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THE

# LAST OF THE LEGENDS;

OR,

THE BARON, THE BRIDE, AND THE BATTERY.

*A Psychological Extravaganza.*

BY

GILBERT Á. BECKETT

*(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society).*

IN THE REPRESENTATION OF WHICH ARE INTRODUCED SEVERAL SONGS

WRITTEN BY

W. H. C. NATION.

LONDON:  
SAMUEL FRENCH,  
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1818

*First performed at the Charing Cross Theatre (under the management of Mr. W. H. C. Nation), on Monday, the 1st of September, 1873.*

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**Characters.**

**Characters existing some time ago.**

KARL (*the Youthful Baron of Pilfersberg*) MISS EMILY PITT.  
COUNT FRITZ (*his Friend*) ... MISS EMILY VINING.  
SIR HUBERT DE BOW (*a Norman Knight*) MR. F. WOOD.  
SINTRAM } (*Boon Companions of Karl*) { MISS ISABEL HAROLD.  
WILHELM } MISS KATE EASTON.  
SELTZERWASSER (*a Jester*) ... MR. YARNOLD.  
THE LADY BERTHA ... MISS CICY CECIL.  
ERLINDA ... MISS ALICE MOWBRAY.  
DOROTHEA ... MISS ALICE CLIFFORD.

*Retainers, Serfs, and other representatives of the Twelfth Century.*

---

**A Character existing some time hence.**

SMITH (*First Duke of Bayswater*) ... MR. ARTHUR WOOD.

# THE LAST OF THE LEGENDS ;

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SCENE FIRST.—*The Ruins of an ancient Castle overlooking the Rhine ; ivy-grown battlements, L. C., culminating ascent from beneath ; at back smiling landscape, through which the river is seen winding away ; as the curtain rises the following invisible Chorus is heard.*

*Invisible Chorus.*

Older than all history,  
Come from an age long, long ago !  
We live lost in mystery,  
And now,—we find it rather slow !

*The old clock of the Castle strikes seven ; on the seventh stroke, portions of the ruins glide away, and discover in a tableau, KARL, FRITZ, SELTZERWASSER, ERLINDA, WILHELM, and OTHERS. They all rise and come down, looking about them with considerable surprise.*

KARL. Dear me ! where am I ? Have I been dreaming—or dining—or what ? (*looks about him*) Yes ;—yet no ! Is this Pilfersberg ? described in the advertisement that caught my respected father's eye, it seems but yesterday, as " An eligible castellated country villa residence, in thorough and substantial repair ! "

SELTZ. " Containing forty-seven bed rooms, the usual offices, a machine for pouring boiling lead upon the heads of a besieging force, and every other modern comfort and convenience. Fixtures, including a family ghost, to be taken at a valuation. "

KARL. Exactly, Seltzerwasser ! But where (*looking about*), where—where's the elegant new zinc roof I had put on the top of that tower ?

SELTZ. The second-hand porcellis your papa picked up a

bargain at Damascus? and, I say, what—what has become of his summer torture chamber, all beautifully got up, and newly furnished? (*looking at a portion of ruin*) Why, I do believe this is where it stood! Yes, here's the door!—ruins, every stone of it. I don't think the bill for the instruments is paid yet.

ERLIN. Why, it all looks as if a thousand years had passed over it!

SELTZ. It does, my dear; but it is to be hoped they haven't been sending in their account every quarter, or they must have ruined the firm in invoices some five hundred years ago.

KARL. (*to ERLINDA*) You said a thousand years! Why, now I come to think of it, we've only got this place for nine hundred and ninety-nine—the usual term!

SELTZ. Then you may depend upon it, it's run out a twelve-month. It all comes of your papa's economy, wanting to save something on the stamp! Just like him.

FRITZ. But who could tell he would want a renewal? I have never come across anything a thousand years old yet.

SELTZ. Then you've never heard one of my jokes, that's certain! Will you have one?

KARL. (*stopping him*) No, no! I feel quite depressed enough as it is! A thousand years, then horror! What will have become of the lady of Abbeville—my chosen love?

SELTZ. Most probably a leading feature in the sarcophagus department of the British Museum. Send for a catalogue.

KARL. Not so; but quick, saddle my black charger, and let me off to her sea-girt castle at once.

SELTZ. Oh, that's the secret of your annual expedition to Boulogne. I told your weak-minded father there was more than donkey-rides and sea-bathing at the back of your indifferent French.

KARL. You were right. There was—listen!

*Song—KARL—"The Cottage by the Sea."*

Yes, I will away at once!

SELTZ. Before you've solved this riddle——

KARL. Riddle! What riddle?

SELTZ. Well, I should call it a tidy one. Isn't it rather confounding to find oneself, one's clothes, retainers, appetite, rheumatism, and all in the midst of a property that looks—(*looking round*) as if it had been let unfurnished to a hyæna on a long term. But there, I know what's happened!

KARL. (*rushing to him*) You do! Speak.

ERLIN. (*same business*) Oh, tell us, do!



FRITZ. (*same business*) Quick, Seltzer, out with it!

SELTZ. It's as clear as the sky in the roof of your dining room. We're in a *legend*!

ALL. (*start*) A legend! (*Music*)

SELTZ. Yes, in a *legend*! We're *part* of a legend. I might say, humbugged into a legend. I feel convinced when I regard my boots, and think how much I should relish a ham sandwich, that I have been to sleep for a thousand years.

ALL. A thousand years!

SELTZ. (*to KARL*) Yes; don't you remember the strange Saxon Knight, who asked your sister Bertha's hand?

ERLIN. Yes; and how you promised it to him, as he started for the wars! You know you did!

FRITZ. And swore an oath that you would wait *ten centuries* for his return! (*all start*)

SELTZ. And that very night—finding that he had but two hundred a year, a mere trifle in ready-money, and no expectations worth mentioning—had him, at the advice of his rival, Sir Hubert de Bow—

ERLIN. And spite the prayers of my dear Lady Bertha—

SELTZ. (*mysteriously*) Put into the haunted chamber—(*horror of all*) from which he evidently never returned! At seven the next morning I took him his shaving water, his helmet, and his boots!

FRITZ. And found the three-foot-six flock mattress—

SELTZ. Empty! (*horror of all*) Your injudicious oath has taken effect! Ten centuries *have* elapsed since I put the finishing polish to those boots! But, hush! here comes the Lady Bertha; and with her her false admirer! Silence—not a word of this to her!

*Enter LADY BERTHA, followed by SIR HUBERT—she carries a roll of paper, and he holds an empty stout bottle—all bow to her respectfully.*

LADY B. Count Fritz, you remember that song you made about that happy night when we wandered together by the seashore? I am melancholy—cheer me—I would hear the dulcet strains once more!

*Song—FRITZ—"Sparkling Eyes."*

SIR H. Oh, fair lady, forget the foreign swain, the rosy dawn, and think of me, who for the hundred and nineteenth time offers you his heart, his hand, and his balance at his banker's. (*offering her the stout bottle*) One smile, one look, fair Bertha, and this priceless *objêt d'art*, exquisite in design,

and matchless in its workmanship, shall be thine. (*he holds it out*)

BERTHA. It is indeed beautiful; but, Sir Hubert, you know I am affianced to another.

KARL. (*looking at bottle*) Must be true Venetian! What grace! What colour! Where, gallant sir knight, where did you obtain that?

SIR H. (*with a swagger*) I found it in the palace of Saladin himself, defended by seventy Turks, through whom I cleft my path, to gain the prize and place it at your lovely sister's feet. (*aside*) Just picked it up in the ditch outside my window, half concealed by the *débris* of a lobster salad.

FRITZ. (*admiringly*) Most delicate! And see, there is some inscription on its side. Oh, it's a gem!

SELTZ. (*reading*) "Double London Stout."

KARL. Double London Stout! What does that man?

ERLIN. (*rapturously*) Perhaps the true elixir of life!

SELTZ. (*taking bottle*) I shouldn't wonder. It tastes uncommon like it.

BERTHA. (*unfolding a large poster, on which is written legibly, "Daily Telegraph, largest circulation in the world. Price one penny."*) And what does *this* mean? I found it affixed to my bedchamber wall in the castle.

WILHELM. Some fearless knight—and that (*points to poster*) must be his *standard*.

SELTZ. Standard! No, that's his "Telegraph!" (*reads*) "Largest circulation in the world!" Oh, I give it up; he must be "on the confines of the boundless desert," or at some fearful spot beyond the reach of human "correspondence." But wait! This will decide. If I have topped Methuselah, and the fair lady Bertha is a charming creature of a thousand and nineteen summers, possibly we shall find some trifling change below. (*points to scene*) My youthful but patriarchal master, hear your doom.

KARL. At once! (*approaches battlements and suddenly starts*) Ha! what do I see? A mighty city on the site of my wild boar forest!

FRITZ. (*looking*) And the castle of the terrible Baron of Hapenstein, neatly laid out in gravel paths and garden seats, and——

SELTZ. Labelled with a notice that "The band plays from four to six," and is entirely supported by "voluntary contributions."

LADY B. (*looking*) Oh, how exquisite! Look, Erlinda, look, at yonder chamber window a maiden is seated at her afternoon toilette! How lovely her complexion!

ERLIN. (*same business*) And what a lot of it she has got in that paper!

LADY B. (*in admiration*) How slowly she puts on her jewels—one by one!

FRITZ. (*same business*) And how quickly she puts on her back hair—all at once!

LADY B. So she does! Wonderful! But look in the high road beneath. A beautiful bright yellow vehicle drawn by two horses, and licensed to carry sixteen inside and thirteen out. Oh, it is exquisite! What luxury!

SELTZ. And the magnificent word "Omnibus," painted in large blue letters on its side! (*wonder of all*)

OTTO. And what a noble driver on the box.

SIR B. (*looking over*) And everybody walking about without a battle axe, and passing each other—positively, without cutting each other's throats! Call that chivalry! Gammon!

KARL. But look, a huge craft rounds the point on wheels!

SELTZ. Upon which "No smoking is allowed abaft the funnel."

LADY B. See, it nears the shore! They land, oh, horrible!

FRITZ. They are set upon by varlets who rob them of their goods!

SELTZ. (*to KARL*) Quite reminds one of your father!

SIR H. Let us on to the attack.

SELTZ. Quite unnecessary, the struggle is over, and they are taken captive by the proprietors of the several neighbouring hotels!

SIR H. But one has escaped! Ha, and advances to the foot of the ascent! He is coming up, and—yes—seems quite unarmed! (*drawing a sword*) By Sir Bugo of Bow Street, but I'll make short work of him!

BERTHA. You will not touch him. (*to KARL*) Brother, you will protect the defenceless stranger. Perhaps he is a Saxon knight disguised. Spare him!

ERLIN. He may tell us where that maiden got that lovely hair. Spare him!

SELTZ. He may have straying through his memory an unmade joke. By all means spare him!

KARL. He may bring me some message from the lovely Lady Rose. Her people talked of going over with the Conqueror for change of air. They may have met at Hastings! (*aloud*) He shall be spared! (*looks*) Quick, he is on his way to the summit now—so hide, all of you; and if he has no manners, think of his tender age. He comes!

ALL *gradually retire.*

*Enter SMITH—he has on a modern tourist suit, carries a small opera glass, camp stool, and knapsack, as he enters he has a “Murray’s Handbook” open in his hand—he seats himself in centre.*

SMITH. Let’s see—ah! here we are! (*reads*) “Pilfersberg—a well preserved ruin; date uncertain. The barons were an economical race, celebrated for their unscrupulous ferocity.” (*the other CHARACTERS all creep out, and begin slowly to surround him*) “They are said to have disappeared suddenly, and hence the following legend.” (*shuts book*) Well, we’ll have the legend after lunch. (*opens knapsack*) Fancy printing a legend in the year two thousand and seventy-three! Well, enough for our great-grandmothers a hundred years ago! Lor, how glad I am I didn’t live in the nineteenth century! (*looks in bag*) Let me see, what have I done with my food globules? Ha, here—wait a moment—where’s my appetite? I’ve got it. (*puts a chain band round him*) Capital galvanic arrangement. Now for my globules. (*reads on little box which he produces*) “Lobster salad.” (*swallows one*) Let’s see, “pigeon pie.” (*same business*) “Mashed potatoes,” “curried chicken,” “pickles,” “strawberry ice,” “pint of sherry,” (*swallowing between each*) There, that’s done. Take off my appetite. (*removes band*) And now, we’ll do the ruins. (*looks up, and finds himself surrounded*) Holloa! what’s all this?

KARL. Your pardon, sir stranger, but what is all that? (*points to box*)

SMITH. Lunch; my lunch, that’s all. Saves time! We do everything to save time.

LADY B. What, get through your dinner in half a minute? Why, papa always used to take five hours.

SMITH. Yes, my dear, that’s what they used to do in England a hundred years ago. But there was a reaction; these things came in; and when you’re asked to a public dinner *now*, they always send you your dishes in the envelope. It has played the very dickens with the charities.

SELTZ. And doesn’t eating *nothing* make you ill?

SMITH. We’re never ill. We’ve done away with the doctors.

OTTO. And didn’t they protest?

SMITH. No; but the undertakers did!

SELTZ. What a row there must have been. Didn’t they make a fight for it?

SMITH. Fight! Oh dear no, we never quarrel now-a-days.

LADY B. Never quarrel?

SMITH. No; we suppressed the lawyers, and every row ceased in a fortnight.

OTTO. And what became of *Justice*?

SMITH. Took off her bandage and sold it for six and eight-pence!

LADY B. And do you happen ever to have come across a thing called "love?" (*ALL show interest*)

SMITH. (*reflecting*) Love! (*a pause*) Ha! I know what you mean. No, gone out—long ago! (*surprise of ALL*)

LADY B. But how could you manage *that*?

SMITH. Simple enough. Obligated everybody to marry by Act of Parliament. *That* settled it. *Love's* extinct!

ERLIN. But you seem to have a lot of wonderful things about you. Tell us all about them? (*approaches him*)

SELTZ. Let the gentleman alone, do; I'm ashamed of you.

ERLIN. I shan't; I'm naturally curious, and when any one tries to conceal anything from me, I always like to know *why* they do so.

*Song—ERLINDA—"Tell me Why?"*

SIR H. (*blustering*) You said, stranger, you came from England. What is your rank and title?

SMITH. My title's Smith; my rank—a duke!

SIR H. Indeed! Think you, then, were the Normans to come over, as they threaten, that they would succeed?

SMITH. The Normans? Why they've *been*. Oh yes, they got on all right enough; but that's a long time ago. Been invaded a dozen times since then! We've got an invasion going on now. Last year we had the Figi Islanders. I don't know who is coming next summer, but some one's sure to turn up before the season's over.

LADY B. And you are an English duke and tell me this?

SMITH. Why not? Sugar's cheap, beer's cheap, rent's cheap; so nobody minds it; on the contrary, everybody likes it. It's good for trade, and introduces foreign capital. Excuse me, but you are very fascinating. (*approaches her*)

KARL. (*hand on his sword*) By Sir Beolph's memory, this language to my sister!

FRITZ. (*same*) Have a care, sir stranger.

SIR H. (*same*) By the ninepins of Jericho, a compliment to the fair Bertha! She is my affianced and betrothed bride.

SMITH. Indeed? I think you are mistaken. Allow me! (*places a small coil in her hand with wire attached*) You've never heard of sympathetic magnetism. It's quite the rage just now. (*LADY BERTHA smiles amiably at him*) I thought so, she's attached to me—devotedly attached to me! This little apparatus discovers instantly the existence of natural sym-

pathy. It saves all the expenses of courtship, present-giving, your own elaborate get-up, tailor's bill, flowers for your button-hole, wear and tear of anxiety—in fact, saves everything, especially time.

SIR H. (*indignant*) But by Sir Bugo! I protest.

LADY B. (*coolly*) Nonsense. He's charming, I'm sure.

SMITH. I told you so. Might have known her six months. This is infallible—never makes a mistake.

SELTZ. I wish I had got hold of something of that kind then when I was looking out for Mrs. Seltzerwasser. I made a terrible mistake. (*aside*) Clever man this! (*to SMITH*) I beg your pardon, sir, but as you seem to have come from rather an advanced age, do you happen to have such a thing as a new joke about you?

SMITH. No, they're extinct. Wait a minute though, (*takes paper out of his pocket*) I've got a comic paper—last week's, and I thought that not bad, (*shows him paragraph*) eh? It struck me as new, eh?

SELTZ. (*reading*) New!—why, it's one of my oldest; made it in the first Crusade. Haven't you got another joke anywhere about you?

SMITH. No, that's the only one I've ever heard of; there was one made forty-two years ago, but somebody said he had heard that before. The fact of the matter is, there are two things extinct in England now-a-days—burlesques and coals.

SELTZ. What, no more fun and no more fire?

SMITH. Run out of both. Allow me. (*taking a ring off his finger and places it on BERTHA'S*) That rare black stone you perceive is a bit of "best Wallsend" set in diamonds.

LADY B. How beautiful! Isn't it black? (*shows it to ERLINDA*) Tell me, what is coal?

SMITH. No use asking what it is, for you can't get it now. But there *was* a day, they tell me, when you could have it as low as eighty shillings a ton. But it jumped up by tens, till people took to burning chalk—paving stones—Thorley's food for cattle—Nabob's pickles—their own fingers—and other substitutes, and now we burn the atmosphere. There's lots of it, and it doesn't often blow up. (*to KARL*) What do you burn?

SELTZ. (*apologetically*) Mostly, other people's furniture.

SMITH. Have it in by the ton?

SELTZ. No, we generally get that by the sack!

SMITH. Then you can't "carry coals to Newcastle?"

SELTZ. No, we carry *new castles* to the coals!

SMITH. Do you? Ah! something in that. But you seem the funny man of these amateur theatricals on the rampage.

SELTZ. (*dolefully*) You are right, I am the funny man. I

am Seltzerwasser—the jester! the merriest of the merry this side of Innsprück—known in the provinces as the “Roaring Comique of the Black Forest!” And you?

SMITH. The flower of the twenty-first century. Highly civilized.

KARL. And you come then from the golden age?

SMITH. Oh dear no; the golden age came off two hundred years ago. Like to look at it? Excuse me. (*holding a little battery in his left hand—waves the other*) A capital mesmeric apparatus this—sends anyone into a clairvoyant state instantly. There—all of you (*waves hand*)—you're in London in the nineteenth century. (*they fall into attitudes*) In the year of grace 1873. Now—what do you all see? (*tremolo in orchestra*)

KARL. (*clairvoyant business*) A ministerial move, yet no new faces,

SMITH. The British Government exchanging places!

ERLIN. The world gone mad to see a blazing star!

A locomotive jewel shop——

SMITH. The Shah!

SIR H. Three hundred people—seeking mere diversion,

Upset and smashed——

SMITH. A Railway Excursion!

LADY B. Poor little pigeons shot, as each one passes!

SMITH. The sport, *de rigueur*, of the upper classes!

SELTZ. Fat, gravy, joint—all come to grief!

A terrifying dish! (*shudders*)

SMITH. Australian Beef!

WIL. Poison!—for rich and poor—for serge and silk!

And no inspector stops it!

SMITH. London Milk!

RUD. An organ grinder, living but to bore us,

Plays his *one* tune!

SMITH. Ha! Rivière's Spring Chorus!

FRITZ. The bigots rob the poor man of his one day.

SMITH. Wicked museums locked up tight on Sunday!

SELTZ. A British tax-payer keeps up his pecker!

SMITH. *That's* plain enough! A change of the Exchequer! There, that'll do. As you were. (*waves hand*) That's the way we learn history. Go back to it ourselves.

BERTHA. (*taking the chain from him*) And can this little amulet send you anywhere as well?

SMITH. Concentrated mesmerism—it's a seven-and-sixpenny one. I believe you.

BERTHA. (*business*) Then go back, I command you, to the twelfth century!

SMITH. (*struggling, but overcome*) I'm there!

SELTZ. Indeed! then perhaps you'll oblige us!

SMITH. (*to SELTZERWASSER*) With pleasure.

No houses that give draughts from all the doors!

No cracking ceilings—no ill-seasoned floors.

No morning papers, cheap champagne, Lord Mayor;

No paradise on earth—no Leicester Square!

No feather beds, no liberty, no wages—

No standing it!—

SELTZ. By Jove! the Middle Ages!

KARL. Enough! He is in a trance—he has come back to us. We'll keep him. Give me the amulet. (*takes it from BERTHA*) Prond Saxon Duke, you are my vassal. Restore me my lady love of Abbeville and you are free, refuse, and a dungeon awaits you!

SMITH. (*consternated*) But look here, I say—

KARL. (*waves amulet*) Silence—keep in the twelfth century, don't attempt to leave it. (*SMITH struggles with influence, but is overcome*)

SMITH. Youthful but intemperate baron, I will swear fealty to any extent with pleasure, but I cannot oblige you with the young lady.

KARL. Then to the torture chamber with him! (*ALL advance*)

SMITH. (*making an effort*) Here! Police! (*again overcome by the amulet*) Allow me at least a mediæval solicitor.

SELTZ. No use; he means business. Before sunset you will be drawn, then quartered, then hung, then examined—

SMITH. (*kneeling*) Mercy! Think of my business in Shore-ditch: I mean think of what they'll say at Bayswater—a thousand years hence. Think of—

BERTHA. (*aside to him*) Hush! I will rescue you—you are in the middle of a legend—a real legend—not a word. To your dungeon in silence.

SMITH. But I have got a Cook's Excursion coupon for a second-class hotel.

LADY B. (*mysteriously*) Then destroy it! Silence—or all will be lost!

KARL. (*to SELTZERWASSER*) Executioner—your duty!

SELTZ. (*to SMITH*) You'll come along with me.

### *Chorus.*

Make him wed, or instead

Take his head,

With a chop—chop—chopper:

Should he hope to elope,

Give him scope,

Though it's most improper!



**KARL** He shall have no poor relations;  
 He shall have good expectations;  
 He shall merely,—*after marriage*,  
 Start six horses and his carriage,  
 Opera box, two country places,—  
 Take his wife to all the races,  
 Fill his house with unknown faces,—  
 Do the thing in style!

*Chorus.*

Make him wed, &c. &c.

*(dance as Scene closes in)*

SCENE SECOND.—*A Dungeon in the Castle restored.*

*Enter FRITZ and ERLINDA. (lovingly)*

**FRITZ.** Yes, dear. You see all is restored. Why may not the feelings of bygone days be renewed too? Why not again be what we once were to each other?

*Song—FRITZ—"Bitter Sweet."*

*Enter SELTZERWASSER, followed by SINTRAM, WILHELM and DOROTHEA—they are all speaking together as they enter and follow him across, he faces them, he carries in one hand SMITH's portmanteau, in the other hand the mesmeric rod, with which he keeps them off.*

**SELTZ.** It's no use. I tell you you don't touch his property, and if you don't take care, I'll send you to some cheerful time before the flood with this! *(waves talisman)*

**FRITZ.** Give up the stranger's little box. *(the rest clamour)*

**SELTZ.** Never! I've had my orders, and I stick to them.

**ERLIN.** I don't believe there's anything worth looking at inside it!

**FRITZ.** Fancy travelling with that!

**SELTZ.** Yes, when you're accustomed to taking a caravan to last for three days, it doesn't look much. As for myself, I don't see where he can put six suits of armour!

**FRITZ.** Then why will you not give it up? Now do. *(same business of all)*

**ERLIN.** *(coaxingly)* Just one little peep! *(the same business)*

**SELTZ.** Can't. *(to her)* He doesn't carry about back hair—*(to FRITZ)* or light lit-er-a-ture—*(to rest)* or cheap cigars—*(to DOROTHEA)* or vulgar valentines! But there, my orders are

B

simple, so by leave if you please—by leave. (*pushing through them*)

FRITZ. Orders, indeed! What orders?

OTTO. Yes, what orders? Explain them?

SELTZ. With pleasure. My young but eccentric master, the Baron—appreciating the scientific advantages of the twenty-second century, but not exactly seeing its clothes, has entrusted this trifle to me, with directions that I am perpetually to keep the lot, and you, under the impression you are existing where, but for his unlucky oath, you would have existed together, in due course, with your administrators, executors, and assigns; in fact where you did. (*waving it at ERLINDA*) Where are you, miss?

ERLIN. (*trance*) The newly-erected Castle of Pilfersberg!

SELTZ. Quite right. Anno Domini—

ERLIN. Twelve hundred and seventy-three!

SELTZ. Thank you! (*same business with FRITZ*) Sandwiches not yet invented, I think!

FRITZ. (*trance*) I cannot see one.

SELTZ. Just so. Works capitally!

FRITZ. Then, isn't the legend a dream? And isn't this the castle—restored?

SELTZ. All fancy—I can assure you it's all fancy! All in ruins—all in ruins! But, as long as you're happy, what does it signify? Why, I've put our youthful liege into a state himself several times this morning—it has comforted him to imagine he is waiting, a thousand years ago, at the Etablissement at Boulogne, and paying compliments to his boyish love, the Lady Rose. See, here he comes. He's at it still! Humour him!

FRITZ. (*protesting*) I shall tell him—I shall!

*Enter KARL.*

SELTZ. Hush!—you'll do nothing of the sort! (*waves talisman*) There—you're a crowd of Rose's playmates, delighting in amusements for which she no longer cares—be quiet!

*Song—KARL—"The Secret."*

KARL. (*dreamily*) Where am I? Ha! I remember.

SELTZ. Will you be sent somewhere else? Constantinople, Margate, Venice, Tottenham Court Road, in the sixteenth century?

KARL. Stay! first let me ask where is the stranger?

SELTZ. In the condemned dungeon! Firmly convinced he'll

never see the year one thousand two hundred and seventy-four.

KARL. Good! He still refuses to wed the Lady Bertha?

SELTZ. He doesn't exactly seem to care about it.

KARL. You mentioned the "thumb-screw?"

SELTZ. I did just mention it.

KARL. Then let him be dressed according to his rank, and brought here. Perhaps these trifles—(*points to scene*) may influence him. Failing there—try your after-dinner jokes. And now, send me to Boulogne. (*business of SELTZERWASSER*) Thanks; I'm there!

FRITZ. But I must really arouse him, Karl, I—

SELTZ. Will you be quiet? I tell you he's at Boulogne, rambling in the Val Denacre—the "Happy Valley," as the villagers call it; and there—(*waves*) you, the whole lot of you are "peasant girls, with deep blue eyes!" Now—(*general protest*) all of you, sing away to him. Now then!

*Song—SINTRAM, FRITZ and ERLINDA—A Village Roundelay.*

*Exit.*

SELTZ. (*looking at talisman*) Extraordinary arrangement, and works capitally. I couldn't send them to sleep quicker with one of my own jokes than I do with this. (*looking off, R.*) Ha, here he comes, dressed in the full style and trappings, proper to a Saxon Peer! (*calling off*) Show him this way. Sir Hubert—this way.

*Enter SMITH, following SIR HUBERT, mechanically, he is dressed in the robes of a peer, with an uncomfortably long sword, buckled round his waist—SIR HUBERT carries a modern band-box in his hand.*

SMITH. (*dolefully*) What is your game now? Do give me that confounded apparatus, and let me call a cab and catch the next boat for—

SELTZ. (*waving it and cutting him short*) S'sh! you are forgetting—you don't live in an age of cabs and boats, there is nothing to catch here, but wild boars and influenza! Consider yourself a Saxon Duke, come to claim the hand of the Lady Bertha!

SMITH. I do!

SIR H. And so doing, bound to meet in mortal combat, your deadly rival, Sir Hubert de Bow, before sunset!

SMITH. With pleasure! What will you fight with?

SIR H. (*terribly*) The double-spiked battle axe!

SMITH. (*aside*) I wonder what I've done with my revolver!

(*looks for his pocket—remembers he is dressed up as a peer*) I forgot, I'm dressed according to my exalted rank. Been made to send to London for this, and just got it by telegraphic delivery. Where's the hat? (SIR HUBERT *opens bandbox, puts on peer's coronet*) I feel like one of the kings in the caldron scene in Macbeth.

SELTZ. Macbeth! Do you know him? Why he was here only last week.

SMITH. What, starring with a company?

SIR H. No, on a foray—sacking castles, and emptying houses.

SMITH. Macbeth! emptying houses? Yes, I've known him do that before now. (*to SELTZERWASSER*) But, come, I say, let's drop this! Let me imagine I'm myself, and you shall have the battery for five and sixpence.

SELTZ. (*waves it*) Can't do it! My orders are peremptory, you are a Saxon Duke, before seven this evening you are to claim the hand of the Lady Bertha! If you don't, we all go to sleep for another thousand years, that's all, and my orders are to take you with us!

SMITH. What, drag *me* into the legend! A thousand years—perhaps to turn up as a sort of ghost now and then at night, when there's somebody to frighten—and with my tendency to rheumatism. Oh, horrible! Here, let me off, and you shall have it for three-and-six, and owe me the money.

SIR H. Ha, ha, you quail, proud Duke.

SMITH. Bless you, I've no pride. (*to SELTZERWASSER*) There, take it; you shall have it for nothing. Now, open the middle ages, and do let me out. (*business*)

SELTZ. (*waves talisman*) Can't do it! You and your civilization are a great find, and we must keep you.

SMITH. Well, let me have a few centuries on account.

SELTZ. (*business*) The year twelve hundred and seventy-three. That's where you are.

SMITH. Let me enjoy myself in the Fire of London. There was something going on then, or I wouldn't mind the battle of Waterloo, or the wars of the Roses, or some other period of history when you could get a "brandy and soda." Anything you like but this. Make me a Tichborne juryman—anything for a change!

SELTZ. Very sorry, but can't do any of them. You don't seem to see that you're the missing man in the legend—the Saxon knight, for whom, through the thoughtless conduct of my youthful master, we have had to wait one thousand years, and has turned up in you. We've got twelve hours to settle

the business. Nine are gone; there are three left. You know your fate.

SMITH. What, marry my great-great-great-grandmother or be annihilated? Oh, it's like a story in the Police News.

SELTZ. You've heard the terms; and now prepare yourself. Here comes the Lady Bertha. She sees in you her long-lost love.

*Enter LADY BERTHA—she instantly approaches SMITH, with an affectionate and confiding manner.*

LADY B. (to SMITH) At last I have found you. Oh, tell me tell me your history—and why you have come (coily) to Pilfersberg? Why I—

SMITH. (*struggling against the influence*) Well, my dear, having a second class Cook's excursion ticket—(SELTZERWASSER *instantly waves the talisman*) with which—with which I was on my way (*wave*) to the Crusades!—

LADY B. How romantic!

SMITH. (*same business*) But losing half my luggage at Folkestone—my mackintosh, umbrella, Bradshaw—(*business*) and my helmet, I thought some brave German brother in arms might possibly (*business*) lend me a few pounds to pick up what I wanted at Paris. (*business*) But failing in my request at each castle along yon mighty river, and (*business*) being due at my business in the city on the thirteenth, (*business*) I have come—come to ask you whether—whether—notwithstanding that I may be your great, great, great grandson—whether you will fly with me—in short be mine!

LADY B. Did you never hear the song of the traveller who met a maiden dwelling, sad and solitary, by a mill stream?

SMITH. Never!

LADY B. Fancy that you are that traveller and I that maid—and I will sing it you.

*Song—LADY BERTHA—"The Tic Tac of the Mill."*

SELTZ. All works capitally—now to prepare the *fêtes*! By Jove, we'll do the legend yet!

SIR. H. But, by troth, she whispers love couplets to him! I'm Sir Hubert de Bow, her affianced—and (*threatening*) by the tea gardens of Constantinople!—

SELTZ. You'll do nothing of the kind! You're not a Crusader—(*waves talisman*) you—you are the Boots of the establishment. (*points to portmanteau*) Quick with it to No. 16.

SIR H. (*hesitating*) By my knightly fealty, but—

SELTZ. Now then, No. 16.

SIR. H. (*struggling, but obeying*) A day *will* come—yes, sir,  
No. 16, sir. *Exit, with portmanteau.*

LADY B. Then you will join the *fêtes* to celebrate our betrothal? I shall see you fronting the chivalry of Christendom, to do battle against the mighty Moors.

SMITH. The Moors! Oh, for a week's grouse-shooting—or even an upper gallery seat at the Alhambra. (*business*) Fair lady, I am yours.

*Trio.*—SMITH, SELTZERWASSER and LADY BERTHA.

*Air, "Have you seen the Shah,"*

SMITH. Now in two nought seven three  
Many wonders you will see,  
That the century has managed to contrive.—  
If you get into a train,  
You may p'raps get out again,  
And—what's more—may p'raps get out again *alive!*

LADY B. Oh, how very, very sweet,  
It must really be a treat,  
At some seven miles an hour p'raps to glide!

SELTZ. If a luggage train advance,  
Do they ever miss a chance?  
Isn't travelling a sort of suicide?

SMITH. No.  
All the pointsmen only work  
Twenty hours a day;  
And, seated on the engine front—  
Just to clear the way—  
We fasten two directors, who are kind enough to see  
The way is clear in two nought seven three.

SMITH. Now in two nought seven three,  
We enjoy such luxury,  
Native oysters are one halfpenny the score,  
Mutton chops fall from the air;  
And, a fact, in Leicester Square,  
You can hunt and really *catch* the wild boar!

LADY B. Oh, how very, very nice!  
All these things so much entice;  
I do long to go away to town with you.

SELTZ. Well, there's lots on which to feed,  
And no end of books to read,  
You must hit the good, the beautiful, the true!

SMITH. Well!  
 Although "the world's all apple pie,  
 And all the sea is ink,"  
 There's so much *writing* going on,  
 There's nothing left to drink.  
 And when you've had a month of it,  
 I think you'll own with me,  
 You've seen enough of two nought seven three.

SCENE THIRD.—*Same as Scene I., but restored; the whole having a bright new aspect, in direct contrast to the same in ruins.*

*All the CHARACTERS, with exception of SMITH, SELTZERWASSER BERTHA, SIR HUBERT, discovered grouped about the stage, the whole forming a picture of repose; seated towards R. C., KARL, he has a lute in his hand. As scene opens, soft music, after a few bars, motive changes to melody of song.*

FRITZ comes down with ERLINDA.

ERLIN. At least no change has come over you, dear Fritz.  
 FRITZ. Ah, sweet lady, would I could convince you of the unvarying ardour of my attachment. Yet what need of eloquence? For could any eloquence be more expressive—any language more full of meaning to a sensitive heart than those tender words—I love you!

*Song—FRITZ—"I Love You."*

KARL. (*rising*) Thanks, Fritz, thanks; a charming ditty puts to flight the last vestiges of that horrid nightmare.

FRITZ. Was the legend then a nightmare?

ERLIN. And the ruins—all a dream?

KARL. (*pointing to scene*) What do these walls say? Why, it's clear we *must* all have been dreaming.

FRITZ. Not a doubt of it.

ERLIN. (*looking at scene*) So we have.

*Enter SIR HUBERT hurriedly, carrying SMITH's portmanteau.*

SIR H. No, you haven't. It's all a fact. Here's his luggage. I'm a mesmerised Boots, taking it to number sixteen. (*about to proceed*)

KARL. (*remembering*) Then a Saxon duke really came up from yonder town?

WIL. (*looking over*) Town? No town. The town's gone!

OTTO. (*looking over*) And, by Jove, all the women too!

DOROTHEA. (*looking out*) Nothing but endless forest! Oh, what a pity!

RODOLF. (*looking out*) Not a yellow omnibus—as far as the human eye can reach.

SIR H. This (*holds up portmanteau*) is all that remains of ten centuries of civilization! (*melo-dramatically*) Let us divide the spoils! we'll make a night of it!

*Enter SELTZERWASSER.*

SELTZ. No you won't! you won't make half an hour of it! (*clock chimes two quarters*) There, I told you so. Just thirty minutes more—and we shall be in for another thousand years of it. (*all start*)

KARL. What—and shall I never—never again see the lovely Rose?

SELTZ. She'll be two thousand and seventeen instead of one, that's all. But what's a century or two at her time of life?

KARL. Silence, fool! I tell you she lives—she breathes—and I will see her yet. Rose, thou fairest, sweetest of flowers, I'll sing thy beauty!

SELTZ. What, when you have only five-and-twenty minutes to live?

KARL. Silence, and listen!

*Song.—KARL—"Under the Rose."*

KARL. But, tell me, will not this stranger ratify my inconsiderate oath, and wed the heiress of Pilsfersberg? I bade you make him—ha!—the talisman! You have lost it!

SELTZ. I'm very sorry. I was giving him an extra dose of it—bringing him to the point—when——

ALL. Well?

SELTZ. It went over the battlements into the depths of the cold river beneath. (*ALL express consternation*) Unless your sister can humbug him into a proposal in five-and-twenty minutes, off we all go into a fossil state for another thousand years. (*horror*)

KARL. And the stranger?

SELTZ. Can't even stand a fiver to stop it. I sent him into the twelfth century—you told me to do it—and there I left him. He's in for it, too!

KARL. But he *shall* wed! You mentioned the boiling oil?

SELTZ. I did; and he seemed to prefer it to matrimony. He is turning the matter over now in the third-class dungeon.



*Enter* LADY BERTHA.

ALL. Well?

KARL. He has proposed?

LADY B. (*archly*) Not yet, but he *will*. (*all excited*) He has confided to me that, hidden away in that small box, is a secret, that let a woman but once master she is irresistible. There is no man living who will not claim her hand, and gladly.

KARL. Quick, secure it at once.

ERLIN. Oh yes, dear. What a charming invention!

FRITZ. Oh, it's a marriage settlement.

SIR H. Or a battle-axe.

SELTZ. More likely a gag.

LADY B. No matter what it is. I have secured the key. (*holds it up*) and at the fête in the presence of all will test its power.

KARL. Well thought, fair sister. Let the dance begin.

[*Ballet.*]

(*at conclusion of Ballet chime sounds the three quarters*)

SELTZ. My youthful and respected but reckless master, we have fourteen minutes left. If you are not going to hurry matters, let me know and at least give me time to get a cup of tea before I crumble away.

FRITZ. He is right. No time is to be lost. Bring the poor captive forth.

KARL. (*seating himself, R. C.*) Bring in the prisoner.

(*the rest arrange themselves round*)

*Enter* SMITH, L.—SELTZERWASSER *stands on one side of him, and* SIR HUBERT *on the other, like a couple of policemen—the portmanteau is placed in the centre.*

Prisoner, you have five minutes left to decide. Will you claim the hand of our fair sister?

SMITH. Thank you, your worship; but I don't seem to see it.

SELTZ. (*aside to him*) You'd better. She'll have twenty pounds down, and there's no mother-in-law!

SMITH. The offer is tempting; but, no; I prefer physical to social annihilation. Let the hour strike!

KARL. Why, then, have you come with your boasted civilization, to break in upon our brief lease of life—deluding me?

SELTZ. Living ten hundred years, and then bringing me, as a novelty, one of my own jokes.

SIR H. Holding out delusive prospects to me—the Norman Knight—of an opening as “First Robber” at an East End theatre!

FRITZ. Showing us, as in a vision, that lovely “omnibus,” but to see it melt away!

ERLIN. And, oh! that beautiful complexion! vanished, as in a flood of tears! (*all threaten him*)

SMITH. (*aside*) Yes, it probably would.

LADY B. And telling *me* that love is quite extinct! But, Sir Knight, you will not escape! When *in* your very preferable and amiable mesmeric state, you told me of the secret in that box. I have the key—I will have that secret—and I shall be irresistible—I must be yours!

SMITH. By Jove, you must! Secret—irresistible—she can't mean the revolver? But, if I do marry her, what can I do with her? Might take *her* to Bayswater; but, then, the friends and relatives! Can't do it! (*looks at his watch*) Four minutes more—no, I'll be annihilated!

LADY B. (*opening portmanteau*) I don't think you will! Now, for this wondrous charm! (*all show great excitement—the key turns—opens portmanteau*) Ha!—*Music*.

(*they take the articles named, and hold them up in admiration one after the other*)

FRITZ. Pair of dress boots—too tight!—seen at a glance!

SMITH. A sort of torture—worn when we would dance!

SIR H. Three ugly articles of clothing!

SMITH. Yes;

But that's our modern taste—in evening dress.

FRITZ. Tables and figures running side by side,  
Designed to drive one mad!

SMITH. A Bradshaw's Guide;

KARL. A work of fiction—moral—very shady.

SMITH. The modern novel—written by a lady.

SELTZ. “Bed, breakfast, chop.” Three seventeen nine—

SMITH. Modern hotel bill—not including wine.

LADY B. “Cigar and latch-key!”

SMITH. Both a great assistance—

In married life—the secret of existence.

LADY B. More clothes—

SELTZ. (*with hair-brush*) Some other torture.

KARL. (*with revolver*) Infant's toy!

SELTZ. (*to KARL*) One minute more! No hope—good-bye, my boy!

The power to make him wed. Say, can't you find it?

LADY B. (*tossing things about*) No; boots, coats! Beg your pardon.

SMITH. I don't mind it!

I think you've got about a good half minute.

Ta, ta! (*to every one*)

LADY B. Ha! here, this book. The secret's in it.

(*takes a book out of portmanteau, and rushes to front—  
Tableau*)

SMITH. That shilling volume!

LADY B. (*triumphantly*) Yes; you guess the truth.

Gives hope to every pining maid, and youth.

FRITZ. It solves the mighty riddle of the age!

And calms the dread that shrouds the word "engage."

LADY B. Nor longer holds him back, but gives instead

To man the courage to propose and wed!

The secret, potent! Listen, it is here:

'Tis "How to dress on fifteen pounds a year!"

SMITH. (*starts*) The woman who does that must be divine!

Can you do this?

LADY B. I can.

SMITH. Then you are mine!

(*gong. Bell chimes seven, at seventh stroke scene changes to  
the ruins*)

KARL. My oath is ratified—we're free!

LADY B. My noble knight!

SMITH. Well, I'm in for it—and here comes the steamer—  
we shall just have time to catch it. (*they all crowd after him*)

KARL. Now to see the Lady Rose.

SELTZ. Get that dinner—I've been waiting for a thousand  
years.

SIR H. And sharpen my revolving hatchet with a view to  
business.

FRITZ. But we are all really in the twenty-first century;  
what are we to do about clothes?

KARL. We are all coming with you.

SMITH. What, got up like this? Impossible!

LADY B. (*coolly*) For your Bertha's sake.

SMITH. Well, there's no getting out of it. I have it!  
We'll open at Charing Cross, and then go round the Provinces  
with Hamlet. Come along, you Middle Ager's—off we go to  
the twenty-second century.

(*Finale*)

Curtain.



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