

**FREEDOM: A PLAY
IN THREE ACTS**

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Freedom: A Play in Three Acts by Alfred Sutro

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F R E E D O M

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

ALFRED SUTRO

**NEW YORK
BRENTANO'S**

1916

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FOREWORD

This play, at which I had been working for over a year, was finished in July 1914, a few days before the war broke out. It was to have been produced by Mr. Granville Barker, and to follow *The Great Adventure*. When that moment arrived, the Germans were at the gates of Paris—and it was obviously not the time to put upon the stage a play which dealt exclusively with questions of sex. That time seems far distant—and, when it has come, the conditions, the environment, will be no longer the same as when the play was written.

Perhaps one of the most definite results of the vast upheaval that is shaking the world's foundations will be the development it will have brought about in the character, as well as in the position, of women. Before the war, the most eager and ardent among them were concerned with problems such as those with which this little play deals; those problems have become, and will continue, secondary, although not losing their importance, which must ever remain acute. During the last two years, women have given proof of such heroism and devotion, they have so magnificently, and with such superb acquiescence and mastery of self, accepted the

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FOREWORD

burdens which fell most heavily upon them, that it seems almost an impertinence to publish a play in which they are shown concerned merely with one minor issue, struggling for a freedom that affects themselves alone. Were I writing the play to-day, and dealing with the same theme, I would have conceived a different class of woman—the one whom events have revealed to us, as also to herself, as complete mistress of her destiny. But the play stands, and cannot be rewritten; and, with all its imperfections upon it, it may yet possess some trifling value as an indication of the conditions that obtained before the war.

ALFRED SUTRO

LONDON, *July* 1918

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

BARTLEY CHAMBERS
LAURENCE TARGILL
RUTHERFORD COLLINS
TOBY PARNING
BALDERTON
MIRIAM CHAMBERS
EVE TARGILL
AGNES BELL
FANNY COLLINS

The time is the present. The action of the play passes within twenty-four hours, the scene being rooms in the CHAMBERS'S house in Upper Berkeley Street, and the offices of "Manhood," a weekly paper, in Henrietta Street.

NOTE. The Stage Directions in this book are conceived from the point of view of the audience, and must, therefore, be reversed by the actors performing the play.

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ACT I

The dining-room at BARTLEY CHAMBERS'S house in Upper Berkeley Street. It is a conventional, square-shaped room on the ground floor; windows, heavily curtained on the left, fireplace on the right, door at back, opening direct on to a smallish hall. The room is comfortable, pleasant enough in its way, with nothing strikingly original in its decoration or appointments, and no specially feminine touches. There is heavy modern furniture against the walls, which are distempered in a bluish green; on these hang two or three rather dark pictures of the Royal Academy order. On a sideboard are the usual pieces of silver, on a side-table the usual flowers—in fact, the room, while by no means unattractive, is precisely of the kind to be found by the hundred in the houses of well-to-do folk in the West End.

Eight people have just finished dinner, and are seated at an oblong table, two at each end, two at the sides. MIRIAM CHAMBERS and LAURENCE TABGILL are at the back, LAURENCE at MIRIAM'S right; next to him AGNES BELL and then RUTHERFORD COLLINS; next to him, and facing MIRIAM and