

Selection from *Longston Park*

By Greg Edwards

MRS. CHAISSE

Edith, might I offer you our carriage to escort you home? You may not fit inside—it seats but three—but I have a strong bit of rope with which you might be towed.

MISS WORTHINGTON

How upsetting that tea and scones and their limited quantities must so often disperse parties and bring end to joviality. Let us pray that, someday, there might be scone enough for every pleasant acquaintance and tea enough in which the scones enough might enough be dipped.

MRS. CHAISSE

Yes, let us pray, but, at present, my dear, there is a dearth of both tea and scones, while only Lady Barouche comes in abundance. Now, Edith, walk with me, and I will summon the carriage.

*(MRS. CHAISSE lays her hand on LADY BAROUCHE's arm.)*

LADY BAROUCHE

Oh, misery! Misery unmentionable! I'm quite unable to move, I'm afraid. I shall have to wait here until I have fully recovered.

MRS. CHAISSE

And how long will that be?

LADY BAROUCHE

Regarding ankle injuries, I could not hope to conjecture. One of our servants twisted his ankle—

*(To MISS WORTHINGTON)*

When you have an estate like ours, you require a great number of servants—and he was unable to move for a week.

MRS. CHAISSE

That's most unfortunate. Now, Miss Worthington, may I offer you some tea—

LADY BAROUCHE

Oh, pain! Pain perpetual and unpalliated!

*(To MRS. CHAISSE)*

I had best not complain, however, for our domestic woes pale next to the tragedy of your butler who developed fever after drinking the tea you prepared.

*(To MISS WORTHINGTON)*

It's peculiar, I know, Mrs. Chaisse brewing her own tea. You'd think she could afford a servant for that—but, after all the economic troubles the Chaises faced—

MRS. CHAISSE

Lady Barouche, you know that was some years ago. Now, our books are quite in balance, and, as you can see from Longston, we never stoop to economy.

MISS WORTHINGTON

*(Looking at her tea)*

What became of the servant who drank the tea?

LADY BAROUCHE

Oh, he descended into madness and stalked the countryside, spreading pestilence across the moor. It caused a bit of an epidemic.

MRS. CHAISSE

Edith—

LADY BAROUCHE

Mrs. Chaisse and I disagree on the management of servants. I never allow mine to start epidemics without permission, but, as Longston, it's really the *status quo*.

MRS. CHAISSE

*Lady Barouche*, are you certain you wouldn't like to lie down upstairs? We have the most comfortable settee in the opposite wing of the house.

LADY BAROUCHE

Oh, Mrs. Chaisse, I couldn't. What if my conditioned worsened?

MRS. CHAISSE

To what?

LADY BAROUCHE

Plague. I had some tea.