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1914

# WHAT'S WRONG

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY  
FREDERICK BALLARD

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# WHAT'S WRONG

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## CAST.

GEORGE H. SMITH.....*A business man*  
 PERRY DODGE.....*Another business man*  
 EDDIE.....*A boy in Smith's office*  
 WOODROW.....*A boy on Smith's farm*  
 " RED " }  
 " HEAVY " } *Farmhands.*  
 " BILL " }  
 MESSENGER BOY  
 JENNIE BROWN  
 MRS. PERRY DODGE  
 MRS. LEE-HUGH.....*S. P. A. I. H.*  
 PHOEBE SNOW  
 FLOSSIE  
 AGNES  
 TELLIE

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## SCENES.

ACT I. *New York City.*  
 ACT II. *New Jersey.*  
 ACT III. *A New York suburb.*

TIME.—*Present.*

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# WHAT'S WRONG

## ACT I.

SCENE:—*The private office of the George H. Smith Land Company.*

*To R. and L. of center, rear wall, are windows through which can be seen the roofs of lower office buildings, church steeples and a general view of the city and harbor.*

*At C. of R. wall, a door leading into general office and waiting-room. Rear wall, near R. corner, a door opening into stenographer's room. When this door is open, the stenographer's desk, typewriter, etc., can be seen. Left corner, a clothes cabinet. L. C. and against wall, a large filing case for filing copies of deeds and other legal papers. L. C., and well down, a flat desk. Behind it a pivot chair. To R. of it, a straight chair. Upon it, a telephone and two stacks of legal looking manuscripts covered with light blue paper covers. The stack at upper end of desk is neatly arranged; the stack at lower end is scattered. At lower end of desk, on its down-stage side, is a speaking tube, or hose, and a push button. (This tube is connected with the outer office). On the L. wall is a large map of North America. The rear and right walls are decorated with*



enlarged framed photographs of views in regions where SMITH has land interests.

Following the rise of the curtain, there is a slight pause during which the ticking of the typewriter keys is heard off rear. Then SMITH enters briskly, R. D.

SMITH is a good-looking man, somewhat tall and, although but 35 years of age, looks much older. He wears a dark business suit which needs pressing, and a black derby hat; has the haggard expression of a sleepless, over-worked, improperly fed office man who is always under high nervous tension and constant activity. He does everything rapidly—reads, talks, moves, thinks rapidly. In fact so great is his "speed" and so tremendous the nervous pressure under which he incessantly works, that one wonders how he can keep it up. His general appearance, which is somewhat careless, is that of an ultra-busy mono-ambitious man. As SMITH enters, the telephone rings. SMITH hastens to desk and grabs 'phone from desk and jerks its receiver from hook.

SMITH, (*Quickly and almost savagely*) Hello!—Yes!—You've got the wrong Smith! (*Jamming the receiver into its hook, he puts the telephone on the desk, presses button and seizes speaking-tube. In speaking-tube:*) Tell Miss Waite to come in right away. (*He drops the tube and starts towards clothes cabinet. Telephone rings again. He rushes to desk and jerks receiver from hook*) Hello!—Yes—Yes, this is the George H. Smith Company!—Minnesota land?—How much?—You bet your life I'll buy it—Any time. I'm always here! (*Jams receiver into hook and jerks out watch*) Two minutes all shot to thunder! (*Enter FLOSSIE WAITE, somewhat listlessly, rear door. She is the conventional stenographer—dark skirt.*

*white shirt-waist, black tie and fluffy hair. 20. vain and flippant. She is quite jaded because she danced late the night before. As she crosses to desk, SMITH thrusts watch into pocket and jerks a long, legal-looking document from his inside-coat pocket. Manuscript is folded three times. To save time, SMITH hastens to FLOSSIE. Polite but in a hurry) Make two copies of this. (Shoving it into her hand) File one and bring the other to me, quick! (Returns quickly to desk and FLOSSIE starts deliberately toward rear door) That document describes valuable land in Dakota, so be careful.*

*FLOSSIE. (Glancing over shoulder at him and a trifle impudently) I'm always careful. (SMITH jerks off hat and hangs it in cabinet)*

*SMITH. (Impatiently to FLOSSIE, now at rear door) I'm going to South America to-morrow and there's a million things I've got to straighten up before I leave. Hurry! (FLOSSIE glances at him resentfully. She doesn't intend to hurry for anyone. Then, tilting her head arrogantly, she exits rear door)*

*(Enter EDDIE, the office boy, R. D. He enters briskly with a cablegram envelope and goes towards desk, but SMITH meets him to R. of it.)*

*EDDIE. (Holding out envelope) Cablegram.*

*(SMITH grabs it, rips it open, reads it hastily, EDDIE, meanwhile, exits briskly R. D. The cablegram read, SMITH pushes push-button and seizes speaking tube.)*

*SMITH. (In tube) Miss Waite. For dictation! Right away! (Dropping tube, he picks up cablegram and paces up and down left. Re-enter FLOSSIE rear D., note-book in hand. As she enters) Cablegram for South America! (FLOSSIE, taking*

her time, starts towards the desk; SMITH watches her a moment, as if puzzled, then pleasantly ironical) Are you ill or in love?

FLOSSIE. Neither.

SMITH. (*Exasperated but supplicatingly, not harshly*) Then for goodness' sake, hurry! (*FLOSSIE goes to desk as deliberately as before and sits to R. of it. SMITH, pacing, dictates rapidly*) Senor Pedro Alphonso Monto Carlo DePisa, Buenos Ayres, Argentine. Got it?

FLOSSIE. Yes.

SMITH. (*Dictating*) Yours received. Sailing to-morrow. Meet you Buenos Ayres. Smith. (*Tossing cablegram to desk*) Call a messenger and send it at once. (*He grabs telephone and FLOSSIE rises. During following, she goes deliberately up to rear door. In telephone*) Bryant 8763. (*Impatient. Central has misunderstood him*) No, no! Bryant! William Cullen Thanatopsis Bryant! (*Slight pause*) It's been busy all day! When its open, call me! John 486. (*As he jams receiver into hook EDDIE enters R. D.*)

EDDIE. (*At door*) A gentleman from Maine.

SMITH. (*Sharply, as he sits in pivot chair*) What does he want?

EDDIE. He wants to trade an island in a lake for an automobile.

SMITH. This is a land office—not a garage. (*Grabs manuscript and jerks it open*)

EDDIE. But he says—

SMITH. (*Emphatically*) Busy!

EDDIE. (*Meekly*) Yes, sir. (*Exits R. D.*)

(*As EDDIE exits, SMITH glances at FLOSSIE who is now at rear D.*)

SMITH. Miss Waite. (*FLOSSIE stops and glances at him. Then ironically but not rudely*) That cablegram is to be sent now—to-day. (*The*

telephone rings. SMITH snatches it. Exit FLOSSIE uppishly rear D., during following. In telephone) Bryant 8763? (Annoyed) Oh!—(Mellowing) Oh, hello, Perry. What is it?—Out to your place for dinner?—This evening? Impossible!—Sorry! G'bye. (As he jams receiver into hook, enter EDDIE)

EDDIE. A gentleman from Mexico.

SMITH. Busy! (Begins to read MS.)

EDDIE. He says he has some of the finest land in the world.

SMITH. (Rapidly reading) Tell him to fortify it. Then I'll talk business.

EDDIE. But he says——

SMITH. (Glaring at him) Busy!

EDDIE. (Jumping) Yes, sir. (Exit quickly)

SMITH. (In telephone) Bryant 8763?—Perry, I tell you I can't come out! G'bye! (He jams receiver into hook. Enter EDDIE, card in hand. He hastens to SMITH who snatches card from him and glances at it) Who is she? What does she look like?

EDDIE. Solid.

SMITH. Show her in—quick.

EDDIE. Yes, sir. (Starts towards door naturally)

SMITH. Hurry! (EDDIE exits quickly)

SMITH. (Scowling at card) Mrs. Lee-Hugh, hyphenated. (Adjusts his tie quickly. EDDIE opens R. D., and steps aside; MRS. LEE-HUGH strides into room. She is a large and very striking society woman of 45, strikingly gowned. Exit EDDIE, closing door quietly. Going to welcome her. Politely, but rapidly) Mrs. Lee-Hugh? (Indicating chair at R. of desk) Sit down! (Sitting as she crosses to chair) What can I do for you—city property or a **farm?**

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (Sitting in front of him) Horse money.

SMITH. (Dumbfounded) What?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Calmly and plainly*) Horse money.

SMITH. Are you in the wrong office or is this blackmail?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Neither. You are Mr. George H. Smith and I am a bona fide solicitor for the Society for the Preservation of Aged and Indigent Horses.

SMITH. Madam, I'm entirely too busy to monkey with horses. (*Looks at his watch*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. But we want every successful business man in New York to make at least one poor, old, wornout horse happy.

SMITH. (*Impatiently, as he jerks open upper drawer of desk*) How much?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Very deliberately and sweetly*) Well, out on our retired-horse farm in New Jersey where the cost of living is comparatively low, an *old* horse can live nicely on two dollars a day.

SMITH. So can I and I don't have to go to Jersey, either.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*With a very, very sweet smile*) Ah, but you are not a horse.

SMITH. (*Politely, but ironically*) Does that include music and flowers?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. No, sir—just oats and hay and a nice warm blanket to sleep in.

SMITH. (*As he opens check book which he has taken from desk drawer*) What is to be the duration of this equestrian bliss?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Perplexed*) I don't quite understand you.

SMITH. How long am I supposed to pension the animal?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. For life.

SMITH. (*Looking at her shrewdly*) How long is life?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Until the horse dies.

SMITH. But how will I know when it dies?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. We shall send you its funeral bill.

SMITH. Do you think for one minute that I'm going to squander money that way?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Rising, indignant*) Why, Mr. Smith, you were recommended to me as a man with a tender heart! A man who would never, never, never—(*She becomes dramatic*)

SMITH. (*Dipping pen in ink*) I'll pension one horse one month. If he isn't dead then, give him gas.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*As SMITH writes check*) Oh, I'm sure you'll keep right on pensioning him. (*Flatteringly*) Big men, like you, always do.

SMITH. (*Rips check from book*) Who recommended me to you?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Smiling*) A friend.

SMITH. (*Rising*) Yours or mine? (*Shoving check at her*) There you are—one month, including Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. On behalf of a poor old horse, I thank you. (*She bows deeply*)

SMITH. (*He tosses check book into drawer of desk and hastens R. D. to open it*) Don't mention it! I'm going to South America to-morrow and I'm busier than a man paying double alimony.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Following him, pretending to be worried over the fact*) I hope I haven't interrupted you.

SMITH. (*Politely*) Not at all! (*Opens door and steps aside*) Good day!

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Smiling as she exits*) Au revoir!

SMITH. Good-bye. (*Exit MRS. LEE-HUGH R. D. As SMITH closes door behind MRS. LEE-HUGH, re-enter FLOSSIE rear door, carrying manuscript*) Now, what's the matter?

FLOSSIE. (*Rather brazenly*) Does this mean North Dakota or South Dakota?

SMITH. North, of course! Did you ever hear of a Bismark, South Dakota? It says Bismark, doesn't it?

FLOSSIE. (*Impudently*) Yes, but how do I know where Bismark is? I'm not a human geography.

SMITH. (*Sternly, but not rudely*) Give me that. (*Holds out hand for manuscript and FLOSSIE gives it to him. He takes twenty-dollar bank-note from his wallet and shoves it at FLOSSIE*) Here's two weeks' notice. Put on your hat and coat and take the first elevator going down. (*She doesn't take the bank-note*)

FLOSSIE. (*Surprised and feigning innocence*) What have I done?

SMITH. Nothing! That's why I'm discharging you. You've done nothing the last two weeks but kill time and sass back. And here I'm up to my ears in work! and you stand there sassing back because Bismark's in North Dakota. (*Thrusting bank-note into her hand*) Now take this and go.

FLOSSIE. (*With an impudent little smile*) All right. I should fume and get fussy—wrinkles. (*Goes leisurely toward R. D. SMITH seizes telephone*)

SMITH. (*In 'phone*) Typewriter Exchange! Hurry! (*Enter EDDIE R. D., card in hand. FLOSSIE at R. D., grins at SMITH'S back, then exits. EDDIE crosses briskly to SMITH and holds card in front of him so that he can read it, SMITH'S hands being occupied holding 'phone. SMITH glances at card, then sternly*) What does she look like?

EDDIE. (*Confidentially. He wants to warn SMITH against seeing her*) Just between you and me, Mr. Smith, she looks like a high-priced stenographer.

SMITH. Good! Send her in! Quick! (*Bangs telephone down on desk*)



EDDIE. (*Completely surprised*) But you said yesterday—

SMITH. Never mind yesterday—this is *to-day!*

EDDIE. (*Meekly*) Yes, sir. (*Goes briskly to R. D., and exits. As EDDIE crosses to R. D., the telephone rings. SMITH seizes it*)

SMITH. (*In telephone*) Hello—Yes, but I don't want it now. I've got one coming. You people are too slow for New York—move to Baltimore. (*Jams receiver in hook and as he replaces 'phone on desk, re-enter FLOSSIE R. D. She has her hat in her hand*)

FLOSSIE. (*Just inside R. D., and somewhat meekly*) Mr. Smith.

SMITH. (*Without looking at her, seating himself*) Yes.

FLOSSIE. (*Strictly business—not with feeling or sincerity*) If I apologize, will you take me back?

SMITH. (*Firmly, but not rudely*) No. Once I discharge a person, she's discharged. I never take her back.

FLOSSIE. But—

SMITH. (*Finally*) No!

FLOSSIE. (*Savagely*) Then don't! I didn't want to work for you anyway. There's nothing in *this* office but business.

(*She slaps on her hat and jabs hat-pin into it. As she pins on her hat, EDDIE opens door R. D. and steps aside. Enter JENNIE BROWN, R. D., EDDIE exiting and closing door quietly. JENNIE is an attractive girl of 22, intelligent, refined, unassuming and democratic. She wears a pretty, street suit made of good material. It is very becoming to her and is in good taste. Her general appearance gives the impression that she is a girl with lots of common sense, gentle disposition, strength of character and although raised in the midst of luxury, yet she possesses a natural resourcefulness and a charm that will*



enable her to meet any emergency and overcome every obstacle. Her chief characteristics are: a good sense of humor, tact, gentleness, simplicity, sympathy and capability. As JENNIE enters, FLOSSIE "takes her in" with a side glance and exits R. D., snappishly.)

SMITH. (*Rising and very politely, though rapidly, to JENNIE*) How-do-you-do? What can I do for you? Are you a—(*Pauses. He is afraid to say "stenographer" because he isn't at all sure she looks like a stenographer. Slight pause during which SMITH looks at her admiringly*)

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly. She is standing at R. D.*) A what? (*A door slams violently immediately off rear. JENNIE, somewhat startled, glances at rear door*)

SMITH. (*Reassuringly*) Don't be alarmed. (*As she glances at him*) That's only my stenographer—leaving. (*Indicating chair R. of desk*) Be seated.

JENNIE. Thank you. (*As she starts toward chair, SMITH glances at watch. JENNIE sees him and stops. Then pleasantly and tactfully*) Am I interfering with—

SMITH. (*Interrupting. Polite, but rapid*) Not at all! Not at all! Sit down! (*As JENNIE sits at R. of desk, SMITH sits in pivot chair. As he sits*) Er—(*Not quite certain what she is—meaning to draw her out*) Er—what can I do for you—city property or a farm?

JENNIE. Neither. (*SMITH looks at her curiously. He doesn't know whether she is a stenographer out of a job or some kind of agent*) I want to ask you to please make at least one little poor boy happy.

SMITH. (*Impatiently, but trying to be polite*) I just got through making a horse happy, and besides, I'm entirely too busy to monkey with kids.

JENNIE. (*Kindly, yet somewhat drolly*) I'm not

asking you to monkey with kids, Mr. Smith. We do that at the Settlement House. (*Offers the card or credential she shows when she collects money*)

SMITH. (*Apologetic—just glances at card*) I beg your pardon. (*Opens desk drawer, grabs check book, slams drawer shut, slaps check book on desk, jerks it open and seizes pen. Then, glancing impatiently at JENNIE who has been watching him closely*) How much?

JENNIE. (*Deliberately and pleasantly*) If you can spare it conveniently, enough to keep one little boy in the country all summer.

SMITH. (*Suspiciously*) Two dollars a day?

JENNIE. In the country—not at the St Regis. (*Smiling*) That would keep four little boys.

SMITH. (*Writing check*) How long is summer?

JENNIE. Fifty dollars.

SMITH. Thanks! (*Writing check rapidly*) Your name, please?

JENNIE. The Sunshine Settlement House.

SMITH. (*Writing rapidly*) Sunshine Settlement House, Fifty dollars. (*JENNIE watches him curiously and sympathetically. She is interested in him because of his extreme nervousness and hurry-hurry habit. The check written, SMITH blots it quickly and vigorously, then rips it out of book and offers it to her*) There you are! One boy—one summer!

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly as she accepts check*) You were a boy yourself once, weren't you?

SMITH. (*Rapidly and impatiently-but not rudely*) Don't mention it. (*Grabs telephone. Then, in telephone*) Hello! Give me the Typewriter Exchange. Quick!

JENNIE. (*Politely and as if sympathizing with him in his predicament*) Pardon me, but do you need a stenographer?

SMITH. (*Emphatically*) Need one? There isn't anything in the world I'd rather have right now than a real good—(*In telephone*) Hello! Type-

writer Exchange? Call a taxi and send the fastest stenographer you've got to George H. Smith right away—(*Surprised and exasperated*) To-morrow? I'll be half way to South America to-morrow—(*Angrily*) Say what kind of an institution is this? I want one now. G'bye. (*Jams receiver on hook savagely*)

JENNIE. (*Kindly. She has been watching him calmly but interestedly during the above*) Perhaps I can help you.

SMITH. (*Emphatically, implying that no settlement worker can help him*) I need a stenographer!

JENNIE. (*Simply*) I believe you—that is why I volunteered my services.

SMITH. (*Dumbfounded*) Are you a——

JENNIE. Not a professional, but——

SMITH. (*Interrupting and anxiously*) Can you take dictation?

JENNIE. Yes—when it is given.

SMITH. (*Quickly*) Fast?

JENNIE. If you give it fast. (*SMITH, tickled to death, springs to his feet, grabs a handful of blank writing paper and slaps it down on desk in front of JENNIE. Then grabs pen and shoves it at her*)

SMITH. (*Eagerly and pen in hand*) Take this letter. Quick!

JENNIE. (*Calmly and drolly*) My gloves are on.

SMITH. (*Politely, but trying to "speed" her up*) Take them off! (*As JENNIE begins to unbutton right glove*) Let me help you. (*Drops pen on desk and, in order to save time, grabs her left hand, and, in his characteristic, hurry-up way, unbuttons the glove and tries to pull it off. His haste makes him awkward. When this scene is at its height—*)

JENNIE. (*He is hurting her somewhat*) Oh! (*The 'phone rings but SMITH keeps on pulling glove*) Oh! (*It rings again. SMITH glances at it but does not lessen business with glove*)

SMITH. (*To telephone*) Busy! (*SMITH jerks*

*off the glove, the 'phone rings again. SMITH tosses glove on desk and seizes 'phone*) Hello!—I did but I don't now. I've got one! (*Replacing 'phone vigorously on desk*)

JENNIE. (*Mothering hand*) Do you remove Mrs. Smith's gloves very often?

SMITH. There isn't any——

JENNIE. Too busy?

(*SMITH gives her a quick, sharp glance. The twinkle in her eyes changes to sober seriousness. SMITH seizes the pen and thrusts it at JENNIE.*)

SMITH. Here!

JENNIE. I'm sorry, but you took off the wrong glove. (*SMITH, amazed at his stupidity, gazes at her blankly*) I write with my right. (*Takes the pen deliberately from his hand, lays it carefully on the desk, then begins to remove the right glove. SMITH glances impatiently at the glove he removed, then seizes the speaking tube and pushes button*)

SMITH. (*In the tube*) Fetch me a coco-cola. (*Glances at JENNIE, who is removing right glove*) And hurry! (*Drops tube and goes around L. end of desk to help JENNIE remove glove. At the word "hurry," JENNIE glances at him, sideways. She wonders if he is a chronic hurry-up man*)

JENNIE. (*Curiously, but looking at glove, as SMITH comes toward her*) Are you always this busy?

SMITH. No, sometimes I'm busier. (*Referring to glove which he wants to help her remove*) Allow me.

JENNIE. (*Still busy with glove*) Thank you, but—(*She glances at him. He sees the handle of her hat-pins, one on each side of the hat, and reaches for them. His arms, as he reaches for the hat-pins, look as if they were going to embrace JENNIE. She starts to rise*)

SMITH. Sit still. I'm not going to hurt you. (*He plucks hat-pins quickly and simultaneously from hat*)

JENNIE. As I said, I am not a professional stenographer.

SMITH. (*Removing her hat*) I don't care what you are so long as you do the work. (*Plucks right glove—now removed—out of JENNIE'S hand, picks up left glove from desk and thus laden—her hat in one hand and her gloves and hat-pins in other hand—begins to dictate rapidly*) F. H. Henderson, Winnipeg, Canada. (*JENNIE picks up pen, but before she can write, SMITH interrupts her*) Wait a minute. (*Clutches her hat under his left arm*)

JENNIE. (*Anxious over hat—rising*) Mr. Smith!

SMITH. (*Blankly*) What's the matter?

JENNIE. My hat!

SMITH. (*Apologetic as JENNIE takes hat from under his arm*) I beg your pardon. Is it hurt?

JENNIE. (*Examining hat*) Not fatally, but—  
(*SMITH grabs the document from R. coat pocket and shoves it at her.*)

SMITH. Copy this—it's more important. (*Takes her hat and she takes the document. SMITH dashes to clothes cabinet, JENNIE watching him. When he stops at cabinet*)

JENNIE. (*Politely*) Where shall I copy it?

SMITH. (*Somewhat ungraciously at he hangs her hat next to his own*) On the typewriter. (*JENNIE glances around to locate the typewriter*)

JENNIE. Have you one?

SMITH. (*Pointing glove-filled hand at rear door*) There! In there!

JENNIE. Thank you. (*She starts toward rear door and SMITH hangs the gloves on clothes hooks—each glove on a hook. Then he glances at JENNIE, who is now at rear door*)

SMITH. Hurry! (JENNIE, startled, jumps. Then she glances at him) Hurry!

JENNIE. (Politely) Yes, sir. Shall I open the door or jump through it? (Telephone rings)

SMITH dashes down to desk and seizes telephone. Exit JENNIE rear door. She watches SMITH curiously until she closes door)

SMITH. (In 'phone) Plaza 8763? (Disgusted) No! No, Perry! Don't come over! No!! (As he replaces 'phone on desk, enter EDDIE R. D., carrying a glass of coco-cola. As EDDIE crosses to him:) If Perry Dodge comes to the office, don't let him in. Understand?

EDDIE. (As SMITH grabs glass of coco-cola) Yes, sir. (Starts towards R. D. SMITH drinks the coco-cola quickly. Re-enter JENNIE R. D., carrying the document)

JENNIE. (Politely, as she enters) Pardon me, Mr. Smith, but—(EDDIE, about to exit R. D., stops and stares at her in amazement)

SMITH. (Impatiently) Now what's the matter? (Puts coco-cola glass on desk, starts towards JENNIE, sees EDDIE staring at her and, emphatically, to EDDIE:) Busy! (EDDIE jumps and exits quickly)

JENNIE. (Politely, she is now near SMITH) Does this mean Bismark, North Dakota?

SMITH. Of course!

JENNIE. (Politely and trying to smile) It says simply Dakota.

SMITH. (Impatient) Did you ever hear of Bismark, South Dakota?

JENNIE. Not frequently, but——

SMITH. It is the capital of North Dakota!

JENNIE. The map shows also a Bismark, South Dakota.

SMITH. Fetch me the map.

JENNIE. Don't you believe me?

SMITH. (Emphatically) Fetch me that map!



JENNIE. (*Surprised and shocked*) Mr. Smith——!

SMITH. (*Angrily*) Did you hear what I said?

JENNIE. (*Self-possessed*) Yes, sir, but——

SMITH. Then mind! (*JENNIE looks at him deliberately and thoughtfully*) Hurry! (*Slight pause during which they look at each other, SMITH scowling impatiently, JENNIE contemplatively calm. Then:*)

JENNIE. (*Calmly and somewhat slowly but finally*) I haven't worked for you very long, Mr. Smith, but I think I have worked long enough.

SMITH. (*Quickly*) What do you mean?

JENNIE. I mean that I am through.

SMITH. What!

JENNIE. (*Calm but emphatic*) I am through.

SMITH. You haven't begun yet. (*JENNIE lays MSS. on the desk*)

JENNIE. Nevertheless I am through. I don't propose to help a man who insults me.

SMITH. (*Impatiently insistent*) I didn't insult you.

JENNIE. You doubted my veracity. Please get me my hat.

SMITH. I simply said, "Fetch the map!"

JENNIE. (*Indicating clothes cabinet*) My hat and gloves, please.

SMITH. (*Pepperishly angry, exasperated*) All right! Go! Go! Quit! I haven't time to put the soft-pedal on everything I say. (*He hastens up to clothes cabinet and gets her hat and gloves. JENNIE watches him. As he comes briskly down towards desk, carrying her hat and gloves*) Remember, I am a busy man.

JENNIE. (*As she accepts gloves and hat*) Gentlemen are never too busy to be polite.

SMITH. (*Brusquely and finally*) I beg your pardon, but business is business.

JENNIE. (*Calmly, after SMITH has gone angrily*)

*to desk*) Not with you, Mr. Smith. (*Puts on hat*)

SMITH. (*Glancing at her quickly; he is puzzled and surprised*) What?

JENNIE. (*Shoving hat-pins in hat*) With you, business is a mania. No wonder your stenographer left. She should have. They all should. I don't blame her for slamming the door. Good-day.

(*Exit R. D., SMITH staring at her. He starts towards R. D., as if to call her back, halts, hastens back to desk, seizes speaking tube with one hand and presses call-button on desk vigorously with thumb of other hand.*)

SMITH. (*Sharply, in speaking tube*) Miss— (*Can't recall her name*) The new stenographer! Send her back! Right away! (*Drops speaking tube and hastens up to left window and opens it. Re-enter JENNIE. She is putting on gloves. Stands near door*)

SMITH. (*Politely as he goes rapidly towards desk*) That was Bismark, North Dakota. (*Picks up the manuscript and hastens to her*)

JENNIE. Thank you, but I am no longer interested in the whereabouts of Bismark. (*She turns to leave*)

SMITH. (*Kindly*) Wait a minute. (*JENNIE pauses and glances at him*) I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. (*He offers her the manuscript, but she doesn't take it*)

JENNIE. (*Busy with gloves*) Maybe not. But when a person volunteers to help another person, it does hurt to be called a—(*Glances at him*) Suppose I had an office and you offered to help me, how would you like to have me call you a liar?

SMITH. I didn't call you a—

JENNIE. Practically—you implied it.

SMITH. I know—I do speak hastily sometimes; but I don't mean anything by it.



JENNIE. Just the same it hurts—especially when you're telling the truth—and are not accustomed to—(*Wiping her eyes*) to that kind of treatment.

SMITH. I am sorry—and I apologize.

JENNIE. You should.

SMITH. The land described is in North Dakota. (*He offers the manuscript to JENNIE*) Please!

JENNIE. (*Paying no attention to MSS.*) I'm not over-sensitive, Mr. Smith, but I don't like to be wounded.

SMITH. (*Reassuringly sympathetic*) Why, I wouldn't wound you intentionally for anything in the world. Miss—why, there isn't one girl in a thousand who'd come into a business man's office soliciting funds for the poor and then volunteer to step into the breach and be his stenographer. That's the kind of a girl men admire. You aren't going to leave me, are you? (*Pause, then offers MSS. again*) Please. If you stay I'll double your wages.

JENNIE. I'm not working for wages.

SMITH. What are you working for?

JENNIE. To help you. (*Takes MSS.*)

SMITH. I'm awfully sorry I hurt your feelings. (*Raises hands to remove her hat but she hands him the MSS.*)

JENNIE. (*Trying to smile*) I'll take it off this time. I'm just a trifle superstitious.

SMITH. (*Quickly and somewhat emphatically, MSS. in hand*) So am I. (*Loudly*) Eddie! (*Starts towards desk, frowning as if cursing himself. JENNIE watches him, puzzled, anxious. Enter EDDIE*)

EDDIE. (*Entering*) Yes, sir.

SMITH. Run over to Fleishman's and get a box of flowers for—for the young lady.

EDDIE. Yes, sir. (*JENNIE goes towards rear door*)

SMITH. Hurry! (*EDDIE dashes off R. D.*)

*Politely*) Miss—(*Pauses because he can't remember her name. JENNIE stops. Re-enter EDDIE*)

EDDIE. What kind of flowers?

SMITH. All kinds! And make it speedy! (*Exit EDDIE quickly. SMITH hastens to desk*)

JENNIE. Thank you for the flowers, Mr. Smith.

SMITH. Don't thank me! Don't! We haven't time for that!

JENNIE. (*Politely*) I beg your pardon.

SMITH. That's all right! (*Toward R. D.*) Eddie! Eddie! (*Then to JENNIE, who is now at rear door*) What play do you want to see to-night? (*Re-enter EDDIE*)

EDDIE. Yes, sir.

SMITH. Stay in the office till I tell you to go.

EDDIE. Yes, sir. (*Exit*)

SMITH. (*To JENNIE as EDDIE exits*) Tell me—what play to-night?

JENNIE. None.

SMITH. To-morrow night?

JENNIE. (*Smiling*) I shall be busy telling a room full of ambitious little foreigners about the Father of their country—George Washington.

SMITH. Next night, then? (*Picks up speaking-tube and presses button*)

JENNIE. (*Going towards him*) Don't get theatre tickets, Mr. Smith. Please don't.

SMITH. All right, then, I'll get you some more flowers.

JENNIE. (*Modestly yielding*) If you will, please send them over to the Settlement House. My poor children like flowers almost as much as they dislike soap.

SMITH. (*In speaking-tube, and in great haste*) Rush over to Fleishman's and tell him to send all his flowers out to the Sunlight Settlement House.

JENNIE. (*Dumbfounded and in remonstrance*) Not all of them!

SMITH. (*In speaking-tube*) Wait a minute!

JENNIE. A few of each kind will be plenty.

SMITH. (*In tube*) Eddie! (*Pushes button vigorously*) Plenty of each kind will be plenty. And hurry! (*He drops the tube. To JENNIE*) And if you happen to change your mind and do want to go to a play to-night, Eddie will take you. Sorry I haven't time to.

JENNIE. (*Smiling, eyes him. He is too busy to think that she might not care to go with him*) Thank you. Eddie looks like a very nice little boy, but I—I am quite sure that I won't change my mind—(*Exit rear door. SMITH watches her admiringly until she closes door, then jerks out watch and frowns at it*)

SMITH. (*Disgusted with himself*) Fourteen minutes all shot to thunder! (*Thrusts watch back into pocket, hastens to pivot chair, sits, grabs a document and begins to read it frantically. Pause, during which clicking of typewriter is heard off rear and the tinkling of the bell on the machine. SMITH listens to the rapid clicking, satisfied*) Ah! Quick worker!

(*Reads hurriedly whistling. Enter PERRY DODGE R. D. PERRY is a man of SMITH's age and height, but much stouter and healthier. He has broad shoulders, a nice, comfortable, prosperous-looking stomach and is well-fed and happy. Democratic in dress and unassuming in manner. He impresses one as being a very successful, generous, sensible, optimistic, clean-minded, home-loving, country-raised, business man—of simple tastes—a self-made man who has his business so completely under his control that he has plenty of time for everything he wants to do. Wears a business suit of good material and well-made, but modest in color and pattern, and a Fedora hat. His chief characteristics are an optimistic smile, a big nature, and genu-*

*ine frankness. As he enters, he closes door quietly; goes to desk, sits R. of it, watches SMITH who is unaware of his presence, then slips his hat over the manuscript which SMITH is reading. SMITH starts, as if seeing things, then looks up.)*

PERRY. Hel-lo, George!

SMITH. (*Angrily*) I told you to stay away from here, Perry!

PERRY. (*Good-naturedly*) Do you think I would stay away from a life-long friend simply because he told me to?

SMITH. (*Hotly*) I meant it!

(PERRY smiles broadly, then begins to tap desk slowly with forefinger.)

PERRY. George, Majorie and I want you to come out to our place to-day for dinner.

SMITH. (*Trying to reason with him*) If I haven't time to eat here, how in thunder can I go way out to your place to eat? (*Turns impatiently to desk*)

PERRY. What's your hurry, George?

SMITH. I've got to hurry!

PERRY. (*Genially*) In the long run, I accomplish just as much as you do, but I work deliberately. And look at me! (*Pats stomach proudly*)

SMITH. You were built that way.

PERRY. (*Smiling*) No, I wasn't. The day you and I cast our first presidential vote back home, we tipped the scales at identically the same mark, and you were just as big around the waist as I was. Since then— (*Glancing proudly at his own stomach*) Well, look at my equator—and then at yours. George, there isn't a happier man in this whole broad country than I am. And why? I repeat my question—Why?

SMITH. (*Impatiently and somewhat impetuously, as he glances nervously at watch*) Why? I'll bite. Why?

PERRY. Simply because I don't try to do three men's work, three times too fast.

SMITH. (*Rapidly and with concealed irony*) You don't have to! You're selling hulled corn—something to eat. I have to appeal to a man's intellect.

PERRY. (*Good-naturedly and buoyantly*) George, you need a little vacation and——

SMITH. (*Impatiently*) But I tell you I can't go.

PERRY. (*Good-naturedly*) Yes, you can. We are going to take a train at the Grand Central; and my hired man is going to meet us at the depot with the family carriage—just like the old folks used to do back home when company was coming. And Marjorie is going to meet you at the front gate and take you into the house and set you down to the finest meal you've had since you left the dear old home state. Yes, sir-ree!

SMITH. (*Shaking his head*) Yes, but——

PERRY. After dinner, you are going to spend the night with us. I will wager that it has been weeks and weeks since you've had one good big snore.

SMITH. I'm too busy to snore!

PERRY. In the morning, you are going to have some berries fresh from our garden.

SMITH. (*Rises. Coaxingly, as he goes around up-side of desk to him*) Now look here, Perry— (*PERRY rises and places hand on SMITH's shoulder*)

PERRY. (*Pleasantly and deliberately*) George, five years ago to-night Marjorie and I were married. Remember?

SMITH. I ought to—I was your best man.

PERRY. Now, we want you to help us celebrate. (*He forces SMITH gently back into his chair*)

SMITH. (*Picks up PERRY's hat and hands it to him*) Here's your hat. I don't want to hurry you off, but—(*PERRY accepts hat and SMITH takes hold of his arm to escort him to door. But PERRY does not move*)

PERRY. (*Smiling but serious*) You probably don't realize it, George, but in spite of the fact that you and I grew up together in the same little town and went to school together in the same little red school house, you haven't been out to see us for almost a year. And here we live only fifty-nine minutes from the Grand Central Station! (*Lays hat on desk*)

SMITH. (*Sincerely, having glanced at his watch*) I know it, Perry, and I'm ashamed of myself, but fifty-nine minutes is an hour.

PERRY. What are you trying to do, anyway, George—make a million dollars a minute?

SMITH. No, but if a man's going to make good, he's got to be on the job all the time.

PERRY. You aren't on the job all the time, old man. The job is on you!

SMITH. Now look here——

PERRY. I'm doing a big business myself, George. The demand for Dodge's hulled corn as a breakfast cereal is becoming enormous, and I am supplying the demand. But I haven't become a slave to my business. (*SMITH takes PERRY's hat from the desk and offers it to him, but PERRY ignores it*) When I am not selling hulled-corn my mind is not on hulled-corn but on my home—and I still have plenty of time for my friends. (*SMITH puts hat on PERRY's head, but PERRY pays no attention to it; simply smiles*)

SMITH. (*Impatiently, but not angrily, yet emphatically, pointing to map on left wall*) See that map?

PERRY. What about it?

(SMITH *crosses quickly to the map.*)

SMITH. (*Indicating with index finger on map as he talks*) I'm pushing timber land in Canada; wheat land in North Dakota; fruit land in Colorado; ranch land in Texas; cotton fields in Carolina; tobacco, sugar, coffee, rice, rubber, indigo plantations in Mexico, Central and South America! (*He suddenly remembers something important*) Oh, great Scott! (*Seizes telephone. In telephone hotly*) Haven't you got Plaza 8763 yet?—Plaza 8-7-6-3!! And hurry! (*To PERRY*) A friend of mine's going to be married this afternoon. Asked me to be one of his ushers.

PERRY. You are going to, aren't you?

SMITH. No! I couldn't spare time to usher if it was my own wedding. (*Angrily, in 'phone*) All right! (*To PERRY, as he jams receiver in hook*) Every time I try to get that confounded bridegroom, he's busy! (*In telephone*) Central! Send me a messenger boy right away. (*As he bangs 'phone on desk, enter JENNIE rear door, carrying open MSS.*)

JENNIE. (*Politely as she enters*) Excuse me for interrupting you, Mr. Smith, but——

SMITH. (*Politely, but rapidly*) Certainly, certainly! (*Going toward her*) Some mistake?

PERRY. (*Delightfully surprised, to JENNIE, as she goes towards SMITH*) Why, hello, Jennie!

(JENNIE, *surprised, stops and looks at PERRY.*

SMITH, *also surprised, stops and looks at him too.*)

JENNIE. (*Recognizing PERRY—pleased*) Hello.

PERRY. (*Curious*) Since when did you become a stenographer?

JENNIE. To-day. (*Starts towards SMITH*)

SMITH. (*Raising his hand to stop her*) Wait a



minute. (JENNIE stops) You said you *were* a stenographer.

JENNIE. (*Drolly serious*) I am—but I wasn't a real one until I began to work for you.

SMITH. What?

JENNIE. I could take dictation and typewrite, but a stenographer isn't really a stenographer until she works for a business man. (*Tactfully, as she goes to him*) Now here is what I wanted to ask you about. (*Placing her finger on page of MSS. She is now beside SMITH and holds MSS. so he can read what she indicated with finger*) It says: "The party of the second part assigns all rights, etc., etc." (*Glancing at SMITH*) Shouldn't it be: "The party of the first part?"

(SMITH, *much interested, takes the MSS., turns to the preceding page, reads the last few lines thereon quickly, but carefully, then:*)

SMITH. Of course it should! (*Please, as he hands her the MSS.*) I'm mighty glad you called my attention to that. That pleases me. It shows you're looking out for my interests. Just change it, will you.

JENNIE. Certainly.

SMITH. Thanks.

JENNIE. Welcome. (*To PERRY*) How is Mrs. Dodge?

PERRY. Nicely, thank you. (*Puzzled*) But what I can't understand is why you are working in this office.

(SMITH, *who has just glanced at his watch, misinterprets PERRY'S remark as an insinuation against him.*)

SMITH. (*Indignantly*) Why shouldn't she work in this office?



JENNIE. (*Surprised and somewhat anxiously, to PERRY*) He's a gentleman, isn't he?

PERRY. Of course! Of course he is! But I thought you were doing settlement work.

SMITH. (*Annoyed at PERRY'S stupidity*) She is!

JENNIE. That is why I came here.

(*PERRY looks at SMITH as if trying to figure out what's wrong with him.*)

PERRY. (*As if deeply interested, to JENNIE. As he speaks, SMITH shoves hat into his hand, but PERRY ignores it*) Just what kind of settlement work are you doing?

JENNIE. Helping poor little boys.

PERRY. (*Significantly, but drolly*) You certainly have come to the right place. (*Faces SMITH and smiling patronizingly at him, takes the hat*)

JENNIE. (*Realizing the way PERRY has interpreted her answer*) Oh, I didn't mean it that way! I came here to solicit money for——

SMITH. Don't pay any attention to him.

JENNIE. (*To SMITH*) Yes but *you* will explain how I——

SMITH. I'm too busy to explain anything—and so are you.

JENNIE. But——

SMITH. (*Politely, indicating rear door*) If you please.

JENNIE. (*Apologetic*) I beg your pardon. (*Starts towards rear door*)

SMITH. (*Politely, accompanying her*) That's all right! That's all right! No offence! I simply want to get that thing copied as soon as possible. You understand?

JENNIE. That is why I apologized.

SMITH. Never mind apologizing. It's his fault, not yours.

JENNIE. (*Now at rear door*) Thank you.

SMITH. Welcome. (*Exit JENNIE rear door.*

SMITH *closes the door for her, then, to PERRY, pointing at R. D.*) Do you see that door?

PERRY. (*After glancing at R. D.*) Nice door, isn't it? (*Lays hat on desk again*)

SMITH. Now, look here, Perry!

PERRY. I didn't know you knew her. (*Indicating rear door*)

SMITH. I don't!

PERRY. Do you mean to say that you don't know your own stenographer?

SMITH. She sent it in on a card, but I've lost the card. (*Hunting about desk for card*) Who is she?

PERRY. (*Significantly, as if speaking of a celebrated person*) Why, that's Jennie Brown!

SMITH. (*Glancing at him blankly. He doesn't know of JENNIE BROWN and his expression and voice show it*) Is it?

PERRY. Yes. You know who she is!

SMITH. (*Reminiscently*) Brown—Brown. There's something familiar about the name, but— (*Abruptly. He wants to save time*) Who is she? I haven't time to look her up in "Who's Who" or Bradstreet's!

PERRY. (*Surprised at his ignorance*) Why, she's the daughter of old man Brown!

SMITH. Call names, Perry! For Heaven's sake, call names! How can I tell one Brown from another if you don't name 'em? Was her father John Brown or Jay A. Brown or—

PERRY. Yes—Jay A.!

SMITH. (*Surprised*) The big real estate man who died a few years ago?

PERRY. Yes. He laid out our suburb and lived there quite a while. We were neighbours. That's how I happen to know Jennie.

(SMITH, *who has been listening intently to PERRY, glances at rear door, then:*)

SMITH. (*Gravely, but determinedly, to PERRY*) I'm going to keep her for my stenographer if it costs me a hundred dollars a week.

PERRY. (*Patting him on shoulder*) She's worth it.

SMITH. Well, good-bye, Perry—I——

PERRY. (*Slowly and trying to smile, but it is a pathetic smile. As he runs his hand slowly along the rim of his hat*) Of course there's a little sentiment about the dinner to-night, George.

SMITH. (*Sincerely, though rapidly*) I know it, Perry, but I'm absolutely too busy to monkey with sentiment.

PERRY. (*Generously*) All right, George. Good-bye. (*Extends hand and SMITH seizes it*)

SMITH. (*As he shakes PERRY'S hand and leads him towards R. D. to save time*) Good-bye, Perry. I'll see you when I get back from Argentine.

(*Enter EDDIE R. D., carrying a large decorated paste-board box.*)

EDDIE. Here are the flowers you sent for, Mr. Smith.

SMITH. Thanks. (*As he takes box from EDDIE*) Tell Miss Brown to come here. (*Eddie looks at him stupidly*) The new stenographer! Hurry!

(*Exit EDDIE briskly rear door as SMITH crosses to desk. PERRY remains where he is and watches SMITH curiously during the following. Enter JENNIE rear door. She looks perplexed, as if wondering why SMITH has sent for her.*)

SMITH. (*Very politely—and hastening toward her*) Here are your flowers.

JENNIE. (*Modestly as she accepts box*) Thank you, Mr. Smith! You are very generous.

SMITH. Don't mention it! There'll be more next time. (*Glances at watch*)

JENNIE. (*She thinks he wants to hurry her up*) I'm going.

SMITH. (*Apologetic as JENNIE exits*) That's all right! That's all right! Just so you get that thing copied as quick as you can. (*Exit JENNIE rear door. SMITH closes door for her, hastens down to desk, then glances at PERRY, who hasn't taken his eyes off him since EDDIE entered with the flowers. PERRY smiles wisely at SMITH. SMITH tries to gaze calmly at PERRY. Pause. Finally, when SMITH can stand it no longer: Explosively and somewhat angrily*) Well, what're you grinning at?

PERRY. I thought you didn't have time for sentiment.

SMITH. That wasn't sentiment—it was diplomacy. I nearly fired her before you came in, and had to do something to square myself. (*He makes a wry face as if in pain*) Ouch! (*Grabs jaw with hand*)

PERRY. (*As SMITH presses right hand against right cheek*) What's the matter?

SMITH. Toothache. Have had it for a month!

PERRY. Why don't you get it filled?

SMITH. Takes too long! (*Telephone rings. To PERRY, hand on cheek*) Answer that, will you? (*PERRY lays hat on desk. As PERRY is about to pick up 'phone*) Hurry!

(*PERRY smiles at him, then picks up 'phone.*)

PERRY. (*Calmly, in 'phone*) Yes?

SMITH. (*Impatiently*) Who is it? Tell me. Who is it?

PERRY. Doctor Adams.

SMITH. Let me talk to him. (*Forgetting tooth-*

ache, he hastens to PERRY who gives him the 'phone. In 'phone, rapidly) Hello. This is Smith. Say, Doc, I think I'll have to pass up that appointment altogether. I simply can't get there to-day—and—(Abruptly) I'll see you later. G'bye. (*Jams receiver in hook and puts telephone down*)

PERRY. Is he a dentist?

SMITH. No—stomach specialist. Haven't been able to sleep lately and thought maybe something might be wrong with my stomach. (*Calls*) Eddie!

(*Enter EDDIE R. D.*)

EDDIE. (*Entering*) Yes, sir.

SMITH. Fetch me a cup of coffee and a piece of apple pie. Hold on a minute—make that a lemon merangue.

EDDIE. Yes, sir.

(*Exit EDDIE rapidly.*)

SMITH. Eddie!! (*EDDIE re-enters*) Fetch both the apple pie and the lemon merangue. I'm starving!

EDDIE. Yes, sir. (*Hurries off*)

SMITH. (*To PERRY*) I haven't had a square meal in a week.

PERRY. (*Placing hand on SMITH'S shoulder*) George, what you need is a wife—

SMITH. What I need is a Bromo Seltzer. (*Places right hand to forehead and goes quickly to other end of desk*)

PERRY. You need a wife, like my Marjorie—a nice little woman who knows how to make home the dearest, sweetest, most restful spot in all the world! George; (*Laying both hands on SMITH'S shoulders*) why don't you get yourself a wife like Marjorie? (*Slight pause. They are looking steadily into each other's eyes. Taking hold of PERRY'S wrists gently*)

but firmly, SMITH removes the hands from his shoulders and places them emphatically at PERRY'S sides)

SMITH. (*Calmly, but with potential emphasis*) Perry—I've told you politely that I'm busy. I've told you politely that I couldn't go home with you. Now I ask you politely to get the hell out of here!

PERRY. (*In a tone of voice bespeaking genuine sincerity*) I want to help you, George.

SMITH. (*Quickly and emphatically*) I hire my help!

PERRY. But——

SMITH. The elevators in this building go down every minute! (*PERRY smiles broadly—whereupon SMITH rushes to door and jerks it open. Enter JENNIE rear door, MSS. in hand. To JENNIE, somewhat brusque*) Is it all copied?

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly and calmly, as she comes down briskly*) Yes, sir.

SMITH. (*Grabs handful of MSS. from desk*) Here's some more! (*Shoves them at her. JENNIE gives her MSS. to SMITH and accepts SMITH'S from him. Incisively*) Hurry! (*JENNIE does not move. Slight pause, then: Very politely*) If you please. (*JENNIE nods slightly and starts up*)

PERRY. (*To JENNIE as she starts towards rear door—confidentially, after glancing at SMITH who is busy reading MSS. at lower left*) Have you any chloroform?

JENNIE. (*Curiously—puzzled*) Chloroform? (*PERRY nods.—She looks at him quizzically, suspects his meaning, glances at SMITH who is now thrumming desk nervously with fingers, like a pianist playing piano. Then, to PERRY*) Paderewski?

(*PERRY nods. JENNIE shakes her head—she hasn't any chloroform—Then exits rear R. PERRY goes toward SMITH.*)

PERRY. George——

SMITH. Go.

PERRY. But——

(SMITH flings MSS. on desk and seizing PERRY'S hat, hurls it at door.)

SMITH. Get out!

PERRY. (*Deeply hurt by SMITH'S action*) I beg your pardon. (*He goes slowly towards D. R. SMITH, hands clenched, and brows knit, stares at him. Arrived at D. R., PERRY picks up hat, glances at it, then begins to wipe off the dust with his handkerchief. When the hat is dusted: Kindly, but not smiling*) Our latch string is always out. (*Putting on his hat*) And Marjorie and I are always in to you, George. (*Opens door to go*)

SMITH. Wait a minute. (*As he goes towards PERRY, characteristically rapid but deeply apologetic*) I didn't mean to make such a damn fool of myself. Really I didn't. But I've got so much to do that—(*Extending hand*) I'm sorry, Perry. Awfully sorry.

PERRY. (*Consolingly, as he shakes SMITH'S hand*) That's all right, George—I understand—I understand.

(*Enter EDDIE R. D., with a tray containing a mug of coffee, a piece of pie and a lemon meringue. He leaves door open.*)

SMITH. (*To EDDIE*) Put it on the desk. Quick!

EDDIE. (*Hurrying awkwardly toward desk. He is afraid of spilling the coffee*) Yes, sir. (*As EDDIE passes SMITH, SMITH grabs mug of coffee from tray and gulps down the coffee*)

SMITH. (*Rapidly to PERRY, his mouth full of lemon meringue*) Good-bye! (*As he shoves PERRY through the open door*) Remember me to



Marjorie. Good-bye! (*Exit PERRY backwards, SMITH shoving him gently with hands against his breast. Slamming door shut, SMITH hastens towards desk, empty coffee mug in hand. Presses his hand against his forehead*) Fetch me a Bromo Seltzer!

EDDIE. (*Accepting mug which SMITH shoves at him*) Yes, sir. (*Starts towards door*)

SMITH. Make it two! Hurry!

(*EDDIE runs to door and exits. SMITH grabs the piece of meringue from tray and begins to eat it rapidly.*)

EDDIE. (*Re-entering*) Excuse me, Mr. Smith, did you send for a messenger boy?

SMITH. Hours ago! Send him in. (*EDDIE exits rapidly. SMITH bolts another mouthful of meringue—cramming it into his mouth and, sitting, grabs pen and begins to write hurriedly. Enter MESSENGER BOY, leisurely. Seizing blotter—and with mouth filled with meringue*) Hurry! (*As SMITH blots note by pounding on blotter, the BOY hastens to him. Rapidly, as he snatches envelope from desk drawer and shoves note into it and sticks flap of envelope with a piece of meringue*) 467 Riverside Drive. Bridegroom! Run! (*He gives the boy the envelope and exit MESSENGER BOY briskly. Glancing at watch*) Another fourteen minutes all shot to thunder! (*Jamming watch into vest pocket, he sits down, shoves the tray of food aside, grabs an unread MSS. from pile, jerks it open and begins to read, tracing finger racing across page at terrific rate. The door R. is opened cautiously, as if someone was pecking in to make sure that SMITH was alone. Then it opens widely and MARJORIE DODGE enters. She is a good-looking, healthy, likeable young woman—medium height and quite*



*plump. She wears a street suit which, although made of good material, is of the 1909 model—pleated skirt quite full at the bottom, and a rather long but plain jacket to match. Her hat is quite country and matches her suit. Her appearance is intended to give the impression that she was raised in a small town and although now living in a suburb of New York, still clings to the small town conservatism as regards clothes. In short, she is somewhat rustic, but not to the extent of being ludicrous. In her right hand she carries a large, black, mesh-cloth market-bag which is bulging with small paper-covered packages—delicacies—for the anniversary feast. In her left hand, she carries a small leather shopping bag and a rather large, square, box-shaped bundle. The bundle is tied with heavy twine and has a wooden carrying handle. MARJORIE'S chief characteristics are: wholesome simplicity, big-hearted hospitableness, a cheery face, and a broad, good-natured smile and a jovial laugh. Upon entering, MARJORIE places her mesh-bag on floor and closes door quietly. As SMITH tosses document aside and reaches for another, he sees MARJORIE. Her back is to him and she is closing the door. SMITH does not recognize her) Never mind the door. What do you want—city farms or property?*

MARJORIE. (*Turning—good naturedly emphatic*) I want you!

SMITH. (*Surprised*) Why, hello Marjorie! (*Rising and shaking her hand*) How are you? Glad to see you! But if you don't wait too long, you can overtake your husband. Perry hasn't been gone more than a minute. (*Snatches up market-bag and is about to open door for her*)

MARJORIE. I didn't come here to overtake my husband.

SMITH. What did you come for?

MARJORIE. To take you home with me.

SMITH. (*Putting down bags*) Say, what is this—

a conspiracy to keep me from going to South America? (MARJORIE *laughs heartily*. SMITH *watches her a moment*. Then, *pepperishly but trying not to be impolite*) Pardon my interruption, Marjorie, but—

MARJORIE. (*Broadly*) George, you make me laugh!

SMITH. All right, but please step outside to do it—this is my busy day. (*Glances at watch—then at rear door*)

MARJORIE. Something told me you'd say "No" to Perry, so I came in to ask you myself.

SMITH. That was sweet of you but—

MARJORIE. (*Smiling confidently*) I knew you wouldn't have the heart to refuse *me*.

SMITH. I haven't but I've got to do it just the same. You see—(*Jerks out watch, looks at it. Then glances anxiously at rear door and picks up MARJORIE'S bags*)

MARJORIE. I see! (SMITH *looks at her curiously and she smiles broadly*) Bring her along.

SMITH. Who?

MARJORIE. (*Broadly ironical—joshing him*) George, you look as innocent as a stuffed rabbit, but you can't fool me. (*Chucks him under the chin and giggles*)

SMITH. (*Dropping bags*) Be rational, Marjorie! You know I haven't time to care for women.

MARJORIE. Busier men than you have been shot by Cupid. And whenever a man looks at his watch the way you do, there's only one answer—petticoats!

SMITH. I tell you—

MARJORIE. Stop your crawfishing!

SMITH. I'm not crawfishing. I—

MARJORIE. You come out to our house this evening and bring that young lady with you. (*Pats her on back. Then snatches up bags*) Come on!

(*Just as MARJORIE gets to the door—JENNIE enters.*)

*MSS. in hand—the two WOMEN recognize each other.)*

MARJORIE. (*Dumbfounded, but delighted*) Why, Jennie Brown! (*Drops everything, rushes to her and hugs her*)

SMITH. (*To himself*) Oh, Lord!

MARJORIE. (*Enthusiastically to JENNIE*) What on earth are you doing here?

JENNIE. Helping.

SMITH. But—

MARJORIE. If you don't I'll think it's because you don't want to come.

SMITH. (*Rapid but sincere*) Don't be foolish, Marjorie. I like you. I like Perry. I like your little home. I like your food. I like the way you cook it. I like everything. But I simply can't come. (*Picking up bags*) Now come on, I'll go as far as the elevator with you. (*Hastens to door and opens it*)

MARJORIE. (*Long-faced*) Aw, why can't you come out, George? I—I—(*Wipes her eyes with handkerchief*)

SMITH. (*Going toward her—sympathetically*) Don't cry, Marjorie. I don't want to hurt your feelings but—

MARJORIE. To-night is our wedding anniversary.

SMITH. I know it but you'll have another one next year, and maybe I can get out then.

MARJORIE. Why, how perfectly lovely! I've known George ever since—(*She sits—to SMITH'S despair*) sit down, Jennie—ever since we were married. Maybe he's told you about me already. I'll bet he has!

JENNIE. Don't bet very much.

(SMITH glares at them both and looks at his watch.)

MARJORIE. (*Struck by an idea*) Say, why don't

you bring him out to dinner to-night, I'm sure he'd come if you asked him. Ask him—go ahead—ask him. You'll come with her, won't you, George? (*Has another idea—looks from GEORGE to JENNIE*) Perhaps you were going to have din—(*Pauses in the middle of the word—trying to ask the question innocently*) Where are you dining to-night, Jennie?

JENNIE. So many unexpected things have happened to me since breakfast that I won't be surprised if I have dinner in a hospital—or the police station.

SMITH. (*Rapidly and strictly business, but polite—approaching MARJORIE*) Pardon me, Marjorie. I know she's an old friend of the family and all that, but she's my stenographer now and business is business. (*Takes hold of her arm and starts toward R. D. with her. Calls loudly*) Eddie! (*To MARJORIE*) It's a case of being downright rude—or missing my boat to-morrow. (*Rushes to bundles and begins to pick them up*)

(*Enter EDDIE R. D. briskly.*)

EDDIE. Yes, sir.

SMITH. (*Shoving bundles into his arms*) Take these to the elevator! Quick! (*Exit EDDIE R. D., as SMITH hastens to MARJORIE*) Come on, Marjorie!

MARJORIE. (*Good-naturedly remonstrative*) Now, George—

SMITH. (*Taking her by arm*) You're my friend, but business is business. Come on!

MARJORIE. (*Going to the door with SMITH—looking back—talking*) We don't mind George! He's funny but we know he means well. But I'm just wild to know how you ever came to work here and—(*They have reached R. D. and MARJORIE balks, stops and refuses to exit—still talking*) Have you known George very long?

SMITH. (*Emphatically*) Come on!

MARJORIE. It's the strangest thing that you two young people——

SMITH. Stop your crawfishing! (*Puts his hands gently but firmly against her back and pushes her off—he follows her and re-enters almost immediately. He slams door shut, jerks out watch savagely. Sotto voce, but angry and disgusted as he gazes at watch*) Hell! When a man's in a hurry, it's just one damned friend after another! (*Jams watch in pocket—then seeing JENNIE*) Oh,—excuse me!—I like my friends but——

JENNIE. (*Drolly*) I understand. You like them but you have no time for them.

SMITH. (*Locks the door*) Precisely! You don't mind my locking this door, do you?

JENNIE. Why should I—if you leave the key in it.

SMITH. (*Taking MSS. from JENNIE who is near desk*) All done? (*Before she can answer*) Fine! Now for dictation. (*Slaps MSS. on desk, seizes speaking tube, presses it to his ear and pushes button. Then to JENNIE*) Sit down. (*Indicating chair at R. of desk, then in the tube*) Eddie, get me a cigar and—(*Eyes JENNIE*) a cocktail—quick! (*Drops tube. To JENNIE*) I don't drink,—but I need something to brace me. You understand. (*As though to resume business*) Now then! I want to answer a letter to—(*Begins to hunt for a letter*)

(*JENNIE now seated and ready for dictation, watches SMITH as he rummages through contents of the drawer. Then:*)

JENNIE. (*Tactfully and with a twinkle as if it had been puzzling her*) Pardon my inquisitiveness, Mr. Smith, but why did Mr. Dodge wish to chloroform you?

SMITH. He wanted me to eat one of those slow family meals.

JENNIE. Don't you think it would do you good?

SMITH. (*Busy with letters, sorting them for the one he wants*) Maybe. No time.

JENNIE. What do you think time was made for?

SMITH. To make money!

JENNIE. (*After a contemplative pause, during which SMITH grows impatient with letters*) You probably think me very inquisitive, but—

SMITH. (*Tossing letters into desk*) Not at all! Not at all! (*He snatches another bundle of letters and searches hurriedly for the one he wants*)

JENNIE. Please don't think I am asking these questions out of idle curiosity.

SMITH. (*Quickly and with a trace of impatience keeping right on sorting letters*) That's all right! Ask them!

JENNY. (*Frankly*) How much money are you trying to make?

SMITH. Lots of it!

JENNIE. When you have made lots of it, what will you do?

SMITH. (*Still busy with letters, quickly*) Marry a wife and keep her like she ought to be kept, I suppose.

JENNIE. (*Puzzled*) You "suppose?" Haven't you any definite plans?

SMITH. I'm too busy to plan. (*Impatiently*) That confounded letter! Where did I—(*Looks again*)

JENNIE. Did you place it on file?

SMITH. No: didn't have time. (*Tosses letters into drawer, slams drawer shut—jerks open another drawer—snatches out letters*)

JENNIE. Do my questions bother you?

SMITH. (*Searching for the lost letters*) Not at all! Not at all!

JENNIE. When you are ready to marry, how old will you be?

SMITH. The Lord only knows!

JENNIE. Approximately how old?

SMITH. (*Somewhat explosively*) Forty! What did I do with that—(*He sorts letters with increased rapidity*)

JENNIE. (*After a slight pause*) Aren't you afraid that by the time you are forty all the nice women will be gone?

SMITH. (*Confidently*) Not a bit!

JENNIE. You know, they are marrying awfully fast.

SMITH. Yes, but there are just as fine fish in the sea as ever were caught.

JENNIE. But to catch those fine fish, you must have fresh bait.

SMITH. Do you mean to insinuate that *my* bait is stale?

JENNIE. If it isn't, it soon will be.

SMITH. What do you mean?

JENNIE. You will pardon my frankness, Mr. Smith, but have you looked at yourself lately?

SMITH. Haven't had time.

(JENNIE takes a little mirror out of the small bag at her waist.)

JENNIE. (*Offering SMITH the mirror*) Reflect a moment? (*SMITH gazes at self in mirror*) Mr. Smith, I haven't known you very long, but I've known you long enough to see that if you keep on working at this hurry-hurry, break-neck speed, by the time you are forty, you will be so old and wrinkled and hump-backed that no self-respecting fish will even *nibble*.

SMITH. Think so?

JENNIE. Do you doubt your own reflection? Look at yourself again.

SMITH. (*Sizing up his face, satisfied*) I guess I can land at least one pretty good fish.

JENNIE. Certainly—of a kind.



SMITH. (*Sharply*) What's that?

JENNIE. There are always those that rise to golden bait.

SMITH. What?

JENNIE. Money will always buy one kind of wife, but I didn't think that was the kind you wanted.

SMITH. It isn't. I want a wife who will love me for what I am, not for what I have.

JENNIE. I am ready for that dictation now.

SMITH. (*Begins to pace nervously R., dictating rapidly*) Mr. F. H. Henderson, Winnipeg, Canada. Yours of recent date received and would have answered immediately but—(*After a pause—to JENNIE*) Is there any way in which a man can preserve his—his bait?

JENNIE. (*Drolly*) It has been done.

SMITH. How?

JENNIE. Plenty of sleep, plenty of exercise and lots of wholesome food. (*Loud knowing at R. D.*)

SMITH. (*Emphatically*) Busy!

EDDIE. (*Loudly outside R. D.*) Cocktail!

SMITH. (*As he dashes to R. D.*) Coming! (*Unlocks door. Enter EDDIE carrying tray containing cocktail and big black cigar wrapped up in tinfoil. SMITH grabs cocktail in one hand and cigar in other. Exit EDDIE briskly, with tray. Coming to desk*) Anything else? (*Drops cocktail glass to floor, smashing it*) Oh, damn!

JENNIE. Putting it as man to man, Mr. Smith, and in the vernacular of a gentleman—everything you do, you do too damn fast.

SMITH. (*Lighting cigar*) Thanks.

JENNIE. Welcome. Now as to that dictation—

SMITH. Oh, yes, where was I?

JENNIE. Mr. F. H. Henderson, Winnipeg—

SMITH. Oh, yes—would have answered sooner had I not been working day and night, closing up the biggest land deal ever—(*Pause*) Say: why

did you ask me how old I'd be before I got ready to go fishing?

JENNIE. (*Seriously, after a slight pause*) Do you know what is going to happen if you keep on hurrying?

SMITH. Sure! I'll be rich and retire—then I can rest.

JENNIE. (*Droll but significant*) A long rest.

SMITH. (*Suddenly remembering it, and emphatically*) That reminds me—Oh, that's awful—a dear friend of mine had a funeral to-day and I was to have been one of his pallbearers. (*Disgusted with himself as he glances at watch*) Huh! Too late now. I've been so rushed that I— (*About to dictate—then pausing suddenly as though he'd forgotten what he'd intended to do. Pressing his hand to his forehead. After a slight pause*) That's queer. What—what'd I call you in here for?

JENNIE. To dictate some letters.

SMITH. Oh, yes—Who was that fellow I was dictating to?

JENNIE. (*Looking at him as though remarking his forgetfulness*) Mr. Henderson—of Winnipeg—

SMITH. Yes—Er—I'm a bit heady—guess I'm hungry. (*Reaches for the plate containing the pie. Enter EDDIE. Irritably*) Now what is it?

EDDIE. Here's a special delivery letter, sir. (*Hands him the letter and starts toward R. D.*)

SMITH. Eddie!

EDDIE. (*Stopping, near door*) Yes, sir.

SMITH. (*Pressing hand against forehead*) Fetch me a pair of Bromos—for my head.

EDDIE. Yes, sir.

SMITH. (*From force of habit as EDDIE exits*) Hurry! (*Exit EDDIE; SMITH rips letter open. To JENNIE, as he jerks contents from envelope*) Just a moment.

JENNIE. Certainly.

(*As he reads letter, JENNIE gazes at him with an expression of mingled curiosity and sympathy. She is keenly interested in him, but it is the interest of an observer, not an admirer.*)

SMITH. (*As he reads letter*) Confound it!  
(*Deeply regretful as he reads second page of letter*)  
Confound it!! (*As he reads third page of letter:*  
*angrily*) Con—Hang me, anyway!

JENNIE. Why?

SMITH. Day before yesterday was my mother's birthday.

JENNIE. (*Anxiously*) And you forgot all about it?

SMITH. Yes.

JENNIE. How old is she?

SMITH. Sixty.

JENNIE. Tc! Tc! Tc! Didn't you ever *think* of her?

SMITH. Yes, but—Take this wire.

JENNIE. Yes, sir.

(*SMITH runs his fingers through his hair as if trying to collect his thoughts. His expression is that of a self-condemning man.*)

SMITH. Dear Mother: Yours received. Regret even more than you failed to remember your birthday. First time has ever occurred; promise you will be the last. No, not ill. Busy, that's all—very, very busy. (*He pauses*)

JENNIE. (*As if repeating what had been dictated to her and as though writing it*) Too busy to remember even his dear old mother. (*SMITH winces*) Is that all?

SMITH. Yes. (*JENNIE rises*) Send only that last sentence—yours, George.

JENNIE. Aren't you going to send her any love?

(*SMITH doesn't hear her—is thinking.*)

SMITH. "Too busy to remember even his dear old mother." (*He takes piece of pie from table mechanically*)

JENNIE. (*Kindly*) What is your mother's address?

SMITH. Ohio. (*Bites end off pie*)

JENNIE. (*As she writes on pad*) What town?

SMITH. Why—why—it seems to have slipped my mind.

JENNIE. Surely you know where your mother lives?

SMITH. (*Bewildered*) That's strange—(*He places piece of pie on edge of desk, then takes several letters from inside of coat pocket*) I generally have one of her—one of her—one of her letters with me. (*He fumbles the letters, aimlessly*)

JENNIE. (*Kindly*) Can't you even remember the name of the town?

SMITH. (*Getting more confused*) I—I seem to have forgotten it.

JENNIE. A man ought to know the name of his home town.

SMITH. (*To JENNIE*) What were we talking about?

JENNIE. Your mother's address.

SMITH. (*Almost stupidly*) What about it? (*Picks up piece of pie, automatically*)

JENNIE. Why—

(*SMITH begins to glance around the room as if it were a strange place. JENNIE stops short and watches him anxiously.*)

SMITH. Where—where am I?

JENNIE. Here—in your office.

SMITH. (*Listlessly*) Oh, yes,—yes. (*Taking deep breath*) I—I feel all in. (*Takes a bite of pie*)

JENNIE. (*Sympathetically*) Does your head ache?

SMITH. Not exactly. (*He takes another bite of pie*)

(*Enter EDDIE with a glass of Bromo Seltzer in each hand. JENNIE beckons him to stay where he is.*)

EDDIE. (*In an excited whisper*) What's the matter?

JENNIE. Nothing—but don't tell anyone. (*Indicating the glasses*) Throw that away and get Mr. Smith something nourishing.

EDDIE. But he said——

JENNIE. (*Firmly*) I say get him some beef tea.

EDDIE. But he——

JENNIE. (*Quietly but emphatically*) Mind!

EDDIE. (*Meekly*) Yes, ma'am. (*Exits—closing door*)

(*JENNIE takes piece of pie out of SMITH's right hand, and tosses it into waste basket.*)

SMITH. (*Weakly remonstrative*) You've thrown away my breakfast!

JENNIE. (*Gently*) Eddie is bringing you some beef tea. And when he returns I shall have him get you some toast and eggs and milk, and a nice piece of beefsteak.

SMITH. (*Complainingly*) A horse couldn't eat that! I can't spare the time to eat a *regular* meal!

JENNIE. (*Sympathetically, but with a frankness which borders on the emphatic*) Mr. Smith, you are on the verge of a nervous collapse.

SMITH. I'm too busy to collapse. (*Placing hand to forehead, he rises*) Now as to that dictation—(*Dictating slowly and carefully*) Mr. F. H. Winnipeg, Henderson, Canada. (*Starts L., but JENNIE stops him gently*)

JENNIE. (*Kindly*) Sit down.

SMITH. (*Trying to reason with her*) Now listen——

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly but firmly*) You listen to me. (*She indicates chair. SMITH sits in front of desk. JENNIE then sits in pivot chair, above desk*) Mr. Smith, since I've been in your office to-day, a friend has died, a friend has married, your mother has had a birthday, and you have had two invitations to dinner—all ignored by you. You stay here hurrying and rushing and life passes you by. You will die without even having lived—and you are too good a man for that. You have been working too hard, Mr. Smith. You must take a rest.

SMITH. I haven't time to rest. I——

JENNIE. I am not your family physician, but what you need is to spend several months quietly.

SMITH. But I tell you——

JENNIE. The ideal place for you is a farm.

SMITH. But——

JENNIE. (*With quiet enthusiasm*) I know where there's a farm that will just suit you.

SMITH. (*Petulantly*) Now listen——

JENNIE. (*As before*) It is in New Jersey.

SMITH. (*Emphatically, and as if that were the last straw*) No! I wouldn't live on a farm in Jersey if——

JENNY. (*Gently and tactfully*) Just on the edge of Jersey. (*Encouragingly and as if that would satisfy him completely*) You can see New York.

SMITH. Can you?

JENNIE. (*Drolly, but seriously*) Yes—on a clear day. (*Then, smiling, and intimately, almost as if she were telling a child a fairy story*) It is a little farm with a little pasture, and a few little fields, and a nice big roomy barn. There is a little house, a cow or two, a few chickens and some bees. Now as I said before, Mr. Smith, I am not your family physician, but it does seem to me that the wisest thing you can do is to lease that farm, go out there.

put on a pair of overalls and forget everything except the cows and the bees and the chickens.

SMITH. Yes, but——

JENNIE. It will be the making of you, Mr. Smith! Early to bed, windows wide open, fresh air rushing in! Early to rise, mist on the meadows, sun coming up, birds singing, roosters crowing, bees humming! All day long, whenever you are thirsty—sweet milk. When you are hungry—fresh eggs, fried chicken, milk gravy, vegetables right out of your own garden. (*During the above, SMITH, with his hands laying on the desk, has watched JENNIE as if fascinated. JENNIE is now leaning forward and her face is radiant with enthusiasm. Slight pause, then JENNIE taps the back of SMITH'S hand lightly and smiles*) Honestly, don't you think you should go to Jersey? Don't you?

SMITH. (*Emphatically, but not petulantly. He is simply stating an incontrovertible fact*) I can't—I've got to go to South America to-morrow—big land deal—Argentine. I was going to give you final instructions before I left.

JENNIE. Have you bought your ticket?

SMITH. Yes, and I've cabled I'm coming.

JENNIE. (*Gently, yet with an air of finality*) But you're not.

SMITH. (*Petulantly*) I've got to!

JENNIE. (*Seriously*) Mr. Smith, if you don't take a rest right now, I know what it is going to cost you.

SMITH. (*Apprehensively*) What do you mean?

JENNIE. My father used to do the same thing you are doing—forgot and—the rest of it—and it killed him.

SMITH. (*Surprised, but quietly*) Really?

JENNIE. Yes—and we don't want that to happen to you. Father hurried and worried, wouldn't take time to eat and grew so nervous that he couldn't sleep.



SMITH. (*As if certain she could have done it if anyone could*) Couldn't you put him to sleep?

JENNIE. No. Like you, he wouldn't listen to reason.

SMITH. *I'm listening.* I've never listened so much to anybody in my life.

JENNIE. (*Eyes him*) Thank you. Finally, my father's nerves gave away, he became paralyzed and—(*Significantly*) Isn't Spanish the national language of Argentine?

SMITH. (*Puzzled by the abrupt transition*) Why?

JENNIE. (*Matter-of-fact, yet with a significant little emphasis on "I"*) I speak Spanish.

SMITH. Say—you know, you're a wonderful girl. You can typewrite and do Settlement work and write shorthand and speak Spanish—

JENNIE. That's how I learned to typewrite. I taught a little stenographer Spanish and she taught me stenography.

SMITH. What else do you know?

JENNIE. A great deal—about land.

SMITH. (*Puzzled*) How does that happen?

JENNIE. I was raised on it. Father never talked of anything else—and in our home, father did all the talking.

SMITH. (*Deeply interested in the girl—and as if to make her a business offer*) Say—(*Then pauses as if to collect his thoughts*)

JENNIE. Were you going to Argentine to buy land or sell it?

SMITH. Buy.

JENNIE. Wheat land?

SMITH. How'd you guess it?

JENNIE. I was raised on land. When does your boat sail?

SMITH. Noon—to-morrow.

JENNIE. I can do it nicely and I'll cable you full details.

SMITH. (*Puzzled*) What do you mean?

JENNIE. I am going to South America and you are going to New Jersey.

SMITH. But——

JENNIE. This afternoon, we will go over and look at the farm.

SMITH. Listen——

JENNIE. On our way over and coming back, you can tell me what to do in Argentine.

SMITH. Yes, but——

JENNIE. (*Surprised and as if defending her honor. Rising*) Don't you trust me?

SMITH. Trust you? (*Rises, then with deep sincerity*) Why, Miss Brown, if I had only one dollar in the world and the wolf was scratching at that door with both feet—I'd give you that dollar and let you go to Paris. That's how much I trust you!

JENNIE. Then surely you will trust me with a little Mother-Earth in Argentine?

SMITH. (*Putting hand to head again*) Oh!

JENNIE. Sit down. (*Enter EDDIE R. D., with the beef tea on a tray, also a spoon, napkin and small salt and pepper shakers. As she takes the tray which EDDIE brings her*) Get Mr. Smith's coat and hat.

EDDIE. Yes, ma'm. (*Starts towards clothes cabinet*)

JENNIE. (*As she places tray on desk*) And order a taxi.

EDDIE. Yes, ma'm. (*During the following, EDDIE brings SMITH'S coat and hat from clothes cabinet*)

JENNIE. (*To SMITH, putting a napkin in front of him with all a woman's tenderness when taking care of someone*) I am sure you are going to like that little farm. (*Handing him the beef tea*) It's a perfect darling! (*SMITH takes beef tea and makes a wry face. JENNIE sees that he doesn't like*

*the stuff, but pretends that she thinks he does like it, smiling)* It's very nice, isn't it? They make beef tea so appetizing now-a-days. (SMITH glances at her as if about to say: "This is awful stuff.") A little more salt? (*Smiling at him and shaking a little more salt into his beef tea as the curtain falls*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

THE SCENE:—*The barn-yard of SMITH'S New Jersey farm, two months later. About 11 A. M. on a hot summer day.*

*Rear—The barn, an old large one, extends from one side of the stage to the other. Center of barn, a large roller-door. It is open and through the doorway can be seen a long narrow window in rear of farm. It is directly opposite the front door. Through this window can be seen long rows of chicken yards with small white coops which have green roofs. The yards are built, and arranged, like the runways in front of barn. The entire field, several acres in size, is used for chicken raising. Beyond the field is an old stone fence, some trees, and then a typical New Jersey landscape under a clear summer sky. Above the front door, a small double door opening into hay loft. It is closed but practical. To the R. and L. of barn door and built against the barn are mesh wire pigeon coops. They are as high as the barn door. The coop on the L. is filled with live Blue Rock pigeons; the coop on the R., is filled with live white pigeons. Each*

coop has a small door in the corner, nearest the barn door.

*Right*—The farm-house. It is a low white structure with a window in the center—at about R. 2 E. This window, which is practical, is open, but its shutters, which are green, are closed. At the rear end of the house are three wooden steps and a small landing, or porch, leading to the kitchen door, which is practical. Between the end of the house and the barn is an open space through which can be seen a green clover field and in the background a stone fence and dusty road.

*Left*—Chicken runways, about five feet wide and fenced with mesh wire five feet high. These runways extend from within six feet of rear coops to lower front, L. 1 E. The lath doors of these runways are about eight feet from the side of the stage. There are four runways. Live chickens, about two-thirds grown, occupy these runways.

*Right Center*, near the house and parallel with it, is a wooden bench two feet high and ten feet long upon which are white bee-hives with supers. The hives face L. The upper end of this bench is on a line with upper end of runways.

There are two entrances to the barn yard R. 4 and L. 4. There is a hand-sickle on the gate of the lower runway.

AT RISE:—Pause during which cockerels try to crow and pullets try to “sing.”

Veteran cocks crow lustily, off rear, egg-proud hens cackle loudly, and pigeons coo—Then the green shutters open and PHOEBE SNOW thrusts her head out of the window.

PHOEBE is a fat negress cook of about forty, and wears a bandana-handkerchief on her

*head. She looks all around to be sure SMITH is nowhere in sight.*

PHOEBE. (*Calling loudly and somewhat angrily—looking toward barn*) Mistah Smith! (*A calf blats off L. (in the distance) as though it were being dragged towards the barn. Slight pause, then louder*) Mistah Smith! (*Slight pause, then—the calf's blat coming nearer*) Mistah Smith, your bwekfast has done bin waitin' for t'ree hours! Are you comin' or ain't yuh? (*Pause, during which she listens alertly. Then, disgusted, her head disappears from window and she slams the shutters shut, and appears at the door—now very angry—calls off*) Mistah Smith! (*The calf blats now as though very near*)

SMITH. (*Voice off*) Hello!

PHOEBE. Bwefkast! (*The calf blats nearer*)

SMITH. (*Voice off*) I haven't time to monkey with breakfast! I'm busy!

PHOEBE. (*Muttering to herself*) All right! Den stay out dere an' work yuh fool head off! I should worry! (*She re-enters house*)

SMITH. (*Calls*) Woodrow! (*Louder*) Woodrow!

(*The hayloft door opens slowly, revealing WOODROW, a farmer boy of fourteen wearing a black sateen shirt, skin-tight, faded blue overalls and a seedy straw hat through the strawless top of which protrudes his shaggy head. He is on his knees.*)

WOODROW. (*Loud, but with languid drawl*) Yep?

SMITH. (*Still off*) You attend to those incubators!

WOODROW. (*Calling to SMITH*) I am attendin' to 'em. (*To himself*) I can't work faster'n I can.

(Enter SMITH hurriedly, L. 4 E. He is breathless and is mopping his perspiring face. He wears overalls, a soft shirt unbuttoned at the throat and sleeves rolled up to elbows, and a large straw hat. He is much tanned but quite as thin and nervous as in the previous Act. He is going to call, but the telephone rings and he rushes to barn door. He snatches a telephone from shelf R., side of door just inside the barn and jams receiver to his ear. The telephone has about thirty feet of insulated wire cord which permits him to walk all over the yard while telephoning. During the following scene he paces nervously to R., and L., in front of barn.)

SMITH. (In his characteristic high tension voice) Hello—Yes—Yes—This is the George H. Smith chicken farm. Broilers?—You bet your life!—Fifty cents a pound—Forty-five—in Rhode Island?—Then buy them in Rhode Island!—You can't touch one of my Jersey chickens for a cent less than fifty—Twenty-five dozen?—I'll make you twenty-five at forty-nine—Say, you don't want broilers: you want setting-hens! (SMITH jams receiver into its hook. The calf blats again. Very loud as he looks off L.) Woodrow! (The calf blats) Woodrow! (Still louder as he strides toward barn door) Woodrow!

WOODROW. Was you callin'?

SMITH. (Gazing up at WOODROW—*emphatically*) I thought I told you to tie that calf so it couldn't get away!

WOODROW. I did.

SMITH. Like thunder! I've been chasing it for half an hour! (Wipes his forehead)

WOODROW. (Grinning, as SMITH mops brow with handkerchief) Did yu catch 'er?

SMITH. Come down here! I caught her all

right! and I'll tie her myself this time. Where's a rope? (*As SMITH starts towards the barn to look for a rope—the telephone in his hand, the calf blats*) Shut up! (*The calf blats*) Blat then! Keep on blatting.

WOODROW. (*Meekly*) Here's a rope. (*As WOODROW picks up rope from L. of loft-door, SMITH places telephone on ground. Then WOODROW tosses rope to him and he catches it. The calf blats just as SMITH catches the rope*)

SMITH. (*Goes toward L. 4, tying noose in rope as he goes*) I'll blat you!

(*Exits SMITH hurriedly L. 4, tying noose in rope as he exits. WOODROW grins at SMITH until he exits, then sits in the loft-doorway and, dangling his bare-feet against the side of the barn, presses the first two fingers of his right hand firmly and perpendicularly against his lips, spreads them apart somewhat, then spits, as if trying to see how far he can spit. He then wipes his fingers across the leg of his overalls, takes a tin buzzer from his pocket, places the loops of twine about each hand and begins to buzz the buzzer. It whistles. Suddenly there is a violent hysterical blatting off left, as if SMITH and the calf were having a rough-and-tumble fight. It lasts only a moment or two. There is a slight pause, then—Re-enter SMITH L. 4, his appearance shows that he has had a tussle with the calf. He limps somewhat on left leg, but has an expression of grim triumph.*)

WOODROW. (*Grinning at him*) Did you tie her?

SMITH. You bet I did! And I tied her to stay! (*Telephone bell rings. SMITH dashes to barn door but fails to find telephone*) Where in thun-



der's the—(*Sees the telephone standing where he left it in barn-yard, picks it up. During the following he paces rapidly back and forth across barn-yard. In 'phone*) Hello!—Yes—Squabs? You bet your—Five a dozen—Certainly, you can get squabs cheaper than that! (*Sarcastically*) You can get sparrows cheaper, too. But if you want thoro'-bred, milk-fed, full grown squabs you've got to pay full grown prices—Cheaper than that in Rhode Island?—Say, you're the fellow who wanted milk-fed broilers at mother-hen prices—I don't know your name, partner, but I can guess your nationality. (*Jams receiver in its hook and starts toward barn. Takes one step then the 'phone rings again. He stops and shoves receiver against his ear*) Hello!—Oh, hello, Eddie! What is it?

—Tell him I've changed my mind and don't want it—No! I'm not buying land now. Everything I've got's for sale. Refer everyone to the agent. G'bye. (*Jams receiver in hook, and starts toward barn door to replace 'phone on shelf. Sees WOODROW, who is buzzing the buzzer, and halts. Emphatically to WOODROW*) Are you coming down to-day or next winter? You've been working for me two months and you haven't hurried once.

WOODROW. (*Petulantly, as he puts buzzer in pocket*) I'm hurryin'!

SMITH. (*Pointing at run-ways*) Feed those chickens some clover. (*Starts toward barn door*)

WOODROW. Gee! It's hot!

(*WOODROW swings out of loft door and, hanging on the door-sill, gauges the distance to the ground. He is barefoot; his overalls are shin-high and ripped across the left "cheek" of the seat, exposing to view a slice of white skin. He hangs on the sill as though afraid to drop. SMITH replaces 'phone on its shelf inside barn, then—looking at WOODROW.*)

SMITH. Woodrow! Time is money. (WOODROW *drops to the ground. He stands, stork-like, on one foot and begins to pick splinter out of right foot which he holds in his hand*) Water the pigeons.

WOODROW. (*Still picking at splinter*) All right.

SMITH. Hurry! (*Hastens to barn door. Peevishly*) All right, but can't a feller take time to pick a splinter out of his big toe! (*He starts down L., walking on toes of right foot*)

WOODROW. (*Whining*) Anyway it's too hot to hurry!

SMITH. Never mind the heat! Cut your clover. (*Grabs rubber coat from peg to L. of barn doorway—inside*)

WOODROW. (*As he takes sickle deliberately from gate*) First thing you know, I'll get sunstroke.

SMITH. (*Jerking coat on*) You stand as much chance of getting sunstruck as the North Pole. (*He grabs green bee-veil from L. of door and pulls it down over hat. As he tucks its edges inside of coat-collar and buttons up coat, WOODROW, sickle in hand, stops in front of lower bee-hive and squints at it closely*)

WOODROW. (*Wisely as he squints at bee-hive's entrance board*) These here bees're gettin' ready to swarm. (*As SMITH jerks on rubber gloves taken from coat pocket*) What you oughter do is to kill one of the queens.

SMITH. That's what I'm going to do. (*Rushes down to lower hive*)

WOODROW. (*Surprised*) Ain't you goin' to smoke 'em first?

SMITH. Haven't time.

WOODROW. Gee! Then it's me for the clover! (*SMITH jerks lid off of lower hive*) Good mornin'! (*He runs to R. 4 E. and exits*)

(*SMITH tosses the lid to the ground, steps to the*

lower side of hive—at end of bench—lifts comb frame from the hive and examines it to find a queen. The wax of the frame is black with age. One side examined, SMITH flops the frame over and scans the other side hurriedly. The calf meanwhile, has been blatting, and continues to blat about every tenth second. As SMITH is scanning the brood-frame, an automobile horn sounds off R. SMITH, busy with frame, pays no attention to the horn. The frame examined, SMITH places it rather roughly on the ground, resting it upright against the leg of the bench. He then grabs another frame from hive. As he does so, the calf blats very loudly. Enter MRS. LEE-HUGH, R. 4 E. She wears a light green automobile cloak, gloves, and a motoring hat covered with a large green veil, which also covers her face. Immediately upon entering, MRS. LEE-HUGH glances suspiciously at SMITH who is so busy with frames that he does not see her, then she stops and listens, as if trying to locate the calf. The calf blats again, whereupon MRS. LEE-HUGH crosses resolutely to L. 4 E. and exits. Exit MRS. LEE-HUGH L. 4 E. SMITH, who has been examining second brood-frame, now places it quickly and somewhat roughly against the first one and jerks third frame from hive. The calf blats a long, angry, defiant blat. As SMITH starts to examine third brood-frame re-enter MRS. LEE-HUGH, L. 4 E. She goes resolutely toward SMITH, whose back is to her.)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (With official dignity) Are you the proprietor of this place?

SMITH. (Busy with frame and without looking at her) Yes. What do you want—squabs or——

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Who tied that calf?

SMITH. (As before) I did and I tied it to

stay, too! (*Flops frame over to examine other side*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Well young man, you can consider yourself arrested. (SMITH *glances at her, blankly*)

SMITH. (*As if not comprehending*) What?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. As an officer of the law, I place you under arrest.

SMITH. Now wait a minute. This is a case of mistaken identity. I'm an honest, hard-working—

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Emphatically*) I am a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty. Here is my star. (*Showing him nickel-plated star on underside of cloak lapel. Taking hold of his arm*) Come along.

SMITH. Say, I've no time to listen to your nonsense—I'm not a criminal to begin with and in the second place I'm entirely too busy to be arrested.

(*Jerks away from her and begins to examine brood-frame, energetically turning it over and over during the following scene.*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Emphatically*) You're guilty of cruelty! I've caught you red handed. I was driving past here in my car, and I heard that poor calfie crying clear from the road! Now you take off your veil and come with me.

SMITH. (*Politely but emphatically*) Madam, I don't know who you are but let me remind you of this vital fact—These bees have *not* been smoked.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Wisely*) Oh, you can't bluff me that way!

SMITH. I'm not trying to bluff you, but if you stay here much longer you'll get stung. Understand? *Stung!*

(*He is now very close to MRS. LEE-HUGH. She peers into his face, her nose almost touching*)

*his nose, their faces are close together.*  
Then—)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Delightfully surprised*) Why, Mr. Smith! (*Lets go his arm and extends her hand*) How do you do?

SMITH. (*Baffled*) I beg your pardon, but—

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Sweetly*) Don't you remember me? (*Puts her face close to his*)

SMITH. Your manner is somewhat familiar, but—  
—Raise the curtain. I can't see your face.

(MRS. LEE-HUGH *raises veil and smiles.*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Now don't you recognize me?

(SMITH *places brood-frame on top of the hive, looks curiously at MRS. LEE-HUGH, then—*)

SMITH. You're probably a very celebrated woman, but I'm up to my neck in bees and—who are you?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Fetchingly*) Why, I am the friend of the poor old horse you are pensioning!

(SMITH'S *face grozes long.*)

SMITH. Oh.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. I'm on my way now to the farm where the dear old pet lives.

SMITH. Then don't let me detain you.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Oh, you're not—It's a pleasure. (*Smiling, as she offers her hand, a la swan's neck*) But what on earth are you doing way out here?

SMITH. Resting! (*He turns abruptly to bee-hive and snatches up brood frame*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Radiantly*) I have wonderful news for you, Mr. Smith! I've been intending to write you.

SMITH. (*Suspiciously*) What is it?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Girlishly silly*) Guess!

SMITH. (*As he shoves veil up on hat, exposing face to view*) My dear old horse has galloped up the golden stairs.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Guess again! (*She places tips of fingers to lips as if trying to suppress a chuckle*)

SMITH. You've sold it.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Smiling, as she shakes her head*) Once more.

SMITH. (*Hopefully*) You've sent him to the White House for a wedding present.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Shaking her head and smiling*) It is such *glorious* news! Can't you guess?

SMITH. I haven't time to monkey with guessing—tell me.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Well, yesterday——

SMITH. (*Affecting a smile*) Yes—go on—tell me—yesterday——

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Early yesterday morning the dear old horse that you have been pensioning——  
(*Pauses*)

SMITH. (*Impatiently*) Yes, yes—Go on, don't stop, you might forget.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Well, the dear old horse—  
(*She chuckles. SMITH grabs pencil and paper from coat pocket and shoves them to her.*)

SMITH. Write it! If you can't say it, write it!

MRS. LEE-HUGH. I prefer to tell it.

SMITH. (*Irritated*) Then tell it! Quick! Time is——

(*He jams pencil and paper in coat pocket and MRS. LEE-HUGH nerves herself into calmness.*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Well, early yesterday morning the dear old horse that you have been pensioning found a coltie——

SMITH. (*Puzzled*) I don't quite grasp you.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Now quite serious—disgusted with SMITH'S stupidity*) Frankly, and putting it bluntly, Mr. Smith, your horse is the mother of a colt.

(SMITH is staggered at this news. Gaining his equilibrium, he places his hand tenderly on his forehead.)

SMITH. (*Weakly—recovering from the shock*) Why the old son-of-a-gun!

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Disappointed*) Why don't you smile?

SMITH. (*Thoughtfully*) I'm trying to figure out who the joke is on, me or the horse.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. On you, of course.

SMITH. Who's going to support Coltie?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Smiling*) You are—of course.

SMITH. Not if I know myself!

(*Jerks veil down over face. Tucks it into coat collar and goes to bee-hive.*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Indignantly*) Mr. Smith, you are no gentleman!

(SMITH with frame in hand, turns to MRS. LEE-HUGH.)

SMITH. We won't argue that point. (*Then abruptly*) Are your skirts hobbled?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Precise*) That's none of your business!

SMITH. We won't argue that point, either, but bees are no respecters of persons and *they have been known to migrate upwards.*



MRS. LEE-HUGH. It takes more than bees to make *me* desert my duty.

SMITH. All right! All right! Stay! Stay! But if anything awful happens, don't blame me.

(*As SMITH places bee frame on ground directly in front of MRS. LEE-HUGH, PHOEBE SNOW opens shutters and pokes her head out.*)

PHOEBE. Mistah Smith.

SMITH. Yes. What do you want, Phoebe?

PHOEBE. (*Deliberately*) Yuh bwekfast was done ready an' on de table three hours ago.

SMITH. All right. Keep it there and I'll eat it for dinner.

PHOEBE. But——

SMITH. (*Emphatically*) Busy!

PHOEBE. All right! Starve if yuh want to! I should worry! (*Jerks her head inside and slams shutters shut*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*With icy emphasis, as SMITH is about to take another frame from hive*) Mr. Smith, are you, or are you not, going to support that coltie?

SMITH. Not.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Caustically*) What *would* you do with the poor little thing?

SMITH. Ship it to France for chipped beef—and send mama along for veal.

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Outraged*) You cruel, bitter thing!

SMITH. (*Dramatically—going toward her*) Who made me bitter?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Sarcastically*) How should I know?

SMITH. You told me that horse was on its last legs and now it is the mother of a brand new colt. Can you blame me for being bitter?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. Just the same, Mr. Smith, you *have* to provide for that little——

SMITH. Yes, but suppose that little coltie, following in the footsteps of its rickety old mother brings into the world another colt, and that colt a colt, and that colt a colt. Am I to be a fairy godfather to all of them? Mrs. Lee-Hugh, I hope to have a family of my own some day. Can that hope be realized if I dissipate my earnings on a flock of promiscuous quadrupeds?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Shaking her finger in his face*) Let me tell you right now, Mr. Smith, if you don't provide for that coltie and—(*She hesitates, glances front, then clutches her cloak in the vicinity of her left knee—just below the joint, and yelps sharply*) Ooch!

(*SMITH glances at her. Her left hand still clutching her left leg, she grabs her right leg just above the knee, winces with pain, grits teeth and stares front, frightened, as if expecting, yet dreading, another sting.*)

SMITH. Pardon me, but is there anything I can do to relieve you?

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Savagely*) Mind your own affairs! (*She clutches the calf of her left leg and gasps with pain*) Ooh!

SMITH. Hadn't you better let me smoke them?

(*MRS. LEE-HUGH clutches her right leg spasmodically, then her right knee with left hand.*)

MRS. LEE-HUGH. (*Wildly, as she grabs hysterically at all parts of her limbs*) Help! Help! Help! (*SMITH dashes to barn, seizes smoker from shelf at L. of door, inside barn, rushes down to MRS. LEE-HUGH and begins to smoke her vigorously all over. MRS. LEE-HUGH shaking fist at him*) You're to blame for this! You wanted them to sting me! Now I will send the sheriff after you!

(*Grabbing limbs as before*) Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!

(*Dashes up to R. 4 E., and off, SMITH following and trying to smoke her. At R. 4, he turns, runs back to the hive and begins to smoke bees. As MRS. LEE-HUGH exits, the calf lets out a long loud agonizing blat. This is the last time it blats. Enter WOODROW, R. 4 E., with an arm-load of clover. When in front of barn door, he lets out a terrified howl, drops the clover and dashes into barn. A moment later he dashes out of barn, batting his ears with his hands; hurdles the pile of clover, and dashes off L. 4 E. The next moment, the auto horn sounds, off R. A few moments later it sounds again, farther off.*)

WOODROW. (*Peeking in first, enters cautiously, rubbing his right ear and whimpering*) If you'd smoked 'em when I told you to, I wouldn't a got stung.

SMITH. (*As he replaces brood-frames in hive*) They're all right now. They won't sting any more.

WOODROW. Wow! (*Now at pile of clover in front of barn. Grabs his nose with both hands—then, blubbing*) Like thunder they won't! I've got a stinger in my nose as long as your arm! (*Boo-hooes*)

(*The telephone bell rings within barn, SMITH slaps lid on hive and rushes to barn, grabs telephone from shelf and thrusts it beneath veil. During the following, in which he half-faces front, he looks like a heavily veiled monk, the bee netting completely hiding his face and the 'phone. HE paces all over the stage, more nervous and faster than before.*)

SMITH. Hello!—Yes—This is the George H.

Smith chicken farm. Broilers?—You bet your—  
Fifty cents—My chickens are milk-fed and thoro'-  
bred—You can't beat Jersey chickens. All right!  
Forty dozen—Yes, sir! This afternoon's express—  
(*HE jams receiver in hook*) Rush order from  
New York! (*Jerking off hat and veil*) Where's  
the men?

WOODROW. (*Looking cross-eyed at his nose and  
trying to pick out the stinger*) White washing the  
new chicken coops.

SMITH. Run and get 'em! Rush order from  
New York. (*HE throws veil and hat aside.*  
WOODROW starts towards L. 4 E., still trying to get  
the stinger) Run!

WOODROW. (*Screwing up face*) It's too hot to  
run!

SMITH. Then fly!

WOODROW. (*Whimpering, as HE runs toward  
L. 4*) What-a you think I am—a bird!

(*Exit WOODROW on a lazy dog-trot, L. 4 E., caress-  
ing nose as HE exits.*)

SMITH. (*Jerks out watch, glances at it, then  
rushes to L. 4 E. Loudly, to WOODROW*) Hurry!  
(*Enter PERRY DODGE, leisurely, R. 4 E. HE is  
fanning himself with a palm-leaf fan, wears  
a Panama hat, a two piece summer suit and looks  
cool. SMITH, looking off Right, is unaware of his  
entrance. Placing hands to mouth megaphone-like*)  
Hurry!

(*Starts toward barn door, sees PERRY, and stops  
short. PERRY, who has been fanning himself  
complacently, salutes SMITH with fan.*)

PERRY. (*Genially calm*) Well, here I am!

SMITH. Hello! Why didn't you come yester-  
day? I wired you. Didn't you get it?

PERRY. Yes, but—(*Smiles and begins to fan*)

SMITH *who is now beside him*) George, I have a little surprise for you.

(SMITH *shoves fan aside.*)

SMITH. Keep it! (*As fast as a man can speak*) I've had one surprise. I want to talk business. Listen: The poultry business in this country's a gold mine. Few people know it but those that do are getting rich. Listen—A good healthy egg costs five cents. Shove it into an incubator for three weeks and out comes a chicken. Feed the chicken four months. If he's a rooster, sell him for a dollar. If he's a hen, keep him and make him lay eggs. Either way, the profit is six thousand per cent. And so long as the American people continue to eat broilers at fifty cents a pound and eggs at fifty cents a dozen, it's a sure thing. Not only that. Squabs! Big money! Profits enormous! From one little pair of pigeon eggs a man can make a fortune.

PERRY. But——

SMITH. (*Stopping him with a silencing gesture*) I'm going to raise squabs and chickens by the thousands and make a bankful of money. A bankful!

PERRY. I thought you came over here to——

SMITH. And I'm going to let you in on it.

PERRY. (*Fanning SMITH*) How much stock do you want me to buy?

SMITH. There isn't going to be any stock—strictly an honest enterprise, and I'm going to make you my partner.

PERRY. (*Drily, after he stops fanning*) Thanks for the compliment, George, but——

(*Smiles and begins to fan SMITH slowly.*)

SMITH. Now listen: you're manufacturing hulled corn, aren't you?

PERRY. Yes.

SMITH. What do you do with the hulls?

PERRY. Nothing.

SMITH. In the chicken business, you can turn your hulls into money. With *our* poultry eating your hulls practically everything will be clear profit. Think of it! Six thousand per cent! *Now* will you be my partner?

PERRY. I'm sorry, George, but——

SMITH. Aren't the profits big enough?

PERRY. Yes, but Marjorie and I are going to move to Seattle.

SMITH. (*Amazed*) What!

PERRY. (*Smiling*) That was the little surprise I had for you.

SMITH. (*Incredulous*) Seattle!

PERRY. Yes—in the state of Washington,—you know.

SMITH. Yes, yes, I know, but what in thunder are you going way out there for? Isn't New York big enough for you?

PERRY. (*Gravely*) That's just the trouble, George—it's *too* big.

SMITH. But why Seattle? • Why not Jersey? There's plenty of room over here.

PERRY. (*Good naturedly but very seriously*) Yes, but after all New Jersey is little more than a suburb of New York, and Marjorie and I want to get away from this New York spirit—you know, S P E E D and M O N E Y.

SMITH. Why should *you* want to get away from it? It hasn't affected *you*. You're just as slow as you've always been.

PERRY. (*Fanning himself*) Yes, and so is Marjorie. Both of us are just as sensible and deliberate and inseparable now as when we lived back home. But if we continue to stay in New York, the New York spirit will get us.

SMITH. Nonsense!

PERRY. It got you. It's getting the other boys. And if I stay here, sooner or later it will get *me*.

SMITH. (*Somewhat disgusted*) So you're going to move to quiet little Seattle?

PERRY. Yes. Marjorie is digging up her favorite bulbs and rose bushes now—going to take them out there and start the new home right. And I'm going to introduce my hulled-corn into British Columbia and make just enough money to keep us comfortably. (*SMITH tries to interrupt—but PERRY silences him with fan and keeps on talking*) Beginning with the first day of next month, I shall be a proud citizen of the Great Far West, the land where people *live*.

SMITH. Now let me finish what I was saying—and don't talk all the time yourself.

PERRY. (*Interrupting him*) Now just a minute, George—

SMITH. (*Impatient*) See that barn? (*Pointing at barn*) Chuck full of incubators and shipping crates! (*Indicating pigeon coops*) See those pigeons? They live forever and have an infinite capacity for squabs, and I'm going to make all four sides of that old barn look like one great pigeon coop. (*Pointing to R. and L.*) And come here—see those run-ways—(*Rushes to L. 4 E.*) Hurry!

PERRY. Now wait a minute, George—

SMITH. (*Pointing off left*) See those chicken coops. That's where the mother hens are shelling out the golden eggs for my incubators. And the eggs that won't hatch I'll sell to the restaurants in New York. God bless them! Go down and take a look at 'em.

PERRY. (*Good naturedly but emphatically*) All right, but before I move another inch, you've got to let me ask one question.

SMITH. (*Jerks watch from pocket and glances at it*) Ask it! Quick! What is it? *My time's money.*

PERRY. Now that you have plunged into the



chicken business, are you going to stay in the land business too?

SMITH. No. There's more money in chickens and I love this quiet life.

PERRY. Will you need a stenographer?

SMITH. No, that's one of the beauties of this business. All you need are eggs, incubators and a telephone. For a while I thought I'd have to get a bookkeeper but I changed my mind and got a cash-register.

PERRY. Then I don't suppose you will need Miss Brown?

SMITH. No, not here. Hens and petticoats don't jibe. Why?

PERRY. Marjorie wants her to come out to Seattle and live with us. I can give her a good position. You won't object, will you?

SMITH. No take her along. She's a nice girl and she's been doing splendid work for me in South America, but as I say, a poultry farm is no place for a lady. Take her. I don't need her any longer.

PERRY. When will she return from South America?

SMITH. (*Glancing impatiently at watch*) I don't know. Now my chicken coops are brand new and—

PERRY. (*Somewhat surprised and puzzled*) Have you written her that you're going out of the land business?

SMITH. I intended to but haven't had time. (*Taking PERRY by arm and escorting him toward L. 4*) Hurry down and take a look at those new chicken cops. I'd go with you myself but I've got a rush order from New York and—(*Enter WOODROW, L. 4 E. HE has a cockerel in his arms. His nose is very large, due to the bee sting. Eagerly to WOODROW*) Did you tell the men? (*Before WOODROW can answer, SMITH sees the chicken and starts towards WOODROW*) What're you doing with that chicken? Is he sick?

WOODROW. (*As SMITH takes chicken from him*)  
He acts like it.

(*SMITH takes hold of chicken's head.*)

SMITH. Great Scott! He's got a fever! (*Then loudly, toward house—*) Phoebe! Phoebe! Come here! Hurry! (*HE pulls the fowl's bill apart, looks down its throat. Disgusted to PERRY*) Can you beat that for luck!

PERRY. What's the matter?

SMITH. This broiler's got the mumps. (*Looking down chicken's throat again*) Gad, on both sides! (*Loudly and angrily*) Phoebe!

(*PHOEBE enters, from the kitchen door. She wears a blue kitchen apron and waddles when she walks.*)

PHOEBE. Yes, suh. I'se comin'.

SMITH. Hurry!

PHOEBE. (*Standing at top of steps—indignantly*)  
Dis am a fine day to hurry!

SMITH. (*Impatient*) Come on! Stop that waddling! Walk! Move! Hurry!

PHOEBE. I won't hurry!

SMITH. I don't want you to hurry! All I want you to do is to cook some hot bran mash for this sick chicken just as quick as you can. Quick!

(*HE is now at bottom of steps—she at top of them*)

PHOEBE. (*Anger rising*) Now youse look out how you talk to me, Mistah Smith! I'se a lady, suh. Yes, suh! An' I ain't goin' to be talked to like I wahn't no lady. No, suh!

SMITH. (*As if trying to cool her down*) Now listen——

PHOEBE. (*Angrily, as SHE descends steps slowly*)

Don't you "listen" me! Youse had five cooks 'fore I came here an' dey all quit. Why? (*Shaking her finger at him*) 'Cause youse wanted dem to do every'ting in a hurry. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! All de time! Yes, suh! An' dey all quit! An' I'se goin' to quit, too! Yes, suh. (*SHE is now face to face with him and begins to untie her apron strings*)

SMITH. (*Laying hand on her shoulder, persuasively*) Now look here, Phoebe—

PHOEBE. Don't youse "Phoebe" me! From now on I'se Mrs. Phoebe Snow. Yes, suh. I'se cooked for de best families in South Ca'lina. An' now youse want me to cook for an ole sick chickun. What d' youse t'ink I am—a roustabout nigger? No, suh!

SMITH. (*Trying to pacify her*) You're dead right, Mrs. Snow. You're the best cook that ever greased a griddle. But—

PHOEBE. Don't youse try to honey me up. Me—goin' to cook for an ole sick chickun! No, suh!

SMITH. (*Friendly*) Now look here, Mrs. Snow—

PHOEBE. (*Hurls apron to ground, and shaking fist in his face*) Yuh git an automobil' an' take me back to dat railroad station just as quick as yuh can. Yes, suh!

SMITH. If you leave here, you'll walk. Understand?

PHOEBE. (*Savagely defiant*) All right, Mistah Smith! I'll walk, (*SHE wabbles angrily up steps. Turning on him*) but I ain't no chicken cook—No, suh! (*Then, as SHE opens kitchen door*) No, suh!

(*Exit PHOEBE, head high, into kitchen. SHE slams door shut. During SMITH'S scrap with PHOEBE, PERRY and WOODROW have been amused onlookers. They stand near the barn door.*)

SMITH. (*Turns to PERRY*) When you get

back to New York, send me a cook that'll cook for chickens. Never mind me! I'm all right. But my chickens *must* be taken care of! (*HE tucks the chickens under right arm and taking hold of PERRY'S arm with left hand, starts towards L. 4 E.*) Now run down and take a look at those coops. Hurry! (*Shoves PERRY off—then looks at watch*)

PHOEBE. (*Who has thrown shutters open and sticks her head out*) Mistah Smith. I hope you can't git anoder cook as long as you live!

SMITH. (*Hotly, to PHOEBE*) You get out of here! I'll do the cooking myself.

WOODROW. (*In despair*) Oh, Lordy!

PHOEBE. (*Sarcastically*) Ha! Ha! (*Withdraws her head from window*)

SMITH. (*To WOODROW*) Turn him loose in the garden so he can't mix with the rest of the broilers. (*Shoves chicken into his arm*)

WOODROW. (*Remonstrating*) But he'll eat up all the tomaters!

SMITH. Never mind the tomatoes. They'll do him good. Tie a red string round his hind leg so we'll know him.

WOODROW. But——

SMITH. Hurry!

WOODROW. (*Hotly*) All right!

(*Exit WOODROW on the run, R. 4. SMITH dashes into barn and exits L. Slight pause, then re-enter SMITH from barn, carrying a lath-and-wire chicken crate on his shoulder. Runs down to lower run-way, drops crate in front of run-way gate then dashes up to barn, snatches galvanized iron bucket filled with wheat, from inside and to R. of doorway, runs back to lower run-way—jerks gate open—enters run-way, closes gate then exits L. 2, calling "Chick! Chick! Come Chick!" and hurling broadcast handfuls of wheat rapidly.*)

SMITH. (*Rapidly and loudly, as he exits, scattering wheat*) Chick, chick, chick, chick! Come chick! Come chick! Chick, chick, chick, chick, chick! Come chick! Come chick!

(*HE keeps this up—off stage L. for almost a minute then stops. After SMITH has been calling "Chick, chick" about ten seconds, re-enter WOODROW, R. 4, carrying the sick chicken, a piece of red rag round its leg. HE enters cautiously, stops a moment and listens to SMITH as if half-frightened and wondering what to do with the chicken—muttering to himself.*)

WOODROW. I ain't goin' to turn no sick chicken loose in them tomaters if he's going to do the cookin'!

(*HE starts towards barn-door, espies chicken crate in front of lower run-way, stops, grins impishly, looks carefully off L. 2—as if to make sure SMITH is not watching him—then opens lid of crate quickly—slips chicken into crate and closes lid. HE then drags crate to house—shoves it under window, then runs up and exits. R. 4. As WOODROW exits, SMITH stops calling to the chickens. Then PHOEBE SNOW pokes her head out of the window. SHE now wears a large black hat gaudily trimmed with bright yellow flowers and yards of cheap ribbon.*)

PHOEBE. (*Angrily, as she pokes her head out of window*) Mistah Smith—I—(*Not seeing SMITH she stops short then mumbles angrily to herself*) I want you to understand dat I'se—I'se a perfectly honest woman—yes, suh!

(*The sick cockerel in the crate crows hoarsely and*

*somewhat weakly but with considerable enthusiasm. PHOEBE stops short. SHE sees the chicken in the crate; stares at it her eyes growing bigger and bigger. SHE glances around to be sure that no one is watching her, then she stoops down and raises the lid of the crate—then after much difficulty, gets hold of the cockerel—lifts him out of the crate and disappears. Re-enter SMITH, from lower run-way, bucket in hand and on the run. HE jerks open lower run-way gate, dashes out, runs to next run-way gate, jerks it open, then—)*

SMITH. Hurry, Woodrow! Hurry! (*Jumps inside run-way, slams gate shut and exits off run-way calling "Chick, chick, chick!" and scattering wheat. Loudly and rapidly as he exits off 2nd run-way*) Chick, chick, chick, chick! Come chick, come chick! Chick, chick, chick, chick! Come chick, come chick!

(*Exit SMITH, 2nd run-way—calling as before "Chick, chick," etc. Enter PHOEBE, from kitchen door. SHE wears an old long linen duster and carries a dingy old cloth-covered telescope bag. SHE comes down majestically and places the telescope bag on the ground near R. 4—while she buttons her duster. During this, SMITH is heard calling to the chickens. WOODROW enters R. 4. At this moment the cockerel crows hoarsely in the telescope. WOODROW quickly glances in the crate and takes in the situation—stands motionless looking at PHOEBE. PHOEBE glances about quickly to see if any one has heard the crow—her eyes light on WOODROW. There is a dramatic pause. WOODROW grins at her. SHE tries not to look at him but keeps glancing at him in spite of herself. HE doesn't take his eyes off her—keeps*

*right on grinning.* PHOEBE watches him, her eyes growing big with fear and indignation. Presently she picks up telescope slowly and gingerly, but without taking her eyes off WOODROW—then.)

PHOEBE. (*Indignantly*) Say, chile, w'at you grin-nin' at? (*WOODROW keeps on grinning*) Don't yer 'cuse me of steal' anything. I'se an honest woman—Yes, suh! You tell Mr. Smith I don't cook fer no sick chickens—no, suh! (*Flounces off R. 4 E.*)

(*Re-enter SMITH, rapidly, from 2nd run-way, calling WOODROW. HE is just in time to see PHOEBE go. Has bucket in hand as before. Comes through gateway, slams gate shut.*)

SMITH. Oh, she's gone, eh?

WOODROW. Yep—an' I bet she has the chicken mumps to-morrow!

SMITH. What makes you think so?

WOODROW. Oh, I dubno—somethin' jest tells me.

SMITH. (*To WOODROW, with fresh energy*) Here kid—You get the rest of the broilers into their coops—(*Shoving bucket at him*) And I'll carry the crates. Now! Speed it up! (*WOODROW accepts the bucket and SMITH dashes to barn. WOODROW goes toward gate of third run-way. From doorway of barn, as WOODROW opens gate deliberately*) Speed it up! (*Exit into barn*)

WOODROW. I am speedin'! (*HE enters run-way, closes gate then exits calling very listlessly, in contrast to SMITH'S calling—"Chick, chick, chick, chick!" As he goes off third run-way*) Chick! Chick! Chick! Chick!

(*HE can be heard calling chickens, off l. about fifteen seconds. Re-enter SMITH from barn dragging a chicken crate behind him. HE*



*rushes down to lower run-way, slams crate on ground, then rushes to L. 4 and puts hands to mouth like megaphone.)*

SMITH. (*As loud as he can yell*) Hey! This is a rush order from New York! Move! (*Dashes into barn and exits L.* JENNIE BROWN appears at R. 4 E. SHE wears pretty traveling suit and a neat summer hat and carries a parasol. Pauses a moment, then enters and, advancing a few steps, stops and surveys the barnyard. SHE is very happy because she thinks SMITH is enjoying his rest here on the farm and also because she likes him. SHE has just arrived from South America and come direct from the dock to the farm. Re-enter SMITH from barn, a chicken crate on each shoulder. HE hastens down to second run-way, drops the crates in front of it, then, jerking out watch, stares at it. JENNIE meanwhile has been gazing at him as if completely dumb-founded. SHE thought he was resting and here he is hurrying worse than ever. SMITH, exasperated at lateness of the hour—staring at watch) My God! (*Throws back head and, loudly, as if trying to make the whole world hear*) Hurry!

(*HE starts towards barn door on a gallop—JENNIE holds out her parasol, like a flagman stopping a train. SMITH halts abruptly. HE is so surprised he can't speak—just stares at her.*)

JENNIE. I thought you came over here to rest.

SMITH. I am resting. (*HE sees the pile of clover which WOODROW dropped, rushes to it, grabs it up in both arms, dashes to run-way, hurls it over fence into run-way—then rushes back to JENNIE rapidly and enthusiastically as he seizes her hand and shakes it*) Golly, but it's good to see you!

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly*) Have you been resting that way ever since I went to South America?

SMITH. No. The first two weeks I did nothing

but write letters—to you. I wrote three and four a day, and long ones, too. Weren't they?

JENNIE. Yes, and very interesting.

SMITH. Say, but you're looking fine!

JENNIE. For a while, they came in bundles on every steamer.

SMITH. (*Admiring her*) You know I'd just about forgotten how you looked.

JENNIE. Suddenly they didn't come at all. Were you *ill*?

SMITH. When did you get back—to-day?

JENNIE. Yes. *Were* you ill?

SMITH. Why didn't you let me know you were coming? Woodrow could have met you at the village and brought you out.

JENNIE. (*Smiling and with a touch of sympathy*) Well, I knew that you came here to rest, so I didn't want to disturb you.

SMITH. No disturbance at all. You should have told me when you were coming.

JENNIE. To be honest with you, I did tell you.

SMITH. (*Puzzled*) You did?

JENNIE. Yes!

SMITH. When?

JENNIE. In my last three letters. Didn't you receive them?

SMITH. Yes, but—(*Pauses*)

JENNIE. But what?

SMITH. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I haven't read your last three letters.

JENNIE. (*Surprised, but quietly, her feelings deeply hurt*) You—you haven't?

SMITH. (*Apologetic*) It wasn't because I didn't want to read them. Really it wasn't!

JENNIE. (*As if censuring herself*) I suppose I should have written them on a typewriter.

SMITH. That wasn't it. I could read them all right. At first I read every letter you wrote. They were wonderful! (*JENNIE smiles drolly*) Really

they were. If I'd kept on reading those letters I'd fallen in love with you.

JENNIE. Was that why you stopped?

SMITH. Not at all! Not at all! But you see it just happened that lately whenever your letters arrived, the incubators were hatching and when the incubators hatch, I have absolutely no time for anything but chickies.

JENNIE. (*Puzzled*) Chickies?

SMITH. (*Explaining rapidly*) Yes—little chickens, baby chickens—chickens de luxe. When they start to come out of the 'shell, I'm up there every minute (*Pointing at barn-loft*) to see that none of those downy little fellows get scorched. And believe me, when one thousand eggs are simultaneously turning into one thousand chickies, it keeps me busy. Busy!

JENNIE. I wondered why you had almost forgotten how I looked.

SMITH. (*Puzzled*) What do you mean?

JENNIE. Chickies were probably coming the day my photograph arrived.

SMITH. (*Surprised*) Did you—(*Telephone rings. SMITH dashes to barn, grabs 'phone and during the following comes rapidly down to JENNIE and paces back and forth in front of her. JENNIE has to keep stepping over the wire to prevent getting tangled up in it. SMITH talks rapidly and intensely*) Hello!—Yes—Squabs? I've got the best squabs that ever came out of an egg or went into an oven—Five a dozen and milk-fed—Yes, sir! Milk-fed!—Ten dozen? They'll be there to-night.—Yes, sir—milk-fed. Absolutely! (*Hanging up receiver*) Woodrow!

WOODROW. (*Off L.*) Yep!

SMITH. Give the squabs some more water! (*Dashes to barn and replaces 'phone on shelf*)

JENNIE. I'm afraid this place isn't doing you much good, after all.

SMITH. (*Coming down*) Oh, yes it is. There's a big chance here to make a lot of easy money and I love the quiet life—Listen—(*Stops in front of her*) The poultry business in this country is a gold mine. One good healthy egg costs a nickel. Shove it into an incubator and out comes a chickie. Give him a little grain, a little grass, a little exercise and lots of water, and the first thing you know he's ready for New York. If he's a rooster, sell him. If he's a hen keep him. Either way you make a clear profit of approximately six thousand per cent. Doesn't that sound like a gold mine?

JENNIE. Yes, but it isn't.

SMITH. Why not?

JENNIE. Do all your eggs turn into chickies?

SMITH. No, but——

JENNIE. Do all your chickies live?

SMITH. No, but——

JENNIE. Do they buy their own food?

SMITH. No, but——

JENNIE. Do they build their own houses?

SMITH. No, but——

JENNIE. When the roosters are old enough to go to New York, do they pay their own railroad fare or do you pay it for them?

SMITH. I pay it, but——

JENNIE. And if you send all your roosters to New York will *all* your eggs hatch?

SMITH. No, but——

JENNIE. And don't you consider your own time worth anything?

SMITH. Yes, but——

JENNIE. Then I don't quite understand how you are going to make a clear profit of even six hundred per cent.

SMITH. Well, you see——

JENNIE. *We* used to raise chickens and we did well if we broke even.

SMITH. Yes, but you didn't go into it as a profession.

JENNIE. Happily, no.

SMITH. Do you consider it a disgrace to raise chickens?

JENNIE. Certainly not—but don't you consider it unfortunate for a splendid specimen of manhood to enter into direct competition with a setting hen?  
(Starts toward kitchen steps)

SMITH. Where're you going?

JENNIE. As I came up the road a few minutes ago, I met a Mrs. Snow. I am going to get your breakfast. (Starts again)

SMITH. (Following her) Never mind my breakfast!

(JENNIE stops and faces him. He pauses.)

JENNIE. You came to this farm to rest and eat three square meals a day.

SMITH. I know it, but——

JENNIE. When your breakfast is ready, I shall call you. (Goes towards kitchen steps, SMITH watching her)

(Enter PERRY DODGE L. 4, fanning himself.)

PERRY. (Surprised to-see JENNIE) Well, well, well! (Going toward her) When did you leave South America?

JENNIE. Shortly after Mr. Smith married his incubators. (As PERRY shakes hands with her) And it's a good thing I did. Mr. Smith hasn't had anything to eat since yesterday.

PERRY. He's too busy.

JENNIE. (Drolly) Resting. (Smiles at SMITH, then goes to kitchen steps—up them and is opening kitchen door when—)

PERRY. Just a moment, Miss Brown. (She closes

*the door*) We have some good news for you. Haven't we George?

SMITH. (*As he jerks out watch*) Yes, but keep it a while—I want you to see my new incubators. (*Grabs PERRY by the arm and starts toward barn door*) Come on! Hurry!

PERRY. (*Glancing back at JENNIE as SMITH pulls him along*) I'll see you later.

JENNIE. I hope so. (*Exit SMITH and PERRY into barn. Enter WOODROW, third run-way, carrying wheat bucket. JENNIE, about to exit into kitchen, looks at him a moment and he, about to open run-way gate, peeps at her through the gate. He is surprised and curious. She is amused. Pleasantly*) Are you Mr. Smith's hired man?

WOODROW. (*Bashfully*) Yes—one of 'em.

JENNIE. (*Going toward him as he opens the gate*) Then I suppose we might as well introduce ourselves.

WOODROW. Yes'm.

JENNIE. My name is Brown. What is yours?

WOODROW. Woodrow.

JENNIE. I am glad to meet you, Woodrow. (*Offering him her hand*)

WOODROW. 'Scuse me. (*He sets the bucket down. Wipes palm of hand on overalls, to clean it, then puts it in JENNIE'S*)

JENNIE. (*As she shakes WOODROW'S hand*) We're going to be good friends, aren't we, Woodrow?

WOODROW. (*Trying not to be bashful*) Yes'm—I'm willin'.

JENNIE. (*Smiling, and laying her hand on his shoulder*) Now Woodrow, I'm going to remain on this farm indefinitely and we must do everything we can to make life easy for Mr. Smith. He came here to rest.

WOODROW. (*Drily*) Did he? (*Feels of his nose, tenderly*)

JENNIE. Yes. He gets in a hurry sometimes—

maybe you haven't noticed it yet—but he has a big heart—and he means well.

WOODROW. (*Caressing his nose*) Yes'm. (*Tilting his face up somewhat*) Will you see please if that there stinger's still in my nose?

JENNIE. Certainly. (*As she looks for stinger*) Woodrow, there is a great future ahead of you.

WOODROW. (*Deeplly interested*) Is there?

JENNIE. Most assuredly. (*Quite gravely*) With a nose like this, if you don't lose your health or go to college, you will succeed in everything you undertake.

WOODROW. Honestly?

JENNIE. Yes. But if you do go to college and lose your health, you'll probably wind up by being a playwright—or a critic.

WOODROW. (*Dead serious*) Am I goin' to get married?

JENNIE. Possibly.

WOODROW. When?

JENNIE. That depends—but basing my deductions upon the shape and size of your nose I can say with a reasonable degree of accuracy that the marriage ceremony will not occur in the immediate future.

WOODROW. (*Disappointed*) Shoot!

(SMITH *appears at hay-loft door, stares at them a moment.*)

SMITH. (*Annoyed*) Woodrow!

WOODROW. (*Nasally—JENNIE is examining his nose*) Yes.

SMITH. (*As JENNIE lets go of WOODROW's nose*) Do you call that getting chickens into their coops?

WOODROW. No, but can't a feller take time to have his fortune told?

SMITH. Not when he's working for me! Hurry!

WOODROW. (*Meekly*) Yes, sir. (*Picks up bucket*)



and hastens to fourth run-way gate. SMITH disappears from hay-loft door and JENNIE starts toward kitchen steps. At run-way gate WOODROW stops, glances at barn, then, confidentially at JENNIE) BROWN!

JENNIE. (*Stopping and smiling at him*) Yes.

WOODROW. What's yer first name?

JENNIE. Jennie.

WOODROW. Thanks, Jennie. Gee, but you're purty!

(*Exit WOODROW, fourth run-way. He exits backwards, smiling at JENNIE and caressing his nose proudly. Re-enter PERRY from barn.*)

PERRY. The world's champion time saver'll be out here in a minute, so I'll have to talk fast.

JENNIE. (*Drolly*) But talk distinctly. This is the good news, isn't it?

PERRY. Yes. We are moving to Seattle tomorrow and my wife wants you to come out there and live with us.

JENNIE. (*Drily*) In Seattle?

PERRY. Yes. I can give you a good position as my—

JENNIE. That is very sweet of Mrs. Dodge, and you—and I know I would enjoy it but—(*Pauses, then smiles and shakes head*) No. It's out of the question.

PERRY. Why? You have no relatives in New York.

JENNIE. No—but that isn't it.

PERRY. Don't you think you would be happy with us?

JENNIE. I'm sure I would—but that isn't it.

PERRY. Then what is "it?"

JENNIE. Mr. Smith.

PERRY. Oh, that's all right. He's willing for you to go.

JENNIE. He may act like it but he isn't.

PERRY. Yes, he is. He has already consented.

JENNIE. Consented to what?

PERRY. To let you go with us.

JENNIE. (*Drolly*) Did Mr. Smith use the word "let?"

PERRY. Practically, yes.

JENNIE. What was the provocation?

PERRY. Why, I told him my wife wanted you to come to Seattle with us and asked him if he was willing.

JENNIE. And he said—?

PERRY. "Certainly!" He said: "I'm going out of the land business into the chicken business. Take her. I don't need her any longer."

JENNIE. (*Slowly—she is hurt but tries to conceal it—ineffectually, however*) Did Mr. Smith say that he didn't need me any longer? Did he?

PERRY. Yes. (*After a slight pause*)

JENNIE. (*Satirically yet with a pathetic little smile*) He is very fond of his chickens, isn't he?

PERRY. (*He is beginning to wonder if she is attached to SMITH, confidentially*) Say—do—do you like him?

JENNIE. (*Quietly and matter of fact—after a slight pause*) I feel sorry for him.

PERRY. Was that why you volunteered to be his stenographer?

JENNIE. Yes.

PERRY. And went to Argentine for him?

JENNIE. Yes.

PERRY. And induced him to come over here and—

JENNIE. (*Drolly*) Relax.

PERRY. Are you sure it isn't something more than just "feeling sorry" for him?

JENNIE. I want to help him, if that's what you mean.

PERRY. (*Significantly*) Why?

(Pause—JENNIE, *thinking.*)

JENNIE. (*After a slight pause—quietly but with sincerity*) He's such a helpless creature. He makes me think of father—

PERRY. And so you want to help him.

JENNIE. Don't you?

PERRY. Yes, but do you think that you or anyone else can ever make George go slow? Honestly now—do you?

JENNIE. (*Significantly—after short pause*) Not if he doesn't want me to. (*Starts up steps slowly*)

PERRY. But even if he did want you to?

JENNIE. (*Pausing at top of steps and glancing at PERRY with a forced little smile. Her hand on door knob*) Tell Mrs. Dodge that I will go.

PERRY. (*As JENNIE opens door*) Good! Our train leaves the Pennsylvania Station eleven o'clock to-morrow morning.

JENNIE. Thank you. (*I will be there.*)

PERRY. (*As JENNIE is about to exit*) Now if you would rather not go, Miss Jennie—

JENNIE. But I want to go! I've always wanted to see the—(*With a faint attempt at a smile*) the better half of America.

PERRY. (*Pleased*) That's the way to talk. The wonderful West—where nobody is in too much of a hurry to enjoy life.

(*Re-enter SMITH from barn. He carries a crate, by its rope handles, in front of him. Upon this crate are stacked four more crates. As he enters, slowly and almost staggering under the load, all that can be seen of SMITH from the front are his hands and the lower part of his legs. PERRY glances at the crates, then at the legs. He cannot see SMITH's body. The pile of crates begins to wobble somewhat and SMITH stops to steady them so as to keep the top crates*

from falling off. JENNIE looks at SMITH, shakes her head and exits into house. Enter "HEAVY," "RED" and BILL—farm hands, L. 4 E. They shamble in, lazily and sullenly. "HEAVY" is a heavy set, pugnacious fellow, thirty years old. Has a four days' growth of beard and looks like a welter-weight prize fighter. He wears old brown overalls—the kind truck-drivers wear—and an old black sateen shirt, and an old brown derby hat. "RED" is tall, lean, homely, awkward, red-faced and red-headed. Same age as HEAVY but taller. Wears old blue overalls, a very dirty white shirt with collar band but no collar, and an old small brimmed straw hat. BILL is a wiry, rat-like cuss, somewhat shorter than HEAVY. Smooth-shaven and rather neat in appearance but mean, cynical, vicious and cowardly. Has sharp features and a small shifty eye. Wears black trousers, glossy with age but rather clean; a black sateen shirt with soft collar and red tie, and a black mechanic's cap. RED and BILL watch SMITH disgustedly but HEAVY gawks at PERRY—doesn't take eyes off of him. PERRY gazes curiously and somewhat comically at the stock of wobbling crates—looks at R. then at L. of SMITH, then to SMITH—drolly.)

PERRY. I can't see your face, George, but good-bye just the same. (Starts towards R. 4 E.)

SMITH. (Impetuously) Wait a minute.

PERRY. I can't. I've got to catch the noon train.

SMITH. (Mechanically. His mind is on the wobbling crates which he is trying to balance) All right. Success to you in Seattle and remember me to Marjorie.

(The crates topple forward and fall with a crash, barely missing HEAVY RED and BILL. SMITH sees them for the first time.)

SMITH. Fill those with forty dozen broilers just as quick as you can!

HEAVY. (*With a lazy grin and an aggravating irresponsibility*) All right.

(*Shambles toward run-way gates, BILL and RED following lazily.*)

PERRY. (*Coming toward SMITH to shake hands*) Good-bye, George.

(*HEAVY stops and gawks at PERRY.*)

SMITH. Good-bye. (*Rushes to him, seizes his hand and shakes it rapidly as he leads him toward R. 4 E.*) Safe journey—(*Now at R. 4 E., and with real feeling*) and God bless you! You're making a big mistake leaving New York, but God bless you! (*Shoves him and exit PERRY, R. 4 E. Then quickly to the men*) Hurry! (*Rushes toward them*) All you have to do is to take the chickens out of the coops and pack 'em in the crates. (*Calls*) Woodrow! (*To men*) Move!

(*HEAVY stops and faces him.*)

HEAVY. (*Pugnaciously*) Now wait a minute! We'll fill them crates, but we're goin' to take our time.

SMITH. Those chickens have got to take the three o'clock express!

HEAVY. (*As before*) I said we'd fill 'em, but we don't propose to get sun-struck doin' it. (*To RED and BILL*) Eh, boys?

SMITH. All right! Just hurry! (*HEAVY shambles to third runway gate, BILL to second runway gate and RED to first runway gate. As the men go to the gates, facing L. he shouts*) Woodrow!

WOODROW. (*Lazily, off L.*) Yep!

SMITH. Come here! Quick!

(HEAVY, BILL and RED, *meanwhile have picked up one crate apiece and are now entering the runways, deliberately.*)

SMITH. (*Pretending to joke*) Move, boys! For heaven's sake, move! Just play there's a reward of \$5000 for your capture and William J. Burns is only a block away. (*The three men glance at him, simultaneously and resentfully*)

HEAVY. (*Eyeing SMITH*) Do you know this is th' hottest day in the year?

SMITH. I'll take your word for it, but——

(JENNIE *appears at the window. She has removed her jacket and her hat and looks very pretty and domestic.*)

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly, from window*) Mr. Smith. (*The MEN look up at her*)

SMITH. (*Peevishly*) Yes, yes——

JENNIE. (*Kindly but quite formally*) How do you prefer your eggs?

(*Re-enter WOODROW, third runway, carrying the wheat bucket.*)

WOODROW. (*Listlessly, as he enters*) What d'you want?

SMITH. (*To WOODROW*) What the thunder have you been doing—playing tiddly-winks?

JENNIE. Mr. Smith—your eggs.

SMITH. Scramble 'em—both sides—anyway.

(*JENNIE withdraws from window*)

WOODROW. (*Big-eyed—with surprise*) Gee! Is she another cook!

SMITH. No! Feed the squabs and get ready to

crate them. (*The MEN who have eyed JENNIE with curiosity, stand looking towards the window. SMITH turns on them*) Hurry! (*HEAVY grins and begins to whistle a popular song, lazily. RED and BILL begin to whistle it, too, and the three MEN exit, off runways. Eyeing them, angrily*) Well, I'll be——(*Angrily*) Woodrow!

WOODROW. (*Now at pigeon coop, R. of barn-door*) Yep.

SMITH. (*Hurrying towards him*) Water the squabs!

WOODROW. You just said——

SMITH. Quick! (*Begins throwing wheat into pigeon coop as WOODROW runs off R. 4.*)

(*Many squabs come from inside the barn to feed. The coop is soon filled with pigeons and squabs. Re-enter "HEAVY," third runway.*)

SMITH. (*From doorway, to HEAVY*) I thought I told you to crate those broilers!

HEAVY. (*Sullenly*) You did, but I got-a-get a sack to carry 'em from the coops to th' crates.

SMITH. (*Impatiently*) Crate them in the coops.

HEAVY. All right! But it'll take twice as long. (*Re-enters runway*)

SMITH. It won't if you hurry. (*HEAVY stops and looks at SMITH, now at third runway gate. Exasperated*) Now what's the matter?

HEAVY. (*Pugnaciously and coming toward SMITH*) I'm not goin'-a do a day's work in ten minutes. See? (*He is now face to face with SMITH*) You've been working Hell out of us!

SMITH. You haven't worked any harder than I have!

HEAVY. That's your fault,—not ours.

SMITH. (*Angrily*) How much do I owe you?

HEAVY. Twenty-four dollars.



(SMITH jerks pocket book from overalls and jerks bills from pocket book, counts them rapidly.)

SMITH. (*Shoving bills at HEAVY*) Twenty-four! (*HEAVY grins and takes money*) Now you get off this farm the quickest you ever did anything in your life! (*Re-enter BILL, in 2nd run-way*)

HEAVY. (*Flippantly, as he folds up bills, deliberately*) I got you, Steve! (*Starts towards R. 4 E.*)

BILL. (*Coming through runway gate*) Quittin', Heavy? (*HEAVY stops*)

SMITH. (*Emphatically, to BILL*) What do you want? (*BILL ignores SMITH as he sees HEAVY start toward R. 4 E.*)

BILL. Quittin'?

HEAVY. (*Grinning, over shoulder, but not stopping*) Tired.

BILL. Wait an' I'll go with you.

SMITH. You will not. — (*BILL glares at SMITH. "HEAVY" stops*)

BILL. (*Viciously*) Give me my money and give it quick.

SMITH. (*Kindly—trying to reason with him*) Now look here, Bill——

BILL. All I want out of you is my money. (*Shoves out his hand, palm up. SMITH jerks pocket book from pocket and begins to take bills from it*)

HEAVY. (*Hands to mouth, like megaphone—loudly, toward first runway*) Red! Oh, Red!

SMITH. Stop that!

HEAVY. (*Pugnaciously insolent*) You ain't th' guy that can make me stop it! (*Calling as before*) Come on, Red!

SMITH. (*Shoving money at BILL*) Here's your pay! Now get! Both of you! (*Gives BILL a shove toward R. 4 E.*)

HEAVY. (*Swaggering slowly but viciously, to-*

ward SMITH—*fists clenched—to BILL*) Shall I bust his jaw?

(*Enter RED, first run-way.*)

RED. What's th' matter?

SMITH. Nothing! These fellows got fresh and I fired them, but if you'll stay I'll double your wages and—(*He is now face to face with RED, who stands in gateway*)

RED. (*Insolently*) I ain't talkin' to you. (*Brushes him aside and starts towards HEAVY and BILL*) What's th' matter, boys?

SMITH. (*Persuasively*) Now look here, Red—I've always done the right thing by you, haven't I? Stay and help me out. I need you! I've got all this trouble with the boys—and there's a woman threatening to send the Sheriff here to arrest me because I didn't tie a calf to suit her. (*WOODROW enters R. 4, lugging a big bucket of water*) Woodrow: would you know the Sheriff if you saw him?

WOODROW. Sure. He's Heavy's big brother. (*Puts bucket in front of R. pigeon coop and goes into barn*)

SMITH. (*He sees his finish*) Oh!—(*The grin on HEAVY's face bodes SMITH no good. All the MEN eye each other—enjoying it. To RED*) If you'll stay—

RED. (*Briefly*) Nothing doin'! I quit.

SMITH. Well, if that's the kind of man you are, go on! Go on! (*Enraged—to RED*) What're you waiting for?

RED. (*Calmly*) Two weeks' wages. (*SMITH jerks out pocket book and opens it. It is empty*)

SMITH. Come around to-morrow.

RED. I want it now.

SMITH. I haven't got it.

RED. Get it. (*SMITH runs to kitchen window*)

SMITH. (*At window*) Miss Brown! Miss Brown!

JENNIE. (*From within the house*) Yes?

SMITH. Fetch my check book—coat pocket.

RED. (*Sullenly*) I don't want no check—I want the cash.

SMITH. (*Going toward him*) I tell you I haven't the cash.

JENNIE. (*Appears at the window, Pleasantly*) How much cash do you need, Mr. Smith?

SMITH. (*All business, no sentiment*) Twenty-four dollars. Have you got it?

JENNIE. No, but I can give you my check.

RED. (*Tipping his hat to JENNIE with admiration*) All right, Miss, I'll take *your* check.

JENNIE. (*Sweetly*) Thank you. (*Withdraws from the window*)

SMITH. (*Sees the men grinning—savagely*) Grin, damn you! (*He rolls up his shirt sleeves*) I'll show you *how* to work! I'll crate every chicken myself!

HEAVY. Hop to it, old cock!

(SMITH dashes to second run-way gate, seizes a crate, dashes through gate and runs off. As he exits JENNIE reappears at window, check book and fountain pen in hand. She opens the check book, places it on window sill.)

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly, to RED*) Did Mr. Smith say twenty-four dollars?

RED. (*Humbly*) Yes, ma'am. (*Removes hat awkwardly—all remove hats*)

JENNIE. (*Dates the check*) Your name, please?

RED. (*Almost meekly*) Morgan.

JENNIE. (*As she writes name in check*) Initials?

RED. J. P.

JENNIE. Thank you. (*She writes the amount, then tears check from book. RED, who has been going toward her slowly, is now near the window and extends hand for check. JENNIE gives it to him*)

RED. Thank you, ma'am.

JENNIE. You are welcome, Mr. Morgan. (*She withdraws from the window*)

(*The MEN glance at each other, then at the window, then they begin to primp, as if intent upon making the best impression possible. They brush the dust off their clothes, then remove their hats and clean them carefully with their sleeves. WOODROW, entering from barn with big dipper in hand, sees the farm hands, takes off his own hat, shoves handle of dipper in his hip pocket, and begins to wipe his hat importantly. WOODROW joins them importantly, the dipper in his hip pocket sticks up like the tail of a fighting cock.*)

HEAVY. (*Admiringly, as he glances at window*) Some pullet! (*Then, to BILL.*) Eh, boh?

BILL. (*Agreeing heartily*) Hell, yes!

RED. If I had a girl like that to cook eggs for me, I'd be willin' to eat cuckoo eggs. Eat 'em raw.

WOODROW. (*Proudly*) I'm goin' to marry her some day! Gee, but she's purty! (*Going to window and tries to peek in*)

HEAVY. (*Who has been keeping a close eye on house*) Cut it! Here she comes. (*Everybody begins to primp*)

(*Re-enter JENNIE from house. She comes down the steps and towards MEN.*)

JENNIE. Will you gentlemen please do me a little favor?

THE MEN. (*Simultaneously*) Sure! (*They face her*)

JENNIE. (*Glances off L., then goes to the men. Somewhat confidential*) When you leave, don't go far away.

HEAVY. (*Not understanding*) Come again!

JENNIE. When you gentlemen leave, please don't go far away. (*Smiling at them*) I may need you.

RED. (*Reassuringly, as she hands him the check*) If you do, call me.

BILL. Sure! *We* won't let him hurt you.

JENNIE. Oh, I'm not afraid of his hurting me, but if you men were within call——

HEAVY. Excuse me, Miss, but you ain't his sister?

JENNIE. No!

RED. Nor his cousin?

JENNIE. No!

HEAVY. (*Wisely*) We git you! (*Starts towards R. 4*) Come on, boys! (*RED and BILL follow HEAVY to R. 4*)

WOODROW. I'll be right there waterin' the squabs—(*Pointing*) If you need me—(*Is interrupted by HEAVY*)

HEAVY. (*At R. 4. Confidentially to JENNIE*) We'll be hangin' out on th' shady side o' th' house, Miss. If that guy gets fresh with you, scream. We'll do th' rest.

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly*) Thank you.

HEAVY. (*Gruffly, though meaning to be polite*) Don't mention it. It'll be a pleasure.

SMITH. (*Off L.*) Open the gate!

(*HEAVY starts pugilistically towards gate.*)

JENNIE. Don't. (*He stops*) I'll open it. (*Indicating R. 4*) If I need you, I'll call.

HEAVY. Don't call—scream. That's all—jus' scream.

JENNIE. All right—listen.

(*Exit BILL, RED and HEAVY, R. 4 E. WOODROW goes to water bucket. JENNIE meanwhile, hastens to second runway gate. As she opens the gate—*)

SMITH. (*Very loudly and very angrily—immediately off*) Open that gate.

JENNIE. It is open. (*Many frightened chickens squawk immediately off L. Enter SMITH, second run-way, hopping backwards and dragging in front of himself a crate filled with squawking chickens. At run-way gate, he pauses to breathe. As he pauses at the run-way gate*) Can't I help you? (*SMITH yanks the crate through the gate and drops end noisily*)

SMITH. (*So busy that he doesn't know what he is saying*) Yes—nail down that cover—(*Indicating lid of crate*) and put on a shipping tag! (*Then loudly*) Woodrow!

WOODROW. (*Who is about to pour water in pigeon coop trough*) Yep!

SMITH. Hitch up the horse. While I pack the crates you and Miss Brown can load 'em into the wagon. Hurry!

WOODROW. All right. (*Tosses dipper into bucket and hastens toward L. 4*)

SMITH. (*Exit WOODROW, L. 4, at full speed. SMITH dashes down to second runway and seizes an empty crate*)

JENNIE. (*On her mettle*) Be reasonable, Mr. Smith—(*SMITH slings a crate on his shoulder and is about to enter run-way*) You can't crate forty dozen chickens alone before three o'clock! Call back your men! (*SMITH drops the crate*)

SMITH. (*Emphatically*) I'm running this farm, Miss Brown.

JENNIE. (*With a pathetic little smile*) I beg your pardon.

WOODROW. (*Immediately off rear and greatly frightened*) Mr. Smith! Mr. Smith! (*WOODROW rushes in, L. 4 E.*) Oh! Mr. Smith!

SMITH. What is it?

WOODROW. (*Breathless with excitement*) She—she's dead!

SMITH. (*Quickly*) Who?

WOODROW. Rosebud!

JENNIE. Who?

WOODROW. Rosebud—the calf!

(SMITH *rushes off* L. 4 E. WOODROW *covers eyes with arm, to hide the tears.*)

JENNIE. (*Sympathetically, as she goes up to WOODROW who is near* L. 4 E.) Don't cry. (*Pats him gently on shoulder*)

WOODROW. (*Rubbing eyes with fists*) You'd cry, too, if you'd knew her as long as I did. (*Blubbers. The calf blats loudly and prolongedly, off stage. WOODROW stops crying instantly and stares at JENNIE. He thinks it is the calf's ghost wailing and he is dumb with terror. WOODROW horrified*) Do—do calfs have ghosts?

(*Re-enter* SMITH, L. 4 E.)

JENNIE. (*To* SMITH) What was the matter with it?

SMITH. It got loose awhile ago and in my haste to tie it so that it couldn't get away again, I tied a slip-noose instead of a hard knot.

JENNIE. Oh! The poor little thing.

SMITH. She's all right now I turned her loose. (*The telephone rings. He dashes to barn and seizes telephone. In telephone*) Hello!—What?—Don't let it occur again! (*Rushing down to crate*) Called by mistake! This kind of a day! Wh! Wh! (*Goes to bucket and drinks eagerly. Exit WOODROW, L. 4*)

JENNIE. Really now, Mr. Smith—I wouldn't drink so much—

(*He wipes his arm across his face to wipe off the sweat, then rushes down seizes crate, throws*



*it on shoulder and starts towards 2nd runway gate. JENNIE shakes her head hopelessly and starts toward the house. Arrived at gate, SMITH halts, begins to sway unsteadily back, As JENNIE glances back, SMITH sinks limply to the ground.)*

JENNIE. (*Rushing to him*) Mr. Smith! (*Kneeling beside him*) Mr. Smith! (*Calling*) Woodrow! Woodrow! Woodrow! (*She raises him to sitting posture. Enter WOODROW, L. 4 E.*) Water! Get some water! (*WOODROW dashes up to pail and lugs it to JENNIE. She pours some over her handkerchief and lays it on SMITH'S forehead. Presently SMITH opens his eyes and gazes around as if dazed*)

SMITH. What happened?

JENNIE. Sun stroke.

SMITH. Where am I?

JENNIE. This time you are here—on your farm—(*To WOODROW*) Pull the crate around for him to lean against. (*WOODROW pulls the crate around*) Now get his hat. (*WOODROW obeys quickly, while JENNIE makes SMITH comfortable against crate*) Bring my parasol—in the kitchen—please. (*WOODROW dashes up steps into house. JENNIE seats herself on top of the crate against which SMITH is leaning. She is on R. side of him. He is seated on the ground. JENNIE dampens the handkerchief again. As JENNIE places handkerchief gently on SMITH'S forehead SMITH listlessly and as if puzzled, confused—*)

SMITH. What time is it?

JENNIE. Time to rest.

SMITH. (*After a slight pause*) Is it too late to get the broilers off on the three o'clock?

JENNIE. (*Trying to quiet him*) No. (*WOODROW re-enters and hastily hands her the parasol*) There! (*She puts it over SMITH*) Woodrow, will you please boil the tea kettle and get some ice. (*Exit*

WOODROW, *speedily into house. She turns to SMITH*) Stay just where you are, I'll get the broilers off—*(She screams. The scream is so forced and artificial that it is ludicrous. She sits perfectly quiet. Screaming loudly)* O! O! O! O! O! O!

SMITH. *(Rising—frightened—solicitous but somewhat wobbly)* What's the matter? Are you sunstruck, too?

*(As JENNIE rises—HEAVY, RED and BILL rush in R. 4. They start toward SMITH threateningly. HEAVY ahead of RED and BILL. WOODROW pokes his head out of window.)*

HEAVY. *(To JENNIE, as if he were a big brother defending a little sister who had been shamefully wronged)* Did that guy get fresh with you?

JENNIE. No.

HEAVY. Then what'd you scream for?

JENNIE. Because I needed you.

RED. *(Eyeing SMITH)* Then he *did* get fresh with you!

JENNIE. No honestly he didn't. I called you men because Mr. Smith has been overcome by the heat. *(The MEN glance unsympathetically at Mr. SMITH, as if the thought he had gotten what was coming to him. WOODROW, convinced that JENNIE is safe, withdraws from window)* I knew that you would be kind enough to help ME pack his broilers for him. *(The MEN glance at JENNIE as if they were not willing to pack them)*

BILL. Not much!

JENNIE. You can pack them any way you like and take all the time you want; but—*(Tactfully)* if you do get them off on the three o'clock, I shall be very grateful—and Mr. Smith will double your wages for the day. Won't you gentlemen please help him?

BILL. *(Turning away—about to leave)* Aw!

JENNIE. Mr. Heavy: won't you?

HEAVY. (*All for JENNIE—to BILL*) Go in th' barn, an' get three gunny sacks. Red an' I'll go on to th' chicken coops. If you don't come out there quick, I'll kill you. Git me?

(*BILL looks at him for a moment and sees that HEAVY means business.*)

BILL. (*Meekly*) Well, you don't have to get sore about it. (*Turns on heel and goes lazily toward barn door*)

HEAVY. (*Emphatically*) Hurry! (*BILL walks rapidly to barn, into it and exits R.*) Come on, Red. (*RED starts towards runways*)

JENNIE. Thank you, Mr. Heavy, I had no idea your brother was the Sheriff! I'd like to meet him. Will you introduce me?

HEAVY. (*On to her—good-naturedly*) Never mind—I'll fix Ed!

SMITH. Now for heaven's sake—(*He is about to say "Hurry"*)

HEAVY. (*Emphatically to SMITH*) She's bossin' this job now. You keep out of it. Git me?

SMITH. (*Argumentatively*) Now you listen—

(*JENNIE pushes SMITH back gently with her arm and steps between him and HEAVY. Then to HEAVY.*)

JENNIE. He gets you. (*JENNIE continues to smile at HEAVY. HEAVY gazes at her, admiringly. Re-enter BILL, from barn. He has three large gunny-sacks*)

HEAVY. (*Emphatically, to BILL*) Hurry!

(*BILL runs down to HEAVY and RED, who grab a sack a piece. They exeunt—HEAVY to first run-way gate, RED to second and BILL to third. There each grab a crate and run off, down run-way.*)

JENNIE. (*Smiling triumphantly, yet modestly, to SMITH*) See! Men will do anything for you so long as you don't drive them. (*For the first time SMITH realizes what a wonderful little woman she really is and how much she means to him and has meant to him all along. WOODROW has brought a tin pan with some pieces of ice in it. JENNIE has taken a piece—wrapped it in her handkerchief. Exit WOODROW into kitchen. JENNIE now holds the ice to SMITH'S head*) There! (*SMITH puts his hand up and takes it. Pressing it to his forehead*) How do you feel now?

SMITH. (*Disgusted with himself*) I feel like a fool. I am a fool, too—Everything I do I overdo.

JENNIE. You talk as if that were a crime.

SMITH. It is.

JENNIE. Pardon the contradiction but you are mistaken. Sit down—(*He sits on crate*) You are much mistaken. Keep the ice on your forehead. (*He replaces ice. She picks up the parasol and shades them both, as she sits beside him on crate*) Mr. Smith: you're suffering from the great American habit—and you've got to call a halt. You've joined the procession—the procession of bad busy boys who rush through life sacrificing everything to succeed and always measuring success not by friends and happiness—but by the dollar. This isn't Sunday and I don't want you to think I'm preaching a sermon; but once these boys set their eyes upon a goal, they cannot even smile until that goal is reached. And when they do reach it—after all their sacrifice, they usually find it is little more than trash—You, for instance, tried to make a huge fortune in a few years. Not because you needed it but because making a fortune meant “making good.” Incidentally, in trying to swell that fortune you hurried and worried. You wouldn't eat and you couldn't sleep. Then you came over to Jersey to rest and recuperate. (*With a smile*) Did you rest?

When you first came to this farm two months ago it was as quiet and peaceful as a New England spinster reading the Boston Transcript. Now look at it. (*At this moment the chickens and squabs are heard from*) Listen! (*As the disturbance dies down*) Does that sound like Boston? You had to be *doing* something. On the move all the time! Anything but relaxation. Result, in your effort to supply the whole earth with squabs and broilers and make another fortune, you neglected yourself, failed to read my letters, forgot to answer them, lost your temper, discharged your cooks, fired your men, were overcome by the heat, and here you are—tottering between a sanitarium and the grave—with a lump of ice on your head and nothing on your stomach—Hurry and Worry—That is the great American habit. And it is *you!* (*Drolly*) Have I made your head-ache worse?

SMITH. Yes, but you have my number, all right.

JENNIE. Don't feel lonesome. You have lots of company. There are thousands just like you. (*Offers SMITH dipper of water*) Here! Have a little water—(*Drolly, as he sips water from dipper*) You probably need it—after my Chataqua lecture.

SMITH. Thanks. Is there any cure for me?

JENNIE. Yes.

SMITH. What?

JENNIE. (*Replacing dipper*) It is very simple.

SMITH. Cremation?

JENNIE. No.

SMITH. (*Insistent on knowing*) What?

JENNIE. I would rather not say. (*JENNIE takes out her watch and glances at it. The glance becomes a gaze, a sad, sweet gaze. She realizes that she must return to the village shortly and that when she says good-bye to SMITH this time it will probably be good-bye for always. She loves SMITH and her face shows it. She wants to stay right where she is and takes care of him, but he has said that he no*

*longer needs her. So there is nothing for her to do but go. As she replaces watch, she rises and starts toward the kitchen steps)*

SMITH. Where are you going?

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly but quite business like and without stopping or looking at him*) To finish (scrambling) your eggs.

SMITH. (*Rising*) I don't want eggs. I want you.

(*WOODROW pokes his head out of the window.*)

WOODROW. (*Proudly*) The water's beginnin' to boil.

JENNIE. All right. Watch it. Don't take your eyes off it. It might burn.

WOODROW. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit WOODROW from window*)

SMITH. Miss Brown——

JENNIE. Yes?

SMITH. A while ago I asked you what would cure me?

JENNIE. Yes, I remember.

SMITH. You can do it. Won't you marry me? I need a wife and a home.

JENNIE. (*Very seriously and as if it were strictly a business proposition*) I agree with you,—but I leave to-morrow for Seattle.

SMITH. (*Surprised and puzzled*) Seattle?

JENNIE. Yes—the metropolis of Puget Sound.

SMITH. What're you going way out there for?

JENNIE. (*As before*) To live. I will leave the Argentine contracts in the house. I arranged everything according to your cables. (*Starts toward kitchen steps*)

SMITH. Say I don't want you to go to Seattle.

(*JENNIE pauses.*)

JENNIE. (*Lightly but with a sweet but sad little*

*smile*) Why should it make any difference to you? You don't need me any longer.

SMITH. Who said I didn't need you?

JENNIE. You did. You offered me to the Dodges—as though I were a pound of tea—or a nutmeg—or an umbrella that you'd borrowed during a rain storm and the storm being over, you don't need it any longer. "Take her," you said—"I don't need her any longer."

SMITH. (*Dumbfounded*) I——? (*Then recollecting*) By thunder! —

JENNIE. You did say it, didn't you?

SMITH. Yes, but—listen——

JENNIE. (*With a note of finality*) It is too late for an explanation, Mr. Smith—and besides your eggs are scrambling. (*Starts towards steps*)

SMITH. Miss Brown, I love you.

JENNIE. (*Pausing and shaking her head*) No, Mr. Smith: there's only one girl that you have time to love—that's the girl on the American dollar.

SMITH. Are you going?

JENNIE. To-morrow morning. (*She then goes deliberately to steps. SMITH watches her—disappointed. He then crosses slowly to crate filled with chickens, which he looks at idly. He does not attempt to work. JENNIE about to ascend steps, looks at SMITH. Her impulse is to rush to him and comfort him. Then she ascends steps slowly. He, meanwhile has been gazing dejectedly at the crated chickens when JENNIE reaches door, she glances at SMITH, then opens the screen door slowly. When it is open, SMITH faces her*)

SMITH. Jennie! (*JENNIE is silent*) Jennie!

JENNIE. I came here on business. For that reason if you wish to discuss matters other than business, it will have to be after business hours and where I live.

SMITH. (*Crosses to the steps thoughtfully. He now stands at lower step*) If I—If I quit the



poultry business—would—you—through pity—if I stayed in the land business—where I was when I met you first—would you——

JENNIE. Whatever you do or in whatever business you may engage, Mr. Smith, I wish you much prosperity.

(RED comes through the run-way gate—carrying a crate filled with chickens which he places on the ground.)

RED. (*Ignoring SMITH*) How many'd you want to ship, Miss?

JENNIE. Forty dozen.

SMITH. (*Weakly but still in a hurry*) And for heaven's sake hur——

JENNIE. (*Cutting him off before he can say "hurry" and speaking very gently*) Take your time, Mr. Morgan. Take your time.

RED. (*Grinning at JENNIE, admiringly—touching his cap*) Yes, ma'am. (*Picks up two empty crates and exits on the run. SMITH looks from JENNIE to RED—in wonder*)

JENNIE. Mr. Smith, when I am gone I don't want you to think of me as a cross between a country doctor and a village preacher, but may I suggest that whenever you feel like saying "Hurry" you say "Take your time." (*Looks at watch*) In ten minutes please come in for breakfast—then I shall have to say (*Trying to conceal the effort*) good-bye.

SMITH. Please—one moment. Jennie, did you ever stop to think why I came over here?

JENNIE. Yes, Mr. Smith—to preserve your bait.

SMITH. But—why did I come *here* to preserve it? *Don't* call me Mr. Smith.

JENNIE. Because this was an ideal place. Don't call me Jennie.

SMITH. Who made it *ideal*? My name is George.

JENNIE. Nature, Mr. Smith.

SMITH. (*Idealistically*) You! This is just an old, worn-out farm but when you described it to me that day in my office it seemed to be a paradise. You brought me over here to see it and it *was* a paradise. Then you went to South America and it became a poultry plant. To-day it seems like paradise again. Jennie Brown, there is something about you that affects me!

JENNIE. Where?

SMITH. All over.

JENNIE. How—chills or fever?

SMITH. I don't know, but when I'm with you, I'm not the same man, I'm entirely different.

JENNIE. Then perhaps it is an act of Providence that is taking me to Seattle. (*Starts towards steps*)

SMITH. (*With feeling*) Don't go, Jennie! You aren't going to leave me now, are you—right when I need you and want you and love you! You've brought such wonderful happiness into my life. You *will* stay, won't you? Won't you? Please!

JENNIE. (*Goes towards the crate—One is in doubt as to whether she will take him or not*) Mr. Smith, I——

SMITH. Won't you marry me? Won't you? Won't you?

(*JENNIE still hesitates. She can't quite forget his willingness to let her go to Seattle.*)

JENNIE. But you said——

SMITH. That was before I knew I loved you. You will marry me, won't you? (*As JENNIE stands by his side, he draws her to the crate beside him. They are both seated*) Won't you?

(*JENNIE'S lips move toward SMITH—instantly he raises his arms as if to crush her in his arms.*)

*Her lips halt. Then SMITH lowers his arms. Again JENNIE's lips start slowly toward SMITH, whereupon SMITH, impatient to kiss her, makes a peck at her lips, like a hungry chicken pecking at an apple, but JENNIE is too quick for him.)*

JENNIE. (*Rebuking him, playfully severe*) Tc! Tc! (*Slight pause, then his lips start slowly toward hers. She watches them a moment, then, drolly, as she places her own lips on a line with SMITH'S*) Take your time, George. Take your time. (*Just as his lips are about to touch hers, he hastens a bit*) Don't hurry. (*Their lips meet. As the curtain is falling a cockerel in the crate crows lustily*)

## CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

THE SCENE:—*The living room of the SMITH bungalow in a New York suburb. A Spring afternoon, two years later.*

*It is a restful, cozily furnished room with exposed beams, and a stone fireplace, L. 2. There are three entrances: a door, somewhat above center of right wall, leading into vestibule of front veranda; another door, somewhat above center of left wall, leading into bed-room; and an archway, center of rear wall, through which can be seen the dining-room with a linen-covered table, center, neatly draped windows in its rear wall. This archway is provided with folding doors. Below center of right wall is a bay window with window seat.*

*L. C., a circular table. Upon it an electric reading lamp with green shade. L. of table, a large easy-chair. R. of table, a rocking chair.*

*Right, against wall and above window-seat, a*

*telephone-stand with telephone and chair beside it. Between this stand and the door is a baby-grand piano.*

*Left, against wall, a bookcase. There is a cuckoo clock above the archway. A small wood fire burns in the fireplace. Above fireplace, a wicker wood-basket, filled with small logs. Below fireplace a foot-stool. On the mantel, among other things, is a photograph of PERRY DODGE taken shortly before he went to Seattle, two years ago.*

*There are several vases of wild flowers in the room.*

*It is late afternoon in spring and through the windows can be seen the green lawn surrounded by a neatly trimmed hedge. In the hedge, are silver maple trees. The house is located on Maplehurst Road, and is about one half mile from its nearest neighbor, a large country house built on old English lines, and surrounded by trees. It can be seen through the dining-room windows.*

AT RISE:—JENNIE is at the 'phone wearing a pretty house dress. She is listening as a tradesman repeats an order on the 'phone after her.

JENNIE. Have you got that down? Yes?—and six cakes of sapolio, two balls of bluing, one package of gelatine—yes Cox's—a tin of Kipperred herring, and a dozen boxes of matches. For Mrs. George Smith, Maplehurst Road. Be careful that you have the right Smith.—Good-bye. (*Puts telephone in receiver—calls into dining-room to TILLIE who is setting the table. TILLIE is a neat little country maid*) Tillie! Did my jelly jell?

TILLIE. No Mo'm. Cook says she's afraid your jelly never will jell.

JENNIE. Very well, then we'll use it for pudding sauce. Mr. Smith likes sweet sauces on his

pudding. (*The cuckoo clock cuckoos five.* JENNIE looks at it) Him! He ought to be here now!

TILLIE. (*As she sets the table*) Maybe he missed his train.

JENNIE. He never misses it. The train is probably late. Don't use the plated silver to-night, Tillie. Put on the wedding silver.

TILLIE. Yes Mo'm.

JENNIE. And set the table for four—we are going to have company. (*She closes the dining-room doors.* AGNES, a sweet-faced, sensible nurse of twenty-eight—capped, aproned and carrying an empty nursing bottle in a nickel-plated frame, appears at the bed-room door) Agnes, I want our baby to show off to-night. Is she asleep?

AGNES. Yes, Mrs. Smith.

JENNIE. (*Giving a few finishing touches to the room*) Some old friends from Seattle are going to be here and I want baby to make a good impression.

AGNES. (*Smiling reassuringly*) She will. She is having a nice long nap. Your friends know you have a baby, don't they?

JENNIE. Oh, yes—at least they should. We sent them one of the baby's cards, but they never answer a letter. (*As AGNES goes towards folding doors*) If you're going out for a fresh bottle, Agnes, please tell cook I want to see her.

AGNES. Yes, Mrs. Smith. (*Exit AGNES*)

(JENNIE glances at clock again, then goes to table and picks up a baby's cap from table—sits in the rocking chair, and sews on a tie ribbon. The sun is now setting. Slowly the grey shadows of evening steal across the landscape—seen through the windows—and during the following scene the room becomes gradually darkened. Enter PHOEBE SNOW, from dining room. She is as fat as ever but is now dressed

*in a clean kitchen dress and is fairly beaming—the ideal cook.*)

PHOEBE. Yassam?

JENNIE. (*As she looks up from her sewing*) I have good news for you, Phoebe.

PHOEBE. Yassam.

JENNIE. We are going to have unexpected guests to dinner.

PHOEBE. (*Smiling*) Yassam. How many?

JENNIE. Two. You remember Mr. Dodge, don't you? (*PHOEBE'S blank expression shows she doesn't*) He was at the farm the day you refused to cook for the sick chicken.

PHOEBE. De stout gen'leman?

JENNIE. Yes—I've just had a telegram from Mrs. Dodge saying they arrived in New York to-day and will be here this evening.

PHOEBE. (*Smiling*) Yassam.

JENNIE. You have dinner enough to go round, Phoebe, but some little extra dessert might—

PHOEBE. Yassam. What is their favorite dessert?

JENNIE. Oh, anything simple. They're not at all **fastidious**.

PHOEBE. (*Blankly—doesn't know "fastidious"*) Yassam. (*Inspired—radiant at thought of it*) You know, I'd just like to set dat dinnah back and have somepin downright speshul.

JENNIE. Have anything you want, Phoebe, except chicken.

PHOEBE. (*Crestfallen but polite*) Yassam, but if I can't cook chicken, Mrs. Smith, I can't do myse'f justice. Fo' chicken it takes Phoebe Snow!

JENNIE. (*Sympathetically*) I know it, Phoebe, but Mr. Smith can't eat chicken any more. He says it's almost like eating an old friend. (*Smiling*) You understand.



PHOEBE. Yassam, I understand—if he means dem croupy chickens like *he* used to raise.

JENNIE. (*Kindly but emphatic—in defense of her husband*) I beg your pardon, Phoebe—Mr. Smith's chickens were milk-fed thorobreds.

PHOEBE. Yassam, but do you remember dat time I quit him on de chicken farm and you sent fo' me to come back and I didn't turn up fo' three days? (JENNIE *nods*) I was sufferin'—O Golly! How I was sufferin'—

JENNIE. What was the trouble?

PHOEBE. I ate one of dem chickens—an' I thought I would die! Yassam! I've had headaches an' toothaches an' rheumatiz an' pertrnitiss (Peritonitis) but of all de sick niggers! I said to m'self—"Phoebe Snow, if you evah git out o' dis alive, don't you *evah speak to anoder chicken as long as you live*. No, suh!" An' I hasn't! Yassam. (*Shaking her head ruefully*) Mistah Smith certainly had one fierce chickens on dat farm. (*Starts off*)

JENNIE. (*Remembering*) Oh, Phoebe. (PHOEBE *stops*) Mr. Smith doesn't know the Dodges are coming. We'll surprise him.

PHOEBE. (*Smiling*) Yassam! (*Goes off*)

JENNIE. (*Lights the lamp, glances at the clock, then goes to bedroom door, opens it softly and listens—then leaving the door ajar—she turns to AGNES who re-enters with a fresh milk bottle in the holder. JENNIE puts her hand to the bottle*) That's just right—not too warm! (*As AGNES passes into the bedroom, and out of sight, JENNIE speaks to her in a hushed voice*) Agnes! will you kindly go into my room and bring out Mr. Smith's jacket and slippers? (JENNIE *goes to the window and looks out—glances at the clock again. AGNES appears at the door with smoking jacket and a pair of house slippers—JENNIE takes them—nodding thanks. AGNES goes off and closes the door quietly.*)



JENNIE sets the slippers down by the fire and lays the jacket across the back of his chair, glances at clock again, surveys room to see if everything is satisfactory, goes to piano and moves the vase of flowers a trifle, draws the window shade a bit lower, fusses a little with curtain, then crosses to bedroom and goes off. As JENNIE goes off TILLIE enters from dining-room, looks about room for vase of flowers for dining table, goes to piano, takes vase therefrom and starts toward dining-room. JENNIE re-enters from bedroom) Tillie, the flowers on the center table are fresher.

TILLIE. Yes'm.

(Returns to piano with vase, takes vase from table, goes into dining-room and closes folding doors. JENNIE takes vase from piano, glances at clock and places vase on table. Enter SMITH R. D., not hurriedly as of old, but taking his time. He wears a light-weight overcoat and looks much younger than in previous acts. Is better fed, better groomed, and quite normal. Has a nice comfortable-looking stomach and a big smile. Is a new man, healthy, happy, prosperous, calm and contented.)

SMITH. (Entering very deliberately) Hello, dear.

JENNIE. Hello!

SMITH. (Going toward her deliberately—She toward him rapidly) The train was late.

JENNIE. I knew it was the train. (He elevates his arms deliberately to embrace her but she is impatient—wants to be kissed quick. Playfully but serious) Hurry, dear! Don't be so slow!

(He smiles good naturedly, embraces her and is about to kiss her when she kisses three times in rapid succession.)

SMITH. How's the kiddy?

JENNIE. Proud as a little peacock over that new tooth. (*They start down, his arm around her waist*) She is probably showing it to the fairies this very minute.

SMITH. Isn't she a great girl! Never makes any trouble! (*Removing overcoat deliberately, JENNIE assisting somewhat*) I've got an appetite as big as a battleship. What are we going to have for dinner?

JENNIE. Phoebe is going to surprise us.

SMITH. Good! What I like about Phoebe is she always has her meals on time and she cooks enough of everything. (*Starts toward vestibule with overcoat*)

JENNIE. And she's honest.

SMITH. (*Stopping and looking at JENNIE*) I don't know about that, Jennie. There was once a chicken with a red string—Well, never mind. (*He hangs up his overcoat in the vestibule. As he re-enters*)

JENNIE. (*Drolly—she has been watching him*) Are you ill, dear?

SMITH. (*Coming toward her—smiling*) I never felt as well in my life. Why?

JENNIE. You are so slow.

SMITH. Large bodies are always slow.

JENNIE. And yours is getting larger every day. (*Offers him the smoking jacket*)

SMITH. (*As he removes coat*) If it keeps on, I think I'll have to either join the Marathon Club or play golf.

JENNIE. Or stay home from the office on Monday morning and help Phoebe with the wash. (*Craftily, as she helps him put on jacket*) I—I don't suppose, George, you've heard from the Dodges, lately?

SMITH. What made you think of *them*?

JENNIE. (*Evasively*) Oh,—it just came to me. Have you?

SMITH. (*In a kind but somewhat disgusted spirit*) No, I haven't heard from Perry for over a year and what's more, I've just about given up all hope of ever hearing from him. He's probably so fat and prosperous that he hasn't the ambition to sign his name to a letter, let alone writing one.

JENNIE. Perry is probably very busy.

SMITH. In Seattle? Oh, no! He's sound asleep. And besides, no man has the right to be so confounded busy that he can't spare time to write to his friends? Any man who allows his business to make a slave of him is a fool. I wouldn't. A man ought to use his common sense. (JENNIE smiles. JENNIE has picked up her work basket to have it out of the way and is laying the baby cap in it—SMITH puts his arm about her and sees the cap) Hello! Is that what you are making for baby? (JENNIE nods. SMITH takes up the bonnet and dangles it, admiringly, at arm's length) Isn't that great! It's wonderful! Do you think she's awake yet? (*Starts towards bedroom*)

JENNIE. No, don't wake her up, George. (*She lays aside the work basket containing the bonnet. Then takes him by his arm and escorts him to easy-chair*) How was business to-day?

SMITH. Good, very good.

JENNIE. That's nice.

SMITH. (*As he sits in easy-chair*) People are beginning to realize that the only safe place to invest their money is in land.

JENNIE. Your Argentine investment is proving profitable, isn't it?

SMITH. I wish we had twenty just like it! (*Pinching her cheek*) My old partner! (*The telephone rings. SMITH starts to rise*)

JENNIE. Don't bother, dear, I'll answer it. (*Crosses to 'phone and picks it up*) Yes—Mr.

Smith?—Yes, but——

SMITH. (*Provoked at having been disturbed*)  
Who is it?

JENNIE. (*To SMITH*) Eddie, at the office.

SMITH. (*Emphatically*) Doesn't he know that I left strict orders *never* to call me up at *my home*?

JENNIE. He says it's important.

SMITH. (*Provoked—angrily*) I don't care if it is.

JENNIE. (*Quietly, in 'phone*) Just a moment, Eddie.

SMITH. (*As before*) My home's my *home* and I don't propose to turn it into a business office.

JENNIE. (*Who has her ear to the telephone*) Oh, I see—Just a moment. (*To SMITH*) The Society for the Prevention of Aged and Indigent Horses.

SMITH. I know the rest—Mrs. Lee-Hugh. (*Smiling, as if amused, and rising*)

JENNIE. Do you know what she wants?

SMITH. Yes. She wants me to pension another old horse. (*He reaches out hand and JENNIE gives him the 'phone. Then, in telephone, calmly and pleasantly*) Eddie, you tell Mrs. Lee-Hugh that I'm willing to pension an old mule or an old automobile but that I don't intend to pension anything that is subject to colts—That's final. And Eddie—it's all right this time but if you ever dare to call me up again on business at my home, consider yourself discharged. That's final, too. (*Hangs up receiver and places telephone on the stand—Then sits in easy-chair again*)

JENNIE. Whatever became of that old horse you've been pensioning so long? Did she die?

SMITH. No, they sold her the other day to Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

JENNIE. How lovely!

SMITH. (*Proudly*) And they say she's the wildest horse in the show.

JENNIE. How proud you must be! We'll take baby to see her.

(SMITH leans over to unlace his shoe, monkeys with it laboriously a moment, then straightens up and looks at JENNIE.)

SMITH. Jennie, I am going to stay home Monday morning. I'm getting so stout that I can't unlace my own shoes.

JENNIE. I'll unlace them this time, but hereafter—(Shakes her head playfully severe. Then picks up the footstool)

SMITH. (As JENNIE puts stool in front of chair) Never mind, dear. (He tries to unlace shoe but JENNIE slaps his hand playfully and, sitting on the footstool, unlaces one of SMITH'S shoes in spite of his efforts to do it himself. She taps his hand playfully—to stop him. Finally he gives in and leans back in chair. Reminiscently—after watching JENNIE a few moments) Jennie, I've just been thinking—(After slight pause) When our little girl is a loving little wife like you, I wonder whose shoes she will be unlacing.

JENNIE. You never can tell dear. The little boy who is to be her husband may some time become President of the United States. And again—

SMITH. He might be a policeman. Somehow I hate that fellow already.

JENNIE. Why dear? (Goes on unlacing his shoe)

SMITH. Well, a domestic man—like me—wants to keep his children by his side as long as he can. You take awful chances when you have girls.

(JENNIE glances at him. She sees that he is troubled over something. As she slips off his shoe she glances at him again. Then she puts his slipper on. During the following, she

*unties his left shoe—the same business as before.)*

JENNIE. Did something happen to-day, George?

SMITH. No, but—I'm just thinking.

JENNIE. What about?

SMITH. (*Gravely*) Jennie: did you ever stop to think that our daughter's a *girl*.

JENNIE. A daughter could hardly be a boy, dearest.

SMITH. No, but the fact remains—She IS a girl, and we must be prepared.

JENNIE. Prepared for what, dear?

SMITH. Why, for the bills. Girls cost money.

JENNIE. Well, we have money, haven't we?

SMITH. Not enough. It costs a fortune to raise girls.

JENNIE. When did you first realize that little girls were so tremendously expensive?

*(During the following, as JENNIE unlaces his shoe, SMITH begins to thrum his fingers on chair-arm as if deeply worried. He removes his shoe, JENNIE puts on his slipper.)*

SMITH. When you were taking off my shoe. (*Subdued but intensely in earnest and pointing in direction of bedroom door which is ajar—partly open*) Did it ever occur to you that that little baby in there isn't going to be a baby all her life? She's going to grow up. We're going to send her to college. She's going to have measles, mumps, fine clothes, fine hats, whooping cough. She's going to travel. You're going to travel with her. She's going to have lots of friends. We're going to give her lots of parties.

JENNIE. (*Pointing towards bedroom door*) Sh!

SMITH. And when she's married we're going to give her a fine wedding and stock her up with towels and sheets and pillow-cases. And for all we

know we'll have to support her husband and buy him a new automobile every year. And then when the grandchildren come—Great heavens. Jennie, you don't know what it costs to raise a girl! I'm not complaining. I'm only too glad to make money for our little girl. It's not her fault she's a girl. But if she'd been a boy it'd be different. By the time a boy's old enough to vote he can take care of himself, but a girl can't.

JENNIE. I took care of myself.

SMITH. But you're an exception. You can't expect her to come up to her mother. Jennie:—from the moment a girl enters this world, a pink little baby, until she leaves it, an old white-headed woman, she is helpless and dependent. (*Rises importantly*)

JENNIE. (*On the stool, looking up, and humoring him*) Yes, dear.

SMITH. *All women are dependent.*

JENNIE. Yes, dear.

SMITH. It's a tough proposition but it's a fact, and we might as well look the fact in the face and get ready. I must make more money and I must make it quickly.

JENNIE. (*Rising—lays her hand tenderly on his arm*) Sit down, Wall Street. (*He looks at her, puzzled*) You don't have to make it this very minute.

SMITH. I tell you——

JENNIE. Now don't get keyed up, dear.

SMITH. No, Jennie: I promised you not to get keyed up and work over time; but it's an awful temptation to——

JENNIE. (*Kindly, yet firmly, interrupting him*) George. (*Points to easy-chair*)

SMITH. Oh, all right.

(SMITH sits in easy-chair. JENNIE sits on left arm of it.)



JENNIE. (*Whimsically*) You're quite right, dear, it *does* cost a fortune to raise little girls. And that is why little girls are so scarce. That is why they have always been so scarce. Only the richest families can afford to have little girls—and even they must be content to have them one at a time. That is why you never see little girls in the homes of poor people. Never! Little boys are there by the bushel because little boys can be raised on mush and milk and lots of love, but little girls—(*Smiling*) You never see little girls in the parks or on the streets or at picnics. It's always boys. That is why there are so few women in the world. You know, you generally have to have little girls before you can have grown women. And that explains why there are always more men than women in the women suffrage parades—and likewise, more husbands than wives. It also explains why fathers always file a petition of bankruptcy the moment the family physician opens the door and says—(*Quietly and very gravely—imitating physician*) “My friend, I am sorry—and you have my heartfelt sympathy, but as your family physician, it is my sad duty to inform you that your wife is the mother of a girl.” When Georgiana came, you filed a petition of bankruptcy, didn't you?

SMITH. I did not.

JENNIE. But you are going to, aren't you?

(SMITH is defeated. He slips his arm around JENNIE'S waist, and smiles sheepishly. He is now [almost] as calm as when he entered.)

SMITH. I surrender. Little girls can be raised just as cheaply as little boys—mush and milk and lots of love. That's all they need! I'm blamed if I'll ever begin stewing over anything again!

JENNIE. But you *were* stewing. George, I'm going to nip you in the bud. (*She rises and starts up towards bookcase*)

SMITH. What do you mean?

JENNIE. I'm going to punish you.

SMITH. (*Innocently—like FLOSSIE in ACT I.*)  
What have I done?

JENNIE. Do you remember the night you gave me my engagement ring?

SMITH. Certainly, but——

JENNIE. (*Smiling*) You wanted to marry me immediately.

SMITH. Who wouldn't have?

JENNIE. I said to you: "When you have calmed down and become a normal man instead of a bundle of nerves, my beloved George, I shall marry you, but not until." Remember?

SMITH. Yes and I went straight to that sanitarium in Philadelphia. And when I got out——

JENNIE. The night we were married you were the calmest man in the room.

SMITH. Of course I was!

JENNIE. Who taught you to be calm?

SMITH. The Sanitarium—and you—mostly you.

JENNIE. (*Smiling, but in earnest*) This evening we are going to revive those old lessons in calmness.  
(*Rises*)

SMITH. (*Rising and pleading like a boy in dread of a whipping*) Don't Jennie. For heaven's sake. Don't make me do all those stunts over again.

JENNIE. Not all of them, dear—(*Satirically*)  
Just the most pleasing parts.

(*She starts towards book-case. SMITH watches her despondently until she is almost there.*)

SMITH. No, no, I can't, Jennie. I'll rock the baby instead. The baby always pleases me. (*He rushes into bed-room*)

(*JENNIE has gone to book-case. She opens the lower drawer, takes out metrenome, then comes*

down to table, with the metronome. Re-enter SMITH, followed by AGNES. SMITH has GEORGIANA in his arms and paces rapidly R. jostling her as if he were making a milk shake. AGNES, horrified, stands near bed-room door and watches SMITH. She doesn't know what to do. Just stares at SMITH, helplessly. Arrived above piano, SMITH reverses and paces L. JENNIE, sets the metronome adjuster at 60 Largo, after removing the front panel of the instrument; SMITH, in the meantime, has reached the bed-room door again and is pacing R. Upon arriving at piano again, he comes down R. almost on a running walk and still swinging the baby. As he passes the table, JENNIE stops him gently.)

JENNIE. If you must rock the baby, dear, keep time to this metronome.

SMITH. (*Screwing face up, like a kid about to take medicine*) Great Scott! Do I have to do that again?

JENNIE. (*Playfully severe*) When children disobey they must be punished. (*Begins to wind metronome*)

SMITH. (*Smiling at metronome. AGNES discreetly retires*) I thought you'd thrown that thing away long ago.

JENNIE. No, George. I didn't have the heart to throw away an old friend. (*Sets metronome on table and starts pendulum swinging*) Now, begin. One—two—three—four.

SMITH. (*Drily*) Oh Lord! Yes, dear.

(JENNIE stops pendulum, then, starting it, counts as the pendulum swings back and forth—about two seconds between each count. She holds on to SMITH'S sleeve until further notice.)

JENNIE. (*Beating time with index finger of right*

hand; metrenome now on table) One—two—three—four—one—two—three—four. (Turning to SMITH) As—you—pace—my—dear—please—keep—time—to—this—met—re—nome. Be—gin—my—dear—be—loved—hus—band. (Starting down with him) One—two—three—four—one—two—three—four—(They face L. and cross L. during the following) You—must—not—for—get—that—I—will—pun—ish—you—ev—e—ry—time—you—hurr—y—or—worr—y—be—cause—if—you—do—you—soon—will—be—the—ner—vous—wreck—you—were—be—fore—I—mar—ried—you. (Arrived at lower right, having paced to fireplace and returned during the above, JENNIE faces SMITH right about and starts him R. alone. He paces in time during the following) While—you—are—pac—ing—back—and—forth—to—lull—our—child—to—sleep—I—shall—fin—ish—her—birth—day—bon—net.

SMITH. (Halting and imitating her speech) Why—in—thun—der—should—I—have—to—

JENNIE. (She goes to him and takes him gently by arm) One—two—three—four—(Starting him off) All—right—be—gin. (SMITH does not obey)

SMITH. (Supplicatingly yet genuinely deliberate, calm) Please let me stop, Jennie. I'm not nervous. And I promise you that as long as I live I won't ever even *seem* to worry over anything. Please let me stop.

JENNIE. All right, dear. (Pointing finger playfully severe at him) But remember, if you break your promise, you will have to begin all over again—hot milk, raw eggs, deep breathing, metrenome exercise and all the rest of it every night and morning.

SMITH. I won't break it.

JENNIE. (As she takes baby from him, gently) Now, you may rock her to sleep here by the fire.

SMITH. (Proudly and happily) Great! The

proudest moment of a man's life is when he's rocking his first baby to sleep!

JENNIE. (*To AGNES at bedroom door*) Agnes, bring the basanet.

SMITH. (*Wisely*) Later on he gets used to 'em.

(*JENNIE glances at him as much as to say—"You are assuming a great deal, George."*)

JENNIE. (*Drolly*) Yes, Brigham. (*She stops pendulum of the metrenome and places it on table. Re-enter AGNES, carrying a small swinging basanet. It is made of wicker, has a silk canopy and is very pretty. SMITH meets AGNES as she comes down, takes basanet from her and places it at R. of easy-chair. JENNIE kneels, places baby in basanet and covers it with a little blanket. As JENNIE rises to feet, SMITH, as happy as a boy with a new toy—sits in easy-chair and begins to slowly swing basanet. JENNIE goes to AGNES. To AGNES, quietly*) Hot milk, Agnes, please.

AGNES. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit AGNES, dining-room*)

(*JENNIE goes to fireplace, takes a stick of wood from woodbasket and puts it on the fire. She then goes quietly up to bookcase and begins to look for a certain book.*)

SMITH. (*Singing, as he swings the basanet slowly back and forth*)

Rock-a-bye baby in the tree-top,  
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.  
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,  
Down comes my rock-a-bye, baby and all.

(*Slight pause, then*) Jennie?

JENNIE. (*As she takes a large book from bookcase*) Yes, George.

SMITH. (*Gravely, as he gazes front—and rocks basanet slowly*) Do you know what is the only salvation for the American business man whose nerves are all shot to thunder?

JENNIE. (*As she glances at book, which she has opened*) No, dear.

SMITH. (*Idealistically*) His wife—His wife, a little home and a baby. (*JENNIE comes down to him with book*) Jennie, you're a wonderful woman! If it hadn't been for you, I wouldn't have a little home to-night. And if it hadn't been for you, the chances are I wouldn't have had a baby, either.

JENNIE. I'm glad you feel that way about it, George.

SMITH. I do. (*Singing*)

“Rock-a-bye baby up in the tree-top,  
When the wind blows——”

(*Smiling*) Jennie dear?

JENNIE. Yes.

SMITH. Will I have time to take a nap before dinner?

JENNIE. Yes—if you don't take it too long. (*Re-enter AGNES with a small pitcher of hot milk and a glass on a tray. JENNIE hands glass of milk to SMITH. Exit AGNES, dining-room*) Here is some hot milk Agnes brought you.

SMITH. She's one of the most thoughtful girls I ever knew. Here I am, getting ready to take a nap, and in she comes with some nice hot milk. Golly, but that will make me sleep! (*As SMITH drinks hot milk*)

JENNIE. If it doesn't, perhaps this book will.

(*SMITH gives her the empty glass and takes the book.*)

SMITH. What is it—fiction? (*Reading title of*



*book*) A History of the Rise and Fall of the American Tariff, With Judiciary Comments By William Howard Taft. Hm! (*Lays it carefully on the floor—leans back in chair.* JENNIE *turns the lamp low, then she goes to the piano, sits and plays, "Rock-a-baby" softly. After a pause—completely satisfied*) Perry Dodge may be fat and prosperous, but when it comes to being happy, he will certainly have to take his hat off to me.

JENNIE. (*Drolly—to humor him, as she plays*) Yes, George.

(*Presently SMITH dozes off to sleep.* JENNIE *glances at him and seeing that he is asleep, plays softer and softer until there is no sound at all. Then she rises, smiles at her sleeping husband, goes to him and kisses him very tenderly on his forehead. She glances at clock. It cuckoos the half hour. Then she carries basanet into bedroom. The room is now dark but due to the reflection from the fireplace the face and body of the sleeping SMITH can be seen distinctly. His face seems to be the picture of contentment. A squeaking automobile-horn sounds off R. It sounds very near—as if the car was in front of the house. SMITH, however, does not hear it. He is sound asleep. At the sound of the auto-horn JENNIE re-appears and turns up the lamp, then hastens to R. D. and opens it. Enter MARJORIE DODGE. MARJORIE is no longer the quiet, unassuming, simply dressed little home-body. She is now a society climber. She is dressed to the minute, has mastered the latest tango step, is an expert gambler at Bridge, takes her after-dinner cigarette, her before-dinner cocktail and acts, talks and looks as if there were only three things in life worth living for—fine clothes, Auction Bridge and the tango. She wears a*



long handsome silk cloak under which is a gorgeous and shockingly modern ball-room gown,—the most expensive thing Bendel could show her. The cloak completely covers the dress. Her hat and slippers are in keeping with the gown. She has come dressed for a tango-supper to be given in the city and to which she and PERRY are planning to return later in the evening. When she enters, the cloak is buttoned, thereby completely hiding the gown. And the light in the room is so subdued that the gay colors and design of the hat don't stand out prominently.)

JENNIE. (*Delighted, but in a low voice*) Marjorie! Marjorie! (*She embraces and kisses her then, stepping back and surveying her*) My, but it's good to see you! I thought you'd forgotten us. And how well you're looking!

MARJORIE. (*Breezily*) I ought to look well—just came from Bendel's. Been there ever since I reached New York. And believe me, Jennie, I certainly did buy the last word in Paris gowns. (*Coming down*) Is George home yet?

JENNIE. (*Warningly*) Sh!

MARJORIE. (*Lowering her voice—and stopping*) What's the matter?

JENNIE. (*In a half whisper*) He's asleep. (*Pointing towards chair*)

MARJORIE. (*Incredulous, and in great amazement*) Asleep?

JENNIE. Completely.

MARJORIE. (*After glancing at easy-chair. She can't see SMITH*) What ails him—is he sick?

JENNIE. Does he look sick? (*The following is played with low voices*)

MARJORIE. (*Taking a look at SMITH—then in great surprise*) No, but—What on earth have you been doing to him?

JENNIE. Nothing. Why?

MARJORIE. He's fat enough to be an alderman!

JENNIE. (*Drolly*) He won't, though. I'll see to that.

MARJORIE. But how on earth can he tango with all that meat on his frame?

JENNIE. He doesn't.

MARJORIE. (*Surprised and somewhat loudly*) Don't you?

JENNIE. (*Raising finger, to warn her against waking SMITH*) Sh! Take off your wraps and stay a while. (*Slips arm around her waist and escorts her R. They are now near window-seat, where they stop*)

MARJORIE. (*Somewhat anxiously, as she unbuttons cloak*) Has Perry 'phoned out?

JENNIE. No, but he'll be here for dinner, won't he?

MARJORIE. (*Peevishly*) He said he would,—but he ought to be here now. (*As she removes cloak. JENNIE assisting*) He promised to take me to a tango supper at the—(*The cloak is now off, exposing to view the gown*)

JENNIE. (*Stunned as she beholds the gown*) Marjorie!

MARJORIE. (*Glancing at her, blankly*) What's the matter?

JENNIE. Your gown!

MARJORIE. (*Smiling proudly at her own gown*) Like it? (*Poses*)

JENNIE. It's the most wonderful thing I ever saw!

MARJORIE. You haven't seen the best part of it. (*Struts up stage, finger tips resting lightly on hips to show off back of dress*) See that back?

JENNIE. (*Naively*) Yes, I can see most of it.

MARJORIE. (*Breezily and glancing over shoulder at her*) Some back, isn't it!

JENNIE. Yes, but—

MARJORIE. New York hasn't *anything* on me—even if I do live in Seattle!

JENNIE. (*With a droll little smile*) You haven't *very much* on yourself, Marjorie.

MARJORIE. (*Not getting the point of JENNIE'S joke*) What?

JENNIE. (*Turning it aside*) I said, "How much you have changed."

MARJORIE. (*As she saunters down*) I've lost forty pounds, if that's what you mean. And tonight I'm going to knock off a few more. Jenn, there's nothing like the tango for reducing! You ought to try it on George.

JENNIE. (*Looking towards SMITH*) Sh!!

MARJORIE. Have you got any cigarettes? I left mine at the hotel.

JENNIE. No, but George sometimes smokes a pipe. Would that—Oh, that reminds me—did your bulbs grow?

MARJORIE. (*Puzzled*) Bulbs? What on earth are you talking about?

JENNIE. Your favorite bulbs and rose bushes—the ones you took out west with you.

MARJORIE. (*Dimly remembering but not in the least interested*) Oh, yes. (*Yawns and sits in rocking chair*)

JENNIE. Is your home in Seattle anything like the one you had here? That was such a cozy little place.

MARJORIE. Heavens no! We live at the most expensive hotel in town—and ours is the most expensive suite in the hotel.

JENNIE. Do you prefer that to a *home*?

MARJORIE. Well, I guess! That way I don't have to do anything but have a good time. (*Yawns as if weary*) May I have a cocktail? I was up all night and—(*Yawns again*)

JENNIE. (*Sympathetically*) Weren't you well?

MARJORIE. Yes, but some girls from 'Frisco got

on the train at Chicago and we played Auction all night. Some game! Seattle against 'Frisco.

JENNIE. (*As before*) Sh!

MARJORIE. For the love of Murphy, give me a cocktail. I'm frazzled to a finish.

JENNIE. I'm sorry, Marjorie, but we haven't any—

MARJORIE. (*Somewhat impatiently*) Then give me a Bromo Seltzer.

JENNIE. I'm awfully sorry, Marjorie, but—Here's some hot milk. (*Pouring out some from pitcher*)

MARJORIE. (*Disgusted*) In the name of Maude Muller, what is this place, anyhow—the barracks of the grape juice brigade? (*Sarcastically*) Hot milk!

JENNIE. (*Patting MARJORIE'S hand*) I know some on who is very very tired.

MARJORIE. (*Irritably*) You *make* me tired. I was all right when I came here. (*Jerks her hand away from JENNIE and turning her back upon JENNIE, looks disgustedly at SMITH*) No wonder he sleeps. I don't blame him. If I had to stay here very long, I'd do the Rip Van Winkle stunt myself.

JENNIE. (*Kindly but drolly and significantly*) There is a slight difference between George and Rip Van Winkle. Rip couldn't sleep at home.

MARJORIE. (*Petulantly*) I don't care a rap what Rip couldn't do—I came to New York to hit the high spots and I'm going to hit them!

JENNIE. (*Drolly serious*) If you take a nice little snooze before dinner you can hit the high spots higher. MARJORIE *looks at her, disgusted*. JENNIE *slips arm about MARJORIE'S waist and smiles*) Come and lie down, little marksman.

MARJORIE. (*Irritably—indicating dress*) How can I lie down with this on?

JENNIE. Take it off.

MARJORIE. Then I can never get it on again.

JENNIE. Why not?

MARJORIE. (*Petulant*) When I sleep I swell up.

JENNIE. Then don't go to sleep. Just lie down and rest. (*Humoring her*) That's a good little sport. (*She escorts MARJORIE toward bed-room*)

MARJORIE. (*Peevishly, as they go*) All right, but why in the Dickens doesn't Perry come! He's always late when I want him to take me any place!

JENNIE. (*At bed-room door—drolly but kindly and as if to soothe MARJORIE*) Don't blame him, Marjorie—there may be a reason. (*They exit—JENNIE closes door*)

(*Slight pause, then SMITH snores a quiet, gentle, peaceful little snore. Another pause, then he snores again and smiles as if dreaming a pleasant Dream. Enter PERRY DODGE, R. D., quickly, nervously. He is thin, haggard and careworn and looks years older than before. He is hollow-eyed and worried and his comfortable looking stomach is gone. He is now like SMITH used to be, only worse,—tired but keyed up, nervous and intense and strictly business. His motto has become S p e e d and M o n e y. He looks quite dyspeptic. He wears a business suit and his shoes are covered with dust, as if he had been walking on a dusty road. He is quite bald and what hair remains is streaked with grey. He enters briskly and determinedly, as if entering an office on a very important business matter that had to be settled immediately and quickly. Closes door, automatically; glances around room, sees no one, frowns impatiently, jerks out watch, glances at it, then espies bed-room door, and shoving watch back in pocket, starts rapidly toward door. As he starts, SMITH snores loudly. PERRY, surprised, stops in his tracks and listens. Slight pause, then SMITH snores again, even*)

louder than before. Instantly PERRY locates the sound and, eyes riveted on easy-chair, goes down to it, quickly but curiously. Arrived at R. of chair, he stops and looks at SMITH curiously, as if not sure that he really knows the man. Then he walks slowly around and front of him, studying SMITH'S face. After PERRY has passed in front of SMITH and is near the fireplace, SMITH snores a lusty, whole-hearted snore. PERRY'S lower jaw drops and, in utter amazement, he stares at SMITH.

PERRY. (*After a pause*) Great Scott! Is that George? (*At this moment, SMITH gives a good healthy yawn, stretches himself and with a series of ecstatic sounds, he turns in his chair, so that he faces PERRY—half opens his eyes and with a long soul-inspiring snore, drops off to sleep again as peacefully as a baby after a dose of paregoric. Dropping into a chair, facing SMITH. Flabbergasted, to himself, as he gazes at him*) I'll be damned!

(*Re-enter JENNIE, from bed-room. She doesn't see PERRY and he doesn't see her. She smiles off L. at the sleeping MARJORIE as she closes bed-room door slowly and softly. When door is closed, she turns towards SMITH and sees the strange man seated in a chair, facing him—and not recognizing PERRY, gives a half smothered exclamation of fright.*)

JENNIE. Oh!

PERRY. (*Recovering from the shock of seeing SMITH asleep and not knowing JENNIE is in the room, rises and, going to SMITH, touches him on the shoulder*) Say, Smith—Smith. (*SMITH does not wake*)

JENNIE. You let my husband alone! Who are you? I'll call for help—I'll—(*Goes toward telephone*)

PERRY. Why Jennie. (JENNIE turns and looks at him, bewildered) It's only me—Perry Dodge.

JENNIE. (Looking at him closely) Are you really Perry Dodge?

PERRY. Of course I'm Perry Dodge! Who do you think I am, Huerta? How are you Jennie? Didn't mean to frighten you. (Shaking her hand nearly off) Say Jennie: is that George or have you divorced him and married some one else? (SMITH snores gently) I don't recognize that man.

JENNIE. (Smiling) It's the same George.

PERRY. (Anxiously—glancing at SMITH) What's happened—is he drinking?

(JENNIE shakes her head.)

JENNIE. (Drily but significantly) Eating. (SMITH snores loudly)

PERRY. For the love of—Listen to that! (Jerks out watch and looks at it) And it isn't six o'clock yet!

JENNIE. (With a proud little smile) You should hear him at twelve!

PERRY. I haven't snored like that since I left New York! But wake him up Jennie—I want to talk business. Hurry.

JENNIE. My—but you have changed.

PERRY. I've been hustling since I saw you. There's big chances out West to make money and I'm making it. (He starts toward SMITH but JENNIE takes hold of his arm, and stops him)

JENNIE. George never talks business at home.

PERRY. But this is important! (Starts toward SMITH. JENNIE takes hold of his arm again and stops him)

JENNIE. No: you mustn't wake him up. We'll chat until——

(SMITH snores comfortably, contentedly. PERRY



*frowns at him. SMITH'S snoring irritates PERRY.)*

PERRY. (*He removes JENNIE'S hand from his arm. Confidentially*) Listen—To-morrow I sail for Europe. I'm going to introduce my hulled corn into England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Germany, France, Spain, and all the rest of 'em. I'm going to get the British Government to feed it to the Army and if the Government refuses, I'll call on Mrs. Pankhurst. Listen. If the militant suffragettes of England ate my hulled corn every morning for breakfast, inside of six weeks they'd be able to knock every bull-headed Englishman off the Island. WHERE THERE'S CORN THERE'S STRENGTH! (*SMITH snores and JENNIE glances at him hoping PERRY won't wake him up*) You don't believe it! Listen—To-day, in China, where for thousands of years the only thing the people ate was rice, my hulled corn's being sold by the shipload. People are buying it by the ton. And what's the result? China is waking up! (*Prophetically*) Inside of fifty years the Chinese people will rule the Orient. And why? CORN! WHERE THERE'S CORN THERE IS STRENGTH! (*JENNIE is now gazing at him as if deeply interested not so much in what he is saying as the way he says it. She is thinking of the great change that has come over him since he left New York and there is a little twinkle in her eye. But PERRY thinks she is intensely interested in what he is saying and that he is hypnotizing her with his wonderful tale of success. He steps close to her. There is a slight pause during which SMITH turns over on his right side, restlessly. He sleeps in that position during the following, which is spoken persuasively and in natural voice*) Two years ago I introduced my hulled corn into Alaska. To-day Alaska is taking more gold out of the ground and fish out of the sea than ever

before in her life. Need I ask *why*? (*Pauses to let the argument sink in—SMITH turns over on his left side*) Drop down the Pacific Coast into British Columbia. You hear nothing but my hulled corn. (*Pauses as before—SMITH turns over on his back as if in the throes of a bad dream*) Come on down the coast to the Pacific States of our own country. (*SMITH opens his eyes slowly and gazes vacantly front, as if listening to something in a dream. PERRY makes a slight pause*) When the women of California made up their minds they wanted the ballot, what happened? (*Slight pause. SMITH is interested*) They got it, and they got it quick. (*PERRY smiles proudly at JENNIE and SMITH turns his head slowly and glances curiously at PERRY. SMITH thinks it is all a dream*) Need I tell you what the women of California eat? (*SMITH's glance becomes a gaze. JENNIE and PERRY do not see him—their eyes being fixed on one another's*) And when peace is restored in Mexico, if it ever is restored, what will restore it? Puffed Rice? Cream of Wheat? Quaker Oats? Not in a thousand years! (*Prophetically*) The man that takes the Dove of Peace to the City of Mexico and keeps her there, will be corn-fed. Understand? Fed on C O R N—HULLED CORN! (*SMITH rises slowly and without taking his eyes off PERRY, goes silently to the wood-basket, picks up a stick of wood and holding it behind his back, approaches PERRY slowly. Not once does SMITH take his eyes off PERRY whose back is to him. SMITH thinks him a fanatic or an inmate who has escaped from some private asylum and, although not afraid of him, wants to be prepared for any emergency. JENNIE sees SMITH and smiles but does not look at him. She keeps her eyes on PERRY who is unaware of SMITH's presence. He keeps right on talking*) I've made one fortune already. Day and night my mills on Puget Sound are working to feed the hungry stomachs of the

Orient and Western America. Now I'm going to make another fortune and I want George to take half of it. He's a hustler, and I'm going to make him my partner. (*Emphatically*) Now will you let me talk to him?

SMITH. (*He is immediately behind PERRY*) Pardon me, stranger, but——

(*PERRY glances over shoulder at him.*)

PERRY. (*Delighted*) George! (*Thrusts out his hand to shake*)

SMITH. (*Motioning him back, with free hand—kindly, gently. He doesn't recognize PERRY*) Just a moment.

PERRY. (*Amazed*) Don't you know me?

(*SMITH looks at him a moment, decides he is a lunatic.*)

SMITH. (*To JENNIE—quietly*) 'Phone for the police.

JENNIE. (*Serious—not in fun*) How many?

PERRY. (*Emphatic—to SMITH*) This is no time for joking, George—I'm here to talk business.

SMITH. (*To JENNIE who has started toward 'phone*) Wait a minute. (*To PERRY, looking at him curiously*) Who are you, anyhow?

PERRY. (*Impatient at his stupidity*) Perry—Perry Dodge!—Don't you know me either?

SMITH. (*Incredulous and pointing finger at him*) You? You Perry Dodge?

PERRY. (*Angrily sarcastic*) Say, what's the matter with me, anyway? Nobody knows me! (*To JENNIE*) Ain't I Perry Dodge!

JENNIE. (*To SMITH, who is gazing at PERRY, completely bewildered*) I'm afraid he is, George.

SMITH. Well I'll be—(*Stops*)

JENNIE. (*Smiling—to SMITH*) Say it—I wanted to.

(SMITH *tosses stick of wood into fireplace and shakes hands with PERRY. During following JENNIE goes to fireplace and places the wood on the fire.*)

PERRY. (*Strictly business—slapping GEORGE on the back*) Now George: I'm off for Europe to-morrow and want to talk business with you all night. This is my proposition——

SMITH. Just a moment, Perry—What have you been doing to yourself?

PERRY. Getting rich.

(PHOEBE SNOW *appears at dining room door.*)

PHOEBE. Excuse me, but dere's a man at de back do' wants to see a thin nurvus gen'leman what ran away in his automobile.

PERRY. (*Incisively to PHOEBE*) Tell him to come around to-morrow—I'm busy now.

PHOEBE. Yass, suh, but he shuh is mad.

PERRY. (*Impatiently to SMITH—as PHOEBE exits*) Now here's my proposition, George——

SMITH. Just a moment. Do I understand that you have stolen someone's automobile?

PERRY. No! When I got off the train at the depot, I jumped into a taxi-cab and yelled—  
“Smith's! Hurry!”

“What Smith?” said the driver.

“George Smith!”

“There's four of 'em.”

“Th' one of Maplehurst Road!”

He lost five minutes talking than ran the car a block and stopped for a cheroot. Imagine it! Me—the busiest man in Seattle—every minute money—sitting out there waiting for a——

“How far is it to Smith's?” says I.

“Three miles,” says he.

“Straight ahead?”

"Yes—except when the road turns."

He went into a cigar store, and I started the car.

JENNIE. You don't mean you ran away with the man's machine?

PERRY. No, it ran away with me and busted up against a tree.

("HEAVY" appears in doorway. He is as heavy as in ACT II but is now clean shaven. Wears taxi-driver's clothes—leather cap, leather coat, heavy trousers, laced boots and gauntlets.)

HEAVY. (*Pointing at PERRY*) That's him! You're the guy I'm after! (*HEAVY starts angrily towards PERRY, but SMITH steps in front of him*) You keep out-a this! He smashed my car an' he's gon-a pay for it.

SMITH. Now look here, friend. My wife is here and we don't want any trouble. (*Recognizing him*) Why bless me!—It's Heavy. How are you, Heavy? (*Grasping his hand and shaking it heartily*) Glad to see you.

HEAVY. (*With great difficulty recognizing SMITH*) Say you ain't—

SMITH. Yes.

HEAVY. Good!—(*Knocked out, sits down and stares at SMITH*)

SMITH. That's right! Make yourself at home.

HEAVY. (*Recovering*) So you're the nut that—

JENNIE. How do you do, Mr. Heavy?

HEAVY. (*To JENNIE, completely flabbergasted*) Pardon th' profanity, but my God! Did you marry him?

JENNIE. Yes. (*Then pleasantly*) You remember Mr. Dodge, don't you? (*Seeing that HEAVY doesn't see any resemblance of the PERRY DODGE of ACT II*) The gentleman that called at the farm the day that—

HEAVY. (*Puzzled—to JENNIE*) The fat guy?

JENNIE. (*Smiling*) Yes—the comfortable gentleman.

HEAVY. (*To PERRY*) What happened?—Did you get into politics?

JENNIE. (*Diplomatically*) Now, Mr. Heavy, can't we adjust—

SMITH. (*To HEAVY*) Yes, can't we adjust—

HEAVY. (*To SMITH*) You keep out of this! He smashed my car and he's gon-a pay for it.

PERRY. (*Losing his temper*) Say: I've had about enough of you! When I'm in a hurry—

SMITH. (*Gently, like a kind father to a wayward son*) Take your time, Perry. Take your time.

HEAVY. (*In pugilistic attitude, fists clenched and glaring at PERRY*) Let 'im go on—I ain't afraid of him.

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly to HEAVY*) How is little Woodrow?

HEAVY. Almost as big as me.

JENNIE. Is he married yet?

HEAVY. No, but he's engaged. (*Grinning*) And th' girl's as big as me and Smith put together.

JENNIE. Tc! Tc! Tc! (*Then tactfully*) How much was your car damaged?

HEAVY. (*Reasonably—politely*) Five hundred dollars—but that ain't it. It's the principle of the thing. (*To PERRY—harshly*) If you hadn't been in such a confounded hurry—

(*Enter MARJORIE, from bed-room. Her hair is askew and she looks half asleep. Rubs her eyes sleepily and doesn't notice anyone but PERRY.*)

MARJORIE. Oh, there you are. And not dressed!

SMITH. (*Surprised*) Marjorie!

PERRY. (*To MARJORIE*) I look as if I had time to dress, don't I?

MARJORIE. (*Mad and nervous—as she goes to*



PERRY) Perry Dodge, you promised to take me to that tango supper!

PERRY. (*Trying to reason with her*) Now listen——

MARJORIE. I won't listen. It's always the same old story! (*Stamping foot as he tries to speak*) I won't! You said you'd take me. Didn't you? Didn't you?

PERRY. (*Exasperated*) Yes, but I'm busy. (*Turns to HEAVY*) Now look here——

MARJORIE. Don't you turn your back on me! (*Takes hold of his arm*)

PERRY. (*Facing her—angry but trying to appear very calm*) For heaven's sake, Marjorie, control yourself. Don't make a scene. (*Then savagely, to HEAVY*) How much do I owe you?

MARJORIE. (*Almost hysterical*) Perry Dodge, if you don't take me to that tango supper——

(PERRY faces her, speechless with rage. JENNIE, who is now at MARJORIE'S side, gently takes her by the arm and escorts her to window seat. As JENNIE takes MARJORIE'S arm, HEAVY pats PERRY sympathetically on the shoulder.)

HEAVY. (*Sympathetically, almost tenderly, to PERRY*) That's all right, old man. You can pay me to-morrow. (*Confidentially*) You've got all you can handle to-night.

(PERRY takes HEAVY by the arm and escorts him to R. D.)

PERRY. (*Sincerely but rapidly to HEAVY, as he escorts him to D. R.*) Thanks for the sympathy. That's what I like about you taxi-drivers. You're always sympathetic—(*Opens door*) except in your prices. (*Shoves him out, slams door shut and locks it*)



MARJORIE. (*Approaching PERRY, fairly bursting with rage*) Perry, if you don't—

JENNIE. (*To PERRY and MARJORIE*) What's the trouble? You two used to be inseparable.

PERRY. Yes, but a man can't get rich if he's running around with his wife all the time. (*To SMITH*) Now George, we'll get down to business. Here's my proposition—I'm going to introduce my hulled corn all over the world and make a bank full of money. And I'm going to let you in on it.

MARJORIE. Perry Dodge, answer me! "Yes" or "No?" Are you—

PERRY. (*Breaking in. Emphatically*) No. (*Then to SMITH*) Already my mills on Puget Sound are running night and day to supply the Orient. Not only that! Alaska—

MARJORIE. (*Who has been tapping her foot angrily, biting her lower lip and gazing wrathfully at PERRY, now explodes. She is so mad she almost cries*) Perry Dodge, you're a mean, horrid old thing! You promised to take me to that dance and now you won't do it. (*PERRY raises hand as if to say—"Now listen"*) I won't listen! I'm going to tell you just what I think of you. You're a mean horrid old thing! All you think of is business, business, buisness!

(*She pauses to breathe and PERRY raises hand as before as if to reason with her.*)

PERRY. Now—

MARJORIE. (*Stamping foot*) Even since we went to Seattle you've been crazy over hulled corn. You don't care *that*—(*Snapping fingers*) for me any more. Everything's hulled corn, hulled corn! (*Covers her face with hands—cries*)

(*SMITH starts toward them to intervene but JENNIE motions him to keep out of the fuss and he stops.*)

PERRY. (*Exasperated yet trying to be tender*)  
Now be reasonable, Marjorie—this tango——

MARJORIE. If it hadn't been for you I'd never got interested in tangos in the first place. You wouldn't stay home and I had to do *something*. (*Sarcastically*) Nice kind of a husband you are!

(*JENNIE motions to SMITH and as she goes to PERRY, SMITH goes to MARJORIE.*)

JENNIE. (*Pleasantly to PERRY—as she goes to him from R. of table where she has been standing*)

Perry. (*Both PERRY and MARJORIE look at her*)  
Our baby has a new tooth. Don't you want to see it?

(*Simultaneously, she takes PERRY'S arm and SMITH takes MARJORIE'S arm.*)

SMITH. (*Kindly and with a friendly smile—going to her*) Pardon me, Marjorie, but I haven't said "hello" to you yet.

MARJORIE. (*Lugubriously*) Hello, George. (*Then, as if appealing for sympathy and support as SMITH shakes her hand*) Don't you think Perry is a horrid old——

SMITH. (*To MARJORIE, as they start leisurely across R. and JENNIE and PERRY start leisurely up L.*) You must have come in while I was asleep.

MARJORIE. I did. (*Then lugubriously*) Really, George, don't you think Perry's a——

(*Exit JENNIE and PERRY into bedroom to see the baby.*)

SMITH. (*Smiling, as if preoccupied, and unconscious of interrupting her—looking straight ahead—not at her*) Marjorie, when I was asleep, I dreamt of you.

MARJORIE. That's more than Perry does.

(SMITH takes hold of her arm again, reverses her deliberately then starts slowly across L. with her.)

SMITH. (*Buoyantly, as they cross L.*) I dreamt that we were out fishing—the four of us—and that you caught a great big fish. Oh, it was a wolloper! And—and——

MARJORIE. (*Glancing at him suspiciously*) You're making that up. You didn't dream about me.

SMITH. (*Kindly but seriously*) I *did* dream about you, but there was no fish in it.

MARJORIE. Then what'd you put one in for?

SMITH. To take your mind off your trouble. (*As they cross R.*) What I did dream was that you and Perry were still living in New York and were just as happy as you used to be. You were in your own little home and Perry had dragged me out of my office and there we sat at your table—you and he and Jennie and I. We were eating berries fresh from your garden, and you and Perry were as happy as children.

(*A slight pause.*)

MARJORIE. (*Expectantly, curiously*) Then what?

SMITH. I began to hear a rumbling—like Niagara Falls in the distance. It grew louder and louder. Finally it woke me.

MARJORIE. What was it?

SMITH. Your husband was introducing his hulled corn to Mrs. Pankhurst!

MARJORIE. (*Complainingly—and whimpering*) There you are! I tell you, George, Perry is nothing but hulled corn! It's all he thinks of or cares for or——

(SMITH stops her with a little gesture.)

SMITH. (*Seriously, yet with a kindly smile*) And you—do you *really* enjoy tango suppers?

MARJORIE. No, but——

SMITH. Do you really enjoy wearing that kind of dress?

MARJORIE. No, but——

SMITH. Wouldn't you rather wear one like Jennie is wearing?

MARJORIE. Yes, but——

SMITH. Then why don't you stay here this evening and wear one of Jennie's and be comfortable.

MARJORIE. (*Stubbornly*) Because.

SMITH. Because why?

MARJORIE. (*Firmly*) Because Perry *promised* to take me.—

SMITH. (*With the air of a stern father sending for his son whom he is going to punish*) Tell Perry to come here.

MARJORIE. Why?

SMITH. (*As before—and crossing gravely R.*) Tell him to come here.

MARJORIE. (*Emphatic, and shaking her finger at him warningly*) Now you look here, George—whatever you do, *don't humor him*. What he needs is a good sound—(*Is about to say licking, but pauses a moment*) talking to.

SMITH. (*Patting her shoulder—reassuringly*) That's what I'm going to give him.

MARJORIE. (*With a tenderness bordering on pathos*) Don't be too hard on Perry, George. He isn't altogether to blame. You used to be like he is yourself.

SMITH. (*Gently and significantly*) That is why I want to talk to him. I know how he feels. Tell him to come here. (MARJORIE *looks at him and then starts toward bed-room door. When she is almost at door*) Marjorie? (*She stops and looks at him*) Don't *tell* him to come—*ask* him.

MARJORIE. I shall *tell* him—and emphatically, too.

(Enter PERRY and Jennie from bed-room. MARJORIE gives a swift glance at PERRY and turns her back to him abruptly. She wants him to understand that all overtures of peace must come from him.)

JENNIE. (As they enter—to SMITH. She is much pleased) Perry thinks the baby looks like you, George.

SMITH. Thank you, Perry.

JENNIE. (Tactfully, as PERRY glances worriedly at MARJORIE'S back—going to MARJORIE. Then sweetly—) Marjorie, you haven't seen our baby yet.

MARJORIE. No, but I know she doesn't look like George. (Glances spitefully at PERRY, then starts independently toward bed-room. JENNIE smiles encouragingly at PERRY—then follows MARJORIE)

(Exit MARJORIE and JENNIE. Bed-room door is closed.)

PERRY. (Disgusted) Can you beat that for luck! Here I am, all tired out—worried to death over business—sailing to-morrow with my hulled corn—(Cynically) and my wife wants me to take her to a tango. (Bangs table with fist and paces angrily)

SMITH. (Significant) Why?

PERRY. (Stopping and throwing up his arms) That's it—why! The Lord only knows—I don't!

SMITH. I do. (PERRY, surprised, stops and looks at him. SMITH indicates easy-chair, as he comes across to lower side of table) Sit down.

PERRY. (Irritably) I'm too busy to sit down. (Paces R. doggedly angry)

SMITH. Abraham Lincoln once said——

PERRY. (*Emphatically but not stopping or looking at SMITH*) Don't tell me what he said. His wife never dragged him out to a tango.

SMITH. And he never tried to make the whole world eat corn, either. Perry, the great trouble with you is, everything you do you do too fast. (*He seats PERRY gently but firmly on the chair*) Sit down. (*PERRY tries to rise but SMITH places his hand on PERRY'S head and pushes him back*) Perry, when I put you, stay put. (*Removes hand from his head but holds it a few inches above head*)

PERRY. (*Face all screwed up*) Now look here, George——

SMITH. What you need is calmness—and I'm going to give it to you. (*Picks up metrenome from the table*)

PERRY. Listen, George——

SMITH. I've been listening to you all evening, even in my dreams. From now on, you're going to listen to me. (*To AGNES who enters from bedroom and is going towards dining-room*) Agnes, heat some milk—the hotter the better.

AGNES. How much, sir?

SMITH. A quart.

(*Exit AGNES, after glancing at PERRY.*)

PERRY. I didn't come here to drink hot milk! (*SMITH begins to wind up metrenome*) What's that thing?

SMITH. A life saver! (*Exhibiting metrenome*) That helped to make me what I am. And look at me! That is my equator. (*Pats his stomach proudly, and smiles at himself. PERRY looks at SMITH'S stomach, then glances at his own. SMITH runs his fingers through his hair, on top of head and holds up a handful of hair proudly by ends*) And look at that! (*Instinctively PERRY puts his hand on top of his own head to imitate SMITH. He raises*

*his fingers from head, as if to hold up some hair, but there is no hair to hold up)* Have you looked at yourself lately?

PERRY. Haven't had time.

SMITH. (*Offering him the metrenome*) Hold this a moment. (*PERRY takes the metrenome and SMITH goes to bed-room door*) Jennie, may I please have your hand-mirror? (*He then opens the door*)

(*The moment the door is opened, MARJORIE screams; PERRY springs to his feet, metrenome in hand. The door is quickly slammed in SMITH'S face.*)

PERRY. (*Anxiously, after the door is slammed shut*) What's the matter?

SMITH. Your wife is making herself comfortable. (*JENNIE opens the bed-room door a few inches, gives SMITH a hand mirror, closes the door. SMITH, coming down with mirror, motions to PERRY to sit down. Petulantly like a boy obeying against his will, he sits in easy-chair. At R. side of chair—offering PERRY the mirror*) Look at yourself. (*PERRY takes mirror and looks at himself pathetically. With sincerity*) Sanitariums are being built every day for just such men as you. And lots and lots of the boys that go into them never come out. I was in one, Perry—ten long weeks—after I left the chicken farm. Some of the boys—the older boys—didn't get out. (*Then—patting PERRY lightly on shoulder*) It's hell, Perry. Hell! Jennie helped me—now I'm going to help you. (*Starts the metrenome pendulum and takes it to the table*)

PERRY. (*Looking dubiously at SMITH, who is placing metrenome on the table. SMITH stands at lower side of table*) That's very sweet of you, George, but I think I'd rather go to a sanitarium. (*Rises cautiously, eyes fixed on SMITH'S back and looks as if he were planning to escape*)



SMITH. (*Suddenly facing him*) Take off your coat. Take it off. (PERRY *removes the coat.* SMITH *then takes off his own jacket, and puts it on PERRY.* Puts PERRY's coat on himself, then goes to *metrenome* and picks it up. Throughout the following, he unconsciously imitates JENNIE—he stops the pendulum, then—) Now we'll begin. (*Starts pendulum*)

PERRY. George, let's stop this nonsense and get down to business. The hulled-corn business—

(SMITH *takes him gently by the arm, and he pauses.* They are now at L. of lower side of table and facing it. SMITH *places metrenome on table.*)

SMITH. (Perry, hereafter, when you talk—(*In time with the metrenome*) Talk—like—the—met—re—nome. When you walk—(*Lets go of PERRY's arm and paces R. slowly*) Walk—like—the—met—re—nome. (*Facing PERRY, who is watching him closely*) When you think—(*Striking a meditative pose*) Think—like—the—met—re—nome. (*Then, as he returns to him, in time*) If—you—don't—give—it—a—chance—I'll—wring—your—blas—ted—neck.

PERRY. (*Persuasively.* They are now face to face) Now listen, George—if I do everything like that—(*Indicating metrenome*) I'll go crazy.

SMITH. You'll go to sleep, and that's exactly what you need—lots of good wholesome sleep at regular hours. Begin—(*Takes hold of his arm and begins to mark time with feet*) One—two—three—four—(*Sternly, to PERRY, who isn't marking time*) Begin! (*Emphatically. He has kept right on marking time*) One—two—three—four. (PERRY *makes a wry face and begins to mark time on "two."* He is awkward at first but soon gets accustomed to the rhythm) One—two—three—four. March! (*As they cross R.*) One—two—three—four—One—two—three—four. Count!

PERRY. Five—six—seven—eight—Five—six—seven—eight. (*They are now at R. wall*)

SMITH. Keep time!

PERRY. (*Petulant*) But—

SMITH. Re—verse! (*PERRY attempts to reverse quickly but SMITH yanks him back and begins to count*) One—two—three—four. Mind! (*They begin to reverse*)

PERRY. (*As they are reversing*) Five—six—seven—eight. I'm nearly dead.

SMITH. Shut up! March! (*They start L.*) One—two—three—four.

PERRY. For—God's—sake—who—told—you—to—do—this?

SMITH. The—doctor—

PERRY. Who—told—him?

SMITH. My—wife.

PERRY. Who—told—her?

SMITH. No—bod—y—tells—her—any—thing—She—knows—ever—y—thing—in—stinc—tive—ly.

PERRY. Re—verse.

SMITH. (*As they reverse, near L. wall*) One—two—three—four.

PERRY. Five—six—seven—eight. Can't—I—sit—down?

SMITH. (*As they cross R.*) No! The—best—thing—to—make—a—man—for—get—his—business—is—a—ba—by.

PERRY. I—wish—I—had—one,—George.

SMITH. Re—verse.

PERRY. (*As they reverse, near R. wall*) Five—six—seven—eight. I—al—ways—want—ed—a—ba—by.

SMITH. (*They cross L. during following*) Why—don't—you—get—one?

PERRY. Be—cause—my—wife—is—out—ev—er—ry—night—play—ing—bridge.

SMITH. Re—verse!

PERRY. (*As they reverse*) One—two—three—four.

(*Re-enter AGNES, from dining-room. She carries a tray upon which is a large pitcher of hot milk, and a tumbler—also carries a long freshly ironed white baby's dress. She places the tray on table and paying no attention to the two men, goes into bedroom, closing door.*)

SMITH. (*As they cross R.*) Why—don't—you—make—your—wife—stay—home?

PERRY. How—can—I—when—I—ne—ver—stay—home—myself.

SMITH. (*Now at R. wall*) Re—verse.

(*As they reverse—enter MARJORIE and JENNIE from bed-room. MARJORIE is now clad in a pretty house dress—one of JENNIE'S—and in pretty house slippers. MARJORIE is struck dumb with terror when she sees PERRY, but JENNIE takes in the situation. The men do not see them enter.*)

PERRY. (*As they reverse*) One—two—three—four.

MARJORIE. (*Frightened*) Perry! (*Rushes toward him. He turns his head slowly, in time with metrenome and looks at her blankly. She stops near table, horrified*) Perry!

PERRY. (*Pacing L. with SMITH*) Hell—o—Mar—jor—ie.

(*As he talks, he smiles, slowly and mechanically, as if keeping time to the metrenome. The men, now quite near MARJORIE, halt. PERRY continues to mark time to metrenome, but SMITH stands still*)

MARJORIE. (*To SMITH—she is all wrought up*)

What's happened to him, George? Tell me! Please!  
Is he hurt? Is he sick?

PERRY. (*As before and marking time*) Do—I—  
look—sick?

SMITH. (*Gravely*) Your husband is on the  
verge of a nervous breakdown.

MARJORIE. I knew something was the matter  
with him!

SMITH. He is tottering between a sanitarium  
and the grave.

(*MARJORIE covers face with hands and sobs quietly.*

PERRY stops marking time and JENNIE comes to  
MARJORIE to comfort her.)

JENNIE. Don't cry, dear.

PERRY. I'm all right.

SMITH. (*Firmly to PERRY—beginning to mark  
time*) One—two—three—four. March!

PERRY. (*As they march R.*) Five—six—seven—  
eight.

SMITH. (*They are now in front of easy-chair*)  
Halt!

PERRY. (*Marking time, in front of chair*) One—  
two—three—four.

SMITH. Sit—down.

PERRY. (*Backing his back around to front of  
easy-chair*) Five—six—seven—eight.

SMITH. Sit.

PERRY. (*As he lowers himself slowly into chair*)  
Down.

MARJORIE. (*Eagerly, yet tenderly, to SMITH, go-  
ing toward him*) Is there anything I can do for  
him?

PERRY. (*Reassuringly, as he settles back com-  
fortably in chair*) I'm—all—right.

(*MARJORIE glances at him and he slowly smiles the  
"metronome" smile.*)

MARJORIE. Isn't there something I can do?  
Anything!

SMITH. Yes.

MARJORIE. What?

(SMITH glances at PERRY then takes MARJORIE gently by the arm and starts gravely across R.)

PERRY. One—two—three—four—I—can't—stop  
—at—all—now.

(Instinctively SMITH slackens his natural gait to fit the metronome's rhythm and MARJORIE follows suit. They take two steps in metronome time. JENNIE is at table, filling a tumbler with hot milk, sees their predicament and stops the metronome's pendulum. SMITH and MARJORIE then resume their natural gait.)

MARJORIE. Tell me. What can I do to help him?

JENNIE. (Quietly) George. (He looks at her. She picks up tumbler of hot milk, starts toward him. He meets her and she gives him the tumbler. She then feels of it, as she felt of the baby's bottle) Just right—not too warm.

(SMITH goes to PERRY and JENNIE to MARJORIE.)

JENNIE. (To MARJORIE) Do you really want to help your husband?

MARJORIE. Of course I do! And I want George to tell me *how*.

JENNIE. I will tell you how.

SMITH. (Imitating JENNIE by feeling tumbler which he has just handed to PERRY) Just right—not too warm.

(During the following PERRY sips milk slowly and between sips smiles contentedly front.)

MARJORIE. (*Impatiently, as JENNIE escorts her R.*) Tell me, Jennie! Tell me! How can I help Perry!

JENNIE. (*Confidentially and very seriously*) Go and see "What's Wrong" at the Belasco Theatre.

MARJORIE. But I want to know now—right now.

(*JENNIE glances at the two men. They are not listening.*)

JENNIE. What is your position on the baby question? (*MARJORIE is puzzled. SMITH begins to unlace one of PERRY'S shoes*) Are you in favor of babies or against them?

MARJORIE. (*Very much puzzled—after slight pause*) Why?

(*PERRY is oblivious to everything but his hot milk, which he is enjoying.*)

JENNIE. George.

SMITH. Yes, dear.

JENNIE. Will you please let Perry hold our baby a while?

SMITH. (*Very sweetly—an object lesson to PERRY*) Yes, dear. (*Goes off for baby*)

JENNIE. George knows what the tired business man neds.

(*Re-enter SMITH with the baby. Baby has on its new bonnet and the wonderful dress AGNES carried into the bedroom. JENNIE meets SMITH near easy-chair and he gives her the baby.*)

JENNIE. (*To PERRY*) Would you like to hold her, or shall I send for the basanet?

(*PERRY, his face beaming, holds out his arms and*

takes the baby. He smiles at it, then draws it slowly and affectionately closer. Every one watches him. SMITH smiles the sympathetic smile of a man who knows the wonderful joys of fatherhood. AGNES is smiling the smile of a proud nurse girl. MARJORIE is not smiling. She is marvelling at the happy expression on her husband's face as he gazes down at the little bundle in his arms. It is an expression she never saw before, and her own expression shows that she understands. SHE KNOWS. A pause.)

PERRY. Isn't it great! I would rather have a little girl like you, than all the money in the world.

(JENNIE and SMITH glance significantly at MARJORIE, as much as to say: "Well, it's up to you now!" Then MARJORIE goes slowly to PERRY, and lays her hand gently upon his shoulder. Slight pause, during which MARJORIE and PERRY gaze into each other's eyes. Exit AGNES, quietly, bedroom.)

MARJORIE. Perry, let's not go to Europe! You're all tired out. It's too much for you.

PERRY. George.

SMITH. Yes.

PERRY. I'm not going to Europe.

SMITH. Where are you going?

PERRY. Home.

SMITH. Aren't you afraid of the Seattle Spirit?

PERRY. If I had a little fairy like this waiting for me at home, I'd not be afraid of anything. (He looks at MARJORIE and she takes his face gently between her hands and kisses him)

(JENNIE, at folding doors, opens them a trifle, peeps



*in, sees that dinner is ready, then throws the doors wide open. TILLIE is dressed for service and the table is beautifully set for four people—decorated with country flowers and the shaded candles are lighted.)*

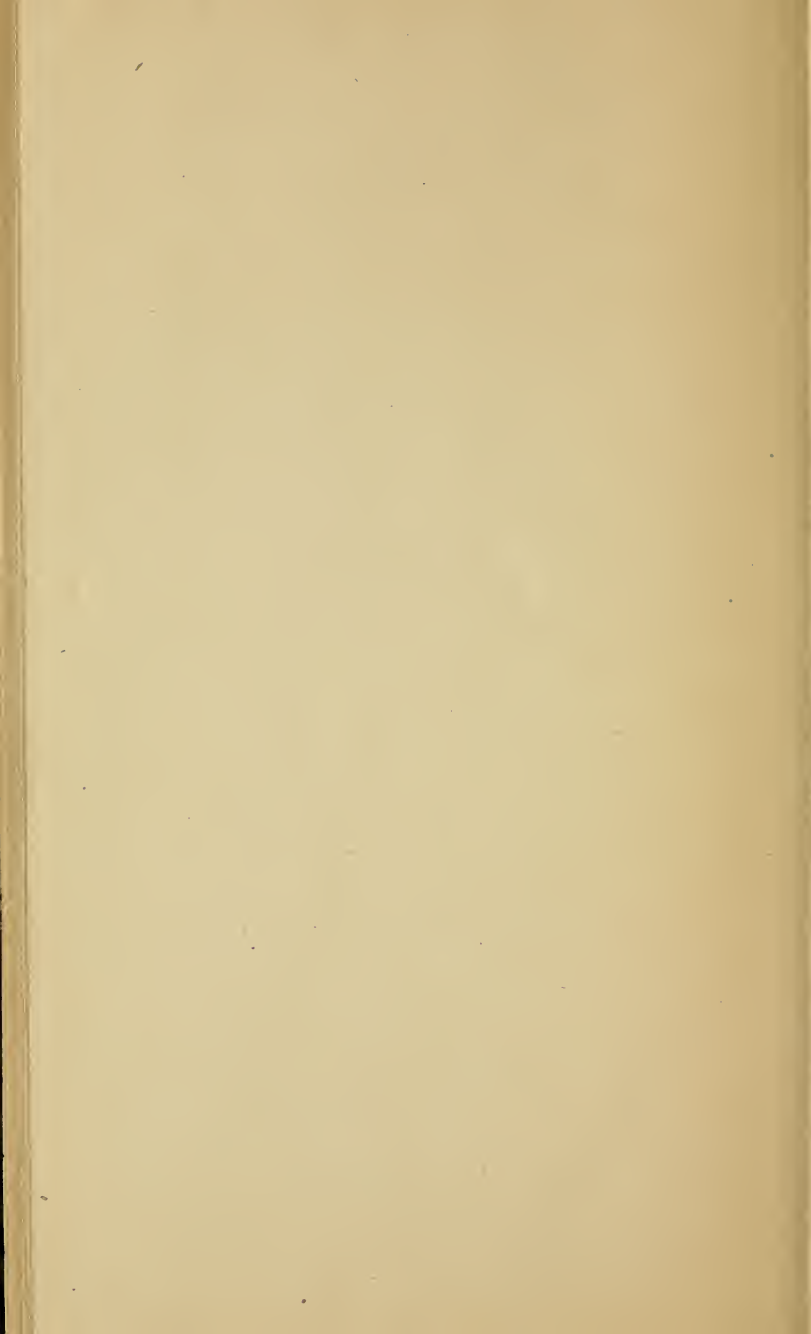
JENNIE. Dinner is ready!

(PERRY rises with the baby in his arms, and escorted by MARJORIE starts toward dining-room. SMITH turns out the lamp on table, then goes up. The living room is now dark and the dining-room brilliantly lighted. Outside the country insects are having a merry time.)

CURTAIN.









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