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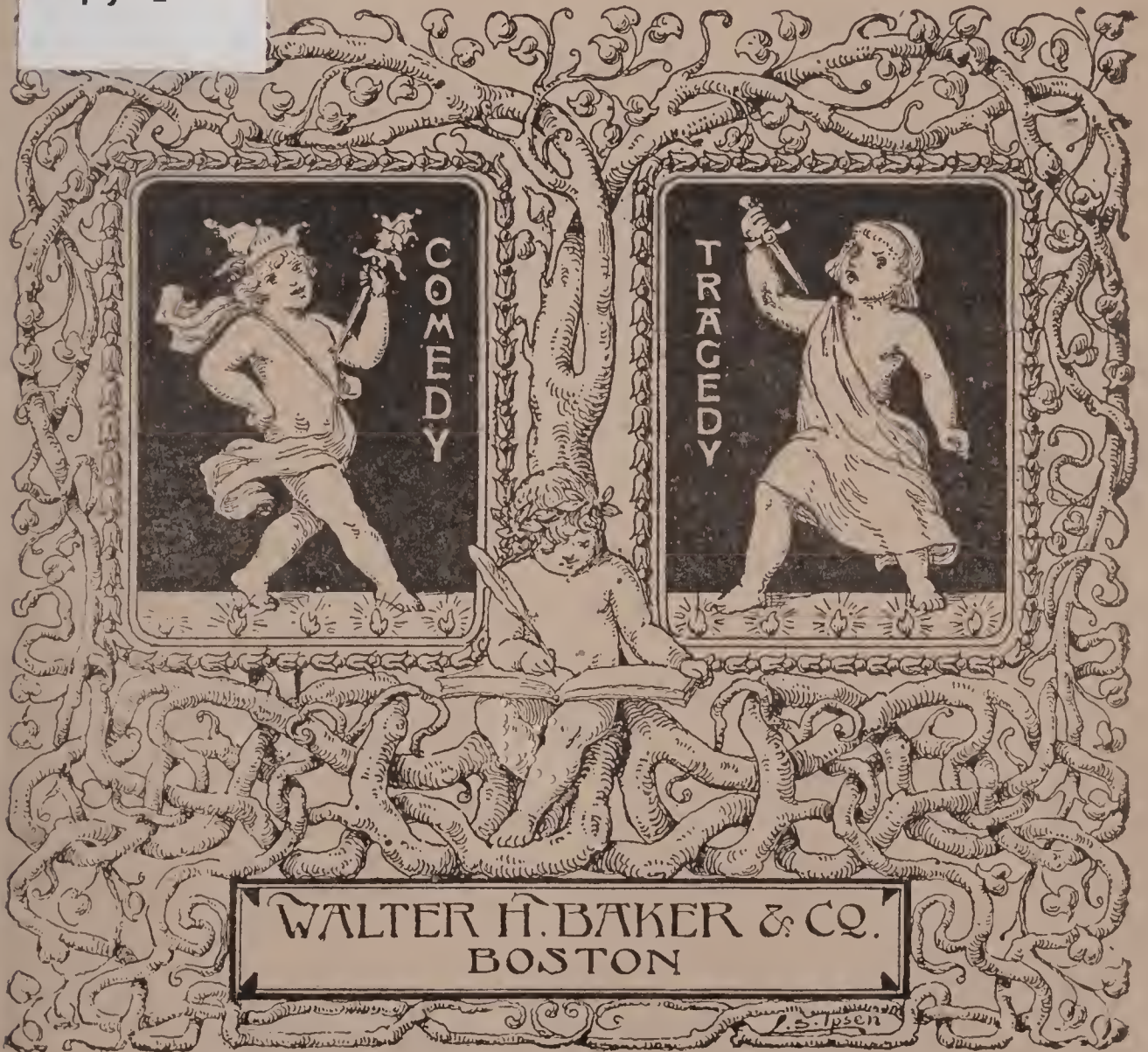
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TURN IN THE ROAD

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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

The Turn in the Road

A Comedy in Two Acts

By

GLADYS RUTH BRIDGHAM

Author of "The Queen of Hearts," "Schoolmates," etc.

*As originally produced by The Cole Class of the First Street
Methodist Church, in Somerville, Mass., March 13, 1912.*

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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The Turn in the Road

CHARACTERS

(As originally cast.)

EZRA STONG		<i>Charles Boutilier.</i>	
HOBART COLFAX, <i>captain of the football team,</i> <i>editor of the "Colton Monthly"</i>		<i>Leonard Rice.</i>	
HIRAM SKINNER, <i>a Woodstock farmer</i>		<i>Howard Chisholm.</i>	
DANIEL HAWKINS, <i>from the backwoods of</i> <i>Maine</i>		<i>Lawrence Taylor.</i>	
THEODORE MORRIS,	} <i>Colton freshmen.</i>	{ <i>Harold Lord.</i>	
JOHN CAMPBELL EDWARDS,			<i>Paul Hewes.</i>
EDWARD CAMPBELL,			<i>Charles Finlay.</i>
THOMAS TODDLES,			<i>Harry Freeto.</i>
MONTGOMERY DONALDSON,			<i>Clarence Collins.</i>

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Stong's room, Colton University, Woodstock Village.

ACT II.—The same—one week later.

Plays one and a half hours.



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The Turn in the Road

ACT I

SCENE.—EZRA STONG'S *room at Colton University, Woodstock Village. As curtain rises STONG sits at table writing, DANIEL HAWKINS studying. STONG writes, and smiles as he writes. HAWK. watches him, and finally throws a book at him.*

STONG. What in time is that for?

HAWK. You look so cheerful you make me sick. What are you writing? A love letter?

STONG. Hardly. I'm not a success with the ladies.

HAWK. Well, you would be if you had the chance. You're just the kind of a fellow to make a girl's heart turn over with delight.

STONG. Where do you feel the worst, Dan?

HAWK. Jeer if you want to. I'm sick of living.

STONG. Well, there's a river handy, but it's awfully cold this time of year. You'd look bluer than you do now, Dan. What's bothering you?

HAWK. Everything. Say, honest, Ezra, if you weren't here, I'd throw the whole thing up and beat it back to Aroostook County to-morrow. I don't fit into this place for a minute. Neither do you for that matter, but you could if you had the chance. There's nothing fair about this deal. Nothing counts up here but money, money, money. You ought to be the most popular fellow in Colton, and there's hardly six fellows who know you by sight.

STONG. Feel better?

HAWK. Why, the bunch that counts are the worst—why, I never dreamed there were such good-for-nothings in the world until I struck in here. There's Morris, Campbell, Glenning, and that silly little 'Foodles, the sickest crowd! They never

know a lesson; they never do anything but go down to the city and rampage around. Yet they are just "it," because they have money. Brains don't count; it's money. Those fellows couldn't do a day's work; couldn't mow a field; couldn't go into the woods and chop a tree! Why, I know things about those fellows that ——

STONG. Yes, I dare say you do, Dan, but it isn't going to help matters any for you to tell me what you know. I don't know any of them but Morris. I don't want to. The less we see of them, the happier we'll be. If you weren't a waiter over to the Woodcroft, you wouldn't be so prejudiced. I dare say they are not over and above careful about the things they say to you ——

HAWK. Careful! Careful! If you knew! I wish you could have heard them this noon! That little Morris kid you are so fond of —— Ezra, it will be the happiest minute of my life when I pour a dish of hot soup down his neck.

STONG. Well, you are peevish. Morris isn't half bad. He doesn't mean half that he says; nor do any of those boys for that matter. It's their way and you don't understand it. They come from the city. You come from the country.

HAWK. So do you.

STONG. Yes, but I've been here three years, and you haven't been here but six months.

HAWK. Oh, of course you'll make excuses. Especially for young Morris. Will you tell me what you see in him? Why you are so fond of him?

STONG. I can't tell you exactly why I am so fond of him. The boy appealed to me the first day that he came up here, and he has a tremendous grip on my heart. I think if I had a younger brother I would care for him the same way. I see great possibilities in him, if something would happen to make him change his style of living. I see what he might be if he was in my place—in your place. I tell you what it is, Dan, we are the ones that really have the chance to make good. Those fellows are bound by golden fetters, and those are the hardest to break. (HAWK. *rises.*) Going?

HAWK. Yes, I've a recitation, and it isn't prepared, either.

STONG. Take a brace, old man. You'll pull through. It isn't like you to lose your grip. You've been putting up a good fight, and you're going to win out.

HAWK. You're the only thing that keeps me going. I'll tell you what bothers me the most. I get so tired that I can't

study, and then I flunk. Books never came any too easy to me, anyway.

STONG. Hope on! There never was a cloud but had its sunlight, too. (*Exit HAWK.*) That confounded cough of his is wearing him out. I must find some way of helping him. Gee, this is a blue Monday all right. I haven't heard anything but tales of woe all day. I'm glad it's nearly time for Morris. He's always cheerful. If it wasn't for that kid, I'd have died of loneliness. Let's see, where was I? Oh, yes. (*Begins to write.* JOHN CAMPBELL EDWARDS *knocks at door.*) Come in!

Enter EDWARDS.

EDWARDS. I say, is your name Stong? Ezra Stong?

STONG. I believe so.

EDWARDS. Well, Ted Morris told me where to find you. He says you stuff his brain for so much an hour. Is that so?

STONG. Well, I tutor him in several subjects, if that is what you mean.

EDWARDS. Several subjects is good. Well, my head is in the same condition as Ted's—only more so.

STONG. What do you want to tutor in?

EDWARDS. Oh, I don't *want* to tutor in anything, but it seems to be a stirring necessity that I should learn something. You see, I can't stay here unless I do throw a bluff in regard to some of the "ologies," and if I should get dropped from President Sherman's calling list, our family would feel that I hadn't been a credit to them. Now, I can't for the life of me see why the instructors should care whether I know anything or not. Dad's paying a small fortune to get me through here, and I don't see why they can't be satisfied with that. I could just board up here for four years to please the family, and then return to New York and every one be happy; but the instructors are the most unreasonable men. So I thought perhaps you could find a vulnerable spot in my brain somewhere and just pour in a few handy little words and phrases that would prove useful in the class room in times of stress. Do you catch my idea?

STONG. Yes, I guess so. How much work are you in the habit of doing? What is your worst subject?

EDWARDS. Geology! And I chose it myself! Now, can you imagine any one doing such an imbecile thing? I thought the course was a series of little picnics in the fields and woods. Honest I did. Now wouldn't any one naturally think so?

STONG. How many lectures have you attended?

EDWARDS. Two.

STONG. Two? Two since the opening of college?

EDWARDS. Why, yes. You don't suppose I waste time on lectures, do you? If I did I shouldn't have to come over here.

STONG. I suppose you are equally well versed in all of your other subjects. Well, I can give you to-morrow at two o'clock.

EDWARDS. All right. Thanks.

(HOBART COLFAX *knocks.*)

STONG. Come in.

Enter COL.

COL. Oh! Are you busy?

STONG. No; I am glad to see you, Colfax. This is Edwards of the freshman class.

COL. Glad to know you, Edwards.

EDWARDS. Thank you. I'm glad to know *you*.

COL. Like it up here?

EDWARDS. Oh, *yes, of course*. Well, I'll see you to-morrow, Stong.

STONG. All right. Good-bye. [*Exit EDWARDS.*

COL. Now wouldn't that make you sick?

STONG. Oh, I don't know. It's human nature. You're a big man up here, you know. Why shouldn't the freshmen worship?

COL. Well, it's mighty tiresome.

STONG. Perhaps; but it's not a bad thing if they worship the right kind of a man. Say, it isn't any of my business; perhaps I've a terrible nerve to mention it, but do you realize what a wonderful influence you have over the fellows, especially the youngsters?

COL. Why, I don't know as I ever thought much about it.

STONG. You'd only have to speak one word either good or bad to get results.

COL. Oh, you exaggerate.

STONG. No, I don't, and it's a good thing for you to realize it.

COL. Sounds like so much nonsense. Say, Stong, here's the money for your friend. We raised five hundred dollars. Will that do all that is necessary?

STONG. It will do everything. Colfax, I thank you from

the bottom of my heart, and as for poor Stevens, well, you fellows can't realize what you have done.

COL. Oh, it isn't much. It's lucky for Stevens that he knew you. We should never have known about it. I never heard of him until you mentioned him.

STONG. Say, Colfax, would you do me a personal favor?

COL. Gladly, if I can.

STONG. Well, you know we have some rooms over in Kendal that we call a Y. M. C. A. Of course it really isn't, but it might develop into one with a little work. It's kind of a good place for the poor fellows who haven't many friends, and we hold meetings, you know. Will you go over there to-night and talk to the boys?

COL. What? I talk in a meeting? Say, that joke is too good to keep.

STONG. It wouldn't be any joke, Colfax.

COL. What in the name of common sense would I talk about?

STONG. Anything. Football, if you like. Just the fact that it was you would be enough for the fellows. I wish you would, Colfax.

COL. It's utterly impossible, Stong. I would be glad to do anything for you that I could do, but not that.

STONG. I wish you would.

COL. I'm sorry. Let me know any time and I will be glad to help in some other way. I really can't do that. Good-bye. [Exit.

STONG (*calling after him*). I wish you would.

COL. (*calling back*). I'm sorry.

(STONG *puts the five hundred dollars on the table. As he writes he throws some papers over the money and forgets about it.*)

STONG (*writing again*). There, that's finished, and luck go with it. (*Puts paper in envelope and seals it. THEODORE MORRIS is heard whistling outside.*) There comes the kid.

MOR. (*outside*). I say, Diogenes, art thou within?

STONG. Yes, come in.

Enter MOR.

MOR. Pluggin'! Pluggin'!—As usual, pluggin'! Stong,

if you keep on, your brain will shrivel to a hopeless crisp, and then what will become of me?

STONG. You might depend on your own brains.

MOR. Believe me, I haven't any. As sure as you're living, Stong, I haven't sense enough to last me over night.

STONG. Well, you certainly don't lack for company. Your friend Edwards was here just a short time ago.

MOR. Did Johnny come to see you? Dear little Johnny! I told him that you run a cranium factory up here. Brains furnished while you wait. I think Toodles is coming over, too. Say, Stong, you can start a little college of your own for youths of limited intellect. Call it *Colton Annex*.

STONG. Morris, did you ever have one serious thought in your head?

MOR. Never long enough to take effect.

STONG. Will you wait for me a few minutes? I just want to drop this letter in the box. It's an important one.

MOR. Sure, I'll wait. It will give me a chance to rest. I'm nearly all in to-day.

STONG. You certainly look it. Why haven't you been out on the river? I wish I had your chance for skating.

MOR. Skating? Gee, I didn't go to bed until four this morning, and perhaps I haven't had a head since I got up.

STONG. Morris! But there, if I should talk I should only say things I've said before. I'll be right back. Say, Morris, this letter means a great deal to me. Wish me luck, will you? Perhaps I'm foolish, but you're the only one there is to do it.

MOR. Of course I will. In whatever you undertake. Luck go with you.

STONG. Thanks.

[*Exit.*]

MOR. Luck! Gee, I wish some one would wish me luck. If he knew the mess I'm in, I guess he'd think I had serious thoughts. What in the name of common sense am I going to do? Do? There isn't anything I can do but let the crash come. (*Sits down by table.*) What a mess I've made of things! Four hundred and fifty dollars to be paid by four o'clock, or Bernstien will write to father and come over here and tell the whole story to the faculty, and it's half-past three and I've just two dollars and ninety-seven cents. The miserly old skin; why couldn't he have given me a chance? By Jove, I'm going to tell Stong about it. His advice is the best that I could have. If I'd listened to him weeks ago, I wouldn't be where I am to-day. Four hundred and fifty dollars, and it took just

two nights to pile that up. Heavens, I must have been crazy. Four hundred and fifty dollars would be nothing to father—and yet I might as well appeal to a stone post. I'll be expelled before the week is over, and father! I'll never face father again as long as I live. I'll light out for some place! Hanged if I won't! (*Brings hand down on table and moves aside some papers disclosing a pile of bank-notes.*) Well, Stong's careless enough about leaving his cash around. Great Scott, a hundred dollar bill! Well, for the love of Mike, five hundred dollars! Who in thunder would have believed it! Why, he's a regular miser. Living up here in this attic and working day and night—and hoarding up money like that. What's the sense? Heaven, how I wish it was mine! If—if—Stong would hurry up and come back I'd ask him to lend it to me. He wouldn't mind, he's so good-natured. He'd let me have it. He—he—he'd let me have it without even asking him if he just knew what a hole I'm in. Why in thunder doesn't he come in? It will be too late! Bernstien may be on his way up here now for all I know, and then I'm finished. I'm not going to wait. I—I—know Stong won't care. I'll—I'll make it all right. (*Writes and speaks as he writes.*) “Back in fifteen minutes. Morris.”

(*Takes all but one bill and exits. After a slight pause, COL. knocks at door. Knocks again.*)

COL. (*stepping in*). I say, Stong! Queer to go and leave his door open to the general public. Then I suppose he hasn't anything very valuable up here anyway, and it gives the kids he tutors a chance to come in, rather than sit on the stairs. (*Picks up paper on table and reads.*) “Back in fifteen minutes. Morris.” That is the son of Graham Morris, the coal king. I wonder how it feels to be the son of a man like that. If he was anything like his father, he wouldn't be coming over here to have his lessons given to him instead of learning them himself. I guess if the truth were known, he and several others in his class are traveling a pretty rapid pace. I wonder if what Stong said is true about my influence over the younger crowd. It doesn't seem possible, but if it is so, I am wasting a good many opportunities to do the right thing. Well, I'll just leave Stong a note. (*Sits down at table and writes.*) HIRAM SKINNER *knocks.*) Come in!

Enter SKIN.

SKIN. You don't happen ter be Edward Campbell, do yer?

COL. No; my name is Colfax.

SKIN. Wall, be this Campbell's room?

COL. No, it is not. Ezra Stong rooms here. Campbell doesn't room in this building.

SKIN. Wall, I ain't much surprised. Somehow, I expected ter find him in somethin' kinder swell.

COL. Well, that's where you'll find him. He's No. 47 Morton.

SKIN. Wall, ben't this 47 Morton?

COL. No, this is 47 Moulton. There's little difference in the names, but a big difference in the places. The wealthiest fellows in Colton room over there, and the poorest room here. The ones who are working their way through.

SKIN. Be 't so? Wall, I'm glad I happened ter git in here. You don't look as if you felt the pinch of poverty very hard.

COL. I don't belong here. I just came over to see one of the fellows. Perhaps I'd amount to more if I did belong here. I wish I was half the man that the fellow is who lives in this room.

SKIN. Young man, I'm glad ter hear yer talk that way. I'm glad ter know yer ain't so stuck up but what yer can be friends with the poor chaps. What might yer name be?

COL. Hobart Colfax.

SKIN. By gum, I thought yer looked familiar. You're the captain of the football team. Young man, I'm pleased ter take yer by the hand. I saw yer play Yale this fall. My niece, Florence Carter ——

COL. Is Florence Carter your niece? Say, I am glad to know you. Sit right down. Here, take an easy chair.

SKIN. Yes, sir, she took me ter the game, an' by gum, I ain't hed so much fun in forty years. It wuz the all firedest scrimmage I ever went ter an' I couldn't no more tell what wuz what; but Florence she ——

COL. Yes, what did she do?

SKIN. She explained things and by gum, when her eyes get that bright an' her cheeks get that red! You know Florence?

COL. Yes.

SKIN. Wall, then you know that look o' hern?

COL. Well, rather! Go on.

SKIN. Wall, when she'd get a-goin' it, I'd get a-goin' it too, an' when she'd wave the Colton flag ——

COL. Yes, when she'd wave the Colton flag !

SKIN. I'd get so durned excited that I'd let out a yell yer could hear clean down in Sembroke County. Then I'd come to and think how 'shamed Florence would be of her uncle, but she never cared a straw. Nicest little gal that !

COL. Yes !

SKIN. But you'd oughter seen us at the end when they wuz a-carryin' you round the field. That's when we did let loose. An' a-goin' home she told me some mighty fine things about you, you bet ! An' I'm proud ter know yer, young man.

COL. Not any more than I am to know you.

SKIN. An' now by cricky, I'm going to tell yer what I came up here for to-day. Do you know Edward Campbell ?

COL. Yes, a little.

SKIN. Wall, what der yer know about him ?

COL. He's a freshman, just entered this year, you know. His father is a millionaire. He seems a pretty fair sort. A little bit wild but he's very smart. He has great standing in his class, and I can't imagine how, for I shouldn't say that he ever opened a book.

SKIN. Wall, he's cut one caper that he'll find ain't so tarnation smart before I git through with him. Last Saterdag afternoon, Louisy, that's my wife, an' I went down ter Sembroke ter stay over Sunday. Saterdag night the hired man went a-courtin' his gal an' there warn't no one left at the house but young Timothy who helps on the farm. He's about fifteen but he ain't bright. He's just about like a five year old kid. Wall, some time or ruther durin' the evenin' two fellers from here called at the house and wanted to buy a cow. Timothy wouldn't sell at first but the one who called himself Edward Campbell promised ter pay sich a reedicrous amount of money that Timothy thought he was doin' some-thin' big an' let him hev the cow. Wall, of course, I supposed it was some more nonsense and thet I'd find the cow in some reedicrous predicament around the place somewhere, but we ain't seen a sign o' her. Now, I've stood all I'm a-goin' ter from Colton students. They've a-kept me a-guessin' ever since I bought the old Holcombe place, an' this is the last straw. I ain't goin' ter stand nothin' more. If Campbell don't produce my cow, I'm a-goin' ter the president o' this school an' see what kin be done.

COL. Of course Campbell will tell you what he did with your cow. Who was the fellow he had with him?

SKIN. Tim said he called him Tommy. Do you know who he might be?

COL. Ye-es, I think so. I tell you, Mr. Skinner, supposing I take you over to Campbell's room. You'll find, I think, that the boys will do the right thing. We aren't any of us looking for trouble.

SKIN. All right, I'm with yer. [*Exit COL. and SKIN.*]

Enter STONG.

STONG. I'm sorry, Morris — He didn't wait. I don't blame him much. Here's a note from Colfax. He's been here too. (*Reads.*) "I just came back to tell you that I will speak at that meeting to-night." Good for him, and good for the boys, too.

Enter MOR.

MOR. Did I keep you waiting?

STONG. No; I just came in myself. If you ever get your breath, we'll begin.

MOR. Say, Stong, I—I want to tell you something before we start in. I—I've got myself into the deuce of a mess. Last Saturday night —

STONG. See here, Morris, if you are in trouble and I can help you, tell me the trouble, not how you got into it. I don't want to hear it. I can guess nearer than I like to.

MOR. Well, then, I ran in debt, in two nights, four hundred and fifty dollars.

STONG. Great Scott, kid, can't you do any better than that? Well, I suppose your father will pay your bills for you.

MOR. That's just what he won't do. If my life depended on it, he wouldn't give me one cent over the amount he agreed to. If you knew the way my father treats me —

STONG. There, cut that, kid; don't whine to me about your father. I know how you are living, and who's footing the bills. Go on with your tale of woe.

MOR. Well, it came to the point that the money must be paid by four o'clock this afternoon or Bernstien was going to write to father and come up here to see President Sherman. It wasn't the kind of story to be told to faculty.

STONG. Well?

MOR. Say, if you had the money you'd let me have it, wouldn't you, Stong?

STONG. Oh, I dare say if I had plenty, I'd do a good many foolish things. Well, it's after four; what did you do about it?

MOR. Well, you see, you weren't here to ask, and—and the time was drawing near—and—and I was afraid to wait any longer—so—so I—borrowed it of you ——

STONG. Borrowed what?

MOR. Why, the money!

STONG. What are you gabbling about, Morris? You couldn't borrow what I didn't have.

MOR. Why, yes, you did have it. There on the table—five hundred dollars.

STONG. Do you mean to say that you stole that money from my table? Speak, do you hear? Speak!

(Pushes him back in chair.)

MOR. Let up, Stong, you're choking me! I only borrowed ——

STONG. What did you do with it? Where is the money now?

MOR. Why, I paid it to Bernstien. I didn't suppose you'd be so stingy with your money.

STONG. Mine! It wasn't mine!

MOR. Wasn't yours?

STONG. No! Do you know what you've done, you contemptible little cur? That money was entrusted to me by Hobart Colfax. It was given by a club of seniors to be used for a fellow in your own class that you never even heard of. He's the kind you don't know anything about. A fellow who has nearly worked himself to death. Shoveling snow, taking care of furnaces, waiting on table, and studying from ten at night until three in the morning for the education which your father is giving to you, and you haven't the brains to appreciate. This fellow is in the hospital now. That money was to pay for an operation and then send him back home and keep him going until he was on his feet again. *(Starts for door.)*

MOR. Where are you going?

STONG. I'm going to telegraph to your father.

MOR. No, don't do that! You won't get it, anyway.

STONG. Not get it if I tell him what it is for—and that you stole it? I know better.

MOR. You have no right to say that I stole it. I tell you I only borrowed it.

STONG. Don't say borrow to me again. You came into my room when I was out—and took money which you found here. You're nothing but a common thief.

MOR. I intend to pay it back.

STONG. How? Why don't you answer? How?

MOR. If—if I should give you so much every week, couldn't you pay the money to the fellow a little at a time, you know, and keep him going? I didn't—didn't take all of it, you know. You have something to start on.

STONG. No. You left fifty dollars; extremely considerate of you. What you suggest could be done, but you wouldn't do it if you agreed to. I wouldn't trust you from here to the door. Besides, what would you suggest turning in to me? About ten cents a week? Your present style of living must use up your income every week.

MOR. I—I—could cut some things.

STONG. Look here, Morris, I'll give you a chance to redeem yourself, and, by Jove, you shall take it whether you want to or not. You go over to Morton and give up your room there and move over here. You can have half of this room at a mighty small figure. Your other expenses will be small. I'll see to that. You'll no longer have my services to pay for as you will stay in nights and do your own studying.

MOR. But—I——

STONG. Don't talk back. You aren't in any position to make comments. Just listen, and if you have any brains at all, try to comprehend what I am saying to you. There will be no more flunking in anything whatever. You will be able to pay in a reasonable amount every week. You have just one alternative. I'll tell you what it is. If your things are not all over here within ten minutes' time, I'll telegraph to your father and also telephone to the police and have you arrested. Now what are you going to do?

MOR. There's only one thing for me to do, and that's as you say. I am at your mercy. Will I have to tell the fellows why I'm coming over here?

STONG. Get out of it any way you like. It's immaterial to me what you tell. Remember, just ten minutes!

MOR. Stong, I hate you! And before we get through I'll make you swallow some of the things you have said! [*Exit.*]

STONG. Oh, what a fool, fool, fool I was to leave that money

here. I forgot it absolutely! It was that confounded letter. It drove everything else out of my head. If it had been any one but the kid! Heavens, how he's drifting. He'll be ruined completely if some one doesn't get a hold on him. I guess I haven't helped things much by making him hate me.

Enter HAWK.

HAWK. For goodness' sake, Stong, has anything happened?

STONG. Yes, this whole world has gone wrong. Dan, I might as well tell you, young Morris is moving over here.

HAWK. Here? Into your room?

STONG. Yes.

HAWK. Well, then you can say good-bye to me.

STONG. Look here, Dan, the kid is down on his luck. Further down than you'll ever be if you live to be a hundred. I tell you he needs your sympathy and your friendship. Give it to him.

HAWK. Can you go over to the hospital to see Stevens for a few minutes? He particularly wants to tell you something this afternoon.

STONG. Certainly. I will go at once.

[Exeunt STONG and HAWK.]

Enter MOR., with a suit-case and a small chair. EDWARD CAMPBELL then enters with a large chair which is piled high with cushions, etc.

CAMP. Lead me to it, Teddy. I can't see for dust. Have I arrived?

MOR. Yes. For heaven's sake, put the stuff down!

CAMP. Come on, fellows. It's great when you get up here. Two more flights. Turn to your left, and it's the fourth door back on the opposite side.

Enter THOMAS TOODLES with arms full of pillows, pictures in his hands, and a feather-duster sticking out from the pillows.

TOODLES. D-d-d-d-don't shove! W-w-w-wait a minute. I've d-d-d-dropped a feather out of the d-d-d-duster.

Enter EDWARDS, carrying a small chair and a collection of college flags, etc.

EDWARDS. Fourth floor! All out! Ladies' coats, suits, separate shirts and shirt-waists! Come on, Donny!

Enter MONTGOMERY DONALDSON, carrying a waste-paper basket full of things.

DON. What a perfectly beastly place to live in! What could you be thinking of, Theodore, to so suddenly amass your belongings and transport them to such an incongruous place as this?

CAMP. Yes, Theodore, how could you?

TOODLES. It's a d-d-d-d —

EDWARDS. Whoops! You're off!

TOODLES. — d-d-d-deuced queer move!

ALL. Hurrah!

EDWARDS. You've got there, Toodles.

DON. What Thomas says is undeniably true. Theodore, why this sudden transition?

TOODLES } (together). Oh—p-p-p-piffle!

EDWARDS } Oh—o-o-o! (Groans.)

CAMP. Yes, Theodore, why this sudden flitting from the family nest?

MOR. Oh, chuck it! You all make me tired.

TOODLES. N-n-n-n-naughty!

CAMP. It isn't very nice to be so peevish when we're helping you move.

EDWARDS. But what in thunder are you moving for?

DON. And way up here to this place so remote from our little world!

MOR. Well, it's the best thing for me to do.

ALL. Why?

CAMP. Chorus! Now, fellows!

ALL (singing). Why—why—oh, tell us why?

MOR. Tell you nothing. You are the darnedest bunch of idiots that I ever met.

CAMP. Don't be so complimentary. You make me positively blush.

EDWARDS. Oh, come on. Tell us. We didn't mean any harm!

DON. We will be attentive.

MOR. Well, I'm not getting along very well in classes.

EDWARDS. What?

TOODLES. T-t-t-t-t —

CAMP. Can it be?

MOR. And my father won't stand for it, and—and--so I'm going to stay over here with Stong for a while—and with his help, perhaps I'll get some kind of a standing. Enough to please my father, anyway.

EDWARDS. I'll bet Stong used his influence for this. He knew it would be a good thing for him.

MOR. He didn't. If any one of you hints a word against Ezra Stong, I'll punch his head for him. If you're going to be friends with me, you've got to be friends with the man I'm rooming with. And another thing, if you come up here to see me, and you find any of his friends here, you treat them the way you do me. You understand?

DON. Certainly!

(They stand MOR. up in a chair.)

ALL. Three cheers! Who'd have thought it? Per-p-p-p—
Speech!

MOR. I've finished. I haven't anything more to say. I'm going over to Morton for some more things. [*Exit.*]

CAMP. Gee! Morris is upset about something.

DON. Probably he is in receipt of a letter from his father.

EDWARDS. You're it, Donny!

TOODLES. D-d-d-d-d ———

CAMP. There you go!

TOODLES. D-d-d-don't you think we'd b-b-better p-p-p ———

EDWARDS. Settle this room? Yes.

CAMP. Sure, come on! Put this chair here!

EDWARDS. No, that looks like the deuce!

TOODLES. Have you g-g-g-g ———

CAMP. And this one here! (*Knocks TOODLES down.*) For goodness' sake, Toodles, look where you're going.

TOODLES. G-g-g g-got any tacks?

EDWARDS. Yes. Here's a whole paper.

DON. I wonder where Stong seeks his repose?

CAMP. There's a sliding couch in the alcove.

EDWARDS. For the love of Mike, Tommy, don't put up that fencing girl poster!

TOODLES. W-w-w-why not?

CAMP. Stong would never seek any more repose with that in the room.

DON. No, Toodles, secrete it.

TOODLES. W-w-w-what?

CAMP. Isn't she a peach, though?

TOODLES. Ti-t-t-t-t —

EDWARDS. Yes, some class!

Enter COL., followed by SKIN.

COL. Well, what in thunder are you fellows up to?

CAMP. Why, why, how do you do, Mr. Colfax?

TOODLES. W-w-w-won't you sit down?

EDWARDS. We're just helping Morris move.

COL. Move? Over here? To Stong's room?

ALL. } Yes!

TOODLES. } Y-y-y-yes!

DON. Extraordinary as it may seem, we are engaged in arranging Morris' belongings in this humble domicile.

COL. Campbell, I've looked everywhere for you, and Morris just told me you were up here. Mr. Skinner, this is Edward Campbell. And, Toodles, were you with Campbell Saturday night?

TOODLES. Y-y-y-yes!

COL. Then I guess, Mr. Skinner, this is Tommy.

TOODLES. Y-y-y-yes, I'm T-t-t-Tommy!

CAMP. I'm sure, Mr. Skinner, I'm glad to meet you.

SKIN. Not any gladder'n I be ter meet you. I've been a-chasin' all over this place a-huntin' fer yer fer the last half hour. If it hadn't 'a' been for this friend o' yourn here I'd 'a' gone ter President Sherman instead a-wastin' my time a-lookin' fer you. But Colfax here insisted on seein' you first. I've got one question ter ask yer before I make yer any trouble. What did you and yer friend Tommy do with my cow?

CAMP. } (together). Your what?

TOODLES } Your w-w-w-what?

SKIN. Cow. C-o-w.

CAMP. I don't know anything about your cow.

TOODLES. N-n-n-no!

SKIN. That won't go, young man! I ain't a-goin' ter have any more foolin'. I'm a-goin' ter have my cow or I'll know the reason why.

COL. Just a minute, Mr. Skinner. A crowd of fellows from your class was down to the city Saturday night. You fellows were all in the crowd?

ALL. } Yes!

TOODLES. } Y-y-y-yes!

COL. Campbell, how did it happen that you and Toodles left the crowd and came back by yourselves? Of course, fellows, it isn't any of my business. I'm just trying to help you out. You don't want Mr. Skinner to go to the faculty, do you?

CAMP. No, we certainly don't; but we can't tell you why we came home ahead of the crowd.

TOODLES. N-n-no, w-w-we c-c-can't.

SKIN. I suppose you don't deny being on my premises Saturday night?

CAMP. No, I don't deny it. We were there.

TOODLES. Y-y-y-yes! W-w-w-we were there!

EDWARDS. You were? Great Scott!

SKIN. Wall, then, I don't suppose you'll deny buyin' my cow?

CAMP. I do deny it, most decidedly!

SKIN. Wall, what in tunket did yer leave yer name for—Edward Campbell, Colton freshman—Morton 47—so I could call an' git my money? Answer me that.

EDWARDS. If the money is what you want, Mr. Skinner, I guess there's enough of us to pay for the cow. How much is the bill?

DON. Yes, most assuredly; before we would see classmates involved in circumstances so unfortunate and embarrassing.

SKIN. It ain't the money I want. It's the cow! I didn't want ter sell and I wouldn't take five thousand dollars for that cow.

TOODLES. W-w-w-what in time w-w-would we d-d-d-do with a c-c-c-c-cow?

SKIN. That's what I want ter find out. What might you claim you were doin' on my premises?

CAMP. We don't claim what we were doing. We can't tell you anything about it, but we don't know anything about your cow.

SKIN. That's too thin! As long as you want trouble, we'll have it. I'm ready!

COL. Mr. Skinner, don't be hasty. Give the fellows a chance. After a little consideration the boys will surely see things right and return your cow. There are reasons why we don't want anything said to the faculty about last Saturday night. As a personal favor to me, please give the fellows a little time.

SKIN. Wall, if yer want ter put it that way, I'll give them a week ter return my cow. Remember, one week. And if I don't see my cow by that time you'll see me down here again, an' it'll mean trouble. I've stood all the nonsense from Colton students I'm a-goin' to. [Exit.

COL. Say, fellows, return that man's cow and stop this nonsense. There's a pretty unsavory story floating around about last Saturday night, and it doesn't do Colton any good. If it reaches President Sherman he won't show any mercy.

CAMP. Mr. Colfax, I haven't his cow. Supposing I had bought it, what in heaven's name could I have done with it?

COL. I don't know. Some of you are capable of doing most anything. [Exit.

TOODLES. D-d-d-d-d —

CAMP. He doesn't believe me either. Here's a nice state of affairs. Tooodles, where do we keep our cow?

TOODLES. D-d-darn!

CAMP. Johnny, I didn't leave my cow in your room last night, did I?

EDWARDS. I didn't notice. I'll look when I go back. What in thunder were you fellows doing on Skinner's place Saturday night?

TOODLES. P-p-p-pickin' d-d-d-daffy-dills.

DON. It doesn't seem to me to be a subject for levity and flightiness.

CAMP. No, it isn't, when you come right down to it. Some confounded idiot has put up a joke on me and there's nothing for me to do but produce a cow. Say, we'll get after Morris. He has a good head for pulling out of scrapes.

DON. Yes, his ability to evade the consequences of his foolhardy actions is remarkable in the extreme.

TOODLES. G-g-g-going to finish p-p-p-puttin' this stuff up?

CAMP. Yes, come on!

(TOODLES, CAMP. and DON. put up flags at the back of stage.)

EDWARDS. Great Scott, what a mess I've landed Campbell in, and how in time am I going to pull out of it? Who'd ever dreamed the old duffer wouldn't take his money? I'd give a farm if I knew what became of the cow. It was very careless of me to misplace her. If I should tell any one that I lost a cow on the main road from here to Sembroke!

DON. Our efforts have not been in vain. The place actually has a festive look.

CAMP. Yes, good imitation of the five and ten, the week before Christmas.

EDWARDS. Teddy ought to appreciate our labors. Wonder where he is.

CAMP. Pipe up, Donny, give us something cheerful. We've trouble enough coming to us. We need something cheerful to start on.

DON. If you'll join your voices with mine in a melody familiar to us all.

(*Song: "Rah, Rah, Boys."*)

Enter MOR. and STONG.

MOR. Fellows, this is Stong.

TOODLES. D-d-d-d-delighted!

CAMP. Glad to know you.

EDWARDS. I believe we've met before.

DON. Pleased I am sure.

STONG (*aside*). Doesn't look as if I'd be lonesome any more.

CAMP. Don't study too hard, old man.

TOODLES. Leave it t-t-to T-t-Ted.

EDWARDS. No, go easy at first. An over dose is apt to have fatal consequences. Coming with us to-night, old man?

DON. Do not discourage him in a righteous effort in scholastic research.

CAMP. Here's to Theodore Morris, the pride of the Colton freshmen.

EDWARDS. Three times three!

ALL. } Good-night, Ted!

TOODLES. } Good-night, T-t-t-Ted!

MOR. Good-night.

(*Boys exit singing, "He's a jolly good fellow." MOR. stands watching them and then drops down in a chair.*)

STONG. Say, Morris, I—I—don't want you to take this thing too hard! I——

MOR. Don't offer me pity. I can stand anything but that. Stong, I realize what I have been doing since I came up here and what a mess I've made of things. You may not believe in what I am saying, but I've come to the *turn in the road*

and I'm going to live a different life. Don't force me. All my life I've been forced and when I came here and had my first liberty, it was more than I could stand. Stong, I need your help. Will you give it to me?

STONG. With all my heart and soul.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I.*

(*As curtain rises STONG is studying. HAWK. and MOR. sit together. HAWK. is helping MOR. with lessons.*)

HAWK. Now do you understand ?

MOR. No, I don't.

HAWK. Don't you grasp the idea at all ?

MOR. No, I'm hanged if I do. I could grasp a hunk of apple pie if I should see it about this time, but I can't grasp the meaning of that stuff.

STONG. If you'd let your mind soar above your stomach you might be able to.

MOR. Oh, quit your kidding. If I starve to death, you won't think it's such a joke !

HAWK. You're the hungriest proposition I ever met, Ted. Why, the hired hand on Dad's farm isn't a comparison.

MOR. Don't you take sides with Stong. Tell me that all over again, will you ? That's a good fellow !

STONG (*aside ; watching them*). "It will be the happiest moment of my life when I pour a dish of hot soup down his neck." Oh, you Ted ! It's taken him just five days to get around Hawkins for keeps.

MOR. Eureka ! Hurrah ! Three cheers ! Colton ! America !

STONG. Will you kindly explain the meaning of such an unseemly disturbance ?

MOR. I have grasped an idea.

STONG. I don't wonder that you want to celebrate.

MOR. Oh, take a fellow your own size ! Why say, I've studied two hours. By George, I'll have brain fatigue and then you fellows will wish you hadn't been so cruel ! I'm going out on the pond. Are you going out, Stong ?

STONG. Yes.

MOR. Gee, Stong, Hawkins ought not to cough so much. What in thunder are we going to do about him anyway ?

STONG. I don't know. He's overworked, no question about that, but I suppose something will happen so that we can get around it in some way. Say, Dan, will you stay here, and keep our room open? I'll be right back. I'm expecting Colfax.

HAWK. All right. I'll stay.

MOR. See you later, old man. [*Exit STONG and MOR.*]

HAWK. Great kid, that! I wonder whatever happened to make him come over here to live. This is a mighty different place than it was a week ago. Well, I'll have a go at this stuff. I'd rather chop wood. (*DON. knocks.*) Come in.

Enter DON. and TOODLES.

TOODLES. H-h-h-hello, H-h-h-Hawkins.

DON. Good-afternoon.

HAWK. Hello! Will—will you sit down? I am alone here. I think Stong will be right in but Morris has gone skating.

DON. Theodore's activity is so manifest that it is positively tiring to his agile associates.

TOODLES. S-skating? I w-w-wish I d-d-didn't have anything else t-t-t-t-to think of. I—t-t-t-t—hang!

DON. Perhaps, Thomas, I can state the case for you. We are glad indeed to find you alone, Hawkins. We would propound a few questions if we may?

TOODLES. Y-y-y-yes, if you d-d-d-don't mind?

HAWK. Why, no, of course not. I'll be glad to answer if I can.

TOODLES. T-t-t-t-thanks!

DON. You have spent your young days, I take it, in sylvan districts?

HAWK. Would you mind repeating the last?

DON. In sylvan districts. Those where fields and flowers abound.

HAWK. Oh, yes, I was born and brought up in the back woods of Maine.

DON. On an agricultural estate.

HAWK. Yes, on a *farm*.

DON. Then without a doubt you are familiar with the modes and customs of cows.

TOODLES. Y-y-yes, of c-c-cows!

HAWK. Of the modes and customs of cows! Oh, yes, I know a cow when I see one.

DON. Well, so far, so good! Now, if you wanted to trace a cow which had been stolen, what in your opinion would be the most expeditious way of doing it?

TOODLES. Y-y-yes, h-h-how would you do it?

HAWK. Find a cow which had been stolen? Is this a detective job or is it my own cow which I'm to find?

DON. Oh, most assuredly your own cow, but one which you have never seen.

HAWK. (*aside*). What kind of a jolly do they think they're giving me? By Jove, I'll give them an answer. Well, it is a little hard to find a cow you've never seen. I suppose you've heard that no two cows have eyes alike and that no cow ever had two eyes alike.

TOODLES. N-n-n-no!

DON. How extraordinary!

HAWK. You never knew that? But then why should you? You have lived all your lives in the city. Well, the only way to trace a lost cow is by her eyes. You would have to find some one who had seen the cow and get a description of the eyes and then you could easily find her.

TOODLES. G-g-g-good gracious!

DON. Marvelous!

HAWK. Yes, isn't it? I've often thought so myself. You know sometimes they have one blue eye and one black one, and sometimes two black eyes with a rim of pink around one and a rim of green around the other.

TOODLES. M-m-m-mercy!

DON. You interest me exceedingly, Hawkins. I think I will study into the unusual conditions existing in the rural regions of our country. No doubt you could tell me many things equally surprising.

HAWK. You bet I could. That isn't a patch on what I could tell if I should get started.

DON. We had better wend our way, Thomas. I have a brilliant idea. We are duly grateful to you for your timely assistance.

TOODLES. Y-y-y-yes, t-t-thanks, old man!

HAWK. Don't mention it. (*Exit TOODLES and DON.*) Well, what *do* you know about that? Gosh, they believed it! Probably they will wend their way to some sylvan district and gaze into the eyes of the cows they meet. One thing is sure, they won't see anything more extraordinary when they gaze at the cows than the cows will see when they return the gaze.

"Your own cow but one which you never saw!" I wonder what kind of a joke this is, anyway?

Enter EDWARDS.

EDWARDS. Hello, Hawkins, have the fellows been up here? I can't find any of them.

HAWK. Donaldson and Toodles have just gone out. Morris is skating. Say, Edwards, will you tell me what ails Donaldson? I think some of his friends ought to look after him. Do you think he's in his right mind all of the time?

EDWARDS. Oh, yes, he's harmless enough. Noah Webster was one of his ancestors and his family have never recovered from it. Donny cut his teeth on the dictionary. I guess I'll chase after the kid. Say, Hawkins, did you ever get into a scrape in your life?

HAWK. Yes, I played hookey from school once and went down to the village to the circus.

EDWARDS. Oh, quit! I mean something serious.

HAWK. Well, that was quite serious enough for me. It was one of the tragic events of my life. I walked five miles to the village and the first person I met when I got inside of the circus tent was my father and I had to walk five miles home again without seeing the show.

EDWARDS. Gee, that was tough lines, wasn't it? Say, you've always lived in the country, haven't you?

HAWK. Yes.

EDWARDS. Well, then, probably you are familiar with cows.

HAWK. With cows?

EDWARDS. Yes, their peculiarities. They don't have spells of shrinking, do they?

HAWK. Well, I never happened to be present during such a spell. What's the joke?

EDWARDS. You just bet it isn't any joke. Now, listen, Hawkins, because it's really important. I never was in such a mess in my life. If—if you were going along a road, a perfectly straight road, and you were leading a cow, a perfectly straight cow and you should turn around for a minute and when you turned back again you weren't leading the cow, and the cow had disappeared, and there wasn't any place for the cow to disappear to, now what would you think?

HAWK. I should think I had 'em!

Enter CAMP.

CAMP. Johnny, for heaven's sake, come out of this. Where's Toodles?

HAWK. He went out with Donaldson.

EDWARDS. What's the matter?

CAMP. Skinner is here. He's on his way over here now. He's looking for me. He's going to kick up the deuce of a row! We mustn't see him.

EDWARDS. Confound it, no! Not yet!

CAMP. Hawkins, if you have any feeling for any of us, any love and pride in Colton, help us *now*. This confounded old duffer is after *me*. You—you stay here and meet him and hang on to him. Don't let him out of your sight. Not for one minute, and talk to him, talk his head off! Keep his mind occupied, don't give him time to think, and whatever you do, don't speak the word—cow. [*Exeunt* CAMP. and EDWARDS.]

HAWK. Well, I'll be —— Has every one gone daffy on the subject of cows?

(SKIN. *knocks and enters.*)

SKIN. Be you Stong?

HAWK. No, sir, I'm not.

SKIN. Wall, don't Stong ever be in his own room?

HAWK. Why, yes, sometimes. Won't you sit down and wait? I think he'll be right in.

SKIN. Oh, it ain't him I want ter see. It's Campbell. Edward Campbell. A feller over in his room told me he wuz over here in Stong's room. By cricky, you don't any of yer seem ter stay in yer own room. Ye're always in some other feller's. Have yer seen Campbell?

HAWK. Yes, sir, he has been here, but he has gone.

SKIN. I'll bet he has. By Jiminy, he kept me a-going from one place to another a-huntin' fer him all last Monday afternoon. Does he ever stop travelin' fer anything?

HAWK. Yes; breakfast, dinner and supper.

SKIN. Wall, you don't look as if you even stopped fer meals. I tell yer what, boy, yer ought not to cough that way. How long yer been at it?

HAWK. Oh, a couple of months, I guess. I got cold, and I can't seem to shake the cough. It's better, though. I'm all right.

SKIN. Wall, it's more than yer look. You belong in this building?

HAWK. Yes, sir; across the hall.

SKIN. Then I take it ye're one o' those boys that Colfax chap was a-tellin' about, that's working their way through.

HAWK. Well, supposing I am? I'm not alone. I have plenty of company, and I'm not doing half of what some of the boys are doing.

SKIN. Boy, who in heaven's name be yer, and where do yer come from?

HAWK. Why, my name is Hawkins—and my home is in Maine.

SKIN. What wuz yer mother's name before she wuz married, and where did she come from?

HAWK. Why! Rose Skinner, and she lived in Sutland, Vermont. Did you know her?

SKIN. Did you ever hear her mention a brother—Hiram?

HAWK. Why, yes, of course.

SKIN. Wall, I'm Hiram Skinner.

HAWK. You? Then you are my uncle!

SKIN. That's who I be, an' I knew it the minit I got a good look at yer. You've got Rose's face, an' just her way of smiling an' speakin'.

HAWK. Yes, I know I have. Say, but I'm glad ——

SKIN. Hold on a minit! Did yer mother ever tell yer why she ain't heard from me all these years?

HAWK. No, sir.

SKIN. Wall, yer wait until I've told yer, and yer mayn't want ter shake hands. Yer mother is well? (HAWK. *nods*.) An' yer father's livin'?

HAWK. Yes, sir.

SKIN. Yer may have heard yer mother tell that yer grand-father died when she wuz a little gal, an' I bein' more'n ten years older'n her, naturally looked out fer her. She lived with me, an' I provided for her, an' I got ter think thet she must do jest ez I wanted her to. Wall, when she got ter lovin' your father, I wouldn't listen fer a minit. Thar wuz a young minister at the church, an' he wuz wild 'bout Rose, an' I wuz dead set for it, but she wouldn't listen. Finally, one night, I told her she could give up young Hawkins or git out o' my house. The next day she went ter the young minister's with Hawkins, an' by cricky, the feller thet wuz in love with her married her to another man. Hawkins took her home thet night to his mother, an' a month later they left fer some place in Maine. She tried ter see me 'fore she went, and she wrote after she got down in Maine, but I returned the letter without ever opening

it. I swore I'd never see her agin. Five years went by an' then my boy died. Dan wuz jest a baby when she went away, an' she worshiped him. Then I wrote ter her an' the letter came back. They'd moved away an' nobody knew where. It served me right. I never wanted anything in my life as I wanted Rose then, an' I've wanted her ever since. Now, lad, do yer want ter call me uncle?

HAWK. I surely do. My mother, I know, never held any ill feeling toward you. Why should I?

SKIN. Lord, I can't realize the luck that sent me down here. Ter think Rosie's got a boy right here in Colton a-workin' himself ter death fer an education, and an uncle almost within a stone's throw with so much he don't know what ter do with it, but thar, we won't talk about it now. I want thet you should come out with me and find Campbell. I've got ter speak ter him 'bout my cow.

HAWK. Your what?

SKIN. Cow! Cow!

[*Exit.*

HAWK. (*following him*). Well, for the love of ——

Enter EDWARDS and CAMP.

CAMP. You're sure they've gone out?

EDWARDS. Yes; there they go over toward Lover's Lane.

CAMP. What in time do you suppose they were talking about so long?

EDWARDS. Hanged if I can imagine! Hawkins is a good one to get him away.

CAMP. It's no use. I might as well give up. I'm finished for sure.

EDWARDS.

Campbell bought a little cow,
And started on his way.
He lost her, ah, he knows not how,
And now the deuce is to pay!

CAMP. Oh, forget it. You won't feel so blamed lively after Mr. Skinner has seen President Sherman. You seem to forget that all of that night's adventures will come to light, and where will we all be after the cyclone strikes?

EDWARDS. Back in the haunts of our boyhood days. Seriously, Ned, I realize that we haven't any of us the ghost of a show, even for probation. We lost our heads for sure that

last night at Bernstien's. We have shut every one up excepting Skinner, and if it wasn't for his confounded cow!

CAMP. Yes, how can I produce a cow I never bought, I never saw, and as far as we can find out no one else ever saw? I've exhausted every resource. By Jove, if I could get my hands on the fellow that bought that cow in my name.

EDWARDS. Read this, Ned. (*Hands him a slip of paper.*)

CAMP. (*reading*). "Found on the Sembroke road, near the Seaton road, on the night of February 26th—a cow. Address Woodstock—Box 65." Where did you get this? It's my cow!

EDWARDS. Yes, I think it must be. I cut it out of the *Sembroke Chronicle*.

CAMP. If I'd only seen it before so I could have answered before Skinner got down here.

EDWARDS. I answered it.

CAMP. You did? What did you say

EDWARDS. Asked them to call at this room this afternoon at four.

CAMP. And it's five minutes of. Jack, you've saved my life.

EDWARDS. Hold on, old man. Wait until we see how things turn out. Here's some one coming now.

Enter DON. and TODDLES.

TODDLES. F-f-f-f-fellows, l-l-l-listen!

DON. Yes, give us your attention. We have learned of scientific developments in cows of which we never dreamed.

TODDLES. Y-y-yes, w-w-we have f-f-f-found out h-h-h-how to do it.

CAMP. } (*together*). Do what?

EDWARDS }
DON. Trace a cow which has deviated.

TODDLES. Y-y-y-yes!

CAMP. Indeed? Well, we shall be delighted to be enlightened.

TODDLES. D-d-d-d-d ———

EDWARDS. Yes, for goodness' sake, fire away. Tommy looks as if he would burst in a minute if you don't. How are you going to trace our cow?

DON. By her dissimilar optics.

TODDLES. Y-y-y-yes, b-b-b-by her eyes.

CAMP. Oh, gosh!

EDWARDS. There, my lad, sit here. This excitement has affected your mind. I was afraid it would.

TOODLES. B-b-y-b —

DON. I protest against your foolishness, John. It can easily be done. No two cows have eyes alike. No cow has two eyes alike.

EDWARDS. Sh, hush! There, don't take it so hard. (COL. *knocks*.) Come in!

Enter COL.

COL. Hello, fellows!

DON. Good-afternoon!

EDWARDS. How do you do?

TOODLES. H-h-h-hello.

CAMP. Here, have this chair.

COL. No, don't get up! I wish you fellows would stop acting as if I was the president of Colton. There'd be some chance of our getting friendly if you would.

EDWARDS. Do you want to be friends with us?

TOODLES. Y-y-yes, d-d-d-do you?

COL. Well, you didn't think I wanted to be enemies, did you?

DON. Certainly not, but we realize how multitudinous are your duties and how many friends and acquaintances you have to make demands upon your valuable time.

COL. Always time for a few more friends. Campbell, have you succeeded in producing a cow for Mr. Skinner?

CAMP. Mr. Colfax, if—if any one else says cow to me I won't answer for the consequences. My nerves are getting on edge.

EDWARDS. I wish we could make you believe, Mr. Colfax, that the fellows didn't have anything to do with the loss of Mr. S.'s cow.

TOODLES. Y-y-yes, w-w-we never saw his c-c-cow. W-w-we never wanted to see his c-c-cow. W-w-we w-w-wouldn't know what to d-d-do with a c-c-cow if w-we had one.

COL. I guess that's right, Toodles. I'll tell you frankly, Campbell, that last Monday I believed that you were mixed up in the affair, but on Tuesday I overheard a conversation between you and Toodles that settled things. Then I tried to think up a way of helping you out. It was the hardest thing I ever undertook. I didn't dare to say anything to anybody for fear something would leak out about your racket at Bernstien's.

CAMP. Mr. Colfax, how do *you* know anything about Bernstien's?

COL. I was there.

TOODLES. W-w-what?

DON. At Bernstien's?

COL. Yes.

CAMP. That night?

COL. Yes. It was this way. My father came up to Sem-broke that day on business. He telephoned out here for me to come down to Bernstien's to supper. He had a private room. It was the next one to yours. It was absolutely impossible not to hear what was said and guess at what was going on. The most of your crowd weren't in any condition to care whether you were overheard or not. That was why I thought it more than likely that you visited Mr. Skinner's place that night. When I found out my mistake I tried to find a way out of the muddle. It seems as if the deuce was to pay that night. The S. I. X. boys were out in full force initiating new members, and they never know where to stop. It was very evident that some one had taken Mr. Skinner's cow, and it was more than likely that in some way they had lost her, for it was Monday when he was here and the cow hadn't been returned. No matter how crazy headed a crowd may be they wouldn't be insane enough to *steal* a cow from a man like Mr. Skinner. Probably if there hadn't been secrets to have been kept and you could have spoken out good and loud in regard to the matter, you could have got at the truth of the thing that night. Well, I thought I'd see if I could discover if the cow had been found, so I sent an *ad* to the *Sembroke Chronicle*. The idiots printed it in the wrong column, so that it read—*found* a cow, instead of *lost* one. Will you look at this! Answers! I used to think there were a few honorable men in the world. I have received letters from seventeen Woodstock farmers claiming that they lost a cow, and without a doubt it's the one I found. If what they say is true, there was something doing among the Woodstock cows on the evening of the 26th.

EDWARDS. Is this your *ad*?

COL. Yes.

(SKIN. *knocks*.)

CAMP. Good-night!

COL. So, as near as I can see, we're just where we were a week ago to-day.

EDWARDS. Well, it isn't your fault, and I tell you what it is, Mr. Colfax, we appreciate what you've tried to do for us.

(SKIN. *knocks.*)

CAMP. You bet we do.

TOODLES. Y-y-y-yes!

DON. Most assuredly.

Enter SKIN.

SKIN. Don't think I come in 'thout knockin'; I didn't. I knocked twice, but you're so durned excited in here you don't know what's goin' on outside. Wall, boys, I got my cow all right. Who wuz the other four?

ALL. What?

SKIN. Boys, o' course.

COL. We don't quite understand. You say your cow was returned?

SKIN. (*looking at CAMP.*). Why, o' course.

CAMP. Don't look at me. I don't know anything about that cow.

TOODLES. N-n-n-no!

SKIN. Yer don't? Wall, who in tunket did send her home with a pink ribbon 'round her neck and a card sayin', "With the compliments o' the six"?

COL. I'll tell you, Mr. Skinner. The six is a secret society called the S. I. X. They were initiating new members that night, which accounts for many things.

CAMP. It accounts for our being on Mr. Skinner's place.

TOODLES. Y-y-y-yes.

EDWARDS. Yes, and as long as the *six* have made the thing public it gives me a right to speak. It accounts for the fact that I bought Mr. Skinner's cow.

ALL. You?

SKIN. By gum!

DON. Will marvels never cease?

CAMP. What in thunderation did you give my name for?

EDWARDS. I didn't. I said Campbell Edwards—Morton 74, and that kid at the farm got it just the other way to—Edward Campbell—Morton 47.

SKIN. That's Timothy out an' out!

EDWARDS. I haven't any right to tell what Tommy I had with me, but it wasn't Tommy Toodles.

TOODLES. N-n-n-no!

SKIN. I don't want thet you boys should think thet I'm too onreasonable, but I wuz put out when I lost that cow, an' I hev stood a heap from Colton students. Now I want ter make up for whatever hard things I said last Monday, so if you'll all be ready Friday night, I'll be down with a couple o' double sleighs and we'll hev a ride out ter the farm, and my niece Florence Carter'll be out thar with some o' her friends an' we'll hev a supper an'——

CAMP. Hurrah! Three cheers!

TOODLES. L-l-lovely!

COL. I'll be there!

EDWARDS. Lead me to it!

COL. Say, fellows, come on out and help me find Morris. I just happened to think that I have some good news for him.

ALL. All right. Sure, we will! [*Exeunt all.*]

Enter MOR.

MOR. Deserted? That's something unusual. Dan's a good one to keep a room open. (*Boys call from outside.*) Hello, what's going on?

CAMP. Say, Teddy, are you up there?

MOR. Yes; what's the trouble? Building on fire?

Enter boys, followed by COL.

EDWARDS. Say, you're the fellow! Three cheers for Teddy.

CAMP. Didn't we always tell you that you were the pride of the Colton freshmen?

DON. Here's Mr. Colfax, who wishes to see you.

TOODLES. Listen t-t-t-to the news!

MOR. What in thunder is the row? Oh, I say, Mr. Colfax. Won't you sit down? I expect Stong right in.

COL. I didn't come to see Stong this time. I came to see you. We just went out to look for you, but Campbell saw you coming in so we came back. A few weeks ago the *Colton Monthly* offered a prize of one hundred dollars for the best poem submitted within a given time. I have the pleasure to inform you that this little poem entitled "Honor," which you sent in, has won the prize.

MOR. What?

DON. Congratulations, Theodore!

TOODLES. You're in the s-pot light this t-t-time, T-t-t-Ted!

EDWARDS. Tell us there isn't any talent in our crowd, if you dare!

CAMP. Are we in it? I guess we are!

MOR. Say, I can hardly realize it. Gee, won't my father be tickled! He never would have believed that I was equal to any such stunt as that.

COL. Well, he'll have to this time. You certainly did a clever stunt. We had some mighty good things passed in, but nothing quite came up to yours. Your friend Stong was next on the list.

MOR. Stong? Next on the list? You mean if it hadn't have been for this that *he* would get the prize?

COL. Yes.

MOR. (*tearing up paper*). Mr. Colfax, I didn't send any poem to the *Monthly*.

COL. What are you doing?

CAMP. Ted, are you crazy?

TOODLES. That's g-g-g-going t-t-t-too far!

DON. There's such a thing as overdoing it.

EDWARDS. You aren't the hero in a novel.

COL. That's very generous, Morris, but it won't go this time. You won the prize fairly and you must accept it. I must ask you for another copy.

MOR. I haven't one.

COL. Then you must write one.

MOR. I can't do that, for I don't remember the rubbish.

COL. See here, Morris, it isn't particularly polite of you to refer to the work to which we have awarded the prize as rubbish, even if you did write it yourself.

MOR. I beg your pardon, Mr. Colfax. I suppose I appear ungrateful. I'm not. I appreciate the honor of the thing, but the prize must go to the man who deserves it. I am not that one.

EDWARDS. Oh, kid, cut it short.

CAMP. Of course you are fond of Stong, and we all are. We didn't know him until a week ago, but even in that short time we have come to realize what a mighty fine chap he is. I know you'd like to see him win, but you owe something to yourself.

DON. To your father! To your class!

TOODLES. T-t-t-to us!

COL. What they say is true, Morris. You have won the prize fairly, and you must take it. Stong would say the same.

MOR. I haven't won it fairly. Fellows, when we saw that notice in the *Monthly* you know the spirit in which we answered it. Not one of us stopped to consider the poor chaps in this place who need the money and would try for it. All we thought of was glory for ourselves, for our class. How much time did we spend on our poems? Just about twenty minutes went into mine, and absolutely no thought. That I won the prize is purely an accident. Stong probably spent hours on his, and put his whole heart and soul into it, the way he does into everything he attempts. When you first came up here with the news, I thought as usual of myself, and what it was going to mean for Theodore Morris. I have been thinking of something else in the last five minutes. Probably you noticed the title of my effusion, *Honor*. Who am I to write of honor? Every one present knows what happened at Bernstien's a week ago Saturday night, and some of the results of our evening's work. One of them you do not know. Bernstien gave me until four o'clock last Monday to settle with him. I didn't have the money, and I was afraid to have him write to father. Afraid to have him come to Colton. You had been up here that afternoon, Mr. Colfax—and left five hundred dollars here to be used for Stevens of our class. Listen, all of you, please, the man who two days before had written a poem on *Honor* came to this room, and, during Stong's absence, stole four hundred and fifty dollars. You understand, *stole* it. True I came back and told Stong, and then I lied to you as to why I came over here. The man whom I have wronged took me in, and has been a brother to me so that I could pay the bill and redeem myself—and no one ever knew. Mr. Colfax, don't you agree with me that the prize goes to Ezra Stong?

COL. Yes, Morris, I do. To the committee I will say that your poem was sent in by mistake.

MOR. You fellows can—can break with me now if you like. I won't blame you. If—if it was one of you, I—I would never speak to you again.

CAMP. Yes, you would, Ted. You'd be the first one to stand by a chum that was down.

DON. I guess we haven't any of us any stones to throw.

TOODLES. N-n-n-no! I g-g-g-guess not.

EDWARDS. I guess not. We're every one of us to blame for what happened at Sembroke—and it just happened, Morris,

that you got further in than we did. I think we are all agreed that evening wasn't anything to be proud of. In fact, I can't see anything that any of us have done to be proud of since we came here. I've been doing some thinking, Ted, since you moved over here, and I've met Stong and Hawkins and some of the other fellows that room in this house. It has brought together the fellows of the opposite stations in life, and which ones are a credit to Colton? Go further than that, and say, their families, their mothers, for I think every one of us here has a mother living. Fellows, I don't want to preach. It isn't in my line, but I wish we all might agree together to live a different sort of a life. Morris has proved this past week what he intends to do; but the rest of us. Of course I don't mean that we are any of us likely to become saints all of a sudden, but if we might live lives that are going to count for something. Like Stong's, you know.

MOR. I'm with you, Johnny.

TOODLES. R-r-r-right!

CAMP. Go ahead!

DON. Give us an oath of allegiance, John, and we'll take it.

EDWARDS. Well, then, let's take *honor*. Let us promise to live our lives with *honor* to God—our mothers and Colton!

ALL. We promise!

COL. Here comes Stong and some more of the fellows.

MOR. You'll tell him now?

COL. Yes.

Enter HAWK., SKIN. and STONG.

STONG. Well, what are we having, a party, kid?

MOR. Yes, a surprise party for you, Stong.

COL. Stong, let me offer my congratulations. The poem which you sent to the *Monthly* has won the prize.

STONG. What?

CAMP. Great work, Stong.

EDWARDS. Good for you, old man.

DON. Congratulations.

TOODLES. G-g-g-g —

STONG. Ted, do you remember that letter? I asked you to wish me luck. That was the poem.

MOR. You're pleased, Stong?

STONG. I can't tell you how much. Hawkins, this is our day. Fellows, what do you know? Dan has discovered that Mr. Skinner is his uncle.

ALL. What?

HAWK. Yes, and I never should have discovered it if it hadn't have been for that cow.

EDWARDS. I propose that we celebrate.

CAMP. That's right! You two with your prize and your uncle, you can just go ahead and give us a party.

STONG. All right, we're agreeable. Go ahead! Lead off, Ted.

(Song : " College Rag.")

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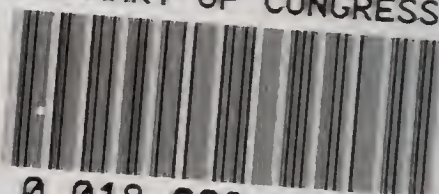
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