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The Ladies Strike

Helen-Sherman Griffith



THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

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FARM FOLKS. A Rural Play in Four Acts, by ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS. For five male and six female characters. Time of playing, two hours and a half. One simple exterior, two easy interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Flora Goodwin, a farmer's daughter, is engaged to Philip Burleigh, a young New Yorker. Philip's mother wants him to marry a society woman, and by falsehoods makes Flora believe Philip does not love her. Dave Weston, who wants Flora himself, helps the deception by intercepting a letter from Philip to Flora. She agrees to marry Dave, but on the eve of their marriage Dave confesses, Philip learns the truth, and he and Flora are reunited. It is a simple plot, but full of speeches and situations that sway an audience alternately to tears and to laughter.

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THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

The Ladies Strike

A Play for Girls in One Act

By

HELEN SHERMAN GRIFFITH

*Author of "Help Wanted" "The Burglar Alarm"
"The Minister's Wife", "Reflected Glory", etc.*



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The Ladies Strike

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The Ladies Strike

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MISS PERRY.....*Head of employment office*
MRS. WASHBURN.....*With newly acquired wealth*
MRS. ALLEN }*In quest of servants*
MRS. HAYNES }
NORAH }*Who might take positions if em-*
SUSIE }*ployer satisfied their ambition*
BRIDGET }
MRS. GORDON.....*Who has come to start something*

Have as many employers and maids for action on the side as possible.

TIME OF PLAYING:—About twenty-five minutes.

COSTUMES:—Modern.

PROPERTIES

Flat top desk. Small table. Chairs. Writing materials for desk.

The Ladies Strike

SCENE.—*The interior of an employment office; exits left front and back right. A bare room with flat topped desk back c., a smaller table at left side. Plain deal chairs at desk and table, and a row of them down right side.*

(*Curtain rises disclosing MISS PERRY at desk, writing. Enter BRIDGET, L., absurdly overdressed. She parades self-consciously across room and stops in front of desk, clearing her throat to attract attention.*)

MISS P. (*looking up and staring*). Why, Bridget!

BRIDGET (*mincing back and forth*). And how do ye loike it, ma'am? Ain't Oi swell?

MISS P. You surely are, but what's the idea? It isn't St. Patrick's Day. What's up, Bridget?

BRIDGET. Sure, wages is up. Oi've joined the domestics' union, drawn all me money from the buildin' fund, and now, begorra, Oi can dress loike a lady.

MISS P. Better than most of the ladies of my acquaintance, Bridget.

BRIDGET (*delighted*). Yez don't mane it! Will yez listen to thot, now! Ah, it's blarney ye're givin' me! Well, if Oi do sez it meself, Oi think Oi'm some charmer. Ye should 'a' seen Mike Cassidy down at the corner as Oi come by. He was so overcome starin' afther me, sure he forgot to give a customer his change! (*She giggles self-consciously.*)

MISS P. (*taking up her pen*). It surely is a grand get-up, Bridget, but nevertheless I shall have to ask you to go into the other room.

BRIDGET. Whot other room do ye mane?

MISS P. (*pointing off R. with her pen*). Where you have always waited till a lady comes to interview you.

BRIDGET. Humph! It's no lady as'll be afther interviewin' me! It's down in the books of the union we're to interview the ladies! And (*with an air*) Oi'm not shure Oi'm in the humor to interview no ladies to-day. Oi jist stopped in to pass the toime o' day. Oi'm off now to march in the union parade. (*Moves toward door, L.*) Oi may be back later, ma'am. If anny of my class comes in, just hold 'em for me to see. (*She starts to go and collides with meek little maid (super) entering. Maid makes way for BRIDGET and crosses to MISS P. BRIDGET looks after her with pitying scorn.*) Just over from the ould country! Oi can just hear her sayin' "yes, ma'am," and "as you wish, ma'am," and standin' on her fate ivery toime the madam comes in the room. Well, she'll learn!

(*Exit BRIDGET, L.*)

(MISS P. meantime talks to maid, aside, then takes her off, R. Enter SUSIE and NORAH, L., each dressed in the extreme of fashion. They pause middle front and glance around room. NORAH looks off, L., after BRIDGET.)

NORAH. Did ye pipe the female that just went out, Susie?

SUSIE (*taking out vanity case and powdering her nose*). Oh, some one looking for a maid, I suppose? (*In bored voice.*) I really didn't notice.

NORAH (*tittering*). You sure didn't. It was old Bridget Flannigan, tiked out like a chicken of sweet sixteen. She was some sight, believe me.

SUSIE. Huh! She must 'a' be'n workin' for a profiteer. Say, Norah, did ye hear about Katy O'Rourke? After she'd engaged in her last place the madam told her she couldn't have Thursdays off.

NORAH. The nerve of her! And why not?

SUSIE. She had an engagement herself that day; one of them Serbian Relief committees or such—the idear of objectin' to our triflin' rise in wages and then turnin' round and sending so much good money outa the country!—and she didn't want the house left empty.

NORAH. I hope Katy didn't stand for it?

SUSIE. Sure she did not. It's Katie's music lesson day.

NORAH. Say, Susie, let's take a place for a week. I saw a peachy pair of shoes down at Smith's—only twenty-two and a half—and I'd like 'em—with a pair of silks to match, for the I. W. W. ball.

SUSIE. You've said it. I need a few pair of hose myself. Let's pick an easy dame.

(They cross to door, R., and meet MISS P., entering.)

MISS P. *(pleasantly)*. Good-morning, girls. Have you come to get a place, or just to make a social call?

SUSIE *(carelessly)*. Oh, we might try a place—together.

NORAH. If any one comes in to suit us.

(Exeunt NORAH and SUSIE, R. MISS P. looks after them, sighs, and reseats herself at desk.)

(Enter MRS. GORDON; glances about empty room, and advances.)

MRS. G. Good-morning, Miss Perry, are there any cooks about?

MISS P. *(sighing)*. Not so you'd notice it, Mrs. Gordon. I hope you aren't wanting one for yourself?

MRS. G. I am, and a housemaid as well. Hannah and Sarah departed because my husband asked for breakfast a bit earlier on Sunday, so he could get out to golf. They said it gave them no time to visit with their friends on the way home from church!

(Enter MRS. ALLEN and MRS. HAYNES. They and MRS. GORDON exchange greeting.)

MRS. H. *(to MRS. G.)*. You, too, Brutus? Noth-

ing is fixed nowadays, not even the heavens. They fall daily.

MRS. A. (*sympathetically*). I did think you settled for life, Lucinda. I quite envied you Sarah and Hannah.

MRS. H. (*to Miss P.*). Nothing for me, I presume—as usual?

(*Miss P. shakes her head.*)

MRS. G. “As usual,” Meta? You take it very calmly.

MRS. H. Oh, it’s all in getting used to it.

MRS. A. Yes, we might as well be philosophical about it.

MRS. G. (*vigorously*). We ought not to submit to such conditions. Girls, I’ve come here this morning to start something. I——

(*A maid enters, L., pausing on threshold. MRS. A. and MRS. H. both start toward her.*)

MRS. H. I saw her first, Alice.

MRS. A. (*stopping*). Very well, but I get next turn.

(*MRS. H. talks aside to maid.*)

MISS P. (*to MRS. A.*). Susie and Norah are in again. Would you care to talk to them?

MRS. A. Would they care to talk to me?

MISS P. I’ll see.

(*Exit MISS P., R.*)

MRS. G. (*to MRS. A.*). Alice, take a brace. The thing for all of us to do is——

MRS. A. (*interrupting*). Meta doesn’t satisfy the newcomer. It’s my turn.

(*She joins MRS. H. and (super) maid.*)

(*Enter MISS P., SUSIE and NORAH. SUSIE and NORAH join MRS. H. and others, and talk aside. MISS P. escorts new maid off R., then reënters immediately. MRS. G. listens to conversation of*

others, with occasional side comments to Miss P., who goes on with her writing.)

MRS. H. I tell you, Susie. You come to me, and Norah will go to Mrs. Allen. We live right across the street from each other.

SUSIE (*doubtfully*). Could we have the same day out?

NORAH. Oh, sure, we'd have to! We likes to enjoy ourselves in our own set.

SUSIE. We allus gets paid overtime if there's comp'ny fer dinner.

NORAH. And I'm particular about the style of me aprons.

SUSIE. Do ye keep chauffeurs?

(Looking from one to other.)

MRS. A. We do, but he's married.

SUSIE (*airily*). Oh, that don't cut no ice. We can supply our own beaus. Of course you let him take the girls joy ridin'?

NORAH. How about a victrola? At my last place they allus sent the victrola down to the kitchen fer a dance once a week.

(MRS. A. and MRS. H. exchange glances.)

MRS. A. (*hesitating*). I should have to consult my husband about that.

NORAH. Oh, if you're bringin' him into the bargain, I'm not takin' the place.

SUSIE. I should say not! Two bosses is exceedin' the limit. (*To MRS. H.*) Are you a widow?

MRS. H. (*taken aback*). Why, no—not exactly—but——

NORAH (*to SUSIE*). Oh, what's the use?

SUSIE. Let's go get a feed.

(They saunter across to desk. During this dialogue MISS P. has brought (super) maid to talk to MRS. G., or meet other (super) employers. MISS P. speaks to MRS. A. and MRS. H., who then wave to MRS. G. and exeunt, L. MISS P. goes to NORAH and SUSIE.)

NORAH (*to* MISS P.). We're goin' out fer lunch, if anybody should be askin' for us.

MISS P. Suppose you talk to Mrs. Gordon? She is a very kind, considerate lady. Her last servants were with her ten years.

SUSIE (*yawning*). What a bore! I'd die if I didn't see a new face every month.

NORAH (*eyeing* MRS. G.). She might do, if she'd come across with the cash.

SUSIE (*eyeing* MRS. G.). We'll see about it after lunch. Bye, bye.

NORAH (*à la grande dame*). We won't be long, dearie.

(*They walk off L., mincing in their over-narrow skirts.*)

MRS. G. (*to* MISS P., *holding up her hands*). My word!

MISS P. They really aren't such a bad sort, Mrs. Gordon. They think it smart to imitate their betters.

MRS. G. Their betters? What sort of "betters" have given them those notions of cheap rudeness?

(*Enter* MRS. WASHBURN. *She is richly dressed in the extreme of style and walks haughtily, holding up lorgnettes.*)

MISS P. (*aside to* MRS. G.). This sort, for instance.

MRS. G. Isn't that Mrs. Washburn?

MISS P. Yes. I understand they are worth billions.

MRS. G. Made during the war. She used to do her own work.

MISS P. And now she wants a butler, footman, cook, kitchen maid, and then some.

(*MISS P. rises and goes to meet* MRS. W.)

MRS. W. (*surveying her from head to foot through her lorgnettes*). My good woman, ah—ugh—what have you this morning in the way of servants?

MISS P. Nobody is in just now. Would you care to wait? (*She points to row of chairs at side.*)

MRS. W. (*surveying chairs disapprovingly*). How annoying! I sent my *choffer* on an errand or I could have waited comfortably in the auto—I mean the *motor*. Why do you not keep a larger—ah—stock on hand? It is a beastly bore, don't you know, to have to wait for that kind of a person to come in; really quite impertinent, you know. (*Stares about room.*) Perhaps that is—ah—one over there? (*Points to MRS. G.*)

MISS P. Oh, dear no. That is Mrs. Gordon, leader of our best society.

MRS. W. (*impressed but not convinced*). Really? Why now, you astonish me, Miss—ah—Miss Peary? Names mean so little to me. I can't keep them in my head. (*Stares at MRS. G.*) Are you *sure*? Possibly some—ah—some vulgar person is passing herself on you, Miss—ah—Berry. She is so—so plainly dressed.

MISS P. I have known Mrs. Gordon for years. Our best families think it distinguished to wear their old clothes in these H. C. L. days.

MRS. W. (*preening*). Oh, no, Miss—ah—Merry. Not the *best* families! Only the poor ones. Women always dress in the latest when they have the money. (*She rises and moves about self-consciously.*) What have you in there? (*Points off R.*)

MISS P. That is where the maids sit, but there are very few there and none your style.

MRS. W. Oh, well, I suppose I must wait. (*Seats herself again, with a shudder of discomfort at hard chair.*) Just take a look outside now and then, Miss—ah—Ferry—and see if my au—motor has returned.

(*Miss P. returns to desk.*)

MRS. G. Have you a telephone, Miss Perry?

MISS P. I'll show you. Right through here.

(*She conducts MRS. G. off R.*)

(*Enter MRS. H. and MRS. A., L., talking together.*
MRS. W. accosts them.)

MRS. W. (*patronizingly*). My good women, are you looking for—for—ah—what do you wish in the way of—ah—employment?

MRS. A. (*surprised*). A cook, if you are interested.

MRS. H. A housemaid. Can you help us out?

MRS. W. (*condescendingly*). I am interested and I think I can help you out. Which the cook and which the hired girl—ah—housemaid?

MRS. A. How can you accommodate us both? Have you a friend?

MRS. W. A friend? Of course I have, my good woman! Many friends! Did you ever meet a lady with money who did not have friends?

MRS. H. Then is the friend a cook or housemaid?

MRS. W. Do you mean to insult me?

MRS. A. No, no, of course not. We are only anxious to know which you are—and which your friend——

MRS. H. Yes, so we can settle matters.

MRS. A. What wages do you ask?

MRS. H. And your friend's wages?

MRS. W. (*bewildered*). You mean, what wages do I give. I see. I pay my cook twenty-five dollars a week and extras. You (*turning to Mrs. A.*), you would want one day off each week, I presume? And (*turning to Mrs. H.*) I always furnish my housemaids' clothes; I have so much better taste than they.

(MRS. H. and MRS. A. stare at MRS. W., then at each other and burst out laughing. MRS. W. looks indignant.)

MRS. A. Are we interviewing or being interviewed?

MRS. W. (*kindly*). You are being engaged, my good woman.

MRS. H. As mistress or maid? Oh, this is rich!

MRS. W. (*indignantly*). What do you mean? I shall not engage you. I do not put up with impudence.

MRS. H. I see. You could not engage to both of

us, so you must think you are engaging us. Oh, Alice, our husbands will never get over this! (*They laugh.*)

MRS. W. (*looking from one to the other*). What do you mean? How dare you laugh in my face? Are you daring to make fun of me? Of *me*, with two hundred thousand dollars a year?

MRS. A. Not making fun, my dear—ah—*lady*; only—you see, we mistook you for a cook.

MRS. H. Or a housemaid.

MRS. A. And you made the same mistake about us.

MRS. H. And so we are quits. Alice, this *is* a good joke on us! (*They laugh.*)

MRS. W. (*furious*). What! You—you—I never was so insulted—never! I'll call the police; I'll fetch my choffer—I—I —

(*She exits, L., angrily, colliding with BRIDGET at door.*)

(BRIDGET *enters slowly; her hat is awry and her gown mussed.*)

MRS. H. Why, if it isn't our old friend, Bridget Flannigan!

MRS. A. What's happened, Bridget?

BRIDGET. Oi've just bin afther havin' a few words with a lady.

MRS. H. (*sympathetically*). So have we, Bridget.

(*Arranges her hat.*)

MRS. A. Tell us about it, Bridget.

BRIDGET (*sadly*). Shure, Oi was to march in the parade, and Oi was a bit late at the startin' place, owin' to not bein' used to these darn things. How can a body walk fast in these? (*She demonstrates high heels and tight skirt.*) Oi'm not used to thim yit, an' that's a fact. And whin Oi got there, will ye belave it, me place was taken! And by a lady Oi'd cooked in the same house with! She wouldn't give it back and the police interfered! Shure, it's spiled me day. A mere chit of a nursemaid in me place? It's loike robbin' an angel of his halo fer advertisin' purposes.

(MISS P. enters, R., while BRIDGET is speaking.)

MISS P. Ah, Bridget, I have an excellent position for you; all the comforts of home.

BRIDGET. Don't say thim words to me, Miss Perry; they're too painful. An iligant position is just what was taken from me in the parade, begorrah! Oi'll be off fer a bite of lunch and maybe Oi'll be fit fer home comforts and the benefits o' good society.

(BRIDGET goes off L., slowly and sadly.)

MRS. A. (to MISS P.). Such a good joke, Miss Perry!

MRS. H. Where is Mrs. Gordon? We must tell her.

MRS. A. Has she gone? Given up in despair?

MRS. G. (entering R.). No despair about it. Conditions are most promising. Let's get down to business, girls.

MRS. H. (looking at her watch). The present business for me is luncheon.

MRS. A. Me, too. Come with us, Lucinda. You must need cheering up.

MRS. H. And you can tell us your wonderful news.

MRS. G. No, thanks. What I have to say is too serious to be chattered about over crab ravigot and ice-cream. You two hurry through your lunch and come back. I'll wait for you before starting the rally.

MRS. A. A rally? That sounds interesting.

MRS. H. Like old times. I feel like a war horse when he hears a band.

MRS. G. I knew you'd stand by me. Hurry back.

MRS. H. If it's a scheme to get a waitress I'll stand by anything.

MRS. A. Me, too, only don't say it's to be done by raising wages. I can't dress as well as my cook now.

(They nod good-bye to MISS P. and hurry off, L.)

MRS. G. (to MISS P.). I've a business proposition to make you, Miss Perry. If I offered you the rent of

this building, plus your profit, for two weeks or a month, would you take it?

MISS P. Why, Mrs. Gordon, are you going into this business? It's a thankless job.

MRS. G. Not this business, exactly. I need an office in which to have these things demonstrated.

(She lays several pamphlets on table.)

MISS P. *(examining pamphlets in turn)*. Oh, these? "Time-Saver Vacuum Cleaner." Is that a good kind? I use a Peerless. "First-Rank Clotheswasher," "Easy Electric Mangle," "King Dishwasher"—I—— *(Suddenly looks at her watch and jumps to her feet.)* Oh, I promised to meet a friend during her lunch hour! Mrs. Gordon, would you—might I—would it be asking too much to——

MRS. G. *(pleasantly)*. To mind the office? I should enjoy it. What is there to do?

MISS P. *(taking hat and coat from rack at back)*. Very little. Show the domestics in that room off there *(points off R.)* and the employers——

MRS. G. *(interrupting)*. The *would-be* employers. I've not seen them employ anyone yet.

MISS P. *(laughing and sighing)*. I hope times and customs will change. I'll only be gone a few moments. Thank you so much.

(Miss P. hurries off, L.)

MRS. G. *(seating herself at desk and taking long list of names from her bag)*. I'm ready now to set off my bomb. I'm sure it will work, and what a lark we'll have. I've practically the whole town behind me. With Alice's and Meta's help——

(Enter NORAH, SUSIE and two maids (supers), giggling and chattering. They pause on way to door, R., near desk, paying no attention to MRS. G.)

NORAH *(to SUSIE)*. And why ever did Mary leave? It's easy to come it over a bride, believe me, and the pay was fair to middlin'.

SUSIE (*indignantly*). The lady had the cheek to fire her.

NORAH (*she and two maids showing indignant astonishment*). The nerve of her! And what for, I'd like to know?

SUSIE. The madam was sick in bed—sore throat; awful catching! She rang for Mary to bring her some tea. Not gettin' any answer—and natural enough, for Mary wasn't riskin' her health—she called down the back stairs. Mary explained as how she never went into no sick rooms, not bein' hired for a trained nurse, and would you believe it, the lady told her she could go! And her sick and not another soul in the house!

(*Mrs. G., listening, applauds softly.*)

NORAH. And what did Mary say? Told her she couldn't go quick enough, I hope?

SUSIE. Mary was so surprised she couldn't get her breath in time to say 't she was leavin' anyhow, so it looked as if she'd been fired. And her within her rights!

NORAH (*sympathetically*). Say, ain't that tough luck for Mary! You can't bank on how they'll act. We must tell the other girls.

SUSIE. You've said it. None of us want to go where there's such independence. Can you beat it?

(*They all walk off, R., talking indignantly.*)

Mrs. G. (*rising and shaking a finger after them*). So we are not to have any rights, eh? Wait till you hear our declaration of independence! Why should labor have a monopoly on the strikes? After all, capital is behind labor. We'll see. (*She reseats herself and studies list. Enter BRIDGET, some of her glory restored to order. She glances about room, takes a chair and seats herself front c., near desk.*) I beg pardon, but are you a—a lady or—or a cook?

BRIDGET (*turning in chair*). And whot's thot to ye? Shure Oi can cook fit fer royalty, and don't Oi look loike a loidy?

MRS. G. (*hastily*). Oh, yes—of a sort—there are all sorts and conditions of *ladies*, you know. But are you a cook?

BRIDGET. Well, whot's to hinder me from bein' both, Oi'd loike to know?

MRS. G. Oh, nothing, nothing at all, only I should like to know if you have come to employ or—or be employed.

BRIDGET (*complacently*). Oi moight be willin' to take a place, if Oi find one as suits me.

MRS. G. I understand. Well, the applicants are supposed to sit in the other room. Shall I take your name and address?

BRIDGET. Oh, Miss Perry knows me all right, all right. Me name is Bridget Flannigan, if it'll interest yez.

MRS. G. Well, Bridget, I'm in need of a cook. (*Sarcastically*.) Would you consider me?

BRIDGET (*seriously*). Oi moight. Whot wages do ye be payin'?

MRS. G. I always pay what is fair —

BRIDGET (*indignantly*). Then don't be afther expectin' to get a cook. Why don't ye give whot all the ither ladies is payin'?

MRS. G. (*suppressing a smile*). I do.

BRIDGET. Then why didn't ye say so? How many in the fam'ly?

MRS. G. Four; my two grown daughters, my husband and myself.

BRIDGET. How ould did ye say the daughters was?

MRS. G. Grown up.

BRIDGET. Do ye be havin' much comp'ny? Oi loikes me evenin's to meself.

MRS. G. We like to have our friends.

BRIDGET. Hum.—Late parthies and breakfast in bed, Oi'm thinkin'. No young children? That's a pity, now.

MRS. G. I thought girls objected nowadays to going to houses where there are children?

BRIDGET. Oh, that's the housemaids, as has to be

clearin' up afther thim. Oi enj'y a bit o' fun now and thin, whin the nurse brings a lively child into me kitchen fer half an hour. They liven a body.

MRS. G. I doubt if I could borrow one for that purpose. No, Bridget, it is evident my place won't suit you —

BRIDGET. And why not, ma'am? Oi haven't said it wouldn't, hov Oi? Oi won't be expected to wash?

MRS. G. (*smiling*). Clothes? No, Bridget.

BRIDGET (*condescendingly*). Well, Oi'll be thinkin' it over.

(*Exit BRIDGET R., airily. MRS. G. looks after her.*)

MRS. G. There's no doubt about it, something has got to be done.

(*Enter MISS P., L., hurriedly.*)

MISS P. I'm sorry I was detained. Has any one been in?

MRS. G. Only a grand lady named Bridget Flannigan. She interviewed me and has condescended to consider my case.

MISS P. (*sighing*). I hope she wasn't impertinent? Bridget belongs to the old order and should know better. (*Puts away her hat and gloves.*)

MRS. G. (*moving her papers to small table*). She has joined the Bolsheviki of servants, but I think the housekeepers, like the proverbial worm, are about to turn.

(*Enter MRS. H. and MRS. A., L.*)

MRS. A. What is this about Bolshevism and worms?

MRS. G. Sit right down here and I'll tell you all about it. (*The three group themselves around small table.*) I've heard you all telling your troubles this winter—Mary Glasgow's colored washlady telephoned her last night that her husband would not let her take in washing any more or they would have to pay an income tax—so I thought I'd come down to-day to see for myself. I move we go on strike.

MRS. A. *We go on strike?*

MRS. H. I don't understand.

MRS. G. You will, soon. I want all the house-keepers of this town to get together and agree to give up servants entirely for a while.

MRS. A. But who'd do our work?

MRS. G. We, ourselves, with the help of these things. (*Pointing to pamphlets.*)

MRS. H. Can it be done? Can we get enough to join?

MRS. G. I'm sure of it. I've been out canvassing, and most of our friends are enthusiastic. The chief difficulty is to convince the fashionable set that it's "the latest thing." Then they will flock to our ranks. Here comes one now, to begin on. (*Enter MRS. W., looking about haughtily. MRS. A. and MRS. H. nudge each other. MRS. G. crosses to MRS. W. and shakes hands.*) How do you do, Mrs. Washburn? Won't you join us? Mrs. Haynes, Mrs. Allen and I are talking over the jolliest scheme. (*She leads MRS. W. to table, and MRS. A. and MRS. H. shake hands with her. They all look self-conscious. MRS. G. holds out pen.*) We want you to put your name on this list. Alice and Meta are just going to sign. You see everybody you know has her name down.

MRS. W. (*trying to decipher list through her lorgnettes*). What is it? A new charity? Put me down for a thousand.

MRS. G. It is a sort of declaration of independence—a ladies' strike.

MRS. W. Oh, if it's a *ladies'* affair, of course I'll join. (*Signs.*)

MRS. A. (*signing*). Can just a few of us swing such a big thing?

MRS. G. It is always the first push that starts a ball rolling. Other towns and cities will follow our lead.

MRS. H. (*signing*). It sounds wonderful, Lucinda, but after all, how can we get on without the servants?

MRS. G. Child's play—with the help of these elec-

trical appliances. I've rented Miss Perry's office for a month and shall keep people here to demonstrate them every day.

MRS. W. (*looking at pamphlet and giving an affected shudder*). I'm awfully afraid of electricity. Thunderstorms make me quite nervous.

MRS. G. (*impatiently*). Do it by hand, then. Nothing is more wholesome than housework; any doctor will tell you that.

(*During this scene employers (supers) gather quietly and occupy the seats at side. NORAH, SUSIE and BRIDGET enter. NORAH and SUSIE talk aside, but BRIDGET listens to MRS. G.*)

MRS. A. (*beginning to be interested*). It sounds rather fun. We can give lunch parties and afterwards our guests will help to clear up.

MRS. H. Instead of playing bridge all afternoon. I used to make very good cake.

MRS. W. But fancy being able to afford servants and not hiring them!

MRS. G. Don't you see, there are not enough servants to go round, and so if we all go without, no one will be deprived.

MRS. H. (*with enthusiasm*). Girls, let's do it!

MRS. A. Let's!

MRS. W. (*simpering*). "Girls!" Me! Of course I'll join!

MRS. A. Lucinda, how soon can we have a meeting?

MRS. G. (*looking at her watch*). In about fifteen minutes. I've arranged for it by telephone. Meta, you and Alice talk to those ladies over there, while Mrs. Washburn helps me arrange this table.

(*MRS. A. and MRS. H. cross to ladies and talk aside.*)

MISS P. (*joining MRS. G. and MRS. W.*). Can I do anything to help? I surely will enjoy my vacation, Mrs. Gordon.

(*They arrange table, talking aside.*)

BRIDGET (*tapping Mrs. G. on the arm*). Oi say, ma'am, here Oi am.

(*Mrs. G. goes on talking without appearing to notice BRIDGET.*)

MRS. G. The war taught us to be practical, economical and industrious. We shall add to this intelligence and system, and our work will be done better than ever before. It is history repeating itself. "If you want a thing done, do it yourself."

(*She goes on talking, Mrs. W. and Miss P. listening interestedly. Mrs. H. and Mrs. A. talk to ladies at side who listen with enthusiasm and presently they all join Mrs. G. and others. BRIDGET listens to Mrs. G. for a moment, then crosses to NORAH and SUSIE.*)

BRIDGET. Oi say, what do ye think they're afther doin'?

(*Points over her shoulder at Mrs. G. and the rest.*)

NORAH. We was wantin' to know.

(*Other maids (supers) come in, R., and gather around NORAH, SUSIE and BRIDGET.*)

BRIDGET. They're goin' on sthrike!

NORAH } (together). What?
SUSIE }

BRIDGET. Oi jist heard the lady Oi intind to cook fer sayin' they'll all be afther doin' their own work! And they're sendin' Miss Perry off on a foine holiday 'cause she'll be havin' nothin' to do here. Can yez bate it?

(*BRIDGET, NORAH, SUSIE and other maids talk aside indignantly. Mrs. G. mounts on chair and addresses ladies.*)

MRS. G. We have had to pay increasing wages for less work, and give unreasonable privileges without any return. Why submit? (*Ladies applaud.*) We are strong, intelligent and willing to work. Those others

(*pointing to BRIDGET and the rest*) are not willing to work, so why not do without them?

(*The ladies applaud and shake hands all round. MRS. W. is among the most enthusiastic. NORAH and SUSIE advance threateningly. MRS. G., with MRS. A. and MRS. H. on each side, come forward as though to meet them, down c.*)

SUSIE. What do ye mean, turnin' us out o' house and home?

MRS. G. (*quietly*). Not turning you out, Susie, but making the homes you scorn pleasant and comfortable to live in.

NORAH. You're takin' the bread out of the mouth of the poor workin' girl, that's what you're doin'!

MRS. G. (*pleasantly*). No, Norah; only a bit of the jam and cake. Understand, all of you. We represent THE LADIES' UNION!

(*All the ladies gather around MRS. G. and wave their handkerchiefs. NORAH, SUSIE and maids shake their fists angrily.*)

BRIDGET (*in background, speculatively*). Begorra, Oi almost believe they're roight!

CURTAIN

Unusually Good Entertainments

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Your Next Program

GRADUATION DAY AT WOOD HILL SCHOOL.

An Entertainment in Two Acts, by WARD MACAULEY. For six males and four females, with several minor parts. Time of playing, two hours. Modern costumes. Simple interior scenes; may be presented in a hall without scenery. The unusual combination of a real "entertainment," including music, recitations, etc., with an interesting love story. The graduation exercises include short speeches, recitations, songs, funny interruptions, and a comical speech by a country school trustee.

EXAMINATION DAY AT WOOD HILL SCHOOL.

An Entertainment in One Act, by WARD MACAULEY. Eight male and six female characters, with minor parts. Plays one hour. Scene, an easy interior, or may be given without scenery. Costumes, modern. Miss Marks, the teacher, refuses to marry a trustee, who threatens to discharge her. The examination includes recitations and songs, and brings out many funny answers to questions. At the close Robert Coleman, an old lover, claims the teacher. Very easy and very effective.

BACK TO THE COUNTRY STORE.

A Rural Entertainment in Three Acts, by WARD MACAULEY. For four male and five female characters, with some supers. Time, two hours. Two scenes, both easy interiors. Can be played effectively without scenery. Costumes, modern. All the principal parts are sure hits. Quigley Higginbotham, known as "Quig," a clerk in a country store, aspires to be a great author or singer and decides to try his fortunes in New York. The last scene is in Quig's home. He returns a failure but is offered a partnership in the country store. He pops the question in the midst of a surprise party given in his honor. Easy to do and very funny.

THE DISTRICT CONVENTION.

A Farcical Sketch in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For eleven males and one female, or twelve males. Any number of other parts or supernumeraries may be added. Plays forty-five minutes. No special scenery is required, and the costumes and properties are all easy. The play shows an uproarious political nominating convention. The climax comes when a woman's rights champion, captures the convention. There is a great chance to burlesque modern politics and to work in local gags. Every part will make a hit.

SI SLOCUM'S COUNTRY STORE.

An Entertainment in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. Eleven male and five female characters with supernumeraries. Several parts may be doubled. Plays one hour. Interior scene, or may be played without set scenery. Costumes, modern. The rehearsal for an entertainment in the village church gives plenty of opportunity for specialty work. A very jolly entertainment of the sort adapted to almost any place or occasion.

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Unusually Good Entertainments

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A SURPRISE PARTY AT BRINKLEY'S. An Entertainment in One Scene, by WARD MACAULEY. Seven male and seven female characters. Interior scene, or may be given without scenery. Costumes, modern. Time, one hour. By the author of the popular successes, "Graduation Day at Wood Hill School," "Back to the Country Store," etc. The villagers have planned a birthday surprise party for Mary Brinkley, recently graduated from college. They all join in jolly games, songs, conundrums, etc., and Mary becomes engaged, which surprises the surprisers. The entertainment is a sure success.

JONES VS. JINKS. A Mock Trial in One Act, by EDWARD MUMFORD. Fifteen male and six female characters, with supernumeraries if desired. May be played all male. Many of the parts (members of the jury, etc.) are small. Scene, a simple interior; may be played without scenery. Costumes, modern. Time of playing, one hour. This mock trial has many novel features, unusual characters and quick action. Nearly every character has a funny entrance and laughable lines. There are many rich parts, and fast fun throughout.

THE SIGHT-SEEING CAR. A Comedy Sketch in One Act, by ERNEST M. GOULD. For seven males, two females, or may be all male. Parts may be doubled, with quick changes, so that four persons may play the sketch. Time, forty-five minutes. Simple street scene. Costumes, modern. The superintendent of a sight-seeing automobile engages two men to run the machine. A Jew, a farmer, a fat lady and other humorous characters give them all kinds of trouble. This is a regular gatting-gun stream of rollicking repartee.

THE CASE OF SMYTHE VS. SMITH. An Original Mock Trial in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. Eighteen males and two females, or may be all male. Plays about one hour. Scene, a county courtroom; requires no scenery; may be played in an ordinary hall. Costumes, modern. This entertainment is nearly perfect of its kind, and a sure success. It can be easily produced in any place or on any occasion, and provides almost any number of good parts.

THE OLD MAIDS' ASSOCIATION. A Farcical Entertainment in One Act, by LOUISE LATHAM WILSON. For thirteen females and one male. The male part may be played by a female, and the number of characters increased to twenty or more. Time, forty minutes. The play requires neither scenery nor properties, and very little in the way of costumes. Can easily be prepared in one or two rehearsals.

BARGAIN DAY AT BLOOMSTEIN'S. A Farcical Entertainment in One Act, by EDWARD MUMFORD. For five males and ten females, with supers. Interior scene. Costumes, modern. Time, thirty minutes. The characters and the situations which arise from their endeavors to buy and sell make rapid-fire fun from start to finish.

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Successful Plays for All Girls

In Selecting Your Next Play Do Not Overlook This List

YOUNG DOCTOR DEVINE. A Farce in Two Acts, by MRS. E. J. H. GOODFELLOW. One of the most popular plays for girls. For nine female characters. Time in playing, thirty minutes. Scenery, ordinary interior. Modern costumes. Girls in a boarding-school, learning that a young doctor is coming to vaccinate all the pupils, eagerly consult each other as to the manner of fascinating the physician. When the doctor appears upon the scene the pupils discover that the physician is a female practitioner.

SISTER MASONS. A Burlesque in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For eleven females. Time, thirty minutes. Costumes, fantastic gowns, or dominoes. Scene, interior. A grand expose of Masonry. Some women profess to learn the secrets of a Masonic lodge by hearing their husbands talk in their sleep, and they institute a similar organization.

A COMMANDING POSITION. A Farcical Entertainment, by AMELIA SANFORD. For seven female characters and ten or more other ladies and children. Time, one hour. Costumes, modern. Scenes, easy interiors and one street scene. Marian Young gets tired living with her aunt, Miss Skinflint. She decides to "attain a commanding position." Marian tries hospital nursing, college settlement work and school teaching, but decides to go back to housework.

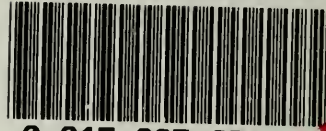
HOW A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET. A Comedy in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For ten female characters. Time, half an hour. Scene, an easy interior. Costumes, modern. Mabel Sweetly has just become engaged to Harold, but it's "the deepest kind of a secret." Before announcing it they must win the approval of Harold's uncle, now in Europe, or lose a possible ten thousand a year. At a tea Mabel meets her dearest friend. Maude sees Mabel has a secret, she coaxes and Mabel tells her. But Maude lets out the secret in a few minutes to another friend and so the secret travels.

THE OXFORD AFFAIR. A Comedy in Three Acts, by JOSEPHINE H. COBB and JENNIE E. PAINE. For eight female characters. Plays one hour and three-quarters. Scenes, interiors at a seaside hotel. Costumes, modern. The action of the play is located at a summer resort. Alice Graham, in order to chaperon herself, poses as a widow, and Miss Oxford first claims her as a sister-in-law, then denounces her. The onerous duties of Miss Oxford, who attempts to serve as chaperon to Miss Howe and Miss Ashton in the face of many obstacles, furnish an evening of rare enjoyment.

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