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JOHN BRAG, DECEASED

A FARCE IN FOUR ACTS

BY

GORDON V. MAY

34
DICK & FITZGERALD

PUBLISHERS

18 Ann Street, New York

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DICK & FITZGERALD, Publishers, 18 Ann St., N. Y.

John Brag, Deceased

A FARCE IN
FOUR ACTS

BY GORDON V. MAY

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NEW YORK

Dick & Fitzgerald

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John Brag, Deceased.

NOTE—The acting rights of this play are expressly reserved. Theatrical managers wishing to produce it should apply to the publisher. Amateur representation may be made without such application and without charge.

CHARACTERS.

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| JOHN BRAG, | | the deceased. |
| ARTEMUS GAUNT, | | Brag's secretary. |
| JACK SCHUYLER, | | his nephew. |
| BLACKSTONE BRIEF, | | his lawyer. |
| CEREPHUS SQUILLS, | | his doctor. |
| DONALD MCGURK, | | his double. |
| NEW YORK LIFE, | | a claim adjuster. |
| C. SNEEKER, | | a detective. |
| SEREPHINA BRAG, | | Brag's wife. |
| RUBY BRAG, | } his daughters. | |
| PEARL BRAG, | | |
| SAPPHIRE BRAG, | | |
| BONNIE CHICK, | | The cause of it all. |

Time—The Present Place,—New York City.
Time of Representation, two hours and a half.

- ACT I.—LIBRARY IN BRAG'S HOME. The trouble begins.
 ACT II.—Same as ACT I. The trouble continues.
 ACT III.—GARDEN IN FRONT OF BRAG'S HOME. More trouble.
 ACT IV.—Same as ACTS I and II. The trouble ends.
 Six months between ACTS I and II. An evening between ACTS II and III. ACTS III and IV occur the same day.

COSTUMES.

BRAG.—In Act I, Dressing gown or Smoking Jacket; half-bald gray wig. In Act II, III and IV, Scotch plaid travelling suit, (or full Highland Costume), full sandy wig and side whiskers. In last entrance travelling costume.
 MCGURK.—As nearly as possible the counterpart of Brag's costume and make-up for Act II.
 JACK.—In Act I, Young man's rather sporty costume. In Act II, evening reception costume.

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GAUNT, BRIEF, AND SQUILLS.—Costumes suitable for elderly men.

LIFE AND SNEEKER.—Young men's business costume and make-up.

MRS. BRAG.—In Act I, plain, domestic gown, gray wig. In Act II, and III, elderly lady's reception costume. In Act IV, travelling costume.

RUBY, PEARL, AND SAPPHIRE.—In Act I, morning costume. In following Acts, dressed for evening reception. In Act IV, travelling costume.

BONNIE.—Handsomely, rather showily gowned, Soubrette style of wig. (If she dances in Act II, she will need a ballet style of dress for this Act with a cloak to throw off when her dance begins.)

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES.

Act I.—Papers, bills, letters, etc., on desk L. Decanter and glasses on safe up L. Book, for BRAG to throw, on stand R. Note book for BRAG. Watch and note book for LIFE. Letter for BRIEF.

Act II.—Large bottle of red colored water on desk L. Letter for GAUNT.

Act III.—Four pistols for JACK.

Act IV.—Cigar for JACK. Handcuffs for SNEEKER. Club for MCGURK. Bandages, plaster, etc., BRIEF and SQUILLS. Satchel, etc., for BRAG and family on last entrance.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R, means Right, L, Left of the Actor facing the audience. C, Center; R. C., Right, of Center; L. C., Left of Center; U, Up towards back of stage; F. Front, towards footlights; D. F., Door in flat; D. R., Door Right of stage; D. L., Door Left of Stage; E. Entrance.

Author's Note.

This play has been given under the author's management, and met with great success. It was written to fill the needs of an up-to-date amateur company, giving them plenty of opportunities, without trouble as to scenery or costumes. Any Hall having a stage is usually supplied with a room and a wood scene. That is all that is necessary. As to costumes, they are such as any one can furnish, with the exception of Bonnie's dancing costume for Act II. Of course they may be elaborated to suit the taste. Each male part may be made a distinct hit. Likewise the parts of Mrs. Brag and Bonnie, and on each depend a part of the success of the play. BRAG is a rather sporty old fellow whose scrapes have got him into financial difficulties. In Acts II and III he is angry and in deadly earnest. GAUNT should be at all times the faithful Secretary, willing to help his employer, but hopelessly lost in the maze of circumstances, and fearful of the results. JACK is the sporty young man always in debt, and in love with Bonnie as well. BRIEF and SQUILLS may be made the hits of the performance. In their quarrels with each other, they should appear as they really are, very angry. During the duel scene, however, they are cowards, and should exhibit it in expression, action and voice. LIFE is the thorough man of business, eager to make a record for his Insurance Company. SNEEKER, is a cool, mysterious detective. MRS. BRAG is a very kittenish old lady, and should be played in comic old maid style. MCGURK's lines depict his position.

BONNIE should be what she is,—a chorus girl, inclined to be gay, but true in her love for Jack. She need not dance, and the specialties in Act II may be cut out, but they add materially to the pleasure of the audience, and should be used if possible.

Care should be taken to work up the climaxes of each act; and in the first and last, the players must be careful to follow the directions as to positions. Especially is this important in Act I, when BRAG lies on sofa. No one should look his way. This will allow him and Gaunt to work up considerable by-play, which however must not be such as will draw the attention from the dialogue.

A further word as to BRIEF and SQUILLS. The former (if possible) should be tall and spare, and speak at all times slowly and deliberately. SQUILLS should be short and stout, and quick of speech. This contrast alone will heighten the effect in all their scenes.

THE AUTHOR.

John Brag, Deceased.

ACT I.

SCENE. *Library of JOHN BRAG. Door, R ; door, L, door in C. of rear flat ; a chair R. and L. of rear door ; safe, rear L. screen rear R ; sofa, R. front ; desk with chair, L. front ; table left of C. with two chairs behind it and a chair R. and left of it. GAUNT discovered at desk L. as curtain rises, examining bills.*

GAUNT. Things are surely going badly with the boss. I cannot understand it at all. He seems to be doing a good business, and yet he is away behind with his bills. And such bills. Here is one of five hundred dollars, for a lady's coat ; another of a like amount for a diamond ring. And, good lord, (*reads*), "To six pair of silk hose—\$20.00." I can't remember seeing his wife or daughters in a new coat or a diamond ring. They may have worn the stockings. I cannot say as to that (*rising*). But it is all very strange, and I cannot understand it (*starts R.*).

(*Enter JACK, D. F.*)

JACK (*coming down R. C.*). Good morning, Gaunt, where is the gov'nor ?

GAUNT (*L. C. behind table*). He hasn't come down yet.

JACK (*seated R. of table*). Oh, he hasn't, eh ? Lucky dog to be able to lie abed until nine o'clock.

GAUNT. He was up rather late last night, sir.

JACK. Opera or vaudeville ?

GAUNT (*back of table*). Eh ?

JACK. I said opera or vaudeville ? When a man is up late it means——

GAUNT. Oh, neither of them, I am sure. Some business meeting, I believe.

JACK (*taking off gloves and hat*). Business meeting ? Oh yes, I see. I often have business meetings myself. Well, I will wait his pleasure. In fact, I'll have to. I want to take in the races this afternoon ; and I haven't got enough to get me into the betting ring, to say nothing of taking a flyer after I get there.

GAUNT. Do you mean that you are after a loan ?

JACK. Um, well, I would hardly call it by so harsh a name as

John Brag, Deceased.

that. He is my uncle, I know, but he does not live at the sign of the three balls. Besides a loan signifies that a repayment is expected, and I have never been guilty of that. No I would be more genteel. I wish to touch him for—say—a ten spot.

GAUNT (*going R.*). Well, I'm afraid you won't get it.

JACK. Won't get it? Why not?

GAUNT (*back to R. of JACK*). Well, you see, the boss is in straightened circumstances just at present.

JACK. Nonsense. Why he is one of the most lucky traders on the floor of the Exchange.

GAUNT (*going R.*). I cannot say as to that, sir. (*Exits D. R.*)

JACK (*takes up newspaper*). Well I can. It has been to my interest to keep an eye on my worthy relative. No, no. John Brag cannot pull the wool over my eyes by pleading poverty; unless—(*thoughtfully*) by Jove, it cannot be. At his time of life; with a wife and grown daughters. Oh if I were only sure; how I would mulct the old sinner. Still, I've got to have the money, poverty or no poverty. (*Enter BONNIE, D. F. she comes down slowly to back of table.*) Hang it all. If I don't, I can't lay that bet on Surprise that stands to win me a hundred, and if I don't win that hundred where will Bonnie Chick come in?

BONNIE (*L. of table*). Door in flat. (*JACK springs to his feet.*) That is where I come in. It is the only proper place. You always get in the limelight then, and you make a better appearance.

JACK. Great Scott! Where did you come from?

BONNIE. From a cab that dropped me at the door. We poor girls can't afford our own carriage you know, unless some good angel—

JACK. There, there. I don't have to be kicked to take a hint. I mean what are you doing here?

BONNIE. Hush, don't speak so loud. It is unnecessary, and might bring undesirable intruders. It is a dramatic climax though, isn't it? Sit down, dear boy, and I'll tell you how it all came about. (*Both seated; JACK R. and BONNIE L. of table.*) You see I give lessons in dancing as well as dance myself; and a few days ago, I received a letter asking my terms. It was signed, Ruby Brag.

JACK. My cousin!

BONNIE. So I understand. Well I sent my terms; they were accepted; and I am here to give my pupils—for they are three, I believe—their first lesson. (*Pause.*) It is all so funny.

JACK. What is so funny? A mere coincidence.

BONNIE. Yes I know. But to think that I should be selected to teach the old gent's daughters.

JACK (*quickly*). Who?

BONNIE. My friend, Mr. Brag.

JACK. Your friend? What do you mean? (*angrily.*)

BONNIE. Now Jack, don't get jealous; that's a good boy. Do

you see this wrap; and these rings; and those stockings? John Brag's money paid for them all.

JACK (*rises angrily, and strides to R.*) The old villain.

BONNIE (*leans back in chair. Gazes at him*). Very tragic I declare. You ought to join the profesh at once. There is a barn-storming company going out next week. I might get you the heavies.

JACK. Don't mock me. I am mad clean through.

BONNIE (*rises and goes to him*). Oh no you're not. Only a bit jealous. Now don't be, for "my heart is true to Poll." (*Arm on his shoulder.*) But really now, you couldn't expect me to let a chance like that slip by, could you? We will call them premature wedding presents, if you like. (JACK *turns away.* BONNIE *puts arm about neck.*)

JACK (*after a pause during which she coaxes in pantomime*). Well—all right. We will let it go at that. Does he know that you are here?

BONNIE. Oh dear no. And what is more, he must not. Not only for our sakes, but for the dear girls. They do not wish their parents to know of it until they are proficient.

JACK. Then you had better go to them at once. You will find them in the parlor, just down the hall. Uncle may be here at any moment.

BONNIE. Very well. Now Jack, old fellow, remember, you are to keep this and the other (*pats his cheek*) a secret. (*Exits D. F. MRS. BRAG enters D. L. at same time and gazes after her.*)

JACK (R. C.). Will I? Well the dancing part perhaps. But as for the other—Oh no; I won't do a thing to him. Let me see. I'll just strike him for twenty-five as a starter. (*Turns L. and discovers MRS. BRAG.*) Oh, good morning, aunt. MRS. BRAG *business of looking off at D. F.*)

MRS. BRAG (*up C*). Who was that woman I saw leave the room as I entered?

JACK. That woman? Oh yes I see. Well—er—that woman was a book agent.

MRS. BRAG. A book agent, indeed. The impudence of those people is something amazing. Did you tell her to get out?

JACK. I? Yes, oh yes. I told her we had no use for books here.

MRS. BRAG. Quite right. I shall see Marie, and give her a lecture on letting every Tom, Dick, and Harry into the house. She might have robbed us.

JACK (C. *aside*). I guess she has, if the truth was known.

MRS. BRAG. Eh?

JACK (*going left*). I said yes, so she might. (MRS. BRAG *exits D. F.*) The plot thickens. Egad, if she gets at Bonnie, there is likely to be trouble all around. I guess I'll light out, (*Exits D. L.*) Enter GAUNT and BRAG D. R.

John Brag, Deceased.

BRAG (*coming down followed by GAUNT*). No, I don't feel very well this morning. The fact is—er—Gaunt, get me a drink. (*sits R. of table, GAUNT fetches decanter and glasses from safe*). The fact is,—I say Artemus; I've always been a good friend to you, haven't I? (*pours and drinks*).

GAUNT (*back of table*). Indeed you have Mr. Brag.

BRAG. Thanks. Well, the fact is I'm in a tight hole. The fact is, I've speculated unwisely (*aside*). Damn the women (*aloud*). And I'm short.

GAUNT (*expectantly*). Yes sir.

BRAG. Yes short. Very short. Exceedingly short; in fact—damn short. I'm on the verge of bankruptcy.

GAUNT (*distressed*). Is it possible.

BRAG. Possible? Yes, unpleasantly so. Let me see (*takes note-book from pocket*). I owe just about one hundred thousand dollars.

GAUNT. Good lord!

BRAG. Takes your breath away, does it? Well it does mine too. Now I've got about twenty thousand to my credit; leaving a balance of eighty thousand.

GAUNT (*anxiously*). What are you going to do about it?

BRAG. That is just what I wanted to see you about. I've laid awake all night thinking over the matter; and I have come to the conclusion that there is but one thing left for me to do.

GAUNT. You mean to fail?

BRAG. No, to die.

GAUNT (*excitedly*). Good lord, Mr. Brag, you don't mean,—

BRAG. There, there, Gaunt. Don't go off half cocked. Sit down and I'll explain. Er—you had better close the doors first. (*GAUNT goes to each door, listens and then closes it. He then returns to table, and sits L. During the interval BRAG drinks several times*).

GAUNT. Now, sir.

BRAG. Yes, I am going to die; but I am not going to kill myself. Do you understand?

GAUNT (*rising. Very excitedly*). Good lord, Mr. Brag, you don't expect me to do it, do you? I never had any experience in killing people, and I'm sure I'd make a mess of it.

BRAG. No, you fool. I see I shall have to be plain (*GAUNT sinks back in chair*). Listen. My life is insured for a hundred and fifty thousand. If I only had that, everything could be straightened out, and still leave a comfortable surplus. Now my idea is to make believe I am dead and get the money. Mrs. Brag can settle the debts, and still have a nice pile. I can take what I've got, and skip.

GAUNT (*shaking head*). It's mighty risky business.

BRAG. I know it. But it is my only chance. Either that or poverty.

GAUNT. But how will you do it?

BRAG. I shall die right here. You will send for old Squills; he's a numbskull anyway. Tell him I died of (*rubs head*), let me see. Ah! heart disease, that will do nicely. He will fix up the certificate, and arrange matters with the insurance company. After I am in the vault, you can let me out, and I will lie shady for a while.

GAUNT (*trembling*). I don't like it a bit. I was always afraid of ghosts.

BRAG. Nonsense. There are no such things. Here, take a stiff bracer (*he pours a glass of wine, which GAUNT with trembling fingers drinks*). Now there is only one thing that I have not arranged; and that is my coming back.

GAUNT (*excitedly*). Good lord!

BRAG. You see, when John Brag is once dead, that settles John Brag.

GAUNT (*nodding head*). Just so, sir, I can see that plainly.

BRAG. Very well. I shall have to lie low for a while, say six months or so, but then naturally I shall want to come back and see my family again. Now haven't you some friend whom I can impersonate?

GAUNT (*thinks*). I have got a half brother in Scotland.

BRAG. Good. The very thing. What is his name?

GAUNT. Donald McGurk.

BRAG. Not a very euphaneous title; but it will do. Dead men cannot be choice in their names. I will come back as your half brother, Donald McGurk. Now come with me and we will arrange the details. (*Rises and exits D. R. GAUNT returns decanter and glasses to safe.*)

GAUNT (*going R.*). Such a business. (*exits D. R.*)

Enter D. F. BONNIE and three daughters. They form in line, and preceded by BONNIE they dance down stage to footlights. On reaching front, music ceases and the girls sit. RUBY R. of table; PEARL and SAPPHIRE on sofa R. BONNIE down L. As they sit, JACK enters D. L.

JACK. Bravo girls. Some day you will rival your teacher.

BONNIE. Thank you, sir. Now, my dears, the lesson is over for the day. Fortunately we were not interrupted.

JACK (*L. C. near BONNIE*). You weren't eh? Well, it was not aunt's fault.

RUBY. Indeed. We shall have to be careful. She might not like it at all.

PEARL. And papa too might object.

JACK. That's so; he might.

BONNIE (*to JACK*). Hush, you naughty boy. (*aloud*). Good-by, now. (*starts up stage.*)

Exits D. F. accompanied by PEARL and SAPPHIRE.

RUBY (*rises*). You seem to know our teacher.

John Brag, Deceased.

JACK. I Er-yes, I know her slightly.

RUBY. Oh just wait until I can dance like her. I will surprise some people. (*Dances, off stage, D. L. in awkward fashion.*)

JACK. No doubt you will. When you can. Confound that old sleepy head (*looks at watch*). Here it is nearly ten o'clock and he isn't down yet. If he does not hurry, I shall lose my chance at Sheepshead.

Exits R. C.

D. L. *Enter GAUNT and BRAG D. R.*

BRAG. Well, everything is ready now, I think.

GAUNT (R. C.). Yes, sir.

BRAG. And you are sure of your instructions? I cannot be expected to communicate with you after I am dead, you know?

GAUNT. I think I understand it all.

BRAG (*lies on sofa R facing audience*). All right, here goes. Now I'm dead. Remember, don't let any one come near me.

GAUNT (*looking at BRAG and rubbing his hands.*) Good lord, this is terrible. Let me see,—

BRAG. You are to rush to the door and call, but don't leave me alone.

GAUNT (*goes to D. F. and calls loudly*). Help, help, murder, police.

BRAG (*rising*). The idiot will make a mess of it yet, if he isn't careful.

(GAUNT returns to BRAG'S side. BRAG drops back on sofa. *Enter MRS. BRAG and PEARL D. F. ; RUBY and SAPPHIRE D.L.*)

MRS. BRAG (R. C.) Artemus, what is the matter?

GAUNT. The boss is dead.

ALL. DEAD!

GAUNT. Yes, dead, dead, dead.

MRS. BRAG (*coming R.*). Oh it cannot be.

GAUNT. Go back. Don't touch him.

MRS. BRAG. Why not. Oh do not tell me that.

RUBY seated L of table, PEARL and SAPPHIRE behind it.

GAUNT. I wouldn't, only you see it was his last words. He said: "Gaunt, don't let any one touch me." Poor man; he had been touched so often in life, that I suppose it came kind of natural.

MRS. BRAG (*handkerchief*). How did he die?

GAUNT. Well he just said, "Here goes and,—

ALL. What!

GAUNT. Er—you see—I mean—. Well I guess he was a little out of his head.

MRS BRAG. Why didn't you call me? (MRS. BRAG sits R of table.)

GAUNT. It was all so sudden like.

RUBY. Have you sent for a doctor?

GAUNT. Yes, we did that before we came in here.

ALL. Eh!

GAUNT. Yes—that is—you see he wasn't feeling well, and he told me to telephone for Squills. But it won't do him any good now, poor man. He is dead. (MRS. BRAG and girls all bury their heads on table, and cry loudly and discordantly.)

GAUNT. Isn't that worthy of a Wagner chorus?

MRS. BRAG. Oh, he was such a dear, good husband. He always let me have my own way, and gave me plenty of money. Ah me! It will be a long time before I can find another like him, I suppose.

RUBY. And to think that we have got to put on mourning. It does not agree with my complexion at all.

PEARL. And stay away from balls and parties for six months at least. Oh it is terrible.

SAPPHIRE. And give up Bonnie.

BRAG. Eh! (BRAG rises as he speaks, and is pushed back by GAUNT.)

MRS. BRAG (to GAUNT.) Did you speak?

GAUNT. Oh lord, no, ma'am. At least—that is I only coughed.
(Enter SQUILLS D. F.)

SQUILLS. Dear me. (MRS. BRAG and girls cry.) Can it be possible that my old friend,—

GAUNT. He is dead.

SQUILLS. Dead? (coming down R. C.)

GAUNT. Yes, dead.

SQUILLS (down R. C.). Dear me. Paralysis, I suppose.

GAUNT. No, heart disease.

SQUILLS. Heart disease? Impossible, Why John Brag's heart was as sound as mine.

GAUNT. Well it was heart disease. He said so himself, and I guess he ought to know.

SQUILLS. Dear me, how strange. Let me make an examination, and see,—

GAUNT. Go back doctor. His last request was not to be touched.

SQUILLS. Dear me, how strange. Well, we will respect his last wish. He was insured was he not?

GAUNT. Yes, for a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

MRS. BRAG. { A—h—h—h.
GIRLS. }

MRS. BRAG. Wasn't he a dear good man?

SQUILLS (goes to R. of MRS. BRAG'S chair.) My dear woman, pray don't take on so. (Aside). A hundred and fifty thousand, and me a bachelor. (Aloud.) There, there, be comforted. He was a good man no doubt, but there are others.

BRAG. Eh! (Each time he speaks he rises, and is pushed down by GAUNT.)

MRS. BRAG. I suppose so, dear Doctor Squills. But I may never find them.

John Brag, Deceased.

SQUILLS. Never fear. They will find you. There are plenty of loving hearts, pining for just such a dear good woman as you. (*He bends over MRS. BRAG.*)

BRAG (*aside to GAUNT*). Choke him off, Gaunt; or I shall forget myself and kick him.

MRS. BRAG. Oh dear doctor; it is so good of you to comfort me.

SQUILLS. Tut, tut. It is a privilege to comfort beauty in distress.

(BRAG *takes book from table R and throws at SQUILLS.*) (*to GAUNT.*) Sir! what do you mean by assaulting me.

GAUNT. Oh lord! ere—I—I— (*Enter NEW YORK LIFE, D. R.*)

LIFE (*coming down C. briskly and talking hurriedly throughout*). Excuse me, but our office has just received word that one John Brag, holding policy 1,277,648 in our company, has just died suddenly.

GAUNT. It is so.

LIFE (*stands R. C.*). Good.

ALL. Eh!

LIFE. Excuse me. I was not referring to the gentlemen's death. Have you had a doctor?

SQUILLS. I have the honor to be the family physician of the deceased and his dear wife.

LIFE. Good. Excuse me. The fact is, the Tontinia company paid a death claim last week in five hours, forty-three minutes, and twenty-eight seconds after the holder drew his last breath, and they have been advertising it ever since. But we mean to have the record. Let me see. When did he die?

GAUNT. About half an hour ago,

LIFE. Good. Excuse me. Have you the policy?

GAUNT. Yes. It is in his desk.

LIFE. Good. Get it on the jump now. (GAUNT *goes to desk and returns with policy, which he hands to LIFE. He does so quickly; looking back at BRAG frequently.*)

LIFE (*taking out notebook and pencil*). Thanks. Time of death 9:30; (*looks at watch*). Claim adjuster at house at ten o'clock. That beats the Tontinia by three-quarters of an hour. (*To SQUILLS.*) You say you are the doctor?

SQUILLS. I have the honor, as I said—

LIFE. Then fill out this certificate, and be P. D. Q. about it. (*He pushes SQUILLS to desk L., opens policy and points out place for SQUILLS to sign. He does.*)

MRS. BRAG. A hundred and fifty thousand (*delightedly*)!

GIRLS. A hundred and fifty thousand (*delightedly*)!

MRS. BRAG. Wasn't he a dear, good man (*delightedly*)!

RUBY. Now we can have an automobile, with rubber tires.

PEARL. And a summer residence at Newport.

SAPPHIRE. Oh, let us go travelling.

LIFE (*catches up policy*). There, that will do. Certificate filed at ten : ten. Still three-quarters ahead. And now I will bid you all good morning. I will telephone the home office that everything is O. K., and they will send you a cheque by special messenger. Oh, we will beat the Tontinia this time, dead sure.

Exits hurriedly, D. F.

Enter JACK, D. L., SQUILLS seated at desk.

JACK (*up L.*). If he isn't up by this time—Hello ! What's the matter ?

GAUNT. The boss is dead.

JACK (*up R. C.*). Dead !

GAUNT. Dead.

ALL. Dead. (*MRS. BRAG and GIRLS cry.*)

JACK. Hang it all. Did you ever see such luck. Why must he go off just when I need the loan of a few bones.

GAUNT. Can't say, sir. You had better ask him—ere, I mean—

MRS. BRAG. Come here, Jack, my poor boy. Isn't it terrible ?

JACK (*at MRS. BRAG'S side*). Yes. It puts me in a deuce of a hole.

MRS. BRAG. But think of it. He is insured for a hundred and fifty thousand.

JACK (*whistles*). I say, Gaunt, did he leave a will ?

GAUNT. I don't know. (*Aside to BRAG.*) Did you ? (*BRAG nods.*) Yes, he did.

JACK. Oh, he did, eh ? I wonder if he mentioned me ? If he didn't, confound his bones ! I'll not come to the funeral. But I say, Gaunt, can't you let me have ten dollars from his cash drawer ? Or you might as well make it twenty, while you are about it (*goes up L. to safe*). What is the combination of his safe ? I'll get it myself.

GAUNT starts toward him. BRAG pulls him back.

GAUNT. I—I don't know, sir.

JACK. All right, I suppose I'll have to wait. I'm going now. By the way, Gaunt, I'll just take that silk hat of his that he bought last week. It fits me nicely and mine is a little shabby. (*At D. F. Enter BRIEF, D. F.*)

BRIEF. Ah, I am so glad (*MRS. BRAG and GIRLS cry*). Why, what is the matter ? Is he drunk ?

JACK. No, he is dead.

BRIEF (*coming down C.*). Dead ! Impossible.

GAUNT. Well, he is. As dead as mutton (*or introduce local name*).

BRIEF. This is terrible.

MRS. BRAG. But think, dear Mr. Brief, he left an insurance policy of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. It helps us to bear our grief.

John Brag, Deceased.

BRIEF (R. C.). A hundred and fifty thousand. Pshaw! A mere drop in the bucket in comparison with what I have come to offer.

ALL. Eh!

BRIEF. May I have a chair?

GAUNT *starts to get one and is pulled back by BRAG.*

GAUNT. You get one, Jack.

JACK. You must be terribly cut up over the old gent's demise. (*Brings chair down C. from up R., and goes back of MRS.*

BRAG.

BRIEF. (*seating himself R. C.*). Ah, thank you. Now, my dear madam, I will explain my mission. How little did I think that my message of joy would never be heard by my dear friend. Ah well! Such is the uncertainty of life. We never know——

JACK. I say, Brief, cut it short. Don't belie your name.

BRIEF. Young man, I know that youth is not wont to respect age, but it behoveth you to hear me calmly. My dear madam, your husband had a brother. Well, some years ago, he sold what he possessed and sailed to Australia. There he engaged in trade speculation, and lost every penny.

JACK. That may be interesting, but where is the climax?

BRIEF. Having failed at that, he went to the mines of South Africa, and one day he accidentally came upon a rich deposit of ore. A rich deposit of ore, my dear madam (*turns away from MRS BRAG*). How often great events are the result of chance. History is full of them, and (*as if recollecting, turns toward her*)—but I will proceed. He managed to interest some other men in the venture; they bought the mine, and your husband's brother amassed a fortune. A fortune, my dear madam (*turns away*). How mysteriously Providence acts sometimes (*turns toward her*)—but I will proceed. At last he bethought himself of his far-away home and his brother. (*Turns away.*) Even in the midst of changing scenes, one's thoughts will revert to one's birthplace (*turns toward her*)—but I will proceed. He sold out his share, and made preparations for departure, but alas! On the day,—the very day that he was to sail, he fell sick with a fever, and in a week he was dead. Yes, died in a week.

(MRS. BRAG, GIRLS, and JACK interested. BRAG raises and peeps over GAUNT'S shoulder.)

MRS. BRAG. And now?

BRIEF. Pray be patient, my dear madam. On inspection of his documents it was found that his estate was valued at about two hundred thousand pounds; which if reduced to our money values, would amount to nine hundred and sixty odd thousand dollars. I used to know the exact tables, but one forgets a great deal in one's life, if one does not refresh one's memory.

JACK (*aside*). I'd like to forget my manners, and throw him out,

BRIEF. But I will proceed. Among his effects, was found a will, whereby he bequeathed in due form his entire estate to his brother, John Brag of New York. (*Commotion.*)

RUBY. How much did you say it was (*excitedly*)?

BRIEF. Two hundred thousand pounds, which, if reduced to our,—

PEARL. Think of it, nearly a million (*delightedly*).

SAPPHIRE. And all ours.

BRIEF. Eh, *what is that?*

MRS. BRAG. Since my poor dear husband is dead, I suppose it will all come to us. What a dear, good man he was.

BRIEF. I am not quite so sure as to that. But I have brought the papers with me (*takes letter from his pocket*). Let me see. This is a letter from Boggs & Beard, his attorneys, or barristers, as they call them in those foreign parts. "Dear Sir:"—it reads: "Our client, Mr. James Brag, lately deceased, left a will in which he bequeathed his entire estate, valued at two hundred thousand pounds to his brother, John Brag, of New York, if alive,—

MRS. BRAG. Yes, and if dead?

BRIEF. Let me see—"if alive. And if the said John Brag is dead, or cannot be found within the legal time, then, and in that event, the estate is to go to a nephew of the testator, one Jack Schuyler."

JACK. What! (*steps back surprised.*)

MRS. BRAG (*rising*). What!

GIRLS (*rising*). What! (*all look at JACK.*)

BRAG (*throwing himself back on sofa*). Oh what a damn fool I've been.

CURTAIN.

SITUATIONS AT END. BRAG *on sofa* R. GAUNT *in front of him*. BRIEF *seated*. MRS. BRAG *and GIRLS stand by their chairs, from which they have just risen*. JACK *up* L. C. SQUILLS *seated at desk* L.

ACT II.

SCENE. *Same as ACT I. Six months have elapsed since closing of ACT I. (The girls discovered on stage at rise of curtain. RUBY sits R. of sofa. PEARL seated R. of table. SAPPHIRE stands L. near desk arranging her hair with the aid of a hand mirror.)*

SAPPHIRE (*setting glass on desk*). There. I think I am about ready.

RUBY. It is high time that Bonnie was here.

PEARL. Do you know, I am glad our mourning is over. It was an awful bore.

SAPPHIRE (*seated at desk*). But mamma did let us go out some.

RUBY. And we did go on dancing.

PEARL. But it wasn't enough fun to suit me.

RUBY. Well it is over now, thank goodness; and we enter society once more to-night, with our little entertainment.

SAPPHIRE. Won't it be fine, Bonnie, to dance and sing.

PEARL. And we will surprise some of the guests too, I imagine.

SAPPHIRE. Jack is going to sing with Miss Chick.

RUBY. He seems rather sweet on her.

PEARL. Won't she be lucky. He is worth a million since he got all of Uncle James' money.

SAPPHIRE. Which ought to have come to us.

RUBY. Well it was all papa's fault for dying so suddenly. If he had only waited a few hours longer.

PEARL. I wonder who will be our stepfather?

RUBY. That old legal fossil, Brief, I suppose. He is here enough.

SAPPHIRE. Oh I don't know. I think old Squills has the best show.

PEARL. Well either will be a nightmare.

RUBY. Yes indeed. I am glad I'm engaged.

PEARL. So am I.

SAPPHIRE. Well I'm not. But I'm going to try and land somebody to-night. Then I won't care either.

Enter BONNIE D. F. she carries dress suit case.

GIRLS (*rising*). Good evening, Bonnie.

BONNIE. Good evening, girls. Have your guests begun to arrive yet?

RUBY. Not yet.

BONNIE (*up C.*). Is Mr. Schuyler here.

PEARL No.

BONNIE. Then suppose you allow me to lay aside my wraps; and we may have time to run over our turn.

SAPPHIRE. A good idea. I am a little shaky about one part.

All exit D. L.

Enter GAUNT D. F. with letter.

GAUNT (*coming down C.*) I wonder who this letter can be from? Let me see (*opens and reads*). "Dear Gaunt:—After travelling in Europe for six months. I think it will be safe for me to return to America. I shall probably arrive almost as soon as this letter. Expect me; and remember that I am your half brother. Yours as ever, John Brag." Oh, lord! Why didn't he stay longer? Or why didn't he die? Let's see. Maybe the steamer went down. (*goes to desk and picks up newspaper*). No. It arrived and he is here. Now my troubles begin again.

(BRAG *enters D. F. comes down stage and slaps GAUNT on back.*)

BRAG. Hello, Artemus, old fellow. It is like Paradise to see you again.

GAUNT (*shaking hands*). Is it you? Why, you look just like my half-brother.

BRAG. Do I? So much the better. You see while I was in England I took a run up to Scotland, found your half-brother, and sized him up.

GAUNT. Did you speak to him?

BRAG. No. I merely looked him over, so I could copy him.

GAUNT. There is only one thing you lack.

BRAG. What is that?

GAUNT. Why my brother's hair is red. Yours is grey.

BRAG. Well, I can get a wig.

GAUNT (*picks up bottle of red ink from desk*). No, dye is better. Hark! some one is coming. Here. (*Attempts to pour ink over BRAG'S head. Gets it on his face.*)

BRAG (*going R.*). You blithering idiot. What do you mean? Now look at my head. Look at my face. I'm a cross between a Hottentot and an Indian.

GAUNT (*pushing him behind a screen, up R.*). Hush, some one is coming.

BRAG. I don't care a — (GAUNT *places hand over his mouth. Enter MRS. BRAG and BRIEF. D. F. They come down C.*)

MRS. BRAG. It was so good of you to come, dear Mr. Brief. (*Seated at R. of table.*)

BRIEF. Now, don't try to thank me, my dear madam. I simply could not keep away. (*He gets a chair from back of table, and sits close to MRS. BRAG'S side.*)

MRS. BRAG. Oh, Mr. Brief!

John Brag, Deceased.

BRIEF. Tut, tut, What is business, musty, legal business, to your bright smile. But don't interrupt me, my dear madam. I have long resolved to speak, and to-night seems the fitting time. You see, I have always felt as if you needed a protector.

BRAG (*aside*). I'm hanged if the old fool isn't going to propose.

GAUNT. Hush!

BRIEF. Yes, you have needed a protector, my dear Mrs. Brag, ever since the day that your husband died.

MRS. BRAG. Isn't it too bad, though, that he didn't live? Then we might have had all his brother's money.

BRIEF. No.

BRAG. Eh! (*GAUNT takes hold of him.*)

BRIEF. I know it seems cruel to be shut off from the enjoyment of James Brag's million. But your nephew has generously placed half of it at your disposal; and, after all, what is money to love?

MRS. BRAG. True enough, dear Mr. Brief, what is it?

BRIEF. Aye, it is nothing. (*Draws chair closer*). And—and—er—dear—dear—Serephina. You will let me call you Serephina, won't you?

MRS. BRAG. Yes, Blackstone,

BRAG (*aside*). Hold me tight, Gaunt, or I shall burst.

BRIEF. Blackstone. Ah, it gives me joy to hear you say that (*kneels*). And now I want to tell you——

Enter SQUILLS, D. F. He comes down. MRS. BRAG rises, and goes C. BRIEF springs up and goes R.

SQUILLS. Ahem!

MRS. BRAG. Oh, dear Doctor Squills. You here also.

BRIEF. (*aside*). Damn dear Doctor Squills!

SQUILLS. Indeed, I am, my dear Mrs. Brag. I said my patients could wait while I basked for a few hours in the smile of——

BRIEF. (R. C). My dear Mrs. Brag,——

SQUILLS (R. C). In the smile of——

BRIEF. My dear Mrs. Brag, had we not better go to the parlor? Your guests may be arriving.

MRS. BRAG. Why, yes, I guess we had.

SQUILLS. Then allow me (*offers arm*).

BRIEF. Allow me (*offers arm*).

SQUILLS. Mrs. Brag!

BRIEF. Serephina!

SQUILLS. Eh! (*to Brief*).

BRIEF. Sir! (*to Squills*.)

MRS. BRAG. Now, you dear men, don't get angry. I'll let both of you escort me. (*She takes the arm of each, and they exit D. F. BRIEF and SQUILLS glare at each other over her shoulder, as they go up stage.*)

BRAG (*stepping from behind screen*). At last they are gone.

If that had kept up much longer, I would have jumped out and throttled both of them.

GAUNT (*at his side*). But remember, Mr. Brag, you are dead.

BRAG. Am I? Well, perhaps I am, but I'll be everlastingly jiggered if I'll stand by and see two such fools make love to my wife.

GAUNT. It is all right. Let me take you to my room and wash you up.

BRAG. Go ahead then, But there is trouble brewing for somebody.

(BRAG and GAUNT *exit* D. R. *Enter* BONNIE and GIRLS, D. L.)

RUBY. You certainly do look pretty to-night, Bonnie.

PEARL. Yes, indeed. I don't blame Jack for falling in love with you.

BONNIE. Hush, here he comes. (*Enter* JACK, D. F. *BONNIE and GIRLS grouped down* L.)

JACK. Hello, girls. I'm here at last, although I thought that I never would. The Paris arrived this afternoon, and I went down to meet an old friend. There was a fellow aboard, a Scotchman, I think, who said his name was McGurk. Funny name, isn't it? But the joke was, that he asked me where Mr. Brag lived.

PEARL. Mr. Brag!

RUBY. Did he mean us?

JACK. I don't know. He said he was a relative of some servant. I didn't stop to inquire. Hadn't the time, you know. I gave him a jolly and left.

N. B. *If it is not intended to use specialties, the following lines, etc., may be cut out. Otherwise to go on from here.*

RUBY. Well, we are glad you arrived. We want to hear that song and see your dance.

JACK. Ladies first always. Let us have your turn.

PEARL. Come on then, girls,

(*The girls do a dance. BONNIE and JACK seated* R.)

JACK. Good! That will be the hit of the evening.

RUBY. And now yours.

BONNIE. Have we the time?

SAPPHIRE. Yes, if you hurry.

BONNIE. Very well.

JACK and BONNIE *do song and dance or other turn.*

(N. B. *If specialties are not used, play continues from here.*)

RUBY. Come now, girls, it is quite time that we were in the parlor. Mamma will be wondering what has detained us. (*Girls go up.*)

PEARL. We will find you in the conservatory when your turn comes, Bonnie.

BONNIE. Yes, I'll be there. (*GIRLS exit* D. F. *JACK and BONNIE down* C.)

John Brag, Deceased.

BONNIE (*to JACK*). Well, sir?

JACK. Yes, well. You know what I would say. How much longer have I to wait before you will name the day?

BONNIE. Oh, you are a dreadful fellow.

JACK (*embracing her*). You don't mean that. Come, Bonnie, let us quit fooling and get married.

BONNIE (*strikes attitude*).

To marry or not to marry,

That is the question.

Whether 'tis better in the mind to contemplate

The joys and sorrows of wedded bliss;

Or take the arms of an ardent lover,

And, by accepting, begin them.

To accept. To wed. No more.

And by a wedding say we end

Our days of single blessedness,

Independence, flirting, champagne,

And all the extras that poor flesh indulges.

'Tis not a consummation devoutly to be wished.

To accept. To wed.

To wed, perchance to regret. Aye, there is the rub.

For in that grim estate of matrimony,

What trials may come, when we

Have shuffled off our single blessedness.

For who would bear the servant question,

The overbearing husband and the squalling children;

When she herself might her quietus take

With a Dakota divorce?

Who would scorn the ardent lover's fervent pictures,

But that the dread of something after marriage,—

That oft-discovered country,

From whose bourne so many disappointed travellers return,

Discourages the heart,

And makes us rather bear the peace we have,

Than fly to a chimera that we know not of.

Thus prudence doth make cowards of us all,

And many matches of great pith and moment,

With this regard have only come to naught.

JACK. Very good but—

(BONNIE *breaks away from him and runs L.*)

BONNIE. Jack, old fellow. Meet me in the gardens to-morrow morning. That will be according to traditions. "Meet me 'neath the drooping willow tree," dear boy, "and I will say thee yea or nay." (*She runs off at D. L. laughing.*)

JACK. If I didn't love her so, I would curse. (*Exit D. L.*)

Enter BRIEF and SQUILLS D. F. They come down stage, gesticulating as they come. This scene must be well worked up. Both are exceedingly angry.

SQUILLS. And now, sir, that we are alone, perhaps you will explain your infernal impudence this evening.

BRIEF. I was about to remark something similar, myself.

SQUILLS. Me? What have I done?

BRIEF. And what have I?

SQUILLS. You insulted me, sir.

BRIEF. Nonsense. You, sir, interrupted a conversation with Serephina.

SQUILLS. I interrupted a conversation with Serephina, did I? Well, if I did, I'm glad of it. What right have you —

BRIEF. And what right have you——

SQUILLS. You are an old fool.

BRIEF. And you are a hopeless idiot.

SQUILLS. Sir!

BRIEF. Sir!

SQUILLS. Have a care, sir, or I shall forget that you are an old man.

BRIEF. I, old! Tush! Pshaw! That is a coward's excuse. For a penny I'd——

SQUILLS. You would, eh? What?

BRIEF. I'd strike you (*raises arm threateningly*).

SQUILLS. You'd strike me? YOU'D STRIKE ME, WOULD YOU? Why, you poor, measly, withered-up old cornstalk. I'd eat you up if you laid your hands on me.

BRIEF. You'd—YOU'D—Y-O-U-'D——

SQUILLS. Yes, I'd, I-'D—I-'D——

BRIEF. Have a care yourself, sir, or I shall lose sight of the fact that I am a gentleman and a member of the bar.

SQUILLS. Gentleman and member of the bar. Ha, ha. What bar? Now see here—(*shakes his finger at BRIEF*).

BRIEF. Don't point your finger at me, or I will give you a chance to try some of your surgical skill on yourself, old saw-bones.

SQUILLS. What, insult my profession. You—YOU——

BRIEF. Go on, you old back-number pill-mixer.

SQUILLS. Really I cannot find words in the English language, to express my contempt for you.

BRIEF (*turns and walks L., hands behind him shaking his coat-tails*). Try Latin then. Some of that hog latin that you write your prescriptions in.

SQUILLS. Oh, this is unbearable,

BRIEF (*back to C.*). That is right, and it has got to be stopped. I'll not have any old fool meddling in my affairs.

SQUILLS. Your affairs? I'd have you know——

BRIEF. And I'd have you know——

BRIEF }
SQUILLS } What?

Enter BRAG and GAUNT D. R., BRAG now has red wig on.

John Brag, Deceased.

GAUNT. Good evening, gentlemen. Let me introduce my half-brother, Donald McGurk, of Scotland.

SQUILLS (C.). Good evening, sir. But pray, my good Artemus, don't call that fellow a gentleman.

BRIEF (L. C.), I would have you understand, Mr. McGurk, that he is mistaken. It is he, not I, who is no gentleman.

BRAG (*coming slowly down C., GAUNT behind him*). What is the matter with the two of you?

SQUILLS. You see, sir, I—

BRIEF. It was this way—

(*They gradually draw nearer BRAG and each other.*)

SQUILLS. I was insulted by—

BRIEF. He insulted me, and—

(*BRAG catches each by the neck and knocks their heads together.*)

BRAG. Confound you both.

BRIEF } Sir! (*drawing away*).

SQUILLS }

BRAG. I know all about it. You are a pair of scoundrels.

SQUILLS. Sir, I never allow anybody to call me a scoundrel.

BRIEF. And I, sir, am in the habit of visiting summary chastisement on any one who—

BRAG. Oh, go to the devil!

GAUNT. Donald, do be calm (*hand on BRAG'S shoulder*).

SQUILLS. Mr. McGurk, I demand satisfaction.

BRIEF. Mr. McGurk, I insist on reparation.

BRAG (*throwing off his coat. If he has on highland costume, he throws sash over shoulder*). All right, come on. It would do me good to whip the two of you.

BRIEF. Sir, it may be the custom in your barbaric country to fight in a lady's parlor, but—

SQUILLS. Exactly, but in this enlightened land, the field of honor,—

BRIEF. Just so, the field of honor.

BRAG. The field of honor? Ho, ho, ho. Very well, the field of honor.

SQUILLS. Pistols at sunrise, sir.

BRIEF. Pistols at sunrise, sir.

BRAG. Pistols and pistols at sunrise, sir. Good. Just make a note of it, brother Artemus. Be sure and call me early, for I wouldn't miss meeting these honorable gentlemen for the world.

SQUILLS. You may expect me (*going up C*).

BRIEF. And me also (*going up L. C.*).

BRAG. Never fear, I shall be there. (BRIEF and SQUILLS exit D. F.)

Well, well. I haven't felt so good since I've been dead.

(BRAG puts on his coat.)

GAUNT. Eh!

BRAG. Oh you slow dog (*going L.*). You never see a joke.

But steady now, Gaunt. Here comes my wife. (*Enter MRS. BRAG, D. L.*)

MRS. BRAG. Artemus, where is, —oh a stranger!

GAUNT. Er—that is,—yes. This is my half-brother, Donald McGurk, of Scotland.

MRS. BRAG. Of Scotland? How lovely. That is where they play bagpipes, wear kilts and show their bare knees.

BRAG. Well, I cannot say as to the last. I haven't seen much of it. I only wore these to remind Artemus of home.

(*N. B.—Last line to be cut out if Brag does not wear kilts.*)

MRS. BRAG. Haven't seen much of it? Why bless you, Scotchmen always wear kilts on the stage and in books.

BRAG. Perhaps they do. But that is as near as they get to it in this day and age.

MRS. BRAG. Dear me; how sad. I think it looks ever so much more romantic than pants. (*sits R of table.*) You see I am in a romantic mood to-night.

BRAG.—Indeed. (*Sits near her in chair occupied formerly by BRIEF.*)

MRS. BRAG. Yes. I have had two proposals of marriage this evening. (*BRAG starts.*) Why what is the matter?

BRAG. Nothing at all. Go on.

MRS. BRAG. And the truth is, I don't know which to accept. One is a nice;—a very nice old doctor. He attended my late husband, and has been so kind to me ever since. The other is a lawyer. Think of it, two professional men. Isn't it romantic? (*Gaunt up stage, near D. F. alternately watches them and gazes off stage.*)

BRAG. Yes, devilishly so, considering,—er I mean; yes, of course it is.

MRS. BRAG. I thought you would appreciate it. The Scotch are so romantic. Do you know, I am just a bit Scotch myself, so we are like brother and sister.

BRAG (*aside*). If I don't look out, I shall get mixed in my relations with this woman.

MRS. BRAG. This other, the lawyer, was my late husband's legal adviser. Poor man; he died just before a legacy came from his brother, which we didn't get, because he was dead. I never quite forgave him for dying so suddenly.

BRAG (*aside*). Neither did he.

MRS. BRAG. Well I've got both of them, and oh it is so romantic. Sometimes I think I should like, to go to court, and hear my husband plead a case; and sometimes I think I would rather go with him to help the poor, suffering sick. I really don't know which to take, and they are awfully jealous of each other. I have a fear that they will do each other some injury.

BRAG. Have no fear on that score. I'll attend to that.

John Brag, Deceased.

MRS. BRAG. Oh, will you indeed. What a dear good man you are. And who would you advise me to marry?

BRAG. Neither, until to-morrow. Then if either asks you—why take him (*rises and goes R. aside*). But hang me if I will give them the chance.

MRS. BRAG. You are a very considerate gentleman, sir. Most Scotchmen are.

BRAG. Oh don't mention it. I shall be only too happy to arrange the affair with those,—those gentlemen.

GAUNT (*up stage near D. F.*). I think some one is calling you, Mrs. Brag.

Mrs. BRAG (*rising*). I suppose they are. I am quite the belle of the evening. My daughters are not thought of, poor girls. Yes, I will go. Won't you join us, Mr. McGurk? We are to have a little entertainment. Mr. Schuyler, my nephew, will sing. My daughters will dance. So will Miss Chick—

BRAG. Who?

MRS. BRAG. Bonnie Chick, the celebrated dancer. She is,—well, I guess my nephew is in love with her.

BRAG (*aside*). The young villain!

MRS. BRAG. Won't you come?

BRAG. Yes, I will be there presently.

MRS. BRAG (*going up C*). Do, I know you will enjoy it. So different from bagpipes and the Highland fling, you know. (*Exits D. F. Gaunt comes down C.*)

BRAG (*gazing after her*). And that is my wife (*down C with GAUNT*). I say, Gaunt, this is certainly a great home-coming for me.

GAUNT. Yes, sir. Things are terribly mixed.

BRAG. So they are; and there is only one way out of it.

GAUNT. Is there any way, sir?

BRAG. Yes, there is one.

GAUNT. Oh, I see, you will go away again.

BRAG. Um'm'm, well, I wasn't thinking of that. Yes, perhaps I will. But I'll kill those two old fools before I do.

GAUNT (*excitedly*). Good lord, sir, you wouldn't do that?

BRAG. Wouldn't I? Confound it, I would take great pleasure in doing it. They are the cause of the whole trouble. If Squills hadn't been such an old fool, he would have insisted on making an examination. Then he would have found out that I was not dead, And if that infernal old attorney had only arrived half an hour sooner, I wouldn't have had to die. Yes, they are to blame, and I'll pepper both of them; hang me, if I don't. But just make my excuses to my dear wife. I could not stand seeing them about her. I'm going to bed. (*Exits D. R.*)

GAUNT (*C. wringing his hands*). Oh Lord; what shall I do? I wish I was dead. There is sure to be more trouble come from this very unpleasant affair, and I feel as if I should faint if anything else turned up.

(Enter JACK D. F.)

JACK. Ah, here you are, Gaunt! I'm glad I've found you. I have a pleasant surprise for you.

GAUNT. I hope it is, sir. I haven't been having pleasant surprises lately.

JACK. Well this one will be. I met him at the pier, but I didn't know then who he was, or I would have brought him along. But he has found his way here. Come right in, sir.

(Enter McGurk, D. F.)

MCGURK *(Coming down stage with hands outstretched)*. Brother. Don't you *know me?*

GAUNT. Good lord! The very worst has happened.

(He staggers forward and falls limp in MCGURK'S arms. JACK R looks at both in surprise.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE. *Garden. Entrance R. and L. Upper ; R. and L. 2d, and R. and L. 1st. Rustic seats near R. and L. I. E.*

MCGURK *discovered asleep on rustic seat L. As curtain rises he stretches two or three times, then rolls off on ground. Sits up ; rubbing his eyes.*

MCGURK. I hardly know whether I am awake or dreaming. Let me see, I am Donald McGurk, only son of Micah and Susannah McGurk, of Edinboro, Scotland. (*Picks up his cap or hat and examines it.*) Yes, there is my name on the inside of my hat, (*takes piece of money from pocket*) and here is a sovereign I haven't had changed yet. I came to this blasted country to see my half brother Artemus Gaunt, who lives in the family of a Mr. John Brag, Yes, that's right too. (*takes letter from pocket*) Here is his last letter in which he says that Mr. Brag is dead (*takes out another piece of money*) ; and here is an American dollar. Yes, I'm in America. Now let me think. I got off the steamer and I met a young man who gave me some directions. I followed them and got lost. The cussed fellow must have been guying me. Then I inquired again and was shown here. I came, and, strangely enough, the first one that I meet is that same fresh young man. I told him who I wanted to see, and he led me into a grand house, and I saw my half brother. Yes, I'm sure I saw him ; but I'm a little mixed as to what happened after that. Let me see. He almost fainted at sight of me. I remember that. Then he recovered, and told me to fly. That this was no place for me. When I demanded an explanation, he pushed me out of the house, and told me he would see me to-day. Yes, that is about all that I remember ; except that I didn't sleep very well out here. But I cannot understand it at all, and what is more, I ain't going to wait for him to come and see *me*. I'll just wait about here until the folks are up, and then I'll go and see *him*. (*Rises to feet and exits R. U. E.*)

(*Enter BONNIE L. U. E. Music.*)

BONNIE (*coming down L.*). Ah me. I wonder if he is here (*looks about*). No. Is this how he keeps a tryst. He cannot love me much, or he would have been here ere now. Perhaps, though, the big lazy fellow has overslept himself (*sits on rustic seat L.*) And I shall tell him—what ? 'Tis hard to give up one's indepen-

dence, and leave the stage, and—and, get married. Ugh! It seems as if one were growing old to speak of marriage. And yet,—and yet. Oh, you poor miserable Bonnie. You cannot deny it. After dallying with half the men in town and snapping your fingers at the little god, he has at last pierced your heart, and,—and I love him. Yes I love him, and that settles it.

(Enter BRAG R. 2 E. He comes down R.)

BRAG. I wonder if those fire eaters have arrived yet? No, Hum. Evidently their ardor has cooled. No matter, I'll find a way to—(discovers Bonnie). Hello, Miss Chick!

BONNIE. Sir?

BRAG (Crosses to L.). What are you doing here?

BONNIE. I might reasonably ask the same question; and add, who are you?

BRAG. Don't you know me?

BONNIE (rising). I can't say that I do. Are you some old flame of mine?

BRAG. Sit down. (They both sit L.) Do you remember John Brag?

BONNIE. Indeed I do. He has been dead and buried these six months.

BRAG. Suppose I were to say that he was not dead?

BONNIE. I would say that you were crazy or drunk.

BRAG (removing wig). Bonnie. (BONNIE rises, screams and runs R.)

BRAG (following her). Hush. Do you want to arouse the neighborhood?

BONNIE. No, but,—

BRAG. You wonder how I am here, eh?

BONNIE. Do the dead come back? You are either a ghost or an impostor.

BRAG. I am neither, Bonnie. I could not help disclosing myself to you. Will you keep it a secret if I tell you all about it?

BONNIE. I'm afraid you are taking me for a come-on.

BRAG. Not at all. Swear to keep it a secret, and I'll,—

BONNIE. Oh yes. I'll swear.

BRAG. Then come. Let us go to the summer house, and I'll tell you an interesting story.

BONNIE. All right, go ahead. (BRAG goes up R.) (aside) There is something wrong here, that's sure. I'll just see what it is. Both exit R. U. E.

(Enter JACK L. U. E. He goes up C. and gazes R. after BRAG and BONNIE.)

JACK. Oh the false woman. She makes an appointment with me, and then flirts with another man under my very nose. And by Jove! it is that half brother of Gaunt's, Donald McGurk. The Scotch villain, he dares to start such a game when he hasn't been here twenty-four hours. I'll smash that thistle face of his, hang

John Brag, Deceased.

me if I don't. (*Goes R. and gazes off. Enter BRIEF R. I. E. and SQUILLS L. I. E.*)

SQUILLS. Ah, you are here.

BRIEF. Yes, I'm here.

SQUILLS. Where is that scoundrel?

BRIEF. He evidently hasn't arrived yet.

SQUILLS. Oh—er—hello! I've forgotten my pistols.

BRIEF. So have I.

SQUILLS. I say, Schuyler, that's a good fellow, will you just step to my room and get my revolvers?

BRIEF. And get mine also, Mr Schuyler.

JACK (*coming down C*). What is the meaning of this?

SQUILLS. Why you see—er—

BRIEF. A little target practice.

SQUILLS. Just so, a little target practice.

JACK. You must be devoted to the art, to get up at this unseemly hour to take target practice. (*Exits R. I. E.*)

SQUILLS. I wonder where he is?

BRIEF. No doubt he has considered my temper.

SQUILLS. Your temper. Ha, ha, ha. My temper, you mean.

BRIEF. Nonsense. He will eat you alive.

SQUILLS. Bah! He would have hard work to hit you, you tremble so.

BRIEF. Sir, you are a liar.

SQUILLS. Sir you are another.

BRIEF. When I have settled with him, I'll settle with you.

SQUILLS. Exactly, exactly (*turns L. and stops extreme L.*). That is, if there is any of you left.

Enter MCGURK R. U. E.

BRIEF. Ah here he is now (*aside*). Confound it!

SQUILLS. Yes, here he is now (*aside*). I wish he hadn't come.

MCGURK (*coming down C*). Well, gentlemen, what can I do?

SQUILLS. My pistols will be here in a moment.

BRIEF. So will mine, sir.

MCGURK. Your pistols? Gentlemen, I—

SQUILLS. Yes, sir. Then we can settle our little matter.

BRIEF. Just so, our little matter.

MCGURK. But what do you mean?

SQUILLS. Ah! trying to take water, eh? No, no. (*Both blustery.*)

BRIEF. Not a bit of it. You have got to settle with us (*Enter JACK R. I. E. with four pistols. He gives two each to BRIEF and SQUILLS then discovers MCGURK.*)

JACK. Hello: you are just the man I want.

MCGURK. Eh!

SQUILLS. Have you a debt to settle also?

BRIEF. He insulted us last night.

JACK. He did, eh? Well, he insulted me this morning. How dare you flirt with my affianced wife?

MCGURK. Gentlemen, are you all crazy?

SQUILLS. Crazy! You dare to call me crazy.

BRIEF. You are daft yourself.

JACK. Well, I'll knock a little sense into him if he is.

Enter GAUNT R. 2. E. He stops in amazement.

GAUNT. Good lord.

MCGURK. Ah, Artemus; save me from these lunatics.

SQUILLS. } Lunatics; SIR!

BRIEF. }

GAUNT. Oh Lord; what's the matter?

SQUILLS. You know what is the matter. He insulted us last night.

BRIEF. And agreed to meet us on the field of honor this morning.

SQUILLS. Just so, the field of honor.

MCGURK. I didn't; did I, brother?

BRIEF (*to SQUILLS*). Brother. You hear that,

SQUILLS. Exactly. The same.

GAUNT. No, no. He is not my brother,—er that is—I mean that he is not the man who,—

SQUILLS. Nonsense!

BRIEF. Pshaw!

SQUILLS. Don't try to shield him, GAUNT. I'm bound to have his heart.

BRIEF. And I, sir, will spill his blood.

GAUNT (*excitedly*). Good Lord!

MCGURK. Artemus, tell me, is this a private asylum?

SQUILLS. Private asylum! Don't, don't drive me too far, sir.

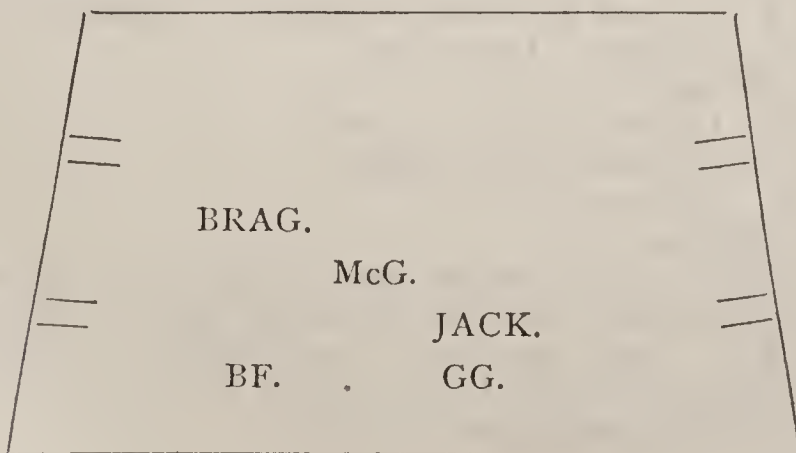
BRIEF. And me, sir.

SQUILLS. Come. Here is your weapon (*offers pistol*).

BRIEF. And here is yours, sir. (*They offer pistols to MCGURK.*)

Enter BRAG R. U. E. All start back. Tableau.

Position,—



SQUILLS. Eh, two of them ?

BRIEF. What is the meaning of this ?

BRAG (*aside to GAUNT*). Great Jumping Jupiter ! it is your brother.

GAUNT. Yes ; what shall we do ?

SQUILLS. Explain, sir.

BRIEF. Exactly. Explain, sir.

BRAG (R. C.). What is the matter here ? I am DONALD MCGURK ; Artemus GAUNT'S half brother from Scotland.

MCGURK. You are ? Then who in the name of thunder am I ?

BRAG. An impostor begone !

MCGURK. But I demand ;—

BRAG. Here, Mr. Schuyler, throw that vagabond out. He is trying to fool you as my double.

JACK. I'll do so with pleasure, sir. I saw him with my affianced wife this morning.

MCGURK. Me !

JACK. Yes, you. Come, don't contradict.

MCGURK. But I tell you,—

JACK. Out you go, and if you dare to come back, I'll have you arrested. (*He catches MCGURK by the collar and pushes him off R. U. E.*)

BRAG (C). Now, gentlemen, let us settle our little affair. Who is first ?

SQUILLS (*anxiously*). I—er—that is—

BRIEF (*ditto*). Well—er—you see—

BRAG (*briskly*). Speak up, speak up. Don't keep me waiting.

SQUILLS. Mr. Brief ; you are the elder.

BRIEF. Dr. Squills ; it has always been a rule of my life to give way to others.

SQUILLS. Don't say a word, sir. Go ahead.

BRAG. You are both cowards.

SQUILLS. } SIR !

BRIEF. }

BRAG. I have said it. Shall I repeat it ? Cowards.

SQUILLS. Enough. I am ready.

BRIEF. So am I.

SQUILLS. I demand the first chance.

BRIEF. But I insist on my rights.

SQUILLS. Nonsense.

BRIEF. Pshaw.

BRAG. Here, give me the pistols (*takes one from each*). Now you get over there (*points R. with pistol, BRIEF dodges and goes R.*). And you over there (*points L. with pistol, SQUILLS dodges and goes L.*). Now I'll settle the two at once. Artemus, will you please give the word ?

(SITUATIONS. BRIEF R., SQUILLS L., BRAG C., GAUNT *up* C.) N. B. *Each time GAUNT says "one" the others half raise their pistols, at "Two" they aim. Each time he breaks in, the pistols are all lowered.*

GAUNT. Oh—er—that is—yes, sir.

BRAG. Ready, gentlemen. Go ahead, brother.

GAUNT. One—er, oh lord—two—er-- Can't this thing be arranged.

SQUILLS. Why, as to that ; of course if—if—

BRIEF. If—if--we can—

BRAG. Not a bit of it. We fight.

SQUILLS. Exactly—we—fight.

BRIEF. Just so, we—fight.

GAUNT. Oh lord—er—one—er—two—e—r--suppose somebody gits hurt?

SQUILLS. Ugh, don't mention it.

BRIEF. Why if—if—somebody gets hurt,—

BRAG (*angrily*). They will get hurt of course ; and if somebody gets hurt, they'll get killed.

SQUILLS. Exactly,—they'll—get—killed.

BRIEF. J—j—just s—s—s—o, they'll get killed.

GAUNT. Oh lord,—er—one,—er—two,—er—, shall I say three?

BRAG. Yes, and be quick about it (*very angrily*).

SQUILLS. E—r—exactly.

BRIEF. Y—e—s—, just so.

GAUNT. One—, oh dear. Two—, oh—oh—. Threeeeee—e—r—, e—r—. (*pause*) Fire!

(*At the word, fire BRAG steps back and lowers his weapons, SQUILLS and BRIEF fire at each other and fall.*)

CURTAIN. •

SITUATIONS,—

BRIEF *lies* R. SQUILLS *lies* L. BRAG *stands* C. *with folded arms*. GAUNT *up* C., *wringing his hands*.

ACT IV.

SCENE—Same as Act II. JACK *enters* D. L. *as curtain rises.*

JACK (*coming down C.*). Well, well, well. To say that we are in a pretty muss, doesn't begin to describe it. My worthy uncle, John Brag, not dead, but very much alive. And after all these months. 'Gad. If I hadn't seen him, and proved it, I wouldn't have believed it. (*Sits R. of table.*) It was a neat thing of Bonnie to tell me, although hang me if I believed her. But when I went to him and demanded the proof,—well, I got it, although he tried to deny it at first. And now, what is to be done? Of course it will get out, and the insurance company will be after him. Confound it all; if it isn't a devil of a mix-up! (BRAG *looks in* D. R.)

BRAG. Anybody here, Jack? (JACK *rises.*)

JACK. No, uncle. Come right in. (BRAG *enters.*)

BRAG. But I am so afraid that the insurance company may get wind of it.

JACK (C). Of course they will. It is bound to occur sooner or later.

BRAG (C). Heavens! What shall I do?

JACK. Well, there is only one way out of it so far as I can see.

BRAG. Good. I'll take any chance. Only let me get out of this hole, and I will quit New York, aye and America too, forever.

JACK. Just what I was going to suggest. See your wife. Explain to her and her daughters. Then get your things together, and skip. There is a steamer sails to-day.

BRAG. But the insurance company. They will follow me,

JACK. No, they won't. Once they get their money back, they will not trouble you. I will attend to that.

BRAG. Jack, my boy, you are an angel. (*Hands on* JACK'S *shoulder.*)

JACK. Yes, that is what all the girls used to call me.

BRAG. And what will you do?

JACK. I? Oh, I'll get married perhaps, But never mind that now. Brace up and see your wife.

BRAG. I will (*shaking* JACK'S *hand*). Jack, you have made me feel ten years younger.

JACK. Don't mention it, but go. (BRAG *exits* D. R.) Now I begin to see my way clear. (*Enter* SNEEKER D. F.) Hello. Who is this, I wonder.

SNEEK (*coming down C.*). I am a detective, C. Sneeker, of the Central Office.

JACK (*aside*). The devil. (*Aloud*) Indeed. Most pleased to see you, Mr. Sneeker. Pray be seated and have a cigar. (SNEEKER seated R. of table. *He accepts offered cigar, examines it carefully, then lights it.*) And now, sir, what can I do for you?

SNEEK. Well, to be brief, the Endowment Insurance Company paid a death claim some months ago on the life of one John Brag.

JACK. That is correct. He was my uncle.

SNEEK. So I understand. Well, sir, to-day we received word that they have a suspicion that he did not die.

JACK (*aside*). What shall I do? (*aloud*) Indeed! That is very strange.

SNEEK. Yes, very. Still it is not the first time that such tricks have been played. Now I am here to see what you know of it.

JACK. Me! I—er—that is—I know nothing.

SNEEK (*sneeringly*). You look it.

JACK. The fact is—well I would advise you to see his widow, Mrs. Brag. Just step in here, and I will call her.

SNEEK (*rising*). Very well. But no attempt to flimflam me, remember.

JACK. Oh dear no. (*Leads SNEEKER to D. L. and he exits.*)

JACK (*comes down stage and sits R. of table*). Flames and furies. I began to think that we were out of the woods, but from present indications, we have just entered them. He will question her and maybe search the house. Oh if I could only throw him off the scent for a day or two, they could sail away, and I would settle with the company.

Enter MCGURK, D. F. He comes down C., shaking a long club which he carries.

JACK. Ah, more trouble. It never rains but it pours.

MCGURK. Now, sir, I want to see you.

JACK (*rising*). To see me?

MCGURK. Yes, to see you. I came to this infernal country to see my half-brother, Artemus Gaunt; but I find him in a lunatic asylum as crazy as the rest.

JACK. Go on. This is interesting.

MCGURK. I came here, and was pushed out, almost thrown out, and that by my own relative. I came back this morning, and fall in with a crazy set who want me to fight. They said I had insulted them, when I never saw them before. My poor brother stood by, the dupe of the rascals, and made no sign. Then, strange as it may seem, a living double of myself appeared, who even claimed the name my own mother gave me, and at his word, you—you sir, forcibly eject me from the grounds. I have been insulted and assaulted until I'm sick, and now I'm here to demand satisfaction, or by thunder, I'll take it out of your hide.

JACK (*aside*). I have an idea. (*Aloud*) My dear sir, pray be seated. (*He seats MCGURK R.*) You really deserve satisfaction, and you shall have it. I'll see about it in a moment. (*He goes to*

D. L. and motions SNEEKER in. *He takes the detective's arm and leads him down L. Speaks in a confidential tone.*)

JACK. All you have guessed is only too true, my dear sir. We had hoped to keep it a secret, since the poor man really didn't mean it. But it will be better if he is in the State's care.

SNEEK. What do you mean?

JACK. I mean that my poor uncle was buried alive while in a catalepsy. He returned to consciousness, and managed to get out of the vault, but the terrible shock was too much. It turned his brain, and he is a hopeless lunatic. There he is. (*Points to MCGURK. SNEEKER crosses to R.*)

SNEEK. My dear sir.

MCGURK. Eh?

SNEEK. It is all right. Have no fear. Come along with me, and we—

MCGURK. Who are you?

SNEEK. Your friend, Mr. Brag.

MCGURK. Mr. Brag? I'm not Mr. Brag. I am Donald McGurk of Scotland, half brother of Artemus Gaunt.

JACK. That is his illusion, Mr. Sneeker. He believes that he is the half brother of his private secretary.

MCGURK (*rises*). W-h—a——t! WHAT!! (*in great astonishment*).

SNEEK. There, there. It is all right. Come along with me. (*Places a hand on his arm.*)

MCGURK. I won't.

SNEEK. Oh, yes you will. Remember, Mr. Brag, you are guilty of a crime which I have no doubt the law will overlook, But you will have to come with me.

MCGURK. I tell you I won't. I am Donald McGurk.

SNEEK. I am a detective, and I arrest you.

MCGURK. You idiot. Are you crazy like the rest?

SNEEK. No, you are the only daft one here. Come. (*Catches MCGURK by the shoulder.*)

MCGURK (*striking him*). You fool, you—you—

SNEEK. Here, Mr. Schnuyler, assist me. (*SNEEKER and JACK struggle with MCGURK, who is finally handcuffed, and led up stage by the detective.*)

MCGURK. Oh, somebody shall pay dear for all this. Why, oh why did I leave bonnie Scotland for this God-forsaken country.

(*He is led off at D. F. by SNEEKER.*)

JACK (*dances about stage*). I feel like shouting. At last the road seems clear. It will take them a few days to investigate his story. In the mean time we can get things straightened out, and Brag will be on the deep. (*Enter GAUNT, D. R.*) Good afternoon, Artemus.

GAUNT (R. C.). Have you seen anything of my half-brother?

JACK (C.). Please be explicit, Artemus. Which half-brother do you mean?

GAUNT. Sir, I—

JACK. Just so. Do you mean your real half-brother; or your half-brother, late employer, half-brother?

GAUNT (*excitedly*). Good lord, sir, do you know?

JACK. I do. Now your real half-brother is in the hands of the law.

GAUNT. Good lord, sir, what for?

JACK. Well,—for not staying home and minding his own business. Now see here, Artemus (*tapping his arm confidentially*), the jig is up. The police are on to the game, and are playing mighty lively. Mr. Brag is getting ready to sail. Likewise Mrs. B. and the girls. They may need your help.

GAUNT. But my half-brother?

JACK. Oh don't worry about him. He will come out all right in the end.

GAUNT. But sir, I believe you have played some trick on him.

JACK. What if I have? It will save your skin.

GAUNT. Mine? What have I done?

JACK. How dull you are to-day. Who was it who aided and abetted John Brag, in his successful attempt to defraud the Endowment Insurance Company?

GAUNT. Good lord, sir (*frightened*)!

JACK. Ah, you see the point, do you? Quite right. It would not be conducive to good health for you to fall into the hands of the law.

GAUNT. What shall I do?

JACK. Just what I have told you to.

GAUNT. All right, sir, I shall go immediately if not sooner. (*Exits hurriedly D. R.*)

JACK. I feel like some general, directing his victorious army. But I do wish Bonnie would come. (*Exits D. L.—enter BRIEF and SQUILLS D. F. with arms and head bandaged. They come down C. slowly. Music.*)

BRIEF. Well?

SQUILLS. Well?

BRIEF (C.). You look as if you had lately interviewed a mule.

SQUILLS. And you look as if you had been through a threshing machine.

BRIEF. Ah, you take advantage of me, now that I am incapacitated from repaying your insults.

SQUILLS. Hum. You seem to lose sight of the fact that I am slightly jammed up myself.

BRIEF. Well, whose fault was it?

SQUILLS. Yours, sir.

BRIEF. Mine, sir?

SQUILLS. Yes, yours. Didn't you fire at me and riddle me

with bullets? I'm perforated, sir, perforated. I shall probably die of my injuries; and then,—

BRIEF. Oh nonsense. I didn't fire at you. I fired at Brag.

SQUILLS. At Brag!

BRIEF. Yes at Brag, John Brag. Who has tried to fool the law all these months. But virtue and the majesty of justice is at last triumphant, and he will get his just reward.

SQUILLS. And do you mean to say that John Brag is alive, sir?

BRIEF. I do.

SQUILLS. And it was he whom we fought?

BRIEF. It was, sir,

SQUILLS (*confused*). Then—then—er that is—Mrs. Brag is not a widow?

BRIEF (*starts*). Eh? Um'm'm'm'm—er—she is not, sir.

SQUILLS. Then, Blackstone, what the devil are we quarrelling about?

BRIEF. Damn if I know, Cerephus.

SQUILLS. Let's shake.

BRIEF. Let's. (*Comic business as they try to shake hands.*)

SQUILLS. You are a noble, courageous man, my dear sir; and I am proud to call you my friend.

BRIEF. My sentiments exactly, dear doctor.

SQUILLS. But Brag; he is a scoundrel.

BRIEF. He is worse. He is a villain.

SQUILLS. Deep dyed.

BRIEF. Double distilled.

SQUILLS. And he played us a contemptible trick.

BRIEF. He did, sir.

SQUILLS. He ought to be punished severely.

BRIEF. He ought, sir.

SQUILLS. Let's do it.

BRIEF. Let's. (*They again shake hands. Enter JACK D. L.*)

SQUILLS. Ah, good afternoon, Mr. Schuyler. Where is your dear, late lamented, long deceased, but still alive and lately returned uncle?

BRIEF. Yes, where is he?

JACK (*aside*). Everybody seems to be on. (*Aloud.*) Sirs,—that is, my uncle,—

BRIEF. Yes, your uncle.

SQUILLS. Don't try to deny it, young man. We have authority for the belief that he is alive.

BRIEF. Exactly. Alive, sir.

SQUILLS. And we demand to be shown where he is, that we may mete out his just punishment.

BRIEF. We do, sir.

JACK. Well, I am sorry that I cannot accommodate you, but my uncle,—

SQUILLS. Yes, your uncle.

BRIEF. Just so, your uncle.

JACK. My uncle is in jail.

SQUILLS. } In jail!

BRIEF. }

JACK. In jail.

BRIEF. Good.

SQUILLS. Excellent. The law will take its course, and just retribution will fall upon his sinful head.

BRIEF. Amen, dear doctor, amen.

SQUILLS. Blackstone, it seems that a kind fate has taken the task of punishing this miserable worm from off our shoulders.

BRIEF. It undoubtedly has, Cerephus.

SQUILLS. Let's take a drink.

BRIEF. Let's (*They again shake hands, and exit D. F. Music "Razzle, Dazzle."*)

JACK. Two old fools (*sits R. of table*). Forever meddling in someone's affairs. (*BONNIE enters D. L. She comes down R. of table and places her hands over JACK'S eyes.*)

JACK (*rising*). Bonnie, my darling. Here at last.

BONNIE. Forever and aye, Jack. (*They embrace L. Enter D. R. BRAG, MRS. BRAG and the three daughters. They are dressed for travelling and carry satchels, etc.*)

BRAG. Well, here we are, Jack. Is the coast clear?

JACK. All clear, sir.

MRS. BRAG. Isn't it romantic to have your dear father back again?

RUBY. So much nicer than having a stepfather.

PEARL. Like that old Brief.

SAPPHIRE. Or that older Squills.

BRAG. Hush, don't mention them. I want to forget the past, and be happy once more.

MRS. BRAG. And we are going abroad, Jack. But what is to become of you?

JACK. Oh I shall become a husband.

ALL. A husband!

JACK. Yes. Allow me. My future wife. (*Presents BONNIE.*)

ALL. Bonnie!

BRAG. The devil.

MRS. BRAG. No the dancer.

BONNIE. Yes, Bonnie, once the dancer, but from this time henceforth and forever,—Jack's little wife.

CURTAIN.

SITUATIONS. BRAG and MRS. BRAG, RUBY, PEARL and SAPPHIRE *up C.* JACK and BONNIE *L.*

A BUNCH OF ROSES

A BURLESQUE MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT, BY W. D. FELTER



PRICE, 15 CENTS

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MRS. PHOEBE ANN ROSE	<i>from Kalamazoo</i>
PRUDENCE LOBELIA	}	
POLLY CLORINDA		
PRISCILLA		
PAMELIA		
PATIENCE		
PENELOPE		
LILLY	}	
PANSY		
VIOLET		
DAISY		
SALLY SPARKS	<i>who only "thinks so."</i>
MATILDA JANE	<i>the Hired Girl</i>
MELVIN MELROSE	<i>the Only Young Man on the Spot</i>

A burlesque musical entertainment in 1 act, by W. D. Felter (author of "The Sweet Family," etc.), 1 male, 13 female characters. Time of performance about 1½ hours. This is a miscellaneous programme rendered for the benefit of "The Free Ice Fund for the Philippine Islanders." It includes various "specialties," living pictures, Mother-Goose chorus, etc., and concludes with a burlesque operetta entitled "JOHNNY JONES." The Roses, the Rosebuds and the Only Young Man on the Spot make up an entertainment that cannot fail to excite continuous mirth for the better part of an evening. The author has produced this burlesque at church entertainments in many parts of the country, with unvarying success.

GERTRUDE MASON, M.D.

Or, THE LADY DOCTOR

A FARCE IN ONE ACT, FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS, BY
L. M. C. ARMSTRONG



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

GERTRUDE MASON, M.D.	<i>a young Physician</i>
BERTHA LAWRENCE	}	
ELLA GRAY		
MISS JANE SIMPKINS	<i>a Spinster of Uncertain Age</i>
MRS. VAN STYLE	<i>one of the "400"</i>
NORAH	<i>Dr. Mason's Cook</i>
MARIE	<i>a Lady's Maid</i>

TIME.—The Present. PLACE.—New York.
TIME OF REPRESENTATION.—Thirty Minutes.

An exceedingly bright piece for young ladies, in which young Dr. Gertrude, already a victim of circumstances, is made the victim of a practical joke. The scenes with *Mrs. Van Style*, who mistakes the doctor for a pawnbroker, and *Miss Jane Simpkins*, who brings a sick dog to be cured, are hilarious, while *Nora*, an Irish cook, is deliciously droll. The cook is the star of the piece, but all the personages are vivacious and every situation bristles with fun.

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MY LADY DARRELL

Or, A STRANGE MARRIAGE

A Drama in Four Acts, by JOSEPH LE BRANDT

PRICE, 25 CENTS

This drama possesses all the elements of success—quick movement, strong heart-interest, genuine comedy, powerful situations, effective stage pictures, grand climaxes.

It is unconventional in plot and treatment, and runs the whole gamut of interest. With the opening act on a farm, we have the rural play; the second act, at the home of Lord Darrell, affords society-drama; the last act, with its thrilling dénouement in The Beggars' Paradise, gives strong melodrama. The characters are all real, living people.

Each act is stronger than the preceding one; each incident adds to the interest; the unravelling of the plot holds the attention and sympathy of the audience to the end. It is full of surprises; the story is not so simple that the audience can tell exactly what is going to happen next. The pathos of one scene brings a tear to the eye, only to be banished the next moment by a hearty laugh at a bright line or a mirthful bit of comedy. Scenes of the play have been likened to such successes as THE WIFE, THE WAGES OF SIN, THE TWO ORPHANS, etc. The leading female rôle (Alice) is on the style of characters assumed by Miss Annie Russell. Easy to stage, the piece can be produced in an ordinary hall by actors of average talent. Its author's reputation and its professional success during two seasons especially recommended the play. Professional rights reserved. No charge for amateur production.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ALICE, afterwards Countess of Darrell	Lead
VIOLA VAUGHN	Genteel Heavy
LADY DARRELL, Roy's mother	Straight Old Woman
MARTHA PAISEY	Character Old Woman
KATE CRIPPS	Emotional Heavy
MOTHER CRIPPS	Character Old Woman
LORD ROY DARRELL	Juvenile Lead
GEORGE VAUGHN, alias Count Jura	Genteel Heavy
ARMSTRONG DALE	Light Comedy
SIR GEOFFREY RAWDON	Straight Old Man
CAPTAIN LIONEL WYNDHAM	Juvenile Man
JOSEPH PAISEY	Character Comedy
JOB TROTTERS	Character Comedy
TOBY BRUCE	Character Heavy
DALTON, Sergeant of Police	Utility

TIME.—The Present. PLACE.—England.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.—Two Hours and a Half.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS

ACT I.—*Scene 1.* The Paisey Farm. "Now, strike if you dare!" *Scene 2.* Lord Darrell's Estate. A Strange Marriage.

ACT II.—A lapse of four months. The Plot. The Insult. The Blow.

ACT III.—The Abduction. The Recognition. "You are the murderer of Capt. Wyndham!"

ACT IV.—In London. "I'll rescue her if it takes the last drop of blood in my veins!" The Beggars' Paradise. Finale.

DICK & FITZGERALD, PUBLISHERS, 18 ANN STREET, NEW YORK

OCT 10 1902

SHE WOULD BE A WIDOW;

OR, BUTTERNUT'S BRIDE.

An Original Farce-Comedy in Three Acts, for Laughing Purposes Only,

By LEVIN C. TEES.

PRICE, 25 CENTS.

Eleven male, six female characters (by doubling, the piece can be played by seven gentlemen and four ladies). The leading male parts offer great opportunities for two comedians; the remaining male characters will yield barrels of fun. All of the female parts are first-rate and none of them difficult to play. As played by MATTHEWS & BULGER, under the name of "At Gay Coney Island," this play has won applause everywhere from packed houses. It is a laugh-producer all around.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BENJAMIN BUTTERNUT, an unworthy plumber, who weds a young lady and contracts to make her a widow in two weeks, but does not live up to his agreement. LOW COMEDY

DR. FELIX SYRUP, who brings about Butternut's matrimonial adventure, and afterward devotes his energies to sever the bonds. LIGHT COMEDY

UNCLE ABEL SYRUP, who resorts to an innocent stratagem which fails to pan out well. STRAIGHT OLD MAN

WILLIE GOODFELLOW, with a pet scheme for getting rid of objectionable husbands. JUVENILE GENTLEMAN

GOPHIR BILL, a noted burglar whom the plumber attempts to teach the business. CHARACTER BIT

DEPUTY SHERIFF POUNCE, who meets first a cordial and then a very warm reception. UTILITY MAN

UNDERTAKER SCREWEMDOWN, who comes to grief in trying to bury a live subject. CHARACTER BIT

HIRAM JONES, a land speculator. UTILITY MAN

FIRST KEEPER. UTILITY MAN

SECOND KEEPER. UTILITY MAN

REPRESENTATIVE GRABALL, a useful member of the Legislature, with an eye to spoils. CHARACTER BIT

SIX MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE. SUPERNUMERARIES

GEORGIE FANSHAW, afterward Mrs. Benjamin Butternut, a young lady with a fad for becoming a widow without losing a husband. LEADING COMEDY LADY

NAOMI ROSEBUD, who knows what fun "we widows have". INGENUOUS

DAISY CARROTS, with a penchant for mixing up things generally, ROUGH SOUBRETTE

Mrs. LYDIA BROCK, who finds her well-intended efforts unappreciated. COMIC OLD WOMAN

BIDDY MULHOOLEY, an excited matron from the Emerald Isle. CHARACTER BIT

NANETTE FANCHETTE, in search of her truant husband. CHARACTER BIT

TIME, the present. LOCALITY, Acts I. and II. in New York City; Act III. at Dover, Delaware. TIME OF REPRESENTATION, 2½ hours.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

ACT I.—Dr. Syrup's office—An M. D. in the dumps—"When are you going to pay me my wages, sa-ay?"—Making 'em feel at home—Poor Willie—Striking a bargain—Uncle Abel's scheme—Daisy in a scrape—An unprincipled plumber with a classical countenance—A deputy sheriff taking stock on the quiet. Throwing out the wrong man—Fifty dollars for a husband—Preparations for the wedding, and arrangements for a first class funeral—"Doctor, the bath-tub is busted and the house is afloat!"

ACT II.—The home of Butternut's bride in Madison avenue—Not such a soft snap after all—"When I win my wife's affections, I'll raise your wages"—Willie floored and the ladies have a little set-to—Old acquaintances hatch a nice little plot—The doctor and the undertaker disappear through the window, and the plumber assumes control of the establishment. The greatest scheme of all—A burglar goes a burgling. Making mincemeat of the whole caboodle of them—Another surprise for old Butternut—Uncle Abel is mistaken for a lunatic and run off to the asylum, and Gophir Bill takes the last trick.

ACT III.—Hotel parlor at Dover—Uncle Abel, bent on vengeance, sets a trap for the plumber—Mrs. Syrup cultivates the manly art and comes down to Delaware with blood in her eye—Butternut on a bicycle—"She bought you for a job lot and got stuck"—"Fixing" the Legislature—"Telling her all"—Willie's infernal machine—Making a will in a hurry—Mrs. Syrup gives up boxing lessons, and the doctor gets another chance in business—The infernal machine knocks out the Legislature—"You drunken idiots, this aint the railroad bill!"—Butternut on the matrimonial market again—Finale.

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


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