

CHAPTER II

Forfeits

THE "crying of forfeits" is managed in this way. The director, or any one of the party who has come under no forfeit, collects the forfeits—trinkets of all sorts, handed in as a pledge that the owner will do as ordered—together, and, sitting down, calls one of the players to kneel with his or her face on the director's knees, so that the forfeit cannot be seen, as the director, holding one of the forfeited articles a little way over the head of the person kneeling, cries out, "Here's a pretty thing, and a very pretty thing; and what's to be done to the owner of this very pretty thing?" The person having to pronounce the penalty then asks, "Is it for a lady or a gentleman?" and, on being told, proclaims the forfeit, choosing the most difficult thing to be thought of. The person to whom the forfeit belongs has at once to perform the penance mentioned, and in this way all the forfeits are cried one after the other. The director can call on a different person to kneel as often as he pleases, or each one can cry a certain number of forfeits apiece.

The following are some of the best forfeits invented:—

1. To bow to the wittiest, kneel to the prettiest, and kiss the one you love best.

2. To bite an *inch off* a hot poker. This is done by making a bite with your mouth one inch distance away from the hot poker.

3. Give your private opinion of each member of the company. This is not unlike the penance of Good Advice (No. 32)—only instead of sage counsels you impart (aloud or in whispers, as you may be instructed) to all the players your private opinion of them.

4. Place a straw on the floor so that you cannot jump over it. Place it against the wall.

5. Kiss yourself in the looking-glass.

6. Push your friend's head through a ring. This is accomplished by putting your finger through a ring and pushing your friend's head with the tip of it.

7. Kiss your shadow. This may either be done literally by kissing your own shadow on the wall, or, more agreeably, by putting yourself between the light and a nice young lady and saluting her.

8. To laugh in one corner, cry in another, sing in a third, and dance in a fourth.

9. To put one hand where the other cannot touch it. This is done by putting the right hand to the left elbow.

10. To say "Quizzical quiz, kiss me quick," six times running without drawing breath.

11. Smile without tittering or laughing in each corner of the room.

12. To kiss a book inside and outside without opening it. This is done by kissing the book inside the room and outside the room.

13. To put two chairs together back to back and take off your shoes and jump over them. This forfeit is only a catch. You are to take off your shoes and jump over *them*, not over the two chairs.

14. To put a candle in such a place that all in the room but yourself can see it. This is done by placing it on your head.

15. Repeat the letters of the alphabet, leaving out *o*, three times, without stopping.

16. Stand on a chair and perform whatever grimaces or motions you are bidden without laughing.

17. Put yourself through the keyhole. This is done by writing the word "yourself" on a slip of paper, rolling it up, and pushing it through the keyhole.

18. Repeat six times without a mistake: "A lump of rough light red leather, a red light rough leather lump."

19. Ask a question that cannot be answered in the negative. The question is, "What does YES spell?"

20. Look up the chimney and say—

Peep, fool, peep,
 Peep at your brother ;
 Why mayn't one fool
 Peep at another ?

21. Say aloud—

I am a goose, as I do confess,
 So return my forfeit ; you can't do less.

22. Perform "the egotist." This consists in proposing your own health in a complimentary speech, and afterwards singing the musical health honours—"For he's a jolly good fellow."

23. To dot and carry one. Hold one ankle in one hand, and hop round the room.

24. To say five times without a mistake, "Around the ragged rocks the ragged rascals ran."

25. Repeat five times rapidly, "Villy Vite and his wife went to Vinsor and Vest Vickham von Vitsun Vednesday."

26. To answer a riddle, or give a conundrum.

27. Go out of the room with two legs and return with six. Bring a chair with you.

28. Become the spirit of contradiction. Whatever tasks may be imposed by each member of the company, the person condemned to act under the influence of the spirit of contradiction has, of course, to do just the opposite of what he or she is desired.

29. Manufacture a perfect woman. The player ordered to manufacture a perfect woman selects from each lady present some particular charm of mind or person possessed by her. All these admirable qualities being combined in one imaginary individual, the necessary pitch of female excellence is supposed to be attained.

30. Enact the Grecian statue. Stand on a chair, while any of the company may *pose* you as they think proper, and great ingenuity may be displayed in inventing ridiculous postures.

31. Make your will. This is done by bequeathing to each member of the company something the penitent possesses—either an article of property or some moral or physical quality.

32. Give either in whispers or aloud any piece of advice

that comes into your head to one or all of the company.

33. Blow out the candle. This seems a simple instruction, but the penitent will change his mind as he finds the candle passed rapidly to and fro before his mouth.

34. Play the parrot. The penitent is supposed to be transformed into a parrot, and must go round all the players and ask each one in turn, "If I were your parrot what would you teach me to say?" Each player answers as his fancy may dictate. Should a lady say, "Kiss poor Polly," the supposed parrot puts the suggestion in practice, and his ordeal terminates. If not, he must repeat exactly every answer before going to another person.

35. Give "poetic numbers." Repeat a passage of poetry, counting the words aloud as you proceed, thus: "Full (one), many (two), a (three), flower (four), is (five), born (six), to (seven), blush (eight), unseen (nine), and (ten), waste (eleven), its (twelve), sweetness (thirteen), on (fourteen), the (fifteen), desert (sixteen), air (seventeen)!" This is a great puzzle to many, and affords considerable amusement.

36. To lie your whole length on the floor, and after calling all the company round you to say out aloud, "Here I lie, the length of a booby, the breadth of a booby, and three-parts of a logger-head."

37. Say, "'Twas I" to everything that is said to you. This is really a penance, the penitent having not only to submit to, but to inflict upon himself, an almost unbearable amount of torture. He must ask each of the others in turn, "What did you see this morning, or last night, in the street, at the theatre, at a party?" and so on. The answer may be whatever the person questioned likes and the unhappy penitent must invariably reply, "'Twas I." Example.—Answer, "I saw a man, whose brains had run to whisker," or, "I saw a man steal a red herring from a chandler's shop," in each case the penitent is compelled to make the humiliating confession of identity.