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Billy's Aunt Jane

BY

WILLIS N. BUGBEE

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The Willis N. Bugbee Co., Syracuse, N. Y.

Bugbee's Popular Plays

Billy's Aunt Jane

BY

WILLIS N. BUGBEE

*Author of "The Coonville 'Ristocrat Club," "Hiram and the
Peddlers," "Uncle Ephraim's Summer Boarders,"
"Jolly Dialogues," etc., etc.*

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The Willis N. Bugbee Co.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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BILLY'S AUNT JANE.

CHARACTERS

- PROFESSOR STEPHENS *President of Bellmore College.*
 BILLY BLAKESLEY *A Popular Bellmore Student.*
 TOM BURKE *Billy's Roommate.*
 RALPH PETERS } *Billy's Classmates.*
 HARRY HUNTER }
 PHILANDER WELLS *A Mining Expert.*
 DEACON PODGER *A Tight-Fisted Farmer.*
 SAM JOHNSON *A Colored Chore Boy.*
 MRS. JANE BRIGGS *Billy's Aunt.*
 MISS WIGGINS *A Maiden Lady.*
 DORA GRANT } *Students at Bellmore.*
 ALICE MOORE }
 BERTHA WRIGHT }
 ANNA MOXLEY }
 KATIE MURPHY *A Hired Woman.*

TIME—The Present.

PLACE—Bellmore College and Buxton, U. S. A.

TIME OF PLAYING—One Hour and Thirty Minutes, or Longer.

COSTUMES

PROF. STEPHENS, Acts I-III, dark suit, long coat; Act II, light linen suit, straw hat. BILLY, TOM, RALPH and HARRY, Acts I-III, ordinary school suits; Act II, light trousers, belts, blouses, sporting caps. MR. WELLS, business suit. DEACON, coarse baggy clothes, soft hat, uses cane. SAM, Acts I-II, common work clothes; Act III, white pants and vest, dark dress coat, wide standing collar, straw hat. AUNT JANE, Acts I-III, plain, old-fashioned dress and bonnet; Act II, common work dress, large apron. MISS WIGGINS, Act II, plain dress; Act III, odd, old-fashioned dress and hat. ALICE, DORA, BERTHA and ANNA, Act I, ordinary clothing; Acts II-III, neat summer costumes. KATIE, Act II, work dress, large apron; Act III, plain, dark dress, small white apron.

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no. 1

BILLY'S AUNT JANE

ACT I.

SCENE: Sitting-room of college boarding house. Chairs, sofa or settee, small table or stand, one or two pictures and a number of college pennants on the wall comprise the furnishings. BILLY is discovered sitting at table studying. SAM is heard singing a snatch of coon song off stage.

(Enter SAM with letters)

SAM. Heah dey is, Mistah Billy—heah am de lettahs wat yo'se done been s'pectin'. Dat one on de top am de bery same letter dat comes ebry week jes as reglar as de clock work. Reckon dat am from yo' sweetheart, ain't it?

BILLY. You're right, Sam, it is from one of my sweethearts.

SAM. From *one* of dem? Golly! How many ob dem does yo' hab, I jes' lak to know?

BILLY. Couldn't say off-hand, Sam. However, this one happens to be from my Aunt Jane.

SAM. Huh! From yo' Aunt Jane? Reckon she mus' be a mighty good aunt to write so off'n.

BILLY. That's exactly what she is. She's the best aunt in all the world. If I didn't hear from her once a week I should think something had happened to her.

SAM. An' if I done heah from my Aunt Mandy down in Louisiana once in fohteen yeahs I done tink sumpin happen sho nuff. Well, I gotter go'n gib dese lettahs to de odder fellers. Specks dey'll be wantin' to heah from dere sweethearts, too. (Exit whistling.)

BILLY (looking at letters). Let's see, now—here's a bill from Stimson & Co., the clothiers, for that suit of clothes. Thank fortune, I've got the money right here in my pocket to pay them. Here's another one from Bob Preston, my last year's roommate. I'm always mighty glad to hear from Bob. However, Aunt Jane's letter comes first every time. (Opens it and reads. Pause.) Well, well, so Squire Wheeler and old Peggy Johnson have got married at last. I should say it was high time. Twenty years is about long enough for any couple to keep company. (Pause while reading.) And Jack Brown's got a new automobile. Whew! He'll cut a figure now all right. I can just imagine him taking the girls out riding. (Reads to himself.) A new brass band started. Buxton's certainly getting to be some town. (Pause while reading.) Hello! What's this? The Buxton National Bank failed! Gee whillikins! That's where Aunt Jane keeps her money. (Reads aloud.) "It is thought that everybody will lose their entire savings." (Gives prolonged whistle.) I suppose that means that I must give up school. Here's what she says, "Now, Billy, I don't know jest how long I can keep you in college, but I'll try to have you

finish the term anyway." Jupiter! Is it as bad as that? She'll try to keep me till the term is over. (*Sits in thought for some time, finally strikes table emphatically with fist.*) I'll do it, yes, sir, I'll do it!

(*Enter TOM BURKE*)

TOM. Well, what is the wonderful deed you're going to do, Billy? Nothing desperate, I hope.

BILLY (*turning suddenly*). It is desperate. That's exactly what it is.

TOM. Proceed with the story. Not going to cast yourself into the raging torrent? Or will you use gas?

BILLY. It's not quite so bad as that. I'll tell you, Tom, I'm going to quit school.

TOM. Going to leave school? Why? When?

BILLY. Can't say exactly when. Sometime this week—perhaps tomorrow. I must see Prof. first.

TOM. You don't mean it! You're out of your head—been studying too hard of late, haven't you?

BILLY. No, I'm not loony. Never was saner in my life. Read that if you want to know. (*Tosses letter to TOM.*)

TOM (*reading to himself*). Great Scott! So you were in love with the venerable Peggy and the Deacon cut you out, eh?

BILLY. Fiddlesticks! I'm not in love. Read the rest of it.

TOM. Now I understand—it's the automobile. You're jealous of your neighbor, Jack Brown.

BILLY. No, Tom, it is neither jealousy nor love—that is, not love in the sense you take it. Read on and you will soon discover the real cause.

(*A pause while Tom reads the letter.*)

TOM. By George! It's too bad, Billy, it is for a fact. Is that all the means your aunt had?

BILLY. Practically all except her home. There are about fifteen acres of land with it, but mostly all rocks. Remember the photograph I showed you?

TOM. Yes, and a mighty pretty place it appeared to be—right on the shore of the lake. I should say it would be an ideal place to spend the summer.

BILLY. It certainly is. My aunt and her ancestors have enjoyed it for a good many summers.

TOM. I say—what will you do if you should leave school, Billy?

BILLY. Don't know yet. Probably hire out as a farm hand or—well, anything that comes along. At any rate, I have a responsibility on my hands now. Aunt Jane has been as good to me as a mother could possibly be and I would do anything to keep her from want and suffering.

TOM. That's right, Billy, I don't blame you, but it does seem a pity to have to leave now when only one more year would complete your course and you would then be better able to provide for her.

BILLY. True, old chap, but we must live in the meantime. At the present cost of living, together with the college expenses and all—I tell you it's a hard problem to solve.

TOM. Well, don't be too hasty whatever you do, Billy. Let's study this thing out together. Between us we may yet solve the problem.

BILLY. As we have so often done in our geometry, eh?

TOM. Yes, with perhaps a little well-timed advice from Prof. But speaking of eating reminds me that I haven't done that little stunt since early this morning. I'm nearly famished. Come on; let's get a lunch.

BILLY. Really, I don't feel like it just now, Tom.

TOM. I say, don't be too down-hearted, old fellow. You and your aunt will come out all right in the end, see if you don't. Come along and get a bite to brace you up.

BILLY. Well, perhaps, I'll go and get a cup of coffee just to steady my nerves. (*Exeunt R.*)

(*Enter ALICE and BERTHA, L.*)

ALICE. I wonder where Billy and Tom are. I thought they were in here.

BERTHA. I think there's something to pay. They were talking very earnestly a few minutes ago when I came by the door.

ALICE. We'll have to find out today if they are going to take parts in the play or not.

BERTHA. If Billy doesn't take the part of Colonel Grimes I don't know whom we can get for it.

ALICE. The part just fits him. He's always doing something to help somebody out of a scrape, same as the Colonel is. You remember that part in the play where the Colonel protects the girls from the ruffians? Well, I imagine Billy would do exactly the same thing.

BERTHA. And you know now dramatic the Colonel gets when he says, "Back! You dark and treacherous villain! Would you take the life of an innocent boy because he will not betray his dearest friend? Back, I say, or I will strike you to the ground!" (*The above is recited with dramatic effect, the arms raised as if to strike an imaginary villain. During the recital SAM enters and makes ludicrous business of dodging the blows. Appears frightened.*)

SAM. Oh, Lawdy sakes, Miss Bertha, don't strike! don't strike! I—I may be dark but I ain't no treachersome villain, an' I ain't tryin' to betray nobody nor nuffin, deed I ain't.

BERTHA. Goodness, Sam! Are you there? And did you think I took you for a villain?

(Girls laugh.)

SAM. I dunno wat you' done took me fo' but I know yo' jes' erbout scared de daylights plum outer me, dat's wat I knows.

BERTHA. It's only a part in a play, Sam. You certainly would make a funny villain.

SAM. Well, I'se suah glad I ain't in dat fellow's shoes, I is fo' a fac'.

(Girls laugh.)

ALICE. Have you seen Billy and Tom anywhere, Sam?

SAM. No'm, I ain't seed Mistah Tom roun' nowhar. I'se jes' now lookin' fo' him to gib him dis yere lettah.

ALICE. If you do see either of them tell them we're looking for them.

SAM. Yes'm, I suah will. *(Starts to leave room and bumps into PROFESSOR STEPHENS who is just entering. He falls to floor.)* Oh, Lawdy sakes alibe! I'se done kilt now suah! *(Sees PROF.)* 'Scuse me, am dat you', Professor?

PROF. S. Yes, sir, I believe it is me—or rather I. And allow me to say that if you would use your eyes to better advantage you would not get into such scrapes.

SAM. Yes, sah, dat's so. *(Runs off.)*

PROF. He's the most heedless fellow I ever saw.

ALICE. But very convenient to have around sometimes, Professor.

PROF. *(surprised at girl's presence).* Ah, good morning, young ladies. Have you seen Mr. Billy—er, I mean, William Blakesley? I don't seem to be able to find him anywhere.

BERTHA. We are looking for him ourselves but we can't find him.

PROF. Ah yes, he appears to be quite a popular young man just now.

ALICE. Come, Bertha, we'll look in the library. If we find him we'll tell him that you wish to see him.

PROF. Thank you—thank you. Tell him to come down to my office. *(Exeunt girls.)* A very popular young man and a very worthy one. I wish there were more like him. Any parent should be proud of such a son.

(Enter RALPH and HARRY in conversation)

RALPH. But I tell you right now, Harry, if we don't get an A No. 1, pitcher, we'll never win the game—never. The Bayville nine have the best battery they've ever had.

HARRY. It's a shame that Clarksy had to be taken sick just at this time.

RALPH. Yes, but he is and we've got to make the best of it—that's all. Now if we could only get—(*discovers* PROFESSOR). Why, Professor, are you here? We were so interested in our game that we didn't see you.

PROF. I hear it is to be a great game tomorrow, boys.

HARRY. Yes, sir; it's to be the deciding game, but I'm afraid we're done for. Our pitcher was taken sick yesterday.

PROF. Who is your pitcher this year?

HARRY. Clarksey—John Clark.

PROF. Strange I hadn't heard of it. Is Mr. Clark very sick?

RALPH. Yes, sir; taken with pneumonia yesterday afternoon.

PROF. Too bad—too bad all around. I'll have to go and see Mr. Clark. And say, boys, if I could pitch a ball as well as I could thirty years ago I'd help you out in a minute. (*Boys laugh.*)

RALPH. We know it without you're telling it, Professor. We know that your heart is with us.

PROF. But isn't there someone else you can get?

HARRY. Only one man, and that is Billy Blakesley, but he's always so busy.

PROF. Quite true. Mr. Blakesley is one of our busiest men in the college—and that reminds me—he may be at the office waiting for me now. I shall have to go.

RALPH. We'll go with you. We must see Billy at once. (*Exeunt R.*)

(*Enter SAM, L., with letter*)

SAM. Hi, golly! I can't fin' dat Mistah Tom nowhars to gib him dis lettah. (*Studying letter closely.*) It says on heah, "Return in fibe days to John H. Burke, Chicago." Ef I don't hustle an' fin' him 'fore dem fibe days are up he won't hab no lettah, no sah.

(*Enter BILLY and TOM, R.*)

SAM. Oh, heah yo' is now.

TOM. What's the trouble, Sam?

SAM. Heah am a lettah fo' Mistah Thomas Burke from de ham-bone—I mean de pork city.

TOM. It's from father. Give it here, you rascal. (*Opens letter and reads. Exit SAM.*) Listen to this, will you? (*Reads.*)

My dear Son:

I am writing this to inform you that business affairs will prevent mother and myself from making any plans for the sum-

mer, so you are at liberty to spend your vacation wherever and however you like. You may call upon me for any reasonable allowance to cover your expenses.

From your father,

JOHN H. BURKE.

(*Whistles.*) Now, what do you think of that? Spend the summer where and how I please. There's another problem for us to solve.

BILLY. I'm afraid we have more than we can master already.

SAM (*outside*). Yes'm, right dis way, ma'am.

(*Enters, R., carrying satchel.*) I've done brung yo' sweet-heart, Mistah Billy.

BILLY. My sweetheart?

(*Enter AUNT JANE, R.*)

Why, Aunt Jane! Are you here?

AUNT J. Yes, Billy, I jest had to come to explain matters to you. It takes too long to do it by mail.

(*TOM moves toward door*)

BILLY. Hold on, Tom, don't go. I want you to meet my aunt. This is my roommate, Aunt Jane.

AUNT J. Well now, I'm awfully glad to see you. I feel's if we were real well acquainted already.

TOM. That's about the way I feel, Mrs. Briggs.

BILLY. Now, Aunt Jane, tell us all about it and we'll listen—and oh say! Will you go and ask Prof. to come here, Sam?

SAM. Yes sah, an' all de rest ob dem folks wat's been lookin' for you'. (*Exit R.*)

AUNT J. Well, I told you in the letter about the bank failin'. You see that new cashier they got there embezzled a lot of the money an' skipped off to Canada or somewhere else.

BILLY. And wasn't anything saved?

AUNT J. Not a penny so far's we can find out. But you needn't worry, I've been thinkin' of a way to keep you in school. That's what I came to tell you about.

BILLY. How, Aunty?

AUNT J. I've been talkin' with Deacon Podger about his takin' a mortgage on the place. It's his own offer an'—

BILLY. And has he done so?

AUNT J. Not yet, but he seems real anxious an' willin' to do it.

BILLY. No doubt of it. You can tell him, however, that his money is not needed. I'll quit school before I'll allow you to mortgage your home, and especially to a man like Deacon Podger.

AUNT J. Why, Billy—

BILLY. I've made up my mind to that, Aunt Jane, and nothing can budge me.

(Enter PROFESSOR, R.)

Professor Stephens, this is my aunt, Mrs. Jane Briggs.

PROF. I am very glad to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Briggs, and I wish to inform you that your nephew is an honor to our school.

AUNT J. I'm real glad to hear he's doin' well in his studies.

PROF. And I wish to inform you, Mr. Blakesley, that your standings were the highest of any in your class in the last quarterly test. Mr. Burke was not far behind you. I congratulate you both.

BOYS. Thank you, Professor, thank you.

AUNT J. Well now, that's jest the way Billy used to do in the district school.

BILLY. Now, Professor Stephens, I have something to tell you—something that I regret very much indeed.

PROF. Well, out with it, young man.

BILLY. My aunt comes with bad news. Through the failure of our local bank all her available cash has been swept away, consequently I feel it my duty to leave school in order to—

PROF. To leave school? Impossible! Why, my boy, we can't spare you, we can't possibly spare you.

(Enter ALICE and BERTHA, followed by RALPH and HARRY.)

ALICE. Oh, here he is! Will you people please pardon us if we interrupt you. We wish to know if Mr. Blakesley will take the part of Colonel Grimes in our play. Will you, Billy?

BILLY. Why—I—er—

RALPH. And we hope you'll pardon us, too. Say, Billy, old chap, we're in a deuce of a fix. Clarksy's sick and we've got to have a pitcher for tomorrow's game or we lose. Will you do it?

PROF. There, young man, what did I tell you? We *can't* let you go. You're an indispensable part of the college just now.

SEVERAL. What's the row, anyway? Is Billy going to leave us? It can't be done.

BILLY. Well, I'll tell you, classmates. My Aunt Jane, whom I wish you all to know—the dearest aunt in the world—has suddenly lost her property—all except her little home, and so I feel in honor bound to leave school in order to support her and myself rather than mortgage her home.

SEVERAL. Good for you!

TOM. I say, Billy, I think I have a scheme that may solve the problem for a while at least.

BILLY. You have? How?

TOM. Well, you know dad says I may spend the summer wherever and however I like and he'll foot the bill.

BILLY. I don't see the connection.

TOM. Don't you? Then I'll tell you. The fancy prices that I would pay at a seaside resort I would rather pay to you for the privilege of spending the summer at your home if you would let me.

BILLY. Now, Tom, what are you talking about?

TOM. It's true. I would enjoy it a hundred per cent better and I'm sure there are others here in college who would like to spend the summer there if they knew what a delightful place it is—right on the lake shore, with plenty of boating and bathing and fishing and—

BERTHA. Oh say! Wouldn't that be a splendid place for our girls' club!

TOM. What do you say, Aunt Jane—pardon me, I mean Mrs. Briggs?

AUNT J. Why, I'd like it real well. I always did like to have young folks around. We took boarders once, a long time ago, when Mr. Briggs was alive.

BILLY. We could fix up the cottage for some of them, couldn't we, Auntie?

AUNT J. Why, yes, I guess so if they'd like it.

TOM. Then it's a go, and both our problems are partly solved.

PROF. Perhaps I shall like to engage board with you myself, Mrs. Briggs. I'll see.

(Several call out, "What, you too, Professor?")

PROF. At any rate, Mr. Blakesley, your college expenses will be cancelled for the balance of the term.

BILLY. Thank you, Professor.

ALICE. And you will take part in the play, Billy?

RALPH. And how about the game?

BILLY. Yes, I'll do the best I can to help you both.

TOM. Let's give three cheers for Mr. Billy Blakesley. *(All cheer.)* And now three more for Billy's Aunt Jane. *(All cheer.)*
(A lively college song may be sung as the curtain falls.)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—Sitting room at Aunt Jane's home. Old fashioned furniture. A sofa or settee at R. may be the same one as in first act but with different cover, pillows, etc. A fireplace with mantel at C. rear.

KATIE is discovered dusting and tidying the room. Voices are heard off stage singing a lively college song as curtain rises.

KATIE. Well, jist hear thim byes an' gurls a singin'. It's always something they're up to—first wan thing an' thin another the whole blissed toime except whin they're ashlape, an' hivin knows that's little enough. In all the sivin years I've been wid Mrs. Briggs I niver saw sich excitement an' commotion as there's been here this summer. But afther all they do be makin' jolly toimes for us. The worst trouble I have is wid the naygur, jist thryin' to keep him busy an' out uv mischief. (*Singing off stage, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."*) Faix, wull yez listen to thot. 'Tis the song me Pat is always a singin'. (*Stops a moment to listen, then joins in song. She works and sings with back to R.*)

(*Enter SAM R. with huge piece of cake.*)

SAM (*sits in chair and eats*). Golly, dis suah am a picnic! Dem wimmen folks knows jes' how to cook de eatables. Dey—

KATIE. Here you black spalpeen! Phwat are yez doin' in the settin' room gettin' crumbs all over me carpet, after I've swept an' dusted?

SAM (*frightened*). I 'clare to goodness! I—I didn't know yo' was heah, Miss Katie.

KATIE. Wull, ye'd better belave I am, an' phwat's more, ye're eatin' up all me missus' cake, ye haythen.

SAM. Yes'm, yo' see I done finished shellin' de peas an' I—I'se eatin' de cake so's to get strength fo' de nex' job.

KATIE. Strength? Begorra, thin yez must have the strength uv Samson. Ye'd betther be usin' some uv it on the woodpile an' thin come in an pare some pertaties for dinner. D'ye hear?

SAM. Yes'm, my hearin' 'pears to be in bery good condition.

KATIE. Thin yez betther be heedin' me advice before I get the broom.

SAM (*hurrying off*). Yes'm, I'se gwine! I'se gwine! I'll hab de wood split fo' yo' can say—Pat McGinnis. (*Rushes out, R.*)

KATIE (*chasing him off stage*). Ye black haythen! I niver saw the loikes uv sich a bye. If I was to be pestered wid him all me days I'd have narvous combustion, so I would. (*Brushes up crumbs.*) Wull, bliss me shtars! If there ain't old Miss Wiggins aturnin' in at the gate. I wonder phwat she's got on her mind now.

(*Enter MRS. WIGGINS, L.*)

MISS W. Good mornin', Katie.

KATIE. Mornin', Miss Wiggins. Ye're on hand airly this mornin'.

MISS W. Yes, jest stopped in on my way hum from the store. My! you're as slick as a whistle here! Takes a lot of work with all them college folks round, don't it?

KATIE. You're right, mum, it does, but afther all they're as foine a bunch as iver ye'd laid eyes on, an' jest as full uv fun as a monkey is full uv thricks.

MISS W. First thing you know, Katie, you'll be fallin' in love with one of them young fellers an' mebbe elopin'.

KATIE. Ach worry! Phwat would me own darlint Pat say if he should hear yez talkin' thot way?

MISS W. Dear me suz! I'd forgot about Pat. He's all right, Katie. Don't give him up for anything. Now what's become of Mis' Briggs? Hain't gone away nowhere, has she?

KATIE. No, mum, she's out in the garden. I'll jist tell her you're here. (*Exit R.*)

(*A sound of shouting and laughing outside.*)

MISS W. My land! What a noisy lot they be. It's most like Bedlam let loose. I don't know for my part how Jane Briggs can stand it.

(*Enter AUNT JANE with bouquet of old-fashioned flowers.*)

MISS W. Howdy, Mis' Briggs. Jest thought I'd step in an' see how you was gettin' along. My! ain't them pretty flowers. Mine didn't seem to do anything 'tall this year.

AUNT J. I ain't had a mite of trouble with mine. I'll let you pick a bouquet to take home if you want to.

MISS W. Thank you. I'd like to first-rate. Them are the real old-fashioned ones, too.

AUNT J. Yes, I like the old-fashioned posies best, so did Mr. Briggs, and so does Professor Stephens.

MISS W. Perfessor Stephens? Is that his name. I heerd you had a real perfessor here. And a darky, too. Say, I'd jest like to know if that darky's a student.

AUNT J. Land sakes, no! He's jest a helper around the college.

MISS W. Well, don't it beat all. You've got the hull kit an' caboodle from the perfessor down. 'Bout how old is he, would ye say?

AUNT J. Who do you mean, Miss Wiggins—the darkey or the Professor?

MISS W. Why, the perfessor, of course. You don't s'pose I'm interested in niggers' ages?

AUNT J. Well, I should say Professor Stephens is about fifty or thereabouts.

MISS W. Not so very old after all. And is he married?

AUNT J. He's a widower an' has one daughter. She's livin' with her grandma.

MISS W. Do tell. Now ain't that too bad—the poor man livin' all alone. My heart goes out to him. I'll have to get an introduction an' try to cheer him up.

AUNT J. I presume likely you'll have a chance. He's goin' to be here all summer.

(Enter BILLY and TOM, L.)

MISS W. Well, if here ain't Mr. Billy. I ain't seen him since he got home. (*To Billy.*) My sakes! You've grown bigger'n your aunt. They must be feedin' you well down to college.

BILLY. Haven't suffered much on that account yet, have we, Tom?

TOM. No one would think so if they should see us eat.

BILLY. By the way, Miss Wiggins, shake hands with my chum, Mr. Thomas Burke. He's young and handsome and unmarried.

MISS W. (*shaking hands*). Well, do tell! I'm real glad to meet you, Mr. Burke.

TOM. Thanks. I'm equally glad to know you.

BILLY. What's the news, Miss Wiggins? You usually keep pretty well posted on current topics.

MISS W. I consider it my duty to keep well informed on neighborhood affairs. I don't know of anything special 'cept that they're talkin' of havin' a Fourth of July celebration here next week. They're goin' to have fireworks an' parade an' the new band, an' they would have a ball game but one of the boys told Susie, that's my niece, tother day they couldn't get enough fellers to make up a nine. They was goin' to play with the Schuyler Hill boys.

BILLY. Gee! That's great! A Fourth of July celebration! What do you say, Tom, let's help 'em out on the ball game.

TOM. I'm with you. We'll make it the greatest event of the season.

BILLY. We'll put Peters behind the bat.

TOM. And yourself in the pitcher's box.

BILLY. Come on! We'll get up a nine that will make the Schuyler Hill lads look like a picked up nine from a day nursery.

MISS W. They do say the Schuyler Hill boys are great ball players.

BILLY. If they beat us we'll give 'em a medal. Eh, Tom?

TOM. Sure thing. (*Exeunt boys, L.*)

MISS W. Well, did you ever! They're nothin' but boys yet. Now I guess I'll go an' get that bokay an' then I'll go on home. But I do wish I could meet that perffessor.

AUNT J. Take any of the flowers you want, Miss Wiggins. (*Exit Miss W., R.* AUNT J. *arranges flowers on the mantel shelf.*) I've heard it said there's a Jack for every Jill, but somehow or other Miss Wiggins has had the awfulest luck a findin'

her Jack that ever was. She's tried to catch every man that's ever come to Buxton but I'm afraid she'll never find one.

(Enter PROFESSOR, who stands and admires flowers while she arranges them. AUNT J. turns and discovers him.)

AUNT J. Mercy, Professor! How you startled me. I didn't know you were here.

PROF. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Briggs. I was admiring your beautiful flowers. They remind me of the ones my dear old mother used to raise years ago in my childhood home.

AUNT J. So you used to live in the country, did you, Mr. Stephens?

PROF. I was born and bred a country boy, and everything about your lovely home "carries me back to my youth again," as the poet says.

AUNT J. I'm real glad you enjoy it here. I was afraid you would find it monotonous.

PROF. Indeed we do not. We are all of us having the time of our lives.

AUNT J. An' I'm real glad there are so many rocks on the old place so you an' the young men can study whatever 'tis you're a studyin' of.

PROF. Geology, you mean. There are some valuable specimens here—more valuable than either of us can imagine. And right here there's one thing I wish to caution you about, Mrs. Briggs. Do not under any circumstances mortgage or sell your home. I have every reason to believe that your neighbor, Mr. Podger, will soon make you an offer for it.

AUNT J. Dear me! Is there a mystery? I'll try not to mortgage it until I have to.

PROF. Sometime perhaps I will explain to you. By the way, if a gentleman calls to see me this morning will you please have Sam direct him to me?

AUNT J. Certainly.

(Enter Miss W., with bouquet)

MISS W. Much obliged for the flowers, Mis' Briggs—oh, I beg pardon—I didn't mean to interrupt anybody.

AUNT J. You aren't interruptin' us. Professor Stephens, this is one of our neighbors, Miss Wiggins. (They bow.)

MISS W. I'm so glad to make your acquaintance, Professor. I want to speak to you about my niece. She's got such a wonderful talent for mathematics—addin' an' subtractin' an' sech, that I've thought some of havin' her take a special course at college. But excuse me—you're jest goin' away, aren't you?

PROF. I'm only going down the road a piece.

MISS W. Well then, I'll walk right along with you. That'll save time for both of us. Good-bye, Mis' Briggs. (Exeunt Miss W. and PROF. S.)

AUNT J. (*looking after them*). Well, did-you-ever!

(*Enter ALICE, BERTHA, ANNA and DORA*)

ALICE. Oh, here you are, Aunt Jane.

DORA. We've been looking all over for you.

AUNT J. Well, what do you want, my dears?

BERTHA. We want to ask a favor of you.

ANNA. Yes, a very great favor.

DORA. And we were afraid you wouldn't grant it.

AUNT J. Do let me hear what it is.

ALICE. We want to borrow something of you.

BERTHA. No, not *something*, Alice.

ALICE. Of course not. We want to borrow Katie for to-morrow afternoon.

AUNT J. Borrow Katie?

ANNA. Yes, you see we are going to have a little party and invite some of the village girls.

DORA. And we'd like to have you come to it, too, Aunt Jane, as our honor guest.

BERTHA. We'll have it all to ourselves because the boys and the Professor are going off on a fishing excursion—

ALICE. And we'd like to have Katie come and help us if you don't mind.

AUNT J. I'm perfectly willin' but hadnt' you better ask her about it first?

BERTHA. That's so. We'd forgotten to do that. We'll do it now. (*Exeunt, R.*)

AUNT J. (*gazing toward L.*). I do believe there's that man comin 'to see the professor. He's a stranger anyway.

(*A knock at L. She goes to door.*)

Come in.

(*Enter Mr. WELLS*)

MR. WELLS. Good morning, lady. Is this the place where Professor Stephens is stopping?

AUNT J. It is, but you'll find him down in the lots jest now. I'll have someone show you the way.

MR. W. Thank you. I wish to see him at once on very important business.

(*AUNT J. goes to R. and calls "SAM!"*)

SAM (*outside*). Yes'm, heah I is. (*Enters.*)

AUNT J. Sam, I wish you'd show this gentleman where to find Professor Stephens.

SAM. Yes'm, I reckon we'll fin' him hammerin' away on dem ol' rocks like all possessed. He's been doin' nuffin' else fo' two weeks. (*Exeunt SAM and MR. W.*)

(*Enter girls, R.*)

DORA. It's all right, Mrs. Briggs. "Barkus is willing."

ALICE. And will you come, Aunt Jane? We'll look for you.

AUNT J. If I can spare the time, my dears. You're getting along nicely in the cottage, I hope?

ALL. Oh, perfectly splendid!

ANNA. We've named it "Cosy Nook Camp."

BERTHA. Alice has taken possession of the piano. She's our musician. You certainly must come and hear one of her piano solos sometime.

ALICE. Dora is our vocalist. She hopes sometime to win fame before the footlights.

AUNT J. Before the footlight?

ALICE. On the stage, you know, as a soprano singer.

DORA. Don't forget Anna. She's the artist. You just ought to see some of the pictures she's painted of scenery around here. Then she's got a beautiful picture of a cow chewing her cud.

ALICE. You see, Mrs. Briggs, we're a very talented bunch—in our way.

AUNT J. You didn't mention, Miss Bertha. What great thing does she do?

ANNA. Really, we forgot Bertha. She's our elocutionist—speaks pieces, you know, and she's a poet, too. She has written a lovely poem about "Cosy Nook Camp."

AUNT J. Well, I'm real glad you young ladies are enjoyin' yourselves.

ALL. Oh, we are! We are! We're having the jolliest times ever.

DORA. Come girls. We're hindering Mrs. Briggs. We'll have just time for a game of tennis. (*Exeunt L.*)

AUNT J. My, they're a jolly set—as jolly as they make 'em. They've got the world before 'em. Who knows what great men an' women these college boys an' girls may become—what wonderful deeds they may perform. I hope an' pray that I may keep my promise to Billy's mother to send him through college, but I can't tell yet what the outcome will be.

(*Enter Katie*)

KATIE. Will yez be comin' to see to the pies, mum? They've been in the oven that long I'm afraid they'll be burnin'.

AUNT J. Yes, Katie, I'm comin'. I'd forgotten all about them. (*Exeunt R.*)

(*A great commotion is heard off L.*)

(*Enter RALPH*)

RALPH (*calling off stage*). I say, fellows, bring him right in here and set him on the sofa.

(Enter BILLY and TOM, supporting HARRY between them. They place him on sofa.)

RALPH. There! Now take off his shoe and stocking.

HARRY. Shucks! What's the use, fellows? I only turned my ankle when I stepped off from that horse block.

RALPH. We aren't going to take any chances on a broken leg. Off with the shoe and let Doctor Tom diagnose it. He's going to be a doctor some day.

TOM. Doctor of Divinity, you simpleton—not medicine.

RALPH. What's the difference. Some doctors of medicine wouldn't know any more about it.

(Boys remove shoe. Stocking may be taken off or turned down.)

TOM. Got anything to put on it, Billy?

BILLY. I'll get some liniment.

TOM. And some bandages. (Exit BILLY R. TOM examines ankle.)

RALPH. Anything serious, Tom?

HARRY. I tell you it's nothing. What's the use of all this fuss.

BILLY (entering with large bottle and cloths). Here's the liniment—all I can find. (Hands bottle to TOM.)

TOM (examining bottle). Great guns! Horse liniment. (Reads) "Saturate cotton with the liniment and bind on the affected parts. Keep the horse in a well-bedded stall until the soreness has entirely subsided. Shake well before using." Somebody shake him while I soak this cloth with liniment. (Soaks cloth.)

HARRY. You're not going to put that stuff on my leg—I won't have it.

RALPH. Hold still. Don't get delirious. The operation will take but a minute.

(TOM binds cloth about ankle.)

HARRY. But I say—

(Enter AUNT J. and KATIE, R.)

AUNT J. Mercy sakes! What's the matter?

KATIE. Shure an' is some wan killed?

HARRY. Now see what a fuss you fellows have stirred up.

(Enter girls, L., hurriedly)

DORA. Oh dear! Is Harry hurt? Somebody said he was.

OTHERS. What is it, anyway?

HARRY. Nothing only I turned my ankle.

RALPH. And sprained it. Doctor Tom has been binding it up.

ANNA (*looking at bottle*). With horse liniment?

KATIE. For the love uv Mike!

AUNT J. Dear me! If you'd only brought him out into the kitchen we could have bathed it in warm water first.

DORA. That's what mother always does.

BILLY. Help him into the kitchen, fellows, and let Dora and her assistants fix it up, because here is Deacon Podger coming to see Aunt Jane.

AUNT J. Deacon Podger? Dear me!

BILLY. Yes, he's right here.

AUNT J. Don't go away, Billy.

(*Boys assist HARRY off at R. Others follow. Knock at L. Enter DEACON PODGER.*)

DEACON. Howdy do, howdy do, Mis' Briggs, (*shakes hands*) an' Billy, too, I declare. I ain't seen ye since ye got back. I hear ye've got a house full of folks here.

AUNT J. Yes, some of Billy's friends from the college are here.

DEACON. Jest thought I'd step in as I was goin' by an' see if you was ready to take up with my offer for the place. I've got \$2,000 ready to give ye jest as soon as ye say the word.

AUNT J. No, deacon, I'm not quite ready to sell yet.

DEACON. Wal, I didn't know. That offer don't hold good allers. I'll have to invest the money somewheres before long. I calc'late you'll need the money to send the young man through college.

AUNT J. I'm afraid I shall need the money before the year's over but somehow I can't bring myself to part with the old homestead. It's been in our family for most seventy years.

DEACON. Wal, as I told ye before, I could take a first mortgage on the place if ye'd ruther.

BILLY. No, sir, Deacon Podger, my aunt will never mortgage her home while I am able to do for her.

DEACON. Oh ho! You're mighty independent all of a sudden. 'Pears to me ye hain't done much so fur.

BILLY. But that is no sign I cannot and will not work.

(*Enter SAM. L.*)

SAM. De 'fessor hab done quit hammerin' rocks an' he an' dat odder man am comin' down de road. Reckon dey's got sumpin up dere sleeves, dey's talkin' so earnes'.

DEACON. Wal, what's your decision, Mis' Briggs? I'm in a hurry.

AUNT J. I can't give you an answer today. Really, I can't.

(*Enter PROFESSOR and MR. WELLS, but seeing the deacon they turn to go back with the words "Beg pardon," etc.*)

AUNT J. Come right in, Professor. Deacon Podger has stopped in to see about buying my place. He offers me \$2,000 for it.

DEACON. An' a big price for it, too, considerin' the times.

PROF. I would advise you again not to dispose of your place. First let me introduce to you Mr. Wells, who comes here today at my request. He will explain matters to you better than I can.

MR. WELLS. I'll tell you in a very few words, Mrs. Briggs. Your place is worth many times what this gentleman offers you. (DEACON *appears very excited and tries to interrupt.*) Wait just a moment, sir. My reason for saying this is that we have found a vein of copper on it. Just how extensive this vein is I am unable to say at present, but the prospects are good—very good indeed.

DEACON. I've got something to say about that. The place where you've been investigatin' is on my property. The line fence sets over on my land fifteen feet an' I can prove it.

PROF. Pray don't get unduly excited, my dear sir. This vein that we are speaking of is much farther than that from the line fence.

DEACON. Wal, we'll see, we'll see! (*Stumps off stage.*)

AUNT J. Dear me, I hope it'll turn out all right. It seems too good to be true.

PROF (*taking piece of rock from pocket*). Here is a piece of the ore. It has been proved to be genuine copper. We are to make further investigations, however, and Mr. Wells will then make arrangements with you for developing it.

(*Enter MISS WIGGINS carrying plate with napkin over it.*)

MISS W. Excuse me, Mis' Briggs, but I've brought over some cottage cheese for your dinner. The professor says he is very fond of it.

AUNT J. Thank you, Miss Wiggins. Here, Sam, take it out an' give it to Katie.

(SAM *takes plate and just before leaving stage takes a large bite of the cheese.*)

MR. WELLS (*to Miss W.*). Isn't this the Miss Wiggins who used to live in Petersville about twenty years ago? I thought it was you when you came in.

MISS W. Land sakes! I do believe this is Philander Wells. (*Shake hands.*) Where have you been all these years? I've thought of you real often.

MR. W. I've been in Butte, Montana, in the copper region.

MISS W. Be you goin' to stay long?

MR. W. I shall be in the vicinity for some time. We are investigating a copper deposit on Mrs. Briggs' farm.

MISS W. Well, do tell! A copper mine? What won't happen next! You must come an' see me, Mr. Wells. I live in the first house on the right.

(Enter SAM, R.)

SAM. Ebrybody come to dinner. De eatables am all on de table.

TOM (*entering*). And I wish to say to you that, under skillful nursing, our patient is now on the road to recovery.

BILLY. And I have equally good news for you, classmates. My Aunt Jane is now the possessor of a valuable copper mine, thanks to Professor Stephens' explorations, so she will *not* have to mortgage her home.

RALPH. I say, Bully for Aunt Jane for—

ALL. She's all right!

HARRY. Who's all right?

ALL. Aunt Jane.

AUNT J. Mercy sakes! Now everybody come while the dinner's warm.

(ALL *pass off stage at R.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: The lawn at "Cosy Nook Camp." Rustic chairs and benches, or camp chairs, at R. and rear. One large easy chair occupies a prominent position near the center of the group. Japanese lanterns are suspended from ropes or wires across stage. A banner at C. bears the words "COSY NOOK CAMP."

The college boys and girls are discovered arranging chairs.

(Enter PROFESSOR and AUNT JANE)

PROF. Well, young ladies, you have an ideal evening for your farewell party. Every star in the firmament is visible to-night with not a trace of a cloud to mar their brightness.

DORA. And see how full and bright the moon is, too, Professor, and how it shines and glistens on the surface of the lake.

RALPH. Just right for a boat ride, eh?

ANNA. Yet after all there's a feeling of sadness in the thought that tomorrow we must leave all—the cottage, the lake—everything.

BERTHA. It certainly has been a dandy summer.

PROF. I agree with you. It has been the most satisfactory vacation I have ever spent—most satisfactory in every way. It has been a decidedly delightful summer.

TOM. "Delightful" doesn't express it, Professor. It has been a *bully* summer.

PROF. Well, whatever adjectives we may use to describe it, I think I am safe in saying that everyone of us has enjoyed

it thoroughly. We could not have selected anywhere a better place to spend the summer months, a more healthful spot, a more congenial people to associate with, and a more hospitable hostess than we have had in Mrs. Briggs.

HARRY. That's right, Professor. We all agree with you. Don't we?

ALL. Yes! Yes! Sure we do!

PROF. The verdict is unanimous.

AUNT J. Now, Mr. Stephens and all of you, I just think you're tryin' to flatter me as a sort of farewell compliment. I'm afraid there was more of charity in it than anything else.

PROF. No, I assure you that if there was any charity in it, it would be hard to say to whom the charity was shown. I think, take it all in all, that we have been the gainers.

AUNT J. Well, I'm awfully glad things have turned out as well as they have.

HARRY. I say, what's this coming? Looks some like Sam's complexion.

TOM. Look at the outfit, will you!

(Enter SAM)

RALPH (*singing*). Oh, where did you get those pants?

BILLY. And the stand-up collar. There's style for you all right.

SAM. Gemman, dis am my ebenin' suit.

TOM. Did you borrow them, Sam?

SAM. Yes, sah. Yo' see I didn't hab nuffin' fit to weah on such a suspicious occasion an' so—

HARRY. If you'd asked me I would have loaned you some pajamas.

SAM. Yes, sah, an' so de gals dey done fixed me out wif dis fine suit ob clothes.

RALPH. The gals? What about it, ladies?

BERTHA. It's a suit I had last year for our society masquerade and I let Sam take it. He has promised to sing for us bye and bye in payment for it.

TOM. Good enough. We have nothing more to say.

AUNT J. (*to KATIE who just enters*). Katie, have you seen anything of Miss Wiggins?

KATIE. Yes, mum. She was sittin' down in a boat wid Mr. Wells just a minute ago.

AUNT J. Well, I never!

KATIE. An' here they both be a comin'.

ALICE. Now if you will all find seats we will have a little musical performance—we can't say it's a treat because—well, because it's just a simple little affair we've gotten up quickly.

DORA. We have saved this easy chair for Aunt Jane.

(All take seats, AUNT JANE sitting in easy chair near C. with PROF. S. at her side. MR. WELLS and MISS W. together at R. Others as desired. College, patriotic or popular songs may be given by girls, also by boys or by mixed voices. A coon song may be given by SAM. This program may be made as long as desired.)

ALICE. Bertha has a little poem that we want you all to hear.

BERTHA. I don't call it poetry. It's just a little effusion that I wrote one morning to amuse myself and the girls got hold of it and said I would have to read it. It's entitled:

COSY NOOK

I know a fairy land not famed
 In song or story book,
 Though 'tis a spot I hold most dear—
 Its name is "Cosy Nook."

It overlooks a pretty lake
 Where sunbeams dance and gleam
 And lovers in their little skiffs
 Float gently on its stream.

'Tis sheltered from the burning sun
 By rocks and spreading trees,
 And where it faces toward the lake,
 It catches every breeze.

It harbored there one season brief,
 Four maidens blithe and gay,
 And there within those cottage walls
 Full many a lark had they.

But now its rooms are bare and still,
 No voices there resound,
 No laughter shakes its roof—alas!
 There's silence most profound.

Yet deep within my inmost heart,
 Where strange eyes cannot look,
 I hold the sweetest memories still
 Of dear old "Cosy Nook."

ANNA. You see that's the way we all feel about Cosy Nook. We're going to have it published in the College Review next month.

BILLY. It's my opinion the poem shows signs of a budding genius.

RALPH. Or in other words, an "embryo poet." What do you say, Professor?

PROF. It's very good—very good indeed for a beginning.

ALICE. We're going to have Dora write up the chronicles of our summer vacation and have them published sometime.

HARRY. Well, don't forget about my catching the largest fish—fifty pounds remember.

RALPH. Say, don't mention the ball game, whatever you do. We don't want the other fellows to find out how we got trimmed by the Schuyler Hill nine.

DOBA. But the greatest event of all was Professor Stephen's discovery of copper and the formation of the Cross Lake Copper Co.

BERTHA. I can't forget how mad that Deacon Podger got when he found out the line fence was over on Mrs. Briggs' land instead of his own.

SAM. Golly, he jes' hopped right up an' down, he was so mad.

MISS W. They do say the Deacon's goin' to get someone to see if there ain't some copper on his land.

AUNT J. Well, I for one don't wish him any ill luck.

TOM. Gee! I'll tell you folks one thing—I feel mighty sorry to have to leave here tomorrow. We've had a lot of fun.

SEVERAL. That's right, Tom, we have.

TOM. We feel sorry to leave the people here, and we feel sorry to leave Aunt Jane.

PROF. AS for leaving Aunt Jane, I can relieve your feelings somewhat by informing you that she is going back to college with us.

SEVERAL. What? How? Aunt Jane going to college?

MISS W. Land sakes! Do tell!

BILLY. Is that a fact, Aunty?

AUNT J. Yes, Billy, we've saved the news until tonight.

ALICE. I know the meaning of it now. See! There's a brand new ring on Aunt Jane's finger.

PROF. You will no doubt see much of her through the school year. Our summer vacations, however, will be spent in her old home.

AUNT J. An' we hope you'll all come back again next summer an' stay with us.

SEVERAL. We will! We will!

MISS W. An' Philander an' myself would be glad to have you come an' visit us anytime during' the year.

AUNT J. What? You too, Miss Wiggins?

(Exclamations of surprise by others)

MR. WELLS. Yes, Mrs. Briggs, we have just concluded the bargain. The knot will be tied just as soon as Miss Wiggins can get ready.

MISS W. It won't take me long.

SAM. Golly, she done kitched him at las'.

BILLY. Will you close up the house for the winter, Aunty?

AUNT J. No, Katie's goin' to stay right here.

BILLY. What? Alone?

AUNT J. You'd better tell 'em about it, Katie.

KATIE. 'Tis Mr. McGinnis an' meself will be at home aafter nixt Monday, at which toime the saramony will be performed.

GIRLS. Another one!

HARRY. Gee whiz! It's catching.

RALPH. Three strikes and out.

SAM. Golly, I jes' wish I could fin' a nice cullud lady.

TOM. Congratulations are in order. Here's health and happiness and long life to all of you.

ALL. But especially to Professor and Aunt Jane.

CURTAIN



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