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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts
Country Folks

A Comedy Drama in Three Acts

By

ANTHONY E. WILLS

Author of "Our Wives," "A Regiment of Two," "Liberty Corners," etc.

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1911
Country Folks

CHARACTERS

Josiah Dean, an old farmer.
Martha Dean, his wife.
Nathaniel Dean, their children.
Polly Dean,
Lorna Lane, a seamstress.
Ozius Schuyler, the postmaster.
Prudence Schuyler, his daughter.
Peter Patch, the chore boy.
Horatio Finch, a country lawyer.
Alvina Berry, a neighbor.
Jake Diemer, the village barber.

SYNOPSIS

Act I.—Home of Josiah Dean. Summer.
Act II.—The same. One year later.
Act III.—The same. A month later.

Time, 1898. Plays a full evening.

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DRESSING AND CHARACTERISTICS

Josiah Dean.—A typical farmer, is a good-natured, smooth-shaven, gray, partly bald-headed old man, wearing boots, trousers tucked in same, white bosom shirt, no collar, corduroy vest with heavy watch-chain. Later wears jacket or old frock coat, linen duster, straw hat. Also gold rimmed eyeglasses.

Martha Dean.—A typical farmer's wife, is a small, gray-haired woman, wearing calicoes, neat aprons, except when otherwise indicated during action. Wears rimmed glasses.

Nathaniel Dean.—Is a well educated young man of twenty-four. Act I, wears blue serge suit, white collar, flowing tie and soft hat, later changing to Khaki uniform, with campaign hat, leggings and blanket. Act III, wears shabby dark suit and soft hat and is pale and rather unshaven.

Polly Dean.—Aged fifteen; is a vivacious country lassie, with hair in long braids down her back, wearing short skirted dresses, with apron, and sleeves to elbows; also sunbonnet. Act I, on first entrance, bandanna handkerchief tied about her face, knot on top of head.

Lorna Lane.—Is a good looking young lady, neatly dressed throughout.

Ozias Schuyler.—Is a hard-hearted old country character about sixty, with pallid face, sunken cheeks, shaggy eyebrows, and thin hair. Is miserly and dresses accordingly, affecting dark colors and carrying a cane.

Prudence Schuyler.—His daughter, who has spent two years at a school in Boston, is an attractive looking girl of about twenty, wearing dresses and hats of the latest design, carrying parasol, etc. Different dresses each act. In fact, is particularly noticeable for her gay attire.

Peter Patch.—Is a country chore boy type, about fifteen, with red crop wig, wearing a red undershirt and blue overalls and large straw hat. Also such other changes noted during action.

Horatio Finch.—Is a country lawyer, having a distinguished appearance when compared with others. Smooth-shaven, with long hair combed back from the brow; wearing a flowing tie, frock coat, spats, and silk hat.
Alvina Berry.—A widow, aged about forty-five, with side curls, wearing old-fashioned gowns, bonnets and shawl. Carries hand-bag and umbrella.

Jake Diemer.—Is a fiery German, with bald head, imperial and mustache, wearing clothing of loud or checkered design and low crowned derby. Uses German dialect.
Country Folks

ACT I


(At rise Lorna Lane is discovered looking from window.)

Enter Nathaniel Dean from r. i.

NAT. (observing her, stands in doorway an instant. Then quietly). Still angry, Lorna, eh?
LOR. (glancing at him, then turning to look from window again). No, not exactly angry.
NAT. Sorry then?
LOR. (coming down C.). No, not that either.
NAT. Well, let's call it disappointed, eh? (Over to her.)
LOR. Perhaps that's the word for it.
NAT. I told you before, Lorna, how I regretted being unable to keep my appointment to take you to the dance.
LOR. If only you hadn't told me to be ready and waiting when you returned at seven o'clock.
NAT. How did I know, dear, that I'd be detained in Willowdale?
LOR. (looking up). Willowdale? Why you said Milltown a while ago.
NAT. (quickly). That's right, I did say Milltown, didn't I?
Lor. And you really think they'll offer you a position in New York?

Nat. Nothing certain, of course, but it looks very promising. If things pan out as I figure —

Lor. (now reassured). You'll take me with you, won't you?

Nat. You bet. Ought to be able to make my mark in a big city as well as the rest of the boys who left the village.

Enter Jos. from L., in shirt-sleeves, stockinged feet and carrying boots in hand.

Jos. Oh, Nat—you'd better hitch up Jed.

Nat. Going out, dad?

Jos. Yep—tu town—on business. Be back afore the boys march off.

Lor. Oh, yes, this is the day the local volunteers start for the front.

Jos. That's what. And it means a whole lot to some on 'em. (Sadly.) Ain't likely to come back agin.

Lor. Why, I heard Mr. Thurston say that the war was little more than a skirmish and would soon be over.

Jos. Stay at homes alwus hev a lot tu say. But dodgin' bullets hain't no fun—nor the fever nuther, once it tackles you. (To Nat.) I'm glad, Nat, you changed your mind 'bout goin'.

Nat. (referring to Lor.). It was Lorna made me do that.

Jos. (sitting on sofa and with difficulty putting on boot). I s'pose it wuz. A gal kin get a man to do most everything. Wal, trot along now and hustle Jed out.

Nat. All right, dad. (At door back, throwing Lor. kiss.)

Jos. (hearing sound, quickly glancing back at Nat.). Eh? What? (Then quickly turning to Lor. in time to see her throw kiss at Nat.) Oh, now I know. Wal, I do hope you two spooners will be very happy when you're hitched.

Lor. Thank you, uncle.

Jos. (putting on other boot). You've been a good gal, Lorna, sence you've been with us, and a great help tu Martha. I can't fergit it—nor wish yu luck enough.

Enter Martha Dean, from L.

Mar. (to Jos.). Well, Josiah, ef you ain't as stubborn as a
mule. I thought you'd made up your mind to postpone that trip until Saturday.

Jos. Saturday may be too late.

Mar. Shucks! It's never too late fer anything. I can't see why you've got to spile all our pleasure. We wanted to drive tu town and see the soljers off.

Jos. I'll be back afore they go.

Mar. Oh, I know you, Josiah. Once you reach town, you'll hev to talk to everybody on Main Street. (To Lor.) Lorna, throw a few sticks o' wood on the kitchen fire, like a good gal. I've got tu hev hot ovens for the bakin'. (Glances around.) Peter seems tu hev disappeared complete this mornin'. [Exit LOR., L.

Jos. Peter's a well-meanin' lad.

Mar. And you're a soft-headed old fool. Ef I had the runnin' o' this farm, I'd make the hired help toe the mark! No wonder they're runnin' amuck. No head or tail to the way things is managed on this place.

Jos. I don't see as how we're runnin' back, Martha. Nat's had a good skulin'.

Mar. And a pretty penny that college trainin' cost you.

Jos. Wal, he'll pay it back twofold ez soon as he lands a good job.

Mar. Afore which, we'll all likely land in the porehouse. But we'll drop that subject. What's the great need o' your goin' to town? Must be somethin' important.

Jos. Wal, I didn't want tu upset you—but now that you insist—why it's the bank at Milltown.


Jos. (stamping feet). Thet's it. It hain't happened yet—but likely tu by sundown. It's on the verge o' goin' up in smoke.

Mar. Good gracious! You don't mean——

Jos. Bustin'! Yep! I got a hint o' it this mornin' from Sol Russell on his way tu draw his money out. That's why I'm so anxious to git tu town.

Mar. To draw out o'urn. That's right—that's right. I'm a bigger fool than you are. Forgive me, Josiah—I didn't know—I didn't know.

Jos. Ef we should lose that money, Martha—we'd cum mighty near goin' up the creek ourselves. It would be a pretty hard blow to weather jes' now, with crops ez bad ez they've been.
Hurry, Josiah, hurry. You ain't got a minute to lose. (Enter Peter Patch, breathlessly, door at back. Mar. to Peter.) And where've you been—you lazy, good-for-nothing—

Peter. 'Scuse me, Mrs. Dean, but I jes' couldn't help slippin' tu town to see the soljers. Gee, they're fine.

Jos. (putting on jacket which he took from rack). Great excitement, I s'pose.

Peter. Great? I should swarn! Ain't been no sech goings on since the night Ham Dawson's red barn burned down.

Mar. (hands in air). Thet was a night!

Peter. They've all got new uniforms! Guns and every-thing! The gals are jes' crazy about 'em. Gee, I wish I wuz goin'.

Jos. Can't all go. Some o' us must remain here—-—

Peter. That's me! (Pompously strikes pose.) To protect der women and children!

Jos. No, to do the chores.

Peter (crushed). Gosh, I'd rather fight the enemy.

Jos. And get killed?

Peter (his enthusiasm dampened). Well, I wouldn't like that part. Guess I'm glad, arter all, they wouldn't let me join. (Starts for L.)

Jos. Better see whether Nat's got Jed hitched yet.

Mar. And you'd better be gittin' washed fer your lesson.

Peter. You mean readin' and writin'? 

Mar. Yes. Lorna will be ready fer you presently.

Peter. Gee, I hate learnin' things.

Mar. Wal, you can't expect tu be a know-nothing all your life. Hurry, now.

Peter. Yes'm. (Starts to go. Then halts.) Oh, I fer-got. There's a political meetin' in town tu-night.

Jos. Thet so? Lots o' goings on, hain't there?

Peter (handing Jos. circular). They handed these out—thet's all I know. (Off L.)

Jos. (adjusting glasses). Heigho! Ef Horatio Finch ain't down to speak!

Mar. Horatio Finch? Why, I ain't seen him sence the day he stood up fer us at our weddin'.

Jos. (sighing). Twenty-four years ago. I've run across him once sence then; over tu the county fair. Invited him tu call on us any time he happened this way. Wouldn't be s'prised ef he dropped in on us.
MAR. Wal, I hope he does. I'd be glad tu see him. What's he electioneering fer?
Jos. (looking at circular). Runnin' fer office. Ef he lands it, wouldn't be s'prised tu see him settle down in these parts.

Enter Peter, door at back.

Peter. Jed's hitched, boss.
Jos. (quickly). All right. Help me on with my things. (Peter goes quickly to rack, bringing down linen duster and straw hat and hurriedly assists him on with same.) Thet's the ticket. (To Mar., patting her on shoulder.) Now, I won't be gone long—so don't do any worryin'. Good-bye, Martha—good-bye. [Exits, door at back.

Mar. Good-bye, good-bye. (Then quickly hurries up to door and shouts off.) Oh, Josiah, don't fergit to bring those needles.
Jos. (off stage). I won't, Martha.
Mar. And the bakin' powder, Josiah.
Jos. (faintly off). All right, Martha.
Mar. (after thinking, calling off). Oh, yes, and the—and the— (Then turns.) Oh, never mind. (Closes door.) I do hope nuthin' happens to him. He's gettin' older each day. (Then to Peter.) Now then, Peter, you'd better get out those books and things.

Peter. Must we really learn tu-day?
Mar. When you remain from school, you've got to study at home, and that settles it. I won't hev you and Polly fer-gittin' all the teacher learns you. Now, hurry.

Peter (moving to door L.). Gee, I hate tu be smart. (Off.)

Polly Dean (from within). Yes, maw.
Mar. Come down and take your skule lesson.
Pol. (from within). All right.

Enter Peter, door L., carrying a small blackboard on easel, with piece of chalk tied to a string, and two school-books.

Peter (with grin). Skule's arrived.

(Places blackboard c., and sits on sofa with book in hand.)

Enter Pol., from L. I, a bandanna handkerchief tied about her face.

Mar. How's the toothache, dear?
Pol. *(hand to face).* Hurts like the old mischief. Sorry I couldn't go tu skule.

Peter *(gleefully; aside).* I'm glad I couldn't.

Mar. You couldn't very well have gone all bundled up like that.

(Pol. goes over to sofa, sitting beside Peter and taking up book.)

**Enter Lor., from L.**

Lor. Have I kept you waiting?

Peter. Yep. Skule's on time this morning.

(Pol. nudges Peter in side reprovingly.)

Mar. *(to Lor.)* Give the children a general review, Lorna. I'll be fixin' the up-stairs rooms. *(Off r. i.)*

Lor. *(taking position at blackboard).* Good-morning, everybody.

Peter. Good-morning, teacher.

Lor. Geography or spelling—which would you rather do?

Peter. I'd rather do nuthin'. *(Buries head in book.)*

(Pol. again nudges Peter.)

Lor. Oh, come now, Peter, I don't like that.

Peter. Neither do I like g'graphy or spellin'.

Lor. *(to Pol.)* Polly, which do you prefer?

Pol. I'd rather have spellin'.

Peter *(piqued).* Dang it. I'd rather have recess.

Lor. Then spelling it is. *(Turns to blackboard.)* Now we'll take the alphabet. *(Writes letter "A" on board. To Pol.)* What letter is this, Polly?

Pol. *(rising and promptly answering).* "A"!

Lor. Correct. *(Then writes "B" on board. To Peter.)*

Now, Peter, stand up. *(Peter reluctantly rises.)* What letter is this? *(Points to "B." Peter hesitates. Lor., after a pause.)* Come, Peter, what letter is it?

Peter *(fumbling trousers).* Teacher, I don't know.

Lor. Oh, yes, you do. Think hard.

Peter. I am thinking hard.

Lor. *(after pause).* Well?

Peter *(ready to cry; blurtling out).* Teacher, I fergit.

Lor. Take it slowly, Peter. Don't get nervous. Now try hard. *(Peter pauses; business.)* What is it that stings?
Peter (promptly). 'Teacher's switch!
Lor. No, no—there's something else that stings.
Peter (eagerly). Now I know. A rattlesnake.
Lor. No, no. (To Pol., whose hand is raised.) Polly, you tell us.
Pol. Please, teacher—a bee!
Lor. A bee, of course—a bee!
Peter. Oh, gee, that's right—a bumblebee!
Lor. (to Peter). Now then, Peter, tell us what letter of the alphabet this is. (Points to "B.")
Peter (with broad grin). A bumblebee!
Lor. No, no—just plain "B."
Peter. That's right—a plain bee!
Lor. (writing a "C" on board; to Pol.). Now then, Polly,—what letter is this? (Points to "C.")
Lor. Correct, Polly. (To Peter.) And now, Peter, I'm going to give you a hard one to answer.
Peter. Oh, gee, teacher, you're always giving me der hard ones.
Lor. (writing an "O" on board). What does this represent, Peter?
Peter (promptly). Nuthin'.
Lor. Oh, yes, it does.
Peter. A doughnut, then.
Lor. No, no, it represents a letter. Now tell me what letter.
Peter. A circle!
Lor. (irritated). No, no, no!
Peter (waving hand). Teacher, I got it. A hoople!
Lor. (to Pol.). Tell him, Polly.
Pol. It's an "O."
Peter (quickly). Oh what?
Lor. "O" is the name of the letter.
Peter (with broad grin). Gee, what a funny name.
Lor. I'm afraid you haven't been very attentive to your studies. I'm going to try you again. (Makes a "T" on board.) Now then, Peter, what letter is this?
Peter. I give it up.
Lor. What, so soon? Just think a bit. It will come to you. (Endeavors to assist him.) What do you drink at your evening meal?
Peter (quickly). Water!
LOR. No.
PETER. Milk!
LOR. Think again. It's stronger than either.
PETER. I've got it—whiskey!
LOR. Goodness, Peter, you know you don't drink intoxi-
cants. (To Pol.) Tell him, Polly.
POL. Tea, teacher.
LOR. Of course. (To Peter.) The letter is "T," Peter,
—"T."
PETER. I wuz jes' going to guess that, when you axed Polly.
Try me agin, teacher.
LOR. All right, Peter. (Makes a "Y" on board.) Now, then, Peter, tell me what this is.
PETER (quickly). It's a hod!
LOR. A hod?
PETER. Sure—what they carry bricks in!
LOR. Goodness, Peter!
POL. (quickly). It's a "Y"—a "Y"!
PETER (turning on her). Sure it is. I knew it all the
time.

Enter Mar., hurriedly, from r. i.

MAR. Sorry to disturb you, Lorna, but company's come.

(Quickly to door at back, opening same.)

HORATIO FINCH (standing in doorway, bundles and valise
in hands). Pardon me, but does Josiah Dean live here?
(Then espies Mar.; drops bundles.) Martha! Martha!

(Throws arms about her.)
PETER (on sofa, observing Hor.'s action, throws his arms
about Pol.). Oh, Polly, Polly!

(LOR. has removed blackboard, etc.)

HOR. (finally to Mar.). It's over twenty years, Martha,
since I've seen you! And I'd known you—you haven't changed
a bit! (Looks around.) Where's Josiah?
MAR. Be back presently. Went to town on business.
HOR. So sorry. (Refers to LOR.) Your daughter?
MAR. No. (Presents LOR.) Allow me to present Miss
Lorna Lane.
Hor. Not the daughter of old Spencer Lane—he as used to run the bank at Abbeyville?
Mar. The same.
Hor. (shaking Lor.'s hand). Well, I'm right glad to know you, gal. Your dad was one o' my best friends. Must 'a' died all of fifteen years ago.
Lor. Sixteen years in March.
Mar. Lorna's made her home with us ever since. We brought her up from a little tot, you might say, and really look upon her as one o' our own.
Hor. (sighing). Your father would 'a' died a wealthy man ef the panic hadn't hit him so hard. We all lost money that year. (Refers to Peter. Pompously.) Ah, but this is Josiah's boy. I can tell it by his hair. Looks just like his father used to—
Mar. I should say not, Horatio! That's Peter, our chore boy!
Hor. Bless my soul!
Mar. (drawing Pol. to her). This is our daughter, Polly. Nat, our oldest child, will be along soon.
Hor. Just so—just so. I must apologize fer not visitin' since your marriage to Josiah, but I've been busy—oh, so busy all these years.
Mar. You didn't stand still, thet's sartin. You've come right along the line, hain't ye, Horatio? Why, I kin remember when you were a poor skule teacher!
Hor. (touching her on arm; haughtily). Not so very poor, my dear Martha.
Mar. Land sakes, I don't mean as to learnin'—only as to riches. (To Pol. and Peter.) Gather up those things and take 'em to the spare room. (To Lor.) Lorna, see whether everything's in shape up-stairs.

(Lor. goes off r. 3. Peter and Pol. pick up valise and bundles and exit off r. 3 with them.)

Hor. I don't want you to go to a whole lot of trouble. Only when last I saw Josiah, he insisted on my coming up here the first time I struck these parts.
Mar. Thet's right.
Hor. And so, when I was called upon to deliver the political oration at Willowdale to-night, I sezs—sezs I—"here is the opportunity I've been waiting for."
COUNTRY FOLKS

MAR. Needn't stand on no ceremony 'round here. We're glad you've come.

Hor. (looking around). You've got a nice place, I must say. Josiah's done pretty well, too, hasn't he?

MAR. Done a darn sight better ef he'd 'a' followed my advice. Too easy-going. Folks kin git most anything they want out'en him. Nat, our son, takes right arter his dad. Soft-heartedness kin be overdid too, you know.

LOR. (on from r. 3). Everything is ready.

MAR. Better go right up, Mr. Finch.

Hor. (with broad smile). Horatio—my dear Martha—Horatio!

MAR. (bashfully). Oh, o' course—Horatio! Only I thought a'cause you're runnin' fer jedge——

Hor. (pompously). I hope ever to remain Horatio to my friends. (Off r. 3, followed by LOR.)

MAR. (looking after him). Jes' as conceited ez ever. Josiah alwus thought him his best friend, but I ain't never had much use fer the critter. (Knock on door at back.) Who kin that be? (Opens door at back.) Why, Alvina Berry! I do declare!

Enter Alvina Berry, breathlessly.

AL. Thought I'd gone tu Boston, eh? Well, I got a letter from the lawyers sayin' as how I didn't need tu come. (Looks around.) But who wuz your visitor?

MAR. Eh? Oh, you mean——?

AL. I saw him drive up in the 'bus and get off at your place. A stately-lookin' stranger in these parts.

MAR. Why, you mean Jedge Finch.

AL. Finch! (Starts.) Finch! You don't mean Horatio Finch?

MAR. Do you know him?

AL. Lordy! Didn't he and I officiate at your weddin'; wasn't he best man, and wasn't I——

MAR. Land sakes! O' course! O' course!

AL. I jes' got a glimpse o' him. Doesn't he look grand! Hasn't changed a bit from the handsome young man I was going to marry.

MAR. Thet's right—you two were engaged, weren't you?

AL. Yep; but it took him such a long time to set the weddin' day, that I up and married Abner Berry.

MAR. And didn't make no mistake arter all.
Al. (sadly). I don't know 'bout that.
Mar. Why, Abner left you a lot o' real estate, didn't he?
Al. He left the earth—that's all. (Then brokenly.) But he was a good sort, and I'm sorry he's gone.
Mar. (comforting her). Wal, we can't live forever.
Al. You don't know how lonesome it is—bein' a widow! How lonesome!
Mar. Wal, what's the matter with makin' the jedge stick to his promise——
Al. (looking up). O' twenty-four years ago?
Mar. He looks lonesome, too. (Suddenly sniffs air.) But here I'm chattering, and my bread is scorching! 'Scuse me, Alvina! 'Scuse me! (Hurries off L.)
Al. (on sofa). Horatio here, arter all these years! What if he should have come for me! I've read of such things in story books! (With broad smile.) How romantic that would be!

Enter Lor., from r. 3.

Lor. Good-morning, Alvina.
Al. Good-mornin', Lorna. What's come between you and Nat?
Lor. Come between us? Why, nothing.
Al. I thought you two engaged.
Lor. So we are. (Shows ring on finger.) See, here's the ring!
Al. Well, that does surprise me! 'Cause I could have sworn I saw him over to the Schuylers' las' night visitin' thet Pruddy Schuyler gal.
Lor. Oh, you must be mistaken, because Nat went to Milltown yesterday.
Al. No, dear, he didn't go to Milltown, 'cause I saw him at the bank at Willowdale at three o'clock, and again at the post-office at eight.
Lor. (staggered). You're sure of that?
Al. (surprised). What ails you, gal? Certain! 'Cause I spoke to him the first time, and the second time I saw him sitting at the window over the post-office a-talkin' to Pruddy Schuyler!
Lor. (with a sob, burying head on arms on table). Oh, Nat! Nat! How could you! How could you!
Al. (up and over to her, comforting her). There, there,
Lorna, I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings. Mebbe Nat jes' paid them a sort o' social call.

Lor. (through sobs). But he told me a falsehood.

Al. 'Bout going to Milltown, eh? I see.

Lor. He deliberately deceived me. The story about the position in New York—everything—was false! Oh, my heart will break!

Al. Give him a chance, Lorna. P'rhaps he can explain. If he's nothing to hide he'll tell the truth. (Glances L.)

Hush! Some one's coming!

(Lor. dries her tears and goes up to window, looking off.)

Mar. (on from L., wiping flour from hands). Come, Alvina, I want yu tu see my new gingham dress.

Al. (going r.). But I want tu get a glimpse o' Horatio.

Mar. He'll keep. Besides it'll take him a half hour to prim up! Some men are worse'n women! (Off L.)

Al. (starting L., stops at door; to Lor.). Don't forget tu let me know when he comes down, will you, Lorna?

Lor. I won't.

Al. Thet's a dear. (Off L.)

Lor. (coming down). I can't believe Nat would deliberately tell me an untruth. I must have misunderstood him. I'll question him again and make sure.

Enter Peter from R. 3.

Peter. I'm a-going to hev lots o' fun with that old jigger.

(Starts toward door at back.)

Lor. (quickly). Oh, Peter,—just a moment.

Peter (halting at door). Yes'm.

Lor. You were up last night when Nat returned, weren't you?

Peter. Yes'm.

Lor. What time was it?

Peter. Five minutes after half-past nine.

Lor. He told you he'd been to Willowdale?

Peter. Yes'm. (Then turns.) But how did you know? He told me not tu tell any one.

Lor. (supporting herself on back of chair). Told you to answer all questions by saying he'd been to Milltown,—wasn't that it?
Peter (fumbling cap). Yes'm—but gee! how did you know? You weren't listening? I'll bet I git the dickens! He'll think sure I told you.

Lor. (with difficulty). We must both keep silent and not let him know.

Peter. That's my idea o' it, 'cause he'd be hoppin' mad, I know.

Lor. Then you'd better hold your tongue good and tight.

Peter. This way, eh?

(Sticks out tongue and takes hold of it with fingers of left hand.)

Enter Hor., in shirt-sleeves, from r. 3.

Hor. (to Peter). Oh, boy! Is there a barber in the village?

Peter. Yep; but he's over tu Rowley's now, shavin' their old grandpop who's laid up with the rheumatiz in his arm. Jake, the barber, often calls here to shave the boss.

Hor. Often calls here, you say?

Peter. Sure thing. Shall I tell him you want him, too?

Hor. I wish you would. (Rubs chin.) I must appear presentable at the meeting to-night. Tell him to hurry and I'll double his fee.

Peter. Hurry? Gee, he'll fly when he hears that.

(Off door at back.)

Hor. (to Lor.). I presume, Miss Lorna, you'll attend the meeting at the opera house?

Lor. I should like to, but don't see how I can possibly get away.

Hor. You'll miss a beautiful flow of oratory.

Lor. Oh, I know it'll be well worth hearing. I'm really sorry. (Off L.)

Hor. And so am I. Sorry because I've got to make the confounded speech. What can I say to stir them? (Rises on chair left of table.) Let me see! (Then strikes imposing attitude.) Ah, I have it! (Clears throat.) "Fellow citizens, I stand before you not as a candidate merely seeking your suffrage, but as a benefactor of the nation at large!" (Relaxes.) That's a good starter. (Resumes pose.) "If elected, I will always remember I am a servant of the people—not a sovereign!" (Relaxes.) Another good lie! (Then resumes
again.) "And the poorest amongst you will have as great right to the square deal and justice as the richest of the rich!"

(Loudly.) "Isn't this fair dealing? Isn't this the kind of a judge you want on the bench? Shouldn't I be elected?"

(Nat. has entered quietly door at back; stands watching him. Hor., wildly.) "I ask you, one and all, to answer those questions, 'Yes' or 'No'?"

Nat. (loudly). No!

Hor. (confusedly turning). Oh, Lor'!

(Quickly down and confusedly off r. 3.)

Nat. (laughingly coming down and looking after Hor.). Who can he be, I wonder? Perhaps one of dad's friends.

(Suddenly.) By Jove, Horatio Finch, who's billed to speak in town to-night and of whom dad has so often spoken. Oh, I'm sorry. I'll have to apologize. (Enter Ozias Schuyler cautiously, door at back. Nat. turns and starts.) Ozias Schuyler! Of all persons I least expected to see you!

Ozias (nervously glancing around). I didn't sleep a wink for fear the thing would get out.

Nat. (glancing off r. 1 and r. 3, and then coming down). I told you last night when I loaned you the money that you could count on my silence.

Ozias. The thing must look very suspicious to you, I know.

(Raises voice.) The shortage in the post-office account was through a clerical error somewhere. I swear to you.

Nat. Yes, yes. You told me all that, and I believed you or I shouldn't have drawn my hard-earned savings from the bank and loaned them to you.

Ozias. If the postal examiners hadn't given me such short notice, I could have called in one of my many mortgages and squared the thing. But when the notice came day before yesterday, I knew of no one to whom I could go without arousing their suspicions, until my eyes lighted upon you.

Nat. (nervously). Now let's hear no more of it. I've got into a bad enough muddle as it is.

Ozias. I don't understand you.

Nat. Oh, it's Lorna. She's got some idea or other. (Then turns to him.) The fact is, I'm a poor hand at telling falsehoods, and in trying to account for my absence yesterday without mentioning your name, I sort of put my foot in it. But it's all right now.
OZIAS. I'm glad of that. And you give your word not to tell any one? You promise this?

NAT. I feel sorry for you, and promise.

OZIAS. Thank God! (Offers paper.)

NAT. What's this?

OZIAS. A receipt for the five hundred you loaned me. I had my daughter Pruddy write it out, and I signed it.

NAT. Oh, I don't need a receipt from you, Ozias. (Tears it into bits, throwing particles near table.) You helped dad out when he needed money for my college tuition, and I ought never to forget that. (Starts L.) And now you might at least say "how de do" to mother.

OZIAS (crossing L.). But you will keep it a secret, won't you? People might think I stole the money. (Off L.)

NAT. (following him). Don't worry—don't worry.

Enter POL. from R. 3.

POL. Gee, my tooth aches. Wish I had some o' dad's horse liniment handy. (Espies torn bits of paper.) Wal, I like that! If maw seen those papers scattered all over the floor, she'd be hoppin' mad. Bet it wuz Nat agin. (Picks them up.) Ever sence he went to college to learn style and sech, he seems tu hev forgotten all the manners he ever knew. (Glances at bits of paper.) Hello! A woman's handwriting! Not Lorna's, I know! Thet's funny. (laughs.) Mebbe it's a love letter. Guess I'll paste them on a sheet o' paper and see what it sez. (At door R. 1.) Gee, what fun!

Enter PRUDENCE SCHUYLER, door at back.

PRU. (haughtily). Good-morning, Polly.

POL. (imitating her haughty manner). Oh, look who's here!

PRU. Where's Nat?

POL. Oh, so you've come tu see my brother, eh?

PRU. I don't remember having said anything about calling to see you.

POL. Oh, mercy! Wal, Nat, I reckon, ain't got much time to devote to your sassiety.

PRU. Better let him be the judge of that.

POL. Is that so? Well, perhaps you're not aware he's engaged to Lorna Lane. So there now, Miss Smarty!
(Raising skirt with left hand, haughtily struts off R. 1.)

PRU. (taken by surprise). Engaged to Lorna Lane! That's news to me! (Bitterly.) Well, he'll never marry her if I can prevent it.

Enter LOR., from R. 3.

LOR. (going to her). Oh—how are you, Pruddy——
PRU. (ignoring LOR.'s proffered hand). I wish you'd call me by my right name. It's Prudence! Not that horrid—— (Shrugs shoulder.) Oh, how common!

LOR. Why, you never used to mind it.
PRU. That was several years ago. You forget I've been to Boston for two years.

LOR. Yes, I heard you'd but recently returned. (Confusedly.) I hardly expected a visit from you. (Then quickly.) Won't you sit down?

PRU. No, I must tear myself away. (Starts toward door at back.) Call and take tea with me some Thursday afternoon.

LOR. I'm awfully sorry you can't stay a while.
PRU. Well, you know I really called to see Nat.

LOR. (surprised). Nat? Have you seen him recently?
PRU. Why, yes,—only last evening. He called at our home and paid me a most pleasant visit. Why?

LOR. (breathing hard'). Oh, nothing—nothing. I just wanted to know—that's all.

PRU. Nat was one of my dearest friends before I went to Boston. True, he didn't write me while I was away; but since his visit of last evening I really do believe we understand each other and are going to be the good friends of yore.

LOR. (swaying and grasping back of chair right of table for support; hardly audible). Oh, Nat! Nat!

PRU. (coming down). Why, what ails you, dear?

LOR. (breathing hard'). Nothing—nothing. (At door R. 1.) You'll excuse me, won't you? I'm a little faint—a little faint!

PRU. (with a smile). Certainly. Only don't forget, dear. Call some Thursday afternoon and take tea. (LOR. staggers off R. 3. PRU. looks off after her. Laughs lightly.) Engaged to Nat, eh? Perhaps the marriage won't take place after all.

Enter NAT., door L., unconcernedly.

NAT. (coming face to face with PRU.). Prudence! What brought you here?
Pru. I came to find out whether the rumor I'd heard was true.

Nat. What rumor?

Pru. About your being engaged to Lorna Lane.

Nat. It's true—yes—we are engaged.

Pru. (her eyes flashing). You never told me you were going to marry Lorna.

Nat. (quietly). No—I told her. She had the greatest interest in knowing.

Pru. (changing tone). I don't see why a man of your education should want to throw himself away on a poor——

Nat. (firmly). Stop! Stop right there! You have no right to say such things—you have no right to——

Pru. (wheeling around; bitterly). Well, you'll never marry Lorna Lane!

Nat. (calmly). Really, Pruddy, I'm surprised at you.

Pru. (in same emphatic tones as before). You'll never marry her!

Nat. And pray, why not?

Pru. (bitterly). Because I'll prevent you!

(Opens door at back.)

Nat. Since you feel that way about it—why, we'll see.

Pru. You are right! (About to go. Firmly.) We will see. [Exits, door at back.]

Nat. Jealous, by thunder! And I never so much as even gave her a thought! (Laughingly goes up to window and looks off L.) She's angry, clean through. (Enter Lor., door R. 3; observing Nat., halts in doorway. Nat. turns and observes Lor.) Oh, Lorna, did you hear her?

Lor. Hear who?

Nat. Why, Pruddy Schuyler. She was just here.

Lor. (sadly). Yes. I had a talk with her.

Nat. (surprised). No! (In front of table.)

Lor. She told me a number of things that surprised me.

Nat. (lightly). Shouldn't wonder. She's rather a clever girl in her way.

Lor. (looking him in the eye). Nat, you haven't told me the truth about last night.

Nat. (nervously). Lorna! Why——

Lor. You weren't at Milltown!

Nat. (puzzled). Not at Milltown?
LOR. (*firmly*). But at Willowdale! (*Nat. bows head.*) Your whole story wasn't true. You went to Willowdale to see Pruddy Schuyler!

**NAT.** (looking up). Now, Lorna, you know that isn't ——

**LOR.** (worked up). She's told me everything!

**NAT.** Good heavens, Lorna, you don't believe what that woman says?

**LOR.** Alvina Berry corroborates her story. She saw you at the Schuylers' last evening. You told Peter all about it and bound him to secrecy.

**NAT.** Well, I confess, Lorna, I did go to Willowdale.

(*Bows head, and leans against table.*)

**LOR.** (bitterly). And you cannot deny visiting the Schuylers!

**NAT.** No—I can't deny that either.

**LOR.** (bitterly). Went to call on your old sweetheart—just returned from Boston.

**NAT.** No, no, Lorna—not that. I went there because her father wanted me to —— (*Then halts.*) My promise! My promise! I mustn't forget!

**LOR.** (as he hesitates). Because—why?

**NAT.** (looking down). I can't tell you, Lorna—I can't tell you!

**LOR.** (giving a deep sigh). Very well, Nat. I won't question you longer! (*Removes ring from finger.*) Here is your ring! (*Forces it in his hand.*)

**NAT.** (quickly). Lorna! what are you doing? What do you mean?

**LOR.** I mean our engagement is broken! (*Starts r. i.*)

**NAT.** (wildly). No, no, Lorna; this mustn't be the end of our dream of happiness! I made a foolish promise; that's the only reason why I can't explain my object in going to Willowdale yesterday. Won't you believe me?

**LOR.** I'm sorry, but after the stories you told, I really cannot. I'll go away. No doubt you'll soon forget me.

**NAT.** You'll go away?

**LOR.** We can't continue like this! Life would be unendurable for both of us.

**NAT.** And nothing will make you change your opinion?

**LOR.** Nothing! Nothing! It is the end! All is over between us!

[*Exits r. 3.*]
COUNTRY FOLKS

NAT. (worked up). Very well, then! That blasts my hopes—blights my future! You never really could have cared for me, anyway! (Suddenly.) I know what I'll do! (Starts toward door at back.) Yes, yes—it's the only way to forget—the only way to be forgotten! (Swings door open.) I'll do it! I'll do it! (Off hurriedly, door at back.)

LOR. (on from r. 3, drying eyes). He's gone! (Hurries to window and looks off after NAT.) On his way toward the village. Perhaps I was too hasty after all.

Enter Pol., from r. i.

POL. Oh, Lorna, here you are! I've been looking for you. (Holds out bits of paper.) Look what I found.

LOR. (curious). What are they?

POL. A letter or somethin' Nat tore up. I've been tryin' to patch it together again.

LOR. (reprovingly taking them). Why, Polly, you ought not to— (Then starts.) Pruddy's handwriting! Oh, yes, I've seen it a dozen times! It's hers!—hers! A love letter, no doubt! I was right from the first! I was right from the first! (To Pol.) Oh, I'm so glad you found this. Come, I'll help you put it together! It can't be a wrong to learn the truth! Come quickly, Polly,—come! (Off r. i.)

POL. Gee, some people go up in the air awful easy! I wonder what's troublin' her. (Then goes.) Yes, Lorna, coming! Coming! (Off r. i.)

Enter Peter, door at back, followed by Jake Diemer, carrying a valise with barber's utensils.

PETER (shouting gleefully). Here's the barber! Here's the barber!

JAKE. Blease, not so loud! Not so loud!

PETER (surprised). Well, you're the barber, hain't you?

JAKE. Of course—but you don't got tu shout it from der housetops.

PETER. You ain't ashamed o' it, are you?

JAKE. Of course, in der same place again.

PETER. Then what's the harm o' me shoutin', "Here's the barber"?

JAKE. Ach, you make me tired in der head. Where iss it der man what wants to get shaved?
Enter Hor., in shirt-sleeves, from r. 3.

Hor. Ah, you're here at last, eh?

Peter (to Hor.). Jedge, this is the barber. (Points at Jake. Then to Jake.) Barber—(pointing to Hor.) this is the Jedge. (Quickly repeats and points from one to the other.) Jedge—barber! Barber—Jedge! Shake!

Jake (angered). Dot boy gets me all excitement. I don't know wedder I am standing on my head or my feet.

Hor. The lad's all right. Only a little enthusiastic.

Jake (opening valise). Yes—und something else besides. Iss it you who wants a shave?

Hor. Do you think you can give it to me?

Jake (sharpening large razor on stone). I kin give it to anybody.

Peter (laughing). You bet you kin.

Jake (angered). If dot boy stays here—I go ouden.

Hor. Don't get excited.

Jake. I don't got excited. I only lose my head—dot's all.

Peter. I didn't mean no harm. I jes' want tu watch Jake, 'cause some day I expect to be a barber too.

Jake (to Hor.; wildly). You see? You see? I refusen to shave you ef he is watching. I don't want him to git on to der secrets of my trade. No, sir, I don't do it. (Commences to pack valise again.) Nodding like it.

Hor. Confound it, I've got to have my shave. (To Peter, handing him coin.) Here, my boy! You'd better run along since the gentleman requests it.

Peter (with grin). Gentleman? He ain't no gentleman; he's a——

Jake (brandishing razor). Say it—say it—und by golly I give you a souvenir of de occasion!

Peter (hurriedly opening door at back). So long, Ducky!

Jake (roaring). Ducky! (Runs up to door.) I fix you! (Peter exits, slamming door in his face. Jake staggers back.) Ach—my nose! (Then comes down.) I neffer like dot boy.

Hor. Has he ever injured you in any way?

Jake. Injured me? How would you like it, ef you vas courting a certain lady, und dot loafer hinders you at every chance mit his monkey-doodles? How would you like it?

Hor. I wouldn't like it at all.

Jake (placing chair right of table, c.). Vell, dot's how iss it. Be seated, please. (Hor. sits; Jake raises Hor.'s feel
and places hassock underneath.) Now you are at ease, what?

Hor. (watching him). I have felt easier.

Jake (swishing razor through air). Are you afraid of being cut?

Hor. (nervously). I'm not speaking for publication just now.

Jake (tying towel roughly about Hor.'s neck). My dear man, I don't cut mebbe one out of every two I shave.

Hor. Great heavens!

Jake (looking at him). By golly, you are Jedge Finch, ain't it?

Hor. I hope to be judge after the votes are counted.

Jake. Iss dot so? Strange I don't remember your face.

Hor. No, I suppose not. It's healed up now.

(Peter, unseen by others, cautiously climbs through window and remains partly concealed by curtains.)

Jake (carefully lathering Hor.'s face). Your face is nice und smooth, Jedge.

Hor. Do you think so?

Jake. Ches—it's as smooth as sandpaper.

Hor. Well, it hasn't anything on your touch.

Jake. Will you want a hair cut after I'm through shaving?

Hor. More likely a hospital.

Jake. I cut hair any old way.

Hor. I believe you.

Jake. Now mit your locks, I could make a extra fine job.

Hor. I'll take your word for it. Only hurry the shaving.

Jake. I do it so quick, you won't know it.

Hor. I suppose my neck'll be cut. Hurry, hurry.

Jake (looking at lather on hands). By golly, I got tu wash der soap from my fingers. Where is it a pitcher of water?

Hor. You'll find one in my room, off there. (Points r. 3.)

Jake. All right. I hurry back. (Off r. 3.)

Hor. (lying back on chair with head resting on back). I'm sorry I ever permitted the fellow to go this far. (Peter has
cautiously come down and unseen by Hor., taken up cup and brush, and is vigorously mixing lather. Hor. hears sounds.) You're back, eh? Didn’t take you long. Now please hurry the shaving. (Peter smiles broadly, comes from behind, dabs brush in Hor.'s face, then laughs heartily.) Help! Help! My eyes! You're filling them full of soap! (Peter continues to dab Hor., and then to stop his struggles, holds Hor. around neck and thoroughly applies lather. Finally takes up large razor and commences to scrape lather from Hor.'s face. Hor. protests.) Help! Help! Help!

Enter Mar. and Al., finally from L.

Mar. (surprised). What has happened?
Peter (triumphant). I've given the Jedge a shave!

(Quickly moves behind table.)

Hor. (sitting up, his face covered with lather, moving arms as if swimming; then finally espying Peter). You scoundrel! You miserable fellow! (Roars.) I'll—I'll——

(Makes after Peter, who quickly jumps through window and exits.)

Mar. (apologetically). He meant no harm.
Hor. (bitterly). He meant to cut my throat.
Mar. I’m so sorry, Judge.
Hor. You're not half as sorry as I am.
Mar. He won’t do it again.
Hor. You can bet he won’t.
Mar. (presenting Al.). I want you to meet an old flame!
Hor. (absent-mindedly). I’m mad enough to tackle a hornet's nest.
Mar. (referring to Al.). Alvina Berry, whom you knew as Alvina Hoyle.
Hor. (surprised). Alvina Hoyle! Do my eyes deceive me? Of course they do—(rubbing eyes) they're full of soap!
Al. (coquettishly). No, Judge, I’m the Alvina of old!
Hor. (with outstretched arms). Come to my arms! (Embraces her.) Alvina! Alvina!

Enter Jake from R. 3, observing them, gives a cry.

Jake. What's dis? Alvina! Und in der Jedge’s arms?
COUNTRY FOLKS

Quickly down, swinging Hor. r.) What iss der meaning of dis?

Al. It means, Jake, I've found an old friend.

Jake. It looks like it. Und are going to give me der go-by, what? (To Hor.) I would hev you understood dot dis lady is my finance.

Hor. (starting). What? (To Al.) You would marry that? (Points at Jake.)

Jake (looking himself over). What's der matter mit that? (Then firmly.) Yes—I am der proud victim.

Al. I don't know about that.

Jake (surprised). Vell, if you don't know—who does?

Hor. That's enough, Alvina. I've something to live for. Where there's life—(rubbing lather from face and looking at it) there's soap—hope, I mean—hope!

Jake (seizing Hor. by arm; brandishing razor). Come here—I shave you!

Hor. (drawing hand away and over to door r.). Excuse me! I had a close enough shave before. (Off r. 3.)

Jake (looking after him). Vell, he loses my vote, anyway. (Angrily restores things to valise.) I wouldn't vote for dot man ef I got paid a hundred dollars! (Then changes tone.) Yes—I would—but not fer a cent less. (Then turns to Al.) But I am surprised at you in his arms.

Al. He's an old friend.

Jake. So it seems.

Mar. Alvina and the Judge stood up for my husband and me when we were married.

Jake. Vell, he didn't got to put his arms around her. Vy didn't he explode himself in der first place?

Al. (to Mar.). Good-bye, Martha. (Starts toward door at back.) I'm going home.

Mar. Come again.

Jake (quickly taking up valise). But hold on, Alvina; what's der rush?

Al. (haughtily). When you know how to act like a gentleman, you can address me again, not before.

[Exits, door at back.]

Jake. Like a gentlemans? Alvina, shust a minute! Wait! I promise anyding! (At door at back. To audience.) Ach himmel, I bet now I lose her und her fortune besides.

(Off sadly.)
MAR. (looking from window). Alvina has her own troubles with her many admirers. I'm afraid most of them are after the money that one day may be hers. (Looks off.) Hello, Josiah's returned. How glum he looks. (Quickly opens door at back.) What can have happened? (Enter Jos., sadly, door at back. MAR., anxiously.) Josiah, what is it?

Jos. I was too late. (Comes down to sofa.)

MAR. (alarmed). You don't mean?

Jos. The bank's closed. Every penny lost. The savings of a lifetime gone! (Sinks on sofa.)

MAR. (brokenly). Poor, poor Josiah. But think how much better off we are than some of the others.

Jos. (disconsolately). Oh, I know, I know. If only I'd drawn the money yesterday.

MAR. I'm as much to blame as you are. But never mind, we've both got our health and can start over again. Then there's Nat and Polly. We mustn't forget we've still got the children.

Jos. You're right. (Up.) They mustn't know. We've got to keep it from the young people.

Enter Peter, excitedly, from L. I.

PETER. Here comes one o' the soljers. (Hurries to window.) I seen him from the up-stairs window. (Looks out.) Why, it's Nat!

MAR. } (up). Nat?

Jos. 

Enter Lor., door r. I, followed by Pol. NAT., same instant, enters door at back, wearing a Khaki uniform, leggings, campaign hat and blanket rolled up over shoulders.

ALL (starting). Nat!

LOR. (wringing hands). What have you done?

NAT. Enlisted! I'm going with the boys to the Philippines!

Jos. (staggered). Good heavens, lad, do you know what you're doing?

MAR. (wringing hands). My boy, my boy, it will break my heart.

NAT. (nervously). Perhaps I didn't think; perhaps I—— (Then turns to Lor.) For the time being, Lorna, your words drove me almost insane!
Lor. (quickly). And I was wrong all the while. I know now why you wouldn’t speak. It was because of a promise made to Ozias Schuyler; because of the money you loaned him; because of this!

(Holds out piece of paper on which other particles have been pasted.)

Nat. (surprised). Then you know all?

Lor. (her arms about his neck). Nat, you shan’t go! I take back all I said! You mustn’t leave this way!

(Fife and drum heard off in the distance playing strains of “The Girl I Left Behind Me.”)

Nat. (releasing her hold). It’s too late now. I’ve got to go.

Jos. Think of me, Nat. (Refers to Mar.) Of your mother.

Nat. If I turn back now, ever after I’ll be known in the village as the one who was afraid to go. (Up to door at back.) I couldn’t stand that. No, no; I’ve got to go!

(Strains gradually grow louder.)

Peter (looking from window). They’re getting on the train!

Nat. (throwing door open). Good-bye, all—good-bye.

Lor. (with outstretched arms). Nat! Nat!

Jos. (L., imploringly). My boy—my boy!

(Mar. looks from one to the other, then impulsively exits, door at back.)

Mar. (sinking on sofa, with a sob). He’s gone! Gone!

(Gone!)

(Strains of fife and drum continue off to)

SLOW CURTAIN
ACT II

SCENE.—The same; one year later. No change in setting, save that American flags are draped over doors, picture frames, etc., and room otherwise decorated. Table is laid for six.

(At rise, LOR. is discovered standing on small ladder just finishing draping of flag over window. POL. is laying plates on table.)

LOR. It doesn't seem a year, Polly, does it, that the boys marched to the front?
POL. I should say not. Seems more like yesterday.
LOR. When Nat went away that day, I never really expected to see him again.
POL. (over to sideboard for napkins which she brings down to table). Strange, though, he never wrote any letters.
LOR. I can understand that. (Sighs.) He may not have forgiven my doubting him that way.
POL. But that doesn't account for his not writin' dad, maw, or me.
LOR. (nervously). Don't, Polly—don't. You frighten me with your doubts. The Philippines are a great way off. Perhaps that's why —
POL. All the other boys have written dozens of letters. (Brokenly.) Only Nat—Nat hasn't —

(Buries head in arms and sobs.)

LOR. (down from ladder, her arms about POL.). There, there, Polly, don't cry. Everything will come out all right. He'll return with the rest, I know.
POL. (wiping eyes). I hope so, Lorna—I hope so.

Enter PETER, door at back, with arms full of paper bundles.

PETER (struggling with bundles). Here—give a lift! My arms are near busted! Hurry! Hurry! (The bundles begin to slip and finally all fall to the floor. POL. and LOR. quickly over to him.) Too late—too late! The damage is done! Now you kin help me pick 'em up.
Pol. Whatcher all got, Peter?
Peter (with broad smile). A bunch o' good things! Fer the party, yu know. Gee, it's going tu be great!

(Piles bundles in Pol.'s arms.)

Lor. (his picked up several bundles and handed them to Pol.). I don't think you need me any longer.
Peter (with bow). Nope! You're excused!
Lor. (laughingly over to ladder). I've any number of things to do before Mr. Finch arrives.
Peter. Oh, gee, is he comin'?
Lor. (folding ladder and moving it to r. 3). Why, of course, Peter,—why?
Peter. Oh, I hate him—that's all.
Lor. That isn't nice, Peter. (Off r. 3.)
Mar. (heard off l.). Oh, Peter! Peter! Where are you?
Peter. Callin' me! Here's where I git the dickens! (To Pol.) Hurry, Polly—hurry! (Takes up remaining bundles, and over to door l.) Don't tell your maw I dropped these—will yer—'cause I think I broke that box o' store eggs. (Then suddenly places finger to nose and holds package well in front of him.) Now, I'm sure I did.

(Off l., followed by Pol., who is laughing heartily.)

Enter Jos., door at back. He takes off hat and coat, hangs on rack, and then takes out pipe and tobacco, comes down to sofa, fills same and about to light it, when enter Mar., from l.

Mar. Got back, Josiah, I see.
Jos. Yep.
Mar. Is Alvina comin'?
Jos. You bet. And what d'ye think?
Mar. Josiah, what d'ye want me tu think?
Jos. I engaged that picture feller tu cum up and take a picture o' the whole shebang.
Mar. Land sakes!
Jos. It ain't every day we celebrate our twenty-fifth weddin' anniversary. And bein' as how Alvina and Horatio are both tu be here, I thought to duplicate that picture we had taken on our weddin' morn.
Mar. (wiping eye with end of apron, then going to cup-
board and bringing down an old album; sitting beside him). We've changed some, Josiah, sense that day.

Jos. (adjusting spectacles and taking album on knee). Wal, I should swarn! You were a putty gal, then. (Then quickly adds.) Not thet ye've changed any.

Mar. (shaking head sadly). You can't take it back, Josiah. I've grown older, like yourself.

Jos. Wal, dang it, looks don't count, anyway. I ain't a bit older then I feel.

Mar. (looking at album). Alvina was a putty gal.

Jos. You wouldn't think it tu look at her now. (Chuckles.) And Horatio was the same old stuck-up, conceited mule he is tu-day. But he couldn't help that, I reckon—born that way.

Mar. (closing book). We've a double joy to-day, in the return of Nat.

Jos. Yep! Our prayers hev been answered. He's come back again! (Mar. has restored album to its proper place. Knock on door at back.) Heigho! Who kin thet be?

Mar. (opening door). Good-afternoon, Jedge!

Enter Hor., pompously, door at back.

Hor. Good-afternoon, everybody. Am I early?

(Comes down.)

Jos. Jes' in time.

Hor. I only had two cases on the calendar to-day, and was able to get away sooner than I expected.

Jos. How do you like bein' on the bench?

Hor. (conceitedly). My dear Josiah! I was born to adorn it.

Jos. Yu had a putty close shave in landin' it, though.

Hor. Thanks to your kindly offices, I managed to get in. You certainly swung a good many votes my way. But tell me (glancing around)—— Alvina! Is she here?

Mar. Not yet; but she won't be long now. (Over to door l.) You'll excuse me, won't you, Jedge?

Hor. (with low, sweeping bow). Certainly.

(Mar. off l.)

Jos. I've got a s'prise fer yu. Going tu hev a picture took o' the whole shootin' match. Same's we did twenty-five years ago.
HOR. No!
Jos. Yes!
HOR. Who's the photographer around these parts?
Jos. Why, that barber feller from the village has jes' turned his shop into a picture gallery!
HOR. You mean Jacob Diemer?
Jos. Gosh darn it, I think that's the feller's name.
HOR. Good heavens, Josiah, do you realize he's my greatest rival for the hand of the fair Alvina?
Jos. Eh? I didn't know it. But what's the difference? When he sees you a-posing alongside o' her, it ought to give him heart failure.
HOR. (shaking head). I must say, I am not partial to the arrangement. (Bitterly.) One doesn't like to have a rival camping on one's heels. (Glances around.) By the way, Josiah, I've wanted to ask you a question for over a year.
Jos. Land sakes! Fer a year? Must be a corker! What is it? I'm all ears!
HOR. (glancing around). Well, you know a man of my standing shouldn't really throw himself away on —
Jos. Never mind backin' and fillin'—hemmin' and hawin'—what's the question?
HOR. (nervously). Well, then—have you any idea as to the financial status of my beloved ——
Jos. In plain words, yu want to know what Alvina's worth.
HOR. Oh, I wouldn't put it in quite those words.
Jos. No, but you'd mean the same thing, anyway. Wal, I'll tell yu. Alvina ain't got nuthin' to speak of.
HOR. (sinking on sofa). My word! Then I've made a mistake! I've made a —— (Shakes Jos.'s hand.) I'm so glad you told me in time. I've got two other widows who are just dying to ——
Jos. Hold on. Yu ain't let me finish. I said Alvina ain't got no money to speak of at present—and then was erbout to add, that's the future——
HOR. (anxiously). Yes, yes, what about the future?
Jos. (looking at him). Gee whittikens, you're in an awful hurry.
HOR. You see, it means so much to me!
Jos. It's this way. When Abner Berry died, he owned a lot o' mining stock that warn't considered wurth a darn. Alvina held on tu it, and later when they begun to sink shafts, they found a lot o' ore — gold, silver or sumthin'. Anyways,
Aivina's been offered a big sum for her holdings, and if a tornado or somethin' don't come along tu knock things helter-skelter, why she ought tu be a rich woman in a few weeks.

Hor. (rubbing hands). About how rich, Josiah?
Jos. Four or five hundred thousand wurth.

Hor. (sinking on sofa). Good gracious!
Jos. So you'd better give the other two widdies a wide path and stick tu Alvina.

Hor. By Jove, Josiah, I will. From now on she can't lose me.

Enter Lor., from R. 3, nervously.

Lor. (to Jos.). Can I see you just a moment, dad?
Jos. Sure thing. (To Hor.) 'Xcuse us fer a few seconds.

Hor. (with sweeping bow). Certainly.
Jos. (pointing to L.). See Martha. She kin tell yu all erbout Alvina.

Hor. Thank you so much. (Pompously bows and off L.)
Jos. (to Lor.). Well, Lorna, what now?
Lor. Ozias Schuyler is coming up the road, and I happened to remember that to-day——
Jos. The notes I made him become due.
Lor. I thought perhaps if he wouldn't give you time to pay; if for any reason he wouldn't renew them; that you might take up the matter of this receipt with him.

(Holds out Nat.'s receipt to him.)

Jos. (taking it). Oh, yes, that's so. The receipt he gave Nat for the five hundred! I never thought of that all this while. Thank you, Lorna, I'll do it. But Ozias is our friend, and we need have no fears o' his pressin' us. (Knock on door.)
Lor. That's him, now.
Jos. (rising and moving R.). Open the door, Lorna.

(Lor. opens door.)

Enter Al., breathlessly, door at back.

Lor. } (together). Alvina!
Jos. }
Al. I ran so I'm all out o' breath.
Jos. What is it?
Al. I'd jes' started fer your place, when stumpin' behind
me I saw that awful Ozias Schuyler a-callin' out, "Alvina, dear, Alvina."

Jos. What o' it?

Al. What o' it? Ain't yu heard? Sence he found out I was liable tu come into a fortune, he's set his cap fer me and writes me the most sugar-coated letters yu ever heard tell on.

Jos. Yu didn't know what trubble was until yu had the promise o' that money, eh, Alvina?

Al. The men folks never used tu give me a second look. Now they're breakin' their necks runnin' after me. (Knock on door at back.) Thet's him now. (To Lor.) Let me go into one o' the other rooms. I don't want to meet him jes' now.

Lor. (over to door l.). Come quick,—this way.

Al. (quickly to door l.). Thank goodness.

(Exits door l., followed by Lor., laughing. Knock repeated.)

Jos. (opening door). Oh, thet you, Ozias? Come right in. Ozias (glancing around). Thought I saw Alvina Berry a-headin' this way. What's goin' on here to-day? Heard yu had a party o' some sort.

Jos. Not 'zactly a party. Jes' a private gatherin' o' a few friends.

Ozias. In which I'm not included, eh?

Jos. (nervously). Why, I didn't think you'd ——

Ozias. No one ever thinks o' Ozias Schuyler unless they're in trouble and need money. My society ain't wanted nowhere, it appears. But I'll hev you and the rest understand that me and my daughter are as good as any o' you.

Jos. I for one hev never doubted that.

Ozias (sneering). Oh, hain't yer? Well, we'll talk o' that later. I jes' came to remind you that the notes are due tu-day and must be paid.

Jos. Why, you're not serious. You don't mean ——?

Ozias. I've got a lot o' bills tu pay and need all my out-standin' cash.

Jos. I figured, Ozias, that ——

Ozias. You had no right tu figure my affairs. (Sharply.) Yu can't pay, can yu?

Jos. (on sofa, with bowed head). I'm sorry to say I can't.

Ozias (rubbing hands together). Well, what are yu going tu do erbout it?
Jos. That's a question fer you to decide. I am at your mercy.

OZIAS (chuckling). Thet's more like it. Thet's the way I like tu hear folks talk. Now here's a proposition. You kin 'cept it or leave it, as yu prefer. (Clears throat.) Your son Nat returns to-day, doesn't he?

Jos. I am happy tu say he does.

OZIAS. Wal, I'll tear up the notes and consider 'em as paid, on one condition.

Jos. (eagerly). And that?

OZIAS. On condition your son Nat marries my gal Pruddy.

Jos. That's somethin' fer Nat tu decide.

OZIAS. Wal, he'd better decide it, or I'll sell yu out. There it is agin! I s'pose yu think my gal ain't good enough fer your family! Wal, Pruddy's set her mind on havin' him, and thet settles it. Either you arrange matters at once, or I'll —

Jos. (up). Jes' a moment—jes' a moment. You seem tu fergit about this. (Holds out receipt.)

OZIAS. What's thet?

Jos. The receipt you gave Nat fer the five hundred he loaned you.

OZIAS (starting). The receipt! Why thet was destroyed! Nat tore it up hisself. He can't deny it! I don't owe him the money! I was a fool not to get that back at the time I paid him, but I thought I could trust the Dean family, and thet's where I made my mistake.

Jos. You can trust us. Ef you say it was paid, I believe you.

OZIAS (holding out hand). Then give me that receipt.

Jos. No—I'll let Nat do it.

OZIAS (enraged). I thought so—I thought so. I'm sorry I loaned you the money on the notes. (Opens door at back.)

Jos. And I'm sorry I had tu borrow from you. I know you now for what you are.

OZIAS (bitterly). Wal, I'm glad we understand each other. Remember my proposition. Think it over. Either Nat marries Pruddy, or I sell you out. (Off angrily door at back.)

Jos. (sinking on sofa with head bowed in hands). And I thought him a friend; I thought him a friend!

Enter Pol., from l., with covered dishes.

Pol. Everything's ready, dad. (Places dishes on table.)

Jos. (pulling himself together). Thet's so. I mustn't fer-
git the company. Funny that photographer hain't showed up. It'll be gittin' dark soon and too late tu take the picture.

Enter Peter, from l., now wearing a checkered suit, fancy shirt, collar and large red bow tie.

Peter (to Jos.). Hey, boss, didn't you say I was to sit at the first table tu-night—same as Polly?
Jos. Yes, providin' you know how to behave yerself.
Peter (with drawl). Sure. Jes' tell me what tu do.
Jos. Show yer best manners. Remember we've got company.
Peter. I know. (With broad grin.) Not eat with my knife and fingers.
Jos. Wal, I should say not. I tell you what. You all jes' watch the Jedge.
Peter (all attention; repeating). I'm tu watch the Jedge.
Jos. And do what he does.
Peter (repeating). I'm tu watch the Jedge and do what he does. All right. (To Pol.) See, Miss Smarty?
Jos. Now do be careful.
Peter. Bet I will. (As if to self.) Do what the Jedge does. Oh, I kin remember that all right.

Enter Mar., door L.

Mar. (talking off). Now come right in, folks.

Enter Hor., arm in arm with Al., L.

Jos. (to Mar.). You'd better seat the company, Martha.
Mar. (to Hor.). Jedge, you take the head o' the table.

(Refers to chair left of table. Chairs are so placed that there is one chair at each end and two on either side of table.)

Hor. (taking position behind chair indicated; pompously). I am honored, Mrs. Dean—honored!
Mar. (to Al.). You sit here, Alvina.

(Refers to chair at back, nearest Hor.)

Al. (taking position). Thank you.
Mar. (to Jos.). Dad, you sit there. (Points to chair on other side, nearest Hor.) Polly, there!
(Refers to chair next to Jos. Pol. and Jos. take up positions. When seated, they will have their backs to audience.)

Peter (anxiously). Where do I come in?
Mar. Oh, yes, that’s so. (Refers to chair right end of table.) You take that chair, Peter.

Peter (hurriedly seating and adjusting napkin). That suits me!

Mar. (reprovingly). Peter! Peter!
Peter (looking up and then observing others are standing). Oh, gee, I forgot. I’m to watch the Jedge.

(Removes napkin and stands behind chair, closely watching Hor.’s every movement.)

Mar. (taking position behind chair at back of table, next to Al.). Now, then, I guess we’re ready.

(All sit. Lor. enters from l. with large covered platter which she places on table, then exits l.)

Jos. Wal, I guess we’re all ready.
Peter (eagerly, pounding knife and fork on table). You kin bet I am!

(Hor. takes folded napkin, adjusts it; Peter, closely watching him, duplicates his action.)

Hor. Turned out a nice day, hasn’t it?
Peter (imitating him). Corkin’ day, ain’t it?
Jos. Yes, I reckon the storm’s blown over.
Mar. Now don’t be backward. Help yerself.

(Passes bread to Hor., who takes a slice; then passes it to others. Peter, when it is passed him, spears several slices with fork.)

Hor. Kindly pass the salt. (Al. passes large salt-cellar.) Thank you. (Takes it.)

Peter (watching him). Will some one pass the salt this way?

(Then, when it is passed him, vigorously salts his food.)

Al. I hear they’ve postponed the county fair again.
Mar. S’pose folks ain’t got the money on account o’ the poor crops.
Hor. Kindly pass the celery. (Jos. passes it; Hor. selects some.) Thank you.
   Peter (eyeing him). Hand me some o' that, too.

(Helps himself to the remainder. Hor. raises cup to mouth; Peter, watching him closely, does the same.)

Hor. (resting cup on saucer and looking longingly at Al., patting her lovingly on shoulder). You're not saying a great deal, Alvina, my dear.
   Peter (up and reaching in front of others, duplicating Hor.'s patting). My dear, you ain't opened your mouth!
   Jos. (surprised). Peter! Peter! Such manners!

(Peter confusedly resumes seat.)

Hor. (indignant). I never saw such a thing! (Throws down knife and fork; Peter does the same. Hor., watching him, angrily removes napkin; Peter, ditto. Hor., now realizing that Peter is imitating him, angrily throws napkin on table; Peter does the same.) Did I ever!

(Rises and walks L.)

Peter. No, I never! (Rises and walks R.)
   Hor. (aside). The fellow's mocking me. (Waves his right hand over head; Peter imitates him. Hor., watching him, angrily removes napkin; Peter, ditto. Hor., now realizing that Peter is imitating him, angrily throws napkin on table; Peter does the same. Hor., angrily.) I won't stand it any longer!

(Angry over to table, pounds chair heavily on floor, then throws himself on same; Peter does the same. Others have all been intently watching Hor.)

Jos. (to Hor.). What's the trouble? Anything wrong?
   Hor. (angrily). Everything's wrong! That knave (pointing at Peter) is endeavoring to make a fool out of me.
   Jos. (surprised). Peter! Why, what has he done?
   Hor. That's just it. Everything I've done!
   Jos. (to Peter). Peter, I'm surprised at you!
   Peter (with mouth well filled with bread). Didn't you say I was to watch the Jedge and do what he did?
   Jos. Oh, yes—yes! (Breaks into hearty laugh.) I forgot—I forgot! (Laughs heartily.)
   Peter. Wal, I didn't. (Then suddenly begins to cough.)
Mar. (alarmed). The boy is choking. Quick! Someone pat him on the back!
Jos. More trouble!

(Immediately up, pats Peter vigorously.)

Peter (finally relieved; sighing in relief). Gee! I thought I was a goner then time. (Knock on door at back.)
Jos. Hello, who kin that be?

(Mar. goes quickly to door, opening same.)

Enter Jake, with large camera on tripod, and carrying plate-holder and black cloth.

Jake. I'm sorry to be so late.
Jos. Cum right in.
Jake (coming down; observing Al.). Ach, my dear. I didn't know you vas—— (Then espies Hor.; aside, angrily.)

My hated rivals!
Jos. Kind o' late fer a first-class picture, hain't it?
Jake. Not ef I take him right away. Der sun is goot yet.
Hor. (up). Well, then, we'd better not delay.
Al. (rising). No.

(All up except Peter, who, seated at table, is quickly sweeping contents of all plates and platters on his own plate, and secreting apples, bread and celery in various pockets.
Jake begins to adjust camera r. c.)

Jos. (to Pol.). You and Peter had better run along now.
Pol. All right, dad. (Quickly to door r. 3, calling to Peter.) Oh, Peter, Peter! (Off.)

(Peter unheedingilly fills mouth with bread.)

Jos. (turning to him, loudly). Peter! Did you hear what I said?
Peter. Yessir—but I was busy.

(Then rises, and as Jos. turns to others, takes up filled plate in one hand, and a loaf of bread in other, and stealthily off r. 3, stumbling at moment of exit. Loud crash heard off.)
Jos. (quickly up to door r. 3). Great Scott! What can hev happened? (Looks off.)

Peter (from within). I only tripped, dad—it’s all right.

Jake. Now, how do you want dis picture? In a bunch or all together singly?

Jos. (to Al.). I thought we’d duplicate that picture of a quarter of a century ago.

Al. Yes, a group!

Jake (in businesslike manner). Very well. (Rolls sofa a bit up stage l. c.) Now, then, Mr. and Mrs. Dean, if you please. (Jos. and Mar. take positions on sofa. To Al.)

Und now, Alvina. (Poses Al. behind sofa. To Hor. Bitterly.) Und you, sponge-face!

Hor. (indignant). Sponge-face!

Jake. Veil, whateffer your name iss. (Roughly shoves Hor. alongside of Al.) You stand dere. (Then turns to audience.) Oh, how I hate dot man! Ef dot camera was only a cannon, vat a goot chance to shoot him! (Places camera r. c., then with cloth over head endeavors to focus same. Business. Finally withdraws head.) Do you want der faces tu show in der picture?

Jos. (starting). Faces tu show, o’ course! Why do you ask?

Jake. Vell, because it’s going to be pretty hard to get any-thing in besides der feet. (Over to Jos. and Mar., posing them. To Jos.) Please look a little pleasant, shust as if you wasn’t married. (Places Jos.’s hand stiffly on knee and turns his head in an awkward position to the left.) Dat’s better. (Then to Mar.) You look dot way! (Turns her head to the right.) So! (Mar. and Jos. are now looking at each other.) Now, then!

(Goes to Al., takes her hand in his and pats it gently.)

Hor. (indignant). Hold on, there! That isn’t necessary!

Jake. How do you know vat’s necessary? Who’s doing dis?

Hor. You’re patting the lady’s hand.

Jake. Who’s der fotographer? You or I?

Hor. (indignant). I won’t stand this.

Jake. Den get oudt! I don’t care! (To Al.) You will take a handsome picture, I know. Too bad it will be spoiled by dot—sun spot. (Gives Hor. hard look. Then to Hor.,
looking him over.) I don't really know how to pose you. You are quite impossible.

Hor. (thoroughly angered). This is getting more than I can stand.

Jake. Den sit it! (Poses him in awkward manner. Then notices that Al. and Hor. are looking at each other.) Oh, dot won't do at all. (Turns Al.'s head so that she looks well away from Hor. Then turns Hor.'s head as far as possible in other direction.) That's more like it. (Goes to camera, adjusts cloth and looks through camera, moving it back and forth in ludicrous effort to focus same. Finally out.) Everything seems to be upsides down. You are all standing on your heads, ain't it? (Impulsively.) I got it! (Down to footlights L.) Everybody look dis way! (All look in his direction.) So. Dot's better. (Returns to camera and adjusts cloth.) Now hold it for a minute!

(Peter appears at window with putty-blower, and blows putty at Hor.; then quickly disappears.)

Hor. (starting). Ouch! (Jumps up and down in pain.) Jake (looking through camera). Hold it! Keep quiet! (Then angrily removes cloth.) What iss der matter mit you? You are jumping like a jack on a stick!

Hor. (rubbing face). Some one hit me with a putty ball.

Jake. Und I hit you mit someding else, ef you don't keep still. Now, once again. (Under cloth, looks through camera.) Steady! Steady! (Peter appears at window and again blows putty; then disappears. Hor. repeats previous business. Jake angrily throws down cloth.) Did I ever see such a fool? How can I take der picture ven you jump up and down like a bucking bronchos? Now try to keep quiet! (Stands alongside of camera with bulb in hand.) Only a minute longer! Hold it, hold it, hold it! (Dances up and down. Al., watching him, gradually smiles, then finally breaks into laugh. Jake throws bulb down.) Stop laughing! Stop laughing! Do you hear? (Paces up and down.) Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! (Looks himself over. To Al.) What in der world are you laughing at, anyways?

Al. (looking at Jake). Nothing.

Jake. Und yet you looked straight at me. Am I noddings? (Returns to camera.) Now, once more! Everybody! (Takes up bulb.) Hold quiet, blease! Dot's it! (Counts slowly.) One, two —— (Peter appears at win-
dow, pointing putty blower at Jake. Jake, slowly.) Und three — (Gives a cry and drops bulb, as Peter blows and disappears.) Help! Help! I’m shot! I’m shot! (Jumps up and down.) Der Jedge shot me out of vengeance! All (crowding about him). It’s too bad! Too bad! I’m sorry!

Jake (finally, exposing eye to Jos.). Tell me, is my eye still in?

Jos. (looking). Hain’t injured.

Jake. I thought fer a minute my head vas blew off. (Waves them to places.) Once again to your places. I take dis picture ef I get assassinated. (All resume positions. Sounds of fife and drum playing “The Girl I Left Behind Me” heard off. Jake takes up bulb. Counts slowly.) One, two —

Mar. (suddenly). Listen!

Jos. (loudly, starting up). It’s the boys!

Al. (rising, clapping hands). The volunteers returned.

Jake (wildly). Steady! Steady!

Jos. (paying no attention to Jake, quickly up and over to Mar. window). Yes, yes—the boys from the front!

Mar. Our boy! Our Nat!

Jos. (quickly taking duster and hat from rack; to Mar.). Quick, Martha! Help me on with my things! I’ll hev to be on hand to greet them!

(Mar. eagerly assists him on with duster and hat. Peter and Pol. on from r. 3, with paper hats and carrying brooms for guns and humming tune, march across stage to l. and then return to r.)

Al. (jumping up and down). I’m so glad! I’m so happy!

Jake (with cloth over head is swinging camera around room, endeavoring to focus same; imploringly). Shust a minute more und I’m through! Shust a minute!

Jos. (to Mar.). Hurry, maw! Hurry!

(Finally opens door at back and presents Ozias in the doorway.)

All. Ozias Schuyler!

Ozias (entering; quietly). Yes, Ozias Schuyler! (To Jos.) And I want a word with you!
Jos. *quickly*. I'm sorry, Ozias, but I haven't time now. I'm on my way to see Nat; I'm on my way to fetch him home! Ozias. I'm sorry fer you, Josiah, but I'm feared you're doomed to a disappointment.

Jos. *taken aback*. You startle me, Ozias.

Mar. You frighten us!

Jos. You don't mean —

Ozias. Nat didn't return with the rest!

Jos. Didn't return?

Ozias. He's dead!

All. Dead?

*(Peter and Pol. quietly remove paper hats.)*

Ozias. Died in the Philippines some months ago. I heard it in town and came right over.

Mar. *giving a convulsive sob and burying head on Jos.'s shoulder*. My boy—my poor, poor boy!

Jos. *brokenly*. That's why we received no letters! That's why we never heard a word frum him! *(Comforts Mar.)* There, there, Martha, I s'pose it had to be. We've got tu bear up. *(Gently leads her in front of sofa.)* We've got tu bear up!

*(Pol. is sobbing on Peter's shoulder; Jake has moved extreme R. and stands with bowed head.)*

Ozias *taking c.*. Nat's taking away hits me mighty hard, too—'cause I liked the boy and figured on havin' him as a son-in-law. How-some-ever, thet's all blotted out now. *(To Jos.)* You couldn't agree tu my offer ef you'd a mind to. The question is, Josiah, how are you going tu pay them notes?

Jos. *(turning)*. You ain't got the heart, I hope, tu speak o' thet at sech a time as this?

Ozias. And why not? One time's ez good ez another. You owe the money! Yu can't deny thet!

Jos. *wearily*. I don't deny anything.

Ozias. Wal, then, I've a right tu be paid back. The debt's past due.

Al. The idea o' talkin' bizness here and now! Ozias Schuyler, yu ought tu be ashamed o' yerself. Ef I had enough money, I'd throw it in your face.

Ozias. Talk's cheap, Alvina. And I didn't address any remarks tu you.
COUNTRY FOLKS

AL. (her arms folded). And you'd better not.
OZIAS (to Jos.). Since yer ain't got money enough tu pay me, you'd better give me a deed o' your property. The Jedge there (referring to Hor.) kin draw up the papers ef yu but say the word.
Jos. (brokenly). A deed? Of the farm here? Why that would leave us without a roof over our heads.
OZIAS. I didn't make no conditions when I loaned yu the money, did I?
Jos. No—but you're makin' them doubly hard at this time.
OZIAS. Well, the matter's got tu be settled here and now.
Jos. (firmly). I can't talk business at this time. You'll have to give me a few days' time.
OZIAS (firmly). I'll have tu do nothin' o' the sort. It's got tu be settled at once. What is it to be—a deed or—
Jos. (emphatically). Nothing! Do you hear, nothing! And I demand that you leave this house at once!
OZIAS. Oh, you do—do you? (Chuckles.) That's a good one. Leave the house, eh? And if I refuse?
PETER (stepping forward). Gosh dang it, I'll throw you out!
OZIAS (brandishing cane). You will?
PETER (throwing off jacket and rolling up sleeves). Yes, I will!
Jos. (pleadingly). Peter! Peter! don't do anything.
OZIAS (with sarcasm). Oh, I'm not tu be intimidated—nor frightened. The law's on my side, and I demand my rights. (Brandishes cane.) Come on, what is your answer?
PETER (suddenly seizing OZIAS, rushing him to window and pushing him over sill). There's the answer, and I hope you're satisfied.
OZIAS (kicking legs in air and shouting). Help! Help!

(PETER has hold of OZIAS's legs; AL. and HOR., l., are laughing loudly. OZIAS suddenly disappears from window. Loud crash heard. PETER, at same instant, from behind window, draws forth OZIAS's trousers and holding them up by legs, dangles them triumphantly, loudly laugh-
ing the while.)

QUICK CURTAIN
ACT III

SCENE.—The same; a month later. No change in setting, save that table has been cleared and furniture arranged as in Act I.

PETER (entering excitedly, door at back, with handbill). Polly—oh, Polly!

Enter Pol., from L.

Pol. What's the excitement, Peter?
Peter (holding up handbill). Look at this!
Pol. Hain't I lookin' at it? What's it all erbout?
Peter (pocketing handbill). Wal, I'll tell yer. You know about the medicine show bein' in town?
Pol. Yep.
Peter. And you know that they've got a real live strong man wrestler with the troupe.
Pol. No—I didn't know that.
Peter. Then you know it now. Wal, Ham Beesom told me they're offerin' fifty dollars to any one as their strong man can't throw in ten minutes.
Pol. Throw where?
Peter. On his back, o' course—stupid!
Pol. What does he want tu throw people for?
Peter. I don't know. Jes' because—that's all.
Pol. How silly!
Peter. Wal, it wouldn't be ef I happened to win that fifty.
Pol. Goodness, you're not going to try?
Peter. Ain't I? Wal, jes' watch your Uncle Dudley. You see, I've been a-thinkin' how your dad helped me out all these years sence my folks died——
Pol. (almost ready to cry, fumbling apron). He has been good to yu, Peter, hain't he?
Peter. You bet. I'd 'a' starved sure as summer ef he hadn't tuk me in and—and—I can't fergit it, Polly—— (Pol. bows head in arm and convulsively sobs. Peter watches her, and almost crying himself, draws a wet bandanna handkerchief from pocket.) I can't fergit it—boo hoo—boo hoo!
(Gives a convulsive sob, places handkerchief to eyes, after which wrings water out on stage.)

POL. (comforting him). Don't take it so to heart, Peter.

PETER. I ain't! I'm a-takin' it on this red handkerchief.

POL. And if you win the fifty?

PETER (through sobbing; enthusiastically). If I stay on the mat ten minutes with that Turkish wrestler and win the fifty dollars, I'm a-going to give it to your dad tu help him pay old Ozias Schuyler.

POL. Good boy, Peter! I hope you win!

PETER. That's the girl, Polly! (Up to door at back.)

So long! (Off door at back.)

POL. (calling after him). Good-bye—good-bye, and good luck!

HOR. (heard off, angrily). Look out where you're going.

PETER (off). Aw, look out where you're comin' from.

POL. The Jedge! The Jedge!

HOR. (appearing in doorway at back, looking off). Impudent puppy! (Then enters.) I wouldn't tolerate that ragamuffin about the premises if I owned this place.

POL. How do, Jedge?

HOR. (observing her for the first time). Oh, how are you, Polly? Your folks at home?

POL. Yes; I'll call them. (Over to L.) We ain't seen much o' you lately, Jedge.

HOR. (nervously). No, I've been very busy.

POL. Visitin' the Schuylers, eh?

HOR. That's my business.

POL. (laughingly). All right. (Off L.)

HOR. Another impudent brat. I hope they don't expect me to give up all my prospects because of maudlin sentiment. What's friendship, anyway? Why, only what you kin get out of people.

Enter Jos., slowly, door L.

JOS. How are you, Jedge?

HOR. Very well, thank you.

JOS. You ain't paid us a call in a month now.
Hor. (curtly). Been busy—busy!
Jos. (referring to sofa). Won't you be seated?
Hor. Haven't time. The fact is, Josiah—tu come tu the point quickly—I've come on business.
Jos. (puzzled). Business? What business?
Hor. Well, if you must know—(taking legal document from pocket) as the attorney for Ozias Schuyler, to serve this paper on you. (Hands him paper.)
Jos. (dumbfounded). Why, what is it?
Hor. A summons and complaint. Ozias has started a suit on those notes.
Jos. (sinking on sofa). It's come at last—at last!
Hor. Of course, I'm sorry to have been retained as plain-tiff's counsel, but I can't afford to turn any business away.
Jos. (quietly). Oh, I ain't blamin' you. I owe the money, and ought to have paid it. (Rises.) By the by, how are you and Alvina getting on?
Hor. Bah! Not at all! The story of her promised fortune is a myth. I don't believe she'll ever realize a dollar out of it. I'm engaged, you know, to Lucy Beech.
Jos. The rich widow, eh?
Hor. Well, she isn't exactly wealthy—but worth, I should judge, around thirty thousand.
Jos. You always wuz a calculatin' cuss.
Hor. Well, if a fellow doesn't take care of himself, no one else will.
Jos. Unless he marries a widow with money, eh, Horatio?

(Digs him in ribs and then off L.)

Hor. (looking after him). That was meant for sarcasm. Well, it doesn't affect me. He'd had me married to that old scarecrow, Alvina Berry, if I hadn't been extra careful. Luckily I saw through the scheme. From what I've been able to learn, she's poorer than a church mouse. (Starts for door at back. Enter Al., door at back. Hor. starts back.) Alvina!
Al. (indignant). Mrs. Berry, if you please!
Hor. (also on dignity). Very well, Mrs. Berry, as you wish. Good-day, madam! (Starts for door at back.)
Al. Aren't you going to congratulate me?
Hor. Eh? On what?
Al. Haven't you heard? (Takes letter from hand-bag and holds out to him.) Read!
Hor. (coming down, taking letter, quickly reading). What's
this? “Enclosed find drafts amounting to four hundred thousand dollars.” (Looks up.) Then your mining property ——?

Al. (relieving him of letter). Has turned out just as was promised. I deposited the proceeds to-day.

Hor. (clasping hand to head; aside). Great guns! And to think I engaged myself to another! (Pulls himself together.) No matter, no matter! (To Al.) Congratulations, my dear Alvina. Congratulations! I always knew you would some day realize your dreams!

Al. And that’s why you ain’t spoken or called on me for the past four weeks.

Hor. (apologetically). My dear Alvina. I had a motive. How could I, a poor, lonely, penniless man, have the presumption to address or even look at the wealthy Alvina Berry! But now—now that you have shown me that despite your good fortune, we are still to be the friends of old, why, I——

Al. (puzzled). I don’t really understand what you are getting at.

Hor. (passionately). My dear Alvina, I have waited to speak to you of this matter for over twenty-five years. (On knees follows her about. With arms outstretched.) My dear, I love you and want you to be my wife!

Al. (firmly). Rise! You are wasting your time and energy. I’ve found you out before this. You are a conceited, selfish, good-for-nothing gold seeker.

Hor. (rising in confusion). Outside of which, I’m all right, I hope.

Al. I never want you to address me again. Go to your fiancée, the widow Lucy Beech.

Hor. Lucy Beech? Bah, I never loved any one but you, Alvina.

Al. Be careful—be careful! Or you may lose her too!

Hor. Then all is over between us?

Al. You heard what I said.

Hor. (angrily). Very well, madam! You will live to regret this step. (Opens door at back. Dramatically.) I’ll throw myself from the stone bridge yonder and end it all. (Then adds.) No, I’ll be drowned if I do. On second thought, I’ll marry the widow Beech! (Off.)

Al. (laughing heartily). Wal, I was right erbout that old hypocrite, anyway.

Enter Jos., from door L.
Jos. Oh, is that you, Alvina? I didn’t know you were here.

Al. I was let in by the Jedge—who’s jes’ gone.

Jos. Reckon you can’t guess what fetched him here.

Al. Wal, it’s hard to tell. He’s up to so much devilment o’ late.

Jos. He’s Ozias Schuyler’s lawyer now.

Al. Do tell!

Jos. And has brought a suit agin us on the notes.

Al. Wal, wal, and arter all you did fer the critter! Thet’s gratitude fer you!

Jos. Wal, it’s broken Martha all up.

Al. I’ll bet it has. (Crosses to L.) Wal, I’ll cheer her up a bit.

Jos. She’ll be right glad to see yer.

Al. (at door L.). Don’t mind the Jedge and Ozias. Birds of a feather—flock together, and you’ll be glad some day you’re rid o’ the two of them fer good and all. (Off L.)

Jos. Perhaps she’s right—perhaps she’s right.

(Exits after her. Knock on door at back.)

Enter R. I, Lor., dressed in black.

Lor. I thought I heard a knock. (Knock repeated.) There it is again. (Opens door. Nat. stands in doorway. His face is pale and he is unshaven and wears dark suit well covered with dust and soft hat. Lor., staggered.) Nat! Nat!

Nat. (weakly). Yes, Lorna—I’ve come home.

(Makes a step forward, staggers and is about to fall.)

Lor. (catching him in her arms). You’re faint! (Assists him to sofa.) I’ll call the folks. (Starts toward door L.)

Nat. Wait! I wouldn’t just yet. It might be better for them not to see me in this weakened condition.

Lor. (crossing to him). You’re right; I hadn’t thought of that. (Then after pause.) Nat, we thought you dead.

Nat. I had the narrowest of escapes, dear. I was pretty badly wounded in one of our early skirmishes and left for dead. Lorna, you don’t know what I endured. I lay on the battlefield all day, the hot sun beating down upon me and the hours—the minutes passing oh! so slowly! Just before nightfall I
thought it all ended. I closed my eyes in what I believed to be my last earthly sleep; but my time hadn’t come, it seems. I won’t weary you with the many details now. You can picture for yourself the chance succor by the enemy; the long, hopeless days in the prison hospital; the final recovery and ultimate return home.

LOR. I can imagine it all. But why, oh, why didn’t you write?

NAT. (looking up slowly; repeating). Why didn’t I write? You don’t mean — — ?

LOR. We haven’t had so much as a line from you since the day you went away.

NAT. (rising slowly; then firmly). Lorna, there’s something wrong here! For I wrote a dozen letters before I was injured — —

LOR. You wrote a dozen letters?

NAT. And only the day before my departure mailed the last—to say I’d soon be home. That letter should have reached here at the same time I arrived.

LOR. I can’t understand it. We heard never a word.

NAT. (suddenly). Lorna, I have it! Pruddy Schuyler! It’s her work! She threatened we should never — —

LOR. (quickly). I see it all now. She’s been the cause of all our sorrow!

NAT. But we haven’t time to think of her now. (Anxiously.) Tell me, how are the folks?

LOR. As well as could be expected under the circumstances. Your home-coming will bring renewed life to us all.

NAT. And Polly? Peter? Old Jed? The dogs? Every one and everything?

LOR. Just as you left them.

NAT. I’m so glad of that. But Lorna, I must get a look at dad—mother.

LOR. (over to R. I). Go into the sitting-room, Nat. I’ll break it to them gently.

NAT. (moving R.). That’s it! (Then at door.) Oh, but Lorna, you haven’t told me a thing about yourself.

LOR. (lightly). Oh, we’re going to have plenty of time to talk about ourselves.

NAT. You’re right. (Off R. I)

LOR. (looking after him). Oh, I’m so glad he’s come back. But how—how to break it to the others without frightening them half to death! (Starts toward L.)
Enter Jos., door l., and they almost collide.

Jos. Heigho, Lorna! Where be you headin' fer?

Lor. (taken by surprise). Why you—that is I—he——


Lor. (nervously). It's nothing—I mean something—well, the fact is, it's—it's——

Jos. You're tryin' tu keep somethin' from me, gal. Come, no secrets. Out with it.

Lor. Well, if you must know, he's in there. (Points r. i.)

Jos. (crossing to r. i, unconcernedly). Who's in there? Ozias! The Jedge! (Then looks off and espys Nat. Gives a start.) Great Cæsar's ghost! It's Nat! Nat, my boy!

(Rushes off.)

Nat. (heard off). Dad! Dad!

Jos. (heard off; warmly). My boy, my boy!

Lor. I knew I'd make a mess of it!

Enter Mar., hurriedly, from L.

Mar. (excitedly). What's happened? Josiah—I hear his voice! Is he hurt? (Crosses to r.) Where is he? Where is he? (Then glances off. Gives a cry.) Nat! Nat! Returned alive! (Rushes off.)

Nat. (heard off r. i). Mother, mother!

Mar. (heard off; brokenly). My boy—my boy!

Enter Al., breathlessly, L.

Al. Good gracious, Lorna! Is the house afire? Where are the folks? Where's Martha? (Lor. points to r. i. Al. quickly over to r. i.) She's fainted, I s'pose! (Glances off, then gives a cry.) Good Lor'! (Faints in Lor.'s arms.)

Lor. (struggling with Al.). Help! Help! Help!

Enter Pol., hurriedly, L.

Pol. (excitedly). What is it, Lorna? (Then over to her and glancing off r. i, gives a cry.) It's Nat! Nat! Hurrah! Hurrah! (Rushes off r. i.)

Lor. I've never seen so much excitement.

Al. (recovering). Pinch me, Lorna—pinch me! I don't believe that I'm awake.
LOR. Oh, you're awake, all right.

AL. *(looking off R. I.)* And is that really Nat Dean?

LOR. It's Nat—and surrounded by the rest of the folks.

AL. *(sighing).* Wal, I swarn, ef it don't beat everything.

*(Exits R. I.)* Nat, Nat, I'm so glad tu see yer!

(Knock on door at back.)

LOR. Who can that be? *(Opens door at back.)*

*Enter Jake, excitedly, door at back.*

JAKE. Mrs. Berry, I must see her right away quick, blease.

LOR. But I'm not certain she will see you.

JAKE. Hurry, hurry—it is of the greatest importance. I ain't got a minute to lose.

LOR. Very well, I'll tell her. *(Off R. I.)*

JAKE. By golly, it's goot I found oudt about dot money in time. I might hev lost dis opportunities. *(Looks at himself in mirror.)* Is my tie on straight? *(Arranges tie.)* Und my hair? *(Brushes hair with hands, then surveys himself.)* I never looked more handsomer in my life.

*Enter Al., door R. I.*

AL. Did you want to see me, sir?

JAKE. Sir? She calls me a sir. *(To Al.)* My dear Alvina.

AL. Pray, don't call me Alvina.

JAKE *(surprised).* Ain't dot your name? Why, I used to call you sweeter names den dot once.

AL. *(firmly).* But no more—no more!

JAKE *(aside).* She means it, too. *(To Al.)* But, my dear, you don't understood me. I heared der news about——

AL. Nat's return?

JAKE. Ach, vat I care about anything but you?

AL. I see. You heard about my deposit in the bank to-day.

JAKE. Hearing is noddings compared mit what I dink of you.

AL. You know I'm worth a half million dollars now.

JAKE. Ches, und I would lofe you ef you were wurth only twice as much. Come, my dear, give me an answer.

AL. I thought you told me a few weeks ago you were engaged to the Widow O'Shaughnessy?
JAKE. Ach, vat nonsense. When I said dot, I hadn't thought it over how much better I like you.

AL. And you've finally decided you'd rather marry me?

JAKE (with smile). Do you blame me? (Passionately.) When I look at your beautiful bank-books—I should say—beautiful face, by golly I shust lose my whole head. (On bended knee.) Alvina, will you acception me?

AL. I'm sorry, but I'm engaged to Jed Newkirk.

JAKE. You're engaged to Jed Newkirk?

AL. We're to be married next Monday.

JAKE. Dot has-been! Dot never-vas been!

AL. (haughtily). You'll gain nothing by calling him hard names.

JAKE. I gain der satisfaction, anyway. By golly, I could do someding worser even besides. (Strikes pose.) You didn't look at me very close, did you? If you pass me up, you lose a most excellent husband. (AL. looks at him intently, then breaks into a hearty laugh. JAKE, puzzled at her manner; aside.) She is giving me the ha ha!

AL. (at door r. i). Really, you don't know how funny you look. (Off r. i.)

JAKE. No—und you don't know how funny I feel. (Crushed.) It's all off. I figured it oudt all wrong. (Sadly.) Vell, I s'pose dere's nodding else to do but shoot my brains oudt. (Opens door at back.) Yes, dere is. I'll marry der Widow O'Shaughnessy shust fer spite! (Off quickly.)

LOR. (on from r. i). How happy they all are! What a change Nat's return has made! (Starts.) I thought I heard some one at the window. (Cautiously up to window; looks off.) Yes—no — (Then starts.) Pruddy Schuyler! What can she be doing here? (Looks from window.) At the key-hole peering in. There's some mystery here. (Glances about.) I'll see what's in the wind!

(Getts in wardrobe and closes door.)

PRU. (noiselessly pushing door open at back, glancing around, then cautiously down c., looking right and left). Nat alive, after all! (Looks at crumpled letter in hand; reads.) "Will arrive about as soon as this letter reaches you." (Bitterly.) He hasn't forgotten Lorna, despite my planning and scheming. (Brings forth bundle of letters.) I thought if he received no answers to his letters, he'd soon forget her—give her up. But no, he loves her more than ever. (Looks at let-
ters.) And what will become of me when he learns the truth? (Emphatically.) That's it! He must never know! (Over to desk.) I'll put them here. (Rises top of desk; deposits packet of letters, then noiselessly lowers top again.) There, so much for that. Now she won't be able to deny having received them. My word's as good as hers, and the fact of the letters being in her possession will be in my favor. (Lor. has noiselessly stepped from wardrobe and is now watching Pru.) If only I can get away without any one seeing me. (Turns to go and comes face to face with Lor. Starts.) Lorna Lane!

Lor. And I know all!

Pru. (sinking to knees; pleadingly). Forgive me, Lorna! Forgive me! I didn't mean to do it.

Lor. Didn't mean to? Can you say that, after nearly breaking the hearts of a loving father and mother! Can you say that, after —

Pru. (with bowed head). I'll do all in my power to repair the wrong, Lorna, only don't—please don't let Nat know.

Lor. A word from me would bring him to this room!

Pru. He's home already! Oh, we mustn't meet now!

We must never meet again!

Lor. You've got to explain about those letters! Some one will have to do that.

Pru. (up). Well, I can't—I can't! Let me pass, Lorna—let me pass!

Lor. (firmly). Not until you've —

Pru. Let me pass, I say! (Makes a move as if to exit.)

Lor. (restraining her). Help! Help! Help!

All (on from R. I). What has happened?

Lor. (to others). The mystery of Nat's undelivered letters explained! (To Nat.) Look on that desk, Nat!

(Points to desk.)

Nat. (quickly throwing top open, finding packet of letters). My letters! (Glances at them.) Every one! Why, how did they get here?

Pru. (defiantly). I placed them there!

All. You?

Nat. (quietly). Pruddy, what am I to think of you?

Pru. Oh, I suppose it doesn't matter now what you think. (Looks at Nat. anxiously. Then after effective pause. To Lor.) I must go! So please let me pass!

(Knock on door at back.)
Al. (having glanced from window). It's Ozias Schuyler!

Pru. (starting). My father! (Then wildly glances about.)
He mustn't see me here! He mustn't know!

(Quickly hides in wardrobe.)

Nat. Perhaps he'd better not see me just yet, either.

Lor. A good idea. Quick, into the other room. (Nat. off R. I. Lor. opens door at back.) Come in.

Ozias (entering angrily door at back, followed by Hor.). I suppose you're all surprised to see me at this time, but I've come with a last proposition.

Jos. Wal, out with it. We'll at least hear what you've got to say.

Ozias (surprised). Kinder independent, ain't yer, fer one askin' favors? Wal—(looking around) I know that your son Nat's alive.

Jos. Oh, you do, do you?

Ozias. And I've come to renew my offer. If you'll consent to Nat's marryin' Pruddy, I'll tear up these notes.

(Waves notes in Jos.'s face.)

Jos. Furst tell me where you got your news erbout Nat. You ain't seen him?

Ozias (troubled). Wal, no—I hain't.

Jos. Then how did you come tu know?

Ozias. Well, dang it, ef you must know—from my gal Pruddy! He wrote her a letter.

Nat. (on from R. I). That's an untruth! I never wrote her a letter in all my life.

Ozias (starting on beholding Nat.). Nat Dean! (Then recovers.) I've jes' made your father a proposition whereby I will tear up these notes.

Al. (stepping forward). Oh, you needn't be so skeered. They'll be torn up in the morning.

Ozias. Torn up? By whom, pray?

Al. By me—'cause I'm going tu pay them. (Ozias surprised.) And what's more, I'm a-going tu hev you removed as postmaster unless you beg Josiah's pardon fer all the insults and things you've heaped upon his head.

Ozias (with sneer). Do you think I'm a fool?

Al. Wal, I know you're the father o' one!

Ozias (turning upon her). Pruddy!
Al. She's been openin' other people's letters and stealin' the mail.

OziAS (wildly). That ain't so! A vile slander! I'll sue you and get some o' that money you received in the mail to-day.

Al. (quickly). How did you know I received money in the mail to-day?

OziAS (angrily). Because I opened ——

(Then clasps hand to mouth.)

Al. (quickly finishing sentence). My letter! Go on, why didn't you finish it? I've been aware o' your mean tricks for some time!

OziAS. I won't stand for this bullyraggin'. You can't defame people's characters thet way without havin' tu suffer fer it. (Wildly.) Come on, Jedge—I want a warrant issued for malicious slander. (To Al.) I don't care erbout myself, but what you said about my gal Pruddy don't go! (Starts toward door at back.) It's a lie! (Then to Hor.) Come on, Jedge—we'll make 'em sweat!

Hor. (going). You bet we will!

Pru. (out from wardrobe; loudly). Don't go that way, dad—(then with bowed head) because it's the truth!

OziAS (surprised). Pruddy! (Then realizes the truth.) You mean ——?

Pru. (with lowered head). I held back all of Nat's letters.

OziAS (crushed, standing with bowed head for an instant, then slowly looking up; brokenly). Josiah, I'm sorry for what I said—(then turning to Al. and others) I apologize to all o' you. I didn't know—I didn't know.

Jos. Thet's all right, Ozias. We all make mistakes sometimes, and sence you feel thet way erbout it, why I ain't got no hard feelings.

Hor. (completely changing manner toward Jos.; with outstretched hand). And likewise, Josiah, you and I aren't going to be bad friends.

Jos. (looking him in the eye; calmly). No—from now on—simply strangers!

Hor. (crushed). Oh, Lor'!

OziAS (placing arms about Pru.'s shoulders; she is sobbing). There, there, my gal—it'll all come out right.

Jos. (touched; feelingly patting Pru. on shoulder). O' course it will, Pruddy—o' course it will.
Peter (heard off). Polly! Polly! It’s over! Over!

(Breathlessly enters door at back with clothing torn, hair disheveled, and one eye blackened.)

Pol. Gracious, Peter, did you win the fifty?
Peter. I missed by a minute.
Jos. (looking him over). You look ez if you’d jes' missed a cyclone!

(Gives a hearty laugh, in which all save Ozias and Pru. join.)

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SALLIE CLEGG, her sister ......................... Character Comedy.
MRS. DALSIMEE, whose hobby is "reform" .......... Character Old Woman.
ELIZABETH ANN Cripps, "saved from the slums" ... Character Comedy.

SYNOPSIS:

Act I.—Home of Frank Eastwick, New York City; an afternoon in December. Suspicion.
Act II.—The same night, 12:30 o'clock. The desertion.
Act III.—One week later. The ruined home.
Act IV.—At Mr. Chalmers's residence. Four months have elapsed. The return.

NO ADMITTANCE.

A Farce in One Act.

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY.

By EVELYN GRAY WHITING.

Seven female characters. Scene an easy interior; costumes modern and pretty. A humorous picture of amateur house-keeping in a "flat"—a case of sweets to the suite, in fact. A "bachelor girl" with a taste for modelling is presented, with a few of her friends, as the victim of Maria Kelley, "a general houseworker," with amusing results. Brightly written. Plays half an hour.

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UNCLE SILAS.
A Play in Three Acts.
By BERNARD FRANCIS MOORE.

Seven male, three female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, an exterior and two easy interiors. A very easy and dramatic piece in Mr. Moore's well-known and popular style, particularly suited and intended for younger amateurs who desire a simple but effective play not beyond their strength. The story is melodramatic in character and full of interest, turning upon a bank burglary. Irish, Negro and character-comedy parts; all the characters good and effective. Plays an hour and three quarters.

PRICE . . . . . . 15 CENTS.

CHARACTERS.

| Silas Bradford | President of the village bank |
| Jim Bender | Sheriff of the county |
| Lemuel Harrison | A man of the world |
| Andrew Cashman | A young farmer |
| Martin Murphy | A young Irish American with an eye to the future |
| Sam Potter | A gentleman of color |
| Jack Walker | Who sees more than he should |
| Lottie Bradford | The banker's daughter |
| Sadie Bradford | The banker's niece |
| Gertrude Malvern | The banker's housekeeper |

SYNOPSIS.

Act I. — Bradford's home. The murder in the front yard.
Act II. — Bradford's home. The promise in the kitchen.
Act III. — Bradford's home. The interrupted wedding in the parlor.

TOO MUCH SMITH.
A Musical Comedy in One Act.
By ARTHUR PENN.

Five male, two female characters. Scenery, simple; costumes, eccentric. A simple bit of fooling intended to afford an opportunity to amateurs of gratifying the prevailing taste for light musical plays. The words of a few songs in common metres are given, for which fitting music can easily be found, either in the lighter operas or among the airs of the day; they may be omitted, and other songs inserted at any point. The play is offered merely as a vehicle for the exhibition of any special accomplishments, singing, dancing, or what not, in which the amateurs who attempt it may be proficient.

PRICE . . . . . . 15 CENTS.
NEW PLAYS.

OUT WEST.

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts.

By JUSTIN ADAMS.

Nine male, five female characters. Costumes, modern and rough; scenery varied, but not difficult, Act III., providing a "sensation," very effective and very easy to do. This is a play of Western mining life, the scenes being laid in Colorado and New York City. It is a strong and stirring melodrama, full of life and dramatic action, giving its ten characters plenty to do. Has been produced professionally by the Maude Hillman Co., and is in perfect acting shape, moving briskly, without a dull moment. Ray, the heroine, is a dashing soubrette, an X-ray for dramatic purposes, though no "back-number." Strong lead, heavy and character parts, Irish and Yankee. Just the thing for a strong company. Plays a full evening.

PRICE . . . . . 25 CENTS.

CHARACTERS.

REGINALD LEWIS. (Lead) A young inventor
WALLACE MERRICK. (Heavy) His evil genius
JETHRO PUTNAM. (Low Comedy) From the rural districts
MAJOR ROUNDS. (Character) Of Coxey's army
JOHN RAY. (Old man) A false friend
JERRY. (Comedy) A purely American product
MIKE MORAITY. (Comedy) Finished on American soil
JOE HASKELL. (Utility) A poor tool
DETECTIVE. (Utility) With more sentiment than sense
LUCILLE RAY. (Juvenile Lead) A typical American girl
MRS. STECK. (Old woman) An unfortunate
CLAIRE MONTAGUE. (Emotional) Samantha Putnam.
SAMANTHA PUTNAM. (Character) Jethro's better half
Cissy. (Soubrette) A typical type-writer girl

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—Cripple Creek, Colorado. The Liberty Bell mine. Back from the grave. A vile plot. DEAD BY PROXY.


Act IV.—Jethro's home. A vile bargain. The accusation. The Major's confession. RESTORED TO LIFE.

HIS LUCKY DAY.

A Sketch in One Act.

By SUSAN THAYER BOWKER.

Two male, one female characters. Scene, an interior, which may be made very pretty; costumes, modern and golfing. A very pretty and "snappy" little play for parlor or stage, turning upon the royal game, and employing it in a very original and striking situation. French dialect comedy character, and a capital part for a bright girl. A bright little sketch, cleverly written, and full of life and "go." Plays thirty minutes.

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THE MAGISTRATE Farce in Three Acts. Twelve males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interior. Plays two hours and a half.


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SWEET LAVENDER Comedy in Three Acts. Seven males, four females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE TIMES Comedy in Four Acts. Six males, seven females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.


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AS YOU LIKE IT Comedy in Five Acts. Thirteen males, four females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.


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