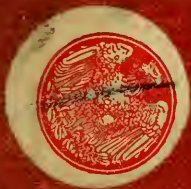


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*Whose
Little Bride
Are You?*

*by
Edith Ellis*

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T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

154 West Randolph Street

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WHOSE LITTLE BRIDE ARE YOU?

WHOSE LITTLE BRIDE ARE YOU?

A Farce-Comedy in Three Acts

BY

EDITH ELLIS

AUTHOR OF

"Mary Jane's Pa," "Contrary Mary," "Never Too Late,"
"Seven Sisters," "The Man Higher Up," etc.



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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me 1

WHOSE LITTLE BRIDE ARE YOU?

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY.

MEN.

- DR. BENJAMIN BELLOWS.
Age fifty, a well-to-do retired physician, with an excitable disposition and a tendency for romance.
- ALGERNON CLAWHAMMER
Age twenty-eight, a modest and retiring young man, very good looking and of the intellectual type.
- AUGUSTUS MAY.
Age thirty, a stocky, amiable Englishman with a Cockney accent.
- SIMEON SINGLETON
Age fifty-two, a gay clubman, showing traces of dissipation and high living.
- GEORGE TOBIN.
Age twenty-one but looks less. Rather short and very boyish manner.

WOMEN.

- FLORENCE BELLOWS.
Age twenty, a charming, refined girl.
- MRS. MACECKRON
Age thirty-five, but looks younger. Up-to-date, fashionable woman of the world.
- DOLLY MACECKRON.
Age sixteen, very small figure, but shrewd face.
- MAGGIE BRADY.
Age twenty-two, handsome, but commonplace sort of beauty.
- MRS. AMELIA TOBIN.
Age forty-eight, weighs two hundred pounds, with a very strident and positive manner.

TIME: *The Present.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*Two and One-Half Hours.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES.

All three acts take place in the living room of Dr. Bellows' residence in Rahway, N. J.

ACT I. *Noon.*

ACT II. *Late afternoon.*

ACT III. *Evening.*

COSTUMES.

DR. BELLOWS—Act First, morning suit and smoking jacket. Second Act, the same, with coat of morning suit. Third Act, change to evening dress.

ALGERNON CLAWHAMMER—Cutaway suit and Fedora hat. Disreputable, faded and worn old bath robe. Also cotton bathrobe for steam bath scene. Act III, evening dress.

AUGUSTUS MAY—Rather sporty looking checked traveling suit and Derby hat.

GEORGE TOBIN—Light Knickerbocker suit, suitable for boy of sixteen. Cap or straw hat. Third Act, same c^o plain dark material.

FLORENCE BELLOWS—Acts I and II, thin light summer dress and fancy apron. Act III, modest evening dress.

MRS. MACECKRON—First Act, smart sport suit. Second Act, handsome afternoon gown. Third Act, elaborate evening gown and fan.

DOLLY MACECKRON—Acts I and II, summer dress suitable for a child of ten, sash and big bow hair ribbon, flat heels. Act III, child's white evening dress over colored slip. Stockings and slippers to match.

MAGGIE BRADY—First Act, flashy, loud silk dress, hat, parasol and handbag. Act II, same dress, hat off. Act III, evening dress given her by Florence described in First Act.

MRS. TOBIN—Rather old-fashioned, but loud silk dress and hat, traveling duster, handbag and gloves. Second Act, same dress. Third Act, old-fashioned white satin dress, cotton net veil and orange blossoms.

TO THE STAGE DIRECTOR.

The success of this farce depends upon the briskness of the action and in the picking up of cues sharply so that the dialogue does not drag. All the parts must be played with absolute sincerity and seriousness in order to create the illusion of reality.

PROPERTY PLOT.

ACT I.

Carpet covering floor of living room, or large center rug, and small ones on side.

Rug in dining room.

Dining table and six chairs in dining room.

Side board on which is candelabra and dish of fruit.

Linen tablecloth and three napkins.

Dishes, silver and glass ware.

Two dishes of food.

Two cocktail glasses.

Two sherry glasses and decanter, plate of bread.

Large center table in living room.

Large arm chair.

Four smaller chairs.

Sofa or divan and cushions.

Two folding screens.

Two small stands.

Handsome lamp on table.

Four books and six magazines on table.

Steam bath made of wood or canvas, one side to open.

It is a box-like affair, the head to pass through the top; trumpet attached or motor horn.

Mantel-piece down left with mantel ornaments.

Large paintings on wall.

Watering can for Florence.

Large doll and doll carriage for Dolly.

Letter with lower corner torn off for Dr. Bellows, also business letter.

Small old-fashioned card photograph for Dr. Bellows.

Circus bill for Maggie.

Parasol and handbag for Maggie.

Electric bell for door bell to ring off right.

Suit case for Augustus.

Traveling bag, suit case, artist's easel, drawing board containing sheets of drawing paper, crayons, and mandolin case for Algernon.

Two suit cases, two handbags, a basket, a bandbox and an umbrella for Mrs. Tobin and George.

ACT II.

Plate with two sandwiches and a glass of sherry for Florence.

Carpet sweeper for Algernon.

Dust pan, brush and dust cloth for Algernon.

Cigar box containing cigar for Augustus.

Match safe and ash tray on table for Augustus.

Kitchen apron for Algernon.

Second plate of sandwiches and glass of sherry for Florence.

Tray containing whiskey decanter, water bottle, two glasses for Dr. Bellows.

Steamer rug or blanket for Florence.

Plate of cake for Florence.

ACT III.

Suit of pajamas, two shirts, collars, ties, toilet articles, etc., as contents of suit case for Algernon.

Hand towel for Algernon.

Safety razor for Algernon.

Soap lather for Algernon.

Extra pair of black shoes for Dr. Bellows.

Vase of flowers for Maggie.

Pair of military brushes for Dr. Bellows.

Check for Augustus.

LIGHT PLOT.

ACT I.

Time, noon.

Footlights and borders full up.

ACT II.

Late afternoon.

Footlights and borders full up till near end of act when they begin to dim. End of act in semi-darkness.

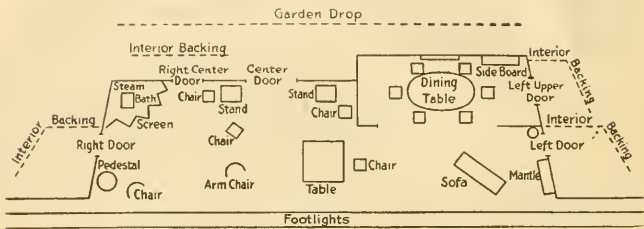
ACT III.

Evening.

Footlights and borders full, table lamp lit.

Borders or bunch lights on the garden drop blue for night effect, or if lacking these, keep the third border out altogether.

SCENE PLOT.



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance, up stage, etc.: up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

WHOSE LITTLE BRIDE ARE YOU?

THE FIRST ACT.

SCENE: *A handsome living room. Glass doors at C. at back open in disclosing a garden. Long jog L. and an arch form an angle of the dining room. R. of C. door is door leading off into the rest of the house and in the corner double screens hide a mechanical contrivance known as the Bellows steam bath. Doors R. and L. and L. upper. Below the door L. is a mantel-piece and grate; large round table in the foreground R. C. Sofa L. Chairs and tables disposed decoratively about the room. Vases of flowers, dignified pictures on the wall. In the dining room, sideboard against the backing, table with handsome service sets just back of opening with places set for six. Consult diagram for separate details.*

Curtain rises upon Mrs. MACECKRON and DOLLY. Mrs. MACECKRON is seated on the sofa L. DOLLY is seated L. of the table C. and is absorbed in a book.

Mrs. MACECKRON.

Dolly! Dolly! (*No answer.*) Dolly! Dorothy MacEckron!

DOLLY.

(*Without looking up.*)

Yes.

Mrs. MACECKRON.

Will you put down that book?

DOLLY.

But this is such a fascinating passage.

Mrs. MACECKRON.

Do you want to ruin me? Haven't I told you again and again that you spoil all my prospects with your grown-up manner?

DOLLY.

But mamma, when no one is present I can surely be permitted to relax a little.

Mrs. MACECKRON.

Do you call that relaxing? Reading those high brow books? And you are always forgetting when people are present. As for your language, I can't half understand it myself.

DOLLY.

I am sorry if I embarrass you, mamma. I am perfectly willing to remain an idiotic infant until you get settled matrimonially, but you must not forget that I am sixteen years old and—

Mrs. MACECKRON.

(Half rising in alarm.)

Psh! Not so loud, Dolly.

DOLLY.

(Unheeding.)

I am sixteen and mentally precocious.

Mrs. MACECKRON.

Yes, that's my tragedy.

FLORENCE BELLOWS.

(Outside R.)

Very well, I'll attend to it.

Mrs. MACECKRON.

(In an undertone.)

Here comes Florence, dear. Do please drop that book and play with your doll like a good child.

DOLLY.

(Sighing, picking up a large doll from the table, putting it in the doll carriage by her side, and during the following scene she solemnly wheels the cart from R. to L. and back and forth up stage.)

Oh, very well. But you understand, though I am glad to serve your interests, mamma, I do this sort of thing under protest.

FLORENCE enters R.

FLORENCE.

(In a state of nervous excitement.)

Dear Mrs. MacEckron, good morning. I am so glad you ran over and Dolly, too. Good morning, Dolly. *(DOLLY is wrapt in reverie and does not answer.)*

MRS. MACECKRON.

Dolly, dear! Dolly!

DOLLY.

(Rousing herself.)

Oh, I beg pardon!

MRS. MACECKRON.

Miss Bellows is saying good morning to you.

DOLLY.

(Stops her mechanical wheeling of the cart, assumes a childish manner.)

Good morning, Miss Bellows. I hope this wonderful morning finds you in excellent health. *(Resumes her wheeling of the cart.)*

FLORENCE.

(Looking after her in amazement.)

Isn't she the most extraordinary child.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Smiling indulgently.)

Yes, poor dear. That's what comes of her being so much with grown people. You look quite flushed, Florence.

FLORENCE.

Yes, I am so nervous I could scream.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

What's the trouble?

FLORENCE.

The most unheard of thing is happening today.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Really?

FLORENCE.

Mrs. Tobin and her little boy, George, are coming from Skowhegan, Maine, today.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

And who is Mrs. Tobin?

FLORENCE.

She was father's sweetheart when he was a boy, before he married my mother. A rural romance before he came to the city. A year ago he happened to come on an old package of love letters and the old romance flamed up again. It happens that his Amelia is now a widow, Mrs. Tobin.

POSITIONS.

DOLLY
(Up R.)

FLORENCE, MRS. MACHECKRON.
(Lower L.)

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Frowning.)

How extraordinary.

DOLLY.

What an amazing resurrection.

MRS. MACECKRON.

(*Reprovingly.*)

Dolly! (DOLLY recovers herself, meekly takes her doll in her arms and plays with it.)

FLORENCE.

Father's been corresponding with Mrs. Tobin and last week proposed to her. She telegraphed, accepting, and said that she and her son Georgie would come on here for the wedding immediately.

MRS. MACECKRON.

How perfectly brazen.

DOLLY.

Remarkable self-assertiveness. The rural psychology.

MRS. MACECKRON.

(*Quite losing her temper.*)

Dolly, will you be quiet? (DOLLY tosses her doll up and down and her mother turns to FLORENCE.) Dear little innocent. She's just crazy about long words. But really, Florence, I must say I don't understand your father. You know the marked attention he's been paying me. Every one noticed that they *were* marked.

FLORENCE.

Of course, and I am as disappointed as I can be. This Amelia Tobin affair is perfectly ridiculous. I don't wonder that she wishes to change her name. Mrs. Josiah Tobin. Isn't that awful?

MRS. MACECKRON.

Dreadful!

DOLLY.

Not particularly euphonious.

MRS. MACECKRON.

Dolly, how often must I speak to you? (*DOLLY rocks her doll in her arms.*) But, Florrie, dear, don't think for a moment that I *care* about this woman and your father. I think he's a charming man, and I won't say that I haven't taken his attentions seriously, because I have. I admit that I am very anxious to change my name. You have no idea how trying MacEckron is.

FLORENCE.

Is it, really?

MRS. MACECKRON.

I should say so. I actually hate being introduced. People invariably ask me to spell it.

DOLLY.

That's always so disconcerting, don't you think so?

MRS. MACECKRON.

Dolly, mother is speaking.

DOLLY.

(*Goes up reciting to herself.*)

"Little Tommy Tucker, sings for his supper."
(*Her voice dies away inarticulately as she recites to her doll.*)

MRS. MACECKRON.

Oh, yes. The name of Smith would be preferable. When I make a purchase in the stores, the clerks get it McGucken or McCracken, and it's a positive fact, my dear, that Mrs. Major McGuffen is wearing a hat from Madame Louise that I paid for and ordered sent down.

FLORENCE.

Couldn't you do anything about it?

MRS. MACECKRON.

I tried, but by the time I got it introduced

had gone out of style. (*Sighs.*) Bellows is such an easy name. I am sure there would be no mistakes.

FLORENCE.

Well, let's look on the bright side. Something may happen yet. Mrs. Tobin's train might be wrecked. And anyway, when she gets here and finds how father rides his steam bath hobby, she may not want him after all.

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

A woman from Skowhegan isn't likely to throw away any chances. Is your father in the garden?

FLORENCE.

I don't know. (*Mrs. MacEckron goes up C. as if looking off into the garden.*)

DOLLY.

(*Tropping down to Florence, C.*)

Have you seen my dolly?

FLORENCE.

No, dear. I haven't.

DOLLY.

(*Very confidentially.*)

Oh, Miss Bellows, can't you help me? I am sure you must understand my position. I am doomed to the nursery until mother finds a second husband. The reasons are obvious, I am sure.

FLORENCE.

(*Gasping in amazement.*)

Well, my dear child!

DOLLY.

I can't do anything I want to do. I can't even join
r' b.

FLORENCE.

The Browning Club?

DOLLY.

All my studies are wasted. As long as she remains single and tries to pass for a widow under thirty.

(Putting her hand on FLORENCE'S arm.)

Listen to what the poet says:

“Spending weeks and months in learning
What an A is, what a B is,
What a C, D, F and G is,
Till my brain is wracked and turning.”

From the modern Greek of Christopholus.

(Goes solemnly up and puts doll in the cart.)

FLORENCE.

(Looking after her in amazement.)

Well, of all things!

DR. BELLOWS.

(Heard singing off in room R. C.)

“Believe me, if all those endearing young charms.”

Enter DR. BELLOWS R. C. s.

FLORENCE.

Father, Mrs. MacEckron is here. *(MRS. MAC-ECKRON comes down into the room again.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

(Going to her and seizing her hands warmly.)

My dear Mrs. MacEckron, behold your humble slave at your feet. *(FLORENCE exits C. off R.)*

MRS. MAC-ECKRON.

At my what?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Kissing her hands.*)

I should say at your hands.

MRS. MACECKRON.

You seem very happy this morning.

(*Goes over and sits on sofa L.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

You are right. I *am* happy. This morning I'm simply bubbling over with poetry, romance and love for my fellow man—and woman. Woman especially.

(*Sits beside her on the sofa.*) And speaking of women—you are looking charming this morning.

MRS. MACECKRON.

You are quite radiant yourself, Doctor.

DR. BELLOWS.

I *am* radiant. For two good reasons. In the first place I have had a bath in the Bellows Patent Steam Bath—a bath that would rejuvenate the sphinx; and secondly, I am living over again the days of youth—of dreams—of love.

MRS. MACECKRON.

(*Leaning toward him and looking into his eyes, wooingly.*)

Really?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Recovering himself and realizing his danger.*)
Of first love.

MRS. MACECKRON.

(*Cooling and drawing back.*)

Oh!

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Ecstatically.*)

Her name—was Amelia. Here is her picture. I have kept it all these years. (*Pulls from his pocket*

an old-fashioned carte de visite.) Just gaze on that face.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Looking at it frigidly.)

Apparently this was taken a very long time ago.

DR. BELLOWS.

Only twenty-five years ago.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

But time *does* work changes, Doctor.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Very sentimentally.)

Ah, dear lady, time may *dim* Amelia's beauty, but it can never *destroy* it. Those limpid eyes will wear their old expression, that tender mouth will form the same sweet curve, that slender form with its willowy lines will—

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Horribly bored.)

I never dreamed you could be so romantic. Your first love, eh?

DR. BELLOWS.

First and last.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Significantly.)

But not the *only*—

DR. BELLOWS.

(With a little realizing cough.)

Hum—of course—there was Mrs. Bellows—and I don't mind confessing, Mrs. MacEckron, that you have been—er—that is to say—*(recovering himself)*—well, mine is a faithful heart, and it has always held the image of my Amelia. By the way, she'll be here today, and the ceremony will take place this evening.

MRS. MACHECKRON.
(Starting up.)

So soon?

DR. BELLOWS.

There's no use in delaying. And do you know that I shall not only gain a lovely and devoted wife, but another dream will be fulfilled. I have always wanted a son. If I could have had a son to dandle on my knee—

MRS. MACHECKRON.

I never thought of you before as a "dandler," Doctor. *(Crosses to DOLLY, who is again absorbed in a book.)* Put down that book, Dolly. *(To DR. BELLOWS.)* Poor darling. She's so fond of illustrations. Come, dear, you haven't said good morning to the Doctor. *(DOLLY sighs, puts down her book, walks over to DR. BELLOWS and gives him her hand.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

Good morning, my dear.

DOLLY.

I hope you are salubrious—*(catching herself and putting her finger to her mouth)*—how do you do, Doctor Bellows.

DR. BELLOWS.

Bless my soul. I am very well, you extraordinary child.

FLORENCE enters C. from R. with watering can.

FLORENCE.

Mrs. MacEckron, I want you to have a look at my garden. The roses are really beautiful. *(DOLLY trots up C., gets the doll carriage and exits with it C. off R.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

Florence, ask Mrs. MacEckron to excuse you for a moment. I want to see you on an important mat-

ter. (*Goes up to screen in corner R., opens it and discloses the box bath connecting hose and steam radiator.*)

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(*Frigidly.*)

Oh, please don't mind me, Doctor. (*To FLORENCE.*) Really, Florence, your father is getting maudlin over this Amelia person.

FLORENCE.

I know. But please don't be annoyed, Mrs. MacEckron, and do stay and help me over the ordeal of receiving Mrs. Tobin.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

I confess I'm curious to see her.

FLORENCE.

Let Maggie go and fetch yours and Dolly's dinner gowns.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

All right. I think it would be rather amusing to stay. Dolly and I will be in the garden if you want us. (*Exits C. off R.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Coming down C.*)

My dear, Mrs. MacEckron hasn't the sympathetic nature that I have always credited her with. I believe she is laughing at me.

FLORENCE.

That wouldn't be strange, would it?

DR. BELLOWS.

Ah, you women, even you, Florence, haven't quite come up to the mark. I want to ask if everything is in order for Amelia's coming. Is her room ready? And Georgie's?

FLORENCE.

Yes. And luncheon ordered.

DR. BELLOWS.

Good! Good!

(Lapsing into a very sentimental tone.)

Come here, my dear. I want you to know that while I have arranged for my future, I haven't forgotten yours.

FLORENCE.

I don't understand.

DR. BELLOWS.

You have heard me speak of my old college friend and chum, Simeon Singleton.

FLORENCE.

Yes.

DR. BELLOWS.

Our attachment was very remarkable. In fact, our affection was so strong that we vowed that if one of us had a son and the other a daughter, they should marry each other.

FLORENCE.

(Dubiously.)

Wasn't that taking things rather for granted?

DR. BELLOWS.

Possibly. Yet by the very nature of our happy companionship it stands to reason that our descendants would have been equally congenial. Study the law of heredity, my dear.

FLORENCE.

And has he a son?

DR. BELLOWS.

No, Singleton never married.

FLORENCE.

Oh.

(*Relieved.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

But he writes me that his sister's son is a splendid fellow, and would be a perfect match for you.

FLORENCE.

But how does he know? I don't remember even having seen Mr. Singleton.

DR. BELLOWS.

Don't make silly objections. (*Takes a letter from his pocket, the lower corner of which is torn off.*) Here, I'll read you what Singleton says about his nephew. (*Skims down the page.*) "Those were the happy days. You remember the little dancer at the Casino?" Hm—hm—that's not the place. "The night we carried you home on a peddler's cart." Where the deuce is it? Ah, here it is. "My nephew is a model young man. He neither drinks, smokes nor swears. Is not a spendthrift, and so far has been a distant admirer of the fair sex."

FLORENCE.

That sounds too good to be true.

DR. BELLOWS.

"So far, he has only been in love with the arts. He is very talented, paints well, and is decidedly musical. Has spent some years in England studying voice culture."

FLORENCE.

Musical, artistic? That's not so bad. What's his name?

DR. BELLOWS.

Why, Singleton, of course.

FLORENCE.

No, it can't be. He's Mr. Singleton's *sister's* son.

DR. BELLOWS.

That's so.

(*Looks at letter and sees torn corner.*)

Where is the name, anyway? Perdition.

FLORENCE.

Perdition? I don't like it.

DR. BELLOWS.

No, no, that's not his name. I've torn off the very corner containing his name.

FLORENCE.

(*Disappointedly.*)

Now we don't even know what his name is.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, well, Singleton writes that he's coming here today on the one o'clock train, so he can speak for himself.

FLORENCE.

Coming today. But, father, what if I shouldn't like him?

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, but you will. His uncle says—

FLORENCE.

I don't care what his uncle says. I'm not going to be handed over like that, and if I don't like him, I simply will not marry him. So there. (*Goes up C. pouting.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Crosses to R.*)

Well, well, we won't cross the bridge till we come to it. (*Puts away SINGLETON'S letter and brings out another*). I wrote to Higgins, the employment agent, Florence, and told him to send me a butler.

FLORENCE.

(*Turning in surprise.*)

A butler?

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes. Singleton is rich. Probably his sister married a rich man. This nephew may be used to a good deal of style. I want him to think we are accustomed to the same sort of life.

FLORENCE.

My goodness, a butler. (*Coming down to L. C.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

We don't need him exactly, but I shall get him to let me experiment with him in my work on my steam bath.

FLORENCE.

Be careful, Dad, you know you nearly killed the gardener.

DR. BELLOWS.

Nonsense. The gardener happened to have a weak heart, that's all.

FLORENCE.

You'd better be careful. I hope the butler knows how to buttle.

DR. BELLOWS.

Higgins, the employment agent, telegraphs that he is sending an A 1 man. He'll be here on the two o'clock train.

FLORENCE.

That will be too late for luncheon, but in time to serve at dinner.

MAGGIE *enters R. putting on her gloves.*

DR. BELLOWS.

And Amelia may come on the same train with the butler. (*He and FLORENCE at this moment watch MAGGIE sweeping up toward C. door.*)

DR. BELLOWS AND FLORENCE.

Maggie! (*She pays no attention but goes on.*)
 Maggie! (*As before.*) Marguerite! (*She turns slowly
 at C. door and faces them.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Where are you going?

MAGGIE.

To the circus.

DR. BELLOWS.

You'll do nothing of the kind.

MAGGIE.

(*With forced sweetness.*)

Louder, please.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Losing his temper and bawling.*)

I say that you will do nothing of the kind.

MAGGIE.

(*Coming down into the room, her eyes narrowing.*)

I guess there's something wrong with your memory, Dr. Bellows. Do you know what day this is?

DR. BELLOWS.

Certainly. It's the 15th of June.

MAGGIE.

It's Thursday and it's my day out. (*Turns to
 go.*)

DR. BELLOWS AND FLORENCE.

She mustn't go.

POSITIONS.

MAGGIE.

(*Up C.*)

DR. BELLOWS
 (*Lower R.*)

FLORENCE
 (*Lower L.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Sternly.*)

Maggie, we are expecting company.

MAGGIE.

Thursday is Thursday, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

And company is company.

MAGGIE.

(*Fishing a circus bill out of her handbag.*)

And circus day is circus day.

DR. BELLOWS.

Maggie, be reasonable.

MAGGIE.

(*Reading the bill.*)

“The continents of Europe, Asia and Africa have been scoured to furnish this great moral entertainment that is applauded by all classes and denominations. A gigantic and educational entertainment that has been endorsed by the clergy of the United States. A very colossus of amusement, crowned with the applause of approving millions, who have declared it to be pure, elevating and instructing.” Do you think I’m going to miss that?

FLORENCE.

My goodness.

DR. BELLOWS.

Rubbish, rubbish.

MAGGIE.

(*Referring again to bill.*)

“A merry mingling of the greatest clowns on earth. An endless array of aero features. New songs, new sayings, new acts, everything new.” Call that rubbish? Not on your life. When these

show people have been searching Europe, Asia and Africa to furnish me moral entertainment, I'm going to get it, and nobody is going to stop me. (*Folds the bill and starts up.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Going up on her R.*)

Maggie Brady, I command you to remain at home.

FLORENCE.

(*On her L.*)

Oh, please don't go, Marguerite. You shouldn't be so rude to her, father.

DR. BELLOWS.

I admit command was not the word. I should have said, I *beg*.

MAGGIE.

It's all one to me. I'm going to that circus just the same.

FLORENCE.

Please, Maggie.

DR. BELLOWS.

Here you've been with us three years. We have treated you like one of the family.

MAGGIE.

Hey?

DR. BELLOWS.

Almost.

MAGGIE.

Humph!

DR. BELLOWS.

We've humored you and put up with—

MAGGIE.

And what have you put up with, I'd like to know. Just what do you think *you've* put up with now. *I'm* the one that does the putting up with things. (*All working down stage.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Don't you get impertinent, now.

FLORENCE.

Don't Dad. Be careful.

MAGGIE.

You put up with things. You old Betty.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Almost exploding.*)

Silence! How dare you?

MAGGIE.

(*Quite unheeding.*)

You and your old steam bath. And all your talk about our livers and things. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. It's enough to drive any girl out of her seven senses. That old thing mussing up the parlor here. (*Pointing up to R. corner at the steam apparatus.*) I've had a mind to leave for six months past, and now is as good a time as any. (*Turns up C. again.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Well, go then, and be—

FLORENCE.

Don't Dad, don't! (*Follows MAGGIE up.*) Do be reasonable, Maggie. Company is coming, but we're going to make it easier for you. We are getting a butler. He'll be here to serve at dinner. You will answer the bell and dust and do the other things as usual.

MAGGIE.

Oh, will I now?

FLORENCE.

And you know that blue evening gown of mine? With the silver spangles you've admired so much?

MAGGIE.

The one that always hiked on one side?

FLORENCE.

Yes. I'll give it to you.

MAGGIE.

(*Critically.*)

You'd have to have it hung right before I'd wear it.

FLORENCE.

Of course. And there are some other things that go with it. Now, Maggie, you will stay today, won't you? There are three visitors coming.

MAGGIE.

Three? Land o' living. Why don't they come one at a time?

DR. BELLOWS.

We are going to confide something very sacred to you now, Maggie. The visitors are really future members of the family.

MAGGIE.

Aw, go on, now!

DR. BELLOWS.

They are Florence's future husband, whom she has never seen, and my future wife, whom I haven't seen for twenty-five years.

MAGGIE.

Say, what have you two been doing? Writin' to a matrimonial agency?

FLORENCE.

No, of course not.

MAGGIE.

Well, where is number three? You haven't sent for a husband for me, have you?

DR. BELLOWS.

No, my fiancee is a widow with a little son.

MAGGIE.

A small boy in the house? I've got to sleep on that.

DR. BELLOWS.

Now, Florence, do stop fussing in the garden and take off that apron.

FLORENCE.

I like myself in this get-up.

DR. BELLOWS.

(As bell rings off R.)

There's the bell. It must be Singleton's nephew. Run, Maggie! Stop! *(She does so.)* That's a nice get-up for a maid.

MAGGIE.

Sorry you don't like it, sir. All the rest of the week I dress to suit my employer, but on Thursday I dress to suit myself. *(The bell rings again.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

Run, Maggie, run!

MAGGIE.

Run on Thursday? I'd like to catch myself. *(Exits R. with a dignified walk.)*

FLORENCE.

I'll go and see to the luncheon. Oh, dear, I'm so nervous! *(Exits through dining room and off L.)*

(Bell rings again.)

DR. BELLOWS.

(Shouting off to MAGGIE.)

Will you get to that door? Great Scott, here I am in my smoking coat, and appearances are everything. *(Exits R. C. door.)*

Presently MAGGIE enters R. in a state of subdued but happy excitement, ushering in AUGUSTUS MAY, who carries a suit case and umbrella.

MAGGIE.

Come right in here.

AUGUSTUS.

Thank you very much. (*Casts an admiring glance at MAGGIE.*)

MAGGIE.

Just make yourself at home. The Doctor will be back soon.

AUGUSTUS.

Oh, dear lady. Don't give yourself any trouble on my account. (*Sets down suit case near the table R. He is so flattered at MAGGIE'S evident admiration that he continues flirting with his eyes.*)

MAGGIE.

Just sit down and be comfortable. The Doctor won't be long.

AUGUSTUS.

Wonderfully democratic country, America. (*He looks about the room.*) Quiet old place this. Rather think I shall like it.

MAGGIE.

Indeed I hope you will. (*As he stifles a yawn.*) You are very tired, aren't you?

AUGUSTUS.

Deuced tired. I wasn't expected until two o'clock. I fancy they'll be glad to see me, though. (*Settling himself in the easy chair L. of C. table.*)

DR. BELLOWS *enters R. C. fully dressed, runs into MAGGIE at the door.*

MAGGIE.

(*Excitedly.*)

There he is. Oh, he's wonderful!

DR. BELLOWS.

Run along, Maggie. (*She exits C. off R. with a backward glance at AUGUSTUS. The Doctor comes down stage, nervous and ill at ease, not knowing the gentleman's name, but all smiles and affability. Coughing slightly.*) Hm—hm. (*AUGUSTUS turns toward him and rises respectfully. DR. BELLOWS rushes at him, grabs his hand and nearly shakes it off.*) My dear fellow, how do you do? I am delighted to see you.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Completely taken off his feet at such a greeting.*)

Why, I—I—

DR. BELLOWS.

Sit down, sit down, my dear boy. I know you must be tired. (*Gets small chair and brings it L. of AUGUSTUS. AUGUSTUS remains standing. DR. BELLOWS pushes him down in his chair.*) Sit down, sit down, my dear fellow. I can't tell you how glad I am to see you. (*Again pushing AUGUSTUS back in his chair.*)

AUGUSTUS.

Your greeting quite overwhelms me, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

Let's have a look at you. You are tired. Just a little touch of yellow. The liver, the liver!

AUGUSTUS.

Perhaps I *am* a little out of sorts, but I—

DR. BELLOWS.

Naturally, the excitement, the journey, but I'll soon put you right. You shall have a steam bath. How's your heart?

AUGUSTUS.

In the right place, I 'ope, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

You seem pretty strongly put together. (*Gives him a good slap in the chest.*)

AUGUSTUS.

(*Coughing.*)

Well, I'm middlin' toughish, sir. (*By this time, unable to comprehend the Doctor's actions.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*So concerned with his own train of thought that he scarcely listens to the replies of AUGUSTUS.*)

Hope you won't mind if I ask you a few questions.

AUGUSTUS.

Not at all. Not at all.

DR. BELLOWS.

Of course, the principal thing is your character.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Feeling in breast pocket for a letter and not finding it.*) I 'ave it in my pocket 'ere sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

For after all, happiness rests on character. You will admit that, my boy.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Dismayed.*)

Good 'eavens. I've lost my character.

DR. BELLOWS.

I've heard about your disposition and education. They are all I could ask. By the way, how old are you?

AUGUSTUS.

Thirty last month, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Delightedly rubbing his hands.*)

A very good age, a suitable age. Not too old, not too young. I only got the letter this morning telling me when you would arrive.

AUGUSTUS.

Yes. He told me to follow the letter down. (*Referring to HIGGINS.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*His mind full of his friend SINGLETON.*)

That's like him. Perfectly characteristic. Always acting on impulse. Oh, my dear fellow, you should have known him when he was a boy. A bit too much of a sport, perhaps, but—

AUGUSTUS.

(*Amazed and blinking.*)

Was 'e now? I never would have thought it.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Pluming himself.*)

But there was a pair of us. If you could have seen us when we used to run up from Princeton to the city. Coster & Bials, the French ball at the garden, supper at Delmonico's—(*suddenly realizing that this is not the tone to pursue*). Of course I don't approve of that sort of thing, and I understand that you are a very steady young man.

AUGUSTUS.

I'm as steady as most of 'em, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

I'm glad to hear it, Mr.—eh—Mr.—er—

AUGUSTUS.

May, sir—Augustus May. August for short.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, yes, May. August May. That's very simple. I sometimes forget faces but never names. Now what do you say to a little luncheon, June, my boy.

AUGUSTUS.

Not June, sir, May—August May.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, yes, May, of course. What do you say to luncheon?

AUGUSTUS.

What do I say?

DR. BELLOWS.

Now before you go to the dining room I want to show you my steam bath. The Bellows Adjustable, Portable Steam Bath. The most valuable contribution to mechanical therapeutics. No torpidity can withstand its magical effects on the liver. (*Leads him up to the screen. They converse in an undertone.*)

FLORENCE enters from L. U. door through the dining room all excited curiosity to see the new arrival. She looks him over with a critical eye. DR. BELLOWS resumes full voice.

POSITIONS.

DR. BELLOWS. AUGUSTUS.

(Up R.)

FLORENCE.

(Down L.)

DR. BELLOWS.

I am getting out a pamphlet which I shall illustrate with my picture, something artistic. I think that you and I will work it out together. I have heard how clever you are with the brush.

FLORENCE.

The blue room is ready. (*Catches Dr. Bellows' eye and beckons him to come to her.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Excuse me for a moment. (*Crosses to Florence L.*)

AUGUSTUS.

(*To himself.*)

Well, this is the most amazing situation. Talk about democracy.

DR. BELLOWS.

Well, well.

FLORENCE.

Father, I want you to let me introduce myself.

DR. BELLOWS.

What a ridiculous whim.

FLORENCE.

No matter, I want to see what he's like before he knows who I am.

DR. BELLOWS.

And you've still got on that infernal apron.

FLORENCE.

It's Thursday and Maggie has refused to serve at luncheon.

DR. BELLOWS.

And of course the new butler is not here yet.

FLORENCE.

What is he like?

DR. BELLOWS.

Charming fellow, with a beautiful English accent.

FLORENCE.

English?

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, yes, he's traveled a great deal in England, you know.

FLORENCE.

Go away, father, and leave me to introduce myself.

POSITIONS.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Up R.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

FLORENCE.

(*Lower L.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Have your own way. Now, July—

AUGUSTUS.

(*Coming down R.*)

May, sir, Augustus May. August for short.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, yes, of course, of course! (*Going over and taking his arm.*) Now, all I've got to say is, make good with my daughter.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Dazed.*)

Make good with—(*looks up in the direction of MAGGIE'S exit C.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Chuckling artfully.*)

It won't be difficult, and you'll find her a delightful girl.

AUGUSTUS.

Well, upon my word!

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Picking up AUGUSTUS' suit case R. of table.*)

I'll take your baggage to your room.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Following and also grabbing the handle of the suit case.*)

Oh, no, really, I couldn't allow that.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Trying to pull it away from him.*)

Nonsense, nonsense! I shall take it up.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Pulling hard.*)

Oh, but I can't permit you, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Struggling and straining.*)

Rubbish, rubbish, let go, let go, my dear boy!

AUGUSTUS.

Well, if you insist. (*Lets go suddenly, which precipitates DR. BELLOWS on the floor with the suit case.*) Oh, I beg your pardon, sir. (*Assists DR. BELLOWS to his feet.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Not at all. Don't apologize. It's nothing at all. (*Is obliged to put his hand to his back from the nasty jar he has received. Goes up L.*) Florence, see to the luncheon. (*AUGUSTUS rolls his eye over in the direction of FLORENCE and is evidently delighted to see such a pretty maid.*) Now be gallant, you know.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Surprised.*)

What? With 'er?

DR. BELLOWS.

Settle the matter as quickly as you can and seal it with a kiss.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Stupefied.*)

Seal it with a kiss?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Chuckling.*)

Tell her I told you to. You needn't mind the luncheon, Florence, I'll see the cook about it myself. (*Exits L. U. through dining room with suit case.*)

AUGUSTUS.

(*After a pause, rather embarrassed, but boldly attacking the situation.*)

Hm—a—how do y' do?

FLORENCE.

How do you do, Mr. May?

AUGUSTUS.

So your name is Florence. I think I shall call you Florrie?

FLORENCE.

Isn't it rather early for that?

AUGUSTUS.

Not a bit of it. The sooner we get acquainted the better. On the Q. T. you might call me Gus.

FLORENCE.

No, I thank you, Mr. May.

AUGUSTUS.

Well, my little dear, how do we amuse ourselves down here in the country?

FLORENCE.

(*Indignantly.*)

I am not your little dear, if you please, at least, not yet.

AUGUSTUS.

(Going toward her.)

Well, the Governor said I might seal the bargain with a kiss, so here's where I obey orders. *(Starts to catch her. She runs across R. and around table, he following her.)*

FLORENCE.

Good heavens, we haven't known each other five minutes yet. Don't you dare. Help! Help! If you dare! *(Runs down C. AUGUSTUS is now R.)*

DR. BELLOWS *enters L. U. through dining room, still carrying suit case.*

DR. BELLOWS.

Now, then, luncheon is ready, September.

AUGUSTUS.

(Thoroughly annoyed.)

It is not September. It is May, sir. Augustus May—August for short.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, yes, May, to be sure. *(They continue talking in an undertone.)*

FLORENCE *goes up stage, meeting Mrs. MAC-ECKRON and DOLLY, who enter C. from R.*

FLORENCE.

Dear Mrs. MacEckron, will you save the situation? I am so upset I can't go in to luncheon. Father has to meet Mrs. Tobin's train, the new butler is coming and Maggie refuses to wait at table because it's her Thursday off. Would you be so kind as to have luncheon with Mr. May, and serve yourselves? Everything will be on the table.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Don't apologize, my dear. I am only too happy.

DR. BELLOWS.

Mrs. MacEckron, allow me to introduce Mr. —

AUGUSTUS.

Are you introducing me, sir? May, Augustus May. Wonderful country. (*They acknowledge introductions.*)

MRS. MACHECKRON.

My daughter Dolly. (*DOLLY stares fixedly at AUGUSTUS, who finds her gaze disconcerting.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Crosses to R.*)

Luncheon is ready, if you will go into the dining room with Mrs. MacEckron.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Gasping.*)

I? Me? Take 'er? Oh, I say! (*FLORENCE leads them into the dining room, DR. BELLOWS shooing them in front of him.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

I'll join before you finish. (*Over AUGUSTUS' shoulder as they go up.*) I am expecting my bride also. Quite a coincidence, eh? (*Pokes AUGUSTUS in the ribs.*)

AUGUSTUS.

(*Now reduced to absolute stupidity.*)

Luncheon? Bride? Yes, sir, wonderful coincidence.

DR. BELLOWS.

You will find cocktails on the table and plenty of first-class sherry. Don't spare it. I've laid in a cellar full.

AUGUSTUS.

A cellar full? Well, I 'ave struck it rich. (*Goes into*

the dining room, seats MRS. MACECKRON above table, facing audience, then DR. BELLOWS seats AUGUSTUS at the head of table, AUGUSTUS protesting. He finally seats himself, and though much embarrassed by MRS. MACECKRON's attention during the following scene, he keeps filling up on the sherry and becoming very familiar in his actions toward MRS. MACECKRON. FLORENCE beckons her father to come to her up C.)

MAGGIE enters R., still with her hat and gloves on and reading her circus bill. DOLLY, L. on sofa, has buried herself in a book.

MAGGIE.

Miss Dolly, ain't you going to have any luncheon?

DOLLY.

I suppose I shall have to eat something, but when we are away from home mamma insists upon my eating grape nuts or bread and milk. (*Sighs and slowly enters dining room. AUGUSTUS seats her next to MRS. MACECKRON. MRS. MACECKRON is seen to tie a napkin around DOLLY's neck and serve her.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*To MAGGIE.*)

You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Three guests in that dining room and no one to serve them. And you, Florence, why don't you go in there?

FLORENCE.

I can't endure that disgusting man.

MAGGIE.

Disgusting? He looks like a regular prince to me.

DR. BELLOWS.

You're right, Maggie. He's a very engaging

young fellow. (*Bell rings off R.*) There's the bell. Go on, Maggie. Why don't you take off that hat?

MAGGIE.
(*Going R.*)

Because I'm going to get to the circus grounds in time to see that aeroplane man fly upside down. (*Exits R.*)

FLORENCE.

Now, father, you might as well know first as last. I don't like him at all. He's a conceited, insufferable creature, and I wouldn't marry him if he was the last man on earth. So there. (*Goes up into the dining room and tends to the guests. AUGUSTUS throwing killing glances at her. DR. BELLOWS, thoroughly discouraged, throws himself into a chair R. of table, mops his brow with dismay and mortification.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

This is a nice how do you do. I don't know what Singleton will think. But when a woman won't, she won't.

MAGGIE *enters R.*

MAGGIE.

There is a man out here with a lot of luggage.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, the new butler, I suppose. I don't feel like talking about wages and references. Maggie, tell him to sit down here. I'll be back presently. (*MAGGIE exits R. DR. BELLOWS goes up into the dining room, talks to his guests.*)

FLORENCE *exits L. U. door. MAGGIE re-enters R., ushering in ALGERNON CLAWHAMMER. He is laden with suit case, handbag, leather hat box, easel and drawing board and a mandolin case. MAGGIE is very*

indifferent to him and his manner is hesitating and rather shy.

ALGERNON.

Did—did I understand you to say that Dr. Bellows was at home?

MAGGIE.

(Very indifferently, pulling off her gloves by the fingers.)

He'll be here presently.

ALGERNON.

Oh, presently.

MAGGIE.

You're not above waiting, I suppose.

ALGERNON.

Oh, dear, no. *(Sees the luncheon party.)* I'm afraid I'm intruding at the wrong moment. *(MAGGIE has been inspecting her circus bill. She looks up.)*

MAGGIE.

You should worry.

ALGERNON.

I'm afraid I'm a little late.

MAGGIE.

(Her eyes on her bill.)

The Doctor asked me to stay and talk to you.

ALGERNON.

I beg pardon? Did you say—

MAGGIE.

(With disagreeable emphasis.)

He asked me to stay and talk to you.

ALGERNON.

Oh, oh, thank you, yes, very kind. Have I your permission to deposit these articles—

MAGGIE.

You can deposit them where you like.

ALGERNON.

(Looking her over with dawning interest.)

Is it possible that I could be addressing—why of course. *(Straightens up, pulls at his collar and cuffs.)* My dear young lady, I have journeyed all the way from New York in the belief, or I should say the fervent hope—a hope, it is true, that was mingled with fear—but the fear is also mingled with ecstasy, and in that ecstasy but one dream—a dream, I might say—

MAGGIE.

(Up at C., frightfully bored.)

Excuse me. *(She exits C. off R. ALGERNON is nonplussed, looks about helplessly.)*

ALGERNON.

So that is Miss Bellows. What an extraordinary reception. I'm afraid this is a very bad beginning. *(Puts luggage upon table C.)*

FLORENCE *re-enters L. U. through dining room, her father speaks to her in an undertone, trying to persuade her to remain there. She comes down into the room and ALGERNON sees her.*

ALGERNON.

What a nice little girl.

FLORENCE.

(Very kindly.)

So you've just arrived.

ALGERNON.

Yes, about five minutes ago.

FLORENCE.

I am sure you will be satisfied with everything. Dr. Bellows is a kind and indulgent master.

ALGERNON.

(Puzzled for the moment.)

Master? *(With a look at her apron.)* Oh, I see. So the Doctor is kind to his servants.

FLORENCE.

Almost too much so. They are apt to take advantage of him.

ALGERNON.

Oh, well, this is the age of democracy. Many owe their present menial position to fortune's stern decrees.

FLORENCE.

It's evident that your parents have known the blessings of affluence.

ALGERNON.

Why should you think that?

FLORENCE.

Your manner of expressing yourself.

ALGERNON.

I imagine education is making great strides in *this* part of the country.

FLORENCE.

Yes, there is no excuse for ignorance, even in this locality.

DR. BELLOWS *comes down from the dining room.*

FLORENCE.

Here is the Doctor now. *(She exits C. off L. ALGERNON catches her eye. The exchanged look upsets them both a little. DR. BELLOWS comes down concerned with his own thoughts. Looking at his watch.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

I am as nervous as a woman. I will soon be going to the station. I wonder if Amelia will know me.

ALGERNON.
(*Coughing.*)

Hem—Dr. Bellows?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Very gruffly as he recalls that this must be the butler.*)

Oh, it's you, is it?

ALGERNON.

Yes, I'm afraid I'm a little bit late.

DR. BELLOWS.

You're not a little bit late, you are a great deal late. Of course you should have come on a much earlier train.

ALGERNON.

I am sorry. I came the first moment after the affair was arranged with—

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Irritably.*)

Yes, yes. What I've heard of you is satisfactory. I think you'll do.

ALGERNON.

(*Smiling.*)

Well, I had no idea it could all be settled so quickly.

DR. BELLOWS.

What's your name?

ALGERNON.

My name?

DR. BELLOWS.

Certainly. You have a name. I suppose.

ALGERNON.

Of course. But I thought you knew it. My name is Clawhammer.

DR. BELLOWS.

Clawhammer? I don't like it at all.

ALGERNON.

You don't like it? I'm sorry, but—

DR. BELLOWS.

No, I can't be shouting Clawhammer all day long.

ALGERNON.

But would that be necessary?

DR. BELLOWS.

Will you be quiet? Now where was I. Oh, yes, what's your other name?

ALGERNON.

Algernon.

DR. BELLOWS.

Good Lord. That's a nice name for a man in your position.

ALGERNON.

I think it's a perfectly good name, sir. You will recall that the poet Swinburne honored that name by bearing it.

DR. BELLOWS.

That will do, that will do. I can't be shouting Algernon all day either.

ALGERNON.

But as I said before, is it necessary? No one else ever complained of my name. And anyway, I am not responsible. At the time I received it I was at such a tender age that I had no voice in the matter.

DR. BELLOWS.

You have one fault that I shall speak of now. You

talk too much. (ALGERNON *gasps*.) I shall call you William.

ALGERNON.

(*Gasping.*)

Call me William?

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, it's a respectable name and easy to pronounce.

ALGERNON.

Viewed in that light, of course. Shakespeare's name was William, to say nothing of William the Conqueror, and so on ad infinitum. (*With a weary gesture he throws himself into a chair down R.* DR. BELLOWS *has taken a turn up stage and has not seen ALGERNON sit.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Turning C.*)

Now then, Shakespeare Willhammer. Where the deuce is he gone? (*Coming down discovers him.*) Are you sitting down when I'm talking to you?

ALGERNON.

(*Very calmly.*)

You'll pardon me. It was a very tiresome journey.

DR. BELLOWS.

Get up.

ALGERNON.

(*Amazed.*)

Get up?

DR. BELLOWS.

I can take all that out of you by giving you a bath.

ALGERNON.

(*Indignantly.*)

Now, really, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

But I'll come to that later. First, I want to know what you can do.

ALGERNON.

(*Amused.*)

I am supposed to play the mandolin rather well.

DR. BELLOWS.

Play the mandolin? Well, you'll cut the mandolin out around here. I suppose you can brush clothes well?

ALGERNON.

(*Smiling.*)

As well as the next man if I were to try.

DR. BELLOWS.

Well, William, if you stay around here you'll try. See? How are you at waiting on table?

ALGERNON.

Well, every good citizen should know how to carve a fowl.

DR. BELLOWS.

Of course you don't have to cook.

ALGERNON.

Oh, I once made an omelet for the fun of the thing.

DR. BELLOWS.

With eggs at their present price we don't have omelets made for the fun of the thing. (*He paces up stage again.*)

ALGERNON.

My uncle said he was peculiar. It strikes me he's a little bit touched in the upper story. (*Leans back in his chair and becomes lost in thought.* DR. BELLOWS consults his watch.)

DR. BELLOWS.

There is just time to give you a good steaming before Amelia comes. William! (*This means nothing to ALGERNON and he doesn't answer.*) William!

ALGERNON.

Shall I call him for you?

DR. BELLOWS.

William!

ALGERNON.

Oh, I beg your pardon, I forgot.

DR. BELLOWS.

William, I'm going to give you a steam bath before I set you to work.

ALGERNON.

Work? What work?

DR. BELLOWS.

You don't think you came down here to amuse yourself, do you?

ALGERNON.

(Very seriously.)

Oh, no. I take it very seriously.

DR. BELLOWS.

Good. I want you to commence operations at once.

ALGERNON.

Operations? *(A light dawning on him.)* Oh, oh, I see. Very neatly put. You have a sense of humor, Dr. Bellows.

DR. BELLOWS.

I have, but don't you get fresh about it.

ALGERNON.

I beg your pardon. But that word "operations" was so subtle and so full of—

DR. BELLOWS.

Never you mind what it's full of. Go in there and take off your clothes. *(They are in front of the R. C. door.)*

ALGERNON.

(Indignantly turning.)

This is going too far, Doctor.

DR. BELLOWS.

Rubbish, rubbish, my boy. I am going to give you a real treat.

ALGERNON.

But where is this—this steam affair?

DR. BELLOWS.

(Opening screens and showing it to him.)

Here in this corner. See?

ALGERNON.

But it is all so public.

DR. BELLOWS.

It was the only place I could make the connection.

ALGERNON.

But I don't feel that I need it.

DR. BELLOWS.

Look at the whites of your eyes, look at the texture of your skin. Why, man alive, you ought to get down on your knees and be thankful you came into my hands in time. That liver of yours would be setting up a nice jaundice the first thing you know.

ALGERNON.

Well, if you really think that I—

DR. BELLOWS.

(Thrusting him off R. C.)

I don't think. I know. *(Follows him off.)*

AUGUSTUS.

(He has partaken so copiously of the cocktails and sherry that he is now quite intoxicated and is get-

ting very maudlin in his compliments to Mrs. MacEckron.)

I 'ave met many women in my time, Ma'am, but I will say a lovelier pair of eyes than yours I've yet to meet.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Trying to pull her hand out of his grasp.)

Really, Mr. May, I think you have had too much sherry.

AUGUSTUS.

The old boy has laid away prime stuff, 'asn't 'e now?

DOLLY.

I shan't be a party to this disgusting exhibition any longer. *(Shoves her chair away from the table and comes down into the living room.)*

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Dolly, Dolly dear, come back here!

DOLLY.

No more of that for Dorothy. *(Comes down to the books at the table.)*

AUGUSTUS.

(Struggling to his feet.)

It is with pride and—an—joy that I take this occasion to drink to your eyes, Madam.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

I am afraid your journey has tired you, Mr. May.

FLORENCE *enters L. U. door through dining room.*

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Florence, dear, I really think Mr. May had better be shown to his room.

FLORENCE.

I quite agree with you, Mrs. MacEckron.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

I think you had better speak to the Doctor.

FLORENCE.

Indeed I shall.

AUGUSTUS.

Here's to our sweethearts and wives, may they never meet. (*Waves his glass and falls into his chair.*)

DR. BELLOWS *and* ALGERNON *re-enter from room R. C.* ALGERNON *has on a bathrobe.*

DR. BELLOWS.

You get in and I'll turn on the steam.

ALGERNON.

But, Doctor, I—

DR. BELLOWS.

In with you, don't stop to talk.

FLORENCE.

Oh, dear, what is he doing?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Turning on steam as ALGERNON goes back of screen and adjusts himself in the bath.*)

When you get out of this you'll feel like a different man.

ALGERNON.

I feel like a different man now.

DR. BELLOWS.

When I turn on the steam and it gets as hot as you can stand it, blow that horn that's on the standard there.

FLORENCE.

You must come into the dining room and get that horrid man away.

AUGUSTUS.

Three cheers for Dr. Bellows.

DR. BELLOWS.

Now, then, William, let me know when you've had enough.

FLORENCE.

You'll have to get Mr. May to his room. He's intoxicated. (*Bell rings outside.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Is that the bell? Great heavens, what if it should be Amelia. I should have been at the station. (*ALGERNON gently blows the horn. He is plainly visible to the audience, as one screen has been folded back against the right wall.*) Florence, is my hair straight? (*Brushing it with his hands.*) Do I look calm and dignified? (*From now on ALGERNON keeps blowing the horn crescendo until curtain. He is evidently in great distress.*)

MAGGIE enters R.

MAGGIE.

Mrs. Amelia Tobin and Mr. George Tobin. (*MAGGIE goes up C.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

At last, my little Amelia.

He comes down C., turns toward the R. MRS. TOBIN enters R. with her son GEORGE. *She is a two hundred pounder of decided plainness and is dressed in rather a rural fashion. GEORGE is a country lad of eighteen. On beholding her DR. BELLOWS staggers back and falls into a chair.*

MRS. TOBIN.

Benjamin, here I am at last. (*Holds her arms out to him. The horn is madly tooting.* FLORENCE

crosses up R. and tries to turn off the steam, AUGUSTUS is trying to embrace MRS. MAC ECKRON in the dining room. DOLLY with her fingers in her ears continues to read her book.)

POSITIONS.

		MRS. MAC E.
ALGERNON.	MAGGIE.	AUGUSTUS.
FLORENCE.	(Up C.)	(In dining room.)
(Up R.)		
	MRS. TOBIN.	DOLLY.
GEORGE.	DR. BELLOWS.	(At table.)
(Down R.)	(Down C.)	

CURTAIN.

SECOND CURTAIN.

MRS. MAC ECKRON has broken away from AUGUSTUS, comes into living room and gazes at MRS. TOBIN in astonishment. AUGUSTUS is sitting on the floor in the dining room with his napkin on his head. ALGERNON has fainted, or an explosion of the steam bath can be worked here if desired. GEORGE has advanced into the room and he and DOLLY are staring at each other. MRS. TOBIN has gathered DR. BELLOWS into her embrace, his face toward the audience showing utter dismay. MAGGIE at the C. door laughing.

CURTAIN.

WHOSE LITTLE BRIDE ARE YOU?

THE SECOND ACT.

SCENE: *Same as Act I.*

Discovered, AUGUSTUS still on the dining room floor leaning against a chair asleep, napkin over his head. ALGERNON cautiously opens the door of the room R. C. and walks painfully toward his luggage near the table. He is evidently somewhat the worse for his painful experience in the bath. As he gathers up his luggage and puts on his hat FLORENCE enters from L.

FLORENCE.

Oh, I hope you are not going.

ALGERNON.

Yes, I think I'd better. I don't feel quite right yet after my experience in the bath.

FLORENCE.

Oh, I'm so sorry.

ALGERNON.

I am getting rather faint, too. I have eaten nothing since I breakfasted in New York this morning.

FLORENCE.

Put your things down and I'll attend to that.

ALGERNON.

Do you mean that you could bring me something to eat?

FLORENCE.

Of course I can.

ALGERNON.

Your thoughtfulness is very touching in the circumstances. I was prepared for a great deal when I came down here, but I certainly didn't expect to be blistered and tortured.

FLORENCE.

Please try and forget it. I sha'n't be long. (*Exits into the dining room and off L. U. door. ALGERNON casts an admiring glance after her, and with a deep sigh begins to put his things down again.*)

GEORGE.

(*Outside R.*)

Mo-ther, oh, mo-ther.

GEORGE *enters R., looking about.*

GEORGE.

Oh, mo-ther. (*Sees ALGERNON.*) Say, have you seen ma?

ALGERNON.

Only once. Oh, my head. (*Puts his hand to his head as if it were swimming.*)

GEORGE.

Don't you know where she is?

ALGERNON.

No, I don't.

GEORGE.

(*On his way to C. door.*)

Mo-ther, oh, mo-ther. (*Continues calling diminuendo through following speeches and exits C. off L. ALGERNON goes to sofa L., lies down, closes his eyes trying to rest.*)

ALGERNON.

Oh, my poor head.

GEORGE.
(*Outside.*)

Mo-ther, oh, mo-ther.

FLORENCE *enters L. U. door through dining room with a plate containing sandwiches and a glass of sherry. Sees that ALGERNON's eyes are closed, tip-toes to the table, puts down the plate and tip-toes to L. With a tender glance at him as she goes.*

FLORENCE.
Poor fellow. (*Exits L.*)

GEORGE.
(*Returning.*)
Mo-ther, oh, mo-ther.

GEORGE *re-enters C. from L.*

GEORGE.
Mo-ther. Oh, where is ma? I'm hungry. (*Sees the sandwiches on the table.*) By gosh, here's a picnic. (*Goes down to the table, begins to gobble the sandwiches. ALGERNON opens his eyes and watches him in pained surprise. GEORGE picks up the glass of sherry and smells it.*) Licker! I've a good mind to drink it. (*Tastes it and smacks his lips.*) By gum, it's ma's wedding day, so here goes for a spree! (*Drinks the wine.*)

ALGERNON.
Are you sure that was intended for you?

GEORGE.
(*Alarmed, starts off R. calling.*)
Mo-ther, oh, mo-ther. (*Exits R.*)

ALGERNON.
What a tiresome youth. Oh, my head. (*Leans back on sofa with closed eyes.*)

DR. BELLOWS *enters from L. Greatly agitated.*

DR. BELLOWS.

It's a perfect sell. If anyone had told me that Amelia could change like—(*As he goes C. he sees ALGERNON.*) Well, upon my word, it this isn't—get up. Get up there. I never saw anything like this in my life.

ALGERNON.

(*Rising to sitting posture.*)

Is it really necessary for me to rise?

DR. BELLOWS.

Is it really necessary? What's the matter with you, William? (*ALGERNON rises painfully.*) That's something like it. Now, William, get busy.

ALGERNON.

Get busy?

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, busy; that's what I said. You seem to be perfectly useless in this house, William, so get outside there and mow the lawn.

ALGERNON.

(*Doubting his ears.*)

Mow the lawn?

DR. BELLOWS.

You'll find the lawn mower around against the back porch. Step lively now.

ALGERNON.

When I came down here I certainly had no idea—

DR. BELLOWS.

No idea you'd be put to that kind of work, I suppose.

ALGERNON.

Frankly, I did not.

DR. BELLOWS.

Frankly, I'd like to find out just what's in you.

ALGERNON.

I see. Something of a test of my good nature, too. Oh, very well. (*With an amiable smile he goes up C.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Come, come now, get at that lawn.

ALGERNON.

If I only didn't feel so faint. (*Exits C. off L.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Sinking into an arm-chair R. and mopping his forehead.*)

Oh, what a day, what a day.

MRS. MACÉCKRON and DOLLY enter C. from L. DOLLY goes and sits up R. in chair. MRS. MACÉCKRON smiles as she watches DR. BELLOWS' desperation.

MRS. MACÉCKRON.

Dr. Bellows, what is the matter? Are you ill?

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh. (*With a terrible groan and a shake of his head.*)

MRS. MACÉCKRON.

Dear me, what has upset you? (*He groans again.*) Is it so serious?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Looking up at her.*)

Have you seen her?

MRS. MACÉCKRON.

Who?

DR. BELLOWS.

My—my—that woman.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Your Amelia? Oh, yes, I saw her.

DR. BELLOWS.

Then how can you ask what's the matter?

MRS. MACHECKRON.

But didn't you say that the eyes of love could see through—

DR. BELLOWS.

Don't, don't, don't. Don't tell me all the fool things I've said. I'm nearly crazy. It's not enough that Singleton's nephew should be so unsatisfactory and that Higgins should have sent me a fool for a butler, but that Amelia, my Amelia, should be so, so—(*pantomimes indicating her enormous size. He groans and puts his head in his hands.*)

At this moment ALGERNON crosses back of C. door from L. to R., pushing a carpet sweeper over the lawn before him.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

But you said that her mouth and her—

DR. BELLOWS.

For heaven's sake don't tell me what I said.

GEORGE.

(*Outside R.*)

Mo-ther, oh, mo-ther.

GEORGE *enters R.*

GEORGE.

Oh, mo-ther.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Well, at any rate, Doctor, you have the little son you've always wanted.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Shrinking down into his chair.)

Don't, don't.

GEORGE.

Say, have you seen Ma?

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, I certainly have.

GEORGE.

Well, where is she?

DR. BELLOWS.

Just now I don't know. Thanks to the stars I do not know.

GEORGE.

Say, what do you want me to call you?

DR. BELLOWS.

Call me?

GEORGE.

Yes, do you want me to start in calling you "Pa" now?

DR. BELLOWS.

Certainly not.

GEORGE.

You are going to be my father, ain't you?

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Of course you are, Doctor.

GEORGE.

I hope you and Ma get on better than she and my last pa did.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Sitting up.)

Your last pa?

GEORGE.

Hm, hm.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Do you mean your own father?

GEORGE.

No, I can't remember him. I mean my last step-father.

DR. BELLOWS.

Do you mean that your mother has been married twice already?

GEORGE.

Four times.

DR. BELLOWS.

Great heavens! (*Collapses in his chair with a groan.*)

GEORGE.

Yes sir-ree, and the last one used to give Ma as good as she sent. By gee, they used to make things hum when they both got going.

At this point ALGERNON crosses with his sweeper back of C. door from R. to L. He has taken off his coat.

DR. BELLOWS.

This is the finishing stroke.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Come here, Dolly.

DOLLY.

(*Coming down.*)

Yes, mamma. (*She is up R., GEORGE R. C., MRS. MACHECKRON L., DR. BELLOWS R.*)

MRS. MACHECKRON.

This is George Tobin, Dolly. Georgie, this is my little daughter Dorothy.

DOLLY.

(*With a curtsey.*)

Happy to meet you. From the agricultural districts?

GEORGE.

I'm from Skowhegan.

DOLLY.

Isn't he ingenuous?

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Reprovingly.)

Dolly, Dolly, see if you can't amuse Georgie.

DOLLY.

(Taking his hand and leading him up stage.)

Come on, let's tell stories. *(They sit and talk up L. C.)*

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Cheer up, Doctor. Look at your son. Oh, and look at your son-in-law. *(Her eye lighting on AUGUSTUS in the dining room.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

Shocking. But he drank, I think, to drown his disappointment. Florence has treated him very shabbily.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

I don't blame her. He's anything but a gentleman. I wish you could have heard the things he said to me at luncheon. And the amount of sherry he consumed was unbelievable.

DR. BELLOWS.

I am in a devilish awkward position. I've got to tell him that Florence won't have him, and he's my best friend's nephew.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

You can't buy a pig in a poke with safety, even of your best friend.

DR. BELLOWS.

(As she has come over to him he pulls her hand through his arm and starts off R. with her.)

Come into the library and give me your advice.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Oh, but what would Mrs. Tobin say?

DR. BELLOWS.

Mrs. Tobin be—

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Putting her finger on his lip.)

Oh, oh, gently! *(They exit R., talking in an undertone.)*

ALGERNON *crosses at back with the sweeper. He is now without his vest. DOLLY and GEORGE come down the stage, she looking at him thoughtfully, he giving her bashful but admiring glances.*

DOLLY.

For a boy of your age, Georgie, you are singularly lacking in self-possession.

GEORGE.

Aw you go on! I don't know what you mean.

DOLLY.

It's only a matter of psychology.

GEORGE.

Aw quit your foolin'!

DOLLY.

I mean that you are very shy.

GEORGE.

I'm always that way with girls.

DOLLY.

It's a strange coincidence, Georgie, but you and I are in much the same situation.

GEORGE.

Oh, I ain't got a situation. Maw won't let me go to work. She thinks I'll get into bad company.

DOLLY.

That's only an excuse. Your mother and mine, each in her individual way, is practicing deception.

GEORGE.

Go on!

DOLLY.

Yes, and Georgie, you and I are the victims.

GEORGE.

Go on, you don't say!

DOLLY.

(Squaring herself in front of him.)

Now look at me, Georgie, and tell me how old you think I am.

GEORGE.

(Bashfully looking at his feet.)

Oh, go on, I don't want to.

DOLLY.

Come on, look at me. Don't be afraid.

GEORGE.

I ain't afraid, but I don't like to.

DOLLY.

Don't be silly. Look at me.

GEORGE.

(Still looking at his feet.)

Well, I'll look at you if you won't look at me while I'm looking.

DOLLY.

(Turning her head away.)

All right. Now.

GEORGE.

Gee, you're awful easy to look at now. You're pretty, too.

DOLLY.

Spare me your compliments. I want you to say how old you think I look.

GEORGE.

Well, you look about old enough to be just getting your second teeth. But you talk like you was old enough to vote.

DOLLY.

Exactly. I am an anachronism.

GEORGE.

Poor little girl, is that so?

DOLLY.

Do you know what that means?

GEORGE.

No. Do you?

DOLLY.

Yes, I do. And, Georgie, you're an anachronism, too.

GEORGE.

I am not. And what's more, I never will be. I am an American citizen.

DOLLY.

Your education has been sadly neglected, Georgie. I think I shall have to take it in hand. How old are you?

GEORGE.

Eighteen last April Fool's day.

DOLLY.

That accounts for some things. Now, Georgie, tell me why your mother keeps you in knickerbockers.

GEORGE.

Sure pop I will. My Pa left me some property when he died, and Ma wants to keep hold of it.

DOLLY.

Ah, now I see. Well, Georgie, I am sixteen. My mother keeps me like this to make herself appear younger. She wants to get married again, and a

debutante daughter with my vocabulary would be embarrassing. But if I were a boy, I'd rebel. Why don't you rebel, Georgie?

GEORGE.

I don't dast. Why don't you?

DOLLY.

I am anxious to get my mother married off. She's no companion for me. I shall be glad to get her off my hands.

GEORGE.

Ain't widows the devil?

DOLLY.

We ought to help each other. Your mother has ruined all our plans. Mamma had very serious designs on Dr. Bellows.

GEORGE.

If ma *does* marry him he'll get a divorce. They *all* do.

DOLLY.

All?

GEORGE.

Yes. Three of them and then one died.

DOLLY.

On what grounds did they get a divorce from your mother?

GEORGE.

Cruelty and non-support.

DOLLY.

Oh, I see.

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

(*Outside R.*)

Dolly, Dolly dear.

GEORGE.

Say, there's a circus in this town. Wouldn't you like to see it tonight?

DOLLY.

It might be a relaxation.

GEORGE.

I wish I could go. I am going to ask Ma to let me. I wonder where she is.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Outside R.)

Dolly, Dolly dear. Come here.

DOLLY.

(In her childish manner.)

Yes, Mamma. Bye bye, Georgie. *(Trots off R.)*

GEORGE.

Mo-ther, oh mo-ther. *(Goes off L. calling.)*

ALGERNON *crosses, working his sweeper, his hat on the back of his head. He has removed his tie and his collar is only fastened by the back button. In the dining room, AUGUSTUS, with a loud snore which awakens him, begins to stir. He pulls the napkin off his face and looks about him as if he didn't quite know where he was. With an effort of memory he recalls the luncheon. In a laborious fashion he gets to his feet, straightens himself out, throws the napkin on the table and comes down into the living room.*

AUGUSTUS.

By Jove, I've been asleep. But how did I get on the floor? It must have been the Governor's sherry. No more of old England for me. Give me the land of the free where a man is as good as his master. *(He has strolled up to C.)* Well, that poor devil is 'avin' a 'ot time of it. Must be the footman. Well, that class of people must expect 'ard labor. *(Goes back into the dining room to the side-board and selects a cigar. As he is doing this—)*

ALGERNON *enters C., coat and vest on his arm, faint and wilted, and dragging his carpet sweeper behind him. He comes down stage and mops up the perspiration. AUGUSTUS strolls down lighting his cigar.*

AUGUSTUS.

Rather 'ottish, aren't you, old top?

ALGERNON.

It's terrible in the sun. And this lawn mower makes no impression on the grass.

AUGUSTUS.

Is that a lawn mower, old chap? I thought it was one of these blooming American carpet sweepers.

ALGERNON.

Perhaps it is. It was the only thing I could find on the back porch. I hope you'll excuse my appearance. I haven't had the pleasure of an introduction.

AUGUSTUS.

All in good time, my friend. We'll let the Doctor see to that.

ALGERNON.

I am sorry to appear to such a disadvantage before one of the Doctor's guests.

AUGUSTUS.

It's all right, old top. (*Sits and smokes L. of table.*)

ALGERNON.

I feel the need of a little light refreshment. If I might take the liberty. (*He goes up into the dining room at R. of table, picks up a piece of bread, is about to pull out a chair and sit when—*)

Mrs. TOBIN *enters the dining room from L. U. door.*

AUGUSTUS.

He takes a lot of liberties for an under servant.

MRS. TOBIN.

(*To ALGERNON in a loud and commanding tone.*)
Now what are you doing there?

ALGERNON.

(*Taking off his hat and bowing.*)

I beg your pardon, madam.

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Going off on a tirade.*)

I never saw such a house in all my born days. There's no head nor tail to it. Look at this table of dishes. Standing around at this time of day. (*She commences to clear off the table, piling up the dishes just as ALGERNON is about to take a bite of his bread, she reaches and takes it out of his hand as she speaks.*) Never in all my born days saw such useless help. No more good than a sore thumb. What's that cook's name? (*Calls.*) Cook! Cook! Come and get these dishes. (*Turns to ALGERNON.*) As for you, you clear right out of here. There must be a lot of things for you to do.

ALGERNON.

I haven't had the honor of an introduction, madam, but my name is—

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Walking down into the living room R.*)

Your name is William. I know that much.

ALGERNON.

(*Following her.*)

But did Dr. Bellows explain?

MRS. TOBIN.

Yes, he did. He told me all about you, and we're both very much disappointed in you.

Really?

ALGERNON.

MRS. TOBIN.

But I think if you try and please me, it might be different.

ALGERNON.

But I don't see clearly—

MRS. TOBIN.

Just you keep quiet and come along with me. (*She starts toward R., ALGERNON following, quite dazed. AUGUSTUS rises to his feet at attention.*)

AUGUSTUS.

Madam!

MRS. TOBIN.

Oh, how do you do. I've heard all about you. I am going to have a talk with you alone about your affairs.

AUGUSTUS.

But I understood Dr. Bellows to say—

MRS. TOBIN.

Never mind what he says. The wedding will come off this evening, and then I'm going to run things.

ALGERNON.

(*Startled.*)

The wedding will come off this evening? Seems to me that's hurrying things.

AUGUSTUS.

I'll be here, madam, whenever you wish to see me.

ALGERNON.

(*Thoroughly alarmed.*)

Did I understand you to say, madam, that the Doctor has planned for the wedding to take place this evening?

MRS. TOBIN.

Yes, there's no sense in waiting, and there's a lot to be done to get this house in order, so don't stop

to talk about it. You will have to do your share. Get along now. (*Shoos him in front of her toward R. door and she exits. AUGUSTUS resumes his easy chair L. of table.*)

Presently DR. BELLOWS' head appears around the R. of the C. door, looking after MRS. TOBIN. Satisfied that she is not coming back, he enters cautiously. Sees AUGUSTUS.

DR. BELLOWS.

Phist! Phist!

AUGUSTUS.

Eh?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Advancing cautiously.*)

Has she gone?

AUGUSTUS.

(*Rising.*)

Yes.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*With a sigh of relief.*)

I breathe again. Ah, my boy, this has been a terrible day, an eventful one for us both. I have something to say to you, but not yet, not yet. My dear October, has your trunk come over from the station yet?

AUGUSTUS.

If you could just remember, sir, it's May—Augustus May. August for short.

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, yes, yes, of course. Has your trunk come yet, August?

AUGUSTUS.

I didn't 'ave it brought over sir. It happened that I was a little short this morning. I thought if you would consider a slight advance.

DR. BELLOWS.

Money? My dear boy, why didn't you speak. Be-

fore. I only wish money could make up for my daughter's treatment of you.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Puzzled.*)

Eh?

DR. BELLOWS.

How much, my boy, how much?

AUGUSTUS.

Well, if you don't mind five—

DR. BELLOWS.

Five hundred? Of course I don't mind.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Nearly swooning.*)

Five hundred?

DR. BELLOWS.

Are you sure that will be enough?

AUGUSTUS.

Loads, Governor. It will be loads.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Going L.*)

Step right in here, my boy. I'll write you a check.

AUGUSTUS.

Am I dreaming? (*Following him.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Don't you know that you can ask anything of me?

(*They both exit L.*)

MRS. TOBIN *enters R. followed by ALGERNON, who has a large gingham kitchen apron tied around him, carries a dust pan, whisk broom and dust cloth.*

MRS. TOBIN.

Now begin right here. There isn't time for a thorough sweeping, but look at the sand that's been

tracked in from the garden. Everything should be spick and span before the ceremony.

ALGERNON.

But, my dear madam! Why rush things so?

MRS. TOBIN.

Now, William, there's no time to talk. Get down on your marrow-bones and go to work. Begin in that corner. (*Points up around the steam bath corner.*)

ALGERNON.

But I'd like to talk it all out.

MRS. TOBIN.

We'll talk it all out when you get this room cleaned. Everything must be in order for the wedding. I'm glad the Doctor's daughter is to be married, for it's plain she is no housekeeper. And who is this Mrs. MacEckron, William? She gives herself a lot of airs.

ALGERNON.

I don't know the lady.

MRS. TOBIN.

Well, after the ceremony I'm going to tell her what I think of her.

MRS. TOBIN *starts up C. and meets MAGGIE, who enters C. from R.*

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Addressing MAGGIE.*)

I wish you'd keep an eye on the work here. I've got to go and dress that cook down again. She's soldiering. (*Exits through dining room L. U. door.*)

MAGGIE.

(*Looking after her.*)

Well, if that old catamaran is going to run the house, I'm going to get out.

ALGERNON.

(*Seeing MAGGIE, thinks it is FLORENCE, rises and tries to make himself presentable by tucking up his apron.*)

I beg your pardon.

MAGGIE.

(*Bursting into laughter.*)

Well, can you beat this?

ALGERNON.

It's the most remarkable test of character that I've ever submitted to.

MAGGIE.

This beats the circus.

ALGERNON.

(*Approaches her with the dust pan in one hand and the whisk broom in the other.*)

Did you understand that the wedding was to take place so soon?

MAGGIE.

I didn't know it till today?

ALGERNON.

Does this unseemly haste meet with your approval?

MAGGIE.

I haven't given it a thought.

ALGERNON.

Do you mean to say you are perfectly indifferent?

MAGGIE.

I am not troubling myself about it at all. Are you?

ALGERNON.

Why, it came upon me so suddenly. It seems to me that until you and I have drawn nearer to each other—that under the circumstances—

MAGGIE.

Well, the very idea.

ALGERNON.

If the ceremony is set for this evening, I should like a few hours reflection.

MAGGIE.

Now see here, if you and I are going to live in peace in the same house, you've got to talk sense, and you're not going to get out of your share of the work.

ALGERNON.

I've always been willing to shoulder responsibility, but when the Doctor goes to such extremes—

MAGGIE.

See here, Freshie, you let the Doctor run his own shebang. (*She exits L. singing some popular love song. ALGERNON stares after her in amazement.*)

ALGERNON.

Unfeeling and vulgar. How could my uncle expect me to be happy with a girl like that. Oh, my head is bursting.

MRS. TOBIN'S voice is heard raging off L. In a panic he goes down on the floor and resumes his brushing. FLORENCE enters C. from L.

FLORENCE.

Oh, William, has Mrs. Tobin set you doing that? And your headache, is it better?

ALGERNON.

No, if anything it is worse. If I could only appease my hunger.

FLORENCE.

(*Not knowing that he has had nothing to eat.*)

Are you still hungry? I'll get you something immediately. (*She starts.*)

ALGERNON.

(*Rising.*)

One moment. I have a presentiment that my stay under this roof will not be as long as I anticipated. (*He goes to his easel and luggage, which has been placed behind the sofa. He gets out easel and drawing material and sets them up in front of the sofa L. C.*) I should like to carry away with me a sketch of the face that has looked at me so kindly.

FLORENCE.

Oh, but really—

ALGERNON.

I ask it as a great favor, for whenever I shall look at it in the time to come, it will bring to mind the one ray of sunshine in what seems like the darkest day of my life.

FLORENCE.

Very well, I don't mind, if you can be quick about it.

ALGERNON.

(*Placing the easel back to audience so that he is facing audience L. C. FLORENCE is down R. C.*)

I see you don't wish Dr. Bellows to know of the sitting.

FLORENCE.

Naturally I do not. He might think that a servant—

ALGERNON.

Quite right. We are still in the days of autocracy. (*With the charcoal in his hand he stands ready to sketch.*) The profile, please. (*She turns.*) Thanks. My head is swimming so that I can hardly see what I'm doing. But my imagination will supply the real likeness.

FLORENCE.

I am so sorry you should have been neglected like this.

ALGERNON.

Oh, I'm always ready to make allowances.

FLORENCE.

Dr. Bellows is usually very considerate.

ALGERNON.

My hand is trembling. I'll work the rest of this up at my leisure. I have the facial outlines.

FLORENCE.

Then I'll go and get you some more food. Poor man. (*Exits into dining room and off L. U. door.*)

ALGERNON.

(*Sketching.*)

No, I'll have to give it up. (*Goes to the easy chair R. C., throws himself into it exhaustedly.*) If only Miss Bellows would adopt the manners of her maid it wouldn't be hard to care for her. (*Closes his eyes wearily.*)

DR. BELLOWS *enters arm in arm with* AUGUSTUS
from L.

DR. BELLOWS.

No, no. There has never been a steam bath that approaches this in results. It's going to make the name of Bellows a household word. (*They are walking over toward* ALGERNON.) The name of Bellows is going down as one of the benefactors of the human race. Dr. Benjamin Bellows, the man who steamed the livers of millions of Americans. The man who—(*his eye lights on* ALGERNON *as he and* AUGUSTUS *stand C.*) Now, now, William, what are you doing here?

ALGERNON.

I have just been assisting Mrs. Tobin. She wishes

to clean and garnish the house in preparation for the wedding tonight.

DR. BELLOWS.

Devil take the wedding. (AUGUSTUS *strolls up stage.*)

ALGERNON.

(*Eagerly.*)

Do I understand that you are willing to postpone it?

DR. BELLOWS.

Am I? I'd like to postpone it indefinitely.

ALGERNON.

(*Greatly relieved.*)

Then why not do so?

DR. BELLOWS.

The lady won't hear of it.

ALGERNON.

As far as I can see she is perfectly indifferant.

DR. BELLOWS.

Well, at any rate your advice isn't important. Get to work now.

ALGERNON.

But, my dear sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Looking him over.*)

That's an absurd get-up for a man like you; isn't it, July?

AUGUSTUS.

Absurd, I call it, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

William, come here and let's have a look at you.

ALGERNON.

Of course, I apologize. (*Holding his coat lapels over his collarless neck.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Now that's a nice sort of coat for a man in your position.

ALGERNON.

My position?

DR. BELLOWS.

Don't repeat everything I say. Take off that coat.

ALGERNON.

I won't take another steam bath.

DR. BELLOWS.

Indeed you won't. You're not going to get another steam bath till tomorrow. Give me your coat. (ALGERNON *hands it to him.*) You'll get a steam bath every day. You are a very lucky man, William. Do you know what those treatments would cost you in a sanatorium? Now, Bill, I'm going to give you a garment that's more like it. (DR. BELLOWS *exits R. C. door.*)

ALGERNON.

(*To AUGUSTUS.*)

Dr. Bellows has forgotten that we have not been introduced, but I inadvertently learned your name. I am glad to meet you, Mr. May. My name is Clawhammer.

AUGUSTUS.

Oh, that's all right, William.

ALGERNON.

(*Affably.*)

Algernon is my Christian name, but Dr. Bellows prefers William.

AUGUSTUS.

Very naturally. You can't reasonably expect to be called Algernon.

ALGERNON.

For the life of me I don't see why.

DR. BELLOWS *enters R. C. with a faded old shabby, plaid smoking jacket.*

DR. BELLOWS.

Here, now; here is something a bit more suitable. (*Tosses it to ALGERNON.*) Here now, put that on.

ALGERNON.

When I packed my trunk I—

DR. BELLOWS.

I know your trunk isn't here yet. But we can't wait for trunks or anything else.

ALGERNON.

I have a dress suit in my suit case which I can wear at the wedding if you insist.

DR. BELLOWS.

Of course, if there's a wedding, what else would you wear? Here, get into this coat. (*Helps him on with it.*)

ALGERNON.

Anything to be accommodating.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*As ALGERNON goes back to his work.*)

Get busy now. (*Goes down L. C. and speaks to AUGUSTUS.*) I don't think the man is quite right in his mind.

AUGUSTUS.

I don't see 'ow you put up with 'im.

DR. BELLOWS.

Ordinarily I wouldn't think of it, but I happen to be in a peculiar position. Now, my boy, get back to my bath. I'm going to advertise it through the mail. I am getting up a very high-class booklet. That's where you come in.

I?

AUGUSTUS.

DR. BELLOWS.

I know your talent with the brush. (*Looks at drawing board.*) Ah, I see you've been at work already. Good, very good. You are a clever artist. Been getting your hand in, I suppose.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Quite at a loss.*)

Get my hand in?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Going over to the drawing board and looking at the sketch of FLORENCE made by ALGERNON.*)

Ha, ha, this is good, very good indeed.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Following him.*)

Why, yes, so it is.

DR. BELLOWS.

Now, my boy, that five hundred I let you have we will consider an advance payment for a sketch of me. I want it for the first page of my steam bath booklet.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Wholly puzzled, gathering that he has got to make good as an artist.*)

Oh, for the five hundred you expect me to draw your portrait?

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes. I want to get the circulars out as soon as possible.

AUGUSTUS.

You wouldn't mind if it is a bit rough. I haven't done much of that sort of thing lately. It isn't my regular work, you know.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, I know you are only an amateur, but this sketch of Florence is very clever. It shows originality and talent. Now that's what I want—something original. (*Pulls up chair down R. C.*) Now come, my boy, get busy. (AUGUSTUS, *very nervous and in desperation turns the easel facing on him, puts a chair in front of it, sits back to audience, tears the sheet off containing the sketch of FLORENCE and throws it one side.*)

ALGERNON.

(*Rising and coming forward.*)

You will please be good enough to let me have that sketch.

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, yes, all right, all right. Give him the sketch, Augustine, and now run along, William. Go out and sweep the path. You make me nervous.

ALGERNON.

(*Taking the sketch.*)

I think it's time we had an explanation.

DR. BELLOWS.

Will you get out? I have no time for explanations now. (ALGERNON *exits C. off R.*)

AUGUSTUS.

(*Nonplussed and anxious to get out of the situation.*)

Dr. Bellows, don't you think that you'd better take that four hundred and ninety of the five hundred. I don't really feel that I could do you justice.

DR. BELLOWS.

Nonsense, nonsense. All this new art is a little bit queer. Of course I don't want any futurism. Just a nice little charcoal sketch. But something that gives the individuality.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Recklessly.*)

All right, sir, here goes. (*He looks at DR. BELLOWS and draws the outline of a face as best he can. DR. BELLOWS feeling rather handsome at the moment.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Rather a strong chin, eh?

AUGUSTUS.

Magnificent chin, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

Jaw pretty firm, too, eh?

AUGUSTUS.

(*Putting some little points on the jaw.*)

Iron, sir, iron, I should call it.

DR. BELLOWS.

The nose indicates originality, I've been told.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Drawing a nose.*)

Very unusual nose, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

My nose *is* strong, if I do say it.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Now throwing himself into the spirit of the thing and drawing a fiery nostril.*)

Quite the strongest nose I've ever drawn.

DR. BELLOWS.

When you come to the mouth—

AUGUSTUS.

I'm coming to the mouth now, sir. (*Places his crayon ready to draw the mouth.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Flexible, yet firm. Understand, I'm not vain of my mouth Augustus.

AUGUSTUS.

(Drawing a rather large and heavy mouth.)

No, sir, I don't consider your mouth your best feature, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

You are quite right, my boy. If I have a feature to be thankful for, I suppose, after all, the Bellows eye. The Bellows have all had remarkable eyes.

AUGUSTUS.

Oh, 'ave they, now? *(Puts the eyes in, the effect being anything but harmonious.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

The Bellows eye is remarkable for its penetration, its benignity—of course I am speaking now of the expression only, Augustus.

AUGUSTUS.

(Putting some up strokes on the eye for eyelashes.)

On a woman, sir, I should call them twin stars. *(Continues silently drawing.)*

FLORENCE enters L. U. door with a plate of sandwiches. Neither of the two see her. She tip-toes down to the table, places the plate on it, goes up C. looking for ALGERNON. Sees him, beckons to him. He meets her in the C., she points to the sandwiches and exits C. off R. ALGERNON gives a longing look at the food, comes in and resumes dusting up stage.

AUGUSTUS.

(Adding eyebrows, hair and whiskers.)

Remarkable growth of 'air you 'ave, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

I'm bald on top, but what I have left is fairly decent.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Realizing his mistake.*)

It's the texture I mean, sir, the texture.

DR. BELLOWS.

How are you getting on?

AUGUSTUS.

Middlin' well, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

Do you know I'm curious to see what you've done.
(*Rises and goes over.*)

AUGUSTUS.

It's only in the rough, sir. It doesn't really do you justice.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Adjusting his glasses and looking at the sketch. As he looks he becomes speechless with disappointment and rage; unable to put his feelings into words after looking from the picture to AUGUSTUS two or three times, he thrusts his hands in his pockets.*)

You—that—me—you call—oh, good Lord! Five hundred. (*Unable to formulate his sentences and swelling up like a balloon.*) This is an outrage. This is an outrage! You wait until I see your uncle. Artist, indeed. (*Rushes off R.*)

AUGUSTUS.

I'm sorry, sir. I am sorry. (*After DR. BELLOWS' exit.*) Queer old party. Terribly exhausting. (*He and ALGERNON make a dive for the sandwiches and sherry, AUGUSTUS reaching them first.*) I must say this is a very free and easy 'ouse with the eatables

and drinkables. 'Ere's your 'ealth, William. (ALGERNON *groans, goes up the stage and ties his handkerchief around his head.*)

ALGERNON.

Mr. May, if you were not a near and dear friend of the family, I should insist on an explanation of your conduct.

AUGUSTUS.

Don't be peevish, Algernon. (ALGERNON *exits C. R.*)

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Her voice is heard L. of dining room.*)

Don't answer me back.

MAGGIE *entering L. U. door through dining room, speaking off L.*

MAGGIE.

I'm not answering back.

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Off L.*)

See that you don't.

MAGGIE.

(*Coming down into the living room.*)

That woman is driving the whole house crazy. (*Sees AUGUSTUS, beams and tries to attract his attention by coughing.*)

Hm!

AUGUSTUS.

(*Sees who it is, jumps up with his mouth full.*)

Ah, the young Missus.

MAGGIE.

Are you quite comfortable, sir?

AUGUSTUS.

Oh, quite, quite. This 'ere America is wonderful.

MAGGIE.

(Flirting with her eyes.)

I hope you're not lonely here, sir.

AUGUSTUS.

How could I be lonely in such circumstances. Just to be where you are—

MAGGIE.

Oh, Mr. May, you take my breath away.

AUGUSTUS.

(Amazed.)

Mr. May?

MAGGIE.

I don't suppose servants should forget their place, Mr. May, but in this case—

AUGUSTUS.

Doesn't the chap in "Pinafore" say that "love levels all ranks"?

MAGGIE.

Of course, and why shouldn't it?

AUGUSTUS.

To be sure, we're all democrats now. I say, miss, if you could meet me 'ere in 'alf an hour, I 'ave something I'd like to say to you.

ALGERNON.

She is flirting with him.

(Watching their flirtation from C. door.)

MAGGIE.

Meet you here in this room? In half an hour? I'll be here. *(Goes to door R., turns.)* Mr. May, take this and keep it till I come back. *(Throws kiss to him and exits.)*

AUGUSTUS.

(Delightedly.)

By Jove!

ALGERNON.

(*Indignantly.*)

Before my very eyes, too.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Strolling up C.*)

Ah, this wonderful America. It beats the old country, eh William?

(*As he passes him and exits C. off R. DR. BELLOWS' voice is heard off R.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Off R.*)

No, Florence, that portrait decides me. He is not the man Singleton thinks he is.

DR. BELLOWS *enters from R.*

DR. BELLOWS.

I'd like to run away. Hide myself in the wilds of Africa.

MRS. TOBIN's *voice raised as she enters L. U. door through dining room. At the sound of it ALGERNON slips into the room R. C. and BELLOWS starts as if to run away R.*

MRS. TOBIN.

Benjamin! Benjamin! Benjamin! (*Catching sight of him*). Oh, Benny dear, here you are. (*He groans and stops in his tracks R. with his back to her.*) Benjamin, dear. This is the first moment I've had for a little talk. I've set things going in the house. (*Putting her arm through his. Reaches around and tries to turn his face toward her. He keeps averting it.*) What's the matter, Benny? Is Benny angry with his Melie? Come now, Benny. Who's 'ittle Benny is 'ou? (*He groans again.*) You don't act one bit as your letters said you felt.

DR. BELLOWS.

I wish those letters were in Jericho.

MRS. TOBIN.

But they are not, Benny. They are, every one of them, in a safety deposit box at my banker's in Skowhegan.

DR. BELLOWS.

The devil they are!

MRS. TOBIN.

(Kindly but firmly.)

Oh yes, I've made it a rule never to destroy a love letter.

DR. BELLOWS.

But why not, Mrs. Tobin?

MRS. TOBIN.

Why don't you call me Melie?

DR. BELLOWS.

I couldn't.

MRS. TOBIN.

Your letters commence that way.

DR. BELLOWS.

Never.

MRS. TOBIN.

Yes they do. The last three began "My own precious Melie." (DR. BELLOWS *collapses in the large chair L. of table.*) And in two of the others you said—

DR. BELLOWS.

Don't, don't tell me what I said.

MRS. TOBIN.

(Gradually growing harder, louder and faster through the following speech as she stands over DR.

BELLOWS, *who appears to shrivel under the fire of her words.*)

I don't know why you are acting so cold to me, Benjamin.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Faintly.)

Am I—am I cold?

MRS. TOBIN.

You certainly are, Benjamin.

DR. BELLOWS.

The fact is, when I saw you I had a chill. I think we ought to talk the whole thing over, argue it all out.

MRS. TOBIN.

Well, as I've said before, I'm terribly sensitive, and I don't like to argue. I'm a woman of few words and I can't stand a lot of argufying. If you want to act the villain and go back on your word—your *written* word, mind you, all right, go ahead. Go on and give me the mitten if you dare; but right here let me tell you, Benjamin Bellows, that even though I am a poor, weak, sensitive woman, I'll give you the doggondest fight in the courts that you ever heard of. I didn't come all the way from Skowhegan, Maine, with my child to take chances on your marrying me. Before I left the depot I telephoned the Baptist minister to come here at half past eight o'clock tonight to marry us, and if you back out I'll sue you for every dollar you got in the world. So you'd better sing small and listen to reason. One thing I will tell you. Florence says she won't marry that fellow, but that's all bosh. The quicker she's out of the way the better, for the way this house is run is a sin and a shame. I've told the cook to leave a week from tomorrow, and I'll send that Maggie

skiting after the wedding. She's too pretty to have in the house. As for that fool Bill, I'll get what work I can out of him and tomorrow *he* goes packing. As for *that* crazy old shebang (*pointing to the steam bath*), it's going to be chopped up for kindling wood. Anybody that's so dirty that soap and water won't get them clean I won't have in the house. (*He opens his mouth to speak.*) Now stop arguing with me. I'm too sensitive. I can't stand it. Now don't forget that we are to be married this evening. You can dress up or not, but we'll be married just the same. My wedding dress and veil have done duty four times. I guess they're good enough for this time. As I said before, I'm a woman of few words. If you just begin any of your backsliding monkey-shines we'll see what damages you'll pay; that's all. (*She sails off R., leaving DR. BELLOWS speechless.*)

GEORGE.

(*His voice is heard outside back.*)

Mo-ther, oh mo-ther.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*With a leap from his chair rushes off L.*)

That pest!

ALGERNON *enters R. C., apparently in the last stages of exhaustion.*

ALGERNON.

My knees are beginning to give way, and dark spots keep dancing before my eyes. If I could only be quiet and alone for a while. (*Goes down to sofa and gets cushions.*)

GEORGE.

(*Outside.*)

Mo-ther, oh mo-ther. (ALGERNON *with the cushions, at the sound of this dreaded voice, rushes up to*

R. corner, throws the cushions down on the floor behind the screen, arranges them to hide himself as if to lie down for a rest.)

ALGERNON.

I'll be safe here for a few moments.

MRS. MACHECKRON and DOLLY enter C. from L.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Dolly, if you were a mind to, you could think of a plan to rescue Dr. Bellows.

DOLLY.

Rescue him from whom? From Mrs. Tobin or yourself?

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Why, Dorothy MacEckron, what a thing to say. There's no comparison between that woman's vulgar, coarse methods and my innocent artifices.

DOLLY.

It amounts to the same thing in the end.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

If you'd only try to make the Doctor fond of you. If you'd only been a boy. You know how he said he'd always wanted a son to dandle on his knee.

DOLLY.

Even if I had been a boy, mamma, I should not have permitted anyone to dandle me.

SINGLETON.

(His voice is heard off back.)

Where is he? Where is Benjamin, the old scout?

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Startled.)

Dolly, that voice.

DOLLY.

It *has* a familiar cadence.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Crossing back of C. from L. to R. with outstretched hands.*)

Singleton, my dear old friend! (*Sounds of greeting and slaps on the back.*)

MRS. MACECKRON.

Simeon Singleton! If it should be he.

DOLLY.

You might land him this time, mamma.

MRS. MACECKRON.

Now, Dolly, do be careful. (*Mrs. MACECKRON straightens DOLLY's hair ribbon and pinks a little herself, as she goes with DOLLY over L. DOLLY sits on the sofa.*)

As SINGLETON and DR. BELLOWS enter at C. arm in arm, SINGLETON L., DR. BELLOWS R.

SINGLETON.

Bless my soul, but it's jolly to see you again.

DR. BELLOWS.

It's good for sore eyes to see you, Simeon. (*Seeing Mrs. MACECKRON.*) I want you to meet my charming friend, Mrs. MacEckron. Mrs. MacEckron, this is my old roommate at college, Simeon Singleton.

SINGLETON.

(*In delighted amazement.*)

Can I believe my eyes? Mrs. MacEckron, my dear, dear friend. (*Rushes to her L. C., seizes both her hands, kissing them effusively one then the other sev-*

eral times, DR. BELLOWS anything but pleased.)
This is the most delightful surprise of my life.

POSITIONS.

SINGLETON.

(L. C.)

DR. BELLOWS. MRS. MACÉ.

(Down C.)

DOLLY.

(Down L.)

MRS. MACÉCKRON.

Here's Dolly, too. (DOLLY comes forward to meet him.)

SINGLETON.

And dear delightful little Dolly, too. (Takes her face in his hands and kisses both cheeks.) My, my, what a big girl we are getting to be.

MRS. MACÉCKRON.

Yes, she grows so fast. You may sit down, Dolly. (DOLLY, very much bored, sits on the sofa L. again.)

DR. BELLOWS crosses L.

SINGLETON.

But you, dear Mrs. MacEckron, are the same bewitching, delightful, tantalizing—

DR. BELLOWS.

(Pulling at his right sleeve.)

Simeon, eh—I want to show you my steam bath.

SINGLETON.

Tut, tut, cut out the baths in the presence of ladies. My dear Mrs. MacEckron, I shall never forget that summer at Nantucket. It has lived in my memory as a beautiful, exquisite—

DR. BELLOWS.

Simeon!

SINGLETON.

(Giving him a push away.)

Won't you sit down, dear lady, and tell me why I've never been able to find a trace of you since those wonderful days at Nantucket? *(She sits R. of table, SINGLETON leans over her chair tenderly. DR. BELLOWS consumed with jealousy.)*

MRS. MACHECKRON.

We've been living very quietly down here. The country air is good for Dolly.

SINGLETON.

And you are blooming as a rose. Do you remember that evening on the piazza of the hotel, with the moon beaming—wasn't the moon beaming that night?

DR. BELLOWS.

(Pacing up back of them and over L. C. Begins to cough.)

Hm, hm!

SINGLETON.

I remember that you had on a wonderful white gown with graceful lines falling down. *(DR. BELLOWS coughs again.)* What's the matter with you, Bellows, can't you keep quiet?

MRS. MACHECKRON.

I quite understand Dr. Bellows' nervousness.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Taking hope and rushing down, seizing her right hand.)

Of course you do, dear Mrs. MacEckron. You are all sympathy, I know.

SINGLETON.

(On her left, taking her other hand.)

Ben, old fellow, Mrs. MacEckron and I are near

and dear friends. We have a lot to say to one another that couldn't possibly interest a third person.

DR. BELLOWS.

But, Simeon, I understood you came down here to see me.

SINGLETON.

So I did, and I was prepared to be bored to death with your infernal lectures on your steam bath, when lo, the heavens smiled, and instead of your ravings, I find this lady and Paradise.

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

That's altogether too unkind a speech, Mr. Singleton. The Doctor is naturally upset and strained. He is going to be married this evening.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Going R.*)

Please, *please* don't!

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

And to such a charming woman, with the dearest little son.

DR. BELLOWS.

This is *too* cruel of you.

SINGLETON.

(*Roaring with laughter.*)

Well, well, Ben, you are a sly one. A victim to Cupid, eh, and I am just in time for the rice throwing. (*Goes R. and seizes DR. BELLOWS' hand, shaking it violently through this speech.*) My heartiest, sincerest congratulations. And the knot is to be tied tonight? And what is the bride like?

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

I'll give you the Doctor's own description. A dainty, graceful figure. (SINGLETON *nods* and DR.

BELLOWS *groans.*) A low, sweet voice. (*Repeat business.*) Limpid eyes, a rosebud mouth.

DR. BELLOWS.

Don't, don't!

MRS. MACHECKRON.

Ask him to show you her photograph. He carries it in the pocket next to his heart.

SINGLETON.

Ben, you romantic old Romeo.

At this moment GEORGE enters R. unseen by the others. Stands spellbound looking at SINGLETON.

SINGLETON.

I'm all eagerness to see the fair Juliet—and the wedding comes off tonight? I insist upon standing up with you, Benjamin. (*At this moment his eyes light on GEORGE and he is transfixed as if with terror and a recognition.*)

GEORGE.

(*Rushing up C. and off L., calling.*)

Mother, oh, mo-ther! (SINGLETON, *suddenly weak, almost collapses in the chair R. C. after watching GEORGE off. DOLLY jumps up from the sofa and runs out after him.*)

MRS. MACHECKRON.

My dear Mr. Singleton, what is the matter?

SINGLETON.

(*Faintly, and mopping his forehead with his handkerchief.*)

Nothing, nothing, my dear friend—a striking resemblance, that's all.

MRS. MACECKRON.

(*Going up C.*)

I am going to run away now, and let the Doctor tell you of his impending happiness. I'll see you again. I am staying this evening for the wedding.

SINGLETON.

Come right back, won't you. I want to finish the talk we began that night at Nantucket in the moonlight. (*Kisses her hand.*)

MRS. MACECKRON.

I'll be back in a moment. (SINGLETON *blows kisses after her as she exits C. off R. He recovers his poise, turns and looks at DR. BELLOWS, who is very dejected.*)

SINGLETON.

You are a nice looking bridegroom. Your face is as long as your arm and you are looking wretched.

DR. BELLOWS.

I am feeling wretched, Simeon.

SINGLETON.

What's become of that wonderful steam bath of yours that was going to rejuvenate the human race?

MAGGIE *enters R. bringing in a large vase of flowers which she puts on the table C.*

SINGLETON.

(*As usual ogling a pretty woman, aside to DR.*

BELLOWS.)

What a pretty girl? Who is she?

POSITIONS.

MAGGIE.

DR. BELLOWS.

(C.)

SINGLETON.

(*Down R.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Maggie, the maid.

SINGLETON.

In that costume?

DR. BELLOWS.

It's Thursday and she is dressed to go out.

SINGLETON.

I don't know when I've seen a prettier girl.

DR. BELLOWS.

Maggie, you may air the rose room. Mr. Singleton, our guest, will occupy it tonight.

MAGGIE.

(*Enjoying SINGLETON's admiring glances.*)

Yes, sir. (*She still fusses with the flowers.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

I suppose you'd like a drink, Simeon, after your journey.

SINGLETON.

You're a mind reader, Ben. (DR. BELLOWS *exits into the dining room and off L. U. door. SINGLETON, going up to her and speaking very familiarly.*)

Well, my dear, I don't know which is the prettier, you or the posies.

MAGGIE.

Oh, now, you don't mean that, sir.

SINGLETON.

If all the Jersey maids are so pretty, I understand why my friend Bellows resides in this state. (*Plumes himself on his speech.*)

MAGGIE.

My goodness, how you talk, sir.

SINGLETON.

My dear, if you don't want appreciation you mustn't show your face to a lover of beauty.

MAGGIE.

The first thing I know you will turn my head.

SINGLETON.

(Putting his arm around her waist.)

That's just what I intend to do. *(Puts his right hand under her chin.)* One, two, three, turn. *(He kisses her and at this moment—)*

DR. BELLOWS *enters L. U. door through dining room, carrying glasses and tray and wine bottle.*

MAGGIE.

Oh, sir, how can you? *(Rushes off through dining room, nearly upsetting DR. BELLOWS.)* I was looking for Mr. May, sir. *(Exits L. U. door.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

Look out there, Maggie. *(Coming down L. of table.)* At your time of life, Simeon. You ought to be ashamed.

SINGLETON.

My time of life? What do you mean, my time of life? You old broken down—my time of life. I'll put on the gloves with you tomorrow, and then we'll talk about my time of life. I was up in the Cascade Garden at the Wiltmore last night, dancing till one o'clock.

DR. BELLOWS.

Go on, go on, keep that sort of thing up and you'll end in the hospital inside of a year. *(Pouring wine.)*

FLORENCE *enters C. from L.*

FLORENCE.

Father, that terrible man is in the garden. Why

don't you tell him that I won't accept him and get rid of him?

DR. BELLOWS.

(Going up to her and bringing her down.)

Hush, my dear, his uncle is here. I'll introduce you. Simeon, this is my daughter Florence.

SINGLETON.

(Rushing at her.)

Is it possible, little Florrie. Allow me. A fatherly kiss. *(Kisses her on the forehead and takes both of her hands, retaining them.)* I don't suppose you remember me, my dear.

FLORENCE.

Why, I've never seen you before, Mr. Singleton.

SINGLETON.

Of course, that's true, you haven't. But I've always loved you as an uncle. Just an uncle's kiss. *(Kisses her again.)* What's this, blushing at an uncle's kiss? Ah, my nephew is a lucky fellow. I envy his good fortune. Now tell me, my dear, what do you think of him?

FLORENCE.

Really, Mr. Singleton, I'd rather not say.

SINGLETON.

Dear little dove. I dare say it is hard to put it into words.

FLORENCE.

If you'll excuse me, Mr. Singleton, I'd rather my father told you about—about your nephew.

DR. BELLOWS.

Tell him yourself, my dear.

FLORENCE.

No, it was you who arranged the whole thing and you will have to stand up to it now. (*Exits R.*)

SINGLETON.

(*Seating himself R. of table.*)

By Jove, then, if I were ten years younger I'd give my nephew a battle for your daughter.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Seating himself L. of table.*)

Well, have a drink and let's talk it over.

SINGLETON.

Well, how are they getting on? Was it love at first sight? Are they billing and cooing? (*Tosses off his drink.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, I wouldn't say they were billing and cooing (*Pours drink into his own glass.*)

SINGLETON.

Just you wait. It won't take long for two ardent young things to get to the lovey, dovey, pidgy, widgy stage. (*Picks up DR. BELLOWS' glass and tosses it off in two gulps.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

No, I—I don't think they will ever see the pidgy widgy stage. To be perfectly frank, I am disappointed at your nephew. (*At this moment ALGERNON'S head appears above the screen behind which he has been resting. He is amazed at DR. BELLOWS' words and surprised at the sight of his uncle.*)

SINGLETON.

Nonsense. You couldn't be disappointed in him. He's a trifle slow, but a model young man, for all that.

DR. BELLOWS.

Slow! That fellow?

SINGLETON.

Yes, and a damned clever chap, too. One of his paintings was hung in the Salon in Paris.

DR. BELLOWS.

Well, I'm no judge of art, but if that fellow is an artist, I wish you could see the sketch he made this afternoon—a sketch of me, mind you.

SINGLETON.

Oh, well, the man would have to have a decent subject.

DR. BELLOWS.

Well, leaving the art aside, I don't like his ways in money matters. I understood that he was well off.

SINGLETON.

He is.

DR. BELLOWS.

Then why did he land down here strapped. (*Pours a drink.*)

SINGLETON.

(*Taking the glass.*)

He drew a thousand dollars out of the bank before he left town yesterday. (*Drinks.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

And less than an hour ago he borrowed five hundred dollars of me. (*ALGERNON gasps with indignation.*)

SINGLETON.

The devil he did.

DR. BELLOWS.

And as for qualifying as a husband, he isn't worthy of a nice girl. Why, he makes love to every woman he meets.

SINGLETON.

The libertine. (ALGERNON *agitates the screen.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Again trying to get a drink for himself, pours it out.*)

The minute he lays eyes on a woman he begins a flirtation.

SINGLETON.

(*Taking the glass.*)

That's the limit. A man that will carry on with women isn't fit to associate with them. (*Drinks.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

But that's not the worst thing about him. (ALGERNON'S *horrified face appears again above the screen.*)

SINGLETON.

Is the worst yet to come?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*This time hanging on to one glass and pouring two.*)

Simeon, your nephew drinks like a fish.

SINGLETON.

That's the last straw. (*Drinks.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

He got vilely intoxicated at luncheon and isn't sober yet. (*At last drinks.*)

SINGLETON.

That's enough. The two-faced young demon. I'll teach him a lesson. He'll never get a penny of my money and I'll send him about his business in a hurry. No, I'll do worse than that. I'll never look upon his profligate face again. What a shattering of our hopes. I hope your daughter hasn't formed an attachment for him.

DR. BELLOWS.

To tell you the truth she disliked him the moment she saw him.

SINGLETON.

Go and tell her that I apologize for having sent him here.

DR. BELLOWS.

If I find him I'll send him to you. Get him off on the next train or Florence will be in hysterics. (DR. BELLOWS *exits R.* SINGLETON *very sadly finishes the decanter.* ALGERNON, *weak and dilapidated, his collar off, his head tied up, and wearing DR. BELLOWS' old jacket, comes down R. C.*)

ALGERNON.

Uncle Simeon.

SINGLETON.

(*Springing to his feet.*)

So there you are, you trifler, you debauchee.

ALGERNON.

But you are mistaken, Uncle Simeon.

SINGLETON.

(*Shaking his fist at him.*)

Indeed, I am mistaken, sir, in you, in *you*. Do you hear? In *YOU*!

ALGERNON

But it isn't true. You are all wrong.

SINGLETON.

Wrong? Why your very appearance is a confirmation. Look at you. Is this the way you present yourself? You are a nice looking fiance. No, you have deceived me. All these years abroad when I thought you were studying you have been dissipating. But I'm done with you. I never want to see your besotted face again. Never, sir, never. (*Exits R.* ALGERNON *goes over to the sofa, thoroughly despon-*

dent, and apparently coming down with a nervous chill.)

ALGERNON.

This is too much. I can't stand any more. Ooh, how cold I am.

FLORENCE enters C. from R.

FLORENCE.

Oh, here you are. I've been looking everywhere for you. We haven't had time to get your room ready. I am sure you ought to be in bed. You look so terribly ill.

ALGERNON.

(With chattering teeth.)

Y-e-es, I'm a-f-fraid I'm g-o-o-ing to have a c-c-chill.

FLORENCE.

Poor fellow, why you have one now. I thought the sherry would warm you up.

ALGERNON.

You don't understand. If I could only get something to eat.

FLORENCE.

Do you mean to say that you're still hungry?

ALGERNON.

I am st-ta-ta-tarving, and I'm fr-fr-fr-freezing.

FLORENCE.

Wait a moment. Here's a traveling rug. (Goes inside doorway L. and brings out a traveling rug.)

ALGERNON.

(Faintly, as he lies on the sofa.)

What an angel. It's only the working people, after all, who have hearts.

(The lights go down gradually from now on to the end of act, by which time the room is in semi-darkness.)

FLORENCE.

(Returning with rug.)

There you are, poor dear man. Put this around you and sit quietly here until I come back. I'll bring you some food and then I'll show you to your quarters. You simply must lie down and rest before the wedding. *(Helps him to wrap the rug around him.)*

ALGERNON.

Oh, the wedding! If you only knew the torment of that word. But I understood from something Dr. Bellows said that he isn't in favor of the marriage.

FLORENCE.

But he's helpless. She insists upon the marriage, and even threatens a breach of promise suit.

ALGERNON.

(With a groan.)

Oh, good Lord!

FLORENCE.

Why, I actually heard her say that she intended to be married at half past eight if she had to drag the bridegroom in front of the clergyman by the hair of his head.

ALGERNON.

Criminal! That sort of thing is criminal.

FLORENCE.

So you'd better get what rest you can before you dress. You'll be needed, of course.

ALGERNON.

If I must, I must. But there is a law in this land. That woman had better not go too far.

FLORENCE.

Now be very quiet. I think I shall bring you some light cake this time. Those sandwiches were

too rich, perhaps. (*Exits L. U. door through dining room.*)

ALGERNON.

What a sweet girl. And that frightful Miss Bellows threatens me with a breach of promise. Dr. Bellows lies about me to my uncle, my uncle casts me off, Miss Bellows treats me with the greatest indifference, yet she says she's going to marry me willy-nilly. But that housekeeper and the Doctor make me assist in the work of the servants—oh, I don't understand it at all.

The lights are down so low that the room is quite dim. MRS. TOBIN *enters from R.*

MRS. TOBIN.

Lands sakes, how dark it is.

MRS. MACECKRON *entering C. Goes down L. near sofa.*

MRS. MACECKRON.

I wonder if Mr. Singleton kept his appointment.

Hey?

MRS. TOBIN.

SINGLETON *entering L. passes Mrs. MacEckron gets over R.*

SINGLETON.

Pst! Are you here?

DR. BELLOWS *enters C. from L.*

DR. BELLOWS.

Why doesn't somebody light up? (*He gropes his way down.*) Mrs. MacEckron, is that you? (*DR. BELLOWS mistakes ALGERNON'S figure on the sofa for Mrs. MacEckron, who is further down near the table. He kneels in front of ALGERNON'S figure.*) Dearest of women, don't listen to that old libertine, Singleton. You know that he is fickle, while I have

loved you faithfully through all things. (Mrs. TOBIN has dropped into the big chair L. of table. SINGLETON is leaning over the back of it under the impression that it is Mrs. MACECKRON.)

SINGLETON.

Darling, why do we wait? Come with me on the next train and let me make you Mrs. Simeon Singleton before another sun shines.

FLORENCE enters L. U. door into the dining room with a plate of food and switches up the lights. Outside in the moonlight C. MAGGIE and AUGUSTUS are seen embracing. GEORGE and DOLLY appear in the R. doorway in time to catch the tableau. The following lines are all spoken together.

FLORENCE.

My goodness, what are you doing, father?

Mrs. TOBIN.

(Leaping up and throwing her arms around SINGLETON, who is horrified at his mistake.)

Simeon, at last.

SINGLETON.

Good Lord!

GEORGE.

Oh, mo-ther.

POSITIONS.

MAGGIE.

AUGUSTUS.

FLORENCE.

(Up C.)

(Up L.)

GEORGE.

(At R. door.)

DOLLY.

Mrs. MACÉ.

(L. of table.)

ALGERNON.

DR. BELLOWS.

Mrs. TOBIN. (Down L.)

SINGLETON.

(L. C.)

DR. BELLOWS.

*(Falling back on his feet in his kneeling position
as he looks at ALGERNON.)*

Bless my soul, what are you doing?

DOLLY.

Extraordinary goings on, don't you think?

CURTAIN.

WHOSE LITTLE BRIDE ARE YOU?

THE THIRD ACT.

SCENE: *The same as in previous acts.*

TIME: *Eight o'clock in the evening of the same day.*

DOLLY is discovered *up C.* beckoning to GEORGE to enter. *Lights are full up in electroliers or chandelier, or standard lamps, whichever is used.*

DOLLY.

Georgie, come in here a moment, I want to speak to you.

GEORGE enters *C.* and looks about.

GEORGE.

Where's everybody?

DOLLY.

Everyone is keeping out of sight. The situation is very painful for all concerned.

GEORGE.

Mother doesn't mind it.

DOLLY.

Georgie, your mother is the most remarkably poised woman that I've ever met in my life.

GEORGE.

Well, she's doggone set in her ways if that's what you mean.

DOLLY.

What I'd like to know is where she became acquainted with Mr. Singleton.

GEORGE.

Why, he was a summer boarder on our farm one summer.

DOLLY.

Oh, that's it.

GEORGE.

He got carrying on with one of the young women from Boston that boarded with us. He wrote her a lot of love letters. Ma is pretty cute, she is. Somehow she got hold of the letters and as there wasn't any name used, just "dearest, and darling, and angel," and all that mush, ma said any jury that she took him before would think they were written to her if she swore to it.

DOLLY.

Merciful powers! Didn't I tell you your mother was a remarkable woman, Georgie?

GEORGE.

Well, she's had a whole lot of experience. Can't any city women teach her anything about men.

DOLLY.

If my mother had her generalship she'd have been married again long ago, and I could have done my hair up, let down my dresses and gone to college.

GEORGE.

I don't know what gets into them after they are widows. They act like all possessed.

DOLLY.

I'm getting desperate, Georgie. I don't know why we should let them do all the spooning. Come over here till I tell you something that I've been thinking of.

MRS. TOBIN.

(*She is heard calling outside R.*)

William! William!

GEORGE.

Come on, let's beat it out to the summer house.
(*They rush out C. off L.*)

MRS. TOBIN *enters R. dressed in her old-fashioned bridal outfit.*

MRS. TOBIN.

William! Where are you, William? (ALGERNON *appears from behind the screen wrapped in the traveling rug, his head still done up.*) So that's where you've disappeared to. You wait till the Doctor talks to you. You never appeared for dinner at all. And look at you. You are a nice looking object, aren't you?

ALGERNON.

I apologize, but I was feeling so wretched. (*His voice dies away as with a horror-stricken look he points to the orange blossoms on her head.*) Good heavens! It isn't possible that you are to be the bride.

MRS. TOBIN.

Well, it just is possible, and you'd better get ready. (*She begins putting the chairs, etc., in their places.*)

ALGERNON.

(*Following her. Goes over to head of sofa and gets suit case.*)

But, madam, that wasn't what I understood. Are you sure this is Dr. Bellows' intentions?

MRS. TOBIN.

You are wasting a lot of time talking when there isn't a moment to spare.

ALGERNON.

But what I am asking is, are you, madam, expecting to enter the holy state of wedlock tonight?

MRS. TOBIN.

Well, now what do you think I got on this rig for? All you've got to do is to get dressed and be ready to do your part.

ALGERNON.

(Wringing his hands.)

But this is certainly out of all reason. You can't expect me to participate.

MRS. TOBIN.

Now what you've got to do is to get yourself decently dressed. You will participate or the Doctor and I will know the reason why. *(Backing him up through the door R. C.)*

ALGERNON.

But my dear madam—

MRS. TOBIN.

Go in there and get dressed and I'll see if I can find the Doctor.

ALGERNON.

Very well, madam, I am willing, if I have the strength to change my clothes. But remember this, you may lead a horse to water, you cannot make him drink. *(Exits through door R. C.)*

MRS. TOBIN.

Impertinent, useless, idle fellow. Serves Benjamin right for trying to put on airs with a butler. And the way the help talks back in this house is a sin and a shame.

FLORENCE and MRS. MACECKRON enter together from R.

FLORENCE.

The situation would be amusing if it were not so painful.

MRS. TOBIN.

Where is your father, Florence?

FLORENCE.

I don't know, I'm sure. Do you, Mrs. MacEckron?

MRS. MACECKRON.

How should I know?

MRS. TOBIN.

I told your father, Florence, that I wanted a private wedding. Some people couldn't take the hint when it is handed to them in black and white. (*Marches off L.*)

FLORENCE.

Don't pay any attention to her. I couldn't bear to be left here alone. You will stay, won't you?

MRS. MACECKRON.

It's very embarrassing for me, especially since that scene here before dinner.

FLORENCE.

Mr. Singleton says he thought Mrs. Tobin was you when he met her in the dark.

MRS. MACECKRON.

Nonsense, I'll never believe that. Of course I know he's a dreadful flirt, but even Singleton would have been a great improvement on MacEckron as a name.

FLORENCE.

I think Mr. Singleton is an old reprobate, and his nephew, Mr. May, is a chip of the old block. As

for that dreadful Mrs. Tobin, I don't see why father doesn't send her packing back to Skowhegan.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

I pity you, my dear, when that woman holds the reins here.

FLORENCE.

I'm so desperate that if Mr. May had been half way presentable I should have been tempted to accept him, just to get away from home.

SINGLETON *enters from L., advances effusively to C. to greet them.*

SINGLETON.

Ah, here you are. Where have you been hiding? I've been looking everywhere to explain to you.

FLORENCE.

(Frigidly marching past him and up through the dining room.)

You will excuse me. Your actions explain themselves. *(Exits L. U. door.)*

SINGLETON.

But my dear Mrs. MacEckron. Certainly you are not so foolish as to think that I could possibly—*(holding out his hands)*.

MRS. MACHECKRON.

(Sailing past him to L.)

I am staying to the wedding out of regard for Florence and the Doctor. I don't see how you and I can have anything to say to each other. *(Crossing to L.)*

DR. BELLOWS *entering L. at the same moment almost collides with* MRS. MACHECKRON. *He grabs her hand.*

MRS. MACÉCKRON.

Dr. Bellows, I want to have just a word with you while there is time.

DR. BELLOWS.

Dearest of women, I can never tell you what I have endured these last few hours. The poet says blessings brighten as they take their flight. (*Putting her arm through his, coming into the C. of the room, paying no attention to SINGLETON, who stands up stage watching them jealously.*) When I realize the happiness that has been mine in your friendship, dear Mrs. MacEckron, I stand aghast at the foolish whim which even for a brief time diverted my thoughts from the dearest little woman in the world. (*Looking down into her eyes.*)

MRS. MACÉCKRON.

(*Returning his gaze.*)

Oh, Doctor, do you really mean all that?

DR. BELLOWS.

Can you doubt me? Can you doubt yourself? And your power over a heart that has sometimes wavered, but in the end beats true to the sweetest of her sex. (*Carries her hand to his lips.*)

SINGLETON.

(*Who has come down C. and is pulling DR. BELLOWS' sleeve.*)

Ben, look here, Ben—

DR. BELLOWS.

What's the matter with you, Simeon? Can't you see I'm busy?

SINGLETON.

But look here, Ben, this won't do.

DR. BELLOWS.

Go away, can't you? I am engaged.

SINGLETON.

That's just the point. You are engaged to Mrs. Tobin.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, come now. After seeing you making love to her? I don't see how you have the audacity to mention Mrs. Tobin's name to me. Do you, Mrs. MacEckron?

MRS. MACECKRON.

Well, I must say, if appearances are anything, Mr. Singleton is a very powerful rival of yours, Doctor.

SINGLETON.

(Running around to the R. of MRS. MACECKRON.)

My dearest lady. If you would only permit me to explain.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Taking her over R.)

Now, Simeon, there's nothing to explain. Everything was explained in this room two hours ago.

SINGLETON.

(Tagging after them.)

Now, Ben, don't be an ass.

DR. BELLOWS.

Simeon, I must ask you to remember that you are in the presence of a lady.

SINGLETON.

(Completely losing his temper.)

Why, you old fool—

DR. BELLOWS.

I shall protect this lady's ears from any further profanity and abusive language. This is my house and she is under my protection.

SINGLETON.

(*Shouting sarcastically.*)

Ha ha, that's good. That's *good*. What would your Amelia say to that, I wonder.

DR. BELLOWS.

My Amelia? Ha ha, that *is* good. *Your* Amelia, you'd better say.

SINGLETON.

Mine! That's ridiculous. Just because of that mistake this afternoon—

DR. BELLOWS.

Mrs. MacEckron, you saw his rapturous embraces, you heard his lavish endearments.

SINGLETON.

Rapturous fiddlesticks. That was a mistake.

DR. BELLOWS.

Amelia didn't appear to think it was a mistake.

SINGLETON.

(*Violently.*)

Amelia be—

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Quickly.*)

Simeon!

MRS. MACECKRON.

I really think, Mr. Singleton, that you are forgetting yourself. I shall leave you to settle your quarrel alone. (*Exit C. off L.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

There now, you've upset everything again. I had something very particular to say to her.

SINGLETON.

You're a nice bridegroom. Here you are, standing on the brink of matrimony, and you have the nerve

to actually flirt with a lady toward whom I have the most serious intentions.

DR. BELLOWS.

Serious intentions? *You* serious? That's really too good. (*Laughs derisively.*)

SINGLETON.

Laugh away, laugh away! Amelia will make you laugh on the other side of your mouth.

DR. BELLOWS.

I resign all claim to Amelia in your favor.

SINGLETON.

No you don't. You can't do that.

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes I can. Everyone in the house saw her in your arms.

SINGLETON.

But I tell you it was the wrong woman.

DR. BELLOWS.

She seemed to know who you were, all right. Called you Simeon, and then Simmie. No woman would dare call a man Simmie unless there was an understanding between them.

SINGLETON.

Look here, Ben, you know I'm a man of taste. Do you think I could ever fall for a woman like Amelia Tobin?

DR. BELLOWS.

(*As they both stand together down C.*)

I don't know anything about your taste. All I say is, take her with my blessing.

MRS. TOBIN *enters L. U. through the dining room, sees them, comes down C. behind them. They do not hear her.*

SINGLETON.

No, old man, I'm not the man to interfere with

your happiness. Take her and may you live long and happy.

DR. BELLOWS.

No, Sim, I want you to have her. I'm glad to step out of the way.

MRS. TOBIN.

(Slipping an arm through each of theirs as she separates them. Both men silent in their surprise and embarrassment.)

Are you two naughty boys quarreling about me? Why, Benny, I'm surprised at you. And you, too, Simmie.

SINGLETON.

(Trying to get away.)

Ben was just saying he wanted to see you alone before the ceremony.

MRS. TOBIN.

(Pulling him back to her side.)

Just wait a minute, Simmie.

DR. BELLOWS.

No, no, it was Singleton here said he wanted a word with you privately. *(Trying to move away L.)*

MRS. TOBIN.

(Pulling him back.)

Now you two bad boys mustn't make me cross. You know how sensitive I am, and you shouldn't upset me in a crisis like this.

SINGLETON.

That's right, Ben, she's nervous. I'll leave her to your tender care. *(Tries to move off again.)*

DR. BELLOWS.

No, no. I can see, Simmie, that she's longing for a private understanding with you. *(Tries to move*

off. She draws them both to her again, her voice hardening.)

MRS. TOBIN.

Just you keep quiet, both of you. Benjamin, you asked me to marry you and it is down in black and white in your letters. Those letters are safe in Skowhegan, Maine, so unless I change my mind before the minister comes I am going to be Mrs. Bellows, just make up your mind to that.

SINGLETON.

(Delighted.)

There, Ben, old boy, I knew she was faithful and true to you. Take my blessing, both of you. And now if you'll excuse me—*(starts to go R.)*

MRS. TOBIN.

(Holding on to him.)

Wait a minute. I said *if* I don't change my mind. I've got some letters from you, too, in Skowhegan, and they'd make wonderful reading in court. I'd hate to sue either of you for breach of promise, but I am a lone widow and I've got my child to provide for. I have cut my eye teeth on four husbands. So I know something about men. I haven't got any false pride and I'd just as soon kick up a rumpus in the newspapers as not. I don't wish to threaten anybody, but the letters you two old codgers have written would make mighty lively reading in the New York papers. Now if you will just keep your minds on that and put on your Sunday-go-to-meetin' clothes, we can have a quiet but happy wedding this evening. You know your duty now, march! *(DR. BELLOWS in quiet desperation exits through door R. C. SINGLETON goes off L. She watches them off, turns and folds her arms in a satisfied manner.)* It's

a shame I can't marry both of them. I wish I knew which was the better off. Benjamin is steadier than Simeon, so I guess I'll let matters stand as they are. (*A big row is heard up R. Voices quarreling.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

What the devil do you mean by coming in here? Get out, get out, get out of my room.

The door at R. C. opens suddenly and ALGERNON enters hastily as though he had been shoved out. He has on full dress trousers and shirt, suspenders hanging down his back, no collar or tie. Towel tucked in his neck as though about to shave. His hair is disordered. In his arms he carries his open suit case containing soap, vest, ties, collars, cuffs, pajamas, comb, brush, hand mirror, everything in disorder, and the garments hanging half out of the suit case. One-half of his face is lathered, the other half shaved.

ALGERNON.

(*Going L. C.*)

This is an outrage, the crowning outrage.

MRS. TOBIN.

My land, William, what in the world are you trying to do?

ALGERNON.

That man should be confined in an asylum. I have never been so mistreated in my life.

MRS. TOBIN.

You just finish dressing and be quick about it. I'm going to hurry this thing through.

ALGERNON.

Well, don't expect me to fulfill my part of the bargain.

MRS. TOBIN.

I don't want any back talk. What do you mean standing there in that condition. Go into the pantry and finish shaving. The idea!

ALGERNON.

Very good. Just let me get shaved and—

MRS. TOBIN.

(Clapping her hands at him.)

Go on with you. *(He runs out L.)* The idea. We get better help than that in Skowhegan, Maine.

GEORGE.

(Outside.)

Mo-ther, oh, mo-ther!

MRS. TOBIN.

(Calling out.)

Here I am, darling.

GEORGE and DOLLY appear at C. door, DOLLY whispering to him and indicating that he is to follow her instructions and go in to his mother.

GEORGE.

(To DOLLY.)

All right, I will. *(DOLLY disappears off R.)*

MRS. TOBIN.

What is it, dearie?

GEORGE.

(Coming down to her C.)

I want to tell you something, ma.

MRS. TOBIN.

Well, well, what is it?

GEORGE.

You know Dolly, that old little girl.

MRS. TOBIN.

Well, what about her?

GEORGE.

Well, she just told me something.

MRS. TOBIN.

Well, for goodness sake, what is it?

GEORGE.

Why she told me that her mother just found out that Dr. Bellows had lost all his money.

MRS. TOBIN.

(Taking the shock with a gasp.)

No! Georgie Tobin, is that the truth?

GEORGE.

Yes, sir, she says Dr. Bellows has spent all he's got on that old invention of his.

MRS. TOBIN.

That steam bath?

GEORGE.

Yes. Dolly says that he's ruined himself over it. I believe she's right. You better look out, ma. He'll get your money, too.

MRS. TOBIN.

For the land sake. And here I was ready to take the plunge. Georgie, it's a good thing you found this out.

GEORGE.

Dolly says it's because he's broke that he's crazy to get Florence married to Mr. Singleton's nephew.

MRS. TOBIN.

Of course. Simeon Singleton is a rich man. That's why that Mrs. Mac—what's-her-name is trying to get him on her hook. Now look here, Georgie, you

just keep your eye on ma, and you'll see her come out at the big end of the horn. Don't say a word to the Doctor.

GEORGE.

All right, I won't.

MRS. TOBIN.

Don't say anything to anybody, but I'll just tell you, Georgie, the Tobins are going to come out on top. (*Exits R. DOLLY peeks around C. door from R. watching her off.*)

DOLLY.

Georgie, did you tell her what I told you to?

GEORGE.

Sure I did.

DOLLY.

And did she believe it?

GEORGE.

Well, I should say so. Isn't it true?

DOLLY.

No, Georgie. That is what is popularly known as a whopper.

GEORGE.

You mean a lie?

DOLLY.

Yes. Now don't look so frightened, Georgie. Your mother gets away with an awful lot of prevarication, and so does mine, too. Everything is getting in an awful mess with our family affairs and it is up to us to straighten them out.

GEORGE.

Yes, but I hate lies! Ma tells 'em, but I don't.

DOLLY.

(*Patting his arm.*)

You are a very unusual person, Georgie, but you have no talent for generalship.

GEORGE.

Well, Gee Whizz, you have.

DOLLY.

I know it. I *have* to have. I'm going to get my mother married and off my hands this summer or in desperation I'll run away with some one and get married myself. I *will* be emancipated.

GEORGE.

Say, look here, Dolly. Do you mean that about getting married yourself?

DOLLY.

Well, of course I was speaking rhetorically.

GEORGE.

You know, I'd like to keep company with you. I could learn a whole lot from you.

DOLLY.

Yes, your education has been of the most elementary character. It would be interesting to take you in hand.

GEORGE.

Well, then, come on, take me.

DOLLY.

(Looking him over.)

A little sophistication and polish and you wouldn't be a bad proposition. Come out in the summer house and tell me about those farms of yours. A country estate appeals to me.

(As they go out C. door.)

GEORGE.

I don't know anything about country estates, but when it comes to farming I'm some boy, Dolly.
(They exit C. off L.)

SINGLETON.

(*Noise of row off L. He is heard shouting angrily.*)

No, sir, get out of my room. I told you I washed my hands of you.

ALGERNON.

But Uncle Simeon, let me finish shaving.

SINGLETON.

(*Outside.*)

Get out. (*Noise of door slamming and his voice is shut off.*)

ALGERNON *with his disordered suit case still in his arms, the towel in his neck and a small patch of lather left on one side of his chin, enters L.*

ALGERNON.

If I can only get dressed and to a restaurant, I'll take the first train out of here, and Dr. Bellows, my uncle and this whole household can go straight to—

DR. BELLOWS *has opened the door R. C. and throws a pair of shoes out at ALGERNON.*

DR. BELLOWS.

William, clean those. (*Closes the door.*)

ALGERNON.

(*Putting down his suit case, picking up the shoes, going up to the door R. C. and knocking.*)

Dr. Bellows. (*Knocks again.*) Dr. Bellows. (DR. BELLOWS *opens the door angrily. Putting on white tie, in dress trousers and shirt.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Look here, what do you want?

ALGERNON.

Here are your shoes.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Roaring.*)

What?

ALGERNON.

I said, here are your shoes.

DR. BELLOWS.

You haven't got them polished already.

ALGERNON.

Do you mean to say that you expect me to polish your shoes?

DR. BELLOWS.

Well, did you think I expected you to eat them?
(*Bangs the door shut. ALGERNON, confused, starts down stage with them, then, in a determined manner, goes back to the door. Knocks.*)

ALGERNON.

Dr. Bellows, just a moment, please.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*From within.*)

Get away from that door.

AUGUSTUS *enters from L.*

AUGUSTUS.

Hello, that footman is badly trained, looks untidy. They don't know 'ow to train the servants in America.

ALGERNON.

Mr. May, you'll have to pardon my appearance. I am going through the most frightful experience of my life. (*Remembers the shoes in his hand.*) These are Dr. Bellows' shoes.

AUGUSTUS.

Well, what of it, old chap?

ALGERNON.

I don't understand the Doctor at all.

AUGUSTUS.

There's just your difficulty, William. You don't seem to understand anything. I shall 'ave to take you in 'and.

ALGERNON.

I never was treated so in my life. I haven't even been shown to my room yet.

AUGUSTUS.

I can't complain. A nicer room I never 'ad; large double bed, bath adjoining, oriental rugs—oh this 'ere America is wonderful.

FLORENCE *enters L. U. door through dining room.*

FLORENCE.

William. Just a moment, William.

ALGERNON.

I'm coming. (*To AUGUSTUS.*) There is the only human being in the house. (*Goes up into dining room. They talk in an undertone, going off L. U. door.*)

AUGUSTUS.

William is a bit off 'is 'ead. I shall ask the Governor, I think, for another 'ousemaid. These 'ere American footmen are no good.

DR. BELLOWS *enters from room R. C., fully dressed in evening clothes, except for coat, brushing his hair with military brushes.*

DR. BELLOWS.

William, William! Oh, there you are, Augustus. Well, I might as well have it out with you first as last.

AUGUSTUS.

'Ave it out with me?

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, it's a very unpleasant duty I have to perform,

but the sooner it's over the better. The fact is, Augustus, you won't do at all.

AUGUSTUS.

Won't do?

DR. BELLOWS.

That's what I said. You won't do at all.

AUGUSTUS.

But, sir, I 'aven't 'ad a chance yet. You got the letter explaining my capabilities.

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, I did, but you are not at all the man the letter said you were.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Distressed.*)

But in what way?

DR. BELLOWS.

I don't like your habits.

AUGUSTUS.

My 'abits?

DR. BELLOWS.

No, and neither does my daughter. She positively refuses to marry you.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Astounded.*)

Your daughter—refuses—well, sir, I'm sure the very idea of marrying your daughter makes me very proud, and it's most democratic of you to entertain it. I should never 'ave thought of such a thing. All the same the young lady's been making eyes at me ever since I've been down 'ere.

DR. BELLOWS.

That's your conceit. She can't bear the sight of you and says she wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth.

AUGUSTUS.

(His pride thoroughly aroused, he flicks a speck of dust off his coat with a superior air.)

Oh, very well. I don't think I should like it 'ere anyhow, and as for your daughter's opinion, it really doesn't matter.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Furiously.)

Doesn't matter? AUGUSTUS.

No, sir. And I might as well make a little confession to you, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

A confession. AUGUSTUS.

Your daughter is a very nice gel, but when it comes to love, I've fallen 'ead over 'eels in love with your little parlor maid.

ALGERNON *re-entering the dining room from L. U. door in time to hear this last remark.*

ALGERNON.

He in love with her, too.

DR. BELLOWS.

This is an insult. AUGUSTUS.

If it is agreeable to you to 'ave a married man in this position I'm willing to take 'er for a wife tomorrow. I think this will give you great satisfaction, sir.

ALGERNON.

Horror!

DR. BELLOWS.

How dare you, sir! How dare you! You come down here to marry my daughter, and you insult her by falling in love with the maid.

ALGERNON.

(Now thoroughly at sea.)

"Come down to marry his daughter."

AUGUSTUS.

But my intentions are perfectly honorable, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

Damn your intentions. Get out of my house.

AUGUSTUS.

(Retreating up center near stand L. C., on which is ALGERNON'S hat, which AUGUSTUS mistakes for his own and picks up.) I intend to lead 'er to the halter, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Wildly.)

You won't lead her anywhere. Leave my house this instant.

AUGUSTUS.

I 'ad my suspicions that you was crazy, and now I am sure of it. (Exits C. off R.)

DR. BELLOWS.

Get out. Get out. (Exits R. C.)

ALGERNON.

(Quite unconscious that he still has a shoe in each hand.)

This is the most amazing situation. Dr. Bellows has been playing a double game, encouraging me and with another suitor for his daughter's hand on the ground.

MAGGIE entering C. from L.

MAGGIE.

There he goes, that lovely Mr. May, and he never told me good-bye.

ALGERNON.

You seem agitated, Miss—

MAGGIE.

Well, I should say I am.

ALGERNON.

May I speak to you for a moment?

MAGGIE.

Indeed you can't. I've got too much on my mind.

DR. BELLOWS *re-enters R. C.*

MAGGIE.

Dr. Bellows may I speak to you for a moment?
(ALGERNON *goes back into the dining room trying to think what to do.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, yes, yes; what is it? Be quick about it. I'm nearly out of my mind.

MAGGIE.

I want to tell you something, Doctor—something has happened today. I want to make a confession to you.

DR. BELLOWS.

What *you* with a confession. Well, out with it.

MAGGIE.

(*Very sentimentally.*)

You see it's this way. I've fallen in love, and I think I ought to tell you.

DR. BELLOWS.

It's none of my business if you've fallen in love.

MAGGIE.

Oh, but it is in this case, sir. Because the man I'm in love with is your son-in-law that is to be.

DR. BELLOWS.

Now, I'd like to know what's the matter with you. What's taking hold of everybody. My maid in love with my son-in-law. You ought to be sent away.

MAGGIE.

That's just what I mean, sir. I couldn't be happy

here. Unrequited love is a terrible thing, and if he marries Miss Florence—

DR. BELLOWS.

Pack your things and go. How dare you discuss such things as my daughter's private affairs. I'll close the house. I'll sell off the furniture, live in the garage and eat at the cafeteria.

MAGGIE.

I'm just as anxious to go as you are to have me, believe me. (*Exits L.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

What is the world coming to? And there is Amelia. (*Wilting.*) I'd run away if I was sure she wouldn't put it in the papers and get the police after me.

ALGERNON *comes down from the dining room.*
FLORENCE *re-enters L. U. door into dining room and lingers in the background listening.*

ALGERNON.

Dr. Bellows, it's time that you and I came to an understanding.

DR. BELLOWS.

Now what are *you* driveling about?

ALGERNON.

I have just heard things said that make me feel—

DR. BELLOWS.

Now what the devil does it matter what you feel. You forget yourself, William.

ALGERNON.

But I see that a great mistake has been made and I wish to rectify it.

DR. BELLOWS.

Never mind rectifying. Shut up and finish my shoes.

ALGERNON.

(*Now losing his own temper and getting into a towering rage.*)

It's a very long worm that has no turning, Dr. Bellows, but you have gone too far. You have outraged every instinct of my manhood, you have humiliated me before every one in this house, you have lied about me to my uncle, you have permitted me to be made the laughing stock of your guests, you have imposed the most menial services upon me, and you haven't given me one morsel of food, nor shown me the commonest courtesy since I entered your door; and as for these, *take them.* (*Takes the shoes at DR. BELLOWS.* FLORENCE screams and runs down to him.)

FLORENCE.

Oh, William!

SINGLETON *entering from L. in full dress.*

SINGLETON.

What's the row?

DR. BELLOWS.

You ought to hear this fellow.

ALGERNON.

Well, he *will* hear me. You are *all* going to hear me before I leave this house. Your injustice and cruelty to me I shall remember to my dying day. As for your old college friend, Dr. Bellows, I don't wish him ever to address me again. As for his daughter, I refuse to discuss her. There is just one human being that I shall remember with pleasure when I leave this house, and that is the kind little maid who has shown herself to be not only an angel of mercy, but a lady. I have the honor to wish you all a very good evening. (*Grabs up AUGUSTUS' soft hat from stand R. of C. and rushes C. off R.*)

FLORENCE.

(Rushing to her father down R. C.)

Father, how can you treat that poor fellow so? What has he done?

DR. BELLOWS.

What has he done? He's done nothing. I never saw such a worthless fellow in my life.

SINGLETON.

My dear, this is all my fault. I blame myself for everything.

FLORENCE.

Oh, you had nothing to do with it. Father, I want to make a confession to you.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Wincing.)

Good Lord! Another confession?

FLORENCE.

Yes. I never believed in love at first sight until now, but I know what I feel. I know my own heart, and father, I'm—I'm in love.

DR. BELLOWS.

With whom?

SINGLETON.

Not my nephew, surely?

FLORENCE.

No. I suppose I should be ashamed to confess it, but I'm not. I have fallen in love with the butler. *(Both men exclaim.)* I couldn't help it. No one has understood him but me. He is so refined, so intellectual, for a man in his position. So noble, so patient, so—so everything.

DR. BELLOWS.

Oh, this is the end of everything. I am ashamed of you. If you were a little younger, miss, I'd

lock you in your room and keep you on bread and water for a week. Don't tell me anything more. This blow is the hardest of all. (*Drops into a chair R. C., and FLORENCE weeping in her handkerchief, goes off R.*) This is the straw that is going to break the camel's back.

SINGLETON.

Bear up, Ben. I must say it is a bit of a shock to me, too. I would never think it of a refined and charming girl like Florence. I must confess—

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Jumping to his feet.*)

No, no, don't you confess. I don't think I can stand another confession.

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Outside R.*)

Where's your father, Florence?

DR. BELLOWS and SINGLETON each starts to tip-toe stealthily, DR. BELLOWS to his room R. C., SINGLETON off L. and exit. MRS. TOBIN enters R. followed by GEORGE.

MRS. TOBIN.

Now, Georgie, stop your teasing. You mustn't think of getting married for years yet.

GEORGE.

I've got my nerve up, Ma. You tried to put it over on me, telling me I'm only eighteen, just to keep me out of my part of the property. I'll be twenty-one next month, and that's of age.

MRS. TOBIN.

Now Georgie, mother knows best what's good for her boy. You'd have been making a fool of yourself over some girl if you'd known how old you were. You leave everything to me.

GEORGE.

No, I've been gettin' engaged, and you might as well know it.

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Furious.*)

You—you wouldn't dare.

GEORGE.

Yes I would. And if you don't let me have my way I'll tell Mr. Singleton that those letters weren't written to you at all.

MRS. TOBIN.

(*Alarmed.*)

Hush, Georgie, don't talk so loud.

MRS. MAC ECKRON *enters from L.* DOLLY *enters C. from R.*

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

Oh, here's the lovely, blushing bride. Where's the happy bridegroom?

MRS. TOBIN.

You just hold your horses. You'll see him in a minute. (*To GEORGE.*) Now you keep still till after the wedding. That's all I ask. (*To MRS. MAC ECKRON.*) Now you'll see him. (*Calls at the top of her voice.*) Benny—Simmie—oh, Benny—oh, Simmie!

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

My goodness, you can't marry them both.

MRS. TOBIN.

Benjamin! Simeon! Have I got to come after you?

Door R. C. opens slowly and DR. BELLOWS enters, coat on, but thoroughly crushed. SINGLETON does the same from L.

MRS. TOBIN.

There, now, Mrs. MacEckron. Here's the happy bridegroom.

MRS. MACHECKRON

(*To DOLLY.*)

A female Brigham Young.

MRS. TOBIN.

It seems to me it is about time we got down to business.

SINGLETON.

Just a moment, I've forgotten something.

MRS. TOBIN.

You stay right here, Simeon.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Up C. looking off R.*)

Wait a moment. Wait a moment. Singleton, here comes your nephew on the run.

AUGUSTUS, *out of breath, enters C. from R.*

AUGUSTUS.

I beg pardon, but in the indignation of the moment I forgot my suit case.

DR. BELLOWS.

Your suit case?

SINGLETON.

I thought you said it was my nephew.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Handing DR. BELLOWS a check.*)

Yes, sir, I want my suit case, and here's the check you gave me, but I want my traveling expenses paid and the employment agent's fees.

DR. BELLOWS.

Your uncle and I will arrange that.

AUGUSTUS.

My uncle?

SINGLETON.

His uncle?

POSITIONS.

AUGUSTUS. DR. BELLOWS.

MRS. MACE. (Up C.) GEORGE.

MRS. TOBIN. SINGLETON.
(Down R.) (Down L.)

DR. BELLOWS.

(Pointing to SINGLETON.)

Isn't that your uncle?

AUGUSTUS.

No, sir, I never saw the gentleman before today.

SINGLETON.

That cockney my nephew?

DR. BELLOWS.

And what the deuce do you mean by employment agent's fees?

AUGUSTUS.

Why, 'iggins, sir.

DR. BELLOWS.

Great heavens! I see it all. You came on an earlier train and—Singleton, what do you think, I tried to make your nephew clean my shoes.

SINGLETON.

Do you mean to say that *this* is the man you said behaved so badly down here?

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes. It is.

AUGUSTUS.

I apologize, sir. I did go a bit too far, but I'm a stranger in this country, and I did take things a bit too free and easy perhaps.

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, your idea of a democracy isn't exactly ours, Augustus, but stay and try again.

ALGERNON *rushes on C. from R. and comes down, has DR. BELLOWS' jacket over his arm.*

ALGERNON.

I forgot to return this disreputable garment of yours, Dr. Bellows. (*Tosses it at DR. BELLOWS and starts back C.*)

(*Everybody exclaims.*)

SINGLETON.

There's Algernon, my nephew.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*To ALGERNON.*)

My young friend, my *dear* young friend. Do you know it would serve me right if you knocked me down?

ALGERNON.

I certainly do, and if you'd been a younger man, I'd have done it long ago.

SINGLETON.

It's all been a mistake, Algy.

DR. BELLOWS.

Yes, you see, I thought you were the butler I had ordered sent down. (*DR. BELLOWS is shaking one of ALGERNON'S hands and SINGLETON the other.*)

ALGERNON.

That explains everything. (*Gets into his own coat and vest, which are still on the sofa in his open suit case.*)

MAGGIE *enters L. U. door through dining room carrying satchel, a handbox, a suit box and an umbrella.*

MRS. TOBIN.

When you all get settled down, I have a few words to say. (*Sees MAGGIE.*) Now what do *you* want?

MAGGIE.

I am leaving, and before I go I want the Doctor to look through my trunk and count the spoons. There is a certain party in this house (*with a glare at Mrs. TOBIN*) that I wouldn't put anything past.

DR. BELLOWS.

Count the spoons? Nonsense. Where is my daughter?

ALGERNON AND AUGUSTUS (*together, pointing to MAGGIE*). There she is.

DR. BELLOWS.

Nonsense. That's Maggie Brady, our maid.

AUGUSTUS.

My word, is that so?

ALGERNON.

(*His face lighting up.*)

That explains everything.

MAGGIE.

Here is Miss Florence.

FLORENCE *enters R.*

FLORENCE.

Father, the minister is coming up the walk.

(*The bell rings. DR. BELLOWS falls into AUGUSTUS' arms and SINGLETON into ALGERNON'S arms, immediately recovering.*)

MRS. TOBIN.

Now I guess you'll pay attention to me.

FLORENCE.

Maggie, go to the door. (*MAGGIE exits R.*)

AUGUSTUS.

So the maid is the mistress.

ALGERNON.

And the mistress is the maid.

MRS. MACECKRON.

Florence, dear, everyone else seems paralyzed. Let me introduce you to Mr. Singleton's nephew.

ALGERNON.

Algernon Clawhammer at your service.

FLORENCE.

Oh, how wonderful.

(After recovering, SINGLETON and DR. BELLOWS have gotten together C. MRS. TOBIN looks at both of them with a stern eye.)

MRS. TOBIN.

I have just about decided, Benjamin, that my feelings have cooled in the last twenty-five years.

DR. BELLOWS.

(Thoughtfully.)

Amelia, do you mean that?

MRS. TOBIN.

I could never love you as a wife should.

DR. BELLOWS.

(With a low bow.)

I thank you.

MRS. TOBIN.

While you, Simeon—

SINGLETON.

(Looking wildly around.)

Help! I've got to get back to the city. I've got to take the next train. *(Begins grabbing everybody's hand and shaking it goodbye.)*

MRS. TOBIN.

(Taking his arm and bringing him down stage.)

Now, Simmie, don't make this too embarrassing for us both. You know very well what I know. All I

need mention is what is in the bank at Skowhegan. You are a wild old thing, and somebody has got to tame you before you get one foot in the grave. Providence seems to have laid that work out for me.

SINGLETON.

(*Under his breath to her.*)

This is sheer blackmail.

MRS. TOBIN.

Prove it then.

SINGLETON.

I only wish I had the nerve, but I could never face the yellow journals. (*They continue talking in an undertone.*)

MAGGIE enters from R.

MAGGIE.

The minister is waiting in the front parlor. (*Casts a killing glance at AUGUSTUS, which he returns. DR. BELLOWS over L. of MRS. MAC ECKRON.*)

DR. BELLOWS.

Why not make it a double wedding to save accidents.

MRS. MAC ECKRON.

But, Doctor, this is so sudden. (*DOLLY nudges her and signals for her to accept.*) Oh, well, if you will insist.

POSITIONS.

FLORENCE.

ALGERNON.

(*Up C.*)

MAGGIE.

AUGUSTUS.

(*Up R.*)

MRS. TOBIN.

SINGLETON.

(*R. C.*)

DOLLY.

GEORGE.

(*L. C.*)

MRS. MAC E.

DR. BELLOWS.

(*Down L.*)

MRS. TOBIN.

Come on, Simmie, and look pleasant. (*With a sigh of resignation SINGLETON gives her his arm and they start off R., followed by DR. BELLOWS and MRS. MAC ECKRON.*)

ALGERNON.

(*To FLORENCE, to whom he has been talking animatedly.*)

Why not? It was love at first sight.

FLORENCE.

I dare if you dare. (*Takes his arm and they follow the others.*)

AUGUSTUS.

I wonder if the Governor would object to another little wedding on the side.

MAGGIE.

Leave it to me. (*Arm in arm they follow.*)

GEORGE.

(*To DOLLY.*)

We've got our mothers on the run. Why not make it a fiver.

DOLLY.

I'm willing. This is our emancipation proclamation.

(*They follow. The dialogue must come very quickly during this last business before the characters get off.*)

CURTAIN.

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