

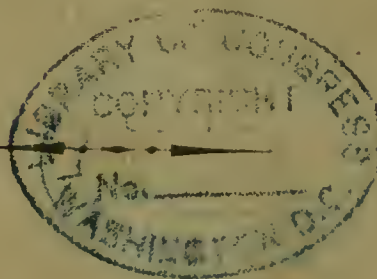
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LIFE
IN THE LOBBY.

A COMEDY

IN FIVE ACTS.

By DONN PIATT.



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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HON. PHINEAS PILASTER.—Christian Statesman.

HON. MONTEZUMA BUGGS.—Of Buggs' House, and House of Representatives.

HON. JOHN PEPPERCORN.—Congressional casualty.

HON. ALBERT ROWE —Average Congressman.

COL. RALPH STACKPOLE.—Chief of the Lobby, who knows all of Washington and nothing of his wife.

MR. EDWARD BASC MB.—Head of Post Office Ring and infatuated with Marie Antoinette Louise Buggs.

TOM CUTLETT.—Confidential clerk of a first-class hotel, afterwards one of the Lobby.

BENJAMIN GUSSETT.—Male half of a matrimonial alliance far from pleasant.

MRS. DR. GUSSETT.—Addicted to bloomers and medicine.

PAT DOOLAN.—Baggage smasher, afterwards reporter for New York Daily Libel.

SCIPIO AFRICANUS DIGGS.—Waiter at Buggs' house, afterwards Professor in Howard Institute.

Mrs. RALPH STACKPOLE. } Wife of Ralph Stackpole, who changes
Mrs. DORA JONES. } from a plain country wife to an ornament of
the Lobby.

MARIE ANTOINETTE LOUISE BUGGS.—Disposed to flirt with all the male world.

Servants, officers, Indian chiefs, little Treasury girls, and others.

Scene, New York, afterwards Washington.

LIFE IN THE LOBBY.

ACT 1ST.

SCENE 1ST. Entrance hall of Bugg's house—To right, private office, partially enclosed from hall but visible at end; large window back, with balcony looking upon court—Entrance right and left—Elevator to be seen.

T. Cutlett at desk sticks a pen behind his ear and comes forward.

T. CUTLETT. Well if the Hon. Montezuma Buggs, proprietor of the Buggs-house and member of Congress, to say nothing of being the author of Marie Louisa Antoinette Buggs, thinks he can run the Buggs house and the House of Representatives at the same time he is an ass. I say that the paternal creator of the divine Marie Louisa Antoinette Buggs is an ass. I speak advisedly, when I utter this unparliamentary language—Buggs is an ass. He is called Old Ability because of the stoutness of his legs, and the solemnity of his countenance. But the man who undertakes the impossible, with his eyes open, is an idiot or a lunatic. Buggs undertakes the impossible. He would attempt to run two houses and I can explain it upon no other hypothesis than the one I have indicated. He is of that species of horse, which nature, through some eccentricity attached to a preposterous pair of ears, and a cow's tail. But for me, his confidential clerk and cashier, this concern would have gone to pot long since. I propose now to propose to the divine Marie Louisa Antoinette Buggs, but whether old Buggs, who is idiot enough to go to Congress, will recognize the merits of T. Cutlett, Esq., is yet to be seen. I have touched the heart of the tender Bugg, but whether I have touched the pocket of the paternal B. is further along—ah! here 's the evening train.

(Retires to his desk within office. Enter Scip and other waiters, followed by a crowd of passengers. The last named crowd about the desk registering names. Pat Doolan enters with luggage, which is deposited with great violence in centre of stage, all the while Cutlett rings hand-bell and cries "front")

as each traveler registers his name and gets a key. Enter Peppercorn, Stackpole, Senator Pilaster escorting Mrs. Stackpole, who is deeply veiled. He crosses stage and exits with her. Stackpole stares at them.)

PEPPERCORN. At what time does the 10:40 train, shore line, leave, sir?

(Cutlett rings, looking vacantly over Peppercorn's head.)

CUTLETT. The 10.40 leaves precisely at 10.40, unless through some casualty it leaves a little earlier, or a little later, or does not leave at all.

PEPPERCORN. Ah! that is very satisfactory. Now, young man, can you give me a comfortable room on this floor, with windows on each side, and no draft? (Cutlett rings.)

STACKPOLE. I say, you, I don't propose going from town to-night further than a mile and a half, and so object, you see, to the sixth story. (Cutlett rings.)

(Enter Mrs. Dr. Gussett in bloomers, followed by Benjamin loaded heavily with luggage. He attempts to relieve himself of some of it.)

MRS. DR. G. Benjamin!

BENJ. Doctor.

MRS. DR. G. Are you a man?

BENJ. Doctor?

MRS. DR. G. I say are you a man or not a man?

BENJ. I believe I am. You ought to know.

MRS. DR. G. Then call in play the muscular ability with which nature endows the man animal, and don't dare let go any of those valuables. Now, follow me. (Exit.)

BENJ. I wish I was a hoss. A hoss has a wagon. That superior being don't recognize the difference. That superior being works me like a hoss, and wants to know if I'm a man.

MRS. DR. G. (within.) Benjamin!

BENJ. Doctor.

MRS. DR. G. (within.) Come along.

BENJ. Oh, Lord! if I only was a hoss. (Exit.)

(Enter Bascomb in traveling costume.)

BASCOMB. Helow, Stackpole, glad to meet you. On your way to Washington for another campaign?

STACKPOLE. Yes, and you?

BASCOMB. Armed and equipped, eager for the fray, we have a superb Congress to operate on, old fellows with subsidies sticking to their legs like moss to an old log, and some twenty going out forever. I say, Colonel, I met the loveliest girl as we entered. By Jove, she is magnificent. Just a little animated rose-bud.

STACKPOLE. A passenger.

BASCOMB. No, indeed; asked servant, and learned that she is the daughter of old Montezuma Buggs, M. C., and proprietor of this hotel. I am going to brush up and make her acquaintance.

STACKPOLE. Better let the crinoline alone, Ned. Take warning by me.

BASCOMB. That is the wisdom that must be learned through the old school of experience. Now for a bath, dinner, and the little Bugg. (*Exit.*)

SCIP., (*brushing Mr. Peppercorn.*) Ye'r berry welcome to de Buggs' House, sah—berry welcome indeed, sah.

PEPPERCORN. Buggs' House—what affectation. This is what I call a tavern or inn—I call it tavern.

SCIP. Ye can jis call, sah, what you please. Dusa bah-room down stairs, and de more you call de better we likes it, sah.

PEPPERCORN. And now I want some supper.

SCIP. Dinnah on the table, sah.

PEPPERCORN. Dinner at this hour of the night. Well, show me the supper-room. (*Scip bows him to door. Pep. exits.*)

(*Previous to this all the travelers have left save Stackpole, who has been examining the register and comes forward.*)

STACKPOLE. I can't stand this sort of thing any longer. Every traveler should register an oath on leaving home, before a competent tribunal, to murder a conductor, ticket agent, or hotel clerk before he returns. Here's, this supercilious, insolent fellow, now swinging his empty head in the atmosphere as if Divine Providence ought to be thankful that he consents to exist. (*To Scip who attempts to brush him,*) Oh! get out. (*Strikes him in the stomach, knocking Scip over the baggage. Scip gets up, squares himself and begins dancing around Stackpole in a boxing attitude.*)

SCIP. Yah, yah, look 'y heah.

T. CUTLETT. (*Coming forward.*) Stay, Scipio. When a robust individual of pugilistic tendency indulges in the eccentricity of tossing you among the baggage, respect for the house should restrain your wrath. Report the facts to the office and robust individual will find his luxury in the bill.
(*Retire Scipio.*)

STACKPOLE. I say, is not your name Cutlett?

CUTLETT. (*Looking at ceiling.*) Well yes—I believe it is. That is my cognomen.

STACKPOLE. Well, Tom Cutlett, if you will lower your chin and bring your eyes down from where they have been gazing over my head into the dim distance, as if I were some insignificant nuisance, and condescend to look at me, you will recognize an old friend.

CUTLETT. (*Slowly regarding him.*) Why Col. Stackpole! How do you do. I am gratified in seeing you again.

STACKPOLE. Ah! You do recognize me at last. Your gratification has my thanks. But, I say Tom, the last time I saw you—you were a minister of the Gospel, preaching soft salvation to pretty little milliner girls, out of a white choker and a single-breasted frock. How did you come to be the top-loftical mahogany-high poster I find you here?

CUTLETT. Preaching proved not to be my vocation, Colonel, my piety fell short of my dignity. Eve, the first milliner proved the ruin of Adam, and an Eve of the needle brought the Rev. T. Cutlett to grief. The dear little lambs.

STACKPOLE. Came to be lamb cutletts—eh, Tom. I take it however, your lack of piety and abundance of dignity are not in your way here.

CUTLETT. Not at all. A first-class hotel, Colonel, retains all the exclusive refinement that has come down to us from the feudal ages. Landlords and clerks are our only aristocrats in this degenerate day of familiar republicanism.

STACKPOLE. That is true; and in the voice of an indignant people, an oppressed people, I cry down with them!

CUTLETT. For such a position I have, I may say, a few natural qualifications. And when such qualifications look calmly at the admiring world from behind a cascade of immaculate linen and a diamond pin, success waits on effort. I have seen genuine merit record its name with an air; and by the time genuine merit secured a room, and had been marched by me from end to end of our vast dining-hall,

genuine merit lost its identity and sunk into the number of its bed-chamber, to have respect paid it, just in proportion to its purse—and no more.

STACKPOLE. Well, well, I know all that. But I say, Tom, I'm in a scrape, and I believe you can help me.

CUTLETT. Anything in reason that I can do, Colonel.

STACKPOLE. Yes, yes; of course. But you know that I am not happy in my domestic relations.

CUTLETT. I have heard——

STACKPOLE. That Mrs. Colonel Stackpole was an unappreciated female, hid in the obscurity of a little village. Well, having no end of trouble with one woman, I naturally took up with two. A pretty California widow—an unprotected female.

CUTLETT. And between the great unappreciated and the pretty unprotected you came to grief.

STACKPOLE. Precisely. And when the explosion occurred I fled; I retreated in great disorder. With carpet-sack in hand, I cut across the fields, waited for and took the first train at daylight, and had scarcely secured a seat before a tall female, thickly veiled, sat down by me. And she stuck to me like a burr. I attempted to lift that veil. I tried her on newspaper, an accident ticket, The Bloody Avenger of the Spanish Main, and gum-drops, but without avail to lift that veil. She followed—no, she accompanied me here. She is in the lady's parlor now. And, Tom, I don't know whether she is the unappreciated or the unprotected. She is one or the other. If its my charmer, I'll get drunk; if its my wife, I'll commit suicide. By Jove, how hard a man works to make himself miserable. Now, Tom, you must find out.

CUTLETT. My dear Colonel, I am very sorry; but the rules of our house and the exigencies of public morality——

STACKPOLE. Rumti, tumpti, rumti, tumti, tum. Oh! confound it, Tom, don't put off any of your old sermons on me. I see you throw me over. Well, I'll go to dinner, and when this matrimonial complication explodes I'll be prepared for consequences. (*Pulls his hat over his eyes and exits. As he does so he runs against Peppercorn, who enters.*) Oh! go to the devil.

PEPPERCORN. Thank you, sir; I believe I have no wish to go there. Rudest muscular individual I ever encountered. (*To Cutlett.*) Now, young man, I have had my indigestion, I would thank you for an answer to my request.

CUTLETT. What was it you were pleased to request?

PEPPERCORN. Really, it has been so long since, I have forgotten; but I believe I asked for a room on this floor—with two windows on each side and without a draft.

CUTLETT. Ah! yes.

PEPPERCORN. A room on this floor and without drafts. I don't want coughs, colds, catarrhs, and consumption driven in at every crack and paid for at the rate of five dollars a day, fires and doctors extra.

CUTLETT. Scip, show this gentleman to No. 1, the bridal chamber, (*aside*) directly over the kitchen, and our venerable friend can cut himself into steak for breakfast, as by that time he'll be done brown.

PEPPERCORN. Colored individual.

SCIP. Sah.

PEPPERCORN. Do you see those boots?

SCIP. Yes, sah.

PEPPERCORN. There's a quarter. Don't you touch them.

SCIP. Never, sah.

PEPPERCORN. And American citizen of African descent?

SCIP. Yes, sah.

PEPPERCORN. Do you see this coat?

SCIP. I think I does, sah.

PEPPERCORN. There's a quarter. Don't touch it.

SCIP. Not if I dies, sah.

PEPPERCORN. And—

SCIP. Sah!

PEPPERCORN. Show me No. 1.

SCIP. This way, sah. (*Aside.*) De Lord, but its my pinion freely expressed, dat dis old gentleman aint compus. No, sah, not compus.

(*Exit, showing out Peppercorn.*)—*Enter*' Marie Louise Antoinette.

MARIE. Mr. Cutlett, have you seen papa?

CUTLETT. Divine Marie, I have not seen the p. b.

MARIE. And what do you mean by p. b.?

CUTLETT. To you it means the parent bird, to me the parent bull.

MARIE. How absurd. But really, have'nt you seen him?

CUTLETT. My precious little rose-bud, my violet, my cauliflower, do you want me to see your papa?

MARIE. That is not what I mean. I ask you if papa has yet come in, Mr. Cutlett?

CUTLETT. Why Mister Cutlett? Why not Tom, or Cutlett; or, if you will, lamb cutlett?

MARIE. Don't talk nonsense. How do you like my new dress? Is't Madame de Thimballi a splendid fit? Only look at that train.

CUTLETT. It is superb; it is magnificent; it touches the sublime and borders on the immense.

MARIE. Mr. Cutlett, I believe you are saying something improper.

CUTLETT. You drive me to desperation. Why so frivolous? Why so cold?

MARIE. Why, indeed, why? Do you want me to betray our secret love in this public place; have an infuriated father learn through servants of our hidden loves, when such knowledge will end in broken hearts and death.

CUTLETT. Ah! I understand. At midnight in the garden, when the calm moon casts her radiance down upon the trickling fountain and its plaster Venus with a broken nose; when flowers unseen drown the scent of burning meat, and the brass band on the balcony is louder than the hum of hungry mosquitoes, I clasp you in my arms and sigh, Marie; you whisper, Cutlett, and we are blest.

MARIE. Happy hours, will they come again? 3

(They embrace.)—Enter Peppercorn in night cap, gown and slippers.

PEPPERCORN. I say, do you call that a room. It's an oven. I am perspiring two gallons to the square inch.

CUTLETT. Retire, you indecent old man.

PEPPERCORN. Retire to be roasted—I won't do it.

CUTLETT. Retire, or I'll call in the police.

PEPPERCORN. Young man, do you suppose that has any terrors for me? I can't be put in a worse place.

CUTLETT. Retire, sir. Don't you perceive the presence of refined female innocence. *(Pushes him out.)*

CUTLETT. Beautiful days when will they return, watched as we are?

MARIE. Let us fly! oh, my Cutlett, let us fly to the sunny isles of the ocean and be blessed!

CUTLETT. You say, fly, divine Marie, ah! would we could;

but such flight calls for golden wings. In those sunny isles shall we keep a Buggs house?

MARIE. Ah! I see it all. Mercenary wretch, you seek my fortune and not myself. Away! I will entertain your false love no more.

CUTLETT. Hear me dearest! For myself I care naught. Besides the love that lifts me to a heaven of delight, this filthy lucre is as dross. But for you, divine Marie, reared in the lap of a first class hotel luxury, with your delicate anatomy and refined tastes that revels in dreamy indolence on dime novels; you, with your sweet face and flowing locks, gotten up regardless of expense, and all your own—to be reduced to hash and bread pudding of a cheap boarding house—perish the thought! I would not cast a shadow on that sunny brow for all the heaven your love may bring. (*Aside.*) Hem, Bulwer.

MARIE. (*Softly.*) Cutlett!

CUTLETT. For I have known want my angel. I have had my exalted genius stifled by the smell of cooked cabbage and the lofty longings of my aspiring soul beaten to atoms in the mortar of adversity. But I love you, my love; hear me on my knees.

(*Enter Peppercorn, as before.*)

PEPPERCORN. They are grinding coffee. I have discovered the geographical position of No. 1. The subteranean regions of the kitchen burn below.

CUTLETT. Oh, get out. (*Pushes him off.*) Dear being, let me lay our suit at the feet of your hard-hearted parent. Let me plead with him as now I plead with you. (*Kneels.*)

MARIE. No, Thomas, we will fly. From the front balcony, that opens from my boudoir, on some moonless night, when the winds howl and the thunder rolls, fearlessly I will descend the silken ladder to your loving arms and share your lowly lot whate'er that lot may be.

CUTLETT. Oh! Maria Louisa Antoinette.

(*Enter Pat.*)

PAT. Howly mither! an her's the clark a coortin the little June Bugg.

(*Cutlett rises in some confusion, while Marie exits with a scream.*)

CUTLETT. You infernal rascal.

PAT. Aisy, Mither Cutlett! Aisy now! Let me brush yer knees or ould Buggs, who is just beyant wid a Hon. Phinias Pilaster will think yer been at yer devotions. (*Brushes Cutlett.*) Yis want to marry the little Bugg, Mither Cutlett. All right, just up and spake boldly to the ould humbug. Nivir fear, spake yer mind fraly. It's a club I have convanient that'll bring him to rason. Now yees spake out.

CUTLETT. (*Aside.*) Shall I take this ignorant Hibernian to my confidence or not. If I do it will cost me divers sums from my monthly stipend. If I do not he'll betray us. I had better. I'll promise him a hundred dollars and pay him fifty cents on account. Well Pat. what do you think of it?

PAT, (*assuming a thoughtful attitude.*) Now, Mither Cutlett, whin you ask me to think ye's puts me in a position that requires consideration. An' yes want to marry the little Bugg.

CUTLETT. Most assuredly I do.

PAT. An' the little Bugg wants to marry you?

CUTLETT. The latest information on that subject informs me that she does.

PAT. Well, Mither Cutlett, as this is a fra country, including the nager, why in the divil don't ye marry?

CUTLETT. We require the consent of the paternal Bugg.

PAT. Och, murther, an' is it that what kaping yes apart. I'll tell ye what, ye marry first an' git the consint afther.

CUTLETT. Patrick, it won't work. I have observed that fathers are pelicans before marriage, willing to feed their tender young from their paternal breast, and buzzards ready to hustle them out of their nest immediately after.

PAT. Thru for you, sur. A father-in-law is a buzzard, an' a mother-in-law is two buzzards. But hold asy, I say; I've a club convanient that'll make the old Buggs come to terms. He's a candidate for Congress agin, an' I know his wakeness. Kape ye'r eye on me an' spake out bowldly to old Buggs, de ye mind?

[*Enter Hon. Montezuma Buggs and Senator Phineas Pilaster. Cutlett retires to his desk, and Pat seats himself on the luggage.*]

BUGGS. You are welcome, Senator, to my humble abode,

I trust you will find your much-needed rest before resuming your arduous duties in the Senate.

PILASTER. I thank you, Mr. Buggs, for your Christian welcome. I do indeed need it after twenty years' service of my country. I long for the hour, my friend, when I can retire from the labors of the Christian statesman that so oppress and weary me.

BUGGS. We do, indeed, need repose. The cares and responsibilities of the high duties thrust upon us make the sweet domesticity of private life so precious.

PAT. (*Aside.*) The ould hypocrit, an' he's workin like a mule for a renomination.

PILASTER. We must not look to find that rest this side the grave; I fear, my dear sir. We have done the Christian work of lifting the African from servitude to citizenship; but the Indian yet appeals to us for aid.

CUTLETT, (*Aside.*) Having skinned the colored person, they contemplate Mr. Lo's scalping.

BUGGS. It is really a miracle the Christian work we have accomplished for the downtrodden and oppressed African. The Howard Institute alone is a monument of the Lord's mercy and our endeavor—wherein are taught plain sewing and the Christian religion.

PILASTER. But look at the Freedman's Bank.

BUGGS. The collected savings of four millions of laborers.

PILASTER. Eight millions safely invested—two dollars to each oppressed African.

CUTLETT. (*Aside.*) Loaned to Pilaster, Buggs & Co. to be repaid on the day of judgment.

BUGGS. I hope we may be as successful with our Indian brethren.

PILASTER. Doubtless. The Lord will not leave so wide a field uncared for. Evidence is given in this of our discovery of the Omahogs, an unknown tribe hidden away in the heart of a continent by the Almighty that they may be plastic material in the hands of the Christian reformer.

BUGGS. How interesting, and how curious. Simple children of the wilds—save a taste for roasted missionary, they are as yet untouched by the vice of a godless civilization.

PILASTER. Should we succeed in getting our appropriation of three millions through, we will make of the Omahogs propagandists of the faith to all Indian tribes.

BUGGS. It is intended, I believe, to devote one million to cooking stoves for the tribe.

PILASTER. Yes, our most Christian Secretary of the Interior, who is known to the Omahogs, as "Our Little Father," to distinguish him from our Christian President "The Great Father," thinks if the Omahogs could once have a taste of Christian cooking, they would forego their cannibal proclivities for roasted missionary.

BUGGS. A most original and ingenious idea. I see by the latest report of brother Leatherlungs, that he succeeded in baptizing three hundred at one time.

PILASTER. A most edifying event. There were three hundred warriors painted and equipped for the war path. Under the persuasive eloquence of brother Leatherlungs and a formal distribution of beef, bibles and blankets——

CUTLETT. (*Aside.*) To say nothing of whisky——

PILASTER. They went in and the water washing off the war paint they sang old hundred a little out of tune, but with the earnest simplicity of children.

BUGGS. Wonderful, Senator Pilaster, wonderful! The Lord is surely with us.

PILASTER. By the bye, I see that the Hon. Job Peppercorn, lately elected to Congress is an inmate of your excellent hotel. As the Speaker has designated him as chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, it would be well to cultivate him.

BUGGS. Is that so, Mr. Cuttett?

CUTLETT. (*Aside.*) Yes, sir, he is perspiring this moment at the rate of forty pints to the square inch in No. 1.

BUGGS. He shall be cared for.

PILASTER. As I must take the midnight train, so as to be early at my duties in Washington, I will retire to my apartment and pray and wrestle with the spirit until the hour of departing. And brother Buggs, if you would have a portion of that roast pig to strengthen my inner man and my flask refilled with some of your choice old Bourbon to be used in case of illness, I shall be greatly obliged.

BUGGS. Certainly. Mr. Cutlett, show Senator Pilaster to his room.

CUTLETT. Front.

SCIP. Here, sah.

CUTLETT. Conduct the Christian Statesman to the elevator, and elevate him to 42.

PILASTER. May the Lord bless this dwelling.

PAT. Amin.

(*Exit Senator Pilaster.*)

BUGGS. Ah, Mr. Cutlett, I am glad to see you so attentive to the interests of this house. You have great executive abilities, Mr. Cutlett. I am happy to observe, sir, that you have high executive abilities.

CUTLETT. I am delighted that my efforts in behalf of the house meet with your approbation.

BUGGS. I have no hesitation, sir, in saying that your deep interest, ripe intelligence, and executive abilities fit you for a higher position. I have thought, that as my constituents insist upon my continuing in Congress, much to my private embarrassment and injury, that it would be well you should have an interest in the Buggs' house. I have that in contemplation, sir.

CUTLETT. You'll excuse me, Mr. Buggs, but I have had that same under advisement.

BUGGS. It pleases me to know that our thoughts run in the same direction, sir. Now, what do you say to a fifth interest?

CUTLETT. The interest I feel, sir, is of a deeper and tenderer sort. It is an interest in your lovely daughter.

BUGGS. Mr. Cutlett!

CUTLETT. And an interest, sir, that I am authorized to say is reciprocal on the part of the party of the second part, Maria Louisa Antoinette.

BUGGS. I cannot permit this to go further, sir. I am astonished. The incompatibility of such an union must strike even so infatuated an individual as yourself.

CUTLETT. If I proposed, sir, to unite myself to a lot of old upholstery—or even a stone front; if in marrying I sought a woman recognized in good society, and gave in return a battered body and a carriage, I could see the incompatibility as you term it. But I love the divine Maria for herself, and she reciprocates for her Cutlett. This means wedlock in our eyes, and makes wedlock bliss.

BUGGS. A noble sentiment young man, and one that reflects credit on your noble heart. Uttered upon the floor of the House, from the stump, or at the Twin Mountains, it would call for and merit applause. But in this hall of the Buggs' house, I must say, altho' somewhat profane, that it is damned nonsense, that you believe in as much as I do.

CUTLETT. But, Mr. Buggs—

BUGGS. I must move the previous question, that cuts off debate. It is my intention to take my daughter with me

to Washington this winter, that she may aid and comfort me in my arduous public duties.

CUTLETT. So you move the previous question?

BUGGS. I do.

CUTLETT. And this brings up the main question. You refuse your consent to our loving union.

BUGGS. Most conclusively, emphatically and positively I do.

CUTLETT. Then, Hon. Montezuma Buggs, M. C., proprietor of the Buggs House, I must beg of you to procure some other competent person to take my place in this establishment. I cannot consent to remain with an infatuated individual who cannot see my merits as a son-in-law, while eulogizing him for the more difficult and responsible position of confidential clerk of a first class hotel. As Shakespeare beautifully expresses: You can go, and be damned.

BUGGS. Mr. Cutlett, I am surprised, sir; I may say, sir, I am astonished at your conduct.

CUTLETT. Oh, don't be surprised; it's not time; I'll surprise you; restrain your startled emotions until I give the word.

BUGGS. When I see you again, Mr. Cutlett, I hope you will be under better restraint. (*Exit*)

CUTLETT. (*Alone.*) Pat is right, marry first, and conciliate after. I must consult Stackpole. (*Enter Stackpole.*) Ah! Colonel, I was but now thinking of you.

STACKPOLE. To what convulsion of nature do I owe such consideration?

CUTLETT. Colonel, I am not the man to go back on a friend; I have a heart Colonel.

STACKPOLE. Come, Tom, cut that. You want something; what is it?

CUTLETT. Stackpole, old friend, you pain me——

STACKPOLE. I tell you, Tom, I am in no temper for your infernal sentiment. Now tell me in three words what do you want?

CUTLETT. In three words; then, I want assistance.

STACKPOLE. I know it. Well, for the items.

CUTLETT. Your'e in the lobby at Washington?

STACKPOLE. I am.

CUTLETT. Does it pay?

STACKPOLE. To cheek, backed with brain, yes.

CUTLETT. I have the capital. Now, Colonel, I find I must

throw up this pleasing pursuit of hotel torture, and I contemplate joining you in the lobby.

STACKPOLE. Tom, your'e in a scrape—a woman.

CUTLETT. Only another name for a scrape, Colonel. Now you've given me your confidence I'll give you mine. I and Miss Buggs elope to-night.

STACKPOLE. All right.

CUTLETT. We take the midnight train for Washington.

STACKPOLE. Good train.

CUTLETT. At Washington I'll join you in the lobby and profits will accrue. Now for your case. I have seen that female; she seems to be under the protection of the Christian statesman.

STACKPOLE. That is singular.

CUTLETT. She sent for old Buggs, and the three had a long private conversation.

STACKPOLE. You don't say so.

CUTLETT. Yes; I heard old B. say he would put her under the care of his old, trusted friend, Hon. Phineas Pilaster, who would take the midnight train for Washington.

STACKPOLE. I can't understand the muddle. But let them go, so they don't bother me. Now for your case.

CUTLETT. All right. (*Takes pencil and paper and writes, reading,*) "Dearest, eyes of my soul, meet me in the hall at midnight to-night, and we will fly to the"—where the devil shall I say we'll fly—oh, yes, (*writing,*) "to the isles of the ocean."

STACKPOLE. That, geographically considered, is rather an indefinite locality.

CUTLETT. Oh! never mind, she'll understand. (*Rings, enter Pat.*) Here, Doolan, give this to Miss Buggs, if you can; if you cannot, slip it under her door.

PAT. All right, sur; an' de ye's stand just here, sur; you'll hear news directly. (*Exit.*)

CUTLETT. Come, Colonel, let's to the bar and drink success to the lobby. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter Buggs, reading telegrams.*)

BUGGS. (*Alone.*) I must say that I am uneasy; they are pushing me closer than I thought. All turns on the delegate from the 18th precinct. I must have that delegate or I am lost. Well, if my friends have not elected him, I must

buy him—generally the cheaper process. (*Noise outside.*)
What is the meaning of this row?

(*Enter Pat excitedly.*)

PAT. Where's Mither Cutlett? where, I say, is Mither Cutlett?

BUGGS. What do you want with him?

PAT. Divil a bit do I want him. It's the boys. He's elected honorable delegate from the 18th precinct.

BUGGS. That is not possible. How did that happen? I never heard Mr. Cutlett had any politics.

PAT. Divil a politic or principle aither. The boys named me, ye say, an' I declined in favor of Mither Cutlett. Now, ye's jist spake him fair, for he has the casting vote. (*Enter Cutlett.*) Ah, here ye is, honorable delegate from the 18th precinct. Ye've got him now. He can't be Congressman widout ye'r vote.

(*Band of music and cries of Cutlett! Cutlett! heard outside.*)

CUTLETT. What do they want?

PAT. They want yir thanks an' a trate.

CUTLETT. But I can't speak—hav'nt the remotest idea how.

PAT. Never moind; stip out on the balcony now an' make the motions, an' I'll make the spache. (*Pushes him out. Cheers heard while Pat speaks. Cutlett gesticulates violently.*)

PAT. My fellow-citizens. It's the motions uv me heart that's too dape for utterance on this tremenjious occashun. Ye've elected me diligate, and I thank ye. It's a grate honor, it is, in this dark hour of piril, whin the ship uv State is plugin' and laborin' in the stormy ocean, wid the rocks a rollin, the thunder a gleamin, an' the waves ready on all sides to dash the noble vessel all to smithereens. In this hour you called a Cutlett to the fore. Ye desire to know me principles. I'll tell ye. It is to study the wants uv the papple. Now, what do the papple want? They want the good liquor, (*loud laughter and cheers,*) and they shall have it; an' it's me wish that ye go into the bar, ye can git me principles from a bottle at me cost, an' ye must imbibe those principles until ye are full. Can I say more? No, I can say no more. (*Cheers, laughter, and music. Re-enter Cutlett.*)

BUGGS. Mr. Cutlett permit me to congratulate you on the

unexpected honor. Nothing could gratify me more than thus to have a friend placed where—

CUTLETT. He could surprise you. Did I not tell you to restrain your emotional astonishment.

BUGGS. The proposition you made me, my dear Cutlett, was so unexpected.

CUTLETT. Does it seem more familiar now?

BUGGS. But my dear Cutlett you were acting under some sentimental impulse. Now we are practical men. Would not—say, three hundred dollars?

CUTLETT. No, Mr. Buggs.

BUGGS. Five hundred?

CUTLETT. Sir, I scorn the filthy lucre.

BUGGS. Now, say a thousand?

CUTLETT. Not worth one throb of a tender loving heart.

BUGGS. (*Aside.*) I can purchase two delegates for that; but to have my confidential clerk against me would be ruinous. He knows too much. (*Aloud.*) Say two thousand.

CUTLETT. Not ten—not twenty. Sell my country and my love. Never, sir.

BUGGS. Those sentiments do honor to your head and heart. I never before understood your noble nature. You are the man of all men I would have selected for my only child. Take her, Cutlett, cherish her and you have the earnest prayers of a loving father for your success and happiness. (*Aside.*) That secures me his vote, and he will be invaluable as a son-in-law in the lobby. (*Aloud.*) Come to my private office, my son, and we will discuss the campaign for tomorrow. (*Exeunt.*)

PAT. (*Alone.*) That's what I call a loving ending to a bit av trouble. An' its all yer doing Patrick Doolen. An' its yerself that's got a moind above the trunks. I've the intention to turn editor and wield the moighty engine, called the press, I have. Och! Moses, but I'm tired. It's me watch, but I'll just turn out the gas an' take a bit slape, for its a dhirty noight and the wind kapes blowing uv it about.

(*Turns off gas and throws himself on luggage to sleep; trombone represents his snores. Enter, dressed for traveling, from room No. 1, Hon. Mr. Peppercorn, bag in hand; groups his way forward.*)

PEPPERCORN. I believe they intend to torture first and then murder me. I'll steal away.

(Enter from opposite sides Marie Antoinette and Mrs. Ralph Stackpole; immediately after the Hon. Phineas Pilaster. All group about them.)

MARIE ANTOINETTE. Hist! me love.

HON. PHINEAS. Hist!

(They both grapple Peppercorn.)

PEPPERCORN. *(Struggling.)* Murder! murder! murder!

(Pat Doolan, starting up, captures the Hon. Phineas.)

PAT. Police! police! police!

(All scream and struggle. Enter Buggs, Cutlett, Stackpole, Mrs. Doc Gussett, and Benjamin, lodgers, servants with lights. Mrs. Stackpole screams and pulls down her veil.)

BUGGS. What is the meaning of this unseemly disturbance? My daughter, what do you here at this hour?

CUTLETT. Permit me to explain. When you refused your consent to our loving union I planned an elopement. Since you gave your honored consent, I have had no opportunity to explain to my loved Marie.

BUGGS. This grieves me. Such disregard of a fond parent's wishes. I could weep.

STACKPOLE. Don't weep. If we delay for tears we shall lose the train for Washington.

CUTLETT. To which place we adjourn to weep at our leisure.

[END OF FIRST ACT.]

ACT SECOND.

Scene, room in house of Mrs. Stackpole—Doors right and left—Closet left side—Two windows heavily draped, back—Rather loud in furniture. Mrs. Stackpole and Marie discovered.

MARIE. How very droll that Col. Stackpole should not know you, his own wife.

MRS. STACKPOLE. A blond wig and a little rouge, my child, makes a vast difference, and this is helped by the fact that he never did know me for what I am. For some years he

left me to mope in an obscure village while he enjoyed life in Washington. Our union was unhappy from the start, and I should have been willing to live apart but for an effort he made at reconciliation, and in that effort I learned that he was a libertine and a lobbyist, leading a life here that disgraces the name he gave his wife and child. Then I determined to act.

MARIE. What did you do?

MRS. STACKPOLE. The same train that carried my husband to our village brought a disreputable woman, who, preceding him to our house, claimed my lord and master as her own. I refused him an interview, and the same train that took him away carried me also. I determined to see his life here and strive to reclaim him. I fell in, by accident, with your father and Senator Pilaster, and telling them that I had means, and a claim to prosecute received their aid and advice.

MARIE. And your husband never suspected?

MRS. STACKPOLE. He never cared enough to suspect.

MARIE. Why, what a romance. How came you to separate so soon after marrying?

MRS. STACKPOLE. It is a sad, shameful story, my dear; one not fit to remember if I could only forget. He has forgotten; and, at times, I believe, I trouble myself too much in the way of a disguise.

MARIE. I don't know about that. I see him frequently staring at you as if, as if——

MRS. STACKPOLE. As if he were puzzled. And so he is; he finds a woman at last who, knowing him, is his equal.

MARIE. And did you bring money enough from home to pay for all these beautiful things?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Yes, my child; I must say for Ralph that he is generous. He has always maintained us handsomely, and in this last separation made over to me quite a fortune through my agent. In the expenditure I have been greatly aided by the advice of Senator Pilaster, the Christian statesman.

MARIE. How good of him.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Oh, very good. You have no idea, you innocent rosebud, how good he is. The old Turk; I see that he even wants to include you in his goodness. Good! It is a wonder to me, child, that the angels do not lift the Hon. Phineas out of the Senate right into Heaven with all his broad-cloth and brass buttons on him.

MARIE. Your'e making fun now.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And you don't see where the laugh comes in? Wait awhile and you'll see it all. Did I not hear him whisper to you in the diplomatic gallery to-day about meeting him after the german to-night?

MARIE. Oh, yes, he wants to show me his great speech on closer Christian and commercial relations with the interior of Africa, in which subsidized ships are to carry out christianized negroes and return laden with ivory, elephants, camels, mummies and cockatoos. I don't know what it all means, but he has repeated it so often I know it by heart.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Well, you'll find my dear, that it is not a matter so much of foreign as domestic relations. You are being used. I don't know how much your respected father observes, but there is a gentleman who answers to the name of Cutlett, your intended, who sees it all, and don't like it a bit.

MARIE. My intended. I'll tell you something — now don't go and tell on me like a nasty creature—I hate him.

MRS. STACKPOLE. You don't say so?

MARIE. Yes, I do. I was a little fool to listen to him. But at home, he was the only beau. I could'nt flirt with the colored barber, you see, and if he'd a run off with me I'd a married him. But——

MRS. STACKPOLE. I know that but. A handsome, merry young fellow is that but; wears lavender gloves, and loves you to madness.

MARIE. What a clever creature you are. Now don't tell, please, and I'll make a clean breast of it. Do you see that ring?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Quite perceptibly. It is your engagement ring?

MARIE. Yes; but that isn't all. I was walking with Edward——

MRS. STACKPOLE. Edward? come now.

MARIE. Don't interrupt me. I was walking with Edward in Lafayette Square when he looked at my ring and laughed.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Laughed? How impertinent.

MARIE. Yes, he did laugh at the ring Tom gave me, and said it was paste. My, but I was angry.

MRS. STACKPOLE. At Edward?

MARIE. No; at Tom. But I said it wasn't. Then we rode down to Sempkin's in his coupé. My, but he has an ele-

gant coupé, and old Sempkin said it was paste, and then Henry gave seven hundred dollars for a real solitaire and threw the paste in the gutter. There now.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And when you marry Tom you'll have to return Edward his solitaire.

MARIE. Did you ever hear of such a thing? Why, it is real elegant; I won't do it.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. What, keep Tom and the solitaire?

MARIE. No, I'll keep Ed. and the solitaire. I'll do that if I am torn in pieces by wild horses, see if I don't.

SCIP. Colonel Stackpole and Mr. Cutlett.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. Show them up. Come, child, it is time to dress. Say to the gentlemen we will see them directly. (*Exit Scip.*) So you will be torn in pieces by wild horses, eh? Come along. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter Stackpole and Cutlett.

STACKPOLE. Well, Tom, how do you like the lobby as far as you have got?

CUTLETT. Well, I hav'nt seen the money yet. Can't get up the interest before I see the capital.

STACKPOLE. Of course not, and if you could see it, it would'nt be worth seeing. If our business could be comprehended by every fool at a glance it would not be worth following.

CUTLETT. Thanks.

STACKPOLE. You are no fool; I would'nt propose a partnership if you were; but you have to be initiated. Now for this Indian business. Everything in this world was created for some wise purpose; Mr. Lo was created for the lobby.

CUTLETT. When was that discovery made?

STACKPOLE. The memory of man runneth not to the contrary. The Indian ring is an antique. It dates back to the Declaration of Independence, and was covered with moss in the days of Jackson. It is nearer perfection, perhaps, than any work the devil ever consummated. Extending from the seat of government to the furthest frontier, it includes the highest and the lowest. Its work is done among savages, who can neither reason nor testify, with convicts escaping punishment, and criminals escaping conviction. It makes treaties only to break them, and the money appropriated, every dollar of which is stained with blood, it divides among its followers. If the Indians submit, profit doth accrue; if

they rebel and blindly make war, war calls for heavier contracts and heavier appropriations, and corresponding profits. It legislates for a million of savages, where the actual number is not a hundred thousand.

CUTLETT. The devil you say.

STACKPOLE. Oh, that's nothing. Now we are pushing through a heavy appropriation for the Omahogs. Now, let me tell you there are no Omahogs.

CUTLETT. No Omahogs.

STACKPOLE. Not a one. There never was a Omahog, and the probability is there never will be one.

CUTLETT. But I don't see how anything can be made out of that cheeky business, to say nothing of the danger.

STACKPOLE. My dear fellow, give us the money ; we may not find the Omahogs, but we will find vouchers.

CUTLETT. Well, if that is'nt the brassiest swindle I ever heard of, sell me for sausage meat.

STACKPOLE. My dear fellow, you are new to this business. What do you think of a railroad company organized to build a road with the endorsement of its bonds by Government, and the donation of a domain in public lands, forming another company within itself, and contracting with that inner company to construct the road and getting itself returned to Congress to so shape legislation as to shut out investigation and allow the honorable members to cart off eighty millions of dollars ; or of a Land Office ring that gobbles up all of the public domain ; or of a Patent Office ring, that realizes on all the ingenuity of the land ; or of a Navy ring, or a War Department ring ?

CUTLETT. Hold on, old fellow ; the thing is getting so immense as to threaten insanity.

STACKPOLE. Why, Tom, it is estimated by the more knowing ones, that of every three dollars collected for this blessed paternal Government of ours, one only reaches the Treasury. Count the yearly revenue and you may estimate the profits of those enterprizing gentlemen who collect and disburse the public funds.

CUTLETT. And Ralph, you have been one of the favored few, for these ten years—you ought to be a millionaire.

STACKPOLE. I ought, and there's my grief—and therein lies the reason I have for initiating you. The leaders take the lion's share, but the subordinates who devise the work and encounter the danger, are rewarded as if they were slaves.

Now I propose applying a remedy to this abuse. While our leaders are working Congress, we will work our leaders.

CUTLETT. And how?

STACKPOLE. Ah! there's the rub. Our nearest is this Christian Statesman, the Hon. Phinias Pilaster. To get a hold on that gentleman—to ring his nose, is no slight undertaking, T. C., my friend. I have studied him—I have gone through him with a dark lantern and a pair of India rubber boots. There is'nt an honest pulsation in his body—not a pore but sweats the rogue, and yet never a misstep—not an imprudence even. He has a cunning that amounts to genius.

CUTLETT. Well, partner, what's the use wasting time on this piece of Senatorial adipose if the task is so hopeless.

STACKPOLE. I don't say that. I think I see an opening. This clever blonde, Mrs. Dora Jones, I believe has captured him—she certainly has a strong hold of some sort.

CUTLETT. And it is for us noble conspirators to get a hold on her, eh?

STACKPOLE. Precisely.

CUTLETT. Well, that must be your work, I have my hands full with Marie Antionette. I never saw a girl so changed. She is as full of flirt as a colt is of capers, and by jove, I find it rather fatiguing to keep round her.

STACKPOLE. Why waste your time on that sort of thing. Let her flirt out. She won't pay.

CUTLETT. I know that, but I have fooled around her until my affections—

STACKPOLE. Oh bother! cut that!

CUTLETT. Well Ralph, when we were alone in that beastly eating house, I did'nt care a continental for her, but some how or other, with her, surrounded here by all sorts of people—well, I want her.

STACKPOLE. The old story.

(Enter Mrs. Stackpole and Marie.)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Good morning to you, gentlemen—I believe it is morning here until one dines. I hope we have not exhausted your patience in waiting.

COL. STACKPOLE. Waiting for angels is even more exhausting than the same attention on common humanity, but we managed to survive.

MARIE. *(To Cutlett, who attempts to embrace her.)* Now Tom, stop that—you'll muss my dress.

CUTLETT. The drapery of my angel must not be disarranged. (*Aside.*) Damn her dress.

MARIE. Is'nt it nice?

CUTLETT. Rawther—I like it better than the one you wore at Madam Sardine's last night.

MARIE. Do you indeed ; and why, Tom?

CUTLETT. That was one fellows could muss with impunity, sixteen lads went whirling you through the waltz until the trail disappeared in tatters—oh! I like a dress that cannot be touched without being mussed.

MARIE. Tom, you do make yourself so disagreeable, quarreling with me, and grumbling at me, because I have admirers. I am sure you told me when I came, I must make myself fascinating, and get the Omahog appropriation votes.

CUTLETT. Oh, yes, certainly ; and my bird of paradise was negotiating for the Omahogs night before last, at Mrs. Barlow's, when she sat perched on the back stairs for an hour with that naval duck at her feet. And again, she had no thought but for the O's when she spent the morning in the diplomatic gallery listening to that Jackanapes Benson ; or the other day when she gave three hours to Corcoran's gallery looking at the Plague in Egypt, with that Ad. Tucker, and a catalogue upside down.

MARIE. Oh, hush. I never heard anything so ridiculous. Can I help it if gentlemen admire me, and I am not going to help it either. I am going to have a good time while I can. There, now, if you dont like it go and fall in love with another ; plenty of them.

CUTLETT. No, I don't propose transferring stock. But I tell you what; I'll make myself very disagreeable to some fellow one of these days, and send a bullet in search of brains that are not to be found, hang me if I don't.

MARIE. Oh, Tom, your swearing. You are a nasty rude man, and I don't love you any more. There now.

CUTLETT. Well, suppose you hand me over that ring, and we'll dissolve partnership.

MARIE. (*Aside.*) Good gracious, I can't do that. (*Aloud.*) No I won't, I'll sleep on it, and if to-morrow I hate you as I do now, I'll send it to you in a box. You are just perfectly hateful now. So you are.

(*Enter Scip.*)

SCIP. Mistah Edward Bascomb. (*Exit Scip.*)

(*Enter Bascomb.*)

BASCOMB. The cream of the day to you, ladies. Ah, Cutlett, how d'ye ; you see, Miss Marie, I am punctual ; ready for the stroll you promised.

MARIE. Quite ready. Won't you accompany us, Tom ?

CUTLETT. No.

MARIE. Well, by-by ; see you at the German.

(*Exit on arm of Bascomb. Cutlett walks violently across the stage twice or three times, then jams his hat on his head and exits.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Col. Stackpole, have I the honor of being the subject of your meditations ? For the last ten minutes you have been engaged gazing at me as if I were a rare work of art.

STACKPOLE. (*Aside.*) And so you are. (*Aloud.*) I must confess to that rudeness.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And why ?

STACKPOLE. You so strangely resemble some one in a dim past, I am getting to have faith in a former state of existence.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Indeed ?

STACKPOLE. By jove, that "indeed," did it. You resemble my wife.

MRS. STACKPOLE. (*Coldly.*) You have a wife ?

STACKPOLE. Yes, and no. But see how much you two are alike. (*Takes locket from his breast pocket.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. And you carry her image next your heart. What beautiful affection !

STACKPOLE. Ah ! yes. One cannot altogether wipe out the past.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Even when one wishes ?

STACKPOLE. Even so. That affection made an epoch in my life.

MRS. STACKPOLE. That you put down, as a boy does a stick to see how far he can jump from it.

STACKPOLE. Well, yes. But is not the resemblance striking ? True, she is a brunette, you are a blonde. She is a plain little country woman, you are a graceful winning woman of the world. She has not your style, you see.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Thanks. And this strange resemblance has brought me to your notice?

STACKPOLE. Not at all. Quite the contrary, in fact I never caught the resemblance till now. And now it is only something to wonder at. I am more concerned about the future than the past. I saw you, Mrs. Dora Jones, at first, to admire your cleverness, I have remained long enough under the influence of its charms to have a deeper feeling.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Col. Stackpole must put a check upon such wandering and wicked feelings.

STACKPOLE. May I not love you?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Certainly you may, that I cannot help, but the expression of that love is an offense so long as you have a wife, as you say, entitled to your affections.

STACKPOLE. That is true in part and false in part. I have a wife and yet I have no wife.

MRS. STACKPOLE. How can that be?

STACKPOLE. It is a strange but not a pleasant story. I had returned from the war in love with a girl I never saw. I had solicited a correspondence through the press, as soldiers were wont to do. In response came a letter evidently from a school girl. I answered and she wrote, and so we continued until the war ended, and in the grand review of Sherman's army in Washington, who should meet me at the Capitol but my little correspondent. She had run away from school in Pennsylvania. She was young, fresh, pretty and clever. What followed was not well to do nor is it good to tell. We were young and she was romantic. I returned with her to my native town as the wife she should have been. But my little love had a temper. God knows I intended to make it all right, but while I hesitated her uncle and guardian appeared—appealed to the law with her consent. Now the law of Pennsylvania gives the gay Lothario a choice between matrimony and the penitentiary. I chose the first. We were married and separated forever on the same day.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Why separate?

STACKPOLE. She had shamed me in my native place. I was ruined in the estimation of those who knew me from my birth. I fled, changed my name, sought a new career but the blight went with me. I was returned to Congress only to be discovered. Shamed and abused I was driven from respectable society to that of disreputable people, from Congress into the

lobby, and here I am, Mrs. Dora Jones, finding in you what I ought to have known in my youth. Had I met you—

MRS. STACKPOLE. The result would have been the same. You blame your poor wife for faults that are in yourself. With all your courage as a soldier you are a coward as a man. You have stupidly tried to escape yourself. Instead of going to the front you have been caught skulking in the rear. The man who shows by his own actions that he has something to fear will soon find that others know he has enough to answer for; this stupid world takes us at our own estimate.

STACKPOLE. Words of wisdom; but all too late. I only know that you are my lost opportunity, you are the one I should have loved, and sought and cherished. With you my career might have been love. But the might have been is now my curse. I only know, Dora Jones, that I love you.

MRS. STACKPOLE (*aside*.) He loves me—poor Ralph—he loves me, after all.

(*Enter Scip, announcing Hon. Mr. Peppercorn and Mr. Pat Doolan.*)

(*Enter Mr. Pep. and Pat; Mr. P. sinks exhausted in a chair.*)

PAT. The crame of the avening to yees, ladies; the same to ye, Colonel.

STACKPOLE. The same to you, Mr. Doolan; and how do you find your new vocation?

PAT. It's to me taste, Colonel. We have chained the speed of the storm to the press, that moighty engine, and I ride the steed. It's not so healthy as baggage-smashing, but it's more intellectual and suited to me ganus.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. Why, my dear Mr. Peppercorn, you seem exhausted.

PAT. Exhausted, is it; he's nearly kilt, an' if it had'nt been for me powerful purtection I belave there'd been a vacancy in his district.

STACKPOLE. Why, what does it mean?

PEPPERCORN. It means, sir, that I am the wrong man in the wrong hole. I was not meant for a Congressman. I am, so to speak, an accident—a casualty. I was sent here without my knowledge or consent. My party got to quarreling over two men, and I was unexpectedly taken up as a

compromise. I didn't want it; I don't want it now, and it'll kill me yet.

STACKPOLE. How so?

PEPPERCORN. I have to provide for all the loafers and beggars and rum-hole rats in my district. They call themselves my constituents. They are all here. I can't turn round that a dozen are not on me. All who don't want office want contracts. There are five hundred to every place, and the same men have signed all the petitions, cuss 'em. When I go out I have to dodge down back alleys and run for my life. I got an old hack and had small-pox painted in big letters on the sides. Bless your soul, they all said they'd had that disease, and rode with me until the Board of Health arrested us for spreading a deadly disorder. It is a deadly disorder, but won't spread; it all sticks to me.

STACKPOLE. But you certainly were safe on the floor?

PEPPERCORN. Not a bit of it. They card me out. I tried sending word I was not in my seat, and took refuge in the barber-shop. They watched me from the gallery, and wrote home to my papers that I was drunk and in the barber-shop all the time, and I am called there the chairman of the Committee on Barber-shop.

STACKPOLE. Why, lock yourself up in your room.

PEPPERCORN. My friend, I have no room. They sleep on the floor, on the chairs, in my bed. They wear my shirts, use up my stationery, and drink my whisky. I can't get into a hole or corner to change my linen. I tried it this morning in a closet, and got my head through to find a female poking a petition at me, and they'r all coming.

STACKPOLE. Who?

PEPPERCORN. The women. The President appointed a woman postmistress, and they'r all coming in from my district. (*Noise heard without.*) Oh Lord! there they are.

(*Enter Scip.*)

SCIP. Dares quite a number of gentlemen here, say dey must see Mr. Peppercorn.

PEPPERCORN. I can't see them; say I'm not here.

SCIP. Dey say dey saw you come in, sah.

PAT. Here, sir, come wid me; get behind them curtains. (*Hides him and then opens windows.*) Now bid im come in.

(*Enters crowd with petitions, crying, "Where's our member?" "Where's Mr Peppercorn?"*)

PAT. Ould Pippercorn tuk the alarm an' wint out at this windy, he did. And there's a noice slate on the roof. He slid down, an' yonder he goes. Git out, now, an' ye can catch him.

CROWD. Where? where? (*They tumble out at the window, save a fat man, whom Pat helps out.*)

PAT. There they go. Sure the hefty gintleman is split all to paces. But he's up an' together agin. Come out, sur; yir precious life is good for tin minutes more.

PEPPERCORN. Thanks, Patrick; thanks.

(*Scipio enters.*)

SCIPIO. Hon. Mr. Buggs and Senator Pilaster.

(*Enter Buggs and Pilaster.*)

PILASTER. May the blessings of the Lord rest on this household.

PAT. Amin.

BUGGS. Well, my daughter, how is your health to-day, after the vain frivolities of the week?

MARIE. I am well enough.

PILASTER (*to Marie.*) You remember, you are to hear my speech this evening.

MARIE Oh, I won't forget. (*Aside.*) I'm going to the german, if I die for it.

PILASTER. I am sorry to learn, my dear Mr. Peppercorn, that you hesitate reporting in favor of our appropriation for those suffering children of the plains, the Omahogs.

PEPPERCORN. I don't hesitate at all. I won't report in favor of an appropriation for Indians who don't exist.

PILASTER. Ah! I see; some of those ungodly men of the sword, from the War Department, have been slandering our missionary brethren.

PEPPERCORN. Slander or no slander, I won't report until I have proof. Old Col. Plunkett, who has lived fifty years on the plains, says there is no such tribe. He says let them fetch on a delegation, so we can see them. So say I. When your missionary psalm-singers fetch 'em on, I'll report, and not before.

STACKPOLE. I am happy in being able to relieve the gentleman. A delegation is now on its way, and will probably reach here to-morrow or next day.

PILASTER. The Lord be praised.

PAT. Amin.

CUTLETT (*to Stackpole*.) What the devil do you mean.

STACKPOLE (*aside to Cutlett*.) Oh, bother, we can have an Indian delegation here in two hours any time, if that is all the old fool wants.

SCIP announces Mr. and Mrs. Doctor Gussett.

(*Enter Mr. and Mrs. Doctor Gussett—the last in Bloomer costume.*)

DOCTOR G. Benjamin Gussett.

BEN. Doctor.

DOCTOR G. Hold my umbrella. Put those clogs outside the door, stupid. Evening to you all. Dropped in to dispose of a few tickets to my lecture on Bran as a Diet.

PILASTER. You are doing good work in the cause of reform, Doctor.

DOCTOR G. Should think I was. How many tickets do you want now?

PILASTER. You can give me one.

DOCTOR G. One! I like that—no I don't. What, a man with your progressive sympathies and grasp of intellect call for one ticket! Benjamin!

BEN. Doctor.

DOCTOR G. Give Senator Pilaster twelve tickets. Five dollars, Senator. (*Senator gives reluctantly.*) Any of this benighted frivolous crowd want to be enlightened on bran?

STACKPOLE. I fear not, Doctor.

CUTLETT. Light diet for horses; has a purgative effect when made into a mash. Your enlightened intellect, then, is opposed to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

DOCTOR G. Young man, the devil is a buggabo, invented to frighten idiots such as you into good behavior.

CUTLETT. Thanks.

DOCTOR G. Flesh taken as food corrupts the blood, clouds the brain; clogs the pores, and destroys the digestive process. It makes women imbeciles, and men brutes. If any man wants to die, let him eat turkey.

PAT. Begorrah, but I want to die.

DOCTOR G. If any man wants to be a butcher of his fellow men, let him eat beef. All of which is proven and illustrated in my lecture on Bran as a Diet. Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR G. Offer the tickets.

(Benjamin offers the tickets.)

MRS. S. You must excuse me, Doctor, Marie and I have to retire and dress for the german. *(Exeunt Mrs. S. and Marie.)*

DOCTOR G. German! paugh, what stupidity.

SENATOR PILASTER. You never dance, Doctor?

DOCTOR G. Dance! yes, I do; not as these puppets, pulled in at the waist like wasps, until the lungs and heart are jammed in on each other, and the stomach pushed out of place, with their arms turned up until they resemble kangaroos, and they go churning the indigestible Kickeshaws. They eat and dance only with their legs.

STACKPOLE. Oh! Doctor, we blush, say limbs.

DOCTOR G. No, I wont; I call things by their right names. Now, when I dance I dance all over. I expand the lungs, develop the muscles, stimulate the circulation, and open the pores. *(Benjamin.)*

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR G. Give these idiots a specimen of my gymnastic-health-restoring dance.

(Gymnastic dance.)

(Cutlett laughs boisterously.)

DOCTOR G. Young man, what are your cachinary organs stimulated by now?

CUTLETT. At that remarkable exhibition of terpsichorean health restorer, by jove, you and Benjamin would make your fortune with the minstrels.

DOCTOR G. Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR G. You are the muscular side of our matrimonial alliance. Knock this idiot down, and then fetch me my clogs. *(Exit.)*

BENJAMIN to Cutlett: Young man.

CUTLETT. Sir, to you.

BENJAMIN. I am inclined to befriend you. I pity your ignorance and deplore your imbecility. You don't know that superior being.

CUTLETT. I flatter myself I don't.

BENJAMIN. Let me tell you, then, that that superior being

is dangerous. Where other women carry newspapers to improve the contour of the figure she carries revolvers. She, that superior person, swells on revolvers.

DOCTOR. (*Outside.*) Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR. Knock that fellow down, and fetch my clogs.

BENJAMIN. Young man consider yourself knocked—beware.
(*Exit.*)

(*Re-enter Mrs. Stackpole and Marie, cloaked for party.*)

STACKPOLE, (*to Mrs. S.*) May I have the honor, madam.

MRS. S. With pleasure.

CUTLETT. And you my love?

MARIE. Yes; but I hate you.

(*Exeunt all save Doolan.*)

DOOLAN. (*Soliloquizing.*) I had me orders from headquarters to watch this house. It's the sate of the lobby, and much fraquinted by that Christian statesman Phineas Pilaster. Sure an I say him here often enough. But he makes sacrit visits. Och that's the pint. I must see him in sacrate, an' hear what he says confidentially. Let me say, we have here a nate little closet where I can concale meself. (*Opens closet.*) Be me sowl but its made a purpose. There's a bit uv a windy I can drap me notes from, an' have Tim carry 'em to the telegraph. Now come on, Mr. Pilaster, but I'm ready for yees. (*Enter closet.*)

(*Re-enter Marie and Ned Bascomb.*)

NED. Didn't we slip them nicely? Now we'll have the evening all to ourselves.

MARIE. Didn't I get up an awful headache?

NED. To ease my heartache.

MARIE. How lovely—now really, why do you love me?

NED. Because you are dutiful, beautiful, and an armful.

(*Embracing her. Enter Scipio.*)

SCIPIO. Hon. Mr. Pilaster's below, Miss, and says you expect him.

MARIE. Oh, I forgot. I did promise.

SCIPIO. Are you at home, Miss?

MARIE. Oh, yes; of course. (*Exit servant.*)

NED. I don't like this. D—n the Hon. Pilaster.

MARIE. Now, Ned, you get behind this curtain and you'll hear some fun.

NED. I don't like that sort of fun.

MARIE. Here, quick ; I hear him coming. (*Putts him behind curtain. Enter Hon. Pilaster.*)

PILASTER. Ah, my little friend, this is very kind of you.

MARIE. Is it not? I just slipped away to keep my appointment with you. Now for the speech.

PILASTER. The speech I have for you beautiful maiden is not of a political sort. More, I may say, of a poetical kind—one of the heart.

MARIE. Why, Mr. Pilaster, I believe you'r making love.

PILASTER. Don't say making love, dearest girl, when it comes spontaneous from a throbbing heart. I do not offend you. (*Putting his arm around her waist.*)

MARIE. No, indeed ; I like it. (*Groan from Ned.*)

PILASTER. What's that?

MARIE. That? Why that's rats or spirits—I don't rightly know which. When it knocks it's rats ; when it groans it's spirits. Don't mind 'em ; go on.

PILASTER. Dearest girl——(*drawing her to him—knocks and groans.*)

PILASTER. Bless my soul—let me look after the rats.

MARIE. No use wasting time that way. Let 'em knock and groan, I don't care. But you don't know how to make love.

PILASTER. Do I not, lovely creature?

MARIE. No, indeed. Now you must get on your knees and take my hand and kiss it and caress it like Bowser.

PILASTER. Like Bowser?

MARIE. Yes ; that's my dog. Now, get down. (*He kneels ; he takes her hand and kisses it ; she bursts in laughter.*)

PILASTER. Lovely maiden, why do you laugh?

MARIE. I can't help it ; you do look so funny. But I won't laugh—I'll be ever so serious—go on.

(*Enter Scip.*)

SCIP. Hon. Mr. Peppercorn.

MARIE. Scipio, I'm offended with you. Whenever Mr. Pilaster is with me you must knock at the door, for Mr. Pilaster comes to pray with me. Now show Mr. Peppercorn up.

PILASTER. But what shall I do? I would not be seen here for the world.

MARIE. Here, get behind this curtain; I'll soon make him go. Hurry; and if you sneeze or cough I'll tell him it's rats or spirits. (*Hides him behind the other curtain. Enter Hon. Peppercorn.*)

PEPPERCORN. Oh, Miss Marie, I beg your pardon, but I'm pursued by my constituents—gridirons, grindstones and hair-pins are hard after me. You won't mind my locking the door?

MARIE. No, indeed. (*Locks door and sits on sofa.*)

PEPPERCORN. They will kill me. I can't stand this much longer. If I don't get some relief I'll run away—I will.

(*Loud knocking at the door.*)

CUTLETT, (*outside.*) Open the door, I say; open, or I'll break it down.

MARIE. Dear me, that's Tom. He's got a revolver and will shoot you—he's so jealous.

PEPPERCORN. Shoot me? Use fire arms? Let me out of this. Let me fly. Hide me. Oh, what will Mrs. Peppercorn say?

MARIE. Let me see, there's no place. Oh, yes, get under the sofa. There, quick. (*Gets under, she runs, unlocks door and hurrying back, sits, spreading her skirts so as to hide Peppercorn. Knocking continues.*)

MARIE. Why don't you come in, you goose, door's unlocked.

(*Enter Cutlett.*)

CUTLETT. What's this door locked for? What do you mean by slipping away with that Ned Bascomb for, eh? I tell you, Miss, I'm not going to stand this. Where is the fellow, I want to shoot him. (*Drawing revolver.*)

MARIE. Now, Tom, sit down and I'll tell you all about it. You see I had such a headache—

CUTLETT. Headache! Headache! I'll make that Bascomb's headache.) (*Curtains agitated.*) What's the matter with those curtains, are the windows up? I see, he got out at the window. Well, I'll catch him yet. (*Sits violently on sofa and jumps up and down.*) My blood's up. I'm mad. I'll kill somebody. (*Breaks sofa down.*)

PEPPERCORN. Murder; murder. Help. Police. Help. (*Crawls out and runs. Cutlett chases him, snapping his revolver. Peppercorn takes refuge behind curtain and comes out with Pilaster. Pistol explodes, both rush for next curtain and tumble out with Bascomb. Cutlett stands amazed. All the while Marie screams, and Peppercorn and Pilaster cry murder. Enter Buggs, Stackpole, Mrs. Stackpole and servants.*)

HON. BUGGS. God bless my soul; what's the meaning of this violence?

STACKPOLE. What is it, Tom?

CUTLETT. I caught a seducer locked in this room with my affianced bride.

STACKPOLE. It strikes me, Tom, you have flushed a covy.

PAT. (*Inside closet.*) Oh! murthur, murthur. Help. I'm kilt entirely. (*Enters with chain and stool dragging after. Dances violently about the stage.*) I'm shnake bit. I'm shnake bit. (*They seize him, and take a steel trap from his elbow.*)

PAT. Arrah, is that the baste. I thought I was schnake bit.

STACKPOLE. You infernal Hibernian blunderbus, what were you doing in that closet?

PAT. I was there in the discharge of uv me duty, and thought for greater convanience I'd sate meself, when snap went something, a grablin me behint an I thought I was shnake bit.

PILASTER. In the discharge of your duty. What duty?

PAT. Shure an aint I a reporter for that moighty engine, the press, an' aint it me duty to pape through cracks an' listen at kay holes.

PILASTER. It is infamous.

PAT. Don't ye's be after saying a word, ye ould seducin villain. But it's some qare things I've observed this night, an' it'll be divartion to you to rade it in the New York papers to-morrow mornin'.

(*All surrounding him.*) Oh, Mr. Dolan, you would'ut?

(*Curtain.*)

ACT THIRD.

Room in Col. Stackpole's house.—Back folding doors opened, exhibits dining room.—Both handsomely furnished.—Stackpole and Bascomb.

STACKPOLE. General Ripson writes me that he is greatly discouraged by your management, or, rather, lack of management, in your business. He says you are too much given to the dissipations of Washington.

NED BASCOMB. General Ripson is an aged ass. I am sent here and ordered to entertain, and now he complains of my entertainment. Let him come on, and see what he'll make of it.

STACKPOLE. Yes, my boy, but entertaining is only means and not an end.

NED BASCOMB. I know all that, and I'd like any one to show a better book. For twenty thousand dollars spent I have half a million made.

STACKPOLE. Well, why don't you write him and give the details and results?

NED BASCOMB. Not such a fool; black and white are bad partners in our trade. That firm has put many a good fellow in the penitentiary.

STACKPOLE. But you have a cypher.

NED BASCOMB. And who knows who may hold the key. No, I thank you, I can drive just as near the State's prison as any man; but then I drive.

STACKPOLE. Well, well, its your ring, this post office business, and I don't propose meddling. I must say, you seem to be spending a great deal of time and money on Senator Pokeroot, the carpet bagger, who has nothing but his own vote to counteract the evil effects of his bad character.

NED BASCOMB. He is about as damaged a product of the barn-yard as any left above ground, but he has control of the Post Office Department, I can tell you. He has three of the most important clerks in the Contract Bureau, any one of them would be hung under any other government but ours. Now, look here; we meet at the Senator's house every Sunday, and all that is done in the Bureau during the week is duly reported. It is a regulation of the Department, that after the sealed bids, in accordance with advertisement, are put in, they are stamped and signed by the Assistant Post Master General, and deposited in the safe, only to be opened

on a certain day in the presence of the Post Master General I don't care to violate that regulation if I could. Poke stops at nothing. We have the bids, and for every real bid, we put in two straw and one real competition bid with forged stamps and signatures. Now, you don't get a Senator of the United States every day willing to commit burglary, forgery and perjury, for ten thousand a year, eh?

STACKPOLE. Well, no. And it pays.

NED BASCOMB. Should think it did. Listen. (*Takes out note book.*) Route 1,049, running from Dead Cove to Devil's Gap, a howling wilderness, real cost a mustang and a half breed, fifty dollars a year, contract eight thousand. Route 7,052, from Noodletozy, in Oregon, to anywhere, for no man has yet found Jacksonville, supposed to be at the other end. There isn't, and never will be, a human being on the route. The mail, an old hunter, goes out when he feels like it and comes back from the same motive, cost nothing but a new rifle and a few bottles of whisky; contract price six thousand a year. Route 1161, from Shirttail Bend, on the railroad to Madison City, in Colorado, a whisky saloon of eighteen inhabitants, where the wolves run the mail in ahead of time, with one newspaper nobody can read, real cost one hundred and fifty dollars a year, contract price ten thousand. Route 1,380—

STACKPOLE. That will do, Ned. You seem to have pages of them.

NED BASCOMB. Of course I have, and not a bad thing in any one of them. And yet old Ripson complains of my dissipation.

STACKPOLE. It's a wonder to me, Ned, some of your competitors don't peach on you?

NED BASCOMB. Not a bit. Most of them know that it's a sham, and they are in for a clear steal, like the rest of us. Then if a stupid, honest Congressman comes on to fight us we buy him out or bother him out. It costs like smoke to come a thousand miles or so to fight a ring.

STACKPOLE. The game is so barefaced it is a wonder some Congressman don't attack you and expose it all.

NED BASCOMB. Stackpole, you know, as well as I do, that Congress is so busy, looking after its politics, it has no time to attend to the business of the Government.

STACKPOLE. All right, my boy. You run your own machine. But, by the by, I wish you'd let Cutlett and his girl alone.

NED BASCOMB. I won't do it. I'm in love with that little one, and I'm going to have her. What a fascinating little girl she is, and as pretty as a painted wagon.

STACKPOLE. But it's a dangerous game. You came near getting a bullet through you last night.

NED BASCOMB. All the more delightful. Col. Stackpole, I was born in a stable and brought up in a bar room in a land where it was an accident for a man to die with his boots off. Ropes, revolvers and bowie knives made my diet. I am tired of this humdrum life. Let your Cutlett come on. If he wins he is welcome.

STACKPOLE. All right. Hope you'll have our Omahog delegation in good training.

NED BASCOMB. First rate. I have our lot and some pretty little Treasury girls for squaws. But, mind, I am to be interpreter, and I don't want any of your fellows to put in any chin music or they'll flummux the affair.

STACKPOLE. That is understood. I will see to it. Happily, Hon. Peppercorn is an innocent old lady.

NED BASCOMB. I must go and get on the war paint. Good by.

(Exit, as he does so Cutlett enters. They scowl at each other.)

CUTLETT. I sometimes wonder how Providence came to set such beasts on end, I do.

STACKPOLE. Better let the discovery end in the wonder. I don't know of any more troublesome beasts than those that go about on end.

CUTLETT. *(Snapping his fingers.)* That for them.

STACKPOLE. So you would rather run after this little girl and fight her admirers than attend to our business?

CUTLETT. I don't neglect any thing. Through the influence of the paternal Bugg old Pilaster has made me clerk to his committee, which means his private secretary. So I'll soon be as much inside as your Mrs. Rosa Jones; a lady I don't believe in much, I can tell you.

STACKPOLE. Why not?

CUTLETT. Don't trust my fortune and sacred honor to a woman who wears a blond wig, and paints.

STACKPOLE. If she paints, it is with the hand of an old master.

CUTLETT. Better say, an old mistress.

STACKPOLE. See here, Tom, I can stand your coarse jokes

on most things, but if you ever refer to that lady again in that manner, you will collide on a closed hand.

CUTLETT. Hello, hello, does the male feline vault in that direction? Beg your pardon, old fellow—no idea the tender susceptibilities of your manly heart were touched. But, let me, as your Damon, warn you not to be so blinded by love as not to see——

STACKPOLE. There, there, that will do on that subject.

CUTLETT. All right—now to business. What is the meaning of this Chickamung land affair?

STACKPOLE. Clear enough to one inside. The Chickamungs are, or were, a tribe of Indians, possessed of the Catholic religion, and a turn for agriculture. That is, they built huts, wore breeches with seats to them, went to church, and left their squaws to do their plowing. In time, their lands became valuable, and of course the Indians were troublesome. Congress carved out a new reservation beyond the Mississippi of very valuable land—valuable now at least, for then the railroad, the telegraph, the steamboat, and the Christian Statesman were unknown. To satisfy these semi-civilized Indians, and their spiritual guides, Congress conveyed the land by law to the Indians in fee, to preserve, hold, occupy and enjoy, as the Christian whiteman enjoys his real estate. The Indians again built huts, opened fields, raised stocks, and wore swallow-tailed coats, and stove-pipe hats. But modern civilization, railroads and Christian Statesmen crowded in again, and what does old Pilaster, commonly called Old Piety, do, but organize a company consisting of himself, to buy out these copper-tinted agriculturists, and get Congress to confirm the purchase. The contract cost two barrels of whiskey and a pow-wow, the Congressional confirmation, a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The next move was to sell out to the Inter-Ocean Muskrat and Tadpole National Excavation Company, that gave us bonds that realized sixty cents to the dollar, leaving about two millions in our hands.

CUTLETT. Our hands.

STACKPOLE. To wit: Watkins Smith, old Piety's half brother, and your humble servant. Now, I have concluded to hold on to this as our compensation for ten years hard work.

CUTLETT. To which Old Piety will object.

STACKPOLE. To which Old Piety will object and fight. He

will threaten us with an investigation. I doubt it. Mrs. Rosa Jones has some hold on him, and I want her cooperation. I had you made his private secretary, that you might possibly get access to his papers.

CUTLETT. And my stipend for diplomatic services so rendered is to be—

STACKPOLE. Ten per cent. on the amount realized; for Old Piety, when cornered, will compromise.

CUTLETT. And you give me that in writing?

STACKPOLE. Not a bit of it. I'll do better—give you bonds to the amount.

CUTLETT. Enough said.

(Enter servant.)

SERVANT. Mrs. Jones and Miss Buggs, desire to know if they can come up.

STACKPOLE. Certainly. *(Exit servant.)* Now, Tom, take the little Bugg away. I want to have a confidential talk with Mrs. Jones.

CUTLETT. Take her, certainly, if she will be taken—but she is so skittish of late, I can't count on any thing.

(Enter Mrs. Stackpole and Marie.)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Excuse the intrusion, gentlemen, but our little friend here has the absurd notion in her head of being a squaw this evening, and I want your influence to dissuade her.

MARIE. If I'd known you were going to tell, I would not have come up.

CUTLETT. I see no objection to my dear intended indulging in a harmless masquerade if she wishes.

MARIE. Thank you, Tom. I say Tom, when we are married are you going to rush about and fire pistols at old gentlemen?

CUTLETT. My soul's enchantress, when we are bound in the silken chains of matrimony, my bruised arms shall be hung up as monuments, and your hero will caper nimbly to the soft persuasions of a rankatauk, which means piano.

MARIE. Well, I wanted to know, its such fun to see them run and hollow as they did last night. But come, let's go and look up a lovely dress for an Indian girl. Dora, you wait here, I won't be gone long.

CUTLETT. At your service, queen of my heart.

MARIE. Oh, Tom, when you are good, you are too good, but when you are bad you are the hatefulest creature in the world. (*Exeunt Cutlett and Marie.*)

STACKPOLE. Will Mrs. Jones honor my poor home by being seated?

MRS. STACKPOLE. (*Sits.*) Not much of an honor. You seem to be very comfortable here, Colonel.

STACKPOLE. As much so as a lone man can expect.

MRS. STACKPOLE. You feel the loss then, of the little wife and boy, at times?

STACKPOLE. Of a wife. Not the wife. I have my ideal wife in my mind's eye, and sometimes I see her before me as now

MRS. STACKPOLE. Thanks. I fear, however, the ideal when brought into daily use would prove a bore.

STACKPOLE. (*Drawing his chair nearer her.*) I would risk my all on that.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I fear the familiarity that breeds contempt destroys the ideal. And in women, who are born actors, do so much before marriage, that we are only real when we become wives. The real is fatal to the ideal, Colonel.

STACKPOLE. To boys, yes, but men who have seen and felt the world find the beautiful in the real. When young, we see angels in women, a little experience gives us women in angels.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Colonel, you are not only a thoughtful man, but a man of feeling; generous and impulsive to a fault. You have in these rooms, I am told, every morning a score of poor dependents. No one needy goes from you empty handed. Don't you think your charity would be of a better sort, did it begin at home?

STACKPOLE. I do not get your meaning.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Your story of yesterday, I find strangely interesting. It haunts me. I see all the time a little pale faced wife pining in her lonely house with a heart hungry for the loving sympathy denied her. She cannot leave the solitude of her unhappy home without encountering the sneers of the world, and realizes that her boy is growing up without a father's love, and that it is his fate to learn that he is the inheritor of a shame. Why not return and make two helpless beings happy, if you have no other reward than a sense of duty accomplished.

STACKPOLE. I dreamed all that once and did return to find

a welcome that had in it more temper than love. She would not grant me even an interview. No, my friend, these are dreams that end in night-mares. I cannot leave this active life where I can at least forget, for one that would be misery to both of us.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I cannot believe that this sort of life is one likely to make a man happy.

STACKPOLE. It makes money—not as much as one could wish, and here I want to consult you. I have these many years been furnishing the brain and labor for men who refuse to share the spoils. I want to correct this, and I ask your aid.

MRS. STACKPOLE. My aid?

STACKPOLE. Yes. I am not blind to the fact that you have a strange influence over Senator Pilaster. You have a hold on him.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Me a hold on Senator Pilaster?

STACKPOLE. One of the most capable and cautious men in public life. But every man has a weak place in his armor. I don't know precisely what it is; probably his admiration of you. Now, if you would join.

MRS. STACKPOLE (*Aside.*) Good heavens! this man seeks to use me. The mean, selfish wretch. (*Aloud.*) And if I join you?

STACKPOLE. We can conquer the world; add your wit, grace, and beauty to my brain, and we shall move only to triumph.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I enlist. Colonel, will you please ask if my carriage has returned.

STACKPOLE. Certainly. (*Exit.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE (*Alone.*) And this is the man I fancied loved me. The cold, calculating miscreant. Selfish, heartless man. Oh! yes, I will aid. I will unbar the road to his utter ruin, and have done with it. The day is past when I could be trampled on.

(*Enter Stackpole.*)

STACKPOLE. Your young friend has probably forgotten you. Ah! here she is.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Thanks, Colonel. But I am not easily forgotten.

(Enter Cutlett, Mrs. Doctor Gussett, and Benjamin, Marie, and Bascomb.)

DOCTOR GUSSETT. Be a free-born American girl, study the Constitution as amended, and don't you marry until you are ready, and then marry the man of your choice.

MARIE. That's my notion. It is'nt pa that's going to marry Tom, or my husband, whoever it may be; it's me.

DOCTOR. That's the doctrine. If the paternal author of your being wants you to marry a certain person you don't approve of, tell the paternal author of your being to marry that person himself.

MARIE. I will; I will.

DOCTOR. Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR. Fetch me the Constitution.

BENJAMIN. Here, Doctor.

DOCTOR. You see I go armed. It's amended for persons of African descent, but applicable to all humanity; makes all equal under the law. Stand on the Constitution, girl, and bid despots beware.

CUTLETT. Doctor, will it be necessary for her to stand in that extraordinary costume on the charter of our rights?

DOCTOR. No, sir, not as a requisite. We grant the largest liberty. Our principles go no further than the chimeloon.

CUTLETT. What's a chimeloon, Doctor?

DOCTOR. What you have'nt got, sir; it's common sense. It is a garment and a principle. It gives warmth without obstructing the circulation and supports the clothes without destroying the vital organs. The chimeloon is our banner. Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR GUSSETT. Fling out our banner.

(Benjamin shows chimeloon.)

MARIE. Doctor, if I marry as I please, do I have to wear that thing?

DOCTOR. Of course you do.

MARIE. Then I'll marry as pa wants me to.

DOCTOR. And be a slave?

MARIE. I'll be anything rather than a fright.

DOCTOR. Am I fright?

CUTLETT. You are, you are.

DOCTOR. Benjamin!

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR. Knock that person down and follow me. (*Exit.*)

BENJAMIN. Young man, I'm going to smite you in the countenance.

CUTLETT. Well, smite. (*Benjamin strikes out awkwardly and misses, Cullett hitting him in the stomach. Benjamin goes down in a sitting position.*)

DOCTOR. (*re-entering.*) Benjamin!

BENJAMIN, (*still sitting.*) Doctor.

DOCTOR. Have you knocked him down?

BENJAMIN. No; he knocked me down.

DOCTOR. He did, did he. How dare you strike a man smaller than you! Take that, you sneak. (*Knocks him over with her umbrella.*) Benjamin!

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

DOCTOR. Follow me. (*Exeunt Doctor and Benjamin.*)

CUTLETT. Ralph!

STACKPOLE, (*laughing.*) Well, Tom.

CUTLETT. Is my head on my shoulders?

STACKPOLE. I believe it is.

CUTLETT. Well, give me my hat, then. (*Getting up.*) That female advocate lashes out like a mule. (*Exit.*)

MARIE. That's woman's rights. Well, they are funny. Come down, I must dress for the Indians. (*Exeunt Marie and Mrs Stackpole.*)

Enter Hon. Pilaster, Bugg and Peppercorn.

HON. PILASTER, (*speaking as he enters.*) I am delighted, my dear Mr. Peppercorn, to hear your liberal and enlightened views respecting our helpless wards, the Indians of the West. You see, sir, the Indian Territory stretching across the path of progress, so to speak, can be entered only by the missionary and the cookingstove. Plain cooking and the Christian religion, Mr. Peppercorn, must subdue these wild denizens of the plains and prairies. Cure the soul and strengthen the body. The Omahogs, sir, are very far to the North, an inhospitable region; but give our missionaries enough appropriations to distribute Bibles and cookingstoves and we will soon have an isothermal line and a railroad, sir, that will carry Christian civilization to the furthest reaches of the Pacific coast.

PEPPERCORN. Now tell me, Pilaster, how the devil appropriations by Congress are to establish an isothermal line?

PILASTER. Nothing easier, sir. The climate along the Pacific coast is of a mild type, originating in the influence of the Pacific ocean, that is supposed to have a current something like our Gulf stream, that, sweeping northward along the coast, carries the tropical warmth as far to the North as Alaska, where sunflowers and cauliflowers grow to an enormous size, sir; yes, sir. Now, the influences of this tropical heat is shut out from the water-shed of the Mississippi valley by the chain of Rocky mountains that make the backbone of our continent. Now, sir, keep your eye on me. A gap has been discovered in this chain of mountains far to the North by Professor Haybug that if cleared of its forests and rocks would let a stream of warm air in over Duluth, sir, that would make linen dusters and palmleaf hats necessities. Give us appropriations, sir, and we establish an isothermal line, you see?

PEPPERCORN. And this is the meaning of the grand National Inter-ocean Gigantic Pea-shooter Company that is to pierce the Rocky mountains with huge tubes, along which balls filled with freight and mails are to be propelled by compressed air—cold air from the lakes, hot air from the Pacific coast?

PILASTER. Exactly so. But before anything can be done we must conciliate and Christianize that powerful tribe of Indians known as the Omahogs. (*Enter delegation.*) Ah! here is our delegation. Welcome, red men. Welcome.

(*Indians range themselves in a half circle. Squaws crowd together in a corner. Each chief utters a grunt, and seats himself on the floor.*)

PILASTER. Mr. Interpreter will you introduce the Hon. Mr. Peppercorn to our red brethren.

(*Ned Bascom pushes Peppercorn forward and lays his hand on his shoulder.*)

NED BASCOMB. Nau pau kaw nau tu chu. Bau pau kaw naw ta chu due. Naw pau kaw nau ta chee chum. (*Indians grunt.*)

PILASTER. What next, Mr. Interpreter?

NED BASCOMB. Ingin smoke pipe—pipe of peace.

(*Pipe produced, lit, and passed from chief to chief, and then given to white men.*)

PEPPERCORN. Paugh! the pipe of peace is about the nastiest thing I ever tasted.

1ST CHIEF. (*Rising.*) Chee ko ko ni ko catch o mo dun go chu a ku cum cum. (*Sits.*)

PILASTER. What does he say, Mr. Interpreter?

NED BASCOMB. He Big-fire, say same as afore. He tired of wake. He want rations for he family, a wagon to pull 'em in, an he go to reservation.

PILASTER. That is a friendly Indian. He must be encouraged.

2D CHIEF. (*Rising.*) Mae o chee chee mee o chung chung, ow ow ow, puff puff, bang.

NED BASCOMB. He High-kick-hoss, say Ingin agent too much big thief, missionary too much squaw, he want gun, an' shoot 'em all, both.

PILASTER. Ah! that's a bad Indian, must be instructed.

3D CHIEF. Do do bo um cum cum slow do dum dum ko ko one n ou n' ik o n an pilo stink um lun stonk ko cum luch, puff, puff, bang.

NED BASCOMB. Rearin Bull, he say he want much Bible, much cook-stove, much powder ou much ball, and he go shoot devil.

PILASTER. That is a correct sentiment, indeed

4TH CHIEF. Pow wow, pow wow, no no go go, squaw squaw squaw, in go go no who-ooop, (*gives yell, the other Indians start and seize their tomahawks,*) i si puff poof poof boom.

NED BASCOMB. Hole-in-the-Ground, he say all Indian much squaw, much afraid. He big chief, shoot big father, little father, all, both.

PILASTER. Ah, we'll conciliate that out of him before he leaves.

5TH CHIEF. (*Takes Pilaster's hand.*) How how how, big thief, much Bible, ki ko kum, much cook, ke ko much agent, big steal, big preach, God dam, How how how.

PILASTER. What does he say?

NED BASCOMB. Oh, he big fool. He tink he talk English. He talk fool. Now, Indian dance war dance.

PILASTER. This is very interesting.

(*Indians execute absurd dance, squaws shaking gourds. After, all cry "muck a tush"—"muck a tush."*)

PEPPERCORN. What's that?

NED BASCOMB. Muck a tush, means mush and whisky. Indian want eat, want drink.

PILASTER. Well, Peppercorn, I suppose you are satisfied.

PEPPERCORN. Quite so. I will finish my report to-night, and offer it to-morrow.

PILASTER. Well, let us go then. Colonel Stackpole has a little entertainment for the delegation. (*Exeunt Pilaster, Peppercorn, and Buggs*)

NED BASCOMB, (*to 5th Chief.*) Look here, Bill Skimer, next time you put in your chin music on my programme I'll hamstring you, if I die on the spot.

STACKPOLE. Come, lady Indians and gentlemen Indians, the supper waits. (*Delegation go out back—doors are closed.*)

(*Enter Marie, dressed as squaw.*)

MARIE. I had to run away after all. Pa and Mrs. Jones both jumped on me. I don't care, I promised Ned to be here, and here I am.

(*Enter Ned Bascomb, from folding-doors.*)

NED BASCOMB. Ah, my little Beam-in-the-sky, I was afraid you were going to disappoint me.

MARIE. Not much. But I had hard work, I can tell you. Pa sent word to Mrs. Jones not to let me out, but I bribed old Scip and here I am. How do I look?

NED BASCOMB. Perfectly lovely. Now my charmer, now's the day and now's the hour. I have ordered my driver to have our coupé, our coupé my love, at the corner, and when I say come, we'll slip off, get in, drive over the long bridge to night express at Alexandria. That will throw them off if we are missed, and to-morrow, in Richmond, the Rev. Mr. Puttyfoot will make us one—happy for life.

MARIE. Oh! Ned, now that its got to be done I am so afraid.

NED BASCOMB. Don't fear. I love you. You are the—

MARIE. Ned?

NED BASCOMB. My love.

MARIE. When we are married will you take me to Europe?

NED BASCOMB. At once.

MARIE. Let me buy lots of things in Paris?

NED BASCOMB. Buy out Worth.

MARIE. And have it all in the papers?

NED BASCOMB. Columns of it.

MARIE. Ned, I'm yours.

NED BASCOMB. Now, charmer, remain in this next room until we come out and get to dancing, then join us and you will not be observed. (*Leads her off, and then returns through folding-doors to party.*)

(*Re-enter Senator Pilaster and Hon. Bugg.*)

PILASTER. Then, I think we have disposed of that Indian affair rather neatly. I was gratified on observing the favorable impression made on Mr. Peppercorn's mind by the delegation.

BUGG. Yes, he now will make a strong report in our favor to the House, and nothing that I can observe will obstruct the passage of the bill.

PILASTER. We must not, however, relax our efforts. Divine Providence favors the prudent. The Speaker must be seen so as to secure the floor at the right moment, and the Hon. Cockeye must move the previous question so as to cut off debate; and above all our forces must be well in hand. (*Enter Peppercorn.*) God bless me, this is unfortunate!

PEPPERCORN. Ah! Pilaster, this is lucky. I found when I got to my room that I needed a few statistical facts before concluding my report, and it is so fortunate I find you here. Let me read you my report.

PILASTER. Certainly, my friend, come to my house, where we can be more retired, and I will listen with pleasure.

PEPPERCORN. Certainly, as soon as I put a few questions through the interpreter to the chief.

PILASTER. I doubt whether you can do much with them to night. They are eating and I fear drinking, as Indians will, to excess. (*Roars of laughter heard.*) There, you hear.

PEPPERCORN. Oh, I don't mind that. Here is the way I open: (*reads*) "The simple Indians of their native wilds are the wards of our Government." Now that is a fact none can gainsay, certainly none truthfully.

PILASTER. Certainly, my friend, certainly. (*Aside.*) Good Lord! if they were to come in now. (*Aloud.*) Accompany me, my friend; accompany me.

PEPPERCORN. Directly; then I say, (*reads,*) when it is remembered that our fathers found a vast and warlike population, holding with ignorant but patriotic tenacity to the soil of their birth, it is hard to realize in the present helpless and childlike savage——

(Enter first chief drunk.)

CHIEF. The pale face lurks about the red man's lodge. Piankishaw will creep like panther on his prey. Ah! *(to Peppercorn)* red man's heart is fire. Ah! have white man's scalp; hang it to red man's lodge.

(Flourishes tomahawk over Peppercorn, who shrinks and tries to get away. Pilaster gets between.)

PEPPERCORN. Why this is amazing! But an hour since this Indian could not speak a word of English.

PILASTER. Come, my friend, our Indian brethren have been drinking too freely.

PEPPERCORN. Does drinking teach them English?

1ST CHIEF. Certainly, old cheesewax; fetch him, 'in Senator, fetch him in an' try it on. Loos'n his tongue beautifully.

(Enter 6th chief, Pat Doolan, drunk.)

PAT. Be me sowl, but here's Mither Peppercorn come to join our festivities.

PEPPERCORN. An Irish Indian—a miracle.

PAT. Divil a bit; an' ye'r hurd tell uv the O'Ragins that come over wid the Phanacians an' discovered America before Columbus was born. *(To Pilaster, who puts himself between them.)* Git away wid ye, Mr. Pilaster, when I'm discoursin wid the learned Theban.

1ST CHIEF TO MR. BUGG. Tell me, Bugg, tell me confidentially, you going to vote for the increased twenty per cent. for us clerks? Eh, tell me, now.

PAT. As I was remarkin', the Phanacians an' the O'Ragins sailed in ships. Where the divil are ye, Mr. Peppercorn. Me friend, Senator Pilaster, come to me arms.

(Doors back are thrown open. Enter chief and squaws, drunk and singing.)

We are the gentle Omahogs, come to see our father dear,
And we won't go home 'till morning, 'till daylight doth appear,

'Till daylight doth appear,

'Till daylight doth appear,

Oh! we won't *(wild yells)* go home till morning,

'Till daylight doth appear.

PILASTER. Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Indians! Mr. Peppercorn!

2D CHIEF. Damn Peppercorn! A dance! a dance!

(Cries. Dance! dance!)

(Hug-em-smug, or can-can, is danced. During dance Marie enters and exits with Ned Bascomb. Cutlett observing this tries to drag out Mr. Bugg. Bugg is tripped up by Indian chief, who pulls off his wig. Cutlett hurries out Senator Pilaster, and Peppercorn, attempting to follow, is treated in same wag as Bugg, and curtain falls on tableau.)

ACT FOURTH.

Scene.—Library of Hon. Pilaster, U. S. S.—Two windows with heavy drapery, back.—Entrance between of glass doors, through which a telegraph ticker, with boy, can be seen.—Handsome library table capable of seating eight or ten people on one side.—On the other a stand with large box labelled in gilt letters, “Treasury of the Lord.”—Portraits of clerical gentlemen in white chokers, on the walls.—Very few books in cases.—Documents piled upon floor.—Placards of “Prepare for Judgment.”—“God Bless our Home.”—“Hell and Brimstone, the doom of Sinners,” &c., suspended in frames.

(Col., Mrs. Stackpole and Marie discovered.)

MRS. STACKPOLE. So my dear, you’r elopement proved a fiasco?

MARIE. I don’t know what you mean by fi-as-co, but it ended in a fizzle. Is that what you wanted to say?

MRS. STACKPOLE. *(Laughing.)* Well, yes, that is not a bad translation. Tell us, how did it happen?

MARIE. I am sure I don’t know. We ran away from that Indian thing, almost tumbling down stairs, Ned pushed me into his coupé and then got in himself after swearing at the driver; and then we spun over the pavements till we hit Pennsylvania Avenue, and then it was hump-di-bump, I tell you. Sometimes Ned was on top and some times I was on top. I thought upon my soul we’d go through the roof of the carriage. We got to the depot at last. The train was about starting, and Ned pushed me into the car and was about following, when Pa came puffing in like a porpoise, followed by Tom. Ned turned and knocked Pa over beautifully.

You ought to have seen him setting on the platform holding his stomach. I did laugh.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. "And further proceedings interested him no more."

MARIE. Then Ned went to putting bay windows all over Tom. Oh! you ought to see Ned box. It is just lovely to see him strike out from the shoulder, and he was a punching Tom, when the nasty police interfered and captured both of them.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. And what did you do?

MARIE. Do? What could I do—I went out and pulled up pa, and we hobbled into Ned's coupé. We had a thousand boys about us, shouting "here Miss Indian, here's your carriage!" "Shine em up old duffer," and other things. Poor pa, he put a hot brick to the small of his back and plasters all over him. He says his system has received a wrench he can never recover from. I don't care.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. Now my child, an elopement calls for two things, somebody to elope with, and somebody to elope from. You have the first, but for the last, I know your father will consent to your marrying any one you prefer.

MARIE. What of that. Do you think I am going to have a hum-drum common wedding, with nothing in the papers; but "no cards" no indeed.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. Well, you have made a pretty good start in that direction. Here is the morning paper (*reads*) "Terrific combat between two Omahog chiefs for possession of an Indian maiden. Last night as the ten p. m. train was about to leave the depot, an Indian chief rushed in, followed by another, who was accompanied by an elderly man, probably the Indian agent or interpreter. The Indian, with the maiden hurried on, his pursuers and an excited colloquy ensued, being in the Indian tongue, escaped the knowledge of our reporter. The talk was of short duration, however, for the two chiefs, drawing their scalping knives and tomahawks, went at each other in the wildest fury. Which would have proved the victor cannot be told, as the agent or interpreter intervening, he was mortally wounded in the stomach, and slashed over the head in the most frightful manner. At this stage, Sergeant Bung of the police force, aided by patrolmen Stick and Steblins, interfered at the risk of their lives and arresting the two chiefs, carried them to the lock up. We have six reporters out in search of the wounded agent, but

up to the hour of going to press, have failed in obtaining any information. This startling and exciting event recalls the days of the Mohigans, and a sequel may be expected in our next issue."

MARIE. Stupid lot. Can't you go and tell them how it was, and get me some papers to send to my friends? (*Enter Buggs feebly, with head bandaged, leaning on arm of attendant.*) Why here's pa.

HON. BUGGS. Oh Lord! gently, now, gently. I am bruised all over. Oh, oh! Confound it don't push me that way.

MARIE. Dear pa, how's your back?

HON. BUGGS. My child, do you want to kill me?

MARIE. Of course not. But it was all your fault. You ought to have come into the depot just as the train went out and put a white handkerchief to your weeping eyes and cried, "My daughter! oh, my daughter!" and then you wouldn't have been hurt.

HON. BUGGS. Well, when you elope again, oh, with a pugilistic young man, oh Lord, I won't follow at all. But if you value my consent drop that young man, ah; he is too free, oh, with his fists for domestic life.

MARIE. What do I care for your consent. You don't marry him.

HON. BUGGS. There's filial obedience for you. Dear me, dear me, how my back hurts me. I wish you'd marry somebody and have done with it. Confound it, man, can't you support me without jogging. I have had in the last week no less than five fellows sent by you to ask my consent, and I consented to each one.

MARIE. Of course you did, you'r so stupid. Why didn't you look at them like a flinty-hearted parent and say no, sir, my daughter is fitted for a coronet.

BUGGS. She's fitted for a lunatic asylum. Do take me in where I can lie down. Oh, oh! be careful now. (*Exeunt Hon. Buggs and attendants.*)

Enter Cutlett in Indian dress, eye blacked, and arm in sling.

STACKPOLE. Here's the chief in his war paint.

CUTLETT. Most damnably demoralized. I say, has my old senatorial bumblebee been about this morning?

STACKPOLE. He is out for his morning constitutional. Where have you been?

CUTLETT. In durance vile. I was locked up in a wooden

cage with three drunken tramps, and we had a general engagement all night.

MARIE. Arn't you ashamed of yourself. Do you think I'd marry you after your scandalous conduct of last night?

CUTLETT. Small difference. Had it not been for my scandalous conduct you'd have been married to another by this time.

MARIE. I break the engagement right here.

CUTLETT. Hand over the evidence of our troth. Give me my ring.

MARIE. Oh, Lord, can't do that, (*to Mrs. Stackpole.*) If I break, I must give this ring. If I don't, I'll have to be engaged.

MRS. STACKPOLE. That is a dilemma.

MARIE. I won't give up the ring. Let Ned and Tom fight it out. I'll crown the victor, and I know who that will be. I'll be Queen of Beauty, and they'll be my knights.

STACKPOLE. One will be Sir Knight of the Bridal Chamber, and the other the knight after, I suppose.

CUTLETT. Well, I must throw aside the warlike trappings of the wild prairies, get on my trotting harness, paint my eye, and go to work. (*Exit.*)

[*Enter Mrs. Doctor Gussett, followed by Benjamin with petition. Scipio Africanus Diggs with chimeloon, as banner, and procession of strong-minded women.*]

MRS. DR. GUSSETT. Halt. Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

MRS. DR. GUSSETT. Inform Senator Pilaster that a delegation of female suffragists, also a colored citizen, wait on him to make preparation to present their petition to the Congress of the United States, asking—Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

MRS. DR. GUSSETT. Give me your undivided attention, and don't stare at the female suffragists.

BENJAMIN. All right, Doctor.

STACKPOLE. I beg your pardon, Doctor, but the Senator is not at home.

DOCTOR GUSSETT. Not at home, what does he mean by not being at home. Let Phineas Pilaster beware. If he weakens in the spinal vertebra his fate is sealed. His final bed is excavated.

STACKPOLE. You purpose petitioning Congress for an extension of the suffrage.

MRS. DOCTOR GUSSETT. We do. We demand our rights. Women, the mothers of the nation, are, I say, classed with minors, aliens, Indians, idiots, and insane people. We have organized against tyranny. Behold our banner, the chime-loom. Our cry is dress, diet, and political rights for oppressed women.

STACKPOLE. Why, Mr. Diggs, do you join in this raid.

DIGGS. Beg pardon, sah. I is professor now, sah.

STACKPOLE. Oh, you are, are you! and when did that promotion come to you?

DIGGS. De older day, sah—I was pinte professor of moral philosophy and co-adjutor to de faculty ob de Howard University, in de primitive elements. Where dey kiss de fraternal kiss ebery mornin.

STACKPOLE. You don't say so. Professor Diggs, I congratulate the Howard University on so valuable an addition to its instructive department of moral philosophy and the primitive elements.

DIGGS. Thank you, sah.

MRS. DOC. GUSSETT TO MARIE. Young woman, have you thrown off the yoke of male tyranny yet; have you selected the partner for your domestic duties?

MARIE. Much good selecting does when one is jumped on by every body, I'm sure.

MRS. DOCTOR GUSSETT. Young female slave, come to my office to-day after we have presented our petition, and I'll diagnose your disorder. I'll prescribe for you.

MARIE. I believe I will—your not afraid.

MRS. DOCTOR GUSSETT. Afraid! Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Doctor.

MRS. DOC. GUSSETT. Did you ever see me in any perturbation of mind. Did you ever see me afraid.

BENJAMIN. I'll make affidavit. I'll swear that that superior being never had perturbation, or any other unmanly disorder.

MRS. DOC. GUSSETT. So come to me. I'll protect you. But we lose time. Go up to the Senate. Female suffragans! about face, march! (*Exit procession.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Come, my dear, we are under engagement to lunch, you know, at Mrs. Bullins.

COL. STACKPOLE. One word please (*to Mrs. Stackpole.*) You have seen the Senator about our business.

MRS. STACKPOLE. (*Coldly.*) I have.

COL. STACKPOLE. And what said he?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Not much—was very indignant and threatens an investigating committee.

COL. STACKPOLE. He dare not.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Don't be so sure of that. The Senator acts very promptly when he has no choice but to act. (*Going.*)

COL. STACKPOLE. A moment, please. Can I not see you again.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Certainly, I will return here if you wish.

COL. STACKPOLE. Do, please.

(*Hurries them out as Cutlett enters in ordinary dress.*)

CUTLETT. Here I am, civilized again.

STACKPOLE. What have you done with your black eye.

CUTLETT. The discolored orb of vision has received a few artistic touches from a master-hand. A little lady who tints into life the ruder picture of the sun, revived, replenished, and reinstated the private secretary to the original luster and splendor of his appearance.

STACKPOLE. You have not seen Pilaster this morning?

CUTLETT. No; but the youthful manager of his private lightning, vulgarly called the clicker, says he is in a heavenly humor, and has been all night telegraphing Watt Smith.

STACKPOLE. What?

CUTLETT. I said Watt Smith, his half brother.

STACKPOLE. Drop your stupid jokes. What was he telegraphing?

CUTLETT. There you get me. I tried to solve that problem, but the messages being in cypher, and the key being next that part of his senatorial anatomy called a heart, I failed.

STACKPOLE. You must secure that key.

CUTLETT. As easily get the key of Wagner's music. But we will make the effort, Stackpole.

STACKPOLE. Well?

CUTLETT. The further I follow you in this tortuous route the less I like it. Stackpole, the peril overrides the pleasure of the profit.

STACKPOLE. And you leave me?

CUTLETT. Friend of my soul, not yet; but I stand ready for a leap when I find the foundations giving way. The more

I see of the Christian Statesman the less I feel like going for his treasure. He is an Aaron Burr, covered all over with John Wesley. Do you see that box?

STACKPOLE. Distinctly.

CUTLETT. "Treasury of the Lord!" Now, I thought at first that for every ten thousand going to the treasury there would be fifty cents paid on account. No, indeed; the Hon. Phineas Pilaster is the treasurer, and he covers in, under Christian projects, his revenues in a way that would make Satan commit suicide from very envy.

STACKPOLE. Well, if you find your nerves disturbed, why leave. But you won't betray me?

CUTLETT. Gaze on me; see my hand upon my——

STACKPOLE. Bother; drop that cant. This Watt Smith engineered the bill through Congress and the trade out West. Pilaster is urging his return since hearing of my refusal to account for the million and a half; and my word for it Watt is traveling East as rapidly as express trains can carry him. He has my best wishes for a speedy return. With Watt forced to testify and me to cross-examine, this threatened investigation will be very brief. I must go now. Will return here to meet Mrs. Rosa Jones after old Christianity leaves for for the Senate.

CUTLETT. I shall await your coming. (*Exit Stackpole.*) I don't half like this business. I have tried almost every line of life, save that of serving the State in the comfortable but not picturesque costume of a convict. Half a mind to go over to the enemy.

(*Enter Pilaster.*)

PILASTER. Good morning, Mr. Cutlett. Any one to see me?

CUTLETT. An assortment of mixed humanity. My proposed paternal by common law, Hon. Buggs, called.

PILASTER. What did he want?

CUTLETT. He seemed most in want of a salve for his bruised corpus.

PILASTER. Who else?

CUTLETT. Hon. Mr. Peppercorn.

PILASTER. What does he want?

CUTLETT. Balm for his wounded susceptibilities. He is

troubled in soul. Strange to say he cannot understand that Indian demonstration of last night.

PILASTER. Small wonder. What an outrage that was.

CUTLETT. Most damnable—in its failure.

PILASTER. Mr. Cutlett, you will oblige me by forbearing hereafter in my presence the use of profane language?

CUTLETT. Profanity shall not offend. Mr. Peppercorn says he will not report in favor of the Omahog appropriation until the demonstration of last night is explained to him.

PILASTER. A most unreasonable and impracticable man. He would have a delegation, and now he is dissatisfied with it. Fortunately the committee has ordered the report and when the moment arrives for it to be given the House, I shall invite Mr. Peppercorn to the Senate chamber to hear my speech on the unprotected wards of the nation. In his absence, Mr. Snapps, a far abler man will make the report. By-the-bye, have you prepared that extract from my effort for the press?

CUTLETT. It is here. (*Giving it.*)

PILASTER. I think this will meet with public approbation. (*Reads.*) Good men and inspired writers have taught that the Lord works through mysterious ways, his wonders to perform, and we are, therefore, not to be surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the road to christian civilization lies through the stomach of the savage. Teach the blanket Indian to eat and you give from a healthy stomach, a brain capable of comprehending the simple yet grave precepts of scriptural truths. Let our missionaries, Mr. President, sustained by a paternal government go among the savages with the Bible in one hand and a cooking stove in the other, and the white-winged dove of peace will spread its snowy pinions over the troubled borders, where the crack of the murderous rifle will be changed to the hymns of thanksgiving, and the tomahawk transformed to the little hatchet of truth." Rather good, that reference to the little hatchet?

CUTLETT. Beg your pardon, Senator. It may be the opaque condition of my mental process, but the comparison, is so to speak, an egg of mystery and I cannot hatch it.

PILASTER. Mr. Cutlett, I have observed in you, sir, a disposition to levity. It is oppressive, sir, and not to be endured in a clerk of a Senate committee.

CUTLETT. All right. Levity must die that the clerk may live.

PILASTER. This, with the other extract, you must distribute on newspaper row for the papers, a list of which you will find on my table; and should the delegation of the Total Abstinence-by-law-Association arrive, treat the members to ginger pop, and say that I shall move the bill for the establishment of water fountains in the District navy yards, arsenals and other territorial possessions of the Government. Should the committee from the Manufacturers' Union call treat to champagne, and say that the enactment for the better protection of hoop skirts and hair pins will be urged by me at an early day. Write to that stupid editor of the Eagle of Freedom that if he persists in calling the Hon. and pious Secretary of the Interior an ichthyosaurus he cannot expect any more Government advertising. Notify Jones, of the folding-room, that in any agricultural report of mine I want my photograph inserted on the page having the engraved likeness of my blooded ram, Charles Sumner. It is a good advertisement given me gratis—

CUTLETT. You or the ram?

PILASTER. Sir?

CUTLETT. Beg pardon. Levity got the start.

PILASTER. Don't offend again. The photographs will be sent him by Mr. Oscuro, for whom we have erected a studio on the top of the Senate Chamber. And, by the by, Mr. Tinto Sneak, the historical painter, who is at work in the rooms of the agricultural committee, wants my coat, boots and pantaloons to put me in as the modern Cincinnatus, called from his plow to Government service. Answer and file my letters, and if any thing unusual occurs telegraph me from the clicker in the other room. (*Exit.*)

CUTLETT, (*alone.*) Answer and file his letters; make his lies with his speeches, and prepare his bills and make his reports. Well, the place is not a sinecure, but the pay is good. Let me see. Eighteen hundred from the committee with a right to all the soap, hair and clothes brushes, towels, spittoons, plated pitcher and goblets of the room, over. Then Snorter pays me five hundred cash to get my boss to take up the bill for the relief of Soapy Sands, scalped by friendly Indians. One thousand from the Shorter ring to get a favorable report on the horizontal bar for the better ventilation of the Emma mine. Two thousand cash to steal the papers in that affair of Eddy-house shoals. Ought to have a bigger fee for that.

Think I'll put in a contingent of five thousand to be paid after the theft is certified to.

Enter Colonel and Mrs. Stackpole.

MRS. STACKPOLE. It is well I picked you up, then. (*To Cutlett.*) Senator gone to the Senate?

CUTLETT. He proceeded from here at 12:30 upon the most painful duty of his life; that is, to wit: the moving of a committee of investigation for his bosom friend, Colonel Ralph Stackpole. Duty, public duty, sir, you see. Now, if you will excuse me, I have a statesman to meet at Welcker's concerning a most important matter, to wit, a small compensation for repeated services to your humble servant. *Ta-ta.* (*Exit.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. You see, sir, the Senator does not hesitate to demand this investigation.

STACKPOLE. He may demand, but he will never investigate.

MRS. STACKPOLE. But suppose he should?

STACKPOLE. I never entertain a remote supposition. When the evil comes there is always time if one keeps cool for preparation. Now, Pilaster is a timid man. He may bluster, but he will never act when confronted with actual danger. I hold that before him.

MRS. STACKPOLE. That I cannot comprehend. You have no evidence connecting Senator Pilaster with this transaction. He moved a bill that his committee unanimously sustained and Congress sanctioned. That is all. If a lobby was employed and members bribed he does not appear in the transaction. You hold the proceeds, but you can only trace them to Watt Smith; and if it were shown that he was treacherous to and dishonest with the poor Indians who employed him, such proof cannot hurt the Senator. There is no law to punish a man for owning a corrupt half-brother.

STACKPOLE. There is considerable penalty, however, for a corrupt half brother owning a Senator. Now, I tell you that the agent of the Indians and the railroad company are all one and the same party. Give me Watt Smith on the witness stand and I'll make evidence as rapidly as he can answer me. No, it is a game of bluff. He has telegraphed Watt to come on, precisely when he would not want him were he in earnest. But he is not. While we talk Watt is traveling here by express to negotiate with me. A thousand

investigations is a good basis to build on. Oh, I know these men. They know no love nor hate; they know money, money; nothing but money.

MRS. STACKPOLE. But suppose Watt Smith were not to appear, but, on the contrary, leave the country.

COLONEL STACKPOLE. Then I should know that Pilaster meant business, and I should prepare for the worst. (*Enter telegraph boy, excitedly.*) Well, boy, what is it?

BOY. Important telegram, and I don't know whether I should send it to the Senator or not.

COLONEL STACKPOLE. Let me see. (*Reads.*) Great God! what an event. (*Hands it to Mrs. S.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. (*Reads.*) Frightful railroad accident on train from Omaha; broken axle; cars thrown down an embankment and destroyed; among the killed your brother, Watt Smith.

COLONEL STACKPOLE. Did any event ever happen so inopportune? Oh! telegraph it to the Senate at once. (*Exit boy.*) Let the man know that he is free of the only being he ever had reason to fear.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And your case?

COLONEL STACKPOLE. Lost beyond redemption. I am at the mercy of as pitiless a man as ever God created or the devil owned. I am given my pleasing choice of suicide or the penitentiary.

MRS. STACKPOLE. It is not as bad as that?

COLONEL STACKPOLE. Not so bad; it is so bad as Pilaster and I cannot conceive of anything worse. Can't you see death has removed one who, knowing his evil deeds, owned him. Disgrace is before the other, and these two out of the way, he can enjoy his ill-gotten gains in peace.

MRS. STACKPOLE. There remains another witness yet to accuse and torture him.

COL. STACKPOLE. And that is—

MRS. STACKPOLE. His evil conscience.

COL. STACKPOLE. Bah! I beg your pardon—but conscience is the shame and mortification the rogue feels on being caught. That is precisely what I feel at the present moment. Give Pilaster success, and his conscience will sleep the sleep of peace and innocence.

MRS. STACKPOLE. But punishment will come to him.

COL. STACKPOLE. Most assuredly. It is the law of our being sooner or later, retribution follows sin as day follows

night. I go down to-day, Pilaster to-morrow. This world is bad enough, it were a hell, but for the unseen agents who administer with even hand the law of God. Would you do me a favor.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Willingly.

COL. STACKPOLE. There is an address. It will lead you to a little cottage hid under vines near an obscure village. In that you will find a poor woman, the mother of my child, who for some years has carried my poor name without reproach. Say to her, as the last words from Ralph, her husband, that he begs her forgiveness for all wrong he did her.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Your last words. What mean you?

COL. STACKPOLE. Precisely what I say. One has to die upon some proposition, and this is as good as any other. I shall pay over this money to Pilaster, and go where a higher investigation awaits me, and so save my wife and child the misery of carrying the name of a felon.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I will do your bidding only on one condition, and that is, you will commit no rash act without at least a day's warning to me.

COL. STACKPOLE. Well, yes, I promise.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Excuse. (*Goes to the table and writes, then to the door and calls boy.*) Telegraph that to the Capital.

COL. STACKPOLE. What have you done?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Telegraphed Senator Pilaster that I must see him here, immediately.

COL. STACKPOLE. And he will obey your summons?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Promptly.

COL. STACKPOLE. (*Aside.*) She has him in excellent training.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Now Ralph Stackpole, had you your life to live over, would you make it other than what it is?

COL. STACKPOLE. I am in an excellent mood for pious resolves. The devil was sick, the devil, a saint would be.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Do not jest, but answer me earnestly—Would you, if you could, repay this money to the Government, where it rightfully belongs, and return to your wife and child.

COL. STACKPOLE. Repay the money, yes. Return, no.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And why not?

COL. SLACKPOLE. Too late. Since I am in the confessional let me make a clean breast of it. When I at first approached you it was to use you. But before I had progressed

far I found myself carried away by feelings I could not control. Your voice, your face haunted me. I could not drive you from me, and I tried hard enough. The one want in my life grew into a love of you to a madness. I found the sympathy I needed, the home in another heart that a man must have to live. You came between me and my past. I cannot, if I would, return.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Ralph Stackpole I am going to lift you clear of this peril.

COL. STACKPOLE. You?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Yes. And when it is past I shall exact my recompense. A just recompense you cannot refuse?

COL. STACKPOLE. I can deny you nothing.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Hush! I hear his carriage. Slip into his picture gallery, so you can calm your agitated mind by studying art.

COL. STACKPOLE. (*Aside.*) Poor woman, she thinks her pleading can move this reptile. Well good luck to you. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Senator Pilaster.*)

PILASTER. You wish to see me?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Ah! how pained I am to hear of your heavy loss.

PILASTER. Poor brother. He died nobly in the service of his Lord and country. But in the midst of life we are in death. The Lord's will be done.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I telegraphed your coming on another account. You have moved your committee of investigation?

PILASTER. I have.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I have been considering of that. Do you not think it rather imprudent.

PILASTER. Certainly. But prudent or not it is my duty. No man can say Phineas Pilaster ever came to a knowledge of corruption that he did not endeavor to have it exposed. Yea, if it carried down my brother. But why do you ask?

MRS. STACKPOLE. This man, Ralph Stackpole, is no common man, and he will not be crushed without a desperate effort to save himself, and failing in that to carry down with him his enemy.

PILASTER. My dear Mrs. Jones, he is helpless. He is caught in his own trap. He can carry under no one.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Not even your dead brother?

PILASTER. Not even my dead brother ; and if he can, my brother's name must carry the shame of his wrongdoing, if there be shame.

MRS. STACKPOLE. But that brother leaves a wife and children.

PILASTER. Very well situated, indeed. His estate cannot be less than a million.

Mrs. STACKPOLE. But is the shame nothing ?

PILASTER. You are imagining evils that do not exist. But even if shame does follow, the consequences are not mine. What do you mean ?

MRS. STACKPOLE. I mean that when this investigation opens and Ralph Stackpole is driven to the wall, he will fight desperately, and if he cannot save himself, will strive to drag his enemy down with him.

PILASTER. If by his enemy he means me, I laugh at him. Under Divine Providence, my steps have been in broad daylight along the paths of righteousness.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Of course, that is well known to the world ; but there are some steps not so well known, that if uncovered would cause grave suspicion, Senator Pilaster.

PILASTER. He can uncover nothing of the sort, for no such tracks exist.

MRS. STACKPOLE. But were he to call me to the stand, as he threatens ?

PILASTER. Bless my soul, what would he gain by that ?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Not much to benefit himself, but much that would injure, if not ruin, you.

PILASTER. I cannot comprehend.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Let me help your comprehension. Do you remember one afternoon, and not long since, you joined me in the diplomatic gallery of the Senate ?

PILASTER. I have enjoyed your society in that locality so often I cannot now recall any one instance.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Let me assist your memory. On this occasion a page, a bright-eyed boy, brought you your mail.

PILASTER. Ah ! I recollect.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I thought you would ; you turned over your letters idly as you talked until you came to one, you opened hastily, and read rather impolitely, without asking my permission.

PILASTER. Really I beg your pardon.

MRS. STACKPOLE. It was granted half an hour after. You

read the letter, and then with your pencil you did some figuring upon the margin. After you tore the letter into bits and dropped them on the floor. That was very imprudent of you, my friend, for you left in that diplomatic gallery some tracks that were not in the paths of righteousness.

PILASTER. How do you know that?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Easily enough. Thinking the letter of importance by your manner, and regretting your imprudence in thus leaving the fragments on that public floor, I gathered them up, and subsequently, with great care, pasted the pieces together. Senator, you are not well.

PILASTER. This room is very close.

MRS. STACKPOLE. You should not excite yourself. You have a tendency of blood to the brain—I beg pardon, the head. Let me give you a glass of water.

PILASTER. But this letter was in cypher.

MRS. STACKPOLE. All save the names. The cypher puzzled me. One day, however, I happened to take from your table an old dictionary, and I found in it something beside the English language. Senator, really you must compose yourself. What, a man who all his life has walked on the edge of a penitentiary wall—his path of righteousness—to be embarrassed this way! Why, I am amazed.

PILASTER. I—I—believe I am not well. But this dictionary?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Was the key to your cypher. Look, Senator. (*Takes paper from her pocket.*) Here are the several amounts paid the lobby. Here is a list of members receiving stock, and the value of each share. Here is the surplus—a neat sum of three millions—subject to your order, and here are the figures penciled by yourself in confirmation of this account rendered you. Look at it.

PILASTER, (*tearing the paper.*) I thank you, I thank you! This letter was imprudent—not but what it could have been explained. But now we destroy it finally. I am so much obliged to you.

MRS. STACKPOLE. My dear friend, this revelation has affected your brain—I beg pardon again, your head. You have destroyed my poor copy.

PILASTER. Bless my soul! And the original—the original is in the hands of Stackpole?

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, Senator; it is in my bosom. I carry your interest next my heart.

(*Pilaster approaches her, and she moves back, facing him, towards door of the picture gallery. He suddenly seizes her arm.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Gently, Senator, gently. You hurt my arm, and being a woman, I might scream. Such cry would disturb Ralph Stackpole in his study of art in your gallery; that consists of a photograph album. See how you have bruised my poor flesh.

(*Senator Pilaster. Walks the floor. Pauses.*)

PILASTER. You won't betray me. You won't attack so good a friend as I have been. Can this not be compromised?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Most readily.

PILASTER. I have observed of late, that the gay life of the Capitol has worn on you. You are not well. Now, a trip to Europe.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Would be delightful. Dear, dear, Paris, the dream of my life; and sunny Italy, with its ruins, like shattered mountains. And dear, dear, Switzerland; but then, the sea. I dread the sea; it makes me sick.

PILASTER. But you shall have the best state-rooms. You shall have a ship to yourself. A hundred thousand dollars would not be too much.

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, Senator, you can bribe officials, but you cannot bribe the sea. Its waves will toss and its wind blow without regard to prayers or money.

PILASTER. Then a run to California?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Grand, lovely, wonderful; land of grizzly bears, and gold. How I long to see it. Do you know, Senator, you have touched a weakness of mine. I do so want to travel. I have never been from home.

PILASTER. Then, California, and start immediately.

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, my friend. You forget that California is under the far-reaching and despotic jurisdiction of Congress. I should only be hurried back.

PILASTER. Mrs. Rosa Jones, you are a wonderful woman. You are the most remarkable woman I ever met. I offer you myself. I am old, it is true, but I have position; and I am worth millions.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Thanks, Senator, but your estate is very heavily encumbered.

PILASTER. I don't owe a cent in the world. How encumbered?

MRS. STACKPOLE. By you. Senator, do you know why a man marries under these circumstances?

PILASTER. No, why?

MRS. STACKPOLE. That he may beat his wife or break her heart. She is his, at common law, to do either, or both.

PILASTER. But you said this could be compromised.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Certainly. Withdraw your charges, and ask to be relieved from further consideration of the subject.

PILASTER, (*after a pause.*) I cannot consent to a quarrel with such friends. I agree to your demands. You say Col. Stackpole is here?

MRS. STACKPOLE. He is. (*Opens door.*) Colonel, your dear friend, the Senator asks for you.

Enter Stackpole.

PILASTER. My dear Stackpole, at the urgent solicitation of this lady, who can scarcely ask anything I would not grant, I have consented to withdraw the charges and ask to have the committee relieved; and as for the money in your possession I leave you to settle that between your conscience and your God.

COL. STACKPOLE. A court, Senator, to which you cannot appeal, being without either. (*Throws himself sullenly upon a seat.*)

PILASTER. I return to the Senate to carry out my word. (*Exit.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Have you no word of thanks, and are you ready to pay me for my services?

COL. STACKPOLE, (*coldly.*) I thank you, madam, for your kindness; and if this stolen money, (*fiercely,*) all of it, can repay you, it is yours.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Why, Ralph Stackpole, why do you address me thus?

COL. STACKPOLE. Why? Why do you think me blind—a fool? Can't I see: Do I not know to what I owe my release? Have I lived to this hour not to recognize the taint of such influence?

MRS. STACKPOLE. That cruel and cunning man; he shot that arrow as he left the room. Ralph Stackpole's in error there. I owe my influence to this letter that came by accident to my keeping. That is my hold on the Senator.

COL. STACKPOLE. This, why what is this?

MRS. STACKPOLE. An account rendered by Watt Smith to his half-brother of moneys expended in bribing through their bill.

COL. STACKPOLE. Rosa Jones, you are a wonderful woman, and you have had this hold upon that man and never breathed a word. Ah, you make me happy again. Be mine. I will procure a divorce and we together will make our fight against the world.

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, Ralph Stackpole, that cannot be. A woman who could consent to do so cruel a deed would be unworthy your love. Before the guilty pair, night and day, haunting happiness from their home, would be the pale, wistful face of a discarded wife eating her heart out in a hungry demand for the sympathy a selfish woman had stolen from her.

COL. STACKPOLE. My dear Rosa, your kind nature blinds your better judgment. This wife eats no heart in demand for sympathy from a man she disgraced. She began her married life——

MRS. STACKPOLE. Don't repeat that to me again—it makes me angry. A man himself at fault—a great strong man—to thus hold a poor girl of sixteen to account. I am ashamed of you. But enough of this. I said I should exact a recompense for my services.

COL. STACKPOLE. My dear, dear Rosa, only name your terms.

MRS. STACKPOLE. They are, that you pay this money to the Government, and return to your wife and child.

COL. STACKPOLE. The money can go; but that other, as I said before, is impossible.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I accept no less.

COL. STACKPOLE. You ask too much. But I understand it. You belong to another, and while I am immured in a loveless dreary home, I can think of you in the arms——

MRS. STACKPOLE. Ralph Stackpole, have a care—go but a step further.

COL. STACKPOLE. A step further. What can I say. I know I am nothing but a poor devil of a lobbyist, despised and hated; while he is rich—a Senator. Oh, go to him. Don't waste time on me, I am not worth it—you are all alike. My wife began where you end——

MRS. STACKPOLE. (*Excited.*) You—you mean, selfish, cruel

man. You insult those who help and trample on those who love you. Ralph Stackpole, I hate you. I throw you off—go your own dark ways; fight your own fight. See, see! I tear and trample on your one means of escape—(*tears letter and stamps on it, as she does so, enter Pilaster and Sergeant-at-Arms. The last approaches Stackpole.*)

COL. STACKPOLE. Well, what do you want?

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS. I beg pardon, Colonel, but I hold an order from the Senate for your arrest and imprisonment.

COL. STACKPOLE. All right, I am at your service.

(*Turns at the door and looks fixedly for a second at Mrs. Stackpole. As he closes the door in his exit, she rushes to it.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Oh Ralph! Ralph! my own, forgive me.

(*Sinks on the floor. Pilaster approaches, as if to help her. She starts up.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. What means this?

PILASTER. The meaning of it lies upon the floor. (*Pointing to the torn letter.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. And you listened——

PILASTER. To every word.

MRS. STACKPOLE. You despicable wretch.

PILASTER. Oh, don't be so excited. Hear me. I'm not so bad a man as you think. Now, I will yet carry out my promise, if you will make good his charge.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And be your mistress?

PILASTER. No, my wife.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Never. Marry you—you a thief, a swindler. You, who rob churches as a patriot, and your Government as a saint. You, the head of a gang that is destroying the crowning glory of a hundred years. You, who for your sordid greed rot out the very foundations of the Republic, and make self-government a shame and a mockery. Marry you—not to save Ralph Stackpole from death and me from the heart break and a life of misery.

PILASTER. Oh, you defy me.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Defy you. I trample on you as I would on a snake.

PILASTER. The snake may poison with its bite, and in a few days your lover will be a convict and you more reasonable.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Senator Pilaster, I go to my lover, as you call him, to beg forgiveness of him on my knees, and then I take up his quarrel to fight it out.

PILASTER. But you lost your power when you destroyed that letter.

MRS. STACKPOLE. You think so. Well, comfort yourself with the thought. Let me warn you, however, that although you have blinded and conquered me, you never encountered a woman. I say now, have a care, and see that it is Ralph, and not the Senator, who ends the convict.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT FIFTH.

Scene, same as in Act Fourth. Curtain discovers Cutlett arranging papers at table.

(*Enter Stackpole in charge of officer.*)

STACKPOLE. If you would permit me to walk a space and then go to Welcker's for a breakfast, I should be under great obligation to you?

OFFICER. I will consult the chairman of the committee, Colonel, and give you his response.

STACKPOLE. Thanks. (*Exit officer.*)

CUTLETT. Well friend of my soul, the dark clouds of adversity have gathered over you deep enough of late?

STACKPOLE. Yes, Tom, and you made your escape none too early. But can you tell me why I am brought here?

CUTLETT. Don't you know that Old Christianity is too ill to attend a committee, so a sub-committee comes here to take his testimony.

STACKPOLE. Is he really ill?

CUTLETT. From the best observation I can make, he is very ill. The diagnosis of his disorder indicates dissolution. The enemy has possession now of his foundations. Paralysis in the extremities.

STACKPOLE. Is it possible?

CUTLETT. It is a fact. His legs have gone up, so to speak; but, as yet, his saintly old head is as clear as a bell.

STACKPOLE. And he may die?

CUTLETT. We are frail creatures and all mortal, but a

fellow can't well kick the bucket when he has no leg to kick with.

(*Enter Mrs. Stackpole in traveling dress.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. (*Nods to Cutlett.*)—To Stackpole. I am glad to find you at last. I hurried to the Capitol this morning to hear three different accounts of your whereabouts from stupid officials.

COLONEL STACKPOLE. They fetch me here that I may have the pleasure of hearing the Hon. Phineas Pilaster perjure himself. He is not well enough to wait on the committee.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And how have you been the last seven days?

COLONEL STACKPOLE. Well as a man could be, imprisoned in one of those gloomy vaults beneath the Capitol. I never before so appreciated sun light and pure air. But where have you been all this time? I began to believe, like all the world, you had deserted the unfortunate.

MRS. STACKPOLE. The imprisonment must be severe to give rise to such suspicion. Will you favor us, Mr. Cutlett, with a little of your valuable absence? You know I am the Colonel's legal adviser.

CUTLETT. Oh! certainly. (*Aside.*) Well, for polite coolness that woman beats Satan. I feel as if I had taken cold approaching her. (*Exit.*)

STACKPOLE. Where have you been these many dreary days?

MRS. STACKPOLE. In your service. The very day after your imprisonment I read in the morning journals a telegraphic report of the railroad accident in which Watt Smith lost his valuable life. It seems that the car in which he sat was thrown down an embankment, and this pious brother found himself partially crushed between its broken timbers. He yet lived, and efforts were immediately taken to release him. But the car caught fire from the broken stove, and drove the men from their work. Finding that he could not escape alive, Watt Smith gave through the window a satchel that he begged might be sent to his brother Senator Pilaster. That satchel I determined should reach the Senator through my hands. It must be valuable to thus disturb the thoughts of a man dying of slow torture. I hastened to the express office——

STACKPOLE. And found the satchel?

MRS. STACKPOLE. No; only that such parcel had not been delivered from this office; and through a reliable bribe and

the use of the telegraph I learned that it had not come into possession of the company at all.

STACKPOLE. And then?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Leaving my paid agent on guard here, I took the lightning express, and arrived at Omer, where the accident occurred, before all of the wreck had been cleared away. In an old stable I found a pile of unclaimed luggage, and among them, the lost satchel.

STACKPOLE. And you secured the prize?

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, my friend, as I was about to seize it, an express agent took it from the pile. "Here is the cursed thing at last," he said. I committed the blunder, under the impulse of the moment, of offering him a thousand dollars for the parcel. The shrewd fellow said in reply, "if it is worth that to you it must be worth five times that to Senator Pilaster, and the Lord knows he is making row enough about it. I am sent by the company to find and deliver it to him. He says it contains papers of great importance."

STACKPOLE. And you lost the prize?

MRS. STACKPOLE. But I never lost sight of it. I accompanied that agent night and day. We sat together, ate together, and when he secured a berth in a Pullman, I engaged the one opposite.

STACKPOLE. To what result?

MRS. STACKPOLE. I had a double object. I studied that agent and I studied the satchel. The one, I got at last, photographed on my brain; and the other, its guardian I fascinated. He at last begged me to stop over with him at Chicago.

STACKPOLE. And you consented.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I was only too glad to consent. I wanted a few hours—

STACKPOLE. For rest. Poor girl—

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, for work. Instead of keeping my appointment with the infatuated agent, I hurried to an establishment and purchased a satchel as near the one we want, as I could find, and spent the night in working it into as near a resemblance as my memory would permit.

STACKPOLE. And you exchanged the false for the real?

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, my friend. The agent, indignant at what he called my heartless conduct, locked himself in the Express car after he left Chicago, and I could only travel on

the same train to Washington. We all arrived this morning.

STACKPOLE. And so we fail?

MRS. STACKPOLE. Not yet. The satchel has not been delivered. I have had only time to warn my paid agent to watch the movements of his more virtuous brother and keep me advised. Can you not trust Cutlett?

STACKPOLE. Trust Cutlett, he is as treacherous as hell and as selfish as the devil. I can trust you, and no other.

MRS. STACKPOLE. I will stand on guard in the street below with this false satchel. Any moment, up to the last moment, is as good as a hundred years. (*Exit.*)

STACKPOLE. What a superb woman—the clearest brain and the highest courage I ever encountered.

(*Enter officer.*)

OFFICER. You have permission, Colonel, to walk, for a few moments, before the committee meets.

STACKPOLE. Thanks. I had no idea until now, that the fresh air was such a luxury. (*Exit, with officer.*)

(*Enter Pilaster, walking with difficulty, supported by two canes, followed by Cutlett.*)

PILASTER. Pull me a chair near the window, where I can get a breath of air before that sub-committee arrives. (*Looking out.*) Is not that Mrs. Rosa Jones on the street below? It is. How she clings to that fellow. Well, the penitentiary will soon shut him in, and her out.

CUTLETT, (*pushing a chair to him—aside.*) The devil on two sticks. Hope he is not going to dissolve immediately; would interrupt my business.

PILASTER. Cutlett.

CUTLETT. Sir.

PILASTER. I learn by telegraph that a satchel containing some important papers sent me by my late brother reached Washington this morning. It ought to be here. What time does the express ordinarily deliver parcels in the morning?

CUTLETT. About this time; seldom later than ten.

PILASTER. I wish you'd take a hack and hurry to the office and see if the satchel is yet there.

CUTLETT. Certainly, sir. (*Aside.*) A good thing his legs

have gone up, or I should next be called upon to glorify his pedal extremities by blacking his boots. (*Exit.*)

PILASTER. (*Solus.*) I am very uneasy about that satchel. Of course it contains all the papers in this unfortunate land business. While my brother lived, I had one in whom I could trust. If that satchel miscarries, I am lost. It should be here ; it should be here.

(*Servant enters.*)

SERVANT. The express agent is below, sir, with a parcel he wishes to place in your hands.

PILASTER. Call him up. Call him up immediately. Thank Heaven, it is here.

(*Enter agent.*)

AGENT. Morning, Senator. Here is a little bag I was told to find and give you.

PILASTER. Very well ; give me your book. (*Writes receipt.*)

AGENT. Good many people after that little bag, Senator.

PILASTER. (*Taking it.*) Yes.

AGENT. Should think so ; was offered a thousand dollars for that little bag. Didn't take it, for I thought it might be worth two thousand to you.

PILASTER. I never reward a man for doing his duty.

AGENT. (*Aside.*) Cussed old skinflint, if ever I act on the square with a Congressman again may Satan seize——

(*Servant enters, followed by Mrs. Stackpole.*)

SERVANT. Mrs. Rosa Jones.

(*Pilaster hastily puts the satchel in the window sill and pulls the curtain over it.*)

AGENT TO MRS. STACKPOLE. He's got it and did'nt give me a cent.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Teaches you that the service of the devil is one of love. Is it locked in his safe ?

AGENT. No, it is not—he has it.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Thanks. (*Exit agent.*)

PILASTER. To what do I owe this early call from Mrs. Rosa Jones ?

MRS. STACKPOLE. To the fact that you are persecuting

Ralph Stackpole, Senator. You forget I promised you a contest.

PILASTER. It is narrowing to a close issue and a short time. It is not too late, however, for a compromise. I can yet arrest these proceedings if you will accept my terms.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Which means yourself. Never.

PILASTER. Very well, madame; then justice must take her course, and the Lord protect the right.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Amen.

(Servant enters.)

SERVANT. Hon. Montezuma Buggs, Hon. John Peppercorn, Hon. Albert Rowe.

(They enter, accompanied by phonographic reporter.)

PILASTER. Welcome, gentlemen. You find me something of an invalid, but well enough to proceed. Be seated. Wheel me to the table.

(Servant is about to do so, when Cutlett enters and assists him. Mr. Buggs sits at head of table, Pilaster, Peppercorn and Senator Rowe on his right. Phonographic reporter on his left. Enter officer with Stackpole who sits on same side with reporter. Peppercorn rises uneasily, and walks around the table.)

STACKPOLE. Mr. Peppercorn, you seem excited!

PEPPERCORN. Of course I am excited—any man would be excited. Here I am, charged by the N. Y. Daily Libel, with having consorted with the lobby and connived at an appropriation for Indians, who never existed. It is infamous, sir, infamous.

STACKPOLE. Would you be offended, if I gave you some information on that subject, Mr. Peppercorn. All that enterprising journal says concerning those imaginary Indians, is true. They never existed, save in the brain of Senator Pilaster.

PEPPERCORN. Sir?

STACKPOLE. Your most intimate friends and admirers have been Messrs. Stork, Bascomb, Cutlett and the Hon. Montezuma Buggs.

PEPPERCORN. Yes, sir.

STACKPOLE. They are leaders of the lobby. You have frequented the house of Mrs. Rosa Jones.

PEPPERCORN. Certainly, sir.

STACKPOLE. That has been, all winter, the headquarters of the lobby.

PEPPERCORN. The Lord save me—can this be true?

STACKPOLE. True as holy writ, sir. In a few days charges will be preferred against you, and Congress will expel its one innocent member, that the rogues may escape.

PEPPERCORN. You alarm me, sir—you make me perspire. It cannot be. And are you an innocent man, and treated in this way?

STACKPOLE. No, Mr. Peppercorn, I am about the worst in the business. I am only euchered by a heavier hand.

PEPPERCORN. And what would you advise me to do.

STACKPOLE. Resign, my friend. Go home and await that better time, when the people of the United States shall have discovered that the business of the Government is of more importance than their private affairs, and taking the election of Congressmen from the caucus and the corner grocery, have honest official agents here, instead of this delegated rascality.

(During this dialogue between Peppercorn and Stackpole, Mrs. Stackpole goes about the stage, looking in the corners and other places. When she attempts to scrutinize any place, Cutlett, who accompanies her, gets before her, bowing politely.)

MR. BUGGS. Well, gentlemen, I believe we are ready for business.

(Peppercorn and Stackpole resume their seats.)

MRS. STACKPOLE. Before proceeding, I wish to make a remark.

MR. ROWE. Is this lady a witness?

MRS. STACKPOLE. No, sir. I appear as counsel for Mr. Ralph Stackpole.

MR. BUGGS. Is this in order?

PILASTER. I make no objection. We live in an age of progress. Why should women not appear as advocates, if any one desires such representation.

MRS. STACKPOLE. *(Placing false satchel on table.)* There are certain papers in this satchel, gentlemen—

PILASTER. Why, madam, what are you doing with my property. That satchel is mine.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Yours, Senator?

PILASTER. Certainly, and I demand it of you.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Why, Senator, you amaze me. How could I get possession of your satchel.

PILASTER. I but this instant placed it on yonder window sill. Some of your confederates have stolen it from the outside. I appeal to the committee. See, it is to my address under seal of the express company.

MR. BUGGS, (*taking satchel which Mrs. S. gives reluctantly.*) The Senator is correct, madam. This is certainly his property. (*Handing satchel to Pilaster.*)

PILASTER. Cutlett, lock this in the safe.

STACKPOLE, (*starting to his feet.*) I protest. I insist upon an exhibit of the papers now being concealed. They are of the utmost importance to my case.

(Cutlett during this protest exits with false satchel. Pilaster watching him anxiously, and looks at door until he returns, and gives Pilaster key of safe. Mrs. S. walks to window, secures real satchel, and, returning, hands it to Stackpole.)

MR. BUGGS. If you will designate the papers, the committee will give due weight to your demand.

MRS. STACKPOLE, (*aside to Stackpole.*) Break it open and examine the papers while I occupy the time. (*To committee.*) Senator Pilaster, gentlemen, in his former testimony, made certain statements, upon which, in behalf of my client, I wish now to ask a few questions. Is this in order?

MR. BUGGS. Certainly, madam.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Senator, the late Watt Smith was your half brother, and confidential agent and adviser, was he not?

PILASTER. In our private affairs he was.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Did he not act as such in this land business?

PILASTER. No, madam; in all my public business I know no brother. My course as a Senator is of public record.

MRS. STACKPOLE. You did not employ your half brother to distribute stock among members of Congress and bribes of money to the lobby for the purpose of procuring the passage of the law confirming the sale of the lands?

PILASTER. The question is an insult. I decline answering.

MRS. STACKPOLE. And I appeal to the committee.

PEPPERCORN. (*After brief consultation.*) The committee decides that you must answer, Senator.

PILASTER. Then, most emphatically, I respond, no.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Under oath.

PILASTER. I am sworn, and, calling God to witness, I say I never did.

MRS. STACKPOLE, (*taking her papers from Stackpole.*) Senator, will you state to the committee in whose handwriting this is? (*Showing letter.*)

PILASTER. I, I—what is this? I don't comprehend.

MRS. STACKPOLE. An account rendered you by your half-brother, the late Watt Smith, and found among his effects.

PILASTER. I denounce it as an infamous forgery! Infamous, infamous, gentlemen!

MRS. STACKPOLE. A forged imitation of your brother's writing is it? Senator Pilaster inform the committee whether this other letter is in your writing? (*Handing another paper.*)

PILASTER. I, I cannot understand.

CUTLETT. (*Aside.*) My boss is gone up dead sure. He hems and drags.

PILASTER. This is an unmeaning exhibit of figures.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Permit me, Senator, (*taking papers.*) These are in cypher, gentlemen, and to that cypher I hold here the key. It is an old dictionary, now out of print. The first figure indicates the page, the dash or cross indicates the column, and counting from the top, one finds the words. The proper names are given on the fly leaf in the end. By this you will find that, under direction of Senator Pilaster, three Senators and eight leading members of the House had stock given them, while a hundred and thirty thousand dollars were distributed in the lobby.

PILASTER. Gentlemen, I am not well. These infamous charges are unexpected. I demand time. I, I—

SENATOR ROWE. Help! the Senator is ill.

CUTLETT. (*Dashing water in his face and fanning him with his coat tail.*) Gone hook and line. Wake up, Boss, wake up! The Philistines are on you.

PILASTER. (*feebly.*) Help me to my room. (*Cutlett and servant aid him. At the door he turns.*) I go in prayer to the Lord for aid against the wicked machinations of my enemies. (*Exit.*)

STACKPOLE. True hypocrite to the last. (*Exit.*)

MRS. STACKPOLE. And now, gentlemen, my client is at liberty.

SENATOR ROWE. Not yet. It is our duty to report to the committee—a mere form, madam, but a form—and you forget that he stands charged with an illegal detention of a million and a half of public moneys.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Which he holds subject to the order of the Secretary of the Treasury. It was because he did so these proceedings originated against him.

PEPPERCORN. I'll take the responsibility. I'll be security for his appearance should he be needed. I am proud to stand by so honest a man.

SENATOR ROWE. Not so honest as his advocate was able. Madam, I congratulate you.

(Enter Mrs. Doctor Gussett, Benjamin, Bascomb, Marie, Professor Diggs and Pat Dolan.)

BASCOMB and MARIE, *(throwing themselves at the feet of the Hon. Montezuma Buggs.)* Your blessing, father.

MRS. DOCTOR GUSSETT. Yes, bless 'em. They'r both your children. Well married under the new dispensation.

PROFESSOR DIGGS. Yes, sah, I'se a witness.

PAT DOLAN. An' I sent a full report to me papers. Moighty interesting, I tell yee's.

BUGGS. I do thank God that she is off my hands with me alive. There, there, bless you.

(Re-enter Cutlett.)

CUTLETT. The Christian statesman is in a bad way. I fear he is about to leave Congress for Heaven, or some other locality.

STACKPOLE. And will you follow, Tom?

CUTLETT. Not to any extent. I think I shall try a book agency—Beecher's Life of Christ, or Procter's patent lightning rod. I am tired of the lobby.

MARIE to STACKPOLE. So your wife got you off. Why, that's splendid.

STACKPOLE. My wife. What do you mean?

MARIE. Why, you goose, don't you know Mrs. Rosa Jones is Mrs. Ralph Stackpole. Men are such fools.

STACKPOLE to MRS. STACKPOLE. My wife. Am I dreaming!

MRS. STACKPOLE. Well, I do not know. I lack the style, the grace, the *je ne suis qua*, eh, Ralph.

STACKPOLE. Darling, what can I do to win your forgiveness.

MRS. STACKPOLE. Be your true self, and come home to those who love you.

STACKPOLE. Then home it is. Let us go.

MRS. STACKPOLE. One moment. (*To the house.*) Ladies and gentlemen, the lobby lives by the House—so long as the House approves, Life in the Lobby will be a success.

[CURTAIN.]

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