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A LOYAL FRIEND

A Comedy-Drama in Four Acts

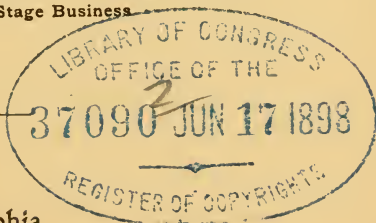
By

Charles Townsend

Author of "A White Mountain Boy," "Four A. M.," "A Family
Affair," Etc.

AUTHOR'S EDITION

With Cast of Characters, Time of Representation, Synopsis, Description of Costumes, Scene and Property Plots, Entrances and Exits, and all of the Stage Business



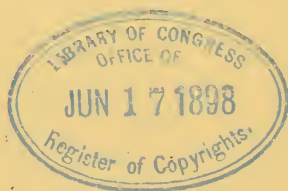
Philadelphia

The Penn Publishing Company

1898

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TWO COPIES RECEIVED.

A LOYAL FRIEND

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROYAL PLAYFORD, everybody's friend . . .	<i>Character Lead</i>
GILBERT FANSHAW, a newspaper man . . .	<i>Juvenile Man</i>
RAYMON ALVAREZ, a Spanish diplomat . . .	<i>Leading Heavy</i>
O'KELLY, "wan o' the ould sod" . . .	<i>Comedy Old Man</i>
NUBBINS, the baker's boy	<i>Utility</i>
MONTE, Alvarez' servant	<i>Utility</i>
ARTHUR FANSHAW, Gilbert's son, age 7	<i>Child</i>
MRS. MILLY MERRYMAN, a jolly young widow . . .	<i>Lead</i>
SYLVIA FANSHAW, her sister	<i>Juvenile Lady</i>
MRS. GRIGGINS (afterwards O'KELLY), "a widdy"	<i>Character</i>

TIME—The present.

LOCATION—New York and Florida.

TIME OF PLAYING—Two hours.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I—THE BROKEN HOME. "Dead to me!"

ACT II—BALKING A VILLAIN. "If you do, I'll cowhide you."

ACT III—TIGHTENING THE COILS. "Not to-day, my boy."

ACT IV—THE RESCUE. "I've repelled a Spanish invasion!"

NOTE.—Some of the incidents of this play, including Sylvia's flight and subsequent return, were suggested by *La Maison du Mari*, to the author of which I take pleasure in giving due credit.

THE AUTHOR

COSTUMES

ROYAL. Acts I and II—Rich and elegant summer dress, suitable for country wear. Act III—Light sack suit. Act IV—Evening dress. All costumes may be slightly eccentric. Wears overcoat in last entrance, Act IV.

GILBERT—Same general style as Royal's, but much quieter.

RAYMON—Act I—Light summer dress. Act II—Frock suit. Act III—Sack suit. Act IV—Black frock, slouch hat.

O'KELLY—Modern throughout. In last act wears ill-fitting evening dress.

NUBBINS—Modern.

MONTE—Modern.

ARTHUR—Modern.

MILLY—Acts I, II, III—Pretty house dress. No change between first two acts. Act IV—Ball dress.

SYLVIA—House dress throughout. No change between first two acts.

MRS. GRIGGINS—House dress until last act, then change to loud and exaggerated ball dress.

PROPERTIES.

ACT I—Basket and bread, letter in envelope, telegram ; writing materials on table.

ACT II—Lawn tent, dress suit case, valise, hat box, pipe and tobacco.

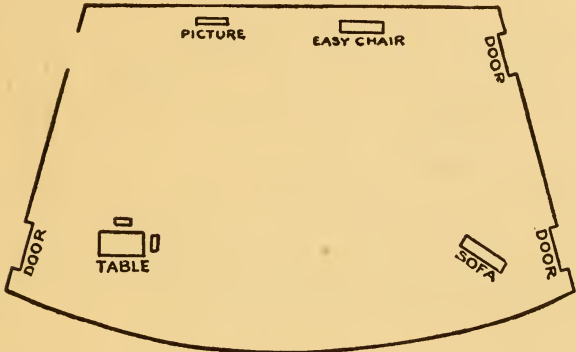
ACT III—Newspaper, coin, cigar and matches, watch, dagger.

ACT IV—Handsome lamp, revolver.

SCENE PLOT

Act I

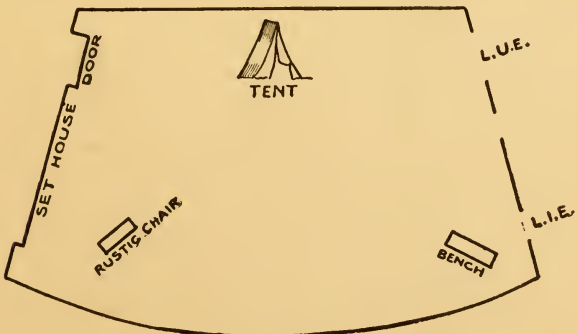
SCENE—Parlor in 4th grooves. Interior backing. Carpet down. Lights on. Time, morning. Set as per diagram.



ACT I

Act II

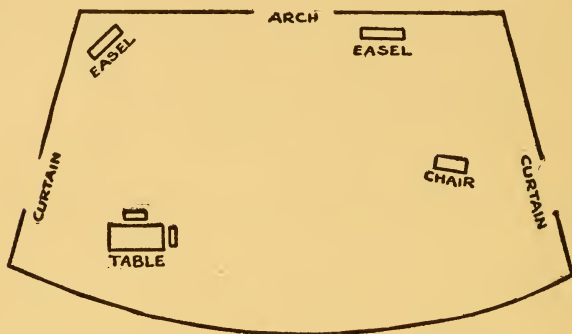
SCENE—Summer landscape on flat in 5th grooves. Grass cloth down. Lights full on. Time, morning. Set as indicated.



ACT II

ACTS III AND IV

SCENE—Plain parlor in 3d grooves, with semi-tropical landscape backing in 5th grooves. Set as indicated.



Act IV has same set, except that lighted lamp is on table, or piano lamp stands near table.

A LOYAL FRIEND

ACT I

SCENE—*Comfortably furnished parlor in fourth grooves. See scene plot. Exterior backing—summer landscape—in fifth grooves. Sofa L., front. Table R., front. Carpet and rugs. Lights on. Time, morning. Doors C., R. I E., L. U. E., and L. I E.*

(*At rise of curtain enter O'KELLY and NUBBINS, C. NUBBINS has basket and bread.*)

O'KELLY. Now phwat air ye bringin' thot in here for?

NUBBINS. Nobody 'round at the kitchen.

O'KELLY. Thin ye should hev kim again.

NUBBINS. Not on yer life. I don't make no double trips to-day.

O'KELLY. Indade, and why not?

NUBBINS. Why not? Didn't you hear?

O'KELLY. Well—what?

NUBBINS. There's a game o' ball this afternoon, and I'm in the box for the "Holy Terrors," see? Ketch! (*Tosses basket to O'KELLY, which strikes him in stomach, knocking him down. NUBBINS runs out C.*)

O'KELLY. Here, you! Come back till I drive ye into the ground wid a club! (*At C. D. shakes fist.*) I'll break the face all aff ye!

(*MRS. GRIGGINS enters C., meets O'KELLY face to face. He slowly retreats backward toward L. front. She follows him, arms akimbo.*)

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*down L. front*) Will ye, now? Ah, now, why don't ye, eh? Why don't ye?

O'KELLY. Ah, Mrs. Griggins, ye know—

MRS. GRIGGINS. Yis, I do know. Ye're always talkin' foight, but ye wouldn't tackle a chicken.

O'KELLY. Nor an ould hin, ayther.

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*angrily*) Do yez be callin' me an ould hin? Eh? Eh? Av ye do I'll—(*raises hand*).

O'KELLY. (*on knees*) Divil a wance did I, an' I'm sorry that I did.

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*crosses*) Ah, ye're a beauty.

O'KELLY. (*still on knees, aside*) I wonder how she found that out?

MRS. GRIGGINS. Don't be sprawlin' around like that. Get up. (*He rises*) Go down to the post-office for the mail. Mrs. Fanshaw is anxious.

O'KELLY. Wants to hear from her newspaper-writin' husband 'way aff among thim African nagurs.

MRS. GRIGGINS. He's not, He's the New York *Herald* war correspondent wid the Italian army.

O'KELLY. Think o' that, now.

ARTHUR. (*off c., calls*) O'Kel—ly! Ho! Ho—o!

O'KELLY. (*repeats*) Mr. Ar—tie! Ho! Ho—o!

(ARTHUR *runs on c.*)

ARTHUR. O'Kelly! (*backs down c. holding O'KELLY'S hands*) Give me a ride.

O'KELLY. (*picks him up, carries him on shoulder*) Thare ye go!

ARTHUR. I want to go to the post-office with you, O'Kelly.

O'KELLY. So ye shall.

ARTHUR. Whoa—up! Set me right.

O'KELLY. (*puts ARTHUR astride shoulders*) Thare ye air!

ARTHUR. Gee up, hossy! G'lang, g'lang!

O'KELLY. (*trots up, c.*) Aisy wid ye're heels! Stop kickin', ye omadhoun.

(*Exit, c.*)

MRS. GRIGGINS. A pair of kids, if ever thare was wan! An' which is the kiddiest kid nobody kin tell.

(*Enter MILLY, L. U. E.*)

MILLY. Has my sister been down yet?

MRS. GRIGGINS. No, Mrs. Merryman, she said she didn't want any breakfast this mornin', sorry the day.

MILLY. Is she ill?

MRS. GRIGGINS. Oh, no, mem! Just blue, loike, I do be thinkin'.

(*Exit, R. I E.*)

MILLY. Blue! Blue! That sounds cheerful.

(*Enter SYLVIA, L. U. E.*)

MILLY. Ah, here she is at last! Good-morning, Sylvia.

SYLVIA. (*sadly*) Good-morning. (*Sits, L.*)

MILLY. (*same tone*) Good-morning! You are as cheerful as a Quaker meeting. (*Sits, R.*)

SYLVIA. I am as cheerful as I feel.

MILLY. Well, you look it.

SYLVIA. Oh, Milly! I am so utterly wretched.

MILLY. No, you're not; you're the happiest woman living. You have a good husband, good home, good health,—a lovely child—plenty of friends—what more can you want?

SYLVIA. Something that you care nothing about, but which is all the world to me.

MILLY. (*clapping hands*) A riddle! A riddle! Unravel it.

SYLVIA. I am not happy, Milly, and you know it. Gilbert's work on that wretched paper keeps him constantly on the move. It is more than a year since I have seen him, and when he does return he will shut himself up in his library and do nothing but write, write, write.

MILLY. Yes, and his write, write, writing gives you comforts, and even luxuries, of which we never even dreamed in our childhood days—those dark days when a bit of ribbon was a luxury and a new dress the dream of a year.

SYLVIA. I care nothing for that. Had my husband been penniless I would have shared his poverty gladly, willingly, had he given me the love and sympathy that my heart craves.

MILLY. Love and sympathy! Skim milk and moonshine! My dear, your husband is a man of whom any woman might be proud. He is no Claude Melnotte, no fascinating idiot with a head full of airy schemes and pockets full of unpaid bills. He is just a level-headed newspaper man, who earns a tidy sum every year, and whose wife and child are all the world to him.

SYLVIA. And who leaves me alone month after month with never a word of sympathy.

MILLY. Sympathy? That is twice you have used that stupid word this morning. My dear Sylvia, listen to me, and imagine it is your mother's voice. When a wife with a brave, loving manly husband like yours, begins to crave sympathy, she is treading on dangerous ground.

SYLVIA. (*angrily*) Mildred! What do you mean?

MILLY. (*coolly*) Just what I say. Because your husband is not ever at your side, because he is not a man to fill your romantic mind with soft flattery, you turn for sympathy to—

SYLVIA. (*quickly*) To whom?

MILLY. To anybody—and then you revel in tears and happiness. Now, if you were a poor, lone widow, like me, there might be some sense in being miserable. But you have no excuse. Apropos, have you seen or heard anything of our delightful Spanish friend, Señor Alvarez, of late?

SYLVIA. Nothing whatever. He left without even saying good-bye. (*Crosses to R.*)

MILLY. Strange, isn't it. And he was so devoted, so sympathetic. (*Down, L.*) So very, very kind!

SYLVIA. Ah! (*turns aside impatiently.*)

MILLY. Well, he's gone, and in good time, or I should have cabled Gilbert to return.

SYLVIA. Why?

MILLY. Because that foreigner's devotion to you was becoming notorious, and you, alone, were blind to it. Gilbert may return at any time, and then— Well, I'm glad the Spaniard has gone.

(*Enter O'KELLY, C., carrying ARTHUR on shoulders.*)

ARTHUR. Gee up, hossy! Whoop! (*Slips down to floor.*)

O'KELLY. Ah, ye young rascal, me back is bruck, an' there wasn't any letters for you, mum (*to SYLVIA*), but here is wan letter for you, mum. (*Gives letter to MILLY, and exits with ARTHUR, C.*)

SYLVIA. No letter; as I expected!

MILLY. Don't worry. He may wish to surprise you (*opening letter*). Here's jolly news, anyhow.

SYLVIA. From whom?

MILLY. Listen. (*reads*) "Dear Mrs. Merryman: I've just got back from London—beastly town—located in England—capital or something—famous for fogs and scandals. I'm going to drop in to see you, so if you get this before I come, you'll know I'm here. If not, you'll see me before you know it. Your devoted Royal Playford." He will probably propose this time—if he can find words. If not, I'll have to do it for him.

SYLVIA. And you will accept him?

MILLY. I believe I will.

SYLVIA. But he is so different—so—

MILLY. Exactly. I want a different man. You need some one to protect you, while I—well, I want some one whom I can protect.

SYLVIA. I wouldn't marry a fool!

MILLY. Be careful now, Sylvia. Royal Playford is no fool. True, he thinks and speaks slowly; but when he has to assert himself he can be quick and forcible enough. See how he thrashed that loafer who insulted me one night, and remember he saved Arthur's life by strangling that mad dog when everybody else ran away.

SYLVIA. Yes, I do remember.

MILLY. He is a brave, loyal friend, and I intend to marry him if I have to pop the question myself.

SYLVIA. (*half aside*) No letter yet—not a word from my husband.

MILLY. Now don't be unreasonable.

ROYAL. (*off c.*) So glad, don't you know—really.

MILLY. Here he comes. Now be cheerful.

(*Enter ROYAL, c.*)

ROYAL. I walked right in, you know. Awfully glad to see you. (*Shakes hands with SYLVIA.*) You got my letter? (*Shakes hands with MILLY.*) Yes? That's nice, because if I'd got here before my letter you wouldn't have known whether I was here or not until I got here. (*During above speech shakes hands again with SYLVIA, then returns quickly to MILLY, and rapidly shakes first her right, then her left, then her right hand again.*)

MILLY. Don't distress yourself, but when you get quite through with my hand—

ROYAL. Excuse me—yes—but I'd like to keep it forever. (*Crosses quickly.*) There! I almost said something then.

SYLVIA. (*seated, l.*) Did you have a pleasant trip across?

ROYAL. (*standing, c.*) No.

MILLY. (*seated, r.*) Were you sick?

ROYAL. Yes—awfully. Steward asked if he could fetch anything. Told him to bring me a continent or an island.

MILLY. Did he do it?

ROYAL. No—said they hadn't any. Then I told him to sink the ship—but he wouldn't even do that.

MILLY. What a shame!

ROYAL. Yes—but afterward I was really glad he didn't, don't you know.

MILLY. Why?

ROYAL. Because we were in the middle of the Atlantic, and it would have been a long swim to get back to you. (*Aside.*) I almost did say something then.

MILLY. He's finding his tongue at last. (*Aloud*) Do you like orchids?

ROYAL. Oh, yes. (*Aside*) I wonder what the deuce they are.

MILLY. Come out and look at ours. We have some beauties.

ROYAL. So glad, I'm sure. (*Aside*) Now I will say something, or die in the attempt. (*They exit, R.*)

SYLVIA. She suspects me. Her words, her very looks tell me that. And yet I have done no wrong. It is not my fault that Raymon loves me, while my own husband leaves me here to wear out my heart alone. The world, the hard, cruel world, makes no allowance for all the temptation that a woman undergoes, but is only too ready to condemn without reason. (*Crosses, goes up, then down stage nervously.*) I cannot endure this life—it is wearing my very heart out. But what can I do—where can I go? I am bound for life in chains that cannot be loosened. Oh, my heart is breaking; my heart is breaking! (*Sits at table with bowed head.*)

(*Enter ALVAREZ, C. Pauses.*)

ALVAREZ. Sylvia!

SYLVIA. (*startled*) Raymon!

ALVAREZ. Hush!

SYLVIA. You said you were going—that you would not return.

ALVAREZ. And I am going—going to leave here forever. But when I bade you a seeming farewell it was in the presence of others. I could not speak as my heart prompted—I scarcely dared trust my voice at all lest it should betray me. I have returned once more to say farewell—if, indeed, it be farewell—to you alone, and—forever.

SYLVIA. Forever? (*Rises.*)

ALVAREZ. You regret—you do not wish me to go? Tell me, tell me that you do not! Only say the word, and nothing—

SYLVIA. No, no! Go—go at once!

ALVAREZ. And alone?

SYLVIA. Don't you understand—can't you see? Go—it is my command!

ALVAREZ. You have spoken. Good-bye, then—for the last time, good-bye.

(*Enter MILLY, C., quickly, with open telegram, followed by ROYAL.*)

MILLY. You here again?

ALVAREZ. I was bidding Mrs. Fanshaw good-bye.

MILLY. I'm glad of that. (*Looks at him*) Good-bye. (*Pause*) I said good-bye.

ROYAL. How do, Alvarez. Going away?

ALVAREZ. Yes, sir; I am going away.

ROYAL. Cuba?

ALVAREZ. No, sir. What a stupid question!

MILLY. (*who has been showing telegram to SYLVIA*) So Gilbert will arrive in a few minutes. Will you come?

SYLVIA. Where?

MILLY. To meet him at the station.

SYLVIA. No—I am not feeling well.

MILLY. I thought as much. (*Goes up c.*)

ALVAREZ. Good-bye, Mrs. Merryman.

MILLY. I said good-bye, once! (*Exit c.*)

ROYAL. I thought you might be going to help Weyler run away from the Cubans, don't you know. (*Turns and exits c.*)

ALVAREZ. Bah! (*Down c.*) So he is coming back.

SYLVIA. Yes.

ALVAREZ. And at once.

SYLVIA. Yes. This is the end.

ALVAREZ. No—say rather the beginning.

SYLVIA. Of what?

ALVAREZ. Of life—for you, for me. There is a fair, bright world across the wide Atlantic, a world of sunshine, of flowers, of love. Where the air is heavy with the rich perfume of orange and magnolia. Where no chilling frost comes, where winter is unknown—in sunny Spain, the land of poetry and love. Sylvia, will you remain here to wear your heart out in never-ending misery, or will you break the silken fetters that bind you and go forth with me, joyous, free, and happy?

SYLVIA. (*after brief pause*) No, I cannot. Those silken fetters are like bonds of steel which death alone can sever.

ALVAREZ. And what has bound you! Words—nothing but words—a senseless form—a one-sided contract, in which a man gains everything—a woman, nothing.

SYLVIA. You would convince me against my own judgment. I'm doing wrong even to listen.

ALVAREZ. There is no wrong in self-preservation. To remain here is death for you, despair for me. And the man who is responsible for all this—who has cast aside your love—

SYLVIA. There, there—say no more—I'll go! Anywhere, anything to escape from this. Wait. (*Sits at table and writes*)

a few lines. ALVAREZ *brings her cape from chair on which it was lying and places it over her shoulders*) I am ready.

ALVAREZ. And you shall never regret it. (*They go toward L. U. E.*)

ARTHUR. (*off c.*) Mamma!

SYLVIA. (*pausing*) Arthur, my child!

ALVAREZ. (*quickly*) You have no time to lose. Come! (*Exeunt slowly, L. U. E., ALVAREZ supporting her.*)

MILLY. (*off c.*) Hurry up, hurry up!

(*Enter MILLY, c.*)

MILLY. Those men are the slowest mortals. (*Calls*) Sylvia, Sylvia! Has she actually hidden herself on her husband's return? (*Sees note.*) A note, in her handwriting? (*Reads*) "I have left him forever. Think of me as dead. SYLVIA." She has gone with Alvarez! Oh! if I were only a man!

(*Enter GILBERT, c.*)

GILBERT. Home again, and mighty glad of it. Where is Sylvia?

MILLY. (*flurried*) She—she is somewhere about the grounds.

GILBERT. About the grounds? You said she was ill.

MILLY. Yes, I know. (*Aside*) Shall I, dare I, tell him?

GILBERT. What is the matter, Milly? Is it anything serious?

MILLY. (*Hands him letter in silence.*)

GILBERT. (*reads note, sinks into chair beside table*) Gone!

MILLY. Poor fellow.

(*Enter ROYAL, c.*)

ROYAL. Ah, I say—

MILLY. (*warningly*) Keep still! Did you see that Spaniard?

ROYAL. Yes—legging it for his cottage at a 2.40 clip.

MILLY. Is your horse fast.

ROYAL. He's a cyclone.

GILBERT. (*raises head*) Dead? Yes, dead to me forever.

MILLY. Don't say that, Gilbert. The poor girl is half demented through worry. We'll have her back here in half an hour, (*Up c., to ROYAL.*) Come.

ROYAL. Yes. (*Aside*) And this time I'm going to say something!

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE—*Cottage exterior in fifth grooves. See scene plot. The cottage is set at R. U. E. with practicable door. Summer landscape on flat. Up c. a circular lawn-tent with sides down, but draped back in front. Chair and stool within tent. Rustic chair R. front. Rustic bench L. front. Time, morning. Lights full on.*

(*Enter O'KELLY and MRS. GRIGGINS, L. U. E.*)

O'KELLY. What seems to be the matther wid ye, Mrs. Griggins?

MRS. GRIGGINS. Matther enough. It's little Arthur, bless his purty face, that is tuk sick all av a suddin loike.

O'KELLY. Sick is it? Since whin?

MRS. GRIGGINS. Half an hour ago. He fell an' hurted himself. I was cuttin' across lots afther the doctor whin I met Mr. Playford and Mrs. Milly drivin' loike a whirlwind. I tould thim, an' they said they'd drive around for him.

O'KELLY. It's an angel in petticoats ye air, Mrs. Griggins.

MRS. GRIGGINS. G'wan wid ye!

O'KELLY. I mane it. Mrs. Griggins—ahem!—I—Mrs. Griggins!

MRS. GRIGGINS. That's me name.

O'KELLY. I don't loike it.

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*bridling*) Oh, indade!

O'KELLY. No, indade. Thare's another I like better.

MRS. GRIGGINS. Yis—whisky.

O'KELLY. No, (*gushing*) Birdie.

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*aside, giggles*) He's calling me Birdie!

O'KELLY. But thare's another name wud suit ye betther nor that.

MRS. GRIGGINS. An' what is it?

O'KELLY. It's—it's—it's—Mrs. O'Kelly.

MRS. GRIGGINS. Oh! (*Falls into his arms.*)

O'KELLY. Here! Don't flop around like that—ye dear little darlin' ducky.

MRS. GRIGGINS. This is so suddin.

O'KELLY. Yis. (*Aside*) An' so bloody heavy.

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*stands erect*) What?

O'KELLY. I mane me heart was so heavy—so heavy wid love for ye.

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*pats him under chin*) Do ye really love yer little birdie? Chirp, chirp, chirp!

O'KELLY. Better nor old rye. Chirrup, chirrup, chirrup!

MRS. GRIGGINS. Sh, now! (*Leans head on his shoulder.*)

O'KELLY. "There's nothing half so swate in loife as love's young dream." (*Rocks back and forth on feet.*)

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*straightens up*) We're forgetting all about poor little Artie. (*Goes L.*) Come along home!

O'KELLY. Sure! (*Takes her hand*) We'll fly, my birdie; we'll fly! (*They "skip" off L. I E.* NOTE—*Specialties may be introduced here previous to the last speech.*)

(*Enter MONTE from house. Carries dress-suit case, valise, and hat-box, which he places beside chair, R.*)

MONTE. There, everything is packed as the señor ordered. His trunk has gone to the station, and I am to follow. It must be something very important that sends him flying about the country like this. I hope I haven't forgotten anything. I'll just take another look over the place to be sure. (*Exits into house.*)

(*Enter MILLY, L. U. E. Crosses quickly and knocks at door.*)

MILLY. (*repeats knock*) Don't hide in there! Come out if you're at home. (*Knocks.*) Do you hear me? Come out, I say!

(*Enter MONTE, from house.*)

MILLY. Where is he?

MONTE. Who?

MILLY. That Spaniard.

MONTE. Señor Alvarez? I don't know, madam.

MILLY. (*pointing to valise, etc.*) Do those belong to him?

MONTE. Yes, madam.

MILLY. Then we are in time. Thank you, I won't detain you longer. (*MONTE bows and re-enters house. ROYAL enters, L. U. E.*) We are ahead of him. He can't escape.

ROYAL. So glad, I'm sure. Say, are you on the track of an escaped convict or a Royal Bengal tiger?

MILLY. (*in thought*) No, no, no.

ROYAL. Because you told me to drive like blazes—I mean I did drive that way—and you wouldn't let me say a word all the way here. I don't know what it all means, don't you know, and perhaps you don't want me to know. And if you don't you might say—

MILLY. Will—you—keep—still!

ROYAL. Have you the toothache or something? I can't help asking, though you do shut me up like an umbrella on a clear day.

MILLY. (*turns to him*) I beg your pardon, Royal. I was rude, I know; but I am dreadfully worried.

ROYAL. If it's some fellow, just say who and I'll punch his head.

MILLY. That may come later. Just at present I want you to stay right here. Don't move until I come back.

ROYAL. But supposing you don't come back?

MILLY. I'm only going to look for my sister. Now don't ask any questions. Remember! Don't you budge! (*Exits quickly, R. 2 E.*)

ROYAL. (*looks around*) Don't you budge. Am I to stay here until I take root and grow like a squash vine? That's the most wonderful woman I ever saw. Always in a hurry. A tornado in petticoats. Thinks further in a minute than I can in two hours. As I've got to stay here, I may as well go into camp and be comfortable. (*Goes up to tent, takes pipe from pocket—fills and lights it.*) Knew a fellow who stayed in one spot all night. Sat down on some liquid glue. Awfully stuck-up chap. (*Goes into tent. Sings line, "Tenting to-night on the old camp ground."*) Wouldn't want to tent on an old camp ground. Apt to be malarious.

(*Enter ALVAREZ, L. U. E.*)

ALVAREZ. Success has crowned my efforts. She is mine at last. It took time and patience, but it was worth the effort. Having made the plunge, she cannot, she dare not, retreat, and her husband, if he has any pride at all, will not attempt to follow. And what if he does? Within one hour we shall be in New York. The steamer sails at noon, and once on the broad Atlantic, we are beyond pursuit. I left her at the old mill—it would not be wise to bring her here—and there I shall hasten to rejoin her. (*About to enter house.*)

(*Enter MILLY, hurriedly, L. U. E.*)

MILLY. Stop! (*He turns.*) Where is she?

ALVAREZ. To whom do you—

MILLY. Don't try to lie, you wretch! You snake! You—Spaniard!

ALVAREZ. Pardon me—madame seems excited.

MILLY. Excited! Excited! Oh-h! (*Stamps.*)

ALVAREZ. May I offer you a glass of wine?

MILLY. If you do I'll throw it in your face.

ALVAREZ. The politeness of American ladies is most remarkable.

MILLY. You sneering scoundrel! Where have you hidden my sister!

ALVAREZ. I fail to see why I should tell you

MILLY. You have decoyed her from home.

ALVAREZ. Pardon me again, but your sister is a free moral agent. I have not decoyed her.

MILLY. That is false. My sister is foolish, romantic; and you, with your soft blandishments, your lying tales, have turned her head for a moment.

ALVAREZ. You flatter me, madam.

MILLY. If I were a man I'd flatten you.

ALVAREZ. Indeed?

MILLY. With an honest American fist in your cowardly face.

ALVAREZ. And the man who tried that would get some warm lead or cold steel in reply.

MILLY. Oh, I know you Spaniards and dagos are quick enough at stabbing a man in the back. (*Crosses.*)

ALVAREZ. You are a lady, and can say what you please. You are angry, and I forgive you. I will only say in my defense that I love your sister devotedly, and that in leaving her cold, unloving husband—

MILLY. Silence! Gilbert Fanshaw is not cold nor unloving. He is a true man—worth a thousand things like you. (*Crosses.*)

ALVAREZ. (*sneering*) Madame's language is so choice!

MILLY. Oh, I am not stopping to pick and choose my words. You are not worth it.

ALVAREZ. I regret that you hold me so lightly. Others have not always done so.

MILLY. Others may not have known you.

ALVAREZ. And I don't know this Gilbert Fanshaw whom you esteem so highly. I have never seen the man. However, I am wasting valuable time, so pardon me if I appear rude in leaving you. (*Goes, R.*)

MILLY. One moment. (*He pauses*) You think you have my sister so thoroughly under your control that nothing can save her. But when I tell you that her child is ill, perhaps dying, even your vaunted power will fail. (*Exit, L. U. E.*)

ALVAREZ. What an advantage women have over men. They can say whatever they please without fear or favor. She said a number of hard things, but I suppose I deserve it. No doubt it is a rascally thing to run away with another

man's wife. (*Looks L.*) She's there like a sentry on guard. Means to follow me, no doubt. Well, I have a speedy horse, and I think I can give my lady the slip. (*Exit to house.*)

ROYAL. (*coming from tent*) But I don't think you will give me the slip. I suppose I should not have listened to what they were saying, but by Jove they got at it, thrust and parry, before I could open my mouth. That fellow ought to be kicked. Running away with a married woman when so many single women would run away with him! I'll put a spoke in his wheel; I'll drive over to the old mill and rescue Mrs. Fanshaw from the villain that still pursues her. (*Turns L., looks off*) Eh? What's that? Mrs. Merryman has collared my horse and is driving towards the station like mad. Hi! Hi! Stop! (*Waves handkerchief.*) Stop! By Jove! Here's a go.

(*Enter ALVAREZ from house, followed by MONTE.*)

ALVAREZ. (*not seeing ROYAL*) Carry these things to the station.

MONTE. (*gathering up valise, etc.*) Shall I await you there?

ALVAREZ. Yes.

ROYAL. Can I help?

ALVAREZ. (*aside*) The deuce! (*Aloud*) You here?

ROYAL. Can you doubt it?

ALVAREZ. (*crosses L. with MONTE, speaking to him in dumb show.*)

ROYAL. (*aside*) Good! Thinks I know nothing about it. (*Aloud*) Not going to leave us?

ALVAREZ. I am very sorry, but I must. Some diplomatic business requires my immediate presence in Washington.

ROYAL. Are you going to declare war against the United States?

ALVAREZ. (*impatiently*) I hope so.

ROYAL. Then we're done for.

ALVAREZ. Very likely. If you will excuse me—

ROYAL. (*detaining him*) Are you going to batter down New York the first thing?

ALVAREZ. I don't know. If you will excuse—

ROYAL. (*detaining him*) Excuse me, but if you are, I want to sell out.

ALVAREZ. Sell what?

ROYAL. My interest in a peanut-stand.

ALVAREZ. Ah, caramba!

ROYAL. No—peanuts!

ALVAREZ. Good-bye; I have just time to catch the train.

ROYAL. Then I'll help you catch it. I'm going to Washington myself.

ALVAREZ. (*aside*) This fellow may suspect something. I'll try a game of bluff. (*Aloud*) Look here. You are an unmitigated nuisance.

ROYAL. So glad, I'm sure.

ALVAREZ. Do you know how we deal with such?

ROYAL. Stick 'em in the back.

ALVAREZ. No; we slap them in the face.

ROYAL. That just suits me. (*Takes off coat.*) I may be a d-darn fool, but I know how to fight. (*Removes vest.*)

ALVAREZ. Another time. There is a lady approaching. (*Aside*) It's Sylvia! Curse the luck! She must not see us here. (*Aloud*) Get out of sight. You are not presentable. (*Exits quickly into house.*)

ROYAL. I should say not. (*Grabs coat and vest; runs to house. Door is fastened.*) Hi there! Let me in! Hi! (*Runs quickly into tent, pulling the sides down.*)

(*Enter SYLVIA, hurriedly, L. U. E. She is nervous and excited.*)

SYLVIA. Waiting by the old mill, I heard passers-by say that my child, my Arthur, was dangerously ill. I cannot leave him. I cannot. I will not. I shall tell Raymon that for my child's sake he must never see me again.

(*Enter ALVAREZ.*)

ALVAREZ. He's gone at last. Sylvia!

SYLVIA. (*raises hand*) Stop! I have come to say farewell. You must leave me and at once—at once and forever.

ALVAREZ. Leave you? What nonsense!

SYLVIA. No. I have recovered my senses at last—in time, thank heaven, in time.

ALVAREZ. What do you mean?

SYLVIA. My child is ill; I must go to him.

ALVAREZ. I have heard that story. It is a wild fabrication, made to frighten you.

SYLVIA. It is the truth. My instinct, my very soul, tells me that. (*Starts L.*)

ALVAREZ. Where are you going?

SYLVIA. To my child's bedside, where you dare not follow me! (*Both are L. C.*)

ALVAREZ. I dare follow you to the end of the world.

Do you think I would lose you thus for a whim, a phantasy? No. We have gone too far—too far, I tell you. Come with me now you must and shall.

SYLVIA. Not one step. I can see you now in your true light—cold, heartless, selfish. Go! For I despise you as much as I hate myself.

ALVAREZ. You are nervous, excited. (*She crosses to R.*) Listen to me. You are compromised already. If I tell the story of your attempted flight, no power on earth can save you.

ROYAL. (*Down c., between them.*) And if you do I'll cowhide you out of your skin!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE—*A plain parlor in third grooves, with semi-tropical landscape backing in fifth grooves. See scene plot. Wide arch at C. Entrances R. and L., all hung with light drapery. Table and chairs R. and L. front. Pictures on easels. Lights all on.*

(*Discover GILBERT seated at table, reading newspaper. Enter O'KELLY and ARTHUR, C.*)

O'KELLY. Thare, me b'y, your walk has done ye a power o' good. Ye luk fresh as a daisy afther a storm.

ARTHUR. Are daisy's fresh, O'Kelly?

O'KELLY. Well, (*rubs chin reflectively*) I hov known some daisy's thot wor purty fresh.

ARTHUR. That's your wife's name, isn't it?

O'KELLY. So she claims.

ARTHUR. Is she fresh?

O'KELLY. No. The present Mrs. O'Kelly, formerly Mrs. Griggins, is not very fresh.

ARTHUR. (*mysteriously*) Say!

O'KELLY. (*some business*) Hey?

ARTHUR. How old is she?

O'KELLY. I don't know. An' unless ye want to get yer head bruck don't ask her. Run along now.

ARTHUR. I'll find out. (*Exits, laughing, C.*)

GILBERT. (*looking up*) Well, O'Kelly, how is your married life progressing?

O'KELLY. Foine sor, foine.

GILBERT. Then you agree?

O'KELLY. Oh yis—that is—ginerally spakin' we do. Av coorse Mrs. O'Kelly, that was formerly Mrs. Griggins, has her ways an' I hov my ways, an' sometimes they get crass-ways.

GILBERT. And then the fur flies?

O'KELLY. No, sor (*rubs head*), hair.

GILBERT. You have come to Florida on a pleasure trip, I suppose.

O'KELLY. Thot's the idea. Ye see, whin I left you an' tuck up thot contract I made a pot av money, an' Mrs. O'Kelly is tryin' to break the pot.

MRS. GRIGGINS. (*outside, C.*) I'll foind him meself, niver ye moind.

O'KELLY. There's her fog-horn. (*Crosses.*) Now, O'Kelly, moind yer eye.

(*Enter MRS. GRIGGINS, c., very loudly dressed.*)

MRS. GRIGGINS. O'Kelly, I've been luckin all over the State o' Floridy for ye. (*Sees GILBERT*) Ah, Mr. Fanshaw, I'm deloighted to see ye. (*GILBERT rises and bows. She makes a very elaborate bow.*) It's a pleasure to foind ye here. (*Another bow.*) Since I've gan into society I feel so much at home. (*Bows, trips, and falls against O'KELLY.*) Ye clumsy boneen! Trip me up, will ye! (*GILBERT goes up R.*)

O'KELLY. Luk here, ye ould catamaran, I niver touched ye.

MRS. GRIGGINS. Yes, ye did—ye know ye did.

O'KELLY. No, I didn't. Ye can't step widout walkin' on yer own fate.

MRS. GRIGGINS. Av I wasn't yer wife an' a rale born loidy, I'd crack yer jaw for ye.

O'KELLY. Come outside, an' I'll give ye a chance to crack all ye plaze.

MRS. GRIGGINS. Ah! (*They exit quarreling, c.*)

GILBERT. Quarrel and make up—that is their programme, and they will live happily through it all. No lingering doubts of each other's loyalty—no half-shadows of a would-be-forgotten past—no heart-hunger enchained by foolish pride! (*Sits L.*)

(*Enter MILLY, c.*)

MILLY. Good-morning, Gilbert. (*Sits R.*)

GILBERT. (*gloomily*) Good-morning.

MILLY. (*same tone*) Bow wow! What's the matter?

GILBERT. A fit of the blues, I think.

MILLY. The blues! In sunny Florida! Drop that, or you'll be mobbed.

GILBERT. By whom?

MILLY. The real estate agents. They declare that Florida's climate is worth a thousand dollars an acre, and a cure for every known ill.

GILBERT. Always bright and cheerful. You carry sunshine with you wherever you go.

MILLY. And so I am always happy.

GILBERT. I envy you.

MILLY. Don't. There is no excuse for it.

GILBERT. Have I no reason?

MILLY. None whatever.

GILBERT. But my wife—

MILLY. Hush! Your wife is a good, true woman. She is nervous—high strung—easily excited. She imagined that you were neglecting her, and in a moment of anger wrote that foolish letter saying that she had left you, a letter which really meant nothing.

GILBERT. If that were all—

MILLY. All? What more can there be? Did she not return within an hour?

GILBERT. With whom did she leave?

MILLY. With whom? Why—(*slightly confused*) with nobody.

GILBERT. (*slowly*) Are you sure?

MILLY. Is it possible—

GILBERT. Yes. In her sleep I have heard her cry out, "No, no; I cannot go with you. I must return home." Then she would plead with some one to release her, and—

MILLY. And you—you—are jealous over that! A dream; a figment of imagination! You dear, stupid fellow!

GILBERT. Perhaps I am. But why does she appear so quiet, so reserved, ever since my return?

MILLY. Because—

GILBERT. Well?

MILLY. A woman's reason. Isn't that enough?

GILBERT. No.

MILLY. Then I will tell you in confidence that your wife feels she has misjudged you, and deeply repents it. Your own coldness and unworthy doubts have discouraged her, and she is patiently waiting for you to make the first move.

GILBERT. Is that true?

MILLY. As gospel.

GILBERT. My poor Sylvia, I will doubt her no more.

MILLY. There! Now you are becoming sensible again. Keep on like that and you will soon become your old self once more—the dearest and best fellow in the world.

GILBERT. Except Royal.

MILLY. Now you think you have said it. Royal! He has forgotten my existence.

GILBERT. Has he? Read that. (*Gives paper.*)

MILLY. What on earth—(*glances at paper. Reads aloud*) "Royal Playford, Esq., the wealthy and eccentric globe-trotter, arrived yesterday from New York. It is said that he has been drawn southward by a magnetic attraction which few could resist." There's not a word of truth in it.

(Enter ROYAL, C. D.)

ROYAL. Oh, yes, there is.

GILBERT. Royal, old fellow, I am glad to see you.

ROYAL. Yas. (*Shakes hands*) So glad, you know.
(*Turns to MILLY.*)

MILLY. Thank you. (*Turns away.*)

ROYAL. Aren't you going to say "hello" to a fellow?

MILLY. I am glad to see you. When are you going back?

ROYAL. I wouldn't be too glad. It might bring on a fit of sickness.

GILBERT. Royal— (*MILLY goes up.*)

ROYAL. (*to GILBERT*) I thought it would be warm down here, but it's awfully chilly.

GILBERT. (*goes up c. with ROYAL*) Never mind, old fellow. She'll thaw out directly.

ROYAL. Yas. Lend me an overcoat, won't you?

GILBERT. (*laughing*) No. You'll find it warm enough soon. (*Laughs and exits, C. D.*)

ROYAL. (*aside*) Wonder what I've been doing now!

MILLY. So you arrived last night.

ROYAL. Yas—10.15.

MILLY. And immediately told a reporter all about me.

ROYAL. You?

MILLY. No, you.

ROYAL. Never. I simply made inquiries where you and the others were to be found.

MILLY. You might have left me out of it.

ROYAL. But I—don't you know—I came—I mean I didn't come—to see anybody—except somebody. (*Aside*) I will say something pretty soon,

MILLY. Then you came to see me.

ROYAL. Yas. Ain't you glad? I mean I am so glad—deuced glad, you know.

MILLY. And the paper is full of it.

ROYAL. Eh? Have they really got that in the paper?

MILLY. Read that. (*Gives paper tragically.*) And remember, it separates us forever. (*Crosses.*)

ROYAL. (*reads*) "Good-morning. Have you used Pears' soap?"

MILLY. Stupid! (*Points to paragraph.*)

ROYAL. (*reads item*) It is the truth; but, of course, I'll have to punch the fellow's head.

MILLY. Will you really do that for me?

ROYAL. Yas—anything you say; let him punch my head if you prefer.

MILLY. You are very devoted—after leaving me for six months without a thought.

ROYAL. But I have been thinking of you—day and night and other times, too. Sometimes I thought of you so much that I really forgot what I was thinking about.

MILLY. Poor fellow! Where were you?

ROYAL. Across the pond.

MILLY. Tell me all about it. (*They sit R. and L.*)

ROYAL. Didn't expect to go, you know; but it happened this way. Our Spanish friend concluded to go home last summer, and I went with him to New York to see him off—sort of body-guard. Afraid he would give me the slip, so stayed beside him until we got to Liverpool, and never let up until I saw him safely in Madrid with a beautiful case of brain fever. Had to help nurse him through that, so got back, only to find you gone.

(*Enter SYLVIA, R.*)

SYLVIA. Mr. Playford—this is a pleasure.

ROYAL. Yas. (*Shaking hands.*) Knew you'd think so—er—mean—so glad, don't you know.

SYLVIA. Where have you been this age?

ROYAL. Why, I went over to—that is, I was looking after—yas—that is, I—er—exactly.

MILLY. (*aside*) Oh, dear! (*aloud*). Don't you want to see our orange grove? It is very pretty.

ROYAL. Thank you. Excuse me, Mrs. Fanshaw. (*Goes up with MILLY.*) Like anything pretty. That's why I like to look at—

MILLY. Who?

ROYAL. Pictures. Au revoir, Mrs. Fanshaw. (*Exit with MILLY, C.*)

SYLVIA. Why was he so confused when I asked where he had been? Can it be that he knows anything of Raymon? The thought of that man, his very name, terrifies me. If he should ever meet Gilbert, Heaven knows what the result might be. Yet why should I fear? He went abroad, I know, and I have heard nothing from him for so long. No, no; I must not give way to childish fears.

ARTHUR. (*Runs on, C.*) Mamma, mamma! There's a strange gentleman coming here.

SYLVIA. A strange gentleman? What is he like?

ARTHUR. He is pale and thin; but he's awfully nice. He gave me a whole dollar when I told him you were here.

SYLVIA. (*agitated*) Take it back at once, and remember that you must never again speak to strangers.

(Enter ALVAREZ, C. D.)

ALVAREZ. But I am no stranger.

SYLVIA. (*terrified*) Raymon!

ALVAREZ. You remember me, then?

SYLVIA. Yes. (*aside to him*) What do you want?

ALVAREZ. (*aside*) Send the child away.

SYLVIA. No, I will not. You dare say nothing to me that my child should not hear.

ALVAREZ. But I may say something that you might not want the child's father to hear.

SYLVIA. What?

ALVAREZ. Be wise. (*Crosses.*)

ARTHUR. That is the gentleman, mamma. Must I give back the money?

SYLVIA. (*takes money*) I'll do that. You shall have another. Run away now and play.

ARTHUR. Yes, mamma. (*Exits, c.*)

SYLVIA. There is the money with which you bribed my child. (*Gives money.*) Now, what have you to say to the child's mother?

ALVAREZ. Several things.

SYLVIA. Be brief, then. If my husband appears—

ALVAREZ. There is no immediate danger. I waited until I saw him go into town.

SYLVIA. But he may return.

ALVAREZ. And what if he does? We have never met, and I doubt that he has ever heard my name.

SYLVIA. I wish that I could say as much.

ALVAREZ. Have I grown repugnant to you?

SYLVIA. Yes.

ALVAREZ. Pardon me, but I don't believe it.

SYLVIA. Shall I say more? Shall I tell you that my infatuation was a fancy, a whim, arising from mere pique, and forgotten long ago?

ALVAREZ. I should still doubt it.

SYLVIA. Then believe me when I say that I love my husband with all my heart; that I loathe, despise the weakness that made me turn from him even in thought, for he is more to me than ten thousand men like you. (*Crosses.*)

ALVAREZ. And are you foolish enough to think that I will accept your words as final? You deceive yourself greatly if you do. No, I tell you my love is my very life, my soul, my all. What do I care for the idle words that bind you to another. They are ropes of sand, that will fall apart of their own weight, now that I am again by your side.

SYLVIA. Never. I have grown strong through my folly, and even your threats cannot frighten me.

ALVAREZ. I make no threats. Would I be one to frighten or coerce the woman I love more than life itself? Your heart has not changed toward me, but you have simply fallen back into this dull, hopeless life, bound by imaginary chains, which I alone can sever.

SYLVIA. This chain, as you term it, is a golden bond, linked by love, which I would not break if I could.

ALVAREZ. We shall see. In a short time you will awaken from this dream, and the love you had for me will be—

SYLVIA. Stop! Your words are an insult. If my husband knew of this—

ALVAREZ. There would probably be a quarrel, a duel if he had pluck enough to fight, and then I would kill him—yes, kill him!

SYLVIA. No, no, no!

GILBERT (*off c.*) All right, old fellow. Don't mind me.

SYLVIA. My husband!

ALVAREZ. Ah, so he has returned. Present me as a friend, or take the consequences.

(*Enter GILBERT and MILLY, c. d.*)

GILBERT. That's a good joke on Royal. He never—
(*Sees ALVAREZ*) I beg pardon.

ALVAREZ. (*aside to SYLVIA*) Be quick.

SYLVIA. Gilbert, this is Señor Alvarez, a—a—

MILLY. (*quickly*) An acquaintance of mine, whom I am very, very glad to see.

GILBERT. Glad to meet you Señor. Any friend of Mrs. Merryman is always welcome.

ALVAREZ. Thank you. I have heard so much of your wonderful Florida winters that I decided to pass a short season here.

GILBERT. Then you are not disappointed?

ALVAREZ. Not in the least, I assure you. I have found it very attractive here. (*Glances towards SYLVIA.*) Far more so than I hoped.

MILLY. (*aside*) If I were a man I'd break his neck.

GILBERT. The climate here is really wonderful. Would you like to take a look over my place?

ALVAREZ. With pleasure. With your permission, ladies. (*Bows and exits, c., with GILBERT, after pausing and laughing at MILLY.*)

MILLY. I really wonder why some things were created.

SYLVIA. What shall we do?

MILLY. Do? In the slang of the small boy, "You make me weary!" I thought you were done with that fellow—that you would never communicate with him—never speak to him again. Why have you broken your word?

SYLVIA. (*sadly*) I did not break my word.

MILLY. Indeed! Isn't he here? Were you not talking to him?

SYLVIA. But you see—

MILLY. To be sure I saw—him. I'm not blind. And to think you should dare introduce him to your husband, forcing me to lie that you might not betray yourself. Compelled to call that man my friend! (*Pause.*) Why don't you say something? Can't you see I'm dying for a quarrel?

SYLVIA. He threatened to murder Gilbert if I told him anything. Oh, I'm so wretched! (*Sits, sobbing.*)

MILLY. There, there, don't cry. We must get you out of this scrape somehow. It is safe to flirt with a fool, but it is dangerous to fool with a knave. That Spaniard means trouble unless we head him off.

SYLVIA. How can we?

MILLY. Don't worry yourself. I expect that I shall have to set Royal at him again. Poor, dear fellow! If anything happens to him I shall be doubly a widow, for I am certain that he intends to propose this time. I can tell by the way that he stands on one foot and looks at me.

(*Enter ROYAL and GILBERT, C. D.*)

GILBERT. It's a real pleasure to see you here, old fellow. I hope you will remain through the season. (*SYLVIA sits up R. C.*)

ROYAL. So glad, I'm sure. (*Looks at MILLY.*)

MILLY. (*aside*) Anchored!

ROYAL. What do you do down here?

MILLY. Eat and repent.

ROYAL. Of eating?

MILLY. No—of our sins.

ROYAL. I wish you wouldn't say such things.

MILLY. Why not?

ROYAL. Because I ought to make a smart answer, and I don't know how.

GILBERT. You should observe Milly's friend. He is sarcasm itself.

ROYAL. He? Who? (*MILLY and SYLVIA show agitation.*)

GILBERT. Señor Raymon Alvarez.

ROYAL. The deuce!

GILBERT. Do you know him?

ROYAL. I? Never.

MILLY. (*aside, to ROYAL*) Yes, you do.

ROYAL. Er-yes—I recall him now. Saw him in Spain or somewhere. Perhaps it was in Jerusalem or (*looks at MILLY*) or New Jersey! (*aside*) I'm getting foggy.

GILBERT. You will be glad to meet an old friend—especially one of Milly's friends.

ROYAL. Yas. I'll be very glad.

GILBERT. You will be at the reception at the "Ponce," to-night?

ROYAL. Yas. Will our dear friend be there?

MILLY. Be quiet.

GILBERT. No doubt of it. (*Up c.*) You may ask him, for here he comes. (*Exits with SYLVIA, c. to L.*)

ROYAL. (*to MILLY*) What does it mean?

MILLY. Never mind.

ROYAL. But, I say—

MILLY. Be quiet!

ROYAL. Can't you tell a fellow—

MILLY. Hold—your—tongue!

(*Enter ALVAREZ, c. D., from R.*)

ALVAREZ. What? Mr. Playford? This is a surprise.

ROYAL. Eh? Yes. Where did you drop from?

ALVAREZ. Home.

ROYAL. Going to New Orleans, I suppose.

ALVAREZ. No. I think I shall remain here.

MILLY. (*to ROYAL*) Tell him no.

ROYAL. Yas. I wouldn't if I were you.

ALVAREZ. Why not?

ROYAL. It isn't healthy.

ALVAREZ. You find it so.

ROYAL. Yas. I'm an American—can stand any climate. But Florida is hard on foreigners.

ALVAREZ. In what way?

ROYAL. Every way. Yellow fever, sassy niggers, rapacious landlords! It's a deuce of a place. Besides, after I ran you out—I-er-mean you said you wouldn't make a fool of yourself after you—

MILLY. Stop!

ROYAL. (*Pauses. Looks at her.*) But you know he really did say that—

ALVAREZ. (*quickly*) Be silent.

ROYAL. (*Looks at him, then at MILLY. Turns and walks, R.*)

MILLY. Where are you going?

ROYAL. After a padlock for my tongue. (*Exit, R.*)

MILLY. (*to ALVAREZ*) The best thing for you—

ALVAREZ. Yes.

MILLY. Is to leave here at once.

ALVAREZ. How very odd!

MILLY. If you have any conscience—

ALVAREZ. I haven't. Conscience is an affliction of childhood. I outgrew it years ago.

MILLY. And you outgrew common decency, self-respect, truth, honor—everything prized by men, but wholly unknown to curs. (*Crosses.*)

ALVAREZ. Now you are becoming personal again. How sad it is that we should always quarrel. (*Pause.*) Pleasant day, isn't it? (*Pause.*) Well (*up, C.*), you may bear this in mind: I shall stay here until I see fit to go, and neither you nor your idiotic admirer can dislodge me. (*Exit, C. D.*)

(*Enter ROYAL, R.*)

ROYAL. Shall I break his head?

MILLY. I would like to break yours.

ROYAL. All right. Everything goes.

MILLY. You make a mess of everything. Where are your brains?

ROYAL. How the d-deuce should I know?

MILLY. You're smart enough—

ROYAL. So glad I'm—

MILLY. But you do tangle up everything.

ROYAL. Oh!

MILLY. The way you talked to that fellow threw me into fits.

ROYAL. I noticed that you seemed excited.

MILLY. Who wouldn't be! At any moment I expected Gilbert to return, and then what would have happened?

ROYAL. That's a conundrum. Give it up.

MILLY. Good heavens! Can't you see?

ROYAL. (*bluntly*) No, I can't. Ever since I entered this house I've been blind as a bat. If I open my mouth somebody says, Hush! Be quiet! Hold your tongue! If I don't say a word I'm pitched into on that account. That fellow Alvarez bobs up here, and I'm told to run him out. I give him a jolly. All right. It doesn't go. All wrong. I pile on the agony, and get the deuce for it. I offer to break

his head. You offer to break mine. It may be all a joke, but, hang me, if I see it.

MILLY. You got rid of that fellow once. Do it again.

ROYAL. It may not be so easy this time.

MILLY. No matter. If he remains here his attentions will be noticed, Gilbert may be forced into a quarrel, perhaps killed—for dueling is still possible down here—my sister will be compromised. You must send him away.

ROYAL. That is all right enough in theory, but it may not go. I can't box him up and ship him to Madrid labeled "this side up with care."

MILLY. If he had any manhood about him—if he really did love my sister—he would leave her without a word.

ROYAL. Don't you believe it. More a fellow loves, the closer he sticks. Leave without a word? A Webster's "Unabridged" couldn't make me leave you! (*Aside.*) Whew! Now I have said it! (*Crosses.*)

MILLY. (*looks at him*) Do you mean that?

ROYAL. (*limply*) Yes.

MILLY. (*claps hands behind back and walks over to him*) Do you love me?

ROYAL. (*very limp*) Yes.

MILLY. And you want to marry me?

ROYAL. (*limply*) Yes.

MILLY. You do?

ROYAL. (*positively*) Oh, yas.

MILLY. Well, you can't.

ROYAL. (*wilts*) Oh!

MILLY. So long as that wretch is in Florida.

ROYAL. It's a go—mean he'll go. We may have a fight—

MILLY. Can you really fight?

ROYAL. Yes, I can. I may not be bright at seeing things, but I can make the average man see stars in one round.

MILLY. I mean a duel.

ROYAL. Never had one; can shoot, though. If he makes a stand of it I'll fetch him or he'll fetch me.

MILLY. I don't want you to get hurt.

ROYAL. Killing doesn't hurt much if it's done quick. It's the thinking about it that uses a fellow up. (*Goes up.*) And I say, Milly, if I should be turned into an angel I shall leave you my property, and I want you to buy something.

MILLY. A beautiful monument.

ROYAL. No—a gallon of tears.

MILLY. I'll cry my eyes out if anything happens to you.

ROYAL. Then you must care for me.

MILLY. Have you just found that out?

ROYAL. How was I to know? You never said anything about it.

MILLY. Here comes Gilbert. Come along.

ROYAL. Yas. (*They go, R.*) Had I better kick Alvarez or punch his head?

MILLY. Whichever you please—only don't get hurt yourself. (*They exit, R. I E.*)

(*Enter GILBERT and ARTHUR, C.*)

ARTHUR. Papa, I don't like him.

GILBERT. Whom do you mean, Artie?

ARTHUR. The dark man, he is the one that mamma went with the day you came home last summer.

GILBERT. (*surprised*) What do you mean?

ARTHUR. He made her cry. Then she wrote a letter and went away with him. But she came back, you know.

GILBERT. (*sinks into seat*) Merciful Heaven!

ARTHUR. What is it, papa?

GILBERT. Only a pain in my heart, There, there—it's nothing. Run along and play. (*Arthur exits, L. I E.*) At last I understand the meaning of that letter—of her strange actions—her cold, unloving manner. This scoundrel—her lover! She would have fled with him had I not returned, and now that he is back again she would make her infamy complete. I have been a blind, unreasoning fool—trusting, pitying her and accusing myself. But to-night shall end it all. I shall expose her, and then—then I'll have a settlement with him.

(*Enter SYLVIA, C.*)

SYLVIA. Gilbert, are you ready?

GILBERT. Ready?

SYLVIA. To go driving,

GILBERT. No. And I should think, Sylvia, that you would prefer resting before the ball to-night.

SYLVIA. I shall not attend the ball.

GILBERT. Oh, yes you will. It would not do to disappoint our friends—especially that excellent Señor Alvarez. (*She turns away.*) What is the matter? You appear agitated.

SYLVIA. Don't ask me to attend that ball to-night.

GILBERT. We have already accepted the invitation, therefore we shall go.

SYLVIA. If you knew—(*Pauses confused.*)

GILBERT. Well?

SYLVIA. Nothing.

GILBERT. A wise conclusion. You seem troubled over something. Perhaps if you lie down for a time you'll feel better.

SYLVIA. Perhaps. (*Goes, L.*) I should tell him all, but I dare not, I dare not. (*Exit, L. I E.*)

GILBERT. (*goes, R.*) Now let the game go on, and we shall see who holds the winning hand. (*Exits, R. I E.*)

(*Enter ROYAL and ALVAREZ, C. D.*)

ROYAL. I say, old fellow—glad I met you. Want to have a serious talk.

ALVAREZ. You astonish me.

ROYAL. So glad, I'm sure. Sit down. (*ALVAREZ sits.*) When I left you in Madrid you promised that you would not return to worry Mrs. Fanshaw.

ALVAREZ. Well?

ROYAL. But you did return.

ALVAREZ. Yes.

ROYAL. Now I want you to go back.

ALVAREZ. How very amusing, And by what right do you assume to order me about?

ROYAL. I am only asking you to go.

ALVAREZ. Then by what right do you ask?

ROYAL. By the right of any decent man to protect a helpless woman.

ALVAREZ. How very amusing.

ROYAL. Say—don't make me lose my temper. I never lose my temper unless I get mad, and then I'm apt to raise a row.

ALVAREZ. (*as if amused*) You alarm me.

ROYAL. Mrs. Fanshaw will be my sister very soon, and I—

ALVAREZ. And you are going to become a knight errant, eh, to rescue suffering divinity.

ROYAL. (*quietly*) Will you leave here?

ALVAREZ. Not at the command of a donkey like you. (*Turns away and lights cigar.*)

ROYAL. (*Crosses and removes coat and cuffs.*)

MILLY. (*appears, c.*) Royal!

ROYAL. (*holds coat in front of himself*) 'Sh! Get out.

MILLY. But, I say—

ROYAL. Will you get out! (*She disappears.*)

ALVAREZ. (*looks around*) Going to retire?

ROYAL. No; but you are.

ALVAREZ. (*sneering*) Astonishing!

ROYAL. You've got me mad, and now I— (*In a quick, forceful tone*) Well, I'm done fooling. I've asked you to leave like a gentleman. Now if you don't go I'll kick you out like a dog.

ALVAREZ. (*rising*) What! You dare address me thus!

ROYAL. You have five seconds to get out. (*Looks at watch. Is up c.*)

ALVAREZ. (*draws dagger*) Raise a hand to me and I'll kill you.

ROYAL. (*Springs forward, guards blow with left arm, and knocks ALVAREZ down with right fist.*) Not to-day, my boy.

CURTAIN

(*For second curtain ROYAL stands with coat held up before him, back of coat to audience, embracing MILLY with right arm, which is thrust through left sleeve.*)

ACT IV

SCENE—*Same as last. Time, evening. Handsome lamp, lighted; curtains drawn.*

(*Enter GILBERT and ROYAL, C. D.*)

GILBERT. So you have finally proposed to Milly.

ROYAL. Yas—I guess I did.

GILBERT. Guess? Aren't you certain?

ROYAL. Not exactly. Whether I proposed or she proposed, or neither one proposed is more than I could swear to. But there's one thing I do know and that is we're engaged—and it's awfully jolly. (*They sit, R. and L.*)

GILBERT. I suppose you will enjoy the ball to-night?

ROYAL. Yes—but for one thing.

GILBERT. Shoes hurt?

ROYAL. No. It hurts me to see you so glum.

GILBERT. Glum? I? Why, man, I'm joy personified.

ROYAL. (*looks at him*) You do look happy! Now, as one of the family—a sort of second-hand brother—I want to give you some advice. Brace up. Go to the ball to-night as if nothing had happened, and all will be well.

GILBERT. You seem positive.

ROYAL. I'm certain! I know it's a risky thing to mix up in a family fracas; liable to get a broken head from both sides of the house. But, in this case, I'm going to chance it.

GILBERT. Go ahead.

ROYAL. You imagine that this fellow, Alvarez, has exerted some undue influence over Mrs. Fanshaw; but I tell you, on my word of honor, that he has no more influence than a played-out politician.

GILBERT. Yet he must have had some influence over her. Remember the letter she wrote.

ROYAL. She was frightened into it. The fellow is a duelist, you know, and he compelled her to write that letter under a threat of jabbing you full of holes, filling you up with lead, and all that. Don't you see?

GILBERT. The cowardly cur! And yet you introduced him into my house.

ROYAL. But I squared accounts by kicking him out of it.

GILBERT. When?

ROYAL. Half an hour ago; and if that isn't enough, you can kick me out.

GILBERT. I am much obliged to you, Royal, and if ever I can—

ROYAL. Don't mention it. I rather enjoyed the exercise.

GILBERT. Very well, then. (*Rises*) If you will excuse me—

ROYAL. Going out?

GILBERT. Yes. I'm going to have a settlement with that Spaniard.

ROYAL. He's settled already. Besides, if you should punch his head, it would only create a scandal, which you certainly want to avoid. Let the matter rest, I tell you, and go to the ball to-night. If our Spanish friend wants any pistol practice, I'll try to accommodate him.

GILBERT. You?

ROYAL. Why not? If I get popped over, I'll leave no family to mourn for me. A year or so from now it might be—er—you understand—I mean—lucky I'm not talking to Milly!

GILBERT. But Sylvia refuses to go.

ROYAL. Then let her remain at home.

GILBERT. My dear fellow if you could understand—

ROYAL. I can. A man is judged by what he does—a woman by what she says. If your wife says "stay," she means "go," and the best way to have your way is to let her have hers.

(*Enter MILLY and SYLVIA, C. D.*)

MILLY. Excellent! Excellent! Your epigrams are jumbled, but they ring right anyhow. All ready for the ball?

ROYAL. Yas—but Mrs. Fanshaw isn't going.

SYLVIA. No, for I fear it would overtax my strength. But Gilbert has promised to go.

ROYAL. That's good of him.

GILBERT. Not at all. I am going to throw care to the winds to-night—dance, flirt, and perchance develop into the social knave that women so much admire.

MILLY. Now, Gilbert! Don't make another speech like that, or people may think you've been drinking.

GILBERT. They may think right before the night is over.

ROYAL. Oh, no they won't; for I shall stick to you like a shadow.

MILLY. So shall I—so you must be on your good be-

havior. (*To SYLVIA.*) Are you quite sure that you won't go? (*L. with ROYAL.*)

SYLVIA. Yes, dear.

MILLY. Good-bye, then. (*Exits, L., with ROYAL.*)

SYLVIA. Good-bye. Are you going, Gilbert?

GILBERT. Certainly—you would not have me do otherwise?

SYLVIA. No, and yet I wish you were not going; that is, not to-night.

GILBERT. Really? You have never objected to my going out before.

SYLVIA. Not in words, perhaps; but— Oh, it would be useless to say anything more. (*Crosses.*)

GILBERT. Why useless?

SYLVIA. Because I—oh, you would not understand.

GILBERT. Sylvia, there has a wall arisen between us, built through pride or weakness. Shall it go on, mounting higher and higher, until it separates our lives forever? Or shall we demolish it here, to-night, and begin life again as in the old, bright days, when we both were happy in each other's love?

SYLVIA. (*turns to him*) Gilbert, my husband!

GILBERT. (*embraces her*) Sylvia!

SYLVIA. This makes me so happy, Gilbert—as if I had awakened from a long and terrible dream. But there—you must go now.

GILBERT. Without you?

SYLVIA. Yes—but you will return early.

GILBERT. At the earliest moment.

ROYAL. (*appears, L.*) Any time to-night, Gilbert.

GILBERT. All right. (*ROYAL exits.*) Good-bye, Sylvia. There, Royal is waiting. (*Kisses her and exits, L.*)

SYLVIA. Peace and joy at last! At last!

(*Enter O'KELLY and MRS. GRIGGINS, C. D.*)

O'KELLY. Good avening, Mrs. Fanshaw. Me an' me wife, formerly Mrs. Griggins, ye know, stopped in to ax wor ye going to the ball this avening?

MRS. GRIGGINS. I suppose ye don't care for the whirl av society, but we do. I've been teachin' O'Kelly how to waltz. Waltz; stand up an' show how well ye know. (*Hums a tune and waltzes a few steps awkwardly.*) There! Isn't that elegant, did ye iver see the like before now?

SYLVIA. (*laughing*) I never did.

O'KELLY. I knew ye'd say that, an I—

MRS. GRIGGINS. Come along, O'Kelly. We want to get the wort' av our money in the tickets we bought for the dance. Good avenin, Mrs. Fanshaw. (*Exeunt, dragging O'KELLY, L.*)

SYLVIA. They are happy—but no more so than I am to-night. And yet—I have a strange dread of impending evil. (*Faint rumble of thunder.*) There is a storm coming. (*Turns lamp down. Lights quarter down.*) I'll go and sit with Artie. (*Flash of lightning and louder thunder.*) I wish they had not gone—but, nonsense, there is nothing to fear. (*Turns and meets ALVAREZ, who has entered, c. d.*) Raymon! Here again!

ALVAREZ. Don't be alarmed.

SYLVIA. What do you want?

ALVAREZ. Yourself.

SYLVIA. And you dare—

ALVAREZ. I dare do anything for the woman I love.

SYLVIA. You disgrace the word in speaking it to me.

ALVAREZ. You are unhappy here.

SYLVIA. No. I am happy to-night for the first time since your blighting shadow fell upon my life.

ALVAREZ. I will waste no more words. You loved me once, you love me still. I am a Spaniard, I forget nothing. (*Storm heard, but not too loud.*) There is a storm in my heart greater than that which rages in the wild night. You must go with me. I say you shall.

(*Enter ROYAL, c. d.*)

ROYAL. I say she won't. (*Comes down and turns up lamp. Lights up.*) Look here, Alvarez, I imagined you would come sneaking back, although I kicked you out once. Now you travel, or I'll hammer you into a jelly. (*ALVAREZ is about to draw a knife, but is stopped by revolver.*) You needn't mind drawing that knife, for I'd kill you before you could injure Mrs. Fanshaw.

SYLVIA. He wouldn't—

ROYAL. Oh, yes, he would.

ALVAREZ. Yes, gladly, rather than see her escape me. (*Down L.*) But look. Your husband is coming; I see his carriage by the lightning's glare. Come with me quick, quick, or I will waylay and kill him. (*ROYAL exits quickly, c. d.*) Will you come?

SYLVIA. No, no! (*Clings to him.*)

ALVAREZ. Then he dies! (*Flings her aside and exits, L.*)

SYLVIA. (*after a pause*) Gilbert, Gilbert!

(A shot is heard off L. SYLVIA sinks on sofa, covering face with hands.)

SYLVIA. He has killed him, killed him, killed him!

GILBERT. (*entering quickly, L.*) Sylvia!

SYLVIA. (*rising*) Gilbert! Are you hurt?

GILBERT. Not at all. Royal stopped him.

(*Enter ROYAL and MILLY, C. D.*)

SYLVIA. What did he do?

ROYAL. Winged a rascal in the dark.

GILBERT. (*goes R. with SYLVIA*) I'll thank you later, old fellow.

ROYAL. I've repelled a Spanish invasion.

MILLY. And proved yourself a loyal friend.

ROYAL. (*goes up C. with MILLY*) Well, if everybody else is satisfied I am. (*Kisses MILLY.*) Good night!

MILLY. Good night. (*Exits, C. D. to L.*)

ROYAL. Good night. (*Exits, C. D. to R.*)

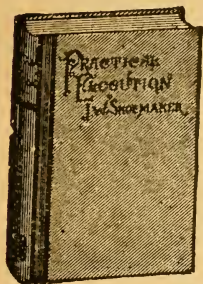
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