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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

The Village Postmistress

A Rural Comedy in Three Acts

By

BERTHA CURRIER PORTER

*Author of "The Voice of Authority," "Gadsby's Girls,"
"The Mishaps of Minerva," "Lucia's Lover," etc.*



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BOSTON
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1912

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The Village Postmistress

CHARACTERS

ACHSAH KITTREDGE, *the postmistress.*
HANNAH WEBSTER, *who has always had her own way.*
ALICE PLUMMER, *who lives with Mrs. Webster.*
HAZEL ROBERTS, *the new school-teacher from the city.*
MARTHA STETSON, *a neighbor.*
REBECCA CARTER, *a neighbor.*
DAVID JAMESON, *a man of peace.*
JOHN WEBSTER, *in love with Alice.*
BART HACKETT, *blind, but newsy.*
JABE KENDALL, *the village politician.*
FRANK SANDERS, *the stage-driver.*
HIRAM PRESTON, *a farmer.*
STRANGER, *a detective.*

TIME.—The present.

PLACE.—A small country village in New England.

COSTUMES.—Of the present day.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Mrs. Webster's living-room. A cloudy afternoon in November.

ACT II.—The village store and post-office—early evening of the same day.

ACT III.—Same as Act II—the next afternoon.

TMP 96-006918



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The Village Postmistress

ACT I

SCENE.—HANNAH WEBSTER'S living-room. Door at rear, leading to kitchen; door at R., leading outdoors. Windows at each side, filled with plants in blossom. Haircloth lounge in front of window at R. Fireplace at back. In center of stage, extension table, with red checked cloth on it. Braided rugs on a painted floor. Shelf with old-fashioned clock, glass vases, some goblets and saucers holding plant-slips; almanac hanging beneath. The table is littered with papers, old programmes and books. Old-fashioned pictures on walls, and an enlarged crayon portrait of JOHN WEBSTER. MARTHA STETSON and REBECCA CARTER sit by the table.

Enter HAN., with scrap-book.

HAN. Here's my scrap-book. Now we shan't repeat anything. Every programme we've ever had is in this book—every harvest festival, every Easter concert, every Christmas celebration.

MAR. You do beat all for system, Hannah. The way you keep everything is a caution. Well, it's lucky somebody keeps things. If ever you throw anything away or lose anything, you're sure to want it. Now when I lost that recipe for dried apple pie, I knew you'd have the copy I gave you, so I didn't worry a mite, and sure enough, you did.

HAN. Careless people make lots of trouble in this world.

REB. Here's a pretty piece in this book—all about fallin' leaves an' autumn breeze—just the thing for Thanksgivin'. Hetty Cartwright would speak it real nice.

HAN. No doubt she would. Hetty Cartwright's probably got her piece all picked out long 'fore now. For my part, I think Hetty Cartwright's spoke about all the pieces I want to hear. I'm in favor of somethin' new.

REB. Why, Hannah, we couldn't slight Hetty! Think how she'd feel. She's always spoke a piece at the Thanksgivin' concert.

MAR. Likely she'll wear that old blue dress. I wish she'd get somethin' new. Say, ain't that light purple suit the new teacher wears just grand?

HAN. Teacher does have the prettiest clothes. You ought to see a white dress she has hangin' up in her press-closet. She ain't worn it yet. Perhaps she'll wear it to the concert.

MAR. I guess the scholars like her real well. My sister's boy says she's all right. An' she makes Harold Bean behave, which is more'n any other teacher ever did.

HAN. Is that great Bean boy still goin' to school? My, I should think 'twas time his folks put him to work.

REB. Folks nowadays don't seem to have to work the way they used to. My father was earnin' man's wages by the time he was Harold's age.

MAR. Well, this ain't plannin' the Thanksgivin' concert.

HAN. No, it ain't, an' we haven't any too much time, either.

REB. Let's take that scrap-book, Hannah. Perhaps there's somethin' appropriate in that. (*They hunt in silence a moment.*) Why, here's that piece your John spoke at Easter, when he was five years old. I can see him now. Wasn't he a cunnin' youngster?

MAR. Pity he's away, Hannah. We shall miss his singin'. We always depend on John. An' Alice plays so pretty for him.

HAN. Teacher plays the nicest I ever heard. I got her to try over some of John's pieces. I been telling her about his singin'. And when he comes home, I'm goin' to have 'em practise together.

(MAR. and REB. exchange glances.)

MAR. Where's Alice to-day, Hannah?

HAN. She's doin' up some sewin' I got behind on.

REB. I s'pose she'll play at the concert?

HAN. Well, teacher says she'll play, an' we don't want too much instrumental music.

MAR. Why, Hannah Webster, do you mean you ain't goin' to ask Alice? Folks always look forward to her playin', an' she's so good about encores.

HAN. Altogether too forward as she grows older. It won't

hurt her a mite to check her some. A girl in her position shouldn't be so bold.

MAR. Well, I never should call Alice bold. Folks will think it's queer enough if she don't play. I guess David'll have somethin' to say.

HAN. David don't run this town yet, even if some folks thinks he does. But we can settle that part of it later. I s'pose we'll have ice-cream an' cake for sale, as usual? I'll make a couple o' loaves o' my pound cake.

REB. I wish we didn't have to ask Mis' Flanders for cake—she can't cook no more'n a cat. But then she'll make a loaf anyway, even if she ain't asked. Who's that goin' by the window, Hannah?

(They all hurry to the window, and peer out.)

HAN. Land o' love, it's Bart Hackett! Pokin' along, as usual. I s'pose he's comin' here. I'd like once in a while to do something that Bart Hackett didn't get wind of. For all he's blind, he picks up more news than a man with eyes all round his head, like a fly! Yes—there he comes—in the shed door.

MAR. He gives me the shivers sometimes, settin' around with them eyes o' hisn. They don't look blind. I know he can't see what I'm doin', but he'll break right out with some remark, just as if he could.

REB. They say that blind folks have a sense that we don't—to make up for their affliction, I s'pose.

Enter BART HACKETT, from rear door.

BART. Howdy, Hannah! Marthy an' Rebecca's here, ain't they? I heard so. Howdy, girls! Thanksgivin' concert comin', I guess. *(He goes across the room, and feels among the books and papers on the table, until he finds the scrap-book that REB. has put there.)* Yes, here it is. Knew I'd find it. Read in my almanac this mornin' "About this time watch out for Hannah Webster's scrap-book." Got it all planned, I s'pose? "First number on the programme will be a song by John Webster, accompanied by Alice Plummer—Recitation, 'Autumn' by Hetty Cartwright——" Gosh, I know it all by heart.

HAN. *(tartly)*. If you can give us any better ideas, we'll be glad to have 'em, I'm sure.

BART. Don't let me interfere. I've stood 'em so long. Guess I can weather a few more. S'pose you'll work the new schoolma'am in, won't ye? I ain't seen her yet.

MAR. Oh, Bart, I wanted to ask you—I knew you'd know—when's Jabe Kendall goin' to have his auction? I heard he was goin' to sell off all that old truck in his attic.

BART. So he was, but he's changed his mind. He's heard that Paul Potter, you know, Paul on the old pound road—wife was a Cheney—well, Paul's aimin' to take some boarders next year, so Jabe's goin' to wait till July an' have his auction when the boarders are here. He's sent for some blue plates an' such from the ten cent store down Boston way, an' he's goin' to use 'em till they get kind o' crackled an' greasy, an' then put 'em in amongst his stuff, an' he calculates to get enough out o' the boarders, one way an' another, to buy an automobile.

[*Exit HAN.*

REB. Paul Potter's folks goin' to take boarders? Why, where on earth are they goin' to put 'em in that little old house?

MAR. An' way up out o' creation—on that lonesome pound road, too.

REB. Paul Potter's wife can't keep house fit for a pig. I don't think she's all there anyway. Sometimes she looks as if she hadn't a wit in the world.

Enter HAN. with a tray of cake and cider.

HAN. Talkin's dry work. Don't you want some o' my cider? Here, Bart, I know you won't refuse. Have some cake, Martha. Have some, Rebecca.

BART. My father used to say, "No thank you has lost many a good meal." Never did in my case. I'll have some cake, too, Hannah.

MAR. This is lovely cake, Hannah. Did you make it?

HAN. No, Alice made this.

REB. She's a real good cook, ain't she?

MAR. She's had a good teacher.

BART. Powerful good cake, Hannah. I'll take another piece.

HAN. (*passing him the cake*). Well, since she's been with me, I've tried to teach her what I could.

MAR. Now, who else can we have to speak at the concert?

REB. Land o' mercy, it's after four o'clock. I must be

scootin'. I got biscuits to bake for supper. Don't it shut down dark awful early now?

HAN. We shall have to have another meetin' of this committee. We haven't accomplished a thing.

MAR. Why can't we leave the rest of it to you, Hannah?

BART. That'll just suit Hannah—she does love to manage things, don't ye, Hannah? Where's Alice? I want to tell her how good this cake is. Since you're so pressin', I *will* take another piece.

HAN. I'll call her.

[*Exit.*

MAR. (*aside, to REB.*). I'll bet you she tries to make a match between John an' the new schoolma'am. She won't admit there's a girl in this town good enough for him.

BART. Hannah begun on the schoolma'am yet? I'll bet she gives her an earache about John. I only hope she don't do too much gabbin' before Alice.

MAR. (*starting*). Bart Hackett, you've got ears like a fox.

BART. Kind o' too bad John's got such a managin' ma. Too bad for her, I mean. John Webster's goin' to have his own way in this world, or I miss my guess. There's a good deal of his ma in him, an' when those two disagree things are goin' to be lively.

REB. Hush, here she comes.

Enter HAN., followed by ALICE PLUMMER, who picks up the glasses and plates.

ALICE. How do you do, Martha? How do you do, Rebecca? Got the programme all made out for the concert? Hullo, Bart, I heard you liked my cake.

BART. Powerful tasty cake, Alice. If I hadn't made up my mind to go into the Old Men's Home, I'd ask ye to marry me, just on account o' that cake.

ALICE (*laughing*). You're real good, Bart. I'll take the will for the deed. And I'll send you a loaf of cake sometimes when you get into the Home.

MAR. It was lovely cake, Alice. Come, Rebecca, we *must* be goin'. (*At the door.*) Mercy, how low the clouds are! Why, it's snowin' hard. Goin' our way, Bart?

BART. No; I rather guess, seein' Hannah wants me so bad, I'll stay an' take supper with her. Maybe that cake ain't all gone yet.

HAN. I ain't got much for supper, Bart.

BART. All the same to me. I'll take my chances with the schoolma'am. I guess what's good enough for her will be good enough for me. (*Settles back in his chair.*) Good-night, girls.

MAR. Good-night, Hannah. Good-night, Alice—Bart.

REB. Good-night, all.

[*Excunt MAR. and REB., at side door.*]

HAN. (*crossly*). Go put another plate on for Bart, Alice.

(*Exit ALICE. BART rocks comfortably while HAN. picks up the scattered papers and books, and tidies the room.*)

BART. I guess I'll step down to the store while Alice is gittin' supper, Hannah. I'll fill the wood-box an' tend to the chores, too, to kind o' pay for my keep.

HAN. All right. (*Exit BART, at rear. Children's voices are heard at the side door, calling, "Good-night, teacher—good-night—good-night."* Enter, at side door, HAZEL ROBERTS. *She stands in the door, waving her hand and calling "Good-night."*) It looks as if you had company home, Miss Roberts.

HAZEL. Quite an escort, yes. And I'm laden with all sorts of trophies. Butternuts—we'll crack some if we can after supper—apples, and see the lovely pop-corn that William brought me! It's going to be a wild night. It snows now, and the wind is rising, and I think we're in for a blizzard. It's just the night to stay in where it's warm and bright, and talk and eat goodies.

HAN. It's a pretty good sign when children like a person, Miss Roberts. When my John was a boy, he just worshiped his teacher. I'll be glad when he gets home. He'll entertain you an' make things real pleasant. I s'pose you noticed this picture of him—I had it enlarged from a photograph by a man that came to town. It's a real good likeness.

HAZEL. I supposed that must be your son. He looks like you, Mrs. Webster. You must be proud of him.

HAN. You've heard of a hen with one chicken—I guess I know how she feels. Just let me show you his baby pictures here in the album. There's one that's awful cute. He was as fat as butter, and as good a baby as you'd want to see. I'm just ambitious for that boy, Miss Roberts. I've always lived right here in the country myself, an' things haven't always been to my likin', but I want John to have the advantages I missed. He's queer, though. I set out for him to be a teacher; put him through high school an' the academy, but he

decided he'd rather be outdoors. Went an' took a course in forestry. He's up north here now, lumberin'—says he'll try teachin' his neighbors how to cut trees for a while, then he'll see. (*Shows her the picture.*) There, there he is when he was a baby.

HAZEL. Isn't that a dear picture?

HAN. An' here he is in his first short dress. I've got one o' those shoes now—blue kid, with white buttons. The other he kicked off an' lost.

Enter ALICE.

ALICE. Hadn't I better go down for the mail now? Jabe Kendall's gone up by with his.

HAN. No, I want to do some tradin'. I'll go. You entertain Miss Roberts.

HAZEL. Truly, Mrs. Webster, I don't need entertaining. Now if I'm going to board here, I must insist on being treated as one of the family, or I shall feel that I am such a bother.

HAN. It must seem kind of stupid to you now, but just wait till John gets home. He'll take you all around. There's some awful pretty drives here. An' it's lovely in the winter when snow's all white an' clean. Not much like your city streets—all slush an' dirt. Alice, get the lard pail for me, will you? We're all out. [*Exeunt HAN. and ALICE, at rear.*]

HAZEL (*closing the album with a bang*). I'm so sick of John I shall scream if she mentions him again. (*Goes up to the picture and shakes her fist at it.*) Some day I'm going to turn you to the wall, you smirking piece of perfection—you! "John this—John that—John for breakfast, dinner and supper." It's very evident that Mrs. Hannah Mother Webster has plans for John, and I'm included. I won't go riding with you, John. I won't be thrown at your head, John. Somebody might object—still, I wonder how it would do to give mother a lesson. I might pretend to be impressed — (*Enter ALICE, who moves about in silence.*) It's snowing faster, isn't it? Mrs. Webster ought to take an umbrella.

ALICE. Country people get used to the weather, Miss Roberts.

HAZEL (*laughing*). I suppose I shall have to learn all sorts of things. Mrs. Webster seems determined to use every method to improve my education. Have you always lived in the country, Miss Plummer?

ALICE. Ever since I can remember.

HAZEL. Mrs. Webster is your aunt, isn't she ?

ALICE. No, she isn't any relation. You see my mother came here when I was a tiny girl. She hired a house and lived by herself. And because she would not satisfy the curiosity of her neighbors, and tell every one all about herself, they began to talk. I was too young to realize then, but I know now what mother must have suffered. She was so good to me that I never missed the grandmother and other relatives that the children talked about. One night our house caught fire. It was some distance from the village—there was no fire department, of course,—and by the time the light was seen and help came, my mother and I were safely out. We could only watch it burn. Suddenly my mother cried out and ran back into the blazing house before any one could stop her—then the roof fell in——

HAZEL. Oh—oh——

ALICE. I don't like to think about it. David tried to go after her, but it was just a fiery furnace. The neighbors were good to me when I was small. I lived with David's mother till she died, and we were so happy. Then David brought me to Mrs. Webster ; because he said she needed a daughter. But, you see, I don't know who my people are. Once it made no difference—now I'm learning what my mother endured. Oh, Miss Roberts, I don't know why I'm telling you this. I don't usually talk about my affairs to strangers.

HAZEL. I hope it is because I am not going to be a stranger long. You and the wonderful John must be like brother and sister. When he comes home we will have some good times together. I can see him now—a spoiled mother's boy—I must take him in hand. If his mother is going to educate me, I'll give the son a few lessons, just to even up things. (*Laughs.*) I must take care I don't fall in love with him. Does he look like this outrage ? (*Points to the picture.*)

ALICE (*quietly*). John is a good-looking fellow. Every one likes John.

HAZEL. All the more reason why I should devote a little of my valuable time to him. Yes, my mind is made up. I shall certainly cultivate this paragon—he's too good to be true. Can't you give me some points, Alice ? What is the quickest road to his affections ? Does he like a shy, clinging creature, or a woman with brains and opinions ?

(*Before ALICE can reply, BART enters from the rear door.*)

ALICE. Why, Bart, are you back so soon? Miss Roberts, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Hackett.

BART (*extending his hand*). Glad to see ye, Miss Roberts. I've heard a heap about ye—it's quite an event when a stranger comes to this town.

HAZEL (*shaking hands*). Glad to meet you, Mr. Hackett.

BART. "Bart," if it's all the same to you. "Mister" don't set easy on my name. Well, what's the news? What ye talkin' about up here? You're the general subject o' conversation in every other house in town, Miss Roberts. You'd be some surprised if you could collect all your histories—you wouldn't know yourself, I'm sure. Come from Boston, don't ye?

HAZEL. From near Boston, yes.

BART. I said 'twas Boston, but Jabe Kendall, he was bound to have it New York. Boston ain't on his map sence he took that trip out west five year ago. An' now he's got into politics, he's runnin' the whole country. Fust thing he aims to do is to get a veteran appointed postmaster here. An' veteran's name is Jabe Kendall.

ALICE. Do you suppose he will, Bart? I heard he was after Achsah's place.

BART. Well, he's tryin'. That's no sight he's gettin' it, though. Other folks besides Jabe has got a finger in that pie. Achsah's heard of it, an' she's worryin' some. Ye see there's been a lot o' changes in the post-offices lately, an' Jabe happens to be of the prevailin' party just now. Spends all his pension money buyin' postage stamps to write to Washington—good thing for Uncle Sam.

ALICE. Well, if the President takes that away from Achsah, after she's had it all these years —

BART. President ain't got nothin' to say about it, Alice. Jabe's runnin' things now.

HAZEL. Isn't Miss Achsah one of the finest women you ever knew? Somehow you feel her friendship just as soon as she shakes hands with you.

BART. I guess you're right there. Ain't nothin' Achsah wouldn't do for anybody. An' nobody in this town but would do anythin' for her, exceptin' Jabe Kendall, an' he's too cussed mean to count. What's the matter with you, Alice? Sound kind o' sniffly, don't ye?

ALICE. Nothing's the matter, Bart.

BART (*hitting the album, which lies on a chair*). Been

lookin' at the family portraits, Miss Roberts? Been admirin' John in all his various stages?

HAZEL. I have seen a few pictures of him, Mr. Hackett.

BART. Well, now, you don't want to let Hannah prejudice you agin' him. John's a mighty fine chap, hey, Alice? I guess Alice here knows what John is as well as any one.

ALICE (*quickly*). Was the mail sorted when you left, Bart?

BART. Yes, I waited. Achsah said there wa'n't nothin' for me, but she mentioned there was a letter for you from John.

ALICE. Did she give it to you?

BART. No, I guess Hannah took it.

ALICE. She took it? Oh, what shall I do?

BART. Why, what if she did? What's the matter?

ALICE. She doesn't know John writes to me. She won't like it. She has —

BART. Now don't go gittin' nervous, Alice. And don't you be afraid o' Hannah, nuther. I should want her to know John was writin' if I was you. Then you won't be doin' nothin' underhanded, an' she can't blame you.

ALICE. Bart, you know how angry she will be.

BART. Let her git mad—an' let her git over it. You ain't done nothin' in all your life to be ashamed of. She's got to know John loves you some time. She knows it now, if she'd only admit it. She sets a heap by John, I know, but when she realizes he wants you more'n anythin' on earth, she'll give in an' things will be all right. She's never denied that boy anythin' he wanted, an' she ain't goin' to begin now.

ALICE. But this is different. Bart, you know—every one knows—I don't know who I am really; oh, she has said so often enough lately, ever since she noticed that John was beginning to care for me. She would never have consented to let him go away from home if it hadn't been for that. Oh, if I only knew who I am!

BART. Ask Jabe Kendall—he knows everythin'—he'll tell ye.

ALICE. It is no joking matter to be all alone in the world, Bart.

BART. Relations ain't always such a blessin' as some folks seem to think. 'Cordin' to some I've seen, I'm glad I ain't got none. Don't worry, Alice. It'll come out all right. Brace up, now—here she comes.

Enter HAN., with parcels and mail.

HAN. (*not too well pleased*). Oh, Bart, you came back, didn't you? Miss Roberts, here's some mail for you.

HAZEL. Thank you. Will you excuse me while I read my letters?

BART. Well, Hannah, what's the news down street?

ALICE. Isn't there anything for me?

HAN. No.

BART. That's funny. Where's your letter? I'd have brought it if I hadn't thought Achsa'd give it to Hannah.

HAN. (*hurriedly*). I don't believe you'd better stay for supper, Bart. You'd better be steppin' along. It's fillin' in pretty fast, and none of us can go home with you.

BART. Oh, I ain't in any hurry. Storms don't bother me much. See just as well as when it's fair. Black an' white's all the same to me. Funny 'bout that letter, Alice. I thought sure Achsa'd give it to Hannah.

HAN. Well, what if she did? Is it any of your business? You're a meddlesome old fool, Bart Hackett!

ALICE. Then there *was* a letter?

HAN. Miss Roberts, don't you want to go up-stairs a little while? Supper won't be ready quite yet.

ALICE. Miss Roberts, please don't go. Mrs. Webster, will you please give me my letter?

HAN. I'll do no such thing! I know who it is from, and I won't have my John writing to you. I've seen how things were goin'. I've seen you makin' eyes at him. Do you suppose I'd let my son marry a girl from nobody knows where? A girl who has worked in his kitchen—done his drudgery—a girl with no people, no name, for all I know.

HAZEL. Oh, Mrs. Webster, what are you saying?

HAN. You keep out of this.

ALICE. Give me my letter. If your son were here, he would not allow you to say such things to me.

HAN. If my son were here, he would obey me as he has always done.

ALICE. That letter belongs to me. You say he is your son—what would you wish him to do if any one spoke of you as you have spoken of my mother? Give me my letter, and I will leave your house this instant.

HAN. There is your letter—take it if you can get it!

(*She thrusts the letter into the fire, holding it in the flames as ALICE struggles to rescue it.*)

HAZEL. Oh—she has burned it!

BART. Tarnation, Hannah, what you done? You ain't burned up a letter that don't belong to ye? That's tamperin' with the mail! That's a crime! That's State's Prison doings! Jabe Kendall will be writin' to Washington about ye! An' we're witnesses—me an' Miss Roberts—we see ye do it!

(In the silence which follows, DAVID JAMESON enters. He carries a bunch of dried catnip. Apparently unconscious of anything unusual, he calls softly, "Kit—kit—kit.")

DAVID. Here's a little treat I brought for kitty. *(No one speaks.)* Why, what's the matter? You don't look happy.

BART *(uneasily)*. Hullo, David. Stormin' some, ain't she?

DAVID. Yes, she's goin' to be a wicked one. Snowin' now so you can't see your hand before your face.

BART. Guess 'tain't any worse out than 'tis in—guess it's kind o' lucky you come along, David. Hannah, here, she's —

HAN. Bart Hackett, will you mind your business?

ALICE. Oh, David—David—she has —

DAVID. There, there, Alice, wait just a minute. Hannah, what has happened to put ye in one of your tempers?

HAN. I may as well tell you as Bart, here. He knows all about it, so the whole village will learn it before mornin'. If I tell you myself, you'll get it straight. I've only just found out what I've surmised for a good while. This hussy here has been tryin' for my boy—she's inveigled him into writin' to her—I don't know how many letters she has had, but I know there's one she didn't get, for I just burned it up!

DAVID. Now, Hannah, that wa'n't right.

HAN. Right or wrong—what do you suppose I care where John's welfare is concerned? I mean him for something better than a nameless girl. It's only a boy's fancy, anyhow. Seein' her round under his nose all the time, she's bewitched him—that's what it is. He'll forget all about her when she's gone—and out you go, miss! I'll put a stop to this, right now!

ALICE. I'm going, Mrs. Webster. I shan't stay here any longer. John would not want me to, now. You said I'd done his drudgery—worked in his kitchen. That's all true—and because it was for John, whom I loved and who loves me, Mrs. Webster, it was not drudgery. What did you do for the man

you married? Didn't you work for *him*? Didn't you wash for him, and mend for him? Didn't you keep his home clean and attractive? Didn't you make his bed and cook his food? Was that drudgery? Is it degrading for a woman to labor for the man she loves? To make him comfortable? If it seemed drudgery for you to do these things for your husband—then I think you never knew what love is. [Exit.

DAVID. Hannah, that child is opening old wounds. Hannah, you're hurt now, and you don't know what you're doing. But remember what your temper did for you years ago! Remember the night you turned a man away from your door!

HAN. David, don't you dare to come between John and me! You know he's all I've got. Do you suppose I'm going to let him take up with a nameless hussy?

BART. Go slow there, Hannah Webster! Remember you're speakin' of the girl John loves.

HAN. So you know it too? I suppose every one in town knows it except his mother? Well, she knows it now! And out that girl goes! I'll end this to-night.

DAVID. Hannah, you've had your own way all your life, and only the Lord knows whether it's been pleasant or not. But there's some things that are too mighty for you. And love is one of them. Do you think John will be any more anxious to please you when he knows you've turned Alice out?

BART. Hannah, you don't mean to put that girl out into such a night as this? Why, it's a raging blizzard—'tain't fit for a woman to step foot outside the house!

HAN. I'll risk her. She thinks too much of her precious clothes to go out in this weather. But not another mouthful does she get under my roof. This isn't what I took her for when you brought her to me, David Jameson!

DAVID. I'll take her to a place where she won't bother ye, Hannah. I don't want her to stay where she ain't welcome. I'll drive round for her in the mornin'. But, Hannah, you let her alone to-night. Don't you say anything more to her. I'll be goin' along, now. Good-night. (*He goes toward the door, then turns to say.*) If I was you, Hannah, I'd think over what I'd said an' done. Come, Bart, I'm goin' your way an' I'll pilot you. Jack's waitin' in the shed an' if the storm's too much for us, he'll find the way.

Enter HAZEL, swiftly, white and frightened.

HAZEL. She's gone! Out through the barn and into the storm! Oh, it's awful—I called but she wouldn't answer. I tried to run after, but she vanished. The snow cuts like knives, and the wind drifts it so I could not see her footprints. Oh, Mrs. Webster, you cruel woman, what have you done? And the things I said—she will think ——

BART. Gone! Into this night? An' the wind howlin' so you couldn't hear the horn o' the angel Gabriel! Hannah Webster, I guess Jabe Kendall will have somethin' to write about now—it's plain murder—that's what it is!

DAVID. Oh, Hannah, see what your temper has brought you to once more. Come, Bart, we must find her. Miss Roberts, can't you get me something she has worn lately? It might help some if we could give Jack the scent.

[*Exit HAZEL.*]

BART. Gosh-all-hemlock, what'll folks say?

HAN. I guess you won't have to look far—she'll come back as soon as she begins to feel uncomfortable.

Enter HAZEL, with kitchen apron.

HAZEL. Here's her apron—she just took it off.

HAN. H'm, she wa'n't in such a tearin' hurry but she could stop to fix herself up!

BART. Hannah Webster, thank the Lord I ain't your husband!

DAVID. Come, Bart, there's no time to waste. Hannah, while you're thinkin' it all out, in the dark, you just imagine how you'd have felt if Charlie Blanchard's mother had done this to you. An' what Charlie would have thought of her. You were a girl once, an' I remember the time when you never dreamed your name would be Webster.

[*Exeunt DAVID and BART at rear door.*]

HAZEL (*watching at the window*). It is a fearful night—that poor girl!

HAN. I'll have supper in a minute, Miss Roberts. I'm sorry this should have happened, but I'll have things ready pretty soon now.

HAZEL. Supper? Do you think I would eat with you now? Have you no feelings? Have you no heart?

HAN. (*laughing grimly*). Heart? I had one once—but it's old and dried now—like me! Feelin's? No—not now—only love for my boy —— (*Fiercely.*) My baby—the child

I bore—the only creature God let me keep ! An' I'll do what I think is best for him—I'll not have his life ruined as mine was—I'll spare him that—at any cost ! He doesn't love this girl—he would have told me—she shan't have him—do you hear ? She shan't have him !

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*The village store and post-office. Shelves, well stocked with goods. Post-office boxes at side, with counter beyond. Large, round stove in center. Box of saw-dust beside it. Settee in front of grocery counter. Wooden chairs about stove. Notices of auctions, dances and entertainments posted about, some of them showing unmistakable signs of age. Rubber boots and heavy mittens hanging from beams overhead. Entrance door at rear; another at side, leading to ACHSAH KITTREDGE'S room back of the store. FRANK SANDERS and HIRAM PRESTON sit by the stove, their chairs tipped back; they smoke in sociable silence. At last FRANK speaks.*

FRANK. Jabe Kendall is about the meanest cuss I ever see, tryin' to git this place away from Achsah, when she's had it ever since her father died. She was brought up in this here store—it's the only home she's ever known.

HIRAM. I can remember when the old man used to h'ist her up onto the counter when she wa'n't bigger'n a pint o' cider, and he'd put her little hands onto the tobacco cutter an' make her think she was a-runnin' it. But mebbe Jabe won't have it all his own way quite so much as he thinks for. Didn't ye hear what David was up to?

FRANK. No—what?

HIRAM. Ain't you heard that? Well, you know that time when Jabe went away an' stayed three year? Said he'd been drivin' stage out West, you remember?

FRANK. He was always terrible close-mouthed 'bout them three years.

HIRAM. Well he might be, I guess. You know Bart Hackett's always nosin' round an' tryin' to find out everybody's business, but even he couldn't git Jabe started on that. Well, it's the queerest thing. Here 'bout two weeks ago, when that drummer was here—you know, the dark-complected feller that boarded up to Mary Lizy's—well, he come from the West, an' when he see Jabe he acted sort o' surprised like. Bart—he was a-settin' right where I be now, an' he heard the hull conversation. Seemed this drummer used to have a route

in the West, an' he hailed Jabe, sayin', "Ain't you the feller that used to work for a man named Tompkins, out near Chicago?" Jabe says, "Guess you're mistaken in your man, mister," but he didn't seem to like it very well, an' he went right out o' the store. Then Bart hails the drummer an' asks him about it. Drummer swears he ain't mistaken, an' adds that Jabe left old man Tompkins pretty sudden, an' he'd heard some o' Tompkins' money went along, too. Drummer says he don't know but Tompkins would be glad to see Jabe.

FRANK. Jabe Kendall? You don't say!

HIRAM. Yes—an' Bart asks him why he don't send out there an' find out, but drummer says it's none o' his hunt. Then Bart hikes right out after David an' tells him the story, an' David gets the name o' the town from the drummer, an' writes out there to the chief of police, askin' him about it, an' describin' Jabe just as careful, 'cause probably he might have been under another name or somethin'.

FRANK. Well, say, ain't that grand? I'd like to see Jabe Kendall get his come-uppance first-rate.

HIRAM. Guess there's a few others around here that would, too. David ain't heard nothin' yet, but he's lookin' for a letter every day. Don't say anythin' about it. He don't want Achsah should know till he's sure.

FRANK. Of course he don't. David's all right, now I tell ye. He ain't much of a talker, but when it comes to doin', he's right there.

Enter ACH., from side.

ACH. It's a bad night, boys; lucky you don't live far from here. Guess there won't be much trade this evenin'.

FRANK. How soon do you calculate the appointment will be made, Achsah?

ACH. I don't know, Frank. Most any time now, I expect. I suppose I'll be movin' out o' the old place pretty soon. It'll be quite a change.

HIRAM. Never say die, Achsah! Jabe Kendall ain't sortin' the mail just yet, an' maybe he never will be. Ain't any other candidate, is there?

ACH. Oh, no. Jabe's the only one that's runnin' against me.

FRANK. What a fool question, Hi! Ain't another man in town would do a thing like that.

HIRAM. That petition David sent on ought to do some good. It had some pretty hefty names on it.

ACH. I know—David's awful good. I don't know what we'd all do without David.

FRANK. Jabe Kendall calls him a shif'less old do-nothin'—says he just roams round the woods all day long.

ACH. I guess David's got a right to take a day off in the woods once in a while if he wants to. 'Tain't anythin' out o' Jabe Kendall's pocket. Jabe Kendall is mischief-makin' all the time. He can't say much—he loaf's round this store more time than David spends in the woods. An' David is always after somethin' to help some sick person—if it's nothin' but catnip for babies an' cats.

HIRAM. David's all right, Achsah. Now don't you worry.

ACH. I shan't—any more'n I can help. *(Stumbling footsteps are heard outside. The door is flung open, and BART staggers in, panting, exhausted, and covered with snow.)* Mercy, Bart, what's the matter? What you doin' out such a night as this?

(FRANK and HIRAM rise swiftly. FRANK shuts the door.)

BART. Who's here? Any men? Anybody that can get out an' help hunt a lost girl?

FRANK. Here's Hiram an' me, all ready. Who is it?

ACH. Lost? What's happened?

BART. It's Alice. Hannah Webster flew into one o' her rages because she found out that John was writin' to Alice, an' she twitted Alice 'bout her folks, sayin' she wa'n't a fit wife for John, an' at last she told her to go, an' Alice took her at her word; she's out in the storm somewhere—goodness knows where! Got some lanterns, Achsah?

ACH. Oh—oh—poor child! Wait, Bart, I'll light the lanterns in a second.

(She gets three lanterns and lights them.)

HIRAM. How'd you hear about it, Bart? Is anybody else out? Hadn't we better ring the church-bell?

BART. No, not yet. I was there through it all, but I can't stop to tell ye now. Only Hannah burned up Alice's letter. David come in right after she did it. He's out lookin' for Alice.

ACH. David!

BART. He wants two strong men. She can't be far away. Ain't had time. He don't want nothin' said about it if it can be helped. Guess he thinks he can bring Hannah to her senses. Told me to come here an' see if I could get two men. Said I'd probably find you an' Frank here, Hiram. Said if he could git you, he could depend on ye. Wants us to spread out an' go up toward the old pound road where the old house was burned. Thinks maybe she'd go that way. Wants Achsah to have plenty o' hot water an' blankets. Said he'd bring Alice here. Come on, boys—I'm all right now.

ACH. Bart, you ought not to go out again in this weather.

BART. S'pose I'm goin' to set round the stove like an old woman when Alice Plummer's lost in the snow, an' the night an' the day's alike to me. Come on, boys.

HIRAM. All ready—let's have the lanterns, Achsah.

[*Exeunt* FRANK, HIRAM and BART.]

ACH. I'd better get the water on to heat. And I'll put a light in the windows—maybe that will help some. Poor Alice! So Hannah found out before John told her—that's what's the matter. Gracious—perhaps it's my fault! She didn't know he was writin' to her? Come to think of it, David's been takin' Hannah's mail up since John went away. Or else Alice has been for it herself. There was a letter to-night, I remember, an' Hannah came for the mail. That's it! And I suppose that wicked tongue of hers was more than Alice could stand. Oh, Hannah wasn't always like this. I remember —

[*Exit.*]

Enter JABE KENDALL.

JABE (*looking about*). Huh! post-office all alone! Anybody could come in an' help themselves to anything they wanted! How do I know but some o' my mail's been stole already? Ain't none in my box. When I git this job, things will be different. (*Shouts.*) Hey, there! Ain't there nobody here to wait on customers? Achsah—Achsah—where be ye? I want a plug o' tobacco.

Enter ACH.

ACH. Oh, Jabe, I'm so glad you come in just as you did. Alice Plummer is lost in the storm. The boys have just this minute gone out to look for her. If you hurry you can catch up with them. They took lanterns. Didn't you see them? Have you got your team?

JABE. How'd she come to be lost, I'd like to know?

ACH. Never mind that now. Only go—go quick! Bart Hackett came here for help, an' he an' Frank an' Hiram have just left. David's out, too. They'll be glad to have you.

JABE. Well, I guess they will, when they git me! Catch me goin' trampin' around this night, huntin' after any girl! She probably knows what she's doin'. I guess she didn't get far. I guess there was some feller round the corner with a buggy. I guess ticket agent's the one to inquire of—she's eloped! That's all.

ACH. No, Jabe, no! She's lost, I tell you.

JABE. Well, well, she's lost, then. An' she's goin' to stay lost for all o' me. I'm 'bout ready to turn in.

ACH. Do you mean you ain't goin' with the boys, Jabe?

JABE. That's just what I mean. Had all the Plummer I want to-day. Been up to the old place where her mother was burned, all day, diggin' an' blastin'. Some fool from the city has bought it, and nothin' would do but he must start right off on the cellar for his new bungalow. Nice time o' year to start a cellar! Might have known we'd have a storm before we got half done. An' I struck bed-rock to-day, an' had to blast. Set off a good one just 'fore I left. Snow an' rocks an' dirt flyin' all over creation! Must have tore all the rubbish out o' that old cellar-hole, all right. Don't know but it spoiled the well—don't care if it did. Didn't stop to see. Here, Achsah, gimme that plug o' tobacco, an' I'll be movin'.

ACH. Jabe Kendall, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Lettin' a poor old blind man like Bart Hackett tramp all over town a night like this when you run for the house an' your tobacco!

JABE. No call for me to make a fool o' myself, even if Bart Hackett does, is there? Gimme that tobacco!

ACH. No, I won't! I can do that much to make you uncomfortable, anyway.

JABE. Refuse to sell me goods, do you? We'll see what kind o' campaign readin' that'll make. We'll see whether the President is goin' to appoint a person like that to be post-mistress.

[*Exit, slamming the door.*]

ACH. There goes the meanest man in creation.—Oh, hear that wind! I wonder where Alice is—and David.—I hope he's dressed warm.—I've got all the hot water I can get on the stove, an' bricks heatin' in the oven, an' blankets warmin', an' a good pot o' coffee all ready—oh, I wish there was somethin'

I could do! This waitin' here an' wonderin' is awful nervin'. But, there, how must Hannah feel? Seems as if she must — What was that noise?—I declare, I'm so nervous I can't keep still! (*She wanders about, peering out of the windows, and shading her eyes with her hands.*) Oh, dear! Seems as if things were all crossways now—that appointment—an' now this awful thing—what's that? I thought I heard a call — (*She listens. Faint cries are heard, "Achсах—Achсах."* *They come nearer. Then, "Achсах, open the door!"*) It's David!

(*She runs to the door, flinging it open, as DAVID stumbles in with ALICE, half unconscious, in his arms.*)

DAVID. Hot things, Achсах—quick—an' dry clothes. She's all right, I guess, but it's lucky we found her before she wandered into the woods.

(*They place ALICE in a chair.*)

ACH. Bring her in the kitchen, David, an' lay her on the lounge. You're soppin' wet yourself.

DAVID. Never mind me—just 'tend to Alice. (*He carries her into the next room. ACH. follows. DAVID returns, and sinks into a chair, panting.*) She's all right now.—She's in good, kind hands if ever a girl was.—No wicked words here.—I s'pose I ought to go an' tell Hannah—soon as I'm rested a bit.—No.—I guess it won't hurt Hannah to do a little bit o' worryin'.—I'll tell her to-morrow—if somebody else don't get ahead o' me.

(*He sits there, breathing heavily. After a pause, enter ACH.*)

ACH. I've got off her wet clothes, David, an' wrapped her in warm blankets. She won't say a word—just moans an' cries! I want you should carry her up to bed, please. Now you get off those wet coats an' dry 'em out by the kitchen stove. I can't have you gettin' your death o' cold, on top of every-thing else. (*She begins to cry.*)

DAVID. There, there, Achсах, don't take on! It's all right now. Ain't no real harm done yet. Hannah'll feel different in the mornin'. [*Exit.*]

ACH. He needn't think that—I know Hannah Webster. She won't stop here. She'll be packin' John off somewhere next. I'll keep Alice here with me anyway,—well, I'll keep her as long as I'm here myself. Lord only knows how long

that will be! David's on her side, anyway—that's worth a good deal. I don't know how we could get along without David. I wish—oh, what's the use o' wishin'? Stop your fussin', Achsah—it don't make things a bit better. Count your blessin's and count David's friendship as number one.

Enter DAVID.

DAVID. I guess she'll go to sleep now. Give me a cup o' coffee, if you've got some, Achsah, an' I'll go out an' find the boys.

ACH. David, you're not going out again—you're going to stay right here an' get warm an' dry. Didn't you make any arrangements in case she was found?

DAVID. Told 'em to come back here in half an hour if they didn't see no trace of her, an' we'd make another start.

ACH. Well?

DAVID. Ain't no need for 'em to be out longer'n necessary. Guess I'd better hunt 'em up.

ACH. Oh, David, David! I wish you'd think of yourself once in a while!

DAVID. Think o' myself? Why, I'm the most selfish old cuss on the face o' the earth. Just pleasin' myself all the time. Don't do anything all day long but tramp round the woods an' amuse myself—ask Jabe Kendall. (*Laughs.*)

ACH. David, don't you *name* Jabe Kendall! He came here, an' I told him Alice was lost an' asked him to go out an' help you, an' he *laughed!* He *sneered!* An' then he went *home!* He ain't fit to be mentioned in the same breath with you, David. *Please* stay an' get dry. What should I do if anythin' happened to you?

DAVID. Lord, Achsah, I'm tough as a hickory log! Won't nothin' hurt me. Achsah—you ain't cryin'? Achsah—what was it you said?—Do you mean it? Would you care?

ACH. (*sobbing*). Care? Oh, David, David!

DAVID (*taking her in his arms*). Now praise the Lord, all his saints! Achsah, don't ye ever worry another bit. 'This is happiness enough to last all our days. Good Lord, Achsah, what do we care now about Jabe Kendall? Let him have the post-office—I was just tryin' to fix things so you'd be all right. I've always felt I'd kind o' like to look out for ye, as far as I could without bein' a nuisance, but I never hoped—I never dared to think—Achsah, ain't you afraid to trust yourself to a shif'less old do-nothin' like me?

ACH. Afraid—with you?

DAVID. I rather guess I can manage to take care o' my wife. I can't believe it. But it must be true. Here you be, cuddled up in my arms—(*suddenly*) an' right against this wet coat, too! Achsah, you'll get your death!

ACH. No, I shan't, but *you* will! David, you must mind me now—you must begin this minute! Take off that coat while I get your coffee.

(DAVID *obeys, and she takes the coat with her into the kitchen.*)

DAVID. My, how things can change in a minute!—Gosh! I *am* a selfish old wretch, settin' here makin' love when poor old Bart an' the boys are pokin' round in the snow. An' that unhappy girl up-stairs.—But I'll fix that.—I'll tell John a few things that will help when he argues with his ma—perhaps he won't stop to argue; perhaps he'll act first an' talk afterwards.—David Jameson, think o' the blessin's you're goin' to have all the rest o' your life.

Enter ACH., *with a cup of steaming coffee.*

ACH. Now, drink this—every bit of it.

DAVID. It's too hot. I'll have to wait a little.

ACH. While it cools, tell me about Alice.

DAVID (*talking between sips of coffee*). I didn't see the whole of it, but from what I gathered, an' from what Bart told me, it was this way. You know the new schoolma'am is boardin' with Hannah. Well, of course, she's from the city, an' she's nice-lookin' an' well-educated, an' Hannah begun tellin' her about John—John bein' away lumberin' so's he couldn't speak for himself—don't know as he'd had a chance if he'd been there —

ACH. An' all before Alice, I s'pose. Drink that while it's hot, David.

DAVID. Sure! An' I guess Alice worried quite a bit. Well, to-night Hannah got hold o' one o' John's letters to Alice, an' decided not to give it to her.

ACH. Oh, David!

DAVID. But Bart Hackett—funny how Bart manages to get into everything—heard you say somethin' when you was sortin' the mail, an' he was there when Hannah come home, an' he spoke about it. Then the fat was in the fire, an' Hannah burned up the letter, an' told Alice to go. She said some pretty hard things about her mother, Bart said.

ACH. The cruel woman!

DAVID. Well, Achsah, you know Hannah's been through a good deal. We can't read each other's hearts by our looks an' our actions. She felt a sight worse about the way she treated Charlie Blanchard than she ever let on. I always thought she expected he'd come back, but he never did. Then she married Jonathan Webster to show she didn't care. I guess she thought she might as well be rich if she couldn't be happy. Jonathan's losin' his mind an' shootin' himself when John was nothin' but a baby, was pretty hard for her. She ain't the kind to take pity from nobody, so she's just bound all her affection up in John.

ACH. David, I wish I was as charitable as you are.

DAVID. Don't you ever let me hear you say such a thing as that again, Achsah. It's only that I know how Hannah feels. She's just like the animals in the woods, doin' all she can for her young one. She wants John to have the best there is.

ACH. Then she surely shouldn't cheat him out of love.

DAVID. Well, don't you fuss about it—I guess it will all come out right. (*Scuffling feet are heard, and voices.*) There's the boys now—they'll be glad she's found.

ACH. I'll get some more coffee. [*Exit.*]

Enter FRANK and HIRAM, supporting BART, whose head is bleeding from a cut on the forehead. HIRAM carries a rusty tin box, covered with dust and dirt.

BART. No, you ain't goin' to leave me here, neither! I'll just get Achsah to tie up this blamed cut, an' then I'm goin' back with ye.

FRANK. No, Bart, you ain't fit.

DAVID. She's found, boys—she's here, safe and sound!

BART. Glory be! An' three times three! Where'd ye find her, David?

DAVID. Headin' toward the old pound road. I reckoned she'd go that way. She hadn't gone so very far. I guess she'd been off the road a good deal. She was kind o' crazy—didn't really know what she was doin'.

Enter ACH.

ACH. She's sleepin' now, boys. An' she'll stay right here till John comes home. Why, look at Bart! He's all bloody!

What's happened now? Bart, you set right down in that chair an' let me bathe your head. (*She hurries out, returning with water and cloths. While she is gone, DAVID examines the cut, and they talk aside.*) Get your wet coats off, boys. There's coffee ready as soon as I see to Bart, here. My! What's goin' to happen next, I wonder! Bart, how did you get such a blow as this?

BART (*impatiently*). Gosh, Achsah, don't fuss any more with my head! 'Tain't bleedin' much now anyway. Tie it up anyhow.—We've got a mystery here. You see this box? Where is it, Hiram? Ye ain't lost it, have ye?

ACH. I don't care if you've got all the gold of Injy. You're goin' to have this cut seen to, an' you're all goin' to drink some hot coffee as soon as you can. Your old box will keep that long, I know.

BART. But, Achsah, you don't realize — [Exit ACH.]

DAVID. Set down an' behave yourself, Bart. Boys, where did you go?

HIRAM. Well, we did 'bout as you suggested—spread out in a line, near enough to keep track of each other by hollerin', an' beat up the woods toward the old place. We must have missed you at the corner.

FRANK. An' we was goin' along, with our heads down, fightin' against the wind —

Enter ACH., with the coffee, which she serves while they talk.

BART. An' we must have gone a good deal further'n I realized, because, all of a sudden, the ground give way under me, an' down I went!

HIRAM. He let out a yell when he went, an' 'twas lucky he did, for that was the last sound he made for some time.

ACH. Where on earth were you?

BART. Come pretty nigh bein' under the earth instead of on it, Achsah. 'Twas the old cellar hole of Alice's house, but somethin's happened to it, because I been by there a hundred times, but I never fell in before.

ACH. It's bigger. Jabe Kendall's diggin' a cellar there for somebody that's bought the place an' is goin' to put up a bungalow, an' he's been blastin' there to-day.

HIRAM. More o' Jabe's work, hey? That accounts for it, Bart. Well, we come a-runnin' an' pretty nigh went in ourselves, an' there lay Bart, all of a heap.

BART (*in great excitement*). I lit on my head when I fell, an' this is what I struck.

ACH. What is it?

FRANK. Just what we want to know. When we was luggin' Bart out o' the hole, my foot hit the thing, an' as soon as we saw what it was, we brought it along with us.

HIRAM. It's locked, you see.

(*They all examine the box.*)

DAVID (*thoughtfully*). You say it was in the old cellar?

BART. Yes, right about under the bedroom, as near as we could tell. I come to right away—I was only stunned—an' the fust thing I said was, "Where's that tarnation rock I hit on?" an' Hiram says, "'Tain't a rock. It's a box," an' I says, "What kind of a box?" an' Hi says, "A deed box," an' all of a sudden it flashed across me how Alice's mother run back into the blazin' house, an' nobody ever knew what for, an' —

ACH. Oh, David, do you suppose—oh, open it! Open it, quick!

BART. Well, that's what I been tryin' to get ye to do ever since we come in. Give us a hammer, Achsah.

DAVID. But the box isn't ours. If there is anything of value here, it belongs to Alice. We haven't any right to open it.

BART. Tarnation, David! There ain't nothin' to show it's Alice's. That's all guesswork. Might have belonged to old man Jenks that lived there before they did. Might have been hid in the chimney for a hundred years for all you know! Findin's keepin's, ain't it? An' I found it sure enough! (*Rubs his head.*) Give it to me, if you're so squeamish. I'll open it! Where's that hammer, Achsah?

ACH. He's right, David. The only way to know is to look.

(*DAVID opens the box. They all crowd about him. He lifts out some folded, yellowed papers.*)

BART. Papers! Papers! I hear 'em cracklin'. What be they, David?

HIRAM (*bending over DAVID'S shoulder*). Them's government bonds. I've seen 'em down to the bank. See the coupons?

BART. Money? Money? Tarnation! It's lucky we found this 'fore Jabe Kendall did!

ACH. He told me he set the last blast off so late he didn't stop to see what it did. He said he didn't care.

FRANK. I'll bet he'll do some carin' when he hears about this.

DAVID. There's more than bonds here. Here's a marriage certificate.

HIRAM. That one says "Record of Birth."

DAVID. Those are for Alice to see first. It is her right. They may tell her what she has longed to know all her life.

BART. Ain't ye goin' to look at 'em?

ACH. Here's something here, David. See? It is marked, "To whom it may concern."

BART. That's us, all right. We're concerned. Read that, David!

DAVID. You read it, Achsah.

ACH. (*taking folded paper from long envelope, and reading. As she reads and a glimmering of the meaning dawns upon her, her voice breaks, and the others show feeling*). "I cannot rest with the burden of my secret upon me. Neither can I bring myself to tell it. Therefore I write it here. Some day I may tell Alice."

FRANK. 'Tis about Alice, after all, boys.

BART. Hush up, can't ye? Go on, Achsah.

ACH. "If I never do, she will find it here after my death. I am not Mary Plummer. I was once. There are documents here to prove all that I say. My husband was a native of this town. He was a good husband to me, and I was a happy woman, yet—there was a secret chamber in his life, to which I was not admitted. When he knew that he must die, he opened the door. He told me why he left this town. He asked me to live here. You who find his name at the end of this paper may perhaps know why he wished it. There had been another woman, a woman whom he always loved, though she drove him from her."

BART. Gosh, listen to that!

ACH. Wait, Bart. (*Resumes.*) "He gave me money to provide for her, if she should be in want. Because it was his wish, and because I loved him, I came. But I could not bring his name to the woman who had scorned him. I would help her, as he bade me, but she should never know whose thought

had planned for her. She had spurned him living—she should not have him dead ——”

DAVID. Poor Mary! And poor Hannah!

ACH. “I took my own name—Plummer. Yet for the sake of my child, I must leave this record. It is all that will ever show her parentage. Yet, perhaps there is another reason. I found the woman a widow, like myself, but prosperous—self-sufficient—asking aid or pity from no one. Yet I seemed to see beneath her hard exterior a something—perhaps I am wrong. My husband always loved her. If I were in her place, I should want to know that. I cannot tell her! He would not ask me to do that! But I must write it here. She may never see it. I shall never give it to her. When I die, this box will fall into other hands. I cannot tell what may happen then. The woman is Hannah Webster. My husband was Charles Blanchard. Mary Plummer Blanchard.”

BART (*awed and subdued*). Gosh, boys, my old blind head amounts to somethin’, after all. It’s found a father for Alice—why, do you see what this means? It’s all right now! Hannah can’t say anythin’! Alice is Charlie Blanchard’s girl!

DAVID (*reverently*).

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The post-office, the next afternoon. The storm has cleared, but the roads are still heavy with snow. ACH. is behind the counter. DAVID, in front, leans toward her.*

ACH. An' you're sure you don't feel any cold, David?

DAVID. Not a mite. Bless your heart, dear, it would take more than the worst blizzard we ever had to make me get cold after what you said last night.

ACH. You're glad, then, David?

DAVID. Glad ain't the right word. I'm thankful!

ACH. Alice slept all night, an' when she waked this mornin', she found the box right on the bed beside her. She can't hardly realize it—she keeps readin' 'em all over. She don't say much. I really think she cares more about what it will mean for John than for herself.

DAVID. Has she mentioned Hannah?

ACH. No—but she has read the letter. She knows.

DAVID. John ought to be here soon—that is, if the telegraph got through all right.

ACH. What did you say?

DAVID. Just enough to bring him, that's all. You didn't tell Alice I'd sent for him, did you?

ACH. No. You told me not to.

DAVID. That's right. This is a matter for him to handle now. We've done our part.

ACH. I'll tell Alice you're here. She wants to thank you. (*Calls.*) Alice, here's David.

Enter ALICE.

ALICE. David—oh, I can't say what I'd like to! What you did for me last night can't be thanked in words. It has to be lived out all one's life, and that's what I'm going to do for you.

DAVID. There—there, Alice; why, I didn't do anythin'. 'Twas Bart did it all. Bart found the box.

ALICE. And you found me! What good would the papers do me dead? I was insane, I think, when I ran out into the storm. It wasn't only last night, David. That was only one

time of many. But something seemed to snap in my brain, and all I remember after that is shaking—shaking in the cold—till you came!

DAVID. Don't talk about it, little girl. Why, anybody'd done the same. Frank an' Hiram was out, too.

ALICE. I know—I know—oh, you are all so good.

DAVID. I s'pose you read that letter, Alice?

ALICE. Over and over! Poor mother!—David, I think Mrs. Webster has a good deal to answer for. She spoiled two lives.

ACH. She spoiled three lives—you forget her own, Alice. And your father was always kind to your mother—she says so. She was not entirely unhappy.

ALICE. I suppose so. I can't remember him.

DAVID. Hannah had the worst of it, Alice. She loved your father with all her heart—I knew 'em when they were sweethearts. But she had a temper then as now, an' she hurt him—hurt him cruel! It's bad enough to be hurt, girl, when it ain't your fault, but it's a thousand times worse to hurt somebody you love—an' never have a chance to say you're sorry.—That's the canker that has eat into Hannah's soul all these years!

ALICE. She drove him away, just as she did me, didn't she?

DAVID. Yes, she hurt him so he never came back. But when she said those things to you she hadn't an idea you were Charlie Blanchard's girl any more'n you had. Be just, Alice. You've got all your happiness before you. If there's a little bit o' consolation that you can put into the life of a lonely old woman, is it for you to hold your hand?

ALICE. You think it is my duty to show her that letter?

ACH. Just take it home to yourself, dear. Imagine it was you an' John. That'll tell you without our sayin' a word. But, whatever happens, don't let anything come between you an' the man you love!

DAVID. No, don't!

ALICE. Why, you talk as if you knew all about it—Achsah—David—do you mean——? Is *that* why you understand so well?

DAVID. Achsah an' me are aimin' to practice what we preach.

ALICE. I'm *so* glad—you dear, dear people! (*Enter HIRAM and BART. Exit DAVID.*) Here's Bart! How is your

poor head this morning, Bart? I never can thank you enough for finding those papers. And you, too, Hiram. They have changed my whole life.

BART (*jubilantly*). My old head *was* some good, after all, wasn't it, Alice? It's found out what nobody else could—found out who your pa was, Alice. That box was what your ma went back for.

ALICE. Poor mother!

BART. An' there it lay, all these years, under the rubbish, till this old fool fell into a hole that Jabe Kendall blasted.

HIRAM. That's one good thing Jabe's done, but then it's no credit to him, 'cause he didn't mean to do it. How do you feel, Alice?

ALICE. Rather tired, and bewildered.

ACH. Go in the back room and rest, Alice. Now the roads are gettin' broke out, there's likely to be folks in, an' perhaps you don't feel much like talkin' just yet.

[*Exit ALICE.*

BART. Well, I rather guess there'll be plenty o' talkin' in this town as soon as folks find out what has happened. Ain't had nothin' so excitin' as this since the lion got away from the circus.

HIRAM (*looking out the door*). Here comes the school-ma'am.

Enter HAZEL.

HAZEL. Good-morning, everybody. Miss Achsah, may I see you alone a minute?

BART. Ain't no need o' that, Miss Roberts. She's here!

HAZEL. What do you mean?

BART. Guess you're down here to talk about Alice, ain't ye? Needn't be afraid to speak up—Hiram here, he was out huntin' for her with the rest of us, an' she's right in the back room, safe an' sound.

HAZEL. What a relief! Then you know all about it, Miss Achsah. You see I felt as if I were partly to blame. I didn't realize how it was with Alice and John, and I was joking about falling in love with him myself. I never would have said what I did if I had known how serious it was.

ACH. And Hannah?

HAZEL. Mrs. Webster has hardly spoken. She locked up the house as usual, and went to her room. I don't believe she slept any more than I did. You see we could not know whether

you had found her or not, and I imagined all sorts of dreadful things. This morning Mrs. Webster got breakfast, but said she wasn't hungry. The breakfast wasn't touched. When dinner time came, she told me she had eaten hers. I ate a little alone. Then they broke out the roads, and I came here.

ACH. Poor Hannah—but go in and see Alice, Miss Roberts—she has good news for you. [Exit HAZEL.]

BART. Where did David go? I thought I heard his voice when I came in.

ACH. He's gone to the station to meet the down train.

BART. John's comin', hey? Well, we'd better straighten the hull matter out an' have it over, I s'pose. Wonder if Jabe Kendall's heard about that box yet! (*Chuckles.*) That's a good one on Jabe!

Enter MAR.

MAR. Hullo, Achsah—hullo, boys. Awful storm, wasn't it? I declare I'm so flurried, I don't know where I'm at! What do you think has happened? I've got a boarder! Yes, at this time o' year! Drove over from Hunnewell this mornin'. Said they told him at the livery stable that I was a good cook. Said he wasn't goin' to stay long, but he had a little business in town, an' wanted a place where he could get a good bed, an' three square meals a day.

BART. Drummer, ain't he? Don't ye know him?

MAR. Never set eyes on him in all my life. Can't find out what he wants, either. He talks all the time, too, an' when he gets through you ain't a bit wiser than when he began.

BART. Glory! Guess I better have a look at him. He sounds interestin'.

MAR. He'll likely be down here by an' by. Achsah, give me some corn-starch, an' some bacon, an' a pail o' lard, an' some breakfast food, an' a yeast-cake, an' a bag o' pastry flour an'—oh, got any oranges?

ACH. Yes, plenty.

BART. Well, now, I wonder who the critter is! By gum! I'll bet he's a inspector, come on to look over the ground 'bout this post-office appointment. That's just what he is. I'll put a flea in his ear about Jabe Kendall, see if I don't!

HIRAM. P'raps he's one o' them patent-medicine men. Did he say anythin' about givin' a show in the hall, Marthy?

MAR. No—he ain't that kind. He's clean-shaven—they most all wear face-trimmin's.

ACH. Here's your things, Martha.

HIRAM. Lemme take that flour out to the wagon for ye.

Enter HAZEL.

HAZEL. Good-bye, Miss Achsah. I think I'll go back now.

ACH. Miss Roberts, let me make you acquainted with Mrs. Stetson. Marthy, this is the schoolma'am. She's boardin' up to Hannah's. Can't you give her a lift? It's heavy walkin' to-day.

MAR. Of course. Pleased to meet you, Miss Roberts. Come right along—there's plenty of room.

HAZEL. Thank you ever so much. It *is* hard walking.

(As they turn toward the door, enter DAVID and JOHN WEBSTER. JOHN'S face is set and stern.)

HIRAM. Hello, John. When did you get back?

JOHN. Achsah, where is she?

DAVID. John, wait a minute, please. I only told ye the bad part of it. There's more an' better, but it's Alice's right to tell that. I'm goin' to say one thing, though, same as I did to her—be awful careful about keepin' happiness from any one else in this world. An' remember—folks lived an' loved long before you was born—just the same as Alice an' you do now. An' old folks now was young folks then. Maybe this'll help ye to understand when Alice tells ye.

ACH. John, don't be too hard on your mother. Remember you're her only child, an' she thinks more of your happiness than anything else in the world.

JOHN *(bitterly)*. Yes—she showed it last night. Where is Alice?

ACH. In here, John.

[*Exit JOHN.*]

MAR. Alice here? What does that mean?

BART. I'll tell ye, Marthy—ain't ye heard?

(MAR., BART, HIRAM and HAZEL step back and talk together.)

ACH. How did he take it, David?

DAVID. Just as you see him. He's pretty bitter now. Couldn't seem to think of anythin' but Alice out in the storm. Guess 'twas worse up where he was.

Enter JABE, raging.

JABE. Where's Bart Hackett? Where's the thief that's been trespassin' on my land?

BART. Thief? Trespass? What you talkin' about, Jabe Kendall? *Your* land? You don't even own six feet of earth to bury your old worthless carcass in!

JABE. Well, you know what I mean. It's where I'm diggin' a cellar. It's in my charge, an' anythin' that's found there belongs to me.

BART. Oh, it's in your charge, is it? You're responsible for it, be ye?

JABE. Yes, sir.

BART. Well, I'm glad to hear ye say so before witnesses. Because I'm goin' to sue ye for leavin' it in such a condition that I fell in an' broke my head—so, there now.

JABE. We'll see who'll sue. I'm after that box o' gold you an' Hiram stole up there last night.

BART. Well, ye won't get it! That box is in the hands of its rightful owner.

HIRAM. Yes—an' that ain't you, neither, Jabe.

JABE. I demand you to produce that box.

BART. Demand away, if it's any comfort to you.

JABE. You refuse, do you?

HIRAM. } Yes.

BART. }

JABE. We'll see about this. I'll write to the district attorney. We'll see if two good-for-nothing old loafers can steal from an honest man that works hard for his livin'.

BART. Who might that honest man be, Jabe?

Enter FRANK, with the mail.

FRANK. Hello, folks! How's everything to-day? Down to normal yet? Small mail this afternoon, Achsah. 'Twon't take long to sort this.

(ACH. sorts the mail.)

BART. Here's another one o' the forty thieves. Say, Frank, Jabe says that's his box that split my head open. He's just come after it. Says he's goin' to have us arrested for stealin'.

FRANK. Go as far as you like, Jabe. Written to the President about us yet?

JABE. You'll laugh on the other side of your mouth before I get through with you.

ACH. (*coming from behind the mail boxes with an official envelope*). David—David, look—here's my appointment! I can stay! I'm postmistress again! Oh, David, it's all right.

BART. Yah—yah—Jabe Kendall, how do you like that? Let's see—you was goin' to be postmaster, if I remember rightly, wa'n't ye? Tellin' what you'd do when you got here, wa'n't ye? Well, ye didn't get it, did ye? No—nor you won't get your old box, neither.

JABE (*looking sharply from ACH. to DAVID*). "It's all right, David,"—that's it, is it? It's "David—David," is it? Guess I see how the land lays. You an' your petition, David Jameson! Mighty particular to work for her, wasn't you? Guess you knew what you was about. Guess you're goin' to take it easy now, an' live on your wife's salary, ain't you?

DAVID. Jabe Kendall, you take back them words.

BART. Jabe—you old sarpint, you — (*To FRANK and HIRAM.*) Lemme go, boys! Lemme get hold o' the cuss —

JABE. You think I'm down, don't you? Well, I know who drove up from the depot with you, David. An' I know who's in the back room there now. Hannah'll be pleased when I tell her. [*Exit.*

ACH. (*calling*). Oh, Alice—John—I've got my appointment!

Enter JOHN and ALICE.

ALICE. Oh, Achsah, is it all settled? I'm so glad!

(*They all crowd about ACH., reading the appointment and rejoicing. DAVID stands alone by the door.*)

BART. Tarnation, what does it say? Can't somebody read it to me?

Enter the STRANGER.

STRANGER (*to DAVID*). There seems to be quite a little excitement here, sir.

DAVID. Yes, things is stirrin' some.

STRANGER. Can you direct me to David Jameson?

DAVID. Guess I'm the man you're lookin' for. What can I do for you?

STRANGER. You wrote to the chief of police of Chicago some days ago, giving us a description of a man, and asking

us to look him up. (*Shows picture.*) Did you ever see this man before?

DAVID. Jabe Kendall!

STRANGER. Jim Crane, when we had the pleasure of his acquaintance. We shall be mighty glad to see him again too. There's a little matter of an assault with intent to kill some time ago, in Dolan's saloon.

DAVID. Stranger, I'm mighty sorry you didn't blow in about five minutes ago. 'Twould have saved us some trouble, I'm thinkin'. Jabe's stirrin' up ructions just now, an' he's just left to stir up more mischief.

STRANGER. Gone—which way?

DAVID. He'll be back—you just stay right here—an' you won't have long to wait, either. He's goin' to brew his pot o' trouble right here in this store, an' he'll be on hand to stir the mess. (*Calls.*) Bart, come over here. Here's somebody with news that will please you.

BART. Who is it?

DAVID. A detective from Chicago.

BART. After Jabe? Then he did do somethin'? Glory be! When ye goin' to arrest him, mister? What did he do?

STRANGER. Nothing but try to kill a man in a saloon row. 'Twasn't his fault he isn't wanted for murder, though. I guess you won't see him round here for a few years, anyway.

BART. Tarnation! You don't say so! An' him a-handlin' dynamite right in our midst! It's a wonder he ain't blowed us all up. I'm goin' to set right where I be, an' see the fun.

MAR. (*looking around*). My—there's my boarder, now. Gracious! I forgot all about him. I guess he got tired settin' alone, an' thought he'd hunt me up,—me an' his supper. (*To STRANGER.*) How do you do, sir? Ain't goin' back just yet, I take it? Supper'll be ready at six o'clock sharp.

STRANGER. Thank you. I am going to stay here a little while and transact a little business.

MAR. Well, come on, Miss Roberts.

[*Exit* MAR. and HAZEL.]

DAVID (*to JOHN*). Is it all right, John?

JOHN. It is more than right with Alice, David. But mother must —

Enter HAN., followed by JABE.

JABE. There they are—just as I told you.

HAN. (*to JOHN*). So—you turn against your mother, do you? You come to a nameless girl in the village store, rather than to your own home? The whole town knows you're here and why—knows all your affairs—but it remains for your own mother to learn it from a passing neighbor?

BART. To learn it from a darned old busybody, you mean.

HAN. (*to ACH.*). And you? you interfere between mother and son? You and David take it upon yourselves to settle my boy's future? What is it to you?

DAVID. Hannah—Hannah—come into the other room. This is no place for —

HAN. My affairs seem to be town's talk. Let the town hear the rest of it. John, will you come home with me?

JOHN. Not without Alice, mother.

HAN. A nameless girl shall never —

DAVID. Wait, Hannah. Don't say it. There's things you ought to know first.

HAN. I know as much about her as anybody, don't I? I know how she came here, from nobody knows where. Who knows who her folks were?

JOHN. Mother, she is going to be my wife.

ALICE. John—wait—let me tell her. She is your mother, John. (*Holds out the letter.*) Mrs. Webster—Mrs. Webster—please, please, before you say any more, read this.

HAN. I don't want to read anything. I want my son.

DAVID. Hannah, Alice is Charles Blanchard's daughter. Now, will you read this letter?

HAN. Charlie Blanchard—David, how can you be so cruel? How can you speak that name to me now? (*She sinks into a chair.*) Charlie — What does it mean? Give me the letter. I don't understand — (*She reads swiftly.*) Oh, Charlie—Charlie—he forgave me—he thought of me —

BART. Tarnation—I must 'a' got a cold last night, after all. My eyes water like blazes!

HAN. Alice—and you've been living in my house all this time — David, tell me—is it true? Is this really Charlie's girl? Alice, come here—let me look at you—yes, you're his girl! Why didn't I see it before?—David—I haven't been good to Charlie, have I? I wasn't good to his girl.—But I'll make it up to her.—He'll forgive me, won't he, David? He did before, you know—he said so in the letter.—Alice—will you come home?

ALICE. Yes—mother. Come, John.

DAVID. John, the rig we came up in is outside. Take it and drive home.

JOHN. Come, mother.

ALICE. Get the box, John.

JABE. Hannah Webster, have you turned fool in your old age? Are you goin' to let 'em play it on you like this? How do you know this story's true? That box is mine—John Webster, hand it over here!

HAN. I don't need records to know this story is true. I'm seein' things clear for the first time in a good many years. Come, Alice.

(As HAN., ALICE and JOHN go out, the STRANGER steps forward.)

STRANGER *(placing his hand on JABE'S shoulder)*. You are wanted in Chicago, my man.

JABE. Who are you? What are you talking about?

STRANGER *(showing his badge)*. I am Detective O'Hara, and you are Jim Crane, my man. I have a warrant for your arrest for assault with intent to kill. Will you come along without any trouble, or shall I get out extradition papers? We've been looking for you quite a while.

BART *(seizing JABE and holding him fast)*. Don't let him get away, boys! Grab him, Hiram.—Grab him, Frank.—Tarnation, Jabe Kendall, who's a jailbird now? Who's that honest man that worked for his living? Guess it's better to be a loafer than a murderer, ain't it?

JABE *(throwing him off)*. Take me out of here. I'll fight every inch of the way.

BART. Maybe he'll write to Washington, mister. He's great on writin' about folks. Hee.—Guess next letter you write to the President, Jabe, you'll be askin' for a pardon! You'll look handsome in a striped suit, Jabe, now I tell ye!

[Exit JABE and the STRANGER.]

BART. Gosh! I never see such excitin' times since I was born!—Be they really gone, Achsa? Is it all over?—Gosh, I got to find out more about Jabe! Which way did that constable go, boys?

HIRAM. Down toward the livery stable. Come on, Bart, let's go down. I'd like to see the end o' that myself.

BART. I'd like to step up to Hannah's an' find out about

John an' Alice, too. Glory—there's so much goin' on, I don't know where to go first.

FRANK. Come on—come on—you got all the rest o' your life to talk about it in. [*Exit BART, FRANK and HIRAM.*]

DAVID. Well, Achsah, it's gettin' dark. Guess I'll be goin'.

ACH. Going, David?

DAVID. Yes.

ACH. Why do you go so soon, David?

DAVID. Well, everything's all settled.

ACH. Is it, David? I thought so last night—I thought so this morning—but it doesn't seem just the same to me now.

DAVID. Things were different, Achsah. Last night I thought you were goin' to need a home, maybe. But now you've got your appointment, and I—

ACH. David, dear—what I need and what I want more than anything in the world—oh, don't you know what that is? David, you're not going to let Jabe Kendall spoil our lives? He's gone, David—forget him.—John an' Alice are going to be happy.—Hannah's going to be happier than she has been for years.—Aren't we going to be happy, too, David?

DAVID. Well, Achsah, I s'pose the business *is* increasin'. (*Smiles.*) Maybe the postmistress needs an assistant.

ACH. She does, David. I'm sure she does.—An' the mail isn't half sorted yet. Come, assistant, begin now.

(*They stoop for the mail-bag. As their hands touch, DAVID takes ACH. in his arms, and kisses her.*)

Enter BART.

BART (*in great excitement*). Gosh, I guess I'm losin' my mind! Went off without my hat! David—David, do you see my hat anywhere? Achsah, seen my hat? (*ACH. and DAVID start as he speaks, but a button on DAVID'S coat catches on ACH.'S waist, and BART, fumbling about, comes on them trying to unfasten it.*) Tarnation! What's this? What's doin' now?—Gosh-all-hemlock! It's David a-huggin' Achsah!—Glory—what next?—I can't keep up with things nowadays, they happen so fast! (*DAVID and ACH. finally extricate themselves, and confusedly hunt for BART'S hat.*) Where *is* that hat? Can't you find it? Jabe'll be on the train 'fore I get there, an' I've just thought o' somethin' I want to say to him.

I'll be back, though ! (DAVID *at last finds the hat, claps it on BART'S head, and rushes him toward the door.* BART *calls.*)
I'll be right back.—I'll be right back.

(*As his voice dies away in the distance, ACH. and DAVID laugh at each other.*)

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A RUSSIAN ROMANCE

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

For Female Characters only

By *Helen Kane*

Author of "A POINT OF HONOR," etc.

Sixteen female characters. Scenes, two interiors; costumes modern. Plays two hours. A very exceptionally dramatic and effective play for all women, high in tone and quite above the average in quality. Calls for strong acting by three of its characters, has several good character parts and a number of minor parts that call for handsome dressing. An excellent play for a woman's club, easy to stage and absorbing in interest. Confidently recommended to the best taste.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

Mlle. SANNOM (<i>Olga Petrovna</i>), a Russian refugee.	Mrs. TREMAINE, <i>cousin to Mrs. Willner</i> ; a "manager."
MADAME IGNATIEFF, <i>wife of the Russian Ambassador.</i>	LADY GRAY, <i>wife of English Ambassador.</i>
MADAME LUYOFF, <i>wife of Attaché, Russian Embassy.</i>	MADAME DE FAYEUSE, <i>wife of French Minister.</i>
Mrs. WILLNER, <i>wife of Senator, — kindly and inconsequent.</i>	Mrs. WESTON, } <i>Calls at Sen-</i>
ASENATH, <i>her daughter, aged eighteen; romantic but loyal.</i>	Mrs. ELLETT, } <i>ator Willner's</i>
LORNA, <i>her "Baby," aged six; rebellious — "enfant terrible."</i>	MISS DE LORME, } <i>This number may</i>
	MISS FAIRFAX, } <i>be increased if de-</i>
	MISS DE PREYSTER, } <i>sirable.</i>
	SASHA, <i>maid at Russian Legation.</i>
	HULDAH, <i>maid to Mrs. Willner.</i>

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. SCENE 1. — At Senator Willner's. Olga (Mlle. Sannom) arrives in America, in search of her brother.

SCENE 2. — The same. She "manages" the "unmanageable."

ACT II. SCENE 1. — "Calling day" at Senator Willner's. Olga meets an old friend, and is seen by her enemy.

SCENE 2. — At the Russian Embassy. Story of the escape from Siberia. The enemy threatens.

ACT III. SCENE 1. — At the Embassy again. Olga meets her enemy.

SCENE 2. — At Mrs. Willner's. The enemy conquered.

THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE

A FAIRY PLAY

By *W. B. Yeats*

Three male, three female characters. Scenery, a plain interior; costumes, Irish peasant. Plays half an hour. An excellent example of this author's work. It has been extensively used in this country by schools of acting, and the present edition was made for this purpose. Perfectly actable, but most unconventional in form and treatment. Offered to students rather than for acting.

Price, 15 cents

New Plays

THE COUNTRY MINISTER

A COMEDY-DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

By Arthur Lewis Tubbs

AUTHOR OF "VALLEY FARM," "WILLOWDALE," "THE PENALTY OF PRIDE," ETC.

Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery not difficult. Plays a full evening. A very sympathetic piece, of powerful dramatic interest; strong and varied comedy relieves the serious plot, as in this author's "Valley Farm," to admirers of which this play is recommended. Ralph Underwood, the minister, is a great part, and Roxy a strong soubrette; all parts are good and full of opportunity. Scenes are laid about equally in city and country. This will be the "hit" of the coming year, and Clubs will do well to secure early copies. Clean, bright and strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

Rev. RALPH UNDERWOOD, <i>the country minister.</i>	WILLIAM HENRY.
GREGORY HEATH, <i>of the world at large.</i>	TOM SPARROW.
JUD PARDOE, <i>a wreck on the ocean of life.</i>	Mr. FILKINS, <i>an officer.</i>
TIMOTHY HODD, <i>who would rather whittle than work.</i>	HELEN BURLEIGH, <i>from the city.</i>
DEACON POTTER, <i>"just a trifle deaf."</i>	JERUSA JANE JUDKINS, <i>the post-mistress.</i>
	ROXY, <i>"a fresh air kid."</i>
	GRANNY GRIMES.
	FANNY, <i>a maid.</i>

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. — Yard of Miss Judkins's store and postoffice, Mullenville, N. Y., on a morning in August.

ACT II. — Same as Act I, half an hour later.

ACT III. — Granny Grimes's garret, on the East Side, New York City, the following November.

ACT IV. — Miss Burleigh's home in New York, the same evening.

ACT V. — Back at Mullenville, in Miss Judkins's sitting-room. One month has elapsed.

TWELFTH NIGHT

By William Shakespeare

A comedy in Five Acts. Ten males, three females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening. A new acting version of this comedy, based on the prompt-book of Miss Julia Marlowe

Price, 15 cents

New Plays

OUT OF TOWN

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By Bell Elliott Palmer

Three males, five females. Scene, an interior, the same for all three acts; costumes, modern. Plays an hour and a half. A clever and interesting comedy, very easy to produce and recommended for amateur performance. Tone high and atmosphere refined. All the parts good and full of varied opportunity. A safe piece for a fastidious audience, as its theme and treatment are alike beyond reproach.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

MR. JOHN SPENCER ELLINGTON, *the unwilling possessor of a Dukedom, disguised as a valet in Act III.*

MR. ROBERT MAYHEW THORNDIKE, *alias "Bobby," a bachelor by choice.*

JAMES, *butler at Thorndike's.*

MRS. JANE HARRINGTON THORNDIKE, *a widow; mother of Bobby.*

disguised as housekeeper and maid in Acts II and III.

ELIZABETH THORNDIKE, *her daughter.*

MRS. J. LUDINGTON MONROE, *former classmate of Mrs Thorndike's.*

ESTHER MONROE, *her daughter.*

MARIE, *Miss Thorndike's maid.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—At Mrs. Harrington's. A deep-laid plot. An unexpected Duke. Unlooked-for trouble. The best-laid plans. A disguised household.

ACT II.—The same. A tyrannical guest. An imitation housekeeper and a spurious maid. A titled valet. Social algebra. Lifting the mask.

ACT III.—The same. The camel's back and the last straw. The beginning of the end. Mrs. T. asserts herself. The tyrant dethroned. An international alliance and a bachelor reformed.

THE MARBLE ARCH

A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT

By Edward Rose and A. J. Garraway

From the German

Two males, two females. Costumes modern; scenery, an easy interior. Plays half an hour. A bright and amusing little play, suited for any occasion, but particularly for parlor theatricals, because of its simplicity and its independence of stage accessories. Very refined and high in tone. Strongly recommended.

Price, 15 cents

New Plays for Female Characters

THE VISIT OF OBADIAH

A FARCE IN TWO ACTS

By Eunice Fuller and Margaret C. Lyon

Thirteen females. Costumes modern; scene, an easy interior, the same for both acts. Plays an hour. A clever and original play, suited for school or college performance. Full of incident and offers a great variety of character and great opportunity for pretty dressing. Irish and negro comedy parts.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

Mrs. MEHITABLE COFFIN, <i>who has buried her husband and her brother.</i>	MARIA AMANDA VAN ALLSTYNE-SMYTHE, <i>named by her father.</i>
Mrs. HIRAM VAN ALLSTYNE-SMYTHE, <i>her sister-in-law.</i>	ELINOR CARMICHAEL, <i>Cecile's "chic school friend."</i>
CECILE MONTGOMERY VAN ALLSTYNE-SMYTHE,	Mrs. PETER VAN BIBBER.
CLARICE DU MONT VAN ALLSTYNE-SMYTHE,	WILHELMINA STUYVESANT VAN BIBBER.
CELESTE ROCKERBILT VAN ALLSTYNE-SMYTHE,	KATRINA KORTLANDT VAN BIBBER.
CORALIE VANDERBECK	BRIDGET.
VAN ALLSTYNE-SMYTHE, } <i>Named by their mother.</i>	DINAH.
	OBADIAH, <i>Aunt Mehitable's bird.</i>

A PAN OF FUDGE

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Maude B. Simes

Six females. Costumes modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays twenty-five minutes. A bright little boarding school sketch, at once amusing and sympathetic; tone high and quality good. Confidently recommended to young ladies as an effective piece easy to get up.

Price, 15 cents

MAID TO ORDER

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

By Helen Sherman Griffith

Six females. Costumes modern; scene, an easy interior or none at all. Plays half an hour. A bright and vivacious little play of boarding school life, suited for young people and sure to please them. Clean, refined and confidently recommended to the best taste.

Price, 15 cents

NOV 11. 1912

New Plays

THE MISSING MISS MILLER

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By Harold A. Clarke

Six males, five females. Scenery, two interiors; costumes modern. Plays a full evening. A bright and up-to-date farce-comedy of the liveliest type. All the parts good; full of opportunity for all hands. Hymen's Matrimonial Bureau is the starting point of a good plot and the scene of lots of funny incident. Easy to produce and strongly recommended. Good tone; might answer for schools, but is a sure hit for amateur theatricals. Professional stage rights reserved.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

HYMEN TROUBLE , manager of the San Francisco Matrimonial Agency.	SHERLAW COMBS , <i>Sleuth, friend of Buckskin.</i>
SCOTTY BUCKSKIN , a cowboy from Bar X Ranch, Texas.	GWENDOLYN DASHFORTH , niece to Colonel Penuckle.
COLONEL B. PENUCKLE , from Pacific Avenue.	BOSTONIA JOUGHNZ , friend of Gwendolyn.
PETER D. Q. WURDZ , of the staff of the San Francisco Daily Yahoo.	MRS. LOSTA MANN , housekeeper for the Colonel.
DR. FAUNCE RHINESTONE , who keeps an auto.	CASSIE PAULINE SKIDOO , an authoress of the intense school.
	TESSIE TAPP , a typist.

Costumes, modern.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The marriage bureau, Powell Street, San Francisco.

ACT II.—Home of Colonel B. Penuckle, Pacific Avenue, San Francisco.

ACT III.—The marriage bureau.

CAMILLE

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

From the French of Alexandre Dumas, Fils,

By Mildred Aldrich

Nine males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening. A new acting version of this popular play, with full stage business. A complete working prompt-book. Strongly recommended.

Price, 15 cents

H. W. Pinero's Plays

Price, 50 Cents Each

MID-CHANNEL Play in Four Acts. Six males, five females.
Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors.
Plays two and a half hours.

THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH Drama in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE PROFLIGATE Play in Four Acts. Seven males, five females. Scenery, three interiors, rather elaborate; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS Farce in Three Acts. Nine males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY Play in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

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

THE THUNDERBOLT Comedy in Four Acts. Ten males, nine females. Scenery, three interiors; 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.

THE WEAKER SEX Comedy in Three Acts. Eight males, eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening.

A WIFE WITHOUT A SMILE Comedy in Three Acts. Five males, four females. Costumes, modern; scene, a single interior. Plays a full evening.

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Recent Popu

THE AWAKENING Play in Four Acts. By C. H. CHAMBERS. Four males, six females. Scenery, not difficult, chiefly interiors; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening. Price, 50 Cents.

THE FRUITS OF ENLIGHTENMENT Comedy in Four Acts. By L. TOLSTOI. Twenty-one males, eleven females. Scenery, characteristic interiors; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening. Recommended for reading clubs. Price, 25 Cents.

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NATHAN HALE Play in Four Acts. By CLYDE FITCH. Fifteen males, four females. Costumes of the eighteenth century in America. Scenery, four interiors and two exteriors. Acting rights reserved. Plays a full evening. Price, 50 Cents.

THE OTHER FELLOW Comedy in Three Acts. By M. B. HORNE. Six males, four females. Scenery, two interiors; costumes, modern. Professional stage rights reserved. Plays a full evening. Price, 50 Cents.

THE TYRANNY OF TEARS Comedy in Four Acts. By C. H. CHAMBERS. Four males, three females. Scenery, an interior and an exterior; costumes, modern. Acting rights reserved. Plays a full evening. Price, 50 Cents.

A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE Comedy in Four Acts. By OSCAR WILDE. Eight males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening. Stage rights reserved. Offered for reading only. Price, 50 Cents.

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