

A MASTERPIECE OF DIPLOMACY.

Farce.

BY W. D. HOWELLS.

THE scene is in the summer cottage of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Roberts, in a Boston suburb, and the space where they encounter from opposite doors at the moment the action opens is a square hallway, with the stairs climbing out of one corner of it, and a fireplace in the other, after a fashion no longer very novel in the architecture of summer cottages. It is rather a close morning in August, but all the windows are shut, and a fire is briskly burning on the hearth.

I.

MR. AND MRS. ROBERTS.

Roberts, at sight of his wife: "Well, Agnes?"

Mrs. Roberts, at sight of her husband: "Well, Edward?"

Roberts: "How is the child?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Where is the doctor?"

Roberts: "He wasn't at home."

Mrs. Roberts: "Not at home! Oh! then I'm sure you'll approve of what I've done. And I was so afraid I had made a mistake."

Roberts: "A mistake?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes. About the doctor. He was in such a violent perspiration that I couldn't help being alarmed about him, though of course I know that perspiration is generally a very good thing. But it simply rolls off him, and he keeps begging for something to eat."

Roberts: "The doctor?"

Mrs. Roberts: "The doctor! No!

Haven't you just told me he wasn't at home?"

Roberts: "Yes, but I left word for him to come as soon as he could, and I thought perhaps he had got my message and run. The perspiration, you know!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, poor little Rob, he's in a perfect drip, and he keeps wanting to have his clothes on. But you're perspiring yourself, Edward; and *you've* been running. I don't know what I shall do! I've made the fire, here, so as to keep Robby from taking cold; and I don't dare to put the window up, for fear of the draught, and you must be just simply expiring. Why *did* you run so, dear?"

Roberts: "I didn't run. But it's like an oven, out-of-doors. And I walked rather fast, for I wanted to get back and see how the child was, especially when I found the doctor wasn't at home."

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, you did just as I should have done, and I'm so glad now that I telephoned for Dr. Lawton."

Roberts: "Dr. Lawton?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes; as soon as this terrible perspiration set in I felt that we oughtn't to wait another instant, for it might be a case of life and death, and I knew you wouldn't want to take any risks; and when I remembered that you mightn't find Dr. Williams at home, I was perfectly wild, and I telephoned at once for Dr. Lawton to come instantly; and it was very well I did so, for *he* wasn't at home, either. But Lou Bemis was there, and she told me to keep up courage, and



"YES, BUT I LEFT WORD FOR HIM."

as soon as her father came in she would send him flying. Did you leave word for Dr. Williams to hurry?"

Roberts: "Yes, I left a very urgent message on his slate. I—"

Mrs. Roberts: "I hope you underlined it, Edward! You never *will* underline things, even the most important!"

Roberts: "Well, I underlined this, my dear."

Mrs. Roberts: "How many times? Three times?"

Roberts: "I think it was three times—"

Mrs. Roberts: "Because if you don't do it three times, it isn't the least use in the world. Are you sure it was three times?"

Roberts: "Yes, I think so—"

Mrs. Roberts: "And did you put an exclamation after it? Three?"

Roberts: "I don't know—"

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, how *could* you be so careless, Edward? If you didn't put three exclamations, you might as well not have gone. He'll just take his time to it, and Robby may be in a collapse by the time he gets here. He's furious now. Listen!"

A wrathful Voice from above: "I want to get up! I want to have my clothes on! I want my breakfast!"

Mrs. Roberts: "There, that's the way he's been going on the whole time since you left! Dear, dear! I wish the doctor would come. I don't see what keeps them all! It's as much as Amy can do to hold him in bed. He's as strong as a lion, and I know it's just his delirium. They're always so when they're delirious."

The wrathful Voice again: "No, I don't love you a bit, and you're a hateful old thing! And I want my clothes. I won't have the doctor! I ain't sick, and I'm going to get up! I am, too! When Uncle Willis comes, I'll tell him how you've acted. I'm hungry, and I want my breakfast!"

Mrs. Roberts: "There!"

Roberts: "I'll go up to him—"

Mrs. Roberts: "No, no, Edward! You'll be sure to give way to him, and Amy can manage him nicely. And I want you to be here to receive the doctor. I'll run back and relieve Amy; she must be perfectly worn out, poor thing. He fights so."

Roberts: "But if he's in a perspiration, Agnes—"

Mrs. Roberts: "But it isn't a *common* perspiration, Edward! Of course if it were any other time, and they were not quarantining everybody everywhere, and almost firing on them in New York, I might think it was a very good thing; but as it *is*, I can't do anything till the doctor comes; and if he doesn't come pretty soon, I don't know what we shall do with the child. I wish you had put three exclamations after the hurry! I'm sure I've done my part. I've kindled the fire here, and shut every window in the house, so that the heat can all go up into his room, and I've got the flannels all ready heating in the oven, so that if the collapse does come, I can

swathe him in them from head to foot; and I don't see how you could be so heartless, Edward, as not to put three exclamations, when you were about it!"

Roberts: "Well, perhaps Dr. Lawton will get here at once—"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, and it's fortunate I happened to think of him! I don't know what would happen, if I didn't keep my mind on everything and everywhere at once. I don't mean to reproach you, Edward; and I know that you're perfectly devoted to the children, but if you only could have had the forethought to put three excla—"

The furious Voice: "Ya-a-a-a! I will, I will, I will! You sha'n't keep me in bed! I want my clothes! I want my breakfast! I want my Poppa!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, dear—"

Roberts: "Yes, Bob—"

Mrs. Roberts, in an awful voice: "Edward, I'm astonished at you! Just when we had got him nicely quieted down, and he's in the wildest delirium!"

The furious Voice: "I want my Poppa!"

Roberts: "But the child is calling me! What shall I do, Agnes?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Do! Stay where you are, Edward, if you are *half* a father! You must be here, and receive the doctor. And be sure to keep him, so that I can come down and tell him the history of the case before he sees Robby, or he'll be all prejudiced, especially if it's Dr. Lawton; you know how headstrong he always is, and wants to see the patient before you can get in a word. Oh, dear! I almost wish I hadn't called him."

Roberts: "Perhaps Dr. Williams will get here first."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, how *good* you are, Edward, and how *thoughtful*! Of *course* he'll be here first, and I never thought of it."

The furious Voice: "Poppa! Poppa! Poppa! I want my Poppa!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, darling! in a moment! Papa's coming! Oh, Edward, how can you let me lie so to the poor darling, and perhaps he's in the last stages!"

Roberts, in a stifled voice: "But what shall I do, Agnes? You won't let me go to him, or answer him; and—"

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, yes, put it all on me, dear! And when I've been through so much already— There!" At the sound of a step on the veranda Mrs. Rob-

erts shrinks together for flight, and with one foot on the stair and her skirts gathered in her hand, she turns to her husband with a stage-whisper: "It's the doctor, and I don't care which doctor it is, you must keep him here till I can make Robby a little presentable and throw on something so that I sha'n't be such a *perfect* fright, and dash the comb through my hair. Don't let him come till I send Amy down to let you know when. I'm not going to have the doctor find her there, and pretending to care more for the child than his own mother; she'd like to, well enough. Don't wait for Bella to open the door. Open it yourself, and— U-u-u-gh!" This cry feebly represents the emotion of Mrs. Roberts as the steps on the veranda approach, and the door is flung open without any pull at the bell, revealing the face and figure of Mr. Willis Campbell. "Willis! How could you?"

II.

CAMPBELL AND THE ROBERTSES.

Campbell: "Could what?"

Mrs. Roberts: "I thought it was the doctor! I was *sure* it was!"

Campbell: "Well, perhaps it is. What do you want with the doctor? Who's sick?"

Mrs. Roberts: "'Sh! Robby—"

Campbell: "What's the matter with Bob, this time? Cholera?"

Mrs. Roberts, whimpering: "Oh, there you are! I don't see how you can say such a thing. He's been in the most frightful agony, and he's had a nap since, and now he's all in a cold perspiration, and he insists upon getting up and putting on his clothes and having his breakfast, and it's as much as Amy and I can do to manage him; he struggles like a maniac. She's almost exhausted, poor thing."

Campbell: "What's she doing?"

The wrathful Voice from above: "She's holding me in bed, Uncle Willis, and she's keeping me from having my clothes on, and getting any breakfast! Oh, uncle, uncle! Come up here and make her stop!"

Campbell: "I can't make her stop, Bob—"

Mrs. Roberts: "'Sh! for shame, Willis, spoiling everything! He mustn't know you're here, or we can't do a thing with him, and we *must* keep him in bed, now,

till the doctor comes, or it may be as much as his life is worth."

Campbell: "What doctor have you sent for?"

Roberts: "I've just been to get Dr. Williams, but he wasn't at home, and I left word—"

Mrs. Roberts: "And I got so anxious that I couldn't wait any longer, and I telephoned for Dr. Lawton, and Lou Bemis is going to send him the instant he comes in. They can consult together, if the case is very dangerous, and I'm sure I never saw anything like it: perfectly bathed in an ice-cold perspiration, rolling off him in great beads."

Campbell: "Who?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Robby!"

Campbell: "I thought you meant Roberts. He looks as if he was ready to float away. What have you got a fire for on a day like this?"

Mrs. Roberts: "It's to send the heat into Robby's room, and prevent his taking cold, in the perspiration."

Campbell: "Well, if you want to send the heat up into his room, why don't you open the doors and windows down here, and make a draught?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Do you think that would do it?"

Campbell: "Of course it would; and besides, it's a great deal hotter outside than it is here. What's the matter with Bob, anyway? Been eating something?"

Mrs. Roberts: "He's been eating everything!"

Mrs. Campbell, from above: "Agnes! Agnes! I can't manage this boy any longer!"

Mrs. Roberts, flying up the stairs: "I'm coming, Amy! I don't see how I could be so heartless as to leave you alone with him so long, anyway. But I had to stop and ask Edward about the doctor, and tell him about the case so that he could explain it; and then Willis came in, and I've been advising with him; but I know you must be dropping dead, and I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself, and I shall never be grateful enough to you for it, the longest day I—" Her voice gradually loses itself in the regions above, which she vanishes into before it becomes wholly inaudible.

III.

CAMPBELL AND ROBERTS.

Campbell, calling after her: "I'll stay here with Roberts and help him explain

when the doctors come. We'll have a doctor apiece to explain to, if they happen to come together."

Roberts: "Good heavens, Willis! You don't suppose they'll come together?"

Campbell: "Well, I don't know what's to prevent them."

Roberts: "But wouldn't it be rather awkward?"

Campbell: "It would be deucedly awkward, my dear fellow; but you ought to have thought of that before you called them both. If they happen here together, and the case turns out to be a rather simple one not calling for a consultation of physicians, the doctors may be a little bit put out about it. You know how peppery old Lawton is where professional etiquette is concerned."

Roberts: "Is he? I didn't know—"

Campbell: "And I suppose he'll wonder why you should have called in a stranger, when your old family physician was in the neighborhood. Lawton will be hurt. But you can easily make it right with him. You can tell him you prefer homœopathy for your children: some people do, you know; it's milder."

Roberts: "Do you think that would do, Willis?"

Campbell: "Yes; it's the only way; and I'll tackle Williams. I'll tell him it was such a trifling case, you thought you wouldn't call in a regular practitioner. That'll give him confidence in himself."

Roberts: "I don't think that would do, Willis—"

Campbell: "Well, perhaps it wouldn't. Perhaps we'd better trust to inspiration. But we've got to take one apiece, and see what Providence will do for us. What makes Agnes think Bob is so very bad?"

Roberts: "I don't know, I'm sure. He was in a good deal of pain, when I left, and now he's in a profuse perspiration."

Campbell: "Well, that sounds rather threatening, but I think when the doctor comes you'd better not give him the history of the case. I think you'd better devote yourself to explaining why you called another doctor. Now, if they both come together, which doctor do you think you had better take? Do you think you could manage best with that cranky old Lawton, with his punctilious medical etiquette, and his contempt of homœopathy, or little Williams, with his sensitiveness, and conceit, and quick temper, and his—"

Roberts: "I—I don't know which I had better take, Willis."

Campbell: "I'd willingly take old Lawton, but he never believes a word I say; and I'd take Williams, but he's got a notion that I'm always laughing at him. I'm afraid I can't be of much use to you, Roberts."

Roberts: "Oh, but surely, Willis, you're not going to back out altogether?"

Campbell: "No, not back out. I'll stay by, and throw in a word or two, when I see it's needed. You'll get on swimmingly." To Mrs. Campbell, who appears on the stairs somewhat disheveled and very heated-looking: "Hello, Amy!" Mrs. Campbell descends the stairs, and reaches the level of the hallway while she is speaking.

IV.

MRS. CAMPBELL AND THE TWO MEN.

Mrs. Campbell: "What is that you are trying to put Edward up to, Willis? I insist upon knowing."

Campbell: "What's the matter, Amy? You look as though you had been having a little flirtation with a cyclone."

Mrs. Campbell: "Never mind how I look, or what I've been flirting with. What have you been putting Edward up to?"

Campbell: "Oh, very well, if you don't want him to do what I say, you can take the case in hand yourself. The simple fact is that he's called in Williams, and Agnes has called in Lawton, and the two doctors are going to arrive here together as mad as hornets, and I was just telling Roberts how to manage them. But I don't want to force my advice on any one."

Mrs. Campbell: "How do you know they'll arrive together, and be as mad as hornets?"

Campbell: "Well, my dear, as soon as you see them arrive together, you watch out whether they're as mad as hornets or not. That's all! What do you want Roberts here to say to them when they both come in together?"

Mrs. Campbell: "They won't both come together." She goes to one of the windows and looks out. "There, I knew they wouldn't! There comes Dr. Williams, and he's quite alone. There's not another soul in sight, and he's hurrying like everything."

Campbell: "Well, then, you must smuggle him out of the way, as quick as

he gets into the house, and leave the coast clear for Dr. Lawton. Perhaps old Lawton hasn't started at all, yet, and you can stop him. Can't you call up Mrs. Bemis, and tell her that Rob is all right, and her father needn't come?"

Mrs. Campbell: "But what if he isn't all right?"

Campbell: "Why, then, here's Dr. Williams to make him so!"

Mrs. Campbell: "That is so—"

Roberts: "Yes, do speak to her, Amy, and Willis and I will meet Dr. Williams here—"

Mrs. Campbell: "Well, I will if you wish it, Edward, but I'm not sure." She goes to the telephone in another room and is heard ringing, and then conducting the one-sided dialogue of the telephone: "Is that you, Lou? Yes, well! It's Mrs. Bemis I want. Are you Mrs. Bemis? Yes, well! This is Mrs. Campbell—Mrs. Willis Campbell. Amy, you know. Well, I'm speaking for Mrs. Roberts. Robby is much better. He's quite well, and if your father hasn't started yet— What? Is that you, Mrs. Bemis! Hello! Who is that! Lou? Yes, well! If Dr. Lawton hasn't started yet, Mrs. Roberts thinks it isn't worth while for him to come, and— What? Oh, my goodness, Willis!"—she rushes into the hallway again as she pronounces the dreadful words—"he's started as fast as he can drive, and he'll be here before we can turn round. What shall we do?"

Campbell: "Well, then, I'll tell you what! Roberts, here, has got to use a little—finesse, a little diplomacy."

Mrs. Campbell: "You know he can't!"

Roberts: "You know I'm never up to that sort of thing, Willis. I really can't help thinking, although I value your kindness so much, Willis, and appreciate your wish to help me, that perhaps it would be best, after all, to treat the matter frankly."

Campbell: "How, frankly?"

Roberts: "Why, simply tell both of the doctors, when they come, that we called one because we didn't think the other would get here in time, and—and—throw ourselves on their mercy, don't you know."

Campbell: "Oh, a nice time you would have on old Lawton's mercy! It would never do in the world, Roberts. You would make the most fearful mess of it."

Roberts: "I'm afraid we should make a fearfulest mess of it the other way, I do

indeed. I'm not at all equal to it, Willis. You know how to carry these things off naturally, but I—"

Mrs. Campbell: "And I think you are quite right, Edward. It's much better to be honest about things."

Campbell: "You wouldn't know how to be honest about a thing if you tried, Amy. You leave Roberts to me."

Roberts: "No, Willis, I don't know how—I can't—"

Campbell: "Well, in this instance, you have simply *got* to; or you'll have the awfulest row— By George, Amy, why shouldn't *you* use the finesse, or the diplomacy? You'd be the very one for a thing of that kind. I don't say it to flatter you, but when it comes to a little fibbing—in a good cause, of course—"

Mrs. Campbell, after a moment of apparent fascination with the notion: "No, I shall have nothing to do with it. I shouldn't mind the fibbing—for the cause is good—but I should know that you had something underhanded in it, and were just trying to get me into a scrape. No, Willis, I can't trust you, even in a case of life and death."

Campbell: "Well, better put up your hair, anyway, Amy; and there's something stringing out of your neck— 'Sh! There's his step on the piazza!" Mrs. Campbell runs to the mirror in the corner of the hallway, and hastily reorders her dress and hair, and turns again to her husband.

Mrs. Campbell: "Will that do?"

Campbell, laughing: "Perfectly."

Mrs. Campbell: "I don't believe it; unless you're just laughing to tease me."

Campbell: "I'm not, Amy, indeed. And now as soon as he rings, Roberts and I will get out of this, and let you receive him, and then you'll know that I haven't put up any job on you. Now my plan is that Roberts shall stay in the library, on one side of the hall, here, and I'll stay in the dining-room on the other side. If old Lawton comes before you get Williams out of the house, I'll receive him in the dining-room, and prime him with a little sherry, and talk round him, and keep him amused till Williams is gone. And you must smuggle him down the back way, and Roberts will be there in the library, and shut the door, and then I'll steal out, and get up stairs with Lawton, and then Roberts can open the door, and hustle the other fellow out, and get

him into his buggy, and have him off, and old Lawton will never suspect anything." He glances out of the window. "By George, there comes Lawton down the road now, and there isn't an instant to lose! Poke Williams right into the library there with Roberts, the instant he appears, and shut the door on them, and— 'Sh! There's his step! He's crossing the veranda! He's ringing!" The bell is heard. "Come, Roberts!" Roberts starts to follow Campbell into the dining-room. "No, no! You're to be in the library, you know." He turns Roberts about in the right direction by main force. "And remember, you're to take him up out of the door at the other end of the library, and then get him out of the house by the back stairs." He closes the library door upon Roberts, and retreats to the dining-room. At the same moment Mrs. Campbell opens the hall door to Dr. Williams.

V.

DR. WILLIAMS AND MRS. CAMPBELL.

Mrs. Campbell: "We don't stand upon ceremony this morning, doctor; I don't know where the maids all are. We've been terribly frightened about poor little Robby, and I don't know what you'll think of him. But we've kept him in bed till you came, though he's been perfectly furious to get up and have his clothes on."

Dr. Williams, standing with his hat in one hand, and his case of medicines in the other: "Get up and have his clothes on?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Yes; his mother is afraid he may be a little delirious. But won't you just step in here, and speak with Mr. Roberts? He would like to see you first." She throws open the library door, and Dr. Williams disappears within, looking mystified. As she closes the door on him, and turns away, Campbell shows himself at the dining-room door, and addresses her in a stage-whisper.

VI.

MR. AND MRS. CAMPBELL.

Campbell: "Splendid, Amy! I couldn't have done it better myself. Now, if you'll only manage old Lawton half as well, our lives will be saved."

Mrs. Campbell, whispering: "Dr. Lawton will be more difficult. Willis, I believe I shall let you receive Dr. Lawton."

Campbell: "No, no! You mustn't think of it. You are doing magnificently, Amy! It will be such a joke on old Lawton when we're all safely out of it! Say the first thing that comes into your head, and it will be right." He runs to

me, and I'll keep him from going up stairs till Edward gets the other fellow out of the house, and the coast is clear."

Mrs. Campbell: "Willis, you *mustn't* go. Stay and receive him with me."

Campbell: "I tell you I can't. It will



"WHAT HAVE YOU GOT A FIRE FOR THIS MORNING?"

the window, and peeps. "He's there! He's hitching his horse, and he'll be at the door in half a minute. Courage, Amy, and luck to you."

Mrs. Campbell: "No, Willis! Don't leave me! You know I shall be perfectly helpless in Dr. Lawton's hands. You know how merciless he is if he suspects anything."

Campbell: "Old Lawton? Well, Amy, if you couldn't manage old Lawton! All you have got to do is to send him in to

spoil everything. He'll be sure to smell a rat if I'm with you."

Mrs. Campbell, in a lamentable voice: "He *always* smells a rat!"

Campbell: "Well, he won't this time. There he is, coming up the veranda steps. Now, keep your wits about you, Amy, do! And send him right in here to me." He retreats toward the dining-room door.

Mrs. Campbell: "Oh, how can you be so cruel, unkind, and inconsiderate! Well, now, I don't care *how* badly I man-

age, and I shall just be glad of it if I make a mess of the whole thing." The bell rings, and she pulls the door open, and admits Dr. Lawton. "Oh, how very kind of you, doctor! Agnes has been worried to death, asking you to come in your vacation. But poor little Rob has been acting so strangely that she couldn't help feeling alarmed, and she knew there was no one like you, and she telephoned you on the impulse of the moment; and it's so good of you to come." She glances round at the dining-room door, and catches a glimpse of Campbell making frantic gestures of approval and encouragement. "Won't you sit down a moment, and I'll go and tell—"

VII.

DR. LAWTON AND MRS. CAMPBELL.

Dr. Lawton: "No. I'd better see the patient at once, if he's in an alarming condition."

Mrs. Campbell: "Oh, he is! But hadn't I better get you a fan, or a lemonade, or something? It's so very warm this morning."

Dr. Lawton: "I should think it was—in here. What have you got a fire for this morning?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Why, Agnes kindled it. She thought that Rob might take cold, he's in such a drip of perspiration, and she didn't realize how hot it was outdoors. She wanted to send the heat up into his room."

Dr. Lawton, throwing open the windows: "Well, she hasn't succeeded, then. And it's a very good thing she hasn't. It's enough to kill the child, let alone the doctor. By-the-way, whose horse is that out there?"

Mrs. Campbell, with dismay, which she tries to make pass for astonishment: "Horse?"

Dr. Lawton: "Yes; I didn't say *cow*, Mrs. Campbell."

Mrs. Campbell, looking resolutely away from the window in the direction of the dining-room door, which Campbell closes: "Is there any horse besides yours, there, Dr. Lawton?"

Dr. Lawton: "Yes, there is another doctor's horse. The signs are unmistakable. Who's in the dining-room, there?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Dining-room? Why, I suppose the maids—"

Dr. Lawton, darting suddenly upon her: "Isn't Mr. Campbell in there?" As

she hesitates, he smiles, and continues in a rapid whisper: "I see. They called another doctor first, and when he didn't come at once, they telephoned to me. That is all perfectly natural, and all perfectly right. I suppose you're afraid I shall be vexed at finding another doctor here. I think it's the jolliest kind of fix for Roberts, but I haven't the heart to tease him about it. If it was your husband, Mrs. Campbell, I shouldn't mind doing it. He's always teasing somebody. Tell me, now, what's his little game at present? Concealment is impossible, you know, and you might as well be honest as not."

Mrs. Campbell, allured by the fact: "I suppose I really might." She whispers throughout, and so does Dr. Lawton.

Dr. Lawton: "Better. What is he up to, in there?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Will you ever tell him I told you?"

Dr. Lawton: "Never!"

Mrs. Campbell: "Well, it would really be such a good joke on Willis, and I should like to see him come up with, once."

Dr. Lawton: "Dear lady, if you will only tell me, he shall be come up with as he never was in his life before!"

Mrs. Lawton: "But wouldn't it be a little wrong, doctor? I shouldn't want you to tease him *very* much!"

Dr. Lawton: "Not so as to injure him, of course; but just to give him a little lesson. You can safely trust me. I am your family physician, you know, and I will be responsible for the result."

Mrs. Campbell, reflectively: "That is true. And it would be just serving him right, wouldn't it, for leaving me here to take the brunt of it with you, and to try to keep you in the dark."

Dr. Lawton: "It would be your duty, Mrs. Campbell, in an event of that kind."

Mrs. Campbell: "And perhaps it would cure him of his teasing, if he could feel how it was himself."

Dr. Lawton: "It would be the saving of him. It would bring out all his good and noble qualities. What is his game?"

Mrs. Campbell: "I have the greatest mind in the world to tell you, only I don't like to do anything that a man would think underhand."

Dr. Lawton: "A man would think it the frankest kind of a thing. A woman might think it underhand, but—"



"DON'T YOU KNOW THAT ROBERTS IS IN THERE WITH DR. WILLIAMS?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Oh, I don't care what a woman would think. And it would be such a good joke on Willis! Well, you see—you see—"

Dr. Lawton: "Yes, yes!"

Mrs. Campbell: "You see, Dr. Williams—"

Dr. Lawton: "Oh; little pills! Well, he isn't such a bad sort of fellow. Go on!"

Mrs. Campbell: "Agnes sent for him, and then, while Edward was gone, Robby broke into such a profuse perspiration that she got frightened, and telephoned for you. And when Willis found out what they had done, he began to tease, and to try to make them believe it was something awful, and that you would both be so angry that you would never forgive it—"

Dr. Lawton, rubbing his hands: "Capital! Just as I suspected. Oh, I'll fool him to the top of his bent! Go on!"

Mrs. Campbell: "And poor Edward wanted to tell the truth about it, as soon as you came, and Willis wouldn't let him. And he said Edward must go into the library, and receive Dr. Williams, and let him see the child, and then smuggle him

out the back way, and he would be waiting in the dining-room, and I was to show you in there to him—"

Dr. Lawton: "Glorious! Oh, young man, how I will block your game!"

Mrs. Campbell: "And he would keep you amused there till Dr. Williams was safely out of the house, and then let you go up stairs, and you would never know anything about it."

Dr. Lawton: "Oh, won't I? Well, Mrs. Campbell, now I'm going to begin. You say, *Just step into the dining-room, doctor, and I'll call Mr. Roberts.*"

Mrs. Campbell, aloud: "Yes, Mr. Roberts would like to see you first, and if you'll step into the dining-room a moment out of this terrible heat, and won't mind its being in a little disorder—"

Dr. Lawton, whispering: "Is any one in the library now?"

Mrs. Campbell, opening the door, to peep in: "No."

Dr. Lawton: "All right." Aloud: "Thank you, I'll wait in the library, if you please, and look at a word I want to see in Roberts's dictionary." He goes into the library, and closes the door after

him, and at the same instant Campbell flings open the dining-room door, and flies out upon his wife.

VIII.

MR. AND MRS. CAMPBELL.

Campbell: "Great heavens, Amy, what in the world are you up to? Don't you know that Roberts is in there with Dr. Williams? You showed them in there yourself, half a minute ago." Campbell is obliged to speak in an impassioned whisper, so that he shall not be heard in the library.

Mrs. Campbell: "Why, so I did! What shall I do?"

Campbell: "Oh, do! You can't do anything now. The die is cast, the jig is up, the fat's in the fire, the milk's spilt."

Mrs. Campbell, mysteriously: "I don't believe it is."

Campbell: "Don't believe it is! What do you mean?"

Mrs. Campbell: "'Sh! Willis, I have a great mind to tell you something."

Campbell: "Tell me something?"

Mrs. Campbell: "'Sh! Yes, it would be such a joke on Dr. Lawton!"

Campbell: "On Lawton! Out with it, Amy! I'm round paying a heavy premium for jokes on Lawton."

Mrs. Campbell: "What will you give me if I tell you?"

Campbell: "Oh, anything! Everything! A kiss."

Mrs. Campbell: "Stuff! Will you ever let any human being know that I told you?"

Campbell: "Red-hot pincers couldn't get it out of me."

Mrs. Campbell: "Well, I peeped before I let him go in, and made sure Dr. Williams had gone up stairs. He wants to block your game, Willis. But I don't think it was very nice of him to try to get a wife to join against her husband; do you?"

Campbell: "Oh, that was very wrong indeed! I wonder at Lawton. What did he want you to do?"

Mrs. Campbell: "If it wasn't for that, I don't believe I should tell you."

Campbell: "I know you wouldn't, Amy. It's your sense of duty that obliges you to speak."

Mrs. Campbell: "If I were sure that it was my sense of duty—"

Campbell: "You may bet anything it is, Amy. I can tell when you're doing

a thing because you're mad, and when you're doing it from a sense of duty. You look altogether different."

Mrs. Campbell: "And it isn't at all for the joke—"

Campbell: "Joke, Amy? You joke! You would rather perish. You wouldn't know how, even if you wanted to. What is it?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Oh, then you think women have no sense of humor?"

Campbell: "I? I think they are so truly humorous that they needn't joke to show it, and that if you saw anything funny in giving Dr. Lawton away, you wouldn't do it. What is the old reprobate up to, Amy?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Well, then, I'll tell you, if you won't give *me* away, as you call it."

Campbell: "Amy!"

Mrs. Campbell: "He made me confess—or the same as confess—that there was another doctor here, and you were going to keep it from him, till we could get Dr. Williams out of the house, and then let him go up and see Rob, and he would never know anything about it. And I know he's going to bounce out of the library in a minute, and pretend to be furious, and block your game, as he calls it."

Campbell: "Oh, *is* he! I guess two can play at blocking that game!"

Mrs. Campbell: "And I'm not going to stay, Willis, and you may get out of the boggle the best way you can."

Campbell: "You are an angel, Amy, and nothing proves it more than your wanting to sneak out of the difficulty that your perfidy has got two men into. Angels of your description always do that."

Mrs. Campbell: "Well, if that's the way you talk, Willis, I'll take back everything I've said. Dr. Lawton doesn't know anything about my telling you. Now, how do you feel?"

Campbell: "Terribly. But I think I'll act just as if he did. Go, my love; leave me to my fate."

Mrs. Campbell: "I shall not do it, now, because I see that you really wish me to. I shall stay, and see what a miserable mess you will make of it. I shall stay, and triumph over both of you. And I shall laugh and laugh. Oh, how I shall laugh! Wo-o-o! Oh, my goodness, he's coming!" At the sound of the knob turning in the library door Mrs. Camp-

bell starts in fright, and with a backward glance at Dr. Lawton as he emerges, she flies from the scene.

IX.

DR. LAWTON AND CAMPBELL.

Campbell, gayly: "Ah, Dr. Lawton!"

Dr. Lawton, grimly: "Ah, Mr. Campbell!"

Campbell: "Awfully good of you to let them disturb you in your vacation, this way. Roberts will be down in a moment. He wants to see you before you go up to Rob. Agnes wants him to explain the case to you. It's rather a peculiar case—"

Dr. Lawton: "I don't think I'll wait to see Mr. Roberts, Mr. Campbell. I will ask you to say to Mrs. Roberts that I preferred not to wait—simply that."

Campbell, with affected consternation: "Why, Dr. Lawton, I hope you don't mind having had to wait a few moments for Roberts. I'll run right up stairs for him. I know he'll be extremely mortified and distressed."

Dr. Lawton, as before: "The waiting is nothing. I don't mind the waiting—"

Campbell, with affected humility: "Then may I ask—"

Dr. Lawton, as before: "Yes, sir, you may ask, and I have not the slightest objection to answering. Another physician has been called here, before me."

Campbell: "Oh, but, Dr. Lawton, I assure you—"

Dr. Lawton, always with the greatest sternness: "Don't attempt to trifle with me, sir. When I hitched my horse before the door, I found another doctor's horse hitched there: an unmistakable doctor's horse, chewing the top of the post, and drowsing as peacefully as the flies would let him." He turns aside to conceal a laugh.

Campbell: "Well, I recognize the type, doctor, but I think you must be mistaken—"

Dr. Lawton: "No, sir, I am not mistaken. How should I be mistaken?"

Campbell: "Well, the grocer's horse behaves that way, too, I believe."

Dr. Lawton: "But grocers don't drive round in top-buggies!"

Campbell: "That is true." He appears to fall into extreme dejection.

Dr. Lawton: "Besides, the motive for this delay that I have been subjected to

is not sufficiently accounted for on the ground that Mr. Roberts wishes to explain a case to me that I can judge of a great deal better than he can. No, sir! They have another doctor up there with the patient, and they are waiting to smuggle him out of the house before they let me go up. I suspect your hand in this, Mr. Campbell, and I will not suffer you to trifle with me. You are keeping me here until Dr. Williams can be got out of the house, and then you are to let me go through the farce of prescribing for the patient."

Campbell, with simulated deprecation: "Now, Dr. Lawton—"

Dr. Lawton, with every token of suppressed fury: "Well, sir?"

Campbell: "If I were to give you my honor that there was not another doctor in this house?"

Dr. Lawton: "I advise you not to do so." He seizes Campbell by the arm, and pulls him to the window. "Look there, sir! What do you say to that? Do you see my horse hitched at one end of that rail, out there, and do you see Dr. Williams's horse hitched at the other end of the rail? What do you say to that?"

Campbell: "Why, Dr. Lawton, if you force me to be frank, I say that I didn't suppose you began so early in the morning. I don't object to a modest eye-opener, but if a man takes so many as to make him see double—"

Dr. Lawton: "Don't prevaricate, Mr. Campbell! Do you see two doctors' horses there, or don't you?"

Campbell: "I see *one* doctor's horse, there."

Dr. Lawton, releasing him, and anxiously scanning his face: "Ah! my poor young friend! This is worse than the simple drunkenness you accuse me of. Are you aware that there is a very serious brain disorder which causes the victim to see but half of a given object, and of two objects to see but one?"

Campbell: "No; is there? Then we had better get another doctor to judge between us, or appeal from Philip after to Philip before his second eye-opener. Come, now, doctor, hadn't you better go home? I'll excuse you to the family, and account for you some way. I don't believe Amy noticed anything; and when you get back, you can sleep it off, and nobody will be the wiser. It isn't habit-

ual with you, and we can hush it up for this once if you'll only go—"

Dr. Lawton, with a fresh access of pretended rage: "No, sir, I will not go! I insist upon seeing Mr. Roberts, and upon verifying the presence of another doctor in this house."

Campbell, with a shrug: "Well, I suppose if you see double there's nothing to prevent you from *thinking* double. But if the solemn assurance of one of your oldest and truest friends—"

The Voice from overhead, making itself heard through the closed door: "I won't, I won't, I won't! I don't want any medicine! I know it's nasty. Go away, doctor! I ain't sick!" The voice dies away into the indistinct murmur of other persuasive and menacing voices, and the sound of a struggle, terminating in a wild yell.

Dr. Lawton: "There, sir, what do you say to that?"

Campbell: "Say to what?"

Dr. Lawton: "To that outcry, that uproar, that plain proclamation of Dr. Williams's presence!"

Campbell: "Why, did you hear anything, doctor?"

Dr. Lawton, with a compassionate shake of his head: "Hearing affected, too! This is very interesting. Will you let me examine your eye, Mr. Campbell?"

Campbell: "Oh, certainly." After the doctor has lifted the lid, and peered earnestly into his eye: "Anything green, there?"

Dr. Lawton: "What do you mean, sir?"

Campbell: "Oh, nothing, only I think you are doing it splendidly, and it's a pity you shouldn't know how fully I appreciate it. My game is completely blocked. Go on!"

Dr. Lawton, after a moment: "Who told you?"

Campbell: "Amy."

Dr. Lawton, with mock tragedy: "Then I have been betrayed."

Campbell: "I've been betrayed, too. She told you that I was going to put up a job on you."

Dr. Lawton: "She did. Mrs. Campbell is truth itself."

Campbell: "I should say deceit personified."

Dr. Lawton: "You are Mrs. Campbell's husband. What shall we do now?"

Campbell, offering his hand: "Shake."

Dr. Lawton, taking it: "And then?"

Campbell: "Keep the thing up with increased fervor. Bite the biter; deceive the deceiver; outshine the truth itself in candor."

Dr. Lawton: "Ah, that might be difficult—for some of us! But still I think we had better make the attempt. But first: there isn't anything serious the matter with Rob, is there?"

Campbell: "He's hungry, as I infer from a remark that I heard him make."

Dr. Lawton: "That's a trouble that can always be reached, happily, in our condition of life. Well, where did we leave off?"

Campbell: "Oh, I think at Rob's giving Dr. Williams's presence away."

Dr. Lawton: "I remember! Well, here goes, then!" He bursts out furiously: "No, sir, I will not be put off with any such excuse. It is a matter which touches my personal and professional dignity. Where is Mr. Roberts, I say?" In a natural tone: "How will that do?"

Campbell: "First rate! Perhaps it was a little too emphatic. I'm afraid Amy will begin to suspect something. Now I'll reply in persuasive accents: *My dear Dr. Lawton, you know that Roberts is incapable of offering you a personal or a professional affront. If you will give me a little time, I can explain—*"

Dr. Lawton: "Well, now, I'll retort in a tone of biting sarcasm: *I fancy you will not only want a little time; you will want a little eternity to explain a thing like this. But if Mr. Roberts will not come to me, I will go to Mr. Roberts!*"

Campbell, naturally: "Oh, that's capital! That will fetch them. 'Sh! They're opening the door a little. That's Agnes. I suppose Roberts must have got Williams down the back stairs. Now I'll throw myself in your way, here, and attempt to prevent your going up. That will simply madden you. I'll place myself at the foot of the stairs, with folded arms, and say, in a voice choked with a sense of duty, *Dr. Lawton, if you so far forget yourself as to attempt to mount a single step toward the room where my poor nephew lies in a drip of perspiration, I will—* Now, you go on, in a perfect frenzy."

Dr. Lawton: "You will what, sir? Do you mean to say that you will use

physical force to prevent me?"

Naturally: "How will that do?"

Campbell: "The very thing! Now I'll come in: I don't know what you call it, but I shall keep you from going up stairs."

Dr. Lawton, dramatically: "Stand aside, sir!"

Campbell: "Not so loud, quite. They're listening. I'll give you the right pitch: I will not stand aside. If you mount these stairs, it will be over my body, dead or alive. About like that, you know. Now, we must both stamp our feet, and that will bring them."

They both stamp their feet, and a sound of swishing dresses and suppressed voices is heard on the little gallery that looks down into the hallway from above. The dresses and the voices are those of Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. Campbell; Mrs. Campbell restrains Mrs. Roberts by main force from rushing down and interfering with the quarrel of the men.

X.

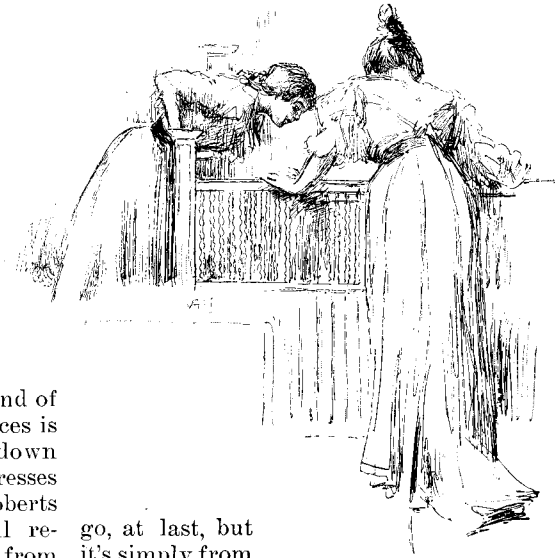
MRS. ROBERTS AND MRS. CAMPBELL ABOVE;
CAMPBELL AND DR. LAWTON BELOW.

Mrs. Campbell, in bated breath: "Now, do control yourself, Agnes! I tell you they're just trying to fool each other. Oh, dear! I wish I hadn't put them up to it! This comes from not sticking to the exact truth. Edward's way is the best; yes, it is, and I shall always stick to it after this, if it kills me."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, but are you sure they're trying to fool each other, Amy? Perhaps you're not telling the truth, now! If they should be in earnest, I should surely die!" The men continue to dramatize a struggle on the floor below. "Oh, look at them! I can't bear to look at them! Oh, are you sure you're not mistaken, Amy?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Don't I tell you I put them up to it myself?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, I wish Edward would come back, and separate them! I don't see what he's doing with Dr. Williams so long! Of course he had to make the excuse of the garden when he took him down the back way, but he could have shown him every leaf in it by this time, I should think. Amy, I can't think they're joking. They do struggle so fearfully. There! They've let each other



go, at last, but it's simply from exhaustion!"

Campbell, proudly placing himself at the foot of the stairs again, and addressing Dr. Lawton, with feigned hauteur: "I think you are satisfied now, that you can't go up stairs, Dr. Lawton."

Dr. Lawton, dramatically: "We will see, Mr. Campbell. I have kept one little argument in reserve." He advances upon Campbell with lifted hand, as if to strike.

Campbell, dramatically: "What! A blow, Dr. Lawton?"

Dr. Lawton, dramatically: "Several, Mr. Campbell, if you insist upon it. Will you stand aside?"

Campbell, dramatically putting himself into a posture of self-defence: "Never! And beware, Dr. Lawton! You are an old man, but I will not be answerable for the consequences if you strike me. I will not take a blow from you, much as I respect you, and would like to gratify you. I allow no one to strike me but Mrs. Campbell."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, Amy! Is it true? Do you ever strike poor Willis?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Don't be a goose, Agnes! Doesn't that show you that he's just making fun."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, do you think he is? If I could only believe you, Amy, I should bless you, the longest day you lived. Is Dr. Lawton making fun, too?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Yes, up to a certain

point. But he doesn't seem to be making as much fun as Willis is."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, I'm sure he's in the bitterest earnest. See, he's just struck at Willis!"

Mrs. Campbell: "Yes, and Willis has warded off the blow nicely."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, don't look!" She hides her eyes in her hands. "What are they doing now?"

Mrs. Campbell: "He keeps striking at Willis, and Willis wards off his blows, without returning one of them. Oh, isn't he glorious! That's his fencing. He can outfence anybody, Willis can. He mustn't strike *him*, but if he lets him strike *HIM*, I will never speak to him again!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, stop them, somebody, do! Oh, Willis—"

Dr. Lawton, advancing with lifted hand: "*I demand to see Mr. Roberts!*"

Mrs. Roberts, in wild appeal: "Oh, but he isn't here, Dr. Lawton! Indeed he isn't! He's out in the garden with Dr. Williams, and as soon as he can get rid of him he'll come right back and explain everything. It all happened through my being so anxious, and telephoning for you after he had gone for Dr. Williams, because we hated so to disturb you in your vaca— Oh, my goodness, he doesn't hear a word I say!" The men renew their struggle. "Oh, Amy, do you think they're still in fun?"

Mrs. Campbell, with misgiving: "I don't believe they're as much in fun as they were at first. I—"

Mrs. Roberts, wringing her hands: "Oh, well, then, speak to Willis, do, and see if you can make him hear you!"

Mrs. Campbell, with great but faltering sternness: "Willis! Willis! I want you to stop that absurd nonsense! You will give me a nervous headache if you keep on. You know that Dr. Lawton doesn't mean anything, and you're just trying to frighten us, and I think it's a shame. Stop, Willis! Oh, dear! he doesn't hear me, or he just pretends he doesn't. I don't know what I shall do."

Mrs. Roberts: "Well, then, we must both scream as loud as ever we can scream."

Mrs. Campbell: "Yes, that's the only thing we can do now." They both scream at the tops of their voices. Campbell and Dr. Lawton desist, and look smiling-

ly up at them, with an air of great apparent surprise and interest. At the same moment Roberts and Dr. Williams burst wildly in through the door from the veranda.

XI.

DR. WILLIAMS, ROBERTS, AND THE OTHERS.

Roberts, with shuddering dismay: "What's the matter? What are you screaming for? Is Robby in a relapse? Willis—Dr. Lawton—what is it?"

Campbell, with great calm: "What is what? Have you noticed anything, Dr. Lawton?"

Dr. Lawton, with kindly serenity: "I'm sure I couldn't say. Has there been anything unusual going on?"

Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. Campbell: "They have been struggling violently together, and we screamed."

Mrs. Roberts: "Dr. Lawton was trying to come up stairs to speak with you, and Willis wouldn't let him."

Mrs. Campbell: "They were just fooling us, and I will settle with Willis when we get home."

Mrs. Roberts: "We were terribly frightened."

Mrs. Campbell: "I was not frightened, but I was never so indignant in my life."

Campbell: "Do you understand all this, Dr. Lawton?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Willis! I will *not* stand this any longer, and if you keep it up, I shall go into hysterics. Now you just tell Edward the truth!"

Campbell: "Well, Amy, I will. You see, Roberts, that as soon as Dr. Lawton got here he suspected another physician, and he taxed Amy with it when she let him in, and instead of confessing at once, as any one else would have done, that he had been called simply because Roberts hadn't found Dr. Williams at home—"

Mrs. Campbell: "Oh!"

Campbell: "—she invented a cock and bull story, and then, because it wouldn't work, she told him that I was trying to play it on him; and they arranged it between them that they would let me do it—"

Mrs. Campbell: "And I think I was perfectly justifiable. You're always doing such things to me."

Dr. Lawton: "You were simply acting for his best good, Mrs. Campbell."

Campbell: "Then she gave Lawton away to me, the first chance she had."

But as soon as Lawton and I got together we saw through each other in a minute, and we concluded to let her have as much of her game as she wanted. That's all. Sorry to disturb Agnes, but that couldn't be helped. Of course we had to make some noise in the course of our little drama—"

Roberts: "Fortunately, Dr. Williams hadn't driven away; and when I heard the alarming uproar here, I called him in again. I thought Robby might—"

Campbell: "Well, that's pretty rough on Dr. Lawton."

Dr. Lawton: "Yes, Roberts, you might have remembered I was here. Well, I forgive you! Dr. Williams, shall we go up together and see if our patient is in a relapse?" He offers Dr. Williams his hand.

Dr. Williams, taking it, and meaning to say something civil: "I think I can safely leave him to you, *now*, doctor. There's nothing really the matter—"

Dr. Lawton: "Oh, you're very good!"

Campbell: "*You* seem to be getting compliments on all hands, Lawton. What's the matter with a few words of modest praise for your fellow-conspirator?"

Mrs. Roberts, to the waitress, who looks out from the dining-room door: "What is it, Bella? Breakfast? Well, now, you must both stay to breakfast with us, and if you decide that Robby can have something, and will only consult together and say what he shall have—"

Dr. Lawton, looking up the stairs at a forlorn little figure, very much dishev-

elled and imperfectly attired, which appears on the landing: "Suppose we let Robby decide for himself! Would you like some watermelon, Bob?"

Dr. Williams: "Or ice-cream?"

Dr. Lawton: "Or August sweetings?"

Dr. Williams: "Or soda-water?"

Dr. Lawton: "Or candy?"

Dr. Williams: "Or peaches and cream?"

Campbell: "Or all together?"

Mrs. Campbell: "Ah, don't tease the child!"

Robby, looking wistfully from one to the other as he descends to the floor, and fixing his eyes on his mother at last: "If you'll let me come to the table, mamma—I couldn't find all my clothes—I'd like a little milk-toast and tea."

Mrs. Roberts, stooping and putting his arms round her neck: "Oh, you poor little dirty angel! You shall have anything you want on the table. You won't mind his coming just as he is?" She turns with Robby to her guests, who take him into their arms one after another.

Dr. Lawton: "If Rob had another rag on him, I shouldn't feel good enough for his company."

Dr. Williams: "I consider him perfect, just as he is."

Mrs. Campbell: "And I will never hold him in bed again!"

Robby, after a moment: "You couldn't."

Campbell, catching him up on his shoulder, and dancing into the dining-room with him: "I knew she was just shamming when she pretended to do it."

A SINGING-STUDENT IN LONDON.

BY JEAN FORSYTH.

OWASSO, Michigan.—*April* 18, 1892. —After years of working away by myself, trying experiments with Madame Seiler's method, reading the best books on singing I could find, and practising according to all the hints given me, the desire of my heart seems at last within my reach. My dear old brother Reuben says I am to go to London for three months to take singing-lessons from the very best master there. When I look at his worn worried face, with the hair above it already turning gray, his rapidly rounding shoulders, and hands blackened with his hard work as foreman in a machine

shop, I feel unwilling to accept this great thing from him, but he says:

"It will please me more than anything has done for years to think of you being over there, and having a chance to develop yourself. I think your voice is worth it, sister."

"But what about Mary Holles?"

"Mary and I can wait," he replied. "We've waited for each other for nearly ten years now, and a year or so more or less will not make so much difference to us as it will to you. If you are ever going to sing well enough to earn your living by it, you must not be any longer