

***SYDNEY GRUNDY***



***THE NEW  
WOMAN***

**Sydney Grundy**

# **The New Woman**

**Enriched edition. An Original Comedy, in Four Acts**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Cooper Black*

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# **THE NEW WOMAN**

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## CHARACTERS.

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GERALD CAZENOVE.

COLONEL CAZENOVE.

CAPTAIN SYLVESTER.

JAMES ARMSTRONG.

PERCY PETTIGREW.

WELLS.

SERVANTS.

MARGERY.

LADY WARGRAVE.

MRS. SYLVESTER.

MISS ENID BETHUNE.

MISS VICTORIA VIVASH.

DR. MARY BEVAN.

ACTS 1 and 2: *At Gerald Cazenove's.*

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## **THE NEW WOMAN.**

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### **ACT I.**

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SCENE.—*Gerald Cazenove's Chambers. A sitting-room, somewhat effeminately decorated. The furniture of the boudoir type, several antimacassars and a profusion of photographs and flowers. The main entrance, R. at back, in the flat. Doors, R. and L., window, L. of flat.*

A knock is heard off, as curtain rises. Enter Wells, L., crosses stage and opens door in flat. Enter Colonel Cazenove and Sylvester.

COLONEL.

Is my nephew at home?

WELLS.

No, Colonel; but I expect him every moment.

COLONEL.

Very well; I'll wait. [*Exit Wells, door in flat.*] Bah! what a stench of flowers! [*Opens window and throws out a bunch of lilies standing on the table below.*] Sit down, Sylvester—if you can find a chair to carry twelve stone.

SYLVESTER.

Really, I feel a sort of trespasser.

COLONEL.

Sit down.

SYLVESTER [*sits*].

I don't know Cazenove very well—

COLONEL.

I'm much in the same case. Since he came up to town, I've only called upon him once before. By Jove, it was enough. Such a set as I met here!

SYLVESTER.

I understood that he was up the river.

COLONEL.

Came back yesterday. Hope it's done him good. After all, he's my nephew, and I mean to knock the nonsense out of him.

SYLVESTER.

Colonel, you're very proud of him; and you have every reason to be. From all I hear, few men have won more distinction at Oxford.

COLONEL [*pleased*].

Proud of him? My dear Sylvester, that boy has more brains in his little finger than I have—gout. He takes after his aunt Caroline. You remember Caroline?

SYLVESTER.

Oh, I remember Lady Wargrave well.

COLONEL.

Wonderful woman, sir—a heart of gold—and a head—phew! Gerald takes after her. At Oxford, he carried everything before him.

SYLVESTER [*laughing*].

And now these women carry him behind them!

COLONEL.

But he's a Cazenove! He'll come right side up. We Cazenoves always do. We may go under every now and then, but we come up again! It's in the blood.

SYLVESTER.

According to my wife—and Agnes is a clever woman in her way—

COLONEL.

Don't know her.

SYLVESTER.

His cultivated spirit and magnetic intellect are one of the brightest hopes for the social progress of our time— [*Laughs.*] whatever that may mean!

COLONEL.

Does it mean anything? That is the sort of jargon Gerald was full of, when I saw him last. But he'll get over it. Intellectual measles. Oxford's a fine place, but no mental drainage.

SYLVESTER.

I can form no opinion. I hadn't the advantage of a university training.

COLONEL.

I had. I was rusticated. We Cazenoves always were—till Gerald's time. But he'll redeem himself. We Cazenoves have always been men, except one. That's my sister, Caroline; and, by Jove, she's the next best thing—a woman.

*[Rising, in his enthusiasm—the antimacassar slips on to the seat.]*

SYLVESTER.

A real woman.

COLONEL.

Caroline's a heart of gold——

SYLVESTER.

Yes, so you said.

COLONEL.

Did I? I beg your pardon. *[Sits on the antimacassar, instantly springs up, and flings it into a corner. Points to that covering Sylvester's chair.]* Throw that thing away!

SYLVESTER.

All right. I'm used to 'em. We grow 'em at our house. *[Looks round.]* I might be sitting in my wife's boudoir! Same furniture, same flowers, same photographs—hallo, that's rather a pretty woman over there!

*[Crosses.]*

COLONEL.

A pretty woman, where? *[Crosses.]* No, not my style!

SYLVESTER.

Ha! ha!

COLONEL.

What are you laughing at?

SYLVESTER.

My wife! I didn't recognize her.

*[Goes about examining photographs.]*

COLONEL.

Ten thousand pardons! I had no idea——

SYLVESTER.

Bless me, my wife again!

COLONEL *[looking]*.

That's better. That's much better.

SYLVESTER.

It's an older photograph. Agnes was quite a woman when I married her, but she grows more and more ethereal. Philosophy doesn't seem very nourishing.

COLONEL.

She's a philosopher?

SYLVESTER.

Haven't you read her book? "Aspirations after a Higher Morality."

COLONEL.

The old morality's high enough for me.

SYLVESTER.

I've tried to read it, but I didn't succeed. However, I've cut the leaves and dropped cigar ash on the final chapter. Why, here she is again!

COLONEL.

*Three* photographs? And you're not jealous?

SYLVESTER.

My dear Colonel, who am I to be jealous?

COLONEL.

Her husband, aren't you?

SYLVESTER.

Yes, I am Mrs. Sylvester's husband. I belong to my wife, but my wife doesn't belong to me. She is the property of the public. Directly I saw her photograph in a shop-window I realized the situation. People tell me I've a wife to be proud of; but they're wrong. Mrs. Sylvester is not my wife; I am her husband.

COLONEL [*taking up a book*].

This is what comes of educating women. We have created a Frankenstein[2q]. "Man, the Betrayer—A Study of the Sexes—By Enid Bethune."

SYLVESTER.

Oh, I know her. She comes to our house.

COLONEL.

And has a man betrayed her?

SYLVESTER.

Never. Not likely to.

COLONEL.

That's what's the matter, perhaps?

SYLVESTER.

Her theory is, that boys ought to be girls, and young men should be maids. [*Colonel throws down the book.*] That's how she'd equalize the sexes.

COLONEL.

Pshaw! [*Takes up another book.*] "Ye Foolish Virgins!—A Remonstrance—by Victoria Vivash."

SYLVESTER.

Another soul! She's also for equality. Her theory is, that girls should be boys, and maids should be young men. Goes

in for latchkeys and that sort of thing.

COLONEL [*throws down the book*].

Bah! [*Takes up a third.*] “Naked and Unashamed—A Few Plain Facts and Figures—by Mary Bevan, M.D.” Who on earth’s she?

SYLVESTER.

One of the plain figures. *She* comes to our house, too.

COLONEL [*reads*].

“The Physiology of the Sexes!” Oh, this eternal babble of the sexes! [*Throws book down.*] Why can’t a woman be content to be a woman[19]? What does she want to make a beastly man of herself for?

SYLVESTER.

But my wife isn’t a woman.

COLONEL.

None of them are, my boy. A woman, who *is* a woman, doesn’t want to be anything else. These people are a sex of their own, Sylvester. They have invented a new gender. And to think my nephew’s one of them!

[*Strides up and down, seizes another antimacassar and flings it into another corner.*]

SYLVESTER.

Oh, he’s young. Don’t despair!

COLONEL.

I don’t despair! Do you suppose this folly can continue? Do you imagine that these puffed-up women will not soon burst of their own vanity? Then, the reaction! then will come *our* turn! Mark my words, Sylvester, there’ll be a boom in men!

[*Rubbing his hands.*]