

MUSIC

(He turns to look up at the portrait of the Duke, and, as he raises his glass towards it, the Company follow his example.)

For a Royal Birthday Celebration—  
Our Duke is ninety-three to-day!  
We send him a loyal salutation,  
Long to reign over us yet, we pray!

Though far away from Pontevedro,  
We're patriotic as can be!  
This house is part of Pontevedro—  
Pontevedro in Paree!

ALL: 'Though far away from Pontevedro,  
It's home-from-home, we all agree!

(During the latter part of the music there is a general raising and clinking of glasses. As the music ends, there is general chatter, and the CHORUS disperses gradually and naturally into the Ballroom.)

During this movement, the FOOTMEN collect the champagne glasses and take them off on their trays.

NJEGUS enters unobtrusively up R., intercepts one of the FOOTMEN on his way off, and drains a couple of the glasses.

BOGDANOVITSCH talks to PRASKOVIA and SYLVIA, up R. VALENCIENNE whispers with CAMILLE, L.C.; up R. OLGA flirts with PRITSCH, and KROMOV, up C., watching them jealously, fumes and frets. ST. BRIOCHE and CASCADA remain down C. with ZETA.)

ZETA: Ah, such loyalty—such loyalty! Touching, isn't it? I must send a message to His Royal Highness at once! . . . Where's that fellow Njegus got to?

NJEGUS (coming forward hastily and whipping out notebook and pencil): Here I am, your Excellency!

ZETA: Take this down: "Most Gracious Sovereign! To-night on the eve of your sublime birthday, all your loyal subjects here in the far West join in sending you affectionate greetings—"

ST. BRIOCHE }  
CASCADA } Hear, hear!

ZETA: "—and assurances of our devotion and esteem—"

ST. B. }  
CASCADA } Bravo!

ZETA: "—most cordial, heartfelt good wishes—erm—"

NJEGUS: In fact, many happy returns of the day.

ZETA: Well—yes—that's right, but dress it up a bit . . . you know . . . You ought to be able to compose a birthday greeting to the Duke by now, Njegus! (He moves R., with ST. BRIOCHE and CASCADA.)

NJEGUS (resignedly, as he shuts his notebook and turns away): Trouble is, the longer he lasts, the harder it gets . . . (Makes off L.)

KROMOV (striding angrily up to OLGA and PRITSCH): Olga!

OLGA (Irritably): What's the matter now?

KROMOV (In a harsh whisper): I've told you before—I won't have you flirting with every man you meet!

PRITSCH (hastily): Excuse me . . .

(Nervously passing a finger round the inside of his collar, he darts a scared look at KROMOV's fierce expression, and hurries over to join BOGDANOVITSCH, SYLVIA and PRASKOVIA.)

OLGA (furiously, to KROMOV): Oh, you—you—!! Leave me alone, can't you?

(With difficulty restraining herself from smacking his face, she turns and goes off up L.)

KROMOV (calling after her, in a temper): Olga! Olga! . . .

(The others have been watching with amusement, and as he hears their chuckles, he turns to throw them a furious glance; then with an exclamation of baffled rage, he stamps off after OLGA.)

(The others now laugh loudly.)

ZETA (amused, but pitying): Dear, dear, dear! Poor Kromov! Did you ever see such a jealous husband?

ST. B. (Slyly): Now if any husband ought to be jealous—(With a swift glance at VALENCIENNE and CAMILLE, who oblivious of everybody else, are still whispering together.)—it should be you, your Excellency, shouldn't it?

ZETA (who has not observed ST. BRIOCHE's glance): Me?—What do you mean?

ST. B.: Oh, nothing—nothing—

CASCADA (tactfully drawing them both aside, R.): He's talking nonsense, your Excellency. . . . Everybody knows the Baroness is a very model of virtue.

ZETA: Yes, indeed—just an innocent child. I'm a very lucky man, you know—(As CASCADA and ST. BRIOCHE engage ZETA in conversation aside, we see that CAMILLE is surreptitiously kissing VALENCIENNE's hand. She laughs chidingly, and, as she reluctantly withdraws her hand, he takes from her the fan she was holding. She moves down C., with CAMILLE following her.)

VALEN.: Not now, Camille, not now . . .

CAMILLE: But, Valencienne . . .

VALEN.: Sssh! . . . Wait till we're alone!

(CAMILLE quickly writes something on the fan.)

What are you doing?

CAMILLE: You won't allow me to say it to you—so I've written it down. (He hands her the fan.)

VALEN. (Glancing at the writing): "I love you . . ."

ZETA (detaching himself from the others, and advancing genially): Ah, there you are, my dear!

(VALENCIENNE gives a little start, but recovers immediately.)

VALEN. (sweetly): I've been here all the time, dear—chatting with our guests.

ZETA (dotingly): Of course, of course—always the perfect hostess!—(Glancing amiably at CAMILLE)—eh, de Rosillon?

CAMILLE (murmuring sheepishly): Yes indeed, your Excellency!

ZETA (promptly forgetting him and concentrating on his wife): And apropos of that, my dear, you know Madame Glavari will be arriving at any moment. You will be on hand to greet her, won't you?