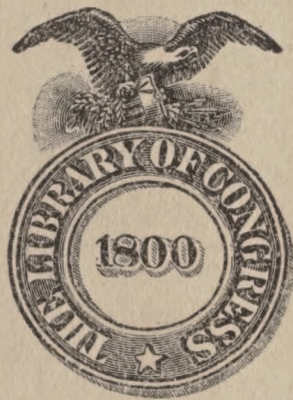


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ONLY 38

By A. E. THOMAS



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

RESERVE STORAGE

The Touch-Down

A comedy in four acts, by Marion Short. 8 males, 6 females, but any number of characters can be introduced in the ensembles. Costumes modern. One interior scene throughout the play. Time, 2½ hours.

This play, written for the use of clever amateurs, is the story of life in Siddell, a Pennsylvania co-educational college. It deals with the vicissitudes and final triumph of the Siddell Football Eleven, and the humorous and dramatic incidents connected therewith.

"The Touch-Down" has the true varsity atmosphere, college songs are sung, and the piece is lively and entertaining throughout. High schools will make no mistake in producing this play. We strongly recommend it as a high-class and well-written comedy.

Price, 30 Cents.

Hurry, Hurry, Hurry

A comedy in three acts, by LeRoy Arnold. 5 males, 4 females. One interior scene. Costumes modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

The story is based on the will of an eccentric aunt. It stipulates that her pretty niece must be affianced before she is twenty-one, and married to her fiancé within a year, if she is to get her spinster relative's million. Father has nice notions of honor and fails to tell daughter about the will, so that she may make her choice untrammelled by any other consideration than that of true love. The action all takes place in the evening the midnight of which will see her reach twenty-one. Time is therefore short, and it is hurry, hurry, hurry, if she is to become engaged and thus save her father from impending bankruptcy.

The situations are intrinsically funny and the dialogue is sprightly. The characters are natural and unaffected and the action moves with a snap such as should be expected from its title. Price, 30 Cents.

The Varsity Coach

A three-act play of college life, by Marion Short, specially adapted to performance by amateurs or high school students. 5 males 6 females, but any number of boys and girls may be introduced in the action of the play. Two settings necessary, a college boy's room and the university campus. Time, about 2 hours.

Like many another college boy, "Bob" Selby, an all-round popular college man, becomes possessed of the idea that athletic prowess is more to be desired than scholarship. He is surprised in the midst of a "spread" in his room in Regatta week by a visit from his aunt who is putting him through college. Aunt Serena, "a lady of the old school and the dearest little woman in the whole world," has hastened to make this visit to her adored nephew under the mistaken impression that he is about to receive the Fellowes prize for scholarship. Her grief and chagrin when she learns that instead of the prize Robert has received "a pink card," which is equivalent to suspension for poor scholarship, gives a touch of pathos to an otherwise jolly comedy of college life. How the repentant Robert more than redeems himself, carries off honors at the last, and in the end wins Ruth, the faithful little sweetheart of the "Prom" and the classroom, makes a story of dramatic interest and brings out very clearly certain phases of modern college life. There are several opportunities for the introduction of college songs and "stunts."

Price, 30 Cents.

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York City
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22
1816

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ONLY 38

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

A. E. THOMAS

SUGGESTED BY A SHORT STORY BY
WALTER PRICHARD EATON ✓

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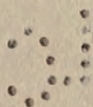
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The following is a copy of the playbill of the first performance of "ONLY 38" at the Cort Theatre, New York, Tuesday evening, September 13, 1921:

MR. SAM H. HARRIS

PRESENTS

ONLY 38

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

A. E. THOMAS

Suggested by a short story by

WALTER PRICHARD EATON

(Staged under the direction of Sam Forrest)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MRS. STANLEY	.....	Mary Ryan
MRS. NEWCOMB	.....	Helen Van Hoose
MRS. PETERS	.....	Kate Mayhew
MR. SANBORN	.....	Percy Pollock
ROBERT STANLEY	.....	Neil Martin
LUCY STANLEY	.....	Ruth Mero
MARY HADLEY	.....	Margaret Shackelford
SYDNEY JOHNSON	.....	Leon Cunningham
PROFESSOR GIDDINGS	.....	Harry C. Browne
JIMMY	}	.....Friends of SYDNEY
CHARLEY		
ALICE	.....	Friend of LUCY

SYNNOPSIS OF SCENES

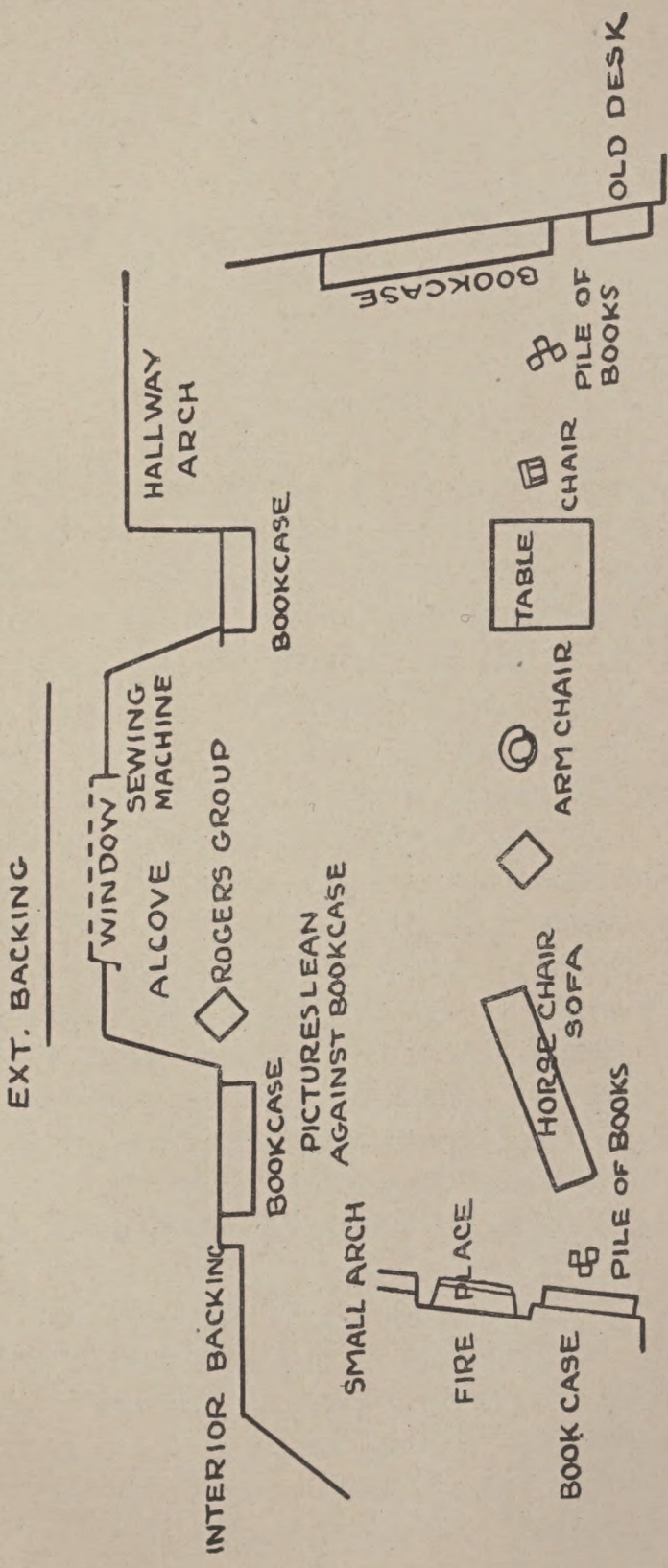
ACT I—*Library of the Parsonage.*

ACT II—*Living room in MRS. STANLEY'S cottage.*

ACT III—*Same scene.*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MR. SANBORN, 65.
PROFESSOR GIDDINGS, 40.
ROBERT STANLEY, 18 *Mrs. Stanley's son*
SYDNEY JOHNSON, 18 *Robert's Chum*
JIMMY, 18 *Sydney's Friend*
CHARLIE, 18 *Sydney's Friend*
MRS. STANLEY, 38 *Sanborn's Daughter*
LUCY, 18 *Mrs. Stanley's Daughter*
MRS. NEWCOMB, 60 .. } *Members of the late*
MRS. PETERS, 55 } *Rev. Stanley's Church*
ALICE, 18 } *Friends of Lucy's*
MARY, 18 }



ONLY 38
 ACT I

ONLY 38

ACT I

SCENE: *Library of the Parsonage. Fireplace R. Writing-table and chair in front of it. Black walnut bookcases around the walls. Great gaps are shown in the shelves where books have been removed. In the middle of the floor is a big heap of books that have been taken from the shelves. Against the writing-desk, several framed pictures, just taken from the walls, are standing. On a small table at rear, is a "Roger's Group"—"Evening Prayer"—a small boy kneeling at his mother's knee, her hand upraised in benediction above his head. One picture still hangs upon the wall. It is a picture of an old man—a print more or less suggestive of New England ecclesiastical history. There is also a sofa R. covered with horse-hair. The furnishings are all of that stiff mid-Victorian sort which have done so much to make vice attractive.*

AT RISE: *Discovered: MRS. STANLEY. Though she is only 38 and her hair is still yellow, she nevertheless conveys an impression of middle age. She is dressed in black, neatly enough, but with not the least attempt to make the most of whatever physical advantages she possesses. She*

wears a dust cap, in one hand she holds a dust-pan—in the other a dust-brush. She sighs a little as she glances from the book-cases to the heap of books and back again. Suddenly the door bell rings. She starts and hesitates, then she drops the dust-brush into the scrap basket. For a moment she can't think what to do with the dust-pan; first she puts it on the desk, then thinks that won't do, and hastily thrusts the dust-pan under one of the rag rugs that decorate, in a manner of speaking, the floor. This done, she leaves the room by the door at rear, L.C. She is heard greeting her visitors in the hall and presently returns with them. The two newcomers are both women. One of them, MRS. NEWCOMB, is a tall, angular, pious, vinegary female of 60. Her companion, MRS. PETERS, is short, stout and amiable though constantly dominated by her more aggressive friend.

MR. NEWCOMB. We just dropped in, Sister Stanley, to see if we could be any help to ye about yer movin'.

MRS. PETERS. Yes—yes—about your movin'.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, now I call that right kind of you, Mrs. Newcomb—and you too, Mrs. Peters.

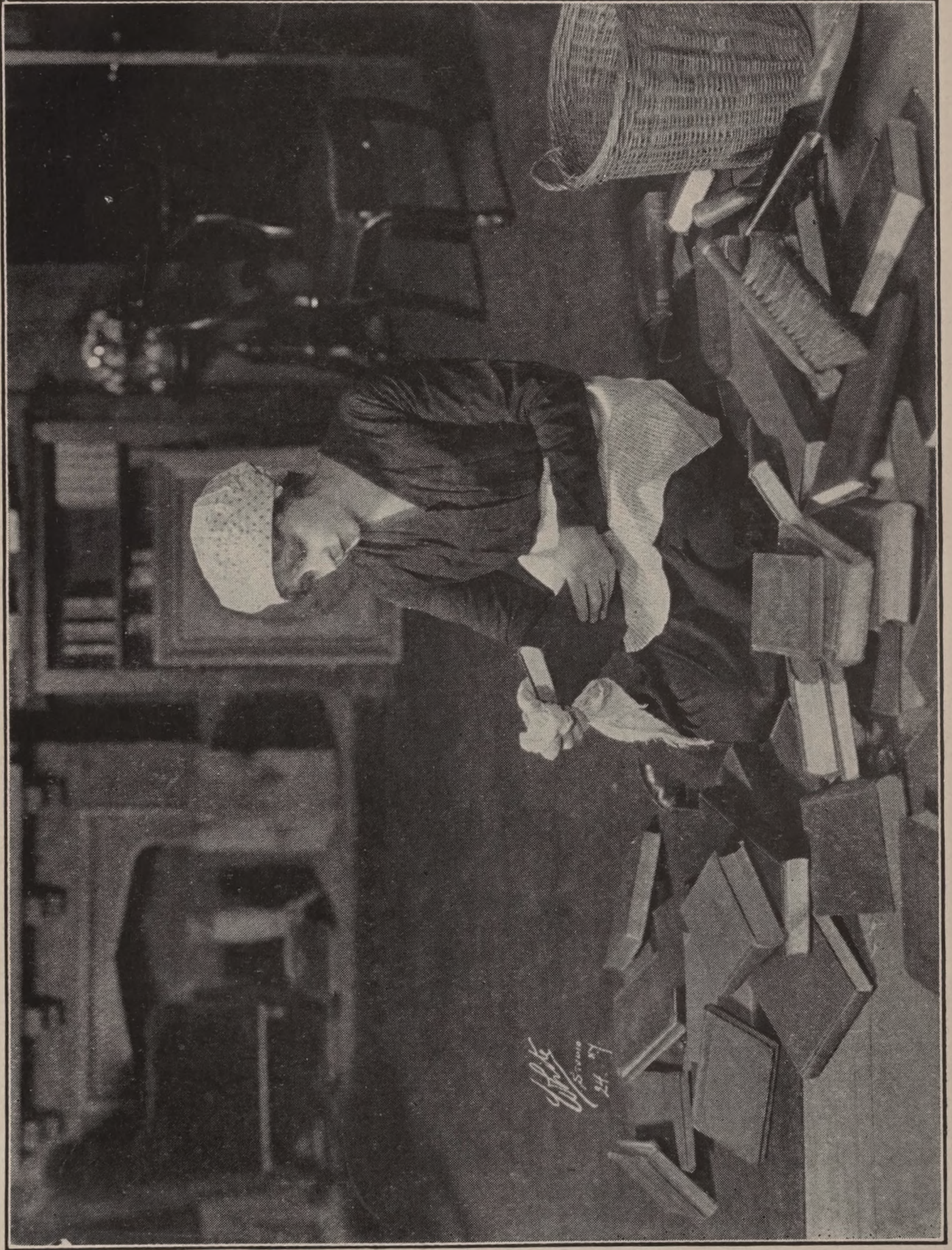
MRS. NEWCOMB. (*Deprecatingly*) No—no—not a bit—not a bit.

MRS. PETERS. No, not a bit.

MRS. NEWCOMB. No. You're just a poor lone widder woman an' there's no knowin' just when it might please an all-wise Providence to afflict us likewise.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I'm not quite alone. I have the twins, you know.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Well, after all, they're nothin'



but children and children's so thoughtless. I s'pose they can't help it.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, they're very good to their mother. But do sit down—please do.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Well, I don't care if I do—just for a minute. (*They sit down.*)

MRS. PETERS Just for a minute.

MRS. NEWCOMB. What you doin' with the books? (*Indicating the heap on the floor.*)

MRS. PETERS. Yes—what you doin' with the books?

MRS. STANLEY. Why, I've just been—well—sorting them out.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Sorting 'em out?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—you know I haven't much room in that little house I'm moving to next week and I've got to give some of the books away.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Give the Reverend Mr. Stanley's books away?

MRS. PETERS. Give them away?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I hate to do it, of course, but what else can I do with them?

MRS. NEWCOMB. Who ye goin' to give 'em to?

MRS. PETERS. Yes, who ye goin' to give 'em to?

MRS. STANLEY. Why, I had thought of giving them to the Public Library.

MRS. NEWCOMB. (*Goes to the heap and picks one up*) Humph! They're terrible dusty.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, aren't they?

MRS. NEWCOMB. (*Rising*) Give us some dust-rags, and I and Sister Peters'll help ye.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, would you?

MRS. NEWCOMB. Might's well, long's we're here.

MRS. PETERS. Yes—long's we're here.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Picks up a big dust-rag from the desk—tears it into three pieces and distributes them*) Well, I must say that's right kind of you.

MRS. NEWCOMB. (*Going to work*) Allus try to keep busy. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.

MRS. PETERS. Yes—for idle hands to do.

MRS. NEWCOMB. (*Holding up a huge book*) "Cragin's Concordance of the Holy Scriptures"—hum! Always wanted a Concordance.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, Mrs. Newcomb, I'd be so pleased if you'd accept it as a gift.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Oh—no—no—really now——

MRS. STANLEY. As a—well, as a sort of keepsake of my husband. I'm sure he'd like it so much.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Well, if you've got your mind all made up, you don't want it——

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes, I have.

MRS. NEWCOMB. I s'pose I might's well git it as the Public Library.

MRS. STANLEY. And you must take something, too, Mrs. Peters—any book you like.

MRS. PETERS. D'yer s'pose you got any sermons by the Rev. Dr. Charles H. Spalding?

MRS. STANLEY. I think so. Let's see.

MRS. PETERS. That's Dr. Spaulding's picture, ain't it?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Pretty man, wasn't he?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes—here's one. Would you like that?

MRS. PETERS. (*Taking the book*) Yes, Mis' Stanley, I certainly would. I heard him preach once. I was on my weddin' trip to Boston. I can remember the text right now.

MRS. STANLEY. My husband was a great admirer of Dr. Spalding's sermons.

MRS. NEWCOMB. (*As the women go on dusting the books*) Goin' to come kind of hard on you to pay rent, I should guess.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

MRS. NEWCOMB. After livin' rent free all these years in the parsonage.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—these last twelve years.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Still, we got to have some place for the new minister.

MRS. PETERS. Yes, for the new minister.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I can't complain. It was mighty kind of the church to let me stay on here these last few months.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Good thing your boy'n girl's just finishin' their schoolin'.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, I'm grateful for that, too. I had hoped, if their father lived, but no matter—they've had more schooling than their mother ever had.

MRS. NEWCOMB. They'd ought to be a great help to ye, one way'n another. Though I must say—
(*She sneezes violently.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I'm so sorry, I'm afraid they haven't been dusted recently.

MRS. NEWCOMB. (*Crosses to R.*) 'Tain't no matter, only when I get sneezin' sometimes I can't stop. Sometimes I go right on for half a day. (*She sneezes again.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Perhaps you'd better stop dusting.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Lord, no! Don't do me no harm. Just kind of annoyin'. (*She sneezes again.*) Does seem strange the Lord should have seen fit to take Mr. Stanley to Himself. He wasn't so very old.

MRS. STANLEY. Only sixty-one.

MRS. NEWCOMB. You was his second wife, wasn't you?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Hm! Can't help wonderin' whether he's met his first wife again and what he said to her about you.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Rather shocked*) Mrs. Newcomb!

MRS. NEWCOMB. I s'pose I do git some queer ideas now an' then—— (*Door bell rings.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Excuse me till I see who it is.

(*She goes out. The two women go on dusting. MRS. NEWCOMB sneezes again.*)

MRS. PETERS. Mis' Stanley's bearin' up well. Wonder how she's goin' to git along?

MRS. NEWCOMB. Well, she's young. I can remember her when she fust come here—pretty young thing, she was—just a leetle might too pretty for a minister's wife, if you ask me. Not that the Reverend Stanley ever noticed that, I guess. But others did.

MRS. PETERS. Mis' Newcomb! You don't mean——?

MRS. NEWCOMB. Oh—no—no—she's a good woman—just a mite triflin', that's all.

(*MRS. STANLEY returns with MR. SANBORN, a slim little man of some sixty odd years—a farmer who to-day is wearing the store clothes that men of his kind put on when they go to the nearest metropolis for a visit.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Mrs. Newcomb, this is my father, Mr. Sanborn.

SANBORN. How'd'ye do, ma'am. I hope I see you well.

(*MRS. NEWCOMB answers with a resounding sneeze.*)

MRS. STANLEY. This is Mrs. Peters, father.

MRS. PETERS. Pleased to meet ye.

SANBORN. Mrs. Peters, I hope you're feelin' as well as you look, ma'am.

MRS. PETERS. (*Affected by this gallantry*) Oh, I'm fine, I thank you.

SANBORN. Your friend seems to have an awful cold.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Oh, no, I ain't got any cold. I just got a way of sneezin' sometimes. I dunno what does it, but the fact of the matter is—I——
(*She concludes her remarks with another sneeze.*)

MRS. PETERS. P'r'aps we'd better be goin', Matilda.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, please don't hurry.

MRS. NEWCOMB. Might's well, I guess. I'll probably sneeze all day. Let us know if we can do anythin', Mis' Stanley. Could I have my book now? Good afternoon, Mr. Sanborn. Hope to see you again some time when I ain't—— (*Sneezes.*)

SANBORN. Thank ye, ma'am.

MRS. PETERS. I think I used to know your sister, Jennie, Mr. Sanborn. She'n I went to school together up in—— (*Another vast sneeze from MRS. NEWCOMB.*) She'n I went to school together when we was—both girls up in—— (*Another sneeze from MRS. NEWCOMB drowns her.*) I guess it ain't any use tryin' to talk.

SANBORN. (*To MRS. NEWCOMB*) Why don't ye try rubbin' yer nose?

MRS. NEWCOMB. Don't do a bit o' good. 'Sall right for some, I s'pose, but when I get started sneezin' I jest got to sneeze myself out. Just seems like I——

(*Again the fit takes her. Her eyes are now nearly blinded with tears. Helplessly she beckons to MRS. PETERS and the two take themselves off, followed by MRS. STANLEY. The explosion continues until the outside door finally closes behind the sufferer. Left to himself, the old man*)

prowls around the room for a moment, taking a special interest in "The Evening Prayer"—apparently a slightly humorous interest. In a moment or two his daughter returns.)

MRS. STANLEY. Well, father, anything wrong at home?

SANBORN. No—no—everything's bout as common.

MRS. STANLEY. Why didn't you write me you were coming?

SANBORN. Didn't know it myself. Had to run up to Hampshire on some business an' jus' took a notion I'd come down here an' see how you're gettin' along.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, we're all right.

SANBORN. Movin' next week—be ye?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—next week.

SANBORN. Come kind of hard to leave the old shack, won't it?

MRS. STANLEY. It'll come kind of hard to have to pay rent for the new shack.

SANBORN. (*Sits couch R. MRS. STANLEY rises from books c.*) Yes, I s'pose so. Nellie, sit down a minute, I want to talk to you. (*He sits down on the sofa and nurses one knee.*) Nellie, just how're you fixed?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Sits armchair R.C.*) I've got the two thousand dollars from the life insurance policy and three hundred and eighty-five dollars in cash.

SANBORN. Anything else?

MRS. STANLEY. No—that's all.

SANBORN. Two hundred and eighty-five?

MRS. STANLEY. Three hundred and eighty-five, father.

SANBORN. Well, if you put that with the insurance money in a savings bank, that'll bring you about

ninety dollars a year interest. That ain't a whole lot for a family of three.

MRS. STANLEY. No—it isn't—thirty dollars apiece.

SANBORN. What ye goin' to do?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I'll get along somehow. Bob is going to get a job with the telephone company keeping books and Lucy wants to teach school—oh, we'll manage somehow.

SANBORN. Of course you can always come home.

MRS. STANLEY. I know that, father, dear. But I'd rather keep my own little roof over our heads, if I can.

SANBORN. Don't blame ye a mite. 'Tain't very gay at the old place—not since your mother died—a good woman, your mother was—but serious—serious—and pious. Terrible worried about my soul, she was.

MRS. STANLEY. She never gave up hope for you, did she?

SANBORN. No—allus kep' on a-prayin' that the Holy Spirit would convict me o' sin.

MRS. STANLEY. But it never has.

SANBORN. No—I guess I'm still un-re-gen-erate—I must confess I still like a little game o' high, low, Jack now an' then—and a little cider, and if it's the least might hard—well, it don't annoy me much. I guess I'm just naturally predestined for Hell-fire.

MRS. STANLEY. Don't you go to church at all, any more?

SANBORN. Yes—now'n then. When I want to take a good nap. Don't s'pose you got any cider in the house, hev ye?

MRS. STANLEY. Father! And me a minister's widow.

SANBORN. By gum! Can't seem to get used to that. Funny thing your marryin' the Reverend Eben—old 'nough to be your father, he was.

MRS. STANLEY. He was a good man, father.

SANBORN. Oh, yes—so was Methusaleh, I guess. Yes, he was a good man—but, gosh! He must have made things dull fer ye.

MRS. STANLEY. Father!

SANBORN. Shucks! He's dead an' gone. What'd yer mother used to call it? Gathered to his fathers. I never could understand it. You was allus such a bright, happy little thing—allus singin' around the house—and then you go an' marry this solemn old feller—well, anyway your mother was pleased.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, mother was pleased.

SANBORN. Hope she still is. Well, I s'pose you'll be marryin' again soon.

MRS. STANLEY. Father!

SANBORN. Ain't no law again it that I know of.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Rises. Crosses to table L.C.*) I wish you wouldn't talk about it.

SANBORN. (*Rises and goes to books c.*) All right. All right. Don't get het up. Where's the children?

MRS. STANLEY. They're not home from school yet.

SANBORN. Nice children you've got, Nellie.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, they're dears—both of them.

SANBORN. Ain't much alike though, not fer twins. What ye goin' to do with them things?

MRS. STANLEY. I'm going to give them to the Public Library.

SANBORN. (*Picking a book up from the heap*) Well, that's a good place for 'em, I guess. Sermons, ain't they?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, a good many of them.

SANBORN. Always did wonder how a parson could grind out a sermon every week. An' now I know they don't. They steal 'em from other parsons.

MRS. STANLEY. Father, you mustn't say that. My husband would never have done that.



W. S. 21. NY.

SANBORN. Then what in time——

MRS. STANLEY. He used to read other men's sermons just for inspiration. You really mustn't——

SANBORN. All right. All right. Don't get het up about it. I s'pose the Reverend Eben wrote a power o' sermons himself.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes.

SANBORN. Where be they?

MRS. STANLEY. They're down cellar in a barrel.

SANBORN. Forty years o' preaching down cellar in a barrel! Hum! Kind of makes a man scratch his head, don't it?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, father, his life wasn't all sermons—visiting the sick—comforting the bereaved—oh—he did a great deal of good.

SANBORN. Well, I hope so; I hope so. An' besides that he left his widder two children an' ninety dollars a year. Well, the Lord don't overpay his servants. (*Crosses to R.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (L.) There are better things in life than money, father.

SANBORN. (R.U.) So there be, Nellie, so there be, and a darn good thing for you, too, eh? (*Indicating the Rogers Group.*) What ye goin' to do with that thing?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, you mean the family group?

SANBORN. That what ye call it?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Crosses to model up R.*) I s'pose I got to take it with me.

SANBORN. Don't ye like it?

MRS. STANLEY. I hate it.

SANBORN. Do ye?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Crosses to R.U.*) Yes—it's so—so fearfully ugly.

SANBORN. Well, well—ye can give it away, can't ye?

MRS. STANLEY. No, I'm afraid not. You see, the church gave it to Mr. Stanley on his tenth anni-

versary as pastor. No, it wouldn't do. As long as I live in this town, I'll have to keep it. Oh, how I hate it! (*She gives it an angry flip with her dust-cloth. Crosses down L.C.*)

SANBORN. Tut! Tut! Tut! Nellie. Let not your angry passions rise. (*A pause.*) Nellie, you know what I'm goin' to do? I'm goin' to smoke a seegar. (*He takes one carefully from his pocket.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (L.C.) All right, father.

SANBORN. Is that the way ye take it?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Busy again about the dusting*) How did you think I'd take it?

SANBORN. I kinda thought ye'd kick. The Reverend Eben was terrible down on terbaccer.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—he was—but I rather like the smell of it.

SANBORN. Do ye, now?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—that was the only nice thing about being sick. Old Dr. Chase used to smell so of cigar smoke. (*Crosses down L.*)

SANBORN. (*Sits armchair R.C.*) Gosh! Beats all how little a feller can know about his own flesh an' blood. Nellie, you'n me's got to git better acquainted.

MRS. STANLEY. Father!

SANBORN. Well, we would a been too, only—honest Injun. Reverend Eben—well, I never could come into this house without kind of gettin' a chill.

MRS. STANLEY. Father!

SANBORN. Well, you can't tell me, Nellie, 't you ain't felt like that yourself now an' then.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Crosses to SANBORN, R.C.*) Father, you mustn't go on like this. Mr. Stanley was a good man, whatever his faults may have been—and what's more, he was my husband and the father of my children. (*Crosses to R.I.*)

SANBORN. Yep, I s'pose so—— (*Lights match.*) But somehow or other he used to freeze me up. I

never could act natural nowheres around him. (*He strikes a match, lights the cigar and blows out a cloud of smoke. MRS. STANLEY goes up R. and around behind to R.C.*) Like it?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—it's very pleasant.

SANBORN. (*Looking at the band on the cigar*) Ought to be. That's a Lillian Russell. Actress, ain't she?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—I believe so.

SANBORN. I'd kind of like to see her some time.

MRS. STANLEY. Why, father! (*Puts books on table L.C. Goes to father, R.C.*)

SANBORN. Oh, I know—I suppose I'm nothin' but an' old hayseed that's s'posed to be thinkin' about nothin' but cattle an' hay an' plowin' an' milk-in' from one year's end to another.

MRS. STANLEY. Nonsense, father. What——

SANBORN. Well, I've been settin' round the old house night times now an' I've been doin' a lot o' thinking. I'm gettin' to be an old man. It kind-a grinds me to think I ain't really seen a darned thing.

MRS. STANLEY. Father, what's got into you?

SANBORN. Well, I ain't. There's times when I feel like I want to do some travelin'. I want to see Lillian Russell, San Francisco, Billy Sunday, Madison Square Garden, William Jennings Bryan, Niagry Falls, Doctor Parkhurst, Charlie Chaplin, Palm Beach, Broadway, Maude Adams, Theda Bara, Ethel Barrymore, an' I don't know what.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Quite overcome by this outbreak*) Father!

SANBORN. Darned if I don't.

MRS. STANLEY. Father I never heard you talk like this in all my life.

SANBORN. No—nor nobody else, neither. Well, I'll take it out in talk, I s'pose. I'm too old to git giddy. But if I was twenty years younger though I'll be darned if I wouldn't shake a leg an' take

a squint at all the glory an' shame o' this old world.

MRS. STANLEY. Father, what's happened to you?

SANBORN. Not a thing—not a blame thing. That's what I'm hollerin' about. Nothin' ever happened to me. Nor to you neither. Don't you never git kind of sick of it?

MRS. STANLEY. Well, what if I do. We must all strive to do our duty in that station in life to which it has pleased Providence to call us.

SANBORN. (*Scornfully*) Echoes from the Reverend Eben. (*Rises.*) Ain't ye got any spunk?

MRS. STANLEY. Spunk?

SANBORN. Yes—ain't ye got any git up an' git?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Crosses R.*) Father, it's wrong of you to talk to me like this.

SANBORN. Is it?

MRS. STANLEY. You know what I am. I'm a minister's widow and the mother of two children. There was a time when I might have been something else—a trained nurse, or a teacher, or something—but now? I shall never be anything else—I've got to scratch along as I am, and I don't hardly see how I'm going to do that, and for you to come putting ideas into my head—like this—well, it isn't— (*Sits in chair R.C.*) It isn't kind. (*She begins to get a little tearful.*)

SANBORN. Well, I'm sorry, Nellie. (*Tries to comfort her.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, you don't mean any harm. I suppose it's just because I *have* had thoughts of another kind of life than the one I've lived that I feel like this. I've put those thoughts away—down deep in my heart—because I've had to—and the years have gone by and now I'm a middle-aged woman with two grown children—and pretty soon my hair'll be gray. Well, I made my choice—I've no right to complain—and I don't.

SANBORN. Well, pretty nice children you've got, anyway.

MRS. STANLEY. They're darlings—no mother ever had sweeter children than my Robert and Lucy—only I wish their names were different.

SANBORN. (*Sits chair R. of table L.C.*) Do ye now?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, I wanted to call them Paul and Virginia, but their father wouldn't have it. He said it would be too romantic. Of course, that's just why I wanted it.

SANBORN. Sure.

MRS. STANLEY. I suppose it's silly—but I've thought if they'd been named Paul and Virginia, they wouldn't be quite so matter of fact.

SANBORN. Uh?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, life's a very serious matter to them—even at their age. They make me mind my p's and q's, I can tell you.

SANBORN. Scared of 'em, be ye?

MRS. STANLEY. Sometimes, just a little. They never let me forget the dignity of my position. A minister's widow! Oh!

SANBORN. I s'pose they think you're 'bout a hundred years old.

MRS. STANLEY. Sometimes I *seem* that old to myself.

SANBORN. Gosh, if that's how you feel, I'd ought to be ashamed I don't go out and git myself chloroformed. (*Puts cigar on table. Takes wallet out.*) Nellie, I've got a little surprise for you.

MRS. STANLEY. What is it, father? (*Children are heard in the hall.*)

SANBORN. That's the children now I guess.

(*Enter BOB and LUCY. They are a pair of wholesome, good-looking, rather serious minded,*

eighteen-year-olds, in considerable danger of growing up to be prigs.)

LUCY. Why, Grandpa! *(She gives him a kiss.)*

BOB. Hello, Grandpa!

SANBORN. Well, young folks, how be ye?

LUCY. We're all right, thanks.

SANBORN. Here, let's have a look at ye. Darned if ye ain't growed about a foot since I see ye last. *(Turns to BOB.)* And Rob—how's the muscle, Robbie? *(He feels of the boy's muscle in his arm.)*

BOB. Oh, all right, I guess.

SANBORN. Pretty near through school, I s'pose?

BOB. Yes, only a week more to graduation.

SANBORN. I s'pose you've took 'bout all the prizes between you?

BOB. We don't know yet.

MRS. STANLEY. They won't know till graduation day, father.

SANBORN. Goin' to speak a piece?

BOB. Lucy's going to read an essay.

SANBORN. That so? What about?

LUCY. The poetry of Robert Burns.

SANBORN. My gracious! Robert Burns! *(To MRS. STANLEY.)* That's another one o' them see-gar names, ain't it? *(Goes up and down to L. of table L.C. Sits.)*

LUCY. *(Crosses to R. to mother)* Mother, you've gone and taken all those books down and you promised you wouldn't till we could help you.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I thought I might as well make a beginning.

LUCY. You see, Grandpa, we can't turn our backs on her a minute. *(Sits chair R. of table L.C.)*

BOB. *(Coming down c.)* Mother, you really mustn't. You'll tire yourself all out.

MRS. STANLEY. Don't worry. There's plenty for you to do. Suppose you start in by taking down

that picture. (*She indicates the old man's picture.*)

BOB. Oh, all right! (*Gets up on chair.*)

LUCY. Be careful, Bob, don't drop it.

BOB. Drop it? Why would I drop it?

LUCY. You're so careless.

BOB. (*Descending with the picture*) Is that so?

MRS. STANLEY. I was wondering, Bob, if Mr. Evans wouldn't like it to hang on the vestry wall.

LUCY. Mother, you're not going to give it away!

MRS. STANLEY. (*Guiltily*) Well, I——

BOB. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. I had thought perhaps it would be nice to give it to the Sunday School.

LUCY. Mother! When you know how much father thought of it.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, of course——

BOB. Why, mother, father's had it ever since he was a minister.

LUCY. It used to hang in his room at the Theological Seminary.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, very well—if you feel that way about it.

LUCY. Oh, we do—oh, we do.

BOB. Yes, of course, we do. Yes, I think we ought to keep it.

SANBORN. (*Rises, crosses to couch R.C. to get hat*) I guess I'll just take a little walk down Main Street.

MRS. STANLEY. Surely you'll be back to supper, father?

SANBORN. Oh, yes, I'll be back—that is, if you've got room fer me.

MRS. STANLEY. Of course we have—for as long as you can stay

SANBORN. Well, t'won't be more'n over night. Look here, young folks, as I come down through Hampshire I see by the billboards, Barnum & Bail-

ey's Circus's goin' to be here to-morrow. Now, what ye say we make up a little party, eh?

(The twins look at their mother and then at each other. MRS. STANLEY sits armchair R.C.)

LUCY. *(After a long pause of disapproval)* Thank you very much, Grandpa, but I don't think we can.

SANBORN. Oh, come now—why not? *(L.C.)*

BOB. *(L.)* Why, you see, the fact is, Grandpa, we've only got a few more days of school left and—well——

LUCY. *(R. of L.C.)* Well, we haven't the time.

SANBORN. Say, you're a couple of wonders, you be. If anybody'd a-said circus to me when I was a boy, well, he'd-a got me, school or no school. Nellie, you an' the Reverend Eben certainly brung 'em up good an' proper. School, eh? Well, I'm a son-of-a-gun. *(Chuckling to himself. SANBORN exits.)*

LUCY. Circus, indeed!

BOB. Grandpa's awfully funny, mother! He doesn't seem to remember father was a minister. We'd look nice at a circus now, wouldn't we? Why, everybody in town would talk about it.

MRS. STANLEY. I went to a circus once.

BOB AND LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Long before you were born, my dears.

LUCY. Did father know?

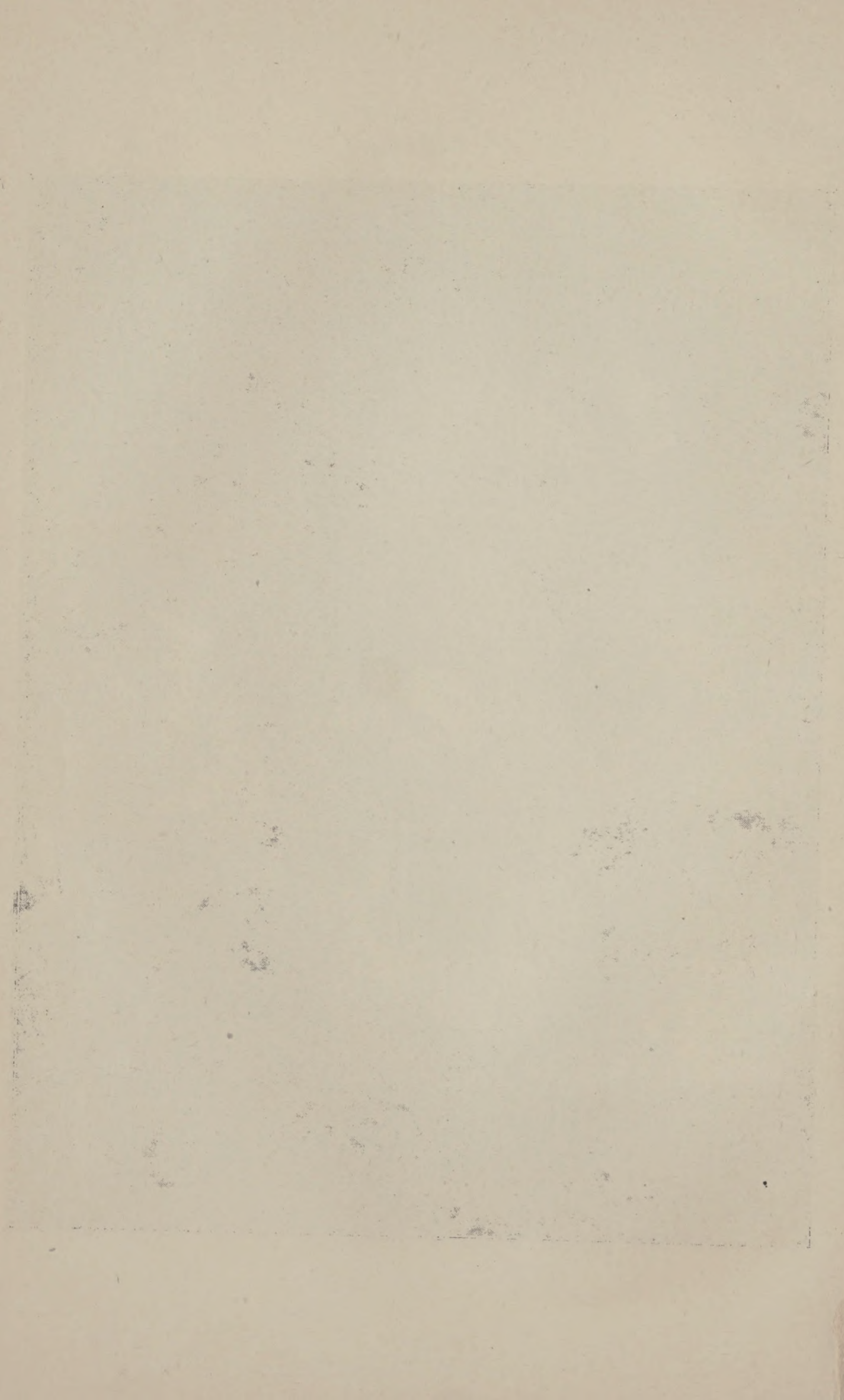
MRS. STANLEY. No, indeed. It was before I'd ever seen him. But I remember it as well as if it were last week. My! Those clowns were funny. *(She smiles reminiscently.)*

BOB. *(Disapprovingly, crosses down in front of table L.C. to L.)* Hum! Well, I guess I better tell Jim Green to come over and take these books over



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to the new house. (*Indicates the heap of books on the floor.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (*Rises*) Not these, dear.

BOB. Why not?

MRS. STANLEY. We haven't room for them.

LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I'm going to give them to the Public Library.

BOB. Father's books?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear.

LUCY. Give away father's books?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Exasperated at last*) My goodness, children! They are not sacred merely because they were your father's. You might as well say I shouldn't give away his old clothes! Don't be silly!

BOB. But, mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Now, if you can find one book in that heap that either of you think you'll ever read, you may keep it. Not one of them has ever been opened since your father died. Now, I'm going to see about supper—we'll have it a little early to-night, and then we'll take a walk with grandpa down along the river. It's a lovely there these June evenings.

LUCY. But, mother, it's Wednesday night.

MRS. STANLEY. Huh!

BOB. Prayer-meeting night.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Dashed*) Oh!

LUCY. Mother, you haven't been to prayer-meeting in two weeks. People will begin to think it's very queer.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, I suppose they will. (*She exits.*)

LUCY. (*Crosses and closes door R.*) What has come over mother?

BOB. Oh, I don't know. Something's wrong. Maybe it's grandpa. He always seems to set her off some way or other.

LUCY. (L.C.) Father didn't like grandpa very much.

BOB. (R.C.) Did you ever hear him say that?

LUCY. No—but I could see it. Oh, I suppose it's just our breaking up here—where she's been so happy all those years.

BOB. Yes, I suppose so.

LUCY. Mother's an old dear.

BOB. Sure, she's an old peach.

LUCY. We've got to be pretty good to her.

BOB. Well, I suppose so—after all she's done for us.

LUCY. She said something this morning about getting some kind of work herself.

BOB. She did!

LUCY. Yes.

BOB. Mother work! She never has yet and I guess she's not going to start now. Not if I know it. I'm going to take care of mother.

LUCY. And I'm going to help.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Appearing at the door*) Lucy, will you run down to the store and get a pint of oysters? Your grandpa's very fond of oysters. (*BOB goes up c.*)

LUCY. Of course. (*She exits.*)

MRS. STANLEY. And as for you, Bob—

BOB. (*Coming down c.R.*) Look here, Mother, what's this Lucy tells me about you going to get some work?

MRS. STANLEY. (c.) Well, Bob, we've got to live, you know.

BOB. But I'm going to take care of you, Mother. You work. Why, the idea! You've never worked in all your life.

MRS. STANLEY. (*With a queer sort of smile.*) No, dear, no.

BOB. And I guess you're not going to begin now.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, the truth is, I thought per-

haps I might like to do something besides cook and sweep and make beds and wash and iron and dust and scrub.

BOB. Mother! What would people say? You, a minister's widow.

MRS. STANLEY. Bob, sometimes I think if you call me a minister's widow again, I shall scream.

BOB. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, I shall.

BOB. But that's what you are, aren't you?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, but that's not all I am.

BOB. Of course not. You're my mother.

MRS. STANLEY. Robert Wesley Stanley—will you go and mow the lawn or won't you?

BOB. (*Wonderingly*) Why—er—of course.

(*He exits, entirely failing to comprehend her mood. As BOB exits R. SANBORN enters L.C.*)

MRS. STANLEY. My goodness, Father! I nearly lost my temper then.

SANBORN. What's the matter, Nellie?

MRS. STANLEY. Bob called me a minister's widow again.

SANBORN. (*Puts hat on table L.C.*) Well, you be one, ain't ye?

MRS. STANLEY. Now you're doing it. You don't know how I hate that phrase.

SANBORN. All right—all right. Don't get het up. Ain't nothin' in gettin' het up.

MRS. STANLEY. You didn't go far, did you?

SANBORN. No.

(*The sound of the lawn mower is heard.*)

MRS. STANLEY. I've got to go and cook supper. Sit down and make yourself as comfortable as you can on this Methodist sofa. (*Starts to go L.*)

SANBORN. Now wait a minute, Nellie—wait a minute.

MRS. STANLEY. (R.C.) What is it, Father?

SANBORN. (C.) I been thinkin' I used to hear you say as how you was goin' to give that boy'n girl of yourn a college education.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes—perhaps, if Mr. Stanley had lived, we could have managed it somehow, but now—well, it was only a dream.

SANBORN. Feel kind of bad about it, don't ye?

MRS. STANLEY. A little.

SANBORN. (*Sits chair R. of table L.C.*) Sinclair College is a good college, ain't it?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes—one of the best.

SANBORN. It's co-co-co—they take boys an' girls, *too*, don't they?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—it's co-educational.

SANBORN. Yeah—that's what I said.

MRS. STANLEY. What of it?

SANBORN. (*Rises*) Do you hear any sleigh-bells? Did I come down the chimbley when I come in?

MRS. STANLEY. What are you talking about?

SANBORN. I'm talkin' about Santa Claus.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, you talk as if you'd found some cider somewhere.

SANBORN. (*Taking out wallet*) Set that down there, Nellie. I'm goin' to give you that little surprise. (*Sits R. of table L.C.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (L.C.) What is it, Father?

SANBORN. Nellie, d'ye remember that grove o' big white pines up on Monument Mountain back of the old house?

MRS. STANLEY. Of course I do, I got lost there once.

SANBORN. Well, I've sold 'em.

MRS. STANLEY. Sold them?

SANBORN. Just take a squint at this. (*He pro-*

duces a wallet and from it a check which he hands her.)

MRS. STANLEY. (*Reading*) "Pay to the order of Nathaniel T. Sanborn, Twenty Thousand dollars." Father!

SANBORN. Pretty good, ain't it?

MRS. STANLEY. Twenty Thousand Dollars! Oh, I'm so glad.

SANBORN. Yeah! So be I.

MRS. STANLEY. Father, this will make you comfortable for life! Why, you need never worry again as long as you live.

SANBORN. Sinclair College is a good college, ain't it?

MRS. STANLEY. Father, what do you mean?

SANBORN. It's co—they take boys *and* girls, too, don't they?

MRS. STANLEY. Father, you don't mean—you can't mean——

SANBORN. Guess I do.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh! Father! (*She sinks to the sofa and begins to cry.*)

SANBORN. (*Rises*) There—there! Now, Nellie—don't take on so. You don't have to send 'em if ye don't want to.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I do—I do.

SANBORN. Then what in Sam Hill—— Say, you're goin' along, too—ye know.

MRS. STANLEY. Me—go to college?

SANBORN. Well, mebbe not to college, but as *fur* as college, anyhow. I ain't figurin' on sendin' them twins away from ye, exactly. Not if I know it.

MRS. STANLEY. What do you mean?

SANBORN. I guess they's houses to rent up there, ain't they?

MRS. STANLEY. But, Father, it'll cost such a lot.

SANBORN. Well, I got it, I guess—an' more too.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Begins to cry*) Oh, Father! I just can't stand it—you don't know what it means to me.

SANBORN. P'r'aps I do.

MRS. SANBORN. It's the dearest wish of my life—and now—to think it's come true. Oh!

(*Enter LUCY.*)

LUCY. Here are the oysters, Mother.

(*Enter BOB.*)

BOB. Lawn's all mowed, Mother—and I'm hungry.

LUCY. (*Seeing her mother dissolved in tears*) Mother!

BOB. Mother!

SANBORN. Oh, she's all right.

BOB. Mother, what is the matter with you?

SANBORN. Now, don't git excited. She's all right, she's just had a little good news, an' she ain't used to it.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *The scene is the living-room in the little cottage in the college town whither MRS. STANLEY and the twins have moved in the interval between Acts I and II.*

It is furnished with the furniture of Act I and its general atmosphere is that of the modified dismal. The paper on the wall is one of the few cheerful notes. That of course was there when they rented the house. On the wall still hangs Dr. Spalding's picture. The protest of the twins brought it with the family. Also "Evening Prayer" stands on a table in one corner. On another table is the family album and a big Bible. Bookcase at c. rear. Entrance from hall at rear L.C. Window at L. looking to street. Door at R.3.E into dining-room, kitchen, etc. The same horse-hair sofa R. Table c. Chairs L. Fireplace and mantel R.2.E.

AT RISE: *The twins come in with their arms full of text-books—just returned from afternoon lectures.*

LUCY. *(As she comes in, calls)* Mother—oh, Mother! Wonder where she is. *(She goes to door R. in search of mother.)*

BOB. *(Goes into hall and calls upstairs)* Mother!

LUCY. *(Heard calling off R.)* Mother! Mother! *(No answer—LUCY comes back to room.)* Where on earth do you suppose she is. She's always at home at this hour.

BOB. Search me. But I saw her this afternoon.

LUCY. Saw her? Where?

BOB. Going into the library.

LUCY. Are you sure?

BOB. Yes, pretty sure. Why not?

LUCY. Oh, nothing.

BOB. What are you driving at?

LUCY. Bob, mother's up to something.

BOB. Up to something.

LUCY. Yes—she's doing something queer.

BOB. Say—what d'you mean?

LUCY. Well, yesterday morning I came home. Mother wasn't here and pretty soon she came in and—she kind of acted flustered at seeing me. Course I asked her where she'd been and she—well, she—she put me off.

BOB. Wouldn't tell?

LUCY. No—just said it didn't—really matter.

BOB. Well, it didn't, did it?

LUCY. No-o. I only asked because—well—you know the way you do—but I thought it was kind of queer and she—well—she looked kind of guilty.

BOB. Guilty! Look here, Sis, you can't talk about mother like that.

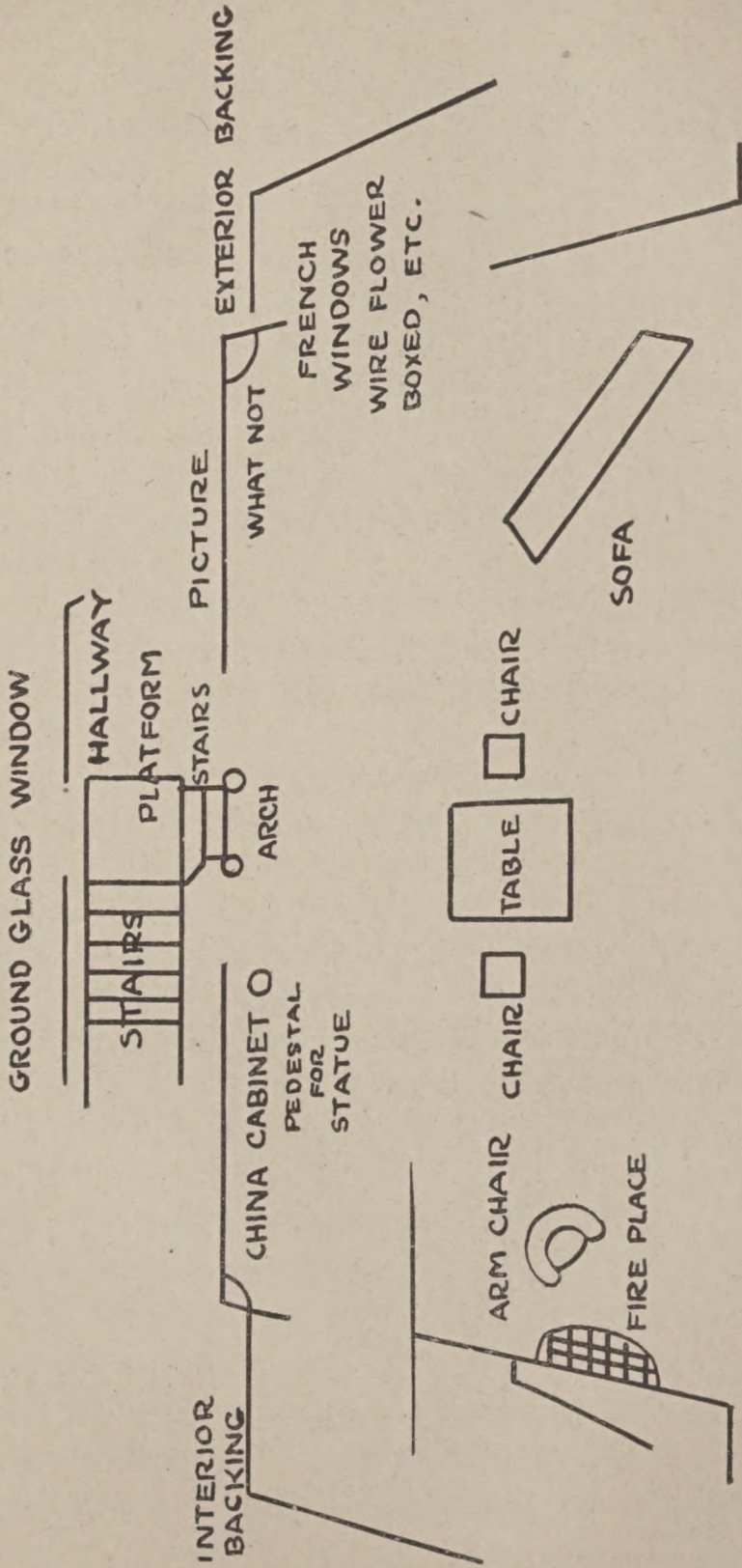
LUCY. Oh, you silly. I don't mean she looked like a criminal—but—well, she acted as if she'd been doing something queer.

BOB. Well, if you're not just like a woman. The minute you don't tell a woman everything she wants to know, she thinks you're queer. Oh! I know 'em! I know 'em! Who was that girl I saw you with coming out of Callaway this morning? (BOB goes L. and lies down on sofa with a text-book.)

LUCY. Oh—I guess you mean Mary Hadley—she's from Brockton. Isn't she pretty?

BOB. (With assumed indifference) Oh, I don't know.

LUCY. Of course you know she's pretty. Don't be silly.



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ACTS II & III

BOB. Well, I wasn't very close. She looked all right.

LUCY. She's awfully nice, too. I'm going to bring her home some time, if she'll come. You'll like her, Bob.

BOB. Oh, I don't know, I haven't got much time for the women. I'm too busy.

LUCY. Humph! I guess you'll find more time for her than she'll find for you.

BOB. Is that so! By the way, there was a man asking about you to-day.

LUCY. A man!

BOB. Yes, a feller in my class. Name's Johnson, Syd Johnson.

LUCY. What did he want to know about me?

BOB. Well, of course, he didn't know it *was* you. He—he just asked me who that girl was he'd seen me with.

LUCY. What did you say?

BOB. Said it was my sister, o' course.

LUCY. What did he say?

BOB. He just said "Oh!"

LUCY. Oh! (*Dropping her eyes.*)

BOB. (*Rises from sofa, crosses to L. of table R.C.*) He's from Waterbury. He asked me to come over to his dorm and swap a yarn with him some time.

LUCY. Well, I think you'd better bring him here first.

BOB. Oh-ho! (*Grinning.*)

LUCY. Now don't be silly! I mean mother'd probably like to see him, before you go making friends with him.

BOB. There you go! Jumping at conclusions. Just like a woman! I just barely met the man and to hear you anybody'd think we were Damon and Pythias.

LUCY. I never said anything of the kind. I

just don't think you're quite old enough to pick up any old——

BOB. Humph! I'm as old as you, little Miss Wise.

LUCY. No, you're not.

BOB. I am.

LUCY. You're not.

BOB. (*With fine sarcasm*) Well, of course, I may be very stupid, but I have been brought up to believe that there isn't *much* difference in the ages of twins.

LUCY. (*Wisely*) Girls are much older than boys of the same age.

BOB. Is that so?

LUCY. Yes, that's so.

BOB. Where did you get that bright idea?

LUCY. I read it in a book.

BOB. What book?

LUCY. Never you mind.

BOB. Huh! *Some* book! I s'pose you think it's an epigram.

LUCY. No—it's just the truth.

BOB. Well, you may be a lot smarter than I am—but somehow it don't seem to come out very well.

LUCY. Bob, I only——

BOB. Now don't you worry your gigantic intellect about me. I'll try and worry along for a while longer with nothing but the college faculty to instruct me.

(*Enter MRS. STANLEY. BOB rises. She is still dressed in black, but she wears a hat that is slightly youthful and her manner is vaguely suggestive of reviving happiness.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (*BOB rises*) Well, well, children! So you're home, eh?

LUCY. Of course, we're home—and oh, mother,

dear, I *do* wish you wouldn't call us children. We're not children any more.

MRS. STANLEY. Dear me! I suppose that's so.

BOB. Of course, it's so.

MRS. STANLEY. I suppose I seem as old to you as you seem young to me. (*She sits down.*) All right, my dears. You won't mind my calling you that?

LUCY AND BOB. Oh, no—no, indeed.

MRS. STANLEY. Because you *are* dear to me—and you're *mine*—aren't you?

LUCY. Of course.

MRS. STANLEY. All right then, my dears. I'll try to remember. I'll keep saying to myself—they're not children—they're not children—they're not children any more. And you—you must keep saying to yourselves—Mother's not old—Mother's not old—at least she's not so very old. Will you?

LUCY. Mother! You're so funny.

MRS. STANLEY. Am I?

LUCY. Yes—and you're—well, you're different somehow.

MRS. STANLEY. Am I?

LUCY. Yes.

MRS. STANLEY. Bob, there's a package in the hall. Bring it in, dear.

BOB. (*Goes to hall L. and brings in picture, wrapped up*) Funny shape.

(*After a pause, MRS. STANLEY makes a decision.*

BOB *unties package and discloses a Japanese print—all framed and ready for hanging. It is a piece of vivid, beautiful color.*)

LUCY. Mother! What are you going to do with that?

MRS. STANLEY. Isn't it beautiful?

LUCY. Why—yes—I suppose so.

MRS. STANLEY. Bob, just take that down, will you? (*She indicates Dr. Spalding's picture.*)

BOB. What? Dr. Spalding?

MRS. STANLEY. I just want to try an experiment. (*Doubtfully BOB climbs a chair and takes down the old man's picture.*) Now, just hang that up there. (*She hands him the Japanese print. Hesitatingly he hangs it up, then gets down and all three look at it.*) Now, my dears, what do you think of it?

LUCY. (*Reluctant admission*) Well, it's pretty, but—it—it hardly has the atmosphere of our family.

MRS. STANLEY. Lucy—Lucy—and I thought you were only eighteen.

BOB. It's sort of cheerful, isn't it?

MRS. STANLEY. I think so.

BOB. But I don't think it matches our furniture very well.

LUCY. You're not going to leave it there, are you?

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I thought—perhaps—for a day or two—

LUCY. But what about Dr. Spalding?

MRS. STANLEY. You may have him to hang in your bedroom.

LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, just for the present, I mean. It's only an experiment. Then, of course, if you both want him back here, you shall have him.

LUCY. But, Mother, don't you want him back yourself?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Crosses to R. LUCY to L.C. BOB takes paper and throws it out R.*) We'll see—we'll see. Why! It's nearly time to think about supper isn't it? How the time does fly when you're busy and happy?

BOB. (*Starts to go*) I saw you this afternoon, Mother.

MRS. STANLEY. Did you—where?

BOB. Going into the Library.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I may as well tell you. *You'll* probably see your mother entering the Library a good many times, if you look sharp.

LUCY. What do you mean?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Teasing them*) Well, I can read, you know.

BOB. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes—words of not more than two syllables.

“Sister, sister, come and see,
'Tis not a bird, 'tis not a bee,
Ah, it flutters, there it goes,
Now it nestles on a rose.”

LUCY. Mother don't be so foolish.

MRS. STANLEY. Excuse me, my dear. I forgot. A minister's widow must never be frivolous. Someone might think it queer.

BOB. Mother, you're up to something.

MRS. STANLEY. Am I?

LUCY. You've got something up your sleeve.

MRS. STANLEY. Up my sleeve! Lucy, Lucy!
(*Shakes her head.*)

LUCY. What is it?

MRS. STANLEY. Such language from a minister's daughter.

LUCY. You're dodging the point.

MRS. STANLEY. Am I?

BOB. Yes, what are you up to?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Hesitates, then takes the plunge*)
Well, I've got a job.

BOB. What!

LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. In the Library—

BOB AND LUCY. Mother! What do you mean? etc.

MRS. STANLEY. A job in the Library—cataloguing books.

BOB. A job?

BOB AND LUCY. Well, of all the—etc., etc.

MRS. STANLEY. I went and saw the dean, told him I was a poor old broken-down minister's widow with two infant children crying for bread and no food in the house, the rent coming due and the hard-hearted landlord about to throw us into the street. Whereupon the sweet old thing wept on my shoulder and gave me a job.

BOB. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Every morning from nine till twelve.

LUCY. Mother! How can you!

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I may have added a detail here and there, but anyhow, he *did* give me a job. And I'm earning money—for the first time in my life I'm going to have some money that's absolutely all my own—money that nobody gave me—money that I didn't have to ask for—money I can spend as I like and give no accounting. Do you know what I'm going to do with the first dollar I get?

LUCY. Perhaps you'll give it to the Foreign Mission Society.

MRS. STANLEY. I'm going to take it down to the river and—throw it in.

BOB. If you do, I'll dive after it.

MRS. STANLEY. And what's more, the dean said that he would see that I got some new books to index—books published by members of the faculty. He says indexing is very important, and it's hard to get people who will do it intelligently. He seemed to think I might. I really don't know why. Nobody ever asked me to do anything intelligent before.

BOB. (*Rises*) Mother, I don't like it. What'll the other men think—my mother working in the Library! And I ought to be working so you wouldn't have to.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Rises*) All right, my son, only

remember this—the better education you get right now, the more you can do for mother when she's really as old as you think she is now.

LUCY. (*Rises*) But, Mother, dear, you'll be all worn out, and besides it looks so funny.

MRS. STANLEY. Lucy! I will *not* have a snob for my daughter.

LUCY. I'm not a snob! But I can't forget father's position. A minister, and now——

MRS. STANLEY. My dear, your father's life is over. While he lived, his word, heaven knows, was law, and that was right. But now we've got *our* lives to live and he can't help us—or hinder us. You speak of his position. Think of mine—a widow—with two children to educate—and precious little money, too—just think of that, children.

BOB. You promised you wouldn't call us children.

MRS. STANLEY. I'm sorry—it's so hard to remember—and after all, you are my children——

LUCY. Yes, we *are* your children, but *not* children. Oh, don't you see?

MRS. STANLEY. Then what *are* you, in pity's name?

LUCY. Why—er—er— We're—er——

BOB. Offspring.

MRS. STANLEY. Offspring! Very well, hereafter I shall call you that! I hope that'll be satisfactory, offspring.

LUCY. Mother, don't be so silly.

(*The bell rings*)

MRS. STANLEY. Will one of you offspring run and see who that is? (*BOB exits.*)

LUCY. Mother, you're not going to call us that?

MRS. STANLEY. What?

LUCY. Offspring.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I must call you something.

I can't call you "my dears" all the time. It's a trifle sugary—and besides, there *are* times when I don't feel like it. Offspring indeed! "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Offspring."

(BOB enters. He carries a big box, well wrapped up and elaborately addressed.)

BOB. Expressman, Mother. It's for you.

MRS. STANLEY. Me!

LUCY. It says Lucille. Mother, who's Lucille.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, dear, the only Lucille I know is a lady in a poem by a gentleman named Meredith.

(They all busily and excitedly unpack it.)

BOB. Well, I guess it can't be her. Let's open it. I'll bet it's some kind of a joke.

MRS. STANLEY. I suppose so.

LUCY. *(Undoing another layer of wrapping paper)* Well, if it's a joke, it's pretty carefully concealed.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear, it is rather subtle so far.

(Finally they get it unwrapped. It turns out to be a lovely gown—not too bright—but distinctly a happy gown—and of course a French model. MRS. STANLEY holds it up, her eyes shining amid a chorus of wondering delight from the twins.)

LUCY. Oh, Mother, there's a note with it. *(She produces a note from the box and gives it to mother.)*

MRS. STANLEY. A note?

BOB. Oh—read it—who's it from?

LUCY. Yes—who *can* it be?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Looking at the address*) Oh! Oh! Well, bless her heart.

LUCY. Who, Mother, who?

BOB. Yes—who's heart?

MRS. STANLEY. It's from Alice Denny.

LUCY. Oh, the girl you used to know.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

BOB. The one that married the New York lawyer.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes. (*She opens the note.*)

BOB. She's rich, isn't she?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear.

LUCY. Oh—do read it, Mother.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Reading the note*) "Dearest Nellie: This is a liberty, I know. But perhaps you won't mind. I'm sure you wouldn't if you knew how happy it makes me to do it. I've been thinking a lot about you and I just had to send you something to stand for everything of sunshine and happiness that I wish for you—for all the bright things of life that you ought to have had long ago—and that have passed you by. I hope they will pass you by no longer. Do write and tell me if it fits. I'm sure it will, with a little trouble. Give my love to your delightful—offspring—and——"

LUCY. Mother, she *didn't* say that. (*Goes to box to take out gown.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (*Not heeding her*) "Offspring, and believe me, Your loving Alice." (*She is much affected by the whole incident.*)

LUCY. (*Holding the gown up*) Oh, Mother, it's new—it's not second-hand. It's brand new.

BOB. 'Course it's new. (*Puts hat on his head.*
LUCY takes out silk stockings.)

LUCY. Mother, they're silk! See!

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear, aren't they lovely?

BOB. Some socks! Look at the clocks on them, too.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, my son, that's so; I won't

get home late when I'm out walking. (*Again she looks at the dress and holds it up in front.*) Lucy, look at the petticoat. Oh, isn't it beautiful!

BOB. Looks good to me.

LUCY. Ye-e-es. But is it—er—quite—suitable?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh! For a minister's widow, you mean?

LUCY. Well—I—I—only meant—

MRS. STANLEY. You dear! You're so afraid someone is going to say something nasty about your poor mother. You just couldn't stand it, could you?

LUCY. No, Mother, I couldn't.

MRS. STANLEY. You nice offspring! Well, well, dear, let's hope that no one will. Now, just help me put these things away. (*They all get busy on the job.*)

BOB. (*As they work*) Man in my class I want to bring home some time, Mother. Name's Johnson, Syd Johnson. May I?

MRS. STANLEY. Why, of course. Bring him in to tea—some afternoon.

BOB. All right, I will. He's O. K., I think. Nothing fresh about him. He's all to the merry.

MRS. STANLEY. All to the merry, eh? Well, fetch him along, I want to know all your friends, if you'll let me.

LUCY. Oh, Mother, I've got the dandiest professor in English Lit.

MRS. STANLEY. English what?

LUCY. English Lit—English Literature, you know.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes.

LUCY. Oh, he makes everything so interesting—and he reads poetry so beautifully. He's quite young, too—well, I mean he's not old a bit. Oh, he's just dandy.

MRS. STANLEY. What's his name, dear? I don't seem to remember.

LUCY. Giddings—Professor Giddings.

BOB. Commonly known as Giddy.

LUCY. Oh, I'm just crazy about him.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, so I gathered.

LUCY. Well, he's—he's just dandy. He's got the loveliest voice.

BOB. (*Jeering at her*) All us girls are just dippy about Giddy.

LUCY. Oh, you hush up!

MRS. STANLEY. Here, Bob—— (*Hands him an armful of wrapping paper.*) Take this stuff away, and, by the way, what do you think we'd better do with "The Family Group"? (*She indicates the Rogers Group on the little table.*)

BOB. Do with it?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

LUCY. Why do anything with it?

MRS. STANLEY. Why not? You can't tell me you like it.

BOB. It isn't very gay, is it?

LUCY. But it was *father's*.

MRS. STANLEY. He didn't choose it. It was wished on him.

LUCY. Wished on him! Mother!

WARNING.

BOB. Oh, Luce! She means the church gave it to him, you bonehead.

LUCY. Oh, I know what she means—it was the way she said it.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, you never heard your father say he liked it, did you?

LUCY. Yes, I did. When they gave it to him at the Donation Party he made a speech thanking them for "their beautiful present."

MRS. STANLEY. He had to say something nice. You couldn't expect him to say: "My dear brothers and sisters, I thank you heartily for your hideous present." The poor man had to keep it about be-

cause they gave it to him. But that is no reason why *we* should.

LUCY. Well, I don't know.

MRS. STANLEY. (*At last she is exasperated*) That's enough, my dear! Bob, take it away. Hide it in the attic. Bury it in the cellar! Throw it in the street! Give it to the Heathen! Anything! Only don't ever let me see that dreadful thing again.

WARNING for curtain.

LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Oh! (*Checks herself.*) That wasn't nice of mother, was it? But I mean it. You don't know—you can't imagine—how sick I am of living in the shadow of "what people will say."

LUCY. But, Mother, dear——

MRS. STANLEY. All my life I've done it and all my life I've hated it and now I'm through with it.

BOB AND LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Don't be alarmed, my dears. Mother's not going to dye her hair, or rouge her cheeks, or elope with a married man. At least, she doesn't think so. But for the first time in her life she's going to do as she pleases. She doesn't *think* she's going to do anything terrible—but she's going to do what she likes. I shouldn't wonder—some-time—if she smoked a cigarette.

LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Oh—just one—just a little one—down cellar, in the dark. I don't say she will—but she will if she wants to—and you can just put *that* in your two little pipes and smoke it, my offspring.

(She exits.)

CURTAIN

SCENE II

The curtain remains lowered a minute or so to indicate the lapse of several days. When it rises, the time of day is late afternoon. MRS. STANLEY is discovered. There are chintz curtains on the window. The chairs are covered with chintz slip-covers. MRS. STANLEY is sewing on a heap of chintz in her lap. After a moment or two she finishes her sewing, rises and holds up the heap of chintz. It is a slip-cover for the horse-hair armchair. She takes it over to that fearsome article of furniture and slips it on. Then some vases with flowers that lie on the table she puts on the mantelpiece, etc. This done, she stands back and surveys the effect, smiling. The little room had really become quite gay. MRS. STANLEY herself still wears her black dress of the preceding scene. As she stands surveying the room, the front door is heard to slam, and BOB is heard whistling in the hall. After a moment he enters, hat in hand, books under arm.

BOB. Hello, Mother.

MRS. STANLEY. Hello, dear.

BOB. Everything all right?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes.

BOB. That's good! Gee, I'm tired. Been on the go all day. Grandpa showed up yet?

MRS. STANLEY. Not yet. His train's probably late.

BOB. Yes—it generally is. How long's he going to stay?

MRS. STANLEY. Just over night. He's on his way to New York.

BOB. New York!

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—he's never been there and he thinks it's time he went. Bob—how do you like it?

BOB. Eh?

MRS. STANLEY. Look around! Look around you.

BOB. (*Surveying the room*) Phew! Wow!

MRS. STANLEY. Well, do you like it?

BOB. Gee! It's—it's kind of pretty, ain't it?

MRS. STANLEY. Well, it's different.

BOB. Did you do it all yourself?

MRS. STANLEY. All myself.

BOB. Gee! Aren't you the smart one! Does Lucy know?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, no, indeed. I did it as a—sort of surprise.

BOB. She'll be surprised all right. Where'd you get the posies?

MRS. STANLEY. I stole them.

BOB. Mother! Who from?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, from God.

BOB. Mother, you do say the funniest things. But it is pretty.

MRS. STANLEY. You like it?

BOB. Yes—and you, too. (*He gives her a hug.*) I'm kind of glad I've got you for a mother.

MRS. STANLEY. Really, this is gross flattery, my son.

BOB. No—honest, I am.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—but—but—what do you suppose Lucy will say?

BOB. Mother, I believe you're scared of her.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, she's rather severe.

BOB. Well, don't be frightened. Don't you care. I won't let her hurt you.

MRS. STANLEY. Bob, there's something in the bookcase I want you to see.

BOB. Will it bite?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, no—it's not cross at all. It's very happy. That's why I got it.

BOB. (*Taking model from bookcase, discloses a plaster cast of Donatello's "Laughing Boy"*) Well, of all the — Where on earth did you get it?

MRS. STANLEY. Over at Tony's.

BOB. But, Mother—it must have cost a lot.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh—it's just a reproduction, and a little bit damaged. Very cheap, you know.

BOB. What'll I do with it?

MRS. STANLEY. On that table, I think. (BOB *puts it on the table in corner R.*) It—it isn't much like "The Family Group," is it?

BOB. Huh! Not much—no!

MRS. STANLEY. Do you like it?

BOB. Sure, if *you* do.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Giving him a hug*) Ah, you darling. Boys are so satisfactory, aren't they? After this all the rest of my children shall be boys.

BOB. I prefer girls myself.

LUCY. (*Enters*) Mother Stanley! (*Amazed by the change in the room.*)

MRS. STANLEY. It's quite a change, isn't it?

BOB. Great stuff. Kind of cheers you up, don't it, Luce?

LUCY. Mother, you did all this yourself, and you never told me. It must have been a lot of work.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, it was fun. (*A pause.*) I do hope you like it, dear.

LUCY. (*With her hand on one of the slip-covers*) Well, I suppose it will save the furniture a good deal.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear, my idea exactly. How did you guess it? (*Turns to BOB.*) Is your friend coming for tea this afternoon, Bobby?

BOB. Gee! Yes! I forgot—old Syd'll be in any minute now.

MRS. STANLEY. Very well; Lucy, just bring in the tea things.

LUCY. Oh, what do you think? Professor Giddings is coming here this afternoon.

BOB. Oh! Giddy! Giddy! Giddy!

MRS. STANLEY. Bobby, you mustn't be disrespectful.

LUCY. I went up after the lecture to ask him about a magazine poem he quoted and what d'ye think he said? You could have knocked me over with a feather.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, what *did* he say?

LUCY. He said "I'll bring the magazine to your house at tea-time to-day." Isn't it just thrilling!

MRS. STANLEY. (*A little taken aback, for no apparent reason*) Why—er—yes, dear, I suppose so.

LUCY. Mother, don't you want him to come?

MRS. STANLEY. Why—yes—of course—only—

LUCY. Oh, you'll like him.

BOB. Oh, all us girls are just dippy about Giddy.

LUCY. Oh, you hush up.

BOB. Giddy-ap—Giddy-ap—Giddy-ap.

LUCY. Bob Stanley, I do think you might act like a man and not like a kid.

MRS. STANLEY. Now, offspring, offspring. Lucy is right, Bobby. You mustn't act like that. Professor Giddings is a man for whom I have grown to have the highest respect.

LUCY AND BOB. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Well, what's the matter?

LUCY. Do you know him?

MRS. STANLEY. Of course I know him. I've met him often.

LUCY. Well, why didn't you say so?

MRS. STANLEY. I am saying so.

LUCY. Yes, but just now when I said he was coming here, you never said a word about having——

MRS. STANLEY. Look here, I brought you two offspring here for an education, didn't I?

LUCY. I suppose so.

MRS. STANLEY. Well I'm educating you, that's all.

LUCY. Educating us?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes. There's a lot more education to be had than you'll ever find in books—and I'm helping to give it to you. I'm trying to open your eyes to people and customs and surroundings that you've never known before—so that when you get to be my age you'll be a finer—stronger—nicer woman than your mother ever was or ever can be, and so—Amen.

LUCY. Mother, I've never seen you like this before.

MRS. STANLEY. Because I've never been like this before.

BOB. Well, what's the idea?

MRS. STANLEY. Did you ever read Aesop's Fables?

BOB. Sure. (*Sits on arm of armchair.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Remember the one about ducks and the two chickens?

BOB. Don't believe I do.

MRS. STANLEY. Do you, Lucy? (*LUCY shakes her head.*) Then I'll tell it to you. Once upon a time there was a duck that had two chickens.

LUCY. Ducks don't have chickens.

MRS. STANLEY. This one did, and one day the duck left her two chickens for the first time and went swimming in the mill pond. And the two chickens stood on the bank and peeped in fright. They peeped so loudly that all the neighbors came

running to see what was the trouble. And the two chicks cried out to the neighbors: "Oh! Oh! Please make mother come back before she gets drowned." But the neighbors laughed and said, "Why, you sillies, don't you know she's a duck?" And do you know that up to that very moment those two chickens had always believed that their mother was a hen. Yes—it's a fact. (*Exits upstairs.*)

LUCY. Hen, huh!

BOB. (*Rises*) Well, mother is a duck, isn't she?

LUCY. Well, I don't care for the simile.

BOB. It isn't a simile, it's a metaphor, you dumb-bell.

LUCY. (*Rises, goes L*) Well, whatever it is, I don't care for it.

BOB. Well, you certainly started something that time, didn't you?

LUCY. What has come over mother?

BOB. Search me.

LUCY. Well, there's something the matter with her.

BOB. Anyhow, she's made this room a lot prettier, hasn't she?

LUCY. Ye—e—s, I suppose so. But I don't think it looks much like us.

BOB. Like us!

LUCY. I was just thinking what father would say.

BOB. Oh, Luce!

LUCY. Well——

BOB. I guess he'd like it after he got used to it.

LUCY. Well, perhaps——

BOB. Then what are you kicking about?

LUCY. I'm not kicking.

BOB. Yes, you are, too. You're kicking like a steer. Every time mother does something new around the house you look like there was a funeral going on.

LUCY. It isn't that—it's just that mother's so

kind of queer—and she—she looks so—so kind of young.

BOB. Well, what of it? I 'spose you'd rather have her be an old hag with all her teeth gone and a hump on her back—like Mother Goose or something. I think mother's a peach.

LUCY. Of course she is. What could we do without her? You don't understand me at all. I——

BOB. No—I sure don't. Any fellow that says he understands a woman is either a liar or a fool.

LUCY. I suppose you got that out of a book.

BOB. What if I did?

LUCY. Some book!

Door bell rings.

BOB. You go to the kitchen and get the tea things as mother said. I'll answer the bell. (*LUCY exits R. BOB exits L. and re-enters with MARY HADLEY.*) Do come in, please. Lucy's sure to be in any minute.

MARY. Do you think I ought to?

BOB. I don't see why not.

MARY. Oh, but you don't know who I am, do you?

BOB. Oh, yes I do.

MARY. Do you?

BOB. Sure, you're Mary Hadley.

MARY. How did you know?

BOB. Asked my sister.

MARY. Oh!

BOB. We don't have to stand up. We can sit down if we want to. (*They sit. MARY on couch. BOB on chair L.C.*) Where you from?

MARY. Brockton.

BOB. Oh—that's where the shoes come from.

MARY. Yes, my father makes 'em.

BOB. Is that so? Did he make those you've got on?

MARY. Oh, no. I got these at Langham's.

BOB. They're awfully pretty. Brockton's where they make the Douglas shoe, isn't it?

MARY. Yes.

BOB. (*Trying to be entertaining*) I used to know some poetry about that.

MARY. Did you?

BOB. Yes—it began, "Douglas—Douglas, tender and true, send me a pair of your three dollar shoe."

MARY. I bet you wish you could get 'em for three dollars now.

BOB. Yes. (*Long pause.*)

MARY. Isn't it just terrible the way everything's going up?

BOB. Fierce. 'Specially aeroplanes—ha-ha.

(*An awkward pause.*)

MARY. I guess I'd better be going. (*Rises.*)

BOB. Oh, no, don't go.

MARY. Well, I guess I'd better.

BOB. It's all right, Lucy will be here in a minute, sit down, please! (*They sit again.*)

MARY. I think your sister's awfully nice.

BOB. (*Indifferently*) Oh, she's all right.

MARY. I think she's going to be the most popular girl in our class.

BOB. (*Surprised*) Honest?

MARY. Well, if that isn't just like a man.

BOB. What?

MARY. I never knew a man who appreciated his own sister. They're crazy about other men's sisters, but their own—oh, no.

BOB. Oh, I guess I appreciate her enough.

MARY. Humph! You do not. Why, half the men in our class are crazy about her already.

BOB. (*Astonished*) No!

MARY. Of course they are.

BOB. Honest?

MARY. Of course! Where are your eyes? And there's that Johnson man—oh!

BOB. You mean Syd Johnson?

MARY. Hm—hm.

BOB. Well, what about old Syd?

MARY. Why, he's awfully gone on her. Why only this morning in algebra he never once took his eyes off her.

BOB. Gosh!

MARY. Of course, she never paid any attention to him.

BOB. I'll bet she knew it all the same. Oh, they always know.

MARY. Do they?

BOB. Yes. I saw a fellow looking at you. I bet you knew.

MARY. Who?

BOB. Me.

(Enter LUCY.)

LUCY. Mary Hadley! Bob, why didn't you tell me? Hello, Mary.

MARY. Hello, Lucy. Just talking about you.

LUCY. Me?

MARY. Yes, didn't you ears burn?

LUCY. No.

MARY. They should have.

BOB. I should say so. Oh, you Johnson!

MARY. Now, you hush up or I'll never tell you anything again.

BOB. Mum's the word.

LUCY. What *do* you mean?

MARY. Oh, just a lot of nonsense. But I've got to go. Just came in to ask you to a fudge party in my room to-night. Will you come? Eight o'clock.

BOB. Sure I will.

MARY. Oh—not you! Do you want to get us all fired?

LUCY. Of course I'll come.

MARY. Fine! (*Going to BOB.*) Remember, mum's the word.

BOB. I won't say anything. (*They giggle.*)

LUCY. Won't you stay to tea, Mary?

BOB. Oh, yes, please stay.

MARY. I wish I could, but I've got an engagement.

BOB. Who with?

LUCY. Why, Bob!

MARY. Well, I've got to be going. Good-bye.

BOB. (*As LUCY starts to go out with MARY*) Look here, now, I'll show this lady out.

(*BOB and MARY exit. Enter MRS. STANLEY. She wears a pretty bright dress. It is the first time we have seen her in anything but black. Also she has done something interesting to her pretty yellow hair.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Well, offspring, where are the tea things?

LUCY. (*Staring at the transformation*) Mother!

(*BOB enters.*)

BOB. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Never mind me now. The tea things, hurry up now. (*The twins run off R. Mother takes a half-smiling glance at herself in the mirror, pats her hair, etc. The twins return with the tea things and place them on table. Mother sits at table and inspects the tea things.*) There—now. I guess we're ready. (*Door bell.*) Answer the door, Bob. (*BOB exits into the hall.*) Like my new dress, honey?

LUCY. Why—yes—er——

MRS. STANLEY. Got it at Langham's at a bargain sale.

LUCY. But—Mother——

MRS. STANLEY. (*Calmly heading her off*) Just raise the window shades a bit, will you? (*LUCY goes to the window at L. to obey. BOB and SYDNEY JOHNSON come in. MRS. STANLEY rises and puts out her hand.*) So, this is Bob's new friend, Sydney Johnson. We've heard such a lot about you, Mr. Johnson. (*SYDNEY takes her hand.*)

SYDNEY. Pleased to meet you, Miss Stanley.

(*Looking at her with awkward admiration. MRS. STANLEY chuckles delightedly. BOB shows amazement. LUCY shows displeasure.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Thank you—but I'm Bob's mother. This is my daughter. I think you must have been born in Ireland, Mr. Johnson.

SYDNEY. (*Much embarrassed*) No'm, Waterbury. Now I look at you, I can see you're old, older, I mean. Must have been the light, I guess.

MRS. STANLEY. That's it—the light. Lucy thinks our chintz is too dazzling. Well, we'll all have some tea now. Do sit down, please. (*She sits. SYDNEY sits near her.*) You like yours sweet, I suppose?

SYDNEY. Yes, please.

MRS. STANLEY. Hot water?

SYDNEY. Yes, please.

MRS. STANLEY. And cream?

SYDNEY. Yes, please—er—I mean, yes.

MRS. STANLEY. There you are. (*She hands him his tea and goes on making tea for the others. BOB hands her hers when it's ready.*) So you live in Waterbury.

SYDNEY. Yes, please—er—I mean yes.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, that's a very big city, isn't it?

SYDNEY. Oh, yes, ninety thousand last census—must be ninety-one by now. My father was mayor three years ago.

MRS. STANLEY. Really! Isn't that splendid! Well, how do you like college so far?

SYDNEY. All right—I guess.

MRS. STANLEY. Not homesick?

SYDNEY. Oh, no'm. I was in prep. school three years before I came to college, so I kind of got used to it, I guess.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes, of course. Have you any brothers and sisters? (*BOB rises and passes the tea things.*)

SYDNEY. One brother—he's only ten and two sisters. One of 'em married—that's Grace. She lives in Boston. Her husband's a banker. (*BOB throws napkin at LUCY.*)

MRS. STANLEY. I see, and what are you going to do when you leave college?

SYDNEY. I don't know yet. My mother wants me to be a minister.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh——

LUCY. (*Trying to edge into the conversation*) Oh, that's so interesting. My father was a minister, you know.

SYDNEY. (*Turning to her a second*) That so? (*Then back to MRS. STANLEY quickly.*) My mother's a Baptist. She wants me to be a Baptist minister.

LUCY. (*Trying again*) My father was a Methodist minister.

SYDNEY. That so? I'd like to be a lawyer—only it takes so long.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes—it does, doesn't it?

SYDNEY. Why, you have to go to a law school three years. Sometimes I feel like I just want to go out and do something quick.

MRS. STANLEY. Of course, of course—I understand. Bob, won't you pass the biscuits. (BOB *does so*. SYDNEY *takes a handful and stuffs his mouth with them.*) Do you like your professors, Mr. Johnson?

SYDNEY. Ah, they're all right, I guess. Old Billy Ap is a character, though.

MRS. STANLEY. Billy Ap!

SYDNEY. Yes'm. His right name is William Hark—— (BOB *nudges him on arm and offers him the biscuits.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Just another drop of tea, Mr. Johnson?

SYDNEY. Thanks, don't care if I do. It's awfully good.

MRS. STANLEY. Very glad you like it. I hope you like it well enough to come in for more quite often.

SYDNEY. Oh, I'll do that, you bet. I'll probably be so thick around here you'll have to sic the dog on me. Mother says I haven't got much sense that way. If I like anybody I'm liable to bore 'em to death. (LUCY *rises. He empties his cup at a gulp.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (*Getting more and more self-conscious as her realization of LUCY'S disapproval becomes more and more acute.*) Oh, really, Mr. Johnson, you can't expect me to believe that. We can't quite swallow that, can we, Lucy?

LUCY. (*Pretends she has not heard*) I beg your pardon?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, nothing—nothing. (*The conversation languishes. A pause. Then MRS. STANLEY says suddenly.*) Er—you won't have some more tea, Mr. Johnson?

SYDNEY. No, thanks, really. (*Another long pause.*) I—I guess I'll have to be getting along.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, please don't hurry

SYDNEY. (*Rising*) Well, I've got some things

to do before supper. And it don't pay to be late at the boarding-house—because if you're late you only get what's left and then you—well, then you understand why it is left, all right.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Giving him her hand*) Do come again soon.

SYDNEY. Yes, indeed. Sure, I will. Good-bye, Miss Stanley. So long, Bob. (*He starts for the door, drops his napkin, picks it up, stuffs it in his pocket like a handkerchief, and finally manages to get himself out of the room.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (*Turning to the twins*) Such a nice friendly boy, isn't he? (*The twins are looking rather queer and say nothing.*) Well, my dears, what's the matter?

BOB. Look here, Mother, I—I asked old Syd here to meet Lucy and then he——

MRS. STANLEY. To meet both of us, I hope, dear.

BOB. Well, of course. But to meet Lucy anyway—'cause she's in his class—and he don't say six words to her.

MRS. STANLEY. Are you blaming me, dear?

BOB. Well, I don't know—but you—well, you don't look the way you used to, somehow—nobody every took you for Lucy before.

MRS. STANLEY. Don't be absurd. Nobody could possibly take me for Lucy. The boy was just a little embarrassed, that's all.

BOB. Well, anyhow, he just stuck around you like—like a bee 'round a jelly tumbler and you never gave Luce a look-in.

MRS. STANLEY. Come here, my dears. (*She gets them with an arm about each.*) Sydney will see Lucy often. It won't take him long to learn that I'm only a little old lady. But he'll like this house all the better because I tried to make him feel at home in it the first time he came and didn't treat him like a little boy. I don't want your friends to

be scared of your mother, and besides, don't you want your old mother to look as young as she can? Don't you want people to like her?

BOB. Of course we do. Only—only—you *do* look *so* young. It kind of sticks me.

MRS. STANLEY. Does it?

BOB. Yes. I can't seem to dope it out.

MRS. STANLEY. Can't you?

BOB. No.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, suppose you run along and think it over. I want to talk with your sister.

BOB. All right, but I can't seem to make it out. (*Shaking his head as he walks out. Exit R.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Lucy, dear, you see, don't you? (*LUCY still averts her gaze and says nothing—she sobs. Her mother is suddenly frightened and makes an appeal.*) Why, my darling! My darling!

LUCY. (*Suddenly puts her head on her mother's shoulder*) Oh, Mother, I'm such a fool.

MRS. STANLEY. There, there, dearest. What is it? What is it?

LUCY. I don't know. That's why it's so silly. But sometimes—I feel as if suddenly I didn't know you at all. And it's so strange—why, Mother, it's terrible—and I—I get so frightened.

MRS. STANLEY. Dearest, I didn't know you felt like this. How could I guess?

LUCY. Well, I do, Mother. Isn't it silly of me?

MRS. STANLEY. No, dear, not a bit. It's just because I'm not quite the person I used to be. I'm changing a little—— Oh, I know it—and, of course, that's why you feel as if you didn't know me as well. Lucy, dear, the fact is I'm growing a little younger— isn't it disgusting of me?

LUCY. Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. I—I can't seem to help it some-way. But I'll try harder, dear. I really will.

LUCY. But, Mother, I didn't know a person *could* grow younger.

MRS. STANLEY. Neither did I, dear, but it seems it's possible. I wish everybody could do it. Wouldn't it be nice, dear, if we could all be born very old and grow steadily younger and stronger and handsomer and happier until——

LUCY. Yes, Mother, until——

MRS. STANLEY. Why, dear me! Then we wouldn't ever die until we got to be babies, would we?

LUCY. (*Laughing*) Ho! Ho! Ho! Mother, you silly dear!

MRS. STANLEY. And then when you did anything foolish I could say to you: "You'll know better than that, my dear, when you're as young as I am."

LUCY. Mother, what queer notions you do get.

(*Enter BOB, in excitement.*)

BOB. Mother, here's old Giddy coming in the gate right now.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, dear, you run and let him in, Lucy.

LUCY. Oh, Mother, are my eyes all red?

MRS. STANLEY. No, dear, just nice and shiny, that's all. (*Rather hesitatingly LUCY goes out into the hall.*) Bob, run and get some more hot water, and another cup. I suppose professors drink tea. (*Gives BOB the hot water kettle.*)

BOB. Sure—I'll be back in a jiff. (*He goes out at R. Mother has a second to primp her hair, etc. Then she hears the voices in the hall.*)

PROFESSOR. Good afternoon, Miss Stanley, is your mother at home?

LUCY. Oh, yes, sir. Won't you come right in, please?

PROFESSOR. Surely.

(LUCY and PROFESSOR come in. The PROFESSOR is a youngish man, about forty years old, well built, masculine, humorous, vital—in no way the comic stage professor. His hair is closely cropped and his clothes well cut. If you met him on Fifth Avenue he would not seem in the least out of place.)

LUCY. Mother, dear, this is Professor Giddings.

PROFESSOR. How are you this afternoon, Mrs. Stanley?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, splendid, thank you. (They shake hands.)

PROFESSOR. You've been well since I saw you last?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes—ever since this morning.

PROFESSOR. Just to insure my welcome, I've brought this magazine for your daughter. (Gives it to LUCY.) And this for your more frivolous self. (Gives MRS. STANLEY a box of candy.) I hope you like sweets?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes—I adore them. Thank you so much. (Opens the box.) Perhaps you'll help eat them, professor?

PROFESSOR. Thanks, no—none for me. (Goes up c. BOB enters R.)

MRS. STANLEY. Lucy? (Offers her the candy.)

LUCY. (Stiffly) No, thank you.

MRS. STANLEY. (To PROFESSOR) Do sit down, please.

PROFESSOR. Thank you. My, how you have improved—(he surveys it)—this room since I was here last.

MRS. STANLEY. (As LUCY winces) Well, we've done our best with it. (Enter BOB with hot water kettle.) You know my son.

PROFESSOR. Oh, yes. How are you, Stanley?
(*Shakes hands.*)

BOB. Fine, sir, fine.

MRS. STANLEY. (*They all sit*) You'll have tea, I hope?

PROFESSOR. Please—just tea—rather strong. (*She makes it and BOB hands him the cup.*)

LUCY. (*Recovering herself a bit and trying to take charge of the conversation*) Oh, Professor Giddings, it's so nice of you to bring me the magazine. I loved that poem so when you read it in class and I *did* so want to copy it. Thank you so much.

PROFESSOR. No trouble at all, I assure you. I was coming here anyway.

LUCY. (*With a gulp*) Oh!

MRS. STANLEY. (*With a look at LUCY*) Do light the fire, Bob. It's growing a bit chilly. (*BOB lights the fire.*)

PROFESSOR. And how do you like college life, Mrs. Stanley? A little dull for you?

MRS. STANLEY. Er—have you ever lived in Lebanon, New Hampshire?

PROFESSOR. Why, no.

MRS. STANLEY. Compared to Lebanon, New Hampshire, this is the metropolis of the world.

PROFESSOR. Indeed! I confess I've never thought of it in that light.

MRS. STANLEY. Lebanon, New Hampshire, is the land where it is always afternoon.

PROFESSOR. How jolly! No one has to get up in the morning. Always afternoon. Perhaps Miss Stanley can tell us where *that* quotation comes from?

LUCY. (*BOB passes cakes to LUCY*) I—I'm afraid I can't.

MRS. STANLEY. Tennyson—"The Lotos Eaters."

BOB. Mother! How did you know?

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I spend three hours a day

in the library. Tell me, Professor Giddings, you adore your work of course?

PROFESSOR. Yes and no. Take my class room now. It's a good deal like fishing. There are days when you can't get a single bite.

MRS. STANLEY. *Bite?*

PROFESSOR. Yes. I throw out ideas, you know—like bait, in the hope that someone will rise to them. If they don't I try another kind, just as you do for the fish.

MRS. STANLEY. I hope my two little fish bite well.

LUCY. Mother, I will *not* be a fish.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, but think, dear, a sweet little speckled trout.

PROFESSOR. (*PROFESSOR and MRS. STANLEY laugh*) One of the prettiest things in the world.

LUCY. (*Trying to make them serious*) Tell me, professor, who do you think is the greatest living poet?

PROFESSOR. Charles M. Schwab.

LUCY. What!

PROFESSOR. Charles M. Schwab of the Bethlehem Steel Co.

LUCY. Well!

PROFESSOR. He dreams wonderful dreams and makes them come true.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, that is poetry. Some more tea?

PROFESSOR. Yes, please.

LUCY. Tell me, professor, what do you think is Wordsworth's greatest poem?

PROFESSOR. I'd rather you made up your own mind about that. (*LUCY rises.*) The business of a professor, Mrs. Stanley, should be not to give his pupils ideas but to help them to form their own. Don't you think so?

MRS. STANLEY. Precisely.

PROFESSOR. Very few people really think. Most people's ideas are second-hand—and very much worn at that—all the buttons off—out at the elbows—really not fit to wear at all.

MRS. STANLEY. And then there's the man with one idea.

PROFESSOR. He's positively naked. He ought to be locked up. But I mustn't talk shop. Tell me, is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable at Sinclair? We old settlers, you know—we know all the ropes.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, no, thank you—we're beginning to feel quite at home and everyone is so kind.

(LUCY quietly steals out of the room.)

PROFESSOR. By the way, you were going to tell me if you would like a card to the fall reception that Dr. and Mrs. Adams are giving next week.

MRS. STANLEY. Why, really—I——

PROFESSOR. Oh, I know—you said you didn't know them—but they're old friends of mine and I'll see that you get a card, if you like.

MRS. STANLEY. Well—really—I don't know quite what to say. Lucy, dear, do you think I'd——
(She turns, sees LUCY has gone, gives a sigh.)
Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

PROFESSOR. Eh! What's the matter?

MRS. STANLEY. Bob, go out and see what's become of your sister. *(BOB goes out.)* Poor Lucy!

PROFESSOR. I—don't understand.

MRS. STANLEY. Poor child! I—I'm afraid she thought you were coming to see her. And naturally she was flattered.

PROFESSOR. Oh! *(A little flattered himself.)*

MRS. STANLEY. Girls are very silly about professors, you know.

PROFESSOR. (*A bit jolted*) Oh—thanks.

MRS. STANLEY. You're quite welcome. I didn't have the heart to disillusion her. I—I'm afraid I hoped she wouldn't find out. I'm a stupid mother, I guess.

PROFESSOR. (*A little embarrassed*) It—it's rather ridiculous, isn't it?

MRS. STANLEY. Is it?

PROFESSOR. I mean you wouldn't want me to come to see her, would you?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Sharply*) Certainly not. (*A pause.*) She is eighteen and you are——

PROFESSOR. Forty.

MRS. STANLEY. Exactly. I want her to have a wonderful time for the next few years with all the nice little boys. I want—oh, I want her to savor her youth to the full—as—I—as I did not.

PROFESSOR. Tell me—please—would it—I mean—I don't want to hurt you in any way—I mean I wouldn't for the world re-open any old wounds—but I *would* like to know such a lot about you and I know so little—except what my eyes can tell me. But you seem to be a person who was intended for so much happiness and sunshine—and yet——

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—that's it—"and yet"—— (*Pause.*) You don't know how strange all this new life seems to me. I seem almost to be moving in a dream. And I don't know whether to go on dreaming or really wake up for good.

PROFESSOR. I think you're going to wake up.

MRS. STANLEY. I wonder.

PROFESSOR. I understand from what you told me the other day—that your husband was much older than you.

MRS. STANLEY. Twenty-three years.

PROFESSOR. A quarter of a century.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, my, it sounds so much worse when you say it like that.

PROFESSOR. You must have married very young.

MRS. STANLEY. I wasn't quite eighteen. Lucy was born when I was just twenty.

PROFESSOR. And your husband—tell me what he was like?

(MRS. STANLEY rises, goes to the horse-hair sofa, and after a moment's thought takes off the slip-covers.)

MRS. STANLEY. He was like this.

PROFESSOR. I see. Honest, uncompromising.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes. (*The PROFESSOR goes and sits on the sofa.*)

PROFESSOR. A bit grim, not very comfortable—full of character—a little hard—and not, well, not very gay.

MRS. STANLEY. Not very. For him life was real, life was earnest and it's only proper business was the preparation for the next.

PROFESSOR. I have no quarrel with that view, but a bird in the hand, you know.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, I know. I fear I'm a Pagan after all.

PROFESSOR. My dear lady, I see that you have camouflaged this ancient sofa a bit—and I draw from that a certain inference.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes?

PROFESSOR. Won't you let me help you?

MRS. STANLEY. Help me what?

PROFESSOR. Help you to wake from the dream of the past ten years. You have eyes in which the sunshine lingers and a mouth that was made for smiling. Let me encourage the sunshine and the smiles.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Timidly*) It doesn't seem as if there could be much harm in that.

PROFESSOR. No, indeed.

MRS. STANLEY. And—yet—no—I'm afraid.

PROFESSOR. Afraid of what?

MRS. STANLEY. First of all, I am a mother.

PROFESSOR. But you are so young. Why, you look as if your daughter might almost be your younger sister.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—I shall have to do something about that. I wish she were my sister. Daughters are so strict.

PROFESSOR. I don't understand.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I had rather a scare just now. My children—I've given my life to them and I—I just can't lose them—I mustn't.

PROFESSOR. Lose them?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—lose their love and their respect. The fact is, to them I'm a middle-aged woman—the widow of a Methodist minister—all their lives the dignity of that position has been drilled into them. To them I'm settled—I'm just their mother and their father's widow and I can never—I *must* never—be anything else.

PROFESSOR. But surely—surely—you can't mean that—why it's nonsense.

MRS. STANLEY. I wish it were—but it isn't, I'm afraid. You see, I've been through deep water with my children—rather deep and rather cold—and I'll do anything in this world not to lose them—anything. And if I must put away all else—for them—if I must shut the door on all the things of youth that I'm just beginning to learn to love all over again—for them—and just learn to be a little old lady before my time—for them—why, I'll do it—I'll do it if I must. (*A pause—suddenly.*) Yes—take these flowers, please. I've no business to wear them. (*Gives them to him.*)

PROFESSOR. Ha! (*He gets up and prowls about a moment.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Oh! I don't know why I'm talking like this. I never talked so much about myself to anyone in all my life.

PROFESSOR. Don't you know why you've done it?

MRS. STANLEY. No—I don't.

PROFESSOR. Then I'll tell you. It's because I understand you and you knew I would.

MRS. STANLEY. Then perhaps you'll help me.

PROFESSOR. Of course I will.

MRS. STANLEY. My hair's so awfully—— I suppose I'll have to make it gray. Where do they sell hair dye? At a drug store?

PROFESSOR. I never heard such nonsense in my life, and if you think I'm going to put up with it—look here, I'm going now—and I won't come back till I've thought of some way out of this.

MRS. STANLEY. Such as what?

PROFESSOR. Lord! I don't know—but I'll think of something—a man's brain must be made for something. Why, you poor daffodil—just poking your little head above the ground in the Spring—do you think I'm going to stand by and see you frost-bitten? Not much.

MRS. STANLEY. Spring! I'm afraid there's not much of that about me.

PROFESSOR. Indeed there is. Spring comes late some years and this is a late season and not only for you—for me, too. Had you thought of that?

MRS. STANLEY. W-what?

PROFESSOR. Oh, you hadn't. You selfish woman!

MRS. STANLEY. Eh!

PROFESSOR. That's what I said, selfish. Just look around you, daffodil. Don't you see the lonesome crocus just beside you? If you are frost-bitten, how shall he escape?

MRS. STANLEY. Poor crocus! I'm sorry for you,

but I didn't make you come up in all this frosty Spring weather——

PROFESSOR. (*Almost shouting*) Ah, didn't you? Who did, then? Do you think crocuses go about looking for frost? Not much, daffodil, not much. Just you wait. (*He claps on his hat and is about to rush out.*)

MRS. STANLEY. (*Checks him*) No. You mustn't go like that.

PROFESSOR. (*Filled with a sudden hope that she has changed her mind*) Oh, you dear——

MRS. STANLEY. (*Checking him*) No—I don't mean that. I wish I did—but—I don't. I mean you mustn't go with any hope that I shall change, for I shan't. I can't.

PROFESSOR. Oh, surely—you——

MRS. STANLEY. No—never—my two babies have lain so snug in my heart so long—the only things that have kept it warm at all—just now—these last few days—they've stirred uneasily in their nest and—well, you can't know how it hurt. It mustn't happen again—it can't. And so, when you go—you mustn't come back any more.

PROFESSOR. Ah, you don't mean that?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, I do.

PROFESSOR. Not even as a friend—as your best friend?

MRS. STANLEY. If you really are my friend——

PROFESSOR. Do you doubt it?

MRS. STANLEY. No—no—and that is why you must never come back any more. Don't you see—it is the only thing you can do for me.

PROFESSOR. Oh—is it?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

PROFESSOR. Look here! What kind of a man do you think I am?

MRS. STANLEY. Eh!

PROFESSOR. I'm head over heels in love with you

and you tell me that all I can do for you is to go away and bury myself.

MRS. STANLEY. Why, I never said anything of the——

PROFESSOR. And it isn't as if you didn't love me—for I think you do.

MRS. STANLEY. I—oh! Do you?

PROFESSOR. Can you look me in the eye and say you don't?

MRS. STANLEY. Of course I can, if I want to.

PROFESSOR. (*Smiling and approaching her hopefully*) Ah!

MRS. STANLEY. (*Avoiding him*) No—no—— Oh—what's the use—what's the use?

PROFESSOR. (*Beginning to lose his temper*) Very well, then—it's come to this—you're going to throw your life away, are you?

MRS. STANLEY. What?

PROFESSOR. That's what it amounts to. You're going to ruin your life and mine for those two little—brats.

MRS. STANLEY. Brats!

PROFESSOR. Well——

MRS. STANLEY. Brats!

PROFESSOR. (*Trying to mollify her*) Well, of course, I don't mean that——

MRS. STANLEY. Brats! Brats! My offspring!

PROFESSOR. I withdraw the word, but the fact is they're a pair of little despots and I'd like to put them both over my knee and spank them.

MRS. STANLEY. You look here, now, if there's any spanking done in this family, I'm going to do it.

PROFESSOR. It's a bargain! Shake hands on it.

MRS. STANLEY. Why, a month ago I'd never even seen you and now you're going to beat my children.

PROFESSOR. Oh, I say now——

MRS. STANLEY. Heavens! What an escape! If

you're like this now, what would you be after I'd married you.

PROFESSOR. (*More angry*) Aren't you going pretty fast? I haven't asked you to marry me.

MRS. STANLEY. What!

PROFESSOR. No. I have not.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I'll like to know what you call it.

PROFESSOR. I only said——

MRS. STANLEY. You with your daffodils and crocuses.

PROFESSOR. I only said I loved you.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, and now you want to beat my children!

PROFESSOR. (*Bewildered*) Lord! I think I'd better go.

MRS. STANLEY. I think so, too.

PROFESSOR. I'll write to you when you're——

MRS. STANLEY. I won't read it.

PROFESSOR. I'll call again to-morrow.

MRS. STANLEY. I won't see you.

PROFESSOR. Good lord, woman! Where's your generosity, where's your common sense—where's my hat? (*Exits.*)

SANBORN. (*Enters*) Who's that young man, Nellie?

MRS. STANLEY. That—oh, that's Mr. Crocus. (*Crossing L.*)

SANBORN. Kinder het up, wan't he?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

SANBORN. Nellie, what's the trouble? What's the matter?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, Father, why must the Spring time come in the Autumn?

SANBORN. Look here, Nellie, ain't you getting just a little mite mixed up?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, that's just the trouble.

SANBORN. Couldn't ye—couldn't ye tell me all

about it? (*Shakes her head.*) Couldn't give me no idea? (*She shakes her head.*) Ain't nobody been getting gay? (*She shakes her head.*) 'Cause if they is, they's a little life left in the old man yet, I guess. Don't want anybody licked? (*She shakes her head.*) Say, I'll bet a cookie that feller's tryin' to get you to marry him. That it? Gosh! Well, Nellie?

MRS. STANLEY. He's gone. I drove him away.

SANBORN. Well, of course if you don't like the feller——

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, what's the use—it's too late.

SANBORN. Too late.

MRS. STANLEY. I can never be anything but a mother. My two babies won't let me.

SANBORN. Well, Nellie, them babies of yourn ain't always goin' to be babies. Couldn't you sort of hold off for three or four years till ye got 'em weaned an' then——

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—and then I shall be a middle-aged woman—— Just now it's my Indian summer and you know how brief that is.

SANBORN. No, Nellie, it's only your spring time.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—and in a flash it will be winter. Winter when nothing matters. Winter when everything is over.

SANBORN. Now, Nellie, I hope you ain't acting foolish.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Rises*) Of course I am—but I can't help it.

SANBORN. Now, Nellie——

MRS. STANLEY. I suppose I'm just plain stupid. If I were clever, I wouldn't be in this mess. There's a lot of nonsense talked about mother love—and in a way it's a remarkable thing. It's indestructible, but it isn't always sensible. It isn't always wise for a mother to sacrifice herself for her children. It isn't always best even for the children. But we do



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and I suppose it's because, after all, that's the thing that satisfies us the most.

WARNING.

SANBORN. Well, Nellie, I guess it's a thing I dunno much about.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Sits chair L. of table R.C.*) No. As a rule, fathers don't.

(*Enter BOB—shakes hands with SANBORN.*)

BOB. Hello, Grandpa! I didn't hear you come in.

SANBORN. 'Tain't to be wondered at. The feller that went out, when I come in, was a lot noiser than me.

BOB. Oh, you mean old Giddy. Say, Mother, ain't he a peach?

MRS. STANLEY. Do you think so?

BOB. I sure do!

MRS. STANLEY. He wants to spank you.

BOB. (*LUCY starts downstairs*) What?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes. You and Lucy.

BOB. Well—of all the—— Well—Heaven is my witness.

LUCY. Look here, Mother, I want to speak to you.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I think you better speak to your grandfather. Don't you see him?

LUCY. Hello, grandfather—Mother, I just got to talk to you about something.

MRS. STANLEY. Not now please.

LUCY. But I got to. I just can't wait.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I'm afraid you'll have to—

LUCY. But, Mother, I've just got to——

MRS. STANLEY. I know perfectly well what you want to say and I won't hear one word of it.

LUCY AND BOB. Why, Mother!

MRS. STANLEY. Not one word. I'm sick to death

of the whole business. You can stay here and talk to yourself, your grandpa or the moon. I don't care a rap which. I'm off.

LUCY. Mother!

BOB. But, Mother, where are you going?

MRS. STANLEY. I'm going up to my room and smoke that cigarette.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I: *Same as Act II.*

TIME: *Some weeks after Act. II.*

On the wall, we see Dr. Spalding's picture, replacing the Japanese print. Also "Evening Prayer" is back on the table where stood Donatello's "Laughnig Boy."

AT RISE: *Discovered LUCY staring up at Dr. Spalding's picture. As she does so, a banjo is heard playing in the hall.*

LUCY. (*Going up to entrance*) Oh, for heaven's sake, do stop that thing!

BOB. (*Off stage*) I thought you liked it.

LUCY. Well, I'm tired of it. Just because grandpa gave it to you, that's no reason for playing it all the time.

BOB. (*Off stage*) Oh, all right.

(*Enter BOB.*)

LUCY. Look here, Bob, who put that picture back?

BOB. (*Staring at the picture*) Search me.

LUCY. You didn't do it?

BOB. Nope! Heaven is my witness. First I've seen of it.

LUCY. Then it must have been mother.

BOB. (*Sees Family Group back on the table*) Gosh! There's that thing back again, too. I

stuck it down cellar behind the coal bin. Say, Lucy, don't they look like the old scratch?

LUCY. Well—I don't really think—they look quite—appropriate.

BOB. Poor old mother—well—she's stuck 'em back here because she thinks we want 'em.. And it's all your fault.

LUCY. Bob Stanley!

BOB. Heaven is my witness. You know perfectly well you acted as if somebody'd desecrated father's grave.

LUCY. Bob Stanley, I don't know how you can stand there and say such stuff.

BOB. Look here, Luce, something's the matter with mother. Haven't you noticed it?

LUCY. Well, yes—I——

BOB. She's moping about something. What d'ye s'pose it is?

LUCY. How should I know?

BOB. Well, it's something. Haven't you got any idea?

LUCY. Well, perhaps I have.

(Enter MRS. STANLEY with an armful of fresh linen. She wears her old black gown again and looks as she did in Act I. Twins do not see her.)

BOB. What is it?

LUCY. I—don't think I'll tell you.

BOB. Oh, now, Luce.

LUCY. No—I wouldn't put such an idea into your head unless I was sure—because—well—it's just awful.

BOB. Luce!

MRS. STANLEY. Is your room all ready for grandpa, Lucy? You know he's coming back to-day.

LUCY. Yes, Mother.

MRS. STANLEY. All right, dear. (*She starts to go out.*)

BOB. (*After vainly motioning to LUCY to start the inquiry*) Look here, Mother.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear?

BOB. What did you go and put these old things back for? (*Indicating the picture and "Evening Prayer."*)

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, those—why, I thought you'd like it. (*Suppressing a smile.*) I only want to please you, you know.

BOB. Look here, Mother, we're kind of worried about you.

MRS. STANLEY. My goodness! What for?

BOB. Are you sure you're all right?

MRS. STANLEY. All right?

BOB. Yes. You're not sick or anything?

MRS. STANLEY. No—indeed. Why?

BOB. Well—we only thought you—well—we thought you'd been kind of queer and—well—kind of down in the mouth lately—and we—well—we just wondered—that's all.

MRS. STANLEY. Nonsense! I'm all right. You don't expect me to go around grinning all the time, do you?

BOB. No-o-o—— But——

MRS. STANLEY. You mustn't expect an old lady like me to act like a girl. You wouldn't like it, would you, Lucy?

LUCY. (*A little uncomfortable*) Well—I——

MRS. STANLEY. No—of course, you don't want anyone to think mother's queer. I'm all right. Mothers must grow old, you know. (*Door bell rings.*) See who it is.

(BOB and LUCY run out into the hall to see who the visitor is. MRS. STANLEY has time to look

up at Dr. Spalding's picture with a rueful smile of triumph before the twins come back with GRANDPA. The old man carries a brand new suitcase, wears a new suit of New York clothes, a red tie, and is pretty nearly smothered by the collection of assorted bundles he carries. LUCY and BOB ad lib as they usher in MR. SANBORN.)

SANBORN. Well, well, Nellie, how be you? (MRS. STANLEY gives him a kiss.)

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I'm fine. Here, let's take your things. Why, you look like an expressman.

(MRS. STANLEY and the twins take the bundles, suitcase, hat and coat.)

SANBORN. (*As he sees them eyeing him*) What's the matter?

MRS. STANLEY. Your tie.

SANBORN. (*A little shamefaced*) Yep. 'Tis kind of loud, ain't it? (*He fingers the tie.*) It was give to me by a friend. Guess I'll have to shed it before I git to Worthington.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, do sit down, Father, and tell us all about New York. (*They all sit.*)

SANBORN. Well, Nellie, it's quite a place. Gimme that box, Bobby—the biggest one. (*BOB gives it to him and he opens it as he talks.*) Picked up a little sovenoor for ye, Nellie. Thought it might come in handy. (*He takes out a handsome set of furs.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Father! You darling. (*She puts them on.*) Oh, children, aren't they wonderful?

BOB. Swell—all right.

MRS. STANLEY. Father! How sweet of you.

SANBORN. Do you like 'em?

MRS. STANLEY. Like them! Why, Father! All my life I've dreamed of having a set of furs.

SANBORN. (*Indicating another box to BOB*)
That's yours, Bobby.

BOB. Mine! (*He begins to open it.*)

SANBORN. Yep. Guess it'll fit ye. Near enough.
Hope so, anyhow.

BOB. (*Producing a Persian wool sweater jacket*)
Well, Heaven is my witness!

SANBORN. Try it on—if it don't fit I can send it
back. I hope it fits. (*BOB takes off his coat and
tries on sweater.*) How is it—eh?

BOB. Just right.

MRS. STANLEY. How on earth did you ever think
of it, Father?

SANBORN. Well, there's a little sense left in the
old man yet, I guess. That's yours, Lucy. (*LUCY
opens a third box.*)

LUCY. Oh, Grandpa!

SANBORN. Had quite a time gettin' that—quite
a time, I tell ye. (*LUCY produces her present. She
suddenly unfolds it. It turns to be a dainty silk
nightgown.*)

LUCY. (*All blushes*) Oh, Grandpa! (*MOTHER
and BOB laugh delightedly.*)

SANBORN. What's the matter? Don't ye like it?

LUCY. Oh—yes—it's lovely—only——

SANBORN. Silk, begosh—both on 'em. 'Nother
one in the box. (*LUCY pounces on it.*) Had quite
a time gettin' them things. (*He grins reminis-
cently.*) Young woman I bought 'em of seemed to
enjoy herself considerable.

LUCY. Oh—they're lovely, Grandpa!

SANBORN. Well, now—d'ye calc'late they're worth
—a kiss—on the old man's withered cheek? (*LUCY
gives him a hearty hug and kiss.*) There! That
pays the bill, I guess.

LUCY. I'm going right upstairs to try them on.

SANBORN. Not both of 'em to onct?

LUCY. Oh—no—— (*She exits up the stairs.*)

SANBORN. Hope they fit. Young woman I bought 'em of seemed to think they might. I kind of asked her advice—I ain't had a great deal of experience in that line myself.

MRS. STANLEY. Bob, take grandpa's bag up to his room.

BOB. Sure—sure I will.

SANBORN. (*Anxiously, the idea being that it contains bottles*) Go easy with that bag there, Bob.

BOB. (*Looks at it*) Say, get on to the initials.

SANBORN. Yep—that's on the latest things in New York, they tell me.

BOB. Gee! It's heavy.

SANBORN. Well, they ain't no gold bricks in it. (*BOB exits.*) Did Bob get the banjo, Nellie?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, indeed. It's such fun. He's learning to play it. But do tell me all about it, Father. You must have had a splendid time.

SANBORN. Well, Nellie, I give Noo York quite a scrapin'. (*He takes out a cigar—produces a silver cigar lighter and elaborately lights up. Blows out a cloud of smoke.*)

MRS. STANLEY. I suppose that's another Lillian Russell.

SANBORN. Nope—this cigar is a John Drew.

MRS. STANLEY. But do tell me all about New York.

SANBORN. Nellie, it's quite a place. (*Reminiscently.*)

MRS. STANLEY. I suppose so.

SANBORN. Yes—quite a place.

MRS. STANLEY. Where did you stay?

SANBORN. I put up at the Waldorf Astory.

MRS. STANLEY. Father—you didn't?

SANBORN. Yes, of course I did. It's about three hundred times as big as the court house up to Worthington. First few days I darn near got lost in the rooms there.

MRS. STANLEY. How did you ever find it?

SANBORN. Went there in a taxicab from the depot. I told the young man to drive me there.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh! Yes, of course.

SANBORN. Them taxicabs is great—little automobile they be—got clocks on them—clock's got a face sits up lookin' at ye all the time an' every few seconds it says ten cents more. First few days I darn near ruined my health watchin' that blamed clock. Then I see if I was going to have any fun at all, I'd have to learn myself not to look at the cussed thing. So I done it—had to—ridin' round all the time like I was.

MRS. STANLEY. You didn't have to ride all the time. Why not walk?

SANBORN. Didn't dast to. 'Fraid I'd git lost, or run down or somethin'.

MRS. STANLEY. But what did you do—where'd you go—what did you see?

SANBORN. Well, Nellie, I didn't see Lillian Russell. I was a little too late. The poor thing's dead, they say. But I guess I seed most everything else. I seed Theda Bara! Yes—sir-re!

MRS. STANLEY. Did you see Dr. Parkhurst?

SANBORN. Well, I guess I did. Heard him preach one Sunday mornin'. Looks a good bit like his picture.

MRS. STANLEY. What did he preach about?

SANBORN. Well, now, Nellie, I don't know. Fact is—well—I guess I kind of dozed off.

MRS. STANLEY. You went to sleep in church! Father!

SANBORN. I know, Nellie, I guess I'd ought to be ashamed o' myself, but I couldn't seem to help it. You see, I was up awful late the night before. I went to see a queer kind of show they call the Midnight Frolics.

MRS. STANLEY. Father!

SANBORN. Up on top of a roof 'twas—music and dancin' and carryin's on an' such things. Girls sing a song—then they'd come down to the tables where we were settin' an' ask you to hook up the back of their dresses.

MRS. STANLEY. Father!

SANBORN. Yes, that's how I felt. It made me feel uncomfortable. An' one day I went up in the Woolworth Tower. Gosh! Them elevators. When I got to the top I thought certain sure I'd left my stummick down on the sidewalk. But the things I see from the top—it made me think of that place in the Bible where the Devil took the Lord up to that high place and showed him all the powers and principalities of the world.

MRS. STANLEY. Did you see the Brooklyn Bridge?

SANBORN. Well, I guess I did. Stock Exchange, Aquarium, Coney Island. One night I went to see that Yankee Doodle Dandy feller, George M. Cohan.

MRS. STANLEY. You did?

SANBORN. Yes. Great little feller. I'd kinda like to know him. Oh, Lord, Nellie, the things I done in that village. Makes me dizzy when I think of 'em.

MRS. STANLEY. Father, what was the finest thing you saw in all New York?

SANBORN. Well, Nellie, I guess it was General Grant's tomb. You know, Nellie, your grandfather fought with Gin'ral Grant. I remember readin' in the Springfield *Republican* years ago when they put the old Gin'ral in that big tomb. It's a great big, round granite thing—last till the day o' Doom, I should think. The old Gin'ral's buried down in a sort of pit at the bottom of it an' you stand up there behind a railin' and look down at it. I guess I must have stood there an hour. All them old days was goin' through my head. The day we heard your

grandpa was killed at Petersburg. The day we heard Abraham Lincoln was shot—oh, things I hadn't thought of fer a long time. An' the grim old Gin'ral sleepin' away the years down there—well—somehow he seemed to stand for it all. It kind of stirred me up an' made me feel kinda weepy and proud—proud of my father and the country he died for.

MRS. STANLEY. I'm so glad you went, Father.

SANBORN. Well, I guess so. An' to-morrer, I'm a-goin' back to your Aunt Fanny and the old farm an' I s'pose I shan't never stir a peg off it again.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I don't know.

SANBORN. No. Don' s'pose I shall. But I've been out among 'em. Allus wanted to—and now I've been. Ah! Hum! *(He heaves a deep sigh of satisfaction.)* Well, Nellie, how be you?

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, I'm all right.

SANBORN. Happy?

MRS. STANLEY. Of course. Why not?

SANBORN. Seemed to me the last time I seed ye, you was kinda—— *(Door bell rings.)*

MRS. STANLEY. Who can that be? *(She looks out the window toward the porch.)* It's a man, Father. You answer the door—tell him I'm not in. *(She is clearly much perturbed and goes hastily to the door leading to the dining-room.)* Well, you can tell him what you please—only I won't see him.

SANBORN. Who is it?

MRS. STANLEY. It's Mr. Crocus.

(She escapes almost hysterically into the dining-room. SANBORN, after a moment's quizzical hesitation, goes out and a moment later is heard greeting the PROFESSOR.)

PROFESSOR. *(Heard off stage)* How are you?

My name's Giddings. I suppose you're Mrs. Stanley's father?

SANBORN. Yes, I s'pose I am. Step right in, won't ye?

PROFESSOR. Thanks.

(A pause. Enter PROFESSOR and SANBORN.)

SANBORN. I'm sorry—but my darter ain't in. She—she's jest gone down to the village to do some shoppin'—or—or—somethin'.

PROFESSOR. Thank you—but the person I wish to see is *Miss Stanley*.

SANBORN. *(Surprised)* I want to know.

PROFESSOR. Exactly.

SANBORN. Oh—excuse *me*—my mistake.

PROFESSOR. Is she in?

SANBORN. Oh, yes—*she's* to home. I'll get her down for ye, right off. *(He goes to the stairs and calls up.)* Lucy—Lucy! You got a caller. Lucy! *(No answer from above.)* Guess I'll have to go up an' route her out. You see, she's busy tryin' on a—

(He goes upstairs. Left alone, the PROFESSOR looks about—presently he sees Dr. Spalding's picture. This puzzles him, then he sees "Family Group." He cogitates a moment, then he sees the point and smiles rather ruefully. As he does so, LUCY comes down the stairs.)

BOB. *(Coming down the stairs behind LUCY and is seen crossing to hall door)* Tell mother I've gone to see old Syd, will you, Luce?

LUCY. All right.

PROFESSOR. *(As she advances into room, he goes and takes her hand)* How do you do, Miss Stanley?

LUCY. I'm very well, thank you. Grandpa said

you asked for me. Of course, I know he'd got it mixed up but he would have it. I'll go and call mother for you.

PROFESSOR. Oh, then she's at home!

LUCY. Why, yes.

PROFESSOR. Oh! Nevertheless, it is *you* I asked for.

LUCY. Me?

PROFESSOR. And you I want to see. (*A pause.*) Please sit down. (*Hesitatingly LUCY sits armchair L.C.*) Miss Stanley, I have called to ask your permission to pay my addresses to your mother. (*LUCY rises with a gasp.*) Now, don't be frightened. Please sit down—please. (*LUCY sits again.*) There is no occasion for alarm. You are quite in control of the situation. It is going to be just as you say: (*A pause.*) May I go on?

LUCY. I—I suppose so. (*She is most uncomfortable.*)

PROFESSOR. I have not been able to see your mother for two solid weeks. I have called repeatedly. She will not see me. I have written her three letters. She answered only one. Will you read it? (*Offers the letter to her.*)

LUCY. No—thank you—I'd rather not.

PROFESSOR. Then I will. (*Reads.*) "My dear Professor Giddings: Of course, I know that you did not mean to call them bra——" Excuse me, oh, here's the place. "You are very, very kind but it is all no use. My children are all the world to me and I must try, it seems, to be as old as they think I am." Do you understand what she means?

LUCY. No—not exactly.

PROFESSOR. Miss Stanley, how would you feel if I were to ask you to marry me?

LUCY. (*Rising in alarm*) Professor Giddings!

PROFESSOR. Now don't be afraid. I'm not going to. If I did, how would you feel?

LUCY. I guess I'd be frightened. (*Sits.*)

PROFESSOR. Your mother was married when she was as young as you are now.

LUCY. Ye-e-s.

PROFESSOR. And to a man as old as I am. In other words, I am old enough to be your father. And I wish I were. I am two years older than your mother. Have you any respect whatever for my judgment?

LUCY. Why—of course.

PROFESSOR. Then perhaps you'll bear with me for a moment. I'm quite aware you find this interview a painful one. I do myself and yet—Miss Stanley, surely you do not intend or want that all your mother's future life shall be devoted to being your mother. (*A pause.*) Had it occurred to you that you may some time marry and have a home of your own—and your brother, too? What's going to happen to your mother then?

LUCY. My mother will always have a place in my home, Professor Giddings.

PROFESSOR. Of course. But is a place in someone's home—even in the home of one we love—ever quite the same as one's own home? She'd always be just your mother. Do you really want her to be—always nothing but that?

LUCY. (*With a touch of defiance*) She'd be a lot better off being just my mother than being just your wife.

PROFESSOR. (*With a smile*) There may be something in that. However—— (*He turns to Dr. Spalding's picture and Family Group.*) Is it your mother's taste, may I ask, that is represented by that picture and that—er—decoration, there? (*LUCY drops her eyes.*) Just as I thought. (*Sits.*) Really, Miss Stanley, aren't you just a bit of a tyrant? (*Sits on chair beside LUCY. LUCY makes a movement of protest.*) Now I know you don't mean to be. But

doesn't that letter I read to you give you a glimpse of your mother's heart that you have never seen before?

LUCY. (*With something like a sob*) My mother's the sweetest mother in the world.

PROFESSOR. I quite agree with you. She is the dearest person I have ever known. She ought to be the happiest person in the world. Do you think she is?

LUCY. I know she loves me very dearly.

PROFESSOR. She does indeed. She loves you so much that, if you say the word, she'll turn her back on everything and everybody else for you. If you say the word, she's willing to spend the rest of her life in being just your mother. If you say the word, she's willing to put away all the brightness of life that might be hers and grow old many years before her time—if you say the word. Are you going to say it?

LUCY. Oh! I think you're perfectly horrid. (*Trying not to cry.*)

PROFESSOR. I'm sorry.

LUCY. I want my mother to be happy just as much as you do. And she *was* happy, too—till you came along and spoiled everything.

PROFESSOR. Indeed!

LUCY. Yes.

PROFESSOR. Spoiled everything—come now, what have I spoiled?

LUCY. I wish she'd never seen you.

PROFESSOR. She need never see me again, if you say the word. I shall never come between you and her. You know as well as I do that, if I did, she would never forgive me. No—if I ever come to her again it is you who must bring us together. That's all, Miss Stanley—— (*Rises.*) There's a football game this afternoon. You're going, I suppose? (*She nods yes.*) With some young man? (*She*

nods.) Not your brother, I presume. (*She shakes her head.*) Is your mother going?

LUCY. (*Shakes head.*)

PROFESSOR. Ah, I see. Very well. I am going now. And I put myself in your hands. I have procured two seats for the game. If you like, you may tell your mother that I shall call for her at two o'clock precisely. But if, in the meantime, I hear nothing from you, I shall know you have not told her and I shall not call. Good-day. (*Starts to go. He meets BOB coming in with JOHNSON.*) Ah, good morning, Stanley—good morning, Johnson.

BOB AND SYDNEY. Good morning, Professor, etc., etc.

PROFESSOR. Of course you're going to the game?

SYDNEY. Oh, yes, sir. Aren't you?

PROFESSOR. (*With a look at LUCY*) I don't know—yet.

(*He exits, followed by BOB acting as host.*)

SYDNEY. (*Smiling self-consciously*) How do?

LUCY. (*Still shaken by the preceding interview*) Oh, I'm all right.

SYDNEY. (*Dimly sensing something strange*) Anything—er—anything wrong?

LUCY. (*Making an effort*) Oh, no—no, indeed. Please sit down. (*LUCY sits on couch. SYDNEY on the chair L.C.*)

SYDNEY. Great day for the game.

LUCY. Yes.

SYDNEY. Thought I'd come in—just to—just to say I'd come 'round for you a little early. Going to be some crowd, you know.

LUCY. Yes, I suppose so.

SYDNEY. I like to get there early. Then we can see 'em practice.

LUCY. Yes. (*A pause.*)

SYDNEY. Anything wrong? (*Sits on couch.*)

LUCY. No—no.

SYDNEY. You could tell me, you know.

LUCY. Yes—I know. (*A pause.*)

SYDNEY. You wouldn't look at me in class today.

LUCY. Oh, please, Syd—

SYDNEY. Have I done anything?

LUCY. No—no—oh, no.

SYDNEY. Then—

LUCY. Oh, please don't ask questions. It isn't anything to do with you.

SYDNEY. Anything I could do?

LUCY. No—nothing anybody could do. I'm a little pig—that's what I am, and there's nothing anybody can do about it.

SYDNEY. Lucy! (*Timidly takes her hand, then suddenly in a wave of self-consciousness lets it go again.*) Er—great day for the game.

LUCY. Yes.

SYDNEY. I'm awfully glad you're going with me.

LUCY. I'm afraid I shan't be very good company.

SYDNEY. Best in the world for me.

LUCY. Oh, you don't know me.

SYDNEY. (*Ironically*) Is that so!

LUCY. I'm just a selfish pig.

SYDNEY. Say, you can just knock off on that kind of stuff. D'ye think I'm going to sit here and—and—well, I'm not—that's all.

LUCY. Don't see how you're going to help it.

SYDNEY. Why, you're just the very nicest—

LUCY. Oh, you mustn't talk like that.

SYDNEY. Well, I guess I better go.

(*They both rise. He looks at her a moment. Suddenly he gives her a very boyish, awkward kiss.*)

LUCY. Syd! (*She draws away from him.*) Oh, Syd!

SYDNEY. Well—I—I just couldn't help it. (*She turns her back on him and looks out of the window. Her bosom heaving.*) I'm sorry! Now, I s'pose you're awfully mad at me. Well, I don't blame you.

LUCY. No—no—I'm not mad—but I guess you better go.

SYDNEY. Can I—can I come back? I mean, you will go to the game with me?

LUCY. Yes.

SYDNEY. Lucy! (*He advances toward her quickly.*)

LUCY. No, Syd, no—— (*Crossing to R.C.*) Please—you must go—I—I've got something to do. Oh, I'm not mad at you—but you've got to go now—you've just got to go.

SYDNEY. All right. (*Going.*) I'll do anything you say. All you've got to do is crook your little finger.

LUCY. Oh! Syd! You *are* nice.

SYDNEY. Luce! (*He meditates another advance on her, but she checks him.*)

LUCY. Oh, Syd, please—please go.

SYDNEY. All right! All you got to do is crook your little finger.

SLAM.

(*He exits. The outside door closes behind him.*)

LUCY *hesitates—half between smiles and tears. She goes to the door and calls at R.*)

LUCY. Mother—oh, Mother——

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear?

LUCY. Will you please come here?

(*Enter MRS. STANLEY.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Just a moment, dear. (*Enter. LUCY crosses to L.*) What is it, dear?

LUCY. Mother, don't you want to go to the football game?

MRS. STANLEY. Why, darling?

LUCY. Don't you?

MRS. STANLEY. (*Timidly*) Why, do you think it would do?

LUCY. Oh, Mother, everybody does it.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes, dear, I know. I'd love it—all the pretty girls dressed up in their best—and the crowds and the flags and the cheering—and the singing—— Oh, I'd love it, but——

LUCY. Mother, Professor Giddings wants you to go with him.

MRS. STANLEY. Lucy!

LUCY. He's going to call for you at two o'clock.

MRS. STANLEY. Lucy, dear!

LUCY. Yes, Mother.

MRS. STANLEY. No—I'm afraid it wouldn't do.

LUCY. Oh, Mother, please go—please.

MRS. STANLEY. You—you really want me?

LUCY. Oh, yes—yes, I do.

MRS. STANLEY. You nice—offspring. Perhaps—no—we'd better leave things as they are, my dear. Mothers had better stick to their jobs, I think.

LUCY. Oh, Mother—don't—don't make me feel so like a worm.

MRS. STANLEY. Darling! What's got into you?

LUCY. Mother—I'm such a pig.

MRS. STANLEY. But dearest, you can't be a pig *and* a worm, too.

LUCY. Yes, I can—because I am. Oh, Mother, it used to make me mad when you called me a child—but I *was* one—just a silly, silly child—but I'm not going to be one any more.

MRS. STANLEY. What *are* you going to be?

LUCY. I'm going to be a woman, Mother. I've

grown up. Oh, Mother, dear, I want you to be happy. I want it more than anything else in the world.

MR. STANLEY. Why, my darling!

LUCY. (*In a passion of love and self-abasement*) Oh, Mother, dear, I hate myself—I'm such a fool—such a selfish little fool. But oh, Mother, dearest, I do so want you to be happy and if you're not I—I just can't stand it. (*She throws herself in a passion of sobbing into her mother's arms.* MRS. STANLEY *sits armchair L.C. LUCY in her arms.*) Oh, Mother—Mother, dear.

MRS. STANLEY. (*Comforting her*) There, there—my darling—don't—don't—you mustn't cry—mother understands—there, there—my darling. (*It is her baby in her arms again.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE II: *Lights down.*

When the curtain rises it is late afternoon of the same day. The room is nearly but not quite dark. A plate of sandwiches covered with a napkin awaiting the homecomers, on table R. Through the window we see the last gleam of the Autumn sunset. Though we cannot see them very clearly at present, the Japanese print and the "Laughing Boy" are again in their places. Presently the outside door is heard to open and LUCY and BOB enter into the darkening room.)

BOB. (*Complainingly*) Now look-a-here, Luce, what the mischief are you up to anyhow, hustling me home like this?

LUCY. Oh—you hush up and turn on the lights.

BOB. Dog-gone. We'll miss half the fun stickin' around here in the house. (*He turns up the lights.*) Everybody else out celebratin' an' everything. 'Tisn't every day we smear a whitewash on Hampshire.

LUCY. Sit down, Bob. (*Rather scared.*) Bob, what would you say if I told you that——

BOB. Told me what?

LUCY. I—I don't know how to tell you.

BOB. (*Exasperated*) Well, Heaven is my witness! What's the matter with you?

LUCY. Bob, we—we haven't been treating mother very well.

BOB. What!

LUCY. She's not an old lady, you know.

BOB. Well, who said she was?

LUCY. She's only thirty-eight.

BOB. Well, I know it, I guess. Did you drag me home just to tell me how old mother is?

LUCY. Bob, suppose mother—suppose she—suppose—now you mustn't get excited.

BOB. Great Caesar's ghost! Luce, why can't you come to the point?

LUCY. Well, suppose I were to tell you that—that mother might get married again?

BOB. Luce!

LUCY. Yes.

BOB. Well, Heaven is my witness!

LUCY. Now, Bob, you mustn't be angry.

BOB. Phew!

LUCY. She's got a perfect right to, if she wants to.

BOB. I say, Luce, you don't mean old Giddy!

LUCY. He's not old at all.

BOB. Luce!

LUCY. He's no older than father was when mother married him.

BOB. (*Collapsing*) Oh! Boy!

LUCY. Now, Bob, dear, you mustn't get excited about it. It's all natural enough.

BOB. Look here, d'you mean to say that mother has told you that——

LUCY. She hasn't told me anything at all.

BOB. Then how d'you know?

LUCY. She hasn't—but *he* has.

BOB. What!

LUCY. Yes.

BOB. (*Rise*) Well, I should think he ought to have spoken to me.

LUCY. Do you?

BOB. Well, ain't I the head of the family? What'd he say?

LUCY. He asked my permission to pay his addresses to mother.

BOB. (*Aghast*) Well, what d'you know about that? (*Crosses L.*)

LUCY. Oh, Bob, I do hope you're not going to be horrid or—or—anything.

BOB. Why, the old goat!

LUCY. Bob, you mustn't talk like that.

BOB. Well, I like his nerve.

LUCY. Oh, Bob, don't you see, if it's going to make mother happy——

BOB. But, Luce, it's so queer.

LUCY. What d'you mean, queer?

BOB. Well, mother being a widow and—and well—you know—our mother.

LUCY. But, Bob, you and I are grown up now. By and by—we—well, we might get married ourselves and then——

BOB. Well, I guess I could take care of mother anyhow——

LUCY. Of course, but——

BOB. She'd always have a home with me.

LUCY. (*Repeating the PROFESSOR unconsciously*) Yes, of course, but having a home *with* someone isn't quite the same as having a home of your own. I can't quite see mother without a home of her own.

BOB. Gee! It's queer.

LUCY. Oh, I know just how you feel. At first I thought I just couldn't stand it—and then—something happened—something queer—and—well—I got to thinking and I made up my mind our mother never's had very much fun in her life—yet.

BOB. Well, now you put it like that I don't s'pose she's had—had what you'd call fun.

LUCY. Well, I think she ought to and if this—well—that's the way I feel about it.

BOB. Say, Luce, you're a pretty good sort after all.

LUCY. Well, that's the way I feel. (BOB *kisses* LUCY.)

BOB. Gee! It'll be queer, though.

LUCY. Queer?

BOB. Yes. Going to class to recite to your step-father.

LUCY. I don't care! I don't care for anything, if only it's what she wants.

BOB. (*Helping himself to a sandwich*) Gee! What'll we call him?

LUCY. That's so.

BOB. Sound foolish to call him professor, wouldn't it?

LUCY. Ye-s, I s'pose it would.

BOB. And I *won't* call him father.

LUCY. Of course not. He'd hate it anyway.

BOB. I got it. We'll just call him "Sir." How's that?

LUCY. I guess that's the best we can do.

BOB. Gee! We're funny! Sittin' here jawing as if it was all over. Maybe she won't have him at all.

LUCY. Maybe not—but I bet she does.

BOB. What makes you think so?

LUCY. Well, I've—I've got a presentiment.

BOB. That's feminine for hunch. Mother as a blushing bride! Wow! (*Sits chair* R.C.)

LUCY. But wouldn't she look sweet in her bridal veil. Ah, Bob, I can just see her.

BOB. Oh, you orange blossoms!

LUCY. (*Sighs*) But of course we'll never see her wearing them.

BOB. Why not?

LUCY. Widows never do, you know. But wouldn't it be just sweet to see her dressed like that—spe-

cially because we weren't there when she—when she—got married—for us.

MARY. (*Heard calling off R.*) Oooh—ooh!

LUCY. Now mind, don't you tell. Not one word or I'll skin you alive. (*MARY HADLEY enters.*) Hello, Mary.

BOB. My Lord!

MARY. Hello.

LUCY. I thought you were with mother.

MARY. She's coming along. She's invited a whole crowd here to have some lemonade.

LUCY. Oh, goodness! I'll have to hurry up and get things ready. (*LUCY exits.*)

BOB. Gee! I'm sorry.

MARY. What for?

BOB. Why—skipping off and leaving you like that.

MARY. Oh!

BOB. It wasn't all my fault, but I'm awfully sorry.

MARY. (*Indifferently*) Oh—that—that's all right. I didn't hardly notice you'd gone.

BOB. (*Dashed*) Oh! Well, I couldn't help it because— Well, Lucy just dragged me home by main force, you see—she had something she wanted to tell me.

MARY. A secret?

BOB. Well—yes.

MARY. (*Sits on sofa*) Oh! What fun! Come right here and tell me at once.

BOB. (*Sits beside her*) Afraid I can't.

MARY. What?

BOB. Well, if I tell you then it won't be a secret any more.

MARY. Well! I guess I can keep a secret. What is it?

BOB. Sorry, can't.

MARY. Won't, you mean.

BOB. No—can't.

MARY. Oh! (*Hurt.*) Well, if that's how you feel—all right for you.

BOB. Oh, Mary, for heaven's sake, don't get sore—please.

MARY. I'm not.

BOB. Yes, you are, too.

MARY. I'm not. I don't care about your old secret.

BOB. You know I'd tell you if I'd tell anybody in the whole world.

MARY. Would you?

BOB. I'll say I would.

MARY. Honest?

BOB. Honest Injun! (*She goes close to him and he takes her hand.*)

MARY. Oh, you *are* a nice man, aren't you?

(*BOB meditates kissing her, but as he hesitates the crowd comes in. BOB goes out at R. LUCY enters.*)

LUCY. Come right in—come right in, folks—tea'll be ready right away.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, so here you are—we thought we'd lost you. (*MRS. STANLEY wears her new furs and under them the pretty dress that came from New York. Her yellow hair is done up smartly, her eyes are bright and laughing. She looks ten years younger. All the others are in high spirits, too. Several of them, headed by GRANDPA, carry the college flag of Sinclair—green, with a big white S displayed upon it.*) Well, do take off your things, please. Father, won't you just light that fire?

SANBORN. Why, sure, Nellie— (*He does so and presently the room is full of firelight, and laughing young people.*)

SYDNEY. I say, Lucy, can't I help you?

LUCY. You can go and see what's become of Bob, if you like.

SYDNEY. (*Dashed at being sent away*) Oh, all right. (*Goes out R.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Please, everybody, do sit down and make yourselves at home. Oh! Wasn't it fun? I don't know when I've enjoyed myself so much.

JIM. Some game, what? Twelve to nothing.

CHARLIE. That last touchdown, Professor—wasn't that a peach?

PROFESSOR. It certainly was—young Taylor ran that ball down sixty yards if it was a foot.

MRS. STANLEY. And such cheering. I couldn't hear myself think. Oh, but I do hope that boy wasn't hurt much.

PROFESSOR. Oh—you mean Walker—no, nothing serious, I think.

ALICE. I thought his leg was broken.

JIM. No—just a sprained ankle.

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I couldn't tell what was going on most of the time—but I liked it. (*Enter BOB and SYDNEY with the hot water.*) What did you think of it, Father?

SANBORN. Looked like a free-for-all fight to me.

PROFESSOR. Did you like it?

SANBORN. I liked watchin' it a blame sight better'n I'd a liked doin' it.

BOB. (*To the PROFESSOR*) Great game, sir, wasn't it, *Sir!*

PROFESSOR. Splendid. Never saw a better.

LUCY. (*Offering him a sandwich*) Will you have a sandwich, *Sir!*

PROFESSOR. (*Sensing a hidden meaning. Puzzled*) Why—er—thank you. (*BOB and SYDNEY hand the tea around.*)

SANBORN. Professor, d'you mean to tell me most of them boys won't be laid up for a week or so?

PROFESSOR. Oh, no, they'll all be around to-morrow—except perhaps the sprained ankle chap.

SANBORN. Well, they certainly make 'em tough nowadays, don't they?

JIM. I guess that'll hold Hampshire for a while.

SYDNEY. Fellow from my town's a Hampshire man. Always telling me what they'd do to us. Wait till I see him—that's all.

CHARLIE. Oh, you twelve to nothing!

BOB. I think I'll try for the team next year.

SANBORN. Oh—hold on there, Bob.

BOB. Oh—I know I'm under weight now—but I'll be bigger next year. (*To PROFESSOR.*) Don't you think so, *Sir*?

PROFESSOR. Very probably.

SANBORN. There was one feller there smaller than you be, Bobbie.

BOB. Oh, yes, Spike Andrews, our quarterback.

SANBORN. Yes, he was just about big enough for a *quarterback*, I should think.

SYDNEY. Some little catamount, that Spike.

SANBORN. 'Bout as big as a pint of peanuts.

LUCY. (*To JIM*) Have a sandwich, Jim?

JIM. Sure! I could eat a walrus.

ALICE. (*Giggling*) Now, Jimmie, behave.

MRS. STANLEY. Look here, now, why can't we have a little singing?

LUCY. Oh, yes—yes!

PROFESSOR. Song of the classes—why not? You, Johnson? Heard you warbling on the Chapel steps the other evening.

MRS. STANLEY. So did I. You were remarking that "You loved your love in the Springtime, you loved your love in the Fall."

SYDNEY. (*Blushing*) Oh, say now! (*PROFESSOR gets the banjo from the table and sits L.C.*) Lord! I can't sing. (*Ad lib from all the boys and girls,*

urging SYDNEY to sing. He sings.) When Freshmen first we came to town——

ALL. Fol-de-rol—de-rol—rol—rol.

SYDNEY. Examinations made us frown.

ALL. Fol-de-rol—de-rol—rol—rol.

Here's to good old Sin-Sinclair.

Fol-de-rol—de-rol—rol—rol.

Here's to good old Sin-Sinclair.

Fol-de-rol—de-rol—rol—rol.

SYDNEY. As Sophomores we're lazy chaps.

ALL. Fol-de-rol, etc.

SYDNEY. Electing all the easy snaps.

ALL. Fol-de-rol—de-rol—rol—rol.

Here's to good old Sin-Sinclair, etc.

SYDNEY. In Junior year we take our ease.

ALL. Fol-de-rol, etc.

SYDNEY. In smoking pipes and singing glees.

ALL. Fol-de-rol, etc.

SYDNEY. In Senior year we play our parts.

ALL. Fol-de-rol, etc.

SYDNEY. Then out into the world we go.

ALL. Fol-de-rol, etc.

SYDNEY. To glorify our college so.

ALL. Fol-de-rol, etc.

JIM. Now—three cheers for old Sinclair——
One—two—three.

ALL. S—I—N—C—L—A—I—R,

Ah, E. A. Ah—E. A. Ah——

Yea—Varsity.

PROFESSOR. Now—"Alma Mater." Please—just one verse—altogether.

(The whole crowd now sings "Alma Mater." The song is a fine simple college anthem—full of feeling and melody. It is, in fact, the anthem of Brown University, slightly adapted. It runs as follows):

ALL.

"Alma Mater, we hail thee with loyal devotion
And bring to thy altar our off'rings of praise,
Our hearts swell within us with loyal emotion
As the name of Sinclair in loud chorus we raise.
The happiest moments of youth's fleeting hours
We pass 'neath the shade of these time-honored
walls.

And sorrows as transient as April's brief showers
Have clouded our lives in those dear college halls."

JIM. (*The first to discover the bonfire outside*)
Hey! Look-a that, will you?

SYDNEY. Gee! The Sophs have started the bon-
fire already.

LUCY. Oh, let's all go and see it.

ALICE. Oh, let's—let's——

THE OTHERS. Sure—hurry—come on, etc.

(*The young folks all depart in a babel of high
spirits.*)

MRS. STANLEY. Lucy, don't forget your rubbers.

LUCY. (*Disgusted*) Oh, Mother——

MRS. STANLEY. Now, Lucy——

LUCY. Oh, Mother——

SYDNEY. Oh, Luce, do hur-ree up!

(*LUCY runs out. Her mother turns with a smile
of cheerful resignation to the PROFESSOR. As
she does so, LUCY darts in again.*)

LUCY. Oh, Mother, won't you come, too?

MRS. STANLEY. No, thanks, dear. (*LUCY sud-
denly throws her arms about her mother, gives her a
heartly hug and kiss.*) Why, you darling offspring!

LUCY. (*With half an eye on the PROFESSOR*)
Well, I—I just thought I would! (*Then like a
whirlwind she is gone.*)

BOB. (*Embraces mother*) Won't you come along Sir? (*Exits.*)

PROFESSOR. (*To SANBORN*) Wouldn't you like to go and see the bonfire?

SANBORN. Oh, I guess not.

MRS. STANLEY. Well—someone's got to.

SANBORN. Eh?

MRS. STANLEY. Why—er—I mean—someone's got to go and tell those children not to forget to come home to supper.

SANBORN. (*He looks at his daughter curiously, is puzzled at first, then he sees that she wants him to go*) Oh, yes—I guess I do want to see a bonfire. Come to think of it, I ain't seen a bonfire in a good many years. (*He gets into his overcoat helped by the PROFESSOR. Then he sits again on the couch.*) Not since I used to go skating on the mill pond moonlight nights when I was a boy—and we all used to fight to strap on Daisy Miller's skates for her. There was somethin' about strappin' on Daisy Miller's skates! Hum! Poor Daisy, been dead for thirty years, I guess. We used to sit around the bonfire an' toast something or other. Let me see. What was it, now.

MRS. STANLEY. Marshmallows?

SANBORN. Yes, guess 'twas. An' ask each other how big the moon looked to you. Ever play that game, Professor?

PROFESSOR. Oh, yes. Adam and Eve used to play it, I think.

SANBORN. (*Getting to the door*) Daisy always used to say it looked as big as a barrel-head to her—never looker no bigger'n a quarter of a dollar to me.

MRS. STANLEY. (*As the old man seems to forget he's going out*) Don't forget supper at half-past six.

SANBORN. (*Absently*) Hm!

MRS. STANLEY. Supper at half-past six.

SANBORN. (*Recalling himself, with a start, to the present. Rises.*) Oh, yes, I get the idea. (*A pause. He looks after the departed young folks.*) Pretty nice children you got there, Nellie.

MRS. STANLEY. Oh, yes, they're darlings.

SANBORN. Pretty nice mother they've got, too.

MRS. STANLEY. Now, Father.

SANBORN. Best one they'll ever have, anyway. (*A pause.*) Well! (*He puts on his hat and takes himself off.*)

PROFESSOR. (*After a pause, approaches Mrs. Stanley and looks down upon her.*) Well, Mrs. Daffodil?

MRS. STANLEY. Well, Mr. Crocus?

PROFESSOR. Not quite so frosty as it was, is it?

MRS. STANLEY. (*With a little choke in her voice*) Are you going to talk about the weather?

PROFESSOR. Why not? It's life or death to Daffodils and Crocuses. Isn't it?

MRS. STANLEY. I—I suppose so.

PROFESSOR. Oh, you dear thing!

MRS. STANLEY. Please, please, oh, please——

PROFESSOR. Am I making you unhappy?

MRS. STANLEY. I never was so happy in all my life, and I want to hold it just so, for a little while. Ah! I suppose you won't understand.

PROFESSOR. Try me.

MRS. STANLEY. Life's suddenly grown so beautiful. It's like—like a flower that's just blossomed—all at once—in my very hands—and I want to hold it there—just as it is—as long as I can.

PROFESSOR. What kind of a flower?

MRS. STANLEY. I don't know—a pansy, I guess—it's so wistful—yesterday it wasn't there at all and to-morrow it will be faded, perhaps, but just for to-night—I want to press it close to my heart and keep it there for a little while.



"ONLY 38"

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PROFESSOR. Then, so you shall.

(LUCY and BOB and GRANDPA, hiding behind curtain suddenly turn out lights.)

MRS. STANLEY. It's those dear brats. (PROFESSOR stands near her in the firelight.)

PROFESSOR. Have a heart.

BOB. Oh, come on, Grandpa, the bonfire will be over in a minute.

SANBORN. Coming right along. (Door slam. After a pause.)

MRS. STANLEY. I've dreamed of this. (A pause.) Haven't you ever—sometimes out walking in the country, come suddenly around a turn in the road and there was the loveliest sight in the world—a little silver lake—or a hillside—with the sunlight on it—something so beautiful that it just kind of took your breath away. Well, that's how my life is to-night. I'm almost afraid to move—for fear something will spoil it.

PROFESSOR. (Sits) Do you think it would be perilous if you were to let me take your hand?

MRS. STANLEY. We might try it. (She gives him her hand.)

PROFESSOR. (After a pause) Is it all right—so far? (She nods and he lifts her hand to his cheek.)

MRS. STANLEY. Nobody ever did that to me before. It rather scares me. (He lets go her hand.) That scares me worse. (He takes it again.)

PROFESSOR. You don't know how wonderful it is to be here with you in your home—just the two of us—alone.

LUCY. Don't go in, Grandpa. (Off stage L.)

SANBORN. (Off stage) I wan't going in.

MRS. STANLEY. (Raising her voice to call) Lucy, I thought you'd gone.

LUCY. (Off stage) Well, I had to go and hunt for those old rubbers, didn't I?

MRS. STANLEY. Well, I hope you found them.
SANBORN. (*Off stage*) Yes—we found 'em.

(MRS. STANLEY and the PROFESSOR exchange a smile of surprise and comprehension.)

LUCY. (*Off stage*) Come along, Grandpa. We'll be late.

SANBORN. (*Off stage*) Yes. Don't want to miss anything. (*The door is heard to close behind them.*)

PROFESSOR. Alone at last! (*They resume their former positions. He takes her hand again. She hunts around for her handkerchief with her free hand and dabs at her eyes.*) Why, you're not crying?

MRS. STANLEY. Yes.

PROFESSOR. Oh, my dear.

MRS. STANLEY. Yes—I am. And, oh, how I do enjoy it.

(*There is silence in the firelight.*)

CURTAIN

KEY TO DIAGRAM OF ACT I

1. Bookcase with picture hanging above it.
2. Two old pictures standing in front of bookcase.
3. Pile of 18 books on the floor.
4. Haircloth couch.
5. Haircloth armchair.
6. Round stand with two or three books on it.
7. Bookcase with gaps in it where books have been taken out.
8. Big plush armchair.
9. Hanging picture of Dr. Spaulding.
10. Mantel with two candlesticks.
11. Fireplace.
12. Wooden box to stand on.
13. Pile of old newspapers on floor.
14. Bookcase partly empty. Some books on top.
15. Waste basket with dust pan, dust cloths and brush.
16. Pile of 28 books on floor.
17. Round table, about four inches diameter.
- 18, 19, 20. Single chairs, haircloth.
21. Library table and student lamp and two or three books.
22. Small round stand with wax flowers in case.
23. Window seat with newspapers and bric-a-brac on it. (French window.)
24. Single chair, haircloth.
25. Pulpit stand with Bible.
26. Old fashioned combination bookcase and writing desk.

27. Old picture, standing on floor.
28. Marble-topped table with old curtains on it.
29. Big picture standing on floor.
30. Pulpit top.
31. Picture hanging.

KEY TO ACTS II AND III

ACT 2. SCENE I

1. Red armchair.
2. Chair.
3. Stand with vase.
4. Table with folding top and family album and old model. (Rogers group.)
5. Old picture.
6. Armchair.
7. Picture.
8. Chair.
9. Large table.
10. Armchair.
11. Picture.
12. Table.
13. Large vase.
14. Picture.
15. Stand with wax flowers.
16. Old picture. (Three Graces.)
17. Bookcase.
18. Picture.
19. What not.
20. Chair.
21. Pulpit with Bible.
22. Mirror.
23. Marble-topped table.
24. Sofa.
25. Chair.
26. Picture on mantel.
27. Hallway cosy corner. Clock on the mantel,

candles at either end. Carpet down. Curtains on windows, etc.

ACT 2. SCENE 2. *CHANGED.*

Chintz covers on Nos. 1, 2, 8, 10, 20, 24, 25.

Chintz curtains to match on Arch c. and both windows.

No. 3, stand empty.

No. 4, folding top open.

No. 5 is a new picture.

No. 6, back of table No. 9.

Two vases of flowers on table No. 9.

Sewing basket and material on table No. 9.

No. 16, new picture.

Nos. 15 and 16 off.

No. 17, new model in case. (Laughing Boy.)

No. 9, moved over slightly R.

Large vase of flowers on No. 23.

ACT 3. SCENE 1.

Chintz covers and curtains off.

Old model on No. 4.

Old vase on stand No. 3.

Old picture on No. 6, in original position.

No. 10, up R. of sofa.

No. 15 on.

No. 19 on.

ACT 3. SCENE 2.

Same as Act 2. Scene 2.

Except, new model on No. 4.

No. 8 in front of No. 9.

Large vase of flowers on No. 23.

Vase of flowers on No. 4.

Banjo on No. 4.

No. 10, almost c. between Nos. 9 and 24.

DOROTHY'S NEIGHBORS.

A brand new comedy in four acts, by Marie Doran, author of "The New Co-Ed," "Tempest and Sunshine," and many other successful plays. 4 males, 7 females. The scenes are extremely easy to arrange; two plain interiors and one exterior, a garden, or, if necessary, the two interiors will answer. Costumes modern. Plays 2½ hours.

The story is about vocational training, a subject now widely discussed; also, the distribution of large wealth.

Back of the comedy situation and snappy dialogue there is good logic and a sound moral in this pretty play, which is worthy the attention of the experienced amateur. It is a clean, wholesome play, particularly suited to high school production, Price, 30 Cents.

MISS SOMEBODY ELSE.

A modern play in four acts by Marion Short, author of "The Touchdown," etc. 6 males, 10 females. Two interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

This delightful comedy has gripping dramatic moments, unusual character types, a striking and original plot and is essentially modern in theme and treatment. The story concerns the adventures of Constance Darcy, a multi-millionaire's young daughter. Constance embarks on a trip to find a young man who had been in her father's employ and had stolen a large sum of money. She almost succeeds, when suddenly all traces of the young man are lost. At this point she meets some old friends who are living in almost want and, in order to assist them through motives benevolent, she determines to sink her own aristocratic personality in that of a refined but humble little Irish waitress with the family that are in want. She not only carries her scheme to success in assisting the family, but finds romance and much tense and lively adventure during the period of her incognito, aside from capturing the young man who had defrauded her father. The story is full of bright comedy lines and dramatic situations and is highly recommended for amateur production. This is one of the best comedies we have ever offered with a large number of female characters. The dialogue is bright and the play is full of action from start to finish; not a dull moment in it. This is a great comedy for high schools and colleges, and the wholesome story will please the parents and teachers. We strongly recommend it.

Price, 30 Cents.

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This is the Lend A Hand Smith College prize play. It is an admirable play for amateurs, is rich in character portrayal of varied types and is not too difficult while thoroughly pleasing.

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