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Bachelor's Romance

A MORTON



SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York

A BACHELOR'S ROMANCE

AN
ORIGINAL PLAY

IN
FOUR ACTS

BY
MARTHA MORTON

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A BACHELOR'S ROMANCE

Produced by Mr. Sol Smith Russell; September 16, 1896

ORIGINAL CAST

DAVID HOLMES—Literary Critic on *The Review*.
Sol Smith Russell.

GERALD HOLMES—His brother—pleasure-loving
—a man of the world. *Arthur Forrest.*

MARTIN BEGGS—David's secretary and confidential man.
George Denham.

HAROLD REYNOLDS—On the staff of *The Review*.
Sidney Booth.

MR. MULBERRY—A literary man, with a classical education—which he cannot turn into money.
Alfred Hudson.

“SAVAGE”—A modern literary man.
Charles Mackay.

MISS CLEMANTINA—A maiden lady, with a sharp tongue.
Mrs. Fanny Adison Pitt.

HELEN LE GRAND—David's sister—a widow of the world.
Beatrice Moreland.

HARRIET LEICESTER—A society girl.
Nita Allen.

SYLVIA SOMERS—David's ward.
Annie Russell.

JAMES—

ACT I —David's Study in Washington Square.

ACT II —Helen's Fashionable Home, Murry Hill, New York.

ACT III—David's Study. Same as Act I.

ACT IV—Miss Clemantina's Home in the Country.

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A BACHELOR'S ROMANCE

ACT I

SCENE.—*DAVID HOLMES' apartments in the cupola of a studio building, Washington Square. Old fashioned and comfortable. Entrance L 1 from exterior—entrance R 1 into adjoining room—also little winding stair into cupola—leading out on balcony—view through window over tops of houses. Spring sky—ledges of roofs.*

DISCOVERED.—*MARTIN at his desk L—sorting papers, filing them away, etc. A knock at door.*

MR. MULBERRY puts in his head L. 2.

MR. MULBERRY. (about 50, very worn and tired—shrunk up—hopeless kind of manner. Very shabby and greasy clothes. Holds door half open, poking his head in—looking around anxiously with a soft, tired voice) Is Mr. Holmes in?

MARTIN. (without looking up) Not yet, Mr. Mulberry; he's been detained later than usual at the office.

MULBERRY. Something important, Martin?

MARTIN. (non-committal) A consultation with the proprietor—

MULBERRY. (slides into room, pauses, up c., looks anxiously at MARTIN, who seems engrossed in his work. Creeps to fireplace, up L., sits down in a capacious armchair in front of it, and with a sigh of satisfaction, warms his hands—pauses) Martin,

have you a copy of this week's Review? I don't like to miss Mr. Holmes's fine scholarly editorials.

MARTIN. (L. *pointing to desk*, R) Last week's in there—this week's coming out this afternoon.

MULBERRY. (*rumaging among papers on table*, R. and *taking the Review sits down* R. *cuts paper*) A very reliable solid paper, this—the only literary sheet worth reading.

MARTIN. Thanks to Mr. Holmes, who made it what it is.

MULBERRY. (R.) Now what other paper could afford to offer ten thousand dollars for the best prize story? What do you think of it, Martin?

MARTIN. (L.) I'm opposed to competition in general—and literary competition in particular.

MULBERRY. (R.) I never had the nerve to compete with anybody. I started out, *hampered* by a classical education. I soon found out publishers did not care for Homer as much as I did. Nobody wants essays or critical reviews—except on *new* books, and there's nothing in *new* books. (*sighs and shakes his head*) I'm trying for that ten thousand dollars.

MARTIN. (L. *looking up*) Are you?

MULBERRY. (R.) Yes—the scene of my story is laid in Olympia—it's a romance of the Grecian gods—

MARTIN. (L. *thawing out a little*) Confidence for confidence—I am trying for it too, Mr. Mulberry. I'm a realist—I've written a character sketch, taken from life.

MULBERRY. That must be a very unpleasant story. My experience teaches me anything taken from life is very disagreeable.

(A *brisk double knock at the door*. MR. SAVAGE *enters quickly*, R., a man about 25—*very quick and active*—*Bohemian in appearance, res to C.*)

SAVAGE. (C., in light bantering tones to MULBERRY) Ah!—Hail to you—“Wise man of Greece.”

MULBERRY. (seated at fire-place) Hail to you, Phoebus Apollo.

SAVAGE. (C. to MARTIN) I ran in to congratulate Mr. Holmes. He deserves it.

MARTIN. (L.) Deserves what?

SAVAGE. You have evidently not seen this week's Review. (takes it with a number of other papers out of his pocket—reads) “Mr. David Holmes, the literary critic and the author of many popular books of travel, has been selected to decide *who* shall be the winner of the ten thousand dollar prize offered by the Review for the best serial story.

MARTIN and MULBERRY. Ah!—Ah!—

SAVAGE. (with an important air) I am trying for the ten thousand dollar prize.

MARTIN. (MARTIN and MULBERRY exchange looks) And what may your story be about, Mr. Savage?

SAVAGE. My same old hobby—Naturalism—I lash the over-extravagance and luxuriousness of the age—I show a society of *fin de siecle*—ladies and gentlemen—giving up their luxurious homes and going back to nature—I show them working side by side—barefooted in the fields—barefooted—mind you—producing what they consume—I show a gradual revival of the natural faculties—they love, hate, laugh, weep, marry and have large families like common peasants—I am sounding the note of warning in the ears of the rich—It's a great satisfaction to a poor devil without a penny in his pocket.

MARTIN. You're a crank, Savage. (exit L.)
(MULBERRY rise, with newspaper, xes up—and sits on ladder c—leading to roof)

SAVAGE. Oh!—very well—everyone to his con-

viction—and the best man wins. (*Sit down L. of R. desk, takes up book; MULBERRY, nose in paper. Door opens quietly, and MR. DAVID HOLMES enters L. x. to desk R., a man of about forty—looks older. Hair streaked with grey—rather careless in attire—arm full of books and papers, and umbrella. A type of a hard-working journalist. DAVID puts a small bag full of papers and books carefully on desk, then takes a package of MS out of pocket, and puts them on desk.*)

DAVID. Good evening. (*absentmindedly drops coat, hat and umbrella. Takes book out of his pocket—opens it—stands at table—he becomes absorbed in it.*)

MULBERRY. (*on the steps c*) It's a great honor—

DAVID. What's a great honor? (*points to paper in his hands*) Oh! you mean—well it may be a great honor, but don't congratulate me until I have acquitted myself creditably. It's a heavy responsibility. I wish they had given it to somebody else. (*puts on old frayed-out working jacket, very much the worse for wear, and ink stains all over it—which hangs back of chair. Puts his hands on package*) Here they are—twenty of them, selected from the hundreds sent in. (*They all look eagerly at the package, from which he takes off paper and string. Puts them in drawer and locks it. Then sits down at his desk*) Want something to do, Mr. Savage?

SAVAGE. Badly as usual—Mr. Holmes.

DAVID. (*giving him a number of books*) Review these will you? I want them done at once—there's a desk in the other room.

SAVAGE. (*rise, gratefully*) Oh, thank you, Mr. Holmes. (*Go to door R. stops—DAVID sits down to desk, puts on spectacles, takes up pen, spreads paper in front of him*)—(*by R. door*) No signature, of course?

DAVID. No—it will be printed under general criticism.

SAVAGE. (*to DAVID, confidentially*) Mr. Holmes—I have a story in the competition.

DAVID. (*Int. Indignantly.*) Savage! That's not right. I don't want to know *who's* got a story in the competition. I want to judge this matter from an impartial standpoint. Get out—

(SAVAGE *exits quickly* R. 2.)

DAVID. What can I do for you Mulberry?

MULBERRY. (*embarrassed*) I wanted to ask you what I ought to get for an old copy of Plato's Republic—(*hands book*) rare binding—genuine—

DAVID. (*takes it out of his hand, runs through it and examines it as a connoisseur*) Will ten dollars buy it? (*puts book on desk*)

MULBERRY. Oh! Mr. Holmes.

(DAVID *puts his hand in his pockets, then opens drawer, takes out a ten dollar bill and hands it to MULBERRY, who during this had taken up the book and caressed it softly—then put it down with a sigh*)

MULBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Holmes.

DAVID. Don't speak of it. If I go on, I'll own your entire library.

(*Exit MULBERRY* L. 2. E.)

(MARTIN *re-enters* L. *with tray, sets it on DAVID'S desk.*)

MARTIN. (*stands above desk* R.) Your supper, sir. (DAVID *looks over tray*)

DAVID. Thank you, Martin. (*goes on writing, forgets all about supper*)

MARTIN. (*to him, quietly—speaks at his elbow*) A letter, sir. It's been lying on your desk for two days, read it sir—

DAVID. Read it yourself.

(READY WHISTLE)

MARTIN. I have sir—but I think you'd better glance over it. (*at his elbow*) It's from Miss Clemantina, sir.

DAVID. (*writing*) Is it?—What does she say? She received her allowance and the birthday present for the child?

MARTIN. (*L. of desk R.*) Yes, sir—but Miss Clemantina is very angry with you for keeping away so long—she wants to see you about Miss Sylvia—

DAVID. (*dropping pen*) Why can she want to see me about Sylvia?

MARTIN. As the child's father left her to you, sir, perhaps Miss Clem thinks you ought to have a hand in her bringing up—

DAVID. Don't be a fool, Martin—what can I do in the bringing up of a child. Henry Somers was as dear to me as my own brother, but to die and leave me a baby—a *girl* baby to look after—it—it wasn't kind of him to serve me like that.

MARTIN. I suggested Miss Clemantina taking the child, because she was an old family stand-by—when I was a bookkeeper in your father's store, she used to come down—flounce about and turn my head for the day. (*sighs*) It's twenty odd years ago, Mr. David, since you said to your father "I'm sick of trafficking in money—and you put on your hat and walked out of the place, and I followed you.

DAVID. (*laying his hand on MARTIN'S arm*) You've been a faithful friend to me, Martin, and the very best thing you ever did for me was getting Miss Clemantina to take charge of the child. I've tried to do my duty, but I can't get over to see her—I haven't time. I'll go next Sunday—remind me, Martin, will you?

MARTIN. (*L. of DAVID'S desk*) I've reminded you every Sunday—sir—for the last ten years.

DAVID. (*uneasily*) Don't forget this Sunday—Martin, and if I can't make the time keep on at me, until I do.

MARTIN. (*go to desk L.—sit down*) Yes, sir.

DAVID. (*takes cup of tea—a whistle through the tube—DAVID starts*) Martin, I told you to stuff that tube with something—

MARTIN. (*at tube L.*) (*rising, goes to tube L.*) I did, sir. But they blow the wad out every time. The person's coming upstairs—it's a *young* person by the light step—

DAVID. Another author who is trying for the prize? I can't see him—I'm engaged.

MARTIN. I'll lock the door.

DAVID. Wait Martin—it might be some poor devil—I could help. But I won't talk prize story to him—I'll draw the line there.

(MARTIN *down to his desk, sits L. C.* DAVID *at his desk R.—pause—a timid knock—L.* *The door L. is pushed timidly open, and SYLVIA stands at the threshold, a very quaint, little figure of a country girl, dressed in an old-fashioned but picturesque way.*)

SYLVIA. (*L., stands at entrance, watching the two men, who sit at their desks with hands over their work, aside*) (*goes to MARTIN*) Good evening, Mr. Holmes. (*MARTIN looks up, makes a motion towards DAVID*) (*aside*) Oh!— (*crosses to DAVID'S desk R.*) Good evening. (*DAVID falls back in astonishment*)

SYLVIA. I'm an author.

DAVID. YOU—

SYLVIA. Yes, I'm trying for the ten thousand dollar prize—my name is—

DAVID. (*interrupting*) Please—I don't want to know your name! It might prejudice me against your story.

(*Begin to work lights down slowly.*)

SYLVIA. (L. c.) But I wanted to explain—

DAVID. (R. *Int.*) I—I'd rather you wouldn't—you can't explain to the reading public—

SYLVIA. (*with a groan of disappointment*) I—I—thought you were a kind man—but I see you don't take any interest. (*looks about nervously*) And—I've come such a long way—I'm so tired— (*as if ready to cry*)

DAVID. (*she sits on sofa c.*) I didn't mean to be unkind, but it seems so preposterous—a young immature thing like you to invent anything in the way of fiction.

SYLVIA. (c.) I haven't invented anything. I keep a diary—which I write in, every night before I go to bed, I put it all together, and sent it.

DAVID. (*becoming interested*) That's a very good idea, Martin. An awakening soul's first impression.

(*MARTIN grunts disapprovingly*)

SYLVIA. My story's called "The Charity Child" because I live on the bounty of people. (*pathetically*) My father died and left me in care of a gentleman whom I have never seen. I'm living with a maiden lady. *He* pays my board. She's very good to me, but she's kinder soured on things, and I get so tired of listening to how wicked the world is. She's opposed to everything—are you?

DAVID. (*writing, head down—not much interested—*) Yes! Oh!—no—no.

SYLVIA. (*innocently*) How about concerts?

DAVID. (*still busy writing*) Perfectly harmless—when they play in tune.

SYLVIA. (*confidentially*) I'm invited by a young man who comes down to visit a neighbor of ours to go to a college "Glee Concert"—he knows you—he's on your paper—Harold Reynolds.

DAVID. (*looking up*) It's not my paper—I'm only the editor—Harold's a manly honorable young fellow.

SYLVIA. I'll go to the concert. Shall I? I can't be shut up forever—can I?

DAVID (*regarding her gravely—for the first time*) I don't see how you could—you'll find an outlet somewhere. Go by all means, and if your lady relative objects—send her to me. I'll try to convince her that you should have a little suitable enjoyment.

SYLVIA. (*impulsively*) Oh! Thank you—you're so good and—(*looking at him attentively*) You are not a bit old—are you? I thought when everybody talked about you that you were so wise and lived so many years and knew everything in the world—

DAVID. I—I think I look older than I am.

SYLVIA. I must go now—Harold is waiting for me—I must say goodbye—you'll see me again. (SYLVIA *curtseys—goes to door L. 2 E. looks back at them, laughs a peal of laughter and exits L. 2 E.*)

DAVID. (*looks at MARTIN, looking after her*) Youth, Hope, Freshness—if we could put that into our writings—but we can't—we're shop worn, Martin—shop worn.

MARTIN. You've made yourself accessory to an act of insubordination, sir, the results may be graver than you imagine.

DAVID. (*good humoredly*). I'll shoulder them! (MARTIN *goes to back of desk*) I know what it means to live with people who want to grind you down to their way of thinking. (*abstractedly*) At twenty, I took life in my own hands and fought it alone. I've had no time to be young, no time for

gaiety—or love, like other men, and now—it is too late. It is shameful, this sweet young girl, neglected by a selfish old man—I can see him—wrapped up in his own comfort. Not thinking of her forlorn young life—I'd like to tell him what I think of him—the old skinflint. (*paces up and down*)

MARTIN. (L.) Dr. David, I haven't seen you so excited in a long time.

DAVID. (C.) People annoy me. They don't know what duty means. Martin, just drop a line to Miss Clemantina—I'll be there on Sunday—to talk over matters—pertaining to the training and education of my ward. Don't let anything interfere with that, Martin.

MARTIN. No, sir—I won't.

DAVID. (*sits down, at his desk, composes himself to work and arranges his light and papers—commencing to read, shows signs of impatience*) Martin—

MARTIN. Yes, sir—

DAVID. Where is that college glee concert to be held? I used to sing in a chorus myself—

MARTIN. (*rises*) I'll go and get a newspaper and find out, if you wish.

DAVID. You do get an idea sometimes, Martin.

MARTIN. (*with a grin*) Now and again, sir. (*go out—R. 2 E., return, take lunch off, sounds of noises on stairs*) Mr. Gerald and Miss Helen are coming up sir—

DAVID. (*sternly, straightening himself up*) My brother and sister—what can they want here? (*closes book with a bang. Frowns—MARTIN exits quietly*)

GERALD. (*enter at door, L. very foppish, pale, dissipated looking*) Any more stairs?

HELEN. (*young widow, rather artificial in manner—in deep fashionable mourning*) (*gasping*)

Oh! I haven't a breath left in my body. (*sit on sofa*) David, why will you live on the top of a building without an elevator?

GERALD. Confoundedly inconsiderate— (L. c.)

DAVID. (*coldly*) I prefer no elevator, because it makes my habitation more difficult of access. (*crosses up to window, throws it open, showing tops of houses, full view of sky and red moon just rising*)

GERALD. (c. *lightly*) Every man to his taste—for you, a sky parlor and musty old books—for me “Wine, Women and Song.” I suppose you'd like to know why I've forced my unwelcome presence upon you, if I don't see you once a year, you'd forget my existence, and I don't want you to do that. (*puts his arm around DAVID.*)

DAVID. (R. of GERALD) I forget you, Gerald—I think of you very often, but it's a remembrance, which is very painful to me at times.

GERALD. (*drops his arm from around DAVID*) Don't lecture, please. Because we are brothers, that's no reason why we should be alike. I suppose you still owe me a grudge, because father cut you off—I would have made it all right—I'm willing still, but you won't let me.

DAVID. (c. *coldly*) You didn't climb all the way up my stairs for useless recriminations—my father had a right to do what he liked with his money. I can earn all I need, and enough to give a little away—more would be a burden to me. Are you well, little sister?

HELEN (*down c*) (*with a pout*) You've not troubled yourself very much to find out.

DAVID. My dear—I don't want you to think I have neglected you—I have been promising myself to come to see you some Sunday, when I get time.

HELEN (c.) The old story. When you get time.

I've seen you twice in two years—the first time on my wedding day—the second time—when I buried my husband—poor Robert—he's been dead a year tomorrow.

DAVID. Dear me—you don't say so, how time steals away. Poor little sister, you've been unhappy.

HELEN. Happy—unhappy—I've never been either—I married a man twice my age—because—well—he was very good to me, and I missed—him—at first. I have everything money can buy—but nothing interests me— (*yawns*) I think I'll take up *literature*—

DAVID. (*R. sternly*) I'd try to be sincere about something in life—if I were you.

HELEN. I am— (*looks back at GERALD who is exploring Cupola*) About Gerald—but I think you ought to take that responsibility off my shoulders, David, he's simply running himself to the ground. The doctor says—he'll go into a rapid decline—if he doesn't stop.

DAVID. Stop what?

HELEN. Burning the candle at both ends—he must settle down.

DAVID. Settle down—how?

HELEN. Stupid—there's only one way for a man to settle down—to marry—I want you to persuade him—David.

DAVID. I shall do nothing of the kind. (*rises, crosses to desk L.*)

GERALD. (*strolling in*) Ah! Discussing my matrimonial possibilities—

DAVID. (*L. C.*) Helen wants you to marry.

GERALD. (*C.*) Helen delights in making people miserable. (*angrily*) I don't see why you trouble David with my affairs—he and I are radically unlike. He always put his pennies in a tin box, I spent mine—that's the difference between us.

DAVID (L. c. *regretfully*) If it were only the money wasted—Gerald.

GERALD. (*recklessly*) You've got your cake—in the shape of a good constitution, I've eaten mine—I'm off—goodbye.

DAVID. I—I—I can't let you go in this reckless mood—Gerald—wouldn't some other means—affect a cure—not quite so severe as marriage? (HELEN and GERALD *laugh*)

GERALD. (L. c. *laughs*) That old fool of a doctor—advised farm life.

DAVID. "Farm life"—just the thing for you.

GERALD. Thanks—I'll be years enough buried—I don't care that— (*snapping his fingers*) —for my life, as long as it lasts—I shall live it—my own way. (*crosses to door L. 2 E.*)

HELEN. (R.) That's just how it always ends—when I talk to him.

DAVID. (C.) Gerald—don't go—stay and spend the evening with me, and—read.

GERALD. (*laughingly*) (*at door L.*) And read—an unaccustomed diversion—it's the first time you've ever asked me—thanks—I will stay awhile and—read. (*takes book and sits down, at chair L.*)

HELEN. (R.) David,—tomorrow night, my mourning year is up,—I'm going into colors—come and dine with me. (*aside*) I want you to see the girl I've picked out for Gerald—

DAVID. (C.) Impossible—tomorrow. I'll drop in next—

HELEN. Year—good-bye. (*cross to door*)

DAVID. Helen—don't go—I really think you quite as bad in your way, as Gerald.

HELEN. David.

DAVID. And I'd like to help you—Wait a moment—were you in earnest about studying literature?

HELEN. (*undecided*)—Eh—yes—why?

DAVID. (*crosses to door R.—calls*) Savage—Savage—

(*Enter SAVAGE quickly—book in hand—pen behind ear, hair mussed up—very intense—enters rapidly—nearly runs into HELEN who recoils*)

SAVAGE. (R. E.) I—I—beg your pardon.

DAVID. (R.) My sister wants something to interest her—I recommend YOU—

HELEN. (L. C.) (*laughing*) Oh! David—

(R. WHISTLE)

DAVID. Coach her—give her some ideas— (GERALD *enjoying HELEN'S discomfiture*) —Helen—you can arrange terms with him. (*sit down to desk R.*)

SAVAGE. Madame—my poor talents are at your disposal. (R. C. *bows*)

HELEN. (*sweetly*) Thank you, but I really don't know what I want to study.

SAVAGE. (R. C.) Will you leave that to me—I shall—try to be as interesting as possible. (DAVID *rustles papers impatiently*). We are disturbing your brother. May I walk a little way with you? (*bows*)

HELEN. (L. C.) (*nods*) Certainly. (*bows in return*) (GERALD *annoyed, SAVAGE rushes to L.—exit R. to change coat*)

HELEN. (L. *towards C.*) David—what shall I pay this young man?

DAVID. (R. *at desk*) Oh! anything—he's struggling for a living—and I'd like to help him along. You can't possibly do him any harm, and he can do you a great deal of good.

GERALD. (*comes down C.*) Helen—you can't be seen with that ink spot.

HELEN. Oh! anything for a novelty— (*crosses to door—SAVAGE enters, enthusiastically to DAVID*)

SAVAGE. (*shakes his hands*) Thank you—Mr. Holmes—thank you a thousand times. (*crosses to door L. Bows HELEN out much to her amusement*)

GERALD. (C., *in a friendly manner*) This is a jolly safe place to spend an evening—keeps a fellow out of mischief,—eh!—David?

DAVID. (R.) I invited you to read—not to speak—

(WHISTLE)

GERALD. Oh! (*subsides behind book with a yawn*) (*whistle at tube, MARTIN enters R.*)

MARTIN. (*at tube*) Well, what is it? Yes, he lives here—who are you? I'll show you if it is none of my business—you'll keep down stairs, till you tell me your name—Mr. Holmes is a very busy man, he's not seeing every trash that comes along. (*two loud whistles up the tube*)

(DAVID *puts his hands to his ears.*) (MARTIN *goes to desk.*)

(WHISTLE)

MARTIN. (*up L., through tube*) What name—what! (*in comic despair*) Oh!—Mr. David—it's Miss Clemantina?

DAVID. (*starting up*) Miss Clemantina—I can't stand her. (*hastily put couple of books in your pocket*) I'm going on the balcony, call me when she's gone. (*rushes up hastily as MISS CLEMANTINA bounces into room, L. ascends ladder at bookcase C. out window to the roof*)

CLEM. (*sharply*) Who was it abusing me down that tube?

MARTIN. (R., *stuttering*) Miss Clemantina—I had no idea—

CLEM. (C. *Int.*) Oh—it's you, Martin—of course—you wouldn't have an idea.

MARTIN. I've held on to one idea for a long time—Miss Clemantina, but I couldn't succeed in getting you to share with me.

CLEM. (c., *tossing her head*) Don't be a fool—Martin—that's twenty years ago. (*looking at him*) What a sight you are—you've got a crawled inside, shrunken-up kind of look.

GERALD. (*coming down L.*) How do—Miss Clemantina—

CLEM. Well—I declare—if it isn't Gerald.

GERALD. (L.) It's a long time—let me see how many years—

CLEM. (*sharply*) Not so long, but I can remember a very bad boy. I hope—growing-up has made you better.

GERALD. No—Miss Clemantina.

CLEM. You were always a pasty-faced-cake-eating-law-breaking young fiend.

GERALD. I am still—I've broken every law I know of—and the cake's all eaten—

CLEM. Humph! Where's Mr. Holmes?

GERALD. He's out.

CLEM. *Whose* long legs were scrambling up into that roof just now?

MARTIN. Mr. David's a very busy man—he is—

CLEM. (c., *Int.*) I've come a long way—and my business is important—I'll sit here till he comes down. (*a sneeze outside c.*) There. He's sneezing. He'll catch his death of cold—up there. Call him. (*GERALD goes up laughing, stands at fireplace L.*)

MARTIN. Miss Clemantina,—I—

CLEM. Call him. (*x to L. c.*)

MARTIN. Mr. David— (*2d time at foot of steps*)

DAVID. (c., *putting his head over, coming down the ladder, back to audience*) I suppose she gave me a great raking over the coals—for not spending my Sundays with her—her rasping voice always

goes through me. (MARTIN, *during the following, tries to pantomime to convey to DAVID the knowledge of MISS CLEMANTINA's presence*) (DAVID *crosses to his desk*) That woman's a (*looks up and sees MISS CLEMANTINA; drops into a chair*)

CLEM. Good evening, Mr. Holmes. I've had the pleasure of hearing your opinion of me.

DAVID. (*grimly*) The unadorned truth is a good thing now and then, that is if people are sensible enough to benefit by it. All the same I was coming to pay you a visit next Sunday. Martin was going to see to that—wasn't you Martin?

MARTIN. (*head down, looking under his eyes at MISS CLEM.*) I was going to try, sir.

DAVID. (*in a conciliatory tone*) How's the child—I hope she's well—you'll excuse me if I go on writing, I'm a very busy man—I suppose you've brought your sewing.

CLEM. (C.) Mr. Holmes—you talk—as if you'd seen me yesterday—do you know how long it is?

DAVID. (*uneasily*) It's a little while longer than it should be perhaps—you get the quarterly allowance of course, and the toys—for the child.

CLEM. Yes—and they are all piled up in the garret, she has no longer any use for them.

DAVID. Too bad—grown out of toys evidently, what would she like now?

CLEM. I'll tell you what *I'd* like, Mr. David, I'd like *you* to take her off my hands. (DAVID *drops pen, looks helplessly at MISS CLEMANTINA*)

CLEM. (*over desk*) She's unruly, disobedient, disrespectful, and worse than all—she argues with me—about things. (*goes towards C.*)

DAVID. I might suggest a good training school, or a private Kindergarten.

CLEM. Kindergarten—the girl's turned seven-teen—she's a woman.

DAVID. A what?

CLEM. A young woman with a tendency for pleasure—to-night—against my express wish, she left my house, to attend some entertainment, accompanied by a young man.

DAVID. (*in solemn wrath*) Alone! at night!—with a young man—Miss Clemantina!—how—could you?

GERALD. (*aside*) Oh! Awful.

CLEM. There. I knew you'd blame me.

DAVID. No. No. I am the one to blame. I haven't done the right thing. It's on my conscience—what can I do to make things right?

CLEM. Take charge of her yourself.

DAVID. (*horror-stricken*) I—my dear woman—what in the world—could I do with her? (*in an injured manner*) It's not fair, Clemantina—I gave a sweet innocent babe into your arms, you bring me back—an undisciplined, young woman.

CLEM. (*blazing up*) I can't help the child growing up—can I—can I?

DAVID. (x. r., *in helpless excitement*) I'll get my hat and coat, wherever she is—we'll fetch her at once. (*exit into room R. 3*)

GERALD. (*rushing for hat and coat*) Yes—wherever she is—we'll go and fetch her at once.

CLEM. (c.) She's at a concert—a glee club concert, among a lot of wild boys.

MARTIN. (*the truth breaking upon him, stammering and stuttering*) A glee—glee—club concert— (*sounds of laughing are heard—enter SYLVIA and HAROLD laughing and talking*)

HAROLD. (L. c.) The concert didn't really amount to much—but I was amused at seeing you enjoy it.

SYLVIA. (L.) I enjoy everything—no matter how bad it is.

HAROLD. Why—Mr. Holmes— (*shakes hands with GERALD, who comes down between them*) Miss Sylvia—this is your guardian's brother—Mr. Gerald Holmes.

SYLVIA. (*L., extending hand*) My guardian's brother—then what relation is he to me? (*GERALD and HAROLD look at each other*)

GERALD. (*bending over her*) Suppose we say—er—uncle—

SYLVIA. My uncle—Oh!—that's too funny.

CLEM. SYLVIA!

HAROLD. (*R. C.*) (*putting himself between Miss CLEM. and SYLVIA*) (*very sweetly to Miss CLEM.*) I hope you won't be angry at Miss Sylvia—it's only half-past nine—we left early in order to catch you, and if you'll allow me—I shall take great pleasure in escorting you both home—

CLEM. You're too kind—sir—too kind.

HAROLD. (*C., sweetly*) I can't help that—it's my natural disposition—my dear Miss Clemantina—it don't do to be too strict with girls—in these days. Now in your time—half a century ago—

CLEM. SIR— (*sweeps past him*)

HAROLD. (*C.*) What have I said?

(*SYLVIA seated on sofa C. roaring with laughter, as DAVID, who enters, on the fly, with umbrella, coat and hat—to C., starts back, at seeing SYLVIA and two young men*)

SYLVIA. (*laughing, crossing to DAVID*) How do—Guardy—

(*DAVID starts back*)

CLEM. Your ward—Mr. Holmes—

DAVID. My—my what?

SYLVIA. (*innocently looking up in his face*) Your ward— (*puts her cheek up, which after a pause, he pecks at in a frightened way*) I received

all Martin's nice, funny letters, and the hobby horse he sent me last Christmas—was beautiful.

HAROLD and GERALD. HOBBY HORSE! Ha, ha, ha!

DAVID. Martin—you're a fool.

MARTIN. Yes, sir.

HAROLD. Mr. Holmes, good evening—I had no idea—Sylvia was your ward—

DAVID. It's a great shock to me, Harold—I—you—understand.

HAROLD. (R. C.) Yes, I understand—you'd forgotten about her—perfectly natural for such a busy man.

GERALD. (R. of desk R.) You lucky dog—David—

DAVID. Don't Gerald.

HAROLD. (L. of DAVID, laughing) He wants us to go.

GERALD. Have it out with the old girl—and—you can always depend upon me to look after the young one—*(goes round to L. C., exit)*

HAROLD. (to SYLVIA) You're in for it—

SYLVIA. (C.) I'll get out of it.

MARTIN. (R.) It's the little author—sir.

DAVID. (to MARTIN R.) She was too much for us; she did us completely. *(chuckled, and watches SYLVIA like a strange animal)*

SYLVIA. *(sweetly)* Miss Clemantina—I can't bear you to be angry with me.

CLEM. *(pushes SYLVIA)* Go away.

DAVID. (R. C.) Clemantina, don't punish the child. It's not her fault—it's mine. Sylvia, this time, Miss Clemantina will overlook your disobedience, and you'll go home with her, and things will go on just the same as before.

SYLVIA. (R. C.) *(disappointedly)* Go home—

DAVID. *(a little sharply)* Certainly—where else you want me to go home with Miss Clemantina.

can you go at this late hour, everyone goes home, it's the only place to go. (*consulting his time table, on L. desk R.*)

MARTIN. Last train for Brookfield—10:30.

DAVID. 10:30.

CLEMANTINA. (*L., softening*) I'm fond of the child, if she'll beg my pardon, for being disobedient.

SYLVIA. I was not disobedient, my guardian gave me permission to go with Mr. Reynolds.

CLEM. He gave you what—?

DAVID. My dear Miss Clemantina—

CLEM. Did you give her permission? Or did you not?

DAVID. I certainly did—I—

CLEM. That settles it—I deliver her safe and sound and—in good physical condition to you. Good evening.

DAVID. (*clutching her in despair*) Clemantina—don't leave me like this—

CLEM. Martin—walk behind me to the cars.

MARTIN. (*with a start*) Yes—yès—Miss Clemantina— (*ring L.*)

DAVID. (*clutching MARTIN*) You're not going to leave me here with—

CLEM. Mr. Holmes—when you have sufficiently realized the gigantic task of looking after a very young woman, who likes pleasure, you may appreciate my feelings. (*half hysterically*) You'll see—you'll see. Martin, come along. (*she exits followed by MARTIN R. 2 E.*)

SYLVIA. (*R. of DAVID, sits demurely hands folded*) She don't mean a word, she's too fond of me, but it's best for us to part for a little while.

(*DAVID stands in door L., watching her, as she slowly removes her hat and gloves, also cape. DAVID comes down, clears his throat—SYLVIA watching him slyly under her eyes*)

SYLVIA. Miss Clem. has washed her hands of me, and I shall stay with you. I consider it my duty to repay what you have done for me.

DAVID. (R. C.) My dear child, you don't realize—I couldn't have you here. It wouldn't do.

SYLVIA. (R. C.) (*with quivering lips*) You don't want me.

DAVID. It's not a question of wishes—it's—

SYLVIA. My rightful place is here. You're my guardian. My father left me to you.

DAVID. Yes, but—but—not here. (*aside*) I can't tell this child, but— (*takes her hat, hands it to her*) Here— (*SYLVIA takes hat*)

DAVID. Put it on!

(*SYLVIA puts on hat, DAVID hands her gloves and puts on her wrap wrong side out. SYLVIA half crying, half laughing*)

DAVID. (*ad lib.*) I—I've turned it upside down—I mean wrong side out. (*awkwardly takes it off*) Now I'll take you back to Miss Clemantina.

SYLVIA. (*hopelessly*) Back to Miss Clemantina.

DAVID. I hope you don't feel that I am neglecting you or trying to put you off on anybody else, I—loved your father. His loss made my life very dreary, for years, I—I'll come to see you every Sunday, and look after your mental development. Every Sunday. (*looks at watch, X'es to door, SYLVIA following reluctantly, looking around room*)

SYLVIA. Father had a room like this, I can just dimly remember it, I used to say when I grew up, I should make his tea for him. You never read the letter my father wrote to me—before he died. I was only a little tot then—and I couldn't understand much. I always carry it next to my heart. Would you like to read it? (*takes letter out of her*)

bosom kisses it) It's nearly worn away with my kisses.

DAVID. (*aside*) Poor little waif. (*takes letter in his hand, looks at it*)

SYLVIA. (*edging up to him*) Read it out loud—will you?

DAVID. (*opens letter, reads*) "My dear little daughter: I am going to leave you forever. My heart has been very heavy, but I feel comforted now because my dear, faithful David has been with me all day." (DAVID *affected*) I am not leaving you alone—dear. *He* will take care of you. Nestle close to him and grow into his heart, as you have grown into mine. "My Precious—Goodbye." Poor Henry—poor fellow. (*breaks down*) (SYLVIA *wipes her eyes*) I—I never had much experience with children. I thought all they needed—was fresh air, and exercise, and I forgot the time, and that you were grown up, and—affection—and—I'm very sorry—I'll try to make it up— (SYLVIA *reels—hand to her head*)

SYLVIA. (R. C.) Oh! Everything's going round.—I was so excited—I—I didn't eat any supper.

DAVID. Lie down, on the sofa—there's some of my supper left, fortunately.

SYLVIA. (*faintly*) Thank you— (DAVID *out R. 2 E. with lamp*) (*drops on sofa—lays her head down with a sigh*) Oh! My head. I'm so tired. (*laughs faintly. Enter DAVID with plate of food*) How funny—it all is. You're not a bit old, and your face lights up so, when you smile. You're coming every Sunday. That's something, and perhaps when you're old and can't use your eyes, you'll let me copy for you and—

DAVID. Here's a nice piece of chicken for you.

SYLVIA (*drowsily*) Thank you, but I'm too tired to eat. (*drops asleep*)

MARTIN. (*enters R. S. E.*) Mr. David!

DAVID. Hush! Hush! She's asleep. (*looks at watch*) The ten-thirty train has gone. (*in a whisper*) Go down and tell the janitress to look after the young lady, in my room—Go and find quarters for the night, somewhere—Hush! (*push MARTIN out L. 3 E.*)

(LIGHTS DOWN)

(DAVID quietly takes a small leather bag, from underneath table, throws in book, puts them in bag, goes to mantelpiece. Takes pipe and tobacco—takes out coat and umbrella. X's to door, comes back, turns down reading lamp on desk—moon streams in room over SYLVIA, he comes to door—comes back again—takes pillow which has dropped on floor, puts it under her head, draws rug over her, tucks it in softly, X's to door L., stands looking after her, then softly exits.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

TIME.—*The following evening. HELEN LE GRAND'S home—Murray Hill.*

SCENE.—*A turkish smoking room to practical hall C., dining-room R. 3. All lights up. Bunches strong R. and L. and R. U. E. Music on stage R. U. E.*

AT RISE.—HAROLD enters C. from L., followed by FLUNKEY, soft strains of music are heard, and the sound of voices and clinking of glasses.

HAROLD. (*to FLUNKEY*) Still at dinner?

FLUNKY. (*with grand air*) It's nearly over—sir—be seated, and I'll announce you to Mrs. Le Grand. (*exits in dining-room R. 3.*) (HAROLD comes down and seats himself on divan L.)

HELEN. (*enters R. 3. HAROLD rises*) (HELEN in handsome dinner gown, with outstretched hand) My dear Harold, I'm delighted to see you.

HAROLD. (L. C.) Am I disturbing your dinner party?

HELEN. Oh, not at all — and it's not a dinner party, only four of us. I'll let you into a secret,—I'm trying to get Gerald married.

HAROLD. And the lady in question is Miss Leicester.

HELEN. (*up and flitting about*) Harriet is just the wife for Gerald. She is wide awake to his faults, and really—cares for him. I am hoping to-night will clinch matters. I do love to marry people off. Spiteful of me, isn't it? Considering what a failure I made of it myself. My couple is getting on famously and Mr. Savage, poor fellow is discreetly admiring the pictures.

HAROLD. (*rising, quickly*) Who?

HELEN. (*innocently*) Mr. Savage—a very dear friend of mine.

HAROLD. (*eyeing her suspiciously X'ing L. 1.*) That's strange—he and I are room mates—you've known him a long time, then?

HELEN. (*demurely*) Since yesterday—he's going to give me a course in literature. Hush!—here he is— (*as SAVAGE enters in full dress, with evident attempt at adornment. He comes down R.*)

HAROLD. (L.) Savage a professor—ha! ha—he couldn't teach anything—if he died for it. He's clever, undeniably so—but he's not standard literature.

SAVAGE. (*annoyed*)

HELEN. (*to SAVAGE*) Don't mind him—I have perfect confidence in you, Mr. Savage—perfect. (*HELEN exits in dining room, laughing*) (*Bus*)

HAROLD. (*L. of him*) You sly dog.

SAVAGE. (*turning toward c.*) You beggar—

HAROLD. To put on my dress suit—

SAVAGE. Our dress suit.

HAROLD. And steal out—

SAVAGE. It was my turn—you went to a concert last night. That silk handkerchief goes with the suit—(*snatches it from HAROLD'S breast-coat pocket, and SAVAGE returns him a linen handkerchief, crumpled up*)

HAROLD. (*disgustedly*) Phew! Your pipe's rolled up in it as usual. (*shakes handkerchief, pipe falls out, SAVAGE picks it up guiltily, and puts it in his pocket*) I wish you'd break yourself of the beastly habit of putting your—a lighted pipe in your pocket you burnt a hole clear through this second best—(*bus*) If you're going to take to society—we'll be threadbare in no time—Good Heavens! (*catching at the lapels of SAVAGE'S coat*) What's that?

SAVAGE. (*very guiltily*) I think it's the soup or the ice-cream—

HAROLD. (*L. c.*) Savage, for my sake, for your mother's sake, stop eating in these clothes.

SAVAGE. (*R. c.*) It's only grease—an iron over brown paper—will take it out.

HAROLD. (*x. L.*) It won't take me out—to Mrs. Cornwallers—at home—at 10:30 to-night.

SAVAGE. Yes it will. (*SAVAGE turn to him*) I'll leave here at 10 sharp. I'll press the grease spot and the wrinkles out of this front, and have you as neat as wax—(*comes to L.*)

HAROLD. (*c.*) Thanks—old chap—I'll do as much for you.

(*Enter GERALD, HELEN and HARRIET R. 3 E.*)

HAROLD. Good evening—
(HELEN and SAVAGE down L. together)

GERALD. (down R.) Ah!—How are you—Reynolds—Helen—I am longing for a smoke and my coffee—your dinner was an awful bore.

(HARRIET on divan R.)

HELEN. (Sees HARRIET) Hush!—Sit here Mr. Savage—my poor husband's chair, I always miss him at this hour, he'd smoke and take his coffee, and then he'd go off into a good—long sleep for the rest of the evening.

(SAVAGE sits on armchair L.)

GERALD. (R. C.) A decent fellow—my brother-in-law — Enormously rich — but — between you and me—Helen was a duced sight too good for him—

HARRIET. (R.) Most women are too good for the men they marry.

GERALD. (R. C.) How is it women always find that out *after* they are married?

HELEN. (*x'ing to C., HARRIET rises and meets her C.*) They know it before—and imagine they can reform their husband, but they can't. (*enter FLUNKY R. U. E., passes around coffee—and cigarettes (aside to HARRIET)* Well?

HARRIET. (*on sofa L.*) (L. C.) If I were you, I would not make such obvious efforts to leave me alone with Gerald—he doesn't like it, and I—I get rather disgusted with myself. (*x back R and sits*)

HELEN. Nonsense— (*x back L. and sinks on divan L.*)

GERALD. (*down R.*) Mr. Savage, what will be the next fashion in Literature? Realism is dying—is going out—

SAVAGE. Ruralism—will be the next fad (*drink-*

ing his coffee) The fact is we are surfeited with everything.

HAROLD. (C. *on ottoman*—) *He's* eaten too much dinner.

SAVAGE. (L.) The next successful literary work will resound with the rippling of brooks, and the babble of simple country folk. Society will take it up, because society is worn out and must go back to nature—for renewed strength.

GERALD. Talking of ruralism—Ah!—Sylvia—
(*throws a kiss in the air*)

HARRIET. (*on divan L.*) Sylvia! (*looks at HELEN R., who nods enthusiastically*)

GERALD. David's ward—she's a rural maiden—and quaint enough to have been painted by an old master.

HARRIET. (*on divan L.*) Handsome?

HAROLD. Sweet—fresh as an opening rose.

GERALD. (R. C. *beside her*) And as refreshingly transparent as a dew-drop.

HARRIET. (R., *restless and jealous*) Good style?

GERALD. None—whatever.

HAROLD. (C.) She is natural.

HARRIET. (R.) Stupid, of course?

GERALD. (R. C.) Not world-wise—like you and me.

HAROLD. She has everything before her.

HELEN. (*lying back on couch*) Fortunate child—I've exhausted everything. (SAVAGE *beside her bus.*)

DAVID. (*outside L. U. E.*) That's all right—my man, I know my way up. (*enter DAVID excitedly hat back of his head, comes down excitedly, crosses to HARRIET R. and without looking at her, bends over her and kisses her*) My dear Helen— (*leans over as if to kiss her*)

GERALD. (*laughing*) David—this is Miss Leicester—

DAVID. (*bowing in an old-fashioned way*) I'm afraid I kissed you—

HARRIET. (*rises to him*) (*extending her hand—laughing x. r.*) You did—but I don't mind.

DAVID. (*takes her hands, pats it for a moment, looks earnestly at her, then drops it*) Poor child! (*absent mindedly*) Ah! Savage—have you succeeded in interesting my sister? (*SAVAGE laughs*) Helen—I want to see you about Sylvia. (*comes down to HELEN L. C.*)

HELEN. Sylvia!— (*SAVAGE left behind divan—GERALD, HARRIET R.*)

DAVID. (*R. C.*) Miss Clemantina wouldn't take her home—

HAROLD. Oh! (*x. L.*)

DAVID. I gave her my rooms—last night, and sought shelter elsewhere.

HELEN. (*L. C.*) David! Where did you sleep?—

DAVID. (*R. C.*) I didn't sleep—I sat up in Mr. Mulberry's vacant chair, during the hours that he occupied his cot.

GERALD. (*R., breaking out*) Ha—ha—ha.

DAVID. (*looks at him solemnly*) I was very much worried all day, and as night was falling fast, I didn't really know what to do—Martin suggested that I should bring her here. (*apologetically with a side glance at HELEN*) She's following on with Martin. (*HELEN very much amused, and trying to restrain GERALD'S merriment*)

HAROLD. (*gladly*) Sylvia—here. (*DAVID goes up—MARTIN very much crushed enter at C.*)

MARTIN. (*up L. in a worried tone*) She says—she won't come up, unless you fetch her.

DAVID. (*apologetically*) I find her a very determined character, I must go and fetch her.

ALL. Ha! Ha! Ha!

DAVID. I don't see anything amusing about it, I think it's very sad. I've neglected that child all these years—whatever her faults, I am responsible. (*exit DAVID c. to L.*)

HELEN. (*x to GERALD R. C.*) Gerald—don't laugh—I won't have David offended.

GERALD. (*R.*) I can't help it Helen—think of that young girl walking in, taking possession and routing out those old fossils. (*exits L.*)

DAVID. (*from c.*) (*re-enters L. c. very troubled*) I forgot to say that I have not yet told her—I am going to leave her here with you.

HELEN. (*on his R. aghast*) Leave her here with me—

DAVID. (*C.*) As she seems set in the conviction—that it is her duty to remain with me, (*laugh*) which is all very well in theory—but impractical, (*GERALD laughs*) but don't think for a moment, I am trying to evade something disagreeable. She's my responsibility, and I intend to shoulder her, but if you would be willing to take charge of her,—provisionally of course—I would be deeply indebted to you.

HELEN. (*R. C.*) Certainly I will for your sake—David.

DAVID. (*heaves a sigh, exits to L.*) Thank you.

GERALD. (*to MARTIN, who stands at entrance*) Come in—Martin. (*MARTIN enters, stops at entrance*)

HELEN. Sit down, Martin. (*L. C.*) (*MARTIN sits on edge of chair by entrance, twirling his hat*)

GERALD. (*R.*) Where did you sleep—Martin?

MARTIN. (*up c.*) I didn't sleep sir, I sat up with Mr. David—and talked it over.

GERALD. Ha! Ha! Ha!

(*Enter DAVID very stiff and straight, and severe, walks down, crosses, turns head, and looks be-*

hind, not seeing SYLVIA, goes back to entrance, exits for a moment, comes down, walking stiff and straight, lead SYLVIA by the hand very frightened and embarrassed)

DAVID. (c.) Helen—this is Sylvia— (*looks for SYLVIA*)

SYLVIA. (*who has caught sight of HAROLD—runs to him with outstretched hands*) Oh—Mr. Harold!

HAROLD. (*gladly*) Sylvia! (*HAROLD and SAVAGE stand before SYLVIA 1 L. masking her in*)

SYLVIA. I'm so frightened—it is all so grand here, it takes my breath away. (*comes down L. and GERALD crosses to her*) Oh! Do you live here?

GERALD. (*laughing at her*) Yes, I live here.

DAVID. (c.) Sylvia—this is my sister—Helen.

SYLVIA. (*crosses to DAVID*) Is it? Isn't she beautiful? (*all laugh*) (*SYLVIA x's to HELEN R.*)

HELEN. (R.) Thank you,—that was the most sincere compliment I have ever received. (*draws SYLVIA to and kisses her*) Take off your hat—dear and stay.

SYLVIA. (*watches DAVID, who makes a movement to go to entrance c. and stops when he sees her looking*) I will, if he will.

HELEN. (R.) Certainly he will.

(*Takes off SYLVIA's hat and wrap, during which DAVID turns and looks at MARTIN, who at entrance, is on the alert, makes a quick movement over his shoulder to indicate that DAVID should start, and make a rapid exit at once. DAVID nods, and goes up towards exit rapidly. SYLVIA makes a rush after him, just in time to catch the end of his coat-tails—disappears in hall, and draws him back*)

SYLVIA. (*at entrance*) Where are you going?

DAVID. Martin reminds me that I have neglected my work and I must—

SYLVIA. (*interrupting*) I'll go with you.

DAVID. (*conciliatingly*) Sylvia, my sister has kindly consented to take care of you.

SYLVIA. (*up R. with DAVID*) I don't want to be taken care of like a child, I'm too old for that. Miss Clemantina took care of me long enough, it's time I took care of somebody now.

HAROLD. (*L. 1 over chair, aside*) The darling!

SYLVIA. I want to go with you, and make your tea, and try to repay you for what you've done for me—I won't stay here without you—there!

DAVID. (*troubled*) Sylvia—have you made up your mind to that?

SYLVIA. (*firmly*) Yes.

DAVID. (*resignedly*) Well I suppose that settles it. (*weakly*) Will you stay here—while I go after Martin, and give him some instructions?

SYLVIA. (*suspiciously*) You'll come back.

DAVID. (*up C., reproachfully*) I give you my word—Sylvia.

SYLVIA. (*R. C.*) (*magnanimously*) Very well—you can go.

DAVID. (*sighs, exits C.*) Thank you.

(SAVAGE *x's behind divan to L.*)

HELEN. Sylvia—come here dear—I want to present you to my friend—Miss Leicester. (SYLVIA *drops a quaint curtsey*) (HELEN *takes SYLVIA'S wraps off R.*)

HARRIET. (*on divan R.*) (*takes SYLVIA in with lorgnette patronizingly from head to foot*) You have made a great stir, haven't you. It's a good way to set people talking of you. You'll be quite a success in society, indeed you've succeeded already in turning these young men's heads.

SYLVIA. (*looking at her up c.*) When a person succeeds in anything, they try for it, don't they? I haven't—but all the same, I'm very glad they like me. (*turns to HELEN, who puts her arms about her*)

GERALD. One for you—Harriet.

SYLVIA. (*uneasily*) Oughtn't Mr. David to be back now?

GERALD. (*x'ing up L. of SYLVIA*) He's probably gone home to bed, and forgotten all about you. He's singularly unlike the rest of us, so old-fogyish.

SYLVIA. I don't think so—if he took as much trouble with his clothes, as you do—he'd be better looking.

HARRIET. (*R. on divan, laughing*) One for you—Gerald.

HELEN. (*R. of SYLVIA on divan with HARRIET laughing*) Why Sylvia—Gerald is considered very good looking in society. (*HELEN comes to sofa L. does not sit*)

SYLVIA. (*taking him in*) He needs pure air, and fresh milk, morning walks, and sleep.

ALL. Ha! Ha! Ha!

GERALD. (*half piqued, half amused*) Take me in hand, will you? I will turn country pumpkin and we'll run a model farm together.

SYLVIA. Mr. David won't forget me, he gave me his word.

HAROLD. (*behind divan L.*) He always keeps his word—Miss Sylvia—but I know he has most important business in hand, about the Prize Contest.

SYLVIA. (*x'ing to divan to HELEN*) (*L. and sits*) Harold's trying for it. What would you do if you got it, Harold?

HAROLD. (*bending over her*) I'd get married at once. Would you speak a good word for me, Sylvia?

SYLVIA. (*unconsciously*) *With all my heart.*

HELEN. (*on divan L. to HAROLD behind her*) There's a pair of naturally mated doves. (*to HAROLD*) Don't you children want to dance?

(MUSIC—WALTZ)

(*Waltz music R. U. entrance*)

HAROLD. (*L. behind divan*) Do I? Listen to that Sylvia.

(*Lively music, waltz refrain—outside—he catches hold of her, she runs to entrance R. U., GERALD watching SYLVIA under cover.*)

SYLVIA. (*at R. U. entrance*) You'll tell me when Mr. David comes.

HELEN. (*L., smiling*) Yes, Harold. (*calling to HAROLD—who is about to exit with SYLVIA, HAROLD crosses to her L.—aside*) You'd better give me the name of your story.

(*HAROLD hesitates—then bends down, whispers in her ear. Exit with SYLVIA dancing ad lib. GERALD follows them, stands at entrance watching them, HARRIET down on couch R., visibly offended, watching him. SAVAGE x's to HELEN, asks her to dance in pantomime—she x's with SAVAGE to R. U.*)

GERALD. (*up at R. U. E.*) She dances like a fairy. How she flings herself about. I'm half inclined to try a round with her.

HELEN. (*stops at entrance to GERALD—who is watching SYLVIA off*) Gerald—ask Harriet to dance.

GERALD. (*shrugs his shoulders—crosses down to HARRIET R.*) Do you care to dance?

HARRIET. (*on divan R. piqued*) You certainly do not.

GERALD. (*L. of her teasingly*) Oh!—I see—you're jealous of our little "Phyllis" in there.

HARRIET. Not of her, because I know she could

hold you no longer than scores of others, you have been in love with her for a week or two, I do not expect much consideration from you, but—you need not be unnecessarily brutal. (*her voice falters, and she drops her head*)

GERALD. My dear old girl—I wouldn't hurt your feelings for the world. I think as much of you—as it is possible for me to think of anyone.

HARRIET. (R.) Except yourself.

GERALD. (R. C.) You're mistaken—I have an unlimited contempt for myself, I've never done a particle of good in my life, but—I haven't harmed anyone that I know of—except myself—and if you'll take me for better, or worse—it will be worse in this case—I'll promise not to starve, or beat you—and—to be as good a husband—as I possibly can.

HARRIET. (*rising, stands by divan, R., in a low voice—who has been agitated during the above*) Do you really mean what you say?

GERALD. Certainly—it's been tacitly understood between us, for some years, I believe. (L. of her, takes her hands) It would have been better for us both, if I had married you then, and not waited till the bloom faded from everything—and I'd lived it all.

(STOP MUSIC)

(SYLVIA laughs outside.)

(*His face lights up*) What an infectious laugh that girl has— (*goes to door R. U. and comes down R. of HARRIET, as HARRIET rises x's to L. 1, rings bell on table*) Well—Harriet—what do you say?

HARRIET. (L., near table, looking at him) I say no—I will not—marry you.

GERALD. (*starting back*) Harriet!

(Enter FLUNKEY C. from L.)

HARRIET. You do not care for me enough to marry me. You have simply accustomed yourself to think—that some day—you should ask me to be your wife—there is nothing in it for either of us—is nothing.

(Enter FLUNKY with wrap, C. from L., GERALD takes it from him. He exits)

GERALD. (wrap in hand, eagerly) You don't mean it.

HARRIET. (L. after a pause he puts the wrap around her) I do mean it—it's unalterable.

(She slowly exits C. GERALD drops in divan L. speechless, his hands in pockets, as HELEN enters R. U. E.)

HELEN. (coming down C.) Where's Harriet?

GERALD. (L. on divan L.) Gone.

HELEN. (C.) What!—she has not—

GERALD. Refused me—yes.

HELEN. I suppose you asked her in such an indifferent manner, no self-respecting girl could accept you. Gerald—you ought to be ashamed of yourself—you—

(MUSIC—WALTZ)

GERALD. (rising, int.) See, here, Helen, you'd better stop trying to marry me off, if you put me in for any more matrimonial dinners—I shall do as David does—take refuge on the roof—I'll—I'll go and ask Sylvia to dance with me. (x's up)

HELEN. (on divan L.) Oh, dear,—this is most annoying. I hope, Gerald, you are not going to make a fool of yourself over Sylvia. (GERALD exits laughing) (Enter DAVID C. and L. very excitedly—watch in hand, no hat) (down C.) Where's Sylvia—don't tell me she's run away again.

HELEN. (laughing) No, she's dancing.

DAVID. (C.) (with a reproachful look) I've al-

ways condemned dancing as an idiotic gyration of the body. (*x to R. U. E.*) (*looks off*) Sylvia makes it an art—that's a very pretty dance. (*bus*)

HELEN. (*down L. watching him*) She's led you a pretty dance, my poor brother.

(*MUSIC SWELLS*)

DAVID. (*still at entrance, lost in admiring contemplation of SYLVIA, laughing to himself now and then, and thoroughly enjoying himself*)

HELEN. David! David! David!

DAVID. (*starting*) Yes, yes— (*cross to her L.*)

HELEN. Sylvia's a great care to you—Isn't she?

(*STOP MUSIC*)

DAVID. (*with a sigh*) The child's on my conscience. My work absorbs my life.

HELEN. The only way to assure her future—is to have her well married.

DAVID. Married!

HELEN. I'll introduce her formally at the Patriarch's ball, when I get her properly dressed—I think she'll make a sensation.

DAVID. (*after pause*) I can't think of anyone, most of my acquaintances are poverty stricken.

HELEN. I know one—Harold.

DAVID. (*sitting on divan R. dejectedly*) Harold—Harold—there is nothing to be said against him. (*R.*) (*brightening*) Except his poverty—he couldn't marry on his slender salary, he's out of the question.

HELEN. Oh, you can arrange all that—give him the 10,000 dollar prize.

DAVID. (*R.*) What?

HELEN. (*C.*) He's written a story—

DAVID. (*int.*) Stop!—I don't want to know. (*rising*)

HELEN. It's called "A BACHELOR'S ROMANCE."

DAVID. (*standing over her in desperate anger*)
Wretched woman—what have you done?

HELEN. (*in comic dismay*) Oh—dear—anything very dreadful?

DAVID. (*pacing up and down*) You've lost him the prize.

HELEN. It's a good story then—eh?

DAVID. (R. C.) Yes, the best.

HELEN. Oh—what luck for him—you'll give him the prize.

DAVID. No—your indiscretion, and my friendship for the author, puts me in a most delicate dilemma.

HELEN. Why?

DAVID. I must now leave the decision to others, who are unbiased. I shall resign my position at once.

HELEN. (*angrily*) David— You are carrying conscientiousness to a ridiculous extreme. His story is the best, you've said so—you must give him the prize.

DAVID. (C. *angrily*) I'll do nothing of the kind. I won't have my affairs interfered with, I don't see why you should meddle and muddle, and tangle things up in this way.

HELEN. David—you are the most obstinate, self-willed, simple— (*x's R., come x's R.*)

DAVID. (C., *loftily, int.*) Helen—losing your temper only makes things more complicated—

HELEN. Oh! Very well—serves me right, for trying to rid you of a burden—Now—you'll have Sylvia back on your hands. (*back to R. C.*)

DAVID. (C.) I couldn't have anything better on my hands—could—I? I don't see why you should consider a burden of people. I don't see why she must marry. I can take care of her, as long as she lives—I'm only too glad—to take care of her, as

long as she lives—you are a foolish, ignorant, inconsistent woman— (*x's to L. C.*)

HELEN. (*int.*) David—losing your temper—only makes matters more complicated.

DAVID. (*sinks back in chair L.*) That's what Miss Clemantina did—washed her hands of the whole affair. It's remarkable how little women understand of their own sex. I've never made a study of women—but if I put my mind to it, I think I could manage Sylvia. It requires a little patience, and a large quantity of diplomacy.

HELEN. Settle the question with the girl yourself. I wash my hands of the whole affair. (*exit*)

SYLVIA. (*enters R. U. E., archway*) Oh, here you are. I knew you would come back.

DAVID. (*in a conciliatory manner*) I've brought you some books. (*Takes books out of every pocket*)

SYLVIA. (*makes an impulsive rush at him*) Oh—you darling—

(*DAVID keeps her at arm's length, putting the books in her hands, retires as far from her as possible. He sits on arm-chair L. 1 watching her—a little on the defensive and very reflectively*)

SYLVIA. (*sits on sofa L. opening books*) Macaulay. (*throws book down on table L. C. with a grimace*) History of Greece. (*puts her nose in the air*) Oliver Wendell Holmes—"Over the Teacups." (*hugs the book impulsively*) I love him—he's a funny, old dear—like you. Just read this (*crosses to him, sits on the arm of his chair, leans over him. DAVID suddenly starts up, dropping SYLVIA into chair—crosses to sofa R. SYLVIA laughing to herself over book*)

DAVID. (*crossing to down R.*) (*watching her reflectively*) Sylvia, would you like to live here?

SYLVIA. (*throws down book*) Well! If you want the truth—no, I wouldn't.

DAVID. (*drops*) Oh! (*sits on settee R.*)

SYLVIA. (L.) It don't seem real. If I stayed here, I couldn't be just Sylvia. I'd have to put on like the rest, and I promised my father—I'd always be honest and truthful and sincere—

DAVID. (*aside*) Sylvia, this is the world—you have felt at once what most others learn with bitter heartache, and disappointment. Like you—I found it out in time and left it—to be my own natural self, and live my life—the best—not the worst way. Sylvia—(*in rather a faint voice*) Would you like to go back to Miss Clemantina?

(SYLVIA *looks at him in mute reproach—starts to cry*)

DAVID. (*rises and comes C., in an agony of pain*) Don't cry—please don't—I didn't mean it—I'm only trying to get at what you—would like.

SYLVIA. (*brightening up*) I'd like to keep house for you—(DAVID *recoils*) Well for—somebody—I'd like to live cosy and quiet—with a few friends—and books—and—and—things.

DAVID. A few friends, and books and things—can be easily managed. But the somebody—you'd like to keep house for—takes a little time. Oh! Don't worry, Helen is going to decorate you with feathers, and war paint, and take you to the Patriarch's Ball next week—no doubt—you'll find a husband there.

SYLVIA. Mr. David—suppose you leave the matrimonial part of the business in my hands—I'll attend to that—myself.

DAVID. (*relieved*) Will you? That's very good of you.

SYLVIA. I'll go and be decorated with feathers, and war-paint, if you will go with me—

DAVID. My dear child—I—

SYLVIA. It's time you came out—

DAVID. I wouldn't know how to act if I came out.

SYLVIA. (*working herself up*) They'll say—who is she? Who does she belong to? Where's her father, or Uncle, or guardian? You'll do the proper thing, won't you? I'll come in on your arm, and dance the first dance with you.

DAVID. David Holmes—dancing at an evening party—what a cartoon for the comic papers. But I'm past dancing.

SYLVIA. No—you're not—try—don't be afraid, I'll lead you. Now put your arm around me.

(*DAVID puts left arm out awkwardly*)

SYLVIA. No—the right arm. (*puts it around her waist*)

DAVID. I—I've forgotten how—it's so long ago.

SYLVIA. I'll teach you—it's as easy as can be, see now, watch my feet. (*rises her skirts daintily with her two hands, and steps out with one foot*) (*DAVID looks at feet, then quickly turns his head away*)

SYLVIA (*dancing*) One, two, three—see—how easy it is. Why—you're not looking.

DAVID. (*has the back of his head turned to her*) I did look—once.

SYLVIA. (*dancing*) You can't learn by looking once—watch how I do it. One two—one two—one two. (*bus. of stepping out in dance*)

DAVID. (*watches her flit about, his face beaming with delight*) (*quoting to himself*) "Her little feet stole in and out, like mice—from underneath her petticoat."

(*WALTZ MUSIC outside*)

SYLVIA. There, now—you'll look at the world from another side, just for one night. It's frivolous,

but it's beautiful, and when you're dancing with somebody you like, and the music plays and the odor of the flowers, and everybody is happy and laughing, and you go round and round— And—you'll dance the first dance with me.

DAVID. (*recklessly*) The first, last, every one. How does it go? One two—one two—one two. (*dance ad lib.*)

(SYLVIA, *laughing and clapping her hands*)

(*Enter HELEN, GERALD and SAVAGE, who stand in astonishment, looking at DAVID pirouetting round and round.*)

HELEN. David! What are you doing?

DAVID. (*with a smile*) I'm practicing my one, two's. I'm going to the ball with Sylvia.

CURTAIN. (*all laughing*)

ACT III

SCENE.—*A month later. David's Study. The same as Act I. The "Night of the Ball."*

DISCOVERED.—MARTIN *who stands surveying David's desk, which is in great disorder, scattered among the books and papers are different toilette articles, silver hand-glass, gentlemen's white kid gloves, a silk handkerchief, an atomizer, etc. A guitar stands against foot of book-case R. The reading light on David's table is out, and the room is brilliantly lit by side brackets. The door to staircase is open. Enter SAVAGE.*

(*Candle on desk L.*)

MARTIN. (*L. of desk R. shaking his head dole-*

fully) Never since Mr. David forsook his father's roof, and took up housekeeping, have I seen his desk in such a state.

SAVAGE. (*enters L. peering over MARTIN's shoulder*) Anything the matter, Martin?

MARTIN. (*without looking round*) Matter—that's it—too much accumulated matter—letters unanswered—books unreviewed—next week's Editorial unwritten, and—he's dressing for a Ball.

SAVAGE. It's not a regulation ball—it's a dance given by a few prominent bachelors—in return for the hospitality extended to them by their lady friends during the winter. See I've got a card—(*show card*) sent by a pupil—Mrs. Le Grand—at 10:30—I can't go till 12:30—Harold's invited—so we divide the evening up—(*going c.*)

MARTIN. 12:30—oh—I forgot, your wardrobe's a joint stock company.

SAVAGE. (*up c.*) I shall buy him out—Martin. He's growing too stout—I begin to feel baggy at the knees and elbows.

DAVID. (*singing in next room R.*)

“Of all the girls that are so smart”

“There's none like pretty Sally”

“She's the darling of my heart”

“And she lives in our ally.”

SAVAGE. Who's that?

MARTIN. (*R. at desk, solemnly*) Mr. David.

SAVAGE. Ha, ha, ha!

DAVID. (*singing outside*)

“There's no lady in the land”

“Is half so sweet as Sally-ee—ee

(*Swells on the last note*)

(SAVAGE looks at MARTIN—MARTIN looks at SAV-
AGE)

SAVAGE. (*C.*) What's her name, Martin?

MARTIN. Her?—Who?

SAVAGE. The woman he's in love with.

MARTIN. Oh, don't say that Mr. Savage—don't say such a terrible calamity is going to fall upon us. (*comes to L.*)

SAVAGE. (*at table R. laughing*) (*looks at papers on desk R.*) This looks suspicious—Monday—concert with Sylvia, Tuesday, shopping with Sylvia—Wednesday, lecture with Sylvia—Thursday, Bachelor's Ball with Sylvia. Her name is Sylvia—he calls her Sally for short.

MARTIN. There's a letter from the office—marked immediate—been lying on his desk since morning—do you think I can get him to open it— He says, "presently,—Martin—presently," and he skips about—practising steps for the ball. (*bus.*)

SAVAGE. (*laughing R.*) And it's all for the sake of Sylvia.

MARTIN. (*L. C.*) Never—since the day he forsook his father's roof, and we took up housekeeping in one room—has he been in love.

SAVAGE. (*R. C.*) Lucky man—he's just come in on the home stretch.

DAVID. (*entering singing L.*) "She's the darling of my heart" "And she lives in our ally" (*in a very light, debonair manner, he has on a handsome dressing gown, patent leather shoes, hair well dressed, just from the hands of the barber, without eye glasses, his whole appearance well cared for, in contrast to previous acts.* (*R.*) (*lightly*) Hello Savage—how are you—my boy?

SAVAGE. (*C.*) As usual, Mr. Holmes—plenty of health—but very little money. You seem in remarkably good spirits sir.

DAVID. (*R.*) Why not, I've had a very gay winter, and tonight is the last flicker of the midnight lamp,—before it goes out—for the season. You've seen my ward—of course—I've had a miniature of

her painted on ivory. (*takes a small photograph case out of pocket.*)

SAVAGE. Sweet face—Mr. Holmes—very.

DAVID. (R.) She's a favorite wherever she goes—she looks on me as her only relative—and insists on having me escort her everywhere.

MARTIN. (L. *eying* DAVID *disapprovingly*) What time will you be at home, sir?

DAVID. (*singing ad lib.*) "I won't be home till morning—"

SAVAGE. (*looking at* MARTIN, *aside on sofa c.*) I won't be there till morning—

MARTIN. And what's to become of all this work—that's been lying about for a week.

DAVID. The light literature is accumulating in a most appalling manner. (*to* SAVAGE) Just run through them, will you?

MARTIN. (*horrified*) Run through them?

SAVAGE. (*down to L. of desk R.*) (*picking up books eagerly*) Thank you Mr. Holmes—thank you very much.

DAVID. (*to* SAVAGE) Write something of a notice, and take it direct to the office. See the Editor—tell him it is to take the place this week—of my critical review—er—er—and sign it—sign it "SAV-
AGE."

SAVAGE. (*stands in front of* MARTIN'S *desk, arms full of books. His face a study of delighted surprise, drops the books on desk.*) Sign it—at last. I shall write my own name—too generous of you—It's too generous of you Mr. Holmes. (*sits down L. of desk—quickly begins to devour the books, making notes from time to time in a business-like way on a piece of paper*) (*lights pipe*)

DAVID. (*to R. c.*) Don't speak of it. (*spraying his handkerchief with cologne*) Martin.

MARTIN. Yes sir.

DAVID. (*sternly*) Look me straight in the eye.

MARTIN. (*aside*) What have I done now?

DAVID. If you happened to meet me accidentally in the street, and did not know me—how young—would you take me to be?

MARTIN. If I did not know you—I probably wouldn't give it a thought.

DAVID. (*impatiently*) Then say—you know me, and meet me in the street accidentally? How *young* would you take me to be?

MARTIN. If I knew you sir—I would in all probability know your age, and there would be no occasion for thought in the matter.

DAVID. (*disgustedly*) Martin, you're out of date you don't circulate—you're on the shelf for good—get out. (*takes a watch and fob chain from pocket and slings it lightly into his vest pocket*) "She's the darling of my heart" (*exit humming R. D.*)

MARTIN. Mr. Savage, he's mad.

SAVAGE. He is mad, Martin, with love, it's a delicious madness, an ecstatic madness—I'm suffering from a chronic case of it myself.

(MARTIN *shakes his head dolefully, crosses to DAVID'S desk, and commences to put it in order. MULBERRY puts head in door L. 1 E.*)

MULBERRY. (*faintly*) Good evening.

(MARTIN *grunts in a bad tempered way. SAVAGE in an absent-minded way. MULBERRY creeps in room, goes up ladder to bookcases. Takes an old book from shelf, gradually becomes absorbed in book.*)

(*Enter MULBERRY faintly*)

MULBERRY. Good evening. (*puts hat on chair near door. SAVAGE nods gloomily, x's to c*) There's a cloud on the brow of Phoebus Apollo.

MARTIN. He's in love; they're all in love.

SAVAGE. There's electricity in the air, you don't feel it, you're a non-conductor—you never were in love.

MULBERRY. (c.) Every man to his hobby, you to your sweetheart, I to my books— (*goes up c., sits on ladder and reads*)

DAVID. (*enters in r. d. in full evening dress, opera hat in hand, handsome, cape coat slung over his arm. He stops at entrance, watching MARTIN standing at table, who had taken up a book and become interested in it. SAVAGE at MARTIN'S desk—MULBERRY on ladder—all three men their noses on a book, oblivious of everything*) (r., *contemplatively*) And I spent twenty years like that— (*twangs the guitar which he finds r. hanging by bookcase*) (*the three men start—and drop their books*) Good evening, Mulberry (*MARTIN crosses quietly to l. and listens*)

MULBERRY. (*up c.*) (*who has fallen down ladder book in hand*) I beg ten thousand pardons, Mr. Holmes, I was just running through the book shelves.

DAVID. (*behind desk r.*) Shaking hands with old friends—so to speak—eh, Mulberry.

MULBERRY. (c.) Yes, they are all marked with my pencil, Many and many a night I sat up arguing the question on the margin of the page— My shelves are empty now—they are all gone—all gone.

DAVID. Not while my shelves shelter them—Mr. Mulberry. Whenever you want a couple of the boys to take home,—Johnson to drink tea with, Oliver Goldsmith to whistle and laugh with you—when starvation is at the door—you're heartily welcome. I'm going out, so stay a while with your old friends of Grub Street and—I warrant you'll be better company than I shall.

MULBERRY. (*longingly*) Thank you, Mr. Holmes

—but it seems like selling them—and begging them back. Are you quite sure you can spare them.

DAVID. Spare them? I've no use for them—I'm reading a page of fresh, bubbling, human nature. I'm *unlearning* all the book lore, I ever knew—I'm *learning* to be young again—there's a science in *that*—Mulberry—although you may not think it. I've resuscitated my old songs—with my old self. (*snatching down guitar from wall, R. to SAVAGE*) Do you remember this?—eh— (*sings a snatch of an old English song—Sweet Evelina, Dear Evelina, ad lib.*) Now join in chorus—with a fol de lol roll de lol—

(*Bus. for MULBERRY who leans forward—eyes lighting up—beating time. MULBERRY with a cracked voice (tenor) SAVAGE in high glee—join MARTIN at door L. very stiff and solemn*)

DAVID. AR. *singing*—whack—fol—de rol!—Now, once again boys— (*stops as MISS CLEMANTINA appears in doorway—horror stricken—DAVID falls against table, guitar in hand, stiff and starch*)

CLEMANTINA (*enters*) Good evening, Mr. Holmes.

DAVID. (*looking askance at her*) Eh—good evening— (*twangs guitar*) Eh—I—didn't expect you after our stormy parting—Miss Clemantina, or I should have provided quite another form of entertainment. (*MULBERRY on chair and SAVAGE in chair L. snicker*)

CLEM. (C.) (*looks around sharply to MARTIN, who stands at her elbow*) What's the name of that—Gorilla?

MARTIN. (L.) Mulberry—

CLEM. (L. C.) And that—jackanapes—

MARTIN. Savage.

DAVID. (*taking up white glove from table, putting it on*) Isn't it rather late for you to be prowling about—

CLEM. I'm old enough to take care of myself *sir*—at any time. (*softening*) I'm living in town for a few days—I've been very ill—and the doctor advised a change of scene. (*sits on sofa*)

DAVID. (R.) I wouldn't think it to look at you.

CLEM. Mr. Holmes, I didn't come here to quarrel with you—but my temper's none of the best—and if you keep on in that exasperating way—I'll break out—I'm not sick bodily—I'm heart-sick. (MARTIN L. *through the following—visibly affected*) I have always prided myself on being a very strong character. Strong enough to live alone. I used to (*on settee*) laugh, and toss my head and say—this one's not good enough for me—that one don't suit me—but I've made a great mistake Mr. Holmes—we're only human after all, we must have something to hang our hearts on—

DAVID. (*half abstractedly*) "Something to hang our hearts on"— (MULBERRY *up R. sighs*—MARTIN *ditto*—L. *of settee*. SAVAGE *sighs*)

CLEM. Someone to think of when we open our eyes in the morning. Someone to say "God Bless You"—when we close our eyes at night. My Sally had such a way of lighting things up—

DAVID. "A way of lighting things up."

CLEM. She used to sing so blithely outside my window at sunrise—I—couldn't tell which was the lark—and which was Sally. (*goes to desk R.*) Mr. Holmes—I want—Sally back again—I want Sally back.

DAVID. (*standing R. of desk*) I'm very sorry Miss Clemantina—but she has become necessary to us—We can't part with her.

CLEM. (*on chair L. of table*) The child's not in good hands Mr. Holmes—I've just come from your sister's—Helen was always a silly girl—and she's a frivolous woman—There was poor little Sally—with

a hairdresser and dressmaker, and a manicure, and heavens knows what—fussing and pulling her about. She threw her arms around my neck when she saw me—I—came down at once to talk it over with you.

DAVID. Miss Clemantina—you're looking at this matter from a most Puritanical point of view. Sylvia is very well looked after—in fact—I—myself—I am personally superintending—her daily program.

CLEM. You—you—well—I've changed my mind about you entirely Mr. Holmes. I thought you'd be a good, staid, respectable, old party—to keep the child in check, and I come up here and find a rioting, and a bawling, like a lot of sailors in a tavern. I may as well speak my mind while I'm at it—I don't like the looks of *you* at all.

DAVID. (R. *looking himself over*) Oh—you—don't—extraordinary—quite extraordinary.

CLEM. (on sofa) That rig of yours is foolish. You look ten years younger than you *are*.

DAVID. It's better than looking ten years older, than I "*are*" isn't it?

CLEM. (snapping her fingers) Oh, very well sir—and critic of people. And I give you fair warning—I won't stir a step home without Sally— Now—What do you say to that?

DAVID. (singing with guitar) "Whack fol de roll de roll—"

CLEM. (snapping her fingers) Oh, very well sir—whack fol de roll to your authority sir—whack fol de roll—

(MULBERRY skips down, and bows low—likewise SAVAGE—all dancing to DAVID'S song—DAVID bowing—with guitar plays the refrain of song. CLEM. exits in rage L.)

SAVAGE. (throwing himself in chair L. C.) Ha, ha, ha!

MARTIN. (*hopelessly*) It's all over sir—she'll never come near us again.

DAVID. Never—

MARTIN. And you must admit you're not the same man, sir, since—

DAVID. (c.) (*good humoredly*) (*exit to c.*) It's miraculous—I'm wondering at myself continually—would you believe it, I'm looking forward to this dance with the eagerness of a young girl in her teens. When I leave here to-night—I leave twenty years behind me— (*stands at door R. looks around at study*) "Twenty years behind me." (*about to exit R. D.*)

MARTIN. (R. of desk) (*at desk, letter in hand*) This letter sir—

DAVID. (R. at door) What letter?

MARTIN. From the office.

DAVID. (R. door) (*impatently*) I'll read it to-morrow.

MARTIN. (R.) It's been lying on your desk since this morning—

DAVID. (*in an aggravated tone*) I can't touch it with these white gloves—read it yourself.

MARTIN. (*opens letter—reads*) "Friend Holmes"—As judge in our story contest, we decline to accept your resignation. We are pledged to the public, to render a decision in tomorrow's issue, and we appeal to your honor not to desert us at this critical moment.

(*During the above, DAVID comes to c., gradually has lost his air of lightness, and listens intently and gravely. MULBERRY also dropped his book and listens eagerly, also SAVAGE.*)

DAVID. (c.) Signed—?

MARTIN. (R.) Lockwood—Proprietor.

MULBERRY. Mr. Holmes, you resigned then?

SAVAGE. (L. in despair) How could you—we all depend upon you.

DAVID. (*c. dryly*) Yes—I know and I thought I'd give you all an opportunity to depend upon yourselves.

SAVAGE. (*L.*) You'll reconsider your decision.

DAVID. I must do my duty. (*takes off his gloves absent-mindedly, throws them on table*)

SAVAGE. (*timidly*) Have you read them all, sir? (*DAVID at desk looks up at MARTIN*)

(*R. lights*)

DAVID. (*looks round at the three men hanging on his words. Then with a smile of comprehension*)—One is good—most are bad, and some are hopeless—one especially—conceived evidently by a man of absolutely no inventive powers, but some technical skill—a literary hack,—without doubt.

SAVAGE. (*L. aside*) Mulberry.

MULBERRY. (*L. c. aside*) Savage.

DAVID. (*to MARTIN, who leans over desk in critical eagerness, his hands trembling*) If I knew the author—I should advise him to withdraw his story from the competition—it can bring him neither reputation or pecuniary reward. (*without looking up*) Savage, would you mind calling in at my sister's—

SAVAGE. (*ecstatically*) Would I mind?

DAVID. —And ask—if they won't all come down here for me— (*SAVAGE during this has taken hat from mantel shelf and flies out of the door L. D.*) and Savage—

MARTIN. (*R. behind drop*) He's gone, sir.

MULBERRY. (*dryly*) Very much gone—on the lady—I should say— (*chuckles faintly, as MARTIN makes a peremptory sign to MULBERRY to exit*)

(*MUSIC*)

MARTIN. (*at DAVID's elbow*) Mr. David—would you mind letting me see the "*Hopeless Story*."

(*MUSIC*)

(DAVID looks up quickly at MARTIN, then hands him the story—MARTIN crosses to c.—looks at it eagerly—DAVID watching him) (turns down lamp on desk R.)

(LIGHTS DOWN)

MARTIN. (crosses to fireplace—gives one quick look at DAVID, whose head is bent down over desk, then throws the manuscript into fire—watching it burn—pitifully agitated. DAVID rises quietly—crosses to MARTIN who turns from fire, finds himself face to face with DAVID, who extends his hand, and grasps MARTIN'S firmly) (with averted eyes) I'm used to it—sir—I've been a failure all my life—I think it's all Miss Clemantina's fault.

DAVID. Miss Clemantina.

MARTIN. Yes—long ago—she was just such another—as—Miss Sylvia. Of course—she couldn't care for an old fellow almost—twice her age.

DAVID. (troubled) Twice her age.

MARTIN. She wound herself about me—with her saucy ways.

DAVID. I can understand that, Martin.

MARTIN. It was a great disappointment—somehow—after that, I failed in everything—anything more, sir?

DAVID. (abstractedly) No, Martin— (exit MARTIN L. 1 E.) (stop music) A man twice her age—Martin was a fool—to expect it—A Bachelor's Romance—I wish Helen had not told me, it was Harold's—I must read it again, and try to consider it from an impersonal standpoint.

HAROLD. (puts his head in door L. 1 E. in full evening dress) May I come in Mr. Holmes?

DAVID. (starting) Harold!

HAROLD. (L. c.) I'm on my way up to your sis-

ter's—I thought I might catch you, and we'd go together.

DAVID. (R.) As I was starting off, some unexpected work dropped in on me.

HAROLD. Then—it's no use waiting—I suppose—
(DAVID'S head down, over desk—HAROLD goes to door, L. comes back to L. of desk R.) Mr. Holmes—
(DAVID looks up with an annoyed expression) I wanted to speak to you about Sylvia—
(DAVID'S expression changes to one of interest) You're such a busy man—she must be a great responsibility to you.

DAVID. She's on my mind a great deal.

HAROLD. I think she's a sweet girl Mr. Holmes—I've never met a sweeter girl. In fact, I'm sure she's the very sweetest girl on earth. (looks at DAVID rather timidly)

DAVID. (R. dryly) If you are ready to open a debate on that subject, you'll have to find another opponent—as I am entirely of your opinion.

HAROLD. (brightening) I've had a long talk with your sister. Your sister says, she is in your way and if you have no objection—I—I'd like very much to take her off your hands.

DAVID. Take her off my hands—I don't quite understand.

HAROLD. I—I—mean to marry her—when my prospects are better, of course—will you speak a good word for me?

DAVID. (falling back) Er—er—me—to speak—for you— Does she care—

HAROLD. (at desk) I hope I'm not asking too much of you, Mr. Holmes? (looks down at desk, starts back, to C., staggering) My story— (puts his hand to his head)

DAVID. (coming down L. of his desk) I'll—I'll think it over Harold.

HAROLD. (gratefully) Thank you, thank you, sir,

—Mr. Holmes— Do you think I can write a good story?

DAVID. (*looking at desk on the L.*) I know you can.

HAROLD. (*wild with joy*) Oh sir—you don't know how happy you've made me—you can do so much for me in every way, if you want to.

DAVID. (*puts his arms round him*) I do want to, Harold, my boy—I do—but— (*abruptly turning away*) You'd better go now and let me do my work—I have an important question to decide tonight.

HAROLD. (c.) (*aside*) Tonight, then I won't keep you—I'll roam about for an hour, and come back for you—

DAVID. (*at L. of desk*) Yes—do—

HAROLD. (*going to L. D. aside*) Will he give me the prize—will he? (*exit L. D.*)

DAVID. (*stands L. of desk—looking after him*) I envy that boy his youth. (*goes back to desk, on the R. of it, sits down, becomes gradually engrossed in story*) Very good, excellently thought out—far ahead of any of the others— (*still seated*) The love interest is so delicate, and fresh. The first love story—that has interested me in years. There's no doubt of it. Harold deserves the prize. \$10,000 a nice little nest egg to start housekeeping with. He seems sure of Sylvia—naturally—they are both young and— (*despairingly*) How I have struggled and starved for years—it was out of the question for me to think of marriage—if I give him this money—he will marry at once. (*fiercely*) I'll make that impossible. (*takes up M. S.*) Here's another—I know the style—it's Savage's—he's had a hard battle to fight—poor devil—it's his turn first—Harold can wait—yes—Savage is my man—I'LL give the prize to Savage.

(*The door opens softly, strong light in hall—shows*

SYLVIA *enveloped in long cloak—she looks in the room, sees DAVID at desk. Enters quietly, throws off her cloak, shows a full dress ball toilette, stands up stage, moonlight from window envelopes her*)

DAVID. (*rubbing his eyes*) Wonderful—the imagination, I can see her standing over there, as distinctly as possible,—most life like— (*crosses to where SYLVIA stands, she dodges him, and gets out of his way towards r. desk*) How fanciful I am—it's nobody of course. (*turns and sees SYLVIA standing by his desk*) There's the illusion again over there—this won't do—I must drive it away. (*as SYLVIA advances to him c. he starts back—SYLVIA laughing, extends both her hands*)

DAVID. (L. C.) (*delightedly grasping it*) Sylvia.

SYLVIA. (R. C.) I've run away again. Mr. Savage seemed to have so much to say to Helen, I grew tired of waiting—I jumped into the carriage and came down to keep you company; you're not a bit glad to see me.

DAVID. Not glad. (*lays his hand softly on her hand*)

SYLVIA. Come, go back to your desk, and I will sit by you and keep you company. (*leads him to desk and jumps upon desk in front*) What's the unexpected work? Prize story—eh—I knew it.

DAVID. (*seated R. of desk R.*) You knew it?

SYLVIA. (*seated in front of desk*) Certainly—I was sure they wouldn't accept your resignation, it's not so easy to find a conscientious, honorable man.

DAVID. Honorable—conscientious— (*slowly*) But suppose I was not worthy of the confidence reposed in me, suppose I had some personal interest of my own, in giving the prize to the man—who did *not* deserve it.

SYLVIA. You—

DAVID. Imagine the case that way.

SYLVIA. (*indignantly*) I can't—since I was seven years old—and I read papa's letter about you—I always thought of you differently from the others *better*—than the others, and it's grown up with me, as I have grown—if any one else hinted such a thing about you—I would take it as a personal insult—There.

DAVID. (*wiping his forehead*) Don't get so worked up about it child—I was only joking.

SYLVIA. (*aside—taking DAVID in*) Mr. David looks very nice tonight.

(DAVID turns, catches her looking at him)

SYLVIA. Mr. David—I wonder—I won't ask you *who* is going to get the prize, but you can tell me—what the story is about, can't you.

DAVID. It's about a *young* man just entering the battle of life, full of strength and courage like Harold, and an *old* man world-weary, tired, and used up—like me.

SYLVIA. (*comprehensively*) Like you?

(READY WHISTLE)

DAVID. And a young *girl*, sweet and good—who came into this world-weary man's life, like a sudden burst of music, into a long, solemn silence"—and—then—

SYLVIA. (*listens with bated breath*) "And then"—

DAVID. (*watching her*) "The young man loved her of course."

SYLVIA. (*coquettishly, tossing her head*) Of course—

DAVID. "And she loved the young man—of course."

SYLVIA. Oh! you're making it up — but the

most important—who does she marry? Tell me quick?

DAVID. (*puts his hand on hers*) She marries—who would she be likely to marry? Sylvia.

SYLVIA. (*looking back at him solemnly*) She'd be likely to marry the man—she loves.

DAVID. (*putting his hand on hers*) "The man she loves" (*bus.*) (*a whistle heard up the tube, both jump*) (*angrily*) Some meddling intruder—(*crosses to door, exit in hall L. 1 E.*)

SYLVIA. Oh, dear. I never get a moment to talk to you, Mr. David. Poor, quiet Mr. David—

SAVAGE. (*outside*) This way, Mrs. Le Grand. Be careful of that last step. I'll open the door for you.

SYLVIA. (*sitting up*) Here they are.

HELEN. (*enters L. D. in ball attire, followed by SAVAGE, with a pile of books on his arm—bus. of dropping them one by one in embarrassment*) (*sits on sofa*) Oh, those stairs!

SAVAGE. (*follow HELEN*) Oh, the pity of it.

(*SYLVIA has retired—goes up ladder, out window, onto roof, exits.*)

HELEN. Of what?

SAVAGE. You would be perfect if you had a heart.

HELEN. (*laughing*) A heart!

SAVAGE. Be natural.

HELEN. Oh, I am perfectly natural. (*takes out powder puff and glass—powders her face*)

SAVAGE. Go back to nature. Rise with the sun.

HELEN. And go to bed with the chickens.

SAVAGE. Listen to your natural impulses.

HELEN. Oh, I *dare not!*

SAVAGE. Oh, yes, you dare. What is natural is true.

HELEN. Well, I'll test your theory of naturalism. I'll take Gerald to spend the summer with Miss Clemantina. Real, old-fashioned farm life. Perhaps I shall *hear something* wonderful there.

SAVAGE. You will. The wonder is always there. But we must open our ears, our hearts, to the wonder.

HELEN. What is it?

SAVAGE. Love.

DAVID. (*outside*) Enter, please. Such an array of color in my sombre dwelling is indeed rare.

(SAVAGE *drops HELEN's hand. Goes up.*)

HARRIET. (L. *enters* L. D., *looks about*) What a quaint old place!

HELEN. (*embarrassed, sharply*) Where is Sylvia?

DAVID. (C.) I left her here— (*looks about, under table, etc., going up c. towards Cupola*)

HELEN. (*with smelling salts*) (R. C.) It's really very inconsiderate of her, running off in such an untrained fashion—she keeps me continually on the alert. Now, Mr. Savage, shall I keep a dance for you before or after supper?

SAVAGE. (X to C.) (*intensely*) 12:30—If I live and "Harold" don't fail me.

HELEN. (L. C.) Why?

SAVAGE. (*embarrassed*) Well, you see—; step into his shoes—I mean he steps into mine— *Our shoes—* (*aside*) Stretches them out with his big feet. (*aside, coming to door R.*) (*at entrance*) Oh, if I owned a dress suit, I'd conquer the world. (HELEN *looks at him, half laughing, half sad*) (HARRIET *remains, on entering, near door L.*) (SYLVIA SOMERS *puts head in window c.*)

SYLVIA. (*up in Cupola c.*) It's perfectly glorious—up here—come up—it won't spoil your dresses.

HELEN. (*on ladder. SAVAGE helps her up*) David how long are you going to keep us waiting?

DAVID. Not long—if you'll give me a chance to finish my work. Savage—take the ladies up on the roof. Tune the light guitar for the ladies—Savage. The floor is well swept with the breezes of night and it's gloriously illuminated by that "orbed maiden with white fire laden whom mortals call the moon." (*exit HELEN and SAVAGE on roof*) (*GERALD'S voice is heard grumbling about the stairs off L.*) There's Gerald now—I'll leave him to you Miss Harriet. (*exits L. 2 E.—as GERALD stumbles into room from L. He has been drinking enough to make him quarrelsome, but he is not intoxicated*) (*HARRIET comes to R.*)

GERALD. (*stumbling over MARTIN'S desk L.*) Confound it David—you're leading us a pretty dance—dragging us up these endless—dark stairs— (*sees HARRIET R. C.*) Oh!—I beg ten thousand pardons—Miss Leicester— (*takes off hat*)

(*HARRIET R. C.*)

GERALD. (*laughs*) (*HARRIET crosses up to stairs C.*) You're not going—I'm not fit company for myself tonight—

HARRIET. (*L. C.*) (*coming down L. C.*) Then you should have better taste—than to inflict yourself upon others—

GERALD. (*R. C.*) (*taking her in*) Haven't you been sulking long enough?—I—I can't get along without you— (*hold out his hand with a winning smile*) No—then—anything you say—I'll compromise on your own terms. (*between his teeth*) D——it—

HARRIET. (*turns, goes up ladder C.*) I should try and control my temper—if I were you—or you will disenchant the next favored one, sooner than even—

your ever fickle fancy could desire— (*exits up ladder c. onto roof*)

GERALD. Harriet, I say—Harriet—I never would have believed you could be so disagreeable. These confounded women,—a man never knows how to take them.

(SYLVIA SOMERS *enters through a window c.—over bookcase*)

GERALD. (*aside*) Ah!—Sylvia. (*goes gently up to L. foot of ladder, so SYLVIA cannot see him*)

SYLVIA. (*hopping on one foot*) Oh—dear—I nearly twisted my ankle, getting around here—I—wonder—if I can get down this way.

GERALD. (*on ladder*) Not without my permission—fair lady.

SYLVIA. (*shrinking back*) Mr. Gerald!—

GERALD. Are you afraid of me?

SYLVIA. No—I'm not—

GERALD. Then why do you shrink away? Give me your hand—little one. Am I so distasteful to you?

SYLVIA. (*on top of ladder*) You're Mr. David's brother.

GERALD. Ah!—that raises me in your estimation—give Mr. David's brother your hand. (SYLVIA *extends her hand—and he draws her half way down the ladder, she tries to draw her hand from his, and he takes her forcibly in his arms, and swings her to the ground on his L.*) Now—what do I get for my trouble?

SYLVIA. (*L. in terror*) Mr. Gerald!—

GERALD. (*c.*) A kiss—

SYLVIA. How dare you—let me go—

GERALD. (*laughing*) Of course—you'll resist—I must—

SYLVIA. (L. C.) (*screams*) Ah!

DAVID. (*enters quickly R. D. 2 E*) Gerald! (*GERALD releases SYLVIA, who sinks on sofa C. L. of desk R., covers her face with her hands*)

GERALD. (*C. laughing uneasily—and sobered*) Don't look so horrified—David—there's nothing so very terrible—in trying to steal a kiss from a pretty girl.

DAVID. (*R. fiercely*) Silence!

SYLVIA. (*rushing between them*) Mr. David.

DAVID. (*pushing her gently towards the staircase*) Go Sylvia—go with the others.

SYLVIA. Oh!—no—I don't want them to know. (*puts up her face wet with tears*) (*DAVID kindly leading her to door R.*) (*at entrance*) You won't quarrel with him? (*exit R. 2 E.*)

DAVID. (*exits to C. quietly*) When I brought the child to Helen—I did not think my brother would be the one to make me regret it. This last *insult*—(*GERALD rises half ashamed*)

GERALD. (L. C.) Insult—that's entirely too severe a word, I wouldn't harm Sylvia for the world—I'm—I'm very fond of her, and I'm not such a libertine, as you imagine! She'd make a splendid wife—wouldn't she? (*DAVID starts*) If I must marry—

DAVID. (R. C.) No! No!

GERALD. (*angrily*) What do you mean by that?

DAVID. (R. C. *excitedly*) It would be a sacrilege.

GERALD. (*sneeringly*) Very flattering—I'm sure—but your opinion doesn't matter. I'll run off with her, she's good at that.

DAVID. (*interrupting*) I forbid you as her guardian—to speak a word of love to that child.

GERALD. (*laughing*) (*derisively*) I'll show you how that child will take to my words of love—how naturally she will return them.

DAVID. (*beside himself, rushing at GERALD, with*

uplifted arm) YOU SHALL NOT I'LL—I'LL
(GERALD *stands unflinchingly*—DAVID *drops his arm to his side*)

GERALD. (*in low intense tones*) By what right—do you sit in judgment on me, I'm a pleasure seeker—I admit it—but at least—a man of flesh and blood, (DAVID *winces*) But I quite understand your motive in this case, you're horror stricken, if I speak to Sylvia. You're in agony, when I dance with her, you're jealous not only of me, but of every man—who approaches her.

DAVID. (R. C.) (*dazed*) Jealous!—why—should I be—

GERALD. (L. C.) (*interrupting*) Why!—because—you are in love with her—Ah!—deny it—if you can— (DAVID *puts his hand to his head, staggers against desk* R.)

GERALD. (*going to him, towards R. C.*) (*alarmed*) David—old chap—I didn't mean—I—I—I'm excitable tonight—I—

DAVID. In love!— In love!— Yes—but I have never called it by that name—even to myself. Ha! Ha!— An ascetic (*longingly*) It's too late for me— (*then with a yearning cry*) Gerald—is it too late?

GERALD. *Brother!* I—I hate to say it—but if you ask me—it would be the worst of folly for you to marry a young girl—and I'm—I'm afraid you wouldn't have very much chance with Sylvia—

(DAVID *who has been gazing eagerly into GERALD'S face, releases his arm and sinks back in chair by desk*)

DAVID. Yes—yes—you're right. She is not for us—but—for one of her own tastes, and age, who loves her and whom she loves in return. Not for us. Not for us.

GERALD. (c.) No woman is worth it. I—I—wish we had kept together, as brothers should—perhaps you would have gotten more out of life—I—less. (*slowly*) (*shudders*) Ugh. (*in old reckless tone*) This place is enough to give a man the blues. I'll go ahead, and see we get something fit to drink.

(GERALD *stops at entrance R., looks at DAVID—then exits L. lightly*)

DAVID. (*stands hopeless*) (SYLVIA *appears in doorway L., comes down to DAVID timidly*) (*he grasps her hand*) (*excitedly*) (*rise*) It wasn't fair to you—poor child. It was selfish, criminal. —I will make it right for you—for Harold. He loves you. He's worthy of you—you shall be his wife.

SYLVIA. Harold's wife!—you want me to marry Harold?

(HAROLD *appears at door L. SYLVIA with a little sob of disappointment—goes up stage—HAROLD crosses to DAVID*)

DAVID. (*puts his arm about HAROLD'S shoulders*) Harold my boy— (*indicates SYLVIA*)

HAROLD. (*joyously*) (DAVID *nods. HAROLD rushes up stage to SYLVIA. DAVID moves to door W. and stands with knob in hand, door between him and them*)

HAROLD. I want to tell you myself—how much I love you. I wanted to tell you ever so long ago, but I was afraid—think of it dear—a big fellow like me—afraid of such a little girl. There's a star just over my window—I call Sylvia, all my stories—I'll dedicate to Sylvia—I dedicate my life to Sylvia—if she'll let me. (DAVID *softly shuts the door*) Sylvia—do you love me?—

SYLVIA. I—I have never thought of love seri-

ously. (*in a forlorn way*) I'm all alone in the world. Nobody seems to want me. Mr. David has no time for his friend's little girl. He promised to take care of me, and he hasn't kept his word.

HAROLD. He's going to do so much for us in the future Sylvia— If you will marry me—

SYLVIA. (*C. down*) (*recoiling down stage—with a cry*) Oh!—no—not now— Not now Harold— (*HELEN enters C., followed by SAVAGE and HARRIET who join HAROLD up stage, as SYLVIA throws herself into HELEN'S arms*) Mr. David—wants me to marry Harold.

HELEN. (*L. C.*) Has he asked you? That's good—it will simplify matters for us all. Poor David, he's not used to girls, and it will be a great burden off his shoulders. (*HELEN goes toward L. All shake hands with HAROLD. HARRIET kisses SYLVIA. General congratulations.*)

SYLVIA. (*C.*) (*recoiling*) I'm a burden to him—

HELEN. (*Enter DAVID*) David!—(*he has his old coat on and spectacles, looks bent and old. Sits down. Quietly without looking up goes to his desk*)

DAVID. (*R.*) Don't wait for me—I am not going.

SYLVIA. (*C.*) (*aside*) Not going.

HELEN. (*R. C.*) But David—I have some good news for you.

DAVID. (*impatiently*) Yes—I know all about it. (*HELEN, SAVAGE and HARRIET crowd round desk, except SYLVIA*) Please go away—good people—go and enjoy yourselves—I shall never get through my work—good night to you all— (*aside to HELEN despairingly*) Helen my girl—take them away.

HAROLD. (*comes to L. C. L. of HELEN*) (HELEN) It's the prize contest that bothers him—there is so much depending on it, for us all.

HELEN. (*comes to R. C. R. of SAVAGE*) Come—(*crosses to entrance L. and exits, followed by HARRIET and SAVAGE.*)

(HAROLD *comes down with SYLVIA's cloak, wraps it around her.*) (SYLVIA *looks at DAVID—who has his head bent over desk. After a pause extends her hand to HAROLD, who kisses it. Leads her towards entrance R. MARTIN enters R. noiselessly from right and puts out light on DAVID's desk, as SYLVIA with a last look back at DAVID, passes out. Sounds of laughing outside, DAVID raises his head from desk, and listens eagerly.*) (*Laughter gradually dying away. DAVID drops his head on desk. MARTIN behind DAVID's desk R.*)

MARTIN. Mr. David.

DAVID. (*looks up at MARTIN*) (*hands him letter*)

MARTIN. (*wistfully*) I can know now sir—

DAVID. Harold Reynolds—has won the prize.

CURTAIN

(MARTIN *takes his hat, crosses noiselessly to entrance L., exits L.*)

(DAVID *bends head over desk—writes—moonlight streams in on him.*)

SLOW CURTAIN

(DAVID *still at desk, fire out—day light dawns*)

SECOND CURTAIN

ACT IV

(*Exterior of AUNT CLEMANTINA'S house in the country, a rural garden, trout pond at back—practical rustic bridge—from which runs practical path up stage off L.*)

CLEMANTINA. (*enters from house, followed by HAROLD, dressed very well and foppish, in city attire, in contrast to former Bohemian carelessness.*) Are you really off to the city—Harold?

HAROLD. (R.) I take the seven o'clock express. I've threatened so often, this time I'm going.

CLEMANTINA. (C.) (*looking at him sharply*) You've had another tiff with Sally.

HAROLD. (*hesitatingly*) We are not the *best* of friends, but falling out is a habit with engaged people, it varies the monotony. How long are your other boarders going to stay?

CLEMANTINA. Miss Harriet goes home next week. Helen and Gerald want to stay over the fall. They've all learnt—one good thing this summer—to help themselves.

(*SYLVIA enter slowly, R., stops on bridge, very quiet, and settled. In contrast to former girlish gaiety, long dress, and an attempt to appear womanly in appearance.*)

CLEMANTINA. (C.) You look fagged out, Sally—Where have you been?

SALLY. (L.) To the post office. A letter for you from Mr. David and the Review. (*gives CLEMANTINA the letter*)

HAROLD. (R.) May I see that, please— (*SYLVIA hands him paper—he unfolds it and reads it*)

CLEMANTINA. (*opening letter*) David's weekly

bulletin—I know it by heart—hopes you are well. Sends you a packet of books. He promises to pay you a visit, when he gets time. (*goes up to porch, peels apple*)

HAROLD. (*down c.*) (*angrily, throwing down paper*) That fellow Savage is exploiting himself again. I can't understand his sudden popularity.

SYLVIA. I can—he is clever.

HAROLD. I suppose that means—I am not.

SYLVIA. (*L.*) You *were* before you wrote a prize story, but success seemed to paralyze your energies. You've done nothing well since.

HAROLD. (*coming down c.*) (*loftily*) I shall make arrangements with some large house, and publish my own stories in future.

SYLVIA. Is that because nobody will take them?

HAROLD. (*angrily*) Sylvia!!

SYLVIA. I don't like the way you speak of your friend, Mr. Savage—when *you* won the prize, he congratulated you in a most gracious manner—now *he's* getting along—you're jealous of him.

HAROLD. (*c. angrily*) Sylvia!— I won't be lectured like a school boy—I—

SYLVIA. (*L. interrupting*) I won't flatter you—Harold—I *will* tell you the truth—I— (*SYLVIA goes to upper end of porch. HAROLD goes to bridge*)

CLEMANTINA. (*R.*) There—There—children—don't fight— (*they turn their backs on each other, as GERALD comes c. Old farm costume, big hat, rake over his shoulder—sleeves rolled up. Jolly, active manner in contrast to former languid movements*)

GERALD. (*pushing back hat and wiping his forehead*) (*HAROLD now goes up R. c.*) There, Aunt Clemantina—your hay's all in—you'll find I've made a pretty good job of it—for an amateur farmer. (*down to tree L., throws water over his head—*

washes his hands at pump) Ah!—this is fine— (*exit R., meets SYLVIA and takes towel, SYLVIA goes to porch*)

HAROLD. (*coming down R. C. to GERALD*) I must say—I do not share the general enthusiasm in regard to country life—

CLEMANTINA. (*R. on porch, seated*) Humph!—you are in your room—dressing up most of the time. How many suits of clothes have you got in that big trunk of yours?

HAROLD. (C.) Miss Clemantina, before I won the prize, I owned half interest in two dilapidated suits of clothes—now I have the exquisite satisfaction of possessing twelve— Have a cigar, Holmes—choice Havana. (*go to SYLVIA*)

GERALD. (*who has pulled down his sleeves and made himself tidy*) (*sits upon the bench L.*) No, thanks—I've sworn off.

HAROLD. Sylvia—I wish you'd ask Miss Leicester to give you some hints about dress—You've been getting yourself up lately in a most old-fashioned manner—she *always* looks well— (*brushes his boots with his handkerchief, and strolls off R. back of house*)

GERALD. Aunt Clem—was I ever such a fool as that?

CLEMANTINA. (*on porch*) Not quite— (*exit in house R.*)

GERALD. (*quietly to SYLVIA who sits with her head down*) I beg your pardon—I quite forgot—

SYLVIA. Oh! you didn't hurt my feelings—The prize has turned Harold's head. He imagines he's thrown himself away on me, when an heiress like Miss Leicester could be had for the asking. I'm afraid I don't care for Harold as—I—I—should. I keep comparing him with somebody else—so modest, so quiet. I have gone out of his life now, but

he hasn't gone out of mine. Every night, after I say my prayers, there are always two names on my lips—"Father and Mr. David." (*sit on bench c.*)

GERALD. (*watching her*) What's this— What's this—Ah—ha! (*to c.*) (*to SYLVIA*) (*sits down by her*) SYLVIA— My brother David loves you, not as a guardian loves his ward, but as a man, who late in years loves *one* woman. "The only woman in his simple, lonely life." (*SYLVIA rises,—breathless*) He never knew it himself—poor old chap—until I found it out for him. Of course you didn't care for him. (*watching her*) But if you had, what a romance it would have been in an old bachelor's life—such a sweet young wife.

SYLVIA. Ah!

GERALD. (*mischievously*) Now you are angry— (*as MISS CLEMANTINA enters from house R.*)

SYLVIA. Ah—Gerald— (*runs to—throws her arms about his neck*) How I love you— (*enter CLEMANTINA R.*)

CLEMANTINA. What! (*SYLVIA rushes past her into house R.*) (*exit R. U. S.*)

GERALD. (*to CLEMANTINA*) (*facing L. at c.*) David—dear old chap—He won't know what a good turn I've done him.

CLEMANTINA. Gerald, you were born with a good heart, I'm sure, but that city life dried it up. Now you've grown really handsome—

GERALD. And *hungry*—

CLEMANTINA. Now, you'll make some woman a proper sort of husband.

GERALD. Hush! Don't let Harriet hear that. I'll lose my *bad* reputation.

(*Enter HARRIET, rosy and light-footed. She has a basket of eggs on her arm*)

HARRIET. Ah! Miss Clemantina! All my nest

eggs are hatched. Oh, how my heart beat when the dear little things poked their heads out of their shells. Wonderful—

CLEMANTINA. Humph! As if chickens aren't hatched every day!

GERALD. Wonderful! (*steals an egg out of HARRIET'S basket, puts a pin in it and throwing back his head, sucks it down with an expression of delight*)

(*Entrance of HELEN*)

HELEN. (*coming on, looking off*) Lie down—bad cow, lie down, or you won't get your bran mash. (*Enter HELEN, with milk pail and three-legged stool in her hand. She is dressed in cotton frock and white fichu open at the neck*) (*puts down stool, sits on it*) Oh, it's so beautiful! How that cow follows me! Those pleading eyes! She only overturned the pail once this time. (*hands pail to GERALD*)

GERALD. (*puts it to his mouth and drinks it*) Ah!

CLEMANTINA. And how many times did she overturn you?

HELEN. (*modestly*) Oh, I'm getting used to that. The ground is soft and there's nobody around to laugh at me. (*crosses to*)

CLEMANTINA. (*taking the pail from GERALD'S mouth*) That'll do! (*goes to balcony*)

(*Enter HAROLD from house*)

HELEN. I say, Harold, look out for your laurels! Here's another poem in *The Review* by Mr. Savage. He's rising rapidly.

(*HAROLD steps R. HARRIET who is L. of HELEN, grabs it*)

HARRIET. (*looking over her shoulder*) (*takes the paper from HELEN. HELEN works around x. L. of*

HARRIET) "To Helen"—A sonnet by L. Savage. Set to music—with guitar accompaniment.

(HELEN *snatches the paper quickly from HARRIET, puts it behind her back. GERALD comes down snatches the paper quickly from HELEN—holding at arm's length—reads*)

GERALD. (L. of HELEN, *who is almost c.*) (L. by bench) "Oh!—Oh! midsummer's dear madness! "Oh! Time of rapturous gladness! "With heart of mine—pressed close to thine"— (HELEN *reaches for paper*) (GERALD *laughing—holding paper out of her reach—reads*) "With clinging arms close interlaced— "In thrilling—maddening—wild embrace"—

CLEMANTINA. (R. on porch) Stop! I declare, that's indecent.

HELEN. (to HARRIET) (*sound of guitar—outside L.*) Oh, listen! (*as SAVAGE enters c. rather fantastically dressed, with guitar, singing, SYLVIA appears on porch*)

SAVAGE. (*down c.*) Good day to you all. I've been singing as I came, from sheer joy at the thought—of seeing you— (*looks at HELEN L. extreme*) ———all again. (*shakes hands with GERALD and HARRIET*) Harold, old fellow—

HAROLD. (*sullenly*) (*affecting not to see his outstretched arm*) How are you—Savage. (*goes up to bridge*) (*during this scene GERALD works around back to porch*)

SAVAGE. (*shrugs his shoulders good-humoredly*) Miss Clemantina, I have news for you. I am not alone. Mr.—Holmes is with me—

SYLVIA. (R.) Mr. David—

SAVAGE. (*significantly*) He has had a miserable time of it since Martin fell sick.

CLEMANTINA. (R.) Martin sick?

SAVAGE. Yes, and Mr. Holmes nursed him night and day. There's not another man in the world like Mr. Holmes—and with the doctor's help, I persuaded him to bring Martin here—

CLEMANTINA. Martin here?—Martin here?—I must go and get a room ready for him. (*exit into house R.*) (SAVAGE goes L. to HELEN)

SYLVIA. (*runs to GERALD joyfully, who is near porch*) (*business*) O Gerald! (*hugs him—HARRIET recoils and enters house R., followed by GERALD—as SYLVIA flies off toward R.*)

HAROLD. (*comes down to SAVAGE*) I suppose I ought to congratulate you. I always said you'd dig and dig until you struck something—but, there's one thing I could never teach you—good taste. Since you've selected your own clothes, you look fantastic.

SAVAGE. (*good-humoredly*) Fantasy is my strong point. You look dead level, conventional. That's your strong point—(*exit HAROLD, behind house*)

HELEN. (*aside*) Serve him right—

SAVAGE. (C.) (*turns to HELEN L.*) It's a pleasure to look at you—Mrs. Le Grand.

HELEN. (L.) I enjoy everything. I shall never be a fashionable woman again. I shall commence a crusade at once against wearing stuffed birds in bonnets—cruel to kill the pretty, singing things. I shall never be idle. I think I shall run a model farm, or some other model institution.

SAVAGE. (*bends down—looks at her scrutinizingly—then quickly kisses her*) I couldn't help it. It—it—it seemed so—

HELEN. Natural? (*he puts his arm about her. As they go off L. 3 D., SYLVIA comes running over the bridge R.*)

SYLVIA. Miss Clemantina, Mr. David is coming! (*meets GERALD on porch and bumps. GERALD and*

HARRIET, *after looking off c., drop down behind bench L.*)

(Enter CLEMANTINA after this business)

CLEMANTINA. *(looking off c.)* And there's Martin—followed by that old—kangaroo—Mulberry.

DAVID. *(DAVID appears coming up the road, supporting MARTIN who looks done up and shaky, followed by MULBERRY with hand bag, etc. They come down slowly, DAVID speaking encouragingly to MARTIN)* There, now, here we are. Hold up your head, man, and look about you.

MARTIN. I can't, Mr. David. I'll never hold up my head again.

DAVID. Nonsense! Cheer up, old man. Gently, now. Gently, down—there—now you can rest. *(puts MARTIN on bench L., his head dropped on his breast)*

CLEMANTINA. *(c. r.)* Mr. Holmes—

DAVID. *(motions her away, takes MARTIN's hands anxiously—MULBERRY jumping about nervously—opens bag—extracts medicine bottle)*

MULBERRY. *(pours drops from vial—gives them to MARTIN)*

DAVID. *(coming towards CLEMANTINA at c.)* Miss Clemantina, despite your acrid quality of tongue, your heart is sound. For humanity's sake, will you help a fellow-creature back to life and health?

CLEMANTINA. *(sharply)* Of course I will. There's no need to ask that, Mr. Holmes. *(crosses to MARTIN—MULBERRY bows low)*

DAVID. *(looks at them wonderingly)* Where did you all spring from? Oh! I had quite forgotten. Let me look at you—lad— *(puts his hands on GERARD's shoulder—takes him in—)* Mother Nature—seems to have been a good nurse—

(Enter HELEN and HARRIET)

GERALD. The best in the world—I'm a real son of the soil— (*goes up to R.*)

DAVID. (*puts his hand under HELEN's chin who is on his L.*) Nature has woke up the heart in you—my dear—I can see that—and cured your heart-ache.

HARRIET. (*laughing*) And I never lie awake nights, as I used to—that's because I'm tired out from running all day long—

(*Both go up to GERALD and SAVAGE*)

CLEMANTINA. (*to DAVID*) Mr. Holmes—I suppose—you'd like some supper?

DAVID. (C.) I would—Miss Clemantina—if you would send me a bite out here. The rest and quiet would be a boon.

CLEMANTINA. Come, Martin—come, you poor soul—lean on me (*takes him across stage to R.*)

MULBERRY. Any fish in the brook, mum? (*coming down*)

CLEMANTINA. Plenty—but fishing requires patience— (*exit*)

MULBERRY. I've learnt that lesson. (*x'ing to R.*)

DAVID. (C. *coming down*) Take a hand at it—after supper—Mulberry—

MULBERRY. Thanks—I don't mind if I do— (*exits into house R.*)

(*All off, DAVID alone*)

SYLVIA. (*enters with tray R. She stands on balcony—DAVID on seeing her—rises from his seat—looks at her—then in a simple impressive manner—slowly lifts his hat from his head—demurely*) Good-evening—Mr. David— (*comes down—puts the tray on table in front of him*) (DAVID sits looking

at SYLVIA) You must be hungry after your journey—

DAVID. (*eyes fixed on SYLVIA*) Yes—I'm hungry.

SYLVIA. (*pours out milk, arranges tray, but DAVID sits watching her every movement—after a pause DAVID mechanically takes glass—drinks milk—still with eyes following SYLVIA, who crosses to flower-bed, and picks a rose from bush—hands it to him, he takes the rose and SYLVIA'S hand at the same time—keeping it as he inhaled the rose*)

DAVID. You've changed Sylvia— You've grown from childhood into womanhood.

SYLVIA. Do I look older?

DAVID. Yes—little woman—

SYLVIA. (*puts her head down*) Oh! I'm so glad (*hangs down head—sits beside him c., on bench under tree*)—Look—one grey hair—don't touch it—it means age—

DAVID. One only—and I have so many—

SYLVIA. Only a few on the temples, and that's from deep thought.

DAVID. And the furrows ploughed in on the forehead—

SYLVIA. (*laughing*) I can smooth them away (*rises, comes round behind DAVID*) (*she passes her hands over his forehead*) See they are all gone—your forehead is as smooth as Harold's.

DAVID. (*rises*) Harold! (*to L. as CLEM. enters R.*)

CLEMANTINA. Sylvia — child — your supper is getting cold— (*off porch up R. C.*)

SYLVIA. (C.) I don't want any supper— (CLEM. *with a quick motion aside to SYLVIA to get out*)

(SYLVIA *exits* R. *into house*. DAVID *follows her to door, stands—looks after her—lost in thought*)

CLEMANTINA. (*nods her head very mysteriously, looks around—DAVID looking over his shoulder at her in a mystified manner—MISS CLEM.—all excitement—DAVID all ears*) Sylvia, she's a changed girl—

DAVID. (R.) (*in a whisper*) I've noticed it, but for the better I think—her long frocks and hair tumbled up— (*exit to L.*)

CLEMANTINA. I don't mean her looks, she's got something on her mind—Hush! (*as MULBERRY enters with a rod*)

MULBERRY. Would you like to join me, Mr. Holmes— "The saying goes"— Fishing is good around sundown—in the gloaming— "When the sweethearts saunter down the lanes"—then the fish begin to nibble. (*enter HELEN and SAVAGE—pass over bridge. They walk slowly together. SAVAGE has his arm around HELEN—they go off R.*)

DAVID. (R.) I may join you—a little later. What did you mean—by something on her mind?

CLEMANTINA. (L. C.) I mean there's never any kissing on the sly like most engaged people—I've never seen any kissing at all.

(MULBERRY *exits down road L.*)

DAVID (*his smile broadening*) Well—I'm very glad—I mean very sorry—we must look into this, Miss Clemantina—

CLEMANTINA. SYLVIA is in love with *somebody*, and not Harold. *Find the man!*

(HARRIET and GERALD *enter with SYLVIA R. from house, behind CLEM.*)

GERALD. (*on the R., aside to SYLVIA*) Be a brave girl—tell David you don't want to marry Harold!

SYLVIA. Mr. David— (*exit to D.*)

DAVID. We know—

CLEMANTINA. We know—

HARRIET. We know.

GERALD. (*looks at SYLVIA puzzled*) What do they know?

(CLEMANTINA *exits to porch of house R.*)

SYLVIA. (*to HARRIET*) Oh, about Gerald—
(HARRIET *turns away*)

DAVID. (R. C.) Open your heart to me—my boy—I want to set matters right for you if I can.

GERALD. (R.) (*manfully*) You can say a word in my behalf to the woman I love. (DAVID *puts his hand out to SYLVIA*) Brother David—if she will judge me by what I am—not what I was—if she will help me to make something out of my life—Harriet—

DAVID. (C. *amazed*) Harriet!—

SYLVIA. Yes, Mr. David, he loves her with all his heart and soul—Harriet—say—say it.

DAVID. (*gladly*) Yes—Harriet—say—say it.

HARRIET. (*softly*) Gerald—

GERALD. (*eagerly grasping her hands*) Harriet!—
(SYLVIA *goes off softly up L.*) (GERALD *puts his arm around HARRIET and they cross L. together over the bridge, exit after HELEN and SAVAGE*)

DAVID. (C.) (*looking over his glasses humorously*) Miss Clemantina—you were mistaken—you see.

CLEMANTINA. (R.) Mr. Holmes—I still insist—Sylvia is in love—*find the man*—(*exits house R.*)

DAVID. (*make a move up*) I must face this most disagreeable duty—I must—*find the man Sylvia loves.*

HAROLD. (*enters from house R.*) I'm off, Mr. Holmes.

DAVID. (C. *fussing*) I'm going with this train—

I must be in town to-night— (c.) Harold, what's wrong between you and Sylvia?

HAROLD. (R. C.) Oh, nothing, but we have both decided not to think of marriage for some time. To speak candidly, Mr. Holmes, a young man is a fool to hamper himself with a wife at the beginning of his career—and one who is not in sympathy with his ambition— Sylvia cares nothing for my success— (*enter SYLVIA L.*) She cares nothing for me.

SYLVIA. (L. C.) (*agitatedly*) Mr. David, I am only a field mouse born for a quiet corner. Harold likes glare and life and show, we would never be happy together—I— (*extends her hand piteously to DAVID who takes it—gazes at it for a moment, then draws the ring from her finger and hands it to HAROLD. Crosses in front of DAVID. SYLVIA throws herself down on bench L. face in hands*)

HAROLD. (R. C.) (*takes ring, looks at it very much agitated*) Everything has gone against me—since—I won the prize—

DAVID. (C) (*kindly to HAROLD*) Success has been too much for you— Go back to town, my boy—work it off—work it off—work it off— (*HAROLD looks at SYLVIA, L. then exits on road towards L., over bridge R.*)

SYLVIA. (L.) (*raises her head and gives a long peal of laughter—jumps up*) (*bus. then demurely approaching DAVID*) Mr. David—I'm too old for Harold. His character is not yet formed. He doesn't know what he wants—

DAVID. (C.) Do you?

SYLVIA. (L. C.) (*nodding her head*) Yes—

DAVID. (R. C.) A few friends—books and things—and somebody to keep house for— (*fiercely*) Who is the somebody?—

SYLVIA. (L. C.) The man of my choice and when we're married—you shall come and live with me—

DAVID. (c.) (*quickly*) Nothing could induce me to do that—Sylvia—

SYLVIA. Oh, you'll come.

DAVID. Are you quite sure—this time?

SYLVIA. Yes, Mr. David, I loved this man ever since I was seven years old. Mr. David—I'll—I'll tell you who he is—if you ask me—

DAVID. Wait a minute. Stop, Sylvia, stop—(*fussing*) Miss Clemantina—Miss Clemantina—

SYLVIA. (*in despair*) Oh, dear!—Why can't he understand—

CLEMANTINA. (*enters from house—leading MARTIN—puts him in arm chair on balcony*) I'll come in a moment. I'm busy now.

DAVID. (*fussing*) Helen. Helen!—(*exit on a run*)

SYLVIA. He'll have the whole neighborhood here in a minute.

HELEN. (*enters excited, followed by SAVAGE*) Why, David, you must be clean out of your mind. Harold gone—and Sylvia in love with some one else?

DAVID. Yes, some country playmate, I imagine. It's one of the farm hands.

CLEMANTINA. (*horrified R.*) One of the farm hands?

DAVID. (*solemnly*) She has confessed all. (*GERALD enters with HARRIET*)

SYLVIA. (*hysterically*) Oh!—Mr. David—what a story. (*into GERALD's arms*) Gerald—he's the stupidest man in the whole world.

GERALD. Let me tell him.

SYLVIA. What!—before all these people.

HELEN. (R. c.) Gerald—you know.

GERALD. Yes—(*SYLVIA exits L. over bridge R. on a run*)

DAVID (*excitedly*) Gerald—is he worthy of her—is he—

GERALD. (L. c.) He's a good man—and she loves him with all her simple, faithful little heart. But—unfortunately—he is blind—

DAVID. Blind! (*enter MULBERRY—hide behind pump*)

GERALD. (L. c.) He can see—but he won't— (*significantly at DAVID*) David—if he keeps her dancing after him much longer he'll lose her.

DAVID. (c.) (*grabbing GERALD*) The man of her choice—is—

GERALD. (L. c.) Yourself—

DAVID. (*solemnly*) I don't believe you— (*GERALD throws up his hands in comic despair and goes to HARRIET L.*)

MULBERRY. Mr. Holmes (*at pump*) wouldn't it be a good plan to go and ask the young lady?

DAVID. (*quickly*) A very good plan—thank you—Mulberry—I think I'll— Where is she? (*makes a dash after SYLVIA L., on a run over the bridge*)

MULBERRY. Over there in the daisy-fields saying—he loves me, he loves me not, etc.

CLEMANTINA. Well, who would have thought it.

MARTIN. (R.) (*to CLEM.*) I knew it all the time—

HELEN. (R. c.) What could I have been thinking of—

SAVAGE. (R. of HELEN) Of me—

MULBERRY. (*on, bridge L.*) “Here they are—they are coming.

DAVID. (*comes over bridge drawing SYLVIA after him—brings her to center*) (*SYLVIA flies to HELEN who embraces her*) (*in a dazed condition*) Miss Clemantina—I—I was the man—I was looking for— (*SYLVIA embraces MISS CLEM.*). (*DAVID grasps GERALD'S hands*) I— (*then exit to MARTIN*)

MARTIN. (*on balcony*) Mr. David—

DAVID. (*grasps his hands, then looks at his watch*) I—I must be in town to-night. (SYLVIA *exits into house R.*) Good-bye— God bless you all—I—I'm a happy man—Sylvia! (SYLVIA *rushes out, hat on and comes to R. of DAVID*) Where are you going?

SYLVIA. (R. C.) With you.

DAVID. (L. C.) You can't go with me— (SYLVIA *recoils with a little cry*)

GERALD. (L.) Don't you see David— (*whispers to him*)

DAVID. (C. to SYLVIA) I have so much to do— and I won't have time to come here again—we might just as well—I've waited all my life—It's no use waiting—I'll stay over until—Sylvia will you go home with me?

SYLVIA. (*goes to his arms*) (*he gathers her in his arms. Others turn their backs. Mr. M. pulls in a fish*)

CURTAIN



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