

A ONE ACT COMEDY-TRAGEDY

(From the Brooklyn, U.S.A. Tablet.)

Place—10 Downing Street, London.

Time—Lloyd George and Arthur Balfour expected home from the Peace Conference on a visit.

Scene—Lords Curzon and Milner seated at table.

Lord Curzon—Well, Milner, I can hardly wait until Arthur and David arrive. I am most anxious to know how they succeeded so well.

Lord Milner—My anxiety is also great. I do wonder how our success has been so remarkable. My Lord, please read that cablegram from Arthur again.

Curzon (reads)—“We put it all over the Americans. Will be home at once.”—Signed B.

Milner—So we put it all over the Americans. Are you sure that that street language means we out-classed or out-manoeuvred them?

Curzon—Most assuredly. Balfour is so clever that he not only defeats those “outsiders” but he uses their only language to announce the victory.

Milner (laughing)—Well the gentleman beats the “outsider” every time. This is almost too good to be true.

(Enter Arthur Balfour and David Lloyd George arm in arm smiling all over.)

Curzon Hail the conquerors!

Milner (laughing)—So you put it all over the Americans? Do tell us about it.

Lloyd George—My Lords, you flatter us. Arthur deserves all the credit: let him tell how we did it.

Arthur Balfour—Really, gentlemen, you honor me: but David is the Premier and he should have the glory of telling how we vanquished them.

George—Using Arthur's logic, the King should know a great deal about the Peace Treaty, but I really doubt if he knows the war is at an end yet. I pray, Arthur, you tell the Lords about the League of Nations and all that other stuff.

Balfour (smiling)—I am a good soldier and will obey orders. It is really a delight to tell you how we put it all over the Americans. You see the Yanks demanded a League of Nations, so after a great deal of deliberation we agreed. Under the Constitution of the League America will do our police work in Arabia and several other countries: she will put up the assets and we the liabilities, and in case of foreign disorder she will have to help suppress it, whether it be in Ireland or any other place. Of course you knew we only have five votes in the League while the others have one. It was quite hard for the President to “win us over,” but he succeeded. (General laughter.)

George (laughing)—Or, in other words, we are the League and all the others are the nations.

Curzon (laughing)—My word, as far as the Americans are concerned it's a League of Nations.

(Enter Lord Derby, greetings.)

Lord Derby—Well, Arthur, I hear you put it all over the Americans.

Balfour—You highly compliment me.

Derby—Do tell me how the President acted there.

Balfour—The President is a charming man. Rather bookish, but most interesting. Unlike nearly all Americans, he is not boresome.

George—He is most polished. He adores beautiful words. Nearly all day he speaks about democracy and humanity. This disturbed Arthur at first, but he soon saw the terms were meaningless.

Derby—But how about his Fourteen Points?

George (laughing)—You answer him, Arthur: it's too rich.

Balfour—Really, a submarine must have sunk those points on the way over. Self-determination, no annexations, no indemnities, no secret treaties, open covenants, rule of the people, freedom of the seas, disarmament, and—well, I don't remember if there were any others.

Derby—By Jove, if a submarine sank them it must have been a British one.

George—My lords, if there were any other points, you may be sure Arthur disfigured them while the Pre-

sident was talking about democracy and humanity.

Milner—My word, this is a grand occasion. To think that we got America to win the war for us, and now they will protect all our possessions. Getting one's enemy to fight your battles and then to make him protect the spoils for you is no mean achievement. Arthur, you are to be congratulated. It was the most clever act of your clever life.

George (laughing)—Don't say that. The cleverest thing in his life was the day he stood at George Washington's tomb in America without even smiling.

Curzon—We'll never forget the day we heard that news: really, it was richer than anything one could hear at a music hall.

Balfour—And, sir, I actually stood there with my hat off. (General laughter.)

Milner—I positively believed when Arthur had those dull Irishmen gaoled, and spread the pro-German plot, it was really the cleverest thing he ever did. My word, but—

(Enter Lord Lansdowne. Greetings.)

Lord Lansdowne—Arthur, I hear you put it all over the Americans. How did everything go?

Balfour (smiling)—Everything went bully.

Lord Lansdowne—Before you go any further, do tell me, did the President mention Ireland?

Balfour—No, not even once.

Lansdowne—Thank goodness, then my estates in Kerry will be safe. You gentlemen must spend a few days there with me in the summer.

Derby—Do you think the President is apt to do anything in the future for Ireland?

Balfour—Hardly. He mentioned it privately to me once, but I told him about internal questions and some other things like that, so I think everything will be all right. You see—

(Enter Sir Edward Shortt. Greetings.)

Edward Shortt—Aye, Arthur, I hear you threw it all over the Americans. It was real clever of you, don't you know?

George—Before you go any further, tell us how these degenerate Englishmen are behaving in Ireland.

Shortt—Aye, but the situation is quite devilish. You see, the Sinn Feiners—

George—Don't mention those ugly Irishmen by name: it makes me feel indisposed.

Shortt—Have your own way, sir, but a forest fire of agitation is sweeping America. Meetings, legislatures, and resolutions are demanding Ireland's freedom.

Curzon—It's all the King's fault. I knew when he spoke of democracy and small nations that those dull Yanks would think we were serious.

George—I hardly know what we can do now. You see, we used up most of our ammunition. We worked the religious question, the pro-German plot, Irishmen being divided, and the Irish being Bolsheviks. Really, most of our music has been played. Last year we spent nine million dollars on our 4000 agents in the States. It is very puzzling.

Lansdowne—Couldn't we have Edward Carson write some more editorials for the New York papers?

Balfour—You need not worry. I have arranged everything. Under the League of Nations America will forfeit several of her rights. Shortly after the treaty is signed the Yanks will realise that they have lost their freedom. Then they will have to start to agitate their own self-determination, and won't have time for Ireland.

Shortt—My word, but Arthur is a wonder, and to think that the President—

Grand chorus—

For he's a jolly good fellow,
 For he's a jolly good fellow,
 For he's a jolly good fellow,
 Which, none of us will deny.

Be not discouraged by thy past, but know that,
 whatever it has been, the best may still be thine.—
 Archbishop Spalding

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