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DIALOGUES AND PLAYS FOR ENTERTAINMENT DAYS



By Edith C.A.U. Painton

BECKLEY-CARDY COMPANY
C H I C A G O

DIALOGUES AND PLAYS

FOR ENTERTAINMENT DAYS

BY

EDITH F. A. U. PAINTON

Author of THE VALUE OF X

SPECIALTY ENTERTAINMENTS FOR LITTLE FOLKS

POLLY IN HISTORY-LAND

THE PRIZE ESSAY



BECKLEY-CARDY COMPANY

CHICAGO

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DIALOGUES AND PLAYS FOR ENTERTAINMENT DAYS

A WELCOME

CHARACTERS: *Six boys and six girls.*

BOYS *enter, take positions in line.*

ALL [*together,—bow right*]:

Good afternoon, ladies!

[*Bow left*]:

Good afternoon, gentlemen!

FIRST BOY:

We're glad we can bid you all welcome again!

SECOND BOY:

The girls always do it!

THIRD BOY:

They mean to, to-day!

FOURTH BOY:

But we got the start of them once, anyway!

FIFTH BOY:

They'll be disappointed!

ALL [*nodding*]:

Of course!

SIXTH BOY:

But who cares?

Don't we boys need some chances for putting on airs?

FIFTH BOY:

They think we're just boys!

ALL [*indignantly*]:

Yes, just boys!

FOURTH BOY:

Oh, gee!

THIRD BOY:

Just because we can't wear nice white dresses, you see!

SECOND BOY:

And curls!

THIRD BOY:

Yes, and ribbons!

SECOND BOY:

And fix up so fine!

FIRST BOY:

But we can speak pieces and not miss a line!

FOURTH BOY:

So this time we've beat them, dear friends, and we say—

FIRST BOY:

Come, boys,—all together!

ALL [*bowing low*]:

You are welcome to-day!

[*Exeunt BOYS as GIRLS enter hurriedly, as if late. GIRLS appear greatly surprised.*]

FIRST GIRL:

Just look at that crowd, girls!

SECOND GIRL:

They all seem at ease!

THIRD GIRL:

What can it all mean?

FIRST GIRL:

You tell that, if you please!

FOURTH GIRL:

I don't think they looked for us now, girls, do you?

FIFTH GIRL:

They must have been welcomed!

ALL [*clasping hands in dismay*]:

Oh!!!

SIXTH GIRL [*looking at each in turn*]:

What can we do?

FIFTH GIRL:

Those boys!

FOURTH GIRL:

Could they do it?

THIRD GIRL:

Why, they 're only boys,—

And what could they do but just make a big noise?

SECOND GIRL:

They must have been here!

FIRST GIRL:

Oh, that 's just what they did!

THIRD GIRL:

They came and said welcome, and then—

ALL [*in disgust*]:

—Ran and hid!

FOURTH GIRL:

Well, never mind, girls!

FIFTH GIRL:

But it just isn't fair!

SIXTH GIRL:

Well, we can just show them that we didn't care!

ALL [*eagerly*]:

Let 's do!

FOURTH GIRL:

To be sure!

THIRD GIRL:

We 'll go right ahead with our plan.

And make them ashamed of themselves, if we can!

SECOND GIRL:

We 'll just show the people that it 's very true,

How very much better we girls always do!

ALL THE GIRLS [*bowing low*]:

The boys have bid you welcome, friends,

As we can plainly see,
We now will show how doubly so
We girls would have you be!
Of course they thought, when they got through,
All chance for us was past,
But though they had the first word here,
We're bound to have the last.

[ALL *bow low again and march off proudly.*]

STUDYING FOR A TEST

CHARACTERS: *Four girls.*

SCENE: *School-platform with flat-top desk and four chairs.*

EDITH *enters alone, with books, tablets, and pencils.*

EDITH: Algebra test to-morrow, and I don't know any more about the sum of x and y than I did six weeks ago! I certainly must study very, very hard this evening. I must work out and prove every single one of these forty-nine problems before I dare think of sleep. I'm glad I've such a nice long evening all to myself. [*Sits at desk, begins to work. Pause of some length. Knock at door.*] Dear me! who can it be?

ALICE [*sticking head in*]: May I come in, Edith? [*Comes in.*] I've just got to study for that algebra test, and I can't get at anything over home. Everybody's talking about everything but algebra, and I—

EDITH: Of course. Make yourself at home. [*Moves things on desk to make room.*] I've got to work hard, too, so nobody will bother you. Pull up that chair.

ALICE [*getting chair and sitting at desk*]: It's too sweet of you! [*Pause.*] I say, Edith—

EDITH: Yes!

ALICE: Did you get a bid to Clara's party?

EDITH [*keeping at work*]: Of course!

ALICE: Going?

EDITH [*still working*]: Sure!

ALICE: What are you going to wear?

EDITH [*as before, but impatiently*]: White!

ALICE: Do you think—

EDITH: Please, Alice, let us stick to our algebra. I am away behind in it, and I simply must work.

ALICE: Well, must n't I, too? But can't we—

EDITH [*aloud, emphatically*]: $2x$ plus $4xy$, minus $3y$ —

DOROTHY *enters*.

DOROTHY: I did n't stop to knock, Edith. I knew you 'd be at home stuffing that brain of yours. Oh, hello, Alice, you here, too?

ALICE: Looks like it, does n't it?

DOROTHY: I do seem to get that impression. What are you doing? Studying?

ALICE [*showing books, etc.*]: Looks like it, does n't it?

DOROTHY: Another impression I seem to get. Well, well, I won't bother you very long. I just wanted to ask what you are going to wear to the party?

EDITH: Had n't you just as soon wait till to-morrow night, Dorothy, to talk it all over? I have to take a hard test in the morning and I *must* study to-night!

DOROTHY: Oh, of course, if I 'm not welcome—

EDITH: Dorothy! You know better than to take it that way. But you 've no idea how busy I am to-night.

DOROTHY [*turning to ALICE*]: Work away!

ALICE: What are you going to wear, Dorothy?

DOROTHY: Oh, mamma 's making me the loveliest new blue silk. It 's the prettiest thing. What 's yours?

ALICE: Pink chiffon with cream lace.

DOROTHY: How sweet it must be!

ALICE: Wait till you see it.

EDITH: Girls, could n't you please keep a little more quiet? I just can't keep my mind on my work at all.

ALICE: Yes, yes, Edith. We 'll whisper. [*They whisper for a while. Knock.*]

EDITH [*resignedly*]: Come in!

LAURA *enters with very beautiful dress.*

LAURA: Well, Edith, I didn't know you had company. I just came over to show you my new dress for Clara's party. Mamma has just finished it. [*Holds it up against her to show it off to best advantage.* ALL jump up.]

EDITH: O Laura! What a beauty!

ALICE: Isn't it a perfect dream?

DOROTHY [*taking it and examining closely*]: You'll look like a rose in it.

LAURA: I was just going to try it on, but I thought maybe Edith would like to come over and help me, so I ran over here first. Can't you come, Edith?

EDITH: I'm awfully sorry, Laura. I'd love to, if I didn't have this test to prepare for. But I'm so poor in algebra, I simply mustn't waste a minute this evening. [*Resumes seat and work.*]

LAURA [*turns to other girls*]: Can you girls come? [EDITH looks up at ALICE.]

ALICE [*catches EDITH'S eye, and hesitates*]: I—I—I am studying for that test, too, Laura. I came over here because there was too much going on at home to distract my mind.

LAURA: I see. Too bad. How about you, Dorothy?

DOROTHY: Oh, I'm only too glad to come. There's never any test for me like the test of a new dress. I'm dying to see how you look in it!

LAURA: Come on, then. [*Mockingly.*] Good-night, students!

EDITH }
ALICE } : Good-night!

[*Exeunt LAURA and DOROTHY.*]

ALICE [*after a pause*]: Isn't it the darlingest dress?

EDITH [*working*]: Yes.

ALICE [*after another pause*]: Wish I had one just like it. [*No answer. Pause.*] Mine is very pretty, but not so rich as hers. [*No answer. Pause.*] Her mother surely does know how to make the swellest clothes, doesn't

she? [*No answer. Pause. At last, ALICE rises.*] Oh, pshaw, Edith! I can't get head or tail to this studying now. I'm going over to Laura's. I'm crazy to see her in that dress. [*Starts for door.*] Good-night!

EDITH [*who has been working rapidly, even furiously, with lips closed tightly*]: Good—no, wait a minute! I'll go with you. [*Jumps up.*] I can't see anything but that dress, either.

ALICE [*at door, looking back gayly*]: Good-bye, algebra!

EDITH [*with a sigh*]: Till to-morrow!

[*Exeunt ALICE and EDITH.*]

WRITING A SCHOOL PLAY

CHARACTERS: *Four girls and two boys.*

SCENE: *Platform in schoolroom, with desk and six chairs.*

Enter MAUD, CLARA, HATTIE, and GRACE, each carrying heavy load of play books.

MAUD [*throwing books on desk with a bang*]: I have read through all these plays, but I can't find a single thing we can use!

CLARA [*throwing down books*]: Nor I!

HATTIE [*throwing down books*]: Nor I!

GRACE [*throwing down books*]: Nor I! [*ALL sit and begin to laugh. After a pause, GRACE wipes eyes.*] Maybe it's funny, but I can't see the joke! Our last day is only four weeks off!

HATTIE: I know it. I'm sure I feel more like crying than laughing, but—

CLARA: We all did look so funny!

MAUD: Even if we did feel so glummy! I do wish Miss Whitney had n't left it all in our hands.

ALL [*sighing*]: Don't I?

CLARA: But she did!

ALL [*sighing*]: She did!

HATTIE: But what can we do?

GRACE: Laugh, of course!

MAUD: Or cry!

CLARA: We can take our choice, of course, but neither will provide us with a play.

GRACE: And such trash as that [*pointing to pile of plays*] makes my very heart sick!

HATTIE [*after a pause*]: I'll tell you what we'll do!

ALL [*eagerly*]: What?

HATTIE [*importantly*]: Write one.

ALL [*amazed*]: What?

HATTIE: I mean it. We can, if we try.

MAUD: But who? You?

HATTIE: All of us. I couldn't do it alone, of course, but, surely, the four of us—

GRACE: And "Thank heaven there's no more of us!"

MAUD: Hush, Grace! I don't know but you are right, Hattie. I wonder if we couldn't!

CLARA: I don't see why not. We all get perfectly splendid marks on our compositions.

MAUD: But, of course, a play—well, it's a little different!

GRACE: Just a little!

MAUD: Still, I think we can do it. Let's get a stack of pencils and paper and begin right away.

ALL [*jumping up*]: Let's! [*Each provides herself with pencil and paper.*]

MAUD [*as they resume seats*]: All ready? [ALL *nod.*] Well, what shall we write about?

ALL [*shaking heads*]: Don't know!

CLARA [*biting end of pencil*]: I can't think of a thing!

GRACE [*tapping paper nervously with pencil*]: Neither can I.

HATTIE [*sighing, scratching head with end of pencil*]: I can think of a hundred things—but they won't do!

MAUD: We must have something easy to learn.

CLARA: And easy to make scenes for.

GRACE: And easy to dress.

HATTIE: And easy to act!

MAUD [*dramatically*]: Can it, oh can it, be easy to write?

Enter ROY and HARRY.

ROY: Well, what's going on here? A test?

CLARA: Worse!

HARRY: Heavens! What can it be?

GRACE [*importantly*]: We're writing our school play.

HARRY: Honest, are you?

MAUD: We're trying to, boys.

HATTIE: Do be good and help us.

ROY [*sitting*]: Sure we will!

HARRY [*sitting*]: We're the helpers from Helpersville.

ROY: What's the name of the play?

HARRY: And what's the plot?

ROY: Who's the hero?

HARRY: And who's the villain? [*Pause. No answer.*]

ROY [*looking over HATTIE'S shoulder*]: Come, girls, why don't you tell us what it's about?

MAUD: We—don't know!

ROY [*jumping up*]: Don't know?

GRACE: No. You see, we haven't got that far.

CLARA: We haven't made up our minds.

HARRY [*whistles*]: Whew! Some play this! We'll have to name it ourselves.

ROY: Sure! Let's call it "Bloody Pete from Death Valley."

GIRLS [*shuddering*]: Ugh!

HARRY: Don't like that? How about "Dynamite Bill, the Terror of Murderers' Gulch?"

MAUD: Please don't, boys. We *must* write this play.

ROY: May I be the hero?

HARRY: And may I be the villain?

MAUD: Yes, yes, anything, if you'll only—

GRACE: But why must we have a villain?

CLARA: That's what I say. Why not a sweet, clean little country play? You boys could be rivals for—oh, for something or other—

HATTIE: One rich and one poor, you know.

HARRY: I'll be the rich one.

MAUD: All right. The poor one always wins the prize, you know.

HARRY: Not really?

GRACE: Well, always in stories and plays, anyway.

HARRY [*dramatically*]: Alas! I have chosen the smaller part!

CLARA: But we don't seem to be getting along very fast, do we? We haven't even got a title—

HATTIE: To say nothing of a plot!

GRACE: Oh, say! Let's have a dude—

ROY [*strutting about, dude fashion*]: That's me!

MAUD: And a negro—

HARRY [*shrinking back in chair*]: Not me!

CLARA: You must be the heroine, Hattie. You have such a lovely smile.

HATTIE: Oh, no!—you! Your hair's so pretty.

GRACE: But Maud has such nice eyes!

MAUD: And your voice is so sweet, Grace.

ROY [*looking from one to another*]: But you can't all be heroines, can you?

HARRY: You'll have to draw straws.

GRACE [*staring at paper ruefully*]: We won't need any heroine if we can't get a plot.

CLARA: Let's have a girl who wants to marry one young man—

HARRY: That's me!

CLARA: While her mother wants her to marry the other.

ROY: I suppose that's me. [*Sighs.*]

CLARA: The girl's sister can have a fancy for the one her mother likes, while the one the girl herself likes must be crazy about the sister.

ROY: Gee! What a mix-up! How can you untangle it?

CLARA [*pencil on lip*]: That's just the trouble. I can't!

HARRY: But, see here, girls, can't we leave out all that mushy stuff? Can't we have a plot without any of that sort of thing in it?

ROY: Some school story, for instance—examinations, with

papers lost—a hero sick, or hurt playing ball, or something—or questions stolen—anything that doesn't have the dippy dope you're talking about. It makes us fellows feel so foolish to act those parts.

MAUD: That's a good idea. I don't see why we can't.

GRACE: I know we'd all like it better.

HATTIE: All of these printed plays had some such kind of story—every single one of them—so we seemed to think we had to.

CLARA: It's lots nicer to be just good friends with boys when you can.

ROY: Good for you, Clara. Girls are a heap nicer when they aren't "soft."

MAUD [*with tone of great patience*]: But what about the play?

HATTIE: Yes; "the play's the thing."

HARRY: Listen to Hattie, quoting from "Hamlet."

GRACE: Oh, if Shakespeare were only here!

HATTIE: But he'd be bound to kill us all off in the last act,—and that wouldn't do!

MAUD: No, we want our play funny—with just a little seriousness mixed up with it to make it solid—and—

HARRY: Splendid speeches for all of us.

MAUD: This is all very well; but it seems to me that it's all talk and no play.

GRACE: Yes, and it's almost time for the bell.

HATTIE: I'll tell you! Let's each draw up a synopsis—

ROY [*puzzled*]: A sin-up-sis?

HATTIE: No, neither sin-up nor sin-down, sir. I mean a plot with a detailed program—an outline, the same as you'd write for an essay or oration.

HARRY [*protesting*]: We fellows, too, write those things?

GIRLS: Sure!

MAUD: Why not?

HARRY: Say, Roy, what have we got ourselves into?

HATTIE: Well, let's bring them all in to-morrow, read them aloud, and vote upon the best.

GRACE: A good idea! Then we can go right to work and write it. It won't take but a few minutes when we get the outline.

CLARA: Of course not. It's as easy as pie. Why, all these plays are just nonsense. Nothing at all to any one of them. I know I could beat them.

ALL: Sure! [*Bell rings.*]

MAUD [*jumping up, while ALL follow*]: There goes the bell! Hurry! To-morrow, then, we'll write our play.

GRACE: And have four long weeks to practice!

ALL [*as they leave stage irregularly*]: Good! Good!

ORGANIZING A SOCIETY

CHARACTERS: *Five girls and three boys.*

SCENE: *Platform with eight chairs and a desk. All enter, alone and irregularly, taking seats and acting awkwardly and ill at ease. They drum on chairs, twist about, twirl thumbs, and in many ways show nervousness and a desire to do something. After a pause, KATE breaks the silence.*

KATE: Say, kids—

JOE: Who are you talking to? We're not of the Capricorn family!

KATE [*turning to IRENE*]: Who's Capricorn?

IRENE: Never heard of him. Who is he, Joe?

JOE: Why, the Goat, of course! She said "kids." Kids are young goats, aren't they?

MABEL: But what were you going to say, Kate?

KATE: Let's do something.

FRED: Well, I'm willing. You say what.

KATE: Goodness! I don't know. But Miss Earl won't be here for hours and hours—

EVA: More or less!

IRENE: Mostly less!

FRED [*looking around crowd*]: Who knows something we can do?

EVA: "Puss in the corner?" [ALL *shake heads.*] "Drop the handkerchief?" [ALL *shake heads.*] "Hide-and-seek?" [ALL *shake heads.*] Then I don't know.

GEORGE [*after a pause, while ALL think hard*]: Why not organize a society?

ALL: A society?

KATE [*proudly*]: All of my folks are in society already.

JOE: What kind of a society, George?

GEORGE: Oh, one of the kind where they join to get practice in reading and writing. [*Thinks.*] What *do* they call them?

EVA [*eagerly*]: Oh, I know! Littery societies.

JOE: Lit-er-ar-y, Eva.

EVA: Oh, well! Same thing!

FRED: Tell us how to do it, George.

GEORGE: I was at one once. First, you have to have a chairman—

EVA: What 's that?

GEORGE: Why, the man that sits in the chair.

EVA: But here are eight chairs.

GEORGE: But this is the special seat of the man who tells everybody else what to do.

KATE: That 'll be you, George.

GEORGE [*modestly*]: Well, of course, if you all—

ALL: George! George!

GEORGE [*rises, moves chair to desk, and sits with air of great importance*]: Well, then, I 'll sit here. And, now, somebody must move—

ALL [*each jumping up and moving to some other place*]: I will.

JOE: We can all move, you see.

GEORGE: Oh, I didn't mean that. I meant for you to make a motion—

ALL [*with grotesque gestures*]: Like this?

GEORGE: No, no! Sit down, please. [*ALL sit, in some confusion. GEORGE pounds on table with knife.*] Now see! When I hit the desk like this, it 's a call to order.

EVA: To order what?

GEORGE: Dear me, Eva! To order *nothing*!

EVA: Then what does it mean?

GEORGE: It means to come to order.

EVA [*feels hair, etc.*]: Aren't we in order? I thought I looked rather neat, and I 'm sure the others—

GEORGE: Oh, you don't understand. It just means to keep still and behave.

EVA: But haven't we *been*-have?

GEORGE: Yes, yes! But you mustn't talk out loud, you know—

EVA: Humph! Just like-being in school.

IRENE: Well, what do we do next?

FRED: How in the world do you want your motions made? I never was in society.

GEORGE: Why, you just stand up and say what you want—

ALL [*rising eagerly*]: I want—

GEORGE: Oh, no, no! Sit down, please. [ALL *sit, confusedly.*] I mean, what you want to have done in the society.

MABEL [*rising*]: Well, I want Irene, and Eva, and Fred, and—

GEORGE: No, no. Sit down, Mabel. [*She sits down in embarrassment.*] You must first address the chair—

MABEL: What chair?

GEORGE [*tapping back of chair*]: Why, this one. The *chairman's* chair.

MABEL: What a foolish idea!

EVA: Whoever heard of talking to a chair?

MABEL [*seated*]: Well, good morning, chair.

GEORGE: Oh, but that's not the way.

KATE: Well, dear me! Who in the world knows the right way to talk to a chair?

GEORGE: Why, you must just say "Mr. Chairman."

FRED: That's you.

GEORGE: Of course.

FRED: All right. Mr. Chairman—

GEORGE: But you have to stand up, Fred.

KATE: Goodness! What a fuss about nothing!

FRED: Well, I'll put it through, or die trying. [*Rises.*]

Mr. Chairman!

GEORGE: Mr. Johnson.

FRED: What?

GEORGE: Why, I was just giving you the floor. What were you going to say?

FRED: Er—er—good morning.

GEORGE: No. You must say "I move."

FRED [*stepping awkwardly to one side with hand raised*]:
I move—

GEORGE: Well, what do you move?

FRED: Why, why, I don't know. I guess I don't move at all. [*Sits.*]

GEORGE: But wait, Fred. Get up again. You have the floor. Use it.

FRED [*holds up hands in bewilderment, and looks at them*]:
The floor? Where?

GEORGE: Why, I mean—just hold the floor, Fred, till I see what my little book says. [*Takes book from pocket, searching it busily. FRED leans over, with both hands on floor. ALL laugh, causing GEORGE to look up.*] Why, what are you doing?

FRED [*straightening up*]: Just trying to hold the floor, as you said, though I couldn't feel it moving.

GEORGE: Pshaw! I merely meant for you to keep standing.

FRED [*rubbing hands on trousers*]: Then why didn't you say so?

GEORGE [*reading from book*]: Is there any question before the house? [*GIRLS rise and run to door or window, to look out.*] Sit down, girls. The meeting is not adjourned. Where are you going?

KATE: Why, to see if there is any question in front of the house, of course.

EVA: Wasn't that what you said?

GEORGE: Nonsense! Can't you girls understand anything at all?

IRENE [*as girls resume seats*]: Not that stuff you're talking.

GEORGE: If somebody would only move—

JOE: What is the proper thing for a fellow to move, George?

GEORGE: Why, somebody ought to move that we organize a society.

EVA: Goodness! Haven't we got ourselves organized yet?

IRENE: Why, of course! [*Rises.*] I move that we organize a society. [*Sits with air of pride.*]

GEORGE: But you didn't address the chair.

IRENE: Pshaw! Mr. Chairman, I move that we organize a society.

MABEL: But you didn't rise.

EVA: Can't anybody in this crowd rise and move at the same time?

KATE [*giggling*]: We can't rise without moving.

GEORGE: Order! Order!

EVA: Order what?

GEORGE: Oh, just order—be quiet.

EVA [*to crowd, holding up finger*]: Sh!

MABEL: I do wish—

GEORGE: You're out of order.

MABEL [*feeling belt, hair, collar, etc.*]: How? Where?

GEORGE: You haven't addressed the chair.

MABEL: But I don't understand that business, George. Which is the chair?

IRENE: He means himself.

MABEL [*in disgust, to GEORGE*]: Are *you* the chair?

GEORGE: Yes, I—

FRED [*jumps up mischievously*]: Boys, I move we sit on the chair. That's what chairs are for!

JOE [*jumping up*]: Seconded! [*Both grab GEORGE good-naturedly, throw him to floor, after some slight struggle, and sit on him. GIRLS laugh.*]

GEORGE [*as soon as he can get his breath*]: Will—somebody—move—

FRED: Not yet.

JOE: But soon!

KATE [*rising*]: I will, Mr. Chairman. I make a motion that we do *not* organize any society.

ALL: Why not?

KATE: Too poky!

IRENE [*looking off*]: Besides, here comes—

[BOYS *jump up, take seats and look very dignified.*

GEORGE *brushes clothes, etc.*]

EVA: Miss Earl. [GIRLS *assume dignified positions.*]

Enter MISS EARL.

MISS EARL: Good morning, children.

ALL: Good morning, Miss Earl.

THE POPULAR DICK

CHARACTERS: *Four girls and five boys.*

SCENE: *A room, with large dictionary on stand in the corner. Five chairs arranged about room, in easy positions for boys. Another near dictionary.*

The point in the action of this dialogue is to keep some of the girls always at dictionary, with the boys always watching for a chance, whatever they may say or however much they may try to seem interested in something else. The main thought in their minds must not be lost sight of. Whenever a girl at dictionary even moves her head, they must all look quickly and start to get up, showing great disappointment when they discover it to be a "false alarm." This could not be written into the dialogue at every point, for it must be brought in naturally, but no opportunity must be lost for this work.

RENA is discovered alone, searching the dictionary, and constantly referring to a paper in her hand. (Take plenty of time for this before speaking at all.)

RENA: H-e-t—h-e-t—h-e-t-e-r— Oh, dear me! Where is H anyway?

FRED [*entering*]: Just after G, and before I, of course, Rena. At least, I've never heard of it's being moved. Most through?

RENA: Most through? Why, I've fully twenty—

MINA [*entering*]: Do hurry up with that dictionary, Rena! I'm in a hurry to finish my essay.

RENA [*not looking up from book*]: So am I.

MINA [*walking to her, FRED pacing floor*]: What word are you chasing?

RENA: Why, it's—[*looks at paper*—“heterogeneous,”—“heterogeneousness”—er—something like that! I don't just know! Something with a “h-e-t-e-r”—I just must find it! [*Resumes search hurriedly.*]

FRED [*pausing by them, anxiously*]: But, listen, girls, I want to look for—

LUCY [*enters, followed by RUTH*]: Ladies first, if you please, Fred. I need that dictionary for two straight hours, at least, before I can even *begin* to write my essay.

RUTH: Me, too!

[*FRED throws himself into chair with deep sigh of resignation, pulls tablet from pocket and begins to sharpen pencil.*]

RENA [*at dictionary*]: Here it is! “Of a different kind and nature”—

JOE [*entering*]: That's us—all of us!

LUCY: Be still, Joe. Rena is instructing us in the meaning of something or other, and we are all fairly consumed with anxiety to know how it comes out. Aren't we, Fred? [*He nods, without looking up.*]

RUTH: Me, too!

RENA [*reading to herself*]: “Miscellaneous,”—“opposed to homogeneous”—

LUCY [*sits on lounge*]: Dear me! I'm sure we're all opposed to anything like that!

JOE [*sitting*]: Sure we are! Too hard to spell!

RENA: I've got it!

JOE [*jumping up in assumed fright*]: Is it catching?

RENA [*walks to exit, speaks sarcastically*]: Indeed, it isn't—at least, no boy is ever in any danger of catching it. It was just—an idea! [*Pauses before last sentence, and throws it back at him over shoulder as she leaves the stage.*]

LUCY: Now, do you think you'll lie still—you boys? [*Boys start for dictionary, but she motions to RUTH.*] Go ahead,

Ruth. Your turn. [Boys sigh, and resume seats with martyred air.]

RUTH [*uncertainly, eyeing BOYS, timidly*]: Thanks, Lucy; but you see, I've about a dozen words to look up. [*Searches paper in hand.*]

LUCY: Don't stop to count them. Just help yourself to the bread of wisdom.

FRED [*dryly*]: Yes, Ruth—and don't bother to hurry. We're in no rush.

JOE: We have all the time there is, you know.

LUCY: Don't pay any attention to them, Ruth. We must always remember they are only boys and don't know any better than— [RUTH searches dictionary.]

LYMAN [*entering*]: Somebody ahead of me?

JOE: Several somebodies, it seems to me. [*Counts, while pointing at each in turn.*] One, two, three—

LYMAN: Oh, never mind about that. I just wanted to consult old Dick—

JOE: So do we, but— [*Suggestive wave of hands at GIRLS.*]

LUCY: It isn't what you want in this world; it's what you get. Take a seat, Lyman. [*Sweetly.*] Take your time, Ruth.

JOE: Sit down, Lyman. Always do as the girls advise. They're sure to be right. Just help yourself to a chair and be as miserable as we are. [*Enter PAUL and WILL.*] Here come two more pilgrims along the road to Wisdom. Were you also in search of words, boys, or did you just get lonesome—

PAUL: Just wanted á chance at Dick, boys. It won't take me a minute—

BOYS [*all*]: Humph!

JOE: .Poor innocent youth! Who hath deluded thee? That dictionary—the desirable Dick—thou mayst never reach! Sit down and rest thy weary brain.

WILL: But, you see, these essays—

FRED: That's where you're mistaken, too. We *don't* see these essays.

PAUL: You won't, either, unless you turn yourself into a second Webster and define these words—

FRED: Not me!

JOE: Get somebody else.

LYMAN: Nothing like that in my family!

[RUTH leaves dictionary. BOYS rush that way, but LUCY calmly takes her place. BOYS resume seats, shaking heads despairingly.]

JOE [to PAUL and WILL]: Better sit down, boys. It's just as cheap and "it's a long, long way to dictionary."

WILL [sitting reluctantly]: But how long—

LYMAN: Ask us something easy.

FRED: "It may be for years, and it may be forever." Why not "let patience have her perfect work?"

Enter MINA.

MINA: Well, I declare! Is this a meeting of some kind?

WILL [waving hand]: Consult the dictionary.

PAUL: In other words, ask Dick!

MINA: That's what I came for, but I see Lucy and Ruth—over there—

JOE: Yes, and you will continue to see Lucy and Ruth over there—

MINA: But will nothing move them?

JOE: We boys might try our largest smiles on them—

LUCY [over shoulder, with frown]: Do be still, boys. This is important.

FRED: So we thought once; but now— What are mere words, anyway? They're made up of nothing but common, everyday letters, and—

LYMAN: Yes, but *what* letters?—that's the question. And who can tell us but Dick? And how can we know—

MINA: Speaking of words, they're the most important things

in all the world. If it were not for words, how could we ever have learned anything?

JOE [*with mock sigh*]: And how could we ever have written any essays?

PAUL: We wouldn't have been asked to.

[LUCY finishes at dictionary, and starts down. BOYS rise and start for dictionary. LUCY beckons to MINA.]

LUCY: You're next, Mina. Come, Ruth.

[RUTH rises, and they walk toward front, while MINA goes to dictionary. BOYS look from one to another, shaking heads.]

WILL [*teasingly*]:

Oh, would I were a girl,
With hair of dainty curl,
With eyes of blue
And dainty shoe,
And brain all in a whirl.

JOE [*intercepting LUCY and RUTH at exit*]: Don't hurry away, ladies. Surely there must be another word or two in the English language about whose meaning you are not absolutely certain. Dick will tell you. He will be only too glad to tell you. Don't hesitate to occupy the time, you know, if—

RUTH: We won't, thank you. But I think we know it all now.

FRED: Nothing like a little conceit to help a girl—

JOE: Devour the dictionary!

LUCY: Come on, Ruth. Don't let them bother you. They can't help being only boys! [*Leads RUTH out, haughtily.*]

MINA [*at dictionary*]: Let me see—[*consults paper*]—“orbiculated.” O-r-b—o-r-b—what's the use of such a word, anyhow?

JOE: There seems to be plenty just now in keeping us separated from our good friend Dick for another weary hour.

FRED: Somebody or other wrote once in a book, or a poem,

or a play, or something or other like that: "We live by deeds, not words." He surely could never have come up against a situation like this.

MINA [*looking over shoulder, smiling sweetly*]: Oh! did you boys want to use the dictionary?

JOE: Oh, not at all! not at all!

MINA: I'm ever so glad, because, you see, I have two or three more words—

BOYS [*sinking back in chairs with groans*]: Oh!

FRED: But, after all, boys, words seem very important to us just now when we can't find them out!

WILL: I know, but still they can't be as important as deeds. It isn't what folks say that counts; it's what they do.

LYMAN: Well, now, if I had a deed to that dictionary, I'd do—

JOE: By the way, why wouldn't that be a good subject for us to debate on next time?

PAUL: What subject?

JOE: Let's see! How would we put it?—"Resolved, that deeds are more important than words."

LYMAN: The way we're chasing words just now, I'm afraid we'd all want to argue on the same side.

PAUL: That's right. The words in that dictionary are certainly important enough just now.

WILL: But the girls' deeds in getting there ahead of us have been more powerful, that's sure.

JOE: I'll tell you how we can manage. Let us boys take the affirmative. We'd all be in for deeds—if we had the chance—while the girls are certainly after words.

FRED: They always like to use lots of words—especially Mina—so, of course, they'd be glad to take that side. We boys can just win the debate without half trying.

WILL: Still, the one who used the best and most convincing *words* would win.

MINA [*turning from dictionary*]: What's all this but words,

words, words, words?—always big words about what you're going to do! But when it comes to the doing—

JOE [*making for dictionary*]: Pardon me, but were you—

RENA [*enters hurriedly*]: I forgot a word—a very important word—and— What? All you boys here yet? [*Hurries to dictionary.*]

FRED [*as BOYS drop to chairs in disgust*]: I believe we are, Rena.

JOE: Looks like it!

WILL: Girls may come, and girls may go, but we stay on forever.

MINA: And what do you think they're doing, Rena?

RENA [*over shoulder*]: I've not the sign of an idea. They're capable of almost anything, I guess.

MINA: They have been planning a debate; and what do you think they have decided?

RENA [*as before*]: Again, I must refuse to think at all.

MINA: They are arranging for a discussion as to which is the most—I mean the more—important, deeds or words—

JOE [*winking at boys*]: Mina can get a position anywhere, teaching grammar.

MINA: Thank you, Joe. Just what I want. But do listen, Rena.

RENA [*as before*]: Am!

MINA: They are to argue for deeds, and we girls for words.

RENA [*turning*]: Humph! And do they think their words all sufficient to decide such an important question? Were we not even to be consulted? [*Looks sternly at each boy in turn, who hangs head.*]

MINA: It seems not, according to the few words I—overheard.

RENA [*thoughtfully*]: Well, there is plenty of argument on both sides of that question, but—[*waves hand toward dictionary*]—I'm too busy even to think of it now.

FRED [*with sigh*]: That very important word is still lost.

JOE: Let's get out an ad.—“Lost, strayed, or stolen,—an important word. Finder please return to the dictionary, or leave with Miss Rena—”

RENA: Boys! boys! how can I find it if you won't keep quiet?

RUTH [*enters hurriedly*]: I find that there's just another word or two—

BOYS: O gee!

FRED: Can there still be one left in the book?

RUTH [*walking to RENA*]: Mayn't I have it next, Rena?

RENA: Of course, Ruth. Help yourself. [*Walks toward group thoughtfully.*] That subject you suggest isn't such a bad one, boys. Of course, words are very important. We are proving that now, for the dictionary seems the most popular book at school to-day. But when we have the words, we must learn to spell them, and that sort of turns them into deeds. And some of them are certainly none too easy to spell.

RUTH [*over shoulder*]: Say, children, how do you spell “impecuniosity?”

WILL: Whew! You have the spelling-book right in front of your face.

LYMAN [*ruefully*]: We haven't!

JOE: Dick's the most popular boy at school!—Rena says so.

LUCY [*entering*]: I'm after another word—

RUTH [*leaving dictionary*]: Here, Lucy. Just in time.

FRED [*in disgust*]: Talk about girls' rights!

PAUL: They seem to have all the rights—to words.

LYMAN: They are said to be very fond of the last word.

PAUL: Wonder if they ever get to it.

RUTH [*looking over her paper*]: Each word has so many shades of meaning. It's just wonderful. Can we ever learn the right one?

LYMAN: Ought to—if we could just keep glued to the dictionary long enough!

WILL: Stick to Dick! He's the wise boy!

PAUL: The trouble is: how's a fellow to get to him?

JOE: "If at first you don't succeed"—

LUCY [*turning to face group, with finger in dictionary to keep place*]: Yet think, boys, of the real importance of words. Words make literature. [*Turns back.*]

FRED: But deeds make history.

RUTH: Ugh! I never did like history. Literature is my best—

JOE: Yes, yes! but somehow, the more I think of it, the better I like the idea of this subject for debate.

PAUL: Yes, it sounds good. I could talk an hour right this minute—

WILL: An hour in a minute! That's going some.

PAUL: Well, I believe I could manage it just the same, if I could just get a chance at Dick for a bit!

LUCY [*without turning*]: In just a minute, little boy.

PAUL: Humph! It's been "in just a minute, little boy," for the last hour and a half!

[*LUCY turns from dictionary, and boys all make a big start for it, but RUTH slips in ahead.*]

RUTH: Oh, dear! I forgot to look up— Oh, so sorry to keep you waiting, boys, but—

[*BOYS retreat, with sigh, in unison. Make this advance and retreat in military fashion, every step in unison.*]

LUCY [*walking to front, RUTH at dictionary*]: In this case, boys, we'll all admit that "actions speak louder than words."

RUTH: Ready, girls! Let's go to the classroom and write!
[*GIRLS leave, bowing low to BOYS.*]

JOE: Can it be true?

LYMAN: Our chance at last!

[*ALL rush to dictionary, and carry it off in triumph.*]

BOYS [*all*]: Good old Dick!

CURTAIN

ISABEL'S POEM

CHARACTERS: *Three girls and two boys.*

ISABEL *enters, alone, with manuscript and pencil.*

ISABEL: If I were only a poet, a real, true poet like Jean Ingelow, Adelaide Proctor, Felicia Hemans, Alice Cary, and so many others have been when they were no older than I, what a lovely poem I would write about our dear Miss Graham. She is such a splendid teacher, I think, and yet I sometimes mistrust that I do not really appreciate the truly wonderful woman that she is. None of us students do; but, at any rate, she is so lovely and lovable, and so altogether charming, that such a prosaic mortal as I have been chasing rhymes all day in the hope of producing something worthy of her. [*Sits.*] But this is all I've been able to get—six tame little lines! [*Reads slowly.*]

“Like roses in the early spring,
Like silvery dawn at sea,
Like notes that woodland songsters sing,
My teacher proves to me
What a vivid, fragrant, vital thing
One fervent soul can be.”

Why, truly, when I read it over again, that is n't half bad. I must go on and finish it. I wonder if my friends and I have not been mistaken in our estimation of my talents, and if I am not really very much of a poet after all!

WINNIE *and* VERNA *enter.*

WINNIE: What are you doing here all by yourself, Isabel?

ISABEL [*embarrassed*]: I was—writing.

VERNA: Writing?

WINNIE: But what?

VERNA [*looking over ISABEL'S shoulder*]: Let me see. [ISABEL *covers paper with hands*. VERNA *looks at WINNIE in astonishment*.] What can it be?

WINNIE: A letter, maybe? [ISABEL *shakes head*.] Her will, perhaps! [ISABEL *shakes head*.]

VERNA: A check for a hundred dollars, payable to me—Miss Verna Milton—for a birthday present? Was that it, Belle? [ISABEL *and WINNIE laugh, but ISABEL shakes head*.] Then why do you make such a secret of it? Surely nothing less than that could be worth concealing from your true and loyal schoolmates, whom you love so very, very dearly.

WINNIE: What's the reason you can't tell us, girlie? Was it some old examination paper, or some class exercise that you'd rather not show us?

ISABEL: Not exactly that, girls; and it is n't really any secret, either, only—only—

GIRLS [*together*]: What?

ISABEL: Only I'm afraid you'll laugh at me.

GIRLS: Laugh? [ISABEL *nods*.]

WINNIE [*to VERNA*]: We wouldn't, would we?

VERNA [*to WINNIE*]: We couldn't, could we?

ISABEL: Well, then, girls, if you must know, I'll tell you.

VERNA: Well, then, Isabel, we must know! Do tell us.

ISABEL: I was only thinking about Miss Graham, and—
and—well, I tried to write a little poem about her.

VERNA: A poem? Oh, wasn't that fine! Do let us see it!
[*Reaches for it*.]

WINNIE: Great! You must read it to us.

ISABEL [*rising and holding paper behind back*]: You are certain sure you won't laugh?

WINNIE: Surest of sure!

VERNA: Of course we won't! You know I love poetry.

WINNIE: So do I! And I love Miss Graham, too!

ISABEL: But this isn't real, true poetry, you know, girls—it's just my poor, feeble attempt to express in weak little rhymes some of the big stirring thoughts that our lovely teacher always seems to wake up inside of me—and—and—it is so pitifully short of all that I would like to make it that that is the reason why I was afraid to let you see it, for fear it would appear as ridiculous to you as it probably would to so many people. But—well—here it is! [*Holds paper out to them.*]

VERNA: Read it to us, Isabel. We'll get lots more good from it that way.

WINNIE: Yes, Isabel, please do.

ISABEL: Well, if you both really wish me to—I had just got started with it, you know, and it's only six lines—

WINNIE: Wait a minute till we get comfortably seated. [*They sit, ISABEL stands. FRANK and GEORGE enter just before she reads. They stand behind her, and she does not see them.*]

VERNA: Ready now. Go on.

ISABEL: All right. Perhaps, if I can get the right thoughts together, I may later— Well, I'll stop talking and read. [*Reads poem as before.*]

WINNIE: Oh, isn't it pretty!

FRANK [*coming forward, mischievously*]: You're right, it is; but it's old, Isabel—awfully old. I've read every single word of it before.

ISABEL [*turning on him*]: You have not!

FRANK: Well, I certainly have. I've seen every single word of it in print time and time and again. In fact, I'm sure we have a book at home that has every word of it in.

ISABEL [*half crying*]: I don't care, Frank Mann, you have not! I made up every word of it myself.

FRANK: Now, see here, Belle, don't you try to make us believe that. You just wait a minute and I'll prove to you that I've read every single word from my own book.

I know there's a copy here in the library. Come on, George. [*Exeunt FRANK and GEORGE.*]

WINNIE: Can it be possible?

VERNA: Of course it can't! Surely, Winnie, you will not pay any attention to what Frank Mann says about a girl we've known as long and well as Isabel!

ISABEL: Thank you, Verna. Thank you. I didn't copy a bit of it—honestly I didn't.

WINNIE [*soothingly*]: Of course you didn't, Belle. We both believe in you.

ISABEL: I worked awfully hard on it, too. I've been chasing rhymes all day—because I wouldn't borrow a single one. I didn't know it was such hard work to be a poet.

FRANK and GEORGE *re-enter, carrying large dictionary.*

FRANK: Here, Miss Isabel, it's just as I said. You'll find every single word of that immortal poem in this book. [*Laughter.*] Would you like me to show each one to you, or— [ISABEL *begins to chase him, and he runs, setting book on desk.*] Help, George, help!

[*ALL leave stage, laughing.*]

THE BAIRNIES' SATURDAY NIGHT*

CHARACTERS:

JEAN, *the elder sister, aged fifteen or sixteen.*

JOCK, *the brother, aged from ten to twelve.*

NANNY, *the younger sister, aged from eight to ten.*

ALL *dress in Scotch costume, Jock's "breeks" badly torn.*

JOCK *enters left, alone.*

JOCK: Naebody hame? Aweel, I canna say as I'm ower sair about that. Mither would be in a bad wy at a sight o' the tatters o' these auld claes! It's nae hard to see that she never waur a laddie. Gin Jean comes hame, I'll jeest hae her—nae, that I won't, neither, fo' Jean aye gabs to mither a' she kens aboot me and Nanny, the wee lassie!

NANNY [*enters right*]: Hoots, Jock! Hame?

JOCK [*backing away from her, so she cannot see rags*]: I cudna say for sartin. I winna be sayin' as I am; an' I winna be sayin' as I am not.

NANNY: What fashes ye? [*Looks him over suspiciously.*] I winna doot but ye've been aboot some o' yer mischief, Jock.

JOCK [*waving her back*]: Dinna fash yersel'! I ken what I'm aboot! [*Looks around cautiously.*] Is Jean— [*Looks at NANNY inquiringly.*]

NANNY: I hae na' set e'en on her the nicht. Turn yersel' 'round, Jock! I warrant ye've—

*A study in the Scotch dialect, for the use of schools studying Burns, Scott, Barrie, Maclaren, and others. (Pronunciation of words and Glossary will be found at the back of THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT AND OTHER POEMS, which may be obtained from the publishers of this book for 6 cents.)

JOCK: Ay, an' I warrant ye 'd better haud yer tongue! Ye'r ower glib.

NANNY [*looking around cautiously*]: But, Jock, I'm sair fleid—

JOCK: Fleid? Ye? I dinna ken what ye—

NANNY [*coaxingly, to enlist his sympathy*]: I'm jeest a wee bit lassie, Jock!

JOCK [*patting her shoulder patronizingly*]: Ye are, Nanny, ye are!

NANNY [*resenting the patronage*]: Maybe not sae verra wee— [*Stands straight.*]

JOCK [*sizing her up*]: Ower wee, Nanny—ower wee! [*Suspiciously.*] What hae ye been doing, Nanny?

NANNY [*dropping head guiltily*]: Naething!

JOCK [*insisting, sharply, lifting her chin with finger*]: Naething?

NANNY [*reluctantly*]: Weel, I wadna licht to hae Jean ken what I speired to Rab Baxter aboot her.

JOCK [*shaking finger at her*]: O Nanny! Nanny!

NANNY [*same action*]: O Jock! Jock!

JOCK [*affecting innocence*]: Weel—

NANNY [*triumphantly*]: What's gang wrang wi' yer breeks?

JOCK [*backing away from her defiantly*]: Naething!

NANNY [*holding up finger*]: Naething?

JOCK [*guiltily*]: Weel, I wadna licht to hae Jean ken how I blacked the twa e'en o' that Davy McDonald the nicht!

NANNY [*holding up finger*]: O Jock! Jock!

JOCK [*same action*]: O Nanny! Nanny!

NANNY: But what did ye fecht him fo'?

JOCK: He flouted me!

NANNY: Hoo?

JOCK: He lees.

NANNY [*shocked*]: Lees?

JOCK [*emphatically*]: Ay, lees!

NANNY: What aboot, Jock?

JOCK [*looks all around cautiously*]: He said—[*comes closer to NANNY, and whispers*—noo, ye winna gae an' blab it a', wi' ye, Nanny? [*She shakes head emphatically.*] Sure, now? I dinna ken if sic a wee bit lassie as ye can haud her tongue or na—[*NANNY is indignant*—but it's jeest as true as I'm telling ye, Nanny, that limmer dared to tell me right to my heid, ye ken—[*NANNY nods with interest*—that Scotland wasna in the 'Nited States at a'.

NANNY [*astounded*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*imitating her*]: O Nanny!

NANNY: But, Jock!

JOCK: Weel, Nanny!

NANNY: Gin they gaun and moved it oot—

JOCK: Losh, Nanny, what a fulish bairn ye be! Weel, he said, as I telled ye, right to my heid, and syne, I jeest sailed right into him, an' proved my p'int wi' my fists. He kens whaur Scotland is noo, a' straucht eneuch! [*They laugh.*] But, ye ken, my auld breeks—[*sighs*—if ye wasna sic a wee bit bairn, Nanny, an' mair handy like wi' a leddy's needle, it's a bonny clout ye could sew on these claes, and naebody be ony the wiser! But, as it is, I feel like a puir gaen-aboot laddie wi' neyther faither nor mither o' my ain.

NANNY: Puir Jock! [*Examines holes.*] It's verra likely as Jean could mend ye oop, noo, afore mither kens a word about it.

JOCK: I'm na sayin' as I'm wantin' to hae Jean ken aboot the fechting.

NANNY: And I'm na sayin' as I'm wantin' to hae her ken about Rab Baxter.

JOCK: She's daft aboot Rab.

NANNY [*reprovingly*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*imitating*]: O Nanny!

NANNY [*comes closer, looking around slyly*]: Say, Jock!

JOCK: Weel, Nanny!

NANNY: I winna tell her a word about ye, gin ye winna tell her about me!

JOCK: There's a bonnie lassie! I dinna ken nae ither lassie like my Nannie O, my Nannie O. [*Clasps her and they dance gayly around the room.*]

NANNY: Say, Jock!

JOCK: Weel, Nanny!

NANNY: I've got a wee bit needle—see? It's got a bit o' white thread in it, but that differs na sae muckle. Gin ye tak aff yer breeks, I dinna ken but I can pu' the holes thegither a wee bit.

JOCK: O Nanny, ye are the bonniest wee lassie! [*Begins to unfasten them as JEAN appears at door.*] Hist! not a word to Jean, Nanny! [*NANNY shakes head.*]

JEAN: Weel, weel, the bonnie bairns!

JOCK } [*run to her, embracing her fondly*]: O Jean!
NANNY }

JOCK: It's sae lang syne ye came hame, Jean. Will ye bide a wee the nicht?

NANNY [*half-crying, wiping eyes slyly*]: Aye—lang syne, Jean!

JEAN [*slyly wipes her own eyes*]: Havers, lassie! I'm ashamed o' ye for a fulish bairn! I'm aye at hame, come a Saturday nicht, ye ken!—to gae wi' ye a' to the auld kirk, come ilka Sunday. Noo, get to wark, an' tell me a' about the week, and dinna stand there greeting and wagging yer tongues!

JOCK [*reproachfully*]: O Jean!

NANNY [*same*]: O Jean!

JEAN [*surprised*]: Weel! Weel! An' noo, bairnies, wha's gang agley?

JOCK [*hanging head*]: Naething!

JEAN [*looks at him sharply, then turns to NANNY*]: Nae-thing?

NANNY [*hanging head guiltily*]: Naething!

JEAN [*looks at her sharply, and turns back to JOCK*]: Nae-thing?

JOCK: Weel, ye ken, Jean—Nanny, here! She 's jeest a wee bit lassie, and she—

NANNY [*has kept pulling at him all the time, now gets in front of him*]: Ye ken, Jean—Jock! He 's sic a braw, donsie laddie, and he—

JOCK [*has been pulling at her, now steps in front*]: Dinna ye heed to her, Jean! It was a' Nanny—

NANNY [*pulling him back as before*]: Jean, Jean, it was a' Jock! He—

JEAN [*dropping into chair*]: Onybody can see wi' ainly half an e'e that ye'r baith clean daft! In the auld days, when I waur a wean, ilka bairn waur made to behave himsel' [*shaking finger at JOCK*] and hersel' [*shaking finger at NANNY*] an' if ye jeest had mair manners aboot ye to ain anither, ye wadna be fechting sae muckle—

JOCK } [*looking at each other in amazement*]: Fechting!
NANNY }

JOCK: Who told ye, Jean? [*Turns and shakes fist at NANNY angrily.*] Nanny?

NANNY [*begins to cry*]: I didna—

JEAN [*rising*]: Are ye baith off yer heids a' thegither?

JOCK: Dagont! She maun be mighty quick in the uptake—

JEAN [*suddenly understanding*]: Jock, gin ye hae been fechting again, I dinna ken what faither will do to ye! [*JOCK hangs head, NANNY nudges him. No answer. NANNY nudges him again. No answer.*] Jock, hae ye been fechting? [*After pause, JOCK shakes head without raising it.*]

NANNY [*accusingly*]: O Jock! Jock!

JOCK [*looking up, imitating her*]: O Nanny! Nanny!

JEAN [*severely*]: Jock!

JOCK [*reluctantly*]: Weel, I winna say as I hae not hae jeest a wee bit o' a scrimmage!

NANNY: O Jock!

JOCK: O Nanny!

JEAN: Tell me a' about it, Jock! [*He hangs head again.*]

Jock! [*He still hangs head, NANNY pulling at him.*]

Somethin' must be gang wrang wi' the laddie's lugs!

[*Shouts in his ear.*] Jock!

JOCK [*jumping back, rubbing ears*]: Havers, Jean! D'ye think ye'r a whustle wi' yer hoot-toot-toot?

NANNY [*laughing*]: Wasna it bonny to see the lad loup, Jean? O Jock!

JOCK [*mockingly*]: O Nanny!

JEAN [*sits, speaks sternly*]: Noo, tell me, Jock!

JOCK [*walks away from her*]: Better bide a wee, Jean.

JEAN: I hae bided to lang a'ready. Hoo did ye dare to brawl when ye ken hoo baith faither and mither—to say naething o' my ainsel'—and yer ainsel'—and Nanny here—[*shakes head sadly*—hoo did ye come to fecht, laddie?

JOCK [*turning around indifferently*]: Eh?

JEAN: What I'm speiring at ye is, hoo did ye come to fecht?

JOCK: Ah, the fecht—weel—a—a—the fecht—a—I maist forget hoo I come to!

NANNY: O Jock! [*Goes and stands behind JEAN'S chair.*]

JOCK: O Nanny!

JEAN [*patiently*]: D'ye na mind wha' 't waur a' about, Jock?

JOCK: Weel, I wadna jeest like to say as hoo I didna mind it, Jean, but—

JEAN: D'ye mind the ither laddie, then?

JOCK: Oh—ay—I mind the ither laddie weel eneuch—ay, mind the laddie!

JEAN: Then who—

JOCK [*croons, chants, or hums, mischievously*]:

“But what's his name, or whaur's his hame
I dinna care to tell!”

JEAN: Weel, d'ye mind the reason o' the fecht?

JOCK: Bide a meenit—bide a meenit—I 'm thinking! Ay, I mind the reason noo—mind it fine!

JEAN: Wha' d 'ye mind 't waur a' about, then?

JOCK: Weel, ye ken, Jean—ye ken—the reason was, Jean,—the ither laddie an' me, we jeest didna, as ye might say, agree like. He thocht ane thing about something; I thocht anither. And that was the reason, Jean. Dinna it waur a guid reason—a verra guid reason!

JEAN [*impatiently*]: Ilka fule in the warld kens that is the ane and ainly reason for ilka auld brawl. What was the gist o' it like?—the thing *ye* thocht, and the thing *he* thocht, and wha' *ye* thocht and *he* thocht about it?

JOCK: Oh, that's wha' ye've been speiring about a' the time, is it? What for did ye na speak plain afore? Weel, it waur a guid reason—a verra guid reason!

NANNY: O Jock!

JOCK: O Nanny!

JEAN: Nanny, do ye be still and leave Jock gie me his reason afore it is fu' time for ye bairnies to cuddle doon.

NANNY [*reproachfully*]: O Jean!

JOCK [*the same*]: O Jean!

JEAN: Come, Jock, I dinna want to hae to punish ye when I 'm gang from hame sae muckle, but—

NANNY [*steps front of JEAN eagerly*]: O Jock, hurry!

JOCK: O Nanny, worry!

JEAN: Jock! Gin ye hae sae muckle to tell, I wadna think ye wad be waggin' yer tongue sae lang about naething! Ye may make licht o' this, but it's far frae being sic a sonsie matter to me that my ainly brither should be gang oot fechting like a mad dog in the streets, wi' nae regard for his ain folk, that are bringin' o' him oop to be a mon! I didna think ye had sae muckle o' meanness in ye, ye waukrife rogue!

JOCK [*has listened with head down, speaks protestingly*]: O Jean!

NANNY [*sympathetically*]: O Jean!

JEAN [*to NANNY*]: Weel, then, lassie, why dinna the lad speak oop when I 'm speiring him the reason o' his fecht the day? I like nae sic behavin'!

NANNY: But, Jean!

JEAN: Weel, Nanny.

NANNY [*coaxingly*]: Gin sae be Jock tells ye a' about it—

JOCK [*angrily*]: A' about Nanny, what she's lang syne blabbin' to—

NANNY [*alarmed*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*mocking*]: O Nanny!

JEAN [*puzzled, looks at NANNY sternly*]: What Nanny's been blabbin' to—

NANNY [*drops head*]: Naebody!

JOCK [*accusingly*]: O Nanny!

NANNY [*pleadingly*]: O Jock!

JEAN [*impatiently*]: And gin ye'r expectin' me to ken what ye 'r speiring at when ye dinna say *ane* word a Christian lassie can put wi' anither to make four, ye baith hae e'en less sense in yer fule heids than I thocht ye had!

NANNY [*pleadingly*]: O Jean!

JOCK [*same*]: O Jean!

NANNY [*turns to JOCK when JEAN does not look up, half crying*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*plainly troubled*]: O Nanny!

JEAN [*sternly, to JOCK*]: What did Nanny tell, and wha did she tell it a' to?

JOCK [*sorry he spoke*]: I wadna say as how the lassie told anything, but I canna deny as it waur jeest Rab Baxter as she waur a-tellin' it a' to.

JEAN [*springs up, looking sternly at NANNY, NANNY backing away, JEAN following*]: Rab Baxter!

NANNY [*alarmed*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*sympathetically*]: O Nanny!

JEAN: An' ye maun jeest "O Jock" an' "O Nanny!" till

ye waur black in the verra face o' ye baith, ye blundering, blabbing limmers! What did ye tell Rab Baxter about me, Nanny? [*Shakes her.*] Tell me, this meenit, afore I shake the bones o' ye into a pudding string!

NANNY [*in alarm, teeth chattering*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*sympathetically*]: O Nanny!

JEAN: Ye drivelling brat! Ye ken far ower muckle! Oot wi' it!

JOCK [*trying to come to rescue*]: She said—she said [*scratches head*] wha' did ye say to him, Nanny?

JEAN [*shaking her*]: Weel, Nanny!

NANNY: I didna ken as hoo ye wad be carin' if I jeest told the lad—

JEAN: What?

NANNY: That my sister Jean was jeest the bonniest, sonsie lass in a' the warl'!

JEAN [*surprised, hugs NANNY with delight, pulling her to lap*]: O Nanny! my bonnie wee sister!

JOCK [*accusingly, through jealousy*]: O Nanny!

NANNY [*pleading for mercy*]: O Jock!

JEAN [*slightly suspicious*]: An' what mair did ye tell the laddie, Nanny?

JOCK [*laughs tauntingly*]: Naething!

JEAN [*insisting*]: Naething?

NANNY [*reluctantly*]: Jeest ainly that ye liked him right weel, an'—

JEAN: Nanny! Nanny!

NANNY [*innocently*]: Dinna ye like the puir laddie, Jean?

JEAN: I wadna be sayin' as hoo I didna like the lad, exactly—a wee bit—but I wadna tell him sae muckle. O Nanny! Nanny! wha' hae ye done? [*Weeps.*]

NANNY [*alarmed, jumps from JEAN's lap*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*accusingly*]: O Nanny!

NANNY [*pats JEAN on back, rubs head*]: Puir Jean! Puir Jean! Dinna greet!

JEAN [*jumping up*]: Dinna ye “puir Jean” me! I ’m sair angry wi’ the twa o’ ye!

NANNY [*runs to JOCK*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*embracing her*]: O Nanny!

JEAN [*as if to herself*]: Maybe I’m ower hard on the bairns. I ’m sae little o’ a Scotch lassie noo that I ’m nae muckle better ’n a Yankee. Ah, weel I maun dree my weird—ay, that I maun!

JOCK [*leads NANNY to JEAN*]: She ’s jeest a wee bit lassie. She might turn silly gin ye scold her, Jean, an’ syne mither—

JEAN [*sits, taking NANNY on lap*]: There! There! Maybe ye ’r gey ill for what ye ’ve done.

NANNY [*eagerly*]: Ay, ay, Jean!

JEAN: Dinna be so woeful about it, for that ’s na nane like oor wee Nanny. Gie me a’ ye’r daft capers o’ singing an’ lauching noo! [*Tickles her.*]

NANNY [*laughing*]: Ye’r kittling, Jean.

JEAN: That ’s right. Aweel, Jock! I ’m ready to hear who ye waur fechting wi’, the day, and what ye waur fechting about! I ’ll do fair weel gin I keep my bit o’ temper wi’ ye, lad; but gang alang wi’ yer tale.

JOCK [*sitting*]: Weel, gin ye will hae it, I waur eighty mile frae the corner here—

NANNY [*jumps down, shakes finger at him*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*rises, NANNY gets behind him*]: Though there be some as says as hoo it be not mair than sixty mile—

NANNY [*pulls on his coat*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*after turning round and shaking fist at NANNY*]: And as I walked it in fair time, at a slow gait, I ’d be sair put to it to think it waur mair than thirty mile—

NANNY: O Jock!

JOCK [*turning angrily on her*]: Noo, ye jeest look a-here, Nanny, I ’ll no take anither inch frae that road, e’en gin ye should pull every last thread oot o’ the auld breeks!

[*Backs up to JEAN.*] Jeest see what Nanny hae doon.
Jean.

NANNY [*protesting*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*insisting*]: O Nanny!

JEAN [*reproachfully*]: O Nanny!

NANNY [*protesting*]: O Jean!

JEAN [*sits again*]: O Jock! Gin mither sets her e'en on the hole in these breeks—but gang alang wi' yer tale! It's fair lang an' far-soundin' for a laddie o' yer years.

JOCK: Oh, noo, is it that, Miss Jean?

JEAN: Ay, an' it is, Jock. But gae on noo, speak the truth, an' gie me a' ye ken aboot the fecht. Syne, I'll gar the auld breeks look amaist as weel's the new—afore mither an' faither come hame.

JOCK [*delighted*]: O Jean!

NANNY [*runs to her, climbing on lap and hugging her*]: O Jean!

JOCK [*sits*]: Weel, Jean, d'ye ken Water Street?

JEAN: My certie, of course I do.

JOCK: Weel, ye gang alang it, and turn into the square, and ye cross the street, and syne go past the auld kirk—

JEAN: Ay, ay, I ken.

JOCK: Weel, gin ye gang across the square there, ye turn to the right and oop High Street, till ye come to a pump.

JEAN: Ay, Jock. I ken the auld pump weel.

JOCK [*rises*]: Weel, then, Jean, ye maun-jeest gang an' pump it, for ye'll nae pump me.

NANNY [*jumps down, runs to him*]: O Jock!

JOCK [*defiantly*]: O Nanny!

JEAN [*goes to him*]: Ye limmer! Gin ye dinna—

JOCK: It waur Nanny that—

NANNY [*pulling him back*]: O Jock!

JOCK: Dagont! Who was it that told—

NANNY [*pulling him back*]: Who was it that jeest—

JOCK [*same action*]: Who told—

NANNY [*same*]: Who gie the black e'en to—

JOCK [*same*]: Who said—

NANNY [*same*]: Who—

JOCK [*same*]: Who—

JEAN [*stepping between them*]: Dinna fecht wi' ane anither, bairns. It's a sair canny laddie ye be, Jock!

JOCK [*pleased with the flattery*]: Weel, Jean, I dinna say it's no!

JEAN: An' ye waur fechting the day?

JOCK: I nicht hae been.

JEAN [*puts her hand on his shoulder*]: But waur ye?

JOCK: I wadna like to say as hoo I waur; an' I dinna jeest like to say as hoo I waur no.

JEAN: But why not?

JOCK [*mischievously*]: Because I'm sic a "sair canny laddie!"

JEAN [*embracing him*]: O Jock! Jock! Ye'r a right braw sonsie laddie, wi' a' yer rags an' rantings.

NANNY [*wriggling in between them, jealously*]: Me, too, Jean!

JEAN [*after embracing her*]: But I maunna stand here crack-
ing clavers wi' ye bairns ower lang, or I'll hae nae time
to get the bit sup for the faither and mither, nor my
frock for the morrow's kirk. It's speiring ower muckle
o' a lassie to ask her to gang to the kirk in her ilka day
claes—especially when there's bonny Rab Baxter as
thinks she's maist as bonny a lassie as he kens in a' the
town. [*Hums "Coming Through the Rye."*] This was
a shilling the yard, an' no less, when I bocht it, an'
that's maist three year come Halloween, an' it's been
turned six times syne. It's a guid piece o' clout yet,
but what does the stuff matter to a lassie when the cut
isna fashy?—an' it takes muckle o' siller to keep a puir
body oop with the quality folk. So come, bairnies, and
I'll jeest sew oop the rent in the auld breeks, and then—

think, gin mither comes hame an' speirs aboot her lassie
and laddie, I dinna ken wha' I can say! I dinna—

JOCK: Say:

“The bairnies, mither, are in their cots,
And lang syne cuddled doon!”

NANNY [*smuggling against her skirt*]: Tell us a tale, Jean—
We're ower guid bairns, ye ken.

JEAN [*as she throws arm around each and leads them off
stage*]: Weel, I'm na a-sayin' as hoo I winna!

CURTAIN

REHEARSING THE PROGRAM

CHARACTERS: *Three girls and one boy.*

SCENE: *A schoolroom.*

EDNA *enters alone.*

EDNA: I wonder where Miss Monroe is. I thought we were to rehearse our program this morning.

GRACE *enters.*

GRACE: Where's Miss Monroe?

EDNA: I just came. I haven't seen her.

GRACE: Weren't we to rehearse this morning?

EDNA: I thought so.

GRACE: I have to take a music lesson at ten. What shall I do if she doesn't hurry? Mamma doesn't like me to have to do school work on Saturday, anyway. Say, Edna, I wonder if you couldn't hear me recite my part.

EDNA: Why, of course, I could *hear* you. I'm not a bit deaf. But I wouldn't know a thing about how to direct you, or correct you—

GRACE [*with superior air*]: Oh, I won't need any direction or correction. I have been all ready for the entertainment for two weeks.

EDNA: All right, then.

GRACE: Here's my copy. [*Hands it.*] I'll stand over here. [*Takes place.*] The subject is "Delsarte." [*Recites*]:

You see I'm learning lots of Delsarte now;
My cousin Kate is here, and shows me how;
And oh! I know an awful lot, I do;
If you would like, I'll pose some here for you.

[*Illustrates each sentence.*]

I suppose you can't do like a *butterfly*;
 You have to stretch your arms out, same as I;
 Now, let the wrists lead up, and up, and then
 Be sure you let the wrists lead down again.

And when you *pout*, you do like this, you see;
 And when you *laugh*, you 'd better do like me;
 And when you *cry*, this is the way to do;
 And when you 're downright *mad*—I 'll show you, too!

To *reach*, you stand on tiptoe, reaching high;
 To *call*, you make a trumpet, same as I;
 To *listen*, you must stand like this, you know;
 To *pray*, you kneel, and clasp your hands, just so.
[*Pause before rising.*]

This isn't half I 've got to learn of it,
 And I don't like it all a little bit;
 But mamma says it really is my place
 To try to learn to move with ease and grace.

So, every day, they call me in from play,
 And make me practice, practice, as they say;
 Of course, it 's very nice—it must be so!
 Nice things are never pleasant things, you know.

If Mr. Delsarte had to go all through
 These mad contortions, like we have to do,
 I 'm very sure that he 'd be sorry, then,
 And not invent such crazy things again.

Some day, I 'll know it all—of course I will;
 But there is lots of time a-coming still;
 I 'm sure I ought to go and practice now,
 So I will leave you with my Delsarte *bow*.

EDNA: I think you do it beautifully, Grace.

GRACE: So do I.

JOE *enters.*

JOE: Where 's teacher?

GRACE: Nobody knows. Well, I must go. Thank you, very much, Edna, for hearing me practice. [*Exits.*]

EDNA: That 's all right, Grace.

JOE: Did you hear her recite, Edna?

EDNA: Yes. She was in such a hurry—

JOE: So am I. Mother's sick, and I have to run on a very important errand. Couldn't you hear me, too.? I 've got the piece here.

EDNA: Why, yes. But I 'm not able to tell you how to—

JOE: Oh, goodness! I know how. I 've been coached into a regular livery horse.

EDNA: All right, then. Go ahead. What 's the subject?

JOE [*taking place*]: "A Little Mimic." [*Recites:*]

They say I am a mimic;
 I don't know what they mean;
 Of course, I 've learned the language
 Of some things I have seen;
 But—"mimic!" Say, what would you do?
 Would you "Ha, ha, ha!" or "Boo, hoo, hoo!"

I wake up in the morning
 To hear the wee birds sing;
 But close beneath my window
 I hear a different thing—
 "I 'm Cock-a-doodle-doo!
 Now who in the world are you?"

I jump up and, while bathing,
 I listen all the time;
 I 'm sure to hear some fellow
 Break forth in his own rhyme;
 I hear my good friend calling now,
 And here 's his message—"Bow, wow, wow!"

I run downstairs for breakfast
Where kitty waits for me;
Her purr-r-r-r-r is welcome
Wherever I may be;
But when she 's hungry, her "Me-ow!"
Makes me feel hungry, too, somehow!

Away out in the barnyard,
Is our old bossy, Bess;
She knows me, for I feed her,
And she likes me, too, I guess;
I call to her "Co' Boss," and you
Should hear her answer, "Moo-oo-oo!"

There 's sheep out in the pasture;
They know me not so well;
They like me when I feed them,
As anyone could tell,
But every time I laugh, "Ha, ha!"
They mock me with their "Baa-aa-aa!"

And homeward from the pasture
There 's one I really fear;
I 'm careful not to touch him
Whenever he comes near;
No matter what a fellow does,
He sings a warning,—"Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!"

Of course, there 's lots of others
That I could tell about;
But if I keep on going
I 'll shut somebody out;
And so I 'll simply run away
And tell the rest some other day.

EDNA: Joe, that 's fine.

JOE: Yes, I like it.

EDNA: You have it so nicely prepared, too.

JOE: Oh, do you honestly think so? I've tried so hard to get it right. Well, I must hurry off. You'll explain to Miss Monroe, won't you?

EDNA: Certainly.

JOE: Thank you, for everything.

MAUD *enters*, JOE *greet*s her as he *passes out*.

Hello, Maud. Good-bye, girls. [*Exits.*]

MAUD [*staring after him*]: Why, how funny!

EDNA: He was just going out as you came in.

MAUD: Oh! That's it! Where's Miss Monroe?

EDNA: She has n't come.

MAUD: Oh, dear! When I wanted to practice my piece in a double jerk, so I could go to the ball-game with Uncle Jerry!

EDNA: I have been hearing a couple of the others rehearse, if you'd like—

MAUD: Oh, will you?

EDNA: Gladly.

MAUD: You dear thing! Here's the paper. It's "How Auntie Danced." [*Recites.*]

My auntie's just the sweetest girl
That I did ever see;
She's mamma's sister, and that's why
She's aunt to Bob and me;
Last night, they had a party here!
I just wish you had seen
How beautiful she looked, all dressed
Just like a fairy queen!

And how she danced! She held her dress [*Imitates.*]
And stepped so daintily;
She pointed—so—her pretty toe,
So every one could see;
And then she picked her skirt right up,
And whirled around and 'round;

And then she stopped and bowed so low
I thought she 'd touch the ground!

Oh, say, 't was fine! and I just think
Tom Wheeler thought so, too;
He watched her all the blessed time
To see what she would do!
I just wish I was big like her!
I know I 'd love to dance;
But mother says I 'm growing,
So perhaps I 'll get my chance.

EDNA: It 's beautiful.

MAUD: And it was so nice of you to hear me. You will report
to Miss Monroe?

EDNA: Of course.

MAUD: Thank you. Good-bye. [*Exits.*]

EDNA: Good-bye! Well, well! I seem to have everything
my own way this morning. I wonder if I 'd better hear
myself practice and then go home.

JOE enters.

JOE: Say, Edna, I just met Fred and he says that Miss
Monroe is sick and can't come this morning. She sent
word for us to go through with our parts the best we
could without her. I thought I 'd better stop and tell
you.

EDNA: Thank you. [*Exit JOE.*] Well, I 've had a little
entertainment of my own, anyway. Shall I practice or
not? I guess I 'd better—not! [*Exit EDNA.*]

BOYHOOD FRIENDS

CHARACTERS: *Three boys.*

JACK: I 'm sorry, boys, if the poor fellow you 've been talking about really has n't any friends. Why, you know what a long way I live from everybody! [Boys *nod.*] But I never get lonesome.

HENRY: Why, Jack, everybody knows you have more friends than any other kid in school.

JACK: Oh, no, no, Henry—not that many! But I 've always tried to make friends with everybody and everything, and so I guess I have my share.

FRANK: Every boy in school is your friend, Jack.

JACK: I hope so, Frank; but I was n't thinking of boys when I spoke.

HENRY: Then who?

JACK: Well, Henry, the first thing in the morning, there 's a real good friend of mine that comes right under my window and calls me to wake up. He says "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

FRANK: Oh, we 're all acquainted with him.

JACK: I hope so. He 's worth knowing. Then I hear another friend calling, "Moo! moo! moo!"

HENRY: We 've met old Bossy, too!

JACK: And soon, if not sooner, a "bow-wow-wow!" and a "me-ow!" tell me it 's time other friends were being fed!

HENRY [*with slight sarcasm*]: And a "Ugh! ugh! ugh!" from the pig-pen, I suppose, reminds you of another dear friend.

JACK: Certainly! As well as a "baa-baa-baa!" from the other side of the fence.

FRANK: It's a "hiss! hiss! hiss!"—[*imitate goose*—that wakes Henry up!

HENRY: Oh, I'm not such a goose as I look. But I don't have to choose my friends—

JACK: Never mind, Henry. I'm glad to. I hurry and get cleaned up, for I remember one dear little friend waiting to call "Sweet! sweet! sweet!" to me, while dear old Barney calls from the barn. [*Whinny like horse.*] A good many friends run to meet me, telling me their good news in a "cluck, cluck, cluck," or a "cut-cut-cut-cadah-cut!" while I hear a "gobble, gobble, gobble," close behind!

HENRY [*with greater sarcasm*]: Where's the one that says "He-haw! he-haw! he-haw!"

JACK: He doesn't happen to live in our yard, Henry; but, if he did, I should certainly try to make friends with him.

FRANK: Good for you, Jack! What a happy life you must have out on the farm!

HENRY: Humph! If those are his chosen friends—

JACK: They are; but the dearest of all is the one who calls, "Jack! Jack! Mother wants you!" I am listening for the call of another one now—one you all share with me!

FRANK: What does it say?

JACK: Ding-dong! Ding-dong! [*Bell rings off stage.*]
Hear it? Let's run!

BOY HEROES

CHARACTERS: NED, HARRY, FRED, JOHN, and JIM.

COSTUMES: *Ordinary school attire, with books, bat and ball, etc.*

SCENE: *A street. NED, HARRY, FRED, and JIM discovered in group, talking earnestly, with many gestures.*

NED: I just want to tell you right here, boys, Harry is the lad that gets the prize for doing the bravest thing this month. There is n't any question about it, is there, boys?

BOYS [*all but HARRY shaking heads vigorously, and patting HARRY on back*]: No—sir—ee!

HARRY: Oh, don't josh me, boys, I did n't do a thing—honest I did n't—not a single thing that any of you would n't have done as easy as I—or a lot easier. Why, I was swimming right there, and when the little tot fell in, what would any decent kid do but grab her and haul her to shore? I can't see any bravery about that.

FRED: But did n't she kick and scream and hang on to you like the mischief?

HARRY: Oh, yes, but—

BOYS [*all, mocking him*]: Oh, yes, but—

FRED: There 's no use trying to get out of it, Harry. You are our hero all right. I thought when we were reading the stories of all those brave men that I would so like to be a hero, too, and that I would do some great and daring deed some time. And then, when we talked it over with teacher and she offered a prize to the one doing the bravest deed each month, why, I just did mean to try hard; for if it is really true that we don't have to wait to grow up before doing great things, I wanted to do it, right away, soon, you know! But—opportunity did not

seem to knock at my door, that's all. And if it had— Well! it might not have found me at home. One never can tell! At any rate, I am glad that it did knock at Harry's door—

NED: And did find him at home, too—eh? Hurrah for Harry!

BOYS [*all but HARRY*]: Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah for Harry!

HARRY: I don't deserve it, boys—really I don't; but I thank you for your kindness. But while you are talking about it, Mr. Fred, I would just like to call to your mind something you may have forgotten—

FRED: Now don't go to giving me away, Harry! [*Acts afraid of what HARRY may say. Others laugh teasingly.*]

BOYS [*all but FRED*]: Tell it, Harry—tell it.

FRED [*starts off left*]: Good-bye, boys. See you later.

BOYS: Head him off, Jim! [*All, catching and holding him.*]
No you don't, Fred.

FRED [*out of breath*]: No fair—but fire away, Harry. A real sure-enough hero won't run from danger. [*All laugh.*]

HARRY: I wasn't going to say anything, Fred, only just to ask if you had forgotten the night the barn burned and your pony was so frightened by the smoke, blaze, and noise of the fire department that he wouldn't let anybody near him. So you yourself went into the very worst of it, to blindfold and lead him out. That was only at the beginning of the month, Fred, and I could never have done that. It is natural enough for me to swim, for Father taught me to swim when I was no larger than a frog; but fires make me frantic, and that night I was so bumfuzzled I didn't know a thing. Now, boys, I ask you which was the greater hero, Fred or I?

BOYS: Hurrah for Fred! Hurrah! Hurrah!

FRED: Boys, *will* you keep still? I didn't do a thing!

BOYS [*mimicking him*]: I didn't do a thing!

FRED: Well, I didn't! Prince was always afraid of strangers—even when there was nothing to scare him to death

—do you think “any decent boy” would let his own pony burn to death just because he was afraid to walk in and help him out? There was no one else who *could* do it, and wasn’t it up to me?

HARRY: Of course,—but I couldn’t do it!

BOYS: Nor I!

JIM: Speaking of bravery, though, I know a little something, if you ’ll give me leave to tell.

BOYS [*eagerly*]: Tell it!

FRED: Sure! dive in!

JIM: I saw a boy rush in front of a flying automo-bubble just last night to help an old woman out of the way. She was lame and slow, and would likely have been crushed to death if he hadn’t jumped just in time. The machine knocked him down, and I’ll bet he is badly bruised to-day to pay for it—

NED: Nonsense, Jim—only a scratch or two, and—

[*Has held head down ever since he caught what JIM was going to tell.*]

BOYS: Was it Ned?

JIM: Of course it was Ned! Who else!

BOYS: Bully for Ned! Hurrah! Hurrah for Ned!

NED: It seems to me, boys, you are making a lot of fuss about nothing. I couldn’t let the poor old lame woman get run over, could I? No manly boy would have stood for that. Why, what if it had been your mother—or mine?

HARRY: He’s right, boys! But the question is, would the rest of us have had the quickness of thought and the courage to do it?

BOYS: Not I!

NED: Sure you would—every one of you! And it didn’t amount to anything, anyway. Now I’ll tell you what I call courage. The other day an electric wire—a real live wire, you know—got caught on the pole beside the

new building that 's going up on Cherry Street. It had slipped from the place the men had placed it, and if it had fallen on another live wire just a little way below where it caught, it would have done what they call short-circuiting; and that would have meant sure death to the men who were working with it just over the hill, for it was one of the power wires. So what does a boy we know do but climb away up that pole, higher than the top of that building, and hold that wire where it had caught, with a long stick, till I ran clear over the hill and told the men. Goodness only knows how he got up there. But he did get there,—and it was the bravest thing I ever saw done. Why, I get dizzy just climbing a ladder!

JIM: Oh, pshaw! you know my father is a carpenter, and I'm used to making high climbs. That was no trick at all.

BOYS: Jim?

NED: Sure it was Jim! Gee! it made me dizzy just to see him do it.

BOYS: Hurrah for Jim! Hurrah! Hurrah for Jim!

JIM: It seems that we 're all heroes—a jolly bunch of candidates for the prize. When we all get to urging our superior claims, I guess Teacher will find it hard to know who deserves the honors—eh? [ALL laugh.] But where is John? He 'll be late if he doesn't move himself.

HARRY: There he comes now. Hurry up. John!

JOHN [*entering right with head down*]: Hello, fellows!

HARRY: What's the matter, John? You look glum. Has the world used you wrong this early in the morning?

JIM: Or did you get out of bed the wrong way?

JOHN: Neither one, I guess, boys; but I don't feel any too happy. You see, this is the end of the month, when teacher was to give the prize to the boy who had done the bravest act—

BOYS [*nodding*]: Yes!

JIM: That 's what we 're talking about!

JOHN: And I—boys, I am a—a coward!

BOYS: A coward? [*JOHN nods, and turns away.*]

NED: I don't—won't—believe that could be true of any one of our bunch.

BOYS: Nor I!

JOHN: It 's very kind of you to say so, boys, but it is only too true. I am nothing but a coward.

FRED: Tell us about it!

JOHN: I can't!

JIM: Of course you can. Aren't we your pals?

FRED: And your best friends?

JOHN: Yes, boys, and it is because I want you to be my best friends always that I can't tell you. You 'll have no more use for me if you find out.

HARRY: You don't put a very big value on our friendship, it seems to me, John.

JOHN: Well, if you put it that way, I 'll have to tell you. On the way to school, remembering that this was the day when we were to report all our doings and receive the reward for bravery, I was wishing something would happen that would give me a chance to prove myself brave, you know, so that I 'd stand some chance for the prize, when I ran on to some big boys from across the way, and they wanted me to smoke a cigarette with them, and tried their best to force me to put one into my mouth. Now you know, boys,—as I have told you before—my mother always taught me that it was wrong, and I promised her several years ago that I would never use tobacco in any form. Then the teacher hates it so! And, don't you know, I just couldn't touch the thing. They said I was a coward,—and—well, I guess I must be, for I didn't dare break my word to Mother or displease Teacher; but anyway, I can't help feeling that I 'd rather

be a coward and lose the prize than be brave as a bear and always have to know that I had lied to Mother.

BOYS: So would I!

JOHN [*brightening up*]: Honest, boys?

JIM: Well, I hope so!

JOHN: But do you mean it?

BOYS: Sure thing!

HARRY: And don't you know, boys, I think John has done the bravest thing of all, and the prize must be his.

BOYS: Sure! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah for John!

JOHN: Don't, boys, I—

HARRY [*interrupting*]: Anyone can swim who knows how, and—

NED: Any decent boy would help an old woman across the street, and—

JIM: Any boy whose father is a carpenter can climb, and—

FRED: It would be a poor stick of a boy who would leave his pony to burn when he could lead him out; but when it comes to courage—the stuff they call moral courage—that makes a boy dare to stand up before three or four “toughs” and “bullies” with their taunts, and be true enough to himself and his mother and teacher to say “No!”—I say John's got it, and John must have the prize. What do you say, boys?

BOYS: John! John's IT!

FRED: Come on to school, now, and get what's coming to you. Come, boys, let's “bear the conquering hero home” with all the honors of war.

[*ALL grab JOHN and place him upon their shoulders.*]

JIM: We'll carry him in like they carried the football captain home Saturday.

[*Just as they exit, carrying JOHN, NED speaks.*]

NED: Oh, teacher, here's your prize boy!

MURDERING THE LANGUAGE

CHARACTERS: *One large girl, five smaller girls, and six boys.*

SCENE: *A bare room, with benches at sides and dictionary at back. All of the children but one are playing quietly at "tag," "drop the handkerchief," or any preferred game. MISS THOMPSON enters with VICTORIA, and they stop playing at once.*

MISS THOMPSON: Children, here is a little girl who has just moved into our district from far-off England. She is going to attend our school for a few months.

ALL: Cries of "Good! Good!"—"Oh joy!"—"Bully for her!"—"Hurrah!" etc.

MISS THOMPSON: As she has never been in the United States before, and so knows nothing of our manners and customs, she will naturally feel strange for a while; but I trust you all to help her feel as much at home as possible.

MABEL: Sure thing, Miss Thompson. [*Exit MISS THOMPSON.*]

JENNIE [*to VICTORIA*]: Well, what's your handle, young one?

VICTORIA [*puzzled, looking down at clothes*]: My handle? Why—

MABEL: She means your name.

VICTORIA: Oh! My name is Victoria Alexandra Eugenia Elizabeth Barclay.

ALL: Whew!

JOHN: Get next to the dictionary, would you? [*VICTORIA immediately goes to dictionary and leans against it.*]

ARTHUR: Gee! ain't she a peach?

VICTORIA [*quickly*]: No, indeed. How can you think so? I am just a girl.

ARTHUR: If she 'd just take off her lid—

VICTORIA: Lid? What does the boy mean? I have no lid.

HATTIE: He means the lid of your cocoanut, of course.

VICTORIA: But I have no cocoanut, either. Why, I have n't even seen one for ever and ever so long.

GEORGE: If you girls would keep your long noses at home
[VICTORIA looks at each girl's nose in turn, curiously.]
she 'd get it all through her cocoanut—

VICTORIA: But I tell you I have no cocoanut—

FRED: Yes, she would—in the neck!

VICTORIA [*alarmed, feeling neck*]: Would it hurt?

MABEL: No! no! He just means you would n't—what George said.

ARTHUR: Ain't she the hot one?

VICTORIA: No, no, really, I 'm not a bit hot. I was thinking it was rather too cool here.

FRED: Gee! She 's sure going some!

VICTORIA: Why, no, I 'm not! I have n't moved since that boy told me to come over here.

FRED: Well, you 've got the rest of the bunch going some, anyway.

VICTORIA: I have n't seen a single one go.

JENNIE: Boys, do let up on the josh. It ain't fair.

VICTORIA: In England we say "It is not fair."

GEORGE: So do we, in America, when we want to put on lots of dog.

VICTORIA: Put on dog? Put dog on what?

JENNIE: Oh, don't be stuck up, Vic.

VICTORIA: Why, I 'm not. I 'm sure I 've kept just as clean
[*examines dress*]—

MABEL: Now see here, kid—

VICTORIA [*runs to her eagerly, looking off*]: A kid? Oh, where? I have always so wanted to see a baby goat!

HATTIE: Why, you!—you 're it—the kid!

VICTORIA: Why, what peculiar children you are! First, you

say I am a peach, then you say I am a little goat. Do I look so different from you?

GERTRUDE: No, no! But— Oh, dear, this is the limit—

VICTORIA: The limit of what?

GERTRUDE: Oh, of surprises, I guess! We seem to be up against it—

VICTORIA [*staring behind her*]: Up against what?

JOHN: Oh, Gert! You go chase yourself—

VICTORIA: Oh, my! How could she do that? We couldn't do that in England.

GERTRUDE: Oh, it's easy. He just wants me to fade away.

VICTORIA [*horrified*]: What?

GERTRUDE: To make myself scarce, you know.

VICTORIA: No, I don't know. I don't understand.

JOHN: No, Gert, she don't get you at all.

VICTORIA: Why, I haven't tried to get her. What would I do with her? I don't want her. I've just listened—

JOHN [*shaking head*]: You don't seem to catch on at all.

VICTORIA [*looking at ceiling and corners*]: Catch on to what?

JOHN: Why, to the line o' gab we've been putting up!

VICTORIA [*still looking*]: I didn't see you putting up any line? Where is it? Maybe I could catch on if you'd show it to me.

FRANK: She gets my goat.

VICTORIA: Oh, do I? Where is it? Do let me see.

JOHN: He's missing, Victoria. All I want Gert to do is to break away and give her little brother a chance.

VICTORIA [*looking from him to GERTRUDE, and sizing them up*]: Are you her little brother? How can you be, when you're such a large boy, and she's so very small?

JOHN: Well, anyhow, I want her to pull in her horn—

VICTORIA: She didn't show me any horn.

JOHN: And go away back and sit down.

VICTORIA: Oh, I see! [*Looks back.*] Back there, I suppose. But why can't she stay here with me?

JOHN: Well, because there 's no use of her trying to stuff you—

VICTORIA: Stuff me? Why, she did n't. She never offered me a thing to eat.

FRANK: Say, John, come off. You ain't in it with her.

VICTORIA: In it? In what? I 'm not in anything but this room! How can he be in with me when I 'm not in anything myself?

HENRY: You 've hit it—right on the head!

VICTORIA [*searching floor remorsefully*]: Hit it? Hit what? Oh, I did n't mean to.

MABEL: You did n't hit anything, Victoria. That 's just Henry's way of saying you 're up to snuff.

VICTORIA: Up to snuff? But I 'm not, you know. I hate snuff. It 's not nice at all.

HATTIE: Now you 're shouting!

VICTORIA: Shouting? Pardon me. I thought I was speaking very low.

GERTRUDE: Victoria, when you glue your lamps on this bunch—

VICTORIA: Lamps. I have no lamps with me. Are we expected to bring them? And I do not seem to see any bunch—

FRANK: We 're sure up a tree.

VICTORIA: I don't see any tree, either.

FRED: Just the same, kids, the girl 's got the goods all right, if we could only make her open up.

VICTORIA: What *do* you mean? I have no goods.

MABEL: Good-night!

VICTORIA: Why, it 's only morning. You are n't going to bed in the daytime, are you?

MABEL: Not on your tintype.

VICTORIA: Certainly not, for I have no tintype. They went out of fashion in England years ago.

FRED: Well, this makes me tired. I 'm going to beat it.

VICTORIA: Beat what?

JOHN [*taps head significantly*]: Nobody home!

VICTORIA: Where?

JOHN [*still tapping*]: At your house.

VICTORIA: Oh, but you are mistaken. My father and mother are both home.

JENNIE: Oh, what a girl! Get on to her hair—

VICTORIA [*shrinking back in alarm*]: Oh, don't!

JENNIE: I did n't mean—

FRED: Dry up, Jennie. Every time you open your mouth you put your foot in it!

VICTORIA: Oh, my! Do you, really? How can you?

JENNIE: He's feeding you taffy!

VICTORIA: Why, no, he is n't. I have n't even seen any.

GERTRUDE: If I had the dough, I'd buy me a rig just like yours.

VICTORIA: Dough? Do you buy things with dough over here?

GERTRUDE: Sure thing!

VICTORIA: What kind of dough?

GERTRUDE: Any old kind we can get.

VICTORIA: Isn't that handy? I'm sure father will be pleased to learn of it. We always had to have real money in England.

MABEL: Say, kids, I wish mother could see her. Wouldn't she just eat her up?

VICTORIA [*in real alarm*]: Oh, my! Are there real cannibals here?

MABEL: Oh, no, no! I meant she'd fall all over you.

VICTORIA [*still alarmed*]: Is she heavy?

JOHN: The dickens!

MABEL: I meant she'd—she'd—well, she'd put you up as the swellest piece of calico that ever came over the pond.

VICTORIA: But I'm not a piece of calico, you see. And I

did n't come over any pond. I came across the big Atlantic Ocean, and I—

Enter MISS THOMPSON.

MISS THOMPSON: Well, children, how are you getting along?

JOHN: Bum!

GEORGE: Swell!

FRED: Punk!

VICTORIA: If you please, Miss Thompson, what language do you speak in this school?

MISS THOMPSON [*in astonishment*]: Why, the English language, of course!

VICTORIA: It is n't a bit like ours. Why, I can scarcely understand a word they say.

MISS THOMPSON [*still astonished*]: You can't? Ah, I see! It's the slang—the dreadful slang the scholars use—that has bothered you. If you only knew how hard I fight to weed it out! Maybe you can help me. It is n't good English, Victoria—in fact, we can hardly call it English at all. They fairly murder the language.

VICTORIA: I would not like to say they've really killed it, Miss Thompson, but it is very badly bruised and wounded.

JENNIE: Why, Miss Thompson, she could n't get next—that is, I mean she was n't wise to— Oh, dear, I mean—

MISS THOMPSON: Yes, Jennie; you see already how hard it is to break yourself of the bad habit of wounding the good old English language. I hope this will be a lesson to you all, and that you may learn of this little girl how to use, and not abuse, your own mother tongue. Will you try?

BOYS: Watch our smoke!

GIRLS: Bet your neck, Miss Thompson.

MISS THOMPSON: You see, Victoria, how strong the habit has grown. Be very careful not to adopt their strange language, but to hold closely to your own.

VICTORIA: I will.

MISS THOMPSON: Then let everybody take their places. This way, Victoria.

GEORGE: Everybody hike!

[ALL *scramble off the stage, following* MISS THOMPSON *and* VICTORIA.]

THE LOST COLORS

CHARACTERS: *Two girls and one boy.*

SCENE: *Stage with desk near back and three chairs. ANNA enters alone, walks to desk and looks over the books and papers on it eagerly.*

ANNA: Miss Nelson said she would leave our breast-knots on the desk for us, so that we could get them and wear them this evening. She wanted to be sure that everybody would know who were the three she had chosen to be her ushers at the entertainment. But I guess she hasn't quite finished them yet. Anyway, I don't see a scrap of pink and green anywhere here. We are so anxious to show our colors to everybody as having won the best marks in the school that I hope she'll be sure to get them here on time for us to get a little used to them ourselves before we show them off. It wouldn't do for us to act too proud, Maud and Will and I. I wonder where I left my paper. I've just about time, I guess, to sit down and finish my writing before the others come. Here it is.

[*Looks all around cautiously, to see if anybody is coming, then sits, and writes busily. After a pause, stops and consults dictionary for word, then resumes writing. MAUD enters, left, coughs, but ANNA does not look up. Coughs more loudly. No reply. Walks to desk quietly, clears throat. No reply.*]

MAUD [*when beside desk, after repeated failures to attract ANNA'S attention*]: What are you doing, Anna?

ANNA [*frightened*]: O-o-o-o-h! [*Jumps up, holding paper against front of dress.*] Why, Maud, how you startled me! What in the world made you keep so still about it?

Did you have to come in "like a thief in the night?"

MAUD: Still? Why, I coughed, and coughed, and coughed!

ANNA [*counts on fingers*]: Coughed, and coughed, and coughed! That makes three times! [MAUD *nods*.] Well, they must have been little teenty baby coughs, for I didn't hear you, anyway, and you nearly frightened me out of my wits! [*Sits again, preparing to write.*]

MAUD: Didn't mean to, I'm sure! Beg your most humble pardon.

ANNA [*writing*]: Oh, that's all right, Maud. I just didn't hear—that's all.

MAUD [*searching desk*]: Why, where are our colors?

ANNA [*not looking up*]: Not here yet!

MAUD [*astounded*]: Not here yet?

ANNA: No.

MAUD: Strange! I know they are all ready, for I saw Miss Nelson tying the last one, and heard her say, "There! the badges for my ushers are all ready!" Where can they be, I wonder, and why aren't they here? [*Sits left.*]

ANNA: Don't ask me! But they'll be here on time, we may be sure of that!

MAUD [*a little dubiously*]: I'm sure I hope so. Wonder where Will is! Have you seen him?

ANNA: Not since noon. [*Keeps on writing throughout conversation, not looking up.*]

MAUD: Will's a pretty decent sort of a boy, don't you think?

WILL [*entering at back unperceived*]: I sure do!

MAUD: There's nothing like having a good opinion of yourself and letting others know it—is there, Anna?

ANNA [*not looking up*]: No!

WILL [*tries to look over ANNA'S shoulder, but she keeps paper covered with hand*]:

Why so busy here, fair lady?

Prithee, why so busy now?

Why do wrinkles, deep and shady,
 Cloud thy young and placid brow?
 Why do—

MAUD: Never mind, Will. She won't tell you. And, do you know, our colors aren't here yet!

WILL [*surprised*]: They aren't? [*Walks to chair at right.*]

MAUD: Not a sign of them!

WILL [*looks back toward desk*]: Strange! Are you sure they aren't here somewhere?

MAUD: Positive! We've looked everywhere.

WILL: How long have you been here?

MAUD: Oh, not long! Anna was here writing when I came. Why?

WILL: I was just wondering if anybody else could have picked them up.

GIRLS [*together*]: Oh, my!

WILL: They could, you know!

MAUD: Yes, and they would, you know, just to tease us, if they happened to see them. How long were you here before I came, Anna?

ANNA [*rousing from writing again*]: What?

MAUD: Nothing—only—

ANNA: Well, only what?

MAUD: Do hurry up and get through with that writing!

ANNA [*writing fast*]: Um-humph!

WILL [*to MAUD*]: What is she writing, anyway?

MAUD [*shrugging shoulders*]: Ask her!

WILL: What are you writing, Anna?

ANNA: Why—er—a history.

WILL } [*together, in amazement*]: A history?
 MAUD }

ANNA: Yes, a history—h-i-s-t-o-r-y!

WILL [*pulls dictionary from pocket and begins to search*]:
 H-i-s-t-o-r-y.

MAUD: But, Anna, a history of what?

WILL [*reads definition*]: "A history is the record of the lives of great men."

MAUD: Great men? [*He nods.*] Humph! What about women?

WILL [*consults dictionary*]: It doesn't mention them.

MAUD: That book must be terribly out of date. Women play as much part in making history as men do. Look at—

WILL: Yes, yes, we won't argue the matter, Maud. I'll put women down, too, so I won't forget next time. [*Scribbles in dictionary.*]

MAUD: But what are you writing a history of, Anna?

ANNA [*hesitatingly*]: Oh—of—of our school, I guess.

WILL } [*together*]: Our school?
MAUD }

ANNA: Exactly! School. Shall I spell that, too?

WILL [*searching dictionary*]: Please!

MAUD: Oh, don't! We've all had our spell of that! But, Anna,—

ANNA: Well!

MAUD: What made you—

ANNA: I suppose I am foolish to even think of trying to write it, but I do so love the old school, and some day we'll grow up. I shall like to have done a little something to keep its memory alive.

WILL [*walking toward her*]: Read it to us, Anna.

ANNA [*covering paper with hand*]: By-and-by, maybe.

MAUD [*walking to her*]: Isn't it finished yet?

ANNA: Finished? Dear me, no! Just begun. [*They try to read over her shoulder.*] But, I guess I won't put any more time on it just now. [*Rises.*]

WILL: But do let us see it. [*Holds out hand.*]

ANNA [*holding it close to her*]: Oh, no, no, no!

MAUD: She must be putting in all our faults and failings to go "thundering down the ages." But you'll let me see it, won't you, Anna? [*Coaxingly.*]

ANNA: Oh, I just couldn't, Maud. Not now, anyway.

MAUD: Why?

ANNA: Oh, just—just—just—just because.

MAUD: I declare it must be a record of all my black and desperate deeds of daring.

WILL: Mine, too. She won't let me stand on the same side of the room. Read it to us, Anna, if you can't trust us with the paper. [ANNA shakes head.]

MAUD: Oh, yes, do—please!

WILL: Can't you see how we are devoured by our curiosity? Do read it to us!

MAUD: Like a good little girl!

ANNA: Don't tease me, Maud. I just can't!

WILL: Can't read it? Why? Is it written in Greek, Latin, or Hebrew; Chinese, Hindoostanee or pig latin?

MAUD: Or did you use words too long to be pronounced without a dictionary? [ANNA shakes head.]

WILL: I see! It's a secret history, like the lodges have—to be kept under the seal of eternal silence.

[While they are talking, ANNA hides paper inside one of her books on the desk. She is very sly about it, but WILL sees her and motions to MAUD, to call her attention. She nods wisely. ANNA does not know they see.]

MAUD: Well, it certainly ought to be worth keeping. Just think how famous this school will be some day, when we have all done something wonderful like—like—like—

WILL: Like writing histories—

MAUD: Yes, thank you, Will, for helping me out.

WILL [sits in chair carelessly]: Oh, this school could never get along without boys, anyway!

ANNA: Humph! I wonder now! I guess if we had a chance—

WILL: Humph! [Jumps up.] Where's that history? [Goes to desk, searching books. ANNA follows, gets

between him and desk, motioning him back.] A school without boys would be like a house without a stove.

GIRLS [*together*]: Humph!

MAUD [*walks to desk, ANNA watching her narrowly*]: I do wish we could find our colors! [*ANNA walks slowly after her.*]

ANNA [*relieved*]: Oh!—the colors! So do I. [*Turns back to front.*]

WILL [*walks toward MAUD*]: Certainly the colors! Where can they be, do you think?

ANNA [*looks over shoulder at them uneasily*]: They are not anywhere there. I have looked very thoroughly. I am sure that Miss Nelson has n't brought them yet, or else that somebody else found them first.

WILL [*at desk with MAUD*]: But you may have overlooked them. Two heads, you know, are better than one. [*Searches books.*]

MAUD: Yes. One never can tell what they may turn up—

ANNA [*going back to them, nervously*]: Please don't disturb my books, Maud.

WILL [*with wry face*]: Suppose that means me, too!

ANNA [*laughingly, but uneasily*]: Indeed, it does.

WILL [*walking toward front again*]: Well, then, Maud, what were you going to say a while ago? Pardon my interruption, won't you, and go on with your speech. It was so interesting.

MAUD [*ANNA watches her so closely and suspiciously that she, too, gives up and walks toward front*]: Must have been!

WILL: Well, it was—really! Please go on! [*Sits in chair at left.*]

MAUD [*sits in chair at right*]: Oh, I guess there was nothing more to it.

ANNA [*sits near desk, as if on guard*]: Oh yes there was, Maud. You weren't nearly through with it.

WILL: No, indeed!

MAUD: Well, then, let me see. What was it I was talking about?

WILL: Why, er—er—about—er—er—what was it, Anna?

MAUD: I thought that was about the extent of your great interest.

WILL: But I was awfully interested, Maud—honest, I was. But I got so concerned over those colors,—

ANNA: Yes, indeed—those colors!

WILL: What was it about, Anna, if you know so much more than I do about it?

ANNA: Why, it was about—about—about— Oh, yes, I know! It was about our school, and how famous we were going to make it, some day, and the importance of the history, and all that!

WILL: Of course! I knew that's what it was all the time, but I didn't think you would know.

GIRLS [*together, laughing*]: Of course!

MAUD: Isn't that the boy of it?

WILL: Well, now, Maud, surely you will go on and say your little say.

MAUD: Well, I'll try; if I can only remember what I was going to say.

WILL: Isn't that the girl of it?

MAUD [*glaring at him*]: Oh, yes! I know now. I was just thinking that when our school becomes real old, and everybody all over the country is talking about it, you know, they will point with pride to everybody who ever studied here—especially the women—

WILL: Humph! Women!

ANNA: Yes, and then they will be sure to add: "Too bad the boys were not more brilliant when all the girls have turned out to be such wonders!" That shows how much brighter women always are than men! [*As she speaks she rises and walks toward front, forgetting the desk.*]

MAUD *sees her opportunity and slips back to the desk to search for paper.*]

WILL [*trying to hold ANNA's attention, so that MAUD may find paper*]: Indeed, you're very much mistaken, Anna. That shows how little you know of human nature! Instead, it will be this: [MAUD *drops book with a crash, and ANNA jumps and hurries to desk.*]

MAUD [*walks to front, trying to appear innocent*]: That's the time I stopped you, Will.

WILL: It isn't polite to interrupt, Miss Maud.

MAUD: It's only tit for tat. [ANNA *replaces book and walks to front again.*]

WILL: Listen! This is what they will say: "The whole work of that school has been turning boys into men. It found the girls so bent on showing off that they were—impossible!"

MAUD [*slipping slyly to desk*]: Anybody would know a boy said that.

ANNA [*following her suspiciously*]: Of course!

WILL: Why not? A girl would be sure to try to keep it covered up.

GIRLS [*together, walking toward front*]: Humph!

WILL [*attempts to back toward desk*]: Well, isn't it true?

ANNA [*following him, suspiciously*]: What they really will say is this: "What good are boys anyway?" And the answer will always be: "Why, you know, they aren't any good—only for variety!"

WILL [*walking toward front*]: Well, here's one that will make everybody admit that he got a mighty good start in this man-mill, anyway, and that he himself was more than a match for a hundred girls!

GIRLS [*turning backs on him—WILL in center of stage, ANNA at right, MAUD at left*]: Humph!

[WILL *grasps the situation and slips to desk.*]

WILL: Where are those colors, anyway? [*Searches desk.*]

ANNA *runs to him, but too late. He finds paper, and waves it triumphantly in air.*] Found! Found!

MAUD [*turning eagerly*]: The colors?

WILL: No, the history! [*Holds paper high above head, ANNA trying to get it.*]

MAUD [*running to them*]: Oh, good! good! Give it to me, quick.

WILL: Now, Maud, we will see what our fond schoolmate has had to say about us—eh? Now we shall see what future generations are to have the privilege of reading about the dear old school we love. Now we shall see—

MAUD: Look out! She'll get it again! Hand it here, Will, quick!

ANNA [*pleadingly*]: Please give it back to me, Will. Don't let Maud see it.

MAUD [*surprised*]: Oh, it's about me, then, is it? [*Reproachfully.*] Why, Anna!

WILL [*goes to unfold it*]: Let me see.

ANNA [*trying to take it, very nervous and excited*]: Oh, please don't read it!

WILL [*holding it behind back*]: Don't worry, Anna. I won't read it out loud. I won't let Maud hear a single word of it. I'll just—

ANNA [*alarmed*]: But I don't— [*MAUD has slipped back of WILL, and now gets paper.*] O Maud! Maud! please don't let Will get it again!

WILL: Well, what do you think of that? It's about me, is it? [*Tries to get it.*] Let me see, Maud.

MAUD [*holding it behind back*]: No, I feel sure it's about me. You can't have it, Will!

ANNA [*slipping behind MAUD and getting it*]: Indeed, you can't, Will!

MAUD [*reproachfully*]: O Anna!

ANNA [*putting paper hastily in dress*]: It's safe now!

WILL: Two girls against one boy! I don't think it's fair.

ANNA: A girl and a boy against one girl! I don't think it's fair, either!

MAUD: Against one girl and a sheet of paper, you mean.

WILL [*shaking head and sighing*]: Yes—a girl with a history!

MAUD: Not only that, but a history that she admits is not finished.

WILL: Shocking! What will she come to?

ANNA: To school, till she finishes! And anyway it's a history of her own.

MAUD: And about me!

WILL: No, about me!

MAUD: Me!

WILL: Me!

ANNA [*teasingly*]: Don't you wish you both really knew?

BOTH [*eagerly*]: Yes!

ANNA: Maybe it's all about me!

MAUD: Oh, no! I'm sure it's not.

WILL: Of course not! That would be too conceited for a student of our school!

MAUD: Oh, my yes! We'd have to change our colors, for I know they'd droop with shame!

[*At the word "colors" all look eagerly toward desk, then shake heads disappointedly.*]

WILL: We'd have to change our motto, and we'd have to change our name!

MAUD: For of course our dear old school could not make so proud a claim—

WILL: And our dear, good, faithful teachers could not hold their heads the same—

MAUD: If a student should thus ever boldly sound her own fair fame!

[*After each line of the above rhymes, ANNA has stepped forward and opened her lips to speak; but the others have cut in and she has stepped back again to listen*

to another line. After this last one, she turns to WILL and listens a moment for him to continue the jingle before she speaks.]

ANNA: Well, have you really and truly finished?

WILL: Finished? Should say not!

MAUD: Just begun, Anna dear. Listen now and hear the rest.

ANNA: Spare me! Oh, spare me! [*Pause.*] Do you know, I'm getting really anxious about our colors. I'm afraid somebody else may have taken them to tease us. Had n't we better go see Miss Nelson and find out what she did with them? We simply can't be ushers without showing our colors.

MAUD: No, indeed! And Miss Nelson took such pains with them, too.

ANNA: Shall we go?

WILL: Certainly! With pleasure, Miss Anna!—if you will first let us read that important document you have so securely locked up in the secrecy of your garments.

MAUD: Or else read it to us. 'Tis n't nice for one friend to have secrets from the others. Is it, Will?

WILL: Not a bit nice—for the others!

ANNA [*reluctantly*]: Well, I would read it to you, if I were not afraid—

MAUD: Afraid? [*ANNA nods.*]

WILL: Of what?

ANNA [*hesitating*]: Afraid you'd laugh!

MAUD: Laugh? [*ANNA nods.*]

WILL: Why? Is it funny?

ANNA: I don't think so, but you might make fun of it.

MAUD: We won't!

ANNA [*looking from one to the other*]: Honest?

WILL: We'll be as solemn and sober as owls.

ANNA [*dubiously*]: But owls hoot!

MAUD: We won't!

ANNA [*looking from one to the other*]: Honest?

BOTH [*together*]: Surely!

ANNA [*takes paper from dress and reads. They sit and listen eagerly. She stands at center, MAUD sits at right, WILL at left.*]:

Our school is just the finest place
 We know in all the land;
 We come each day with smiling face
 To join a smiling band;
 We know that education's power
 Will help us while we live,
 And so we study every hour
 To gain all school can give.

We never may be great or wise,
 Nor do heroic deeds;
 But we will do our best to rise,
 For he who tries succeeds;
 Thus we 'll do credit to our school
 And teachers, every one;
 Drinking each day at learning's pool
 Till all school work is done.

MAUD } [*together, clapping hands*]: Good! Good!
 WILL }

MAUD: Isn't it simply fine?

WILL: Did you really write it all yourself?

ANNA [*showing paper*]: See! Isn't it my writing?

[*They both look eagerly.*]

MAUD: It surely is. Who would have dreamed that we'd have a real, sure-enough poet in our school?

WILL: But why do you call it a history?

ANNA: Isn't it—so far as it goes?

WILL: Well, yes—I guess it could be called that. But you girls sit down now and let me speak my little piece.

GIRLS [*together*]: Piece?

WILL: Surely! Think I can't? [MAUD resumes seat, while ANNA takes WILL'S.] Now, ladies, you have both been very good to-day—[*they smile at each other*—]—while one of you, to my surprise and possibly her own, has proven herself to be a poet—a wonderful poet! [*Looks at ANNA, who hangs head.*] Therefore it becomes my duty, as the only man present—

GIRLS [*together*]: Ahem!

WILL: —to exercise the masculine privilege and reward you according to your deserts. I have here some prizes which I hope you may prize—[*takes two breast-knots from pocket, holding them up*]—

GIRLS [*together, jumping up*]: Our colors! Our colors!

ANNA [*reproachfully*]: And you had them in your pocket all this time!

MAUD: And let us keep looking for them!

ANNA: Isn't that just like a boy?

WILL [*innocently*]: I could n't help your looking for them, could I?

ANNA: You might have told us.

WILL: Then I would n't have had any reward "For a Good Girl." Now, you see, Anna, I will pin this on you—stand up, please!—[*she rises, and he pins on breast-knot with much elaborate "fuss"*]—and tell you how much I hope that you may live to be a hundred years old and write forty poems every day, each one better than the last! [ANNA bows, laughing.] And you, Miss Maud, as I pin it on you—[*she rises while he repeats action*]—it is with the hope that you may study in eight schools, and yet at the end still like our own the best! [MAUD bows, laughing.] Mine, I will stand as a flag-pole on the schoolhouse and wave forever in honor of the dear old school. [*Steps on chair, waving breast-knot over head, as all laugh.*]

[*If there is no curtain, ALL leave stage laughing.*]

THE CAMP-FIRE GIRL

CHARACTERS:

KATE, *A Camp-Fire Girl.*

MAUD, *disguised as a "Cow Girl" in khaki suit, sombrero, etc.*

JULIA, *in Indian costume.*

DICK, *a Small Boy in Brownie costume.*

The last three should wear masks.

SCENE: *A camp fire. Dim light. KATE, with book of wild Indian stories, sits on a log beside fire, reading.*

KATE [*alone*]: Gracious! What a book! I wish to goodness I'd left it on the shelf in the library! Indian stories, indeed! and the very wildest of the wild! They fairly make my hair stand on end, and my flesh creep like a—something or other that better be nameless. Yet, somehow, I can't tear myself away from it so long as it's here! It's just like it used to be

[*Pokes fire with long stick.*]

when I was a kid—Oh, mercy! I mean "a child of tender years!" What if Miss Prim heard me using that terrible word! Would n't she just—[*hesitates for word*]
—well, she just would, anyway!

[*Pokes fire again.*]

Dear me! this fire! What if it should go out on me entirely, and I should be left all alone in the cold and dark—ugh! It's all right to be a Camp-Fire Girl in the broad open light of day, with a jolly bunch—er, I mean crowd—to help you earn your beads and their honors, but to be left to guard the fire in the dead of night—well, maybe not the dead of night, but it's dark enough to be dead, anyway, and I feel as if I were half a ghost

myself. It's more than I bargained for when I paid my little dollar!

[*Begins to search ground for book.*]

Where's my book? I can't live if I read it, and I don't seem to be able to live if I don't! Bad scrape I'm in!

[*Noise out left.*]

What's that? I'm sure I heard something! Maybe it was just my own heart pounding!

[*Looks off left awhile, shading eyes and peering with frightened expression; then returns to search for book.*]

Where is that book? Wish I had courage enough to throw the old thing in the fire where it rightfully belongs. But—courage—me? Humph! I have n't courage enough to even breathe out in the open where anybody could hear me! And that's true, too! I'm gasping now, just like a dying fish! Yet I've not got sense enough to leave this book alone! Not me! [*Finds book.*] Good! Here it is! Now it's me for the blood and thunder again! [*Sits.*]

I do wish the girls would come back! Seems to me they have had time to buy a whole grocery store and have it put up in nickel packages by this time, with a clerk or two thrown in for good measure.

DICK [*looking in from left*]: Boo!

[*Dodges back before she sees him.*]

KATE [*jumps up, looks all around nervously*]: I know I did hear something—once upon a time!

[*Resumes seat, ashamed of her fear.*]

When I grow up and write a book about Indians, it's going to be just about real good, nice, friendly Indians, like Pocahontas, Hiawatha, Massasoit, Sitting Bull—Oh, no, I don't mean him—but like—all the rest of the good ones! I'll cut out this scalping knife, war dance, eat-'em-alive stunts, and hand it over to the Boy Scouts

They 'll just revel in it, I suppose! That's the boy of it!

[*Reads silently awhile, then aloud*]:
 "Strip him to the skin," said the Chief of the Fire Eaters, "Bind him to the tree, brand him with red-hot irons, till you force the bloody secret from his throat!"—ugh! It's perfectly fascinating, of course! but somehow, I don't seem to care about being fascinated any longer.

[*Throws book far away from her.*]
 There! lie there and fascinate the worms and mosquitoes! Ugh! Worms! Wonder if there are many of them around the camp to-night! Believe I'll shoot them! And—mosquitoes! They'd make a really, truly Indian maid lay down her weary body and cover up head and ears, let alone a little light-haired play-Indian like me, whose pale face could n't deceive anybody!

[*Picks up bow and arrow and attempts to shoot.*]

Humph! pretty Indian, I am! could n't hit a barn door!

DICK [*again peeps in left*]: Boo!

KATE [*jumps and trembles*]: Ugh!

DICK [*entering*]: Boo!

KATE [*trying to drive him back, and at the same time backing away from him*]: Go 'way—go 'way, I tell you! Can't you see I'm an Indian, a bad, bad, bloodthirsty Indian that lives by eating little goblin imps like you!

DICK [*straightens up defiantly*]: Pooh!

KATE: Please, little—little—whatever you are—go away and I—I won't hurt you. I don't want to hurt you, you know, but if you will insist on staying where you're not invited, why—

DICK [*with motion of hands*]: Shoo.

KATE [*walking to fire, and assuming bravery and cheerfulness*]: Isn't this just the loveliest camp fire? I just love to take care of the camp fires, all alone at night.

DICK [*walking toward her*]: Do?

KATE [*dodging him and walking to other side of fire nervously*]: Why, of course I do! They all say I'm the bravest girl in the camp, and that's why they leave me here to look after things! Big, bold, brave, pale-faced Indian, me! [*Straightens up to full height.*]

DICK [*pointing at her*]: You?

KATE [*dodging his finger*]: Sure—me! Who else? Why, when they come back they'll all—

DICK [*looking around with interest*]: Who?

KATE: Why, Miss Nelson, our captain, and the girls! I belong to a big tribe of very fierce, cruel Indians, called—called—called—

DICK: Sioux?

KATE: No, not Sioux! I—I—I can't think of our name just now, but our war-cry is "Wohelo!"

DICK: New?

KATE: Oh, well, not so very new. It means, you know, work, health, and love. "Wo," from work, "he," from health, and "lo" from love! Put them all together, you see, and they spell "Wo-he-lo."

DICK [*sits*]: True?

KATE: Why, of course it's true! But I don't think you'd better sit down. I—I—well, you see, I wouldn't want to hurt you, but I'd have to if you didn't run away, for that's our Indian rules. [*Pause. He does not move.*] Where did you come from, anyway?

DICK: Grew.

KATE: Well, I suppose you had to grow, of course, like all the rest of us; but how did you come to be here in our woods? How'd you get into camp?

DICK: Blew.

KATE [*sighs and shakes head in exasperation*]: I guess you did! I do wish you'd blow out again. Are there any more like you where you came from?

DICK [*nodding wisely*]: Few.

KATE [*nervously*]: Gracious! [*Walks left, looking off, speaks aside.*] I wonder if I look as white as I feel!

[*Takes mirror from pocket, looks at self.*]

DICK [*looking over shoulder at her curiously*]: You?

KATE: This camping is n't any too good for the complexion, but I feel that I've got thoroughly bleached to-night!

DICK [*as before, teasingly*]: Do?

KATE [*replacing mirror in pocket and walking across stage nervously*]: I do wish I knew something to do to amuse myself. It's rather uncanny all alone here like this.

DICK [*offering gum*]: Chew?

KATE: Oh, I'd love to, but I don't dare! You see it's against our rules. Camp-Fire Girls don't chew gum, you know.

DICK [*shaking head sympathetically*]: Chew!

MAUD [*off stage*]:

Down from the tree tops,
Over the stream,
Through the soft shadows,
Sweetly I gleam,
From the green branches,
Through the moonlight
Here I am coming,
Coming to-night!

DICK [*jumping up*]: Who?

KATE: Oh, my! my! what's that? [*Calls off right.*] Don't come this way! It ain't safe! I'm a bad Indian, and I'd just have to shoot, shoot you right through the heart!

DICK [*surprised, but feigning fear*]: Whew!

KATE [*trying to adjust bow and arrow*]: Which way does this thing go, anyway?

DICK: Through!

KATE [*working with it*]: Through? Through what? Through where? Through how?

DICK [*laughing teasingly*]: Pooh!

[MAUD *laughs loudly off right.*]

KATE: Oh, dear! Just listen! I wonder if there are many of them!

DICK [*looking off right*]: Crew.

[*Gestures with hands to indicate large numbers.*]

KATE: Oh, mercy, where 'll I go?

[DICK *exits laughing.*]

What 'll I do? How 'll I handle 'em all?

[*Looks around suddenly.*]

Why, where 's he gone?

DICK [*off stage, teasingly*]: Flew.

MAUD [*enters right*]: Why, hello here! If it isn't a little bit of a pale-faced, make-believe, somebody or other, with a bow and arrow!

[KATE *tries to aim at her, nervously, but she does n't even see it.*]

Who are you, anyway?

KATE [*lowering bow at MAUD'S threatening tone, and shaking with fright*]: Why, I—I—I don't know!

MAUD: Just what I thought! Rigged out in all that war paint and feather flummadiddle, you look as if you did n't know! What are you trying to do, anyway, out here in these woods all alone?

KATE: Alone! Why, I 'm not alone! I 'm—I 'm—not alone! There 's just a lot of us here—dozens!

DICK [*off stage*]: Who? Who? Who?

[KATE *jumps and looks off nervously.*]

MAUD [*looking around skeptically*]: Where?

KATE: Oh, just—just—everywhere!

MAUD [*sarcastically*]: Up in the trees, I suppose—or behind the stumps; or maybe in the ashes! Humph! I like your nerve, but it don't go down very well. Don't you know

it isn't safe here in the woods alone? Lots of Indians around!

KATE [*shrieking*]: Indians!

MAUD [*nodding*]: Real ones, you know, not just play ones with blue eyes and blonde hair like some I've seen—but real ones, and cowboys, too!

KATE [*as before*]: Cowboys?

MAUD: Yes, sure! The real thing! I came from a camp of them that's got dozens and dozens of 'em, all wild and woolly! They all carry revolvers—see?

[*Shows hers, KATE dodges.*]

And scalping knives.

[*Takes knife from belt and flourishes it. KATE screams.*

MAUD *walks toward her.*]

And—and—

KATE: Go 'way! Go 'way!

MAUD: Well, now, that's a pleasant how-d'ye-do! I don't call that very polite!

KATE: I didn't ask you to come here, anyway!

MAUD: I didn't wait to be asked. I was looking for Red Rose.

KATE [*looking around ground*]: A red rose? I haven't seen a sign of a rose around here. They don't grow very well wild, you know.

MAUD: I mean an Indian girl I know! A peach of a looker, too! But my! dreadfully wild! The Boy Scouts are all terribly afraid of her!

KATE: I didn't know the Boy Scouts were afraid of anything.

MAUD: Well, they aren't, of ordinary things! But Red Rose isn't an ordinary thing. They say even her own father and mother have been afraid of her ever since she was a tiny papoose, strapped to the old squaw's back.

KATE: Oh!

MAUD: She's a fierce one all right! [*War whoop off left.*]
There she comes now.

KATE: Oh, my! Oh, my! Don't let her come here!

MAUD: Let her? Humph! I'd like to see anybody not let
Red Rose do anything in the world she undertook to do!
You don't know her!

KATE: But, oh, dear! What if—

MAUD: Besides, I want her to come. She's my pal, my side
partner, the best young squaw I know. Why, she ain't
afraid of anybody or anything in all this world—nor any
other world she's ever heard about. She'd just as soon
scalp you as to look at you!

KATE: Oh, my goodness! But what would she want to
scalp me for? I—I—I never did her any harm. Why,
I've never even seen her!

MAUD: Oh, she wouldn't want to scalp you especially, so
far as I know. She doesn't care a cent who she scalps
or doesn't scalp, or what they have or haven't done!
It's just anybody, anywhere, so long as she keeps in
practice. She has to scalp somebody or other every day,
you know, just so's not to forget how. She's got scalps
of about a million different people, I suppose, hanging
around her wigwam already, just as pleasant souvenirs
of course! [*War-whoop off right. KATE jumps.*] She's
a dandy! [*Calls.*] Whoo-oo-oo-oo! Here I am, Red
Rose! Here by the camp fire!

JULIA [*entering right with a bound*]: Ugh! Ugh! Bad
day! Heap much riding, heap much hunting, not a scalp
for Red Rose—not one little bit scalp! Big Chief mad
—ugh! Poor sick Red Rose! Heap tired! No good
day! [*Sighs.*]

MAUD [*slaps her on back*]: Cheer up, Red Rose! Here's a
real pretty little pale-faced maid—see the nice long hair!
I'm sure she'd be glad enough to part with it to make
you happy.

JULIA [*looking all around, sniffing eagerly*]: Where?

[KATE tries to hide, but MAUD pulls her out.]

Her? [*Points finger at her scornfully, laughs mockingly.*]

Humph! [*Pulls out strand of hair, examines it critically, then shakes head. KATE screams.*]

No good! [*Sits down by fire discouraged.*]

MAUD: Oh, come, Red Rose, why not?

JULIA [*scornfully*]: 'Fraid girl! Pale-face! Red Rose no scalp 'fraid girls!

MAUD [*sits by her*]: You must be mistaken, Red Rose! This is a very brave girl. Come here, you!

[KATE has been walking about, eyeing them fearfully.

Now comes to them timidly.]

See, she wears an Indian costume much like yours. She's not afraid of anything or anybody, she said so! [KATE hangs head.] Why, she was left here all alone, you see, as late as it is, to guard the camp-fire from—from—from bad cowgirls and naughty Indians. She's very brave! Try her!

JULIA [*gruffly*]: She say, "Oh!"

MAUD: But she did n't mean it.

JULIA [*with some interest, looking at KATE*]: Pretty hair.

MAUD: Of course she has pretty hair! And how nice it would look among all those scalps at your wigwam!

JULIA: Oh, much nice! Much nice! Heap fine! Cut—cut—cut zip—she say, "Oh! Oh!" much times. Red Rose run home with scalp heap glad! Eh?

[*Pantomimes the operation while she talks.*]

MAUD: Exactly the way.

JULIA [*rises and pulls knife from legging, sharpens on boot, grabs KATE'S hair*]: Hold still, pale-face—heap still!

KATE [*screams*]: O-o-o-o-h!

DICK [*runs in at left, gets between them and pushes Red Rose back*]: Skidoo!

KATE [*throws arm around him*]: Oh, you dear little boy!

DICK [*innocently*]: Who?

KATE [*crying hysterically*]: You have saved me!

DICK: You?

KATE: Yes, yes! This cow-er— cowgirl and this Indian—
[*they laugh*]—well, I don't see what you are all laughing
at! The whole crew of you can—

DICK: Crew? [*They laugh again.*]

KATE: You laugh as though—

MAUD [*throwing off mask*]: “We were only teasing you!”

JULIA [*throwing off mask*]: “Just to see what you would
do!”

KATE [*half crying, half laughing*]: Oh, you girls! You
girls! Maud and Julia! You naughty, naughty two!
[*Clings to both.*]

DICK: Two?

[*Counts with finger, pointing to first one girl, then the
other, then himself, looking perplexed.*]

KATE [*grabbing him and pulling off his mask*]: Three, for
you count, too! Just Dickie, of course, but you scared
me most to death!

MAUD: We didn't mean to make it quite so bad as that,
Kate; but it's such fun breaking in a new girl, and we
wanted to find out just how brave you were!

JULIA: And we have found out all right!

KATE [*with gesture of despair*]: Poor me! I found out, too!

MAUD: What did she say, Dick, when you first ran in on her?

DICK [*teasingly*]: Boo-oo-hoo!

KATE: Did I? Surely not me!

DICK [*points at her*]: You!

[*GIRLS clap hands and laugh.*]

KATE: Well, I don't care! If you girls were here all
alone at night—reading blood-and-thunder stories—you
wouldn't think it all so funny!

JULIA: We don't now! You spoiled our fun when you
wouldn't let us scalp you! [*Laughs.*]

MAUD: Don't tease her any more, Julia. Let's call Miss Nelson and the girls. She's certainly won her honors to-night! Wait till it's your turn, Kate, to help break in a new girl!

KATE: I'll read to her.

JULIA: Well, come on, let's go meet the crowd and tell them how brave our new squaw is!

[KATE starts to chase them off, and all exit laughing as
DICK follows.]

DICK [*driving them*]: Shoo!—shoo!—shoo!

CURTAIN

A COUNTRY COUSIN

CHARACTERS:

BELLE, a *City Girl*, daintily and richly dressed.

BOB, her *Brother*. Also nicely dressed.

MEG, their *Country Cousin*. Shabbily and unfashionably dressed. (*Her clothes should be especially shabby and out-of-date.*)

SCENE: *Any stage platform.*

BELLE enters from right. MEG from left. They meet in center of stage. MEG holds out hand, and BELLE turns haughtily away.

MEG:

Good morning!—Oh, excuse me,
If I've made a mistake;
But aren't you my cousin?
I'm Meg, from Turtle Lake.

BELLE:

Your cousin? I don't think so!

MEG:

Why, Rob said she was here; [*Looks left.*]
I don't see any other! [*Looks right.*]
Where can she be? Oh, dear!

BELLE:

My name is Belle, but surely
There must be some mistake; [*Sneering.*]
I'm sure I've no relation
Who lives at Turtle Lake.
[*Looks MEG all over, disdainfully.*]

MEG:

You are Belle Brown?

BELLE [*reluctantly*]:

Y—e—s, surely!

MEG:

Well, I 'm Meg Brown, you see;
Why, Belle, don't you remember
What friends we used to be?

BELLE:

Perhaps I once was foolish,—
Most children seem to be;
They change as they grow older,—
At least it 's so with me.
I cannot own relations
In one-horse towns like that;
I can't know anybody
Who wears that sort of hat.

MEG [*turns sadly away*]:

I see,—I see,—I 'm sorry;
I 'll go find Bob, I guess;
He likes his country cousin,
And he 's just splendid.

[*Exits hastily left.*]

BELLE [*looking after her*]:

Yes!

Bob 's always just that foolish,
He 'll like her well enough;
But as for me, I really
Prefer my friends less—rough!
Enter BOB from right.

BOB:

Hello, Belle, where 's the cousin?
She must have left you quick;
Say, ain't she jolly? Really,
That girl 's a regular brick!

BELLE [*coldly*]:

I do not understand you,—

DIALOGUES AND PLAYS

- A dowdy girl like her?
You surely will not own her?—
I'll not, I tell you, sir!
- BOB [*surprised*]:
You won't? Why, Belle, I always
Thought you a downright snob!
You don't like this rich cousin?
- BELLE:
Rich? Quit your fooling, Bob!
- BOB:
Why, Sister, I'm not fooling!
- BELLE:
But, Bob, she looks so green!
- BOB:
Well, money'll change her color.
- BELLE [*impatiently*]:
Do tell me what you mean!
- BOB:
Well, Belle, her mother's brother,
Or sister—don't know which—
Just left her all her money,
And she is awful rich!
She's got just heaps—Pa told me—
Five times as much as we;
[BELLE *covers face with hands.*]
Why, Sister, what's the matter?
- BELLE:
I snubbed her, awfully!
- BOB [*whistles*]:
You did?
- BELLE:
Yes.
- BOB:
You're a dandy!
She'll never look at you!

BELLE:

I don't like—poor relations!

BOB [*teasingly*]:

Perhaps she's that way, too! [*Looks left.*]
But here she comes!

MEG [*entering left,—to BELLE*]:

Why, cousin,
What makes you look so glum?
I've just been buying popcorn— [*Passes sack.*]
I thought I'd bring you some.

BELLE:

Oh, thank you! You're just lovely!

BOB [*laughs*]:

The popcorn's lovely, too! [*Bows low.*]
I am so glad to see you
I don't know what to do!

MEG:

To see me—or the popcorn?

BOB:

Well,—both!

BELLE:

But mostly you!

MEG [*gravely*]:

You've changed your mind some, ain't you?

BELLE [*embarrassed*]:

Oh, I was—cross and—blue;
I sometimes am!

[*Suddenly raises head frankly.*]

Forgive me!

MEG [*delightedly, and kissing BELLE impulsively*]:

Why, Belle, of course I will!

And we must be forever

Good friends and cousins still. [*Looks right.*]

There's Uncle—I must see him;

Good-bye!

DIALOGUES AND PLAYS

[Runs off right, eagerly. Turns back at entrance and waves hand to them, nodding and smiling.]

BELLE:

Good-bye!

BOB:

Good-bye!

[Turning to BELLE, when alone]:

Well, Sister, what about it?

BELLE *[penitently]*:

She 's twice as good as I.

BOB:

Of course!

BELLE *[reproachfully]*:

Now, Bob!

BOB *[stoutly]*:

I mean it!

You 're far too "stuck-up," miss!

BELLE:

Well, I 'll like country cousins

Forever after this!

BOB:

For sure?

[Puts both hands on her shoulders, looking in eyes questioningly.]

BELLE *[meets his gaze without flinching]*:

For sure! Now, Brother,

Don't say any more, I beg!

BOB *[taking hands down]*:

Well, "mum 's the word," then, Sister.

Come on!

[Offers arm, with grown-up air.]

BELLE *[looks up at him, smilingly]*:

Let 's go find Meg.

[They go off right, arm in arm.]

LIKE HIS NAMESAKE

A Lincoln Birthday Play

CHARACTERS:

ABRAHAM JONES, *at eight, sixteen, and twenty-five years of age. (The two older easily taken by same person.)*

GRANDFATHER JONES, *an Old Man—Civil War Veteran.*

BILLY WHITE

JOHNNIE SMITH } *Boys eight or nine years of age.*

BOB

JACK } *Boys of fifteen or sixteen.*

JIM

MR. HUNT, *a Business Man.*

MR. GRAHAM, *an Associate Business Man.*

MR. BLACK, *a Fellow Citizen of the two.*

COSTUMES: *Modern.*

ACT I

SCENE: *A Room.*

GRANDFATHER JONES *is discovered in a large armchair, with his grandson, little ABRAHAM, on a footstool beside him.*

ABRAHAM: Tell me a story, grandpa.

GRANDPA: A story, Abraham? Well, well, if you haven't the biggest appetite for stories of any youngster I ever set eyes on! [*Scratches head.*] 'Pears to me I have told you all the stories I ever knew long ago. What kind of a tale do you want this time?

ABRAHAM: Why, a true story, of course, grandpa! I don't like any other kind.

GRANDPA: So it's got to be a true story, eh? Well, I don't know but you be about right, so far as that's concerned! But, it 'pears to me, boy, that I have told you everything that's happened to me in all my born days,—you're always so crazy fer stories—stories!

ABRAHAM [*after thinking a minute*]: Oh, I know, grandpa. Tell me why you called me such a *dreadful* name as Abraham. Mamma says you named me, so I s'pose you must have had a good reason for it.

GRANDPA: So you don't like your name, eh?

ABRAHAM: Indeed, I don't! I just hate it.

GRANDPA: Well, I declare! But I tell you, my lad, I'd give a lot to be worthy of a name like that, for to my mind it is the grandest name in the hull world.

ABRAHAM: Why, grandpa?

GRANDPA: Because it was the name of the noblest and truest man that ever lived—that's why!

ABRAHAM: Do you mean Abraham in the Bible, grandpa? The man who was going to burn his little son Isaac because the Lord wanted him to?

GRANDPA: No, I don't mean that one, Abe. Though you ought to be proud of your name on that account anyhow. The man I mean was an American—and he did n't live so turrible long ago, either.

ABRAHAM: Oh, tell me about him, please, grandpa.

GRANDPA: All right, child, I'll just do that—and I don't think you'll ever hate your name again. The name of this man was Abraham Lincoln. Now don't you ferget it—*Abraham Lincoln!*

ABRAHAM: Of course I won't ferget it. [*Repeats slowly: Abraham Lincoln—Abraham Lincoln.*]

GRANDPA: Of course the name sounds a little strange to you now, but in a few years it will seem as natural to you as mine, for he was one of the greatest men who ever lived and his name will live on and on forever!

ABRAHAM: Was he very handsome, grandpa?

GRANDPA: Handsome? Well, I should say not! Indeed, he was so plain, and rough, and awkward, that some folks said he was the homeliest man they ever saw.

ABRAHAM: Gee, grandpa! Then what made him so great as you say he was?

GRANDPA: You will learn sometime, Abe, that the world don't care so very much for a man's looks. It is what a man has *inside* of him that counts; and Abraham Lincoln had the noblest soul and the kindest heart inside of his homely old body of any man that ever lived.

ABRAHAM: Where did he live, grandpa?

GRANDPA: He was born in Kentucky, but when he was a boy about your size his father moved to Indiana, and that's where he grew up.

ABRAHAM: He was awfully rich, wasn't he? Great men always are.

GRANDPA: That's where you're wrong again! He was a very poor boy, and lived in a miserable log cabin. He had to work very hard for what he had,—and I can tell you that was mighty little! He never went to school more 'n a year in his hull life; but he was bound to learn and be somebody, so he read and studied every book he could get hold of and by the time he was grown up he was ready to be a lawyer. Then he went to Illinois, and before long became mighty well known.

ABRAHAM: Are all lawyers great men, grandpa?

GRANDPA: Well, hardly, my boy! But Abe Lincoln, you see, was so good and true and honorable that he would have been great *in anything*! It wasn't very long before everybody who knew him began to call him "Honest Abe," and the name stuck to him all his life! Yes, and lots of people call him "Honest Abe" even yet!

ABRAHAM: Oh, how fine! Don't you just wish people would call *me* "Honest Abe," grandpa?

GRANDPA: You could n't have a grander title, my boy,—nor one your old granddad would be prouder to hear you called; but you will have to earn the right to a name like that.

ABRAHAM: Earn it, grandpa? But I ain't big enough to work very hard yet.

GRANDPA: Earn it not by work, Abraham, but by proving yourself worthy.

ABRAHAM: I see! Well, what did Abraham Lincoln—there! —I did n't forget—do next, grandpa?

GRANDPA: Well, after a number of years, he became a great and famous man and was president of the United States!

ABRAHAM: Gee!

GRANDPA: Yes; and while he was president, the great war was fought that I've told you so much about.

ABRAHAM: The war that freed the poor slaves?

GRANDPA: Yes, Lincoln was the friend of the black men, and it was his Emancipation Proclamation that set them free.

ABRAHAM: How everybody must have loved him! Did n't they, grandpa?

GRANDPA: A great many did, Abraham, but he had lots of enemies, too,—and some very bad ones! Indeed, he was shot and killed by one of them, right after the long war was over.

ABRAHAM: Oh, grandpa, how could they?

GRANDPA: There's always lots of wicked people in the world, and it seems as though they can do 'most anything. Well, I hope you will like your name better after this—

ABRAHAM: Oh, I will! I will!

GRANDPA: And that you will grow up to be as near like your great namesake as you can, and never be unworthy of bearing his name. [*Rises, laying hand on boy's head.*] But it's a mighty big name to have to live up to, I can tell you.

ABRAHAM: But I'll try, grandpa—I'll try hard. Sure I will.

GRANDPA: I guess I'll turn in awhile now and get my nap. Old folks need lots of snoozing to keep the wheels a-running. [*Exit left.*]

ABRAHAM: I'm so glad grandpa told me about Abraham Lincoln, for now I'm glad that my name is Abraham.

Enter BILLY and JOHNNIE on run, left.

ABRAHAM: Hello, boys!

BILLY: Hello, Abe. Come and go fishing.

ABRAHAM: Can't! You stay here and play marbles.

JOHNNIE: Stay here? Not on your tintype! We're going fishing. Come and go 'long!

ABRAHAM: I'd like to, Johnnie, but I can't—honest, I can't!

BOYS [*both together*]: Why not?

ABRAHAM: Mamma would n't like it!

BILLY: Don't tell her, then. She'd never find out.

JOHNNIE: Just ask her to let you come over to our house awhile. She'd never know the diff. Oh, come on!

ABRAHAM: No, I couldn't do that.

BOYS [*both together*]: Why not?

ABRAHAM: Because it would n't be right!

JOHNNIE: Who cares about that? 'Pears to me you're getting awful good all of a sudden?

BILLY: Ain't sick, are you, Abe?

ABRAHAM: No, I'm not sick, but I can't go, so it won't do a bit of good to coax me.

BILLY: Rats! Come on, Johnnie. Let's leave mamma's baby boy alone—tied tight, tighter, tightest, to her apron strings!

JOHNNIE: Yes, tied tight, tighter, tightest to her apron strings, poor baby boy!

BILLY: Bye-bye, 'ittie boy!

ABRAHAM: Good-bye, boys! [*They exit, laughing scornfully.*] Oh, dear! I would like to go fishing with them. They're sure to have a good time. But ever since Georgie Murray fell into the river, mamma don't want me to go near the water for fear I'll get drowned. It's awful foolish of her, of course, for I'm big enough to take care of myself—[*straightens up proudly, and struts back and forth*—]but I would n't be living up to my name if I deceived her, so I just could n't do it.

Re-enter GRANDPA.

GRANDPA: Abraham, I'm proud of you, I sure am. I was just a-comin' back to get my paper, and heard every word the boys said, and *you* said, and— Well, I guess Abraham Lincoln need n't be ashamed of his namesake to-day. That's the way to begin, Abe. Just you stick to that course and, before you know it, people will begin to think of you as "Honest Abe," too.

[*Puts arm around boy's shoulder, and they start to walk off left.*]

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *A Schoolroom*

ABRAHAM, *aged sixteen, at desk, studying.* BOB, JACK, and JIM *in chairs about the room, reading or writing.*

JACK: Come, Abe, have n't you got that problem solved yet?

BOB: It's just as easy as can be when you know how!

ABRAHAM [*laughing*]: Yes, that's the sticking-point. I don't know how!

BOB: Oh, Abe never can learn anything but history!

JACK: Yes, he's a genuine histori-maniac, if there is any such a thing!

JIM: Well, there is—for Abe's it, all right. What he doesn't know about history is too insignificant ever to have really happened—that's a cinch! Anyway, I'll bet he knows everything that Abraham Lincoln ever did, or said, or even *thought*.

JACK: Probably better. Lincoln may have forgotten a great deal by this time.

ABRAHAM: Do keep still, boys—won't you, please? I want to study.

BOB: Do keep still, boys—won't you, please? Abe wants to study! [ALL *but* ABRAHAM *laugh merrily*.]

JACK: Study away, my son,—study away! And may the wisdom of all the dead and gone historians, and—and—

BOB }
JIM } [together]: Mathematicians!

JACK: Oh, yes, mathematicians—descend upon you and fill your head to overflowing, and take my blessing with you!

BOB: Never mind my *blessing*, Abe, but just take my solution of that problem and look it over. You'll easily see where your trouble lies. Wait a minute, and I'll get it for you. [*Searches book*.]

ABE: Thank you, Bob—but don't bother, please. I wouldn't look at it, anyway.

BOB: Wouldn't look at it? And why not?

ABRAHAM: It's very kind of you to offer, Bob, and you mustn't think I don't appreciate it, but I must just dig it out for myself.

JIM: Pshaw, Abe, I can't, for the life of me, see what would be dishonest about that! You've probably made some little mistake that you don't happen to see, and a glance at Bob's paper would make it all right.

ABRAHAM [*shaking head*]: You know that's not my way, boys. [BOYS *wink at one another*.]

JIM: Don't tease him, boys. He probably knows his own business better than we do—and if he won't, he won't!

BOYS [*all together*]: “And that 's the end on 't!”

ABRAHAM [*not looking up*]: Thanks, boys!

BOB: Gee, boys, I've got some letters to mail! Come on down to the post-office with me!

JIM: Right you are, Bobby, my boy! You'll find us with you!

JACK:— And we'll leave this dear, studious old stupid of ours to the solitude for which he so evidently yearns! [*Slaps ABRAHAM'S shoulder.*] Here we go, Abe, my boy—

“There were three boys sat on a tree—
And they were bad as boys could be!”

Console yourself for our absence, my child, and be as happy without us as you may find possible. Ta, ta!

ABRAHAM [*laughs*]: Trot along, fellows. Take all the time you want going, but—hurry back! Good-bye.

JIM: That sounds like “Shoo fly!”—eh, boys? [*ALL exit, laughing.*]

ABRAHAM [*alone*]: I don't see why this problem bothers me so. Nine times eight is seventy-six; seven times six is forty-two, and seven makes forty-nine. [*Figures silently awhile.*] Now that 's just the same result I had before, and it 's several hundred dollars from the correct answer. And that must make twenty times I've worked it, too, with the identical result. Nobody would want to trust me with his books if I lost money for him like that. Oh, dear! [*Scratches head.*] I believe I'll see it all in my sleep to-night—if I am not too excited to get to sleep. But the idea of letting such a simple little problem as that get the best of a fellow! I'll try it again. [*Figures silently awhile.*] There! that isn't exactly the same answer I had before, but it 's just as far from the right one. I just believe I *will* look at Bob's paper when he

comes back. There surely would n't be anything real dishonest about that, after all. I have the *principle* all right, but must have made a miscalculation somewhere. I'll never get it any different to-night, that's sure, for the figures seem burned into my brain. But I would like to have it correct for the recitation, and—what earthly good would it do a fellow to know you had the *principle* of the work all O. K., if you lost several hundred dollars for him because the *figures* didn't follow out your principle? I wonder whether it *is* right to look at Bob's paper! Any of the other boys would do it, and never give it a second thought. But, then, none of them have such a grand old name to live up to as I have. I declare, I don't know what to do about it! Here they come back, already! I'll have to make up my mind pretty soon, that's sure! [*Re-enter BOYS, noisily.*] Back again, boys?

JACK: Sure we are,—every single one of us! How you coming, Honest Abe?

ABRAHAM: Pretty slow, Jack—but I thank you for calling me that fine old name! It answers a question for me, and—I'll try and prove worthy of it!

JIM: Try? Pshaw, Abe!—what's the matter with you? Don't you know we always call you that among ourselves? You think so much about Lincoln that you are getting to be ever so much like him. We notice it more and more every day!

ABRAHAM: Do you mean it, boys?

BOB: Why, sure we do! Just as though we didn't know that it was your highest ambition! Can't say you *look* much like the Great Emancipator, though! But you probably would n't feel inconsolable about that!

JIM [*laughing*]: I presume he'll be content with the spiritual resemblance! [*ALL laugh.*]

ABRAHAM: You need n't chaff, boys! I would be only too proud to look just like him. I think he is the handsomest

man that ever lived. He is my patron saint, you know!
Now, I'm going to work that problem!

Boys [*all*]: Good for Honest Abe!

[*They take books and seat themselves at study. ABE works awhile in silence.*]

ABRAHAM [*waving paper*]: Hooray! I've got it!

BOB: Abe's got it, boys—got something—hold him! [*ALL laugh.*]

JACK [*grabbing him*]: Tell us, Abe, have you got it awful bad?

ABRAHAM: No-sir-ee! Had it bad all day—got it *good* now.

[*JACK releases him.*] You see, boys—[*showing paper*]

I was just calling a seven a nine all the time—that's all!

JACK: Might've known you couldn't get the right answer calling the figures bad names, Abe! [*ALL laugh.*]

BOB: And if you'd looked at my paper, you'd have seen what was wrong hours ago.

ABRAHAM: I know it; but then something would have felt all wrong inside of me, Bob, and I'm ever so glad I didn't do it!

BOB: Of course! that's the Lincoln of it!

JIM: Don't tease him, Bob. I think he is perfectly right, and only wish I had enough of the Lincoln spirit in me to be half as particular. Come, now, let's all give three cheers and a tiger for Abraham Lincoln!

[*ALL rise, and cheer lustily.*]

BOB: Now let's give three more for Abraham Jones,—our "Honest Abe."

[*ABRAHAM sits down while the others cheer, and curtain falls.*]

ACT III

SCENE: *A Business Office.*

ABRAHAM, *now twenty-five, sits at a desk, writing.* MR. HUNT, *at another near-by.* *Over ABRAHAM'S desk hangs a large portrait of Lincoln.*

MR. HUNT: How's your wife, Jones?

ABRAHAM: She doesn't seem to be improving a bit, Mr. Hunt.

MR. HUNT: Who's your doctor?

ABRAHAM: Whitney.

MR. HUNT: Any good?

ABRAHAM: I think he is doing all that he can for her, thank you, Mr. Hunt, or, indeed, all that anyone could do. He says there is nothing that will do her any good but an operation.

MR. HUNT: Operation?—pooh!—nothing in that,—nothing at all! When these fool doctors find out they aren't doing a patient any good, and don't know what else to propose to get money out of his pocket, they order some sort of an operation. In nine cases out of ten it does no good at all—and in the one where it does, it's just luck.

ABRAHAM: Still, when it seems the only hope—

MR. HUNT: Nonsense! Wasn't thinking of having it done, were you?

ABRAHAM: No, not seriously, because it would cost a great deal, and the state of my finances makes it impossible. But if I had any possible way of scraping the money together I'd have it attended to before to-morrow night.

MR. HUNT: It's a good thing you haven't got the money, Jones. This is one of the times when poverty is a blessing. Nothing in these operations, I assure you, sir—nothing but graft, pure and simple, on the part of these

rascally doctors. Let the poor woman die a natural death, in her own bed—that's my advice!

ABRAHAM [*sadly*]: And there being no other alternative, I shall be forced to take it, I suppose—but it's pretty tough!

MR. HUNT: Yes, death is always a tough proposition, Jones, any way we can fix it, but it's one we'll all have to face! [*Rises.*] I'll be back by and by, Jones. I'm going over to Stewart's. [*Exits.*]

ABRAHAM: All right, sir! Mr. Hunt's a good fellow. He does n't mean to be heartless or cruel, but he does n't and can't understand what this means to me. I hoped that he would offer to advance me the money on my salary, but, feeling as he does about it, it would be useless to ask him. Oh, my poor wife! Is there no way out of this—nothing but death! [*Shudders and bows head on desk.*]

MR. GRAHAM [*entering*]: Morning, Jones! Where's the boss?

ABRAHAM [*raising head*]: Good morning, Mr. Graham. Mr. Hunt has just gone over to Stewart's. He will be back soon, he said; but if you want him in a hurry, I can ring him up. [*Turns to 'phone.*]

MR. GRAHAM: Oh, no, don't do that. I just want the bill for that last consignment of Weatherby's, and I dare say you can give it to me as well as he!

ABRAHAM [*going to other desk and sorting papers*]: Certainly, Mr. Graham!

MR. GRAHAM: What's the matter, Jones? You don't seem quite yourself this morning.

ABRAHAM: Just a fit of the blues, I guess, Mr. Graham. Everybody seems subject to them at times.

MR. GRAHAM: It does n't pay, though. Cheer up! [*Slaps ABRAHAM'S shoulder.*] Everything always has come out all right, has n't it, Abe? [*ABRAHAM nods.*] Well, is n't that a pretty good sign that it always will?

ABRAHAM: I hope so, Mr. Graham. Thank you! Here's the bill!

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you. [*Looks it over.*] All O. K. Tell Hunt I called for it. Good morning! [*In going, MR. GRAHAM drops leather wallet on floor.*]

ABRAHAM: Good day! What a good, kind-hearted man that Mr. Graham is! For a moment I was tempted to ask a loan of him. I almost wish I'd told him what troubled me, anyway! He might have offered. [*Telephone rings.*] Now what? [*Turns to 'phone and picks up receiver.*] Hello! . . . Yes, sir! . . . Yes, this is Jones speaking. . . . No, nobody but Mr. Graham! . . . Graham,—G-r-a-h-a-m— . . . Yes, sir!— . . . Why, he only wanted the bill of Weatherby's last consignment. . . . Yes, sir, I gave it to him. . . . Yes, that was all. . . . Nobody else, sir! . . . At eleven, you say? . . . All right, sir! [*Hangs up receiver and, in turning around, sees purse and picks it up.*] Ah, what is this? Mr. Graham's purse, I presume. He must have dropped it as he left. [*Examines it.*] There is no name on it, and no card, but nobody else has been in to-day, so it must be his. [*Counts bills.*] Five hundred dollars! Exactly what Dr. Whitney told me the operation and hospital expenses would cost. What wealth this would be to me just now,—wife and home, and life itself! And it is almost nothing to him! [*Pauses, thinking deeply.*] Of course he has no idea where he left it! [*After a pause, closes the wallet resolutely and turns to Lincoln's picture.*] Forgive me, if for one little moment I was half tempted to forget the noble name I bear, and all I owe to it. I've lived up to that name so far and, God helping me, I always shall. I'll get this temptation out of my hands as quickly as possible, too. [*Starts out. Meets MR. HUNT.*]

MR. HUNT: Where you bound for, Jones?

ABRAHAM: Mr. Graham's office—be right back!

MR. HUNT: All right! [*Exit ABRAHAM, hastily.*] What an honest, steady fellow that Jones is! I 'm glad I got hold of him instead of somebody else. He 's bound to make his way in the world, sometime, that 's sure. He 's worth every cent I pay him, and more; but as long as he does n't know it, I stand in no danger of losing him. Get the best you can as cheap as you can—that 's my motto! He 's got a lot of old-fashioned notions and a queer kind of worship for his hero, Lincoln, but no one could think any the less of him for that. In fact, I don't know but it adds to his market value. Ha, ha, ha! But he does n't know it! He says he is bound to live up to the name of Abraham, and nothing pleases him so much as to be called "Honest Abe." Well, he deserves it all right. [*Looks left.*] Why, what in the world has happened?

*Enter MR. GRAHAM and MR. BLACK, carrying ABRAHAM.
They lay him on sofa.*

MR. GRAHAM: Well, Hunt, we thought for a minute it was all up with poor Abe! He was rushing across the street to return my purse, which I had dropped here, and not watching where he was going. He was knocked over by an automobile,—and—this was the result. We thought he would surely be killed, but I am sure he has been only stunned.

MR. HUNT: Jones, Jones,—do you know me?

ABRAHAM: Yes, I know you, Mr. Hunt. Don't let my wife know about this. She must n't be worried now. When she does know, she will be glad that I lived up to my name, and was "Honest Abe" to the last.

MR. GRAHAM: Nonsense, Abe—you are not going to die. [*Turns to MR. HUNT.*] What is wrong with his wife?

MR. HUNT: She 's been ailing for a long time—all winter, in fact—and the doctors have made him believe that an

operation is all that will save her. Fortunately, he has n't the means, and—

MR. GRAHAM [*sarcastically*]: I see! [*Bends over ABRAHAM.*] Listen to me, Jones. You must rouse yourself and take me to your wife, for we must get her to a hospital at once. Don't worry about the expense. You just leave that to me. And as soon as you are able to work again, I need you in my office. My private secretary has recently left, and I have been unable to find a man I could trust to take his place. But, thanks to this accident, I have found one now whom I shall be glad to have with me.

MR. HUNT: But—

MR. GRAHAM: No "buts," if you please, Mr. Hunt. Fortunately for me you have n't the money to hold him at the salary I intend to give him.

[*ABRAHAM reaches out his hand, which MR. GRAHAM grasps cordially.*]

CURTAIN

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