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A Drama of American Patriotism

In Three Acts

By

WALTER BEN HARE

Author of more than one hundred plays, including:
"A Couple of Million," "Professor Pepp," "A Pageant of
History," "The Hoodoo," "Much Ado About Betty,"
"Teddy," "The Heiress Hunters," "The Scout-
master," "The Camp Fire Girls," "The Boy
Scouts," "The Dutch Detective," "Isos-
celes," "Twelve Old Maids," etc.

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BOSTON

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CHARACTERS

(Names are printed in the order of their appearance.)

J. B. WHEEDON.
COMRADE FERGUSON, *a veteran of the Civil War.*
JUDGE GARY.
MISS EM FINCH.
MISS LORNIÉ DAVIS, *the milliner.*
DAN MONIHAN.
TOMMY CRONIN.
LIZZIE.
FREDERICK J. ECKERT.
MRS. CRONIN.
CELIA BAKER.
A CHILD.
CORPORAL SHANNON.

Villagers and Band.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The village square at River Landing, Mo. The day they heard the news.

ACT II.—Same scene as Act I. The day the boys marched away.

ACT III.—Sitting-room in Eckert's house. The night the spy came home.

“Lives there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said—
This is my own, my native land!”



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JAN -9 1919

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

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J. B. WHEEDON. A small-town business man of about thirty-five. He is dogmatic and inclined to argue. His big patriotic scene with ECKERT in the first act must be thoroughly rehearsed and especial attention given to the proper emphasis. In the original cast of the play this character was played by a small man with light hair, mustache and eye-glasses. Carelessly dressed. This rôle must be played in deadly earnest; any attempts at comedy will ruin the effect.

COMRADE FERGUSON. A Civil War veteran aged about eighty. Veteran's uniform, if possible, but this is not necessary. Could be played either as a veteran of the North or a veteran of the South. Wears a badge. White wig and beard. Large heavy cane. Slightly palsied. This is a character part of great importance and must be thoroughly rehearsed in impersonating an aged man. Pay careful attention to the emotional scenes in Acts I and II. The "drum scene" never fails to bring applause, if properly played. Wear shoes suitable to the character. Neat costume.

JUDGE GARY. Prosperous city lawyer. Rather short in speech, but thoroughly human at all times. Aged about fifty-five. Iron gray hair. This rôle should be played by a middle-aged attorney, if possible. Stylishly dressed. The recruiting address at the end of Act I should be carefully rehearsed and the part must be learned letter perfect. Care must be taken in his entrance in Act III not to allow the audience to recognize his personality. This is necessary to preserve the air of mystery and to key the audience to the climax of the play.

MISS EM FINCH. An old maid housekeeper, aged about forty-four. A strong emotional rôle and in stock productions always played by the leading woman of the company. Naturally she is timid and kind, but when spurred on by patriotism she shows the qualities of a born leader. The author has noted her changes of tone, etc., in the text and the rôle must be carefully studied. This rôle was originally played by Helen O'Neill who costumed it in a simple black dress, old-fashioned and rather short, rough looking shoes, a small old gray shawl, cheap black hat, gray hair. She wore an apron in the last act. When the play is produced by amateurs it is desirable to have this rôle played by a middle-aged woman, if possible.

MISS LORNIE DAVIS. The comedienne of the play. Aged about forty. Costumes, accessories and make-up should indicate giddy girlhood. Do not wear the traditional old-maid stage cos-

tume, but rather costume the part in a caricature of the latest style, made up in cheap materials. Much jewelry is worn. The part "plays itself" and there is no need to resort to any low comedy tricks to impress the audience. Play it true to life and with sincerity. Three changes of costume are recommended. Do not speak the lines too fast; allow the audience to absorb the comic points before hurrying to the next speech.

DAN MONIHAN. Star rôle. A boy crook, aged nineteen. The part, while not at all difficult, offers a great opportunity to impress the audience. Albert Terhune, who originated the rôle, wore light tan shoes, low-cuts with large knobby toes, white socks, rather tight gray trousers, a black jersey, gray coat and cap. A careful study of the lines and business will make the character clear. Remember that Dan affects an air of indifference when others are present. Only in the last act is his emotional nature apparent, except in his soliloquy and his scene with **ECKERT** in Act I. The competency of the actor assuming this rôle may be gauged by his ability to show the inception and growth of a love for his country ranging from hatred to passionate declaration.

TOMMY CRONIN. A small-town clerk, aged about eighteen. Play the part sincerely and dress it naturally. No low comedy methods are permissible, nor any absurd costume effects. He may wear a neat red wig, with reddened eyebrows, but this is not necessary. Don't speak the lines too rapidly and make the proper pauses after punctuation points. Do not run the sentences together; give the audience time to absorb the speeches.

LIZZIE. A country hired girl, aged fifteen. Dress the part naturally and do not make a caricature of it. Cheap, ill-fitting clothes, countrified hat with elastic under chin, rough shoes, striped stockings, etc., are permissible. Skirts, ankle length. Hair may be worn down in curls if desired.

ECKERT. A chunky villain, aged fifty. Gray hair and mustache turned up at ends. Well dressed, easy going and prosperous. Do not speak with a German accent, except the slight idioms called for in the text. This role is a very difficult one and needs careful rehearsing, especially the scenes with **DAN**. Much care should be exercised in casting this part, as the success of the entire play depends almost entirely upon **ECKERT**.

MRS. CRONIN. A motherly old lady with white hair, spectacles and wrinkled face. Wear black dress and widow's cap.

CELIA BAKER. A sweet, well-educated young school-teacher. Neat costumes. In Acts II and III she wears the coif of a Red Cross nurse.

A CHILD. A little girl or boy about seven. Rehearse the part until the child is perfectly natural in lines and action. Any self-assertion, or child elocution stunts, will ruin the climax of the first act.

CORPORAL SHANNON. A big, rough, virile soldier dressed in a corporal's uniform. Study the lines as written, take plenty of time

for the bashful business, pay attention to punctuation, making the correct pauses with each change of subject, and this part, while somewhat brief, will shine out as one of the best in the play.

SCENIC EFFECTS

For large stages: Use street or landscape back drop. Set house up L. Wood wings at R. and down L. As many set trees and grass mats as possible. Park benches down R. and down L. Beds of red geraniums in R. and L. corners add to the effect; have the pots covered with foliage. For the third act a simple interior with entrances R., L. and C. is all that is needed.

For small stages: The set house may be omitted and scenery may be entirely dispensed with if necessary. In this case make a wall of brick tissue-paper, such as is for sale at Christmas, and have two or three trees nailed to stage for Act I. Scatter foliage and leaves over the stage. Screens may be used for the third act to good advantage.

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OVER HERE

ACT I

SCENE.—*The public square in front of the post-office, River Landing, Missouri. Post-office exterior up L. Park benches down L. and down R. For detailed explanation of the stage setting see "Scenic Effects" in the Introduction.*

(Discovered, COMRADE FERGUSON and J. B. WHEEDON seated on the bench at R., in earnest conversation.)

J. B. W. I've been a Republican ever since I was born, and my father and grandfather were ones before me, and if we Americans get mixed up in this European war—well, it won't be the *Republicans* that got us in it.

COM. There's no use trying to argue with you, J. B. If we enter this war it'll be as a united people; Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, the rich, the poor, the white, the black, all of us will stand shoulder to shoulder with party lines and creeds and colors all forgot, with only one thought in mind, "America, with the help of God, will do her duty."

J. B. W. But Wilson was elected President on just one platform, Comrade Ferguson, just one! And what was it? It was to keep us out of war.

Enter JUDGE GARY from post-office. He comes down L.

GARY. Good-morning, Comrade Ferguson. Good-morning, J. B. Taking a little morning constitutional here on the public square?

COM. Yes, Judge; it's a fine morning for April.

J. B. W. Now, I'll leave it to the Judge here. He's a city man, and he knows how they feel about it up in St. Louis. Ain't I right, Judge? Wasn't the President elected just because he promised to keep us out of war?

GARY. I believe that was the slogan of the party. We're neutral just now, J. B., and if any man on earth can keep us out of war and still preserve our national honor, that man is (*raises hat*) Woodrow Wilson.

COM. (*rises tremblingly to his feet and salutes the JUDGE*). You're right, Judge. I'm for him now, I've always been for him, and I always will be. (*Slowly and with simple eloquence.*) He's my President, and I'm going to trust in his wisdom. (*Resumes his seat.*)

J. B. W. (*after a slight pause*). So am I, if he keeps us out of war.

Enter MISS EM FINCH from the post-office. She carries a basket on her arm and starts to exit at rear R., but pauses listening to the JUDGE'S next speech.

GARY. I fear the thing has gone too far for that now, J. B. War seems inevitable. We can never hope to have peace in the world, now or at any time, unless we help to put down—and keep down—any nation that allows the slaughter of innocent women and children.

J. B. W. I know all that, but it looks like he could use some more arbitration.

GARY (*seriously*). The time for arbitration has passed. On the second of April our President made an address to Congress that clearly stated his opinion. I have it here. (*Takes clipping from wallet, puts on spectacles.*) I'll read the closing paragraph to you, J. B., then you'll understand the high ideals held by Woodrow Wilson. (*Reads.*) "There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace."

COM. Do you hear that, J. B.? The right is more precious than peace. That means that there are some

things worse'n war, dishonor and disgrace. The right is more precious than peace.

GARY (*reads*). "And we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts,—for democracy, for the rights of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments——"

J. B. W. That means giving every man a vote. I'm in favor of that. I'm beginning to understand it better now.

(*Positions: J. B. W. and COM. seated on bench at R., J. B. W. nearer the R. GARY standing L. C. MISS EM at rear C. unobserved.*)

GARY (*continuing*). "—for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free people as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free."

COM. (*much moved*). It's wonderful, wonderful. That's what our United States is standin' for—to bring peace and safety to all nations, and to make the world itself at last free.

GARY (*reading*). "To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

(*During this speech MISS EM has been drawn almost involuntarily toward the center of the stage, listening with rapt attention to the reading.*)

COM. If that is his message it can have but one meaning.

GARY. It means war.

J. B. W. Mebbe not. Mebbe they can settle it by arbitration. His platform was "I kept you out of war," now let's see if he can stick to it. Let him write some more notes to 'em. Arbitration and peace notes'll do the business. (*Rises and stands at R.*)

MISS EM (*takes a step forward, half faces J. B. W. and speaks indignantly*). Arbitration and peace notes? No, this is no time for arbitration and peace notes. Didn't they sink the *Lusitania* with all those innocent women and children on it? Haven't they fired on our American boys and insulted the American flag? Things like those can never be settled by arbitration. What did the President say? We've got to make the world safe for the people. It ain't safe now, but we've got to *make* it safe. Our people have been long-suffering and slow to anger, but in the sinking of that boat they went too far. Are we going to stand back like cowards and let 'em run rough-shod over us, or are we going to strike for the honor of our flag and the defense of our women and our children?

J. B. W. But, Miss Em, you don't understand. The word arbitration —

MISS EM. The word arbitration is dead; we gave 'em peace notes and they insulted us for our pains; we gave 'em arbitration and they killed our women and children on the *Lusitania*. (*Loudly.*) Now, we'll give 'em *war!*

COM. (*rises and comes toward her*). Why, Miss Em, I don't hardly recognize you. I never heard you act thisaway before. It's a fearful, awful thing war is. Don't I know? I was in the Civil War from start to finish. I saw men die by hundreds, by thousands. War is heart-breaking, Miss Em; there ain't anything as terrible on earth.

MISS EM. Yes, there is, Comrade Ferguson; disgrace is more terrible. Acting the coward is more terrible. (*Changes her tone.*) Oh, don't I know all about the horrors of war, doesn't every woman know its heart-breaks and cruelty? You all know my story. Everything we had was swept away in the Civil War; my father was wounded and his father and three brothers fell at Gettysburg. Only common soldiers they were, but they gave themselves up for their country. And when the Spanish-American war broke out in '98 I was all ready to be married, but John went. And I was proud of him as he marched away. I gave him up willingly—for my country. He was all I had, and he never

came back, (*proudly*) but it was for my country. Nearly twenty years ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday. The boys marching right through the square here and then over the hill to the depot. He looked back and waved his hand (*brokenly*) and—I never saw him again. He didn't talk of arbitration. His country called and he answered it. And now, when the safety of the whole world is at stake they talk of peace notes and arbitration. Peace? There can be no peace until the enemy is crushed—beaten down and crushed to the earth.

COM. Why, Miss Em, I don't hardly know you, you're so fierce.

MISS EM. I hardly know meself. I guess my feelings got the better of me. Sometimes I feel just like I was a living, acting part of this great nation of ours, not poor Em Finch an old-maid housekeeper in River Landing working for fifteen dollars a month. (*Changes tone to one of despair.*) And I can't do a thing for my country. Oh, if I'd only had a son, if I had *five* sons, I'd give them all, *all*, with joy and pride in my heart, to fight for my country.

GARY (*goes to her and shakes hands with her*). Miss Finch, I'm proud to know you. Your patriotism does you much credit.

MISS EM. Oh, Judge, you do me proud, sir.

Enter LORNIE DAVIS from the post-office. She comes down L., meeting MISS EM, who crosses to her. GARY crosses and joins COM. and J. B. W. and they stroll to upper R. corner engaged in pantomimic conversation.

LORN. (*down L.*). Oh, Miss Em, I been lookin' everywhere for you. Which way you headed?

MISS EM. I just started for the grocery. The train isn't in yet.

LORN. No, ain't it exasperating? I'm looking for a piece of music in from Chicago. It's been nearly two weeks a-comin', and it ain't here yet. I was hopin' to sing it at church Easter and that'll only gimme to-day and to-morrow to practice it. An' if it don't get in this morning I'll have to oblige with sump'm old. But

I'm goin' to have the cutest Easter hat ever seen in River Landing. I got it off'n a drummer, right out o' stock. It's awful chick.

MISS EM. Chick?

LORN. Yes, that's French fer cute. All us milliners say chick when we want to make an impression. You ought to see the hat I sold Sadie McJimpsey this mornin', a kind of a fadey green trimmed with marigolds. She was tellin' me she got a letter from her sister Stell in Milwaukee. She's had the most awful thing happen to her. A regular scandal with her name in the paper and everything.

MISS EM. You don't say!

LORN. Yes. She was a hired girl in a man's house and he turned out to be a German spy. Ain't that scandalous? The poor thing is mortified most to death. They arrested him quicker'n scat, but I'll bet poor Stell won't never live down the disgrace till her dyin' day.

MISS EM. Why, it wasn't her fault, was it?

LORN. No, of course not. But she was kinder mixed up in it, her bein' his wife's hired girl. They sent him to the Federal Penitentiary and it all come out in the papers, mentionin' Stell's name and everything. Ain't it awful? Them spies is just all over the country. (*Primly.*) 'Twouldn't surprise me none if we didn't have some of 'em right here in River Landing.

Enter DAN^o MONIHAN from R. U. E. during the preceding speech. He slinks to the door of the post-office slowly, looking furtively around at the characters on the stage. He enters on words "Them spies is just all over the country," and it must be made evident to the audience that he is a spy. This must be done by his mannerisms of appearing lazy and bored, but sharp glances from the corner of his eye, slinking manner, etc., convey the impression desired. The other characters on the stage pay no attention to him.

MISS EM. There's no telling, Lornie. It seems like they're just everywhere. I haven't the least doubt but

they're responsible for all this trouble down along the Mexican border.

LORN. Ain't it awful? It makes me so nervous, Miss Em, that I know I'd just die if I thought one of 'em was spyin' on me. I'll walk as fur as the store with you. (*They start toward R. U. E., but pause a little in c.*) Who's that man over there? (*Indicates GARY.*) He's a stranger in town and he looks kind o' suspicious. (*Draws MISS EM a little to L. and speaks in subdued tone.*) Do you reckon he's a German man?

MISS EM. Why, Lornie, don't you know Judge Gary? He's a United States district judge appointed by the President. It's part of his business to run down spies.

LORN. (*excitedly*). Then that's what he's a-doin' here. Ain't it scandalous? He must know there's some of 'em right here in River Landing. Who do you reckon it is?

MISS EM. Nonsense, Lornie, the judge is here on a vacation. His folks used to live here years ago. They owned the old Saterlee place. He hasn't been back in twenty years; he said it was the first vacation he'd had in all that time. (*They move toward R. U. E.*)

LORN. He's a right nice lookin' man, ain't he? He can't be a day over fifty-five. I wonder if he's married.

MISS EM. Oh, yes. His wife and children are at home up in St. Louis. He told me all about 'em. You see, he used to be right friendly with John.

LORN. John? John who?

MISS EM. The man I was going to marry, Lornie.

LORN. Oh! (*Looks at GARY.*) I'd kind o' like to be introduced to him.

MISS EM. I'll make you acquainted with him now.

LORN. Massy sakes, no! With me lookin' like this, and him from St. Louis? Wait till this afternoon when I'm more becomingly becostumed. So he's a United States judge, is he? Well, if there are any spies down here, I certainly hope he'll catch 'em and hang 'em higher 'n hallelujah. All this war talk's got me so nervous! (*They move toward R. U. E.*) I've got to hurry home now and practice my scales, so as to be ready fer Easter. I'm goin' to wear my new charmooz, if it

don't rain. I wonder if they've got any new phonograph records at the grocery store?

[*Exits R. U. E., still talking to MISS EM.*

J. B. W. (*standing with GARY and COM. down R.*). Well, as I was sayin', I'm a Republican born and a Republican bred, but I'm an American first of all, by heck.

GARY. That's the kind of talk I like to hear, Wheedon. The President has given us orders to close the ranks.

J. B. W. Close the ranks? What does he mean close the ranks?

COM. He means that we've all got to git together, J. B. We've got to forgit all our little troubles and our differences in the face of a common danger. We've got to git together, and stand together shoulder to shoulder. We've got to close the ranks.

(DAN MONIHAN *slinks slowly over to the group at R.*)

DAN (*with an unlighted cigarette in his hand*). Excuse me, mister, c'n you gimme the loan of a match?

GARY (*hands him small box of matches*). There you are, sir.

DAN (*lights cigarette*). Much obliged.

(*Returns box and crosses back to the door of the post-office.*)

GARY (*to J. B. W.*). Who is that young fellow?

J. B. W. Stranger in town, I reckon. I never saw him before.

COM. I got to go over to the grocery store. Got to git a nickel's worth o' cut plug. Goin' over, Judge?

GARY. Yes, we can pick out some new fishing tackle. Coming, J. B.?

J. B. W. I'll be along pretty soon. I want to wait for the mail.

COM. Still like to fish, do you, Judge?

GARY. I certainly do. I suppose the old fishing hole is just as good as ever.

COM. (*as they cross to R. U. E.*). No, I don't reckon it is. The fish don't seem to bite like they did twenty er thirty years ago.

[*Exit R. U. E with GARY.*

DAN (*has crossed to R. C. during the preceding speech*). Say, can you gimme another match? I can't keep this thing lit.

J. B. W. (*searching his pockets*). I don't believe I've got one.

DAN (*drawling the first word*). All right.

(*Strolls into the post-office.*)

(J. B. W. sits on bench at R. and reads newspaper. Enter TOMMY CRONIN from R. U. E., whistling a popular air; he crosses to the door of the post-office and is about to enter when he apparently sees some one off stage at L. I E. He smiles bashfully, indicates that it is his "girl," waves hand at her, pauses, waves more vigorously, finally whistles loudly through his fingers, pauses again, waves hand again and beckons her to join him. He crosses down to L. I E. J. B. W. starts at the whistle, sees the cause, frowns, turns his back on TOMMY and reads paper. Enter from L. I E. LIZZIE BROWN, carrying a clothes-wringer.)

LIZ. (*stands at L. I E., looks at TOMMY bashfully, then twists bashfully away from him*). Hello!

TOM. Hello! (*Pause.*)

LIZ. I didn't know you'd be down-town. Why ain't you a-workin'?

TOM. Oh, 'cause.

LIZ. 'Cause why?

TOM. 'Cause I seen you go past the store. (*Giggles.*)

LIZ. Aw, now you go on! (*Giggles.*)

TOM. Where you goin'?

LIZ. Pust-office.

TOM. Mail ain't in yet. Let's walk down to the depot.

LIZ. (*with closed lips signifying "no"*). Um-umph!

TOM. Why not?

LIZ. Miz Doolittle sent me over to Mandy Pellenses to borry the clothes-wringer, but I ain't a-goin' to be seen walkin' through town with it.

TOM. I'll carry it fer you.

LIZ. It's awful heavy.

TOM. (*disdainfully*). Humph, I c'd carry it on one finger.

(*Takes it, then offers his left arm to her.*)

LIZ. Aw, some'n'll see us.

TOM. What d' you care? We're engaged, ain't we?

LIZ. Kinder.

TOM. (*takes her arm*). Well, I don't care who knows it.

LIZ. Maw won't lemme announce my engagement till I'm seventeen anyhow.

TOM. Well, that's only 'bout a year to wait.

(*They move toward R. U. E.*)

LIZ. They're goin' to have a movin' picture show at the opery house Saturday night, I hear.

TOM. Yup, so I hear. Costs two bits a ticket, too. Wanter go?

LIZ. (*with closed lips signifying assent*). Um-umph!

TOM. Here's a stick o' gum. Lickerish. I saved it fer you.

LIZ. Much obliged. [*They exeunt at R. U. E.*]

Enter FREDERICK ECKERT from the post-office. He comes down c.

ECK. Well, how is everything, Wheedon? Pretty bad, yes?

J. B. W. I dunno whether you'd call it bad er good.

ECK. Anything late come in by telegraph?

J. B. W. A couple of wires this morning. It's all one kind of news.

ECK. (*anxiously*). Meaning war?

J. B. W. War!

ECK. (*paces stage from c. to L. and back again*). There must be some way out of it. This is horrible.

J. B. W. (*rises*). It was bound to come.

ECK. (*pacing*). It's upset me, completely upset me. I hardly know which way to turn.

J. B. W. Turn the *right* way.

ECK. What do you mean the right way?

J. B. W. There's only one course for a decent American to take.

ECK. Oh, you only see your own side.

J. B. W. What do you see?

ECK. I see this great, good country, always friendly with Germany, filled with thousands and thousands of good loyal German-Americans like yourself, I see it torn from end to end with dissention and distrust.

J. B. W. (*hotly*). You mean —

ECK. (*hastily*). Oh, I'm for my country, of course. That comes first. I'm naturalized and just as loyal an American as any one, but I'm not in favor of war, if it can be avoided.

J. B. W. It can't be.

ECK. Surely you are not for war? No, no, impossible!

J. B. W. It's the only course.

ECK. That is pure savagery—barbarism.

J. B. W. Well, if it's savage to fight when every national right has been violated, then I'm a savage. But I'm an *American* savage, and not a German savage.

ECK. (*after a slight pause*). But your father and mother, both Germans —

J. B. W. No, they are no longer German, they are American. For fifty years the United States has given them a good living, a home, protection. Shall they turn their back on it when trouble comes? No, sir, the motto of the Wheedon family is not Deutschland Ueber Alles, it is (*raises hat*) America Comes First!

ECK. (*sneers*). Very patriotic. But this break with the Fatherland must be averted if possible. We must appeal to Washington. We must protest against this war. And our protests will come in such great numbers that that weak demagogue —

J. B. W. (*furiously*). Stop! (*Pauses and then speaks tensely*.) Are you speaking of the President of the United States?

ECK. (*confidentially*). Oh, only between ourselves. We're old friends, Wheedon, you and I; you know what I think and I know what you think.

(DAN *appears in the door of the post-office, unseen by the actors.*)

J. B. W. You might think you do, but maybe I've changed my mind.

ECK. (*sneers*). Since when have you swung around to the Schoolmaster?

J. B. W. (*tensely*). Since he gave the order to close the ranks.

ECK. (*after slight pause*). We must remain neutral. Yes, yes, neutrality must be our watchword.

J. B. W. No, not neutrality, justice and democracy!

ECK. And this from you, a German-American?

J. B. W. No longer a German-American, Eckert, just a plain American! I've cut out the hyphen. (*Crosses to R. U. E., turns to ECK.*) I won't argue with you any longer, but listen to me, you'd better be a little less free with your speech, Eckert, or people are liable to talk. [*Exits R. U. E.*]

ECK. (*crosses to R.*). Yes, he's right. I must be more prudent.

(DAN, *with another unlighted cigarette in his hand, slouches down to ECK. at R. C.*)

DAN. Excuse me, mister, could you give me a match?

ECK. (*starts, looks at DAN sharply, pauses a moment, then speaks naturally*). A match? What do you want with a match?

DAN (*starts, showing the audience that the password has been answered; then he looks sharply at ECK.*). I was thinking about starting a little fire.

ECK. (*smiles, realizing that DAN is a spy*). Oh, for your cigarette, yes?

DAN. No! (*Tosses cigarette away, moves closer to ECK., and speaks confidentially, but distinctly.*) Fer sump'm bigger'n my cigarette.

ECK. What are you going to set on fire?

DAN. A sky-rocket. (*Slight pause.*) One that can be seen clear over the Rhine.

ECK. (*cautiously looks around*). I understand. We are alone. (*Stands at attention, speaks in a tone of command.*) Your name and number!

DAN (*slouching as usual*). Dan Monihan, Chicago, one ten.

ECK. I am F. J. Eckert, Missouri, twelve. Who sent you?

DAN. The Professor. Number One, Chicago.

ECK. And you have some instructions? Yes?

DAN. To come here, meet Number Twelve of Missouri, and report to him for active service.

ECK. Maybe you've got something for me? Yes?

DAN. Yeah, I got it all right.

ECK. Ah, ha, maybe a little package, eh? And you brought it all safe?

DAN. It ain't a package; it's a fountain pen.

ECK. Ah, ha! A fountain pen, eh? That's clever. Number One, the Herr Professor, is a very clever man. Brains? Colossal! Such a safe way to send it. In a fountain pen.

DAN (*takes pen carefully from inside pocket*). I dunno what it is, but you'll find it's all right. I didn't even jar it. I carried it like soup.

ECK. Soup?

DAN. Yeah, nitro-glycerine, wot they use on safes. If it's that—one little jar and blooey! Good-night!

(*With a gesture signifying annihilation.*)

ECK. Oh, it's not nitro. No, no, my lad. But there are other things, maybe, more deadly than nitro-glycerine, yes?

DAN. Well, there it is. Now gimme a receipt fer it.

ECK. A receipt?

DAN. Sure, I gotta have sump'm to show.

ECK. Very good. (*Writes.*) "Received of Dan Monihan one fountain pen apparently in good order. Signed, F. J. Eckert."

DAN. Okeh.

ECK. So, you don't trust me, eh?

DAN (*sneers*). Trust you? Say, I don't trust nobody.

ECK. Very well. Prudence is a good quality. I don't trust many people myself. There is your receipt.

(*Hands him leaf from note-book.*)

DAN. And there's the fountain pen.

ECK. (*takes pen eagerly and fondles it*). Ah, ha, only a little fountain pen, eh? (*Unscrews top and examines the interior of the pen.*) It's all right. Everything is all right. (*Replaces top.*) It's only a little medicine, that is all. A gift from my friend, the Herr Professor. (*Smiles.*) Such a little thing it is, but so important, so important!

DAN. It ain't nothin' to me what it is. I did what they told me to, that's all. Anything else you want me to do?

ECK. Indeed, yes. There is more to do, much more. You know what your orders are, yes? You understand that you are to be under my charge for some time?

DAN. Yeah, dat's what Number One said. He told me to bring your report back with me.

ECK. It will be ready for him, maybe in two or three weeks.

DAN (*astonished*). Two or three weeks? Say, you ain't goin' to bury me here in this burg that long, are you?

ECK. (*seriously*). For this work that we now do have I buried *myself* here for five years. I have a good business here, the largest mill in this part of the State. The same powerful hand that released you from your American prison has made me a profitable business here in River Landing. It is best that you should be here with me for some time. I will give you a job in the mill. Let me see! Your name is Monihan, yes?

DAN. Dat's it, dey call me Slink.

ECK. German?

DAN. Who, me? Naw, nothin' like it.

ECK. Irish, maybe?

DAN. Naw, jes' plain Chicago.

ECK. Oh, an American?

DAN. No, I ain't no American either. I ain't nothin'.

ECK. But you were born in America?

DAN. Sure. And I was beat and kicked and treated like a dog all my life in America. When I was six dey sent me up to the Reform School. I ran away and got caught. They kep' me till I was sixteen, ten years behind the stone walls, and then they lemme go. But bein' out was worse'n in the stir. I couldn't go straight. They wouldn't no one gimme a chance. So I went crooked. Then they began to hunt me like a rat. I had to live under the docks and only go out at night. (*Brokenly.*) Then—they caught me—they beat me—with an iron bar—they —— (*Breaks down and sobs passionately.*) Oh, I hate 'em, I hate 'em. Gawd, how I hate 'em. They gimme a five year stretch fer crackin' a crib, and me only a kid.

ECK. Five years for burglary, eh? (*Sympathetically.*) Too bad; so that's how your America has used you, eh? But my friend, Number One, the Herr Professor, he helped you out, yes?

DAN. Yeah, he helped me. He was white all right, aces high. I'd been behind the bars fer nineteen months, and I'd 'a' been there three years more, if it hadn't 'a' been fer him. He pulled the wires in Chicago and got me out. Den he sent me down here to you and said you'd treat me square. Well, whatcha want me to do? I'm ready. You're the boss.

ECK. So all your life they've been persecuting you, eh? These good, just Americans! They caged you up like a rat in their prison, they took away your clothes and gave you stripes, they took away your freedom and gave you iron bars, they took away your name and gave you a number, they mistreated you—they beat you—and all for what? That their American sense of justice might be satisfied. That's what did it, that flag. (*Points to flag over the post-office.*) And it belongs to you. It's the flag of your country.

DAN (*passionately*). It ain't, it ain't, I tell you! I

ain't got no flag, I ain't got no country. Think I'm goin' to claim a country that's treated me worse'n a dog? My flag? No, it ain't my flag. I ain't got no flag.

ECK. (*rubs hands gleefully*). No flag, eh? Well, what if I was to give you a flag? That isn't the only flag, is it? (*Takes folded white handkerchief from inside pocket and hands it to DAN.*) There, look at that.

DAN. What is it? This ain't a flag.

ECK. Just to look at it so and it means nothing. But hold it up to the sun once. (*DAN complies.*) Ah, ha—now what do you see?

DAN. I see an eagle. An eagle with two heads. What does it mean? Is it a flag?

ECK. What you see is the imperial emblem of Prussia. Now it is your emblem. Take it for your own and keep it always next to your heart. If trouble comes, show it to a friend. If he is wise he will hold it to the sun and then will recognize you as a brother. For we are all brothers, bound together in a great and dangerous undertaking. You are one of us. You are on our side, on the side of right and Kultur. Even now the United States is on the verge of declaring war. Let them! It will mean danger and work for us, but victory will follow. Kultur will rule the world.

DAN. I dunno nothin' about that, boss. But I'm with you and I'll stick like glue. I'll do what you tell me to.

ECK. Then we will work together, work against a common enemy.

DAN. What do you mean by an enemy?

ECK. The American nation is your enemy—your enemy and mine! They robbed you of your liberty, they hounded you into prison. But they shall pay! The day shall come when *we* will have the power, and then America shall pay, and pay. They shall bleed until there is no America left. Grrr! Then shall you be avenged for your life in prison, for your misery and your beatings. Their day will pass, our day will come!

DAN. I'll do my share. Slink Monihan never goes back on his friends. But I gotta know all about it. All, mind you! from deuce to ace.

ECK. And so you shall, in good time. But we must not be seen together. This is a small town and people are apt to talk. This afternoon you come to the office of my mill and ask me for a job. I will give it to you, and after that all will be easy.

DAN. But where'll I get a place to eat? I ain't used to these small town jays.

ECK. Maybe I can fix that up too. You might live at my own house. My housekeeper is a good woman. Sh, some one is coming.

Enter MISS EM and LORN. from R. U. E. talking in pantomime.

DAN (*assuming the rôle of a stranger*). Mister, when does the mail get in this town anyway? Every day er only once a month?

ECK. It will be here presently. Miss Em! (*Miss EM comes to him.*) This young man is a stranger in town. I have given him a place at the mill and I thought that maybe I could take him to board. He could have the little room up-stairs.

MISS EM. Yes, sir. Only I'll have to air it out.

ECK. (*to DAN*). Well, that's settled then. Be at the mill at two o'clock sharp. There's plenty of work to do.

DAN. Yes, sir.

LORN. (*comes down to R. of ECK.*). Oh, Mr. Eckert, do you think there's any German spies in this town?

ECK. (*starts*). German spies, Miss Davis?

LORN. Yes. Miss Em was jest tellin' me that Judge Gary is a United States district judge and that part of his business is to git after German spies. And he's been here two days. Ain't it terrible? There must be some of them spies right here in River Landing. It makes me so nervous.

ECK. Nonsense, Miss Davis, I'm sure that's all talk. The judge is here on a vacation. He told me so himself. There are no spies around here.

LORN. Well, you certainly do make me feel relieved. I wouldn't sleep a wink at night, if I thought any one was spyin' around this town. The war is bad enough but spies would be perfectly scandalous.

ECK. Bah, that is all gossip, Miss Davis. Why should any one want to spy on River Landing?

LORN. Well, you never can tell. The women down at the Belgium Relief Sewing Society say they are all over the country.

ECK. By the way, Miss Davis, I've been hearing scandalous reports about this Belgium Relief Society.

LORN. You have? My gracious, ain't that awful? What are they?

ECK. They say that the committee in New York takes out all the best clothing collected and sells it and pockets the money. Of course, I don't know, I'm only saying what I heard.

LORN. Do you mean that they sell all these nice things we collect for the starving Belgians?

ECK. That's what I saw in the paper.

LORN. My, my, ain't that scandalous? Well, I'm done. I won't collect another article. Why should we work our heads off down here in Missouri to help make them New Yorkers rich? I'd think they'd be ashamed of themselves. Stealing from the poor Belgians.

ECK. Miss Em, you bring the mail over to the office. Monihan, I'll see you at two o'clock. Remember what I told you, Miss Davis, there are no German spies in Missouri and you'd better watch the doings of the New York Belgium Relief Society. One can't be too careful. (*Crosses to R. U. E.*) That society is all a fraud anyway. [*Exits R. U. E.*]

LORN. Now, Miss Em, what do you think of that? You always have been so active in collecting things. Ain't it awful?

MISS EM. I don't believe a word of it.

LORN. (*scandalized*). Don't believe it? Don't you believe your boss? There ain't a nicer man in River Landing than Mr. Eckert, him being so pleasant and patriotic. It's a wonder he don't get married with his mill and all his money and land. But that 'ud throw you out of a job, wouldn't it?

MISS EM. I'm thinking of getting a new position anyway, Lornie. I'd like to be a Red Cross nurse.

LORN. So would I. I'd just love to wear one of

them costumes and nurse a wounded soldier boy back to life. That's a good idea, Miss Em. I think I orter be a nurse. Paw always said I was sich a comfort to him when he was down with plumbago. You know I can sing and play on the mouth harp. I think I'd be real handy as a nurse. (*They enter the post-office.*)

DAN (*at rear*). Gee, these country dames is funny. She'd make a swell nurse, she would. One look at her and the patient would give up all hope forever.

Enter TOM. from R. U. E.

TOM. Say, have you seen anything of Judge Gary?

DAN. I don't know him. I'm a stranger in town.

TOM. Well, if you see him tell him to come over to the telegraph office right away. There's a telegram just come in fer him.

Enter J. B. W. from R. U. E.

J. B. W. Is the train in yet, Tommy?

TOM. No, I ain't heard the whistle. Say, Mr. Wheedon, have you seen anything of Judge Gary? There's a telegram over at the office for him.

J. B. W. Yes, he's down at the store.

TOM. Then I gotta find him. It's awful important.

(Starts out R. U. E.)

J. B. W. Wait a minute, I'll go with you.

(Follows him out.)

DAN. Gee, a telegram makes about as much excitement in this jay burg as a run on the bank. And the boss said I'd have to stay two or three weeks. Gee, I wisht I was back in Chicago.

(Sits on bench down L.; reads the "Police Gazette.")

Enter MRS. CRONIN and CELIA BAKER from R. U. E.

MRS. C. Did you say the train was in, Celia?

CELIA. Yes, Mrs. Cronin. It's been in two or three minutes.

MRS. C. Then the mail ought to be up pretty soon.

(They start toward the post-office.)

Enter a CHILD from R. U. E. She runs to CELIA.

CHILD. Teacher, can I go with you to get the mail?

CELIA. Certainly, come along, Sadie. They're probably putting it in the boxes now.

(The sound of a bugle is heard in the distance blowing the reveille. All pause and look off R. U. E.)

MRS. C. What's that?

(The sound of distant cheering is heard.)

CHILD. Teacher, what is it? A parade er what?

CELIA. I don't know, dear.

MRS. C. It sounds like the call to arms. I ain't heard anything like that in River Landing for years.

(Bugle blows call to arms. Enter MISS EM and LORN. from post-office, ECK. and TOM. from R. U. E.)

LORN. *(comes down L. with MISS EM)*. What they blowing the bugle for? It's got everybody all excited, and it makes me so nervous!

MISS EM. They must have had some news down at the telegraph office. It's Comrade Ferguson blowing his war bugle. Do you suppose we've declared war?

(Men, women and children enter and crowd the stage at R. This is very important, and a large crowd adds to the general effect of the scene. Every extra person must be well trained and thoroughly rehearsed in this scene. J. B. W. and GARY enter with the crowd and move down R. GARY has a telegram in his hand.)

ECK. *(at R. C.)*. What is it, Wheedon? What does that bugle mean?

GARY *(down R.)*. It means, sir, that the United States has awakened at last. War has been declared.

ALL *(excited)*. War?

(Cheers are heard in distance, followed by the long roll of the drum. Cheers are heard closer. All on stage hold tableau looking off at R. U. E. DAN, alone, remains unconcerned.)

GARY. The news has just come over the wire. Congress has passed the bill. Our days of neutrality are over. We are in a state of war with Germany.

LORN. Ain't that awful? And on Good Friday, too. Looks like they might have waited until after Easter. This'll make me so nervous I know I can't sing a note.

(Nobody pays any attention to her; all are talking in pantomime among themselves. COM. enters from R. U. E. followed by a crowd of boy scouts. COM. carries a bugle. He comes down R. C. TOM. joins MRS. C. and CELIA down L. C. LIZ. enters R. U. E.)

TOM. Mom, folks from the country are beginning to come in. Flivvers and barebacked. They've unhitched the horses from the plows to ride in to hear the news. And it means war.

LIZ. Oh, Tom, will you have to go? Are you goin' to war?

MRS. C. Is he goin'? Honey, he wouldn't be a Cronin if he didn't.

TOM. You bet I'm goin'.

MRS. C. Yes, and he's all I got left to me now. My baby! And he's going to war.

TOM. You wouldn't want me to be a coward, mom, would you?

MRS. C. No, boy, I'm proud of you, proud of you, that you want to do your bit for your country and your flag!

COM. It's jest like the days of '61. I was blowin' the old bugle jest like I used to do in the army.

J. B. W. Read us the telegram, Judge.

ALL. Yes, read us. Let us hear the news.

GARY. It's very short, but to the point.

VOICE (in rear). Louder! Git up on the bench!

GARY (mounts bench at R.). I'll read it to you. (Reads telegram.) "Congress declares war on Ger-

many. Our regular army and national guard must be filled to war strength. We depend on River Landing to do its share. Open enlistment in all branches of service. More later." That is the message. It is from the governor of the state and he calls on River Landing to do its share.

COM. And River Landing will obey.

J. B. W. You bet!

(*All cheer.*)

GARY. My friends, you have heard the brief message. It is only a few words, but those words will make history in this community. It is our call. The call of the Stars and Stripes. A call to the young manhood of this village to offer themselves to fight for their country, and we are ready. To a man we stand behind the President in this hour of national peril.

ALL. Yes, yes!

GARY. This is a peculiar nation. It is made up of many peoples, of many races, but one thought welds them together as a solid mass, one idea dominates our republic, and that is freedom—the democracy of mankind. That's what that flag (*points to flag on post-office building*) stands for and that is what our nation stands for. Freedom and democracy. Every man here this morning, you and you and you (*pointing to men in the crowd, he points to DAN on the last "you"*) love and honor that flag as you love and honor your country. "Breathes there a man with soul so dead who never to himself hath said—This is my own, my native land!" No, down deep in your hearts you know that you are first of all Americans. This *is* your own, your native land. And now is your chance to show your colors. Will they be the black that portends the doom of Germany, with a streak of yellow? Or will they be the Red, the White and the Blue! Answer me, under which flag will you serve?

J. B. W. Under the Star-Spangled Banner.

(*All cheer.*)

GARY. We want you all; men, women and children all have their duty to perform. We count on your loyalty. This is no time for copperheads, slackers or soft-pedalists. If there be any such among us it is our duty to drive them away and brand them as traitors. Your country has called you, men of River Landing, what shall be your answer?

J. B. W. Put me down, Judge. I'll enlist. My father and mother fled from Germany to escape the iron heel, but I'm ready and willing to fight for freedom.

(All cheer.)

TOM. Put me down. A true Irishman never yet refused a fight.

(All cheer.)

GARY. That's the talk. Boys, don't wait for the draft—your President has called for volunteers. Like our fathers of old our eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. His soul is marching on. Now I want all those who are willing to come to the office across the square and sign the muster roll. Follow on, follow on, for your country and your country's flag.

(Descends from bench.)

(The women and children begin to sing the chorus of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The men cheer and join in the singing. They form in line and all, save DAN, march off at R. U. E. singing and cheering. The singing is heard off stage, the singers starting the first verse after the opening chorus. The singing continues far away in the distance until the end of the act.)

DAN. They're fools. Goin' to fight fer their country and their country's flag, eh? Not me. *(Pauses, crosses to c., looking after the crowd.)* That fellow made a good speech all right. What did he say? *(Pauses, thinking of the words; speaks slowly.)* "Lives there a man with soul so dead who never to himself hath said, This is my own, my native land!" *(Pauses, then repeats*

slowly.) My own, my native land! Pshaw, it's only words—it don't mean nothin'. And yet—(*pause*) and yet, this *is* my own, my native land!

Enter CHILD from R. U. E. carrying small flag.

CHILD. Come on, mister; let's you and me go over and see 'em march.

(Takes his hand and looks up into his face in a trusting manner.)

DAN *(draws back)*. Naw, I can't go. I don' wan'a.

CHILD. Why not? They all got flags and everything.

DAN *(with significant emphasis)*. That's the reason. You see I ain't got no country er nuthin'. I ain't even got a flag.

CHILD. You ain't? Wait, I'll give you my flag. *(Hands it to him.)* Now you gotta flag and everything. Come on!

(She leads him out at R. U. E. walking very slowly.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I, but about three weeks later. Time, an afternoon in May.*

(Discovered, MRS. C., LIZ. and TOM. seated on bench down R. TOM. is seated between the ladies and has a sack of bananas. All are eating bananas. CELIA is seated on bench down L. earnestly conversing in pantomime with a young man. A young husband and wife, leading two small children, walk across stage at rear talking earnestly. The action throughout this scene must be serious and subdued. The boys are going to war and their kin-folks feel the gravity of the situation.)

MRS. C. It was just three weeks ago that our country declared war, and to-day you're leaving. Why, you ain't learned how to drill or how to hold a musket or anything.

TOM. We'll get all that at camp, mom. Gee, I tell you, little old River Landing ought to be proud of herself to-day. Just think, over fifty men have volunteered and we're going to have a special car and everything.

MRS. C. How long before it'll leave, son?

TOM. *(looks at wrist watch)*. In about forty minutes.

(A young man and an old man enter R. U. E., meet the young husband and wife at rear and stand talking to them in pantomime.)

LIZ. Maybe the train'll be late er sump'm like that.

TOM. Nope, there ain't a chance. A government train is never late. That's one of the first things they teach us in the army, to be on time.

LIZ. You wasn't on time when you said you'd meet me at the store last night at seven o'clock.

TOM. Well, that's different. Meetin' a girl ain't army work, is it?

(The group at the rear stroll out R. U. E. Enter from L. I E. J. B. W. leading an old gentleman and an old lady. They walk very slowly toward R. U. E. and talk in pantomime.)

LIZ. It's just as important, anyhow. Your last night in River Landing, too.

J. B. W. *(at c.)*. All ready to leave, are you, Tommy?

TOM. You bet, ready and rarin' to go. Been gittin' ready sence five o'clock this morning.

J. B. W. *(to his companions)*. Now we'll walk over to the recruiting office. I want you to meet the corporal. The government sent him all the way down from St. Louis to escort us to Washington Barracks. Pretty fine, ain't it?

(They stroll out at R. U. E., followed by CELIA and her escort.)

MRS. C. *(crying a little)*. Tommy, boy, you'll take care of yourself, won't you?

TOM. You bet I will, mom. You needn't a-worry about that.

MRS. C. But you're so careless sometimes. *(To LIZ.)* You dunno how careless he is. Why, nearly every night I have to come in and tuck him up, he gets so restless. *(To TOM.)* I hope they'll have feather beds and plenty of blankets and good comforts and quilts at the camp. And I put the hot-water bottle in the bottom of your grip.

TOM. Oh, I'll be all right. The corporal says they treat you fine at the cantonment.

MRS. C. It's forty minutes till train time. I think I'll go home a little while and see if there's anything I forgot. *(Rises.)* It won't take me long.

(Crosses to L. I E., looks back at TOM., who is talking to LIZ., sighs and exits L. I E.)

LIZ. I thought your mom said she was goin' home.

TOM. Ain't she?

LIZ. (*points*). She went that way. I know where she went. She's goin' to stop in at the church, she is, and say a prayer for your safety, Tommy.

TOM. (*softly*). Yes, that's just like mom. That's just what she's goin' to do.

LIZ. (*begins to cry a little*). Oh, Tommy, this goin' away to war is jest awful. Suppose you should get wounded, or killed, or sump'm. (*Cries louder.*) Oh, Tommy, don't go! Tell 'em we're goin' to git married, and stay at home. Jest suppose you'd get blowed into pieces, er get shot or get hit by a air-ship, er sump'm.

TOM. There, there, Lizzie, there ain't nothin' like that goin' to happen. At least, not if I c'n help it.

LIZ. (*still crying and eating banana at same time*). Goin' way over there across the ocean full of them U-boats and everything.

TOM. Don't you worry, honey, they ain't goin' to get me. And think of the time we'll have when I get back, a major er a captain er sump'm like that. Three er four hundred a month. Gee, I c'n hardly wait till I git mixed up in it. The very first Dutchman I capture, I'll cut all his buttons off and send 'em to you fer a souvenir.

LIZ. (*brightening*). Will you?

TOM. Cross my heart. I'll send you some from every one I capture, and you'll have enough to trim two or three dresses all over.

LIZ. Oh, Tommy, how can you be so brave and everything when you're goin' to leave so soon?

TOM. What do you want me to do, cry?

LIZ. No, but you ain't showin' sentiment enough. You're goin' to be a hero and yet you don't act like they do in the moving pictures.

TOM. Mebbe I don't, but I feel it just the same.

LIZ. (*her mouth full of banana*). Maybe I won't never see you again, Tommy. (*Cries.*) Wouldn't that be cruel?

TOM. You wouldn't want me to stay at home and be a slacker, would you?

LIZ. No, I wouldn't. I'm proud of you. Jest as proud as any one. If you hadn't 'a' enlisted I'd never

held up my head on high again in River Landing as long as I lived.

TOM. Now don't forget what you promised. You gotta write to me heaps and heaps.

LIZ. (*crying*). Oh, I will; I will.

TOM. You know it'll be awful lonesome there in the camp. And then when we get over in France it'll be worse'n ever.

LIZ. There's lots of girls over there in France. I hear they're awful fascinatin' to the soldiers. Oh, Tommy, you won't fall fer any of them French girls, will you?

TOM. Who, me? Well, I should say not. That is, if you promise to write every day.

LIZ. Oh, I will. Honest I will, and I'll never let another feller look at me, till you get back. Not even if he is a general.

TOM. (*has arm on back of bench, now slips it around LIZ.*). Honey!

Enter LORN. and MISS EM from R. U. E. TOM. and LIZ. rise in confusion and walk hurriedly out at L. I E.

LORN. Oh, ain't that awful? He had his arm around her.

MISS EM. He's going off to the camp this afternoon, and I've heard that they're just the same as engaged.

LORN. And he called her honey. Right in daylight in the public square. Ain't that awful?

MISS EM. Lornie, we shouldn't have hurried in like we did. Maybe it was her last chance to tell him good-bye. I've got a lot of sympathy for young folks, especially when they're goin' away to war.

LORN. Yes, but it don't seem modest right out here in plain view. And they're so young, too. Ain't it awful?

MISS EM. They've got long years ahead of 'em, Lornie, with maybe plenty of sorrow and trouble, so let 'em be happy while they can.

LORN. It'll be awful lonesome here in River Landing with all of our young men gone to war. It'll be real

pathetical fer us girls, all by ourselves. There certainly is a lot of folks in town to see 'em off.

MISS EM. Ain't there? It's too bad Mr. Eckert didn't get back in time to make the address. He's a real good speaker, but he's been away for nearly three weeks and he won't be back till midnight to-night.

LORN. I'm real disappointed in the exercises, Miss Em. Seems they're going to be so plain. Now I wanted to have a parade with wagons trimmed to represent things, and I was going to be the Goddess of Liberty and ride on the Cullen's lumber wagon with a bunch of the choir girls a-singin' Over There and dressed in cheesecloth with their hair hangin'. But the committee thought they knew it all, so it's just goin' to be a few speeches and some music by the band. Seems like it ain't patriotic not havin' a Goddess of Liberty, er some such fancy fixings.

(Several young men enter from L. I. E., cross stage to R. U. E. conversing in pantomime and exeunt R. U. E.)

MISS EM. Them are the boys from Wilson Creek. Seems like every able bodied man in the county has volunteered.

LORN. Well, they can't say River Landing is a slacker town anyhow. What you got in the basket, Miss Em?

MISS EM *(hesitates a moment)*. Oh, just some things, Lornie. I intended to give 'em to one of the boys, but it seems like every last one of 'em has got more'n he can carry now. Maybe Dan'll change his mind and volunteer at the last minute.

LORN. Dan? Dan who?

MISS EM. The young fellow who boards up at our house. He came from Chicago to work in Mr. Eckert's mill and he's one of the nicest boys I ever saw. Just as polite to me as can be. Last week he was down sick a couple of days with the influenza and I took care of him, read to him and made him things, and we got to be real good friends.

LORN. Is he going to join the army?

MISS EM. I don't think so. I've tried to talk to him about it, but he don't seem interested. It's just his way, I reckon. You see he's an orphan and never had no kith or kin since he was six years old. But I'm going to talk to him again. My, I'd be proud if he'd join the company. It 'ud kind o' make me think that I was doin' sump'm for my country if I could persuade him to volunteer.

LORN. You seem to take a right smart interest in him, Miss Em. How old is he?

MISS EM (*laughs*). Oh, I'm not interested in that way, Lornie. I'm old enough to be his mother. He ain't twenty yet.

LORN. Well, I ain't got to the point where I can be interested in 'em when they're under twenty.

Enter LIZ., TOM. and MRS. C. from L. I E.

MISS EM. Tom, I'm awful proud of you. Your mother and Lizzie must be two very happy women this day, seeing they have such a man to give to their country.

MRS. C. I am, Miss Em; it's the proudest day of my life.

LIZ. (*after a slight pause*). Proudest day of mine, too.

TOM. (*shakes hands with MISS EM*). Good-bye, Miss Em.

MISS EM. Good-bye, Tom, and God bring you safe home.

MRS. C. (*crossing up R. with TOM. and LIZ.*). They're all going to meet over at the recruiting office. Don't you all want to come with us?

Enter COM. from L. I E. carrying army drum.

COM. Tommy, I want to say a word to you before you go.

TOM. (*comes to him at L. C.*). Yes, sir?

COM. I tried to enlist, son, but they wouldn't take me. I'd give everything I've got to be able to march away with you boys to-day and do my bit fer my country. Everything! Fifty-six years ago I marched away to

war, jest like you all are doing to-day. And I want you to go, son, and do your best. (*Simply.*) Be obedient to your officers, be faithful to your friends, but when you git close to the enemy, give 'em hell!

TOM. (*salutes him*). Believe me, Comrade Ferguson, those are my sentiments exactly.

COM. I wanted to give you a little present before you went away. I brought it down to you. It's the old drum. I want y' to take it with y'. I carried it fer four years in the Civil War, but it's jest as good as it ever was. It's got new heads, but the old shell is jest the same and so are the rosewood sticks. It's all I got to give you, son, but I want y' to have it.

TOM. (*takes it*). Thank you, Comrade.

COM. The women of the community bought it fifty-six years ago and they presented it to the first company that marched away from River Landing in '61. We've kep' it ever since in the Army Hall. But it plays jes' as good as it ever did. It ain't new like the kind they'll have down there at the camp, an' it ain't as fancy an' bright, but it's a drum that can bear testimony. It has been through blood and battle. It knows.

TOM. We were just going over to the recruiting office to hear the speeches. Suppose you come along, Comrade, and present it to the entire company.

COM. (*trembling with joy*). Do you think they'd care fer it?

TOM. Care for it? I should say they will. And it'll lead us, Comrade, into battle; it'll lead us on to victory.

(*Takes his arm and moves toward R. U. E.; the others follow.*)

Enter DAN from post-office.

MISS EM. Oh, there's Danny. I want to speak to him a while. You go long without me, Lornie. I'll be over pretty soon. [*Others exeunt.*]

DAN. Did you hear anything from the boss?

MISS EM. Yes, Danny, I got a telegram. He'll be in on the midnight train. Are you going over to hear the speeches?

DAN. Not so as you c'n notice it. I ain't got no use fer speeches.

MISS EM. The boys are going to camp this afternoon and I thought maybe you'd like to see 'em off.

DAN. Who, me? Nix on that stuff. They're all sore 'cause I won't enlist.

MISS EM. Why don't you? It would make a man of you.

DAN (*roughly*). Naw, I won't do it. A guy's a coot to enlist less'n he has to. What d' y' get? Thirty dollars a month and a bed on the ground. Not me!

MISS EM. But all the other boys are enlisting, Danny. It isn't for the money. It's for their country. Folks'll talk if you don't join the army.

DAN (*flings himself on bench at L.*). Let 'em talk. I don't worry about what folks say er do about me. What difference does it make? Nobody gives a hoot f'r me. Nobody'd care whether I'd live er die.

MISS EM (*standing back of him, places her hand on his shoulder*). Oh, boy, Danny, don't talk that way. Mr. Eckert's your friend. I'm your friend. I was jest tellin' Miss Davis how pleased I was to have you boarding at our house.

DAN. What you tryin' to do? Git me to enlist?

MISS EM. Not unless you want to.

DAN. Well, I don't want to and I ain't goin' to.

MISS EM. But your country needs you, Danny. This is its hour of trial, and it needs all its young men to volunteer.

DAN. Well, here's one it don't get. Why should I do anything for my country? Do you know how they've treated me? (*MISS EM sits on bench by DAN's side.*) They sent me first to an orphan asylum and then to a reform farm. Ten years in a reform farm. And who did it? My country! They beat me and kicked me and made me live like a hunted rat under the docks, and then when I turned out bad they threw me into prison.

MISS EM (*draws back*). Prison?

DAN (*bitterly*). That's right, shrink away from me. Folks all do. I'm like the smallpox, nobody wants anything to do with me. I ain't got a friend, I ain't got

no one. I had a dog once, a starving yellow cur that I found in the alley. But they took it away from me. They wouldn't even let me have a dog. And now you shrink away 'cause I'm a crook. (*Fiercely.*) Well, what made me a crook? The American government.

MISS EM. No, no, Danny. You've got it all wrong. The government isn't against you if you're straight. If you do the right thing the government will be the first to help you along.

DAN. Yes, I know how they help you along. Do you know what they did to me? They beat me—beat me with an iron rod when I was sick. I wasn't seventeen then, but do you think I'll ever forget it? No! (*Fiercely.*) But I'll make 'em pay. I'll make 'em pay f'r every hour they've made me suffer.

MISS EM. Danny, boy, you mustn't talk that way. You're talking about your country. It ain't right, just because you've had a hard life, to lay the blame on the government. No matter what's happened to you, they've tried to do the best they could.

DAN (*sarcastically*). Yes, they have!

MISS EM. You've had a hard time, boy, but so have I. My life has been almost as barren as yours. My folks lost everything they had in the Civil War, and when I was a young girl my lot was just as hard as any one's. The other girls all had their schooling and their beaux and good times. I had nothing but hard work in the mills. From sunrise till way after dark, and I wasn't very strong. My mother was paralyzed and I had to work all the time to keep her alive. Dan, I too have learned what it is to suffer.

DAN. And you a woman! (*Tensely.*) Curse them, curse them, I say—with their laws and their justice.

MISS EM (*dully*). I couldn't earn enough to hire a doctor and my mother (*brokenly*) she—died! Died, and I was all alone. Only eighteen and all alone in the world.

DAN. I knew it. I knew you'd been through things like that. That's why you understand me so well. That's why you know how I feel.

MISS EM. Yes, Danny, that's why. But after all those years of misery a great happiness came into my life.

DAN (*wonderingly*). A happiness?

MISS EM. I met a young man, Danny. He was kind to me. (*Smiles reminiscently*.) I remember the first day I ever saw him. He was the assistant superintendent of the mills and he stopped at my loom and spoke to me. He was a good man, good all through. Somehow you remind me of him, Dan. He had eyes like yours and the same color of hair. (*Pauses*.) For a few months we were happy. I thought it was goin' to last, but it didn't — (*Brokenly*.) He—went—away.

DAN. And turned out bad?

MISS EM. No, John wasn't that sort. The Spanish-American war broke out and he enlisted. He marched away with the boys—marched away—for his country and his flag—and there's a grave somewhere over there in Cuba on the San Juan Hill—only a grave and memories, that's all that's left to me now.

DAN (*fiercely*). They took him away from you. It was the government —

MISS EM (*interrupts*). No, it was his sense of duty, it was the call of his country!

DAN (*sneers*). The call of his country? What does that mean? Only words. One country's just the same as another.

MISS EM. Not when it is your native land. Don't you remember what it says in the poem,

Lives there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own, my native land!"

DAN. That's what the judge said in his speech the day we started into the war. (*Rises and crosses to c.*)

MISS EM. See, you say the day *we* started into the war! You can't help it. No matter what you say or do, this is your own, your native land.

DAN. I shouldn't think you'd feel that way after that man you was talking about went away and got killed.

MISS EM. It was my sacrifice. I gave him up to his country.

DAN. But why *should* we give anything for our country? You and me, I mean. Why should *I* enlist? What has my country ever given me? What has your country ever given you?

MISS EM (*rises, facing DAN*). What has my country given me? Oh, I wish I could tell you, I wish I could make it clear to you. It's given me everything I've got, it's given me the chance to make sump'm of myself, it offered me an education if I could have taken it, it's given me freedom and liberty and the right to sing, "My Country, 'tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty!" I might be poor as poverty, and uneducated and hard-worked, but it's *my* country, my native land, and I (*emotionally*) could take it to my breast like a child (*hands to breast*); I could die f'r it!

(*Arms extended. Pause.*)

DAN. It's too bad you ain't a man, Miss Em; you'd make a general.

MISS EM (*pathetically*). But I'm only poor Em Finch, and I can't do nothin', I can't give nothin', I can only pray! If I was a man I'd follow that flag if I had to crawl down on my hands and knees to the enlisting office, I'd follow the flag of my country if it led me into the jaws of hell! (*Pause.*)

DAN. I don't feel that way. I can't see nothin' but the stone walls and the iron bars, I can't think of nothin' but how the government's hounded me and beat me and shut me up like a rat.

MISS EM. But that's all over now. There's a new life ahead of you. You're only a boy and think of your future. Why, the army would make a man of you, it would open up your whole life, it would give you a future! That's sump'm you didn't have the way you was headed. Go and talk to the enlistin' officer; he can explain to you better'n I can.

DAN. Who is he?

MISS EM. I dunno. Some one the government sent down here from St. Louis to take the boys to camp. He came yesterday.

DAN. Well, I ain't goin' to camp. They can't get me, so there's no use in talkin' to him.

MISS EM. You might get to be an officer. This war is just as much for the poor man as it is for the rich. It's your chance, Danny, your big chance.

DAN. I won't do it. No country that has buried me behind stone walls nearly all my life is goin' to get me to stand up and be shot for it. (*Crosses to post-office.*) Miss Em, you're all right, you're straight clean through, but I don't see things like you do, that's all. I can't forget, and I can't forgive. [*Exit in post-office.*]

MISS EM. It wasn't no use. I'm a failure. I couldn't persuade him to go. Seems like I can't do a thing f'r my country.

Enter from R. U. E. GARY and CORPORAL SHANNON, talking in pantomime. MISS EM starts to enter the post-office.

GARY. Good-afternoon, Miss Em. Aren't you going over to the exercises?

MISS EM. No, I reckon not. I ain't got the heart, Judge.

GARY. Miss Em, let me introduce Corporal Shannon. He's the enlisting officer. (*To SHAN.*) This is Miss Finch, one of our Red Cross workers.

SHAN. (*awkwardly*). Pleased to meet y'.

GARY. We're out trying to line up two or three more recruits. You don't know of any, do you, Miss Em?

MISS EM. No, I can't think of any just now.

SHAN. River Landing's done pretty good as it is. I never seen so many volunteers for such a small place.

GARY (*looks off L. I E.*). There's that Sanderson boy over by the drug store. I'll have a little talk with him. Maybe I can add him to the list. [*Exits L. I E.*]

(*SHAN. starts to follow him, crossing to L. C. MISS EM comes down R. C.*)

MISS EM. Mister, can I speak to you a minute?

SHAN. (*turns to her*). Sure, go as far as you like.

MISS EM. It's almost time f'r the boys to go, ain't it?

SHAN. Yes'm, in about twenty minutes. We leave on the 4:12 special. I suppose some of your boys are going away with me?

MISS EM. (*simply*). No, sir, I ain't got no boys. I haven't any kin at all. (*Sadly*.) Seems like I ain't got anything to give to my country. And the boys a-marchin' away to war to-day.

SHAN. Yes, I'm taking 'em to the cantonment. They'll be in training there for a while and then, if we're lucky, we'll go across the Big Pond.

MISS EM. You're a stranger hereabouts, ain't you?

SHAN. Yes'm. I'm from Chicago. Just detailed down here to escort the volunteers to camp.

MISS EM. (*bashfully*). I've got a little basket here, some cookies and jelly and chicken and things. And some warm socks and a muffler. (*Hesitates*.) I don't know who to give it to. You see all the River Landing boys have got kin-folks to provide f'r 'em, but you bein' a stranger—— (*Impulsively*.) Take it, boy, and God bless you!

SHAN. (*hesitates, takes basket slowly, then shakes hands with her*). God bless you, too, lady. I ain't got no kin-folks either. When I joined the army there wasn't nobody to see me off, 'cept some of the gang. No women folks, I mean. Nobody's ever gave me nothin'.

MISS EM. You won't think me too forward and you'll take 'em?

SHAN. Will I? (*Enthusiastically*.) *Will I?*

MISS EM. And I'll think of you when you're off yonder. I'll pray for you, too. Every night, jest like I was your kin-folks. (*Pauses, bashfully*.) And mebbe, if it ain't too much trouble, you'd write to me. Jest a line er two on a post-card er sump'm, to lemme know if there's anything you need.

SHAN. I ain't much on writin', lady, but Gawd knows I'll do my best.

MISS EM. And be a good boy. Do your work well, whatever you have to do. Mebbe it'll be right hard, you bein' so big and strong, they'll give you a man's work to do, but you'll do it, I know. You'll go through with it.

(SHAN. *much moved, unable to speak, grasps her hands.*)

SHAN. (*after a pause*). Yes'm, lady, you can trust me.

MISS EM. I got a little favor I want to ask of you.

SHAN. I'll do anything you want me to. Why, I'd commit murder f'r you.

MISS EM (*nervously*). I've got a friend of mine here in town. Just a young boy who boards at my house. He's a good boy and just as nice as you'd meet anywhere, but—but he ain't enlisted. You see he don't look at things like you and me. Not that he's afraid—Dan ain't that kind, but he ain't got the right idea about some things, that's all.

SHAN. Why don't you talk to him? Looks like you could do anything with anybody.

MISS EM. I have tried, but it didn't do much good. I was just thinkin' that mebbe you could see him. He'd listen to you, you being a soldier and an officer. And he comes from Chicago too.

SHAN. What do you want me to say to him?

MISS EM. I was jest thinkin' that you might make him care more for things, that's all. Seems like I'd be a heap easier if he cared more.

SHAN. I don't get you. I don't get you at all. Cared more for what?

MISS EM (*simply*). For his country and his flag, the things that are worth livin' for and worth dying' for. I take a heap o' interest in him, mister. Just try to make him see that his country needs him and, more than that, he needs his country.

SHAN. I'll do anything you say, lady. Maybe he needs a beatin' up to make him understand things.

(*Places basket on bench.*)

MISS EM. Oh, no; Dan isn't that kind. Just reason with him. You're a man and he'll listen to you. You c'n put things before him a heap better'n I can. I'll call him. He's over there in the post-office. Oh, if you c'n only make him care f'r things a little more, things like his

country and his flag, it 'ud make me the happiest woman in River Landing. (*Crosses to post-office.*) I'll call him out to you. [*Exit in post-office.*]

SHAN. (*grimly*). I'll make him care for 'em, if I have to manhandle him. (*Enter DAN from post-office. He slouches down c. SHAN., turning suddenly, looks at him, looks closer; much surprised.*) Well, fer the love o' Mike!

DAN (*recognizing SHAN.*). Buck Shannon!

SHAN. Slink Monihan! What are you doin' down here? (*They shake hands heartily.*)

DAN. Nothin' much. Just mooched along till I landed a job here. And look at the uniform! What are you, a general er sump'm?

SHAN. (*proudly*). I've only been in three months and I'm a corporal. How long you been out o' the stir?

DAN. Nearly a month.

SHAN. Kind o' loosened up on your time, didn't they?

DAN. Yeah, I got it short f'r good behavior.

SHAN. You? Don't make me laugh, me uniform's too tight. How long you been down here?

DAN. Three weeks.

SHAN. Didn't lose much time, did y'? How was all the gang up in Chi?

DAN. I didn't see 'em. I was only there two days. I couldn't spot a soul I knew. (*They sit on bench at R.*) What's become of Rat McGowan?

SHAN. Rat's in the trenches. He was one of the very first to go across.

DAN. In the army?

SHAN. Sure.

DAN. Him with two bits in the stir to his record!

SHAN. They didn't ask him his history when he signed his papers. And what's the difference? It'll make a man of him.

DAN. Where's Nance?

SHAN. What you think? She's turned straight and quit the game.

DAN (*astounded*). Nance?

SHAN. She's gone into trainin' as a Red Cross nurse.

I meets her on State Street the Saturday night before I enlisted and I give her the office, the same as you'd have done. And what happens? She yanks me in a hallway and tells me she's straight, and that if I even as much as look at her ag'in she'll beat me knob in, and then she drills on wit' her head in the air and her eyes like blue coals o' fire.

DAN. I'd never ha' believed it. And you, too, Buck.

SHAN. Sure. Y' didn't t'ink I was a slacker, did y'?

DAN. But how did they happen to let you join? Didn't they know your record?

SHAN. I went straight to 'em and told 'em what I was, and what I wanted to be. They knowed I was a ex-con, but they didn't put it down in my papers. Dis war's turned t'ings inside out fer fair. Dey ain't askin' y' what y' *have* done, it's what y' *will* do!

DAN. But how did you ever git the idea?

SHAN. I got it off'n Rat McGowan and Nance. Them joinin' the army set me thinkin'. So I went straight to d' police an' told 'em dat I wanted to enlist. And whatcha t'ink dey done?

DAN. Pinched you?

SHAN. Nothin' like it; dey squared it f'r me all down d' line. Why, the bulls helped me. T'ink of it, the police a-helpin' Buck Shannon.

DAN. Yes, but what *made* you do it? Thirty dollars a month! What was eatin' y'? Y' must ha' been bugs.

SHAN. (*explosively*). Bugs? Gawd! Wit' d' drums a-beatin', an' d' flags a-flyin', and d' band, and soldiers marchin' up and down d' street, and men makin' speeches about our flag an' our native land—what's a guy goin' to do? Sit at home and twirl his thumbs like a slacker—er shoulder a musket and go out to help his country like a man?

DAN. The country ain't got no claim on me. I don't owe it nothin', an' I ain't got nothin' pertic'ler agin the Dutch. Some of 'em is aces high.

SHAN. Slink Monihan, you an' me usta be pals; if it wasn't f'r that, I'd mash y', right where y' are! So the Dutchies are aces high, hay? Did you ever hear of the *Lusitania*?

DAN. Naw, what is it?

SHAN. It was a ship. Not a war boat, y' understand, but sump'm like a excursion boat, and it was full of Americans. Not only men, but hundreds of women and children, some of 'em little babies. They was Americans and our country was at peace wit' the Dutch. And wot happened? They was out in the ocean one night when up comes one of them U-boats, straight up from hell; it waved the German flag and attacked that ship and sunk it. Sunk it! Men, women, children and little babies! An' the U-boat went under all safe enough and wouldn't help none of 'em, an' they drowned, out there in the ocean all alone. Hundreds of 'em, little babies and women and all. And the U-boat makes his report to headquarters and the Dutch come out and say 'twas a big victory. That's why I'm so anxious to git over there. Maybe I can't do much, but I'm as good as any five of them baby-killers—and by Gawd, I'll make some of 'em pay!

DAN. All dat happened when I was in the stir. I never knowed nothin' about it.

SHAN. Then come along with us, Dan. What's the use of waitin' f'r the draft? Come and join the army.

DAN. I can't do it now. Maybe I will some time, but I gotta little matter to straighten up first. You say you're goin' over there to make some of 'em pay; maybe I c'n make some of 'em pay over here.

SHAN. Well, every man's gotta settle it f'r himself. But a guy's got to fight f'r his flag, you know. It's worth fightin' f'r, Dan. It's worth dyin' f'r. (*Pauses a moment, then looks at wrist watch.*) My time's nearly up. I gotta get the boys together. (*Rises.*)

DAN (*rises*). I wish't I was goin' with you, Buck. Honest, I do.

SHAN. Then come on and join.

DAN. Naw, I can't do it yet. But I'm beginning to look at things different, Buck.

SHAN. (*takes small silk flag from pocket*). Here, Dan, I wanta give you this before I go. We've been good pals and mebbe we won't ever see each other again. Take it, it's worth fightin' f'r, it's worth dyin' f'r.

DAN (*takes flag and puts it in pocket*). Much obliged, Buck.

SHAN. It's a great game, boy. Take a tip from me and get in it jes' as soon as you can. (*They shake hands warmly.*) That's all. I gotta go and assemble the men. Good-bye, old pal!

DAN. Good-bye, Buck. Here's luck! (*Exit SHAN. R. U. E. taking basket.*) Old Buck goin' to war—and Rat McGowan and Nance! (*Takes out American flag.*) And all f'r this. Huh, what's a flag? Only a piece of cloth to hang out in front of a store to draw trade. (*Slowly.*) And yet Buck said it was worth fightin' f'r, worth dyin' f'r. (*Fiercely.*) And a man who don't do that is a coward, a slacker. Well, I ain't a coward. But I gotta have a talk with Eckert. Curse him! A damn foreigner, livin' here—makin' money here—and then givin' the place the double cross. (*Puts flag in pocket.*) I gotta see him and get things straight.

(*Band music heard in the distance playing "Over There," with men singing. The music draws nearer.*)

DAN crosses to L. Enter MISS EM from post-office.)

MISS EM. They're coming, Danny. The boys are marching away to war. (*Joins DAN down L.*)

(*Music louder. Enter all characters, except ECK., from R. singing "Over There." Band marches on with SHAN. and boys. The crowd throng the stage.*)

TOM. is beating the drum. Take plenty of time for this action and thoroughly rehearse this scene.)

COM. (*mounts bench assisted by GARY*). Fellow citizens, more than fifty years ago the brave men and boys of this community went out to fight for the same banner that flies above us from the top of that building. (*Points to post-office flag.*) Then it was they went to fight their own kinsmen, their own flesh and blood. But now, my brothers, we are called on to fight for the old flag once again, not against those of our own country, but against a foreign foe, against an enemy that already is pouring shot and shell into our sacred institutions. And you are going forth in the young manhood of your

life in the defense of your flag. Some of you have been a little wild, some of you maybe have bad records, but here's your chance to square yourselves. Here is your chance to show the manhood in you. No matter what you may have done in the past—the future rests with you. And we'll be proud of you. The train is waiting for you. I can speak no more, I can only say good-bye, and may God bless you each and every one who is going forth to follow our flag. And, though I am old in years, my spirit is young, and I'd give all I have to be able to stand once more in the ranks and do my bit for the star-spangled banner. Good-bye, boys, God bless you!

SHAN. Company, attention! (*Boys line up.*) Forward, march!

(Band plays, crowd join in singing and cheering. All march out at R. U. E., except DAN. DAN listens as music dies away in the distance.)

DAN. They got a chance to square themselves with their country. Buck's taken his chance and is an officer. He's squared himself all right (*pause*) and that's just what I'm going to do. (*Takes white handkerchief that ECK. gave him from inside pocket, looks at it slowly, tears it in pieces. Drops it to floor, takes American flag from pocket, opens it, looks at it. Speaks slowly.*) This is my flag. (*Pauses, looks around.*) And this is my own, my native land!

SLOW CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The sitting-room in ECKERT'S house. The same night about 11 P. M. Neatly furnished room with three doors, C., R. and L. Table down L. C. with red cloth and lighted lamp on it. Sofa down R. Chairs, fireplace, clock, carpet, furniture, etc., at the discretion of the stage manager. Pictures on the wall.*

(Discovered, MISS EM seated at the table reading the Bible. She wears spectacles. DAN sprawled out on the sofa smoking a cigarette.)

MISS EM (*reading*). “And Saul armed David with his armour. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with this; for I have not tested it. And David put it from him. And he took his staff in his hand and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And the Philistine drew near unto David, and disdained him, for he was but a youth. And the Philistine said, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And David put his hand in the bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in the forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.”

(Closes the book.)

DAN. Say, he was some boy, all right. Wise guy, too. Just think of him soakin' that gink with a sling shot.

MISS EM. It was the hand of the Lord, Danny.

DAN. Maybe it was, Miss Em, maybe it was. But it was the kid who fired the stone.

MISS EM. Even so shall we prevail against our enemy, for the hand of the Lord is with us, even unto the end.

(A rap is heard at door c.)

DAN. What's that?

MISS EM (calmly). Some one's at the door, Danny. Go and let them in. I wonder who it is at this time of night.

(DAN opens the door and admits LORN., CELIA and a boy.)

LORN. Don't be scared, Miss Em, it's only us.

MISS EM. Why, Lornie! And Celia and Willie. Come right in. Take off your things.

LORN. Oh, we ain't makin' calls at 'leven o'clock at night. We just saw the light burning in your window and dropped in to see if anybody was sick.

MISS EM. No, Lornie, we aren't sick. Mr. Eckert is coming in on the midnight train and I'm staying up to have his supper ready for him. He doesn't like a cold supper after traveling so far.

LORN. Well, I wouldn't set up till midnight to get no man's supper, not even if he was a king askin' me to on his bended knees on a golden throne. I'll set down a spell, although it's 'leven o'clock. I'm jest too frustrated to stand up. (Sits at c.)

CELIA. It's so late, Miss Lornie, we'd better be going. (At L.)

MISS EM (at R. c.). Never mind if it is, Celia. Sit down and rest a bit.

CELIA (sits at L.). Lornie wanted to stop and see if all was well. She thought she saw a man loitering in your lane.

MISS EM (*alarmed*). A man? In our lane?

CELIA. I think it was just her imagination.

LORN. No 'twasn't, either. I saw him jest as plain as pikestaff, a-hidin' by your hedge as we crossed over under the arc light.

MISS EM. I don't reckon it was a man, Lornie; maybe 'twas a cow or Jackson's big dog.

LORN. No, it wasn't, Miss Em, it wasn't a cow at all. He had on a hat, and cows don't wear hats, leastways not in River Landing, as fur as I know.

CELIA. You mustn't be frightened, Miss Em. I didn't see anything.

MISS EM. Oh, I'm not frightened at all, especially since Danny's here. He's going over to the station with the surrey to meet Mr. Eckert when his train comes in. Well, how was the meeting?

LORN. Oh, it was wonderful. It was jest as interestin' as any novel book I ever read in all my life. The speaker was Mr. Gooseberry from Kansas City.

CELIA. Dusenberry, Lornie.

LORN. Well, I knew it was some kind of a berry. But, Miss Em, you should have been there. It got me so excited. He told all about the German spy system. (*Rises.*) But we ought to be goin'.

MISS EM. Sit down a while, Lornie. Willie is going to see you home. And the man by the hedge won't catch you.

LORN. (*sits*). I was wantin' to tell you about the meeting. It was awful excitin'. The speaker was the handsomest man. He had a mustache. Looked sump'm like Jim Hawkins, only not so stout.

MISS EM. What did he say about the spies?

LORN. I'm jest gettin' to that. He told the most thrillin' tale, and every word as true as Corinthians. And it happened only last week in an army camp somewhere in Indiana. Them spies went right into the camp. Wasn't that awful? One of 'em was a woman pretendin' like she was goin' to sing for the soldiers. Jest to hear him tell about it got me so nervous that I'm all on edge. He wore eye-glasses, too.

MISS EM. What did the spies do, Lornie?

LORN. I'm jest gettin' to that. Well, this woman had a man with her and the officers showed them all over the camp. Jest treated her like a queen. And what do you think she was tryin' to do?

MISS EM. I'll never guess—what?

LORN. Tryin' to poison the soldier's bread with cholera morbus germans. Ain't that awful?

CELIA. Cholera germs, Miss Lornie.

LORN. Well, I knew it was sump'm like that.

MISS EM. You mean to say she tried to spread the cholera among our boys at camp?

LORN. That's jest what she tried to do. Ain't it awful? And her a woman, too. She tried to get the officer to take her in where they made the bread, but he wouldn't do it. Oh, the speaker got real excited when he told about that. He waved his hands all around. Did you notice, Celia, he had on a di'mond ring—and the whitest hands!

MISS EM. How did they find out she was a spy?

LORN. I was jest gettin' to that. She was real disappointed when she couldn't get into where they baked the bread. She said she'd git a permit from some of the higher-up officers, 'cause she wanted to see if it was cemetery.

MISS EM (*puzzled*). Cemetery?

LORN. Wasn't that the word he used, Celia?

CELIA. Sanitary, Miss Lornie.

LORN. I never *kin* remember them medicated terms. At any rate the spies got away, and she never got near the bread dough to stick them cholera germans in it. And a great mercy it was, too. Cholery is jest awful. I ain't had it since I was a little girl and got into paw's green apple tree, but I'll never forget it to my dyin' day.

MISS EM. But if they got away how did the officers find out that they were spies?

LORN. I was gettin' to that. After they'd been gone a spell the officer began to git suspicious and looked around where they'd been. And whatcha think he found?

MISS EM. What?

LORN. A fountain pen.

DAN (*starts*). A fountain pen?

LORN. Stuffed full of cholery germans.

MISS EM. How could they put germs in a fountain pen?

CELIA. It's all true, Miss Em. They found a well developed growth of the germs in wet cotton on the inside of the fountain pen.

DAN. But would it 'a' killed people?

CELIA. By the hundreds. It might have spread over the entire country. Cholera is one of the most fatal epidemics ever known.

LORN. And she was tryin' to put it in the bread. Ain't that awful? I hope I'll never have to eat another piece of baker's bread as long as I'm a livin' woman. And her carryin' them things around in a fountain pen. I wonder how she squoze 'em in. What do they look like, Celia? Bugs er sump'm like that?

CELIA. They are too small to be seen by the human eye, but they are more deadly than dynamite.

DAN. More deadly than nitro-glycerine. Them things are more deadly than nitro. I heard a man say that once.

MISS EM. How did the officer know what they were when he found the pen?

CELIA. He didn't, but he carried it to a government chemist for examination. Then a bacteriologist examined it and pronounced it a perfect cholera culture. It might have spread the plague throughout the whole country.

DAN (*interested*). Where'd you say all this happened?

LORN. Out in an army camp, somewhere in Indiana. And it was jest last week, too. (*Rises.*) But honest we can't stay another minute. Mamma don't like me to be out this late. She's always worryin' about me.

MISS EM. Dan, you go down the cellar and bring up some sweet cider and apples for the folks.

CELIA (*rises*). Oh, no thank you, Miss Em. We must go right away.

MISS EM. Do you want Dan to walk as far as the mill with you?

CELIA. Oh, no, it isn't necessary at all. Willie's going clear home with us.

LORN. Well, if I see any more signs of that man hidin' down by your hedge, Miss Em, I'll let out a yell that'll scare him to Jericho. Now, Celia Baker, don't be tellin' me it wasn't a man, 'cause I know it was. I ain't a gump. I reckon I know a man when I see one.

MISS EM (*crossing to door c. with them*). Maybe it was one of the boys from the mill. Sometimes they stay out awful late.

LORN. I dunno who he was, but I know it was a man, and that's certain.

CELIA. Suppose it was, Miss Lornie. He won't hurt us.

LORN. You never kin tell what they'll do. I know this much, I won't feel safe until I'm at home in bed and the covers pulled up over me. And I'm going to look under the bed, too. (*At door c.*)

CELIA. Good-night, Miss Em. We'll see you at the Red Cross rooms in the morning.

[*Exit door c. with LORN. and boy.*]

MISS EM (*calling after them*). Good-night! Can you see your way?

CELIA (*outside*). Oh, yes; there's plenty of light. Good-night.

MISS EM (*resuming her seat by the table*). Well, Danny, what do you think of that spy story? I wonder if it actually happened.

DAN. I'm bankin' on it. It 'ud be just like them. After the way they sunk that boat with them babies and everything, I would put nothin' past 'em.

MISS EM. Why, I am surprised. I thought you had nothing against the Huns.

DAN. That was before I knowed as much as I do now. Do you know what I'm goin' to do, Miss Em? Just as soon as I get some things squared up, I'm goin' to enlist.

MISS EM (*delighted*). Oh, Danny, I knew you'd do it, I knew you would! You're going to be a soldier.

DAN (*stolidly*). A feller's got to do sump'm f'r his country, ain't he? What's the use of being an American

at all, if you ain't willin' to fight f'r her? Might just as well be a Greek er a dago.

MISS EM (*standing c.*). Oh, Dan, you've made me sō proud of you. Why didn't you enlist this afternoon? Then you could have gone away with the boys. But it ain't too late yet.

DAN. I told you I had some things to square up first. There's sump'm I gotta settle before I c'n enlist.

MISS EM. Maybe Mr. Eckert could look after it for you. I'm sure he'd be willing to.

DAN. I reckon Mr. Eckert'll have his hands full lookin' after his own things. (*Standing at R.*) Lemme see, he's comin' in on the train from the north, ain't he?

MISS EM. Yes, on the midnight train.

DAN (*carelessly*). Where's he been?

MISS EM (*resuming her seat at table, she begins to knit*). It's funny about that. First he said he was going to Little Rock to see about some new milling machinery, but the telegram he sent to me to-day wasn't from there at all.

DAN. Where was it from?

MISS EM. Somewhere in Indiana.

DAN (*starts, then controls himself and speaks naturally*). That's where them German spies was, ain't it? Somewhere in Indiana.

MISS EM. Yes, but ——— (*Pauses, a look of horror comes into her face.*) Danny, (*brokenly*) you—don't think—that—Mr. Eckert—you don't think he ——— Oh, Danny, why do you look like that? Do you think ———

(*Pauses.*)

DAN. I don't think nothin'.

MISS EM. Mr. Eckert isn't a spy, Danny. Of course his folks were Germans, but he's a naturalized citizen. And he's real patriotic. Makes speeches and donations and everything. Maybe he had some business up there in Indiana.

DAN (*grimly*). I reckon he did. He wouldn't go up there on a Sunday School excursion, er anything like that, would he? (*Slowly.*) But I wonder what his business was.

MISS EM. He often takes long trips away from home. Last Christmas he was up in Chicago visiting his sister.

DAN. In Chicago, eh?

(Pronounce "eh" to rhyme with may.)

MISS EM. He told me all about her. She's the private secretary for one of the big college professors up there. He often goes up to visit her. Sometimes they take trips together.

DAN *(looks at clock)*. It's pretty near time for the train, ain't it?

MISS EM. Yes, if it's on time, it ought to be here in about twenty minutes. The rig is hitched out in front all ready for you. *(Pause. Miss EM suddenly speaks.)* Listen!

DAN. What's the matter?

MISS EM *(speaks unconsciously in a whisper)*. I thought I heard sump'm. Didn't you?

DAN *(pauses a moment listening)*. Naw, I don't hear nothin'. What did it sound like?

MISS EM. Like some one on the back porch. It sounded like a step or sump'm.

DAN *(crosses to door R., looks out)*. I guess it wasn't anything. That lady who thought she saw a man hiding by the hedge—she got you all excited. Who'd be on the back porch at this time o' night in River Landing?

MISS EM *(nervously)*. I don't know. I'm sure I heard it. But maybe it was the cat.

DAN. I'll take a look. *(Goes to R.)*

MISS EM. Oh, Danny, be careful. Maybe it *is* some one. Take the lantern anyway. It's on a nail at the head of the cellar stairs. Maybe you'd better turn on the kitchen light.

DAN. And give him a chance to make a getaway?

MISS EM. Then you think it is some one?

DAN. That's what I'm going to find out. Don't worry about the light, I'm used to workin' in the dark. And don't get scared. Chances are there ain't no one there at all.

MISS EM. Maybe I'd better go with you.

(Crosses to R.)

DAN. No, you stay right here. There ain't nothin' goin' to hurt me. [Exits R.]

(Pause. MISS EM remains perfectly still watching door at R. Hold this picture while one with moderate haste might count forty. This is an excellent stage effect and keys the audience for the dramatic scene to follow. To shorten the pause at this point would be almost fatal to the climax of the play. Finally a door is heard to slam off R.)

MISS EM. Is that you, Danny?

DAN (off stage at R.). Yes, it's all right.

Enter DAN from R.

MISS EM. Didn't you see anything?

DAN. Not a thing. No one out there. I went all around the house. It must have been the cat.

MISS EM. Was the rig out in front?

DAN. Yes, that's all right.

MISS EM. Then you'd better be startin' for the depot. It's almost train time.

DAN. I kind o' hate to go down there and leave you here all by yourself.

MISS EM. Oh, I'm not afraid, Danny. (Pauses, then speaks tremulously.) That is, not very much.

DAN (slips on cap and coat). You'd better go upstairs to bed. And lock yourself in.

MISS EM. Oh, no. Why, what would Mr. Eckert say?

DAN. Don't worry about that. He'll have other things to think about. I'm going to have a talk with him.

MISS EM. His supper is all on the table, except the meat. That's in the fireless cooker.

DAN. I'll give it to him. You go on to bed.

MISS EM. I believe I will. (Crosses to L.)

DAN. And lock your door.

MISS EM. I will. Good-night, Danny.

DAN. Good-night, Miss Em.

MISS EM. Rest well, Dan, and remember that I'm awfully proud of my boy. Good-night. (*Exits at L.*
 DAN *pauses. He stands at c., takes revolver from his pocket, opens it and examines it carefully, smiles slowly and replaces it in his pocket. Take plenty of time for this action. DAN blows out the light and exits door c. The stage is in total darkness. DAN has been whistling softly when looking at revolver and continues after he leaves the stage, the whistle dying away in the distance. Pause, while one might count twenty. The door c. opens and GARY enters carrying a darkened flash-light. The audience must not recognize him. When he is at c. he flashes light around, but is careful not to allow it to shine on himself. He crosses to door R. and exits R. MISS EM after a pause is heard speaking off L.)* Danny, is that you? (*Pause.*) Danny! (*Enter MISS EM from L. carrying a lighted lamp. She is somewhat frightened. She looks all around the room, then crosses to R. and exits slowly at R. Pause. Reënter MISS EM from R. after the pause.*) I'm nervous to-night, I reckon. I keep thinking I'm hearing things. Lornie's story about the man hidden in the hedge has got me all on edge. (*Crosses to L.*) I wonder what Mr. Eckert was doing up in Indiana. (*Yawns.*) I hope I can get to sleep.

[*Exits L.*

ECK. (*heard outside door c.*). What's the matter with the lights? The house is as dark as a tomb.

DAN (*outside door c.*). That's all right. Here we are.

Enter ECK. and DAN from door c.

ECK. Light the lamp. (*DAN does so.*) Where's Miss Em?

DAN. I told her she could go to bed; she wasn't feeling well.

ECK. So? And she is now taking orders from you, yes?

(*ECK. removes coat and hat, hangs them up; puts grip beside them.*)

DAN. What d' you want to do? Have her stay up when she's sick?

ECK. Is there anything to eat?

DAN. Yes, she got your supper in there on the table.

ECK. (*comes down R.*). The train made good time to-night. She generally is late. Did they put the horse in the barn?

DAN. Yeah, they got the rig all right.

ECK. (*sits at R.*). I'm tired. Everything went wrong. Nothing came out like I hoped it would. Blunders, blunders in all directions. We've had all our work for nothing.

DAN (*down C.*). What work?

ECK. Ah, never mind. To you it is no difference. To me, maybe it means more weeks of preparation, but success will come at last. That's it, my boy, success always comes to the patient, willing worker. Was there any mail for me personally?

DAN. Naw, only for the mill. It's over at the office.

ECK. No telegrams?

DAN. Nothin' like that.

ECK. No one to see me?

DAN. Farmers and drummers. The usual folks.

ECK. Well, that is good. Things might be much worse. They're bad enough up north.

DAN. Where have you been?

ECK. (*looks at him sharply*). I had to go up in Indiana on business. Yes, I had some dealings up in Indiana. But it was rotten luck.

DAN. I should think you'd be glad of anything that 'ud take you out of River Landing.

ECK. You don't like River Landing, eh? That's good—that makes things work out easier, for to-morrow I send you away.

DAN. You can't send me away too fast to suit me. What's the game? Where do you want me to go?

ECK. How would you like to make a short trip to Chicago for me? Eh? Just a little pleasure trip.

DAN. That 'ud suit me all right.

(*Sitting at C., by table.*)

ECK. I would want you to see my friend the Herr Professor. He'll probably send you back here in a day or two with another little package for me.

DAN. Aw, no he won't. Nothin' like that.

ECK. He won't? What do you mean?

DAN. I mean I ain't comin' back to River Landing no more. I'll have other things to do when I get to Chicago.

ECK. (*rises*). You mean that you would refuse to obey the Professor?

DAN (*rises*). That's just exactly what I mean. I'm done carrying fountains from Chicago. I don't like the job; it's too dangerous. Get me? I'm done!

ECK. (*goes to him*). You say that the job is too dangerous? What do you mean by that? (*Grasps his arm.*) How can a fountain pen be dangerous? Give me an explanation.

DAN (*jerks away from him, crosses to L. of table*). I told you when I came down here that I wanted to know the whole game. All of it, from deuce to ace.

ECK. You already know more than is good for you. There is no reason why you should know too much. All you have to do is to obey your superiors.

DAN. I'm done with all that. From now on I won't take orders from you er any of your friends. Get me? I'm done.

ECK. Nonsense. We are your friends and we'll stand by you. You can be very useful to us. To-morrow you go back to the Herr Professor.

DAN. To-morrow I'm goin' to Chicago all right, but I've scratched the Herr Professor off'n my list. I'm done wit' him, and I'm done wit' you.

ECK. (*furiously, through clenched teeth*). You mean that you are going to quit us?

DAN. That's it.

ECK. But what do you intend to do? You can't get a position anywhere, you said that yourself. Every one is against you; what are you going to do?

DAN (*proudly*). I'm going to do what I'd order done weeks ago. I'm goin' to enlist in the army.

ECK. Enlist?

DAN. Dat's what I said. You say everybody's

against me and dat nobody'll gimme a job. You're wrong. Uncle Sam ain't against me, he'll gimme a job! (*Pause.*) I'm goin' to do just like the other young fellers all over the country is doin'. I'm goin' to follow the flag!

ECK. (*close to him, sneers in his face*). Follow the flag? What flag? You haven't any flag—you haven't any country. Your very words to me. What flag?

DAN. You know what flag. I thought I didn't have a flag ner a country, but I was wrong, dead wrong. This is my own, my native land, and its flag is worth fightin' for, it is worth dyin' for.

ECK. The country that imprisoned you—the government that has hounded you all your life—that shut you up like a rat—that beat you with an iron bar. Have you forgotten all that?

DAN. No, I ain't forgotten it. I can't forget it. But that's all over now. What is done is done. The past is all over, but I've got the future before me. If I go out there and fight, I'm as good as any of 'em. It's took me a long time to find out where I'm at, but at last I know. I'm an American, I am, and I'm going to stand by the flag.

ECK. (*sneers*). A fine American! You will betray America even as now you are trying to betray us. Once a traitor always a traitor.

DAN. I ain't a traitor. I'm just through with you, that's all. I ain't goin' to stay with a bunch that is agin my country.

ECK. (*loses control of himself and speaking loudly*). Your country, your country. Always your country! Grr!

DAN (*sincerely*). Yes, always my country!

ECK. Words, words, that's all it means to you—words. Was it the American flag or the American government that got you released from prison? No! They sent you there and held you there, but it was the long arm of the Prussian government that opened the doors of freedom for you. It was the Herr Professor. Suppose he had kept silence, where would you be now? Answer me!

(Swings DAN around to face him; they are now L. of table.)

DAN. I ain't denyin' it; I'd still be in the stir.

ECK. And now you'd be like the snake in the story, you'd sting the hand that gave you freedom!

DAN (*jerks away from him, crosses to R. C.*). Say, what's the use of fussing about it? I've made up my mind and I'm goin' to enlist. That's finished. But I ain't a squealer. You needn't be afraid I'll go back on your bunch. If any one asks me about you, I don't know nothin'. But I ain't in the game no more. From now on, I'm going straight!

ECK. (*crosses to him*). You say you'll not go back on our bunch. Good! Then join the army, enlist just as soon as you like. But no matter what you do, no matter where you are, you are one of us! We need men in the army. It would be a good thing for you. A commission, maybe, and much money, but you are one of us!

DAN. I ain't. I'm an American. I ain't a-goin' to be mixed up with you. I tell you I'm goin' straight.

ECK. (*angrily*). You are. Straight to the Professor in Chicago. He's the man to deal with you.

DAN. Naw, I won't do it. I've been a crook all my life, maybe, but there's some things that even a crook won't do.

ECK. What harm is there in bringing me a little present from my friend in Chicago? What harm is there in a fountain pen?

DAN (*scornfully*). Say, whatcha think I am? I know what was in that fountain pen. I'm wise all right, and what's more I know what you tried to do with it.

ECK. (*alarmed*). What do you mean?

DAN (*bravely facing him*). I mean that I'm wise to you and your whole bunch. They're black, Eckert, black clean through. I mean that you wouldn't stop at nothin'. That you'd just as soon poison a whole army as look at 'em. That if you could you'd spread the cholera from one end of the country to the other. (ECK. *starts*.)

ECK. Cholera?

DAN. Oh, I know what was in the pen all right.

Cholera germs. Enough to start the disease in the camp, enough to spread it everywhere, enough to kill a million men.

ECK. (*livid with rage, seizes DAN, clenches with him, finally gets him by the throat, forcing DAN to his knees*). You dog! You water rat! Jail bird! Prison scum! (*As he forces DAN to knees*.) Traitor! (*Strangling him*.) I'll show you how we use traitors. You know too much. But I'll show you, I'll show you!

(*DAN reaches in his pocket, draws revolver, pushes it upward against ECK.'s stomach*.)

DAN. Drop me, drop me, er I'll fire. (*Pushes ECK. back with gun, rises*.) You try to manhandle me and you'll never leave this room alive. (*ECK. recoils to R.; DAN takes C.*) I know you, and I'm heeled f'r you, that's all.

ECK. (*with hands up*). What would you do? Murder me?

DAN. That wouldn't be a bad idea, would it? You tried to spread the cholera in an army camp; that was worse'n murder, wasn't it? Murder by the wholesale.

ECK. This is your gratitude, then, for all we have done for you. We took you out of prison —

DAN. I'm going away from here to-morrow and start my life all over again. I don't even want to think of what I've had to go through. But I'll keep still, as far as you and your gang are concerned, I won't blow. Not unless you start some more of your dirty work, then watch out!

ECK. You threaten me? You dare?

DAN. You bet I do. If there's any more of that cholera spreadin', well, you'll get yours, and you'll get it straight from me.

ECK. (*sneers*). You? What could you do?

DAN. You'll find out. If you or your gang do anything else crooked against the army of the United States, I'll go to the head officer of the camp and tell him who it was that lost the fountain pen up there in Indiana.

ECK. But who'd believe you? A homeless wharf-

rat, a jail-bird from the slums of Chicago. Suppose you went to the officers. Who'd believe you?

Enter GARY from R., quietly.

GARY. I would. (*Covers them with revolver; they slink to c.*) Just keep him covered, my boy, while I slip these little bracelets on his wrist.

ECK. Curse you, what are you doing in my house?

GARY. Just a little missionary work for Uncle Sam. I've been looking for you for a long time, Rudolf Eckert. (*Handcuffs him.*) And to think I'd run across you in my old home town.

ECK. You've got nothing on me. You can't hold me. The authorities shall hear of this.

GARY. The authorities have already heard of it. You probably forget that I represent the authorities.

ECK. But of what am I accused?

GARY. I overheard your entire conversation with this boy. I was hidden in the closet by the cellar stairs. I knew all about the little fountain pen story and we've been hunting over the entire country to find the perpetrators of such a fiendish crime. The sheriff is waiting outside by the hedge. You'd better tell your young friend good-night and come along with me.

ECK. He's in it as much as I am, the young fiend. If I have to go to prison, it will be some comfort to know that you (*to DAN*) will go with me.

GARY. I'm really sorry, Eckert, but I'll have to deprive you of even that comfort. This young man is going to join the army, I believe.

Enter MISS EM from L.

MISS EM. Mr. Eckert, I thought I heard sump'm. Is anything wrong?

GARY. Not at all, Miss Em. Things have been wrong, but thanks to this young chap, they're beginning to go right again.

DAN (*to GARY*). Then you think they'll gimme a chance in the army, do you, mister? I'll try awful hard.

GARY. Give you a chance? Why, my boy, we'll all

be proud of you yet. But my friend, the sheriff, is waiting for us. Come along, you! Good-night, Miss Em. Good-night, young man. If you need a recommendation at the army headquarters just call on me. That's all. (*He leads ECK. out at door c.*)

MISS EM. Dan, Dan, what does it all mean? Was the judge arrestin' Mr. Eckert?

DAN. Looked kinder like it.

MISS EM. What on earth for? What's he been doing up in Indiana?

DAN. I dunno as the judge 'ud want me to say. Maybe he'll tell you himself in the morning. (*Yawns.*) Gee, this has been a strenuous day, all right, all right!

MISS EM. And all that nice supper is in there on the table.

DAN. Supper? Let's go in and sample it, Miss Em. I'm holler clean down to my toes. I'm goin' away tomorrow and there ain't no tellin' when I'll get another meal like you can cook.

MISS EM. Goin' away, Danny?

DAN. Yep, goin' to join the army. Goin' to show 'em that I got some good in me after all. I'm goin' to try and do sump'm for my own, my native land. (*Changes tone.*) But now let's eat.

(*They move toward L. entrance as the curtain falls.*)

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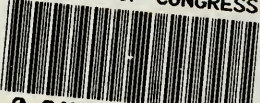
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