

PS 3515
.I3465
P3
1907
Copy 1

THE PARTING

AN AMERICAN PLAY
IN FOUR ACTS

BY

DAVID K. HIGGINS

AND

MILTON O. HIGGINS

COPYRIGHT 1907, BY
DAVID K. HIGGINS AND MILTON O. HIGGINS
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THE PARTING

AN AMERICAN PLAY
IN FOUR ACTS

BY

DAVID K. HIGGINS

AND

MILTON O. HIGGINS

*"printed from type set within the limits
of the United States"*

COPYRIGHT 1907, BY
DAVID K. HIGGINS AND MILTON O. HIGGINS
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

P 3515
I 3465 P3
1907

LIBRARY of CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
NOV 18 1907
Copyright Entry
Oct 31 1907
CLASS D. ACC. No.
11635
COPY B.

PERSONS.

GILBERT STANLEY.

KATHERINE STANLEY, his mother.

ABIGAIL WESTLAKE.

CLARICE WESTLAKE, her daughter.

MATTHEW VANBERG.

ELIZABETH VANBERG, his wife.

CHARLIE VANBERG, his son.

MILDRED VANBERG, his daughter.

ALICE FROTHINGHAM.

LUCILLE DERNY.

DELLA SNOW.

EUGENE HAMMOND.

PERSON.

Bridesmaids, Guests, Servants, Mob.

THE BIRD AND THE CAGE.

ACT I.

AT STANLEY'S HOME.

Time—Summer Morning.

Large Colonial room—tricked out with athletic apparatus—and feminine knick knacks—summer furnishing of refined character and profuseness—doors open right and left—room is a wide large living room—outlooking a porch with white columns twined with vines—backed by red brick wall also vine twined—showing an old high iron gate through which a country road is seen in distance—hangings are typical of a nice quietness of home—a combination of the old and the new in wall ornamentation and furnishings—willow, rattan or mission furniture—rugs and matting on the floor—coolness, the tone—small table set for breakfast for one dozen near large fireplace—screen doors—large low windows at back opening out onto porch, open—stairs to a colonial balcony, with doors leading off from same into second floor rooms—with practical doors opening from balcony into them—window at back is a wide, low colonial bay with a step up to a window settee built in and cushioned—covered with linen—at rise—a bell rings—Lucille enters door on balcony—comes down stairs carrying tray—Della enters from door R or L down in front of fireplace and meets Lucille C. takes tray—clock is striking ten as this goes forward—

DELLA—(*A prim, frank-spoken, rural serving woman of about thirty years.*)—I should think your arms would be worn off carrying things up and down those stairs fifty times a day.

LUCILLE—(*A nice looking French maid of about twenty years.*)—It is not my arms I will wear off—(*kicks out her foot and laughs*).

But I love her—everyone loves mademoiselle.

DELLA—It seems so—in this house.

(*Bell rings again—messenger enters with large box of flowers—Della starts to put down tray—Lucille checks her, and goes to meet him—takes box—they stand talking, each with her bundle; messenger exits.*)

LUCILLE—Here it is again.

DELLA—Every day—

LUCILLE—The box of orchids from the millionaire. Forgiveness prayers for tipping her out of his automobile.

DELLA—It's lucky Doctor Gilbert was handy.

LUCILLE—To save her—to carry her in here in his arms. (*Embraces box sentimentally.*) Ah, if it were my ankle it would never get well.

They are playing a match game—the doctor and the millionaire. Now, it is my opinion—



DELLA—What?

LUCILLE—That unless some one upsets the chess board the doctor will checkmate the millionaire in one bold move. (*Goes up stairs and exits with box.*)

(*Della turns away as Abigail and Clarice enter—(C). Abby bustles in and Clarice lounges after. She is dressed for riding horseback—goes to table and absently takes cake and eats it—is a large buxom girl of twenty years—blonde and full checked—loud and distinct utterance, but not vulgar—a practical minded Miss with some sense of humor, but no real appreciation of it.*)

ABIGAIL—(*A large, stout, middle-aged woman of brusque and bustling manner, dressed showily youthful in light colors.*)—Good morning, Della. Is Mrs. Stanley here? (*Bustles about.*)

DELLA—In the garden.

ABIGAIL—And Doctor Gilbert?

DELLA—Not returned yet, ma'am.

ABIGAIL—Isn't he home?

DELLA—He went away suddenly last night—

ABIGAIL—Away—suddenly—last night— Alone?

DELLA—No, ma'am; with some one.

ABIGAIL—Della, you don't mean to tell me!—where's Miss Vanberg?

DELLA—In her room, ma'am.

(*Della exits shows resentment at questions.*)

ABIGAIL—Thank goodness—she gave me such a turn—(*sinks into chair.*)

CLARICE—(*eating*)—You thought they had eloped—no such luck—

ABIGAIL—How you talk—wishing another woman would run off with your affianced husband.

CLARICE—He isn't—

ABIGAIL—He is.

CLARICE—He isn't.

ABIGAIL—He is—always was; always will be—

CLARICE—That's your merry-go-round.

ABIGAIL—Stop using slang—everybody knows it.

CLARICE—Yes—you've attended to that little detail—

ABIGAIL—It's settled.

CLARICE—Puppy love—we've both outgrown it—

ABIGAIL—He just worships the ground you walk on.

CLARICE—He has lots to worship then.

(*Enter Charlie from room on balcony; comes down.*)

ABIGAIL—Why are you dressed for riding?

CLARICE—To ride, of course—

ABIGAIL—Who with?

CLARICE—With Mr. Vanberg. You told me I must ride to reduce my flesh—how can I reduce without some one to ride with?

CHARLIE—(*coming down; he is a bright young man of about twenty-seven years*)—Yes. How can she reduce without some one to ride with?

ABIGAIL—And you are the proper some one, I suppose?

CHARLIE—On my lucky days. Ah, good morning—

ABIGAIL—Now, don't pay my daughter indirect compliments—she's silly enough already—besides I don't believe this riding does any good. Let me look at you (*turns her around*). Not an ounce gone with all that jolting—it would kill me.

CHARLIE—Would it? (*Eagerly; then meekly*)—Why not try?

CLARICE—I can't help it—it only makes me hungry to ride (*eats*).

ABIGAIL—Stop eating sweets. How's your sister?

CHARLIE—Fine.

ABIGAIL—I saw your father ride by—he's upstairs, isn't he?

CHARLIE—Yes—come on, Billy.

ABIGAIL—I must find something else—this daily ride don't suit you at all.

CHARLIE—You haven't given it a chance—her waist is certainly smaller.

ABIGAIL—How do you know?

CHARLIE—Why—I can see it—anybody can see it—certainly—

ABIGAIL—(*sarcastically*)—Yes—anybody can see lots of things. I've been watching this little picnic for almost two weeks now.

CLARICE—While I've been reducing (*taking another cake*).

ABIGAIL—This brotherly visit here to your injured sister every day and then the gallop with my daughter afterwards.

CLARICE—She's on (*surreptitiously kicks him*).

ABIGAIL—And I must say, my daughter is not for you.

CLARICE—Why, I never thought of such a thing.

CHARLIE—Well—I had no notion (*together*).

ABIGAIL—Likely story.

CHARLIE—But now that you've been inventive enough to suggest it—

CLARICE—Why not?

CHARLIE—My prospects are AI—only son—solid with rich father—plenty of money to keep up any sort of an establishment—no scandals. Kept off the front page of yellow journals so far—shook my bracelet—climbed no rainspouts in evening dress—don't walk on all fours in public, and, besides, I love her; come, what do you say?

ABIGAIL—Not with that family—I've no use for your crowd.

CLARICE—I'm not marrying the crowd.

ABIGAIL—Years ago your father and my husband were partners—equal in everything—now he has millions to my thousands—and since that new house was built I've never been invited to put my foot inside of it.

CHARLIE—That isn't the governor's fault.

ABIGAIL—Oh, I know who it is—not that I care—but when it comes to family and ancestors I don't step aside for your mother—not a bit of it—millions or no millions—I've bought sugar in her father's country store too many times.

CLARICE—Wasn't it vinegar?

ABIGAIL—Put down that cake and keep still.

CHARLIE—It isn't her fault entirely—you've never been here when they were not abroad—you're to be included in everything from now on—I heard mother say so.

ABIGAIL—Huh.

CHARLIE—Spoke of renewing old intimacies.

ABIGAIL—Did she? (*Sarcastic.*)

CHARLIE—Yours has been the proud—too sensitive nature. I heard her say so.

ABIGAIL—(*mollified*)—She did?

CHARLIE—And Sis likes Billy—who has been so kind to her—why she just said so—not five minutes ago—they like each other—don't you, Billy?

CLARICE—Uh, huh.

CHARLIE—Born to be sisters—come now—why not?

ABIGAIL—You're too late. (*Clarice, aside, kicks out one foot, sideways, and shakes her head.*)

CHARLIE—All right then; you know best.

MATTHEW—(*entering door at top of stairs*)—Eh, what did you say? (*Calling in—then goes back.*)

ABIGAIL—Your father is coming.

CHARLIE—Don't transact any business with him this morning—no matter what he proposes.

ABIGAIL—About my Arizona lands, I suppose?

CHARLIE—Mind—no business—any excuse. I'll explain later.

MATTHEW—(*coming down—he is a large, fine looking, smooth cameo-faced man of sixty—vigorous step—and rugged, but face too pale for health—nervous and roughly dignified*)—

ABIGAIL—Well, Matthew Vanberg, I'm glad to see you, even if it isn't in my house.

MATTHEW—That's your own fault, Abigail.

ABIGAIL—How's Mildred.

MATTHEW—Perfectly recovered, as far as I can see.

ABIGAIL—I notice that Mr. Hammond calls every day—he's very attentive.

MATTHEW—He ought to be after tipping her out of his automobile—fortunately it's no worse.

ABIGAIL—It's quite romantic—I congratulate you.

MATTHEW—She might do worse.

ABIGAIL—I hope it is settled—especially now. You see, Doctor Stanley is betrothed to Clarice.

MATTHEW—Your daughter—what's that to do with it?

ABIGAIL—I'll feel easier if you take her home today.

(*Enter Gilbert—dusty—stands at door.*)

GILBERT—(*a young athletic man of twenty-eight—smooth faced, alert, direct in glance and manner—unaffected and sincere in deportment—rather quiet in speech and movements—till roused—then quick and decisive*)—Good morning, everybody.

(*Enter Mrs. Stanley from garden with roses she places on table—a gentle, white-haired woman of fifty-five—of medium size—refined and gentle in manner*)—Good morning, mother—you slept well—were not disturbed?

MRS. STANLEY—I heard you leave the house, and Della told me your errand—you were not too late?

GILBERT—(*putting down instrument case*)—No, it's all right.

ABIGAIL—Some accident?

GILBERT—Farmer's boy kicked by a horse. I trephined that boy's fractured skull by the light of a single candle held by his father—while the boy's mother acted as surgeon's assistant—it was something to remember—the courage of that simple couple.

MRS. STANLEY—He will live?

GILBERT—Will be well in a few weeks.

MRS. STANLEY—(*tenderly touching his arm*)—My dear son.

MATTHEW—And how far have you travelled to do this?

GILBERT—Twenty miles.

MATTHEW—And got out of bed early this morning?

GILBERT—Three o'clock.

MATTHEW—It's worth a good round sum of money. Can my daughter be moved today?

GILBERT—Today? Oh, no, no—that is, I will see—

(*Goes to table, takes up roses and starts to stairs.*)

She is improving rapidly, but it won't do to take any risks; you know sprains heal slowly. (*Exits upstairs.*)

MATTHEW (*to Mrs. Stanley*)—My dear Mrs. Stanley, I trust this accident that has forced us upon the privacy of your home may be our excuse.

MRS. STANLEY—Do not speak of it again, I beg; it is enough that my son and myself have been of some use.

MATTHEW—Mrs. Vanberg and myself feel under deep obligation. May I make a slight return—for an impersonal purpose—(*she waves a refusal gently*)—some hospital or something you may possibly have an interest in?—I would feel better.

MRS. STANLEY—We are more than repaid as it is. He has taken away my roses; I must go for more. (*Exit, as if to avoid further discussion.*)

CHARLIE—(*to Abigail, aside*)—Remember; no business—

MATTHEW—Charlie, telephone your mother to send the carriage for Mildred.

CHARLIE—Yes, sir. (*Exits into alcove—Clarice starts after him, is stopped by Abigail, catching her dress.*)

ABIGAIL—You stay here. (*Telephone rings off.*)

MATTHEW—(*contemplating table*)—Stanley's breakfast; how I envy him—the irony of fortune that loads a man with millions, and compels him to feed on bran like a horse.

ABIGAIL—Isn't your dyspepsia any better?

MATTHEW—My latest doctor says so—but I can't see it—I've made a dozen—each with a new remedy—at present it's horses.

ABIGAIL—(*horrified*)—As a diet?

MATTHEW—No—to ride—they say it tones me up.

CLARICE—And trims me down.

ABIGAIL—Doesn't it work?

MATTHEW—Work—of the hardest sort—no cure at all—I've worn out three horses and am no better that I can see.

ABIGAIL—Try my remedy.

MATTHEW—Abigail, I had hopes there might be one person on earth without a remedy—don't destroy an innocent faith. You still have unbounded belief in the millions to come out of your Arizona property, I suppose?

ABIGAIL—James made but two business mistakes—one was in dying and leaving this undeveloped property on my hands—and—well, you know the other.

MATTHEW—His division with me—chance decided that—he had first choice, but he was determined to load up with those wild lands and water concessions; I disagreed—we shook hands and parted. They have been a burden ever since, I imagine.

ABIGAIL—Up to the present time.

MATTHEW—And likely to be for fifty years. But the world is filled with visionaries, and I can almost say I may volunteer to relieve you of your "Landed Estates."

ABIGAIL—James said there was gold there—millions.

MATTHEW—Undiscovered millions. It's output to date has consisted of what?

ABIGAIL—Expenses and taxes, mostly.

(*Charlie enters, stands up with Clarice at window.*)

MATTHEW—Neither you nor your child will ever see any change of product. I would advocate acceptance of any offer made.

ABIGAIL—Has one been made?

MATTHEW—No; but things look buoyant—a craze for gold hunting in outlandish places is on; we never know to what corner of the earth it may turn. (*Crosses to table and pours glass of water and drinks*)

ABIGAIL—It may turn my way.

CHARLIE—(*turning Clarice toward him*)—It may turn my way (*to her affectionately*).

CLARICE—(*to him*)—Stop calling me a corner of the earth.

CHARLIE—Well, I want a little corner of the earth I can call my own.

MATTHEW—Eh? (*turns*) Oh! (*To Abigail*)—I might get two hundred and fifty thousand.

ABIGAIL—That's what it cost.

MATTHEW—Well, it isn't every financial knot hole that returns one hundred cents on the dollar.

ABIGAIL—It's really for Clarice—when she marries.

MATTHEW—Then it comes in good time. (*To Clarice*)—My girl, if you can trade off that Arizona desert for a quarter of a million and a rising young surgeon, at one clip, you're in luck.

CLARICE—Mr. Vanberg, don't you think, before final arrangements are made, I'd better be consulted?

ABIGAIL—Clarice?

CLARICE—Nobody has asked anybody to marry yet, and if he ever does, I'm not so sure I know of anyone who wants to marry anybody anyway.

ABIGAIL—That was settled long ago.

CLARICE—It wasn't and it isn't—so, there. (*Exits to garden, angry.*)

ABIGAIL—You see? (*Motions to Mildred's room.*) Jealousy!

MATTHEW—Huh! Overfeeding. Lovers' quarrel likely.

ABIGAIL—More likely, pernicious influences. (*Looks hard at Charlie.*) I'm in no fit state to talk business. You must excuse me, Matthew.

MATTHEW—I'll keep you advised as matters progress. (*Charlie coughs slightly.*)

ABIGAIL—I don't want to sell. (*Exit Abigail into garden.*)

MATTHEW—My compliments to Mrs. Stanley. (*To Charlie*)—Are they going to send the carriage?

CHARLIE—Yes. (*Goes to door and looks off into garden.*)

MATTHEW—Let us go; what are you waiting for? That woman always gets on my nerves—women are the bane of business. No benefits from my ride this day.

CHARLIE—Those New York doctors don't seem to do you much good.

MATTHEW—Doctor's cat's foot—they don't know anything.

CHARLIE—Don't understand your case.

MATTHEW—Well, well, well, I know it, I know it. What am I to do?—I try everything—I wonder what has made her so suspicious about that land (*to self*).

CHARLIE—Try young Stanley.

MATTHEW—Eh?

CHARLIE—He's a good doctor.

MATTHEW—Doctor! (*Deep scorn.*) He's a sport—worst kind.

CHARLIE—Easy; no one knows it—here.

MATTHEW—Um—(*grunts low*).

CHARLIE—Sport or no sport, he can help you.

MATTHEW—(*pacing floor*)—Well, trot him out—I'm ready for anything—what can he do?

CHARLIE—I don't know.

MATTHEW—(*fretting, with pain*)—Then what are you talking about? Confound that woman!

CHARLIE—Let me call a carriage.

MATTHEW—Aren't you able to ride your horse home?

CHARLIE—Of course.

MATTHEW—Well, so am I. (*Gilbert comes down stairs.*) She's able to make the trip I suppose? (*To Gilbert.*)

GILBERT—It's possible; but—

MATTHEW—Good; I have sent for a carriage.

GILBERT—Very well. (*Touches bell; Della enters.*) Tell Lucille the carriage will soon be here to take Miss Vanberg home.

DELLA—Yes, sir; your breakfast is getting cold.

GILBERT—Very well, bring it. (*She goes upstairs, comes down and crosses to kitchen door during following:*) Won't you sit down (*to Matthew*)?

MATTHEW—No; you have some influence with Mrs. Westlake?

GILBERT—Possibly; I never tried to exercise it.

MATTHEW—Do so now—for her own advantage.

GILBERT—In what way?

MATTHEW—She could get rid of that Arizona land. A syndicate is forming that thinks it needs that property—it will go up in smoke, but it's a chance for her to unload. (*Della comes down stairs.*)

GILBERT—I see. (To Della)—Did you tell the nurse?

DELLA—Miss Vanberg herself said she would go if you advised it. (*Della exits off R.*)

MATTHEW—Which you do?

GILBERT—As you desire.

MATTHEW—Her mother is anxious for her return.

GILBERT—Naturally—I wanted to make sure of no mishap—no risk of future lameness.

MATTHEW—You will, of course, retain the case till the cure is complete?

GILBERT—Thanks; I expected that.

MATTHEW—Do you confine your efforts to surgery?

GILBERT—Principally. How long have you had it?

MATTHEW—Had what?

GILBERT—Dyspepsia.

MATTHEW—(*Della, bring in breakfast*)—Twelve years.

GILBERT—How long have you been making money in large quantities?

MATTHEW—About the same time; why? (*Della goes out.*)

GILBERT—What did you do before that?

MATTHEW—Made it in smaller quantities. Eat your breakfast.

GILBERT—With your permission (*sits and eats*). My ride gave me an appetite.

MATTHEW—Mine didn't.

GILBERT—What did you do before that?

MATTHEW—Superintendent of a division of railroad in the Rockies.

GILBERT—And before that?

MATTHEW—Foreman of a construction gang on the same road.

GILBERT—And before that?

MATTHEW—I was one of the gang.

GILBERT—Lived in the open air, didn't you?

MATTHEW—Worked—ate—slept—out of doors.

GILBERT—Could eat then?

MATTHEW—Anything; baled hay; I was young.

GILBERT—Try it again.

MATTHEW—The hay?

GILBERT—No; the work. Put on overalls and rough boots—take a shovel and go at it.

MATTHEW—Is that your prescription?

GILBERT—Yes; work out your road tax—and, while you are about it, work out mine.

CHARLIE—And mine.

GILBERT—Good! There's six days for you. You'll earn nine dollars and six nights of sweet sleep; by that time I'll find some other people whose road tax you can shovel out. That will make your work interesting.

CHARLIE—And say, father, you might fill in that low spot in the polo ground. That will take two weeks more.

GILBERT—Just the thing. Work with an object.

MATTHEW—Yes; for you fellows to play on.

GILBERT—And forget there ever was a dollar in the world.

MATTHEW—I've got the habit of making money and can't let go.

GILBERT—Then use it for good.

MATTHEW—In what particular way?

GILBERT—That's a nice question to ask me—you a multi-millionaire and I a struggling young M. D.; but turn over a hundred thousand to me.

MATTHEW—What for?

GILBERT—To build a hospital for the refined poor.

MATTHEW—Bosh! You'd have all the miserly well-to-do on your hands in a week.

GILBERT—I tell you one use for money. The truth is you rich are all alike—you have but one object for wealth—your-selves.

MATTHEW—You are plain spoken at any rate.

GILBERT—A physician's privilege. Follow my advice—dig in the earth—get back to nature—get back to your primal self—forget business—forget worry—forget money.

MATTHEW—That has the right ring to it. I will. (*Takes out watch.*) I have just time to get to that syndicate meeting. Charlie, look after Mildred. I'll try not to make another cent. Good day (*at door*). By the way, don't forget to urge Mrs. Westlake to get rid of her Arizona lands—encourage her to take my offer. My compliments to your mother. I'd give a million dollars for your appetite. (*Exit Matthew.*)

CHARLIE—Has he any chance? (*Takes out pipe and fills it at bowl and smokes.*)

GILBERT—He's half cured. What's doing?

CHARLIE—Not much. Didn't see you at the boat race.

GILBERT—No.

CHARLIE—The Frothingham was there.

GILBERT—Oh, drop it.

CHARLIE—You may not find that so easy—very busy here?

GILBERT—No, why?

CHARLIE—If you're going to be around I'd like you to take Erskine's place on the polo team—match on our grounds in a few days. If dad gets the holes filled up (*laughs*).

GILBERT—I'm out of practice.

CHARLIE—Oh, rot; we must win—it's sure if you're in.

GILBERT—Sold my ponies.

CHARLIE—Use mine; you could call on your patient (*jerks head at Mildred's room*), and get in trim on the grounds at the same time.

GILBERT—So I could. Just the thing.

CHARLIE—Is this genuine?

GILBERT—What? "This"?

CHARLIE—Why, this—"this." Your latest "sentimental journey."

GILBERT—No joking now.

CHARLIE—Why, confound it—you're not serious?

GILBERT—More than serious.

CHARLIE—But it's impossible.

GILBERT—Yes, I know—I feel it is impossible—that very thing makes it possible—that's it—that's just it. So unlike the rest. Every time I turn to it it's a mixup of nightmare and Heaven—I want to run away and can't—want to stay and don't dare.

CHARLIE—Come, now—no funny business.

GILBERT—You're quite right.

CHARLIE—You're in earnest.

GILBERT—Right again.

CHARLIE—She don't care for you?

GILBERT—Right.

CHARLIE—Then what do you want to marry her for?

GILBERT—I don't know.

CHARLIE—Do you want to marry her?

GILBERT—Don't know.

CHARLIE—Are you going to marry her?

GILBERT—Don't know.

CHARLIE—What are you going to do?

GILBERT—I hardly think that concerns you at present.

CHARLIE—Yes, it does.

GILBERT—No.

CHARLIE—It does.

GILBERT—Well, what the devil—

CHARLIE—I love the girl, that's what the devil.

GILBERT—You love the girl—you love—you—

CHARLIE—Yes, I love her—Clarice. Are you going to marry her? Now, mind, if you do I'll go on making love to her just the same.

GILBERT—Oh, I see.

CHARLIE—Are you?

GILBERT—(*sigh of relief*)—Her mother says so.

CHARLIE—Oh, damn (*looks around*). But she don't know your situation—don't any of them here know—now, do they?

GILBERT—Look here, Vanberg—

CHARLIE—Well, now—do they? Do they? We were in college together—same set—and afterwards—now and then we've met—you know where mostly.

GILBERT—Well—

CHARLIE—Well— Come, I say, she's a good girl—Clarice is—

GILBERT—You mean I'm hitting off the paces too fast for any good girl?

CHARLIE—Well, what do you say?

GILBERT—I've quit it—out of it—for good and all.

CHARLIE—Since what particular date?

GILBERT—Ever since— Well, ever since I came out here.

CHARLIE—Two weeks.

GILBERT—What does time matter?—two weeks—two days—
—an instant—a face—the flash of a soul and the change of front in the destiny of a man is accomplished forever.

CHARLIE—You mean it?

GILBERT—To a finish. Never mind what has been; from now on I quit.

CHARLIE—But will it quit you?

GILBERT—It must.

CHARLIE—The dainty establishment in Tenth street.

GILBERT—Ended for me.

CHARLIE—No more quiet little rubbers at bridge, eh—and the gentle Frothingham?

GILBERT—Goes with it.

CHARLIE—You say it easy;; I wish you luck. By the way, you don't happen to have my last notes about you?

GILBERT—No.

CHARLIE—You haven't been to the governor? (*Gilbert looks at him.*) No, of course not—I'd have heard something drop if you had.

GILBERT—She has them.

CHARLIE—Frothingham? The deuce you say.

GILBERT—I needed cash (*bitterly*). I risked everything I had in that stock deal you put me on to—everything my mother had—the roof over her head—and when the slump came I had to meet my margins somehow, and I borrowed the money from a woman;—from her—I had sunk low enough for that.

CHARLIE—But you got out on the rally.

GILBERT—Oh, yes. I'm out with a whole skin. I'll get those notes for you as soon as I see her; but I'm done—no more double life for me. From now on I'm a doctor.

CHARLIE—You've set the pace too high, old man—you're best out of it, and I hope you get out—clean.

GILBERT—As to money, yes; as to the rest—

CHARLIE—Throw it down and walk on it.

GILBERT—You talk well.

CHARLIE—I can afford to—everybody expects the limit in everything from me—I'm one of the multi's-plutos—vulgar rich. The cost don't count with me—more the better. It's part of my training and best sort of free advertising—but with you it's different—it don't fit.

GILBERT—I've had the same front to keep up—with no money to do it on—I play a handy game, and turn to the cars; meet a pretty woman; now somewhat socially adrift, but once at the front of New York's exclusive set. She's part of the game. It's very easy—and before I know it—an establishment where cards are played.

CHARLIE—Always on the square, old man.

GILBERT—As those things go—but still for money—and there I am. A man with a romance and a—past. (*Laughs disgustedly.*)

CHARLIE—Well—I'm glad you've given it the shake—old man. If for no other reason, for the sake of this little mother of yours. (*Gilbert drops into chair.*) I'll take a turn in the air till Sis is ready. Ah! so long. (*Somewhat embarrassed, exits into garden.*)

(*Gilbert sits abstractedly a moment—stirs—then fumbles glass on table tips it over and straightens it, and finally leans head on his hands—elbows on knees.*)

(*Enter Mrs. Stanley, and comes softly to him.*)

MRS. STANLEY (*laying hand on his hand*)—Bertie—isn't home the same?

GILBERT (*taking her hand*)—The dearest place on earth, mother.

MRS. STANLEY—Then is my son the same?

GILBERT—Why, yes, mother, just the same.

MRS. STANLEY—No (*shakes her head*). These weary eyes—these lines about the mouth—are not my boy's.

GILBERT—Your boy has been up since three A. M., and ridden twenty miles of rough roads. (*Forced jocularity.*)

MRS. STANLEY—I know—it is beautiful of you—to save life—but the look I mean is back of one night's loss of sleep.

GILBERT—Time has something to say to every one of us, myself included—and besides, this vacation must end and I go back to work.

MRS. STANLEY—It is my ambition for you—my pride in you—and so I want you to go back with a light heart and a free mind.

GILBERT—Do you want me to leave you?

MRS. STANLEY—I want you to be worthy of yourself.

GILBERT—You, too, are not the same—I have been selfish—left you alone.

MRS. STANLEY—No, never alone—I have my boy and his life in my thoughts every day. So you see I do not want for pleasant company.

GILBERT—That I ever forget it only proves more fully my selfishness. Yes, I am—I prefer the ease of the city. I should come home to work—what a field for usefulness right here at our door!

MRS. STANLEY—You must not let sentiment stand in the way of your career.

GILBERT—I am indolent—I haven't worked enough—but from now on I will—I promise that—I am in earnest—from now on, mother—I have every motive for work—every motive in the world.

MRS. STANLEY—Bertie!

GILBERT—Yes.

MRS. STANLEY—Well?

GILBERT—Well?

MRS. STANLEY—I'm waiting—do you love her?

GILBERT—Why, mother?

MRS. STANLEY—That is what I want to see. Your love for a noble-hearted girl, to whom you are everything.

GILBERT—You ask much, madam, in this age when wealth and social place are ruthlessly crowding poor little Love into dark corners.

MRS. STANLEY—I do not expect you to be free from worldliness in these modern days—but remember always love alone lights with a holy flame the darkest deeps of life. However it may come, dearest, hold it with the strength of steel—closely—singly—for eternity. Believe me, there is little else worth while. (*He embraces her tenderly.*)

(*Mildred has come on from inner room at head of stairs during last exchange—stands on stairs back—is dressed for de-*

parture—leans lightly on a walking cane—a fine type of American woman of about 24, dressed in a pretty morning dress of silver grey.)

MILDRED—And the lovers met in secret every happy day.
(Laughs lightly)

MRS. STANLEY—Concealment will no longer avail us I see.
Good morning.

MILDRED—If I were a man I would want such a mother.

GILBERT—There isn't such another.

MILDRED—(raises cane)—I have stolen your cane.

GILBERT—(going to her to assist her)—Sit here.

MILDRED—(waving him aside)—It is not necessary—unless you insist. Now that I am to go away, I find I am stronger than we thought.

MRS. STANLEY—We are glad of that, but we do not want to lose you.

MILDRED—You are not going to lose me—so easily. The stray kitten once befriended knows the doorstep where it is safe—I am coming often. When the terrors of the world beset me, I know now where to turn for refuge—if I may.

MRS. STANLEY—Whenever you feel like making an old woman happy, come.

MILDRED—You may regret your generosity. I feel I have been a little spoiled by your kindness and will not want to lose it.

MRS. STANLEY—That is just what I desire—and as soon as you are well—

MILDRED But I am well—see (lifts cane—stands on lame foot), I can stand alone quite nicely.

GILBERT—I say—don't do that.

MILDRED—You fear I will injure my foot and not be able to go today.

GILBERT—I want my work to end in a permanent and perfect cure.

MILDRED—And you want my cure to be a thorough piece of work?

GILBERT—Yes.

MILDRED—I always disliked that word "Thorough." It seems to end everything. I never was thorough in anything; I am afraid of thorough people.

GILBERT—You are not afraid of me?

MILDRED—Every one is afraid of doctors—but I am not afraid of you—not often. Oh, Mrs. Stanley—you have been so good to me here—a stranger.

MRS. STANLEY—No, my child, not a stranger.

MILDRED—And under your roof I have found peace and, in spite of pain, almost happiness—and but for him I might have been a cripple for life. I have seen so many cripples—on the streets—everywhere, and I pitied them in a sort of vague way as something far off, but now that it has come so near—do you think I can ever be grateful enough?

GILBERT—You put the matter too strongly.

MILDRED—Please let me look at it that way.

GILBERT—Thank you—very much.

(Enter Clarice—comes to Mildred.)

CLARICE—Hello, Mildred. So glad to see you down—going?

MILDRED—Yes—running away.

CLARICE—Wish I was. I may some day. I think you're lucky. I'd be willing to sprain an ankle—I'd be willing to break a—well, anything—for a little excitement and liberty. I'm going to surprise somebody some frosty morning—see if I don't.

(*Enter Abigail and Charlie, in converse.*)

CHARLIE—Don't sell for any price till I say so—leave it to me—I'll make you millions. Oh, hello, Sis. In harness again—that's good.

MILDRED—Thanks to our dear friends.

CHARLIE—Best doctor in the state. This is Mrs. Westlake—Aunt Abbie—you know—

MILDRED—Oh, yes. How do you do, Aunt Abbie? (*Quietly cordial.*)

ABIGAIL (*rather stily*)—Quite well, thank you, Miss Vanberg.

MILDRED (*freezes up slightly*)—It is some years since I saw you, Mrs. Westlake.

ABIGAIL—A great many—

MILDRED—Oh! Is it as bad as all that?

ABIGAIL—You were playing on the grass plot beside your grandfather's country store the last time I saw you.

MILDRED—How charming.

ABIGAIL—Barefooted.

MILDRED—Indeed! An original disciple of the Kneip Cure. I remember now—you wore a yellow sunshade and apron. What particular quality or emotion does yellow stand for, Doctor?

GILBERT—Noisiness, I think—something of that sort.

MILDRED—Nonsense. How nice it is to find you and Clarice are cousins.

ABIGAIL—They are soon to be related in another way.

CLARICE—Mother!

GILBERT Eh? What's that?

ABIGAIL—You know you've been as good as engaged for a long time.

CLARICE—How can you say that?

ABIGAIL—It's nothing to be ashamed of.

MILDRED—Ah— (*turning to Gilbert*)—You spoke of a surprise.

ABIGAIL—I arranged it, and now that Clarice will soon be very rich, I don't see why it should be put off. Won't you act as a bridesmaid?

MILDRED—Delighted

CLARICE—Now, mother, will you ever let up? (*Angry.*)

GILBERT—Aunt Abbie, I must refuse to allow you to couple Billy's name and mine in this manner.

ABIGAIL—Why, it's an understood thing.

GILBERT No such good fortune for me.

ABIGAIL—Have you refused him? (*To Clarice.*)

CLARICE—(*frightened*)—I—no—not quite.

ABIGAIL—There, you see—

GILBERT—I haven't asked her—I knew better—we like each other, but not that way. Billy is free to follow her heart—so am I—that is if I have any. I never supposed you took it seriously or I'd have cleared this matter up long ago.

ABIGAIL—I understand. I have been deceived—by you—by my daughter—by you all. Don't speak to me, Katherine—not today—I'm all unstrung—it seems no matter where I turn I'm opposed by some member of a certain family. They're my "Bate nore," Clarice! Come home! (*Exit in anger*)

CLARICE—(*coming to Gilbert throwing arms around him*)—Now I hope she's satisfied. Thank you, Bert. You don't know how many hours and hours of arguments you've saved me. (*Goes to door.*)

GILBERT—All right, Bill.

CHARLIE—(*embracing Gilbert*)—Doctor, you have saved two lives—perhaps dozens of lives—God bless you! (*Exits with Clarice C.*)

MILDRED—You are right. Yellow is her color.

MRS. STANLEY—I regret that your departure should be so disturbed.

MILDRED—It's very interesting. (*To Gilbert, archly*)—Then I am not to be a bridesmaid after all?

GILBERT—Not at my wedding—if I can help it. (*They look intently at each other.*)

MILDRED—I wonder if Charlie has gone for a carriage? (*Turns up stage.*)

GILBERT—Yes.

MRS. STANLEY—(*to Gilbert*)—I am glad you have spoken. My mind is cleared of doubts. Follow your heart. (*Exits.*)

(*Gilbert stands looking at Mildred, who turns*)

MILDRED—Your mother has gone?

GILBERT—For a few moments. I will call her.

MILDRED—Won't you disturb her?

GILBERT—You will need Lucille, perhaps.

MILDRED—But I don't want Lucille—not yet. So I am to go today?

GILBERT—If they come for you.

MILDRED—Do you think I am able to go?

GILBERT—Do you?

MILDRED—I am the patient—patients never know anything.

GILBERT—There is an old adage that says,—the physician who is his own patient has a poor doctor.

MILDRED—But you are not the patient.

GILBERT—No—you are.

MILDRED—Of course I am.

GILBERT—Well!

MILDRED—Well!

GILBERT—Don't you see—if you go away—it comes to that—I must take the prescription.

MILDRED—How nice. Do you do that for all your patients?

GILBERT—(*shakes his head*).

MILDRED—But I always understood doctors never take their own medicine.

GILBERT—Sometimes they can not help it.

MILDRED—To go or not to go.

GILBERT—Which do you wish it to be?

MILDRED—I have no choice—I'm only the submissive patient. (*Sound of auto horn outside.*) And you hear—you have decided it—I am to go.

GILBERT—And I am to take my medicine after all. (*Goes up to window and remains unseen by Hammond.*)

MILDRED—If I were revengeful I would say it serves you right.

Good morning, Mr. Hammond.

(*Enter Hammond at door C—in auto costume. Rather athletic man of forty or thereabouts—active—nervous—rather loud—inclined to laugh at trifles—talks quickly and bluffly, but as a gentleman—smiles when he talks—a man inclined to stoutness, which tendency he keeps down by more than average activity—a flatulent fullness and paleness that speaks of too intense application to the demands of an intense life showing under a vigorous exterior.*)

HAMMOND—(*speaks from doorway*)—Ah! Good morning, Miss Vanberg; good morning. You are quite restored to us at last. I can hardly express my happiness. I have been delegated by your mother to bring you home if you can make the journey, and of course you can.

MILDRED—Yes. Thank you for your beautiful flowers. You have not missed a day. You are very kind.

HAMMOND—A few orchids—what sort of amends? After being guilty of the whole mishap.

MILDRED—Now remember (*shaking her finger at him*). You know very well you were not—

HAMMOND—No—no—no excusings. I can never forgive myself—

MILDRED—Yet you make me forgive you every time we have met since the accident—when you're quite blameless.

HAMMOND—Cunning—artfulness of man—no—no—let me blame myself—to have you forgive me—it's my one supreme pleasure to be forgiven by you. I thrive on it—meat and drink, you know. You will go—you are quite restored?

MILDRED—Quite.

HAMMOND—That's good. (*During above has shown restiveness under Gilbert's gaze—then turns on him.*) I say—why do you look at me? You make me nervous—look some other way.

GILBERT—With pleasure.

MILDRED—Why this is—Doctor Stanley—you must be friends.

HAMMOND—Stanley!—why of course—there in the shadow I didn't recognize you—seems to me I did hear he was your doctor. Lucky boy. Know Stanley quite well—I say though, there are some eyes I can feel in the dark—they pierce the back of my head. I never noticed it before—but you have those eyes.

GILBERT—Unpremeditated on my part, I assure you.

MILDRED—Hypnosis.

HAMMOND—(*laughs*)—No—nerves—a notion—you have told Doctor Stanley how I caused your injury.

MILDRED—But you did not.

HAMMOND—You see, Doc—this was the way of it—we came bowling along—almost dusk—you know how I drive—and I didn't see it—thought it was a dog—didn't see it was a child playing in the road—didn't see it at all till she reached for the lever—I turned quick—just in time—thought I could make it—I know how to handle a machine—took instruction in France—sort of Bob Handy at it, you know—but we run against a stump and over we go—as usual, the undeserving escapes with a scratch or two, while our heroine here receives the injury. It is the worst misfortune that ever happened.

MILDRED—No—no—it is the best—the very best. (*Gilbert starts—looks intently at her.*) Your only thought was for me. And—and—you see—I'm quite recovered—and ready to trust myself to your protection again. (*Flinging a defiant glance at Gilbert.*)

HAMMOND—It is my wish that you make your trust permanent.

MILDRED—A reckless wish. (*Enter Mrs. Stanley at door from garden L—Mildred going to her.*) Ah, Mrs. Stanley, I must say goodbye.

MRS. STANLEY—You must go then??

MILDRED—Yes. One look at your garden before goodbye. (*Goes with Mrs. S. and stands in converse—her arm around her.*)

HAMMOND—(*to Gilbert*)—Did you hear that? “My only thought was for her”—there's a treasure—a woman with appreciation.

MILDRED—(*to the men who turn to observe them*)—Now, this isn't for you men—turn your backs and don't listen.

HAMMOND—Stanley, I never wanted to be a mother till now. And you've been nursing that foot for two weeks. Ah, you doctors—lucky dogs—get the best of everything. I'd give a fortune to be able to set that ankle (*with sincere feeling in last line*).

GILBERT—It wasn't broken—pardon my staring at you—a physician's privilege.

HAMMOND—Certainly. Well—I'm all right, am I not? I feel all right.

GILBERT—That's good.

HAMMOND—Live here?

GILBERT—Yes.

HAMMOND—That's why I haven't seen you at our little club, eh? Since that rouser of a night. The Frothingham, eh? (*nudges Gilbert*).

GILBERT—Yes.

HAMMOND—Say, what was the matter with me that night? I held up my glass to your final toast, and that's all I recollect. Fainted, didn't I? superheated room. She always keeps that house too warm—that glass of brandy brought me round all right—I hit the corner of the table as I toppled over—I was sore here for a week (*hand over heart*).

GILBERT—You didn't strike anything?

HAMMOND—Say, what did you do to me?

GILBERT—I gave you a hypodermic of ammonia—over your heart.

HAMMOND—The deuce you say? What for?

GILBERT—Syncope.

HAMMOND—Hell! That's heart failure. Oh! Not much. You're an alarmist. Nothing but champagne and hot room—that's all. Do you mean it? (*Gilbert nods.*) I thought it was the brandy that brought me round. You saved my life.

GILBERT—That's my trade.

HAMMOND—I'll send you a check.

GILBERT—Excuse my staring.

HAMMOND—Oh, that's all right—a sort of inherited tendency to fear. My father died in mortal terror over a fancied loss of his fortune. It hits me in this way—I have intense likes and dislikes (*musings to self, aloud*). My grandfather went that way.

GILBERT—Oh, you're all right.

HAMMOND—Of course—of course—muscles hard—nerves steady—vitality at concert pitch—they all lived life—all the great ones—didn't dream it—I'm no dreamer—I want the real thing—must have it. Why, old Bismarck hit it up till he was eighty-five—all the time. He fell down in a faint, too—so did Caesar—lots of times—I'm sound as a nut—why, I never know what it means to go to bed tired.

GILBERT—The trouble with you is you make too much money and you spend too much.

HAMMOND—You mean I work too hard by day—and play too much at night.

GILBERT—Your struggle for great wealth and your excesses in spending it. Well—you're murdering existence.

HAMMOND—Thanks for the tip (*laughs*). I'll swing into line with the popular procession. I'll join the reformers.

(*Noise of carriage outside.*)

MILDRED—There is my brother with a carriage. If you will tell him that I am to ride with you I will soon be ready (*Lucille enters with many wraps, etc.*), and you might help Lucille with the wraps.

MRS. STANLEY—I'll call, Della. (*She exits.*)

HAMMOND—(*taking things from Lucille and standing with arms full*)—And no mishaps this time. Doctor, we may meet again.

GILBERT—We may.

HAMMOND—My gratitude for your skill and care. Good day.

GILBERT—Good day. (*Hammond and Lucille exit.*)

GILBERT—Isn't there something I can carry out?

MILDRED—No. I don't believe he left a single thing.

GILBERT—What did you mean by that?

MILDRED—By what?

GILBERT—By what you said.

MILDRED—What did I say?

GILBERT—You said it was the best—the very best misfortune that had ever happened.

MILDRED—Did I?

GILBERT—What did you mean?

MILDRED—Isn't there something you can carry out?

GILBERT—No. What did you mean?

MILDRED—There—I believe Mr. Hammond is right.

GILBERT—Oh, confound Mr. Hammond.

MILDRED—Not in the least. He is always agreeable and has advanced ideas on many things.

GILBERT—And ambitious too, no doubt?

MILDRED—Boundless ambitions I've heard.

GILBERT—You will marry him?

MILDRED—There. He *is* right—your eyes are disagreeable—sometimes. I feel them now—in the back of my head (*puts hands up to head*).

GILBERT Why did you say it was the best misfortune?

MILDRED Because it has enabled me to live for two weeks—two little weeks a life I had never known and can never forget. You are a man—I don't know what or how men feel—but women love peace—some women. I am one of them at heart—and to me this house spells peace. It is yours—be grateful for it—deserve it for the mother's sake. On second thought there is something you can carry out.

GILBERT—What?

MILDRED—Didn't we have a long, serious talk last night?

GILBERT—Serious—not long.

MILDRED—True—not long—only four hours. What did we talk about?

GILBERT—Careers mostly—my career.

MILDRED—That is what I want you to carry out—the ambitions born of the atmosphere of this house and the mother love here can not be other than noble. Fulfill them the best you can.

GILBERT—I've made a noble commencement.

MILDRED—You saved a life today before sunrise. Oh, Lucille told me—I envy you.

GILBERT—Envy me?

MILDRED—Your life—haven't you told me the story of your childhood? Haven't I dragged it out of you piecemeal?—love—love—love—that's what it has been—you were born to it—it has saturated every hour of your existence, and now on the basis of this love build your career.

GILBERT—Career means success—success is only another name for money.

MILDRED—Oh—money (*scornfully*).

GILBERT—Yes—money. The new orthography for career. Listen to any chance word of conversation—everywhere—on every corner—read it in every scrap of printed paper—success—money—money—the sole and only measure of success—with it we compass every heart's desire—without it our brightest dreams vanish—for it we step into dark and hidden ways and brazenly forget the sense of shame.

MILDRED Oh, don't. I have heard nothing but this sort of thing since I was so high (*Bus*). It has become necessary to

my life—I suppose it will rule me to the end—I am a part of it—but I hate it. Father fought for money night and day—it came—it still comes—and now ambition—social power—but little love. I am not satisfied—I do not understand it, but I am not satisfied. There is something better. Then I was hurt and carried in here. My ideals have been met—roused in a way—I never felt possible. I want to look to you as something too strong for mere sentiment—too earnest for mere material success.

GILBERT (*intensely*)—By what right do you want this?

MILDRED—By the right of pure friendship—by the right of the higher ideal our brief comradeship has lifted me to—(*a pause; she extends her hand*). Goodbye.

GILBERT (*taking her hand*)—And if I strive for this, what then?

MILDRED—You will walk into the morning of life and carry the hearts of your friends with you.

GILBERT—I have only room for one heart beside my own.

MILDRED—(*whispers*)—Goodbye, my friend. There are moments in life that remain in spite of ourselves—you remember—my third night here. Lucille was worn out with watching and had fallen asleep. I was feverish and in pain and could not rest—I can not bear pain—you heard me moan and came in.

GILBERT—I dared not give you a stronger narcotic.

MILDRED—But you took my hand—sat by my side and softly drew the bed so that my eyes could fall on the flowers in the moonlight and talked to me, and your voice and the soft beauty of the night lulled me to sleep—and when I awoke you still held my hand, and it was dawn—

GILBERT—It was dawn (*A pause.*)

MILDRED—My love. (*She sinks into his arms.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE—*The Vanberg house—drawing room—large window at back, overlooking an extensive view of the Hudson River and the palisades—a room in a mansion on Riverside drive—means of exit to right and left—details as elaborate as pleases—room is a living room, on a large and magnificent scale—contains a large table, strewn with papers and books; a fine secretaire on left—a built-in fireplace—an Empire room of palatial proportions.*

AT RISE—*Lucille discovered, carefully wiping, with soft silk cloth, a small cloisonne vase she takes from table—she is nicely dressed as a maid—wears Chinese crepe waist of black—as curtain goes up, a ring is heard off—she stops at sound—then resumes work—a slight pause, then enter Hammond from main entrance which is from a magnificent hall seen through the entrance on right—he stands in door—looks about at her—then over his shoulder, then at her again; she has glanced up at his coming, then resumes work.*

PERSON—*(who shows Hammond in)*—Miss Vanberg, sir?

PERSON—*(exit)*.

HAMMOND—Mrs. Vanberg—Ah, Lucille; *bon jour* *(seeing Lucille)*.

LUCILLE—*(pretends to be startled)*—Ah, you startle me, Monsieur.

HAMMOND—What's new?

LUCILLE—He comes often, stops long; they meet here and elsewhere—he looks happy—she is always dreaming or softly singing.

HAMMOND—You told me all this before—it proves nothing. I, too, come often, stay long. We meet here and elsewhere—I look happy—she may sing for me. But you warn me of a danger and—well—*(rubbing his cheek with silk unconsciously)*—you warn me—of a danger—*(she pulls at cloth)*—eh, what?

LUCILLE—The silk—why do you rub your cheek?

HAMMOND—Oh, was I? ha! a boyhood habit—instinct. I like the touch of silk, I like the sound, when it rustles. Do you know you're improving—in looks, you're—

LUCILLE—*(snatching cloth away and turning abruptly from him)*—Yes, I know.

(MRS. VANBERG enters, rather small wiry woman of about fifty, with quiet manners, decision of manner, and a repose that seems genuine, until she is roused, and then shows itself acquired—she is dressed in the refined elegance of wealth and good taste, combined with a studied effort at simplicity that is betrayed by the one large diamond brooch she wears at her throat—her costume is a fine neutral gray, with a supply of lace better befitting a younger woman; her hair is not gray but dark, with a decided strand of white running from her right temple back—she speaks in a low, rather pleasing voice with gentleness, until roused, that has a ten-

dency to be strident—the type of little young woman with baby eyes that usually grows into a purring feline in middle years.)

ELIZABETH—I am very happy to see you.

HAMMOND—Thanks. Good morning!

ELIZABETH—You threatened to leave us.

HAMMOND—I found it too difficult. There is something here I covet too much to leave, and where the heart is—you know my thought—

ELIZABETH You do my daughter great honor.

HAMMOND—I want her for my wife. With her, my fortune and ambitions amount to something worth while. As it is they're wasted.

ELIZABETH—Why not make the venture now?

HAMMOND—You advise it? (*She nods and smiles*). I will. (*Stops.*) By the way, I promised you those notes—here they are. (*Hands two notes to her.*) I would like to know if Charlie signed them?

ELIZABETH—It is his signature.

HAMMOND—I mean for the amount named.

ELIZABETH—Charles will tell that.

HAMMOND—Yes, Charlie can best explain.

ELIZABETH—Did he lose this money in a gambling resort?

HAMMOND—Not a public one; a sort of—well, private club—an apartment where bridge is the principal thing—in fact, without the game the apartment would have no cause for being.

ELIZABETH—(*turns notes over—reads—stops—looks at Hammond, then at notes again*). The name of a woman. My son lost this money at her apartments?

HAMMOND—It would seem so. The paper was floating about; such women are always in the impecunious stage—bank notes flutter through their fairy fingers like summer birds over a meadow. This came to my eye in the hands of a friend—by chance; and I wanted to keep Charlie from any unpleasant or awkward comment—people will wag their tongues at any excuse, however trivial.

ELIZABETH—And there would be talk because of the woman's name—(*looking at note*).

HAMMOND—Pardon my interference but you see how I stand—(*bluff heartiness*)—I feel a brotherly interest in your son, if I may presume to use the expression. (*Mildred heard singing lightly off.*) The carol of the lark—

ELIZABETH—Life's spring time of song and love! Now, if I were a young man, with courage—

HAMMOND—Just my opinion—I will. (*Starts off—met by Vanberg who enters in rough clothes—a telegram in his hand.*)

ELIZABETH—Why, Matthew, what's the matter?

MATTHEW—That you, Betsy? Fine morning, Hammond! Been shoveling gravel—(*to H.*)—working costume—doctor's orders. What your hurry? (*To H.*) Hope I didn't interrupt (*to her*).

HAMMOND—Not at all.

ELIZABETH—Mr. Hammond has spoken of Mildred.

MATTHEW—To her?

HAMMOND—Of her.

MATTHEW—Well, pitch in and win.

ELIZABETH—Matthew!

MATTHEW—I'm a plain man, so I don't mind saying you have two very firm allies right here.

HAMMOND—I had expected that.

MATTHEW—Uh! That's good. By the way, your board met in special session last night, I suppose?

HAMMOND—Yes, and adjourned.

MATTHEW—Adjourned?

HAMMOND—Without action.

MATTHEW—Well, I'm ready whenever your people are.

HAMMOND—Thanks, I will remember. I believe I will interrupt the song if you don't mind. (*He goes off toward song.*)

MATTHEW—Gook luck! Did you hear that?

ELIZABETH—I do hope she will have a little common sense, I do hope so. Wit enough to see her opportunity. I know she has, but, perhaps, I am wrong. With his name and its prestige, what can't I do to get with the right people, the really right people, at one clip? I've worked hard for it and I'm about tired out. (*Bell rings off.*)

MATTHEW—Worse than the wash tub of old days, eh?

ELIZABETH—Matt Vanberg? (*He looks at her.*) Shut up! You're—you're—(*Butler enters with letters.*) Well, what is it (*to Butler*) Ferson? (*taking letters—opening one.*)

MATTHEW—What is it? (*Servant has gone out.*)

ELIZABETH—Another invitation to one of those devilish stupid dinners, the Lynn-Baileys—good enough people of their sort—but not the right ones.

MATTHEW—Not of his inner-circle set—where you want to be.

ELIZABETH—Where I will be!

MATTHEW—Did you hear how he evaded me on that consolidation idea? They're putting up another big combination, and unless I get in, my little railroads and my few millions may as well go to the scrap heap. I need him, but he don't need me, and he knows it. He wants Milly, and he isn't going to let me in till he gets her. He's too much of a gentleman to say so, but I can see it.

ELIZABETH—Is that all you can see?

MATTHEW—No! I'm stronger than he is, a stronger man. He has the position and the many millions—thrown at him on a piece of paper, called a will, and increased by sharp work and luck; but I dragged mine out of nothing with my bare hands; fought every inch of my way upward, and it has put me in training and fit to meet just such fellows and they will go down before me. Once let me in right, and I'll show 'em what it is to pile up the millions—I'll give them a new meaning for the word success. Are you sure you'll land him?

ELIZABETH I was five weeks ago.

MATTHEW—Then why not now?

ELIZABETH—If not it's your fault, or the same thing, your doctor's.

MATTHEW—You bite that off suddenly.

ELIZABETH—A blind man could see it.

MATTHEW—That will never do; we must stop that little game short off.

ELIZABETH—Don't stir things up—be careful.

MATTHEW—Short off, I say! (*Noise outside.*) Hello!

ABIGAIL—(*outside*)—Never mind, never mind, I must see her this instant.

MATTHEW—Abigail is making her formal call at last. (*Enter Abigail in excitement, followed by Butler, who stands in door and stares.*)

ABIGAIL—I cannot speak! I must see you instantly both of you. I never dreamed of such a thing. (*To Butler*)—Here, you—stop listening and go away. I won't complain (*to them*), but I think it is dreadful.

ELIZABETH—What's the matter?

ABIGAIL—Your son!

MATTHEW—Charlie?

ABIGAIL—He has haunted my house for weeks and now that I am thoroughly compromised—

MATTHEW—You?

ELIZABETH—My son?

ABIGAIL—He's gone—vanished. Has he been here? No, I see he hasn't. My life is wrecked.

MATTHEW—Good Lord! (*Drops into chair*)

ABIGAIL—Gone and taken her with him.

MATTHEW—State your predicament in plain English.

ABIGAIL—Billy—Clarice—my daughter!

ELIZABETH—My son gone away with *your* daughter? (*Expresses intense disgust.*)

ABIGAIL—My only child to do such a thing. (*Waving telegram frantically.*) Eloped! (*Enter Clarice on Charlie's arm.*)

CHARLIE—Good morning, everybody. Pleasant morning, isn't it? Everything so bright and cheery. So glad to see you, Aunt Abbie. Sort of expected you'd surprise us here. (*A pause.*)

CLARICE—Did you get my little telegram, Mumsey?

ABIGAIL—And to think, my child—my CHILD—would treat me so. (*Hands wire to Van.*) Read that!

MATTHEW—(*reads*)—"You are cordially invited to meet us this morning at eleven at the home of the groom. Charles Vanberg—Clarice." Is this true? (*To Charlie.*)

ELIZABETH—You have gotten married without a word to your father or myself!

ABIGAIL—Stolen my child in spite of my express disapproval! Oh, Clarice, how could you?

MATTHEW—I had begun to hope I was not the father of a fool. Your conduct opens the subject for immediate reconsideration.

CHARLIE—Oh, I don't know. A few people still marry now and then. I might as well look after her property as anyone else.

MATTHEW—That Arizona alkali desert.

ABIGAIL—It's as good as anything *you* own, Matthew Vanberg.

MATTHEW—I hope so.

CHARLIE—Have you seen the Expert's report?

MATTHEW—What's that?

ABIGAIL—What Expert? Have you been nosing around my property?

CHARLIE—It came last night—as secretary of the company I opened it.

MATTHEW—You had no business to do that.

CHARLIE—Being a fool, I don't understand business.

MATTHEW—What does he say?

CHARLIE—Anywhere from two to five millions in sight!

MATTHEW—Jerusalem!

CHARLIE—No, Arizona.

ABIGAIL—What did I tell you; what did I tell you? Who's crazy now, Matthew Vanberg?

CHARLIE—The syndicate is up against a reorganization.

ABIGAIL—You marry my child for her fortune.

CLARICE—No. He told me all about it. Said he was born of poor, but honest parents, and would I have him now that I was rich? and I said I was his by right of discovery.

CHARLIE—Didn't I warn you not to sell?

ABIGAIL—I wasn't going to sell.

CHARLIE—Don't you want the property developed?

ABIGAIL—Yes.

CHARLIE—Well, I will develop it.

ABIGAIL—You'll do nothing of the sort.

MATTHEW—Don't be hard, Abigail. Young hearts have their rights.

ABIGAIL—No good will come of it to either of you, marry-ing against your parents' wishes.

MATTHEW—Why, you eloped yourself!

CLARICE—Oh! Mumsey!

ABIGAIL—I had to; my father was a pig-headed man.

MATTHEW—I can well believe it. You climbed down a ladder.

ABIGAIL—I didn't. That was long ago.

CLARICE—Oh, Mumsey, did you? I'm so glad. (*Embraces him.*)

ABIGAIL—(*angrily*)—You have made a great mistake, with this fortune you might make a great social match, as others are trying to do—(*glares at Elizabeth*). As for you (*to Charlie*) you forget one thing—the fortune is not her's yet; it is mine to do with as I please until she marries with my consent. With my consent. (*To Clarice*)—You have disobeyed your mother; you have gotten into this mess; now get out the best you can—I won't help you, and I'll never give my consent, never.

ELIZABETH—It is *her* happiness you should consider.

ABIGAIL—I'll let her mother-in-law do that! If I can help it, not a penny will ever go to an old Vanberg, a young Vanberg or any other Vanberg—past, present or future—or future, just you remember that! (*Starts to go.*)

CLARICE—Mumsey, don't go; we, we are not just exactly married.

ABIGAIL—But this telegraph? I'd—I'd like to know why you're not?

CLARICE—We started to, but I got scared, and would'nt until you knew; and so—so—we—

CHARLIE—We—we—we couldn't get you here any other way to talk it over.

ABIGAIL—Well, you got me here and I'm not going to talk it over.

CHARLIE—So—I thought out this telegram scheme to bring you around.

ABIGAIL—Very brilliant of you! Well, I'm 'round—

CHARLIE—Yes, I can see that! I mean—

ABIGAIL—I say I'm around—all right—rather—I should think. Young lady, come home, instanter!

CLARICE—But won't you?

ABIGAIL—Yes, I won't.

CLARICE—Now, please!

ABIGAIL—Come along, this instant. I'll attend to my end of this, Matthew Vanberg. (*Going to door.*) There is one thing in all this I will be eternally grateful for. It's your dazzling thought about that telegram—if I can forgive you for anything, it will be that; come along, Miss. (*Exits, followed by Elizabeth.*)

CLARICE—We'll be married anyhow. I thought you'd scold me.

MATTHEW—When did I ever scold five millions (*aside*). Is this true? (*To Charlie.*)

CHARLIE—Yes, sir.

MATTHEW—And about the mines?

CHARLIE—Every word.

MATTHEW—And not married after all. Well, as a complete ass, you're an edition de luxe.

CHARLIE—I thought!

MATTHEW—Don't—(*in deep disgust*)—don't insult the word.

CHARLIE—I've broken the ice!

MATTHEW—Yes, and gone clean through up to your neck.

CHARLIE—Well, she's been here.

MATTHEW—She has been here.

CHARLIE—I'll get the girl—I've got her now. I'll get these Arizona lands—a little stroke of finance.

MATTHEW—Bosh!

CHARLIE—Wait and see. I'll marry her in a month—and go to Arizona on our honeymoon—

MATTHEW—Good! It's hot as blazes there now but you won't mind—look over matters on the ground. (*Exit Charlie and Matthew.*)

(*After exit of Vanberg and Charlie enter Hammond and Mildred.*)

MILDRED—If you keep on, I'll begin to think I am nearer perfection than the facts warrant.

HAMMOND—You are not near—you have arrived—that's my way at it—it's my character, if I want a thing, that's the best of its class, to my mind, I go after it and I always get it, too.

MILDRED—I do not feel as you do—I am not all you say, really; I know very little. (*He makes gesture of dissent.*) Listen! It distresses me to have you think I hold you lightly. But truly, you are mistaken—we are not quite in harmony.

HAMMOND—I'll tune myself to your liking then.

MILDRED—The only thing that can do that, I can not give—

HAMMOND—You mean love. I don't see why.

MILDRED—Because—(*shaking her head and smiling*).

HAMMOND—Seems to me I've heard of that reason somewhere.

MILDRED—Well, you *will* reason with a woman.

HAMMOND—I'll divide—I have enough love for two—(*she shakes her head*). You're the right thing. I want you. I knew it the first time I set eyes on you. I said then, "that girl is mine." Not quite the thing to say, but I said it—couldn't help it.

MILDRED—You're not an unskillful flatterer.

HAMMOND—I said "there's my wife"—the ornament my name needs; the one woman toward whom all my energies have been converging—created to stand at the head of the long line of fine women of my family.

MILDRED—But I am not that. I am of the new rich—

HAMMOND—Who isn't nowadays? Why, my father doubled his fortune in a life time of hard work. I've increased it twenty fold in fifteen years—we're all new rich. But there is a social caste, an inner circle—I was born in it. I've paid no attention to its value till lately; been too busy. But now I see its uses—its necessity. I'm ready for it—been collecting art trinkets—new house going up—in fact, I'm coming out, and I want the cap-sheaf to be perfect, I want the perfect woman for all this to adorn.

MILDRED—If you mean all that for me, I'm not worth it.

HAMMOND—Oh, I'm not making a display of values to catch you—you are above that, so am I—it's yourself I want. But we're all savages, to some extent, and I can't resist the instinct to dance before you in war-paint and feathers a little—you can stand it—the more we pile on the higher your head will lift above them all and I'll pile it on—that's what I want; and besides, I am more than fond of you—I want you—I'd want you no matter where I found you—you understand me all along better than I've understood myself; that's the woman of it—so I needn't say more.

MILDRED—I do feel complimented by what you have said to-day; but, you see how it is—

HAMMOND—You don't love me? I can't see why.

MILDRED—Nor I, but, really, I don't—

HAMMOND—I'll make you—(*fiercely, then checking himself suddenly*)—I mean—love begets love (*jocosely*).

MILDRED—I like you—I like your (*archly*) masterful ways.

HAMMOND—I'll be the gentlest sort of tyrant.

MILDRED—I admire your bravery—we women like brave men; and you are candid and sincere; but, well—I've told you—

HAMMOND—You don't mean that you refuse me—Me—off hand—positively—without weighing matters and thinking it over?

MILDRED—Yes.

HAMMOND—This is a big question—you haven't sized it up.

MILDRED—Oh, yes—I have.

HAMMOND—Irrevocably?

MILDRED—Irrevocably.

HAMMOND—Are you quite well this morning?

MILDRED—Quite.

HAMMOND—I positively won't hear you. Come, take a spin—we'll talk it over better in the open. (*She shakes her head.*) I will win. You see I'm persistent—it's my character. Obstinacy, eh? Spoiled child, eh?

MILDRED—Determination; that's one of your good points.

HAMMOND—There, you see? I'm taking all the tricks. Wait, don't dismiss me—let me go to-day in hopes, as the poets say. If you would only come—we could soon settle it; come along.

MILDRED—I like you; I like your boyishness—but I'm afraid—

HAMMOND—Not of me?

MILDRED—No, the auto—

HAMMOND—Safer than horses; just suits me. I like the speed—to drive ahead, override everything. Lifts me up—I can talk then—say something worth while. Come along, just to hear me talk. Once I get you in that car I'll win you sure. Come along.

MILDRED—No; give me a fighting chance—fair play, you know.

HAMMOND—You shall have it; but I tell you now it's useless. You will respect me enough to marry me when the time comes; until then, just keep on picking out my good points. Then you won't come?

MILDRED—No—(*lightly*).

HAMMOND—You're not displeased with me?

MILDRED—Not in the least.

HAMMOND—Good, that counts two more. I'm running up an excellent score this morning; better go before my luck turns. (*She laughs.*) See me off from the window at any rate, won't you—

MILDRED—With all my heart.

HAMMOND—Um! that remark counts ten against me. (*Shakes his finger at her*). Well, I'll look for you—good bye.

MILDRED—Good-bye—(*he goes out and she goes up to window; Elizabeth enters—stands watching Mildred; then comes toward her. Mildred, up at window at sound of auto's horn, waves her hand*).

ELIZABETH—You are going out?

MILDRED—Yes.

ELIZABETH—Alone?

MILDRED—No. (*A pause.*)

ELIZABETH—I see it is not with Eugene.

MILDRED—Eugene? Oh, Mr. Hammond. He seems quite devoted—to you.

ELIZABETH—Is that all you have to tell me?

MILDRED—It is useless, mother; I can not marry him.

ELIZABETH—Your conduct of the last four months has led us all to believe otherwise.

MILDRED—In his presence I don't feel human. I feel a thing of barter and sale. Besides, I am engaged to Doctor Stanley.

ELIZABETH—Engaged? You are throwing away your possibilities.

MILDRED—Oh, I understand you—we have wealth—we can buy anything—I am free to go where I wish—to reach out and take what I want of the world only to find my hands always empty.

ELIZABETH—These are new ideas from you.

MILDRED—You have made me a prisoner of money—a bird in a gilded cage. Oh, yes! I have dainty food and drink—a nest of down; but the door is closed and I am beating my life out against the bars. I want it open, open—I am shut in and I want the blue sky; I want to be free.

ELIZABETH—Your father will never sanction it. You know so little of him—his life—his past.

MILDRED—I love him. I have known him since the world began.

ELIZABETH—You astonish me. (*A ring outside.*)

MILDRED—That is he—see him—see him—now—Doctor Stanley—Gilbert—(*goes to door and calls*).

ELIZABETH—I detest scenes—they frighten me; I am not equal to them.

MILDRED—Do not go (*to Elizabeth—to Gilbert—enter Gilbert*)—To-day one of the richest men in the world has asked me to marry him. It is needless to add my mother favors it, and wants me to give my answer.

ELIZABETH—Please be calm.

MILDRED—My answer is that I have promised to be your wife.

ELIZABETH—My daughter forces me into a strange and embarrassing position. I am bewildered at this sudden overturning of all our plans.

MILDRED—Plans in which I had no share.

ELIZABETH—I want her to be happy.

GILBERT—So do I.

MILDRED—That's for me to decide. What am I for—why do I breathe if I am not to choose for myself. (*Enter Matthew—has changed his clothes*).

MATTHEW—What's this you're choosing? A new hat or a pet pup? (*Sees Gilbert.*) Hello, Stanley!

GILBERT—Good morning! You're well, I trust.

MATTHEW—Oh, so, so—(*indifferently*)—what's the matter? More excitement?

ELIZABETH—Dr. Stanley wishes to speak to you about Mildred.

MATTHEW—Well, what is it?

GILBERT—We wish to marry.

MATTHEW—Hum, um!

GILBERT—I believe we can be happy together.

MATTHEW—Our daughter has been accustomed to considerable freedom with money. Can you support her in the fashion that has become a habit with her?

ELIZABETH—Her own prospects were taken into account, perhaps.

MILDRED—Mother!

MATTHEW—You are a bold man—or a selfish one. Chance threw under your professional care a girl to whom you immediately proceeded to make love. Let's be charitable to her intelligence and say she is impressionable—within two weeks you are an accepted lover, although, for a long time, her ambitions were fixed on another plane of life and another man.

MILDRED—I will never marry him.

MATTHEW—You shall marry no one else with my permission.

MILDRED—Then I will marry without it.

ELIZABETH—Mildred, what are you saying?

MATTHEW—Love in a garret!

MILDRED—In a garret or in a palace—love—love.

MATTHEW—I shall use every weapon I have to save my child from this mistake.

MILDRED—Father, you forget I am a woman.

ELIZABETH—Now, Mildred, wait. Matthew, remember, be calm—she's your daughter—high strung—like yourself. If you are to take her from us, Doctor Stanley, against our dearest wish, we cannot help it; but we do not want her to go in anger—I could not bear that. There is no need for that. (*Hides her head on Matt's shoulder and covertly pulls his sleeve.*)

MATTHEW—You understand, Doctor Stanley, we don't approve of you. I don't want you for a son-in-law, but I don't quarrel with my children; if my daughter is foolish enough to throw herself away—

MILDRED—Father!

MATTHEW—There, there, now, don't fly off the hooks—I say it and I mean it. But I'm not going to use force to keep you here. Go with him—marry him—be a doctor's wife—a country doctor, and with no practice at that—but no money of mine. On that I'm determined—I've pulled up to a standard for myself and my family, and am going forward, not back, over the ground again for any sentimental or other reasons.

MILDRED—Then you do consent?

MATTHEW—No, I don't; you simply drop out—that's all.

MILDRED—Ah, but he will succeed—you will be proud of him. We don't want anything but your love. I want to keep my father—

MATTHEW—And I want to keep you, Milly—but you are making a mistake, and I don't want to stand by and see you do it—(*with feeling*).

MILDRED—But pit it out of your mind that I am your child and say: "Here is a woman standing before me—pleading to follow the impulse of her heart, and I won't oppose her, nor plant thorns in her path." That is all I want. You don't know how happy I have been since I've known Gilbert—if you did you would be glad that I have found him.

GILBERT—Do you think now that I can give her up?

ELIZABETH—That is hardly fair, doctor.

MATTHEW—It isn't a square deal—we have no show. I—I—well, run along. You're jamming me into a corner—you two; the tightest corner I've been in for a long time—and I'm not ready for it. I want air—I want time—wasn't you going somewhere?

MILDRED—Yes, yes—(*embracing him*). Oh, I'm so happy.

MATTHEW—Well (*taking her arms from his neck*)—why don't you go? (*She holds him at arm's length looking lovingly at him*). No (*shaking his head*). Now, I won't say another word to you to-day.

MILDRED—(*giving him a hug*). Ah! (*sighs rapturously—to Gilbert as she flits by*). Wait—just a minute—(*throws him a kiss—Elizabeth has watched scene with intense interest—Mildred exits*).

MATTHEW—Now, what the devil am I to do? When the arms of my baby get around my neck, I'm done for (*walking back and forth*). I suppose you'll marry her. (*Short walk.*) But I don't want it. I can't have it. What the dickens she can see in you—

GILBERT—I ask myself that every day.

MATTHEW—These women—always in the way; never falling into line when most needed—and I must consent or play the old fool father and pitch her out. Well, I don't do either. You're not good enough for my daughter.

GILBERT—I know it.

MATTHEW—Look here—(*goes to desk and writes a check*)—you've never sent your bill for services—here, here is a check for fifty thousand dollars—take it and forget that a Vanberg ever crossed your path.

GILBERT—(*laying the check quietly down*)—I have been paid.

MATTHEW—I'll make it a hundred thousand—two hundred thousand; I'll found that hospital for the worthy poor you are so fond of.

GILBERT—Your objection to me must be serious.

MATTHEW—It is—do you accept?

GILBERT—I cannot set a price upon her love.

MATTHEW—(*raging*)—Damn you—you shall not—we are not going to be balked and thrown down by a sentimental romancing girl and a fortune-hunter.

GILBERT—You are speaking of my affianced wife and I must ask you to temper your remarks.

MATTHEW—Temper hell. Since when must I stand corrected in my treatment of my child—you get out of my house before I throw you out.

GILBERT—You are her father?

MATTHEW—Never you mind what I am—you get out.

GILBERT—I am not familiar with section-boss tactics.

MATTHEW—That's what I was—a section boss. I'm section boss still. I'm section boss of this house.

ELIZABETH—Matthew. (*Gilbert starts to go.*) One moment, doctor.

MATTHEW—Section boss! (*Rumaging in the desk.*) It's all on account of that damned automobile. I'm off the books; where are those tablets?

ELIZABETH—You must not excite yourself. It has brought on another attack.

MATTHEW—I suppose so—I suppose so—just my infernal luck. When I get a doctor who understands my case, he goes

and makes a fool of himself—just as I was beginning to eat with comfort.

GILBERT—(*offering him a tablet from his pocket*)—Here!

MATTHEW—Oh, go long with you (*angry disgust*).

GILBERT—Why can't we talk this over?

MATTHEW—What are we doing now?

ELIZABETH—I am going to ask you to give up my daughter because of your character and past career.

GILBERT—A dead issue. It's what I am now that tells. My future.

MATTHEW—Who said anything about your future? A man is the sum total of his past—and your past don't come up to the mark.

ELIZABETH—Have you told her of your recklessness in college—your gambling for the money to keep up with your set since—not to mention worse incidents—I see you have not. Two week ago I saw you look at my daughter, and I began to watch you—I have watched you ever since. I have done nothing else but watch you.

GILBERT—What are you going to do?

MATTHEW—What are you going to do—that is the question?

ELIZABETH—Have you told her about this woman affair, this Mrs. Frothingham?

GILBERT—I have gambled some, if that is what you mean; at Mrs. Frothingham's house.

MATTHEW—Bridge—(*exclamation, half aside*).

ELIZABETH—You are a silent partner in that establishment—your own some of that pretty furniture.

GILBERT—Yes.

MATTHEW—Oh! Aha! (*Suppressed*.)

GILBERT—There is no woman affair, however.

ELIZABETH—Who will believe that?

GILBERT—She will when I tell her.

ELIZABETH—You expect her to overlook it? Just like a man. But you have waited too long; your story is mine now to do with as I please. Suppose I print it.

GILBERT—You mean to expose me if I take her away.

MATTHEW—You bet!

ELIZABETH—If you permit her to go.

GILBERT—Let me live down my mistakes; they're not so bad—it looks worse than it really is.

ELIZABETH—For my daughter's sake, I refuse. Have you thought of yourself? What loss of reputation means? How many families will employ a physician hero of such a scandal?

GILBERT—I sell my skill, not my private affairs.

ELIZABETH—Have you thought of the woman in this?

GILBERT—I tell you there is no woman who can demand consideration.

ELIZABETH—Not even your mother?

GILBERT—She believes me when I say it's over forever. I have injured no one—not even the other woman. I am free to love your daughter.

MATTHEW—But not to marry her.

GILBERT—Free to marry her.

MATTHEW—Oh, yes. You'll do the repentant sinner act. I know what that will mean, pity, tears, bouquets, gush; you'll win sure—she'll forgive you and go down in disgrace with you.

ELIZABETH—(*she turns up as butler enters and speaks to her in undertone*). Request her to step in. Send Mr. Charles here at once. (*Butler exits.*)

MATTHEW—Who is it?

ELIZABETH—I told you I have been investigating Dr. Stanley. Good morning, Mrs. Frothingham. (*Enter Mrs. Frothingham, a pretty woman of fashion of about thirty-five years, elegantly dressed, gentle of voice and manner, with a trick of dropping corner of her mouth as she talks—Gilbert starts, and shows he knows her.*)

MATTHEW—(*aside*)—Ah! um! u-u-m—

ELIZABETH—So kind of you to come—my husband, Mr. Vanberg.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Good morning—rather warm, is it not?

MATTHEW—Turning sultry.

ELIZABETH—You have met Dr. Stanley, I believe?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Yes, we have met.

ELIZABETH—Won't you be seated—can I get you anything?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Nothing, thank you.

ELIZABETH—You are very kind to respond to my little note so promptly.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I should have come yesterday but was prevented. You asked a personal interview (*looks at Matthew and Gilbert questioningly*). Ah, do they know?

ELIZABETH—Mrs. Frothingham has some papers I wish to purchase.

MATTHEW—Letters?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Notes.

MATTHEW—Not mine. I don't sign notes any more—for women.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Not yours.

ELIZABETH—Charles.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I am sorry you have been misinformed.

ELIZABETH—Possibly.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I have no such papers.

ELIZABETH—I am aware of that, they came into my possession to-day.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Mrs. Vanberg—how did you get them?

ELIZABETH—(*handing notes to Matthew*)—Through a friend; you don't know—in the course of business. (*Enter Charles.*)

CHARLIE—You want to see me?

MATTHEW—Yes; this is Mrs. Frothingham—my son—(*they bow*). Did you make these notes?

CHARLIE—Yes, but I hardly expected them to turn up here.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—(*to Charlie*)—Your mother wrote it was your wish that I bring them here. I am sorry that I was misinformed—(*look at Elizabeth*).

MATTHEW—How much did you sign them for?

CHARLIE—I don't exactly recollect.

MATTHEW—Um-m—loaded.

CHARLIE—Not completely.

MATTHEW—Do you know for how much?

CHARLIE—A thousand dollars each.

MATTHEW—You mean four thousand each?

CHARLIE—No, one. I lost two thousand, quit, and gave these two notes.

MATTHEW—Card losses?

CHARLIE—Bridge.

MATTHEW—Um-m! Card sharp! These notes say four thousand dollars each. (*To Frothingham*)—It is eight, isn't it?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—(*confusedly*)—I believe so—I understood they called for eight thousand.

MATTHEW—(*examining the notes*)—These notes are payable to Gilbert Stanley and are endorsed on the back (*turning notes over and reading*)—Gilbert Stanley and Alice Frothingham.

CHARLIE—But it isn't eight thousand; it's two, I tell you.

MATTHEW—What do you say to that, Stanley?

GILBERT—I have nothing to say.

MATTHEW—Um-m! You're sensible. (*Picks up small sun glass and examines notes*). Your memory is good. These notes are for one thousand each and have been raised to four—see?

CHARLIE—But that's forgery.

MATTHEW—I know it. (*Mrs. Frothingham sinks into a chair.*)

CHARLIE—If it's just the same, sir, I'd rather you turned them over to me.

MATTHEW—It isn't the same.

CHARLIE—I rather object, sir—they're mine.

MATTHEW—Your mother needs them at present.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—What are you going to do? I don't understand.

CHARLIE—You have it in for Stanley.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You do not like Dr. Stanley—but, my dear Mr. Vanberg, he is quite guiltless, I assure you. If there is anyone guilty it is I. He knows nothing about the change in the notes. You must not use them to bring trouble on him—you must not. I changed them.

MATTHEW—My dear madam, I have my doubts.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Ah, but I did.

MATTHEW—What for?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I needed that sum—for a friend.

GILBERT—To lend to me.

MATTHEW—Worse and worse.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—But he has repaid me; that is our affair.

MATTHEW—But this is ours, my dear madam.

CHARLIE—You are dragging me in; my name is on those notes. I prefer to settle this matter myself. I don't want you to pay my debts of that sort. It's not over-complimentary to you, Stanley, that you let them get out of your hands.

GILBERT—You are right, I never should. I never should

have done many things that I have done—one mistake follows another. I did go for them as I told you; I was unable to see her. They got into the hands of some one, and landed here.

CHARLIE—It's deuced unpleasant for me.

MATTHEW—Oh never you mind the unpleasantness. I know you play cards—everybody takes a swing at bridge nowadays, or tries to. I want you to be in the swim, but I don't want Vanberg notes floating around.

CHARLIE—But I only lost two thousand, I tell you.

MATTHEW—Don't let that worry you. You've done many a fool thing, but making those notes was a stroke of genius.

CHARLIE—I don't like your buying my paper.

MATTHEW—Do you want Stanley for a brother-in-law?

CHARLIE—I don't believe I do.

MATTHEW—No more do I; but it's your mother's affair. So let's vamoose. There's your artillery, Betsy. I say, Stanley, do you still think you're worthy my daughter. You made a mistake in refusing my offer to found that hospital for the worthy poor. Come along, Charlie—we're in the way here. He seems pretty strong with the women. I want you to tell me more about the expert's report on those Arizona lands.

(*Exeunt Matthew and Charlie.*)

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You sent for me for this?

ELIZABETH—You forget, you were to come yesterday.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—This is why you wanted those notes—why your letter held that covert threat.

ELIZABETH—Five weeks ago my daughter met with an accident—she was taken to the house of Doctor Stanley's mother—he was there.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Well?

ELIZABETH—Doctor Stanley has not been to see you for five weeks.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Because of your daughter!

ELIZABETH—Do you want him to marry her? Do you?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—(*Sinks into a chair with an exclamation*)—Ah!

ELIZABETH—I see you do not. Let me be your friend.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You are trying to break their friendship. Perhaps he loves her (*glances at Gilbert who has gone up to window*). He does love her—I feel it.

ELIZABETH—A passing infatuation. I have other plans for my daughter. You must help me.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You are playing with a woman's heart. You know I can not give him up.

ELIZABETH—Why do so? We must help each other. She wants to marry him.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You are playing with their hearts as well as mine. He loved me before.

ELIZABETH—He will again if they separate. If I make use of my information.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You will involve me in a public scandal? I can not endure it—I will kill myself rather. What right have you to involve me?

ELIZABETH—I need you. I don't care who goes down in my struggle.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You have caught me on the verge of the social precipice. It needs but one blow to hurl me over into the abyss.

ELIZABETH—Do you want me to do it? You want him to marry you. If I thought he would, there is nothing I would not do for you—there is nothing I would not compel you to do.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You frighten me.

ELIZABETH—I open the way for you to win him for yourself. Doctor Stanley, what have you to propose?

GILBERT—(*coming down*)—Nothing; I am a man of clay in your hands—to mould as you choose.

ELIZABETH—We fully understand what it is necessary to do.

GILBERT—I am to break with her?

ELIZABETH—Finally—at once—to-day.

GILBERT—To-day?

ELIZABETH—Nothing can be gained by delay.

GILBERT—I can't do it. She seems so happy. I can't to-day.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Gilbert—forgive me—I never thought—never meant—

GILBERT—Don't, please. It is not you that needs forgiveness. She would forgive me—but I can not ask it of her. I am unfit to look upon her again. I will go now, and never see her again. (*Starts to go.*)

ELIZABETH—(*stopping him*)—I don't want you to run away—that will do no good. She will follow you. You must see her—tell her, so that she will know, once for all, that everything is over between you. You are to receive these notes (*to Mrs. Frothingham*) the day my daughter is married.

GILBERT—How am I to tell her?

ELIZABETH—That is your task (*goes and touches bell—Butler appears*). Mrs. Frothingham's carriage. I think it best for my daughter not to meet you. (*Butler exits.*)

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—(*crosses to L*)—Yes. Allow me—one word with him.

ELIZABETH—Be brief, then.

GILBERT—What am I to say to her?

ELIZABETH—You're not to say anything about these notes, or anything of what has passed between us. You are to break with her—finally—to-day. Anyway you choose. Say you're what her father called you, a fortune hunter; that you don't want her without her money.

GILBERT—If I refuse to tell her these lies?

ELIZABETH—This woman will be arrested—(*flutters notes*). I do not see how you can.

GILBERT—How am I to tell her?

(*Elizabeth exits.*)

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Oh, Gilbert, what have I done?

GILBERT—They dragged you into this—

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—She found out somehow about those notes and sent for me—she wrote it was for her son.

GILBERT—You sold them and they came to her hands. How?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I don't know.

GILBERT—To whom did you sell them?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—To—oh, some money lender—what difference does that make?

GILBERT—Yes, yes, of course. I have not been to see you for many reasons. (*She shakes her head in a deprecating way.*) You see, why—I had to pull up—I could not go on—

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I understand.

GILBERT—I had made up my mind before—before that accident to her. There was talk floating around—involving us more and more; and I had to drop it all—suddenly—

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Without a word to me?

GILBERT—It is not a nice thing to do, or an easy one to speak about; but there are times when the only possible thing is to be roughly honest.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Go on—you have given me five long weeks of silence to prepare for this moment.

GILBERT—You know I do not want to cause you pain—

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I think I understand your character a little.

GILBERT—Do you think there is enough depth in me for love to find a shelter in?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—That is why—I wanted you—

GILBERT—Then I tell you I am in its clutches, and it will never let me go.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—And it is not for me?

GILBERT—This is no time for mincing words. It is not for you.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Then what is to become of me?

GILBERT—I did not think you cared so much.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Not care so much! But what does it matter—women can live without love—they are doing it every day; but they can not live without loving.

GILBERT—Alice—God knows, I didn't dream of this—you are making it a very hard day for me—

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I have felt all along that I was only an episode in your life. I never meant to let it become a really serious thing—but you see how it is.

GILBERT—I understand. How easy it is to be a rascal.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I will not let you say that.

GILBERT—Oh, don't gloss me over with forgiveness. I'd like to know what right a man has to pitch blindly on—to let a woman love him and then when he has nothing to give in return, howl out his remorse after it is too late. Yet that's about all we ever do.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—I think I understand you—you are not thinking of me even now. You think you are but you are battling with yourself—to win or lose her.

GILBERT—That is God's truth.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Then, why not go to her?

GILBERT—You tell me that!

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Yes; I am strong enough for that.

GILBERT—Because you know I love her.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Because I love you.

GILBERT—Alice (*burst of self-condemnation*)—Others make sacrifices but I can only whine and take all—everything that is offered, as a matter of course. You put yourself in the peril of the law for me. You even now, telling me you love me, urge me to go to another woman and for that love—and I, I, am afraid to tell her what I am—what I have done. I have no courage, no fairness, to free her from such a creature as I am, simply because I say I love her. I haven't been so bad—it didn't seem so bad; but step by step, I have gone down till it seems there is no degradation further except to drag a pure girl to my level, and, to do so, by playing on the divine impulse of her innocent love. Oh, yes; I'll do it—I am capable of it—I am capable of anything.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Stop!

GILBERT—What am I to do?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Hush! Don't speak so, don't—don't think of me in this. I am about done for already. You are to stay here—for her. You are to forget me—and I am to go away—quietly out of your life, as quietly as I came into it.

GILBERT—And you are willing to let me go—for my happiness.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Good-bye.

GILBERT—Why don't you tell me you won't give me up, no matter what comes of it for either of us. Why don't you tell me?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Because you can't make me happy after my changing those notes—getting that money.

GILBERT—You did it for me—I used it.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—You did not know what was done—but knowing now, you can have no respect for me.

GILBERT—Good God, Alice! You are putting words into my mouth—a hot iron into my brain. There is no way out of it. They've got us. If they arrest you the disgrace falls on all of us. She'd share it. She'd stand by me, but I won't let her—I'm man enough for that. How—How?

(*Mildred heard coming.*)

MRS. FROTHINGHAM—Goodbye! (*Frothingham exits with half-hidden show of triumph*)

(*Gilbert has sunk down and is holding his head in his hands—staring before him—he sits there for a moment—then rises in a fury—takes his hat and starts blindly after her and is met by Mildred, who cuts and stands facing him.*)

GILBERT—I must speak to you. (*Love intensity.*)

MILDRED—You are to go on speaking to me all the rest of my days.

GILBERT—No, I mean now, at once. Something has happened.

MILDRED—Since I left the room?

GILBERT—Yes—no—before—before that.

MILDRED—Before you met me?

GILBERT—Yes, before that.

MILDRED—I do not care for what was before that.

GILBERT—I have tried to tell you and did not have the courage. I have been a coward—every man is a coward sometimes.

MILDRED—So is every woman. You see, I am going to stand by your side in everything.

GILBERT—I am taking you from your home—(*in a desperate way as though he didn't know what to say*).

MILDRED—You are taking me to my home and I am ready.

GILBERT—You have not even asked me where we are to go.

MILDRED—I have not even thought of it. We are to go together.

GILBERT—Oh, God! What am I to do?

MILDRED—My dear love! What is it? You need not fear for me—I am not afraid.

GILBERT—It is not that!

MILDRED—Have I done anything?

GILBERT—You? Oh, no. Not you.

MILDRED—You are suffering and I—let me help you. Let me help you by knowing what it is. I can bear it. It is my turn now. Yes, it is. Remember how good you were to me.

GILBERT—You do not know how poor we are.

MILDRED—I do not care for that—I know something better. I know how rich we are.

GILBERT—Do you think I would have the courage to give you up for your own sake?

MILDRED—Not for my sake—you could not.

GILBERT—Do you think I love you enough for that?

MILDRED—I do not want that love—I want the love that would keep me in spite of myself.

GILBERT—But if in my reckless life I had done something that called for punishment—even prison.

MILDRED—I would wait for you at the gate.

GILBERT—You would not give me up?

MILDRED—I will not give you up, if you only love me. That is all I ask. But you are trying me. You have done nothing. A prison has no perils for you.

GILBERT—No—no—I only wish it had.

MILDRED—Don't tell me that anything can separate us now. Tell me of poverty and pain and everything terrible, but don't tell me that.

GILBERT—What I have to tell I must tell.

MILDRED—No you must not—I do not want to hear it.

GILBERT—I have talked to you of ideals and higher motives of life like a hypocritical coward, while in my heart I was thinking and planning something entirely different—the ideal that fills the air around us all, and is dragging us we don't know where. It all comes back to that—to money. It has been so ever since I went away to school—I heard little else even there—money, money—always the need of money—never enough. As soon as I could I began drawing on my capital—I was bound to have what money only could buy—I gambled—I schemed in every way to keep in. The money demon had me in his clutches, and twisted me from every better thing. I lied to my mother and deceived her—robbed her—all for money. It

has blighted my nature and made me incapable of seeing anything beyond it. I have struggled to hold my place in the world without it long enough. How I hate it and how I love it.

MILDRED—(*who has listened with growing terror*)—I do not believe you.

GILBERT—When I carried you into my house, and knew who you were—I saw my chance.

MILDRED—I do not believe you.

GILBERT—I wanted a fortune—I would do anything for a fortune.

MILDRED—I do not believe a word you say. There is something else you dare not tell me. What is it?

GILBERT—I can not marry you. In this life I have lived there is a woman.

MILDRED—Another woman, with whom you are entangled? I've heard of such things; they seem a part of men's experience—men of the world. She is of your past—I do not care for that—there is no such thing—that is all forgotten. When you met me your soul lifted you above all that. It has been chastened in a holier flame. That is what love means—that is why it is everything. It is you and I, here, now, you and I. This is all I care for. Tell me—take me in your arms and tell me this is so. That your love for me now is the only vital thing on earth to you.

GILBERT—It would do no good—you would discover the truth sooner or later.

MILDRED—You mean money—my money? That is why you came to me—my money! You do not love me. You love that other. Do you—do you—love her? Yes, you do—I see it—you do—and I have told you all my soul. (*The shame of hurt pride crushes her.*) Oh!—Oh! oh! The bitter shame of it. Leave me. In God's name leave me—before I die in your sight. (*Stands in attitude of intense resentment at the shame heaped on her—as Gilbert staggers out.*)

MILDRED—Mother—you are there?

ELIZABETH—(*appears on raised steps*)—Yes.

MILDRED—Tell father I am not going to marry Gilbert Stanley!

Curtain.

ACT III.

TABLEAU I.

CHURCH SCENE.

(*At Rise, The final strains of the Wedding March from Lohengrin, harp or organ are heard. They cease during first stages of crowds' exchanges; then a brief silence in Church, and then the indistinct intoning of the Episcopal Marriage Service—heard during lulls in murmur of the crowd outside, on stage. The scene is the front, at the corner of a street, of a small vine-covered fashionable Church in New York. Stage set not deeper than "2." Church in upper right hand corner set to show obliquely from audience—a lamp-post at corner down front—at edge of curb corner of two intersecting streets. Church surrounded or fenced in by iron fence—steps and approach to Church door lead down to "1" at "RC"; this is canopied. Back of canopy appear the walls and windows of church—a large set tree—with wide spreading branches overhanging the sidewalk and street, that lead up stage—tree is backed by brick wall of the building that adjoins the church, and a view of the open street in perspective that extends down the street, in panoramic effect, at center and left of stage—filled with mob of women—and carried out on the drop. At extreme side of stage, on the left, is shown opposite curb with mob packed to and off stage. The center and left front open as though showing the middle of the street.*)

(*The general view is the South Church at corner of Thirty-eighth and Madison Ave, as seen from a point near the middle of the two streets, Thirty-eighth leading off right and the avenue extending up stage—looking south.*)

(*The stage is completely filled with a mob of struggling and pushing and chattering women, fashionably dressed, expostulating with each other, and a squad of policemen, who are trying to keep them in order and back from the church door, which they are all seeking to enter or look into here and there one jumps into the air, to get a better view and, as curtain goes up, the officers are hustling some of them back by the arms and two are being pushed, protesting, down the church steps and out from the opening of the canopy, with hats avery, and in general disorder; as the scene proceeds one woman tries to crawl under the canopy; gets half way under, and is pulled out by the heels, and raised upright and hustled into the crowd—the whole scene continuously worked up and on constant move, swaying to and fro in excited jabberings, protests, and hysterical screechings. The idea to produce, as nearly as possible, a mob of curiosity-mad women, bound to see the wedding, overriding all bounds of propriety and decency, in a crazy determination to gratify a morbid craze to see and hear.*)

(*Down at "RC." A lamp-post or boxed tree—in shelter of which most of the dialogue between the principal characters takes place; this tree, or post, and the canopy and iron fence*

surrounding the church, serve to keep the mob, at arm's length, from them.)

At Rise:

CAPTAIN OF POLICE—Keep that line there.

FIRST OFFICER—Keep that line there. Get back there.

CAPTAIN—Why don't ye move them back? Keep them women back. (*Grabbing Second Officer by arm and shaking him as he would an unruly boy, and pushing him into place toward R., to great delight of the crowd, who laugh and jec.*)

SECOND OFFICER—Good Hivins, Captin, I'm not a Hereules. (*Captain moves about, pushing women back.*)

FIRST WOMAN (*at R.*)—Come now, all I want is just one little peek. Oh, ple-ease—

SECOND OFFICER—Can't do it, mum. Agin the Captain's orders.

SECOND WOMAN—Oh, fiddle (*ambulance going off L.*)

FIRST OFFICER (*L.*)—There's the ambulance—some one hurt over there. It'll be one of you'se next.

THIRD WOMAN (*L.*)—I don't care.

FOURTH WOMAN—I came here to see, and I'm going to see, or die.

FIFTH WOMAN—(*R.*)—Oh, come, let us in; just a second.

SECOND OFFICER—(*R.*)—Are ye invited guests?

CHORUS OF VOICES—Yes—I am—yes—me—me—yes—

SECOND OFFICER—Where's yer card, de invitashun?

CHORUS—Lost—home—forgot it—lost—lost.

SECOND OFFICER—That's what would happen to me job if I let yees in.

SIXTH WOMAN—(*whispers to him*)—Hey? What that (*same business*)—I can't do it—(*shakes head*).

SIXTH WOMAN—Just a second—

SECOND OFFICER—Not a minute.

FIFTH WOMAN—I only want one peep.

SECOND OFFICER—Ye'll hev to stand back.

FIFTH WOMAN—(*bristling up*)—Don't you touch me, sir.

FIRST OFFICER—(*L.*)—Ye have to keep the way clear, ladies. (*To guests pushing their way in from L.*)—Pass along, all right—stand back there—(*to crowd*).

(*Burly citizen—nicely dressed—starts to cross roped walk.*)

FIRST OFFICER—We can't cross here.

CITIZEN—Why not? Isn't this a public street?

FIRST OFFICER—Ye can't cross, I say.

CITIZEN—The Hell I can't—I'm crossing, ain't I?

FIRST OFFICER—It's against orders. Go back.

CITIZEN—Whose orders? What orders? These high-toned snobs and their wedding nonsense? I live in this street—I've been going up and down this walk for twenty-five years at this hour every day—to my dinner; and I'm going now. And I'm not going to be stopped for any Plutocratic Nob or his police. You get out of my way—I'm going through. (*Officer turns back and he goes through and off; crowd cheers.*)

Crowd Orator.

(A wild, long-haired, rather shabby man—gets up on pedestal and begins to harangue the crowd, who jeer and good-naturedly scoff his attempts at a speech.)

Is this a free country or not?

(Jeers and cries of "Yes," "no"—"get down.")

Where even the streets are taken away from the people by the millionaires?

(More jeers and laughs.)

I tell you—

(Same interruptions.)

I demand to be heard.

(Cries of "Keep still"—"more noise"—laughs.)

The People have some rights—I speak for the People—

(Shouts and more laughter—cries of "Keep still," etc.)

Now is the time to strike!

(Officers pull him down and club him—take out on him as they hustle him off—what they couldn't take out of the Burly citizen.)

FIRST OFFICER—*(to woman who crowds forward)*—Stand back—you don't live here.

SECOND WOMAN—You're real mean.

THIRD WOMAN—I'll report you.

FIRST OFFICER—Ye heard the Captin's orders?

FIFTH WOMAN—*(R)*—I want to see-e-e.

SECOND OFFICER—There's nothin' to see. Ye can't look a hole through a church door; ye know that.

FIFTH WOMAN—I can peek through the keyhole, can't I?

(Crowd sways forward—almost pushing him off his feet)

(Women get officer in their embraces—hug him.)

SECOND OFFICER—Hold on—yer crushin' the life out o' me—

SIXTH WOMAN—They're pushing behind.

FIRST WOMAN—We are not.

FOURTH WOMAN—You are, too.

SECOND WOMAN—Are not.

FOURTH WOMAN—You are.

SECOND OFFICER—Now, then, ladies—don't use voi-a-lance. Remember, ladies, ye're ladies—remember that now.

FIFTH WOMAN—Only a second.

SECOND OFFICER—Ye'll hev to stand back—*(pushing against line, vainly)*.

SIXTH WOMAN—How can I?

SECOND OFFICER—Ye'll hev to.

FIFTH WOMAN—I pity your wife.

SECOND OFFICER—Hev' none—glory be.

FIFTH WOMAN—Hope you never will have.

SECOND OFFICER—Never, after this.

FIFTH WOMAN—Lucky for her.

SECOND OFFICER—Me, too, mum.

(*Stops woman, very flashily dressed, who pushes and shoves to front—her hat jammed over one eye.*)

Stand back, mum.

WOMAN—(*slightly intoxicated*)—I know the bride!

SECOND OFFICER—Indeed! (*All laugh.*)

WOMAN—She's a particular friend of a particular friend of mine.

SECOND OFFICER—She has a large acquaintance to-day, mum; stand back—(*pushing her into crowd.*)

(*Gilbert comes on from L—and Frothingham reaches out from crowd L, and catches his arm—at L down.*)

FROTHINGHAM—Gilbert, what are you doing here?

GILBERT—On duty—(*he crosses toward R—she following—during the following work their way to shelter of tree RC.*)

FROTHINGHAM—With that ambulance—(*he nods.*)

GILBERT—An ambulance surgeon—I had to go to work.

FROTHINGHAM—You keep away from me—

GILBERT—Work to do, and a little trouble and sorrow.

FROTHINGHAM—I heard. You lost your mother—I'm so sorry—

GILBERT—Thank you.

FROTHINGHAM—I wanted you—so much—I could help you—why not let me?

GILBERT—I think you know why—

FROTHINGHAM—Yes—I know—but I don't give up so easily.

GILBERT—There are times when we have to.

FROTHINGHAM—Yes, I know. You're standing here like the man in Locksley Hall. She is there. Your Amy—shallow hearted, before that altar, with another man, swearing before God, to love and cherish him—(*a note of vicious triumph in tone, but not venomous.*)

GILBERT—It doesn't matter.

FROTHINGHAM—She never loved you.

GILBERT—Yes, once.

FROTHINGHAM—A dead love.

GILBERT—I am its assassin.

FROTHINGHAM—She is the assassin of your love for me—

GILBERT—We came to an understanding about that long ago, didn't we?

FROTHINGHAM—But I haven't seen you for so long—you would care for me—you couldn't help it—but for her—

GILBERT—You're not yourself to-day.

FROTHINGHAM—You think I've been drinking—well I do—a little—who don't? (*He turns away.*)

Is that why you cut me?

GILBERT—My work takes my time—

FROTHINGHAM—Why shouldn't I drink? Haven't I cause? It's your fault—no, no; I don't mean that. I can stop it—give

me a chance to show you—(*Gilbert shows it all a closed incident*)—But no, you won't—you hate me.

GILBERT—No.

FROTHINGHAM—But you don't care for me; it's the same thing.

GILBERT—Our story is out.

FROTHINGHAM—Out?

GILBERT—(*showing paper*)—Yes.

FROTHINGHAM—They don't dare—yes—(*reads at intervals*)—the flat—the cards—everything, but out names; they'll come next—(*furiously—strikes paper in rage*)—why do they do it? After their promises; why do they do it? What's the name? (*Looks at paper.*) I see—his paper—he owns it. (*Shakes paper at church door.*)

GILBERT—You don't mean—

FROTHINGHAM—He—the man standing there—at her side “in your place.”

GILBERT—Where are those notes?

FROTHINGHAM—I don't know—they are holding them back—they were promised to me to-day before this wedding. Mrs. Vanberg refuses to see me. That's why I'm here, shut out, like yourself. (*Laughs recklessly.*)

GILBERT—They may drag us into a court.

FROTHINGHAM—(*not heeding—examining paper*)—Do you see this? A full description of my house, half true, half false. They mention no names, but any one may guess, and they will—that will come. They are after us—he never will stop till he has finished me, in every way. This will be followed by full details—you know what that means. I'm socially done for—dead. They will arrest me for changing those notes—for you a disgraceful publicity and for me—the river—

GILBERT—Come, you must get away from here.

FROTHINGHAM—I won't stand it—I'll do something. She has kept me on the rack all this time over them. It's dragging the very life out of me. If this is so (*striking paper*), they will do anything—so will he—to crush me.

GILBERT—He is in this, then?

FROTHINGHAM—He's only this scheming mother's tool. She will get me those notes now or I'll add to this day's sensations; I'll drag another name into this affair. (*Looks menacingly at church.*)

GILBERT—Not her, no; you will not.

FROTHINGHAM—I will.

GILBERT—You will tell her nothing.

FROTHINGHAM—Oh, she—she—her feelings must be spared—her heart must not throb and beat the night out; not even the crumpled rose leaf of a sorrow for her—never mind the others. (*Sounds of Mendelssohn's wedding march from church.*) It's done—she is his wife—his wife. (*Gleams triumph at Gilbert.*)

GILBERT—Are you satisfied, now?

FROTHINGHAM—Shall we stay to offer our congratulations; wish her happiness?

GILBERT—I do wish it.

FROTHINGHAM—You are like every man. You pick out

a woman, everything for her—a beast of selfishness for every one else.

GILBERT—Come—this is no place for either of us—

(During foregoing scene crowd busy pushing and jostling to get nearer church door.)

WOMEN IN CROWD—They're coming out; there they are; let me see; stop—you're crushing me. *(Etc. ad lib.)*

(As doors of church open and bride and groom appear, the semi-calm that has marked the preceding scene is ended, and a wild rout and struggle begins to get in path of bridal couple—women jump up to see on all sides, and push and sway the mass in an endeavor to see and get nearer—be careful not to introduce love comedy of any sort into mob's action here.)

FROTHINGHAM—*(Crowding wildly up to door gets in path at side of Mildred, as she reaches top of low church steps at opening in the street canopy)*—I must speak to you—

MILDRED—*(avoiding her)*—Not now, please! *(She is pale and looks worn out.)*

FROTHINGHAM—I've been kept away—

MILDRED—Another time.

FROTHINGHAM—Your mother knows.

MILDRED—Who is she? *(To mother who is behind her.)*

ELIZABETH—I don't know.

FROTHINGHAM—Yes, you do; you know well enough what I want. You're betraying me—all of you. You haven't kept your word—I'll trust you no more—I go with you now. You give me what I want or I'll tell her. *(This to Elizabeth as coterie moves down steps to C.)*

HAMMOND—What's all this?

(Frothingham throws paper at him, it falls)—Here, officer, can't you help us?

(Crowd separates Mildred and Hammond as he turns to speak—then, as Frothingham catches her arm, they are propelled down stage to RC, and crowd intervenes and separates them from Hammond and all the rest, who push to get her during following bit.)

MILDRED—What do you want with me?

FROTHINGHAM—You must save me or I'll drag you down. *(Crowd crushes her.)* I'll drag you all down. Help—they are crushing me. Gilbert, Gilbert, help me, help me—*(Gilbert fights his way to them and catches Frothingham as she falls.)*

GILBERT—Stand aside—aside—I tell you.

MILDRED—*(to crowd)*—Keep back. *(To Gilbert)*—Who is she? The woman you told me of—

GILBERT—Come away.

MILDRED—*(to Frothingham)*—You know where I live?

FROTHINGHAM—*(nods)*.

MILDRED—Come there—

FROTHINGHAM—They won't admit me—

MILDRED—They will; come, come. *(Frothingham nods.)*

(Officers pushing back crowd—that Gilbert has been trying to hold back as Frothingham is supported on his arm—as his

back is turned during this colloquy held between the two women—Mildred speaking to Frothingham in front as she hangs over Gilbert's arm, they in front, he behind holding back mob with his right arm.)

OFFICERS—Keep back, there—keep back—

GILBERT—(to Mildred)—I protest—I won't have it.

MILDRED—(to Frothingham—not heeding him—swiftly)—
The side door. (Crowd rushes in on them again.)

GILBERT—Here, here; help me here—some one. (Officer and a man help Frothingham off stage R)—Get her out of here.

MILDRED—Gilbert, help me—(as crowd pressed down—he turns to her assistance as Frothingham is led off R).

GILBERT—Are you hurt (as she throws herself into his arms).

MILDRED—No, no—see that she comes.

GILBERT—It is too late.

MILDRED—It is never too late.

(Gilbert starts toward L.)

MILDRED—What is this mystery (looking off R where Frothingham has gone.)

GILBERT—Nothing.

MILDRED—You said you loved her—you don't, you don't—you'd have gone to her—you'd be with her now. Why, why, did you tell me so. See that she comes.

GILBERT—Let me get you to your carriage.

(Doors of church open and mob begin crowding into church.)

MILDRED—She asked me to save her—that she had been kept away by my mother. What does it all mean? I will know. I must see her; don't fail—don't fail.

(During this she is looking off after Frothingham, and he is gently leading her toward L—she, almost oblivious of his presence, and under spell of what Frothingham has told her.)

(As they move toward L, Hammond has pushed through and comes to them.)

HAMMOND—Are you hurt?

MILDRED—No, no; Doctor Stanley has saved me.

(At some point in above action in crush—the church doors have been opened to the public, and they are pouring in during the close of the last episode. Hammond and Mildred are borne away in crowd and off stage L. Gilbert left alone in front—mob of women pushing and scrambling over church decorations they have looted; up stage and around him—he stoops and picks up a spray of orange blossoms fallen from Mildred's head gear—stands looking off after her and holding spray, as crowd rushes out of church, tearing flowers and decorations to pieces from each other and strewn stage with them as curtain falls.)

ACT III.

BOUDOIR SCENE.

(*Scene opens with Mildred in midst of the bridesmaids, who are chattering and rearranging her and their own somewhat disordered apparel. The idea is a confused, girlish, babble of excitement over the events of the wedding. A maid kneeling and sewing lace on Mildred's skirt.*)

SETTING—*A palatial boudoir of young woman of wealth and fashion, overlooking view of Hudson River—doors right and left—escretoire, settees, chairs, tables, etc., in full detail.*

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Some one please pin my skirt.

SECOND BRIDESMAID—Where's my other glove?

FIRST BRIDESMAID—We're all torn to pieces.

THIRD BRIDESMAID—Did you kiss her?

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—Yes, her lips like ice.

THIRD BRIDESMAID—No wonder. They nearly killed her.

FIFTH BRIDESMAID (*To Mildred direct*)—I hope you'll be happy, dear.

MILDRED—Thank you; yes.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Well—it was a romance, wasn't it?

SECOND BRIDESMAID—After her brother's marriage she went abroad. Gene Hammond went with her.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—No, he followed on another boat.

FIFTH BRIDESMAID (*to Mildred, pulling her skirt in place*)—Let me help—

MILDRED—Very well. (*Listlessly.*)

THIRD BRIDESMAID—She refused him five times.

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—But the family were set on it—so he won.

THIRD BRIDESMAID—I just adore a man you can't refuse.

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—Any kind for me. He courted her in mid-ocean—by wireless.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Ardent love letters at ten dollars a syllable.

SECOND BRIDESMAID—Talk about tropical affection.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Warm—a'—ah—that's the sort of adoration I'm hungry for.

SECOND BRIDESMAID—It tastes like lettuce at five dollars a leaf.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Not for her money, either:

SECOND BRIDESMAID—He's richer than they are.

THIRD BRIDESMAID—What became of the rival?

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—Oh, that doctor—a hopeless case.

THIRD BRIDESMAID—She married her old lover, after all.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—I like to see the real earnest man win. How's my back hair?

THIRD BRIDESMAID—All right.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—You're not looking—not a hair pin left.

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—Some one tore my skirt. How is it? I've been afraid to look or ask.

SECOND BRIDESMAID—Give me another pin (*pinning up skirt*).

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—Quick, I feel like Eve after she ate the apple.

MAID—This way, please.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Come, we must hurry.

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—And now for the final climax. I hope it won't last long. I'm dying for a cocktail.

SECOND BRIDESMAID—Hush. So'm I. Who'll go next, I wonder?

THIRD BRIDESMAID—No one of our crowd this year.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Why?

THIRD BRIDESMAID—Look at her bouquet. Nothing left to throw.

FOURTH BRIDESMAID—That's just my luck. I counted on catching that bouquet. I'm the tallest—that's why I consented to be bridesmaid.

SECOND BRIDESMAID—Oh, get out.

FIRST BRIDESMAID—Come along; we'll be late.

CLARICE—(*entering from side room as bridesmaids exeunt, passing her singly and in twos and threes*)—You'll find everything ready for you. (*Shuts door after last one exits and turns to Mildred.*) Well, Mildred—no offense to your Knickerbocker ancestors, but this beats the Dutch. I had to fight my way in and out of the church.

MILDRED—There seems no limit to the common hunger for new sensations.

CLARICE—Jewillikins! I didn't know you had so many friends. The street was jammed with crazy women. I saw one freak with a French poodle in arms, scrapping with a policeman to get in.

MILDRED—I suppose the multi-rich will be blamed for this, also.

CLARICE—Who cares what the papers say; anything rather than nothing. They've scolded so much, and so many, no one minds it any longer.

MILDRED—Wealth is easily forgiven.

CLARICE—They all want it—that's why. Say, I heard Bert Stanley was among 'em, with an ambulance, gathering up the dead and wounded. He's on the Bellevue Hospital staff now, you know. Did you see him?

MILDRED—Yes.

CLARICE—And he pulled one crazy woman away who had almost torn your veil off.

MILDRED—Yes.

CLARICE—And you spoke to him?

MILDRED—Yes.

CLARICE—And that this woman was screaming about having been kept away and wanting to speak to you.

MILDRED—Yes. Dr. Stanley took her away and helped me to our carriage. He—he looked pale and ill—

CLARICE—Poor Bert—you knew his mother was dead?

MILDRED—Oh! I did not know; is it true?

CLARICE—He's gone back to the old house to live.

MILDRED—Is—is he married?

CLARICE—No, a hermit; works and works. Just imagine—Bert Stanley—and I almost married him.

MILDRED—So I understood.

CLARICE—But he ducked; something happened—right after cut up lively; something dreadful, I heard—of course, I'm not conceived enough to think it was on my account. Then Aunt Katherine died, and he—well, he's completely changed. She never knew, thank goodness. Say, you were a little interested there, weren't you?

MILDRED—Oh, no.

CLARICE—Thought you were. But, of course, this beats it hollow. Just think! Columns and columns already, and more to follow; and look at poor little me now—I ran away for my wedding—thought I was doing something; and what did I get?—three lines. "Married—Privately, at eleven, Thursday morning, Miss Clarice Westlake to Mr. Charles VanBerg. The Reverend Busby Mild officiated." Officiated! That's all my wedding amounted to. You're the luckiest ever. Talk about being born with a silver spoon in your mouth. You came into the world with a solid gold soup ladle in yours.

MILDRED—Yes, it seems so, doesn't it?

BILLY—Oh! come now, Mildred, it's all right, isn't it? I've always wanted you to marry right—just exactly right. You know what I mean.

MILDRED—Such marriages as mine are always right. Every one says they are the wisest and turn out the best.

BILLY—You love him, don't you? A little bit, anyhow? It doesn't need very much, to begin on.

MILDRED—Yes, yes, I married him.

BILLY—Great snakes! (*Gazing at her in blank amazement.*) Why did you do it, Mildred?

MILDRED—Because he is sincere and honest with me; and because he loves me.

BILLY—Well, that's half; but not the best half. What if you're mistaken?

MILDRED—It can make little difference one way or the other.

BILLY—Well, I'll go see how the procession is getting on. I—I can't do anything here—can I? No, I suppose not. (*As she goes out—aside*)—Poor old Bert.

MILDRED—(*After Billy's exit, to Lucille, who has entered just before*)—Quick; is she there?

LUCILLE—She came by the servants' stairway, and is in the next room.

MILDRED—Please send her here and lock that door.

(*Lucille exits—Mildred fills in interim with business—goes to mirror; looks at herself; lifts her hands to her head, and sees her remnant of a bouquet in the glass—looks at it in a sort of despair.*)

Ah! you poor wreck of an emblem! (*Drops it on stage in repressed anguish.*) You poor wreck of a woman. (*Frothingham enters; sees Mildred, and starts toward her.*)

FROTHINGHAM—Mrs. Hammond—

MILDRED—Ah—you have come as you promised. What do you want with me?

FROTHINGHAM—I want some papers.

MILDRED—I don't understand you.

FROTHINGHAM—They are held by some one in this house.

MILDRED—And that is why you stopped me in the street?

FROTHINGHAM—Yes.

MILDRED—May I ask your name?

FROTHINGHAM—I am Mrs. Frothingham.

MILDRED—I have heard you spoken of.

FROTHINGHAM—I dare say. (*With a deprecating smile.*)

MILDRED—I do not yet understand you. What is it I can do?

FROTHINGHAM—It is for the sake of some one else I came quite as much as for my own. I want you to ask for the return of these papers for me.

MILDRED—And who is this other person?

FROTHINGHAM—I would not like to say.

MILDRED—I do not see how I can be of any assistance.

FROTHINGHAM—Oh, you must.

MILDRED—I cannot.

FROTHINGHAM—Then I must try elsewhere. Good night—I must save him somehow.

MILDRED—No, no! (*Quickly intervening.*) Don't go—I won't permit it. I mean—I will assist you—I will, if I can. You can understand how much I have endured to-day—that street tumult—and my happiness. I am so happy! You know that makes us selfish and forgetful of others. Go on; tell me more, more—I may be able to help you; I will try.

FROTHINGHAM—You can help me—get those paperes.

MILDRED—It must be of the greatest importance to you—you risked your life to get at me in that crowd.

FROTHINGHAM—I didn't think of that.

MILDRED—You jumped on the step of the carriage and asked to speak to me. What is it you have to say—what is it?

FROTHINGHAM—I had two notes signed by your brother, for losses at bridge—in my house. Another man—no matter—some one you know, a dear friend of mine, needed money; and I sold these notes to help him.

MILDRED—And now you cannot pay the debt?

FROTHINGHAM—Oh, yes. I have sold some few trinkets to do so.

MILDRED—Well?

FROTHINGHAM—They refuse to accept payment.

MILDRED—But it is your right—they cannot refuse.

FROTHINGHAM—The notes were for a certain sum. He needed more. I had no other resource then; and so, the notes were changed. The amount was increased. I did not know, they say it—it is the same as a forgery. They threaten to expose me in the newspapers—make a sensation of it—It means disgrace—destruction for me unless I get those notes—

MILDRED—And you did this and sold your jewels for your friend? And some one I have influence with holds these notes—

FROTHINGHAM—And refused to surrender them till to-day.

MILDRED—Who is it?

FROTHINGHAM—I was to have them to-day—

MILDRED—My—husband? (*Pause.*) You must tell me.

FROTHINGHAM—Your mother.

MILDRED—And she promised them to-day? (*Touching bell.*) Tell Mrs. VanBerg to come here. (*To Lucille, who enters; Lucille exits.*)

FROTHINGHAM—I had to come—I could endure the suspense no longer.

MILDRED—Yes, yes, I understand—I suppose you refuse to tell how my mother secured these notes.

FROTHINGHAM—Yes.

MILDRED—Why did she hold them over you?

FROTHINGHAM—I can't tell you—it would scarcely interest you.

MILDRED—Possibly not. They were promised you today?

FROTHINGHAM—Yes. (*Elizabeth enters.*)

MILDRED—Mother—you know Mrs. Frothingham, of course?

ELIZABETH—Have you dared to come here? To my daughter?

MILDRED—Why not to me, mother?

ELIZABETH—That she should come to you!

MILDRED—Is there anything strange in that?

ELIZABETH—No, no. Nothing strange or not strange, nothing at all.

MILDRED—But I see there is something. You have some dealings with Mrs. Frothingham? Do they concern me? They do concern me, and I am not to know it. You don't want me to know it—why?

FROTHINGHAM—I have told you—it is a matter of some notes.

MILDRED—But what are they?

ELIZABETH—A mere matter of money.

MILDRED—But what is it about them I am not to know?

FROTHINGHAM—My personal interest. (*To Elizabeth.*) I want them now.

ELIZABETH—I wrote you what I would do.

FROTHINGHAM—You promised them to-day—

MILDRED—Why to-day?

ELIZABETH—A mere coincidence.

FROTHINGHAM—Hardly that, Mrs. VanBerg.

ELIZABETH—Are you seeking trouble, or to avoid it?

FROTHINGHAM—I am seeking my deliverance—desperately seeking. I want those notes.

ELIZABETH—I cannot give them to you.

FROTHINGHAM—You must. You must.

ELIZABETH—But I can promise—

FROTHINGHAM—You are safe now. Keep the promise you have made.

ELIZABETH—The notes are not in my possession.

FROTHINGHAM—You don't mean to say—where are they? I insist on knowing—now—at once—

MILDRED—Who has them, mother?

ELIZABETH—I don't know.

FROTHINGHAM—Do you realize what you are saying?

MILDRED—Who has them, mother?

ELIZABETH—Now—Mildred, dear—you must consider—you will be late—do not forget your situation—our guests coming—are here now. Why not leave this matter for me to arrange quietly—

MILDRED—I must know, mother—now—before I leave this room—

ELIZABETH—This is making me so nervous—I can't abide scenes—

MILDRED—Who has those notes?

ELIZABETH—Oh—this delay—you don't know what you're doing—what will they say—Mr. Hammond, I think—I am not sure.

FROTHINGHAM—(*Involuntarily—in affright*)—Mrs. Van-Berg—(*then sudden repression*).

MILDRED—(*Touches bell button—after a sudden gleam at Frothingham*)—Tell Mr. Hammond—I wish to see him—(*Lucille enters—to Lucille*).

ELIZABETH—(*Agony of remonstrance*)—Mildred!

MILDRED—Wait (*to maid*). Well, why not? (*To mother.*)

ELIZABETH—Here—now?

MILDRED—(*Walking toward Lucille, who is near door, R.*)—Why not?

ELIZABETH—But you are not ready—and they are waiting. The impropriety of it—

MILDRED—We will override propriety. Bring Mr. Hammond here (*aside—quickly to Lucille*). By the other door—don't knock—(*Lucille exits R.*)

ELIZABETH—Now, Mildred, why do you do this?

MILDRED—I am trying to understand the situation—I feel that it concerns me—most of all—

ELIZABETH—I am sure—I can satisfy Mrs. Frothingham—alloy all her groundless fears. It's like your generosity, my dear child. Just listen—one moment—oh—you know how I despise scenes—my nerves are not equal to them—so needless, too—

MILDRED—We shall soon know—

(*Mildred turns toward door out which Lucille went. During following—till Hammond enters she keeps her back toward others—as if unconsciously facing the door R. Elizabeth motions Frothingham over to other side as if to keep her in background and comes herself toward Mildred.*)

ELIZABETH—But, what will his opinion be of us—to involve him in such a trivial petticoat affair?

MILDRED—He understands women, I've heard—and will make allowances. You have known Mr. Hammond some time, I believe, Mrs. Frothingham? (*Elizabeth signals to deny.*)

FROTHINGHAM—Oh, no—(*carelessly*).

MILDRED—But have met him?

FROTHINGHAM—Yes—possibly—I don't know.

MILDRED—Why did you speak to him to-day—at the church?

FROTHINGHAM—He owns the newspaper in which—in which—my story will be printed unless—

MILDRED—Unless we stop it?

FROTHINGHAM—Y—Yes. (*Hesitatingly.*) That is all.—

(*Enter Hammond quickly from side where Frothingham is. She and Elizabeth exclaim and as they do so Mildred turns and catches the situation.*)

HAMMOND—Alice, what in the devil do you want here? (*Love, but Mildred hears without showing it—catching himself.*)

ELIZABETH—This is Mrs. Frothingham.

HAMMOND—Mrs. Frothingham. (*As if introduced.*)

MILDRED—Mrs. Frothingham has asked me a favor which

you can grant. She has requested me for some notes which mother says you have.

HAMMOND—I have two notes—yes.

MILDRED—Why not return them to her?

HAMMOND—Well, for one reason—I paid eight thousand dollars for them.

FROTHINGHAM—(*half aside*)—Oh—you—

MILDRED—She seems in great distress over them.

HAMMOND—Forgery is a serious thing—for those involved.

MILDRED—There are others implicated then.

HAMMOND—Well, I wouldn't say—the notes were tampered with and then sold.

FROTHINGHAM—I am ready to refund the amount.

MILDRED—Then why not take it and let her go?

HAMMOND—A matter of principle. No, I don't want any money from you—

MILDRED—As a concession to me—

HAMMOND—(*joyfully affectionate*)—There—there—dearie—of course—certainly—certainly—for you—(*tone changes to suspicious*). By the way, is any one else mixed up in this—uh—is there any other motive for this?

FROTHINGHAM—No other name has been mentioned.

ELIZABETH—No—no—it concerns ourselves alone.

HAMMOND—If you wish it—well—yes.

MILDRED—Thank you very much—

HAMMOND—Oh, I'm more than repaid by that smile. (*He shows a trace of too much champagne.*) My dear madam, you may go away assured of no action on my part. (*Has approached Frothingham—then lozv to her—tone ugly.*) But go—far—and forever—take him with you—you understand?

FROTHINGHAM—If I cannot?

HAMMOND—You must—must. (*Aloud.*) I will send you the notes tomorrow.

FROTHINGHAM—I understand you. (*Aloud, but with meaning.*)

HAMMOND—By the way, shall I send them to—(*Stops—recollects self.*)

FROTHINGHAM—Yes—to my—ah—(*He looks at her*). I will leave my address with—your wife.

HAMMOND—Very well. (*Snapping watch case which he has opened.*) Our time is brief. They are waiting for us.

MILDRED—I shall be ready at once.

HAMMOND—That's good—my compliments, Mrs. Frothingham—I'm too happy to give advice—but for the future may I suggest a little more caution. A little—

FROTHINGHAM—Thank you—I will try.

HAMMOND—That's right—try—nothing like trying. (*Sighs rapturously to himself as he glances at Mildred and goes out—Mrs. Van Berg starts after him.*)

MILDRED—Mother.

ELIZABETH—Well?

MILDRED—Where are you going?

ELIZABETH—To rejoin our guests—to avoid remark—

MILDRED—What have you to do with those notes?

ELIZABETH—They were forged against Charlie—please—please—hasten—

MILDRED—I know—but why did you hold them over her head?

ELIZABETH—I did not want any exposure that would involve your brother—and ourselves—at this time—so I—I secured them—

MILDRED—From Mr. Hammond—

ELIZABETH—Now, Mildred—well—yes—

MILDRED—But returned them to him to-day—as exposure counts for nothing after my wedding.

ELIZABETH—Now, Mildred—what nonsense—

MILDRED—Who is the other person involved? The person whose name you conceal?

FROTHINGHAM—I told you—the friend I loaned the money to—it doesn't matter.

ELIZABETH—Yes, she's promised them now—so it's all settled. You must really hurry—they are waiting—

MILDRED—(*turns away resignedly*)—Yes—I know—

ELIZABETH—Come, Mrs. Frothingham—this way—(*Frothingham starts to follow Elizabeth out*).

MILDRED—No—let her go as she came—to escape comment—

FROTHINGHAM—Yes, my carriage is at the side gate.

ELIZABETH—Very well—but do not delay—Mildred.

MILDRED—I'll soon be ready. (*Elizabeth exits.*)

FROTHINGHAM—I won't detain you—I'm sure I am very grateful.

MILDRED—What did my husband say to you?

FROTHINGHAM—I don't quite—comprehend—

MILDRED—Over there—just now—

FROTHINGHAM—(*laughs*). He told me to go away.

MILDRED—And take him with you—I heard that—

FROTHINGHAM—(*lightly*)—Oh, don't be afraid—that song was another “him”—

MILDRED—And will you do so?

FROTHINGHAM—I shall try. (*With a toss of her head.*) “Nothing like trying”—as your husband said. (*Bitingly—starting toward door she entered.*) I'd best be going.

MILDRED—Wait. Will he go with you—this—this man whose name you hide?

FROTHINGHAM—With what I have to offer I believe he will. Thanks to your action to-day—

MILDRED—(*fiercely*)—You mean my marriage!

FROTHINGHAM—Oh, no—your generosity.

MILDRED—No, my marriage. That is what you mean. You have done a very foolish thing in coming here to-night. Why did you come at all?

FROTHINGHAM—I have told you why.

MILDRED—Because in my marriage to-day you saw your last hold on them slipping from your hands. They had you at their mercy, but you have something to tell me they fear to have me know, and that you dare not tell.

FROTHINGHAM—You are utterly mistaken.

MILDRED—I take an interest in you and your story, and called my mother here because I know it concerns a man you all have wronged. And this man, you now say, you sell your jewels to save. How you must hate him—hate him—

FROTHINGHAM—I love him—love him, far better than—

MILDRED—Than I do. That is what you mean to say.

FROTHINGHAM—I'll not talk to you any more.

MILDRED—You said you had been kept away. There—in the street—away from what? Who kept you away?

FROTHINGHAM—I meant nothing.

MILDRED—You said to my mother—there in the crowd at that church door—"You give me what I want or I'll tell her." What can you tell me—

FROTHINGHAM—A woman says anything when she's half crazed.

MILDRED—You said you would drag me down. What did you mean?

FROTHINGHAM—Nothing.

MILDRED—Who kept you away from me?

FROTHINGHAM—No one—I lied.

MILDRED—No—you didn't. I believe you have kept this man I love away from me. You and the rest—

FROTHINGHAM—You do not love him. You do not—

MILDRED—I do—as he loves me—

FROTHINGHAM—It is not true—he loves me. Always—

MILDRED—No—there in the crowd to-day—he told me—he loved me. As he held you in his arms. He turned to me. I asked him if you were the woman he loved and he said No—he loves me—me—

FROTHINGHAM—Much good may it do you—now that you are tied to a man that I have thrown away—

MILDRED—My husband. You said you didn't know him. You have lied to me there. You know him only too well—

FROTHINGHAM—He's yours—take him—I don't want him. Take good care of him. I'm going.

MILDRED—To him!

FROTHINGHAM—That should not interest you.

MILDRED—If you attempt to leave this room those notes will never be given up. I'll see to that.

FROTHINGHAM—Then you'll ruin the man you say you love—just what your husband wants to happen—

MILDRED—Gilbert Stanley.

FROTHINGHAM—His name is on those notes with mine.

MILDRED—And that is why he left me. They drove him to it. Tell me—they used those notes in some way to separate us—my mother and the man I married—they threatened him with this crime.

HAMMOND—(*knocks at door, outside*)—Mildred!

MILDRED—You come to me—his wife—and—brazenly tell me that man (*pointing at door where Hammond is*) is your cast-off. Oh! You Unspeakable! (*Knock at door again.*) You should have stood with him at that altar—you should wear this—(*getting her veil*).

FROTHINGHAM—No—no—no—(*clinging to her*).

MILDRED—(*winding veil over her head*)—Take it. It belongs to you—you belong to him. I'm going. You have set me free—free!. (*Leaves room—Frothingham stands in fright as Hammond bursts in door, followed by Elizabeth and others.*)

(*Curtain.*)

ACT IV.

(Same room as Act I—it is early night and the exterior shows almost dark through windows gradually lighting to full moonlight—instead of summer furnishings the room is fitted in rugs, divans and chairs of a winter living room—the vines and trees show bare through window and door when opened—and at intervals gusts of wind sound and dead leaves fall and flutter past—the fire burns low in fireplace—and there is no light in room at rise—music, “It rains.” Gilbert discovered seated before the fire—he rises, goes to window up C and looks out—then turns to fireplace and puts wood on it—goes to mantel and contemplates portrait of his mother over it—turns to table picks up the spray of orange blossoms he held at climax of Act III, Scene I—then goes slowly up stairs to door of room Mildred made her first entrance from in Act I—opens the door and stands looking in—the moonlight shows in this room—as he turns from the door and comes down stairs, Hammond enters through door C in a rush—softly closes it after peering about without moving and hurriedly moves about room in eager search—meets Gilbert at foot of stairs—both start—it’s almost dark.)

GILBERT—Were you looking for me—the doctor?

HAMMOND—Yes—the doctor—

GILBERT—Hammond—

HAMMOND—Yes.

GILBERT—Well?

HAMMOND—Are you alone?

GILBERT—Quite—

HAMMOND—Sure?

GILBERT—Certainly.

HAMMOND—Not mistaken?

GILBERT—Not mistaken.

HAMMOND—Good—I want to talk to you.

GILBERT—Go ahead—I’ll light the lamp.

HAMMOND—Not necessary. We can talk it over in the dark.

GILBERT—Go on—

HAMMOND—Money is a big thing, Stanley. When a man’s got it he’s got about everything—

GILBERT—I used to think so—

HAMMOND—I’ve always been able to buy anything I’ve set my mind to and I’ve always found that when a man had anything worth selling—no matter what it might be—it could be bought. Now, we won’t go into my reasons at all but I’ll make you the biggest offer you ever had in your life—or you’re ever likely to have—and you’re going to sell me nothing but the gratification of a whim—

GILBERT—Of mine?

HAMMOND—No—of mine. I’ll give you one hundred thousand dollars if you’ll leave New York and stay away for five years—

GILBERT—I am going away of my own accord.

HAMMOND—To stay away?

GILBERT—Probably forever.

HAMMOND—When?

GILBERT—In a few days—as soon as I can get my affairs straightened out.

HAMMOND—Can't you leave them in other hands and go to-night?

GILBERT—Impossible—personal matters.

HAMMOND—Oh, yes, you can—my lawyers can attend to all that for you. Sold out here?

GILBERT—I intend to sell.

HAMMOND—Where you going?

GILBERT—I don't know—somewhere west—

HAMMOND—Good place for a man with money, but it isn't the place it was. Need capital there—take my offer—

GILBERT—Why?

HAMMOND—Don't ask me. You're a man of your word—make it good. Come with me now. My machine is here at the door. Leave this house and come with me to-night. I'll put you up and you can go in the morning. (*Gilbert strikes a light.*) What are you doing? We don't need a light—what do you light the lamp for?

GILBERT—I just want to look at you. You talk like an insane man—and you look like one (*holding lamp to his face*), pardon the physician in me—it's my habit to examine any unusual symptoms—

HAMMOND—You're wasting time—do you accept?

GILBERT—I'm talking as your physician and if I were to diagnose your case I'd say you were under the excitement of some delusion—insanity born of fear—dread of something.

HAMMOND—(*sinking down in chair*)—I am—you're correct—

GILBERT—You offer me a fortune to leave New York for five years.

HAMMOND—A trifle for me.

GILBERT—You fear me—

HAMMOND—I do—I'll tell you why—I'll put it to you in plain English and in one sentence: I don't want the former lover of my wife around—

GILBERT—I told you I'm going away. I have no intention to be around—no desire to be conspicuous—

HAMMOND—But you were—to-day—at the church—you dragged her out of that mob of crazy women—what did you say to her? What did she say to you? Your arm was around her—I saw you. You looked at her and I didn't like the way you did it; and, damn it, man, that's enough for me—and—everything must go with me as I want it. I want no past memories—call it fear—insanity—what you like. Between us it's business. You're going away—go now.

GILBERT—Is there any other condition than the one you name? Is there any other reason? (*A pause.*) I understand how you distrust me, but I do not understand how you can distrust your wife. Supposing I say "Good—I accept your proposition?"

HAMMOND—You mean it? I thought you might—every man has his price. But hold on. There is something else—

GILBERT—I thought so.

HAMMOND—(*going to door and opening it*)—Come in—

(*Enter Frothingham.*)

FROTHINGHAM—Gilbert—I—

HAMMOND—I don't want you two to do any talking till I get this thing into a clear proposition. I've got you both where I can ruin you socially—where I can—never mind—you thought a great deal of each other once—do still. She loves you—yes—and you care for her. I know you do. Now, my machine is at the door—we came over in it—passed a little church a mile or so back—light burning in rectory—I took occasion to notice it. Jump into my machine—go there—get married (*Gilbert looks at him*). I say get married; and that clears everything up—what do you say?

GILBERT—I thought when you burst in here it was a hurry call—some accident—life and death at stake—some fatal illness. I see I wasn't far from right about you—it is a hurry call and the patient is here. You don't want to talk business to-night—you want to consult a physician. You'll find a good one about four minutes' ride further on. I advise you to call on him immediately.

HAMMOND—I was never cooler or more level headed in my life.

GILBERT—Nor I.

HAMMOND—Well, then, what do you say?

GILBERT—No. (*Turns back on him.*)

FROTHINGHAM—I told you, you would fail—but you would drag me along with you—another humiliation—

GILBERT—Then this is not a surprise to you? You came here knowing his intentions.

FROTHINGHAM—I went for those notes—to the house. They refused to give them. He has them—and that article—if our names are published it will utterly crush me—kill me—I didn't intend to come. I must have those notes.

HAMMOND—Yes, I hold them—you still stand in peril there.

GILBERT—How did you get them?

HAMMOND—From Mrs. VanBerg.

GILBERT—When?

HAMMOND—Yesterday.

GILBERT—(*to Frothingham*)—Who did you sell the notes to?

FROTHINGHAM—I pledged them—

GILBERT—With him?

FROTHINGHAM—Yes—

GILBERT—And you gave them to Mrs. VanBerg. You must have been on very friendly terms—you two—for you to advance her eight thousand dollars on security you knew was not straight. You—who never gave a dollar without a purpose. Is that all you ever advanced?

FROTHINGHAM—Gilbert—

GILBERT—You owe him other sums.

FROTHINGHAM—Well—I—no—I don't—yes—yes—I do—

GILBERT—That is how you always had money?

FROTHINGHAM—I suppose so. I hate him.

HAMMOND—(*laughs*). You hear—

FROTHINGHAM—Spare me this—please—

GILBERT—So this is your anxiety—you are not so eager to get me out of the way as to rid yourself of her—this threatened article is not inspired against me, but against this woman—she's what you're afraid of. Damn you—you come here at the point of a gun and propose that I marry her—shut the lid down on your past relations with her. You come here—palm your discarded mistress off on me—if you were not a man sick in mind and body I'd throw you into the road—

FROTHINGHAM—Gilbert—

GILBERT—I've suffered enough through this woman and through you. Do you suppose I don't want to forget you all. This incident in my life is closed—forever—and I'll never lift a finger to reopen it—dismiss your fears. I'll not bother your wife—nor you. But God pity her. Good night—

HAMMOND—Is that your answer?

GILBERT—I've had enough of all of you—enough. I must remember that you are in my house—but I want you to leave it (*goes up and opens door*).

(*When the door is opened Mildred enters as though exhausted—she falls into Gilbert's arms and is half carried to the fireplace—they completely abandon themselves to their emotions—regardless and oblivious to the presence of Hammond and Frothingham. All the pent up tenderness of their natures is given full sway in the following scene—he realizes she has come to him unreservedly—absolutely—and she gives full rein to herself—abandonment—to her instincts—her womanly hunger for his love.*)

GILBERT—Mildred—Mildred—

MILDRED—Oh, Gilbert, my own—I have come to you—you know—I could not keep away—

GILBERT—What has happened?

MILDRED—Gilbert—

GILBERT—Tell me—

MILDRED—To-day—she came to me—that woman—to get those notes—and I found out—everything. He had them—he held them over her—and over you—and over me. I know why. He and my mother—my own mother—used them to take you from me—but I have come to you—before it was too late—

GILBERT—Mildred—

MILDRED—Ah—now we understand each other—no more deceits—no more doubts and fears—nothing but the sweet truth between us. Oh, you don't know how happy I am—I am so happy—so happy—(*Hides her head on his breast in deep tenderness.*) Now we do understand each other—at last—do you know it seems almost sweeter for what has come between us—it has been the redeeming fire—for you and me—we can go along our journey with cheerful hearts—we can face anything—everything—in serenity—I know now that you never turned from me in your heart for an instant—I know it—it is true—

GILBERT—I have lived in death many days—I have hated myself—and now in spite of everything you are here—where you have always been—on my heart. They dare not take you away—we will be deceived no longer—we will fear them no more—

MILDRED—Why did you turn from me? I asked you that once before to-day—at that church door—and you did not answer me—you can answer me now.

GILBERT—I wanted to save you.

MILDRED—And that is why you left me. How little you men know of us. The only way to save me is to take me in your arms—as you are doing now—take me and hold me fast—

GILBERT—I did not want to bring down disgrace upon you. I could not bear to think of your eyes looking into mine in reproach.

MILDRED—And that is how they drove you away from me—I knew it—ah—what perfidy—my parents—when will they ever learn that they have no right to drive bargains with their children's souls. Ah—but you see, I would not let you go—

HAMMOND—Do you think I'll endure this?

MILDRED—Ah—you—what are you doing here?

HAMMOND—I came for you. I knew well enough where I would find you—

MILDRED—You will never have to look elsewhere—for I'm always going to be by his side—do you hear—always—always. Why did you bring her? Can't you answer? Well, why did he bring you? Ah—you needn't tell me—I know well enough. Do you think now that he (*Gilbert*) will go with you. (*This last to Frothingham.*)

FROTHINGHAM—I think nothing—he made me come—your husband. He has been generous enough to offer us a fortune to go away together.

MILDRED—Is there no limit to your presumption?

HAMMOND—None—where you are concerned—I don't want them around—

MILDRED—You threatened Gilbert with those notes. You held the whip of criminal arrest over him to drive him from me—and my father and my mother aided you—you don't need to explain—I see it all—I saw it in everything that passed before my eyes to-night—I heard it in every noise that came to my ears—you—you—in the background through it all—using my parents—their selfishness—my pride—my resentment at him for what you made him do—all—to marry me—you played upon his love and her fears to do this and now that it is done what do you think you have gained by it—I'll tell you—you have deceived a woman—who hates you for it—who would not look at you now if you were the last man on earth—that's what it brought you—that's what you have come here for. Are you satisfied?

HAMMOND—There is only one thing that will satisfy me—my wife—

MILDRED—You hear—if you had only believed in me a little—just a little—this creature never could have stood here before us and called me—Oh, Gilbert—Gilbert—

GILBERT—I was a coward—

MILDRED—And so was I—see—see—what I have done in pique and anger and hurt pride and in despair—

HAMMOND—Do you think I will listen to this—

MILDRED—What do I care for you—what you do is a matter of indifference to me. Gilbert, forgive me—forgive me—I'll not reproach you—never mind what has been said or done. This is no time for anything but the simple truth and plain speaking. You love me now—you do—I feel it—I know it—you do—but tell me—tell me—

GILBERT—Yes—

MILDRED—Yes—with all your soul—as I do you—

GILBERT—With all my soul—

FROTHINGHAM—Ah—(*turns away*).

HAMMOND—By God—I'll kill you—

MILDRED—Gilbert—

GILBERT—This woman is mine—she has come to me—do you think you can obliterate that fact with your wealth—try it—thank God, she has come to me to-night. Do you think we care for your rage. I rather like it. You burst into my house to-night like a wild animal—well—we animals fight for our mates—it's our turn now—we are man and woman—mated—by choice—in spite of everything—and all your money and all your laws and all your social conventions piled in a heap are not going to separate us.

MILDRED—No—no—(*flinging herself into his arms*).

HAMMOND—You're not going to disgrace me—

GILBERT—We are not going to disgrace any one—least of all ourselves. But we are going to love each other—live for each other—together if possible—but whether apart or together—for each other—

MILDRED—Do you understand that? (*To Hammond*.)

FROTHINGHAM—I told you—

MILDRED—Do you think you can buy anything like that?

FROTHINGHAM—Mr. Hammond, you drove me here under compulsion. Do what you please with me—but take me away—

GILBERT—He will do nothing—

HAMMOND—I'll show you what I'll do—

FROTHINGHAM—Do what you please, but I am through. You made me come—I am glad you did for I can do a little something for them—drive me back to the station. As for me this is ended.

HAMMOND—But it's not ended for me. See her to my car and give me a minute with my wife—you can forego her company that long at least seeing you are slated to have it for so many years to come—

MILDRED—Yes—go.

FROTHINGHAM—Gilbert, forgive me.

GILBERT—Yes—yes—I blame myself.

HAMMOND—Can't you get out—you two? Take her away—
(*Gilbert and Frothingham exit*.)

MILDRED—You're going to give back those notes.

HAMMOND—No—I'm going to keep them.

MILDRED—You're going to destroy them.

HAMMOND—I am? (*Sarcastically*.)

MILDRED—Yes—because this woman has suffered enough. She did wrong—but what is it compared with those we have done? She did it out of her love and for her sake you're going to destroy them.

HAMMOND—No.

MILDRED—And for your own sake—because of what she has been to you—

HAMMOND—If I do—what then? Suppose I say "I'll destroy them?" I can—I'm entrenched—I'm too strong to be hurt by any story she can tell.

MILDRED—You mean you have too much money to care—

HAMMOND—Well—put it so—but we'll drop that out—and say I could criminally prosecute this woman—this man—blast the reputation of both of them. I take these notes—throw them into this fire—burn them up before your eyes—drop everything—let them go. Say I do it because you ask it. What are you going to do?

MILDRED—You are back to me?

HAMMOND—Yes—thats all I care about—you. I'm going to have you. What are you doing to do? That's what I want to know. What of you and me?

MILDRED—Yes—what of you and me?

HAMMOND—You're my wife—I fought for you—schemed for you—

MILDRED—Tricked for me.

HAMMOND—Put it that way if you want to—I've got you. The law says you're mine—

MILDRED—Never mind the law—this is for ourselves. You have schemed for me you say—bartered for me. Let's not forget that. Traded over the counter of my father's money—mad ambitions—my mother's vanity—and between you you've tied me as you'd tie up a bundle of bonds and bought and sold me for your profit. But they sold you what they did not possess. They planned and schemed and you helped them—to separate me from the man I cared for—to whom I belonged—they played upon my pique, my chagrin and made merchandise of my pride and shame and lied to me and sold me to you and you bought me—you bought me under these terms. But there was something they could not sell for all your money. Something he brought into my life—the birth of a woman's love—the awakening of a woman's heart. They turned him from *me*, but they did not turn me from him. You know all this—you must feel it and yet you come here and expect something from me.

HAMMOND—I expect you to be sensible and come with me—

MILDRED—I did not know you but now I do and it will keep me safe from you and such as you forever.

HAMMOND—You're blind—flinging yourself at a man's head—how do you know he cares—when he told you he didn't he told you the truth—

MILDRED—They made him tell me—that he didn't care for me—that it was only my money—that he loved another woman and would leave me for her—but he was loving me all the time—and when I was desperate and wild they came to me with you and filled me again with all the shallowness of our way of life

and you took me—a dead woman—when you knew I didn't love you. Oh, yes—you planned and worked and schemed—

HAMMOND—I admit it—I loved you—I wanted you—I felt that your craze for this man was a fancy—I know it now—I couldn't reconcile a woman like you to a man like him. I wanted you as I never wanted another woman—as I never will want another. I wanted you as I never wanted anything. I am so hungry for you I want to wipe out everything that stands between us—I admit that—I was born with strong desires—spoiled in it too perhaps—I don't excuse that—what I want I must have—It's my nature as it always has been in my life to carry things through and make my will my law—

MILDRED—You cannot win love that way—you terrify me—

HAMMOND—I'm turning myself inside out for you to see me as I am—I never did so for any living being—I'm terrible and rough—I know—but my love is terrible and rough, too—it will be for you—to protect you—to make your life a happy one—

MILDRED—You are deceiving yourself—as you deceived me.

HAMMOND—Neither of us is in a mood tonight for this. Come home with me. Everything is all right—your absence will be explained—come—and to-morrow we'll talk it all over—

MILDRED—No—We'll talk it all over here—that's what we're here for—I cannot go with you—this hour has come to us right here. It's to end here—now—

HAMMOND—You're not going with me, you say—and you're not going alone—don't tell me you are—I know better; you're pulling a fine sensation down upon all of us—

MILDRED—I care nothing for that.

HAMMOND—Your father said: "Bring her back with you or tell her not to come back at all."

MILDRED—I expect nothing from my father.

HAMMOND—What's to become of you?

MILDRED—That is what I ask of you?

HAMMOND—Then I say—come along with me and come now. Turn your back on all this and be a sensible woman.

MILDRED—I am not going with you.

HAMMOND—You're going with him.

MILDRED—Yes—if you determine it so.

HAMMOND—Hah—you mean divorce.

MILDRED—Yes.

HAMMOND—No.

MILDRED—Yes—you will—

HAMMOND—You think there is nothing left for me.

MILDRED—Do you want me—loving another man. No, you do not.

HAMMOND—More than ever.

MILDRED—You excuse your conduct toward me with love as your defense—why should I not go to him for the same reason?

HAMMOND—Because I won't let you—

MILDRED—You know better than that.

HAMMOND—You'll forget him.

MILDRED—And if I do how would that help you?

HAMMOND—I don't care—I want you anyway.

MILDRED—No.

HAMMOND—Yes.

MILDRED—No—

HAMMOND—You—you—

MILDRED—Don't you understand that if I didn't love him I couldn't go with you even then. If I hated him it would make no difference. If he came in here and told me he hated me you would still be the same impossibility to me. What you have done will stand between us all our lives—what you have been to her and what to-day has shown to me would be never lifting shadows on the fireside of our home—we could never have a home together. I've seen too many such homes. I do not want one like that. If home is not a sanctuary where love can enter—it is a never ending hell. I wronged you when I married you—I want to right that wrong now. I want to save you—just as much as I want to save myself.

HAMMOND—I tell you I do offer you love—I know it—Good God—you don't realize my hunger for you. It sounds like rot coming from me, but its true—every word—its true, I tell you. He can't offer you anything better. I've been a money slave by day—am yet—will die that way. I've been with the best or worst of them by night—I admit it—I'm sailing before you under bare poles—I want you to see me as I am—no frills—I didn't think it would ever come to me but I didn't know you—you've come—and I'm all in. He can't say more—no living man can—you're love to me. Once I get you I'll show you it's the truth—I'll prove it—I've played unfairly, I admit—I haven't been a saint—but has he? Is he now—you don't know—what he has been—what he is—to this woman.

MILDRED—You know better—she said so.

HAMMOND—She lied—

MILDRED—No—a woman don't lie about the man she loves—you won't understand me. I can't drive it into your brain—It is love—not this man nor any man—but love—that he has awakened. Love that you all deny me—that is what I demand—the right to feel for myself free from every influence—the right to be a woman—that is all I want and that I will have.

HAMMOND—Then have it from me—you can—I know you can—

MILDRED—No—no—there is one man on earth to whom a woman absolutely belongs—if she ever meets this man laws count for nothing—she is his in spite of herself—that is the law—the highest law—and it only rests with her to obey it—wildly welcome it with outstretched arms—and no fear—no restraint can stop her. The right to love—that is the only freedom worth having—the only truth in a woman's life. Go away from me—go away. I never want to see your face again—

HAMMOND—You mean you'll go with him?

MILDRED—No—it is my right but you have robbed me of it—no, I'll go alone—

HAMMOND—No—by God—you're lying to me—that's the way with you women—always tricky—it's because of him—that's what all this high and mighty talks means—and by God I'll

not have it. You're mine. You belong to me. You'll go with me to-night—I'll make you—I'll take you anyway whether you want to go or not—you're not going to slip away so easily—I'm man enough to make a fight—you say you don't care for my money—you'll not be bought—we'll see—you married me for it—and now up jumps this fellow again—I'll use every dollar to hound you—you'll come with me or I'll—I'll—I'll make you too notorious to live—I'll put him behind the bars—I'll wipe your braggart of a father and his little bundle of dollars off the map—I'll not go out of here without you—I will have you—I will—I will—you're mine—come with me—I'll listen to no more nonsense—I've stood enough—I won't have my whole life spoiled by you—I want you—I'll have you—I'll not listen to you—to anything—come with me, I say—with me—(*gasps wildly—clutches table—then his side—and bends over corner of table, then falls prone*).

(*As Hammond falls Mildred starts from him! bursts open window; moonlight streams in on his face.*)

MILDRED—Help—Gilbert—Gilbert—quick! He's dying.

(*Gilbert rushes in—glances at Hammond—runs to side-board—pulls out drawer and gets hypodermic syringe, as he speaks.*)

GILBERT—Tear open his shirt. It's his heart.

(*Mildred opens bosom of Hammond's shirt. Gilbert and Mildred face each other across Hammond's body—for one instant—they give each other one intense look—then Gilbert bends over Hammond and gives him the hypodermic.*)

MILDRED—Don't let him die. I never saw death—I'm afraid.

GILBERT—Hold his head—

MILDRED—Can you save him? Oh, you can—you can.

GILBERT—We must.

MILDRED—Yes—yes.

(*Hammond reviving—speaks faintly and gradually with more vitality.*)

HAMMOND—Hello—Who is it? What's up?

GILBERT—You're all right—keep quiet.

HAMMOND—You saved me—again. What did you do it for?

MILDRED—He did it for us all.

HAMMOND—You might have let me go. Why didn't you?

MILDRED—No—no.

HAMMOND—I begin to see through you two—lend me a handkerchief—

GILBERT—Here.

(*He hands his to Mildred and she wipes Hammond's face and lips—his head pillowed on her breast.*)

HAMMOND—(*looking at her in adoration*)—Thank you. Oh, these women. You're too fine for me—too fine—it won't do—I can see that.

GILBERT—(*giving him stimulant*)—Here—take this—

HAMMOND—Stanley—you're right—it's true—what she said. She belongs to you. Stanley, you're the richest man in the world to-night—and I'm richer, too. She has saved us both. I begin to understand a few things. A man and woman must come to each other or it's good for nothing—I've lost you; but, I've found myself, through you. That's something.

MILDRED—It is everything.

HAMMOND—Your troubles are over.

GILBERT—So are yours, old man.

HAMMOND—Yes, mine. Am I going to die?

GILBERT—You've just begun to live.

HAMMOND—I'll do the square thing. Help me up. (*They do so.*) That's right. Girl, you've shown me something to-night—I know a little more of life. I'll be of some use to others—some use to myself. That's what you've done for me. I won't forget.

MILDRED—You are making me happy—happier than you know. (*Seizing his hand and caressing it.*)

HAMMOND—You've bested me—you two. I'm beat; for the first time—I'm glad of it—from now on, I'm your friend. (*Placing Mildred's hand in Gilbert's.*) You understand—your best friend. (*Mildred retains her clasp on Hammond's hand and bends over the three clasped hands.*)

(*Curtain.*)

NOV 18 1907

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 905 956 A