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MADE IN PARIS

A PLAY OF HUMOR AND HISTORY
By FREDERICK J. POHL



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MADE IN PARIS

A PLAY OF HUMOR AND HISTORY

By FREDERICK J. POHL

Author of *Laugh and Grow Wise, Love and Grow Wise, Gold of the Sun God, Gas, The New God, The Embarrassing Baby, America's Sacred Cow, The Cobra's Head, etc.*

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CHARACTERS

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

PIERRE AUGUSTIN CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS

COMTE DE VERGENNES, Foreign Minister of France

LORD STORMONT, British Ambassador to the Court of
France; later, a British Peace Commissioner

SILAS DEANE, American Agent in Paris

ARTHUR LEE, American Agent in Paris

MAJOR THORNTON, Secretary to Lee

WILLIAM TEMPLE FRANKLIN, Benjamin Franklin's
grandson

DR. FRIEDRICH ANTON MESMER

DESLON, Mesmer's assistant

VOLTAIRE, (Jean Francois Marie Arouet)

JOHN LORING AUSTIN, of Boston

JOHN ADAMS, American Peace Commissioner

JOHN JAY, American Peace Commissioner

RICHARD OSWALD, British Peace Commissioner

STRACHEY, British Peace Commissioner

SOMNAMBULIE, a lady of the French Court

SUZANNE, one of Dr. Mesmer's patients

Time - 1778 and 1782

In the making of America, the work of Benjamin Franklin in Paris during the critical years of the War for Independence was of the utmost importance.

MADE IN PARIS

ACT I.

Mesmer's Salle des Crises, Paris—February, 1778.

(There is a large tub in the center of the floor with chairs around it. Enter left Major Thornton, followed by Silas Deane and Arthur Lee.)

Thornton—We are the first arrivals, Mr. Lee.

Lee—Mesmer's Hall of Convulsions! Thank God, America has no folly like this!

Deane—Here is the tub of which all Paris is talking.

Lee—Half of Paris, Mr. Deane, is talking of your dealings with Hortalez and Company.

Deane—Mr. Lee, I must ask you not to associate my name with Hortalez and Company. What I know must not pass my lips.

Lee—You have told Benjamin Franklin. As an American Commissioner, I have equal right with Franklin to demand information as to Hortalez and Company.

Deane—I should suppose, sir, that you had already made demands enough. You have asked the Continental Congress to recall me to America. You accuse me of refusing to account to you for certain funds I may have paid to Hortalez and Company. Public policy and my sacred promise require that I attempt no defense. For the sake of the independence for which our country is fighting, I may have to face disgrace and ruin. I am content, for, if I am recalled, my unfinished business with Hortalez and Company will be in the strong hands of Dr. Franklin.

Lee—Dr. Franklin! Always Franklin! Am I to be entrusted with nothing? I insist on knowing who Hortalez is.

Deane—You will never know, unless the agent of Hortalez and Company, Monsieur de Beaumarchais, commits the indiscretion of telling you.

Lee—I will have no further dealings with you nor with Beaumarchais, your accomplice.

Deane—Accomplice?

Lee—In theft!

Deane—Theft!—If we were not fellow Americans with the eyes of all Europe upon us, I would show you how we answer such words in Connecticut!—Arthur Lee, you are a disgrace to Virginia!

Lee—My family is one of the most prominent in that state!

Deane—If you are representative of it, your family does not deserve prominence!

Lee—That is an insult!

(Lee starts for Deane and attempts to strike him. Thornton steps between, saying: "Gentlemen! Gentlemen!"—Lee turns away to the right. Enter left Mesmer's assistant, Dr. Deslon, who stands at the door and announces)

Deslon—Monsieur Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais!—
(Exit Deslon)

Lee—Come, Major, I will not meet that Frenchman. I shall go out until more guests arrive.—*(Exit Lee right. Enter left Beaumarchais. Thornton lingers a moment before he follows Lee.)*

Beaumarchais—Bon jour, Monsieur Deane.—Has the devil been plaguing you again?

Deane—Mr. Lee has demanded my recall to America.

Beaumarchais—I regret to hear it. Mr. Lee is too much a trouble maker. Besides, he does not know how to hold his tongue. The English spies hear everything he says. In consequence, the English have just captured three Hortalez Company ships off Bordeaux. No, I do not like Mr. Lee. He is probably honest, but so suspicious!—But you will pardon me?

Deane—He is one fellow countryman I do not care to defend.—Monsieur de Beaumarchais, there is a question I should like to ask. Who created Hortalez and Company?—*(Beaumarchais bows, nodding and smiling.)*—I thought so! In the name of my country, I thank you for that great idea. You are the best friend America has in France.—*(They shake hands.)*

(Enter left Deslon, announcing.)

Deslon—Comte de Vergennes, Foreign Minister of France!
(Enter left Vergennes. Exit Deslon. Vergennes, Beaumarchais, and Deane bow.)

Beaumarchais—Bon jour, Comte!

Vergennes—Bon jour, gentlemen.—Mr. Deane, will Dr. Franklin be with us to-day?

Deane—He will be here shortly, sir.

Vergennes—It is for him that this private exhibition of mesmerism is to be held. The King desires to have Dr. Franklin's opinion of the cause of the extraordinary phenomena Dr. Mesmer produces.

Deane—If I may take advantage of this moment, sir, may I urge upon you again to arrange a loan to help the American States?

Vergennes—Sir, I am charmed with the American Colonies, but I am a stickler for my duties towards Great Britain.

Deane—England is the traditional enemy of France. What will help us will hurt her.

Vergennes—Perfectly true, sir. But France at present is at peace with England. I could not make you a loan, though I desired to do so, without breaking with England. The affairs of America are in too doubtful a condition now to make such a break politic. Therefore, I can make no loan. But I can refer you again, as I did once before, to Roderique Hortalez and Company, a large Spanish mercantile house in Paris.

Beaumarchais—Hortalez and Company: Americans received; Englishmen not admitted!

(Enter left Deslon, announcing.)

Deslon—Lord Stormont, British Ambassador to the Court of France!

Stormont—*(off left)*—You silly ass! *(Vergennes places a warning finger to his lips. Enter Stormont. Exit Deane. Beaumarchais and Deane turn away right.)*

Vergennes—*(bowing)*—Lord Stormont.

Stormont—Comte, I dropped in out of—ah—curiosity, to see Dr. Mesmer's Convulsion Ward. His assistant tells me a special exhibition has been arranged for this afternoon. Will there be any objection to my remaining in this—ah—Hall of Fits?

Vergennes—None, my Lord, if you find none.—There may be present several Americans.

Stormont—An Englishman is not afraid of Americans.—By Jove! Who is that—(*pointing*)—that conceited-looking Frenchman?

Vergennes—That is Caron de Beaumarchais, the friend of the King.

Stormont—Watchmaker turned courtier, eh?—How did he rise to favor?—By flattery?

Vergennes—He has wit, intelligence.—(*Beaumarchais is evidently amusing Lee by remarks upon Stormont.*)

Stormont—Ah yes, I remember. He spent some years in England.—An upstart! A watchmaker! A tradesman's son, who nosed his way in among ancient and respected nobility!—I will show him where he belongs. I will teach him his place!

Vergennes—My Lord, he is not easily handled.

Stormont—Let me alone with him! I will snub him! I will humble his pride!—Monsieur Beaumarchais, a word with you.—(*Beaumarchais advances to Lord Stormont's side.*)—You are a watchmaker. Here is my watch, monsieur. Please repair it as soon as possible.—(*He hands the watch to Beaumarchais.*)

Beaumarchais—But, my Lord, I have ceased making watches for so long a time that I am inexpert.—(*He returns the watch to Stormont.*)

Stormont—Surely you will remember how to repair my watch.—I beg you, do not refuse.

Beaumarchais—Very well, sir, but I give you notice I have become awkward.—(*Beaumarchais takes the watch, holds it at arm's length, and drops it. He bows gracefully to Stormont.*)—I warned you, my Lord, of my extreme awkwardness.

(*Enter Deslon with Somnambulie and Suzanne. Exit Deslon. The women come down center, laughing. Upon seeing Vergennes and Stormont, they stop abruptly, retire a step or two, and courtesy.*)

Somnambulie—Oh! Pardon, Messieurs.

Suzanne—(*giggling hysterically*)—We are Dr. Mesmer's subjects. We are to be mesmerized.

Stormont—Mademoiselle, have you ever been mesmerized before?

Suzanne—Oh, yes, I've been cured several times.

Stormont—Cured?—Once is not enough?

Suzanne—Not when you have agitation of nerves. That is what I have. Lots of the rich ladies have it.—(*She giggles.*)

Stormont—And you, Mademoiselle?

Somnambulie—My case is unique. They all say I am a puzzle—

Beaumarchais—Every woman is a puzzle, a fascinating puzzle.

Somnambulie—(*crossing to center*)—Oh la! Monsieur Beaumarchais, how you flatter!

Stormont—But I don't see. What is there unusual about you, Mademoiselle?

Beaumarchais—(*whispering to Somnambulie*)—English!

Somnambulie—(*to Beaumarchais*)—Typical!—(*to Stormont*)—Why, milord, the effects of mesmerism upon us are so surprising that the greatest man in the world is coming to-day to observe them.—He is of your race.

Stormont—What Englishman is the greatest man in the world?

Somnambulie—Your race, milord, but not an Englishman.—The great American, Dr. Franklin.—(*She crosses to right.*)

Stormont—(*near center*)—Franklin!—Comte Vergennes, a year ago, I warned you this fellow Franklin should not be permitted to enter Paris. You told me you would prevent him, but I think you only half tried. Now I prophesy that you will soon compel him to leave Paris. The cause which he represents is a failing one. I have the latest news from America, from absolutely reliable sources. It practically means the end of the Colonial rebellion.—The greater part of George Washington's forces have surrendered!

Vergennes—Of what date is this information, Lord Stormont?—

(*Stormont and Vergennes converse together.*)

Somnambulie—(*to Beaumarchais*)—Do you believe what Lord Stormont said?

Beaumarchais—Ill news, if true.

Somnambulie—I am sorry, because I know it will grieve Dr. Franklin. He is such a dear, kind old man.

Suzanne—If he has to leave Paris, it will be a pity. He creates a sensation wherever he goes. He makes Paris interesting. Just think of his going to Court among all the nobles, before the King and Queen, dressed as he always is, in a plain brown Quaker suit with no wig, and for defense, a walking stick instead of a sword!—He is so original!

Somnambulie—They say he wears a pair of double spectacles he invented for himself.

Beaumarchais—So that he can look at two such pretty ladies at once!—(*bowing.*)

Suzanne—(*crossing to extreme left*)—Is that the reason for his spectacles? (*She giggles.*)

Beaumarchais—It is two reasons.—(*bowing again*)—Seriously, he has combined two lenses in the one rim, the upper for ordinary vision, and the lower for reading.

Somnambulie—That is almost as clever as your invention of the escapement balance for watches.

Beaumarchais—Ah, Mademoiselle, where I have made watches that keep good time, but one little thing, Dr. Franklin has invented many things. When I come down the street, I am lighted by street lamps of his devising that do not smoke; I draw close to one of his stoves when cold, beneath a roof protected from lightning by one of his lightning rods.

(*Enter left Deslon, announcing.*)

Deslon—Dr. Benjamin Franklin!

Somnambulie—Oh! He has come! He is here! The great Dr. Franklin!

(*Enter left Benjamin Franklin, escorted by his grandson, William Temple Franklin. Somnambulie runs to Dr. Franklin and kisses him twice. He smiles and gives her his arm. Temple Franklin drops back a step as Suzanne takes the other arm. The two women escort Dr. Franklin to the center. Vergennes, Beaumarchais, Deane, and Deslon crowd around Franklin and his grandson, welcoming them with acclamations of pleasure. Stormont remains at the extreme right.*)

Franklin—(*sitting*)—Friends, you overwhelm me. If I had as many tongues as all of you together, I would thank each of you separately.

Beaumarchais—You have one tongue worth all of ours.

Franklin—Yours, Monsieur, can teach mine how to flatter.

Beaumarchais—Dr. Franklin, we have just heard news from America.

Franklin—Authentic?—or by way of England?

Beaumarchais—From Lord Stormont.

Franklin—I am all attention.

Beaumarchais—Lord Stormont says most of Washington's soldiers have surrendered. Is it the truth?

Franklin—No, sir, it is not the truth; it is only a Stormont.

(The group around Franklin laugh heartily; the women clap their hands, Beaumarchais cries: "Bon! bon!"—Stormont turns abruptly and stalks angrily off left.)

Vergennes—I do not wish, sir, to echo my Lord Stormont, the British Ambassador, but I hope you can give us better news from America than we have received the past twelve months. Your army fights no battles; it does nothing but retreat. Can the Colonies, small in population and relatively poor as they are, continue much longer their resistance to the English forces?

Franklin—As for population, we are numerous enough; and as for riches, we have tremendous resources of which you in Europe do not dream. We have forests and water power, harbors and fisheries, minerals and fertile farms. Poor?—Why, every pair of American breeches is made with four pockets, because its owner has so much money to carry. And the very tails of American sheep are so laden with wool, that each has a little car or wagon on four little wheels to support and keep it from trailing on the ground.

Vergennes—Do you honestly believe your rebellion may succeed?

Franklin—Sir, with George Washington and Tom Paine in America, there is little doubt of the outcome.

Beaumarchais—And with Benjamin Franklin in Paris, there is no doubt of the outcome.

Vergennes—Tom Paine?—Who is Tom Paine?

Franklin—Washington holds the sword, but Thomas Paine holds the pen. He wields the weapon that is mightier. His

pen aroused the American continent to demand independence; his pen encourages the zeal of Washington's men. Washington leads the material forces; Paine leads the moral forces of America. The spirit of the American nation will never yield, so long as Tom Paine is there to spur it on.—Sir, that is the answer to your question.

Vergennes—May I ask one more, sir?—Are the United Colonies truly a nation, or as Lord Stormont says, only a parcel of rebels?

Franklin—Sir, what make a nation?—If it be people of one race and custom, we are not a nation. If it be people all of one religion, we are not a nation. If it be people of one culture and learning, or of one climate, we are not a nation. But if it be people of common sympathy, common principles and united purpose, then we are a nation.

Deslon—Ladies and gentlemen, all please move back! All please move back, to give me room to prepare the apparatus.

(The group moves back, Suzanne and Somnambulie to the extreme left; Franklin, left of center; Vergennes, behind him; others, back center. Lee and Thornton enter right. Deslon busies himself with inserting rods in the tub.)

Beaumarchais—Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce the famous Dr. Friedrich Anton Mesmer!

(Enter Mesmer right, dressed in a lilac robe. He advances to the center. All except Suzanne and Deslon are seated.)

Mesmer—Good people of Paris, and distinguished Americans!—Twelve years ago, I completed my first study of the mysterious forces of Nature, and the influence of the planets on human bodies. I studied the influence of magnets on the nervous system. Later, I made my great discovery, which is that stars, planets, and magnets do not affect the body so much as does a certain force within us which I call animal magnetism. This animal magnetism flows through all matter. Much of this vital magnetism is concentrated in me. I have been able to cause marvelous cures in cases of congested spleen, gutta serena, and agitation of nerves,—

Suzanne—My trouble!

Mesmer—or in other words, hysterical insanity.—*(He asks Deslon to bring forward a chair.)*

Vergennes—Dr. Franklin, what is your opinion of Dr. Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism?

Franklin—A natural philosopher does not accept theories until he has observed facts.

Mesmer—In Vienna, I treated one patient at a time. In your great city of Paris, I have been so besieged by patients that I invented this baquet—(*pointing to the tub*)—to treat a great number at once. This baquet I will now explain. It consists of a tub with appendages of iron. In it are layers of powdered glass and iron filings, in which are buried full bottles—

Beaumarchais—Good to drink?

Mesmer—If you like water.

Beaumarchais—Bah!

Mesmer—Rods, as you see, extend from the tub. Around the tub, the patients sit, each holding a rod. A cord, attached at one end to the tub, is carried around the waist of each sitter.—(*He adjusts the chair.*)

Vergennes—Dr. Franklin, what is your opinion of this tub?

Franklin—A barrel of rum would work as well, and might have more effect on some.

Mesmer—The first case I will treat to-day is that of Mademoiselle Suzanne, afflicted with agitation of nerves, jumping pains, and other peculiarities.—(*Suzanne giggles hysterically as she takes the seat near the baquet. Mesmer places a rod from the baquet against her right shoulder.*)

Suzanne—I don't care for the tub, Dr. Mesmer. I prefer personal treatment.—(*Mesmer motions to Deslon, who takes up a violin and begins playing softly. Mesmer removes the rod and places his hand on Suzanne's shoulder.*)

Suzanne—Your hand is so soothing, Dr. Mesmer.—(*She giggles hysterically.*)

Mesmer—Where is the pain to-day?

Suzanne—It is moving, Doctor, moving—Oh!—down my spine!—(*Mesmer's hand follows the pain.*) You didn't catch it, Doctor. It has gone to my head!—(*She giggles.*)

Mesmer—It escaped me that time. Have I located it yet?

Suzanne—I think you have, almost.—No, it slipped from your fingers again. It is going to my neck!

Mesmer—There! there!—Now I must have it.

Suzanne—Yes, you have it.—No—It is jumping along toward my shoulder! (*Mesmer's hands move towards her right shoulder.*)—The other one! It is running out my left arm! My elbow!—(*Mesmer's hands move down her left arm, encircling it, as though forcing the pain towards her hand.*)

Mesmer—I will drive the pain out from your shoulder. Past your forearm, so. Past your wrist, so. Across your hand, so. Through your fingers, so—(*Suzanne sighs contentedly.*)—Now, you will never have that pain again.—(*As he finishes, her left arm is extended horizontally from her shoulder, and remains so after he moves away. Seeing that her arm is mesmerized, he makes a pass or two below it to release it, and it falls at her side.*)—Under the influence of this mesmeric state, Mademoiselle exhibits an amazing case of sense transference.—(*Deslon ceases playing. Mesmer places a rod from the baquet against Suzanne's waist. He takes up another rod at least five or six feet in length, places one end in the baquet, and holds the other end of it in his left hand. He stands as far away from Suzanne as possible.*)—What am I saying, Mademoiselle?—(*He whispers to the fingers of his right hand.*)

Suzanne—You are saying that you are very glad you have cured me.

Mesmer—And now?—(*whispering again*)

Suzanne—You are saying that you have finished my treatment for to-day, and you thank me for coming.

Mesmer—Do you see? She can hear with her stomach!—And now, Mademoiselle Suzanne, will you please let Mademoiselle Somnambulie sit here—(*Suzanne giggles hysterically. Somnambulie and Suzanne exchange seats. Mesmer stands behind Somnambulie.*)—Now I shall produce a state of artificial slumber, or somnambulism. Because of the frequency with which I put Mademoiselle into this trance-like condition, I have nick-named her Somnambulie.—(*Deslon begins playing.*)—Close your eyes, Somnambulie. Keep them closed—(*He makes downward passes before her face.*)—You will soon go to sleep. Go to sleep. Sleep. Sleep.—(*Suzanne yawns.*)—Now, Somnambulie, you are so fast asleep that you cannot open your eyes. You cannot rise from your chair. Try to do so.—(*She tries in vain.*)—No, you cannot rise.—Now I

will ask you to do something. Twirl your hands about each other. So. Backward. Enough.—Now you see, gentlemen, in this state of artificial somnambulism, the patient does what I tell her to, and can do nothing I forbid.—(*Deslon stops playing.*)—One of you try to wake her up.—(*Temple Franklin steps forward at the right. He calls to her.*)

Temple—Wake up, Mademoiselle, wake up!

Beaumarchais—If you knew what a nice-looking young man it is, Mademoiselle, just eighteen years of age, you certainly would open your eyes to look at him.

Mesmer—Shake her, young man, shake her!

Temple—I might hurt her.

Mesmer—No fear, shake her!—(*Temple, with great embarrassment, gently prods her shoulder.*)

Beaumarchais—How inconvenient to be mesmerized!

Mesmer—I shall now tell Mademoiselle something she is to do after she wakes up.—What shall I order her to do?—Who has a suggestion?

Beaumarchais—When Dr. Franklin came in, she kissed him according to good French custom, but she omitted her duties towards his grandson. Ask her to kiss Mr. William Temple Franklin.
(*Temple looks dismayed.*)

Mesmer—Mademoiselle, do what Monsieur suggests.

Temple—(*crossing to the extreme right*)—No! No!—Don't wake her up!
(*Mesmer makes upward passes before her face, and claps his hands. She wakes and rises. After her gaze slowly falls upon Temple, Temple runs off right, and she pursues him. Suzanne, giggling hysterically, follows.*)

Mesmer—(*crossing right*)—Gentlemen, you have seen my power. If there are any cases of suffering which I might relieve, send them to me. The rich I charge; the poor I treat for nothing.

Beaumarchais—Do you treat lovers?

Mesmer—Lovers do not yield to treatment.—I bid you all good afternoon.—(*General murmur of "Good afternoon, Dr. Mesmer."*)—*Exit Mesmer right.*)

Vergennes—Now, Dr. Franklin, what is your opinion of mesmerism?

Franklin—It is clear to me that if anyone takes treatment with Dr. Mesmer long enough, he will either be cured or die.—I do not question that Mesmer effects cures, many of them. But this magnetic fluid theory, this universal animal magnetism does not appear reasonable. I should say that mesmerism is rather the action of the imagination. When Somnambulie believes that she is to be put to sleep, and the belief make a sufficiently strong impression upon her imagination, she is, to all appearances, really asleep. So also with the case of jumping pains. If Dr. Mesmer had suggested to her that the pain was to locate itself in her big toe, it would have done so.

Vergennes—I thank you for your opinion, Dr. Franklin. Ever since this popular craze of mesmerism came to Paris, the King has desired that it should be investigated by someone competent to understand it.

(Suzanne enters right, giggling hysterically. Behind her, come Temple and Somnambulie, side by side.)

Suzanne—*(down right)*—She did it! I saw her do it! It was so thrilling!—*(She giggles.)*

Franklin—*(rising and speaking to Temple)*—And so, young man, you let yourself be caught!

Beaumarchais—He would like to see her mesmerized in the same way again.

Franklin—*(to Somnambulie)*—Did you really kiss him, my dear?

Somnambulie—I didn't want to, but—

Franklin—Both cheeks?—*(Somnambulie nods affirmatively)*—What a good Christian my grandson is!—He turned the other cheek!

Beaumarchais—A most pious young man!—Ladies and gentlemen! Attend!—I have a surprise to announce.—*(Exit Deslon left.)*—The natural philosopher of America, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, and the genius of Europe, the French philosopher, Voltaire, are to meet in your presence, today, for the first time!

(Voltaire enters, leaning heavily on the arm of Deslon. All stand respectfully silent as Voltaire advances to a position facing Franklin.)

Beaumarchais—Dr. Franklin, to you, whose name Frenchmen have honored for a generation, and whom it has been our pleasure to have living among us in Paris for two years, to you we give our affection, our reverence, and all good wishes.—To you, our countryman, Voltaire, who for two generations have added glory to the name of France, and who have just returned to Paris after many years of absence, at the age of eighty-four, to you we give our respect, our adoration, and the plaudits of Frenchmen! You, Voltaire, have spent your life destroying the superstitions of mankind. In thus destroying, you have cleared the ground for the building of better things. To such constructive work, Dr. Franklin, you have devoted your life of seventy-two years.—Behold the greatest destructive mind of the Old World, and the greatest constructive mind of the New World!

(Voltaire and Franklin shake hands. Cries of: "Vive la France! Vive l'Amerique! Vive Voltaire! Vive Franklin!")

Beaumarchais—It is not enough. You must do more than shake hands.

Franklin—What must we do?

Beaumarchais—It is necessary that you embrace, French fashion!—*(Voltaire and Franklin embrace. Cries of: "Vive les philosophes! Solon and Socrates!")*

Franklin—Monsieur Voltaire, I am honored.—Here is my grandson. I pray you give him your blessing, the blessing upon a young man, a beginner in philosophy, of an aged scholar, accomplished philosopher, and sage.

(Temple gets down on one knee, and Voltaire places a trembling hand upon his head.)

Voltaire—God and Liberty!

Franklin—Sir, you properly couple God and Liberty. There are some people who ignorantly suppose that you do not believe in God.

Voltaire—If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent one.

Franklin—If there were no land of liberty like America, it would be necessary to create one.—*(applause)*

Voltaire—Friends, let me go now to my carriage. I am very ill. I took this journey to Paris against the orders of my physician.—*(Voltaire and Franklin bow to the others)*

and to each other. Deslon and Franklin assist Voltaire to the door left. At the door, Voltaire and Franklin turn and bow once more.)—Adieu! Adieu!

Franklin—To you, Monsieur, humanity will never say adieu!
(*Exeunt Voltaire, Deslon, Franklin, and Deane.*)

Somnambulie—Dr. Franklin makes me love America.

Beaumarchais—There are many in every country who sympathize with the cause of America. I found them in Prussia as well as in England; even in Russia.

Somnambulie—I have heard it said, Monsieur Beaumarchais, that you went into Russia disguised as a woman.

Suzanne—(*giggling*)—How thrilling!

Vergennes—It is true, Mademoiselles. He cannot deny it.

Beaumarchais—I do deny it. I did not go disguised as a woman.

Vergennes—You have told me yourself, Monsieur, that you entered the Muscovite Empire dressed as a woman.

Beaumarchais—Dressed as a woman, certainly, but not disguised as one. For you see, Mademoiselle,—(*twirling his moustache*)—I am a woman.

Suzanne—How droll!

Somnambulie—What extravagant things you say, Monsieur Beaumarchais!

Vergennes—You carry the contradiction of what you say on your upper lip, Monsieur. Who ever heard of a woman with such a moustache?

Beaumarchais—Ah so! I am caught! I confess. What I said was not the truth; it was a Stormont!

Somnambulie—Monsieur, how did you succeed in acting the part of a woman in Russia? Did you escape detection?

Beaumarchais—I had every Russian moujik making love to me.

Somnambulie—(*right of center*)—But how can you act what you do not understand? This very afternoon you declared that all women were puzzles to you.

Beaumarchais—But indeed I can act the part of a woman. I will bet you a finger watch, such as I made for the Princess of the Royal Family, against the fan in your hand,

that I can go tomorrow to Dr. Franklin at Passy disguised as a woman, and deceive him into thinking I am a woman.

Somnambulie—Done! It is a bet! But you will lose. Women are no puzzles to Dr. Franklin.

Beaumarchais—Women can easily deceive the wisest of men.—Gentlemen,—(*addressing Lee and Thornton*)—I rely on you not to give Dr. Franklin the slightest hint of my coming disguised.

Lee—We will not, sir. But I hope you will not take up much of Dr. Franklin's valuable time, sir, with this foolery.

Beaumarchais—(*crossing right to Lee*)—Your zeal in your country's affairs, Mr. Lee, will more than compensate for the time Dr. Franklin may lose.—Personally, I am more concerned with the necessary loss of my moustache.

Vergennes—Let the hero of your play, *The Barber of Seville*, cut it off.

Beaumarchais—Well said, Comte.—Mademoiselle, take good care of that fan for me!

Somnambulie—(*to Suzanne*)—On which finger will my new watch look best?

Lee—(*back center*)—Ladies and gentlemen, I bid you all good afternoon.—A most extraordinary mesmeric exhibition, ladies.—(*Exit Lee and Thornton. Temple converses with Somnambulie and Suzanne. Vergennes and Beaumarchais together move slowly towards the left.*)

Vergennes—The chances of the United American Colonies to hold their own against England without further aid from us, seem almost hopeless. You must go further with the Hortalez business at once. I will give you a million livres.—(*Exit Vergennes and Beaumarchais.*)

Somnambulie—Mr. Franklin—

Temple—Call me Mr. Temple.—People do so, not to confuse me with grandfather.

Somnambulie—Mr. Temple, then. Before you escort us to our carriages, Suzanne and I would like a word together,—if you don't mind?

Temple—Not at all, Mademoiselle.—I want to look at the inside of Mesmer's tub.

(*Somnambulie and Suzanne cross to the extreme left. Somnambulie sits.*)

Somnambulie—What are you going to do with him?

Suzanne—That is your question, not mine. It is you he is interested in.

Somnambulie—That is inconvenient. If it were you—

Suzanne—My dear, don't you see your opportunity? The way to make Gaston perfectly jealous will be to carry on a most outrageous flirtation with this young American. Since he is Dr. Franklin's grandson, all the world will hear of it at once, and Gaston will be your devoted slave immediately. Besides, it will be a pleasant flirtation. This Mr. Temple is good-looking.

Somnambulie—It is not fair to him.

Suzanne—All is fair in love.—It is the only thing to do.

Somnambulie—(*rising and sitting in chair left of center*)—Mr. Temple, I hope you have not been getting impatient?

Temple—Yes, I have, impatient to look at something more attractive, Mademoiselle, than this old tub. Now I am able to do so!—(*Suzanne giggles.*)

Somnambulie—You have been with Monsieur Beaumarchais learning gallant speeches.

Suzanne—You will both pardon me. I must hurry home.—(*Temple moves as though to accompany her.*)—Oh no, not at all necessary. My coachman will be at the door.—*Au revoir!*—(*Suzanne exits left, giggling hysterically.*)

Somnambulie—You must not mind Suzanne's running away like that,—her not wanting you to accompany her. You see she—Come over here. I must tell you this in confidence. Sit down, right here.—(*Temple appears somewhat diffident.*)—No! Bring the chair nearer.—You see, she is engaged to a most jealous young man, who would be furious if any other handsome young man were seen alone with her on the street. She is in love,—(*sighing*)—fortunate girl!—Perhaps you don't know what it is to be in love?

Temple—Well, — I —

Somnambulie—Wouldn't you like to learn? You Americans have a reputation for being slow in such matters, but there are always exceptions.

Temple—Say, I should like to show you around a bit out at Passy. Could you come tomorrow?

Somnambulie—Who will be there?

Temple—Oh, Mr. Lee, and his Secretary, Major Thornton, and grandfather,—

Somnambulie—And Monsieur Beaumarchais disguised as a woman!—Of course I will come!—*(Enter left Thornton.)*

Thornton—I beg your pardon.—Mr. Temple, your grandfather will want you soon to help him with his correspondence.

Temple—Oh!—I have been forgetting!

Somnambulie—I will not delay you a second. Show me at once, please, to my carriage. I will drive out to Passy tomorrow, and you shall meet me at—*(Exit Somnambulie and Temple.)*

(Thornton cautiously looks off right and then signals to someone off left. After a moment, he signals again. Lord Stormont enters left.)

Thornton—All have gone, my Lord. We can talk here with safety.

Stormont—What information have you secured?

Thornton—*(handing a paper to Stormont)*—Here is a copy of a despatch received by Franklin from Philadelphia yesterday.

Stormont—*(examining the paper)*—Major Thornton, you are rendering valuable services to his Majesty. I will mention your name in my next report to the King, and recommend that he direct the Prime Minister, Lord North, to reward you appropriately.

Thornton—Lord Stormont, I am doing my best under circumstances of extreme difficulty.

(Stormont puts his hat on a chair. When about to sit on it, he awkwardly removes the hat from between his legs and places it on the floor.)

Stormont—Ah!—Have you investigated this business of Hortalez and Company?

Thornton—Yes, my Lord, and I have discovered that it is as we suspect. Hortalez and Company is merely a blind. The French cannot openly aid the Americans without war against England. And so, they have resorted to subter-

fuge. They refer the Americans to a newly-established Spanish mercantile house in Paris,—Roderique Hortalez and Company. The Americans find Hortalez a dealer in muskets, bombs, powder, cutlasses, brass cannon, bayonets. He has on hand enough uniforms, shoes, hats and such to equip an army. When they ask to see Hortalez in person, they are told that he is always at home in his chateau. But his confidential agent, Monsieur de Beaumarchais, is there to give them what they want.

Stormont—By Jove! Don't they have to pay for what he gives them?

Thornton—For very little of it, my Lord.

Stormont—And who is this Roderique Hortalez?

Thornton—My Lord, Hortalez is none other than King Louis XVI himself!

Stormont—(*jumping up*)—By George, these French are clever! —We must drag them out into the open.

Thornton—Do we want war with France, my Lord?

Stormont—No, hang it all!—By Jove, what are we to do?

Thornton—My Lord, wait until we have captured George Washington and hanged Tom Paine and a few other rebels.

Stormont—Jove! That's what I call an idea!—(*He leans over the chair upon which he had been sitting, in a vain endeavor to reach his hat upon the floor. Then he clumsily lifts up the chair and sets it aside in order to pick up his hat.*)—Meanwhile, Major Thornton, learn all you can at Passy.

Thornton—Just so, my Lord. I am sure Dr. Franklin does not suspect me.

Stormont—As soon as the next packet arrives from America, let me have the news at once.

Thornton—I will, my Lord.—You go out first, my Lord.—I will come out later, so that we may not be seen together, my Lord.

Stormont—Bally good idea!

(*Exit Stormont left. Thornton remains, filling his pipe.*)

(*Curtain*)

ACT II.

Benjamin Franklin's house at Passy in Paris.—The next day.

(There are two desks up stage, back to back, littered with papers and books. Arthur Lee and Major Thornton are seated at the desks. Lee is at Franklin's, the one to the right, with his feet upon it. Thornton is busily working.)

Lee—I am certain the Continental Congress will do what I ask, Major Thornton. They cannot fail to act favorably upon my demand that they recall Silas Deane. It is about time. He has nothing to recommend him but a fondness for fine clothes.

Thornton—Have you been able to discover, Mr. Lee, how much money he has paid to Hortalez and Company?

Lee—I have not taken the trouble.

Thornton—Mr. Lee, if I may make a suggestion, sir?

Lee—Your suggestions are always acceptable, Major Thornton.

Thornton—*(leaning forward and speaking cautiously)*—A man of your talents, sir,—*(Lee makes deprecating gesture)*—I mean what I say, sir. A man of your talents should not be restricted by having to consult other commissioners. If you made strong enough representations, the Congress might take action, even in the case of Benjamin Franklin.

Lee—*(dropping his feet)*—Major, you are a daring man!

Thornton—I know you are too, sir.

Lee—Well, it isn't a matter of courage. Benjamin Franklin is no man to strike back resentfully.—Can I find a plausible accusation?—*(turning to the papers on the desk)*—Here, let me look through his documents.—Bills; draft on Dr. Franklin; draft on Benjamin Franklin; paid; another draft; memorandum of private loan secured by Benjamin Franklin; more bills marked paid.—Great Scott! This is careless!—A private memorandum from Comte Vergennes, Foreign Minister of France, marked confidential.—This is astounding! The British would give a thousand pounds to lay their hands on this! I must lock it up.—*(rising)*—The Comte must have presented it when he came an hour ago, and Franklin simply laid it down on his desk where anyone might pick it up and read it.—Doesn't he know there are spies in Paris?

Thornton—What does it say, sir?

Lee—I said, doesn't he know there are spies in Paris?—(*Lee, with the document in hand, gets a key from a coat that is hanging over the back of a chair at the extreme right, returns to the desk, unlocks a drawer, puts the paper within, and locks the drawer, replacing the key in the coat pocket.*)—There he sits in the next room with that snob, Comte Vergennes, playing chess! Meanwhile, I have to take care of his important documents. And all the time, I am at my wit's end to know how to make Congress acknowledge my services.

Thornton—Shall you remain here, sir, to see Monsieur de Beaumarchais play his practical joke on Dr. Franklin?

Lee—Not I!—That fellow Beaumarchais sickens me.

Thornton—As I came out from the center of the city this morning, sir, I heard rumors of a signal message from the coast. A ship from America—

Lee—(*jumping to his feet*)—There may be a messenger for us on the way. I must go at once.—(*He rapidly crosses to left, and then pauses.*)—Oh! My coat, please, Major.—(*Thornton crosses to right, takes up Lee's coat, and in carrying it to Lee, extracts the key. He helps Lee on with the coat.*)—Tell Dr. Franklin to guard himself more carefully against spies.

Thornton—Yes, sir.

Lee—I shall return as soon as I hear the news.

Thornton—Very well, sir.—(*Exit Lee left. Thornton listens at the door right; he then moves swiftly to Franklin's desk, unlocks the drawer in which Lee had placed the document, removes the document, relocks the drawer, and after a moment's reflection, drops the key on the floor beside the chair at the extreme right. He seats himself at his own desk, and after glancing hastily at the document, begins to make a copy of it. Enter Temple.*)

Temple—What are you doing, Major Thornton?

Thornton—Nothing much, sir.

Temple—I thought I heard some one moving in here.—(*He sits down at Franklin's desk and looks over to see what Thornton is writing.*)

Thornton—I am merely copying a paper which Mr. Lee had—

Temple—*(relaxing his suspicious attitude)*—Oh, Mr. Lee's.—
You musn't disturb any of grandfather's papers. Things on this desk look a mess, but I know where everything is exactly.—*(looking through the papers on Franklin's desk)*—Why, you have disarranged these papers!

Thornton—Not I, sir. Mr. Lee sat there a few minutes ago, sir. He looked over certain bills.

Temple—*(failing to find on the desk that for which he is looking)*—That is queer!—*(He rises, goes to the table at extreme right and searches through the papers upon it.)*—I am sure grandfather said he left it in this room.—*(While Temple's back is turned, Thornton rises, slips the document beneath the papers on Franklin's desk, and re-seats himself just before Temple swings around. Temple again examines the papers on Franklin's desk, and finds the document.)*—But I see things haven't been seriously disarranged.—*(Temple places the document in the center of the desk, and with apparent carelessness drops two letters upon it. Enter right Benjamin Franklin and Vergennes.)*

Vergennes—*(crossing left)*—Dr. Franklin, I shall always remember that game of chess!

Franklin—Why, sir, there was nothing unusual in your victory. You always win at chess as you do in diplomacy.

Vergennes—I hope not by the same methods.—*(to Temple)*—Young man, your grandfather fails to beat me at chess, only because he thinks more about America when he is playing than about the pieces on the board. Just when I was going to checkmate his king, he took his king up and put it in his pocket. I remonstrated. "Yes, sir; continue," he said, "and we shall soon see that the party without a king will win the game."—*(to Franklin)*—I wish you could say that to the English Minister, Lord North.

Franklin—Someday I shall, sir, but it will be at the end of something more than a game of chess.

Vergennes—Dr. Franklin, you are worth as much to your country as another army would be!—*Au revoir!*

Franklin—*Au revoir, Comte!*—*(Exit Vergennes.)*—Now, to work again!—*(Temple rises.)*—No, Temple, keep your seat. I shall sit here and dictate.—*(sitting in a chair down right)*

—Those letters I wrote to England,—have you the addresses for them?

Temple—To Horace Walpole, to Edmund Burke, M. P., to Dr. Joseph Priestly, Esq.—All ready for the post.

Franklin—Wait before sealing the one to Edmund Burke.—*(Franklin rises and searches among a pile of papers on a stand at the right.)*—Burke is an Irishman, and will be interested in that plan of confederation for the American States which I sketched. I remember I included Ireland in my plan. Here it is. I drew it up in July, 1775. It contains a provision that Ireland may, upon application, be received in an American confederation. Enclose that in my letter to Burke.—Most Irishmen are as much in favor of our cause as the hottest patriots among us.

Temple—That is because they feel we are fighting their battle for them, sir.

Franklin—Now then, are you ready?—*(dictating)*—
“To General George Washington,
Sir:

The gentleman who will have the honor of waiting upon you with this letter is the Baron von Steuben, lately a lieutenant general in the King of Prussia's service, whom he attended in all his campaigns, being his aide-de-camp, quartermaster-general, etc. He goes to America with a true zeal for our cause, and a view of engaging in it and rendering all the service in his power.

I have the honor to be, yours, etc.”

Give that to Baron von Steuben when he calls tomorrow. The Baron will be most useful as a drillmaster, and will be almost as valuable an acquisition to our forces as the Marquis de Lafayette.—That finishes public business for the present.—Temple, I have some private business with you.

Thornton—*(looking up from his desk)*—Shall I go, sir?

Franklin—No, Major, it will do you no harm to hear.—Temple, I wish to give you a serious word of warning.

Temple—*(close to Franklin's chair)*—Against spies?

Franklin—Against Mademoiselle Somnambule.—Major Thornton told me you invited her to come here to-day.

Temple—Do you accuse her of wishing to steal documents?

Franklin—No! No! Get the spy business out of your head. I

will tend to whatever spies there are.—I accuse Mademoiselle of wishing to steal hearts, especially yours.

Temple—(*heatedly*)—You have no right to impute such a motive to a beautiful woman!

Franklin—Dear! dear! She has stolen your heart already!

Temple—Why do you say that, sir?

Franklin—You defend her with the ardor of a lover.

Temple—I am not in love with her. I never saw her before yesterday. We are friends, merely good friends. She says most interesting things, and—

Franklin—You are almost ready to propose to her.

Temple—Grandfather, why will you continue to make fun of me?—You never seem to want me to look at a girl.

Franklin—I not only want you to look at a girl, but I hope you will look at many, and marry the best. A man without a wife is but half a man. I want you to marry someday, a steady, economical woman, as I did, one who can tend to business and keep accounts.

Temple—Suppose I happen to fall in love with a woman who can not keep accounts?

Franklin—Teach her how.—But indeed, you should make up your mind beforehand as to the kind of woman you are going to let yourself fall in love with. If you decide on a kind that really exists, the right woman will appear.

Temple—Isn't love blind, sir?

Franklin—It should not be. Keep your eyes wide open before marriage; half shut afterwards.—What is Mademoiselle Somnambulie's first name?

Temple—You don't think I have already asked her that?

Franklin—If you didn't yesterday, you will to-day.

Temple—Should I ask her so soon as to-day what her first name is?

Franklin—Ask her, my boy. If she tells you only her last name, she is a sensible woman. If she tells you her first name, she is a flirt.

Temple—What if she refuses to tell me either?

Franklin—Then she may be either sensible or a flirt, and in that case, beware!

Temple—In return for the advice you have given me, sir, may I venture an opinion on another matter?—It is in regard to Mr. Lee. Major Thornton, as Mr. Lee's Secretary, is bound to tell Mr. Lee of what I say. Well, I want Mr. Lee to know what I think. I think, sir, that since Mr. Lee cannot cooperate with his fellow commissioners, and has demanded the recall of Mr. Deane, and since he is useless here in Paris and is always stirring up trouble, I think, sir, that you should report him to Congress!

Franklin—It will not render Mr. Lee more useful, for me to make accusations against him. But it is hard, that I, who give others no trouble with my quarrels, should be plagued with all the perversities of those who think fit to wrangle with one another. I have too many antagonisms to face as it is. I have causes enough for discouragement, without giving attention to Mr. Lee. According to our latest news, Washington was still retreating; Lord Howe was nearing Philadelphia; New York and New England were on the point of being overrun by the army of Burgoyne. We have had serious losses at sea recently on this side of the Atlantic. Besides all these concerns, I am overworked with correspondence, arranging private loans, and paying the drafts Congress continues to draw against me. And now, those who should be helping me, quarrel among themselves!—Give me those words by Tom Paine which Washington ordered read to his troops.—In the top drawer.—I always find comfort in them.—(*Temple hands him a paper and sits down. Franklin reads.*)—"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation left with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."—What weaklings we are to let ourselves become discouraged!

Lee—(*shouting off stage left*)—Dr. Franklin! Dr. Franklin—(*Enter Lee.*)—News from America, Dr. Franklin! A messenger is reported very near Paris. I have galloped all the way from the Court! I am going back again to meet him!—(*Exit Lee.*)

Franklin—The worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise.—
(*Reenter Lee left.*)

Lee—There is a woman just arrived to see you, Dr. Franklin.

Franklin—You mean to see my grandson.

Lee—No, to see you, sir.

Franklin—(*rising*)—Bless me! I was not expecting a visitor.
Who can it be?

(*Temple and Thornton signal to each other their enjoyment of the situation. Lee shows his disapproval as Beaumarchais, dressed as a woman, enters left. Temple rises.*)

Beaumarchais—Ah, Dr. Frankleen, I have found you at last!—
(*Beaumarchais courtesys. Lee, standing at the door left, is drawn against his will to remain.*)

Franklin—(*bowing*)—I am charmed.

Beaumarchais—Helas! Ees eet thus with a coldness that my old friend greets me? Does he not remember me?

Franklin—(*adjusting his spectacles*)—I beg your pardon, but you have me at a disadvantage. I cannot recall your name. Your face is somehow familiar. Can it be that age has begun to attack my memory? Believe me, I am distressed that I cannot remember you.

Beaumarchais—(*turning to Lee*)—Mistaire Lee knows who I am. Ees eet not so, Mistaire Lee?

Lee—I must confess that I do.

Beaumarchais—Confestion ees goot for the soul, Mistaire Lee. Therefore, eet ees my goot wishes for you, that you often confess. Mon Dieu, but how you look disgust with me! Mistaire Lee, eet ees customaire in France zat the gentleman kees the hand of the ladies their friends.—Here ees my hand, my leely hand.—(*Lee hesitates, swallows wrath, snatches up Beaumarchais's hand, makes as though to kiss it, throws it down and exits left.*)

Beaumarchais—A most ill-bred man, Dr. Frankleen.—Are all Americans like heem?

Franklin—Madame, here is one who is a gentleman, my grandson, William Temple Franklin.

Beaumarchais—Ah! Mistaire Willaum Temple Frankleen, with you I will shake the hand, Anglaise fashion.

Temple—Fair lady, my grandfather has taught me how to address a Frenchwoman.—What is your first name?

Beaumarchais—Eet ees an impertinence! My first name ees not for you!

Franklin—My grandson misunderstood. I hope you will pardon the ignorance of his youth, Mademoiselle.

Beaumarchais—Certainement.—(*getting out a handkerchief*)—But, hélas! Dr. Frankleen! I am not mademoiselle. I am what you call in Anglaise a widower.

Franklin—Widow, Madame.

Beaumarchais—Ah yes, widow. Widower ees a man who ees widowed, yes?

Franklin—Exactly, Madame.

Beaumarchais—(*weeping into a handkerchief*)—Helas! My poor husbonde! Ah, Dr. Frankleen, you do not know what eet ees to lose a husbonde!

Franklin—Not yet, Madame.

Beaumarchais—He was so goot a man, so honest, so kind, so gentle,—when he was sober!—But I must not weep any more. Eet ees bad for the complexiown.

Temple—Madame, permit me to ask you a question. Can you keep accounts?

Beaumarchais—Accounts?—What ees accounts?

Franklin—Records of money matters. Every woman should keep them. Then she will be more useful.

Beaumarchais—Mon Dieu! Why should I be useful? Ees eet not enough that I am beautiful?

Franklin—For me, Madame, it is.

Beaumarchais—How you are gallant, Dr. Frankleen!—And so, my beauty ees enough for you?—Eet ees too much for one of your friends, too much dazzlement.

Franklin—How is that, Madame?

Beaumarchais—Eet ees one of your friends who ees in love with me too much.

Franklin—Who is he, Madame?

Beaumarchais—He ees Monsieur de Beaumarchais.—He ees too much selfish interested in me. He thinks of nobody else, I am sorry to say. I do not like to tell you, hees friend, scandal about Monsieur de Beaumarchais, but—

Franklin—I can believe anything about Monsieur de Beaumarchais.

Beaumarchais—What?—Then I tell you.—He has been so—what you call—craze about me the past month that he has been to my house every time he knows I am at home. He goes everywhere I go, sometimes even in my carriage. I cannot keep myself rid of heem. Eet ees too much attentions. I wish that you spik to heem about eet.

Franklin—I am not surprised at what you say, Madame. If Monsieur de Beaumarchais had as good an escapement balance in his brain as he has put into the watches he used to make, he would behave himself properly.

Beaumarchais—Ees that what you say of heem, Dr. Frankleen?—I will remember eet.—But eet ees that I came to ask you to help me in another mattaire also.

Franklin—Anything in my power, Madame, I will do.

Beaumarchais—There ees a reech man in the West Indies who wants a wife from Paris. I ask you to do me the great favaire to write to heem for me a letter of recommendatiown.

Franklin—I would gladly do so, Madame, but I have been so overworked lately, I beg you to excuse me.

Beaumarchais—Eet ees a leetle thing for you; eet ees everything to me.

Franklin—But, Madame—(*Beaumarchais turns from Franklin, takes a powder puff from a handbag, and powders his nose.*)—Madame, I will do it.—(*Beaumarchais, smiling, continues powdering.*)—To whom shall I address it?

Beaumarchais—(*without turning*)—Monsieur Alexandre Gramont, Island of Martinique.

Franklin—(*sitting down and dictating to Temple*)—
“My dear Monsieur:

I have been requested by a lady who moves in the best society in Paris to address the following recommendation to you.—(*Beaumarchais smiles.*)—The lady in question is one whom I met some few years ago,”—That is right,

Madame, is it not?—(*Beaumarchais nods affirmatively.*)—
“some few years ago, when she looked much younger.”

Beaumarchais—(*starting*)—Need you say that, Dr. Franklin?

Franklin—What am I thinking of!—Erase “when she looked much younger.” I will express it differently.—“whom I met many years ago. She is a widow who reveres the memory of her sainted husband.—(*Beaumarchais smiles.*)—Her character is to be judged by the fact that the famous author of the popular *Barber of Seville*, Monsieur de Beaumarchais, has been smitten by her charms, and attempts to force his attentions upon her. She is too modest to tolerate a man like him. I have no doubt he deserves her disapproval. I have been so deeply impressed by her that I can describe her in terms no less than to say that she is—an aged, awkward, scandal-mongering female, and worse yet, one who looks for all the world like Monsieur de Beaumarchais!”

Beaumarchais—(*with chagrin*)—Have you known all the time who I was?

Franklin—You are a clever man, Monsieur de Beaumarchais.

Beaumarchais—(*taking off his woman's wig*)—Not clever enough this time. I have lost a bet. The joke is on me.—Let me go to my carriage. I have a suit of male attire in it.

Temple—I will get it for you, Monsieur.—(*Exit Temple left*)

Beaumarchais—You have observing eyes, Dr. Franklin.

Franklin—(*moving back stage, and staring hard at Major Thornton, who has risen and is going to left*)—I see more than some give me credit for.—Stay, Major.—I believe I hear the arrival of the messenger from America in the courtyard. If I mistake not, he bears news you will be interested to hear.
(*Enter Temple.*)

Temple—The messenger has arrived!

Lee—(*off left*)—This way, Mr. Austin.—(*Enter Lee and Austin left.*)

Franklin—Sir, is Philadelphia taken?

Austin—Yes, sir.—(*Franklin claps his hands in dismay and turns away.*)—But, sir, I have greater news than that! General Burgoyne and his whole army are prisoners of

war!—(For a moment, all pause, as the importance of the news dawns upon them. Then Beaumarchais jumps towards the door, shouting:)

Beaumarchais—I must tell Comte de Vergennes at once!—(Exit Beaumarchais. Thornton seizes paper and quill and hastily begins to write.)

Franklin—(to Temple)—Put that news in each of those letters to England.—(to Austin)—Sir, I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance.

Austin—I am John Loring Austin, of Boston.

Franklin—(shaking hands)—I am glad to meet you, Mr. Austin, and the more so since you are the bearer of such great news! An entire army, prisoners!—Consider what it means, sir! The British will begin to think of making peace, and the French of making war!—Where is Washington?

Austin—At Valley Forge, sir.

Franklin—Have you any dispatches?

Austin—(taking two folded documents from his pocket)—These, sir.

Franklin—(opening one, glancing at it, and handing it to Lee)—You are the only one, Mr. Lee, to whom this will give satisfaction.—(Franklin crosses to right.)

Lee—At last! Mr. Deane is recalled, and Mr. John Adams is appointed to take his place! John Adams is more to my liking!—(Exit Lee right.)

Franklin—(who has been reading the second document)—This is a most important communication!—(folding it up)—I am glad that you escaped seizure by the British with this in your possession.—(Thornton listens.)—Who brought you across the Atlantic?

Austin—Captain John Paul Jones.

Franklin—The very man I need!—I want to commission him as a privateer against British shipping. He must see me here in Paris. I have plans for an attack on certain British ports.—And, will you go as my personal envoy to England?—It will be dangerous. You will risk being hung as a spy.

Austin—I care not for the danger, sir.

Franklin—Good!—You can carry communications from me to the Prince of Wales. He sympathizes with us. You will meet the Whig leaders in Parliament and find many friends. But burn all the papers you brought from America, as a precaution.—There, my grandson is ready, and he will direct you.

Austin—I will do my best, sir!

Franklin—Goodbye, Mr. Austin, and God bless you!—*(They shake hands. Exit left Austin and Temple. Franklin is at the left, still holding in hand the document he received from Austin.)*—Major Thornton, here is this dispatch from America. I wish it to be put away safe from spies.—*(Thornton rises eagerly.)*—Please lock it up for me in my desk.—*(He hands it to Thornton.)*

Thornton—*(center)*—I have no key, sir.

Franklin—My grandson and Mr. Lee have keys.

Thornton—Shall I run after Mr. Temple, sir?—*(crossing left)*

Franklin—*(stepping back and blocking Thornton's way)*—Won't it be easier to call Mr. Lee?

Thornton—Why, of course, sir.

Franklin—Why, of course.—*(Thornton crosses to right.)*—But wait, Major.

Thornton—Yes, sir?

Franklin—I do not believe it will be necessary to call Mr. Lee, to get the key.

Thornton—But,—but if he has the key, sir?

Franklin—My eyes are not very good, even with these spectacles, at such a distance across the room. But I am sometimes surprised at how much I do observe.—Don't I see a key lying beside that chair?

Thornton—So you do, sir!—*(picking it up)*—Why, it is the very key we want, sir!

Franklin—Please put the dispatch in the bottom drawer.—*(Franklin turns his back as Thornton unlocks the drawer. Instead of placing the dispatch in the drawer, Thornton slips it in his pocket.)*—Major!—*(Thornton starts.)*—You will be interested in reading that dispatch at your leisure. Just at present, I should like to tell you of a way I have

with spies. Come here.—(*Thornton approaches him.*)—Let me have it.—(*Thornton looks Franklin in the eye for a moment; then his eyes waver and fall, and he slowly reaches into his pocket, draws out the dispatch, and hands it to Franklin. Franklin crosses to his desk.*)—My way of foiling spies, Major Thornton, is to lock up unimportant documents, for every lock is an invitation to a spy. Those documents which I do not care to have spies read, I leave out on the top of this desk, so,—(*placing the dispatch on the desk*)—where no one would expect to find a manuscript of value.—But as a matter of fact, I have nothing to conceal from the enemies of my country. The more they know, the sooner they will yield. Here, read this, if you like.—(*Franklin picks up the dispatch and advances to Thornton, holding it towards him. Thornton, head hanging, remains silent.*)—If you won't take this,—(*gesturing with the dispatch in his left hand*)—won't you take this?—(*holding out his right hand*)

Thornton—Would you shake hands with me, sir?—Forgive me, sir!—(*They shake hands.*)—I cannot be your enemy, sir—I have been loyal to King George the Third, but it was with hope of being knighted. If I had King George's promise to make me a Lord, sir, I would not fight any longer against you!

Franklin—Major, there need be no patent of nobility from a king to make a man a true nobleman.

Thornton—(*going to his desk and taking up certain papers*)—I will destroy this report which I was preparing for Lord Stormont, on the news from America.

Franklin—(*crossing right*)—No, send it. I want Lord North to have it as soon as possible.
(*Enter left Somnambule and Temple. Temple remains near the entrance.*)

Somnambule—Bon jour, Dr. Franklin!

Franklin—Ah, Mademoiselle, bon jour!

Somnambule—Your grandson tells me how busy you are, sir. I shall not disturb you. I know what work it is to keep accounts.—(*smiling at Temple*)

Franklin—Ah, so! Then, with your kind permission, Major Thornton and I will retire to another room.—(*Exit Major Thornton right.*)—A thousand pardons for leaving you so abruptly.—(*kissing her hand and speaking in confidential tones*)—Mademoiselle, I entreat your mercy to—

wards my grandson. He is young, and inexperienced in the free ways of fine ladies of the French Court like Mademoiselle. Remember that I trust him with you, Mademoiselle.—(*Franklin agains kisses her hand, and exits right,*)

Somnambulie—(*looking after him*)—Does your grandfather always have his own way with every one?

Temple—With most people, but not with me.

Somnambulie—You naughty boy!—He is a better man than you realize, and you should obey him.

Temple—Sometimes he asks impossible things.

Somnambulie—As for example?

Temple—Oh! I can't tell you!

Somnambulie—What did he tell you to do in regard to me?—Come, tell me!—You won't?—Then, goodbye!—(*She starts towards the door left.*)

Temple—(*intercepting her at center*)—You're not going to leave?

Somnambulie—At once, unless you tell me what your grandfather said about me.

Temple—He told me to ask you a question.

Somnambulie—Well, ask it.

Temple—I can't.

Somnambulie—Don't you want to know the answer?

Temple—I am not sure.

Somnambulie—(*her curiosity thoroughly aroused*)—You must tell me!—Now,—(*sitting down*)—I shall stay until you tell me.—Or ask your grandfather myself.

Temple—No, don't! I will ask the question.—What—What is your real first name?

Somnambulie—Is that all—(*to herself*)—Why that question?

Temple—Are you going to answer?

Somnambulie—Should I? —(*pause*)—No, you must never ask me who I am, nor try to find out.

Temple—Does grandfather know who you are?

Somnambulie—He knows that I am a dangerous woman.

Temple—Oh! But you are not!—I will not believe it!

Somnambulie—I may be worse than dangerous.

Temple—You are too kind and good to be anything but an angel! You have the disposition of an angel and the character of a saint!

Somnambulie—Mr. Temple, you must not say such things!

Temple—They are true! You are the best woman in Paris! You are the noblest woman in France! You are the most perfect woman in the world! You are as lovely as Venus! You are as beautiful as—as Helen of Troy!

Somnambulie—Stop, Mr. Temple, stop!—*(She rises.)*

Temple—I don't care! I shan't stop!—You are the only woman in the world for me, and I want you to be my wife! Yes, I do!—*(Somnambulie falls back into a chair, laughing heartily, yet trying to conceal her laughter.)*—You are laughing!—Everybody tries to make fun of me! First it's grandfather, and now it's you!—You don't think I mean what I said?—I do mean it!—*(very solemn)*—Somnambulie, I love you!—I will die unless you give me your hand! I will kill myself unless I have your love!—*(He falls upon his knees beside her chair and seizes her hands.)*

Somnambulie—My dear boy,—

Temple—It is so sweet to hear you call me that!

Somnambulie—It seems to me that I once heard it said that you are eighteen years of age.

Temple— I am.

Somnambulie—Well, my dear boy, do you realize that I am nearly twice your age?

Temple—Impossible!—You don't look it!

Somnambulie—But I am.

Temple—Even if you are, I love you just the same!

(Enter Beaumarchais and Vergennes. Beaumarchais is now dressed as in Act I. He carries his left arm in a sling.)

Beaumarchais—Ah!—What a pretty tableau!

Temple—(*rising hastily to his feet and crossing to right*)—
There's another one making fun of me!

Somnambulie—(*rising*)—Mr. Temple and I were practising a scene we are going to give at a charity ball.

Beaumarchais—Oh! I see!—A tableau representing the love of France and America?

Somnambulie—Yes, exactly.—Mr. Temple, as young America, asking me, as old France, to give him my hand in help.—Monsieur Beaumarchais, we intend to be more skillful in our parts than you were in yours as a woman. Where is my finger watch?

Beaumarchais—You shall have it tomorrow.—You see why I lost my bet, Mademoiselle. I did not have your fan to make me perfect in my disguise.

Somnambulie—What has happened to your arm, Monsieur?

Vergennes—He drove so fast to bring me news from America that his carriage overturned and he broke his arm.

Somnambulie—Oh! Monsieur!

Beaumarchais—No matter. It was good news, worth a broken arm.

Temple—I shall tell grandfather you are here, gentlemen.

Vergennes—If you please.—(*Exit Temple right.*)—I am sure we are wise to take action at once. We must forestall any British advances to make peace with America.

(*Enter Lee right.*)

Lee—Good afternoon, gentlemen. Sirs, be seated.

Vergennes—Thank you, sir.—(*Vergennes turns to Beaumarchais, giving his back to Lee. Vergennes and Beaumarchais remain standing.*)—Of course, you will close the house of Hortalez and Company at once.

(*Enter right Franklin and Temple.*)

Franklin—Ah, Comte, welcome again to Passy!—Monsieur Beaumarchais, you don't look now as though you wanted to marry a man in the West Indies.—What is the matter with your arm?

Beaumarchais—My carriage upset. Nothing serious.—I am more concerned with the unfortunate fact that General Howe has captured Philadelphia.

Franklin—No! Philadelphia has captured General Howe. The luxuries of the city will unfit his soldiers for the next campaign, and Philadelphia society will make his officers loath to take the field again. The loss of Philadelphia does not count in comparison with the surrender of Burgoyne.

Vergennes—Dr. Franklin, I bring word from the Court of France, that his Majesty, King Louis XVI, is fixed in his determination not only to acknowledge, but to support the independence of the United States by every means in his power!

Franklin—In the name of the United States, I thank his Majesty!

Vergennes—I will take steps immediately to join you in your war against England.

(Temple, overcome with emotion, rushes across to Somnambulie, seizes her, and kisses her.)

Beaumarchais—Here! Here! That is going further than a tableau!

Temple—As young America, I thank old France!

Somnambulie—Mr. Temple, to use the quaint English expression, you are a chip of the old block!

Vergennes—I shall ask the United States to make a treaty with me to the effect that “neither of the two parties, the United States nor France, shall conclude either truce or peace with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other first obtained.”

Franklin—I can answer for Congress that the treaty will be agreeable.

Lee—If you desire a treaty with the United States, there is one stipulation I shall make, to which you must agree. You must remove the export duty on molasses from the West Indies.

Vergennes—*(to Franklin)*—Why is Mr. Lee so much interested in molasses?

Franklin—The explanation is this.—You French drink wine; Germans, beer; Russians, vodka; English, tea; we Americans, Jamaica rum.

Lee—Out of the molasses from the West Indies, we make rum. In exchange for that molasses, we find a market for our

products. The trade of the United States with the West Indies is necessary for the maintenance of our home industries. In fact, it may be said that every American who drinks a glass of rum, advances the national prosperity.

Franklin—I trust that posterity will appreciate the zeal with which we are thus promoting the general welfare.

Vergennes—You shall have the molasses without the charge of an export duty.

Franklin—Then the terms of treaty between the United States and France are settled.—Sir, we welcome France as she enters the conflict.—I have observed, gentlemen, that all Europe is on our side of the question as far as applause and good wishes can carry them. Those who live under arbitrary power do nevertheless approve of liberty and wish for it; they almost despair of recovering it in Europe; they look with hope to us. Hence it is that the cause of America is the cause of all mankind, and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own. It is a glorious task assigned to us by Providence, which has, I trust, given us spirit and virtue equal to it, and will at last crown it with success!

(Curtain)

ACT III.

Same as Act Two

November 30, 1782

(A table is in the center of the room. Papers, books, and letters are piled high on the desks and floor. Benjamin Franklin is seated at the right of the table and Temple at the back. Temple is wearing a heavy moustache. John Jay is standing, smoking a long clay pipe.)

Jay—I told you, sir, we might just as well never have won the victory at Yorktown, so far as our hopes for a diplomatic success are concerned. How can the United States, impoverished by the war, gain general recognition of their independence in the face of such opposition?—(crossing right)—The English Government is not disposed even yet to recognize our independence; Spain never has done so; she will not until England does.—(crossing and recrossing)—The French Government appears to be on the point of forgetting our treaty of 1778, by which we agreed that neither nation would make a separate peace with England.—(crossing left)—France shows an inclination to join with England in profiting at our expense. Nations seem generous to their friends when they are engaged in war, but when peace-making time comes, and all are scrambling to get what they can for themselves, they forget their friends.—(crossing right)

Franklin—Mr. Jay, I believe there never was a good war nor a bad peace.

Jay—True, sir.—(crossing left)—I am going now to see the Spanish Ambassador in regard to our western boundaries and the use of the Mississippi.—Where is that memorandum?—I must have left it here.—(looking among the papers on the table)

Temple—It has disappeared.

Jay—I shall have to write another.

Temple—Never mind, sir; you will find it as soon as the French have done with it. Every paper we have is stolen by their spies, but they are always very considerate about returning things.

Jay—I shall go to the Spanish Embassy without my memorandum. I have a map of the Mississippi.

Franklin—Let us work for peace, Mr. Jay, never despairing. Little strokes fell great oaks.

Jay—That proverb is from Poor Richard's Almanac, is it not?—The thing I enjoyed best in your Almanac, Dr. Franklin, is that "epitaph on a scolding wife by her husband. Here my poor Bridget's corpse doth lie; she is at rest,—and so am I."—(*Amid general laughter, Jay exits left.*)

Franklin—I am glad the dear fellow Jay has come to relieve me of part of my work. Ever since Silas Deane and that quarrelsome Mr. Lee were recalled, I have had no one but you.

Temple—And now Congress has refused for the second time to grant me a salary!

Franklin—You will have to be satisfied, my boy, with what I pay you myself.

Temple—But it's a shame, sir! I have done all the secretarial work when you have suffered from the gout, or have been ill. Congress is ungrateful!

Franklin—No, my boy, Congress has had its hands full of more urgent business.
(*Enter left Vergennes and Beaumarchais.*)

Vergennes—Bon jour, Dr. Franklin!

Franklin—(*rising*)—Ah, Comte Vergennes, welcome to Passy!—You have written another play, Monsieur Beaumarchais. Do I understand correctly that the King refuses to let it be performed?

Beaumarchais—He read it and called it "detestable and unactable."—Nevertheless, it shall be acted before long.

Franklin—Dare you oppose the King?

Beaumarchais—Oh no! I shall merely persuade the King not to oppose me.

Franklin—How will you do that?

Beaumarchais—I am giving private readings before the nobility. People are asking each other, "Have you heard the new play?"—Soon there will be a demand through all Paris, a demand which the King cannot resist, that he permit a performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Vergennes—*The Marriage of Figaro* satirizes the Court and all Society. Monsieur Beaumarchais has his laugh at all of us.

Beaumarchais—I hasten to laugh at everything, lest I should have to weep at everything.

Vergennes—I came to you to-day, Dr. Franklin, to complain of your colleague, Mr. John Adams. He is worse than Mr. Lee! I was forced to be no more than civil to Mr. Lee; but Mr. Adams, I am forced to flatter. And Mr. Adams does not seem to realize the custom of ambassadors at court.

Franklin—Do not be too harsh with him, Comte. He is a strenuous worker; sometimes he is too busy to think of the forms of etiquette; but he means well.

Beaumarchais—(*at left*)—Perhaps we expect the impossible of Mr. Adams. Every one can not be like Benjamin Franklin, who, in the words of the poet:

“snatched the thunderbolt from heaven,
and the sceptre from the hands of tyrants.”

Franklin—As for the thunder, I left it where I found it; and a million of my countrymen cooperated with me in snatching the sceptre. Also, Monsieur Beaumarchais helped, and Comte Vergennes, who gave us money. During these five years, you have aided me in securing loans that total 52,000,000 livres.

Beaumarchais—(*crossing to Temple*)—The only additional thing the Franklins need to secure in France, is a wife for Mr. Temple.

Temple—(*twirling his moustache*)—Are you trying to arrange a loan of one, sir?

Beaumarchais—With a security as handsome as you, she would be safe.

Temple—I don't care to borrow a wife.—I would rather do as the poet says grandfather did with the thunder, and snatch one.

Beaumarchais—You tried that once.

Temple—What do you mean?

Beaumarchais—Don't you remember?

Temple—Oh! You mean that tableau with—with—with—what was her name?

Beaumarchais—You were on your knees before her, vowing to kill yourself if she refused you!—And now you have for-

gotten her name!—(*crossing left*)—Such is youth!

Temple—I have grown up since then. I was a mere baby,—only eighteen.—But I remember!—She called herself Somnambulie.

Beaumarchais—(*returning to Temple*)—She often remarks on how cleverly you acted that tableau!

Temple—That was easy!

Beaumarchais—Naturally, you would say so now. I understand you have improved by practice.

Temple—Occasionally I play a part in what you call a tableau. But I never attempt to impersonate an old woman. I leave that for you, Monsieur.

Vergennes—(*to Beaumarchais*)—Mr. Temple's tongue shows that you have been a good tutor, Monsieur.

Beaumarchais—I will not claim credit that belongs to his partners in tableaux.

Vergennes—Come, Monsieur,—Au revoir, Dr. Franklin!

Franklin—Au revoir, Comte!—I will do what I can with Mr. Adams.
(*Exit Vergennes.*)

Temple—Where is Somnambulie now?

Beaumarchais—(*at exit*)—She is married,—just at present.
(*Exit Beaumarchais.*)

Temple—I cannot imagine two people more unlike than Beaumarchais and Mr. Adams. One is so much a man of the world; the other, so much a Puritan.

Franklin—Mr. Adams is always an honest man, often a wise man, but sometimes and in some things, absolutely out of his senses.

Temple—I hear his voice. Had I not better leave?

Franklin—(*sitting*)—Very likely.—(*Exit Temple right.*)

Adams—(*off left*)—It is not right! I will not do it! I will not buy a carriage at any such price!—Good day, sir!—(*He enters.*)—I intend to see that expenses are kept within reasonable bounds. There has been too much luxury and extravagance among American Commissioners. I am appalled at the prodigious sums of money you—(*pointing at*

Franklin)—have expended!—I find on looking over your accounts for last year that you spent the total of four hundred and fifty dollars!

Franklin—(*quietly*)—Good afternoon, Mr. Adams.

Adams—(*surlily at having his rudeness thus called to his attention*)—Good afternoon, Dr. Franklin.—I never saw records kept in such confusion! Here are letters, bills, books, miscellaneous documents, with no arrangement, no system!—(*He begins vigorously to sort and tie up papers into bundles.*)—I am shocked at this lack of order. It is fortunate Congress has sent a man of business here at last. I know the need of order and system, for I built up the largest law practice in Boston.—But I must not boast. I thank God I have succeeded in making humility one of my virtues! I am not in Paris to receive the praise and flattery of Frenchmen. I am here to get things done and make a treaty of peace, and not go around gibbering French. These frog-eaters are a frivolous folk. Of course, I would not be just if I condemned them all. Some of them are fine gentlemen. I was guest of honor at a dinner given by Comte Vergennes. The compliments I there received show that I am appreciated in some quarters, at least. I made a note in my diary of the things that were said of me.—(*reading from diary*)—“You have made a treaty with Holland; you have negotiated a loan with the Dutch. You afford us the spectacle of a perfect success.”—(*sorting papers again and finding one from which he reads*)—“Montgolfier’s balloon experiments”—(*laughing*)—This must be a private paper of yours.—(*handing it to Franklin*)—Of what use are balloon experiments?

Franklin—Of what use is a new-born babe?

Adams—What I criticize is the wasting of your time on balloons, when you might have arranged these public records.—And now, while I am doing this work, you sit there quietly with your hands folded as though nothing disturbed you!—Dr. Franklin, you are too much in love with your ease! And too fond of visiting with talkative Frenchmen, so that your mind is kept in a constant state of dissipation!

Franklin—(*rising*)—Sir, when you are cool and in good humor, I will justify myself to you.—(*Exit Franklin right. Adams stares after him for a moment, and then thoughtfully takes out his diary and writes in it. He then reads aloud what he has written.*)—“I must hereafter take

special pains to control my temper. The tongue is an unruly member."—(*He turns again to sorting papers.*)
 (*Enter Jay left, smoking his pipe.*)

Jay—(*crossing to right*)—Mr. Adams, I am glad to find you here.

Adams—You look worried, Mr. Jay.

Jay—I have cause to be. The Spanish Ambassador has just intimated that Spain's intention is to deny us the use of the Mississippi, and to limit our boundaries to the east of the Alleghanies. At the French Foreign Office, I was bluntly told that the United States can have no pretensions to the territory we claim. I am suspicious of the French.

Adams—We ought to forestall the French plans and treat at once and separately with the English Commissioners, now in Paris.

Jay—It will be necessary to convince Dr. Franklin.

Adams—I foresee difficulty there, sir. Dr. Franklin's long residence in Paris has prejudiced him in favor of the French.

Jay—Dr. Franklin is our strong arm. His personality and trusted character will accomplish more than your force and mine.

Adams—God forbid that I should boast, but did I not secure a treaty with Holland? I am capable of making a treaty with England without Dr. Franklin's assistance.

Jay—No, sir, we must have Franklin with us.—(*calling at door right*)—Dr. Franklin!—
 (*Jay and Adams cross to the left. Franklin enters and remains at the right.*)

Franklin—Ah, Mr. Jay, you have returned. I too have been busy—

Adams—(*snorting*)—Busy!

Franklin—Very busy, thinking,—how to get the treaty we want.

Adams—That is the question Mr. Jay and I have solved.

Jay—Dr. Franklin, my visits to the Spanish Ambassador and to the French Foreign Office, convince me that neither France nor Spain is to be counted on in this emergency. Neither will support our boundaries claim, and unless we secure the right to the Mississippi, the United States will have a sorry future indeed.—The French, in particular, arouse my distrust. Their spies are too active. As your grandson foretold, my memorandum has reappeared. It was thrust into my pocket while I was in the French Foreign Office.

Franklin—Gentlemen, only as France, Spain, and the United States stand together against England, will England yield to our demands.

Adams—We are determined to treat separately with the English.

Franklin—But sirs, we are bound by gratitude not to do that!

Adams—I, personally, owe no gratitude to France!

Franklin—As an American and a gentleman, you do!—Besides, there is the order of Congress.

Jay—As to the order of Congress that we should keep the French informed of every step we take, I do not feel bound by that.

Franklin—Would you break your instructions?

Jay—Yes, as I break this pipe!—*(Jay breaks his pipe and drops the pieces.)*

Franklin—Four years ago we agreed not to conclude either truce or peace with Great Britain without the formal consent of France. This treaty with France we can not break.

Adams—Patriotism demands it!

Franklin—Your form of patriotism may; mine does not.—Mr. Adams, I am a patriot, as you know; yet to benefit mankind means more to me than to benefit a single nation. My country is the world. To violate a treaty is an injury to all the world, for it destroys man's faith in mankind.

Adams—*(with his back towards Franklin)*—When there is a great good to be gained, as in this case, the future security of the United States, all other considerations must be thrust aside.

Franklin—Shall considerations of honor weigh as nothing in the scale?—*(pause)*—Gentlemen, you do not answer me.—*(pause)*—Gentlemen, it is our firm connection with France that gives us weight against England and respect throughout Europe. If we were to break our faith with France, on whatever pretence, England would again trample on us, and every other nation despise us. The treaty with France must be fulfilled, for we are a new republic just come into the world, and if we were to forfeit our character at the outset, we would never be trusted again.

Jay—Dr. Franklin, you are right. We must be honest, and grateful to our Allies,—but we must think for ourselves.

Franklin—I have raised no objection to our doing that, sir.

Jay—I believe I see a way in which we may make terms with the English at once, without violating our treaty with France. Let us treat separately with the English, but only so far as to agree upon the terms later to be adopted at the same time the French make a treaty with the English.

Adams—It is a clever plan!

Franklin—It is a lawyer's plan.—True, it does not violate our French treaty.—Still, I do not like to do it. I feel that secret treating with the English shows an insulting distrust of France, like throwing over a friend when he has been sufficiently used.

Adams—Mr. Jay and I will do it anyway, sir, no matter how you feel.

Franklin—In that case, gentlemen, I shall have to act with you.

Jay—I have already sent for the English Commissioners, who by now should have arrived.

Franklin—*(calling)*—Temple!—*(Enter Temple right.)*—Please show in Mr. Oswald and his colleagues.—*(Exit Temple left.)*

Adams—These Englishmen will waste their time if they try to make me compromise! I will show them how an American can talk!

(Enter left, Oswald, Lord Stormont, Strachey, and Temple. Adams and Jay are at the extreme left. Franklin is at the right.)

Oswald—Dr. Franklin, we meet, I trust, upon an auspicious occasion.

Franklin—Mr. Oswald, it is my fervent prayer that we do, sir.

Oswald—(*introducing*)—Dr. Franklin, my colleagues: Lord Stormont, and Mr. Strachey.—(*Stormont and Strachey cross front to right.*)

Franklin—(*introducing*)—Lord Stormont and Mr. Strachey; Mr. Adams of Massachusetts, and Mr. Jay, of New York.—Be seated, gentlemen.—(*Temple sets a chair for Lord Stormont. The English are seated at the right; the Americans, at the left of the table.*)

Oswald—(*rising*)—Gentlemen, my colleagues and I hold commissions from the Prime Minister of England, to treat with the Commissioners of the Colonies.

Adams—(*leaping to his feet*)—We are no longer colonies!

Franklin—(*rising slowly*)—Mr. Oswald, may I interrupt?

Oswald—What is your objection, Dr. Franklin?—(*Adams sits down reluctantly.*)

Franklin—We can treat with you, Mr. Oswald, only as you recognize us as Commissioners of the United States. Treat with us on the basis of independence, or not at all.

Oswald—Dr. Franklin, I hope you will not insist on that, sir. I trust that your country will be content with the same relation to England that Ireland has.
(*Adams and Jay leap to their feet, shouting.*)—No! No! Never!

Oswald—Surely some form of reunion will be possible?

Franklin—(*quietly*)—My statement was an ultimatum, sir.
(*Strachey whispers to Oswald. Adams and Jay seat themselves.*)

Oswald—We will give an answer to your ultimatum, presently, sir.—May we know your further terms?
(*Adams leaps to his feet. Franklin sits down.*)

Adams—I demand that England shall give American seamen the right of fishing on the Banks of Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence!

Oswald—Gentlemen, have you any other terms to present?

Jay—(*rising*)—Gentlemen, I have here a map with the boundaries claimed by the United States marked in red; also,

a memorandum relating to our use of the Mississippi.—
(*He lays them on the table before Oswald, and reseats himself.*)

Franklin—(*rising*)—Mr. Oswald, I might add to what we have said that in accordance with the treaty between the United States and France, we cannot sign a permanent treaty of peace with you until France does so also. But we can, and hope to-day to sign an agreement with you as to the terms to be included in that peace when France is ready.—*He sits.*)

Oswald—We understand.—Gentlemen, in regard to your terms: fisheries, boundaries, and independence; to grant all you ask would require that I exceed my instructions. A new Parliament, unfavorable to making peace with America, is soon to meet. Unless we can agree as to terms to-day, it will be too late tomorrow.—(*He sits.*)

Strachey—All we need do is delay.

Stormont—By Jove! That's an idea!

Strachey—Let us postpone our reply to the American terms.

Oswald—We have no good excuse for doing that.

Stormont—By George, sir, you seem to want to make peace with the damn Yankees!

Oswald—Of course I do, my Lord, don't you?

Stormont—No, by George! Not with that fellow Dr. Franklin. He's too clever by half!—He used my name, Stormont, you know, to signify an untruth.—By Jove, sir, people all over Paris began to call me Lord of Lies!

Strachey—I have an excuse for delay.—(*The Englishmen consult privately.*)

Jay—(*to Adams and Franklin*)—We must avoid delay. The meeting of the new Parliament will destroy all present hope of peace.

Adams—We must compel them to accept our terms to-day.

Oswald—(*rising*)—Gentlemen, we have decided to send a courier to London for further instructions.—(*He sits.*)

Adams—We must prevent their doing that!

Jay—But how?—Can't you suggest a way, Mr. Adams?

Adams—No, sir—Can't you?—(*Jay shakes his head.*)—Then all my efforts to arrange the terms of peace must come to nothing!

Franklin—Perhaps I can save the situation, Mr. Adams.

Adams—Impossible, sir! If they are determined to send a courier, they will send one.

Franklin—(*rising*)—Gentlemen, if a courier goes to London, I suggest that he also carry from us a demand for compensation for damages done by British troops in America. The merchants of Boston and Philadelphia suffered heavily from the troops occupying those cities. Then,—(*taking up a paper*)—in addition, here is a total of the loss to the United States of ships seized, of towns and farms burnt. If a messenger goes to London, we will add to our terms compensation for all these losses.—(*He hands the paper to Oswald.*)

Stormont—Now I say, we don't want to pay all those damages, you know!

Strachey—This puts a new complexion on the matter.

Stormont—Gad, this demand is an outrage! Really, you know, I think I am beginning to feel angry! I don't want to threaten, you know, but I have half a mind to protest against this! I don't want to be nasty, you know, but there is such a thing as going too far!

Oswald—(*rising*)—Dr. Franklin, if we do not send a courier to London,—?

Franklin—We will not demand compensation.

Oswald—We should like to retire to another room to confer in private.—Dr. Franklin, I wish you might modify your ultimatum.

Franklin—Sir, the ultimatum stands.
(*All rise. The Englishmen move towards the right.*)

Temple—(*opening the door at the right*)—In here, gentlemen, is the room for your consultation.

Stormont—By George, you know, that demand for compensation is really no kind of idea at all!

(*Exit Oswald, Strachey, and Stormont.*)

Adams—They will refuse to yield!

Jay—We asked too much! Congress did not insist on anything save recognition of independence. In demanding too much, we shall lose all.

Adams—They cannot accuse us of lack of firmness.

Jay—They have the advantage over us, and they know it. All they need do is delay, and our negotiations fail.

Franklin—I am confident they will yield, because a majority of the English people sympathize with us. Many Englishmen have rejoiced at our victories, and Burke has even done so openly in the House of Commons. Remember, gentlemen, that such men as the eldest son of Lord Chatham and General Sir Jeffery Amherst resigned their commissions rather than fight for King George III against us.—I have worked hard to help bring success to our arms in this war. But in nothing have I striven so hard as to encourage the growing attitude of sympathy with our cause among the English people. And now, it is with the deep emotion of joy that I face the prospect of reconciliation with Great Britain.

Adams—But you will accept nothing less than complete independence from England?

Franklin—The United States, for many years to come, will have a separate destiny. There are natural causes at work that will make us a great power in the world.

Adams—You might as well say, sir, that similar causes will make inevitable some sort of union between England and America.

Franklin—So I do, sir. We all, British and Americans, have common customs and manners, and a common inheritance of traditions and laws, and principles of liberty. Above all, we have a common language. That fact, sir, will prove stronger than all the dissensions and rivalries that may tend to divide us. Great Britain and the United States must stand together to maintain the civilization and liberties they possess in common. I go so far as to predict, sir, that the cooperation of Great Britain and the United States in peaceful pursuits will someday be the hope of the world for the betterment of humanity.

(Enter the British Commissioners.)

Oswald—Gentlemen, the Commissioners of His Majesty, George III, King of England, agree to your claims as to fisheries and boundaries, and recognize you as Commissioners of the United States of America!

(There is general handshaking.)

(Curtain)

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