm learning to make tables and chairs. My father sells furniture.

FREDERICK I had some tea in the City. Why are you glad I'm not a German? (He takes her hands)

LADYSMITH You're a foreigner, aren't you?

LADYSMITH Oh, nothing - just - (She looks him frankly in the eyes,

FREDERICK Well, I'm not an Englishman. (on her) You have always been so nice and kind. And when you - like anybody, you naturally want them to be everything they ought to be

LADYSMITH (She gives an unconscious sigh) No, I thought you weren't. You're so quiet.

FREDERICK Do you remember Queen Victoria?

FREDERICK (He laughs) You don't like foreigners?

LADYSMITH You mean our Queen Victoria?

LADYSMITH Well, of course they can't help it - What kind of foreigner are you?

FREDERICK Your Queen Victoria. You remember when she married?

FREDERICK What kind of foreigner do you - least object to?

LADYSMITH Prince Albert wasn't it? The Albert Memorial chap.

LADYSMITH I don't know. I suppose the French are all right, now. Father didn't think much even of them. But that was a long time ago. I expect they've got a bit better. - Are you French?

(He has released her. She steps back)

FREDERICK No. I'm a - Pomeranian.

LADYSMITH A German!

LADYSMITH Pomeranian! I thought they were dogs!

ARE YOU SURE?

FREDERICK Not all. Some of us are men.

FREDERICK Quite sure. You don't think Queen Victoria could have

LADYSMITH Uhm! I'm glad you're not a German.

FREDERICK Why are you glad I'm not a German? (to judge her. I've heard father say that people like kings and queens had always to be allowed a certain amount of license.

LADYSMITH Oh, I don't know. I -

(He is looking at her. She grows a little confused)

Aren't you letting your tea get cold?

FREDERICK I had some tea in the City. Why are you glad I'm not a German? (He takes her hands)

LADYSMITH Oh, nothing - just - (She looks him frankly in the eyes, putting her hesitation away from her) You have always been so nice and kind. And when you - like anybody, you naturally want them to be everything they ought to be. Don't you?

FREDERICK Do you remember Queen Victoria?

LADYSMITH You mean our Queen Victoria?

FREDERICK Your Queen Victoria. You remember whom she married?

LADYSMITH Prince Albert wasn't it? The Albert Memorial chap.

FREDERICK He was a German.

(He has released her. She steps back)

LADYSMITH A German!

(He nods)

Are you sure?

FREDERICK Quite sure. You don't think Queen Victoria could have done anything wrong, do you?

LADYSMITH (She shakes her head) Not for me to judge her. I've heard father say that people like kings and queens had always to be allowed a certain amount of license.

FREDERICK (Laughs) You don't think it possible you might follow her example - not if he was very nice and kind and loved you very much?

LADYSMITH One never can say for certain. I don't pretend to be perfect - - why do you ask?

FREDERICK Because when you're puzzled you look so grave - and sweet. It's your evening out, isn't it?

LADYSMITH Yes.

FREDERICK Where are you going?

LADYSMITH I expect I'll go round and see Aunt at Bart's Hospital. I generally do. She's a nurse there.

FREDERICK Not a very cheerful outing.

LADYSMITH It's interesting.

FREDERICK Come out with me. I've got two tickets for a concert. You like music?

LADYSMITH Oh yes. But -

FREDERICK But what?

LADYSMITH It would be - walking out with me.

FREDERICK We'll take a bus.

LADYSMITH It isn't that. I can't explain it to you.

FREDERICK You can't trust me. You think all foreigners are wicked?

LADYSMITH I know you're not. (She smiles, then becomes grave again) But you don't understand!

FREDERICK I think I do. It's much the same in - Pomerania. In Pomerania, when we meet a little girl, and come to feel that she's the sweetest, quaintest little girl in all the world; then we ask her to "walk out" with us, as you call it. It's just the same as saying to her; 'won't you give me the opportunity of trying to make you fond of me; won't you give me the hope that one day we may be betrothed to one another?' We nearly always begin with a concert.

LADYSMITH (She looks up at him, her large eyes wide open) But I'm only a servant!

FREDERICK But your father was a watchmaker - and jeweller? Doubt if it's as useful. (He hands back the photograph. The other takes it and crosses with it to the table) Wonder

LADYSMITH He did sell jewellery - not very much. and me in these.

FREDERICK (He takes her hand, raises it to his lips and kisses it) turns and looks at him)

LADYSMITH (Looking at her hand) They are so red! Well, it is possible, you know. All this talk about it's going to come to anything?

FREDERICK They will come white in Pomerania. You will come?

LADYSMITH Yes. I must be in before eleven.

FREDERICK You shall be in before half-past -

(The door opens, HENRY bursts in. He is re-dressed from head to heel. It is a transformation. A soldierly looking lad, and pleased with himself. Just inside the door he halts and salutes.

FREDERICK returns his salute. The two stand for a moment facing one another, the child between them)

(HENRY comes down. FREDERICK walks round to the other side of him)

Very neat. What does "R.B." stand for?

HENRY "Rifle Brigade." What are you, by the bye, when you're at home?

(FREDERICK shows his watch to LADYSMITH with a smile. HENRY has walked across to the window and does not notice)

LADYSMITH (She smiles back, takes up the tea tray) Don't forget your letters. As, when the day comes, we shall march over Europe. It is God's will. Germany will conquer the world, and (She goes out) be happy.

FREDERICK (He has gone to a desk standing the other side of the door, from a drawer he takes out a photograph of himself in regimentals. Brings it across and shows it to HENRY) Pomeranian Huzzars.

HENRY Uhm! I like the uniform. More showy than ours. Doubt if it's as useful. (He hands back the photograph. The other takes it and crosses with it to the table) Wonder if we shall ever meet - you in those togs, and me in these.

(The other was about to take up his letters - he turns and looks at him)

Well, it is possible, you know. All this talk about war. What do you think, yourself? Think it's going to come to anything?

FREDERICK Not this time, I'm afraid. Russia isn't ready. She'll climb down - Would you have to go - in case of a war?

HENRY Not if I didn't want to. We think for ourselves in this country.

FREDERICK Would you want to?

HENRY Should want to if you were in it, old chap.

(A pause)

FREDERICK It's got to come, you know. We've got to smash you, some day. Sorry!

FREDERICK And if you don't? If we smash you instead? Well, you can't do that to-night, you'll have to leave it till tomorrow.

HENRY That's all right. That's what you have got to try to do.

FREDERICK Tomorrow may be too late. (Takes out watch)

FREDERICK (Suddenly there leaps to life the fanatic - seeing visions) We should march over you, as we marched over France in 1870. As, when the day comes, we shall march over Europe. It is God's will. Germany will conquer the world, and the world will be happy.

FREDERICK (He is thinking aloud) Yes, if I can get to Elephant and Castle by - (He replaces his watch, goes to table)

HENRY Napoleon talked that rot, my boy, a hundred years ago; and if it had not been for blooming little Britannia, there'd be no Germany to-day. You make Germany happy and leave the rest of the world alone. That's our job - most of it.

HENRY (Takes his hand) Good-bye, old man. See you again.

FREDERICK (Laughs - the fanatic dies as suddenly as he came to life) You're right. It has got to come. Perhaps the sooner the better. (He takes up letters, the top one is of no importance)

(The front door bangs)

HENRY Same here. Meanwhile we'll have another go at Tipperary do you mind? (He goes towards the piano, getting no answer, he turns) What's the matter? Anything wrong?

(LADYSMITH has entered in hat and gloves)

FREDERICK (He has the second letter open in his hand, he awakes to the necessity of disarming suspicion. He speaks in quiet low tones) A letter from my father. (He lays it down on the table, a paper, enclosed in it, falls unnoticed to the ground) I must - - I had a Bradshaw somewhere. (He is looking for it in the desk) Where is it?

HENRY Freddy! He's gone.

HENRY Here you are.

LADYSMITH Gone?

(It was on the table by the window, he takes it up, looks at the back cover)

HENRY Yes, Father taken suddenly - (His eye catches the paper

"Paris and the Continent" - takes it up) Here - what's this? "Mobilwaching" - (His pronunciation is his own)

"Nineteenth Regiment" - "Friedrich" - Great Scott! It's

FREDERICK No, that's no good to me. Excuse me, (Takes it away, turns to a page, evidently marked) yes. Liverpool St. 8.30. - that's what he meant when he said tomorrow night he

HENRY (He has looked at his watch, puts it back) Well, you can't do that to-night, you'll have to leave it till tomorrow.

FREDERICK Tomorrow may be too late. (Takes out watch)

HENRY What is it? Old chap ill?

LADYSMITH To a concert. (It is little more than a whisper)

FREDERICK (He is thinking aloud) Yes, if I can get to Elephant and Castle by - (He replaces his watch, goes to table, picks up his letters, sees that he has some money, goes towards the door - then suddenly stops, stretches out his hand) Good-bye.

LADYSMITH He didn't tell me he was a German. He said he was a - Pomeranian.

HENRY (Takes his hand) Good-bye, old man. See you again.

HENRY And so he is. (FREDERICK is already gone) that Pomerania - Why, it's the very worst part of Germany - it's Prussia! Good luck to you - Sorry - fortnight we and the Prussians will be killing one another - if all goes well. He's your (The front door bangs) you - Were you soft on him?

HENRY (Goes to window) Poor chap! Not even a toothbrush. (Turns)

LADYSMITH (LADYSMITH has entered in hat and gloves)

HENRY I believe you were. Hulloo kid - I say, that's a saucy hat. Going out?

LADYSMITH (Smiling) Yes, I - (Looks round the room) Where is - concert. I've seen you shake hands with him.

HENRY Freddy! He's gone.

HENRY Friendship between men isn't the same thing. It don't prevent our running one another through the body when the proper time comes. Women are different.

LADYSMITH Gone?

HENRY Yes, Father taken suddenly - (His eye catches the paper on the floor, he crosses, picks it up) Here - what's this? "Mobilmachung" - (His pronunciation is his own) "Eighteenth Regiment" - "Friedrich" - Great Scott! It's War!! (The paper falls from his hands) Wonder if we're going to be in it? If so, I ought to stop him. - Of course that's what he meant when he said tomorrow might be

too late - By God, they don't waste time. If they are all like him, - It will be the grandest scrap old England's ever had. (He stands with folded arms, the light of battle in his eyes. Young England rampant. Then he becomes aware of LADYSMITH standing bewildered, her world about her going down in pieces) Were you going out - with him?

LADYSMITH To a concert. (It is little more than a whisper)

HENRY With a German! Why your poor father, my girl, would have turned in his -

LADYSMITH He didn't tell me he was a German. He said he was a - Pomeranian.

HENRY And so he is. You mean you didn't know that Pomerania - - Why, it's the very worst part of Germany - it's Prussia! Why in less than another fortnight we and the Prussians will be killing one another - if all goes well. He's your country's enemy, and you - Were you soft on him?

LADYSMITH No.

HENRY I believe you were.

LADYSMITH (Hotly) No, I wasn't. You've no right to say that. Just because it was my evening out, and I fancied a concert. I've seen you shake hands with him.

HENRY Friendship between men isn't the same thing. It don't prevent our running one another through the body when the proper time comes. Women are different.

LADYSMITH I shouldn't have done that, even if I'd known he was a German. I never got as far as geography. I had to leave school when - (She is breaking down)

HENRY (Pats her kindly on the shoulder) That's all right.

SCENE II

Chiefly my fun.

LADYSMITH I hate all Germans.

HENRY We'll have a little concert all to ourselves, shall we? Come on. (He leads her to the piano - sits) It's all about an Irishman and the sweetest girl he knew. Are you ready? (He strikes at once into the words)

(They both sing the first verse. LADYSMITH with her chin in the air, fighting bravely)

Now then, Chorus - all together -

DOCTOR (At "sweetest girl I know" the Curtain begins to slowly descend. It reaches the stage together with the end of the Chorus) appears in the opening. He is carrying on his back an equally indistinguishable figure. The DOCTOR moves down to make room. On the threshold the burdened man stumbles and falls, bringing both figures to the ground)

DOCTOR Take care! Take care! What's the matter with you? Can't you - - Sorry! Didn't know you were wounded yourself.

(The nurse has come to his assistance. Together they carry the wounded German to one of the heaps of straw that have been made ready)

Get him ready.

(The DOCTOR returns to the other figure who has partly risen)

Can you move?

HENRY I'm all right, sir, on one leg.

(With the assistance of the DOCTOR he gains a pile of straw and sinks down upon it. At the sound of his voice the NURSE looks across at him. Then goes on with her work of undressing the wounded GERMAN)

DOCTOR (Is undressing his patient - HENRY is able to help him a little) What is it? Shell?

S C E N E I I

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

SCENE:- Three stained plank walls and a litter of straw. A gaping hole in the thatched roof lets in a feeble light, which grows stronger as the eye becomes accustomed to it. At the back in the centre a door swinging on broken hinges. Outside the gathering twilight.

(A Red-Cross nurse - a slight girlish figure in grey - moves silently, arranging the straw. An Army Doctor is standing just inside the open doorway)

DOCTOR (Calling to someone outside) Bring him in here.

(A grimy mud-stained figure appears in the opening. He is carrying on his back an equally indistinguishable figure. The DOCTOR moves down to make room. On the threshold the burdened man stumbles and falls, bringing both figures to the ground)

DOCTOR Take care! Take care! What's the matter with you? Can't you - - Sorry! Didn't know you were wounded yourself.

(The nurse has come to his assistance. Together they carry the wounded German to one of the heaps of straw that have been made ready)

Get him ready.

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Can you move?

HENRY I'm all right, sir, on one leg.

(With the assistance of the DOCTOR he gains a pile of straw and sinks down upon it. At the sound of his voice the NURSE looks across at him. Then goes on with her work of undressing the wounded GERMAN)

DOCTOR (Is undressing his patient - HENRY is able to help him a little) What is it? Shell?

- HENRY No, sir. Bullet. It went in just above the hip, I think. Here. Too much risk. I'll send you the first ambulance I come across. Get one of those flags?
- DOCTOR Um! No shirt? she takes out and hands him a small red cross flag)
- HENRY No, sir. Have given up shirts. Laundry's been very unsatisfactory of late. (He puts him on the shoulder) We'll have you in a comfortable bed in less than an hour. Next week we'll have you skipping. (He moves towards the door)
- DOCTOR (He laughs, he is probing him) Can you feel that? (He takes from his pocket and slips it into the NURSE's hand) Don't use it unless you're bound to.
- HENRY (Utters a slight suppressed cry) Yes, sir. I can feel that all right, thank you. (closes the door)
- DOCTOR Must have been pretty close quarters. Where did it happen? (He has crossed for the sponge and some water. He goes on with his work) (He looks at his face. HENRY's eyes follow him. Remain fixed on her)
- HENRY Just over there. (With a jerk of the head) In the wood. We had both lost our way apparently. He caught sight of me first and potted me, and I got in with the bayonet. Ain't killed him, have I? (Am I in a delirium?)
- DOCTOR (Has crossed, he examines the man) No. Half an inch lower would have done it. (If you keep quiet.)
- HENRY Shall know better next time. (dreaming)
- DOCTOR Funny lads, some of you. You come here to kill Germans. One of them puts a bullet into you. You run a bayonet through his chest. Then you risk your life carrying him on your back for half a mile.
- HENRY Well, I could hardly leave him there. You see, when I came to look at him, I found he was a friend of mine.
- HENRY (DOCTOR looks up) (that was a nurse.)
- LADY: We lodged together in the same house in London in the Old Kent Road years ago. (He remembers, gives a short laugh) What am I talking about - "years ago." Back in the summer.

DOCTOR (Grunts, he turns to the little nurse) I shan't operate here. Too much risk. I'll send you the first ambulance I come across. Get one of those flags?

LADY: Yes (From a bag she takes out and hands him a small red Cross flag)

HENRY I'll fix it up in the thatch. You'll be all right. (He crosses to HENRY, pats him on the shoulder) We'll have you in a comfortable bed in less than an hour. Next week we'll have you skipping. (He moves towards the door - then comes back a few steps. He takes something from his pocket and slips it into the NURSE's hand) Don't use it unless you're bound to.

HENRY (He goes out, closes the door)

(The little NURSE continues silently about her work. Puts some more straw under HENRY's head, takes off his shoes. Covers his feet. Then she crosses to the other, she washes his face. HENRY's eyes follow her. Remain fixed on her)

HENRY Nurse!

LADY: Yes (She looks up)

Am I in a delirium?

LADYSMITH No, you'll be all right if you keep quiet.

LADY: You mustn't talk so much.

HENRY Sure I'm not delirious - not dreaming.

HENRY It's all right. It does me good. Keeps me from

LADY: Quite sure. - you know. I was a bit gone on you myself in those days. Only you were a servant, and I thought I was a "nut." I ain't clean already, am I?

HENRY Then you are the "kid."

(She moves away - stops)

LADY: That is what you used to call me. Such soft hands.

HENRY (He takes her hand. He is about to kiss it - she I remember. Your aunt was a nurse. on his forehead)

LADY: Did he know it was you, when he fired?

LADY: I wanted to come. She managed it for me.

HENRY No. No more than I know it was him, when I spitted

HENRY (Watches her again) You soon picked it up. Natural to you, I suppose. Know what you've got there?

LADY: Yes. (She moves away) Do you know what I feel whenever a wounded chap is brought in. I never seem to get used to it. I

HENRY How is he getting on? you - all broken. (He tending the GERMAN lad at the moment - wiping his wound)

LADY: (Listens) His breathing sounds easier. (Comes across with her bowl and sponge) it that way.

HENRY Him and me, and you waiting on us. It might be the Old Kent Road.

(There comes the sound of a distant shell)

HENRY Hark! Sounds like the 'buses, don't it! Do you remember the evening he was going to take you to a concert. And I was afraid you were soft on him. And how mad you were with me for thinking so?

LADY: Yes, I remember.

HENRY You had on a hat with cornflowers in it. You did look nice in it.

LADY: You mustn't talk so much.

HENRY It's all right. It does me good. Keeps me from thinking about - you know. I was a bit gone on you for myself in those days. Only you were a servant, and I thought I was a "nut." I ain't clean already, am I?

(She moves away - stops)

Just my face, that's all - you've got such soft hands.

(He takes her hand. He is about to kiss it - she draws it gently away. She lays it on his forehead)

LADY: Did he know it was you, when he fired?

HENRY No. No more than I knew it was him, when I spitted

HENRY him. Funny thing in fighting, you don't think about the man. It's just the uniform you want to kill.

(FRED: looks up)

LADY: (Moves away) Do you know what I feel whenever a wounded chap is brought in. I never seem to get used to it. I always wonder who his girl is. It must be like having your baby sent back to you - all broken. (Is tending the GERMAN lad at the moment - wiping his wound)

(She arranges the straw behind him)

HENRY It don't do to look at it that way.

'Fraid you got the worst of it, haven't you?

LADY: No, I suppose it's wrong.

Well, it sounds discourteous. But I almost wish

(She moves away)

HENRY They're only doing their duty. Same as we're doing ours. They've got sweethearts, too, who must be hating us. Shouldn't be surprised if - I say, he's coming to - Frederick! It's a long long way -

LADY: Hush! NURSE raises her hand. He takes it to himself)

(Salutes) Sorry, Colonel. Was only thinking aloud -

HENRY He's coming to. He's all right - ain't you, old man. Don't you know where you are. Old Kent Road. Here's the Kid. (Only comes a sound)

(The other has half risen. is staring about him)

LADY: Be quiet, you must be quiet. You are exciting him and yourself. You must be quiet and lie down.

(HENRY obeys with a salute. He turns to FRED: for sympathy) in the line of their attack. They must.

HENRY We do get ordered about, don't we?

But the flag, you gave it him. He took it. He can't have forgotten -

FREDERICK How did I get here?

LADY: It may have fallen down. They do sometimes. (Runs

LADY: (Gently forces him back upon the straw) He carried you.

FREDERICK Of course. I remember, I'm glad I missed you.

HENRY

Don't tell him he didn't. Make him conceited.

(FRED: looks up)

Nothing very serious. You chaps, you ~~throw~~ ^{know}, you can't shoot for nuts.

FREDERICK

I think I'm more comfortable sitting up. (Flings it to)

LADY:

(She arranges the straw behind him)

HENRY

'Fraid you got the worst of it, haven't you?

FREDERICK

Well, it sounds discourteous. But I almost wish we hadn't met.

HENRY

(Laughs) Remember our last meeting, you played the accompaniment and we all three joined in the chorus. You've heard it once or twice since then, haven't you? It's a long long way -

HENRY

(The NURSE raises her hand. He takes it to himself)

(Salutes) Sorry, Colonel. Was only thinking aloud -

FREDERICK

(But she does not move. She has heard - there suddenly comes a sound)

FREDERICK

They are shelling us.

HENRY

They are the French guns.

FREDERICK

We are right in the line of their attack. They must.

HENRY

But the flag. You gave it him. He took it. He can't have forgotten -

LADY:

It may have fallen down. They do sometimes. (Runs to the door)

HENRY

Come back.

(But she is gone)

Kid, come back, you fool. (He springs up - stumbles)
Don't let her go. They're firing. They won't be able
to tell her in this light. Can't you move yourself,
can't -

(The other has tried, he is gripping the straw,
the door flings open - she rushes in, flings it to)

LADY: It's all right. They've seen it. It had fallen down.
They don't make the sticks long enough. They've seen
it. They're coming. They - (She pitches forward)

HENRY (Crawls to her - looks into her eyes) My God, they've
done it. I wonder where 'tis. Do you know where it
is, Kid? (Looks up) Have you got a knife? Where the
hell is a knife. (Speaks between a cry and a whisper)

FREDERICK (Is leaning as far as he can reach) She's speaking.

HENRY (Leans over her) Yes - what is it? Can you say it a
little louder - can you make it out?
(To Frederick)

FREDERICK She's praying.

(They look at one another - draw back - there is
silence)

LADY: (The broken words can just be heard) - - forgive me
for having loved a German.

(There is a slight quiver. Then stillness)

HENRY Ah! Blast the War!

C U R T A I N