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A PAPER WEDDING

A COMEDY

BY

CHARLES NEVERS HOLMES

AUTHOR OF

*"Please Pass the Cream," "Their First Quarrel" and "Smith's Un-
lucky Day."*



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
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A PAPER WEDDING

MR. JOHN ROBINSON.....*A Young Husband*
MRS. JOHN ROBINSON.....*A Young Wife*
MRS. SAMUEL PATCH.....*Her Mother*
MRS. ARTHUR CROSS.....*Her Friend*
MISS MARTHA SAVAGE.....*A Maiden Lady*
MARY ANN COOK.....*A Culinary Specialist*

PLACE—*Anywhere.*

TIME—*Afternoon.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Thirty Minutes.*

COSTUMES.

MR. ROBINSON—Business suit.

MRS. ROBINSON—Afternoon gown.

MRS. PATCH—Afternoon gown; hat, wraps.

MRS. CROSS—Tailored suit; hat, wraps.

MISS SAVAGE—Afternoon gown; hat, wraps.

MARY ANN COOK—Hat, wraps, suitcase.

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A PAPER WEDDING

SCENE: *A room in the ROBINSONS' apartment; small table in center with lamp and books upon it; a sofa and several chairs. A rug under the table, pictures on the walls, a calendar on the rear wall displaying clearly to the audience the date "February 28," window and door at right of room with telephone on stand between them; door leading to hall outside apartment at rear of room, and a mantel with fireplace and clock, and a closet door, at the left of the room. A good fire in the fireplace.*

As the curtain rises, MRS. ROBINSON is seated at the telephone, energetically talking into it.

MRS. ROBINSON (*pausing, looking around her, then again talking into the telephone*). Are you sure, Sally? (*Pausing, listening.*) Oh! You heard her with your own ears? Well, if she said *that* I'll never speak to her, not as long as I live! *Why*, the idea! (*Pausing, listening.*) Yes, I guess that's so! She can't see or think of her married friends without becoming peevish. Well, it's not *your* fault or *my* fault, Sally, that Martha Savage isn't married. It's all her own fault with that aw-ful disposition of hers. And I feel absolutely certain, Sally, that there is at least *one* very lucky man in this world! (*Pausing, listening.*) No! I'll *never* speak to her again as long as I live! The hateful thing! (*Listening.*) Oh, must you go? Then I'll see you here shortly—I shall be delighted, and I am *sure* that mother and Jack will be delighted to see you. Goodbye, dear. (*She hangs up the receiver, the doorbell rings, she goes to and opens the door at rear of room.*)

MRS. PATCH *enters*.

MRS. R. Well, mother, how did you find Mrs. Littleton?

MRS. PATCH (*removing her hat and wraps*). I am sadly disappointed in Susanna. Despite the many, many times I

have warned her, she is now *completely* under the dominance of her husband. Of course, Mr. Littleton is personally a very fine man, but no matter how fine a man may be, his wife should never permit him to assume conjugal superiority. My daughter, I believe that you have an excellent husband, but beware!—Priscilla, if you sink to the matrimonial level of my poor friend Susanna, I shall never darken your doors again—*never!*

MRS. R. (*carrying her mother's hat and wraps to the closet at left of room and leaving them there*). I don't believe there's any danger of Jack's trying to dominate over me. Our married life has been *almost* ideal. That is what every one of my friends says—we've all compared notes, and I find that Jack and I have the *lowest* quarrel-record of any of our married acquaintances.

MRS. P. (*sitting down in one of the chairs, gloomily*). Still you never can tell what a single day may bring forth! Priscilla, I *suppose* that you have heard from John by this time.

MRS. R. (*also seating herself in a chair, cheerfully*). Yes, mother, I have just received a telegram stating that he would be back here from his business trip by two o'clock. (*The clock on the mantel strikes four times.*)

MRS. P. (*still more gloomily*). That sounds very much like *four* o'clock, Priscilla.

MRS. R. (*rising from her chair, going to the window, looking out*). Well, it is four o'clock—but doubtless Jack has been delayed.

MRS. P. (*rising from her chair, going to door at right of room, opening it*). I thought you told me that John was *always* punctual, but perhaps that was before the days of the honeymoon.

MRS. R. (*turning away from the window, a little sharply*). I don't see why you are finding fault with Jack. I can remember several occasions when my father was not on time.

MRS. P. (*passing through the door, closing it after her*). Well, your father explained *everyone* of those occasions

most satisfactorily to me. I trust, my daughter, that you will demand a satisfactory explanation from John!

The doorbell rings, MRS. ROBINSON opens the door; MRS. CROSS enters.

MRS. CROSS (*kissing MRS. ROBINSON affectionately*). Really, I didn't expect to get here so soon after telephoning you. But I couldn't stay away a moment longer from congratulating you and Jack upon this first anniversary of your wedding. (*She looks around her.*) Why, *where* is Jack?

MRS. R. (*assisting MRS. CROSS in removing her wraps*). He hasn't returned yet—I expect him every moment.

MRS. C. (*seating herself on the sofa*). Why, Jack has been away quite a while, hasn't he?

MRS. R. (*taking MRS. CROSS'S wraps to closet on left*). Yes, almost a week. I do hope nothing has happened to him!

MRS. C. (*encouragingly*). Don't worry, dear. Nothing happened to Arthur, and he went away on a business trip just before the first anniversary of our wedding.

MRS. R. (*sitting down beside her*). And he came back all right?

MRS. C. (*smiling*). Yes, he came back *all right*—on the day *after* our anniversary.

MRS. R. (*rising and going to the window*). *What a pity!* Did you expect him back in time for your anniversary?

MRS. C. (*with another smile*). I *certainly* did!

MRS. R. (*looking out of the window*). What was his excuse?

MRS. C. (*with a short laugh*). He hadn't any. He confessed that he forgot all about it.

MRS. R. (*turning around, with an amazed expression*). He forgot *all* about it? Your *first* wedding anniversary?

MRS. C. (*seriously*). That is what he said.

MRS. R. (*looking out of the window*). Well, what did you do?

MRS. C. (*significantly*). Mr. Cross has never forgotten another anniversary!

MRS. R. (*turning around, positively*). Jack wouldn't forget anything like that!

MRS. C. (*skeptically*). How do you know? He hasn't returned yet.

MRS. R. (*more positively*). I *do* know!—besides he has just telegraphed.

MRS. C. (*with a smile*). That's *exactly* what Arthur did, and then he forgot all about our anniversary.

MRS. R. (*leaving the window, sitting down beside her*). Well, *Jack* hasn't forgotten *our* paper anniversary.

MRS. C. (*quickly*). You mean, my dear, your *cotton* anniversary.

MRS. R. (*decidedly*). No, I mean our *paper* anniversary—our paper wedding.

MRS. C. (*a little doubtfully*). But—I have always heard it spoken of as a "cotton wedding."

MRS. R. (*more decidedly*). And I have always heard it spoken of as a "paper wedding"—and *Jack* isn't going to forget *our* paper wedding!

MRS. C. (*more skeptically*). You never can tell! A year of married life makes most men very absent-minded.

Re-enters MRS. PATCH *by door on right*.

MRS. R. (*rising*). Here is mother.

MRS. P. (*greeting* MRS. C., *who also rises*). How do you do, Sally? I trust that you and your husband are enjoying health and happiness.

MRS. C. (*pleasantly*). Yes, thank you—

MRS. P. (*glancing at the clock*). Why, it's almost quarter past four! (*Addressing* MRS. R.) Hasn't John come yet?

MRS. R. (*a little nervously*). Oh, he'll be here *soon*.

MRS. P. (*impatiently*). He's more than two hours late. I should think he would telephone.

MRS. R. (*more nervously*). Probably he can't find a telephone.

MRS. P. (*grimly*). Well, your father couldn't make any such excuse to me. There were no telephones when we had our first anniversary.

MRS. C. (*sweetly*). I am sure that you and Mr. Patch had a *very* happy first anniversary.

MRS. P. (*brusquely*). We did not! In fact, Mr. Patch forgot all about our first anniversary.

MRS. R. (*in amazement*). Father forgot all about your first anniversary! Why, mother, you have never told me that before.

MRS. P. (*very grimly*). Well, Priscilla, he forgot about our first anniversary—but he remembered *every* other anniversary.

MRS. C. (*quietly*). Mrs. Patch, that is *just* what happened to Mr. Cross and me—he forgot all about our first anniversary.

MRS. P. (*emphatically*). Of course! All men are much alike—and I'll warrant that *John* has wholly forgotten that today is his wedding anniversary.

MRS. R. (*very positively*). He has not! You wait and see!

Enters MARY ANN from door on right, dressed for going out, with a suitcase.

MARY ANN (*with loud dignity*). Goodbye, Mrs. Robinson! I give you my notice! This roof isn't big enough to shelter both me and your mother!

MRS. R. (*in amazement*). Why, *what* is the matter, Miss Cook?

MARY ANN (*moving towards the door at rear of room*). I've stood *her* as long as I'm going to—besides she has broken rule number 89!

MRS. R. (*addressing MRS. PATCH*). Mother, *what* have you done to Miss Cook?

MRS. P. (*in a subdued tone*). Really, Priscilla, I *don't* know—except that I was out in the kitchen for a short time—

MARY ANN (*pausing, with her hand on the knob of the door at the rear of room*). Well, *that's* where you broke rule number 89! It's aginst the rules of our Association for you to be in the kitchen during certain hours. (*She puts down her suitcase and draws a small book from her pocket.*) Hear *this!* (*She opens the book and reads.*) "No mumber of the household except the cook (or friends she wishes to

invite) shall enter the kitchen, without her permission, between the hours of 4 to 6 and 8 to 10 p. m." That's rule 89 of the United Culinary Association of America, and Mrs. Patch has just broke that rule. She's broke other of our rules, too, and so, Mrs. Robinson, I'm after giving you my notice!

MRS. P. (*humbly*). Miss Cook, I'm *very* sorry. I didn't know that I had broken any of your rules. You see I live out in the country where there isn't a United Culinary Association.

MRS. R. (*entreatingly*). Please don't leave us, Miss Cook.

MARY ANN (*relenting a little*). I like you and your hubby well enough, but if I stay you'll have to give me five dollars more a week.

MRS. R. (*quickly*). You shall have it, Miss Cook.

MARY ANN (*picking up her suitcase and returning to door at right*). Mrs. Patch, I'll forgive you *this* time, but don't let it happen again! (*She exits.*)

MRS. R. (*sitting down somewhat weakly in a chair*). My! That was a narrow escape.

MRS. C. (*drawing a long breath*). It *certainly* was! Oh! Priscilla, there is something I forgot to tell you. On my way here I met Martha Savage, and she said she was coming to congratulate you and Mr. Robinson on your anniversary. I expect she'll be here at any moment.

MRS. R. (*angrily*). I don't want *her* congratulations! The *idea* of her having the face to visit me after what she has said. I told you that I should never speak to her again, and I *never* will!

MRS. C. (*earnestly*). But listen, Priscilla, Martha told me that she had something *very* important to tell you.

MRS. R. (*inquisitively*). What was it?

MRS. C. (*more earnestly*). She wouldn't tell me, but by her manner I judged it must be a very choice bit of gossip. Now, any gossip that Martha Savage tells you is usually very delectable. Moreover, it will be *absolutely* true. Don't

you think, Priscilla, that you had better be pleasant to her—at least until you have found out what she has heard?

MRS. P. (*emphatically*). Certainly, Priscilla, you should be pleasant to her. For my part I'm very eager to learn what Miss Savage has to tell you. Since my present visit here she has told me some *exceedingly* interesting things. If what she has to tell now is as interesting as what she has already told me, I wouldn't miss it for worlds.

The door bell rings, MRS. ROBINSON goes to the door, and MISS SAVAGE enters.

MISS SAVAGE (*kissing MRS. ROBINSON and greeting the others*). I am perfectly *delighted* to see you all again! Priscilla, please to accept my *heartiest* congratulations for your first anniversary—(*looking around her*)—now, *where* is Mr. Robinson?

MRS. R. (*quickly*). I expect him home at any moment. (*She assists MISS SAVAGE to remove her wraps, placing them on a chair close by.*)

MISS S. (*impressively*). Priscilla, I have something quite remarkable to tell you. Of course it will be in the *strictest* confidence. It was told me in the *strictest* confidence, and I should not repeat it to you unless I was sure that you would not divulge it to anyone else. Of course your mother and Mrs. Cross are present, but I feel that I can trust them to keep it an inviolate secret. It concerns a person very high in the social life of this city—

(*The telephone rings, MRS. ROBINSON answers the call.*)

MRS. R. (*taking down the receiver*). Hello! Who is *this*? W-h-y, *Jack*! You don't know how happy I am to hear your voice. What is that? Oh, you'll be home inside of five minutes? Well, you can't get home any too soon to suit me! All right—goodbye, dearest! (*She hangs up the receiver and turns around to the others.*) *There!* Mother, didn't I tell you that Jack would not forget our anniversary!

MRS. P. (*unenthusiastically*). Yes, John seems to be coming home, but if I were you, daughter, I should exact

a rigorous accounting of where he has been for the past week and why he is more than two hours late.

MRS. R. (*gleefully*). Oh, I can trust Jack—I sha'n't ask him anything except what he is willing to tell me.

MRS. P. (*disapprovingly*). Those, my daughter, are the words of a very young and very foolish woman.

MISS S. (*critically*). It seems to me that those of us who are married—and I feel more and more contented with my single state as the years roll by—cannot in these modern days be too careful in watching over the public and private conduct of their husbands. (*Speaking very impressively.*) What I was going to say when Priscilla was called to the telephone (*they cluster eagerly around her*) relates to a person very high in the social life of this city—indeed, none of you would suspect him, such is the clarity of his alleged reputation, of being implicated in wickedness so black—

Enters MARY ANN from door at right, dressed for going out.

MARY ANN (*crossing the room towards the door at rear, in a voice somewhat raised*). I'm going out, Mrs. Robinson. Don't expect me back before ten o'clock.

MRS. R. (*in dismay*). But—Miss Cook—I thought you would help me with my reception tonight—you know it's my wedding anniversary.

MARY ANN (*pausing*). That's true, Mrs. Robinson, and it's sorry I am. But I've an important meetin' to attend, and accordin' to rule number 28 of the United Culinary Association of America I have the rest of this day off, as well as four other days in the week from three o'clock in the afternoon until twelve o'clock. But seeing it's your wedding anniversary, perhaps I'll get back at half-past nine.

MRS. R. (*in despair*). How am I *ever* going to get along without you, Miss Cook?

MARY ANN (*opening the rear door*). Sure I don't know, but my duty is my duty! I'm präsident of the Culinary Association in this city, and we have a meetin' at four o'clock

sharp. I must be on my job—I'll be back at half-past nine. My best wishes to Mr. Robinson and you! (*She exits.*)

MRS. C. (*angrily*). That jars me all over!

MRS. R. (*anxiously*). What on earth am I going to do, mother?

MRS. P. (*encouragingly*). Don't worry, Priscilla. I'll take her place. But Miss Savage hasn't told us yet the name of the person high up in the social life of this city.

MISS S. (*impressively*). As I was saying when that member of the United Culinary Association interrupted me, none of you would suspect this person, such is the clarity of his alleged reputation, of being implicated in wickedness so black and dreadful—

The door bell rings, MRS. ROBINSON hastens to the door and MR. ROBINSON enters.

MRS. R. (*rushing into his arms impetuously*). Oh, Jack!

MR. ROBINSON (*returning her greetings warmly*). Dearest, you can't imagine how *glad* I am to be back—but I never expected to return today. The only reason I am here is that a certain business transaction did not go through.

MRS. R. (*suddenly releasing herself from MR. ROBINSON'S arms*). You did not expect to return *today*!

MR. R. (*a little surprised*). Why, no. When I left home I planned to get back tomorrow—the first of March.

MRS. R. (*in a low, listless tone*). Not until tomorrow? John, do you know what day *this* is?

MR. R. (*still more surprised*). Of course—this is the 28th day of February—I remember the date particularly because I thought there was to be a big business transaction this morning.

MRS. R. (*in a very hurt sort of voice*). Is that *all* you remember about *this* day, John?

MR. R. (*somewhat bewildered*). Why—yes. What is there especially remarkable about this day, my dear?

MRS. R. (*wildly*). You are a perfect *brute*, Mr. Robinson! (*She throws herself down upon the sofa, sobbing.*)

MR. R. (*in utter bewilderment*). What on earth is the matter? What have I done?

MRS. P. (*hastening to comfort her daughter*). Didn't I tell you, Priscilla, that all men are much alike?

MRS. R. (*sobbing more violently*). Boo-hoo! But I thought *he* was different—boo-hoo!

MRS. C. (*to Miss S., aside*). Isn't this aw-ful? Martha, hadn't we better go home?

MISS S. (*with a smile*). You may, if you wish—I shall remain.

MR. R. (*walking towards the sofa*). I don't understand this at all. Priscilla, won't you tell me what I've done?

MRS. R. (*hysterically*). Boo-hoo! Boo-hoo!! Boo-hoo!!!

MRS. P. (*addressing MR. ROBINSON*). Mr. Robinson, I think that my daughter will henceforth be happier under the shelter of her mother's roof. Of course I expected nothing else from a married man, but I fear you have broken my poor child's heart!

MR. R. (*attempting to comfort his wife*). Priscilla, I wish you'd tell me what I've done—I—

MRS. R. (*between her sobs, repulsing him*). Go away! Go away from me! Never, never speak to me again!

MR. R. (*in despair, turning to MRS. CROSS*). Sally, won't you inform me what all this means? Am I dreaming or am I awake?

MRS. C. (*very unsympathetically*). John, you are awake all right, or you will be in a moment. It seems that *you*, just as Arthur did, have forgotten that *this* day is the first anniversary of your and Priscilla's wedding.

MR. R. (*still a little bewildered*). The first anniversary of our wedding! Why, *that* isn't so—no, it *can't* be—our first anniversary comes tomorrow.

MRS. R. (*springing up from the sofa*). You hypocrite! Isn't it bad enough to forget our *first* wedding anniversary without resorting to a false statement to avoid the responsibility for your heartless negligence and wretched imbecility!

MR. R. (*somewhat impatiently, leaving her*). I have not been negligent and I am not an imbecile. We were married last year on the 29th of February. Today is the 28th of

February. (*Pointing to the calendar.*) We were not married on the 28th but on the 29th, so that our anniversary occurs on the day following the 28th, which is the first of March—tomorrow—there being no 29th of February this year.

MRS. R. (*angrily*). Mr. Robinson, you are just trying to dissemble. Our anniversary takes place upon the 28th—today—because we were married on the last day of the month, and *this* is the last day.

MR. R. (*very positively*). That is not so, Priscilla. Our anniversary is upon the day following the 28th, and that day, since there is no February 29th this year—for the 29th is omitted excepting during leap-years—would be tomorrow, the first of March.

MRS. R. (*in a rather high tone*). You are in the wrong, and you know it! I suppose you won't admit that *you* were married in February—well, *I* wasn't married in March!

MR. R. (*impatiently*). Can't you see, Priscilla, that we were not married on the 28th of February but on the 29th. The 28th comes one day *before* that of our marriage, and, accordingly, our marriage took place on the day *after* the 28th, that is, the 29th, or what corresponds this year to the 29th, the first day of March.

MRS. R. (*in a higher tone*). I say I was not married in March—neither on March 1st nor on March 31st!

MR. R. (*irritatingly*). No one has accused you of having been wedded in March. I admit we were married in February, but I will not admit that we were married on the 28th day. You cannot deny, Priscilla, that we were married on the 29th, and the year will not be completed until the 29th, or what corresponds to it—the first of March.

MRS. R. (*hysterically*). I don't care to hear any more of your arguments! You are a cruel-hearted brute! Don't you *dare* to dictate to me on what day I was married—we were married in February, and *you* know it! (*She throws herself down upon the sofa and sobs.*)

MRS. C. (*soothingly*). Well, after all, Priscilla, I guess it's just a mistake. When you consider the matter in one

light *you* are right, and when you consider it in another light *Jack* is right. I should say you were *both* right!

MRS. P. (*aggressively*). Not at all, Sally! My daughter is wholly in the right and Mr. Robinson is wholly in the wrong. Today is her wedding anniversary, because she was married in February, and tomorrow, March 1st, is in the month of March.

MISS S. (*judicially*). I am rather inclined to believe Mr. Robinson has it right. Of course, if there is no February 29th this year, and a marriage was solemnized on that date last year, its anniversary would not arrive *before* February 29th but upon the next day *after* the 29th.

MRS. P. (*sitting down beside her daughter, trying to comfort her*). As I well remember, Priscilla, your father, when he forgot all about our anniversary, was man enough to acknowledge freely his fault. He didn't try to argue the matter.

MISS S. (*obstinately*). Well, *both* of them can't be right. For my part, I do not see the sense of observing a wedding anniversary until a full year has elapsed.

MR. R. (*with an attempt at facetiousness*). I don't believe we were married at all! How could we have been when my wife was wedded in February and I was wedded in March!

The door bell rings, MRS. PATCH goes to the door and MARY ANN enters.

MRS. P. (*surprised*). Why—how is this, Miss Cook? I thought you were not coming back until half-past nine.

MARY ANN (*in a loud tone*). Sure I thought so, too, Mrs. Patch, but when I reached our rooms they were locked. Then I remembered that our meetin' was yesterday—they'll be turning me out of my pridency, they will—and I came back.

MRS. C. (*quickly*). Oh, Priscilla!—Jack—since you are not able to agree upon what day is the anniversary of your wedding, why don't you let Miss Cook decide it for you?

MR. R. (*laughing*). Well, that wouldn't be such a bad idea!

MRS. P. (*seriously*). Perhaps it would be a good plan—

MRS. R. (*sitting up suddenly on the sofa, wiping her eyes with a handkerchief*). I know I'm in the right, but I should like to hear Miss Cook's opinion.

MARY ANN (*inquisitively*). Now what are you all talking about?

MR. R. (*with a smile*). You see, Miss Cook, it's this way. Mrs. Robinson and I were married last year on the 29th day of February. This year there is no February 29th—it occurs only in leap-years—and Mrs. Robinson thinks that our wedding anniversary comes today, February 28th. It seems to me that our anniversary comes tomorrow, March 1st. What do you think about it?

MARY ANN (*puzzled*). Sure I don't know what to think. You say that Mrs. Robinson says her wedding anniversary is today, but you say it isn't. It's not for me to decide between husband and wife, but I've a third cousin on my father's side who's been married three times and is a clear-headed man. I can call him up for you on the telephone and ask him.

MR. R. (*laughing*). Go ahead, Miss Cook—call him up. (MARY ANN *walks to the telephone, takes down the receiver and gives a number. Presently she receives an answer.*)

MARY ANN (*speaking into the receiver*). Hello! Hello! Is this Bill? It is? Well, this is Mary Ann. How are you? (*Listens.*) How's your wife? (*Listens.*) What? There's been an addition to your family? (*Listens.*) What—twins?—again? (*Listens.*) Love of Mike! How many does that make? Ten in all? I'm coming round to see you tomorrow. (*Listens.*) Sure, I want to take a look at those last twins—remember me to Katie—what's that? (*Listens.*) Go on with yez! Who told you? He *did*! Well, I'm not going to be married! It's me for single blessedness and a long life. Oh—say—I nearly forgot what I was telephoning you for. The folks here are in lots of trouble—yes—they don't know whether they was married—no, that isn't it—they don't know whin they was married—no, that ain't it—they don't know whether they was married once or whether they

was married twice—no, that isn't it—sure I'm getting it all mixed up!—just hold on to the line, Bill, until I ask them. (*She turns towards the others.*) And what was it you wanted to know?

MR. R. (*laughing heartily*). About our anniversary—does it come on the 28th of February, today, or on the first of March, tomorrow?

MARY ANN (*turning back to the telephone*). Bill, are you there? You *are*? Well, what they wanted to know was what day were they married? No, what day was their anniversary? You see they were spliced a year ago, on February 29th. Now there ain't no February 29th this year, only February 28th. What they want to know is, does their anniversary come on February 28th or March 1st? What's that? No, *no!* You see, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were married—what's that? Yes, *married*—got *that?*—they were married February 29th last year, and as there isn't no 29th this year, they wanted you to tell them whether their wedding anniversary comes on February 28th or March 1st. It can't be both of them days, and it must be one of them days—which is it? (*Listens.*) That's so! (*Listens.*) Sure it would be. (*Listens.*) I knew that you'd know, Bill. Thanks—yes, I'll visit you tomorrow all right. Give my love to Katie, the children and the last twins. What's that?—you bet!—goodbye! (*She hangs up the receiver, the others gather around her.* MARY ANN *rising from the telephone chair.*) Bill says that your *first* wedding anniversary won't be for three years—till February 29th in the next leap-year. He says that he had a great-grandfather who married February 29th, and his great-grandfather had a wedding anniversary only once every four years. Bill also told me he'd had *three* first wedding anniversaries. Well, I'm going into my kitchen now—but what'll I do about the dinner? Shall I cook it tonight or shall I cook it tomorrow night?

MR. R. (*going to the table at center of room and turning on the lamp's light*). Thank you very much for telephoning your cousin, Mary—er—Miss Cook—we'll let you know

about the dinner just as soon as we decide. (MARY ANN *exits through door on right*. MR. R., *gaily*.) I guess that Bill, whoever he is, has the right of it. Since neither my wife nor I can agree upon what date our first wedding anniversary comes, we had better wait until the *next* 29th of February. But, Priscilla, although we are unable to agree upon the exact day of our anniversary, we shall have to agree that I haven't forgotten that anniversary. (*He draws a small case from his pocket and hands it to her*.) Open it and see for yourself. (*She opens the case and finds a handsome pearl necklace*.) You will have to admit, my dear, that I didn't forget we were married!

MRS. R. (*rushing into his arms*). Oh, John!

MR. R. (*happily*). It seems to me that three years are too long to wait for our first anniversary. I have already admitted we were married in February, and we might as well have our anniversary in February. Of course tomorrow is *really* the first anniversary of our wedding, but I have no objection to celebrating it tonight.

MRS. R. (*smiling*). No, Jack, today is *really* the first anniversary of our wedding, but I have no objection to celebrating it tomorrow.

MR. R. (*laughing*). Priscilla, my dear, let's compromise. Let us celebrate our first anniversary this very midnight—from eleven p. m., February the twenty-eighth, until one a. m. March the first!

CURTAIN.

Safety First

By SHELDON PARMER

Price, 25 Cents

Farce-comedy, in 3 acts; 5 males, 5 females. Time, 2¼ hours. Scenes: A parlor and a garden, easily arranged. A sprightly farce full of action and with a unique plot teeming with unexpected turns and twists that will make the audience wonder "what on earth is coming next." Behind the fun and movement lurks a great moral: Always tell the truth to your wife. The cast includes three young men, a funny policeman, a terrible Turk, two young ladies, a society matron, a Turkish maiden and Mary O'Finnigan, the Irish cook. The antics of the terror-stricken husband, the policeman, the dude and the Irish cook start the audience smiling at 8:15 and send them home with aching sides from the tornado of fun at 10:40. Suitable for performance anywhere, but recommended for lodges, clubs and schools. Not a coarse or suggestive line in the play.

SYNOPSIS

Act I.—Jack's lil suburban home. A misplaced husband. "He kissed me good-bye at eighteen minutes after seven last night, and I haven't laid eyes on him since." The Irish maid is full of sympathy but she imagines a crime has been committed. Elmer, the college boy, drops in. And the terrible Turk drops out. "Sure the boss has eloped wid a Turkey!" Jerry and Jack come home after a horrible night. Explanations. "We joined the Shriners, I'm the Exalted Imported Woggle and Jack is the Bazook!" A detective on the trail. Warrants for John Doe, Richard Roe and Mary Moe. "We're on our way to Florida!"

Act II.—A month later, Jack and Jerry reported drowned at sea. The Terrible Turk looking for Zuleika. The return of the prodigals. Ghosts! Some tall explanations are in order. "I never was drowned in all my life, was I, Jerry?" "We were lashed to a mast and we floated and floated and floated!" A couple of heroes. The Terrible Turk hunting for Jack and Jerry. "A Turk never injures an insane man." Jack feigns insanity. "We are leaving this roof forever!" The end of a perfect day.

Act III.—Mrs. Bridger's garden. Elmer and Zuleika start on their honeymoon. Mabel forgives Jack, but her mamma does not. They decide to elope. Jerry's scheme works. The two McNutts. "Me middle name is George Washington, and I cannot tell a lie." The detective falls in the well. "It's his ghost!" Jack and Jerry preparing for the elopement. Mary Ann appears at the top of the ladder. A slight mistake. "It's a burglar, mum, I've got him!" The Terrible Turk finds his Zuleika. Happiness at last.

Foiled, By Heck!

By FREDERICK G. JOHNSON

Price, 25 Cents

A truly rural drama, in 1 scene and several dastardly acts; 3 males, 3 females. Time, 35 minutes. Scene: The mortgaged home of the homespun drama, between sunup and sundown. Characters: Reuben, a nearly self-made man. His wife, who did the rest. Their perfectly lovely daughter. Clarence, a rustic hero, by ginger! Olivia, the plaything of fate, poor girl. Sylvester, with a viper's heart. Curses! Curses! Already he has the papers. A screaming travesty on the old-time "b'gosh" drama.

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Lighthouse Nan

By SHELDON PARMER

Price, 25 Cents

A sea-coast drama, in 3 acts; 5 males, 4 females. Time, 2¼ hours. Scenes: 1 exterior, 1 interior. Its intense and human story vibrates with startling incident and heart-gripping situations only relieved by the cleanest comedy. It tells the story of a little uneducated waif, mistreated and overworked but full of merriment and kind, natural sympathy for good. A star rôle for a soubrette, one of the best ever written and ranking with Sand's Fachon, Harte's M'Iss. No greater rôle of this type has ever been offered to amateurs. The other parts are almost equally good, leading man, Indian character heavy, dude, old man (gentle) and Ichabod Buzzer, a great part for a character comedian. The ladies' rôles are Nan, the little waif, Moll Buzzer, an old hag, Hortense Enlow, an adventuress who makes good, and Lady Sarah, an aristocratic young woman. The heart of the audience will beat in sympathy with the trials of Nan and rejoice at her ultimate triumph.

SYNOPSIS

Act I.—A Carolina lighthouse, 'long about sundown. Injun Jim starts trouble. "I'm an Injun, and an Injun never forgets a wrong!" Nan learns to read. The locket. "That's the face I always dream about. Do you reckon she is my sure-enough mother?" The visitors from the city. Sir Arthur, the speculator. "I never seen a real live speckled-tater afore." Nan goes hunting for a mollie cottontail and catches an Injun. "Stand right whar you are, or I'll blow you clean into Kingdom Come!"

Act II.—Cap'n Buzzer and his mule January. "That 'ere mule gits more'n' more like my wife every day he lives." Nan bap-souses a biddy hen to keep her from setting. Nan poses as a lady, with disastrous results. Ned finds his wild rose. "You talk jest like the Bible." Injun Jim's secret. "I am your father!" The disgrace of Hortense. Mr. Enlow decides to give Nan a chance and send her to school. Injun Jim and Nan. "Hands up, Injun Jim!"

Act III.—Two years later, Mr. Enlow's library on Christmas night. "Either she leaves this house tomorrow, or I leave it!" Nan comes home from boarding school. Ichabod and Moll visit the city. The Cap'n sits on the couch. "Holy mackerel, I thought I set on a cat." "January's got the heaves, old Sukey's got a calf, the old red hen's got ten little chicks and the blacksmith's wife's got twins. Population is shore a-growin'!" All is right at last; with the ringing of Christmas chimes comes peace on earth; good-will to men!

A Watch, a Wallet and a Jack of Spades

By LINDSEY BARBEE

Price, 15 Cents

Comedy; 3 males, 6 females. Time, 40 minutes. Scene: A living room. Three famous detectives are engaged to unravel the mystery of the disappearance of a roomer. At intervals a number of his personal belongings are returned by post. The wise sleuths discover bushels of clues that involve everybody and bring about a humorous climax. The case was the invention of an imaginative girl in an attempt to secure material for a mystery play. French, Irish and colored servants help supply the fun. Will appeal to schools as there is no love theme.

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An Old Fashioned Mother

By WALTER BEN HARE.

Price, 25 Cents

The dramatic parable of a mother's love, in 3 acts; 6 males, 6 females, also the village choir or quartet and a group of silent villagers. Time, 2¼ hours. One scene: A sitting room. A play of righteousness as pure as a mother's kiss, but with a moral that will be felt by all. Contains plenty of good, wholesome comedy and dramatic scenes that will interest any audience. **Male Characters:** The county sheriff; an old hypocrite; the selfish elder son; the prodigal younger son; a tramp and a comical country boy. **Female Characters:** The mother (one of the greatest sympathetic roles ever written for amateurs); the village belle; the sentimental old maid; the good-hearted hired girl; a village gossip and a little girl of nine. Especially suited for church, Sunday school, lodge or school performance.

SYNOPSIS.

Act. I.—**The Good Samaritan.** Aunt Debby's farmhouse in late March. The Widder rehearses the village choir. Sukey in trouble with the old gray tabby cat. "She scratched me. I was puttin' flour on her face for powder, jest like you do!" Lowisy Custard reads her original poetry and Jerry Gosling drops in to see if there are to be any refreshments. "That's jest what maw says!" Lowisy and Jonah pass the fainting tramp by the wayside and Deborah rebukes them with the parable of the Good Samaritan. The tramp's story of downfall due to drink. "A poor piece of driftwood blown hither and thither by the rough winds of adversity." John, Deborah's youngest son, profits by the tramp's experience. "From this moment no drop of liquor shall ever pass my lips." John arrested. "I am innocent, and when a man can face his God, he needn't be afraid to face the law!"

Act II.—**A Mother's Love.** Same scene but three years later, a winter afternoon. "Colder'n blue and purple blazes and snowin' like sixty." Jerry's engagement ring. "Is it a di'mond? Ef it ain't I'm skun out of two shillin'." "I been sparkin' her fer nigh onto four years, Huldy Sourapple, big fat gal, lives over at Hookworm Crick." Deborah longs for news from John, the boy who was taken away. The Widder gossips. "I never seen sich a womern!" "You'd think she was a queen livin' in New York at the Walled-off Castoria." Lowisy is disappointed in Brother Guggs and decides to set her cap for Jonah. Deborah mortgages the old home for Charley and Isabel. The sleighing party. "Where is my wandering boy tonight?" The face at the window. Enoch and John. "I've been weak and foolish, a thing of scorn, laughed at, mocked at, an ex-convict with the shadow of the prison ever before me, but all that is passed. From now on, with the help of God, I am going to be a man!"

Act III.—**The Prodigal Son.** Two years later. Deborah bids farewell to the old home before she goes over the hills to the poorhouse. "The little home where I've lived since John brought me home as a bride." The bitterest cup—a pauper. "It ain't right, it ain't fair." Gloriana and the baby. "There ain't nothin' left fer me, nothin' but the poorhouse." The sheriff comes to take Aunt Deb over the hills. "Your boy ain't dead. He's come back to you, rich and respected. He's here!" The return of the prodigal son. Jerry gets excited and yells, "Glory Hallelujah!" The joy and happiness of Deborah. "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land."

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