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No. 354

The Girls Over Here

A PATRIOTIC PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY

MARIE DORAN

*Author of "Tempest and Sunshine," "The New Co Ed,"
"Dorothy's Neighbors," etc.*

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NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
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no 1

THE GIRLS OVER HERE

THE GIRLS

As they first appear in the scene

VIRGINIA

MADGE

DOLLY

ETHEL

VERA

AUNT KATE DAVIS

NORA

BABE

The Girls Over Here

SCENE: *The living room in the home of MRS. DAVIS, to-day. A neat interior, comfortably furnished, with no attempt at style. A window c. at the back, with neatly draped curtains. A window-seat under the window, with several loose cushions. A door on the L. A door on the R., or curtained opening, if preferred. If available, a fireplace and mantel on the R. below the door. A cheery fire burning, and suitable ornaments on the mantel. A couch, oblique, down-stage R. of C. with a cushion or two. An armchair faces the fireplace. A table on the L. down-stage, with light chair R. of it. A chair or book-rack in R. upper corner, with books. A light chair, easy to move, at R. of window-seat, upstage. Another chair below the fireplace on the R. A tabourette up C. in front of window-seat. A cabinet, or stand in L. upper corner, with phonograph, to play, and several records at hand. The only record played is a lively dance melody. A magazine on the couch R., for DOLLY. Knitting and needles on couch R. Knitting in bag on table L., for MADGE. Hank of wool, to wind—on window-seat, and more knitting, for BABE—on window-seat. Rugs on the floor, and pictures on the walls, if available. Interior backing for the L. door. (The R. door is not used) If the R. entrance is*

an opening, use interior backing there also. Exterior backing at window. A tray with pretty tea service, four or five small cups, and small plate with small cakes on the tray—off L. for ETHEL. Medium size flags of England, France, Belgium, the Irish emblem, Red Cross, and Stars and Stripes off L. Bound volumes for MRS. DAVIS, off L. The time is afternoon, a cool, clear day, and the scene is brightly lighted all through.

The characters represent the following types: MRS. DAVIS, advanced in years, but vigorous, is the wife of a Grand Army man, intensely patriotic, and lovable. ETHEL, her niece is a pretty, lively average American girl. VIRGINIA has been named for her native State; she is a Junior Red Cross nurse wearing the costume of the organization. MADGE is a happy-go-lucky, rather slangy girl with a warm, hearty personality. VERA is a girl of strikingly handsome appearance and gracious manners; she has secured a commission to drive an ambulance, and wears the correct costume. BABE is very fat, good natured and penetrating in a quiet, half-humorous way. NORA is a pathetic little figure of Irish parentage, simple manners and simple in dress. DOLLY, out of harmony with her companions, is a selfish grumbler, inclined to be disloyal. The costumes, other than those described, are pretty afternoon dresses—no hats or wraps.

NOTE: The theme of the play is patriotism, service. The dialogue is descriptive, often dramatic, and should be read with force and enthusiasm. The tone is cheerful and the action continuous.

AT RISE: The phonograph is playing a lively dance air. DOLLY is seated on the couch R. reading a magazine. VIRGINIA and MADGE are

dancing to the music, they make a wrong turn, at which they both laugh heartily. Allow the dancing and laughter to continue a few seconds after the rise of the curtain, then DOLLY looks at the girls and speaks, with some impatience.

DOLLY. Goodness! what a racket! We'll never hear the bell when the other girls come.

(MADGE and VIRGINIA pause c., looking at DOLLY, MADGE L. of VIRGINIA.)

VIRGINIA. Ethel is watching for them.

MADGE. (To DOLLY) Hate to see us enjoy ourselves, don't you, Doll?

(VIRGINIA laughs a little, turning to phonograph L. and stops the machine. She picks up some records, examining them, and retaining one, advances a step to up c.)

DOLLY. (To MADGE, reproachfully) Madge!

MADGE. (To DOLLY) You're a regular grouch; isn't she, Virginia? (Turning a step to L. looking at VIRGINIA)

VIRGINIA. Not as bad as that, Madge.

MADGE. (To DOLLY) Yesterday, you barked at us because we went skating—wow—woof! Last week when we went to a patriotic lecture, cricky! what you said put the dictionary on the blink! (Turning to table L. she faces the chair around toward c., and opens the knitting-bag on table)

DOLLY. (Resentfully) I don't see how you can be so cheerful and actually enjoy yourselves during this terrible war!

MADGE. You have the wrong idea, sister. (Looking at DOLLY) Gloom won't get us anywhere; we live up to our National reputation—when Uncle Sam tackles a big job, he doesn't begin with a long face and a funeral march.

VIRGINIA. (*Advancing a step, warmly*) No, indeed!

MADGE. When we start anything, we open festivities with a band and a banquet.

VIRGINIA. (*Enthusiasm*) Of course we do!

MADGE. That's why we finish first under the wire. (*Taking her knitting from the bag*)

DOLLY. (*Leaning forward, regarding MADGE earnestly*) Do you really, truly believe we will finish first in this war?

(*VIRGINIA looks at DOLLY in amazement.*)

MADGE. Did we ever finish last in any war? (*DOLLY sinks back, still unconvinced. Advancing a step, earnestly*) We've had three big fights! The first was for freedom, when General Washington led our troops. The next was for emancipation for the poor black man who never raised a hand in his own defense; the next was for the enslaved Cuban people, and this is for justice!

VIRGINIA. (*Enthusiasm*) Liberty, equality, justice! (*To DOLLY*) Oh, Dolly! doesn't it make your heart beat faster! Don't you want to help!

(*DOLLY sighs rather impatiently.*)

MADGE. (*To DOLLY, dryly*) Take it from me, honey, we're going to put an awful crimp in old sauerkraut Bill of Berlin! (*She places the bag on table, seats herself at r. of table, knitting, her chair facing almost squarely toward c.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Up c. laughing*) Sauerkraut Bill! I wish the autocrat could hear you say that!

MADGE. You don't wish it as hard as I do! Every time I see a boy in khaki—which is every minute—I hate myself because I'm a girl.

DOLLY. (*Regarding MADGE in surprise*) You don't mean that you want to fight?

MADGE. Like a tiger! in the first line, over the top with the boys!

DOLLY. (*Rising quickly*) Oh, Madge! you might be killed!

MADGE. I'm not afraid to die!

DOLLY. Don't talk about it—it's horrible! (*Nervously turning a step toward R., below couch, retaining the magazine*)

MADGE. (*Pausing in her work*) Look here, when we organized this service Committee, what did we pledge?

VIRGINIA. (C.) America first! To live for her, fight for her, work for her, and if we must, to die for her!!

MADGE. What's the punishment for shirkers?

DOLLY. (*Apprehensively*) Punishment?

VIRGINIA. The resolution said——

MADGE. Imprisonment, for the period of the war, in the cellar, with the mice!

VIRGINIA. (*Light laugh, to MADGE*) Give her another chance. (*To DOLLY*) It's just a case of blue devils, or indigestion, isn't it, Dolly?

DOLLY. (*Forcefully*) How can I be cheerful when I hate war—I *despise* it!

MADGE. We all do, and the way to prove it is to help smash the Red Handed King of the Huns.

DOLLY. (*Pouting*) It breaks my heart to think of it—all my arrangements upset—I expected to marry Freddie in June.

MADGE. Which Freddie?

DOLLY. Freddie Switzmeyer—of course!

MADGE. (*In comic disgust*) Ye gods! Switzmeyer—that's a title for these times! You better shake him for Patsy McFadden!

DOLLY. (*Vehemently*) I hate Patsy—I shall wait for Freddie, if he ever comes back—he didn't want to go, poor boy! (*Seating herself in chair R., below fireplace*)

MADGE. Patsy is the one best bet—have you heard? His uncle died and left him a soap factory.

DOLLY. (*Indignantly*) I don't want a soap husband!!

MADGE. (*Calmly*) I love soap, but of course, tastes differ.

DOLLY. I never *tasted* soap, and never shall!

VIRGINIA. Don't argue girls, remember, our Committee was not organized to squabble but to work, and do something, and it's time——

(*Interrupt VIRGINIA'S speech by ringing electric door-bell off L.—loud.*)

MADGE. There's some of our bunch. (*DOLLY indifferently looks through magazine; when she rises, she leaves it on the chair. MADGE knits diligently, VIRGINIA, up c. looking toward L. door*)

(*Enter from L. ETHEL, carrying tray with tea service, etc.; she leaves the door open, and advances toward tabourette.*)

ETHEL. It's Nora and Vera. (*Placing tray on tabourette.*)

VIRGINIA. (*R. of tabourette*) Where's Babe?

MADGE. She's always late.

ETHEL. Aunt Kate says we may have tea here if we are *very* tidy, and a dear little cake! (*Holding up small cake*)

MADGE. (*Looking at cake*) Is that a cake, or a button?

ETHEL. Auntie is a radical food conservationist. She went to school with Mr. Hoover's grandmother. (*Pouring tea*)

DOLLY. Perfect nonsense! I hate all this economy talk!

VIRGINIA. (*To DOLLY*) You don't seem to approve anything.

DOLLY. No, I don't—the United States should not have gone to war!

(ETHEL and VIRGINIA regard DOLLY in astonishment.)

MADGE. (*To DOLLY*) Take this from me, Doll—there's no room in this world for Bill Hohlenzollern—it has come to a clinch between Bill and Uncle Sam—and if you're wise, you'll bet all your money on your Uncle!

ETHEL. There is no doubt about you, Madge—you delight my Auntie! (*Handing a cup of tea to VIRGINIA, who carries it to DOLLY*)

VIRGINIA. Brace up, Dolly—no use trying to pull against the tide.

(DOLLY, pouting, takes the tea, but does not drink it at once. VIRGINIA pauses down R. of C. Enter VERA from L., pausing near the door.)

VIRGINIA. (*Observing VERA*) Oh, girls! Look at Vera! isn't she stunning!

(*All the girls except DOLLY, regard VERA in admiration.*)

ETHEL. Perfectly regal!

MADGE. (*To VERA*) The late Mrs. Cleopatra had nothing on you.

VERA. (*Smiling, bowing graciously*) Thank you, girls. It's lovely of you to greet me so warmly. (*Advancing to up C.*)

VIRGINIA. Have you received your commission?

VERA. Yes, four of us will sail for France on Saturday.

DOLLY. (*Apprehensively*) France—that's where the shooting is—and the danger!

VERA. Yes—we are going to drive ambulances at the front.

ETHEL. (*Quickly down L. of VERA, regarding*

her earnestly) Oh, Vera! how wonderful! Tell us about it!

VERA. (*Earnestly*) When our boys advance under command of General Pershing and one of them is hit, he is brought to the first aid station, where your workers care for him—(*Indicating VIRGINIA*) Then he is carried to the rear where the ambulance is ready to drive him to the hospital back of the lines. That's where our work begins—when the boys are laid carefully—two in the upper stretchers, and two on the lower tier, it is a woman who takes her place at the wheel, and many a blessing follows her as she picks her way across the rough roads, beyond the line of danger, to the care and rest of the base hospital!

DOLLY. It's a man's work—not for women.

VERA. (*Firmly*) It's woman's war, as well as man! It was an American girl who blazed the trail for our ambulance work—a petted society beauty who had driven her own car for her own pleasure. But when the call came, she felt it in her heart—she left her home, her friends, and next we heard of her over there with the wounded! A new American Florence Nightingale of the twentieth century!

ETHEL. (*L. of VERA, earnestly*) We know who you mean! This same girl, driving her wounded across the shell-torn roads, heard a faint cry from within her ambulance car. "Oh, Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle! moaned the French soldier—"turn me over, please, I beg!" She climbed into the car and with her own hands, lifted the sufferer to a comfortable position, and then drove on, while he prayed—"Vive le Americaine, Dio! Vive le Americaine!"

DOLLY. That was only a Frenchman!

VERA. Only a Frenchman—only a hero! We admire England, we pity Italy, but we love France!

ETHEL. That wounded French soldier was fighting for his country——

VERA. And for *our* country—for us—it is the woman's day, and God helping—(*Raising her cap reverently*) we'll make good!

MADGE. You bet we will—! (*Knitting with increased energy*)

DOLLY. Some people say we don't need those things. (*Indicating knitting*)

MADGE. Some people are natural born bone-heads!

ETHEL. Oh, dear! I wish I could be something important and order people about! (*Pouring tea at tabourette*)

VERA. You energetic little person! You're a stimulator, and that helps wonderfully! (*Crossing to couch R. where she sits*)

(*VIRGINIA turns to window-seat where she picks up the hank of wool.*)

ETHEL. How nice of you! (*Picking up cup of tea*) Who wants this? (*To MADGE*) Madge?

MADGE. Don't flag the express! (*Working rapidly*)

ETHEL. (*Advancing toward VERA with tea*) I'm afraid to offer anything so un-strenuous to our heroic Vera!

VERA. I'll thank you for it—I haven't given up tea! (*ETHEL hands her the cup*) I hope you didn't sweeten it?

(*DOLLY, for the first time, tastes her tea.*)

ETHEL. No——

VERA. I've learned to do without sugar entirely—then you get the real flavor of the infusion.

DOLLY. How can you! it's dreadfully bitter! (*Making a wry face*) Can't you spare me three or four lumps, Ethel?

(Enter from L. MRS. DAVIS in time to hear DOLLY'S request.)

MRS. DAVIS. (Pausing near door) Who is that asking for sugar?

ETHEL. Dolly. (At *tabourette* pouring another cup of tea)

MRS. DAVIS. (Advancing to c.) My dear, Dolly, I am surprised! How do you expect us to win unless you make your individual sacrifice?

DOLLY. I have made great sacrifices, Mrs. Davis, only I never get credit. (Pouting)

MRS. DAVIS. Indeed? (Regarding DOLLY inquiringly)

DOLLY. We had all our plans completed to spend the Winter in Florida, and at the last moment, we had to give it up, because Dad felt he couldn't afford it.

MADGE. Some martyr! (Glancing at DOLLY)

MRS. DAVIS. You gave up a holiday because Dad couldn't afford it—that was necessity. A sacrifice is something we give up voluntarily, something we want, something we feel the loss of.

(VIRGINIA brings forward the light chair from R. of window-seat, and places it c. for MRS. DAVIS.)

DOLLY. Of course I felt it—I cried for two days!

VERA. Crying for Florida and sugar! what a baby!

(MRS. DAVIS sits c. ETHEL advances down L. of her, handing her a cup of tea, lingering for a moment at her chair.)

DOLLY. (Indignantly) I'm not a baby! But I hate tea without sugar, and if I can't have all I want, life isn't worth living!

VERA. (*Earnestly*) Life was never so well worth living for all of us—don't you agree with me, Mrs. Davis? (*Drinking her tea*)

MRS. DAVIS. (*Earnestly*) Heartily! If we could only know at the beginning of life, how to live, what blunders we might avoid!

VIRGINIA. We cannot get far without sacrificing something.

MRS. DAVIS. As true as the Gospel! Self-denial builds character, it makes us big and noble! (*Proudly*) I am the wife of a Grand Army man—that's enough to make any woman proud! There are not many veterans left, and when taps sounds for my Peter, I hope I shall not be left long after him—we've been such comrades through life, I want to march beside him in the great procession of the spirit world!

VERA. If we could all be as blessedly optimistic as you, Mrs. Davis.

(VIRGINIA extends the towel to ETHEL; both up-stage, ETHEL holding towel, while VIRGINIA winds it.)

MRS. DAVIS. It rests with us—cheerfulness, and kindness and courage—that's all! (*Smiling at VERA, then sipping her tea*)

VERA. That's everything.

MADGE. You said it!

MRS. DAVIS. All that's good about me, I learned from Peter—he isn't an inspiring person to look at, with his red nose, bald head, gruff voice, and eternally smoking a pipe! Doesn't sound romantic!

MADGE. Nothing picturesque about husband Peter.

ETHEL. (*To MADGE, reproachfully*) He wasn't always bald—he once had lovely brown curls—didn't he, Auntie?

MRS. DAVIS. Of course he wasn't bald at twenty-

two when I met him—and I was twenty—I thought him the handsomest thing—do you know why? Brass buttons! I never could resist brass buttons!

(All the girls laugh.)

MADGE. Me, too.

MRS. DAVIS. During the Civil War my folks lived near Gettysburg. Peter was wounded in battle, and they brought him to our house—there were no ambulances in those days, my young friends. The army surgeon said, Peter will die; I said, he shall not die—no soldier will ever die in our house! Mother and I nursed him, and when he was able to sit up, he told me he loved me! Dear me! *(A happy sigh)* That was the happiest moment! But I was such a silly dunce, I pretended indifference; then Peter said unless I answered yes, he'd turn right around and truly die! And all the time I was crazy to be Mrs. Peter Davis!

(All the girls laugh.)

VERA. What a beautiful story!

VIRGINIA. Ideal!

ETHEL. But the brass buttons weren't very polished then, were they, Auntie?

MRS. DAVIS. No, indeed! Peter was covered with mud, and the blood was heavy about his shoulder where the bullet struck.

DOLLY. Did they cut it out?

MRS. DAVIS. *(Rising, astonished)* Cut it out! *(Comic indignation)* After all that trouble to get it! You must think it an easy matter to receive a bullet in the shoulder! He would no more think of cutting it out than he would cut off his head! We love that bullet—we are proud of it—it stays there—*(Tapping her shoulder)* forever! *(Lighter tone)* I'm jealous because I haven't one to go with

it! (*She extends her cup, ETHEL advances and takes it, placing it on tabourette*)

MADGE. That's the talk! What would Heinie Hindenburg say to a woman like that!

(*All the girls laugh heartily. VIRGINIA advances, taking VERA'S cup and placing it on tabourette, as MRS. DAVIS advances down c., laughing at MADGE. Enter from L. NORA, quiet and serious.*)

ETHEL. Here's Nora!

MRS. DAVIS. I'm glad you came, Nora—I wanted to ask you about your mother—how is she?

NORA. (*Advancing down L. of MRS. DAVIS*) She's poorly, thank you, Mrs. Davis.

MADGE. Sick?

NORA. Yes—

MADGE. Measles?—they're fashionable just now.

NORA. It's not measles—it's from crying about Denny.

VERA. Your brother?

(*NORA nods yes. DOLLY rises and places her cup on mantel.*)

MADGE. Is that all?

MRS. DAVIS. (*Mildly reproachful*) Madge!

MADGE. (*More seriously*) I've had my cry—alone, in the dark. I have two brothers with the engineers, and a cousin in the navy—a cousin I think an awful lot of, dear old George. When I think about it, there's a lump right there. (*Touching her throat*) But tears won't help, and sweaters will! (*Knitting*) I've learned to love these needles—I call them spikes of hope!

(*A moment of solemnity falls upon the group.*)

NORA. We all have someone we love over there—it's not that mother didn't want him to go, but it's hard coming just now. My father died only three months ago, suddenly, away from home, and mother hasn't had time to recover—(*Tearfully*) Denny is all we had—it's hard—it's so hard! (*Tearfully, advancing to MRS. DAVIS who places her arms about NORA, consoling her*)

MRS. DAVIS. (*With arms about NORA*) It is hard, Nora; the war has come into our homes, into our hearts, but we must play our part. This was a happy peaceful nation—we never provoked a quarrel with anyone—it was forced upon us—we had to preserve our National honor, our glorious freedom—the freedom for which our fathers died more than a hundred years ago! Denny's a brave boy—tell mother to look on the bright side, and think of the day of victory.

NORA. (*Looking up*) I wish you would come and see her—if you would talk to her, she'd cheer up a bit.

MRS. DAVIS. I will go—the first thing in the morning—I mean of course, after breakfast.

NORA. Thank you.

VERA. Come over here, Nora, sit by me. (*Motioning NORA to a seat beside her on couch. MRS. DAVIS turns a step up c.*) What a pretty dress you are wearing!

NORA. (*Crossing to couch R., brighter tone*) I'm glad you like it. Denny gave it to me the day before he went away. (*Seating herself on couch R. She and VERA converse quietly for a moment, then NORA picks up the knitting from couch, and knits*)

MRS. DAVIS. Ethel, for pity sake play us a rag. (*Facing VERA*) When I was a girl, I knew two tunes—one was The Maiden's Prayer, and the other wasn't. (*VERA laughs*) It's a humiliating confession to make, but I love rag-time, and a circus! I'd run ten blocks to see a circus!

(*The girls laugh.*)

VERA. It's splendid to have that youthful spirit!
(*ETHEL turns to the phonograph and arranges a record, but does not start the music; as she is about to do so. Enter from L. BABE, coming in slowly. BABE wears postman's cap*) Here's Babe!

MADGE. (*To BABE*) Hello, Skeleton!

(*The girls laugh.*)

BABE. (*Good naturedly*) Same to you.

ETHEL. Don't mind Madge!

(*MRS. DAVIS resumes her seat c. VIRGINIA comes down R. of her, together they wind the wool. BABE advances down c. and suddenly begins gymnastic exercises with her arms.*)

MADGE. Look, girls! Babe's having a fit!

VERA. (*To BABE*) What for?

BABE. Training. (*All the girls regard BABE inquiringly*) Told you I was going to work for Uncle Sam!

MADGE. Did he ask you to do that jig?

BABE. Guess what I am! (*Continuing exercise*)

MADGE. Oh, a harmless lunatic.

BABE. I'm a postman!

OMNES. Postman!

BABE. Or postwoman, if you like. (*Stop the exercise*)

ETHEL. Good for our Babe! (*Applauding*) Oh, girls! our Committee is lining up magnificently! Virginia's a nurse, Vera is a ambulance driver, Madge is a knitter—we're all that of course—and Babe's a postman! Sit down and tell us about it! (*ETHEL snatches two pillows from the window-seat, tossing one at MRS. DAVIS' feet, the other toward L. C. She picks up the knitting from window-*

seat, then sits on the cushion on the floor, preparing to knit)

BABE. (*Looking at cushion*) Must I sit there?

ETHEL. Um—um—patriots are never particular about chairs. (*Knitting*)

(*Positions: MRS. DAVIS seated c. up-stage, holding wool; VIRGINIA R. of her, winding wool. VERA on couch R. attentive to the scene, NORA seated on R. of VERA, knitting. MADGE seated at table L. knitting. ETHEL seated on floor, knitting. BABE standing L. of ETHEL. DOLLY R. below couch, standing, her hands clasped idly behind her back.*)

BABE. I ache all over—I'm not used to walking much.

MADGE. That's why you grew so much like a rotunda.

ETHEL. Oh, Madge, stop teasing her.

BABE. I'm a sub! (*Dropping on her knees on cushion*)

MRS. DAVIS. (*To BABE*) For goodness sake! what's a sub?

BABE. Substitute!

MRS. DAVIS. Ah! the modern habit of abbreviating keeps the old heads guessing.

BABE. The first thing you find out when you go out on a job—that is if you're a woman, and it's something new, is—what a lot of rubes there are roving about! They're as green as cows!

MADGE. Who ever saw a green cow!

BABE. When I started with the mail-bag over this shoulder—(*Indicating*) maybe it wasn't heavy—you'd never think it! And when I blew my whistle—(*Taking whistle from a convenient pocket, blowing it*) you should hear the remarks! (*Imitating street urclín*) "Hey fellows! get onto what's carryin' de mail! It's a woman, b'lieve me!"

ETHEL. What a saucy boy!

BABE. Nothing worries me, only curiosity.

DOLLY. What fun to read the postal cards!

BABE. Nothing doing in that line! But all those letters do fuss one! Some folks snatch 'em from us, some smile and say thank you, and others just nearly cry when we say "nothing to-day."

VERA. We've all experienced that crushing disappointment—the looked-for letter that did not come!

(All the girls sigh, heavily.)

MRS. DAVIS. How I used to look for Peter's letters! and when they came, I could never read his scrawl!

BABE. People get real snippy—as if we could help—when I feel just as bad as they do—like to-day.

ETHEL. To-day? *(Looking at BABE inquiringly)*

BABE. There's a woman on my route always standing at the door, waiting for me, poor soul, with two kiddies hanging to her skirts, and to-day she was nearly frantic. "You *must* have something for me this time, you surely have, if you'll only look again!" Maybe that doesn't hurt—so I looked through all the letters to satisfy her, and then she asked me to excuse her, and said it was John she was expecting to hear from. It was just like all the other days—there's nothing for her.

MADGE. Who is John?

BABE. Why, her son, John, who is in France. She smiled through her tears and told me that she was working for the Red Cross and would work all the harder. She had made sweaters and other things for the boys and is willing to do more. I hope some day I may bring her a letter from her boy, and I feel as if I should, God bless him.

VERA. *(Rising)* Yes, God bless him, and his

mother, too, and the thousands of other mothers, sisters and sweethearts. With the help of such women we must win this war and good will follow after.

(Everyone except DOLLY, promptly in a clear strong tone.)

OMNES. Hurrah!

(BABE rises, placing her cushion up-stage.)

ETHEL. *(Up c. looking at DOLLY)* All but Dolly! *(DOLLY is standing down R. of c. near couch. All the girls look at her inquiringly; VERA moves a step above couch to address DOLLY. BABE down L. back of table, ETHEL moves to a position near L. door, ready to open it)*

VERA. *(To DOLLY)* What part have you chosen in the world drama?

DOLLY. *(Replying reluctantly)* I have given up the trip to Florida, and I bought only three hats this month, because they were bargains!

NORA. *(Astonished)* Three hats in one month! And the orphans of France crying for bread! Heaven save us!

DOLLY. *(Impatiently)* I wish I had never come here—the way you talk—it's not fair!

VERA. *(Forcefully)* It's more than fair, it's our duty to search out the slackers in civil life and force them to share in the struggle for democracy and freedom!

DOLLY. *(With force and bitterness)* I'm not a slacker—you shan't say it! *(Crossing rapidly to c. facing VERA)* You are fanatics—war fanatics! *(All rise, except MRS. DAVIS, all looking at DOLLY, as she gains in dramatic force)* This is a nation of shop-workers! money-makers! Luxury-lovers! unused to war, unable, and unwilling!

MRS. DAVIS. (*Rising, indignantly*) I deny it, and I am a soldier's wife! The boys of Vicksburg and Gettysburg were not unwilling—they followed General Grant and General Lee, the blue or the gray as it called them, and our boys in khaki will follow General Pershing to the last trench!

ETHEL. (*Forcefully*) This country has always championed the cause of small nations, nor has it hesitated to draw the sword against powerful foes! Neither in the halls of diplomacy or on the field of battle has America shirked, and in this Titanic struggle, we'll not stand by and see those bleeding nations fight our fight!

ALL. (*Strong*) No! no!

MRS. DAVIS. A thousand times no!

MADGE. Down with Krupp and Kultur, and the King of the Goose-steppers!

(*All the girls applaud MADGE heartily. VIRGINIA moves chair up c.*)

ETHEL. I don't expect you to agree with me, but you'll admit, this country was unprepared.

VERA. Unprepared—Yes, my dear, but Uncle Sam is more than a mile a minute when he gets started. As you know, it only took a little over two months to raise an army of a million men and we sent hundreds of thousands of great soldiers over there in the last six months without losing a life. Your Uncle Sam does things when he starts, and he has the women over here to help him.

NORA. America is big and smart, we'll win—that's what Denny says!

MRS. DAVIS. Denny is right!

DOLLY. (*Sneeringly*) Oh, yes—no one doubts it is a boastful country.

MRS. DAVIS. (*Her head held high*) I represent the twelfth generation in an American family! That's something to boast about!

VIRGINIA. I'm the seventh!

BABE. I'm number five.

MADGE. I'm the eighth!

ETHEL. Hurrah for our Madge.

MRS. DAVIS. How about you Miss Dolly?

DOLLY. Father was born in Wisconsin, and grandfather in Berlin.

MADGE. Sweet Moses! No wonder you see crooked!

NORA. (*To DOLLY*) You cannot defend the Prussians—not if you read about their terrible cruelty to women and children!

DOLLY. (*Quick and sharp*) That's all newspaper talk!

MRS. DAVIS. (*Firmly*) It's the truth—we have the word of our former Ambassador—and we have the solemn writings of that great Belgium patriot—Cardinal Mercier—a man who stood with his people, with the love of the Lord in his heart, and no fear of the merciless tyrant—Bismark's ready follower of the policy of blood and iron! (*Crossing to L. door. ETHEL opens L. door*) I'll fetch a copy of that book and you shall read it—not as a favor to me, but in justice to humanity! (*Exit MRS. DAVIS L. followed by ETHEL, who leaves the door open*)

NORA. That's the whole story—a war for humanity! (*Down R. a step—leaving knitting on couch*)

VERA. You can't resist it—it cries to everyone of us, and we *must* answer it!

DOLLY. My father is not inhuman—he is generous and kind to his family—

VERA. A man must be kind to his family, and in this hour of trial, he must be generous to his country!

BABE. (*L.*) Your dad's rich, isn't he, Dolly?

DOLLY. Not as rich as he would like to be.

VERA. (*To DOLLY*) All that he has he earned in this country—America gave him prosperity and

happiness, it has blessed his children; what will *you* do to repay some of the debt!

DOLLY. We don't owe this country anything!

ALL. (*Exclaim reproachfully*) Oh, Dolly!

MADGE. Doesn't that sound like a pig! (*Looking at DOLLY*)

DOLLY. (*Stubbornly*) We don't! Father had to work, and so did grandfather—the country didn't give him anything.

VERA. (*Firmly*) It gave him opportunity which his own land denied him—your grandfather came like many thousands, poor immigrants, oppressed in the land of their birth; they turned their backs upon the monarchy, and fled to the Western Republic, where freedom and friendship awaited them. From the millions of strangers who came across the sea, the country that protects them asks nothing but their loyalty, and that, we demand!

DOLLY. (*To VERA*) Of course you're a patriot!

MADGE. There are only two kinds of persons in this country—patriots and—traitors! (*Looking steadily at DOLLY*)

DOLLY. (*Sharply, to MADGE*) I'm not a traitor—I gave fifty cents to the Red Cross last week—(*To VIRGINIA*) What do they do with all that money?

VIRGINIA. (*Advancing, facing DOLLY*) They spend it in the service of mercy. Let me tell you, just this incident. (*The girls listen with deep interest*) On a cold night last week, a transport lay in the bay, steam up, lights dim, when, into our headquarters came the word that the ship would sail in an hour. She was crowded with our soldiers bound for the front. The message said that among those on board two hundred and sixty were not supplied with warm clothing. Think what it means to keep watch on a Winter night, with the icy winds sweeping across the deck! A call like that means two hundred and sixty of everything! when the word came, it reached the watcher, one

small woman, who collected the stores and helped load them aboard a tug. It ran swiftly to the side of the great transport and a cheer went up from the boys on deck! Two hundred and sixty of everything, ready for the call, for the comfort and health of two hundred and sixty sons and fathers, sailing to risk their lives, for us! That's only one thing that's being done by the girls over here!

OMNES. Hurrah

(The faint sound of the beat of drums is heard from off L.)

NORA. Wonderful!

DOLLY. *(Subdued)* I never thought of it like that!

VERA. Listen! *(Indicating the sound of the drums)*

(BABE goes quickly to window up c. looking out.)

NORA. Our boys, marching somewhere! *(Advancing to c.)*

MADGE. This is no place for me, or you, sisters! *(Going quickly to L. door)* Come out and give them a send-off! *(Exit MADGE quickly L., followed by all the others except BABE and DOLLY)*

(The beat of the drums grows louder as the girls are running off, outside, they cheer; then the drums gradually subdue, at no time interfering with the dialogue. The drum corps may be secured from the Boy Scouts, or local drummers, and the martial music off-stage may be elaborated as much as desired by using military records on phonograph. DOLLY c. turns, looking up-stage. BABE, seated on window-seat, after looking through the window, turns, looking at DOLLY.)

DOLLY. Babe! *(A step toward R. of c. rather*

up-stage, facing BABE)

BABE. (*Calmly*) Dolly.

DOLLY. Why didn't you go with the girls?

BABE. (*Same unruffled manner*) I stayed to make a few remarks. I don't talk much, but I think hard! (*She rises, leisurely advancing down to chair at R. of table, retaining her knitting. DOLLY turns, following BABE'S movements*)

(*Stop drums.*)

DOLLY. (*Near couch R.*) What about?

BABE. You. (*Sitting R. of table, knitting calmly*)

DOLLY. Me! (*Dropping on couch R. nervously*)

What about me?

BABE. Lots about you—and your kind.

DOLLY. I don't understand. (*Looking steadily at BABE*)

BABE. I am a member of the Home Defense League.

DOLLY. Another League—what for?

BABE. For the detection of disloyalty.

DOLLY. There seems to have been a great deal of organizing.

BABE. More than folks think.

DOLLY. (*Abruptly*) You work in the post-office, don't you?

BABE. Yes.

DOLLY. (*Rising, advancing, with interest*) Have you access to the foreign mail?

BABE. Perhaps. (*Looking at DOLLY*)

DOLLY. Will you do me a great favor?

BABE. What kind of a favor?

DOLLY. Here is a letter—(*Drawing a letter from her pocket*) Will you drop it in the foreign mail-sack when no one is looking?

BABE. What for? (*Pausing in her work, looking at DOLLY*)

DOLLY. Because, we don't want it opened by the censor.

BABE. Where is it going?

DOLLY. To—Germany!

BABE. Germany! (*Rising, regarding DOLLY firmly*)

DOLLY. (*Quickly*) It's harmless—it is to my father's family—we have not heard from them in two years—father is so anxious—we don't know whether they are living or dead. (*Advancing down to R. of C.*)

BABE. If that's all, you don't need to smuggle it.

DOLLY. That's not smuggling—I'd love you if you *would* send it!

BABE. Your uncle, you say? (*Extending her hand for the letter*)

DOLLY. My dear Uncle Adolph. (*Giving the letter to BABE*)

BABE. (*Looking at letter*) Uncle Adolph—

DOLLY. (*Eagerly*) You *will* send it?

BABE. Yes—*after* the inspector reads it.

DOLLY. (*Astonished*) Inspector!

BABE. (*Calmly*) I forgot to tell you that I'm an agent of the Department of Justice—so is every good citizen. You see I'm a pretty busy woman. Uncle Adolph may be a nice old man, but Uncle Sam's my favorite!

DOLLY. (*Apprehensively*) Are you going to keep it?

BABE. We'll leave that to the Committee. (*Crossing to L. of C.*)

(*A cheer is heard from the girls off L. Then, they all sing, off-stage—"Marching Through Georgia." As they near the end of the refrain, they march in L. each with a flag—ETHEL first, carrying the flag of Belgium. VIRGINIA next with Red Cross banner, NORA next with the Irish emblem, MADGE next with the British flag, VERA with the French flag, and MRS. DAVIS last with the Stars and Stripes, and a*

bound volume. They enter singing, and finish, substituting—"When we go Marching Through Berlin" instead of "When we go Marching Through Georgia," and form a graceful semi-circle toward the back.)

MRS. DAVIS. (L. of c.) I have brought you the book, Dolly—let your father and your grandfather read it—they will not be able to resist it's strength and truth.

BABE. (Down L.) What shall we do with this, girls? (Showing letter) A letter Dolly asks me to mail to her Uncle—in Germany.

DOLLY. (Down R. near couch) You need not send it—he *is* my uncle, but he hates us all—it won't help to send it—you may destroy it. (She sinks on the couch R. facing the girls, her back to audience. BABE tears the letter across. To girls) I know you mistrust me—but it's not all my fault—

MADGE. The trouble is, you eat the wrong hash—you want to eat corn meal and turnips, and brown bread and pie—then you'll feel like a Yankee, and ready to fight at the drop of the hat!

ETHEL. Like our Madge! (Regarding MADGE in admiration)

VERA. (C.) How will you feel when the boys come home, and we stand on the corner to welcome them! That will be the day of victory, when savagery is crushed, and the tyrant hides in terror from the anger of his own distracted people! If you want to be with us then, you must be with us now—every man, woman, and even the children must join, heart and soul, rich and poor, great and lowly, and so astound our enemies with the greatest democracy the world has even seen! Are you with us, or against us! Will you be one of The Girls Over Here!

DOLLY. (Rising, earnestly) I'm with you—

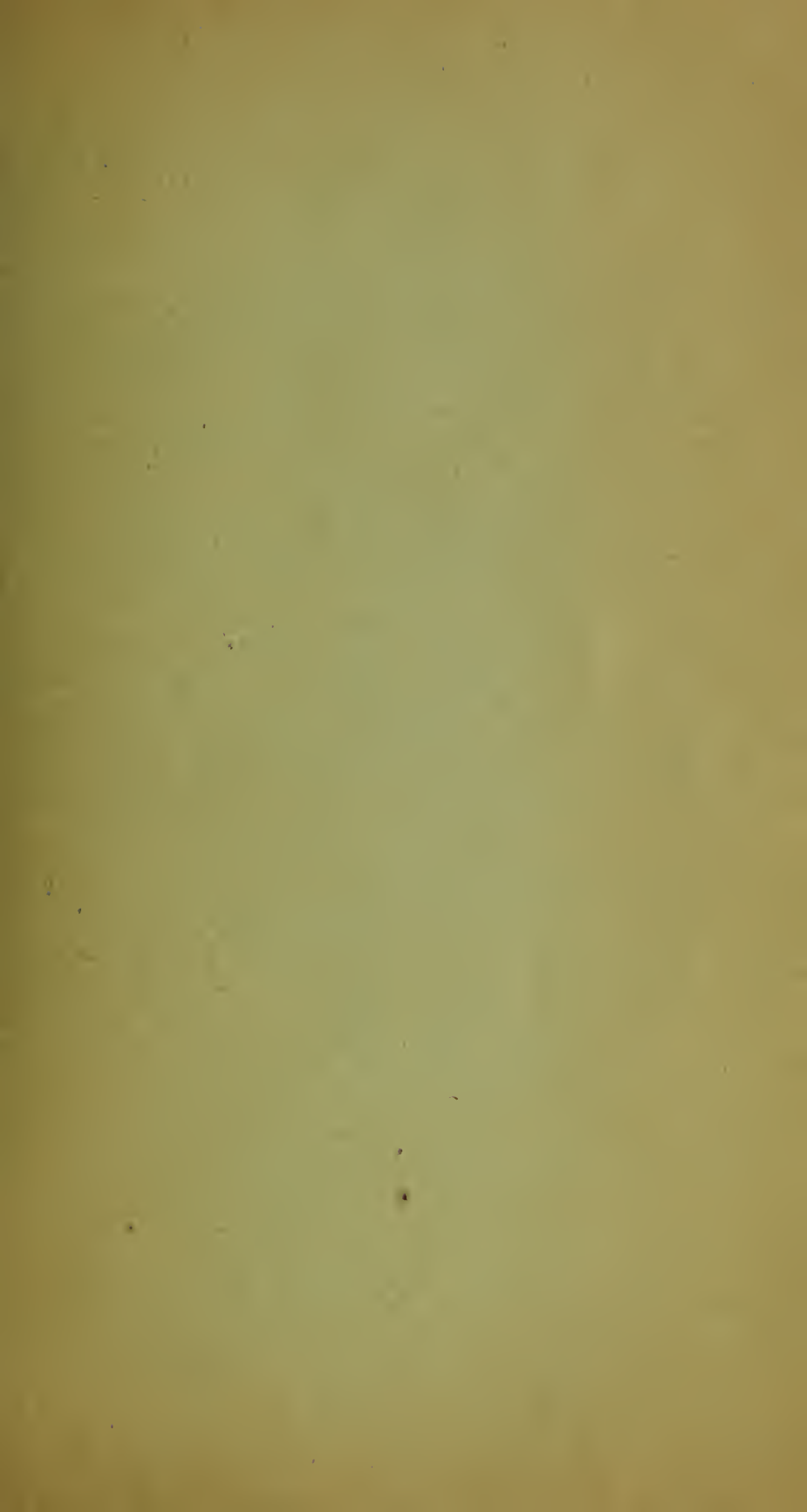
(*Up to c. a step*) I know you're right, I know you'll win, and I want to help if you'll let me!

OMNES. Hurrah!

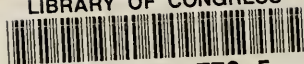
(*VERA takes her hand earnestly.*)

MRS. DAVIS. (*Advancing a step*) And when that glorious victory comes, a new verse will be written into our immortal hymn—"Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light!" A new light will shine, a world peace, blessed by the Prince of Peace, and safe for all nations, on the honor of the Stars and Stripes!

Curtain



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