

NO PLAYS EXCHANGED.

BAKER'S EDITION
OF PLAYS

The College Chap

Price, 25 Cents



WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
BOSTON

COPYRIGHT, 1889, BY WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

A. W. Pinero's Plays

Price, 50 Cents Each

THE AMAZONS Farce in Three Acts. Seven males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, not difficult. Plays a full evening.

THE CABINET MINISTER Farce in Four Acts. Ten males, nine females. Costumes, modern society; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

DANDY DICK Farce in Three Acts. Seven males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours and a half.

THE GAY LORD QUEX Comedy in Four Acts. Four males ten females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening.

HIS HOUSE IN ORDER Comedy in Four Acts. Nine males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE HOBBY HORSE Comedy in Three Acts. Ten males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery easy. Plays two hours and a half.

IRIS Drama in Five Acts. Seven males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

LADY BOUNTIFUL Play in Four Acts. Eight males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, four interiors, not easy. Plays a full evening.

LETTY Drama in Four Acts and an Epilogue. Ten males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery complicated. Plays a full evening.

Sent prepaid on receipt of price by

Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

The College Chap

A Comedy-Drama in Three Acts

By
HARRY L. NEWTON
and
JOHN PIERRE ROCHE

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1911

The College Chap

PS 635
29 N5534

CHARACTERS

- ELIJAH GOODING, *a village product.*
SETH HINES, *just as tired.*
ART WIMPEL, *chief clerk, Occidental Hotel.*
SAMUEL CRANE, *proprietor of the Occidental Hotel.*
STARR CLAY, *promoter of Jay I. C. Trolley Line.*
BART EATON, *factotum of the "Clarion."*
JOHN DREW IRVING, *advance agent and drummer.*
WILL SELLMUM, *a traveling salesman.*
BILL, *a bell-boy.*
GEORGE, *another.*
DAVE CRANE, *the college chap.*
SALLIE CRANE, *in love with Art.*
MRS. JANE CRANE, *the mother.*
MADGE CLAY, *the girl.*
GERTIE FLYE, *the news-stand girl.*
MRS. MORTIMER JONES-BROWN, *a progressive woman.*
MRS. HEZIAH JENKS, *of the Chester Culture Club.*
MISS MARGARET SEYMOUR, *secretary of Chester Culture Club.*

PLACE.—Chester, Minnesota.

TIME.—The Present.

SYNOPSIS

- ACT I.—Office of the Occidental Hotel.
ACT II.—Office of the Chester *Clarion*, six months later.
ACT III.—Office of the Occidental Hotel, eight months later.



COPYRIGHT, 1911, BY WALTER H. BAKER & Co.

TMP96-007191

© Cl.D 24870

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

ELIJAH GOODING and **SETH HINES**. Men of about fifty-five and sixty respectively; typical village loafers and shabbily dressed. Very lazy in speech and action. As they have merely a "bit" in Act I, their parts may be "doubled" to **BART EATON** and **JOHN DREW IRVING**.

ART WIMPEL. Youth of about twenty or twenty-one. Bright and breezy in speech and action; a whole-souled, warm-hearted chap and madly in love with Sallie. In Act I dresses in cheap but rather flashy suit and straw hat. In Act II wears heavy overcoat, cap and muffler. In Act III, stylish suit, loud shirt and tie, turned up trousers and straw hat.

SAMUEL CRANE. Man of about sixty, smooth shaven, healthy complexion, and iron-gray hair. Rather slow and drawling in speech and gentle spoken, evincing in every action a lovable disposition. In Act I his clothing shows signs of much wear. In Act II he is garbed in winter clothing, also much the worse for wear. In Act III his appearance is decidedly more prosperous looking.

STARR CLAY. Man of about fifty-five, tall and slightly stoop-shouldered, smooth shaven and gray hair. Is harsh and abrupt in manner, and talks in jerky fashion, altogether businesslike. In Acts I and II his dress suggests the prosperous, small town business man's. In Act III he wears overalls, blue shirt, and old cap and carries red bandana handkerchief. His manner and speech in Act III is, however, greatly modified and he must portray to the audience that his character has undergone a great change.

BART EATON. About forty years of age and quite deaf. Wears chin whiskers and rather long hair; speaks with Yankee dialect. In Act I wears light summer clothing and straw hat. In Act II winter clothing. As he has nothing in Act III he can be "doubled" to play **WILL SELUM** if desired.

JOHN DREW IRVING. Man of about thirty-five or forty. Part should be played by a large, portly person, florid of face and smooth shaven. Is cheery in speech and action and a fast talker. His appearance should suggest that of one who desired to make a good "front" on a small income, especially in Acts

I and II. In Act III he is supposed to be in better circumstances and shows it in dress.

WILL SELSUM. A typical traveling salesman, aged twenty-eight or thirty. In Act III he has "finished" the town and is merely loafing about until his train time; indicating that he is quite bored with everything. He also shows signs of intoxication, but must be careful not to overdo it.

BILL and GEORGE. Typical uniformed bell-boys.

DAVE CRANE. Youth of about twenty-three or twenty-four, affecting the latest craze in style in Act I, but more subdued in other two acts. A close study of the speeches and lines in part should give the performer a good idea of the sort of character the authors have in mind. Only in Act I should he be "flip" or careless, and then only until his scene with **MADGE**, after that he is sincere in manner, but not at any time intensely dramatic, except his scene with **STARR CLAY** in Act II. **DAVE CRANE** is a splendid juvenile part if proper care is taken that it be not overacted or approaches the heroic.

SALLIE CRANE. Soubrette part; aged eighteen. Very simple and girlish in speech and manner; warm-hearted and impulsive. In Act I wears a simple white summer dress. In Act II neat winter clothing. In Act III her dress is slightly more pretentious, but not extravagant.

JANE CRANE. A kindly, motherly soul of about fifty. Dresses rather old-fashionedly. Has snow white hair and healthy complexion.

MADGE CLAY. A rather high-spirited maiden of eighteen or twenty years. Wears expensive summer gown in Act I and handsome winter clothing and furs in Act II. In Act III a more simple traveling costume at first entrance, then changes to simple afternoon gown. In playing the character, it should be borne in mind that she is really in love with **DAVE** at all times, and must be careful not to lose the sympathy of the audience in her scenes with **DAVE**, in which she reprimands him.

GERTIE FLYE. A slangy girl of eighteen, affecting latest style in hair-dressing, etc. Warm-hearted and impulsive disposition underlies her affected carelessness, and care should be taken in delivering the two or three lines of pathos she has, especially: "Gee, I hope *he* wins." Which must show that her love for **DAVE** is sincere, but that she is noble-hearted enough to realize that he is not for her.

MRS. MORTIMER JONES-BROWN. A haughty appearing, handsome woman of thirty-two or thirty-three. Has plenty of

money, looks it and doesn't care who knows it. Is nervous in manner and voluble in speech.

MRS. HEZIAH JENKS. A plump little woman of about twenty-five, finicky in dress and manner and "long" on culture.

MISS MARGARET SEYMOUR. A prepossessing maiden of nineteen. She wears handsome, stylish clothes in summer and winter effects. As she has nothing in Act III her part can be "doubled" with GERTIE FLYE.

The College Chap

ACT I

SCENE.—*Interior of the office of the Occidental Hotel, Chester, Minn.; full stage, box setting. Practical doors L. and R. Door at back, right of C. At back L. is counter, small cigar case at one end, hotel register, etc. At L. is wash-bench with two tin basins, soap, soiled roller towel, etc. Right of C., down stage, are two chairs and rickety kitchen table on which is a checker-board with checkers. Small writing table at extreme R. In front of table small stool with legs tied about with wire. On wall back of counter is an old clock, one hand missing. Right of clock large soiled railroad map. The whole effect must be of general dilapidation.*

(At rise, discovered ELIJAH GOODINGS and SETH HINES seated at table right of C. They both stare fixedly at checker-board but make no move to touch the men. This pose must be held for a full half minute before a word is spoken, then.)

ELI. *(in slow drawl)*. It's your move, Seth.

SETH *(after pause of ten seconds, with even slower drawl)*. So 'tis, Elijah.

(With his index finger he pushes a checker with immense deliberation.)

ELI. *(after another pause)*. It appears to me, Seth, that this checker match ain't arousin' any tremenjus enthusiasm.

SETH *(after still another pause during which ELI. moves)*. No, it ain't. Funny, too, seeing as how it's fer the town championship. I guess the whole town's gone jes' plumb crazy over that new-fangled croquet they're playin' in Si Stebbins' pasture.

ELI. Oh, you mean golloluf.

Enter ART WIMPEL, in bustling fashion, door R.

ART. Hello! What little stunt are you boys up to now?

ELI. Checkers.

ART (*sarcastically*). Oh, is that so? I thought you were doing a skirt dance on the top of a hard-boiled egg or white-washing a tent. Howsomever, if it's checkers (*pointing suggestively at door L.*) I guess it's your move. The Law and Order League of Chester don't allow no games of chance. The Occidental is a hotel, not a gambling house.

SETH. Gambling? You don't see any money in sight, do you?

ART (*laughing and going back of counter*). Nope; don't see any there or anywhere else around this shebang. Couldn't be doing less business if we were quarantined for smallpox. (*Here SETH and ELI. return to their absorption in checker game.*) At present we have one boarder, and if he knew he was alive he'd move. Last week we nearly had a drummer—said he wanted a quiet spot. Oh, this is a fine hotel—keeps a man busy (*slamming register shut in disgust*) doing nothing! (*Turns to SETH and ELI.*) Say, hadn't you boys better run along home? You'll be late for dinner. Besides, you're burning up the furniture with that hotly contested game. (*They pay no attention to him.*) Well, I guess I'll sweep up. (*In disgust he commences to sweep vigorously, raising a cloud of dust. SETH and ELI. cough in protest.*) We might get a guest. (*SETH and ELI. laugh derisively.*) I said we might!

Enter SALLIE CRANE in breathless fashion through door L., waving letter in hand.

SALLIE. Goody, goody, goody! Oh, Art, what do you think?

ART. Well, I'd hate to tell a lady what I'm thinking just now.

SALLIE (*disregarding him*). Dave's coming—coming home, here, on the one-ten. Oh, Art, you just can't think how good it seems to have one's big brother back after he's been a whole year at college. But he's finished now for good and ever. (*Does a little dance of joy.*) But where's mother?

(*ART points at door R. SALLIE runs off, leaving ART looking after her in dazed fashion.*)

ART. Humph, don't know why I should feel glad. (*Starts sweeping to relieve his feelings.*) I suppose that means I lose

this job. (*Throws broom down in anger.*) Gee! things roll pretty soft for some folks! There's Dave—four years at a bang-up Eastern college, spending a barrel of monee so he can come back and lord it all over us. By George, it don't seem fair, that's all!

SETH. Did she say Dave's coming back?

ART. Yes.

ELI. Well, don't you worry. He won't lord it over nobody. Never did amount to nothing and never will; and I guess everybody in this town knows it, too—except his maw and paw.

ART. Oh, Dave ain't so bad—he's got his good points!

SETH. Humph, nobody ain't discovered them, as I heard of.

ART. Well, he's the swellest dresser ever came to this town!

ELI. Yes, but who pays for his fine fixin's?

SETH. Why, his paw does, and he can't afford to, nuther!

ART (*picking up broom and brandishing it menacingly*). Now that will be about all of that. I never see either of you working nights. And you are not going to sit around here and knock Dave, so just git.

(*Advances toward them threateningly. ELI and SETH arise and make for door L. with as much dignity as possible. At the door they stop.*)

ELI. Well, we'll go, but not because we're afraid of you. (*With crushing scorn.*) We ain't goin' to form no welcoming committee for any shiftless ne'er-do-well.

SETH. No, siree! Dave may be able to pull the wool over his folks' eyes, but he can't fool us by a durn sight!

(*SETH and ELI both exeunt hurriedly. ART throws the broom at them, but it falls short.*)

Enter SALLIE, door R.

SALLIE. Why, Art, what's the matter?

ART. Matter! Those two old moss-grown fossils there—they said your brother —

(*Stops in confusion and picking up broom puts it in corner.*)

SALLIE. Yes?

ART. Oh, nothing; they just said he wasn't worth his salt,

and that everybody but you knew it—that he was wasting his time at college and spending your father's money on fine clothes.

SALLIE (*pained*). Oh, how could they? And poor Dave's been studying so hard. Why, he just has to keep paying the bookmakers money all the time.

ART. Oh, they're just jealous, that's all. I tell you, Sallie, I'm glad that Dave's coming back (*pausing*), even if I do lose my job on account of it.

SALLIE (*wondering*). Lose your job?

ART. Sure. I guess you won't want any extra help around here (*hopefully*), unless business picks up.

SALLIE. Oh, Art, you don't think that Dave is going to clerk here after graduating from Yale. Why, didn't you know that over a year ago Mr. Williams offered him the editorship of the *Clarion*?

ART (*gleefully*). Honest? And then I won't have to leave here—and you, Sallie.

SALLIE (*gently*). Why, Art!

ART. Well, Sallie, you know I love you—have loved you and intend to keep right on loving you until, until—well, until everything blows up. (ART *takes SALLIE's hand*. *Here enter BART EATON, door L*. ART *looks at him in disgust and drops SALLIE's hand*.) Just think of having only one boarder, and then for him to come in at a time like this. (*Wearily*.) Can you beat it?

(*With great unconcern and without any greeting BART goes over to wash-stand, removes coat, rolls up sleeves, and proceeds to make his toilet.*)

SALLIE. Art, do you really love me?

ART. Do I really? Why, say—

SALLIE. Then get right to work and make this office look just as nice as you can, for Dave will be here on the one-ten. And now I must go and get into my best bib and tucker.

[*Exit SALLIE, through door R.*

ART (*surveying office with disgusted expression*). "As nice as I can." I reckon it would take half a million dollars to make this office look like anything; and nobody around here has got any part of thirty cents! (BART, *in the meantime, is washing his face in his hands, the process being accompanied by a great deal of noise*. ART *looks at him*.) Aha, I see our

boarder is washing its face, and making a noise like a trained seal, too!

Enter SAMUEL CRANE, through door L.

SAM. (*going over to counter and looking at register*). Anybody come?

ART (*pointing at BART, who has finished washing and gone over to small writing table L., where he is playing solitaire*). Yes, it's here.

SAM. No, no. I mean did we get any one from the south-bound?

ART. Nope. I suppose they all went to the Van Avery, the same as per usual.

SAM. Yes, I suppose they did. I guess we ain't up to snuff like the Van Avery folks. I can't blame them much for not wanting to stop here. (*Then more brightly.*) But we'll have one arrival to-day, Art (*rapturously*); my boy Dave! Has Mr. Clay been here this morning?

ART. No, sir.

SAM. He said he'd be here about this time. (*Looks up at clock which has stopped and then takes out silver turnip watch.*) We must have that clock fixed some time.

ART (*dryly*). Yes, some day when we get time.

SAM. There are a couple of things I want to speak to Clay about, that Jay I. C. stock especially. I tell you, my boy, if the Jay I. C. trolley line goes through here and the stock goes up as Starr Clay says it will, we'll make this hotel one that we can all be proud of.

Enter MRS. CRANE through door R. C., carrying scrub pail and mop rag. She starts to wash off counter. ART comes round from back of counter and takes cloth from her.

ART. Here, let me do that, Mrs. Crane.

(*She protests.*)

MRS. C. Why, no, Art, this is a woman's work.

ART. Well, maybe so; but I promised some one to do it and I'm going to.

SAM. Let Art do it, mother. You'll have to be getting fixed up for Dave.

MRS. C. (*proudly*). Yes—my boy!

SAM. Yes, mother, *our* boy. (*He pushes her gently toward door L.*) Now run along, mother, and get slicked up.

(*Mrs. C. smiles at him and exits. ART runs cloth over counter three or four times perfunctorily and then stands off admiringly.*)

ART. How does that look?

SAM. Fine, my boy. Now just put the pail out of the way and run down to the post-office. There might be some mail.

(*ART puts pail hastily on top of counter, grabs hat from hook and dashes off through door R., colliding with STARR CLAY as he enters. Enter CLAY, looking back angrily at ART.*)

CLAY. Confound that boy!

SAM. (*apologetically*). I'm sorry, Mr. Clay——

CLAY (*interrupting*). Sorry? *I'm* the one the boor ran into, not you!

SAM. Have a chair?

CLAY (*testily*). Thanks, I'll stand. (*Looks meaningly at chair.*) It's safer. (*Pulls out papers from pocket.*) Well, it is June 10th. I suppose you know that. And I suppose you are ready to meet this note on your installment of stock?

SAM. (*hesitatingly*). Well, of course, Mr. Clay, this comes rather sudden-like. You see I've been under heavy expense with Dave at college.

CLAY (*abruptly*). Mr. Crane, I came here to collect money, not to listen to any family troubles. Business is business.

SAM. Certainly, Starr. But seeing we have been lifelong neighbors, I thought you might extend the time a leetle.

CLAY. That's all right, Sam, but money talks. We can't put a trolley line through to St. Paul on promises. The sooner it is completed the sooner the dividends.

SAM. Certainly, Starr, certainly. But business ain't been very lively. I've been hoping it would pick up (*proudly*), and now that Dave's back——

CLAY (*interrupting*). I sold the stock to you, not your son. Come, come—yes or no.

SAM. I guess it will have to be no, Starr. You see I counted on your extending the time a bit.

CLAY. Oh, you did, eh? If you hadn't fooled your money away on that son of yours you'd be able to meet this note. I tell you this college business is all stuff and nonsense. I never went to college, but I got the money just the same.

SAM. (*with quiet dignity*). We won't talk about that, if you please, Starr.

CLAY. So you're not going to pay to-day? I'll tell you what I will do—I will give you just two weeks' time, and then—look out! Good-day!

(*Slaps papers into pocket, turns on his heel and exits through door L.*)

Enter MRS. C., through door R.

MRS. C. Well, father, I am all ready for our boy.

SAM. (*looking at her admiringly and patting her cheek lovingly*). There's only one thing I am afraid of, mother.

MRS. C. What's that, Sam?

SAM. That our boy won't be able to tell sister from mother, and mother from sister.

MRS. C. (*blushing with pleasure*). Oh, Sam!

Enter MADGE CLAY, through door L.

MRS. C. Oh, good-morning, Madge.

MADGE. Good-morning. How do you do, Mr. Crane?

MRS. C. Oh, he's very fine to-day, Madge. My boy is coming.

SAM. Yes, *our* boy is coming.

MADGE. Dave coming? (*Shows agitation.*)

MRS. C. Yes, dear. On the one-ten. Hasn't he written you?

MADGE (*confusedly*). No—not lately.

MRS. C. I suppose the dear boy has been too busy with his studies.

Enter SALLIE, through door R.

SALLIE. Oh, mother, have you seen my — (*Discovers MADGE.*) Why, Madge!

MADGE. Hello, Sallie. I just ran over to see if you had this month's fashion journal. There's a love of a waist pattern in it.

MRS. C. You will have to excuse me, Madge. I have to see about the dinner. And, father, aren't you going to shave?

SAM. (*rubbing his face*). Well, I guess I could take off a trifle without catching cold.

(*MRS. C. exits through door R. C., and SAM. exits through door R.*)

SALLIE. I think I know the one you mean. It's that lovely Russian blouse effect with the embroidered yoke and the Irish lace jabot. But, Madge, I don't see what *you* want with any more clothes. Goodness, you have six times as many as any girl in town now.

MADGE (*laughing*). My dear, it's father, not I. He simply insists that I keep the dressmaker busy.

SALLIE. Lucky girl. But come, and I will give you the pattern. Besides, I have just loads to tell you.

MADGE. Yes, I think I know what you mean.

(Exeunt arm in arm through door R., chattering.)

Enter ART, through door L., waving postal card.

ART. Well, I've got the mail. I tell you it is some strain fetching the mail for the Occidental these days. (*Looks at BART.*) What's that you said? (*To himself.*) Lively little cricket, ain't he?

Enter JOHN DREW IRVING, through door L., carrying suit case and with roll of theatrical dodgers under arm.

JOHN (*breezily*). Ah, good-morning, young man. (*Goes to counter, places suit case on floor, bills on counter, and turns register toward him. Then looks about for pen.*) Where's your pen?

ART. What for?

JOHN. I want to register.

ART. Oh, pen you want? (*Looks around.*) Gee! I don't know whether—it was here last week. (*Gropes in his pocket.*) Pencil do? Thinking about stopping here?

(Hands him pencil, which JOHN takes, and writes his name with a flourish.)

JOHN. Sure. I've got to stop somewhere, and it might as well be here. There we are—John Drew Irving, advance agent for the Brutus Franklin Repertoire Company, playing fourth consecutive season of forty consecutive weeks in that drama of moral uplift and power—Uncle Tom's Cabin. Company all ladies and gentlemen, swell dressers on and off. Our little Eva, sir, is a whiz—she's played the part for thirty years. Our bloodhounds are the most versatile animals that ever barked, and we furnish our own ice for each and every performance.

ART. Hold on just a minute. Did I understand you to say that you were an advance agent?

JOHN. I did, young man, I did. For the Brutus Franklin Repertoire Company, an aggregation of players endorsed by press and public, clergy and laity. I am, sir, as you say, an advance agent.

ART. Well, just for that, you can put up in advance.

JOHN. Sir, do you mean to insult an artist? Ah, you need have no fear.

ART. I know, but we need the money.

JOHN. Young man, I take your words in the jesting spirit you offer them. (*Picks up one of the bills from counter and unrolls it.*) Look, look and feast your eyes on the pictorial grandeur of a noteworthy enactment of a notable spectacle.

ART. A dollar bill is about the noblest spectacle I want to see just now.

JOHN (*commencing to tack up his bills on the walls*). As a patron of the fine arts you can have no objection to my hanging up a few of these lithographic allurements. Behold the thespian feast the Brutus Franklin Repertoire Company is prepared to offer at prices so low that they are positively depressing! (*Goes to BART.*) My dear sir, it gives me more than an ordinary degree of pleasure to apprise you of the advent of a metropolitan entertainment of transcendent merit. My attraction is nothing more or less than that classic of slavery—Uncle Tom's Cabin.

ART (*aside and referring to JOHN*). Quite a nice little talker.

JOHN (*seeing that BART pays no attention to him*). Ah, sir, I see that you are busy. Allow me to present you one of our æsthetic posters to be perused at your (*sarcastically*) leisure, sir, your leisure. (*Pins bill to BART'S coat collar, then goes over to counter and picks up handbills. Then to ART.*) I now depart, young man, on my noble mission of delighting the gaze of your townsmen. But I shall not dally to pick flowers by the wayside—the dinner gong shall find me here again. As to any mercenary consideration in advance you may rest easy. I shall not stay here long.

ART. Humph, nobody does. (*JOHN makes sweeping bow and exits through door L. ART mimicks JOHN.*) I shall not stay here long. Didn't take him much time to get next to this place.

Enter MRS. MORTIMER JONES-BROWN, MRS. HEZIAH JENKS and MISS MARGARET SEYMOUR, through door L.

MRS. J.-B. (*to* MRS. J. *and* Miss S.). I don't really suppose there is any use in our seeking a donation here.

MRS. J. Dear, no (*looking around with disgusted air*); it is positively unsanitary.

MISS S. Quite right, Mrs. Jenks.

MRS. J.-B. (*to* ART). Young man, is Mr. Crane in?

ART. Yep.

MRS. J.-B. (*turning to* MRS. J. *and* Miss S.). I don't really suppose there is any use in seeing him, but we must make every effort for so noble a cause.

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MRS. J.-B. (*to* ART). Well, young man, I asked you if Mr. Crane was in.

ART. I think I murmured something to the effect that he was.

MRS. J.-B. Then kindly go and tell him that I wish to see him at once.

ART. Then kindly why didn't you say that at once?

[*Exit* ART, *through door R.*

MRS. J.-B. That young man is entirely without culture. The working classes nowadays seem to have no sense of their hopeless inferiority.

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

(MRS. J.-B. *discovers* BART. *She tiptoes over to table R. and peers over his shoulder; then tiptoes back to her companions.*)

MRS. J.-B. (*horrified*). What do you think? That man is gambling—with himself!

(MRS. J. *and* MISS S. *repeat business and then come back to* MRS. J.-B.)

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

Enter ART, *through door R.*

ART. Nothing doing.

MRS. J.-B. (*shocked at the lack of reverence*). What did you say, young man?

ART. I wafted the information that Mr. Crane has blown,—gone out,—not in.

MRS. J.-B. (*with great scorn*). Come, ladies. I, for one, refuse to stay any longer to be insulted by this person!

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

(*All three turn and give ART a withering look. Then exeunt through door L.*)

ART (*solus, looking after them*). Humph, find Mr. Crane to hand over money to those lady high-brows? I don't think!

(*MRS. C. opens dining-room door.*)

MRS. C. You may call dinner now, Art. [*Exit.*]

(*ART gets large dinner-bell from beneath counter and commences to ring it resoundingly, looking significantly the while at BART. Then goes to BART, and taking his ear-trumpet puts it to his ear and rings anew. BART rises hurriedly, throwing cards in a heap. ART goes to dining-room door, still ringing bell and followed closely by BART. Exeunt ART and BART.*)

Enter DAVE CRANE, through door L., carrying suit case and bag. Looks about him for a moment then goes to C., where he deposits satchels, then goes over to writing table R. and sits on one corner, swinging his leg. He draws out cigarette case from pocket, takes out cigarette, lights it, takes a couple of deep inhales, then looks about the room with an air of extreme distaste for his surroundings. Then.

DAVE. Occidental Hotel, Chester, Minn. What a hole! (*Renews puffing on cigarette.*) The man who wrote "Home Sweet Home" never saw this place. (*Sighs.*) Well, if I wanted a change I got it—got it strong! (*Looks around.*) I wonder where is everybody. I can see I'm going to be a pleasant surprise, all right. And, gee! what will I be when they discover that instead of having a nice gilt diploma I have been kicked out of college. (*Puffs at cigarette.*)

Enter SAM., through door R. About to cross to enter dining-room when he discovers DAVE.

SAM. Why, why, Dave, my boy—is it really you?

(Goes over to DAVE, places one hand on his shoulder, the other outstretched to grasp his hand. DAVE stops to take another puff before rising to acknowledge his greeting.)

DAVE *(indifferently)*. Why, hello, dad.

(Gives him formal hand-clasp.)

SAM. *(showing surprise at cool greeting and stepping back)*. Why, Dave, my boy, what's the trouble? But wait—I'll call the folks. *(Goes to dining-room door and calls.)* Oh, mother, he's here! *(Then goes to door R. and calls.)* Oh, Sallie!

Enter MRS. C., from dining-room, wiping her hands on apron.

MRS. C. *(going toward DAVE with outstretched arms)*. My boy!

(Throws arms around neck, kissing him. DAVE submits passively to the embrace.)

DAVE *(coldly)*. Hello, mother.

MRS. C. My, it's good to have my boy back again!

SAM. Our boy, mother!

Enter SALLIE, dancing through door R.; MADGE following in her wake.

SALLIE. Oh, Dave! *(Clutches him with sisterly zeal.)*
You darling! *(Kisses him.)*

DAVE *(coldly)*. Hello, Sis. How are you?

(They all look at him in amazement at his small display of affection. MADGE stands a couple of feet inside door R. detachedly surveying the scene.)

MRS. C. Why, Dave, what has happened? You don't seem to be glad to be home again—with us.

DAVE. Glad? At being back here!

SALLIE *(teasingly)*. Oh, never mind, mother. I suppose we seem funny after all his fine college friends.

SAM. *(looking at DAVE's cigarette)*. Why, Dave, do you smoke those much? Where's your pipe?

DAVE. Oh, you've got to do something. (*Goes back and straddles corner of table.*) Cigarettes are all right, anyway. Only rubes and hod-carriers smoke a pipe nowadays.

(*Yawns in bored fashion.* MADGE, realizing her intrusion on a family scene and surprised at DAVE's attitude, gives a rueful shake of her head and exits through door R.)

MRS. C. Now, Sam, don't scold my boy so soon after his return. (*To DAVE.*) But how did you get here so early?

DAVE. Oh, when I got to St. Paul I found I had time to cremate, so I flipped another rattler (*sighing*), and here I am.

SALLIE (*who has gone over to DAVE's luggage and is opening the traveling bag*). What did you bring me, Dave?

DAVE (*shortly*). Nothing. I just had about enough coin to save myself from hitting the ties and doing the tragedian specialty, without investing in any grimcracks.

MRS. C. Why, Dave, dear. I am afraid you have hurt Sallie's feelings.

SALLIE (*rallying and trying not to appear hurt*). Oh, don't mind about me, mother. But, Dave, I do *so* want to see your diploma. Is it in your suit case?

DAVE. In my suit case? No; I haven't got any—I mean I forgot it. (*Brazenly.*) Oh, I guess you might just as well know first as last. I haven't got any degree and never will get any. To make it short and sweet I was kicked out.

SAM. (*wonderingly*). Kicked out?

MRS. C. What do you mean, my son?

SALLIE (*pained*). Oh, Dave!

DAVE (*rising from table and shoving hands into his pockets*). Oh, there's no use in making any fuss about it. Until this last year I want you to know I was the college farmer—a gawk to be laughed at when I crossed the campus. I got good and tired of it, I tell you. So I got running with another gang—none of your greasy grinds, but good fellows. I might have known my luck wouldn't last. One night I got pinched in a scrape and Prexy canned me. Now there's the whole thing. And for heaven's sake, don't give us any tears. It's all over and done with.

SAM. See here, Dave, a college education don't entitle you to talk that way to us.

MRS. C. (*interrupting*). Father, don't!

SAM. Just a minute, Jane. I want to talk with Dave. (*To*

DAVE.) Have you ever stopped to think what this means to your mother and me? Do you realize how we have scrimped and saved, pinched and deprived ourselves, that you might have a college schooling and be as good as the best of them? We never grudged you anything in our power. Until now we were proud of you and happy—and now you have done this—disgraced your mother and me.

MRS. C. (*pleadingly*). Father!

SAM. (*not noticing the interruption*). Well, I'm through with you, Dave. I have done my best, and you have done—your worst. We've spent every cent we had on you. From now on you had better look out for yourself—if you can. They all told me what you were. We didn't believe them (*bitterly*), but I guess they were right. You're a ne'er-do-well! (*Goes to door R., then turns.*) Come, Sallie! Jane!

(*Exit through door R. SALLIE follows, turns and looks at DAVE sadly, then exits with handkerchief to eyes.*)

MRS. C. (*putting arms around DAVE and patting his shoulder tenderly*). Don't mind father, Dave. He's excited. Everything will come out all right, my boy! (*DAVE attempts to evade her embrace. She goes over to dining-room door, opens it, then turns.*) Dinner's ready when you are, my son.

(*Exit through dining-room door. DAVE shrugs his shoulders as if brushing the whole troublesome matter from him. Reaches in pocket for cigarette case, takes cigarette from it, and smokes rapidly as if to restore his self-esteem. Goes over to writing table and sits there, dangling his legs, as if undecided what to do next.*)

Enter MADGE through door R., walking rapidly across stage as if about to exit through door L. At the sound of her steps DAVE turns and discovers MADGE.

DAVE. Madge! (*MADGE continues to walk toward exit L.*) Haven't you time to say hello to me?

MADGE (*seriously*). Yes, Dave, if you wish. But not much more. (*Comes back to him.*)

DAVE (*sneeringly*). Oh, I suppose Sallie's been crying around her tale of woe.

MADGE. You don't mean that, Dave.

DAVE. Well, they all kicked up such a row you'd think I'd robbed a safe. (*Ingratiatingly.*) But that isn't going to make any difference with us, is it, Madge? (*Laughs.*) You know the way it is with fellows at college. (*Lightly.*) But you're just the same old Madge—only prettier than ever.

(*Seizes her hand. She wrests her hand from him and retreats a couple of steps, where she stands, eyeing him in sorrowful indignation.*)

MADGE. Dave, I didn't mean to say anything to you about the pain you have caused your father and mother. I meant to leave you to fight it out with your better self—the old Dave.

(*DAVE renews puffing on his cigarette.*)

DAVE. So you're going to turn preacher, too. You're too pretty by half to preach. Why not be the old Madge?

MADGE. Because I can't. I am different and you are different, Dave—oh, so different. And we can never be as we were before unless you drop this cheap cynicism—this man-of-the-world contempt for those who really love you. Unless, Dave, you stop hiding your heart behind a cigarette.

DAVE. Oh, come, no melodrama!

MADGE. It isn't melodrama, Dave. It is the truth—and that is why it hurts and burns deep. What you are you owe to your father and mother, not to your college chums. They sacrificed everything for you to have you sneer at them. This is just the beginning. It is what you do to-day that is going to count. If I knew you were all wrong I wouldn't have come back when you called just now. I came because I knew that this isn't the real, right you. (*DAVE removes cigarette from lips and slowly allows it to drop from his hand.*) No, Dave, I can't even respect you. And until you can prove that you are not what your father said, but that you're a man and can do a man's work, I can't be the old Madge or Madge at all to you. Good-bye, Dave. Think over what I have said, and when the old Dave comes to the surface perhaps, perhaps the old Madge will be waiting for him.

(*She goes to door L., turns and looks back at DAVE, who stands with head bowed in thought; then exits through door L. Ten second pause for effect after MADGE'S exit. Then unconsciously, as if from force of habit, DAVE reaches*

into pocket for cigarette case, takes out cigarette, lights match—still unconsciously—slowly lifts match as if to light cigarette. Then suddenly conscious of what he is doing, DAVE allows match to drop from fingers to floor. Then with new determination he snatches cigarette from lips, looks at it, and dashes it to the floor.)

DAVE. No, I'm damned if I will!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Office of the Chester "Clarion"; full stage, box setting. Door R. C., in back. Window L. C., in back, through which people may be seen as they pass. Practical doors R. 2 E. and L. 2 E. Flat top desk L. C., with swivel chair back of it and straight chair L. Stove with pipe running into flat, between door and window. Pile of wood near stove. Hat and coat rack L. Small table and two chairs R. C. On desk are ink bottle, pen, papers, books, etc. On small table a stack of newspapers. Snow is seen falling through window and when door in back is opened. It continues to snow fitfully through act, and characters entering door in back should have snow (coarse salt) on clothing. The stage is well illuminated, it being early afternoon. Stage empty at rise.*

(*When curtain is well up DAVE is seen passing window; then enters through door in flat. Steps inside, shakes snow from coat, stamps feet, removes hat and shakes snow from it. Then crosses to hat rack, hangs up hat, removes outer coat and hangs it up, then crosses over to stove and proceeds to warm his hands. This done he goes down to desk L. C. He picks up corn-cob pipe from desk, which he fills, lights, and smokes. Then he sits down at desk.*)

DAVE (*briskly*). Now to put the finishing touches on the Christmas number of the *Chester Clarion*. Christmas! (*Thoughtful pause, bitterly.*) Merry Christmas! Oh, well! (*Seizes pencil and rummages about desk as if in search of something, then.*) I wonder what my superannuated helpmate did with those galley proofs. (*Calls.*) Bart! (*Louder.*) Oh, Bart! Gee, I forgot—my enterprising assistant couldn't hear the crack of doom at this distance. (*Rises, goes to door R., opens it, and calls in very loud voice.*) Bart, have you got those proofs?

(*BART comes to door R., speaking-trumpet at ear.*)

BART. Hey? What's that?

DAVE (*very loudly*). Proofs, proofs! Have you got them?

BART. Oh, it's proofs you want. Well, why didn't you say that in the first place? [*Exit BART, through door R.*]

DAVE. Lord, it's hard to convince that man he's hard of hearing. (*Goes back to desk, picks up paper and shears, and, whistling a few bars, proceeds to cut out article, then stops.*) Well, there are no brilliant squibs in the *Eyota Gazette* that I can cop to-day. (*Puts scissors down on desk.*) I tell you, if the devoted reading public knew the lively little time that I—combination editor, reporter, proof-reader and office boy—had in getting out the *Chester Clarion*, they would have more respect for my talents. And now since I've started this sensational Jay I. C. trolley line exposé, I presume they will expect me to keep up the pace. (*Enter BART, shuffling from door R., carrying proofs in hand.*) At last, little Mercury has arrived.

BART (*putting trumpet to ear*). What's that?

(*Drops trumpet.*)

DAVE. That wasn't for publication. The gifted editor was talking to himself. Now, then, Bartholomew, lend an ear. The next issue of the *Clarion* is going to knock spots. What we have been feeding them heretofore has only been a sample—to-day they get the goods. (*Notices that BART has not got trumpet to ear.*) My dear Bart, put the receiver to your ear and step closer to the 'phone. You must drop that habit of ringing off while I am talking, or I'll have to discontinue the service. (*While talking to him DAVE places trumpet to BART's ear.*) Now this time it is going to be simple; the next issue of the *Clarion* is going to say flat what we have been hinting, namely, that the Jay I. C. trolley line is an out-and-out swindle, and that Starr Clay is a fraud of the most abandoned type. Now let's have those proofs. (*Extends his hand for them.*)

BART (*protesting and holding back proofs*). Jest a minute. I've worked on the *Clarion* twenty years and it never done no such thing as this before.

DAVE. My respected adjutant, you're a member of the old school. You were brought up on the "Lem-Peters-is-repairing-his-fence-good-boy-Lem" diet. But since then the *Clarion* has changed hands and feet.

BART. Wa'al, does Mr. Williams know what you are doing?

DAVE. As he is the owner of this paper he ought to; and you just bet he does. He's one of the few live wires in this

candle-lighted community. If you don't believe me you can write to him.

BART (*reluctantly handing over proofs*). Wa'al, I ain't going to write as far as Europe to find out, but when he gets home I'll speak to him about it. It don't seem right to me lambastin' Starr Clay that way. He's a power in this town, I tell you. He's got a lot of money.

DAVE. Cheer up, Bart. He may not have so much when the *Clarion's* finished with him. (*He spreads proofs out on desk. BART turns to go, but DAVE grabs him by the elbow.*) Just a minute—don't ring off! I've got to read this to some one, and it might as well be you. How's this for a scarehead, Bart? (*Reads from proof; BART with ear-trumpet stands in listening attitude.*) "Jay I. C. stock deal fraudulent. Starr Clay's company only exists on paper. The *Clarion* hereby announces and has documentary proof in its office to show that the Jay I. C. trolley line is a swindle of the rankest sort, and that its stock is utterly worthless." How does that sound over the 'phone, Bart?

BART (*doubtfully shaking his head*). Wa'al, I don't know. But I wished Mr. Williams hadn't gone to Europe.

DAVE. Mr. Williams told me to run this paper to the best of my ability. (*Impressively taps the desk with his finger.*) 'This story goes in!

BART. Then I reckon I'll hunt up a hiding place.

DAVE. No, you go oil up the press.

(*BART goes over to door R., turns and looks at DAVE, then.*)

BART (*aside*). That ain't the same Dave that came home from college.

(*DAVE occupies himself reading proofs intently. SAM. appears at window in back, looks in, then enters door in back. He comes down to desk and looks over DAVE'S shoulder.*)

SAM. (*playfully*). Is the editor in?

(*DAVE swinging round on chair discovers him, then springs up joyfully.*)

DAVE. Why, dad!

(Starts to extend hand in warm greeting, then drops it and half turns away as he suddenly remembers their last meeting.)

SAM. (putting one hand on DAVE's shoulder and grasping DAVE's hand with his). Don't turn away, boy!

DAVE (facing him). But, father, I thought——

SAM. (interrupting). What I said six months ago, my boy, isn't what I think to-day.

DAVE (returning hand-clasp warmly). Then you——

SAM. (again interrupting). I am a subscriber for the *Clarion*, and have been for twenty years—and it is a whole lot different since my boy's been editor. But don't you think you're going a leetle bit strong on Starr Clay and the Jay I. C.?

DAVE. Starr? (Turns to proof on desk.) Why look here. (Picks up proofs and hands them to SAM.) Just take a glance at this heading. What do you suppose they will say when they see this in the next issue?

(SAM. adjusts spectacles, peers at proofs and gives a whistle of astonishment.)

SAM. Ain't going to print that, be you?

DAVE. Every word of it and three columns besides—all in Hearst type.

SAM. Ain't you afraid you're going too far?

DAVE. No; because I feel sure I am right. And besides—well, didn't he get your money?

SAM. Yes, he got it all. Every cent. But maybe it was partly my own fault. Maybe I wanted to get rich too quick.

DAVE. That is Starr Clay's trouble, but it wasn't yours. It's going to do this town a world of good to have this hypocritical grafter shown in his true light.

SAM. Well, you know best, my son. But I'll have to be getting along. (Turns toward door in back.) I just thought I'd drop in on my way to the post-office.

DAVE. Oh, father, how's mother? And Sallie?

SAM. Both well and—both proud of you!

DAVE (hesitatingly). And the hotel? How's business?

SAM. 'Tain't gone back any. Of course, we ain't quite as busy as they be at the Van Avery. Well, good-bye, my son, and be careful of Starr Clay. (Shakes his head.) He's pretty hard, Starr is, pretty hard.

(Exits through door in back, stopping at window to look in at DAVE, who has plunged again into his proof-reading.)

DAVE (*solus*). Well, we shall see what we shall see.

(Busies himself clipping and whistling.)

Enter JOHN, door in back from R., thus is not seen passing window in back. He carries small grip in hand. Comes briskly down to desk on which he bangs satchel.

JOHN. Good-afternoon.

DAVE. I know it is; but there's no use bragging about it.

JOHN. Are you the editor of this newsprint, sir?

DAVE. I am; and a very busy one, too.

JOHN (*slapping him on the back*). I don't suppose you know me?

DAVE. I don't seem to recognize your face, but (*brushing off his shoulder*) your ways are familiar.

JOHN. Then, sir, allow me to introduce myself. (*Throws card on desk.*) John Drew Irving, late advance agent of the Brutus Franklin Repertoire Company, now demonstrator for Robinson's Ready Relief. A far cry from Momus to medicine, but (*sighing*) alas, a necessary one. (*Opens satchel and takes out bottle which he holds aloft in one hand.*) Robinson's Ready Relief, the paramount remedy of the century. The more you use it the more you have to use of it. Makes the sick well and the well sick. Not a cure-all, but the alpha and omega oil of medical ingenuity. And only one dollar a bottle.

DAVE. As I repeat, I am very busy. If you must go, don't let me keep you.

JOHN. Not at all, sir. It's busy men I like to talk to. A busy man needs medicine, I say. An idle one needs work. But I am not here to lure the coy greenback from you. Far from it. I am authorized by my company to present you with a bottle of its sterling remedy free gratis for nothing.

(Presents DAVE with bottle.)

DAVE. Say, you make me nervous.

JOHN. Nervousness? The greatest cure on earth. See full directions on the bottle. But I fear I am taking up your time. I leave the bottle in your hands and trust to see a notice of Robinson's boon to mankind in your sparkling columns. Good-day, sir! (*Turns to exit.*)

DAVE. Good-day. That's the best thing you've said yet.

JOHN (*at door in back*). My company has also authorized me to purchase ten copies of your journal with marked notice. Remember, ten copies, sir! [*Exits through door in back.*]

DAVE (*laughing good-naturedly*). Well, if this keeps up the Christmas issue of the *Chester Clarion* will be the Fourth of July number. I'll have to remember those ten copies and increase the issue accordingly. (*Returns to proof-reading.*)

(*MRS. C. comes to window in back, smiles as she sees DAVE at desk, then opens door in back, enters and stops on threshold as if uncertain of her welcome.*)

MRS. C. (*aside*). Sam is right. He *has* changed. (*Comes down to desk.*) Dave!

DAVE (*springing up joyfully*). Mother! (*They embrace affectionately; playfully.*) Now, mother, what editor do you wish to see? I'm all of them. Society? Amusements? Household? Sporting?

(*Pulls chair forward, kisses her, and then gently pushes her into it.*)

MRS. C. I don't want to see any editor, Dave. I just want to see my boy. I want to see myself if he is, as everybody says,—different.

DAVE (*looking at her intently*). And?

MRS. C. (*patting his hand lovingly*). Oh, Dave, you don't know how happy I am. I've read the *Clarion* for twenty years, but I never thought (*proudly*) that some day my son would be editor.

DAVE (*smilingly*). You never can tell.

MRS. C. But Madge? Do you ever see her?

DAVE (*turning to pick up paper to hide his embarrassment*). No—not to speak to her.

MRS. C. (*sighing*). Don't worry, Dave, it will all come out all right; (*rises*) but I mustn't keep you any longer. I want to ask you to come over to dinner—Christmas dinner. We're going to have turkey and some of my mince meat. You see, I haven't forgotten what you like, my son. Father wants you, too. You'll come, won't you, Dave?

DAVE (*delightedly*). Come? (*Kisses her heartily. Walks with her toward door in back with his arm around her. At door.*) Good-bye, mother.

MRS. C. Good-bye, son! (*Kisses him.*) Be over early.

(*Exit MRS. C., through door in back, stops at window and waves at him. He waves back, then comes back to desk.*)

DAVE. Bless her old heart, if she only knew how good that bill of fare sounds to me. But this isn't getting out the *Clarion*. (*Sits down at desk, picks up pipe and lights it.*)

Enter BART, through door R., with paper in hand.

BART. 'Scuse me. Is this here advertisement of Lem Wilkins' goin' to run this time?

DAVE. What one's that, my gifted typesetter?

BART. The one that ain't paid for.

DAVE. I'm afraid that's not very explicit, Bart. He never paid for any that I know of. You'd better "kill" that this time.

BART. Wa'al, he's one of our oldest advertisers. I reckon the *Clarion* won't look the same without Lem's notice in it.

DAVE. All right, Bartholomew, chuck it in. Far be it from me to destroy all your sacred traditions in one day.

BART. Thank ye. That's a big load off my mind. Have you read that first page proof yet?

DAVE. Just finished. (*Picks up papers from desk and hands them to him.*) Nice, clean proofs, too. Bart, I'm proud of you.

BART. Wouldn't you sorter modify that heading?

DAVE (*shaking his head*). Not a bit. That goes!

Enter SALLIE and ART, through door from R., thus are not seen passing window.

SALLIE. Howdy do!

DAVE (*wheeling around in chair*). Hello, Sallie! And Art!

BART. Wa'al, I swan!

SALLIE (*coming down stage, followed by ART*). Good-afternoon, Mr. Eaton.

ART. Hello, Bart!

(*DAVE kisses SALLIE and shakes ART'S hand.*)

BART (*to SALLIE and ART*). Anything I kin do for you?

ART. No; we came to see Dave.

BART. Then I reckon you'll have to excuse me. (*Gives DAVE a meaning look.*) I'm busy!

[*Exits through door in R.*

DAVE (*to ART*). Well, Art, what's stirring? Got a "scoop" for me?

ART (*impulsively*). You see, it's this way. Sallie and me—— (*Stops abruptly, twirling hat in embarrassment.*)

SALLIE. Well, go on, Art. I'm sure it's nothing to be ashamed of.

ART. Then you tell it.

SALLIE. Now don't be absurd—you know it's your place. You said you didn't mind a bit.

ART. Well, I don't—only —— (*Suddenly taking courage.*) You see, Sallie and me—— (*Stops again in embarrassment.*)

Oh, I say, Sallie, let's write it out and send it in.

SALLIE. Why, Art, aren't you ashamed of yourself?

DAVE (*laughing*). Never mind. Give me three guesses? You two are going to be married.

SALLIE } (*together and in astonishment*). Who told you?
ART }

DAVE (*to ART*). Why, you did.

SALLIE (*reproachfully to ART*). Why, Art, you said you'd never breathe it to a soul!

ART (*earnestly*). And I didn't either!

DAVE (*laughing*). And when does the fight come off—er—I mean when are you to be married?

ART. Well, I've got to get a suit of clothes first.

SALLIE. Why, Art!

DAVE (*lightly*). Bless you, my children.

ART. You're going to give us a good write-up, ain't you, Dave? You know—beautiful girl—well-known and genial hotel clerk. That sort of thing.

DAVE. You leave it to me. I'll give you display notice, top of column, next to reading matter.

SALLIE (*turning to exit*). Come along, Art. Can't you see that Dave's busy?

ART (*to DAVE*). See, she's starting to boss me already. (*At door.*) Gee! I'm glad that's over.

SALLIE } (*together*). Good-bye.
ART }

[*Exeunt through door in back.*

DAVE *sits down at desk and starts to write out notice.*)

DAVE (*reading as he writes*). "The engagement is announced of Miss Madge Clay to Mr. David——" (*Stops abruptly and throws pencil down on desk; then seriously.*) No, that's wrong. It's right—but it's wrong. It's been wrong for six months. I wonder if it will ever be right. (*Then bestirring himself.*) But I've got to get to work. (*Shivers as if cold, then calls to BART.*) Bart! Oh, Bart! Chuck a little wood in the stove, will you, while you're resting. (*Busies himself with his work; then noticing that BART doesn't answer his summons, calls in louder tone.*) I say, Bart! Oh, no use. I'd forgotten. Can do it myself in less time than to tell him.

(*Rises, goes up to stove, opens stove door, and starts to throw in wood, whistling loudly and making considerable noise.*)

Enter MRS. J.-B., MRS. J., and MISS S., through door in back from R., thus not being seen passing the window. DAVE does not discover them but continues with his task. They advance to C., looking critically around the room.

MRS. J.-B. Ladies, I am indeed disillusioned. No literary atmosphere whatever.

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MRS. J.-B. (*turning and indicating DAVE with a wave of her hand*). I wonder who this person can be?

DAVE (*looking up and discovering women*). What's that? Oh, I beg your pardon.

(*Gets up from floor where he has been kneeling.*)

MRS. J.-B. Why, it is Mr. Crane.

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

DAVE (*bowing*). To what, may I inquire, am I indebted for this visit?

MRS. J.-B. (*patronizingly*). I come, Mr. Crane, as a committee of protest from the Chester Culture Club. It has seemed to our members that there has been undue curtailment of the accounts of our meetings.

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

DAVE. I am sure I can explain, Mrs. Brown.

MRS. J.-B. (*ignoring him*). At our last meeting Miss Luella Wilkins, a daughter of one of your oldest advertisers (*DAVE makes a grimace of recognition*), read a beautiful poem. You may recall the first line: "Under the mistletoe she stood when he assailed her." (*Sternly.*) That poem was sent to you, Mr. Crane, but it never appeared.

DAVE (*placating her*). But really, Mrs. Jones-Brown, we receive so much *beautiful* poetry.

MRS. J.-B. I have a copy of Miss Wilkins' verses here on which I have made critical notations. A reading of it in its entirety will doubtless prove most educational.

(*Takes out poem from hand-bag.*)

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

DAVE (*aside*). Oh, Lord! (*Aloud.*) Pray, Mrs. Jones-Brown, allow me to have it for publication. It would be selfish to confine such a treat to myself.

(*Smiles ingratiatingly; MRS. J.-B., greatly mollified, allows him to take it from her.*)

Enter BART, from door R., with printed page in hand; walks over to desk, staring at women.

BART (*placing newspaper on desk*). Page proof.

(*Crosses to door R., still staring curiously at women, who haughtily return his gaze, and then exits through door R.*)

MRS. J.-B. Now there was another matter, Mr. Crane. In a recent issue you had a most depraving and brutal account of a—er—a baseball game, I believe—entirely overlooking our Browning meeting. One of the contestants was caught while attempting to steal a base; the pitcher was knocked all over the lot; and a Mr. Muggsy McGuire endeavored to reach home but died at third base, presumably from over-exertion. Altogether most revolting!

MRS. J. Quite right, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MISS S. As you say, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

DAVE. Of course, you are aware, Mrs. Jones-Brown, that the *Clarion* is obliged to cater to various classes of society. (*Blandly.*) Not all of us are sufficiently gifted to be interested in Browning as you are.

ALL. Oh, how nice of you!

(MRS. J. and MISS S. give MRS. J.-B. *emphatic nudges.*)

MRS. J.-B. (*embarrassed*). And still another thing, Mr. Crane. We ladies have often thought we should like to participate in the publication of the *Clarion*, to bear a part in the diffusion of sweetness and light through the medium of printer's ink.

DAVE (*who has been shifting from one foot to the other in his anxiety to see them take their departure*). I've got it—the very thing. You—you—er—just chuck the wood in the fire there and I'll finish with these proofs. And after that—(*pauses in perplexity*) why, after that you can go in the next room and help Bart kick the press. Tickled to death you suggested the idea.

MRS. J.-B. (*indignantly*). Chuck wood, indeed!

MRS. J. Kick the press? Just fancy!

MISS S. How repulsive!

MRS. J.-B. Come, ladies, let us go and leave this impertinent young man to his own degrading company.

(*All exit through door in back, casting backward scornful and indignant glances.*)

DAVE (*sighing*). For this relief much thanks. Thought at one time I would have to call in the fire department to put them out. (*Goes back to desk.*) Well, now one more stab for the good cause. The Christmas *Clarion* shall appear despite fire and flood.

(BART *opens door R., and intruding head, calls to DAVE at desk.*)

BART. If you're not busy will you step in here and see how this eight-point set-up looks. (*Pointedly.*) That is, if you're not too busy.

DAVE (*getting up from chair*). Oh, bless you, my child, I've given up being busy. (*Goes over to door R. At door steps and turns as if about to return for proofs, then.*) Oh, I guess they're safe. [*Exit through door R.*]

(CLAY *is seen at window in back. He peers cautiously around as if to make sure no one is in office, then enters through door in back, again looking around to see if he is unobserved.*)

CLAY. Humph, not in. So this is where the young upstart does his mischief. Well, we'll see. (*Walks down toward desk, glances carelessly at papers, then stares intently as the headlines of the page proof catch his eye, starts with surprise, snatches paper from desk, and holds it at arm's length, reading aloud.*) "Jay I. C. stock deal fraudulent. Starr Clay's company only exists on paper." (*Lowers arm and crushes paper in fist.*) The scoundrel!

Enter DAVE through door R., walking briskly. Stops short as he discovers CLAY.

DAVE. Oh, Mr. Clay!

CLAY (*nervously endeavoring to recover composure*). Oh—er—howdy do, Mr. Crane.

DAVE (*coolly*). Anything special?

CLAY. No, no. Just thought I'd drop in for a little friendly call, you know. (*Laughs in forced manner.*) Haven't been in a newspaper office for some time. Thought I'd see how you run things—you understand.

DAVE. Oh, yes, of course.

CLAY (*looking about room*). So this is where you get out the Chester *Clarion*?

DAVE (*dryly*). This is where I try to get it out.

CLAY. Nice quarters, ain't they?

(*Picks up paper knife from desk and taps it against other hand, looking at it with divided attention.*)

DAVE. Yes, they answer the purpose.

CLAY. Well, a good paper needs good quarters, and the *Clarion* has gone right ahead since you took hold of it. I cal'late it's just about as good as any in this part of the state now, ain't it?

DAVE (*significantly*). Some people are kind enough to say so.

CLAY (*holding paper knife by blade and gazing at it curiously*). Odd little knife, ain't it? Something foreign?

DAVE (*watching CLAY intently*). Yes; French, I believe.

CLAY. Ever been on the other side yourself?

DAVE. No. Couldn't afford it.

CLAY. Uh-huh. (*Pause.*) Aiming to go some time, I suppose?

DAVE. You never can tell.

CLAY. Great sights over there—wonderful. Shouldn't miss it (*slowly and impressively*), especially for a young man like you.

DAVE (*facing him squarely*). Mr. Clay, I don't want to take up any of your time. Just what did you come here for?

CLAY (*not noticing interruption*). Great rest, too, for people who are overworked. Finest thing on earth for brain fag.

DAVE (*impatiently*). Mr. Clay, this is all beside the point. The subject for discussion (*pointing at paper*) is right there in your hand. Now come clean.

CLAY. Partly right and partly wrong, young man. I came here to offer you six months abroad at my expense.

DAVE (*sarcastically*). You are very kind.

CLAY. I am (*impressively*) sometimes. Of course, you understand there is a little condition attached to my kindness.

DAVE. And that is?

CLAY (*holding out proof and tapping it*). That this article never appears. (*Sits down at desk and pulls check-book from pocket as if matter was settled.*) Let's see—six months—you ought to be able to do it for two thousand dollars. Well, you might as well see everything. Let's say two thousand, five hundred dollars. Satisfactory?

DAVE. Mr. Clay, there's one thing the matter with you. You've got inflammation of the imagination. Money has been your god so long that you imagine every one else is worshipping at the same dirty shrine. You've made yourself believe that every man has his price—and that mine is a mighty low one. Let me tell you this: my health's good and my nerve is better, and I don't intend to go to Europe and leave a rotten swindle at home. Now what do you say to that?

CLAY (*gasping with astonishment; rising from chair*). What do I say to that? That you're a fool, a darn fool! And you'll lose your job, too! Do you think that I've been reading that stuff in your paper right along about me and twirling my thumbs? Maybe you do, but I didn't. The first time I saw those lies I sent Williams a cablegram. I'm expecting an answer every minute, and when it comes it means you're fired; do you hear, you're fired. It means you'll be a loafer like you always was. Now what have *you* got to say to that, Mr. David Crane?

DAVE. That it is a pretty good bluff. But until that cable comes I'm editor of the *Clarion*, and what I say goes.

(Sits down at desk as if interview is at an end.)

CLAY. Then you mean —

DAVE *(interrupting him)*. Yes. And don't slam the door when you go out!

CLAY *(near door in back, holding up crumpled proof in one hand)*. You see that? Crushed, ain't it? *(Lets it fall to the floor.)* Well, that's just what I'm going to do to you. Crush you, understand—just like that. *(Points to paper on floor.)* Good-day. *[Exits through door in back.]*

(On CLAY'S exit DAVE picks up pipe from desk, lights it and holds match meditatively as if mentally turning over CLAY'S threat. He then blows out match and holds it for an instant.)

DAVE *(flicking match away)*. Just like that. *(Resumes puffing vigorously on pipe and staring intently in front of him. A timid knock is heard at door in back. DAVE removes pipe from mouth and listens. The knock is repeated, this time stronger. DAVE, loudly.)* Come in! *(Gets out of chair and starts for door in back.)* What are you waiting for, anyway? Copper-plate invitation? I'll tell you right now I don't want to buy anything—no books, patent cleaning fluids, reversible umbrellas — *(Door in back opens and MADGE is discovered standing timidly on threshold. DAVE recoils in surprise; embarrassed.)* Oh —

MADGE. May I come in?

DAVE. Come in? Well, I should say you could!

(Takes the hand she offers, goes over to door and closes it. MADGE comes down stage followed by DAVE. DAVE pulls forward a chair and offers it, which she accepts. Both are embarrassed as to just how to begin.)

MADGE *(after a pause)*. It has stopped snowing.

DAVE *(glancing confusedly at window)*. Why, so it has.

(Another long and embarrassed pause ensues.)

MADGE *(glancing at desk)*. Don't let me keep you from your work.

DAVE. Work? Oh, no—not at all.

MADGE. It isn't so cold as it was.

DAVE. Yes—er—I mean no.

MADGE (*impulsively and laughing nervously*). Dave, I didn't come here to talk about the weather. (*Pause.*) You must know why I came—those articles about father. Don't you realize how they hurt him—and me? There must be some mistake somewhere. They can't be true. Why are you doing this, Dave?

DAVE. Why? Why, because—because it's the only thing I can do. I know you don't understand, Madge—you can't. It's only natural that you should believe in your father, but—well—oh, Madge, can't you see how hard it is for me—*your* father——

MADGE. But it can't be true. You know my father as well as I do.

DAVE (*grimly*). Better, I'm afraid. I fought this all out, Madge, fought it just as fairly as I could and—it was all there was left to do. You remember what you told me when I came home from college? I haven't forgotten that. I guess it's burnt into my brain somewhere. You remember you said that you couldn't respect me until I did a man's work. Well, I think I have found it—and I'm going to try to do it.

MADGE. Yes, Dave, I know I told you that. You have done it, done it beautifully; and I was so proud of you until—until these articles appeared. And now you're wrong, Dave.

DAVE (*firmly*). Madge, I'm right, dead right. I tried to shut my eyes; tried for your sake, but I couldn't. It's more now than a question of your respect for me—it means my self-respect. I can't stop now. It's got to go through.

MADGE. I suppose I am foolish but, somehow, I thought you cared more for me than that, Dave.

DAVE. That isn't quite fair. You know how I care for you and what I owe to you—but that is just why you shouldn't demand this sacrifice. Honor may be a high-sounding title, but it stands for something; for something that I've felt inside me since that night I came from college. It means—oh, hang it all, why couldn't it have been somebody else's father? Anybody but yours.

MADGE. And now that it is my father—you will not go on?

DAVE. I must.

MADGE (*rising from chair*). Have you thought what this means to me?

DAVE. Have you thought what this means to *me*? Here I am, struggling to get a grip, to plant myself solidly somewhere. I'm just getting a foothold now and you ask me to slip back,

back into the shiftless existence your words lashed me out of. Can't you understand, Madge? You've been my goal—you've stood for everything. Now the first time there comes a real rub between duty and inclination you ask me to give over. It isn't right, I tell you, it isn't right!

MADGE. By what right, Mr. Crane, do you assume all this? How can you be sure that my father is—is—well, all that you say?

DAVE (*pulling open top drawer of desk and pointing at papers therein*). By this! (*Holds up folded letter*.) A letter placed in my hands that would convince any jury in Brown County. (*Unfolds it and holds it toward MADGE for her inspection*.) Perhaps you recognize the writing?

MADGE (*vehemently*). My father's!

DAVE. Yes.

MADGE (*pleadingly*). Dave, let me have that letter. For my sake—for the sake of old times—please, Dave!

DAVE (*making motion as if to give it to her, then taking it back*). No, Madge. Not for the sake of old times, not even for the sake of what I hoped might be.

MADGE (*scornfully*). What might be! How tremendously self-sacrificing you have become. And as for anything that might have been you have killed that to-day. You have only yourself to blame. But then one could hardly expect the virtuous Mr. Crane to listen to the daughter of a—a thief.

DAVE. Madge!

MADGE. Don't call me Madge, Mr. Crane. When you take my father as a means to forward your ambition, to thrust yourself into public notice and to play reformer, our friendship is at an end. I can only thank you for your courtesy.

(*Goes up toward door in back.*)

DAVE. Madge, won't you let me —

MADGE (*interrupting him*). Good-day, Mr. Crane. I congratulate you on your success.

(*Bows scornfully and exits through door in back.*)

DAVE (*looking after her sorrowfully; then bitterly*). My success! I wonder if it's worth it all?

(*BART comes bustling in through door R., dressed for street. Goes over to desk and places newspaper on it.*)

BART. There she be. Clean, spick, and span! Gosh, it's goin' to open folks' eyes. Well, they're all run off and a few extra ones besides. Guess if you don't want me for anything more I've got a leetle shopping to do.

(DAVE standing at desk gazes fixedly but inattentively at paper.)

DAVE (as if he hadn't heard BART). I wonder if it's worth it all?

BART. Wa'al, I guess I'll be goin' along. (Goes over to door in back; stops half way.) Wa'al, good-night, Dave, and merry Christmas!

DAVE (absent-mindedly). Oh, yes, to be sure—merry Christmas, Bart! (Sinks down into chair and repeats reflectively.) Merry Christmas!

Reënter BART, through door in back, with cablegram in hand.

BART (excitedly, coming over to desk). Cablegram for you. Just met Hank coming up from the station, so I brought it in. Guess it ain't anything to keep me, though. Wa'al, good-night and merry Christmas! [Bustling exit through door in back.

(DAVE slowly tears end from envelope, draws out slip of paper and reads aloud.)

DAVE (reading). "You are hereby fired. George Williams." (Rises slowly to feet, slowly crushing cable blank in hand.) Crushed! (Then letting blank fall from hand to floor.) Crushed! Just like that!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Lobby of the New Occidental Hotel, eight months later. Full stage, box setting. Double practical door R., backed by street scene. Sliding doorway R., with sign "Elevator" over doorway. Door L., with sign "Buffet" over doorway. Handsome hotel counter against back flat, upon which is usual hotel equipment. Back of counter on front is pigeonhole case for mail and keys. L. is cigar counter and news stand. R. and L. are two or three handsome leather chairs of the usual type. Alongside of elevator is bench for bell-boys. The furnishings must be in direct contrast to the settings of Act I. Everything is as handsome as circumstances will permit. Lights are full up, as it is early afternoon. Note: characters of BART and WILL SELLEM are doubled, also MISS S. and GERTIE FLYE.*

(At rise discovered ART behind counter, engaged in reading newspaper. Bell-boys on bench. GERTIE behind news counter and WILL in front of it, busily engaged in shaking dice.)

GERTIE *(counting up total of throws)*. That makes just twenty-four. You lose.

WILL *(putting down dice box in disgust and shoving hands in pocket)*. That's the last time I play that game. You ain't got as much chance as a pair of lace curtains in a blast furnace.

(Starts to walk toward counter.)

GERTIE. Just a minute. *(Yawns in bored fashion.)* Did you pay me for that?

WILL. Oh, charge it.

GERTIE *(making a note of it)*. All right. *(Sweetly.)* Your sporting blood is kinda thin this afternoon, ain't it, Mr. Sellem?

WILL *(disregarding her and going over to counter. To ART)*. What time is the next mail? *(ART pays no attention to his query.)* Excuse me if you're busy, but when is the next mail? *(ART looks up from paper, yawns and stretches. WILL looks pointedly at ART, and then at GERTIE, who is also yawning.)* Say, I ain't keeping you folks up, am I?

ART. The next mail is in. It was in the last time you asked me. Our carrier pigeon service ain't installed yet.

WILL. Oh, very well. Just thought I'd inquire. (*Goes over to chair R., and sits down.*) Well, thank heaven, this is the last of the tanks on my route list. 'This excitement would kill me.

(*Rocks steadily back and forth for a moment, then gets up and exits into buffet.* ART, who has dropped pen from back of ear, taps bell on desk smartly.)

ART. Front! (*Bell-boy comes briskly up to desk.*) Just pick up that pen, boy. (*Boy picks up pen and hands it to him.* ART replaces pen back of ear.) Eight months ago I'd had to pick that up myself. Lot of difference in this place.

GERTIE (*who has been busily arranging hair and chewing gum*). It must have been an awful place!

ART. Awful is not quite the word. If you'd seen it then and now you'd realize what Dave has done.

GERTIE. I think Dave—I mean Mr. Crane—is just the grandest thing. 'There's something so classy about him. He reminds me of New York City.

ART. Say, can't you ever forget that town? Why, say, Dave makes New York look like a pair of white cuffs in Pittsburg. I'll bet there isn't a hotel man in New York who can beat him!

GERTIE (*yawning again*). My, how we love our boss! By the way, when's he coming back?

ART. Kind of interested, aren't you? Well, if it will help you any, he'll be back to-day. The convention closed yesterday and Dave won't tarry in any wayside inn. In the meantime, Miss Flye, don't let me keep you from dusting off your emporium of literature.

GERTIE. Thank you kindly, Mr. Wimpel, but I guess I don't need your help. I had a friend who was cigar lady for two years at the Hoffman House in New York City. Did you get that, the Hoffman House!

ART. My word!

(*Bends over paper again, and GERTIE commences to dust stock.*)

Enter JOHN, carrying a suit case in each hand, through door in back. As he enters a bell-boy rushes forward to relieve him of his burden.

JOHN (*dropping suit cases to floor*). Whee! (*Removes hat and starts to mop forehead.*) Hot as a chorus rehearsal ain't it?

(*Walks over to counter; bell-boy follows carrying grips.*
ART whirls register around and offers him pen.)

ART. Howdy do!

JOHN (*flourishing pen, then looking around the office*). Some changed, hasn't it? I didn't know at first whether I was in the right place. Changed hands?

ART. No, not exactly. (*Proudly.*) Mr. Crane's son is manager now.

JOHN (*signing his name*). About a year since I've been here. Guess you don't remember me, do you?

ART (*whirling register toward him and reading name*). Oh, yes, Mr. Irving. John Drew Irving. Let's see—gents' suits, ain't it?

JOHN. Nope; used to be patent medicines, but it's suspenders now. Support myself by supporting others. Kinda funny, eh? (*GERTIE giggles and JOHN looks around in her direction, not having noticed her before. Then to ART.*) Does that belong here, too?

ART. It does now, but (*confidentially*) it's late of New York City.

JOHN. Is that so? Can you fix me out all right? And nothing too good, either! I'm just putting a belt around the universe with these suspenders. Kinda funny, eh?

(*GERTIE giggles again.*)

ART (*turning to key rack*). I guess forty-four will suit you about down to the ground. (*Hands key to boy.*) Want to go now?

JOHN (*handing boy tip*). Just take my stuff up, boy, and put some ice water in the room. I want to see if she has the Clipper. (*Boy exits into elevator with baggage; JOHN starts over to news stand, then turns.*) Say, I forgot something. (*Draws baggage checks from pocket.*) Get those up for me all right?

ART. You said something there. Finest baggage man in the country. Starr Clay's doing that for us now.

JOHN. Starr Clay? You don't mean that rich old codger that was mixed up in the Jay I. C. deal, do you?

ART. The very same.

JOHN. What, hauling baggage?

ART. Yes, and he's a good hauler, too!

JOHN. Come on, I'll bite. What's the joke? What's he doing it for—his health?

ART. Yes, in a way. He had to get his three meals per, I guess. But you must have read about him losing all his money—and this was the only thing left to do. You'll hear all about it if you stick around long enough. (JOHN goes over to news stand and engages GERTIE in conversation. ART busies himself with register. After a minute JOHN starts for buffet with "Clipper" under his arm. ART finishes writing and pulls out his watch.) Gee, it's time to smoke. (Comes around from back of counter. As he does so WILL enters from buffet drying his lips suggestively and smacking them reminiscently. At stand to GERTIE.) Well, bright eyes, what have you got in the burn line? Got a nice panatella that's idle? (GERTIE produces box and ART selects cigar.) That looks like a respectable rope. How much?

(SALLIE enters from elevator and stands watching them.)

GERTIE. Oh, I guess that's a gift. You're a pretty good customer.

ART. Gertie, you're a great little girl, and I don't care who knows it.

GERTIE (*discovering SALLIE*). Are you sure you don't? I guess your stern lamps need trimming.

ART (*turning around and discovering SALLIE*). Oh, hello, Sallie!

SALLIE (*coldly*). I intended to ask you something, but I see you are engaged.

GERTIE. He ain't to me. Run along, Art, like a good boy. Besides, it's me for the eats. My canary bird appetite is beginning to scream for help.

(GERTIE comes around from back of stand and walking over to elevator in stately fashion, exits.)

SALLIE. Art Wimpel, I'm surprised at you!

ART. What's the answer? (*To bell-boys.*) Front! Both of you! Go up-stairs with ice-water.

BOYS. What room?

ART. Oh, any room. Give them all ice-water—it's a hot day. [*Exeunt bell-boys.*]

SALLIE. I suppose you consider it perfectly proper for an engaged man to flirt with—with—well, with her!

ART (*trying to take her hand*). Oh, is that all that's worrying you? (*Seriously.*) You know you're the only one, Sallie. The others just don't count.

SALLIE (*pouting*). Well, you never called me a great little girl.

ART. Well, I will now. (*Puts his arm around her.*)

Enter JOHN from buffet and discovers them.

JOHN (*embarrassed*). Er—I—I beg your pardon. Going up! (*Strides across stage and exits into elevator.*)

SALLIE (*disengaging herself*). No, sir. I don't like it one bit. And unless your attentions to that person cease you can never be my husband; so there!

ART. Then I'll tell you how we can settle it. You can be my wife.

SALLIE. Oh, there's no satisfaction in quarreling with you.

ART. Not a bit.

(*Kisses her. Here WILL sits up in chair with start, sees the situation and starts hurriedly for the buffet.*)

WILL. This is no place for a dealer in dry-goods.

(*SALLIE, to hide her confusion, picks up paper from counter and pretends to read.*)

ART (*standing back of her and pointing over her shoulder at item*). Oh, look. There's something I forgot to tell you.

SALLIE (*reading*). "Mrs. Jones-Brown, accompanied by Miss Madge Clay, is expected to return home to-day after a protracted sojourn in foreign parts. Until the decorators have finished the Jones-Brown residence she will stay at one of the local hotels." Oh, Art, do you suppose she will stop here?

ART. Well, why not? It's the best one, isn't it?

SALLIE. But Madge is with her.

ART. Well, what of that?

SALLIE. Oh, you men never understand. Just think how hard it would be for her to stay here.

ART. Don't see why—pretty swell place. If you stay here I guess it's good enough for Madge Clay.

SALLIE. Did it ever occur to you that I was thinking about Dave? You know that Dave and Madge haven't met since last Christmas eve—just before the Jay I. C. exposé.

ART. Gosh, I never thought of that.

SALLIE. And she probably isn't any too strong either. Art, if you ever say another word about Mrs. Jones-Brown I'll break our engagement. Just think of her taking Madge away when the poor child got nervous prostration. There aren't many women in Chester who would do that.

ART. Keep your gloves on. I'm not knocking Mrs. Jones-Brown. But she didn't do a bit more for Madge than Dave did for her father. Staked him to a horse and wagon and gave him all the baggage business from the hotel.

SALLIE. Oh, Art, doesn't it seem a shame that we're all so happy and that Dave is—well, he never says anything about it, but you know the way he cares for Madge.

ART. It's too bad, all right. But Dave's game, you bet—only he never laughs or cuts up the way he used to.

SALLIE. Now see here, Art, if Madge comes here and you and I can't straighten matters out I'll just cry I will be so miserable.

ART. Well, getting them together will be as hard as swimming through glue. Every time they meet they scrap. Why aren't they like us? (*Puts his arm around her waist.*) Now we never fight!

SALLIE (*doubtfully*). Well, we do sometimes, but—(*he kisses her; coyly*) but the making up is worth it.

Enter SAM., through door in back, with telegram in hand.

SAM. (*bustling in, but stopping short as he discovers ART and SALLIE*). Ahem! (*Playfully.*) Art, how dare you kiss my daughter before me?

ART. I didn't know you wanted to kiss her.

SAM. Well, folks, I got a little news for you. Guess what?

SALLIE. Oh, daddy, please tell us!

SAM. (*handing her telegram*). There, read for yourself.

SALLIE (*reading*). "Reserve suite for party. Will arrive August 14th, at three. Mrs. Jones-Brown." Why, that's to-day. Oh, Art, they're really coming here!

SAM. (*proudly*). I guess that will let the Van Avery folks know where we stand when Mrs. Jones-Brown stops with us. (*Looks around admiringly.*) Lord love me, I'd never believe

that this was possible a year ago. And it wouldn't have been except for my boy. (*Pulls out another telegram from pocket.*) And I've got some more news. Dave will be home this afternoon. He comes in on number six.

SALLIE. Now, Art, you can see the work that lies ahead of us—with Madge and Dave here.

SAM. What's that, daughter?

SALLIE. It's a little secret just now, daddy. But you'll know; won't he, Art?

ART (*doubtfully*). I guess it's all right if you say so.

(SAM., ART and SALLIE, at counter, engage in pantomime conversation. Bell-boys enter from elevator and take seats on bench. Then enter WILL, from buffet, wiping his lips suggestively. Also enter JOHN, from elevator. They meet c. stage and shake hands.)

WILL. Well, I'll be darned!

JOHN. Same here. How's biz?

WILL. Finer than silk. How is it with you?

JOHN. Great. Just took an order for two hundred pairs.

WILL. What are you talking about, fruit?

JOHN. No, suspenders. (*Slaps him on the back.*) Kinda funny, eh? Still selling dry-goods?

WILL (*nodding his head in direction of buffet*). No, I'm buying wet goods. Come on in!

(*They link arms and exit into buffet.*)

SAM. Well, Art, I guess you'd better see that them rooms on the second floor front is fixed up for her then.

ART. All right, sir. We'll show Mrs. Jones-Brown what the Occidental can do.

Enter DAVE, through door in back, carrying hand-bag which he lets fall to the ground on discovering SAM., SALLIE and ART. Bell-boys rush forward to seize his baggage. Then DAVE comes down stage.

SALLIE } (*together*). Dave!
ART }

SAM. My boy!

DAVE (*shaking hands warmly with SAM. and ART and kissing SALLIE*). Hello, dad. And how are the happy lovers? Where's mother?

SAM. Up-stairs. Sallie, go up and tell her Dave's come.

DAVE. Tell her I'll be up in just a minute, Sallie.

[Exit SALLIE, into elevator.]

SAM. How was the convention, Dave? Did you make a speech?

DAVE (*laughing*). Hardly, dad. My, but it seems good to be back. How's business been?

(*Goes over to counter to look at register.*)

ART. Been a little light to-day, but —

SAM. (*interrupting him*). Yes, but Mrs. Jones-Brown and Madge will be here directly, we expect.

DAVE (*abstractedly and softly*). Madge!

Enter MRS. C. and SALLIE, from elevator.

MRS. C. (*rushing forward eagerly*). Dave, my boy! I just couldn't wait.

DAVE (*embracing her*). You see I got back all right, mother. And I didn't forget to say my prayers and brush my teeth. (*Puts arm around her waist affectionately.*)

MRS. C. Say, doesn't it seem good to have my boy back again?

SAM. *Our* boy, you mean, mother.

DAVE (*laughing*). There, there, mother. "Our boy" will be a conceited wretch if you aren't careful.

MRS. C. My boy couldn't be a wretch of any kind.

DAVE (*laughing again*). I see it's no use. You're incorrigible.

MRS. C. I'll get along now, Dave, and see about your room. Like as not the sheets are damp. One can't trust these chambermaids at all. (SAM. *starts for buffet*. MRS. C., *noticing him*.) Are you coming, dear?

SAM. Just thought I'd have a lemonade, mother, to celebrate Dave's arrival.

MRS. C. Well, be sure it is a lemonade, dear.

(*Goes toward elevator.*)

SAM. Yes, mother.

[Exits into buffet.]

MRS. C. (*at elevator, turning*). Are you coming, Sallie?

SALLIE. I was going down town, mother, to get some silk for that table cover.

MRS. C. All right, dear. But hurry back!

[*Exits into elevator.*]

(ART looks longingly at SALLIE as she starts to take her departure.)

DAVE (*observing ART's look*). You'd better go, too, Art. Two heads are better than one. (SALLIE exits through door in back; ART is about to follow her, when.) Just a minute, Art. What's this about Mrs. Jones-Brown coming?

ART (*lightly*). Our society leader's house is still in the hands of the decorators. Until finished she is to be a guest of the New Occidental, second floor front.

DAVE (*confusedly*). And—and——

ART. Oh, yes, she's coming, too. Mrs. Jones-Brown and party, the message said, and (*meaningly*) I guess Madge is the party all right. Gee, I forgot—Sallie's waiting for me.

(*Hurried exit through door in back.*)

DAVE (*going slowly back of counter*). So she's coming back. I wonder—no, what's the use—she's nothing to me—yes, she is, she's everything—if she only knew it.

Enter CLAY through door in back, carrying suit case which he puts down on counter.

CLAY (*brisk and businesslike*). Got anything to come up?

DAVE (*abstractedly*). Come up? Oh, yes, you mean baggage. (*Looks about counter and sees JOHN's checks.*) Here are two, I guess. (*Hands them to him, then takes another check from pocket.*) And you can bring mine up on the same load.

CLAY (*taking checks*). All right. Get them right up.

(*Turns to exit through door in back; almost at door when.*)

DAVE. Er—how's business been?

CLAY. Fine. (*Comes back toward DAVE.*) I'm going to pay everything I owe just as soon as I can.

DAVE. Oh, no hurry about me. I wasn't thinking of that. Did you hear the news?

CLAY. Oh, yes, yes. You mean about Madge? I just got word. They're coming in on number seven.

DAVE. I just thought I'd tell you in case you wanted to go home and spruce up a bit.

CLAY (*emphatically*). No. I've got to tend to business.

DAVE. I guess you'll be glad to see her after all these months?

CLAY. Yes, yes, I will. Of course things are changed. I ain't fixed the way I was, but Madge is the sort of girl who will understand and be glad.

DAVE (*reflectively*). Yes—she is that kind.

CLAY. I don't care so much about myself, but it's going to be hard on her. Madge always had everything, and now—well, it's a big change for a girl.

DAVE. Everything would have been all right if I hadn't butted in and spoiled things.

CLAY (*shaking index finger*). Stop right there. You saw your duty, and did it. If I'd seen things the right way a little sooner it would have been all right.

DAVE. Yes, but I can't help but think —

CLAY (*interrupting him*). Well, don't think any more about it. Besides, this ain't getting those trunks up. (*Here GERTIE enters from elevator and walks toward news stand in elaborate fashion*) So long. See you later.

[*Exits through door in back.*]

GERTIE (*to DAVE*). Howdy do, Mr. Crane. Did you have a nice time in Chicago?

(*Continues on her way to news stand.*)

DAVE. Very fine, thank you. (*Smilingly.*) How has everything been in your department?

GERTIE. Oh, just grand. I suppose there was a lot of hotel keepers there from New York City?

DAVE. New York? Oh, yes, they condescended to come.

GERTIE. Well, there ain't any of them got anything on you running a hotel. Of course, some of the shacks is sweller; but when it comes to the management thing you can give them extra tires and cylinders, and beat 'em to it.

DAVE (*smilingly*). I'm afraid you flatter me, Miss Flye. I think my success can be partly attributed to your New York ideas.

GERTIE. Say, quit your kidding. The only New York ideas I lugged to this metropolis was about four pounds of fluffy curls and a winning smile. Of course not all the gents who buys magazines of me does it just because they hanker for the liter-achoor, but, believe me, you're the real little dynamo around

this shop. Why, say, there ain't an anxious mother of a front family in this town but has got you down for a good prospect.

DAVE (*pointedly*). I'm afraid you're more hopeful than I.

GERTIE. Oh, there's no use in pulling that modest violet by a mossy bank stuff with me. I lived in New York long enough to know that most men don't quote themselves below par if there's a chance to bull the market. Of course, I suppose the local skirts may seem a bit quiet alongside of the girls you met at college, but you'll be picking out a bungalow pretty timely just the same.

DAVE. I have the time and place all right, but I haven't got the girl.

GERTIE. Oh, say, now, didn't you ever lay orbs on a doll that was your idea of a breakfast table partner for life? Of course, I don't want to be impertinent.

DAVE (*picking up hat and going toward door in back*). Yes, I have, if you put it that way. (*Puts on hat.*) If anybody comes in tell him I'll be back in a few minutes.

[*Exit through door in back.*]

GERTIE (*solus*). I wonder if he meant me—he ain't featuring nobody else that I can see. (*Puts elbow on counter, chin in hands, and stares dreamily into space.*) So it must be little me.

Enter ART through door in back. He goes over to register, looks at GERTIE, then closes register smartly. The noise brings GERTIE out of her reverie.

ART. Come out of it—come out of it!

GERTIE. Say, what's your chief trouble? Can't you let me have a nice little dream without spoiling it all with that slapstick comedy? If it will interest you any I just had a proposal.

ART (*looking around room*). I don't see anybody that handed it to you.

GERTIE. He just went out.

ART (*astonished*). Dave? Did he propose to you?

GERTIE. Well, not out right flat. But actions speak louder than words. And I'm strong for him, too.

ART. Oh, go way with that chatter. (*Goes over to news stand.*) Gertie, I don't want to put you on the skids, but there's just one girl for Dave—that's Madge Clay. Why, they've been pals since they were kids. They're a little out of tune just now, but it ain't going to last for long, believe me.

So if you've got any large ideas about Dave being gone on you you'd better let go of the flying-rings and come down to earth.

GERTIE (*brokenly*). Gee, I thought it was too good to be true. I suppose it's some tin horn drummer for mine (*with forced gaiety*), but I don't care, I had a nice dream while it lasted.

ART (*patting her hand*). I'm sorry for you, Gertie. I know how I'd feel if I was to lose my one and only. (GERTIE *puts her handkerchief to her eyes*. SALLIE *enters through door in back and discovers ART consoling GERTIE, and in turn puts her handkerchief to her eyes*. ART *looks from GERTIE to SALLIE, and then back again*.) Can you beat it? I guess I'm the nobby little consoler. I see where I have to give another squaring party for Sallie, all right. (*Starts toward her*.) Sallie, don't do that!

SALLIE (*taking handkerchief from eyes and stamping her foot*). Don't speak to me. I saw it all.

[*Exits into elevator.*]

ART (*looking at door, then turning slowly to GERTIE*). There goes my one and only.

GERTIE (*drying eyes with handkerchief*). It's all my fault. Trust me to get everybody in bad. I suppose she thinks she caught us with the goods. But leave it to me. I'll square it if it takes an arm. (*Hopefully*.) And I wish you'd do the same for me.

ART (*kindly*). It ain't no use, Gertie. There ain't a chance in the world.

(*Loud laughter is heard in buffet.*)

GERTIE. Some folks with a smile left anyway.

(*ART goes back of counter. Then enter WILL, JOHN and SAM., with arms linked.*)

WILL } (*singing*). "It's always fair, fellows, when good
JOHN } weather gets together."

(*They take c. stage and stop singing.*)

SAM. (*laughing heartily*). Well, sir, that was a good story you told—that one about "Why does a chicken cross the street?" That's a brand new one on me.

(*All laugh.*)

WILL (*to SAM.*). Say, did you ever hear this one?

(*Winks at JOHN.*)

JOHN. Oh, you'll laugh when you hear this one.

(*Slaps SAM. on back.*)

WILL. Here it is: What gives more milk than a cow?

JOHN. Yes. This is a good one. (*Winks at WILL.*) This is immense!

SAM. Well, I guess I'll have to give it up.

WILL. Oh, this is funny. Now here's the answer. (*Stops short.*) Say, I used to know that one but I've forgotten it. But it's funny—you'd laugh if you'd heard it.

GERTIE (*to ART*). Get wise to the minstrel first part.

SAM. But that isn't as funny as the one about the chicken.

(*Laughs loudly.*)

Enter MRS. C., door R.

MRS. C. Samuel, dear, I want you if you have had your lemonade, dear.

SAM. Yes, my dear. (*Starts toward door R.*)

WILL (*slapping JOHN on back*). Lemonade.

(*They both laugh significantly. MRS. C. and SAM. exeunt through door R.*)

JOHN (*to WILL*). Shake you for a cigar.

WILL. You're on!

(*They go over to news stand, pick up dice box. Pantomime of dice game for cigars.*)

Enter MRS. J.-B. and MADGE, through door R. They are dressed in traveling costumes. MRS. J.-B. is talking volubly.

MRS. J.-B. No, my dear, it doesn't strike me that there has been any remarkable transformation in the town. Of course, there are new buildings, but nothing to compare with what we saw in Europe. (*At counter and looking about room.*) Why, this really justifies the descriptions that appeared in the local press.

ART (*impulsively*). Why, howdy do, Madge!

(*He puts out hand.*)

MADGE (*shaking his hand*). How are you, Art? It seems very good to see you again.

MRS. J.-B. How do you do, young man? I suppose you got my message? Are our apartments in readiness?

ART. Yes, ma'am. Front!

(*Bell-boy crosses to counter and takes key from ART. MRS. J.-B. starts to cross to elevator.*)

MADGE (*at counter*). You'll tell Sallie to come to my room, won't you, Art?

ART. I sure will. She's got a lot to tell you. (*MADGE follows MRS. J.-B. ART, to bell-boy.*) Boy, tell Miss Crane that Miss Clay would like to see her in Room 236.

(*MRS. J.-B., MADGE and bell-boy exeunt in elevator.*)

WILL (*at news stand*). That sticks me. Always sticks me.

JOHN. Want satisfaction?

WILL. Nix. I'm satisfied.

(*Both take cigar, which they light.*)

JOHN. Much obliged, old man. Well, I've got an appointment. I'll have to get along. See you later.

(*Crosses over to door in back and exits.*)

WILL. Got an engagement myself. [*Exits into buffet.*]

GERTIE (*to ART*). Who was the talky frail and her friend?

ART. Can't you guess?

GERTIE. Not *her*?

ART. Yep. That's another one and only.

GERTIE. Say, Art, on the level now, do you think she's got anything on me? If it was up to you which prize would you draw?

ART. It's not up to me. I've drawn mine. (*ART and GERTIE sigh pensively. As if struck with the same idea they both start to exit; she to door R., he to buffet. At doors both turn and face each other.*) Why, where are you going?

GERTIE. To my powder rag—woman's only solace in a case like this. And where are you hiking for?

ART. I go to drown myself in yonder room. (*Mock dramatically.*) Farewell, Gertie; I shall return no more.

GERTIE. You'd better or you'll lose your job.

(*Push doors back and exeunt simultaneously; she door R., he into buffet.*)

Enter SALLIE and MADGE from elevator. SALLIE is talking volubly.

SALLIE. I suppose you noticed the office, dear, when you came in; but we're so proud of it. You'll have to take the buffet for granted, of course, but they say it's a beauty.

MADGE. And has Dave really done all this?

SALLIE. Every bit of it. He's simply opened people's eyes, and the Van Averys are green with jealousy.

(*SALLIE and MADGE have backs to door in back when CLAY enters wheeling a truck with trunk on it. He lets trunk fall to the floor and stands mopping his brow. Both girls wheel about and face him at sound.*)

MADGE. Father!

(*She starts forward impulsively to embrace him.*)

CLAY (*waving her back*). Hold on. Just a minute. (*Wipes face and hands vigorously with handkerchief.*) Now, Madge.

(*They embrace. SALLIE comprehending the situation, turns and tiptoes cautiously from room through door R.*)

MADGE. But, father, I don't understand. How—why—why are you doing this?

CLAY. Why? Because I'm the baggage man.

MADGE. You, father—the baggage man? But you never wrote me that you were—that you were doing this. I knew the money was gone but I never thought—

CLAY (*interrupting her*). I didn't want to worry you, Madge—you were sick. It was the only thing left me.

MADGE. But I don't understand. Why are you—(*looking around*) why are you here—after what happened between you and Dave?

CLAY. That is just why I am here—after what happened between Dave and me.

MADGE. So Dave is responsible for this, too?

CLAY. Yes, Dave is.

MADGE. But the *Clarion* and the Jay I. C. stock? Surely —

CLAY. I don't blame you for wondering. I don't blame anybody. Sometimes I wonder myself how it all happened. But it has happened. Madge, I'm glad you're here—because I can talk to you and I know you'll understand. When the *Clarion* came out about the Jay I. C. deal, I was madder than a hornet. I wanted to get my hands on somebody and hurt him—hard. But instead I had to fight and give up all the money I struggled for and schemed for to keep out of—well, the penitentiary.

MADGE (*dismayed*). Oh, father!

CLAY (*defiantly*). Well, I might just as well tell you as to have you get it from somebody else. Then I got to thinking. I saw what people thought of me—and they showed me when I was down and out, every last soul—except one. I reckon things looked different. When you got sick that made me think some more. I saw I wasn't a big man, but a mighty mean one. There was only one man in Chester last January who would lift his finger to help me—and I didn't want to take it from him. But pride don't keep you long, so I took the money Dave offered me (*proudly*) as a loan, mind you.

MADGE. From Dave?

CLAY. Yes, from Dave! Maybe you don't know Dave as well as I do. When he wants anything he gets it. You can't resist him—at least, I couldn't. And there was a time when I was pretty hard to win over.

MADGE. To think that I was traveling in Europe in luxury and that you were doing this.

CLAY. Don't let that worry you none. I was sleeping nights, something I hadn't done for a long time before. I tell you, Madge, honest labor seems mighty good to me just now. Not that I was struck at first on smashing baggage for Dave. I knew he was all right, but people wagged their heads off. (*Proudly.*) They ain't doing so much talking now.

MADGE. But, father, at your age —

CLAY (*interrupting her*). I don't intend to be doing it long. I'll have some men working for me pretty soon. It won't be baggage man, but a transfer company—but I ain't going to get it by floating no bonds.

MADGE. But the money you sent me? I only took it because you said you were doing so well.

CLAY. I was. I've hauled a lot of trunks in Chester in the past six months. (*Holds out hands.*) Look at them hands. Don't they look like business? (*Proudly.*) Beside, I didn't want Mrs. Jones-Brown to be doing it all.

MADGE. But tell me, father, didn't you have Dave discharged from the *Clarion*?

CLAY. You just bet I did—that just shows what the boy's made of. I reckon I thought like a lot of folks in this town, but Dave has showed us all.

MADGE (*in thoughtful aside*). Showed us all!

CLAY. Well, that's the whole thing, Madge. I hope you ain't ashamed of me.

MADGE. Ashamed of you? I am proud of you, father, proud of you.

(*Throws arms about him impulsively and kisses him.*)

CLAY. I thought my little girl would understand. (*As if anxious to dismiss the subject.*) But this ain't business. I've got to get back to the depot. (*Turns on speech and picks up truck.*) I'll call round after business hours and you can tell me all about Europe. (*Goes toward door in back. Enter DAVE, through door in back.*) Here's the young man I was talking to you about. (*Puts one hand on DAVE'S shoulder and pushes him gently toward MADGE.*) Now go ahead, say howdy do to each other—and maybe something else.

[*Exits, with truck, through door in back.*

(*DAVE removes hat and advances a couple of steps toward MADGE, as if uncertain of his reception. At speech of CLAY, MADGE drops her eyes in confusion and half turns away. DAVE is just about to speak when enter MRS. J.-B.*)

MRS. J.-B. Oh, here you are, my dear. (*DAVE showing annoyance at interruption, turns on heel and goes back of counter.*) I fancied you had quite deserted me. (*Goes over to counter with baggage checks in hand.*) Young man, will you have these brought up as expeditiously as possible? I trust no mishaps will occur in transmission. I always find baggage men in small towns abandonedly careless—not at all the way it is in Europe.

DAVE (*beaming on her*). We have the exception to prove the rule, Mrs. Jones-Brown.

MRS. J.-B. Intelligence of the most gratifying proportions,

I assure you. Come, Madge, I have a new book of poems I want you to read to me—something on the order of Kipling, only more refined. (*They both exeunt into elevator.*)

DAVE (*staring after them*). There's a neat little example of a good-natured woman smothered by her vocabulary. And as a chaperon for Madge I don't fancy the way she times her entrances. No use making my work any harder in that direction. (*ART enters from buffet, slamming door behind him. With hands thrust deep in pockets he walks across the stage dejectedly to door in back, and, leaning against it, stares out moodily.*) What's the trouble, and why the dejection?

ART (*turning and coming over to counter*). Say, I want to ask you something. Do you know anything about love?

DAVE (*lightly*). If I wasn't a rank amateur, my dear Arthur, I wouldn't be here talking with you.

ART. Wrong gender, eh? No, but this is a very serious matter.

DAVE. Love generally is, I believe.

ART. Oh, come now, can't you help a fellow out? I'm in trouble.

DAVE. So am I. Any further particulars?

ART. Oh, with Sallie, of course.

(*SALLIE enters from door R., unnoticed by ART.*)

DAVE. Why, certainly I'll help you.

(*Picks up hat from counter and starts toward door in back.*)

ART. That's a fine way to do it—leaving me here alone.

DAVE. Not exactly. (*Nods head toward SALLIE.*) Take a look. [*Exits through door in back.*]

(*SALLIE starts to go on discovering ART, but he calls to her in a severe voice.*)

ART (*simulating anger*). Young woman, come here!

SALLIE (*turning around in astonishment*). Why—why—

ART (*still pretending to be angry*). Come here, I say. I want to know what you mean by— (*SALLIE starts to interrupt him.*) Don't speak, don't dare to interrupt me until I have finished. I want to know why you don't speak to me. What have I done that you dare to treat me as a stranger, instead of one who has toiled and struggled as I have to make you a happy—er—er—home?

SALLIE. Why, Art Wimpel, what can you ——

ART (*mock dramatically*). Silence! My wrongs cry for vengeance. If you are acting thus that our engagement may be a thing of the dead gone past why not tell me? Speak now and our plighted troth is over. But why resort to subterfuge after subterfuge (splendid word that)! But I see you are silent. Does your guilt bind your tongue? Why don't you say something in your own defense?

SALLIE (*gaspingly*). Speak? Goodness gracious, you never gave me a chance.

ART. Oh, woman, woman, you have broken my heart!

SALLIE. I never did, Art Wimpel. Now you tell me something: how dare you flirt with Gertie; and twice in one day, too?

ART. I wasn't flirting one little speck. I was merely giving first aid to an injured heart. Gertie was dead in love with Dave, and when I told her about Madge she took the count. And just as I was bringing her to, you came in. If you don't believe me, ask Gertie.

SALLIE. Art Wimpel, is that really the throw-salt-over-your-left-shoulder truth?

ART. Honest Injun—cross my heart!

SALLIE. Then I forgive you, Art.

ART. I want more than that. I want to know when you intend to marry me. I've taken enough chances on losing you already.

SALLIE. How would on or after October 1st, date to be settled by party of the first part, suit you?

Enter GERTIE through door R.

ART. Oh, Sallie!

SALLIE. Oh, Art! (*They embrace rapturously.*)

GERTIE (*crossing over to back of news stand*). Oh, fudge!

ART. Well, it's all patched up, Miss Flye. We're to be married the first of October. You're invited to bring your presents—I mean, to be present at the gay doings.

GERTIE (*sincerely*). And I—I wish you all kinds of luck.

SALLIE. But, Art, I forgot—we haven't asked mother.

ART. Easiest thing in the world. Come on, we'll go right now. (*To GERTIE.*) Just keep an eye on my department, will you, while we ask mother?

GERTIE. Both eyes, all the time. Run along and play. (*They exeunt through door R. Enter JOHN from door in back,*

and WILL from buffet. WILL shows just the slightest signs of unsteadiness. They cross to cigar stand. WILL takes coin from pocket and puts it down on case. GERTIE to WILL.) What's your special craving?

WILL. Nothing particular. Just thought I'd like to buy something from you. (*Turns and discovers JOHN for the first time.*) Oh, hello! How many apples have you sold now—I mean pairs?

JOHN. Coming to look you over I think you've been hitting the high places. You need a good strong-armed chaperon. Now what do you mean by such conduct?

WILL. Nothing a-tall, nothing a-tall. But I can't remember whether I promised my wife to be home at twelve and take one drink, or be home at one and take twelve drinks.

JOHN. Well, I guess you've had your share anyway. Come on up to the room. We just got time for a little game of pinochle before supper.

(*They link arms and cross stage, WILL singing, "It's always fair, fellows, when good weather gets together"; then exeunt into elevator.*)

Enter DAVE through street door. Goes over back of counter.

DAVE. Anybody here while I was gone?

GERTIE. Nobody but Sallie and Art. Handed me a card to their wedding.

DAVE (*wondering*). Their wedding?

GERTIE. Yep, they're down on the cards for October.

DAVE (*laughing*). Art must have gotten his new suit at last.

Enter MADGE from elevator. She crosses to news stand.

MADGE (*to GERTIE*). Have you this month's Scribner's?

GERTIE. Yes, ma'am.

(*DAVE meanwhile has kept his eyes on MADGE from time of entrance. GERTIE searches about for magazine, finds it, and hands it to MADGE, who pays her. GERTIE evinces her curiosity by glancing, whenever opportunity allows, from MADGE to DAVE, and back again. MADGE picks up magazine and starts toward elevator. DAVE comes around from back of elevator.*)

DAVE. Just a moment, Madge.

(MADGE stops, and GERTIE, comprehending the situation, crosses over to door in back.)

GERTIE (*at door in back*). Do you care if I run down and see if New York won to-day? (*They pay no attention. After slight pause, aside, heartily and referring to DAVE.*) Gee, I hope he wins. [*Exits through door in back.*]

DAVE. Madge, you don't know how good it is to see you back again. (*MADGE lets her gaze fall to the magazine.*) It seems like a long, long time since you went away.

MADGE (*nervously toying with magazine*). Yes, it has been long.

DAVE. I don't suppose it seemed so to you, seeing new places and people, but here in Chester—well, you understand what I mean.

MADGE (*roguishly*). Are you sure I do?

DAVE. I'm going to make sure—right now. Madge, do you remember that night I came back from college? As I look back now I can see I was a pretty sad affair; but I didn't know it then—until you told me. You remember you said that it was just the beginning, that it was what I did then that was going to count. Sometimes at first I used to think, "Oh, what's the use?" Then I could see you standing in that dingy old office, and I would buckle down to work again.

MADGE (*softly*). Yes, Dave.

DAVE. And sometimes when I was reading proof the type would blur before my eyes and I would see you, smiling at me the way you did before I went to college. Madge, I don't know why I am saying all this—I'm just trying to tell you that I love you, love you more than anything in the world, and that I want you to be my wife. Won't you say "yes"?

MADGE (*softly, and looking up at him*). Yes, Dave.

DAVE (*smiling*). And now do you know what I'm going to do? I am going to crush you—(*putting arms around her*) crush you just like this!

CURTAIN

New Plays

THE COLONEL'S MAID

A Comedy in Three Acts

By C. Leona Dalrymple

Author of "The Time of His Life," "The Land of Night," etc.

Six males, three females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening. An exceptionally bright and amusing comedy, full of action; all the parts good. Capital Chinese low comedy part; two first-class old men. This is a very exceptional piece and can be strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

COLONEL ROBERT RUDD, a widower of
North Carolina }
COLONEL RICHARD BYRD, a widower } *mortally antagonistic.*
of South Carolina }
MARJORIE BYRD } *not so antagonistic as their respective fathers.*
BOB RUDD }
MRS. J. JOHN CARROLL, a widow, and Colonel Rudd's sister-
in-law.
JULIA CARROLL, her daughter.
NED GRAYDON, a young gentleman of exceedingly faulty memory.
MR. JAMES BASKOM, Colonel Rudd's lawyer.
CHING-AH-LING, the Chinese cook, a bit impertinent but by far the
most important individual in the cast.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Early morning in the kitchen of the Rudd bachelor establishment.

ACT II.—The Rudd library, five days later.

ACT III.—The same. Evening of the same day.

BREAKING THE ENGAGEMENT

A Farce in One Act

By W. C. Parker

Two males, one female. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. A quick playing little piece suitable for vaudeville use. Very bright and snappy and strongly recommended.

Price, 15 cents

A PAPER MATCH

A Farce in One Act

By E. W. Burt, M. D.

Two males, two females. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays thirty-five minutes. Four rustic characters, all good. The heroine advertises for a husband and gets her aunt's old beau to their mutual horror. Very funny, easy and effective.

Price, 15 cents

New Plays

THE SAWDUST QUEEN

A Comedy Drama in Three Acts

By Dana F. Stevens

Author of "Plain People," "Old Acre Folk," etc.

Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening. A play of circus life, very picturesque and effective and not difficult to get up. Unusually rich in character parts and comedy. Soubrette lead; ladies' parts especially strong. Can be recommended. Free for amateur performance. *Price, 25 cents.*

CHARACTERS

DEACON MATTHEW STERLING.

NED STERLING, *his son.*

MISS PRUDENCE PRUE,

MISS PATRICIA PROSSITT, } *three maiden ladies, his cousins.*

MISS PATIENCE PROUTY,

MR. SILAS HANKUM, *his solicitor.*

ADANIRUM GEORGE WASHINGTON HOBBS, *proprietor of "The Great Forever Circus."*

TONEY O'HARA, *an old clown.*

THE HERR PROFESSOR, *acrobat and flying trapeze man.*

HULDA SCHWARTZ, *strong lady and snake charmer.*

STARLIGHT, *the sawdust queen.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Inside the dressing tent of "The Great Forever Circus."

ACT II.—Three days later. The living room in the Sterling homestead.

ACT III.—Several days later. Inside the dressing tent again.

THE SUMMERVILLE BAZAR

An Entertainment in One Act

By Frank Towslee

Twenty-one males, thirty-one females are called for, but this number can be greatly reduced by "doubling" or by curtailing the length of the entertainment. No scenery required; costumes, modern. Plays about an hour with specialties introduced when called for. This is a humorous picture of a church sale, depending upon its characters and incidents, which are home thrusts in almost any community, for its success. It ends with a sale by auction which may be made a real one, if desired, to actually end up a fair. This entertainment will serve as an admirable frame for a vaudeville entertainment, being designed to introduce songs, dances or recitations at intervals in its action, but may be played wholly without them, as a straight entertainment, if it is preferred. *Price, 25 cents.*

Novelties

HOW THE CLUB WAS FORMED

An Entertainment in Three Scenes

By Mrs. O. W. Gleason

Author of "How the Story Grew," "A Modern Sewing Society," etc.

Eighteen females. Costumes modern; scenery unimportant. Plays one and a half hours. A humorous skit on the Woman's Club suited for performance by either young or middle-aged women. Full of points and chances for local hits and thus a sure laugh-maker. Parts well distributed; can be recommended.

Price, 15 cents

A MOTHERS' MEETING

An Entertainment in One Scene

By Arlo Bates

Author of "A Business Meeting," "A Gentle Jury," "An Interrupted Proposal," "Her Deaf Ear," etc.

Ten females. Costumes modern; scenery unnecessary. Plays thirty minutes. A good-humored and amusing satire of this institution suited for performance by middle-aged as well as young ladies. Can be made very amusing by the introduction of local points, as in all such entertainments. All the parts are good and of nearly equal opportunity. Well recommended.

Price, 15 cents

MAIDS OF ALL NATIONS

An Entertainment in One Scene

By Maude Burbank

Author of "A Pan of Fudge," etc.

Fifteen females, one male. Costumes of the nations; scene, the usual tableau arrangements. A pleasant variation of the "Bachelor's Reverie" introducing fifteen pretty girls in the costumes of as many nations. Plays thirty minutes. Recommended for its simplicity and picturesqueness. Its one male character may speak or not, as preferred, and may be played by a girl if desired.

Price, 15 cents

New Entertainments

OUR CHURCH FAIR A Farcical Entertainment in Two Acts

By Jessie A. Kelley

Twelve females. Costumes modern; scenery unimportant. Plays an hour and a quarter. A humorous picture of the planning of the annual church fair by the ladies of the sewing circle. Full of local hits and general human nature, and a sure laugh-producer in any community. Can be recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

MRS. ROBERTS, <i>who wants to be president.</i>	MRS. LAWSON, <i>plump.</i>
MRS. HENRY, <i>young, giddy, fond of novels.</i>	MRS. BROWN, <i>anxious to get new church attendants.</i>
MRS. JACKSON, <i>the president of the society.</i>	MRS. ADDISON, <i>very inquisitive.</i>
MRS. BRETT, <i>on the dinner committee.</i>	MRS. RIDGELY, <i>sensitive.</i>
MRS. LEWIS, <i>the minister's wife.</i>	MRS. OTIS, <i>on the dinner committee.</i>
	MRS. THOMPSON, <i>decidedly close.</i>
	MRS. DREW, <i>just married.</i>

THE RIVAL CHOIRS

An Entertainment in One Scene

By Sherman F. Johnson

Seven males, four females. Costumes eccentric; scenery unimportant. Plays one hour. A novelty in musical entertainments, introducing the old choir and the new in competition. A novel setting for a concert, offering an interesting contrast between the old music and the new. Lots of incidental fun, character and human nature. Sure to please. Originally produced in Meriden, Conn.

Price, 25 cents

A THIEF IN THE HOUSE

A Comedy in One Act

By R. M. Robinson

Six males, one playing a female character (colored). Costumes modern scenery, an interior. Plays forty-five minutes. A first-class play for male characters only, of strong dramatic interest with plenty of comedy. A play that can be recommended, in spite of its lack of female characters, to any audience.

Price, 25 cents

A. W. Pinero's Plays

Price, 50 Cents Each

THE MAGISTRATE Farce in Three Acts. Twelve males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interior. Plays two hours and a half.

THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH Drama in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE PROFLIGATE Play in Four Acts. Seven males, five females. Scenery, three interiors, rather elaborate; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS Farce in Three Acts. Nine males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY Play in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

SWEET LAVENDER Comedy in Three Acts. Seven males, four females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE TIMES Comedy in Four Acts. Six males, seven females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE WEAKER SEX Comedy in Three Acts. Eight males, eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening.

A WIFE WITHOUT A SMILE Comedy in Three Acts. Five males, four females. Costumes, modern; scene, a single interior. Plays a full evening.

Sent prepaid on receipt of price by

R Company
on, Massachusetts

One copy del. to Cat. Div.

AUG 7 1911



The William Warren Edition of Plays

Price, 15 Cents Each

AS YOU LIKE IT Comedy in Five Acts. Thirteen males, four females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

CAMILIE Drama in Five Acts. Nine males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

INGOMAR Play in Five Acts. Thirteen males, three females. Scenery varied; costumes, Greek. Plays a full evening.

MARY STUART Tragedy in Five Acts. Thirteen males, four females, and supernumeraries. Costumes, of the period; scenery, varied and elaborate. Plays a full evening.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE Comedy in Five Acts. Seventeen males, three females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery varied. Plays a full evening.

RICHELIEU Play in Five Acts. Fifteen males, two females. Scenery elaborate; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

THE RIVALS Comedy in Five Acts. Nine males, five females. Scenery varied; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER Comedy in Five Acts. Fifteen males, four females. Scenery varied; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL Comedy in Five Acts. Ten males, three females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

Sent prepaid on receipt of price by

Walter D. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts