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No. 711

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# A Sunny Morning

A COMEDY OF MADRID  
IN ONE ACT

BY

SERAFÍN AND JOAQUÍN ALVAREZ  
QUINTERO

*Translated from the Spanish by Lucretia Xavier Floyd*

*Arranged for The Civic Repertory Theatre, New York,  
by John Garrett Underhill*

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Program of "A SUNNY MORNING," as produced by  
The Civic Repertory Theatre, April 13, 1929:

THE CIVIC REPERTORY THEATRE, INC.  
(Eva Le Gallienne, Director)

Present

"A SUNNY MORNING"

A One Act Play

By

SERAFÍN AND JOAQUÍN ALVAREZ QUINTERO

Translated from the Spanish by Lucretia Xavier Floyd

Arranged for The Civic Repertory Theatre by  
John Garrett Underhill

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DOÑA LAURA ..... *Eva Le Gallienne*  
PETRA, her maid ..... *Josephine Hutchinson*  
DON GONZALO ..... *Egon Brecher*  
JUANITO, his servant ..... *Robert Ross*

SCENE: *A retired corner in a Park in Madrid.*

TIME: *The present.*

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## A Sunny Morning

SCENE: *A sunny morning in a retired corner of a park in Madrid. Autumn. A bench at Right.*

DOÑA LAURA, *a handsome, white-haired old lady of about seventy, refined in appearance, her bright eyes and entire manner giving evidence that despite her age her mental faculties are unimpaired, enters leaning upon the arm of her maid, PETRA. In her free hand she carries a parasol, which serves also as a cane.*

DOÑA LAURA. I am so glad to be here. I feared my seat would be occupied. What a beautiful morning!

PETRA. The sun is hot.

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, you are only twenty. (*She sits down on the bench.*) Oh, I feel more tired today than usual. (*Noticing PETRA, who seems impatient*) Go, if you wish to chat with your guard.

PETRA. He is not mine, señora; he belongs to the park.

DOÑA LAURA. He belongs more to you than he does to the park. Go find him, but remain within calling distance.

PETRA. I see him over there waiting for me.

DOÑA LAURA. Do not remain more than ten minutes.

PETRA. Very well, señora. (*Walks toward R.*)

DOÑA LAURA. Wait a moment.

PETRA. What does the señora wish?

DOÑA LAURA. Give me the bread crumbs.

PETRA. I don't know what is the matter with me.

DOÑA LAURA. (*Smiling*) I do. Your head is where your heart is—with the guard.

PETRA. Here, señora. (*She hands DOÑA LAURA a small bag. Exit PETRA by R.*)

DOÑA LAURA. Adiós. (*Glances toward trees at R.*) Here they come! They know just when to expect me. (*She rises, walks toward R., and throws three handfuls of bread crumbs*) These are for the spryest, these for the gluttons, and these for the little ones which are the most persistent. (*Laughs. She returns to her seat and watches, with a pleased expression, the pigeons feeding*) There, that big one is always first! I know him by his big head. Now one, now another, now two, now three—— That little fellow is the least timid. I believe he would eat from my hand. That one takes his piece and flies up to that branch alone. He is a philosopher. But where do they all come from? It seems as if the news had spread. Ha, ha! Don't quarrel. There is enough for all. I'll bring more tomorrow.

(*Enter DON GONZALO and JUANITO from L.C. DON GONZALO is an old gentleman of seventy, gouty and impatient. He leans upon JUANITO'S arm and drags his feet somewhat as he walks.*)

DON GONZALO. Idling their time away! They should be saying mass.

JUANITO. You can sit here, señor. There is only a lady. (*DOÑA LAURA turns her head and listens.*)

DON GONZALO. I won't, Juanito. I want a bench to myself.

JUANITO. But there is none.

DON GONZALO. That one over there is mine.

JUANITO. There are three priests sitting there.

DON GONZALO. Rout them out. Have they gone?

JUANITO. No, indeed. They are talking.

DON GONZALO. Just as if they were glued to the seat. No hope of their leaving. Come this way, Juanito. (*They walk toward the birds, Right.*)

DOÑA LAURA. (*Indignantly*) Look out!

DON GONZALO. Are you speaking to me, señora?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, to you.

DON GONZALO. What do you wish?

DOÑA LAURA. You have scared away the birds who were feeding on my crumbs.

DON GONZALO. What do I care about the birds?

DOÑA LAURA. But I do.

DON GONZALO. This is a public park.

DOÑA LAURA. Then why do you complain that the priests have taken your bench?

DON GONZALO. Señora, we have not met. I cannot imagine why you take the liberty of addressing me. Come, Juanito. (*BOTH go out R.*)

DOÑA LAURA. What an ill-natured old man! Why must people get so fussy and cross when they reach a certain age? (*Looking toward R.*) I am glad. He lost that bench, too. Serves him right for scaring the birds. He is furious. Yes, yes; find a seat if you can. Poor man! He is wiping the perspiration from his face. Here he comes. A carriage would not raise more dust than his feet. (*Enter DON GONZALO and JUANITO by R. and walk toward L.*)

DON GONZALO. Have the priests gone yet, Juanito?

JUANITO. No, indeed, señor. They are still there.

DON GONZALO. The authorities should place more benches here for these sunny mornings. Well, I suppose I must resign myself and sit on the bench with the old lady. (*Muttering to himself, he sits at the extreme end of DOÑA LAURA'S bench and looks at her indignantly. Touches his hat as he greets her*) Good morning.

DOÑA LAURA. What, you here again?

DON GONZALO. I repeat that we have not met.

DOÑA LAURA. I was responding to your salute.

DON GONZALO. "Good morning" should be answered by "good morning," and that is all you should have said.

DOÑA LAURA. You should have asked permission to sit on this bench, which is mine.

DON GONZALO. The benches here are public property.

DOÑA LAURA. Why, you said the one the priests have was yours.

DON GONZALO. Very well, very well. I have nothing more to say. (*Between his teeth*) Senile old lady! She ought to be at home knitting and counting her beads.

DOÑA LAURA. Don't grumble any more. I'm not going to leave just to please you.

DON GONZALO. (*Brushing the dust from his shoes with his handkerchief*) If the ground were sprinkled a little it would be an improvement.

DOÑA LAURA. Do you use your handkerchief as a shoe brush?

DON GONZALO. Why not?

DOÑA LAURA. Do you use a shoe brush as a handkerchief?

DON GONZALO. What right have you to criticize my actions?

DOÑA LAURA. A neighbor's right.

DON GONZALO. Juanito, my book. I do not care to listen to nonsense.

DOÑA LAURA. You are very polite.

DON GONZALO. Pardon me, señora, but never interfere with what does not concern you.

DOÑA LAURA. I generally say what I think.

DON GONZALO. And more to the same effect. Give me the book, Juanito.

JUANITO. Here, señor. (*JUANITO takes a book from his pocket, hands it to DON GONZALO, then*

*exits by R. DON GONZALO, casting indignant glances at DOÑA LAURA, puts on an enormous pair of glasses, takes from his pocket a reading-glass, adjusts both to suit him, and opens his book.)*

DOÑA LAURA. I thought you were taking out a telescope.

DON GONZALO. Was that you?

DOÑA LAURA. Your sight must be keen.

DON GONZALO. Keener than yours is. — *refers to*

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, evidently.

DON GONZALO. Ask the hares and partridges.

DOÑA LAURA. Ah! Do you hunt?

DON GONZALO. I did, and even now——

DOÑA LAURA. Oh, yes, of course!

DON GONZALO. Yes, señora. Every Sunday I take my gun and dog, you understand, and go to one of my estates near Aravaca and kill time.

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, kill time. That is all you kill.

DON GONZALO. Do you think so? I could show you a wild boar's head in my study——

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, and I could show you a tiger's skin in my boudoir. What does that prove?

DON GONZALO. Very well, señora, please allow me to read. Enough conversation.

DOÑA LAURA. Well, you subside, then.

DON GONZALO. But first I shall take a pinch of snuff. *(Takes out snuff box)* Will you have some? *(Offers box to DOÑA LAURA.)*

DOÑA LAURA. If it is good.

DON GONZALO. It is of the finest. You will like it.

DOÑA LAURA. *(Taking pinch of snuff)* It clears my head.

DON GONZALO. And mine.

DOÑA LAURA. Do you sneeze?

DON GONZALO. Yes, señora, three times.

DOÑA LAURA. And so do I. What a coincidence! *(After taking the snuff, they await the sneezes, both anxiously, and sneeze alternately three times each.)*

*Not  
2 long  
& pause*

DON GONZALO. There, I feel better.

DOÑA LAURA. So do I. (*Aside*) The snuff has made peace between us.

DON GONZALO. You will excuse me if I read aloud?

DOÑA LAURA. Read as loud as you please; you will not disturb me.

DON GONZALO. (*Reading*) "All love is sad, but sad as it is, it is the best thing that we know." That is from Campoamor.

DOÑA LAURA. Ah!

DON GONZALO. (*Reading*) "The daughters of the mothers I once loved kiss me now as they would a graven image." Those lines, I take it, are in a humorous vein.

DOÑA LAURA. (*Laughing*) I take them so, too.

DON GONZALO. There are some beautiful poems in this book. Here. "Twenty years pass. He returns."

DOÑA LAURA. You cannot imagine how it affects me to see you reading with all those glasses.

DON GONZALO. Can you read without any?

DOÑA LAURA. Certainly.

DON GONZALO. At your age? You're jesting.

DOÑA LAURA. Pass me the book, then. (*Takes book; reads aloud*)

"Twenty years pass. He returns.

And each, beholding the other, exclaims—

Can it be that this is he?

Heavens, is it she?"

(DOÑA LAURA returns the book to DON GONZALO.)

DON GONZALO. Indeed, I envy you your wonderful eyesight.

DOÑA LAURA. (*Aside*) I know every word by heart.

DON GONZALO. I am very fond of good verses, very fond. I even composed some in my youth.

DOÑA LAURA. Good ones?



"A SUNNY MORNING"

*See Page 7*





DON GONZALO. Of all kinds. I was a great friend of Espronceda, Zorrilla, Bécquer, and others. I first met Zorrilla in America.

DOÑA LAURA. Why, have you been in America?

DON GONZALO. Several times. The first time I went I was only six years old.

DOÑA LAURA. You must have gone with Columbus in one of his caravels!

DON GONZALO. (*Laughing*) Not quite as bad as that. I am old, I admit, but I did not know Ferdinand and Isabella. (*They both laugh.*) I was also a great friend of Campoamor. I met him in Valencia. I am a native of that city.

DOÑA LAURA. You are?

DON GONZALO. I was brought up there and there I spent my early youth. Have you ever visited that city?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, señor. Not far from Valencia there was a villa that, if still there, should retain memories of me. I spent several seasons there. It was many, many years ago. It was near the sea, hidden away among lemon and orange trees. They called it—let me see, what did they call it—Maricela.

DON GONZALO. (*Startled*) Maricela?

DOÑA LAURA. Maricela. Is the name familiar to you?

DON GONZALO. Yes, very familiar. If my memory serves me right, for we forget as we grow old, there lived in that villa the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, and I assure you I have seen many. Let me see—what was her name? Laura—Laura—Laura Llorente.

DOÑA LAURA. (*Startled*) Laura Llorente?

DON GONZALO. Yes. (*They look at each other intently.*)

DOÑA LAURA. (*Recovering herself*) Nothing. You reminded me of my best friend.

DON GONZALO. How strange!

DOÑA LAURA. It is strange. She was called "The Silver Maiden."

DON GONZALO. Precisely, "The Silver Maiden." By that name she was known in that locality. I seem to see her as if she were before me now, at that window with the red roses. Do you remember that window?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, I remember. It was the window of her room.

DON GONZALO. She spent many hours there. I mean in my day.

DOÑA LAURA. (*Sighing*) And in mine, too.

DON GONZALO. She was ideal. Fair as a lily, jet black hair and black eyes, with an uncommonly sweet expression. She seemed to cast a radiance wherever she was. Her figure was beautiful, perfect. "What forms of sovereign beauty God models in human clay!" She was a dream.

DOÑA LAURA. (*Aside*) If you but knew that dream was now by your side, you would realize what dreams come to. (*Aloud*) She was very unfortunate and had a sad love affair.

DON GONZALO. Very sad. (*They look at each other.*)

DOÑA LAURA. Did you hear of it?

DON GONZALO. Yes.

DOÑA LAURA. The ways of Providence are strange. (*Aside*) Gonzalo!

DON GONZALO. The gallant lover, in the same affair—

DOÑA LAURA. Ah, the duel?

DON GONZALO. Precisely, the duel. The gallant lover was—my cousin, of whom I was very fond.

DOÑA LAURA. Oh, yes, a cousin? My friend told me in one of her letters the story of that affair, which was truly romantic. He, your cousin, passed

by on horseback every morning down the rose path under her window, and tossed up to her balcony a bouquet of flowers which she caught.

DON GONZALO. And later in the afternoon the gallant horseman would return by the same path, and catch the bouquet of flowers she would toss him. Am I right?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes. They wanted to marry her to a merchant whom she would not have.

DON GONZALO. And one night, when my cousin waited under her window to hear her sing, this other person presented himself unexpectedly.

DOÑA LAURA. And insulted your cousin.

DON GONZALO. There was a quarrel.

DOÑA LAURA. And later a duel.

DON GONZALO. Yes, at sunrise, on the beach, and the merchant was badly wounded. My cousin had to conceal himself for a few days and later to fly.

DOÑA LAURA. You seem to know the story well.

DON GONZALO. And so do you.

DOÑA LAURA. I have explained that a friend repeated it to me.

DON GONZALO. As my cousin did to me. (*Aside*) This is Laura!

DOÑA LAURA. (*Aside*) Why tell him? He does not suspect.

DON GONZALO. (*Aside*) She is entirely innocent.

DOÑA LAURA. And was it you, by any chance, who advised your cousin to forget Laura?

DON GONZALO. Why, my cousin never forgot her!

DOÑA LAURA. How do you account, then, for his conduct?

DON GONZALO. I will tell you. The young man took refuge in my house, fearful of the consequences of a duel with a person highly regarded in that locality. From my home he went to Seville, then came to Madrid. He wrote Laura many letters, some of

them in verse. But undoubtedly they were intercepted by her parents, for she never answered at all. Gonzalo then, in despair, believing his love lost to him forever, joined the army, went to Africa, and there, in a trench, met a glorious death, grasping the flag of Spain and whispering the name of his beloved Laura——

DOÑA LAURA. (*Aside*) What an atrocious lie!

DON GONZALO. (*Aside*) I could not have killed myself more gloriously.

DOÑA LAURA. You must have been prostrated by the calamity.

DON GONZALO. Yes, indeed, señora. As if he were my brother. I presume, though, on the contrary, that Laura in a short time was chasing butterflies in her garden, indifferent to regret.

DOÑA LAURA. No, señor, no!

DON GONZALO. It is woman's way.

DOÑA LAURA. Even if it were woman's way, "The Silver Maiden" was not of that disposition. My friend awaited news for days, months, a year, and no letter came. One afternoon, just at sunset, as the first stars were appearing, she was seen to leave the house, and with quickening steps wend her way toward the beach, the beach where her beloved had risked his life. She wrote his name on the sand, then sat down upon a rock, her gaze fixed upon the horizon. The waves murmured their eternal threnody and slowly crept up to the rock where the maiden sat. The tide rose with a boom and swept her out to sea.

DON GONZALO. Good heavens!

DOÑA LAURA. The fishermen of that shore who often tell the story affirm that it was a long time before the waves washed away that name written on the sand. (*Aside*) You will not get ahead of me in decorating my own funeral.

DON GONZALO. (*Aside*) She lies worse than I do.

DOÑA LAURA. Poor Laura!

DON GONZALO. Poor Gonzalo!

DOÑA LAURA. (*Aside*) I will not tell him that I married two years later.

DON GONZALO. (*Aside*) In three months I ran off to Paris with a ballet dancer.

DOÑA LAURA. Fate is curious. Here are you and I, complete strangers, met by chance, discussing the romance of old friends of long ago! We have been conversing as if we were old friends.

DON GONZALO. Yes, it is curious, considering the ill-natured prelude to our conversation.

DOÑA LAURA. You scared away the birds.

DON GONZALO. I was unreasonable, perhaps.

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, that was evident. (*Sweetly*) Are you coming again tomorrow?

DON GONZALO. Most certainly, if it is a sunny morning. And not only will I not scare away the birds, but I will bring a few crumbs.

DOÑA LAURA. Thank you very much. Birds are grateful and repay attention. I wonder where my maid is? Petra! (*Signals for her maid.*)

DON GONZALO. (*Aside, looking at LAURA, whose back is turned*) No, no, I will not reveal myself. I am grotesque now. Better that she recall the gallant horseman who passed daily beneath her window tossing flowers.

DOÑA LAURA. Here she comes. *see next page*

DON GONZALO. That Juanito! He plays havoc with the nursemaids. (*Looks R. and signals with his hand.*)

DOÑA LAURA. (*Aside, looking at GONZALO, whose back is turned*) No, I am too sadly changed. It is better he should remember me as the black-eyed girl tossing flowers as he passed among the roses in the garden. (*JUANITO enters by R., PETRA by L. She has a bunch of violets in her hand.*)

DOÑA LAURA. Well, Petra! At last!

DON GONZALO. Juanito, you are late.

PETRA. (*To DOÑA LAURA*) The guard gave me these violets for you, señora.

DOÑA LAURA. How very nice! Thank him for me. They are fragrant. (*As she takes the violets from her maid a few loose ones fall to the ground.*)

DON GONZALO. My dear lady, this has been a great honor and a great pleasure.

DOÑA LAURA. It has also been a pleasure to me.

DON GONZALO. Goodbye until tomorrow.

DOÑA LAURA. Until tomorrow.

DON GONZALO. If it is sunny.

DOÑA LAURA. A sunny morning. Will you go to your bench?

DON GONZALO. No, I will come to this—if you do not object?

DOÑA LAURA. This bench is at your disposal.

DON GONZALO. And I will surely bring the crumbs.

DOÑA LAURA. Tomorrow, then?

DON GONZALO. Tomorrow!

(*LAURA walks away toward R., supported by her MAID. GONZALO, before leaving with JUANITO, trembling and with a great effort, stoops to pick up the violets LAURA dropped. Just then LAURA turns her head and surprises him picking up the flowers.*)

JUANITO. What are you doing, señor?

DON GONZALO. Juanito, wait—

DOÑA LAURA. (*Aside*) Yes, it is he!

DON GONZALO. (*Aside*) It is she, and no mistake.

(*DOÑA LAURA and DON GONZALO wave farewell.*)

DOÑA LAURA. "Can it be that this is he?"

DON GONZALO. "Heavens, is it she?" (*They smile*

*once more, as if she were again at the window and he below in the rose garden, and then disappear upon the arms of their servants.)*

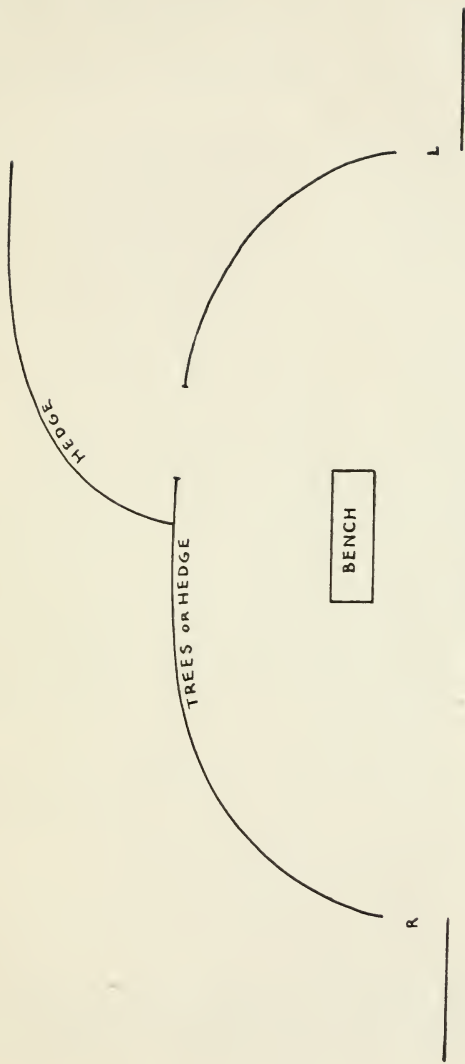
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## “A SUNNY MORNING”

“A Sunny Morning,” the most popular of the shorter Quintero plays, is especially adapted to Amateur and Little Theatre production. Few light comedies have been so successful internationally, whether presented in Spanish, Italian, English, French or German.

“A Sunny Morning” has been a feature in Eva Le Gallienne’s repertory since the season of 1928-1929. With Miss Alice Lewisohn as *Doña Laura*, it was a favorite during several seasons at the Neighborhood Playhouse, New York City. Among other performances, those of the Amateur Comedy Club, New York, and the Toy Theatre, Boston, deserve mention. The foreign productions are numberless. With the exception of Miss Jane Cowl’s “Malvaloca,” offered under the auspices of the Actors’ Theatre, “A Sunny Morning” is the only one of the more widely known Quintero plays to be acted in English.





SCENE DESIGN  
"A SUNNY MORNING"

# COME OUT OF THE KITCHEN

A charming comedy in 3 acts. Adapted by A. E. Thomas from the story of the same name by Alice Duer Miller. 6 males, 5 females. 3 interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

The story of "Come Out of the Kitchen" is written around a Virginia family of the old aristocracy, by the name of Daingerfield, who, finding themselves temporarily embarrassed, decide to rent their magnificent home to a rich Yankee. One of the conditions of the lease by the well-to-do New Englander stipulates that a competent staff of white servants should be engaged for his sojourn at the stately home. This servant question presents practically insurmountable difficulties, and one of the daughters of the family conceives the mad-cap idea that she, her sister and their two brothers shall act as the domestic staff for the wealthy Yankee. Olivia Daingerfield, who is the ringleader in the merry scheme, adopts the cognomen of Jane Allen, and elects to preside over the destinies of the kitchen. Her sister, Elizabeth, is appointed housemaid. Her elder brother, Paul, is the butler, and Charley, the youngest of the group, is appointed to the position of bootboy. When Burton Crane arrives from the North, accompanied by Mrs. Faulkner, her daughter, and Crane's attorney, Tucker, they find the staff of servants to possess so many methods of behavior out of the ordinary that amusing complications begin to arise immediately. Olivia's charm and beauty impress Crane above everything else, and the merry story continues through a maze of delightful incidents until the real identity of the heroine is finally disclosed. But not until Crane has professed his love for his charming cook, and the play ends with the brightest prospects of happiness for these two young people. "Come Out of the Kitchen," with Ruth Chatterton in the leading rôle, made a notable success on its production by Henry Miller at the Cohan Theatre, New York. It was also a great success at the Strand Theatre, London. A most ingenious and entertaining comedy, and we strongly recommend it for amateur production. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## GOING SOME

Play in 4 acts. By Paul Armstrong and Rex Beach. 12 males, 4 females. 2 exteriors, 1 interior. Costumes, modern and cowboy. Plays a full evening.

Described by the authors as the "chronicle of a certain lot of college men and girls, with a tragic strain of phonograph and cowboys." A rollicking good story, full of action, atmosphere, comedy and drama, redolent of the adventurous spirit of youth. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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## MRS. PARTRIDGE PRESENTS

Comedy in 3 acts. By Mary Kennedy and Ruth Hawthorne. 6 males, 6 females. Modern costumes. 2 interiors. Plays 2½ hours.

The characters, scenes and situations are thoroughly up-to-date in this altogether delightful American comedy. The heroine is a woman of tremendous energy, who manages a business—she manages everything—with great success, and at home presides over the destinies of a growing son and daughter. Her struggle to give the children the opportunities she herself has missed, and the children's ultimate revolt against her well-meant management—that is the basis of the plot. The son who is cast for the part of artist and the daughter who is to go on the stage offer numerous opportunities for the development of the social possibilities in the theme.

The play is one of the most delightful, yet thought-provoking American comedies of recent years, and is warmly recommended to all amateur groups (Royalty on application.) Price 75 Cents

## IN THE NEXT ROOM

Melodrama in 3 acts. By Eleanor Robson and Harriet Ford. 8 males, 3 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays 2¼ hours

"Philip Vantine has bought a rare copy of an original Bonaparte cabinet and ordered it shipped to his New York home from Paris. When it arrives it is found to be the original itself, the possession of which is desired by many strange people. Before the mystery concerned with the cabinet's shipment can be cleared up two persons meet mysterious death fooling with it and the happiness of many otherwise happy actors is threatened" (Burns Gentle) A first-rate mystery play, comprising all the elements of suspense, curiosity, comedy and drama. "In the Next Room" quite easy to stage. It can be unreservedly recommended to high schools and colleges. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars) Price, 75 Cents

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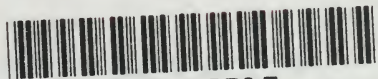
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