

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

DRAMA

1916/02/T/PRE

Written Paper Option A

FRIDAY 13 JUNE 2008

Morning

Time: 2 hours



INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This booklet contains a script extract from 'Poppy', by Peter Nicholls, and a stimulus item, 'The Match-girls'.
- This is a clean copy of the Pre-Release Material which you should already have seen.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- You should refer to it when answering the examination questions which are printed in a separate booklet.
- You may **not** take your previous copy of the pre-released material into the examination.
- You may **not** take notes into the examination.
- Answers must **only** be written on the examination paper and any additional answer paper you may need.

This document consists of **23** printed pages and **1** blank page.

Poppy

by
PETER NICHOLLS

Background information on the play.

'Poppy' by Peter Nicholls, the author of 'A Day in the Death of Joe Egg', 'Passion Play' and 'Privates on Parade'.

Originally performed by The Royal Shakespeare Company, 'Poppy' was first written for a big theatre. The play *'uses all the resources of the traditional British pantomime to tell the essentially serious and devastating story of the mid-nineteenth century Opium Wars. Using everything from spectacular transformation scenes to brilliant parodies of Gilbert and Sullivan and with a cast including a principal boy, dame and pantomime horse, Nicholls lays bare the Victorian hypocrisy of a foreign war waged to ensure that China remained addicted to opium, the single most profitable export of the British East India Company.'*

(Quote taken from front sleeve of the 1982 Methuen paperback publication of the play.)

You will need to adapt your approach to the text for the smaller scale performance spaces you use in your school. Finding ways to make it work on a small scale with less elaborate forms of staging is an interesting theatrical challenge.

The extract has been slightly edited to make it suitable for use in schools. The play exposes the double standards that often exist, especially between nations where some are more powerful than others. The play contains references and expressions that would be deemed unacceptable today in the United Kingdom. However the author uses them to highlight the different social and political standards that existed at the time when the play is set – Victorian Britain at the height of the British Empire. In this context, the play is sharply satirical and ironic. Even the title, '*Poppy*', is a play on words with the cockney rhyming slang for money and the source of opium.

CHARACTERS

TAO-KUANG, *Emperor of China*

QUEEN VICTORIA

JACK IDLE, *a manservant*

RANDY, *his horse*

SALLY FORTH, *a schoolmistress*

CHERRY, *her mare*

LADY DODO, *the dowager Lady Whittington*

DICK WHITTINGTON, *the squire*

OBADIAH UPWARD, *a London merchant*

LIN TSE-TSII, *Commissioner to Canton*

TENG TING CHEN, *Viceroy of Kwuantung*

YO-YO, *his daughter*

Villagers, sailors, clerks, Indian peasants, Chinese courtiers, servants, apparitions, wild animals, etc.

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ACT ONE

Scene One (Prologue)

During the orchestral overture, the front tabs rise to show a swirling mass of clouds and water, a place where gods and emperors can meet.

The music takes on an oriental tinge and lights come up behind the scrim. A gong is struck. We hear voices intoning:

- VOICES: From the Paradise of Countless Trees 5
In the shade of the Temple of Universal Joy –
Gong.
- Hear the greeting of Tao-Kuang,
Emperor of the Middle Kingdom,
Son of Heaven, 10
Ruler of the Four Seas,
Glorious Rectitude,
Lasting Glory!
- The EMPEROR has gradually appeared during this, robed and splendid,
in a throne floating high above. 15*
Gong.
- EMPEROR: I have chosen the Hour of the Snake to call across my vast domains to
you, regent of the isolated Western Isles. Are you receiving me, distant
and subject king?
- Music crescendo and the young VICTORIA comes from a trap, holding
her orb and sceptre. 20*
- VICTORIA: Loud and clear, Your Highness.
The EMPEROR looks down on hearing her.
- EMPEROR: Forgive me, are you sure you are a king? 25
Your tribal garb is so bewildering,
Your head-dress and regalia so wild,
You seem to us more like a female child.
- VICTORIA: We were a girl till Uncle William's death,
Then queen, Defender of the Faith, Fid. Def. –
- EMPEROR (*interrupting*): 30
We leave that sort of thing to our advisers;
Our Mandarins, we take it, will apprise us
Of any changes in our colonies.
- VICTORIA: Your minions
Are wrong as to the scope of our dominions.
We rule not only England, Scotland, Wales – 35
Gong. She stops, wincing.
- EMPEROR: These only seem to us like travellers' tales.
Who cares who rules these lands we understand are in
A semi-savage state?

VICTORIA:	Your senior Mandarin Merits a reprimand: too often wrong.	40
EMPEROR:	Come, child, this audience is getting long. The loyal offerings your last king sent –	
VICTORIA:	That wasn't quite what Uncle William meant –	
EMPEROR:	– We will accept as interesting toys Although the gun made rather too much noise. The traps for mice were fun, the chiming clocks, Your funny sea-charts and your weathercocks.	45
VICTORIA:	We're glad you were amused.	
EMPEROR:	We weren't <i>amused</i> . The Son of Heaven amused? My Mandarins perhaps. Not I. Not We. Monarchs aren't easy to amuse.	50
VICTORIA (<i>thoughtfully</i>):	I see. But may I send some up-to-date examples Of Britain's skill? A steamship full of samples?	55
EMPEROR:	As long as you instruct your envoys now Never to come again without kowtow.	
VICTORIA:	That's not a word we English understand.	
EMPEROR:	Nine knockings of the head upon the ground. The minimum salute.	60
VICTORIA:	Our subjects bow Or go down on one knee. They don't kowtow. <i>Burst of threatening music. Gong. Smoke, bursts of flame surrounding the EMPEROR.</i>	
EMPEROR:	Vain girl, you'd better learn kowtow chop-chop Or else you'll find we've shut the China shop. Without our tea and rhubarb your whole nation Will die in agonies of constipation. As for our silk, we hear your ladies love it. What have you got that Chinese people covet? We tolerate this trade through our complaisance As long as envoys make the right obeisance. To anyone who won't we'll close our doors. Young queen, we've said enough. The choice is yours! <i>More noise, music and smoke. A last gong. He vanishes.</i>	65 70 75
VICTORIA (<i>to the audience</i>):	Do Chinamen always behave that churlish Or is he shocked to find someone so girlish Wearing Britain's crown? Well, we'll find out. He'll keep on dropping in, I make no doubt, And I'll pop <i>up</i> , to stop you all complaining You came tonight for something entertaining, Not a display of oriental pride. You'll say there's quite enough of that outside. But hark! the English church-bells softly chime To start the story. Once upon a time There was a village far from London Town, That called itself Dunroamin-on-the-Down.	80 85

Scene Two

During the last lines, lights come up to show that VICTORIA is a statue on a stone plinth in the courtyard of a manor house that's seen better days.

The courtyard of Whittington Manor: A ramshackle house behind, neglected outbuildings with thatched roofs, beams and gables; behind them part of a Gothic chapel with a crooked weathervane; in the courtyard near the statue are a well and a tree. 90

VILLAGERS enter, mostly GIRLS, some carrying milkpails on yokes, sheaves of corn, baskets, reap-hooks, etc., singing: while they do, some VILLAGE MEN come on carrying trunks, bags, possessions, clearly ready for a journey. 95

VILLAGERS (*who are staying*):

What more could you ask for an opening scene?
The heavens so cloudless, the meadow so green,
The bit where we're standing which comes in between 100
Is filled with an air that is spotlessly clean.

VILLAGERS (*who are leaving: mostly men*):

We freely admit there's no pollution,
But country life's all give, it's never take.
They've started an Industrial Revolution
And it's time we got our slice of the cake! 105
Now the CHORUS. An argument between the leavers and the stayers, roughly girls and boys.

GIRLS: And that's why you're leaving to go to the town?

BOYS: Because Dunroamin's on the Down.

GIRLS: Deserting your village to live in the smoke? 110

BOYS: Why not? Dunroamin's stony broke.

GIRLS: The country's the best place for sons of the soil.

BOYS: Yes, if they only want back-breaking toil.
And so the factories and mills are where we can be found
As long as poor Dunroamin's on the Down. 115

GIRLS: Shan't we be seeing you back here before
You hear Dunroamin's on the Up once more?

BOYS: By which time no one's gonna wear a frown –

VICTORIA: And heavy is the head that wears a crown –

ALL: At Dunroamin-on-the-Down! 120

This jumpy number ends with a tableau as the VILLAGERS raise their hands to the QUEEN, who holds aloft her orb and sceptre.

JACK IDLE comes from the stables, carrying a saddle. He's in his twenties, bright, hard-working, speaks with a Cockney accent. He leads RANDY, a pantomime horse. 125

JACK (*coming centre*):

Whoa boy. Stand at – ease. Stand – easy.

RANDY collapses on the last command.

I said 'stand'. You haven't forgotten how to stand?

RANDY shakes his head emphatically and whinnies, stands, scrapes his hind hoof on the stage several times. 130

Now, now, that's enough of that. In front of all the boys and girls.

- CHORUS: Hullo, Jack.
- JACK: Hullo, boys and girls.
- CHORUS: And hullo, Randy.
 RANDY *nods his head and whinnies.* 135
- JACK: Collapsing like that before you've even got the harness on.
 Leave alone the young squire.
- GIRL: Won't you be sorry to see Randy go?
- JACK: I'm going with him.
- GIRL: To London? 140
- JACK: Yes. Blimey, who d'you think's going to take care of The Young Master
 if it's not his gentleman's gentleman? And I couldn't let my old moke go
 back there, not without his hostler to comb his coat and file his nails.
During this, he has been saddling the horse.
- GIRL: We were hoping you'd help convince our men to stay. 145
- JACK: I would if I could.
- MEN: We're off to make our fortunes in Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester,
 London.
- GIRL: Jack, you were born in London, weren't you?
- JACK: I was a cheery Cockney sparrow till the day I flew away – 150
- MAN: Have you no urge to see it again?
- JACK: No thanks.
- GIRL: No ambition to see the world?
- JACK: Tell 'em Randy.
 RANDY *shakes his head.* 155
- ALL: How typical of Idle Jack!
- MAN: From Cockney sparrow to village goose!
They all laugh and turn away, talking to each other.
- JACK (to RANDY and the audience):
 Why should we seek a favourable breeze
 To carry us to the antipodes 160
 When all our heart's desire is in this valley –
 A mare called Cherry and a girl called Sally?
He looks about.
 But look, old sport, they've left us all alone –
 A chance for me to play my xylophone. 165
He pulls a xylophone from behind a tree and nods to the orchestra
 CONDUCTOR.
 Thank you, Professor.
As the band plays the opening chords, the CHORUS returns.
- GIRL: Here's Sally coming. Look, here's Sally Forth. 170
*The music dies away. JACK wheels off his xylophone, as SALLY enters
 on CHERRY, the mare. SALLY is the principal girl, wearing a long
 Victorian riding-habit. They help her dismount. CHERRY has long
 lashes which she flutters at RANDY, who scrapes the ground with his
 hoof again. JACK has to restrain him till a CHORUS BOY leads him
 upstage to drink from a pail at the well. GIRLS attend to CHERRY.* 175

- SALLY: Hullo, boys and girls.
- CHORUS: Hullo, Sally.
- SALLY: And hullo, Jack. You can't imagine how glad I am to see you.
- JACK: Are you really? 180
- SALLY: I was afraid I'd miss you.
- JACK: Would that have mattered?
- SALLY: Jack, how could you say such things? Aren't we the best of friends?
She leads him downstage, arm in arm, flirting. The VILLAGERS rhubarb to each other. She kisses him lightly. 185
- Suddenly loud gunfire is heard. A cry of alarm from the CHORUS. A large bird falls from the flies on to the stage. SALLY, JACK, RANDY and CHERRY run off. The CHORUS boys and girls hide. QUEEN VICTORIA cowers, holds up her sceptre and drops on her plinth down the trap. Another explosion and music with it. DODO enters, the dame, a middle-aged woman played by a man. She's wearing black nineteenth-century hunting clothes, trimmed with all the dead birds and rabbits she has shot. She carries a smouldering fouling piece. She adds the dead bird to her bag.* 190
- DODO: Anything that moves I put a bullet in. My bag so far today – three rabbits, a brace of pheasant, a wild duck, a seagull, a cherry orchard, one scarecrow and a traffic warden. 195
- CHORUS (*emerging, in unison*): Good morning, your ladyship.
- DODO (*falling back in alarm*): Oooh, you could frighten anyone to death jumping out like that.
As she turns, she sweeps the gun round and they all cower. 200
- What are you doing in my back garden? Aren't you a load of commoners?
- CHORUS: Yes, your ladyship.
- DODO: Then why aren't you on the common?
- SINGLE GIRL: Your son invited us, Lady Dodo.
- DODO: Lady Dodo? Lady Dodo? I am the Dowager Lady Dorothea. Don't you even know what a Dodo is, you half-witted, D-stream, Comprehensive School bumpkins? It's a hideous extinct old bird. 205
- CHORUS: We know that, Lady Dodo.
- DODO (*reacts with umbrage, sweeping the gun round as they cower*): Get off my land, the lot of you. Yobs, paysans, putains! Sacré bleu! 210
- SALLY *comes on*.
- SALLY: But, Lady Dodo, they were all asked to come here by the young master.
- DODO: Whatever for?
- SALLY: To wish them godspeed. Many of them are leaving for a new life, he himself is off to London – 215
- DODO: Why, why, why, I ask myself. Where did I go wrong?
- CHORUS MAN: Don't ask yourself. Ask your son –
- CHORUS: Because here he comes!
A fanfare from the orchestra. Everyone turns as DICK WHITTINGTON enters, the principal boy, played by a beautiful young woman. He too is wearing black but it's a tight-fitting suit with high-heeled shoes and legs in tights reaching nearly to his shoulders. He's putting on black leather gloves and carries a riding-crop. 220

- DICK: Good morning, boys and girls.
- CHORUS: Good morning, squire. 225
- DICK: Good morning, Sally.
- SALLY (*curtseying*): Good morning, sir.
- DICK: Good morning, mother.
- DODO: Good morning, son.
- DICK: I didn't see you at breakfast. 230
- DODO: No, I was out shooting lunch. Is it true you invited all these commoners here?
- DICK: Is that what you call them?
- DODO: They couldn't be much commoner if they tried.
- DICK: They're the villagers, our neighbours and dependants, for centuries the faithful servants of our fine old family. But how have we rewarded their loyalty and labour? Dunroamin's in ruins. 235
- DODO: And whose fault is that? It's theirs.
- CHORUS: Oh, no, it's not.
- DODO: Oh, yes, it is. 240
- DICK: }
SALLY: }
CHORUS: } Oh, no, it's not.
- DICK: Within a year I promise you I'll see our family thrive again or my name's not Dick Whittington.
- DODO: A Whittington in trade! We'll never live this down.
- DICK: But, mother, the first Dick Whittington, who thrice became Lord Mayor of London, was up to his neck in trade. 245
- DODO: Oh, no, he wasn't.
- CHORUS: Oh, yes he was!
- SALLY: Oh, yes, a draper to begin with –
- DODO: Pas devant! 250
- SALLY: And afterwards a moneylender.
- DODO: Pas devant les paysans!
- SALLY: He lent money to Richard the Second – Henry the Fourth –
- DICK: Parts One and Two.
- SALLY: Henry the Fifth – 255
- DICK: Both play *and* film –
- DODO: Well, moneylending's not so bad. You couldn't call it *useful*, could you?
- SALLY: And his success had nothing to do with his cat.
- DICK: No, that sort of fairy tale's no use in the new Victorian age that's coming. Britain's going to have to go out into the market-place, find new customers, sell more goods, compete with other nations. 260
- DODO (*aside to the audience*): He talks like a Merchant Banker already.
- DICK: That's the only way there's any hope of living happily ever after.
- DODO: After? We lived happily *before*. In the good old days. Ask *them*, if you don't believe me. Weren't you? Happy before? 265
- She sweeps the CHORUS again with her gun. They eagerly agree.*

- (DODO *sings*): Now let us praise
The good old days,
The Life of Riley and the easy ways,
When everybody knew their station – 270
A golden age before we had inflation.
For half a crown
You'd buy a gown,
A trip to London where we'd paint the town,
With champagne, oysters and the fare both ways 275
In the Good Old Days
(With some left over).
- CHORUS: In the Good Old Days –
- DODO: We were in clover
- CHORUS: In the Good Old Days. 280
The music ends.
- DODO: Of if you won't believe that lot at least believe your poor Old Dad.
God bless his scutcheon. Yes, he loved the days of yore.
- DICK: A man of his time.
- DODO: Well, what man's not? 285
- DICK: The eighteenth century.
- DODO: So?
- DICK: Times have changed. There's more to life than aristocracy.
New forces are at work.
- DODO: What bosh! It's still the same old story – 290
The son becomes a radical because his dad was Tory.
- DICK: It doesn't take a radical to see our fortune's spent.
- DODO: Then make some more.
- DICK: How?
- DODO: Can't these tenant farmers pay more rent? 295
- CHORUS: Oh, no, we can't.
- DODO: Oh, yes, you can.
- SALLY: They can't, they haven't any.
Because their produce isn't sold, they never make a penny.
- DODO: A City Man? Your father will be turning in his grave. 300
- DICK: Well, Mother, I'm the squire now and rather than a slave
I'll be a tradesman any day. It's absolutely vital
To pay our debts and bring new honour to our ancient title.
*Everyone except DODO cheers. JACK re-enters with RANDY, ready for
the journey. RANDY is bowed down with baggage and JACK carries a
dainty bundle tied in a handkerchief on the end of a stick. DICK speaks
to the VILLAGERS as they prepare, bid farewell, etc.* 305
- Friends, your road lies t'wards the North while
Idle Jack and I
Will wend our way to London. Till we meet again 310
– goodbye
And remember – Professor –
(*Sings*). Stop pining for
The days of yore!

Believe me, there are better times in store. 315
 The age of gold's not past, it's coming;
 You'll all have bungalows with inside plumbing.
 It's gonna be
 A century
 Of daring British ingenuity 320
 With other nations standing by amazed
 In the Good New Days.

The band plays out the end of this while they all kiss, etc. DICK tries to mount RANDY but he won't bear any more, JACK and other MEN take off the horse's load, help DICK to mount. JACK gives him his dainty parcel on a stick which DICK slings picturesquely over one shoulder. The MEN load JACK with the clobber. SALLY kisses JACK and off they go. 325

The CHORUS divides, most going, a few WOMEN and OLD MEN staying. 330

Scene Three

Frontcloth falls. The stable yard of Whittington Manor. SALLY and CHERRY left onstage.

SALLY: Cherry, he's gone! Yours too. It isn't fair.
 What's left for this schoolmistress and her mare?

Jets of water squirt from CHERRY's eyes. SALLY embraces and comforts her. 335

Work's left. That's what. We must work hard. So hard there's no time left to think or dream.

CHERRY *shakes her head.*

I needn't tell you my wicked thoughts again, need I? 340
 You've blushed at them so many times already.

CHERRY *nods. A red spot is thrown on her.*

But I must.

CHERRY *shakes her head, puts hoofs on ears.*

Yours are the only ears in the world that I can allow to hear my secret longings. Of course I know Our Lord can hear me too but it's through you I confess to Him, begging His tender mercy and imploring His forgiveness. 345

CHERRY *runs to another part but SALLY catches her.*

I know it's an illicit craving, a forbidden fancy, a hectic fever but what can I do? I love Sir Richard. I do, I do! Not poor decent Jack who loves me, no – I like him, of course, and enjoy flirting with him and twisting him round my little finger and it thrills me and gives me collywobbles when I remember how many of the village girls he's supposed to have kissed. 355

CHERRY *prances about in excitement, brings SALLY a bucket from the well. SALLY mops her brow with water. It steams. They both kneel and SALLY puts her hands together.*

Sweet Jesus, look mercifully on us poor sinners. Wash us from our wickedness and cleanse us in your precious blood ... 360

One of the VILLAGE GIRLS runs across pushing a barrow full of luggage.

- GIRL: Hurry up, your Dodoship, or you're going to miss the bus.
DODO *follows, now garishly dressed. Other VILLAGERS drift on.*
- DODO: Bye-bye, tally-ho, le prochain fois, see you on the ice, if you can't be good be careful. 365
SALLY *and CHERRY stand but CHERRY weeps aloud.*
And what are you whinnying about, you silly filly?
- SALLY: Whatever's happened to your widow's weeds?
- DODO: My spell of mourning's over. I'm still a young woman with my life before me. This is my ensemble de voyage. I'm off to London. 370
- SALLY: To London?
- DODO: For a few days.
- SALLY: Oh, my lady, has it occurred to you? In London you may come across Dick. 375
- SALLY (*after being nudged by CHERRY*): Did I say Dick?
- DODO: You did.
- SALLY: I meant Jack. Jack Idle.
- DODO: Idle by name, idle by nature. Runs in the family. His uncle, the second coachman when Jack first came here, he was the same. Died of idolatry. 380
- GIRL: Madam, you must hurry. If you're not there they won't wait. It's only a Request Stop.
- DODO: Tout de suite, Sharon. Oh, the shame of it! A Whittington waiting for a bus. Going on a cheap mid-week return! Mixing with the Great Unwashed at Victoria Coach Station. But what can we do? We've no horses of our own. We lack the ready. I wanted to take Sharon as a lady's maid but where's the fare to come from? 385
- SALLY: Oh, my lady, let me come instead.
- DODO: You. How *can* you?
- SALLY: As your maid. I've got the fare. 390
- DODO: You have?
CHERRY *stamps on the ground and shakes her head.*
- SALLY (*aside*): The school milk money. It can be a loan.
- DODO: Well, why not? We'll call you my chaperone.
(*Aside:*) My chic will be more stunningly displayed
Beside the rustic looks of this poor maid. 395
- GIRL: Your ladyship, I hear the coach approach.
- DODO: Au 'voir, paysans, a bientôt, toodle-oo,
And don't do anything I wouldn't do.
She goes, preceded by the GIRLS and the luggage. SALLY kisses CHERRY. 400
Music. SALLY follows. The sound of an old-fangled motor born. The VILLAGERS and CHERRY remain waving goodbye.

Scene Four

Cloth flies revealing a City office: a window with a view of St Paul's, portraits in oils, a chandelier, desks. 405

The music becomes the intro to a Gilbert and Sullivan sort of song. The preamble is sung by four male CLERKS with quill pens, ledgers, abacuses, etc.

CLERKS: In these chambers fine and spacious
Verging on the ostentatious 410
Sits a merchant perspicacious;
Obadiah Upward.

In our time few businessmen shall
Be one whit as influential,
So we beg a reverential 415

Silence for the most courageous
Man the City's seen for ages.
(And what's more he pays our wages!)
Obadiah Upward.

UPWARD is revealed at the main desk: he's fifty, robust and prosperous, hearty. The CLERKS attend him and grovel. 420

UPWARD: When I was a lad in Bromley, Kent,
I worked as a grocer's assistant;
My present position eminent
Seemed a likelihood rather distant; 425
But at the grocery I did so well
That the Promised Land grew closer.
I loved to buy and I loved to sell
So I finally bought the grocer.

CLERKS: How enterprising of you to buy 430
That old-established grocer.

UPWARD: Thus far I'd risen when I came
To find upon reflection
That if Upward was my second name
It was also my direction. 435
I fell in love with a fair young maid
Who said, 'It's such a pity,
I couldn't marry a man in trade,
Only Someone in The City.'

CLERKS: She didn't understand that trade's 440
What happens in The City.

UPWARD: I bought a failing partnership
And the profits started leaping
To prove I never lost my grip
On accounting and book-keeping. 445
The fair young maid was now my wife
For by this time I'd bought her,
Though regrettably she lost her life
Giving birth to our only daughter.

CLERKS: Oh, what a shame she lost her life 450
Giving birth to his only daughter.

They all laugh as the coda's played. UPWARD rounds on them and they go back to their work, like Bob Cratchits.

A loud knocking at the door. UPWARD takes up a tiny bell from his desk and rings it. It sounds like a fire bell. DICK puts his head round the door. 455

DICK: I hope I understand the bell? It seemed to say 'Come in at once'.

UPWARD: Well?

DICK: Sir Richard Whittington to see Mr Obadiah Upward.

UPWARD: S'welp me, Bob! Sir Richard here? The man to whom, in many ways, I owe my prosperity, these pretentious premises, the chandelier ... 460

He indicates it, looks at the audience, pauses, then goes on.

After all this time? Well, show him in, young man, show him in.

DICK enters, bows grandly.

DICK: Sir Richard, at your service, sir. 465

UPWARD (*ringing the bell again*): You seem to be a dab hand at reading bells? So did you hear the message that time? 'Clear off, vamoose, scarper, sling your hook'. I happen to have met Sir Richard Whittington.

DICK: Is that so, sir?

UPWARD: Yes, it is, sir. Unluckily for you. Only once, it's true, and many moons ago but I haven't forgotten he was about my age – 470

DICK: Older, I'd say.

UPWARD: A thumping snob –

DICK: That sounds like him.

UPWARD: In fact, a proud and unbending member of the minor aristocracy. So throw this person out! 475

CLERKS: With pleasure, sir.

They surround DICK and threaten him.

DICK: The first to lay a hand on me will be in for a surprise.

CLERKS: (We wouldn't say *that*.) Oh, no we won't. 480

DICK: Oh, yes you will.

They grab him but DICK struggles, escapes and jumps on the main desk.

Was old Sir Richard so proud that he settled a gaming debt of yours and afterwards wouldn't suffer you to repay him, however many times you tried? 485

UPWARD: How the deuce –

DICK: A debt for five hundred pounds?

UPWARD: The man's a scoundrel. Grab him!

The CLERKS approach. DICK escapes but calls out:

DICK: Jack! (*Takes out a chit*.) And here, sir, is your IOU, which he would never let you redeem. 490

UPWARD (*takes and looks at it*): Because I was in trade, don't tell me.

JACK comes in, dagger at the ready.

JACK: Hullo, hullo, hullo, what's all this? As the policeman said to the three-headed burglar. 495

DICK: These fellows are giving me a warm reception.

- JACK: I told you that bell didn't say 'Come in!'. *(To the audience.)* It was the same on Highgate Hill. 'Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London –'
- UPWARD: Who are you, sir? 500
- DICK: I am the only son of old Sir Richard, heir to the estate and all his debts, come to London with notes of the credit he advanced when there was a fortune to squander.
- UPWARD: So the old man's dead? I'm sorry to hear it. And I beg your pardon.
They shake hands. The CLERKS relax. 505
- DICK: Think nothing of it, sir. My man, Jack Idle.
- JACK *(nodding to him)*: I left our horse on a double yellow line.
- UPWARD: One of these fellows will feed the warden. As you see, they're a sort-of Victorian ABBA.
The CLERKS fuss round DICK, touching him. 510
- CLERKS *(singing)*: We're sorry we laid hands on you,
We hope that you'll forgive us.
DICK *retreats from their prying hands.*
- UPWARD: This is my chandelier. Which usually gets a round. But not from this lot. *(Glares at the audience.)* I'd introduce you to my better half but she snuffed it years ago. 515
- JACK: Yes we heard.
- UPWARD: Where?
- JACK: In the song.
- DICK: Your daughter lived? 520
- UPWARD: My darling Lucy, yes! She's away being finished.
- DICK: Was there something missing?
- UPWARD: S'welp me Bob, no! Everything in its place.
He opens a panel revealing a pin-up photograph of a pretty girl in Victorian dress. 525
Lucy, eighteen, a trim craft, enjoys all water sports and every man she meets goes overboard.
Shuts the panel.
She's at school in a place called Shammynicks.
- DICK: Acquiring a little French polish? 530
- UPWARD: You've got to hand it to the French, they could educate a chimpanzee.
(Sings.)
When she's learnt the Peerage then the job
Will almost be completed.
They've turned her into a high-class snob 535
So I reckon I've not been cheated.
Because her dowry will be solid gold
She'll soon be married to the gentry
And then perhaps I shan't be told
To use the tradesman's entry. 540
- DICK: But why are you so keen your gold
Should help you join the gentry?

- UPWARD: 'Cos still my Upward-looking eyes
Are fixed on climbing higher;
By far the most elusive prize 545
Is to be a country squire.
I'd ride a hunter with tremendous verve
And when I came to mount her,
They'd none of them guess I used to serve
Behind the bacon counter. 550
- ALL: Astonishing thought that he used to serve
Behind the bacon counter.
- UPWARD: Two years from now my Lucy will be a Marchioness.
- JACK: Have you fixed on any particular Martian?
- UPWARD: The Marquis of Melton Mowbray – 555
- DICK: Old Archie?
- UPWARD: Master of The Quorn.
- JACK: Pork pies by appointment.
- UPWARD: But His Grace drives a hard bargain. More than I can manage at the
moment. Still – if this was my last monkey you should have it and 560
welcome.
He's taken banknotes from a safe.
- DICK: Thank you, sir, but I want to be paid in kind not cash. I want a position
in your business.
- UPWARD: Bless my soul, young sir. I'd be chuffed beyond words to have your 565
moniker on my notepaper. Give my enterprise enormous catch-it.
- DICK: Would it?
- UPWARD: How shall I put it? Dick Whittington's the sort of name – well, it –
- DICK: Rings a bell?
- UPWARD: And have the poppy anyway. 570
- DICK: The poppy?
- JACK: Cockney slang for money.
*A motor horn is heard off, followed by a commotion. They all turn as the
door bursts open and DODO enters.*
- DODO: Where is he? Let me at him! Where's this thieving skinflint Upward? 575
- DICK: Mother!
- DODO: Dick!
- DICK: What are you doing here?
- DODO (*showing a book*): This is your father's address book. I'm going round London
looking up all the robbers that reduced us to our present level of 580
penury.
- UPWARD (*to CLERKS*): I notice you're not so keen to lay your hands on her.
- DICK: This is Mr Upward, Mother, and he's no robber but an honourable City
merchant who's about to offer me a place in his business.
- UPWARD: And five hundred pounds. 585
- DODO (*taking it*): Oh, he's charming! Quite delightful. And almost a gentleman.
*She lifts her skirts and puts the money into a purse suspended among
her petticoats. SALLY enters.*

- SALLY: Lady Dorothea, that *is* Randy standing outside. I knew it the moment I saw him ... Sir Richard! 590
- JACK: Sally!
- SALLY: – and Jack! Randy came and licked my hand.
- JACK: He could smell Cherry.
- CLERKS: Shall we lay our hands on *her*, sir?
- DICK (*as JACK defends her*): My ward Sally. The family's complete. 595
- UPWARD: Just in time to say goodbye. Tomorrow I'm off to foreign parts and I should like you to come along, sir.
- SALLY: Oh, no! (*Then quickly.*) Jack too?
- JACK: What foreign parts?
- UPWARD: We'll be sailing in a merchantman which carries a cargo of Lancashire cotton goods to Bengal. 600
- SALLY: They buy our cotton goods in Bengal? I've always taught in geography that they make their own.
- UPWARD: They used to. And so cheaply they threatened to wipe out British textiles altogether, the coolie labour being as cheap as dirt. Then our mill-owners came to their senses, got the kiddies into the factories, even cheaper than the blacks. Bingo! Made our goods competitive once more. 605
- DICK: I should never have thought of that.
- UPWARD: You'll soon learn.
- DICK: It's the right attitude for a new age. 610
- UPWARD: And the more you see, the prouder you'll be.
- SALLY: It's clever, sir, but is it Christian?
- UPWARD: It keeps them off the streets, ma'am, how can it not be?
- DICK: I'm only a plain country gentleman, lass, but don't you think it pleases Our Lord to see those heathen loins decently hid by drawers of British cotton? 615
- SALLY: I'm sure it does.
- UPWARD: At Calcutta we board one of my own clippers, bound for Canton, with an altogether different cargo.
- DICK: Canton? How's that strike you, Jack? The fabulous coast of Cathay? The Forbidden City, Aladdin's Cave – 620
- UPWARD: Aladdin's Cave is right. And we have the 'Open, Sesame'.
He sings a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song.
- If you want to make a killing
And you're capable and willing, 625
Then your pockets you'll be filling
In Cathay;
- And in regions Oriental
A determined Occidental 630
Will be treated in a gentle-
Manly way.
- Which is why I'm now a shipper
With a record-breaker clipper
And a mile-a-minute skipper
On his day. 635

- DODO: I suppose that if you carry tea
With any regularity
You'll never be to charity
A prey?
- UPWARD: But a man would be a silly'un 640
Who thought he'd make a million
From tea or from vermilion
Today.
- DICK: And if the Orientals are the suppliers 645
And we're forced to be the buyers
That can hardly justify us
In our stay?
- UPWARD: Except that there's a line a 650
City man has found much finer
And it's one for which the China-
Man will pay:
In Calcutta grows a crop he
Can't resist in any shop; he
Loves the product of the poppy.
What d'you say? 655
- DICK (*speaking*): What do we say? Hooray. And let's away.
- DODO: Not without us. An ocean voyage! Just what I need. A widow's cruise.
- DICK: But, Mother, you can't! How long's the journey take?
- UPWARD: Six months to get there. We'll be away two years.
- JACK: Two years. (*To SALLY*): Not without you. 660
- DODO: Certainly not. I'll pay our passage if I have to.
She lifts her skirt to find the purse.
- UPWARD: No need, my lady. Be my guest.
- UPWARD: }
CLERKS: } (*sing*).
We welcome you with open arms 665
And sentiments euphoric.
With our experience and your charms,
Our rise should be meteoric.
- JACK: }
SALLY: } It's love that makes the world go round.
- UPWARD: It's trade that keeps it spinning – 670
– which every intelligent man has found
Right back to the beginning.
- UPWARD: For I love to buy –
- ALL: Oh my, oh my
- UPWARD: And I love to sell – 675
- ALL: Well, well, well, well
- UPWARD: A bit of trade's my favourite game –
- DODO (*ogling him*): Mais quelle bon chance, I feel the same!
- ALL: And that is the tale of the life so far
Of Obadiah Upward! 680
Tableau. They beg applause for the chandelier.

Scene Five

A blackout ended the song and in the dark the opening cloth is dropped: lights behind show the PRINCIPALS greeting RANDY, mounting a gangplank that's dropped from the side.

The music here is a medley of themes from the age of sail and should include part of 'Rule Britannia'. Rigging swings on from above, CHORUS members seen as mariners aloft. Projections of a storm at sea, sails, birds; thunder in the music, lightning in the lights, wind in the sound effects. 685

At its height, the EMPEROR OF CHINA appears above as before, watching benignly. As he speaks, the scrim lightens and the seascape fades. He occupies the stage alone. 690

EMPEROR: The Son of Heaven, Master of the Four Seas, I, Inflexible Solemnity, view with compassion your loyal efforts to reach the Middle Kingdom.
The music has finished. 695

Of these islands the most remote is Britain, reigned by a female potentate –

VICTORIA (*coming from below*): Victoria, by the Grace of God –

EMPEROR: Yes, you my child. The island chieftainess of a rugged tribe of red-haired people living in houses built of clay. We find they bind their legs with cloth – 700

VICTORIA: I'd like to send more recent books. A gazetteer –

EMPEROR (*raising voice, making smoke*): Whereas our empire stretches from the mountains of Tibet to the Northern Wastes, from the Western limits of the British Islands to the China Seas. Our system of government has hardly changed since the Ch'in dynasty, which was, we hear, three hundred years before your god was even born – 705

VICTORIA: D'you mean Our Saviour Jesus Christ –

EMPEROR (*continuing over*): – in another of the Western Isles called Africa?

VICTORIA: Perhaps a visit from my missionary friends in the British and Foreign Bible Society could throw some light onto the obscurity of – 710
The EMPEROR fumes and throws a thunderbolt.

EMPEROR: No more missionaries. No more traders, bringing trash and trinkets no one wants. Our compassion obliges us to grant your tribe the tea, the silk and above all the essential rhubarb but there'll be no growth of trade with The Middle Kingdom. No more Foreign Stuff. 715

VICTORIA: I beg your pardon?

EMPEROR: Opium! This trade must cease. Have the plant plucked up, grow rice instead. Tremblingly obey, young queen, and keep your place. Remember we are known as Lasting Glory!

Gong and twangling of oriental strings. He vanishes. The QUEEN waves away the smoke. 720

VICTORIA: My claim's more modest. I'll be England's Glory –
A match for anyone.

The orchestra begins next music but she stops them.

Before the story 725
Is resumed I fear I must detain
You yet a minute longer to explain
That regular immortal intervention
's a vital part of pantomime convention.

Another is a superfluity 730
 Of blatant sexual ambiguity.
 A man, for instance, always plays a Dame –
 Yet he may have a son who by the same
 Perverse tradition struts on high-heeled shoes
 And flaunts an ample bosom but can't lose 735
 An urge to meet some girl he can convince
 That he's her long-awaited Fairy Prince.
 Or else the *girl's* a royal and the boy
 Has raised himself above the hoi-polloi.
 In either case, it ends in happy marriage – 740
 Bunting, cheering crowds, a crystal carriage.
 Clever intellectuals may scoff
 And say in life toff always marries toff;
 Good honest folk subliminally know
 That romance helps maintain the status quo. 745
 If Lasting Glory wants to understand
 The real preoccupations of our land,
 He could do worse than spend a little time
 Deciphering the British pantomime.

She signals the CONDUCTOR who starts the music. The scrim begins to go. 750

Meanwhile Dick and his friends have travelled far
 To India, up the Ganges to Bihar.
 It's more than time the Son of Heaven knew
 My countrymen can build an empire too! 755

Scene Six

A cinema screen is revealed and a film begins – one of those shorts that used to come between second and main features in the fifties. It's in colour and the soundtrack is jolly orchestral music and hearty comment.
Title: 'Far and Wide'.

A spinning globe. 760

Sub-title: 'The Queen's Dominions on which the sun never sets ...'

Close on the globe as it slows down.

Captions: Number Four: India.

Travel clips: the Taj Mahal, elephants, snake charmer, temple dancers, sahibs and rajahs posing with dead tigers; 765

COMMENTARY:

India. Most dazzling of the great and growing circlet of jewels that comprise the Empire! No mere country but a vast sub-continent, stretching from the great Himalayas of the Far North to the magical island of Ceylon almost on the Equator.

Mountains, plains, palms, etc. 770

Richest region of all is the fertile delta of the Holy Ganges.

Show on map.

Its commercial centre the thriving city of Calcutta. Unhappy memories still stir in British hearts at the mention of that name. But the atrocity of the Black Hole was soundly avenged – the local prince was given a hiding by Colonel Clive that no Indian would forget in a hurry – 775

British Tommies in K.D. (or 18th century uniforms) give thumbs-up and light cigarettes.

Well, done, Tommy! Keep it up! We depend on you to maintain the friendly relations between local maharajahs and the babus of The Honourable East India Company. 780

An INDIAN PRINCE in handshake with a SAHIB both looking at the camera. Then move across map from Calcutta up the rivers to Bihar and Patna.

Bullock-carts, villages, people in Ganges, etc. 785

COMMENTARY: As Britain sends her manufactured goods to the four corners of the earth, so India is now moving forward under the guidance of John Company to develop her most lucrative natural asset: The Poppy.

Drawings of the poppy: film of it growing.

To the likes of you and me it may look like nothing more than a common wild flower but to old Abdul and his hardpressed family it means full stomachs and a safe future. 790

Close-up of an INDIAN FARMER posing in the sun.

Pan across his large family.

An elephant squirting water on himself. 795

Hard luck, Jumbo! There always seems to be a bit in the back you just can't reach with the brush, eh?

The INDIAN FARMER salaams to a sahib holding a microphone at him but we don't hear.

But 'hang on a sec' I hear you say, 'how's a field of poppies going to pay for a new road or hospital?' Well, this is no common-or-garden poppy. It's *papaver somniferum*, a delicate bloom, rather like the dreams it gives to those who smoke it. 800

Botanical drawings show the poppy at various stages of production.

It's a long, hard job, the ploughing, weeding, watering and draining and even then old Abdul's still got the trickiest bit to do. That's making slits in the seed-case with a freshwater mussel-shell and letting the gum ooze from the pod for three weeks, an ounce a day. 805

INDIAN FARMER looking up into the sun, shielding his eyes.

This takes all the patience of timeless Asia but the East India Company officials pay strictly according to weight and quality. 810

Under an awning, a sahib sits at a table with an INDIAN PAY-CLERK while the same FARMER receives some coins.

In return, Abdul and his pals are under the kindly umbrella of the Company monopoly and the fair wages it lays down. No monkey business here! Thirteen shillings a week may not sound a lot to us in the West but it's wealth indeed to the average Indian. 815

The INDIAN faces the camera, holds out a hand containing coins. His face is stony.

COMMENTARY: Come on, Abdul, cheer up! It may never happen! 820

The film ends with a flourish.

Screen flies.

Match-girls demand compensation

July 18, 1888, Bromley

At the Byrant and May match factory the women are on strike. Some are suffering from what they call 'phossy-jaw', a horrific disfiguring complaint, which destroys part of the face. The complaint is caused by handling phosphorous, a substance which the women have to handle while making the matches. Management have responded by promising to increase wages and improve working conditions for the women. A Matchmakers' Union is also to be formed.



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