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OF PLAYS**

The Guest Retainer

Price, 35 cents



WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
BOSTON

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BAKER, Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

The Guest Retainer.

A Farce in Three Acts

By

CARL WEBSTER PIERCE

Author of "A Lady to Call," etc.

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The Guest Retainer

CHARACTERS

H. O. TELL } *proprietors of the Hotel Jerskeet.*
T. A. VERNE }
IMA BRAYER.
CASSANDRA MCARTY.
OWEN COFFIN.
RICHARD ARCHIBALD SIMPSON.
BIRDIE LARK, "*The Eaglet.*"
HOPPER.

SYNOPSIS

SCENE. Lobby of the Hotel Jerskeet, somewhere in New Jersey.
ACT I. Morning of July 15.
ACT II. Two weeks later.
ACT III. Morning of August 15.

PLAYS TWO HOURS



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OCT -9 1920

no 1

The Guest Retainer

ACT I

SCENE.—Lobby of Hotel Jerskeet, morning of July 15. Hotel desk L. Telephone, register, account book, and large number of bills on desk. House telephone and mail rack on wall behind desk. Divan R. C. Chairs scattered around. Furnishings not very elegant or complete. Entrances C. by wide arched doorway; R. from veranda; and L., just above desk, by door marked "Private." TELL discovered on stool behind desk, fluttering bills. Telephone rings.

TELL (*savagely*). Hello! . . . What? . . . No! (*Slams up receiver and turns to bills again.*) What's the use of living!

(*Crumples up bills and stuffs them into drawer. Opens account book and pores over it. VERNE heard off C. whistling "In the Good Old Summertime."*)

Enter VERNE, C.

VERNE (*casually*). How they coming this morning, Harry?

TELL (*glaring at him*). Don't talk to me; I'm about crazy.

VERNE. What's on your mind—anything special?

TELL. Ye gods! Have you no sense of responsibility whatever? You've been wandering around here long enough doing nothing but ask "What's worrying you?" If you don't give a darn about yourself, think of the mess that you have gotten me into.

VERNE (*sprawls lazily on divan*). Keep cool, Harry. What's the specific complaint to-day?

TELL (*pulls bills from drawer*). Look at this. Bills, bills, bills! I don't think that I've ever seen so many in my life as I have this summer; and they are all higher than ever. Business is on the blink. The only thing that progresses around here is the debit account. This thing is getting on my nerves.

VERNE (*calmly*). Let's see, season's about a quarter gone; capital most gone; practically no guests to go. If something doesn't happen, and happen soon, we might as well close up and go ourselves. That's about the situation, isn't it?

TELL. You must be crazy to be able to talk so coolly. When you were seized with the brilliant idea of taking over this old, run-down dump and making a paying proposition of it, in common language, I think that there was nobody home (*taps his head*)—that you were numb from the shoulders up.

VERNE. Now don't you worry, my boy. You have seen me try my hand at a variety of things, and I've never failed yet, have I?

TELL. Well, you've met your Waterloo this trip.

VERNE. Cheer up. Leave it to me. I'll soon find out what the trouble is.

TELL. Don't you know? Look at the register and you will "soon find out."

VERNE. Ah! that's an inspiration; I believe that all we need is a few more guests.

TELL. What a marvelous deduction! It's queer, but I arrived at that conclusion some time ago.

VERNE. Well then, let's start in and get some.

TELL (*dryly*). I'm willing, if you are; but how shall we go about it?

VERNE. I think that advertising —

TELL (*exploding again*). I have my thoughts about advertising, too. If we had all the coin you have put into advertising without getting a single soul to stay here even over night, we could settle our bills with it.

VERNE. We must look around for some novel idea—

something that will attract the summer people in mobs—something original.

TELL. And how in the name of the Seven Sutherland Sisters can you get people to a summer hotel in New Jersey? Who in blazes wants to come here for a vacation? I guess that we were suckers to buy this place. You were a fool to put your money into it, and I was a fool to let you convince me that it was the best investment I could make. All my ducats gone for sand and mosquitoes! That's all there is in this place.

VERNE. You have heard the saying that things go by threes, haven't you? We need something to make up the trio, so why not have guests? Sand, mosquitoes, and guests. How's that?

TELL. If you can get any honest-to-goodness guests in this place, you have more brains than I give you credit for.

VERNE. To tell you the truth, I've been worried, too. But what's the use? Worry will only land you in the cemetery. Now I'll tell you a secret. I've a corking good scheme in mind; in fact, it's under way. I am now awaiting developments.

TELL. Not interested. I'm sick and tired of your everlasting schemes.

VERNE (*enthusiastically*). This is a good one. It is going to bring us some honest-to-goodness guests.

TELL. I hope so from the bottom of my heart.

Enter IMA BRAYER C., carrying half a dozen newspapers under her arm. She is dressed very mannishly; stiff collar, plain waist and skirt, heavy square-toed boots. Her hair is brushed tightly back; and she wears tortoise shell glasses.

IMA. Gentlemen, read! (*Thrusts a paper into the hands of each.*) Did I not tell you that right would triumph? See, a woman has been appointed sheriff. Why shouldn't she be? A woman can stop crime quicker than a man. She can't be bribed. Man commits crime, and man bribes man to close his eyes. But a woman's eyes can't be closed.

TELL (*aside*). Nor her tongue stopped.

IMA. Down with tyrant man! Where is Mr. Coffin? I must spread the news. Mr. Coffin. Mr. Coffin. (*Exit R. Off stage.*) Down with tyrant man!

TELL. Whew! Some cyclone.

VERNE. She's not as bad as she seems.

TELL. Say, did you remark that you could get some *real* guests around here?

VERNE. I certainly did, brother.

TELL. I hope so. Look at what just blew out. What have we around here now? A half dozen or so of the worst old fossils I have ever seen, and an assortment of the most marvelous females in existence. Look at that old scribbler who is always talking about love, heaven-made matches and all that sort of slush every time I get within hailing distance. You are immune because she knows that you are married, but it's torture for me. I have to run and dodge and hide from sunrise to sunset.

VERNE (*laughs*). Oh Harry, Harry! If you would only cultivate a sense of humor. You don't act a bit like yourself lately, you gloomy old grouch. Why not be light-hearted and care-free like yours truly?

TELL. I'd like to see you retain your sweet disposition if you were hounded at every step by that two-penny authoress. Of all the sentimental slush. And I'm a married man. Do you realize that? I've been married scarcely a year, and you force me to carry on a flirtation with every forlorn female here.

VERNE. I wish that you could see yourself as others see you when Cassie gets you cornered. It's a sight for the gods. Really, it's what keeps me as cheerful as I am.

TELL. You can't begin to realize what agony it is. You might at least tell her that I'm married. (*VERNE laughs.*) I was a fool to promise you that I wouldn't change her impression on that score. What made her think that I am not, in the first place?

VERNE. Don't you know? Thought I told you. She asked me pointblank if you were married, and I told her no for the sake of the business.

TELL. Of all the nerve. Wouldn't my wife like that?

VERNE. You would forgive me if you could have seen her face when I told her. She was so happy. It would be a shame to break the illusion; and besides, if she were to learn the truth now she would leave immediately, and we can't afford to have that happen. She pays in advance every Monday, you know.

TELL. That is all that helps me stand it. I'm not crazy over being used as an entertainment bureau around here.

VERNE. We have got to make an attempt to hold the guests we have, and it is up to you to be the Romeo of this place.

TELL. Why don't some of your old fossils forget their gout, lumbago, checkers, playwriting and other afflictions for a while, and make things lively? This hotel is deader than the village graveyard.

VERNE. Don't you worry; I'll guarantee that things will be very different very soon.

TELL. I don't know what you have up your sleeve now, but I hope that it pans out O. K.

VERNE. We've got to make it agreeable for each and every guest we have to make a go of this place. We can't afford to lose one of them. I'm doing the best I can to keep affairs running smoothly. Take Miss Mc-Arty, for instance. I took pains to inform her that you were in the eligible class, and she sees great possibilities and therefore stays. Were it not for you she would get restless and drift away.

TELL. You can bet your bottom dollar that I won't last out the rest of the season.

VERNE. You won't have to. My new idea will let you loose very soon.

TELL. That is welcome news, but it is probably the best part of the plan.

VERNE. Listen, how much will you bet that I don't make a match between that retired undertaker and old suffragette Brayer?

TELL. What! You couldn't hire her to say two words pleasantly to any man.

VERNE. You leave it to me. The only reason that she

"hates" men so, is that she has never been successful in landing one. You watch the old undertaker vanish that "tyrant man" stuff. All this week I have been keeping them together as much as possible,—no one is aware of it of course, but I have gone out of my way to do it. This morning at breakfast he requested to be changed to her table. See my idea? Keep every one happy and they will stay.

TELL. Well I'll be darned.

VERNE. That merely illustrates how I can handle things on a small scale. Now my scheme will take care of them *en masse*.

TELL. How? Spring it.

VERNE. You will know soon. By this plan of mine guests will come flocking here in mobs, and you and I will sit back and smoke clear Havanas.

(*Rises and strolls carelessly around.*)

TELL. Tom, you are the most easy-going critter I know of. You almost inspire confidence. Here's hoping that you have figured so that we can get out of this mess with whole pocketbooks.

VERNE. Our pocketbooks will be stuffed, my boy. Don't you worry about that. I cut out worrying the day I was born; it never does any good.

TELL. Won't you let me in on the great plot which is to save our bacon?

VERNE. You will know before the day is over. For once you seem really interested in what I say.

TELL. I'll try to be, but you have such wild dreams——

VERNE. This one is a pip. (*Goes toward R. entrance.*)

TELL. I wish that I had your assurance; I don't know but I should say *nerve* or *gall*.

VERNE. Watch me, then you'll know how next time.

Enter IMA, R., brandishing newspapers. She pushes VERNE out of her way, and stops C.

IMA. Where is every one? I can't find a soul to whom I can break the glorious news. Tyrant man is being

conquered! Miss McArty, Mr. Coffin, Mr. Coffin! (*Exit c.; off stage.*) Down with tyrant man!

TELL. And you think that she would marry a retired undertaker! You've got another think coming.

VERNE. You wait and see. He has fallen for her pretty hard, and when she wakes up and realizes it, she'll fall for him harder still. It takes some time for anything to penetrate that "tyrant man" stuff because she has used it so long. But it is merely camouflage. See if I'm not right.

TELL. Some of the characters here are positively funny, are they not? I wonder what Barnum and Bailey would give us for the lot.

VERNE (*enthusiastically*). Now you're talking, old man. Your soft music sob stuff gets on my nerves. There's plenty to laugh at around here. Just keep on with your sight-seeing tour.

TELL. I'll try to. In the meanwhile you hustle that plan along to where I can horn in on it.

VERNE. Leave it to me. (*Starts to exit R. but stops suddenly.*) Good-night! Guess I'll go through the office. (*Crosses to L.*)

TELL. What's the trouble?

VERNE. Cassie is on the horizon headed this way.

TELL (*in mock terror*). Tom, don't desert me in a time of trouble. Stay here with me.

VERNE. Sorry, but I stood all that I could last night. I guess you will have to face the music alone. (*Shakes hands very seriously.*) Good luck. [*Exit L.*]

Enter CASSANDRA MCARTY, R. She is dressed very extravagantly; her person is overloaded with jewelry; wears eye-glasses with wide black ribbon streaming from them; is much older than she will dress or admit. Carries manuscript under arm.

CAS. (*effusively*). Oh, *bon jour*, my dear Mr. Tell. How are you this divine morning?

TELL. I'm very well, thank you; and also very busy.

(*Buries face in ledger.*)

CAS. I have been up since five o'clock. It thrills one so to commune with nature while the babe is still "dewy with sleep" and the earth—er—sleepy with dew.

(Sits in chair up c.)

TELL. Yes. (*Adding his accounts.*) Twenty-six fifty—thirty-nine seventy-five—one hundred fifty —

CAS. I won't disturb you but a second. You have so kindly advised me on my manuscript before that I thought perhaps you would be willing to criticize this passage. Oh dear, I *do* hope this story will be as successful as was my "Hearts at Sea."

TELL (*without looking up*). I'm sure it will be.

CAS. I am putting my greatest effort into it.

TELL. Then of course it can't miss fire.

CAS. If it is a success, do you know I think that not I alone will deserve the credit.

TELL (*without interest*). Who will?

CAS. (*gushingly*). Why, *you!* My dear Mr. Tell, you must realize that you are almost as important as the hero of my story. (*She approaches desk. TELL straightens up, his eyes rolling in search of a way of escape.*) Your advice on the book has been priceless; and, besides that, I feel that I have made a really worthwhile acquaintance.

TELL (*confused*). Er—er—I'm very pleased to have met you.—Come again.

CAS. We must get down to business now; I don't wish to detain you. (*Goes to divan and spreads out manuscript; TELL looks wildly about.*) Here is the passage on which I wish your opinion.

TELL. Let 'er go.

(*Closes ledger with a slam. Stands with elbows on counter, chin on hands, eyes half closed.*)

CAS. This is the letter which Lord Islington sends to Lady Deerington the morning after his proposal is accepted. You remember that passionate scene, do you not, Mr. Tell? Now I would like to know if, in your judg-

ment, this epistle fully lives up to the verve and spirit of that scene. (*Sits on divan. Reads very affectedly.*) "To my own darling sweetheart: Oh, how happy I am to be able to call you sweetheart. There seems to be music everywhere, and all creation is singing your name. The little birds chirp it; the limpid brook gurgles it; the mighty waves roar it; the sighing tree-tops whisper it. (*Sighs ecstatically. In an awed whisper.*) Isn't that perfectly rapturous, Mr. Tell?"

TELL (*in a serious drawl*). Sure is. Say, Miss Mc-Arty, couldn't you get something about the fishes in between the waves and the tree-tops?

CAS. Thank you for the suggestion. (*Studies manuscript a moment.*) I'm afraid that would be a *little* too much. I don't want to overdo it in the least. Won't you come and sit beside me while I finish the letter? It would be so comfortable for you. You are forced to stand there so much.

TELL. I can hear all right from here, thank you.

CAS. Now don't you be so shy. I refuse to continue until you come over. (*Coyly.*) Come on, don't make me coax you.

(TELL *crosses with a sigh, and sits on extreme end of divan. CAS. is greatly pleased.*)

TELL. Let 'er go.

CAS. Please tell me if you consider this excerpt soulful enough. (*Reads.*) "Before, all was cold and dreary, but now it is warmth and sunshine just because you love me." (*Turns squarely to TELL with a sigh. He runs back to desk.*) Don't you think that the sentiment is beautiful? Ah me, romance is stirring to the ever youthful soul! I feel deep sympathy for those poor creatures who have never had romance in their lives.

TELL. That's great. I guess Lady Deerington will fall for that stuff, all right.

CAS. I'm so glad that your criticism is favorable.

TELL. Where do you get your inspiration, Miss Mc-Arty? When I was in school I couldn't get around a two page composition in less than a week.

CAS. Sometimes it just comes to you. At first, I

didn't think that I was going to like it here at all. I couldn't get settled down to writing; in fact I had about decided to leave, when suddenly I had an inspirational attack. Thoughts came in floods upon floods, swifter than my pen could transcribe. Let me see, it was about the time I became acquainted with you, Mr. Tell. What a coincidence!

(She gazes earnestly at him. TELL blows nose, then looks at watch.)

TELL. What a fine day. I hope that to-morrow will be like it.

CAS. Mr. Tell, do you know I was much astonished to hear from Mr. Verne that you had not already entered the state of matrimonial bliss?

TELL *(looks nervously at watch)*. Some of Verne's superfluous talk.

CAS. What a husband you will make for some lucky girl. You are such a steady, sympathetic, understanding man. Have you any one in view?

TELL. No. Haven't even looked for one for a long time.

CAS. Oh my, I hope that I—that I may meet her in the future.

TELL. When do you intend to marry, Miss McArty?

CAS. Oh, Mr. Tell, what a foolish question. I—I'll wager you a hundred that I never marry!

TELL *(pulls out a wad of bills with a laugh)*. I'm a sport. I'll take you.

CAS. Will you, really? Then I have lost my bet already.

TELL. Don't! You may cause me to have an acute attack of heart disease.

CAS. *(confidentially)*. Do you know, I had a beautiful romance a few years ago. I was just seventeen. Dear boy, he ran away with a circus, and nearly broke my heart.

TELL *(aside)*. Lucky escape.

Enter IMA, c.

IMA. Down with tyrant man! *(Sees CAS.)* Miss

McArty, I have been looking for you everywhere. Have you heard the glorious news? (*Thrusts paper out to CAS.*) Here, read this. It will do your heart good. (*Sternly.*) Or *should*. I do wish that I could induce you to join our society. Why don't you? You have no more use for men than I.

CAS. Miss Brayer, don't you believe that there are exceptions? Once, when I was seventeen, I knew a young —

IMA. But a kind fate has given you your independence. You are far luckier than many of our sex. Come in with us. I do pity those who have not seen the vision.

TELL. I didn't know that women saw visions. I thought that the men had a corner on visions, pippins, dreams, peaches, chickens —

IMA (*coldly*). Really, your speech is beyond my comprehension.

CAS. Don't criticize, I beg of you. It is simply his individuality. I think that good American slang, as Mr. Tell uses it, is exceedingly quaint and charming. I may even put some of his expressions into the mouth of Lord Islington.

IMA. Lord Islington?

CAS. Yes. Don't you think that they would fit in somewhere, Mr. Tell?

TELL. I suppose it could be done. You're a cracker-jack at ink slinging, Miss McArty. (*Goes to desk.*)

CAS. (*to IMA*). Sit here a while with me. (*In a whisper.*) My dear, don't you think that he is perfectly marvelous? I shall model Lord Islington after him to quite an extent.

IMA. I beg pardon, but who is this Lord of whom you speak?

CAS. Oh, I thought you knew. He is the hero of my latest novel—the one I am now writing.

IMA. I see. I liked your last story very well except in one particular.

CAS. And that?

IMA. You did not show brute man at his worst. There was too much gloss.

CAS. I thought it best to be impartial.

IMA. I hope that you can work something about our noble cause into your present effort. What shall you entitle it?

CAS. I haven't quite decided. (*Beams at TELL.*) How do you think er—"True Love at Last" would be?

IMA. Bah! It is suggestive of that odious creature, man. Why not work your plot around my motto "Down with tyrant man"?

CAS. Perhaps—perhaps in the future, but not now. (*Glances at TELL.*) Ah, no, the source of my present inspiration keeps me from even considering the suggestion.

IMA. I don't know what the source is, but whatever it be, it cannot be an excuse for indulging in sentimentalities. You should permit nothing to sway you. I say now and forevermore, down with ty —

Enter OWEN COFFIN, R. He is a hale and hearty, robust man, about fifty years old; is partly bald, and of a florid complexion.

IMA (*stopping abruptly; warmly*). How do you do, Mr. Coffin? Good-morning.

COF. Good-morning, ladies.

IMA. I have been looking all over the place for you. I have some wonderful news. I know that you will appreciate it if some people don't. (*Glances at TELL and then at CAS. Hands paper to COF.*) Read that.

COF. Well, well, my friend, that is good news. I hope your good fortune continues. You have interested me greatly in your cause, and I most heartily support it.

IMA. Yes, Miss McArty, as you remarked a while ago, there are exceptions.

COF. It is uncanny the way you have interested me in a subject that two weeks ago I would have uncompromisingly vetoed. I can't understand it.

IMA. I can. Truth and justice have overwhelmed you.

COF. I am inclined to believe that it is the bearer of that truth who is responsible.

IMA (*dropping her mask completely for a moment*). Oh, Mr. Coffin! (*Catching herself; stiffly.*) I am confident that some day you will see a woman in the president's chair.

COF. It sounds quite possible and logical when you say it, Miss Brayer.

IMA (*to CAS.*). Again I say that you are correct.

CAS. (*who has been looking through paper*). Good gracious! Will you listen to this! (*Reads.*) "Famous actress admits that she proposed to her husband. Read her article in the Sunday Supplement."

COF. She certainly had her assurance with her. I suppose that she could do it, but it seems a little out of the order of events. A little more maidenly reserve suits me. Let the men do the stuttering proposal and leave the blushing acceptance to the ladies.

IMA. I don't agree with you on that point, Mr. Coffin. If woman is truly man's equal, you should concede that the equality holds at all times. Why shouldn't a woman propose if she wants a man?—I say *if*. We have got to overthrow foolish customs, and might as well begin at once. (*Smiles earnestly at COF.*)

COF. Er—er—I wouldn't be too precipitate. The fair sex should go in for such things gradually.

IMA. Don't try to make me believe that you are bound down by convention and precedent so that you are unwilling to countenance any changing of the old order, Mr. Coffin, for I know better.

CAS. It all depends upon the case. Individual cases should be considered from their own peculiar points. We should be tolerant.

IMA. Your philosophy is broadening, my dear. I know that you will soon be one of us.

CAS. I once knew a man whose wife divorced him because he refused to let his mother-in-law visit them. He had read all the terrible newspaper jokes about mothers-in-law and took them seriously. He should have awaited the outcome of his own experience. Generalities don't always hold.

IMA. Poor abused mothers-in-law! If I should ever

have a mother-in-law I would worship her as a saint. What a wonderful woman she would be to have a son that I would marry!

COF. Help! This is getting too deep for me. (*Crosses to desk.*) I say, Tell, have you the returns from the races yet?

TELL. Not yet. They should be in soon.

Enter VERNE, L. Has newspaper in pocket.

VERNE. Good-morning, every one. Why don't you all go out on the beach and see the air-ship? It is right in front of the hotel now, and is going up very soon.

CAS. Come on, let's all go. Miss Brayer, if he should fall, that would be "down with tyrant man" with a vengeance, wouldn't it?

VERNE. Haven't you heard? This is a woman—an aviatrix—who has recently blossomed forth. No one knows who she is; the papers refer to her as the "Eaglet," and they are all trying for a scoop on her identity.

IMA. Again woman rises supreme.

CAS. How romantic. I do want to see that dear little butterfly of the heavens.

COF. Young and pretty, I suppose.

IMA (*sharply*). Not necessarily. Let's get started.

CAS. Can't you come with us, Mr. Tell?

TELL. Sorry, but I have some mail to attend to.

CAS. Good-bye for a while, Mr. Tell.

[*Exeunt COF., IMA and CAS., R.*]

TELL. Ye gods, what a relief. Say, I'm beginning to think you are right about Coffin and Brayer.

VERNE. Sure, I'm always right. They show signs of mutual admiration, to put it mildly.

TELL. But dash your top-lights for wishing that cracked story-grinder on to me. She sticks tighter than glue. She'd fall for anything that wore pants.

VERNE. Cheer up, things will soon be all right.

TELL. Put on a new record, will you?

VERNE. Honestly, things are coming out fine. I've got my advertising scheme under way.

TELL. Then let me in on it.

VERNE (*takes paper from pocket*). Read this.

TELL. The paper again! I'll say that that dirty yellow sheet has been used two cents' worth this morning. (*Reads a moment with puzzled expression.*) You raving idiot. Don't you know what food costs now? We are better off with the few guests we have now than we will be if you get an answer to that.

VERNE. Pretty catchy ad, isn't it?

TELL. Catchy? It'll help us catch it in the neck. (*Reads.*) "Wanted: An up-to-date young man to become a regular guest, with board, room and all privileges for five dollars a week. Must be a gentleman of good education, and up on the latest dances, gossip, fashions, and games. The faster he can talk, the better. Apply to T. A. Verne, Hotel Jerskeet."

VERNE. That sounds original, doesn't it?

TELL. Holy jumping mackerel! Don't you know that our price is as low as we can make it and live?

VERNE. Just a minute. Let me explain.

TELL. Do it, if you can.

VERNE. Do you want a vacation from the attentions of our fair friend, Miss McArty?

TELL. I'll have one up with Saint Peter soon if I don't get relief.

VERNE. What is it that Ima and Cassie and the weepy widow and all the rest of that bunch are looking for? Isn't it a real live man who will make a fuss over them?

TELL. You don't have to keep me going at this infernal pace. They'll stay, now that they are here.

VERNE. Sure they will, *if* you keep up your end of the game. You've been holding them, Bob, old stocking, and as sure as you let down some of them will flutter away; nevertheless, I think that you deserve a rest.

TELL. Break the news gently. What has softened your heart?

VERNE. Here's my large idea. These old used-to-was individuals will flood the country with the info. that there is a regular guy here who makes a fuss over all the discards of the matrimonial market. Then watch. We'll have suffrage conventions, the Order of Ancient Author-

esses, the Forlorn Widows Forum, and everything else making the Hotel Jerskeet their headquarters, or I'm a bum guesser. See the idea of the ad?

TELL. Gosh, that sounds fishier than the story you used to sell Arctic oil stock.

VERNE. There's a regular gold mine in this stunt. It won't be any expense to us. The five dollars will cover most of the cost of his food, and he will soon be bringing in much more than that.

TELL. Suppose we will get an answer to the ad? It sounds pretty queer, you've got to admit.

VERNE. Ah, my son, let's talk biz. Listen, I've got a regular response to the "Maiden's Prayer" waiting in the office. Some parlor cootie saw that appeal for help as soon as it was off the press, and has applied for the position.

TELL. Well, I'll be hanged. Rush him in quick!

VERNE. He's a real rah-rah boy, a pink tea lizard. He's our one best bet. (*Crosses to door, L., and calls.*) Simpson, out here, please. (*To TELL.*) I am sure that we will land him. (*Enter RICHARD ARCHIBALD SIMPSON, L. He is "dolled up" to the extreme limit. Panama hat with bright colored band; shirt with wide black and white stripes; trousers well above shoe-tops, displaying brilliant purple socks; flaming red tie; yellow silk handkerchief trailing from breast pocket; kid gloves; wrist watch; tan shoes; carries slender gold-headed walking-stick.*) Mr. Richard Archibald Simpson—my partner, Mr. Tell.

(TELL and SIM. greet each other.)

SIM. Well, gents, I guess that I have all the qualifications called for. What's the string to the proposition? There is one of course. Let's get down to details.

TELL. I'm interested in the particulars, too, Tom. Shoot 'em.

VERNE. It is a long story, boys. Gather some chairs. (*VERNE goes to desk and gets long document. All draw chairs c. and sit.*) We'll take up the ad first. Tell us about your education.

SIM. It took three of the best prep. schools in the country, to say nothing of private tutors, to get me into Harvard.

VERNE. Fine! Great!

SIM. It hindered my social life somewhat, to study, you see. Then I got kicked out of Harvard my Junior year.

VERNE. Education O. K. (*Looks at ad in paper.*) Let me see, how about the rest of this—the gossip, dances, games, and fashions?

SIM. I am a regular subscriber to “Town Topics,” “Vanity Fair,” and seven theatrical and movie publications.

VERNE. Ever read the “Atlantic Monthly”?

SIM. No, but I never miss a single issue of “Smart Set.”

TELL. You’re elected!

VERNE (*spreading out document*). Here is an agreement you will be expected to sign.

SIM. Let’s hear it.

TELL. Motion seconded.

VERNE (*reads*). “I,”—Let me insert your name; I know that you are the man for the place—(*Writes.*) “Mr. Richard Archibald Simpson,” (*reads*) “do hereby agree to act as Guest Retainer for the Hotel Jerskeet, for a trial period of thirty days, with right of renewal of contract at close of said trial period.”

SIM. That sounds all right; but what is a Guest Retainer? I have had personal encounter with “bouncers” in some public places, but a “retainer” is new to me.

TELL. It’s a terrible life.

VERNE (*to TELL*). Shut up. (*Reads.*) “During this time I am to receive equal treatment with other guests as regards board, room and miscellaneous privileges. I agree to carry out to the best of my ability the following rules and regulations: First: This contract is to be kept absolutely secret.” Get that. No one is to be aware of the fact that you have anything to do with us but pay your bills.

SIM. Certainly. I would prefer to give that impres-

sion. I'm long on accomplishments, but rather short on money just at present.

VERNE (*reads*). "Second: I am to pick out the wall-flowers on the ballroom floor every evening, and entertain them to the best of my ability, but not dance or promenade with the same lady more than twice in the same evening, except with the express permission of my employers." We'll modify that for the present. Until business picks up we will make it, say, four times. (*Reads.*) "Third: I am to be present on the veranda immediately after dinner and there to slowly meander up and down, devoting myself to those who in the rush of the day have been noticed as fixtures and general adornments in whatever functions the hotel guests may happen to disport themselves."

SIM. A-ha! I begin to understand the meaning of "Guest Retainer."

TELL. Some job.

SIM. I'll say you said it. SOME job!

VERNE (*reads*). "Fourth: I am to make a specialty of being agreeable at all times to all widows, suffragettes, authoresses, and to any females who may seem lonely and disconsolate."

SIM. Oh, boy! This job is a pipe.

TELL. Hold your horses. You'll soon find out. I look a darn sight healthier than you, but my constitution is weakened after less than a month of it on a small scale.

VERNE (*reads*). "Fifth: I am at all times between five A. M. and midnight under the command of either of my employers. Sixth: In the event of my contracting a wealthy marriage as a result of my attentions, I am to pay to Messrs. Verne and Tell, within one year, five per cent of the lady's reputed fortune."

TELL. Fine! Fine! Now we are getting sense; but do you think that any one who sports a check-book would put up here?

VERNE. The future is yet unborn, sonny. (*Reads.*) "Seventh: In the event of my breaking the terms of this contract I am to pay the full price of lodgings and board

at the Hotel Jerskeet for time spent there, and in addition, a copy of this contract, together with my name and photograph, is to be handed to the newspapers." That's all, my friend.

TELL. For the love of Mike, what did you eat for breakfast?

SIM. Sounds pretty good to me. Pass it over until I sign. (*Signs.*)

VERNE. Now you witness it, Harry. (*TELL signs and then VERNE. Clock in distance strikes.*) Listen, it's just eleven by the town clock. This contract holds until eleven o'clock the morning of August fifteenth. Are you agreed?

SIM. Done. Shake on it. (*All shake hands.*)

VERNE. Remember now, this is just between Tom, Dick and Harry.

SIM. Right you are. Some noble trio.

TELL. Think of the first syllable of your last name, Simp-son. That's you, all right. I'm nearly all in from doing half the things you have signed up for.

SIM. This is just what I have been waiting for. La—la, dances, games, moonlight strolls, whispered sweet nothings, afternoon tea, a few flirtations—I'm a bear at them all.

VERNE. Now get ready for a rush of business, Harry.

TELL. Well, I don't know about this; it sounds good in theory, but who can tell how it will work out?

VERNE. The news will spread like wild-fire.

SIM. And once it starts to spread, you gents leave it to little Dickey to keep things going. (*Strolls R. and looks out.*) Here comes some one who looks as formidable as a battle-ship. I'm ready for business. Introduce me.

(*SIM. sits in chair up C. reading paper. TELL runs R. and peers out; then runs behind desk.*)

TELL. Simp., old boy, win her from me.

Enter CAS., R.

CAS. Oh, Mr. Tell, those two seemed so happy that

I hated to intrude. I would much rather stay and talk with you anyway.

TELL. I'm sorry, but I must attend to the mail.

VERNE. Miss McArty, we have a new arrival who would like to meet you.

CAS. Is it a—a man?

VERNE. Yes.

CAS. I'd be delighted.

VERNE. Mr. Simpson, won't you come here a moment? (SIM. *comes down c.*) Miss McArty—Mr. Simpson. (To SIM.) Miss McArty is the author of "Hearts at Sea," you know:

SIM. Ah, my favorite novel.

CAS. How very kind of you.

SIM. Yes, I have read it several times. It is simply irresistible.

CAS. Really now, you don't mean that!

SIM. Honest to goodness I do.

CAS. Are you to stay with us long?

VERNE. Oh, yes, Mr. Simpson will be here a month at least, and very probably the balance of the season.

TELL. Here is your key, sir.

SIM. (*crosses to desk and takes key*). Get me a copy of "Hearts at Sea," Tell. I shall have to sit up all night and read it.

TELL. Don't worry. She will give you an autographed copy by to-morrow morning at the latest.

VERNE (*to CAS.*). I'll leave you to help Mr. Simpson get acquainted with the folks. [*Exit L.*]

CAS. (*sits on divan*). Let's sit down here and get better acquainted ourselves.

SIM. I'd be pleased to. (*Sits beside her.*)

CAS. Since you are so interested in good literature, I shall want your advice on my new book.

TELL (*aside*). I feel a load lifted from my soul.

SIM. Is it anything like "Hearts at Sea"?

CAS. Oh, no. It is quite different. This one deals with the nobility, and is written on a more intellectual plane. By the way, what part of "Hearts at Sea" do you like best?

SIM. Why, I—er—er. Well, of course the first chapter is not at all like—like the last one. On the whole I don't like any part of it—er—better than another. One must digest it whole. (TELL coughs loudly.) I have often thought that I would like to write. In fact, I took a correspondence course in movie writing once.

CAS. How very interesting. Did you ever sell any?

SIM. No. The correspondence people wanted more to revise them than I could ever hope to get for them; so I gave up writing and took their course in movie acting.

CAS. How romantic! (TELL closes book with a bang.) In what pictures did you appear?

SIM. I supported Douglas Fairbanks in "The Unconquerable Hero." I was in one scene. He hit me so hard that I retired from the picture. Anyway, I don't like those rough and tumble affairs.

CAS. No. You look as if you would be more at home in society dramas.

SIM. Then I heard that Mary Pickford was looking for a leading man. When I got there they had hired some one else. Said they didn't know I was coming, and couldn't break the other man's contract. They were very sorry about it. So I gave up acting.

CAS. Too bad. I know that you would make a splendid hero. Perhaps you would like to help me with the climax of my story. I would love to have your opinion on this passage.

(TELL is seized with a coughing attack.)

SIM. I am delighted.

CAS. (opening manuscript). Now you must understand that Lord Islington and Lady Deerington—

Enter IMA, c. Still has newspapers.

IMA. Any mail for me?

TELL. Not this morning, Miss Brayer.

CAS. Do come here. I have a surprise for you. Miss Brayer, do meet Mr. Simpson.

SIM. I am most exceedingly delighted.

IMA (*brusquely*). So am I. (*Thrusts out paper.*) I don't know how you stand in the fight, but read this.

SIM. (*reads*). "Woman sheriff appointed." I'd let any chicken pinch me. (*Starts to laugh heartily. TELL coughs violently, gets his attention, and wildly signals "No."* SIM. *sobers down quickly.*) Fine! Fine! I certainly am glad.

IMA. I *know* that I am going to like you.

CAS. Where is Mr. Coffin?

IMA. He will be right back. He went to mail a letter for me.

SIM. What do you ladies say to a short stroll, just for an appetizer? We have a few minutes before lunch.

CAS. Delighted.

IMA. Yes. I can tell you all about our Equality League.

(SIM. *offers each an arm, and they start for door, R. All talk.*)

TELL. What a blessed relief. Now I can live in peace.

Enter COF., C.

COF. Did Miss Brayer — (*Sees trio going through door. Stops short and stares.*) Well, I'll be — (*Runs R., and looks out.*) Tell, who is that man?

TELL. A new guest, sir. Seems to be one of those fashion plates who makes a hit with all the ladies.

COF. Well, he's not a bit bashful, is he? How long is he going to stay?

TELL. The rest of the season, I believe.

COF. The devil you say! (*Paces back and forth.*) Miss Brayer said that she would be here when I came back, and he has had the nerve to drag her off. And he came just this morning! (*Again looks out R.*) They are both clinging to him as if he were their last hope. Well, I'll be — (*Dashes off R.*)

TELL (*runs and looks off R. Then calls*). Tom, Tom, for the love of soup, come quick.

Enter VERNE, L.

VERNE. What's up now?

TELL (*excitedly*). Look out the door,—hurry. (VERNE runs to door R.) What do you know about that? Some speed work. Old Coffin is going crazy.

VERNE. Harry, old scout, we are off!

(*They dance all over stage.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. Two weeks later. *Curtain discovers CAS. and SIM. on divan. TELL is behind desk.*

CAS. Now remember,—to-morrow morning at five-thirty. Oh, wasn't it beautiful this morning! I just love to take early morning walks. To-morrow we may discover where that little thrush has its nest.

SIM. It would be positively thrilling if we should discover it, I do declare.

Enter COF. and IMA, c.

COF. Ah, yes. The sea at sunset is most charming. Let us stroll to Rocky Point at twilight again to-night.

IMA. Yes, indeed. (*Sees SIM. Very cordially.*) Mr. Simpson, how are you to-day? I haven't set eyes on you this morning.

(She crosses and shakes hands with SIM. COF. and CAS. are perturbed.)

SIM. Let's all go down and see the boat come in. It's due now.

IMA. We would be delighted, Mr. Simpson.

(All rise, but IMA takes SIM. by the arm and hurries him off R.)

COF. Well, I'll be da ——

CAS. Please *don't* be, Mr. Coffin.

(She gazes off R. a moment, dabbles handkerchief at eyes, and quickly exits c.)

COF. That insolent young pup. Dash him for butting into my affairs like that. I'll fix him. [Exit R.

TELL. There's a storm brewing. I wonder what is going to happen. Something will with the bunch of lunatics that is running around here.

Enter VERNE, L., with several letters.

VERNE. Look at this—three letters and two telegrams came in late last night. All want reservations, and they are all signed "Miss" this or "Miss" that. I guess that there was something in Tommy's little scheme, after all.

TELL. I'll have to admit that there was.

VERNE. I guess you will. You know what our prospects were two weeks ago.

TELL. Starvation was our closest friend.

VERNE (*waving letters*). And see what began to happen after Dick had been here just one short week. And there is a good part of the season left yet, boy. That's the best part of it, too.

TELL. Doesn't it beat all how Dick is mixing things up around here? But look, if we don't do something, Coffin will be so raving mad that he will up-stakes and go. Ima has fallen too hard for Dick. So hard, in fact, that I am really afraid that Coffin will clear out.

VERNE. No he won't. He wants his little affair with Ima to be lasting, and he will stick and fight to the finish. He will enjoy it more in the end if he has to step lively now.

TELL. Simp. sure has him up a tree now.

VERNE (*takes small note-book from pocket*). Well, we will have Dick stay away from her to-night. (*Writes in note-book.*) Steer clear—of Miss Brayer—until—further notice. Dick's a good little worker, Harry. He's keeping his contract to the letter.

TELL. Seems to enjoy it, too. The big idiot. No man can keep up that pace.

VERNE. It breaks my heart to see Cassie. She has given up her wild chase for you, and it's Mr. Simpson this and Mr. Simpson that all day long every day. She can't understand why he is so inconstant; one minute here and the next there.

TELL. She is so happy when getting her share of at-

tention from our Guest Retainer, that I almost want to console her when her time is up. (*Puts arm around VERNE and chucks his chin.*) "There, there, Cassie, don't cry. Mr. Simpson will do a one step and a waltz with you to-morrow night, and perhaps we will order him to take you for a walk before breakfast, if you are good."

VERNE. Run along before you hear the angel Gabriel blowing his trumpet.

TELL. You stay at the desk while I go for the morning mail. Say, don't you think that next week we can add a bell-hop to our staff of two cooks and three combination chamber-maids and waitresses?

VERNE. I guess that we can if business holds out.

TELL. I hope so. I'm sick of being everybody's jack-in-the-box. I'll be right back. [*Exit c.*]

(*VERNE picks up house 'phone and rings.*)

VERNE. Is this the kitchen?—Don't give 'em stewed prunes again to-night. Make it prune pie.—Yep.—Good-bye.

Enter COF., R. He walks quickly to desk.

COF. Er—Mr. Verne, can you tell me how long Simpson is to be here?

VERNE. At least two weeks more, I understand.

COF. The devil!

VERNE. And probably until the end of the season.

COF. (*sarcastically*). Fine!

VERNE. I agree. Every one seems to have taken a tremendous liking to him.

COF. The insolent pup!

VERNE. What?

COF. Nothing; nothing. Guess I'll have a smoke on the veranda. (*Turns abruptly and exits R.*)

VERNE. So the green-eyed monster has arrived. That big husky acts as if he were about nineteen.

Enter CAS., C., very slowly.

CAS. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

VERNE. I beg your pardon. Did you speak?

CAS. Mr. Verne, my heart is just overflowing. I must talk to some one. We have become such good friends the last two weeks,—you have told me so much about your dear wife and children. May I talk to you a while?

VERNE. Certainly.

CAS. I suppose that you have noticed that we have been just like a big family here—every one chummy and friendly with every one else.

VERNE. Yes, I have often thought how much nicer it is than at some of the larger hotels where every formality and convention must be observed. We like our guests to have that “big family” feeling.

CAS. Have you noticed anything that threatens the quietude of our family?

VERNE. I can't say that I have; it seems as if things were better than ever. There never was more laughter and jollity around here than at present.

CAS. I am astonished to note that one person seemingly has no regard for the rest of us.

VERNE. You surprise me.

CAS. You realize how much Mr. Simpson has been the life of the place since his arrival, do you not?

VERNE. Yes; to some extent.

CAS. Well, do you think that it is very fair for Imà Brayer to monopolize his time as she does? Every time I come in with him she manages to be at liberty, and makes a grand rush for him. Really, it's most discouraging.

VERNE. Perhaps he wishes to be impartial. I saw him dancing with about every one last evening.

CAS. Yes, I know. Yesterday he was out walking with me all the afternoon. After dinner Miss Brayer got him for a dance, and I didn't hardly see him the rest of the evening. Mr. Coffin and I had a most miserable evening together.

VERNE. That's too bad.

CAS. There is something else just as bad.

VERNE. Let's hear it. I can sympathize, at least.

CAS. Well, ever since about the time that Mr. Simp-

son came, Mr. Tell has been very brusque and inattentive. Before that he was the most courteous, most understanding gentleman that I have ever known. In fact, I had just about concluded that he was my ideal. But now, I am sorry to say, he is commencing to totter on his throne.

VERNE. You must excuse him. Business is business, and he has had considerable on his mind lately.

CAS. The last two weeks have been fateful ones for me.

VERNE. I wouldn't worry any more if I were you. "Every cloud has a silver lining," you know.

CAS. I fear that my cloud has been turned inside out so many times that the lining is all worn through.

VERNE. Perhaps things aren't so bad as they seem.

CAS. I'm afraid that they are. Even Mr. Coffin notices it. We had quite a talk last night. This state of affairs disturbs him as much as it does me; only he looks at things back end to. He prefers to imagine that Mr. Simpson is using cave man tactics, which is all wrong. Miss Brayer is overstepping all bounds, and Mr. Simpson is defenseless as he is such a gentleman that he can't bear to hurt any one's feelings, no matter how badly they need to be hurt.

VERNE (*glances across desk and out R.*). Here comes Coffin. Why don't you talk it over again to-day? Since he is more actively concerned, perhaps he can help you better than I.

CAS. I believe I shall.

VERNE (*aside*). I'll clear out of this. [Exit L.

Enter COF., R.

CAS. Oh, dear. Isn't it awful?

COF. I should say it is. Er—er—what are you talking about?

CAS. You know. Didn't we talk it over last night?

COF. Wasn't it a horrible evening? I thought that perhaps to-day would be different, but see what happened the minute we were all together.

CAS. Yes. Did you see that woman rise like a vulture and pounce on that poor, defenseless man?

COF. You are all wrong. He literally dragged her away.

CAS. No, no. It was the other way about.

COF. Evidently my sight is failing. I saw no such incident as you describe.

CAS. I am so miserable that I could die.

COF. I confess that I am, too. I never dreamed that I would be such a silly old fool.

CAS. Neither did I.

COF. What!

CAS. Er—think that I would be one, too.

COF. Will you be frank with me?

CAS. Of course.

COF. Well then, let's get down to brass tacks. We will talk things over freely and see how we can help each other. There must be some way out. I'll die if there isn't.

CAS. That will be fine. How romantic this is! (*Simperingly.*) Two er—er—lovers in distress. But not the usual case of those who are in love with each other. It's a new idea. I shall have to embody it in my next novel.

COF. Let's get down to business. First of all, we had better analyze our chances as they seem to us. You were more or less confidential with Miss Brayer—before Simpson came. Did you ever hear her speak as if there were *one* man in existence to whom she would not address her favorite phrase?

CAS. I don't know, I'm sure.

COF. Please think hard. It means much to me. Ye gods, after living all these years with immunity, to have to go through such agony! I would have sworn that nothing like it could enter my life.

CAS. Let's exchange. Did—did Mr. Tell ever speak as if he liked me a little more than the others? He used to be so attentive. (*Pause.*) Or has Mr. Simpson ever remarked about me? He was so kind and polite until that Brayer woman began to be a—a vampire.

COF. (*with dignity*). Madam, please be careful in speaking of Miss Brayer. She is not to blame. It is all the fault of that interfering pup.

CAS. (*tearfully*). Please don't allude to Mr. Simpson again as a—a young dog.

COF. I beg your pardon. Seriously now, do you think that there is any chance for me?

CAS. Do you think that I stand any show?

COF. We don't seem to be getting anywhere. It is time to answer some of each other's questions. We must be frank, even to the point of brutality.

CAS. We will begin. You answer mine. Candidly, now, do you think that I stand any chance?

COF. With whom? Simpson or Tell?

CAS. Either.

COF. To speak plainly, I think that the whole trouble lies in the fact that it is very evident which way you would like to have the wind blow.

CAS. What! Do you think that I have once overstepped my dignity?

COF. I wouldn't like to ——

CAS. (*angrily*). Do you know what your trouble is? To speak plainly, I think that the whole trouble lies in the fact that it is very evident for whom you are angling.

COF. (*excitedly*). Do you think that I have been anything but reserved in my speech and action?

CAS. I—I ——

COF. By Jove! I believe that you are correct. And I'm mighty sure that I am. The trouble is that we have been steadily on the offensive, so much so that they have had no opportunity to go through what we are now experiencing. No doubt they have been enjoying our torture and suffering none themselves.

CAS. I begin to see your point of view; but how humiliating.

COF. I think that I see a way out—for both of us.

CAS. A light in the darkness? What is it?

COF. Listen; Ima—er, Miss Brayer is indifferent toward me; Tell and Simpson toward you. Why? Because we have let them see that they are absolutely sure

of us. It is not the fault of our conscious selves. We are more temperamental, more impulsive, more romantic by nature than they.

CAS. Yes. Romantic! It's in our souls.

COF. If we can make them suddenly realize that we are not martyrs to their whims, and that they are in danger of losing us altogether, we will be reinstated.

CAS. Victory! We have really helped each other. How glad I am that our natures are so sympathetic. The next question is how shall we accomplish our end?

COF. We might leave here for a week—give them a chance to see how it is without us around.

CAS. Oh, I couldn't do that! They might even forget that we exist. No, I think that it is best to remain near them.

COF. I have it. We will stay right here and lead them to think that they have misjudged us—that our interest in them is merely passing. We will give them the impression that you and I are wrapped up in each other. We will be very, very good friends for a few days. You must give me every dance, go out only with me, and talk about me constantly when Miss Brayer is around. That will fix things. I will do likewise for you. (*Laughs.*) I shall have to work twice as hard, though. I shall have to play up to two persons, while you have only one to manage.

CAS. It sounds just like a book. How thrilling.

COF. Affairs will gradually slip back to their natural state. We can even let it go a bit the other way, and cause them some worry. Cheer up; we will soon control the situation.

CAS. I feel so relieved. Mr. Coffin, if you were I, to whom would you be inclined, Mr. Tell or Mr. Simpson? They are such dear creatures. I admire them both.

COF. (*almost laughs in her face*). I don't know, I'm sure. Get 'em going and then take your choice.

CAS. How clever of you. I believe I shall.

Enter TELL, C., with bunch of letters.

TELL. I think that I have a letter for you, Miss Mc-Arty.—Yes, here it is. (*Hands letter to her.*)

CAS. (*coldly*). Thank you. (*Takes COF. by the arm.*)
Let us go on the veranda. It is much more pleasant out
there. [*Exeunt COF. and CAS., R.*]

TELL (*stares after them a moment, then*). My! it's
getting cold. Believe me, whatever the cause, that frosty
atmosphere is a welcome relief from the torrid weather
of the last few weeks. (*TELL, softly whistling, sorts mail
and puts it in rack. Now and then reads "Hotel Jer-
skeet," and throws letter on desk. After mail is all in
rack he opens these letters and glances at them.*) More
requests for reservations. I thank my lucky stars that
Tom had one idea worth while.

Enter IMA, R.

IMA. I saw Miss McArty reading a letter, so I have
come in to see if I have any mail.

TELL. Yes, there is one for you.

(Takes it from rack and gives it to her.)

IMA. Thank you. (*Opens it and reads.*) Mr. Tell,
we have won over another state.

TELL. Congratulations.

IMA. I'm so glad that my talking has opened your
eyes to truth and justice.

TELL. Might as well be liberal.

IMA. By the way, I wonder if you can tell me any-
thing about this young man Simpson. What is he and
where does he come from?

TELL. A—ha! young lady.

IMA. Oh, Mr. Tell.

TELL. I thought that you were getting interested in
him. I've got your number.

IMA (*violently*). Do you know what I really think of
him? I think that he is a feather-brained young fop.
He is about as much use on this earth as a caterpillar—
in one respect he is much like one,—he makes a beautiful
butterfly.

TELL. What language from Miss Brayer. Naughty!
Naughty!

IMA. I don't care; it makes my blood boil. Just think, in my home town they would let that brainless fashion plate vote, and help run the place, while I would be considered useless because I don't happen to be a talented cook.

TELL. I'll be darned if I understand you. Here you have been trotting around with him for a week or more.

IMA (*aside*). It has been noticed. I hope that the right one realized it. (*To TELL.*) Do you want to know why I have done it? (*Pause.*) It seems queer to talk to you like this, but we seem like old friends because you have taken such an interest in my life-work the last few weeks. Since we are good friends I'll tell you. I must confide in some one. My heart is breaking.

TELL (*aside*). She evidently thinks that I am a confidence man.

IMA. Mr. Coffin is the first man that I have ever become interested in. He so thoroughly believes in our cause that I was greatly attracted to him.

TELL. Then why did you give him the cold shoulder for Simpson?

IMA. It had to be done. It was strategy on my part.

TELL. I don't understand.

IMA. I saw him come up the street with that—that novel writer three different times, and I realized immediately that I had let him see too clearly that he meant a great deal to me. I have never been so desperately unhappy in my life. Who ever dreamed that such a thing would come to pass? I know that he realizes it, and is simply playing me. I feel certain that he cares. I'm game, though. I'll keep Simpson under my wing until Owen Coffin wakes up. My one chance is to show him that I can exist without him, and be happy elsewhere. But for some reason it doesn't work yet.

TELL. Things will soon straighten out.

IMA. He still goes with her all the time. Three times I saw them together, I tell you, and he danced with her all last evening,—and they have just this minute left here together.

TELL. You have Simpson, as you say; and I know

that you are only kidding me about him. All the ladies are crazy over him.

IMA. I know that some of them are making perfect fools of themselves; all of them, in fact, except me. I have a few brains, and any one so blessed would prefer a *living undertaker*, to a *mental corpse*.

TELL. Is he as bad as that?

IMA. He is. He can talk fast enough about fashions and theatres and dancing, and half a hundred inconsequential things, but he has to back into a corner when you start to touch upon the great things of life.

TELL. The poor boy.

IMA. And Coffin is such a different man.

TELL. I should say so.

IMA. Such a thoroughbred gentleman of the old school; so sympathetic and refined. I don't see why he should be so attracted by that authoress.

TELL. You never can tell.

IMA. I suppose that it must be wonderful for her. Probably all her life she has been trying in vain to find some one who would pay her a little attention.

TELL. It is unfortunate when a woman has to worry over getting a meal ticket.

IMA. It must be. I really feel sorry for Miss Mc-Arty.—But it is mean of her to commit highway robbery.

TELL. It isn't as bad as that. I am positive that they accidentally met while going in the same direction, and you, in your upset state of mind, didn't realize that it was nothing intentional on his part.

IMA. Three times? Yes, accidentally on purpose. How about last night—and just now?

TELL. Don't worry; it will all come out in the wash.

IMA. Then I hope that wash day comes soon. I shall go up to my room and try to calm myself. You must not tell a soul about this. Really, I am more surprised at myself than you are. I'm glad I have some one in whom I can confide.

TELL. So am I. (*Exit IMA, c.*) Some game of hearts that's being played around here. I wonder whose will get cracked or broken next. It's a wonderful game,

all right, all right. It's funny, but almost every one has to play it some time, in spite of themselves. I'm in luck, though —

Enter SIM., R. Wears new shirt, socks and tie.

SIM. Howdy, most noble employer. How are things with you to-day?

TELL. Slick-o-do-ri-ous, most esteemed charmer of antiquated femininity.

SIM. Thought I'd drop in now for general orders for the day. How's business averaging?

TELL. To tell the truth, I'm surprised at the way it has picked up.

SIM. You know whom to blame for such a state of affairs, do you not?

TELL. By George, I've got to admit that you are the original candy kid.

SIM. Harry, I've been having the time of my young life. (*Laughs.*) I was out for a stroll with Ima, the man-hater, for a while this morning, and you should have heard me talking to her. You comprehend that common phrase "throwing the bull," do you not? If the King of Spain had heard me talking a few minutes ago, he would have given me the title of matador without hesitation. I'll venture that before long you will hear Miss Brayer talking about me.

TELL. I have already.

SIM. She'll be crazy about me soon. Take it from me, you can believe every word she says about your Uncle Dudley.

TELL. I do.

SIM. She thinks that I'm some boy. I know it. I don't get a minute to myself when she is around. If I happen to cruise along with some old "has been" in tow, she manages to commandeer me in about five seconds.

Enter VERNE, L.

VERNE. Hello, Dick. You're doing fine.

SIM. That's the way it appears to me. My praises are already being sung by the fairest in the land. Ask Harry, he knows.

TELL. True, Miss Brayer has just had an extended discussion with me about Dick.

VERNE. I have heard considerable ravings from one source or another myself.

SIM. While I think of it I must call up and order my neck-wear for next week. I have made a decided hit with my cravats because I never wear the same one but one day.

VERNE. Use the 'phone in the office; it's more private.

SIM. Thanks.

[Exit L.

VERNE. Once again I must ask if you are not dumfounded with the success of my scheme.

TELL. I think the heavens will fall next. You were absolutely right about Ima. She has just unburdened her heart to me—all because I was kidding her along about "equal rights" the other day, and she thought I meant what I said. She shows a few human characteristics which I thought she lacked altogether.

VERNE. I say it many times, and now again—I'm always right. (*Laughs.*) As I am Cassie's confidant we can view this whirl-i-gig from several angles. It's really exciting.

TELL. I wish you could have heard the blowing up the suffragette gave that conceited ass.

VERNE. The others take him seriously, don't they? Just because this McArty-Simpson-Coffin-Brayer affair is so interesting we mustn't lose sight of the fact that Dick is doing wonderful work among the rest. It warms my heart to see the joy shine on those old maps as Dick strolls down the veranda. Each joy gleam means dollars in our pockets.

TELL. They sure do. You've put it across again, Tom.

VERNE. They are all crazy over him —

TELL. Yea, he admits it himself.

VERNE. You should see them watch for him to enter the dining-room. It looks as if they were expecting Mary Pickford or some other celeb. They won't make plans for anything until he has been consulted. In fact, he is the whole cheese around here. It's too rich to believe.

TELL. I once had a hunting dog, one of those fellows with a meek face and eyes like saucers. When I came home he would wag his tail and jump up and paw me all over, while those big eyes spoke adoration, and he'd look and look and look at me. I think of him every time the fat widow sees Dick heave in sight.

Enter SIM., L.

SIM. I've got a regular rainbow assortment on the way for next week. It will register some hit among my admirers.

VERNE. I believe you. You've made some knock-outs already.

TELL. What have you to suggest to Dick to-day?

VERNE (*takes out note-book*). I think that a little tête-à-tête with the widow is in order directly after lunch.

SIM. The one who weeps over the husband who died five years after she divorced him?

VERNE. No. I mean the fat one. Darn it, I forget that there are two.

TELL. It would be wise to soothe Cassie with about four dances to-night.

VERNE. Perhaps Ima had better be left to her own devices until Coffin regains his equilibrium somewhat. Aren't they a couple of romantic old fools?

TELL. Don't use the word "romantic" around here or your life will be in danger. It has been worn out by the author of "Hearts at Sea."

VERNE. When they both wake up there will be more joy around than there is at a colored revival meeting.

SIM. Any more orders?

TELL. Nothing specific. Just what we told you; then follow the rules of the contract, as usual.

SIM. Guess I'll run along and take some dame for a stroll—to earn my lunch. [*Exit c.*]

VERNE (*strolling toward door, R.*). Harry, my boy, I'm exceptionally pleased at the way things are turning out at this "old, rundown dump," as you expressed it a couple of weeks ago.

TELL. I'm agreeably disappointed myself. You've

surely got a lucky star shining over you. Who but you would have thought of such a queer stunt to bring guests? The news is spreading at a great rate.

VERNE (*gazing out of door*). Everything is running smoothly. There is only one thing that we must guard against.

TELL. What is it?

VERNE. Open war between Cassie and Ima. I am afraid that they are about to sever diplomatic relations; and we can't afford to lose any guests even now. (*Peers eagerly out of door.*) Wow! Do my eyes deceive me?

TELL. What's the matter?

VERNE. Here comes a dream. Oh, boy! It will be some stunt to keep Dick on the job once he lams this chicken.

(TELL goes to door, R.)

TELL. She has her suit-case. Do you think that she really intends to stop here?

VERNE (*going behind desk*). Looks that way.

TELL. Some class!

Enter BIRDIE LARK, the "Eaglet." She is clad in an aviator's costume: leather coat, helmet and leggings. Carries a leather suit-case.

BIRD. Good-morning. Can I get accommodations here?

VERNE. Certainly. Do you wish a room for the rest of the season?

BIRD. About two weeks.

TELL. Pardon me, but are you not the young lady known as the "Eaglet"?

BIRD. Yes, yes. (*Excitedly.*) You didn't recognize me from that picture in the paper, did you? I hope it was not clear enough for that.

TELL. That's queer. No, I didn't. I inferred from your costume that you must be she. I remember several people remarking about that cut in the paper. Your features were not the least bit distinct.

BIRD. I'm glad of it.

VERNE. That sounds funny.

BIRD. There are many aviators in the country who don't have reporters buzzing around them all the time. Just because I am a woman they try to make out that I am marvelous. I don't object to an occasional write-up, but I don't want my photo in the paper for personal reasons. The same reasons force me to be known as the "Eaglet." I'm not wonderful at all; it is my little machine that deserves all the praise.

VERNE. We are glad to have you with us, and will do our utmost to see that you are not annoyed by reporters.

BIRD. Thank you. I shall appreciate it. As little as possible publicity is what I have come in search of.

TELL. If you please, register.

(BIRD. registers. VERNE exits L. with account book.
Enter IMA and CAS., R. They stop short when they see BIRD.)

CAS. The Eaglet!

IMA. Goodness gracious!

(She hurries CAS. over to the desk.)

TELL. Miss—er—er—Miss Eaglet, I would like you to meet Miss McArty and Miss Brayer.

BIRD. Very pleased, indeed.

CAS. Oh, I thought that you were stopping at the Ocean House.

BIRD. I was; but it is so noisy and crowded there, and I was so troubled by curiosity-boxes of every description that I decided to try a new place; so I just packed my bag and slipped out without saying a word to any one.

IMA. I am sure that you will like it here.

TELL (*picking up suit-case*). This way, Miss—er—er. Hang it. What will we call you?

BIRD. (*with a laugh*). Just say Eaglet. I'm so used to that now that I have nearly forgotten my own name. Wasn't it silly of the papers to dub me that?

CAS. We will see you at lunch, if not before. (*Exeunt*

BIRD. *and* TELL, c.) What unexpected pleasure shall we have next?

IMA. I wonder. I'll wager anything that she is in favor of the cause. One so fearless as she must long for independence in all ways.

CAS. I know that she is a romantic little creature.

IMA. I wonder how Mr. Simpson will take to her.

CAS. He will pay no more attention to her than he does to lots of people.

IMA. His attention amounts to considerable in some cases, I think you will admit.

CAS. What do you mean?

IMA (*with sarcasm*). If it is over your head, my dear, never mind.

(*Both are now down c. facing each other.*)

CAS. I used to think that you were a friend of mine, but from your actions lately I shall have to conclude otherwise.

IMA. Explain yourself; I don't understand.

CAS. I can explain in two words why you are no friend of mine.

IMA. Say them.

CAS. Mr. Simpson!

IMA (*after a silent glare*). May I say two words to you?

CAS. Of course.

IMA. Mr. Coffin!

CAS. You awful woman.

IMA. No worse than you.

CAS. I don't know about that. Perhaps it was you who turned Mr. Tell against me. You heap injury upon injury and then add insult.

IMA. Insult? I'd like to forget that I am a lady, and scratch your eyes out, you—you insinuating hussy!

CAS. I could tear your hair out with joy, you—you *vampire*, you!

(*They talk furiously. Enter TELL, c.*)

TELL. Why, ladies, what is the trouble? (CAS. *stares*

at him a moment and then exits R., crying. IMA wheels around and exits C. TELL looks first one way and then the other.) Talk about the monkey cage at the zoo—we've got it beat right here.

(VERNE rises slowly from behind desk.)

VERNE. Ye gods, man. You should have heard that. It was rich. I thought I'd have to send in a riot call. I was in the office with the door open, and when it started I crawled out here and took in the whole show.

TELL. What is it all about?

VERNE. They exchanged compliments and then proceeded to wrangle over Coffin and Simpson. Even the Eaglet, who has just come, is mixed up in their love affairs; and you, my boy, were the straw that broke the camel's back.

TELL. I was?

VERNE. Yes. Come into the office, and I'll give you a detailed report of the bout.

(Exeunt VERNE and TELL, L. After a pause COF. sticks his head cautiously in door R., and after looking around enters.)

COF. Guess I can get a minute's peace here. I'll light up and soothe my frazzled nerves. (Lights pipe and paces back and forth.) That authoress on top of all my other troubles is a terrific load, but I'll try to stand her until Ima is mine. (Smokes a moment in silence.) Lord, what a crazy old fool I am. After living all these years with immunity, at last I am robbed of my heart.—This love is all right if it's *with* you; but you can feel damned blue if it's not. Poor Miss McArty. I pity her. It's laughable; she is absolutely impossible. Tell,—Simpson. The poor old thing has gone out of her head. They are young fellows. (Pause.) It's different with me. Ima—Ima. Just at present she is a bit giddy over Simpson, but it won't last.—Let me see, how can I finish it quickly? (Puffs pipe vigorously.) I'll have to find some way, if I have to kill him.—What an old fool I am. (Enter CAS., R.) Hello, sister in distress. I came in here to be

alone, but I find it dangerous to think. I'm glad that you have come.

CAS. It goes from worse to worse. Will things ever straighten out? I'm feeling absolutely desperate.

COF. What do you say if we forget ourselves for a few minutes and talk about something cheerful?

CAS. That's a good suggestion.

COF. We must forget our worries a while or we will be all fagged out.

CAS. I've some news. Who do you think is the latest arrival here?

COF. I'm sure I couldn't guess. Isn't any one of national prominence, is it?

CAS. Some one much talked of in this vicinity.

COF. I'm afraid that I shall have to give up.

CAS. Can't you give one little guess? Well, I'll tell you. It is the Eaglet.

COF. No! Well I declare. The Jerskeet will soon be quite famous. She's a nice little thing. I'm acquainted with her after a fashion. How in the world did she happen to come up here?

CAS. To escape publicity. Mr. Tell and Mr. Verne are going to keep the newspaper men away, if possible.

COF. They will have some job. Those fellows are a hundred per cent pure nerve.

CAS. If they do come up, couldn't you divert some of them my way? A little publicity wouldn't hurt my book. And er—if they should request it, I'd be willing to pose for a photograph.

COF. I'll fix it if possible.

CAS. How do you happen to know the Eaglet? You don't know who she really is, do you?

COF. No. In fact, we have only a bowing acquaintance. I have been down around her hangar a great deal. I like to watch them fuss around that motor. It seems that for every minute of actual flying there is about an hour's tinkering to be done.

CAS. Just think of flying up among the clouds all alone, miles away from any human being. It must be thrilling, to say nothing about the romance of it.

COF. I wouldn't want to try it. Just imagine that slender little girl looping the loop and cutting all kinds of antics. It's wonderful.

CAS. I should say so. Do you know ——

COF. Wait! I've an inspiration. Now I see my way. It came like a flash.

CAS. What is it? Do tell me.

COF. The Eaglet shall be the means of my getting back my Ima.

CAS. For goodness' sake, how?

COF. Listen, listen. The Eaglet is level-headed, and I am sure that she will help me.

CAS. You don't intend to kidnap Ima, do you?

COF. No, no. This is my scheme. I'll introduce Simpson to the Eaglet, and he will promptly fall in love. She won't mind him. If she can conquer the air, she can surely handle a little hot air. When Ima sees that he has gone, she will forget her giddiness and come back to me. He is just a temporary attraction, I'm sure. Isn't that a great idea?

CAS. (*greatly agitated*). No, I don't think it is.

COF. Why in the world not?

CAS. If Mr. Simpson should fall in love with her I would lose him forever. I'm sure that he is only teasing me about Miss Brayer, but the Eaglet is so attractive that it might last.

COF. What do you mean—"the Eaglet is so attractive"?

CAS. Pardon me, I didn't mean to cast reflections on any one. I am so upset that I can't think straight. But don't you see that I would surely lose him?

COF. Have you got him now?

CAS. No, not exactly.

COF. Then he might as well be one place as another.

CAS. No. No! NO!

COF. That will be fair. You have two chances anyway: Tell and Simpson, while I have only one.

CAS. Oh, if one didn't have to—to fall in love. That's what it is in plain language, isn't it?

COF. I'm afraid it is, dash the luck.

CAS. I—I don't see why that aviatrix had to come here.

COF. Cheer up. It won't hurt your chances in the least, and it will improve mine. Won't you agree to it?

CAS. I must go up to my room and think it all out.

(Starts to exit c., but meets BIRD. coming in.)

BIRD. I am sorry that I didn't know of this place before. I am sure I shall like it.

(COF. R. C. CAS. and BIRD. come down c.)

CAS. I know you will. It is an ideal place.

BIRD. *(sees COF.)*. How do you do? I didn't know that you were stopping here.

COF. Yes, I have been here several weeks and can vouch for the place.

BIRD. Perhaps Miss McArty had better introduce us; I don't even know your name. Our meeting was rather unconventional, I think you will agree.

COF. Yes, Miss Eaglet, but as I am old enough to be your father, perhaps the prudes can't scold too much. *(To CAS.)* You see, she was standing on her head in the machine whacking away at the motor, when a wrench dropped. I was handy, and picked it up.

CAS. What a romantic way to begin a friendship. Miss Eaglet, allow me to present Mr. Owen Coffin.

COF. Yesterday afternoon I saw you cutting some capers that made me hold my breath.

BIRD. It is perfectly safe; just like driving an auto.

COF. I'll stick to my flivver, thank you.

BIRD. *(sees newspaper on desk)*. There's a paper. I wonder what those pests have written about me to-day. Two of them were around most of the time yesterday. They didn't get a picture of me, thank goodness.

(Looks through paper.)

COF. *(to CAS.)*. Now is the time to get Simpson and start things. He's on the veranda. Do you mind if I get him?

CAS. Yes.....No.....All right.

COF. I'm off on the road to recovery—of Ima.

[Exit R.

CAS. What shall I do!

BIRD. (*putting down paper*). Where has Mr. Coffin gone?

CAS. He is coming right back. Anything in the paper?

BIRD. No, I guess they wanted a photo. I had a terrible time dodging the camera. It would be awful if my picture were to get in the paper.

CAS. (*looks out door, R. Aside*). Here they come. (*Glances around in despair*.) It is nearly lunch time, my dear. (*Urges BIRD. toward door, C.*) If you are going to get out of those queer togs you will have to hurry.

BIRD. I don't think that I shall bother, as I am going to fly directly after lunch.

CAS. (*grabs BIRD. by the arm. In despair*). Eaglet, please come up to my room a moment, I have something I would like you to see.

(CAS. rushes BIRD. off C. Just as they disappear COF. and SIM. enter R.)

COF. Well, I declare. I left them here not a minute ago.

SIM. If she is such a peach as you say, hunt her up this minute.

COF. Dash it all; I think I'm hoodooed.

SIM. Why?

COF. Nothing, nothing. This is most exasperating. I'm going out. Coming?

SIM. No. Now that I am here guess I'll read the paper.

COF. All right.

[Exit R.

(SIM. takes paper from desk and sits on divan.)

SIM. This job is the softest cinch I've ever had. I'm sure enjoying myself. Every one in the place is daffy over me except poor old Ima. I know she thinks I'm a fool; but it is all the old biddies who are fools. I'm just having a good time. Dear Cassie is in love with me. Now isn't

that pathetic? (*Enter VERNE, L., unobserved by SIM.*)
I'm sure enjoying myself.

VERNE. Are you?

SIM. (*swinging around quickly*). Oh, it's you. You bet your sweet life I am.

VERNE. I should think you would be all in. You can't keep this up much longer. You will have to break your contract.

SIM. Not for a million dollars.

Enter TELL, C.

TELL. What's this about a million dollars?

VERNE. He says he won't have to break his contract.

TELL. Boy, if you can live through two more weeks like the last two, you have some constitution.

VERNE. Life seems to be one round of honeyed sweets just now, but you will soon be sick of them.

SIM. Gents, I thrive on "honeyed sweets."

TELL (*points out R.*). Here comes Ima.

SIM. Stick around. I'll give you a grandstand exhibition.

VERNE. Fine.

TELL. Go to it.

(Throughout following scene VERNE and TELL are behind desk, L., presumably working at the books, but really paying attention to the others. Enter IMA, R.)

SIM. Well, well. Thinking of angels—I was just longing for a few minutes of your company.

IMA. You don't say so.

SIM. But I do say so. Won't you sit down?

IMA. No, thank you. (*Walks across stage in deep thought. Turns to come back when CAS. enters C.*)
Yes, thank you.

(Sits at R. of SIM. on divan.)

CAS. I'm about starved. How soon will lunch be ready?

IMA. The bell will ring.

CAS. Thank you a thousand times.

SIM. Won't you sit down while you are waiting?

CAS. I presume there is room for me, Miss Brayer?

IMA. I presume so.

(CAS. *sits at L. of SIM.*)

SIM. Isn't it a little cool around here?

IMA (*abruptly*). Mr. Simpson, if you ever marry, do you intend to let your wife control the financial affairs of the family?

SIM. Don't talk about such trifles. Do you know, I think you are charming in that dress.

CAS. Have you the time, Mr. Simpson?

SIM. (*glances quickly at watch*). It's eleven fifty. (To IMA.) I wish you would call me Dick.

IMA. Really!

SIM. Honest and true. You're so much old—whoa! I mean it is so much more friendly.

IMA. Have you ever studied psychology—Dick?

(CAS. *starts at the name "Dick."* IMA *notices it, and enjoys it.*)

SIM. Almost. You see, my dancing class conflicted, so I didn't get very far.

IMA. Too bad.

CAS. Do you like to study literature, Dick—I mean Mr. Simpson?

SIM. Sure. Never miss the Police Gazette. Say, you call me Dicky.

(IMA *is disgusted.*)

CAS. (*overjoyed*). Oh, may I? Then you may call me Cassandra.

SIM. Miss Brayer, how soon do you think that there will be a woman governor in New York?

IMA. Are you really interested in suffrage,—Dick?

SIM. I am never so happy as when discussing it.

CAS. (*aside*). My poor heart will break. He ignores me entirely. O, cruel, cruel fate. What shall I do?

Enter COF., R.

COF. Nearly lunch time, isn't it? (SIM. and IMA merely nod. IMA moves nearer to SIM., which CAS. and COF. both perceive. They glance at each other understandingly.) May I take you in to lunch, Miss McArty?

CAS. I'd be delighted.

COF. Shall we go out on the piazza until it is ready? It is more quiet and secluded there.

CAS. (rises and takes his arm). Yes, I'd love to.

(CAS. and COF. haughtily stalk across and exeunt R.)

IMA. That wretch! (Drags SIM. to his feet.) Come on, we can stroll on the piazza, too. [Exeunt R.]

TELL. Holy smoke! There's a hornet's nest stirred up now.

VERNE. Who would have thought that one little shrimp like Dick could work such havoc?

TELL. I'm not responsible for anything that happens, Tom. You are captain of this ship, and you had better get ready for a big storm.

Enter COF. and CAS., R. They cross to L. C.

COF. (angrily). I guess that they can have the veranda if they wish it.

CAS. This is horrible, simply horrible.

(Falls on COF.'s shoulder and weeps. Lunch bell rings in distance.)

COF. (pats her back and tries to comfort her). There, there.

Enter IMA and SIM., R. They see COF. and CAS. apparently embracing.

IMA. This is too much; my heart will break.

(IMA throws her arms around SIM.'s shoulders and cries. Enter BIRD., C. She stops short when she sees SIM., and screams.)

BIRD. Dick! Dick! What does this mean?

SIM. Good Heavens, Birdie!

(Shakes off IMA, and exits R. hurriedly.)

BIRD. Dick, Dick! (*Runs off R. after him.*)

CAS. Oh, Dicky, Dicky. [*Exit R.*]

(*IMA stares at COF. a moment, then exits R., crying.*)

COF. Ima, Ima! Oh, my dear! [*Exit R.*]

(*TELL and VERNE rush c., and stand speechless a moment.*)

TELL. What in the name of ——

VERNE. Who is Birdie?

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The same. Morning of August 15. There is a great pile of letters on the desk. Curtain discovers TELL standing in entrance, c. VERNE is behind desk opening and reading letters. SIM., attired in still another brilliant shirt and tie, is rapidly pacing back and forth. His hair is disheveled, and he holds his wrist-watch up before his eyes. In following scene neither TELL nor VERNE pay any attention to him, being busy with letters where other business is not indicated.*

SIM. Ye gods! Why won't you fiends listen to me?

TELL (*calling out c.*). Hopper, Hopper, hurry up.
(*To VERNE.*) That boy is slow.

Enter HOPPER, c., on the run.

TELL. Ice water to twenty-three; hot water to forty-four. Get a hustle on.

HOP. Yes, sir. (*Dashes off c. 'Phone rings.*)

VERNE (*at 'phone*). Hotel Jerskeet? Sorry, but we are full for the rest of the season. . . . Absolutely. . . . No, not even a room on the top floor rear. Good-bye.

TELL. Another?

VERNE. Yes. We can't keep 'em away. Here, help me open these letters and sort them. They should have been answered last night, but I was swamped with work. Most of them are for reservations; too bad we have got to turn them all down, but there is not an inch of room left.

SIM. Boys, boys, be human. Won't you listen to me a moment?

(*SIM. drops exhausted on divan. VERNE is busy with letters. House 'phone buzzes; TELL answers.*)

TELL. Hello. . . . Sorry, Miss Richman, but you gave notice that you were going to-day, and some one is waiting

for the room; otherwise we would be delighted to have you stay longer. . . . No, there isn't an available cot. Sorry to lose you. Good-bye.

VERNE. We will have to go to Palm Beach next winter to rest up from this rush.

TELL. You bet. We're rolling up coin now. And to think that I called you a fool to buy this place. Tom, forgive me, forgive me.

SIM. Look here! Can't you spare me a minute? (*Wipes face with handkerchief and paces back and forth again.*) I didn't think that you boys could be so cruel to me.—Oh, Birdie, Birdie!

VERNE (*holding up a letter*). What a shame. Here's a letter from a sewing-circle that wants accommodations for seventeen members over the week-end. (*Reads.*) "We have decided upon the Hotel Jerskeet on account of the delightful way Miss Cassandra McArty writes of it."

TELL. Too bad we will have to let them go.

VERNE. Never mind, we have three conventions landed for next summer,—all women's affairs, too. I'm going to wear a Prince Albert and a stove-pipe.

TELL. If you do, I'll raise a goatee and carry a cane.

SIM. And I'll have a coffin wrapped around me if you two don't have a heart.

VERNE (*dramatically*). Our success proves that real ambition cannot be downed.

TELL. That sounds like the eminent writer, Miss Cassandra McArty.

SIM. (*with a groan*). O-o-o-oh!

Enter HOP., c.

HOP. Gee, the ice water tipped me two bits, and the hot water came through, too.

TELL (*with authority*). Boy, run along and get the mail. Don't waste a minute talking.

HOP. 'Right, sir.

(*Gets a huge mail-sack from under desk and exits R.*)

TELL. To think that I used to go for the mail—and bring it all back in my pocket!

VERNE. Come into the office and help me answer these letters. We will have to get a stenographer, that's all there is to it. (*Takes armful of letters.*) Gather up the rest of those, Harry.

SIM. (*frantically*). See here, you've got to listen to me. I'm going insane. Don't leave me.

(*Exeunt VERNE and TELL, L., slamming door in SIM.'s face. He again paces back and forth. Enter IMA, R., and meets him face to face. He sinks down on divan.*)

IMA (*abruptly*). Well, what's the matter with you?

SIM. Oh, I feel so sick.

IMA. You look like a jelly-fish all slumped down there. Where's your spine?

SIM. Wh-what?

IMA. I should think you would be sick. Why don't you get out with some of the men and rough it up a bit? It would do you good.

SIM. How humorous you are to-day, Miss Brayer.

IMA. I don't intend to be. I'm sick, too.—Of you!

SIM. Wh-what?

IMA. I say that I have stood you as long as it is humanly possible, you nonentity, you essence of inanity.

SIM. I—I don't get you.

IMA. You will get all of me you want before I get through. I'm going to heap glowing coals upon your head, and see if it will thaw out your gray matter. (*SIM. does not stir.*) You pitiful sight. And in my home town you could vote and I couldn't! This may be cruel, but some day you will thank me for it. Why don't you be a *man* instead of an animated tailor's dummy? You are just about as useful as a leather nickel.

SIM. I—I think that you misjudge me, Miss Brayer.

(*COF. appears in door, R., but is unobserved.*)

IMA. Misjudge nothing. Don't you think I have had ample opportunity to size you up the last few weeks?

SIM. Too much opportunity.

IMA. As a rule I stick to a thing until I gain my end, but this time it is unendurable. I've got to give in. I don't know how I have lived through these last few days.

SIM. (*looking at watch*). Nor I.

IMA. I'm going away to-day. I don't want to, but I must. For once I can't gain my end.

SIM. What do you mean?

IMA. I mean—nothing. Oh, I don't want to ever see you again.

SIM. Mutually agreed.

IMA. Leave my sight this instant, you vacuum skulled ladies' delight.

(SIM. miserably hurries off c. IMA sits on divan with a sigh. COF., still unseen, crosses to her.)

COF. Miss Brayer.

IMA. Oh, how you frightened me!

COF. May I talk with you a little while?

IMA (*coldly*). Are you sure you can spare the time?

COF. What do you mean?

IMA. Perhaps Miss McArty is looking for you.

COF. She can look for me from now until the crack of doom, and I'll try my best to evade her until that time.

IMA. You don't really mean that?

COF. I do. I swear by all that is holy that I do. Miss Brayer, I happened to hear what you said to Simpson. Did you really mean it? Have you sent him from you forever?

IMA. I most certainly have.

COF. You don't know how good that sounds to me.

IMA. Why should it?

COF. Perhaps I can manage to say something I have wanted to say for a long time. Perhaps it means that my dream of happiness is about to be realized.

IMA (*with a triumphant look*). Mr. Coffin, do you know that you are not speaking to Cassandra McArty?

COF. Cassandra McArty be damned! Pardon me. Ima, I love you. I've loved you for weeks. I've tried to get an opportunity to tell you, but somehow we seemed

to drift apart just as I was about to speak. Simpson was the wedge which came between us, but I have just seen you send him from you. Ima, will you marry me? Will you be my wife?

IMA (*greatly flustered*). Do you mean what you say about Miss McArty? Are you sure you don't care for her?

COF. I don't want any more to do with her than you do with Simpson. She has nearly driven me crazy with her twaddle. There has been romance in everything from the Saturday night beans to that infernal Lord Islington. I am done with her forever. It never amounted to anything, anyway. I can explain it all to you later. Don't keep me in suspense, Ima dear, answer me. Will you be my wife?

IMA (*extending her arms to him*). Owen dear, I will. (*They embrace.*) Owen.

COF. Yes, love.

IMA. I shall have to resign as president of the Single Blessedness Club. I am breaking the only rule which demands expulsion.

COF. Never mind, my dear, we will start a little club of our own. We are both charter members.

IMA. Owen, I'm so happy.

COF. I have a confession to make. I must explain why I have been seen so much with that—that scribbler.

IMA. Yes?

COF. I had an insane idea that perhaps it would arouse your jealousy and give me a chance to win you back from Simpson. It was a mean thing to do, I know. Will you forgive me?

IMA. Forgive you for a little thing like that?

COF. Don't judge me too harshly. I know it was a childish thing to do, but I loved you so!

IMA (*softly*). Owen, I was seen with Simpson for the very same reason. But I was well punished for my foolishness. How I regret the hours I wasted in his company. He is intolerable. I simply had to give him a terrible talking to this morning; I couldn't stand him any longer.

COF. It is lucky that I heard you, or I should never have had the courage to ask you—what I did. (*Laughs.*) I was as bad off with friend Cassie as you were with Simpson. I told her two days ago that I couldn't stand it any longer, and broke my agreement with her.

IMA. What agreement?

COF. I'll explain later. It was simply a plot so that I could get you.

IMA. You dear boy. (*They embrace.*)

COF. I guess we were only going through what all young folks must meet. We simply wouldn't realize that each wanted the other. I even thought that I was too forward.

IMA. Why, I had the same idea of myself.

COF. But we understand each other now. By George, isn't it glorious!

IMA. I guess that the old saying "Love is blind" can be applied to our case. Were we not big sillies not to have realized long ago what we have just awakened to?

COF. Never mind, we have our big, glorious future before us. Come, my dear, let's go out and sit in the hammock.

(*Exeunt COF. and IMA, R. Enter SIM., C., slowly, gazing at watch. He goes to office door, L., and knocks several times before getting any response. Finally TELL opens door and steps out, followed by VERNE.*)

TELL. Well, what the devil do you want?

SIM. (*in a whisper*). Boys, boys, what time is it by your watches? Will eleven o'clock never come?

VERNE (*glancing at watch*). Buck up. It's ten forty.

TELL. About all in? (*Dances around SIM.*) I told you so; I told you so.

SIM. So you have informed me many times in the last ten days.

VERNE. Can you remember when you said "I am sure enjoying myself"?

SIM. I've never been so tormented in my life. Eleven o'clock, hurry with thy blessed relief!

TELL. "I thrive on honeyed sweets."

SIM. Can it. Why didn't you fellows relent and let me have one evening to myself? Oh, the horror of this month. I wonder if I can stick it out until eleven o'clock. (*Sinks down on divan; shakes watch and anxiously looks at it.*) If Cassie will stay away a few minutes I may survive, but I can't stand the sight of her until after eleven o'clock.

VERNE. You remember the terms of the contract. We have been trying faithfully to keep our part of them; see that you do as well.

SIM. I know you have. One evening a week to myself would have kept me in trim, but you wouldn't let up on me.

TELL. Article five says that you are subject to orders from five A. M. until midnight.

SIM. (*savagely*). I never want to dance again, I'm dizzy from dancing. If you ever catch me sipping afternoon tea again, shoot me at sight. I swear that I will never look at another woman except Birdie. (*Mournfully.*) You wouldn't explain to Birdie. She has been under the same roof with me for two weeks, and hasn't spoken a word since that awkward moment when I first saw her.

TELL. The first rule of the contract reads "This understanding is to be kept absolutely secret." You can do your own explaining in a few minutes.

SIM. If you knew how I fear Cassie now, you would give me the few remaining moments out of pity. She let up for quite a while, but the last two days she has been after me harder than ever. You made me take a walk with her at sunrise this morning, and let me tell you, it almost finished me.

TELL. Business is business.

VERNE. You can break your contract if you wish. You know what the last rule says about photos and newspapers.

SIM. See if Cassie is coming. I'm too weak to move.

VERNE. She is liable to come at any moment; she knows it's mail time. And Dicky, you make these last few minutes happy ones for her. Eleven o'clock sounds

the death knell of her happiness. Let the partnership of Tom, Dick and Harry end in a blaze of glory.

SIM. Was there ever a more diabolical scheme invented to torture a human soul! For a month now, I have been at the beck and call of every female here. I haven't had a minute to myself. It was great for a while, but when they began coming in droves it was more than any man could stand. Each one that came brought about five more. It was a regular endless chain. I was fought over like the last piece of meat among a pack of hungry wolves. It is horrible. What time is it?

(Shakes watch and looks at it.)

VERNE. Listen to what you have done, Dick. I balanced accounts this morning, and I find that already we have cleared more than the old proprietor the last three summers put together.

TELL. Is that straight?

VERNE. Gospel truth.

(Some one heard approaching off R.)

SIM. Listen! Is that Cassie coming?

(SIM. starts for door, C. TELL pulls picture from his pocket, and VERNE the contract.)

TELL. See the pretty picture.

(SIM. stops in door, C., with eyes glued on R. entrance. Enter HOP., R., with mail-sack, which he throws on desk. House 'phone buzzes. TELL answers.)

TELL. Hello.....Yes. *(To HOP.)* You're just in time, Hopper. Beat it up to room five twenty-five. That's top floor rear, you know.

HOP. Can't I ever have a minute's rest?

TELL. Not around here. This is a regular hotel.

[Exit HOP., C., on the run.]

VERNE. You delight in bossing that fellow around, don't you?

TELL. In memory of the time I did all those things.

VERNE (*leans over desk looking intently out R.*). Look out the door. See what's coming.

SIM. Now I'm in for it. Always remember me, boys.

Enter COF. and IMA, C., arm in arm.

COF. (*to IMA*). We were right. (*To others.*) Thought we heard voices and have come in to tell you some good news.

TELL. We are all ears.

COF. Come on, every one, congratulations are in order for me. Miss Brayer will not be Miss Brayer very much longer. What do you think of that? I am going to the city to-morrow to get the ring.

TELL. I'm mighty glad.

VERNE. I told you so, Harry.

SIM. Congratulations. I hope that you will both forgive me for any hard feeling I may have caused.

COF. Certainly, certainly, my boy.

IMA. Owen, I feel so embarrassed.

COF. I feel as happy as a lark.

IMA. Let's go back to the hammock, dear. [*Exeunt R.*]

SIM. Won't you please let me off now?

VERNE. Stick it out. We will send you away later for a rest cure.

SIM. If you will only give me these last few minutes I'll be happy. It is almost the hour. Haven't you got ten minutes' worth of mercy?

TELL. Sure, if you will step to the 'phone and get a reporter on the way down for this.

(Draws photo from pocket.)

VERNE (*taking out contract*). And this.

SIM. What a fool I've been. What a fool!

Enter BIRD., C., clad in pretty summer frock.

BIRD. Dick.

SIM. Birdie, are you going to speak to me at last?

BIRD. I am going home this afternoon, and I have something to say before I leave.

(VERNE and TELL go behind desk.)

SIM. (*eagerly*). Yes, yes, honey.

BIRD. If you can explain that outrageous sight which met my eyes when I came here, and your various performances ever since, all well and good; if not, our engagement is off.

SIM. Birdie!

BIRD. Absolutely off.

SIM. I can explain. You will understand. You see—— (*VERNE and TELL wave photo and contract at him.*) I—I can't explain now, but I will make it clear very soon.

BIRD. I want to know now. Oh, Dick, if you don't want to wipe away the last bit of faith I have in you, you will speak up. I've been suffering terribly the last two weeks——

SIM. Ye gods! Haven't I suffered, too? You wouldn't speak to me, and you would continue to risk your neck in that darned flying-machine. *You have suffered!*

BIRD. Well, talk up like a man, and clear away the clouds.

SIM. I—I can't now. I'll tell you later; give me a little time to think. (*Looks at watch.*)

BIRD. Your only need of time is to conjure up some fable. I want the truth.

SIM. I'll tell you everything; you will understand if you will only wait a while.

BIRD. (*glances at her watch*). It is now ten minutes to eleven. I will give you those ten minutes. You must tell me before eleven o'clock or all is over between us. I shall be back before then. [*Exit c.*]

SIM. You damnable fiends! Now see what you have got me into. I'll lose her anyway. If that stuff gets in the paper it will queer me with her people, and if I don't tell her she leaves me. (*Paces wildly about.*) Why, oh why, was I such an idiot? If that McArty woman comes in here before eleven o'clock I swear vengeance on both of you if I have to devote the rest of my life to it. (*Shakes watch.*) What time is it? Has this thing stopped?

TELL (*to VERNE*). "I sure am enjoying myself."

VERNE (*to TELL*). "I thrive on honeyed sweets."

SIM. Shut up, you fiends in human form.

TELL. It is almost time to discuss the renewal of your contract. We are well satisfied with your work, and are willing to take you on permanently.

SIM. Don't talk like a raving maniac. New Jersey will never see me again. I hope your business goes smash when I go.

VERNE. It won't. We shall merely bait our line again and catch another sucker.

TELL (*looking out R.*). Holy jumping monkeys!

SIM. What time is it, I ask you. I think that my watch has stopped.

VERNE (*consulting watch*). Ten fifty-three.

SIM. Only seven more minutes.

TELL. And here comes Cassie.

SIM. Good-night. (*Rushes to door, c.*)

TELL. Wait. Remember your contract. You know what will happen if you break it.

VERNE (*holding up seven fingers*). Come back for seven short minutes and you are free.

SIM. I'll make a desperate effort to survive. (*Sits on divan, grimly eying watch, which he almost continuously looks at during following scene.*) Don't you boys leave me alone.

TELL. We will be back very soon.

VERNE. Important business to look after. [*Exeunt c.*]

SIM. Now for the final round. If I can only hold out. (*Looks at watch.*) Six minutes and a half.

Enter CAS., R.

CAS. Dicky, I've been hunting all over the place for you. I have some most thrilling news. What do you think? Mr. Coffin and Ima have announced their engagement. Isn't that absolutely the most romantic affair of which you have ever heard? Their clouds have rolled away and the glorious sunshine is everywhere.

SIM. (*aside*). Help! Murder!

CAS. Mr. Coffin is a happy man, and Ima is a lucky woman.

SIM. (*aside*). I'm neither happy nor lucky.

CAS. Don't you think that they make a stunning pair?

SIM. Yes. I feel stunned, too.

CAS. (*sitting beside him*). Do you know, sometimes when I see others starting off on their happy voyages together it just makes my lonely heart ache.

SIM. I feel sorry for you.

CAS. This summer—in fact, during the last few weeks—I have been thinking very seriously of attempting to embark on a voyage of my own.

SIM. I guess it's just the effect of the summer weather. Many people have these summer attacks every year, but they disappear with the first frost.

CAS. That is what I have always believed until this summer. I have often looked on and smiled at the young people who fell in love on the Fourth of July and out again Labor Day. Those little affairs are so interesting; but I was always sure that none of them lasted beyond that.

SIM. (*business with watch*). What's the difference now?

CAS. This year I have discovered one of those little summer affairs which I hope will become lasting. (*Pauses and smiles at him.*) I feel sure that this summer I have found my mate. I am sure his soul is in tune with mine.

(*She sits looking dreamily into space.*)

SIM. Holy smoke, why doesn't she quit? What's coming next?

CAS. Do you remember the morning a few weeks ago when Ima and her groom-to-be and we were discussing the proposal of marriage by women?

SIM. Yes. (*Aside.*) Why doesn't the clock strike? Why, oh, why?

CAS. I have been thinking it over a great deal since then, and I don't see why a woman hasn't the right, if she wishes to exercise it.

SIM. (*emphatically*). I don't agree with you; not in the least.

CAS. I had hoped that you didn't feel that way, because — (*A very long pause. She gazes steadily at him; he returns it a moment then looks at watch; then.*) Dicky, can't you see that I love you? All summer I have been thinking only of you. I have quite a few thousands in the bank, and a good home in the city. Won't you share them with me?

SIM. (*much flustered. With a silly grin*). Oh, this is so sudden.

CAS. I'm serious, Dicky, I was never so much in earnest in my life. (*She slowly gets down on her knees.*) Dick, will you be my husband? Will you marry me?

(*Clock in distance strikes eleven. CAS., on knees gazes at SIM., who is staring at watch and counting the strokes half aloud. At sixth stroke BIRD. appears in door, c., but is not seen. As last stroke dies out SIM. speaks.*)

SIM. Eleven o'clock. Saved! Saved! My slavery is ended.

BIRD. I have come for your explanation.

(*When CAS. sees BIRD. she drops from her knees to all fours. SIM. is speechless.*)

CAS. Mr. Simpson, will you help me find that dime I dropped?—Never mind, I have it.

(*Rises and quickly exits R.*)

BIRD. So you needed time to think it over. You need not attempt to explain anything after the ridiculous scene I have just witnessed.

SIM. Yes, yes, I can tell you all now. You must keep your agreement. It is just eleven. I shall tell you everything; and now that I am going to do so, I think that there is some explanation due me. I was astounded when I found out that *you* were the Eaglet.

BIRD. Easily explained. When you went away to really earn your living for the summer, I was so lonesome

that I had to do something to take up my mind, and I decided to study aviation. Of course, I couldn't use my own name as that would have brought Dad on the run and ended my flying. I'll venture that your explanation is not so simple.

Enter TELL and VERNE, C.

SIM. More explanations needed. Fellows, what do you think? Cassie proposed to me, but I swear upon my honor that the clock struck before I had to answer. Birdie can testify to that if she will.

VERNE. And you still live. You are a hero!

TELL. Pardon me, do you mind telling us who the Eaglet is? We know that she is Birdie, but who is Birdie?

BIRD. (*to SIM.*). Go ahead, let's clean things up. Tell them everything—contract and all.

VERNE. Contract! Did he tell you? Harry, get William Randolph Hearst on the wire; we'll fix him.

SIM. Hold on; this is just one of my contracts.

BIRD. Then I hope that you can explain your conduct. I always knew that you were a bit of a flirt, but I didn't think that you would go to such extremes as I have seen during the last two weeks.

SIM. Boys, this is my fiancée, Miss Birdie Lark. Now the truth. I am really rotten with money, and have never done a stroke of work in my life. Birdie insisted that I live on just a few dollars a week this summer to prove that I could settle down and be a *man*, before we are married in the fall. I signed an agreement with her—you see I had 'em all 'round—to start with just a hundred dollars in my pocket, and live a hundred days away from home without any more money unless I earned it.

BIRD. I don't see that you have. And how do you explain the numerous affairs you have been carrying on around here? Remember, I have been watching you. (*Pleadingly.*) Dick, don't you know how I have been hoping and praying that this summer would make a man out of you. Our whole future depended on it.

TELL. Miss Lark, don't you worry. When he gets

rested you will find him a real live man. That boy has worked this summer. He has nearly worked his darned head off. I'll guarantee that he will make a good husband. Tom, just show her our contract.

VERNE (*handing contract to her*). Read that.

TELL. You have kept both contracts to the letter, I guess, but you came very near spoiling at least one of them.

SIM. Boys, I have learned some valuable lessons, and I shall have to thank you that I did. I have never had to do anything before if I didn't want to—not in my life. This summer I've learned to stick through a thing to the finish. It was nearly the finish of me, but I know now that I am in trim for more important affairs.

TELL. What will become of Cassie?

VERNE. I guess that she reverts to you.

TELL. No, sir! I'll do a Steve Brodie into the briny first.

BIRD. (*rolling up contract*). Did he carry that out?

VERNE. To the letter.

BIRD. (*to SIM.*). You have more perseverance than I thought. You'll come around all right when you get in the office with Dad.

Enter IMA and COF., R.

VERNE. Miss Brayer, let me present another happy pair—Miss Birdie Lark and Mr. Richard Simpson.

COF. Congratulations, Simpson; but isn't this rather sudden?

VERNE. Explanations are in order all around.

IMA. Well, young man, I congratulate you; but my dear Eaglet, you will have a struggle, a very great struggle, I am afraid.

COF. I have never seen a livelier summer in my life. It's been one continual game of hearts.

VERNE (*pointing off R.*). It's not over yet; here comes Cassie.

SIM. Birdie dear, take hold of my arm, and hang on to me; I may have a fainting attack.

Enter CAS., R.

TELL. Miss McArty, allow me to present Miss Lark, Mr. Simpson's fiancée.

CAS. (*in a daze*). Wh-what? Oh, Dicky. Oh, oh! (*Suddenly*.) Mr. Verne, I have decided to leave for home to-night. Good-bye, every one. Good-bye, Mr. Tell. Oh, by the way, will you be here next summer?

TELL. I expect to.

CAS. Mr. Verne, you may expect me next year for the entire season.

Enter HOP., c.

HOP. Telegram for Mr. Tell.

TELL (*opens and reads; appears greatly excited*). Read this and explain to the folks, Tom.

(*Hands telegram to VERNE.*)

VERNE. For the love of Mike. It's from his wife.

CAS. His wife? His wife?

VERNE. Listen to this. (*Reads.*) "It happened this morning. It's twins. All doing well."

CAS. I have changed my mind; I shall not be back next year. Good-bye.

TELL. Gee, I'm a dad!

CAS. (*as she slowly goes toward R. exit; to herself*). Ah, cruel fate! Romance is not for me.

(*COF. and IMA, R. C. SIM. and BIRD., L. C. TELL and VERNE, c., shaking hands. HOP. back c.*)

CURTAIN



THE BEANTOWN CHOIR

A Farcical Entertainment in Three Acts
By Walter Ben Hare

Two men, ten women, male and female quartettes and two men for tableaux. Scenery, unimportant, an interior if any; costumes, modern and eccentric. Plays a full evening. No royalty. The Widow Wood's projects to honor the memory of Brother Botts, the former choir director and to marry the minister both come to grief after a series of side-splitting adventures. A riot of mere fun introducing sole and concerted music and specialties; a frame for a musical or vaudeville entertainment. Strongly recommended.

Price, 35 cents

CHARACTERS

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

Male Quartet, and two Men for Tableau. Fedediah Girls quartet.

WHAT ROSIE TOLD THE TAILOR

A Farce in One Act
By Edith F. Broomhall

Seven men, three women; female characters may be played by men if desired. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. No royalty. If Dick Manners is going to take his girl to "the game" he simply has got to keep that spring suit that the tailor wants back unless he has his money. How "Rosie," Dick's man, brings this about is the story of a very easy and effective farce. Recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CONVERTING BRUCE

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By Edith F. Broomhall

Two men, two women. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. No royalty. Bruce says that all girls are double faced, saying one thing to you and another about you. His chum Jack, by an ingenious plot, proves to him that even if this is sometimes true Peggy Lee is an exception. A very bright, lively and entertaining farce, full of "pep" and go. Recommended.

Price, 25 cents

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By *Mansfield Scott*

Seven males, four females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours. Royalty for amateur performance \$10.00 for one, \$15.00 for two performances. Inspector Malcome Steele, of the U. S. Secret Service, devotes himself in this thrilling play to unravelling the German plots that surround Prof. Middlebrook's submarine shell that is to bring the downfall of the Hun. The battle between his wits and those of "Tom Cloff," the German secret agent, is of absorbing interest. An easy and effective thriller that can be recommended for school performance.

Price, 35 cents

CHARACTERS

HANS KRAFT, <i>alias James McGrady.</i>	DETECTIVE ALBERT BRADBURY.
OTTO HERMAN, <i>alias William.</i>	INSPECTOR MALCOME STEELE.
MR. WARREN MIDDLEBROOK.	"TOM CLOFF."
MONSIEUR CHARLES LECLAIR.	MRS. MIDDLEBROOK.
PROFESSOR HENRY WESTERBERG.	ELEANOR MIDDLEBROOK.
	MARGARET LINDEN.
	DELIA.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. The living-room. August 11, after dinner.

ACT II. Same as Act I. August 12, 1:30 P. M.

ACT III. The private laboratory. That evening, 7:30.

ACT IV. Same as Act III. Later, 10 P. M.

THE AMERICAN IDEA

A Sketch in One Act

By *Lily Carthew*

Three males, two females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. Royalty for amateur performance \$5.00. Mignon Goldman, following the American Idea, throws off the parental yoke and marries the man of her choice and not the choice of her parents. She brings home for the parental blessing John Kelly. Abe, her father, is disconsolate at this prospect until he sees John and recognizes in him Yan Kele Operchinsky, rechristened in accordance with "The American Idea." Originally produced at The Peabody Playhouse, Boston. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents.

THE CROWNING OF COLUMBIA

A Patriotic Fantasy in One Act

By *Kathrine F. Carlyon*

Twenty-five boys and twenty-four girls. Costumes, modern and picturesque. Nothing required in the way of scenery but a platform. Plays half an hour or less. Columbia is approached by the Foresters, the Farmers, the Miners, the Pleasure Seekers, the Ammunition Workers and even the Red Cross Workers, all asking her to be their Queen, but it is only when the Soldiers and the Red Cross Nurses come, asking nothing and giving all, that she yields. Easy, pretty, timely, and strongly recommended. Introduces music.

Price, 25 cents

MUCH ADO ABOUT BETTY

A Comedy in Three Acts

By *Walter Ben Hare*

Ten male, twelve female characters, or seven males and seven females by doubling. Costumes, modern; scenery, two easy interiors. Plays a full evening. Betty, a moving picture star, going south on a vacation, loses her memory from the shock of a railway accident, and is identified as a rival, Violet Ostrich, from a hand-bag that she carries. In this character she encounters the real Violet, who has just eloped with Ned O'Hare, and mixes things up sadly both for herself and the young couple. An exceptionally bright, clever and effective play that can be highly recommended. Good Negro, Irish and eccentric comedy parts.

Price, 35 cents

CHARACTERS

LIN LEONARD, <i>Betty's one best bet.</i>	ETHEL KOHLER, <i>a high-school admirer of Betty.</i>
MAJOR JARTREE, <i>of Wichita, not only bent, but crooked.</i>	VIOLET OSTRICH, <i>a film favorite, Ned's bride.</i>
NED O'HARE, <i>a jolly young honeymooner.</i>	MRS. K. M. DIGGINS, <i>a guest at the Hotel Poinsettia.</i>
MR. E. Z. OSTRICH, <i>who has written a wonderful picture-play.</i>	DAFFODIL DIGGINS, <i>her daughter, "Yes, Mamma!"</i>
DR. McNUTT, <i>solid ivory from the neck up.</i>	MISS CHIZZLE, <i>one of the North Georgia Chizzles.</i>
JIM WILES, <i>a high-school senior.</i>	PEARLIE BROWN, <i>Violet's maid, a widow of ebony hue.</i>
ARCHIE, <i>a black bell-boy at the Hotel Poinsettia.</i>	VIOLET, <i>Violet Ostrich's little girl aged seven.</i>
OFFICER RILEY, <i>who always does his duty.</i>	DIAMOND, <i>Pearlie's little girl aged six and</i>
OFFICER DUGAN, <i>from the Emerald Isle.</i>	BETTY, <i>the star of the Movagraph Co.</i>
MR. EBENEZER O'HARE, <i>a sick man and a submerged tenth.</i>	
MRS. EBENEZER O'HARE, <i>"Birdie," the other nine-tenths.</i>	
AUNT WINNIE, <i>Betty's chaperone.</i>	
LIZZIE MONAHAN, <i>Betty's maid, with a vivid imagination.</i>	

Jartree may double Dugan; Ned may double Riley; Jim may double Archie; Mrs. O'Hare may double Ethel; Aunt Winnie may double Pearlle and Lizzie may double Miss Chizzle, thus reducing the cast to seven males and seven females. The two children have no lines to speak.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. Betty's apartments near New York. Married in haste.
ACT II. Parlor D of the Hotel Poinsettia, Palm Beach, Fla. Three days later. Betty loses her memory.
ACT III. Same scene as Act II. A full honeymoon.

JUST A LITTLE MISTAKE

A Comedy in One Act

By *Elizabeth Gale*

One male, five female characters, or can be played by all girls. Costumes, modern; scenery, an easy interior. Plays forty minutes. Mrs. Ball receives a cablegram from her sister Lucy stating that Jerry will arrive that day and begging her to be cordial. Mrs. Ball then goes out to hire a cook, leaving three young friends to receive the unknown guest. The cook, sent down from the agency in haste, is greeted and entertained as Jerry and when the real Jerry (Miss Geraldine Take) arrives she is sent out to the kitchen. After considerable confusion and excitement she is discovered to be the "Little Miss Take." Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

LOST—A CHAPERON

A Comedy in Three Acts by Courtney Bruerton and W. S. Maulsby. Six male, nine female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior and an exterior. Plays a full evening. A lot of college girls in camp lose their chaperon for twenty-four hours, and are provided by a camp of college boys across the lake with plenty of excitement. The parts are all good, the situations are very funny and the lines full of laughs. Recommended for high-school performance. *Price, 35 cents*

THE PRIVATE TUTOR

A Farce in Three Acts by E. J. Whisler. Five male, three female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, two simple interiors. Plays two hours. Tells of the endeavors of two college boys to disguise the fact that they have been "rusticated" from the family of one of them. Hans Dinklederfer, the leader of a German band, trying to make good in the character of a private tutor, is a scream. All the parts are good. A capital high-school play. *Price, 35 cents*

THE REBELLION OF MRS. BARCLAY

A Comedy of Domestic Life in Two Acts by May E. Countryman. Three male, six female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, easy interiors. Plays one hour and three-quarters. A clever and amusing comedy with all the parts evenly good. There are many Mr. Barclays all over this country, and Mrs. Barclay's method of curing her particular one will be sympathetically received. Good Irish comedy parts, male and female. Strongly recommended. *Price, 35 cents*

THE TRAMPS' CONVENTION

An Entertainment in One Scene for Male Characters Only by Jessie A. Kelley. Seventeen male characters. Costumes, typical tramp dress; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a half. An entertainment in the vaudeville class, with possibilities of unlimited fun. Music can be introduced, if desired, though this is not necessary. The opening is very funny and original and the finish—The Ananias Club—can be worked up to any extent. Strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

THE DAY THAT LINCOLN DIED

A Play in One Act by Prescott Warren and Will Hutchins. Five male, two female characters. Costumes, modern; scene, an easy exterior. Plays thirty minutes. A very effective play suited for a Lincoln Day entertainment. It offers plenty of comedy, and is a piece that we can heartily recommend. Professional stage-rights reserved. *Price, 25 cents*

PA'S NEW HOUSEKEEPER

A Farce in One Act by Charles S. Bird. Three male, two female characters. Modern costumes; scenery, a simple interior or none at all. Plays forty minutes. Jack Brown, visiting his chum, is tempted by his success in college theatricals to make up in the character of the new housekeeper, an attractive widow, who is expected but does not arrive. He takes in everybody and mixes things up generally. All the parts are first rate and the piece full of laughs. Strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

Plays for Junior High Schools

	Males	Females	Time	Price
Sally Lunn	3	4	1 ½ hrs.	25c
Mr. Bob	3	4	1 ½ "	25c
The Man from Brandon	3	4	½ "	25c
A Box of Monkeys	2	3	1 ¼ "	25c
A Rice Pudding	2	3	1 ¼ "	25c
Class Day	4	3	¾ "	25c
Chums	3	2	¾ "	25c
An Easy Mark	5	2	½ "	25c
Pa's New Housekeeper	3	2	1 "	25c
Not On the Program	3	3	¾ "	25c
The Cool Collegians	3	4	1 ½ "	25c
The Elopement of Ellen	4	3	2 "	35c
Tommy's Wife	3	5	1 ½ "	35c
Johnny's New Suit	2	5	¾ "	25c
Thirty Minutes for Refreshments	4	3	½ "	25c
West of Omaha	4	3	¾ "	25c
The Flying Wedge	3	5	¾ "	25c
My Brother's Keeper	5	3	1 ½ "	25c
The Private Tutor	5	3	2 "	35c
Me an' Otis	5	4	2 "	25c
Up to Freddie	3	6	1 ¼ "	25c
My Cousin Timmy	2	8	1 "	25c
Aunt Abigail and the Boys	9	2	1 "	25c
Caught Out	9	2	1 ½ "	25c
Constantine Pueblo Jones	10	4	2 "	35c
The Cricket On the Hearth	6	7	1 ½ "	25c
The Deacon's Second Wife	6	6	2 "	35c
Five Feet of Love	5	6	1 ½ "	25c
The Hurdy Gurdy Girl	9	9	2 "	35c
Camp Fidelity Girls	1	11	2 "	35c
Carrotty Nell		15	1 "	25c
A Case for Sherlock Holmes		10	1 ½ "	35c
The Clancey Kids		14	1 "	25c
The Happy Day		7	½ "	25c
I Grant You Three Wishes		14	½ "	25c
Just a Little Mistake	1	5	¾ "	25c
The Land of Night		18	1 ¼ "	25c
Local and Long Distance	1	6	½ "	25c
The Original Two Bits		7	½ "	25c
An Outsider		7	½ "	25c
Oysters		6	½ "	25c
A Pan of Fudge		6	½ "	25c
A Peck of Trouble		5	½ "	25c
A Precious Pickle		7	½ "	25c
The First National Boot	7	2	1 "	25c
His Father's Son	14		1 ¾ "	35c
The Turn In the Road	9		1 ½ "	25c
A Half Back's Interference	10		¾ "	25c
The Revolving Wedge	5	3	1 "	25c
Mose	11	10	1 ½ "	25c

BAKER, Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.



Plays and Novelties That Have Been Winners

	Males	Females	Time	Price	Royalty
Camp Fidelity Girls		11	2½ hrs.	35c	None
Anita's Trial		11	2 "	35c	"
The Farmerette		7	2 "	35c	"
Behind the Scenes		12	1½ "	35c	"
The Camp Fire Girls		15	2 "	35c	"
A Case for Sherlock Holmes		10	1½ "	35c	"
The House in Laurel Lane		6	1½ "	25c	"
Her First Assignment		10	1 "	25c	"
I Grant You Three Wishes		14	½ "	25c	"
Joint Owners in Spain		4	½ "	35c	\$5.00
Marrying Money		4	½ "	25c	None
The Original Two Bits		7	½ "	25c	"
The Over-Alls Club		10	½ "	25c	"
Leave it to Polly		11	1½ "	35c	"
The Rev. Peter Brice, Bachelor		7	½ "	25c	"
Miss Fearless & Co.		10	2 "	35c	"
A Modern Cinderella		16	1½ "	35c	"
Theodore, Jr.		7	½ "	25c	"
Rebecca's Triumph		16	2 "	35c	"
Aboard a Slow Train in Mizzoury	8	14	2½ "	35c	"
Twelve Old Maids		15	1 "	25c	"
An Awkward Squad	8		¼ "	25c	"
The Blow-Up of Algernon Blow	8		½ "	25c	"
The Boy Scouts	20		2 "	35c	"
A Close Shave	6		½ "	25c	"
The First National Boot	7	2	1 "	25c	"
A Half-Back's Interference	10		¾ "	25c	"
His Father's Son	14		1¾ "	35c	"
The Man With the Nose	8		¾ "	25c	"
On the Quiet	12		1½ "	35c	"
The People's Money	11		1¾ "	25c	"
A Regular Rah! Rah! Boy	14		1¾ "	35c	"
A Regular Scream	11		1¾ "	35c	"
Schmerekase in School	9		1 "	25c	"
The Scoutmaster	10		2 "	35c	"
The Tramps' Convention	17		1½ "	25c	"
The Turn in the Road	9		1½ "	25c	"
Wanted—a Pitcher	11		½ "	25c	"
What They Did for Jenkins	14		2 "	25c	"
Aunt Jerusha's Quilting Party	4	12	1¼ "	25c	"
The District School at Blueberry Corners	12	17	1 "	25c	"
The Emigrants' Party	24	10	1 "	25c	"
Miss Prim's Kindergarten	10	11	1½ "	25c	"
A Pageant of History	Any number		2 "	35c	"
The Revel of the Year	"	"	¾ "	25c	"
Scenes in the Union Depot	"	"	1 "	25c	"
Taking the Census in Bingville	14	8	1½ "	25c	"
The Village Post-Office	22	20	2 "	35c	"
O'Keefe's Circuit	12	8	1½ "	35c	"

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