

Memorial Edition

PLAYS BY CLYDE FITCH

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE



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VOLUME ONE
BEAU BRUMMELL, LOVERS' LANE
NATHAN HALE

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION
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INTRODUCTION

SIR FRANCIS BACON has written that "Friendship maketh indeed a faire day in the Affections", and it is because of the many fair days awakened in our memory of Clyde Fitch, that we are attempting, in this foreword to a Memorial Edition of some of his plays, to re-create the flavor of his personality which was dear to us. In the writing of biography, there is no better course to follow, no better philosophy to maintain, than the inner beauty of little things, — those quotidian moments which strike sparks from the spirit, yet are not thought of at the time, because they do not represent crises in a life. Maeterlinck's contribution to modern thinking is that the exalted is ever near us, even in the silence; and, when he came to write essays on Emerson and Novalis, he brought into high light those moral qualities underlying the small act, the casual thought, — and made nothing of the event.

Thinking over our association with Clyde Fitch, we find that what we remember most about him are those acts and services which were done largely through moral forces in his character. Under such conditions it is difficult to separate the man from the act, difficult to dissociate the locality from the personality, difficult to assume an impersonal judgment without paying a personal tribute. He was one of the best of friends, one of the most loyal of associates. His genius for friendship was not merely the ability to attract to him the love of others, but the gift of drawing from others the best that was in them. In all of his activities, he was ever generous, ever courteous, ever anxious to spare the trouble and to share the gain. His life was a busy one, filled with the obligations of an ever-increasing profession. In one respect it may be said that from the time Clyde Fitch began to be regarded as America's most popular playwright, each year found him externally doing the same things, — fulfilling contracts, selecting casts, arranging rehearsals, and attending "openings." Faster and faster grew this whirl of routine until, during the last year of his life, he was attempting sufficient to undermine the health of the strongest man. Every year found him abroad, noting with the quick eye of the trained expert what was

best in the Continental theatres, and meeting Charles Frohman or some other American manager, in order to read a manuscript or to talk over an embryo comedy. It was the life of a successful literary man of the theatre, and was filled with interesting associations, correspondences, and travels.

All of this may be brought to light some day in another form, yet we cannot but feel that, after all is said, after the last word has been uttered, the true significance of Clyde Fitch lay in the spirit rather than in the letter of what he did. The mere story-element in his plays is something an inventive mind other than his might be able to duplicate; the technique of his drama is a matter many clever playwrights might be able to explain. But the Fitchean flavor of the various pieces, the Fitchean humor, observation, and verbal twist, are characteristics no one has been able to emulate. Such literary elusiveness is what is meant when we say that the style is the man. Since the death of Clyde Fitch, the New York stage — and that means the stage of the entire country — has missed his distinctive contributions to a dramatic season. Without exactly analyzing why, we believe that the Fitch theatregoing public miss him for exactly the same reason — though not so intimate a one —

as his friends miss him. The personal equation is gone, and all that is left of him is the rich memory of his presence, — and his plays which must ever be regarded as healthy contributions to American drama. We who knew him see in those plays a large part of the man himself, — sympathy for human problems, quick observation of minute details, interest in moral actions and their consequences, the love of beautiful things, and a refreshing approach toward life. Those are the qualities which no artifice can create, — those are the inner beauties which are unconsciously born of the character of thought and expression. And that is why the personality of Clyde Fitch is bound up in his work.

If his life were to be told in brief, we should point to his childhood in Schenectady, New York; his college days at Amherst; his struggles to maintain himself in New York with his short stories; his writing of "Beau Brummell;" and then the open but slow road toward success. We remember one of his anecdotes about a reading he gave in Schenectady, where he returned in after years. The account was scribbled on a train as he was going to Chicago where "Nathan Hale" was to be rehearsed. The reading at Schenectady was to be from this play, and from his "Smart Set" sketches. In

the large audience that turned out to greet him, he recognized the familiar face of his little, fat music teacher whose sense of humor got the better of her as she listened to the story. She had hysterics, he said in the letter, and looked so funny that he dropped his book on the floor and laughed for five whole minutes, keeping the audience waiting meanwhile. Clyde Fitch never lost that hearty, natural, boyish laugh of his; there was a contagious "funniness" about it that was good to hear.

He was always proud of his Amherst connection; always proud of the college pride in him. Those who are fortunate enough to look back on undergraduate days with him will recollect a certain reticence, a certain shyness which at times misled people as to the firmness beneath. This latter characteristic is exemplified by a story told in retrospect by one of Mr. Fitch's professors. "I remember," he said, "that when Clyde first appeared upon the campus, he wore a suit of a peculiar blue — sufficiently blue and peculiar to call down upon him the ruthless jibing of the upper classmen. For days he persisted in his attire, and faced the music. So I was not surprised when, one evening, he put in his appearance at my house. He explained the situation and asked my advice. I felt that

whatever decision he might make must come from him, and I told him so. Then in a perfectly quiet voice he said, as he turned to go, 'I guess I'll stick it out.' "

We have vividly in mind a picture of the college graduate launched upon a career of his own choosing. For if Clyde Fitch had followed his father's choice he would have been an architect. He always possessed a strong art taste, manifest in his collecting of antiques, and asserting itself in the three homes he came to build. But, at the beginning, his art taste and his literary income were incompatible. Those who saw him in his studio days, saw the real artist — always eager for some *objet d'art*, and spending his small checks — paid him for his stories — in some much-coveted prize.

Mr. Fitch was ever eager to enjoy these humorous anecdotes about himself. He never regarded himself as anything more than the average man, endowed with a gift which he used to the very best of his ability. And we suppose the incidents that went to make up his life were not extraordinary, despite the special atmosphere which his calling created around him. But his significance rests in his achievement, and in the manner in which he responded to the daily happenings in his life. Like all boys, there came a

time when he had to break from his youthful surroundings in order to develop himself, but this break left him with an affectionate feeling for those faces that looked out at him from faded tinctypes. There is no telling how much of those associations slipped into his plays. He never, however, broke from those early ties. There was a tremendous element of pride in the make-up of Clyde Fitch; he was thoroughly conscious of his family position, and his reverence for relationship was only another evidence of that loyalty we have spoken of. There was likewise a pride in his friendship, shown whenever someone close to him met with deserved recognition. With this pride went a dignity which began to assert itself in some of his earliest business relations.

One cannot read the plays included in this Memorial Edition without feeling how evident was the spiritual development of Clyde Fitch. In a copy of "Beau Brummell," sent to a friend, he wrote, "I send this as a curiosity. It was my *Alpha Beta*. But how well the theatre has progressed beyond the *bric-à-brac* stage." He had his *bric-à-brac* expression — a youthful exuberance that never left him, — a decorative-ness which is a part of fresh rather than of staid vision. In four of his dramas this unusual color found dominant expression. Mr. Fitch took

peculiar personal pleasure in the "period" story. To the details of writing he gave special care; and when the time came to externalize them, he was untiring in his efforts. Even in such a simple comedy as "Lovers' Lane," during rehearsals, he spent hours fastening apples and pinning blossoms in the orchard scene. In "Beau Brummell," at the very outset of his career, he manifested a characteristic care, while in "Barbara Frietchie" and "Nathan Hale" his correspondence shows a particularity which was thorough and searching. His special expertness in feminine psychology, as exemplified in a series of plays culminating in "The Girl with the Green Eyes" and "The Truth," became in later years his greatest bone of contention with the critics, who denied that he would ever be able to depict a man's character. As an answer to this charge he gave to the public one of his most vivid stage personages — Sam Coast, in "Her Great Match," — and this vigor on his part was but the beginning of that decisiveness and sharpness uppermost in "The City." In some of his very earliest comedies, Clyde Fitch likewise won for himself the title of the playwright of New York city, and no one has as yet been able to surpass him in catching the evanescent peculiarities of the town. "Captain Jinks

of the Horse Marines" had all the flavor of old-time personal experience; it was not something Mr. Fitch had read about, but something he seemed to have felt. Here was his old love for a "period" cropping out. But between that and "Girls" — his most realistic and detailed treatment of apartment-house life in its externals — there are a great many of his dramas that are excellent Kodak films of the city, subject to his sensitized impression.

Looking on these plays from their outside, there is a superabundance of cleverness which in itself would have won for him a name. Mr. Fitch had the fictionist's feeling of character for its own sake to such a superabundant degree that, as in the case of "The Happy Marriage" — which he always seemed to treasure as a good piece of work — he would throw away in casual reference whole ideas and situations capable of serious development. It was this ease of technique that sometimes belied the deeper penetration beneath, which he possessed and which dominated his conversation. When the actual time came for writing, the rapidity of his mere recording was no measure of the many years he may have pondered over a subject for his play. How often — long before he put pen to paper — would he exclaim that he was anxious

to get at his "jealousy piece", meaning, of course, "The Girl with the Green Eyes." Often we have seen him, seated on a stone by the countryside, writing with a rapidity comparable to an artist sketching. Many of his friends remember his temptation, while at the Opera, to jot down bits of dialogue — for music always set his imagination astir. Yet he would never obtrude his inventive vagaries upon others. When the curtain was down, he was always the centre of conversation, always the life of the party. But we have a feeling that he regarded his attendance as a member of the Opera Club simply as a means toward an end.

It was that quality of mental arrangement which enabled him to set down on paper whole situations with a rapidity which critics called haste. He once wrote from Italy, ". . . I don't think the writing them [the two plays on which he was at work] made me ill; I knew so well what I wanted to write — it was copying something that one knows by heart." And from London, on May 24th, 1902, about "The Girl with the Green Eyes," he wrote, "I have also just finished to-day Act 1 of Mrs. Bloodgood's play. Of course it seems as if I were doing an awful lot of work. And I suppose it would be better if I didn't do so much, but I can't help

it! I limit my writing to three hours a day. However, the point about these plays is that I know them almost by heart. I've been planning the *Mannering* piece since a year ago last Winter. I know it all; it only wanted to be written down, and the same with the *Bloodgood* piece. It isn't as if I had to think up plot and situations. I've had them for a long time."

In other words, his method of workmanship revealed Clyde Fitch's intense nervous vitality; his was a type of mind to take quickly, to hold tenaciously, and to communicate to others, through association, that same subtle unrest which stimulates rather than wears out. Success never brought to him a self-satisfied outlook upon his work; his deepening view of life was too vital for that. What it did seem to do to the very day of his death was to stir him to better effort. He was one of those rare workers who took criticism with a bigness and eagerness which only accentuated more fully his keenness to his defects. Writing from Paris, in July, 1905, he made this confession: ". . . I still am working like a horse, but I hope like one of those trained, intelligent horses! Now, on the changes necessary in 'Her Great Match' for London; next on my *Blanche Walsh* play ["The Woman in the Case"]; and to-morrow I go to London to cast

the Frohman play, etc., etc., etc. And altogether more than I can do, or more than I *want* to do! But if I can only do it well! I am trying. I think each year I try better to *do* better."

Such pressure which came with success was what always beset Clyde Fitch, the workman. It was not what he wanted, but what theatrical condition imposed on him. He had little time to do things leisurely. His morning mail was read rapidly and appreciatively; his letters were answered out of the fulness of the moment, — often prompted, not by the immediate necessity of the occasion, but because of some purely human quality discovered in a phrase or sentence. While abroad he would scribble notes on trains or in motor-cars, flowing over into the margins of the paper with an unchecked love of recording impressions. These letters — often postcards — were weighted down with personal flashes, showing humor, pathos, appreciation; recording plans in naïve declarations; describing people and places with that surface irony which critics always took at its surface value, never giving Mr. Fitch credit for something deeper behind it all. These communications were significant in their revelation of the man. A letter from Florence, 1902, came to its destination laden with the joyful appreciation of beauty, but, he con-

fesses, "while I can look at pictures alone, I hate to eat alone. Just to *eat* bores me." Yet his sociable instincts did not take from him an abiding love for the silence.

This rush of work which followed him to town whenever he left his country place; which trailed him across continent, making his progress a hasty circuit of live observations and rapid business negotiations — did not deprive him of a very serious attitude toward his work. If there was one quality uppermost in Clyde Fitch, the craftsman, it was his never-failing belief in what he had done. He wrote from Berlin, in April, 1908, "I wish you dear —, who have always taken me and my work seriously, and know *what I put into it*, and from what a standard I wrote, could have shared my joy and satisfaction at Hamburg [over the reception of 'The Truth']." With that tendency of his to underscore and double underscore his emphasis in letters, he declared, in August, 1900, from St. Enogat, France, "I have had a disappointment. Frohman decides not to do 'The Climbers.' It is a real bitter disappointment, for I *believe* so much in the play."

This belief led him to spend as much energy nurturing a play after it was launched, as he expended in the actual composition. Conviction brought out a dogged persistence which was

often needed in the face of failure. But while maintaining a bold front to the public, his letters showed continually how much criticism discouraged him. Though we recognize in "The Truth" some of his best and most characteristic workmanship — it having attained Continental distinction — its initial production in New York was a failure. It was a play he believed in, and he slaved to keep it on the stage. In this instance, criticism nearly killed him, "convincing me," so he wrote, "that it is impossible for me to succeed in New York with the present press, — which will mean my laying down my pen."

This press served to accentuate two dominant traits in Clyde Fitch: his sensitiveness, and his patience. From the time of "Beau Brummell," he was constantly repudiated by the dramatic critic. Yet we know from experience that no more open-minded man could be found than he in his eagerness to welcome suggestion and in his readiness to accept advice. We have seen a lengthy letter of his analyzing, with some justification, the stereotyped view of him held in America; whereas abroad his recognition was based on qualities never attributed to him at home. I fear, he said in substance, the press has crystallized toward me. On another occasion he asked a critic to see one of his plays over

again, valuing his opinion, and personally distressed that his opinion was a negative one. There was no vainglory about this; there was an earnest desire to have his work as right as he could see it and make it.

In other words, there was nothing external after all in the representative plays of Clyde Fitch; they were all closely evolved out of his own personality; representative of his relationships, his outlook on life. He may have excelled in external detail, but the literary value of his work lies in the truth of his observation, and in the sincerity of his feeling for character. His thought was subservient to these, and sometimes overclouded by the cleverness of theatrical effect.

Those who knew Clyde Fitch were at first drawn to him through a brilliancy of conversation which, however sparkling in his dialogue, was brought within bounds as soon as set down in words. He had a great dislike for the mediocre. He had many worldly interests, and his quick action, coupled with these, gave the impression that he lacked the powers of contemplation, of concentration. Yet soon, association with Mr. Fitch revealed a reverence and an humbleness which brought into play a certain calm reflection of his religious life. We remember him being enthralled by the reading of Renan's

“Life of Christ;” referring time and time again to the mystical devoutness of Maeterlinck. Some might disbelieve that he had deep-founded principles of faith; yet he was almost old-fashioned in his moral acceptances, though welcoming and intellectually tolerant of the broadness of others. In people near him he required permanent rightness of thought, and reverence for the Real Thing, as his tradition taught him. He was once heard to say, “I can tell those that pray and those that do not.”

It was impressed very strongly upon Mr. Fitch’s friends that he had other interests in life besides the theatre. Those things were necessary to him that developed the essential humanness of his nature. Slow to give his friendship, — though ever willing to give plentifully of his interest, — he clung to his permanent friends, even in the country, and less and less found satisfaction in the promiscuous associations of social life. Even to his valet he was a hero, though nothing pleased him more than to “get a rise,” as he would laughingly put it, out of his valet’s implacable presence. We remember, after Mr. Fitch’s death, the grief of his man — an old-fashioned type of French servant, whose devotion had been tested in many ways. “We shall never forget what you

have done," a member of the family said, out of the fulness of the moment. And he replied simply: "A good master makes a good servant." Such was his tribute!

Loyalty was deeply ingrained in Mr. Fitch's character, nor was it a heedless offering of his friendship. There are many pictures of Clyde Fitch to conjure up in mind, the rarest being that of friend. We have noticed his letters signed "loyally yours," and they were addressed only to those who had been proven. He had great patience with the people he trusted, — and when he trusted, he did so unreservedly, even up to the very verge of doubt. His gratitude was abounding, and was called forth unexpectedly by the most insignificant thing. Many actors will remember how quick he was to detect in them the slightest evidence of generosity, accentuating it beyond its due proportion, and recalling it on all occasions. How well we understood that response in him which prompted him to add a postscript to one of his letters, "Give my love to those who remember me, and to those who don't, — if *I* love them."

One could never quite forget the companionableness of the man. We remember once on a visit to him, hearing him call to us, "Don't you want to come down and have a cookie?" And

when we came to the Terrace where he was working, there would be no cookie, and he would go on writing! But he knew that we were feeling the beauty of the country with him — were understanding beyond the mere necessity for interchange of words.

This dramatist of city life was a great lover of nature; he revelled in the out-of-doors; and his garden was humanized for him. It was very characteristic of him that even in the simple things of life his dramatic eye saw every detail with freshness, and he expressed what he saw with a vivacity, an unusualness, that gave life to the picture. When he was moving from "Quiet Corner" to "The Other House," he wrote to a friend:

"We are moving!! The study is empty! There is hardly a picture left! The walls show thin wounds!

"I go daily to 'T. O. H.', buried in a heap of Old Masters, inside Pauline (Panhard).

"Ed. is planting trees, and I am planting pictures, and Monday we hope the curtains will sprout in the windows; and Friday of next week I think the Katonah katydids will be singing my lullaby!!

"Awful scandal at 'Q. C.'! In the Spring we put nine goldfish in the pool, and, when Bridge emptied it out this morning, there were sixty-five!!!"

And, with that never-failing hospitality of his, he added:

“Why can’t you make a real visit . . . and not just play ‘tag’ with the trains?”

“Quiet Corner,” in Greenwich, was built so that Mr. Fitch might live most of the time out in the open; “The Other House,” at Katonah, gave him joy because it brought within reach all the beauties of a car country. The latter house, it is our impression, offered him greater peace, and here he would turn with relief after hard work in the city. In May, his East Fortieth Street house lost its holding power on him. “It mortifies me,” he writes, “to imagine what the lilacs must be thinking of us for not coming out. When I left, they had their little buds all ready to unpack! and the syringa bush was giggling with little leaves!!”

On one of his very last rides around Katonah, before going abroad on his final trip, he spoke of the glories of the Fall, and the burning red of the trees. And his heart seemed to go out to an old countryman on the road, who, all smiles, passed us with a nosegay in his ragged button-hole. “Behind that flower is love,” exclaimed Mr. Fitch.

This spirit in him often found expression in his

correspondence. "I love the world," he wrote. And this expansion came over him not suddenly but by slow process of spiritual deepening. For there was a time when Clyde Fitch might easily have fallen into the ways of dilettantism — those Sherwood Studio days on Fifty-seventh Street, when social life was trying to overcome his desires to work. And the exactions of a successful career imposed upon him many of the surface responsibilities, until that deepening of the spiritual side of him began to alter his entire approach toward life, — an altering that meant a clearer assertion of his philosophy. This is seen in flashes of his later dialogue, and was strongly marked in "The City," which was not only uttered in strength of conviction, but was physically written with defined intention of purpose. His handwriting seemed to have gained a firmer stroke.

More and more he began to value, above all other experiences, the Real Things in life. This is very apparent in his work — the increasing maturity of which can be detected from play to play along the entire course of his writing. Though he may have dealt, as a satirist, with the shams of social life, the thing that struck most people who came in contact with Clyde Fitch was that he was eminently sincere. And

that sincerity he looked for in the approach of others. We do not recollect that he was given to retort unless it was called for by some insincerity of a friend, or some false statement of a critic. And when that was the case, the occasion brought from him characteristic touches of understanding, and a true measure of the Real Thing.

An Editor once sent him the first three numbers of a new magazine, in which some reference had been made to him and his work. We quote his acknowledgment intact, for it exemplifies an originality of phrase, a generous interest in current literary matters, and, above all, an outspoken expression of belief as regards himself.

“Since writing you,” [it runs] “I’ve been able to take up your three numbers, and with *much* interest. I congratulate you on an individual tone which you have certainly attained. The magazine has character. . . . In my own field, however—! Your writer is in earnest, and evidently deserves a good end, but I regret to find he is not working on new lines, or with new thoughts. He is not of the early Victorian Period, but I should say of the early McKinley. He repeats the old theories, the old formulas, of what is good and what isn’t, the point of view about our drama of over a dozen years ago, when the whole thing was stereotyped. Your writer does not *feel* the *new current*. I mean

just that, exactly, — he floats on the surface, and sees only the surface. Clothes are not the man, though they may be characteristic of him. Your writer does not seem to me to realize what is *underneath*, which is the Real Thing. The Real Thing exists without a surface, but the surface adds to it one more note of value, besides its own personal value of being an individual characteristic. Wherefore: when your writer says of my work that it is 'still chiefly a display of dramatic millinery,' then, for me, whatever he may say of the drama is worthless. No one knows better than I that my work is *full* of faults; that's why I go on writing, — to correct them, — at least it's one reason why. But your man hasn't hit the right faults — not by a long shot! At least, *I* think that; I may be wrong. All this because I had a few moments, and the telephone bell hasn't rung since I began."

When Mr. Fitch moved to Katonah from Greenwich, he seemed to take a different hold on life; the negatives of existence were halted. His health had been almost undermined by the exactions of a busy career, and now he was beginning to hate all things that suggested vacillation, weakness, or ill-health. We have met him often on the East Terrace of "The Other House," seeing with an eye as profoundly simple as Wordsworth's, when he wrote his simplest lyric. "It was a lovely day, to-day," he declares

in a note, dated May, 1909, “. . . All afternoon I've been out on the Terrace. The swans behaved like angels! Even a white pond lily spread her wings on the pool. The peacock spread his tail—and you weren't there! I couldn't bear your not seeing all the poetry and beauty in the day—and now (it is seven o'clock) there is that divine murmuring sunset-light everywhere about!”

Again in June of that year, there is this spontaneous expression of himself: “I've just come in from a walk with Buck, Betsy, and Fiametta [his dogs]. We walked across the meadow in the moonlight. The swans sailed softly mirrored, like Narcissus in the pool, and up in the rose garden it was thick with fireflies!! It was exquisitely beautiful.”

This poetic quality was ever alive, and made of him a splendid companion on a journey. Nothing seemed to escape his quick observation, and he was able to convert the impression almost simultaneously into terms of human value. Travelling extensively, he picked up here and there chance acquaintances, from whom he gained a transitory enjoyment which was delightfully described in his letters. On such occasions his humor was never-failing in its assertion. There was a home quality about Clyde Fitch that few

people believed he had, simply because his work kept him so constantly on the go. A jotting, dated January, 1906, expressed eloquently his feelings on the subject. "Had a hotelly dinner in a hotelly hotel. Rehearsals going well — but what a life for a man who isn't in the drummer business!!"

On the steamer, on the railroad train, he was ever alert in the study of his companions. When he saw one, seemingly in lonely mood, he was drawn to him through a sympathy which he was ever ready to show. Sometimes, these impulsive moves on his part rewarded him beyond his expectations. It was on an ocean liner that chance brought him in contact with an elderly lady of the Old School, whose friendship he always held in deepest consideration, and whose correspondence with him was a constant source of inspiration. On the other hand, in carriage compartments he would often meet with conversationalists who amused him up to the moment of unsought-for advice. "Don't stop off at Pisa," one of these chance acquaintances pleaded, "there's nothing to see there but the tower," and then he added, in the spirit of the perfect utilitarian, "You can see that from the train." Yet "I got out," adds Mr. Fitch in a letter, "and have been here for three days."

How the beauty must have steeped his soul is detected in the mood of what follows: "The nights in these beautiful towns are all sad nights. One feels the need of some one to sit in silence with."

It was characteristic of Mr. Fitch that quickness of humor went side by side with a heart quality which made his humor all the more lovable. This gave a brilliant flash to his correspondence that desultory quoting can only suggest. Yet these suggestions reveal an inherited fund of native freshness. "Am bringing over with me an 1860 English cook," he remarks from London, in 1901, "who looks like a hair-cloth and rose-wood armchair — an ugly one." In another breath he is referring to a dinner engagement which forces him to cut short his letter. "I wish I could be chloroformed," he declared. He had the amusing habit of making light of his own discomforts as a seaman, and, in a log kept of a typical day and night aboard, we find such entries as, "8:00. Try to sleep on my back. 8:30. Vice versa."

This infinite variety, so manifest in infinite ways, is what made the friendship of Clyde Fitch a rare day in the affections. If he was among his flowers, he showed personal care for each rose bush. His animals and birds received from

him a goodly share of his day's attention. Even in the midst of strenuous work, with guests in the house, he would write with a wonderful power of giving everything and everyone personal consideration. He possessed a rare ability of self-effacement. Yet no one was more delighted than he when a person for whom he cared showed interest in what he was doing.

Then it was that he would talk of his characters, and of the situations he had recently invented, and he would ask advice as though he were in collaboration. Were the guest fortunate enough to be taken even deeper into his confidence, probably Mr. Fitch would read the newest play to him. And that was no mean opportunity, for it was a saying among theatrical people, "If you don't want to accept a play by Clyde Fitch on the spot, don't let him read it to you!" Our memory retains vividly the details of that evening "The City" was finished—in the rough state just before final revision. He read it aloud; the graphic power of his acting in the quiet of the country, far into the early hours of the morning, is never to be forgotten. Though he never went on the stage, his ability to illustrate what he was anxious to obtain in acting, was constantly manifest. And his gratefulness to the actor who worked with him to gain these

effects was never-failing. To one of them he wrote, just after having been interviewed: "I said the most enthusiastic things I could think of, of you — because I feel them." Such enthusiasm for the individual always culminated with him in such exclamations as, "God bless the personal equation — and God bless you." In November of 1908, a letter contained some reference which illustrated in poignant fashion his gratitude for the actor's faithfulness. "Alas, poor ———," he wrote, "is getting too old, and we have to change her. It breaks my heart; I fear it will nearly kill her. I am writing in a bit for her in the last act, so as to keep her in the company. . . ." It was this quality in him that made him considerate — often far too considerate — of the appeals which deluged his mail daily. One only had to have a sincere ring to a request to elicit a quick response, and to obtain an appointment. And if Mr. Fitch thought there was a possibility of using such a person to their mutual advantage, he would motor miles in order to keep such an appointment. There was no saving of himself. Had there been, his vitality might have withstood the sudden illness at Châlons-sur-Marne, which resulted in his death on September 4, 1909.

To use a phrase formulated by Dr. Percy Grant

on the occasion of the dramatist's funeral, such is the Clyde Fitch we recall, when we "listen to our memories." His own plays and their stage history will bear witness to what he was as a craftsman, as a force in American drama. We have only here tried, out of the fulness of our recollection, to give some idea of the warm-hearted presence of the man.

A complete list of Mr. Fitch's plays will be found below.¹ It has been our endeavor here

¹The following is a list of original plays by Mr. Fitch. Adaptations and pieces written in collaboration are not included. "Betty's Finish" (1890), "Beau Brummell" (1890), "Frédéric Lemaitre" (1890), "A Modern Match" (1891), "Pamela's Prodigy" (1891), "The Harvest" (1893. This play, in one act, was presented before the Letters and Arts Club, of Boston, and was afterwards used in "The Moth and the Flame."), "The Social Swim" (1893), "His Grace de Grammont" (1894), "April Weather" (1894), "Mistress Betty" (1895. Subsequently revived as "The Toast of the Town."), "Nathan Hale" (1898), "The Moth and the Flame" (1898), "The Cowboy and the Lady" (1899), "Barbara Frietchie" (1899), "The Climbers" (1901), "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines" (1901), "Lovers' Lane" (1901), "The Last of the Dandies" (1901), "The Way of the World" (1901), "The Girl and the Judge" (1901), "The Stubbornness of Geraldine" (1902), "The Girl with the Green Eyes" (1902), "Her Own Way" (1903), "Major André" (1903), "Glad of It" (1903), "The Coronet of a Duchess" (1904), "The Woman in the Case" (1905), "Her Great Match" (1905),

to select what we considered to be a representative group of his best — plays most of which have been identified with long runs, many revivals, and varied “stars.” In the latter respect, we can instance no American dramatist whose work is so closely related to the careers of American actors and actresses. One need only mention the name of “Beau Brummell” to conjure up the figure of the late Richard Mansfield in the minute finesse of the part. “Barbara Frietchie” could not now be revived without inevitably challenging comparison with the ideal set by Julia Marlowe. “Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines” reflected the freshness of Ethel Barrymore at the very outset of her career. Theatregoers of over a decade in range will treasure the excellence of Mary Mannering in “The Stubbornness of Geraldine,” of Mrs. Clara Bloodgood in “The Truth” and in “The Girl with the Green Eyes.” Then there was Maxine Elliott, whose early career was largely enriched by her work in “Nathan Hale” and “Her Own Way;” and Amelia Bingham in “The Climbers.” So we might go through a longer list of professional association. It may be said in truth that through his

“The Truth” (1906), “The Straight Road” (1906), “A Happy Marriage” (1909), “The Bachelor” (1909), “The City” (1909).

efforts, many a player was brought rapidly to the front. In the making of "stars" he was noted, though sometimes he failed, as in the instance of "Major André," in which he was convinced that his friend, Arthur Byron, would meet with deserved recognition. His correspondence with Mr. Byron contains ample evidence of his generosity of spirit; reveals likewise his ever alert interest in a production. Once he had determined to write a play for an actor, he was ever thoughtful of taking the actor into his confidence. All through his rehearsing of "André," he was sending Mr. Byron details of his plans. Now it is, "I have thought of some good business for 'André,'" or again, "I do not want the regulation colonial designs." On his trip abroad, during the preparations for this play, he began to chafe over the smallness of the stage in the Savoy Theatre, where "André" was booked to open. Doubtless, in his visit to European theatres, he had seen novelties he wanted to introduce but could not. One can detect a note of desire in his declaration that he had seen "some very beautiful staging and lighting. I *wish* we had more room in the Savoy Theatre." But Mr. Fitch was never one to aim at huge effects; there was more delicacy in his workmanship — a delicacy well brought out in his "bloodless" war

dramas, like "Nathan Hale" and "Barbara Frietchie." He recognized that the American manager was fine — the word underlined five times — as a stage manager of big effects, "and equally bad of subtle ones." All during the arrangements for "André," Mr. Fitch was largely concerned about the future of his friend. It was this concern that prompted him to write, "You know my interest in you is not bounded by 'André'; it is bounded by Byron! and if 'André' fails, we must have something else."

His correspondence with Mr. Byron contains reference after reference for him to read up on the dress of André, and in order to create in the actor and manager a distinct feeling for the time and place, Mr. Fitch motored Mr. McKee and Mr. Byron to the exact spot where André was captured. "We saw the spot . . .," he writes, "the prison where he spent his last night, and the stone that marks the place where he was hung. The latter on a hill with the sun red behind it, and the moon already risen in front. It was a beautiful sight, and so full of romance feeling. I am pretty well worn out! It has been my most difficult task, and nothing ready yet! It all lies closer to my heart, I think, than any other play."

Such was his feeling at the moment; but when the papers rejected it, he confessed to Byron that

“our failure to draw has at least been a dignified one.” And with renewed energy he turned his attention to another play.

Such was the attitude of Clyde Fitch toward all with whom he came in contact. It is true that many of his plays were written for definite actors; long before he put pen to paper he was feeling his way for people he wanted in his casts — and he was in that position, as a successful playwright, where he could indicate to his managers what he wanted. They usually let him have charge of the preparations. At the time of his death he had practically arranged for the whole *personnel* of “The City;” he had selected his “star” for a farce which was well under way; and he was negotiating with a young woman whose career he had watched with interest, and whose talent he believed in. Add to this the fact that, during the year 1909, “The Truth” had been played in nearly every large theatrical centre in Europe, and that “The Woman in the Case” had just taken London by storm, and we are justified in claiming that, at the time of the death of Clyde Fitch, he was among the foremost of American dramatists, and certainly the best known abroad.

If possible, Europe received him with greater *éclat* than he was ever given in his own country.

Writing from Hamburg, in April, 1908, he claims that neither in France nor Germany can he find any good plays to adapt, for they are "very talky-talky, and all hard brilliancy; no heart or big nature behind them. But this is what the Italian press call my *Puritanism*. The papers are very good in Italy for 'The Truth,' *La Verità*, but they complain of my Puritanism. They say I have 'exquisite wit,' 'originality,' and 'deep psychology,' but I think they were a little disappointed there were no Indians in it."

* * * * *

This first volume of the Memorial Edition contains two examples of Clyde Fitch's genuine love for special atmosphere. He got into a period with precision; he instinctively felt it; and he worked for every little effect which would accentuate it. As someone said of "Captain Jinks," there was no mistaking it for the period of the hoop skirt; it was distinctly of 1872, when the bustle was *à la mode*.

The career of Mr. Fitch really began with the success of "Beau Brummell." There lies before us as we write a faded scenario as it was first presented to Mr. Mansfield; we have also a letter, dated November 6, 1889, while he was living at the Sherwood Studios, which sets at rest all disputes regarding his authentic connection with

the play. It is a youthful letter, splendidly joyful. And it may be said that it was ever his habit, even in the after years of his success, to greet each new commission with the same fullness of expectation. "My dear ——," he writes, "I have been kept from answering your kind letter because I have not been able to know if I am to be in town Saturday or not. Now, however, I think it most likely that I shall be, and in that case will accept your invitation with eagerness, if you wish to have me with this mite of uncertainty. It is all *apropos* of something wonderful for me, which is also a very great secret. . . . Negotiations are on the *tapis* for a play to be written for RICHARD MANSFIELD by WM. CLYDE FITCH, and I am awaiting a dispatch now to go to Philadelphia to clinch things with Mansfield, who is playing there this week. It all may elude my grasp, as so many things have done, but if it doesn't, isn't it, oh, isn't it an opportunity! The subject of the play is to be 'Beau Brummell'. . . . I am not settled yet, and I have had two teeth pulled!! but those that are left and I are, Faithfully yours, W. C. F." It seems, however, that the engagement of Mr. Fitch for supper was not kept, but instead came the welcome news that IT, meaning the scenario, had been accepted. Then, on December 10th,

word was sent that he and Mansfield were working daily, talking and planning, and arranging for early rehearsals.

It was Mr. E. A. Dithmar, of the *New York Times*, who was instrumental in bringing Mansfield and Clyde Fitch together, for he knew that here was a subject well suited to the artistic taste of his young friend. Indeed, there was a picturesque quality about the meteoric rise and fall of the Beau which always had appealed to Mr. Fitch — the detailed elegance which was as much a joy for him to externalize as it was for Mr. Mansfield to depict. Despite those critics who dismissed the play with the casual comment that there was nothing in Brummell's life of a dramatic character, Mr. Fitch and Mr. Mansfield found copious material for graphic portraiture. While the play was always close to his heart, Mr. Fitch nevertheless recognized in it during after years a great amount of plot machinery which his maturer technique would never have been satisfied to let remain. But "Beau Brummell" is nevertheless a distinct piece of *genre* work. He was to return to the Beau theme once more in "The Last of the Dandies," but we believe it true that had he approached the subject with less seriousness — for here he became engrossed in the father-love of his Dandy — had he used

the same surface feeling he put into "Beau Brummell," he would have duplicated his success.

"Lovers' Lane" was written several years before it was produced. It was at first called "The Parson," and [Sir] George Alexander, the English actor, accepted it for his theatre. But he failed to make use of it within the stipulated time. Its theme is of the simplest order, and was called forth by the challenge that Mr. Fitch would be unable to create characters other than those of a period or of the city. But though Clyde Fitch was identified in his plays with a certain social level, "Lovers' Lane" is a pleasant departure, showing his sympathy with the country type. The character of the Minister, and the little incident of his constant interruptions, appealed strongly to him.

The staging of "Nathan Hale" was a matter that won his undivided attention. He always placed great importance on lights, and he felt how much that early cool daybreak light, turning into sunrise, with the first twitter of birds in the trees, meant in the creation of that ineffable sadness of the final scene, with Nathan Hale under the blue sky and beneath the apple blossoms, brought forth to die. In the same spirit he worked in "Barbara Frietchie" for the after-supper light of a Southern summer evening.

It often happened that Mr. Fitch was his own competitor in a theatrical season. For example, when "Lovers' Lane" was given its *première*, there were running at the time in New York, "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," "Barbara Frietchie," and "The Climbers." "The Cowboy and the Lady" was first produced in Philadelphia, with great success, "and is doing even a bigger business than 'Hale,'" wrote Mr. Fitch. "I am sorry to have it beat 'Hale,' but if any play is going to beat it, I'd rather it was one of mine, eh?"

There was something very personal about the stage management of Clyde Fitch, and the time will come when a mass of data — comments of his own, and those of his associates — will be brought together in some fuller reflection than has here been attempted. Such a compilation will illustrate his unswerving devotion to his craft, and his serious realization of his duty to the public. The majority of his plays would stand revival now, because of their essential human appeal, and because the characters are eternally true. Very slight alteration had to be made in "The Truth" when it was revived in the Spring of 1914. The very permanence of literature is due, not to material truthfulness, but to the realization of constant human factors. This realization was caught by Mr. Fitch with

originality, deftness, and a certain swift wit. There was a vein in him native of New York city, but it was more truly native of Clyde Fitch, the man.

It is our firm belief that, through the plays contained in this Memorial Edition, readers will discover much that "maketh indeed a faire day in the Affections." Even if there was not the testimony of his friends, one would be able to detect in his written word the manner of man we have here so sketchily portrayed. For, as Matthew Arnold says, in his poem on "The Future," "As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been."

MONTROSE J. MOSES,
VIRGINIA GERSON.

NEW YORK,
July, 1915.

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BEAU BRUMMELL

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

Written for RICHARD MANSFIELD

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NOTE

*THE idea of this Play was Richard Mansfield's,
and the author gratefully acknowledges his debt
to the actor for innumerable suggestions.*

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BEAU BRUMMELL

THE FIRST ACT. FIRST SCENE. *The morning toilet. Mr. Brummell despatches a proposal of marriage, assists his nephew, and sends for a new tailor.*

SECOND SCENE. *The Beau receives a number of friends, and makes an unfortunate blunder.*

THE SECOND ACT. *A small and early party at Carlton House. Mr. Brummell proposes to an heiress, and reprimands a Prince.*

THE THIRD ACT. *The Mail, and how it came about that Mr. Brummell had a previous engagement with His Majesty.*

THE FOURTH ACT. FIRST SCENE. *Mr. Brummell's lodgings in Calais.*

(Six months later.)

SECOND SCENE. *The attic at Caen. A very poor dinner with an excellent dessert.*

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THE PERSONS IN THE PLAY

THE PRINCE OF WALES. *Heir apparent to the throne of England.*

BEAU BRUMMELL. *Prince of dandies.*

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN. *Playwright.*

REGINALD COURTENAY. *Nephew to the Beau.*

MORTIMER. *Valet and confidential servant to the Beau.*

MR. OLIVER VINCENT. *A self-made merchant, father of Mariana.*

LORD MANLY. *A fop.*

MR. ABRAHAMS. *A money-lender.*

BAILIFFS.

PRINCE'S FOOTMAN.

SIMPSON. *Footman to Beau.*

THE DUCHESS OF LEAMINGTON. *Middle-aged, but very anxious to appear young.*

MARIANA VINCENT. *Young and beautiful, beloved by Beau and Reginald.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. *Passée but still beautiful — very anxious to captivate the Prince, but unwilling to resign the Beau.*

KATHLEEN. *Irish maid of Mariana.*

LADY FARTHINGALE. *Pretty — insipid.*

A FRENCH LODGING-HOUSE KEEPER.

A NURSE.

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This play was first produced at the Madison Square Theatre by Richard Mansfield, on May 17, 1890. The 250th representation took place at the Garden Theatre, on January 30, 1891. The cast on this occasion was

Beau Brummell	Mr. Richard Mansfield
The Prince of Wales	Mr. D. H. Harkins
Richard Brinsley Sheridan	Mr. A. G. Andrews
Lord Manly	Mr. H. G. Lonsdale
Reginald Courtenay	Mr. Vincent Sternroyd
Mortimer	Mr. W. J. Ferguson
Mr. Abrahams	Mr. Harry Gwynette
Simpson	Mr. Smiles
Bailiffs	{ Mr. Gwynette and Mr. Ivan Peronette
Prince's Footman	Mr. F. F. Graham
Mr. Oliver Vincent	Mr. W. H. Crompton
Mariana Vincent	Miss Beatrice Cameron
Kathleen	Miss Ethel Sprague
The Duchess of Leamington	Mrs. Julia Brutone
Lady Farthingale	Miss Helen Glidden
French Lodging-house Keeper	Miss Hazel Selden
Nurse	Miss Genevra Campbell
Mrs. St. Aubyn	Miss Adela Measor

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THE FIRST ACT

SCENE ONE

The scene represents the BEAU'S dressing-room.

A cheerful room, furnished more like a lady's boudoir than a man's dressing-room. A handsome dressing-table, covered with a bewildering array of silver-topped bottles, stands at the Left. A large cheval-glass stands in front of a bay window opening out on a balcony. The curtains are open. The door at the back leads into the BEAU'S bedroom. A table stands at one side, with books and papers in precise order. A door at the left-hand side leads into an ante-room where visitors are detained until the great man wishes to see them.

MORTIMER, the BEAU'S valet and really con-

fidential servant, is discovered sitting on sofa, head back, face covered with handkerchief; he has evidently been asleep. It is about noon.

[MORTIMER *removes handkerchief, yawns and speaks.*

MORTIMER. Up till four this morning! It was pretty lively at the club last night, but I have lost all my beauty sleep to pay for it. I don't know how much longer we will be able to continue this style of living. Our nerves will give out if our credit doesn't. Mr. Brummell only turned over twice and then took to his chocolate. That means he will only be half an hour at his bath — time for a nap. *[Replaces handkerchief.*

[*Enter SIMPSON through door from ante-room.*

SIMPSON is the regulation footman, with powdered hair and livery.

SIMPSON. [*At Left.*] Mr. Mortimer, sir, Mr.

Abrahams has just called. He particularly wishes to see you, sir.

[Going toward MORTIMER.]

MORTIMER. *[Starting and removing handkerchief.]* Hang Abrahams, what's he after? Dear me! It can't be that he thinks of collecting those I. O. U.'s of mine. *[Rising.]*

SIMPSON. *[Who has a great respect for MORTIMER. Very deferentially.]* Been losing again, sir?

MORTIMER. *[Loftily.]* Yes, Simpson, pretty high stakes last night, and one must play, you know.

SIMPSON. Mr. Mortimer, sir, you couldn't propose me in your club, could you, sir?

MORTIMER. *[Haughtily and then more kindly, as he sees SIMPSON'S downcast face.]* No, Simpson, not in your present position, you know; but if

you should ever raise yourself, depend upon me to use all my influence for you.

SIMPSON. [*Gratefully.*] Oh, thank you, sir, I'm sure, [*going*] but what about Mr. Abrahams, sir?

MORTIMER. [*Seating himself.*] Oh, damn Abrahams!

[*Enter ABRAHAMS from ante-room, hat and cane in hand. ABRAHAMS is the typical Jew money-lender of the period, exaggerated in dress and manner.*]

ABRAHAMS. [*Advancing just as SIMPSON crosses back of table and exits, giving him a look of haughty disdain.*] No you don't, Mr. Mortimer; no, you don't, not yet. Where's your master?

MORTIMER. Excuse me, where's my gentleman, you mean, Mr. Abrahams. [*Rising.*] I am a gentleman's gentleman; I have no master.

ABRAHAMS. [*At Left Centre.*] Oh, you haven't a master, haven't you? Well, now, suppose I was to come down on you with some of your little I. O. U.'s, I wonder then if you'd have a master. Where's Mr. Brummell?

MORTIMER. Mr. Brummell has not yet appeared.

ABRAHAMS. [*Sitting down as if to wait.*] Inform him that Mr. Abrahams wishes to see him.

MORTIMER. [*Shocked.*] I repeat, sir, he is not up.

ABRAHAMS. Well, then, my good fellow, it's time he were up. Tell him I said so.

MORTIMER. It is as much as my position is worth, sir, to go to him at this hour. You must call again, Mr. Abrahams.

ABRAHAMS. [*Rising.*] Call again! Call again! This is the seventh time I've called again.

MORTIMER. [*Trying now to placate him.*] Yes — eh — if you please, Mr. Abrahams.

ABRAHAMS. No, sir; I must see him now. I'm in need of money myself, and I must get it from Mr. Brummell. My creditors are pressing me, and they force me to do the same. [*Loudly.*] I regret the necessity, but I am determined upon seeing him.

MORTIMER. [*Who is so shocked he can hardly speak.*] Not so loud, Mr. Abrahams, not so loud. If Mr. Brummell were to hear you, he'd be distressed. Besides, he never tolerates any one who raises his voice unnecessarily. If he should hear you, you might never be paid.

ABRAHAMS. [*Aghast at the thought.*] What!

MORTIMER. [*Hands raised in horror.*] Sh! Sh!

ABRAHAMS. What!

[*Whispering in MORTIMER'S ear.*]

MORTIMER. [*Looking at ABRAHAMS out of the corner of his eye.*] Upon my honor, Mr. Brummell was saying only yesterday he thought he would pay Mr. Abrahams.

ABRAHAMS. [*A little more calmly.*] Then why hasn't he done so?

MORTIMER. Mr. Brummell only said it yesterday, and Mr. Brummell never does anything in a hurry.

ABRAHAMS. Is four years a hurry? Well, this is the last time that I will be put off. Do you follow me — the last time! And now, when am I to have your little sums?

MORTIMER. [*Taking out handkerchief and wiping eyes.*] Mine! Oh, I have a wealthy aunt, who is now dying in Clapham, Mr. Abrahams, and I am her sole heir. I fear I must beg you to wait until after her funeral.

ABRAHAMS. [*At Left Centre. Really puzzled.*]

It is very strange, a very large number of my clients have wealthy aunts who are dying, but they don't die. They all appear to be affected with a most lingering sickness. However, Mr. Brummell has no such relative, and I believe, on consideration, that I will wait for him this morning. [*Sits in chair by table.*]

MORTIMER. [*Who is now determined to get rid of him, crossing to ABRAHAMS.*] No, really, Mr. Abrahams, you must go. Mr. Brummell would not see you until his toilet is completed; and, indeed, if he would, he could transact no business in *déshabille*.

ABRAHAMS. In what? [*Jumps up.*] Oh, very well, very well; but advise him this is the last time I will be dismissed without seeing him. The next time I call, I will see him whether he is in

desh — desh — or nothing. I will have my money. I will have my money.

[All the while he is saying this, MORTIMER is pushing him gently off through the ante-room. MORTIMER ushers ABRAHAMS off at the Left, then crosses to the Right Centre, and turns away with a sigh of relief as SIMPSON enters very hurriedly.]

SIMPSON. Mr. Mortimer, sir, there are a number of people waiting with their accounts to see Mr. Brummell. What shall I say, sir?

MORTIMER. *[Resignedly.]* Get a list of their names, Simpson, and tell them I'll call around and see them to-day.

SIMPSON. Very well, sir.

[Exit SIMPSON through ante-room. A murmur of voices is heard there.]

MORTIMER. Affairs are very shaky. It was

only three days since Abrahams called. According to this he will return again to-morrow.

[Sits in chair in front of dressing-case, makes himself comfortable, and is about to fall asleep when KATHLEEN appears at door and peeps in.]

KATHLEEN. *[In door at Left. She is MARIANA'S Irish maid, very pretty and piquant.]*

Pst! Pst!

[MORTIMER starts and listens, then composes himself for another nap.]

KATHLEEN. Pst! Pst!

MORTIMER. *[Still seated.]* I did drink pretty heavily last night, but I hardly thought it affected me.

KATHLEEN. Hello!

MORTIMER. *[Rising.]* Who is it? What is it?

KATHLEEN. *[Still in door. With pretty impatience.]* Is it all right, — can I come in?

MORTIMER. [*Laughingly.*] Look here, Kathleen, are you going to indulge in that sort of thing when we are married?

KATHLEEN. Can I come in?

[Comes in a few steps.

MORTIMER. [*Crossing to Centre.*] Yes, it's all right now. Mr. Brummell is finishing the first part of his toilet; he won't be out for some time yet. Well, what do you want, you little minx?

[Chucks her under chin.

KATHLEEN. [*Tossing her head.*] Minx, indeed! [*Crossing to Right.*] I dropped in to find out what's your intentions. Mr. Sheridan's gentleman has become very pressing in his, and won't be held off much longer. Now, is it marriage with you, Mr. Mortimer, or is it a breaking off, Mr. Mortimer? Am I to be worn in your coat like a flower and thrown aside when I'm withered, or

am I to be pressed in the album of your affections, Mr. Mortimer? I own there is an air about Mr. Brummell, and I should not be averse to a connection with the family. [Quite seriously.]

MORTIMER. [Just as seriously.] And I mean you shall have it, Kathleen, for you would become our position. But the fact is, I can't afford to marry while Mr. Brummell's money matters are so bad. I tell you his social position is like a halo, — it is glory all round him, but there's a hollow in the middle.

KATHLEEN. [With a sudden thought.] Mr. Mortimer! We must marry Mr. Brummell! First, we must procure a list of the heiresses.

MORTIMER. [Slyly.] I understand there is a heap of money in your family.

KATHLEEN. [Dubiously.] But there's one obstacle — Miss Mariana's affections are already engaged.

MORTIMER. Indeed, to whom?

KATHLEEN. That's what I can't find out. The divvle never signs any of his letters. I can promise you one thing, he isn't very high, and Miss Mariana's father has forbid him the house, and swears she shan't have him. Mr. Vincent, oh, ho! he's all for position and fashion.

MORTIMER. [*Puts arm around her waist and they walk up and down.*] Then Mr. Vincent would be glad to marry her to Mr. Brummell. We'll enlist him on our side. Now there are two difficulties with Mr. Brummell — first, he is, just at present, very friendly with Mrs. St. Aubyn. Still, I think I can get him out of that predicament, and then you see Mr. Brummell is so demmed particular, — the young lady must be correct to a hair in every respect —

KATHLEEN. [*Affectedly.*] Lord, Mr. Morty,

you needn't worry yourself about that; ar'n't I in her service? And what's the matter with me? She's a very much *a la mud* and [*crosses to mirror at Right*] correct in every particular. Mr. Mortimer, do you think you are as becoming to me as Mr. Sheridan's gentleman?

[*Beckoning to him, he comes up and looks over her shoulder in the glass.*]

MORTIMER. [*Putting his arm around her and leading her away from mirror.*] Look here, Kathleen, no tricks; and what are you doing out at this time of day?

KATHLEEN. [*Walking to and fro with MORTIMER.*] Why, Miss Mariana sent me over an hour back with this letter [*holding up letter*] for her young gentleman. They correspond through me; faith, I'm turned into a regular post-bag. But I'm afraid I've missed him this time.

MORTIMER. [*Laughingly.*] You will have to miss him quite regularly when we begin to break it off between your young mistress and her lover, and supplant him with my gentleman.

BEAU. [*Voice in distance from bedroom.*]
Mortimer! Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir! [*Alarmed.*] That's Mr. Brummell!

KATHLEEN. [*Starts off Left.*] Lord! I'm off. [*Pointing to dressing-table.*] Oh, Morty! Is that where he sits and does it? [MORTIMER *nods.*] Couldn't I see him?

MORTIMER. [*With horror.*] What! Before he's finished? Gracious Heavens! No!

KATHLEEN. [*Crossing to door of ante-room.*]
Well, I am going. I'm loath to leave ye; goody-by — be faithful.

[*Throws kiss.*]

[*Exit* KATHLEEN. *Enter* BEAU *from door into bedroom. He enters slowly as though it were too much trouble to come in. He is dressed in a yellow brocaded dressing-gown, tied with a heavy yellow cord. It is long, so that only his patent leather pumps with silver buckles show, with just a glimpse of brown and yellow striped socks. He crosses at once to the dressing-table without paying any attention to* MORTIMER, *who bows deferentially and says:*

MORTIMER. Good morning, sir.

BEAU. Oh, go to the devil.

MORTIMER. [*To himself.*] Mr. Brummell is in a bad temper this morning.

BEAU. [*Seating himself at dressing-table.*] Mortimer, is the sun shining?

MORTIMER. [*Crossing to window — Right.*] Oh, finely, sir.

[SIMPSON enters, bringing soda-water bottle and glass on a tray.

BEAU. [*Simply looks at it and motions it away; exit SIMPSON.*] Any gossip, Mortimer?

[*Has taken up hand-glass, and then gently smooths his eyebrows.*

MORTIMER. None of any account, sir. The Dowager Lady Slopington ran off yesterday with young Philip Pettibone.

BEAU. [*Now manicuring his nails.*] If it happened yesterday, it must be forgotten to-day.

MORTIMER. And Captain Badminton shot himself in the Park last night, sir, after losing ten thousand pounds at hazard.

BEAU. [*Now takes tweezers and pulls out one or two hairs from his face.*] Very stupid of him; he should have shot himself first — is he dead, Mortimer?

MORTIMER. No, sir.

BEAU. He always was a bad shot. You'll find some of his I. O. U.'s among my papers; return them to him cancelled, with my compliments. He can use them for plasters. And who has called?

MORTIMER. [*Crosses to small table and looks over cards.*] Oh, nobody, sir. To be sure there has been the usual crowd of people. The Honorable Mrs. Donner came for your subscription to the town charities, and I gave her all you could spare, sir. Mr. Cecil Serious, the poet, called for permission to inscribe your name under the dedication of his new volume of verses. Lord Cowden came to know if your influence might still be used in the support of his party in the coming elections.

BEAU. [*Still occupied with his toilet.*] Yes, he

can use my influence. Well, you satisfied them all, I presume.

MORTIMER. [*At Left.*] I took that liberty, sir. Then there was a quantity of trades-people with their bills and accounts. I said you had been out all night with the Prince and really were not able to see them.

BEAU. Pray, Mortimer, be a little careful of my reputation in your lies. You know common people are apt to look upon dissipation very differently from persons of fashion. You may say what you like about the Prince, but handle me a little delicately.

MORTIMER. [*Bows, then speaks after short pause.*] Sprague, the tailor, called again, sir, with his account.

BEAU. [*Much astonished.*] Again! What insolence! Upon what previous occasion had he the presumption to call?

MORTIMER. A year ago last month, sir.

BEAU. [*With real astonishment.*] What damned impudence! Mortimer, you may let it be known at your club that he comes to me no longer. Send for that new tailor — what's his name — to wait upon me this afternoon. Bring this morning's letters.

[MORTIMER *brings down table with a number of little notes to BEAU, who is still seated at dressing-table.*

MORTIMER. [*Holding up a bundle of bills.*] These are bills, sir. All of them fresh this morning, and some of them more urgent than usual.

BEAU. [*Not taking the trouble to look at them.*] Hide them away somewhere, where I can't see them, and I shall feel as if they had been paid.

MORTIMER. [*Pushing forward a bundle of notes.*]

Your private correspondence, this little collection, sir.

BEAU. [*Still seated, takes up notes, one at a time, and smells them.*] Patchouli! — phew! — Frangipane! — I believe that smells like peppermint. I don't know what that is, but it's very unpleasant. Violet! — musk! Take them all away — you may read them yourself.

MORTIMER. [*Holding up a yellow lock of hair which he has taken from an envelope.*] This letter has this little enclosure, sir.

BEAU. [*In interested tone.*] Money?

MORTIMER. Not exactly, sir, although a similar color.

BEAU. [*Disappointedly — languidly.*] Whose is it?

MORTIMER. Lady Constance Conway's, and she says —

BEAU. [*Interrupts him.*] Never mind what she says. I believe I did honor her with the request. Write and thank her, and quote some poetry. Say hers is the most precious lock I possess. Rather tender little woman, Lady Constance. [*Sentimentally.*]

MORTIMER. [*Pointedly.*] Is she rich, sir?

BEAU. [*Sighing.*] No, she's not.

MORTIMER. [*Opening another note.*] Oh! A note from Mrs. St. Aubyn. She wants to know where you've been these two days. She says you are her lover's knot; she's coming to see you at three this afternoon; bids you be ready to receive her. She has, besides, down below in a postscript, a myriad of sentiments which she says belong to you, and she is herself, unalterably yours, Horatia.

BEAU. The one woman in London with whom it's possible to have a Platonic friendship. One

must have something nowadays, and these other liaisons are so excessively vulgar.

MORTIMER. [*Very loud as he opens letter.*] Mr. Brummell, sir.

BEAU. [*Shocked.*] Mortimer, how often have I told you never to startle me?

MORTIMER. [*Bows an apology.*] Mr. Brummell, sir, here's the memorandum of an I. O. U. for one thousand pounds, given by you to Lord Gainsby at White's three nights ago, for sums lost at hazard.

BEAU. [*A little disturbed.*] The deuce, Mortimer. It must be paid to-day; that's a debt of honor. How can we obtain the money?

MORTIMER. I can try Abrahams again, sir, but he was very difficult the last time.

BEAU. [*Rings bell. Enter SIMPSON from ante-room. Without looking at him.*] Simpson!

SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

BEAU. Go to Mr. Abrahams. Of course, you know where he lives.

SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

[MORTIMER brings table back to place up at Right.

BEAU. Say Mr. Brummell requests his immediate attendance.

SIMPSON. Very well, sir!

[Exit SIMPSON.

MORTIMER. [Coming down.] Mr. Brummell, sir, this can't go on much longer.

BEAU. No, I hope not.

MORTIMER. Everybody's pressing on you, and the only thing that keeps them off at all is your friendship with the Prince, and if anything should happen to that —

BEAU. [Quite unaffectedly.] Nothing could happen to that, Mortimer, and if anything did, I

should cut the Prince and make the old King the fashion. [Rises.

MORTIMER. I have been wondering, Mr. Brummell, if I might be so bold, if you had ever thought, sir, of the advisability of a rich marriage.

BEAU. Yes, it has occurred to me occasionally; in fact, it has passed through my mind quite recently that it might be desirable. Only to decide on the person really seems too difficult a task for me to undertake. You would not have me marry a mere money-bag, would you, Mortimer?

MORTIMER. [*At left of table.*] But the great Mr. Brummell has only to choose.

BEAU. [*Staring at him in utter surprise that such a remark should be necessary.*] Yes, of course! But one desires some sentiment. I wouldn't care to make a loan for life and give myself as security.

MORTIMER. Mr. Brummell, sir, have you ever observed Miss Mariana Vincent?

BEAU. [*Thoughtfully.*] Yes, I have noticed her in the Mall, and I must confess it was to admire her; her person is perfect. Is her matrimonial figure as good?

MORTIMER. I believe it is sixty thousand pounds, sir.

BEAU. Oh, dear!

MORTIMER. [*Hastily.*] But Mr. Vincent would be ashamed to offer so little to the wife of Mr. Brummell.

BEAU. [*Musingly.*] Yes, it's a very paltry sum, and Mrs. St. Aubyn —

MORTIMER. [*Insinuatingly.*] If you could present her to the Prince, Mr. Brummell, don't you think a Platonic friendship might spring up there?

BEAU. [*As though thinking aloud.*] She is

ambitious, but she is clever and would never forgive a slight. She is a good hater, and if she thought she were being put upon one side, she would make a sly enemy. Well — we shall see. Mortimer, write a letter to Mr. Vincent — make my proposal for his daughter's hand. Be mindful of your language and careful to accomplish it in the most elegant manner, and request an immediate reply.

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

SIMPSON. [*Enters at Left from ante-room.*] Mr. Reginald Courtenay, sir.

BEAU. Yes, you may bid him come in here.

[REGINALD *comes rushing in from ante-room.*

He is a handsome, bright-faced lad of twenty, dressed simply, in great contrast to BEAU'S gorgeous attire.

REGINALD. [*Speaks very loud.*] Ah! Mortimer.

[*Crossing to BEAU, after placing hat and cane on table, with hand extended.*] Good morning, Uncle Beau!

BEAU. Reginald! You are evidently laboring under the impression that I am a great distance off. [MORTIMER *goes into bedroom.*

REGINALD. [*In a much lower tone.*] I beg your pardon, Uncle Beau. [*Bows.*] Good morning. [*Hand extended.*

BEAU. No, I don't think I will shake hands; men shake hands much too often, especially in warm weather. A glance of the eye, Reginald — a glance of the eye! Did it ever occur to you, Reginald, how thoughtful our Creator was, in giving us bodies, to give them to us naked, so that we could dress and ornament them as we choose?

REGINALD. It had not occurred to me before, Uncle.

BEAU. No, I suppose not.

REGINALD. I trust you are well this morning?

BEAU. No, I've contracted a cold — I suppose everybody will have a cold now. I left my carriage on the way to the Pavilion last night, and the wretch of a landlord put me into the same room with a damp stranger.

REGINALD. [*Goes up, sits on settee at Right, with a change of tone and manner.*] Uncle, I want your advice and help.

BEAU. [*Goes to REGINALD, and puts his hand on his shoulder and speaks with real affection.*] All the advice I have is yours. Reginald, my boy, I trust you haven't gotten yourself into difficulties. You are the one creature in the world whom I love, and I think it would break my heart to see you in any trouble from which I could not free you. Your mother, my boy, was a

mother to me for years, and when I lost my sister I lost the best friend I ever had. She saw the heart that beat beneath the waistcoat. Moreover, she helped me always — in every way; if it had not been for her, perhaps even now, I might be in some smoky office in the city — that undiscovered country from whose bourn no social traveler ever returns. [*Crosses back to dressing-table.*] What is it, Reginald? If you are in debt, I will give you a letter to Mr. Abrahams. If you are in the blue-devils, I will give you one to Mrs. St. Aubyn.

REGINALD. [*Rises and comes down to BEAU.*] I am in neither, Uncle Beau; I am in love.

BEAU. Dear me, that's worse than either. How do you know you are?

REGINALD. Why — well — I feel it here! [*Indicating heart.*] I live only when she is present, and merely exist when away from her.

BEAU. [*Staring at him through his glass.*]
Reginald, don't talk like a family newspaper.
Is your fair one possible?

REGINALD. [*Indignantly.*] If you mean is she
a gentlewoman, she is, and besides, young and
beautiful — and —

BEAU. [*At Right.*] Of course, she would be.
But does she return your passion?

REGINALD. She loves me, Uncle.

BEAU. Of course, she would — but —

REGINALD. Her father is opposed to me. He
has forbidden our seeing each other ; our meetings
have to be clandestine, and our mutual correspond-
ence is carried on through her maid. He wishes
a title for his daughter. He is rich and seeks
only position in the world of society, while
she, ah! she cares nothing for it — only —
for — me.

BEAU. [*Looking at him through glass.*] Reginald, do you know I think you are more conceited than I am.

REGINALD. [*At Center.*] Oh, no! [*Bowing.*] Oh! Uncle Beau, you, who are so high in favor at the Court, who have Dukes at your elbow and the Regent on your arm, might help me in a worldly way, that I might win over the father. I know that I am dear to you, as you are to me — and that is why I have come to you!

BEAU. And you shall not have come in vain. [*With enthusiasm.*] By my manners! You shall have the girl if I have to plead for you myself. But that will not be necessary. No, I will give you social distinction and prominence much more easily. Come for me in a little while, and I'll walk along the Mall with you to White's. Yes, and be seen with you at the Club window a few

moments. Now, my dear boy, can anybody possibly do anything more for you?

[With absolute conviction.]

REGINALD. *[Pleased.]* No, Uncle. *[Turning to go.]* Yes, Uncle — you can do one thing more for me. I've left my purse; will you lend me a couple of crowns to take a chair with? I've missed an appointment with the maid, and I wish to return to the Park in a hurry.

BEAU. Reginald, you know I never use silver, it's so excessively dirty and heavy. Ask Mortimer for a couple of guineas as you go out. *[REGINALD starts to go.]* By the way, Reginald, it is just possible that I may enter into the golden bands myself. I am thinking somewhat of a marriage with a certain young lady whose charms, strange to say, very much resemble those you would have described had I permitted you to inflict me.

REGINALD. [*Laughing.*] You marry! Uncle! You! Your wit makes me laugh in spite of my dolours. Imagine the great Beau Brummell married! Why, Uncle, your children would be little Rosettes.

BEAU. [*Wincing.*] Reginald, never be guilty of a pun; it is excessively vulgar. I am serious. I think I may marry.

REGINALD. [*Going to BEAU and offering hand quickly.*] Then, Uncle, I am glad for you.

BEAU. [*Starts, looks at hand with eye-glass.*] Dear me, what's that? Oh, dear, no, Reginald — a glance of the eye. [*REGINALD drops hand.*] A glance of the eye! My boy, you look so like your mother — God bless you!

[*REGINALD goes to table at Left for hat and stick.*]

BEAU. You will return?

REGINALD. [*Boisterously, crossing to door at Left.*] Yes, shortly.

BEAU. [*Again shocked at his loud tone.*]
Reginald!

[REGINALD *stops, returns a step or two, looks at*

BEAU *as if to say, "What is it?"* BEAU *bows very politely.* REGINALD *remembers he had forgotten himself for a minute, bows, places hat on his head, as he turns, and exits less boisterously.*

SIMPSON. [*Enters from ante-room as REGINALD exits.*] Mr. Abrahams, sir.

BEAU. Yes, you can let him in here.

SIMPSON. [*Exits and returns, ushering in ABRAHAMS.*] Mr. Abrahams, sir.

ABRAHAMS. [*Enters with assurance.*] I understand, Mr. Brummell, that you wished to see me. I had much difficulty in leaving my place of business, but you see I am here.

BEAU. [*Glancing at him through his glass.*] Ah — Abrahams — ah, yes! So you are, so you are.

ABRAHAMS. [*Insinuatingly.*] I thought it was likely, sir, that you wished to make a few payments.

BEAU. [*Dryly.*] I think that's wrong, Abrahams; do you know, I fear you will have to guess again.

ABRAHAMS. [*With indignation.*] Well now, really, Mr. Brummell, I hope you don't want to raise another loan.

BEAU. [*Pleased that he has surmised it.*] I believe that's right, Abrahams; second thoughts seem to be always the best.

ABRAHAMS. [*Very loudly.*] Really, Mr. Brummell, sir, I'm sorry, sir, but the fact is I can't possibly — [*Enter Simpson from ante-room.*

SIMPSON. [*Interrupting ABRAHAMS.*] A footman from His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, sir.

BEAU. [*Quite unconcernedly.*] Yes, you can let him come in here.

[*ABRAHAMS looks at BEAU, and backs up a trifle.*

Enter footman. Stands below door.

BEAU. [*Without looking at him.*] Mortimer, which one is it?

MORTIMER. [*Who had come in from bedroom.*] Bendon, sir.

BEAU. [*At Right. Graciously.*] Very well, Bendon.

FOOTMAN. [*With great respect.*] Mr. Brummell, sir, His Royal Highness wishes to know if you will be at home this afternoon at four o'clock. If so, he will call upon you to make arrangements for the dance at Carlton House.

BEAU. At what o'clock did you say, Bendon?

BENDON. [*With low bow.*] At four o'clock, sir.

BEAU. Say to His Royal Highness to make it half-past four o'clock.

[*Exit footman at Left, followed by SIMPSON.*]

ABRAHAMS *is overcome with wonder at this, and looks at MORTIMER, who draws himself up proudly.*

BEAU. [*As if recollecting his presence.*] You were saying, Mr. Abrahams, that you could not possibly —

ABRAHAMS. [*Bowing, changing attitude and tone.*] H'm, ach — hem — that I should be very glad — though I am just now rather pressed myself. How much did you say, sir?

BEAU. How much did I say, Mortimer?

[*Enter REGINALD, same door.*]

REGINALD. [*Boisterously rushing to BEAU, Left Centre.*] Am I in good time, Uncle?

BEAU. [*Startled.*] Reginald, how often have I told you to enter a room properly. You came in like — like a — Mortimer, what did Mr. Reginald come like?

MORTIMER. [*Reproachfully.*] Like a thunderbolt, sir.

BEAU. Ah, yes — like a thunderbolt; very unpleasant things, thunderbolts. Mortimer, have I ever seen a thunderbolt?

MORTIMER. Once, sir.

BEAU. Yes; I once saw a thunderbolt; very unpleasant things, thunderbolts. You must not come in like a thunderbolt, Reginald.

REGINALD. [*Looking at ABRAHAMS.*] I beg your pardon, Uncle Beau. Are you busy?

BEAU. [*As if startled.*] I beg your pardon —

REGINALD. Are you busy?

BEAU. Busy! Ugh! Never employ that term with me. No gentleman is ever busy. Insects and city people are busy. This — ah — person has come to ask my assistance in some little financial matters, and I think I've rather promised to oblige him. Mortimer, go with this — ah — ah — person. You go with my valet. [ABRAHAMS bows and bows.] Yes, quite so, quite so.

[*Exit MORTIMER and ABRAHAMS into ante-room at Left, ABRAHAMS backing, bowing all the time.*]

REGINALD. [*Gloomily sitting on sofa.*] I was too late; I missed her.

BEAU. Don't be gloomy, Reginald, or I shall not be able to walk with you. Nothing is more conspicuous than melancholy.

[MORTIMER *returns* — *coughs*.

BEAU. Mortimer, are you coughing?

MORTIMER. [*Apologetically.*] Yes, sir.

BEAU. [*At Right.*] Well, I wish you wouldn't. You wish to speak with me?

MORTIMER. Yes, sir. [BEAU *crosses, bowing in apology as he passes* REGINALD.] Mr. Brummell, sir, everything is arranged satisfactorily, sir.

BEAU. Did you send for the new tailor, what's his name, to come this afternoon?

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. And have you written the letter to Mr. Vincent?

MORTIMER. Yes, sir, all ready to seal.

BEAU. Then seal it and despatch it at once. And now, Reginald, come with me and you shall see me having my coat put on.

[REGINALD *rises*.

[*Exit* BEAU and REGINALD *into bedroom.* *Enter*
KATHLEEN *from ante-room.*

KATHLEEN. La! I must come in for a minute. I missed my young gentleman in the Park, and I ventured back to ask how we are to discover who he is. That's what we must do somehow, but how? [REGINALD *enters from bedroom.*

REGINALD. [*Coming down.*] Mr. Brummell's snuff-box, Mortimer.

[REGINALD and KATHLEEN *recognize each other.*

REGINALD. Her maid!

KATHLEEN. [*To* MORTIMER.] Oh, Lord! The very young gentleman himself.

MORTIMER. What!

REGINALD. [*At Left. Suspiciously.*] What are you doing here?

KATHLEEN. [*At Centre.*] Why, I missed you in the Park, sir — you were too early. [*To*

MORTIMER.] Will you say something? But I saw you in advance of me. [*To MORTIMER.*] Give utterance to something! And I followed you here to give you this letter. [*Gives note to REGINALD. To MORTIMER.*] I had to give it to him that time.

BEAU. [*Outside, calling.*] Reginald!

[*MORTIMER and REGINALD rush KATHLEEN off through bay window. MORTIMER stands at window after drawing curtain. REGINALD crosses to table at Left Centre, and stands back of same. Enter BEAU from bedroom.*]

BEAU. [*At Centre door.*] Mortimer, what was that extraordinary commotion?

MORTIMER. [*At Right, at window, innocently.*] What commotion, sir?

BEAU. [*Standing in doorway.*] Mortimer, don't be an echo; how often have I told you that

servants are born to answer questions, not to ask them? I believe you said the sun was shining?

[Crosses to window.

REGINALD. *[Very loud, stopping him.]* Uncle Beau, your snuff-box. *[Offering box.*

BEAU. *[At Centre. Starts.]* Ah! I knew I lacked something; I perceived I had on my coat, my fob, my waistcoat, my unmentionables. Dear me, yes, it was my snuff-box — thank you, thank you. *[He does not take snuff-box.*

[He is now fully dressed — long brown trousers, fitting very closely around the leg and buttoned around the ankle, a yellow brocaded waistcoat, brown coat, ruffled shirt with neckerchief, fob with many seals. He crosses to dressing-table and arranges flowers — three yellow roses — in his coat. MORTIMER has crossed to table and stands holding hat, gloves and stick.

REGINALD *has the snuff-box.* BEAU *turns from dressing-table, comes to the Centre.* REGINALD *offers him the snuff-box open.* BEAU *takes a pinch with courteous nod of head.* REGINALD *takes pinch, closes box, hands it to BEAU, who holds it in hand.* MORTIMER *then hands him gloves.* BEAU *arranges them in hand very precisely.* MORTIMER *then hands stick.* BEAU *puts this in just right position.* MORTIMER *then hands hat.* BEAU *takes it, is about to put it on, then looks at it, stands aghast, and hands it back with no word, but just an expression of complete astonishment.* MORTIMER, *very puzzled, takes it and then sees that he has handed it with the wrong side to put on.* Bows *very low with an expression of great chagrin.* Turns *it and hands it to BEAU.* BEAU *takes it, walks to mirror, raises it two or three times*

until he has it at just the right angle, then puts it on. Turns to REGINALD.

BEAU. And now, Reginald, I'll make your fortune for you. I'll walk down the Mall with you to White's.

[Walks to door, followed by REGINALD, as

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE FIRST ACT

SCENE TWO

The BEAU'S reception-room. A small room, furnished in chintz. Chippendale sofa at the Right. Large entrance at back with red striped chintz curtains. Palms in window. A table on the Left holds a standing memorandum tablet. Small arm-chair back of sofa. Two or three other chairs scattered around the room. A door at the Left. BEAU BRUMMELL at the rise of curtain is standing by table, looking at the memorandum tablet through his eye-glass. He is dressed as in Scene One. SIMPSON draws the curtains at the back, and announces:

SIMPSON. Mrs. St. Aubyn, sir!

[SIMPSON then leaves the curtains drawn and goes out. BEAU turns and bows.

BEAU. Punctual as the day, and twice as welcome.

[MRS. ST. AUBYN *has sailed into the room with an air that plainly says, "You and I are to settle some important things to-day." She is a very handsome woman of about thirty, beautifully dressed, and showing in every look and motion the woman accustomed to homage and command. She carries a fan, which she uses to emphasize all her remarks.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. You received my letter?

BEAU. [*With another bow.*] And your ambrosial lock of hair.

[MRS. ST. AUBYN *is at first offended, and then laughs and sits on sofa.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Not mine, my dear Beau; you know I'm not such a fool.

[BEAU *is not at all taken aback by the mistake he has made.*

BEAU. Ah, no, I believe I am mistaken; but, my dear Horatia, one gets things of this sort so mixed; and I plead in extenuation that the wish was father to the thought.

[BEAU sits in chair near table.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Have you missed me really these last two days? Where have you been? It's been so dull without you, I vow, I could almost have married again. [*Leans forward and speaks very confidentially.*] Now, I want you to do me a favor, will you?

BEAU. Whisper it and it is done.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Well, then, I will whisper. I want you to get me a card to the dance at Carlton House.

BEAU. The very privilege that I have looked forward to. I desire to present you myself to the Prince, and witness your triumph. An

unselfish pleasure, you would say, but I love you too well, my dear Horatia, not to sacrifice myself to your greatest opportunity.

[During this speech, MRS. ST. AUBYN has listened with a slight cynical smile, and now with an air of finality says:]

MRS. ST. AUBYN. I would not give up your devotion altogether — even for the Prince's.

[With great empressement.]

BEAU. Take both. Mine you will always have.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Yet I think my devotion for you overbalances yours.

BEAU. My dear madam, you are too good. Do you know, I fear you will die young?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. *[With an air of giving up this contest of wits.]* Oh, the deuce take your fine phrases! If I thought I'd a rival, I'd let the Prince flit somewhere else. You're clever

and the Prince isn't. He'll be very dull. Then he'll be harder to keep within bounds. Oh, [*quickly as she sees an almost imperceptible shrug of BEAU'S shoulder*] it isn't that I'm afraid for my reputation — that was damned long ago. But I've certain notions of self-respect which aren't in the fashion and which men don't seem to understand.

BEAU. [*Very quietly.*] Marry him!

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*With real astonishment.*]
What!

BEAU. [*Taking out snuff-box and taking snuff.*]
Marry him.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. It is impossible!

BEAU. With you all things are possible.

[*MRS. ST. AUBYN laughs nervously and steals a surreptitious look at herself in a little mirror in her fan.*]

MRS. ST. AUBYN. My dear Beau, I wish you'd make plain sense instead of pretty sentences. What advantages have I to recommend me?

BEAU. I will ask Mortimer to make out a list, but I may name one only — which is all-sufficient. For the past six weeks — I have admired you.

[MRS. ST. AUBYN *rises with a laugh.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Oh, the conceit of the man! But tell me what style of woman is the Prince caught by?

[BEAU *rising also.*

BEAU. To be perfectly frank with you, the Prince admires the fashion, and I — have made you the fashion. I am expecting him here this afternoon.

[MRS. ST. AUBYN *gives a shriek of dismay.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Who? The Prince! Gracious, why didn't you tell me? [*Runs to che-*

val-glass.] How am I looking? There, there, you needn't answer; I know it is one of my bad days.

[BEAU *is really very much upset by this rushing around and rapid talking. Speaks as though quite overcome.*

BEAU. My dear Horatia, I beg of you not to rattle on so; you've no idea how you fatigue me.

[SIMPSON *enters at back and announces:*

SIMPSON. The Duchess of Leamington, Mr. Sheridan, sir! [SIMPSON *goes out.*

[MRS. ST. AUBYN *says to herself, as she comes down to chair at right of sofa:*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Damme, that woman.

[*The DUCHESS and MR. SHERIDAN enter at back. The DUCHESS is a very much painted and bewigged old young woman, dressed in a very light flowered gown, with a very large hat.*

SHERIDAN *is still handsome, but no longer young, dressed in black silk knee-breeches, black coat and stockings; he wears the powdered wig instead of short hair like BEAU'S. The DUCHESS makes low curtsy to BEAU, who bows.*

BEAU. Ah, Duchess, what happy accident! Has your carriage broken down at my door, or do you come out of your own sweet charity? We were just speaking of you. I said you were the best-dressed woman in London, but Mrs. St. Aubyn did not seem to agree with me. [*To SHERIDAN.*] How do you do, Sherry?

[*Nods to SHERIDAN and, crossing to him, offers him snuff-box. SHERIDAN takes snuff.*

DUCHESS. [*As though noticing MRS. ST. AUBYN for the first time, says superciliously:*] How d'ye do?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Haughtily.*] Mr. Brummell pleases to be witty at my expense, Duchess. [*Then to herself.*] I must be on my guard. I don't understand Beau.

[*The DUCHESS seats herself on sofa. MRS. ST. AUBYN is sitting in chair just below sofa. BEAU is sitting at chair near table, and SHERIDAN is still standing.*]

DUCHESS. Mr. Sheridan and I thought we'd come to tell you the news. We knew you were never up till noon, and thought you might want to hear what's going on.

[*SHERIDAN now brings down chair from the back, and sits about Centre.*]

SHERIDAN. And when we were nearly here we remembered that really there was nothing to tell. There seems to be a lamentable dearth of scandal and gossip nowadays. I don't know what we are

coming to. The ladies have absolutely nothing to talk about.

BEAU. Sherry, I hear the "School for Scandal" is to be revived. It returns to us every year like Spring and the influenza.

SHERIDAN. [*Regretfully.*] Yes, but it won't be played as it used to be.

BEAU. [*Thankfully.*] No, I hope not.

DUCHESS. Dear me, only think of Miss Motional playing *Lady Teazle* now, at her age! Why is it that *passé* people are always so anxious to act? [*With a little affected giggle.*] I wonder you don't go on the stage, Mrs. St. Aubyn?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*With great sweetness.*] I never experienced a scandal of sufficient *éclat* to warrant such a step. But you, Duchess, what a success you would have!

DUCHESS. Spiteful creature!

BEAU. How very severe —

[SIMPSON *enters at back, and announces:*

SIMPSON. His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, sir.

[SIMPSON *exits. The PRINCE enters; does not remove his hat. All rise. DUCHESS and MRS. ST. AUBYN curtsy. SHERIDAN bows very low and BEAU bows rather condescendingly.*

PRINCE. Ah, Beau, good morning.

BEAU. This is very good of you, sir. The Duchess, I am sure, is a welcome vision. Sherry you know, and you have heard — surely you have heard of the fascinating Mrs. St. Aubyn.

PRINCE. But never have seen half enough.

BEAU. Where will you put yourself, sir?

PRINCE. [*Very emphatically says as he crosses to sofa:*] Damme, here.

[*He sits on sofa and makes a motion with his*

hand, inviting MRS. ST. AUBYN to sit beside him. To do this, MRS. ST. AUBYN has to cross in front of the DUCHESS, which she does with a look of triumph, while the DUCHESS, in moving to MRS. ST. AUBYN'S vacated seat, turns up her nose as much as to say, "That won't last long." And BEAU, having witnessed all this little byplay, has a little smile as he sees all is just as he wants it.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. I believe, sir, Mr. Sheridan is thinking of a new play.

PRINCE. Don't you put me in, Sherry, or, if you do, mind you make me thin. A fat man played me in the pantomime t'other night, and damme, I had him locked up.

SHERIDAN. [*With great deference.*] 'Twas a libel, sir, a gross libel.

PRINCE. I heard, Beau, from my tailor, this

morning, that you had gotten up something new in trousers. Why the deuce haven't you told me?

DUCHESS. [*With affected girlishness.*] Oh, dear me, what are the new trousers?

SHERIDAN. [*Maliciously.*] Why, Duchess, I don't see how they can possibly interest you.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Sheridan, both your plays and your conversation ought to be expurgated.

DUCHESS. Come, come, stop all this banter, and Mr. Brummell will tell us.

BEAU. [*As though bored by all this chatter.*] You must excuse me, Duchess; I have contracted a cold.

PRINCE. I'll tell you, Duchess; they're long trousers which are slit so [*pointing with his cane to his own leg*] at the bottom, and then buttoned tight. Very odd, you see, and striking.

DUCHESS. It might be too striking; don't you think it depends on the — eh — eh — circumstances?

[She draws her skirt up very slightly, and strikes her leg with her fan.]

PRINCE. Damme, Duchess, you're right; and that's just what I want to know of Beau here, whether he thinks my legs could stand 'em.

BEAU. Really, my dear fellow, I'm no judge of calves. *[All laugh.]*

SHERIDAN. You must appeal to the ladies, sir.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. *[Feigning to hide her face with her fan.]* No, no; I object!

BEAU. Mrs. St. Aubyn means they are little trifles not worth mentioning.

PRINCE. Now, I object. Besides, I've something else to talk about. What think you, Beau, of Tuesday week for the dance at Carlton House?

[BEAU rises very slowly, takes tablet, looks it over.]

BEAU. Tuesday, Tuesday — yes, I think I might make Tuesday do.

[PRINCE rises, and everybody rises.]

PRINCE. [To MRS. ST. AUBYN.] You will not forget, then, siren, the opening quadrille with me. May I take you to your chair?

[MRS. ST. AUBYN makes him a low curtsy.]

MRS. ST. AUBYN. You make me wish my chair was at my own door, instead of at Mr. Brummell's.

BEAU. That's very good, very good.

[MRS. ST. AUBYN curtsies with a look of triumph to the DUCHESS. The PRINCE holds out his hand. She places her hand lightly on his, curtsies low to BEAU, and retires up to the Centre door, while the PRINCE is making his adieus, which he does by simply nodding]

to the DUCHESS and SHERIDAN, most graciously nodding to BEAU; and then he takes MRS. ST. AUBYN'S hand again and they go off chattering.

DUCHESS. [*Who has witnessed this with ill-concealed envy.*] Now, Mr. Brummell, promise me you'll bow to me at the play to-night. You bowed to Lady Farthingale last week Thursday, and she has given herself airs ever since.

BEAU. After the play, Duchess, after the play. If I looked at you once during the play, I could never bend my attention again to the players.

DUCHESS. [*With a girlish giggle.*] And that, Mr. Brummell, would damn the play.

BEAU. Yes, I shouldn't wonder if it did. It wouldn't be the first play I've damned. [*DUCHESS curtsies, SHERIDAN bows, and they go*

off at Centre door. BEAU takes up memorandum tablet and goes toward door, Left, reading as he goes.]

Let me see — Thursday, lunch with Lord and Lady Pleasant, then on to Mrs. Hearsays — *pour passer le temps*. Dinner with the Dowager Countess of Alimony, dance at Gordon House, then to the Rag, then to the Raleigh, then to Vauxhall.

[BEAU goes out.]

[SIMPSON enters at Centre door, showing in MR.

VINCENT. VINCENT is a stout, red-faced man, bluff manner, dressed rather loudly, with brown bob-wig, and he drops his h's.

SIMPSON. Whom shall I say, sir?

VINCENT. Never mind introducing me. I'll introduce myself — tell him a gentleman wishes to see him in answer to his message; he'll understand.

SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

[SIMPSON goes out at Left door with a look of disdain at VINCENT.]

VINCENT. [*Who is in a state of great excitement.*]
Well, am I really in the great Mr. Brummell's house? I thought I'd show my appreciation of the honor I feel in Mr. Brummell's suit for my daughter's 'and by answering his message in person. But, really, now I'm 'ere, I'm not sure I've done the right thing. It's perfectly absurd, ridiculous, but I'm slightly nervous. I, the most successful cloth merchant of the day—unreasonable! I must appear at my ease or I shall fail to make an impression. Let me see, what shall I say when he comes in? After greeting him cordially, but with dignity, which is due to my position, I'll tell him in the proper language, with a few figures of speech to show I'm a man of some learning — he's coming.

[*Shows great nervousness. Begins to bow very*

low, moving first on one foot, then on the other, rubbing his hands together.

BEAU. [*Enters from Left door; tablet in hand; as he comes on he says:*] Sunday — Sunday! —

VINCENT. He's coming, he's coming.

BEAU. Sunday after service, lunch with Lady Sybilla — Sybilla! She is "*un tant soit peu passé*," but there was a time, there was a time, when poor Sybilla and I —

[VINCENT'S *bowings and movements now attract* BEAU'S *attention, and he looks at him through eye-glass.*

BEAU. [*To himself.*] Ah, yes, the new tailor. [*Aloud.*] I will speak with you presently. I am somewhat occupied just now. [*Resumes soliloquy.*] Dinner with Figgles — silly beast, Figgles, but delicious truffles.

[VINCENT *has still continued to bow.*

BEAU. [*Looks at him again.*] Would you be so kind as not to wobble about in that way?

[VINCENT *stops a moment.*

BEAU. Thank you. [*Resumes soliloquy.*] Then on to Lady Ancient's — very tedious, but I must go or the poor woman's rooms would be quite vacant.

[VINCENT *has again resumed his bowing and clasping and unclasping his hands.*

BEAU. [*Looks at him.*] Did you hear what I observed? Would you be kind enough not to wobble about in that way, and please do not wash your hands incessantly with imaginary soap, or *chassez* about in that manner? You have no idea how you distress me. [VINCENT *never stops, growing more and more nervous.*] How very extraordinary; he does not seem to be able to stop. Perhaps he is suffering with St. Vitus's

dance. I shall never be able to employ a person so afflicted. Well, I won't dismiss him at once. I'll turn my back on him so I can't see him. [BEAU turns his back to VINCENT.] Let me see, where was I — ah — yes, Lady Ancient's very tedious, but I must go or the poor woman's rooms will be quite empty; then on to the club.

VINCENT. [*Very deprecatingly.*] But, sir —

BEAU. I'll speak with you presently. I am somewhat occupied just now, and, although my back is turned, I can feel you are wobbling about. [*To himself.*] I think I might venture to play again with my present prospects, Monday — Monday —

VINCENT. [*Who is now getting restive, and realizes he is being treated badly.*] But! —

BEAU. Please do not say "but" again.

VINCENT. My lord! —

BEAU. Nothing so commonplace.

VINCENT. Sir —

BEAU. Very well, I suppose I had better speak with him — the sooner it is over the better. You've come to see me about my suit, I suppose.

VINCENT. Yes, the honor it confers upon my daughter and myself —

BEAU. It's affected his head. Does your daughter sew, also?

VINCENT. [*Surprised.*] Oh, beautifully, Mr. Brummell, but —

BEAU. I must ask you to omit your "buts." Now, if you will stand perfectly still for a few moments, I will endeavor to ask you one or two questions; but you must try to stand still, and if you try very hard, you may succeed. But do try — there's a good man — try, try, try again. [*Aside.*] I'm so sorry for him. He must suffer

so. Well, I won't look at him. [*Turns away and sits down at table. During all this time VINCENT has been bowing, trying to stand still, but not succeeding, owing to his great embarrassment.*] Now, have you any new cloths?

VINCENT. My dear sir, I was not aware that you were at all interested in cloths.

[*Looks around for a chair, and goes up to back of room to get one.*]

BEAU. He's violent — he's going to attack me.

VINCENT. [*Bringing down the chair near to BEAU.*] Yes, there are some very fine new cloths. Now, if you'll allow me —

BEAU. Certainly not, sir; certainly not. [*Aside.*] Poor man, I suppose he never waited upon any one before.

VINCENT. [*Can now stand it no longer, and*

rises.] This is too much. 'Tis outrageous. I'll not stand it, sir. I am a gentleman, sir.

BEAU. Then why don't you behave like one?

VINCENT. I've come here —

BEAU. Of course, you've come here, that's very evident. You've come in answer to my message, haven't you?

VINCENT. Yes, sir, I've come in answer to your message asking for my daughter's 'and —

BEAU. Your daughter's what?

VINCENT. My daughter's 'and —

BEAU. Your daughter's hand? [*It begins to dawn upon him.*] I beg your pardon.

VINCENT. I came to accept your offer of marriage, but I've altered my intention.

BEAU. Dear me, you are —

VINCENT. Mr. Holiver Vincent, sir.

BEAU. [*Aside.*] And I thought he was the

tailor! [*Aloud.*] A thousand apologies; won't you be seated? I was very much preoccupied. I ask you a thousand pardons — but [VINCENT *has begun to bow and wobble again*] what can you expect if you will wobble about in that manner, my dear *Sir* Oliver!

[VINCENT, *indignant, again is soothed by title.*

VINCENT. Not *Sir* Holiver yet. *Mr.* Holiver — *Mr.* Holiver Vincent, at your service.

BEAU. I only regret that you did not say so before. [SIMPSON *enters.*

SIMPSON. Sir, the Duke of York sends word, will you be so gracious as to take mutton with him to-night?

[BEAU *looks at* VINCENT, *who looks pleadingly at him, as much as to say, "Dine with me."*

BEAU. Send my polite regrets to his Royal

Highness and say, I dine to-night with Mr. Oliver Vincent.

[SIMPSON *exits at Centre door.* BEAU *offers his snuff-box to Vincent, who takes a pinch and snuffs it with a loud, disagreeable noise, which shocks BEAU unspeakably.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE SECOND ACT

The ballroom at Carlton House, a large, stately room hung in yellow damask — yellow damask furniture. On the Right, a door leading into reception room. On the Left are three curtained recesses. At the back a large doorway extends the whole width of room; it is curtained with yellow brocade curtains, which are looped back, showing a long hall hung with mirrors; it leads to supper room.

On the stage, at rise of curtain, is the PRINCE, standing near the Centre, talking to MRS. ST. AUBYN. THE PRINCE is dressed in black, with the blue ribbon of the Garter; MRS. ST. AUBYN in elaborate evening dress. SHERIDAN, the DUCHESS OF LEAMINGTON, LADY FARTHINGALE, LORD MANLY and other guests are standing at back.

PRINCE. [*A little impatiently, as though he had been welcoming guests until tired.*] Any one else, damme; I'm ready to dance.

[*Servant enters from the door on the Right.*

SERVANT. Mr. Brummell, Mr. Oliver Vincent, Miss Vincent.

[SERVANT *steps to one side of door as MR. BRUMMELL comes in with MARIANA, her hand resting lightly on his. The DUCHESS then steps forward and takes MARIANA'S hand. MR. BRUMMELL steps back to the side of VINCENT, who has followed them on. The DUCHESS leads MARIANA to the PRINCE. While this is going on, MRS. ST. AUBYN, who has stared in amazement, says:*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. What's this presentation for; does it mean money for the Duchess? She does not need it.

DUCHESS. [*As she presents MARIANA.*] Your Royal Highness — Miss Vincent.

[*Both curtsy to the PRINCE.*

PRINCE. This places me deeper than ever in Mr. Brummell's debt.

[*The DUCHESS and MARIANA back away and retire to the back of room, where they are joined by SHERIDAN. BEAU now advances to the PRINCE, closely followed by VINCENT, who is greatly excited.*

BEAU. Sir, I have the honor to present my friend, Mr. Oliver Vincent.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Aside.*] It's Mr. Brummell who is at the bottom of this. I think I begin to see.

PRINCE. Mr. Vincent? Is this *the* Mr. Vincent, of the city? For, egad, sir, I am pleased —

VINCENT. [*Greatly embarrassed.*] Your High-

ness, sir, the honor is all mine, ah, all mine, Your Highness, thank you for your cordiality, Your Highness.

[Offers the PRINCE his hand. BEAU quietly throws it up, and motions VINCENT away to the back, covering his retreat, as it were, by his own self-possession and the look of humorous appeal which he gives to the PRINCE.]

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Your Royal Highness, what does Beau mean? Really, sir, I think you take too much from him. They are from the city, these Vincents; you can see its dust on their feet.

PRINCE. *[Chuckling at his own wit.]* Yes, damme, madam; but it's gold dust.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. *[With a slight smile, such as an offended goddess might give.]* Pray, sir, let us have the dance now.

[The PRINCE offers her his hand and they take

their places at the head of the set. SHERIDAN leads the DUCHESS to one side. LORD MANLY leads LADY FARTHINGALE to the other.

BEAU. [*To MARIANA.*] May I have the delight of leading you out in the dance?

MARIANA. I fear, Mr. Brummell, you will find me but a poor dancer.

BEAU. I know you dance well, or I should not have asked you. I have watched you. One must always judge for oneself.

[He leads MARIANA to the head, opposite the PRINCE. They dance an old-fashioned quadrille, the end of which is a deep curtsy from the ladies and a bow from the men. The PRINCE then goes up to Centre door, and out through the hall with MRS. ST. AUBYN.]

PRINCE. Egad! Poor Beau! Your charms have made me false to my friend.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Ah! But I fear Your Royal Highness is fickle, and may be false to me, too.

PRINCE. Zounds! I could only be that by being false to myself.

[They are now out of sight. The DUCHESS has joined BEAU and MARIANA, LADY FARTHINGALE and LORD MANLY. The latter couple now curtsy and bow and exit through Centre door, and go down the hall.]

DUCHESS. I really think it gives one more *éclat* to dance with Mr. Brummell than to dance with the Prince.

BEAU. *[Quite sincerely.]* I really think it does.
[The DUCHESS and MR. SHERIDAN then bow, and also go out at Centre door, meeting VINCENT, who bows to them in a most exaggerated way and then comes down toward the BEAU and MARIANA. BEAU bows in courtly fashion]

and also goes out through Centre door, so VINCENT and MARIANA are left alone. MARIANA is a charming type of a young English girl, dressed in white, her hair in soft ringlets, with a wreath of tiny rosebuds.

VINCENT. This is the proudest moment of my life! He had heard of me; he recognized me at once, Mariana.

MARIANA. [*Quizzically.*] Of course, papa, he had read your name on his buttons.

VINCENT. You are mistaken, my dear; I am not a tailor, I am a cloth merchant. Did you notice how cordial His Royal Highness was? [*Regretfully.*] I was too stiff with him, much too stiff, but Mr. Brummell would have it so.

MARIANA. [*Still trying to make a jest of it.*] Quite right, papa; you needed your dignity and His Royal Highness did not.

VINCENT. Think, Mariana, what a difference to-day from yesterday. Yesterday, I was Vincent, of the City — to-night, I am Vincent, of the Court. It is a proud position, my dear; think of it, Holiver Vincent, the Prince's friend! No more "The Hoak, the Hash, and the Bonny Hivy Tree." No more "A Weary Lot Is Thine, Fair Maid." [*Imitates the playing of a piano.*] No more going to sleep after dinner. No, my dear, we'll read our names every morning, several times over, in the Court Journal. It'll be a staggerer for your Aunt Jane at 'Ounds-ditch.

MARIANA. [*Sadly.*] I think, for my part, we are very well as we are, and very happy. And I like the old songs, and I like my old father just as he is.

VINCENT. Pooh! My child, I am ambitious,

and, if you marry the Beau, in a year from now, I may wear a coronet — a coronet.

[Makes a gesture as though placing a coronet on his head.]

MARIANA. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, papa, and how much are you going to give for the coronet? Anybody can buy one nowadays. Give your money for it, by all means — but not your daughter's happiness.

[Crossing and going up toward Centre as though to end the discussion.]

VINCENT. *[Follows her and speaks pleadingly.]* Mariana, I have been a kind father to you. My heart is set upon the accomplishment of this thing. You have ever been a dutiful child.

MARIANA. *[Turning quickly.]* And you shall ever find me so. But I hold, papa, that a woman's heart alone should guide a woman's choice.

VINCENT. [*Turns away vexed.*] Yes, I know -- but —

MARIANA. Still, my affection for you shall largely influence my decision. Go, my ambitious father. [*Goes to him and puts her hand on his shoulders.*] I will see what I can do to win the coronet for your head.

VINCENT. [*Delightedly kisses her forehead.*] That's a good child.

[*He goes up and out through Centre door.*]

MARIANA. If I can only tear the arrow from my heart. [*Walks slowly up and down.*] No dream of greatness, no wish even of my father's, should for one instant weaken my devotion to Reginald if I could believe him true to me. But he has ceased to write; I hear of him only in social dissipation. He is gay and merry, and Mariana is forgotten. Since I cannot be happy,

there is only my dear old father to be pleased.
And yet — and yet —

[*Starts and turns as BEAU, the DUCHESS and
MR. VINCENT enter from the Centre door.*

DUCHESS. [*As she comes gaily down.*] *Ma mie*, you are very fortunate, I vow — you will be the talk of the town to-morrow — to have pirouetted with our Beau here. 'Tis no small favor, I assure you — and one his Beauship has never yet bestowed upon his doting Duchess — you naughty, naughty Beau! [*Shakes her fan at BEAU.*] And I must say, *ma mie*, you comported yourself right well, right limber and nimbly for a *débutante*. Though I am no bad *executante* on the tips of my toes myself, i' faith.

[*Gives a little pas seul.*

BEAU. [*Putting up glasses and looking at her critically.*] Ah, Duchess, all you need is a ballet

skirt and a tambourine. But, egad, we forgot the Prince — the Merchant Prince — we have just left the title! Permit me, my dear Duchess, to present to you the money. Mr. Oliver Vincent — Her Grace, the Duchess of Leamington.

DUCHESS. [*As she curtsies to VINCENT, who bows very low.*] Deuce take me, Mr. Brummell, have you ever known me to refuse a presentation to money?

BEAU. No, my dear Duchess, and I have known you to become very familiar with it at the card-table without even a formal introduction.

DUCHESS. Beau, I vow you're a brute.

[*She crosses to VINCENT and they go up a little.*]

BEAU. [*Crossing to MARIANA.*] You hear that, Mariana. I am a brute, 'tis true, and I am looking forward to a conjunction of Beauty and the Beast. [*Turning to the DUCHESS.*] Duchess, shall Sir Money conduct you to the card-room?

DUCHESS. [*Smiling at VINCENT.*] With pleasure, if he'll stay there with me.

BEAU. No fear of that, for your Grace is sure to put him in your pocket.

DUCHESS. Incurrible! Come, Mr. Vincent, your arm, your arm; 'fore Gad, we are routed.

[*Takes VINCENT'S arm; they turn to go.*]

BEAU. [*Stopping them.*] One moment, my dear Vincent. [*BEAU bows to DUCHESS, who joins MARIANA, and they stand talking, while BEAU speaks to VINCENT.*] My valet has neglected placing my purse in my pocket, and I am going to allow you the privilege of lending me five hundred guineas before you run away with the Duchess.

VINCENT. [*Heartily.*] Certainly, my dear Mr. Brummell, certainly, sir, take ten —

[*Puts his hand in his pocket.*]

BEAU. [*With a look of horror.*] Not here, my good sir, not here — in the card-room.

VINCENT. [*Going up to the DUCHESS.*] My arm, madam, my purse and myself are entirely at your service.

DUCHESS. [*Taking his arm.*] I only need one of them; but come, come, I see you are quite a courtier. *Au revoir*, Beau. [*To MARIANA, as she waves a kiss.*] *Ma chère!*

[*Curtsies to the BEAU, waves her hand airily to MARIANA, and goes off with VINCENT.*]

BEAU. Your most humble and devoted slave, Duchess.

MARIANA. You do not follow the cards, Mr. Brummell?

BEAU. They are too fickle; I am always unlucky.

MARIANA. Unlucky at cards, lucky in love —

[Stops abruptly, vexed that she has mentioned the word "love."]

BEAU. That is why I am here.

MARIANA. *[A little coquettishly.]* Well, what sort of a hand shall I deal you?

BEAU. *[With great meaning.]* Yours!

MARIANA. *[With equal meaning.]* Are diamonds trumps?

BEAU. *[Reproachfully.]* No. Hearts!

MARIANA. *[Lightly.]* I haven't one in the pack.

BEAU. Nay, but you deal your cards badly.

MARIANA. That is because I have chosen Nature, not Art, to be my mistress.

BEAU. By my manners! I've a mind to bring Dame Nature into fashion again.

MARIANA. Then there's not a woman here could show her face.

BEAU. But you. And if you would deign to be seen always on my arm —

MARIANA. Mercy! Mr. Brummell, I fear you would wear me as you do your coat, and throw me aside when I'm wrinkled.

BEAU. [*With a shudder.*] Don't mention wrinkles; they give me the jaundice.

MARIANA. [*Seriously.*] I cannot but remember that only one short week ago every bench in the Mall, every lady's tea-table, every *entr'acte* of the play was the occasion for reportings of Mr. Brummell's fancy for the Honorable Mrs. St. Aubyn.

BEAU. You cannot imagine I have not favored some woman more than others. Mrs. St. Aubyn was clever and amused me. We passed our time in laughter, not in loving.

[MRS. ST. AUBYN, *who has entered at back,*
hears this last remark.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. I fear I am *malapropos*, but I will be deaf and blind.

[*She comes down the Centre, while VINCENT, SHERIDAN, LADY FARTHINGALE and the DUCHESS enter also at Centre door.*]

MARIANA. It would be a pity, madam, to destroy two faculties which serve you to such good purpose.

[*Crosses and passes MRS. ST. AUBYN with a slight bend of her head, and joins VINCENT.*]

BEAU. Oh, that's very good. [*To MRS. ST. AUBYN, as he crosses to her.*] Don't you think that's very good?

[*They stand together, apparently talking, MRS. ST. AUBYN very angrily.*]

VINCENT. [*To MARIANA.*] A most bewitching woman that, but I'm sorry she would insist upon hunting Mr. Brummell, for I knew you wouldn't

want to be interrupted. I did all I could with politeness. I took her to every other room before this.

[MARIANA and VINCENT go out at Centre door, as LORD MANLY comes rushing on, almost running into them.]

LORD MANLY. [*He is a fop of the period, and quite a little the worse for drink.*] My dear Beau! My dear Beau! [*A little louder.* BEAU pays no attention to him.] My dear Beau!! [*Still louder.* BEAU finally looks at him.] Lord Crawlings is cheating at the card-table. It is a fact! He has cards up his sleeve. What shall I do?

BEAU. Cheating at the card-table?

LORD MANLY. Yes; he has cards up his sleeve.

BEAU. [*Thoughtfully.*] Cards up his sleeve!

LORD MANLY. Yes. What shall I do?

BEAU. Well, if he has cards up his sleeve, bet on him.

LORD MANLY. [*With a blank stare.*] Oh — thank you.

[*He joins LADY FARTHINGALE and offers her a chair, which she refusing, they stand conversing with other guests.*]

LADY FARTHINGALE. If Mr. Brummell marries Miss Vincent, he'll have no more difficulty in paying for his clothes, though I hear he's sadly in debt now.

SHERIDAN. Poor Beau! He will never be able to forget the old gentleman's cloth; it will be like riding to wealth on a clothes-horse.

DUCHESS. [*Who has been looking down the hall.*] Lord, Mr. Sheridan! They are starting for supper. You can do as you please, but I want an oyster.

[SHERIDAN *and* DUCHESS *go off at Centre door, followed by* LADY FARTHINGALE, LORD MANLY *and other guests.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*To* BEAU, *who was starting to go.*] I insist upon a few words with you.

BEAU. Your wishes are my commands.

[*He is now standing in the door, Centre, so he can look down the hall.* MRS. ST. AUBYN *is walking angrily back and forth.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. I found myself quite *de trop* when I entered the room a few minutes ago.

BEAU. You speak of impossibilities.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Pray, spare me; I overheard your last speech.

BEAU. You mean you listened to what I said.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Well, if I did — I begin to see through you now.

BEAU. Happy me!

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Did you think me blind when you presented these Vincents to the Prince?

BEAU. [*Bowing to some imaginary guests down the hall.*] How do you do? Who could think those eyes blind?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. You presented me to the Prince, not for my own sake, but for yours. 'Twas a pleasant way to be rid of me.

BEAU. No way with such a destination could possibly be pleasant.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. You have puffed the Prince with the conceit that he is driving you out of my affections, against your will. Suppose he were to know the truth?

BEAU. Royal personages are so rarely told the truth that if he did hear it he would not recognize it. How do you do!

[*Again bowing to some imaginary person.*]

MRS. ST. AUBYN. What would become of his friendship for you, do you think, and what would you do without it?

BEAU. He would have my sincere sympathy.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Suppose I were to inform him?

BEAU. [*Again bowing.*] How do you do, my dear Lady Betty; how do you do? Yes, presently — with great pleasure — h'm. [*Turning and apparently paying attention to MRS. ST. AUBYN for the first time.*] My dear Horatia would not be so foolish as to ruin herself. Would the Prince, do you think, still care for you if he thought I no longer admired you? He affects you now for the same reason he wears my coats, because I have made you as I made them — the Fashion.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Triumphantly.*] But there's

something that binds one faster to a man than the button of a coat. There is, my dear Beau, such a thing as marriage.

BEAU. Oh, yes, to be sure! There, my dear madam, I bow to your vast experience [MRS. ST. AUBYN *makes an impatient movement*], but, when it comes to a question of the Prince's wedding coat, I fear you will find the buttons are sewed on with a very lig^h thread.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. There you are wrong. You seem to forget, my dear Beau, that the Prince already dotes on me. We are both playing a little game — you and I — but I am persuaded I shall win, for I stake on a heart.

[*Sweeps past BEAU with a superb gesture, toward the Left.*]

BEAU. [*Very quietly.*] Your fortune will turn, for you stake on a knave.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. What will take my knave when the king is out of the pack?

BEAU. Why, then, I think a queen might turn up.

[*Before MRS. ST. AUBYN can crush him with the reply that is on her lips, VINCENT enters.*]

VINCENT. Ah, 'ere you are, my dear Mr. Brummell; you are losing your supper, and Mrs. St. Aubyn, too, is depriving the feast of its most brilliant hornament.

BEAU. Yes, truly, it is too selfish of Mrs. St. Aubyn. Mr. Vincent, Mrs. St. Aubyn must permit you to conduct her to the supper-room.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Sarcastically.*] Surely, Mr. Vincent did not do *me* the honor of leaving the table to search me out.

VINCENT. 'Fore Gad, madam, though I did see

a vacant seat next His Royal Highness, in truth I came to look for my daughter.

BEAU. Mrs. St. Aubyn will hardly permit the chair which awaits her next to the Prince to remain vacant. [*Takes MRS. ST. AUBYN'S hand and hands her with great empressement to VINCENT.*] Meanwhile, Mr. Vincent, I will go through the rooms for your daughter.

[*MRS. ST. AUBYN stops, gives BEAU a look, is about to make a scene, then thinks better of it, and lets VINCENT lead her from the room.*]

BEAU. You amused me once, but you do so no longer. No, you're clever; yes, you are clever, and you dress to perfection, but Mariana has all your charms and more—a heart! Horatia St. Aubyn, your day in the world is waning; Mariana's reign begins. I will go and inform her so. She cannot be insensible to my regard, to

my love, for, strange to say, I begin to think I do love her. Yes, I believe I do. [*Quite seriously.*] And I think I love her madly — yes, I do, I love her madly.

[*Stands for a moment in deep thought; then walks slowly off through Centre door down the hall.*

MARIANA *enters from door down Right from reception room. She has a note in her hand.*

MARIANA. Kathleen has conveyed to me my own letter to Reginald unopened. She says he has left his lodgings, and his landlady does not know when he will return. I am afraid men are not what they are represented to be.

[*Sits down in chair near the door at Right.* LORD MANLY *comes on through hall and Centre door. He is slightly intoxicated.*

LORD MANLY. Ah! Miss Vincent! What happiness.

MARIANA. [*Annoyed.*] Here's another!

LORD MANLY. Won't you drink something?
I mean eat something?

MARIANA. [*Not looking at him.*] Thank you,
I care for nothing! There can be no mistake;
Kathleen vowed she delivered the letters.

LORD MANLY. You won't eat, and you won't
drink — most 'straordinary! What *will* you do?

MARIANA. I will dispense with your society,
sir. [*As she rises, she looks at him.*] I do believe
he is intoxicated.

LORD MANLY. She's coy! She's coy! No,
fair creature, I have follolled — follolled — I
have follolled — most 'straordinary I can't say
follolled — I have follolled you from room to
room to find you.

MARIANA. And, having found me, you may
leave me, sir!

LORD MANLY. Leave you! Never! Never will I stir from this sacred spot. [*In his endeavor to stand quite still, he staggers and almost falls over.*] I mean the sacred spot where you are. Miss Vincent, I adore you! Fact. All you do, I see through rosy-colored glasses.

MARIANA. Wine-colored glasses you mean, sir. Let me pass!

LORD MANLY. No, fair tantalizer. [*Nods his head with great satisfaction.*] Good word — tantalizer. I will speak; my heart is full.

MARIANA. There can be no doubt about the fulness.

LORD MANLY. Here on my knees [*looks at knees*] — egad, look at my knees. I have four knees instead of two knees — but, no matter — here on all my knees [*kneels, almost falling*] I will pour out —

MARIANA. More liquor, sir! You do not need it.

LORD MANLY. You cannot ignore me, my love, my passion, my *adorashion* — I mean adoration — Miss Vincent — I —

[BEAU *has come on through Centre door. Unperceived, he comes down, takes LORD MANLY by the ear, making him rise and stagger back.*

BEAU. My dear Miss Vincent, how unfortunately unconventional.

LORD MANLY. Mr. Brummell, sir, you are no gentleman.

BEAU. My good fellow, you are no judge.

LORD MANLY. My honor, sir, my honor!

BEAU. Fiddlesticks! Come, trot away, trot away. You may apologize to Miss Vincent tomorrow.

LORD MANLY. You apologize to me now, sir.

BEAU. I never had occasion to do such a thing in my life. [*Walks up and looks off down the hall.*] Now trot away; I think I see the Prince approaching.

LORD MANLY. Proach aprincing! — I mean Prince approaching. Miss Vincent, it is with deep regret I say adieu!

[*He stumbles to door at Right and goes off.*]

BEAU. [*Coming down and offering MARIANA a chair. She sits.*] I heartily congratulate you, my dear Miss Vincent, on having escaped a scene. Nothing but the regard I bear you could have persuaded me to so nearly incur a possible fracas. Lord Manly was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and he has thought it necessary to keep that spoon full ever since. But now that we have found one another, may I not be permitted to continue the conversation where it was broken

off? I desire to speak with you seriously. I wish to make a confession. I want to tell you what perhaps you know — when I first sought your hand, I did not bring my heart. I admired you, 'tis true, but I did not love you — not then — not madly! I was — I am so deeply in debt, so hemmed in by my creditors, so hard pressed on every side, it was necessary for me to do something to find the wherewithal to satisfy their just demands, or sink under my misfortunes and give up forever the life of the world which had become my very breath and being. The one means at my disposal to free myself from my difficulties was a marriage. I knew your fortune and I sought you out. The admiration I entertained for you the first few days deepened into esteem, and finally expanded into love — mad love! That is why I have rehearsed this to you. At

first it was your fortune which allured me — but now it is yourself!

MARIANA. Mr. Brummell!

BEAU. Yet, were you penniless, I would not wed you.

MARIANA. [*Rising in astonishment.*] Mr. Brummell!

BEAU. Because I would not drag you down to share this miserable, uncertain lot of mine. No! I would seek you once to tell you of my love, and then step aside out of your path, and never cross it again. I would not willingly, purposely encompass your unhappiness.

MARIANA. [*Slowly.*] I begin to believe in you.

BEAU. I remember no other word that you have spoken. May I have the delight of pressing my very unworthy lips to your very dear hand?

[MARIANA *is about to give BEAU her hand; then suddenly withdraws it.*

MARIANA. I think, Mr. Brummell, I would rather you did not.

BEAU. [*Thoughtfully.*] I believe you are right. Yes, I am quite sure you are! Thank you. You have saved me from doing something very commonplace.

MARIANA. You are not angry, sir?

BEAU. I believe it is exactly fifteen years since I last lost my temper — but, Mariana, I still await your answer. It is a new sensation for Brummell to be kept waiting.

MARIANA. Will you leave me, sir, to consider my decision? I pray you, Mr. Brummell, give me a few moments here — alone.

{*She motions toward recess farthest down stage and crosses toward it.*

BEAU. I would refuse you nothing. I will await your pleasure in this other recess, and seek you here in five slow minutes.

[He motions toward the recess, the farthest up stage, and with a low bow to MARIANA goes in and draws the curtain.]

MARIANA. *[Holding the curtain which closes the recess where she is standing.]* I cannot bring myself to say yes to him, although a certain sympathy pleads in his behalf, and joins with pride to prompt me against Reginald, who has neglected me. Why has he not replied to my letters? 'Tis very soon to be forgotten! Oh, Reginald, to be absent when most I needed you! You are no better than the men of the world. Father is right. Mr. Brummell shall have his answer. *[The PRINCE and MRS. ST. AUBYN enter at Centre door, so much engrossed in each*

other that they do not see MARIANA.] Oh, how provoking!

[MARIANA *hides in recess and draws the 'curtain.*

BEAU. [*Who has also looked out at that moment.*] How very annoying! I shall have to play Patience on a window-seat, and wait.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Yes. I must own to you, my sentiments toward Mr. Brummell are greatly altered. Until I met you — can you believe it? — I positively thought him a man of some parts.

BEAU. [*From the window.*] Really, really!

PRINCE. Goddess! Of course, he has been much with me, and naturally smacks somewhat of my wit.

BEAU. Ah, that's very good! Very good!

MRS. ST. AUBYN. But only as a false echo does, for he has none of your delicate pleasantry.

BEAU. No, thank goodness, I haven't.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. He mimics you in dress, in everything, but, then, you know, he never had your figure.

[The PRINCE and MRS. ST. AUBYN go toward middle recess and seat themselves.]

BEAU. Heaven forbid!

MRS. ST. AUBYN. He really has no taste.

PRINCE. He showed that when he chose Miss Vincent for his marked attention.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. And do you think so, too? Why, I know Miss Vincent is an insignificant little thing, whose name has never been associated with any gentleman of quality, but, though without mind or manners, she has money, sir. She dresses like a guy, but her clothes, like the clouds, have silver lining.

MARIANA. *[With a hasty look out of the curtain.]*
I wish I could escape by the window.

BEAU. I've half a mind to crawl out of the window, but I might be observed. There's no resource but to try to go asleep.

PRINCE. You are a flatterer and a coquette.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. No; only a woman — and under a spell.

PRINCE. Damme, that sounds very fine. I should like —

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Well?

PRINCE. I should like to be one of those little words that kiss your lips and die.

BEAU. One of my pet speeches — number five.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Beware, sir, let me warn you — remember, I have been married once already.

PRINCE. 'Fore Gad, madam, I wish that you would marry twice.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Never! Now! To be sure, I once thought there was something like love

engendered in me by Mr. Brummell, but now I know it was not real love ; it was only a shadow.

PRINCE. Why do you think that?

[At this moment VINCENT enters from the Centre door. All the curtains of the different windows are drawn so he can see no one.]

VINCENT. I cannot keep away any longer ; she's been sensible and accepted him, or they'd have been gone long before this. [MRS. ST. AUBYN moves the curtain a little, with a slight exclamation.] There they are in the recess behind the curtain. Oh, he's clever — Mr. Brummell — very clever.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. I tremble to acknowledge, even to myself, the dictates of my own heart. Ah, sir, I conceive you know only too well who reigns there now.

VINCENT. *[Who apparently cannot hear.]* I

should just like to hear a word to see how the great Mr. Brummell makes love. I wonder would it be wrong now to listen a bit? Why should it be — am I not her father? It's my duty, and I will. *[Comes further down and listens.]*

PRINCE. Siren! You make me drunk with joy!

MRS. ST. AUBYN. No; let me recover myself. You have bewitched me, sir. I must resist your fascinations, and not forget the difference in our rank. Fashion would condemn me.

PRINCE. Damn Fashion!

VINCENT. Oh! Mr. Brummell a-damning Fashion. How he loves her! How he loves her!

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Ah! sir, we women are so frail, so easily beguiled!

PRINCE. *[Falling on his knees.]* By Heaven, I will not lose you!

VINCENT. [*Joyfully.*] He's on his knees!
He's on his knees!

PRINCE. Superb! sumptuous! beautiful woman!
[*Kisses her hand.*]

VINCENT. He's kissing her! He's kissing her!

PRINCE. I swear I will marry you!

VINCENT. [*Who can restrain himself no longer, rushes forward and draws curtain aside.*] And so you shall! Bless you, my — [*Sees the PRINCE and MRS. ST. AUBYN. Falls back.*] Oh, Lord! The Prince!

[*All guests enter at Centre door.*]

PRINCE. [*Rising, indignantly.*] What do you mean, sir? Confound your damned impudence! Will some one show this gentleman —

BEAU. [*Who has come slowly down.*] Oh, take his blessing; it won't hurt you.

PRINCE. Damn his blessing!

BEAU. Be composed, my dear Wales, or you'll make a fool of yourself.

PRINCE. [*Too exasperated to take from BEAU what he usually thinks all right.*] Oh, I am tired of your deuced impertinence, too, Beau. Step aside, step aside!

BEAU. [*Slowly handing his snuff-box to the PRINCE.*] My dear Wales, first you lose your equilibrium, and now you lose your temper. Take a little snuff.

PRINCE. Damn your snuff!

[*Knocks snuff-box out of BEAU'S hand.*]

BEAU. [*Puts up his glass and looks quietly at him.*] Very bad manners, very bad. I shall have to order my carriage. Wales, will you ring the bell?

[*Everybody is aghast at BEAU'S daring. The*

PRINCE stands petrified. BEAU holds out his

hand to MARIANA, who has been standing in the recess, half fainting. She comes forward, bows low to the PRINCE, and backs to the door, followed by her father, who is pitifully dejected. As BEAU, with a last look at the PRINCE through his glass, turns and walks toward the door,

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE THIRD ACT

The Mall, St. James Park, the great promenade where, every day, all London walks. There are benches on each side of the stage under the trees. At the back, ladies and gentlemen can be seen walking.

[MORTIMER comes on from right-hand side, and walks up and down impatiently. After a little, KATHLEEN appears in a great hurry.]

KATHLEEN. Oh! You're there, are you?

MORTIMER. [*Indignantly.*] Am I here? You're half an hour late.

KATHLEEN. [*Airily.*] Well, what do you expect? Aren't I a woman? Say, what's the matter with your face? You have an awful gloomy expression of countenance.

MORTIMER. [*Laughing.*] You little minx. Well, how goes it?

KATHLEEN. [*Crossing to bench and sitting down.*] Why, bad. I can't for the life of me keep one lie from spoiling the other. Say, is all this true about Mr. Brummell and the Prince?

MORTIMER. Yes. We've quarreled.

KATHLEEN. And did the Prince cut ye's?

MORTIMER. No; we cut the Prince, and on account of you Vincents, too. The Prince is deuced put out with Mr. Brummell, [*crosses to bench and sits*] so Bendon told me. It's all abroad, and I left a swarm of creditors at the house, and, worse still, there are two bailiffs after him. [*KATHLEEN gives an exclamation of horror.*] We must hurry on this marriage, Kathleen, or you and I'll be ruined. We must take pains to keep Mr. Brummell and his nephew apart, for he's

that partial to him there's no telling what he mightn't do if he was to discover Miss Mariana and Mr. Reginald were lovers.

KATHLEEN. And we must see to it that Miss Mariana and Mr. Reginald don't meet, else he'd explain how he'd never received any of her letters. I kept them all carefully, for I thought it might comfort him to read 'em after she was married to Mr. Brummell. But I must be off. [*Rises.*] Good morning, me Lud.

[*Makes very deep curtsy.*]

MORTIMER. [*Bowing very low.*] Till this evening, me Lady.

KATHLEEN. Till this evening.

[*Turns to go out, and meets REGINALD face to face.*]

REGINALD. Ah! Kathleen, where have you been this last week?

KATHLEEN. [*Is very much perturbed; MORTIMER has retreated to the back of the Mall, and has disappeared.*] Here, sir, here.

REGINALD. Will your mistress be in the Park this morning?

KATHLEEN. No, sir; she left town to-day, sir.

REGINALD. [*A little wistfully.*] Was she — in good spirits, Kathleen?

KATHLEEN. Oh, beautiful, sir! She skipt with joy.

REGINALD. [*Gives KATHLEEN money, and then slowly walks away.*] I cannot understand it. I am sure there is some mistake.

KATHLEEN. [*Looking at the coin disdainfully.*] That's mighty small pay for a mighty big lie. Bad cess to him!

[*She walks off at the Right with a toss of her head.*

As she disappears, REGINALD comes down as

though to call her back, but she has gone, and he turns to see MORTIMER.

REGINALD. Ah, Mortimer, is Mr. Brummell well?

MORTIMER. [*Very respectfully, hat in hand.*] No, sir. Not at all, sir. He can see no one, sir.

REGINALD. But he will see me?

MORTIMER. Excuse me, sir, but he especially mentioned your name, sir; he could not even see you.

REGINALD. Will he not be in the Mall this morning?

MORTIMER. No, oh no, sir.

REGINALD. Well, tell him I will visit him to-morrow.

[REGINALD goes off down path to the Right.]

MORTIMER. That was a tight squeeze. I expect him here any moment. I must see him and

warn him of the bailiffs, if he only arrives before they do.

[MORTIMER goes off hurriedly by a path to the Left. BEAU enters from the lower left-hand side, and walks slowly to the Centre, followed by MORTIMER. MORTIMER seems quite out of breath. BEAU is dressed in dark green silk knee-breeches, green coat, black silk stockings, buckled shoes, frilled shirt and neckcloth; wears two fobs, carries cane with eye-glass in the top; has gray high hat of the period, yellow waistcoat, yellow gloves, large red boutonnière.

MORTIMER. Mr. Brummell, sir!

[BEAU starts, turns, lifts cane slowly, looks at MORTIMER through glass on top, then turns away and continues his walk.

MORTIMER. [Very deferentially, but firmly.]

Mr. Brummell, sir!

BEAU. [*Without turning.*] I think there is some mistake.

MORTIMER. Excuse me, sir, but I *must* speak to you.

BEAU. You forget, Mortimer, servants in the street are like children at the table, — they may be seen, but must not be heard.

MORTIMER. I have not forgotten, sir, but this is serious.

BEAU. Serious! then it is sure to be unpleasant — wait till I take some snuff.

[*Takes snuff very quietly, and with much ceremony replaces box; then nods to MORTIMER and listens.*]

MORTIMER. Sir, your quarrel with the Prince is already common talk.

BEAU. [*Brushing a little snuff off his ruffles.*]
Ah, poor Wales!

MORTIMER. There was a crowd of creditors at your door when I left, sir.

BEAU. That is neither new nor serious.

MORTIMER. But they were angry and would not go away.

BEAU. Why did you not send them off?

MORTIMER. Sir, we've been sending them off for the past two years, and now — they won't *be* sent. Besides, sir, there are two bailiffs who swore they'd have you if they had to take you in the Mall.

BEAU. Impossible!

MORTIMER. I fear not, sir; one is from Mr. Abrahams.

BEAU. Here? In the Mall? I would rather perish! There is no help for it. [*To himself.*] I must make a shield of my marriage. I blush to do it, for it would seem to leave a blot upon my love for Mariana, but a blot upon that love

is better than a blot upon the name of Brummell, the name she is to wear. [*Aloud to MORTIMER.*] Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. You must hasten back and meet them, these dogs of bailiffs; you must prevent them by telling them of my marriage to the daughter of Mr. Oliver Vincent. That prospect should satisfy them. Promise them all they demand — and added interest. [*BEAU starts to go off at the right-hand side; MORTIMER also moves off to the Left.*] Promise them everything. [*MORTIMER stops and bows respectfully, then starts again. BEAU moves on a few paces, then stops again.*] Promise them anything!

[*MORTIMER again stops and bows. BEAU moves on again, and MORTIMER also starts again to go. BEAU stops suddenly.*]

BEAU. And, Mortimer! [MORTIMER stops, and comes back a few steps.] You must not go unrewarded [MORTIMER looks pleased and expectant]; promise yourself something!

[BEAU walks slowly off at the right-hand side and MORTIMER, with low bow, replaces his hat, and goes quickly off at the Left side.

MORTIMER. [As he exits.] Yes, sir!

[VINCENT and MARIANA enter from the upper left-hand entrance. MARIANA is dressed simply but prettily in a light flowered silk gown and poke bonnet, with a parasol.

VINCENT. We'll be sure to meet him here somewhere. You must do it all, Mariana. He was just as haughty with me last night after we left Carlton House as he always was. You wouldn't have thought he had just sacrificed himself for me.

MARIANA. Sacrificed himself for you, papa?

VINCENT. Isn't it sacrificing himself for him to give up his position in the world? And isn't that what he has done to resent your father's insult?

MARIANA. [*Trying to lighten the seriousness of the situation.*] I fancied he did it partly on my account, papa.

VINCENT. Of course, you little rogue, it was for us both, but it's you alone who can repay him. He hasn't a penny, and this rupture with the Prince has brought down all his creditors upon him. With the money your dowry will bring him [*MARIANA turns her head away, biting her lip*], he can pay off his creditors and defy the Prince. Without it he can do neither, and is utterly ruined.

MARIANA. I realize, father, that it is through us this sudden calamity has come upon Mr. Brummell. It was you, papa, who were to blame.

Why did you bring down the curtain before the comedy was over?

VINCENT. [*A little irritably.*] Come, come, Mariana, you have too teasing a temper.

MARIANA. [*Seriously enough now.*] Ah, my dear father, I only want to help you by making light of the matter. Come [*taking his arm and crossing slowly toward the Right*], let us find Mr. Brummell. I am not blind to the fact that it was by protecting you and me he exposed himself to insult. Well, he shall not suffer for it. Father, I promise you that I will accept his hand!

VINCENT. And I feel sure that it will mean happiness for you in the end. Wait here [*seats MARIANA on bench at Right*] a moment, and I will return with Mr. Brummell.

[*VINCENT exits at the upper right-hand path.*]

MARIANA. Yes, yes. I must hesitate no

longer. I must think now only of my father, and not remember Reginald, who has neglected me. Gratitude and sympathy shall take the place of love in my heart.

[MRS. ST. AUBYN *enters from right-hand entrance, dressed very exquisitely in white, — large white hat; she carries a fan.*

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Ah, Miss Vincent! Is Mr. Brummell with you?

[*Makes a very slight curtsy.*

MARIANA. [*Rising and curtsyng.*] No; my father.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. And you have him to thank for the scene last evening. It is he Mr. Brummell has to thank for the Prince's displeasure.

MARIANA. [*Anxiously.*] Madam, and is the Prince still angry?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*With great relish.*] He is

furious, and swears he will never forgive him. There is, I think, only one person who could influence him in Mr. Brummell's behalf, and that person — is — myself!

[Crosses triumphantly in front of MARIANA, with a sweep of her fan on the last word.]

MARIANA. *[Eagerly going a little toward her.]* Then, surely, you who have been such a good friend of Mr. Brummell will use your influence in his behalf. Indeed, if I am not wrong, it was through Mr. Brummell that you met the Prince. Your smoothing this quarrel, then, will be but a fair return to him.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. You forget I am a woman of fashion. We take all we can get, but we never give anything. No, only on one condition shall I persuade the Prince to hold Mr. Brummell again in favor.

MARIANA. [*With quiet scorn.*] Ah, I see, a condition. Then you women of the world condescend to sell, if you will not give.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Angrily.*] You would do better not to ruffle me. My condition is this: If you will promise to relinquish Mr. Brummell, I will make the Prince promise not to cut him, as he has sworn to do publicly to-day.

[*Looks triumphantly at MARIANA, then turns away as though to give her time to consider.*]

MARIANA. I would I could accept this proposition, but I cannot, I cannot! 'Twould be the greatest injustice to Mr. Brummell. I must not forget that he did not hesitate to sacrifice himself for me and my father. I spoke to her of making him a return. Let me not shrink then from making as just a one myself. [*Then speaking to MRS. ST. AUBYN, who has turned to-*

ward MARIANA.] What right have you to ask any one to give him up?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. He sought my favors before you enticed him from me.

MARIANA. [*Very quietly.*] I do not believe that.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Angrily.*] You are uncommonly insolent. [*Then changing her tone to one of condescension.*] Well, even if it were not so, I should still have the right to ask you. You seem to forget the difference in our position.

[*She sweeps past MARIANA with a grand air toward the Right. At this moment BEAU enters from the right-hand side; he has overheard the last speech. He crosses to the Centre, bowing to MRS. ST. AUBYN as he passes her, and with a very low bow to MARIANA says:*

BEAU. It is you, Mrs. St. Aubyn, who forget. It is greatly to the credit of Miss Vincent if she

can overlook a difference your present conduct makes so very marked.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*With a very low curtsy.*] I will repeat to you what I have just said to Miss Vincent.

BEAU. [*Airily.*] Pray do not fatigue yourself, madam.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. You will learn that I know how to remain a friend when once I become one. I offered Miss Vincent the chance of regaining for you the Prince's friendship.

BEAU. And your price?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*In a low tone.*] Yourself.

BEAU. [*To MARIANA.*] And you, you refused? [*MARIANA bows her head.*] It would have been most unflattering, madam, had Miss Vincent disposed of me so cheaply.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Who is now enraged almost*

beyond the bounds of endurance.] Are you mad? Do you know to whom you are speaking? You are somewhat rash, sir. Discard me, and the Prince shall know *all*.

BEAU. He knows so very little at present, the knowledge of anything would be largely to his advantage. And yet — I cannot imagine you will tell him — *all*.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Your raillery is ill planned. A woman scorned —

BEAU. Pray spare us, Mrs. St. Aubyn; you were never intended for tragedy — it does not become you — and it produces [*pause*] — wrinkles.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Has now recovered her composure.*] Mr. Brummell, I bid you adieu — you have taught me how to smile even when — tush — I am a woman of fashion! [*Crosses to Left, passing MARIANA.*] Miss Vincent, I wish you

joy. [*With an exaggerated deep curtsy.* MARIANA *curtsies. Looks off up the Left path, and calls:*] Manly — Lord Manly. [MANLY *comes on, raises hat, bows.*] Lord Manly — your arm — your arm.

[*They go off arm in arm.*]

MARIANA. [*Sinking down on bench.*] Your regard and protection leave me too much in your debt.

BEAU. Pray let that debt weigh no more heavily on you than do my debts on me. One smile of yours had overpaid me.

MARIANA. If your creditors were as easily satisfied as you are, sir, I should be prodigal of my smiles.

BEAU. [*Crossing to MARIANA'S side.*] Ah, Mariana, if your smiles were the coinage, egad, I think I should turn miser.

MARIANA. You are not practical, sir I must make you so.

BEAU. I am your slave, and the chains I wear are no burden. May I indeed hope that you will accept my humble service? That you will be my wife? *[Stands hat in hand.]*

MARIANA. Yes, Mr. Brummell, I honor and respect you. *[Gives her hand to BEAU.]* I will be your wife.

BEAU. *[Kissing her hand.]* And may I hope you will learn to love me a little?

MARIANA. I do indeed hope so. *[Aside.]* Or make myself forget.

BEAU. *[Putting on his hat with a buoyant gesture.]* Come, Mariana, *[MARIANA rises]* honor my arm — and we will tell the whole world of our — of *my* happiness.

[They go off at left-hand path. VINCENT enters from the Right.]

VINCENT. I can't find him anywhere. I'm

afraid he's hiding, poor fellow, from those bailiffs, and doesn't dare show his face lest he be taken. Where's Mariana? Has she changed her mind and gone? No, she gave her promise she'd accept him, and I can trust to her word. I'll search for her now, and perhaps, by so doing, I may find him.

[VINCENT goes out by upper path, left-hand side.

TWO BAILIFFS enter from upper right-hand path.

They are villainous-looking creatures; one limps — the other has a patch over one eye, and both have very red noses; they are dressed in ragged clothes.

FIRST BAILIFF. Our gentleman's so fine we mustn't bother our eyes with winking, or he'll slip through our fingers.

SECOND BAILIFF. Not if I know it. This is the most fashionable affair of my life. Look here — who's this?

[He points to the left-hand path. They both quickly withdraw behind a tree. BEAU enters from the Left.]

BEAU. I'll leave her to inform her father. I must find Mortimer; he should have returned by now. What if he should not have met those bailiffs — if they should still be at large. Zounds!

[He sits on bench at Right.]

FIRST BAILIFF. *[In a low tone.]* That's him!

SECOND BAILIFF. Lud — ain't he scrumptious! We ought to have a pair of silver sugar-tongs to take him with.

[They come down, one behind the other.]

FIRST BAILIFF. Mr. Brummell, sir!

BEAU. *[Looking up.]* The devil!

FIRST BAILIFF. No, sir, the bailiff.

BEAU. What is the difference?

[The BAILIFFS look at one another in amazement.]

FIRST BAILIFF. We've been looking for you, sir.

BEAU. I am so sorry you have put yourself to that trouble, and you must not speak to me here. Do you realize what you are doing? Suppose some one were to observe you. My valet will attend to you.

FIRST BAILIFF. Oh, we'll take care of your valet later; it's you that we've got a couple of papers for this morning. I represent your landlord, sir!

[BEAU lifts his cane with great deliberation, and looks at him through the glass.]

BEAU. Are you the best he can do?

FIRST BAILIFF. You have lived in his house three years, and he considers it's time as how you paid a bit of rent.

BEAU. [*As though to himself.*] The ungrateful wretch! The very fact of my having resided

in his house should be more than sufficient remuneration.

SECOND BAILIFF. [*Comes up in front of BEAU, while FIRST BAILIFF retires a little, shaking his head as though completely puzzled.*] And I am here for Mr. Abrahams and several other gentlemen.

BEAU. You remind me of the person in the theatre whom they call the super, who represents the enemy on the march or the company in the ballroom. We will dispense with your company, sir.

FIRST BAILIFF. [*Coming up again.*] That won't do, Mr. Brummell. You must pay, or come along with us.

[*Makes vague gesture of thumb over shoulder.*]

SECOND BAILIFF. [*Making same gesture as he withdraws again.*] Yes, pay, or come along with us.

BEAU. You men must be mad; the Prince will be here presently, and I will speak to him. [*Rises.*]

FIRST BAILIFF. [*Obsequiously.*] Oh, if His Royal Highness will help you, sir, of course we won't press matters.

BEAU. See that you do not. And now, [*looking at them through his glass*] trot away, trot away, and walk in Fleet Street; the Mall is really no place for you.

[He turns, lifts his boutonnière so he can inhale the perfume of the flowers, and then walks away with great deliberation. They stand staring after him for an instant, stupefied.]

FIRST BAILIFF. We'll keep our eye on our gentleman, just the same. These little rumors about the Prince and him might be true after all, and if they are, why, we won't walk in Fleet Street alone.

[He pulls a black bottle out of his pocket, takes a drink, and then hands it to the SECOND BAILIFF, who also takes a drink; then they go off in the same direction BEAU went. The DUCHESS, LADY FARTHINGALE, LORD MANLY and SHERIDAN come on from the left-hand path. LORD MANLY and LADY FARTHINGALE cross to the right-hand bench. LADY FARTHINGALE sits, MANLY stands by her side. Three ladies and gentlemen come on at the back and stand there, apparently chatting or listening to the DUCHESS.]

DUCHESS. Where can Beau have disappeared to? It's near time for the Prince to be out, and I wouldn't miss observing the meeting for worlds. Pray, Sherry, give us your opinion — will he cut him or not?

[The DUCHESS has been flying around, looking for BEAU in every direction.]

SHERIDAN. Really, Duchess, I cannot say what the Prince will do. He's too great a fool for me to put myself in his place.

MANLY. Damme, of course he'll cut him, and, moreover, Beau deserves it.

SHERIDAN. [*Decidedly.*] Then, for my part, I say, let's move on.

DUCHESS. [*Equally decided.*] We'll do no such thing. We must see for ourselves, so that we can trust our own ears and know how to treat Mr. Brummell accordingly. Besides, if we observe it, we can inform others of the affair correctly, and there will be some merit in that.

[SHERIDAN *moves away to the Right, with a shrug of his shoulders.*]

LADY FARTHINGALE. Mr. Brummell will never be able to stand it if he's injured. I should not wonder now if he fainted!

DUCHESS. Dear me, do you think so? [*Face falls as though disappointed.*] I don't know, I'm afraid not.

SHERIDAN. [*Impatiently.*] He's more likely to resent any insult, I'm convinced.

DUCHESS. [*Most excited, rushes to LADY FARTHINGALE.*] What! A duel! Oh, Lud, Lady Farthingale, only think — a duel! Deuce take it, where can Beau be? I'm afraid the Prince will arrive first.

SHERIDAN. [*Sarcastically.*] My dear Duchess, prithee be calm; you are too great an enthusiast.

DUCHESS. [*Looking off at the Right.*] Here comes Mr. Brummell, I vow. Do you notice anything different in his manner of walking?

SHERIDAN. [*Monocle in eye, looks off in direc-*

tion BEAU *is supposed to be.*] He seems to have the same number of legs as formerly.

[He crosses over to the Left.

DUCHESS. Oh, you may rail at me, Sherry, but it's no laughing matter for Mr. Brummell, I can tell you.

LADY FARTHINGALE. *[Rising so she can see better.]* He's coming — he's coming!

DUCHESS. Lud, we must not expose ourselves! We must at least feign utter ignorance of the affair. *[BEAU enters.]* Ah, Beau!

[The ladies curtsy, the men raise their hats.

BEAU. Still loitering, Duchess? I was so afraid you would have returned home.

[He joins SHERIDAN on the other side.

DUCHESS. *[Aside to LADY FARTHINGALE.]* You hear? A hint for us to go, but he'll not hoodwink his Duchess. *[To BEAU.]* We were

just going, but we'll rest a moment for another chat with you.

BEAU. Too good of you, Duchess. Are you not afraid to risk your — what's that called, Sherry? *[Touching his cheek.]*

SHERIDAN. *[Much embarrassed.]* Complexion.

BEAU. Yes, your complexion in the sun.

[Chats with SHERIDAN. DUCHESS, very angry, does not know what to say until LADY FARTHINGALE'S speech gives her a chance to show her spitefulness.]

LADY FARTHINGALE. Here comes His Royal Highness!

DUCHESS. *[Looking off at the Right.]* The Prince! Is he truly? I didn't expect him this morning. Beau, the Prince is coming.

BEAU. *[Indifferently.]* Is he really? Where's the music? In the play the Prince always comes

on with music. Let's be going, Sherry, there's no music.

[Takes SHERIDAN'S arm, and they move off to the Left.]

DUCHESS. *[Meaningly.]* What, Beau, you wouldn't leave before His Royal Highness comes?

BEAU. *[Seeing there is no escape, meets his fate gallantly.]* By my manners, no! Sherry, let us meet him.

[They turn and start to the Right, as the PRINCE enters with MRS. ST. AUBYN on his arm. The DUCHESS has retreated back to where LADY FARTHINGALE is standing.]

DUCHESS. The deuce, did you hear that, Lady Farthingale?

[BEAU and SHERIDAN reach the Centre and stop. The PRINCE and MRS. ST. AUBYN pass directly by BEAU, although he stands, hat in

hand, and the PRINCE addresses SHERIDAN.

BEAU replaces hat and listens with an amused expression.

PRINCE. Sup with me to-night, Sherry, after the play. Mrs. St. Aubyn and the Duchess will be there with us, and, egad, we'll make a night of it.

[SHERIDAN *can only bow acquiescence, and the*

PRINCE and MRS. ST. AUBYN move on a little way. BEAU, lifting his glass, looks after them and says to SHERIDAN :

BEAU. Sherry, who's your fat friend?

[SHERIDAN *is divided between delight and amazement at his daring, and consternation at thought of the consequences, and whispers in BEAU'S ear.*

PRINCE. [*Who has stopped short.*] Well — damn his impudence!

BEAU. [*Affects not to hear or understand* SHERIDAN.] I beg your pardon, who did you say? I had no idea he looked like that. Is it really? You don't say so? Dear, dear, what a pity! What a pity!

[*Takes SHERIDAN'S arm and they go off at the Right, BEAU with his usual imperturbable air, and SHERIDAN visibly shaking and dejected. The PRINCE and MRS. ST. AUBYN are at the Left, the PRINCE speechless with rage, and MRS. ST. AUBYN trying to say something consoling.*

DUCHESS. Well, I've had all my pains for nothing.

LADY FARTHINGALE. But, Duchess, did you see?

DUCHESS. See what? There was nothing to see! [*With a chuckle.*] Lud, Beau got the best of it.

MRS. ST. AUBYN. Duchess, you look ill. Doesn't the air agree with you, or is it the daylight?

DUCHESS. [*Loftily.*] I hope, my dear Mrs. St. Aubyn, you'll never look worse.

[*With a deep curtsy.*]

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*With affected horror.*]
Heaven forbid!

[*The PRINCE and MRS. ST. AUBYN exit at Left.*]

All the people at back exit.

DUCHESS. Come, let's be going. [LORD MANLY offers one arm to the DUCHESS, LADY FARTHINGALE takes his other arm. They move off toward the Left.] Where can Beau have disappeared to? Of course, it's of no interest to us, only I must say it was uncommonly ill-natured of him not to make more of a scene for our sakes, you know.

[They all go out. BEAU and SHERIDAN enter from the Right, followed by the TWO BAILIFFS.]

SHERIDAN speaks as they come on.

SHERIDAN. Your marriage, my dear Beau, will redeem your misfortune, and it is the only thing that will.

[They have reached the Centre by this time, and BEAU sees the BAILIFFS. He stops, puts up his glass, looks at them, and says:]

BEAU. *[Shaking his finger at SHERIDAN.]* Sherry, Sherry, who are these fellows following you?

[SHERIDAN turns and sees the BAILIFFS, and becomes much agitated.]

BAILIFF. Mr. Brummell, sir!

[BEAU sees it's no use to try to deceive SHERIDAN.]

BEAU. Zounds! Proceed. Sherry, I will join you in a moment. Well, my good men!

[SHERIDAN *hurries off, shaking his head sadly.*

BEAU. You donkeys, would you ruin me?

BAILIFF. Come, come, we've had enough of your airs, now. You'd better come along with us quietly. [*Places finger on BEAU'S shoulder.*

BEAU. [*Moves away.*] For Heaven's sake, don't put those hands on me! Why don't you wear gloves? [BAILIFF, *who had retreated a step, comes closer.*] And don't come so close. You are too hasty and ill-advised — you have no manners. [BAILIFFS *retreat in real confusion and astonishment.*] There's one resource, I must tell them. [*He takes out snuff-box, and takes snuff with great deliberation, and does not speak until he has returned box, brushed his lace ruffles, — then he turns to them.*] Had you met my valet he would have delivered to you my message. It was to the effect that the banns of marriage between the

daughter of Mr. Oliver Vincent and myself are to be published in St. James's on Sunday. As the son-in-law of the merchant prince, I can not only satisfy your master's demands, but handsomely remember you yourselves. Now, trot away, trot away, anywhere out of my sight. [*Turns away.*]

BAILIFF. We've heard one of your fine stories before, and we don't go till you prove what you say.

BEAU. How very annoying! [*Looks off at Left and sees MARIANA. His face lights up.*] Here comes Mariana. Here is the young lady herself. Withdraw and you shall have your proof.

[*BAILIFFS look at each other.*]

FIRST BAILIFF. [*A little doubtfully.*] Well!

SECOND BAILIFF. [*Still more doubtfully.*] Well!!

FIRST BAILIFF. Well, we'll see what it is, eh?

[*They exit at the back Left. BEAU walks down to the Right, brushes his shoulder where the BAIL-*

IFF'S hand had rested, turns and crosses toward Left as though to meet MARIANA, and suddenly stops.

BEAU. What! [*Looks again as though he thought himself mistaken.*] Reginald and Mariana! Mariana and Reginald!

[*Shakes his head as though to dispel the thoughts that would come. Then walks slowly toward the path at back, leading off to the Left. MARIANA enters hastily, followed by REGINALD, both much agitated.*

REGINALD. I have been wretched beyond the telling — my letters left unanswered, not one word from you in fourteen days!

MARIANA. My letters and appeals unanswered is what you mean, sir. I wrote you even up to yesterday, and Kathleen vowed that she delivered all the notes till then.

REGINALD. To whom did she deliver them?
'Twas not to me.

MARIANA. [*With a cry of joy.*] What, you did not receive them? Then Kathleen has played me false. Oh, Reginald, what I have suffered in wrongly thinking you untrue to me.

REGINALD. Such doubt of me was cruel, Mariana, but [*lightly*] come, ask my pardon and see how quickly I'll forgive you.

[*Comes to her and tries to take her hands, but*

MARIANA *draws away.*

MARIANA. No — no! I cannot, I cannot.

REGINALD. [*Misunderstanding.*] Then see, I'll forgive without the asking.

MARIANA. [*Still refusing to let him take her hand.*] Reginald, what will you think? How can I tell you? It is too late now.

REGINALD. Too late! What do you mean?

MARIANA. I have promised myself to another.

[BEAU is seen at back, head bowed, his attitude one of utter sadness.]

REGINALD. [*Forcibly.*] You must break that promise. To whom has it been given?

MARIANA. To Mr. Brummell.

REGINALD. Mr. Brummell! [*In shocked surprise.*] Great Heavens! Mariana, he is my best friend — my benefactor.

MARIANA. No — no!

REGINALD. My mother's only brother. It is he who, since her death, has cared for me most tenderly, and, all my life, has shielded me from every harm.

MARIANA. He is overwhelmed now by his difficulties. His creditors are like bloodhounds on his track. He has sacrificed himself for me in defence of my father. Through me alone can he be rid of his distresses.

REGINALD. And he loves you. I know that, too, and you, do you love him?

MARIANA. [*Reproachfully.*] You should not ask me that.

REGINALD. [*Taking her hands.*] You are right! But I cannot give you up, nor can I see my uncle ruined; he is the one man in the universe from whom I would not steal your love. 'Tis you who must decide.

MARIANA. And I have done so. I am his.

[*BEAU comes down to the Centre. REGINALD and*

MARIANA draw back on each side.

BEAU. No — no, I give you up; I release you from your promise.

[*The BAILIFFS enter and stand at back, listening.*

MARIANA. [*Starting forward.*] Sir!

BEAU. Take her, Reginald!

[He holds out his hand to MARIANA, who is about to give him hers, when she stops, and withdraws her hand.]

MARIANA. No, I am yours. I will not be released. Our love would not be happiness if it entailed your ruin. Reginald has told me that he owes to you his life. My father and myself have greater cause for gratitude to you than I can say. I hold you to your vows.

BEAU. Impossible; I now release you.

REGINALD. *[Sees the BAILIFFS.]* Great Heavens, the bailiffs! You shall not sacrifice yourself for us. I join with Mariana against myself, and say that she is yours.

BEAU. *[Looks at him with great affection.]* No — no! *[Brushes an imaginary speck from his sleeve.]* I love you both too well to come between your young hearts' happiness.

MARIANA. [*In a last effort to change him.*]
And yet you loved me!

[BEAU takes a step toward her with a look of
love and reproach.

BEAU. Mariana! No, [*lifting his hat and
turning away*] I must leave you.

REGINALD. You shall not; we will speak to
Mr. Vincent and he will help you.

BEAU. [*Reprovingly.*] I have no claim what-
ever on Mr. Vincent. [BAILIFFS standing at back
give a nod to each other.] Take her, Reginald;
wear her very near your heart for my sake.
[Hands MARIANA to REGINALD.] And now I
would accompany you further, but I cannot —
not now. [*With a slight, almost imperceptible turn
toward the BAILIFFS.*] I happen to have a very
pressing engagement — with — with — His Maj-
esty!

[BEAU turns, after a very ceremonious bow to MARIANA to the Right, and moves off. The BAILIFFS have come down, and follow him closely; one of them taps him on the shoulder. BEAU stops for an instant, then takes out snuff-box, and takes snuff, and walks slowly off with the greatest dignity. MARIANA hides her face on REGINALD'S shoulder as

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

THE FOURTH ACT

SCENE ONE. *A lodging house at Calais — a room at the top of the house. The shabbiest furniture, bare floor, window at the back with rude settle in it; the tops of neighboring houses can be seen from the window. A large fireplace with small fire is at the Right, with a door below, leading into another room. A table stands in the middle of room with a chair each side. Another door at the Left leads into the hall. BEAU is discovered sitting in front of fireplace with his back to the audience. He is dressed in a yellow brocaded dressing-gown, apparently the same one worn in Act I, but with its glory gone, — faded and worn, torn in places. He wears old black slippers, with white stockings and brown trousers, “slit so at the*

bottom and then buttoned tight." His hair is a little gray, his face thin and worn. At the rise of curtain MORTIMER enters from hallway. He, too, shows the wear and tear of poverty. All his jauntiness has gone; he is shabbily dressed. After waiting a minute to see if BEAU will notice him, he speaks:

MORTIMER. Not a letter, sir. No answer to those we sent over a month ago. Only one to me from Kathleen, to say if I don't return immediately she will take to Mr. Sheridan's gentleman for good, and enclosing me the passage-money over. [BEAU turns a little and looks at him, as though to see if he is going.] I — I — gave it to the bootmaker, whom I met at the foot of the stairs with a bailiff as I came in.

[BEAU sinks back in his chair again, satisfied that MORTIMER will not leave him.]

BEAU. If you would not use it for yourself, Mortimer, you might at least have bought a *paté* for dinner instead; we should have had something to eat, and we could have made the bailiff stop and dine with us. Could you make no further loans?

[His voice is harsh and strained.]

MORTIMER. No more, sir. I tried everywhere. No one will trust us any more.

BEAU. Mortimer, what will become of us? Think what the finest gentleman of his time is undergoing. It's enough to drive one mad.

MORTIMER. Have you nothing more to sell, sir?

[BEAU rises and comes to the table. He has a snuff-box in his hand — a small black one, in great contrast to the jewelled box he carried in the earlier scenes.]

BEAU. My last snuff-box. You would not have me dispose of that, Mortimer—a paltry trifle that would bring nothing. No, there is nothing, Mortimer. Everything belongs to that wretched female creature who dignifies this hovel with the name of lodgings.

[Loud knocking is heard at the door, which is thrown violently open, and the LANDLADY stalks in. She is a very determined-looking woman, short and stout, with a red face and a pronounced mustache. She is dressed in a rather short blue skirt, heavy shoes, blue denim apron, black blouse with white neckerchief, a white cap with broad frill. Stands with arms akimbo, looking at BEAU disdainfully.]

BEAU. Talking of angels! Good morning, my dear madam. So courteous of you to come. It is not my reception day, but you are always

welcome. Mortimer, offer this good lady a chair.

LANDLADY. [*Speaks with French accent.*] Chair, humph! Your Mortimer had better offer me some money, some rent money, or I'll have you both shown to the door, do you hear? [*Rapping on table; BEAU starts as though in distress at each loud rap.*] That's what I come to say. [*MORTIMER now offers her a chair.*] No, I thank you, I'll stand! It's my own chair, and I will not wear it out by sitting in it.

BEAU. Then sit in it yourself, Mortimer; I cannot permit you to stand; you are tired. I'm so sorry, my dear madam, that I have nothing to offer you; the supplies for which Mortimer went out a short time ago have not yet arrived.

LANDLADY. [*Sneeringly.*] Supplies! Not yet

arrived! Well, when they do they will not pass my door, I'll tell you that.

[Hammers on table again.]

BEAU. *[Wincing.]* Do, my dear madam, do help yourself. And speaking of helping yourself reminds me, would you mind returning some of my shirts? I am sure you cannot wear them yourself. Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. How many were there in the wash last week?

MORTIMER. Twelve, sir.

BEAU. Yes — now if you wouldn't mind returning — Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. How many shall I require for the remainder of the week?

MORTIMER. Five, sir.

BEAU. Yes, if you would not mind returning five, I think I might manage for the remainder of the week.

LANDLADY. [*Who has been restraining her wrath with difficulty.*] I'll do nothing of the sort, sir, and I'm sick of your fine manners. I want more of the money, and less of the politeness.

[*With an exaggerated bow, mocking* BEAU.

BEAU. [*Taking snuff.*] You mean, my dear madam, you want more of the politeness and less of the money.

LANDLADY. [*Furiously.*] What! You dare insult me? Pay me to-day, or out into the street you go! Your polite talk may do good there. It may do for the stones, but it will not do for the flesh, not for this flesh. Pauper! Pauper! Bah!

[*She shouts the last three words, and as she gets to*

the door on "Bah," bangs door and goes out.
At the word "Pauper," BEAU stands as though turned to stone.

BEAU. [*Very slowly.*] Mortimer.

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. What did she call me?

MORTIMER. [*Half sobbingly.*] Pauper, sir.

BEAU. [*Sinking into chair by right of table.*]

Pauper!

MORTIMER. I am afraid, sir, she's in earnest.

BEAU. [*Quite simply.*] She had that appearance. Mortimer, we must find the money somehow, or I must leave Calais to-night.

MORTIMER. [*Hesitatingly.*] That packet of letters, sir, for which you have had so many offers from publishers.

BEAU. What packet, Mortimer?

MORTIMER. Your private letters of gossip and

scandal from people of the Court. I know you have been averse, sir —

[His voice dies away, as BEAU, drawing himself up, gives him a withering glance.]

BEAU. Mortimer, you surprise me. I thought you knew me better. No. I would rather suffer anything than live by sacrificing the reputation of those who once befriended me. *[Opens drawer in table, and takes out packet of letters tied with a faded ribbon. Fondles them for an instant, — then goes to fireplace, kneels and throws them into the flames.]* There they go, Mortimer. There they go — and almost any one of them might break a heart or blast a reputation. And see how swiftly they vanish, — as swiftly as would the reputations which they are destroyed to save.

MORTIMER. I was wondering, sir, if it would do to appeal to His Majesty. He might overlook

what happened when he was Prince. He passes through Calais to-day, sir.

BEAU. [*Rising and coming to table.*] I have thought of it, Mortimer, but I fear it would be in vain — well, we might try. Go to him, Mortimer, go to him, and take him [*pauses to think what MORTIMER can take, and feels snuff-box in pocket; takes it out and handles it lovingly*] — take him this snuff-box. [*Gives MORTIMER the box. Hardly has it left his hands, however, when he reaches out for it again.*] That is, you might take him the box, but, perhaps, you'd better not take him the snuff. [*MORTIMER gives BEAU the box. BEAU picks up a paper lying on the table, saying:] Bills, bills. [*Makes the paper into a cornucopia, and empties the snuff from the box into it; then taps box on the table, loosening any remaining particles of snuff with his finger; then looks at table and scrapes**

any remaining there into the cornucopia; finally hands box to MORTIMER.] Give it to him with your own hands, — say Mr. Brummell presents his compliments. And if that fails, like everything else — why then —

MORTIMER. And what then, sir?

BEAU. Then, [*taking snuff elegantly from cornucopia*] then, Mortimer, I can starve. And I promise you I shall do it in the most elegant manner. And you — you, Mortimer, must return to that Japanese girl; what's her name?

MORTIMER. [*Tearfully.*] Kathleen, sir.

BEAU. Yes. Kathleen.

[*Knock at door. MORTIMER opens it and starts back astounded.*]

MORTIMER. Mr. Vincent, sir.

[*VINCENT enters, puffing from the climb upstairs.*]

BEAU. [*Is astonished and annoyed; puts the*

cornucopia of snuff hastily into his pocket, and draws his dressing-gown around him.] Mr. Vincent! My dear sir! Why, how did you find your way here? You should have been shown into the reception-room, or my drawing-room, or my library; you find me in my morning-gown, in my morning-room. I make a thousand apologies.

VINCENT. Don't, don't; I was passing through Calais and I just happened in. Phew, you're pretty high up here!

BEAU. Yes; the air is so very much purer. Will you be seated, Mr. — It is still *Mr.* Vincent, is it not? [*To himself:*] He must not know my want, my poverty; I could not suffer this man's pity or compassion.

VINCENT. [*Sits at left of table.*] Before I forget it, let me ask you to do me the honor of dining with me to-day.

BEAU. [*With an involuntary drawing-in of the breath.*] Dine! At what hour?

VINCENT. I always dine at five o'clock.

BEAU. Thank you; but I fear you will have to excuse me. I could not possibly dine at such an hour.

[*Turns from table, and goes up toward window.*]

VINCENT. [*Aside.*] Not changed much in spirit, but in everything else — [*Aloud.*] Well, Mr. Brummell, you must lead a dull life of it here in Calais.

BEAU. [*Still at window, and jauntily.*] You forget, Mr. Vincent, that by living in Calais I do what all the young bucks do — I pass all my time between London and Paris.

VINCENT. Witty as ever, Mr. Brummell. The sea air does not dampen your spirits.

BEAU. No; and I use none other. That is

the reason I have nothing to offer you. Had I known of your coming I should have been better prepared to receive you.

[Comes down and sits at right of table.]

VINCENT. *[Looking around the room.]* You must be hard pressed for money, if you don't mind my saying so.

BEAU. *[Very hastily and airily, and rising.]* Oh, no! You have quite a mistaken notion of my affairs, because you miss certain useless articles given away as pledges — *[swallows a word]* ahem — of gratitude for favors shown me. I always pay a debt, Mr. Vincent, when it's a social one.

VINCENT. But those other debts which rumor says are overwhelming you again. Now, if you'd let me pay them —

BEAU. *[Sits at right of table. In a very cold]*

tone.] Thank you, thank you. No doubt you intend to be kind, but you are impertinent. [VINCENT *turns away rebuffed and disappointed.* BEAU *to himself*.:] No, I will not be so humiliated by *her* father. I would rather tell a little lie instead. [To VINCENT.] I assure you, since the renewal of my friendship with the Prince, now His Majesty! —

[*Makes a slight bow at "His Majesty."*]

VINCENT. [*Coming down, delighted.*] Friendship with His Majesty!

BEAU. What! Has not rumor told you that, too? She's a sorry jade, and sees only the gloomy side of things. Then, I suppose you have not heard that the King has pensioned me!

[*Takes handkerchief from pocket; it is full of holes.*]

VINCENT. But —

BEAU. I see you still have that very unfortunate habit of "butting." Why, how, how, without a pension, could I keep up this establishment? [*Holding up the tattered handkerchief in his trembling hand, he says, aside:*] If he can tell me that he will help me more than he knows.

VINCENT. All the more reason, then, why you should return to London and marry my daughter.

BEAU. Are you still obstinate on that point? Do you still refuse her to Reginald?

[*Knock is heard at door.*]

VINCENT. There is Mariana. I told her to join me here.

BEAU. [*Rises in consternation, draws his dressing-gown around him, looks down at it.*] Mariana — Miss Vincent, coming here. Mr. Vincent, one moment, one moment, Mr. Vincent, one moment.

[*Goes hastily to door at Right, bows to VINCENT,*

and exits. MARIANA enters from hall door at Left.

MARIANA. Is he here? Have you succeeded?

VINCENT. My child, we have heard false reports in town. He has a pension from His Majesty. He is friends with the King. Dear me! I hope I haven't offended him.

MARIANA. A pension, papa! [*And then as she looks around the dingy room.*] Are you quite sure he's not deceiving you?

VINCENT. Quite sure; he could not deceive me.

MARIANA. Then, father, there is no further need for me to make the sacrifice you demanded, and which Mr. Brummell's need did justify.

VINCENT. By no means. I am all the more determined on it.

MARIANA. I also am determined now, and say I will not marry him.

VINCENT. Tut, tut! Hush, he's coming — he's somewhat changed.

[BEAU enters. He has put on his coat — a shabby, full-skirted brown coat. Has dingy black neckerchief on. Bows very low to MARIANA.]

BEAU. Good morning, my dear Miss Vincent. I trust the stairs have not fatigued you. You should feel at home, so high up among the angels.

MARIANA. [*Shows she is much affected by BEAU'S changed appearance.*] I am most pleased, sir, that we find you happy with the world and with yourself. We had feared otherwise.

BEAU. I lead a charmed life; even now, you see, it brings you to me.

MARIANA. And has it brought your nephew, too, sir?

BEAU. That may be your privilege.

MARIANA. I trust it may be, or else that you will bring him back to me:

[As she says this, she turns away and goes up toward the window with VINCENT, who shows he is not pleased at this speech. At this moment, REGINALD enters quickly, throwing hat on table as he goes by, and rushing up to BEAU, holds out his hand eagerly.]

REGINALD. Uncle!

BEAU. *[With great affection.]* Reginald! *[Then recollecting himself.]* No, Reginald, a glance of the eye. Reginald, my boy, you here, too!

REGINALD. I heard yesterday of your distresses —

BEAU. *[Hastily interrupting him.]* Do you not see Miss Vincent and her father? *[REGINALD turns, sees MARIANA, and crosses to window to her, where they stand eagerly talking. VINCENT goes*

toward hall door, evidently very anxious to get MARIANA away.] I might have accepted it from him, but he has come too late. This Vincent shall not know the truth. But Reginald shall have Mariana, and Vincent shall give her to him.

VINCENT. I think, my dear, you had better go and wait downstairs for me.

BEAU. No, no, let Miss Vincent remain; my nephew will entertain her, [REGINALD *and* MARIANA *at this begin talking more confidentially*] and I wish to consult you privately in my room for a few moments.

VINCENT. Now, my dear Mr. Brummell, I must insist on Mariana's retiring.

BEAU. And I must insist that Miss Vincent remain. I see your manners have not improved. I will not detain you a moment. I wish to ask

your advice. I hear an earldom is soon likely to become vacant. Now, who's eligible?

VINCENT. An earldom!

BEAU. You know more about matters in town than I, and I wish to be prepared in case my influence should be needed. Now, what name would you suggest?

VINCENT. [*Gasping.*] You honor me, Mr. Brummell.

BEAU. Very likely, but I wish you wouldn't gasp so. Indeed, I do honor you in asking you for your daughter's hand —

[REGINALD and MARIANA start and look around.]

VINCENT. [*Bows very low.*] Mr. Brummell!

BEAU. For my nephew!

[REGINALD and MARIANA turn again toward window, relieved.]

VINCENT. My dear Mr. Brummell, you know

I am opposed to that, and I hope to persuade you —

BEAU. [*Significantly.*] Who is eligible for the earldom — exactly — and I think — mind, I say I think — we both have the same person in mind. But, first, I must persuade you who is eligible for your daughter.

[*He bows to VINCENT and motions him to door at Right.*]

VINCENT. [*Speaking as he goes.*] Gad! Zounds! An earldom! If this should be my opportunity at last. Mariana *shall* marry the boy if he wants it. [*Exits.*]

BEAU. [*Turns to speak to MARIANA and REGINALD, and finds them so absorbed in each other they do not even see him. He attracts their attention by knocking a chair on the floor. They start guiltily apart.*] My dears, I am about to draw

up the marriage settlement, and, perhaps, I'll make my will at the same time and leave you everything. [*They both bow.*] I will now allow you to settle the preliminaries by yourselves.

[They immediately retire again to the window, and are once more absorbed in each other. BEAU stands watching them for a few minutes, then turns away, puts hand over his eyes and totters off.]

MARIANA. [*Coming down left of table.*] But I don't understand, do you?

REGINALD. [*Coming down to her side.*] I don't desire to. I take the fact as it is. [*Kisses her.*]

MARIANA. I think you take much else besides, sir. Aren't you a trifle precipitate?

REGINALD. No, this is the first preliminary. [*Puts arm around her waist.*] I think I shall linger over the preliminaries.

MARIANA. But has my father relented?

REGINALD. Surely! Or why did you come here?

MARIANA. We heard Mr. Brummell was in great distress, and we came to help him, but we found the rumors were false; his friendship with the King has been renewed.

REGINALD. Thank Heaven! Then his troubles are at an end.

MARIANA. My father still clung to the idea of our marriage.

REGINALD. And you?

MARIANA. That question is superfluous, sir. Have I not allowed the first preliminaries to be settled?

[BEAU and VINCENT enter — VINCENT a little ahead of BEAU. Also MORTIMER comes on dejectedly from hall door.]

BEAU. Reginald, give me your hand.

[REGINALD *crosses to him.*

VINCENT. [*Who has crossed over to left of table.*]
Mariana, come to your father. Are you still bent on marrying him?

MARIANA. You mean, papa, that he is still bent on marrying me, and that I — I am not unwilling.

VINCENT. She is yours, sir.

REGINALD. [*Coming back to MARIANA.*] Mine!

MORTIMER. [*Goes up to BEAU at right of table, and hands him snuff-box.*] It was returned without a word, sir.

BEAU. [*In a loud tone.*] Beg Her Grace to excuse me this afternoon.

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

REGINALD. You will dine with us, Uncle Beau, on board the vessel?

BEAU. Thank you, but I fear you will have to excuse me, and now pardon me if I ask you to retire. I happen to have a very pressing engagement.

MARIANA. When will you be in London, sir, You will be there for our wedding?

BEAU. I hope so — and you must accept some little present, some little trifle, some little token of my affection and regard — some — some — remembrance. Now what shall it be? Eh? What shall we say? [*They all look around the room, which is, of course, bare of all ornament.*] What do you really think you would like best — hum? [*Absently fingers the snuff-box which MORTIMER brought him.*] Ah, yes, this snuff-box — it has just been sent to me by — His Majesty.

[*Hands MARIANA snuff-box, which she takes*

with deep curtsy and goes back to REGINALD, showing it to him.

VINCENT. [*At door as he goes out.*] I shall probably hear from you, Mr. Brummell?

BEAU. [*Absently.*] Ah, yes, perhaps — good-by. Reginald, [REGINALD *comes to him*; BEAU *places his hand on REGINALD'S shoulder*] God bless you —

[REGINALD *picks up hat from table and crosses to door*. MARIANA *comes down, gives hand to BEAU, curtsies*; BEAU *raises hand to his lips*. MARIANA *draws it away, backs toward door, makes another curtsy, turns to REGINALD, and they go off gaily, apparently talking to each other*. BEAU *puts hand over eyes, staggers back, and leans against table for support*.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE FOURTH ACT

SCENE TWO. *An attic room. Sloping roof.*

Walls discolored with the damp. Paper peeling off. Window at the back. A bare deal-table over near the Left, with one chair at its side. Another chair stands down near the front, at the right-hand side. Another chair stands at the back, near window. There is a door at the Right and one also at the Left.

[*BEAU enters at the right-hand door. You can hear him for some time before he enters, stumbling up the stairs as though feeble. He stands for a moment at the door, bowing very low. He is very shabbily dressed — his hat battered — his boots gray.*

BEAU. I thought I saw the Prince there, [*pointing to chair*] there! The boys mocked me in the streets — they threw stones at me. No wonder; there has been no varnish on my boots for days. They refused to give me a cup of coffee or a macaroon. They would rather see me starve — and starve so in rags.

[*Sits in chair.*]

MORTIMER. [*Enters from door at Left.*] Shall I announce dinner, sir?

BEAU. [*Starting.*] No, Mortimer, I have only just come in, and you forget this is Thursday, when I always entertain. [*Sinks into a reverie.*]

MORTIMER. Poor Mr. Brummell! He's getting worse and worse. Lack of food is turning his head instead of his stomach. But I don't dare oppose him when he's this way.

BEAU. Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. I could get nothing for us to eat, Mortimer, nothing — and they refused to wash my cravats!

MORTIMER. Oh, Mr. Brummell, sir, what shall we do? We will starve, sir.

BEAU. [*Severely.*] Mortimer, you forget yourself! Who has called during my absence?

MORTIMER. [*Goes up to the window-ledge, and brings down an old broken plate with a few dirty cards.*] These cards won't last much longer. I have been bringing him the same ones on Thursday for the last year. [*BEAU has fallen asleep.*] Mr. Brummell, sir! Mr. Brummell, sir!

[*He puts plate directly in front of BEAU.*]

BEAU. [*Starts and looks at plate.*] The — the — card tray.

MORTIMER. We've — lent it, sir!

[He pushes cards forward with his thumb and finger, as BEAU takes them one by one and lays them back on plate.]

BEAU. Duchess of Leamington — thank goodness, I was out. Lord Manly — do we owe him anything?

MORTIMER. No, sir.

BEAU. Why not? Mrs. St. Aubyn — and I missed her — no matter! They will all dine here this evening.

MORTIMER. *[Taking plate back to ledge.]* Dine — that's the way we eat — the names of things — but it is very weakening — very weakening.

BEAU. Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. Light the candelabra. *[Begins to sing very low in a quavering voice:]* “She Wore a Wreath of Roses.”

MORTIMER. Yes, sir. [*He goes to window-ledge, and brings down to table two pewter candlesticks with a little piece of a candle in each one. He lights both and then with a quick look at BEAU blows out one.*] He'll never know, and if it burns, there will be none to light the next time.

BEAU. Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. Is my hat on?

MORTIMER. [*Choking back a sob.*] Yes, sir.

BEAU. [*Lifts hat with elegant gesture; his hand drops and hat falls to the floor; he rises.*] Mortimer, I hear carriage wheels — carriage wheels! Observe me, Mortimer, am I quite correct? Are there creases in my cravat? I would not wish to make creases the fashion.

MORTIMER. Mr. Brummell, sir, you are quite correct.

BEAU. To your post. Bid the musicians play.
[*Bows as though welcoming guest.*] Ah, Duchess, you are always welcome! And in pink! You come like the rosy morning sunshine into the darkness of my poor lodgings. Lord Manly! And sober — truth is stranger than fiction. The Duchess's smiles should have intoxicated you. Mrs. St. Aubyn — Your Majesty! [*Bows very low.*] Pray, sir, honor my poor arm. Permit me to conduct Your Majesty to a chair, whilst I receive my less distinguished guests. [*Walks to chair with imaginary guest on his arm.*] My dear Lady Farthingale, how do you do? As beautiful and as charming as ever. [*Backs up a little and knocks a chair over.*] I beg ten thousand pardons! My dear Lady Cecilie, how you have grown and how beautiful. [*With vacant stare.*] Shall we dine? Dine! Shall we dine? Permit me to

escort Your Majesty to the table where we dine!
[*Goes to chair and escorts the imaginary king to the table.*] Yours is the honor and mine, Lady Cecilie, my charming *vis-à-vis*. Mariana — Mariana — always nearest my heart — always. Mortimer — Mortimer!

MORTIMER. [*Who has been leaning against the wall with head on arm.*] Yes, sir.

BEAU. His Majesty waits! [*Bows to Right and Left.*] Enchanted! Enchanted! [*Waits until, apparently, they are all seated, and then sits.*] I trust you will find these oysters agreeable; they arrived but this morning from Ostend. Bird's-nest soup. It is very hot. I am very particular to have the soup hot on these cold evenings. This is very good melon.

MORTIMER. [*Who has been pretending to pass things.*] Melon, sir.

BEAU. Duchess, I trust you are fond of ortolans stuffed with truffles. Brown — and glazed. My chef — my chef — *[Voice dies away.]*

MORTIMER. His chef! If only we had something to cook, I should not mind the chef.

[Sinks in chair.]

BEAU. Mariana, let me fill your glass, and drink with me. My dear. My own always. My only dear one!

[His head sinks on chest, and he falls asleep.]

KATHLEEN. *[After a pause, putting her head in at the door and saying very softly:]* And may I come in?

MORTIMER. *[Rising in bewilderment.]* Kathleen! And has it gone to my head, too?

KATHLEEN. *[Half crying.]* No, but to my heart! — or to yours — for they've gotten that mixed I don't know which is which. *[They embrace.]*

MORTIMER. [*In alarm, fearing BEAU may wake.*]

Hush!

KATHLEEN. Miss Mariana that was, Mrs. Reginald Courtenay that is, is out in the hall, and him with her.

[*MARIANA and REGINALD come in at door.*]

MARIANA. Is he here?

[*Gives a low, horrified exclamation at BEAU'S changed appearance.*]

MORTIMER. Yes, madam, but I fear the sudden surprise of seeing you will kill him.

REGINALD. But the King is in town with his suite. We came with him, and they followed us here immediately.

MORTIMER. The King!

MARIANA. Yes, Mortimer; your master's and your troubles are over.

[*MARIANA and REGINALD cross to other side of table, away from door.*]

KATHLEEN. [*Aside to MORTIMER, as she goes up to window.*] I am not so sure but yours are just beginning.

KING. [*Appearing at door.*] Zounds — is this —

MORTIMER. [*Bowing very low.*] Your Majesty, I beg your pardon, but — sh — sh —

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*At door.*] Dear me, you don't —

KING. [*Turning to her.*] Sh — sh —

DUCHESS. But how —

KING. [*Goes through same pantomime, turning, putting finger on lip and saying:*] Sh!

LADY FARTHINGALE. Where is Mr. Brummell?

KING. [*As before.*] Sh! Sh!

LORD MANLY. Well —

KING. [*As before.*] Sh! Sh!

MORTIMER. If Your Majesty will pardon me, I

think I could suggest something. Mr. Brummell has just been imagining you were all dining with him. I think if you were to take your places at the table, when he saw you the truth would gradually come to him.

[They all sit—KING at Left, MRS. ST. AUBYN next, then the DUCHESS. MARIANA and REGINALD are at the Right.]

MORTIMER. Mr. Brummell! *[Louder, as BEAU does not move.]* Mr. Brummell, sir!

BEAU. Duchess, let me send you this saddle of venison; it's delicious. *[Wakes, looks around, and sees MARIANA.]* Mariana! Mariana! Reginald! *[They come to his side.]* Pardon me for not rising; I think I must have forgotten my manners. You won't leave me, Mariana? You won't leave me, will you, will you?

MARIANA. No, Mr. Brummell.

BEAU. [*Sees MRS. ST. AUBYN.*] Mrs. St. Aubyn, you — you forgive?

MRS. ST. AUBYN. [*Very gently.*] And forget, Mr. Brummell.

BEAU. [*Sees the KING.*] Your Majesty! Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. Is this real — is it — is it?

KING. Yes, Beau, you've hidden from all of us long enough — but now we've found you we don't mean to lose you. We sup with you to-night; to-morrow you dine in London with us.

BEAU. Dine! [*Drawing in his breath appreciatively.*] Dine — [*Then remembering.*] At what hour?

MORTIMER. [*Bowing and whispering to the KING.*] At eight, Your Majesty, at eight!

KING. [*With a nod of understanding.*] At eight o'clock.

BEAU. Mortimer, have I any other engagement?

MORTIMER. [*With fear and trembling.*] No — oh, no, sir!

BEAU. I shall have much pleasure. Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. Mortimer!

MORTIMER. Yes, sir.

BEAU. Should anybody call, say I have a very pressing engagement with — with — His Majesty.

[*His head falls, and he sinks into chair, supported*

by MARIANA and REGINALD. All rise.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

LOVERS' LANE

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

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LOVERS' LANE

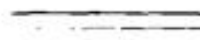


ACT I. THE PARSONAGE.

ACT II. THE MAIN STREET.

ACT III. AUTUMN IN THE ORCHARD.

ACT IV. SPRING IN THE ORCHARD.



AT EDDYSVILLE.

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THE PERSONS IN THE PLAY

THE REV. THOMAS SINGLETON. *The Minister, graduate of Amherst, '86.*

HERBERT WOODBRIDGE. *From New York.*

UNCLE BILL. *The church bell-ringer; of the Minister's household.*

HOSEA BROWN. *The storekeeper.*

MR. SKILLIG. *Manager of the Opera House.*

DEACON STEELE. *Head Deacon of the Church.*

BILLY }
HARRY } *Eddysville boys.*

DICK WOODBRIDGE.

MARY LARKIN. *From the Students' League of New York.*

MRS. HERBERT WOODBRIDGE. *The Alto of the choir; later of the Minister's household.*

SIMPLICITY JOHNSON. *From the Orphan Asylum; of the Minister's household.*

MISS MATTIE. *The Minister's housekeeper.*

AUNT MELISSY. *From the poorhouse; of the Minister's household.*

BRIDGET. *The cook from the hospital; of the Minister's household.*

MRS. LANE. *Herbert Woodbridge's sister, from New York.*

MRS. HOSEA BROWN. *Social leader of Eddysville.*

MISS MOLLY MEALEY. *The schoolmistress.*

MRS. STEELE. *Chairwoman of the Sewing Circle.*

MRS. JENNINGS. *The dressmaker, with latest styles from
Boston ; goes twice a year to the City.*

BESSIE STEELE. *A schoolgirl.*

Produced at the Manhattan Theatre, New York,
on February 6, 1901, with the following cast : —

The Rev. Thomas Singleton	Ernest Hastings
Herbert Woodbridge	Edward J. Radcliffe
Uncle Bill	R. L. Stockwell
Hosea Brown	Frank Hatch
Mr. Skillig	Charles W. Swain
Deacon Steele	Julian Barton
Billy	William Betts
Harry	James Coyle
Dick Woodbridge	Herbert Halliday
Mary Larkin	Nanette Comstock
Mrs. Herbert Woodbridge	Brandon Douglas
Simplicity Johnson	Millie James
Aunt Melissy	Agnes Findlay
Mattie	Sadie Stringham
Bridget	Lizzie Conway
Mrs. Lane	Rachel Sterling
Mrs. Hosea Brown	Zelda Sears
Miss Molly Mealey	Emily Wakeman
Mrs. Steele	Annie Mifflin
Mrs. Jennings	Lillian Lee
Bessie Steele	Lillian Sinnott

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ACT I

SCENE: *The MINISTER'S Study. A pleasant, sunny room. The MINISTER'S desk, littered with interrupted work, and his chair are by the window, Right. Left is a "parlor organ." In the Centre is a large round table, with a green wool cover, a "student's lamp," books, a ruler, a vase of garden flowers, etc. A rocking-chair, two small chairs and a low stool are beside it. Back, between two windows, a low bookcase. In front of one window, toward Right back, is a hair-cloth sofa. In the other sunny window is a green "sheij" flower stand, filled with pots of geranium, fuchsia, and heliotrope, etc. Cheap,*

but very clean, lace curtains are "looped back" at the windows. On the walls are a few engravings, and a faded family photograph in an oval gilt frame. There is an air of cheerfulness and comfort. Enter MISS MATTIE, followed by BRIDGET, who stops, her face hidden in her apron, weeping. MATTIE talking in a steady stream.

MATTIE. Don't answer me back, Bridget. I won't listen to you. Do you hear me? I have told you time and time again I won't have that child in the kitchen. For goodness' sake, where is she? [*Calls.*] Simplicity! Simplicity! [*Enter SIMPLICITY, weeping.*] Oh, here you are! Well, come right along, you naughty girl! I want you to see what your disobedience has brought to others as well as yourself and — Don't break in while I am talking, Bridget — and put your apron down. [*BRIDGET drops her apron for the*

first time from her face and shows it distorted with grief.] And stop making faces at me, Bridget.

BRIDGET. [*Crying.*] I'm not making faces, ma'am, I'm waping.

MATTIE. Don't answer me back. Ain't you ashamed of yourself to let that child stay in the kitchen when you know she's been forbidden to go there? What was she doing?

BRIDGET. Oh, plaze, ma'am, you'll discharge me if I tell you.

MATTIE. I'll discharge you if you don't.

BRIDGET. Oh, well, then, ma'am, I was bakin' her a wee bit of cake.

MATTIE. [*Coming to the front of the table — staggered.*] What! You were, were you? Do you know that's stealing? Bridget O'Hara! And you living here under the same roof with Mr. Singleton! — and listening to his sermons

every Sunday! Bridget, you take a week's notice.

BRIDGET. Thank you, ma'am, but —

MATTIE. Stop asking me to take you back. Go pack your trunk and don't you let me set eyes on your face again as long as I live.

[BRIDGET goes out.]

BRIDGET. [*From outside.*] You won't let me get a word in edgeways.

MATTIE. [*To SIMPLICITY.*] Come here! [*SIMPLICITY comes toward her, sucking her thumb.*] Take your thumb out of your mouth. Nice thing for a girl of eleven to be doing. Sucking your thumb! Now ain't it?

SIMPLICITY. [*Backing away—guardedly.*] Yes'm.

MATTIE. [*Following.*] I said no!

SIMPLICITY. Yes'm.

MATTIE. Say no.

SIMPLICITY. No!

MATTIE. Ma'am!

SIMPLICITY. Ma'am.

[Backing to organ and dodging behind it.]

MATTIE. Land, where is your tongue?

[Following around the table.]

SIMPLICITY. Where my thumb was.

MATTIE. Don't you dare to be saucy to me!

[SIMPLICITY keeps on dodging MISS MATTIE.] Why don't you say something?

SIMPLICITY. *[Stops at the table and sneaks away the ruler.]* Ain't got nothing to say.

MATTIE. *[Up in the air.]* Say you're sorry. Ain't you sorry?

SIMPLICITY. No, ma'am. *[Sees her mistake.]*

MATTIE. What! Very well, we'll see if we can make you sorry. *[Pointing toward the table.]* Get me the ruler.

SIMPLICITY. 'Tain't there.

MATTIE. How do you know it ain't? [*Goes to the table.*] Where is it?

[*Searching the table.*]

SIMPLICITY. [*Keeping the ruler behind her.*]

Burnt up.

MATTIE. What!

SIMPLICITY. To help bake the cake with.

MATTIE. You impudent child! Come here. [*She leans on the desk-table and takes off her slipper.*] Why ain't you sorry?

SIMPLICITY. [*Crying.*] 'Cause Pops told me to go to the kitchen and tell Bridget to make the cake.

MATTIE. My brother Tom did?

SIMPLICITY. Yes, ma'am.

MATTIE. Why didn't you tell me that before?

SIMPLICITY. [*Crying.*] 'Cause you didn't ask me.

MATTIE. Why didn't Bridget tell me?

SIMPLICITY. 'Cause you didn't give her a chance. [*MATTIE shows temper.*] Bridget says the only way she could ever answer you back is by speaking first.

MATTIE. [*Advancing.*] Oh! she said that, did she? [*Drops her slipper on the table and starts for the door.*] I was going to take her back, but I won't now.

[*Steps on imaginary pin. SIMPLICITY picks up the slipper.*]

SIMPLICITY. Won't you?

MATTIE. [*Almost at the door.*] No, I won't!

SIMPLICITY. Won't you?

[*She hides the slipper behind her back, and looks out of the window.*]

MATTIE. No, I won't.

SIMPLICITY. Won't you? Oh, there's company coming!

MATTIE. [*Hopping around on one foot.*] Company? Good gracious! Where is my slipper? [*She falls on her hands and knees, hunting under the table.*]

SIMPLICITY. [*Dancing with glee.*] If I find your slipper for you, will you take Bridget back?

MATTIE. [*On her knees, searching all around.*] No, I won't. [*Getting up.*] I believe you've got that slipper. Have you?

SIMPLICITY. Yes, ma'am.

MATTIE. For the land's sake! Give it to me at once. [*Starting after SIMPLICITY.*]

SIMPLICITY. [*Dodging away from MATTIE to the window.*] Not unless you take Bridget back. I guess they're city folks.

MATTIE. You give me that slipper, you wicked girl. [*Running after SIMPLICITY.*] I'll tell the Minister, just as soon as he comes in, to punish you — and for fear he won't do it, I'll do it myself.

[*She chases SIMPLICITY across the room. Enter*

MINISTER.

MINISTER. Why Mattie! Mattie! What's the matter?

SIMPLICITY. I've been bad!

[*She throws the slipper at MATTIE.*

MINISTER. What! Again?

SIMPLICITY. Yes, sir. Again!

MATTIE. [*Putting on her slipper.*] You'd better make her learn another chapter in the Bible, Tom.

MINISTER. My dear Mattie, if we always punished her that way, she would soon know the whole Old Testament, and be tripping you and

me up. That's all right, Mattie. [*He sits down at the table.*] I'll punish her.

MATTIE. [*Comes over to him.*] I'm sort of suspicious of your punishments, Tom. But first I want to tell you about Bridget. She — is — so —

MINISTER. [*Waving her away.*] Not now! Not now! I must get to work on to-morrow's sermon. I haven't begun it yet.

MATTIE. What's the subject, Tom?

MINISTER. [*Thoughtfully.*] "Is there an actual Purgatory or not?"

SIMPLICITY. Course there is. [*Going over to him.*] You just ask the matron of the Asylum where I used to be. What she don't know about Purgatory ain't worth talking about.

MATTIE. [*Aghast.*] Why, Simplicity! You don't know what you're saying.

SIMPLICITY. Don't I? Guess you'd think so if you'd been at the Asylum.

MATTIE. Tom, you punish that child before you begin. It will tone you up.

[Goes out.]

MINISTER. Come here. *[Turns his chair toward SIMPLICITY.]* Come here and be punished.

SIMPLICITY. *[Going over to the MINISTER.]* Pops! I'm awful sorry.

MINISTER. Then kiss me. *[She kisses him.]* There, now you're punished. What was it you did?

SIMPLICITY. Miss Mattie discharged Bridget, and I teased her to make her take her back!

MINISTER. Was that it? Then you may kiss me again, Miss. *[SIMPLICITY kisses him and sits down beside him.]* And now say, "I'll try not to tease Miss Mattie any more."

SIMPLICITY. I've said it once before, to-day, Pops, but it don't seem to do much good.

MINISTER. I guess it does as much good as learning a chapter in the Bible, and you can say it quicker. Come on now.

SIMPLICITY. I'll try not to tease Miss Mattie any more.

MINISTER. And try hard! You try hard!

SIMPLICITY. Pops, is Miss Mattie really your sister?

MINISTER. No.

SIMPLICITY. Then what is she?

[Sprawling on table.]

MINISTER. She is my brother-in-law's second wife's step-sister.

SIMPLICITY. *[Confused.]* Oh —

[Rises; goes all around the table, looking under the edge for chewing-gum.]

MINISTER. Yes, and she doesn't get on with her step-sister, my brother-in-law's second wife, so that she hasn't any other home, and lives here with me. Now I must get to work on my sermon.

SIMPLICITY. [*Back of MINISTER, with her arms around his neck.*] Then you've just given her a home, as you've taken in Aunt Melissy and Uncle Bill and me, Pops?

MINISTER. She says it's you and Uncle Bill and Aunt Melissy who've taken me in. There! There! I must get to work! [*Starts to write, SIMPLICITY looking over his shoulder.*] I don't believe there's a Purgatory, Simple.

SIMPLICITY. Don't you, Pops? [*Glancing around, as if looking for MISS MATTIE.*] Then where will Miss Mattie go when she dies?

MINISTER. Simplicity! Now you stop — stop — or I'll punish you again. I must get to work!

[Enter BRIDGET, *sniffing*.

BRIDGET. If you plaze, sorr, —

MINISTER. What is it, Bridget?

BRIDGET. [*Sniffing.*] If you plaze, sorr, a Committee from the Choir's outside in the hall waitin' to see you.

MINISTER. I'm very busy just now, but you can show them in, Bridget.

BRIDGET. Yes, sorr.

[*Goes out.*

MINISTER. We must do something for that asthma of Bridget's.

SIMPLICITY. 'Tain't asthma — it's feelings — 'cause Miss Mattie discharged her. Guess Bridget believes there's a Hell.

[BRIDGET *comes back, showing in* COMMITTEE.

BRIDGET. Come right into the study, plaze —

[*Sniffing.*

[*Enter* MRS. BROWN *and* MISS MEALEY.

BRIDGET *goes out.*

MRS. BROWN. Good morning, Dr. Singleton!

[*Goes over to the organ and sits on the stool.*

MISS MEALEY. Good morning!

SIMPLICITY. Hello!

[*She sits on a low stool on the other side of the table so that it hides her from the others.*

MINISTER. [*Rising.*] Good morning. Won't you sit down? Won't you sit down — [*As* MISS MEALEY *passes him.*] Your new hat's very becoming, Miss Molly.

MISS MEALEY. [*Sits in the easy chair.*] Thanks. But it seems to me as if you never noticed what I had on.

MINISTER. On the contrary, Miss Molly, everything!

MRS. BROWN. Good gracious!

MISS MEALEY. [*To MRS. BROWN.*] I think, my dear, we had better speak at once of the matter that brought us.

MRS. BROWN. Yes. I suppose, Minister, we are keeping you from finishing to-morrow's sermon?

MINISTER. [*Coming up between the ladies; smiling.*] No — from beginning it.

MISS MEALEY. What is the subject?

MINISTER. "Is there an actual Purgatory or not?"

MISS MEALEY. S-w-ee-t!

MRS. BROWN. Well, I hope there isn't, for my husband's sake! But [*rising*] what we've come for is — [*Notices SIMPLICITY.*] — Oh — [*Whispering to MINISTER.*] Please send that child out.

MINISTER. Oh, yes. Simple!

SIMPLICITY. Pops!

MINISTER. You go out for a little while.

SIMPLICITY. What for?

MINISTER. For fun. [SIMPLICITY goes out. Turning to the COMMITTEE.] Is it anything serious?

MISS MEALEY. Very! Mrs. Woodbridge — our —

MRS. BROWN. [Interrupting.] Our soprana, turns out to be a reg —

MISS MEALEY. [Rises — interrupting.] Perfect snake in the grass. Of course we all know she had set her cap for you.

MINISTER. Oh, come now, Miss Molly.

MRS. BROWN. [In a loud whisper to MISS MEALEY.] Don't be a fool, Molly Mealey — show him your jealousy that way! Of course Molly has had to put up with her city clothes and

we've had to put up with her city airs and now it's got to end.

MINISTER. Why, I thought everyone loved Mrs. Woodbridge.

MISS MEALEY. Oh, all the *men* do.

MRS. BROWN. You must discharge her from the choir.

MINISTER. I! Why, I couldn't do such a thing, and I wouldn't. Why, she hasn't a cent in the world, except her salary, to support herself and her poor little lame boy.

MISS MEALEY. [*Rising and going up to him.*] Well, if you don't discharge her, *we* will!

MINISTER. No! What has she done?

MRS. BROWN. She's divorced from her *husband!* That's what she's *done!*

MISS MEALEY. A *divorcee!*

MINISTER. Well, maybe her husband wasn't all that he should be.

MISS MEALEY. Humph! More likely *she* wasn't. They say she was an *actress*!

MRS. BROWN. Sung and danced in one of the *continual* performances!

MINISTER. I'd like to have seen her.

[MISS MEALEY and MRS. BROWN are *astounded*.

MISS MEALEY and MRS. BROWN. What!

MRS. BROWN. If *she* remains in the choir I resign *now*.

[*Hitting a book on the table with a bang.*

MISS MEALEY. There goes the *mezzers* soprano, and the whole choir has agreed to do the same thing.

MINISTER. But, Mrs. Brown, you know what a splendid young woman she is. She lives with you!

MRS. BROWN. Oh, no, she doesn't. [*To MINISTER.*] I have a family of boys to bring up.

Besides, I have always suspected Brown was a little *too* polite to her. She's packing her trunks now.

MINISTER. Really, ladies, you take my breath away.

MRS. BROWN. Well, she took our'n. [*Both go to the MINISTER.*] Now which is it? If we go, the organist goes with us. Mrs. Canning says all the wealth of the Indies couldn't make her play accompaniments for a divorced voice.

MISS MEALEY. If she sings — remember.

MRS. BROWN and MISS MEALEY. We don't! [*Going to the door.*] Good morning!

MINISTER. If you're going home now, you might send her over to me — will you?

MRS. BROWN. I'll go straight home, and she can come here before looking for new rooms.

MISS MEALEY. [*At the door.*] Don't be afraid of hurting her feelings.

MINISTER. No.

MRS. BROWN. We haven't been.

MINISTER. So I imagine. Good-by!

MRS. BROWN. Good-by. *[Goes out.]*

MINISTER. Good-by, Miss Molly.

MISS MEALEY. Good-by. *[Giggling, starts to go, turns, and runs to the MINISTER, unwrapping large slippers and thrusting them into his hands, saying:]* For you — *[Giggles.]* For you! *[Giggles until she is out of the door.]*

MINISTER. Well, now we must fix this somehow for poor Mrs. Woodbridge. How can anyone be angry at Molly Mealey! *[Looking at the slippers, he lays them on the table.]* Pleasant change from wristlets! They'll fit Uncle Bill. *[Going toward the door, he calls.]* Mattie! Gracious! I must get to work. *[He sits down once more at his table.]*

[*Enter* UNCLE BILL *and* AUNT MELISSY. MELISSY *sits on stool.*

UNCLE BILL. Good day, Doctor.

MINISTER. Hello, Uncle Bill! Been for a walk?

UNCLE BILL. Yes, sir. Me and Melissy been for a stroll. Come along. [*To* AUNT MELISSY.] The Minister's here and he can decide for us.

[AUNT MELISSY *says* "H-a-y-e?" UNCLE BILL *repeats.*

MINISTER. [*Raising his voice.*] Well, Aunt Melissy, you and Uncle Bill haven't been having another argument, have you?

AUNT MELISSY. Yes, we have, Minister. I say there's no such thing as love at first sight, and Mr. William says there is.

UNCLE BILL. I tell Melissy the very first time

I sot eyes on her I felt Cupid takin' aim with his arrow right here.

[Putting his hand on his heart.]

AUNT MELISSY. *[Interrupting.]* I didn't think, Minister, when you asked me to come and live with you, I was going to have the end of my days made miserable by the same questions that turned their beginning topsy-turvy.

UNCLE BILL. That ain't the p'int — that ain't the p'int. The p'int is, is there such a thing as love at first sight?

[Both going to the MINISTER ; MINISTER scratches his head. MATTIE enters.]

MATTIE. Now look here, Aunt Melissy and Uncle Bill, you mustn't interrupt the Minister. He's at work on to-morrow's sermon. *[She hurries them off.]* Tom, what do you think? Mrs. White has twins.

MINISTER. Twins?

MATTIE. I never did have any patience with that woman!

MINISTER. Which are they?

MATTIE. Girls — both girls! Where will they ever get husbands in this town?

[Goes out Right. BRIDGET comes in Left.]

BRIDGET. If you plaze, sorr — *[sniffing]* — the lady with a voice like a flute is askin' to see you.

MINISTER. *[Rises.]* Oh, Mrs. Woodbridge!

BRIDGET. Yes, sorr.

[Sniffing.]

MINISTER. *[Absent-mindedly.]* Got the asthma, Bridget?

BRIDGET. No, sorr, I've got me notice.

MINISTER. *[Absent-mindedly.]* Have you taken anything for it?

BRIDGET. Sure, it's me lave I've got to take.

MINISTER. Oh, that's it, is it? Simple told me. Come here, Bridget. Don't you go! Miss Mattie will be sure to come around all right tomorrow. You leave her to me.

BRIDGET. To you, sorr? Oh, the Lord bless you, sorr—it would break me heart to lave you, so it would. But what about Mrs. Woodbridge, sorr?

MINISTER. By Jupiter! I forgot all about her. Bring her right in!

[BRIDGET starts to go out; meets MRS. WOODBRIDGE coming in.]

BRIDGET. Sure, here is the lady herself.

[Goes out.]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Good morning, Doctor.

MINISTER. Won't you sit down?

[Indicates chair by the table.]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Mrs. Brown has told you, Doctor?

MINISTER. [*Sitting on the organ bench.*] Yes, and I want to talk over with you the best way to fix it.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. First, I want to tell you how it was I came here two years ago. I wanted to leave the city, where all the associations were most painful, and, besides, I thought my little boy might be stronger in the country. My husband — I had better be quite frank with you — my husband soon after our marriage began to drink heavily — then he lost all his money on the horses and — what little I had — [*Rises.*] Did I do wrong to leave him?

MINISTER. [*Rising and coming to MRS. WOODBRIDGE.*] Could you have helped him by holding on to him, I wonder?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*With averted face.*] That's what I sometimes ask myself — when the old love for my ideal of him comes back with overwhelming force.

MINISTER. Ah, well! Each one's heart and mind is the best court for them to appeal to.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I thought I ought at any rate to take the boy away before he grew old enough to understand. He has been baptized in sorrow, and I want his life to be confirmed with joy somewhere, or somehow —

MINISTER. But he's so much better and brighter already.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*Joyfully.*] Oh, do you think so? Well, that's my story, except when I came here I never lied. I said I had no husband — I didn't think it necessary to explain more. But of course when I was asked whether I was a

widow or divorced, to-day, there was nothing to do but to speak the truth, which I did.

MINISTER. [*Takes a chair near MRS. WOODBRIDGE.*] I'm afraid you weren't prepared to find such good people as they are here. Really, you know, so narrow. Were you? [*Moving towards her.*] But I'm stretching them all I can.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And perhaps I can be of some use as a wedge?

MINISTER. Well — to go back to the choir —

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I'd resign in a minute if it wasn't for Dick. I want to make money enough to have him treated. Little lame backs are made whole now-a-days, you know, without miracles.

MINISTER. I know — I was thinking of that the other day, but I believe it will be best to have you resign now, anyway, and let the congregation

hear Miss Mealey sing a solo again. We won't need much more to get them all on our side.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*Rising, puts out her hand.*] How encouraging you are! Meanwhile, I shall have to find some other place for Dick and me to live in.

MINISTER. [*Rises and takes her hand.*] That'll be easy enough.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. So I thought, but on my way here, three ladies with empty third-floors told me they hadn't any rooms.

MINISTER. Well, I'll tell you what — you and Dick come here and live with us.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Here? Oh, no! We couldn't do that.

MINISTER. Why not? Miss Mattie'll make it all right. Come now, get Dick and your trunk, and stay.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. But are you sure you've room?

MINISTER. Oh, yes, yes — plenty of room.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. But you have so many people here now.

MINISTER. Why, no we haven't — no one at all.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. There's Miss Mattie and Simplicity — I know them —

MINISTER. [*In thought.*] Oh yes, and Uncle Bill and Aunt Melissy, but that's all.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Aunt Melissy? Perhaps she won't like me.

MINISTER. Oh, yes she will, and you'll like her, too. She's a nice old person, a real lady. Lost all her money in a bank that shut up suddenly, and has a perfect horror of dying in the poorhouse, so I told her to come and die here.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And did she?

MINISTER. Yes, that is, she came here, but I am glad to say she hasn't died yet.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And who's Uncle Bill?

MINISTER. Why, you know Uncle Bill Walters?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, the old man who rings the church bell?

MINISTER. Yes. He was living alone and had to do his own cooking — couldn't make enough money to pay a servant. So I told him just to come and live with us, and let us be company for him.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*Turns to him.*] How good of you!

MINISTER. Why, no — he's a splendid character. I consider it a privilege to have him — he's sweet on Aunt Melissy. You mustn't cut her out now, will you?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*Laughing.*] No, I'll try not.

MINISTER. And don't mind Miss Mattie if she is a little cantankerous at first. She always does that when any woman comes to the house. It will take about seven days for her to find out that you don't want to marry me.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Maybe Miss Mattie won't like me on account of my trouble.

MINISTER. Oh, dear no. Mattie's the broadest minded, most generous creature in the world.

MATTIE. [*Outside. Yells.*] T-o-m!

MINISTER. That's Mattie now. [MRS. WOODBRIDGE *starts toward the door, frightened.*] Wait a minute. I'll tell Mattie. She'll be so pleased. [*Calls.*] Mattie!

MATTIE. [*Entering; rather shortly.*] What is it, Tom? Oh! Good morning, Mrs. Woodbridge.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Good morning, Miss Mattie.

MINISTER. [*Timidly, from behind the desk.*] Mattie, Mrs. Woodbridge is coming to live with us.

MATTIE. [*Astounded.*] What!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Dr. Singleton has asked me to, but I have told him I don't think I ought to accept his kind offer.

MINISTER. We'll feel rather hurt if she doesn't — now, won't we, Mattie?

MATTIE. [*Aside to the MINISTER.*] When is she coming?

MINISTER. This evening.

MATTIE. This evening!

[*Disgusted.*]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Perhaps it will inconvenience you to have Dick and me here!

MATTIE. Oh, I suppose I can stand it if the Minister can.

MINISTER. [*To MRS. WOODBRIDGE.*] There, I told you Mattie would be pleased. You mustn't mind Mattie's ways.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. But perhaps you'd rather I didn't come this evening, Miss Mattie?

MATTIE. Well, I must own —

[*MRS. WOODBRIDGE walks over to the window.*]

MINISTER. [*To MATTIE, interrupting.*] That you'd be disappointed if she didn't — eh, Mattie?

[*Winks at MATTIE.*]

MATTIE. [*Hesitating.*] No, Tom, that wasn't what I was going to say, but I suppose it's none of my business.

[*Turning to bookcase and arranging books. Goes out.*]

MINISTER. [*To MRS. WOODBRIDGE.*] Now, you

stay right here, and I'll send Uncle Bill after Dick and your trunk.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Do you think I'd better?

MINISTER. Yes.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Well, thank you ever so much. I'll tell Uncle Bill. You needn't trouble — he's on the porch.

[Goes out; the MINISTER starts to follow.]

MATTIE. *[Coming back.]* Now, brother Tom, I would just like to know where you are going to put her! I suppose you want me to give up my room!

MINISTER. *[Turning back to Mattie.]* Why, no, Mattie. She's to have mine.

MATTIE. Yours? Then where will you sleep?

MINISTER. Here. I shall do nicely.

MATTIE. Here!

MINISTER. Yes. *[Looking around, points to the lounge.]* On the lounge.

MATTIE. You sleep on that lounge? What'll you do with your feet?

MINISTER. [*Laughing.*] Hang 'em over the end, and then all the blood will rush out of my head, and then I shall sleep splendidly.

[MRS. WOODBRIDGE *re enters, saying:*

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Walters, very much.

MINISTER. Mattie was just saying your room would want a little arranging for you.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*Taking MATTIE'S arm.*] She must let me help her. [*To MATTIE.*] Yes, Miss Mattie, I insist. Show me where it is.

MATTIE. It's the room over the front porch.

MINISTER. Why no, Mattie, it's the room over the parlor.

MATTIE. [*Goes up to the desk, sharply.*] Now, brother Tom, I think I am the one who takes

care of this house, and I say it's the room over the front porch.

[MATTIE and MRS. WOODBRIDGE go out together.]

MINISTER. Now, that's too bad. It's just like Mattie — so unselfish — going to give up her own room! Well, there's no use arguing with her. Mattie's bound to have her own way, and I must get to work on my sermon.

[He sits down at his desk once more.]

[Enter BRIDGET, with her hair done up in curl-papers.]

BRIDGET. If you plaze, sorr, there is such a nice young couple in the hall that wants to get married.

MINISTER. [Writing.] Actual Purgatory.

BRIDGET. [Astounded, coming down.] What, sorr?

MINISTER. [Thoughtfully.] Bridget, do you believe in Purgatory?

BRIDGET. I believe in wedlock, sorr.

MINISTER. But that hasn't anything to do with my text — with what I was writing.

BRIDGET. Oh, St. Patrick! [*Laughing.*] I thought you was referring to the marriage state. I axes your pardon. There's a young couple out in the hall on the edge of matrimony, who are wantin' you to give them a wee bit of a push over.

MINISTER. Well, send them in, Bridget, and tell them they must be married quickly or, no — I mean they must — but don't tell them, — because I really have got to work on my sermon.

BRIDGET. Sure. She's a darlin' bit of a wife. [*Showing them in at the door.*] This way, if you plaze.

[*Enter HERBERT WOODBRIDGE, followed by*

MARY LARKIN. BRIDGET *goes out.* MARY *remains at the back.*

HERBERT. [*Coming forward to MINISTER.*] You are Dr. Singleton?

MINISTER. [*Rising.*] I am — and you? —

HERBERT. My name is Woodbridge, and —

MARY. [*Coming forward.*] I am Mary Larkin, and we wish to be —

HERBERT. [*Going over to MARY.*] Married.

MARY. [*Unbuttoning her left glove.*] Will you marry us?

MINISTER. Yes. I will be very glad to. How old are you, Mr. Woodbridge?

HERBERT. Thirty, sir.

MINISTER. [*To MARY.*] And you?

MARY. Eighteen, sir.

[*Turns to HERBERT. MARY takes off the glove from her left hand and places it on the table.*]

MINISTER. Eighteen? Isn't she pretty. [*Forgetting himself.*] Isn't she pretty — isn't she pretty —

MARY. [*Turning.*] What — sir?

MINISTER. [*Starts.*] Oh — er — I said eighteen was pretty young to marry, don't you think so?

MARY. Oh, no, sir. And then Herbert — I mean Mr. Woodbridge — is enough older to make up any way.

MINISTER. Where do you live?

MARY. My home is really in East Eddysville — seven miles away from here. We've just driven over. I met Mr. Woodbridge in New York, where I went last winter to study Art at the League.

MINISTER. [*To HERBERT.*] You are a New Yorker? So am I!

HERBERT. Yes, sir. Oh — don't let us keep you standing!

MINISTER. [*Absent-mindedly.*] No — no —

excuse me. Let's all sit down. [*The MINISTER gives MARY a chair. Then both men sit down.*]

You aren't in any hurry, are you?

HERBERT. Well —

MARY. [*Interrupting.*] Oh, no, not in the least.

MINISTER. [*Moving nearer to MARY.*] That's good. We can take plenty of time, and talk it all over.

HERBERT. I don't think there is anything to say, sir, except what the marriage service requires.

MARY. You don't know me, sir, but I know you very well. I often come here to visit a school friend of mine — Molly Mealey — who teaches here.

HERBERT. But that's not the point.

MINISTER. Well, let me see — you are neither of you married already?

MARY. [*Smiling.*] No, sir.

HERBERT. [*Gravely.*] No, sir.

MINISTER. [*To MARY.*] But why are you not married at your own home?

MARY. I am not happy there — my mother has married a second time, and that's how I came to go to New York and —

MINISTER. [*Interrupting.*] I should think they'd miss you awfully. [*Turning to HERBERT.*] But that's your gain, isn't it? [*Rising and returning the chair to the desk, he goes over to the bookcase.*] I always use the Episcopal service. [*He takes up a prayer-book from bookcase.*] Are you to be married with a ring?

MARY. Oh, yes. Of course, sir —

HERBERT. [*Rising from the organ bench.*] Mary, I forgot the ring.

MARY. Herbert! Then we can't be married to-day!

MINISTER. And that would disappoint you very much, wouldn't it?

[He lays the prayer-book on the table.]

MARY. Yes, sir, but after all we could do without the ring, though — *[smiling at HERBERT]* I shan't feel quite altogether married, Herbert.

[MINISTER stands in deep thought, twisting a ring on his finger.]

MARY. *[Crosses to HERBERT.]* Why? What is he doing?

HERBERT. I don't know. He's a funny old Johnnie, isn't he?

MARY. No, I think he is a dear man!

HERBERT. Well, I wish he'd brace up and marry us. I — I — I beg your pardon.

MINISTER. *[Absent-mindedly.]* I beg your pardon. I've got a ring. Will you let me give it to you for a wedding present? It was my sister's

wedding ring once. She said for me to use it, but I'll never get married. The townspeople here tease me, you know — they say my little church is my sweetheart, and they call the road that leads to it from our orchard, "Lovers' Lane."

MARY. [*Who is standing between the MINISTER and HERBERT.*] Oh, but do you want to part with it?

MINISTER. Yes, I would like it to be your wedding ring. [*She takes the ring.*] Now, we must have a couple of witnesses.

MARY. Oh, Herbert dear. [*Turning to HERBERT.*] We didn't bring any witnesses either.

MINISTER. [*Going to the door.*] Oh, I've got plenty of witnesses — house full of witnesses. [*He calls.*] Mattie! Mattie!

MATTIE. [*Calling back to him.*] Now, what is it, Tom?

MINISTER. I want you.

MATTIE. [*Still calling.*] Go on with your sermon — I'm busy!

MINISTER. I want you to be a witness.

MATTIE. For the land's sake! Witness to what?

MINISTER. A marriage.

MATTIE. [*Impatiently, still calling.*] I'm too busy. I've got no time for such nonsense. Call Bridget, and I'll send down Mrs. Woodbridge.

MINISTER. [*Calling.*] Bridget!

[*Taking up the prayer-book again.*]

HERBERT. [*Starts slightly to himself.*] Mrs. Woodbridge!

MARY. Woodbridge — our name! Isn't that funny!

MINISTER. That ought to bring you luck. Will you stand there?

[They stand together as MRS. WOODBRIDGE comes in.]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. You sent for me, Dr. Singleton?

MINISTER. Yes. Mrs. Woodbridge, I want you to witness a marriage between Miss Larkin and Mr. —

[MRS. WOODBRIDGE starts as she sees HERBERT.]

HERBERT. Lucy!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Was it to witness a marriage between these two people that you called me, Dr. Singleton?

MINISTER. Yes.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I cannot do it.

MINISTER. *[Kindly.]* Tell us why not.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Ask him who is the father of my poor little boy.

HERBERT. Yes, we were once married, she and I.

MARY. [*To HERBERT.*] What do you mean?

MINISTER. [*To MARY.*] He was once her husband, but they are divorced now.

MARY. [*To MINISTER.*] But he never told me he had been married. Herbert, you never said you were —

HERBERT. [*Interrupting.*] I didn't want you to know.

MARY. But it was a lie — you told me a lie — you told me a lie!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*To MINISTER.*] Don't let him ruin her poor young life if you can prevent it.

[*MRS. WOODBRIDGE leaves the room; they watch her go. The MINISTER stands motionless. A pause.*]

HERBERT. [*Impatiently.*] Well?

MINISTER. I cannot marry you — you must go to someone else.

HERBERT. Why? Because I am divorced?

MINISTER. No, because I don't think you will make Miss Larkin happy.

HERBERT. You are not the best judge of that.

MINISTER. [*To MARY.*] Do you still wish to marry him?

MARY. I don't know, sir!

HERBERT. [*Scornfully, turning to MARY.*] Because I have been divorced, you are going to throw me over?

MARY. No. Because you told me a lie!

HERBERT. Then you don't love me?

MARY. Oh — Herbert! [*Turning to HERBERT; then to MINISTER.*] Yes, I do still want to marry him.

MINISTER. Then you must get someone else to perform the service for you.

HERBERT. Very well, sir, I am sorry to have

had to put you to this trouble. Good afternoon.

[*He goes toward the door.*] Come, Mary!

[*He waits at the door.*

MARY. [*Starting to follow.*] Good-by, sir!

MINISTER. Good-by.

[*He stands in deep study at his desk.* MARY,
remembering the ring, goes up to the MINISTER.

MARY. Oh, Herbert! His ring! [*To* MINISTER.]

Dr. Singleton, forgive me, I forgot your ring.

MINISTER. I hope you know, Miss Larkin, that I would be pleased to marry you if I could feel he would make you happy as you deserve.

MARY. Thank you, sir. — Your ring!

MINISTER. Do they know at home what you are doing?

MARY. No, sir, but they wouldn't care.

MINISTER. Then why not go home to-night and think it over?

HERBERT. [*At door, impatiently.*] Mary! It's getting late. I'll go and get the horse.

[*Goes out.*]

MARY. Thank you, sir, — you don't know how much he loves me — But your ring?

MINISTER. No, take it just the same — I am sorry not to be the one to put it on, but if you are determined to marry him, take it, and use it just the same. I want it to be your wedding ring.

[HERBERT calls "MARY."]

MARY. Thank you, sir. I must go.

[*She starts to go, but meets* UNCLE BILL *carrying* DICK.

UNCLE BILL. Here we are, Doctor — come in the back way. How d'ye do, Miss?

MARY. How do you do? Oh, you poor, dear little fellow. [*She kisses* DICK.] What's your name?

UNCLE BILL. Woodbridge. Dick Woodbridge, Esq. [MARY starts.] Now, you must hurry up and grow up, and some day you can marry a pretty lady like that.

[UNCLE BILL goes to bay window and plays with DICK, who has a picture book.

MARY. [To MINISTER.] His boy! His boy! Doctor Singleton — I shall go home to-night!

[She hurries from the room. The MINISTER pauses and thinks. He sees her glove on the table. He picks it up and lays it on his desk. SIMPLICITY comes in.

SIMPLICITY. Pops! Thinkin' of your sermon?

MINISTER. No, Simple, I wasn't, though I ought to have been. I don't believe there's a Purgatory, Simple.

SIMPLICITY. I do, Pops. I've torn my dress again. [She looks for tear, but can't find it.

MINISTER. Dear me! Where?

SIMPLICITY. There! [*Finding a big tear.*] Pin it up for me, will you, Pops?

[*The MINISTER kneels and pins it together.*]

MINISTER. How did you do it?

SIMPLICITY. Guess.

MINISTER. Climbing apple trees?

SIMPLICITY. Ugh-huh! [*Laughs. Picking up MARY'S glove from the desk.*] Whose glove is this?

MINISTER. [*Rising and taking the glove from her.*] Mine!

SIMPLICITY. Yours?

MINISTER. Yes! I got it in exchange for a ring.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE: *The schoolhouse corner. Opposite is the country store. Through a window the post office is seen. It is recess time, and all the children are playing. Six or eight girls in a circle are shouting "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight — all around the other way." They join hands and dance around in a circle. A group of boys playing leap-frog with SIMPLICITY. Two small boys and one girl playing horse, with the smallest boy for the horse. The girl is driving. The teacher rings the school bell. SIMPLICITY hides behind two fighting boys (BILLY and HARRY). MR. BROWN, who keeps the store, is on the porch, smoking and reading. DICK is sitting on the*

school steps, looking on. MARY LARKIN sits beside him. MISS MEALEY comes from the schoolhouse, ringing the bell. The children stop playing.

MISS MEALEY. Where's Simplicity?

ALL THE GIRLS. What?

MISS MEALEY. Simplicity.

BESSIE STEELE. [*With girls — searching among the girls, calls.*] Simplicity! Simplicity! Oh, she must be with the boys.

MISS MEALEY. What, playing with the boys again, when I've expressly forbidden her! Simplicity! [*There is a dead silence. SIMPLICITY is hiding behind the boys.*] Simplicity, are you there?

SIMPLICITY. [*Still hiding.*] No, ma'am.

[*All the children laugh.*]

MISS MEALEY. Come out this minute!

BILLY. She ain't here. That was me making believe.

MISS MEALEY. I know better. Come here, Simplicity!

BILLY. [*To SIMPLICITY.*] Don't you do it.

MISS MEALEY. Billy Brown, you stay fifteen minutes after school.

BILLY. I don't care. She ain't here!

[*Going to MISS MEALEY.*]

MISS MEALEY. Now you'll stay half an hour after. Simplicity!

SIMPLICITY. I'm coming. [*Pushes her way between the two boys, giving BILLY a half-eaten apple.*] Here, Billy. You take my apple. I'm sorry you've got to stay in.

MISS MEALEY. Haven't I told you you'd be punished if you didn't stop being such a tom-boy? You'll get the ruler, Miss.

MARY. [*From the school steps.*] Oh, please don't punish her, Molly. She doesn't mean any harm.

[MOLLY and MARY talk.

BILLY. It's your fault, Harry Jenkins, for not hiding her enough. I've got a good mind to —

HARRY. Aw — why don't you do it? Here, knock the chip off me shoulder — I dare you!

[*The two boys fight. SIMPLICITY grabs BILLY, while MARY LARKIN and the little girls take charge of HARRY.*

MARY. Boys! Boys! Now, come, this won't do any good. Simplicity, you go into the school now, and tell Miss Mealey you are sorry, and maybe she'll forgive you.

SIMPLICITY. I'm always saying I'm sorry — I'm getting tired.

MARY. Come along.

[SIMPLICITY walks toward the schoolhouse.

BILLY. Miss Mealey, if you want to lick anyone, lick me — I don't mind.

MISS MEALEY. No! I'm not going to whip anybody to-day. [*All the children shout for joy.*] But Simple must study her spelling the rest of the recess.

[MISS MEALEY *pushes* SIMPLICITY *into the schoolhouse and shuts the door.*

BILLY. The boys don't mind her lickin'. She don't hurt anybody.

MARY. Billy, will you take Dick Woodbridge home? He doesn't feel well.

BILLY. Yes, ma'am, in just a minute. [*He takes from his pocket the apple which SIMPLICITY has given him, looks at it, and carefully places it in another pocket. MARY helps DICK on BILLY'S back.*] Come along, Dick. Get on my back.

MARY. There! That's splendid — thank you, Billy.

BILLY. Dick, now you pretend I'm a runaway horse and you can't stop me.

[He gallops off stage, all the children following and shouting after him, "Runaway horse — stop him," etc.]

MARY. Come along. Now, children, let's play London Bridge!

HARRY. Aw — I don't want to play no girl's game!

BESSIE STEELE. Ain't he mean? Well, we don't want you anyway, Harry Jennings!

ALL THE GIRLS. No, we wouldn't play with you anyway, Harry Jennings!

HARRY. *[Looking down the street.]* Here comes the Minister. Hooray! Hooray!

[All the children run to meet the MINISTER He comes in, surrounded by children, who continue shouting.]

MINISTER. What a flock of birds! Good morning, Miss Larkin. I'm being mobbed.

BESSIE STEELE. Let's play London Bridge is Falling Down, with the Minister and Miss Larkin.

ALL THE CHILDREN. Yes! Hurrah! The Minister and Miss Larkin!

MINISTER. Will you?

MARY. Yes, indeed.

[They join hands, holding them up to make the bridge, and the children form in twos and pass under, singing:]

“London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down, London Bridge is falling down, my fair Lady. Take some bricks and build it up, build it up, build it up, Take some bricks and build it up, my fair Lady. Take the key and lock her up, lock her up, lock her up, Then take the key and lock her up, my fair Lady.”

[MISS MEALEY enters, ringing recess bell to bring the children back to the schoolhouse. Then, as if looking for some truant, she sees the MINISTER and MARY holding hands.

MISS MEALEY. [*Going up to the MINISTER while MARY joins the children.*] Well, when you two are through holding hands, perhaps you'll let school go on!

MINISTER. I came around to see how the singing was getting along, Miss Molly. [*To MARY.*] We're getting up an Old Folks Concert with the children, to build a wing to the schoolhouse.

MARY. I heard about it, but thought it was to be Mrs. Jarley's waxworks?

MINISTER. So it was, but some of the church ladies said that would be too much like a theatrical performance.

MISS MEALEY. Yes, indeed, there's some of us

as don't care to demean ourselves, though I don't doubt Mrs. Woodbridge was willing!

MINISTER. I wanted the *waxworks*. Thought there'd be more fun, but it's to be a children's Old Folks Concert, and I hope they've learned their old tunes.

MISS MEALEY. They may not sing as well as your choir.

MINISTER. Look out, Miss Molly! Mrs. Woodbridge resigned this morning, and you'll have your chance again.

MISS MEALEY. [*Brightening.*] Don't say! I hadn't heard. Would you like to hear the children practise? We were going to, after Geography. Perhaps you'll be passing by and could stop.

[*Going toward the school.*]

MINISTER. Well, maybe I will.

MISS MEALEY. Come on in, Mame, if Dr. Singleton can spare you.

[Laughing, she goes slyly into the schoolhouse.]

MARY follows.

MINISTER. Miss Larkin. *[Following MARY.]* I hope you are not angry with me for sending you and Mr. Woodbridge from the Parsonage yesterday?

MARY. No, no. I am not angry.

MINISTER. Will you be here after Geography, too?

MARY. Yes, I'm going to see Simplicity through her struggles with the capital of Vermont.

MINISTER. I know, she wants every State to have a Boston.

MARY. Good-by.

[She blushes and goes into schoolhouse.]

MINISTER. *[Follows a few steps.]* No — no! Not good-by — I'm coming back.

BROWN. [*From the porch.*] Good morning, Minister!

MINISTER. Good morning, Mr. Brown. Lovely morning.

BROWN. I hear the billiard table come to the express office this morning.

MINISTER. Yes, I'm going to see about its being put up now.

BROWN. Look out for the women! They're dead set against it.

MINISTER. What's the matter with the women in this town?

BROWN. Oh, they're just mad because you ain't married one of them yet. You take the advice of a friend who has gone and done it, and you go over to North Adams and get one of them purty young city girls!

MINISTER. When I first came here I thought they all liked me, and were going to help me

build up this place into a happy, free, broad-minded community.

BROWN. You can't do it, Doctor. Not with this here generation. They says now you are too free and broad-minded, and old Deacon Steele there,—he's as bad as the women folks. He even says as how nothing can stop you. If they don't look out, you'll be additating a corner saloon.

MINISTER. Poor mistaken old man, when all I want is to make everybody here happy and contented in a good, healthy way, — and I'll do it yet, in spite of them!

BROWN. Go ahead — I'm backing you.

MINISTER. Look here, I want you to get in a stock of cards.

BROWN. Postal or visitin' — I've got 'em both.

MINISTER. No. Playing cards!

BROWN. Playin' cards? I wouldn't risk the outlay. I'd never sell 'em.

MINISTER. I'll order two packs now, for the young men's parlors.

BROWN. Well, you're goin' it purty strong!
[*Rising.*] When the women folks hear that —
[*Whistles.*] But I'll see you through. I'll write a postal card right off to Bosting.

[*He goes into the store to a desk by the window, and writes the card. The MINISTER walks up the street and meets BILLY coming down.*]

MINISTER. Hello, Billy!

BILLY. Been up to your house, sir, with Dick Woodbridge. He's sorter sick.

MINISTER. Sorry to hear that. Was his mother there?

BILLY. Yes, sir, but gee, I'm late!

[*He runs into the school.*]

MINISTER. [*Following.*] Tell Miss Mealey it was my fault.

[MRS. STEELE enters, on her way to the store. She notices the MINISTER, turns up her nose, and flounces into the store.]

MRS. STEELE. [*At the door.*] Mr. Brown, is your wife here yet?

BROWN. [*Who was writing at his desk by the window, comes out.*] No! Didn't know she was coming!

MRS. STEELE. [*On the step, looking up and down the street, and glancing at the MINISTER.*] Well, she is, and that billiard table is going to be carted from the express office any minute now, if we don't prevent it!

[*She goes into the store. SKILLIG enters with paste-pot and brush, posters, etc. Whistling. He commences to paste on the board one sheet.*]

SKILLIG. [*To BROWN.*] Good m-o-r-n-i-n-g —

[*He goes on pasting.*]

BROWN. Good morning, Mr. Skillig. Doctor Singleton, I want to introduce you to Mr. Skillig. Mr. Skillig is manager of our Oprey House.

SKILLIG. How d'ye do?

MINISTER. Glad to meet you, Mr. Skillig. Heard you'd come over to undertake the management of the Opera House.

SKILLIG. Yep! yep! and I lead the orchestra, too.

MINISTER. Musical, too. That's good! You'll help us with the Old Folks Concert?

SKILLIG. [*Vigorously pasting bill-board.*] That's what I've got here in the bills. I'm billposter, too. [*Still pasting.*] One man in his life plays many parts.

MINISTER. An actor, too?

SKILLIG. I always thought so. [*Still pasting.*]
 But I was too darned artistic for the present
 public. I tried everything, from Hamlet to
 Vaudyville, but I never reached Saturday night
 in a single town.

[*He reads aloud.*]

OLD FOLKS CONCERT

AT THE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING ROOMS

IN LOVERS' LANE

NEXT SATURDAY EVENING AT 7.30 SHARP

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE

ADDITION TO THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Admission 25 Cents

ALL WELCOME

REFRESHMENTS

BROWN. Here, Skillig, give me one of them
 posters, and I'll put it up in my store.

[SKILLIG *gives him a poster, and he goes into
 store.*]

MINISTER. [*Pointing to paper on the billboard.*] It's a pity we haven't got some pictures like this Uncle Tom troupe to advertise our concert with.

SKILLIG. That was a rotten show, though. Little Eva and Eliza doubled, and Uncle Tom did the bloodhounds behind the scenes. I won't have them in my Oprey House again.

[*Goes on pasting.*]

MINISTER. Haven't you some left-over pictures — some pretty pictures you could put up for the Concert? Something to attract the country people? We want to make all the money we can.

SKILLIG. [*Stopping to think.*] Well, now, I believe I have. There was a troupe that busted last week, and had sent on some writing, C. O. D. What was it they called themselves? Now, let

me see! Oh, yes — The New York Daisies. They might do.

MINISTER. Pretty little girls?

SKILLIG. That's your figure — they was daisies!

MINISTER. Well, give us some of those.

SKILLIG. I'll go and get a couple now.

[He puts down his paste bucket and brush.]

MINISTER. Good idea. Oh, Mr. Skillig! I'd like to have you come around to our house some night and have supper. My sister Mattie'd be very glad to see you.

SKILLIG. Thank you!

[He goes up the street. The MINISTER starts to go out, but MARY, from the window, coughs to attract his attention.]

MINISTER. Hello! Is that Geography lesson over? *[Coming up to the window.]*

MARY. No, but poor Simplicity has finished. She said Boston was the largest city in the world, and she thought Vermont was a lake.

MINISTER. Poor child! Where is she?

[Peers in the window.]

MARY. In the corner with her face to the wall.

MINISTER. Planning mischief, I'll be bound.

MARY. Tell me, have you been where you were going?

MINISTER. Oh, dear no! I forgot. I'm off to see the billiard table set up in the young men's club.

MARY. *[Still talking through the window.]*
They haven't one yet?

MINISTER. Yet? The Deacon and the Sewing Circle threaten to pull down the house if the table is set up, but I'll conquer before I get through! I'll have the Deacon passing the time,

some dull, wet evening, with an honest game, and Molly Mealey pushing the beads along to keep count. Good-by. Will you be here when I get back?

MARY. Yes. I'll be inside. Just rap three times on the ledge. Molly is awfully mad with me for playing London Bridge with you just now.

MINISTER. [*Absent-mindedly.*] Is she? That's good. I — I — mean — that won't do any harm.

MARY. Good-by.

[*Disappears from the window.*]

MINISTER. Good-by.

[*He stands, watching the window where she was.*]

MRS. BROWN and MRS. JENNINGS enter on their way to the store.

MRS. BROWN and MRS. JENNINGS. [*Together.*]
Good morning, Dr. Singleton!

MINISTER. Good morning — beautiful day!

MRS. BROWN. We're meeting at my husband's store to put down the billiard table!

MINISTER. [*As they both go into the store.*] Don't let me stop you. I am just going to put it up!

[*As the MINISTER starts to go out, he meets SKILLIG coming back.*]

SKILLIG. Hold on there — hold on there — I've got the pictures!

MINISTER. I can't wait — it's all right — put 'em up. I'll see you to-morrow.

[*He goes out.*]

SKILLIG. [*With 3-sheet rolls, he prepares to paste them up.*] This ought to be a great "ad" for an Old Folks Concert. [*As he finishes pasting, he gazes admiringly at the pictures — a flashy group of chorus girls in tights, with large hats and feathers.*] Cussed shame this troupe didn't show

here. Looks like a pretty good show. Calculated to wake this blessed old town up.

[BROWN *enters as the second sheet is pasted up.*

BROWN. [*Disgusted.*] Hello, Mr. Skillig! Do you think there's any room for me out o' doors?

SKILLIG. I don't own the earth, Mr. Brown. Wish I did. [*He pastes up the third sheet.*

BROWN. Well, my wife and her women friends are in the store, and there's no room for me there. What are you doing?

SKILLIG. Puttin' up bills for the Old Folks Concert.

[*Brown starts to read the poster. SKILLIG goes on pasting.*

MRS. BROWN. [*Coming out of the store with MRS. STEELE.*] Hosea, you can go back into your store, now. [*MRS. JENNINGS staying on the porch.*

BROWN. Have you emptied the vinegar barrel?

MRS. STEELE. Good morning, Mr. Skillig. [*She sees the poster and screams.*] Oh, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Jennings! Look!

MRS. BROWN. Good gracious!

MRS. JENNINGS. [*Rushing from the porch.*] What is it — what is it?

MRS. BROWN. Don't look, Mrs. Jennings! Don't look!

MRS. JENNINGS. I guess I do look — you have! [*Looks at the posters.*] Sakes alive!

SKILLIG. What's the matter! [*Turning to BROWN.*] Be they jealous? [*BROWN is shaking with laughter.*]

MRS. BROWN. Give me that brush! [*She struggles for the brush — and gets it.*] Give me one of those white sheets. [*She picks it up and pastes it excitedly over part of one of the pictures.*] You come near enough to see this picture and

I'll paste a bill on you! [*To SKILLIG.*] And now you paste it *all* over, or I'll tear it off, or I'll have you arrested.

SKILLIG. It was the Minister told me to put it there.

MRS. BROWN. What!

MRS. STEELE. The Minister!

MRS. JENNINGS. A nice man to have guiding our young, and ruling in our midst!

MRS. BROWN. [*Showing postal card.*] And what do you think I just found on my husband's counter?

MRS. STEELE. To a woman?

MRS. BROWN. No, but most as bad. To Bosting for playing cards!

[*Tears the postal card in half, and throws it away.*]

MRS. STEELE. As for them indecent pictures, the Deacon will attend to them.

MRS. JENNINGS. And the billiard table!

MRS. BROWN. Let that be for the present, and come back now to Miss Canning's. Putting Mrs. Woodbridge out of the choir ain't enough; we must put that scandalous orphan — Simplicity — of his, out of that school! I ain't agoin' to have her ruining of my boy's character.

MRS. STEELE. She's a bad influence, that's what she is, and we'll show Dr. Singleton who is boss of this town!

MRS. BROWN. We women folks! We'll settle it at Miss Canning's.

[The three women go out talking excitedly. As they go, SKILLIG picks up the postal card — pastes it together with paper, and then mails it in the letter-box, whistling, "There'll be a hot time in the old town to-night." The MINISTER re-enters.]

MINISTER. [*Calling.*] Mr. Brown! Mr. Brown!

BROWN. [*Coming back.*] Yes, sir.

MINISTER. I got it up.

BROWN. What?

MINISTER. The billiard table.

BROWN. Good! But I say —

MINISTER. Can't stop now. You must excuse me. I have an engagement. [*The MINISTER goes toward the window of the school. BROWN goes into the store. The MINISTER taps three times on the window-ledge. MARY appears at the window.*] Sorry I was so long.

MARY. Why, it wasn't long. You've only been gone ten minutes.

MINISTER. Jupiter! I thought it was about an hour and a half.

MARY. I thought perhaps you'd met Herbert — Mr. Woodbridge.

MINISTER. I did — and his sister, Mrs. Lane. She thinks I was wrong yesterday. I wonder if I was.

MARY. What did Herbert say?

MINISTER. I only talked with Mrs. Lane. There are other ministers to go to, you know.

MARY. I won't be married by anybody except you.

MINISTER. Do you know, Miss Larkin, I wish you lived here!

MARY. So do I.

MINISTER. Then, why don't you come and live with us? Oh, dear, I don't suppose that would do — Besides, we haven't any room. I don't know as I would exactly blame Mr. Woodbridge for hating me.

MARY. Why should anyone hate you?

MINISTER. Dear me! Then you must blame a

lot of women in this town. I find myself getting very unpopular. What do you wear on that ribbon around your neck?

MARY. I don't like to tell.

MINISTER. Why not?

MARY. It's something I want to give you. It's the real reason I came to town to-day. But I can't give it to you here — someone might see me. I'll bring it to the Parsonage.

MINISTER. I don't see how I can wait till then to know what it is.

MARY. [*Laughing.*] I'm afraid you'll have to.

MINISTER. [*Taking her hand.*] Isn't it funny how much prettier your hand is than Mattie's?

MARY. [*Blushing and drawing her hand away.*] Is it?

MINISTER. And prettier'n Aunt Melissy's or Mrs. Brown's or Miss Mealey's and even Simple's.

Prettier even than Simple's when it's clean.
It is on special occasions.

MARY. Oh, you're a flatterer, Mr. Singleton!
*[The children's voices are heard inside, trying
to sing the "Swing and Cricket" song, with
the organ.]*

MINISTER. And I bet Molly Mealey didn't
tell you so.

MARY. I forgot. They're practising now for
you.

MINISTER. Ought I come in?

MARY. No, they want to come out here and
surprise you.

MINISTER. Surprise me?

MARY. Sh! Yes! Don't say I told you,
but they're dressed up in the old-fashioned
clothes they're going to wear, and when they
know you are here, they are going to march

out and surprise you. I must tell Molly you've come.

MINISTER. No, don't tell her yet.

MARY. Why not?

MINISTER. [*Absent-mindedly.*] Oh, I don't know. I just thought that you and I might go on talking for a couple of hours.

MARY. Oh, no, there isn't time. I must tell them! Besides, Molly's awfully mad at me still. She says I needn't come over here to see her; that it's only a blind to see you. [*Laughing.*] Isn't she silly?

MINISTER. Yes, I suppose she is.

MARY. Good-by.

[She vanishes from the window.]

MINISTER. [*Absent-mindedly, turning from window.*] Yes, siree! It's the prettiest hand I ever saw.

MARY. [*Comes out of the schoolhouse door and speaks to him, as if they hadn't been speaking before.*] How do you do, Dr. Singleton.

MINISTER. Glad to see you again, Miss Larkin.

[MISS MEALEY *appears at the schoolhouse door.*

MISS MEALEY. Oh, that's what you were doing at the window, Mame Larkin? Talking to the Minister. I'll thank you not to make my schoolhouse your rendezvous.

MARY. Molly!

MISS MEALEY. I'm not playing gooseberry to anyone. If you want to carry on with the Minister, you'd better do it in your own home!

MINISTER. Miss Mealey! Miss Mealey!

[*The children run out from the schoolhouse, dressed for the Old Folks Concert, singing "Old Dog Tray." They form a grape-arbor*

by joining hands across the stage. The first couple stop in front of the steps and join hands. The next couple pass under and do likewise, until all form the grape-arbor. The fat boy, passing through last, stops a second and watches the children. The last couple through start back single file through the arbor and circle round the MINISTER, all running off through the schoolhouse. The fat boy, with his hand on the shoulder of the last boy on the line, slyly peeps at the pastor until he reaches the steps, when he falls into schoolhouse. As the children go out, MRS. BROWN, DEACON STEELE, MRS. STEELE, and MRS. JENNINGS come on.

MRS. BROWN. There, Deacon, that's it! That's the scandalous thing, and the Minister chose it!

STEELE. And in front of Molly Mealey's school.

[*To MISS MEALEY.*] Keep the children in school.

MINISTER. [*Now looking at the bill-board for the first time.*] Jupiter! Is that Skillig's idea of a daisy? The old man's made a mistake. This won't do!

STEELE. No, siree, it won't do!

MRS. BROWN. And lots more things won't do.

MRS. STEELE. The billiard table's up. We'll get it down if we have to saw its *limbs* off!

MISS MEALEY. Oh, the Minister has other games. He can always play London Bridge with East Eddysville girls.

MRS. BROWN. [*To STEELE.*] Go on — Simplicity —

STEELE. Molly, is it true what the ladies have been telling me, that Simplicity Johnson is the most punished child in your school?

MISS MEALEY. Yes, Deacon, that's true.

MINISTER. Poor Simple!

MRS. BROWN. And she deserves it, Molly.

MISS MEALEY. More than she gets.

MINISTER. I doubt that.

MRS. BROWN. I beg pardon, Dr. Singleton, but just now *we're* in the pui-pit.

MINISTER. Then Heaven help your congregation!

STEELE. Mrs. Brown says as Simplicity lies.

MISS MEALEY. She does.

MINISTER. Be careful, Miss Mealey. You'll have to prove everything you say.

MRS. BROWN. And Mrs. Jennings says she steals — took marbles from her boy.

MINISTER. Simple!

MISS MEALEY. Shouldn't be surprised.

MRS. BROWN. And Mrs. Steele says —

[Mumbles on until STEELE interrupts.]

STEELE. Let me do the talking, Mrs. Brown.
[*To MINISTER.*] Mrs. Steele, than whom there
ain't no more trustful woman, allows that this
child is a menace to the young of this town.

MINISTER. Huh!

MRS. BROWN. Yes, indeed. She's a bad ex-
ample — that's what she is. And out she's
got to git!

STEELE. [*To MISS MEALEY.*] Molly, fetch
her here.

MISS MEALEY. [*Calling SIMPLICITY from the
school.*] Simplicity!

[*SIMPLICITY comes in.*]

MRS. BROWN. Simplicity Johnson, you're ex-
pelled from this school.

SIMPLICITY. I'm glad of it!

MRS. BROWN. Oh, you are!

MRS. STEELE. What impudence!

MRS. JENNINGS. Well, I never!

STEELE. But that ain't all.

MRS. BROWN. No, siree, it's only the beginning. You're going to be sent, Miss, to the Massachusetts State House of Correction.

MINISTER. What!

MARY. No!

MISS MEALEY. Oh, of course, Miss Larkin would take the Minister's side.

MINISTER. But that's as good as sending her to jail.

SIMPLICITY. Jail! [*She screams, throwing herself on the ground in front of the MINISTER.*] No, no, Pops! Don't let 'em send me! Don't let 'em send me to jail!

MINISTER. [*Lifting her.*] Never mind, Simple, don't worry.

[*He embraces her. The others are horrified.*]

STEELE. The child is expelled.

MINISTER. And I say she isn't. Who expelled her?

MISS MEALEY. I do.

MINISTER. You? You haven't the right.

MRS. BROWN. Then, Molly Mealey, you resign.

MISS MEALEY. I do! I resign the school this minute.

MINISTER. Good! You witness that, Mr. Brown. She resigns.

BROWN. Yes, siree, Minister. I witness it.

MRS. BROWN. [*Who nods knowingly to MISS MEALEY.*] And now you have no teacher in the town!

ALL. Ugh-huh!

MINISTER. Miss Larkin, I know you don't need our little salary, but you said you'd like to live in this town, and I'd like to have you.

Will you accept the vacant post of teacher of this school?

MARY. Yes, Dr. Singleton.

MINISTER. Thank you. Come in and let me introduce you to the scholars.

[MARY and MINISTER go into the schoolhouse and close the door. In surprise the four women follow, and look in through the window. On seeing the new teacher, cheering from the children is heard, as

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT III

SCENE: *The orchard back of the MINISTER'S house. A covered porch opens out into the garden. It is an Autumn day; the ground is strewn with fallen leaves. There is an apple tree with apples on it, and under it a bench. The MINISTER'S house is to the Left. On the Right, a little path leads up-hill through trees, to a gate. A golden Autumn light pervades everywhere.*

UNCLE BILL *and* AUNT MELISSY *are discovered sitting on a bench under the apple tree. SIMPLICITY is in the tree, watching them from above.*

AUNT MELISSY. I'm sure, Mr. Bill, it's a long time since I've thought of such a thing as marriage and giving in marriage.

UNCLE BILL. I ain't sot much store on it.

AUNT MELISSY. [*Holding her hand to her ear.*] H-a-y-ee?

UNCLE BILL. I say I ain't sot much store on it myself for the last forty years.

AUNT MELISSY. But I must say it's a bit comfortin' to an old body like me to hear as there's someone cares enough for her to want her to change her name.

UNCLE BILL. Then you think, Melissy dear, you kin trust your life to me? [*SIMPLICITY drops autumn leaves on them from above.*] I guess the wind's raisin'.

AUNT MELISSY. And you'd never let me die in the poorhouse, would you, Mr. Bill?

UNCLE BILL. No, siree, Melissa.

AUNT MELISSY. Ha-a-ye-?

[*SIMPLICITY drops more leaves on them.*]

UNCLE BILL. [*Looking up.*] Sort o' spasmodic breezes ever' now and then — hope 'tain't goin' ter rain.

AUNT MELISSY. It will be more convenient for the Minister, too, havin' us married, Mr. William.

UNCLE BILL. Yes, it'll give him an extra room.

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e-?

UNCLE BILL. [*Louder.*] I say it'll give him an extra room for Mis' Woodbridge. That's one reason made me ask yer to-day. Thought as how we *wus* getting sort o' cramped fur room, in the Parsonage.

AUNT MELISSY. You mustn't say *we wus*, if I am going to be Mrs. Walters. I'll have to teach you grammar, Mr. William.

UNCLE BILL. Then it's all settled, is it, Melissy? [*SIMPLICITY drops an apple on UNCLE*

BILL'S *head. He picks up the apple.*] We're goin' ter have an all-fired early apple crop. Hev this one with me, Melissy. I've heard tell of them heathen gods gave Venus a gold apple cas she was a pretty girl.

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e?

UNCLE BILL. I say I've heard tell of one of them heathen gods gave Venus a gold apple cas she was a pretty gal.

AUNT MELISSY. Now, go 'long, Mr. Bill, I'm not a pretty girl.

UNCLE BILL. I didn't say ye wus; I said Venus wus a pretty gal.

AUNT MELISSY. Oh! Yer mustn't talk 'bout Venus until we're married. Come, let us ask the Minister.

[They start to go to the house as BRIDGET and

MR. BROWN come out.

BRIDGET. You'll find him in the orchard.

[BRIDGET goes in again.]

BROWN. Hello — Uncle Bill — is the Minister here?

UNCLE BILL. No, sir, he's to Miss Canning's. Kin we do anythin' fur yer?

BROWN. Well, I dunno. I've come to warn the Minister, in a friendly way, there's trouble brewing in the church. How is he to-day? He's behaved sort o' absent-minded and curious-like the last few days.

AUNT MELISSY. [To BROWN.] The Minister was all put out by the singing in the church Sunday. Said he missed the inspiration of Mis' Woodbridge's voice.

BROWN. Ah, he owned up, did he? That was a mistake. Well, the trouble is, most of the congregation take a different view and sez it made

'em feel real comfortable hearing Molly Mealey getting off the key again in the same old place.

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e?

BROWN. Made 'em feel sort o' comfortable hearing Molly Mealey getting off the key again in the same old place.

AUNT MELISSY. O-h!

BROWN. [*To* UNCLE BILL.] Mis' Woodbridge settlin' down here ter stay?

UNCLE BILL. She's come fer good. I guess — anyway fer a long spell. Her boy was took sick yesterday.

BROWN. That's too bad! Things are going against the Minister. They're all saying he give 'em an old sermon last Sunday.

UNCLE BILL. He had a new one begun — a scorcher — I guess. About whether there's a Purgatory or not.

BROWN. That's just what they wanted. He ought to have given it to 'em hot.

UNCLE BILL. I think he took the side of there being no actual place of the kind.

BROWN. There you have it! Just goin' contrary to the folks' wishes. The people are scandalized by his taking Mis' Woodbridge in. Tell the Minister I've come to tell him there's a private meeting of the Council will be held pretty soon, and I'd advise him, as a friend, to happen in, and if he can say as Mis' Woodbridge has gone to the City on the 5:30 P.M. train, it'd be the best thing fur him.

[During this speech, AUNT MELISSY edges over to BROWN, listening.]

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e?

BROWN. Oh, dog-gon-it — you tell her!

[Walking up and down.]

UNCLE BILL. Mis' Woodbridge's going to the City on the 5:30 train.

SIMPLICITY. [*From the tree.*] Hello, Mr. Brown.

BROWN. Hey? What?

UNCLE BILL. [*Surprised, looking about.*] It's Simplicity.

BROWN. [*Also looking about.*] Where is she?

SIMPLICITY. [*In the tree.*] Here I am, up in the tree.

BROWN. Oh, I thought you weren't allowed to climb the tree?

SIMPLICITY. [*Eating an apple.*] I'm not, by Miss Mattie, but Pop lets me.

BROWN. There, that's just what everyone says — he lets the child do as she pleases.

UNCLE BILL. They'd better not talk to me about the Minister! I can tell yer that I haven't been ringing the bell there for twenty years with

this arm, without putting some muscle into it. Who bought the bell and give it ter the church? Why, the Minister.

AUNT MELISSY. [*Who hasn't heard correctly.*]
Yes, indeed, I was a great belle in my day.

[BROWN *looks disgusted and walks away.*]

UNCLE BILL. We're talking about the church bell the Minister gave. The ding, ding, ding dong bell.

AUNT MELISSY. Oh, yes, indeed, and he just the same as give the church itself. When he first came here, he started right in by lifting the mortgage of three thousand dollars out of his own pocket.

SIMPLICITY. Yes, siree, and I heard every word you said, Mr. Brown, and I can tell you one thing, — Pops will do what's right in spite of all the Councils in creation.

BROWN. But Simplicity, the Minister'd better humor the Council. It's for them to decide who's to be in their pulpit.

SIMPLICITY. I don't care who decides what. I'll bet on Pops every time.

BROWN. Well, I'm his friend, too. I'm going ter do all I kin. *[Goes out through the gate.]*

SIMPLICITY. Uncle Bill, I'm awful glad you and Aunt Melissy are going to be married, but you'd better break it to Miss Mattie first. Pops will be tickled to death, but Mattie will throw a fit.

AUNT MELISSY. *[To UNCLE BILL.]* H-a-y-e? What did she say?

UNCLE BILL. She's offering us her congratulations.

AUNT MELISSY. Thank you, Simplicity.

SIMPLICITY. Aunt Melissy, I'll be your bridesmaid.

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e? What did she say?

UNCLE BILL. She says she wishes she was going ter be married.

AUNT MELISSY. There's plenty of time for you, Simplicity, plenty of time for you.

SIMPLICITY. Uncle Bill, ain't you ashamed of yerself, sparkin' the girls at your age?

UNCLE BILL. What's age got to do with it?

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e? What did she say?

UNCLE BILL. She said you look twenty years younger than yer did yesterday.

[They go into the house laughing.]

SIMPLICITY. *[Still from the tree.]* I don't want ter marry anyone in the world but Pops — I'm goin' to wait until I'm grown up fer him. The trouble is, I'm afraid I'll never be good enough.

[The MINISTER has entered through the gate and is going towards the house. SIMPLICITY throws an apple and hits the MINISTER.]

MINISTER. Hello, is that you, Simple?

SIMPLICITY. Yep. Come along up.

MINISTER. I climb into that tree? Why, what would Mattie say?

SIMPLICITY. She wouldn't care unless you tore your pants. Come along up.

MINISTER. No, you come down — come on — or you'll get into trouble. Look at all the trouble one woman got us into by fooling with an apple tree.

[The MINISTER takes his hat off and lays it on the bench, going up to the tree. He coaxes SIMPLICITY to come down.]

MINISTER. Come on down — come on down.

SIMPLICITY. No, not unless you come up after me first.

MINISTER. We'll see if you won't!

[The MINISTER, reaching up to her, catches her]

— *trying to pull her down by the ankles.* SIMPLICITY *kicks and laughs.*

SIMPLICITY. Pops, you tickle me!

MINISTER. Come down, then. I'll paddy-whack you — that's what I'll do, if you don't.

SIMPLICITY. I'm not afraid. Ouch!

MINISTER. Are you coming?

SIMPLICITY. No — ouch!

MINISTER. Yes you are, too.

[SIMPLICITY *loses her hold. She slides down from the tree, and her dress catches on a snag as the MINISTER helps her down.*

SIMPLICITY. Oh, did you hear that?

MINISTER. Did it tear?

SIMPLICITY. Yes, and you did it too, Pops!

MINISTER. By Jupiter — what'll Mattie say?

SIMPLICITY. [*Trying to fix tear.*] She walloped me yesterday fer doin' it, *with her hair brush.*

MINISTER. Try and keep out of sight until after prayers again. She didn't punish you the other night, did she?

SIMPLICITY. No, of course not, after the chapter you read, Pops. I thought it was awful good of you to choose one about being patient with transgressors.

[She takes an apple out of her waist, and bites it.]

MINISTER. I wasn't thinking of you, Simple. I read that for Mrs. Woodbridge.

SIMPLICITY. *[Throwing down apple.]* Say, Pops, you've got to stop that. Mr. Brown has just been here ter say so.

MINISTER. Mr. Brown? To say what?

SIMPLICITY. He says the church people are mad as hornets at you.

MINISTER. Mad at me? Why?

SIMPLICITY. 'Cause you let Mrs. Woodbridge come and live with us.

MINISTER. What business is that of theirs?

SIMPLICITY. There's a meeting of the Council this afternoon.

MINISTER. [*Angry.*] What? A church meeting without me?

SIMPLICITY. That's it, Pops. Get mad at them — don't you be afraid!

MINISTER. Did he say anything else?

SIMPLICITY. Yes. Lots! They all liked Miss Mealey's singing.

[*Giggling.*]

MINISTER. [*Laughing.*] No? Did he say that, Simple? [*Laughs.*] Oh, that's too good.

[*The MINISTER and SIMPLICITY both laugh.*]

SIMPLICITY. And you preached an old sermon day before yesterday.

MINISTER. Well, I did — I did. I couldn't get Mary Larkin's face out of my eyes long enough to write.

SIMPLICITY. And Mrs. Woodbridge? Oh, they're mad — you took her in.

MINISTER. Poor woman! They'd hound her out of the village if they could.

SIMPLICITY. That's what he said, Pops. It'd be good for you if you could happen in at the meeting and say that Mrs. Woodbridge was going to the City on the 5:30 train.

[MATTIE enters from house.]

MINISTER. [*Angry.*] I'll happen into the meeting and tell them she won't do any such thing.

MATTIE. [*On the steps.*] What, Tom?

MINISTER. Why, there's trouble in the church over Mrs. Woodbridge. They've driven her out of the choir and out of her home, and now they want to drive her out of the Parsonage.

MATTIE. [*Coming down.*] Well, I'd like to see them do it.

SIMPLICITY. Bully for you!

[*Running to MATTIE and taking her hand.*]

MATTIE. [*Looking at SIMPLICITY'S hands.*] For goodness' sake, go and wash your hands — they're filthy!

[*SIMPLICITY goes, but sits down on the steps.*]

MINISTER. She shall stay with me as long as she wants to. The Parsonage belongs to me. I'm going to give it to the church, but I haven't yet.

MATTIE. But Tom, dear, the *church* isn't yours.

MINISTER. What do you mean, Mattie?

MATTIE. The Council have the power to put you out of the church for good.

MINISTER. Put me out? Put me — why, Mattie — how could you ever *think* of such a thing — *me?*

MATTIE. Well, suppose that you didn't satisfy them?

MINISTER. Didn't satisfy them? What do they want? I've given them most of my money and all of my time. Why, the bell in that little square tower over there has never rung out once, in all these fifteen years for service, without our gate latching behind me before the third stroke.

MATTIE. Don't I know that, Tom, dear?

MINISTER. They'd never ask me to resign. Why, they couldn't do a cruel thing like that! They can't help knowing that my heart and soul are mortared up in those red brick walls — Why, Mattie — Mattie — how could you?

[He goes over to the bench and sits down.]

MATTIE. Good gracious, Tom, I didn't want to make you feel this bad —

MINISTER. Oh, well, I guess Simple has been exaggerating a little.

MATTIE. Simple! Now I wish I'd punished her last night for tearing her dress again. Perhaps I will, anyway, when I go in.

[SIMPLICITY, *who has been listening, runs into the house.*

MINISTER. How's little Dick?

MATTIE. 'Bout the same — fever high, but the Doctor says there's no danger. But that isn't my news! It's Aunt Melissy.

MINISTER. [*Rising.*] Not dead?

MATTIE. [*Laughing.*] No — worse — married!

MINISTER. Married?

[*Laughing incredulously.*

MATTIE. She and Uncle Bill want your consent.

MINISTER. Jupiter! What did you tell them?

MATTIE. Never was so stunned in my life!
I was speechless!

MINISTER. Speechless! I guess it was for the first time, Mattie.

MATTIE. Well, I'd like to know where you'd be if it wa'n't for my tongue?

MINISTER. Crowded out of existence long ago. I'll tell you how to let Aunt Melissy know my answer. You know those worsted slippers Molly Mealey gave me the other day?

MATTIE. Yes, I put them in the Missionary Church along with the others.

MINISTER. Well, take them to Aunt Melissy, and say I sent them to her to give to Uncle Bill.

[Enter BRIDGET from the house with broom and dust cap, her dress pinned up.]

BRIDGET. If yer plaze, there's such a foine

lady ter see ye. With kid gloves and parasol and voice like a Frinch novel. Calls herself Mrs. Lane.

MATTIE. Good gracious! And the parlor furniture's got covers on, and the mosquito netting's all over the chandelier!

[MATTIE *hurries into the house.*

MINISTER. [*Pauses.*] Let her come here.

BRIDGET. [*Pause.*] And Mrs. Brown and her two gabby friends is here to see Mattie.

[MRS. LANE *enters from the house.*

MRS. LANE. Good afternoon, Doctor.

[BRIDGET *goes into the house.*

MINISTER. Good day. To what am I indebted for this pleasure?

MRS. LANE. As my brother, Mr. Woodbridge, acknowledged, he failed to accomplish anything with you yesterday. I have come to appeal to

the woman who was his wife and left him. Mrs. Woodbridge is staying at the Parsonage, I believe?

MINISTER. That is true.

MRS. LANE. Is she at home?

MINISTER. She is.

MRS. LANE. I have asked for you lest you should think I were doing something underhanded. I presume I may see her.

MINISTER. If she has no objection.

[MRS. BROWN, MOLLY MEALEY *and* MRS.

STEELE *enter, all coming from the house and talking rapidly.*

ALL. Good afternoon, Minister.

MINISTER. Good afternoon. [*On seeing the women, MRS. LANE looks irritated.*] Mrs. Brown, this is Mrs. Lane from New York. Mrs. Brown is the head woman of our church.

MRS. BROWN. [*Comes forward to greet MRS. LANE.*] Pleased to meet you.

[*Turns up her nose.*]

MRS. LANE. [*Drawing aside coldly.*] How do you do?

MINISTER. Miss Molly Mealey, the alto in our choir. You'd hear her sing a solo if you came to church.

MISS MEALEY. [*Comes forward giggling.*] How do you do?

MRS. LANE. [*Drawing aside coldly.*] How do you do, Miss Mealey?

MINISTER. Mrs. Steele bakes the best bread in the whole town. We couldn't give a church sociable without her.

MRS. STEELE. [*Eyeing her critically, comes forward and says roughly :*] How-de-do?

[*The three women move away.*]

MRS. LANE. [*Walks to the steps of the house. She turns to the MINISTER.*] Good afternoon, Doctor. I was to meet my brother here. If he comes after I have gone, will you be kind enough to say that I have returned to the hotel? Ladies — good afternoon.

[*Goes into the house. The three ladies watch her.*]

MRS. BROWN. Such airs!

MISS MEALEY. [*To MRS. BROWN.*] I never saw such manners!

MINISTER. You see she comes from the City — she doesn't know any better!

MRS. STEELE. Y-e-s!

[*The three gossip, and all laugh patronizingly and look at each other.*]

MRS. BROWN. Is *she* staying at the Parsonage?

MINISTER. Oh, no.

MISS MEALEY. We thought she might be

visiting Mrs. Woodbridge. She is staying at the Parsonage, we believe, for good now.

MINISTER. Yes, she and her little boy, who is ill.

MISS MEALEY. So Miss Mattie told us. We've just been to see her —

MRS. BROWN. Being a Committee of the Sewing Circle —

MISS MEALEY. Which was ter meet here to-morrow at the Parsonage —

MRS. STEELE. Y-e-s.

MINISTER. Isn't Mattie willing? You just leave her to me.

MRS. BROWN. It's the ladies of the Sewing Circle who ain't willing, Mr. Minister.

MISS MEALEY. Whom we represent —

MRS. STEELE. Y-e-s!

MRS. BROWN. If Mrs. Woodbridge is in the Parsonage, the ladies won't come.

MISS MEALEY. We gave Miss Mattie her choice.

MRS. BROWN. And she chose Mrs. Woodbridge.

MINISTER. Bully for Mattie!

MISS MEALEY. Hem! and we are now on our way to the Sunday-school room to report.

[They start toward the gate.]

MRS. BROWN. To the Council that's in session there, and who are waiting to hear the result of our visit.

MRS. STEELE. *[To the MINISTER.]* Y-e-s.

MINISTER. You'd better not keep them waiting.

MRS. BROWN. Doctor, perhaps you wouldn't indorse Miss Mattie's decision.

MINISTER. Wouldn't I? All I want is the chance.

MRS. BROWN. That settles it.

[Goes through the gate.]

MRS. STEELE. Y-e-s.

[She rushes out of gate, and joins MRS. BROWN.]

MISS MEALEY. *[Inside gate, half crying.]* Are congratulations in order, Minister?

MINISTER. Yes, for Aunt Melissy and Uncle Bill.

MISS MEALEY. *[At the gate.]* I ain't joking, Minister. I think you'd better give me back those slippers I embroidered.

MINISTER. *[Recollects.]* By Jupiter — it's too late now — I've given them to Uncle Bill!

MISS MEALEY. *[Half crying.]* How dared you?

[Going down the lane and out of sight, calling

"Lizzie — Lizzie." HERBERT WOODBRIDGE enters.]

HERBERT. Has my sister gone?

MINISTER. Yes, to the hotel.

HERBERT. Well, what are you going to do for me?

MINISTER. Nothing. You won't let me do anything for you.

HERBERT. Try me and see.

MINISTER. Well, will you promise me to give up a life you can't afford — to give up drinking if you can't help getting drunk, and to try and live a life that will be an honor for Miss Larkin to share —

HERBERT. And if I won't promise all that?

MINISTER. Then I must use my influence, if I have any, against you.

HERBERT. You've got a lot of influence. That's the curse of it! I'll tell you what it is — I believe you are in love with her.

MINISTER. I?

HERBERT. Yes. Why did you take such an interest in her, and why did you give her a ring off your own hand, and one that you were evidently pretty fond of, too? And why have you got her over here to teach school? Of course you're in love with her! I want to know if you think it's an honest thing for you to take a man's wife away from him at the very moment of his marriage!

MINISTER. Look here, young man, do you know who you're talking to?

HERBERT. Yes, I do — I'm talking to the Minister whom I asked to marry me, and who, instead of doing so, is amusing himself by casting slurs on my character. A caddish thing to do!

MINISTER. Cad! You'd better take that back.

HERBERT. No, I won't. It was an underhand thing to do.

[Makes a motion to strike the MINISTER.]

MINISTER. *[Holding off at arm's length.]* Look out! Preaching isn't the only thing I can do. I'm the captain of our ball nine, and the Congregationalists didn't knock out the Methodists last Spring for nothing. I can use my fists.

[HERBERT strikes viciously at the MINISTER.]

HERBERT. Use them!

[The MINISTER, catching HERBERT'S arm, prevents the blow. He holds him fast. A tense pause. Then he lets go.]

MINISTER. I'm only afraid I will.

HERBERT. Afraid you will?

MINISTER. Yes, I'm afraid I'll forget I'm a Minister, as you forgot that you were a gentleman.

HERBERT. [*Shamed, turns from MINISTER.*]
I beg your pardon — I did forget myself.

MINISTER. Why, you've no muscle! If you'd been half as ready to fight the Evil One as you are to pitch into me, you'd get more strength of one kind, anyway.

HERBERT. You're right — I beg your pardon — it is I who am the cad. [*Walks over to the tree.*]

MINISTER. [*Whose eyes follow HERBERT.*]
Now, that acknowledgment makes me respect you more than anything else you've said or done.

HERBERT. [*Turning to him.*] How's that?

MINISTER. Because there's hope for a man who can see he's been wrong and acknowledges it. You didn't behave right to your wife and boy, did you?

HERBERT. No, I didn't, and I'm sorry for it, too. A year ago I wanted to go to Lucy and ask

her to try me again, but my sister told me I'd be a fool. I had a feeling I'd like to see the boy. I used to wonder how he looked. I could only remember him as such a little chap.

MINISTER. [*With his hands on HERBERT'S shoulders.*] Look here, there's good in you.

HERBERT. Not much, I guess.

MINISTER. Yes, there is. Will you give me your promise to try for the next six months to do without those things which would keep Mary — Miss Larkin — from being happy?

HERBERT. I'll try my best.

MINISTER. You'll promise?

HERBERT. [*Going up to the MINISTER and shaking hands.*] I'll promise.

MINISTER. Good —

HERBERT. In six months I'll come back and ask for Mary —

MINISTER. And I'll give her to you.

HERBERT. I shan't write to her, though, nor let her write to me. I'll tell her to-day, and say good-by.

MINISTER. You'll find her at the schoolhouse.

[HERBERT goes toward the gate, and gets to the tree as MRS. WOODBRIDGE appears on the porch, coming from the house.]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [Coming down.] Doctor, Mrs. Lane has asked me to — [She notices HERBERT.] She told me you were alone, Doctor.

HERBERT. [Turns, at sound of voice, sees MRS. WOODBRIDGE, and starts.] I am just saying good-by —

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Wait! [HERBERT stops.] It would, perhaps, be as well for you to hear what I have to say, that you may assure your sister I kept my word to her. [To the MINISTER.]

His sister wishes me to tell you — what I believe to be true — that her brother loves me dearly — that he never ill-treated me, and as I believe I said to you the other day, I think he is capable of better things.

HERBERT. Lucy — you are too generous to me.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I am trying to be just — I confess that at such a time as this — [*With emotion.*] My heart feels tender towards my boy's father.

HERBERT. What do you mean?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*With a sob in her voice.*]
I mean he is very ill.

[*Turning toward the house.*]

HERBERT. Ill? Dick! I should like to see him!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*Coming back.*] What!

HERBERT. [*Pleading.*] How I should like to see him!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. No!

HERBERT. [*Following her.*] Yes — let me see him.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. No — you shall not!

HERBERT. [*Determined.*] He is my son! I will! [*He starts to go. She stops him.*]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. You shall not! I have spoken in your behalf for another woman, but I will not share the love of my child with her husband — he belongs only to me!

[*There is a pause. HERBERT bows his head and goes out through the gate.*]

MINISTER. [*To MRS. WOODBRIDGE.*] My poor woman!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, I am tired out — I didn't know what I was saying! I don't know

what you think of me — but I love him in spite of everything — with all my heart !

MINISTER. There, there, come and take a walk under the trees. It will do you good. I'll go a little way with you.

[They go out. AUNT MELISSY enters from the house, followed by UNCLE BILL, arguing.]

AUNT MELISSY. No — I don't want anything more to do with you !

UNCLE BILL. Look here, Melissy, don't break it off like that, so sudden-like.

AUNT MELISSY. Yes, I must. I couldn't look forward to a life of bickering and quarrelling like this —

UNCLE BILL. But if you'd only just let my grammar alone, Melissy — we'd be all right.

AUNT MELISSY. Yes, but your grammar wouldn't be. I hate to say it to you, Mr. Bill,

especially in anger, but you must know that some people consider it a misalliance for me to marry you anyway.

UNCLE BILL. What's that, Melissy?

AUNT MELISSY. Marrying beneath my social station. [UNCLE BILL *tries to interrupt.*] Not that I think it, goodness knows!

UNCLE BILL. Well, then, why not shake hands, kiss and make up!

AUNT MELISSY. [*Puts her hands to her ears and says:*] H-a-y-e?

UNCLE BILL. I say why not shake hands, and kiss and make up!

[AUNT MELISSY *turns away from* UNCLE BILL.

AUNT MELISSY. No, I can't forget your spirit when I corrected your grammar.

UNCLE BILL. But you did it five times to once, Melissy.

AUNT MELISSY. Well, you oughtn't have given me the chance.

UNCLE BILL. All right, then — if it's all over — it's over. I did lose my temper, but I'm likely to do it again. I guess it's better so. But I can't keep these here. [*Handing her one slipper which he takes from under his vest.*] You'll have to take yer present back. [*Handing her the other slipper.*] Perhaps you'll find somebody else that they'll fit, whose tongue will fit the English language better — [AUNT MELISSY goes toward the gate. UNCLE BILL watches her until she gets to the gate. Following.] Where be yer goin', Miss Melissy?

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e?

UNCLE BILL. I say where be yer goin'?

AUNT MELISSY. [*At the gate.*] I'm going down Lovers' Lane to think. Hope it'll do me some

good. And you needn't wait to take me home after the meeting, Mr. Bill, 'cause I don't want yer!

[Goes off down the lane.]

UNCLE BILL. *[In thought at the foot of the steps of house.]* I know what I'll do — I'll go and buy one of them spelling grammars first thing in the morning.

[Goes into the house.]

SIMPLICITY. *[Rushes out from the house, carrying a milk-pail, MARY LARKIN following her.]* SIMPLICITY *calls.* Pops! *[The MINISTER comes from orchard.]* Pops, here's Miss Larkin come to see you — says she brought something of yours back.

MINISTER. How do you do, Miss Larkin?

MARY. How do you do, Doctor Singleton?

MINISTER. Where are you going, Simple?

SIMPLICITY. Oh, you needn't hint, Pops. I know two's company and three ain't allowed, but

I couldn't stay if I wanted. Aunt Mattie found a tear in my dress, and is making me milk the cow for punishment.

MINISTER. I guess you've worn out Aunt Mattie's patience.

SIMPLICITY. Well, the next thing I wear out will be that cow. [*Calling back from the gate.*] I guess she'll wish she'd never been born, before I get through milking her.

MINISTER. Simple, don't forget you're a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

SIMPLICITY. [*Running down to the MINISTER.*] Pops, when Miss Mattie gave me that there order, I temporarily resigned and stuck my badge on Bridget! Pops, I won't do a thing to that cow!

[*Runs out.*]

MINISTER. Don't you like Simple?

MARY. [*Coming down from the porch.*] Yes, of course I do.

MINISTER. She's an orphan. Nobody could understand her — thought she was bad. She was in three asylums in two months, and after a while there wasn't one in the State that would have her — she's so sensitive, it hurts her feelings. I took her to live in the Parsonage, and now couldn't get along without her.

MARY. [*Going over to the bench under the tree.*] Doctor, were you ever unkind to anybody?

MINISTER. [*Following MARY.*] I am afraid I was not as kind to Mr. Woodbridge on Saturday as I ought to have been.

MARY. Oh, that reminds me why I came — I am afraid you thought it very odd of me coming over here so often — now own up, didn't you, Doctor?

MINISTER. No, I don't know as I thought anything. I was just enjoying it without thinking —

MARY. Oh, Doctor, may I have an apple?

MINISTER. Yes, indeed, you must excuse me for not offering you one before. [*Looking up the tree, he sees an apple, but it is out of his reach. He jumps for the apple.*] Here's a beauty!

MARY. Yes, but it's out of your reach.

MINISTER. Wish it were the only thing out of my reach!

[*He stands for a moment in a trance, and then goes to MARY.*]

MARY. Nothing ought to be out of your reach, Doctor. And nothing would be if it only knew you wanted it, I'm sure.

[*Turns her face away.*]

MINISTER. [*Almost about to embrace her.*]

Jupiter, I was forgetting about your apple! Oh, here's one.

[He stands on the bench to reach the apple, and hands it to MARY.]

MARY. A splendid one — have you got a knife?

MINISTER. Yes, siree — a beauty. The Deacons gave it to me two Christmases ago.

MARY. *[Handing him the apple.]* Oh, a splendid one — now cut it in half.

MINISTER. No, I don't want any.

MARY. Yes, you must eat half with me. *[The MINISTER digs out the seeds and cuts the apple in half.]* No, save the seeds, and we'll wish with them!

MINISTER. How?

MARY. Don't you know how? I'll show you. Oh, you're so tall I must get up on the bench. *[She gets on bench to reach him.]* Now, close your eyes.

MINISTER. Close my eyes —?

MARY. You're not afraid, are you?

MINISTER. No, but if I do I can't see you.

MARY. Never mind that — I can see you. Go on, now close them. [*The MINISTER closes his eyes.*] Now, are they tight closed — so you can't see a bit? [*The MINISTER nods his head. She leans toward him and throws a kiss.*] Now, come a little nearer, please. First I put an apple seed on each one of your eyelids. There, now — wish! [*Short pause.*] Have you wished?

MINISTER. Yes, but my nose itches, — may I scratch it?

MARY. [*Frightened.*] No! that might knock off the seeds. Now, wink three times, and if one of the seeds stays on, you'll get your wish.

MINISTER. I've done it — are they both off?

MARY. [*Jumping down from the bench.*] No,

they're both on — you'll get your wish! What was it?

MINISTER. I thought it wouldn't come true if I told you?

MARY. Well, of course we're only joking. I'm afraid you think me a perfect child.

MINISTER. Perfect? Yes.

MARY. [*Serious.*] What did you wish for? Something for yourself?

MINISTER. No, not for myself — it was for you. [*Taking her hand.*] I wished that when Spring comes, after all the fruits of the Autumn have been gathered and the dead stalks of the branches have been thrown away, there will come with the new blossoms a new Herbert Woodbridge — [*releases her hand*] giving you a new love and life worthy of you. And the happiness you crave.

MARY. [*Sadly.*] Thank you, sir. That re-

minds me, I haven't told you yet why I came. It was to give you back your ring.

MINISTER. But I thought you were going to keep it while you waited.

MARY. Yes, but I have told Mr. Woodbridge I can never marry him.

MINISTER. But you mustn't decide that too suddenly — I believe I was not quite fair to him yesterday.

MARY. He told me everything, — things I'd never heard of before. I didn't think him that kind of a man. I thought him good like you.

MINISTER. Perhaps you can make him good. I'm afraid I'm to blame for your feeling this way. Give him one more chance, won't you?

MARY. I can't promise to marry him if I can't love him when he comes back.

MINISTER. I don't want you to do that. Only give him a chance until Spring.

MARY. I will if you wish it. But you must take back the ring.

MINISTER. Well, I will — but why?

MARY. [*Going toward the house.*] Because, Dr. Singleton, I know when Herbert comes in the Spring my heart will not beat one bit quicker.

MINISTER. Ah, you mustn't be too sure! It isn't fair to him.

MARY. I can't help it — I know now I shall never marry. Good-by.

[*She walks toward the porch.*]

MINISTER. [*Following her.*] And my wish?

MARY. You see, you told it, so it can't come true. Good-by.

[*She goes into the house.*]

MINISTER. Good-by. [*He watches her as she disappears through the door.*] What am I thinking about — I have given my promise to persuade her to wait till the Spring. [*A pause.*]

SIMPLICITY *appears, going slowly.*] Till Spring —
[*He sits on the bench.*] Till Spring. [*A bird sings
in the tree, and SIMPLICITY creeps up behind him.
The MINISTER, in deep study, does not look at her.*]
Is that you, Simple?

SIMPLICITY. [*Half crying.*] Yes, Pops. I know
what's the matter with you, Pops!

MINISTER. There's nothing the matter with
me, Simple.

SIMPLICITY. [*Crying.*] Pops, you're in love
with her!

MINISTER. What makes you think so, Simple?

SIMPLICITY. 'Cause when she went into the
house your eyes followed her and — Oh, Pops —
[*Throwing her arms around him and crying still
louder.*]

MINISTER. [*Trying to comfort her.*] Why, Simple,
Simple dear. Why, Simple, what is it — what is it?

SIMPLICITY. [*Kneeling beside him — still louder.*] I want to marry you myself!

MINISTER. Why, she's going to marry Mr. Woodbridge. Lots of us can't marry the people we want to. There, there, dear, I'm not going to marry anyone at all. [*Rising.*] No one at all.

[*He lifts her up.*]

SIMPLICITY. Then neither am I — I'll be an old maid like Miss Mattie.

MINISTER. Now, wipe your eyes and cheer up. I've got my church to give my life to. I've got my church to comfort me.

[*A bird sings in the tree, and* DEACON STEELE,
MR. and MRS. BROWN, MOLLY MEALEY
and MRS. STEELE *enter through the gate.*]

MR. BROWN. Good evenin', Minister.

MINISTER. Good evening.

DEACON STEELE. Good evening! We've come

to see you on a serious business. Ahem! We — perhaps we'd better go into the house.

MR. BROWN. There's no harm in staying here — it's pleasant after the close Sunday-school room.

MINISTER. Yes, I wrote to town this evening for some new ventilators I saw advertised in the *Observer*.

MR. BROWN. I think, Minister, you'd better send Simple in.

MINISTER. Yes, you go in, Simple. Why, where's your milk?

SIMPLICITY. [*From the foot of the steps.*] The cow kicked over the pail and spilt all the milk.

MINISTER. What have you done with the pail?

SIMPLICITY. Left it there. 'Cause I thought like as not Miss Mattie would make me go back and milk her all over again.

[*She goes into the house. BROWN laughs heartily.*

STEELE. What are you laughing at, Brown?
That child grows worse every day.

UNCLE BILL. [*Enters from the house.*] Good evening — good evening!

EVERYBODY. Good evening.

UNCLE BILL. Nearly time for evening meeting.
And the bell has never rung a second late since old Walters took to ringing it.

[*Goes out.*

MINISTER. I had no idea it was so late.

STEELE. Well, Minister, as Mr. Brown told yer, there's bin a meetin' of the Council this afternoon —

MINISTER. Yes, and it hurt me a good deal that I wasn't wanted.

MATTIE. [*Coming out from the house, with her bonnet and shawl on.*] Good evening.

EVERYBODY. Good evening, Miss Mattie.

MR. BROWN. Goin' to meetin' pretty early, Miss Mattie.

MATTIE. Yes, I want to mend our seat cushion before it begins. Simple wiggles so during the sermon, she wears her place out in no time.

[Goes out.]

STEELE. *[To the MINISTER.]* I guess we'd better be quick about what we've come to say, Minister. That Council was called because of the dissatisfaction, ahem — the — I may say wide-spread dis-sat-isdiction that has — ahem — that has been felt by your entire congregation — ahem — for some time. *[Taking out Resolutions from his pocket.]* I have been deputed by the Council to see you concerning the facts which they set forth with a — ahem — great generosity, as follows: You have encouraged beggars by taking in Aunt

Melissy and old Bill Walters, and given them — ahem — a home. You have damaged the character of our county Orphan Asylum by taking in your house a child which it had refused to shelter. You have robbed of her position the faithful and sweet teacher of our — [MOLLY *weeps silently*. MRS. BROWN *encourages her — petting her*] school to further your own ends. And for fifteen years you have neglected — ahem — I can put this stronger — you have refused to take a helpmate from your congregation, which contains many well-favored women willing to help you in your work.

MR. BROWN. Willing? Anxious!

[MRS. BROWN *takes MR. BROWN by the arm, and jerks him roughly to her.*

STEELE. We ain't satisfied with your laxity and freedom. We don't want a new doctrine

upsettin' the old order — we don't want a billiard table in the young men's club. We don't want playing cards in the social parlors. It's rumored you've even written a sermon upholdin' the new-fangled doctrine of there being no such thing as Fire and Brimstun! You have harbored in your house a woman who has, of her own free will, sundered her marriage vow, thus bringing scandal on the community — ahem! Do you deny any of these charges?

[The choir of the evening meeting is heard singing.]

MINISTER. No.

STEELE. It is, then — my — ahem — painful duty to inform you that, unless Mrs. Woodbridge and her child leave your house at once, the Council feels obliged to ask — ahem — demand — your resignation — to take effect at once.

MINISTER. At once? But it's time for evening meeting now.

STEELE. [*Taking off his glasses.*] Deacon Frost has kindly volunteered to lead, if you decide to resign. Will you give us your answer at once?

MINISTER. Yes.

MR. BROWN. Maybe you'd like to think it over, Minister. If so, we will go away and come back.

[*He starts to go.*]

MRS. BROWN. [*Pulling him back.*] Oh, no we won't!

STEELE. Well, what is it?

[*All breathless — impatient.*]

MINISTER. A little while ago I said to my sister, the bell in that little square tower over there has never rung once in all these fifteen years for service without our little gate latching behind

me before the third stroke, but if it should ring till midnight to-night, it wouldn't find me one step nearer than I am now.

STEELE. That's not answering us.

MINISTER. If I finish the sermon that's on my desk now, I'm afraid it would be a plea for Purgatory after all —

STEELE. [*To the others.*] Ah, he's compromising!

MINISTER. You want my answer — well, take it. I have wasted my time among you — lost my strength — and if you were to withdraw every one of your charges now, my answer would still be the same — *I am ashamed of you all!*

STEELE. Then your answer is —

MINISTER. *My resignation!*

[*The MINISTER stands motionless. They all go off through the gate. MOLLY MEALEY sobs.*

The church bell rings, which brings the MINISTER to his senses. He starts toward the gate as if to go to church, partly opens it, and walks slowly back. There is a pause, and then he sits down on the bench under the tree in a sort of dream, as

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT IV

SCENE: *The orchard. The same set as for Act III, only changed from an Autumn to a Spring morning. The apple tree is in full blossom. An easel and painting-stool, paints, brushes, etc., are on the lawn. SIMPLICITY discovered by the tree, examining the bark.*

SIMPLICITY. I'm sure Pops was cutting something on this tree. I knew it — he was cutting her name! M-a-r-y — [*She tries to scratch the letters from the tree with a knife.*] There, I won't have her name on my apple tree.

MATTIE. [*Appears at an upper window of the house, calling.*] Simple — Simple — [*SIMPLICITY hides behind the tree.*] I guess she's gone down to the

village. [*Speaking back into the room.*] Bridget, you're positively the most shiftless person I ever knew — [*SIMPLICITY climbs up into the tree.*] I declare to goodness you haven't done a stroke of work to-day. Nobody could have rheumatism a day like this. [*MARY LARKIN enters from the house. She goes to the easel, arranging paints, etc.*] It's only an excuse to get out of your work. [*Catching sight of MISS LARKIN.*] Oh, you found your way out, all right. I wish I wasn't so over-run with work this morning — I'd sit right here in the window, and you could put me in the picture.

MARY. Thank you, but I didn't intend to do the house. I hope I haven't interrupted you too much. I tried to come across the hills through the gate — but I couldn't; it was fastened.

MATTIE. Yes, siree, — when I came home from that meeting last Fall, led by old Deacon Frost,

and found out why the Minister wasn't there, I nailed up that gate hard with a hatchet. And says I to him, "Nobody goes through that gate again till you do,—back to your rightful place in the pulpit yonder."

MARY. I don't blame you, Miss Mattie. You don't mind my making a sketch of your orchard, do you?

MATTIE. Good land, no!

MARY. You see, I don't know when I shall ever get here again, and I want a little souvenir of the place.

MATTIE. It's a pity you're leaving the school — it's just them jealous women that's making your life a burden here.

MARY. Oh, no! *[Begins to paint.*

MATTIE. *[Turning from the window and speaking back into the room.]* Now, what is it, Bridget?

For the land's sake, put a hot raisin on it, and tie your cheek up with a hot cloth. But don't take to having the toothache too often, or I'll forbid you that, along with the rheumatism. [*To MARY.*] For the goodness sake, Miss Larkin, if you ever marry, don't have a cook in poor health.

[*MINISTER enters from the house as MATTIE disappears from the window.*]

SIMPLICITY. [*In the tree.*] Don't she think she's smart — pretending to come here and paint the orchard. Who ever heard of painting an orchard — it's just an excuse to see Pops!

MINISTER. Good morning.

[*At the sound of his voice, SIMPLICITY starts, but recovers quickly. The MINISTER looks over MARY'S shoulder as she paints.*]

MARY. [*Looking up.*] Good morning, Dr. Singleton.

SIMPLICITY. [*In the tree, mocking MARY.*] Good morning, Dr. Singleton.

MINISTER. [*Looking at the picture.*] Oh, you're putting us in?

MARY. Trying to. Do you remember that day?

MINISTER. It was just six months ago, yesterday.

MARY. Yesterday — and Herbert hasn't come. Do you know what I heard in the village this morning?

MINISTER. No — what?

MARY. [*Smiling and painting.*] The new Minister's leaving.

MINISTER. What! The last one — why, he's only been here a month.

MARY. I know it. But he says he can't stand it — there's no pleasing them. I told Mrs. Brown I was glad of it.

MINISTER. You'd better look out or she won't let you board with her any longer.

MARY. What do you think — she agreed with me!

MINISTER. No!

MARY. Yes, she did, and she said it would teach the people a lesson.

BRIDGET. [*Coming out of the house with a red flannel cloth tied around her face, as if suffering from toothache.*] If you plaze, surr, Miss Mattie's after asking if you're going to the post office?

MINISTER. Yes, I'm going right away, Bridget.

[*BRIDGET goes back into the house.*]

MARY. Doctor, will you ask if there are any letters for me too, please?

MINISTER. Yes. I know from whom you mean. A letter or he must come to-day.

[*He goes toward the house.*]

MARY. Good-by.

[The MINISTER turns at the porch.]

MINISTER. Good-by.

MARY. Good-by!

SIMPLICITY. *[In the tree, mockingly.]* Good-by — it's about time she went back to her own town to live! Anyhow, I'm going to get Pops out of her head.

[Suddenly jumps from the tree, frightening MARY.]

MARY. Oh, how you frightened me!

SIMPLICITY. Did I — what 'cher doing?

[Going over to MARY.]

MARY. Painting.

SIMPLICITY. What?

MARY. The orchard — don't you see?

SIMPLICITY. *[Coming behind her, and looking over MARY'S shoulder, she rubs her finger on the canvas.]* What's that?

MARY. Oh, please be careful — you'll spoil it.

SIMPLICITY. [*Sulkily.*] 'Scuse me!

MARY. That's the bench under the tree, with Dr. Singleton on it.

SIMPLICITY. Who's that going to be by him — Mis' Woodbridge?

MARY. No, I am on the bench. [*After a pause.*] Simple, what made you think it was Mrs. Woodbridge?

SIMPLICITY. 'Cause Pops is in love with her. [*Waiting to see the effect.*] I say Pops is in love with Mrs. Woodbridge. That's why he took up for her against the church. I guess they'll be married soon.

MARY. [*Rising from the stool.*] I don't believe it!

SIMPLICITY. Don't you? That's because you're in love with him yourself.

MARY. How dare you say that — how dare you? You're a bad, impudent little girl — that's what you are!

SIMPLICITY. I thought I'd make you mad before I got through. Everybody sees you're in love with him.

MARY. [*Half crying — very angry.*] You've no right to say such a thing! Suppose he had heard you? I — I — I hate you! [*Going up to the picture.*] Simplicity, I hate you — I hate you! You'll see if I love him. [*She takes her palette knife from the easel, and zig-zags across the picture.*] There, there, there! I wouldn't do that if I loved him! And you can tell everybody who's said so that I love Herbert — Woodbridge, and that he's coming to marry me to-day. Oh, you spiteful little thing — I hate you — I hate you!

[She drops the knife and rushes away through the trees.]

SIMPLICITY. *[Watches her out of sight; then she picks up the camp stool and knocks down the easel.]*
I hate you too — I hate you! I've separated you and Pops, but I wish I was dead!

[She throws herself on the bench and sobs violently. MRS. BROWN, carrying a parasol, and MISS MEALEY appear at the gate, trying to open it, but cannot.]

MISS MEALEY. I can't open it.

MRS. BROWN. Let me try — you haven't strength enough to kill a mosquito.

[She struggles with the locked gate, but fails to open it. The noise arouses SIMPLICITY.]

SIMPLICITY. You can't get in that way — Miss Mattie's nailed Lovers' Lane up.

MRS. BROWN. *[From the other side of the*

gate, very sweetly.] Oh, Simplicity, how do you do?

MISS MEALEY. How do you do?

SIMPLICITY. [*Not moving from the bench.*] My health's pretty good, I thank you. You'll have to go around to the front if you want to get in.

MRS. BROWN. Oh, dear! We haven't time to do that.

MISS MEALEY. Perhaps if Miss Mattie knew what we come for, she'd let us in this way.

SIMPLICITY. Well, I'll call her. Miss Mattie — Miss Mattie — Miss Mattie!

[She runs into the house.

MRS. BROWN. [*Still outside the gate.*] Now, Molly Mealey, for Heaven's sake, don't make a fool of yourself like the last time you were here. Throwing out hints to Dr. Singleton, after being snubbed by everyone of those new preachers!

You ought to begin to see the Lord never intended you for a minister's wife.

MISS MEALEY. I wish you'd mind your own business, Mrs. Brown. Just because you're the mother of seven, you needn't think nobody else can have a chance — I'm something of a flirt, but I'm not fickle!

[MATTIE comes from the house.]

MRS. BROWN. [*At the gate, very pleasantly.*]
Good morning, Miss Mattie.

MATTIE. [*Shortly.*] How do you do?

MRS. BROWN. We just thought we'd drop in.

MATTIE. It's taken you about six months to think it.

MISS MEALEY. Can we get in this way?

MATTIE. Yes.

MISS MEALEY and MRS. BROWN. [*Very pleased.*] O-oh!

MATTIE. If you can climb!

MRS. BROWN. Oh, now, Miss Mattie!

MATTIE. No, siree. When you shut that gate against the Minister, you shut it against yourselves too.

MRS. BROWN. But we've come to open it again for him, now.

MATTIE. What?

MISS MEALEY. And we've come to ask if you'll let the Sewing Circle meet here next week?

MATTIE. Why?

MRS. BROWN. And the choir wants to know if Mrs. Woodbridge will be willing to sing again, beginning next Sunday?

MATTIE. Good land!

MISS MEALEY. Do let the Sewing Circle meet here, Miss Mattie!

MATTIE. Is the world coming to an end?

MRS. BROWN. And do try and make Mis' Woodbridge sing !

MATTIE. Well, I am — Uncle Bill — Uncle Bill !

UNCLE BILL. [*From the house.*] Yes?

MATTIE. Come here and see if you can open Lovers' Lane gate.

UNCLE BILL. [*Comes out to open the gate.*]
Good day, Mis' Brown and Miss Mealey.

[*He tries the gate to see how it is nailed.*]

MRS. BROWN and MISS MEALEY. Good morning, Uncle Bill.

MATTIE. [*Calling.*] Bridget — Bridget !

BRIDGET. [*Comes to the door.*] Yes'm.

MATTIE. Tell Aunt Melissy to bring a hatchet.

BRIDGET. All right, marm — I will.

[*Goes in.*]

MATTIE. [*Going over to the gate, too.*] I'll get the gate open, and then we can talk it over.

MRS. BROWN. We've come to tell you, too, there's a Council being held in the Sunday-school room, and Brown told me, confidential, he thought they were going to draw up Resolutions begging Dr. Singleton to come back.

[AUNT MELISSY comes, bringing the hatchet. She has the slippers also.]

MATTIE. [Following AUNT MELISSY. UNCLE BILL takes the hatchet from AUNT MELISSY, and works at the gate.] It's about time!

UNCLE BILL. The Minister coming back?

[He sings "Glory, glory, Hallelujah!" as the gate gives way.]

MATTIE. [Holds the gate open and then all, except UNCLE BILL and AUNT MELISSY, come through on their way to the house.] I think we'll go right into the setting-room and talk things over.

MRS. BROWN. Yes — let's.

MISS MEALEY. Is Dr. Singleton there?

[AUNT MELISSY goes over and sits on the bench.

MATTIE. No — he's gone down to the post office — don't know as he'll be willing to go back to the church. He feels dreadfully injured at the way he's been treated.

[*They all, except AUNT MELISSY and UNCLE BILL, go in the house.*

UNCLE BILL. [*Going to bench, as if to sit down by AUNT MELISSY. Sees no room, so moves around her to the other side.*] I think I'll sit down a spell, if there ain't no objections.

AUNT MELISSY. H-a-y-e —

UNCLE BILL. I say I think I'll sit down a spell, if there ain't no objections. [*Sitting beside her.*

AUNT MELISSY. I'll be glad to have you, Mr. Bill.

UNCLE BILL. [*Opening the grammar.*] I've

been studying this yere grammar for nigh onto six months — and don't seem to get on very well with it.

AUNT MELISSY. [*Playing with the slippers.*] Never mind the grammar, Billy. Grammar isn't everything. Will you take the slippers back? You see, I've kep' 'em.

UNCLE BILL. [*Taking them.*] I'll wear them next my heart.

AUNT MELISSY. Yes, I was a silly old woman —

UNCLE BILL. No, you wasn't. [*Rising and walking toward the gate.*] Come along with me down Lovers' Lane. I want to find out if it's true they're going to ask the Minister to come back. And if it is, I'm going to ring the old bell for him and for us.

HERBERT. [*Enters at the gate.*] Is Dr. Singleton in?

UNCLE BILL. No. But he will be, soon. Howsomever, this ain't the front door.

[AUNT MELISSY *rises and follows* UNCLE BILL.

HERBERT. No, but they told me this was a short cut from the depot, and I'm in a hurry.

[UNCLE BILL *and* AUNT MELISSY *go out through the gate, humming "Comin' through the Rye" in discord.* HERBERT *knocks at the door of the house.*

BRIDGET. [*Calling from the window above.*] Who's down there? [HERBERT *comes out to the steps, and when she sees him she says :*] Ah — we don't want to buy anything.

HERBERT. [*Looking up.*] I haven't anything to sell. Is Dr. Singleton at home?

BRIDGET. Oh, it's a caller yer are? I axes your pardon, but yer shouldn't come around to the back door. The Minister's out.

HERBERT. When will he be back?

BRIDGET. Sure, it's like to be at any minute.
Will yez come in?

HERBERT. No, I'll wait here if I may —

BRIDGET. You may.

[Leaves the window.]

MARY. *[Coming down through the orchard.]*

Herbert! — *[She is startled, but recovers herself.]*
You have come back.

HERBERT. Yes, Mary — *[He puts out his hand — she takes it.]* I went to East Eddysville, and they said you were living at Eddys Corners.

MARY. I came over this morning to do a sketch of the orchard, because — because — I thought soon, perhaps, I'd be going away for good, and I wanted something to remember — Herbert, I know when you went away I promised to marry you. I can't do it — don't ask me to!

HERBERT. What do you mean, Mary?

MARY. I don't love you any longer.

HERBERT. Mary, I have been dreading for weeks confessing to you, but now you have made it easy for me.

MARY. Made what?

HERBERT. I've done pretty well — I've finished with most of the old life. I felt I ought to tell you when I came back, I hadn't done it all for you. I never loved you as a man should love a woman whom he asks to marry him. I know you will probably despise me — I have been turned adrift by my wife whom, in spite of everything, I love and always will love. I was lonely and hard up and liked you, and your money would have pulled me out of a bad hole. Do you believe such a man as that could ever come to anything?

MARY. Yes — Dr. Singleton says there is good

in everybody, only sometimes other bodys won't take the time or trouble to find it out.

HERBERT. Dr. Singleton says — Mary, is it Dr. Singleton who has made this orchard dear to you?

MARY. It isn't fair to ask me that —

HERBERT. Why not? We must seal our friendship — you and I — with our confidences. I shall have something to tell you.

MARY. But Dr. Singleton does not care for me.

HERBERT. You mean he hasn't shown you his love — that's my fault. I say he loved you the day he gave you the ring in his study. I saw he loved you.

MARY. No — no! You're wrong. He is going to marry —

HERBERT. Who?

MARY. Can't you guess?

HERBERT. Lucy?

MARY. Yes.

HERBERT. Why did I never think of it? Why did I never see that danger?

[HERBERT sees MRS. WOODBRIDGE at the window.

He moves closer to the house so as not to be seen.

Little DICK appears at the window, too.

HERBERT. And I've been hoping she might try to forgive me — but it's only just — only just —

[*He breaks off to listen. MRS. WOODBRIDGE is singing a song to DICK. HERBERT touches MARY to listen.*

MARY. Sh — sh — there she is.

HERBERT. My boy, my boy! Do you think she's coming out here? I'd rather go away without her seeing me.

MARY. [*Gathers together her painting things and easel.*] She won't come here.

[MRS. WOODBRIDGE *leaves the window.*

HERBERT. [*Tries stealthily to see the boy.*] The sight of me now would only cast a shadow over her new happiness.

MARY. I never dreamed Dr. Singleton cared for her in that way.

HERBERT. [*Coming closer to MARY.*] I'd like to see my boy just once. Could you bring Dick out to me without her knowing? I won't tell him who I am. I should like to see him.

MARY. I'll go and get him — [*She goes.*

HERBERT. [*To himself.*] I oughtn't to have asked her to carry him. He's too heavy.

[MARY *enters from the house, leading DICK.*

HERBERT. [*Starts with astonishment.*] Why, he's walking — but he was lame — it isn't my Dick!

MARY. Yes, it is.

[Helps little DICK down one or two steps; leaves him with his father, turning back into house.]

HERBERT. *[Kneeling and holding out his hands to DICK.]* Is your name Dick? *[DICK nods his head, "Yes."]* You aren't afraid of me? *[DICK makes no answer.]* Why, of course not — *[DICK shakes his head, "No"; then, with a sudden impulse, goes toward his father.]* Why, I wouldn't hurt you. *[Kneeling, he takes the child in his arms, and clasps him to him with emotion.]* Why, I'm your — I'm your — My God! — What am I to say? I'm your friend — your friend — *[He holds the boy before him.]* There now, you're taller than I am, aren't you? I thought you were a little lame boy — you were once, weren't you? *[DICK nods "Yes."]* I thought so — I thought so — It's your mother who has done all this for you — I

thought so! You can never love your mother enough! Do you hear that? Never! When you grow up, you must love her just the same, and when she grows old, you must hold her close to your heart — and cherish her always — will you? Will you, Dick? [*Dick nods "Yes."*] Ah, you don't understand all that, do you, my boy? [*DICK shakes his head.*] No, and you don't know what it is to see something you want with all your soul belong to another, and know that you threw her away. Dick — Dick — listen, my little man! Do you ever hear of a father? [*Dick nods "Yes."*] And your mother lets you speak of him? [*He nods "Yes."*] When? [*DICK folds his little hands together.*] When you pray? When you — Oh, my God! [*He breaks down. DICK pushes away, frightened.*] There — there, I've been frightening you. Don't be frightened of me — because I want you to kiss me — will you? I want you

to put your two arms around my neck — around my neck, — just as you do about your mother's. Will you, Dick?

[MRS. WOODBRIDGE *appears on the porch.*

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Herbert!

HERBERT. [*The child runs to MRS. WOODBRIDGE.*] Lucy!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. You see he is well — quite well.

HERBERT. Yes — you won't begrudge me my moment with him, will you?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*With her arm around DICK.*] Begrudge you? —

HERBERT. I didn't mean you should have seen me. I meant to have just spoken to Dick, and then stolen away.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. You didn't want me to see you?

HERBERT. No.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I understand you came back for Mary Larkin, and you find she belongs to Dr. Singleton?

HERBERT. Not belongs — Lucy — Mrs. —

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Why not? They love each other —

HERBERT. But she just told me he loves you.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Me? — Oh, no! What made her tell you that?

HERBERT. I don't know.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Then it wasn't for her you came back?

HERBERT. No. I came back for you!

[MRS. WOODBRIDGE *starts*.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. For me? Is it true — is it true —

[*The tears come to her eyes.*

HERBERT. [*Leads her to the bench, and sits beside her.*] Am I worth trying to save?

[MRS. WOODBRIDGE *nods her head*, "Yes."]

HERBERT. [*Taking her hand gently.*] Lucy — I don't deserve it. I have turned over a new leaf, and with you to help me, I'll never turn this page back. [*There is a pause.*]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. [*Withdraws her hand, and rises.*] Won't you come and walk with Dick and me down Lovers' Lane?

HERBERT. [*Hesitating and smiling at DICK.*] Yes — yes — or — no — we'll make a chair — have you forgotten?

[*They cross hands, forming a saddle, and kneel so DICK can reach.*]

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Now — sit down. Put one arm around mother's neck and one arm around —

HERBERT. Mine — there — that's a dandy chair for you —

[*They lift him up and carry him through the gate,*]

down Lovers' Lane. MRS. BROWN, MISS MEALEY and MATTIE enter from house.

MRS. BROWN. I must say, it has seemed real good to be sitting in the Parsonage again.

MATTIE. Well — I'm sure you've your own self to thank for not having been here oftener —!
[*Calling to the house.*] Simplicity! What's got into the child?

[*SIMPLICITY enters, holding one hand behind her back.*

MATTIE. Take your thumb out of your mouth!
Well, where on earth have you been?

SIMPLICITY. Up in the garret.

MATTIE. What were you doing up there?

SIMPLICITY. Sitting in a corner.

MATTIE. Good land! — where's Mrs. Brown's parasol — she says she gave it to you to put away for her —

SIMPLICITY. [*Takes the parasol from behind her back.* MATTIE *grabs it and hands it to* MRS. BROWN.] I took it upstairs with me without thinking — I'm sorry —

MATTIE. She says she's sorry! What's come over the child?

MRS. BROWN. You ain't sick, air you, Simple?

SIMPLICITY. No, marm. [*Running to the gate.*] I'll open the gate fur yer.

MRS. BROWN. [*Going to the gate.*] Thank you, Simple.

MISS MEALEY. And the Circle can meet here next Thursday?

MATTIE. I suppose so.

MISS MEALEY. Thank you ever so much, Miss Mattie. Good-by.

MATTIE. Good-by.

MRS. BROWN. [*Outside the gate.*] Good-by!

[Goes down Lovers' Lane. MATTIE goes into the house.]

MISS MEALEY. *[To SIMPLICITY.]* What a big girl you're gettin', Simple — you'll be havin' a beau soon, takin' you home from church.

[Goes out, laughing.]

SIMPLICITY. *[Closing the gate.]* I don't want any beau.

[The MINISTER enters from the house with a letter.]

MINISTER. *[Looks over to where the easel stood.]*
Miss Larkin — has she finished already? I'll ask Mattie.

[Going toward the house.]

SIMPLICITY. *[Calls after him.]* Pops —

MINISTER. Hello — what is it?

SIMPLICITY. Who are you looking for, Pops?

MINISTER. Miss Larkin.

SIMPLICITY. What do you want her for, Pops?

MINISTER. I've got a letter that'll interest her. The young man that wants to marry her will be here to-day.

SIMPLICITY. Oh — Pops! Mrs. Brown and Miss Mealey have been here, to have the Sewing Circle meet here again.

MINISTER. You don't say so!

SIMPLICITY. And I believe you're going ter get your church back again.

MINISTER. Simple, I'd rather have that than anything else in the world — except one other thing —

SIMPLICITY. I don't suppose that other thing's me — is it, Pops?

MINISTER. No — I've got you, anyway. We can't have everything we want in this world.

SIMPLICITY. I know that too, Pops. Which would you rather have, Pops — the church or her?

MINISTER. You mustn't tempt me, Simple, with such questions.

SIMPLICITY. Pops — why isn't there a commandment, "Thou shalt not lie"?

MINISTER. Perhaps the Lord didn't think one necessary, Simple.

SIMPLICITY. Then he doesn't know me. "Thou shalt not lie, or thou shalt wish thou were dead." Pops, did you ever tell a lie?

MINISTER. Yes, a good many when I was little.

SIMPLICITY. Oh, Pops — I'm so glad! Lies that hurt other people?

MINISTER. No, they hurt only myself.

[MATTIE comes from the house. BROWN enters from the gate.]

MR. BROWN. [*Over the gate.*] Good morning, Doctor.

MINISTER. Good morning.

MATTIE. Good morning. Come in — the gate's open.

MR. BROWN. [*Surprised, enters, looks back at the gate and shakes his head gladly.*] Glad to hear it —

SIMPLICITY. Pops, I'm going down into the orchard. If you'll give me Miss Larkin's letter, I'll give it to her.

MINISTER. I forgot all about it — she'll be anxious to know! Do, Simple!

[*He gives her the letter.*]

SIMPLICITY. [*Goes behind the tree, keeping her eyes on the MINISTER. She tears up the letter and throws it on the ground.*] There!

[*She runs off.*]

MR. BROWN. Ahem! [*Very nervously.*] Doctor — we — I —

MINISTER. Yes?

MATTIE. For goodness' sake — Mr. Brown, say

it right out, or I will! [To MINISTER.] There's — there's a Council being held over there in the Sunday-school room to consider — can't you guess, Tom?

MINISTER. I'm afraid to —

MATTIE. You needn't be — it's asking you to come back.

MR. BROWN. [*Still nervously.*] I've come over to find out if you'll be likely to accept. Of course, it ain't decided yet — it ain't been put to a vote, and we don't know exactly how the majority will stand, but I think you'll get it —

MATTIE. [*Whispering to the MINISTER.*] Frighten him a little — go on — don't jump at it —

MINISTER. Well, Mr. Brown, there are a few points I'd like to make about that paper you drew up.

MR. BROWN. The Council has thought of that, and has decided what to do in case they ask your acceptance of the pulpit.

MINISTER. First, how about my encouraging beggars, by giving old Aunt Melissy a home?

MR. BROWN. We thought of trying to make up for that by making her an honorary member of the Ladies' Sewing Circle.

MINISTER. Will you kindly make a note of that, Mr. Brown? And I would like to have her made Treasurer.

MR. BROWN. [*Startled.*] Treasurer? Why, Mrs. Brown is Treas —

MINISTER. I said Treasurer. Second, how about my having damaged the Orphan Asylums of the State —?

MR. BROWN. We've made certain arrangements with them, and each Asylum shall send

you a written application for the privilege of taking care of Simplicity.

MINISTER. Very good. Of course we wouldn't think of parting with Simple, but I shall see that each one of the Asylums is supplied with a good, troublesome orphan in her place. But there is one really serious thing — the Council dared to accuse me of neglecting my duty.

MR. BROWN. That, they realize, warn't true and warn't desarved?

MINISTER. If they want me —

MR. BROWN. Well?

MINISTER. I'll come back —

MR. BROWN. [*Shaking his hand heartily.*]
Thank you, Doctor — you'll come back — you'll come back — or, drat it, I'll give up my pew!

[*He hurries off through the gate.* MATTIE fans herself furiously with her apron.

MINISTER. Mattie!

MATTIE. [*With excitement.*] Eh?

MINISTER. Kiss me.

MATTIE. [*Kisses him. Half crying with joy, she fans furiously.*] I'm so glad!

MINISTER. [*With happy excitement, looking down Lovers' Lane.*] Do you think the Council will call me?

MATTIE. If they don't, I'll burst — [*The MINISTER walks up and down with emotion.*] I'm going into the house to work, or I can't stand it. [*She goes into the house.*]

SIMPLICITY. [*Comes through the orchard, leading MARY, who is very nervous.*] You hide behind that tree — anyone can tell the whole thing by your face. [*MARY hides. Then SIMPLICITY turns to MINISTER, stolidly.*] Pops — I'm a liar —

MINISTER. [*Stunned.*] Good gracious, Simple!

SIMPLICITY. [*Standing her ground.*] It's true. And I've come to tell you that I'm going back to the Asylum for punishment.

[*She starts to go. He catches her by her dress and holds her fast.*]

MINISTER. Never, Simple, never — I wouldn't let you!

SIMPLICITY. Do you forgive me for the lie?

MINISTER. Yes.

SIMPLICITY. But it hurt you.

MINISTER. Me? [*Surprised.*]

SIMPLICITY. Oh, you don't forgive that — [*Crying.*] You don't forgive that?

MINISTER. [*Beseechingly.*] Yes, I do, dear, yes, I do!

SIMPLICITY. Then kiss me. [*He kisses her, watching her wonderingly.*] I'm so sorry — I'm so sorry — but I've owned up, Pops — I've

owned up! [*She goes to the tree and brings MARY to the MINISTER.*] Look what I've brought you.

MINISTER. [*Bewildered.*] Where's Herbert?

MARY. [*Shyly.*] With Mrs. Woodbridge.

MINISTER. With Mrs. Woodbridge?

MARY. Yes, it was for her he came back.

MINISTER. And you?

MARY. [*Hesitating.*] Simplicity says —

SIMPLICITY. I told her — I told her —

[*She moves away to the tree, but watches them wistfully.*]

MINISTER. [*Whispering to MARY.*] That I love you —

MARY. No, that *I* love you.

MINISTER. Will you say "yes"?

MARY. With all my heart.

[*He clasps her hands in his.*]

MATTIE. [*From the window above.*] For the

land's sake, look at old Deacon Perkins trying to run across the field!

SIMPLICITY. [*Running out of the gate.*] Just look — there's Mr. Brown and Deacon Steele and Mrs. Brown and a lot of them all running over here.

[*The MINISTER and MARY laugh and run toward the gate to see. As BROWN approaches, followed by MRS. BROWN, MOLLY MEALEY, MRS. STEELE, MRS. JENNINGS, and DEACON STEELE, MATTIE comes from the house with BRIDGET, and the schoolchildren run in through the gate, all out of breath.*

MR. BROWN. [*At the gate.*] When I motion, throw up your hat, — it's the signal for Uncle Bill to ring the bell. [*To MINISTER, with satisfaction.*] They're all a-comin'. The vote's unanimous — will you say "yes"?

MINISTER. With all my heart!

BROWN. [*Excitedly shaking hands.*] Hooray!

[*He throws up his hat. The church bell rings.*]

MATTIE, SIMPLICITY — *all join in, cheering and shaking hands with each other all around, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

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NATHAN HALE

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

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TO
NAT C. GOODWIN
AND
MAXINE ELLIOTT
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF
AS HAPPY A "FIRST NIGHT" AS EVER WAS!

C. F., 1899.

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NATHAN HALE

ACT FIRST. APRIL, 1775. *The Union Grammar School-house in New London, Connecticut.*

ACT SECOND. SEPTEMBER, 1776. *At Colonel Knowlton's house, Harlem Heights.*

ACT THIRD. SEPTEMBER, 1776. THE FIRST SCENE. *The tavern of the Widow Chichester, Long Island.*

THE SECOND SCENE. *Outside the tavern, early the next morning.*

ACT FOURTH. THE NEXT NIGHT. THE FIRST SCENE. *The tent of a British Officer.*

THE SECOND SCENE. *The orchard on Colonel Rutgers's farm (now Pike and Monroe Streets, New York).*

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CHARACTERS

NATHAN HALE. *Yale, 1773.*

GUY FITZROY.

LIEUT. COL. KNOWLTON.

CAPT. ADAMS.

CUNNINGHAM.

EBENEZER LEBANON.

TOM ADAMS.

WILLIAM HULL. *Yale, 1773.*

THE JEFFERSON BOY.

THE TALBOT BOY.

JASPER.

SENTINEL.

THREE SOLDIERS.

ALICE ADAMS.

MISTRESS KNOWLTON.

ANGELICA KNOWLTON.

THE WIDOW CHICHESTER.

SCHOOLBOYS, SCHOOLGIRLS, SOLDIERS, TOWNSMEN, AND
TOWNSWOMEN.

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Originally produced in Chicago, Ill., on January 31, 1898. On January 2, 1899, the play was brought to the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York.

Nathan Hale (Yale, 1773) Mr. N. C. Goodwin
Guy Fitzroy Mr. William Ingersol
Lieut. Colonel Knowlton Mr. Thomas Oberle
Capt. Adams Mr. Clarence Handyside
Cunningham Mr. Neil O'Brien
Ebenezer Lebanon Mr. Louis Payne
Tom Adams Mr. Richard Sterling
William Hull (Yale, 1773) Mr. M. J. Beane
The Jefferson Boy Master Ralph
The Talbot Boy Mr. Henry Lewis
Jasper Mr. Clarence Montaine
Sentinel Mr. Charles Budd

Schoolboys, soldiers, and townsmen.

Alice Adams Miss Maxine Elliott
Mistress Knowlton Miss Estelle Mortimer
Angelica Knowlton Miss Gertrude Elliott
The Widow Chichester Miss Hattie Russell

Schoolgirls and townswomen.

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ACT THE FIRST

The Union Grammar Schoolhouse, New London, Connecticut, in 1775. It is a simple room with a door on the left side. At the back are two smallish windows, through which are seen trees and the blue sky; between them is a big blackboard. At the right of the room is a small, slightly raised platform, on which is the teacher's desk; on the latter are papers, quill pens, an old ink-well, pamphlets and books. A large globe of the world stands beside the platform. On the wall behind, hangs a "birch." In front of the platform, and to one side, is a three-legged dunce's stool, unoccupied for the present. Two long, low benches for the classes are placed beneath the blackboard, and the desks and benches for the

scholars are placed on the left, facing the teacher's platform. It is toward noon of a sunny day, and the music of "Yankee Doodle" is in the air. As the curtain rises, a very badly drawn, absurd picture is seen on the blackboard, representing the boys on the ice pond of Boston Common, with their thumbs to their noses, driving away the British army! ALICE ADAMS is by the blackboard, finishing this drawing. MISS ADAMS is one of the older pupils, somewhat of a hoyden, already a little of a woman, lovely to look upon, and altogether a charming, natural girl, full of high spirits. All the scholars are half out of their places, and they are laughing, shouting, talking and gesticulating. Above the din, a Boy's voice is heard.

TALBOT BOY. [*In warning.*] Quick, Alice!
Teacher!

[There is a wild scramble for their places, and, just as LEBANON enters, sudden silence reigns. All pretend to be absorbed in their books, but keep one eye on LEBANON and the blackboard, till he, following their glances, discovers the drawing.]

LEBANON. *[A prim and youthful assistant teacher, with a pompous manner, intended to deceive his pupils.]* Who drew that picture? *[There is silence.]* Who drew this picture? *[No one replies, and only a few suppressed giggles are heard.]* I will keep you all after hours till the boy confesses.

ALICE. *[Interrupts mischievously.]* Perhaps it was a *girl*, sir.

[The children giggle and snicker.]

LEBANON. No interruptions! I will keep you all in till the boy confesses. *[LEBANON looks*

about expectantly; nobody speaks.] I am in earnest.

TALBOT BOY. It wasn't a boy; it was Alice Adams.

[The scholars hiss and cry "Shame! Shame!"]

LEBANON. Miss Alice Adams, stand up.
[ALICE rises.] Is that true?

ALICE. *[Biting her lips to keep from laughing.]*
Yes, sir.

LEBANON. *[To ALICE.]* Sit down. *[She does so, very leisurely. — To the Boy.]* Well, Master Talbot, you deserve to be punished more than Miss Adams, for telling on a fellow pupil, and on a girl, too. I shall report you both to Mr. Hale.

TOM ADAMS. *[ALICE'S younger brother.]* Please tell him I did it, sir, instead of my sister. Mr. Hale's always punishing Alice!

ALICE. No, Mr. Lebanon, that wouldn't be

fair, sir. Besides, I want Mr. Hale to know how well I can draw.

[Smiling mischievously. All the scholars laugh.]

LEBANON. *[Raps on the table.]* Silence! That is enough. We will now begin the session in the usual manner by singing "God Save the King."
[A knock on the door. All the scholars are excited and curious.] Master Adams, please open the door. *[TOM goes to the door and opens it; all the children looking over the tops of their books curiously.]* Everybody's eyes on their books!

[Each one holds his book up before his face between him or her and LEBANON.]

[MRS. KNOWLTON and ANGELICA enter. MRS. KNOWLTON is a handsome, but rather voluble and nervous lady, an undetermined trifle, past middle age. Her daughter, ANGELICA, is a pretty, quaint little creature, with a senti-

mental bearing; she is dressed in the top of the fashion. LEBANON rises, and TOM returns to his place.

ALICE. [*Half rising in surprise, and sitting again immediately.*] Well! Angelica Knowlton! What are you doing here?

LEBANON. [*Raps on his desk with his ruler.*]
Miss Adams! [*ANGELICA throws ALICE a kiss.*]

MRS. KNOWLTON. Is this Mr. Hale?

[*ALICE gives a little explosion of laughter, which is at once followed by giggles from all the children. LEBANON raps again sharply.*]

LEBANON. No, madam, I am Mr. Lebanon, Mr. Hale's assistant.

[*ALICE coughs very importantly.*]

MRS. KNOWLTON. I wrote Mr. Hale I would visit his schoolhouse to-day, with my daughter, Angelica, to arrange for her becoming a pupil.

[*Bringing ANGELICA slightly forward with one hand; ANGELICA is embarrassed, and plays nervously with her parasol.*] Her cousin, Miss Adams, is already a scholar, and it will be well for the girls to be together. Angelica, dear, stop fiddling with your parasol; you make my nerves quite jumpy!

LEBANON. Mr. Hale will be here in one moment, madam. Won't you be seated, meanwhile?

MRS. KNOWLTON. Thank you, yes. Be careful of your dress, when you sit, Angelica — don't make any more creases than are absolutely necessary!

[*They sit carefully in chairs placed for them by*

LEBANON beside the desk.

LEBANON. Your daughter is a most intelligent appearing young lady, madam. I look forward with pleasure to instructing her.

MRS. KNOWLTON. Thank you, sir, but it's

only fair to tell you her appearances are deceitful. She is painfully backward in everything but spelling, and her spelling's a disgrace to the family. Angelica, dear, untie your bonnet strings; you'll get a double chin in no time if you're not more careful!

[ALICE ADAMS *lifts her hand.*

LEBANON. What is it, Miss Adams?

ALICE. Please, may I go and kiss my aunt and cousin how d' you do?

[*The scholars giggle softly.*

MRS. KNOWLTON. That will not be at all necessary, Mr. Lebanon.

LEBANON. You must wait until recess, Miss Adams. Now, attention, please!

[*The scholars all shut their books, which they have made a pretense of studying, and rise without noise.*

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*To ANGELICA.*] Do you like this teacher, my darling?

ANGELICA. I think he is beautiful, mother.

MRS. KNOWLTON. Well, that is scarcely the adjective I should use; *harmless* would be better, I think. Cross your feet, my dear; it looks much more ladylike.

LEBANON. [*Rising.*] Ready! [*He strikes a tuning fork on the desk, motions three times with his finger, and at the third stroke all begin to sing "God Save the King."* MRS. KNOWLTON and ANGELICA rise and sing. All sing except TOM ADAMS. After the first line, LEBANON stops them.] Stop! Thomas Adams is not singing. Now, everyone, mind, and Thomas, if you don't sing, it will be five raps on the knuckles. [*All except TOM sing two lines; LEBANON again stops them.*] Thomas Adams, come forward! [*TOM comes slowly for-*

ward.] I am ashamed of you, being disobedient in this manner, — before your esteemed relative, too. What do you mean, sir?

TOM. I won't sing "God Save the King."

LEBANON. And why not?

TOM. Because I hate him and his redcoats. Hip! Hip! I say, for the Boston Indians, and Hooray for their tea-party!

[There is a low, suppressed murmur of approval from the scholars, and a loud "Oh!" of astonishment from ANGELICA.]

LEBANON. We'll see if we can't *make* you sing. Hold out your hand!

[TOM holds out his hand, and LEBANON takes up his ruler.]

ANGELICA. Oh — *[She cries out, and rises involuntarily.]* Oh, please, Mr. Teacher —

LEBANON. *[After a moment's hesitation.]* I cannot be deaf to the voice of beauty.

[Bowing to ANGELICA, he lays down the ruler.

MRS. KNOWLTON. Child, compose your nerves ;
watch your mother !

TOM. Oh, you can whack me if you want.
But when Mr. Hale's here, he don't punish me for
not singing.

LEBANON. He doesn't? How's that?

TOM. No, sir. He said he didn't blame me !

LEBANON. Mr. Hale said that?

TOM. Yes, sir, and he said he had half a mind
not to sing it himself any longer.

LEBANON. That's treason ! We'll see about
that when Mr. Hale arrives.

[TOM goes back to his seat.

MRS. KNOWLTON. Does Mr. Hale never come
to the schoolhouse till toward noon? — Angelica !

*[She motions aside to ANGELICA to pull down her
skirts, — that her ankles are showing.*

LEBANON. No, madam. Only, there was a

rumor to-day that there had been bloodshed between the British and Americans at Concord, and Mr. Hale is at the Post waiting for news.

THE TALBOT BOY. [*With his eyes turned toward one of the windows.*] Please, sir, here comes Mr. Hale now.

LEBANON. Very well. You will all please begin again and sing, whether Master Adams sings or not.

TOM. [*Who has been straining to see out.*] Mr. Hale is out of breath, and he's wondrous excited!

[LEBANON *raps for them to sing, and strikes the tuning fork. The children — all except TOM — sing through three lines, when HALE enters, excited.*

HALE. [*Lifting his hand.*] Stop that singing!

[*The children stop.*

LEBANON. Why is that, Mr. Hale?

HALE. I won't have my school sing any more anthems to that tyrant!

LEBANON. We will be punished for treason. Will you kindly notice the drawing on the board?

HALE. Hello! Hello! [*Laughing.*] What is it?

THE JEFFERSON BOY. It's our boys, sir, in Boston, driving the redcoats off the Common.

LEBANON. I have left the punishment for *you* to fix on, sir.

HALE. Punishment! Punishment! Not a bit of it! Give the boy who did it a prize! Listen to me, boys and girls — how many of you are Whigs? Say "Aye." [*All but the TALBOT BOY raise their right hands and shout "Aye!"*] Who's a Tory?

TALBOT BOY. Aye!

[*Raising his right hand, but he takes it down quickly as all the others hiss him.*]

HALE. I make all the boys here "*Sons of Liberty.*"¹ And all the *girls*, too! Listen to me, boys and girls! Two days ago, eight hundred Britishers left Boston for Concord to capture our military stores there! —

ALL THE SCHOLARS. Boo!

[*Groans.*]

HALE. But the Yankees were too smart for them! I want you to give three cheers for Paul Revere. — Ready!

ALL. Hip, hip, hip, hooray!

TOM. [*Excitedly.*] What did he do, sir?

HALE. He rode like mad to Lexington, and warned the people there, and all the farmers on the way, and other men rode in other directions, and when the Britishers came back to Lexington from Concord —

[*Stops for breath.*]

¹ A famous club of the day.

ALL THE SCHOOL. [*Excited, and rising in disorder.*] Yes — yes —

HALE. [*Continues in crescendo.*] They found Minute Men by every fence, inside each house, behind every rock and tree!—and the Americans chased those Regulars clean back to Boston, — at least what was left of them, for the British lost two hundred and seventy-three men, and we only eighty-eight!

[*The whole school breaks loose in shouting — whistles, catcalls, cries, applause, jumping up on their chairs and desks, etc. LEBANON tries in vain to quell the tumult. Finally HALE comes to his rescue and silences the scholars; he turns to LEBANON questioningly.*

LEBANON. Excuse me, Mr. Hale, there are visitors present; Mrs. Knowlton, the lady who wrote you yesterday.

HALE. Madam. [*Bows.*

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Who has risen, curtseys.*]
Sir! Angelica, rise and curtsey. [*To HALE.*]
My daughter, of whom I wrote you, sir. [*HALE bows and ANGELICA curtseys.*] Angelica — what a curtsey! Who'd ever think you'd been taught all the fashionable attainments at a guinea a quarter?

HALE. I'm afraid you find us rather upside down this morning, madam. But I assure you it's nothing compared to what's going on in Boston, where the public schools were closed several days last week.

MRS. KNOWLTON. So I heard, sir, which was one of my reasons for selecting New London. Sit down, Angelica. [*ANGELICA sits.*

HALE. Excuse me one moment, madam. [*To LEBANON.*] Take Miss —

ANGELICA. Angelica, sir.

HALE. Miss Angelica to one side, and inquire about her studies.

LEBANON. This way, Miss.

[They go beside the window up stage.]

HALE. Miss Alice Adams, please come forward. *[ALICE rises and comes to HALE in front of desk; she assumes an air of innocence, but with a conscious twinkle in her eye when she looks at HALE.]* It will be a great pleasure for you, I am sure, to have your cousin with you.

ALICE. *[Sweetly and conventionally.]* Yes, Mr. Hale.

[She looks into his face, and deliberately winks mischievously at him, biting back a smile.]

HALE. *[Coming nearer her, whispers.]* Can I keep you in at recess? Have you done something I may punish you for?

ALICE. Yes, sir. *I drew the picture.*

HALE. [*Delighted.*] Good!

ALICE. But I'm afraid you've spoiled it all by not disapproving.

HALE. Not a bit of it! As *you've* done it, I'll disapprove mightily! [*Smiles lovingly at her, and adds, as he goes back to his desk:*] Very well — that is all, Miss Adams. I will give you an opportunity to talk with your aunt and cousin during recess.

ALICE. [*About to go, turns back disappointedly, and speaks to him aside.*] What — aren't you going to punish me?

HALE. [*Aside to her.*] Certainly, that is only to blind the others. You know I'm obliged to change my mind rather suddenly about this picture. [*ALICE goes back to her seat.*] Mr. Lebanon!

[LEBANON joins HALE and they talk together
aside.

ANGELICA. [*Joining her mother.*] Oh, mother,
he is really beautiful! He says I know a great
deal.

[*She stands by her mother, with one arm about*

MRS. KNOWLTON.

MRS. KNOWLTON. Humph! He must be a
fool. One of your mitts is off, child! Why is
that?

ANGELICA. [*Drawing her hand away.*] He
wanted to kiss my hand.

MRS. KNOWLTON. Put on your mitt, this
minute — and remember this, my dear: you are
not here to learn coquetry, but arithmetic, —
the French *language* if you like, but not French
manners!

HALE. In honor of the day, we will omit the

first recitation, and recess will begin at once. [*A general movement, and suppressed murmurs of pleasure from all the scholars.*] One moment, however; on second thoughts, I have decided this picture — ahem — is, after all, very reprehensible. The perpetrator must suffer. Who is the culprit — she — he — [*correcting himself quickly*] must be punished.

TOM. [*Before anyone else can speak, rises.*] I did it, sir.

ALICE. [*Rising.*] No, sir, it was I!

HALE. Miss Adams, I am *surprised!* And deeply as it pains me, I must keep you in during recess.

TOM. It's a shame! [*Turns to school.*] He's always doing it!

HALE. Silence, Master Adams! Ten minutes' recess.

[All the scholars rise, get their hats and caps from pegs on the wall, and go out talking and laughing gaily, except TOM, who goes out slowly, angry; and ALICE, who remains behind.]

MRS. KNOWLTON. *[To ANGELICA, as the scholars are leaving.]* I think he is rather strict with your cousin. You'll have to mind your P's and Q's, my dear.

ANGELICA. I don't like him one-half as much as Mr. Lebanon.

MRS. KNOWLTON. *[Snapping her fingers on ANGELICA'S shoulder.]* Tut, my bird! Enough of that person.

HALE. *[Rising and turning to MRS. KNOWLTON.]* Madam, if you will allow Mr. Lebanon, he will escort you and your daughter about the playgrounds.

MRS. KNOWLTON. *[Rising.]* Thank you!

Can my daughter remain to-day, sir? Angelica, straighten your fichu strings. You do give me the fidgets!

HALE. Certainly, madam. Mr. Lebanon —
[LEBANON offers his arm to MRS. KNOWLTON,
who takes it after a curtsey to MR. HALE.]

MRS. KNOWLTON. Come, Angelica, and don't drop your mantilla!

[ANGELICA, after a curtsey, takes MRS. KNOWLTON'S hand, and they go out — all three. HALE and ALICE watch them closely till they are off and the door closes behind them; then both give a sigh of relief, and smile, — ALICE rising and HALE going to her.]

HALE. [*Very happy.*] Well?

[*Takes her two hands in his.*]

ALICE. [*Also very happy.*] Well?

[HALE sits on desk before her, ALICE back in her seat.]

HALE. I'm afraid your brother is becoming unruly. I'll not be able to keep you in at recess much longer. You see, you're not half bad enough. [*Smiling.*] I ought *not* to punish you, and all the scholars will soon be perceiving that !

ALICE. I try my best to think of something really bad to do, but my very wickedest things are always failures, and turn out so namby-pamby and half-way good, — I'm ashamed.

HALE. [*Impulsively.*] You darling !

ALICE. [*Laughing; delighted, but drawing back in mock fear, and holding her arithmetic open between them.*] Mr. Hale !

HALE. [*Seriously, passionately, taking the book from her unconsciously, and throwing it aside.*] Alice, did a young man ever tell you that he loved you ?

ALICE. Yes, sir, — [*taking up her geography*] several have ! [*Looking down into the book.*]

HALE. What!

ALICE. [*Looks up at him coyly, then down again into her book.*] And one of them three times.

HALE. [*Closing the book in her hands, and holding it closed so she will look at him.*] I'll keep you in, three recesses in succession — one for each time!

ALICE. [*Looks straight into his eyes.*] Then I wish he'd asked me twice as often!

HALE. Alice!

ALICE. It was my cousin Fitzroy! He says he will persist till he wins, and mother says he will.

HALE. And you — do you like this cousin Fitzroy?

ALICE. If I say I like him, will you keep me in another recess?

HALE. [*Moodily.*] I'll keep you in a dozen.

ALICE. Then I *love* him!

HALE. [*Forgetting everything but her words, and leaving her.*] Alice — Alice — go, join the others. I'll never keep you in again!

ALICE. No — no — you *must!* [*She throws away the geography.*] You promised, if I would say I liked my cousin Fitzroy, you'd keep me in a dozen recesses. [*HALE goes back to her.*] It isn't treating me fair!

HALE. Do you know what I wish? I wish life were one long recess, and I could keep you in with me forever!

ALICE. [*Shyly looking down, speaks softly, naïvely.*] Well — why — don't — you — sir?

HALE. [*Eagerly, delighted.*] May I?

ALICE. As if you didn't *know* you could. Only, there is one thing —

HALE. [*Tenderly.*] What is it?

ALICE. When we're married, I think it's only

fair that *I* should turn the tables, and sometimes *keep you in!*

HALE. Agreed! I'll tell you what —

ALICE. [*Interrupting.*] Oh, I have an idea!

HALE. So have I. . . . I wonder if they're not the same?

ALICE. I'll try again to do something really naughty!

HALE. And I will keep you after school.

ALICE. [*Rises.*] *My* idea — and then you will walk home with me —

HALE. *My* idea, too! And I will ask your father to-day!

ALICE. [*With a half-mocking curtsey.*] And if he won't give me to you, you will kindly take me all the same, sir. [*The school bell rings outside.*]

HALE. Here come the scholars! You love me, Alice?

ALICE. Yes.

HALE. Half as much as I love you?

ALICE. No, *twice* as much!

HALE. That couldn't be. My love for you is full of all the flowers that ever bloomed! of all the songs the birds have ever sung! of all the kisses the stars have given the sky since night was made!

[He kisses her.]

[The door opens, and the scholars enter. HALE goes quickly to his desk. ALICE buries her face in a book. ANGELICA and LEBANON enter together, after the scholars.]

LEBANON. Mr. Hale, I think I had best point out to Miss Knowlton what her lessons will be, — and shall she sit next to Miss Adams, sir?

HALE. Yes. And the first class in grammar will now come forward.

[Seven scholars come forward and take their places on the forms in front of HALE, and while they are doing so, LEBANON has arranged ANGELICA at a desk in front of ALICE.]

LEBANON. This will be your desk, Miss Angelica.

ANGELICA. Thank you, sir. Can I see you from here?

LEBANON. Yes, I always occupy Mr. Hale's chair. But you mustn't look at me *all* the time, young lady.

ANGELICA. I'll try not to, sir.

[She sighs. HALE begins to hear his class. LEBANON bends over ANGELICA, opening several books, marking places in them for her, etc. He is showing her where her lessons are to be.]

HALE. Master Tom Adams.

TOM. *[Rising.]* Yes, sir.

HALE. The positive, comparative, and superlative of *good*?

TOM. Good, better, best.

HALE. Yes. I wish you'd try and act on one or two of those in school. [TOM *sits, grinning.*] Master Talbot! [TALBOT BOY *rises.*] Positive, comparative, and superlative of *sick*?

TALBOT BOY. [*Who lisps.*] Thick —?

HALE. Well? [*Pause.*] Why, any boy half as old as you could answer that. There's our little visitor, Master Jefferson there,—I'll wager he knows it. Master Jefferson! [*The JEFFERSON BOY comes forward.*] Positive, comparative, and superlative of *sick*?

THE JEFFERSON BOY. Sick — [*Pause.*] Worse — [*Longer pause.*] Dead!

[*The school laughs.*]

HALE. [*Laughing.*] That's a good answer for

the son of a doctor to make. [*He nods to the boy to sit, and he does so.*] What is it? [*He looks about and sees ANGELICA and LEBANON engrossed in each other behind a grammar book.*] Miss Angelica — [*ANGELICA and LEBANON start.*] Can you give it to us?

ANGELICA. [*Timidly, rising.*] I love — you love — he or she loves.

[*The school giggles.*]

HALE. That was hardly my question, Miss Angelica. [*She sits, embarrassed. A slight commotion is heard outside.*] What I asked was —

[*The door bursts open and FITZROY enters. He is a handsome young fellow of about twenty-five, in the uniform of a British officer; he is excited, and somewhat loud and noisy.*]

FITZROY. Is this the Union Grammar School?

HALE. [*Rising.*] Yes!

FITZROY. I have been sent here by General Gage, who is in Boston, to hold a meeting of your townspeople who are loyal to King George.

HALE. What for?

FITZROY. Boston is in a state of siege. The Rebels who chased the Regulars through Lexington have been joined by other colonists around, and have cut the town completely off from all communication, except by sea. This state of affairs is nothing else than war, and Great Britain calls upon her loyal children!

HALE. And my schoolhouse?

FITZROY. Is where the meeting is to be held, at once.

HALE. [*Coming down from platform.*] A Tory meeting! Here! Have you been properly empowered?

FITZROY. [*Flourishing a paper.*] Yes, here is

my permit. A crier is going about the town now, calling the men to meet within the hour.

HALE. A Tory meeting here! [*He turns to the school.*] Then we'll get out, eh, boys?

ALL THE SCHOOL. Yes — yes!

FITZROY. What — are you all *rebels* here?

[*Looking over the school.*]

TOM. No! We're "Sons of Liberty!"

FITZROY. Damn you! [*HALE interrupts him with a gesture, motioning to the girls on their side of the room. FITZROY takes off his bearskin hat and bows gracefully.*] I'll warrant the young ladies favor the British! What, Alice, — you here? You will allow me, sir?

[*HALE bows assent, but not too pleased, and*

FITZROY goes to ALICE.

HALE. What do you say now, Mr. Lebanon? Are you going to stay for this meeting?

LEBANON. No, siree! I am going out to buy a gun.

ANGELICA. [*Gives an unconscious cry, and, forgetting herself and her surroundings, rises frightened, crying:*] Oh, no, Mr. Lebanon, oh, no, no, no!

HALE. Don't be alarmed, Miss Knowlton! I doubt if he ever uses it.

ANGELICA. Make him promise me, sir, he'll never carry it loaded!

HALE. [*After a jealous look at ALICE and FITZROY, who are talking together at one side, turns to the school.*] Boys! I have a proposition to make. What do you say to joining a small volunteer company, with me at your head? Every boy over fifteen, eligible.

BOYS. Yes — yes!

THE JEFFERSON BOY. Please, Mr. Hale, make it boys over 'leven.

HALE. We'll make you drummer-boy, Master Jefferson. Come — all boys who want to join, sign this paper !

[They all crowd around the desk and sign, the constant murmur of their voices being heard through the following scene. FITZROY and ALICE come down stage together, ALICE leading, FITZROY following.]

ALICE. Please do not ask me that again. I tell you, you can *never* persuade me. Nor can my mother influence me the least in this. Twenty mothers couldn't make my heart beat for you, if you can't make it beat yourself. And even if I did love you — [*she adds quickly*] which I *don't* — I'd let my heart *break* before I'd marry a man who is willing to take up arms against his own country !

FITZROY. That's a girl's reasoning. England

is too great a power to be defeated by an upstart little government like the American, and when she wins, those of us who have stood by her will be rewarded! These poor rebel fools will have their every penny confiscated, while I have a grant of land, promotion in the army — who knows, perhaps a *title*. Don't refuse me again too quickly!

ALICE. Too quickly! There are no words short enough for me to use. You may *sell* your country for money and power, if you like, but you can't buy *me* with it, also. And that's the last word I'll ever say to you, Guy Fitzroy!

FITZROY. Huh! You'll change your mind some day! I mean to *have* you, — do you hear me? If I can't beg or buy you, then I'll steal. You know what I'm like when I'm in my cups! Some day, when I've made up my mind I can't wait any longer, I'll drink myself mad for you,

and then beware of me! You remember that evening, two months ago, after your mother's punch, when I dragged you behind the window curtain and kissed you against your will on your arms and neck and lips till you called for help? Remember that, and don't think you can refuse me carelessly, and have it done with. No, watch for me! [*She stands, facing him haughtily, showing her disgust for him. There is a moment's pause, in which he gazes passionately and determinedly at her. FITZROY, by a gesture and a toss of his head, as much as to say, "We'll see, I am sure to win," breaks the pause and the feeling of the scene, looking at his watch and speaking as boys go back in single file to their places, having signed the volunteer roll-call.*] It only lacks fifteen minutes of noon; I must be off. I will be back, Mr. Hale, for the meeting at twelve. How many of you

boys wish to stay and rally round King George's flag? [*He waits for some sign from the boys. There is only silence.*] You little fools! [*He turns to HALE.*] Is this *your* teaching?

HALE. Not altogether, though I've done my best, sir. There is a gentleman in the Virginia Assembly who said "Cæsar" — [*He looks at boys with a nod of invitation to join him, and they all finish with him heartily.*] "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George III" — [*TOM throws up his cap.*

FITZROY. [*Loudly.*] 'Treason — this is treason!

HALE. "George III — may profit by their example." That's what Patrick Henry said!

FITZROY. Fortunate for him he went no farther!

HALE. Oh, he is still moving! I think he will go far enough before he stops.

FITZROY. He may go up! [*With a motion across the throat, of hanging.*] See that the house is ready for us. [HALE *nods*. FITZROY *looks hard at ALICE, then says:*] Good day to you all!

[*Goes out.*]

HALE. The school will assemble to-morrow, as usual. Of course, if there's really any fighting to be done, I shall go, and the boys who are too young to go with me —

THE JEFFERSON BOY. None of us are, sir.

ALL THE BOYS. None of us! none of us!

HALE. Ah, I'm *proud* of you! Proud of you all! But your parents have something to say; and for the girls and the younger boys, we must find another teacher.

LEBANON. I will stay, Mr. Hale. I feel it's my duty.

HALE. [*Amused.*] Ahem! Very well — that

is settled, then. For to-day the school is now dismissed, except Miss Alice Adams, who must remain behind.

TOM. [*Rises, angrily.*] What for? She hasn't done anything — she hasn't had a chance to do anything. You kept her in all recess, and you shan't keep her in again!

[ALICE and HALE are secretly amused. The school looks on, surprised and excited.]

HALE. Look here, Master Adams, what right have you to say as to what shall or shall not be done in this school?

TOM. She's my sister, and you're always punishing her, and I won't have it!

HALE. [*Amused.*] Oh, won't you?

TOM. No, sir, I won't! She never does anything worth being punished for. You've got a grudge against her. All the boys have seen it!

Haven't you, boys? Go on, speak out, — haven't you seen it?

[Turning to the boys, who murmur, rather timidly, "Yes."]

HALE. Really? May I ask who is master here? School is dismissed, except Miss Alice Adams, — she remains behind!

TOM. *[Excited, coming out from his seat to in front of the benches.]* I say she shan't!

HALE. And I say it's none of your business, sir, and she shall!

TOM. *[Off his head with excitement.]* She shan't!
[Beginning to take off his coat.] Will you fight it out with me? Come on — a fair fight!

ALICE. Tom!

[The school rise and go out slowly with LEBANON, but casting curious looks behind them as they go.]

ALICE, HALE and TOM are left behind.

HALE. I will leave it with Miss Adams herself whether she does as I say, or not.

TOM. Come on, Alice, come on with me!

ALICE. No, I prefer to stay.

TOM. Bah — just like a girl! Very well, then *I* shall stay, too. [HALE and ALICE look surprised and disappointed, yet secretly amused.] Every time you punish my sister, you'll have to punish me, now. If she stays behind, I stay, too, to keep her company.

[Behind TOM'S back, ALICE and HALE exchange amused and puzzled looks and affectionate signals. Finally HALE has an idea.]

HALE. Tom, come here, — go to the blackboard. [TOM goes sullenly to the board.] I think we'll have a little Latin out of you. Write the present tense of the Latin word "to love." [TOM sneers, but with a piece of chalk writes :

“Amo, *I love,*
 Amas, *Thou lovest,*
 Amat, *He —*”

is interrupted.] Never mind the “he or she”; just make it “she.”

[TOM puts an “s” in front of the “he,” making it “she,” and adds “loves.” TOM looks sullen and rather foolish, not understanding. HALE goes to board and taking a piece of chalk adds, after first line, “Alice,” and also to end of second line, “Alice;” he adds to third line “me,” and signs it “Nathan Hale.” The blackboard then reads: —

“Amo, *I love ALICE,*
 Amas, *Thou lovest ALICE,*
 Amat, *She loves — me.*

NATHAN HALE.”

TOM. [*Embarrassed, surprised, not altogether*

pleased.] What — I don't believe it — it isn't true!

ALICE. [*Rising and coming forward.*] Yes, it is, Tom.

TOM. Well, I'll be blowed! —

[*He stops short, crimson in the face, and rushes from the room. HALE goes toward ALICE with his arms outstretched to embrace her; ALICE goes into his arms — a long embrace and kiss. A loud tattoo on a drum outside startles them.*

HALE. The Tory meeting!

ALICE. Fitzroy will be back. I don't want to see him!

HALE. Quick — we'll go by the window!
[*Putting a chair under the window, he jumps on to chair and out; then leans in the window and holds out his hands to ALICE, who is on the*

chair.] And if to-morrow another drum makes me a soldier —?

ALICE. It will make me a soldier's sweetheart!

HALE. Come!

[She gets out of the window with his help, and, with loud drum tattoo and bugle call, the stage is left empty, as

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT THE SECOND

September, 1776. At COLONEL KNOWLTON'S house on Harlem Heights. A large, general room, with white walls and columns. The furniture of the room is heavy mahogany, upholstered in crimson brocade, this latter material also hanging in curtains at the windows. Life-sized portraits, by Copley and Stuart, of Colonel and Mrs. Knowlton at the time of their marriage, hang on each side of the room. A broad window at back shows the brick wall of the garden, and through a tall, ornamental, iron gate is caught a glimpse of the river. MRS. KNOWLTON is nervously looking out of the window. She comes from the window, pulls the bell-rope, and returns

agitatedly to window. A happy old colored servant, in a light blue and silver livery, enters in answer.

JASPER. Yaas, m'm?

MRS. KNOWLTON. Oh, Jasper, how long since Miss Angelica went out?

JASPER. I dunno, m'm.

MRS. KNOWLTON. It isn't safe for her to go out alone, Jasper.

JASPER. No, m'm.

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Looking again out of window.*] And I've expressly forbidden her.

JASPER. Yaas, m'm.

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Turning and coming back excitedly on her toes.*] And you don't know?

JASPER. Dunno nothing, m'm.

MRS. KNOWLTON. And the other servants?

JASPER. None of the servants in this hyah

house, m'm, dunno nothing whatsomever what ole Jasper dunno.

[COLONEL KNOWLTON *enters hurriedly. He is a tall, striking-looking man, aquiline features, and iron-gray hair. He is strong in character, brave in spirit, and affectionate in heart. He is dressed in the blue and buff uniform of a Revolutionary Colonel.*

COLONEL KNOWLTON. [*Speaks as he enters.*]
Ah, Martha, that's good I've found you!

JASPER. [*Eagerly.*] Beg pardon, sah, but am thar any news, Colonel?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Yes, Jasper. You servants must turn all our rooms into bed-chambers by to-night.

[*Sits heavily on the sofa as if he were tired.*

MRS. KNOWLTON. What!

[*Going to him and sitting beside him on the sofa.*

JASPER *leaves the room, taking the COLONEL'S sword and hat.*

COLONEL KNOWLTON. The army has abandoned the city, under Washington's orders, to take a position here, on Harlem Heights. Washington is making his own headquarters at the house of Robert Murray, on Murray Hill, and we must take in all the staff officers we can.

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Brushing the dust off his shoulders, and holding his arm affectionately.*] Well, I'm glad of a chance to be of some sort of use, even if it's only to turn the house into a tavern! Have we abandoned the city entirely?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. No, General Putnam is there with four thousand men. But everyone who can is leaving. The sick have been sent over to Paulus Hook.¹ I told Captain Adams he

¹ Now Jersey City.

should stay with us, and he brings Alice with him.

MRS. KNOWLTON. That's most desirable for Angelica. This Lebanon person proposed for her again to me this morning! He doesn't seem to understand the meaning of the word "No." The next time, *you'd* better say it and see if he *will* understand.

COLONEL KNOWLTON. What is there against Mr. Lebanon? — Where is Angelica?

MRS. KNOWLTON. I don't know, and I'm that worried. [*Rises and goes again to the window.*] She's been gone two hours, and she didn't wear her pattens.

JASPER. [*Enters, announcing:*] Captain Adams, sah, and Missy.

[COLONEL KNOWLTON *rises* as CAPTAIN ADAMS and ALICE *come in*. ALICE *looks much more*

of a young lady than in the First Act, and very charming in a full blue and white dress, big hat, and black silk pelisse for travelling. Her father, CAPTAIN ADAMS, is a portly, dignified, good-hearted man, older than COLONEL KNOWLTON, and like him in Colonial uniform. CAPTAIN ADAMS kisses MRS. KNOWLTON, then goes to KNOWLTON, while ALICE kisses MRS. KNOWLTON.

MRS. KNOWLTON. I'm so glad you came, too, Alice. Angelica is worrying me terribly.

[Helping ALICE off with her pelisse. The two women go up the stage together.]

CAPTAIN ADAMS. I've been seeing about the public stores which are being taken to Dobb's Ferry. General Washington tells me he has asked you to hold a conference here to-day.

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Yes. *[Turning to MRS.]*

KNOWLTON.] We must prepare this room, Martha.

MRS. KNOWLTON. What is the conference for?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. We must discover, in some way, what the enemy's plans are.

CAPTAIN ADAMS. Yes, what are these damned British going to do? We *must* know. The army is becoming more and more demoralized every day!

ALICE. Only to think! We've heard our soldiers are actually in need of the barest necessities of clothing, and there are practically no blankets!

[*During ALICE'S speech, MRS. KNOWLTON goes to the door at Left, opens it and listens for ANGELICA. She closes it and comes back.*

MRS. KNOWLTON. No blankets — and the Winter coming! Well! I was married with six pairs, and mother was married with six, and

Angelica shan't be married at all — at least, not till this war's over! So there's three times six, — eighteen pairs for the Continental soldiers — bless their hearts! Alice, how about young Fitzroy? It's rumored again you're going to marry him.

[Crossing to ALICE as she speaks her name. At the same time, the two men go a few steps up the stage and talk together confidentially.]

ALICE. Oh, that rumor spreads every time I refuse him; and I did again by post, yesterday.

MRS. KNOWLTON. I'm glad of it! He's nothing like Captain Hale's equal. People aren't through talking yet of *his* gallant capture of the British sloop in the East River!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Hale's done a hundred brave things since then! The eyes of the whole Army are upon him.

ALICE. [*Very happy and proud.*] I know something very few are aware of. Not long ago the men of his company, whose term of service had expired, determined to leave the ranks, and he offered to give them his pay if they would only remain a certain time longer.

[*The two men come forward.*]

CAPTAIN ADAMS. Good Heavens! What my daughter doesn't know about Captain Hale! —

ALICE. [*Beseeking.*] Father!

CAPTAIN ADAMS. [*Smiling.*] If you allow Alice, she will spend the day discanting on Captain Hale's merits. As for Fitzroy, he's a black-guard. They say he would like to join the Americans now, but don't dare, because he killed one of his old friends in a drunken brawl, and he's afraid he'd get strung for it.

COLONEL KNOWLTON. And just at present,

Martha, Captain Adams would probably be pleased to go to his room.

MRS. KNOWLTON. By all means! This way, Captain. Alice, I will return for you in a moment. You must share with Angelica, now the house is to be turned into a barracks.

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Be careful you girls don't do any wounding on your own account. We've no men to spare!

[ALICE *laughs*. MRS. KNOWLTON *and* CAPTAIN ADAMS *go out by the door, Left*. ALICE *stops* COLONEL KNOWLTON, *as he is about to follow*. *She pantomimes him to come back, pushes him down onto the sofa — she is behind it — and with her arms about his neck, speaks cajolingly.*

ALICE. Uncle Knowlton?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Yes, my dear.

ALICE. Have you any news of Captain Hale?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. How long is it since you have seen him?

ALICE. Much too long, and I've made up my mind not to have it any more!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. That's right, don't trust him. In Connecticut, where he's been, the girls are far too pretty!

[Insinuatingly, bending his head back, and looking up at her humorously.]

ALICE. *[Jealously.]* You've heard some stories of him?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. *[Teasing her.]* Ahem! Far be it from me to expose a fellow-soldier.

ALICE. Uncle Knowlton, I'm ashamed of you! An old man like you!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Oh, not so old!

ALICE. *What* do you know?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. [*Rising.*] Nothing, my dear. I was only jesting. [*Starting to go.*]

ALICE. I'm not so sure of that. Wait a minute!

[Coming from behind the sofa to him, she seizes hold of him by a button on the breast of his coat, taking a pair of scissors from the table. The house bell is heard.]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. What are you doing?

ALICE. Getting a soldier's button to make Captain Hale jealous with! He shan't think he is the only one to flirt.

[JASPER enters from the hall in answer to the house bell, and crosses the room to the door which leads to upstairs.]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. We soldiers don't give buttons away — we sell them!

ALICE. Oh, I'm going to kiss you! You're

quite old enough for that, [*she kisses him*] but, when I tell Nathan about it, I shall pretend you were somebody else, and young, and good-looking!

[JASPER, *who has watched them by the doorway, Right, chuckles and goes out.*

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Well, you can tell him to-day if you like! —

[*For a second, ALICE cannot speak for surprise and joy; then she catches her breath and cries:*

ALICE. He's coming here!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Yes!

[*Nods his head violently.*

ALICE. Oh! [*She cries out for very happiness, and, running across the room, throws herself in an ecstasy of joy upon the sofa; then quickly jumps up and runs back to COLONEL KNOWLTON.*] I'll kiss you again for that good news. [*Starts to kiss him; changes her mind.*] No, I won't, either!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. No, you must save all the rest of your kisses for Captain Hale!

ALICE. Oh, dear no! Yours weren't at all the kind I give him. You know there are two kinds of visits, — those we make because we want to see people, and those we make on strangers, or after a party, whether we want to or not. The latter are called *duty visits!* Well? — Do you understand?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. No, not in the least.

ALICE. Stupid! Your *kiss* was a *duty visit*.
[*With a low mocking curtsey.*] What hour is he coming?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. I won't tell you, Miss! I won't give you another party, all for that one little duty visit.

[*And he starts to go out by the door, Left.*]

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Off the stage, Left, calls:*]
Thomas!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Coming, Martha!

[He closes the door behind him.]

ALICE. *[Dances half-way around the room, singing,*

“Nathan is coming, to-day, to-day!

Nathan is coming to-day, to-day!” etc., etc.,
till she reaches the mirror on the wall at the Left. She examines herself critically in the glass, still singing, takes a rose from a vase and puts it in her hair, retouches her toilet where she can, and pinches her cheeks to make them red.] Oh, dear, I wish I were prettier! I wonder what those Connecticut girls are like! —

[ANGELICA appears outside the window, and thrusts her head in.]

ANGELICA. *[Whispers.]* Alice!

ALICE. *[Startled.]* Oh! Angelica!

ANGELICA. Sh! . . . don't look — turn your head the other way.

ALICE. What in the world —!

ANGELICA. Sh — Go on — Please. . . .

[ALICE turns her back to the window. ANGELICA beckons, off Left, and runs past the window, followed by LEBANON, quickly. The front door is heard to slam. ANGELICA puts her head in at the doorway, Right.]

ALICE. What's the matter?

ANGELICA. Alice! Matter! Matter enough!
I'm married!!

ALICE. [Loudly.] What!!

ANGELICA. [Frightened.] Sh! Where is mother?

ALICE. Upstairs.

ANGELICA. Very well. [Speaks over her shoulder.] Come along, darling! [She enters, followed by LEBANON, dressed in Continental uniform. He wears a white wedding favor, and carries a gun awkwardly.] I'm a married woman,

Alice! [*She turns and directs ALICE's attention to LEBANON, on whom she gazes lovingly.*] Isn't he beautiful in his soldier clothes? [*LEBANON smiles, embarrassed but happy, and goes to shake hands with ALICE.*] Go on, you can kiss him, Alice. I won't be jealous, just this once, on our wedding-day!

LEBANON. [*To ANGELICA.*] No, really, thank you, Precious, but I'd rather not. [*To ALICE.*] You don't mind?

ALICE. [*Smiling.*] Oh, no, pray don't put yourself out for me!

ANGELICA. [*Aside to LEBANON.*] You've hurt her feelings. [*She tries to take his arm, but it is his right, in which he carries his gun. Aloud.*] Hold your gun in your other hand. I want to take your arm. [*He changes his gun awkwardly. They stand together, arm in arm, her head on his*

shoulder, and she gives a happy sigh.] Alice, will you break it to mother, at once?

ALICE. Mercy! I forgot about that. It's an elopement!

ANGELICA. Yes, and in the daytime! I hated to do without a moon, but I could never get away evenings!

ALICE. Does your mother suspect?

ANGELICA. Not a sign. She refused Ebenezer again this morning!

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Calls from off stage, Left.*]
Alice!

[*All start. ANGELICA and LEBANON show abject terror, and, "grabbing" for each other, cling together.*]

ANGELICA. Oh, she's coming! Save us. Alice, save us!

ALICE. Quick! Go back into the hall.

[*Starts pushing them out.*]

LEBANON. Do it gently, Miss Alice.

ANGELICA. Yes, mother couldn't stand too great a shock!

[*They go out, Right. ALICE takes a ribbon out of the little bag she carries, and, putting COLONEL KNOWLTON'S button on it, ties it around her neck, as MRS. KNOWLTON comes into the room.*]

MRS. KNOWLTON. I heard voices. What did they want?

ALICE. [*Embarrassed, but amused.*] They desired me to tell you, as gently as possible, that they — that she — that he — well, that *you* are a *mother-in-law*!

MRS. KNOWLTON. What do you mean, child, by calling me names?

ALICE. Angelica —

MRS. KNOWLTON. Angelica! — Mother-in-law — Alice, don't tell me! Give me air! Give me air!

ALICE. [*Fanning her.*] Air!

MRS. KNOWLTON. No! no! I mean something to sit on. Angelica — my baby! — hasn't made herself miserable for life?

[*Sitting in a chair which ALICE brings forward for her.*

ALICE. No! She's married!

MRS. KNOWLTON. It's the same thing! Who was the wicked child's accomplice? [*She suddenly realizes, and rises.*] It wasn't — it wasn't — that — [*she chokes*] that — *that!* —

ALICE. Lebanon!

MRS. KNOWLTON. No! [*Her legs give way, owing to her emotions, and she sits suddenly in the chair.*] I won't believe it! Those children! I'll spank them both and put them to bed! No! I won't do that either! Where are they?

ALICE. In the hall.

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Rises and gestures tragically.*]
Call them!

ALICE. [*Going to the door, Right.*] You won't
be cruel to her — [MRS. KNOWLTON *breathes hard*
through her tightly compressed lips.] Angelica!

[ANGELICA and LEBANON *enter timidly.*

ANGELICA. Mother!

MRS. KNOWLTON. Don't come near me! I —
you undutiful child! [*She begins to break down,*
and tears threaten her. To LEBANON.] As for
you, sir — words fails me — I — [*She breaks down*
completely, and turns to ANGELICA.] Oh, come to
my arms! [*The last is meant for ANGELICA only,*
but LEBANON takes it for himself also. Both
ANGELICA and LEBANON go to MRS. KNOWLTON'S
arms, but she repulses LEBANON.] Not you, sir!
Not you! [*And enfolds ANGELICA.*] My little
girl! Why did you? — [Crying.]

ANGELICA. [*Herself a little tearful.*] He said he'd go fight if I'd marry him! And I heard so much of our needing soldiers. I did it, a little, for the sake of the country!

MRS. KNOWLTON. Rubbish! Come to my room! —

ANGELICA. Look at him, mother! And I wouldn't marry him till he put them all on! Gun and all!

LEBANON. [*Timidly.*] Mother!

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Turning.*] *What!!* How dare you, sir!

LEBANON. Please be a mother to me, just for a few minutes. I'm going off to fight this evening.

MRS. KNOWLTON. [*Witheringly.*] Fight! You?

LEBANON. Yes, I said to my wife — [*These words very proudly. ANGELICA also straightens up at them, and MRS. KNOWLTON gasps angrily.*]

Let's begin with your mother, and if I'm not afraid before her, I'll be that much encouraged toward facing the British.

[ANGELICA, *seizing* LEBANON'S *free hand*, says "Come," and the two kneel at MRS. KNOWLTON'S feet, in the manner of old-fashioned story-books.

ANGELICA. Forgive him, mother, for the sake of the country?

MRS. KNOWLTON. H'm! We'll see — [*She goes out saying:*] Come, Angelica!

[ANGELICA *follows her out*, beckoning to LEBANON to follow, which he does, pushed forward by ALICE. ALICE is left alone. JASPER enters from the Right.

JASPER. Has Colonel Knowlton gone out, Missy?

ALICE. No, Jasper.

JASPER. 'Cause thah's a young Captain Hale hyah to pay his respects.

ALICE. Captain Hale!

JASPER. Yaas, Missy.

ALICE. Then never you mind about Colonel Knowlton, Jasper; *I will take all the respects that gentleman has to pay!*

JASPER. La, Missy! Is you sweet on him?
[*Opens door.*] This way, sah! Hyah's a young lady says as how she's been waiting up sence sunrise foa you!

ALICE. Jasper!

[HALE enters.]

HALE. [*Seeing her, is very much surprised.*]
Alice!

[*He rushes to her and takes her in his arms.*]

JASPER. [*By the door, Right, with much feeling.*]
Dat's right, kiss on, ma honeys! Smack each

other straight from the heart. It does ole Jasper good to see you. Thah's a little yaller gal lying out in the graveyard, yonder, dat knows ole Jasper was fond of kissing, too! [ALICE and HALE finish their embrace, and sit side by side on the sofa. They are unconscious of the presence of JASPER, who lingers to enjoy their love, unable to tear himself away. He speaks softly to himself.]
Don't stop, ma honeys, don't stop!

HALE. I had no hint I should find you here.

[Taking her hand.]

ALICE. Father brought me, to-day.

JASPER. [Taking a step nearer to them behind the sofa.] Bress their little souls!

HALE. I have just come down from Connecticut — a lovely part of the country.

[ALICE draws her hand away.]

ALICE. Yes. I've heard of you there.

JASPER. [*Coming in earshot, disappointed.*] Oh, go on, ma honeys, don't stop! Kiss again, jes' for ole Jasper's sake!

ALICE. Jasper!

HALE. What do you want, Jasper?

JASPER. Want to see you kiss again, Cappen. It warms ma ole heart, it does!

HALE. [*Laughing.*] I'll warm something else for you, if you don't get out!

JASPER. You don' mind ole Jasper, Cappen? Why, I done see the nobles' in the lan' kiss right yah in this very room!

HALE. Well, you go away now. You have kissing on the brain!

JASPER. Maybe I has, Cappen, but I'd a deal sight rather have it on the lips! You ain't the on'y sojer anyway, Cappen, what Missy's kissed. Take ole Jasper's word for dat, you

ain't the on'y one this very day, you take ole Jasper's word for dat!

[*Chuckling.*

ALICE. [*Leading JASPER on to make HALE jealous.*] Why, Jasper, where were you?

JASPER. I was jes' comin' in, Missy, and jes' goin' out. I shet my eyes tight, but they would squint, honey! Jasper's ears, anyway, are jes' as sartin as stealin' to hear kissin' goin' on anywhere round these hyah parts.

[*He goes out, Right.*

HALE. Is that true? [*ALICE looks at him, smiling provokingly, and playing with the military button around her neck, to call his attention to it. He sees the button.*] Whose —

[*He stops himself, resolved not to ask her about it, but he can't take his eyes off it.*

ALICE. I wish to ask a question or two!

How many young ladies did you see in Connecticut?

HALE. [*Moodily.*] I don't know. What soldier's button is that you wear on your neck?

ALICE. What young ladies have you made love to, since we've been separated?

HALE. Whom did you kiss to-day, before me?

ALICE. Confess!

HALE. Whom?

ALICE. [*Rises.*] Captain Hale, [*with a curtsey*] I'm not your pupil any longer, to be catechized so!

HALE. [*Rises also.*] Very well! Please tell your uncle, Colonel Knowlton, I am here to see him.

ALICE. Captain Hale, [*another curtsey*] I shan't do any such thing.

HALE. Then I'll go find him myself!

[*Going toward the door, Left.*]

ALICE. [*Running before him.*] No, you won't
— Captain Hale —

[*Going before the door and barring his way.*

HALE. Give me that button!

[*His eyes on it.*

ALICE. [*Leaning against the door-frame.*] Not
for worlds!

[*Kissing it.*

HALE. [*Looking about the room.*] I'll climb out
the window.

[*ALICE runs to prevent him, and gets to the
window first.*

ALICE. Do, if you like, but I shan't follow you
this time!

HALE. Ah, you remember that day in the
schoolhouse, when you promised to be a soldier's
sweetheart? I didn't know you meant a whole
regiment's!

ALICE. [*Coming away from the window, indignant.*] How dare you! Leave my house!

HALE. *Whose* house?

ALICE. I mean — my uncle's house.

HALE. Which way may I go? The way I came?

ALICE. [*Witheringly.*] Yes, back to your Connecticut young ladies!

HALE. Thank you!

[*Bows, and steps out of the low window. ALICE stands listening a moment, then hurries to the window and leans out, calling.*

ALICE. Nathan! Nathan! Where are you going?

HALE. Where you sent me — to — ahem! — Connecticut!

ALICE. Are there so many pretty girls there?

HALE. There isn't a petticoat in the State — at least there wasn't for my eyes!

ALICE. Then come back! Come back!
Quickly!

[NATHAN *reappears outside the window.*

HALE. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

ALICE. No!

HALE. [*Laughing.*] Then I won't come back!

ALICE. Very well, sir, don't!

HALE. What reward will you give me, if I do?

ALICE. [*Thinks a second.*] This button!

HALE. Good! [*Putting his hands on window-ledge, he springs in. He holds out his hand for the button.*] Give it to me!

ALICE. [*Teasing, pretends to be sad and repentant.*] First, I must make a confession.

HALE. [*Depressed.*] Go on.

ALICE. And tell you *whom* I kissed.

HALE. [*More depressed.*] Well?

ALICE. You'll forgive me?

HALE. [*Desperate, between his teeth.*] Yes!

ALICE. [*Looks up, smiling mischievously.*] It was *Uncle Knowlton!*

[*HALE starts, looks at her a moment, comprehends, then laughs.*

HALE. You little devil, you! To tease your true love out of his wits. But I will make you regret it — I have been very ill in Connecticut.

ALICE. That's why you were there so long!
[*All her teasing humor vanishes, and, for the rest of the Act, ALICE is serious. From this moment in the play the woman in her slowly and finally usurps the girl.*

HALE. Yes. As soon as I was able, I came on here. I've been out of the fighting long enough.

ALICE. Fighting! Is there to be another battle at once? Is that what this conference is for?

HALE. I don't know, but we must attack, or we'll be driven entirely out of New York, as we were out of Boston.

ALICE. General Washington has twenty thousand men!

HALE. Yes, with no arms for half of them, and two-thirds undrilled. Good Heavens, the patient courage of that man! Each defeat, he says, only trains his men the better, and fits them for winning victory in the end! But General Howe has crossed, now, to Long Island, with thirty thousand British soldiers.

ALICE. Oh, this dreadful war! When will it end?

HALE. Not till we've won our freedom, or every man among us is dead or jailed!

ALICE. That's the horror that comes to me at night, Nathan. I see you starving, choking, in

some black hole, with one of those brutes of a redcoat over you, or worse, — lying on the battle-field, wounded, dying, and *away from me!* There's one horrible dream that comes to me often! It came again last week! I'm in an orchard, and the trees are pink and white with blossoms, and the birds are singing, and the air is sweet with Spring; then great clouds of smoke drift through, and the little birds drop dead from their branches, and the pink petals fall blood-red on the white face of a soldier lying on the ground, and it's you — [*in a hysterical frenzy*] you!! And — then I wake up, and oh, my God! I'm afraid some day it will happen! Nathan! Nathan!

HALE. My darling, my darling! It's only a war dream, such as comes to everyone in times like these!

[*Taking her in his arms and comforting her.*]

ALICE. Yes, and how often they prove true! Oh, Nathan, must you go on fighting?

HALE. Alice!

ALICE. Yes, yes, of course you must. I know we need every man we have, and more! Ah, if only I were one, to fight by your side, or even a drummer-boy to lead you on! [*She adds with a slight smile, and a momentary return to her girlish humor, and quickly, in a confidential tone, as if she were telling a secret:*] I would be very careful where I led you! Not where the danger was greatest, I'll warrant! [*She returns to her former serious mood.*] Nathan, listen. Promise me one thing, — that when you do go back to the fighting, you won't expose yourself unnecessarily!

HALE. [*Smiling.*] My dear little woman, I don't know what you mean!

ALICE. Yes, you do! You must! It *isn't* a

foolish thing I'm asking! And I ask it for your love of me! You must fight, of course, and I want you to fight bravely — you couldn't do otherwise, — that you've proved time and again! Well, let it be so! Fight bravely! But promise me you won't let yourself be carried away into leading some forlorn hope; that you won't risk your precious life just to encourage others! Remember, it's my life now! Don't volunteer to do more than your duty as a soldier demands, — not more, for my sake. Don't willingly place the life I claim for mine in any jeopardy your honor as a soldier does not make imperative. Will you promise me that?

HALE. Yes, dear, I will promise you that.

ALICE. That you won't risk your life unnecessarily? Swear it to me!

HALE. [*Smiling.*] By what?

ALICE. [*Very serious.*] By your love for me, and mine for you.

HALE. [*Serious.*] I swear it!

ALICE. Ah, God bless you!

[*In the greatest relief, and with joy, she goes to embrace him, but they stand apart, startled by a loud knocking of the iron knocker on the front door of the house.*]

HALE. The men, beginning to come for the conference!

ALICE. Oh, I wish I could stay! Can't I stay?

HALE. No. No women can be present.

ALICE. If I asked Uncle?

HALE. He hasn't the power!

[COLONEL KNOWLTON and CAPTAIN ADAMS
come into the room from upstairs.]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Ah, Hale, you're in good time!

[Shakes his hand, and HALE passes on and shakes CAPTAIN ADAMS'S hand, as JASPER ushers in three other men in uniform, who are greeted cordially by COLONEL KNOWLTON, and who pass on in turn to CAPTAIN ADAMS and HALE, with whom each also shakes hands. Meanwhile, ALICE, seeing she is unobserved, steals to the big window recess, where she conceals herself behind the curtains. While the men are greeting each other with the ordinary phrases, JASPER speaks at the door, Right.]

JASPER. *[Shaking his head.]* What a pity Colonel Knowlton was down already! Ole Jasper was jes' a-countin' on gittin' another kiss! *[Starts to go out, but stops to hold door open, saying:]*
This way, gemmen, if you please.

[HULL, a handsome young officer, HALE'S age, and another man in uniform enter. They greet, first COLONEL KNOWLTON, and then the others.]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Jasper, arrange the chairs and table for us.

JASPER. Yaas, sir. [*He goes about the room arranging chairs and talking aloud to himself. Places table for COLONEL KNOWLTON at Right, with a chair behind it, and groups the other chairs in a semicircle on the Left. Three more men come in together, and two separately, each one shaking hands all around, and always with COLONEL KNOWLTON first.*] Lor' save us, ef I knows how to arrange chahs for dis hyah meetin'! It ain't exackly a gospel meetin', no yetwise a funeral. Mo' like a funeral 'n anything else, I reckon! Funeral o' dat tha British Lion. [*Moving the table.*] Dat's the place for the corpse. [*Placing a chair behind.*] Dat's fo' the preacher, and these hyah other chahs — [*with a final arrangement of the chairs*] is fo' de mourners! Guess dey's mighty glad to get red o' sech a pesky ole relation; seems as ef

she want de mother country, but mo' like de mother-in-law country, to ole Jasper's mind!

[At this moment, COLONEL KNOWLTON, looking up, sees that all is ready.]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. *[With a motion to the men, and to the chairs.]* Brother soldiers!

[They take their places in the chairs according to their military rank, HALE in the last row, behind all the others. COLONEL KNOWLTON takes his chair behind the table. JASPER draws the heavy brocade curtains in front of the window recess, and in so doing discovers ALICE. He starts, but, with her finger on her lips, she motions him to be silent. None of the others know she is there. TOM ADAMS enters in Continental soldier's uniform. He gives the military salute.]

TOM. Uncle, may I be present?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Yes, my boy, if no one has any objection. [*He looks at the other men, but they all murmur, "Oh, no, no" and "Certainly not," and TOM takes his place beside HALE at the back.*] That is all, Jasper, and we are not to be interrupted.

JASPER. Yaas, sir.

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Not on pain of imprisonment, Jasper.

JASPER. Nobody's not gwine to get into this hyah room, Colonel, with ole Jasper outside the door, not even King George hisself, honey.

[*With a stolen look toward the window where ALICE is hiding, he goes out, Right. A moment's important silence. The men are all composed, serious.*]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. [*Who has taken a letter from his pocket.*] Gentlemen, I will first read you

portions of a letter from General Washington to General Heath, forwarded to me with the request from headquarters that I should summon you here to-day. [*He reads.*] “The fate of the whole war depends upon obtaining intelligence of the enemy’s motions; I do most earnestly entreat you and General Clinton to exert yourselves to accomplish this most desirable end. I was never more uneasy than on account of my want of knowledge on this score. *It is vital.*” [*He closes the letter, and places it in his breast pocket.*] Gentlemen, General Heath, General Clinton, and General Washington together have decided there is but one thing to be done. [*A moment’s pause.*] A competent person must be sent, in *disguise*, into the British camp on Long Island, to find out these secrets on which depends *everything!* It must be a man with some experience in military affairs,

with some scientific knowledge, — a man of education, one with a quick eye, a cool head, and courage, — *unflinching courage!* He will need tact and caution, and, above all, he must be one in whose judgment and fidelity the American Nation may have implicit confidence! I have summoned those men associated with me in the command of our Army, whom I personally think capable of meeting all these requirements. To the man who offers his services, in compensation for the risks he must run, is given the opportunity of serving his country supremely! Does any one of the men of this company, now before me, volunteer? [*He ends solemnly and most impressively. There is a long pause; the men do not move, and keep their faces set, staring before them. After waiting in vain for some one to speak, KNOWLTON continues.*] *Not one?* Have I pleaded so feebly

in behalf of my country, then? Or have I failed in placing her dire necessity before you? Surely you don't need me to tell you how our Continental Army is weak, wasted, unfed, unclothed, unsupplied with ammunition. We could not stand a long siege, nor can we stand a sudden combined attack. We must know beforehand, and escape from both, should either be planned! After fighting bravely, as we have, are we to lose all we have gained, the *liberty* within our grasp at this late day? No! One of you *will* come forward! What is it your country asks of you? Only to be a hero!

HULL. *No!* To be a spy!

[*A murmur of assent from the men.*]

CAPTAIN ADAMS. There's not a man amongst us who wouldn't lead a handful of men against a regiment of the English! who wouldn't fight for

liberty in the very mouth of the cannon! But this is a request not meant for men like us.

HULL. [*Looking at the other men.*] We are all true patriots here, I take it!

ALL. Aye! Aye! Patriots!

HULL. [*Appealing to the men.*] Are we the men to be called on to play a part which every nation looks upon with scorn and contumely?

ALL. No! No!

HULL. [*Turning again to KNOWLTON.*] I would give my *life* for my country, but not my *honor*!

ALL. Hear! Hear!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. *But*, do you understand? Do you realize all that's at stake?

ALL. Yes! Yes!

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Then surely one of you *will* come forward in response to this desperate appeal from your Chief. In the name of Wash-

ington, I ask for a volunteer! [*He waits. Silence again. He rises.*] Men! Listen to me! Shall our fathers and brothers, killed on the field of battle, be sacrificed for nothing? Will you stand still beside their dead bodies and see our hero, George Washington, shot down before your eyes as a traitor? Will you accept oppression again, and give up Liberty, now you've won it? Or is there, in the name of God, one man among you to come forward with his *life and his honor* in his hands to lay down, if needs be, for his country?

[*After a short pause, HALE rises, pale, but calm.*]

HALE. *I will undertake it!*

[*General surprise, not unmixed with consternation, and all murmur, questioningly, "Hale!" A short pause.*]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. Captain Nathan Hale—

[*HALE comes forward.*]

CAPTAIN ADAMS. [*Interrupting, rises.*] I protest against allowing Captain Hale to go on this errand!

HULL. And I!

ALL. And I! And I!

CAPTAIN ADAMS. Captain Hale is too valuable a member of the Army for us to risk losing. [*He turns to HALE.*] Hale, you can't do this! You haven't the right to sacrifice the brilliant prospects of your life! The hopes of your family, of your friends, of us, your fellow-soldiers! Let some one else volunteer; you must withdraw your offer.

[*A second's pause. All look at HALE questioningly.*]

HALE. [*Quietly.*] Colonel Knowlton, I repeat my offer!

CAPTAIN ADAMS. [*Rising, excitedly.*] No!

We are all opposed to it! Surely we have some influence with you! It is to certain death that you are needlessly exposing yourself!

HALE. Needlessly?

HULL. [*Also rising, excitedly.*] It is to more than certain death, — it is to an ignominious one! Captain Hale, as a member of your own regiment, I ask you not to undertake this! [HALE *shakes his head simply.*] We will find some one else! Some one who can be more easily spared. [*Here he loses his manner of soldier, and speaks impulsively as a boy.*] Nathan — dear old man! — We were schoolboys together, and for the love we bore each other then, and have ever since, for the love of all those who love you and whom you hold dear, I beg you to listen to me!

HALE. [*Looks at HULL with a smile of affection and gratitude, and turns to KNOWLTON.*] I under-

stand, sir, there is no one else ready to perform this business?

COLONEL KNOWLTON. I must confess there is no one, Captain.

HALE. Then I say again, I will go.

TOM. [*Hurrying forward.*] Mr. Hale! — Sir! — Captain! [*Seizes HALE'S hand.*] For the sake of my sis —

[*He is interrupted quickly and suddenly by HALE, who places his hand on his mouth to prevent his speaking the rest. HALE takes a long breath, sets his face, then gives TOM'S hand a mighty grip, and puts him behind him.*]

HALE. [*Who is much moved, but gradually controls himself.*] Gentlemen, I thank you all for the affection you have shown me, but I think I owe to my country the accomplishment of an object so important and so much desired by the

Commander of her armies. I am fully sensible of the consequences of discovery and capture in such a situation, but I hold that every kind of service necessary for the public good becomes *honorable* by being *necessary*! And my country's claims upon me are imperious!

[Unnoticed by the men, ALICE draws aside the curtains, and comes slowly forward during COLONEL KNOWLTON'S following speech.]

COLONEL KNOWLTON. *[Rises, and going to HALE, shakes his hand with deep feeling.]* Manly, wise, and patriotic words, sir, which I am sure your country will not forget! I — I will call for you this afternoon to appear before Washington. Gentlemen, this conference is finished.

[A general movement of the men is immediately arrested by ALICE'S voice.]

ALICE. No! It is not!

CAPTAIN ADAMS. Alice!

[ALICE *is white, haggard, "beside herself."*

She is oblivious of all but HALE. She goes to him, and, seizing his wrist, holds it in a tight but trembling grasp.

ALICE. [*In a low, hoarse whisper.*] Your promise to me! Your promise!

HALE. [*Surprised.*] Do you hold me to it?

ALICE. Yes!

HALE. Then I must break it!

ALICE. No! I refuse to free you. You have given two years of your life to your country. It must give me the rest. It's my share! It's my right!

[*She holds out her two arms toward him.*

HALE. Still, I must do my duty.

ALICE. [*Her hands drop to her side.*] And what about your duty to me!

HALE. [*Takes one of her hands, and holds it in his own.*] Could you love a coward?

ALICE. Yes, if he were a coward for my sake.

HALE. I don't believe you!

ALICE. It is true, and if you love me, you'll stay!

HALE. If — *if* I love you!

ALICE. Yes, *if* you love me! Choose! If you go on this mission, it is the end of our love! Choose!

[*She draws away her hand.*]

HALE. There can be no such choice, — it would be an insult to believe you.

ALICE. [*In tearful, despairing entreaty.*] You heard them — it's to *death* you're going.

HALE. Perhaps —

ALICE. [*In a whisper.*] You *will* go?

HALE. I must!

ALICE. [*A wild cry.*] Then I hate you!

HALE. And I *love you*, and always will, so long as a heart beats in my body.

[*He wishes to embrace her.*]

ALICE. No!

[*She draws back her head, her eyes blazing; she is momentarily insane with fear and grief and love. HALE bows his head and slowly goes from the room. ALICE, with a faint, heart-broken cry, sinks limply to the floor, her father hurrying to her, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT THE THIRD

THE FIRST SCENE. *September, 1776. Long Island, opposite Norwalk. The WIDOW CHESTER'S Inn. Time: Night. A party of British officers and soldiers, including CUNNINGHAM, and also some men in civilian's dress, are discovered drinking, the WIDOW serving them. At the curtain, they are singing a jolly drinking song. As the WIDOW refills each mug, each soldier takes some slight liberty with her, pinches her arm, or puts his arm about her waist, or kisses her wrist, or "nips" her cheek; she takes it all good-naturedly, laughing, and sometimes slapping them, or pushing them away, and joining them in their song. At the end of the song*

FITZROY *swaggers in by the door on the Right. He is greeted with shouts and cheers. The WIDOW has gone behind the bar.*

CUNNINGHAM. [*Seated on the corner of the table, which is at the Left.*] Here's a man for a toast! A toast, Major!

ALL THE SOLDIERS. [*Rapping the table with their mugs.*] A toast! A toast!

FITZROY. For God's sake, give me stuff to drink it in! [*Leaning with his back against the bar.*] I've a hell's thirst in my throat.

[*The WIDOW is ready, as he speaks, to fill his glass across the bar. As she is filling it, he kisses her roughly, and she, to elude him, moves, and thus spills half the liquor: he tries to seize her, but she pushes him off.*

WIDOW. Enough of that! Kiss the liquor — it's your equal!

[The soldiers are laughing, singing, and filling their mugs.]

FITZROY. Ain't she coy, the Widow Chic! Well, boys, — here you are to our Royal Master! Long life to King George!

WIDOW AND ALL. *[Holding up their glasses and rising.]* Long life to King George! Hip! Hip!

[All drink, and then sit down again, some of the men going on with the song.]

FITZROY. Here's another!

CUNNINGHAM. Give us a wench this time!

ALL. Yes, a wench! Give us a wench's name!

FIRST SOLDIER. Yes, if you can't give us the wench herself, give us her name!

FITZROY. *[By their table.]* What's the matter with the Widow for a wench?

[All laugh, including FITZROY, who jeers derisively]
WIDOW. *[Coming to FITZROY.]* You're a gallant soldier to poke fun at the woman who supplies you with drink! I've been hugged many a time by *your* betters!

[A general murmur of approval from the soldiers,
"Right for the widdy!" *etc., etc.*

FITZROY. *[Bowing low, with mock courtesy, and taking his hat off as he bows.]* I ask pardon of your Highness!

[All guffaw. She makes a mocking bob curtsey, and goes back to the bar.]

CUNNINGHAM. Go on with the toast,—we're thirsty!

ALL. *[Shouting and pounding on the table.]*
Your toast! Your toast!

[As they shout, HALE enters, from the Right, very quietly, and goes to the bar. He is dressed in a

citizen's dress of brown cloth and a broad-brimmed hat. No notice is taken of him, except by the WIDOW, who gives him a mug and a drink, and watches him a little curiously through the scene.

FITZROY. Here's death to George Washington!

ALL. Hurrah! Death to George Washington!

[HALE *has suddenly fixed his eyes on FITZROY, and shows that he finds something familiar in his voice and manner, and is trying to recall him. HALE has, at the giving of this toast, lost control of his muscles for a moment, — lost hold of his mug; — it drops, and the liquor spills. As the others put their mugs down, HALE is stooping to pick up his. The noise when he dropped the mug, and his following actions, bring him into notice. He comes forward as FITZROY goes up stage.*

CUNNINGHAM. Hello! Who's this?

ALL. Hello! Hello!

[FITZROY *doesn't pay much attention; he is talking with the WIDOW at the bar.*

HALE. Gentlemen, I am an American, loyal to the King, but of very small account to His Majesty.

CUNNINGHAM. [*Tippling back his chair.*]
What's your name?

HALE. Daniel Beacon.

FIRST SOLDIER. What's your business here?

HALE. I'm a teacher, but the Americans drove me out of my school.

CUNNINGHAM. [*Crossing behind HALE to the bar, where he gets another drink.*] For your loyalty, eh?

HALE. Yes — for my loyalty.

FIRST SOLDIER. [*Bringing his fist down hard on the table.*] The damned rebels!

HALE. I am in hopes I can find a position of some sort over here.

WIDOW. [*Who has been half listening.*] Can't you teach these soldiers something? Lord knows they're ignorant enough!

[*Comes out from behind the bar, and places a big flagon of wine on the table. Takes away the empty flagon.*]

FIRST SOLDIER. Widdy! Widdy!

[*All laugh. FITZROY joins them again.*]

WIDOW. [*Behind the men at table.*] Well, have you heard what the Major here says — you drunken, lazy sots?

CUNNINGHAM. What's that?

FITZROY. General Howe's new plans.

[*The men lean over the table to hear.*]

CUNNINGHAM. Are we to make a move?

[*FITZROY nods his head impressively several*

times. The men look at each other and nod their heads.

WIDOW. [*Poking CUNNINGHAM with her elbow.*]
Bad news for you, lazy! Lord! How the fellow does love the rear rank!

CUNNINGHAM. Shut up! Let's hear the news!

WIDOW. You've a nice way of speaking to ladies!

CUNNINGHAM. [*Growls in disgust.*] Bah!

FITZROY. It comes straight from headquarters!
[*The men gather more closely about FITZROY, — HALE with them, with calm, pale face, showing his suppressed excitement. FITZROY continues in lower tones.*] General Howe is going to force his way up the Hudson, and get to the north of New York Island.

[*An instantaneous expression of fear crosses HALE's face.*]

CUNNINGHAM. [*Grunts.*] Huh! What's that for?

WIDOW. Ninny!

FITZROY. Use your brains!

WIDOW. [*Laughing.*] Use his *what*?

FITZROY. Hush, Widow Chic! If we can get to the north of New York Island without their being warned, we'll catch Washington, and cage what is practically the whole American army! They'll have to surrender or fight under odds they can never withstand.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well! What's to prevent the scheme?

FITZROY. Nothing, unless the Americans should be warned.

CUNNINGHAM. If they have an inkling of it, they can prevent us getting up the Hudson, eh?

FITZROY. Precisely. In any case, if they're

warned it won't be tried, because Washington wouldn't be trapped, and, after all, Washington is the man we want to get hold of.

CUNNINGHAM. Wring Washington's damned neck, and we won't have any more of this crying for liberty!

FITZROY. The expedition is planned for tomorrow night, and there's practically no chance for him to be warned before then.

FIRST SOLDIER. Have you authority for this, sir?

FITZROY. The orders are being issued now, — it's been an open secret among the men for two days. Down at the Ferry Station the betting is, this business finishes the rebellion. [*The WIDOW, in answer to a signal from one of the men, comes out from behind the bar, with another flagon of wine.*] They're giving big odds.

CUNNINGHAM. Can't finish it too soon to please me! [*Rises unsteadily.*] Fighting's dangerous work.

WIDOW. [*Filling his cup.*] That's a brave soldier for ye!

CUNNINGHAM. Shut up, damn you!

WIDOW. I'll shut when I please.

CUNNINGHAM. You'll shut when I say! You old hag!

WIDOW. "Hag!"

[*Slaps his face.*]

CUNNINGHAM. Hell!

[*Throws the wine in his mug in her face.* HALE, who has sprung up, knocks his mug out of his hand with a blow.

HALE. You coward!

[*All the soldiers show excitement. Several rise.*

WIDOW goes to the bar, wiping the wine from her face; she is crying, but soon controls herself.

CUNNINGHAM. What damn business is it of yours?

HALE. It's every man's business to protect a woman from a brute!

CUNNINGHAM. Hear the pretty teaching gentleman quote from his Reader!

FITZROY. [*Rises. He has noticed HALE for the first time.*] Who is this?

HALE. Daniel Beacon.

CUNNINGHAM. A teacher the Rebs have driven out of New York.

FITZROY. [*Who has looked at HALE curiously, turns to the WIDOW.*] Have you ever seen him before?

WIDOW. Not to my knowledge.

FITZROY. [*At the bar with the WIDOW.*] There's a something about him damn familiar to me. I'm suspicious! Here you, Beacon, how do we know you're not some Rebel sneak?

ALL. [*Rising.*] What's that?

CUNNINGHAM. That's true enough! What's your opinions?

ALL. Make him speak! Make him speak!

[*A general movement among the soldiers.*]

FITZROY. Yes, if you *are* a loyalist, give us a taste of your sentiments!

CUNNINGHAM. A toast will do! Give us a toast!

[*FITZROY turns aside to the WIDOW.*]

ALL. [*In a general movement, seizing HALE, they put him on top of table.*] Come on, give us a toast!

FITZROY. [*To the WIDOW.*] I'm suspicious of this fellow! I've seen him somewhere before.

[*He looks at HALE attentively, unable to recall him.*]

ALL. Give us a rouser! There you are! Now, give us something hot!

CUNNINGHAM. A toast for the King, and then one with a wench in it.

HALE. Here's a health to King George!
May right triumph, and wrong suffer defeat!

ALL. Hip! Hip! To the King!

[*All drink except HALE, who only pretends, which FITZROY, who is watching intently, notices.*]

FITZROY. [*To the WIDOW.*] He didn't drink!
I am sure of it!

WIDOW. No! *I think he did!*

CUNNINGHAM. Now for the wench!

HALE. To the Widow Chic — God bless her!
[*All laugh, except CUNNINGHAM, who says, "Bah!" and ostentatiously spills his liquor on the floor.*]

HALE AND ALL. The Widow Chic! Hip!
Hip!

[*All drink, and then the soldiers take HALE down, and all talk together, slapping each other on*]

the back, drinking, starting another song, etc. HALE sits by the table.

FITZROY. [*To the WIDOW, suddenly.*] By God!
Now I know!

[In a voice of conviction and alarm.]

WIDOW. [*Frightened by his voice and manner.*]
What?

FITZROY. Who he is! He's my girl's white-livered lover, one named Hale!

WIDOW. Are you sure?

FITZROY. Almost, — and if I'm right, he's doing spy's work here! Get plenty of liquor. If we can drug him he may disclose himself! Anyway, we'll loosen his tongue!

[WIDOW exits at back, with an empty flagon.]

FITZROY joins HALE and the other soldiers; as he does so, HALE rises; he has grown uneasy under FITZROY'S scrutiny.

HALE. Well, gentlemen, I must retire for the night. I haven't a soldier's throat for wine.

CUNNINGHAM. Good! So much the better — the more for us!

[HALE goes toward the door at back; FITZROY, from the Right, goes at the same time to meet him. They meet at the door, back.

FITZROY. Still, won't you stay and have a game with us?

HALE. I think you must excuse me.

FITZROY. [*Angry.*] You're afraid to stay; you're afraid to drink, for fear we'll find out the truth as to who you are!

[*The WIDOW comes in with more liquor, puts it on the table, and takes the empty flagon to the bar.*

HALE. [*Laughs.*] Oh, that's it, is it? Very well, then I'll stay!

[He sits again at the table. The soldiers start up singing "The Three Grenadiers." They all sing and drink.]

FITZROY. *[Interrupts them.]* Stop singing a moment! Fill up, everybody! I have a bumper or two to give in honor of our *guest* here! *[He stands on a chair, with one foot on the table, watching HALE closely.]* Here's to New London, Connecticut, and the schoolhouse there!

CUNNINGHAM. Damn silly toast!

HALE. Never you mind, it's an excuse for a drink!

[All repeat the first part of toast, but they are getting thick-tongued, and all come to grief over the word "Connecticut." HALE has answered FITZROY'S look without flinching, but has managed to spill his liquor. All refill their glasses, singing.]

FITZROY. Here's another for you. The toast of a sly wench, and a prim one, who flaunts a damned Yankee lover in my face! But I've kissed her lips already, and before I'm through with her, if she won't be my wife, by God, I'll make her my mistress! Drink to my success with the prettiest maid in the colonies! — Alice Adams!

ALL. To Alice Adams! Hip! Hip!

[All hold up their glasses with loud cries, and then drink. HALE again manages to spill his liquor, and pretends to drink. FITZROY jumps down from the chair and table to beside HALE.]

FITZROY. *[Loudly, fiercely, to HALE.]* You didn't drink! I watched your damned throat, and not a drop went down it!

[General movement of the soldiers. All rise; excitement.]

ALL. Show us your cup! Show us your cup!

[HALE, with a sneering laugh, holds his glass above his head, and turns it upside down; it is empty.]

CUNNINGHAM. What's the matter with you?

He knows good liquor when he tastes it!

[All laugh drunkenly; general movement again.]

All retake their seats, and continue singing.

HALE looks defiantly in FITZROY'S face, and throws his cup on the floor.

HALE. Good night, gentlemen!

ALL. [Drunkenly.] Good night, good night!

[HALE goes out by the door at back, shown by the

WIDOW, who exits with him, taking a candle.]

One of the soldiers is asleep; CUNNINGHAM is

on the floor; another under the table; they

are singing in a sleepy, drunken way. FITZ-

ROY writes a letter rapidly on paper, which he

finds on the corner of the bar. He finishes it.

CUNNINGHAM. [On the floor, his head and arms

on the chair, whining.] I'm thirsty! Won't some kind person please give me a drink?

FITZROY. [*Kicking him with his foot to make him get up.*] Get up! Get up, I say! I have an errand for you!

CUNNINGHAM. [*Rising, steadies himself against the chair.*] What is it?

FITZROY. This man is a spy —

CUNNINGHAM. Hurrah! [*Waves the arm with which he was steadying himself, and almost loses his balance.*] We'll hang him up to the first tree!

FITZROY. Wait! We must prove it first, and I have thought of a plan. Take a horse and ride like hell to the Ferry Station. Cross to New York, and give this letter to General Howe. He will see that you are conducted to a Colonel Knowlton's house, with a letter from him to a young lady who is staying there.

CUNNINGHAM. [*Who is a little drunk, throwing back his shoulders and swaggering a bit.*] A young lady! Ah, Major, you've hit on the right man for your business this time!

FITZROY. Don't interrupt, you drunken fool, but listen to what I am telling you! The letter will say that Captain Nathan Hale is here, wounded, and wishes to see his sweetheart, Alice Adams, before he dies. If you are questioned, corroborate that, you understand? A young man named Hale is here, wounded! That's who the fellow upstairs is, I'm very well nigh certain! The girl's in love with him — she'll come — and if it is Hale we've got here, we're likely to know it — if it isn't, well, no harm done!

CUNNINGHAM. Very pretty! Just the kind of business I like.

FITZROY. Your password on this side will be

“Love.” Are you sober enough to remember that?

CUNNINGHAM. [*In a maudlin voice.*] “Love!”
You do me an injustice, Major!

[*With a half-tipsy effort at dignity.*]

FITZROY. Mind you don't speak *my* name.
You come at *General Howe's* orders.

CUNNINGHAM. Diplomacy was always my forte. Fighting's much too common work!

FITZROY. Go on, now. There's no time to be lost! I want the girl here by daybreak, before the dog's up and off.

CUNNINGHAM. You guarantee, Major, that the girl's pretty?

FITZROY. [*Turning on him.*] What! None of that! She's my property! You'd better not forget that. No poaching on my preserves!

CUNNINGHAM. [*Doggedly.*] I understand, sir.

[Salutes and exits. All the soldiers are asleep.

The WIDOW comes back. FITZROY turns a chair to face the fire.

FITZROY. Bring more liquor.

[He throws himself into the chair.

WIDOW. More? at this hour?

FITZROY. *[Loosening his neck-gear.]* Yes, enough to last till morning. *[To himself.]* I warned her some day I would set to and drink myself mad for her! And the time's come!

[The stage darkens.

THE SECOND SCENE. *Outside the WIDOW CHICHESTER'S. Very early the next morning. The scene represents the front of the house,—a low, rambling structure of gray stone, with a porch and a gabled roof, in which is the window of FITZROY'S bedroom. There is a well-sweep on the Left, and a sign-post beside the road. There*

are trees and shrubs on each side. It is just at sunrise. As dawn begins, a cock is heard crowing behind the house, answered by a second cock, and by others. The sun rises and floods the scene. The WIDOW is heard unbolting the door, and comes out on to the porch, carrying the mugs of the night before, which she has washed and which she places on a bench in the sun. A bugle call is heard, and, while she is arranging the mugs, THREE SOLDIERS come out from the house.

THE THREE SOLDIERS. [*On the porch, saluting with elaborate politeness.*] Good morning, Widow Chic.

WIDOW. [*Imitating their salute.*] God bless you and King George! [*The soldiers leave the porch, and start off, Right.*] Where are you off to, this early?

FIRST SOLDIER. [*As he speaks, all three stop and*

turn.] On picket duty, between here and the Ferry Station. The Major's orders.

[FITZROY *appears in the upstairs window, opening the shutters; he is without his coat; he is dishevelled and bloated; he looks as if he had not been to bed.*

FITZROY. Here, you men! No loitering! You've no time to lose! Remember, you're to pass no one but the girl, Alice Adams, with Cunningham. If she's brought any one with her, man, woman, or child, don't let 'em pass.

THE THREE SOLDIERS. [*Salute.*] Yes, sir.

[*They start to go.*

FITZROY. Burnham!

FIRST SOLDIER. [*Salutes.*] Yes, sir?

FITZROY. Have you your bugle with you?

FIRST SOLDIER. Yes, sir.

FITZROY. Well, you change with Smith, then;

take his position nearest to the Ferry, and sound a warning the moment they pass, that I may know *here* they're coming, and be ready.

FIRST SOLDIER. [*Salutes.*] Yes, sir.

FITZROY. That's all. [*The THREE SOLDIERS salute and go off down the road, Right. FITZROY calls.*] Widow Chic!

WIDOW. [*Coming down from the porch, and looking up at FITZROY.*] Yes, Major.

FITZROY. We're going to have some pretty sport here, presently.

WIDOW. I hope it's no harm to the young teacher who took my part last night, sir.

FITZROY. Damme! You're sweet on him, too! He's quite a lady-killer.

[*He laughs satirically, and disappears from the window, leaving the shutters open. HALE opens the door and comes out on to the porch.*]

HALE. Good morning, madam.

WIDOW. [*With a curtsey.*] Good morning, sir; the Lord bless you and King George!

HALE. Ahem! By the way, where is my horse? Has she had a good night?

WIDOW. She's tethered right there, sir. [*Pointing off Right.*] In the bushes. It's the best I could do, having no barn. I told the boy to feed her the first thing, sir.

[*HALE goes to the Right as she speaks. The*

WIDOW stands watching him.

HALE. [*Passes out of sight among the trees and bushes.*] Ah! Betsy, old girl! [*He is heard patting the horse.*] How is it, eh? Had a good night, my beauty? Hungry? Oh, no, you've had your breakfast, haven't you? [*He is heard patting her again.*] That's good! Be ready to start in a few minutes now. [*He comes back into*

sight.] Will you kindly ask the boy to saddle her at once, madam?

[FITZROY *comes out on to the porch.*

WIDOW. Certainly, sir.

[*Goes into house.*

FITZROY. Good morning.

HALE. Good morning.

FITZROY. [*Leaning against a pillar of the porch.*]

I have a pleasant surprise for you.

HALE. [*Suspicious, walking slowly across the stage to hide his nervousness.*] That is a sufficient surprise in itself.

FITZROY. I am expecting a visitor for you, every moment now.

HALE. [*Involuntarily stops a second and turns.*]
A visitor?

[*He continues walking.*

FITZROY. *For you.*

HALE. [*More suspicious, but on his guard.*]
Who?

FITZROY. Alice Adams. [*HALE does not make any movement, but he cannot avoid an expression of mingled fear and surprise flashing across his face — it is so slight that, though FITZROY does see it, he cannot be sure that it is anything. HALE continues to walk, returning from Left to Right. FITZROY comes down from the porch, and meets HALE as he crosses.*] You change color!

HALE. [*Quietly, himself again completely.*] Do I?

[*Walks on toward Right.*]

FITZROY. [*Looking after him.*] Yes — Nathan Hale!

HALE. [*Walks on with his back to FITZROY.*]
Nathan what?

FITZROY. Nathan Hale! And you are here,

stealing information of our movements for the Rebel Army! If I can only prove it —

[He is interrupted.]

HALE. *[Turning sharply.]* If!

FITZROY. And I will prove it!

HALE. *[Walking towards FITZROY, now from Right.]* Indeed! How?

FITZROY. If Cunningham has carried out my instructions, he has gone to Alice with a note from General Howe, saying that Nathan Hale is wounded and dying here, and wishes to see her! I think that will bring her readily enough — in which case we ought to hear them pass the sentinels, any moment now!

[A short pause, FITZROY watching for the effect on HALE of every word he speaks. They stand face to face.]

HALE. And who is Nathan Hale?

FITZROY. A damned rebel fool the girl's sweet on. If you *are* he, and she is brought face to face with you, alive, whom she fears to find dead, she's sure to make some sign of recognition, if I know women, and that sign will cost you your life!

HALE. It's a dastardly trick to make such use of a woman!

FITZROY. All's fair in love and war, and this is a case of both, for I love the girl, too.

HALE. And if I'm not — [*hesitates*] what's his name — [FITZROY *sneers*] the man you think me?

FITZROY. Oh, well, then, no harm's done. Meanwhile, you needn't try to get away before she comes. I've placed pickets all about, with orders who's to pass and not.

[*The WIDOW comes from the house, carrying a horse's saddle.*]

WIDOW. That boy's gone to the village; I will have to saddle your horse myself, sir.

[Going toward the Right.]

FITZROY. *[Passing behind HALE to the WIDOW.]*
I'm hungry, Widow Chic! Is there a swallow of coffee and a bite of bread ready? I haven't time for more.

[With a meaning look toward HALE.]

WIDOW. Yes, in the kitchen.

FITZROY. *[Goes on to the porch, and there turns on the steps to say to HALE:]* Don't be alarmed. I won't miss your meeting; I shall be on hand.

[Goes into the house.]

HALE. *[Quickly going after WIDOW. In half-lowered tones, and showing suspense and suppressed excitement.]* Madam!

WIDOW. Yes, sir?

HALE. *[Taking her by the arm, kindly.]* Dear

madam, you thanked me last night for striking that dog of a soldier who had his cup raised against you —

WIDOW. Ah, sir, it's many a day since I've been protected by any man, let alone a handsome young beau like you, sir.

[*With a curtsey.*]

HALE. [*Bows.*] Thank you, madam. Will you also do me a favor in return?

WIDOW. That I will, sir.

HALE. Then quick, leave the saddle by the horse to arrange on your return, and go a bit down the road toward the Ferry Station. Wait there! When you see Cunningham —

WIDOW. The brute who wanted to strike me?

HALE. Yes! — riding along with a girl, make some motion to her, wave your hand or kerchief or something. Do anything to attract her

attention, if possible, without attracting his, and at the same time place your fingers on your lips — so! [*Showing her.*] You don't understand, and neither will she, perhaps! But a life is at stake, and it's a chance, and my only one —

WIDOW. Wave my hand, and do so?

HALE. Yes. She is the girl I love, madam, and I ask you to do this for me!

WIDOW. And, sir, I will.

[*HALE starts, and listens as if he heard something.*

HALE. Quick! Run, for the love of God, or you may be too late! [*The WIDOW hurries off, Right. The saddle is heard falling in the bushes where she throws it. HALE shakes his head doubtfully as to the success of his plan; he goes to the Right and speaks to the horse.*] Betty! Ah! Bless your heart! Be ready, old girl.

I may need you soon, to race away from death with! Be ready, old girl.

[During the end of this speech, FITZROY comes out on to the porch, carrying a coffee bowl in his hand, from which he drinks. He doesn't hear HALE'S words.]

FITZROY. That's a good horse of yours, Mr. Beacon. *[Drinks the coffee. HALE starts very slightly and turns, looks scornfully at FITZROY, and crosses stage slowly.]* Our friends are late! *[He starts to drink again, but just as the bowl touches his lips, a far-off bugle call of warning is heard. Both HALE and FITZROY start, and stand still, except that very slowly the hand with the bowl sinks down from FITZROY'S lips, as the head very slowly lifts, his eyes wide open, a smile of expectant triumph on his face. HALE is at the Left, FITZROY is on the porch steps, as the bugle stops. FITZROY*

hurls away the bowl, from which some coffee is spilled, and which is broken as it strikes, while he cries out:] They're coming!

[He comes down the steps.

SECOND PICKET'S VOICE. *[Off stage, Right, at a far distance.]* Who goes there?

CUNNINGHAM. *[Far off.]* Charles Cunningham, with Miss Alice Adams, on private business.

SECOND PICKET. Your password?

CUNNINGHAM. *[In a sneering voice.]* "Love!"

[FITZROY listens till CUNNINGHAM'S reply is finished; then turns quickly to look at HALE, whose face shows nothing. The sound of the horse's hoofs is heard coming nearer and nearer. After a few seconds, the THIRD PICKET is heard.

THIRD PICKET. *[Off stage at a distance.]* Who goes there?

CUNNINGHAM. [*Nearer.*] Charles Cunningham, with Miss Alice Adams, on private business.

THIRD PICKET. Your password?

CUNNINGHAM. [*Again in a sneering voice.*] "Love!" [*The horse's hoofs are heard coming closer, and then stop. There is the noise of dismounting in the bushes*] Here! just tie these safe! Come along now, Miss!

[CUNNINGHAM and ALICE come on, Right.

ALICE'S eyes fall first on FITZROY.

ALICE. You here!

[FITZROY doesn't answer, but, turning his face and eyes to HALE, directs with his hand ALICE'S gaze in that direction, and then he quickly turns his eyes upon ALICE, to watch her face. She very slowly follows his glance to HALE, rests her eyes on his a full minute without making any recognition, and then turns to CUNNINGHAM.

ALICE. Where is Captain Hale? Why don't you take me to him at once?

FITZROY. [*In a rage.*] She's been warned! Who's spoiled my plot?

[*Going menacingly to CUNNINGHAM. At this action, there is one moment when, unseen, ALICE and NATHAN'S eyes can seek each other, but only for a moment.*]

CUNNINGHAM. Not I! It has spoiled my fun, too.

FITZROY. [*To ALICE.*] That's your lover, and you know it! I only saw him a few moments in his schoolhouse, but I can't have so bad a memory for a face as all that.

[*WIDOW is heard singing "The Three Grenadiers" in the bushes at Right, where she is tying the horses.*]

ALICE. They told me Captain Hale was

here, and dying! Who played this trick on me?

[*Looking blankly at HALE, and then at CUNNINGHAM and FITZROY.*]

FITZROY. Well, *isn't* he here?

[*Motioning to HALE.*]

ALICE. [*To FITZROY.*] It was *you*, of course! You who have forced me to this ride through the night, half dead with fear, and all for a lie! Well, mark my word, you will lose your commission for this! Rebels or no rebels, we have our rights as human beings, and General Howe is a gentleman who will be the first to punish a trick like you have played on a woman!

FITZROY. [*Going to ALICE.*] We'll see what General Howe will do when I give into his hands a man who has been stealing information of our movements for the Rebel Army, — who has been

working for the destruction of the King's men, — and I will do this yet! You've been warned by some one! I'll question the pickets, and if I find one of them the traitor — [*to HALE, crossing before ALICE*] he'll hang ahead of you to let the Devil know you're coming. [*A look at HALE, then he recrosses before ALICE to CUNNINGHAM.*] There are men picketed all about — you need not hang around unless you want to. [*Aside to CUNNINGHAM.*] I shall steal back behind the house, and watch them from inside; make some excuse to go in, too. I want you ready by the door. [*He goes off, Right.*]

ALICE. [*To CUNNINGHAM, going toward him.*]
Aren't you going to take me back?

CUNNINGHAM. Well, not just this minute, Mistress. I've a hankering for some breakfast, when the Widow Chic comes back.

[He crosses behind her, strolls about in earshot and out, keeping an eye on them every other moment. He goes first to the old well, at the Left.]

HALE. *[To ALICE.]* You were brought here, Mistress —?

ALICE. *[With a curtsey.]* Adams, sir.

HALE. Adams, to see Captain Hale? I used to know him; he taught the same school with me. *[He adds quickly in a low voice, CUNNINGHAM being out of hearing.]* A woman warned you?

ALICE. *[Low, quickly.]* Yes! *[Then aloud, in a conventional voice, as CUNNINGHAM moves.]* I was his scholar once.

HALE. You were?

ALICE. Yes, in many things, but most of all in — *love!*

[Added in an undertone. In their conversation,

they keep a constant lookout about them, and, when they see themselves out of CUNNINGHAM'S hearing, they drop their voices a little, and speak seriously. In ALICE'S speech just now, for instance, she adds the word "love" in a voice full of emotion and sentiment, seeing CUNNINGHAM is for the moment out of hearing.

HALE. [*Softly, lovingly.*] Alice! [CUNNINGHAM *approaches.*] You found him a good teacher?

[CUNNINGHAM *goes on to the porch, and opens the top part of the door; he leans on lower part, looking in; he is in earshot of the two, which they perceive.*

ALICE. Yes, in *love* only too proficient!

HALE. Oh, well — that was because, of course, he was enamoured desperately of you!

ALICE. [*Coquettishly.*] He pretended so!

HALE. [*Seriously.*] And didn't you believe him?

ALICE. Oh, I did, at first —

HALE. [*With difficulty keeping the anxiety out of his voice.*] Only at first! [CUNNINGHAM passes on out of hearing.] No — no — Alice, you didn't really doubt me!

[ALICE cannot answer because the WIDOW, singing, enters at this moment, and CUNNINGHAM draws near again.]

WIDOW. [*To CUNNINGHAM.*] Well, you brute, your horses are well pastured!

CUNNINGHAM. I give you damns for thanks! Have you food for a brave soldier in the house?

WIDOW. No, but I've scraps for a coward who strikes women. Come in and eat, if you wish. I don't let starve even dogs! [*Enters the house.*]

CUNNINGHAM. Seeing you press me!

[Laughing, follows her in. Since the WIDOW'S entrance, FITZROY has appeared cautiously in the second-story window, and, leaning his arm out softly, has caught hold of the shutters and bowed them shut. He watches behind them. ALICE sits on the porch steps, pretending to be bored, and HALE moves about with affected nonchalance. The moment they are apparently alone on the scene, they approach each other, but cautiously.]

HALE. *[Anxious.]* Did this Hale prove himself unworthy of you by some cowardly action? Had you any reason to doubt his passion?

ALICE. He broke his word to me; that made me doubt his love.

HALE. But you are still betrothed to him?

ALICE. Oh, no! When he broke faith, then I broke troth.

HALE. Yet you came this journey here to see him.

ALICE. Out of pity — they told me he was dying.

HALE. [*Low voice.*] Are you in earnest? Was it pity, or was it love?

ALICE. [*With a frightened look about her, ignores his question.*] I can't imagine how they took you for the other gentleman — Captain Hale is taller; you, I think, are short.

HALE. [*A little sensitive.*] Short?

ALICE. I don't want to hurt your feelings, but it's only fair to you, sir, in this dilemma, to be frank. It may save your life!

HALE. [*Distressed, anxious, lest she loves him no longer.*] You came to Captain Hale, then, only out of pity?

ALICE. Out of pity, yes! And now "out of pity," I hope this ruffian will take me back.

HALE. [*In a low voice, his passion threatening to overmaster him.*] No, no, say it isn't true! You love me still?

ALICE. [*In a low voice.*] Be careful, the very trees have ears!

HALE. If they have hearts of wood, they'll break to hear you!

[*Leaning over her.*]

ALICE. [*Loud voice, frightened, for fear they are being overheard.*] Let me pass, sir!

HALE. [*Desperate, in a low voice full of passionate love.*] No! Look! We're alone! They're at their breakfast — you drive me mad — only let me know the truth! You love me?

ALICE. Yes!

HALE. [*His pent-up passion mastering him.*] My darling! For just one moment!

[*Opening his arms, she goes into them, and as*

they embrace, FITZROY throws open the shutters of his window and, leaning out, cries:

FITZROY. I arrest you, *Nathan Hale* —

ALICE. [*Cries out.*] My God!

FITZROY. — In the name of the King, for a spy!

[*At the moment that he has thrown open the shutters with a bang, CUNNINGHAM has thrown open the door below, and stands on the porch, levelling his musket at HALE.*

ALICE. [*Cries out.*] Nathan!

FITZROY. [*Calls down to CUNNINGHAM.*] If he attempts to escape, fire. [*Climbing out of the window on to the roof of the porch, and flinging himself off by one of the pillars.*] At last! I've won! Before to-day's sun sets, you will be hanged to a tree out yonder, Nathan Hale, and the birds can come and peck out the love for her in your dead heart. For she'll be mine!

[*ALICE starts, frightened, with a low gasp.*

HALE. Yours!

FITZROY. Mine! [*To ALICE.*] You remember I told you once, sometime I'd make up my mind I'd waited long enough for you? Well, so help me God, I made up my mind to that last night! [*To HALE.*] You leave her behind! But you leave her in *my arms!*

[*Seizing ALICE in his arms, and forcing her into an embrace.*]

ALICE. You brute!

[*Fighting in his arms. CUNNINGHAM has put his hand on HALE'S shoulder to keep him from going to her rescue. HALE has shown, by the movement of his eyes, that he is taking in the situation, the places of every one, etc.*]

FITZROY. Look!

[*And he bends ALICE'S head back upon his shoulder to kiss her on the lips.*]

HALE. Blackguard!

[With a blow of his right arm, he knocks CUNNINGHAM on the head, who, falling, hits his head against the pillar of the porch, and is stunned. Meanwhile, the moment he has hit CUNNINGHAM, HALE has sprung upon FITZROY, and, with one hand over his mouth, has bent his head back with the other, until he has released ALICE. HALE then throws FITZROY down, and, seizing ALICE about the waist, dashes off with her to the Right, where his horse is. FITZROY rises and runs to CUNNINGHAM, kicks him to get his gun, which has fallen under him.]

FITZROY. *[Beside himself with rage.]* Get up!
Get up! You fool!

[Horse's hoofs heard starting off.]

THIRD PICKET'S VOICE. *[Off stage.]* Who goes there?

FITZROY. *[Stops, looks up, and gives a trium-*

phant cry.] Ah! The picket! They're caught!
They're caught!

HALE. Returning, with Alice Adams, on private business.

PICKET. The password.

HALE. "Love!"

FITZROY. Damnation! Of course he heard!
[*Runs off, Right, yelling.*] Fire on them! Fire!
For God's sake, fire!

[*A shot is heard, followed by a loud, defiant laugh from HALE, and an echoed "Love," as the clatter of horse's hoofs dies away, and*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

A SECOND ENDING TO THE ACT. *It was found, on performing the Play, that this ending of the Act, in which HALE'S pent-up passion overcame his control and made him expose himself to FITZROY, did not, as the theatrical phrase is, "carry over the footlights."* In consequence, a new ending of the Act was devised, which proved to be more effective, theatrically. In this second ending, JASPER follows his mistress, and, after ALICE has failed to recognize NATHAN, FITZROY, concealed upstairs, hears the servant being stopped and questioned by the pickets. The MAJOR orders JASPER brought into the presence of himself, ALICE, and HALE, and this time his scheme is successful; for JASPER, unwarned, recognizes HALE, and from the recognition, the remainder of the Act is the same.

ACT THE FOURTH

THE FIRST SCENE. *Saturday night, September 21, 1776. The tent of a British officer. Above the tent is seen the deep blue sky, full of stars; on each side are trees and bushes. There is, every little while, the noise of a company of soldiers encamped close by. HALE is seated at a table, inside the tent, writing letters by candle-light. CUNNINGHAM is outside the tent, on guard. CUNNINGHAM'S head is plastered, where he struck it in falling, when HALE felled him. CUNNINGHAM paces slowly up and down.*

CUNNINGHAM. Writing the history of your life?

HALE. [*Writing, without looking up.*] I am writing a letter to my mother and sister.

CUNNINGHAM. Yankees, like yourself, I presume!

HALE. [*Still writing.*] Please God!

CUNNINGHAM. I suppose you're making a pretty story out of your capture!

HALE. No, I'm only telling the truth — that I got the best of two pretty big men, yourself and Fitzroy.

[*Half smiling. This is said, not at all in the spirit of boasting, but only to ridicule CUNNINGHAM.*]

CUNNINGHAM. Yes, and don't forget to add how you were captured by the picket, close to the Ferry Station.

HALE. [*Looks up.*] Yes, because, hearing Fitzroy's cries, the picket threatened, if I didn't stop, he'd shoot the girl with me.

CUNNINGHAM. It was a narrow escape for us!

HALE. [*With a half-smile.*] But too broad for me! [*Continues his writing.*]

CUNNINGHAM. What else are you saying?

HALE. [*Writing.*] Oh, that I was taken before General Howe, who probably only does what he feels his duty, although he condemns me without a trial!

CUNNINGHAM. Yes, but with plenty of evidence against you, thanks to us witnesses, and the papers found in your shoes, too!

HALE. [*Smiling a little.*] True, I walked on very slippery ground, didn't I? [*He comes out of the tent.*] However, you didn't find all the papers.

CUNNINGHAM. [*Surprised, changes his position.*] What do you mean?

HALE. Oh, the men were so taken up with me, they didn't see my friend and confederate, Hemp-

stead, who was waiting by the Ferry Station! I don't mind telling you, now he is out of danger, the only paper that was of immediate importance — the plan of General Howe's attack on Washington and upper New York — wrapped nicely in a leather pouch, — I dropped in the bushes by the roadside when I was arrested. [*He walks a few steps toward CUNNINGHAM, and stops. He adds cunningly, trying to get information out of him.:*] That's why the attempt to force the Hudson was a failure!

CUNNINGHAM. [*On his guard.*] Oh! Was there such an attempt?

HALE. [*Goes nearer CUNNINGHAM, desperately anxious to know.*] Wasn't there?

CUNNINGHAM. [*Sneers.*] Don't you wish you knew! Go on — make haste with your scribbling! [*Crosses before HALE to the other side.*

HALE. [*Reëntering the tent, and taking up his letter.*] I have finished. I do not find your presence inspiring. Have you a knife?

CUNNINGHAM. Yes.

HALE. Will you lend it me?

CUNNINGHAM. No! What do you want it for?

HALE. My mother — [*his voice breaks; he turns his back to CUNNINGHAM*] poor little woman — wants a bit of my hair. [*He controls himself.*] Lend me your knife, that I may send it to her.

CUNNINGHAM. [*Coming to HALE.*] Yes! That's a fine dodge! And have you cut your throat and cheat the gallows! [*Getting out his knife.*] I'll cut it off for you, shall I?

HALE. Thank you.

[*Holding his head ready, and, with his right hand, choosing a lock.*]

CUNNINGHAM. [*Cuts it off roughly.*] There!

[*Gives it to him.*]

HALE. [*Puts the hair in the letter; starts to fold it.*] May I have a chaplain attend me?

CUNNINGHAM. A what?

HALE. A minister — a preacher!

CUNNINGHAM. No! Give me your letter, if it's finished.

[*HALE comes out from the tent and hands him the letter. CUNNINGHAM opens the letter.*]

HALE. How dare you open that!

CUNNINGHAM. [*Sneeringly.*] How "dare" I?

HALE. You shall not read it!

CUNNINGHAM. Shan't I!

HALE. [*Coming nearer CUNNINGHAM.*] No! That letter is my good-by to my mother, who, for the sake of my country, I have robbed of her "boy." It is sacred to her eyes only!

CUNNINGHAM. Is it! [*Spreads it open to read.*]

HALE. [*Springs toward him, his hand on the letter.*] Stop! There's the mark of one blow I've given you on your forehead now. Dare to read that letter, and I'll keep it company with another! I mean it! I'm not afraid, with death waiting for me outside in the orchard!

CUNNINGHAM. Either I read it, or it isn't sent. Take your choice!

[*HALE looks at CUNNINGHAM a moment, — a look of disgust.*]

HALE. [*Drops CUNNINGHAM'S wrist.*] Read it! [*He walks up and down as CUNNINGHAM reads. He goes to Right; speaks to some one outside.*]
Sentinel!

SENTINEL. [*Who speaks with a strong Irish accent, outside.*] Yis, surr!

[*The SENTINEL comes on.*]

HALE. Ask the men to sing something, will you?

SENTINEL. They haven't sung to-night, purposely, surr, fearing it would disturb you.

HALE. Thank them for me, and say I'd like a song! Something gay!

[His voice breaks on the word "gay."]

SENTINEL. Yis, surr, but I'm afraid the soldiers haven't much spirits to-night. They're regretting the woruk of sunrise, surr.

HALE. Well — let them sing anything, only beg them sing — *till* sunrise!

SENTINEL. Yis, surr.

[HALE turns. CUNNINGHAM has finished reading letter; he has grown furious as he reads.

The SENTINEL exits.

CUNNINGHAM. Hell fires! Do you think I'll let these damned heroics be read by the

Americans? By our Lady, they shall never know through me they had a rebel amongst them with such a spirit!

[He tears the letter into pieces before HALE. The soldiers are heard singing, outside, "Drink to me only with thine eyes."]

HALE. You cur! Not to send a dying man's love home!

[Goes into the tent.]

CUNNINGHAM. I'll make a coward of you yet, damn you!

HALE. You mean you'll do your best to make me seem one! God knows, the worst I have to suffer is to spend my last hours with a brute like you. How can a man give his thoughts to Heaven with the Devil standing by and spitting in his face!

[The SENTINEL comes on and salutes. CUNNINGHAM speaks with him.]

CUNNINGHAM. Hale, you have visitors. Will you see them?

HALE. Who are they?

CUNNINGHAM. [*To the SENTINEL.*] Say he refuses to see them.

HALE. That's a lie! I haven't refused! Who are they?

CUNNINGHAM. They come from General Howe!

HALE. Fitzroy! I refuse to receive him.

CUNNINGHAM. [*To the SENTINEL.*] Say he refuses to receive them.

SENTINEL. But it's not Major Fitzroy, surr; it's a lady.

HALE. What! [*On his guard now.*]

CUNNINGHAM. [*To the SENTINEL.*] Damn you, hold your tongue!

SENTINEL. I was told to ansurr all the prisoner's quistions, surr.

HALE. [*To CUNNINGHAM, coming out of the tent.*] You'd cheat me of every comfort, would you? [*To SENTINEL.*] Is the lady young or —

SENTINEL. [*Interrupting.*] Young, surr.

HALE. [*Under his breath, scarcely daring to believe himself or the soldier, yet hoping.*] Alice! [*To the SENTINEL.*] Is she alone?

SENTINEL. No, surr, a maid and a young man.

HALE. [*Again under his breath.*] Tom!

SENTINEL. [*Continues.*] The young gintleman wishes to see you for a moment fust, alone.

HALE. Quickly! Show him in!

SENTINEL. Yis, surr. [*He exits.*]

HALE. [*To CUNNINGHAM.*] What a dog's heart you must have to wish to keep even this from me!

CUNNINGHAM. Say what you like, one thing is true: I'm here on guard, and any comfort that

you have with your sweetheart must be in my presence. [*He chuckles.*] I shall be here to *share* your kisses with you!

[Goes to Right and sits on the stump of a tree there. The soldiers sing "Barbara Allen."]

The SENTINEL shows in TOM ADAMS.

TOM. Nathan!

HALE. Tom!

[Taking his hand, TOM throws his arm about NATHAN'S shoulder, and, burying his head, sobs a boy's tears, NATHAN comforting him for a moment.]

TOM. Nathan, you *saved* the States!

HALE. [*Excited.*] What do you mean? Was there an attack made on Harlem Heights?

TOM. Yes!

HALE. And Washington? — Good God, don't tell me he was captured!

TOM. [*More excited.*] No, of course not — thanks to your information!

HALE. [*More excited.*] Hempstead got it, then?

TOM. Yes; after the men went off with you, he searched the spot, thinking perhaps he might find something in the bushes, and he did! He came across your wallet!

HALE. [*With joy.*] Ah!

TOM. So, when the British tried to steal up the Hudson that night, they found us ready and waiting, — [*he takes off his hat with the manner of paying homage, of being bareheaded in HALE'S presence*] your name on everybody's lips, your example in their hearts!

HALE. [*Stopping TOM modestly.*] And if you hadn't been warned?

[*Putting his two hands on TOM'S shoulders.*]

TOM. It would have been the end of us,
Nathan. Washington himself says so!

HALE. [*As if to himself, dropping his hands, half turning.*] I'm glad I shan't die for nothing.

TOM. Nothing? Oh! Even if your mission had been a failure, your example has already worked wonders — your bravery has inspired the Army with new courage!

HALE. [*Taking his arm and walking up and down with him.*] Sh! None of that. Talk to me about Alice. She is here?

TOM. General Howe has given her permission to see you, but only for five minutes. Can you bear it? Will you bear it for her sake?

[*They stop.*]

HALE. Yes.

TOM. [*Looking at CUNNINGHAM.*] Is this the man Cunningham? [HALE *nods.*] Alice told

me about him; we heard he was your guard, and she has General Howe's permission to choose any other soldier to take his place inside the tent.

[HALE *looks at* CUNNINGHAM *with a smile.*

CUNNINGHAM. [*Rising. To the SENTINEL, who is standing at one side.*] Have you such orders?

SENTINEL. [*Stepping forward, salutes.*] Yis, surr.

HALE. [*To the SENTINEL.*] Very well, we'll ask *you* to stay in place of Cunningham.

SENTINEL. Yis, surr.

TOM. [*To CUNNINGHAM.*] Then you can take me to my sister — now, at once.

[CUNNINGHAM *crosses to* HALE *and speaks to him.*

CUNNINGHAM. I'll be back on the minute, when your time is finished.

[*He goes out with* TOM, *Right.*

SENTINEL. [*To* HALE.] I undershtand, surr.

Don't think of me a minute. I must shtay in the tint, of course, but if iver a man could git away from his body, I'll promise you to git away from moine !

[HALE smiles his thanks and shakes the SENTINEL'S hand. The soldiers sing the air of what is now called "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms." HALE stands listening for the sound of ALICE'S coming. The SENTINEL retires to the farther corner of the tent, and stands with arms folded, his back toward HALE. TOM comes on first, bringing ALICE. As they come into HALE'S presence, ALICE glides from out of TOM'S keeping, and her brother leaves the two together. They stand looking at each other a moment without moving, and then both make a quick movement to meet. As their arms touch in the commence-

ment of their embrace, they remain in that position a few moments, looking into each other's eyes. Then they embrace, HALE clasping her tight in his arms, and pressing a long kiss upon her lips. They remain a few moments in this position, silent and immovable. Then they slowly loosen their arms — though not altogether discontinuing the embrace — until they take their first position, and again gaze into each other's faces. ALICE sways, about to fall, faint from the effort to control her emotions, and HALE gently leads her to the tree-stump at Right. He kneels beside her so that she can rest against him with her arms about his neck. After a moment, keeping her arms still tight about him, ALICE makes several ineffectual efforts to speak, but her quivering lips refuse to form any words, and her breath

comes with difficulty. HALE shakes his head with a sad smile, as if to say, "No, don't try to speak. There are no words for us." And again they embrace. At this moment, while ALICE is clasped again tight in HALE'S arms, the SENTINEL, who has his watch in his hand, slowly comes out from the tent. TOM also reënters, but HALE and ALICE are oblivious. TOM goes softly to them, and touches ALICE very gently on the arm, resting his hand there. She starts violently, with a hysterical drawing-in of her breath, an expression of fear and horror, as she knows this is the final moment of parting. HALE also starts slightly, rising, and his muscles grow rigid. He clasps and kisses her once more, but only for a second. They both are unconscious of TOM, of everything but each other. TOM takes her firmly

from HALE, and leads her out, her eyes fixed upon HALE'S eyes, their arms outstretched toward each other. After a few paces, she breaks forcibly away from TOM, and, with a wild cry of "No! no!", locks her hands about HALE'S neck. TOM draws her away again, and leads her backward from the scene, her eyes dry now, and her breath coming in short, loud, horror-stricken gasps. HALE holds in his hand a red rose she wore on her breast, and, thinking more of her than of himself, whispers, as she goes, "Be brave! be brave!" The light is being slowly lowered, till, as ALICE disappears, the stage is in total darkness.

THE SECOND SCENE. COLONEL RUTGER'S Orchard, the next morning. The scene is an orchard whose trees are heavy with red and yellow fruit.

The centre tree has a heavy dark branch jutting out, which is the gallows; from this branch all the leaves and the little branches have been chopped off; a heavy coil of rope, with a noose, hangs from it, and against the trunk of the tree leans a ladder. It is the moment before dawn, and slowly, at the back through the trees, is seen a purple streak, which changes to crimson as the sun creeps up. A dim gray haze next fills the stage, and through this gradually breaks the rising sun. The birds begin to wake, and suddenly there is heard the loud, deep-toned, single toll of a bell, followed by a roll of muffled drums in the distance. Slowly the orchard fills with murmuring, whispering people; men and women coming up through the trees make a semicircle amongst them, about the gallows tree, but at a good distance. The bell tolls at intervals, and

muffled drums are heard between the twittering and happy songs of birds. There is the sound of musketry, of drums beating a funeral march, which gets nearer, and finally a company of British soldiers marches in, led by FITZROY, NATHAN HALE in their midst, walking alone, his hands tied behind his back. As he comes forward, the people are absolutely silent, and a girl in the front row of the spectators falls forward in a dead faint. She is quickly carried out by two bystanders. HALE is led to the foot of the tree before the ladder. The soldiers are in double lines on either side.

FITZROY. [To HALE.] Nathan Hale, have you anything to say? We are ready to hear your last dying speech and confession!

[HALE is standing, looking up, his lips moving slightly, as if in prayer. He remains in this

position a moment, and then, with a sigh of relief and rest, looks upon the sympathetic faces of the people about him, with almost a smile on his face.

HALE. I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country!

{FITZROY makes a couple of steps toward him; HALE turns and places one foot on the lower rung of the ladder, as

THE CURTAIN FALLS