

A LESSON IN HARMONY

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A lesson in harmony by Alfred Austin

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ALFRED AUSTIN

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IN HARMONY**

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BY
ALFRED AUSTIN

Poet Laureate

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A LESSON IN HARMONY.

*Produced at the Garrick Theatre on Thursday, June
16th, 1904, with the following cast:*

Phil. Leslie, In the city MR. DAVID DOMVILLE
Ida Leslie, His wife MISS JESSIE BATEMAN
Otho Hazlewood, His friend
. MR. ARTHUR BOURCHIER

SCENE.— *A suburban garden near London.*

TIME.— *To-day.*

A LESSON IN HARMONY.

SCENE.— *Villa and garden at Maplehurst.*

TIME.— *10 a. m. on a summer morning.*

(*Ida discovered syringing a bed of roses.*)

IDA LESLIE.

(*Putting down the syringe to cut a rosebud with a pair of garden scissors hanging from her waist. As she does so a letter falls, unobserved by herself, out of the bosom of her dress, into the flower bed.*)
What a beauty! That will put Phil in a good humour, if anything will. When we were engaged he used to give me roses. But *I* was not gathered then! A-h!

PHIL. LESLIE.

(*Calling from inside the house.*) I must be off, Ida; where are you?

IDA LESLIE.

Here, Phil, here, in the garden.

PHIL. LESLIE.

(*Coming out of the house dressed to go to town.*)
Just one kiss (*pause*), and I must start. (*Going to gate.*) I want to catch the 10.15 if I can.

IDA LESLIE.

Yes, but just one rose.

PHIL. LESLIE.

(*Intently reading Financial Times.*) Rose $\frac{3}{4}$.

IDA LESLIE.

Yes, but do look at it, it's a Fellenberg.

PHIL. LESLIE.

Fell $1\frac{1}{2}$.

IDA LESLIE.

(*Putting it in his coat.*) Is it not a love?

PHIL. LESLIE.

(*A little impatiently.*) Beautiful, beautiful! But I am in a great hurry this morning.

IDA LESLIE.

Husbands always are.

PHIL. LESLIE.

So are lovers, they say, don't they?

IDA LESLIE.

Yes —, but lovers are in a hurry to get to one, husbands to get away from one. I may engage the maid, may I not? How nice to have one, all to myself! It will save me such a lot of money. I shall be able to dress ever so much more cheaply.

PHIL. LESLIE.

I am afraid I must ask you to wait a little.

IDA LESLIE.

Oh, Phil! You promised you —

PHIL. LESLIE.

Things in the city are so — so very uncertain just now.

IDA LESLIE.

Very well, I will wait. But you'll order that Victoria to-day, won't you? Or shall *I* run up and see to it?

PHIL. LESLIE.

Do be patient, dear, please, till things mend. (*Ida moves L.*) And please practise that Lesson in Harmony to-day, won't you?

IDA LESLIE.

(*With a gesture of impatience.*) Bother! I never set my heart on anything, but — (*She moves towards the house R.*)

PHIL. LESLIE.

I shall have to run to catch the train. Don't forget about sending my white waistcoats to the wash. (*Goes out of gate.*)

IDA LESLIE.

(*Going into house.*) All right.

PHIL. LESLIE.

(*Hurrying back and turning round calls out.*)
Ida! Ida! Ida! Mind, dear, you speak to the

butcher about hanging his meat longer. It was so beastly tough last night.

IDA LESLIE.

Was it? (*From off R.*)

PHIL. LESLIE.

Yes, that it was! (*He moves toward gate and Ida goes into the house.*)
(*Otho falls out of hammock.*)

PHIL. LESLIE.

What's that?

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

Only me.

PHIL. LESLIE.

I thought it was an earthquake. (*Helps Otho off ground.*)

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

Are you off?

PHIL. LESLIE.

Yes!

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

Then good-bye, old fellow; for I must leave you to-day.

PHIL. LESLIE.

Please don't go to-day.

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

I'm afraid I must.

PHIL. LESLIE.

I want you particularly to stay till to-morrow. (*Looking at his watch.*) I can't catch the 10.15 now. Well, the 10.30 must do.

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

It's all right about Gwen. Her father is quite satisfied, and we are to be married in September. Isn't it a good one of her? (*Showing a photograph.*)

PHIL. LESLIE.

Charming! Lucky man! But don't go to-day. Ida's low and hipped, and I want you to stay and amuse her. Besides you promised to help me with that new bin of Lafitte.

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

That settles it. I'll stay. How are things in the city? (*Sits in hammock.*)

PHIL. LESLIE.

Much better. The anxiety is not over yet, but we shall know to-day. I shall just catch the 10.30 going quietly. Mind you cheer up Ida.

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

Trust me! (*Waving his hand, as Phil goes through gate and off R.*) Good luck to you, old man.

(*Exit Phil.*)

OTHO HAZLEWOOD.

(*Alone.*) Dear old Phil! Thinks of nothing but