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OF PLAYS**

The Beantown Choir

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WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
BOSTON

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BAKER, 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

The Beantown Choir

A Farcical Entertainment in Three Acts

By

WALTER BEN HARE

*Author of "The Boy Scouts," "Christmas with the Mulligans,"
"The Camp Fire Girls," "A Couple of Million," "The Dutch
Detective," "The Hoodoo," "The Heiress Hunters," "Isosce-
les," "Much Ado About Betty," "A Pageant of History,"
"Professor Pepp," "Teddy, or, The Runaways," "The
White Christmas," "The Adventures of Grandpa,"
"Grandma Gibbs of the Red Cross," "The Scout
Master," "Twelve Old Maids," "Over Here," etc.*

BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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PS 3515
A575 B45
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The Beantown Choir

CHARACTERS

- THE WIDOW WOOD, *of course she would, all widows would.*
BETH WOOD, *her stepdaughter, a real sweet girl.*
HEZEKIAH DOOLITTLE, *jest as full of mischief as a dog is of fleas.*
MRS. DO-REE-MEE SCALES, *the director of the choir, pity her!*
BELINDA SNIX, *who orter be in grand opera, or somewheres.*
TESSIE TOOMS, *who pianns and organs jest lovely.*
SALLIE ETTA PICKLE, *who takes high C jest like a cough-drop.*
MANDY HANSLINGER, *her voice was cultivated on the cultivator.*
BIRDIE CACKLE, *a twittering birdie who sings like a lark, er sump' m.*
GRANDMAW HOWLER, *who'd be a good singer yet, if her voice had 'a' held out.*
SAMANTHA SNIGGINS, *aged eight, little, but—oh, my!*
BASHFUL BILL BOOMER, *long on bass but short on nerve.*
Male Quartet, and two Men for Tableau. Fedediah Girls quartet.

SYNOPSIS

- ACT I. The choir rehearses. Discord.
ACT II. The donation party. A forte climax and a crash.
ACT III. The concert. Harmony.
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COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

THE WIDOW WOOD.—Aged 46. Wrinkle the face with soft lead pencil. Rouge should be plentifully applied high up on the cheek bones. Broaden and blacken the eyebrows. Wear nose-glasses. The rôle requires a good loud-speaking voice and a commanding carriage. It is the leading part in the play and should be carefully rehearsed. For the first act she wears a house dress and apron, changing to the ludicrous costume described in the play for the latter part of the act. In the second act she wears a wrapper or kimono and has her jaw tied up with red flannel and white bandages. In the third act she wears an elaborate wedding dress, veil, wreath, etc. This rôle does not require singing ability.

BETH.—Aged 20. A sweet, pretty girl who can sing soprano. Simple house dress in Acts I and II. White dress with large white hat in Act III.

HEZEKIAH.—A gawky country boy of about 18. White socks, large shoes, tan suit much too small for him, red necktie, funny hat. Touseled red or blond wig and eyebrows painted to match. Freckle the face all over with black dots. Draw white lines around the eyes. A great rôle for a low comedian played similarly to the Fatty Arbuckle rôles in the moving pictures. Learn the lines exactly as written and practice all the funny falls, business, etc., at each rehearsal. Speak loud and slow but in a childish voice. This part has been successfully played by a lady on several occasions. Dry front teeth then cover two with hot black grease paint.

MRS. SCALES.—The choir directress. Old-fashioned costumes, very elaborate. Change costumes in each act. Should be played by a middle-aged woman if possible. Make-up should not be grotesque. She carries a tuning fork, and marks time for the singers in Acts I and II. Her first name should be pronounced Do-re-me, the first three notes of the scale.

BELINDA.—A good soprano singer. Old-fashioned costumes, somewhat grotesque. The quarrel scene with Sallie needs careful rehearsing and it can be made very funny, by waving the arms, crying, shouting and clenching. For the Jingle Bells tableau she wears a pretty winter costume, hat, furs, etc.

TESSIE.—The pianist. Funny old-fashioned costumes changing for each act. For Act III she wears an elaborate evening costume with exaggerated coiffure.

SALLIE.—Funny old maid. Grotesque costumes, coiffure and make-up. Side-curls, lace mitts, reticule, striped stockings, mincing walk, high-pitched voice. This is a very funny part and can be made one of the hits of the play if the actress will play it in a broad comedy manner and costume it for comedy effect.

MANDY.—Pretty young girl soprano. Old-fashioned costumes. Scotch costume for Annie Laurie tableau.

BIRDIE.—Pretty young girl alto. Old-fashioned costumes. Spanish costume of orange and black lace, mantilla, yellow rose over ear, high comb, etc., for Juanita costume.

GRANDMAW.—Old lady in black old-fashioned dress, white apron and cap. Large cane and black megaphone for ear trumpet. Walk bent over, speak in high-pitched old woman's voice. Hands tremble all the time. White hair and large spectacles. Neat gray costume with white lace fichu for Act III.

SAMANTHA.—A pert little girl. Childish costumes somewhat old-fashioned. This part could be played by small woman, if desired.

BILL.—Bashful bass singer in old-fashioned costumes. Negro make-up in Act III.

JEDEDIAH CHORUS MEN.—Full dress coats with buttons covered with tinfoil. Gray trousers. High collars made by turning up a turn-over collar. Ruffled white shirts, black bow ties.

JEDEDIAH GIRLS.—Hoop skirts, pantalettes, bell-crown bonnets tied under chins. Hair down in curls.

The Beantown Choir

ACT I

SCENE.—*Parlor at the WIDOW WOOD's home in Beantown. No scenery required. A plain, old-fashioned room with a piano down L. and entrances at L. and R. A small platform concealed by chenille curtains is at rear center. Table with chairs down R. Sofa and chairs up R. and L. Use old-fashioned furniture, pictures, ornaments, etc.*

(*At the rise of the curtain BETH WOOD is seen seated at the piano. She sings the first stanza and chorus of "Love's Old Sweet Song" and is well started on the second stanza when WIDOW WOOD enters from R. and surveys her angrily.*)

WID. Is that all you've got to do?

BETH. I was just resting a minute. The cakes are in the oven.

WID. You disturbed me while I was getting my beauty sleep up-stairs. How kin a body sleep when you're squawking down here like a delirious chicken with its head cut off? Are the sandwiches made? (BETH *nods.*) And the cream friz?

BETH. Hezekiah's freezing it now.

WID. You made the lemonade, didn't you?

BETH. It's in the ice-box.

WID. Dinner dishes washed and put away? (BETH *nods.*) So you hain't got nothin' to do but to set down to my pianny and play "Love's Old Sweet Song," hay?

BETH. I'm sorry if I disturbed you.

WID. You're allers a-disturbin' me. That's all the thanks I git fer givin' you a good home and everything.

BETH. I try to help you all I can.

WID. Yes, by playin' on my pianny when I need the beauty sleep. I suppose the minister is comin' to the choir rehearsal this afternoon and you're practicing up fer him?

BETH. No, he said he wasn't coming.

WID. Is that what he was tellin' you down at the gate last night? I thought he never would go and we'd have him here fer breakfast in the morning. Now you see here, Beth Wood, I ain't goin' to have no sich carryings-on at my front gate, even ef he *is* a minister. You tell him he can't come no more. You ain't old enough to kite around with the men yet, minister er no minister.

BETH. I'm nearly twenty.

WID. I was over forty when I married your paw.

BETH. Yes, I know.

WID. (*sharply*). I don't want no sass outa you, even if you air my stepdaughter. Ain't I got enough to bother about? It took me all morning to write that memorial poem to Brother Botts and even now I ain't got no rhyme to Botts.

BETH. Pots. (*Crosses to C. E.*)

WID. Pots ain't poetical and you know it. Ef he'd 'a' owned any real-estate I could 'a' said sump'm about lots, but he didn't. I ain't got the last verse done yet and the choir's due at two o'clock, and you a-squawkin' love songs and bangin' on my pianny, actually I'm so distracted that I dunno whether I'm standin' feet-up er head-up. (*Sinks in chair.*) Oh, I'm upsot, I'm all upsot. What was the minister a-talkin' to you about?

BETH. Well, he said — (*Pauses.*) He said —

WID. Took him purt' nigh two hours to say it. What was it?

BETH. He said he liked my pumpkin pie I took to the social.

WID. Your punkin pie? *Your* punkin pie! My punkins, wasn't they? My eggs, my lard, my sugar, my spices. All you did was to make it. (*BETH touches portières.*) You come away from that memorial. Don't you dasst touch it.

BETH. All right.

WID. I never see sich a gal. Lazy, good-for-nothing—

BETH. Mrs. Wood!

WID. Well, what is it?

BETH. I don't know what to do. I try so hard to please you, but I can't. Everything I do seems to be wrong. I don't know why it is. Maybe I'd better leave you and see if I can get a job in the city.

WID. Leave me? *Leave me!* And have every tongue-waggin' gossip in Beantown sayin' that I'm a cruel stepmother. Hush up that sniffin'! Don't you dasst to cry on my chenille portières. Get a job in the city, hay? Why, folks 'ud say I treated you like a slave. I ain't a-goin' to have 'em say that, even if I do, which I don't. You do your work and send that minister a-kitin', and stay in at night, and milk the cows, and do the farm chores and you won't hear no complaint from me. Come away from that memorial. You're liable to drag them portières down, and I ain't goin' to have that picture unveiled until the unveilin' time comes.

BETH (*crosses back to piano*). All right.

WID. My brother Botts was the director of the Beantown choir fer thirty years before he crossed into the River Jerden, and it is befittin' that they be the first to gaze on his picture. It is to be the surprise of the afternoon. Tessie Tooms will play "We Shall Meet, But We Shall Miss Him," and we'll all sing it, and at the beginning of the second verse I'll pull back the curtains and there he'll be.

BETH. They'll be surprised, I'm sure.

WID. Surprised? Well, I should think they would. It's a life-size crayon portrait and it cost me eight dollars and eighty-five cents, to say nothin' of the easel and the frame.

BETH. I am sure it will be a lovely memorial to your brother's memory.

WID. You bet it will. Finer'n anything in Beantown outside the cemetery. I been aimin' to have Brother Bottses tintype enlarged to life-size crayon fer years, and now it's did, and it'll be the sensation of the town.

BETH. Doesn't any one know anything about it?

WID. Not a word. I set it up and put them curtains up to cover it till the proper moment arrives fer the un-veilin'. Maybe I'll have your paw enlarged some time, when I git the money from the lower eighty. Some folks'll say I orter did it now, me bein' his widowed wife in mournin' fer nearly two years, but Brother Botts was sich a prominent man, him being the director of the Beantown choir fer over thirty years—I jist owed a memorial to his musical memory. I know the minister will be impressed, him being musical, too. I'm sorry he ain't comin' to the rehearsal.

BETH. He said he had to make some calls out in the country.

WID. My, my, how confidential you two must have got there at my garden gate. And all on account of a punkin pie. Say, hain't we got another one of them pies out in the ice-box?

BETH. Yes.

WID. I'm going to send it to him with my compliments. And I'm going to tell him it was *my* pie that made the impression on him last night. I'm goin' to send him over a hull pie this minute. (*Goes to door at L. and calls loudly.*) Hezekiah!

HEZEKIAH (*outside at L., bawls*). Huh? Whatcha want?

WID. I want you to go on a errant over to the minister's.

HEZ. (*outside*). I can't. I'm a-turnin' the ice-cream, and puttin' the dishes away on the buttery shelf.

WID. You come here this minute.

HEZ. Can't. I got my hands full, I tell ye.

WID. You drop what you're a-doin' and come here at once when I speak to you.

HEZ. (*yells*). What say?

WID. Drop what you're doin' and come here.

(*Loud crash of breaking dishes heard outside L.*)

BETH. Goodness, the dishes!

WID. My thunder to Betsy, I'll skin that boy alive.

(HEZ. *appears at L.*)

HEZ. (*grins*). I dropped it.

WID. What did you break now?

HEZ. Soup tureen, soup bowl, butter dish, two cups and three sassers. You says drop 'em, and (*makes gesture*) blooey, they dropped!

WID. (*rushes at him, grabs him and shakes him*). I'll learn you, I'll learn you!

HEZ. You don't have to larn me. I know how already. Droppin' soup tureens and sassers is one of the best tricks I do.

WID. (*pushes him to L.*). Oh, you heathen! You great, big, awkward, lummoxy, butter-fingered, addle-headed, over-weight gawk!

HEZ. Gosh! I didn't know they was so many words in the dictionary.

(*She jerks him out at L.*)

BETH (*takes letter from pocket and reads it*). "My dear Elizabeth, I love you better than anything on earth and feel that you are the only woman in the whole world who could make my happiness complete. True, I have known you but a short time, but who could know you at all without loving you, the dearest, sweetest little woman on earth. I want to marry you at once, as life is a dreary aching void without you. May I hope? Tomorrow night is the concert given by the choir to celebrate the close of my second year in Beantown. Why could we not arise after the concert and have Brother Layman, the presiding elder, unite us in the holy bonds of matrimony? I shall return from my country visitations late to-night; if you consent to my plan put a pot of blooming geraniums on the gate-post and make me the happiest man in the world. Let us keep our plans a secret until the ceremony, and believe me, sincerely and devotedly your own, Richard Manly."

(*She smiles, gives a deep sigh of joy and kisses the letter.*)

Enter MRS. SCALES, BELINDA SNIX and TESSIE TOOMS
from R.

BELINDA. We walked right in just like we owned the place. I guess you didn't hear us knock.

BETH (*puts letter under book on piano; embarrassed*). No. (*Shakes hands with them.*) But we are always glad to see you. How well you are looking, Mrs. Scales.

MRS. S. Well, ef I do my feelings belie my looks. I ain't hardly able to be out o' bed, much less direct the final rehearsal of the Beantown choir. But business is business, and here I am.

(MRS. S. *moves to piano, removing bonnet, shawl and lace mitts.*)

BETH. I'm awfully glad to see you, Miss Snix.

BEL. Thank you, Bethy. You're lookin' real sweet to-day. I suppose the widder hain't dressed yet?

(*Joins MRS. S., removing wraps.*)

BETH. Oh, yes. She's out in the kitchen.

BEL. (*to MRS. S.*). That's a good sign. That means we're goin' to have sump'm to eat.

TESS. (*shaking hands with BETH at R.*). Are we the first ones here?

BETH. Yes, and Mrs. Wood will be so glad, for you are her closest friends.

TESS. You're looking right well.

BETH (*laughs*). Oh, I'm always well. Come in here, ladies, and take off your things. (*Opens door at R.*)

BEL. (*crossing to R. with MRS. S.*). I hope some of the men-folks in the choir will turn up.

TESS. You're always thinking about the men, Belinda.

BEL. Not necessarily. But I dunno how we're goin' to have any part singin', less'n some basses and tenors shows up. [Exit, R.

TESS. Ain't it the truth!

MRS. S. Well, if they don't show up fer the last rehearsal the concert is goin' to be a failure. I kin direct a [Exit, R.

choir all right but goodness knows I can't sing tenor and bass, too. I'm strainin' my voice as it is. [*Exit, R.*]

Enter WID. from L., carrying a broom and leading HEZ. by the ear. HEZ. carries a pumpkin pie on a plate, covered with a napkin.

WID. Now you march straight over to the minister's and tell him the Widder Wood is sendin' him one of her own punkin pies with her compliments, and don't you dasst to fall down and break that pie, and don't you eat none of it. (*Suddenly.*) Hezekiah Doolittle, you take your thumb out'n that pie er I'll lamm the daylights outa you.

HEZ. You let go my ear. I can't do nothin' with you a-holdin' my ear. You're a-hurtin' me. My ear's tender, so it is.

WID. I'll tender you ef you break that pie.

(*Goes to piano; HEZ. crosses to R.*)

HEZ. (*peeps under the napkin*). Gosh, that looks good.

WID. Beth, I want you to sweep off the front porch, and there's a little dirt in here. (*Sweeps.*) You don't never half do your work. (*HEZ. sneezes.*) Don't you dasst to sneeze in that pie.

HEZ. (*balancing the plate on his finger tips*). I can't help sneezin', kin I? Sump'm tickled my nose and I jest had to sneeze er bust. (*Sneezes.*) Ker-choo.

(*Nearly drops the pie. WID. rushes to him and hits him with the broom.*)

WID. There!

HEZ. (*trips and falls, spilling pie on floor*). There!

(*Sits on floor.*)

WID. It's busted, the plate's busted and the pie's busted. (*Hits him with broom.*)

HEZ. (*rubs his back where she hit him*). I'm busted, too. (*Eats the pie.*)

WID. (*angrily*). Get up.

HEZ. (*with closed lips meaning "no"*). Um-umph.

WID. You get up!

HEZ. Don't you hit me.

(*Gets up on feet clumsily with his elbows still on floor.*)

WID. (*hits him with the broom, knocking him down again*). Spoil my pie, will you? You get right out there in the buttery and git that other pie and if you break that one, I'll wallop you till you warp.

(*He crawls out on knees at L., she whacking him with the broom and he yelling loudly. MRS. S., BEL. and TESS. appear at R.*)

BEL. (*sinks in chair at R., almost fainting*). Oh, it's a burglar, it's a burglar. I'm faint. Fan me. Help!—

TESS. (*fans her*). No, it hain't.

MRS. S. (*at c.*). What is it? Who was being murdered? Was it a tramp or a thief?

WID. It was Hezekiah. Beth, you clean up all that muss. He spilled a pie on the floor. (*Shakes hands with the ladies.*) I'm so glad to see you. Just set down and make yourselves at home. I've been so upsot in the kitchen that I ain't had time to finish my costume. Excuse me, jest a minute. Beth, you entertain them and then go and sweep off the front stoop. And you'd better look at the cakes in the oven. I hate scorchy cakes.

[*Exit, R.*]

BETH. Excuse me, while I look after the cakes.

[*Exit, L.*]

MRS. S. Ain't she an angel though? A regular angel fallen right down from the skies. If ever there was a fallen angel it's Bethy Woods. And the widder treats her worse'n pizen.

TESS. She makes her a regular slave. It's a wonder the child don't run away.

BEL. She works her like a nigger from morning till night, and won't let her go down to the village, er have company, er nothin'.

MRS. S. The preacher took her home from the meeting last night.

BEL. He did? Wall, I want to know.

MRS. S. I saw 'em when they passed by my house and I was so surprised that I nearly fell outa the open window.

TESS. Beth and the minister! Well, I never thought of that. It would make a lovely match, but what'll Sallie Etta say?

BEL. Sallie Etta Pickle will be left again, that's all. She's had her eyes on the minister ever since he set foot in Beantown two years ago.

MRS. S. It would be a blessing if he married Beth.

BEL. Hush, she's coming.

Enter BETH from L., carrying pie on plate and followed by HEZ.

BETH. You won't let this one drop, will you, Hezekiah?

HEZ. Betcher life I won't. I'd do anything fer you, Bethy.

BETH. Tell Mr. Manly's housekeeper to tell him that the geranium will be blooming to-morrow night.

HEZ. Geranium? Whatcha talkin' about? Hain't they bloomin' all the time?

BETH. You'll tell her, won't you?

HEZ. Betcher life.

(MRS. S. *crosses to piano.*)

MRS. S. Tessie, let's run over Belinda's solo before the others come.

(TESS. *plays piano*, BEL. *sings "A Life Lesson" or "There, Little Girl, Don't Cry."*)

TESS. That's lovely. You're going to make an awful hit to-morrow night, Belinda.

HEZ. (*starts to cry*). Oh, oh, oh!

OTHERS. What's the matter, Hezekiah?

HEZ. That song makes me sad, breakin' her doll and her heart and everything. (*Cries loudly.*) Gosh, it's pa-

thetical. There, little girl, don't cry. (*Sobs.*) Never heard anything so blamed pathological in all my born days.

(*Exit at R., carrying pie and crying loudly.*)

BEL. What's Miss Pickle going to sing, Do-ree-my?

MRS. S. She hadn't decided last night, but she said she'd let me know to-day.

TESS. She orter sing "Men May Come and Men May Go, But I Go On Forever."

(*Knock at door R. BETH opens the door, admitting SALLIE PICKLE.*)

BEL. Well, speaking of angels, you'll smell brimstone every time —

SALLIE. Am I late? Oh, I'm so sorry. It took me quite a spell to dress. I kinda thought the minister would be here and he always likes this dress so much. And of course a girl like me wants to please her minister.

MRS. S. Girl?

BEL. Did you say girl?

SAL. That's what I said. I ain't a day over twenty-five and well you know it, Belinda Snix.

(*They argue in pantomime.*)

(*BETH opens door at R. and admits MANDY HAMLINGER and BIRDIE CACKLE. They all shake hands and exchange greetings.*)

MRS. S. (*to MANDY*). How's your voice to-day? Got over that cold?

MANDY. I'm a little hoarse. Lemme try it. (*Sings scale up and down rapidly.*) How's that?

(*BETH takes wraps, hats, etc., and exits at R.*)

MRS. S. I think you flatted a little on the d. Try it again.

BIRDIE. I'm sure she did. Listen at these trills.

(*BIRD. sings trills and MAN. sings the scales. After a short time BEL. starts to sing ah-ah-ah exercise. All sing softly at first, but get louder and louder, and finally TESS. starts to play fast song on piano. This*

is good comic business, but it should not be unduly prolonged.)

MRS. S. Ladies! (*Louder.*) Ladies! (*Yells.*) Ladies! (*Noise stops.*) We can't have such a discord. Take your seats, please. And remember that Do-ree-my Scales is the director of this choir. Tessie, take your place at the piano. Now we'll start off at once.

(Specialty introduced. Ladies' quartet or solo and chorus. At the end of the specialty BETH enters, followed by GRANDMAW HOWLER and SAMANTHA SNIGGINS. Ladies go to GRANDMAW and shake hands and exchange greetings. GRANDMAW is very "deef" and carries a black megaphone which she uses as an ear-trumpet.)

GRANDMAW. Wall, wall, here you all be jest as snug as a bug in a rug. I thought I wasn't goin' to be able to come, 'cause I had an accident.

SAMANTHA. Yep, she lost her false teeth.

GRAN. What you sayin', Samantha?

SAM. I said you lost your teeth.

GRAN. (*puts up ear-trumpet*). Hay?

SAM. Teeth, teeth, teeth!

GRAN. Beef? What you talkin' about? We hain't had no beef fer a coon's age.

OTHERS (*yell*). Teeth, teeth, teeth. She said you lost your teeth.

GRAN. Yes, that's so. I *am* a little deaf, but there hain't no one hardly notices it.

SAM. She found 'em again, in the water bucket. I was playin' they was submarines.

SAL. (*sings scale*). Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do.

(Descends scale. MAN. sings scale in another key.)

MRS. S. Here, here, ladies. Ladies! Keep still. You're out of order.

GRAN. What say? What say, Doreemy?

MRS. S. I said Sallie Etta Pickle is out of order.

GRAN. (*goes to SAL. and looks her over*). Out o' or-

der, hay? Well, you do look kinda pindly. You orter use Codliver Purple Pills.

MRS. S. Birdie Cackle, have you decided on your solo?

BIRD. No, I haven't. I want something that'll show off my voice.

SAL. You orter sing—"I Cannot Sing the Old Songs."

BIRD. Is that so? Well, you orter sing "Forsaken Am I."

MRS. S. I wonder what's keepin' the widder?

BETH. She'll be down in a minute. She's writing a poem.

ALL. A poem?

MRS. S. What about?

BETH. A little surprise.

MRS. S. Places all. We'll practice "My Old Kentucky Home" and (*to audience*) I want every one to join in the chorus. Don't be afraid. Maybe if you sing out real good we'll give you a place in the Beantown choir. Ready! All rise. Ready at the piano, Tessie. (*Beats time.*) Down, left, right, up. Sing!

(*All sing. "My Old Kentucky Home."*)

GRAN. Wasn't that jest lovely? I tell you these here new-flangled songs ain't near as sweet as the songs of the long ago. When Brother Botts used to conduct the Beantown choir I was the leadin' sopranno and folks 'ud come fer miles around jest to hear me sing "There is a Green Hill." I'd be the head sopranno yet if my voice had 'a' held out. (*Sings high note.*) There, what do you think of that?

ALL. Perfectly lovely.

SAM. Sounded like a chicken to me. (*Goes to c. e.*)

GRAN. Samantha, you come away from them curtains. You're liable to pull 'em down, er sump'm. Ain't you goin' to favor us with a song, Sallie Etta Pickle? You hain't much on carryin' a tune, but your high notes is grand. You take high C jest like a cough-drop.

MRS. S. Yes, Sallie, I got to know what you're going to sing at the concert to-morrow night.

Enter HEZ. from R.

HEZ. I give her the punkin pie to give him and told her about the geraniums.

BETH. Thank you, Hezekiah.

HEZ. I reckon I'll take a seat and set down and listen to the music. I kin stand it ef you kin.

MRS. S. Are you ready, Sallie?

SAL. (*sits at piano*). Oh, yes. I've decided on this.

(*Sings first stanza of "A Life Lesson," somewhat out of tune and ending in a discord. HEZ. howls like a dog.*)

MRS. S. Hezekiah Doolittle, shet up.

HEZ. But —

MRS. S. (*loudly*). Shet up.

HEZ. I'm shet. (*Shuts his mouth with his hands.*)

BEL. But I'm going to sing that song myself. (*Starts to sing first verse. SAL. starts second verse at the same time. They sing two lines then stop and glare at each other.*) It's my song.

SAL. It hain't either. It's my song. It brings out my voice so good.

HEZ. You don't want nothin' to bring out your voice. You want sump'm to shut it in.

BEL. and SAL. (*sing together*). There, little girl, don't cry.

SAL. You hush up.

BEL. I won't. I'm goin' to sing it. Keep still and learn how it orter be sung.

BEL. and SAL. (*sing*). There, little girl, don't cry —

(*They stop and glare at each other.*)

HEZ. (*sings*). There, little girl, don't cry.

SAL. (*takes music from piano, comes to front, opens music and starts to sing*). There, little girl, don't cry.

BEL. (*grabs music*). That's my music.

(*They struggle for music. They slap one another and tear at each other's hair.*)

HEZ. Hit her in the eye. Sic 'em, Fritz. Give her an upper cut.

(SAL. and BEL. continue to fight, screaming, "Give it to me," "I'll show you," etc. HEZ. claps his hands and goads them on. Other ladies are very much excited and try to stop them.)

SAM. Hit her hard, hit her hard. We hain't had as much fun since the circus.

MRS. S. Ladies! Ladies!

(Pulls SAL. to L., where she sinks in chair.)

TESS. Ain't you 'shamed?

(Pulls BEL. to R., where she sinks in chair.)

SAL. (weeping loudly). Oh, such a disgrace! I never was treated so before. Oh, oh! (Cries loudly.)

HEZ. (goes to her and sings very much out of tune). There, little girl, don't cry.

(She jumps at him and pulls his hair and chases him around the room.)

SAL. I'll show you.

HEZ. You don't have to show me nothin'.

MRS. S. I think you'd better kiss and make up. The idea of you two fighting. Kiss and make up. Will you, Sallie Etta Pickle?

SAL. Yes, I will.

HEZ. Well, I won't. I ain't goin' to 'low no female lady kiss me no time and no place, no siree.

MRS. S. I wasn't referring to you, Hezekiah Doolittle. You get out of here.

HEZ. (at door, L.). I'm a-goin', 'cause I ain't goin' to let nobody kiss me.

SAL. (throws sofa cushion at him). I'd just as leave kiss a snake.

HEZ. Well, I'd ruther have you kiss a snake. (Sings loudly.) There, little girl, don't cry. [Exit, L.

MRS. S. Now, Belinda, hain't you sorry?

BEL. Yes, I am. I haven't nothin' agin Sallie Etta,

SAL. No, ner I ain't got nothin' agin Belinda. I always did like her.

BEL. (*crosses to c.*). She's a better singer than I am anyway.

SAL. (*meets her at c.*). No, I hain't.

BEL. Yes, you are.

SAL. I hain't.

BEL. You are!

SAL. (*waves arms*). You are, you are, you know you are. When I say you are it's so.

BEL. (*waves arms*). I ain't, I ain't, I know I hain't. You've been singin' longer than me.

SAL. (*speaking rapidly to BEL., who is speaking to her at the same time*). Now, Belinda Snix, you're a nice gal and a good singer and I've decided that I don't want to sing "There, Little Girl, Don't Cry" anyhow. You kin take the low notes better than I kin and you've had more city trainin'. If you want to sing that song you go ahead and sing it. I guess there's plenty of other songs I kin sing. It hain't suited much to my register nohow and I believe I'd ruther sing a funny song, anyhow.

BEL. (*speaking rapidly to SAL., who is speaking the speech above at same time*). Now, Sallie Etta Pickle, I'm goin' to give in to you, 'cause you're older than I am and I ain't sure I want to sing "There, Little Girl, Don't Cry" anyhow. If you want that piece, why take it. Far be it from me from causin' a disturbance right in church and under the preacher's very nose, you might say. If you want to sing the song, go ahead and sing it. You allers like to take high notes so as to show off your cadenzas and sich, so I won't offer no objections. I'd ruther sing a funny song, anyhow.

SAL. So you can sing it if you want to.

BEL. I won't.

SAL. You will. (*Waves arms at her.*)

BEL. I say I won't. (*Same business.*)

MRS. S. Order, ladies, order. Sit down. Belinda, you sit down. And likewise you, Sallie Etta. Come to order. We've got to proceed with the proceedings. All stand up and git ready to tackle the Hallelujah Chorus.

MAN. We can't sing that; there aren't any tenors or basses here.

MRS. S. Well, we'll have to have another rehearsal, that's plain. The widder has invited us all here to-morrow for a little donation party for the minister and we can have our last rehearsal then. Tell everybody to be here and remember we are to give the concert to-morrow night. Belinda, have you decided what you want to sing?

BEL. I hain't goin' to sing at all. If Sallie Etta Pickle wants to sing "There, Little Girl, Don't Cry," let her go ahead and sing it. I'll jest join in the choruses.

SAL. I'm going to sing "Polly Wolly Doodle," that'll make a bigger hit with the audience.

MRS. S. Well, somebody's got to sing "There, Little Girl." It's printed on the programs.

BEL. I won't do it.

SAL. Neither will I.

MRS. S. Who will then? Who'll be good enough to volunteer? Speak up, who will save the day?

(HEZ. slides in from R., extends right arm, dramatically poses at C.)

HEZ. I will!

OTHERS. You!

HEZ. Yes, I. (*Dramatically.*) We will fight it out along these lines if it takes all summer. A little music. (TESS. plays introduction to "A Life Lesson.") Here I go. (*Sings decidedly out of tune.*) There, little girl, don't cry, they have broken your doll I know. (*All howl, hiss and give cat imitations.*) Ain't that good?

MRS. S. Decidedly not.

HEZ. Didn't I have the right pitch?

GRAN. Hay?

HEZ. I had the right pitch. (*Yells.*) I had the right pitch.

GRAN. Pitch? Pitch? It sounded to me like turpentine.

BIRD. (*at L.*). Here comes the widder. (*All look to L.*)
Enter WID. from L., wearing long trailing dress trimmed

all around with gaudy artificial flowers and cheap white lace. Large head-dress of feathers. She carries a big bouquet of sunflowers, weeds and tree boughs.

WID. Here I be. I hope I didn't keep you a-waitin'.

ALL. Oh, no.

SAL. (*falsetto voice*). Not at all.

HEZ. (*imitates her*). Not at all.

WID. I want to make a little speech. (*All sit, except*

WID.) Ladies (*ladies all rise and make curtseys to her*) and gentlemen. (*HEZ. rises and curtseys to her. All ladies sit down as soon as they curtsey.*) But I see we have no gentlemen present.

HEZ. (*sinks in seat*). Good-night, Hezekiah.

WID. I invited the choir to be present here this afternoon for their rehearsal in order to spring a little surprise.

HEZ. We're goin' to have ice-cream.

WID. You hush up. To-morrow afternoon I will again entertain in my most lavish fashion with a donation party for the minister.

HEZ. Hurrah!

WID. But it is befitten that the choir shall see the surprise first of all. Before proceedin' any further with the proceedings I will recite a little original poem that I wrote all my own self, having made it out of my own head.

HEZ. It's a bird.

WID. I have called it "Lines of Memorials to Brother Botts."

He was the Beantown Choir Director fer over thirty
years,

And now he's gone we'll shed some tears.

We'll shed some tears for my dear brother,

Who allers was doing something or other.

We'll sit and weep and sit and weep and sit and weep
some more,

For Brother Botts, dear Brother Botts, has went to the
other shore. (*Cries.*)

Oh, it's so sad. I jest can't go on. I'm so emotional. I
jest emote at any little thing. (*Weeps.*)

HEZ. (*sings*). There, little girl, don't cry, they have broken your ——

ALL. Hezekiah Doolittle, you hush up.

MRS. S. Go on with your reading, Widder. It's lovely.

WID.

My Brother Botts was the best of brothers,
 He never gave no trouble to his father or his mothers,
 He directed the choir fer thirty years,
 So, fellow-members, give him your tears.
 In his memory I have called this meeting here,
 So that you and me can shed a tear,
 He was a good man every one knows,
 And handsome, too, except for the mole on his nose.
 Three years ago he crossed the river,
 And all alone we're left to shiver,
 This meeting to-day is in memory of my brother,
 Oh, where, oh where, can I find another?

(Makes a low bow and sits down. Ladies all applaud.)

MRS. S. Little Samantha Sniggins and Hezekiah Doolittle will now flavor us with a duet entitled "Little Drops of Water."

(Funny burlesque infant specialty introduced.)

WID. (*rises*). Ladies and gentlemen, now has come the time fer the surprise. I have had a memorial made to Brother Botts. It's behind them chenille curtains and consists of a life-size crayon portrait in a frame and easel. Tessie, you play "We Shall Meet But We Shall Miss Him" and everybody sing it, then at the beginning of the second verse, Mrs. Scales, you slowly draw the curtains and unveil the memorial.

ALL (*sing*).

THE VACANT CHAIR

We shall meet, but we shall miss him,
 There will be one vacant chair,
 We shall linger to caress him,
 While we breathe our evening prayer.

When a year ago we gathered
 Joy was in his bright blue eye,
 But the golden cord is severed,
 And our hopes in ruin lie.
 We shall meet, but we shall miss him,
 There will be one vacant chair,
 We shall linger to caress him,
 When we breathe our evening prayer.

(WID. *sinks sobbing in seat.* MRS. S. *stands by portières.*)

At our fireside sad and lonely,
 Often will the bosom swell —

(MRS. S. *has drawn the curtains disclosing a skeleton or a grotesque dummy or scarecrow. Let all stand back so audience may see it. The skeleton or dummy raises its hand and points at WID. This effect is worked by a concealed string.*)

WID. (*gives a wild shriek*). That ain't him. Aw, aw!
 (*Sobs wildly.*)

HEZ. (*goes to her, pats her hands to restore her and sings loudly*). There, little girl, don't cry, don't cry. There, little girl, don't cry.

QUICK CURTAIN

SECOND PICTURE.—WID. *seated at c. spanking HEZ., who is turned over her knee, she using a slipper.* HEZ. *yells and all the ladies laugh and sing loudly, "There, little girl, don't cry; don't cry. There, little girl, don't cry!"*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. The next morning.*

(*At the rise of the curtain the WID. enters from L., crosses to R. and calls.*)

WID. Beth! (*Louder.*) Beth! Beth Wood, you march down here this minute.

BETH (*outside, at R.*). I'm coming.

WID. Well, don't be all day about it. I'm upsot all over and I'm mad clean through. You'd better hurry up, if you know what's good fer you.

Enter BETH from R.

BETH. What is it?

WID. What I want to know is this—what are you packing your trunk for?

BETH. I'm going away.

WID. Oh, you are, are you? What for?

BETH. Because I'm going to accept another position. I can't live here any longer. I do everything I can to please you, but it isn't any use. I work hard and never have any fun. You won't allow me to go anywhere or see any one, and we can't get along. You don't like me and so—so I'm going away.

WID. Wall, I never! You want to go and leave a good home and work for strangers. They won't treat you with the loving kindness you git here. There hain't many stepmothers as good as me. You have nice clothes and good things to eat and a nice house—what more do you want?

BETH. There's no use arguing any more about it. I've made up my mind and I'm going to leave.

WID. I dunno as I'll let you.

BETH. I'm of age, Mrs. Wood, and I can do as I please.

WID. That's right, leave me right in the midst of my trials and tribberlations. Ain't I got enough on my hands now with that creature Hezekiah Doolittle disgracing me before all Beantown? He's packing too and there's all the work to do with the donation party to-day and every-thing.

BETH. I'm not leaving until this evening.

WID. Wall, I can't force you to stay, but I'll say this, you hain't treating me right—after all I've did for you. Go in the kitchen and make some lemonade.

BETH. Very well. I'll help you all I can to-day.

(*Crosses to L.*)

WID. Then I don't want nothin' more to do with you. You can go if you like, and good riddance. I think I'll go to boardin' and rent out this house. They say there's some perfectly lovely men at the hotel. You answer the door, Beth, if any of the choir comes. Tell 'em I'll be down jest as soon as I make my proper preparations.

[*Exit, R.*

Enter HEZ. from L.

HEZ. Havin' a scrap with the old lady?

BETH. I told her I was going to leave.

HEZ. She told me I *had* to leave. Like to walloped the life clean outen me, too. Jest because I wanted to give the Beantown choir a little surprise. I never hurt her old picture none. I jest carried it up in the attic and put old Mr. Bones in its place. (*Laughs.*) Gosh, wasn't they skeerd?

BETH. You shouldn't be such a bad boy, Hezekiah.

HEZ. It says in the Scriptures that you can't make a silk purse outen a sow's ear, Bethy, so I'm goin' to git me a job in the rollin' mill with the rest of the rollin' stones and marry big fat Hepsy Tiller and let her take in washin' fer me. You know Hepsy, don't you? I been lovin' that gal nigh onto three years now. Big fat gal lives over to Epsom Saltsville. Weighs purt' nigh three hundred pounds, but she's got a lovin' disposition and eighty dollars in the bank. Yep, I think I'll git married to Hepsy.

BETH. So you are leaving to-day, are you?

HEZ. Yep. Got my valise all packed with my other suit of clothes and a red necktie and I'm ready to face the world.

BETH. I wish you well, Hezekiah.

HEZ. Yep, I know you do. You're a good little gal, Bethy, and ef big fat Hepsy Tiller didn't have eighty dollars in the bank I'd marry you. But a feller's got to look out fer himself. You see how it is that I can't marry you, don't you?

BETH (*smiles*). Oh, that's all right, Hezekiah.

HEZ. You see I been lovin' Hepsy purt' nigh onto three years now and sparkin' her off and on durin' that time. It 'ud kinda hurt Hepsy ef I'd up and marry any one else now. Hepsy weighs three hundred pounds, but she's got feelings jest like any one else.

BETH. Then I wouldn't think of depriving her of you, Hezekiah.

HEZ. Oh, it wouldn't be much depravity, Bethy.

BETH. I've got to make the lemonade for the donation party. [*Exit, L.*]

HEZ. Lemonade, hay? That's the one thing I like about this house. They're allers havin' things to eat. I'm fired and my trunk is packed and I'm goin' to leave, but—believe me—I'm goin' to eat first. (*Sits at piano and takes music down and reads title of song.*) "A Life Lesson." (*Opens it.*) I wonder ef I could sing that.

(*Plays in a burlesque fashion and sings three or four lines.*)

WID. (*outside at R.*). Hezekiah Doolittle, you leave my piano alone. I got the toothache.

HEZ. Hay?

WID. (*outside*). You pack up and git out o' my house. I got the toothache.

HEZ. All right. (*Finds letter hidden by BETH in Act I.*) I wonder what this is? (*Reads laboriously.*) "My dear Elizabeth"—Some one's a-writin' to the widder. "I love you better than anything on earth"—well, who'd 'a' thunk it? Stumbling grasshoppers, the widder's got a beau! "You are the only woman in the whole

world who could make my (*spells*) h-a-p, hap, p-i, pie, n-e-double-s, ness, happiness, c-o-m, com, p-l-e-t-e, plete, complete." Ain't that mushy? I wonder who writ a love-letter to the widder. (*Reads.*) "Your own Richard Manly." The preacher. Wall, I wanter know. I thought he was a-makin' eyes at Bethy and now he's writin' to the widder. No, he hain't. This is to Bethy and he calls her by her maiden name Elizabeth. (*Laughs.*) I thought they wouldn't no one be writin' to the widder like that.

Enter WID. from R., her face tied up.

WID. Hezekiah Doolittle, ain't you gone yet?

HEZ. Yep, I'm gone. I'm about seven miles down the road now hoein' turnips in the punkin patch.

WID. (*sinks in chair*). You hush up that foolishness and git out o' this house. I got the toothache like everything and ain't got no time to be bothered with you. What you got there?

HEZ. (*hides letter behind him*). Nothin'.

WID. You have too. Lemme see what's in your hand.

HEZ. (*shows left hand empty*). Hain't got nothin'.

WID. Lemme see your other hand.

HEZ. (*puts letter in left hand behind back and shows right hand*). See?

WID. Lemme see both hands. It's a letter. Who's it fer?

HEZ. You.

WID. Why didn't you give it to me?

HEZ. He told me you'd gimme a five cent nickel fer it.

WID. He? Who?

HEZ. The minister.

WID. Did the minister write a letter to me?

HEZ. Yep, and it's a love-letter, too.

WID. 'Tain't neither.

HEZ. 'Tis, too. He says he loves you better'n anything on earth.

WID. Did you read it?

HEZ. Nope, he jest made his mouth go when he was a-writin' it and I sensed what he was puttin' in it.

WID. Give it to me.

HEZ. Gimme that five-cent nickel.

WID. There. (*Gives him coin.*)

HEZ. There. (*Gives her the letter.*)

WID. Now you hurry down to the store and git me twenty-five cents' worth of laudalum fer the toothache.

HEZ. Gimme the money.

WID. I don't trust you. Tell Hiram Boggs to charge it, and hurry up. (*Groans.*) This tooth is like to pesterin' me to death.

HEZ. Gimme a string and I'll pull it out fer you. I'd be pleased to do it.

WID. Yes, I suppose you would. But I ain't goin' to let you. Now hurry up and git me that laudalum.

HEZ. I'm goin', ain't I?

WID. Yes, about as slow as a worm with the rheumatism. Hurry up. (*Starts to him.*)

HEZ. (*rushes out R.*) I'm gone. [*Exit, R.*]

WID. (*puts on spectacles and reads the letter*). "My dear Elizabeth, I love you better than anything on earth and I feel that you are the only woman in the whole world who could make my happiness complete." (*Speaks.*) The dear boy, and I never dreamed he was smit with my charms at all. (*Reads.*) "True I have known you but a short time, but who could know you without loving you, the dearest, sweetest little woman on earth." (*Speaks.*) He's got real good sense, even if he is a minister. (*Reads.*) "I want to marry you at once as life is a dreary aching void without you." (*Speaks.*) That's just the way I feel! Oh, Richard, Richard, I'm yours. (*Reads.*) "May I hope? To-morrow night is the concert given by the choir to celebrate the close of my second year in Beantown. Why could we not arise after the concert and have Brother Layman, the presiding elder, unite us in the holy bonds of matrimony?" (*Speaks.*) How lovely, how awful lovely. I'll do it. Be still, my little fluttering heart, be still. Oh, Richard, Richard! (*Reads.*) "I shall return from my country visitations late to-night; if you consent to my plan put a pot of blooming geraniums on the gate-post and make me the happiest man in the world." (*Speaks.*) It's too late,

it's too late. I didn't get the letter in time to put the flowers on the post. (*Looks out.*) Why, there they are. Seated on the gate-post just like he says. I suppose Hezekiah put them there. Ain't that fate? I thought I'd lost him, but he's mine—he's mine. (*Reads.*) "Let us keep our plans a secret until the ceremony, and believe me, sincerely and devotedly your own Richard Manly." Wall, I never. Who'd 'a' thunk it? Him in love with me. And he's selected me to be his bloomin', blushin' bride. Won't Sallie Etta Pickle have a fit when she sees us git married? (*Suddenly.*) Oh, my tooth, my tooth. Bethy!

Enter BETH from L.

BETH. Yes?

WID. I'm sorry I was a little cross to you, Bethy, but I've been so troubled with this tooth that I hardly know what my name is. I'm goin' up-stairs and try to cure it. I dunno as I'll be able to see the ladies at the donation party, but you make my excuses and give them cookies and lemonade. Tell 'em I'm sick with a bad tooth.

BETH. Then you're not going to the concert to-night?

WID. Going? You bet I am. I'm going to spring the surprise of the evening at the concert to-night. Oh, my tooth! It jumps up and down jest like a human being. Tell Hezekiah to bring that laudalum right up to my room. And hurry him up, he's slower'n the seven-year itch.

[*Exit, R.*

Enter SAM. from L.

SAM. I just came in the back door. Maw sent over a bag of potatoes fer the minister's donation and I dumped 'em down in the kitchen.

BETH. That's quite a nice present, Samantha.

SAM. Aw, I dunno. We got more'n we kin use er sell and Uncle Jake said to give 'em to the preacher. This has been a big year fer potatoes in Beantown. Ain't the choir going to practice here to-day?

BETH. Yes. They'll be here presently.

SAM. Say, Bethy, is the widder goin' to unveil any more ghosts fer us this afternoon?

BETH. Wasn't one enough?

SAM. It was too much for Grandmaw. When that hand moved she like to had a conuption fit. She told me she thought it was Brother Botts himself come to the choir rehearsal like he used to twenty years ago.

BETH. It was only a joke of Hezekiah's.

SAM. Hez is an awful bad boy, ain't he, Bethy?

BETH. He's rather mischievous, but he has a good heart.

SAM. And an awful appetite. He et eleven ham sandwiches and a hull apple pie at the Sunday-school picnic. He kin eat more'n any man in town 'ceptin' —
(*Insert the name of some prominent man.*)

(*Knock on door at R. BETH opens it, admitting BIRD.*)

BIRD. (*who carries a stuffed flour-sack*). Where'll I put these potatoes? It's my donation for the minister.

Enter SAL. and TESS. from R., carrying baskets.

SAL. Ain't it funny? Tessie Tooms and I both brung the same thing fer the donation. Potatoes fer the minister. I wanted to bring a chocolate cake, him being so fond of cake and such like, but Paw said now was a chance to git rid of some of our potatoes, so I carried 'em along.

TESS. And everybody likes potatoes.

Enter GRAN. from R., followed by BEL. and MRS. S.

MRS. S. We've all brought the same thing. Potatoes. I took 'em around to the back porch.

SAM. Say, don't you think the preacher wants nothin' else to eat except potatoes?

BETH. Just bring your potatoes out here.

(*Goes out, L., followed by BIRD., SAL. and TESS.*)

MRS. S. As usual there ain't none of the men here at choir rehearsal. I dunno what's going to happen at the concert to-night. It'll be a failure as sure as my name is Scales.

BEL. Listen. I hear some one tunin' up.

(MALE QUARTET heard singing off stage. At end of first verse they enter and sing second verse on the stage. All applaud. BIRD., SAL., TESS. and BETH enter from L.)

MRS. S. Mr. Boomer, I don't see your wife here. And she wasn't here yesterday.

BILL (one of the quartet). No'm, she hain't here. She had an accident happen to her Monday morning.

ALL. She did?

GRAN. What say?

BILL. I said my wife had an accident happen to her. (Yells.) Accident!

GRAN. Yes, we got in all our hay jest in time.

TESS. What happened to your wife, Bill?

BILL. She was openin' a can of corn and she cut herself right bad.

SAL. She did? Where?

BILL. What say?

SAL. I said where did she cut herself?

BILL. In the pantry right close to the bread-box. And she hain't been feelin' real well since.

MRS. S. Sallie, you might try "Polly Wolly Doodle." (SAL. sings "Polly Wolly" song, others joining in chorus. Note: Put plenty of action in this song, singing fast, patting hands, twirling around and making gestures.) Now, Bill, we want your bass solo.

BILL. Aw, I can't sing no bass solo.

MRS. S. Yes, you can, too. Jest as natural as life. Stand up here.

BILL. Aw, I'm too bashful. Everybody's lookin' at me.

MRS. S. I guess that hain't goin' to hurt you none. Come on now. Give him the chord, Tessie.

(Solo by BILL.)

BEL. Say, didn't you men bring nothin' fer the donation party?

BILL. Sure, we did. We all jined in together and brung a cart full of potatoes.

LADIES. Potatoes?

BILL. We thought nobody else would ever think of potatoes.

BETH. Now if you will all walk into the dining-room you'll find a little lunch all ready for you.

SAM. And believe me, I'm ready fer the lunch.

(Runs out at L.)

GRAN. What did she say, Belindy?

BEL. *(who is seated near GRAN.)*. She said to come in to lunch. *(Yells.)* Lunch!

GRAN. Punch? Who, me? No, I never drink nothin' stronger'n ice-tea and I'm goin' on eighty-three.

(Several people exeunt at L.)

MRS. S. Where's the widdler?

BETH. She's suffering with the toothache and asked to be excused.

GRAN. What say?

BETH. I said Mrs. Wood was suffering with toothache. *(Loudly.)* Toothache.

GRAN. Oh, yes, I like cake. Of course I do. But I'm surprised at your a-havin' punch. Where's the widdler?

BETH. Up-stairs. She's not feeling well.

GRAN. Yes, I shouldn't wonder ef it would rain a spell. But what I asked you was where is the widdler?

BEL. *(yells)*. She's sick.

GRAN. Don't yell at me. I kin hear jest as good as any one when folks don't mumble their words.

BEL. That's nice.

GRAN. What say?

BEL. I said that was nice. Nice!

GRAN. *(horrifed)*. She has? Well, hain't that awful? I wonder where she caught 'em. Tell her she orter rub some turpentine in her head. I allers heerd that was a sure cure. *(All go out at L.)*

Enter WID. from R.

WID. Oh, oh, this toothache is about to kill me. *(Sinks in chair and groans.)* I wonder what's become of

Hezekiah. If I don't git some relief I'll ache my head off—and I'm to be married to-night at nine o'clock. Married to the minister. Won't I make the old maids in Beantown walk chalk? I'll let 'em know that I'm the boss of the town. Sallie Etta Pickle's been throwin' sheep's eyes at the minister fer nearly two years, but I'll settle her. I got a good notion to tell Bethy. She thinks the minister was after her. (*Giggles.*) When it was me he wanted all the time. It's a good thing she's goin' to git a position in the city. It'll ease her broken heart when she learns that her stepmaw has caught her beau. Owch! Oh, my tooth, my tooth!

Enter HEZ. from R.

HEZ. Say, I wasn't sure what you sent me after. Was it Epsom salts, codliver oil er laudalum?

WID. Laudalum. And me most dyin' with the toothache.

HEZ. Laudalum?

WID. Yes. Ain't that what they give fer toothache? Didn't you bring it?

HEZ. Yep. I brung it. (*Gives her small phial.*) There it is.

WID. Oh, oh! My tooth's shootin' like sixty. How do you take it?

HEZ. How do I know? I never took none.

WID. Neither did I.

HEZ. Wall, I suppose you jes' swaller it down. (*WID. swallows some, then gives a loud shriek and falls back in chair.*) Sufferin' seeds of punkins, she's committed susancide.

WID. (*yells*). Aw, oh, oh!

(All rush in from L.)

BETH. What is it?

HEZ. She's killed. The widder's killed.

BETH (*runs to her*). What is it?

(All surround her, fanning her, etc.)

WID. I swallered some toothache medicine.

MRS. S. What kind?

WID. Laudalum! (*Hands her the bottle.*)

MRS. S. But you should have rubbed it on your tooth, not taken it internally.

WID. Oh, I took it infernally, I took it infernally.

SAL. Not infernally, internally.

WID. What's the difference?

SAL. Infernally means the lower regions.

WID. Wall, that's where it's hurtin' me, in the lower regions.

BETH. Hezekiah, run for the doctor. Run! Run!

HEZ. (*runs to R.*). I'll run. Jest like a velocipede.

[*Exit, R.*

MRS. S. You got to keep her moving. If she goes to sleep it's all over.

WID. (*sleepily*). I want to go to bed.

SAL. You can't go to bed. You've got to stay awake.

WID. What for?

SAL. If you go to sleep you'll never wake up. (*Grabs her.*) Get up.

WID. (*drowsily*). I can't get up.

MRS. S. (*forces her to her feet*). You've got to walk it off.

SAL. Make her arms go up and down to keep up the circulation.

(*They walk her around the stage, pumping her arms up and down.*)

WID. Oh, I can't, I can't. (*She sinks down.*)

BEL. Grab her. Don't let her rest. Hurry. Make her run.

(*They run her around.*)

MRS. S. (*to men*). Here, you take her. I'm all tuckered out.

(*MEN run WID. around, she screaming.*)

WID. Lemme alone. Let me die in peace. (*Sleepy.*) I want to go to bed.

GRAN. Throw some water on her. Samantha, git some water: [SAM. *exits, L.*

BEL. Make her arms go up and down. Keep up the circulation. (*They obey.*) Now trot her around.

(*They trot her around stage. She finally sinks in a chair.*)

Enter SAM. with big dipper of water.

SAM. Here's the water. (*Throws it all over WID.*)

WID. Oh, I'm dead, I'm dead. You've drowned me. Now I'll never git to marry the minister.

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The same.*

Enter TESS. *and* MRS. S. *from R., followed by* BETH.

TESS. What I can't understand is why the concert is to be given here at your house instead of in the church.

MRS. S. The minister wanted it that way and he sent Hezekiah over to the church to tell all the people to come over here. That's all I know about it.

BETH. I have everything arranged for the tableaux (*points to the audience*) and the folks can sit out there.

TESS. There must be some other reason.

BETH. There is. I can't keep it secret any longer. As soon as the concert is over we are to have a wedding.

MRS. S. (*very much surprised*). A wedding?

TESS. Who's going to be married?

BETH. The minister.

MRS. S. For the land sakes. Who to?

BETH. To me.

TESS. (*astounded*). Well!

MRS. S. For the land sakes!

TESS. (*kisses* BETH). I'm awfully glad. I wish you all the luck in the world. Mr. Manly is perfectly lovely.

MRS. S. (*kisses* BETH). Indeed he is. I congratulate you both and wish you many happy returns of the day.

TESS. Many happy returns?

MRS. S. No, I don't mean that. This news has got me so kerflummixed I dunno what I do mean.

TESS. Does the widder know about it?

BETH. Not yet. She's still asleep. The doctor says she'll probably sleep all night and will be sick to-morrow morning, but after that she'll be all right.

(HEZ. *and* SAM. *enter audience from back and take a seat in the front row.*)

MRS. S. It's time to start the concert. See, most everybody is here. Tessie, take your place at the piano. (BETH exits at R. MRS. S. comes to front and addresses the audience.) Ladies and gentlemen, in behalf of the ——— Society permit me to welcome you. The Beantown choir will try and entertain you with some old-time songs and pictures of the long ago. We thank you for your attendance and expect you to applaud right liberally. Don't set there like a flock of geese grinnin' your heads off, but enter into the spirit of the occasion, clap your hands and enjoy yourself. And we're goin' to spring a big surprise on you after the final number. The first number on our program is a piano solo by our gifted and talented musician, Miss Tessie Tooms, who pianns and organs jest lovely. She will play for your edification ——— (Insert the name of the piece.)

(TESS. bows low to audience and plays a piano solo. Something short and popular. Dvorak's "Humoresque" is recommended. During the playing MRS. S. leaves the stage. At the end of the piano solo there is a short pause, followed by the "Jedediah" number without any introduction.)

COUSIN JEDEDIAH

COMEDY SONG FOR DOUBLE QUARTET

JACOB and OBED, *tenors.*

JOHN and JOSH, *basses.*

KITTY and JERUSHA, *sopranos.*

SUKEY and MANDY, *altos.*

(The part of the chorus beginning "Oh, won't we have a jolly time" is played on the piano, repeating it as many times as necessary. JACOB and KITTY skip in from R. in time to music, meeting OBED and JERUSHA, who have skipped in from L. They join hands and circle four at rear, as JOHN and SUKEY skip in from R., meeting JOSH and MANDY, who have skipped in

from L. *All skip in couples once around the stage and then line up facing front in a semicircle. The music continues while KITTY and JERUSHA pull JACOB to the front, the others bending knees on every eighth beat. All point to JACOB as they sing.*)

Oh, Jacob, git the cows home
 And put them in the pen— (JACOB *nods.*)
 For the cousins all are coming
 To see us all again.

(Form in couples, facing partners, shake forefingers at partners.)

Mandy, peel the taters,
 Put the turkey on the fire,

(Form semicircle, clasp hands and march to front eight abreast.)

For we all must get ready
 For Cousin Jedediah.

(Basses close nostrils with thumb and forefinger as they sing.)

Cousin Jedediah!

<i>(Tenors count one on fingers.)</i>	There's Hezekiah!
<i>(Altos count two.)</i>	And Azariah!
<i>(Sopranos count three.)</i>	And Aunt Sophia!
<i>(Basses count four.)</i>	And Jedediah!

(All throw hands up in horror, shake heads dolefully and sing slowly.)

All coming here to tea.

(All join hands forming circle, skip around and sing.)

Oh, won't we have a jolly time,
 Oh, won't we have a jolly time!
 Jerusha, put the kettle on,
 We'll all take tea.

(*Form semicircle facing front, JOHN and JOSIE, JACOB and OBED, KITTY and JERUSHA, SUKEY and MANDY. JACOB shoves OBED to front, where he stands acting like a bashful little boy. Others sing.*)

Now, Obed, wash your face, boy,
 And tallow up your shoes,
 We're goin' to see Aunt Betty
 And tell her all the news. (OBED *pulls*
 And Kitty, slick your hair up, KITTY *to front.*)
 Put on your yaller gown,
 For Cousin Jedediah comes
 Right from Boston Town.

(JOHN and JOSH *bend knees and sing.*) Cousin Jedediah!
 (JACOB and OBED *stand on tiptoes.*) There's Hezekiah!
 (SUKEY and MANDY *bend knees.*) And Azariah!
 (KITTY and JERUSHA *stand on tiptoes.*) And Aunt Sophia!
 (*All sing dolefully.*) All coming here to
 tea.

(*They form circle and skip as before.*)

Oh, won't we have a jolly time,
 Oh, won't we have a jolly time!
 Jerusha, put the kettle on,
 We'll all take tea.

(MANDY *leads SUKEY down front by the ear, others in line half-way back. MANDY sings solo.*)

Now, Sukey, peel the onions,
 And scald the ripe tomaters!

(KITTY *leads JERUSHA down by ear and sings.*)

Jerusha, git a hitchin' post
 To beat the mashed potatoes.

(JACOB *leads OBED down by ear and sings.*)

Now, Obed, smile your prettiest,
 And don't begin to cry,
 And all the gals'll kiss you
 In the sweet by and by.

(*All stand in line at rear facing front. JOHN and JOSH move to front and sing.*)

Cousin Jedediah! (*Bend knees in time to music.*)

(*Tenors join basses in front.*) There's Hezekiah! (*Men bend knees in time to music.*)

(*Altos come down to men.*) And Azariah! (*Bend knees with others.*)

(*Sopranos come down.*) And Aunt Sophia! (*Bend knees.*)

(*Basses.*) And Jedediah.

(*All sing slowly, bending knees as far as possible.*)

All coming here to tea.

(*All give a sudden jump high in air, join hands, circle and sing as before.*)

Oh, won't we have a jolly time,
 Oh, won't we have a jolly time!
 Jerusha, put the kettle on,
 We'll all take tea.

(*All skip out at L., repeating chorus.*)

Enter MRS. S. She comes to L. front and announces.

MRS. S. Our next number is that love song of constancy and a life's devotion, "When You and I Were Young." (*The lights are dimmed or extinguished, the rear curtains open and show GRANDMAW and TENOR SINGER dressed like an old man. Bright spotlights or auto headlights are thrown from the sides on the tableau. The OLD MAN takes GRANDMAW'S hand and sings the three stanzas to her with deep feeling. The characters may move during the song. At the conclusion of the number the curtains shielding the small platform at rear are drawn, hiding the platform. The Jedediah boys and girls come in and sit at R. and L., being careful not to hide the rear platform.*) "Juanita," that Spanish love-song of years ago, will recall sweet memories to the old and young alike. The Beantown choir will sing "Juanita."

(The choir sings the first stanza and chorus of "Juanita." On the words, "Nita, Juanita," the tableau curtain is drawn, disclosing BIRDIE posing in Spanish costume. She sings the second stanza as a solo.)

BIRD.

When in my dreaming moons like these shall
shine again,
And daylight beaming prove my dreams are vain,
Will I then, relenting, for my absent lover sigh?
In my heart consenting to a prayer gone by?

(All sing the chorus softly as the curtains fall.)

MRS. S. The choir will now render "The Quilting Party." *(Choir sings first stanza of "The Quilting Party." At the beginning of the chorus the tableau of Country Boy and Country Girl in old-time summer costumes is shown. He sings the second and third stanzas as a solo, the choir joining in the chorus. The curtains fall.)* Mr. Bill Boomer, our celebrated basso-profundo, will now render a rendition of "Old Black Joe," and everybody here present, man, woman and child, is requested and expected to join in the chorus. Don't be bashful, have a good time and sing! *(Tableau curtains rise showing BILL dressed as an aged darkey. He sings "Old Black Joe" and all join in the chorus.)* The next number on our program is a recitation by little Samantha Sniggins. Little Samantha ain't but seven years old and has never appeared in public before, so you must excuse mistakes.

(SAMANTHA comes forward from her seat in the audience, makes a bow and recites.)

SAM. Yesterday I asked ma fer a penny. "You're too big to be asking fer pennies," says she. "Den gimme a quarter," says I, but she turned me down and den she turned me over and said dat she hoped I would see the error of my ways, but all I could see was the pattern on the carpet. She said dat when she whipped me it hurt

her more dan it did me, but I was ready to bet dat it didn't hurt her in the same place. (*Give childish laugh.*) Dis mornin' the teacher give us our first lesson in subtraction. She said: "T'ings can only be subtracted from each other if dey are of the same denomination." She says dat we couldn't take three apples from four pears, ner six hosses from nine dogs. When she was t'rough explainin' I held up my hand and says, "Say, teacher, can't you take four quarts of milk from three cows?" (*Childish laugh.*) De odder day we had to write a composition. We couldn't ask our papas or our mammas for help, the teacher said, but just to write what was in us ourselves. I writ, "In me there is me stummick, lungs, liver, heart, two apples, a stick of lemon candy and my dinner. That's all." (*Laugh.*) My little brother is jest learnin' his A-B-C's. He got up as fur as the letter G and then he was stuck. "What comes after G, Tommy?" says the teacher. "Oh, I know," he says. "G-whizz. Whizz comes after G." (*Laughs.*) My thither's got a beau. His name's ———. (*Insert local name.*) I asked her if she ever kithed him. She said thertainly not, that thee only kithed her kith and kin. One time I was hidin' under the sofy and I heard him say kin he kith her, and she said that he kin. That makes it kith and kin. Then I heard a smack, jest that-away. (*Imitates.*) It sounded like a cow drawin' his foot out of a mud-hole, all squshy like that. Dat's all I know.

(*Bows and takes her place in the audience.*)

MRS. S. The choir will now render that old favorite, "Jingle Bells." (*Choir sings first verse of "Jingle Bells" and chorus. Curtains are drawn showing BOY and GIRL seated in sleigh. Bells jingle. Snow falls. He is driving and the sleigh is so arranged that the horses seem to be just outside the curtain. Invisible hands make the sleigh back, etc. Choir sings entire song while boy and girl act out their parts.*) Miss Beth Wood will now sing "The Last Rose of Summer." (*BETH appears on tableau stage in summer dress and hat, carrying large crimson rose. She sings entire song, scattering petals, etc. Curtains fall.*) The choir will now sing the oratoric

selection, "Sound the Loud Timbrel!" (*Choir comes to front of stage and sings the song. No tableau here.*) Miss Mandy Hamslinger, our beautiful and gifted soprano, will now favor us with "Annie Laurie." (*MANDY appears on tableau stage in Scotch costume. She sings "Annie Laurie."*) The final number of our concert is "Auld Lang Syne," sung by everybody here present. After that the curtains will fall fer a minute, but keep your seats and don't git nervous, fer the best is yet to come.

(*All sing "Auld Lang Syne" and then the front curtains fall.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*The curtains rise showing wedding tableau, BETH and the young minister stand facing the presiding elder. BOY and GIRL stand with them as attendants. Soft music.*

ELDER. I then pronounce you man and wife.

Enter WID. from R. She stares at them. She wears wedding clothes and has red flannel bandage on face.

WID. Stop 'em, stop 'em! Don't let him marry her. I'm the bride, I am. It's my wedding. Beth Wood, you let my minister alone. He's going to marry me.

BETH. I'm afraid you are too late, Mrs. Wood. We are already married.

WID. (*goes to minister*). Oh, you villain, you impostor, you trifler, you hypocrite; you writ me a love-letter and I'll sue you fer bigamy and breach of promise, and libel and arson in the third degree.

HEZ. (*in audience*). Set down and keep cool, widder. That letter was fer Bethy all the time.

WID. Fer Bethy?

HEZ. Yep. I jest wanted to pay you back fer whalin' me.

WID. Oh, wait till I lay hands on you, that's all.

(*Organ plays "Wedding March." BETH and MINISTER march down, followed by MAID and MAN and others, WID. coming last. They march down through the audience. As WID. passes HEZ. she grabs him, jerks him from his place and leads him out by the ear. HEZ. howls.*)

CURTAIN

NOTE

Most of the music in this play may be found in "The Golden Book of Favorite Songs," price 15 cents per copy. The book is published by F. A. Owens Publishing Company, Dansville, Ky., or can be supplied by Walter H. Baker & Co., Boston, Mass.

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Leave it to Polly		11	1½ "	25c	"
The Minute Man		13	1½ "	25c	"
Miss Fearless & Co.		10	2 "	25c	"
A Modern Cinderella		16	1½ "	25c	"
Moth-Balls		3	½ "	25c	"
Rebecca's Triumph		16	2 "	25c	"
The Thirteenth Star		9	1½ "	25c	"
Twelve Old Maids		15	1 "	25c	"
An Awkward Squad	8		¼ "	15c	"
The Blow-Up of Algernon Blow	8		½ "	15c	"
The Boy Scouts	20		2 "	25c	"
A Close Shave	6		½ "	15c	"
The First National Boot	7	2	1 "	15c	"
A Half-Back's Interference	10		¾ "	15c	"
His Father's Son	14		1¾ "	25c	"
The Man With the Nose	8		¾ "	15c	"
On the Quiet	12		1½ "	25c	"
The People's Money	11		1¾ "	25c	"
A Regular Rah! Rah! Boy	14		1¾ "	25c	"
A Regular Scream	11		1¾ "	25c	"
Schmerecase in School	9		1 "	15c	"
The Scoutmaster	10		2 "	25c	"
The Tramps' Convention	17		1½ "	25c	"
The Turn in the Road	9		1½ "	15c	"
Wanted—A Pitcher	11		½ "	15c	"
What They Did for Jenkins	14		2 "	25c	"
Aunt Jerusha's Quilting Party	4	12	1¼ "	25c	"
The District School at Blueberry Corners	12	17	1 "	25c	"
The Emigrants' Party	24	10	1 "	25c	"
Miss Prim's Kindergarten	10	11	1½ "	25c	"
A Pageant of History	Any number		2 "	25c	"
The Revel of the Year	"	"	¾ "	15c	"
Scenes in the Union Depot	"	"	1 "	25c	"
Taking the Census in Bingville	14	8	1½ "	25c	"
The Village Post-Office	22	20	2 "	25c	"
Women in War		11	½ "	15c	"

BAKER, 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.



Plays for Colleges and High Schools

	Males	Females	Time	Price	Royalty
The Air Spy	12	4	1½ hrs.	25c	Special
Bachelor Hall	8	4	2 "	25c	\$5.00
The College Chap	11	7	2½ "	25c	Free
The Colonel's Maid	6	3	2 "	25c	"
Daddy	4	4	1½ "	25c	"
The Deacon's Second Wife	6	6	2½ "	25c	"
The District Attorney	10	6	2 "	25c	"
The Dutch Detective	5	5	2 "	25c	"
An Easy Mark	5	2	½ "	15c	"
The Elopement of Ellen	4	3	2 "	25c	"
Engaged by Wednesday	5	11	1½ "	25c	"
The Farmerette		7	2 "	25c	"
For One Night Only	5	4	2 "	15c	"
Hamilton	11	5	2 "	50c	Special
Higbee of Harvard	5	4	2 "	15c	Free
Hitty's Service Flag		11	1¼ "	25c	"
The Hoodoo	6	12	2 "	25c	"
The Hurdy Gurdy Girl	9	9	2 "	25c	"
Katy Did	4	8	1½ "	25c	"
Let's Get Married	3	5	2 "	50c	Special
London Assurance	10	3	2 "	15c	Free
Lost a Chaperon	6	9	2 "	25c	"
The Man from Brandon	3	4	½ "	15c	"
The Man Who Went	7	3	2½ "	25c	Special
The Man Without a Coun. ry	46	5	1½ "	25c	Free
Master Pierre Patelin	4	1	1½ "	50c	"
Me and Otis	5	4	2 "	15c	"
The Minute Man		13	1½ "	25c	"
Mose	11	10	1½ "	15c	"
Mr. Bob	3	4	1½ "	15c	"
Mrs. Briggs of the Poultry Yard	4	7	2 "	25c	"
Nathan Hale	15	4	2½ "	50c	\$10.00
Nephew or Uncle	8	3	2 "	25c	Free
Professor Pepp	8	8	2½ "	25c	"
A Regiment of Two	6	4	2 "	25c	"
The Revenge of Shari-Hot-Su	3	4	1½ "	15c	"
The Rivals	9	5	2½ "	15c	"
The Romancers	5	1	2 "	25c	"
The Rose and the Ring	16	5	1¾ "	25c	"
Sally Lunn	3	4	1½ "	25c	"
The School for Scandal	12	4	2½ "	15c	"
She Stoops to Conquer	15	4	2½ "	15c	"
Step Lively	4	10	2 "	25c	"
The Submarine Shell	7	4	2 "	25c	Special
The Thirteenth Star		9	1½ "	25c	Free
The Time of His Life	6	3	2½ "	25c	"
Tommy's Wife	3	5	1½ "	25c	"
The Twig of Thorn	6	7	1½ "	60c	"

For "special" royalties, see catalogue descriptions for detailed information.

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