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Denton's Best Plays and Dialogues

From Book of Maxims

SPEAK CLEARLY IF YOU SPEAK AT ALL,
CARVE EVERY WORD BEFORE YOU LET
IT FALL

—Holmes





He's Not the Worst Boy in the World
From Play (Some Differences of Opinion) A Rhyming Dialogue

🌹 DENTON'S 🌹
BEST PLAYS
AND
DIALOGUES

THE HAPPY BOOK of STAGELAND

Written by

🌹 CLARA J. DENTON 🌹

🌹 *Author of New Program Book, Little
Actors' Plays, Busy Little Birds, etc* 🌹



ILLUSTRATED BY
MARJORIE HOWE DIXON

"A Just Right Book"

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monograph

DENTON'S BEST PLAYS AND DIALOGUES

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May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to others.

—Quotation from Shakespeare.

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FOREWORD



Good plays (and special dialogues) that are entirely new and consistent with common sense and good humor are rare.

In this book of Denton's Plays and Dialogues there is a quality of original construction that will give great delight and entertainment to both the players and the audiences throughout the performance.

There is a charm in each offering that will impress all hearers with this writer's portrayal.

The new book of plays and dialogues for all ages.



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Special Explanatory Note for the Players

The letters reading after the words Exit, Enter and Coming To, mean stage approach—as R indicates Right, L indicates Left and F. C. indicates Full Center of Stage.



I Want My Mother
From Playlet (The Revelation)



Blanche in Front of Mirror
(The Revelation)

Denton's Best Plays and Dialogues



THE REVELATION

(A Playlet for Three Women and One Man.)

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Lawrence.

Mrs. Rood, her friend.

Blanche Lawrence.

Arthur Force, Mrs. Lawrence's nephew.



SCENE—*Interior, Mirror up stage.*

TIME—*Present.*

COSTUMES—*Ordinary suits*



THE REVELATION



MRS. LAWRENCE, MRS. ROOD and BLANCHE are discovered at rise, MRS. LAWRENCE and MRS. ROOD busy with needle work, BLANCHE in front of mirror using powder puff, etc.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Where is Arthur?

BLANCHE.

Out on the porch waiting for me. Good by, mother dear, we'll not be away long. (*Kisses her.*) Of course you'll be here when we return, Mrs. Rood?

MRS. ROOD.

Well yes, I suppose so, if you don't stay too long.

BLANCHE.

O, you'll hardly miss me before we'll be back again, ta, ta. (*Exits R.*)

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Are you going out, Blanche?

BLANCHE.

Yes, mother dear, Arthur and I are going down to Ella's to arrange about the tennis match which we are to play tomorrow.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

(*Going to R. and looking out window.*)

They are certainly a handsome couple. (*Sighs.*)

MRS. ROOD.

Indeed they are, Mrs. Lawrence, I ran across them in the park, yesterday, and I wondered if you had noticed their attitude toward each other.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

(Wringing her hands and crossing over.)

Indeed I have, and I can't tell you how it distresses me.

MRS. ROOD.

But, can't you do anything?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Do! What in the world can I do? But, I must tell you, I foresaw it the moment they met. It was a clear case of love at first sight.

MRS. ROOD.

(Laughing.)

O, I never believed in that.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Well, if you had seen their meeting you would have been a complete convert to that belief. But I always had so strong a belief that they

would like each other if they met, that, had Arthur written me that he was coming I would have prevented it in some way, even if I had been forced to break up housekeeping for the summer.

MRS. ROOD.

Of course you can't object to Arthur in any way except that he and Blanche are first cousins?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

That is all, but isn't that enough?

MRS. ROOD.

But they can't marry; first cousins are not allowed to marry in this state.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Dear me, you don't suppose two determined young people will stop for that? In their eyes that is a very small obstacle.

MRS. ROOD.

Why, whatever do you mean, Mrs. Lawrence, surely they are not so foolish as to attempt to defy the law?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

That law doesn't govern the whole United States, nor Canada.

MRS. ROOD.

O, Mrs. Lawrence, surely they would not go so far as that?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Well, I may as well tell you what is troubling me. I overheard them, this morning, planning to do that very thing. You know I have a sister in Toronto. She is also Arthur's aunt and they are planning that Blanche is to inveigle me into letting her go there for a visit, and Arthur is to

join her a few days later, and the marriage will take place there.

MRS. ROOD.

But what if your sister has scruples against cousins marrying as well as yourself?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Even so, she will not interfere; she is that kind of a woman. She'll just tell them to go and make their own home and then not to complain if, later on, they find it is not a good one.

MRS. ROOD.

Too bad, can't you write to her to forbid the marriage?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

What good will that do? They are both of age. No, there is only one way out of it, a way which it breaks my heart to take.

MRS. ROOD.

Well, I should think you'd take any way to prevent the marriage.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

I cannot prevent the marriage; I'm convinced that must go on, in spite of everything, but, at least, I can prevent a runaway marriage, although, as I said before, it breaks my heart to do it.

MRS. ROOD.

You are very mysterious, and I cannot see what you mean. But I hear them on the porch and I think I must go or my dinner will be late.
(*Rises.*)

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Persuade Blanche to walk a short distance with you, I want to talk with Arthur alone.

MRS. ROOD.

I will if I can.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

And tell Arthur I want to see him alone a few moments. I must talk to him and I cannot do it if Blanche is present.

MRS. ROOD.

All right, I will tell Blanche that you want to talk to Arthur and then she will probably go a piece with me, but you must expect that whatever you say to him will be passed on to her.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Yes, yes, I know it, and that is my greatest worry.

MRS. ROOD.

Well, good-bye, I will fulfill my mission faithfully, and incidentally talk to Blanche against this marriage.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Don't waste your breath on that preachment;

it will do no good whatever. Good:bye, and come again soon. (*Exit R.*) I do hope she will let Blanche alone. I can see plainly that we might as well try to stop the onrushing of the ocean as to stop this match. But O, the dreadful task which is thereby imposed on me. (*Rises and crosses over, ARTHUR enters R.*)

ARTHUR.

(*Coming down.*)

You seem greatly disturbed, Aunt Fannie (*puts arm about waist*), do you want to talk to me? Come sit down and let us be comfy while we talk. (*Places chair.*)

MRS. LAWRENCE.

I cannot, Arthur, I cannot sit down. I have something to tell you which it breaks my heart to touch upon.

ARTHUR.

O, I know what it is, Aunt Fannie, but don't feel so upset over it; you have seen that Blanche and I are in love with each other, and you don't want us to marry because we are cousins, but you must overcome that silly prejudice, Aunt Fannie; lots of cousins marry and the marriages turn out all right.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

But, Arthur, you know the marriage of cousins is illegal in this state.

ARTHUR.

There are other states, Aunt Fannie.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

O, Arthur, what do you mean to do? Don't commit any foolish act, which you will regret all your life.

ARTHUR.

But, Aunt Fannie, if I don't commit the act which you call foolish, that is something that I shall regret all my life.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

(Pausing in front of him.)

But, Arthur, you and Blanche are not the slightest relation.

ARTHUR.

(Throwing his arms around her.)

Aunt Fannie, is this true? Can it be true?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Solemnly true; I adopted Blanche when she was six months old.

ARTHUR.

And she doesn't know?

MRS. LAWRENCE.

No, I always intended to tell her, but could never get up sufficient courage, and now that I feel I must tell her, it is harder than it ever could have been at any other time.

ARTHUR.

But I'll save you the painful task, I'll tell her; think what this means to us! (*Runs out R.*)

MRS. LAWRENCE.

How like a man! He thinks only of his own part in the news, and quite loses sight of the fact that Blanche may grieve to know that she is not my own daughter. How will she bear it? Will she turn against me because I have kept it from her all of these years, and cease to love me? Ah, that would be more than I could bear, but I hear them coming; manlike,

he has made a short story of it; I cannot see Blanche now. (*Exit L.*) (BLANCHE *and* ARTHUR *enter R. arm in arm.*)

BLANCHE.

(*In tears.*)

Where is my mother? I must find her, I cannot believe this dreadful news.

ARTHUR.

But, Blanche, do you forget? We can now be married at once and here in your own home; no need for scheming and contriving to get out of the state. I thought you would be so happy over it.

BLANCHE.

Don't talk to me about it; I don't want a husband if I have to lose my mother to get him.

ARTHUR.

Blanche, don't be childish; she is as much your mother as she ever was. Come, be sensible.
(Opens his arms.)

BLANCHE.

No, I won't. I want my mother, my dearest mother. *(Exit L. weeping.)*

ARTHUR.

(To audience.)

Well, what do you think of that? But I suppose that's the difference between a man and a woman, so I must be patient; my time will come yet. *(Takes a newspaper from his pocket, unfolds it, seats himself and reads.)*

CURTAIN.





Where Is My Mother?
(The Revelation)



THE QUEER PEOPLE

(A Playlet for Two Women and Two Men.)

CHARACTERS.

John, an old bachelor.

Ann, his sister, a widow.

Julia, a single lady, loved by John.

Mr. Jones, a friend of Ann's.





Ordinary home costumes.

SCENE—*Comfortable living-room.*



THE QUEER PEOPLE



JOHN.

(Discovered reading letter.)

How provoking! This woman agreed to take a block of stock in the Multiple Reduction Co., and now she has backed straight out. Is there anything on earth so queer as a woman, anyway?

ANN.

(Entering L.)

Yes, I know several things queerer than a woman.

JOHN.

Gracious, I'd like to know what they are!

ANN.

Well, look out the window there and you'll see something. (JOHN goes to L. of stage and looks off.)

ANN.

Do you see that old Plymouth Rock hen?

JOHN.

Yes, and I hear her cluck, too, but I don't see any chickens.

ANN.

No, she hasn't a chick and never will have; she has been sitting four weeks on four white door knobs. There she's going back on her nest now, and she doesn't seem to have the least notion that if they were eggs they would have been hatched long ago. Can you find anything queerer than that?

JOHN.

Well, that's the female of it, don't you see? We might as well say right out, all females of every kind and sort are queer.

ANN.

Well, even if that's true, which I don't admit for a minute, mind, I know something that's queerer than all the queer females in the world.

JOHN.

(Crossing over.)

You do? Well, I'd just like to know what it is. It's all right for you to talk in that general way, but just come right down to business and specialize.

ANN.

That I can tell in a minute; it's an old bachelor.

JOHN.

(Crossing over and back much excited.)

Just listen to that, just listen to that! Pretty kind of talk to the only relative you have in the world; old bachelor! Umph! just wish you were an old maid, so I could get back at you.

ANN.

Yes, but I forestalled you by getting married.

JOHN.

Since that was your only motive, it proves you are queer, doesn't it?

ANN.

Who said 'twas my *only* motive?

JOHN.

Well, well, you are a widow now, and if you weren't a little queer you'd surely get married again to one of these fine old fellows who are always coming around to see you.

ANN.

That would be the queerest thing of all.

JOHN.

Well, you can't prove that I'm queer, don't I get up every morning and go to my office like a normal man?

ANN.

(Laughing.)

Oh yes, but once in a while you forget to be normal, as you did last night when you stayed away till nine o'clock, and then finding everybody gone and your latch key in your trousers pocket, you stood there on the porch till after ten o'clock waiting for somebody to come home, when, if you had called on the policeman who strolls by here every hour, he would have let you in with his skeleton key.

JOHN.

(Coaxingly.)

Oh, come now, Ann, don't twit on facts.

ANN.

And then, night before last, you left the front door unlocked when we had all that interest money in the house.

JOHN.

(Laughing.)

Well, no one got the money, did they?

ANN.

It wasn't your fault if they didn't. But I'm just trying to show you that an old bachelor is the queerest thing in the world.

JOHN.

Don't you think I'd do queer things if I were married?

ANN.

Certainly not, a wife would keep you straight.

JOHN.

O, well, I suppose I may as well tell you the truth, Ann; I'm in love.

ANN.

(Laughing.)

Is that so? That explains your queerness; an old bachelor in love is the limit of queerness. Who's the lady?

JOHN.

(Going to L. and looking off.)

I see her on the porch now; the door is open and she is coming in. *(Enter JULIA L.)* Julia, my sister says I'm queer because I'm an old bachelor, so won't you marry me and cure all my queerness?

JULIA.

I suppose this sudden proposal is a part of your queerness?

ANN.

And there comes Mr. Jones! Come right in,

Mr. Jones. (*Enter MR. JONES L.*) I must tell you friends, yesterday I promised to marry Mr. Jones, so now who's queer?

MR. JONES.

Well, I know I'm not queer for wanting to marry Ann, for lots of other men have been in the same predicament.

JOHN.

Hurry up Julia and say yes; if you don't you'll be the only queer one.

JULIA.

O, my! that would be serious. Yes, yes, now who's queer?

JOHN.

No one, no one in the whole wide world.

ANN.

Except the Plymouth Rock hen.

CURTAIN.



Except The Plymouth Rock Hen
(The Queer People)



THE BURGLARS AT MRS. DAY'S.

(A Farce in One Act, for Six Girls or Women.)

CHARACTERS.

Mesdames Arnold, Ellis, Collins, Foster and Day. Policeman—As this character has no lines and appears only at window at close of play, it can be taken by a woman.





COSTUMES—*Mrs. Arnold, neat home dress; other ladies, street suits; they carry market baskets. Policeman, hat and coat of policeman's uniform.*

SCENE—*Home interior. Telephone up stage. Window same. Small table, F. C.*



THE BURGLARS AT MRS. DAY'S



MRS. ARNOLD.

(Discovered at phone.)

Mercy! You don't mean it? Burglars?
When? *(Pause.)* At your house? O, My! So
near! What did they get? *(Pause. Hangs up.)*
How utterly exasperating! *(Comes down.)* Just
as she began to tell me all about it, too. I'm
afraid I'll just die from curiosity. O, I know
what I'll do; this is market day, I didn't intend
to go, but I will now. All of her neighbors will
be there, and they will be sure to have all the
details. *(Goes up to window.)* There is Mrs.
Ellis now. *(Beckons frantically.)* Yes, she's
coming in. She lives next door to Mrs. Day and
she's sure to know all about it. She's the kind

that always goes everywhere and knows everything that is going on from Dan to that other place. What is it now? Something about beer anyway. (MRS. ELLIS *enters R.*) O, Mrs. Ellis, good morning; awfully glad to see you. Of course you've heard the news?

MRS. ELLIS.

(*Takes proffered chair.*)

Good morning. No, I haven't heard anything startling. What is it? But I've seen the morning paper, and saw about (*mentions latest news*). Or is it that Miss —— and Mr. —— (*mentions local people*) have announced their engagement?

MRS. ARNOLD.

O, no, nothing of that kind.

MRS. ELLIS.

Well do let's have it quick, you have me on the *qui vive*.

MRS. ARNOLD.

Something dreadful has happened right near home.

MRS. ELLIS.

O, my! What is it, do tell me.

MRS. ARNOLD.

Burglary!

MRS. ELLIS.

What, here? What did you lose?

MRS. ARNOLD.

No, not here, but over on Seventh street.

MRS. ELLIS.

O, dear me! So near home; how dreadful!

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Going to window.)

There is Mrs. Collins on her way to market.
I'll call her in. *(Repeats former business.)*

MRS. ELLIS.

I hope she'll come in; she always knows all the news there is going, and is perfectly willing to tell it.

MRS. COLLINS.

(Entering right.)

Dear me, what are you two women hatching up now?

MRS. ARNOLD.

Nothing at all. I called you in to see if you knew anything about the burglary, but do sit down; you don't need to be in such an awful rush.

MRS. COLLINS.

Burglary? Where? When? *(She sits.)* Here?

MRS. ARNOLD.

No, but over on Seventh street.

MRS. COLLINS.

O, dear, that's pretty near. I've been trying

to make John buy a burglar alarm; maybe he'll listen to me now. I should think you'd be nervous with all your diamonds right here in the house.

MRS. ARNOLD.

So I am, and I mean to put them in the safety vault this very day, though I must say there isn't any comfort in having diamonds, if you can't have them where they are handy to wear when you want them.

MRS. ELLIS.

Yes, I wouldn't give much for diamonds if they had to be in the safety vault all the time.

MRS. COLLINS.

But what did the burglars get?

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Going to window.)

That's what I don't know and I'm nearly burst-

ing with curiosity. But there's Mrs. Foster on her way to market. (*Repeats former business.*) Perhaps she can tell us all about it; she always knows everything that's going on.

MRS. COLLINS.

Yes, and does her best to keep it *going on*, too.

MRS. FOSTER.

(*Entering R.*)

Well, I declare, what are you folks up to? Having a party?

MRS. ARNOLD.

A sort of one; we thought you ought to be in it.

MRS. FOSTER.

Yes, if there is any fun around I like to be in it.

MRS. COLLINS.

But sit down, Mrs. Foster, and if you know



What Are You Folks Up To? Having a Party?

anything about that burglary last night, tell us what you know and be quick about it.

MRS. FOSTER.

(Greatly excited.)

Dear me, Mrs. Collins, a burglary, where? Here? Lost your diamonds? Mrs. Arnold, I always told you you should not keep so many in the house. It's just dreadful; why it's enough to make a burglar out of every honest man, my husband says—

MRS. COLLINS.

(Interrupting.)

So it is, Mrs. Arnold. I never thought of it in that way before. don't you see? If a man should come here and steal your diamonds, you'd be what the lawyers call "Accessory before the fact," and maybe they'd arrest you as well as the burglar.

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Jumping up.)

O, dear me, Mrs. Collins, you are enough to scare a body to death, but I don't believe they could do such a thing as that, do you think they could. Mrs. Ellis?

MRS. ELLIS.

I don't know, I'm sure, but lawyers can do most anything these days.

MRS. FOSTER.

That's true, my husband has just—

MRS. COLLINS.

(Interrupting.)

I wouldn't risk keeping my diamonds here another day, if I were you, Mrs. Arnold, when you know it is so easy to keep them where they are perfectly safe.

MRS. ELLIS.

Neither would I, Mrs. Arnold; it really seems to me to be tempting Providence, you know.

MRS. ARNOLD.

But if my diamonds are going to be in the security vault all the time, I may as well give them to the bank and have done with it.

MRS. ELLIS.

Of course, that's so, but then what good will your diamonds do you if the burglars get them?

MRS. FOSTER.

And then if you should get arrested too, you know, my husband—

MRS. COLLINS.

(Interrupting.)

Oh yes, dear Mrs. Arnold, do try to get those diamonds away from the house, because I've always heard that where there is one burglary

there's likely to be another soon in the same neighborhood.

MRS. FOSTER.

Yes. go in pairs, so to speak, like mice. But where was the burglary?

MRS. ARNOLD. }
MRS. ELLIS. } On Seventh street.
MRS. COLLINS. }
(Together.) }

MRS. FOSTER.

But where on Seventh street? That's a long street, you know; my hus—

MRS. ARNOLD.

But this was right next your house, Mrs. Ellis.

MRS. ELLIS.

Oh no, it can't be; I know everybody in our block; it's a restricted neighborhood, you know, and I hadn't heard a word of it till I came in here.

MRS. COLLINS.

Well, if it is a restricted neighborhood, it isn't restricted enough to keep the burglars away.

MRS. FOSTER.

But do tell me, just where was the burglary?

MRS. ARNOLD.

At Mrs. Day's.

MRS. ELLIS.

What, the dressmaker? (MRS. ARNOLD *nods*.)

MRS. COLLINS.

Well, I never, Mrs. Day's!

MRS. FOSTER.

Are you sure about it, Mrs. Arnold?

MRS. ARNOLD.

Well, I guess so; Mrs. Day told me so herself, just a few moments ago.

MRS. ELLIS.

But I can't see why a burglar should go to Mrs. Day's.

MRS. COLLINS.

Neither can I, for she hasn't a thing any self-respecting burglar would take as a gift, not even a watch and chain, and as for money she has to spend it just as soon as she gets it, poor thing!

MRS. FOSTER.

Well, she ought to have lots of money, the way she charges for every bit of sewing she does. My husband says—

MRS. ELLIS.

(Interrupting.)

But we haven't heard the most important part of the story yet, Mrs. Arnold. What did the burglars get at Mrs. Day's? I wouldn't be afraid to stake all the money in my purse this minute that they didn't get enough money to pay for the flashlight they used.

MRS. ARNOLD.

I know it, and when a burglar starts out to burgle you wouldn't think he'd pass by all those handsome residences on Seventh street and go into Mrs. Day's little one-story cottage.

MRS. ELLIS.

No, he wasn't a very observing burglar; if he had been he'd have meandered over here after that casket of diamonds; that's what I'd do if I were a burglar.

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Looking around frightened and speaking in stage whisper; going to window.)

Oh, do keep still about my diamonds, there may be a burglar lurking around somewhere now.

MRS. FOSTER.

But why don't you go on with your story, Mrs. Arnold? What did the burglar get?

MRS. ARNOLD.

You see, that's what I don't know. Just as Mrs. Day started to tell me all the particulars, she said she saw her best customer coming through the gate and so she hung up.

MRS. FOSTER.

And so you were hung up. Now wasn't that just like a woman? My husband says—

MRS. ELLIS.

(Interrupting.)

But has anyone called up the police department?

MRS. ARNOLD.

Why no, what for?

MRS. ELLIS.

For police protection, of course.

MRS. ARNOLD.

I suppose that would be a good idea.

MRS. ELLIS.

It's the only safe thing now. There's no telling who will be the next victim.

MRS. ARNOLD.

O dear, I suppose I must take my diamonds down to the bank right off.

MRS. ELLIS.

But Mrs. Arnold, if you have fully decided to take your diamonds to the security box, won't you let me see them now while I am here? The others, I presume, have seen them, but you know I have never laid my eyes on them since you fell heir to them.

MRS. ARNOLD.

O, haven't you? I thought all my friends had seen them. Well, excuse me a minute and I'll go after them. I know they are perfectly safe here, though we mustn't talk about them too

loud; one never knows who may be hanging around. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. COLLINS.

Well, I'm going to call up the police department. I believe it is safer to be safe. (*Goes to phone and takes down book.*) Let me see, how does the alphabet run? That wasn't taught to young people when I went to school. A-B-C-D-E-F-G—dear me, what is next? O, I know—H-I-J-K—but what does come after K?

MRS. ELLIS.

L-M-N-O.

MRS. COLLINS.

Yes, yes, now I remember, P-Q-R. I always could get that combination. (*Turns leaves of book rapidly.*) But I always feel like tearing my hair when I have to get at this phone book. P-Q-R-S, but if you'll believe me, it isn't in

this miserable old book at all. I always said this company wasn't any good and you see they can't even get the names right in the phone book. Now doesn't that prove they are just exactly no good at all? O here it is, in great big capital letters; no wonder I couldn't see it. (*Hangs up book and takes down receiver.*) Main 231, please. (*Pause.*) There's been a big burglary in this neighborhood, and—(*pause*). *What* neighborhood? Well, this is 3320 Western avenue. Mr. Arnold's residence. If you'll send someone out here we'll give you full information. We can't tell you over the wire because we don't want it to get into the newspapers. This is a party line, and you know everybody "listens in" these days, so send someone out, and you'll get all particulars. (*Pause.*) All right, thanks. (*Hangs up,*



*There's Been a Big Burglary
in This Neighborhood*

and comes down just as MRS. ARNOLD returns to room carrying jewel box.)

MRS. COLLINS.

The superintendent says he will send a man right out to protect your house, so it looks as if the burglars will stay away from here.

MRS. ARNOLD.

O, I am so glad. I didn't suppose they would do that.

MRS. COLLINS.

O, I knew they would; that's why I called them. Once there was a burglary right next door to my house and they patrolled the house for two weeks.

MRS. FOSTER.

Of course, there wouldn't be any burglars in a house when the policeman was going past the house all the time. My husband once—

MRS. COLLINS.

(Interrupting.)

Why they sent a man in plain clothes. He walked down on one side of the street and up on the other, just as if he were a private citizen on his way home. We didn't even know which man he was until we got used to him, after awhile.

MRS. ARNOLD.

How interesting. *(Going to table at F. C. They all move forward after MRS. ARNOLD speaks.)* Well, here are my great diamonds; not so very much after all, you see, but still more than I should care to lose, although they didn't cost me a cent, since they came to me from my maiden aunt.

MRS. ELLIS.

O, Mrs. Arnold, do tell us the story of each one.

MRS. ARNOLD.

Their stories aren't so very much. (*Takes up pieces as she speaks of each one.*) This buckle was worn on my great great grandfather's shoe.

MRS. FOSTER.

But did he wear only one?

MRS. ARNOLD.

The story is that my great grandmother sold it when she was in sore need of money.

MRS. FOSTER.

O, dear, what a pity; it's a wonder she didn't sell the other one too.

MRS. ARNOLD.

Well, I believe my great grandfather happened along about that time and married her. Very decent of him I am sure; and she was never in need again. This brooch and ear-rings were hers;

this bracelet and necklace and all the rings were my grandmother's.

MRS. FOSTER.

Have you ever worn them all at one time? How you must have sparkled, if you did.

MRS. FOSTER.

Why, she couldn't wear the shoe buckle without its mate.

MRS. ARNOLD.

Oh, but I have worn it as a belt slide. (*Behind scenes bell rings loudly, all start.*)

MRS. ARNOLD.

(*Picking up diamonds.*)

Please answer the door bell Mrs. Collins.
(*Exit L.*)

MRS. ELLIS.

(*As MRS. COLLINS goes out R.*)

That must be someone from the police department.

MRS. FOSTER.

If it is, he must have come in an airship; my husband—

MRS. COLLINS.

(Behind scenes.)

Oh, Mrs. Day, how do you do? So glad to see you. *(All rise excitedly. MRS. COLLINS and MRS. DAY enter R.; all run forward exclaiming—)* “O, Mrs. Day, so glad you have come.”

MRS. FOSTER.

We were just wishing we could see you. My—

MRS. ELLIS.

(Interrupting.)

But do sit down, Mrs. Day. *(She sits, others same.)*

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Entering L., comes down.)

Oh, Mrs. Day, we are so glad to see you.

MRS. DAY.

Well, I declare; why this sudden and enthusiastic welcome? Are you all in a hurry for new gowns?

MRS. ARNOLD.

Why, Mrs. Day, you ought to know we're all just crazy to hear about the burglary.

MRS. ELLIS.

I do hope you have a clue.

MRS. FOSTER.

Yes, a clew is the first thing, when my husband—

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Interrupting.)

But, first, Mrs. Day, tell us what you lost.

MRS. DAY.

Who says I lost anything?

ALL.

Oh, didn't you?

MRS. ARNOLD.

But you told me there had been a burglary at your house, so, of course, you must have lost something.

MRS. DAY.

Did I say burglary, Mrs. Arnold?

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Firmly.)

I am sure you did.

MRS. DAY.

(Laughing.)

No, I said burglars had been in my house.

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Bridling.)

What's the difference, I'd like to know.

MRS. ELLIS.

Yes, what is the difference?

MRS. COLLINS.

Burglars, of course, commit burglary, and that means robbery, so you must have lost something.

MRS. FOSTER.

(Jumping up.)

I'll look in the dictionary; my husband always—

MRS. DAY.

(Interrupting.)

Oh, never mind, Mrs. Foster, I'll explain; burglary is house robbery at night, but burglars are persons who break into a house at night, but they don't always get as far as robbery.

MRS. ARNOLD.

Oh, I see, you drove them away; how lucky.

MRS. ELLIS.

How interesting. What did you do, Mrs. Day?

MRS. COLLINS.

Yes, tell us all about it. My! this is getting exciting.

MRS. FOSTER.

Did you point a gun at them, Mrs. Day? My hus—

MRS. DAY.

(Interrupting.)

I wasn't at home. *(All groan.)*

MRS. ARNOLD.

Then, of course there must have been a burglary, since you weren't there to drive them off; hope they didn't get much.

MRS. DAY.

I didn't lose a thing; on the contrary, I gained something. *(Loud exclamations.)*

MRS. ARNOLD.

Now, Mrs. Day, you certainly must explain.

The idea of burglars coming to your house and, instead of taking something, leaving something.

MRS. FOSTER.

Oh, I see, it's a conundrum, my—

MRS. ELLIS.

(Interrupting.)

No, I see what Mrs. Day is getting at; the burglars got into the house, then something frightened them and they ran off, leaving their "swag"—I think that's what they call it.

MRS. COLLINS.

That reminds me; some friends of mine had burglars break into the house and, just as the man was getting out of bed, the cuckoo clock, which was upstairs, struck twelve, and then the burglars made a quick get-away out of the house; they must have thought the clock was someone calling.

MRS. DAY.

Moral, everybody keep a cuckoo clock.

MRS. FOSTER.

But they are so expensive, my—

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Interrupting.)

But I must say, Mrs. Day, I think that you have made a pretty fine distinction between burglars and burglary. Unless these people, whoever they were, broke into your house with a wrong intent, they were not burglars, and if they left something for you, they couldn't have had a wrong intent.

MRS. ELLIS.

Why, Mrs. Arnold, they might have left a bomb.

MRS. COLLINS.

Or a rat-trap for you to get your foot into.

MRS. FOSTER.

Or the small-pox.

MRS. DAY.

Well, I must admit, Mrs. Arnold stretched a point when I said burglars had got into my house, but I thought it sounded funny to tell, and, of course, I expected to explain right away; in fact, I came over here expressly to explain to you the very minute my customer left.

MRS. ELLIS.

But now, Mrs. Day, since your burglars weren't burglars at all, and didn't take anything, but left something for you, we are all bursting with curiosity to know what they left. *(She rises at this point and comes close to the window.)*

MRS. DAY.

Well, they left one bushel of peaches and half a bushel of apples. *(All exclaim.)*

MRS. ARNOLD.

(Impatiently.)

Oh, it's a joke of some kind, I suppose, but I must confess I fail to see it.

MRS. DAY.

It's no joke at all, but the solemn truth. I was away last night and my brother and his wife came to my house and, finding the doors all locked, he climbed in the back window, which, you see, made a burglar of him, and left—

MRS. ELLIS.

(Interrupting excitedly.)

Mercy on me, there comes a policeman on his motorcycle! What on earth will he think of us?

MRS. ARNOLD.

Oh, Oh, Oh! we can't see him! Come on out the back way! *(All start running L. except*
MRS. DAY.)



What on Earth Will He Think of Us?

MRS. DAY.

What's the matter? What are you running from the policeman for?

MRS. COLLINS.

(Calling back.)

Come on, come on, we'll tell you afterwards.

(Exeunt omnes L. running. Bell rings loudly, several times; policeman appears at window; looks at empty room; shakes head, puzzled.)

CURTAIN.





*Teach me, dear creature, how to
think and speak.*

(Quotation from Shakespeare)



“WE FEW, WE HAPPY FEW.”

King Henry V, Act. 4, Sc. 3.

A Shakespearian Medley in One Act.

(For 31 Women and as Many Fairies as Desired.)

(Suitable for a Shakespeare Club.)

Time—About fifteen minutes.





CHARACTERS.

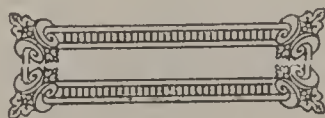
Miranda, Celia, Silvia, Rosalind, Perdita, Margaret, Portia, Imogen, Nerissa, Katharina, Mrs. Ford, Emelia, Desdemona, Phebe, Helena, Queen, Olivia, Anne Bullen, Marina, Dionyza, Lady Macbeth, Gentle Reader, Julia, Mistress Quickly, Jessica, Juliet, Titania, Fairies, 3 Witches.





SCENE—*Interior, furniture as antique as possible.*

COSTUMES—15th and 16th centuries, trailing skirts, tight bodices, full puffed sleeves, ruffles at neck, hair high. Consult a good illustrated edition of Shakespeare, especially for the character of Rosalind in her disguise as Ganymede. Gentle Reader, ordinary home costume, preferably black. Mrs. Quickly, comic costume, wears old fashioned cap. Queen Titania, and Fairies, suitably arrayed. Queen Titania wears train and crown. Fairies wear gauze wings, white, short frocks, very full.





All of the characters, except MIRANDA, PORTIA, MARINA, GENTLE READER, BEATRICE, TITANIA, FAIRIES, and THREE WITCHES are discovered at rise. They are standing about in careless groups whispering together. Good chance for comic business on the part of MISTRESS QUICKLY and others.

As each character speaks she comes forward and the entire company gives her its undivided attention. (See "remarks" at end of play.)

(NOTE—*The explanation for numerals at end of play.*)



WE FEW, WE HAPPY FEW



MIRANDA.

(Entering R.)

“O wonder! how many goodly creatures are there here. O brave new world that has such people in it.”

CELIA.

“Well said; that was laid on with a trowel.”

SILVIA.

“Think not she flatters, for I swear she does not.” (1)

ROSALIND.

“Alas, what danger hath it been for us, maids as we are, to travel forth so far.” (2)

PERDITA.

“How often have I told you ’twould be thus.”



*Oh Brave New World That
Has Such People in It*



*My Little Body is A-Weary
of This Great World*

MARGARET.

(Queen to Henry VI.)

“Because, forsooth, the Duke would have it so.” (3)

PORTIA.

(Entering R.)

“By my troth, friends, my little body is aweary of this great world.” (4)

IMOGEN.

“I have tired myself, and for two nights together have made the ground my bed. I should be sick, but that my resolution helps me.”

NERISSA.

(Advancing.)

“You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet, for aught I see, they are as

sick who surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean. Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer."

KATHARINA.

"When did you study all this goodly speech?"

MRS. FORD.

"Believe me, there is no such thing in *me*."

EMELIA.

"You have little cause to say so."

DESDEMONA.

"I am not merry, but I do beguile the thing I am, by seeming otherwise."

PHEBE.

"Why, I am sorry for thee."

HELENA.

"Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie which we ascribe to heaven."

ANNE BULLEN.

“Verily, I swear 'tis better to be lowly born and range with humble lives in content than to be perked up in a glistening grief and wear a golden sorrow.”

QUEEN (CYMBELINE).

“Forbear sharp speeches to her, she's a lady so tender of rebukes that words are strokes, and strokes are death to her.”

OLIVIA.

“I prithee, gentle friend, let thy fair wisdom not thy passion sway.”

MARINA.

(Enters carrying basket of flowers, comes down while reciting her lines.)

“No, I will rob Tellus of her weeds,
To strew thy green with flowers, the yellows,
blues,

The purple violets and marigolds
Shall as a carpet hang upon thy grave
While summer days do last. Aye me, poor maid,
Born in a tempest, when my mother died,
This world to me is like a lasting storm
Whirring me from my friends."

DIONYZA.

"How now, Marina, why do you keep alone?"
Go, I pray you, walk and be cheerful once again."

MARINA.

"Well, I will go, but yet I have no desire for
it." (*Exit L.*)

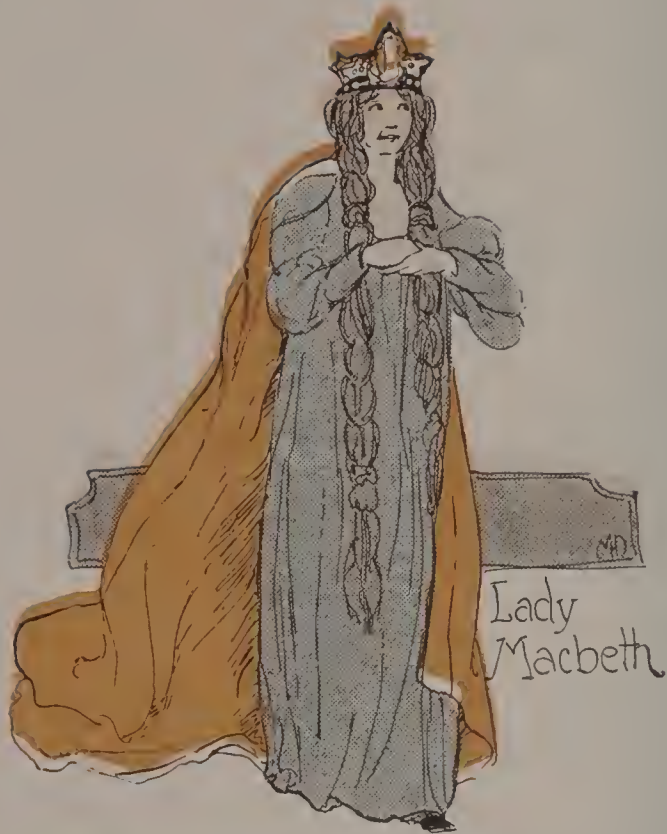
LADY MACBETH.

(*Coming down. Knocking heard behind scenes.*)

"I hear a knocking at the south entry. Hark,
more knocking!"

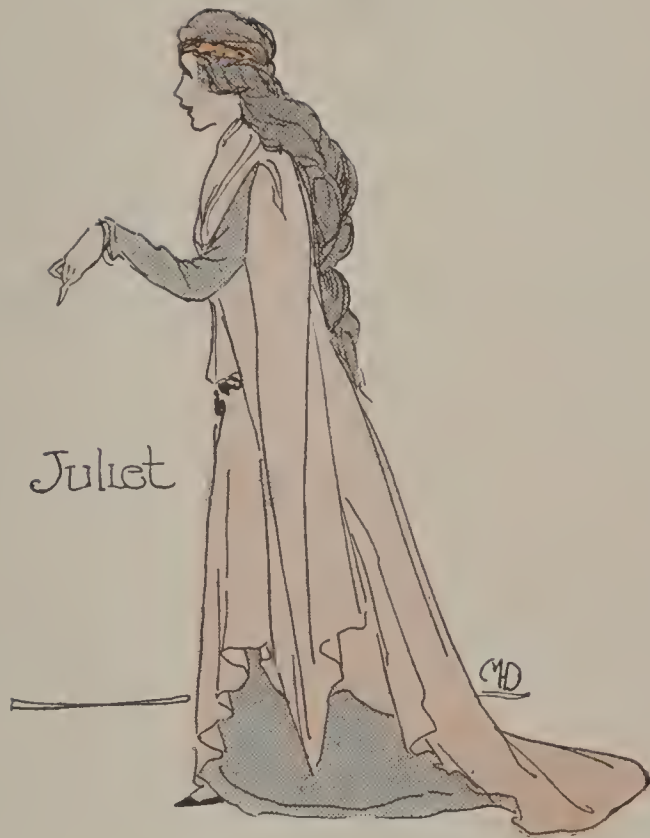
GENTLE READER.

(*Enters R.*)



Lady
Macbeth

*I Hear a Knocking at the South Entry.
Hark! More Knocking*



Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow

ALL.

(Shouting.)

O, welcome, welcome, Gentle Reader!

GENTLE READER.

(Coming down.)

Ah, fortunate indeed, am I to find you thus assembled; but how did you manage to escape from the bonds which your wonderful creator had thrown about you?

MIRANDA.

Ah, Gentle Reader, do you not know that, as we are the creations of genius, so are we held only by the most immaterial bonds. We are "Airy nothings" and therefore, no power can give us a "local habitation and a name."

GENTLE READER.

True, beautiful Miranda, and you whose life is passed amid scenes of magic, must feel this truth

more than others. The daughter of a magician could not be happy like an ordinary mortal under the rule of "old father antic the law." (*Turns toward R. E.*)

CELIA.

Stay then, Gentle Reader, and tell us if you think Miranda "adds a precious seeing to the eye" when looking at this goodly company? She gives us flattering speech, more flattering even than I, the daughter of a Duke, and, therefore, accustomed to the language of the court, can quite accept.

GENTLE READER.

That, dear Celia, is the fault of the scenes which, of late, have hedged about you, the Forest of Arden is "More free from perils than the envious court," and so it has reduced your thoughts to simple truth.

SILVIA.

You are right, Gentle Reader, she has nothing to distract her thoughts from the plain purposes of life; she has not, like myself, been tortured by witnessing the faithlessness of a lover to a devoted lady love; and the hurt it gave my heart was "deeper than e'er plummet sounded."

GENTLE READER.

True, Silvia, the love making of Proteus has taught you that "the private wound is deepest."

ROSALIND.

It is sad indeed, that all maidens cannot be so fortunate as I in winning the love of a "gentleman of good conceit," like Orlando.

PORTIA.

True, fair Rosalind, we all envy you, since you can follow your own affections and must not depend on a silly chance of choosing a casket.

NERISSA.

Be not discouraged, fair Portia, Bassanio will choose well, he has "lined himself with hope" and his good genius will aid him, therefore, he cannot go amiss.

GENTLE READER.

And now, my good Katharina, how goes the world with you, since you have lost your shrewishness?

KATHARINA.

By my troth, I am glad to be done with the vexatious spirit which had been fastened upon me by reputation. But now have I learned, as a woman should, 'tis a happy thing to be "level in her husband's heart."

GENTLE READER.

And with this do you agree, I know, good Mrs. Ford.

MRS. FORD.

Aye that indeed, and was ever a rascal served better than we served the fat knight? O, but I laugh whenever in my fancy I see him climbing into the "buck basket."

EMELIA.

And now, Gentle Reader, if you are not already overtired with much listening, I pray you hear me tell how much it grieveth me that I did give the handkerchief to my treacherous husband Iago.

GENTLE READER.

Ah, well, dear lady, I know you meant no ill, but remember, "Things without all remedy should be without regard; what's done, is done."

DESDEMONA.

A true philosophy, and so do I agree with it. "Like a fair house built on another man's ground."

GENTLE READER.

And now, my honest Phebe, how goes the time with thee?

PHEBE.

No more do I sigh for Ganymede, "'tis but a peevish boy," but have learned to love my shepherd lad.

GENTLE READER.

Helena, we all delight in your story. It is a joy to know that your medicine took full effect and, that at last you won, what you so well deserved, the husband of your heart. We all wished you well.

HELENA.

"'Tis pity that wishing well hath not a body in't which might be felt; that we, the poorer born, whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes, might with effects of them follow our friends, and show

what we alone must think, which never returns our thanks.”

OLIVIA.

“Zounds! I never was so bethumped with words!”

GENTLE READER.

Ah, Olivia, you are with us still, and how goes life with you? Have you ceased to love the disguised Viola and accepted her twin brother instead?

OLIVIA.

That I have; “For want of other idleness” I have transferred my love from the sister to the brother.

GENTLE READER.

That is well, for he is “A proper man as one shall see in a summer’d day.” And, Anne Bullen,



Anne
Bullen

All That Glitters is Not Gold

what think'st thou of queens and thrones, now that thou hast been "Drest in a little brief authority?"

ANNE BULLEN.

"All that glitters is not gold."

GENTLE READER.

Margaret of Anjou, art thou here to show us that thou art more like a man than a woman?

MARGARET OF ANJOU.

Yes, and perchance thou, like the proud Duchess Elinor, would like to "come near my beauty with thy nails and set thy ten commandments on my face."

GENTLE READER.

Nay, nay, fair Margaret, I can only say, "The memory be green" of all thy goodly qualities.

BEATRICE.

(Entering R.)

“Against my will I am sent to bid you come to dinner.”

JULIA.

“Is't near dinner time? Well, let us go.”

MISTRESS QUICKLY.

“Well you shall have it though I pawn my gown. I hope you'll come. You'll pay me all together?”

JESSICA.

“There's a ducat for thee (*hands it to her*), soon at dinner (5) shalt thou see me, and so farewell, I would not have my father see me in talk with thee.” (*Exeunt JESSICA and MISTRESS QUICKLY, R.*)

JULIET.

(Waving to others.)

Good night, good night! parting is such sweet

sorrow, that I shall say good night till it be to-morrow." (*Exit slowly R. Enter TITANIA, motioning JULIET back; others re-enter while she is speaking.*)

TITANIA.

“Out of this wood do not desire to go,
Thou shalt remain here whether thou wilt or no,
I am a spirit of no common rate,
The summer still doth tend upon my state,
And I do love thee, therefore, go with me,
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee.”

(*Claps hands, FAIRIES enter R. running, stand at attention.*)

TITANIA.

“Be kind and courteous to these ladies,
Feed them (7) with apricocks, dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs and mulberries.
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,



Queen Titania Wears Train and Crown

Nod to them (7) elves, and do them (7) courtesies."

FAIRIES.

Hail Mortals!

THREE WITCHES.

(Enter rear, stand in background, each repeating in turn)

"Hail!"

(Other characters shriek and run to front; TITANIA stands at F. C., other characters on either side.)

TITANIA.

(Sings.)

"First rehearse your song by rote,

To each word a warbling note,

Hand in hand with fairy grace,

Will we sing, and bless this place."

(FAIRIES join hands, repeat this quatrain three times, dancing about stage in time to the tune. At close of this song, WITCHES come forward, join hands in circle. Other characters go up.)

THREE WITCHES.

(Recite while circling slowly round.)

“The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about,
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again to make up nine,
Peace! the charm's wound up!”

GENTLE READER.

(Coming to F. C.)

“The deep of night has crept upon our talk.
Now spurs the lated traveler apace to gain the
timely inn.”

“And whether we shall meet again, I know not,
Therefore our everlasting farewell take,
Forever and forever, farewell,
If we do meet again, why we shall smile,
If not, why then this parting was well made.”

DENTON'S BEST PLAYS AND DIALOGUES

(WITCHES *at L.*, TITANIA *and* FAIRIES *at R.*,
other characters in C., with GENTLE READER *in*
front.)

TABLEAU (*With lights*).

CURTAIN.



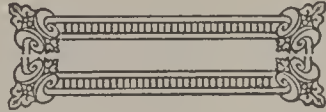
REMARKS.

The speeches given by the characters who appear before the entrance of GENTLE READER are quoted from these characters verbatim, except in a very few cases where slight verbal changes are made in tense or person, to adapt the sentences to the exigencies of the dialogue. Changes of this kind are marked by figures, and the correct readings are given below. After the entrance of

GENTLE READER, until after BEATRICE'S speech, the characters give quotations from other personages to suit the occasion, and are verbatim. After the entrance of BEATRICE, slight liberties are again taken with the text, which, as before, are marked by figures, and the correct word or words are given.

Number 1. I flatter, I do not— 2. Will it be.
3. King. 4. Nerissa. 5. Supper. 6. This gentleman. 7. Him.





HOW THE BAG WAS MENDED.

(A One-Act Farce.)

CHARACTERS.

John Mallory, a bachelor farmer.

Peter, Irishman of all work.

Miss Gay, attractive young woman, Mr. Mallory's nearest neighbor.





COSTUMES—Men, overalls and jumpers; Miss Gay, attractive home costume, wears no hat, carries handsome parasol.

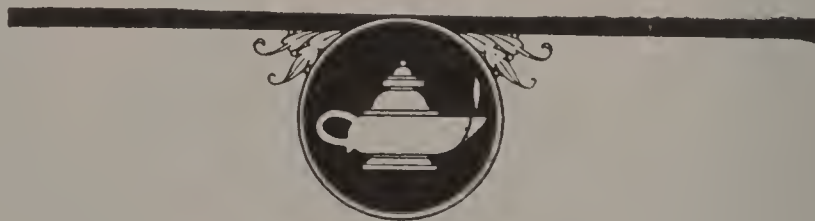




Then I Shall Make the Pot Pie



SCENE—*Comfortable interior, phone up stage L, flat topped desk, covered with a miscellaneous confusion, up stage R. Chair at F. C., near it a small stand or table covered with various articles in disorder.*



HOW THE BAG WAS MENDED



MALLORY.

(Discovered walking about the stage, a rough canvas bag rolled up under his arm.)

Where are the shears, I wonder? Can't get along without them. Oh, here they are! *(Takes them from floor.)* Lucky find, now the thread *(continues looking)*. Oh, here it is under my cap, of course, sure to be under something. Guess now I have assembled everything. *(Looks at things he carries.)* Bag, that is of the first importance, and I guess the hole's there yet, shears, thread. Oh, hang it all! got to have a needle. *(Continues looking.)* Where on earth is that needle book thing the women gave me when I was a soldier boy? And a mighty handy thing

it was to have, then, though this is the first time I've needed it since I became a civilian again; queer how things get away from a fellow just as soon as he wants to use them. (*Turns over a sofa cushion.*) Oh, here you are, you miserable old hider. (*Picks up needle book.*) Now we'll see what we can do. (*Sits in chair at F. C.; lays implements on table, unrolls bag a little way, showing one small hole near the top, while talking.*) This is a job I hate, mending bags, and that's where I get my pay for being a bachelor; but this is only a little hole, I can pucker that up in a minute. (*Lets the bag fall loose, it unrolls full length, displaying great, jagged hole near the bottom.*) Great Ceasar's ghost! Look at that, will you! How in the name of common sense will a green hand ever stop up that yawning cavity?

PETER.

(Entering L.)

Sure, Mr. Mallory, it's mesilf that's forgot to tell yez that the lady nixt dure—

MALLORY.

(Dropping bag.)

The lady next door! What are you talking about? There is no such animal.

PETER.

Indade, an' there is surr, and she—

MALLORY.

Why, Peter, don't you remember when I bought this place I inquired particularly about that ten-acre piece adjoining me, and because the house was built so close to this one I wanted to know whether or not it was likely to be occupied, and they told me the property was in the courts and that no one could rent it or buy it, until two or

three law suits were decided. So I don't see how there can be any lady next door.

PETER.

But sure sir, an' they must a decided thin, all on a suddent loike, fur she's there onyway as you'll foind out if ye'll tak toime t' look over that way an' see what is straight furninst ye.

MALLORY.

Have you seen her, Pete?

PETER.

Well, I dunno as I should say I have 'zactly, sir. She come to the fince, this marnin' airly, 'fore ye was out o' yer bed, but I was a good bit from her an' she had a big, pink sunbonnet, all covered with ruffles, pulled down over her face, so't I couldn't make out nothin' but her chin, jist, and—

MALLORY.

And how was the chin, Pete?



Pulled Down Over Her Face

PETER.

Well, at the distance, ye see, I wouldn't loike to say right out fur certain sir, besoides I was afther bein' purty well tooken up wid all the string she was a pourin' out and—

MALLORY.

You rascal! Why didn't you tell me sooner that she said something to you?

PETER.

Sure, an' that's phwat I've been tryin' to tell ye for the last foive minutes, she—

MALLORY.

I wonder if she knows how to mend bags? Run over and ask her, Pete; if she says yes, I'd like to cultivate her acquaintance. Look at that! (*Holds up bag.*) I'd give her, or anyone else for that matter, half a dollar to have that bag mended without any more worry to me. Do you sup-

pose she'd do it, Peter? Better run over and see; that's a good fellow.

PETER.

(Shaking head slowly.)

I'm thinking not; you see, she's mad at you already.

MALLORY.

Mad at me, what for? She hasn't even seen me.

PETER.

More's the pity! But ain't I tellin' ye what she told me to say till ye? That—

MALLORY.

What can she have to say to me? You haven't told me a word of what she said, but now, get at it quick; I've waited for your slow tongue long enough.

PETER.

She says, tell yer imployer, that's the word she used sir, that ef he doesn't kape his fowls out o' my yard when my garden is made, I'll throw some pot-pie materials over the fince til 'im!

MALLORY.

Mmm, she means business, doesn't she? Too bad the fowls are so tame they can be picked up anywhere. I take it, she hadn't made her garden yet, then?

PETER.

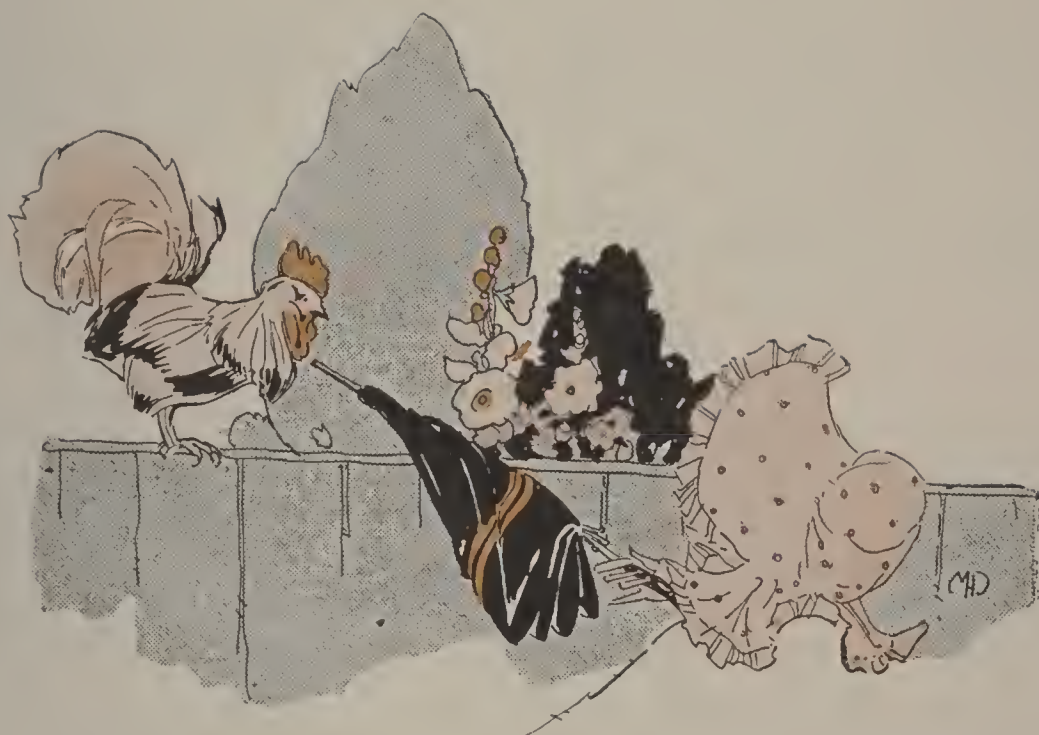
No, but she was busy making it airly this mornin' long 'fore you was out o' bed sir, and I spect she's got some o' it done by this time.

MALLORY.

And the fowls, where are they?

PETER.

Jist where they loikes to be sir, over on her soide of the fince.



Over on Her Side of the Fence

MALLORY.

Oh, Jehosophat, this mix-up is worse than mending bags! She's probably some cross, vinegar-faced old maid who'll make my life miserable now, just for a few hens. I wonder how it happened that she moved here; did she know who owned this place?

PETER.

No sir, she didn't know nothin' about nothin' nor nobody; she asked me first off ef this was my place, an' I said, No ma'am, Mr. Mallory owns ut an' I am only a workin' fur him. Thin she said the rist jist as I told ye.

MALLORY.

(Rising and dropping bag on floor.)

Well, Pete, I have always vowed that I would never have any trouble with my neighbors. I didn't achieve this neighbor, but as she has been

thrust upon me, I will not make any exception in her case, so hitch up the pony and light wagon and go to the village after pickets to build a chicken park *at once*. Come in the last thing before you go and I'll give you a check to pay for the pickets.

PETER.

All roight, sir. (*Exit L.*)

MALLORY.

Now where on earth is my check book? (*Feels in pockets.*) Of course, though, it wouldn't be in these clothes. (*Goes around looking for it.*) Let me see, when did I have it last? Funny I can't remember! Guess I haven't paid for anything very lately. (*Goes to desk, rummages among papers.*) It ought to be here, but it isn't. (*Comes down while talking, looking in possible and impossible places.*) What a fool a man is

to be getting along without a wife! Good notion to ask the cross old maid next door to marry me. (*Laughs.*) Wouldn't she be surprised? No doubt she'd refuse me so quick it would make my head snap, but if she didn't we might compromise on the chicken matter, and maybe that would be cheaper than building a chicken park. (*Telephone rings.*) Oh, bother! Wonder who that is? (*Goes to phone and takes down receiver.*) Yes, yes, this is Mallory, what can I do for you, Madame? (*Stands listening a few moments and then hangs up receiver.*) Well, I never! My new neighbor, as sure as guns; says she just caught one of my fowls that had dug up a whole row of watermelon seeds; she cut its head off and threw it over the fence. Isn't that jolly! Half a notion to invite her over to dinner; would, sure as preaching, if I knew her

name; but where is that check book? (*Continues looking.*) Yes, that's what I'll do when Pete comes back with the lumber; I'll send him over with my compliments and invite her over to eat pot-pie; Pete knows how to make it. Oh, here's my check book and the pen right beside it. (*Takes them from stand, adjusts pen, sits in chair, writes while talking.*) Wouldn't that be a jolly way to heap the traditional coals of fire on her poor, lonely old head; fine, fine!

PETER.

(*Enters L.*)

She's done it, sir; she's done it!

MALLORY.

(*Looking up.*)

Who's done what?

PETER.

That awful old woman nixt door hes kilt that

big Rhode Island rooster; I calls that a sin an' a shame!

MALLORY.

Yes, she called me up and told me about it. When you come back with the lumber, Peter, I want you to make a pot-pie and then go over and invite her to dinner in my name.

PETER.

Indade, thin, an' I'll niver go nixt or nigh her, the blatherin' ould huzzy!

MALLORY.

Do you know her name, Peter?

PETER.

Indade, thin I don't an' don't want to that same ayther.

MALLORY.

If I knew her name, I'd call her up and invite her, since that was the way she communi-

cated with me. Well, get along now (*hands check*) and come back as soon as possible, so you'll have time to cook the rooster for dinner.

PETER.

But if I'll have t'spind all that toime wid the rooster, who'll build the park?

MALLORY.

I will, when this bag is patched. I'll go out and look up the best site; we'll have the fowls all housed and out of the way by night. But before you go, Pete, do you happen to know where there are some patches I can use in mending this bag?

PETER.

Sure, an' I do sir, and it's that glad I am you asked me. (*Goes up stage, takes from a box a big roll of cloth and hands it to MALLORY.*)

There ye air sir, and if ye can't make a good

bag out o' that auld one wid all that stuff to help ye, I'll jist say ye ain't no workman.

MALLORY.

Well, I should think there ought to be pieces enough here to patch all the bags around the place, but I'm mighty glad this is the only one that needs patching.

(MALLORY unrolls the bundle, places it on the stand; it is formed of pieces of all colors and fabrics. He takes up the patches one by one, tries each one separately over the hole, finds it too small and throws it on the floor beside him. [Chance here for good pantomime work.] When he has tried all the pieces except the last one and is just taking that up, there is a firm, double knock on the door.)

MALLORY.

Who in thunder can that be? I haven't had a caller since I moved here. Come in! *(MISS GAY enters L., much embarrassed.)* Oh—ah—

good morning! I'd like to speak to Mr. Mallory.

MALLORY.

(Rising, bows politely and places a chair.)

I am Mr. Mallory; please be seated.

MISS GAY.

But—but—I heard that Mr. Mallory was—
an—an—well, an old bachelor. *(She sits.)*

MALLORY.

(Smiling.)

True, I am a bachelor, but, as you have doubtless observed, not a very old one yet. *(He sits.)*

MISS GAY.

Well, I'm your next door neighbor, Miss Gay.

MALLORY.

Oh, is it possible? I thought—er—er—

MISS GAY.

(Laughing.)

We neither of us had a very clear idea of the

other one's personality, did we? But what on earth are you doing?

MALLORY.

I am not *doing* anything; I am *trying* to mend this bag.

MISS GAY.

And nothing to do it with.

MALLORY.

You have stated the case exactly.

MISS GAY.

You should take another old bag for patches; that stuff is of no use.

MALLORY.

So I have discovered, but you see, Miss Gay, this is the only old bag which my farm affords.

MISS GAY.

I have an old bag which is at your service, but if you don't wish to use this bag until to-

morrow I'll take it home and mend it for you. I am a farmer's daughter and know all about bag mending.

MALLORY.

I had intended to use it this afternoon, but as soon as my man returns with the lumber I intend to build a chicken yard to keep my fowls out of your garden. You see, Miss Gay, I didn't know that my fowls annoyed you until a few moments ago. I sent after the lumber as soon as I heard of it.

MISS GAY.

That is good news. I came over to see you about your fowls; it hurts my conscience to kill the valuable creatures, but I thought as long as I complained so early this morning you might have done something. I am very sorry I did not

wait and talk to you before killing your rooster, but I was so angry, I thought I just couldn't wait, and I didn't know what else to do; but if you intend to build a park at once, I will postpone the rest of my garden-making until the fowls are shut up.

MALLORY.

Fine! That is the best kind of a compromise, and now when Peter returns he is to make a pot-pie out of that Rhode Island rooster. I intended to send Peter over with an invitation to dinner, but now I extend the invitation to you in person.

MISS GAY.

Do you mean it?

MALLORY.

From the bottom of my heart.

MISS GAY.

(Rising.)

Then I shall make the pot-pie, and don't worry yourself any more about that bag. *(He drops bag on floor and rises.)*

MALLORY.

Since you have taken away my occupation then, I must go to the kitchen and help you; it will be a farmer's girl and a farmer's boy together. *(They move toward L. Exit: MISS GAY exits first. MALLORY runs back to C. and says to audience)*

MALLORY.

How's this for luck? No more bag mending for me!

CURTAIN.



WHEN FATHER WAS LEFT TO HIMSELF.

(A Play in One Act.)

For two women, two men and one boy with speaking parts, and as many non-speaking parts as desired.

CHARACTERS.

Mr. Lyon, a wealthy elderly gentleman, living with his married daughter.

Mrs. Free, his daughter.

Mr. Free, her husband.

Mrs. Tate, well-preserved elderly lady, early friend of Mr. Lyon.





SCENE—*Lawn in front of a California bungalow, two-seated porch swing up stage L.*

COSTUMES—*Ordinary costumes for all characters except Mrs. Free, who wears handsome automobile bonnet and coat.*



WHEN FATHER WAS LEFT TO HIMSELF



MR. and MRS. FREE enter from bungalow at rear of stage, carrying robes, baskets, etc.; come down, slowly, during remarks.

MR. FREE.

Do you think it's just the thing to go off for the entire day and leave father here all alone?

MRS. FREE.

Why, John, of course it's all right. I asked him to go, but he said he preferred to stay at home. You know he doesn't like Kittie Jones; calls her a chattering magpie, says she reminds him of dry thorns crackling under a pot.

MR. FREE.

(Laughing.)

Well, I'm inclined to agree with him, but it does seem as if we might get together a crowd of folks agreeable to father and take him off for a day.

MRS. FREE.

Well, we surely will some day, but we have to take the Jones crowd first, you know how much we are indebted to them?

MR. FREE.

The implication is that we're not indebted to your father.

MRS. FREE.

Now, don't be absurd, John, you know father will be perfectly happy here all day with his papers and magazines. Three new ones came in the morning mail and he will be so absorbed in them he won't even know we are away. Then,

too, I've put all his favorite dishes in the refrigerator, even to the iced tea, so he'll have nothing to do but set his victuals on the table. I think I've looked out for him fine, and I'm sure he'll have a delightful day.

MR. FREE.

Well, I suppose you ought to know your own father better than anybody else does.

MRS. FREE.

I am sure I do. (*Exeunt R. Horn heard behind scenes. MR. LYON enters from bungalow, hands full of magazines and papers.*)

MR. LYON.

That means their good-bye, I suppose. (*Comes to porch swing and sits.*) Kind of churlish in me not to come out and see them off, but I'm getting a little tired of doing that. Since I must be always the one to be left behind, I'd rather not rub

it into myself. Heigh ho, another long, lonesome day, I suppose. Well, I may as well make the best of it. I am sure of one thing, Lucy has left me plenty to eat; she always looks out for my inner man in that way, and, no doubt, she thinks the mental side of my inner man is well provided for when I have plenty of reading matter. Well, it does fill a big lack, that's true. I often wonder how people manage to exist when they don't love to read. It must be awful to be reduced to solitaire! (*Man passes along in front of stage.*) Wonder who that is? I don't know half of the people around here any more. Well, let me see, what shall I read first? The morning paper, I think. (*Lays others on seat in front of him; opens morning paper.*) It is easy to see that Lucy has been reading this, folded out at the personal column. Lucy couldn't go off even for



Well, I May as Well Make the Best of it

a day without knowing who's in town and who isn't. Takes after me in her social nature, and yet she seems to think that my social nature is dead because I'm old. On the contrary, I believe it is more active than ever. Well, I'll see who's in town too. Oh, a lot of names I never heard of; um-um-um, queer, how many new people there are here; um-um-um, all strangers. What's this? Sally Tate back in town again! Well, I must see her! (*Drops paper and looks off.*) She went away so suddenly last year, after the way Lucy treated her, she didn't even say good-bye to me. I wonder why Lucy acted so? Maybe she thinks I am likely to marry her. Well, why not? Sally is as good as the best and I should have asked her to marry me when we were both young, if it hadn't been for a few busybodies. Well, poor soul. she didn't have a very good time with

the man she did marry. (*Young woman passes along in front of stage.*) I wonder who that is? Pretty good looking girl, but one I never saw before. (*Looks at paper again.*) I wonder where Sally is staying. Paper doesn't say, but then I guess this town isn't so big that I can't find her. I'll start out after lunch and hunt her up; what a lark it will be. (*Boy passes, they exchange salutations.*) O say, Peter! stop a moment. (*He obeys; MR. LYON rises and goes toward him.*) Do you know Mrs. Tate?

BOY.

No, sir; never heard of her.

MR. LYON.

Well, here's a quarter. If you can find out where she's staying here in town, come and tell me and I'll give you another quarter.

BOY.

All right, sir, but if you had stopped that girl

who just went along here I kind o' think she'd a told you; she works on the "Times."

MR. LYON.

Is that so? Wish I'd have known it. (BOY *exits L.*) I vum, if there doesn't come one of those man-hunting widows. I'll get in the house out of her way. (*Hurries into bungalow; woman passes slowly, looking around at bungalow and lawn.* Mr. LYON *returns to seat as she goes out L.*) Well, there, I got rid of that visitation! My social nature doesn't carry me as far as that widow. Another woman coming; well, it's no one I know, so I guess I don't have to run from her. (*Woman passes.*) Wish someone would come along who knows Sally Tate. That isn't an impossible wish at all, because there are many people here who know her well; but, of course, there won't any of them come my way. Well, I may

as well finish reading my paper. (*Drops paper again.*) Heigh ho! I wonder how it would seem to Sally to have all the money she wants to spend. Well, I'm sure that boy Peter will find her before night, then I'll call on her tomorrow and if she's as friendly as I think she ought to be, I'll do what I ought to have done thirty-five years ago. Ho, Ho! if she accepts, what a surprise that will be to everyone. Why, there—comes—no, it can't be—surely that's too good to be true! It is Sally! (*MRS. TATE crosses stage from R.; he goes down, takes her hand in his and escorts her to the porch swing while talking.*) Great Scott! Sally, you don't know how good you look to me! I just saw in the paper that you were here, and I paid a boy a quarter to find you for me. When did you come? Now tell me all about everything! (*Seats her in porch swing and takes a seat beside her.*)

MRS. TATE.

There isn't much to tell. You know I sold my little home when I went away last year, or at least, I thought I sold it. But the people have never paid a cent, except the first installment, and my agent wrote me that they had left bag and baggage, so I came back yesterday and took possession again. I'll give them credit for leaving things in pretty good shape. You know I sold it furnished; now I intend to live right there, until I can sell it for cash.

MR. LYON.

Sally, you and I were in love with each other once.

MRS. TATE.

That was a long time ago, William.

MR. LYON.

So it was, Sally, but there is an old saying,

“Better late than never,” and now here we are, two lonesome old creatures. Don't you think we are foolish to be eating our hearts out alone, when we might be so much happier together?

MRS. TATE.

But what would people say?

MR. LYON.

Who cares for that? I guess we are of age. Come on, now; we'll go down town, get the license, and be married just as soon as we can find a minister.

MRS. TATE.

But it is going to rain; there's a big storm coming.

MR. LYON.

No matter, we'll be under shelter.

MRS. TATE.

What do you mean? That we are to be married right away, just as we are?

MR. LYON.

Of course, why not?

MRS. TATE.

Why, what a crazy thing to do!

MR. LYON.

I don't see why; you look all right. I'll go into a department store and get a whole new outfit. Just wait until I write a note to Lucy.

MRS. TATE.

She'll be so angry, she doesn't like me.

MR. LYON.

That doesn't cut any figure; she doesn't have to live with you. (*Takes memorandum book from pocket, tears out leaf and reads aloud what he has written.*)

Dear Lucy:

Mrs. Tate and I are to be married within

fifteen minutes. We leave for San Francisco by next train, but will be at home in Mrs. Lyon's bungalow, on Washington street after the first of the month, where we hope to see you.

Now, I'll take this in and stick it up where she'll see it. (*Rises and moves toward bungalow.*)

BOY.

(*Entering L., running.*)

O, Mr. Lyon, I've found her, I've found her!

MR. LYON.

O, you have, have you? Well, so have I, but here's your other quarter, just the same, and thank you too. (*BOY takes quarter and exits L.*)

MRS. TATE.

(*As MR. LYON enters bungalow.*)

Well, this is certainly very sudden; guess it's fate, that's the way it looks anyway.

MR. LYON.

(Entering from bungalow.)

Now, come on, Sally, it's you and I for the rest of our lives. *(He takes her arm, they come down, when they are near the L. exit a horn sounds behind scenes.)* There, if they aren't back again! We must hurry. *(They exit L.)*

MRS. FREE.

(Entering R.)

Well, here we are before the rain after all. I hardly expected we'd be so lucky. Wonder where father is. *(Exits into bungalow L.)*

MR. FREE.

(Entering R.)

I believe we've hurried home all for nothing. *(Looks up.)* I do believe the shower is going over, but I am just as well satisfied; I had about

all I could stand of that crowd anyway. I wonder where father is? (MRS. FREE *enters from bungalow carrying scrap of paper.*) What do you think has happened, John? Just read that! (*Hands paper and tumbles into porch swing.*)

MR. FREE.

(*Glances at note.*)

Married Mrs. Tate, but where did he find her? I thought she had left the city. (*Reads rest of note silently while his wife talks.*)

MRS. FREE.

Goodness knows, I don't. But you can trust any man to find any woman when he wants her. I thought I queered that plan before she went away. I told her how perfectly ridiculous it looked to other people when an old couple were foolish enough to get married.

MR. FREE.

Well, it didn't work, did it? That's once too often we left the old man to himself with his papers and magazines.

MRS. FREE.

Yes, indeed, once too often. This was a dear morning's work for us. And to think, too, that he never touched that splendid luncheon that I left for him.

MR. FREE.

Of course not, what's one luncheon to a man who is soon to be married?

CURTAIN.





*That's Once Too Often We Left the Old Man
To Himself*



ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE

(A Play in Two Acts.)

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Walter.

Ethel, her daughter.

Charlie Tracey, Ethel's lover.

A Working Man.

Jim Tracey, Charlie's cousin.





Ordinary Costumes.

SCENE—*Interior, several chairs near front C.*



ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE



ACT I—*Mrs. Walter, Ethel and Charlie Tracey.*

MRS. WALTER and ETHEL are discovered, MRS. WALTER seated at *F. C.* engaged in fancy work, ETHEL standing near her mother; during the entire dialogue between the two women ETHEL is very restless, frequently crossing over and changing her seat from one chair to another.

ETHEL.

But, mother dear, don't you see—

MRS. WALTER.

(Interrupting.)

No, my dear child, I don't see. Nothing can

change my mind; it is just as I told you at first, when Charlie has a balance of one thousand dollars in the bank you may marry him and I will make a wedding for you second to none of the girls in your set.

ETHEL.

But, mother, you don't seem to realize how long it will take to save that amount of money.

MRS. WALTER.

But, you say, he has saved already four hundred dollars without having any especial object in view, so he should surely be able to save the other six hundred very soon, with you as the ultimate reward.

ETHEL.

But it's so ridiculous to insist on his having all that money laid up when he has a sure position and a fine salary, and we're not to have any expenses to speak of the first year.

MRS. WALTER.

You think so now, but how can you be absolutely sure that such will be the case?

ETHEL.

Why, mother, I've told you and told you; Charlie's mother is to go to California to stay a year with her daughter; she is just waiting for our marriage, so that Charlie will not be left alone, then she will be off and we shall have that perfect little home all to ourselves. How easy it will be to save the other six hundred dollars, before his mother returns. In fact, she may stay two or three years if she likes California.

MRS. WALTER.

That's well added, if she likes California; you know there are some misguided folks who don't like it, and if she doesn't like it, she may stay three months. Then, if she comes back again,

you may depend upon it, you'll not stay long in the "perfect little home." You'll find it will not be so perfect when there is a mother-in-law around to boss it and you.

ETHEL.

Oh, mother, you surely are looking through blue glasses!

MRS. WALTER.

I'm sorry, dear child, to take so dark a view of the situation, but I am only considering possibilities. I must tell you, I spent the first year of my married life under a mother-in-law's thumb and I am only trying to save you from a repetition of my own hard experience.

ETHEL.

But, mother, if you only knew Mrs. Tracey, you would have no fear of her ever keeping anyone "under her thumb."

MRS. WALTER.

I am glad you feel that way, but if you have that thousand dollars in the bank I shall be much surer of your happiness than I shall be if you don't have it, but there, I hear Charlie's step on the porch, so go and meet him and don't let him talk to you about my decision, because it is absolutely final. (*Exit* ETHEL R.) It's too bad to cross her, but they're young enough to wait, and if they have a little nest egg to help themselves with, conditions can't be quite so bad as they might easily be, without the money, but I must get out of the way, I've no notion of having them both get after me. (*Exit* L. as ETHEL and CHARLIE enter R. arm in arm.)

CHARLIE.

Wish I could talk to your mother a few minutes. (*They come to F. C. and sit.*)

ETHEL.

It's no use, Charlie, I've exhausted all the arguments, and she is doing what she thinks is for our good, so as long as she feels so sure of that, nothing can change her.

CHARLIE.

Mother wants to be off for California in about a month and she is just as determined not to go until we are married as your mother is about the one thousand dollars.

ETHEL.

(Laughing.)

Too bad we can't find some way to conquer our stubborn mothers.

CHARLIE.

Yes, I wish we could, but I know mine is hopeless.



*Too Bad We Can't Find Some Way to Conquer Our
Stubborn Mothers*

ETHEL.

Mine is equally so.

CHARLIE.

I think I see a way out of it, if you'll agree. Mother thinks she'd like to cross the continent in an automobile. I'll pull my little four hundred dollars out of the bank, pay two hundred of it on a car, then I'll get a month's leave of absence, you, mother and I will go to Los Angeles, there we'll be married, then I'll sell the car, it's a great place to sell cars, they say, and we'll come home on the train.

ETHEL.

A very pretty plan to talk about, but it won't work. Even if mother'd let me go in the first place, which I don't believe for a minute, she'd be so angry when she would learn of the trick we had played, that she'd have the marriage annulled instanter. No, you must either begin

to economize and save the one thousand dollars, or else wait until I'm of age, which will be in two years, three months and twenty-seven days.

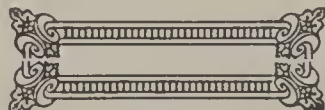
CHARLIE.

Well, I think I can save the money in less time than that. Tomorrow is pay day and I'll put a hundred and fifty dollars in the bank before it closes. Be sure to tell your mother. And I guess we'll ride in the old car awhile, so come on. (*Rises, ETHEL takes coat and cap from the rack, calls to her mother good-bye, at L and exeunt R.*)

CURTAIN.



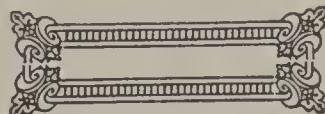
ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE



ACT II.

Three weeks time is supposed to elapse between first and second acts.

Charlie Tracey, a Working Man and Jim Tracey.





ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE

INTERIOR—Library table, with drawer at *F. C.* Electric lamp on table; stage darkened. CHARLIE enters, turns up electric light, sits in chair near table.





Charlie Enters, Turns Up Light

CHARLIE.

Well, I'm home early, as usual. This awful saving habit that I've taken up sends me home early. I suppose Ethel and I are both better off, but it'll take a good many months to hoard up that other four hundred and fifty dollars, but then Ethel's worth it and a lot more added to it. Rather hard on the Mater, though, keeping her here when she's just crazy to be on her journey to California; she can hardly wait to see that new baby out there. Tough luck! Wish there was some way I could make five hundred dollars quick. (*Bell rings.*) Who in thunder can that be? It's nearly ten o'clock; rather late for visitors! (*Goes to door R.*) Yes, I am Mr. Tracey; will you walk in? (*Workman enters R.*) Have a chair.

WORKMAN.

No, thank you, I don't need to stop but a minute. I've bought your cousin Jim Tracey's second-hand motor car. I called him up this morning and told him I'd bring the money 'round tonight; couldn't leave my work to come before bank closed. He said he was afraid he couldn't be at home, and if he wasn't I was to bring it to you, so here it is. (*Lays roll of bills on library table.*) Ten fifty dollar bills; count 'em, please.

CHARLIE.

Great Scott, man, I don't want all that money left in the house tonight!

WORKMAN.

O, it's safe enough; there isn't a soul knows about the deal except your cousin and you and I.

CHARLIE.

Why in the world didn't you put it in the bank? Then you could have given a check for it?

WORKMAN.

O, I don't go any on banks. I saved it all by littles and changed it into fifty dollar bills as fast as I could, so count 'em, please.

CHARLIE.

(Counting bills.)

Well, I must say, this is a queer transaction, but if I'm lucky enough to get through the night alive, of course, I'll turn it over to Jim in the morning.

WORKMAN.

O, don't worry about getting through the night, for, as I said before, no one knows it's here; you're safe enough, so good night. *(Exit R.)*

CHARLIE.

Queer performance, I must say, but then, that cousin of mine is always up to queer things. I've

half a notion to tackle Jim in the morning to loan this wad to me. (*Places it in pocket.*) I don't suppose he has any immediate use for this money anyway, an old bachelor like him, he never spends half his income. Maybe I'd better look after my gun. (*Takes pistol from table drawer, looks it over while talking.*) How do I know but this fellow will come back and steal the money; easy enough done if he has the nerve. (*Bell rings.*) Now who? (*Slips pistol in pocket and goes to door.*) O, hello, Jim. (*JIM enters R.*) Awfully glad it's you; just put pistol in my pocket thinking maybe a thief had come to steal your money.

JIM.

(*Sitting near F. C.*)

So the fellow came with it, did he?

CHARLIE.

Yes, and I'm glad you have come after it.

JIM.

But say, Charlie, would you mind taking care of it for me for awhile?

CHARLIE.

What do you mean?

JIM.

I've been having an interview with some fellows this evening. I'm off with them on the twelve o'clock train. I don't want all that cash with me and it's too late to get a traveler's check. Put it in the bank in the morning on your account and keep it there until I return.

CHARLIE.

And how soon will that be?

JIM.

O, in two or three months.

CHARLIE.

All right. I'll try not to forget it isn't mine; I might draw it out if I don't.

JIM.

Well, if you do it doesn't matter greatly. I know you're good for that small amount. Take care of yourself.

CHARLIE.

(Accompanying him to the door and shaking hands with him.)

You do the same and good night to you. *(Exit J. R.)*

CHARLIE.

(Returning to C.)

I wonder if Ethel is up yet? I'll try. *(Takes down receiver.)* Central give me Hill 2441.

(Pause.) That you, Ethel? Did I make you get up out of bed? Well, I've some fine news

for you anyway. In the morning about ten o'clock the cashier where I bank will call up your mother and tell her that he is authorized to inform her that I have just one thousand and fifty dollars in the bank; so she is to get ready for that wedding. We'll have it just two weeks from tonight, if you are willing. (*Pause.*) O, don't ask me to tell you over the phone, but just be patient till you see me. Good night. (*Comes to F. C.*) All is fair in love, they say.

CURTAIN.







MR. THORPE'S CONVERSION.

A Farce in One Act.

(For Four Women and One Man.)

CHARACTERS.

A Maid.

Mr. Thorpe.

Mrs. Thorpe.

The Next Neighbor.

Georgiana Lacey, a suffragette.





COSTUMES—*Ordinary suits. Georgiana Lacey dresses very plainly, must be large, masculine-looking woman. Mrs. Thorpe and Neighbor on entrance wear hats and wraps.*

SCENE—*Interior, small table, or stand up stage, telephone on stand, chairs at F. C.*



MR. THORPE'S CONVERSION



MAID.

(Entering, carrying a postal card.)

A card for the missus. My! what scratchy writing; looks jest like a man's, but they wouldn't no man be writin' to her, leastways not long, 'case she thinks her own old man is jest the ticket. Guess I'll see what it says jest for fun. Oh, there's someone comin'; must be the missus and the next door lady comin' back from the movies. I'll beat it! *(Lays card on table and runs out L. as MRS. THORPE and the next door neighbor enter R.)*

NEIGHBOR.

Well, that was a pretty good show, don't you think.

MRS. THORPE.

(Removing hat and wrap.)

Oh, pretty good, but I don't like plays or movies about jealousy; you either trust people or you don't, and it always seems so foolish. But take off your things and sit down.

NEIGHBOR.

No, I mustn't stay. But suppose you don't trust them, then what?

MRS. THORPE.

I'd make sure and then I'd quit.

NEIGHBOR.

Weren't you ever jealous?

MRS. THORPE.

Never. I have no idea what the feeling is like

NEIGHBOR.

How about your husband?

MRS. THORPE.

Oh, he'd be jealous if he had a chance, at least, so he says, but, you see, I've always been careful

not to give him a chance. (*As NEIGHBOR turns to go.*) But why must you hurry? Mr. Thorpe will not be at home until the midnight train.

NEIGHBOR.

Oh, I must go, I have a lot of things to do before dinner, but you come home with me.

MRS. THORPE.

I'm afraid I'll hinder you, if you're to be so busy.

NEIGHBOR.

Not a bit of it; I'll work faster if I have company. (*Exeunt R.*)

(*Telephone rings; MAID enters L., answers phone, stating that MR. THORPE is in New York and will be at home on the twelve o'clock train, then exits L.*)

MR. THORPE.

(*Entering R., crossing over and going up.*)
No one at home; wonder where Fannie is?

Well, she doesn't expect me until late tonight. I was lucky to get my business done so soon. Oh, here's a postal card; must be for me, for that's a man's writing, and I never knew Fannie to have a man correspondent. (*Reads.*) "Dear F." Well, pretty familiar to start with. "Couldn't get the auto today, but will have it tomorrow; be there with it at five o'clock.—Yours, G. L." G. L.! That stands for George Lewis, all right, and the auto is a dead give-away. Of course that means that fine new car he's just bought. This was written yesterday (*Looks at watch.*) That means he is due here in about fifteen minutes. That suits me to a dot. Looks as if I'm to have the chance to interview him myself!

MAID.

(*Enters L.; he slips card into his pocket.*)

O, Mr. Thorpe, how you scairt me! I didn't

know you was home; thought you wasn't coming till to-night.

MR. THORPE.

Where is Mrs. Thorpe?

MAID.

She's next door; shall I go after her?

MR. THORPE.

Don't be in a hurry, Jane, I want to speak to you. You're a very good girl, Jane. (*Takes a roll of bills from his pocket.*) And I would like, very much indeed, to make you a little present.

MAID.

(*Sharply.*)

I don't want any of your little presents, so please keep them to yourself.

MR. THORPE.

Well, now, don't be offended where no offense was intended. I just want to ask a little favor

of you, and as you have always been such a good girl and have done many little kindnesses for Mrs. Thorpe, I just thought you deserved a little extra pay, that's all.

MAID.

I'll do the favor for you, sir, but I don't want any pay for it, so put up your money and be quick about it.

MR. THORPE.

Well, then, tell me this, who are the most frequent visitors at this house when I am away?

MAID.

O well, I think Mrs. Jones comes the oftenest of any one. Mrs. Bins comes quite often, too, and Mrs. Blake and—

MR. THORPE.

(*Interrupting.*)

But among *my* friends whom do you remember seeing?

MAID.

(Surprised.)

Your friends? Why, indeed, sir, I don't remember of any of your friends ever coming to see Mrs. Thorpe; why should they?

MR. THORPE.

(Embarrassed.)

Oh, they might come to—er—call, you know. There's Mr. Lewis, now, you know him don't you?

MAID.

O, yes, sir, I know him, but I've never seen him here 'cept of an evening with his wife and when you's at home, sir, too.

MR. THORPE.

Well, that is all. You are sure you've named all of my wife's intimate friends.

MAID.

(Reflecting.)

Why, yes, I think so, sir. Oh, there's Miss Georgiana Lacey; she's here pretty often.

MR. THORPE.

Lacey! Why that is someone I never heard of before.

MAID.

(Laughing.)

Well, she's funny enough, awful homely; she has a funny form and funny ways; she's just like a man with a woman's toggery on, and she has fire red hair.

MR. THORPE.

Red hair, are you sure? Another coincidence.
(Aside.)

MAID.

Sure, of course I'm sure; but it ain't no kincidence, it's just plain red hair, but then she does

look just like a man dressed up in women's clothes. Wouldn't it be funny if she is?

MR. THORPE.

So it would; we must watch her.

MAID.

So we will if she comes again. (*Exit R.*)

MR. THORPE.

Can it be possible the girl has blundered into the truth? I almost begin to fear it, for Lewis is a small man and in woman's clothes he would look very like an overgrown female. But really, I think I will carry this card out and put it in the mail box; I don't want Fannie to know that I have seen it. (*Exit R. Returns in a moment.*)

There, I have disposed of that, and also have discovered that the maid is gone after my wife. Too bad, I wanted to see the reputed Miss Lacey alone.

MRS. THORPE.

(Entering R. carrying postal card.)

So glad you are at home, my dear, but aren't you going out again? I expect a caller; aren't you afraid of being in the way? I'm afraid you'll find it rather pokey. *(Bell rings.)* There she is now, I'm sure.

MR. THORPE.

Well, I'll be conspicuous by my absence.
(Exits L.)

MAID.

(Entering L.)

Shan't I go to the door, Mrs. Thorpe?

MRS. THORPE.

No, don't bother; I'd rather go myself, this time. *(Exit R.)*

MAID.

(Jumping up and down and clapping her hands.)

Oh, wouldn't it be funny if that woman is a

man, my, it's just like a story! If Mr. Thorpe comes in, Oh, won't that be great? Hoo, they're coming. (*Runs out L.* MRS. THORPE and MISS LACEY enter R.; they sit with backs to L. entrance. MR. THORPE enters L, remains in background watching his wife and MISS LACEY during their conversation. MAID sneaks in and joins him. MR. THORPE motions toward MISS LACEY, shows maid in pantomime that he is opposed to MISS LACEY and means her harm; MAID appreciates his feeling and helps with the pantomime.)

MRS. THORPE.

O my dear, I am so glad you have come; now we can have a lovely, long, uninterrupted hour together, if you can stay so long.

MISS LACEY.

(*Opening bundle and taking out book which she hands to MRS. THORPE.*)

You know how gladly I would stay even longer

than that with you if I could, you have been so dear and good to me.

(MR. THORPE *rushes upon* MISS LACEY, *grasps her from behind, clasps her face close against his vest and pounds her on the back*; MRS. THORPE *screams*; MAID *claps hands*.)

MAID.

Give it to him, give it to him, Mr. Thorpe; I knew it all along! I did, I did! I'll go telephone for the hurry-up wagon. (*Runs up stage*.)

MRS. THORPE.

What do you mean, Jane, by talking that way? Don't you dare touch that telephone! (*Runs to her husband and throws herself on his right arm*.)

O, Harry, Harry, do stop; you will kill the poor woman!

MR. THORPE.

(*Loosens his hold on* MISS LACEY, *who straightens up and confronts him*.)

O, O—why—why—it isn't after all; what an



Maid Helps with the Pantomime

enormous fool I have been. (*Turns away and drops his head.*)

MRS. THORPE.

O Harry, how could you so far forget yourself? What can you possibly have against Miss Lacey?

MR. THORPE.

Against Miss Lacey, who said I had anything against Miss Lacey?

MISS LACEY.

Well, you certainly had Miss Lacey against you, but you may well believe this isn't the last of it!

MRS. THORPE.

But, O Harry, do explain yourself, if you can. I knew you were opposed to woman suffrage---

MR. THORPE.

(*Grasping at a straw.*)

If you knew I was opposed to it what are you meddling with it for?

MRS. THORPE.

How could I ever think that you would carry things so far as this? Of course I know I was wrong to deceive you.

MR. THORPE.

(Angrily.)

Then why have you done it?

MRS. THORPE.

Because you weren't willing for me to join the society and they are all such lovely ladies, and Miss Lacey is the best of all when you come to know her. *(Sobs.)*

MR. THORPE.

I have been seventeen different kinds of a fool, but I do hope Miss Lacey, you will forgive me, I owe you a thousand apologies.

MISS LACEY.

You'll find you owe me something more than that; I suppose you are aware that I have a clear case against you for assault and battery. And

now, Mrs. Thorpe, if you will return to me the autobiography of Jane Elinor Simpson, I will leave you.

MR. THORPE.

Autobiography! Great Caesar's ghost! Is that as near as you can come to an automobile?

MISS LACEY.

What are you talking about? I have been thinking ever since you came into the room, Mr. Thorpe, that you are a fit subject for a lunatic asylum, and now that you're talking about an automobile, I feel more sure of it than ever.

MR. THORPE.

I begin to agree with you, Miss Lacey; I really think I have temporarily taken leave of my senses.

MISS LACEY.

Oh, you needn't try to play the insanity dodge; I shall send an officer to arrest you before I sleep.

MR. THORPE.

Really, Miss Lacey, there is nothing that I can say to excuse my conduct. I can only urge as my defense that I was laboring under the most foolish mistake I ever made in all my life.

MISS LACEY.

I am sure I am not in a position to judge how foolish it was, but when you have to pay a big bill for damages, which the courts will give me, I think you will find it was a most serious mistake, although I shouldn't be surprised if it is not the only one you have ever made.

MR. THORPE.

Well, Miss Lacey, let us come to some settlement; what's the use of giving money to the lawyers in court, when we can just as well settle this ourselves. (*Takes out check book and fountain pen, writes check.*)

MISS LACEY.

(Coldly.)

I'm not to be bought, sir!

MR. THORPE.

I know that well, but supposing the courts give you a hundred dollars damage and I pay another hundred in fees and cost, isn't it wiser to give it all to you at once? *(Hands check.)*

MISS LACEY.

(Mollified.)

I suppose it is, Mr. Thorpe.

MRS. THORPE.

And, O Harry, I do want that autobiography, it only costs two dollars.

MR. THORPE.

My dear, you shall have it, and anything else you want.

MRS. THORPE.

O, Harry, I'm sure you have made full amends, but you haven't yet said that you forgive me.

MR. THORPE.

(Putting his arm about her.)

It is you who must forgive me. I have acted like a brute and an idiot, but henceforth you may attend the woman suffrage meetings whenever you please, and I will ask Miss Lacey to see that you are made a life member of the society.

MISS LACEY.

(Offering her hand.)

O sir, how can I thank you enough?

MR. THORPE.

By forgetting the whole affair as quickly as possible.

MISS LACEY.

That I will do with pleasure. *(They move toward R. exit.)*

MAID.

(Coming to F. C.)

So he wasn't a man, after all; what a stupid, tiresome lot they are, anyway!

CURTAIN.





So He Wasn't a Man After All



SOME DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

(A Rhymed Dialogue for Four Women, One Girl and One Boy.)

CHARACTERS.

First Neighbor.

Second Neighbor.

Peter's Teacher.

His Boy Playmate.

His Girl Playmate.

His Mother.



DENTON'S BEST PLAYS AND DIALOGUES



COSTUMES—*Ordinary suits.*

SCENE—*Lawn in front of suburban home,
bench at F. C.*



SOME DIFFERENCES OF OPINION



FIRST NEIGHBOR and SECOND NEIGHBOR discovered seated on bench, PETER'S MOTHER in background, unseen by other actors.

FIRST NEIGHBOR.

(Motioning off right.)

There goes that dreadful Peter boy,
Such awful things he'll do,
Torments the dog and kicks the cat,
Digs up our flowers too.

SECOND NEIGHBOR.

Why, Peter is a lovely lad,
With manners fine as silk,
He often stops to chat with me
And looks as mild as milk.

I'm sure he wouldn't hurt a fly;
He is so sweet and kind,
Indeed, a better boy than he
I never hope to find.

FIRST NEIGHBOR.

How queer! we often think we'll not
Live near him one more day,
If we could only sell our home,
You'd see us move away.

SECOND NEIGHBOR.

I see his teacher down the street (*looking off*),
And when she comes quite near
I'll ask her what she thinks of him,
The truth we then shall hear.

(TEACHER *enters R., crossing lawn; as she comes near FIRST NEIGHBOR, the latter rises and speaks.*)

FIRST NEIGHBOR.

For the great liberty I take,
I trust I'll pardoned be,
We've been discussing Peter boy
And do not quite agree.

So your opinion free, to get,
I now appeal to you.

I know whatever you may say
It surely will be true.

TEACHER.

Just what is Peter like, you ask,
Now that is hard to tell,
He's full of mischief all the while,
And yet, he studies well.

Sometimes stern discipline he needs,
And yet, I'll tell you this,

At other times I'd give a lot,

His rosy cheek to kiss.

He's not the worst boy in the world,

Perhaps he's not the best,

But when I see him, *I am glad,*

So you can guess the rest.

(Bows and exits L. A boy runs in R.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR.

But let me interview this boy,

Do you know Peter well? *(Boy nods.)*

Then what you really think of him,

I wish that you would tell.

BOY.

Huh! Peter's just as mean as dirt,

He licked me yesterday,

Some day I'll get right after him,

And make him run away.



*At Other Times I'd Give a Lot, His
Rosy Cheek to Kiss*

My mother says he is not fit
To 'sociate with me,
So I will keep away from him,
Till I am bigger, see?
(*Runs out L. GIRL enters R.*)

SECOND NEIGHBOR.

Well that's one playmate, here's a girl,
Now her I'd like to greet,
Do you know Peter, little girl,
Who lives upon our street?

GIRL.

He lends me his new sled,
And when I had the measles too,
He sat by me and read.

He always gives me half his gum
And shows me how to do

Those tough examples in the book
I never can see through.

MOTHER.

(Comes forward and speaks.)

Although such different tales are told,

About this boy of nine,

I think you'll find that your dear boy

Is much the same as mine.

A mixture strange, yet, after all,

Reflects his treatment too.

And so the way that he behaves

Must still depend on you.

CURTAIN.





THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

(A Short Dialog for Three Women.)

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. A., B. and C.



THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE



MRS. A. and MRS. B. discovered at front center busy with fancy work.

MRS. A.

Well, we had a good time at the luncheon yesterday, didn't we?

MRS. B.

Yes, I enjoyed it very much.

MRS. A.

I wonder where Mrs. Walters found the captain's wife?

MRS. B.

I don't know, I'm sure, but she was rather a pretty little thing, wasn't she?



Mrs. A., B. and C

MRS. A.

Yes, and such lovely clothes.

MRS. B.

I wanted to ask her the name of her dress-maker, but I didn't dare to.

MRS. A.

And where she bought her shoes.

MRS. B.

They were such a lovely fit.

MRS. A.

And her manners were so fine, too, didn't you think?

MRS. B.

Yes, and she talked so nicely, too. I wish I could remember to speak so beautifully all the while.

MRS. A.

Maybe you could if you were a captain's wife.

MRS. B.

Better say if I had talked so well, maybe I might have been a captain's wife.

MRS. A.

Yes, that's more likely. Well, it's nice to be so fine and proper about everything.

MRS. B.

I suppose those are the women who marry captains.

MRS. A.

And not the common kind like us.

MRS. B.

And of course, being a captain's wife, she can afford to have all those fine clothes and shoes.

MRS. A.

And can go into the very best society, and so pick up the very best manners and talk.

MRS. B.

Do you suppose all those things come from being a captain's wife?

MRS. A.

Of course they do, why shouldn't they?

MRS. B.

Well, I suppose we might be careful about the way we talk whether we are captains' wives or not.

MRS. A.

I do wonder if we could.

MRS. B.

Let's try from now on; we can stop saying ain't and have went and I seen when we ought to say saw, and things like that.

MRS. A.

I'd like to if I can only remember.

MRS. B.

Why not watch each other?

MRS. A.

So we can, that will be fun. (*Knocking.*) O,
I wonder who that is?

MRS. C.

(*Entering and coming down.*)

O, it seems good to see you two here. (*Sits.*)
Didn't we have a good time yesterday at the
luncheon?

MRS. A.

Yes, indeed; we have been talking about it.
We have been saying it was so fine to be a cap-
tain's wife and wear such fine clothes and talk
so nice and everything.

MRS. C.

Well, I think we can be just as much worth
while if we're not captains' wives.

MRS. A.

We surely can't have so much money for clothes.

MRS. C.

But if we're smart enough to make our own clothes we can look just as well.

MRS. B.

Oh no, indeed, that ain't, I mean isn't so. I tell you it's all in being the captain's wife.

MRS. C.

What do you think that woman's husband is captain of?

MRS. A.

Why, of a company of soldiers, of course, with a splendid salary and a fine uniform to wear. My, wouldn't I like to have a husband who wore a swell uniform! I'd be somebody then.



We Can Look Just as Well

MRS. C.

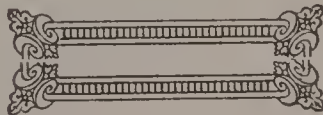
Well, the lady we all met yesterday is the wife of the captain of a dinky little fire company in the suburbs, and he hasn't as good a salary as either one of your husbands, or mine.

MRS. A. and MRS. B.

(Together.)

What do you know about that?

CURTAIN.





The Shakespeare Class



THE SHAKESPEARE CLASS.

(A Dialogue for Seven Women.)

CHARACTERS.

Mesdames Allen, Brown, Clark, Davis, Ellis,
Ford, Greene.





SCENE—*Interior.*

Ordinary home costumes.



THE SHAKESPEARE CLASS.



All the characters are discovered seated in a circle near *F. C.*, engaged in fancy work.

MRS. ALLEN.

Girls, let's join the Shakespeare class this winter.

MRS. BROWN.

Shakespeare class! Where?

MRS. CLARK.

Join the Shakespeare class! What for?

MRS. ALLEN.

Why, to study Shakespeare, of course. They are talking of forming a class in our literary club, you know. Anyone can belong who has paid

her membership dues to the club. They intend to have Mrs. —— (*local name*) for a teacher. They say she is away up in Shakespeare.

MRS. GREENE.

Oh, that's fine; I am just crazy about Shakespeare.

MRS. DAVIS.

Well, I don't give a rap for him, but, I must confess, I don't know anything about him.

MRS. ELLIS.

Then you are just the one to join the Shakespeare class, but you must have learned something about him in school.

MRS. DAVIS.

Well, yes, I dimly remember something about a "Bare bodkin," what is a bare bodkin, anyway? It was Shakespeare, I believe who wanted one.

(*All laugh.*)

MRS. DAVIS.

Now, what are you laughing at? Was it Shakespeare, or was it Bacon?

MRS. FORD.

You are certainly a good subject for the Shakespeare class, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. GREENE.

O, Mrs. Davis, you don't know what you are missing not to care about Shakespeare. Out in California they build the dearest Shakespeare cottages and they make a kind of cake called "Shakespeare's curls," if we can get them we'll serve them in the Shakespeare class, they are something like chocolate eclairs, only better.

MRS. CLARK.

Well, I'm a good deal like Mrs. Davis, I don't know much about Shakespeare, but I'd like the Shakespeare curls to eat if they are as good as

you say they are. I do know that Shakespeare pretended to write something which he didn't, but he stole some other fellow's good work and never gave him a bit of credit.

MRS. GREENE.

O, Mrs. Clark, you are all wrong, you'll learn better than that when you join the Shakespeare class.

MRS. CLARK.

Wouldn't it be fine to make up some kind of waists and call them Shakespeare waists, then we'd all wear them to the Shakespeare class.

MRS. GREENE.

How ridiculous.

MRS. BROWN.

Did you ever belong to a Shakespeare class, Mrs. Allen?



Did You Ever Belong to a Shakespeare Class?

MRS. ALLEN.

No, but my mother was a professional elocutionist, and she used to spout Shakespeare all over the house, so I learned a good deal about him in that way. I can just hear her now saying, "Oh, I have passed a miserable night."

MRS. DAVIS.

What was the matter with her? Why didn't she take a narcotic?

MRS. ALLEN.

O, that was what one of the great characters said, Hamlet, I think.

MRS. FORD.

Wasn't it someone in King Richard?

MRS. ALLEN.

Oh, maybe it was, I don't pretend to be very sure about Shakespeare, anyway.

MRS. BROWN.

But I still don't see why we should join the Shakespeare class.

MRS. GREENE.

O, Mrs. Brown, you'll take that back when you are in it. There's one play called, "The Storm," which is just like a fairy tale.

MRS. ALLEN.

The Storm! Why, I've never heard of a play by that title, and at one time, I knew the titles of all the plays.

MRS. FORD.

I think Mrs. Greene means "The Tempest."

MRS. ALLEN.

That's right, that sounds familiar.

MRS. FORD.

That is a most beautiful play and, as it is said to be the last one he wrote, it certainly ought to be the best.

MRS. ALLEN.

O, well, if we join the class we'll all learn a lot about a good many things, I suppose, for Shakespeare was a great man, I have heard my mother say that to be perfectly familiar with Shakespeare was as good as going to college.

MRS. CLARK.

If I thought we'd have as much fun as girls do at college I'd join right away.

MRS. DAVIS.

So would I, for college girls do have the biggest times! My husband's sister visited me this summer and she said that all she went to college for was to have fun and make friends with the girls and boys.

MRS. ELLIS.

I daresay we'd have good times, because we always do when we get together, but I'd like



Was as Good as Going to College

to learn about Shakespeare too. I've read some of his plays and the more I read the better I like them.

MRS. DAVIS.

That reminds me of a play I just had to read when I was in high school. It was called "Do as you please," and it had—

MRS. ALLEN.

(Interrupting.)

O, Mrs. Davis, that surely wasn't the title, that doesn't sound like Shakespeare at all.

MRS. DAVIS.

Well, that was it, anyway, whether it sounds like him or not. It was all about a girl who dressed up like a man and wandered around in the woods after a fellow. I thought she ought to have been ashamed of herself.

MRS. FORD.

You must mean Rosalind, in "As You Like It?"

MRS. DAVIS.

Yes, her name was Rosalind, I remember, now, and maybe the play was "As You Like It," and anyway, they did just as they pleased, all of them.

MRS. GREENE.

But don't all of Shakespeare's characters do just as they please?

MRS. FORD.

No, indeed, they are subject to the limitations of circumstances, just as ordinary human beings are.

MRS. GREENE.

Well, there's one fellow, I remember, who went stampeding about, scaring everybody to death

and having his own way about everything, Hamlet wasn't it?

MRS. FORD.

I don't know just whom you have in mind, but I'm positive it wasn't Hamlet.

MRS. GREENE.

Well, it was someone, I know that.

MRS. CLARK.

No, I'm certain you are wrong, Shakespeare has no such character, I know, because when I was a girl I had a beau who was a Shakespeare crank. There was a great actor who came to our town and gave us ten days of Shakespeare. We went every night, and I went to the matinees, and I never saw any character like the one you describe.

MRS. ELLIS.

What a rare privilege you enjoyed; do tell us about it.

MRS. CLARK.

Oh, I can't remember anything of it, hardly. I know one play had a lot of witches in it and there were ghosts in some of them and murders too. O my; it was awful!

MRS. DAVIS.

Yes, I think I saw one once where a man made his wife go and murder another man. It was awful and I know everybody raved over it and told how wonderful Shakespeare was.

MRS. GREENE.

Oh, I know that play. That was the merchant of some place or other.

MRS. ELLIS.

You mean "The Merchant of Venice," but the play Mrs. Clark is trying to tell us about is Macbeth, an entirely different kind of play.

MRS. FORD.

But, Mrs. Davis, if you join the Shakespeare class and study the plays with a good teacher you will see things about them that you never dreamed of before.

MRS. DAVIS.

Well, maybe I would, but I'm afraid it's too much trouble for me. I think I'd rather see Mary Pickford in the Sealed Letter.

MRS. ALLEN.

Well, my mother used to recite something about a woman whose hands were all blood and she couldn't get them clean. I tell you it just made you think you'd never do anything bad because you couldn't undo it.

MRS. FORD.

Yes, that was Lady Macbeth, who tried to wash her hands white after she had murdered the

king. There isn't in the whole world a finer picture of remorse.

MRS. DAVIS.

Well, I don't mean ever to do anything bad, so I don't need to see that play.

MRS. CLARK.

I tell you, Mrs. Davis, the day that the rest go to the Shakespeare class, we'll go to the "Movies," then we'll come to the Needle work class and we'll all give our experiences. If we find they are getting more out of the afternoon than we are, we'll join them.

MRS. ELLIS.

All right, then, we are sure to get you, sooner or later. But my watch says five o'clock, so we must postpone this discussion.

(Rises and folds up work.)

MRS. ALLEN.

Yes, our Shakespeare talk did one thing, it made the time fly faster than usual.

(Repeats business.)

MRS. DAVIS.

Yes, and it convinced us too that the most of us know as much about Shakespeare as we do about Greek.

MRS. ELLIS.

Which proves that the Shakespeare class should be organized immediately.

MRS. CLARK.

Well, anyway, if they make those Shakespeare waists, I'm going to have one.

CURTAIN.





(The Charm)



THE CHARM.

A Rhymed Dialog for Two Women.



THE CHARM



FIRST SPEAKER.

So much to do, so much to do,
And nothing ever done,
The hours drag their tireless length
From weary sun to sun.

You look so quiet and serene,
Have you some magic all unseen?

SECOND SPEAKER.

Yes I've a charm, a potent one,
It may seem small to you,
But hurry, worry, toil and care
It safely bears me through.

FIRST SPEAKER.

Tell it to me without delay,
If it will drive my cares away.

SECOND SPEAKER.

Just do the nearest thing, that's all,
Only the nearest thing,
Although, perhaps, 'tis but to aid
An insect's broken wing.
Yes, do the nearest thing, that's all,
And do it with a smile,
When you have well this lesson learned,
You've found life's key the while.

FIRST SPEAKER.

The nearest thing and that just now,
I see must be for me
To hurry home and straight prepare
My busy husband's tea.

CURTAIN.



THE
FABLES OF AESOP
TEXT BASED
UPON
LA FONTAINE..... AND CROXALL



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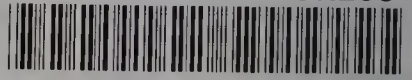






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