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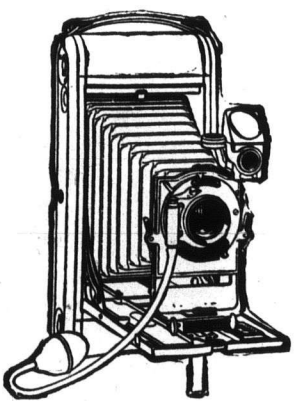
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in the shabby gown, ministered patiently to the many fretful demands of the querulous old father. He sat now before a cheerful fire in gown and slippers, while his daughter stood before him ready to go forth. The wind had changed and a cold, fine rain was falling.

"Is there anything more you want, father," she asked, "before I go?" "Nothin', Cordelia, unless—with a wheedling look and accent, "you can spare me a leetle, just a leetle money." "I can't, father," she replied. "I've only carfare for to-night."

His face hardened. He was in that stage of recovery where the slightest opposition irritates and embitters. He raised his hand, and she knew the old anathema was about to break forth. "Don't father," she whispered, brokenly. "I couldn't stand it to-night." And she went out quickly. He delivered himself of his declamation to the empty air.

Presently, however, sitting before the fire he fell to reflecting. An expression of mingled cunning and cupidity gradually stole over his face. "I want money," he muttered. "She wants money. She said so. I'll get money for us both." And he began hastily to attire himself in his rusty old suit for the street.

"She shall have all she wants," he muttered as he crawled down the stairs, "if she is a thankless child; and I—I'll take one drink, just one drink—good whisky."

"Go," she panted, with ashen face and wide-opened eyes. "Go. Not that way. The way you came—through the side door. Go! go!"

Shaking, palsied, with the dazed, frightened wonder still upon his face, and his eyes, as though fascinated, fixed upon that rigid figure of Justice, the old man backed through the curtains at the opposite end of the room and out from sight. When he was quite gone a shiver seemed to strike the slender, upright figure. She trembled in every limb. Then, with an effort, she stooped and picked up the glittering thing lying coiled like a snake at her feet. And at that instant the maid, bearing the cup of hot bouillon, entered the room.

Three minutes later when an irate manager, frantic at the unlooked-for stage wait, rushed back for explanations he found in the prima donna's dressing room a voluble French maid, a discreetly hysterical leading lady and a mixed chorus, all talking excitedly at random. In their midst, standing straight and silent, stood Cordelia.

The manager was a man for emergencies. "You say she tried to steal this"—to the maid. "Very well, you need not lament, since you have lost nothing"—to the prima donna. "And you"—to Cordelia—"will finish the performance and then consider yourself discharged. Now all of you get on. The stage is waiting."

An instant later the glittering band



The New Way

It was near the close of the first act of "Prince Popalanii." The prima donna, as usual, had been vociferously encored and with her usual set smile of surprise, though she would have been in a violent rage had the arrangements for said encore been omitted, was preparing to give a repetition of her famous song. It was just at this time also that her maid always went for the cup of hot bouillon, which the extra exertion of the prima donna always demanded after this act. The chorus were already in the wings awaiting their cue. Cordelia, who had complained of headache and had remained aloft as long as possible, was just coming down the last flight of stairs. With her foot on the last step, which terminated at one side of the prima donna's dressing room, she paused. A little gasp strangled in her throat, and for a moment everything whirled in chaos.

It was a great gala night, and the prima donna in honor of the event had worn all her famous diamonds. A necklace whose clasp had been found defective had been left hurriedly on the dressing table. The maid, going forth for the hot bouillon, had forgotten it, and the door was ajar.

Before this gleaming, glittering thing, with back to the door, stood a stooping figure—a man's figure. One trembling hand reached out and clutched the string of diamonds, which cornuscated madly in the shaking fingers. The next moment, as the figure turned, the necklace slipped to the floor and lay quivering as though instinct with life at his feet, while old King Lear faced his daughter.

burst upon the gaze of the waiting and slightly impatient audience, Cordelia at their head, erect and graceful. Only once had she flinched. That was when, turning from the dressing-room door, she had found the eyes of the people's idol fixed upon her, and he had moved aside, without a word to let her pass.

The prima donna also saw him and smiled to herself. "Guess he'll look no more in that direction," she thought; and tossed the recovered necklace into its casket, well content.

Upstairs in the dressing room King Lear's daughter looked at herself in the cracked glass half curiously. Yes, she was still the same as before this horrible thing had befallen her. Or, no—not quite the same. She looked pale under all the rouge. She put on more rouge. There was a bit of cosmetic that had rubbed from her eyelash upon her cheek. She carefully removed the black speck and patched up the defective eyelash. To the buzz and suppressed whisperings in the room she was as deaf as though graven from stone. A few of the girls—not many, for she had had few enemies among them—removed their small belongings with ostentation beyond her reach. She never saw them. She saw only one pair of eyes that had looked upon her in her shame and disgrace and believed her guilty. That was enough.

It was all over at last. The audience had departed, laughing and chattering. What did it know of dramas behind the scenes? She passed out of the room in silence and came slowly down the stairs. She stopped for one swift second where she had stood the evening be-

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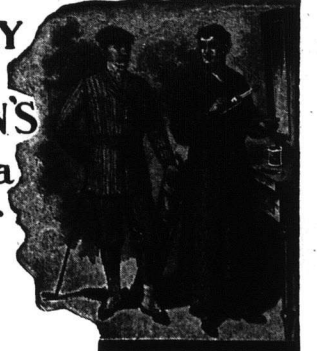
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