

ACT ONE
Scene 2

THE WORKHOUSE PARLOUR, Later.
BUMBLE and WIDOW CORNEY move
towards Widow's Parlour.

MR. BUMBLE

Yes, you're quite right Mrs. Corney. We must get rid of this canker in our midst. That boy was born to be hung, Mrs. Corney. I've never been so shocked in all my days.

WIDOW CORNEY

Hush, Mr. Bumble, you must have had quite a turn. Sit down and have a nice cup of tea.

(SHE pours tea)

MR. BUMBLE

I't nice to be appreciated, Mrs. Corney, these here paupers in this here parish don't appreciate me. Anti-parochial they are, ma'am, anti-parochial, we have given away a matter of twenty loaves and a cheese-and-a-half this very blessed afternoon; and still, them paupers is not contented.

WIDOW CORNEY

Of course they're not. When would they be? Sweet, Mr. Bumble?

MR. BUMBLE

Very Sweet, indeed, ma'am.

(HE sips tea. Spreads HIS pocket handkerchief over HIS fat knees, heaves a deep sigh and looks at cat basket)

WIDOW CORNEY

You little tinker, you.

MR. BUMBLE

You have a cat ma'am, I see...and kittens too, I declare!

WIDOW CORNEY

I'm so fond of them you cant' imagine, Mr. Bumble. And they're fond of their home too.

MR. BUMBLE

Mrs. Corney, ma'am.

(Making time with a teaspoon)

I must say...that any cat...or kitten...that could live with you ma'am...and not be fond of its home...must be an idiot, ma'am, and don't deserve to live in it.

WIDOW CORNEY

Oh, Mr. Bumble!

MR. BUMBLE

It's no use disguising facts ma'am. An idiot! I would drown it myself--with pleasure!

WIDOW CORNEY

Then you're a cruel man...a very hard-hearted man and all.

MR. BUMBLE

Hard-hearted, Mrs. Corney? Hard? Hard-hearted, ma'am? Are you hard-hearted, Mrs. Corney?

WIDOW CORNEY

Dear me! What a very curious question coming from a single man. What can you want to know for?

(MR. BUMBLE drinks HIS tea, wipes HIS lips and kisses WIDOW CORNEY)

Mr. Bumble, I shall scream!

/4/ "I SHALL SCREAM"

MR. BUMBLE

NO YOU WOULDN'T. HEIGH-HO,
IF I WANTED SOMETHING SPECIAL, THEN YOU COULDN'T SAY "NO."
DID I NEARLY CATCH YOU SMILING?
YES I DID AND IT'S BEGUILING.
IF YOUR HAND IS CLOSE I'LL PRESS IT.
YES, YOU LIKE IT, COME CONFESS IT!
YES, YOU DO.

WIDOW CORNEY

NO, I DON'T.

MR. BUMBLE

YES, YOU DO!

WIDOW CORNEY

I SHALL SCREAM! I SHALL SCREAM!
'TIL THEY HASTEN TO MY RESCUE, I SHALL SCREAM.

MR. BUMBLE

SINCE THERE'S NOBODY THAT'S NEAR US
WHO COULD SEE US OR COULD HEAR US.
IF I ASK YOU, CAN I KISS YOU,
SAY WHAT WILL MY PRETTY MISS DO?

WIDOW CORNEY

I SHALL SCREAM, SCREAM, SCREAM!