

Enter ARROSTINO.

GIORGIO. Three secret cheers for the Captain!

ALL (*pianissimo*). Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

ARROSTINO. How do? How do? Ah! the bride and bridegroom. Allow me. (*Kisses her.*) Charming — at least I think so — another. (*Kisses her again.*) Yes, charming. Risotto, my poor fellow, accept my condolences.

RISOTTO. Condolences? You don't see anything wrong with her?

ARROSTINO. With her? Oh, no — not with *her*. My dear friend, she's bewitching. (*To MINESTRA.*) You *are* bewitching, aren't you?

MINESTRA. I believe I'm nice.

ARROSTINO. You do? I'm delighted to hear it on such good authority.

RISOTTO. Still, I don't see why you should condole with me.

ARROSTINO. Don't you? Never mind — you will. Now tell me, Minestra, candidly — what was it you saw in him to admire? It's not his face, of course; nor his figure — we'll put them out of the question. It couldn't be his conversation, because he hasn't any.

MINESTRA. I don't know. He's got a way with him.

ARROSTINO. Has he got it with him now?

MINESTRA. I don't know. I suppose so.

ARROSTINO (*imperatively*). Risotto, give us an example of the way you have with you.

RISOTTO. It's something like this — (*business of ogling*).

ARROSTINO. Oh, my dear girl — really — dear, dear, dear!

MINESTRA (*apologetically*). You've got to be nearer to him for it to tell.

ARROSTINO. Well, but even then! Now, look at it in cold blood. Think of it ten years hence — when the novelty's worn off.

MINESTRA. It does look foolish from here. Oh, I almost wish I hadn't!

RISOTTO. My dear! (*Consoling her.*)

MINESTRA. Don't — I'm so inexperienced!

ARROSTINO. I suppose so. Pity — pity! Never mind — next time you'll be older. Now girls, I have some news for you: the Duke and Duchess of Pallavicini are to pass through the village on their way to Palermo. You don't see a real Duke and Duchess every day, so the best thing you can do is run down and prepare to receive them.

1ST GIRL. A real Duke and Duchess! Oh, that will be delightful.