

EXPERIENCE

HOPE

YOUTH

LOVE



AMBITION

GLENN HALL

WILLIAM ELLIOT

ERNEST TRUEX

WEALTH



CARLETON MACY

EXPERIENCE



GEORGE V. HOBART



CHARLES A. STEVENSON

INTOXICATION



FREDERICK PERRY

PLEASURE



WILL DEMING

FRAILTY



WILLIAM ROSELLE

OPPORTUNITY



PASSION

DELUSION



EFFINGHAM PINTO

CHARLES DOW CLARK



EVERETT BUTTERFIELD

CRIME



PAUL DULLZELL

DEGRADATION



JOHN DALY MURPHY



ROBERT KELLY

THE ORIGINAL CAST AS PLAYED AT THE LAMBS - MARCH 1ST 1914

EXPERIENCE

A Morality Play
of Today

BY

GEORGE V. ^{W.}HOBART

ACTING VERSION



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TO
THE THREE
WHO HEARD IT FIRST

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THE CAST

(In the order of their appearance.)

LOVE

HOPE

YOUTH

AMBITION

EXPERIENCE

PLEASURE

OPPORTUNITY

GUSH

DRIVEL

EXCITEMENT

TRAVEL

SONG

SPORT

FASHION

BLUEBLOOD

STYLE

FRIVOLITY

CONCEIT

SNOB

PRIDE

BEAUTY

DECEIT

SLANDER

WEALTH

INTOXICATION

PASSION

First Episode.

Second Episode.

Third Episode.

ROULETTE DEALERS

GOOD NATURE

CAUTION

VENTURE

SUPERSTITION

SYSTEM

STUPID

DESPAIR

WAITER

CHANCE

CARELESS

THOUGHTLESS

Fourth Episode.

WORK

Fifth Episode.

GROUCH

FRAILTY

MAKESHIFT

ROGUE

DISSOLUTE

SNEAK

ILLITERATE

RECKLESS

CHEAT

INDOLENCE

RASCAL

POVERTY

LAW

Sixth Episode.

DELUSION

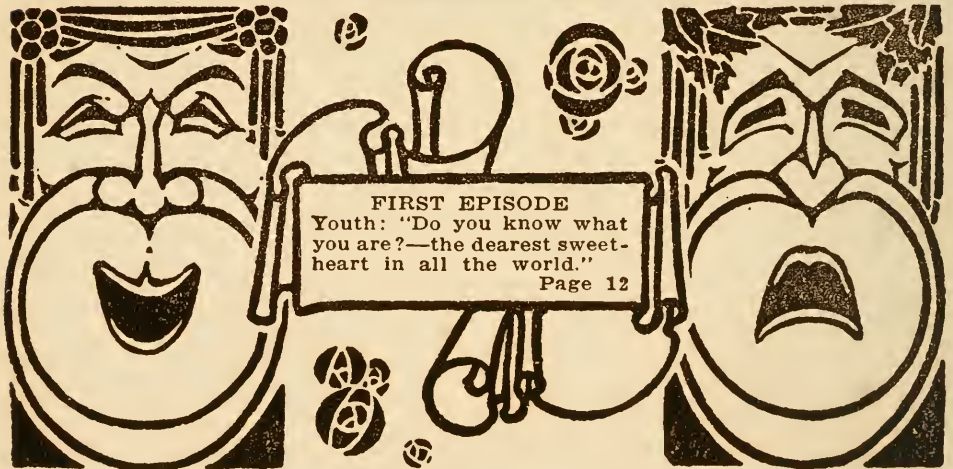
Seventh Episode.

HABIT

DEGRADATION

CRIME

Eighth Episode.



THE FIRST EPISODE.

IN THE LAND WHERE DREAMS BEGIN.

DESCRIPTION: *The Home of Love, on the Hilltop. There is a small, old-fashioned cottage at Left. It is covered with vines and rambler roses. A practical door and window in cottage. A rustic fence crosses stage obliquely. A country lane outside of the fence. Inside the fence and around the house is the flower garden. A rustic bench is near the fence. Peach and apple trees are in blossom. On the side of the hill in the distance is an old-fashioned country church.*

DISCOVERED: LOVE, standing alone by the fence, looking off down the lane as the curtain rises. Birds singing in the trees in the distance. LOVE turns presently and sits on the rustic bench near the fence—sighs. Enter HOPE.

HOPE

Good morning, Love, dear— isn't it a perfect morning!

LOVE

Yes, Hope, and I'm happy because the morning is so perfect. Youth is going away and I want him to have clear skies for his journey. It's lucky, isn't it, Hope, for him to start out for the Big World with sunshine all about him!

HOPE

Of course it's lucky. But are you really happy or just pretending?

EXPERIENCE

LOVE

Well, I don't suppose I can be really and truly happy when
the one I am fondest of in all the world is going away—
but I won't let him see that I'm unhappy.

HOPE

That's the way to do.

LOVE

And while he's gone—well, I'll have you, won't I, Hope?

HOPE

Yes, Love, I'll be with you every minute.

LOVE

I wonder what it's like out there in the Big World?

HOPE

Oh, it's a wonderful place. And Success will be waiting for
him right around the first corner.

LOVE

I know that—I'm sure of it—but he'll meet other people,
won't he?

HOPE

Of course—he'll meet a lot of people.

LOVE

Will he meet any girls, do you think?

HOPE

I suppose so.

LOVE

Pretty girls?

HOPE

Very likely!

LOVE

Do you think he'll meet any girl he'll like better than he likes me?

HOPE

Of course not. Aren't you his first sweetheart?

LOVE

Yes, but a young man very seldom marries his first sweetheart—didn't you know that?

HOPE

No.

LOVE

Well, it's true—I read it in a book.

HOPE

Don't you believe it. He'll come back to you and you'll live happily ever after.

(YOUTH'S *whistle heard off.*)

LOVE

There he is now!

(*Runs to gate—looks off—calls—"Woo-hoo!"—Answering whistle heard off.*)

Hope, dear, of course I don't want you to go, but—I just happened to think of something I wanted to say to him.

(*Whistle heard off—nearer—LOVE answers: "Woo-hoo."*)

Of course, dear, you may stay right here if you want to, but I was thinking that——

HOPE

(laughing)

I understand perfectly.

*(HOPE exits.)**(Whistle heard quite close—LOVE answers it. YOUTH runs on, speaking as he enters the gate.)*

YOUTH

Love, dear!

LOVE

(putting her arms around his neck)

Youth!

YOUTH

(Embraces her—kisses her)

Love, dear! You see, I'm away ahead of time—aren't you glad? And you're not going to be unhappy when I'm gone, are you, Love?

(LOVE tries hard to be brave and smiles up at him—shaking her head slowly in reply to his question.)

You're smiling— isn't that splendid! Come, let's sit here together, for we have so many things to talk about.

(They sit on bench—he kisses her.)

Do you know what you are?—the dearest sweetheart in all the world!

(Music—very faint and low—is heard from the church across the valley.)

LOVE

Listen!

(Pause—both listen to music in distance.)

YOUTH

It seems as though the little church were whispering good-bye to me.

LOVE

No, Youth, that's the way the spirit of your dear dead mother wishes you God-speed on your journey.

(Pause—both listen until music dies away.)

YOUTH

Yes, dear; that's the way she always comes back to me—in the voice of music.

(His tone changes.)

I had almost forgotten!

(Holds up left hand, showing ring on his little finger.)

Look, Love! the little ring I bought you to remember me by.

(He gives her the ring.)

LOVE

(looking at it)

To remember you by! Oh, Youth, Youth, dear! I don't need a ring for that. I'll remember you by the sun that rises and sets—I'll remember you by the breezes that whisper messages from you as they pass me by—I'll remember you by the blue sky that bends above us, and the summer rain beating upon the roof will sing your name to me. Through all the daylight hours I'll walk

with you through the Halls of Memory and when the night comes and the shadows deepen my spirit shall search for yours amidst the darkness.

(She puts her arms around him and her head on his shoulder.)

YOUTH

Oh, Love, dear, I didn't mean that you'd forget me—I—Oh, please, Love—look at me and smile again.

(She looks up and tries to smile.)

Won't you wear it, just as a keepsake?

LOVE

(taking the ring and kissing it several times.)

No, Youth, but I'm going to ask *you* to wear it—*always!* See! I've kissed it—now I'm going to put it on your finger and make a wish to keep evil away from you while you're away from me!

(She raises his hand to her lips and holds it there as she makes the wish.)

There, Youth, dear; I've made my wish—and when you come back——

YOUTH

And when I come back if I'm not able to put this little ring on your finger then you'll know me for an unworthy pilgrim whose soul is bruised and tarnished by contact with the world I'm setting out to conquer.

LOVE

Oh, but come back, even bruised or tarnished—come back. Youth—please don't forget me!

YOUTH

Forget you!—does the river forget to roll on to the sea?—do the stars forget to shine at night?—do the birds forget to sing in Springtime? Forget you—never—never—through pleasure or pain, through joy or sorrow, through weal or woe—and the good God lets me live!

(He embraces her.)

(HOPE enters from the cottage.)

HOPE

Remember, children, there must be no tears at parting!

YOUTH

(Goes to HOPE—kisses her on forehead)

Hope, my best of sisters!

(AMBITION enters at Right—stands outside the fence.)

AMBITION

Come, Youth; you've tarried over long. You said the parting would be brief.

(AMBITION comes through the gate and into the scene.)

YOUTH

Yes, Ambition, I'm quite ready now.

LOVE

(runs to YOUTH—puts her arms around him passionately)

Oh! I can't be brave—I can't! I can't!

YOUTH

Oh, Love, dear, you're crying—what's the matter?

LOVE

He frightens me, I tell you. I don't want you to go out into the big world with him.

YOUTH

But Ambition is my friend—he's eager and anxious to do great things for me in the big world—things that can only be done by him.—I must go with him, Love!

LOVE

I know—but I never saw him until now—and I'm frightened. Don't you understand—can't you see—Ambition is cold and cruel and heartless—and you'll be all alone with him.—Oh, don't go—Youth, just think—who will comfort you when you're weary?—who will bring tenderness to your bedside when you're ill?—*Please*, Youth, don't go!

YOUTH

But, Love, I shall never be weary and I shall never be ill—I am Youth and ills and weariness can never vex me. Oh, Love, why do you stand between me and Ambition?

LOVE

Because I hate him—he is taking you away from me.

YOUTH

But speak to him, please!

LOVE

No; I don't want to speak to him. We have nothing in common. Ambition is too selfish.

AMBITION

(*with a sneer*)

It is quite impossible for me to be more selfish than Love.

YOUTH

And I was so sure you'd be such good friends—I'm disappointed. Don't you remember that ever since we were little children we've roamed these hills together and dreamed our golden dreams!

AMBITION

Come on, Youth; come on!

YOUTH

And always in those dreams together we decided that I must go out into the Big World and get right into the thickest of the fight.

LOVE

Yes, but always I was to be by your side—always—till Ambition came. Please let me go with you!

AMBITION

No, no; you would be in the way. (*To YOUTH*) Come on, Youth; come on!

YOUTH

He means, Love, that only he can help me climb those perilous heights. See, I have money to start with—Ambition says it's plenty to take me up and up to the very summit of glory. Soon I'll be back—laurel-crowned and rich—and then just you and I together, Love!

AMBITION

Come on, Youth; there's time for Love later on.

YOUTH

Good-bye, dear Love! And, Hope, you'll be ever with her,
won't you?

HOPE

I'll never leave her.

YOUTH

God bless you!

AMBITION

Come on, Youth!

YOUTH

Look, Love, to the East—it is the morning of life and every
cloud is rosy with promise. Good-bye!

*(YOUTH embraces LOVE—then gently sends her to HOPE.
LOVE puts her arms around HOPE.)*

LOVE

(tearfully)

Oh, Hope! Hope! you are all I have left now.

YOUTH

(turning to AMBITION)

Go on, Ambition, I'll follow you up the ladder of the skies
and look down upon the world from your highest pin-
nacle—go on—I follow!

*(AMBITION goes out through the gate—YOUTH follows.
Together they walk proudly away down the country
lane. LOVE cries in HOPE'S arms.)*

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

THE SECOND EPISODE

IN THE STREET OF VACILLATION

DESCRIPTION: *An impressionistic view of the Big World.*

DISCOVERED: *AMBITION is walking on the scene, followed by YOUTH.*

AMBITION

Come on, Youth; you must follow closer; I have no time for those whose footsteps falter.

YOUTH

My footsteps haven't faltered—but I must look about me once in a while.

(EXPERIENCE *enters from the Left. He stands looking at YOUTH with a kindly smile on his face.*)

The Big World is very wonderful to me. In my fondest dreams it never seemed so grand and vast and awe-compelling. Its very bigness frightens me and in my heart there is a feeling of vague unrest. All about me the people hurry—to and fro, they hurry—endlessly, eternally hurrying, passing me by unnoticed, with never a smile of greeting, like shadows fading in a fog—their faces forever reflecting their inmost thoughts of money, money, money! And I, who am about to join this horde of hurrying humanity and become a shadow in a land of

shadows, feel in my soul a loneliness unspeakable. The Big World is very glorious and thrills me even as the stories of deeds of valor in the War of the Nations thrill me, but in this one weak moment my heart is yearning for the Hilltop and for the rustle of the wind through the sycamores. I feel like a coward as the battle begins; afraid of the noise and the fury of the fight—I want to turn back and run to the comforting arms of Love.—I want to see again the twilight deepen over the quiet valley and hear the last sweet call of the distant robin to its mate; I want to be where there is no selfishness in the hearts of those who smile a blessing on me and where the only sorrows that we know are those that are sent to us by a kind and loving God!

AMBITION

Come! come! you are homesick—that is all. The World is before you—make yourself its master.

YOUTH

Yes, yes, I know, it's gone now and I——

(Pulls himself together.)

I'm all right. Go on, I follow!

EXPERIENCE

(taking YOUTH'S hand and shaking it)

So those are your impressions of the Big World! And well put, my boy, well put!

YOUTH

(coldly)

Pardon me—I don't know you, sir!

EXPERIENCE

Experience is my name.

YOUTH

Still I don't know you.

EXPERIENCE

But you're going to—you're going to know me very well—
we're going to be great pals, my boy!

YOUTH

What are you?

EXPERIENCE

I am the champion school teacher of the world.

AMBITION

Come on, Youth—we're losing time.

EXPERIENCE

Who is your—Oh, of course, Ambition! I thought I recognized that voice!

(Crosses to him.)

What are you up to now—you dear old rascal!

AMBITION

Why do you delay us?—I am leading this boy on to fame and fortune.

EXPERIENCE

Delay you, God forbid! I shall journey with you if for no other reason than the exercise.

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

I don't like the way you speak to him. Ambition is my friend and you're a stranger.

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE

But in the end *I* shall be your best remembered friend.

YOUTH

I want you to know that I love and trust and believe in Ambition.

EXPERIENCE

(to AMBITION)

I, too, love you, though I know you to have such fickle qualities that friendship shudders at your name; I, too, trust you, though I know you to be the most accomplished cheat and hypocrite of all the ages; and I, too, believe in you though I know you to be the most glorious liar that ever inflamed the mind of man.

AMBITION

This is extremely annoying——Come, Youth, we must go.
(PLEASURE, a beautiful woman, enters from the Left.)

EXPERIENCE

(seeing her—speaks to YOUTH)

One moment!

(Goes to PLEASURE)

Good morning, Pleasure! I'm delighted to see you—how are you?

PLEASURE

A trifle weary this morning, dear friend. No sleep—and the wine too sweet—besides, those new dances—they are so acrobatic—they tire me dreadfully.

(Indicating YOUTH.)

But who is this? Why does he gaze so longingly in my direction?—I hope he isn't flirting with me!

EXPERIENCE

No, no; he doesn't know the meaning of the word.

(*To YOUTH.*)

Youth, come here; Pleasure, may I present Youth!

PLEASURE

Oh, this is a charming adventure. Youth, and innocent, Experience tells me!

EXPERIENCE

An incredible paradox in these days, isn't it? What with the Traffic in Souls in the Movies; Houses of Bondage in the legitimate; sex hygiene in the public schools and eugenics in the parlor, innocence has fled, shame-faced, to the wilderness.

PLEASURE

Absolutely true. All the children of my acquaintance are middle-aged roués.

(*Enter, from Right, OPPORTUNITY, a plain-faced woman, clad in sombre grey—she crosses AMBITION—pauses—then turns to him.*)

EXPERIENCE

(*laughing*)

It's easy to see he's never met you before—the boy is fascinated.

(*The three laugh and chat together.*)

AMBITION

(*as OPPORTUNITY turns and faces him*)

My best friend—Opportunity!

EXPERIENCE

OPPORTUNITY

I must speak with Youth. I bring him good news.

AMBITION

He is yonder. Speak to him!

PLEASURE

My dear Youth, you are splendid!—And this evening you will join me in the Primrose Path, won't you?

OPPORTUNITY

Youth!

YOUTH

The Primrose Path—Oh! I'd love to.

OPPORTUNITY

Youth!

PLEASURE

I *must* show you off to my friends.

EXPERIENCE

Be careful how you praise Youth or they'll be your friends no longer.

(The three laugh and chat in pantomime.)

OPPORTUNITY

Youth!

EXPERIENCE

(turns—sees OPPORTUNITY)

Oh, Opportunity—how are you? You want to speak to Youth? Pardon me!

(To YOUTH.)

This lady wishes to speak with you.



SECOND EPISODE

YOUTH: "Not now—wait till Pleasure finishes her story."

YOUTH

Not now—wait till Pleasure finishes her story.

(YOUTH and PLEASURE chat in pantomime—EXPERIENCE turns to OPPORTUNITY—shrugs his shoulders—turns to YOUTH and PLEASURE and joins their conversation in pantomime.)

OPPORTUNITY

(turns slowly to AMBITION)

I have called Youth but he does not heed me. I can wait no longer. Farewell!

(OPPORTUNITY walks off slowly at Right.)

AMBITION

Oh, the fool! He dallies there with Pleasure and lets Opportunity leave him.

(Loudly.)

Youth! Youth!

YOUTH

(rubbing his eyes—as though waking from a dream)

Yes, yes, who called?

AMBITION

I called you.

YOUTH

Oh, my dear friend!

(To PLEASURE.)

Forgive me, please—I must go!

PLEASURE

(holding YOUTH)

But to-night do not fail me!

EXPERIENCE

AMBITION

Pleasure, let that boy alone!

PLEASURE

Oh, you old skin and bones—behave!

(To YOUTH)

Remember, to-night—the Primrose Path!

(Laughs invitingly.)

AMBITION

Come, Youth, the road to fame!

(Points off at Right.)

PLEASURE

(insinuatingly)

The Primrose Path!

AMBITION

The Road to Fame!

PLEASURE

Remember, to-night, the Primrose Path!

(Laughs and walks off at Left.)

YOUTH

That way the Road to Fame—this way the Primrose Path of Pleasure. In her eyes I saw the promise of most wonderful delights and she says the path is strewn with thistle-down and the scent of wild flowers fills the air. And the other road is long and straight and narrow and there are brambles at either side to tear the flesh—Oh, God! what shall I do? What shall I do?

EXPERIENCE

(putting his arm around YOUTH's shoulder)

My boy, you'll do just as countless millions have done before
you—you'll reach out presently and grasp poor old blind
Destiny by the hand and then you'll take whichever path
he chances into!

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

THE THIRD EPISODE

IN THE PRIMROSE PATH

DESCRIPTION: *A golden Cabaret in that region known as the Haunts of Pleasure. Small tables on both sides at which men and women are dining. In the Center is an archway through which may be seen a wide pathway, bordered on each side by primroses, leading to a fountain. Through the large oval windows at the Right and Left of the room glimpses may be seen of a garden in the moonlight.*

DISCOVERED: *When Curtain rises the men and women are paired off at the eight tables as follows:*

| Women | | Men |
|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| SONG | (Table No. 1—Down Stage R.) | SPORT |
| BEAUTY | (Table No. 2—Right) | STYLE |
| SLANDER | (Table No. 3—Right) | SNOB |
| FRIVOLITY | (Table No. 4—Right) | CONCEIT |
| FASHION | (Table No. 1—Down Stage L.) | BLUEBLOOD |
| EXCITEMENT | (Table No. 2—Left) | TRAVEL |
| DECEIT | (Table No. 3—Left) | GUSH |
| PRIDE | (Table No. 4—Left) | DRIVEL |

(The lights in the room are subdued and on each table there are small electric lamps with red shades. The characters

are dining and chatting quietly. Presently when orchestra strikes up a "one-step" knives and forks are dropped hurriedly and all the characters get up and dance. When the dance is over the characters go back to the tables and resume dining. PLEASURE appears, standing in the archway in the background.)

PLEASURE

My dear friends!

(They all rise.)

Oh, *please!* don't get up! Go right ahead with the Battle of the Bottle and the Bird.

(Omnes, except GUSH and DRIVEL, sit at tables and continue dining.)

I merely wanted to see if you were all happy!

(GUSH and DRIVEL go to PLEASURE. DRIVEL keeps jabbering away all the time, but nobody understands a word he says.)

GUSH

I want to tell you, Pleasure——

PLEASURE

Yes, Gush—is everybody all right? All right, Drivel, I'm listening.

DRIVEL

(jabbering)

Wonderful part about it is—temperature just about right—tried to dance Tango but I stepped on her foot—he was here early in the evening—never could understand—I told him I wore size 36——

(And so on ad lib during the scene.)

GUSH

I want to tell you, Pleasure, that the wine is perfect—Chateau Viviana, '76—drops of gold, that's what it is—
Oh, Drivel, shut up—let me tell her.

(DRIVEL *keeps on jabbering.*)

And the birds, just melt in your mouth—I don't know when I ever tasted anything so gastronomically correct and perfect.

PLEASURE

(to DRIVEL)

Yes, Drivel, I hear you. Thank you, very much, Gush—
Yes, I'll dance with both of you later on.

(*She sends them back to their tables.*)

(EXCITEMENT and TRAVEL *leave their table and go to PLEASURE.*)

EXCITEMENT

(*very nervous—can't keep still a moment*)

Oh, Pleasure, dear, we're having a perfectly glorious time—the wine is perfectly entrancing and the food is perfectly exquisite—and, Pleasure, I have a secret for you—a perfectly astounding secret!

PLEASURE

Calm yourself, my dear Excitement! (*To TRAVEL*) What marvelous stories of adventure have you been telling Excitement, my dear Travel?

TRAVEL

I was merely telling Excitement about a dance I saw done by naked savages on the banks of the Goola River, near Lake Nyanza in Africa.

EXCITEMENT

And I suggested—didn't I, Travel?—I suggested that Travel must explain publicly just how the naked savages dance and then we'll have a perfectly splendid time learning it.

PLEASURE

You'll find, my dear Excitement, that the naked savages dance exactly as we do—except that they are not conscious of their nakedness.

TRAVEL

Thus obviating the necessity of a divorce court.

(PLEASURE *laughs and crosses to SONG, who is at Right.*)

EXCITEMENT

(*to TRAVEL, as they go back to their table*)

Oh! I'm so disappointed! I'm just crazy to have somebody invent a new and perfectly outrageous dance!

(*They sit at their table.*)

PLEASURE

(*to SONG*)

Come, my dear Song, it's time you were adding your voice to the general happiness.

SONG

What shall I sing, Pleasure?—Something classical?

SPORT

Classical—nothing! Sing something we can move our feet to. When you're out in the Primrose Path with Pleasure you don't want any music that gives you time to think—am I right, old dear?

PLEASURE

You're quite right, Sport!

SPORT

You know that classical stuff is all right on the pianola because you can get up and leave the room. But for me, something with the "pep" in it—something smooth with the little old ginger behind it. My brain is all wrapped up in dancing and I don't want anybody to take the cover off.

PLEASURE

Come, Song—something lively!

THE MODERN SONG

In the Primrose Path of Pleasure
 The songs of an ancient day
 With their grace and stately measure
 Are taboo and *passé*,
 And no echo of them lingers
 In the modern cabaret
 Where the singers snap their fingers
 And warble in this way:

REFRAIN:

Just call me baby—
 Or a beautiful doll!
 (She's a doll! She's a doll!)
 If you do then maybe
 I will answer your call!
 (She's a beauty—
 She's a cutey—
 With her baby eyes of blue!)
 Say, be

In a hurry—that's all!
 Just call me baby
 Or a beautiful doll!
 (Do you think she could be true?)

SECOND VERSE :

In days gone by and olden
 The songs they used to hear
 Had music sweet and golden
 And Mem'ry holds them dear;
 But nowadays it's different
 And sad it is to state
 That music is not music
 Unless you syncopate.

REFRAIN :

Just call me baby—
 Or a beautiful doll!
 (She's a doll! She's a doll!)
 If you do then maybe
 I will answer your call!
 (She's a beauty—
 She's a cutey—
 With her baby eyes of blue!)
 Say, be
 In a hurry—that's all!
 Just call me baby
 Or a beautiful doll!
 (Do you think she could be true?)

(After the dance Omnes go to tables.)

EXPERIENCE

PLEASURE

(to SONG—after the dance)

Thank you so much, Song. The selection was perfect—so fresh and modern.

(YOUTH and EXPERIENCE enter through archway, both very gay and happy.)

YOUTH

Pleasure!

PLEASURE

(greeting him)

Youth! then you *are* here—I'm so glad! Welcome, Experience!

EXPERIENCE

Thank you, Pleasure!

YOUTH

And, Pleasure, let me thank you! It's glorious. The music and laughter! and the air is sweet with the far faint odor of dying rose-leaves! Everywhere there are women's eyes that sparkle like the moonlight on a silent river! Everywhere there are white arms that beckon me to lips incarnadine with welcome. Oh! Pleasure, how wonderful you are to grant me all this.

(He turns to EXPERIENCE.)

Isn't she wonderful, Experience?

EXPERIENCE

Wonderful, indeed, in that she has no knowledge of the pain that follows ever in her footsteps.

PLEASURE

Why voice unpleasant thoughts, Experience? Pain and I have been enemies since the beginning of things.

(To YOUTH.)

Are you really glad you're here—in the Primrose Path?

YOUTH

Glad! My heart is beating with delight!

PLEASURE

Tell me, now—what do you think of me?

YOUTH

I think you are the end of the rainbow and all the treasures of the world are in your keeping. I think you are the sunshine of a cloudless day and all the flowers of the earth look up at you and worship.

PLEASURE

Oh, Youth! Youth! the poetry of Youth!

EXPERIENCE

Youth is the store-house of *all* poetry. He looks upon the world as a garden of roses and dreams never of winter nor decay.

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

But you, yourself, told me I'd find her fascinating. Come now, what do you think of her?

PLEASURE

Oh, don't ask him—please!

EXPERIENCE

In the light of ages I think—

(bows to PLEASURE)

—saving your presence, dear lady!—I think Pleasure is but the stain of last night's wine spilled upon the tablecloth. She is but a snowflake falling into the ocean.

Pleasure, my boy, is the last faint crimson flush which a setting sun has left to die alone in a cold gray sky.

YOUTH

But I don't understand. She looks so beautiful and so innocent.

EXPERIENCE

God made Pleasure innocent but Mankind has made her wise.

PLEASURE

(laughs)

True, possibly, but Youth must forever pursue me even if Experience proves me a will o' the wisp. Come, Youth, you must meet my friends.

(She takes him to the table down stage at Left where BLUEBLOOD and FASHION are sitting—EXPERIENCE follows.)

Fashion, may I present my friend, Youth!

YOUTH

Fashion—how do you do!

FASHION

Oh, yes, of course—Youth; awfully glad to see you. Pardon me, won't you, for not shaking hands—but I'm afraid my dress will fall off.

YOUTH

Oh, I feel so relieved. I thought it had fallen off.

FASHION

Have you noticed my earrings—absolutely new—imported from Algiers.

YOUTH

Are they really earrings?

FASHION

What did you think they were?

YOUTH

I thought they were alarm clocks to tell you when the styles change.

FASHION

Oh, no; we women don't need an alarm clock to awaken us to the importance of dressing stylishly. Have you noticed how my hair is done up—an imitation of an Esquimaux woman—don't you like it?

YOUTH

Yes, I like it horribly.

FASHION

I just love to find a new excuse to make myself uncomfortable.

(Goes back to her table.)

YOUTH

Have you ever tried putting pebbles in your shoes?

(To EXPERIENCE—ingenuously.)

Isn't she great?

PLEASURE

(to YOUTH)

And this, my dear Youth, is my friend, Blueblood.

YOUTH

Pleased to know you.

BLUEBLOOD

Of course you have a pedigree?

EXPERIENCE

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

Have I?

EXPERIENCE

If you haven't you can buy one.

BLUEBLOOD

You see, my people came over here with the Pilgrim Fathers.
One of my ancestors was the first to put his foot on
Plymouth Rock.

YOUTH

Is that so! Well, four of my ancestors carried the Rock
into Plymouth and put it where your ancestor could step
on it—so you see, we must be related through our an-
cestors.

(To EXPERIENCE.)

Was that all right?

EXPERIENCE

Yes, but our friend Blueblood doesn't understand. He's
using some of the Rock for his head.

PLEASURE

(offering YOUTH a wine glass—temptingly)

A glass of wine, Youth!

YOUTH

Wine!

*(Looks at it—wavers—draws nearer—then goes back
to EXPERIENCE.)*

What do you say, Experience?

EXPERIENCE

You are Youth! and temptation is ever at your elbow.



THIRD EPISODE

PLEASURE: "Come, Youth, a glass of wine—you'll like it."

YOUTH

Temptation—nonsense! I'm thirsty, that's all.

(*Takes wine glass from PLEASURE—tastes it.*)

Great!

PLEASURE

Drink it, Youth—you'll like it.

YOUTH

(*drinks wine*)

Fine! This is the stuff they write songs about, isn't it?—
you know, "Oh, sparkling wine—divine!"

(*Laughs.*)

That's easy to understand because it tastes just like liquid
music. May I have another glass?

PLEASURE

Certainly.

YOUTH

(*to EXPERIENCE*)

Isn't it beyond words how that stuff takes hold of you and
makes you want to sing and dance and laugh?

EXPERIENCE

Yes, and there's a lot of laughter going on in hell right now,
my boy!

YOUTH

Oh, tush!

PLEASURE

(*offering wine*)

Here, Youth! Drink deep!

YOUTH

(*taking glass*)

You're mighty sweet and good to me, Pleasure.

(*Drinks.*)

The poets have made no false statements—this is the real thing.

(*Drinks.*)

It's an awful hit with me—I'm going to be crazy about this stuff.

STYLE

(*to PLEASURE*)

Pardon me! I'd like to speak to Youth.

PLEASURE

(*to YOUTH*)

Oh, Youth! I want you to meet my friend, Style!

YOUTH

How do you do, Style!

STYLE

Hello! Pardon me, but your necktie! It's just a sixteenth of an inch too narrow!

YOUTH

Oh! is that so!

STYLE

And your coat—at the waist line—a little loose—just a trifle!—The trousers too long—notice mine! And they're not wearing that style of collar.

YOUTH

Gee whiz! is that so!

STYLE

(*gives card*)

My card—I'll call for you to-morrow—take you to my tailor's.

YOUTH

(giving his card)

Will you, really! That's good of you, old top!

STYLE

You must pay more for your clothes—see you to-morrow.

YOUTH

(to PLEASURE)

Important, isn't he?

PLEASURE

Style is always important with us, my dear Youth! Come, you must meet all my friends.

(They go to table at Left where EXCITEMENT and TRAVEL are sitting—PLEASURE introduces YOUTH in pantomime.)

EXPERIENCE

(to FRIVOLITY)

You look tired, Frivolity—what's the matter?

FRIVOLITY

I'm not tired—I'm worried—I don't get enough dancing—the daylight arrives so early—it certainly does interfere with my night life. Now look at Conceit—he never worries about anything.

CONCEIT

Why should I? I am handsome and rich. I have the most perfect manners—the women adore me—I know everything there is to know—I am Nature's most perfect specimen.

EXPERIENCE

You should worry, indeed!

(EXPERIENCE talks to SLANDER and SNOB at Right. As

PLEASURE and YOUTH turn from the table where they have been talking in pantomime with EXCITEMENT and TRAVEL, SNOB goes to them.)

PLEASURE

Oh, Snob—just a moment—I want you to meet my friend, Youth.

YOUTH

(warmly)

Glad to know you!

(EXPERIENCE goes to YOUTH.)

SNOB

(coldly)

How do you do!

(To PLEASURE.)

In our set—permanently?

PLEASURE

I hope so.

SNOB

Family or money?

PLEASURE

A little of both.

YOUTH

What does he mean?

SNOB

I shall have to reserve my consideration until I am completely satisfied he is eligible.

(Looks at YOUTH coldly and walks away.)

YOUTH

(hotly)

Well, the nerve of that shrimp—if I had him outside I'd punch his head off.

EXPERIENCE

Easy, Youth, easy! In the Primrose Path a shrimp of that kind is considered a delicacy.

(PLEASURE *in the meantime has gone up to table at Left and brings PRIDE down with her.*)

PLEASURE

Pride—let me present Youth!

YOUTH

Charmed, I'm sure.

(PLEASURE *goes to table at Left.*)

PRIDE

(*with her head high in the air*)

Thank you!

(*Goes back haughtily to her table.*)

YOUTH

(*to EXPERIENCE*)

She's somewhat impressed with herself, isn't she?

EXPERIENCE

Pride walks in majesty but she's been known to stub her toe.

PLEASURE

(*who has brought BEAUTY forward*)

Beauty, dear, you must know my friend, Youth!

BEAUTY

(*smiling*)

We should be good friends.

YOUTH

(*smiling*)

Of course we should!

(*To EXPERIENCE*)

Isn't she lovely?

EXPERIENCE

(DECEIT *steps in between* YOUTH and BEAUTY.)

DECEIT

(to BEAUTY)

How charming you look to-day, Beauty! Your eyes are wonderful and your cheeks like roses!

BEAUTY

(*demurely*)

Oh, thank you, Deceit.

DECEIT

(to YOUTH)

Look closely—there are crowsfeet about her eyes—and the roses in her cheeks are from the drug-store.

(*Laughs and goes to her table.*)

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

Who is she?

EXPERIENCE

Deceit—strange you've never met her before.

(PLEASURE *brings* SLANDER *down to* YOUTH.)

PLEASURE

Slander—this is Youth. I don't know whether he'll listen to you or not.

(SLANDER *takes* YOUTH *aside.*)

SLANDER

Pardon me, Youth, but I noticed you talking with Beauty. Now don't say I told you, but don't you think it strange!—she was seen at a road-house dining with a married man—don't say I told you!

(*Holds up her finger warningly and walks away.*)

YOUTH

(*goes to EXPERIENCE*)

I don't believe it—did you hear what that woman said about Beauty?

EXPERIENCE

The wise man is deaf when Slander talks.

YOUTH

Who is she?

EXPERIENCE

She is the snake in Society's garden and her poison fangs are forever fatal to the innocent.

(*He turns and finds YOUTH with bowed head looking at the ring on his little finger.*)

But come, my boy, you are letting Beauty stand there neglected. What's the matter?

YOUTH

I was wondering if it's all worth while. You see, Experience, there is so much evil interwoven with the good that I'm confused. And when I looked at this ring I thought of one who——

(*The dance music starts—BEAUTY calls YOUTH and they dance. Omnes dance as before. EXPERIENCE and PLEASURE dance together, and finally all dance off the scene. PLEASURE returns immediately and sits smiling at R. WEALTH walks in and stands looking gloomily at PLEASURE. She turns presently and sees him.*)

PLEASURE

(*going to WEALTH*)

Wealth—where have you been all the evening?

WEALTH

I've been in the background. Say, Pleasure, what's the matter with you lately?

PLEASURE

I don't know, Wealth—I answer your every call very promptly.

WEALTH

No, no, it isn't that. There's something wrong. I look at you and you seem to be there but when I take you in my arms you're a shadow—a shadow. The Primrose Path is there—the Path I've walked for years—do you think it's the same path?

PLEASURE

Certainly, Wealth.

WEALTH

Well, it isn't—not to me. I used to walk there on the petals of rare orchids—now I feel flinty rocks beneath my feet—and those flowers, they're withering—fading—day by day I've watched them fade. I've poured gold—molten gold around their roots but they keep on fading—I wonder what is the matter with me?

(WEALTH *sits despondently at Right. The dance music swells and YOUTH dances on and into the scene, followed by EXPERIENCE—they dance about gayly.*)

YOUTH

(to PLEASURE)

Everything you promised me is here—it's wonderful!

EXPERIENCE

Youth, I want you to meet my friend, Wealth!

YOUTH

(shaking hands with WEALTH)

Glad to know you!

WEALTH

Youth! Oh! Yes, yes, of course; I was——
(YOUTH *leaves him—goes to PLEASURE*)

Come back, Youth! Now I know—I understand—it was with the feet of youth I walked on the petals of rare orchids—it was through the eyes of youth I saw the flowers bloom—it was with the arms of youth I found Pleasure a substance—I want to be like him again—I want youth—I'll give all I have for one hour of youth's enthusiasm. Tell me, Experience, tell me, can it be done?

EXPERIENCE

Can you, with your money, pick one star from the canopy of Heaven and set it in some new position?

WEALTH

No, no!

EXPERIENCE

Can you, with the power of your gold, stop the flight of the world and roll it backward, backward?

WEALTH

No, no!

EXPERIENCE

Then these two tasks are easier far than to bring back for even an hour your squandered youth!

(WEALTH *drops despondently in a bench at Right—sits with bowed head.* AMBITION *appears suddenly up stage at Left—he is listless and speaks with a weak voice.*)

AMBITION

(*weakly*)

Youth!

EXPERIENCE

(*seeing him—goes quickly to YOUTH*)

He's calling you!

YOUTH

Who's calling me?

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE

Listen, don't you hear him?

AMBITION

(weakly)

Youth!

YOUTH

I don't hear anything.

(To PLEASURE—eagerly.)

Tell me again about the wonderful delights in store for me.

(AMBITION, with bowed head and faltering feet, walks off slowly.)

PLEASURE

In my domain delights must come unheralded—for Surprise is Pleasure's dearest friend.

(There is a subdued commotion and groans are heard off at Left.)

What's the matter?

EXPERIENCE

I'll see!

(EXPERIENCE hurries off at Left.)

YOUTH

He's a great companion—Experience!—I've enjoyed every minute I've been with him—and I need him.

WEALTH

(looking up)

Listen to all he tries to teach you for the price he charges is a heavy one.

(EXPERIENCE returns.)

PLEASURE

What was the matter?

EXPERIENCE

Ambition is dead.

YOUTH

(*lightly*)

Oh! is that so?—too bad!

(*Raises wine glass.*)

To Pleasure—for every bubble whispers your name as it expires.

EXPERIENCE

(*raising glass*)

To Pleasure!

(*The three drink and laugh.*)

PLEASURE

Why are you so gloomy, Wealth?

WEALTH

(*rising*)

Ghosts—ghosts—all around me—ghosts! The ghost of my own youth—the ghost of Ambition—I'm getting old—that's it! And my money——

(*laughs*)

—my money can't down the ghosts of the things that should have been.

EXPERIENCE

Brace up, old boy—you're getting fanciful!

(*INTOXICATION, a girl, enters—she is wild-eyed—her hair is touseled and she is smiling inanely.*)

INTOXICATION

Hello, all of you, whoever you are—whee! I'm having the time of my life!

EXPERIENCE

(*greeting her*)

Intoxication—glad to see you, old girl! You arrived at the right moment. Pleasure was becoming just a bit jaded. I want to present my friend, Youth!

INTOXICATION

Pleased to meet you!

YOUTH

I'm glad to see you—I like your style—if you're a friend of my friend, Experience, I'm going to like you—sit down here with me!

(YOUTH and INTOXICATION sit at table.)

EXPERIENCE

Come over here, Wealth, and join us. Here's a lady who can drive those ghosts of yours away.

WEALTH

Who's that? Oh! Intoxication—I know her well. I've known her ever since I was that high. She's all right at night but she's damned poor company in the morning.

(WEALTH sits at table with YOUTH and INTOXICATION—*Omnes drink wine.*)

EXPERIENCE

Come on, pour out some more of that stuff that made Omar Khayaam a poet.

INTOXICATION

Sure, boys, turn the grape loose—turn it loose.

YOUTH

(to PLEASURE, who is standing near him)

Say! this is life, isn't it, eh?

PLEASURE

It's my life.

EXPERIENCE

(raising glass)

Here's to to-night! To-morrow hasn't happened yet.

(*Omnes drink and laugh—all show the effects of liquor since INTOXICATION joined them.*)

WEALTH

That's right—to-morrow hasn't happened yet——

(Drinks.)

That's the philosophy for me!

(Gets up—shows effects of liquor.)

You're a fine girl, Intoxication—you chase all the ghosts away—you sure do!

(Begins to throw money away.)

Open more wine—a lot of it—enough to drown all the ghosts in the world.

YOUTH

(imitating WEALTH—throws his money away)

That's the idea—wine—women—song—old Wealth is all right, isn't he? I want to do just like he does.

(Throws money away.)

INTOXICATION

(pulling him to table)

Sit down with me—your wine's getting warm.

WEALTH

Come on, Pleasure—I'm my old self again! Let's go gliding down the Primrose Path!

PLEASURE

I'm right with you, Wealth—away we go!

(Loud music—WEALTH and PLEASURE dance off. EXPERIENCE, INTOXICATION and YOUTH at the table—drinking.)

INTOXICATION

(to YOUTH)

Are you with me?

EXPERIENCE

YOUTH

I'm with you, all right! I'm going to devote myself exclusively to you!

(*Drinks.*)

INTOXICATION

(*to EXPERIENCE*)

How about you—you don't seem to reflect my genial presence as much as he does.

EXPERIENCE

No; I've met you oftener—you see, you're a stranger to him.

(*PASSION, a very beautiful and alluring creature, enters through the archway and glides down stage in a snake-like manner—she stands gazing at YOUTH—he looks up presently and sees her.*)

YOUTH

Look! look! who is she?

EXPERIENCE

Passion!

(*To PASSION.*)

What do you want?

PASSION

I want him!

(*Her eyes fixed on YOUTH.*)

YOUTH

Look at her eyes—look! Good God! can you see—she wants me, I tell you.

(*To INTOXICATION.*)

Take your hands off me—you're holding me back.

PASSION

(*gazing at YOUTH*)

Youth, I want you, with all my burning heart, I want you!

YOUTH

(*to EXPERIENCE*)

Tell me, tell me—who is she?

EXPERIENCE

She is Passion—the High Commissioner from his Satanic Majesty.

PASSION

Come to me, Youth—my arms are aching to enfold you.

YOUTH

Listen! there's music all about her—don't you hear it?

EXPERIENCE

Yes, the poisonous melody that the siren serpent uses in her dance of death.

PASSION

Oh, Youth, Youth, my very soul is on fire—and I want to smother you in the flames of joy.

YOUTH

She's calling me—and I want her.

(*To INTOXICATION.*)

Take your damned hands off me!

(He struggles away from INTOXICATION, who follows him—he staggers to PASSION.)

I must have her—she was meant for me since the beginning of the world——

(PASSION grabs his right hand—the one on which is the ring—and starts to kiss it—as she does so she speaks.)

PASSION

I love you, Youth!

YOUTH

(takes his hand away from her mouth—looks drunkenly at the ring)

Love! Love! Wait a minute! She put that ring there to keep evil away.—Wait a minute!—there's something wrong—somebody is trying to whisper to me—wait, wait—it's far away—there's a lane—a country lane—and she's standing there—waiting—yes, yes, she's crying—I don't want to see her cry.

(To INTOXICATION.)

I'm going with you, understand—going with you——

(INTOXICATION helps him back to the table—both drop in chairs.)

Help me, will you?—Help me to stop seeing her cry.—I don't want to see her cry—hurts me in my heart——

(To INTOXICATION.)

Put your hand in front of my eyes so I can't see that other woman—can't see—she's crying—hurts—other woman—can't——

(Drops his head drunkenly on table. INTOXICATION drops hers at the same time.)

PASSION

(*intensely*)

Let him go to his drunken sleep and may every curse that my burning body can suggest follow him through the dark corridors of his dreams—bah! he isn't worth while.

EXPERIENCE

He is worth while, because he had the courage to resist the queen regent of Hell. Of two evils he has chosen—the lesser!

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

INTERVAL.

THE FOURTH EPISODE.

IN THE CORRIDORS OF CHANCE.

DESCRIPTION: *A room in a modern Gambling Palace. Doors at Right and at Left. Through an archway in back is seen part of another room where men and women are gambling. A roulette table in the Center of the stage with the wheel in the middle of the table and the lay-out of numbers on each side of the wheel. The furnishings and furniture are rich and in good taste.*

DISCOVERED: *When curtain rises there are two "dealers" at the roulette table in C.—one at Right of the wheel—the other at the Left. There are eight characters at the table, as follows: At the end of the table at stage Left is DESPAIR, pale-faced and with disordered hair. He is playing desperately and losing. Between DESPAIR and the DEALER, facing the audience, is STUPID, red-faced and drunk, scattering his bets aimlessly and winning. Two other men are at the Left end of the table with their backs to the audience. These are SYSTEM and SUPERSTITION, playing with characteristic actions. At the Right end of the table is VENTURE, and standing near him is CAUTION, who is nervous and anxious. Between VENTURE and the DEALER AT RIGHT is GOOD NATURE, losing and laughing. At the Right end of the table with their backs to the audience are two college boys, CARELESS and*

THOUGHTLESS. CHANCE, *the proprietor, moves about from one room to the other. The waiter, a mulatto, in Tuxedo, moves about, bringing drinks, etc. Through the archway in another room men and women may be seen, gambling feverishly over another table.*

(*As the Curtain rises the DEALER AT RIGHT is just calling the number.*)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Seventeen—black in the odd—middle colmun—second dozen!
(DEALER AT RIGHT *pays* VENTURE. GOOD NATURE *loses, with a laugh.* CARELESS and THOUGHTLESS *lose.* DEALER AT LEFT *pays* STUPID and SUPERSTITION. DESPAIR and SYSTEM *lose.*)

GOOD NATURE

Stung again!

(*Laughs and looks over his checks—proceeds to bet again.*)

DEALER AT LEFT

Make your bets, gentlemen!

CAUTION

We've won enough now, Venture; come on, let's go home!

VENTURE

Just one more bet, Caution—this is the last—honestly!
(*Places checks.*)

SYSTEM

(*looking at small book which he takes from his pocket*)
According to my system, red should have won that time—
can't understand it.

STUPID

(*drunkenly*)

That's the idea—set and cop!

EXPERIENCE

(To DESPAIR.)

What's the matter with you, Despair? You haven't won a nickle since you sat in—look at me—I just spread 'em all around and set and cop—that's me—set and cop!

(Spreads more checks.)

DESPAIR

It's hopeless—I know it—and I want to win—God! how I want to win!

(Places another bet. DEALER spins the ball—all watch it intently till it drops in a number.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

(calling)

Sixteen—red in the even—first column—second dozen!

(Both dealers take in losing checks. DESPAIR, SYSTEM, GOOD NATURE, THOUGHTLESS and CARELESS lose—others win.)

GOOD NATURE

(laughing)

Blast me if I didn't lose again—ha, ha, ha, ha!

DESPAIR

Oh, why, why, can't it break for me—just once!

STUPID

(drunkenly)

It don't break for you, Despair, because you don't understand the game—you gotta play it blind—see!—get full of booze—and then you don't care whether you win or lose and you just set and cop. Fortune loves a drunken man—get me, Despair!—Come on, let's tease a highball—what d'ye say, Despair? Get some benzine under your belt and set and cop!

DESPAIR

No, no, Stupid—I don't want to drink—I want to win—just a little—I *must* win!

DEALER AT LEFT

Make your bets, gentlemen!

CAUTION

You'd better stop now, Venture—you've won enough; let's go home.

VENTURE

This one is the last—on the level it is, Caution!

(VENTURE *places a bet. The DEALER spins the ball—all watch intently until it stops.*)

DEALER AT RIGHT

(calling)

Thirty-six in the Red.

(VENTURE *loses and CAUTION is very much upset. SUPERSTITION loses. SYSTEM wins and is elated. THOUGHTLESS and CARELESS win and make a fuss about it. GOOD NATURE wins. STUPID wins. DESPAIR wins.*)

CAUTION

(to VENTURE)

See, you've lost! I told you not to play any more.—Come now, you *must* cash in—we're going home.

(YOUTH and EXPERIENCE *enter in back and are seen watching the play at the table in the other room.*)

VENTURE

Oh! all right; but I'll win the next time.

(VENTURE *"cashes in" and when he gets his money CAUTION takes him by the arm and they go out.*)

SYSTEM

(elated)

I knew my system couldn't fail.—Do you see, Superstition, do you see, I've won!

EXPERIENCE

SUPERSTITION

Yes, System, you've won two bets out of twenty—and you made me lose that last one!

SYSTEM

Why, Superstition, how did I make you lose?

SUPERSTITION

Because you touched my arm just as I was going to bet.
Keep away from me!

STUPID

(drunkenly)

What's the matter with you, Despair?—You won that, didn't you?—Didn't you set and cop?

DESPAIR

I won that, yes! when I had but a few checks left—I lose so much and win so little.

STUPID

Oh, that's all right—get a good, fancy little bun on you and you'll set and cop every time—see! look at me!—Fortune loves a drunken man!

DEALER AT LEFT

Make your bets, gentlemen!

(Enter YOUTH and EXPERIENCE—CHANCE meets them—the waiter takes their hats and overcoats.)

CHANCE

(to EXPERIENCE)

How do you do? Glad to see you!
(They shake hands.)

EXPERIENCE

Chance, I'm pleased to see you again. Youth! this is the party you wanted to meet—my friend, Chance!

YOUTH

(shaking hands)

That's right; I came out looking for you to-night. You know I've spent a lot of money in the Primrose Path so I thought I'd drop in here and get some of it back—you don't mind, do you?

CHANCE

This is the place to get it, Youth. Go as far as you like.

(In the meantime, those at the table have placed their bets and the ball is spinning. YOUTH, EXPERIENCE and CHANCE look on.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

(when ball stops)

Thirty-three in the Black!

(STUPID wins—SUPERSTITION wins—GOOD NATURE loses—DESPAIR loses—SYSTEM loses—CARELESS and THOUGHTLESS lose.)

GOOD NATURE

String me high if I didn't miss it again!

(Laughs.)

STUPID

(gathering his checks together drunkenly)

Set and cop, eh?

(Laughs.)

I'm going to have a little mercy—that's what I'm going to do—have a little mercy!—I ain't going to win all the money in the world and put this place on the bum—here! I'm cashin' in—see! gi'me a lot of money!

(To DESPAIR.)

You see! you poor old boob—you, Despair—you see!—if you had a skin-full of red-eye you'd set and cop, understand?

(Gets his money.)

I'm going to beat it now and open a new bank of England.

(Sees CHANCE.)

Much obliged, old friend Chance! I'm taking away a fat little bundle of your gate receipts, but you don't care, do you? Good-night, everybody!

(Laughs.)

Say! Fortune loves a drunken man, eh?

(Exits through archway. CHANCE follows and is seen talking to STUPID near the other table. Presently STUPID sits at the table in the other room and CHANCE returns to front room.)

DEALER AT LEFT

Make your bets, gentlemen!

YOUTH

(as STUPID goes out)

That fellow is lucky—I'm going to take his seat.

(YOUTH sits in the chair which STUPID has just vacated.

He takes out a roll of money—gives it to the DEALER.)

There's my entire bank roll—give me some checks, please!

(Turns to EXPERIENCE, who stands behind him.)

Watch me! I feel that I'm going to win a lot of money.

EXPERIENCE

You're very foolish to feel that way in a gambling house.

(The ball spins and when it drops the DEALER calls the number.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Nine in the Red!

(YOUTH wins—all the others lose.)

YOUTH

(elated—to EXPERIENCE)

Did you see that?—I won the very first bet! I'll be on Easy Street in a few minutes.



FOURTH EPISODE
EXPERIENCE: "It takes more than a few minutes to get to Easy Street.
The railroad service is very poor."



EXPERIENCE

It takes more than a few minutes to get to Easy Street.
The railroad service is very poor.

SUPERSTITION

(to DEALER)

Cash those for me! I'm through. I hate to sit next to a
jinx.

SYSTEM

(*looking at his book*)

That's the fourth time to-night that number came up—I
don't understand it!

SUPERSTITION

(to SYSTEM)

You made me lose that last bet.

SYSTEM

I did! How?

SUPERSTITION

Why, you put your foot on my chair and I lose 200 cold—
that's what you did—put your foot on my chair.

(*Takes his money and goes. The ball rolls again and the
DEALER calls the number when it stops.*)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Twenty-seven in the Red.

(*YOUTH wins—the others lose.*)

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

See! What did I tell you? This a lucky night for me.

EXPERIENCE

All right; if you feel that way just close your eyes and pray
for daylight.

EXPERIENCE

(CHANCE is standing near the two college boys, CARELESS and THOUGHTLESS, watching them.)

CARELESS

I'm through, Thoughtless—that's my last stack!

THOUGHTLESS

Same here—Gee whiz! what a run of bad luck. I'm out fifteen dollars!

CARELESS

I only had ten to start with—now I haven't even carfare.

THOUGHTLESS

Gee! and it's a long walk home.

(CHANCE takes a blue chip from his pocket—deliberately drops it on the floor—then stoops and picks it up.)

CHANCE

(to CARELESS)

Pardon me, but you dropped a blue check.

CARELESS

Oh! is that so! Gee! that's lucky!

(To DEALER.)

Cash that, will you!

(The DEALER does so.)

Come on, Thoughtless, we won't have to walk home.

THOUGHTLESS

Say! Careless, that's the luckiest play you made to-night when you dropped that chip on the floor.

(CARELESS and THOUGHTLESS exeunt through archway and off—CHANCE watches them with an amused smile.)

DEALER AT LEFT

Make your bets, gentlemen!

(Ball spins again and DEALER calls it when it stops.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Nine in the Red!

(YOUTH and GOOD NATURE win—DESPAIR and SYSTEM lose.)

YOUTH

(*excitedly, to EXPERIENCE*)

There it is again, see! Why, nothing can stop me—nothing.

EXPERIENCE

Nothing—except possibly a losing streak.

GOOD NATURE

(*laughs*)

Every time I win I bet five—every time I lose I bet a hundred—luck certainly is funny!

(*Laughs.*)

SYSTEM

(*getting up*)

According to my book black should have won. Can't understand it.

(SYSTEM starts for the other room—CHANCE stops him.)

CHANCE

Any luck to-night, System?

SYSTEM

No, none at all. I played my little book and lose a thousand.
(Hurries out through archway and off. In the meantime, the ball is rolling again and when it stops the DEALER calls the number.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Thirty-four in the Red.

YOUTH

(*to EXPERIENCE*)

Say! how long has this been going on here? If I had known

this bank was open every night I'd have been here long ago.

EXPERIENCE

Save your praise of this bank till you know it better. This is a financial institution where they loan you money with a smile and exact payment in blood.

DESPAIR

True! every word of it. Exact payment in blood—that's it!

YOUTH

(to DESPAIR)

Say, old side-partner, they're not breaking for you, are they?

DESPAIR

No; I've given up. There's no hope for me.

YOUTH

Oh, yes, there is. What's your name?

DESPAIR

Despair is my name.

YOUTH

Oh! Well, I wouldn't give up yet—try it once more.

DEALER AT LEFT

Make your bets, gentlemen!

DESPAIR

(*hopelessly*)

I have to give up—I have nothing left.

YOUTH

Here! I'll let you have a stack.

DESPAIR

No, no; thank you.

YOUTH

Please! take it now and bet as I do. Put up the whole stack
—you're sure to win.

(YOUTH *bets on a number*—DESPAIR *puts the borrowed stack on the same number. The DEALER spins the ball and when it stops rolling calls the number.*)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Eight in the Black!

(YOUTH *and* DESPAIR *both lose.*)

YOUTH

Gee! that's queer. That's the first time I've lost.

(*To* DESPAIR.)

Come on, I'll stake you again.

DESPAIR

(*getting up*)

No, no, thank you. You have a kind heart—but I can't take
advantage of it. I'm gone, I tell you, gone!

(DESPAIR *goes to big chair at extreme Left—sits in chair—buries his head in his arms—cries quietly. CHANCE looks at him, smiling.*)

YOUTH

(*to* EXPERIENCE)

He isn't a regular gambler, is he?

EXPERIENCE

No, poor chap; he is one of Fortune's fools. He goes a-woo-
ing with tears in his voice and the fickle jade laughs at
him.

YOUTH

Well, I'm not going to let her laugh at me. I'll double up
now and get that last bet back.

(YOUTH *places his checks. The ball spins. The DEALER calls the number.*)

EXPERIENCE

DEALER AT RIGHT

Thirty-two in the Red!

(YOUTH wins—GOOD NATURE loses.)

YOUTH

(elated)

See! in the Red again! It's my night, all right. Now I'm going to make one big bet and quit.

EXPERIENCE

Any time you quit you're that much ahead of the game.

YOUTH

Here I go! I'm not playing any system so it doesn't matter. I'll stick to the Red.

(Puts up a lot of chips. The ball spins and the DEALER calls the number.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Thirty-six in the Red!

YOUTH

What did I tell you?

EXPERIENCE

You told me you'd make one big bet and quit.

YOUTH

And quit is just what I'm going to do.

(To DEALER.)

Give me a whole lot of money for these, will you, old happy-face!

(YOUTH gives his checks to DEALER, who counts them and pays YOUTH.)

GOOD NATURE

(to the DEALER AT RIGHT)

I'm through.

(Gets up.)

Two thousand dollars at one settin'.
(*Laughs.*)

THE WAITER
(*offering a platter*)

Sandwiches, sir!

GOOD NATURE
Oh, hell! do you think I can get even eating sandwiches!
(*Laughs.—Exit GOOD NATURE.*)

YOUTH
(*getting up—very much elated*)
There's a roll for you! All I lost in the Primrose Path—
see, I got it back again in fifteen minutes. Dame For-
tune isn't so very fickle with me.

EXPERIENCE
Just give her time, my boy; the more you learn to care for
her the more cruelly she'll treat you.
(*EXPERIENCE walks over to Right and goes in the other
room. YOUTH turns, meets CHANCE, who has strolled
over to Left during the last few bets.*)

YOUTH
Oh, there you are, Chance! See, I've made good—and let
me thank you for your hospitality.

CHANCE
You're entirely welcome. Won't you sit here and let my
hospitality take on a new form—say, for instance, a bot-
tle of wine?
(*YOUTH and CHANCE sit at small table at Left. The
waiter hovers near.*)

YOUTH
Thank you, no wine—seltzer and milk, if I may.
(*At a sign from CHANCE the waiter goes out.*)

CHANCE

You've been very lucky to-night, Youth. It seems almost a pity to end the affair so tamely.

YOUTH

Tamely! What do you mean?

CHANCE

When Fortune smiles so beguilingly why not accept the invitation for all it's worth—embrace her, my boy; she'll stand for it.

(Waiter brings the drink and a box of cigars.)

YOUTH

That's the way I feel about it, but Experience tells me that Fortune is not to be depended upon.

CHANCE

Oh, pshaw! Experience gives everybody cold feet.

YOUTH

My regards!

(Drinks.)

CHANCE

Drink hearty!—Have a cigar!

(YOUTH takes cigar—lights it.)

No matter what your friend says Fortune is crazy about you—can't you see it! Go on, set in there again. Force your luck while it's with you and get a roll that's worth while. The sky is the limit for you. Of course, I'm not being very kind to my own pocketbook when I talk in this manner, but I like to see Youth have his fling.

YOUTH

Wait till I count what I have. Maybe there's enough here for my purposes.

(YOUTH counts his money. In the meantime EXPERIENCE has strolled off through the archway and, after looking

over the other table, returns to DESPAIR. EXPERIENCE touches him on the shoulder. DESPAIR looks up.)

EXPERIENCE

What's the matter, old friend?

DESPAIR

Nothing.

EXPERIENCE

Oh, yes, there is.

DESPAIR

To-morrow—to-morrow was to have been my wedding day.

EXPERIENCE

I understand.

DESPAIR

Last week I brought my own money here—

EXPERIENCE

And left it here.

DESPAIR

She's a very beautiful girl—she's so beautiful herself that she must have beautiful things about her—dresses and jewelry and all that—and I was so sure——

EXPERIENCE

(interrupting)

Sure! Sure of what? In the Corridors of Chance the only sure things are the bewildered fools who send good money after bad.

DESPAIR

And to-day there was money in front of me—it wasn't my money—but she is so beautiful and I love her so much—I took the money—now it's gone—and to-morrow—to-morrow we set for our wedding day.

(DESPAIR buries his face in his arms and cries. EXPERIENCE shrugs his shoulders compassionately.)

EXPERIENCE

YOUTH

(jumping up and going back to the roulette table)

You're right, Chance. Fortune is smiling on me to-night so I'll take all she has to offer.

(To DEALER—giving him the roll of money.)

Give me those large checks—yes, those with the stars in them. I'm going to court Fortune with every penny I have in the world.

EXPERIENCE

(who has strolled over to YOUTH)

I thought you were through?

YOUTH

I was out Chance told me it was all nonsense to stop so soon.

EXPERIENCE

Of course he did. If the fools held on to their own the gamblers would starve.

(YOUTH has three stacks—the chips representing all his money. He pushes one stack on a number. The ball spins. When it stops the DEALER calls the number.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Fifteen in the black!

(The DEALER takes YOUTH'S checks.)

YOUTH

It's a good sign when you lose the first one.

(Puts another stack on a number.)

I'll get it all back this bet—see if I don't. I'm going after this in a big way. It's no time to pike when luck is with you.

(The ball spins. The DEALER calls the number when it stops.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Twenty in the black!

(DEALER takes YOUTH'S checks.)

YOUTH

(somewhat dazed)

That's mighty strange. Well, it simply *must* be Red this time so I'll put all I have on it.

(Places his last stack. The ball spins and the DEALER calls the number when it stops.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

Thirty-five in the black.

(The DEALER takes YOUTH'S chips. YOUTH hunts through his pockets in an anxious manner for more money.)

YOUTH

(to himself)

What's the use of looking when I haven't any more!

(YOUTH goes through his pockets carefully. He turns presently and sees CHANCE smiling at him in a cynical manner.)

CHANCE

(to the DEALER)

Give Youth a blue stack.

(The DEALER pushes a stack of blue chips to YOUTH.)

YOUTH

Thank you, Chance. That's very kind. You are putting me on my feet again. This time I'll surely play to win.

(He scatters the chips and places them on various numbers. As the ball starts to spin DESPAIR walks slowly over and watches the ball roll. When it stops the DEALER calls the number.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

The Double O.

(The DEALER sweeps in YOUTH'S chips. DESPAIR walks slowly off through door at Left. YOUTH goes through his pockets but can find no money. YOUTH looks up at CHANCE who shakes his head slowly, refusing to give him any more chips.)

CHANCE

Sorry; but one stack is the limit of credit.

YOUTH

Yes, yes, I know.

(Feels through his pockets helplessly.)

Everything gone—strange I didn't think to save even a few dollars.

(Looks at the ring on his finger.)

DEALER AT RIGHT

(in a whisper to YOUTH)

Ask him; he'll slip you a stack of Reds for the ring.

YOUTH

No, no!

(He drops his head on his hands. CHANCE calls the DEALER AT RIGHT and they walk off the scene. There is silence for a few seconds and then a pistol shot is heard off at Right. YOUTH jumps to his feet quickly.)

What's that? I know—it's the echo of my own thoughts, that's what it was—the echo! I was thinking about a pistol at that moment. That's why the echo of my own thoughts frightened me.

(To EXPERIENCE.)

What did you think it was?

EXPERIENCE

Despair has made his last bet and Death wins—as usual.

YOUTH

Death! It came to him in reality and to me it was only an echo.

(He goes to the door at Left and throws it open. He starts back nervously when he looks in the other room and goes to EXPERIENCE.)

Death! It never was so close to me before. Oh, Experience! I'm frightened! I'm frightened! I'm frightened!

(The colored waiter walks down to YOUTH.)

COLORED WAITER

Sandwiches, sir!

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

THE FIFTH EPISODE.

THE STREET OF DISILLUSION.

DESCRIPTION: *A street scene showing at Left the entrance to the "Primrose Path" cabaret.*

DISCOVERED: YOUTH and EXPERIENCE—*walking on.*

YOUTH

This is the place, Experience; we're all right now. A lot of my good friends on their way to the Primrose Path will be along here presently. I feel confident they'll help me to better things with their advice and influence.

EXPERIENCE

I don't want to discourage you, my boy, but friendships made through the wine glass are only as the vapors of the night and they fade and die in the morning of reality.

YOUTH

Now wait a minute, Experience—you call the turn every time, I'll admit, but don't tell me these friends of mine are going back on me simply because my clothes are getting a bit shabby. That isn't fair to them.

EXPERIENCE

No, no; I'm not unfair, but I am as old as the world and I know that the looking glass of human nature reflects over and over again the same pictures. Don't depend on your friends—try to think of something else.

YOUTH

I am thinking—and I have been thinking.

(Enter WORK—a big and powerful man. He carries his coat over his arm—his sleeves rolled up. He is mopping his perspiring brow and is in a hurry. EXPERIENCE stops him.)

EXPERIENCE

Oh, this is an opportune meeting. How are you, Work!
I'm glad to see you. Youth, meet my friend, Work.

YOUTH

Work! how are you? I was thinking about you and wondering what you looked like.

WORK

(roughly)

Youth, eh? Well, you size up all right to me. I'm looking for huskies like you. I've got a lot of vacant places down at the bottom of the ladder. Come on, speak up, speak up; don't stand there staring at me. Oh! I'm rough, I know, but there isn't any harm in me—ask your friend, Experience.

YOUTH

(ingenuously)

I know there isn't any harm in you—but—well——
(Turns to EXPERIENCE.)

He isn't very attractive, is he? Did you notice his voice?—sounds like the lash of a whip! See how the perspiration is rolling down his face! I don't believe I'd like to chum around with him.

EXPERIENCE

Oh, Work is all right. Why, in time you'd learn to love him like a father.

WORK

(roughly)

Now, just a minute—this is not my way of doing things.—If you want to have any dealings with me come right along—don't shilly-shally around here—what is it? Speak up! speak up!

YOUTH

Well, to be frank with you, I didn't think you were quite so rough in your manner. I thought you were—well, you see, your hands—they are so——



FIFTH EPISODE

WORK: "Well, you size up all right to me. I'm looking for huskies like you."

WORK

(interrupting)

Oh! I know—you expected to find me looking like a picture of a new suit of clothes. Well, you've got the wrong idea, boy! I'm old Work—the original—and I have no spare moments to put on starched shirts and fol de rols. Maybe it's one of my sons you expected to meet—I have five of them. Now there's my oldest son—Job—he takes after me—he's rough and ready and willing—Job is. Then there's my twins, Position and Employment—nice boys, but a little unsteady sometimes. Then there's the pride of the family—Profesion. I sent him to college and he made good. He's all right—he's a credit to his father and mother. And then there's Sinecure—he's the black sheep of the family, Sinecure is. He's dolled up all the time and he travels around with a loafer by the name of Graft. Sinecure is the only one in the family I have no use for, but I don't see much of him—he's pretty hard to find. I don't know why I'm wasting my time standing here to tell you all this—but you're a kid and there's only one way to start right and that's through me. If you're with me I'll take you home and let you meet my Missus—her name is Content—she's the mother of all my boys, Content is—she'll be a mother to you—and she's the finest, grandest mother in all the world. Now listen, boy; I know your mind is all confused and you're not strong for me right now—so I'm going about my affairs—and when your thoughts turn to old Work—when you surely want me—well, you come out and look for me—so long!

(Exit WORK.)

YOUTH

He improves as you get to know him—doesn't he? I'd better call him back and—no; I'll see my friends first—maybe they can introduce me to that son of his—what's his name?

EXPERIENCE

You mean Sinecure?

YOUTH

That's the one—Sinecure. I want to start in on the very top round of the ladder where it's soft and easy—so I can have time to spend with my friends.

EXPERIENCE

Only a bird can start at the top of the ladder—and stay there!
(*Enter PLEASURE from Left.*)

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

Now I'm all right. Pleasure still has that inviting smile.
(*He goes to her.*)

Good evening, Pleasure!

PLEASURE

(coldly)

I beg your pardon!

YOUTH

We've been strangers lately but you remember me, of course!

PLEASURE

(coldly)

I can't say that I do——

YOUTH

Youth!—don't you remember?—You invited me to the Primrose Path. I haven't been there lately because I've had the misfortune to——

PLEASURE

(interrupting)

Stop! it was never intended that the word "misfortune" should be spoken in my presence. It annoys me frightfully—please step aside!

(*She exits haughtily into the Cabaret.*)

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

She doesn't know me—and even her voice is different. It hurts to have her speak that way!

EXPERIENCE

The voice of Pleasure is always the thrust of a dagger in the dark.

(Enter STYLE and BEAUTY.)

YOUTH

(goes to BEAUTY)

Beauty, you remember me, don't you?

BEAUTY

Of course; we danced the Tango together, didn't we?

YOUTH

No, I never danced a Tango with you—but we waltzed together—we were very good friends.

BEAUTY

Oh, really; I've forgotten; I waltz with so many—pardon me, won't you?

(She goes in Cabaret.)

YOUTH

(to STYLE)

I'm so glad to see you again, Style! How have you been?

STYLE

I don't seem to recall you.

YOUTH

Oh, yes, you do. Don't you remember how nice you were to me about my necktie—it was just a little too narrow—remember? And my trousers were too long—of course, these I have on now are the worse for wear and they are not pressed but I think the length is all right, don't you?

STYLE

Have you been drinking?

YOUTH

No; no, I cut that all out.

STYLE

Well, I'm afraid you haven't quite recovered because I don't know you and I don't know what you're talking about.

(STYLE goes in Cabaret.)

YOUTH

(to EXPERIENCE)

Have I changed so very much or what is the matter?

EXPERIENCE

You haven't changed, my boy, and neither has human nature. Fair weather friends have no use for you when there's a storm in your soul.

YOUTH

It's hard to lose faith in them—but I'm beginning to understand.

(Enter WEALTH and FRIVOLITY at other side.)

There's Wealth! I'm sure I can depend upon him.

(Goes to WEALTH.)

WEALTH

(to FRIVOLITY)

You can believe me—just so long as there's any champagne left in the world I shall devote my life to you, Frivolity!

YOUTH

(to WEALTH)

Pardon me!

FRIVOLITY

(to WEALTH)

You couldn't find a better way to occupy your time.

YOUTH

(to WEALTH)

Good evening, Wealth—how have you been?

WEALTH

(paying no attention to him—speaks to FRIVOLITY)

Every time I sober up lately I begin to moralize and get despondent so if you don't mind I'll shut out all the blue devils by travelling around with you, Frivolity.

FRIVOLITY

Of course, Wealth!—I won't give you time to be despondent.

Let's go in and dance—I love dancing!

(Exit FRIVOLITY into Cabaret. WEALTH is about to follow—YOUTH takes him by the arm.)

YOUTH

Listen, Wealth, I'll stand for it from the others, but don't you tell me you've forgotten me!

WEALTH

Bless my soul, what is it? What's the matter?

YOUTH

You were my friend—you taught me how to throw my money away.

WEALTH

Did I?

YOUTH

You did—and I learned the lesson thoroughly. Now with your influence and advice I mean to do better things. A new spirit is awake within me and I want you to help me.

WEALTH

Help you—of course—I'm always helping people—but don't take advantage of me when I'm with a lady. Now remember that—here's a bit of money for you!

(Holds out a bill to YOUTH.)

YOUTH

(looking at him in astonishment)

Money!—you—you think I want your money! Well, I don't. You taught me to throw mine away but you can't teach me to take yours like a beggar.

WEALTH

Well, what is it you wanted?

YOUTH

I wanted a chance to earn it. I wanted a chance to prove to myself that even if Ambition is dead his memory still lives—and you've given it to me. Yes, you, with your smug-faced charity, you have shown me that Experience is right. The friendship of the selfish is a warm wind from the South when the skies are clear, but when trouble comes it's as cold as the blast of Death. Go where Frivolity waits for you—you've taught me something worth while this time. Come on, Experience, I'm going to look for Work.

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

THE SIXTH EPISODE.

IN THE HOUSE OF THE LAST RESORT.

DESCRIPTION: *A dive of the Rathskeller type. Door in back leading to the street. Door at Left leading to the kitchen. Cheap tables about the place. A small platform at Right upon which the performer stands to sing; a piano above platform at Right.*

DISCOVERED: GROUCH *sitting at a table at Left. YOUTH, as a waiter, in his shirt sleeves and an apron, is serving him. EXPERIENCE, also as a waiter, is at a table at Right, waiting on DISGRACE, a man, and INDOLENCE, a woman. Pianist pounding out rag-time on piano.*

GROUCH

(loudly)

Here! here! stop that! I'm not going to learn to eat to music.

(To YOUTH.)

Say! what kind of a waiter are you? I ask you for two eggs boiled three minutes and you bring me a couple of door knobs.—What do you mean?

YOUTH

I'm sorry, Grouch, but I brought you what they gave me.

GROUCH

Aw, shut up! I'm payin' for what I want—not what you bring me—see? If you don't know how to wait you shouldn't be here.

YOUTH

That's the trouble—I don't know how to wait.

GROUCH

You bet you don't.

YOUTH

Why don't you give a fellow a chance?

GROUCH

Give you a chance! Say! I've come in here to get waited on—not to give chances. I want things right.

(Indicating piece of toast.)

And look at this!—I asked for toast, didn't I?—Toast is what I asked for—and what's this? A half-portion of rag-carpet—that's what it is. How am I going to eat it?—how?—how?

YOUTH

Well, I'll tell you, Grouch—if you eat as you usually do I should say it's something like a vacuum cleaner.

GROUCH

That'll do! Don't get new, now—don't get new!

(Holds up coffee cup.)

What's this? What do you call this?

YOUTH

I haven't found a name for it myself—but the Boss calls it coffee.

GROUCH

Coffee!—Huh! Coffee! Where does it come from?

YOUTH

I think it's imported from the Ohio River.

GROUCH

Oh! is that so! Say! I want to tell you something:—If you want to make a hit with me you wait on me right. I'm a steady customer here and if you want my trade you keep your face closed—and don't talk back—See?

YOUTH

Listen, Grouch—you order fifteen cents worth of food and you hand me four dollars worth of abuse. Now eat the door knobs and let me alone.

(*Turns to EXPERIENCE, who has come down stage and is watching him.*)

Oh! Experience, I can't stand this much longer—I can't do it.

EXPERIENCE

My boy, you still have a foot-hold on the edge of the abyss. Courage! There may be a chance to crawl back to safety.

YOUTH

It isn't that I have no courage—but look! Look where I am! Look what I've done with my prospects—buried them all under the dust of failure. But I have tried, haven't I, Experience? When my friends passed me by I didn't give up, did I? Day after day I walked the streets looking for Work—and couldn't find him. He's so big and powerful—and it's such a little world—I wonder why I couldn't meet him again; and why, to keep body and soul together, Fate should drive me here to the House of Last Resort.

EXPERIENCE

You are trying to solve the Riddle of Life, my boy—and the Great Answer can come to you only through sorrow and suffering.

GROUCH

(*angrily*)

Waiter!

(*YOUTH goes to him. EXPERIENCE goes up and waits on the man and woman—then exits at Left. Enter FRAILTY. She goes to table at Right.*)

YOUTH

(*to GROUCH*)

What is it now?

GROUCH

I want to pay my check.

YOUTH

Two eggs—coffee—toast—twenty cents.

GROUCH

(gives coin)

There you are—give my nickle in change—I don't believe in giving tips—understand?

YOUTH

*(gives him nickle)*Listen! If you gave me a tip you wouldn't eat for a week—
and I'd hate to see you lose flesh.

GROUCH

Aw! cut it out!

FRAILTY

(to YOUTH)

Hello, Kid!

YOUTH

(going to FRAILTY)

Hello, Frailty!

FRAILTY

Havin' another run-in with Grouch?

YOUTH

No; it's the same one—it's always continued in our next.

FRAILTY

Sit down, Kid!

YOUTH

No, Frailty! the Boss might catch me—and he's not strong
for me anyway.

FRAILTY

Aw! let him rave. Sit down!

YOUTH

*(sitting down)*Well, I'll take a chance. I've been on my feet for eight
hours—but there isn't much doing just now.

FRAILTY

There ain't ever anything doing here till about the time decent people hit the hay. You got the blues, ain't you, Kid?

YOUTH

Well, I'm not holding my sides from laughing—or anything like that.

FRAILTY

What's the idea, Kid?

YOUTH

What do you mean?

FRAILTY

I've been sizing you up every time I slide in here. You don't belong to this joint.

YOUTH

I've got to live some way.

(GROUCH falls to sleep quietly—head down on chest.)

FRAILTY

I know! we all got to live—some way. I guess you got me sized up, too, ain't you?

YOUTH

I don't have time to size anybody up.

FRAILTY

Yes, you do, Kid—but you've got the real stuff in your make-up—and that's why I like you. You don't get mushy like some of those drum-heads in the slumming parties and lean over and pat me on the hand and say, "Who done this to you?—Come on, tell me the story of your life, little girl." Gee! I hate them guys.

YOUTH

I don't blame you.

FRAILTY

Listen, Kid! it's all right for *me* to be part of the furniture here because I'm a girl and the devil has his brand on

my shoulder—but you don't belong! What put you up against it, Kid—booze or a doll?

YOUTH

Neither one of them.

FRAILTY

Ain't you never had a little queen to patter around and make a little fuss over you?

YOUTH

Please! I took the wrong road—that's all.

FRAILTY

I'm right with you, Kid. I picked out the wrong road myself—and I picked a bird.

YOUTH

One with white lights all over it, eh?

FRAILTY

Sure!

YOUTH

They make a rotten road look mighty cheerful—those old -incandescents.

FRAILTY

Ain't it hell, Kid?

YOUTH

It is for me—and it must be worse than that for you.

FRAILTY

It's a black world for a lot of us, boy. But, come on—let's pin a rose on it. Roses look well on black.

YOUTH

You know, it does me a lot of good to talk to you—it makes me ashamed of myself for wanting to give up the fight. You're a dead game little sport and I hope you'll come to a turning in your road—and you'll leave all the white

lights behind you and you'll go on and on to a little cottage waiting for you in the sunset.

FRAILTY

Don't, Kid—please! I get dreams like that sometimes—and I dream till my heart aches. But you know what my name is—and the World knows what my name is—and there ain't any man willing to call his wife Frailty.

YOUTH

Gee! it's tough!

FRAILTY

Aw, come on; let's cut this out—or the weeping willows won't have anything on us. Listen! I like you, Kid, and I'd go the limit for you because you treat me just as if I was a nice girl.

YOUTH

You are.

FRAILTY

I am—with you—and that lets me out. But, say! never mind about me.—You got to get away from this joint. It's coverin' your soul with poison.

YOUTH

How am I going to do it?

FRAILTY

You've got to get money, Kid!

(Enter MAKESHIFT, a rough, husky man. He watches them. EXPERIENCE enters from kitchen and looks on.)

YOUTH

Money! Listen, girl, you're making me laugh. I should say I have got to get money.

GROUCH

(waking up)

Waiter! Where's that waiter?

(YOUTH jumps up quickly.)

EXPERIENCE

MAKESHIFT

(roughly to YOUTH)

Say! what do you think this is—a front parlor in the St. Regis? Now you cut out this loafin' and chinnin' with the customers or I'll boot you out of my place.

FRAILTY

Say, Makeshift—you let him alone—you big stiff.

MAKESHIFT

Is that so?—I'm on all right. I'll throw you out, too.

YOUTH

Now listen, Makeshift; she had nothing to do with it.

MAKESHIFT

Shut up—and attend to your work.

(Turning on FRAILTY.)

And don't you go buttin' in just because you're stuck on him.

FRAILTY

Well, s'pose I am—he ain't stuck on me—and you're a bum sport to go and tip him off.

(To YOUTH.)

Bring me a beer, Kid.

(As YOUTH starts off, GROUCH calls him.)

GROUCH

Waiter! Come here—fresh!

YOUTH

(as he is passing him)

Oh, go to hell!

(YOUTH exits at Left. EXPERIENCE follows him off.)

GROUCH

(to MAKESHIFT)

Get me, Makeshift! You want to get rid of him if you want my trade.

MAKESHIFT

Leave him to me; I'll learn him or break his neck.

(The habitués of the place begin to gather for their nightly revels—DISSOLUTE, a girl, with ROGUE, a man; ILLITERATE, a girl, with SNEAK, a man; RECKLESS, a girl, with CHEAT, a man. DISSOLUTE and ROGUE come down to MAKESHIFT. DISSOLUTE speaks with French accent.)

MAKESHIFT

How are you, Rogue! How are you, Dissolute! Say, get this! There's a swell slumming party doin' my joint to-night and I don't want you to put anything over.

DISSOLUTE

(with French accent)

Ah, Makeshift, you are so funny! Why it is we don't put what you call "something over" on these fools that go slumming! My friend Rogue and me—we have to live—*n'est-ce pas!*

ROGUE

Sure, Makeshift, let me pick a sparkler, or fish out a bank roll from dese swell nuts. Me and Dissolute is got to eat, ain't we?

MAKESHIFT

Nix! No rough stuff to-night. I give me word to the Captain of the Precinct—and me word is me bond, see!

DISSOLUTE

(laughs—goes to GROUCH)

His word is a bond, eh! Well, it is some bond.

(Enter YOUTH with a glass of beer for FRAILTY—he goes to table—gives her the beer—she pays for it. EXPERIENCE enters at same time and waits on tables in back.)

FRAILTY

Thank you, Kid!

(Whispers.)

Don't let Makeshift get your goat.

EXPERIENCE

DISSOLUTE

(goes to YOUTH)

I could call ze handsome waiter—yes!

YOUTH

(to DISSOLUTE)

You want to order something?

DISSOLUTE

Ordaire—ha! I want to talk wiz you. You are not like ze uzzer waiters—you have in ze face something—what you call!—different, eh? I could put such loving arms around you and I could kiss you, ah, so sweet.

ROGUE

(dragging her away roughly)

Cut that stuff!

(To YOUTH.)

You let my doll alone or I'll break your jaw.

(YOUTH draws back to hit ROGUE—DISSOLUTE grabs ROGUE—FRAILTY touches YOUTH on the arm.)

FRAILTY

(warningly)

The goat, Kid, the goat! Rough stuff won't get you anything.

MAKESHIFT

(to YOUTH)

Say! You're goin' to get yours in a minute. Now you get busy or I'll bounce my fist off your bean.

(YOUTH goes to table L., and waits on RECKLESS and CHEAT—going out at Left presently for the order. EXPERIENCE follows him out. INDOLENCE, a girl, with RASCAL, a man, enter. ILLITERATE comes down to MAKESHIFT.)

ILLITERATE

(tearfully)

Say, Makeshift, youse has always took me for a lady, ain't youse.

(SNEAK comes down.)

MAKESHIFT

What's the trouble, Illiterate?

ILLITERATE

Say! I'm a lady, I am, and I comes in dis hole in de wall wit dis guy Sneak for a pail of suds. After he goes swimmin' in de suds he tells me he's broke and I got to pay for it.

SNEAK

Aw, cheese! cheese! You got de coin, ain't you?

ILLITERATE

Say, I'm a lady, and I pays as I goes, see!—but I ain't goin' to put up my good money to cover your system with a cheap jag.

MAKESHIFT

(shakes SNEAK)

You pay for your own drinks, Sneak—come across!

SNEAK

How kin I? I'm flat.

MAKESHIFT

What are you doin' in here if you ain't got any coin?
(MAKESHIFT *grabs SNEAK and runs him out.*)

ILLITERATE

Once a lady, always a lady!
(*Sits at table. Pianist plays—chatter and laughter—waiters running back and forth with beer. YOUTH and EXPERIENCE in and out—very busy. MAKESHIFT goes from table to table and presently gets down to FRAILTY at table at Left.*)

MAKESHIFT

(to FRAILTY)

Say, you're usin' up a lot of table here—where's your John?

FRAILTY

Oh, let me alone.

(*To YOUTH, who is at the next table serving beer.*)

Gimme another beer, Kid!

(*MAKESHIFT walks away. YOUTH gives her a glass of beer from his tray—wipes off the table. RECKLESS goes down to table, C.*)

MAKESHIFT

(*sees RECKLESS*)

Here, here! This table is reserved. Get out o' here!

RECKLESS

Say, Makeshift, listen! What was that line of talk you were handing out last night about a swell guy comin' here to sing for your customers?

(*YOUTH nudges FRAILTY on the arm—they both listen. EXPERIENCE joins them.*)

MAKESHIFT

Well, I engages a cuckoo, see! and I pays him twenty-five bones in advance. Then when he comes down here and sees my place he throws the coin on the floor and beats it. Say! I hope de next time he hits a high note it chokes him.

YOUTH

(*to EXPERIENCE*)

If I could get a chance to sing maybe I'd make good!

FRAILTY

Go after it, Kid. I'll plug for you.

YOUTH

Ask him for me, Experience—please! You know I learned a lot of songs in the Primrose Path—maybe I can put one over.

CHEAT

(*to MAKESHIFT*)

It ain't goin' to do your place no good to advertise swell singers and then not produce.

MAKESHIFT

It ain't my fault.

YOUTH

If I could make good maybe it might lead to something better—ask him, Experience!

(EXPERIENCE goes to MAKESHIFT.)

FRAILTY

(to YOUTH)

Singin' is better than beer slingin'! Gee, Kid! I'm rootin' for you!

EXPERIENCE

(to MAKESHIFT)

Your singer didn't show up, eh!

MAKESHIFT

No; left me flat.

EXPERIENCE

Give Youth a chance, will you?

MAKESHIFT

Who—him? What do you want to do—drive my customers out?

EXPERIENCE

He won't do that—he'll entertain them—let him try.

MAKESHIFT

Well, I suppose there's only one way to find out and that's through you, Experience. All right, tell him to tune up.

(EXPERIENCE goes to YOUTH. MAKESHIFT goes to *Left up stage.*)

EXPERIENCE

He'll give you a chance—pull yourself together and don't get nervous.

FRAILTY

If the audience gets up and leaves the room you'll still be a hit with me, Kid!

(MAKESHIFT gets to table L-C. YOUTH goes to pianist—explains about song—EXPERIENCE stands near FRAILTY—chatter and laughter.)

MAKESHIFT

Order! Order! Ladies and gents: I take great pleasure in announcin' the first appearance in my Royal Palace Cafe of—get up on the platform, Kid!

(YOUTH does so—he is very nervous.)

The first appearance of—what's your singin' name, Kid?

YOUTH

It's immaterial.

MAKESHIFT

I takes great pleasure, ladies and gents, in introducin' Immaterial, the singin' wonder of dis city.

YOUTH

Listen, don't call me a wonder, because I'm not, and it makes me conscious.

MAKESHIFT

Well, get conscious. You make good or I'll throw you out. Cut loose!

(MAKESHIFT walks off.)

YOUTH

(sings—plaintively and nervously)

There's a Big Road in the City
 That they call The Great White Way,
 Where the bright lights—staring white lights—
 Turn the night-time into day;
 But you're lonely when you walk it
 For you want once more to find
 In the shadows, in the darkness,
 That Old Road you left behind:—

REFRAIN

It's the Old Road back to Homeland,
 It's the outcast's only goal,
 Where the ever cruel white lights
 Throw no shadows on your soul.
 It's the Old Road back to Childhood,
 It's the road *you* want to roam,
 With the stars above to guide you—
 It's the Road to Home, Sweet Home!

SECOND VERSE

With your pockets lined with money
 You can walk The Great White Way;
 It's a fine road—song and wine road!
 Just an endless holiday;
 But when once your gold has vanished
 In the cold gray dawn you'll find
 That it's dreary and you're weary
 For the Road you left behind:—

REFRAIN

It's the Old Road back to Homeland,
 It's the outcast's only goal,
 Where the ever cruel white lights
 Throw no shadows on your soul.
 It's the Old Road back to Childhood,
 It's the road *you* want to roam,
 With the stars above to guide you—
 It's the Road to Home, Sweet Home!

(*While YOUTH is repeating the refrain MAKESHIFT enters and sees that his customers are sentimentally affected by the song to an extent that some of the women are weeping and the men are downcast. MAKESHIFT drags YOUTH from the platform.*)

EXPERIENCE

MAKESHIFT

It won't do, I tell you! That mush stuff don't go with me.
You got a lot of these dames bawlin' their eyes out—that
don't sell beer!

(*The habitues of the place applaud YOUTH.*)

YOUTH

But wait a minute—the people like me.

MAKESHIFT

Like you—nothing! They just made a noise with their hands
to keep from throwin' the furniture at you—I'm wise.

YOUTH

I'll sing every evening—just for my board, if you'll let me.
I'll learn a lot of songs.

MAKESHIFT

No, I tell you! No! You learn to be a waiter—and learn
it quick or out you go.

(*Walks away.*)

YOUTH

(*to EXPERIENCE*)

Well, I didn't make good?

EXPERIENCE

I thought you did.

FRAILTY

Sure you made good, Kid. Why, to me you had Caruso
making faces at himself.

(*Enter the slumming party—PLEASURE, BEAUTY, FASH-
ION, STYLE and WEALTH. MAKESHIFT meets them—
sits them at the table reserved for them in C.*)

MAKESHIFT

Glad to see you, ladies and gents! This way!

YOUTH

(*seeing them—speaks to EXPERIENCE*)

Look, Experience—they'll know me and recognize me. What
am I to do?

EXPERIENCE

99

EXPERIENCE

They'll not know you, my boy, because they look upon the scene with eyes that are blind to the truth and in their hearts there is no understanding.

(EXPERIENCE goes up stage.)

MAKESHIFT

(to YOUTH)

Say! Now is the limit, see! Ain't that your table—don't you see ladies and gents settin' there? Go on—get busy!

(Pushes him to table at C.)

YOUTH

(shame-faced, R. of table C.)

Order, ladies and gents!

PLEASURE

(to others)

Oh! Here is the waiter! Typical of the place, isn't he?

BEAUTY

Depraved face, I think!

STYLE

Quite! Wicked-looking eyes!

YOUTH

(getting angry)

Orders, please!

FASHION

Fancy! He doesn't even glance at my gown!

WEALTH

(to the others)

Shall we have some wine?

PLEASURE

Oh, not here! Wine would be terribly out of place. That sort of waiter doesn't suggest wine!

YOUTH
(*angrily*)

Orders, ladies and gents!

BEAUTY
Vicious looking, isn't he?

STYLE
Quite. Notice the way he glares.

WEALTH
Shall we try some beer?

PLEASURE
Oh, do! Beer sounds so slummy.

WEALTH
(*to YOUTH*)
Bring me a lot of it—enough for everybody in the place.
(*YOUTH starts for exit—stops up stage—tells MAKE-SHIFT what WEALTH said and exits at Left. MAKE-SHIFT sends EXPERIENCE and other waiters after beer for the crowd.*)

PLEASURE
Oh, Fashion, don't you love them?—such murderous types.

FASHION
Yes, Pleasure, but they don't look at my clothes. Why should I come here if I'm not to be noticed!

WEALTH
Pardon me!
(*Crosses to the table where FRAILTY is sitting.*)

FASHION
Oh, he's going to speak to that girl!

FRIVOLITY
Wait a moment, Wealth;—didn't you say you were going to devote *all* your time to me?

WEALTH

I'm afraid I've said that to a great many ladies.

PLEASURE

Wealth is so cosmopolitan, isn't he?

WEALTH

(to FRAILTY)

Good evening!

FRAILTY

Hello, Pop!

WEALTH

May I buy you a glass of beer?

FRAILTY

You ain't goin' to hurt my feelings.

(YOUTH, EXPERIENCE and other waiters on with beer.

YOUTH puts four glasses on table for PLEASURE'S party.)

WEALTH

(calling YOUTH)

Waiter! Some beer!

(YOUTH crosses—puts two glasses at FRAILTY'S table.

The pianist plays—chatter—laughter—the waiters very busy—MAKESHIFT moving about for several seconds.

INDOLENCE, finding that RASCAL, her escort, has left her and has gone over to flirt with ILLITERATE, throws a beer mug at his head, misses him and breaks a lot of dishes. There follows a row typical of the place.)

INDOLENCE

(to ILLITERATE)

Whata you try to do, eh?

ILLITERATE

Aw, beat it, Indolence, you Wop!

INDOLENCE

So, you calla me da Wop, eh?

(To RASCAL.)

And you—you makea for me one double-cross, eh?

RASCAL

No, no; I justa speaka da good eve!

INDOLENCE

Oh, you speaka da good eve!—then I speaka da good night!
(Gets knife from her stocking—MAKESHIFT grabs her hand.)

MAKESHIFT

Cut that, now—get back to your beer drinkin' or I'll throw the whole bunch of you out.

INDOLENCE

(dragging RASCAL with her)

You comea with me or I makea plenty da work for da Doc!

MAKESHIFT

Order! Order! Ladies and gents, I wants youse to drink to Wealth, which has treated you so royal.
(All the habitues of the place rise—raise their beer glasses and shout: "Here's looking at you, WEALTH!" WEALTH acknowledges by rising and bowing. Chatter. Pianist plays.)

PLEASURE

Exciting, isn't it, Beauty?

BEAUTY

Extremely! but the atmosphere isn't good for my complexion.

FASHION

I hate the place—there's nobody here to notice my clothes.

STYLE

(rising)

I don't care for slumming. One never knows just what to wear.

WEALTH

(to FRAILTY)

I'm sorry you won't tell me the story of your life. I feel very sympathetic to-night.

FRAILTY

Listen, Pop! Carry your sympathy a little steadier—you're spilling it.

PLEASURE

(to YOUTH, who stands near their table)

* Waiter! Tell Wealth we are quite ready to go.

YOUTH

(to WEALTH)

They're waiting for you.

WEALTH

(getting up)

All right, but don't touch me on the shoulder—I don't like it.

YOUTH

I'm sorry. (Exit at L.)

WEALTH

(gives money to MAKESHIFT)

Keep the change, my man!

(MAKESHIFT, elated, goes over to PLEASURE—speaks in pantomime. She ignores him. He turns away.)

WEALTH

(to FRAILTY)

Any objection to my taking a kiss before I go?

FRAILTY

What do you want to kiss me for?

WEALTH

Just a passing fancy.

FRAILTY

(bitterly)

Put it straight, Pop. You mean you want to kiss me just because you can pay for it.

WEALTH

Certainly—I intend to pay for it.

(Takes out a "fat" pocketbook—extracts a bill therefrom and puts bill on table.)

FRAILTY

Gee! You're full of sentiment, ain't you?

WEALTH

Come on; I'm not in the habit of waiting.

FRAILTY

(turns—sees him putting his pocketbook in the breast pocket of his coat)

All right, Pop, you can kiss me—and you bet you'll pay for it.
(She puts one arm around him—he kisses her and as he does so she steals his pocketbook.)

WEALTH

There, my girl, that's an easy way to earn money, isn't it?

FRAILTY

(bitterly)

Easy—sure! Listen, Pop; it's guys like you that keeps the devil laughin' his head off.

(The Slumming Party rises from the table.)

PLEASURE

Come, Wealth, I'm beginning to weary of slumming. It's all so very sordid. I wonder why people select this sort of life!

WEALTH

If they didn't select it there would be no contrast in life for us, my dear Pleasure.

(To FRAILTY.)

Good night!

FRAILTY

Good night, Pop!

(MAKESHIFT leads the Slumming Party out to the street. They are all laughing and chattering as they go. The habitues of the place follow the Slumming Party to the street in quest of spoil. EXPERIENCE exits, followed by the pianist. FRAILTY goes to door at Left, calls YOUTH.)

FRAILTY

Come here, Kid!

(YOUTH enters.)

It's all right now—you can get a fresh start.

YOUTH

What do you mean?

FRAILTY

I mean you got money——

(Shows the pocketbook.)

—money to lift you out of the mud.

YOUTH

Where did you get that?

FRAILTY

I snitched it from old Wealth.

YOUTH

Oh, no, girl, no! That's dead wrong.

FRAILTY

Wrong, nothing. He wanted to kiss me, didn't he?—and I put my own price on a kiss I give to a mutt like that.

YOUTH

But it's wrong, girl!—we'll have to call him back to give him his money.

(He starts for the door.)

FRAILTY

(stopping him)

Listen, Kid; don't be foolish. He's never going to miss it—it's only car-fare to him and it's a life-saver to you—be sensible.

YOUTH

Please, girl. Listen, I don't want his money and neither do you. Give me the pocketbook. I'll run after him and give it to him.

(As YOUTH takes the pocketbook and starts for the door enter MAKESHIFT, WEALTH and LAW, a Policeman. YOUTH holds the pocketbook under his arm.)

MAKESHIFT

(coming down)

Pulled that rough stuff, did she?

WEALTH

Yes, the girl must have taken my pocketbook. I didn't speak to anybody else.

MAKESHIFT

Frisk her, Law. She must have it on her.

LAW

(handling her roughly)

Come on, now; turn over that pocketbook. Where is it?

WEALTH

It isn't the amount of the money—it's just the idea of being robbed.

LAW

Come across with that coin—it's five years for you this time, my girl.

YOUTH

(to WEALTH)

Here's your pocketbook. Let her alone.

LAW

(turning on YOUTH)

So you're the one, eh? All right, I'll take you.

FRAILTY

No! don't take him—I stole it myself.

YOUTH

She didn't steal it. You found it on me, didn't you?

MAKESHIFT

It's a frame-up. They're both in on it.

LAW

I'll run them both in.

(To WEALTH.)

You, Wealth, appear against them to-morrow morning at eight o'clock.

WEALTH

Eight o'clock! Oh, my dear Law, that's quite impossible.

LAW

If you don't press the charge what can I do?

WEALTH

And it might get in the newspapers—the notoriety would hurt me. Here!

(Takes money from pocketbook—gives it to MAKESHIFT.)

Buy some cigars. Let them go—it doesn't matter—I have the money back and I hate to get up so early.

LAW

(to FRAILTY and YOUTH)

It's a narrow squeak for you two crooks, but I'll get you next time.

(To WEALTH.)

Come on, I'll walk to your taxi with you.

WEALTH

Do, please! I'm not safe in this part of town. Good night!

(Exit WEALTH and LAW.)

MAKESHIFT

Good night!

(Pause for a moment—then MAKESHIFT speaks to YOUTH and FRAILTY.)

Well, you put one over on me, didn't you? You crabbed my slumming parties by makin' my house a hold-up joint.

(*To FRAILTY.*)

You—you!—Now you get out of here!

FRAILTY

I'm goin'—and you don't have to tell me.

MAKESHIFT

(*to YOUTH, threateningly*)

And I'll attend to you in a minute.

(*Exit MAKESHIFT at L.*)

FRAILTY

(*going to YOUTH—tearfully*)

Good-bye, Kid! Listen, please; that was the first pocket-book I ever snitched, and I won't do it again—you believe me, don't you, Kid?

YOUTH

I do believe you, girl, I do.

FRAILTY

Thanks! It's dark, ain't it?—black dark for both of us. Say, would you mind kissing me—just as if you was my brother?

(*He kisses her.*)

Gee! You're nice, Kid, and I won't never forget you—and you'll hold on, won't you?—Hold on to something—maybe there'll come a light for you through the darkness.

(*Enter MAKESHIFT.*)

MAKESHIFT

(*to FRAILTY*)

Come on now, get out of here, you little crook.

FRAILTY

(*turning on him*)

Say, you big stiff, if I was as crooked as you are I'd roll out of here like a hoop.



SIXTH EPISODE

FRALTY: "It's dark, ain't it?—black dark for both of us."

(To YOUTH.)

Good-bye, Kid! I'm goin' to try to pray to God for you and He might hear me even if it's too late to pray for myself—Good-bye!

(*She goes out quietly and closes the door behind her.*)

MAKESHIFT

(to YOUTH)

Now, you!

(*Crosses to him.*)

I told you I was goin' to boot you out of here and I am. I had no business to take you in in the first place—I might of knowed you was a dirty thief!

YOUTH

That's enough!

(*He turns on MAKESHIFT—hits him—they fight. MAKE-SHIFT is too powerful for him and finally knocks YOUTH down—he lies there, unconscious, on the floor.*)

MAKESHIFT

Now you crawl out of here or I'll break your neck!

(*MAKESHIFT walks off at Left. YOUTH lies there in silence for five seconds. EXPERIENCE opens the door—looks around for YOUTH—sees him lying there senseless—hurries to him—revives him—gets him on his feet.*)

EXPERIENCE

It's all right, my boy! I'm with you!

YOUTH

(*exhausted*)

He was too heavy for me—too heavy, that's it. But I'll try again, when I get my breath.

(*POVERTY, a gruesome figure clad in rags, enters through the doorway. YOUTH turns—sees him—is frightened.*)

Look! look! who is that?

EXPERIENCE

Poverty!

YOUTH

Poverty!

POVERTY

I am always waiting to greet those who are thrown out of
The House of Last Resort.

YOUTH

Well, you needn't wait for me.

(Turns his back on him.)

EXPERIENCE

You can't snub Poverty, my boy; he's had nothing but curses
since the world began but he thrives upon them.

POVERTY

The boy doesn't know who I am.

YOUTH

*(turning quickly)*I *do* know you! You are Death's step-brother—I know!

When *you* come creeping into a home Happiness dies
from fright—and with your touch you turn the hours of
enjoyment into ages of despair. Grin at me, if you will,
but I know you to be the King of Suffering and all the
sorrows of the world are your courtiers. Go on, grin,
grin—but you're not going to get *me*—not while I can
hold my head up—not while I can struggle and fight—

(Picks up chair.)

Go on, now; get out of here, damn you—get out! get out!
get out!

*(YOUTH is driving POVERTY towards the door as the cur-
tain falls.)*

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

INTERVAL.

THE SEVENTH EPISODE.

IN THE STREET OF REMORSE.

DESCRIPTION: *A gloomy side-street at dawn.*

DISCOVERED: YOUTH and EXPERIENCE walking on.

YOUTH

(going through his empty pockets)

Gone! gone! I threw away every penny I had—and I'm sick—sick in body and mind and soul.

EXPERIENCE

Of course, you're sick—and you're broke—and your nerves are all gone—but you're living.

YOUTH

Yes, but I've lost Ambition. I don't seem to care any more what happens.

EXPERIENCE

You're in the valley now, my boy, and it's a hard climb up the mountain-side.

(POVERTY enters.)

YOUTH

See—there he is again—he's been following me for days—speak to him—send him away.

EXPERIENCE

(turning—sees POVERTY)

Who—him? Why send him away?

(Goes to POVERTY.)

Well met, old friend Poverty.

POVERTY

We've been through many a hard fight together, haven't we, Experience?

(Laughs mirthlessly.)

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE

Youth, the time has come now—you *must* meet Poverty.

YOUTH

I don't want to meet him—don't you see he frightens me.
Tell him to go away—I can't bear the sight of him.

POVERTY

That's the trouble with me—I never was much of a hand
for making a good impression on anybody.

(Laughs mirthlessly over YOUTH'S shoulder.)

YOUTH

(jumping away)

Merciful God! why does he come so close to me?—I can't
stand it—I'm too nervous, I tell you.

(POVERTY leans at him.)

EXPERIENCE

You'll find he's not such a bad looking chap if you can get
the courage to like him.

(DELUSION enters. He is a "dope"—sallow-faced and thin.)

DELUSION

(to EXPERIENCE)

How're you, Bo—slip me!

(Puts out his hand to EXPERIENCE.)

EXPERIENCE

(shaking hands with DELUSION)

Oh, it's my old friend, Delusion—glad to see you—how are
they coming?

DELUSION

In carriages, Bo—right up to the front door in carriages—
it's a gay life if you play it with a copper on.

EXPERIENCE

Youth, I want you to know my friend, Delusion.



SEVENTH EPISODE

DELUSION: I've got a forget-factory right around the corner.
Come on, Bo, I'll put you wise."

DELUSION

(putting out his hand to YOUTH)

Slip me, Kid!

YOUTH

Delusion—I'm glad to meet you.

DELUSION

That goes double——

(Indicating POVERTY.)

—but it don't take in the look-out. Why do you let that false-alarm get near enough to pass you the crushed ice?

YOUTH

I can't get away from him.

DELUSION

Yes, you can, Bo. I'll take you away from him.

YOUTH

You!

DELUSION

Sure!—That's the best thing I do—getting people away from old frost-face. I've got a forget-factory right around the corner. Come on, I'll put you wise.

YOUTH

(to POVERTY)

You thought you had me, damn you—but my friend has fooled you. Hereafter you can frighten somebody else—you rotten old loafer!

DELUSION

Cut out the criticism, Kid—take to your O'Sullivan's and follow Dandy Dan.

(DELUSION walks off hurriedly at Left.)

YOUTH

(following DELUSION)

Come on, Experience, are you with me?

(YOUTH hurries off at Left.)

EXPERIENCE

(sadly)

Only a miracle can save him now.

POVERTY

(chuckling)

Poor fool! he'll find there are worse things in the world than
Poverty!

EXPERIENCE

Oh, well, it's the privilege of Youth to enjoy first and suffer
after. And while he learns this lesson I must hold the
book for him.—Farewell, old friend!

(EXPERIENCE walks off at Left.)

POVERTY

(chuckling)

And when Delusion is through with the young fool I'll get
him——

(chuckles)

—if he doesn't fall into the clutches of something worse at
heart than I am.

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

THE EIGHTH EPISODE.

IN THE HOUSE OF LOST SOULS.

DESCRIPTION: *A dilapidated room in the poorer quarter of city. A window in back—broken panes stuffed with rags. Rickety furniture—a cheap table and chairs. One door at Right.*

DISCOVERED: *A girl, HABIT, a dope-fiend, is discovered rocking to and fro in a chair and moaning. In the background is an old hag, DEGRADATION, snivelling and cackling by turns—a drug victim in the advanced stages.*

DEGRADATION

(placing powder on hand)

I'd give you a sniff, Habit—but I ain't got no more.
(Sniffs.)

HABIT

Keep it and be damned to you, Degradation!

DEGRADATION

(pulling herself together and bracing up under the influence of the drug)

I crawled through a sewer for the money to get that—and it's worth it.

(DELUSION enters through door at Right. HABIT goes to him.)

HABIT

Delusion, please, gi'me some—quick!

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DELUSION

I ain't got none—get away!

HABIT

(*on her knees*)

For the love of God, just enough to bring me back from hell.

DELUSION

(*pushing her aside roughly—she falls on floor*)

Aw, get away—don't you know that coke is getting scarce.

DEGRADATION

(*grinning inanely*)

Getting scarce!

DELUSION

I ain't got none to spare for a frail like you—I'm saving this for a kid that needs it bad.

(*YOUTH appears in the door at Right. As he enters he sees DEGRADATION grinning at him and, afraid, he turns to go and finds EXPERIENCE standing in the door.*)

EXPERIENCE

It's all right, my boy—I'm with you.

(*YOUTH enters the room, afraid and with nervous steps.*)

Youth, do you want to meet Degradation?

YOUTH

No, no; I should say not.

EXPERIENCE

Very well; it's up to you.

HABIT

(*getting up on her knees to YOUTH*)

Please, if you pity those who suffer, get me just enough to bring me back.

YOUTH

(*to DELUSION*)

What does she mean?



EIGHTH EPISODE
HABIT: "Please,—if you pity those who suffer; give me just enough
to bring me back from hell."

DELUSION

Aw, don't pay no attention to her—she's squealin' for a sniff of coke—she had fifty cents worth yesterday and she don't share it with nobody——Come here, Kid!

(Takes out small package containing white powder as YOUTH goes to him.)

And you, too, old pal, Experience!

(EXPERIENCE goes to his Left.)

This is all there is in the shop, see—and it's harder to get than a front seat in Heaven.

(HABIT watches them like a hungry hawk—DEGRADATION snivelling and grinning in the background.)

Now, Kid, hold your hand like that, see!

(YOUTH does so—DELUSION pours a little of the powder on YOUTH'S hand.)

Go on now, sniff it up your nose.

(As YOUTH starts to do so, HABIT suddenly pounces on him—grabs his hand and sniffs the cocaine—DELUSION jumps for her—she gets the table between them.)

Say, what are you trying to pull?

HABIT

Go on, strike me—beat me—murder me—I don't care—I got it and I'm coming back—I'm coming back from hell.

(Laughs and is joined in the laugh by DEGRADATION—the change in her manner, under the influence of the drug, is marked.)

DELUSION

Aw, you make me sick—get out and hustle for your own hop.
(Enter CRIME—a burly bully—but a dope fiend.)

CRIME

(in the door)

Say, Delusion, got any dope?

(YOUTH, afraid of CRIME, hides behind EXPERIENCE.)

YOUTH
(*frightened*)

Who is that!

EXPERIENCE

Crime!

CRIME
(*to DELUSION*)

Well, how about it? Come across with the makin's for one jolt, will you! See, I'm nearly in—I just had a mix-up, see—and I croaked a guy—in cold blood, the Cops will tell you—I'm beginnin' to see the Chair—everywhere I look—

(*Turns—sees DEGRADATIFN grinning at him.*)

Take that grin off your face or I'll knock your block off.

(*Reaches for gun.*)

DELUSION
(*pacifying him*)

Just enough left for one sniff all around. Here you are, Crime!

(*Pours powder on CRIME'S hand.*)

Here's yours, Experience! Here, Kid, go to it!

(*Gives some to each—turns—finds DEGRADATION grinning at his elbow.*)

Beat it, you bum—s'pose I'm going to waste this good stuff on you?

(*All sniff. YOUTH sniffs some of his and, without being noticed by the others, gives some to HABIT. All sniff and the effect is speedily noticeable. DEGRADATION in the background, snivelling and grinning.*)

CRIME
(*under the influence of the drug*)

What, me!—I should say not!—There ain't no Chair waitin' for me—I'm independent, I am—I got a saloon and I'm

rich—I'm Boss of my ward—that's what I am—I'm Boss.
(His face reflects the wonders he dreams. DEGRADATION laughs.)

YOUTH

Wonderful! I'm floating over an azure sea and summer breezes sing sweet lullabies as I sail on and on.
(His face reflects his thoughts of happiness. DEGRADATION laughs.)

HABIT

(in ecstasy)

I'm back in my home town—see, there's my mother—"Hello, Jennie!" she says. You *are* glad to see me, ain't you, Mumsey—see, I'm rich—look at all the nice things I brought you and I ain't never goin' away from you again, Mumsey, never, never——
(Her voice dies away and she drops limply in the chair. DEGRADATION laughs.)

YOUTH

(alarmed)

What's the matter?—the azure sea is gone—there are cruel rocks in its place and a cold wind is howling about me.
(The faces of the others show that the ecstatic effect of the drug is working off.)

EXPERIENCE

It's the treacherous, lying drug, my boy—it carries you out into an ocean of glory and leaves you there—to perish of thirst and hunger.

CRIME

There it is again—that damn Chair!——
(Sniffs his hand in a vain effort to get more of the powder.)

HABIT

Oh, my God—no, no, no—don't let me wake—don't! don't!
(DEGRADATION laughs—DELUSION stirs around in his seat uneasily—feels in his pocket—sniffs his hand. POVERTY appears—looking through window in back.)

YOUTH

My head is bursting with pain——

(Turns—screams.)

Look! look! there's Poverty leering at me through the window.

(Shaking DELUSION.)

You lied to me, damn you—you told me I'd forget.

DELUSION

(looking up at YOUTH sleepily)

No more—no more!

(Relapses into troubled sleep.)

YOUTH

I can't stand this pain—there must be some way to get more of that stuff.

EXPERIENCE

Only one way—through him—Crime.

YOUTH

(hesitates—then, driven by a mirthless laugh from POVERTY, goes to CRIME)

All right, Crime; come on.

CRIME

Yes, yes, we'll go together and get it—just a minute—wait till they cover up that damned Chair.

(Screams in fright.)

Don't! don't take me there—no, no; I'm not ready yet—no, no!

HABIT

(moaning)

Le'me go back there—just an hour—just an hour!

(DEGRADATION laughs.)

YOUTH

(sinking down in a chair)

Oh, what is this that's tearing at my heart?

EXPERIENCE

The agony that tears at every heart when Nature is ill-treated and reviled.

(DEGRADATION *laughs inanely*—CRIME and DELUSION *groan*—HABIT *moans in pain*.)

Suffer! suffer!—we are poor lost souls—all of us—harried and scourged through every dark recess of hell by fiends incarnate——

(*Groans and moans as before.*)

Suffer! suffer!—miserable human wrecks, rotting on the shores of time—our minds nothing but dismal swamps full of loathsome vapors and each body the home of horrors unspeakable.

(*Groans as before.*)

Hear our groans and look at us—we who are made in the image of God, grovelling like beasts in the dirt of ages. And why—why—because there are those who call themselves men who sell and barter this vile stuff that they may rise to riches through the agonies of the weak—a curse upon them—the curse of a multitude of murdered souls follow them through all the confines of eternity.

(HABIT *screams and falls on the floor.*)

Oh! Everlasting God! mercy, mercy, mercy!

(*Drops exhausted—head on table—all are moaning in pain.*)

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

THE NINTH EPISODE.

IN THE STREET OF FORGOTTEN DAYS.

DESCRIPTION: *A Street showing the end of a church at Right—with a stained glass window, lighted up.*

DISCOVERED: CRIME, *walking into the scene, followed by YOUTH and EXPERIENCE.*

CRIME

Come on; it's only a block away. I'll have to beat that coke peddler over the head to get it.

(Just as they step within the light from the stained glass window of the church the organist plays a familiar hymn. YOUTH stops—EXPERIENCE stops—CRIME takes a step or two—stops.)

YOUTH

Listen!

(They all listen to a few bars of the music.)

CRIME

Aw, come on!

YOUTH

Where are we?

EXPERIENCE

In the Street of Forgotten Days.

(They are silent as the organist goes on.)

CRIME

Say, get a move on you!

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NINTH EPISODE
YOUTH: "My mother—she comes to me now, in the Street of
Forgotten Days."

YOUTH

Wait! Some good angel has come to me on the wings of that music. Through the mist in my mind I seem to see——

(To EXPERIENCE.)

Help me—there's someone stretching out her hand to me.

EXPERIENCE

Your mother!

YOUTH

Yes, yes; my—my mother!

(The music swells out.)

CRIME

Say! what's the matter with you?—Come on!

YOUTH

(to CRIME)

Wait—please!

(To EXPERIENCE.)

Tell me—your vision is clearer than mine.

EXPERIENCE

Don't you remember the little church on that green-topped hill across the valley—and the woman whose voice was kindness itself——

YOUTH

My dear dead mother!

EXPERIENCE

How proudly she dressed you in your Sunday best and led you by the hand into the cool shadows of the church and bade you remember always the simple teachings you heard there together!

YOUTH

My mother—she comes to me now in the Street of Forgotten Days—the Street of Forgotten Days!

(Just then from the church is heard the hymn:)

“Lead Kindly Light,
 Amid the encircling gloom—
 Lead Thou me on;
 The night is dark
 And I am far from home—
 Lead Thou me on!”

(YOUTH, *with a gesture, commands CRIME to leave him—
 then sinks sobbing on his knees beneath the church win-
 dow—CRIME slinks off at Right.*)

EXPERIENCE

(*after a pause—as the music dies away*)

The miracle has come to pass. The never dying miracle
 of a mother's love!

THE END OF THE EPISODE.

THE TENTH EPISODE.

IN THE LAND WHERE THE DREAMER WAKENS.

DESCRIPTION: *The same as The First Episode.*

DISCOVERED: LOVE *standing by the fence, looking off down the lane. She turns presently and sits, dejectedly, on the bench. HOPE enters from the cottage.*

HOPE

No sign of him, yet?

LOVE

No—no sign.

HOPE

(*comforting* LOVE)

He'll be back soon—I'm sure he will.

LOVE

No, Hope; he isn't coming back. I can believe in you no longer. Please go away.

HOPE

Go away, dear?

LOVE

No, no; I didn't mean that. Without you, Hope, my life would indeed be cheerless.

HOPE

I knew you didn't mean it. But you must be patient. He'll be with you soon—even now I feel his presence near us.

(HOPE goes in the cottage. LOVE remains sitting dejectedly on the bench. Presently YOUTH appears outside the fence—he stands looking at her for a few seconds, then enters slowly through the gate and stands near the bench.)

YOUTH
(softly)

Love!

LOVE
(getting up quickly)

Youth!

(Embraces and kisses him.)

YOUTH

You—you've waited for me!

LOVE

Waited for you, oh! dear Youth! I've waited when every hour was an age and every day an eternity. But now that I have you again all my heartaches are forgotten in the joy of seeing you.

(EXPERIENCE appears outside the fence—remains there a few seconds—then enters through the gate and stands near YOUTH.)

YOUTH

But the ring—you haven't asked me! You see, dear, it didn't keep all the evil away from me because——

LOVE
(interrupting)

Don't tell me anything. I know by the light shining from your eyes that your soul is still white and clean.

EXPERIENCE

The eyes of Love are keen and their vision reaches to the distant border-land of Truth.



TENTH EPISODE

LOVE: "I've waited when every hour was an age and every day an eternity."

YOUTH

Oh, pardon me, Love—this is my friend, Experience—to be evermore my best-remembered friend. He has been with me always and he shall be my historian.

EXPERIENCE

Yes, but by the fireside—later on!

(HOPE enters from the cottage. YOUTH goes to her and embraces her.)

YOUTH

Hope! dear, dear sister!

HOPE

Youth, I'm so glad you're back.

LOVE

(going to YOUTH)

Oh, Youth, how pale you look—and worn and weary. Tell me, did you lose your fight for fame and fortune?

EXPERIENCE

He lost his first fight but in losing he conquered the evils in his own heart—and that's the greater victory.

LOVE

But, Youth, aren't you going to fight again?

EXPERIENCE

Of course he'll fight again.

LOVE

You haven't told me—where is Ambition?

YOUTH

(sadly)

He is dead.

HOPE

No, no, Youth—Ambition sleeps but he never dies. I'll waken him and bring him back to you.

(Exit HOPE.)

EXPERIENCE

And when Ambition leads you forth again Love shall be by your side and Experience shall carry the implements of war—and you'll win this time, my boy—you'll win the heights of fame and fortune!

(HOPE enters, leading AMBITION by the hand.)

AMBITION
(smiling)

Youth!

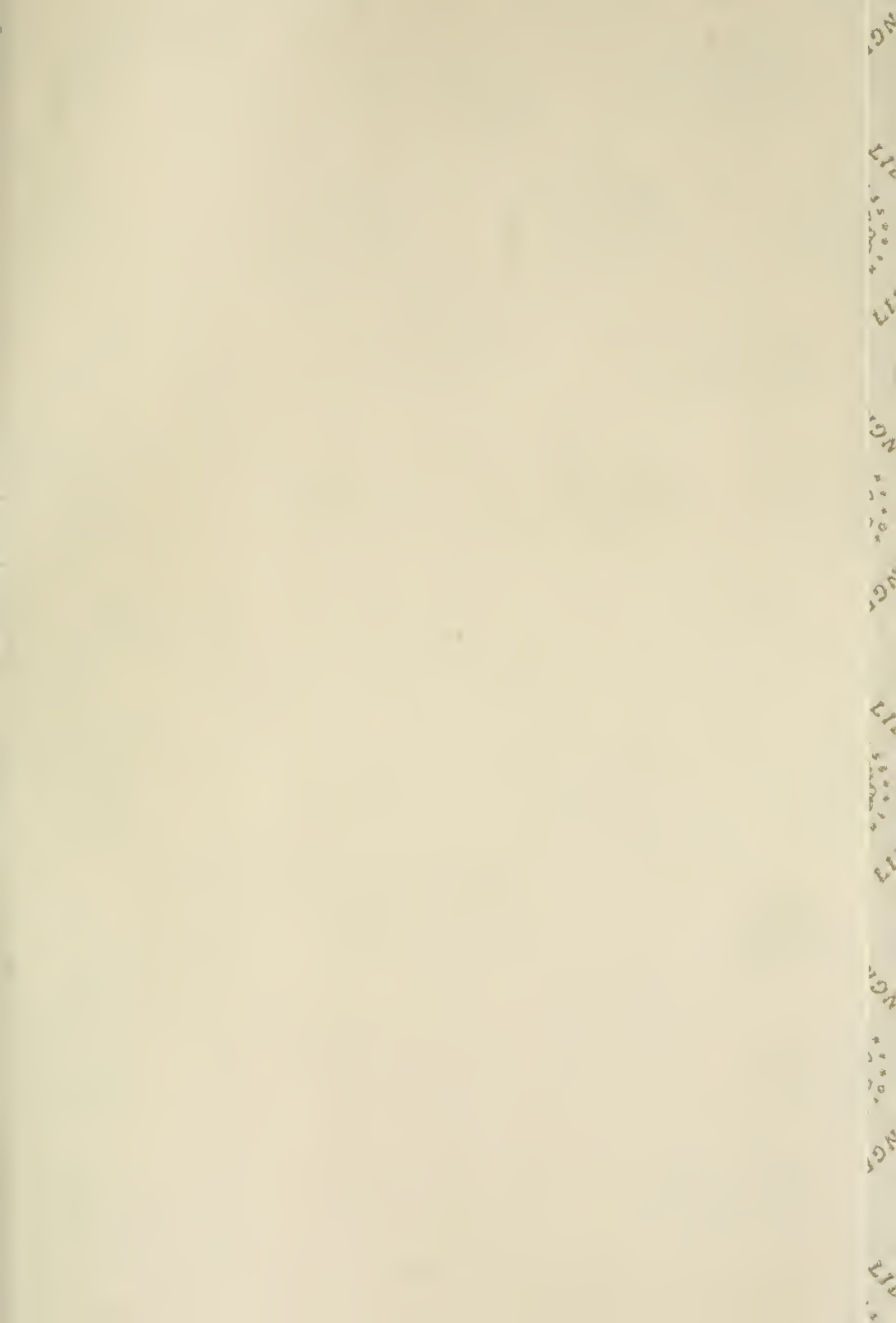
YOUTH
(eagerly)

Oh, Ambition, give me your hand again and let me try to walk with steps of faith upon that long and narrow road—the only road that leads to Love and Happiness.

(AMBITION puts one arm around YOUTH and the other around LOVE. He smiles upon them both. EXPERIENCE and HOPE show their approval.)

THE END OF THE PLAY

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