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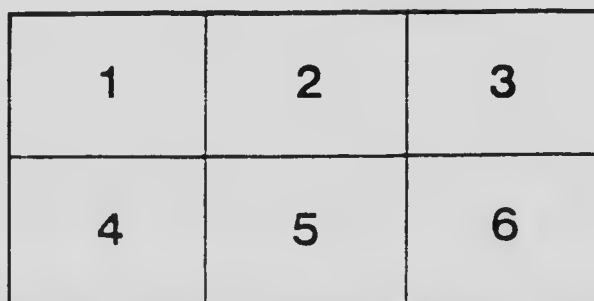
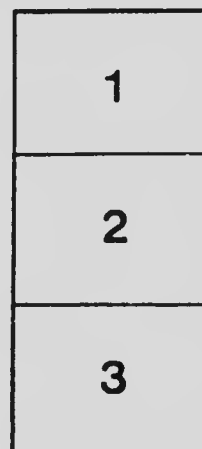
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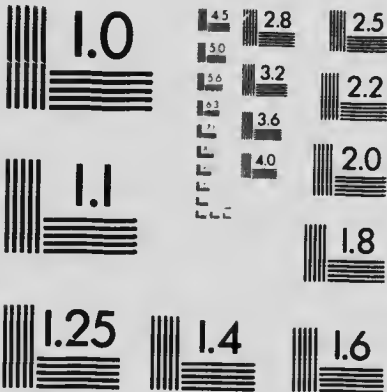
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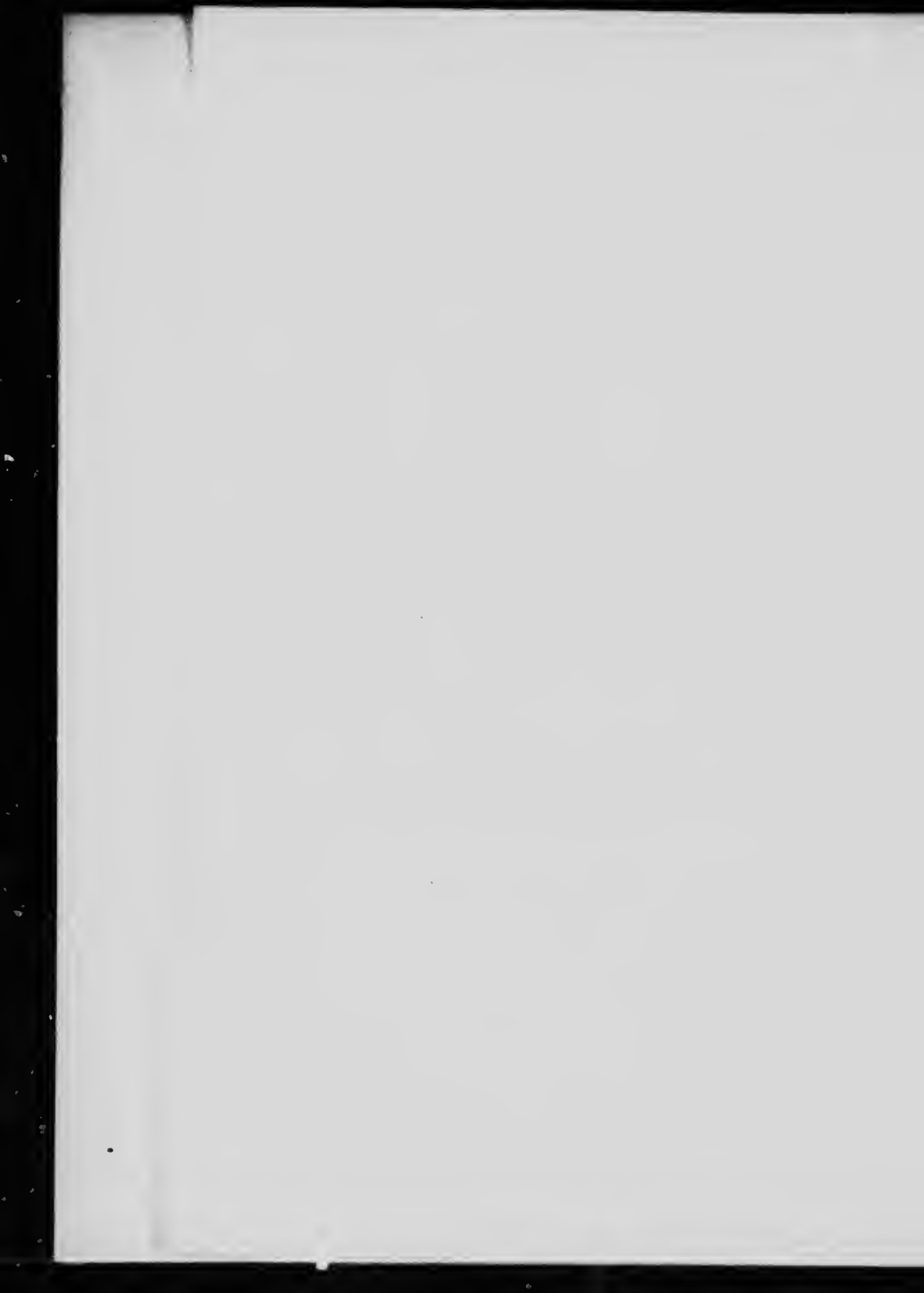
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A CHARACTER SKETCH ENTERTAINMENT

ENTITLED

**Afternoon Tea in Friendly Village
1862**

BY

CLARA E. ANDERSON

Author of "A Ladies' Aid Business Meeting at Mohawk Crossroads."

STRICTLY NON-TRANSFERABLE



Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada in the year 1912 in the office
of the Minister of Agriculture, by Clara E. Anderson, Ottawa, Canada.

**OTTAWA
JAMES HOPE & SONS, PRINTERS
1912**

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1912

A CHARACTER SKETCH ENTERTAINMENT

ENTITLED

Afternoon Tea in Friendly Village, 1862

CHARACTERS

Mrs.—Kelly—Village hostess. A kindly good hearted woman, rather talkative, must have a good voice and free, easy manner.

Mrs. De Vere—A stiff, dignified manner.

Mrs. Barton—A pleasant, gracious manner.

Mrs. Goodsense—A good, strong character, must have strong voice.

Mrs. Hicks—A backward, retiring woman.

Mrs. Vernon } Visitors from the city, elaborately
Mrs. Good } dressed and much given to impress-
ing the villagers by their knowledge.

Thomas's Wife—A kindly, helpful manner.

Miss Skinning—"A man hater." Very pronounced views. A good, strong voice is necessary. This part requires the best talent.

Mrs. Runkle—An excitable woman (a telling part.)

Mrs. Meek—A quiet, gentle woman.

Mrs. Bond—Must have a clear voice.

Mrs. Donnely—A young mother, with baby.

Mrs. Jacks—Speaks very plainly.

Mrs. Lane—An excitable, anxious manner.

Scene laid in a village parlor, fifty years ago. Have a place hung with stiff curtains to look like a window. Tidies, drapings, framed wreaths, old mottoes, stuffed birds, candles, and a melodeon, if possible, should decorate the parlor, which of course is the platform.

All dresses worn must be as old fashioned as possible. Endeavor to secure clothes that were worn long ago if possible.

First scene opens with Mrs. Kelly and visitors sitting in parlor, Mrs. Kelly piecing a quilt, Mrs. De Vere reading, and Mrs. Barton knitting.

A large frame, arranged at back of parlor, made of long narrow pieces of wood with large sheets of paper at back that can be turned to show pictures and then fall back in place until the next person is ready, will represent the Family Album. It should be $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and 4 feet wide, and should have gaudy flowers cut out of wall paper and the words, "Family Album" cut out of gold paper and all pasted on the outer leaf of Album, while more flowers can be pasted on the inner leaf that flys back each time between pictures.

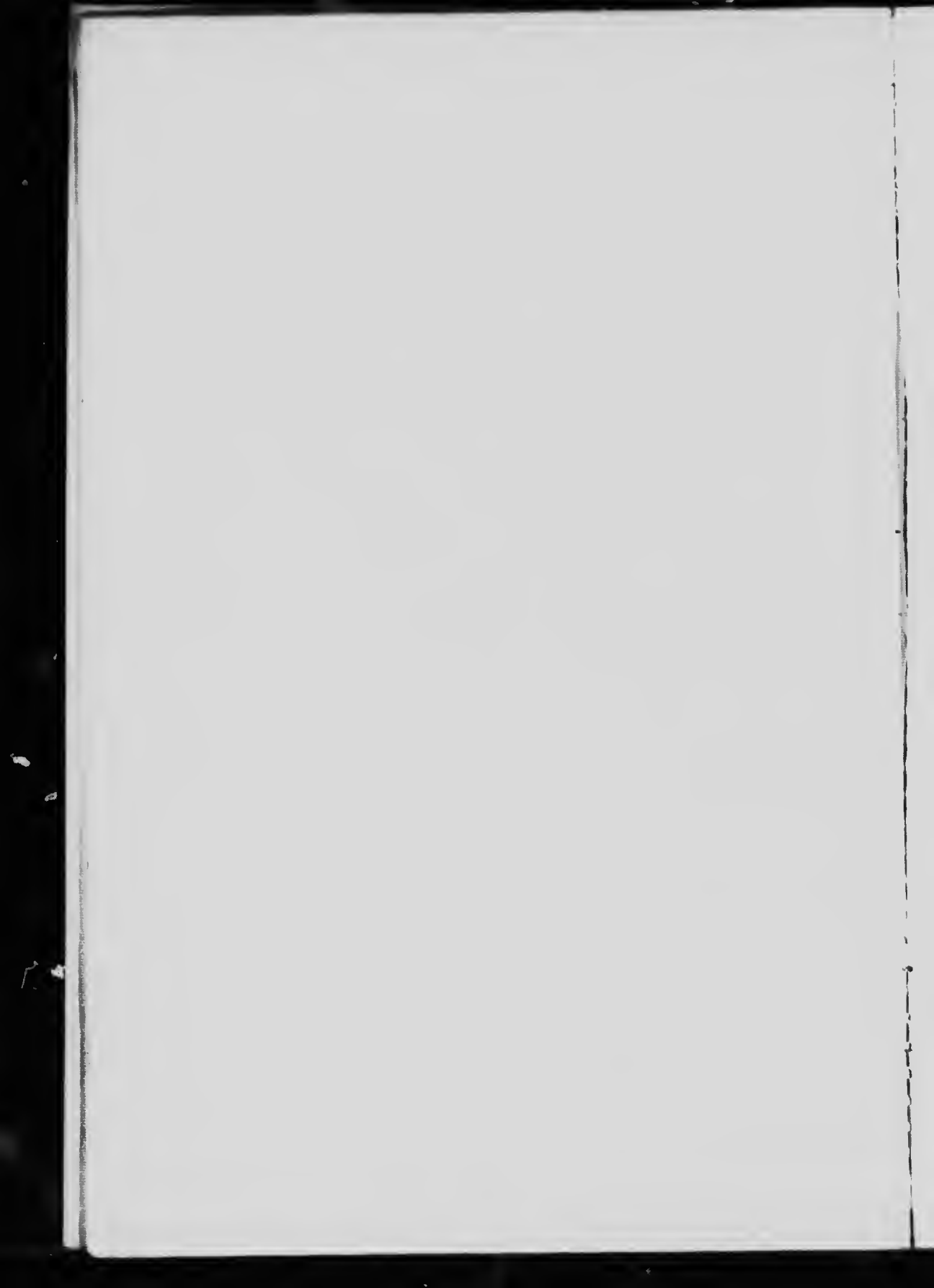
The hostess must have a free and hospitable manner.

The greatest care should be taken that the right person is chosen to interpret the different parts, as the success of the Entertainment depends entirely on that.

Speak plainly and distinctly, and very much louder than in ordinary conversation.

Do not practice or repeat parts before those not taking part.

If you want your entertainment to be a success, interest as many as possible, enthuse over it, sell tickets yourselves, not leaving it to the children, and you will be well repaid. Do not fail to advertise.



SCENE I.

Mrs. Kelly—Now just be making yourselves comfortable. It's the proud woman I am to have you under my humble roof, and you with such grand houses of your own, not that I envy any woman at all, at all.

Mr. Barton—Why, Mrs. Kelly, the size of our houses should make no difference in a friendship as old as ours surely. You are just the same Mary Kelly as when we were all girls together in Friendly Village, even if you are the mother of four grown up sons.

Mrs. De Vere—You know, according to the old Roman idea, the mother of *sons*, had reached the highest distinction possible; and one only has to look at your fine family to realize that your riches are not bounded by the four walls of your house.

Mrs. Kelly (much affected)—And that's the truth you're telling, Maggie. You would'nt find like-like boys in the whole county of Duntroon, not that I care to have them spoken of in the same breath with them heathen Romans though.

Mrs. De Vere—Oh, that was only a slight historical reference, Mary. I never indulge in comparisons; comparisons are odious you know.

Mrs. Barton—You know, Mary, Maggie always had a literary turn.

Mrs. Kelly—Indeed and I mind well, she took to the book-learning just as easy like as I took to the baking, scrubbing, churning, and such work as that.

Mrs. Barton—You certainly are a wonderful house-keeper and cook, Mary. I never saw a cleaner, better kept house nor ate more delicious meals than I have eaten at your table.

Mrs. De Vere—I was about to make that very statement, Mary, it is simply remarkable what you accomplish; can it be possible you have no maid at your command?

Mrs. Kelly—All I have to my command is these two hands (holding them up), and good servants they are, or maids, as you do be calling them now-a-days, and more to be depended on, never leaving you in the middle of the spring cleaning or when company is expected.

Now, there was poor Amanda Grey (she that lives down the road a step), she just got well under way with the spring cleaning, the parlor and spare bedroom furniture on the verandah, and the bedsteads and bedticks in the back yard, and hardly a place to set or stand, when her hired girl was called away sudden like to see her cousin's wife, her as married Jim Blaxter, who went mining in California in the spring of '49.

Mrs. De Vere—Why, what could Amanda possibly do in such a contingency?

Mrs. Kelly—Well, I see'd from our back yard when I was out washing up the milk cans, that Amanda was all in a clutter, and then I see'd a wagon stop and take Mary Jane away, and I felt it was my plain duty, being a neighbor, to step over and give her a hand to put things to rights. Poor Amanda was cryin' her pretty eyes out when I went, but I told her just to

bear up, and take hold of the bed-tick, and we would soon get red up again.

Mrs. De Vere—Well, if that is not the most remarkable thing I ever heard of. Fancy our next-door neighbor in Garden City coming to help us out of such a dilemma.

Miss Barton—I am afraid it would never occur to us to be helpful in that way. You must be a remarkable good neighbor, Mary, I think I should like to live beside you.

Mrs. Kelly—Why, I did not do anything out of the way. Why, I mind well when I was laid by with my back, which comes again me at times, my neighbors did all the work, not to speak of taking out the washing, and bringing in the cooking.

(A rap at the door. Mrs. Kelly jumps up, slicks back her hair, straightens apron and fixes tidy on chair, before going to the door.)

Mrs. Kelly—Now, who can be coming the day? Why, I declare, it is you, Jane Skinning, and you, Jemima Goodsense; just step right in. You brought your work along to set awhile, too. It is pleased I am to see you it is. You remember Maggie De Vere and Caroline Barton, sure we were all to school together. (They shake hands rather awkwardly and rather stiff, and finally Mrs. Kelly gets them seated.)

Mrs. Goodsense—And how are you liking the Village, Mrs. De Vere? Do you see many changes?

Mrs. De Vere—Well, no; I really see little difference in the Village. I regret very much that there

are no reading rooms nor Mechanic's Institutes established here yet, they are such an aid to the development of mind and character..

Miss Skinning—To them as have time for reading, books is all right enough, but with Monday, wash - day; Tuesday, ironing; Wednesday, bakin', and so on until by Saturday one is beat out, I'd like to know where the time for reading is to come in; for them as does nothing else, reading is all right; but a house is a house, and has to be kept clean, say I.

Mrs. Kelly—Indeed that's the truth you're speaking, Jane.

Mrs. Goodsense—Well, I suppose we could arrange our house work, in order to have a few spare hours to ourselves in a week, to read, and get the cobwebs out of our brains.

Miss Skinning—Speak for yourself, Jemima Goodscuse. I ain't no cobwebs in my brain. To them as have cobwebs, books is all right, and let them read them, say I.

Mrs. Goodscuse (laughing)—It is all right. Jane. I've no doubt I have some cobwebs in my brain, but to change the subject. I see Mary has a beautiful new family phot graph album, and such a large size, I don't think I ever saw one so large before. Where did you get it, if I may ask, Mary?

Mrs. Kelly (rising, goes over to it and handles it proudly)—Is'nt it beautiful? Well, I ordered it from a likely fellow, going through the country taking orders. I told him I wanted one for life-size photos, so I had to have it made to

order, and he said I did not need to take it when it came if I did not like it.

(All admire the album.)

Miss Skinning—What did he charge you for it, Mary?

Mrs. Kelly—Oh, only fifty cents down (exclamations.)

Mrs. Goodscuse—Well, you certainly did get a bargain.

Mrs. Kelly—To be sure there is a matter of a dollar a month to pay for two years, but that is neither here nor there, when the album was laid down in my own parlor and set up for fifty cents.

(All agree; think it cheap.)

Mrs. Barton—Oh, do show us your album, Mary, there must be many in it that I used to know.

Mrs. De Vere—Do kindly accede to our request.

Mrs. Kelly—And it is the proud woman I would be to show you the pictures; and here is Jane Skinning and Jemima Goodsense knows all about them most as well as I do, and can help me; now just shove up your chairs.

(Be careful not to hide view of picture from the audience.) Mrs. Kelly sits by and turns the leaf, and they let it fall back to its place between pictures. Mrs. Kelly turns first leaf.

Mrs. Kelly—Now, you will all remember this one. It is grandfather Kelly, as fine a man as ever set his foot on dry land was grandfather Kelly.

Mrs. De Vere—He looks a very superior man indeed.

Miss Skinning—I mind well hearing my father speak of him. I guess they had it hard when they first came to this country. I've heard tell how grandfather Kelly had to walk thirty miles through the woods on his own two feet to get a bag of flour, and carry it home on his back, and no complaining neither.

Mrs. Goodsense—Yes ; well it is just such characters as grandfather Kelly who have made our country what it is to-day. I mind hearing my father say that when he was keeping company with my mother he used to walk fifteen miles there and back through the woods to see her.

Mrs. Kelly—Why, there is my own Josiah, when we was keeping company, used to walk twenty five miles to see me every week, and that for a whole year.

Miss Skinning—He might better have saved his shoe leather, Mary, and asked you his first trip. You would have taken him alright, never fear. (All laugh ; Mrs. Kelly turns page.)

Mrs. Kelly—Grandmother Higgs (all exclaim and look at picture.)

Mrs. Goodscuse—Well, well, I have often heard my father tell, what a hard working, industrious woman she was, and although she had to walk five miles to church of a Sunday over corduroy roads, she was always in her place, with her little flock about her.

Miss Skinning—Yes, and I heard tell how one year, when times was hard Grandmother Higgs

stayed alone in the woods with her five children while grandfather went to the lumber camps for six months to earn money to buy seed for their bit of clearing in the spring.

Mrs. Goodsense—It's all true, and more, for the bears and wolves carried away their pigs and sheep and they had no meat, and the flour barrel was scraped to the bottom, when grandfather got back in the spring.

Mrs. Barton—I do not wonder you give them first place in you album, Mary, one can not honor them too highly.

Mrs. De Vere—One is proud to be descended from such ancestors. (Turns leaf.)

Mrs. Kelly—Joshua Higgs and his Mrs. just newly married.

(Goes up and looks at them.)

Miss Skinning—Joshua Higgs and his Mrs., I do declare. Well, I could have been a'standing there beside him in that picture, if I'd just chose, but I said, No, Joshua Higgs, says I, I a'int a going to tie myself to no may, I a'int a'goin to be no man's slave. (Goes up and looks more closely.) Well, well, and that is Joshua, and that's his choice I suppose, poor thing; I hope she'll stand up for her rights, and not be set upon

Mrs. Goodsense—Did he feel it very keenly when you refused him, Jane?

Miss Skinning—Feel it. He was most dead. Why, he turned from his victuals entire for a matter of three whole days. Would'nt eat nothing

without pressing, so his aunt told my brother
Andrew's wif'e sister,

Mrs. De Vere—Well, he looks remarkably well at
present.

Miss Skinning—Just bearing up, making a good face
on it.

Mrs. Barton—And he must be proud of his wife, they
look very happy.

Mrs. Skinning—(Sits back and looks sanctimonious.)

Miss Skinning—Oh, I suppose he is resigned, has to
be, but mark my words, *he never would have
took her if he could have got me.*

(Turns leaf.)

Mrs. Kelly—Oh, excuse me one minute, I thought I
heard the cow get into the garden, and my cab-
bage will be all et up. (Runs out.)

Mrs. De Vere—How poor Mary is oppressed by family
cares and responsibilities, poor thing.

Mrs. Kelly (comes back)—Oh, the cabbage are alright,
I just headed Daisy out in time. Now, who is
next?

Mrs. Kelly—Oh, yes; my neice Arabella, John's
daughter, from Massachusetts; she might be
here on visit most any minute, the darling.

Mrs. Goodsense (looks at her)—What a nice, sensible
looking girl, and so pretty, too. (Some agree.)

Mrs. Skinning—Pretty is as pretty does, so I say.
Don't put much on looks; can she bake a good
loaf of bread, say I? Can she get down and

scrub a floor with good soft soap and wood ashes, until it's sweet smelling, and white, and not all a streaky?

Mrs Kelly—Well now, Jane, I really don't know, but she plays the melodeon beautifully and sings the dear old Irish songs, she does, until your heart is in your mouth, it is. (Wipes her eyes.)

Miss Skinning—That is all very fine, Mary, but her man, when she gets one, will want more than his heart in his mouth; and, mark my words, Mary Kelly, that's the truth I'm telling you, and no mistake.

Mrs. Goodsense—Well, I don't see any reason why Arabella, or any other girl, can't learn to keep a clean house and yet know a little about other things, too, that is if she lays her mind to it.

Mrs. De Vere—I would place the emphasis on higher education and the fine arts though.

Mrs. Goodsense—Well, if I am not mistaken, her man, when she gets one, will place the emphasis on a good, square meal, and take to the finer arts after being satisfied, and comfortable like. (Turns leaf.)

Mrs. Kelly—My sisters. You will remember them, the first is Jane—

Mrs. Goodsense—Oh, sure, I mind Jane well, she married a farmer, Samuel Hopkins by name, and moved out West.

Mrs. Kelly—That is true, Jemima; the picture is not a good one of Jane. Jane was a good looking girl in her day, was Jane. Then there is Car-

oline, poor Caroline (much affected.) You mind Caroline (all agree and look very saddened and sorrowstricken.) She was most ready to be married to John James Hobbs, had her clothes and quilts all ready, and only just a waiting—(Mrs. Kelly hesitates and wipes eyes)—for John James to ask her? (Much affected.)

Miss Skinning—And did he ask her, Mary?

Mrs. Kelly—Not to this day, Jane. She passed away a'waiting, and was buried in her wedding dress as was to be. I mind it well—it had ten breadths in the skirt—(is overcome)—and all hand sewed.

Mrs. Goodsense—Well, we will not dwell on such painful subjects, Mary, who is the other one?

Mrs. Kelly (wipes eyes, and when she looks at picture, laughs)—Sure that's myself. You'd never know me now, would you? That is just the way I looked when Josiah first saw me. I mind well Josiah said I was far and above the finest looking girl in these parts (looks pleased.)

Miss Skinning—You've changed, Mary. Of course Josiah Kelly never had much of an eye for beauty, not that he was to blame for wanting taste, but he knew enough to choose a woman that could set out three good meals a day for him, and that woman is yours'lf, Mary Kelly.

Mrs. Kelly—Well, I've always tried to do my duty by Josiah.

Mrs. Barton—Indeed I consider him a fortunate man to have won such a good wife.

Mrs. Kelly—It's yourself, Caroline Barton, that has the soft heart, and the kind word for all, but I'm afraid I'll be wearing you all out; you'll be tiring of my photograph album.

Mrs. De Vere—Not at all, it is a great pleasure I am sure.

Mrs. Goodsense—I am afraid I shall soon have to go, it is most milking time, and I never like to keep the cows waiting, but let us see a couple more before I go.

Mrs. Kelly—Yes, set down, sure the cows can wait. (Turns leaf.) My brother Jake's wife.

Miss Skinning—Let me get a look at her. I do wonder if she has any better liking for the work than she used to have. She was always for fussing over her hair and changing her dress every afternoon. Oh, she was all for looks was Jake's wife, as I said to Jake when he was looking after her, says I, looks don't count, Jake.

Mrs. Barton—And what did he say to that, Jane?

Miss Skinnig—Say! You'd as well talk to the wind as talk to a man when his mind is set. I did my duty a warning him, but he took her.

Mrs. Goodsense—And a good wife she has made him. Jake is very proud of her I hear, and she dresses pretty to please her husband.

Miss Skinning—A likely story, that.

(Turns leaf.)

Mrs. Kelly (proudly)—These are my boys—the first is James, you mind James, Jemima?

Mrs. Goodsense—Ah, sure I mind him well, he was just the same age as my Joseph, only my Joseph walked fully three weeks before your John James set his foot on the floor.

Mrs. Kelly (quite indignant)—Well, what odds when my John James set his foot on the floor so long as he got somewhere when he did get it on?

Mrs. Goodsense—Oh, I didn't mean anything, Mary, you know how a mother likes to have her own praised.

Mrs. Kelly—Then there is Michel; my, but he was the fine child was Michel, had every tooth in his head at a year old and weighed twenty-five pounds. He was such an armful, the darling (all agree.)

Then Rob.—Rob. was always the stirring one, never could be easy a moment, but it was Rob. had the kind Irish heart in him, for all that he says he don't want no other girl, his mother is girl enough for him.

Miss Skinning—Give him time, Mary, he'll get over that notion all right, more's the pity I say.

Then John Thomas, but it was John Thomas was the bright clever child, I never saw his equal, he was head and shoulders above all the children in these parts.

Miss Skinning—Strange what becomes of all the smart children. I suppose as they grow older they favor their father, and you can't expect much brains from men folks.

(Turns leaf.)

Mrs. Kelly—Mary Ann Smithers and her son, Joram.

Miss Skinning—You don't say so. Well, he was quite promising as a baby. What a pity he ever grew up. Poor Mary Ann was so proud of him.

Mrs. Barton—Why, I hope, Jane, he did not disgrace his mother, what did he do?

Miss Skinning—Do? Could'nt do worse, marrying a girl as did 'nt know a scrub-brush from a white-wash brush.

(Turns leaf.)

Mrs. De Vere—Why, Mary, I ought to know that face.

Mrs. Kelly—Yes (hesitates), an old beau of mine.

Mrs. Barton—Why, so it is. Well, well, what became of him, Mary, if I may ask?

Mrs. Kelly (sorrowfully)—Sure he was killed in the war, shot dead, in the back, only lived long enough to say: "I was coming back to you, Mary." (Much affected.)

Mrs. Goodsense—It is a pity he ran away, Mary; if he had stood his ground like a man he might not have got shot in the back.

Mrs. Kelly—Sure it was coming back to me he was, Jemima. When he saw the enemy coming he just thought how I'd feel if he was in danger, and he set out to come back to me. Oh, I mind well the day he marched away, looking so brave and true; I mind well "they were all out of step but my John."

Nights when Josiah has taken off his boots and gone off to his bed, the darling, and I am setting alone by the fire-place, and the wind is a howling and the Banshee a'screeching, my own brave John comes back, and we set and talk of the old days before the war, until Josiah calls, "Come away, Mary, you've been warming yourself long enough."

Mrs. Goodsense—Well, I declare, Mary Kelly, I am ashamed of you. The idea of you, at your time of life, setting up, a dreaming-like a girl of 16, and you a grandmother these ten years back; but I really must be going now, I have enjoyed the afternoon very much.

Miss Skinning—Well, I might as well step along, too, it's time the kettle was boiling for supper, and I want to scrub them there back steps down with ashes yet before night.

Mrs. Kelly—Oh, before you go, you remember that quilt I was piecing last winter, I think I'll set it in and have a quilting bee, and have all the folks in to get it out of the frames while my visitors is here, so come on Friday, at 2 o'clock and stay for supper. (Both shake hands and promise to step over and help.)

Mrs Kelly—Now, I shall just have to step over and see to the chickens, and cow, and put the supper on, then I must run over and take some fresh eggs to poor Mrs. Beggs, who is not well at all, at all, and on the way I'll bid the neighbors to the quilting bee on Friday, then I must get right busy and bake up for it; I think Thomas's wife will come in and give me a hand as like as not.

Mrs. De Vere—Well, how can you accomplish so much? It wearies me to hear you enumerate the many things you have to do.

Mrs. Kelly—Oh, I don't think anything of that; come away and set on the porch by the morning glory vines, where you can get the smell of the hay and the scent of the clover, and I'll soon be through. Come away.

(All leave platform.)

THE FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS.

All the life pictures should be very stiff and unnatural looking, head held too high or on one side, or too far back as though supported by irons.

Grandfather—Old-fashioned side whiskers and beard, high silk hat, high neck scarf, red handkerchief, long coat and staff.

Arabella—A very pretty girl with pleasant smile. Style—Old colonial. Hair parted, powdered and curled, caught up and some short curls dropped from left side. Dress of pink cotton or large bright flowered goods, low neck, and made with looped draping over the hips. A very pretty and telling part. A pretty mob cap of pink frilled round with lace and pink ribbon adds to the costume.

Josiah and his Bride—Groom, very back-woodsy get up. Has an arm around his wife's neck hanging over her shoulder. His hair looks roughly combed. Bride holds his hat and stick in her left hand and they both hold hands. The bride should be dressed in white, much befrilled, and trimmed up with lace, ribbons, sashas, etc., and wear a veil.

My Sisters—The centre one very delicate and sentimental looking; dressed in a bright, showy color. The other two very much over-dressed, bows, frills, chains, beads, watches, bracelets, lace and ribbon.

Grandmother Higgs—Full hoop skirts, belle sleeves and white undersleeves, white turn down collar.

Mary Ann Smithers and Son Joram—Mother prettily dressed in white with one curl over shoulder and red rose at side, fichu of lace on neck, the dress turned in low.

My Brother's Wife—Pretty and very dressy; a profusion of lace, bows, flowers, etc.; bright colors.

My Four Sons—Very stiff and awkward looking; sleeves too short and hair combed down over the ears.

An Old Beau of Mine—Military dress with black waxed moustache.

SCENE II.

A showy patchwork quilt partly in the frame and standing up against the wall when the second scene opens. Ladies enter two by twos, and after laying away bonnets and shawls, place the frame on chairs and finish basting it in, afterwards Mrs. Bond marks it with double fan pattern. Mrs. Hicks, Mrs. Meek, Mrs. Jacks, Mrs. Lane and Mrs. Bond work at the quilt.

Mrs. Kelly and Thomas's wife are running in and out, with sleeves rolled up and hands floury, and bring in a pie or cake occasionally to show how the baking is progressing; sit down and fan themselves with their apron.

(Raps on door.)

Mrs. Kelly, in a big apron, shows the visitors in. Thomas's wife takes them in another room to lay off their bonnets. They are all very friendly and speak of anything until Mrs. Runkle speaks.

Mrs. Runkle—Why, Mary, what a beautiful quilt and such fine stitches, how did you ever find time for all that piecing, and you with such a handful of housework?

Mrs. Kelly—Oh, just a few stitches at a time. I always make out to piece two fancy quilts and three plain ones of a winter, and I did this when I had that bad spell last spring when my back came again me.

Mrs. Lane to Mrs. Kelly (looking out of window)—Why, here comes Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Good up the road, and dressed out in their Sunday best to come to a quilting. (Several run to window to look out.)

Mrs. Runkle—Well now, and who'd have thought they'd come, and they new to the village, and so stylish, too; I hear tell, that is, their hired girl told Thomas's wife that they use table-napkins of a week-day at their house; of course that may not be the real truth.

Mrs. Meek—Perhaps they meant Sundays, and when they was having company and the like.

Mrs. Lane—That sounds more like it, to my way of thinking.

Mrs. Runkle (much agitated)—They are very grand folks though. I declare I am so excited I can neither set or stand. We must 'nt act as though we'd never been out of Friendly Village in our lives and did'nt know nothing; is my cap setting on straight I wonder?

Mrs. Kelly (dusting and arranging tidies)—Oh, worra, worra, they'll see my house in such a mess, not a clean chair to ask them to set in, nor a decent bite to offer them.

Mrs. Skinning—Mary Kelly, you know you are never off your knees scrubbing except when companys come; set down, I'd tell you if your house needed cleaning, never fear.

Mrs. Runkle—They're walking slow, and picking up their skirts; they are made full; there must be 18 yards of silk in those skirts, or my name is not Anne Jane Runkle.

Mrs. Hicks—Why, here comes Araminta Donnely up the road, a wheeling her baby buggy.

Mrs. Bond—I always hold quiltings is p. te for

babies, it's too exciting, makes them peevish and fretful.

Mrs. Jacks—Babies is babies I say, and should be left at home.

Mrs. Hicks—I think it would be too bad for poor Araminta to have to stay shut out of society on account of her baby.

Mrs. Meek—Why, I don't mind taking the baby a spell and letting poor Araminta enjoy herself.

Mrs. Hicks—No more do I, Mrs. Meek.

Enter Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Good. Both have a gracious, refined manner. Mrs. Kelly is much agitated and tries to introduce them to those present, but they all look away, finally she pulls Mrs. Runkle over to be introduced.

Mrs. Kelly—I'll make you acquainted with Mrs. Good and Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Runkle.

Mrs. Runkle (shakes hands stiffly with Mrs. Good first and then Mrs. Vernon)—Good day, mam; it's a fine day, I hope you are both interested in Women's Rights.

Mrs. Good—Well, Mrs. Runkle, we are, I hope, interested in what is for the welfare of mankind at large, we do not narrow it down to women.

Mrs. Vernon—I hope when we become better known in the village, Mrs. Runkle, that you will find us to be in favor of everything that is for the best interest of the people. It was extremely kind of you to invite us, Mrs. Kelly.

Mrs. Kelly—You're kindly welcome to come, mam,

set down, do; don't bother with the quilt, sure there's enough of them at that.

Mrs. Runkle (examining their dresses) to Mrs. Good—
You'd better be laying an apron over that dress, mam; folks don't wear their best to quiltings in Friendly Village.

Mrs. Good—Oh, thank you for being so thoughtful, but this dress is only an old one, a little old-fashioned, being somewhat contracted in the skirt.

Mrs. Lane to Mrs. Meek—Law now, there must be twelve breadths in that skirt if there is one, or my name is not Mehitable Lane.

Mrs. Lane—Oh, here is Araminta Donnely—Great fuss and confusion; several go up to see baby, some stay at quilt. (Baby, a big doll wrapped up.)

Mrs. Hicks—Oh, do let me take him a moment, the darling; what a size, and him only a year younger than my Tom.

Mrs. Lane—How old is he, Araminta?

Mrs. Donnely—Well, let me think. Oh, yes; 1 year, 10 months, 18½ days, come next 10th day of January.

Mrs. Barton—A fine, promising child, I hope he will grow up to be a comfort to your old age; if I remember right he favors his father.

Mrs. Bond—Well now, it was just on my tongue to say, he was the living picture of his mother.

Mrs. Meek—Oh, no; he has his father's eyes and voice.

Mrs. Runkle—And his father's mouth, if I am any judge of mouths.

Mrs. Kelly—Won't you take him out and lay him on the bed, Araminta, Thomas's wife will show you where to put him (calls Thomas's wife). After much confusion, wheels baby out and comes in in a few minutes.

Mrs. Goodsense—Oh, anyone can see that child is his father's image, just a chip off the old block.

Miss Skinning—And more's the pity I say, for Jacob Donnely was never no beauty, as all here could bear me out, but he is a decent hard-working man for all that, and that's more lasting than looks I say. I don't bear him no grudge cause of his looks; beauty is as beauty does I say, and it is only skin deep anyway.

Mrs. Good—You evidently believe in speaking your mind freely, Miss Skinning.

Mrs. Runkle—Oh, we are all used to Miss Skinning; she has a good heart, at least they all say so, not that she makes much of a show of it that ever I see, but if you are in trouble just call on Jane Skinning.

Mrs. Vernon—It is very unfortunate that one has to wait until they are in trouble, one needs help and comfort so much all the time.

Mrs. Runkle—Now, who 'd have ever thought she 'd be needing comfort, and her with 14 breadths in her skirt?

Mrs. Kelly calls Thomas's wife to bring in some quilts she has been piecing to show to visitors. Shows two or three striking ones. Mrs.

Meek and Thomas's wife show the quilts (so audience can see them.)

Mrs. Runkle (looking closely at quilt)—Oh, I remember that stuff. Susan Swanton had a dress like that, it must be 35 years ago. I remember it was 29 cents a yard, double fold, and she bought 20 yards and had it made up full and comfortable like.

Mrs. Jacks—That other piece was poor stuff, I mind well, because Jane Asken told me it only wore a matter of 5 or 6 years, and never could be made over fresh.

Mrs. Hicks (showing her dress)—Why, here is my wedding dress, it has been made over half a dozen times, and is just as good as new.

Mrs. Meek (goes up and looks at quilt)—That was Maria Tomb's wedding dress.

Mrs. Jacks (goes up to it)—Why, sure enough, now I mind it well.

Mrs. Bond—She had it spoiled I remember, and had to take the whole front breadth out and turn it to the back, and, Oh, but it was the bad luck it brought her, the turning of it, and it her wedding dress at that.

Mrs. Runkle—Nonsense, it was the good-for-nothing man she married, any one could have told her the kind of luck she was going to have, breadth or no breadth.

Mrs. Lane—Oh, I smell your cakes burning, Mrs. Kelly. Mrs. Kelly and Thomas's wife run out (have a cake of dough burning on small coal oil or gas stove.) Thomas's wife returns with

pan of biscuits to show they are not scorched. All should be either at the quilt or working on a bright piece of patchwork.

Mrs. Vernon—To change the subject, ladies, we are looking forward very much to profiting by the church life of the village, might I ask do you hold your weekly prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, as is the usual custom?

Mrs. Runkle—Well, now that you ask, I think it is on toward the middle of the week, but I should not like to set myself down as saying for certain it is Wednesday.

Mrs. Bond—It is either Wednesday or Thursday, I know there is no mistake about that, but I just don't remember which; since I sprained my arm two years ago I have'nt felt equal to going to prayer meeting, not being able to use it much.

Miss Skinning—Them as wants to can always find excuses.

Mrs. Good—There seems a great difference of opinion on the subject.

Mrs. Kelly—Well, where is Thomas's wife, she mostly goes. (Calls, Thomas's wife, out loud.) Which night does the minister hold his weekly prayer meeting?

Thomas's wife—Why, mid-night, of course, I am ashamed of you, Mary, having to ask.

Mrs. Goodsense—Now, Thomas's wife has just hit the nail on the head when she asks, *What night does the minister hold his weekly prayer meeting?* It is *not* his prayer meeting, *it is*

our prayer meeting, and if it is helpful to us, we ought, as a church, to uphold it, but if *we can get along without it I guess the minister can.*

Mrs. Kelly (much horrified)—Why, Jemima Goodsense, it's a heretic you're getting to be entirely. What would brethren and deacons do wanting the prayer meeting? Why, what would my own poor Josiah do?

Mrs. Goodsense—Just do what they have done all along, *set at home*. I've never seen your Josiah set a foot inside of a meeting these two years and more.

Mrs. Kelly—Oh, but, Jemima, you don't know my Josiah, his heart is there even if he is not, his feet being swole so bad every night that he can't get his boots on after supper, and I have to set home with him.

Miss Skinning—They are never swole if there's any other kind of meeting, political doings, or such like, his boots'll go on then I'll be bound.

Mrs. Vernon—Well, ladies, I am sure nothing was further from our mind than to make any disturbance.

Mrs. Good—No, not at all. I hope you will pardon us introducing a subject which has proven so disturbing.

Mrs. Runkle—Oh, we don't call these disturbances, Mrs. Good, we just speak our mind freely to one another, and no ill feelings whatever.

Mrs. Goodsense—You have done us all good, Mrs. Vernon; now, I move we use our influence for

the prayer meeting. I for one am going to make an effort to go.

(Different ones join in assent.)

Mrs. Kelly—And I'll try and get Josiah to go too; it is curious about his feet; Wednesday night is always the worst with him, other nights they are never swole near as bad, the darling.

Miss Skinning—Well, the more I hear tell of men the more thankful I am that I never was took in by none of them. Now, there was Lem Badger, a likely enough fellow when he was young; he was most crazy to get me, but I said, *No*, Lem Badger, I ain't going to have no men folks 'round me, always fussing about, looking for their meals.

Mrs. Vernon—And how did your admirer take his refusal, Miss Skinning?

Miss Skinning—Oh, he married a poor milk and water creature. Why, Thomas's wife's aunt told me herself that he is so near, he begredges her enough calico to make a dress. I heard tell how she wanted one made with an overskirt, but it was going to take half a yard more print. *No*, says he, you've had six yards of calico now, that had oughter be enough for you, being naturally kind o' short and stunted likc.

Mrs. Meek—The poor thing, was she much disappointed?

Miss Skinning—Oh, no; she said her man had the right to say whether she should wear overskirts or not, and after all it was his money.

Mrs. Goodsense—Perhaps the ladies from the city, not being much used to quiltings, will tell us something about the doings in the city. We are rather a quiet people in Friendly Village, and do not get out much to get the news.

Mrs. Good—Well, I am sure I should be delighted to give you any information. Is there any special subject upon which you would care to be enlightened?

Mrs. Runkle—Well, there was a likely looking young fellow in these parts last summer, and he told us that folks was soon going to be able to send messages between Friendly Village and Greenboro, along wires, without people carrying them. I didn't believe him myself, I told him it could'nt be done.

Mrs. Good—Oh, I don't doubt the truth of that, Mrs. Runkle, the system of telegraphy has been in operation for some time in parts of our county.

Mrs. Vernon—Indeed, there are the more advanced ones, who prophesy that in the near future we will not require horses to draw carriages, they will move along themselves, propelled by electricity.

Mrs. Goodsense—Well, I don't ever expect to see that in my day, no more do I want to; horses are safer to my way of thinking.

Mrs. Runkle—Don't you believe those stories, Jemima? Such things can't be did; how could a rig go down the road without a horse a drawing it?

Mrs. Good—Why, there are those who go so far as to

say that 50 years from now, candles will be almost unknown, the houses being lighted by electricity.

Mrs. Vernon—Yes, and that one will be able to be heard distinctly speaking through ten miles of space.

Miss Skinning—Well, if you ask me, Mary, I think your grand friends from the city are making game of us. *Such things have never been did since the world was made, ain't did now, and never can be did*, I don't care what your fine visitors from the city say. Whoever saw electricity anyway?

Mrs. Good—Well, of course you have the argument on your side there, Miss Skinnig; no person has ever really seen it, it is an unseen force as so many of nature's agencies are.

Mrs. Vernon—Allow me to describe it, ladies. Electricity is a subtile agent, usually excited by the friction of glass, first discovered by the Greeks, who produced it through friction of amber, which explains the Greek derivation of the word.

Mrs. Good—It is derived from the Greek electron, which being translated means amber; it produces mechanical violence, heat, light, attraction and repulsion.

Mrs. De Vere—A very comprehensive explanation.

Mrs. Goodsense—A pack of nonsense I say. Will it produce a good square meal for a hungry man or woman? For no matter how high you fly you've got to get down to first principles, such as *meals*, and that *three times a day*.

Miss Skinning—Yes, and them as knows most about long speeches and big words, knows least about how to set out a meal, or how to keep their kitchen floor white and sweet smelling.

Mrs. Vernon—By the way, ladies, I have a piece from the *Female Trumpeter*, I would like to read it to you after a while if you are interested in what is for your good and uplifting.

Mrs. Kelly—Yes; now you have been working long enough; we will hear Mrs. Vernon's paper, then some one perhaps will give us some music and Jake's wife may say off a piece for us. Now, just set around and rest yourselves (Mrs. Donnely brings in baby and rocks it) before we set in to table; Thomas's wife is making some pumpkin pie and riz biscuits (calls to her), Thomas's wife, that ham must be near boiled by this time, just take it out and set it on the cracked platter, don't take the skin off until it is cold (goes near door to call): Take care and set it where Fido and the cats can't tech it.

Mrs. De Vere—Poor Mary, she is overwhelmed with household responsibilities.

Mrs. Goodsense—I am interested in hearing Mrs. Vernon's article from the *Female Trumpeter*. (Let whoever has the best voice and expression read this.)

Mrs. Vernon—I am afraid I cannot do the article justice, but I feel it is my plain duty to read it.

Mrs. Vernon—Woman's Rights, what is woman's rights? I say, woman's rights is too big a subject to be described in a few words. Why,

I ask, should women not rise in her might and wrest her rights from man, her oppressor and tyrant and natural tormentor? What has man ever done for the world? What do the pages of history teach us? Why should he set up to have rights which is denied us females? Everyone as reads history knows women has been behind every invention which has proven to be for the ame—amelia—amelioration (stumbles over word.)

Mrs. Kelly to others—She means Amelia Nation, I've heard as how her man was hard set on her.

Mrs. De Vere—You mean amelioration, or improvement, Mrs. Vernon.

Mrs. Vernon—Amelioration of mankind. It has been stated by some as writes history that a *man* discovered America, but I say *No*, it was the women as sold her jewels and sent him (cries of here, here.) Give a woman her rights I say, it is not much she is asking, only that she should be recognized in her proper place as head of the man and also get on equal footing with man, and this glorious privilege and inheritance is ours to labor for, ours to labor for with groaning backs through the years, and to instil into our children and grandchildren. (Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Meek and Mrs. Donnely much affected.)

Mrs. Runkle—I never heard tell of her as having any children before, let alone grandchildren.

Mrs. Burton—Hush, she is speaking figurative.

Mrs. Vernon—Ours to fight and struggle for through

all our peaceful years until we come out into the full blaze and glory of woman's rights and privileges, then will man—

Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Hicks and Mrs. Meek quite overcome (mop their eyes.)

then will man, I say, take his proper place at women's feet, then shall he be a footstool indeed, then will the glorious inheritance of freedom and woman's rights be ours to enjoy indefinite, then will we hold sway over the hull earth until men shall be even as the Indian who, recognizing his infer—infer— (Mrs. De Vere, Inferiority) has slunk back farther and father into retreat, giving way to his superiors. Let this be our watchword, this our battle-cry, "A right to live, to walk the earth and to rule our fellow man." No woman with this high goal in view can live in vain. Wake up (some who have been dozing sit up) to your high privileges; keep your eyes on the goal; let no petty domestic cares divert you, and these rights will be ours fully to enjoy, and the glory of women shall shine through the earth, and all that makes for darkness, such as men, shall disappear from the face of the earth and shall be buried underneath a mountain of shame and ob— obli— (stumbles over it)—

Mrs. De Vere—Obloquy you mean, censoriousness.

Mrs. Vernon—of shame and obloquy of their own upbuilding (some sobbing audibly.)

Mrs. Good—A magnificent peroration.

Mrs. Barton—Much a do about nothing, I say.

Mrs. Kelly—I declare I am overcome (wipes her eyes.)

I don't want my John buried under a mountain; he's a good man to me, he is.

Mrs. Goodsense—It's all a pack of nonsense. We have more rights now than we use to good advantage; now, if I remember right we were set in this world to be *helpmeets* to men.

Miss Skinning—*Men are men*, I say, and are here to stay, and no amount of long speeches and big words is goin' to scare 'em away, so make the best of a bad job, I say, not that I ever believe in givin' in to any man.

Thomas's wife—Deacon Sykes is here to see you, Mary; shall I tell him to walk in?

Mrs. Kelly—Why, whatever can Deacon Sykes be wanting? (Enter Deacon.)

Mrs. Kelly—Why, Deacon step right it, if you're not afraid of so many women folks.

Deacon Sykes—I just stepped over to see if you knew where I could get a woman to keep house for me, it's getting very lonely like living all alone.

Mrs. Kelly—It's never a wife you're after, Deacon?

Miss Skinning (comes toward Deacon)—You go on with your quilt, Mary; never mind Deacon Sykes, leave him to me, poor fellow, I'm heart sorry for him. Come away and set in the kitchen, Deacon, and talk it all over, come away. (He goes reluctantly with her.)

Mrs. Runkle—I thought you'd no use for men, Jane? No more had I till the right one came. (All laugh and say that was just what they expected.)

Mrs. Kelly—Now, we must have a song, then Jake's wife will say off a piece for us, she used to know lots of them before she was married and tied down.

Mrs. Kelly calls on the one who is to sing and to recite, and they each give a very old, well known selection.

Mrs. Barton—Can't we sing an old song together as we used to, Mary?

They decide to sing "When you and I were young Maggie." Some one can sing the verse as solo, all singing chorus. They all then rise and sing a verse of "Auld Lang Syne," after which all join in

GOD SAVE THE KING.

