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FOIBLES

A FARCICAL COMEDY

BY

FRANKLIN P. NORTON

Author of Six Dramas of American Romance  
and History

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
FINANCIER OF NEW YORK  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN, OR THE REBELLION  
OTOMIS, THE INDIAN OF MEXICO  
THE THIRD TERM  
KING OF WALL STREET

and of

MACHIAVELLI  
THE LADY OF THE SWAMP  
WHOSE WIFE?  
KINGDOM OF MIND

*For information regarding these plays, terms, etc., address*

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# FOIBLES

## A FARCICAL COMEDY

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

MR. PULLWOOL, a Philanthropist.  
MR. KNOBLOCK, a General.  
MR. POSTEM, a Minister.  
MR. KILLEM, a Doctor.  
MR. LAW, a Senator.  
MR. MIRABEAU, an Ambassador.  
MR. BACON, a Poet.  
MR. DAUBER, an Artist.

} *Noted  
and  
Great  
Men.*

MR. STAKER, a mushroom Millionaire.  
THE GABBLER, a Friend of Law.  
HAROLD, Mr. Staker's Son.  
BOBBIE, the Artist's Child.  
ROZZI, a Cook.  
PLUTO, a colored Servant.  
A POLICEMAN.  
A STREET-URCHIN.  
A DUTCHMAN.  
A MESSENGER.

MRS. PULLWOOL. } *Wives  
of the  
great  
men.*  
MRS. KNOBLOCK. }  
MRS. POSTEM. }  
MRS. BACON. }

MRS. STAKER, Wife of Staker.  
MISS LAW, an Old-maid.  
JANITRESS, of the Block.  
BRIDGET, a Waitress.  
JANE, a disgruntled Servant.

OTIS, the Philanthropist's Son. } *Lovers.*  
GERTRUDE, Mr. Staker's Daughter. }

EDWARD, Mr. Staker's Son. } *Lovers.*  
VIOLET, the Poet's Daughter. }

ALEXANDER, the General's Son. } *Lovers.*  
RUTH, the Minister's Daughter. }

NOEL, the Senator's Son. } *Incipient  
Lovers.*  
HAZEL, Mr. Staker's Daughter. }

PIERRE, a Chef. } *Lovers.*  
ELIZA, a Chambermaid. }

SCENE—New York City, N. Y.

### ACT I.

SCENE 1—*An exclusive Block of elegant Residences, with a Lawn in front, on West End Avenue, occupied by the noted and great. The fronts of the residences are seen in the background, and the stage represents the lawn, with a low stone curb near the footlights, and between this curb and the footlights, is the imaginary sidewalk. The wings are painted to represent appropriate foliage, and there are some flowery embellishments, elsewhere: a few iron-benches are scattered about. The stage is only wide enough to show 3 house-fronts, and the other 6 must be imagined. The 3 shown, are designated—going from right to left—first, second, third.*

*Enter ELIZA from the basement of first house.*

ELIZA. What if I do have a weakness for men in uniform—policemen, soldiers etc.? It is a failing, to be sure; but everybody, whether rich or poor, humble or great, has some weaknesses or failings, of one kind or another—commonly called *foibles*:—

and these very imperfections draw them closer together; for the poet said, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin:" while those who ape perfection, are so tiresome and uninteresting, that they are left to themselves. Oh how I enjoy flirting with the different *coppers*, on the *beat*, that supersede each other every few months:—but ah! Pierre, the *chef* next door but one, is the only one who has really touched my heart. I could never marry anyone else: (*sadly*) Nor him neither I fear, for while possessing good looks and form, he shows so ridiculous in his long white-apron, that I can't stomach his attentions; and am forced to foil his incessant ardor with mischievous rebuffs.—Ah, here comes a uniform!

*Enter a POLICEMAN, right.*

POL. Ah there, my size!

ELIZA. Don't be fresh: besides, that is a chestnut.

POL. Not as I mean it: using s-i-g-h-s for s-i-z-e.

ELIZA. Well that's different.—You are a new cop on the beat?

POL. Yes, this is my first round. Passing by, I saw a vision—

ELIZA. Be careful now.

POL. Of beauty! on a beautiful lawn! and entered.

ELIZA. Didn't you see the signs all over; "Private, no admission except on business?"

POL. Well I *had* business.

ELIZA. What was it?

POL. To jolly you.

ELIZA. Ah, g'wan!—Tell me, why is it that all you policemen are such jolliers?

POL. Well, you see we have a lot of idle time on our hands; and the best way to kill it, is to coddle all the pretty women on the beat. Is it wrong?

ELIZA. Not essentially: but long indulgence has made it a failing—or rather, its synonymous term that is applied when the weakness is sentimental—frailty.

POL. (*laughing.*) You've got it right.—Well this side of the block, is one of the finest sights in this great City of New York: with this lovely deep lawn, stretching from street to street, in front of elegant residences.

ELIZA. There used to be a front fence, and partition fences; but the partitions were removed in order that the tenants might use the whole lawn in common, and the front one was replaced by that low stone curb.

POL. Let's walk along the lawn as we talk.

ELIZA. You are afraid that the roundsman will catch you loitering: so were the others.

POL. Ah, the others, eh! You let the cat out of the bag that time.

ELIZA. Well, what of it. (*Exeunt left*)

*Enter PIERRE, with a chef's white-apron on, extending from neck to feet, from the basement of third house.*

PIERRE. Confound that cop, how can I make him quit Eliza? (*Enter a boy on sidewalk, right*). Ah I have a scheme— I say boy, here is a quarter for you: when I cry out "stop thief," keeping on the sidewalk you tear along past that cop on the lawn.

BOY. But he may catch me.

PIERRE. In that case I will say that it was only a joke. Will you do it?

BOY. Certainly, boss.

PIERRE. Here, take the money—Now for it. (*PIERRE yells "stop thief" and boy runs away left*).

Ha, ha, the copper is chasing him out of sight! Now to join Eliza—Ah here she comes.

ELIZA. (*re-entering left*). Oh there is that horrid white-apron again.

PIERRE. Yes, my adorable one!

ELIZA. Every time that I come out here for an airing, you show up— How do you know of my coming?

PIERRE. Can't one peep through the basement windows?

ELIZA. Yes, if he is silly enough—but now I say

what should have been said before: don't you dare to pester me any more.

PIERRE. Oh, can't you give me some hope!

ELIZA. What you? pooh, you are only a chef, in the Doctor's family.

PIERRE. But you are only a chambermaid, in the Minister's family.

ELIZA. Only—say you? Why even nobility have always sought to be maids—of honor; and they are not to be compared with chamber—maids.

PIERRE. That is surely an optimistic way of looking at it.

ELIZA. Besides, I am employed on this the most exclusive block, on West End Avenue, where none but the noted and great live.

PIERRE. Well, I work too on this same block.

ELIZA. I know that, Pierre, but it makes no difference. While I have a sneaking fondness for you—

PIERRE. Ah do you admit so much! Then you can't possibly refuse an embrace. (*He approaches her with open arms, and she opens her arms, and then drops them with a titter*). No, no, I couldn't endure it; you look like a calf in that white-apron; I abhor you in it!

PIERRE. The same old prejudice: Where is your taste Eliza? I thought it was very becoming to me.

ELIZA. You look like the devil in it, to speak plainly.

PIERRE. (*sadly*). You don't say— Then I will be a chef no longer, but get another job!

ELIZA. No, don't bother: it is too late now; I could never see you without recalling the absurd thing.

PIERRE. Oh cruel pitiless Eliza!

ELIZA. (*kindly*). Don't blame me, Pierre; blame the big bib; it makes me always do what I regret doing—speak harshly to you. (*She starts to go*).

PIERRE. (*getting in her way*). Oh don't leave me!

ELIZA. (*vexed*). Keep away—bah! (*Exit, into basement*).

PIERRE. What is to be done? I am distracted! I am in despair!—Ah she loves uniforms: why not dress up in a handsome one and try and win her that way? That's worth thinking over.—Her dislike for me in this apron is unaccountable: I think that I look very distinguished in it: (*struts around*) and doubt if I can give it up altogether even for her sake. Indeed, it is a fact, that the liking to wear it, quite laudable in itself, has become so unnatural, that it amounts to a foible. (*Exit, into basement*).

*Enter the Janitress from the front-door of second house.*

JAN. Thank goodness, I have got the vacant house all ready for the new tenants, just as they are expected. Oh I am just tuckered out—but what can I do? Unmarried women have to support themselves: (and married ones often do too). But being janitress is no snap job: the work is hard, and the tenants are fault-finding and exacting. Strange.



though they do live in elegant houses, it seems as hard for them to make both ends meet, as it is even for poor people. It would astonish society, if they knew what common drudgery, yea even outlandish things, they do; in the struggle to keep up, by inner economies, outward appearances. In the main, they do their own housework, cooking, dressmaking and washing; and take in work to do at home, such as shirtwaists, artificial flowers etc. Some of the males, even lend a helping hand at these prosy but useful labors; and besides, often darn their own stockings and sew on their own buttons. Are their lives, I wonder, a fair sample of the lives of people in their class? No doubt this block is an aggravated case—but in a measure they are.

*Enter DOCTOR from the front-door of third house.*

DOC. Ah, janitress—Miss Apgar—a word with you.

JAN. At your service, doctor Killem.

DOC. This new tenant for the vacant house, Mr.— what is his name?

JAN. Mr. Staker.

DOC. Ah yes, Staker—Now who ever heard of him or his ancestors, being famous in any way—or even of ever staking anybody.

JAN. (*laughing*). I don't know, sir.

DOC. Of course not—but you do know that all of us tenants on this block, are noted or great in one way or another.

JAN. That's what everybody says.

DOC. And this man, whose name is not even mentioned in "Who's Who," or any similar book domestic or foreign, seeks to inject his common self and family, amongst such august company:— what do you think of it?

JAN. Pretty nervy.

DOC. "Nervy" is a pat word; but I as a doctor find it inapplicable here—for it implies good health, while such idiotic presumption as his, is symptomatic of nervous prostration.

JAN. Ha, ha, ha!

DOC. All the tenants, at my suggestion, are going to hold a meeting on the lawn here, at once, to decide upon the form of a letter of protest to the landlord against their admission.

JAN. Are you indeed.

DOC. When are they expected?

JAN. They are due now.

DOC. What, so soon—I thought not till tomorrow the first. Well, don't dare admit them.

JAN. How can I help it sir?

DOC. Why, send them about their business—or better still, hold them here on the lawn, and see to it that they overhear our meeting; the harsh things said of them there, will probably make them conclude to give up the house.

JAN. Oh, to do that would grate on my fine feelings.

DOC. Bosh, grate on nutmegs—you must do it.

JAN. Very well then, I will— But ah, doctor, my

heart is going back stronger than ever to the old palmy days, when I was a young lady—

DOC. That was in the long ago.

JAN. No it wasn't! I am still young yet—at least in spirit.—I lived in a palatial home, with loving parents; and all that heart could wish. I was the *belle* of the place; I was courted, admired and flattered; I was—

DOC. Catch your breath, dear woman—no more of the *I was's*, as I am familiar with the whole story: you have told it to all the tenants too often: you have encouraged the propensity to make too much of it, until it has become a foible.

JAN. A foible: you mean to say that I—confound it, I thought that I knew what the word meant; but like others, I intuitively use many words meaningly, without stopping to think that I have no definite idea of what they really do mean.

DOC. Ah here is where erudition comes in—A foible, dear lady, means just the same as, a frailty, or a failing, or a weakness, or an infirmity: they may be of either a moral, mental or physical character: and they are, of course, brought on by one's self.

JAN. Then you have a foible too; for the tenants all say that you so much like to talk about—nothing.

DOC. The envious backbiters! I grant you, that I am discursive, exhaustive, even prolix: but that same love to dissect anything, has made me deeply conversant with the human body; and given to science my famous books on physiology and surgery.

JAN. It was wrong of me to play telltale—and put you to the trouble of saying so much.

DOC. So much—why madam, I just began speaking: I will continue by saying—

JAN. Ah, here come Mr. Staker and family.

DOC. Then, join them—and mind that you bring them near the meeting; which we tenants will soon be out to hold. (*Exit into house*).

*Enter MR. STAKER, and his family, left. They wear headgear; but all others in the scene are bare-headed, except POLICEMAN and SOLDIER, who wear their caps.*

STAK. Ah, Miss Apgar—good early-morning! We are come; and our furniture will be here later.

JAN. That is very good Mr. Staker.

STAK. My family, you met before; but another introduction will make you still better acquainted: This is my wife, Abigail; and these my children, Edward 25 years, Harold 19, Gertrude 22 and Hazel 17.

JAN. (*after they have exchanged bows*). I am pleased to meet you all again.

GER. Oh, at last we are going to live and associate with the great! Mother, you know how I have always longed for that.

MRS. STAK. Yes, my dear child: and, as I have often said, all those noble and very lofty feelings in you are *inherited*—You see, Mrs. Apgar, I am a lineal descendant of Robert Bruce, King of Scotland; my maiden name being Abigail Bruce. I can

trace back to my great great grandfather, who lived in Scotland about the year 1800, and Robert Bruce reigned about the year 1300: so you see that for the time between 1300 and 1800, or five hundred years, we have no record of—but I and the many others, that pride ourselves on our descent, are so sure of our premises that we do not care a fig about a small skip in the tracing like 500 years.

(*Mrs. Apgar is perplexed, but nods her approval.*)

EDW. I hope, mother, that you and Gertrude, will be satisfied now: for, living with the great, has been the constant burden of your prayers: or, I should have said—of your moans.

STAK. Indeed, that is true, Edward:—Exquisite manners, (which I hope I possess,) would not allow me to get ruffled either in deportment or speech. but it taxed me severely; and when I made my overnight fortune, their clamors redoubling, I rushed to a real estate office as fast as my legs could carry me, with the idea of trying to attain their wishes, and thus end the annoyance: fortunately he knew of this house:—yes, I hope they will be content.

MRS. STAK. Well dear, perhaps you and Edward had better dwell a little less on Gertrude's and my foibles, and a little more on your own: yours is, dear, to show off the exquisite manners that you believe you possess, Edward's is, to show off the physical strength that he believes he possesses.

EDW. That he believes, eh? (*Striking an attitude*) Well, I know that I possess it. Glorious it is, and not a foible: besides young people can't have such things; they don't call them that.

HAZ. Yes they do—youthful failings, but still foibles.

HAR. Ha, ha, Hazel, your foible is your child-like love for candy and ice cream. (*General smiles*)

STAK. And yours Harold, is the firm belief, quite common among youths, that you know it all.

HAR. (*hotly*). Oh, is it. Well you, in your intercourse with anybody, even a street sweeper, put on the same ridiculous and hifalutin carriage and address, as courtiers do when talking to a king.

HAZ. Shame on you Harold, to speak to papa so.—Come, let us go in.

JAN. Oh not yet, I pray you.

MRS. STAK. Why not: are not all things in readiness?

JAN. —Yes, but—but the doctor just told me that the tenants were going to meet out here, at once, to transact some business; and perhaps you would like to get a glimpse of them.

MRS. STAK. Oh, what luck: of course we would.

GER. I am just dying to even see them! and it might take days, ordinarily.

STAK. Wouldn't it be well to get in a less conspicuous spot.

JAN. I am going to take you in the shadow of those bushes. (*She takes them to front wing, on right.*)

HAR. (*Producing a baseball.*) Come Ed, let us get busy.

EDW. Just the place for a toss.

(*They toss a bit on stage, finally working off.*)

GER. The agent told papa, that the famous occupants of the block, were a soldier, poet, artist, minister, senator, doctor, ambassador, and philanthropist.

JAN. That's right.

GER. Oh what a galaxy! Please tell us in which house each one lives.

JAN. (*pointing to the house-fronts*). Well, there is your house you know, and on either side of you is the minister and doctor. (*Pointing to imaginary house-fronts presumed to adjoin the others on the right*). Next to the minister is the soldier, then the senator, then the poet. (*Pointing to imaginary house-fronts presumed to adjoin the others on the left*). Next to the doctor is the philanthropist, then the ambassador, then the artist.

GER. Now, please, what are they like?

JAN. Why, they are very much like other people; and in some respects, less interesting. You will be disappointed in them.

GER. Oh, that is impossible!

STAK. Why Gertrude, the lady knows what she is talking about.

JAN. Like most people, each of them has one or more foibles.

GER. What is their nature?

JAN. Well, it is not exactly easy to describe them: but you will soon know them, for they will excite your laughter.

MRS. STAK. You don't say.

GER. It would be rude to laugh: but of course I can't help it, if they act very funny.

HAZ. My, how delightful, to have something amusing.

GER. Well mother, this certainly is a setback, in our ideas of the great; but maybe they will more than come up to our expectations, in some respects.

MRS. STAK. Yes, in the main they must be like our dreams. I dare not think otherwise.

HAZ. Ah, some one comes out: Who is it?

*Enter MINISTER from the front-door of first house; he goes off left.*

JAN. That is the minister—and in his black surplice:—his liking to wear that is a regular foible.

GER. You don't say.—What is his name?

JAN. Mr. Postem.

MRS. STAK. Postem—what an extraordinary name: (particularly for a minister): a far different name from that of 'Bruce;' or other equally high-sounding ones of noted men.

HAZ. It has the aroma of the famous substitute for coffee—or brings visions of the billposter and signboard. (*General laughter.*)

JAN. Well, it is odd: and yet appropriate; for he has to acquaint people with matters of religion and brotherly love: that is, he has to post 'em.

STAK. Ha, ha, that's good—a contraction of post them.



JAN. He has gone to hold an open-air revival meeting, at that end of the lawn: he holds them twice a week, at about this hour. When it is over he will come back to attend the meeting that the doctor spoke about.

GER. There comes a man in uniform out.

*Enter SOLDIER, right; he goes off left.*

JAN. That is the soldier—Mr Knoblock. His liking to wear the uniform, is a regular foible, also.

HAZ. Is he going to the pastor's meeting?

JAN. Yes, he attends them all: in order, he says, to have the uniform's glory confound the surplice's solemnity:—he advocates war, you see, and the minister preaches peace: and it has made bitter enemies of them.

MRS STAK. & GER. Is it possible.

STAK. Another one, has come out.

*Enter PHILANTHROPIST, left; he stops by doctor's stoop.*

JAN. Yes, the celebrated philanthropist—Mr Pullwool.

HAZ. MR. PULLWOOL. (*Laughing*) Oh what a funny name.

STAK. Yes,—it recalls at once the ludicrous phrase, that is often used to express deception and cheating—*pullwool over the eyes*.

JAN. It does; and is much applied that way: as many people say that Pullwool is pulling the wool over the eyes of the public, in the immense sums that he begs from them, for much of it goes into the capacious pockets of himself and his confederates.

MRS. STAK. He begs,—for what?

JAN. He is President of the "Home and Foreign Money-aid and Moral-uplift Society."

STAK. He is a fine-looking and a sanctimonious looking man.

GER. Yes, indeed,—but quite old: (*sadly*) that however seems to be the case with most of the great.

MRS. STAK. With you, like most young people, your own age, seems the golden age,—but, my child, it takes years to develop greatness.

GER. (*downcast.*) I presume it does: (*hopefully*) but in the children of the great, of about my age, we may hope, at least, to see wonderful precocity.

STAK. (*laughing.*) Yes; oftentimes so precocious, that they deem themselves greater than their parents.

JAN. There comes the Doctor out.

*Re-enter Doctor from the front door of third house; he stops by his stoop, with PHILANTHROPIST.*

HAZ. What, that man is a doctor,—short, fat and baldheaded.

GER. (*mock despair.*) Oh, how different from what he ought to be! So are they all, so far, in one respect or another.

MRS. STAK. (*authoritatively.*) None of them, are extraordinary enough.

STAK. (*jocularly.*) Well, we will have them all made over to suit Gertrude and yourself.

*Re-enter EDWARD and HAROLD, left.*

MRS. STAK. Did you have a good ball-play, boys?

HAR. Yes, mother, we tossed until we got tired.

EDW. You should have said that you did: (*boastfully*) I never get tired.

HAR. (*boyish conceit.*) Well, I know all about the game.

JAN. The poet, is coming out.

GER. Ah, anyone that writes poetry, must possess personal graces,—he is divinely tall.

*Enter POET, right; he joins those by stoop.*

EDW. And most divinely lean.

GER. (*to Jan.*) What is his name? I know that it must be an euphonious one.

JAN. Mr. Bacon.

GER. Bacon? That name seems familiar; seems suggestive.

HAR. Yes, it suggests bacon and eggs.

EDW. Or, liver and bacon.

GER. Horrid! I do believe that is what I had in mind.

STAK. Or, bringing home the bacon.

HAZ. Oh papa, shame on you.

MRS. STAK. How oddly he dresses,—that is seen, now, that he is facing this way—just like a laborer.

JAN. Yes,—and he also makes them largely the theme of the *verse libre* that he grinds out;—he is too select to have any real affinity with the toilers, so I guess it must be a matter of dollars and cents.

HAR. (*as a loud explosion is heard.*) Oh my! What is that?

JAN. Only another foible,—the Ambassador's, now coming out: he was, (well, to speak it genteelly,) clearing his proboscis, in his own peculiar manner.

HAZ. Clearing his proboscis,—what in the world is that?

STAK. Why, blowing his nose.

EDW. Well, his is certainly some bugle.

*Enter AMBASSADOR, left; he joins those by stoop.*

GER. Oh what a gorgeous dress he wears.

JAN. That is an ambassadorial uniform: he has many different kinds.

MRS. STAK. Has he, indeed.

JAN. Strange to say, the Senator has a foible, that is much like this nose-blowing one of the ambassador: whenever he gets bored, he is apt to gape and yawn, loudly and weirdly.

MRS. STAK. & GER. (*despairingly.*) Worse and worse.

STAK. These particular kinds of foibles, are of the nature of infirmities—from the fact that they are manifested in a physical way. They are, in one form or another, quite common with humanity.

JAN. Now you have seen all, but the senator—Mr. Law; and the artist—Mr. Dauber. —Ah, here they come walking along the sidewalk together—they have been taking an after-breakfast walk.

HAR. Please don't say which is which—I will wager you a necktie, Edward, that I can pick them apart.

EDW. It looks soft for you: but one never can tell—so I will have to take you.

HAR. It is a shame to take your money: it is like taking cake from a child: for one's name is law—and that name at once arouses visions of jurisprudence, in all its majesty and breadth: and you as well as I have concluded that its possessor is not the small insignificant looking man with the retreating forehead and bald head, but the stately younger man with the high broad brow and finely chiselled face.

EDW. It is a foolish bet, Harold; for that is what I concluded.

*Enter on sidewalk, left, SENATOR, and ARTIST; holding their hats in hands: just inside they are stopped by a DUTCHMAN, following them.*

DUTCH. (to ARTIST). Was this Mr. Kohlslaw?

ART. No—damn it—kohlslaw is cabbage.

DUTCH. You bet'yu; and I likes it!—Mine friend the grocer, said as I passed, run and give this package to my customer there, who left it in my store—Mr. Kohlslaw.

ART. Cowles Law—but not Kohlslaw.

DUTCH. How can it be Kohlslaw and not Kohlslaw?

ART. That seems paradoxical, doesn't it?

DUTCH. What's that?

ART. Why, something that appears, contradictory.

DUTCH. What's THAT?

ART. A thing that appears to be false on its face, until more light is thrown on it—The grocer gave you the full name—(spells it) C-o-w-l-e-s, first name; L-a-w, last name—so you see that Law is his name; but his full name is Cowles Law.

DUTCH. Oh that is the way it was, is it?

ART. This is the gentleman.

DUTCH. Oh was it. (*Hands package to Senator*).

SEN. Thank you.

(*Exit DUTCHMAN, left; SENATOR and ARTIST join those by stoop.*)

HAR. You win, Edward, and I lose.

EDW. That's right—Mr. Law, is the insignificant looking man: it was a wrong conclusion.

STAK. Preconceived ones generally are.

HAZ. Ha, ha, it was fun when the artist joked with the dutchman.

JAN. He is fond of joking; that is his foible: and he has another one, very common among men—the frequent use of cuss words.

GER. (*gazing off*). The revival seems to be over.

JAN. Yes, and the soldier comes, headed right in our direction.

STAK. Let us get in the covert of these bushes till he passes. (*They huddle together at front and partly in wing and overhear the SOLDIER and MINISTER'S talk*).

*Enter SOLDIER, left.*

SOL. Oh, this looking distinguished all the time is a terrible bore—a man has to pay a high price for fame: to keep up the reputation is harder than to gain it. People say, there goes the great soldier; and to fully satisfy expectations, I have got to have the bearing of an ordinary soldier, (no easy task to compete with these strapping fellows), plus the idea of greatness. Oh, what a pleasure it is to get away from people, and unlimber myself and act naturally.—Ah, some persons (*he assumes a distinguished air*) over there with the janitress are admiring me. (*Struts off, right*).

STAK. Ha, ha, there we got a glimpse of the real feelings of a great soldier. (*General laughter*.)

JAN. Here is the minister too: they always keep in each other's wake, and at times meet and have hot words together.

*Enter MINISTER, left.*

MIN. (*glancing at those by stoop*). I see that the tenants are gathered for the meeting, so I won't have time to follow the peacock soldier down the lawn, to offset his influence upon any spectators that may pass. I will go in and doff my surplice—I dislike doing it, for it gives me an imposing appearance. And said imposing appearance is due to it alone: for without it, I am forced to admit, against my vanity's denial, that in spite of my sideboards and other semi-artificial aids, I look almost, yes actually insignificant. And what chance has a commonplace, ordinary looking minister to-day? Why people are as sure that nothing worth while could come out of him, as people were sure in the long ago, that nothing good could come out of Nazareth.

*Re-enter SOLDIER, right.*

SOL. How dare you sir to appear outside of the Church in your black-surplice?

MIN. How dare you sir to appear outside of the ranks in your gaudy-uniform?

SOL. My practice is in accordance with military regulations.

MIN. My practice is in accordance with Church regulations.

SOL. You only wear yours sir to show off.

MIN. You only wear yours sir to show off.

SOL. Your calling is inimical to mine: you would take away my bread and butter.

MIN. Your calling is inimical to mine: you would take away my bread and butter.

DOC. (*coming forward from stoop followed by the others*.) What a racket, what a noise, what a fuss, what a combustion! Must you be always quarreling with each other; can't you ever be at peace?

MIN. Please leave us alone sir.

SOL. How dare you interfere.

PHIL. Why, to acquaint you with what he just told us: (*lowering voice*) there are the Stakers, the subject of our present gathering; they are being held by the janitress at the doctor's request, so as to



overhear our action, (*raises voice again*) and should the vote go against them probably voluntarily withdraw.

MIN. That's a good afterthought, dear Pullwool: let's proceed with the business.

POET. The Senator is the natural chairman. (*SENATOR being bored, yawns loudly and weirdly.*)

DOC. What, yawning again, Senator Law? You are easily bored: you yawn, in your inimitable way, at the idea of a prospective personal exertion—who could conceive that you are one of those that kill bills in the senate, by talking against time.

SEN. Who could conceive, Dr. Killem, that you could keep quiet long enough to treat a patient.

AMB. (*after laughter*). Order—now for the question!

SEN. Gentlemen, are you, or not, in favor of sending the landlord a letter, protesting in vigorous language against Mr. Staker's becoming a tenant here? All in favor, say so.

ALL. Yes, yes.

SEN. All opposed, say so. No answer: the question is carried unanimously.

POET. Staker,—what a peculiarly offensive name: it suggests the idea that if this man were not poor, he would offer to stake all of us, if we allowed him to live here—of course without success.

MIN. The name fits the man; for I understand that he of course is not refined.

SOL. And has execrable manners.

STAK. (*to his family*.) 'Execrable manners'—I can't stand that! (*He advances, followed by family and janitress*). My name is Staker—Gentlemen.

ALL. Oh, indeed.

STAK. I came, to—

DOC. My name is Killem, sir: I am a doctor.

STAK. Are you?—I hope sir that your name is not indicative of the treatment your patients receive.

DOC. Well, envious fellow practitioners say that I do kill-em:—but what is the sense of keeping hopeless cases lingering, when the patients are too poor to pay my bills for the nostrums administered.

STAK. Ha, ha, that's true.

DOC. Aristotle, aptly says, that—

ART. Oh, cut it out! When you first butted in, Mr. Staker had begun to say something.

STAK. (*growing stern again*). I started to say this. I come, to resent the remarks you made about me; which I could not help overhearing: all of them were unkind; but the soldier's was also a lie (*Soldier shows fight*) bel. (*Soldier calms down.*) Live amongst you—nothing whatever could induce me to do so.

MRS. STAK. I am not so anxious to live here now: (*spiritedly*) but we'll come just the same.

GER. Yes indeed,—this is a free country.

STAK. (*firmly*.) And I say that we shall not come.

DOC. Thanks! Mr. Staker. We all regret the wounding of your feelings: and personally let me add, in the same words that I use to a patient

after an operation—I beg your pardon for having cut you up so. (*Everybody smiles*)

EDW. (*aside*). The doctor is a funny guy, Harold, isn't he?

HAR. (*aside*). He is all to the merry.

ART. And personally let me add, that seeking to come here was damned presumptuous—and really calls for an apology.

STAK. Which I won't make—but I will, explain. It was due solely to my wife and elder daughter's almost insane longing to live amongst the great: (but which has been impaired, as my wife intimated, by what we have seen and heard here this morning): it made my life unendurable; so that I eagerly sought to end it by gratifying them, when I jumped from poverty to affluence overnight—by making a fortune in Wall Street.

ALL. (*amazed*). You made a fortune!

STAK. Yes.

ALL. How much?

STAK. Something over a million dollars.

ALL. (*excitedly*). So much!—(*Shaking his hands*). Mr. Staker, we beg you to become our neighbor!

STAK. What? Does the money make such a difference.

DOC. Yes—you have wealth; and if it so please you, can make gifts to us in return for our condescensions—that makes all the difference in the world.

STAK. Would you all barter away your favors?

ALL. Well we hate to do it—but we need the money.

STAK. I shall not come.

ALL. You shall!

STAK. It would be infamous to do so, in view of the scurrilous things said about me.

POET. I said that your name was significant: but after having met you, I feel sure that were we to accept from you ever so much, you would stand in the proud position of a benefactor—not a staker: and I now recall that your name is applied to anyone that stakes things off; therefore your ancestors were no doubt renowned surveyors.

STAK. (*flattered*.) Ah!

MIN. And I said that I understood you were not refined; but was falsely informed, for you are the quintessence of refinement.

STAK. Ah! Ah!

SOL. And I was falsely informed also, for your manners are not execrable but elegant, and will be a distinct and rare acquisition to our select circle.

STAK. Ah! Ah! Ah!

ALL. You will come; won't you Mr. Staker?

STAK. Gentlemen, how can I resist you—yes, yes.

ALL. Thanks kind sir—and a warm welcome, to you, Mrs Staker—and to you, children! (*They shake hands*).

MRS. STAK. I thank you sirs, for all of us!

MIN. Now, go in your house; for you all need rest. In a short time we will all be well acquainted individually; and the best of friends.

POET. (*as STAKERS leave*). And in a month or so, we will unite in tendering you a reception and banquet.

STAKERS. You are very kind!

GER. (*aside*). Oh mother, they begin to be after all a little more like our first expectations.

MRS. STAK. Yes—and my bitter disappointment is very much assuaged. (*Exeunt STAKERS and JANITRESS into front-door of second house*)

PHIL. (*to POET.*) Are you crazy, man? give them a reception and banquet; you know that we will all be as poor as Job's turkey, until after my next great drive for donations to the Society.

ALL. Why, we take it that he was only bluffing.

POET. That's what I was—but with a purpose; for once get the idea of a reception into Staker's cranium, it will be easy to get him to give it, instead of us.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha! (*Exeunt into their houses*).

## ACT II.

SCENE 1—*Mr. Staker's Private Office, in his home on the same block. A handsomely cosy room; usual furnishings. A door at rear, (open).*

(*Discovered.*) STAKER and his WIFE.

STAK. Abigail, we have now been living here with the great for three months, and the results show all loss and no profit.

MRS. STAK. How so?

STAK. Well, we are constantly being brow-beaten and snubbed by the women; and by the men too, except when they want me to stake them with money—which is very often: I call it staking, for if they do get it as a loan, it will never be returned. Then we have to put up with both the women and men's foibles: which to be sure, are ludicrously amusing; yet too possess some very disagreeable features.

MRS. STAK. When the janitress told us that they had foibles, I looked the word up in the dictionary: it means the same as, a weakness, or a failing, or a frailty, or an infirmity—and they habitually say many things, do many things, or wear many things, that plainly come under this definition. As you know, many of these they even tax each other with openly.

STAK. Why, such taxing of each other, whether to the face or behind the back, seems to be one of their main delights: they no sooner come together than the fun begins.

MRS. STAK. And, at times, even the members of the family, get back at each other.

STAK. However, to be fair, we must recognize that most people possess foibles: and that they like to make those of others, a favorite topic for social chatter. Even children have them,—one of whose is their abnormal appetite for bread and butter: we have them too.

MRS. STAK. Others see ours, we see others'—but nobody see their own. —Ah, I begin to love this french-derived word—foibles: that so aptly denotes the infinite variety of eccentricities and peculiarities that human beings are subject to.

STAK. Then it is evident that Gertrude and the philanthropist's son, and Edward and the poet's daughter, have become greatly attached to each

other: and there is no telling the outcome; for it is certain that nothing, not even money, would induce their parents to allow them to wed outside of their own circle of greatness.

MRS. STAK. Yes—these lovers' probable trials, worry me too; and the other ills you have not exaggerated: but there is profit too.

STAK. What is it?

MRS. STAK. Why, Gertrude's and my pet *whim* of living with the great has been gratified; (not without alloy, I must admit:) besides, society views us as occupying a proud place—and you forget the reception tendered to us last month.

STAK. Yes—but which was held in our house instead of theirs, by their suggestion, and therefore all the bills were sent to me, and I had to pay them.

MRS. STAK. Ha, ha, you were imposed upon: but you must take comfort in the reflection that money impositions are the least of all.

*Enter PLUTO (a negro,) with a letter in hand, rear.*

PLU. (*handing letter.*) A messenger, sah, am waitin' outside for the answer.

STAK. (*opening, reads aloud.*) "Dear Mr. & Mrs. Staker: We tenants just met at the doctor's house, in relation to my society's next drive for funds; and at once unanimously decided to adjourn, to meet—if entirely agreeable—in about an hour at your house. Please send a verbal reply. Yours very truly—Pullwool."

MRS. STAK. Pluto, tell the messenger that the answer is—Mr. & Mrs. Staker will be delighted.

STAK. Of course.

PLU. All right. (*Exit rear.*)

MRS. STAK. As it is the males, they will ask to see you alone: they always do—let them meet in the parlor: and when they have met—ring: and I will send up some delicacies. Tell them, when they are at leisure, we will be glad to see them: Edward and Gertrude will soon be home, and Harold and Hazel are now.

STAK. Very well.

*Enter JANE, rear.*

MRS. STAK. Ah Jane, what do you want?

JANE. I come for my wages, ma'm.



MRS. STAK. But the servants' quarters, is the proper place to go to.

JANE. I was there, and they said you were here in the master's private office; so I came here.

MRS. STAK. Don't you think it was pretty nervy?

JANE. Perfectly proper, ma'm, under the advanced democracy.

STAK. Why are you leaving us?

JANE. The mistress falsely accused me of stealing, so I threw up the job.

MRS. STAK. I caught you leaving the house with a five pound bag of sugar: do you deny the allegation?

JANE. No—but I despise the alligator: you may call it by a harsh name; but no servant to-day would be thought much of that didn't do such things, and what's right or what's wrong depends upon common practice,—stealing, indeed!

MRS. STAK. Well Jane, then let's call it a foible.

JANE. (*suspiciously*) What's that you say?

MRS. STAK. Why something less than a fault—a weakness or failing.

JANE. Now you are coming to your senses.

STAK. Here is your pay, Jane. (*Hands money, which Jane takes.*)

JANE. Thank you—and I hope that my successor will be as lenient with you as I have been: only five pounds of anything at a time, hum. (*Exit rear.*)

MRS. STAK. Hear that,—will you. I almost regret our change of fortune.

STAK. Why?

MRS. STAK. Blessed are the poor, for they can hire no help: they are enough to set one crazy.

STAK. The servant problem is a hard nut to crack.

MRS. STAK. No one is perfect to be sure, but why should they be worse than others?

STAK. They only seem so because their menial duties try them more.

MRS. STAK. Besides Jane, Fritz the cook, left yesterday, because I called him down for back-talk: his failing is a belief in social equality; which he constantly harped upon, to the neglect of his duties.

STAK. Then we will have to advertise.

MRS. STAK. I did put an ad in the afternoon paper, telling them to call at 5 to-night; and we may soon expect some applications, as it is now a little past that hour:—I guess that I will go to the kitchen and see. (*Exit rear.*)

*Re-enter PLUTO, ushering in BRIDGET and ROZZI.*

PLU. Two applicants, sah, in answer to the ad fur help.

STAK. Why didn't you direct them around to the servants' entrance?

PLU. I did sah, but they wouldn't go: they both 'nised on bein' received like reg'lar guests are.

STAK. Ah, no doubt they have caught the fever of advanced democracy. (*Bridget and Rozzi nod*

*affirmatively*). All right Pluto, you may go. (*He retires.*) What is your pleasure, friends?

ROZ. I am'a an Italianni, therefore polite; let'a the lady speak'a first.

BRID. Ah, is it a lady yez call me? Sure yez are very kind; at the hash-house they just call me Bridget; with a cuss word prefix. Mr. Staker, I apply for waitress: the ad calls for only sich as work for the great; and sure I work for the grand duke of Kack-e-ack—(*aside*) H'iven forgive me for desate, but persons are forced to do a little bluffin' nowadays.

STAK. (*having reflected.*) I don't recall ever having heard of that name.

BRID. L'ave of jokin', sure iv'rybody has heard of him.

STAK. Have they? Well perhaps I am behind the times.

ROZ. I apply for a cook'a: my nam'a is Rozzi; I used to work'a for Guffanti.

STAK. That name sounds familiar: and is he a great man also?

ROZ. So much'a so, that I can think'a of nothing comparable to him'a hereabouts; except greater—New York'a.

STAK. (*after smiling.*) Why did you leave him?

ROZ. He said Rozzi, your tips are too larg'a; you mak'a more money than I do—and gav'a me the grand'a bounce. (*Staker and Bridget laugh.*)

STAK. Well, I do not hire the help; my wife attends to that—excuse me a minute, and I will fetch her. (*Exit rear*)

ROZ. Bridget, if they engage you'a as waitress, and me'a as cook, we will'a be the best'a of friends

BRID. Indade we will that, Mr Rozzi.

ROZ. For our own'a eating, I will always hav'a on the menu, Irish s'ew'a, for you—

BRID. Ah! Ah!

ROZ. And'a the macaroni, for myself.

BRID. P'hat, them pipestems! Signor, pl'ase tel me why yez Italianni ate so much macaroni?

ROZ. Why—why just'a to make'a the day go.

BRID. Ah, g'wan—now it's blushin' I am—yez spalpeen, I didn't think yez would spake vulgar, like many varmint do, about the sweets of the begetting of babies.

ROZ. (*expostulating.*) No no—not (*spells it*) d-a-g-o, dago: but'a (*spells it*) d-a-y-g-o.

BRID. Ah, to have the time pass quickly and nately: I understand yez, now.

(*Rozzi produces a snuffbox and takes a pinch*)

BRID. P'hat the divil are yez doin'?

ROZ. Only taking a pinch'a of snuff'a.

BRID. Why in the wur'd do yez take that stuff?

ROZ. I tak'a it to clear'a the nose; so that'a I can smell'a better.

BRID. *Dasint* people don't want to have very good smellers here in New York.

(*Bridget produces a bottle and takes a nip*)

ROZ. What'a the devil are'a you doing?

BRID. Only taking a drop of the cray' thur.

ROZ. Why in'a the world do'a you tak'a that'a stuff?

BRID. I take spirits down to kape my spirits up.

ROZ. Ha, ha.—But keeping up'a the spirits by'a the aid of *booze* is not'a so popular nor so lawful as it'a used to be.

BRID. That's true; we *old toppers* are the only ones that kape it up—it is my only w'akness.

ROZ. Yes, the sam'a as taking the snuff'a is my only failing. (*Takes another pinch.*) Ah, fin'a—! Here tak'a a pinch yourself.

BRID. Not on yure life. (*Takes another nip.*) Ah, fin'a!—Here take a nip yourself.

ROZ. Not on'a your life.

BRID. B'jaabers, it's at odds we are; let's come to a'vens. I will take a pinch if yez will take a nip.

ROZ. That'a is fair—all right'a.

(*She takes a pinch and he takes a nip*)

BRID. (*sneezing.*) Fa'th, it's a very pl'asing sensation, afther all!

ROZ. (*smacking his lips.*) Fa'th, it is not'a near so bad, as'a I thought!

BRID. B'gorra, I will take another pinch.

ROZ. You need'a no coaxing now.—B'gorra, I will tak'a another nip.

BRID. Yez nade no coaxin' now.—Kape the stuff for the prisint, and I will kape the snuff; and we will repate the expiriment now and then.

ROZ. Yes'a, now and then; but'a mostly—now.

BRID. (*aside.*) I like the snuff, but have had e'nuff; still I am willin' to kape on for the pl'asure of seeing the dago get drunk. (*She takes another pinch, and Rozzi takes another nip: then she has a fit of sneezing, and he sings in a maudlin manner; during which Mr and Mrs Staker re-enter*)

STAK. Why what is the matter here; what has caused this remarkable transformation?

BRID. Why Mr. Rozzi politely asked me to jine him in takin' a pinch of snuff, and I returned the compliment by askin' him to jine me in takin' a wee bit of the cray'thur: he liked the liquor, and the snuff was not displ'asing to me, so we rep'ated the dose too often.

MRS. STAK. Do you think it at all decorous to come here and act in this manner?

BRID. Why, I can't see any har-m in it mu'm.

STAK. Well, I presume you will, with regret, have to decline Miss Bridget and Mr. Rozzi's services!

MRS. STAK. No, I am going to hire them: servants are all the same; they all have failings; and while these foibles differ, one is bad as another:—Bridget will you do me the honor to become waitress?

BRID. Yis mu'm.

MRS. STAK. Mr. Rozzi, will you do me the honor to become cook?

ROZ. Yes, madam.

MRS. STAK. Come then with me down to the kitchen. (*Exeunt Mrs. Stak, Bridget, and Rozzi, rear.*)

STAK. To live here is intolerable; I can't endure the tenants and servants' indignities and impositions: but there's no getting Abigail and Gert-rude away; for they will submit to anything to live with the great: so we are stuck here, I reckon; unless I meet with reverse and can't pay the bills:—ha, to get away by the loss of fortune; that's worth pondering over. (*Sits down and ponders, as the curtain drops.*)

SCENE II.—*A reception Room, in Mr. Staker's home, Rich in style; with usual furnishings; in keeping. A door at right; a door at left; and a casement, (open) at rear.*

(*Discovered*) HAZEL.

HAZ. (*impatiently.*) Oh why don't Noel come back? I told him that I would wait here in the reception room.

MRS. STAK. (*looking in door at left.*) Hazel, I just hired a cook, (Mr. Rozzi); and a waitress, (Miss Bridget).

HAZ. That's good, mama. —Where's papa?

MRS. STAK. In his private office—see?

HAZ. (*looking out door at left.*) Oh, yes.

(*Mrs. Staker retires; Hazel closes door again.*)

*Enter NOEL, with two small boxes in his extended hand, right.*

NOEL. Here is what I promised you Hazel.

HAZ. (*tearing box open.*) Oh, why did you speak of bringing in this ice cream and candy!

NOEL. (*surprised.*) Why, isn't it your weakness; a perfect foible with you—like it is with many young maids—and don't I often gratify you?

HAZ. But, you kept me waiting.

NOEL. I have only been gone about five minutes.

HAZ. It seems like five hours.

NOEL. And, I told you I might not be able to return until our hour for visitors was over.

HAZ. Oh, now I realize that I could never have waited SO long.

NOEL. I'm sorry, but I was lucky to get back so soon: arriving home I donned this livery, and a false mustache, and was ready to serve as menial front-door bell-boy, as usual: a caller came soon, and I ushered him into father's presence: he is a tireless gabbler, whom I knew would hold out long; so, I took a chance, ran out, got the sweets, and here I am.

HAZ. (*having opened boxes is now gulping down alternately the sweets.*) Well, it is very good of you. (*Smacks lips*) Oh my!

NOEL. (*sadly.*) I wish that you liked me as well as you do ice cream and candy.

HAZ. Don't be foolish, Noel: you, and other beaux and husbands are not adapted to be eaten.



NOEL. (*lugubriously.*) That's true—unless people were to turn cannibals.

HAZ. (*laughing.*) In that case you would soon be devoured; for you look sweet in that livery.

NOEL. (*tickled.*) Do I! well that is some compensation for having to wear it.

HAZ. Don't you like to do so?

NOEL. It is not the suit; but the dislike of playing front-door tender for an hour twice a week: and all because dad is too snobbish to do without what he can't afford to hire.

HAZ. Can't afford? why he has a large salary as a United States senator.

NOEL. Yes—but he is always heavily in debt, on account of the high rent and other extravagances; just the same as the other tenants on the block; who also have, each in his own line, large incomes.

HAZ. Do you want to be a senator too?

NOEL. No—my failing, my craze, is to be an orator.

HAZ. Well, the senate is a good place for that.

NOEL. I mean a lecturer, a public speaker.

HAZ. It is pretty hard to learn isn't it?

NOEL. Father says that all there is to it, is to be able to say what I want to say, boldly and clearly.

HAZ. That's a grand idea of the way to go about it—Oh Noel you will yet be able to sway the crowd, with your impassioned words! (*Takes his hands.*) Let me help you: let me be a sort of a tutor:—What do you want to say now?

NOEL. (*looking into her eyes.*) Well just now my thoughts have changed. I want to say, that—(*hesitates and gets depressed*) Oh pshaw, I wanted to tell you often before, and couldn't; I want to tell you now, and can't! (*Despairingly.*) O, how the deuce can I ever become an orator when I can't say what I want to say.

HAZ. Keep up hope; you will yet: it takes patience and perseverance:—Come, try again; what was it?

NOEL. (*sheepishly.*) I don't like to tell.

HAZ. That's the point—there's hesitation—you must overcome that—come speak out boldly, say what you want to say.

NOEL. Well then, here goes. Hazel, I love you!

HAZ. (*blushes.*) Is that just it?

NOEL. Yes, exactly.

HAZ. Then you have taken the first step to be an orator.

NOEL. Hurrah! but—

HAZ. But what?

NOEL. I didn't say it the way I wanted to. I spoke it like a calf; and it had no more effect on you than water does on a duck's back.

HAZ. Ha, ha! Well, cheer up; eventually you will be able to say what you want to, and say it in the way you want to.

NOEL. Will you help me?

HAZ. Yes; provided—

NOEL. Provided what?

HAZ. That you make something else besides myself the subject of your remarks.

NOEL. Why Hazel, don't you want to make love?

HAZ. Yes,—but we've got to go slow; we're young yet.

NOEL. (*proudly.*) Why I am nineteen; and you are only two years younger.

HAZ. Still, our spooning will have to continue a couple of years.

NOEL. Well, that is the next best thing to wedlock!

HAZ. In the meantime you may get your fill of oratory, and be undivided in your allegiance to me.

NOEL. Yes,—and you may get your fill of ice cream and candy, and be true alone to me. (*Hazel laughs; stopping on hearing a weird noise.*)

HAZ. What's that?

NOEL. Egad, that's father! nobody else gapes at being bored, like that: (*looking off right*) the Gabbler and Auntie are along:—you had best leave; for he will be still angrier to see us together.

HAZ. Yes, he's awful stuck-up. (*Exit left.*)

NOEL. (*putting on a false mustache.*) Father wouldn't want the gabbler to recognize me. (*Falls flat on sofa.*) Maybe I can remain here unseen until they leave.

*Enter SENATOR (Mr. Law), his Sister MISS LAW, —and the GABBLER, right.*

GAB. Senator Law, this Staker must be an easy mark?

LAW. Well I must confess that he is—but then we tenants expect to repay his loans.

GAB. You expect to—but will you?

LAW. Oh, forget it.

GAB. Do you think he will grant this farther accommodation?

LAW. I do—and sister, you must speak a helpful word.

MISS LAW. That's what I came along for. (*Aside*) But I came more because I hoped to see my dear bachelor doctor; who often comes in here.

LAW. Since it is your importunity for the \$500. that I owe you that forces me to tackle him, do not butt in when I raise the amount.

GAB. Mum, is the word: all I care for, is to get mine.

LAW. I am going to ask for \$2000.—the \$1500 over, I need myself.

GAB. Agreed: but what do you do with all of your money?

MISS LAW. Why it takes a lot of money to live in the style that we have to do—What do you think this dress cost me?

GAB. (*after inspection.*) Not so awful much—the cost of the material only: for you made it yourself, if looks are any guage.

MISS LAW. Oh, how dare you—how ridiculous! (*Aside*) He is on the truth, the lynx-eyed wretch.

GAB. And that cost is reduced; for the skirt only comes to your knees.

MISS LAW. Oh you blunt fellow, you make me blush.

LAW. My pleadings to have her wear attire becoming to a grown person are wasted.

MISS LAW. I dress this way because beaux like it.

LAW. Beaux—at your age: nonsense.

MISS LAW. Why not? You were along in years when you wed your dear lamented wife.

LAW. Yes, I was thirty five then, but you are forty eight now.

MISS LAW. (*hotly.*) You needn't advertise it.

GAB. Almost fifty; yet still taking pleasure in a wanton display of calves, and still obsessed with the delights of being courted and wed,—what should be said? Well for charity's sake, let's call it an old maid's foibles.

MISS LAW. (*resentfully.*) An old maid—listen to that!

LAW. Come now to Mr. Staker's office.

MISS LAW. I will remain here: (*aside*) perhaps the dear doctor will appear.

(LAW and GAB on way to exit left, see Noel.)

GAB. Ah, here's a servant: (*Noel rises.*) why he looks like your son Noel.

LAW. (*agitated.*) Y-yes, he does, somewhat; but Noel has no mustache; it is my bell-boy.

GAB. Ah yes, the one that let me in.

LAW. Exactly.

GAB. What brings him here?

LAW. (*to Noel with a wink.*) You came in on an errand, I presume?

NOEL. Yes, sir.

GAB. Now here's an excrescence; no wonder you have to borrow—how much does he cost you?

LAW. I ca' can't just say.

GAB. You mean that you are afraid to say,—for it's a good round sum, isn't it?

LAW. Yes—heavy—very heavy.

GAB. Why don't you lop it off?

LAW. What would the neighbors say?

GAB. Let them talk: that is better than being a snob.

LAW. Now is that bad term applicable?

GAB. Because to keep up appearances that one can't afford, is a phase of snobbery.

LAW. That sounds logical.

GAB. Your neighbors, no doubt are as bad, in this respect, as yourself?

LAW. Even worse.

GAB. Then defy them: become economical; live within your means, and buy war saving stamps.

LAW. Ah, War Saving Stamps! First issued during the World War of 1914-18. Born out of the exigencies of that great struggle: and now, some years after the struggle's end, still surviving—as its aftermath.

GAB. Well, what say you?

LAW. By jove, I will do it: and to begin with, I will let this rascal go, right here and now.

GAB. That's the way to talk.

LAW. Consider yourself discharged, sir.

NOEL. (*smiling.*) Yes, sir.

LAW. Your wages due, you can get at any time, (*qualifying*) that I happen to have the money.

NOEL. Yes, sir! (*Noel bursts out in a grin, and mustache drops off*).

GAB. Ha, a FALSE mustache! it is Noel, after all.

LAW. Yes, the cat is out of the bag. (*Noel runs off right*)

GAB. And you were jollying me all the time.

LAW. Oh no,—I only tried—unworthily, I must confess—to get out of a hole.

GAB. Oh what a tidbit for gossip! the mighty senator Law, too poor to have but too proud not to have a bell-boy, togs his only child in livery and false mustache and palms him off on the neighbors as a real article.

LAW. Ha, ha—yes, you are right—but I wouldn't have it known for the world: I beseech you, don't mention it around.

GAB. Of course not.

LAW. Thank you.— (*Law yawns loudly and weirdly*)

GAB. What, indulging in your physical foible, again.

LAW. Pardon me;—I do it very rarely; but persons like you, whose foible is 'to gabble,' bore one excessively.

GAB. (*stung.*) Getting back at me, eh. (*Exeunt Law and Gab, left*)

MISS LAW. (*having been an anxious on-looker some feet away.*) That mean thing—that gabbler—will soon make it public property—Oh, it is just too bad for anything!

Enter DOCTOR (Mr Killem,) right.

KIL. Ah, Miss Law, you here; this is a pleasure, indeed!

MISS LAW. Which, is mutual, dear Doctor Killem, I assure you!

KIL. What a joy for us to have a tete-a-tete.

MISS LAW. Yes,—sit down with me on the sofa. (*They sit*)

KIL. I have urgent, very urgent business with Mr. Staker: which is, to give him the privilege of loaning me some money for a while.

MISS LAW. Ah, that IS a privilege. (*Aside*) I must keep brother's presence secret, until he gets his.

KIL. Our chat will be short, (but I trust, sweet,) for I must get the bulge on the other tenants, who will soon be here for loans.

MISS LAW. (*with mock surprise.*) Ha, Ha; do you think so?

KIL. Yes,—you see, in a half hour the philanthropist and the rest of us, meet here to arrange for his coming big begging drive for funds.

MISS LAW. Why are you meeting here, to arrange for the drive, instead of the doctor's house, as in former ones?

KIL. (*smiling.*) Solely because it affords us another good chance to ask Staker for loans.

MISS LAW. (*assuming astonishment.*) Well I



declare—then you have all made a practice of asking him for money?

KIL. Yes—and you must know that, to help matters, sometimes you women folks are brought along to flatter him.

MISS LAW. (*assuming amazement.*) Is it possible!

KIL. (*growing skeptical.*) Why, your brother must have alluded to the subject—doubtless you are not so green in the matter as you appear.

MISS LAW. (*squaring herself.*) Well, come to think, he probably has.

KIL. As each is anxious to get the first rap at him, they will no doubt be here shortly.

MISS LAW. (*cooly.*) Let us be sweet then at once. (*Fondly.*) Are you happy now?

KIL. (*sheepishly.*) Yes, very! never was happier, except on one occasion.

MISS LAW. When was that? You make me jealous.

KIL. There is no cause—it was in the long ago, when I performed my first surgical operation.—

MISS LAW. (*interrupting.*) Please bear in mind that this is no time to indulge in your foible of talkativeness.

KIL. (*smiling broadly, then continuing.*) Several surgeons were in attendance; all willing to give advice: too willing indeed, for they questioned my skill and experience: some, even wanted to take away my knife: but I persisted; and the result must have been a perfect cut; for they threw upon me contemptuous looks, that of course sprang from envy.

MISS LAW. (*solicitously.*) Take breath, doctor: then finish.

KIL. The patient himself, who was no doubt so fond of quoting his little stock of latin, that he even welcomed the loss of a limb, that gave him a chance to do so, cried out—Doctor doctorum eruditissime!

MISS LAW. Ha, ha!—Now that the other occasion, has been amusingly described, let us return to this occasion. Doctor we have been intimate for some time?

KIL. Yes indeed.

MISS LAW. Long enough for you to speak to me freely, what you have near at heart.

KIL. That's true: and I should and will say, something—that I have often wanted to say but lacked the nerve.

MISS LAW. (*aside.*) Ah, a proposal at last! (*to doctor shyly.*) Well?

KIL. I am going to propose—

MISS LAW. (*interrupting*) First let me put a query.

KIL. Go ahead.

MISS LAW. One can have their last name, changed; can't they?

KIL. Yes, upon application to the legislature. Why do you ask?

MISS LAW. Because I want you to have yours changed.

KIL. What! you surprise me—I don't want it changed; it suits me to a T: what fault do you find with it?

MISS LAW. Why, Killen—is a homicidal name.

KIL. (*indignantly.*) Homocidal, is it? well if it is, it is not half so bad as your execrable habit of talking through your nose.

MISS LAW. (*hotly.*) Execrable, eh? Why, my speaking is melodious, and much admired: nobody ever dared before to hint to the contrary.

KIL. Perhaps on account of delicacy: I fear that you delude yourself in regard to the melody.

MISS LAW. Anyhow, you should take nature to task, not me.

KIL. Don't put it on nature; it is a foible.

MISS LAW. I have such a thing, I admit—that of wearing short skirts—but this is none, for how am I to blame?

KIL. Let me tell you as a medical man learned in such things, that by making a fair effort you could have talked as you were meant to; but you began to admire this nasal squeaking; so the effort was not forthcoming.—

MISS LAW. Take a breath doctor.

KIL. I don't need to—Now as regarding the liberal display of your calves, that frailty I rather like, for it shows a peculiarly fine specimen for an amputation.

MISS LAW. (*flattered.*) Thanks! for the implication that they are well shaped. (*Flushing.*) But I want you to admire them more sentimentally, and less professionally.

KIL. (*smiling.*) I shall endeavor to do so. Now that calmness has returned, I see how ill-bred it was to make a harsh allusion to your mode of speech: but your slur upon my name riled me:—forgive me, I pray.

MISS LAW. We were both to blame, and therefore quits. I did dislike your name, and wanted it changed as a condition precedent to my becoming Mrs Killen; but perhaps it's not so bad after all—and there's your dear self besides,—so go on doctor (*blushing*) with your proposal.

KIL. Proposal? Who said anything about such a thing?

MISS LAW. Why didn't you? You said—I am going to propose.

KIL. Yes; but that you wear your skirts an inch or so longer. Not for my sake—as it is evident from what I said, that I admire them—but for the sake of propriety.

MISS LAW. (*hotly.*) Then you had no idea of marriage at all.

KIL. None whatever—I am wedded already.

MISS LAW. You are, are you? you scoundrel! How dared you have a wife in secret; and yet palm yourself off on the confiding, as a single man.

KIL. You mistake, my dear woman; I mean wedded to my profession.

MISS LAW. Bah, what nonsense! You are erratic—in fact you have a screw loose; and are not worth my bothering with any longer. Adieu. When brother returns tell him I concluded to go home.

KIL. Where is he?

MISS LAW. In the office there with Mr. Staker.

(Exit right.)

KIL. Ah, no doubt after a loan; if not too late I'll beat him to it; for Staker's chagrin at supinely submitting to a first borrower may give him backbone enough to refuse a second one. (Opening left door, he calls) Hey there, Mr. Staker!

STAK. (within.) I will be with you in a minute.

KIL. (calling.) Come quick, can't wait!

STAK. (entering.) What is the matter, doctor?

KIL. I want a loan.

STAK. Is that all?

KIL. Isn't that enough?

STAK. Ha, Ha, yes. Well, come to my office and wait: the rest will want loans; and the senator is already there for one: and I repeat to you what I just said to him, that to be impartial I won't consider the idea until all are here.

KIL. Pshaw! like the others, sir, I want to get the first whack—but will have to be content with an equal chance. (Exeunt left.)

Enter SOLDIER (Mr. Knoblock), and his WIFE, right.

KNOB. (anxiously.) Where is Staker? (Gazes out of left door, closing it again.) Confound it, we are not the first, after all; there two beggars with him already: we'll have to wait our turn.

MRS. KNOB. (after a slight pause.) I say, Knob-bie?

KNOB. (interrupting.) That homely nickname again,—I told you to cut it out.

MRS. KNOB. Well, then, Mr. Knoblock, my dear husband—why didn't you wear your soldier uniform as usual?

KNOB. Because, the minister would cast his contemptible slurs upon it—being free to do so, as he will attend the meeting without his surplice. What made you ask?

MRS. KNOB. Why without it, you look awful prosy; and your bowlegs show to additional disadvantage.

KNOB. Bowlegs, eh! You called them by a far different name when we were courting.

MRS. KNOB. Yes, I was unaware of the ugly fact until after our union—your pantaloons had concealed it.

KNOB. Ha, ha, exactly: the tailors of that period knew something; to-day they are numbskulls.

MRS. KNOB. Besides, you were a soldier,—the glamor of a soldier dazzles the eyes of the average girl, and makes her blind to his actual personality.

KNOB. Now dearie—why don't you take off that big hat? Hardly anyone else ever wears a hat in the house. And why do you wear hats, anyway, as large as, and shaped like, a small umbrella?

MRS. KNOB. I wear them, because I doat on them! And keep them on, inside, for the same reason. It may be a foible of the frailty kind, but I glory in it.

KNOB. But, you are the mother of a grown-up son.

MRS. KNOB. All the more credit to me for being still a marvel of style, beauty and romance—you used to be overjoyed at that.

KNOB. And I am still: but in some things, the hat for instance, you go a trifle—yes, I think I may say, a trifle—too far; and it brings ridicule upon me.

MRS. KNOB. (hotly.) What made you bring me along then?

KNOB. You know very well that we tenants bring you women folks along to help flatter Staker and his family, when we want to borrow money.

MRS. KNOB. Yes,—I was only a little sore at you.

KNOB. As I live, here come the minister and wife—we can't endure being alone with them.

MRS. KNOB. Let's go on the balcony.

KNOB. Yes, a good idea.—Oh that we could have seen Staker before. (Exeunt rear.)

Enter MINISTER (Mr. Postem), and his WIFE, right.

POST. Oh, my dear wife, I feel positively insignificant, without my surplice.

MRS. POST. And, Postem, candor compels me to say that you look it.

POST. I am afraid that for the nonce my utterances will not be thought oracular: and that I may be even slighted by others besides the soldier.

MRS. POST. Remember that you have me along to protect you.

POST. Yes, you are a tower of strength—actually as well as metaphorically, standing as you do, six feet high, and built like a longshoreman.

MRS. POST. (pleased.) Thanks for the compliment.

POST. Ah, you glory in possessing it, as much as did Sampson.

MRS. POST. Even more.

POST. It is indeed a grand asset: but—

MRS. POST. But what?

POST. (timidly.) It has bred in you a foible: you like to dominate everybody and everything.

MRS. POST. (lowering at him.) Oh I do, do I? Well, if I was milk and water, like you and Ruth, the other tenants would simply ride over us.

POST. (reflectively.) That is true.

MRS. POST. And, what was it that put you in the pulpit of a fashionable church, at ten thousand a year?

POST. I often wonder, what? Each time concluding, (by hoping, against hope), that it was because I had—that which is most dear to clergymen—an imposing appearance.

MRS. POST. Imposing appearance, fiddlesticks! (That and wearing a surplice, are YOUR weaknesses.) Get the idea out of your noddle that you look imposing: and you are no oracle; but your utterances are quite commonplace—and what I have said, applies to most other pastors. But you all have ability—in your case, the ability was lacking in push; and my dominating spirit, as you term it, supplied the deficiency.



POST. (*sadly.*) I guess you are right, we clergymen are ordinary, after all:—it was your brawn plus my schooling.

MRS. POST. That well expresses it.

POST. (*uneasily.*) I wish Mr. Staker would appear: I am anxious to see him; and yet don't want to seem so.

MRS. POST. What do you want of him? You came here to help arrange for the philanthropist's drive.

POST. Only ostensibly; but really to see Staker, for I am short of funds.

MRS. POST. Bah, you are always short of funds: what becomes of your big salary?

POST. Why, the high cost of living on this block; and liberal donations to the Church's many benefactions.

MRS. POST. (*reflectively.*) Yes, you are under heavy expense—no wonder you fall behind.

POST. I hope that you will help matters along, as usual: flatter Staker, this time; won't you? You needn't pile it on thick.

MRS. POST. (*sternly.*) You know I never flatter—my way of dealing, will be to frustrate any attempt at balking, by sitting down on him hard.

POST. (*laughing.*) That will be effective—(*grimly*) at least it always has been with me.

MRS. POST. The ministerial way, however, in the obtaining of money, is to get it by feigning indifference to it.

POST. Well havn't we always done so?

MRS. POST. Then let's not be here when he comes, but out on the balcony.

POST. But the others may get ahead of me.

MRS. POST. Let them—Staker has an inexhaustible roll.

POST. You are wiser than I am. (*Exeunt rear*)

*Enter ALEXANDER and RUTH, right.*

ALEX. Ah Ruth, here we can have the bliss of being together, with no fear of our cruel parents.

RUTH. Yes Alexander;—Aren't the Stakers nice, to permit this reception room of theirs to be used as a rendezvous for forlorn lovers: young Pullwool and his beloved Gertrude, Miss Bacon and her Edward, and for us.

ALEX. They love—but they keep it secret; and deem it hopeless; all because their parents would be unalterably opposed to their union, from the fact that Gertrude and Edward's father, Mr. Staker, is not noted nor great.

RUTH. Oh, foolish parents! isn't it awful?

ALEX. But our case is sadder: we cherish a hopeless love, solely because your minister father, and my soldier father, are at enmity.

RUTH. Just like Romeo and Juliet.

ALEX. Exactly. (*Looking her over.*) Ah, you make a lovely Juliet!

RUTH. (*tickled.*) Do I, indeed? (*Perplexed.*) But why then do people call me fat? (in spite of my efforts to reduce by taking vinegar.)

ALEX. (*soothingly.*) They are only jealous of you.

RUTH. (*still perplexed.*) And why do they call me a *sawed-off*? (in spite of these height producing high-heeled shoes.)

ALEX. (*admiringly.*) Ah, those—they are fine—you stand as it were on stilts.

RUTH. (*searching his face.*) Do you really mean that as a compliment; or are you only speaking ironically?

ALEX. I think you found your answer in my face.

RUTH. Oh yes—it fairly beamed admiration.—Now, the comparison begun by you—let me finish it: (*looking him over.*) Ah, you make a handsome Romeo!

ALEX. (*tickled.*) Do I, indeed? (*Perplexed.*) But why then do people call me fat, too? (in spite of my efforts to reduce by taking—exercise.)

RUTH. (*soothingly.*) They are only jealous of you.

ALEX. (*still perplexed.*) And why do they call me a dwarf? (in spite of this height producing high hat.)

RUTH. (*admiringly.*) Ah, that—it is fine—it has become an integral part of you; you wear it all the time.

ALEX. Yes, I never take it off, except when I retire.

RUTH. Oh, why don't you keep it on in bed?

ALEX. (*searching her face.*) Do you really like it; or are you only kidin' me?

RUTH. I think you found your answer in my face.

ALEX. Oh yes—it fairly beamed admiration.—Forgive me for doubting you; but I am made fun of in it, by the tenants, and called unmannerly for wearing it in company: they term it a ridiculous foible.

RUTH. That's just what they term my high heels. Mr. Bacon the poet, however, said something pretty about your hat.

ALEX. (*cagerly.*) What was it?

RUTH. I can't just remember—ah yes, he said that the smoke of the fires of your genius went up through your stovepipe hat.

ALEX. (*pleased, but puzzled.*) That IS praise; but it seems to have a vein of sarcasm.

RUTH. Hush, there's footsteps on the balcony.

(*They turn and look toward the rear.*)

ALEX. Our parents! (*They crouch back dismayed*)

*Re-enter MR. & MRS. KNOBLOCK and MR. & MRS. POSTEM, rear.*

KNOB. & POST. (*to each other.*) Ah, this doorway brings me face to face with YOU.

Note. With the exception of short speeches, and perhaps some other exceptions, it is unnatural to expect two, or more, speakers, to speak exactly the same speech, together: as they would hardly hit upon exactly the same speech. Therefore wherever in the play any speech is written

to be delivered by two, or more, speaking together—either where they speak it, to one another: or where they speak it, to others—the actors must hit upon some ingenious way to do it—perhaps by having it repeated, or echoed as it were, after a first speaker: or speak it together nearly alike: or each one speak a different section of it: or possibly some other way.

MRS. KNOB & MRS. POST. (*to each other.*) Yes, in trying to quit the annoying proximity of your husband and yourself, outside.

KNOB. (*sneeringly to Postem.*) I cannot help but observe, sir, that without your surplice, you look dismally ordinary.

POST. (*sneeringly to Knoblock.*) I cannot help but observe, sir, that without your uniform, you look painfully commonplace.

KNOB. Why didn't you wear the surplice—you love to be togged out in it, don't you?

POST. Why didn't you wear the uniform—you love to be togged out in it, don't you?

KNOB. No more so, than what is natural under the circumstances.

POST. Neither do I.

MRS. POST. Ha, ha, no more than is natural, eh—why, the wearing of them is the rankest kind of a foible, with both of you.

MRS. KNOB. (*seeing the lovers.*) Why, there is Alexander.

MRS. POST. And Ruth.

KNOB. (*angrily to Alex.*) What are you doing in *her* company?

POST. (*angrily to Ruth.*) What are you doing in *his* company?

RUTH & ALEX. (*after hesitation, embracing.*) We are lovers! (*This declaration causes a general guffaw*)

KNOB. (*sarcastically.*) Oh, you are, are you? Well you make a pretty pair of lovers.

ALEX. (*proudly.*) Of course we do—just as lovely as the loveliest.

RUTH. Yes,—even though in us beauty has taken an unusual manner of expression.

MRS. KNOB. & MRS. POST. Ha, ha, what delusions.

POST. (*to Alex.*) So you expect to wed my daughter, do you?

ALEX. (*sadly.*) No, ours is a hopeless love! for Ruth requires your consent; and that, she says, you will never give.

MR. & MRS. POST. (*emphatically.*) Never, never.

POST. (*continuing, emotionally.*) And yet, I am anxious to be rid of her; for she is only a subject of ridicule, and brings contempt upon me—

RUTH. (*stung.*) Well even if people do laugh at me, that is more than they do at the stale jokes you tell in the pulpit.

POST. (*stung.*) Don't interrupt.—To resume: I prayed to heaven for a good child, and it was answered—for she is a saint: but a sinner, if of normal shape, would be preferable.

MRS. POST. (*steruly.*) Postem, what ails you? our bitter regrets are not for others' ears.

POST. (*contritely.*) I was foolish, and also unchristian and unfatherly, but my emotion overcame me.

KNOB. (*emotionally.*) And my emotion too, overcomes me; the gall and wormwood of years must have voice: A soldier, in my youth; with premonitions of coming greatness: (which greatness has now been fully achieved, by heroic deeds)—

MRS. KNOB. (*curily.*) Why, my dear husband—you always say that it was more luck than bravery.

KNOB. (*chagrined.*) Don't butt in.—Being an optimistic young-soldier, as I said—I married—and demanded, (praying for, is not my forte), a son; to bless the union; who could my expected glory perpetuate: a daughter, came instead—and I cursed my fate; as if in penalty, the child died,—and two years later came the longed-for son: I named him after the great Alexander:—but what an Alexander? Far too short, even to enter the army: only sent to me, it seems, to be a sting in my present fame, as a great general.

ALEX. (*spiritedly.*) Well father, you have now spoken bluntly, what you have often hinted at. Still, I must say that I am stuck on my shape; and only for your sake would I be different—regarding your trouble, there's an easy way out of it: become friends with the parson; then Ruth and I can wed: and go live in an out-of-the-way place.

KNOB. (*hotly.*) Make friends with him,—never! Nor shall you ever wed his daughter!

POST. (*hotly.*) Don't worry,—my Ruth shall never marry your son!

MRS. KNOB. Alexander, quit this farce, at once: and never dare renew it:—go home.

MRS. POST. Ruth, you too go home: and never dare speak together again.

ALEX. & RUTH. (*rushing in embrace.*) What, parted for good—how can we ever be reconciled to that!

KNOB. & POST. (*angrily.*) I'll tell you how! (*Advancing, Knob takes Alex, and Post takes Ruth, by the ear and pull them apart, then turn them over knee and spank them.*)

ALEX. & RUTH. (*wriggling with pain.*) Oh, Oh!

KNOB. & POST. Do you promise, never to be in each other's company again?

ALEX. & RUTH. Yes, oh yes!

KNOB. & POST. (*stopping, release them.*) Go home now.

(*Exeunt Alex & Ruth with crest-fallen air, right.*)

*Re-enter STAKER, left.*

STAK. (*greeting.*) Ah, Ladies.

MRS. KNOB. & MRS. POST. (*greeting.*) Dear Mr. Staker.

STAK. The senator, doctor and myself are waiting, gentlemen, for you—what, quarreling again? your faces look as black as thunder-clouds: let me be your pacificator; let me calm you down:—ah, my



exquisite manners have already been a balm to your wrath.

POST. Ha, ha, Staker, the manners that you seem to be exquisite, are really very asinine.

KNOB. In plain words, Staker, you are an ass.

STAK. (*miffed, to both*) What's that?

MRS. KNOB. & MRS. POST. (*aside, each to her husband.*) You fool, he is nutty on the subject of his exquisite manners: your slurring of the foible, may mean the stoppage of loans—you must mollify him.

STAK. (*still miffed.*) Hah, each couple of you, whispering together; despite the fact that I impatiently await an apology.

KNOB. (*aside.*) How shall I square myself with him? well here goes: (*to Staker*) That animal's postures and braying, being the nearest approach to absolute perfection in deportment and speech, is why I called you an ass.

POST. (*chuckling.*) That too is exactly what I meant.

STAK. (*highly tickled.*) Ah! Ah!—(*Apologetic.*) How stupid of me not to get you at first.

KNOB. & POST. (*relieved.*) Not, stupid: but, surprising.

*Enter A TOUGH, right.*

STAK. (*surprised.*) Who are you, and what do you want here?

TOUGH. Which one of you, is his *knob-s*?

STAK. Who do you mean?

TOUGH. Why, his *latchkey-s*.

STAK. Cut out these ridiculous nicknames, and give us his real name.

TOUGH. I can't exactly; I only remember that he is named after the fixings of a door—the lock, the knob.

STAK. Ha, ha, you mean Mr Knoblock.

TOUGH. Yes, that's it.

STAK. This is the gentleman.

KNOB. Well you loon, what do you want of me?

TOUGH. Why, Alexander and Ruth, are just suited to each other; and if you don't let them wed, I'll knock your block off.

KNOB. (*sternly.*) And, who are you?

TOUGH. (*threateningly*) I'm a tough, I am.

KNOB. In that case, the proper place for you is the jug—call up the police, Staker.

TOUGH. Not just yet; wait a bit. On my way here, I met Alexander, and he gave me an inkling that Ruth and he had been caught here, and separated forever by parental severity: I felt sad, but—shame on me—when I caught a glimpse of you thru the door, this prank suggested itself. Now to change from the tough (*he smooths hair with a pocket-comb and turns down coat-collar*) back to—

ALL. The artist! (*Spoken quickly in surprise*)

MRS. KNOB. (*contemptuously.*) Another of his *practical jokes*.

POST. Why didn't you intersperse it with profanity as usual?

DAUB. (*laughing.*) The ladies only prevented me.

KNOB. (*wrathfully.*) Dauber, do you think it

creditable, that you, a fine renowned painter, should habitually indulge in—joking and swearing.

DAUB. No, I admit that they are foibles. (*Weird nose-blowing is heard.*) Not so bad however as this weird nose-blowing one of the ambassador—sounding loudly here, though he is yet distant.

ALL. (*distastefully.*) It is a horrid habit.

DAUB. Yes; and his other weakness—to wear glitter and gilt—is absurd.

KNOB. & POST. (*guiltily.*) Humph.—

STAK. But remember, he is getting old and infirm.

DAUB. Old age does bring on infirmities—still many of these are partly self-incurred, and therefore partly foibles.

ALL. (*startled by another nose-blow.*) He is close at hand now.

*Enter AMBASSADOR (Mr. Mirabeau), right.*

MIR. (*strutting forward.*) How do you like my new ambassadorial uniform?

ALL. (*sneeringly.*) Oh, you look like a perfect peacock!

DAUB. (*continuing.*) More gorgeous even than usual.

POST. But you only bought a new one last week.

KNOB. Well, he buys one every week.

MIR. Not quite so often; but I would like to, if my heavy pension, were still heavier: (some of it goes, you know, for my large retinue; and the entertaining of many guests): as it is, I had to buy this one *on installments*.

ALL. (*snickering.*) Did you, indeed.

MRS. KNOB. Pardon me, Mr. Mirabeau, but is it the custom among you Europeans, for a retired ambassador, like yourself, to still wear the uniform?

MIR. No, it is not; but it is permissible. A few words here: When I became ambassador, I coveted to be great,—Now, true greatness is found in the masses: who perform their humble duties, in joy or sorrow, security or danger, faithfully, but are never heard of,—I wanted however to be in the public eye; to be one of those men who are considered great because they have made a noise in the world—Now such noises are made in various ways,—I finally hit upon a way; rather unusual I admit, yet producing as fine a product as the other noises in vogue—that, of *loud nose-blowing*.

ALL. (*laughing.*) Quite ingenious.

MIR. Afterwards, realizing that the public are wild for theatrical display, I backed the noise up with the wearing of splendid costume.

ALL. And the people fell for it.

MIR. As you intimate, when I retired I was famous everywhere. Fame wanes however in spite of noise and glitter; and (*sadly*) so did mine—my wife said, you are played out here—leave your grown-up children and me, and go to great New York; where you will be, if not a celebrity, at least a curiosity.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

MIR. What? I can't see any joke.

MRS. POST. (*soothingly.*) Of course not: (*aside*) you old imbecile.

DAUB. (*cuttingly.*) To sum up, Mirabeau, you began these odd habits for to advertise yourself; and they have grown on you, and are now become pet hobbies—aren't they?

MIR. (*reluctantly.*) I suppose so.

(*All begin now to sniff a smell that evidently comes in at right door.*)

ALL. (*dismayed.*) The poet and his pipe.

MRS. KNOB. (*continuing.*) Ah, significant alliteration: signifying plainly what a well-known nuisance is at hand.

MRS. POST. If his wife is along, we'll be treated to some slang as usual.

KNOB. Isn't it a horrid habit; and she so proud too.

MRS. KNOB. Proud, nothing—it is only snobbery: she must have come from an ordinary family.

Enter POET (Mr. Bacon), *smoking a pipe; and his WIFE, right.*

DAUB. (*laughing at them.*) Jack Sprat would eat no fat and his wife would eat no lean.

MR. & MRS. BAC. Sir—?

DAUB. (*apologetic.*) Pardon me, Mrs. Bacon, for using this familiar line to describe both of you; but your hubbie is so lean, and you are so fat.

MRS. BAC. (*resentfully.*) What you say cuts no ice, for you are *bughouse*.

BAC. In deference to you ladies, I am letting my pipe go out.

MRS. POST. (*ironically.*) Oh don't do it I pray; the odor is so peculiar.

MRS. KNOB. (*ionically.*) And we so rarely have a chance to smell it.

BAC. (*puffing again.*) I am highly flattered.

MRS. BAC. Oh, douse the glim, Bakie, you nut: can't you see that the ladies are only pokin' fun at you.

BAC. What, do you think so? Well then just a few more puffs. (*puffs away.*)

MRS. BAC. (*impatently.*) Isn't it rotten that you in other respects as proud as the old boy, should always be suckin' on a stinkin' old pipe.

BAC. (*knocking out pipe.*) Why, dear, excessive smoking is one of the most prevalent of foibles.—Now, isn't it a shame that you, proud to an inordinate degree, should be addicted to the constant use of slang.

MRS. BAC. Oh, it's not so bum a failing: the best way to say anything, is to spit it out as plain and short as you can.

MRS. KNOB. There's another thing, Mr. Bacon: Why do you dress like the toilers; and make them the subject of your poems; when you have no real liking for them—you being high-toned and exclusive like the rest of us?

BAC. Why?—Much of your talk begins thus, for you are inquisitive; it is ONE of your failings. But I will gratify you, by saying: I am called the poet

of labor; and my books are heavily bought by laborers,

MRS. KNOB. Ah, you do it to advertise yourself?

BAC. Exactly,—are you satisfied?

MRS. KNOB. Y'yes, as near as curiosity ever can be.

*Re-enter KILLEM, LAW, and GABBLER, left.*

STAK. Ah, gentlemen, you are growing impatient.

LAW. Well, my caller is. (*Points to Gabbler*)

STAK. I found our friends here.

KIL. And they dillydallied the time away, gossiping; and forgot all else.

ALL. (*indignantly.*) Gossiping, indeed.

KIL. Don't assume injured innocence,—all of you have many foibles: in fact, on the block, I am the only exception—

ALL. Ha, ha, how about your chin-music?

KIL. Don't interrupt.—And, you not only have them, but you delight in backbiting each other about them, and other things: so, we must add still another foible, to yours: that of gossiping.

ALL. (*wearily.*) Oh, give us a rest.

*Enter the PHILANTHROPIST (Mr. Pullwool), in full-dress attire, and his WIFE, in costly attire with jewel necklace and ear-rings, right.*

ALL. (*greeting.*) Ah, dear Mr and Mrs Pullwool.

MR. & MRS. PULL. (*greeting.*) Dear ladies and gentlemen.

SEVERAL. (*sneeringly.*) You are both sumptuously attired, as usual.

Note. Whenever the word 'several' is used instead of 'speakers names' it means that that particular speech is to be spoken by several persons, sensibly selected—according to the drift of the dialogue—from the males and females present.

KNOB. Well, you know that there is big money in begging.

MR. & MRS. PULL. Sir—?

KIL. Why shouldn't they revel in their pet foible—elegant attire: they are both distinguished looking: slickly cultivated; and have the graces of melowered age.

MRS. KNOB. But, the cost,—we can't do it, and how can they?

PULL. My salary is large as President of the Home and Foreign Money-aid and Moral-uplift Society.

MRS. POST. That salary is a mere flea-bite in comparison with your expenses.

DAUB. Perhaps he knocks down on the money that his Society begs from the public to give to the unfortunate.

PULL. (*guiltily.*) Sir—? Now you don't really mean that.

DAUB. (*insincerely.*) No of course not—but then you know that lots of people say, that perhaps there have been cases where a part of the immense sums raised for benevolent and moralizing purposes by 'drives,' has stuck fast to the fingers of the high cockalorums of the organizations.



MRS. PULL. (*coming to her agitated husband's aid.*) Lots of people, say things besides their prayers.

KNOB. The Church has done glorious work in the past; and is to do glorious work in the future! Yet some say, that, at a few religious services, begging, is one of the main functions, (as evidenced by the fact that 'collections' are taken up, for so very many purposes,) and that this makes people lukewarm to those particular places, and hurts religion in general.

POST. (*excitedly.*) That is a damn—er excuse me, I never use profanity—that is a wicked—slander! (*Aside.*) Egad, he is right: why, as regards myself when I started on my pastorate, I was tender on the subject of begging; but the machine of the organization, has made even me pitiless.

PULL. (*composed again.*) The innuendoes of all of you are more pointed than usual; but I take them good-humoredly, for am I not universally acclaimed a great philanthropist; a man who is keenly alive to the misfortunes of others, and seeks to alleviate them.

SEVERAL. Yes, but—

PULL. Well, out with the reservation.

SEVERAL. You are also spoken of by many as a Pull-wool-over-the-eyes.

PULL. (*angrily.*) These people ought to be cowhided!—Pullwool, is a lovely but rather unusual name: on hearing it, one is at once inclined to play upon words and turn it into this familiar 'slang term for deception' phrase—pull wool over the eyes:—these slanderers chose a good weapon.

MRS. PULL. (*scornfully.*) There are some foibles which possess no redeeming features: one of these is envy—and these slanderers, and some of our friends here too; (like so many others;) have taken it on.

SEVERAL. (*stung.*) Envious, indeed!

BAC. It seems to me, that the less said about his *knocking down*, the better; as each one of us would be *particeps criminis*: for to help his begging drives along, we permit him to publicly display our pictures, and our names underneath; with this headline, "What these great men think of our cause:" getting for it, a substantial stipend each, and additional prestige.

LAW. By the by, speaking of begging—there is a bill up in the United States Senate, against it.

SEVERAL. There is! What is it?

LAW. Why, to prohibit, all 'indiscriminate' begging, from the public, by benevolent, or other, Organizations,—and all other begging done by them, must be done with the consent of a Government Censorship Board; and a final accounting must be made to, and approved by, this Board.

SEVERAL. Well, isn't that ridiculous!—Why didn't you speak of it before?

LAW. Why, I have only been home on the recess, a few days.

SEVERAL. But it can never be passed in the senate and house, and signed by the president.

LAW. On the contrary, it is almost sure to become a law, when we reconvene shortly.

SEVERAL. (*dismayed.*) The deuce you say!—Of course YOU oppose it?

LAW. No—I spoke in its favor.

SEVERAL. (*wrathfully.*) What? and you getting graft from the philanthropist's begging!

LAW. (*sheepishly.*) Well you see, that, I made an exhaustive study of the subject of begging, with the idea of speaking in opposition to the bill: but, the order of speaking being prearranged, it so chanced that I had to follow a senator who had spoken against the bill; therefore I spoke in its favor—just to differ from him.

PULL. (*wrathfully.*) You are obstinate as a mule—you seldom agree with anyone—obstinacy is your other foible!

LAW. (*retorting.*) Is it? Well, begging is your foible! (*Pointedly*) And that foible sometimes grows into a fault; even into a crime.

PULL. (*guiltily.*) Bah!

POST. But, senator, some no doubt had previously spoken for the bill,—you had to, perforce, agree with them.

LAW. Yes, I realized that a little later, and felt sore about it—but was consoled upon reflecting that my speech was better than theirs:—(*enthused*) Oh; it was a dandy! I will repeat it to you—still knowing it by heart.

SEVERAL. (*expostulating.*) Oh no, I beg.

LAW. Your aversion, shall not deter me; we grow callous to that, in the senate. I will at least give you, the peroration.

SEVERAL. (*resignedly.*) Well then, go on.

LAW. After rising, and saluting the Chairman, I began my speech by emphasizing the crying need of curbing, begging from the public by large organizations, even before the great World War of 1914-'18. Then I gave a vivid recital of the stupendous war drive begging, that occurred during the titanic struggle: which I characterized as having been comparatively noble, necessary and honest, considering the surrounding chaos; but I qualified by asserting that the former evil features of organized begging were tremendously augmented by it. Some years have elapsed since that world war—I said—and the aftermath of suffering that grew out of it, has been about succored, by the numerous organized begging drives, conducted for that purpose, since the war ended; and now the people—I said—are demanding reforms: they refuse to permit these aggravated evils in begging, to continue any longer. And this—said I—is what the present anti-begging measure really stands for. Then came my peroration: (*Law delivers this oratorically*) Mr. Chairman, war—is destructive and deadly—but out of its horrors, come great reforms; which perhaps might not come any other way. The World War—made it indispensable that vast sums of money should be rais-

ed and spent for charitable and religious purposes. It was awful on the masses—but it had to be done. Out of the horror of it—and the cupidity of it—let us hope that a great reform will come; which perhaps could come no other way—that of, the abolition of “indiscriminate begging by organizations,” and government censorship of “discriminate begging by organizations.” The meaning, Mr Chairman, of the word discriminate (as used here), is not open to doubt—for it is expressly defined, in the bill, as that which is honest in purpose and small in extent. (*Law's speech, delivered as though he were actually in senate, now ends—and is met with general cries of 'rotten' and isolated cries of 'bravo'*).

POST. (*hotly.*) Yes, rotten, is an apt name for that balderdash.

DAUB. We don't like the speech, because we are not disinterested parties: it was a fine effort, setting forth a great evil—of which the public are fully aware, but don't care a damn about correcting.

PULL. (*apart with grave face—aside.*) Indiscriminate begging, is doomed. (*Chuckling*) But I am already a multi millionaire, out of it.—To keep on allaying their aroused suspicion of my knocking-downs, I must touch Staker again. (*Rejoins group*) Pardon me, friends, but I can't restrain my anxiety longer—I am in urgent need of a loan, Mr. Staker.

MALES. (*excitedly, each for himself.*) So am I, Mr. Staker.

STAK. Ha, ha, gentlemen, one seldom sees such unanimity among you.

MALES. (*protesting.*) You would not see it now—but we are all *broke*.

STAK. I told the senator that I would not consider a loan—

MALES. (*dismayed.*) What, you will not accommodate us!

STAK. Let me finish,—until you were all here. Now you are here; and—let me see—yes you may have two thousand dollars apiece.

ALL. (*flatteringly.*) Ah, Mr. Staker, you are a gentleman—and a scholar—and many other things, too numerous to mention!

STAK. (*tickled.*) I thank you.—Now, my wife, has assigned the parlor for Mr. Pullwool's use—(and she and the children will be delighted to see you all when the meeting is over)—come ladies and gentlemen.

PULL. Many thanks, sir! The ladies, however, won't come,—you see, we males, have held our drive meetings, in the doctor's house; this one we hold here, and the ladies avail themselves of any pretext to call here.

FEMALES. We admire you so!

STAK. (*elated.*) Ah, that's nice!—Take them along, sirs; we can't do anything well without them.

MALES. All right.

PULL. Our business won't take long: my board of directors and myself, have already arranged the vast

details; and my only business with you gentlemen, is to assign each his part.

MALES. Very well—but how about those checks, Mr Staker?

STAK. The order of proceedings, in the parlor, shall be: first, the checks—then the drive.

POST. No, then a *prayer*.

SEVERAL. Then, the drive.

PULL. & POST. No, then a *collection*.

SEVERAL. Ha, ha, ha—surely you charity and church people, have all got that foible which is commonest with humanity in general—a little too much love of money. (*Exeunt right*)

SCENE III.—*The Reception Room, in Mr. Staker's home, again, ten minutes later.*

Enter BRIDGET, with a tray full of empty cake and fruit dishes, right.

BRID. (*reflectively.*) Sich iligant persons they were; didn't look a bit like drivers:—yet the mistress said, whin the kitchen bell r-ang—that is the master's signal that the *DRIVERS* have just assembled in the parlor, Bridget, take them these delicaseys—b'gorra that word has an irish, (instead of a latin) root: I know the Caseys, well, But oh my, they ate like drivers: everything gobbled from these dishes in ten minutes--and they dining, too—the mistress said--around seven o'clock; less than an hour away—(*smiling*)perhaps they don't git e'nuff to ate at home. (*Smacking her lips.*) B' jabers, we all love *good ateing* however—that foy'ble is priv-alent iverewhere. (*Abruptly.*) Oh, the litters,—whin you l'ave the parlor, said the mistress, go across the hall and dhrop the mail in the reception room. (*Lays some letters on a stand.*)

Enter VIOLET—alias MISS BANGS, right.

VIO. Anything there for Miss Bangs?

BRID. (*scrutinizing letters.*) Yis,—is that your name?

VIO. It is. (*Bridget hands letter, and Violet opens and skims it hastily.*) Or I should say rather, my nickname:—given me because of the wearing of these thick bangs, above my ears,—you see them?

BRID. I do indade—b'gorra I could see 'em with my eyes shut.

VIO. (*cagerly.*) How do they look?

BRID. Upon my sowl, they look like the divil.

VIO. (*mortified in vanity.*) What?—Oh you have hurt my feelings dreadfully—I am supersensitive about them.

BRID. (*blarneying.*) Why, my dear, that was a rale compliment.

VIO. How can you say so?

BRID. Well, now, what is y'er object in wearin' them?

VIO. Why, to look fascinating, of course.

BRID. Exactly,—and the divil, is fascination personified.

VIO. He certainly is said to be.



BRID. At the first glimpse, I ra'alized how they must tempt and tantalize amorous young men.

VIO. (*tickled.*) Oh, you have not only given definite shape, to my intangible hopes regarding them, but made me feel that they have accomplished what I hoped for!

BRID. I *get* yez, I think,—in spite of your use of some jaw-breaker words.

VIO. Ha, ha.—Now, how do you like my—tight skirt?

BRID. Fa'th, I don't like it, a'tall a'tall.

VIO. (*hurt again.*) How is that?—

BRID. Why, whin any girl condescinds to wear a skinny thing like that, it shows that she is slightly *non compos mentis*.

VIO. What in the world is that?

BRID. Why, bughouse. (*Violet laughs*).—And the uncanny thing, will make her more so—until she is like to do something desperat.

VIO. They do make us giddy, I admit: but there is restraint, too; for, you see (*gives the ludicrous tight skirt walk*) that one cannot take an important step, without due deliberation.

BRID. (*watching curiously.*) Upon me sowl, one cannot take hardly any step a'tall.

VIO. Ha, ha.—Now besides these two foibles, I have still another.

BRID. Yis—'painting your face'—B'jabbers you must have given it two coats.

VIO. (*naively.*) Yes—I do plaster it on pretty thick. You see, I strive to be, in all things, one of the typical girls of the period.

BRID. The kind that all the fellows are crazy after—shallow, vain and frivolous: that's what yez mane. (*Violet dissents.*) There, don't get huffy—there's no har-m; for all gir-ls main object in life is to display their char-ms—and besides you are very beautiful.

VIO. (*elated.*) Oh, thank you! And you said what everyone says. But, Gertrude Staker—she is perfectly lovely.

BRID. I haven't seen her: I was just hired. Aren't you a Staker?

VIO. No, I am Violet Bacon, the poet's daughter—on the block.

BRID. What, your fa'ther writes vases—isn't that nice?

VIO. Yes, indeed.

BRID. Come to think, I'd best be l'aving now; the mistress may be wantin' of me. Good-bye.

VIO. Good-bye. (*Exit Bridget, right.*)

*Enter EDWARD, right.*

EDW. Did you get tired of waiting, Violet?

VIO. No Edward, for I had very agreeable company.

EDW. (*suspiciously.*) Who was it—a young man?

VIO. Ah, you are jealous, as usual—still, green-eyed jealousy, is a foible, not uncommon with lovers.

EDW. Well, you can't blame me: for you are beautiful!

VIO. (*blushing.*) Oh, thank you.

EDW. And all the fellows are sweet on you.

VIO. Well, you are handsome!

EDW. (*crimsoning.*) Oh, thank you.

VIO. —And all the girls are sweet on you.

EDW. But, I don't give them any encouragement—and you do,—and we being engaged, too.

VIO. Well, smarty, my company just now was an amusing servant girl.

EDW. (*relieved.*) Not a fellow at all—oh my, what a cad I am: (*taking her hands, an instant*) but then I love you so!

VIO. (*lovingly.*) Cross your heart that you do! (*He does.*) Why did you stop at the gymnasium, on your way from the office?

EDW. Ah, you got my note, stating that I would be a little late, on account of that?

VIO. Yes, since I came in.—You knew I was to be here—and I am, or should be, more important, than the gymnasium.

EDW. But my dear, if I don't exercise, I will lose my strength—and I wouldn't lose that for anything.

VIO. (*quizzically.*) You would even sooner lose me, I presume?

EDW. (*perplexed.*) Well, I can't exactly decide that point.

VIO. (*pouting.*) Oh you can't, eh, Edward Staker? (*Walks away.*)

EDW. (*aside.*) She is miffed.—And I must square myself now before telling her of my muscular feat to-day—ah, when she hears that, she will be amazed—and be still more stuck on me. (*Goes to Violet.*) Violet, you know that I would sooner lose even my life, than to lose you.

VIO. (*beaming.*) Now you talk sensibly.

EDW. Yes, a lover's sensibly. —By the by, after leaving the *gym* it so chanced that I met a very fat woman with a child in her arms, stuck in the street amidst the heavy traffic: taking her up and holding her almost at arms length, I deposited her on the opposite sidewalk. (*Expectantly awaits praise, then impatiently says.*) Well—?

VIO. (*at last.*) Was she pretty?

EDW. "Was she pretty?"—that is what I get, instead of the expected exclamations of admiration for these. (*Exercises his arm muscles.*) I distinctly said she was very fat.

VIO. But still she might have been pretty.

EDW. She might have been, but she wasn't.

VIO. Ha, ha, dear, everybody is on to this pet foible of yours—the bragging about your physical strength: that feat to-day was no doubt, very largely, only imaginary—that's why I didn't praise it.

EDW. (*hotly.*) Bragging, eh? Why I-er- (*Violet roguishly covers his lips with her hand.*)

VIO. Hush—somebody's coming! The front-door bell didn't ring, but the door slammed. (*Peeps out of right door, closing it again.*) What a relief to my scare; it was your sister Gertrude that came in; she sits in the hall, seemingly awaiting some one—it must be Sport Pullwool.

EDW. Of course it is;—like myself, he wants to see his girlie, as soon as he gets home from his father's office.

VIO. Ah, some day, in spite of hearkening for the warning door-bell, we'll be caught by my parents: or some other tenants—who will tattle:—I can't be happy—I'm on nettles.

EDW. The course of true love, never runs smooth.

VIO. The course of ours, is so rough, that, we always have to keep a tire chain, on the wheels of our limousine.

EDW. Ha, ha, you *ring* in a little automobile terminology.

VIO. But dear, must we cherish a love that is secret, and hopeless—(*sadly*) forever?

EDW. While there is life, there's hope—you know.

VIO. (*brightening.*) Ah, yes—hope! That, as the poet says, springs eternal in the human breast.

EDW. Come to think, (*ardently*) we love to *spoon*, don't we?

VIO. (*ardently.*) Well I should say we did! (*They kiss.*)

EDW. Then let's give them a chance.

VIO. By going on the balcony, yes. (*Exeunt, rear.*)

*Enter OTIS, alias SPORT, and GERTRUDE, right.*

OTIS. My perfectly beautiful Gertrude!

GER. My perfectly handsome Otis! (*short embrace with kiss*)

OTIS. What bliss, to have you alone for a few moments!

GER. Which bliss, is mutual I assure you!

OTIS. (*laughing.*) But the perfectly handsome—why I am near thirty.

GER. That's quite young—and you ARE (and everybody says so,) very handsome.

OTIS. (*debonairly.*) Thank you, dear—and everybody else. Now, don't let's forget to keep our ears peeled for the warning front-door bell, as usual. Pop, or some tattler may catch us.

GER. (*sadly.*) And then we won't be able to cherish even a secret, and hopeless love: as Edward and Violet, and you and I, often dolefully call it.

OTIS. Oh, why are the poet and father, so stuck on having Violet and myself marry into great families; or why were not Edward and yourself born great!

GER. (*proudly.*) We were born great—at least, on mother's side.

OTIS. (*chuckling.*) I beg your pardon, I forgot, of course you were: your mother and you often narrate to the tenants, the full particulars of your descent from king Robert Bruce:—Now an old fogey from New Jersey, whose name is Dickson, becoming aware that there was a great general of the name of Dickson, who was along with Washington when he crossed the Delaware, soon proved—to himself alone—that his great-great-grandfather was that man: (though in reality he was never anything else but a tinsmith:) and goes around telling everybody about it:—that is HIS pipe-dream foible.

GER. (*incensed*) That is his, and this is our pipe-dream foible: that is what you meant, isn't it?

OTIS. (*confused.*) Well, er—not exactly,—but it hasn't made much impression on the poet and father: for Edward and you know that it would be suicidal, for Violet and myself to disclose our love to them.

GER. (*positively.*) Of course it would.

OTIS. (*sadly.*) Ah, dear, but for this black cloud, our love, would be all blue sky, wouldn't it?

GER. Yes,—almost.

OTIS. (*surprised.*) Almost? Why what else is there? First let's sit down. (*They sit on sofa*)

GER. (*looking him in the eyes.*) Now Otis dear?

OTIS. What is it dear Gertrude?

GER. A question that I have long been thinking of asking you. Why are you so generally nicknamed, *Sport Pullwool*?

OTIS. (*laughing.*) Why I presume, because I AM a sport.

GER. (*apprehensively.*) Now, what is a sport?

OTIS. (*after thinking.*) Well, he is one of that very large class of swift young men, who seek to win the first prize in the marathon race for the gratification of the senses, and are not over particular in regard to foul running.

GER. I don't altogether understand.

OTIS. Then to make it more definite—I am what is commonly called a *fast* young man.

GER. (*worried.*) Hah, indeed!—I have met young men, who were knowingly said to be such, and I myself and other girls found them to be very fascinating; but it must have been the fascination of a reptile.

OTIS. (*disconcerted*) Rather a dangerous sort of a chap, eh; for a young girl to wed.

GER. (*meaningly.*) Of course.

OTIS. (*reassuring.*) Don't be distressed, dear: many of this kind of fellows, do have real vices; but I—er— why I only call mine, foibles.

GER. (*anxiously.*) What are they?

OTIS. Why, automobiles: and stock-speculation:

GER. (*greatly relieved.*) Oh, I know something of your liking for them; they are not so bad.

OTIS. And women.

GER. (*shocked.*) Women! It can't be possible that you were licentious.

OTIS. (*guiltily.*) Yes—before I loved you: (*solemnly*) but not since; and never shall be again.

GER. (*deeply grieved.*) Oh, what a bitter, bitter disillusionment!

OTIS. (*remorseful.*) Don't grieve, dear: most young fellows, sow some wild oats; and they are generally not reproved, but rather commended for it:— you girls cannot be entirely ignorant of this fact.

GER. No we are not,—but each one of us thinks of it, foolishly I admit, as only applying to other girls' fellows. (*Covers face with hands*) Oh my!—

OTIS. (*despairingly.*) Then break off our engagement, dear!



GER. No, I can't do that: (*ardently*) I love you! (*ambitiously*.) and then you are the son of a great man.

OTIS. Ah, that word 'great' again—your positive idolatry for the great; and your hope of having descended from them; really, dear, you can't deny that these are your foibles:—which is it that attracts you most—myself, or my father's greatness?

GER. (*lovingly*.) Don't talk nonsense, dear.

OTIS. Nonsense? Why when I said that real love takes the bit in its teeth, and weds despite all obstacles—you replied that father would disown me, and I would cease to possess his reflected greatness.

GER. Well, I put you off with that reason, (and greatness is dear to me, I admit; but not vital, for I would wed you great or humble.)

OTIS. Isn't that delicious!

GER. And I left the vital reason unsaid, (for fear of making you sad, though Edward says you should be told it): my father—though believing the poet and your father dead wrong—had exacted a promise from Edward and myself, that neither of us would wed, in defiance of either parent.

OTIS. (*surprised*.) You don't say!—(*With fervor*) Mr. Staker may not be great, but he has something still better—honor. (*Ardently*.) And I love you dear—and respect Edward—still more, for keeping faith with your father.

GER. (*gratified*.) Oh thank you ever so much for saying that of father, and us.

OTIS. That promise explains why Edward and Violet, too, have refrained from doing anything.

GER. Of course.—But for it, they would probably wed: as Violet feels sure that her father will never relent.

OTIS. (*after a pause*.) Oh, another thing, Gertrude.

GER. What is it, Otis.

OTIS. How in the world did you ever contract the habit of flirting?

GER. (*with mock surprise*.) Flirting! What ever made you speak of that—and do I flirt?

OTIS. (*mock solemnity*.) You do—(*accusing finger*) and you know you do.

GER. (*cornered*.) But er—I didn't know that you knew it.

OTIS. (*smiling*.) Because you have done it so slyly, eh?

GER. (*reluctantly*.) Y-yes.

OTIS. It is surprising in you.

GER. Why so?

OTIS. Because it is in such striking contrast to your other characteristics.

GER. Oftentimes, that peculiarity, is of the very essence of a foible.

OTIS. Ah, then you do feel it is a weakness?

GER. Of course I do.

OTIS. Well, that is encouraging.

GER. But I may be excused a little—as the foible of flirting is quite common with my sex. Besides, I am very choice of my flirtations.

OTIS. (*wincing*.) I should say so—never with anyone but some handsome and dashing young fellow.

GER. (*solicitously*.) Dear, would you rather that I would give up flirting?

OTIS. Well, dear,—I was never awful bad; but I want to be better: good clean through—if I can—for your sake:—to do that I need your help,—and flirting would be a hindrance.

GER. (*impulsively*.) Then I'll try to give it up—I say try, because foibles, once they are allowed to get a hold on us, are not easily shaken off, and therefore I may fail—at least for a while.

OTIS. Oh, kind promise—and sweet sincerity, for I too may fail—at least awhile; I realize that.

GER. (*lovingly*.) And if we do fail, we'll keep on striving—not unforbearing but forbearing towards each other; remembering the biblical saying, that—

OTIS. (*quoting*.) "There is none perfect."

GER. (*finishing quotation*.) "No, not one."

Re-enter EDWARD and VIOLET, rear.

OTIS & GER. (*greeting*.) Ah, Edward and Violet!

EDW. & VIO. (*greeting*.) How-dy, Otis and Gertrude!

VIO. We heard you coming, and went on the balcony so as to give you a chance to spoon.

GER. Ha, ha, you are very considerate.

EDW. I say, Sport, what have you been doing lately in stocks?

OTIS. (*wincing*.) Losing money—as usual.

EDW. Why don't you do as father did?

OTIS. I have often wondered how he made his, but delicacy forbids the asking.

EDW. Why he made it in "Mythical Oil."

OTIS. Ah, Mythical Oil, eh?

EDW. Then you have heard of the stock?

OTIS. Certainly. A stock well named, for its boasted oil-wells were nothing but a myth; it had no real value, only a stock-market value; some of father's board of directors, and their cronies, bought it at top prices and got badly stung.

EDW. Ah, they did, eh?—Well about a year ago a clerk in the dry goods store where father was then working, advised him to buy the stock; which was then selling at only 20 cents a share; so he put one thousand dollars in it, and of course got for it 5000 shares. The craze soon began and the stock went soaring—in six months he was able to sell it out at the fabulous price of three hundred dollars a share.

OTIS. Is it possible? I know that it went there; even a bit higher—and that's when the persons I spoke of bought it.

EDW. So you see that his investment of one thousand brought him the snug fortune of a million and a half.

GER. & VIO. Goodness gracious!

OTIS. That was surely *some* profit.

EDW. Come, let's sit on the sofa—(*winking*) you know, Otis.

OTIS. (*winking*). Yes, I know.

GER. & VIO. (*winking*.) And, we know.

(*They sit, and each fellow instinctively puts arm around his girl, keeping it there*).

EDW. (*intensely satisfied*.) Oh I wish that supper time was not so near.

OTIS. (*intensely satisfied*). Yes, *this* is better than eating.

EDW. (*jokingly*.) Let's go without supper.

OTIS. (*jokingly*.) All right.

GER. & VIO. (*jokingly*.) Go without supper—we will we guess not.

VIO. (*continuing*.) For we may get *something* for our supper's dessert, that (*pouting*) we seem unlikely to get here.

GER. (*concluding*.) It is only an *imitation*; (*pouting*) but it is better than *none*: that particular kind of confection, that all girls are so fond of.

EDW. & OTIS. (*catching on*.) You mean—*kisses*: oh get on to *THAT HINT*.

(*Each fellow kisses his girl several times, with comical interludes between times*).

OTIS. Now, that we have had an exercise in osculation—

VIO. (*wonderingly*). Osculation?—what in the world is that?

ALL. (*laughing*.) Why, *kissing*; of course.

OTIS. I will give you a chance to exercise your *brains*—if you have any.

ALL. (*mock dignity*.) If we have any,—what a nerve.

OTIS. To begin, you are aware that there are many kind of foibles; even including—the going to excess, in something that is admirable in itself?

ALL. Of course we are.

OTIS. You are also aware of the great prevalence of foibles among persons of all ages?

ALL. Certainly.

OTIS. Now, young ladies, have five foibles, that are peculiarly their own.

GER. & VIO. (*miffed*) Oh have they.

OTIS. Yes, and they have indulged them, for so many centuries, and with such passion, that they have become bywords.

GER. (*retorting*.) Well, young gentlemen, have five foibles, that are peculiarly their own.

OTIS. & EDW. (*miffed*.) Oh have they.

GER. Yes, and they have indulged them, for so many centuries, and with such excess, that they have become bywords.

EDW. Go ahead, Otis,—the young gentlemen exercise comes afterwards.

OTIS. Well, then—what is young girls' chiefest foible?

GER. & VIO. (*playfully*.) Well you know it all—what is it, smart-y.

OTIS. Why—*love*,—of course.

GER. & VIO. Ha, ha—love, eh? well young men are not so perfect in that respect.

OTIS. What is their next chiefest one?

GER. & VIO. Oh, we give it up.

EDW. Come, use your wits, girls.

GER. & VIO. The subject is not worth it.

OTIS. The answer is—*beauty*.

GER. & VIO. Ha, ha—beauty, eh? well young men like to have us beautiful, too.

EDW. To be beautiful—is really young girls' chiefest: but only ranks second because the underlying cause of their craze for beauty, is that they may be loved and may love.

GER. & VIO. Oh, listen to that—finish it up, Otis; so that we can get back at him—and you, too.

OTIS. Next, is—*vanity*.

GER. & VIO. Ah, vanity.

OTIS. And all that the word signifies, when applied in this connection.—Next is *jealousy*.

GER. & VIO. Ah, jealousy; the shadow of love.—And the fifth, and last?

OTIS. Is—*envy*.

GER. & VIO. Ah, envy—we are envious of each other's beaux, and looks, and dress, etc. I presume.

EDW. Exactly.

OTIS. To conclude—these frailties, spring one from another: and eventually become inextricably blended together.

GER. & VIO. Is that all, smarty?

OTIS. Yes,—and I hope there is no ill feeling.

EDW. So do I.

GER. & VIO. Ill feeling? Why you meant it playfully; and we took it that way. (*Otis and Edw. replace arms around girls; which were taken away shortly before*)

GER. (*smiling*.) Now—what is young men's chiefest foible?

OTIS. & EDW. (*confused*). Havn't the least idea.

GER. Why—*himself*,—of course.

OTIS. & EDW. Ha, ha—himself, eh? well you certainly are getting back at us.

GER. What is their next chiefest one?

OTIS. & EDW. (*thinking*). Perhaps—*young ladies*?

GER. No,—the answer is—*sport*.

OTIS. & EDW. Ha, ha, sport, eh?

VIO. And all that the word signifies when applied to young men.

OTIS. & EDW. Well, go on; let us know the other three.

GER. Next, is—*clothing*.

OTIS. & EDW. Clothing,—ha, ha.

GER. Next—*mashing*.

OTIS. & EDW. Mashing,—ha, ha, ha.

GER. Next—*tobacco*.

OTIS. & EDW. Yes, tobacco,—ha, ha, ha.

(*Miss Law re-enters. right: she makes gestures of indignation at sight of lovers, and retires unseen*.)

VIO. To conclude—These frailties, spring one from another: and eventually become inextricably blended together. (*General laughter*.)



EDW. Otis, let's repeat the osculatory exercise.

OTIS. All right, Edward.

(*Despite simulated opposition, each fellow kisses his girl a few times, at intervals: during which, re-enter Mr. & Mrs. Pullwool, Mr. & Mrs. Bacon, Miss Law, and all the others, right*).

PULL. & BAC. (*astounded and angered*.) Hah! what unseemly love-making sight is this?

(*The lovers arise, dismayed: Enter, left, Mrs. Staker, Harold, and Hazel; they are startled by the scene*.)

MANY. (*astonished and displeased*.) A regular hugging and kissing match! Ha, ha, ha.

PULL. & BAC. (*furiously*.) Yes,—and it is between the children of two illustrious men—as we are: and the children of a nonentity—as Staker is!

EDW. & GER. (*spiritedly*.) Our father is no nonentity!

MRS. STAK. (*proudly*.) And their mother is descended from a king!

MANY. Ah, the Robert Bruce gag, again—ha, ha.

Mrs PULL. & Mrs BAC. (*furiously*.) Oh, is not the tempting of our dear ones, into such scandalous conduct, a perfect outrage upon us, their mothers! and upon their fathers, too!

MRS. PULL. (*continuing*.) Who intend our dear ones to wed with only their equals in inherited greatness.

Mrs BAC. (*concluding*.) Yes,—and above all, not to wed into the family of a cheap skate like Staker.

EDW. (*hotly*.) Father is a cheap skate, eh? (*Exercising arm*.) You are lucky, to be a woman.

MALES. (*angrily*.) Isn't it a perfect outrage, also, upon us—the other great men on the block; and upon our families!

MISS LAW. (*with a chuckle*.) Now you know why I beckoned to you all to come here, as I saw you leaving the parlor for your homes: I witnessed the shameful sight, looking for brother:—it is mean to play *telltale*; but it seemed my duty.

MANY. (*approvingly*.) You deserve our hearty thanks!

PULL. & BAC. (*to Otis and Violet*.) Come, now, what does this mean?

VIO. (*timidly*.) As we are all of good repute—

OTIS. (*helping her*.) It cannot mean but one thing—we are engaged.

PULL. & BAC. (*amazed and enraged*.) Engaged!

MANY. (*derisively*.) Engaged! Ha, ha, ha.

VIO. (*coolly*.) Yes, both of us: Otis to Gertrude; and (*blushing*) myself to Edward.

PULL. (*fiercely*.) Then—as seemed evident from the first, you have been meeting here right along?

BAC. (*fiercely*.) And this has been a regular performance?

OTIS. & VIO. (*haltingly*.) Y-yes.

BAC. (*vehemently*.) Isn't it a damned—excuse me—a deuce of a shame!

PULL. (*to Staker, angrily*.) I dislike slang, Staker; but no other word would be quite as apropos, as what Mrs Bacon termed you—yes, you ARE a cheap skate— (*Edward starts threateningly towards Pullwool, but is held by Violet*) for you try to inveigle our children into a marriage with your children; and set your reception room apart for that purpose.

STAK. (*aroused*.) Thinking your opposition both foolish and unnatural, I told my children that they might keep company with your children, provided they didn't marry without parental consent—and if you don't like it, you can both—and all the rest, for that matter—go to the devil! (*Staker joins his family at left: the lovers remain in front of sofa at center: all others are grouped at right*.)

MRS. STAK. (*hotly*.) Yes,—that is just what you can all do!

HAR. (*advancing*.) And that is just what you WILL all do!

MRS POST. (*rebukingly*.) How do you know?

HAR. How do I know? why I know almost everything—boys know more than men. (*Goes back*.)

MANY. Ha, ha—there are many *self-conceited* youths; and he is one of that kind.

MIR. (*to group*.) Staker is angry, now; and may stop payment of our checks at the bank: and I need a new robe:—let's go and give him some *taffy*.

MANY. Whew, never thought of that—we must pacify him; let the ladies do the talking. (*The group goes to the Stakers*).

MISS LAW. (*humbly*.) Dear Mrs. Staker, Harold and Hazel, we have come to beg your pardon.

MANY. Yes,—to beg your forgiveness.

MRS. STAK. (*warmly*.) Which is granted. (*Harold and Hazel nod assent*).

MRS. PULL. Dear Mr. Staker, we lost our heads entirely: (*Staker bows*.) It would indeed be an honor for Otis to wed Gertrude.

STAK. Ah!

MRS. BAC. It would indeed be all to the *merry*, to have Violet *hitch up* with Edward.

STAK. Ah! Ah!

MRS. KNOB. And nothing in the world would please the rest of the tenants *quite* so well.

STAK. Ah! Ah! Ah!

MRS. PULL. But, you realize our position?

MRS. BAC. You must surely *tumble* to what we are *up against*?

MRS. KNOB. In short, you see that it is utterly impossible!

PULL. & BAC. Oh, that it were possible! Nothing would delight us more!

MANY. Nothing would delight us more!

STAK. Many, many thanks, dear friends!

MALES. (*anxiously*.) We trust that this unpleasant incident, won't make any difference with the payment of our checks.

STAK. (*positively*.) Why not at all, gentlemen.

MALES. (*relieved*.) Oh, thank you, sir.

STAK. Ladies and gentlemen, I begin to understand, and to respect, your attitude in regard to your children. (*Shows emotion*) Excuse me—I must go apart a moment. (*Goes apart, and muses aloud*) In spite of their foibles—they are splendid people at heart! It begins to look as though I did them wrong, to allow my children to go on with a courtship. (*Sadly*) And they love, and never can wed; (for all my fond hopes that the other parents might give in, are now seen to have been illusive); and the only thing to cure love, is a separation,—so that the only merciful thing to do, is to quit this house:—but how can I overcome Abigail and Gertrude's sure objection?—ah, that little plan, that I was pondering over—yes, I'll put that in operation even though it is deception. I hate to resort to it—but the future peace of mind of Edward and Gertrude is at stake.

MANY. Come Staker, what the deuce are you stewing about?

STAK. (*rejoins group.*) It is over now—but I have a bit of bad news, that I am loath to impart to you—I give up this house, at the end of the month, about a week hence.

MANY. The devil you say! going to quit us.

MRS STAK. What nonsense,—you will do nothing of the kind—we shall stay with the great, no matter what we have to submit to.

STAK. Well then we will remain—but you must pay the bills; for I have lost all my money.

MANY. (*excitedly*) You have lost all your money—!

STAK. Yes, in unfortunate speculations in stocks.

MALES. What the devil made you go and lose all your money, when you know that we are always short—and how about these checks? (*Thy hold up checks*)

STAK. Those checks will be paid—and they leave me practically penniless.

MALES. (*jubilantly*) Ah, they will be paid,—that's good! (*Replace checks in pockets*)

MRS. STAK. (*wildly*). Then you have really lost your money! and we will really have to go back to ordinary people; and to prosy things! Oh why did you speculate!! (*After a pause*) But I should not, must not, blame you,—you need my help and sympathy, now! (*Embraces him*).

HAR. & HAZ. (*lovingly.*) Dear father—we don't care much for money, but we're awful sorry for you, and mamma!

SEVERAL. We are deeply moved by your misfortune, Mr. Staker!

OTHERS. We tender you our heartfelt sympathy!

SEVERAL. Having done that, we are obliged to depart.

OTHERS. For to remain here longer, now, would be to belittle ourselves.

SEVERAL. Our past association, with a man like yourself, not noted, nor great—even though possessing wealth—was unparadonable.

OTHERS. Having lost even the wealth, any fur-

ther association with you would be unspeakable.

STAK. (*spunkily.*) Just as you please.

MRS STAK. (*spunkily.*) Yes,—while we regret the loss of you exceedingly—we never force ourselves on anybody.

(*The group moves towards right door*)

MR. & MRS. BAC. Come, Violet.

MR. & MRS. PULL. Come, Otis.

VIO. & OTIS. Yes,—just a minute.

PULL. & BAC. (*sternly.*) Hurry up,—no more nonsense, you understand.

VIO. Good-bye, Edward!

OTIS. Good-bye, Gertrude! (*Each pair takes hands*).

EDW. & GER. Good-bye. (*Each pair is loath to part*).

KIL. Ah, that is a pretty sight! and stirs my heart! I am as much a stickler for greatness as any of you; but let's strain a point, in their case, won't you? You will find it hard to get such a son-in-law, and daughter-in-law, even among the great:—Come Messrs Pullwool and Bacon, let them be happy!

MRS PULL. & MRS BAC. Oh keep quiet doctor; you are always butting in.

PULL. & BAC. (*to lovers*). Come, finish your scene—and finish it quickly. Don't say good-bye—but farewell: for this is a parting forever.

LOVERS. FOREVER—! Oh, no, no! (*Each pair springs to an embrace.*)

SEVERAL. Oh look at that disgraceful sight!

OTHERS. Such shameful disobedience!

PULL. & BAC. (*advancing threateningly, followed by the rest*). Come, break away there, at once!

LOVERS. (*defiantly*). No,—we will get married, in spite of you all! True love laughs at impediments!

PULL. & BAC. (*mockingly.*) Oh you will, will you?

PULL. (*continuing*). Otis, I command you to leave that girl!

BAC. (*continuing*). Violet, I command you to leave that youth!

OTIS. (*to his father*). I regret to have to decline—I would covet your approval of our marrying—but it is not indispensable, as I am more than of age.

PULL. (*dumbfounded*). What—a revolt, eh! you obstinate scamp.

VIO. (*to her father*). And, I regret to have to decline—I would covet your approval to our marrying—but it is not indispensable, as I am just of age.

BAC. (*dumbfounded.*) What—! you willful hussy.

OTIS. Moreover, both couples would have wed ere this; but for Edward and Gertrude's strict adherence, in spite of our entreaties to the contrary, to the promise made to their father—not to wed without Mr Bacon's, and your consent.

PULL. & BAC. Hah, what an outrageous confession!

EDW. & GER. (*firmly.*) Which promise, we now cast to the winds.



STAK. (*reproachfully.*) What—break your promise to me, my children!

EDW. & GER. (*doggedly.*) Yes,—and we are very loath to do so;—but it is an obstacle, (in fact, the only one—as we are both over age,) to our union.

MRS. STAK. (*agitated.*) My dear children, you will have to forget each other, out of respect to these fond parents' wishes, and also out of respect to the solemn promise made to your father—or else you will bring me in sorrow to the grave!

EDW. & GER. (*visibly affected.*) Dear mother!

MRS. PULL. (*agitated.*) And Otis, you will bring me in sorrow to the grave!

OTIS. (*visibly affected.*) Dear mother!

MRS. BAC. (*agitated.*) And Violet, while I perhaps am too robust to be hurt physically, you will bring me in sorrow into the ranks of the 'dead ones' socially!

VIO. (*visibly affected.*) Dear mother!

PULL. BAC. & STAK. (*pleadingly.*) What are you going to do, in answer to your dear mothers' beseechings?

LOVERS. (*fervently.*) Why, we are going to sacrifice ourselves on the altar of filial duty! We give each other up.

(*The lovers go and embrace their respective mothers*)

MANY. (*approvingly.*) Ah, the young people have acted nobly! And are much to be commended.

SEVERAL. Now, let's go.

OTHERS. Very well. (*They start for door at right*)

MRS. BAC. (*casually.*) Violet, your skirt, is badly ripped.

VIO. Yes,— I tore it when I ran into Edward's arms—that seems to signify that I did wrong: that I took an important step without due deliberation.

MANY. Ha, ha, ha.

(*The lovers make forlorn arm motions at each other, with sorrowful looks, in farewell; then suddenly run together again in an embrace—while the rest, aghast, look on—then break away despairingly, and leave each other.*)

MANY. (*to Stakers.*) Ta! Ta!—

STAKERS. Good-bye!

(*Exeunt all but Stakers, right*)

### ACT III.

SCENE—*The Front Lawn, with the house-fronts in the background, again.*

(*Discovered*) JANITRESS and ELIZA.

JAN. (*musingly.*) Ah, Eliza, my heart goes back to the good old palmy days.

ELIZA. (*mirthfully.*) What, again?

JAN. A janitress' work, is never done,—it is the Staker house now that will need fixing up; as they quit it in a few minutes.

ELIZA. He lost all his money—poor man!

JAN. Yes,—and Edward lost his Violet, and Gertrude lost her Otis—poor lovers!

ELIZA. Sundered by stuck-up parents,—it is the talk of the block.

JAN. It is evident that Hazel and Noel, are sweet on each other; and this leaving, will end their dream—but I guess it would have ended, anyway, when Noel's father got on to it; as he is stuck-up like the rest.

ELIZA. Very sad, all around! Very sad, also, in the case of my employer's daughter, Ruth,—and her Alexander: (poor chits! it is now two weeks, they have been lying in the hospital;) whose love was sundered, just because of their parents' enmity.

JAN. Alas, on being caught together, in the Staker home, by their parents, they were, I am told, most unnaturally berated.

ELIZA. And it was only one week afterwards, that their illness began—it seemed almost like a visitation, on their parents' unchristian feud.

JAN. And dangerously ill, too: or doctor Killem would not have ordered their immediate removal to the hospital, where he is surgeon.—Thank goodness, they are better now, I believe.

ELIZA. Yes, almost well.

JAN. By the bye, while we are on this subject—there is Miss Law:—it is said, and it so looks, that she cherishes a love—an unrequited love—for doctor Killem.

ELIZA. (*sadly.*) Poor woman I can sympathize with her! For I (*blushing*) love Pierre! and the scamp unaccountably vanished.

JAN. Ah dear, you do love Pierre,—the doctor's former chef. I thought you did.—(*Mournfully*) Well, the love affairs of this block seem to be so inextricably tangled, that not even fate itself can ever untangle them!

ELIZA. (*abruptly.*) Ah, here comes a uniform! I must do a little flirting.

JAN. (*mirthfully.*) What, again?

ELIZA. Ha, Ha, you got back at me.

JAN. The copper and you will have a free field—for I have to go in the Staker house.

ELIZA. Oh, don't leave on that account.

JAN. Not at all.—I am past due. (*Exit into basement of second house.*)

*Enter POLICEMAN, right.*

POL. (*twirling his club gracefully.*) Ah there, birdie!

ELIZA. Birdie—eh? Now don't spring any more of that sort of stuff, or birdie will fly away.

POL. Then I will fly after you.

ELIZA. The imagery is absurd, applied to you.

POL. Not at all,—for I am one of the fly cops.

ELIZA. Ah, ha, ha; that's good—but rather far-fetched, for that term is applied only to detectives in citizens clothing.

POL. (*with a twinkle.*) Did you ever see me before?

ELIZA. (*puzzled.*) Well, you look somehow familiar:—but I guess not; for you are new on this beat, ain't you?

POL. This ain't my beat; that is down town: I only room near here. I go on duty at ten this morning, (*looks at watch*) and it is now nine fifteen. I am *new* on the force, however: only two days ago, I became one of *the finest*.

ELIZA. One of the finest,—why, you are THE FINEST of the finest,—at least, that I ever saw.

POL. (*highly elated.*) Oh, delicious praise!—and you are the fairest of the fairest,—at least, that I ever saw.

ELIZA. (*highly elated.*) Oh, delicious praise!

POL. (*ardently.*) I love you! Will you marry me?

ELIZA. (*pleased but dismayed.*) Oh, this is very sudden! (*Irresolutely.*) I scarcely know what reply to make: (*blushing*) but it really seems almost like a case of love at first sight.

POL. (*anxiously.*) Come,—I am alternating between hope and fear.

ELIZA. (*undecided.*) Shall I or shall I not?—(*Finally, with abandon*) Yes, I accept your gracious offer! (*They embrace.*)

POL. (*joyously.*) Thanks—my dear one! We will be wed, this very night.

ELIZA. (*breaking away.*) No, no, I am mad! what dreadful act was I about committing,—there's Pierre! I love him devotedly; and could never be happy without him.

POL. Hah, you love another!

ELIZA. Yes,—a fine fellow; a chef, formerly employed on this block. He loved me truly; but I scorned him just because I disliked the white-apron that he wore, and doated on wearing.

POL. (*with a twinkle.*) Ah, a white-apron, eh.

ELIZA. (*sadly.*) He vanished suddenly about one month ago: (*tearfully*) but if he would only come back—and love me—I am sure that I could endure (*with a wry face*) even that apron.

POL. (*amused.*) Ha, ha.—Then you don't love me.

ELIZA. Well, I can't truthfully say exactly that: there's a strange feeling about my heart for you—Oh, if Pierre and yourself, only could be made over into one.

POL. Ha, ha, a sort of composite man, eh.

ELIZA. (*puzzled.*) What is that?

POL. Why, a man, possessing one shape, but two distinct personalities.

ELIZA. Exactly,—that's what I meant.

POL. (*confidently.*) Perhaps your wish may be gratified.

ELIZA. (*incredulously.*) Oh, no,—that is impossible.

POL. Well, it seems to be.—Now, I will be going.

ELIZA. Good-bye.

POL. Good-bye. (*Exit left: Eliza sits on bench, facing opposite.*)

ELIZA. Oh how I miss him! now that he is gone.

Re-enter POLICEMAN, *with a chef's white-apron on, extending from neck to feet.*

POL. (*taking off false mustache.*) Eliza, here is your composite man.

ELIZA. (*amazed and delighted.*) Pierre!

PIERRE. (*exultingly.*) Yes, it is I.—(*Lovingly*) My darling—you just told the policeman that you loved Pierre; won't you now tell that to Pierre, himself?

ELIZA. (*cooly.*) No, no, I won't,—but I will tell Pierre, that—I love the policeman!

PIERRE. Ha, ha—that will answer.—(*Embraces her*) My sweet Eliza!

ELIZA. (*merrily.*) Pierre, you brought the false mustache, and your long white-apron along, on purpose to play this trick upon me.

PIERRE. (*merrily.*) Yes, my dear. (*Takes off apron and throws it down*)

ELIZA. That's right, dear; now that you have had your little sport with it, throw the horrid thing away:—oh, you look handsome in a uniform!

PIERRE. (*tickled.*) I do, eh?—

ELIZA. Dear, what ever made you think of becoming a policeman?

PIERRE. Solely, on the hope of winning you.

ELIZA. Ha, ha, you knew that I was crazy for uniforms. (*Archly*) I knew you went on, to win me; but I wanted the joy of hearing you say so.

PIERRE. (*mock reproof.*) You rogue.—Being eager to show myself, in uniform, to you, and hopeful but anxious, of the outcome: (after a weary month of waiting, before I was appointed): I came here from my nearby room, and waited for you,—with the present delightful result!

ELIZA. Delightful, indeed!

PIERRE. My dear—it is pretty tough, to leave you now; but my time is up.

ELIZA. And you musn't be late on duty.

PIERRE. (*embracing her.*) Good-bye!

ELIZA. Good-bye!

PIERRE. (*leaving.*) I will see you to-night to arrange about our wedding.

ELIZA. (*snapping.*) Oh, will you? (*Relenting*) Yes, call at the Minister's basement.

PIERRE. All right, dear. (*Exit, left; Eliza goes happily skipping into basement of first house*)

PIERRE. (*returning.*) Perhaps Eliza, after we are wed, will let me wear this, (*picks up apron*) when I help her with the cooking,—I couldn't possibly give up the wearing of white-aprons, altogether.

(*Exit left.*)



Enter DAUBER, and his son (Bobbie,) left.

DAUB. Well Bobbie, how are you enjoying our little walk about the lawn?

BOB. Oh, I like's it, papa—but I's hungry; me wants a piece of bread and butter.

DAUB. (*laughing.*) Why, you just had a piece before you left the house.

BOB. (*fretfully.*) Me knows 'dat—but I want more.

DAUB. (*coaxingly.*) More will not be good for you, my child,—in fact, will do you harm.

BOB. Well, I wants it, anyway.

DAUB. (*resignedly.*) Papa knew from sad experience that you would, so he brought some along. (*Produces a large slice of buttered bread and begins to remove the wrapper.*)

BOB. (*on nettles.*) Oh, hurry up, papa.

DAUB. (*handing.*) There—pitch in to it.

BOB. (*devouring.*) Oh my, it is good!

DAUB. Come, what do you say for it?

BOB. (*with mouth full.*) Thank you!

DAUB. Look at him eat,—alas, even in childhood, we begin to take on weaknesses or failings: either to do things that we should not do; or to do, unnaturally, things that we should do. His insatiable appetite for bread and butter, is a childish foible.—But then I have my foibles, also: and my late wife, had hers—an abnormal liking for the opposite sex. In her case, unfortunately, the weakness or frailty, degenerated into evil, resulting in divorce. Let me think? yes, that sad event was about two years ago—after only three years of wedlock: and I, at forty am left wifeless; with a four-year child. The poet says: "O, frailty, thy name is—woman!" Sore though I be, I can't accept that philosophy,—for there are multitudes of good women; and good men, too: even though they do possess, many of them, this abnormal liking for the opposite sex: this frailty foible:—how many a woman's all absorbing idea, is *men*: how many a man's all absorbing idea, is *women*.—Perhaps I ought to give the child a stepmother,—but my sad experience makes me chary of taking another chance.

BOB. (*ruefully.*) It is all gone a'ready, papa—it didn't last very long.

DAUB. (*laughing.*) Well Bobbie, that is often the way with the *good things* of life.

BOB. (*musingly.*) But, sour-balls—they last almost too long.

DAUB. (*smiling.*) They are pretty hard.—(*looking left*) As I live, there stand the Minister and the Soldier, a'quarreling, as usual,— isn't it a *damned* shame! All about nonsense: about each's taking away the other's bread and butter.

BOB. Bread and butter—where is it?

DAUB. (*laughing.*) I have none,—I only spoke of it *indirectly*.

BOB. (*puzzled.*) Me dunno what 'dat means.

DAUB. (*turning away.*) I must quench his aroused curiosity, even with an illogical answer. (*Turning*

*to the expectant Bobbie*) See, Bobbie—I strike at your nose, and hit it. (*He does and Bobbie laughs.*) That blow went directly: or straight to the mark.—Now, I strike at your nose, and miss it. (*He does and Bobbie laughs, louder.*) That blow went—indirectly, or not straight to the mark.

BOB. (*tickled.*) Oh I see papa; directly means 'dat I gets it—and indirectly, means 'dat I don't gets it

DAUB. Ha, ha, exactly—the bread and butter.

Enter KNOBLOCK, in uniform, and POSTEM, in surplice, left: they are intent on a quarrel; and don't notice DAUBER; who overhears their talk, with a grim smile.

KNOB. (*angrily.*) Well, have you quarreled, all that you want to?

POST. (*angrily.*) Have you quarreled, all that you want to?

KNOB. No—there's another thing, Postem: is not twice a week often enough to hold canting revivals, without ringing in this extra one that you just held?

POST. What is that your business?

KNOB. Why, it puts me to trouble.

POST. Nonsense,—how so?

KNOB. When I am not there, (I am told), you preach peace: when I am there, you don't dare do it for fear of being called down.

POST. (*spiritedly.*) I am a pacifist, sir: and nothing shall deter me, on any occasion, from the advocacy of the blessings of peace.

KNOB. (*sneeringly.*) I am not a coward, but a fighter, sir; and nothing shall deter me, on any occasion, from the advocacy of the glories of war.

POST. The world can do without you soldiers, when men get better.

KNOB. Never, sir! Pomp and pageantry, bravery and fortitude, will always be fundamentals.

POST. Well, at least, you will be giving a part of your time, to clothes-making; or some other useful occupation.

KNOB. The world can do without you ministers, when men get better.

POST. Never, sir! Worship of God, and teaching of His holy word, will always be fundamentals.

KNOB. Well, at least, you will be giving a part of your time, to shoemaking; or some other useful occupation.

DAUB. (*joining them.*) Ha, ha, the roaring soldierly lion, and the gentle ministerial lamb, are quarreling yet; in spite of the biblical prophecy that the lion and the lamb would lie down together.

POST. (*testily.*) Don't butt in, Dauber.

KNOB. (*testily.*) Or, I will butt you out.

DAUB. (*incensed.*) The *h-ll* you say.

POST. Oh, cut out that cussing foible, Dauber: don't be an imitator, (everybody swears, nowadays), be an individualist.

DAUB. That's mighty good advice—and I might give you some, regarding your unchristian hatred of Knoblock.

POST. Should I not hate him who hates peace? I count him an enemy. But my hatred is only that perfect hatred, with which the psalmist hated.

KNOB. (*to Dauber, pointing at Postem.*) Should I not hate him who hates war? I count him an enemy. But my hatred is only that *imperfect* hatred, with which an up-to-date man hates.

DAUB. (*pleadingly.*) Have you forgotten, gentlemen, that only two weeks ago, Ruth and Alexander were both taken dangerously ill?

KNOB. But, they are almost well, now.

POST. In fact, doctor Killen has gone to the hospital, to arrange for their home return.

DAUB. Then, show your gratitude to a kind providence, by becoming friends.

KNOB. (*with aversion.*) Not I, indeed!

POST. (*with aversion.*) Not I, indeed!

DAUB. Be prepared, then, for a worse blow.

KNOB. & POST. Ha, ha,—that's nonsensical.

DAUB. Ah, here come the rest of the tenants out from their respective houses, to bid the Stakers good-bye—as we all decided upon last night.

KNOB. (*looking at watch.*) Yes, it is the appointed time.

*Enter MR & MRS BACON and VIOLET, right; then MR & MRS PULLWOOL and OTIS, left; then MR & MISS LAW and NOEL, right; then MRS KNOBLOCK, right; then MR MIRABEAU, in uniform, left; then MRS POSTEM, from front-door of first house: the assembling is rapid, and is accompanied by greetings of words or nods.*

PULL. Now, ladies and gentlemen, that we have all exchanged our good-morning greetings, with each other—I will give to you, (while we are awaiting the arrival of Mr Staker and family), some information on a subject that you are all deeply interested in.

MANY. Oh yes: The drive! the drive!

PULL. Yes, the great drive for funds, by the Home and Foreign Money-aid and Moral-uplift Society: (of which I have the honor to be President.) We met, as you remember, at Mr Staker's parlors, three weeks ago, to portion out your parts, gentlemen, in the drive. And let me say right here, that, you all played your parts—(to use a trite expression)—to the queen's taste: for which service the society, by me, thanks you gratefully!

MANY. Bravo! Bravo!

PULL. One week thereafter, the drive, (an eight day one,) took place: and at the eight days' end; was extended for three days, by request.

LAW. (*yawning loudly and weirdly.*) By request—of yourself, and your dummy board of directors; and not of the public.

SEVERAL. (*whom yawn had annoyed.*) Just to think of a senator making a noise like that. And you didn't have to blurt out that sarcasm, about a thing we all knew.

PULL. (*disoncerted by Law, but now cool.*)

The sum asked for, was twenty millions; but our canvassers, public speakers, and publicity bureau,

presented such a horribly excruciating picture, of the sufferings and sorrows, sought to be ministered unto, that, the snug sum of twenty five million dollars, net; was what the public was touched for.

SEVERAL. (*laughing.*) You shouldn't have used the word *touched*.

BAC. Because, it is not alone a nice man's poetic way of expressing, *moved at heart*: but it is also a tricky man's slang way of expressing, *bamboozled in pocket*.

PULL. (*winking.*) You are right:—I must be a little more cautious about my phraseology.

DAUB. All that you have said, we knew of already; through the newspapers and yourself—but how about our *graft*? Each one of us is to get one tenth of one per cent of the whole.

MALES. (*clamorously.*) Yes, how about our checks?

PULL. My talk was only a preliminary to that, —I have the checks with me. (*produces them*). Here, take them, gentlemen. (*Hands over checks*.)

MALES. (*effusively*). Many, many, thanks; dear Mr Pullwool! (*Each looks at his check*) Twenty five thousand dollars, apiece! (*Excitedly waving checks in air*). Hurrah! Hurrah! (*The hurrahing is echoed by the Females, and the young-persons: during which, Mirabeau blows his nose loudly.*)

MANY. (*startled by nose-blow.*) Oh, Mirabeau, why don't you cut that bugle-blowing out, in company?

MIR. (*apologetic.*) Pardon me,—I was so greatly excited.

SEVERAL. (*mollified.*) Well, considering the circumstances, we will.

FEMALES. (*effusively.*) Dear Mr. Pullwool, we too desire to express to you, our heartfelt thanks!

PULL. (*pompously.*) Don't mention it.

MALES. (*joyously to Females*). These checks are a perfect godsend! They will stop the mouths of clamorous creditors!

FEMALES. (*joyously to Males.*) Now, we can satisfy our needs! And, best of all, gratify our fancies!

PULL. (*hilariously.*) Now that you are all in a liberal mood and not disposed to be sarcastic, I will say frankly that I love *easy* money.

MANY. (*laughing.*) We were always on to you, dear Pullwool.

PULL. (*smiling.*) I imagined as much.—(*Unhappily*) The trouble is, when we get money without working for it, it begets in us a cupidity that is insatiable—that is where the *nemesis* comes in: Confound it, I shall be on nettles until the next drive!

MANY. (*wincing*). Alas, the money-bug stings badly!

MRS PULL. Ah, I love money! Not, however, for its own sake: but because it brings power! And, best of all, it allows one to wear rich apparel and rare gems.



MANY. (*wincing*). These things, too, have their pangs!

Enter a MESSENGER, *in uniform, left*.

MESS. A letter for Rev J. Postem, D. D.  
(*Holds it up*).

POST. That is my name.

MESS. (*handing letter*). Doctor Killlem, sent it from the hospital. There is no answer.

(*Exit Mess.—Postem opens and reads letter.*)

POST. (*greatly agitated*). Merciful heavens!—Listen, all of you, to the harrowing contents of this note! (*reads*) "I am bringing Ruth and Alexander home, dead. Hastily, Doctor Killlem."

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. What—? Ruth and Alexander dead! Horrible! It can't be possible!

MANY. Oh, that is surely too frightfully improbable, to be true!

KNOB. (*tensely*.) Let me see the note. (*Postem hands note and Knoblock looks it over.*) Alas, it reads very plainly—there is not a shred to hang a hope on! (*Hands back note.*)

MRS. KNOB & MRS. POST. O, unutterable sorrow!

MANY. Why, the dear things were considered to be convalescent only yesterday.

POST. What a sudden and terrible change.

KNOB. Dear Alexander! I loved you very tenderly; even though you was a *dwarf*!

MRS. KNOB. (*tearfully*.) The afflicted are always loved with an intenser love—O, how we loved our boy!

POST. Darling Ruth! I loved you very tenderly even though you was a *lilliputian*!

MRS. POST. The afflicted—as was said—are loved with an intenser love—O, how we loved our girl!

MANY. Dear Ruth and Alexander! They were beloved of us all!

KNOB. *Fond lovers* they were: so perfectly suited to each other:—yet cruelly parted by us.

POST. O, why did we interfere with affection's natural course? (*Guiltily*.) It was only another concomitant of our unnatural feud.

MRS. KNOB. This terrible blow may be the ire of heaven.

MRS. POST. Sent to bring us to our senses.

KNOB. & POST. (*to each other*.) I have not the heart, sir; to be your enemy longer.

MANY. (*surprised*.) Hear—!

KNOB. & POST. I desire to be your friend.

MANY. Bravo!

KNOB. & POST. In fact, your very DEAR friend! (*They shake hands warmly*)

MANY. (*delighted*). Bravo! Bravo!

MRS. KNOB. & MRS. POST. (*to each other*). And I, also, desire to be your very dear friend! (*Starting to embrace, Mrs. Knoblock's hat, strikes Mrs. Postem in face*)

MRS. POST. Oh my! your gigantic hat nearly knocked my eye out. (*everybody smiles*). Why do you wear one on the lawn? Seldom anyone does—except your husband, and the Ambassador.

MRS. KNOB. What, indulging in your bulldozing again eh? I fairly idolize big hats: (*everybody smiles*) they are a part of my life!

MRS. KNOB. & MRS. POST. (*their scowls changing to smiles again*.) Forgive me dear! (*They embrace*.)

MANY. Bravo! Bravo!

MIR. Ah, these two pair of implacable enemies, for years—have been changed in a trice, by the loss of children, into dear friends! Surely, mysterious are the ways of providence.

MANY. Isn't it really delightful to see them friends!—And the bitter stroke has also had a tremendously softening influence upon every heart.

SEVERAL. Ah, here come the Stakers!

*Enter the STAKERS, attired for the street, from front-door of second house.*

STAKERS. (*to the others*.) Good-morning, dear ladies and gentlemen!

OTHERS. (*to the Stakers*.) Good-morning, dear Mr. and Mrs. Staker, and family!

STAKERS. You are all out early, this beautiful morning.

OTHERS. The fact is, we came out expressly to see you off.

STAKERS. Indeed?—That is awfully kind of you, to be sure.

OTHERS. And we do now, all of us, bid you all, a hearty *good-bye!* and a hearty *God-speed!*

STAKERS. In return, we do, all of us, bid YOU all, a hearty *good-bye!* and a hearty *God-speed!*

SEVERAL. (*as Stakers offer hands*). We won't shake hands, just yet: we will walk with you to the end of lawn.

MR. & MRS. STAK. That will indeed be delightful!

(*All of the elderly persons, and Harold, start to exeunt, right: and Otis, Edward, Noel, Gertrude, Violet, and Hazel—remaining—instinctively gather together in pairs*).

ELDERLY-PERSONS. (*looking back*). Ah, the young people, are very anxious to have a last parting word together, alone! (*Exeunt*.)

OTIS EDW. & NOEL. (*each joyously to his girl*). Ah, alone together at last!

GER. VIO. & HAZ. (*each joyously to her beau*). Yes! after many weary days. O, what joy!

OTIS. EDW. & NOEL. (*each, sadly to his girl*). But only to say *farewell!*

GER. VIO. & HAZ. (*each, sadly to her beau*). Farewell! A word that has been, and must be!

OTIS EDW. & NOEL. A word that makes one shudder!

GER. & VIO. (*retrospectively*). It is three long weeks, since we lovers sacrificed ourselves, on the altar of parental duty.

OTIS & EDW. (*sadly*). And during all that time we have—by stern commands of our respective parents—merely exchanged *civilities* on passing.

HAZ. (*sadly*). As you know, Noel and I, too, only exchange *civilities* on passing.

NOEL. (*lugubriously.*) Because we also have sacrificed ourselves on the altar of parental duty.

OTIS & EDW. But you are both young,—yours is only a *puppy* love.

NOEL & HAZ. (*ruefully.*) On the contrary, ours is *not* a puppy; but a full-grown *dog*.

GER. & VIO. (*laughing.*) Is it, indeed? Then you are to be pitied, like the rest of us.

OTIS & EDW. O, how we have all suffered!

GER. & VIO. Yes,—almost beyond endurance!

HAZ. And it shows on you all! Why, Violet dear, you are *paler* (*winking to the rest*) even than usual.

VIO. Isn't it mortifying: I paint, you know, to look pale; but I don't want to be a *ghost*.

NOEL. And, Edward, you seem to have lost some of your prodigious (*winking to the rest*) strength.

EDW. To my disgust, my arm muscles seem to be growing positively flabby.

HAZ. Dear Gertrude, you appear to be really *rattled*.

GER. Having miserably failed in my endeavor to bear it with a fortitude in keeping with my *kingly* (*the rest wink to one another*) descent.

NOEL. And, Otis, you look as though you were completely *broke up*.

OTIS. I have sought distraction, by *speeding it up* in my stock speculating, (*the rest wink to one another*) and automobiling,—but in vain.

HAZ. I myself, have even lost my liking for ice cream and candy.

REST. Ha, ha!

NOEL. And I, can hardly utter a word. (*Dolefully.*) If I falter thus, privately; how can I hope ever to disgorge a dictionary full of words, publicly.

REST. Ha, Ha, Ha!

OTIS. (*looking off, right.*) Hah, here they all come back again!

REST. (*looking anxiously.*) Because of impatience at our delay, no doubt.

OTIS. Yes,—and perhaps angry, too.

EDW. GER. & HAZ. We will have to join them at once.

OTIS NOEL & VIO. Therefore, our sad parting must be done quickly. (*They all shake hands around.*)

OTIS EDW. & NOEL. (*each taking his girl's hand.*) Farewell!

GER. VIO. & HAZ. (*each to her beau.*) Farewell!

(*Each pair starts to separate, but instinctively return and spring into an embrace; remaining awhile; then Edward, Gertrude, and Hazel, go despairingly out, right; and Otis, Noel, and Violet, gaze despairingly after them; then sit together on an iron-bench, and bury faces in hands.*)

*Re-enter EDWARD, GERTRUDE, and HAZEL, right.*

EDW. & GER. (*to Otis & Vio.*) O, joy! Your fathers told us to come back, and make as much love as we liked!

OTIS & VIO. (*having arisen.*) What—? It can't be possible!

HAZ. Yes, it is so. And Noel, your father told me that we might (*blushing*) keep company—but nor to become betrothed, for one year yet.

OTIS, VIO. & NOEL. O, joy! O, joy! (*Otis and Edward embrace their girls, and Noel takes Hazel's hands.*)

*Re-enter the ELDERLY-PERSONS and HAROLD.*

PULL. BAC. & WIVES. (*watching lovers.*) Be happy—children!

MR. & MRS. STAK. Be happy—children!

MANY. Yes, be happy—children!

LOVERS. O, we are very, very happy! And we thank you all sincerely! And you, our dear parents, *how* we thank you!

(*They embrace their own parents and shake hands with their betrothed's parents, then pair off again.*)

MANY. (*to the lovers.*) Dear Mr. Staker, is not going to leave us, after all,—so we shall still all be together, on the block!

LOVERS. O, what good news! Isn't it grand!

MIR. Listen to how it happened: As we walked along we acquainted Mr. and Mrs. Staker, with our sad bereavement,—and they were deeply moved; as they loved Ruth and Alexander, dearly. With our hearts thus attuned to tenderness, we began to realize our real liking for the Staker family: and beseeched Mr. & Mrs. Staker, to remain—

STAK. (*gratefully.*) You gentlemen, generously offering even to share your twenty-five thousand dollar checks with me, to help me get on my feet again!

MRS. STAK. (*reproachfully to Staker.*) Which you declined—after profuse thanks, and regrets—on the ground of the unfortunate attachment of our children for their children:—ah, my heart drooped; for it was still bent on living with the great!

MIR. (*continuing.*) And then, Mess. Pullwool and Bacon and their wives, (to the bravos of all,) nobly gave their hearty approval to the wedlock of Otis with Gertrude, and of Edward with Violet,—and Mr. Staker wavered.

DAUB. And finally gave in.

STAK. (*tickled.*) Yes, when you all mourned prospectively, the loss of my exquisite manners!

MRS. KNOB. To conclude—joyously returning, we were joined by the young Stakers; and Edward and Gertrude were *tipped off* to return to their loves.

MRS. POST. And Hazel was tipped off, by Mr. Law, to return to her Noel.

STAK. There is yet a thing to add: My great fortune is still intact.

MANY. What—! You haven't lost your money?

STAK. No,—the loss was only a fabrication; which I unworthily gave in to, as being a good way out of the troubles of that time.

ALL. (*joyously to Staker and each other.*) Congratulations! Congratulations!



*Enter Rozzi and BRIDGET, attired for the street, from basement of second house.*

BRID. B'jabers yez all look very happy.

Roz. Yes'a; as happy as a clam'a at high-tide.

BRID. Yis:-and yez young people, particularly so.

LOVERS. We are, Bridget.

HAZ. Havn't you got a fellow?

BRID. Of coorse, right here—but he's sich a bashful man. (*Pathetically to Rozzi*) Mr. Rozzi, this is not lape year, but my heart, sure, that does lape,—will you marry me? (*Rucfully*) Indade I am no spring-chicken: (*consolingly*) but then na'thur are you.

Roz. (*laughing.*) I am'a only the kind of the spring'a-de-chick that is served up'a in some restaurants, deceptively, as'a the real thing—a tough'a rooster.

BRID. But b'gorra yez always act very *tender* to me.

Roz. Because you are'a my queen'a!

BRID. Ah, yure queen, eh? thin I will at once procade to ascend my throne! (*She lays her head on his breast and he embraces her ardently.*)

MANY. (*amused at them from first.*) Good! Another happy couple.

STAK. Mr Rozzi, we have changed our minds about leaving here, and I hire you now, at double your former pay. That will enable you to place Bridget in a nice apartment.

Roz. & BRID. O, thank you, sir: thank you!

STAK. Not at all: I am glad to be of service.

BRID. Bedad, I am so frustrated, that I will have to take a dhrop of the cray'thur.

Roz. Bedad, I am so'a frustrated, that I will hav'a to take a pinch'a of snuff.

(*Having produced these while speaking, they both indulge*)

MANY. Ha, ha, the ruling passion, strong, even in death.

DAUB. Or, in *love*.

(*Exeunt Rozzi and Bridget into haseiment*)

MANY. O, this is indeed a supremely happy occasion! (*qualifying sadly*) Or it would be if only darlings, Ruth and Alexander, were but with us.

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. Ah, our darlings!

SOME. (*looking off left*). Merciful powers—can it be—yes there *they* come!! And the doctor!

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. Our beloved ones alive and well—O heaven be praised!!

*Enter Alexander and Ruth, with doctor Killlem, after All have rushed to left wings to meet them.*

MANY. Hurrah! Hurrah!

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. (*embracing Ruth and Alexander, alternately.*) Our darling, darling children.

(*All the rest fondle the two children*)

KIL. What a racket, noise, fuss, combustion! Have you all gone *daffy*?

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. But, dear doctor, why shouldn't we all be boisterously joyous: Our dear children, were dead and are alive again.

MANY. What? Remain phlegmatic under such a miracle,—why even you, Killlem, in spite of all your vaunted professional stoicism, must have danced for joy when you learned of the error.

KIL. You speak a riddle—What error?

MANY. You ask that,—notwithstanding the contents of your note.

KIL. What was wrong about the note? Let me see it. (*Postem hands him note: which he reads and tears up*). Confound it! A stupid blunder of mine, in putting one wrong word in. (*Exculpating himself.*) But you see, that, so few of my hospital patients ever recover, that the form of my final letters to their families and friends, has become stereotyped: and I simply followed the stereotyped form; forgetting to substitute the word *cured*, for the *sad* word:—the error, I think was pardonable.

MANY. Pardonable perhaps, considering the notes unusual brevity.

DAUB. But isn't it a shame, that you, who habitually chatter endlessly about nothing, should actually begrudge words when you write on the gravest of subjects.

KIL. I do like to descant, sir; but upon *living* issues: In regard to the *others*, the less said about them the better.

ALEX. & RUTH. (*to their parents*). Then, dear parents, you really believed us dead,—O, how dreadfully you must have suffered!

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. (*wincing*). It can better be imagined than described!

ALEX. & RUTH. (*tenderly*). And the rest of you suffered, too!

MANY. Yes—beyond bounds!—And no real cause for it, either.

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. Nothing but the erratic doctor. However, we will forgive him—and not that alone, but we'll bless him! for he has, unwittingly, been the cause of immeasurable joy!

MANY. For out of it, Ruth and Alexander, your parents have become the dearest of friends!

ALEX. & RUTH. (*delighted*). O, that is grand!

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. And now you can wed, dear children!

ALEX. & RUTH. (*embracing each other*). O, can we!!

KNOB. POST. & WIVES. Yes, just as soon as you like.

RUTH. (*rapturously*). Oh, my, I will order a new pair of *high-heels* for the ceremony at once!

ALEX. (*rapturously*). And I a new *stovepipe*!

MANY. (*laughing*). The parson, under the rules would hardly dare allow you to wear a hat.

ALEX. (*positively*). Then I will get a special dispensation.

MANY. Ha, ha.

RUTH. (*as Alex embraces again*). My Romeo!

ALEX. My Juliet!

LOVERS. (*joining Alex. and Ruth.*) Our love affairs, also, have taken a happy turn—and the Stakers are not going to leave us—that is more, dears, of the immeasurable joy, spoken of before.

ALEX. & RUTH. (*joyously*). We kind'a guessed as much—and are so glad! O, you all look so happy! And the Stakers are so nice!

PULL. By the bye, doctor, here is your drive check,—the others received theirs.

KIL. (*looking it over.*) Ah, twenty-five thousand dollars! This will come in handy—as my patients are way behind in paying bills.

(*Miss Law joins Doctor, and they come to foot-lights, talking: the rest, catching on, gather together and watch them with smiles of enjoyment, under cover of conversing.*)

MISS LAW. (*sweetly.*) Dear Doctor—you ought to be happy now.

KIL. (*sadly.*) I ought to be—but am not! For I am discovering, that my profession, (as much as I like it,) is no real substitute for a mate. (*Ardently*) Miss Law I am going to propose—

MISS LAW. (*aside.*) Ah, there is love-light in his eyes! It must be a *real* proposal this time. (*To doctor coyly.*) Pardon my maidenly confusion.

KIL. That we act as bridesmaid and groomsman, at these young persons' nuptials—

MISS LAW. (*aside, sadly and angrily.*) Only fooling, again!

KIL. Then, no doubt, they will consent to perform like functions at our nuptials,—(*sheepishly*) that is, if you will deign to bestow your virgin affections on poor me!

MISS LAW. (*beaming.*) They have long been yours, dear! (*They embrace.*)

KIL. (*lovingly.*) And you will consent to a quick wedding?

MISS LAW. (*lovingly.*) Yes dear!—(*Anxiously.*) But you won't object to my continuing to wear short skirts?

KIL. Why you needn't wear any,—if that ever becomes the *fad*.

MANY. (*coming laughingly forward.*) We have been keeping tabs on you—we know all!

KIL. & MISS LAW. (*shamefaced.*) Then you saw us, after all—we thought you were conversing.

MANY. Ha, ha, that was only a make-believe.

KIL. & MISS LAW. Oh you rogues,—(*smiling*) but then we were a little sly too.

MANY. Congratulations!—

KIL. & MISS LAW. Many thanks!—

(*An out-of-sight organ-grinder starts playing.*)

LOVERS. Ah, there's waltz music—let's take advantage of it! (*The lovers pair off and begin dancing, and the elderly persons soon follow suit.*)

BAC. (*producing pipe and filling it.*) Here Dauber, please take my wife for your partner,—I am literally dying for a smoke.

DAUB. (*gallantly.*) With great pleasure!

MRS. BAC. (*as she and Dauber start to waltz.*) Oh, go off by your lonesome, Bakie; so that the smoke stench won't get into the ladies and gentlemen's old-factories.

BAC. (*puzzled.*) Their old-factories! Where the deuce—what the deuce—are they?

MRS. BAC. (*touching her nose.*) Why, their *smellers*; of course. (*She and Daub. join in the waltzing.*)

BAC. (*lighting his pipe and smoking.*) Ha, ha! so, *olfactories* was the word, she was driving at. The dear thing, like so many others of the uncultured, loves to use the big words that she hears: (*Merrily.*) Oh what a mess they all make of them.

(*Exit right.*)

MIR. & LAW. (*looking at the dancers.*) Ah, this lawn dance—this enchanting spectacle—is a fitting finale, to an all-around happy morning!—

(*Curtain.*)

# DORA DIMPLE'S BEAU

## A SKETCH IN TWO SCENES

(NOTE—This was written by me long ago—run across while delving in some literary rubbish—revised as regards some obvious faults (due to inexperience,) and published herewith. Any persons desiring to use it, may do so—as there is no copyright. F. P. NORTON.

### Characters.

JOHN DIMPLE, (a wealthy Stockbroker with sporting proclivities)

DORA DIMPLE, his Daughter, (a high-life Belle)

FRED. LEGITT, (right-fielder on the Champion Giants)

JOE. RHODES, his Valet, (a Cockney)

### SCENE I.—FRED'S bachelor Apartments, Central Park West, New York City.

JOE. (*discovered, brushing up his master's clothes.*) Well, the h'owner of these clothes h'is surely the swellest guy that I h'ever acted h'as valet for. Nattier h'even than the young Duke h'of Edgewater; who was known h'as "Chesterfield the Second," on h'account of 'is style. This right-fielder h'of the Champion Giants, can beat him h'a mile! H'aristocratic? well, h'I guess—He's certainly h'a all-around 'ummer—Handsome h'as Apollo; h'and the h'easy graceful way that h'all athletes 'ave—H'and his wardrobe? why it would make h'a woman green with h'envy—And when 'e gets his duds on 'e looks like h'a fashion-plate. (*Keeps on working*)

*Enter FRED in Champion Giants uniform.*

FRED. How-dy, Joe!—Never mind me, go on with your work. I have got to rest—(*sinks in a chair*) I am all in—could hardly walk in from the taxi, (which I came home in, because I didn't go to the club house and doff this uniform, even.

JOE. I was surprised, sir; when you h'entered with it h'on. Well, you can change to this h'evening suit, for to go h'out and dine. (*Lays it one side*)

FRED. Yes, I will wear that.

JOE. And how h'about the suit h'up at the club-house?

FRED. Why, I will go in uniform, in a taxi, to to-morrow's game, and change into it afterward.

JOE. (*solicitously.*) What made you so h'unusually tired to-day?

FRED. Why, both pitchers were off color; consequently it was easy for the *sluggers* to locate the ball—long and high flies in every direction—I chased them until I was almost ready to drop—

JOE. (*laughing.*) H'in other words, sir, you 'ad to leg it.

FRED. (*laughing.*) Hah, you rascal, that was a play-upon-words pun—as my name is Legitt.

JOE. (*nodding yes.*) H'I couldn't let the h'opportunity pass. Pardon me—go h'on.

FRED. I got no rest either when we went in—six times at bat—Made a homer and two double-sackers—Both clubs hit the ball hard, and did stunts in the field—(*Enthusing*) We beat them though 14 to 11.

JOE. I h'am very glad, Mr Fred, for your sake! But baseball has no charms for me,—*cricket!* that's my 'obby. (*Reminiscent*) The mere mention h'of it, brings fond memories. Ah, the day that h'all London played the Continentals! I 'ad a 'eavy wager on London: The Continentals had h'a long lead, when h'up comes Bushby to bat for h'all London—My 'ear't was h'in my mouth when the bowler tossed the ball—H'and such bowling! he 'ardly h'ever sent a ball h'over 'wide' (h'a wild pitch you calls it)—But Bushby had 'is h'eye on the ball, h'and 'e never stopped until 'e scored the winning run!

FRED. (*having arisen thro interest.*) Aha, Joe, your narration of that bit of your sporting past was so vivid that I almost imagined myself a spectator of the game! Baseball for mine, however,—it's the proper caper at present, and commands big pay. I don't know of any other profession to-day—minister, lawyer, physician or politician—that would enable me to surround Dora, with the luxuries she has been used to.

JOE. (*inquisitively.*) And who h'is Dora? might I h'ask.

FRED. (*fervently.*) A beauty! And high-life belle! The daughter of John Dimple, a rich stockbroker: (*anxiously*) and to get her, he must be dealt with—(*despondently*) besides, how can I, although



some pumpkins myself, ever hope to win so rare a prize.

JOE. It h'is the money, that talks h'every time, sir: with your h'income of h'eight 'undred pounds h'a year (what you told me they pays you) you can 'ave your pick.

FRED. There is only one for me, Joe—Dora Dimple. I have studied her curves—and they can't be beat. She has got an assortment of them; and delivers them in such a way, as to fool and puzzle you—you never know what is coming next. But now I am getting on to them a little—and am actually able to make a hit off of her occasionally. The eager striving to fatten up my batting average in our game of love, keeps me in a constant state of delight.

JOE. I don't h'exactly h'understand this baseball talk, sir; but h'in race-horse parlance, which I do h'understand, you no doubt meant to say that she

h'is a thoroughbred. And that you h'are making 'eadway with her.

FRED. Exactly so!

JOE. Well, I 'ope that you gets 'er, Mr. Legitt. And h'also hope that h'afterwards she don't take the bit h'in 'er teeth, h'and run h'away—as these 'igh-steppers sometimes do.

FRED. Ha, ha, Joe: there's not the slightest danger of HER doing that.—Now I want you to quit work and go out and enjoy yourself. As for me, I am going to take a long rest now—then go out and feed my face—come home early and go to bed—for I have an engagement to play tennis with Dora tomorrow morning, and I want to be in good shape.

JOE. H'all-right, sir: h'and thank you kindly!—Tennis? You needs your white-flannel suit for that—h'it will be ready for you when you h'arise.

FRED. Many thanks! old pal. (*Exit Joe*)

(*Fred sits down and soon dozes, and Dora's dream picture appears on the wall.—Curtain*)

SCENE II.—A cosy Sitting-room, in Dora's home, on Riverside Drive, New York City.

*Enter DORA, with her hat and tennis rackets and balls in her hands, rear.*

DORA. (*with vanity.*) Ah, I think that I am arayed quite stunningly for my coming tennis game with 'er Fred—(*blushing*) I should have said, Mr. Legitt. (*Lays hat, rackets and balls on a table, near center.*) Oh I wish that he would come—I am as uneasy as a fish out of water—I hope he will like my new dress—It ought to be good for a compliment; it cost, enough—And my jaunty new hat! My it will never do to leave it lie that way: (*turns it over*) it dont show to advantage. Tennis is nice—but it is not quite as well adapted for courting as a *tete a tete* in the house. It's just too delicious for anything to have this big handsome fellow make love! (*Ardently*) Oh I adore him! (*Roguishly*) But he shan't know it until I have teased him a little. (*Pensively*) I think—yes I am quite sure, that he adores me? (*Anxiously*) But father—there's the rub. He is rich and proud: and he thinks, no doubt, that Mr Legitt is wealthy and aristocratic: (as I have no other kind of beaux.) What will he say when he learns that he is only a professional baseball player? Oh I dread the outcome? Baseball—I am becoming interested in a game that I never saw,—Oh I am crazy to go and see him, in uniform and a'playing! But havn't done so, for fear that he would know too early that I am *gone* on him. (*After a pause*) Dear father admires the dress—for he just said that I make a lovely vision for a camera snap-shot. (*She laughingly assumes a pose—as Fred appears in doorway, right, and makes an extravagant demonstration of delight, at the dazzling costume, on the lovely girl: the audience sees him, but her head is turned another way. She soon resumes her natural carriage.*) Oh, I hope and

believe that he will praise the dress, just as soon as he sets eyes on it! Surely no one but a gawk could do otherwise. (*Fred smiles mischievously, and disappears, still unscen by her. She sits on a sofa, and takes up a book lying on it.*) Ah, a little reading will help to make the waiting less tedious.

*Enter FRED, attired in a white-flannel suit, right.*

FRED. (*advancing quickly.*) Good-morning, Miss Dora!

DORA. (*dropping book and rising.*) Good-morning Mr. Legitt!

(*He takes her hands lovingly, and they exchange tender looks—then dropping them he steps a little away and looks at her, not beamingly now but indifferently; Dora is disappointed, and shows it by pouting; Fred seeing this turns and winks aside, then advancing takes her hands again*)

FRED. (*beamingly.*) Oh, Oh, Oh!

DORA. (*radiantly—expecting delayed compliment.*) What are all the exclamations of delight, about?

FRED. (*doubtfully.*) Maybe I hadn't ought to say.

DORA. (*blushing.*) I guess it won't do any harm!

FRED. (*ecstatically.*) Oh, oh, what a gloriously beautiful (*Dora starts expectantly forward*) morning!

DORA. (*petulantly—disappointed and vexed.*) Oh, pshaw!

FRED. (*making believe to be startled.*) Hah, you are vexed! And justly so, for I really knew that talking about the weather was *tabooed* in sentimental circles—that it can no longer be used as



a makeshift by dull lovers who can think of nothing else to say.

DORA. (*reproachfully.*) But why had you need of mentioning the weather at all: when (*tenderly*) you are always a delightful conversationalist; and (*flushing*) mix it with many a delicious *tidbit* of flattery.

FRED. (*highly pleased.*) Oh thank you!

DORA. (*regretfully.*) I shouldn't have said, 'oh, pshaw'—but I was expecting a speech from you so entirely different.

FRED. (*mock surprise.*) Oh were you—(*mock regret*) very sorry to have disappointed you.

DORA. Of course you didn't know what was passing in my mind. (*Fred smiles meaningly, aside.*)—Yet you are always so quick to apprehend my every mood, and respond to it with some pretty word or action!

FRED. Ah yes—the mysterious power of psychologic affinity!

DORA. To-day, however, you are dull—and I must fish for (*she turns completely around*) what should have come spontaneously. (*She stands expectant but he don't bite.*) Oh you are dense—not dull: and I must speak out bluntly, if I am to get the coveted compliment for my new dress. (*Appealingly—taking him by coat lapel.*) What do you think about my passing muster, for the street—for our tennis match?

FRED. (*listlessly.*) I can't see anything the matter with you.

DORA. (*stamping her foot in vexation*) Oh, 'you can't see anything the matter with me,' can't you!

FRED. (*mock surprise and scare.*) Why did you angrily mimic me?

DORA. (*lowering at him.*) Oh, such unstinted praise! And so poetically expressed!—(*Desperately.*) There—there on the table is the hat, that goes with the suit.—perhaps you will deign to pass judgement also upon that?

FRED. With pleasure. (*Goes to table, takes up hat, looks it over calmly critically, then looking at Dora—who has been anxiously watching him—gives her not one word or look of praise*)

DORA. (*after waiting impatiently.*) Well—?

FRED. (*drawlingly.*) I can't see anything the matter with it.

DORA. (*sarcastically—vexed clean thru.*) Oh you parrot! (*Fred wincing comically*)

FRED. (*laying hat back on table.*) Ah, here are our tennis implements! (*Takes each one up while speaking of it.*) A racket for you, and one for me; and a ball for you, and one for me. (*Having gotten all of them in his hands, he tosses them up, juggler like, in the air one after another; keeping them all up together, seemingly*)

DORA. (*whose vexed look, has changed into a smile of amusement.*) Ah, quite entertaining, to be sure! A rather difficult feat—and you can do it very deftly.

FRED. Yes, I can juggle a little—as well as play ball. (*A ball drops and rolls out thru the door: Dora laughs—Fred chases out after it*)

DORA. (*pouting*) The stupid, never enthused one bit over the dress, or the hat—He acts unaccountably strange; not a bit like himself—Can it be possible that the costly outfit is nowhere near as stylish, as I thought? Or is it that he don't happen to fancy it? Anyway, I am all up in the air. Shall I change it before our game—Or give the game up—(*proudly*) Or even give him up—(*pensively*) yet how could I ever do that.

FRED. (*re-entering and laying lost ball with rest.*) What's the matter with starting now for the tennis court?

DORA. Nothing: but—

FRED. Don't hesitate: but what?

DORA. (*distressed.*) I am beginning to have grave misgivings, about,—(*reproachfully*) for reasons that are quite obvious,—about this dress and hat being becoming to me—but it is some trouble to make a change.

FRED. (*politely indifferent.*) I can sit down and wait, should you decide to attire yourself differently.

DORA. (*looking at him with rising wrath an instant and then bursting out.*) No, I don't want to change it! I don't want to go out at all!

FRED. (*mock indifference.*) Oh, just as you please. But aren't you acting a bit whimsical?

DORA. (*resentfully.*) No, I am not. (*Candidly*) To tell truth, I am beginning to be disappointed in you—(*sadly*) and it gives me a pain at the heart. Heretofore you have ever been very gallant chivalrous, and (*blushing*) ardent: in every way a *beau ideal*:—(*regretfully*) But, to-day—

FRED. (*interrupting.*) To-day, I am a gawk.

DORA. (*suspiciously.*) What made you use that word?

FRED. (*laughingly.*) I got it from you.

DORA. Hah, you were eavesdropping, then before you entered?

FRED. In a way, yes: You see, I reached the door, just as you were posing; and stopped—transfixed by the enchantingly lovely sight!

DORA. (*beamingly.*) "Enchantingly lovely sight"—ah that is delicious praise! ah that is a satisfying compliment! And more than makes up for your delinquency.

FRED. (*looking her over admiringly.*) And I could truthfully say much more in the same vein!

DORA. (*flushing with pleasure.*) Oh, thank you!

FRED. To resume my story: Being anxious to speak to you the exclamations of delight, trembling on my lips, I started to enter; but stopped, on hearing you say, what you did, about the expected compliment from me—because the thought came to me what great sport it would be to tease you: to allay suspicion I went away a minute, and then came in:—you know the rest.

DORA. (*approvingly.*) 'To tease me'—was what you had decided upon when you entered,—that is good! ha, ha, I fully appreciate the joke of the thing!

FRED. (*laughingly.*) Yes—and all that I have said or done since was in furtherance of the teasing.

DORA. (*joyously.*) And the gathering cloud, has been dispersed by explanations—oh I am so glad!

FRED. (*carnestly.*) While enjoyable, the experiment has not been without alloy: therefore I shall not be so eager, in the future, to snap up an opportunity to tease you.

DORA. (*forgivingly.*) How so? I simply delight in teasing anyone, myself.

FRED. But, wound your feelings,—never again! (*Taking her hands, lovingly*) Can you—do you—really forgive me?

DORA. (*lovingly.*) Freely—with all my heart!—(*They drop hands.*) How long were you going to keep the teasing up? (*Laughingly*)

FRED. I don't know—I have no definite idea—As long as it seemed amusing.

DORA. (*after a pause, lifting her face, which had become downcast thru bashfulness at his ardent look.*) So you really do like my new outfit?

FRED. (*ecstatically.*) Why, the dress—is a dream and you look stunningly lovely in it! And the hat, it is simply out-of-sight!

DORA. (*delighted.*) I am so glad that you like them! (*Confidently*) I thought that you would—for they are both Redfern's latest.

FRED. (*ardently.*) I don't want to offend you—but there is something, that I like, even, so much better than the dress!

DORA. (*archly.*) What is that?

FRED. The person that's inside of it! (*Puts arm around her waist, lovingly*)

DORA. (*blushing.*) I hoped that it was—myself!

FRED. (*intensely happy.*) Ah! Ah!

DORA. (*intensely happy.*) Ah! Ah!

FRED. (*as Dora, after a while, tries to elude the embrace.*) Oh, don't break away yet.

(*She soon succeeds, and he looks all broken up*)

DORA. (*coquettishly.*) You see, this dress is very delicate material; too delicate, for you to have an arm around me, very long—(*Fred looks disconsolate*)—at a time.

FRED. (*despair turning to joy.*) Not, very long—at a time, eh? Ha, ha, then what's the matter with our going by boxing rules: three minute rounds—one minute intermissions.

DORA. Ha, ha, that isn't a bad idea.

FRED. When I call 'time', we will come to the scratch, for the first three minute round.

DORA. (*smiling.*) Exactly.

FRED. TIME. (*He embraces her, and taking out watch keeps tabs on the minutes*)

DORA. (*breaking away laughingly.*) I guess we had better go out and play our tennis now,— if we

don't you may forget all about it. (*She starts for door*)

FRED. (*following her beseechingly.*) Oh, please remain! I—I have something to say to you.

(*With a toss of her head, Dora leaves, but soon pokes her face in*)

DORA. (*tantalizingly.*) Don't forget to bring along the rackets and balls. (*Exit right*)

FRED. (*picking them up.*) Ah, her wondrous beauty! And the great love I bear her! have got me going,—and I am quite sure that, before our playing has proceeded very far, I will have to pop the question to her. (*Exit right*)

*Enter DIMPLE, rear: he had looked in twice while the lovers were there.*

DIMPLE. They have vacated finally! I am glad of it, for I want to do some writing. Dora, my darling child, seems to be conquered at last. Amongst all the dashing young fellows who call upon her, she has shown to none more than a passing fancy,—she is certainly in earnest however with this one. It pleases me well—for I liked him from the first. A fine stalwart young fellow! Just as I was at his age. Legitt, is his name: I never heard of it before, but I'll wager that he is all O-K both as to family and prospects. (*Proudly.*) If he is not, he shall not have her: for I, John Dimple—rich stockbroker—must have nothing but a fitting son-in-law. The first thing that I must do is to write my daily stock-market letter. This letter has gotten to be a feature of the financial district: my long experience and sound judgement, enable me to rightly forecast many ups and downs of prices. The lambs eagerly clamber for it, under the belief that it will help them in their frantic efforts to make easy money:—and it does help them: (*laughing*) or rather, as much as anything can, when we consider that Wall street—as the outsiders strongly suspect and we insiders actually know—is nothing but a sucker game. (*Sits at a desk and takes pen and paper*) What shall I say in today's letter? (*thinks*) Well, here goes. (*Writes letter, and reads it aloud while writing.*)

"The stock market had a firm tone today, and it looks like going higher. Prices are high—in fact they look frightfully high to people who live in furnished rooms. The people however who really make prices—men of large wealth and large ideas—never amuse themselves with cheap things: so we may expect their pet securities to be fixed at very high figures. Buy on slight reactions.

Yours truly,

John Dimple & Co."

There, that I think will do quite well.—Now to attend to some social correspondence. (*Looks over mail*)

*Re-enter FRED and DORA, right: they show elation because of seeing DIMPLE, and fondly embrac-*



ing, start to go to him; not being yet seen by DIMPLE.

DORA. (*skipping happily.*) Oh Papa, you are just the man, I was looking for!

DIMPLE. (*laughing.*) Just the man, eh? my dear!—How do you do, Mr. Legitt? Very glad to see you, again! (*They shake hands*)

FRED. In the best of health and spirits—thank you—Mr Dimple! I hope you are very well?

DIMPLE. Excellent! Never felt better in my life.—Well, Dora, what can I do for you?

DORA. (*stammering.*) I—I want to ask—or rather F-Fred, Mr. Legitt, does—a favor, a very great favor, of you!

DIMPLE. Ah, I am delighted to be of service, Mr. Legitt! What is it?

(*Fred shows comic timidity, and Dora sic's him on*)

FRED. I—I—want—Confound it, I lack the nerve to tell you!

DIMPLE. Ah, you are a little squeamish, about it—but you will soon get over that.

FRED. (*lugubriously.*) I hope so,—but it will take a few minutes—I will have to come to it gradually.

DIMPLE. And I will try and help you along.—Perhaps, you want me to give you a good thing?

FRED. (*eagerly.*) Y—yes, that is substantially what it amounts to!

DIMPLE. Ha, ha, I thought so,—for a shrewd man, an astute man, is always on the lookout, for a race horse, that is going to win at a fancy price, or a low-priced railroad stock, that is going to have a big rise.

FRED. Yes, that's true in some cases—but, but—

DIMPLE. (*interrupting.*) Never mind the buts, Fred.—(*Produces, and hands him a paper.*) This is a list of splendid railroad stocks, that are selling for a song—buy any one of them, for a big and quick profit. (*Tapping Fred friendly on shoulder*) Now I have given you a good thing!

FRED. (*dubiously.*) Y—yes, you have—thank you! but not *the one* that I wanted you to.

DIMPLE. (*surprised.*) Ah, you already have something in view!

FRED. (*looking straight at Dora.*) Yes, I have something in view! (*Ardently*) Far better than a sure winner in stocks or in the ponies! And I began to say so, when—

DIMPLE. I interrupted you,—I understand.

FRED. But I can't get it, nor do I want to, without your approval—your consent.

DIMPLE. Ah, that speech removes my perplexity: you wanted me to give it to you, in the sense, of giving my approval—before you consummate the deal: (*tickled*) I feel highly flattered by your confidence in my financial acumen!

DORA. (*impatiently.*) Oh father, you don't understand, at all—if you don't tell him, Fred; I will!

DIMPLE. (*annoyed.*) Don't butt in, Dora, or

you will make me forget a few pertinent questions, to Fred, that I have in mind.—Mr. Legitt, the property, or whatever it is, is it in good shape?

FRED. Good shape? (*looks Dora over.*) Its shape is simply out of sight!

DIMPLE. Not—to use a trite expression—not run down at the heels?

FRED. (*looking at Dora's high heels.*) Exactly the contrary, sir!

DIMPLE. And lastly, but most important of all—not at all likely to go into the hands of a receiver?

FRED. On the contrary, likely to go into the hands—or rather into the arms—of a receiver—right now!

DIMPLE. The arms of a receiver?—Ah, I think that I am beginning to get you—ha, ha, ha.

DORA. (*coily.*) Of course you are, papa! 'And this delay—caused partly by Fred's bashfulness, and partly by the fun of the thing—must end now:—Speak out like a man, Fred.

FRED. Well then, here goes. Mr. Dimple, I love Dora! I have asked her to be my wife—providing that I can get your approval and consent.

DIMPLE. (*twirling his watch chain.*) Ah, you love and would wed, my daughter—Mr. Legitt. You do me much honor—and so forth. To begin with: How do you know that your love for my child, will be enduring—and not a mere passing fancy?

FRED. (*puzzled.*) How do I know it? Well I DO know it, that's all: (*convincingly*) I know that it will endure forever!

DIMPLE. Dora, do you love this young man?

DORA. (*blushing.*) Yes, dear papa!

DIMPLE. Are you quite sure of it? Don't you think that a little more time is necessary, to show that your feelings will not change?

DORA. (*earnestly.*) No, they never can change!

DIMPLE. My darling child! I ask you this, because in this crisis in your life, I must be as careful about your future happiness, as your dear lamented mother would be, were she alive.

DORA. Ah, dear, dear mother!

DIMPLE. Well, dear Fred and dear Dora, I must say that I am highly pleased! for I have watched your courtship, with feelings of joy and satisfaction. But I had no idea that it had come to a betrothal—When did it happen?

DORA. Well you see we went out to play tennis—

FRED. Only ostensibly, for that; but really, to play cupid's game.

DIMPLE. Ha, ha, and then Fred proposed—Dora accepted—both conditional on my approval—and you rushed into the house to get that.

FRED. & DORA. Ha, Ha, exactly.

DIMPLE. Now, Mr. Legitt; before rendering my decision, I will take the liberty of asking you a few questions—which seem to me to be very important. First: In regard to your family?

FRED. My family, are respectable, but poor.

DIMPLE. (*visibly disappointed.*) Ah, I imagined



that they were blue-blooded and rich! And respectable is but a slight offset for this:—your answer is a distinct disappointment.

FRED. (*miffed.*) I can't help it, sir.

DIMPLE. But perhaps you have gained, or are likely to gain, high social standing and wealth, by your own efforts: please tell me of your occupation and prospects?

FRED. I am a professional baseball player, sir. My salary is four thousand dollars a year,—with very good prospects of a quick increase.

DIMPLE. (*disappointed again.*) A professional baseball player! Only that: and humble parentage—Oh, I cannot, will not, give my consent to the match! (*Sternly*) Dora, did you know anything of these facts?

DORA. (*grieved and dismayed.*) Yes, papa.

DIMPLE. (*severely.*) Then why did you accept this youth's attentions! Or even allow him to call upon you!

DORA. (*coaxingly.*) Why, dear papa, he looked very good to me—(*ruefully*) and I thought he would to you eventually. (that is after we were engaged); but I knew that you would make a big fuss first.

DIMPLE. (*angrily.*) I will make a big fuss, first—last—and all the time!—Now Mr. Legitt, as regards you: do you think that you have done quite the honorable thing?

FRED. In what way, sir?

DIMPLE. Why didn't you think that I expected Dora to wed a man of her own class?

FRED. I undoubtedly did—from what I had heard of you.

DIMPLE. Yet, you kept from me the fact that you are not in her class.

FRED. (*spiritedly.*) Well, I am one of the baseball fraternity! Those big-hearted, whole-souled fellows! And that is certainly *some* class.

DORA. Besides, papa, I told Mr. Legitt, that, although you were an enthusiast on baseball, he had best, for a while, not speak of his occupation.

FRED. And I dissented—thinking it best to tell you.

DORA. Yes—but finally, owing to my persuasion, gave in.

DIMPLE. (*with dignity.*) Well, Mr. Legitt, you have had your say: and now will you do me the kindness to leave the house—and never enter it again.

DORA. (*wildly*) What—?

FRED. (*proudly.*) Yes, you have my promise. (*Starts to go*)

DIMPLE. Wait a second.—And never again to speak to Dora?

FRED. (*wincing.*) I don't know whether I could keep such a promise, even if made.

DIMPLE. You must make it; and you can and must, keep it.

FRED. (*mournfully.*) Well, I will try. (*starts to leave*)

DORA. (*wildly and tearfully, after running to Fred, and clutching him.*) Why dear papa, I thought you liked baseball and baseball players!

DIMPLE. (*recalling a forgotten fact.*) Yes; I do, I do!

DORA. You go to a game, almost every other day, and you seem so enthusiastic, when you return—and you are always talking about it to your gentlemen friends, and to me.

DIMPLE. (*enthusing.*) Ah, like the most of men, I love the sport! In fact, I would rather go to a good ballgame than to eat!

DORA. You know the game thoroughly: and of course are able to appreciate the fine points made in the playing.

DIMPLE. Yes, I am what is called, *a fan*.

DORA. You even know many of the players, by name: and often return, enthusiastic, over some exploit or stunt, that one or more of them has performed.

DIMPLE. (*enthusing more.*) Yes, that is *pie*, for me! (*Reminiscent*) Why, only yesterday—

DORA. (*eagerly.*) Oh yes, what was that you were so delighted over yesterday!

DIMPLE. (*with enthusiasm.*) Why, it was the finish of the game: the Champion Giants looked like sure losers—with only one man on the bases, two of their batters already put out, and the visiting club one run in the lead—when up comes to the bat the right-fielder, a big fine-looking fellow: I can't recall his name; but he is a new prodigy, who recently joined the club. The pitcher tosses him the ball, and he misses it, and the umpire calls 'one strike'—this happens again: and only one more failure to hit, spells defeat:—the pitcher again tosses—ah, I am all unstrung—when with a whiff, and a bang, the bat connects squarely with the ball, driving it way out into center field—and around the bases flies the hero—scoring the winning run! By jove, it was the finest thing I ever saw done! I say right here, that fellow can have anything I have got—and I mean it!

DORA. Oh papa, it must have been grand! Your vivid recital carried me away! (*Proudly*) I think, Mr. Legitt said he belonged to the Champion Giants, papa! Wasn't that the name F-Fred?

FRED. Yes, I am their—right-fielder.

DIMPLE. (*aghast.*) Why you don't say so Legitt! I thought there was a familiar look about you! (*looking him over*) Hah, I believe you are the very man that brought in that winning run.

FRED. Yes, Mr Dimple, I am the identical man.

DORA. (*skipping happily.*) Oh what a romantic surprise—my Fred is that hero! (*Goes to her father.*) So, *that fellow* can have anything you have got, eh? Well that fellow picks me—don't you Fred?

FRED. (*ecstatically.*) Certainly! Of course!

DIMPLE. (*perturbed.*) Oh, that is nonsensical.

DORA. Was not that your emphatically made offer?

DIMPLE. Y-Yes—but I spoke it in the exuberance of the moment: it is not binding.

DORA. And yet you often proudly say that you brokers trade in millions without any writing—that your word is as good as your bond.

DIMPLE. (*proudly.*) Yes, that's gospel truth! We brokers are all fond of fun; and often say things that are meant as a joke, and are taken that way: but when we say a thing, and really mean it—our word IS as good as our bond.

DORA. Well, you really meant this; didn't you?

DIMPLE. Y-Yes,—but Dora, for you to marry a mere professional baseball player, is simply not to be thought of,—although I am sorry: and disappointed too, for I had set my heart on Fred as a son-in-law!

DORA. (*embracing her father.*) Dear Papa, why is it impossible?

DIMPLE. (*fondles her, then sternly.*) Think of my pride!

DORA. Oh, *pride*, fiddlesticks! it is nothing but *prejudice*!

DIMPLE. Prejudice?

DORA. Yes, and I will prove it. You don't object to Fred's occupation, on the ground of its being disreputable, do you?

DIMPLE. Not at all—it is respectable enough.

DORA. But, while the salary is lucrative, it can never bring wealth,—nor social standing, (for that comes alone from wealth). Herein lies the real objection to his occupation, doesn't it?

DIMPLE. (*abashed.*) I—I guess that's about it—in a nutshell.

DORA. Then, doesn't that show clearly that you have—that which is so prevalent with the rich—the proud man's prejudice against the humble man?

DIMPLE. (*visibly touched, then reflecting.*) By jove, Dora, you might be right—and I begin to feel that you are right! (*After a pause, to Fred*) So, take her, Fred my boy; she is yours!

FRED. (*rushing and embracing.*) My own darling Dora!

DORA. My own dear Fred!

FRED. (*embracing again.*) Oh, I am inexpressibly happy!

DORA. (*naively.*) The same way here!

DIMPLE. (*supremely happy.*) Well you both certainly *look it*—my beloved!

DORA. (*embracing her father.*) Oh you dear kind grand papa!

FRED. Oh how I thank you, Mr. Dimple, for this rare gift! (*They shake hands warmly.*) I shall, sir, further show my deep sense of gratitude, by being in every way worthy of Dora! And the high social position she occupies.

DIMPLE. I have perfect faith in you, Fred!

FRED. Isn't it delightful, that you, (my father-in-law, to be), are a lover of the National Game!

DIMPLE. Isn't it delightful, that you, (my son-in-law, to be), are one of its bright particular stars!

FRED. (*embracing Dora.*) Oh, Dora, darling! it will be an easy task—because it will be a blissful task—to make you a loving, adoring and devoted husband!

DORA. (*gayly.*) Just as easy as rolling off a log!

(Curtain)









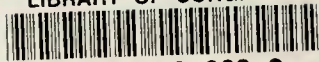








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