SONG

An' apple a day keeps the Doctor away
You've heard the old saying no doubt
And I'm sure it is true, but between me and you,
There ain't many apples about.
Though they grow on a tree
Money doesn't, you see
And you've got to have money to buy.
It's the same with your health
It depends on your wealth,
So if you are poor, you must cry —

Can we afford the Doctor,
The dentist, the midwife, the nurse?
It doesn't seem fair
That medical care
Should depend on the state of your purse.
I know it's a hard pill to swallow
But what can we take for a cure,
And if only the rich can afford to be sick,
How cheap are the lives of the poor?

MILKMAN (JODELLING) Ew-oo! Ew-oo! Milko! Milko! Fresh from the cow. Bring out your basins. Get it while it's warm.

ANNIE

When I was a child, people used to come round the streets, selling things. The milkman used to come round two or three times a day cos in hot weather the milk used to go off very quickly.

ICE-CREAM SELLER Hokey-pokey, penny a lump! Ha'penny ice-cream!
Hokey-pokey a penny! Hokey-pokey!

SELLER

Cresses! Young watercresses! Fresh picked watercresses! Cresses!

ANNIE

And in the open market you could buy anything.

SELLER

Hot potatoes, hot potatoes! Ha'penny each. Keep your hands warm while you eat em. Hot potatoes!

SELLER

Shrimps and winkles! Cockles and whelks! Ready to eat. Shrimps and winkles!

SELLER

Flypapers, flypapers! Guaranteed arsenic compound. Hang a flypaper in your house and be free from flies. Bluebottles and flies! Catch 'em alive! Flypaper!

DENTIST

Are you in pain? Are you suffering agony? Then, ladies and gentlemen, relief is at hand! I hold the world record for extracting teeth at amazing speed!

ANNIE

Anybody could set up as a dentist in those days. You didn't have to have qualifications. And there
ANNIE (con) wasn't much to dentistry then except pulling teeth out. People didn't bother with fillings and things. You waited till a tooth hurt so much you couldn't stand it any more and then you pulled it out.

DENTIST What is more, you will be astounded at my prices! I don't have to pay rent for an expensive surgery. All my equipment is behind this screen. Can you afford to miss this incredible offer?

ANNIE If we had any teeth come loose, we'd tie a bit of cotton round the tooth and then tie the other end to a door handle. Then you'd slam the door. But sometimes it wouldn't work and you had to pay to have it done. It could be very expensive at an ordinary dentist.

DENTIST I can guarantee you won't know that tooth has gone. You will not feel a thing. Who's going to be first? You sir? Then step this way. You'll bless this day.

ANNIE People didn't expect so much. You put up with what the Lord sent you. When you got old, your teeth fell out. You didn't expect false teeth. My grannie never had false teeth. All her teeth came out except two - these two here. But she could eat nearly everything cos her gums hardened. She got by.

SELLER Glasses! Watches! Mechanical bits and pieces! What you fancy, lady? A watch for your old man or a pair of glasses for your good self? Second-hand spectacles, all as good as new. Try a pair on, madam.

A WOMAN TRIES ON A PAIR AND SQUINTS THROUGH THEM.

ANNIE People didn't have their eyes tested in those days. They didn't worry about that. If they thought they couldn't see, they'd just find a pair of glasses off a stall and hope for the best.

SELLER Genuine tortoiseshell those frames. Came from a very wealthy old lady.

WOMAN RETURNS GLASSES

SELLER Suit yourself.

ANNIE Of course a lot of people couldn't read, so I suppose there was less call for glasses. My gran never learned to read and she never wore glasses.

CLOTHES SELLER Secondhand bargains! Clothes as new! Just look at this hat, lady. Hardly been worn. Belonged to
SELLER (con) one of them posh ladies up in Kensington, then what don't like to be seen twice in the same hat. Just you try it on for size. This season's fashion. Couldn't hardly be newer.

A WOMAN TRIES IT ON

SELLER Oh, you look a real picture. Don't she look a picture?

THE FIRST WOMAN TAKES IT OFF. SHE SCRATCHES HER HEAD. A SECOND WOMAN TRIES IT ON.

SELLER Well, I never did! I thought it couldn't suit nobody better than what it suited you, but, blow me, it suits the other lady just as well. Neither of you could go wrong with a hat like that. Or maybe, with a hat like that, you could go wrong...

THE TWO WOMEN PUT THE HAT DOWN, GIGGLING. THEY ARE BOTH SCRATCHING THEIR HEADS VIGOROUSLY.

SELLER You don't recognise a bargain when you see one.

QUACK DOCTOR Ladies and gentlemen! Are you suffering? Have any of you ever experienced lassitude, faintness, brain fog, nervous breakdown? You have! And do you have indigestion, loss of appetite, sleeplessness? You do! And do you break out in pimples, boils, abscesses, ulcers, sores of any kind, eczema, scrofula? Do you persistently suffer from backache, rheumatism, sciatica, gout? Are you, madam, experiencing maternity weakness, palpitations or anaemia? Are you, sir, experiencing mental exhaustion, premature decay, know what I mean...?

You are, aren't you? You are suffering? Well, put an end to your suffering now! Buy a bottle of my medicine - Doctor Harvey's Patent Blood Mixture! You see, blood is the answer to everything. Get your blood right and you get your whole body right!

WOMAN PLANTED IN CROWD (COMING FORWARD) Oh, it's true, it's true what he's telling you. Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you my story. I was under medical treatment for years, with no result except getting worse. I couldn't sleep, night or day. I dreaded to be left alone. I started at the least sound. No food agreed with me. Whatever I ate caused wind and palpitations. I had violent headaches. The splitting pain in my head was agonising. I cannot describe my suffering.

Then, as a last resort, I tried Doctor Harvey's Patent Blood Mixture. After only one bottle, I began to feel brighter, I slept through the night, I grew stronger
PLANT (con) and better daily. I could hardly believe it was real. I want to tell everybody the wonderful properties of this medicine!

QUACK DOCTOR My dear lady! What a touching tale! And what more can I add, except this is an incredible bargain at only one shilling per bottle! Get your supplies now while stocks last!

SONG

I am a learned surgeon, and my name is Doctor Quack,
My draughts and pills to cure your ills I carry on my back.
My medicines are the nastiest that ever cured a pain
If once you've tasted them I know you'd ne'er be ill again.

Then oh, my! anybody ill, anybody ill, anybody ill,
Oh my hi! I'm Doctor Quack, quack, quack-a-ka-quack,
I cure you of any attack.
I've syrup of squills and I've camomile pills,
And my name is Doctor Quack.

I've ointment for a mother-in-law, she swallows half a pound
She'll never trouble you again for she will sleep so sound.
Who'll have a gross of leeches? Shall I put them on your back?
You won't - then he must go elsewhere to trade, must Doctor Quack.

Then, oh my! anybody ill, anybody ill, anybody ill,
Oh my hi! I'm Doctor Quack, quack, quack-a-ka-quack,
I cure you of any attack.
I've syrup of squills and I've camomile pills,
And my name is Doctor Quack.

A FAMILY GROUP: MOTHER IS PREGNANT AND HOLDING A BABY. FATHER JOINS LATER. ANNIE INTRODUCES.

ANNIE Nineteen hundred and eleven. That's my mother and that's my older brother, Edward. That's my father. I was just a twinkle in his eye then.

FATHER I worked in the docks, when I could get work.

MOTHER We were very poor.

ANNIE Nineteen hundred and twelve. The year I was born. I was a very sickly baby. I wasn't expected to live. I think I only lived because my mother was determined I shouldn't die - very determined young woman, my mother.

FATHER Lloyd George had just brought in his National Insurance - the panel system. That meant a lot of workers started to get sickness benefit.
MOTHER  But their wives didn't, nor their children.
FATHER  No, just the important ones - the workers. Ninepence for fourpence. That's what they said.
MOTHER  Still, I'm glad one of us'll be able to afford the doctor.
ANNIE.  In Woolwich, where we lived then, they got up a public subscription.
OFFICIAL To provide a fitting memorial to our late King Edward VII. The form this memorial might take will be fully discussed at an open meeting.
FATHER  I vote we spend the money covering up the railway cutting, the Smoke Hole. You can't breathe when a train goes through.
MOTHER  Yes. The filth what comes out of there's terrible. You can't keep anything clean.
GOOD WORKS LADY  It must be terrible for you. But what we need more than that at the moment is a Babies Home.
MOTHER  Oh, yes, that'd be good. Somewhere for the poor little babies.
FATHER  I'd vote for a Babies Home.
OFFICIAL  The Town Hall needs a new organ.
SILENCE. THEY ALL STARE AT HIM.
MOTHER  Another thing what we need, to get the sick children back on their feet again, is a convalescent home.
GOOD LADY  A convalescent home would be splendid.
FATHER  Yes, I'd vote for that.
GOOD LADY  Or, another idea would be a row of almshouses for the elderly where they could live out their lives in some sort of comfort.
FATHER  My old mum would think she was in heaven if she could get an almshouse.
MOTHER  That's a lovely idea.
OFFICIAL  If it is to be a memorial to our late King, it ought, properly speaking, to be a statue.
MOTHER A statue?

FATHER Who needs a statue?

GOOD LADY Though, when you think about it, what we need more than absolutely anything else, something that would benefit the whole community, not just the babies, not just the children, not just the elderly, but everybody in the community, would be a hospital. We badly need our own local hospital.

MOTHER She's right, you know. We do need a hospital.

FATHER Hospital. Yes, that's the one. Right, we'll go for that. Hospital.

OFFICIAL Very interesting discussion. Thank you. I now have pleasure in announcing the decision of the organising committee on how to spend the £1,200 collected by public subscription as a memorial to King Edward VII.

MOTHER Babies home?

FATHER Almshouses?

GOOD LADY Hospital?

OFFICIAL Unanimous decision: a new organ for the Town Hall and a bust of his Majesty.

ANNIE Nineteen hundred and fourteen. When the war came my dad decided to join up.

FATHER King and Country and all that. You'll get regular money if I'm in the army.

MOTHER Fourteen and sevenpence a week—wasn't much. We couldn't afford to stay on in the place we had in Woolwich. We had to move out. My old mum found us a room in Deptford, just one room. Still there was only me and the two little ones.

ANNIE Till Dad came home on leave.

FATHER HANDS MOTHER ANOTHER BABY.

SONG Everybody seems to be in trouble nowadays,
Trouble comes to all of us in many, many ways.
Everywhere you go, you'll hear a tale of woe,
The butcher wants to meet you when the baker wants his dough.

But there's one thing no-one ever wants to pay,
This is why this is the latest saying of the day:
S O N G ( c o n )

Have you paid the rent? Have you paid the rent?
Naughty, naughty, naughty, have you paid the rent?
Here's a wrinkle when the landlord is about,
Send the kiddies down to say that mother says she's out.
Have you paid the rent? Have you paid the rent?
Never, never, tell a lie.
If you haven't paid the rent,
One day you'll repent,
Or you won't go to heaven when you die.

Johnston spent the night out with no knocker on the door,
Got no door to hang the blessed knocker on no more,
No more roof remains, and though he still complains,
He has his dinner underneath the table when it rains.
And the neighbours' children make old Johnston glare,
Shouting through the keyhole of the door that isn't there.

Have you paid the rent? Have you paid the rent?
Naughty, naughty, naughty, have you paid the rent?
Here's a wrinkle when the landlord is about,
Send the kiddies down to say that mother says she's out.
Have you paid the rent? Have you paid the rent?
Never, never, tell a lie.
If you haven't paid the rent,
One day you'll repent,
Or you won't go to heaven when you die.


M O T H E R

In those days there was no refrigerators and the butcher
had to get rid of his stock at the weekend. So, if you
waited till ten o'clock on a Saturday night, they'd
auctioneer the meat off.

B U T C H E R

Who'll give me four bob for this lovely piece of sirloin?

M O T H E R

That's never sirloin.

B U T C H E R

Lovely piece of meat. Three bob. Worth every ha'penny
of three bob. Two and sixpence then. Who'll give me
two and sixpence?

M O T H E R

It's all bone.

B U T C H E R

Nothing wrong with bone. Two bob.

M O T H E R

One and six.

B U T C H E R

For you love...one and nine. I wouldn't sell it anybody
else at that price.

B U T C H E R W R A P S M E A T , H A N D S I T O V E R A N D G O E S.
MOTHER
So that way you got a bit of cheap meat that would
last you through the week, or you hoped it would.
Look, Edward, Annie, what a nice bit of meat I got.

EDWARD
Sunday - roast! "m".

ANNIE
Mum, I got a sore eye.

MOTHER
Oh dear, so you have. Don't rub it. You'll make
it worse.

EDWARD
Monday - bubble and squeak.

ANNIE
Mum, my eye's ever so sore.

MOTHER
Come here, let's have a look. Yes, you've got a stye
or something. Let's give it a rub with my wedding ring,
that'll make it better. Eddie, run along to the
greengrocers - see if he's got any throw-outs. Ask
him for a pennorth of potherbs.

EDWARD
Tuesday - stew.

ANNIE
Mum, my eye still hurts.

MOTHER
No better, is it. Let's give it another rub with
my wedding ring.

EDWARD
Wednesday - shepherd's pie. We ate a lot of potatoes
cos they filled you up.

ANNIE
Mum, my eye...

MOTHER
Oh, gawk. It is getting bad. Let's try some tealeaves
on it. That's good for sore eyes. Here, hold that
against it.

EDWARD
Thursday - she'd get a pot of bones going, put some
pearl barley in, called it a white stew. Didn't like
that much. Mostly we ate bread, bread and dripping.

MOTHER
Just run up to the shop with this cup and ask him to
put an ha'porth of jam in it.

EDWARD
Sometimes we had bread and jam, but then we didn't have
no fat on the bread, no butter or anything.

ANNIE
Mum, my e.ye's awful.

MOTHER
Tealeaves done no good? Let's try 'em again. I
suppose I ought to take you to the doctor really.

MOTHER GETS OUT HER PURSE AND COUNTS THE ODD COPPERS
LEFT IN IT. CAN WE AFFORD THE DOCTOR TUNE.
EDWARD  
Friday - you were lucky if you got a dinner at all.

MOTHER  
Just run round to the bakers and get twopennyworth of 
stale bread. And while you're out get three farthings 
of skimmed milk.

ALL HER MONEY IS GONE.

EDWARD  
We never had fresh bread cos stale bread was cheaper. 
Sometimes it was so hard we couldn't eat it. Then 
she used to cut it up and soak it in this skimmed milk. 
No sugar on it. We all sat round. We were so hungry. 
She used to deal us out a spoon all round.

MOTHER FEEDS THEM FROM THE BOWL.

ANNIE  
Mum, my eye's all stuck up.

MOTHER  
I don't know what to do, love. I can't afford to 
take you to the doctor, not at half-a-crown a time. 
Not unless I break into Gran's bit of money. But 
I'd never pay it back. No, can't do that.

ANNIE  
It hurts.

MOTHER  
I know. I'll take you to that McMillan clinic that's 
opened.

JERUSALEM--MUSIC-ONLY. THE MCMILLAN CLINIC. 
MARGARET MCMILLAN, AN UPRIGHT SCOTS LADY.

MARGARET  
My sister Rachel and I opened our clinic for poor 
children in Deptford in 1910. Deptford is a very poor 
and very crowded district in South East London. Each 
year we deal with thousands of cases. We put teeth 
in-order, heal up ears and throats, and prescribe glasses. 
Thousands of cases are seen yearly and are treated. 
But they come back - again and again. And why do 
they come back? Because the clinic cannot make any 
kind of war with the causes that breed these diseases. 
We have not wiped out any disease at all. We cannot 
empty our own waiting room. We cure them again and 
again. We cannot prevent their return.

MOTHER AND ANNIE ENTER TO WAIT THEIR TURN.

MARGARET  
In the waiting room - ranged on seats by the walls, 
scores of sufferers whose illnesses need not exist at 
all. Bilepharitis, conjunctivitis, scabies, impetigo, 
skin diseases of many kinds... Chest troubles are the 
most common among the ill-housed - colds, coughs, 
bronchitis, suspected tuberculosis. A great many 
children are more or less deformed before they are
MARGARET (con) twelve years old. So many young backs crooked, so many young insteps fallen. How needless is this suffering. It need not exist at all.

MARGARET EXAMINES ANNIE.

MOTHER

How old is Annie?

MOTHER

She's four now.

MARGARET

Have you any other children?

MOTHER

My first baby was William - he died of convulsions at two months. Then I had a miscarriage. Then I had Edward - he's six now. Then Annie here. Then another miscarriage. Then I've just had Nellie here.

MARGARET

Are you planning for any more?

MOTHER

My husband's in France.

MARGARET

Good. Now, Annie has an eye infection. Not too serious, but it must be treated properly, or it will be. You must bathe her eye in a solution of bicarbonate of soda and I'll give you some ointment to put on it. It is contagious, so she should sleep on her own.

MOTHER

We only got the one bed. I sleep at the top with the baby and Annie and Edward sleep at the bottom.

MARGARET

Perhaps she could sleep on a sofa in another room?

MOTHER

We only got the one room and there isn't space for a sofa.

MARGARET

Well... proper cleansing is very important. Have you reasonable washing facilities?

MOTHER

The standpipe's in the yard so I bring the water up in a bucket. We have got a washing stand.

MARGARET

Each room in the house is let to a different family?

MOTHER NODS.

MARGARET

And where do you play, Annie?

MOTHER

Oh, I don't let her out on the street. I couldn't keep a proper eye on her. And she's a sickly child, gets tired quickly. You just play on the bed, don't you, love.

MARGARET

Poor appetite?

MOTHER

She don't eat a lot.
MARGARET

Stand up straight, Annie. Hold your skirt up.
Look at her legs, Mrs. Taylor. That's rickets.
Not too bad, but it's not going to get better. And
she's anaemic. What Annie needs is plenty of fresh
air and sunshine, and plenty of good food.

MOTHER

I do my best on what the Army sends me.

MARGARET

Would you like to come to my nursery school, Annie,
and have a garden to play in?

ANNIE

Billy Long comes to your school. Billy Long lives
in the cellar in our house.

MARGARET

Yes, and poor Billy has a very bad chest from the damp
of that cellar. And is he a friend of yours, Annie?

ANNIE NODS

MOTHER

How much would it cost?

MARGARET

Would a shilling a week be too much?

MOTHER BITES HER LIP

MARGARET

Well...we can come to some arrangement.

MOTHER AND ANNIE GO. ANOTHER SNATCH OF JERUSALEM.

MARGARET

Space is what children want at all ages. But from
the age of one to seven, space is almost as much wanted
as food... and... air. To move, to run, to find things out
by new movement - that is the life of early childhood.
In front of our clinic doors there was an acre of waste
ground which the London County Council had bought - we
asked for leave to use it, cleaned up the ground as
well as we could, and opened our nursery. At that
time there were no nursery schools proper, certainly
no outdoor nurseries.

ANNIE RETURNS WITH BILLY LONG.

MARGARET

Welcome to our nursery, Annie. Billy Long, you must
show Annie what we do.

BILLY

First thing in the morning we go to our teacher for
register. Then we go to the bathroom and have a bath.

ANNIE

I have a bath on Friday night.

BILLY

We have a bath every day whether we need it or not.
And then we have to clean our teeth even if we've already
cleaned them.

BILLY AND ANNIE GO.
MARGARET: We take their clothes off and bath them first thing every morning. Some of their little bodies... (SHE HESITATES, THEN DECIDES TO MAKE A SPEECH) To be blunt, when we first started, 75% of them were verminous. I know we shouldn't record this. We should forget it. But a heavy duty is laid on us to tell all, to hide nothing, so that it can be remedied, so that it will not be allowed to happen again. You see, the grim streets, the cruel rack-renting, the epidemics and the high death-rate have to be the concern of the teacher just as much as bombs and gangrene and broken limbs are the concern of the nurse in the war hospital. (PAUSE, SPEECH OVER) Now, few of the children come back dirty. They all thoroughly enjoy the bath. They love it, splashing in the water. Afterwards we dress them again, not in their own worn clothing, but in the nursery's special coloured overalls.

BILLY AND ANNIE RE-APPEAR. THEIR FACES ARE CLEAN AND SHINING. BILLY IS WEARING A BRIGHT BLUE OVERALL. ANNIE IS IN HER PETTICOAT.

MARGARET: What colour overall would you like, Annie? What about a red one?

ANNIE (THRILLED): Red!

MARGARET HELPS ANNIE INTO THE OVERALL. ANNIE DANCES ABOUT IN DELIGHT. MARGARET COMBS BILLY'S HAIR AND THEN INSPECTS HIM.

BILLY: Then we come back to the big room and the nurse does our hair, combs it all.

MARGARET: Your hair must shine like silk, your teeth must shine like little pearls, your nails must shine like seashells.

MARGARET: Come and have your hair combed, Annie, and then we'll find you a ribbon...

WHILE MARGARET COMBS HER HAIR, ANNIE PLAYS WITH THE RIBBONS IN THE BOX.

ANNIE: I never had a ribbon.

MARGARET: What colour ribbon would you like? I think a red ribbon would match your red pinafore today.

MARGARET POINTS TO THE RED ONE AND ANNIE SELCETS IT IN DELIGHT.

MARGARET: In a minute you shall have some breakfast. What do we have for breakfast, Billy?
BILLY

Porridge and milk.

MARGARET

That's right — porridge, made of Highland meal from Inverness. All the children eat it and some take four big helpings. And then milk to drink. Each child has a pint of milk a day. You must drink as much milk as you like, Annie. Off you go.

BILLY AND ANNIE RUN OFF TO PLAY.

MARGARET

Nothing can be prettier than the children coming from the bathroom on a June morning. They are at last in harmony with Nature, gay as the butterflies or the blossoms that greet the sun. Their pretty clothes are the symbol of new life.

BILLY

We got sand and buckets and spades. I'll show you how to make sand pies if you like. And we got rocking horses and a slide.

MARGARET

[It is a mistake to think that all poor children are underweight and underfed. Some are too heavy, because they eat the wrong kind of food. Bread, bread and always bread is their portion. They suffer from starvation of what Nature supplies in green food and fruits.] Our lunches of fresh vegetables, meat and milk work marvels.

CHILDREN (SINGING)

Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you, Lord, for everything.

MARGARET

Within two years of opening the nursery, we have registered over 70 cures in rickety children. How easy it would be to make rickets disappear altogether.

BILLY

Now we have a sleep.

ANNIE

In the middle of the day?

BILLY

We have a camp bed.

ANNIE

A whole bed to ourself?

THE CHILDREN GO TO SLEEP

MARGARET

Soon every bed holds a little occupant all warmly wrapped in blankets. [The toddlers will not wake for two hours or more.]. On every little face a great peace has fallen. Annie looks as peaceful as the others. One has an impression of rallying powers, of roots striking firmer, and of joy. The quiet shelter seems to hold a great secret.
THE CHILDREN WAKE UP.

MARGARET
In the afternoon we go round the gardens and have Nature Study, and we sing nursery rhymes.

THE CHILDREN SIT AT HER FEET, AND SLOWLY JOIN IN.

MARGARET
Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after.
Then up Jack got and home did trot
As fast as he could caper.
He went to bed to mend his head
With vinegar and brown paper.

BILLY
Tea is bread and butter and jam! And milk to drink.

ANNIE'S MOTHER, STILL CARRYING THE BABY, COMES TO WATCH.

MARGARET
All day there are groups of mothers near the entrance and eyes watching through the palings.

MOTHER
Just look at those kids. Are they really kids from round here? It's better than a play, watching them better than the pictures.

ANNIE SEES HER MOTHER AND STARTS TO RUN TO HER BUT RETURNS TO CHANGE OUT OF HER PINAFORE.

MARGARET
There is only one sad moment in our school day. It comes when the children lay aside their pretty school clothes and go back to the old clothes, laid aside and forgotten all day.

MARGARET IS ABOUT TO UNDO THE RIBBON BUT ANNIE CRIES AND CLUTCHES IT. MARGARET LETS HER KEEP IT. ANNIE RUNS TO HER MOTHER AND THEY GO OFF.

MARGARET
It is a point of honour with us to make every child so well that it does not need a doctor.

SONG
All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
The Lord God made them all.

EDWARD ENTERS, COUGHING. HE IS FOLLOWED BY MOTHER AND ANNIE. ANNIE IS NOW NOTIC EBLY LIVELIER THAN EDWARD AND IS AMUSED AT THE HUMILIATION OF HIS VARIOUS CURES. EDWARD NOW 7/8ish.

MOTHER
Oh, Eddie, you're not coughing again.
EDWARD Every winter I used to start coughing about October and go on all through the winter.

MOTHER I'd better make you something for it.

EDWARD She used to get an onion and slice it, hollow it out and put brown sugar in it, demerara sugar, cover it with a basin and leave it overnight. You had to drink the syrup that seeped out.

MOTHER Now, let's give your chest a rub. We don't want it getting on your chest.

EDWARD HAS TO TAKE HIS SHIRT OFF AND BE RUBBED.

EDWARD She used to rub goose grease on my chest... and then put a brown paper jacket over it. You had to leave it on for about a week.

ANNIE Then you could tear off a little bit every day till it was all off.

EDWARD (MISERABLE) You couldn't take it all off at once.

MOTHER GIVES EDWARD SOME ONION JUICE AND THEN AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT GIVES SOME TO ANNIE TOO.

ANNIE If you didn't get better with goose grease, they'd rub you with camphorated oil, which really stank. Nobody would sit next to you at school. If you got very bad, they'd rub you with turpentine.

EDWARD IS GETTING MORE AND MORE TEARFUL AT ANNIE'S THREATS.

ANNIE Or you could be poulticed - a linseed poultice or a mustard plaster - or a kaolin poultice - as hot as you could stand. So hot it would make you scream.

EDWARD COLLAPSES IN TEARS AND HAS A BAD COUGHING FIT.


ANNIE That makes you sick.

EDWARD Don't want to be sick.

MOTHER That's good for you - fetches it all up. Otherwise it's syrup of squills... No, let's have paregoric. I always swear by paregoric.
SONG
Onions and brown sugar
That really was the best
Mustard, linseed, kaolin
And goose grease on your chest.
Paregoric, opodeldoc,
Always on the shelf,
But as for curing chilblains
You did that by yourself.

EDWARD
Once, when I had a sore throat, she got some oatmeal
and mixed it with hot vinegar, wrapped it in a cloth
and tied it round my neck while it was hot.

ANNIE
But usually it was a sweaty sock.

MOTHER WRAPS A SOCK ROUND EDWARD'S NECK.  ANNIE VERY AMUSED AT EDWARD IN BROWN PAPER AND SOCK.

MOTHER
There, that'll do you the world of good.

ANNIE
For boils, she'd make a poultice out of bread, or
out of carbolic soap and sugar.

EDWARD
What I have seen done for boils - a friend of mine -
his mum filled a stone bottle with boiling water and
then emptied it out and clapped the neck of the bottle
over the boil and it stuck fast. You couldn't lose it
till the boil burst. He was screaming and yelling.
Eventually he ran outside and smashed the bottle against
the wall.

ANNIE
She was always sending me to fetch opper...

MOTHER
Opodeldoc - that was the best there was in liniments.
And Basilicon ointment - that was good for everything.

SONG
Ipecacuanha wine
And cod liver oil
Eucalyptus, camphor,
Bread poultice for a boil.
Paregoric, opodeldoc,
Always on the shelf,
But as for curing chilblains
You did that by yourself.

MOTHER
What you really need is a good clearing out.

THE CHILDREN ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE BUT FAIL.

ANNIE
Every spring you had to have your blood purified.
Sulphur was what you had. You could either have
flowers of sulphur mixed in black treacle, or sulphur
tables.

MOTHER GIVES SULPHUR TABLETS
EDWARD And then every Friday night, whether you need it or not, you'd be lined up.

ANNIE Senna pods and liquorice powder was what my mum believed in most. Liquorice powder was horrible.

THEY ARE DOSED.

EDWARD Sometimes for a change, she'd go on to syrup of figs or castor oil, but she always came back to the liquorice powder.

SONG Figs and prunes and senna
Would help to clear you out.
Castor oil and liquorice
Would make you run about.
Paregoric, opodeidoc,
Always on the shelf,
But as for curing chilblains
You did that by yourself.
I tiddly I tie
I tiddly I tie pom pom pom pom pom.

MOTHER AND EDWARD GO. ANNIE SITS ON THE FLOOR.
EARLY 1919. ANNIE IS 7.

ANNIE One day I was sitting on the kerb and this soldier came along.

FATHER Hello.

ANNIE And I just looked up and said, hello.

FATHER What you sitting there for all on your own? You haven't forgotten me, have you Annie?

ANNIE And then I looked up again and it was Dad. Dad!

ANNIE JUMPS UP FOR A HUG. MOTHER AND EDWARD COME RUNNING OUT OF THE HOUSE. EDWARD A BIT EMBARRASS AT BEING HUGGED. MOTHER SHOWS TODDLER BUNDLE.

MOTHER This is Nellie.

FATHER HUGS MOTHER. HE OBVIOUSLY PANCIES HER.

EDWARD When Dad came home the one room we were living in wasn't big enough for us any more and we moved to live in my uncle's house. We had two rooms there - a bedroom and a kitchen. I slept on a couch in the kitchen. Annie and Nellie pigged in with Mum and Dad.

MOTHER GOES OFF WITH DAD
ANNIE  Mum and Dad had the big bed and we had a little bed of our own. Dad hung a curtain across the room to give us some privacy.

THE TWO CHILDREN ARE PUZZLED AT THIS CONCEPT.

EDWARD  After the war there were terrible epidemics. First there was the flu epidemic. There was nothing you could take for that except quinine mixture.

ANNIE  A lot of people died. They said more people died of that flu than died fighting in the war.

EDWARD  Then there was scarlet fever.

ANNIE  I'd started proper school by then and my best friend was called Patsy. I used to call for her every morning. One morning I called. Is Patsy ready for school?

MRS. PITT  Get away, get away. Don't come near.

ANNIE  Where's Patsy?

MRS. PITT  She's been took away in the night with scarlet fever.

MRS. PITT GOES.

ANNIE  I thought, if I can catch it, I can miss school and I can go to hospital and be in the next bed to Patsy. I didn't feel too well a few days afterwards but there was no rash come.

EDWARD BRINGS A SKIPPING ROPE

ANNIE/EDWARD  Touch your collar
Never swallow
Never catch the fever
Touch your knee
Touch your chin
Never let the burglar in.

EDWARD  The ambulances used to come to fetch them and we'd all go running up the street and stand round the door...

THEY HOLD THEIR HANDS OVER THEIR NOSES

EDWARD  ...and whoever it was would be brought out wrapped in a red blanket and be put in the ambulance.

ANNIE/EDWARD  Touch your collar
Never swallow
Never catch the fever
Touch your nose
Touch your toes
Never go in one of those.
MOTHER COMES RUSHING ON

MOTHER
Don't you dare go running up the street after ambulances. You'll catch it.

EDWARD
Of course, kids don't listen to grown ups.

ANNIE/EDWARD
Mother, mother, I feel sick. Send for the doctor, quick, quick, quick. Doctor, doctor, shall I die? Yes, my dear, and so shall I. How many carriages shall I have? One, two, three, four.....

ANNIE SKIPS OFF. MRS. PITT ON.

MRS. PITT (WHISPERS TO MOTHER)
Dennis Bannister's just been took. Diptheria, they say. Very bad. Not expected to live. The doctor said he should have been called in sooner.

MOTHER
Oh, my gawd. Which is Dennis Bannister?

EDWARD (OVERHEARING THIS LAST)
Dennis Bannister's in my class at school.

MOTHER
You haven't been talking to him, have you?

EDWARD
He sits next to me.

MOTHER
Oh, my gawd, and you didn't finish your dinner tonight.

MRS. PITT
Being off their food's a very bad sign.

MOTHER
You said you had a sore throat.

MRS. PITT
Always starts with a sore throat.

MOTHER
Have you still got it?

EDWARD
It's worse.

MRS. PITT
It develops very fast.

MOTHER
How do you feel in yourself?

EDWARD
Not very well.

MRS. PITT
You ought to get the doctor in.

MOTHER
But then, he's always having sore throats, aint you. Always got a cough and a sore throat.

MRS. PITT
It's worse if you leave it.

MOTHER
But what if he's all right. It's money down the drain.
MRS. PITT None of my business, but I know what I'd do.

MOTHER I can't afford the doctor.

MRS. PITT That's what Mrs. Bannister said, but she had to afford him in the end, and then it was too late.

SONG Can we afford the Doctor,  
The dentist, the midwife, the nurse?  
It doesn't seem fair  
That medical care  
Should depend on the state of your purse.  
I know it's a hard pill to swallow  
But what can we take for a cure  
And if only the rich can afford to be sick,  
How cheap are the lives of the poor?

MOTHER Which doctor should I have?

MRS. PITT Well, now... My husband's on the panel with Dr. Jones.  
But he's very quick-tempered. Hasn't got time for nobody. I have been to Dr. Smith — he has a nicer manner, but he wears a filthy old hat. I threw it out one day when he came, wouldn't have it in the house.  
Now Mrs. Birkett says that Dr. Brown's medicine bottles are just that bit bigger and he still only charges half a crown same as the others. Dr. Black comes out on a Wednesday afternoon where some of the others won't. Dr. Green, I do know, lets you have more tick. Mrs. Bannister had Dr. White cos he's only in the next street.

MOTHER And if he's seen her Dennis, he'll know what to look for...

MRS. PITT I'll go and fetch him.

MRS. PITT GOES.

ANNIE (TO EDWARD) Dip, dip, dip  
You look sick  
Let me hear you cough (EDWARD COUGHS)  
Very bad indeed, sir,  
You should see a doctor.  
O, U, T spells out.

MOTHER I could pawn my wedding ring, I suppose. Or, I could break into Gran's money. Perhaps now Tom's home, I might manage to put it back...

THE DOCTOR ARRIVES, VERY BRISK.

DOCTOR Where's the patient? How long has he been feeling ill? Off his food is he? Restless at night? Take
his temperature. Feel his pulse. Look down his throat. Feel his glands. Afraid it's diphtheria. 
No doubt about it. Have to go to hospital. I'll make the arrangements. I'll send the ambulance. 
Need to take swabs from everyone else. Seal up the room, block up the chimney. Burn sulphur candles. 
Fumigate thoroughly. Send off the blankets, the mattress, the bedding. Have it all stoved. You'll get it back yellow, yellow but sterile. I'll come back tomorrow when I've tested the swabs. Now, I've got some more patients. That'll be half-a-crown.

MOTHER Half a crown?

DOCTOR I'll take it in instalments. Sixpence a week.

MOTHER No, that's all right. I'd rather pay on the nail.

DOCTOR Always the best. I'll see you again.

SONG I'm a most important member of the medical profession 
With a practice that's esteemed for many miles 
And I earn a reputation by the most profound discretion 
And the luring fascination of my smiles.

I am always most seductive to the darling lady patients 
And if they're nervous try to pave the way 
Or perhaps they've only brought the child to get a vaccination.

Well, it's just the same - I always make them pay.

I'm the doctor and always in demand 
I'm the doctor. Oh, you need not be alarmed 
For if you've a trembling or a tickling in the toes 
Just take a drop of this and then a few of those 
And you always may depend upon the doctor.

THE NURSE MAKES UP THE BED AND EDWARD GETS INTO IT.

EDWARD I was taken to the Brook Hospital. That was the isolation hospital in those days. Twelve wards for scarlet fever, ten wards for diphtheria. Huge wards they were, Florence Nightingale wards. And the ceiling seemed miles away.

THE NURSE BRINGS SOMETHING IN AND THEN LEAVES

EDWARD It was the first time I'd been away from home and I was desperately frightened.

EDWARD STARTS CRYING. THE NURSE REAPPEARS.

NURSE There now. What is it?

EDWARD WHISPERS. NURSE NODS AND GOES.
EDWARD  I was frightened of wetting the bed.

THE NURSE RETURNS WITH A BEDPAN.

NURSE  Part of our work as a nurse in those days was to talk to the patient, to make them feel at home. You had to care for the patient. There weren't any antibiotics, no miracle cures. Your only hope was to nurse them through.

THE NURSE REMOVES THE BEDPAN AND LEAVES.

EDWARD  It was mainly bedrest. We weren't even allowed to sit up. Bedrest and gargling with permanganate of potash.

NURSE RETURNS

NURSE  And of course they were on the spot if their throat closed up altogether and we had to do a tracheotomy.

SHE MIMES SLITTING HER THROAT.

NURSE  Go to sleep [now]. You see that light on the desk? I'll be sitting there. If you need anything, I'll come.

SHE MOVES TO SIT AT THE DESK. SHE HAD A LOT OF PAPER WORK TO DO. TUNE OF NURSE, NURSE.

NURSE  A Nightingale Ward was a long narrow ward with beds either side and a desk at one end where the night nurse sat. The nurse could see every patient and every patient could look to that light.

The time I started, you really had to want to be a nurse. You had to choose it as a vocation. We worked from eight in the morning till eight at night, or eight at night till eight in the morning, though usually it was more like seven thirty till nine. We did our studying when we came off duty. And we had one day off a month. You had to be dedicated.

SHE GETS UP AND DOES A ROUND WITH A LITTLE TORCH.

NURSE (TO EDWARD)  Would you like a drink of milk? Then try to go to sleep.

SHE MOVES BACK TO THE DESK AND PICKS UP A TORN SHEET.

NURSE  We had to darn the sheets. The big sheets were cut down to make draw sheets and then you darned the draw sheets. You even darned the darns. The pay we received was so paltry - even shop assistants earned two or three times as much as we did. I worked at a fever hospital. You got a bit more for doing fevers.
NURSE (con) £45 we got for fevers on account of the risk attached. £45 a year, mind you, not a week. And didn't we work for that.

LIGHTS UP. SHE DOES WHAT SHE DESCRIBES.

NURSE First job in the morning was to pull all the beds out to the middle of the ward, sweep all round, damp dust at the back of the beds, push the beds back again... and get your wheels straight! It was all inspected - there was a sister's round and a matron's round.

Make the beds of course - exact envelope corners.
If the sister was in a bad mood, oh it was fatal!
She would stand at the top of the ward, you'd look at her face, and if those corners weren't envelope corners, oh god, she was vicious. The whole lot would have to be done again.

We had to dust the patients' lockers, change the water and do the flowers. But, while you were doing that, you could chat to the person in the bed.

NURSE (TO EDWARD) How many sisters did you say you had?

SHE LEANS OVER AND HE WHISPERS TO HER.

NURSE There was this contact. You got to know the patients. They got to know you. They were in hospital for weeks and weeks, and you were with them all the time until they got better.

EDWARD Visitors weren't allowed into the ward. They could only come and wave to you through the glass.

FATHER APPEARS AT THE FAR SIDE OF THE STAGE

FATHER Hello, Edward. (PAUSE) Are you all right? We are. The doctor took swabs but nobody else has got it. (PAUSE) It's a long walk up to the Brook Hospital. It's taken me a fair old time. Your mother would have come but it's too far for her to walk just now. We couldn't afford the fare. (PAUSE) You can't hear me can you? Well, just wave to show you've seen me.

FATHER WAVES. EDWARD WAVES BACK.

FATHER (TO NURSE) I've brought him an egg. I've put his name on it.

THE NURSE TAKES THE EGG AND TIDIES AWAY THE HOSPITAL.

NURSE If you want to be a lady go to Tommy's
If you want to be a nurse go to Bart's
But if you want to marry go to Guy's.

EDWARD IS FETCHED FROM BED BY HIS FATHER
FATHER While he was in hospital I made him this shop.

EDWARD And it was a beautiful shop.

FATHER (SHOWING) It's got everything in it - meat and fish, and greengrocery and bread and cheese.

EDWARD I thought it was real cheese and I ate a piece and it was white soap.

FATHER I did a bit every night while you were in hospital.

EDWARD I was in Brock seven weeks and when I went home again I'd grown four inches.

MOTHER COMES TO GREET HIM.

MOTHER Edward! Oh, it's nice to have you home again. But none of your clothes fit you.

EDWARD Well, if I've grown taller, mum, you've got a lot fatter.

MOTHER Oh, yes... well... it's pigeon chested.

EDWARD I'd no idea of course that my mother was pregnant. We were never told things like that. I thought to myself - pigeon-chested? I've seen a lot of them like that. It must be a common complaint.

SONG Missus Moore, who lives next door, 
She's such a dear old soul. 
Of children she's a score or more, 
Her husband's on the dole. 
I don't know how she manages 
To keep that lot, I'm sure, 
I said to her today 
As she was standing at the door:

Don't have any more, Missus Moore. 
Missus Moore, please don't have any more. 
The more you have the more you want, they say 
But enough is as good as a feast any day 
If you have many more, Missus Moore, 
You'll have to rent the house next door. 
They're all right when they're here 
But take my advice, old dear, 
Don't have any more, Missus Moore.

MOTHER AND MRS. PITT HANGING-UP-CLOTHES

MRS. PITT You're never. Not again.

MOTHER I can't help it. As soon as he puts his trousers over the bed rail, I'm like it.
MRS. PITT: You can't go on like this. Why don't you get in a hot bath with a pint of gin?

MOTHER: Can't afford the gin!

MRS. PITT: You could throw yourself downstairs.

MOTHER: Knowing me, I'd just break a leg and nothing else.

MRS. PITT: You can make pills out of lead plaster, you know. You have to be careful how many you take. Penny-royal, you could try that...

MOTHER: I know such a lot who've died through abortions.

MRS. PITT: True. But then how many do you know who've died in childbirth. Remember Rosie.

MOTHER: Only young, wasn't she.

MRS. PITT: Then there's quinine crystals, parsley oil, slippery elm...

MOTHER: No. I've never tried to get rid of one. I've lost enough without that. I expect the Lord will find a crust for it somewhere.

SONG: Don't have any more, Missus Moore. Missus Moore, please don't have any more. The more you have the more you want, they say, But enough is as good as a feast any day. If you have many more, Missus Moore, You'll have to rent the house next door. They're all right when they're here But take my advice, old dear, Don't have any more, Missus Moore.

MOTHER: Annie, go and find Mrs. Pitt and tell her it's started.

ANNIE: What's started, Mum?

MOTHER: Never mind. She'll know.

EDWARD: You weren't even allowed to ask questions about it. That was all taboo.

ANNIE RUNS ACROSS TO MRS. PITT.

ANNIE: Mrs. Pitt? Mum says it's started.

MRS. PITT: I thought it was about time.

MRS. PITT COMES ACROSS

MRS. PITT: Let's get you into bed and have a look at you.
EDWARD: What's happening? What is it?

ANNIE: All I know is, it's started, but Dorothy Crouch says she's on the bump.

EDWARD: What you mean?

ANNIE: She's got a big bump on her front.

EDWARD: She's got ever so fat.

ANNIE: Dorothy Crouch says if your mum's got a bump that means she's going to have a baby.

EDWARD: A baby?

MRS. PITT EMERGES FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN

MRS. PITT: I can't deliver this one. You'll have to have the doctor.

MOTHER: I can't afford a doctor.

MRS. PITT: There isn't any choice. I can't manage. Annie, run round the corner for that Dr. White. Say can he come immediately. It's urgent. What do you say?

ANNIE: Surgent.

MRS. PITT: Run all the way.

MRS. PITT GOES BACK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

EDWARD: In those days if you sent for a doctor to come out in an emergency, they'd come right away. Wouldn't matter how many patients were in his surgery. He'd stop work. Won't be long. Leave all the patients just sitting there.

THE DOCTOR ARRIVES WITH HIS BLACK BAG

DOCTOR: Where is the patient? Better be urgent. Sent for like this at the drop of a hat. Never called out for advice or for check-ups. Emergencies only and usually too late.

MRS. PITT BECKONS HIM TO COME BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

ANNIE: There was never any ante-natal care or anything and she could never afford a proper midwife and usually she couldn't afford the doctor. In those days you just more or less had it at home. There was always a woman in the street who'd help with deliveries and laying out and things.
MRS. PITT AND THE DOCTOR EMERGE. MRS. PITT SCURRIES ACROSS THE STAGE. THE DOCTOR ROLLS UP HIS SLEEVES.

DOCTOR

Boil up a kettle. Pour castor oil down her. Give her some chloroform. Knock her right out.

MRS. PITT SCURRIES BACK WITH A KETTLE. THEY BOTH DISAPPEAR.

EDWARD

Where does the baby come from then?

ANNIE

Shan't tell.

EDWARD

You don't know.

ANNIE

Yes I do. Dorothy Crouch told me — everything! (HESITATES) The doctor brings it in his bag.

EDWARD

We really thought that he'd got the baby in this big black bag. We were told they came like that.

ANNIE

I didn't know any better till I was about 14 and yet we never went anywhere else. We were all in the next room. We sat there, quiet, never moved, until we heard the baby cry.

THE BABY CRIES

ANNIE

It's here! It's here! The baby's come! We've got a baby. We've got a baby!

MRS. PITT PULLS ASIDE THE CURTAIN. THE DOCTOR IS HOLDING THE BABY. MOTHER IN THE BED.

MOTHER

What have I got?

DOCTOR

Little boy. Another soldier for the King.

MOTHER

Never if I can help it! I'm not going through all this just to have him shot down in a trench somewhere.

DOCTOR, INSULTED, GIVES THE BABY TO MOTHER.

DOCTOR

Stay in bed for a fortnight. I'll send you my bill.

THE DOCTOR MARCHES OUT. TUNE OF DOCTOR SONG. MRS. PITT MAKES MOTHER COMFORTABLE.

MRS. PITT

You've got a little brother. You can go and look.

MRS. PITT LEAVES. EDWARD AND ANNIE GO TO THE BED.
MOTHER SINGS  Bye oh my baby
If I was a lady
Oh then my babe would not cry
But my baby is weeping
For want of good keeping
I fear my poor baby will die.

EDWARD  What's the baby sucking that for?

MOTHER  He's got a bad tongue and I've put a little piece of
sulphur in this handkerchief and he's sucking the
sulphur to clear his tongue.

ANNIE  It was what they called thrush. Some babies were
born with it then.

EDWARD  Mum, Dad says he's going to make us a suet pudding,
and if he does we're not going to eat it, not with
his hands.

MOTHER  Go on then. Bring the suet up to me, and the flour
and some water. And don't forget the basin to mix
it in.

ANNIE  And she sat up in bed and she made it.

MOTHER  Do you want to hold the baby?

ANNIE  NODS. MOTHER PASSES BABY OVER.

ANNIE  From that time onwards that baby was more or less my
responsibility as much as my mothers because she was
ill so often. I never seemed to have a baby out of
my arms from the time I was eight years old.

EDWARD  Course the neighbours used to come in and help. They
always rallied round in births, deaths, weddings,
funerals, all that. They used to come in and prepare
all the food. We usually had ham salads.

SONG  Here we are again, all the family,
And we haven't been together for years,
Someone's getting christened, so we meet once more,
And out come the smiles and tears

Oh, we've scores of relations down our street
But there's something wrong with their poor feet
For the only time they ever seem to meet
Is at a Wedding or a Christ'ning or a Fun'r'al.

The men shake hands, and when that's done
The ladies kiss there, one by one,
And the only time we have a bit of fun
Is at a Wedding or a Christ'ning or a Fun'r'al.
SONG (con)

There is a happy land, far, far away
One man's meat is another man's poison - that's what they say.
Oh, we hear some real good-natured chaff, everybody's clean, they've had a bath,
And the only time Mother ever has a laugh
Is at a Wedding or a Christ'ning or a Fun'ral.

FOR THE SHORTER VERSION GO STRAIGHT ON TO THE
SECOND CHORUS OF THIS SONG ON PAGE 26.
FOR THE LONGER VERSION, CARRY ON.

MOTHER

Come on, we'll take the new baby to see your Gran.

ANNIE

I don't like going to the Workhouse, Mum.

MOTHER

Neither do I, but we've got to go. Gran's got nobody else left now.

ANNIE

The workhouse was more like a prison than anything. We had to go through these big iron gates. Inside
it was bare brick walls, painted a kind of grey-green. Wooden furniture - just benches to sit on - very bare.
They didn't try to make it comfortable.

All these old ladies wore black dresses with white aprons and mob caps. All dressed identical. They
were all sitting there, all dressed the same. They could have been effigies sitting there, doing nothing.

Then we went up this old iron staircase to the wards and all up the sides were these cradles to keep the
old people in, all crammed together.

GRAN IN BED.

MOTHER

Hello, mother.

GRAN (PEERING)

Who's that?

MOTHER

It's me, mother.

GRAN

Is it Lizzie?

MOTHER

I've brought the new baby to see you.

GRAN

You've never gone and had another.

MOTHER

It's a little boy. We thought we'd call him Harry after his grandad.

GRAN

Harry? I never see Harry now. They never let me see him.

ANNIE

In the workhouse they used to separate males from
ANNIE (con) females, so the husbands were separated from their wives.

MAYBE A BACKGROUND SNATCH OF MY OLD DUTCH

GRAN You still got that money I gave you? You haven't gone and spent it?

MOTHER (HESITATES, THEN LIES BRAVELY) I still got it.

GRAN I saved up for a good funeral. You'll see I get a good funeral, Lizzie? Promise me when I die you'll put me next to Harry.

MOTHER Oh, mother, of course. Don't talk about it.

GRAN Promise me, though.

MOTHER I promise.

GRAN I don't want a pauper's grave. I want a proper funeral.

MOTHER You're not going to die yet. Hasn't anybody combed your hair today?

MOTHER COMBS GRANS HAIR.

ANNIE They wasn't looked after. They had shelter and they had food, but they wasn't looked after. They were just lying there and calling out.

ANNIE AND MOTHER LEAVE

GRAN Harry? Where are you, Harry?

ANNIE Why is Gran in the workhouse, Mum?

MOTHER She got too old to look after herself. She wasn't eating properly.

ANNIE You won't ever go there will you, Mum? I don't want you to go there when you're old.

MOTHER Oh, I should never have let her go. I should have had her with us. But there wasn't the room....

MOTHER CRIES. BY NOW IT IS PROBABLY 1921. MOTHER IS AROUND 36, ANNIE IS 9, EDWARD 11.

ANNIE When Gran died they brought her body home to us.

FATHER COMES ON WITH EDWARD.

FATHER Don't upset yourself, love. It's all for the best.
MOTHER I should never have let her go in the Workhouse.

FATHER PUTS HIS ARM ROUND MOTHER AND LEADS HER OFF.

ANNIE They made us go and say goodbye to her.

EDWARD The coffin was there on a couple of trestles, but the lid wasn't screwed down.

ANNIE There was a lot of flowers. The neighbours had all been in to see her and brought wreaths and things.

EDWARD The flowers smelt very strong and there was a smell of varnish off the coffin.

ANNIE They lifted me up to see and told me to stroke her forehead. It was stone cold. They wanted me to kiss her goodbye, but I wriggled free and ran out of the room.

EDWARD Nobody played outside our house all week, cos it was a death house.

MOTHER RETURNS IN MOURNING, BRINGING A HAT FOR ANNIE. FATHER WITH BLACK ARMBAND.

FATHER We've put ourselves in debt up to here for all this.

MOTHER Thank God for the Provident Clothing Society.

FATHER I don't know how we're going to pay it back, even at two bob a week.

MOTHER But she had to have a proper funeral. I promised her a proper funeral.

ANNIE I was bought a black hat for the funeral. That was the first time I ever had anything new.

EDWARD I had a new pair of black trousers - all on the Provident Clothing.

ANNIE The funeral was beautiful. Beautiful horses with the plumes on their heads. And the coffin was draped in purple.

EDWARD All the neighbours had their front room curtains drawn till after the funeral had left the street.

MOTHER You got to have a proper funeral. You're looked down on if you have a cheap funeral.

EDWARD After Gran's funeral, we had another ham salad.
SONG

Here we are again, all the family,
And we haven't been together for years,
Someone's getting buried, so we meet once more,
And out come the smiles and tears.

THIS IS THE END OF THE SECTION THAT CAN BE LIFTED
OUT. EITHER VERSION, GO ON TO SECOND CHORUS.

SONG

There are lots of them without a doubt
Whose clothes are always up the spout
And the only time they ever get them out
Is at a Wedding or a Christening or a Funeral.

They all discard their overalls
They all flip up and pay their calls
And there's always an awful smell of camphor balls
At a Wedding or a Christening or a Funeral.

There is a happy land, far, far away,
One man's meat is another man's poison - that's what they say
Oh, we hear some real good-natured chaff,
Everybody's clean, they've had a bath,
And the only time Mother ever has a laugh
Is at a Wedding or a Christening or a Funeral.

ANNIE

Just after the end of the First World War, it seemed
at first like things was going to change.

FATHER

Lot more got the vote.

MOTHER

Even some women got the vote - but not me.

FA THER

No. Just the important ones, like me. Land fit for heroes. That's what they said.

ANNIE

See, towards the end of the war they brought in conscription for the first time and all these millions
of men had to go for a medical.

MOTHER

And there was getting on for half of them put in the bottom category.

FATHER

"Totally unfit for military service." Not even fit enough for cannon fodder. "A C3 Nation" - that's what they said.

MOTHER

Made the powers-that-be think that did. Worried 'em.

ANNIE

There was a lot of talk about improving living conditions - subsidised housing - and talk about forming a Ministry
of Health. Yes, it seemed at first like things was going to change.
FANFARES. ENTER THE OFFICIAL.

OFFICIAL
To provide a memorial to the men of Woolwich who gave their lives fighting for their King and Country, it has been decided to set up a public subscription.

MOTHER
Town Hall needs another new organ, does it? What about that hospital?

OFFICIAL
The need for a hospital has been recognised. The cost is estimated at £50,000.

MOTHER
That's a lot of money.

OFFICIAL
Donations have already been received. The Council will contribute. Proceeds from Victory Concerts and other functions will go to swell the fund.

ATTRACTIONS ARE SHOUTED BETWEEN LINES OF THE SONG

SONG
There were Peace Parades and Cavalcades And dances by the score

SHOUT
Popular Dance at Plumstead!

SONG
There was Icelandic wrestling And then a tug of war

SHOUT
Select Dance at Woolwich!

SONG
Gymnasts and acrobats Performing dogs galore

SHOUT
Mammoth Carnival — Danson Park!

SONG
To swell the funds To buy the ground To purchase a brick To heal the sick And help us afford Another ward In the hospital that we built.

OFFICIAL
The target has been reached!

THEY CHEER. PICTURE OF WOOLWICH HOSPITAL IS ERECTED.

ANNIE
The Woolwich Memorial Hospital was opened by the Duke of York, accompanied by the Duchess.

MORE CHEERING

DUKE
This fine new hospital on the hill is the last word in design and function, the best possible memorial, honouring the dead and serving the living. I declare this hospital opened.
MORE CHEERING AND CLAPPING

MOTHER
And it wasn't just the Woolwich Memorial they were collecting for. There was the Eltham and Nottingham Cottage Hospital - started off as a little two-ward place and they kept collecting for more wards.

ANNIE
First a children's ward, then a casualty department, then another ward...

PICTURE OF ELTHAM AND NOTTINGHAM IS ERECTED. THEY CHEER.

MOTHER
There was a big extension to the Children's Hospital at Sydenham...

ANNIE
£20,000 they collected for that.

PICTURE OF SYDENHAM HOSPITAL IS ERECTED. THEY CHEER.

MOTHER
And then there was the Mothers' and Babies Hospital at Woolwich. That was my favourite.

SONG
There were fun fairs and carnivals.
Torchlight processions.

SHOUT
Garden Party at Charlton House!

SONG
Horse shows and flower shows
All sorts of exhibitions.

SHOUT
Hospital Sunday!

SONG
And the boy scouts, the Army,
And the Co-op made donations.

SHOUT
House to house collections! Flag Days!

SONG
To swell the funds
To buy the ground
To purchase a brick
To heal the sick
And help us afford
Another ward
In the hospital that we built.

? The target has been reached!

THEY CHEER. PICTURE OF BRITISH HOSPITAL IS ERECTED.

MOTHER
Queen Mary came to open it.

ANNIE
And some children had been chosen to present her with purses of money that had been donated, and one of them
ANNIE (con) dropped out at the last moment and they asked me if I would do it! The Queen was sitting up at the end of a corridor and you had to walk up and present the purse to her and curtsey and then back away. You had to walk backwards down this corridor. You couldn't turn round. Little leather purses they were with drawstrings.

SONG
To swell the funds
To buy the ground
To purchase a brick
To heal the sick
And help us afford
Another ward
In the hospital that we built.

CHEERING, ETC.

MOTHER Annie.

ANNIE Yes, mum.

MOTHER I'm really pleased about that Mothers and Babies hospital. Do you know what my dream is?

ANNIE No, mum.

MOTHER One of these days, you'll grow up and you'll meet a really nice young man, somebody like your father. And you'll get married and after a bit you'll decide you'd like to have a baby...

ANNIE I saw some babies all in a row at the hospital and I picked out the one I'd like to have.

MOTHER Well, you're not old enough yet to pick a baby. But what I hope is that when you are, you'll be able to go to that hospital to have it and be properly looked after. Not like me. You'll have proper care.

ANNIE Did Harry have to come in that black bag all the way from the hospital?

MOTHER Come on - time to go to school!

ANNIE School...

EDWARD School...

THE TEACHER BLOWS A WHISTLE. THE CHILDREN LINE UP. A FILTHY BOY RUNS IN AND TAGS ON THE END. THEY MARCH INTO SCHOOL. THE FILTHY BOY PINCHES EDWARD'S CAP AND PUTS IT ON. EDWARD GRABS IT BACK.
SONG
Here we are again, all the family,
And we haven't been together for years,
Someone's getting buried, so we meet once more,
And out come the smiles and tears.

THIS IS THE END OF THE SECTION THAT CAN BE LIFTED OUT. EITHER VERSION GO ON TO SECOND CHORUS.

SONG
There are lots of them without a doubt
Whose clothes are always up the spout
And the only time they ever get them out
Is at a Wedding or a Christening or a Funeral.

They all discard their overalls
They all flip up and pay their calls
And there's always an awful smell of camphor balls
At a Wedding or a Christening or a Funeral.

There is a happy land, far, far away,
One man's meat is another man's poison - that's what they say,
Oh, we hear some real good-natured chaff,
Everybody's clean, they've had a bath,
And the only time Mother ever has a laugh
Is at a Wedding or a Christening or a Funeral.

MOTHER
Time to go to school!

ANNIE
School.

EDWARD
School.

THE TEACHER BLOWS A WHISTLE. THE CHILDREN LINE UP. A FILTHY BOY RUNS IN AND TAGS ON THE END. WHISTLE AGAIN. THEY MARCH INTO SCHOOL. THE FILTHY BOY PINCHES EDWARD'S CAP AND PUTS IT ON. EDWARD GRABS IT BACK. THEY MARCH INTO CLASS.

TEACHER
Good morning, Class Four.

CHILDREN
Good morning, Miss Sharpe.

TEACHER
Times tables.

CHILDREN (CHANTING) One times one is one, one times two is two,
one times three is three, one times four is four...

THE CHANTING GOES ON UNDER THE TEACHER'S NEXT SPEECH
one times five is five, one times six is six, etc.

TEACHER
Local education authorities are now required to provide school meals for the very poor and under-nourished children. As well as the mid-day meal, they have milk and cod-liver oil at eleven o'clock.
THE TEACHER BLOWS HER WHISTLE. THE CHANTING STOPS.

ANNIE  Play-time!

TEACHER  They rush to go out and are halted

ANNIE  The cod-liver oil children will come to my desk.

EDWARD  You had to queue up at the teacher's desk and get your
cod-liver oil and malt out of this big jar which she
ladled from one to the other regardless.

ANNIE  But only if you came from certain homes you had to go
up. I really resented having to go out and stand there
and get this stuff given to me. I knew I was poor and
so did everybody else, but I didn't want my nose rubbed
in it.

EDWARD  It tasted of fish and it was like very dark, runny
toffee. It was a peculiar taste. Most of us didn't
like it.

CHILDREN  Yeerrrgghh!

TEACHER  Weights and measures!

CHILDREN (CHANTING)  Twelve inches one foot, three feet one yard,
twenty-two yards one chain, ten chains one furlong,
eight furlongs one mile.

EDWARD  There were school dinners but, my god, you had to be
poor. Even I didn't come into that category. The
kids that went to school dinners and also to the
cleansing station - they were looked down on as social
outcasts. And the school dinner place was in a kind
of little mission hall - a kind of soup kitchen. We'd
rather go without a dinner than go there.

CHILDREN  What's for dinner? What's for dinner?
Irish stew. Irish stew.
Sloppy semolina. Sloppy semolina.
No thank you. No thank you.

TEACHER  (Weights and measures!)

CHILDREN  Four gills one pint, two pints one quart, four quarts
one gallon.
TEACHER Many of the children in our schools need soap and water much more urgently than they need pen, ink and paper.

CHILDREN Sixteen ounces one pound, fourteen pounds one stone, two stones one quarter, four quarters one hundredweight, twenty hundredweights one ton.

TEACHER Luckily the education authorities are now required to provide a schools medical service.

ENTER SCHOOL NURSE

CHILDREN (WHISPERING) It's Nitty Nora, Nitty Nora.

ANNIE Nitty Nora, the bug explorer.

NURSE The reason for these medical inspections is to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. It's a good preventive service because it can pick up conditions early on and treat them.

TEACHER Line up, children.

ANNIE She'd come round to look in your head to see if you had any marks of where the fleas had bit you.

THE NURSE EXAMINES ANNIE - NAPE OF THE NECK AND BEHIND THE EARS. SHE DISMISSES HER. SHE NEXT EXAMINES THE FILTHY BOY.

NURSE As usual, Jimmy Jones, you'll have to be sent to the cleansing station.

ANNIE They had to go down to this place and be bathed and have their hair combed with kerosene.

THE NURSE EXAMINES EDWARD.

NURSE Edward Taylor, your hair is usually clean.

THE NURSE GOES.

EDWARD I was found to have a lousy head. Everybody was horrified.

ANNIE AND TEACHER EXPRESS HORROR.

TEACHER Edward Taylor, I shall write your mother a note. I know she usually keeps you clean but you've obviously been in contact with another child who is not so clean. And we all know which child that is.

THEY ALL STARE AT JIMMY JONES. TEACHER BLOWS WHISTLE AND GOES. JIMMY JONES SKULK OFF.
CHILDREN

Red, white and blue
The cat's got the flu
The dog's got fleas and
So have you!

ANNIE

After that, Mum used to rub our heads with some ghastly smelling ointment every Thursday night...

EDWARD

Greasy muck it was.

ANNIE

...and we had to go to school with it on every Friday and then have it washed out Friday night.

EDWARD

We had a scullery with a flat-looking sink and a cold water tap.

ANNIE

That's where mother used to do all her washing. There was a copper in the corner to boil the washing and she used that to get the water hot for our baths.

EDWARD

There was a whacking great tin bath out in the back yard and she'd bring that in on Friday night and we'd all have a bath in the scullery.

MOTHER STRUGGLES IN WITH THE BATH.

SONG

A mother was bathing her baby one night
The oldest of ten and a tiny wees mite
The mother was poor and the baby was thin
Only a skeleton covered in skin.

The mother turned round for the soap off the rack
She was gone but a minute and when she turned back
Her baby was gone and in anguish she cried
Oh where is my baby? - the angels replied:

Your baby has gone down the plug hole
Your baby has gone down the plug
The poor little thing was so skinny and thin
It should have been bathed in a jug.

Your baby is perfectly happy
It won't need a bath any more
Your baby has gone down the plug hole
Not lost but gone before.

MOTHER

We can't afford any coal for the copper.

EDWARD

We used to walk round the streets scavenging for firewood, searching about, walking round the streets, looking for boxes and broken stuff to burn on the stove.

ANNIE

Everything went up the copper - old wood and cardboard, old boots, anything.
MOTHER  Shove 'em up the copper. Get the water hot.

ANNIE  Then she'd fill this great tin bath with hot water and we'd all of us get in that same water.

MOTHER  Little Harry first, then Nellie.

ANNIE STARTS TO UNDRESS. EDWARD IS SLOUCHING ABOUT.

MOTHER  Then you, Annie. Are you getting ready, Eddie?

EDWARD MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO GET READY. HE IS EMBARRASSED.

MOTHER  Eddie, I don't want the water to be all cold when I get in it. Not to mention what it'll be like for your Dad...

EDWARD  As I got older, I left the tin bath to the girls and I went down the public baths on a Saturday morning.

MOTHER (GRUDGINGLY)  Here's a penny then.

MOTHER AND ANNIE TAKE BATH OFF.

SONG  Your baby has gone down the plug hole
Your baby has gone down the plug
The poor little thing was so skinny and thin
It should have been bathed in a jug...

EDWARD  You sat in the waiting room till your turn to go in and then you went in this stinking bath place. A hefty-looking bloke used to be in charge.

THE BATHS SUPERINTENDENT COMES IN TO TAKE EDWARDS PENNY AND TO GIVE HIM A TOWEL.

SUPER  I hate you kids.

EDWARD  You paid a penny and you got this blessed thing they called a towel. It was as stiff as a board. It was very painful drying yourself on it. If you were rich you paid twopence and you got another towel which was slightly better, but I wouldn't say it was comfortable.

SUPER  Right. You're next. Get in that one. No mucking about. Otherwise, out you go.

EDWARD GOES INTO THE BATHROOM

EDWARD  So you'd get in there. Then he'd turn the water on from outside. He'd lock the door and turn the water on and you had so long. If it wasn't right, you had a number and you shouted out. Bit more hot in number six!
SUPER More hot in number six, is it? I’ll give you more hot.

HE GIVES THE TAP A HUGE SWIRL.

EDWARD Sometimes you was almost scalded. More cold, more cold!

SUPER Thought you wanted more hot?

EDWARD He didn’t like doing it. More cold, more cold in number six!

SUPER If you don’t stop mucking about in there, I’ll come in and yank you out.

EDWARD He had a key — he’d come in and turf you out. You couldn’t be in there too long.

THE SUPERINTENDENT YANKS HIM OUT. EDWARD IS ONLY HALF-DRESSED. HE STARTS SHIVERING.

MOTHER Eddie, you’re shivering. You haven’t gone and caught a chill have you? You know better than to catch a chill with your chest.

EDWARD Every winter I had these terrible chest coughs. I couldn’t breathe with it.

MOTHER You know you have to wrap up well coming out of a hot bath and then walking home through a peasouper.

EDWARD We used to have these thick yellow fogs — you couldn’t see your hand in front of you, literally.

MOTHER They’re just killing to anybody with chest trouble.

EDWARD These fogs were killers. Old people used to just pack up under it, used to die left, right and centre.

MOTHER This time I’m going to take you to the doctor before it gets any worse.

EDWARD To the doctors? But, Mum... half a crown...

MOTHER No. Mrs. Pitt’s told me about a doctor what’s set up just by the Woolwich Ferry. Only charges sixpence and that’s including medicine. That’s no worse than going to the chemist for a sixpenny bottle.

EDWARD Woolwich Ferry’s a long way.

MOTHER We’ll come back on the bus. Come on. I’ll tie a hankie over your face.

EDWARD You used to wear a handkerchief over your face and when you got home it was black. You could scrape the soot off.
MOTHER She says it's down by the ferry, down the bottom of Hare Street somewhere, opposite where Bellwater Lane runs out - a little wooden hut or something.

EDWARD It was nothing like the big posh houses doctors usually had.

MOTHER It doesn't look very... I hope it'll be all right.

EDWARD We went into this very dusty sort of waiting room...

MOTHER Nothing on the floor and just a little gas fire!

EDWARD ...and sat and waited our turn.

SUMMERSKILL My father was a doctor and when I was a girl, I often visited patients with him. These visits were undoubtedly the strongest single influence in my life. They made me wish to take up medicine, to give immediate help to the sick. And they made me wish to help in the long-term - removing by political action some of the causes of malnutrition and consequent ill-health. In other words, they made me a socialist as well as a doctor.

I was rather looked down on by the other local doctors because I created a threat. I was undercharging and therefore, as they saw it, taking their patients away from them. I wasn't. I was treating patients who couldn't afford to go to the other doctors.

SHE BECKONS EDWARD OVER AND LISTENS TO HIS CHEST, TAPPING IT WITH TWO FINGERS.

EDWARD I had been to doctors before when my chest got very bad, but none of them seemed to be able to do a great deal. They prescribed cough mixture and steam kettles, but mainly they just sort of sat back, more or less waiting to see whether it would develop into TB, which is what they expected and what usually happened.

SUMMERSKILL With a child like this, you really ought not to live in London.

MOTHER Thar'! His father works in the docks.

SUMMERSKILL Then the child ought not to stay in London, not through another winter. I'll see what I can arrange.

DR. SUMMERSKILL LEAVES. MOTHER TIDIES EDWARD AND GETS HIM READY FOR HIS JOURNEY.

SUMMERSKILL They sent me to Brighton, to a nursing home there. It was a home for poor children. We were all poor.
EDWARD (con) We went by train – taken down and looked after by the guard in the train. None of us had ever been on a train before. We didn't know where we were going to, didn't know whether to be scared or excited. There were two little girls sitting in the corner crying. They sat and held hands and cried all the way there. The boys didn't cry. We weren't scared. We swung on the luggage racks.

THE NURSE COMES ACROSS

EDWARD We were met at the station by the nurses and taken to the Home in taxis.

NURSE Some of the children were very badly clothed. Their parents had no idea what to dress them in.

EDWARD Some of the nurses were a bit scathing about what the children were wearing.

NURSE Some boys had no coats and we used to wrap them up before they went out in anything we could lay our hands on...

SHE WRAPS SOMETHING ROUND HIM

EDWARD They had great big chests full of garments, scarves, blankets. They'd wrap them round and then pin them on us.

NURSE They looked a motley crew.

EDWARD People think because you're a child and you're poor, you haven't got any feelings. They talked about us as if we weren't there.

NURSE Walks twice a day whatever the weather is like.

EDWARD It was a dreadful winter. Sometimes it was so windy and we were all thin little things. We were blown over cos we couldn't stand up. We went on short walks to start with and then longer. A lot of them were covered in chilblains.

EDWARD STARTS TO WHIMPER

NURSE Parents not allowed to visit. (PAUSE) I'm not standing any nonsense. Nobody has their parents to visit. They probably couldn't afford it anyway.

EDWARD They were firm but they were kind. They put on a marvellous fireworks display.

NURSE You must write home every week.
EDWARD (WRITING) We aren't having any treatment. Just fresh air. We have a lot of fresh air. And we have a lot of milk, hot milk and cocoa. And we have a lot of hot dinners.

NURSE Let me check what you've written.

EDWARD And she'd check it and then write on the bottom how much we weighed and what we'd gained, so that they would know.

THE NURSE GIVES THE LETTER TO MOTHER

MOTHER He's gained another pound this week. We shan't know him when he comes home.

EDWARD I stayed there for six months and came home in the following March.

MOTHER Is it our Eddie?

EDWARD My family were astonished at the difference in me. The next winter I wasn't quite so bad and shortly after that we moved up the hill out of the worst of the smoke. We were given a council house at Charlton.

SONG
I feel like a fighting man
I'm fit and fat and fine
Since I've lived in a little Garden Suburb "up the line"
Tho' to call it a sookub is the fashionable way
I call it a subub cause it's easier to say.
If Town life's too fast for you and country life's too slow
Don't make a bungle of your life but buy a bungalow.

In our little garden subbub
Far away from the noise and hubbub
When you're tired of the pubbub, tired of the clubbub
Take a little house in the garden subbub.
There you can grow stewed rhubub
Bath in an old rain tubbub
So leave all the hubbub and the pubbub and the clubbub
And grow your own grubbub in the subbub.

EDWARD Course then, after a bit, I was old enough to start work and I decided I'd get an open-air job. I went as a delivery boy for Tommy Liptons!

ANNIE And then a year later, I started work as well. I worked in a shirt factory down in Woolwich. So then we could both give Mum a bit of money every week and things got a bit easier all round.
EDWARD Or they would have done if it hadn't been 1926 by then.

FATHER See, I did my bit for the old Country, did my time in France in the trenches, but I was wounded. Nothing much, not serious, but it seemed to leave me with no muscle.

MOTHER Therefore he was a bit handicapped when it came to getting a job.

FATHER I did get some work at first when I first came home – nice little job with a little family firm – but as times got worse they had to close down. Then I couldn't get another job.

MOTHER He tried, my god, he tried. He used to walk miles. Six in the morning he used to get up and set out.

FATHER I used to queue up outside the gates of the docks and they'd open the gates and say "Ten men" and the rest had to go away again.

MOTHER During the winter he once swept snow cos he hadn't worked. He'd do anything.

FATHER But I couldn't get a permanent job. It was the depression, you see.

MOTHER He never complained. He wasn't that sort of a man. But it got him down.

ANNIE My mum we-nt out to work, cleaning. He didn't like her having to do that.

MOTHER But it brought in a few shillings.

ANNIE Dad used to see to the little ones, see they went to school all right.

EDWARD Then he was in and out of hospital...

ANNIE One thing after another...

MOTHER He didn't live to much of an age.

THEY STAND TOGETHER, HEADS BOWED. STRAIN OF THERE IS A HAPPY LAND.

MOTHER He was a good man but he didn't have much of a life really.

ANNIE The day he was buried, that was the first time I met my husband. I was due to see him that evening and I had to cancel it.
MOTHER  Anyway he asked her out again.  And then she brought him home to tea…

JIM ENTERS AND IS INTRODUCED TO MOTHER AND EDWARD.

MOTHER  He was a nice lad.  We all took to him.  And after a bit they got married…

WEDDING MUSIC

MOTHER  …just in time for the Second World War.

EDWARD AND JIM PUT ON ARMY HATS.  EDWARD KISSES MOTHER, JIM KISSES ANNIE AND THEY LEAVE.

ANNIE  I had my first baby during the blitz, in the blackout.

MOTHER  Well, the guns were going, the bombs were dropping, but she’d started into labour and I thought, well I’ve just got to go and fetch the midwife.  So what I did, I put a saucepan on my head.  I didn’t know whether the midwife would turn out but she said "If you’ve come round for me during this, I can come back with you."  She had a tin hat.

ANNIE  She was wonderful wasn’t she?  She had a lamp, like a pitman’s lamp, that she fastened on her forehead, cos all the ordinary lights we’re off.

MOTHER  When you think what we’ve been through in our lifetime!

WAR MUSIC OR PATHE PICTORIAL NEWS MUSIC

PICTURE POST EDITOR  At the end of the last war we got no new Britain.  This time we can be better prepared.  Our plan for a new Britain is not something outside the war…it is our most positive war aim.  The new Britain is the country we are fighting for.  We believe that after this war, certain things will be common ground among all political parties.  It will be common ground that every Briton – man, woman or child – shall be assured of enough food of the right kind to maintain him in full bodily health and fitness.  It will be common ground that our state medical service must be reorganised and developed so as to foster health, not merely battle with disease.

BARBARA CASTLE  The National Health Service was a living piece of socialism because what it said was never mind whether you are poor, penniless, OAP or the richest in the land, you shall have an equal right to fight pain and death and you won’t pay at the point of use…nobody’s going to stand over you and ask for your cheque book before they’ll operate.
DR. GORMAN'S SURGERY, 1948.  DR. GORMAN IN BRIGHT WHITE DOCTOR'S COAT.  MOTHER IS NOW AROUND 63.

DR. GORMAN
The fifth of July, 1948, the start of the National Health Service. Everybody had to register with a doctor and they had a big buff thing which they had to fill in in duplicate...

ANNIE'S MOTHER COMES IN.

GORMAN
Hello, Mrs. Taylor. Here we are. Fill this in first.

MOTHER HAS DIFFICULTY SEEING IT.  SHE HOLDS IT AT ARM'S LENGTH.

GORMAN
Most people in those days couldn't fill in a form, so the doctor was sitting there scribbling away...
Let me do it for you.

GORMAN TAKES FORM BACK AND FILLS IT IN WHILE TALKING.

GORMAN
And what have you come about, besides registering?

MOTHER
My headaches. I'm getting terrible headaches. All round here.

GORMAN
Do you get them all the time?

MOTHER
They come on when I do things like darning, or reading the paper. The news can get depressing.

GORMAN
Do you wear glasses for close work?

MOTHER SHAKES HEAD

GORMAN
Do you possess any glasses?

MOTHER
No... I've never... 😔.

GORMAN
I think it might be sensible to have an eye-test at your age. I'll give you a prescription for something to ease the pain for now and I'll write you a note to take to the optician.

MOTHER
I couldn't afford an eye-test just now, but thank you anyway. Where do I pay?

GORMAN
You don't pay. Not any more. It's free. I've put the shoe-box away. Take this to the chemist.

MOTHER
I have to pay the chemist instead, do I, for the prescription?

GORMAN
No, the prescription is free too. And when you go
GORMAN (con) for your eye test, that'll be free. And the glasses he'll provide for you, they'll be free.

MOTHER Free? You don't have to pay for anything?

GORMAN Yes, free. Everything's free now. And, incidentally, while you're at it, I should go to the dentist and get yourself some free dentures. They were heady days!

MOTHER And I went for those spectacles and dentures. And I got them. And they were free! Oh, it was nice to be able to go to the chemist with your prescription and get the thing for nothing. And to think you could have a doctor at any time, and you didn't have to worry whether you could afford it. You didn't have to borrow from the neighbours. It was a marvellous thing!

GORMAN I thought it was super. I thought no more starving children coming for treatment - no more people at their last gasp. I thought I shall just be seeing people simply because they're ill. Because not only did the new Health Service mean free medical care - it meant the dole, it meant supplementary pensions, it meant that no one need starve. It felt like a millenium, like Utopia.

MOTHER I thought what a wonderful thing it was to narrow the gap between rich and poor. I'd had experience of managing as a poor person and thinking how much better off other peoples' children would be where there was money in the family. I can't tell you what a wonderful thing it was.

SONG Here's good health to each one Every daughter and son Now the National Health it is free No hospital bed costs an arm or a leg No physician will ask for a fee It's a tonic to know When you're ill you can go And get treatment you don't have to buy We put up a fight And demanded our right Now the future looks bright, we can cry:

We can afford the Doctor The D-entist, the midwife, the nurse. We're all fair and square Now medical care Won't depend on the state of your purse Let's hope the old times are behind us And the bad good old days come no more When only the rich could afford to be sick And cheap were the lives of the poor.
ANNE: After the war, when Jim came out of the forces, I hadn't seen him for four years and, well, it wasn't long before I fell for my second baby.

MOTHER: And she was given all this ante-natal care: the weighing, the regular checkups, milk, orange juice and vitamin tablets.

JIM: It was a strange thing to us then, as young as we were and as modern as we thought we were. This care was something that she was told to go and get and to have.

JIM PUTS HIS ARM ROUND HER PROUDLY.

ANNE: To have Linda I went in the British Hospital for Mother and Babies, in Woolwich, not far from where we lived then.

MOTHER: It's my dream come true.

JIM TAKES HER SUITCASE AND LEADS HER TO THE HOSPITAL.

ANNE: It was a wonderful hospital. You looked out from the balconies on to lovely gardens...

JIM: All the babies were out there.

ANNE: I used to think you just came here and picked one, whichever you liked best. I know better now.

HUG OR HAND SQUEEZE.

NURSE: Come on, young man, time to go.

JIM: Make it a girl this time, for me.

JIM GOES.

ANNE: I remember this hospital opening when I was a little girl.

NURSE: Yes, three friends started it, three nurses. They wanted to do something about the terrible loss of
life they saw in childbirth in those days. That was before there was any proper training for midwives. They started with a house a few streets away and then campaigned for this hospital. The Government finally accepted their standards for the whole country.

A BELL IS RUNG

ANNIE
You can hear that bell for such a long way. People say, "Oh, there's another baby!"

NURSE
It's to call the trainee midwives to watch the birth. Women from all over the world come here to train. Now, I think you're ready. I'll take you through.

ANNIE GOES UPSTAGE

NURSE
We do our level best to keep it personal. Sister Gregory, one of the founders, used to say she wanted women to feel they were among their own family. We have a lot of families working here too, mothers and daughters, and even grand-daughters.

JIM RETURNS WITH THE SUITCASE. ANNIE BRINGS ON THE BABY.

JIM
What have we got?

NURSE
It's a little girl.

ANNIE
You got your wish. When I had Linda, it was like a dream, it really was. I mean it was wonderful, for me it was wonderful. You were tended and waited on. Clean sheets all the time and I didn't have to make my own suet puddings either!

NURSE
She's all yours now. But you'll have a Health Visitor come to see you and she'll deal with any problems you might have. And then you'll want to be up after six weeks. And then you'll want to be taking her to the clinic.

JIM
This carried on for a long time after she was born. Milk, and orange juice and having her weighed.

In my lifetime I've been able to see a huge difference between the babies when I was growing up and the babies now.
JIM little, skinny tiny things, and then suddenly they were big and healthy.

ANNIE You could actually see the improvement.

NURSE Then, in a few months, you'll be wanting to take her for her injections.

ANNIE What's that for?

NURSE Diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus. Preventive medicine. These days we don't wait till they're ill and try to cure them. We stop them catching all these things in the first place.

JIM Makes sense, doesn't it!

ANNIE TAKES THE BABY TO HER MOTHER

MOTHER Oh, isn't she sweet! Just look at her little fingers. Look at her little feet.

SONG The voter of tomorrow is the toddler of today
The toddler will be cared for if the voter gets his way.
I asked a politician if he'd kindly state his views
And say what pleased him most of all about the latest news
He thought a little while
then answered with a smile:

There's never been so many bonny babies
There's never been so many honney lambs
they look so sweet
Toddlng down the street
Or waving their little feet
While they're wriggling in their prams.

There's never been so many bonny babies
Their mothers look as proud as they can be
There's never been a better bunch of babies
On Britannia's Family Tree.

ANNIE The last twenty years of my mother's life were wonderful. She got her glasses, she got her false teeth, and she started to put on a bit of weight. We even took her to the hairdressers

MOTHER I'd never had anything done to my hair before!

EDWARD And of course, we'd all grown up, even Harry - we were all earning - all got homes of our own. So she only had herself to look after on her old age
pension.

MOTHER
I never had so much money in my whole life. Sixteen shillings a week!

ANNIE
And none of us ever went out on a Saturday night without we found out if one of the others was taking her out. I was always determined she wasn't going to end up in the Workhouse, penniless, like my Gran did, and she didn't.

EDWARD
I bought an old jalopy - and when I say old...! But I managed to make it go and I used to take her out for rides in the country or the seaside. We'd go off to Margate, Birghton, places like that.

ANNIE
Her last twenty years were marvellous.

EDWARD TAKES MOTHER OFF ON HIS ARM

SONG
Cheery faces, happy smiles - look at 'em everywhere,
If the sun shines, if it rains, well what do we really care
See the boys and girls come out to play
Go to breezy Margate for a real good day.

It isn't the sea that makes your holiday gay
It isn't the sun that drives your worries away
I isn't the stars at night or the pale moonlight.
It's the jolly good company beside the sea.

It isn't the band that plays those twiddly bits
Makes you feel as happy as can be
It's the whoops-a-daisy, pleased to meet you, here we go again,
Jolly good company beside the sea.

ANNIE
Amazing how fast the middle years of your life go.
When you look back, you wonder what you've done with all that time. I suppose you're so busy working hard bringing up the kids, making ends meet, you don't have time to think. It's only seeing the kids grow up makes you realise that time's passing at all.

JIM
To me it only seems like yesterday that our Linda was born, and here she is married! And expecting a baby of her own.

ANNIE
Come and sit down, love, and put your feet up.
LINDA
Oh mum, I'm all right.

ANNIE
I've been thinking - where you should go to have
the baby is the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies. That's the best hospital there could be for having a baby in. That's where I had you.

LINDA
No, mum. I can't go there. It's closed. They've closed it down.

ANNIE
They can't have. It was world famous was that hospital.

JIM
I remember collecting for that hospital. They only built it in my lifetime. It wasn't old.

LINDA
Well, anyway, they've closed it.

ANNIE
That's a disgrace! Why? It was a lovely hospital. I wouldn't want to go anywhere else if I had to choose.

LINDA
You have to go somewhere else now. I went for a check-up today — in Greenwich. It was that crowded, mum. It was just like a cattle market. I mean they're doing their best, they're doing everything they can. But they can't cope, they're that over-crowded. You're just a number. They said there that the British Hospital should never have been shut.

JIM
Who makes these decisions? One thing for sure — they never asked us. Glad enough to take our money when they was collecting, but I don't see them giving it back to us now.

ANNIE
I can't get over the Mothers and Babies. It was so special having a place just for women, a place that understood women.

SONG
The British Hospital is taken
The Mothers and Babies forsaken
The South London Hospital for women
Women and children first.

Belgrave and Cheshunt finished
Norwood and Enfield vanished
Stepney Green, West Hendon, closed down, all gone,
Shrouded now in dust.

Where's the Teddington Memorial
The Wood Green and Southgate Hospital
Empty and rotting is the Eltham and Nottingahm
They've thrown away the key.

The Prince of Wales, Queen Mary,
The Victoria and Jubilee
The Richmond Royal is one of their spoils
A health to their Majesties?

No casualty at Royal Northern,
The Lugano and the German
The Metropolitan, the Mildmay Mission,
They're quiet as the grave.

Wher's St. Leonards and St. Olave's?
St. Benedict's and St. George's?
What have they done wit St. Giles and St. John
When there are lives to save.

But they are ours, our property
We bought them with our hard-earned pay.
Are we just going to let them slip away?

LINDA

You see they're closing the local hospitals and
building these big new ones - which are wonderful -
but hard to get to. The people who need hospitals
most are pensioners and mothers with young
children. We don't usually have our own transport.

NURSE

People of my age group have worked hard, even
fought, to get what we've got now, and this is the
time of life when we need the health service more.

EDWARD

And we've paid for it. I've been paying into the
Health Service one way and another ever since I
started work in 1924. That's over sixty years
ago. I've paid my share towards what I should've
getting back now.

ANNIE

We are dreadfully afraid of losing a lot of the
services that we've got now. I can't understand
people today letting these things happen. But they
can't remember what it used to be like and we can.

EDWARD

The good old days? I had them and I don't want
them again.

SONG

In these troubled days
The Government says
We have to protect to survive
Should the pounds and the pence
Be spent for defence
Or to keep the Health Service alive?
We get sick, we get cold,
If we're spared, we get old
So our hospitals we must defend.
Will we kill, will we cure?
Is the nation secure
Will the poor have to cry once again:

Can we afford the Doctor,
The Dentist, the Midwife, the Nurse?
ANNIE After the war, when Jim came out of the Forces, I hadn't seen him for four years and, well, it wasn't long before I fell for my second baby.

NURSE Let's have you on the scales.

JIM And she was given all this ante-natal care. Milk, orange juice, vitamin tablets.

NURSE It was a strange thing to us then, as young as we were and as modern as we thought we were. This care was something that she was told to go and get and to have.

JIM PUTS HIS ARM ROUND HER PROUDLY.

ANNIE To have Linda I went in the British Hospital for Mother and Babies, in Woolwich, not far from where we lived then.

MOTHER It's my dream come true.

JIM TAKES HER SUITCASE AND LEADS HER TO THE HOSPITAL.

ANNIE It was a wonderful hospital. You looked out of the windows on to lovely gardens...

JIM Hey, look at all the babies out there, under the trees.

ANNIE I used to think you just came here and picked one, whichever you liked best. I know better now.

HUG OR HAND-SQUEEZE.

NURSE Come on, young man, time to go.

JIM Make it a girl this time, for me.

JIM GOES. T-HE NURSE EXAMINES ANNIE.

ANNIE I remember this hospital opening when I was a little...

NURSE Yes, three friends started it, three nurses. They wanted to do something about the terrible loss of life they saw in childbirth in those days. That was before there was any proper training for midwives. They started with a house a few streets away and then campaigned for this hospital. The Government finally accepted their standards for the whole country. Right, I think we're ready.

THE NURSE RINGS A BELL.

ANNIE You can hear that bell for such a long way. People
ANNIE (con) say, "Oh, there's another baby!"

NURSE It's to call the trainee midwives to watch the birth. Women from all over the world come here to train. Now, deep breaths...

ANNIE IN LABOUR. THE NURSE MOPS HER BROW, ETC.

NURSE But we do our level best to keep it personal. It's a one-to-one thing is having a baby. Sister Gregory, one of the founders, used to say she wanted women to feel they were among their own family. We have a lot of families working here too, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives.

THE NURSE GOES

ANNIE When I had Linda, it was like a dream, it really was. I mean it was wonderful, for me it was wonderful. You were tended and waited on. Clean sheets all the time and I didn't have to make my own suet puddings either!

JIM RETURNS WITH THE SUITCASE. THE NURSE FEEDS ON THE BABY.

JIM (What did she have?)

NURSE It's a little girl. You got your wish.

ANNIE GETS UP. THE NURSE GIVES HER THE BABY.

NURSE She's all yours now. But you'll have a Health Visitor come to see you and she'll deal with any problems you might have. And we'll give you a check-up after six weeks. And then you'll want to be taking her to the clinic.

JIM This carried on for a long time after she was born. Milk, and orange juice and having her weighed.

ANNIE In my lifetime I've been able to see a huge difference between the babies when I was growing up and the babies now.

JIM Little, skinny tiny things, and then suddenly they were big and healthy.

ANNIE You could actually see the improvement.

JIM Then there was all these injections.

ANNIE What's that for?
NURSE

Diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus. Preventive medicine. These days we don't wait till they're ill and try to cure them. We stop them catching all these things in the first place.

Makes sense, doesn't it?

ANNIE TAKES THE BABY TO HER MOTHER.

MOTHER

Oh, isn't she sweet! Just look at her little fingers. Look at her little feet.

MAYBE INTERJECTIONS OF "SHE LOOKS SO SWEET" AND "LOOK AT HER LITTLE FEET" DURING THE SONG.

SONG

The voter of tomorrow is the toddler of today
The toddler will be cared for if the voter gets his way.
I asked a politician if he'd kindly state his views
And say what pleased him most of all about the latest news

He thought a little while
Then answered with a smile:

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There's never been so many honey lambs
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Or waving their little feet
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Their mothers look as proud as they can be
There's never been a better bunch of babies
On Britannia's Family Tree.

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MOTHER

I'd never had anything done to my hair before!

EDWARD

And of course, we'd all grown up, even Harry - we were all earning - all got homes of our own. So she only had herself to look after on her old age pension.

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And none of us ever went out on a Saturday night without we found out if one of the others was taking her out. I was always determined she wasn't going to end up in the Workhouse, penniless, like my Gran did, and she didn't.
EDWARD
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But I managed to make it go and I used to take her out
for rides in the country or the seaside. We'd go off
to Margate, Brighton, places like that.

ANNIE
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EDWARD TAKES MOTHER OFF ON HIS ARM

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LINDA You have to go somewhere else now. I went for a check-up today - in Greenwich. It was that crowded, mum. It was just like a cattle market. I mean they're doing their best, they're doing everything they can. But they can't cope, they're that overcrowded. You're just a number. They said here that the British Hospital should never have been shut.

JIM Who makes these decisions? One thing for sure - they never asked us. Glad enough to take our money when they were collecting, but I don't see them giving it back to us now.

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SONG

The Garrett Anderson is taken To the Mothers and Babies forsaken
The South London Hospital for women Women and children first.

Belgrave and Cheshunt finished
Norwood and Enfield vanished
Stepney Green, West Hendon, closed down, all gone,
Patients no longer nursed.

Where's the Teddington Memorial
The Wood Green and Southgate Hospital
Empty and rotting is the Eltham and Mottingham
They've thrown away the key.

The Prince of Wales, Queen Mary,
The Victoria and the Jubilee
The Richmond Royal is one of their spoils
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We bought them with our hard-earned pay.
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JIM: And we've paid for it. I've been paying into the Health Service one way and another ever since I started work in 1924. That's over sixty years ago. I've paid my share towards what I should be getting back now.

ANNIE: We are dreadfully afraid of losing a lot of the services that we've got now. I can't understand people today letting these things happen. But they can't remember what it used to be like and we can.

EDWARD: The good old days? I had them and I don't want them again.

SONG: In these troubled days
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Should the pounds and the pence
Be spent for defence
Or to keep the Health Service alive?
We get sick, we get cold,
If we're spared, we get old
So our hospitals we must defend.
Will we kill, will we cure?
Is the nation secure
Will the poor have to cry once again:

Can we afford the Doctor,
The Dentist, the Midwife, the Nurse?
It doesn't seem fair
That medical care
Still depends on the state of your purse
I know it's a hard pill to swallow
But what can we take for a cure?
And if only the rich can afford to be sick,
How cheap are the lives of the poor?