

**THE SUFFRAGENT, A
SOCIAL
SATIRE, AN ORIGINAL
PLAY IN THREE ACTS**

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The Suffragent, a Social Satire, an Original Play in Three Acts by Edward Staats de Grote
Tompkins

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EDWARD STAATS DE GROTE TOMPKINS

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✓ The Suffragent ✓

A Social Satire



An Original Play ✓ in Three Acts

BY

EDWARD STAATS DE GROTE TOMPKINS ✓

Author of

"Through David's Realm," "An Honest Hypocrite," Etc.

Boston.

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INTRODUCTION.

It has seemed to the author that a problem play might be written without the gloom of an Ibsen or the iconoclasm of a Shaw. But preachers have almost universally concluded that lessons must be taught by disagreeable methods. Since preaching by such means has almost entirely failed of result is it not fair to assume that something might be accomplished through joy and pleasure rather than by depression and unhappiness. In short the aim of the present effort is to show by an agreeable method that the theme "Fad versus Human Nature" can be illustrated, and just conclusions drawn, without violating either the laws of propriety or the general desire for pleasure. In fact the human being naturally craves the light, and also the lighter forms and lighter methods of instruction. If satire is gently used it can easily impress its lessons on humanity.

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

JOHN MANNERS, who is manly and believes in people being what they are.

HARRY MCMAYNE, a nice young fellow who likes a pretty girl, but does not despise money.

ETHELBERTA DONNE, Who is manly and believes in people being what they are.

THE REVEREND DR. GIBBONS, President of the E. S. L. Capable yet not unmindful of glory.

MRS. STUYVESANT VAN RENSSLAER KRUGER-JONES, a social light.

MISS EARNEST, a lady severe in morals, mind and speech.

ANNETTE SILVERTON, young, fond and foolish.

MISS TATTEL, good, but interested in others.

MRS. VOISINE, a lady who is willing to do odd jobs.

ACT I.

Mrs. Kruger-Jones' Drawing Room.

ACT II.

John Manners' Office, next morning.

ACT III.

Committee Room in Convention Hall, next day.

THE SUFFRAGENT

ACT I

SCENE.—MRS. KRUGER-JONES' drawing room. A table laid for tea. Hot water urn simmering. Enter ANNETTE. She hastily looks the table over and adjusts things. Sits down at table, sighs.

Annette. Oh! dear! I'm in such a pickle. In love with two men! Oh! oh! oh! (*Enter HARRY.*)

Harry. Hello! sweetheart! Didn't expect to see yours truly.

Annette. Hello; dear. I did, I'm always let in.

Harry. By jove this is a fine job. Here I've been looking for one for months and now I've got it. Who'd ever think it? Poor but worthy young man. Young man in love with one girl, and trying to marry another. Patted by a rich, but elderly female and thrown on the cold charities of a cold world. My, though, isn't it chilly?

Annette. Yes, very. You'll give me a cold if you keep on.

Harry. Oh! Annette, oh! Bert, oh! Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Kruger-Jones.

Annette. Mrs. Kruger-Jones. (*Solemnly.*)

Harry. But I must explain my position. I mean my job.

Annette. Your position! Yes, do.

Harry. It isn't every man with a position who has a job.

Annette. My intellect is feeble, but I can grasp that.

Harry. But I have both. You say lucky man. Perhaps, but it is such a peculiar position, and such a ridiculous job. My position is just this. Owing to the exceeding kindness of Mrs. Jones, I mean Mrs. Kruger-Jones—

Annette. Mrs. Kruger-Jones!

Harry. I am bound to heed her slightest whim. She is very fond of young men. Now why are old cats so fond of kittens?

Annette. I don't know. It isn't always reciprocated.

Harry. But what I can't understand is, when they are fond of them, why do they always want to marry them off to some one else?

Annette. It may be spite. You never can tell.

Harry. Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Kruger-Jones—

Annette. (Solemnly.) Mrs. Kruger-Jones!

Harry. Is not so old herself. Nice place, bully style. I could be happy here. (Sighs.)

Annette. I, too, could be happy here. (Sighs.)

Harry. We two, you mean, could be happy here. (Both sigh.) Bert is a fine girl and she has the cash.

Annette. John is a fine man and he has the cash.

Harry. Annette, I love you.

Annette. Oh! dear, yes, I know that. But you have got to devote yourself to the Cause, big C, and don't you forget it.

Harry. I know, I am here at a woman's rights meeting simply because I am poor. The women can suffer if they want to.

Annette. We do, Oh! Harry we do. But we suffer more without money than with. (Both sigh.)

Harry. Well, if we can't get married we will suffer together. I'm to be the only man here. Pshaw! I forgot, I am not here in the capacity of a suffragette. I am merely a gentlemanly usher, just an usher. (Enter MRS. JONES.)

Mrs. Jones. All alone, Harry, with Annette?

Harry. The old cats have not arrived.

Mrs. Jones. Now Harry, you must not talk like that. Ethelberta is not an old cat.

Harry. Oh! she's a trump. But how she does rag out!

Mrs. Jones. Yes, she is a bit manly, I must say. But, HARRY, she is just the girl for you. I would so love to see you marry her.

Harry. So would I. But marriage I suspect has not even entered her mind.

Mrs. Jones. Put the idea there. No one has a better chance. She is fancy free. Lots of nice young girls marry foolish young men. I did myself.

Harry. Yes, but he had money. I am poor, too deucedly

poor even to think about. What can I offer a nice girl? I have not even a heart.

Mrs. Jones. (*Smirking.*) Come Harry. Come now, no more of that nonsense. (*ANNETTE giggles.*)

Harry. All right. (*With a sigh and a wink at ANNETTE.*) I'll be a man.

Mrs. Jones. Yes, Harry, you must. You know old age must respect itself. (*ANNETTE waves her hand at HARRY.*)

Harry. Huh! (*With a grimace.*)

Mrs. Jones. Now it was very good of you to come this afternoon. It will give the affair such an air of—

Harry. Respectability you mean.

Mrs. Jones. No I don't, you silly boy, quite the contrary. in some people's eyes. (*Jestingly.*)

Harry. Who's eyes?

Mrs. Jones. Oh! the old cats you were speaking of. I meant it would relieve the affair of being a hen party.

Harry. With one rooster. I don't see that that helps it very much.

Mrs. Jones. But there won't be one rooster. Mr. Manners is coming.

Harry. Mr. Manners is coming, Mr. Manners is coming. He is coming. Let me think. Do you mean that John Manners is coming to your hen party? (*ANNETTE clasps her hands.*)

Mrs. Jones. I don't know about the hen party. You rather intimated it would be a cat party.

Harry. John Manners, the calm, dignified proper—

Mrs. Jones. Proper, did you say? (*Surprised.*)

Harry. Yes, proper. If you could know how utterly shocked I am you would know something was improper. How is he going to dress? How shall I put it in the paper? Shall it be in low neck and short sleeves, in black satin and point lace or plain street costume. I must know so as to get it right in the morning paper.

Mrs. Jones. You needn't bother about that. I have that all fixed. The reporter just left.

Harry. Good heavens! madam, and did you put me in, in

any such appropriate but ridiculous garb? John Manners! Ye gods and little fishes!

Mrs. Jones. No, I just said my dear friend, Mr. McMayne, had consented to act as usber, and with that grace with which he leads the cotillion was enabled to make the affair pass off as a social function.

Harry. Good God! When I am just a butler.

Mrs. Jones. Don't be silly. It was nasty of Hodges to act as he did. I thought English servants had no principles.

Harry. Well, you found out. (*Enter MISS EARNEST.*)

Mrs. Jones. Delighted to see you, Miss Earnest. You know Mr. McMayne. He has so kindly offered to help us out and brighten up our little company. I leave you to him. (*Exit.*)

Harry. My dear Miss Earnest, you see the hole I'm in.

Miss Earnest. Hole! This drawing room a hole. Why it is the handsomest room in town.

Harry. I don't mean this rance—

Miss Earnest. Rance indeed! Mr. McMayne I do not understand you.

Harry. Oh! now come, don't be hard on a fellow. I mean the situation—ch—the fix I am in.

Miss Earnest. I see nothing of the sort. You don't look in the least like one in a fix. You look rather happy and contented. Indeed if I may speak my mind—

Harry. You may. (*Aside.*) She always has. (*To ANNETTE.*)

Miss Earnest. I think something a little more serious would be becoming.

Harry. Serious. Ye gods and little fishes. If this isn't something serious I'd like to know what is.

Miss Earnest. There, young man, you are right. It is serious. It is one of the great moments of the age.

Harry. Yes, yes, I knew.

Miss Earnest. Now don't interrupt me. In interrupting me you may be destroying the influence which all ages made possible. You cannot tell if the few words I say to you now, into your heedless ear—

Harry. My ear is all right, only I am not deaf.