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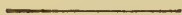
Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

When Women Vote

A Farce in Two Acts

By
ANNA P. SEE



BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1911

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When Women Vote

CHARACTERS

MRS. JAMISON, "*The Queen of Clubs*," an apostle of suffrage.
HELEN JAMISON, her daughter; sentimental seventeen.
MRS. DELANO, a wealthy lady, homeless from choice.
MRS. BROWNELL, the mother of six.
HANNAH, old-fashioned New England "help."

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The living-room of the Jamison home.
ACT II.—The same.



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When Women Vote

ACT I

SCENE.—*In the living-room of the JAMISONS' home. There are two doors, one leading to the hall and the other to the room back. There is also a window. Furniture consists of chairs, a mirror, desk, clock, etc.*

Enter HANNAH with duster; begins work, looking occasionally out of window or at clock.

HAN. Here 'tis after two o'clock, and Mis' Jamison ain't home yet. I guess her dinner's all dried up a-settin' an hour in the oven. But land sakes, she won't know whether she's eatin' steak or leather with the suffrage on her mind. Seems as if she'd clean forgot everything, even her poor invalid husband and her daughter that's a-gettin' more headstrong every day. Helen won't mind even me now. I wish the suffrage was in tunket. What do women want to vote for, anyhow? They've got enough to do if they tend to their rightful business. I'd look pretty, wouldn't I, a-runnin' to the polls on "'Lecture Day"! I might be tempted to take a bribe or even a drink! But if Mis' Jamison wa'n't a-plungin' into the suffrage 'twould be somethin' else. I ain't forgot how she was off, all the time, bein' a slummin' socialist, just when Helen was a-goin' through measles and whoopin'-cough and mumps, all to onct. Then when Mr. J., poor man, had his abominable cavity removed, she was a-runnin' a Theosophist magazine. Of course, I expect her to belong to the Woman's Club and the Travelers' Club and the Tuesday Club and the Orient Club and the Woman's School Alliance and the D. A. R. and the Missionary Society and the Benevolent Society, but to become a suffragette on top of all the rest is too much. (*Whistle outside.*) There's the postman. (*Goes out; returns with letter.*) It's for Helen. That girl gets too many letters in this handwritin'.

(Examines letter critically, finally smells of it.) Humph, it smells of tobacker. I wonder if it's from Jack Delano, and she knows I don't approve of that dissipated boy. (Goes to door and calls.) Hel-én! Hel-én! Here's a letter for yer.

Enter HELEN JAMISON.

HEL. Thank you, Hannah. (Takes letter, looks happy and skips over to window to read it. HAN. goes on dusting. Might sing. HEL., excitedly.) Hannah, do you know where mother is?

HAN. Your ma's been speakin' to the suffragette rally in the Town Hall. The meetin' was at ten o'clock, but the land only knows where she is now. I wish she'd come along so's I'd could git the dishes out ter the way. (Bell rings from bedroom.) There's your pa's bell. I must see what the poor man wants. [Exit.

HEL. Oh, I do wish I had somebody to advise me. Father's too sick, and mother's too busy, and Hannah is so prejudiced against Jack. He is just begging me to run away with him and get married, and I don't know what to do. I suppose seventeen is too young, but Jack says no one cares what we do, so we might as well please ourselves. His letter almost persuades me. (Reads letter out loud.) "My Own Darling Helen:—In two weeks mother sails for Europe. She is going to stay six months, and I shall be infernally lonely. Let's light out and get married as soon as she is off. Your mother won't even miss you, she has so much on her mind. My mother will be furious at first, but she will soon forget it—in Paris. Think it over, sweetheart, and do, do say 'yes.' Your own Jack. P. S. We'll have a home, won't we? How I hate hotels." Poor Jack. To be left alone that way! It's a shame. (Paces up and down.) What shall I do? I'm frightened to death to elope, and yet what's the use of living like this? (Enter MRS. JAMISON, in hat, coat and veil, carrying bag with papers. Walks over to desk and sits down without removing wraps. Puts glasses on over veil and tries to read. Finds mistake, removes veil and puts glasses on again. Does not even see HEL.) Mother! Mother! Mother!

(Approaches MRS. J. each time she speaks. Finally takes her by the arm.)

MRS. J. Well? (Not looking up.)

HEL. Mother, are you too busy to talk to me a minute?

MRS. J. (*writing*). Don't bother me, Helen, I'm in a great hurry. I must make a résumé of my speech for the *Republican* and the *Union*, and I have only a few minutes.

HEL. But, mother, I want to tell you something. It's very important.

MRS. J. (*impatiently*). Nothing is so important as the suffrage for women, Helen. Run away now and let me write.

HEL. (*holding out letter*). Mother, please read this. Unless you advise me I may do something you won't like.

MRS. J. Some other time I'll look it over. Now I cannot spend another minute.

HEL. Very well, then. I'll decide the matter to please myself. [*Exit in anger.*]

MRS. J. (*reading from speech, finally pacing up and down*). "When woman can vote, what reforms will be inaugurated! Woman will cleanse the Augean Stable of politics; woman will not be ruled by bosses or bought with bribes; woman will not come staggering home from the polls! Woman, downtrodden woman, I beseech you rise and demand the suffrage. Wrest your rights from the oppressor, man ——"

Enter HAN.

HAN. Mis' Jamison, your husband wants to see yer. He's feelin' down to-day. He had a dretful sinkin' spell this mornin' that scared me. I wish you'd go up and look at him.

MRS. J. (*shuffling papers*). Hannah, I cannot stop now for anything. Tell Mr. Jamison I'll come up-stairs by and by. I'll make a memorandum of it. (*Writes on pad and reads.*) "See husband at five o'clock." There, will that satisfy you, Hannah?

HAN. The poor man.

(*Exit HAN., muttering. MRS. J. reads papers. Door-bell rings twice, but she does not hear it. Folds papers and puts into long envelope.*)

MRS. J. There, that's done. I hope the papers won't cut it. [*Exit with envelope in her hand.*]

Enter HEL., preceded by MRS. DELANO and MRS. BROWNELL.

HEL. Pardon me for keeping you waiting at the door. I thought Hannah would answer the bell, but I think she must be up with father. He isn't feeling very well to-day.

MRS. D. So sorry to hear it.

MRS. B. Yes, indeed.

MRS. D. Your mother asked us to run over this afternoon, but if your father needs her we could come some other time.

HEL. (*bitterly*). His feelings never interfere with any of her appointments. (*Enter* MRS. J.) Here she is now. If you'll excuse me. [*Exit.*]

MRS. J. (*shaking hands*). My dear Mrs. Delano and Mrs. Brownell, I am so glad that you came this afternoon. I know you both are in sympathy with all good causes. Can you not join this great suffrage movement? We need the help of all enlightened women.

MRS. B. (*languidly*). You know, Mrs. Jamison, that I am interested in all these vital problems, but I have just pledged myself to settlement work in Springford. I hope to do much personal work for the slum child, and that will necessitate my going to Springford every day. With six young children of my own, I feel such sympathy for the neglected ones.

Enter HAN., *bouncing in excitedly.*

HAN. Mis' Brownell, your cook's just telephoned that little Percival Augustus has fell off of the piazza roof and broke his leg. She says, can you come home?

MRS. B. (*not in the least excited*). Thank you, Hannah. Tell the cook, please, that I will be home presently. (*Turns to friends.*) To return to the absorbing topic of the slum child, do you not think the development wonderful under the stimuli of music, art and ennobling companionship?

MRS. J. } Yes, indeed. Wonderful.
MRS. D. }

MRS. B. And to win such neglected children to —

Enter HAN., *still more excited.*

HAN. Mis' Brownell, the cook's just telephoned again, and she says Percival Augustus has fainted and she can't bring him to, and the doctor hain't come yet, and you'd order come right home.

MRS. B. (*rising reluctantly*). Well, I suppose I really ought to go. I am so sorry that our delightful symposium has been interrupted, but I hope to continue it at some other time. Good-bye, Mrs. Delano, good-bye, Mrs. Jamison. I do hope that the suffrage movement will prosper. [*Exit.*]

MRS. J. (*seating herself*). Mrs. Delano, I am counting on you to join our noble band of suffragettes.

MRS. D. (*gushingly*). Oh, I wish I could say "Yes," dear Mrs. Jamison, but I can't. I'll tell you why, if you'll promise never to mention it, for I wouldn't have Allerton people get hold of it for the world. Perhaps you may have heard that I am going to Europe in two weeks. Well, I gave out that statement myself, but in reality I am planning to investigate the problem of domestic service by disguising myself as a servant and taking a place, just like those fascinating magazine writers. I was always good in amateur theatricals, and caps and aprons are really very becoming to me. Then, you see, I'll know all about the servant question, and maybe I'll write a book myself. I might call it "Deserving Domestic Duly Described," by Delano. Don't you think the very fact that I live at the Allerton House and know absolutely nothing about housekeeping will give me a more unprejudiced view of things? I do.

MRS. J. What a glorious plan of investigation! I envy you the opportunities you will have of preaching woman's suffrage to the unenlightened.

MRS. D. (*enthusiastically*). How sweet of you to approve my plan! I shall join that fine Springford agency—the Elite I believe it is called—just as soon as I leave Allerton. Wouldn't my son Jack be horrified! He does hate so to be left alone; I really oughtn't to go away except to do something for humanity. But then I'll give him plenty of money, and he has two autos and a bull-terrier. I should think he might amuse himself, wouldn't you?

MRS. J. (*solemnly*). My dear, how would the world progress if women did not sacrifice something?

MRS. D. (*rising*). So true. Oh, by the way, do advise me about "taking a place," as the servants call it. Do you think I ought to accept the very first position offered me, even if I don't like it?

MRS. J. Most assuredly, Mrs. Delano. If you are investigating the conditions of domestic service you cannot pick and choose.

MRS. D. Thank you. You always see things so clearly. Well, I really must be going. Good-bye.

MRS. J. Good-bye.

(*Exit* MRS. D. MRS. J. *reseats herself at desk and reads magazine.*)

Enter HAN. with tray and food. Sets a table and pours tea.

HAN. Your lunch is ready, Mis' Jamison. (MRS. J. does not hear. HAN. repeats her remark. Finally MRS. J. takes a seat at the table but goes on reading. HAN. gently takes magazine away from her. Then MRS. J. begins to eat. HAN. looks at her a while.) Mis' Jamison, I'm all wore out trying to do the work and tend to Mr. J., poor man, and answer the door and the telephone and everything. Somebody's got to help me or I can't stand it.

MRS. J. You certainly do have too much to do, Hannah. I wish I were situated so that I could assist you, but you see how I am needed outside. I believe I'll try having a second girl. How would you like that, Hannah?

HAN. Well, 'twould depend on the girl, Mis' Jamison. I don't want no Poles round under my feet, nor no ladies of color, neither.

MRS. J. Oh, no, Hannah. We will send to that Springfield agency—the Elite. Mrs. Delano was speaking well of it just now.

HAN. Humph! I don't think much of what she says about anything. She's so triflin'. Off all the time and letting that son of hers go to the dogs. But land's sakes, I've got to have somebody to help me, so perhaps you'd better order a girl from the Elite.

MRS. J. I'll telephone at once.

(Exit MRS. J. HAN. gathers up dishes. Bell rings from bedroom.)

HAN. There's Mr. J.'s bell. I must see what the poor man wants. [Exit.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same. Afternoon ; a month later.*

Enter HAN., followed by MRS. D., disguised as a servant, carrying a suit-case.

HAN. So you're from the Elite agency. (Mrs. D. gives her a letter.) Well, Mis' Jamison's away to a suffrage convention and won't be back till the six o'clock car from Weston, but I'll look at your charácter. (*Opens letter.*) "J-u-l-i-e-n-n-e B-r-e-t-o-n," July-Ann Britton. Be you French?

(*Disapprovingly.*)

MRS. D. Half French, mees. I am from ze Canada. My father, he is of the French and my mothaire was a—what you call him? a Downeaster.

HAN. That's all right, July-Ann. Down East folks is good enough for me. Why, some of our family lives in Maine, same name as mine—Swett. My name's Hannah Swett. Say, July-Ann, where did you live before you come here?

MRS. D. At the hotel. (*Recollects herself.*) Oh, I mean ze hotel in Canada. I work there.

HAN. What hotel? Where?

MRS. D. Ze—ze Hotel Frontenac in Quebec, Mees Hannah.

HAN. That furrin place! Why, perhaps you see a Mis' Delano from here. I heard she was up there the whole summer during last year. She's young-looking, if you don't come too near her, and kinder pretty, but she don't have any too much sense. Did you see her?

MRS. D. Per-perhaps.

HAN. I suppose you had to eat strange victuals in that outlandish tavern. Now if I was to see a frog's leg on the table, my stummick would kick, I know. I bet you never saw a baked bean up there, now did yer?

MRS. D. No, no. Ze bean, ze doughnut, ze pie, we do not have him, but ze French food is good.

HAN. You're welcome to it. (*Bell rings from bedroom.*)

'There's Mr. J.'s bell. He's Mis' Jamison's husband and he's an invalid. You set down till I see what the poor man wants.

[*Exit.*]

MRS. D. (*laying down suit-case and seating herself*). How perfectly ridiculous that the agency sent me to Mrs. Jamison's house. But she told me herself that I must take the first place offered me, so what could I do? I am so glad she is away just now. How strange I feel. I wonder if any one could possibly recognize me!

(*Goes to glass and looks at costume. Takes various attitudes.*)

HAN. (*outside*). July-Ann! (MRS. D. *jumps and returns to her seat in a hurry. Enter HAN.*) Say, July-Ann, you didn't say if you was single or married.

MRS. D. I am a widow, Mees Hannah.

HAN. Any children?

MRS. D. Only one—a son.

HAN. Well, it's none of my business, but I should think you'd want to stay with your only child. Most boys need a mother. Oh, by the way, July-Ann, can you read writin'?

MRS. D. Oui, oui.

HAN. "We"! Of course I can. I asked if you could.

MRS. D. Oh, yes.

HAN. (*bringing an envelope out of her pocket and showing it to MRS. D.*). Now you'll take in the mail most likely. If you see any letters for Miss Helen—that's Mis' Jamison's daughter—in this handwritin', I want yer to let me know. I'm trying to keep an eye on Helen, and I don't approve of the young man that writes these letters. He's a wild boy with no bringin' up.

MRS. D. I will watch the mail, mees. (*Aside.*) Indeed I will.

HAN. Well, July-Ann, you seem respectable. I guess you can stay. Don't you want a cup of tea before you go up to your room?

MRS. D. Mille fois merci.

HAN. Eh? (*Astonished.*)

MRS. D. I mean a thousand thanks. It is kind of you to offer me ze tea. I am tire indeed, carrying ze suit-case from ze trolley-car. Shall I leave it here in ze study?

HAN. They call this the "livin'"'-room, July-Ann, but it ain't *livin'* to my mind, when Mis' Jamison's dead to every-

thing and buried in the suffrage. I just hate that desk. (*Glares at desk.*) But come along to the kitchen. The tea's gettin' cold. [*Exeunt HAN. and MRS. D.*]

Enter HEL., dressed in automobile wraps and carrying a suitcase exactly like MRS. D.'s. Walks up and down room excitedly. Finally sees other suitcase and sets hers down beside it, comparing the two.

HEL. Why, whose suitcase is this? It's exactly like mine. (*Leaves suitcase and walks up and down again.*) Dear me, I'm so scared I don't know what to do. Jack will be here in ten minutes to take me to Greenton to be married, married, married! I've a good mind to back out now. Jack says—— (*Hears voices outside.*) Oh, here comes Hannah. She mustn't see my suitcase. (*Seizes wrong suitcase and hides it.*)

Enter HAN. and MRS. D.

HAN. Go right up to the attic, July-Ann. Your room's just like mine, with a lovely view and no heat in winter, and too much in summer. (*Sees HEL.*) Helen, this is our new girl, July-Ann Britton.

HEL. How do you do?

(*MRS. D. bows to HEL., takes up suitcase and goes out.*)

HAN. Helen Jamison, be you a-goin' out automobilin' with that Jack Delano, after all I've said?

HEL. Well, what if I am?

HAN. You sha'n't go one step.

HEL. (*loftily.*) You haven't any right to forbid my going.

HAN. Yes, I have a right to look after your manners and your morals, seeing as I'm the only real mother yer ever had. Didn't I hold yer in these arms when you was a little pindlin' baby and bring yer through a whole string of children's diseases, and teach yer the ten commandments and hear yer prayers?

(*Puts apron to her eyes.*)

HEL. (*melting.*) Oh, Hannah, dear Hannah, you have been a mother to me.

(*Throws herself into HAN.'s arms. HAN. weeps, making terrible faces. HEL. wipes HAN.'s tears with her own handkerchief. HAN. pats HEL. on the back.*)

HAN. Hannah's own darlin' little girl. Yer won't go out with that scamp, will yer?

HEL. Hannah, I'd do anything for you, but honest and true I can't break my engagement with Jack this afternoon. It's very important, you don't know how important.

HAN. (*solemnly*). Helen, that young man is demoralized—just demoralized by a college education. He's so fast he exceeds the speed limit. Don't go, please don't go. (*Bell rings from bedroom.*) There's your pa's bell. I must see what the poor man wants. [*Exit.*]

HEL. (*going to window*). There's Jack, now. (*Takes suit-case from hiding place and goes to door, then pauses irresolutely. Finally looks around room sadly.*) Good-bye, dear Hannah. [*Exit.*]

Enter HAN. and MRS. D., with carpet-sweeper and duster.

HAN. Now, July-Ann, I want yer to brush up this room a little. Not a regular cleanin'—just a lick and a promise. (*HAN. gives sweeper to MRS. D. She uses it in all sorts of awkward ways.*) Not that way; like this. (*After using the sweeper, HAN. gives the duster to MRS. D.*) You know how to dust, don't yer?

MRS. D. Oh, yes, Mees Hannah. (*Goes around blowing the dust or flapping the duster. HAN. takes it out of her hand and shows her how to use it. Door-bell rings. Exit MRS. D., returning with a telegram.*) From ze messengaire boy—for you, Mees Hannah.

HAN. (*reading telegram, sinking into chair overcome*). Oh, my poor darlin' child, my poor darlin' child, what have yer done!

MRS. D. What ees it? What have happen?

HAN. Helen—our Helen—run away to get married—gone to Greenton with Jack Delano! (*MRS. D. totters and clings to chair, exclaiming: "Jack! My Jack!" But HAN. is too much overcome to notice her.*) Oh, Helen! How could yer! That wild Delano feller ain't fit to tie yer shoes.

MRS. D. (*indignantly*). Indeed he is! He's good enough for any girl, the dear, handsome, affectionate boy!

HAN. (*noticing MRS. D.'s behavior*). Why, what do you know about him? Nothing good, I'll be bound.

MRS. D. (*recollecting herself*). Pardón my excitement. I—I knew his mothaire once.

HAN. Don't mention her. This trouble is all her fault. That boy never had no home nor nobody to look after him.

MRS. D. (*much agitated*). We telephone—we stop this marriage—perhaps eet ees not too late.

(*Door-bell rings ; MRS. D. goes out.*)

Enter MRS. B.

MRS. B. Good-afternoon, Hannah. Have you happened to see anything of my little Ernestine lately? I have just returned from Springfield after a most inspiring and illuminating day and I learn that Ernestine has been missing since nine o'clock this morning. I am not at all alarmed, but I thought I would make a few inquiries. Being only five years old—or is it six? I really cannot remember—she might forget to come home to-night.

HAN. Well, Mis' Brownell, your little Ernestine was a-stealin' a ride on the step of the ice-wagon long about ten o'clock, but I hain't seen her since. I don't suppose 'twould help yer any to send word to our police force, but yer might try it. I'm sorry for yer, Mis' Brownell, and I'm sorry for ourselves, too. (*Enter MRS. D., and stands listening at the back.*) Our Helen has eloped with that dissipated Jack Delano. I wish his selfish mother was a-feelin' as bad about him as I be about Helen. (*Weeps. MRS. D. weeps too, unobserved.*) Maybe they're married already, and her ma not come back yet. I don't know what to do.

Enter MRS. J., with wraps on, carrying a bag.

MRS. J. Why, how de do all? I'm sorry I can't stop to be polite, but I must do some telephoning before I take my hat off.

HAN. (*seizing her arm as she starts from room*). Mis' Jamison, wait! Helen has run away—eloped!

MRS. J. (*absently, trying to free herself*). Well, I've no objections.

HAN. But she's goin' to get married, Mis' Jamison, and she's only seventeen years old!

MRS. J. Before the voting age. That is a pity!

(*Exit MRS. J. HAN. throws up her hands in despair.*)

MRS. B. Hannah, if you should hear anything of my little

Ernestine during the next few days, telephone my cook, please. She seems to be quite anxious. Good-night. [Exit.

HAN. I declare, I'd swap all the "new women" in the world for just one good old-fashioned mother!

Enter MRS. J.

MRS. J. Hannah, where is the *Suffrage Magazine*? I can't find it anywhere.

Enter HEL., with wraps on and carrying a suit-case. Throws herself into HAN.'s arms.

HEL. Oh, Hannah, I've come back!

HAN. My blessed lamb, you did remember what Hannah told yer, didn't yer?

HEL. N-n-no, not exactly. You see something happened just after Jack and I got started for Greenton. I opened my suit-case to get a handkerchief, and what do you think? it wasn't mine at all; it was Julianne's, and there right on top was Jack's picture. I wouldn't have believed that he would flirt with a servant, and one old enough to be his mother, too. Of course he denied it and said he had never even heard of her, and begged me not to condemn him on such evidence. Then I remembered how you had always said he was so wild, and I thought what if he had a wife already, and oh! I just couldn't marry him, so we came home. He broke our engagement he was so angry, and I am dreadfully unhappy. Do comfort me, Hannah. I haven't anybody but you now.

MRS. J. (*awakening to the situation*). You have your mother, Helen.

HEL. (*doubtfully*). Y-es-s, of course.

MRS. J. (*moved at last*). My little daughter, my dearest little daughter, don't you love your mother?

(*Holds out arms.*)

HEL. (*running to* MRS. J.). Mother, I do love you, but I thought you were too busy to love me.

MRS. J. Have I, have I seemed so indifferent, dear child? I beseech you to forgive me.

Enter MRS. D. Goes up to HEL. and takes her hand.

MRS. D. And here is another mother ready to love you,

Helen. I want you to marry my Jack and make him happier than I have ever done.

HAN. Land o' liberty!

MRS. J. Who—who is this?

HEL. Jack's mother!

MRS. D. (*pulling off cap, apron and disguise*). Yes, Jack's mother, who was investigating the servant problem and leaving her own problem unsolved.

Enter MRS. B.

MRS. B. (*much moved*). Helen Jamison, how can I ever thank you for bringing home my little lost daughter! It came over me, all at once, what if she were kidnapped, or even—(*shuddering*) dead, and I was nearly crazy till I heard Jack's car stop at our door. I cried for joy at the sound of her dear little weary voice.

HEL. I am so glad your runaway happened to be on our road. Poor child, she was so tired.

MRS. B. The darling was completely exhausted. I must hurry back and see how she is now.

HAN. Well, well, I know I'm only a bachelor girl, but if I had children, seems to me I wouldn't have to most lose 'em to appreciate 'em.

CURTAIN

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SEP 1 1911

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