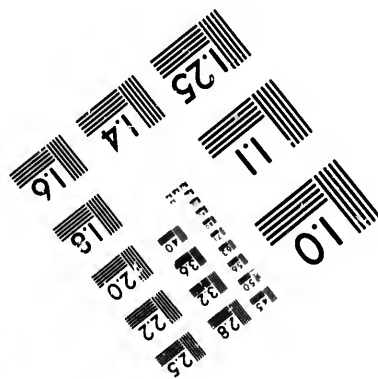
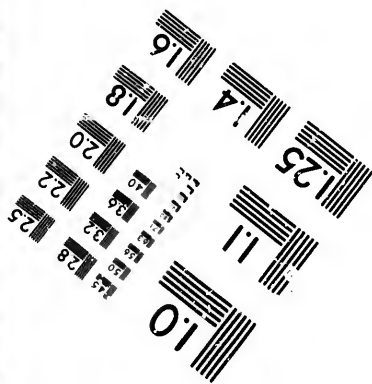
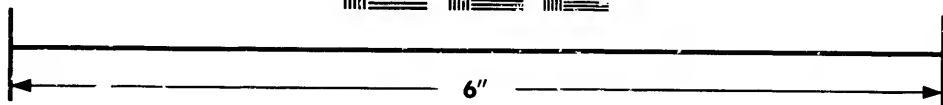
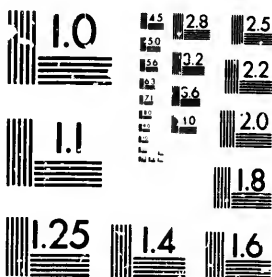


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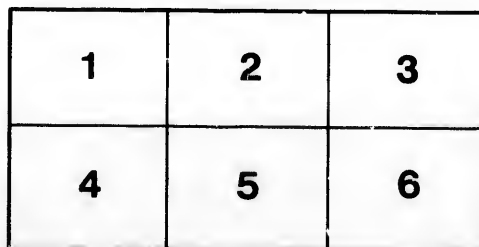
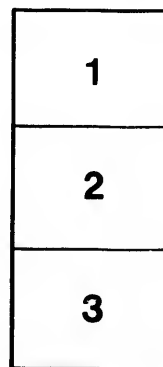
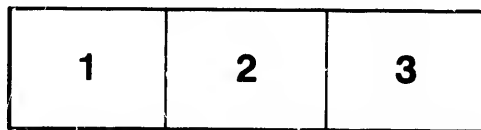
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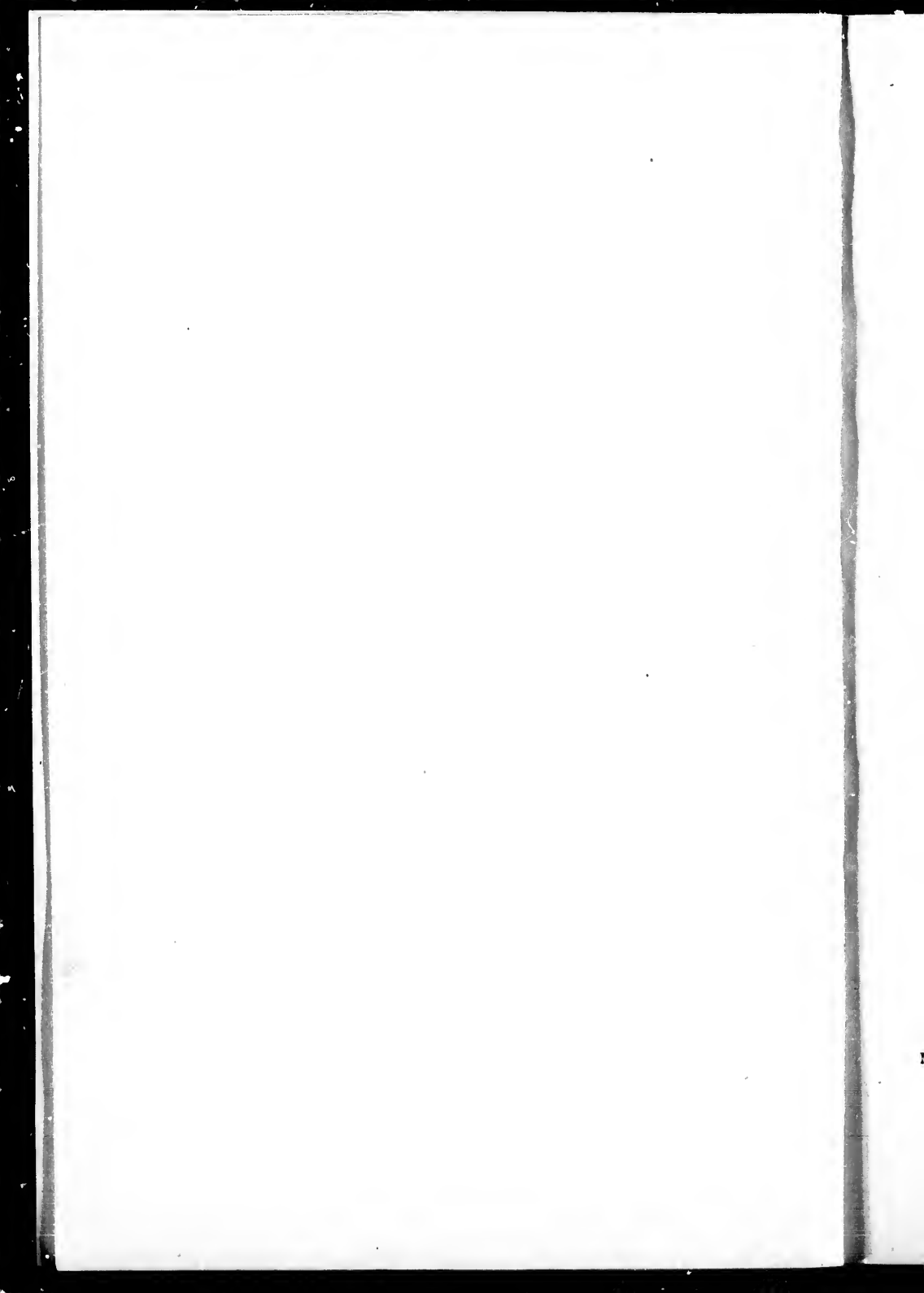
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“GOOD TIMES”

A BOOK OF

DIALOGUES FOR SCHOOL
ENTERTAINMENTS.



By E. WEAVER.



TORONTO:
WILLIAM BRIGGS.

MONTREAL: C. W. COATES. | HALIFAX: S. F. HUESTIS.

1889.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE dialogues contained in this book are designed especially for use in Sunday-school and School Entertainments, therefore as much variety as possible has been given both to subject and style, that they may be suitable for young people and children of all ages.

It will be found that before each of the dialogues there is a list of the characters concerned, and suggestions as to the dresses and articles required to represent the scene. In cases which present any difficulty in this respect, careful descriptions have been given to enable the scholars to contrive dresses, etc., for themselves. In most of the dialogues, however, ordinary garments will be sufficient, and though suggestions as to the dress of each character are given, they are intended rather as an aid to the scholar's thorough comprehension of the scene, than as directions which must be exactly carried out.

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“GOOD TIMES.”

THE LORD OF THE “OPEN HAND.”

PAGE
Scenes. 5

PART I.—(In Two Scenes.)

CHARACTERS.

“ 20 SIR LANCELOT, the Lord of the Open Hand.
ELEANOR, his daughter.
“ 30 A LITTLE BOY, son to Sir Lancelot.
“ 41 THE WISE LADY OF ST. ALDRED'S.
“ 52 MAUDELYN and KATE.
“ 61 SIR GRENVILLE, friend to Sir Lancelot.
“ 71 SERVANTS, POOR WOMEN and CHILDREN.

PART II.—(In Two Scenes.)

“ 76 LANCELOT DELAMERE, a descendant of Sir Lancelot.
“ 86 MRS. DELAMERE, his mother.
“ 92 MARY, his sister, and other girls and boys.
“ 96 THE WISE LADY OF ST. ALDRED'S.
“ 99 GHOST OF SIR LANCELOT.

DRESSES.

SIR LANCELOT, in Scene I., must have a short, close-fitting jerkin of light blue; short, full trousers of the same colour; white hose, reaching to the knee; and tan-coloured boots, with pointed toes and loose tops, falling down about the ankle. He must also have a short cloak of brown or tan-colour, worn on one shoulder; a small blue cap, adorned with white feathers and a gold brooch; a ruff round his neck, narrow ruffles at his wrists, and several gold chains and ornaments.

SIR GRENVILLE should be dressed in the same fashion, but in different colours—such as pink and sage green.

THE SERVANTS must wear brown hose, and doublets (belted round the waist and reaching nearly to the knee), slashed and ornamented with yellow. Low shoes, and brown caps, adorned with their master's device—the "open hand"—in yellow. The device should also be worked upon the fronts of the doublets.

THE WISE LADY OF ST. ALDRED'S should wear a black robe, with close-fitting sleeves, loosely confined about the waist by a girdle. Her head should be covered by a flowing black veil, at the corners of which should be symbolical characters in silver. In Part II., her dress must be covered, at first, by an old shawl, and she must stoop like an old woman.

THE WOMEN must be dressed in dark, short petticoats, and jackets, much the worse for wear; heavy shoes, and hoods without curtains. Some may wear dark plain cloaks, and others handkerchiefs pinned round their necks. The children should be dressed in the same style as the women, if girls, and like the serving-men, only more plainly, if boys.

In Scene II. SIR LANCELOT must wear a loose, shabby robe, trimmed with old fur, if possible, and a black skull-cap. His face should be much marked with lines and wrinkles, and the hollows round his eyes should be darkened to give him a haggard and miserly appearance. If his hair is slightly powdered, it will be an improvement. The same dress will do for his last appearance as ghost.

ELEANOR should wear a petticoat of black under a gray stuff kirtle, open in front; a pointed bodice, laced up the front and stiffened with whalebone; close-fitting sleeves, with puffings at the shoulder; a small ruff; and a hood-shaped cap of black velvet, with a "frontlet" of white lace.

In the second part, all the characters are in ordinary but extremely plain dress, except the "Wise Lady" and "Sir Lancelot's ghost," whose attire has already been described.

In the first scene, Sir Lancelot, Sir Grenville, and the retainers, should be dressed as handsomely as possible; but a very good effect may be produced with gilt paper, and sateen or other cotton materials.

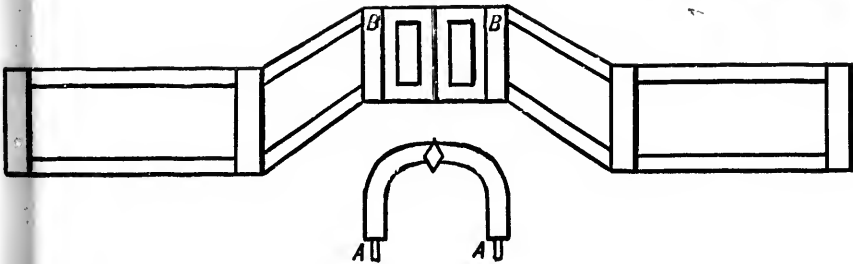
SCENES, ETC.

Part I., Scene I.—A gateway. (See note.) Articles needed : Branches of evergreens, etc.

Scene II.—A bare-looking room. Articles needed : Table, chairs, etc., as old-fashioned in make as possible. Imitation money-bag ; copper coins.

Part II., Scene I.—A plainly-furnished room. Articles needed : Teapot, cups, bread, etc.

Scene II.—The same gateway as in the first scene. Articles needed : Same as in Scene I. Moss ; moneybag ; blue-fire or spirits.



NOTE.—The gateway may be made by covering a very light wooden framework with gray paper, roughly outlined in black to represent stones. It should be of a sufficient height to conceal any one standing behind it, and may be made in three pieces, for convenience, of the shapes shown in the accompanying diagram.

The points of the arch (A A) should be arranged to fit into staples at B B. It

will thus hold the whole structure together. Boughs of evergreens (the larger the better) may be fastened behind the wall and at its ends, as shown in the illustration. In the last scene, a little moss on the archway and the walls would give it a more ancient appearance. In this scene the platform should be rather dark until the gate opens and the blue-fire is burned, which should be so managed that the light will fall principally on Sir Lancelot. The person attending to it must be behind the gateway.

PART I.

SCENE I.—(*An arched gateway.*)

(*Curtain rises on a group of ragged women and children waiting outside the gate. Distant sounds of music, laughter, and shouts of "Long live Sir Lancelot," "Long live the Lord of the 'Open Hand.'"*)

MAUDELYN (*scornfully*)—Listen, yonder! My lord makes merry, while we wait here in the cold.

KATE—Ay! ay! 'tis ever so! The rich are generous to those who have their fill of all good things. 'Tis only from the empty they turn away.

(*The laughter and shouting within the gate come nearer.*)

MAUDELYN—Listen! Sir Lancelot is coming forth at last. But I fear me much he will take no heed of us or our woes.

(*The gate is thrown open, with a cry of "Room for Sir Lancelot and his noble guests." Sir Lancelot comes forth, followed by his gaily-dressed friends and retainers. The women and children drop on their knees.*)

MAUDELYN—We pray you of your mercy, my good lord, give us bread. We are starving here at your gates—we and our husbands and children. Help us, noble Sir Lancelot—oh, help us!

SIR LANCELOT—Good women, let us pass.

MAUDELYN (*grasping his cloak*)—Nay, my lord, not till you grant us our petition. I tell you we are dying—starving to death!

THE OTHER WOMEN AND CHILDREN—Ay! that we are, my lord.

MAUDELYN (*earnestly*)—Oh, my lord, perchance it seems a slight thing to you—for you know naught of want or hunger!—yet listen! for the love of mercy, listen! and we will bless you all our days.

SIR LANCELOT (*impatiently*)—Let go my cloak; I am in haste, woman! What mean ye by these daily gatherings at my gate? I promise you, I shall hold you for idle and shiftless wenches, an you waste your time in this fashion.

MAUDELYN—Would you have us go hence to die of want, my lord?

SIR LANCELOT (*angrily*)—What is all this to me? Can I change bad harvests and ill times? Get you gone, I command you, on the instant, or I will presently have you driven forth!

WOMEN AND CHILDREN (*together*)—Noble Sir Lancelot, good Sir Lancelot, give us bread!

SIR LANCELOT (*to his friends*)—Was ever mortal man so plagued and harassed heretofore. Day or night I cannot leave my gates, but mine ears are besieged with the clamours and prayers of these women, who, by my knightly faith, are so lazy that they cannot content themselves to work, but must needs have their bread given them for the asking.

SIR GRENVILLE—And were I their lord, I would have them scourged from the gates, before they should deafen mine ears with their clamour.

SIR LANCELOT (*roughly*)—Rise up, one and all of you.

Should I find you here on the morrow, I promise you, as I am your liege lord and master, I will bid my knaves scourge you right soundly.

(Enter the "Wise Lady of St. Aldred's," who takes up her position beside the women, and stands with her eyes fixed on Sir Lancelot while he speaks.)

SIR LANCELOT—What, Maudelyn, do you still dare to stop my way? Let go my cloak! *(drawing it violently from her hand.)* Dare you defy me? Get you home; tempt me no further, or it will be the worse for you. *(Pauses, then calls in a louder tone.)* How now, my men, clear me the way! Will you stand by and see your lord mocked at and scorned by a score of women and children?

(The men hesitate, and the Wise Lady takes a step forward and raises her hand in warning.)

WISE LADY—Touch them not. I forbid you—I—the Wise Lady, whom ye all know and dread!

SIR LANCELOT—What, my men! did you not hear my bidding? Make haste, clear the way; it befits me not to stand dallying here at the pleasure of mine own tenantry.

(The men step forward again, but their eyes are still fixed on the Wise Lady, and, at her command, they draw back.)

WISE LADY—Forbear, men. If but one of these defenceless women be hurt or injured, you shall learn what it is to incur the anger of her of St. Aldred's. Be still, and hearken!

SIR LANCELOT *(furiously)*—Come, come, my men! this passes a jest. Know that I will suffer none of you to presume to disobey my commands! Who is she, this same lady, who dares to put herself between me and my knaves?

SIR GRENVILLE *(in a low voice)*—Sure, good my lord, I

wonder not that even your servitors, stout knaves as they be, should fear to cross the will of the Lady of St. Aldred's. Men say she has more than mortal power, that she can read the stars, and foretell the future. I, myself, though I am neither faintheart nor craven, should yet think twice ere I did that which she forbade.

SIR LANCELOT—I have heard of her, but I have ever held her as an arrant and frontless impostor, who deceiveth the silly and the unlearned for her own advantage.

SIR GRENVILLE (*with a glance at the lady*)—Hist, my good friend, you will but anger her the more!

SIR LANCELOT—What care *I* for that? I will not be dand and derided by yon base herd! They cry for bread, forsooth, but, by my good sword, I will put them beyond the need of bread an they dare to stay here much longer!

WISE LADY (*in a tone of entreaty*)—My lord, listen to their prayer. They ask nought but what is just and right. Listen, I pray thee, while thou hast the power to aid them. Have mercy, as thou wouldst receive mercy in thine own hour of utmost extremity!

SIR LANCELOT—I have answered them—and let me tell you, lady, that I brook no interference in mine own matters from high or low, from rich or poor! I hold that I am fittest to manage my own concerns! Get you hence, therefore, and forbear to join these foolish dames in their idle and bootless supplications.

WISE LADY (*to the women*)—Rise up; kneel to him no more! His heart is turned to stone.

(The women rise from their knees.)

WISE LADY (*to Sir Lancelot*)—My lord, henceforth I leave you to manage your own matters as you may. But

hearken now; hear your doom! You have loved your gold too well to part with it to those who die for need of food—henceforward, year by year, your love will grow into a passion. To spend your money will become a harder thing than spending your life-blood. Your heart will harden, to your friends, your kindred—nay, to your very self, until, at length, in the midst of heaped-up wealth, you shall pine away of hunger, and die from very want of bread. (*She pauses, and Sir Lancelot trembles.*)

WISE LADY (*looking far away into the distance*)—Oh! woe of woes! The curses of the poor shall linger about your house and cling to your name, long after your body is turned again to dust. Ay! when your halls are in ruins, your wealth lost, and your lordship but a memory, the "open hand" shall still seem to men the symbol of aught but generosity. The sight of it shall rouse them to scoff and scorn at the hollow mockeries and vain pretensions of the wealthy. (*She pauses once more.*) Oh! woe and sorrow! Naught but woe and sorrow on you and all your name! As far as mine eyes can see through the darkness of futurity there is naught for you but misery, poverty, and grovelling love of gold!

(*She turns away as she finishes speaking, and signs to the women to follow her, while Sir Lancelot and his train stand gazing after her as if petrified.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE II.—(*A bare room.*)

(*Curtain rises on Sir Lancelot sitting at a table counting piles of money. There is a loud sound of knocking at the door.*)

SIR LANCELOT—Who is there?

(*A voice from without*)—'Tis I, Eleanor. Let me come in, father!

SIR LANCELOT (*impatiently*)—I am busy. I will come out to you presently.

ELEANOR—Come out now, father! Make haste; my mother is sick. Cannot you let me speak to you, at least?

SIR LANCELOT (*beginning to put his money hastily into some bags by the table*)—Be patient, Eleanor, for a moment! I cannot attend to you now.

ELEANOR (*knocking again, and calling*)—Oh, father! father! open the door! My mother is dying, I fear!

SIR LANCELOT (*hiding his gold in a corner*)—Well! well! child; I am making all the haste I can.

(*Opens the door. Enter Eleanor.*)

ELEANOR—Oh! father. I fear me much my mother will die.

SIR LANCELOT—What hath happened to her? What do you desire of me?

ELEANOR—'Tis want of food, father. The physician says so; he does, indeed. Oh, give me enough to buy what will make her well!

SIR LANCELOT—The physician lies to you! Your mother has wanted for nothing, as you know full well, throughout her long sickness.

ELEANOR—Nay, not so, father. She hath had neither food nor medicine. Oh! do not let her die.

SIR LANCELOT—*I* let her die. What mean you, girl?

ELEANOR—Give me money to buy what I need for her!

SIR LANCELOT—Have I not told you that I have none? I am poor. My tenants rob me!

ELEANOR—Cannot you give me something? I know that naught is wrong with my mother but shortness of food,

SIR LANCELOT—I gave you money yesterday, girl! What hath been done with that?

ELEANOR—It was but two pence, father. It hath gone in bread. 'Tis no use—I cannot keep the house with naught. Oh, father! the little ones break my heart with crying to me for food!

SIR LANCELOT—Well, well, child, we must do the best we can (*feels in his pocket*). Here is something! Take it and go. Leave me in peace. (*He holds out a copper coin or two.*)

ELEANOR (*looking at, but not taking, it*)—Father! I *must* and will have more than that. We cannot be so poor as that.

SIR LANCELOT—What! are my own children against me also? Hath it came to this, that my daughter dares to say I lie to her?

ELEANOR—I did not say so, father; but I must speak the truth now. I am as sure as sure can be, that you could give me more than that. We used to have everything we needed. Now—we are hungry—shabby—friendless!

SIR LANCELOT—Ay! ay! Eleanor; gay friends are not for poor folks such as we.

ELEANOR—You have changed more than they, father. 'Tis not so many years since you would have thought the garb you wear, and the fare you live on, too poor for our meanest servitor!

SIR LANCELOT (*looking at his dress*)—Perchance it is somewhat the worse for wear.

ELEANOR (*suddenly*)—Father, what were you doing when I knocked at the door, but now?

SIR LANCELOT (*hesitating*)—I—I—I—was—looking to the accounts of our expenditure. The household is conducted on somewhat too extravagant a scale, methinks.

ELEANOR (*wearily*)—To live at all, we needs must have a crumb now and again. We shall never live more cheaply, father, till we find rest in our graves. (*Pauses, then adds*)—But I know—I *know!* that you are wronging us all. I heard the chink of money! Oh, father, father! I will have more than that! (*Pointing scornfully to the coins in his hand.*)

SIR LANCELOT (*angrily*)—Do you dare to watch and spy upon me, girl?

(*Eleanor makes no answer, but looking about, sees the concealed bag in the corner, quietly crosses the room, and begins to untie the string that fastens it, before Sir Lancelot recovers himself.*)

SIR LANCELOT—Eleanor! Eleanor! What are you doing? (*He takes her by the shoulder, and shakes her. She rises to her feet, and confronts him, holding something firmly in her hand. He seizes her by the wrists, exclaiming loudly.*)

SIR LANCELOT—Thief! Thief!

ELEANOR—I am no thief, father! Look at that heap of gold, and dare to call me so again! Oh, father! father, why cannot we be happy as we used to be? What good can yon gold do you, if you keep it hidden away?

(*Enter a little boy, hastily.*)

CHILD—Oh, Eleanor! Come to mother; she is crying and wants you.

(*Eleanor passes her father, looking him defiantly in the face, and leaves the room, with the child. Sir Lancelot follows and makes fast the door, and then takes his bag of gold to the table and begins to count it again, muttering to himself.*)

SIR LANCELOT (*aloud*)—Thirty-two, thirty-three! She

must have taken at least a handful. Thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine. Oh, I would I had had the wit to stop her! A handful of gold pieces! Lost, lost! I shall never so much as see them again, I warrant me! Stolen by mine own daughter! Alack! alack! I would I had taken better order with her when she was younger! She hath no idea of the value of money!

(Curtain falls.)

PART II.

SCENE I.—*(An ill-furnished sitting-room.)*

(Curtain rises on Lancelot Delamere, his mother, brothers, and sisters, seated round a table, on which an extremely scanty meal is roughly arranged.)

LANCELOT *(cutting himself a piece of very dry bread)*—I know we are poor enough, mother, but surely we are not absolutely obliged to live on such prison-fare as this! Dry bread and hot water is hard lines after a good day's work!

MRS. DELAMERE—Hot water, indeed! The tea is stronger than necessary, I can tell you, Lancelot. I was just saying to Mary, as you came in, that she must only put half as much tea in the pot in future.

LANCELOT—The farm has done better this last year, mother; I wish you would let us live a little more decently. I am tired of slaving and pinching from morning to night. What good does it do us? Nothing ever prospers with us, however hard we work!

MARY—I wonder if it's true that our family is under a curse! I think it looks like it,

LANCELOT—It certainly does! I wish I knew how to break the spell. Do you know the story, mother?

MRS. DELAMERE—Yes, indeed! Your father told it to me fifty times, if he told it once. How old Sir Lancelot (that lived I don't know how many hundred years ago) died of starvation, and how his heirs could never find the least trace of all the money he had saved, though he had been saving all his days. I am tired to death of hearing of it!

MARY—Was the money ever found?

MRS. DELAMERE—They say not; but very likely it's only a tale from first to last.

LANCELOT—I don't think so. My father said, many a time, that if every one had his rights, that most of the land round about would belong to him.

MRS. DELAMERE—I know. He always seemed to take a great deal of comfort out of the thought that his ancestors had been so rich and grand, but I don't see much comfort in it. It's all gone years and years ago, and is certain never to come back again.

LANCELOT—Mr. Nestham was telling me a curious story about it last night. He says that the old lord, Sir Lancelot, was rather extravagant than otherwise in his youth, but that he was a hard man, who, come what would, would never help the poor.

MRS. DELAMERE—Mr. Nestham is always talking of charity, and generosity, and such fine things. I have heard him tell that story before, but I wonder how much he would do for the poor if he were in our place.

MARY—What is the story, Lancelot?

LANCELOT—Only this. One day, the old lord found a crowd of women and children at the gate, who begged him to help them. He grew angry, however, and was sending

them away when a strange-looking lady, dressed all in black, with curious signs embroidered on her veil, stopped him and said that he would come to grudge himself food and clothing as he grudged it them, and that he would die of starvation!

MARY—And *did* he die of starvation?

LANCELOT—Yes, so the story goes; and Mr. Nestham says that there has never been one of the family since, but was as miserly as the old lord himself.

MARY—What a horrid thing to say!—to you, too!

LANCELOT—Well, Mary, I'm afraid it's true enough.

MARY—But what can we do—we are so poor?

MRS. DELAMERE—Lancelot, do you intend to go to see Mr. Marks to-night, or shall you leave it until to-morrow?

LANCELOT—I'll go now, mother. It isn't a very bad night!

(All rise from the table. Exit Lancelot.)

(Curtain falls.)

SCENE II.—*(The same gateway as in Part I.)*

(Curtain rises on an old woman, bent and lame, crouching by the gate on the ground.)

(Enter Lancelot walking quickly and whistling.)

OLD WOMAN *(rising and speaking in a pleading tone)*—Good evening to you, sir. I beg and pray that, for mercy's sake, you will give me something, to buy me a crust and a night's lodging. I am old and feeble and footsore! Have pity on me, oh! have pity!

LANCELOT *(hesitating)*—I am very poor, good mother!

OLD WOMAN—But scarcely so poor as I. I have no bread to eat—no roof over my head!

LANCELOT—No! I am not quite so badly off as that.

OLD WOMAN—Then help me—for you can. I ask little, but if you really know what it is to be poor, you will not refuse me that.

LANCELOT (*putting a small piece of silver in her hand*)—I fear this is too small to help you much, but it is all I have to give.

OLD WOMAN (*letting fall her staff and cloak, and standing straight up*)—My blessing on you, fair son! the blessing of the poor and needy!

LANCELOT (*looking at her in surprise*)—Thank you, lady, for your blessing; but who are you?

WISE LADY—I am her who was once called the Wise Lady of St. Aldred’s.

LANCELOT—The Lady of St. Aldred’s! then it was you who pronounced the sentence of the awful punishment that came on my ancestor?

WISE LADY—It was I; and I, who then foretold doom and sorrow to his race, now undertake the happier task of telling you of coming joy and blessing. I spoke to Lancelot (most inappropriately called “Lord of the ‘Open Hand’”), and I foretold naught but misery and want and sorrow. It was not given me to know that one of his race should rise above the shame and sorrow of niggard grasping and hoarding! Oh, young man, I feared for one moment that even you would be unable to shake off the hideous curse of your house! I dreaded to hear you say the words that would have doomed you to Sir Lancelot’s fate! I feared you intended to refuse to aid me.

LANCELOT—I did, indeed, hesitate, lady, for I am very poor.

WISE LADY—Nay, you are poor no longer. Be brave,

fear nothing, and you shall be Sir Lancelot's heir. Throw back the gate!

LANCELOT—I have tried to do so many times, but the lock is strong, and I cannot.

WISE LADY—Do it now. I bid you! The lock will yield, if you dare face what is behind it.

(Lancelot throws back the gate, with a great effort, and as he does so a ghastly gleam of light shines from behind the wall, and the figure of the old lord, Sir Lancelot, comes into the light, bending beneath a heavy bag, which he carries on one shoulder. He drops it at Lancelot's feet with a horrid cry. The old lord disappears, the light goes out, and the gate shuts with a bang.)

WISE LADY—Use the gold wisely, and generously—never forget to share it with the poor—and it shall bring a blessing as rich and as long-enduring as the curse that fell on Sir Lancelot was heavy and hard to bear. Be—in deed as in name—him of the "Open Hand."

(Curtain falls.)

End of "THE LORD OF THE OPEN HAND."

ONLY A COUSIN.

(In Four Scenes.)

CHARACTERS.

MR. LEE, a rich old farmer.

MRS. LEE, his wife.

MINNIE, their daughter.

RALPH MORTON, }
ALLAN MORTON, } Cousins to Minnie.

JOHN SOMERS, MISS DAVIES, MAGGIE, MARY, ARTHUR and others,
friends to the above.

DRESSES.

MR. LEE must have gray hair and a gray beard, and should be dressed in a loose, comfortable style, suitable to a well-to-do farmer.

MRS. LEE must wear a dark dress, a cap, white apron, and spectacles.

MINNIE, in Scene III., must have some sort of white garment. In the other scenes she should be dressed as brightly and prettily as possible. The other girls should also be dressed gaily.

SCENES.

Scene I.—A country sitting-room. Articles needed: Furniture and ornaments, suitable to a farm-house.

Scene II.—Another sitting-room. Articles needed: Plain furniture, a book, and a letter.

Scene III.—A dimly lighted room. Articles needed: A couch covered with a white sheet. A table with a lamp upon it. Chairs, etc.

Scene IV.—A parlour. Articles needed: The same will do as in Scene I., but they must be differently arranged, as it is supposed to be a different room.

SCENE I.—(*A parlour.*)

(*Curtain rises on Minnie Lee, Allan Morton, and several other young men and girls seated in a semicircle.*)

MINNIE—Well, we mustn't keep him waiting any longer. What shall we have? Would his own watch-chain do?

ALLAN—I should think so. Can any one suggest anything better? If not, I will call him in!

MISS DAVIES—Oh, I should think that would do! Yes, call him in, Allan.

(*Allan rises and goes to the door.*)

ALLAN (*calling*)—Ralph! Ralph! we're ready now.

(*Enter Ralph Morton.*)

RALPH (*seating himself opposite the others*)—I am afraid it must be something dreadfully difficult; but if it is, you needn't expect me to guess.

SEVERAL (*speaking at once*)—Oh, it's as easy as possible.

RALPH—I hope it is. Where am I to begin?

MINNIE (*half-impatiently*)—Anywhere you like! Only do begin somewhere.

RALPH—Very well, Minnie! I ask you, is it animal?

MINNIE—No; it isn't.

RALPH—Is it vegetable, Miss Davies?

MISS DAVIES—No, Mr. Morton.

RALPH—Then it must be mineral! Is it in this room, Allan?

ALLAN—Yes.

RALPH—Is it useful, John?

JOHN SOMERS—I don't know; I suppose so.

RALPH—Is it ornamental, Maggie?

MAGGIE—Yes, Ralph, decidedly so.

RALPH—Does it belong to a gentleman, Mary?

MARY—Yes.

RALPH—Does it belong to—*me*, Arthur?

ARTHUR—Yes.

RALPH—Something ornamental, belonging to me. Is it my necktie?

MINNIE (*laughing*)—Do you call your necktie mineral, Ralph?

RALPH—No, of course not; I had forgotten. Is it my watch-chain?

TWO OR THREE (*together*)—Yes, it is.

MISS DAVIES—Well, now, I call that very clever of you, Mr. Morton, to find it out so soon. I never can see how people manage to guess the things they do.

ALLAN—Shall we have another turn at this, or shall we try something else?

MISS DAVIES—Well, mother told me to tell you that supper was ready, so will you come in?—and we will have another game afterwards. Allan, will you bring Mary?

RALPH—Minnie, may I have the pleasure of taking you in to supper?

MINNIE (*taking his arm*)—Certainly.

(*Exeunt all but Ralph and Minnie, who are the last of the procession. Ralph stops suddenly, as the others leave the room.*)

RALPH—Wait one minute, Minnie; I want to tell you something.

MINNIE (*drawing her hand away from his arm*)—But suppose I don't want to listen!

RALPH—I have been trying to speak to you for the past three or four days! Do listen to me, Minnie! I am going away to-morrow!

MINNIE—Yes! I knew that before. I am very hungry, Ralph. It surely wasn't worth your keeping me here just to say that!

RALPH—It wasn't only for that! I wanted to ask you, Minnie, whether you thought you could learn to like me in time!

MINNIE—Oh, that's greater nonsense than ever. I have liked you (just a little bit, you know!) ever since you were six years old.

RALPH—I want you to like me more than a "little bit."

MINNIE—Some people expect too much! I like you quite as well as most of my cousins. That ought to be enough! You shouldn't be selfish!

RALPH—But it isn't enough, Minnie. I am not selfish; but do tell me, do you love me Minnie?

MINNIE—If I said yes! what then? Not that I'm going to say it!

RALPH—Why, then, you would be engaged to me, I suppose!

MINNIE—Well, I don't love you, so I won't say yes! I only like you a little. You make a very good cousin, but I don't mean to be engaged to any one this long time.

RALPH—How long?

(Some one in the distance calls)—Minnie! Minnie!

MINNIE—Oh, for years and years. Listen, they're calling. If you won't come, I'll go myself.

(Enter Allan.)

ALLAN—What are you doing? Mrs. Davies sent me to ask Minnie if she wouldn't like something to eat?

MINNIE *(pettishly leaving Ralph and taking Allan's arm)*—Yes, I should. I'm dreadfully hungry, but Ralph would not come. *(Exit Allan and Minnie, followed by Ralph.)*

(Curtain falls.)

SCENE II.—*(Another sitting-room.)*

(Curtain rises on Ralph Morton, reading. Enter his friend John Somers.)

JOHN SOMERS—I called at the office, Morton, on my way here, and I got this for you. I hope there is no bad news? *(gives him a black-edged letter).*

RALPH *(looking at the writing on it)*—It is my mother's writing.

(Opens it; reads; and exclaims)—How very dreadful! Poor little Minnie!

JOHN SOMERS—What has happened? What is the matter?

RALPH—Minnie is dead!

JOHN SOMERS—What! your cousin Minnie! She was well enough at Christmas, wasn't she?

RALPH—Yes. It is dreadfully sudden. She was well up to yesterday morning they think. But I will read what my mother says.

(*Reads*)—MY DEAR RALPH,—You will be terribly shocked to hear my sad news. Your cousin, Minnie Lee, died very suddenly to-day. She did not seem quite well in the morning, but no one thought it was anything serious. Come home at once.

JOHN SOMERS—How very sad for her father and mother! She was their only child, was she not?

RALPH—Yes, they both thought all the world of her. I wonder if I can catch the two o'clock train home!

JOHN SOMERS—I think you can, if you are quick. Suppose I go round and tell Mr. Dunham that you cannot be at the office this afternoon.

RALPH—I should be glad if you would. I have no time to lose, for if I miss the train I cannot get home to-night.
(*Exeunt both.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE III.

(*A dimly lighted room, with a white-covered couch, on which Minnie is lying in the shadow.*)

(*Curtain rises on Allan sitting in the darkest part of the room, beyond the bed, with his head bent down on his hands.*)

(*Ralph enters quietly, and stands looking down at Minnie, until Allan gives a low groan, and rises. Both start.*)

RALPH (*speaking softly*)—Allan! is that you?

ALLAN (*half fiercely*)—I did not know that you were here, Ralph! I will go!

RALPH—Uncle John told me to come, but why need you go?

ALLAN—Yes, I will; you have the best right to be here! I was only her cousin, but—she loved you!

RALPH—She never loved me, Allan. I was only a cousin, too.

ALLAN—I fancied that you were engaged to her.

RALPH—No, never!

ALLAN—But you had told her that you loved her, hadn't you?

RALPH (*in a low voice, with a look at the bed*)—I asked her to marry me!

ALLAN—Do you mean that you asked her to marry you, when you didn't love her? (*A pause.*) Answer me, Ralph. You don't mean to say that you pretended to care for her because she might be rich sometime? (*Another pause.*) Oh, Ralph, how could you deceive her so?

(*Ralph stands for a moment with his head bent down, then answers, without raising his eyes.*)

RALPH—It was not exactly pretence! I liked her better than most girls. How could I help thinking a little of the money, too? I meant no harm to her, Allan!

(*At this moment Minnie, whom all have supposed to be dead, gives a wild scream, and half rises from the couch. Ralph turns and rushes from the room with a cry of fear; at the same moment Mrs. Lee enters it, and takes her daughter in her arms; while Allan stands perfectly still, gazing at Minnie, as if stunned.*)

MRS. LEE (*kissing and crying over her*)—Oh, Minnie, my darling! my darling! Not dead, but alive.

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE IV.—(*A sitting-room.*)

(*Curtain rises on Mr. and Mrs. Lee.*)

MR. LEE—I am disappointed in the lad. I had thought better of him. He's a smarter fellow than Allan by a long way.

MRS. LEE (*angrily*)—He is too smart! Just fancy his telling Allan that he had never cared for our Minnie, but meant to marry her. I wonder he should ever have dared to show his face here again.

MR. LEE—Does he know that Minnie heard and understood all he said?

MRS. LEE.—Yes! I told him. How he could have the heart to talk like that over Minnie, when she lay there *dead* as he thought, passes my knowledge! Oh, I used to think that Ralph and Minnie were made for each other; now I'd sooner she married a beggar in the street than him.

MR. LEE—Hush! hush, wife! Try to forgive him; after all's said, he has done our little lass no harm!

MRS. LEE—No, but he might have done. If it had not been for that dreadful trance Minnie would have married him, I'm certain of it!

MR. LEE—Well, Mary, let us be thankful our child was spared to us; there is no need now to think of all that might have been.

MRS. LEE—Ah, but John, do you think Minnie has ever been the same since?

MR. LEE—Yes! indeed. She is brighter and bonnier

than ever, to my thinking! I am sure she has never been better than she has this last year.

MRS. LEE (*querulously*)—I hope she is well, but it has made me terribly anxious about her. She never was one to complain!

MR. LEE—I don't think Minnie thinks that there is much to complain of! She and Allan are very happy. It seems strange to me to think of our little Minnie getting married; I never seemed to see that she had grown up until the other day.

MRS. LEE—Oh dear! I don't know what I shall do when she is married.

MR. LEE—Now, Mary, don't be selfish, my dear, and spoil Minnie's happiness. Listen, I believe they are coming now! I hear them talking. I wonder if Ralph is with them.

MRS. LEE—I hope not. I wonder he can bring himself to face us.

MR. LEE—Now, wife, do try to be kind to him. Very likely you won't see him again for years!

MRS. LEE—What would you have, John? I'll be civil to him, I promise you! Won't that do?

MR. LEE—Remember he's your own sister's son after all.

MRS. LEE—Yes, and Jenny always spoiled her boys nicely. She thinks too much of them; Ralph especially.

MR. LEE—Well, if it hadn't been for what he said about Minnie, I should have thought he was a son any mother might be proud of.

MRS. LEE—Well, never mind that now, John. Here are Minnie and Allan!

(*Enter Minnie and Allan.*)

MINNIE—There is someone coming over the hill, father !
I think it must be Ralph !

MR. LEE—It's time he was here, I suppose.

(*A sound of knocking in the distance.*)

Listen ! he's at the door now.

(*Exit Mrs. Lee.*)

Well, Minnie, I hope you enjoyed your walk !

MINNIE (*demurely*)—Yes, father, very much.

(*Enter Mrs. Lee and Ralph.*)

RALPH (*shaking hands all round*)—How d'ye do, Uncle John ? How are you, Minnie ? Hello, Allan, you here !
(*Inaudible murmurs in response, followed by an awkward pause.*)

MR. LEE—I hope you had a pleasant journey, Ralph.

RALPH—Pretty fair, thank you, Uncle. I am sorry to find that I must go to Detroit to-night, so I haven't many minutes to spare. I didn't like to pass without calling, but—

MRS. LEE (*in a frigid tone*)—Won't you stay and take a cup of tea with us ?

MR. LEE (*heartily*)—Of course he will. Don't be nonsensical, Ralph. The morning train will do just as well for you.

RALPH—Thank you, Uncle, you are very kind, but I am absolutely obliged to go on to-night. In fact, I believe I ought to be starting now, if your clock is right ! My watch must have lost a little.

MRS. LEE—Yes, the clock is right, to my certain knowledge.

MR. LEE—Well, if you really must go, I'll walk down to the station with you.

RALPH (*rising and shaking hands again*)—Thank you, Uncle. Good-bye, Aunt Mary. Good-bye, Minnie.

MINNIE—Good-bye, Ralph. I hope you'll get on well out there.

MR. LEE—Of course he will. The West is the best place for young fellows like him!

RALPH (*hesitating and stumbling*)—Good-bye, Allan, I wish—you—I wish you—and Minnie—every—all possible joy!

ALLAN—Good-bye, Ralph, thanks for your good wishes!

MR. LEE—I wish you could have stayed over for the wedding, Ralph. You were always a great one for such doings. We are going to have a gay time, I can tell you!

RALPH—I wish I could, but (*hesitates, then adds quickly*)—Excuse me, I really *must* go. Good-bye again.

MINNIE, MRS. LEE AND ALLAN (*together*)—Good-bye, Ralph.

(*Exeunt Ralph and Mr. Lee.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

THE END.

MONEY'S WORTH.

(*In Three Scenes.*)

CHARACTERS.

MR. LAWRENCE, a rich old gentleman.

MR. MATTHEW LAWRENCE, cousin to Mr. Lawrence.

BESSIE,
NORAH, } Daughters of Mr. Matthew.

JOHN ASHFORD, who is engaged to Bessie.

DRESSES.

All may be dressed in ordinary clothes, but both Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Matthew should have gray hair and beards. In Scene II. Mr. Lawrence should have a white bandage round his head.

SCENES, ETC.

Scene I.—The waiting-room at a railway station. Articles needed: Benches, etc. Valises may be carried by Mr. Lawrence and John Ashford.

Scenes II. and III.—A plainly furnished sitting-room. Articles needed: Sofa, etc. In Scene II. a sponge and a stick.

SCENE I.—(*A waiting-room.*)

(*Curtain rises on Mr. Lawrence, muttering and grumbling to himself, and frowning over a handful of small coins.*)

(*Enter John Ashford.*)

ASHFORD—Hello! sir, what's the matter? Have you missed the train?

MR. LAWRENCE—No! no! the train will be an hour late, and that plaguing fellow has given me a bad twenty-five cent piece in my change. I tell him I'll report him to the company.

Ashford (*seating himself*)—Oh, well! perhaps he didn't notice it!

MR. LAWRENCE—Notice it, of course, he'd notice it. What was he doing with it at all, I should like to know, if he didn't mean to play someone a rascally, dishonest trick?

ASHFORD (*cheerfully*)—Well, Mr. Lawrence, it might have been worse. *You* can afford to lose twenty-five cents, if any one can.

MR. LAWRENCE (*impatiently*)—Yes! yes! young man, that's fine talking; but, let me tell you, if I had gone on

that principle I might be a beggar now ! There is nothing that is more easily lost than money.

ASHFORD—I never had much to do with it, sir, so I don't know so much about it as you do. What a care it must have been to you all these years !

MR. LAWRENCE—Yes, that is the way ; those that haven't it mock at those who have, and pretend they wouldn't be rich if they could ; but I know different. Men will cheat and lie, and flatter and fawn, and roll in the very dust for money. They talk of folks being poor and proud !—I never knew a poor man yet whose pride prevented him trying to get a share of my money.

ASHFORD (*quietly*)—Don't you think, sir, that you may be a little prejudiced on the subject ?

MR. LAWRENCE—Not I ; I have seen more of life than you !

ASHFORD—Then all I can say is that you must have been singularly unfortunate. I know plenty of poor people who would no more think of doing a mean thing to get money than you would, sir !

MR. LAWRENCE—Well, we don't need to quarrel ; I suppose we may both keep our own opinions. Which way are you going ?

ASHFORD—I am going to Hamilton ; I have business there that I must do before I go west.

MR. LAWRENCE—I did not know you were thinking of leaving this part of the country.

ASHFORD—I did not know, myself, until yesterday ; but I have just received the offer of a good situation in Winnipeg ; so I shall have to leave home by the 21st of this month.

MR. LAWRENCE—Do you know which is the best way to

get to Richley? It seems to be a very difficult place to get at!

ASHFORD—Your best plan will be to take the train to Exeter, and from there you can go to Richley by stage. I know that neighbourhood very well. I have some friends there. By the way, I wonder if they could be relations of yours—their name is Lawrence.

MR. LAWRENCE—Indeed! I really don't know. I had a cousin in this country, I believe, but it is years since I heard anything of him.

ASHFORD—Well, if Mr. Lawrence is your cousin, you should certainly go to see him. He is poor enough, but you won't find him either flattering you or cheating you—you may be sure of that. I think, if you knew him, you wouldn't say that all poor men would do anything for money.

(A great puffing and whistling is heard; the sound comes gradually nearer; bells ring, etc.)

MR. LAWRENCE—Here is the train at last. It hasn't been an hour late after all.

(Exeunt both.)

(Curtain falls.)

SCENE II.—*(A sitting-room.)*

(Curtain rises on Mr. Lawrence, lying on a sofa, with his head bound up with a white handkerchief.)

MR. LAWRENCE *(tossing about and groaning)*—Oh! O—o—oh! Oh! de—e—ear!

(Thumps violently on the floor with his stick.)

(Enter Norah.)

NORAH *(brightly)*—How do you do, sir? Did you knock? You look a great deal better to night!

MR. LAWRENCE—Look better! I don't feel so. Where is your sister?

NORAH—She is resting! I've come to get you whatever you want!

MR. LAWRENCE (*still groaning*)—Oh! You can't do anything.

NORAH—Why not? Shall I read to you?

MR. LAWRENCE—No! no! child!

NORAH—Would you like the medicine that the doctor left?

MR. LAWRENCE—I tell you, you can't do anything for me, except ask your sister to come.

NORAH—Why not let me try? If you will only find out what you want, I'll do my very best for you; I will, indeed. But really, I don't like to call Bessie. She has had no rest at all since they brought you in, last night.

MR. LAWRENCE—Oh, dear! this pain is dreadful!

NORAH (*sympathetically*)—I'm very sorry, sir.

MR. LAWRENCE (*sharply*)—Will you call your sister, when I ask you?

NORAH—If she could help you, I would; but you know she can't. I am sorry that you feel so bad (*Mr. Lawrence groans loudly and tumbles about*), but I think you might be a little more considerate.

(*Mr. Lawrence frowns and thumps with his stick again.*)

NORAH—You will make yourself worse, if you get so excited, sir.

(*Enter Bessie.*)

BESSIE—Why didn't you let me know that Mr. Lawrence wanted me, Norah?

NORAH—I thought you were tired.

MR. LAWRENCE—Send her away. She makes my head worse.

BESSIE—Norah, dear; go!

(*Exit Norah.*)

MR. LAWRENCE—Couldn't you do anything to ease the pain in my head? Oh dear, my foot aches so, and I am all bruises. The man must have been drunk. I'll have him prosecuted. Oh! oh!

BESSIE (*unfastening the bandage and bathing his head*)—There! you will feel easier directly.

MR. LAWRENCE—Do you think that doctor of yours is any use? I feel worse to-night.

BESSIE—We have great faith in Dr. Robinson; I think he will do you good. He says there is no cause for uneasiness. If you keep quiet and take care of yourself, you will be all right in a few days.

MR. LAWRENCE (*shortly*)—I don't believe him. A shock like that is a serious thing. It will take me weeks to get round again. I feel so weak and miserable, I don't know what to do.

(*Enter Mr. Matthew Lawrence.*)

MR. MATTHEW L.—Is he any better, Bessie?

BESSIE—I think so, father.

MR. LAWRENCE—I *don't* think so. The pain is worse. My head aches dreadfully.

MR. MATTHEW L.—Is there anything I can do? Shall I read to you?

MR. LAWRENCE—Oh, no; thanks! I couldn't possibly attend to reading.

MR. MATTHEW L.—The man that was driving you has just been up to inquire after you. He seemed very lame

himself. He was extremely sorry to hear that you were in such pain.

MR. LAWRENCE—Impudent scoundrel!

MR. MATTHEW L.—He says that his lines broke, and the horses got frightened, and, of course, became unmanageable. It is lucky for you the accident happened where it did. The ditch you were thrown into was bad enough, but it is nothing to the one at the bottom of the hill.

BESSIE—It seems curious you should happen to have met with an accident just here. I suppose you didn't know you had relations so close at hand?

MR. LAWRENCE—No! I wasn't sure where you lived. If ever I get round, I'll have that man prosecuted—pretending it was an accident, indeed! He was drunk; I am certain of it!

BESSIE—He never drinks, Mr. Lawrence. We know the man well.

MR. LAWRENCE—I wish you would help me up to my room, Matthew. I might possibly be easier in bed.

(Mr. Lawrence rises from the sofa, groaning all the time, and is helped out of the room by Mr. Matthew Lawrence; Bessie follows, carrying the lamp.)

(Curtain falls.)

SCENE III.—*(The same).*

(Curtain rises on John Ashford, Bessie and Norah Lawrence)

ASHFORD—How soon is your visitor to leave you?

NORAH—Mr. Lawrence? Oh, I don't know! I wish he was going to-morrow instead of you. The way he makes Bessie run about for him is something shameful.

BESSIE—You are too hard on him, Norah. He has suffered a good deal, really.

NORAH—He ought to be ashamed of himself all the same. He deserves to suffer! I'm ashamed to own him for a cousin; I am, indeed. Always talking about his money, as if money is everything. He is most ungentlemanly and disagreeable, I think.

BESSIE—You mustn't think too much of what Norah says, John. You know how she talks. Mr. Lawrence doesn't intend to be unkind, I'm sure.

NORAH (*impatiently*)—Oh, Bessie always stands up for him. like she does for you.

ASHFORD (*laughing*)—Does she? well, I'm sure your cousin must need a defender, if he has got into your black books.

NORAH—Oh, I hate him as much as he hates me; but when you have seen him you won't be surprised!

ASHFORD—I have seen him; I met him in Montreal, and saw a good deal of him.

NORAH—Well, isn't he horrid?

ASHFORD—Hush! here he comes.

(*Enter Mr. Lawrence, limping.*)

BESSIE (*rising*)—Will you take this chair, Mr. Lawrence?

MR. LAWRENCE—Thanks! My foot is worse this afternoon. How d'you do, Mr. Ashford? You see I met with an unpleasant accident, and I've been a close prisoner for the last fortnight.

ASHFORD—I am sorry to hear it, but, at least, you were lucky in finding yourself so near your friends.

MR. LAWRENCE—Yes! yes! of course. Where is your father, Bessie?

BESSIE—I don't know. Do you want him?

MR. LAWRENCE—Yes! I should like to see him.

NORAH—Well, I'll go and see if he can come; but I think he is busy!

(*Exit Norah. Enter Mr. Matthew L. and Norah.*)

MR. MATTHEW L.—Is there anything I can do for you?

MR. LAWRENCE—I wanted to tell you that I have just received news that obliges me to return to England immediately, but before I go I should like to express my sense of your great kindness to me, and to show you that I am not ungrateful, I wish to make a proposal to you concerning your daughter Bessie.

MR. MATTHEW L.—Bessie!

MR. LAWRENCE—Yes, Bessie. I am the more willing to do so as I have noticed, with pleasure, her extremely docile and obliging demeanour. But, to explain—of course, I desire in some way to repay you for your—your—civility towards me!

MR. MATTHEW L.—Oh! don't trouble yourself on that account. We have been very glad to be of use to you.

MR. LAWRENCE (*pompously*)—Yes! yes! I understand; but, at the same time, I cannot allow you to suffer, in a pecuniary point of view, for my residence here, for I know that you cannot afford any additional expenditure without *great* inconvenience. Now, I have been thinking that if, from this time forward, I undertook the *entire* maintenance of your eldest daughter, it would be a relief to you and an advantage to her, and, at the same time, a pleasure to me. I think that when she became accustomed to her new surroundings she would be well fitted in every respect to take charge of my household (which really would be the better for a lady's supervision), and if she proved herself to be as efficient and capable as I believe her to be, there would be

no reason why she should not make her home permanently with me.

MR. MATTHEW L.—I am much obliged to you, Robert ; but I think Bessie has other plans for herself.

JOHN ASHFORD—Perhaps, sir, you do not know that she has promised to be my wife !

MR. LAWRENCE—No ! I did not know it, but, having made my offer to the young lady herself, I should be glad to have an answer from her. And I must tell you that I will not only provide you with a really liberal allowance during my lifetime, Bessie, but I will also make an ample provision for you in the event of my death. Think well before you decide ! Remember, I offer you a competence as long as you live.

BESSIE—Thank you, sir, but I am obliged to refuse.

ASHFORD (*smiling*)—Don't consider me, Bessie ! If you desire to accept Mr. Lawrence's munificent offer, don't allow any consideration for my feelings to stand in your way. Choose for yourself.

BESSIE—I have chosen !

MR. LAWRENCE (*in astonishment*)—Do you really mean to say that you refuse wealth, positive wealth, for the sake of this John Ashford ? I am surprised at you. I had a higher opinion of your sense ! If it had been your sister it would have been different, but *you* ! I can only repeat I am *surprised* !

BESSIE (*quickly*)—I am surprised that you can think I care so much for money as to give up everything for it.

MR. LAWRENCE—Give up everything ! If that's the way you look at it, I'll say no more. I thought I was offering you a kindness.

BESSIE—Then you were much mistaken. Money is a

good thing in its way, but home and friends are surely worth more. Oh, Mr. Lawrence, you couldn't really suppose I would do it!

MR. LAWRENCE (*coldly*)—As I said, I had a higher opinion of your wisdom, Bessie. However, you need not fear my troubling you again with such offers.

BESSIE—I hope you won't, but thank you all the same. I suppose you meant kindly, and I know I ought to be more grateful.

MR. LAWRENCE—You have no proper idea of the value of money. Some day you will look back on this as the worst day's work you ever did in your life.

BESSIE—I hope not; but, Mr. Lawrence, I think you put too high a value on it, or you would never have thought I could leave everything for the sake of it.

MR. LAWRENCE—Well, you will live to know better, or I am much mistaken.

BESSIE—At any rate, I thank you for your kindness, and I hope, sir, that *you* will live to know better. It must be very miserable to know of nothing better than none.

MR. LAWRENCE—Well, I have said my say. If you choose to despise it, I cannot help it; but, from my experience of life, you have made a terrible mistake.

(*Exit Mr. Lawrence.*)

NORAH—Don't say that I am too hard on Cousin Robert again, Bessie, after this. I am sure I have never said as much to him as you did.

BESSIE—I am afraid it would seem unkind to him, but what could I do.

ASHFORD—Nothing, Bessie, but what you did, and, for my part, you never shall live to repent it, if I can help it.

(*Curtain falls.*)

INVREE.

(*In Three Scenes.*)

CHARACTERS.

AUNT NELLY, a Zenana Missionary.

BELLE }
DOLLY } her nieces.

INVREE, a little Hindoo widow.

KATOKANKE, her mother-in-law.

ASHA, and other Hindoo women.

DRESSES.

In Scene I, AUNT NELLY, BELLE and DOLLY may wear any ordinary dresses. In the other scenes, Aunt Nelly should wear a thin dress suitable for a hot climate, with the addition of a light straw hat in Scene II.

The Hindoo girls and women should be as dark-skinned as possible, and each should wear a long piece of light-coloured cloth (shawls or sheets would do) fastened round the waist, and having one end brought up over the chest and head. Bracelets and chains, etc., would be an improvement. Invree's dress should be prettier and finer in Scene III. than in Scene II., in which it should be coarse and without ornament.

SCENES, ETC.

Scene I.—A sitting-room. Articles needed; Furniture suitable for a parlor; a letter, and two pieces of knitting.

Scene II.—A Hindoo women's room. Articles needed: (No furniture); mats on the floor; a wooden stool; a doll; work-bag; silk; needles, and pieces of work.

Scene III.—A room in the missionary's house. Articles needed: Light furniture; mats on the floor; a small table, etc.; paper, pen, ink, and sewing.

SCENE I.—(*A sitting-room.*)

(*Curtain rises on Belle and Dolly knitting.*)

BELLE (*with a sigh*)—Oh, dear! I wonder why mother will make us do this horrid knitting! It's always work! work! work! from morning till night.

DOLLY (*also sighing*)—Mother says it wouldn't do to let us grow up ignorant.

BELLE—I can't see the good of it. It's no use saying I can. Knitting and sewing, writing and sums—I hate them all. I wish I was a heathen!

DOLLY (*dropping her knitting in horror*)—Oh, Belle!

BELLE—I do. I'd like to have nothing to do but play and make sweets, like the girls Aunt Nelly talks of. I think it must be just lovely to be a heathen.

DOLLY (*impressively*)—Oh, Belle! you shouldn't talk so. It's wicked! Besides, Aunt Nelly says it's *dreadful* to be a heathen. They don't have nice times at all.

(*Enter Aunt Nelly with a letter.*)

DOLLY (*excitedly*)—Oh, Aunt Nelly—Belle says she wishes she was a—

BELLE (*interrupting her hastily*)—Hush, Dolly; *do* be quiet! Aunt Nelly, won't you tell us a story about what you did in India? You know you promised you would some day!

AUNT NELLY—Not just now, dear. I must read my letter first.

(*She sits down and reads, while Belle and Dolly knit energetically.*)

AUNT NELLY (*looking up from the paper*)—I am so sorry.

Mrs. Raymond tells me that little Invree's husband has just died. Poor little girl! You remember my telling you about her wedding, don't you?

BELLE and DOLLY (*together*)—Yes; we remember.

AUNT NELLY—She is scarcely twelve years old yet; and she was such a bright, merry child; as fond of play as you and Dolly.

(*Belle and Dolly look at each other.*)

DOLLY (*with interest*)—What will she do now? Will she go home to live with her mother again?

AUNT NELLY—I am afraid not, dear. She will probably have to stay with her mother-in-law, who used to be very cruel to her.

DOLLY—But will her mother let her be badly treated?

AUNT NELLY—She cannot prevent it, Dolly. It is not so very long since widows used to be burned with their husbands' dead bodies; and even now, they are treated as if they were very wicked instead of being very unfortunate. All their beautiful bracelets and jewels are taken off, and they are made to wear a coarse, ugly dress, and to do the roughest, hardest work. They are not even allowed to sit down in their mother-in-law's presence, unless she specially commands them to do so; and they are not permitted to touch any food until all the rest have finished.

BELLE—How horrid!

AUNT NELLY—Yes; but that is not the worst. They are obliged to fast so long and so often, that they are almost starved; and if they fall ill, their friends hardly think it worth the trouble of taking care of them, for they are considered a disgrace to the family.

BELLE—Why? What a shame! It is not their fault.

AUNT NELLY—No, not really; but some of the people

think it is, and they tell them that when they die their souls will go into the bodies of the lowest kinds of animals.

DOLLY—How very dreadful! Will that poor little Invree believe that? I thought, perhaps, she would know better.

AUNT NELLY—I have tried to teach her, but I do not think she understands thoroughly yet. When I go back again I will tell her more about heaven and Jesus. I am going very soon now, and I hope that you will tell people all I have told you about Invree and other poor little widows like her, and try to get them to do something to help them. Will you promise me to do this, Dolly? will you, Belle?

DOLLY (*earnestly*)—I will.

BELLE—I can't.

AUNT NELLY—Why can't you, Belle? I wish you would try.

BELLE (*hesitatingly*)—I don't know. I can't—because—Well! sometimes I—

DOLLY—I know what she means, Auntie. It is because she said this afternoon that she wished she was a heathen! We both do so hate knitting, and Belle thought that heathens hadn't any work to do.

AUNT NELLY—Some heathens I know are very glad to learn to sew and knit and read—little Invree was. A great many of the Hindoo ladies are shut up in places like prisons, and are never allowed to go out, and they have nothing to do but talk, and dress their hair and cook. How would you like that, Belle? Would it not be worse than knitting?

BELLE—I suppose so.

AUNT NELLY—Then won't you do what you can to have them taught how to live in a better way, and how to read the Bible and pray to God?

BELLE—Yes ; I'll try.

DOLLY—Oh, Aunt Nelly, I wished I could go and tell them myself.

AUNT NELLY—Perhaps you may some day, when you are old enough. But now you must do what you can in telling other people about them. And, if you liked, you and Belle might make something for me to take with me when I go—you might dress a doll for Invree, perhaps !

BELLE—But will she care for a doll, now she's married ?

AUNT NELLY—She is only a little girl, and I am sure she would like a doll very much. She has had so few pleasures, poor child !

BELLE (*decidedly*)—Then I'll do it!—(*adding ruefully, after a short pause*)—But will it matter making its clothes take off and on. It makes *such* a difference in the sewing, and if she wouldn't care—

AUNT NELLIE—I think she would like it *better*, if she could dress and undress it; but you must please yourselves.

DOLLY—I'll help you, Belle. Let us do it as well as ever we can !

BELLE (*brightening*)—All right, Dolly ! We'll begin tomorrow. It's too late now, I'm afraid.

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE II.—(*A room in a Hindoo house.*)

(*Curtain rises on Katokanee, and Invree, who is cowering in a corner.*)

KATOKANEE—You lazy, idle girl ! I'll teach you to do your work better. Do you call this place clean ? Come here, now ; be quick, or you'll be sorry be it. How dare you stand idling there when I have called you !

(*Katokanee crosses the room, and begins to shake and beat Invree.*)

INVREE (*in terror*)—Oh, don't. Forgive me, oh! forgive me!

KATOKANEE (*striking her again*)—Forgive you, indeed! Be silent, you little wretch, or—

(*Invree screams, and another woman comes up, and whispers to Katokanee, who flings the child off into a corner.*)

KATOKANEE (*fiercely*)—There, be silent, will you? And mind, if you touch a drop of water or grain of rice till sunset to-morrow, I'll give you a beating that you will remember as long as you live!

(*Enter several Hindoo women, and Aunt Nelly.*)

AUNT NELLY—Are you ready to learn how to do things like this?

(*Holding up a piece of embroidery.*)

KATOKANEE (*and several others together*)—Yes, we are, Missy Sahib.

AUNT NELLY—Well, I can stay a little while this morning and teach you how to work the flowers. I have brought you silk and needles. Now sit down.

(*Aunt Nelly seats herself on a stool, and the women group themselves round her.*)

AUNT NELLY—You must make the stitches in this way. Do you see? Be careful not to draw the thread too tight, or it will spoil the shape. Yes, Asha, that's right! Katokanee, is not that Invree in the corner? May not she come to learn, too?

KATOKANEE (*sharply*)—You hear what the Missy Sahib says, Invree—what are you waiting for?

(*Invree comes forward slowly.*)

AUNT NELLY—Invree, are not these flowers pretty? I want you to watch me and learn how to make them. That is nice, Katokanee,—now do these four stitches; let me show you?

(Takes the work from Katokanee, and puts in a stitch or two.)

AUNT NELLIE—Next time I come I will show you how to make the stalks of the flowers. I am glad you like to work. I have two little nieces at home who never like to use a needle if they can help it, but I was telling them about Invree and her sad trouble, and they have sent her this—*(taking a doll out of her work-bag.)* Do you think it pretty, Invree?

(Chorus from all the women)—How wonderful! How beautiful! It has eyes like the Missy Sahib.

INVREE—Is it really for me?

KATOKANEE—No, indeed. Do you think the little ladies would send it to you,—you little lazy, wicked—

AUNT NELLY—Hush, Katokanee! Yes, Invree, it is for you, for your very own, to keep!

INVREE—Oh, Missy Sahib, Missy Sahib, it is too beautiful for me.

KATOKANEE *(angrily)*—Indeed it is. Get away into your corner, and don't you dare to speak again!

(Invree turns away, crying.)

AUNT NELLY—But, Katokanee, I want her to have the doll. I cannot leave it here, if you will not let her keep it. My little nieces dressed it for her, and I promised to give it to her.

KATOKANEE *(sulkily)*—Very well, Missy Sahib, give it her, then.

AUNT NELLY—And you will promise me to let her keep it; will you, Katokanee?

KATOKANEE—Yes! yes! so long as she does her work properly, she may keep it. Though I wonder at you, Missy Sahib, giving such a beautiful present to a miserable creature like Invree!

AUNT NELLY—I am very sorry for Invree, but I thank you for your promise, which the great God of all the earth has heard, as well as I. He will see how you keep it, though I cannot. Never forget, Katokanee, that Invree is one of His children whom He loves. I hope you have not forgotten all I told you—how He came to earth and lived and died to save poor sinners like us from death and misery!

KATOKANEE (*incredulously*)—Missy Sahib, do you really think He cares for Invree?

AUNT NELLY—I do, indeed; I know He does.

KATOKANEE (*with a short, scornful laugh*)—I know better! A girl and a widow like her may be very thankful if she is permitted to become even a wretched, crawling reptile when she dies. No body is too bad for *her*!

(*Invree turns away her head and shudders, but Aunt Nelly rises, and putting her arms around her, kisses her.*)

AUNT NELLY—Invree! dear little Invree; it is not true. God loves His children, and His dear Son Jesus came down to die for us; and if we believe in Him, we shall live forever with Him in heaven, as holy and happy as the angels!

INVREE (*sobbing*)—Oh, dear lady, teach me more! Take me away, oh! let me be with you!

KATOKANEE (*roughly*)—Hush! hush! don't plague the Missy Sahib. What should she want with you?

INVREE (*falling on her knees and crying*)—Oh, let me

come ! I am so wretched. Take me, dear Missy Sahib, and let me learn to be good !

AUNT NELLY—Dear child, I will come here to you again, and teach you all. The Lord Jesus loves every one of you, and He has sent me here to tell you so. But now I must go. I will come again very soon. Invree, here is your pretty doll (*putting it into her hands*). Let me go, my child.

INVREE—Oh, don't leave me ! I shall die, dear Missy Sahib, and then I shall be a dreadful—

KATOKANEE (*giving her a shake*)—Get up at once, and be silent.

AUNT NELLY—Invree, be quiet ! Katokanee, will you not let me take her, or send her home to her mother ?

KATOKANEE—Her mother ? She has no mother, Missy Sahib.

AUNT NELLY—Then let her come with me ?

KATOKANEE—No ! no ! Missy Sahib ; it is not our custom. When a woman's husband dies, she must live as a widow in his house. Invree cannot come. She must stay here—*always !*

INVREE (*passionately*)—Oh, do let me go ! do let me go with the Missy Sahib !

KATOKANEE (*angrily*)—No ! Get out of my sight this instant ! Go !

(Invree slowly leaves the room.)

KATOKANEE (*persuasively to Aunt Nelly*)—But you will come again soon, Missy Sahib, and teach us how to work the flowers. And then you shall see Invree !

AUNT NELLY—Yes ; I will come again, and read to you about Jesus (*turns to go, but stops again*). Cannot you let me have the child ?

KATOKANEE—No ; I cannot, Missy Sahib. It would be

disrespectful to her husband. Do not trouble about her. She is not unhappy—she tells lies to you.

AUNT NELLY—Think over it till I come again. Good-bye now.

(Exit Aunt Nelly.)

(Curtain falls.)

SCENE III.—*(A room in the missionary's house.)*

(Curtain rises on Aunt Nelly sewing.)

(Enter Invree, quickly.)

AUNT NELLY—Well dear, are you read your lesson?

INVREE—Yes; quite ready.

AUNT NELLY—Well, get the ink and a pen, and I will set you a copy.

(Invree brings pen, ink, and paper, and Aunt Nelly sets a copy. Invree sits down at the table, and begins to write slowly and carefully. Presently, Aunt Nelly rises and looks over her shoulder.)

AUNT NELLY—Be careful not to make the upstrokes so thick, dear. On the whole, it is much better than the lines that you wrote yesterday.

INVREE *(eagerly)*—I am so glad that I am improving. I do so want to be able to write to your little nieces; and I seem to have been so long learning even this much.

AUNT NELLY—Yet it is scarcely four months since I brought you here.

INVREE *(thoughtfully)*—It seems longer. I am so happy; I feel like a different girl. I am thankful every minute of my life that you persuaded Katokanee to let me come here;

and I will try, dear Missy Sahib, to learn all you want me to know, as fast as ever I can.

AUNT NELLY—That is well, dear; but don't be too impatient. It will take a long time for you to learn all I shall want you to know.

(Invree goes on with her writing, and Aunt Nelly sits down to her sewing again.)

INVREE *(looking up)*—When I have learnt a great deal, dear lady, will you let me go with you to tell the women of my country about Jesus, and what He has done for us?

AUNT NELLY—That is why I wish you to learn to read and write and sew, Invree. I want you to carry God's message to your own people; but you must have patience, for while you are so young and know so little, people would not listen to you. If it had not been for the embroidery, I think Katokanee would never have let me come into her house.

INVREE—No, I do not think she would. I will try hard to learn all these things; and afterwards, if I may, I will go and tell all the widows about the Lord Jesus. It is so dreadful to be a widow; no one knows what it is, unless they have tried it. I should like to help them.

AUNT NELLY—I hope you will be able. It may be that God wished to teach you what it was to be a widow, that you might be a comfort to other widows.

INVREE—I never thought of that before. I hope it is. I think it may be.

(Curtain falls.)

THE END.

"THROUGH STRONG DRINK."

(*In Three Scenes.*)

CHARACTERS.

TOM TEDMORE, a drunkard.
MRS. TEDMORE, his wife.
JOEY, a sick child, his son.
MAGGIE, TOMMY, and several other children.
GEORGE MITFORD.
ELLEN MITFORD, his wife.
DICKY and FANNY, children to George.
ADAM JONES and others.

DRESSES.

Neat, ordinary dress for George, Ellen, their children, and Adam Jones. Ragged and untidy clothes for all the Tedmore family.

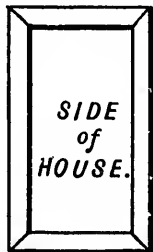
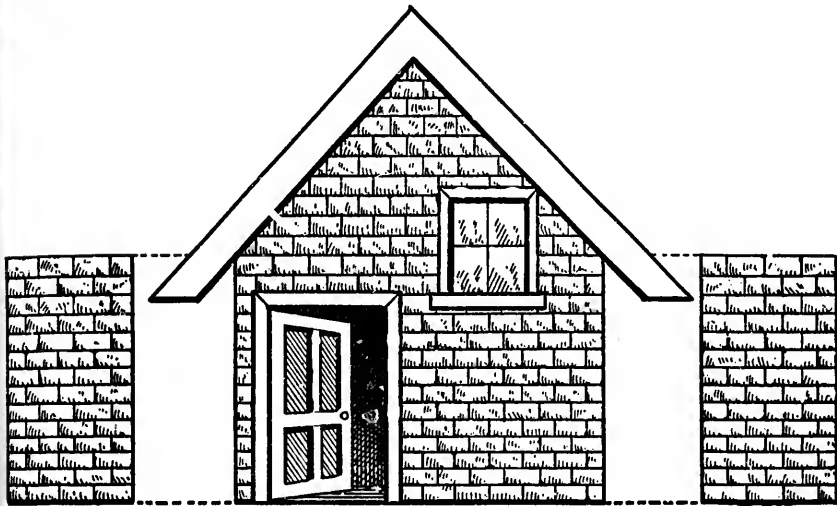
In Scene II. Maggie Tedmore must wear an old hat and shawl when she first comes in. And in Scene III. all the people must be in outdoor dress except Tom Tedmore and his children; Joey must wear a night-shirt. In the last scene there may be any number of actors to represent the crowd, but they should come running on to the platform, one or two at a time, and there should not be so many as to get in the way of the principal actors.

SCENES, ETC.

Scene I.—A comfortably furnished room. Articles needed: Chairs, table, etc.; a doll.

Scene II.—A miserable room. Articles needed: Poor furniture, a heap of rags; a candle stuck in a bottle; a piece of work; a bundle; some money; medicine bottle and spoon.

Scene III.—Outside of burning house. (See note.)



PLAN FOR SCENERY. (See Note.)

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NOTE.—The house may be represented by a rather tall, light framework, covered with paper of a suitable color to represent outside walls, with a space left for the windows, across which white pieces of paper or wood should be fastened to represent the sashes. The roof, window-frame and door-posts should be marked out with bands of dark paper. No measurements are given, as the size must depend on the width of the platform, etc., but care should be taken to make the sides of sufficient depth to support the front firmly. (See diagram on previous page.) The effect of fire may be produced by burning red fire at the back of the house, out of view of the audience. The crashes of the falling timber, and the rumbling of the engine should be imitated by some one behind the scenes, who should be provided with something heavy to throw down and roll about. "Joey" should be on the top of a stepladder, or on a chair placed on a table, to raise him to the height of the window, which is supposed to be in the second story of the house.

SCENE I.—(*A comfortable living-room.*)

(*Curtain rises on George Mitford, his wife Ellen, and their two children, Fanny and Dicky.*)

GEORGE (*looking round the room*)—I went to see Tom Tedmore this morning, Ellen, and I did pity him. I never saw such an untidy, miserable-looking hole as his place is. Mrs. Tedmore was in tatters, and the children were not fit to be seen! I don't wonder that Tom should take a drop too much once in a while. I've been thankful for my tidy wife to-day, I can tell you.

ELLEN (*rocking Dicky in her arms*)—I don't think it is all Mrs. Tedmore's fault, poor thing! It must be hard to keep respectable with a drinking husband! I am often thankful for my sober, God-fearing husband.

GEORGE (*to Fanny*)—Come here, little one. Let me look at your dolly.

(*Fanny runs to him, and George continues.*)

A fellow must be a pretty bad lot who would go drinking with a home like mine. I won't say who's to blame, Tom or his wife; at least, they are both to be pitied, poor souls!

(*A knock at the door.*)

ELLEN—Won't you see who is there, George? I'm busy with Dicky. He is nearly asleep.

(George goes to the door. Enter Adam Jones.)

ADAM—How do you do, Mrs. Mitford? I can't stay a minute, George,—I came over to ask whether you won't join us to-morrow?

GEORGE—Why, what's going on, Adam?

ADAM—Haven't you heard? Blake is off for San Francisco the day after to-morrow, and we're giving him a farewell supper at the Lorne House. Now do come, we shall count on you.

GEORGE—No, thanks, I would rather not.

ADAM—Nonsense! Blake will think you very unkind if you don't. You and he used to be such friends, too.

GEORGE—I'm sorry, but I really can't go.

ADAM—You are not going anywhere else, are you? You will disappoint us all if you don't come. There'll just be Robson and Ford and Tedmore there, and one or two others. Come, man! it won't be a quarter the fun without you. We were going to have some nice singing, and we reckoned on you for that!

GEORGE—Well, but Adam! you know I never do go to such things.

ADAM—I don't know anything of the sort. Why shouldn't you?

GEORGE—I think they do one more harm than good.

ADAM—Oh, that's all rubbish. It'll do *you* no harm anyway.

GEORGE *(decidedly)*—No, thank you, Adam, I really can't come.

ADAM—*Won't*, you mean?

GEORGE—Very well, *won't* then, if you will have it. Are you going? Won't you stay and warm yourself a bit?

ADAM (*without answering George*)—Good night, Mrs. Mitford.

(*Exit.*)

GEORGE—I am sorry to vex him, but what could I do?

ELLEN—I'm very glad you didn't go! I am sure you were right to refuse, though it did vex him.

GEORGE—I suppose I was, but it's very disagreeable. They think one is so "strait-laced" and "goody-goody." I wish they would leave me alone, and give up plaguing me to go with them.

ELLEN—Well, George, I think, even in spite of their plaguing, you have the best of it.

GEORGE—Yes, I have, Ellen; I am a fool to talk as if they were to be envied. (*Sits himself in a comfortable chair and takes Fanny on his knee.*) I wouldn't give my cosy evenings at home for all the concerts and suppers in the world, eh, Fanny?

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE II.—(*A bare, squalid-looking room.*)

(*Curtain rises on Mrs. Tedmore, in a ragged, dirty dress, sewing at a coarse shirt by the light of a tallow candle stuck in a bottle. Children of various ages crying or squabbling with each other in different parts of the room, and a child lying on some rags in a corner.*)

MRS. TEDMORE (*roughly*)—Now Tommy, if you don't hold your tongue, I'll give you something to make you. My head is splitting with your din.

(*Enter Maggie, Mrs. Tedmore's eldest girl, with a bundle.*)

MAGGIE—Here is the work, mother! and here is the money for the last. Mr. Ray made a terrible fuss about those stains on the blue shirt, and he has not paid anything for that one at all. He says he will lose by it as it is.

MRS. TEDMORE (*counting the money*)—I knew he would make a talk about it; he is as hard as nails. I wonder how he expects me to keep them nice? I'd like to see him do it in a place like this, with a lot of children. It's a good job he sent the other money all right!

MAGGIE—Yes, it is. How is Joey to-night? (*Goes over to the heap of rags where the sick child is lying.*) I have brought the medicine for him; I had to wait at the doctor's ever such a while!

MRS. TEDMORE—He is no better, I think. I don't know what is wrong with him. He has been crying all day.

(*Maggie lifts him up, and arranges his rough bed, and then pours out a tablespoonful of the medicine and gives it to him.*)

MRS. TEDMORE—Have you seen anything of your father, Maggie?

MAGGIE—No; has he been out all day?

MRS. TEDMORE—Yes; at least, I've seen nothing of him. He hasn't done a stroke of work this week. I've no patience with him. He just comes home for his meals, and for what he can get. He has been drinking from morning to night. I wonder he is not ashamed to do as he does.

(*Here there is a sound of some one stumbling up the stairs.*)

MAGGIE—Hush, mother, here he comes.

MRS. TEDMORE—Ay, drunk as usual, I suppose!

(*Enter Tom Tedmore, staggering.*)

MRS. TEDMORE (*sharply*)—Well, Tom, here you are at last. I hope you are ashamed of yourself, you idle, dis-

graceful ne'er-do-weel! It's no thanks to you that we are not all in the workhouse.

TOM (*with drunken good-nature*)—Come, Polly, don't scold. I leave you alone, why don't you leave me?

MRS. TEDMORE—Leave me alone! I should think so. I'd like to see you meddle with me, and you living on my bread, as you do! Wait till you earn your own victuals, and then you may talk of leaving me alone, indeed! What have you been doing all day, I should like to know? Idling round the Lorne House, waiting for someone to treat you, I suppose! Oh, you are an industrious husband! you set a nice example to your children, you do! I wonder you have the face to come here and sit smiling and twiddling your fingers while your wife slaves herself to death! Come, get away out of my sight, you'll not get a bite nor a sup from me to-day; you great, idle, loafing, drunken scoundrel!

TOM (*suddenly*)—Look you, Polly, that is no way to talk to me. I won't stand your names and your insolence!

MRS. TEDMORE—Oh! won't you? then you may go somewhere else.

TOM (*taking out a rag of a handkerchief, and wiping his eyes*)—You're a pretty sort of wife, Polly! Where is your affection for your husband? I am surprised at you—teaching the children to look down on me and despise me.

MRS. TEDMORE—Despise you! I should think they would—making a perfect beast of yourself as you do!

TOM—See here now, Polly, lend me fifty cents, and I'll go away and not trouble you any more.

MRS. TEDMORE—Catch me lending you a cent! No, no! I do too much for you, when I find you the food to keep breath in your body! Maggie, clear some of those young ones off into their beds! I'm going to get some

thread and some needles. I won't be long. Now boys, make haste, be off with you!

(Exeunt Maggie and children.)

MRS. TEDMORE *(to Joey)*—Now Joey, you go to sleep like a good boy, and mammy will bring you something nice from the shop.

(She tucks the rags about him, and goes out. His father sits staring at him for some time, and at last lights a short clay pipe, crosses over to him, and throws himself down by his side. Joey puts his arm round his neck.)

JOEY *(entreatingly)*—Father dear, won't you try to stop drinking, and get some work to do? We are all so poor and miserable!

TOM *(getting out the rag, and applying it to his eyes again)*—What can your poor father do, lad? *(Sobs dismally.)* When a man gets wrong, it's no good trying to get right again! *(Sobs again, smoking all the while.)*

JOEY *(earnestly)*—The Sunday-school lady used to tell us that if we are sorry for our sins, God would forgive us and help us to do better. She said He was always willing to help us to be good if we asked Him. I wish you would, father.

TOM *(still wiping his eyes, and smoking)*—It's no good trying! it's no good trying!

JOEY *(after a pause)*—Father!

(No answer.)

JOEY—Father.

(Still no answer; Joey rises on his elbow to look at his father, who has fallen asleep with his pipe still between his lips. He snores slightly, and Joey lies down again and falls asleep himself.)

(Curtain falls.)

SCENE III.--(*Outside of Tedmore's house.*)

(*Curtain rises on Tedmore's house, as it takes fire within.*)

(*Maggie Tedmore and the children rush through the door, calling*)—Fire! Fire! Fire!

(*Enter George and Ellen Mitford, Adam Jones, and others.*)

GEORGE (*to Maggie*)—Where are your father and mother?

MAGGIE—Oh! I don't know! I don't know!

ADAM JONES—Have they sent for the engine? Who'll go?

TOMMY TEDMORE (*and other boys together*)—I will!

(*Exeunt boys.*)

(*The light from the burning house grows brighter. Enter Mrs. Tedmore, in great haste.*)

MRS. TEDMORE—Oh! what shall we do? Where is Joey?
Oh, tell me, has any one seen Joey?

(*At this moment Joey appears at the window.*)

JOEY (*calling*)—The room is burning! Father will be killed. I can't wake him or move him!

ELLEN—Poor little fellow!

MRS. TEDMORE—Oh, Joey! Joey! } (*together.*)

(*Seems as if she intended to rush into the house.*)

GEORGE (*holding her back*)—I will go; be still.

ADAM JONES—You are foolish; you will be burnt to death! Wait for a ladder, man! There is no sense in risking your life like this!

ELLEN (*holding to his arm*)—Oh! wait, George! For my sake and the children's!

GEORGE—I can't leave them to die. Let me go, Ellen.

(He rushes through the door, and after a moment appears at the window. In another minute he is at the door again with Joey, whom he gives to his mother, who kisses him and cries over him. There is a crash, as of falling timber, but George rushes into the house again, and returns, half dragging and half carrying Tom Tedmore.)

THE CROWD *(all together)*—Hurrah! hurrah!

TOM TEDMORE *(holding to George)*—I can't thank you—I don't deserve it—Joey and I would have been gone by this time if it hadn't been for you, George;—but I promise you one thing, I'll never touch a drop of drink again as long as I live! I've had a lesson that will last me to the end of my days, I hope.

(Another crash, and then a heavy rumble is heard.)

ADAM JONES—Here's the engine at last.

(Curtain falls.)

THE END.

THE PATH TO CONTENT.

(In Two Scenes.)

CHARACTERS.

DUTY.

PLEASURE, sister to Duty.

THE WAYFARER, a young man.

WANT.

TWO MAIDENS, attendants on Pleasure.

DRESSES.

DUTY should wear a steel-gray robe, long and straight, and confined round the waist by a girdle. She should have a helmet, a shield, and a sword, which may be made of pasteboard covered with silver paper. Duty should be represented by a tall, dark girl.

PLEASURE should wear a white robe, with a gay ribbon round her waist, a wreath of bright-coloured flowers on her head, and a garland of flowers crossing from the left shoulder to her waist. At the end of the second scene, however, her wreath and garland should be of white flowers and green leaves, and her girdle should be white. The girl representing Pleasure should be fair, with long, light hair. Her maidens should be gaily dressed, in the same style as herself.

THE WAYFARER should be dressed in a long, loose coat or tunic, reaching to the knees, and belted round the waist; knickerbockers, long stockings, low shoes (with buckles, if possible), and a low, round cap. His clothing should be dark in colour, and he ought to carry a long staff.

WANT should be dressed in a long, ragged gown, and should be as tall and thin as possible. He may be marked with dark lines and wrinkles, to give him a haggard appearance.

SCENES, ETC.

SCENE I.—A wood. This may be represented by boughs of ever-greens and plants, with the pots hidden by moss, etc. The platform should not be too light.

SCENE II.—It may be the same as in Scene I., with the addition of a bank of moss and a few flowers. At the beginning of the scene the light should be bright, but it should be gradually lowered, and then raised again, according to the directions given in the dialogue. Music should be played by someone behind the scenes. Fruit, and an ornamental cup.

SCENE I.—(*A wood.*)

(*Curtain rises.*)

(*Enter the Wayfarer, walking wearily, and leaning on his staff. Stops and looks about him as if confused.*)

WAYFARER—(*speaking to himself, but aloud*)—Alas! I fear that I have lost my way. I would that I had some guide to show me what path to follow.

(*Enter Duty.*)

WAYFARER (*turning to her*)—Lady, I have lost my way. Canst thou guide me out of this dark place?

DUTY—Whither wouldst thou go? All paths in this place are well known to me.

WAYFARER—I am journeying to the City of Content.

DUTY—Then you are very far from the road that leadeth thither; but, if you will trust to my guidance, I will gladly put you in the way again.

WAYFARER—Methinks, fair lady, that I have seen thy face before.

DUTY—Thou hast. My name is Duty, and at every turn in your journey I have met you, though sometimes you have turned away without one glance at me. But now, if I undertake to guide you, be patient, and follow in my footsteps carefully, for the road before is rough and hard, and many a traveller, through neglecting this, has fallen by the way, or turned back in despair.

WAYFARER—Is there no shorter, easier road to the City of Content?

DUTY—No, there is but the one way, and only I can guide you there.

WAYFARER—Well, then, make haste, and I will follow you.

(*Enter Pleasure from the opposite side of the platform.*)

PLEASURE—Heyday, fair sister, whom have you there?

DUTY—A wayfarer, who desires my guidance to the City of Content.

PLEASURE—(*laughing*)—Desires your guidance? Nay, speak the truth, Duty, and say you pressed it on him.

DUTY—He followed me of his own will. But (*to the Wayfarer*) come, the road is long, and we must not linger.

PLEASURE—Nay, stop. Perhaps when he knows all, he will prefer to follow me. Have you told him of all the perils of the way? Have you told him how narrow it is, and how rugged? Does he know of the foes that always lie in ambush there, and the snares and pitfalls that beset the path?

WAYFARER—She told me that the road was hard and dangerous.

DUTY—Yet, remember, I told you, too, it was the only road to the City of Content.

PLEASURE—Nay, I know a better road—a path so soft and green that the tenderest can travel in it without weariness. It is bordered with the fairest flowers, and overhead hang rich, ripe fruits for all who desire them. Nay, more, that path is lit with golden light, and those who travel in it are entertained with music sweeter and more melodious than you have ever heard. Come, follow me, leave my stern sister to go her way alone.

DUTY—The road of which she speaks is fair and easy at the first, but it will never lead you to the City of Content. Oh, keep your promise—come with me. There are terrors in that road more awful than aught that lies in the path I would have you tread.

PLEASURE (*laughing*)—Come, now, you shall judge between us which speaks truth. My sister there is armed with sword, and helm and shield, for she fears the dangers of the way; but look at me—should I walk thus unprotected if it were true that my way is more full of terrors than her own? Come! choose between us!

(The Wayfarer stands irresolute, looking first at one and then at the other.)

DUTY—Oh, be wise—follow my path.

PLEASURE—Nay, be happy—walk with me! Make haste and choose, for I will wait no longer in this dull place.

WAYFARER—I choose to follow you—but by what name shall I call you?

PLEASURE—It is well. My name is Pleasure. Let us make haste away. This cold, dark wood chills me through and through. Farewell, Duty.

DUTY—Farewell, sister—yet wait a moment. Young man, ere you depart. I would give you one word of warning. There will come a time, when Pleasure will desert you. It is not in her nature to be constant; if you but look coldly on her, she will instantly disappear.

PLEASURE—Believe her not. I am not so fickle as she would have you think.

DUTY—I say the truth. But as soon as she leaves you, as she surely will, call on my name, and I will come.

WAYFARER—I thank you, lady. Farewell.

PLEASURE (*stamping her foot slightly*)—Come! come!

(*She takes his hand, and draws him gently away. For a moment he looks at Duty, then turns to Pleasure, and follows her eagerly. Exeunt both. Duty stands gazing sadly after them.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE II.—(*Another wood.*)

(*Curtain rises on Wayfarer resting on a bank of moss.*)

(*Enter Pleasure, followed by two maidens bearing fruit and a cup of wine, while in the distance there are soft sounds of music.*)

PLEASURE—Have I not kept my word? Is not *this* better

han Duty's path? Eat and drink; let us make merry, ere we pass onward. There is no haste; drink and refresh yourself, fair youth.

(The Wayfarer raises the cup to his lips and drinks.)

WAYFARER—Thanks, fairest lady, for your courtesy. There is, indeed, no haste. The City of Content can scarce be sweeter than this joyous land of thine.

PLEASURE—Some think that it is not so sweet. The music there is not so gay as this, for in that city Duty rules; and, as thou knowest, she is grave and stern. But think of her no more, my subjects must forget her if they would please their queen.

WAYFARER—Yet her face haunts me.

PLEASURE *(impatiently)*—Drink and be merry, as I command you. Her face will soon pass from your remembrance. Are you not my slave and servant, sworn to follow only me?

WAYFARER—That I will do. Forgive me, that I looked back, though only for a moment, to the time when Duty claimed me. I will do so no more. In this glorious land of sunshine and of music I will live, and only you will I obey.

PLEASURE *(smiling)*—Then are you wise, indeed. I hold all blessings in my hand, and on thee shall they be showered. Mirth and laughter shall ever—

(As she speaks, Want enters, and the music sounds more faintly)

PLEASURE *(sharply)*—How came you here?

WANT—I know not. *(Then turning to the Wayfarer.)* Oh, pity me; I am most miserable. Have mercy on me! Join not with her *(pointing to Pleasure)* in scoffing at my woes.

PLEASURE—Get thee hence! This is no place for such as

you. I never rule over the hungry and the miserable. Your presence here is a shame and a disgrace. (*Then, turning to the Wayfarer.*) Choose between us ; if Want is to remain here, I will not.

WAYFARER (*to Want*)—Go forth, as you are bidden. Pleasure has nought for you.

(*Want slowly retires to the back of the platform.*)

WAYFARER (*pitifully*)—May I not call him back again ? Bless him as well as me.

PLEASURE—I cannot ! I have no power to give aught to him. Look how his very presence here has disturbed my reign. The light is fading, and the music dies away.

(*While she speaks, the light grows dimmer and dimmer gradually, and the music sounds more faintly, until at last it ceases entirely.*) Think of him no more, or I must leave you.

WAYFARER—Leave me, then, faithless guide.

PLEASURE (*mockingly*)—I go ; but surely, without me, you will find it hard to reach the fair City of Content.

(*Exeunt Pleasure and her maidens.*)

WAYFARER—Oh, fickle, faithless Pleasure. I am lost and helpless. She has led me far astray, and now I know not where I am, or what to do. Oh, would that I had followed Duty !

(*Enter Duty.*)

DUTY—I am come as I promised, weak, foolish, wandering youth ! Wilt thou not now follow me ?

WAYFARER—I will follow.

DUTY—The way is harder now ; the dangers greater ; yet, be brave ; rise up and loiter not, and thou wilt conquer yet.

WAYFARER (*rising*)—I am faint and weary; I can scarcely move.

DUTY—It is ever so. They who follow Pleasure, with lightest feet, step wearily, when Duty guides. But come, take my hand; be brave, and strength will come.

(They move on a step or two.)

WANT (*coming forward and falling on his knees*)—Fair Duty, bid him aid me. I am starving, dying, lost!

DUTY (*to the Wayfarer*)—Alas! he, too, has wandered from the path that leads to the City of Content. Take his hand, and bid him rise. Help him, and your own strength will return.

WAYFARER (*turning away*)—I cannot. I am weak and poor. I have no power to aid him.

DUTY (*sternly*)—No will, you mean. Stoop down and raise him, or I will leave you to wander on alone.

WAYFARER (*with an air of great reluctance bends down, and giving his hand to Want, says*)—You ask too much of me. My strength is so far gone I scarce can hope to reach the city with nought to burden me, and is it reasonable to think that with so helpless a companion I can travel on at all?

DUTY—What! have you not yet learnt that you are blind and foolish. Follow me faithfully, and do my bidding without question, and you will soon be in your desired resting place. But, for your comfort, know that you will travel more safely and more speedily with Want to aid, than you would alone.

WAYFARER—How can it be? Sure, a companion so loathsome and so helpless must needs cost me much trouble on the way.

DUTY—Leave all to me. I know whither thou wouldst travel, and I wish to guide you safely; but if you will not obey me I cannot lead you, even if I would. Surely, you have gone far enough astray already.

(The Wayfarer, without another word, assists Want to rise, and as he does so, the light begins to grow brighter gradually.)

DUTY *(smiling)*—Now, I can lead you. Look, the light grows brighter; fear nothing. Ere nightfall you shall both be lodged in the sweet City of Content!

(Duty moves on, and the Wayfarer follows, helping Want, who walks slowly and painfully. A minute later Pleasure enters, crowned with white flowers, and coming behind them takes Want by the hand and helps the Wayfarer to support him.)

WAYFARER *(in astonishment)*—What! Pleasure here? I thought you had bidden me farewell forever?

DUTY *(turning to speak to him)*—Nay, though Pleasure cannot lead to the City of Content, she often consents to bear those company who travel under my guidance.

PLEASURE—It is strange, but true; and yet I scarce expected to be with you so soon.

WAYFARER—But how is this? I thought that you were rivals, both striving for power to command.

PLEASURE *(smiling)*—And we are, but we are sisters, too! Men call me changeable, and Duty calls me fickle (it may be with some truth, for I am here to-day and there to-morrow), but this, at least, believe, I bear no malice. A little while since you mocked and slighted me, and I vowed to leave you for evermore; but now, behold, you are for-

given, and I am at your side again helping you, unasked, with the task that Duty has laid on you.

WAYFARER (*to Duty*)—Do you permit her to assist me thus? or am I wrong even to look on her again?

DUTY—No! Her help is good, and much to be desired. Is not your burden the lighter for her aid already?

WAYFARER—I no longer feel that I am burdened.

DUTY—Then be thankful; when Pleasure comes to you clad all in white, as now, she makes even my hard road easy, and my heavy burdens light. But it may be, she will leave you as before, therefore never step aside to seek her; or, perchance, she will once more entreat you to let her be your guide, and as surely as you follow her instead of me you will travel to gloom and misery. Be wary, therefore, watch her well, she was not made for empire, but to serve.

PLEASURE—Oh, Duty, are you not unkind?

DUTY—Nay! you know my warning is as necessary as it is true. Keep but within your own degree, and I welcome your presence, as you know.

WAYFARER—Fear not, Duty. Henceforward I will have no guide but you.

(*Exeunt all.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

THE END.

JOHNNIE'S PRAYER!

(*In Two Scenes.*)

CHARACTERS.

JOHNNIE, a little boy.

TOM, his elder brother.

MR. CRAYTON, a city missionary.

DRESSES.

MR. CRAYTON in dark, ordinary clothes.

TOM and JOHNNIE, in excessively old and ragged clothes. Johnnie must be pale and thin.

SCENES, ETC.

Scene I.—A bare room Articles needed: A heap of rags, an old box or two, newspapers, and a crust of bread.

Scene II.—The same as in Scene I. Articles needed: The same as in Scene I., a slice or two of bread and butter, and a basket.

SCENE I.—(*A very poorly furnished room.*)

(*Curtain rises on Johnnie, lying on a bed of rags on the floor.*)

(*Enter Tom, carrying a bundle of newspapers under his arm.*)

TOM—Well, Johnnie, are you better to-night?

JOHNNIE (*wearily*)—I don't know, Tom. Perhaps I shan't get better, anyhow. Did you sell many to-day?

TOM—No, I never had a worse day. It has rained from morning to night, and nobody minded to stop to buy my

papers. I haven't got a penny to-night. Are you very hungry?

JOHNNIE—No, I ain't, but I s'pose you are. I didn't eat my bread this morning—I couldn't—you eat it, Tom. See, here!

(Johnnie takes a crust from a broken plate on the floor beside him and gives it to Tom, who takes it and looks at it irresolutely.)

TOM—No! no! Johnnie. You eat it. I had my piece this morning.

JOHNNIE—I can't, Tom. I tried—it kind o' chokes me.

TOM—But, Johnnie, you'll die. It'll never do to go on in this fashion.

JOHNNIE—I wish I could die, it 'ud be better for you, anyway.

TOM—Oh, Johnnie, Johnnie, don't talk like that—I can't abear it. Look, now, we'll break it in two pieces, and you shall eat one half and me the other.

JOHNNIE—I can't, Tom.

TOM *(breaking the bread)*—Oh, but you must. Here, now!

(They both eat it very slowly while they talk.)

JOHNNIE—While you were away this morning I crept to the window, for I felt so choked like I didn't know what to do, and a man came into the street, and talked beautiful. It minded me of what mother used to tell us—all about Jesus and heaven.

TOM—I have forgotten all about it now.

JOHNNIE—I couldn't hear all—but he told how God, that lives in heaven, loves us all. He said He loved us all, Tom.

TOM—Did he? I don't see how that can be.

JOHNNIE—Well, but listen. He said He loved us so much that He wanted all of us to be happy, and was sorry when we're sorry. An' he said that we could ask Him if we wanted anything, and that He would send it. I've been thinking of it all day.

TOM—I don't see as it'll be any good asking Him.

JOHNNIE—The man said it would be! He said He knew all about us, and that He would give us something to eat if we asked for it. I think we had better ask Him; we want it bad enough, that's sure.

TOM—Ay! we want it.

JOHNNIE—Well, the man said He'd give it, if we only asked Him. He said He loved us very much. Do let us ask Him, Tom.

TOM—If you like we can ask Him; but I don't see as any good 'll come of it.

JOHNNIE—Then let us kneel down, like mother taught us.

(They kneel down.)

(Curtain falls.)

SCENE II.—*(The same.)*

(Curtain rises on Johnnie, still lying in bed.)

(Enter Tom, excitedly)

TOM—It's true, Johnnie, what you said. It's come! look here!

(He shows him some nice, fresh slices of bread and butter.)

JOHNNIE—I knew it would.

TOM—Now, you eat some of this, and I'll tell you all about it.

(Johnnie begins to eat a little.)

TOM—You see, it was this way: I was trying ever so hard to sell my papers this morning, an' I saw a great crowd in Market Street; so, thinks I, that'll be a good chance for me, and off I goes. Well, who should I see there but Ned Green, an' says he, "It's a man preaching!" Somehow that made me think of what you was saying last night, and Ned goes on, "It's the same as was in our street yesterday." Then I thought I'd wait a bit, for maybe you'd like to hear what he said. So there I stopped, and after awhile he gets down, and comes right across to me, and says, "My lad, I hope you'll try to remember what I've been saying!" Then, says I, "I'll try, sir, but Johnnie is a far better hand at rememberin' them things!" Then, says he, "Who's Johnnie?" An' I told him, and how you'd sat up at the window.

JOHNNIE—And what did he say?

TOM—Well, I told about your prayin', and he looked as pleased as pleased at that, and says, "Johnnie's right." Then he went into a shop, and gave me this (*pointing to the bread and butter*), and told me to run home quick with it, an' said he'd come himself to see you.

JOHNNIE—To see me? Is he really coming to see me, Tom?

TOM—Ay! he said so. Listen, he's a-coming upstairs now.

JOHNNIE—Oh, Tom! now he'll tell me all about it.

(*Enter Mr. Crayton, carrying a little basket.*)

MR. CRAYTON—So this is Johnnie!

TOM—Yes, sir, that's Johnnie.

MR. CRAYTON—Tom has been telling me all about you. You see God heard you last night, and sent me to you.

TOM (*bringing forward an old box*)—Won't you sit down, sir? It's a poor place, but it's all that we've got.

MR. CRAYTON (*seating himself*)—Thank you, Tom. I've brought a few things, here, for Johnnie; I am sorry to see him looking so ill, but I will get a friend of mine who is a doctor to come and see him, and I think he'll soon be better.

TOM—Thank you, sir; I'm sure we're ever so much obliged to you.

JOHNNIE—Yes, sir, I'm sure I'll soon be better now. I'm so glad that you came to our street yesterday.

MR. CRAYTON—So am I! I have been talking to Tom, and he tells me he finds it very hard sometimes to sell his papers, so I will try to find him steady work, and you, too, when you are strong enough. I think I can.

JOHNNIE—Oh, sir! I don't know how to thank you.

TOM—I didn't believe Johnnie last night; I didn't see as it was any use praying. I didn't think as God cared much about the like of us, but I know different now.

MR. CRAYTON—Yes! He does care! His dear Son came down to earth and died for us, to save us from our sins, and when we pray to Him He will give us everything that is good for us.

JOHNNIE—I knew He would. We wanted something to eat so badly, but He has given us more than we asked for, hasn't He, Tom?

TOM—Ay, that He has.

JOHNNIE—I wish we could thank Him for it.

MR. CRAYTON—You can. Don't you think that if He heard your prayer He could hear your thanks, too?

JOHNNIE—Yes, I s'pose He could.

MR. CRAYTON—Then thank Him in that way! And

there is another way, too. If you ask Him He will show you how to do His will every day of your lives—and that will be a way of thanking Him, too. But now, I must go, for I have other work to do.

JOHNNIE—But will you come again?

MR. CRAYTON—Yes, I will, very soon; and Tom, will you come to my house this afternoon, and I will see whether I can get you the work I spoke of? Number 5, Riverview Terrace, Dale Street, is my address. Do you think you can remember it?

TOM—Yes, sir! Thank you, sir!

Exit Mr. Crayton.

TOM—Won't it be splendid, Johnnie? We'll have fine times—plenty to eat, and tidy clothes—when I get work.

JOHNNIE—Yes, we ought to be very thankful, oughtn't we, Tom?

(Curtain falls.)

THE END.

IMAGINATION.

(In Two Scenes.)

CHARACTERS.

DOCTOR JOHNSTONE, a schoolmaster.

GAY, CAREY, DICKSON, BAILEY, MCPHERSON and DUMONT, his pupils.

DRESSES.

DR. JOHNSTONE, a loose, dark, clerical-looking suit of clothes, and spectacles. He should have gray hair and gray whiskers or moustaches.

The boys may wear their ordinary clothes.

SCENES, ETC

Scenes I. and II.—A school-room, with bare floor, plain chairs and table. Articles needed: Books, etc., a map or two hanging on the wall would be an improvement. In Scene II.—A lamp, three pails, a cloth or two, and a cane will also be required.

SCENE I.—(A school-room.)

(*Curtain rises on Dr. Johnstone and his pupils seated round a table.*)

DR. JOHNSTONE—Where is Gibraltar, Gay?

GAY—At the South of Spain.

DR. JOHNSTONE—To whom does it belong, Carey?

CAREY—To the English, sir. It was taken by Admiral Rook and Sir Cloudesley Shovel, in 1704, from the Spaniards.

DR. JOHNSTONE—I see that you remember your history as well as your geography. If you persevere you will make a scholar that I shall be proud of. Carey, *proud of!* Now, Dickson, let me hear from you where the Cape of Good Hope is situated.

DICKSON (*promptly*)—It is the southern point of South America, sir.

DR. JOHNSTONE (*frowning*)—*What* did you say, sir? Now, consider a moment, *where is the Cape of Good Hope?*

DICKSON (*in an injured tone*)—Well, sir, *I said* it was in South America.

DR. JOHNSTONE (*shouting*)—But it *isn't* there! When will you learn your lessons decently, Dickson? Mistakes like these are a perfect insult to me. A child of six would know better. Come now, Bailey, (*speaking more quietly*) can you tell me where the Cape of Good Hope is?

BAILEY (*the smallest boy at the table*)—South of Africa, sir.

DICKSON—But, sir, I always thought that when they rounded the Cape of Good Hope—

DR. JOHNSTONE (*severely*)—*They rounded* the Cape? When will you get out of that wretchedly indefinite way of speaking?

DICKSON—I don't know, sir. I mean the people who first went that way.

DR. JOHNSTONE—I suppose you mean Diaz, who, however, did not name it. Well, what about him?

DICKSON—Only that he called it the Cape of Good Hope, because as soon as they had passed it they got into the Pacific. At least, I always imagined—

DR. JOHNSTONE (*sharply*)—*Imagined*, yes, you are always *imagining* something that is not the fact. Give me a boy that has no imagination, and I'll make a scholar of him; I can do nothing with a lad like you, Dickson! A boy that can *imagine* a connection between two places as wide apart as the Cape of Good Hope and the Pacific Ocean, ought to be turned back to his A B C. It is your business to *know*, not to *imagine*. *Imagination* is the worst foe to true knowledge that can be found! (*Pauses for breath, then continues with rising anger and increasing emphasis.*) Now remember, Dickson, I will not allow you to tell me that you *fancy* or *imagine* a thing, and to assist you to recollect what I have said on this matter, you shall write out a passage on the *imagination* from Butler's "Analogy," ninety-five times before breakfast to-morrow morning. You are to write it neatly, and be careful to put in all the stops and capital letters. If your copy does not satisfy me, I shall—

(*A knock at the door. Exit Dr. Johnstone.*)

GAY—What a howling shame!

DICKSON (*ruefully*)—He is always so down on a fellow for a little thing like that. What can it matter? why shouldn't I say I imagine a thing? I suppose I shall do it all the same whether I say so or not!

GAY—Of course; every one *imagines*, unless it's some dry old stick like him. Perhaps he may not!

CAREY—I expect he is made much like other people. He thinks he knows a lot and all that, but I fancy he imagines all the same. I am sure when he smells the roast beef down stairs he imagines it's dinner time. I've seen him look at his watch scores of times, long before twelve.

GAY—Well, I say it's a shame, Dickson! and I've thought of a capital plan to pay him out, but you'll all have to help!

CAREY—I'm your man for one, but you had better be quick and expound. I believe I hear the old boy coming!

BAILEY—I say, you won't hurt him, will you?

GAY—Not a bit, my son. But, hush, here he is. I'll tell you afterwards. I only mean to teach him that he has an imagination like the rest of us.

(*Boys bend over their books. Enter Dr Johnstone.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE II.—(*The same.*)

(*Curtain rises on Dr. Johnstone reading by the table, on which is a lamp.*)

(*Enter Carey with some books in his hand.*)

DR. JOHNSTONE—Where is Dickson, Carey?

CAREY (*seating himself at the table*)—He is just coming

sir. (*Carey finds his place, and begins to write, but stops suddenly, saying,*) Don't you think, sir, there is a sort of a smell, almost as if something were burning?

DR. JOHNSTONE (*sharply*)—Nonsense, Carey. Attend to your work.

(*Carey obeys, but furtively looks about him in a manner that excites the Doctor's attention.*)

DR. JOHNSTONE—What are you doing, Carey? I begin to think that you are as bad as Dickson.

CAREY (*anxiously*)—But sir, are you quite certain you can't smell it?

DR. JOHNSTONE—Nonsense!

(*Enter Bailey and Dickson.*)

DICKSON—I say, sir, don't you think the chimney is smoking a little?

DR. JOHNSTONE—Sit down, and be silent, sir.

(*Dickson sits down by Carey.*)

DR. JOHNSTONE—Bailey, go and find Gay. Where can he be?

(*Enter Dumont and McPherson. Exit Bailey.*)

CAREY—May I go and get the dictionary, sir? There is a word here I don't understand.

DR. JOHNSTONE—Very well.

(*Carey rises, crosses the room, gets the book from a table, and then, instead of returning directly to his seat, crosses to another corner, a very dark one, and begins to sniff about.*)

DR. JOHNSTONE—What are you doing there, Carey?

CAREY (*coming to his seat*)—Nothing, sir, only—

(*Enter Gay and Bailey.*)

GAY—I am sorry I am so late sir, but—oh, sir, there is a

dreadful smell of burn in here—don't you notice it? And I'm sure the corner over yonder is quite smoky.

DR. JOHNSTONE (*rising anxiously*)—I haven't noticed it. Where do you think the burning smell comes from, Carey?

CAREY—Well, sir, if there is really anywhere on fire, I should say it must be the old beams that go into the chimney—but perhaps it's only my fancy, after all.

GAY—It certainly seems to me that the smoke comes from that corner (*pointing to the one which Carey had been studying so attentively.*) Hadn't we better look round, and see if we can find out where the fire really is?

DR. JOHNSTONE—No, Gay, thank you—sit down, I'll see to it. It would be a most serious thing if any part of this house caught fire; it is so old, that I fear it would burn like tinder. (*Crosses the room, and stands in the corner, gravely and attentively sniffing about the walls for some seconds.*) Upon my word, I beg your pardon, Carey (*he exclaims, excitedly*). You are right, it is smoking horribly!

DUMONT—What shall you do, sir? Shall I fetch some water?

DR. JOHNSTONE—Yes; be quick. You go with him, McPherson. There is no time to be lost.

(*Exeunt Dumont and McPherson.*)

CAREY—I'm afraid it will be difficult to reach the spot.

GAY—I'm afraid it will. These old houses are terribly risky in case of fire. I saw a house burnt at Stanton, just the same style as this. It was burnt down to the ground, and no one knew how that fire originated. The theory was, that the bricks of the chimney had got out of place, and allowed a spark or two get down among the woodwork.

DR. JOHNSTONE—Dickson, go and tell those lads to

hurry. Carey, comè here and feel this wall (*feels it himself.*) It appears to me to be hotter than usual.

(*Exit Dickson. Carey feels the wall.*)

CAREY—I don't think it feels much hotter than usual.

DR. JOHNSTONE (*feeling it again*)—It seems to be excessively hot to me! Gay, come here; what do you say?

GAY (*feels the walls, but draws his hand quickly away again*)—It is almost hot enough to burn one!

DR. JOHNSTONE—What a time these lads are! One would have thought that even they might have made haste, when the place was burning. (*Goes to the door and calls.*) McPherson! McPherson!

MCIPHERSON (*entering, with Dickson and Dumont, all carrying pails*)—Here we are, sir!

DR. JOHNSTONE (*taking one of the pails, and lifting it up as if to shower its contents at the wall*)—Out of my way, lads! Out of my way!

GAY (*hastily*)—Stop a minute, sir. Don't you think that if we got some cloths, and thoroughly saturated the wood-work, in that way it would be both more effective and make less upset?

DR. JOHNSTONE (*setting the pail on the floor*)—I daresay you are right, Gay. Dickson, go and see if there is an unusual amount of smoke from the chimneys. Bailey, go and ask Mrs. Dale for some cloths. Gay and Carey, I will trust you to get the wall well wetted. I must go and gather my papers together in case of anything happening.

(*Exeunt Dickson, Bailey, and the Doctor.*)

CAREY—We have got him into a pretty stew, and it serves

him right, but don't you think he will have learnt that he's got an imagination by this time?

GAY—I don't know very well what to do. It's an awkward thing to tell him we have been making such a fool of him.

CAREY (*scornfully*)—If he hadn't been one by nature, he would have seen through your grand plan in a minute. I really was afraid he did at first: I could get nothing out of him, but "Nonsense, Carey!"

GAY—I knew it would be all right—besides, I counted on the smell of smoke there always is about this crazy old school-room. It stands to reason that any one should be able to smell smoke here, when the chimney smokes every time the fire is lighted.

CAREY—Well, but what are you going to do next? I suppose you will hardly let the old fellow send to town for the fire-engine?

GAY—Leave it to me. I'll settle him.

DUMONT—Shall you tell him?

GAY—Hush! here he comes!

(*Enter Dr. Johnstone in a tremendous hurry.*)

DR. JOHNSTONE—Well, Gay! What! have you done nothing?

(*Enter Dickson and Bailey with cloths.*)

GAY—No, sir; I haven't; it was all a joke.

DR. JOHNSTONE—A joke!

GAY—Yes, sir. There is no fire.

DR. JOHNSTONE (*angrily*)—What! Do you mean that you have been telling me lies?

CAREY—Oh, no, sir; we never exactly *said* there was a fire. We asked you if you didn't smell the smoke.

GAY—I did say something about a fire, I believe; but I assure you, sir, it was only in fun!

DR. JOHNSTONE (*furiously*)—Only in fun. I'll teach you to make fun of me. A joke, indeed! Do you call it a joke to say what is not true? Were you all in it?

BOYS (*all together*)—Yes, sir.

DR. JOHNSTONE—Very well; so that you may learn not to joke with me again, you shall forfeit your half-holiday next week.

(Boys look at one another, and those whom he cannot easily see make rueful grimaces. Dr. Johnstone turns sharply round, and catches one of them in the act.)

DR. JOHNSTONE (*continues*), and to teach you not to lie, I shall give each of you a caning now. Form into line.

(Boys arrange themselves in a line.)

What caused you to play so foolish a trick? I am surprised at you, Carey, and you, Gay! Of Dickson, such folly might be expected, but lads like you should know better!

GAY—It was my fault, sir. I suggested it.

DR. JOHNSTONE (*in surprise*)—You, Gay? I am astonished to hear it.

GAY—Yes, sir. It was because of what you said to Dickson this morning about imagination. We wanted to try whether you had any imagination or not!

(Dr. Johnstone turns away suddenly, fetches a cane from another part of the room, and then returns to the boys.)

DR. JOHNSTONE (*in a deliberate tone*)—Very well, as it was a scientific experiment, I will change my mind, and not forfeit your half-holiday, but my duty to you and to your parents forbids me to pass over the lie. Gay, hold out your

hand. (*Gay obeys, and receives half a dozen strokes with the cane.*) I must point out to you, however, that your attempt to prove that I am subject to the influence of imagination, like yourselves (*interrupts himself to cane McPherson*), was by no means a fair test. You must remember (*canes Dickson*) that I was misled, not by my own fancy (*canes Carey*), but by my implicit faith in your honesty. (*Canes Dumont*). I am sorry to say that it will be a long time before I shall be able to put confidence in you again. (*Canes Bailey*.)

ALL (*together*)—Oh, sir, it was only a joke.

DR. JOHNSTONE—Well, remember! no more such jokes in future. Now go to your seats; but first take away those things, Bailey and Dumont.

(*Exeunt Bailey and Dumont, with pails and cloths.*)

DR. JOHNSTONE—Now, gentlemen, try to make up for lost time, for I give you fair warning, I shall not consider this foolish business an excuse for badly prepared lessons to-morrow.

(*Exit the Doctor.*)

GAY—After all, the old fellow has taken it like a brick.

CAREY—Yes, I thought he would have been more mad about it. We've taught him a lesson, I fancy.

DICKSON (*rubbing his hand*)—I fancy he thinks that he has taught us one. My hand smarts yet.

GAY—Well, all I can say is, I freely forgive him for it. We have had our fun, and I suppose it was but fair he should have his. I thought I should have died with trying not to laugh when he made me feel the wall. But, as he says, perhaps we had better think of to-morrow's lessons.

(*They all bend over their books.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

THE END.

AN UNLUCKY SURPRISE PARTY!

(In Two Scenes.)

CHARACTERS.

MR. MOBY, a farmer.
 MRS. MOBY, his wife.
 ELIZA, his daughter.
 MISS MERTON, MISS JOHNSON, MR. DARIUS SHEARS, MR. ALLISTER, and others, the "surprise party."

DRESSES.

MR. and MRS. MOBY, plain but neat clothes; ELIZA, plain dress, fancy apron, a strip of red flannel round her face. In the first scene, the others must be dressed in outdoor garments. In the second, all must have rather smart indoor dress.

SCENES, ETC.

Scene—A kitchen. Articles needed: Plain furniture (including a rocking-chair), newspaper, and a piece of knitting.

SCENE I.—*(A farm-house kitchen.)*

(Curtain rises on Mrs. Moby rocking and knitting, and Mr. Moby reading the paper.)

(Enter Miss Moby with her head tied up in a strip of red flannel.)

MRS. MOBY—Is your tooth aching still, Eliza?

ELIZA—Dear! dear! yes! It's worse than ever. I don't know what to do; I'm just wild with it!

MR. MOBY *(looking up from his paper)*—I'll take you down to Stockton to-morrow, and you shall have it out.

MRS. MOBY—Well, dear, hadn't you better go right away to bed. It's near ten now.

ELIZA (*wandering about, and rubbing her cheek*)—I'm sure I shan't sleep a wink.

MR. MOBY—Listen, what's that?

MRS. MOBY (*listening*)—I don't hear anything! Stop! I do now, though!

ELIZA—It can never be any one coming here this time of night, *surely!*

MR. MOBY—I hope not! They're a noisy crowd, whoever it is! Yes, they *are* stopping here. I wish we had happened to have gone to bed.

(*A loud knocking, and a sound of voices and laughter.*)

MR. MOBY—I'll go to the door. Don't you come, Eliza!

(*Exit Mr. Moby. Enter Miss Merton, Miss Johnson, Darius Shears, etc. Re-enter Mr. Moby.*)

MR. SHEARS (*going up to Mrs. Moby and shaking her effusively by the hand*)—Well, Mrs. Moby, here we are at last, and *such* a time as we've had to get here, I never wish to go through again, if I live till I'm ninety.

MISS JOHNSON—I'm very sorry we are so late; but you must blame the roads, not us! We started in good time, anyhow!

MRS. MOBY (*stiffly*)—Well, if you had been ten minutes later we'd all have been in bed. Eliza, there, has had a bad spell of toothache.

MISS MERTON (*going up to her*)—I'm so sorry, Eliza. I wish we'd known, and we wouldn't have come to-night! But (*turning to the others*) I'll tell you what, girls, we had better go right back home again.

MISS JOHNSON—Yes, we will. I'm awfully sorry to have bothered you when you are sick, Eliza.

MRS. MOBY—No! indeed; now you are here just make yourselves as comfortable as you can. I'm sure you'll excuse 'Liza if she's a bit dull.

ELIZA—Come right upstairs and take your things off.

MISS MERTON (*taking hold of her hand*)—Well, but Eliza, we didn't know about your face, or we really wouldn't have come. Indeed, if it hadn't been that we thought you'd be expecting us, we wouldn't have come, anyway.

ELIZA—That's all right. I hope you'll have a good time now you have got here, but I'm sorry we didn't know you were coming, or we'd have had things a bit ready.

MISS MERTON—Didn't know we were coming! There must be some mistake. Mr. Shears!

MR. SHEARS (*Jriskly*)—What can I do for you, Miss Merton? Only command me, and—

MISS MERTON—Oh, nonsense! What I want to know is, how it is you didn't let Mrs. Moby know that we were coming, as you promised?

MR. SHEARS (*in astonishment*)—*Did I promise?*

MISS MERTON (*impatiently*)—Of course, you did! I'll never trust anything to you again. Here you've let us come up here when no one expected us, and when it's dreadfully inconvenient.

MR. SHEARS—Oh, Miss Merton, don't be too hard on a fellow! I *really* think there's been some mistake. I don't think it was fixed for *me* to send word!

MISS JOHNSON—Well, but anyhow, Mr. Shears, I thought this party was of your getting up!

MR. SHEARS—So it was; why, certainly it was my idea!

But, you see, Miss Johnson, the case is this—I had a great deal to attend to, what with arranging for the sleigh, and letting MacAllister know, and so on, and, I suppose, that it must have slipped my memory that I was to have come up here, too. I didn't exactly forget it, but I thought I had asked your brother to see about it, Miss Merton.

ELIZA—Well, it doesn't matter, at any rate.

MR. SHEARS—Oh, but Miss Moby, it does. I really don't like you to think that I should be so careless.

MISS MERTON—Well, I'm sorry to hurt your feelings, Mr. Shears, but I do think you might have managed better!

ELIZA—Won't you come upstairs, Alice? I wonder where all the gentlemen are? We'll have some games when they come in!

(Exeunt all the ladies except Mrs. Moby.)

SCENE II.—*(The same.)*

(Curtain rises on the party, excepting Eliza and Miss Merton, grouped about the room talking quietly to one another. Mr. Shears, seated by Mrs. Moby, talks in rather a loud voice.)

MR. SHEARS—You see, I'd never driven that horse before, and, as luck would have it, I hadn't gone more than half a mile when the cars came up from behind us. Well, if you'll believe me, Mrs. Moby, I almost shook with fright—it wasn't for myself, you know; if I hadn't had Carry with me I shouldn't have cared a bit. The horse gave a regular plunge, and Carry screamed like a—well, I don't know what! However, after the first moment, I felt as cool as I've ever done in my life, and I saw at once that it was no use

trying to stop, so I let the beast go ; Carry was as white as a sheet, but it was the only thing to do, and just as we reached the bridge yonder I heard a crack like a pistol. The right line had snapped clean through. I shouted, "Woa ! woa !" loud enough you may be sure, but the brute gave a great jump, and the next moment—

(*Enter Miss Merton.*)

MISS MERTON—Mr. Shears, what *have* you done with the baskets ?

MR. SHEARS—McAllister brought them in, didn't he ?

MISS MERTON—I can't find them, neither can Eliza.

MCALLISTER—I never touched them, Darry !

MR. SHEARS (*with a puzzled air*)—Where *can* they be ?

MISS JOHNSON—Could you have left them behind anywhere ?

MR. SHEARS (*desperately*)—That's it ! I know now ! You know I took them out at Mrs. Murray's (don't you remember ?) for Ellen to get in, and I mustn't have put them back again.

MCALLISTER (*severely*)—Well ! you *have* made a mess of it this time !

MISS JOHNSON (*mournfully*)—Oh dear ! and I had made such a lovely jelly-cake, Mrs. Moby. It was just beautiful ! you know you asked me for the recipe last time you were at our house. It was the best cake I ever made in my life ! I thought something would happen when it rose so nicely ; for my cakes never do turn out well for anything of this sort. Oh ! it is provoking !

MISS MERTON—Yes, indeed, I'd got chicken and chocolate cake, and—

MR. SHEARS—Well, ladies, I'm sure you can't be more sorry than I am.

MRS. MOBY—I'm sorry—what with Eliza having the face-ache, and my being anxious to get some comforters made up as quickly as possible, we've done no baking to speak of, and there's not so much as a pie or a bit of cake in the house! There's plenty of good bread and butter though. I guess that will have to do.

MISS JOHNSON—Oh, Mrs. Moby, don't take the trouble. We shall do very well without anything. I'm sure I'm too vexed to eat a thing!

MRS. MOBY (*rising*)—If you are not too proud to eat bread and cheese, I guess we can fix you up a supper of some sort.

MR. SHEARS—There's nothing I like better than bread and cheese, Mrs. Moby.

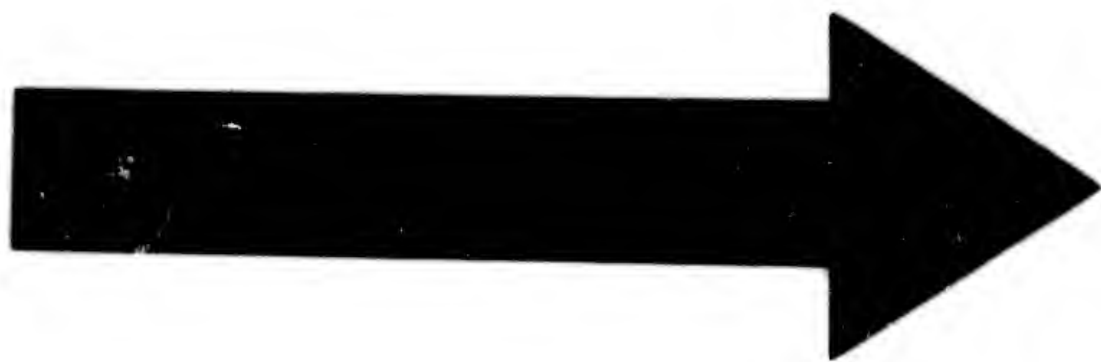
MISS MERTON (*sharply, as Mrs. Moby goes away*)—I wonder *you're* not ashamed to say anything. I can tell you it's the last time I'll go to a surprise party of your fixing. I never felt so mean in all my days. It's the shabbiest thing I ever heard—first to come without any warning (and such a crowd, too), and then to go and forget the baskets, and trouble Mrs. Moby to get supper for us.

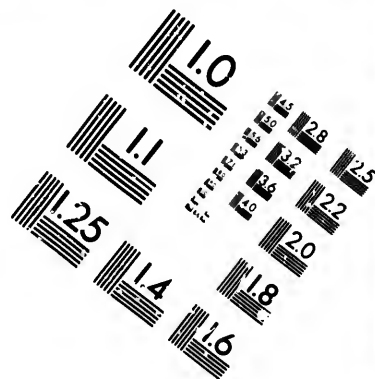
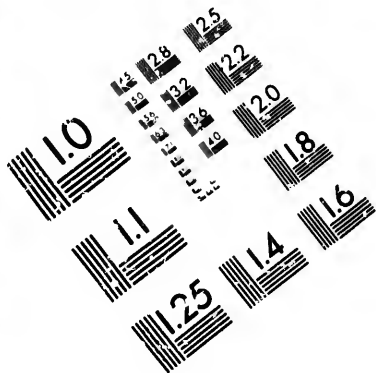
MR. SHEARS—I'm very sorry, Miss Merton—but you know accidents *will* happen!

MISS MERTON—Well, I know they shouldn't happen if I could help it. I wonder you ever tried to fix it, as you don't seem to know anything about such things!

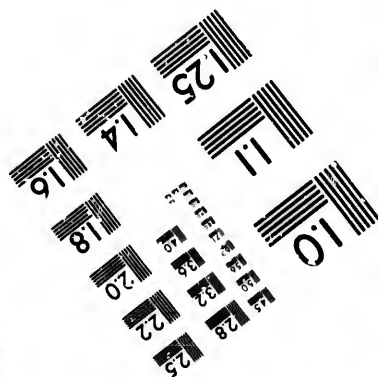
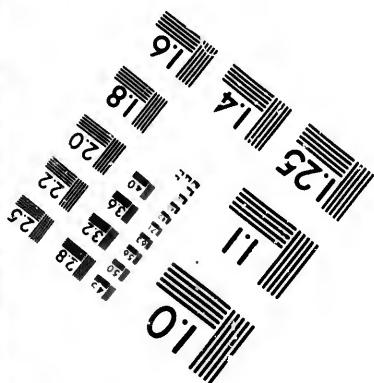
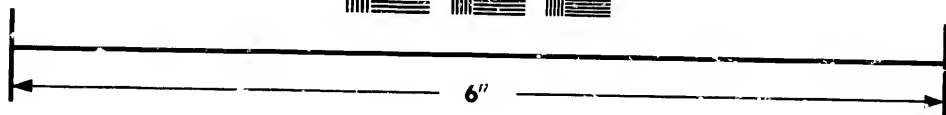
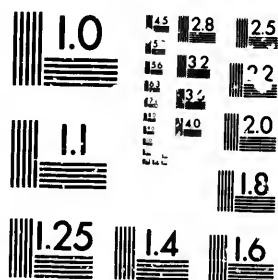
MR. SHEARS—Well! well! I'm sure, Miss Merton, we have all enjoyed ourselves.

MISS MERTON—Yes! that's all you care for, I dare say—but for my part, I hate to make such muddles. I *know* Mrs. Moby and Eliza will both wish that we had been at the Dead Sea, before to-morrow's over, if they don't now.





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MR. SHEARS—After all, it's only a real "surprise party!"

MISS MERTON—It's the last real one I'll ever go to, or I'll know the reason why. Seems to me it's kind of cool to make such a fuss in another person's house, without ever asking their leave even.

MR. SHEARS—Oh, I'm sure they don't mind.

MISS MERTON—I'm sure they do! but talking won't mend it. I'll go and see if I can help.

(Exit Miss Merton.)

(Curtain falls.)

THE END.

HOW NOT TO BUY.

(In One Scene.)

CHARACTERS.

MRS. LACY.

MISS READE, sister to MRS. LACY.

MRS. SIMS, owner of dry goods store.

MARY, daughter of MRS. SIMS.

DRESSES.

MRS. LACY and MISS READE, walking dresses.

MRS. SIMS, a dark dress, a cap and apron.

MARY, indoor dress.

SCENE, ETC.

Scene—A dry goods store, with counter (which may be represented by a broad board or a table). Articles needed: Bales of goods (or something to represent them), stools, etc.

SCENE.—(*A store.*)

(*Curtain rises.*)

(*Enter Mrs. Lacy, who knocks on the counter. Enter Mary.*)

MRS. LACY—I want to look at some dress goods, please!

MARY—We have some very nice goods in now! What sort of material were you wishing to see?

MRS. LACY—Oh! I don't know! What have you got?

MARY (*taking down some woollens*)—How do you like these? They are cheap—only fifty cents a yard, and they wear splendidly.

MRS. LACY (*turning them over*)—You're sure they'll wear, are you?

MARY—Oh, yes! I'm sure they will. Those that have had them say they never had anything they liked better.

MRS. LACY—Have you any other shades? Somehow I don't much like any of those.

MARY—I am afraid we have nothing else in that line of goods. We have other shades in cashmere, I believe. What colour do you prefer, Mrs. Lacy?

MRS. LACY—Oh, I don't know! I haven't made up my mind! I'll wait till I see what you have got.

(*Mary brings out another pile of woollen goods*)

MARY—How do you like this? Real good cashmere—ninety cents a yard. It's a beautiful shade, and will make up lovely, I'm sure.

MRS. LACY—The colour is right enough, but it's very dear for what it is.

MARY—This line of goods always comes high. How would you like a Persian cord? I could find you a splendid one at forty-five cents.

MRS. LACY—You might let me see it. But I never do like Persian cord. Have you any nice shades in silk now?

MARY—Yes. Do you wish to see them—they come dearer than the cashmere! We haven't a silk I could recommend under a dollar.

MRS. LACY—I should like to see them, please.

MARY (*bringing out another pile of goods*)—Here is a satin, at a dollar—a nice sage green—what do you think of that, Mrs. Lacy? And here is a garnet and a bronze. We have a lovely navy blue silk at \$1.25—how would that do?

MRS. LACY—Of all things, I detest navy blue. Have you a seal-brown?

MARY—In the cashmere we have—but not in silk.

MRS. LACY—Well, I think I'll call again. Just leave these things out, and I'll get my sister help me to choose.

(*Exit Mrs. Lacy. Enter Mrs. Sims.*)

MRS. SIMS—Was that Mrs. Lacy?

MARY—Yes! She says she wants a dress, and I think she'll have half the shop down before she makes up her mind.

MRS. SIMS—Hush, Mary! Here she comes again; and her sister with her.

(*Enter Mrs. Lacy and Miss Reade.*)

MRS. LACY—I had some idea of an olive green, but I don't like the shades they have here.

MISS READE (*pointing out one*)—That's pretty; don't you think so?

MRS. LACY—Yes; but I don't like the material.

MARY—Here is exactly the same shade in cashmere.

MRS. LACY—It's much darker; don't you think so, Maud?

MISS READE—I think there's very little difference between them.

MRS. LACY—Oh, Maud! how can you say so? But, after all, I can't very well decide what to have until I've seen Miss Burns. I haven't made up my mind how to have her make it yet, so I don't know what quantity of stuff to get. Besides, she would tell me what is most worn now.

MARY—Is there anything else I can show you, Mrs. Lacy?

MRS. LACY—No, thank you; but just leave these things, I'll probably call in again!

(Exeunt Mrs. Lacy and Miss Reade. Mary begins to put the disordered piles of cloth, etc., to rights in a very impatient manner.)

MARY—I knew how it would be. I hate to see Mrs. Lacy come into the shop.

MRS. SIMS—Well! well! my dear; we must be patient. I suppose she never thinks what an amount of trouble she gives.

MARY *(angrily)*—But she *should* think. She doesn't care, either, that's my opinion! I dare say, now, that she has gone right up town to Mr. Joseph's store, after all the fuss. Asking me to leave the things out, indeed! I know better! She'll not come back—or, if she does, it will only be to toss the goods all over the place again. I've no patience with her, and I hope I mayn't give her a good piece of my mind one of these first days, that's all. It would do her good to spend a week or two in the store herself; I guess she'd soon get to know how *not* to buy, if she had to serve some people!

(Curtain falls.)

GRAY HEADS.

(*In One Scene.*)

CHARACTERS.

LOT STRODE, an old farmer.

NED MARKHAM, a young farmer.

DRESSES.

LOT must wear a blue shirt and overalls.

NED, a light suit and a straw hat.

SCENE, ETC.

Scene—A barn. Articles needed : Straw and a flail.

SCENE.—(*A barn.*)

(*Curtain rises on Lot Strode, threshing wheat with a flail.*)

(*Enter Ned Markham, with his hands in his pockets.*)

NED—Hello! so you thresh your wheat with a flail, do you?

Lot (*dryly*)—It seems so, young man.

NED—I've always heard that it wastes the grain as much as the time; but you old farmers are so set in your ways—you like to do things as your fathers did before you.

LOT (*continuing to thresh*)—Maybe you're right there.

NED—My wheat has been threshed out long since, but of course I did it by machine. I don't approve of taking an age to do a day's work. I should never think of doing as you are doing with it.

LOT (*questioningly*)—No? But I take it you are not much of a hand at the flail?

NED—May I inquire what you consider the advantage of it?

LOT (*resting his flail and wiping his face*)—Why, undoubtedly; and, what's more, I'll tell you. In the first place, I'm so situated that I haven't much wheat; and secondly, I've heaps of time. If I'd paid for the putting of it in, and the harvesting, and the threshing, like some folks, I reckon I'd get precious little profit on it.

NED—But surely, Mr. Strode, you count your time as being worth something?

L T (*beginning to work again*)—Maybe!

NED—I don't wonder that the farmers of this country complain that they don't get paid for the work they do. Farmers, as a class, are the most obstinate set of men living, I think.

LOT—I should like to ask you a question if it wasn't taking too great a liberty!

NED (*politely*)—As many as you like, Mr. Strode.

LOT (*stopping his work and straightening himself up*)—Well, then, I should take it kind if you would tell me how much you made on your place last year!

NED—Well, you see, it was my first year, and the place was in such a state, and altogether—

LOT—Yes! yes! of course; but still, seeing as you know so much about it, I take it you did pretty well, though it is rather a dirty farm;—fact, I don't know as I wouldn't have been almost afeard to have undertook it myself, but, undoubtedly, you know your own business best, and maybe you came out square enough after all.

NED—Oh, yes! of course I did all right.

LOT—Well, I'm real glad to hear that, anyhow. Dave Eli was talking about you and your ways only last night,

and he says, says he, "If that young man don't come to a smash with his new-fangled machines, and his hired men, and his lying abed in the mornings, and what not, my name is not Dave Eli."

NED (*angrily*)—He is an impertinent fellow! what business is it of his, I should like to know?

LOT—So I told him. "Dave," says I, "it ain't nothing to us if he likes to waste all he's got on yon place." Says I, "I've tried advising him, and it does him no more good than pouring water on a duck's back, and now I shall leave him a-be. 'Taint no manner of use wasting breath on him so long as he thinks he knows everything. But there," says I, "you can't put gray heads on green shoulders."

NED (*sharply*)—Well, do you think I'm likely to take advice when you do your own farming in such an old-world fashion as this? (*He points to the stall, scornfully.*)

LOT—Mind you, young man, I never said you were likely to take advice, for I never so much as thought it; but let me tell you one thing, I have farmed nigh on forty years, and when I first come here I hadn't a matter of fifty dollars, now the place is my own, the house is my own, and I've as good barns and buildings as any man need wish to see.

NED—Well, but, Mr. Strode, don't you think that even the most successful men should keep their eyes open to improvements.

LOT—I don't quarrel with improvements; all I say is, that a young man, as scarcely knew the shape of a plough twelve months back, would be a deal wiser if he contented himself with learning instead of teaching yet awhile. It's the way with all beginners; they buy everything that comes along in the shape of machines and improvements, and then they think they are going to show everyone how to make

things pay, but they're very much mistaken, I can tell 'em. "Slow and sure" is my motto; I buy nothing till I see my way clear to pay for it, and if you were wise, you'd do the same.

NED (*slowly*)—I ought to be getting home again—but—I've got a sick cow down there, Mr. Strode, and I don't know what to do for her. I've never seen any creature look like she does, and if you wouldn't mind—

LOT (*clapping him on the back*)—Of course, I'll come. That's what I've been telling you, you want experience. You'll make a farmer yet, if you are not too scared of asking advice. But come along, and let's have a look at the beast. I guess we'll fix her up between us.

(*Exeunt both.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

THE END.

ANNABELLA'S TEA-PARTY.

(*In One Scene.*)

CHARACTERS.

NETTIE, a little girl
 EDITH, sister to Nettie.
 MOLLY, a little ragged girl.
 ANNABELLA,
 GERALDINE, etc. } dolls.

DRESSES.

NETTIE AND EDITH, short dresses; clean, white pinafores; and big straw hats.

MOLLY, a ragged, faded print frock, torn apron and a very old hat.

ANNABELLA must be the largest doll, and should be adorned with many bits of ribbon of all colours.

SCENE, ETC.

Scene—A garden. This may be represented by a large, green cloth spread on the floor, towards the front of the platform, to indicate grass, and a few plants or boughs, to look like trees. Articles needed: Dolls' tea-things, a little white cloth, small tray, cakes, raisins, apples, milk, sugar, etc. Garden chair, a few small stones.

SCENE.—(A garden.)

(Curtain rises.)

(Enter Nettie, carrying a white cloth, which she spreads on the ground with great care. Then she runs back, calling.)

NETTIE—I've spread it, Edith. Do hurry!

(*Exeunt Nettie. Enter Edith, carrying a small tray containing a set of dolls' tea-things, a few raisins, an apple, cut into small pieces, and two or three gingerbreads or little cakes. She sets the tray carefully on a chair, and stands, looking gravely at the cloth, until Nettie returns, carrying three or four dolls.*)

EDITH—Where shall I set for Annabella? You see it's her party, and she ought to have the nicest place.

NETTIE (*pointing to a place*)—Set her there. She'll have her back to the sun then. It's so disagreeable to have it in one's eyes, and she ought to have a good time on her birthday—don't you think so?

EDITH—Yes! of course. How shall we do about the pouring out?

NETTIE (*after a moment of deep thought*)—Well, how would this be? You shall pour out the tea if I may help to the raisins?

EDITH—Very well, I should like that. But now, let us get the things set.

(*Both are very busy arranging the things for a minute or two.*)

NETTIE (*when it is finished*)—Doesn't it look lovely?

EDITH—Yes, indeed—but how we are going to make the children sit up properly, I don't know. I hate to see them tumbling all over the place; but it will be very hard to make them sit straight without any backs to their seats.

NETTIE (*arranging one doll*)—I can't get Polly to sit up. I'll tell you how I'll manage, I'll prop her back with those bits of stone.

(*She fetches the stones, and they prop the dolls up round the cloth, and then sit down themselves.*)

EDITH (*with pride*)—Annabella looks beautiful, doesn't she?

NETTIE—Yes, how old is she to be to-day?

EDITH—Oh, I don't know; I think sixteen might be a good age. You see, she's a nearly grown-up doll, anyway.

NETTIE—Isn't sixteen awfully old, though?

EDITH—Well, rather, perhaps. She shall be twelve; how would that be?

NETTIE—Yes, that would do! But do begin; I'm sure May and Geraldine look dreadfully hungry. You see, if people have to wait too long, they are apt not to want anything when they can have it.

EDITH (*beginning to fill the cups*)—Very well, I'll pour out. Geraldine, (*to the doll*)—do you like sugar in your tea?

NETTIE—I suppose we'd each better speak for our own dolls, hadn't we? Yes, I'll take a little sugar, please!

EDITH—Annabella, my dear, I know you like your tea rather sweet.

(*They pass the cups round, and put a bit of apple on the plate in front of each doll.*)

NETTIE (*looking up suddenly toward one side of the platform*)—Oh, dear! there's a little beggar girl staring at us with all her might through the gate.

EDITH (*pansing with the teapot uplifted in her hand*)—So she is. What shall we do?

(*Both stare in their turn for a minnute.*)

EDITH—I wonder if she likes tea-parties?

NETTIE (*quickly*)—Of course she does. Let us ask her to come in.

EDITH—Oh, I don't like. Besides, where can she sit? And there isn't a cup for her.

NETTIE—Look here! I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll pretend Geraidine has behaved badly, and that I've had to send her away.

EDITH—Yes! then it'll be like the lesson in the Sunday-school, having people come in "from the highways and the hedges."

NETTIE—Well, I'll take Geraldine away. (*Gets, up and shakes the doll violently.*) You naughty, badly-behaved child, how many times shall I have to tell you not to snatch at things in that way? Now I'll go to the gate, and ask that girl to come in.

(*She drops the doll unceremoniously on its face at a little distance from the tea-party, and goes to the gate. Enter Molly, who comes with Nettie to where the cloth is laid on the grass.*)

EDITH (*shyly, as they sit down*)—What is your name, little girl?

MOLLY (*eyeing the feast*)—They calls me Molly.

EDITH (*politely*)—Do you take sugar in your tea?

MOLLY—I like sugar, but I don't see no tea.

NETTIE—Oh, we just pretend, you know. You see, we are having a tea-party, because it's Annabella's birthday, and we haven't got real tea, so we just put some milk in the tea-pot and play that it's tea!

EDITH—Help Molly to some cake, Nettie, won't you?

NETTIE—Do you like cake, Molly?

MOLLY—I guess so.

(Nettie passes her a little piece, and puts a bit before each of the dolls. Molly eats her cake in one mouthful.)

MOLLY *(in astonishment, pointing to the dolls)*—Sure them things can't eat cake.

NETTIE—No! no! we only pretend, you know.

EDITH *(after rising and whispering to Nettie)*—You can eat for the dolls, Molly, if you like.

MOLLY—Eh?

EDITH—You know, we generally each eat the things for our own dolls, but you can have them if you like. Are you hungry?

MOLLY—I should just think I am.

NETTIE *(passing her a whole cake)*—Didn't you have any dinner?

MOLLY—Yes! I've had my dinner right enough, but we don't have nothing like that *(points again to the cake)*.

EDITH—Well, we had lots of dinner, hadn't we, Nettie? so I think Molly had better have these things, hadn't she?

MOLLY—No, I don't want to take all your things. I ain't that hungry. It's awful good of you to let me in here. I only meant to watch you. What made her call me in? *(Points to Nettie.)*

NETTIE—Oh, it was because we wanted it to be like the

feast in the Bible, when they called in all the people from the "highways and hedges," you know.

MOLLY—What did they do that for?

NETTIE—I don't know. Because they were poor, I think; but don't you go to Sunday-school?

MOLLY—No! I don't go nowhere, I don't.

EDITH—Nettie and I do. I wish you'd go, too and then Miss Harker would tell you all about that feast.

MOLLY (*rising*)—Well, I'll come some day, if you want me to; but I guess I must go now; mother'll want me.

(*Nettie hastily collects the remainder of the feast off the dolls' plates into her pinafore.*)

NETTIE—Well, take these.

(*Emptying them into Molly's ragged apron.*)

MOLLY (*smiling*)—Don't you want 'em?

EDITH—No! Good-bye, Molly.

MOLLY—Good-bye.

(*Exit Molly.*)

NETTIE—Well, Annabella, you have had a funny birthday, haven't you?

EDITH—Yes! but it has been rather a jolly party, hasn't it?

NETTIE—Well, let's clear these things away, as there is nothing left to eat.

(*They gather the things hastily together, tuck the dolls under their arms, and run away.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

THE END.

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