

**CASTE; AN
ORIGINAL COMEDY
IN THREE ACTS**

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Caste; an original comedy in three acts by T. W. Robertson

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T. W. ROBERTSON

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ORIGINAL COMEDY
IN THREE ACTS**

CASTE

An Original Comedy in Three Acts

By
T. W. ROBERTSON

Reprinted from the acting book used in the performances of the famous Boston Museum Company, by the courtesy of the late Annie M. Clarke, for many years its leading lady.

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BOSTON
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1913

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CASTE

CHARACTERS

(*First production, Prince of Wales' Theatre, London, April 6, 1867.*)

GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>Frederick Younge.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>S. B. Bancroft.</i>
ECCLES	<i>George Honey.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>John Hare.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Sophia Larkins.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Lydia Foote.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>Marie Wilton.</i>

(*First production in the United States, Old Broadway Theatre, August 5, 1867.*)

HON. GEO. D'ALROY	<i>W. J. Florence.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>Owen Marlowe.</i>
ECCLES	<i>William Davidge.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>Edward Lamb.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Henrietta Chauveau.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>Mrs. W. J. Florence.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Mrs. G. H. Gilbert.</i>

(*First production in Boston, Howard Athenaeum, September 2, 1867.*)

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>H. G. Clarke.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>Harry Crisp.</i>
ECCLES	<i>Mr. Keeler.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>Mr. Scollan.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Mrs. Farren.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Cecile Rush.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>Lillie Marden.</i>

(*First production at The Boston Museum, September 23, 1867.*)

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>L. R. Shewell.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>J. A. Smith.</i>
ECCLES	<i>William Warren.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>J. H. Ring.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Annie Clarke.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>Louisa Myers.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Mrs. E. L. Davenport.</i>

CHARACTERS

(*Wallack's Theatre, New York, N. Y., November 8, 1875.*)

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>H. T. Montague.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>C. A. Stevenson.</i>
ECCLES	<i>George Honey.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>E. M. Holland.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Ada Dyas.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>Effie Gernon.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Mme. Ponisi.</i>

(*Globe Theatre, Boston, Mass., November 8, 1875.*)

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>John C. Cooper.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>Oscar Marlowe.</i>
ECCLES	<i>George Honey.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>J. H. Barnitt.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Katherine Rogers.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>Lillian Conway.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Clara Fisher Maeder.</i>

(*Wallack's Theatre, New York, N. Y., October, 1889.*)

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>Osmond Tearle.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>E. D. Ward.</i>
ECCLES	<i>Charles Groves.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>Tom Robertson.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Rose Coghlan.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>Florence Girard.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Mme. Ponisi.</i>

(*Garrick Theatre, London, February 3, 1895.*)

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>Forbes Robertson.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>W. L. Abington.</i>
ECCLES	<i>G. W. Anson.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Rose Leclercq.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Kate Rorke.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>May Harvey.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>Gilbert Hare.</i>

(*Grand Theatre, London, October 16, 1897, Knickerbocker Theatre, New York, January 18, 1897, and Tremont Theatre, Boston, March 2, 1897.*)

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	<i>Frank Gilmore.</i>
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	<i>Frederick Kerr.</i>
ECCLES	<i>John Hare.</i>
SAM GERRIDGE	<i>Gilbert Hare.</i>
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	<i>Susie Vaughan.</i>
ESTHER ECCLES	<i>Mona K. Oram.</i>
POLLY ECCLES	<i>May Harvey.</i>

PREFACE

OF all the Robertson dramas probably "Caste" took the most decided hold on popular favor. Its sentimental story, its strongly drawn characters which allowed to half-a-dozen actors equally good opportunities in very different lines of business gave it an instant success.

It is doubtful if any other modern play was so many times performed and in so many different theatres within a year as was "Caste." At the time of its production there was not only no international copyright; there was no protection for a play of any sort, so that as soon as it had been played in London it was the property in fact, if not in honor, of any manager who would bother to take it.

"Caste" was first produced at the famous Prince of Wales' Theatre in the Tottenham Court Road, London, April 6, 1867, during the régime of the Bancrofts. Lester Wallack secured the manuscript of the play from the Bancrofts and prepared to produce it in New York in the following September. But he was anticipated in this production by W. J. Florence, who had committed the play to memory in London, and got it on the stage at the Broadway Theatre, then in Broome Street, August 5, 1867, the Wallack production being made in Brooklyn, September 2. Wallack's attempt to protect his prior rights by suit is a matter of history, the defeat of that manager and the legal triumph of Florence not speaking very well for the honor of the courts of that time.

No sooner was "Caste" successfully given in New York than it sprang into popularity everywhere. That was the time of the stock company, and the traveling company was practically unknown. Within the month of September, for example, the piece was played on four different stages in the city of Boston.

All through the sixties and seventies the piece continued a popular play, but with the disappearance of the stock company, it dropped out of sight until the popular English comedian, John Hare, who had created the rôle of Sam Gerridge, when the play was first produced in London, revived it during his tour of the States in 1896-97.

Probably the best Eccles that the American public has known was George Honey, who created the rôle in London and afterwards was seen in this country for several seasons in the same

part. Next to him in point of genuine humor was the Eccles of William Warren of the Museum. Mr. Honey had the advantage of Warren in knowing the type better. But the performances of both these men in this part will be remembered always with keen relish by all who were so lucky as to see them.

"Caste" has been called by those who wish to put a little contempt on it "a cup and saucer" drama. But as a play it will always remain a model of its kind. It is terse, well constructed, with capital acting opportunities, and absolutely no halt in its movement and interest. If it be in any sense really a "cup and saucer drama," it is a pity that some modern writers do not catch the trick.

The present edition is carefully compiled from the prompt book in use at the Boston Museum where the play enjoyed one of its most pronounced successes. Business, stage positions and the few traditional interpolations are preserved exactly as employed in that famous play house. In elaborating the business of the third act in the scene in which D'Alroy returns the description given by Mrs. Bancroft—the original Polly Eccles—in "On and Off the Stage" has been carefully followed.

M. A.

Boston, December, 1912.

PROPERTIES

ACT I.—Key ready at R. 3 E. Letters for postman. Box with ballet dress. Rasher of bacon and other packages for Polly. Cigar case for Hawtree. Teakettle on hob of fireplace. Letters for Esther in pocket of gown. Coins for George to give Eccles.

ACT II.—Cigarettes for George. Parasol for Polly. Decanter of claret and brandy and glass for Eccles on sideboard of inner room.

ACT III.—Box with ballet dress. Slate and pencil on table. Bundle of circulars in Sam's pocket. Coin in Polly's pocket. Coral in baby's cradle. Wine bottle for Eccles. Letter and check for Esther. Deal table at R. 3 E. for Sam. Ring for Sam. Baby's cloak and cap for Marquise. Sample of wall paper.

CASTE

ACT I

Scene.—*Home of the Eccles. Living-room in ground-floor apartment at Stangate. Large window with deep seat at C., back, overlooking street. Door R. 3 E. into hall, giving view of outer door when open. Door at R. 1 E. to kitchen. Fireplace at L., with mantel over it. Fire laid ready to light. At L. C. table with cover. Large chair at R. of it; two small chairs at L. of it. Against back drop, at L. of window, dresser covered with dishes. Bureau against wall R., between doors.*

LIGHTS full up.

(As curtain rises slowly on empty stage GEORGE D'ALROY and CAPTAIN HAWTREE are seen to pass window from L. Handle of door R. 3 E. is tried, and voices heard outside. Key then heard to turn in lock.)

GEO. *(opening door R. 3 E. and entering, followed by HAWTREE).* I told you so. The key was left under the mat in case I came. They're not back from rehearsal. *(Crosses L., to fireplace.)*

HAW. *(coming C.; looking around).* And this is the Fairy's Bower.

GEO. And this is the Fairy's fireplace; the fire is laid, I'll light it. *(Places hat and stick on table and lights fire with match from mantelpiece.)*

RED LIGHT gradually
on at fireplace.

HAW. And this is the abode rendered blessed by her abiding. It is here that she dwells, walks, talks, eats and drinks. Does she eat and drink?

GEO. Yes, heartily. I've seen her.

HAW. And you are really spoons—case of true love—hit dead.